

Pink

Based on the Life and Works of Nellie Bly.

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CHARACTER LIST (INCLUDING NAMED EXTRAS):

NELLIE BLY- Throughout the script Nellie Bly is mentioned by her pen name: Nellie. However she is called many different names by the other characters including her birth name: "Elizabeth Cochran" (or later "Cochrane"); her nickname: "Pink" and her aliases "Nellie Brown" and "Elizabeth Brown".

MARY JANE COCHRANE- Nellie's mother.

ALBERT- Nellie's younger brother.

FRIEND

BOSS

JACK FORD: Mary Jane's third husband. He was abusive.

LAWYER 1

CHILD'S MOTHER

CHILD'S FATHER

GEORGE MADDEN- Editor at the Pittsburgh Dispatch.

JOHN- A journalist at the Pittsburgh Dispatch.

LEYA- Runs a Mexican boarding house.

WOMAN who lives in the boarding house.

MATRON- who runs the boarding house

COOK

ANN

MRS CAINE

JENNY

DOCTOR

NURSE 1

NURSE 2

NIGHT 1

NIGHT 2

MARY

SCENE ONE

We see on the screen: "1882, APOLLO, PENNSYLVANIA, NORTH AMERICA"

INT. Night. Nellie's family home in Apollo. It is a lowly place, lit only by candles.

Nellie Bly isn't **Nellie** Bly yet; she is eighteen years old and still Elizabeth Cochran.

Nellie is sat at the kitchen table watching the flickering glow of a candle flame. In front of her is one of her pink (though faded) dresses and a sewing kit. **Mary Jane** Cochran enters and waves her hand in front of **Nellie's** face.

MARY JANE:

Pink! What's taking you so long?
Are you stitching an entirely new
dress?

Nellie doesn't reply.

MARY JANE:

Pink!

Nellie looks up.

NELLIE:

Sorry...I was just...

MARY JANE:

It's alright, just go to bed
soon. I worry when you don't
sleep and then go and do your
shift.

NELLIE:

I'll barely be another ten
minutes.

MARY JANE:

Good.

Mary Jane kisses **Nellie** on her forehead and then leaves the room.

Nellie looks down from the candle to the pink piece of fabric she is supposed to be sewing up. She stitches a small line over a hole, but soon stops. Carefully checking that **Mary Jane** has gone, Nellie takes out a newspaper and begins reading it. It is the "Pittsburgh Dispatch".

We watch **Nellie's** enthusiasm as she turns the last few pages of the paper. Once she has finished she looks disappointed. **Nellie** carefully picks the paper up and blows the candle out.

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO:

INT. **Nellie** Bly's bedroom.

Nellie adds the newspaper to a teetering pile of other Pittsburgh Dispatch issues, and other newspapers/magazines (e.g. "Godey's Lady's Book"). On the walls of the room are torn out articles of particular interest to **Nellie**. Many are about feminist or social politics.

We watch **Nellie** go to sleep amongst the newspapers.

SCENE TWO

INT. Nellie's father's Mansion. Around 1870

We see a much younger **Nellie**, about six years old, awaken suddenly in very different surroundings.

Six year old **Nellie** has a deep mattress on a grand bed. On the walls there is vibrant pink wallpaper. **Nellie's** nightclothes are also pink, and we can see into a wardrobe full of neatly hung up pink dresses.

We hear a scream and indecipherable shouting.

Nellie sits upright and instinctively shouts.

NELLIE:

Mom!

There are further shouts and another (although fainter) scream.

Nellie huddles under the covers, terrified.

The door to **Nellie's** room slowly opens; Nellie is visibly terrified of what it will open to reveal. But it is only her brother **Albert**.

ALBERT:

Father is dead.

SCENE THREE

EXT. Pittsburgh, 1882.

We see **Nellie** walking through Pittsburgh in the early hours of the morning. She is on her way to the factory where she works. Her dress is pink but severely faded and patched in a number of places.

INT. Factory.

Nellie enters the factory. It is instantly dark, smoky and deafeningly loud. Most of the workers around **Nellie** are men. Some are children.

One of the men who has just finished his shift bumps into **Nellie** and squeezes her backside as he leaves. **Nellie** closes her eyes but doesn't react in any other way.

MAN:

Until next shift pink girl.

Nellie puts on overalls from a heap on top of her dress. The overalls fit around her dress as they are far too large for her.

CUT TO:

INT. The hall where **Nellie** works on huge mechanical looms. There are other women in there working on the looms and also many children who go under the looms to pull out fibres that get stuck in the mechanism.

On the wall is a list of strict factory rules.

CUT TO:

EXT. The factory. **Nellie** and **Friend** are sat outside the factory.

Nellie is eating a slice of bread whilst **Friend** sits and smokes rolled tobacco.

NELLIE:

He's getting worse.

FRIEND:

Nout you can do.

NELLIE:

I can think of some things I'd like to do.

FRIEND:

You'd be the one who lost your job.

(CONTINUED)

NELLIE:

I know.

They sit in silence for a little while. **Friend** rolls another cigarette.

There is a loud mechanical screech.

FRIEND:

Shit, another one!

INT. Factory

Nellie and **Friend** reluctantly walk back into the factory. The weaving machine has stopped running properly. Although it is still trying to keep moving backwards and forwards, something is jamming it. A couple of the women are crying, but most have a vacant expression on their faces. We see the body of a child mangled by the machine.

Boss comes in and looks for and then stares at the problem.

Boss nods and checks his watch.

BOSS:

Right girls. You have two hours.
We'll have cleaned this up by
then and it's back to work!

SCENE FOUR

INT. Hallway of Nellie's Family's home (1882).

MARY JANE:

Pink! I'm sorry! I heard from Mrs Peters...

NELLIE:

Third one in six months. Donkeys get more respect than those children.

MARY JANE:

You can't fight for everyone Pink.

NELLIE:

I just wish I could find a way to even begin to try.

MARY JANE:

I'm so sorry. It's my fault you have to work there anyway. If I hadn't run off with Jack so soon after your father passed maybe I would have found someone different. Or at least someone with some kind of money.

NELLIE:

It's not your fault.

SCENE FIVE-

Int. Courtroom in Pittsburgh, 1874

Mary Jane is trying to divorce her third Husband **Jack Ford**.

Jack Ford is sat on one side of the courtroom and **MARY JANE** on the other.

Mary Jane is crying.

We see **Nellie**, aged around 10 being led to give witness.

Nellie looks nervous but also defiant.

Nellie looks directly at her mother.

Nellie experiences a vision- a memory of her mother **Mary Jane** being hit by **Jack Ford**.

Back in the courtroom **Nellie** is cross examined by **Lawyer 1**.

LAWYER ONE:
Are you Elizabeth Cochran?

NELLIE:
I go by Cochrane.

LAWYER:
But this man, Jack Ford, is
married to your mother?

NELLIE:
Yes.

LAWYER:
And you are not his child?

NELLIE:
No.

LAWYER 1:
So your mother has already got
rid of one husband?

NELLIE:
My father died.

LAWYER 1:
But do you now address Jack Ford
as "father"?

NELLIE:
We don't usually refer to each
other as anything.

(CONTINUED)

LAWYER 1:

Very well. Are you aware that Jack Ford and your mother are seeking a divorce?

NELLIE:

Yes.

LAWYER 1:

Are you aware of what a grave matter that is both theologically and socially.

Nellie nods although she can't possibly understand what he means.

LAWYER 1:

So could you describe the way you see your mother and Jack Ford's relationship?

NELLIE:

They don't get on.

Nellie experiences a second flashback.

CUT TO: EXT. Graveyard. This flashback is slightly longer, we see **Jack Ford** and **Mary Jane** in a graveyard. **Jack Ford** gets a gun out and points it at **Mary Jane**. We can see them shouting but the noise is distorted.

We realise that both **Nellie** and her brother **Albert** are present and sat crying behind a gravestone.

CUT TO: INT. COURTROOM

NELLIE:

They argue. He hits her.

LAWYER 1:

Your stepfather hits your mother?

NELLIE:

And they have intercourse even when she doesn't want it.

LAWYER 1:

That is an adult matter...

NELLIE:

She didn't want to marry him. We had no money.

LAWYER 1:

So in a significant way he saved her.

(CONTINUED)

NELLIE:

No...

LAWYER 1:

Yet she escaped poverty; because of him. Maybe you are not old enough to know this yet, but women need men. Women can't survive on their own.

NELLIE:

He used her.

LAWYER 1:

It is just as easy to say that she used him.

NELLIE:

Sometimes he gets drunk. Sometimes he gets drunk and he hits her until she bleeds and I am terrified and I'm terrified to live in that house and I am terrified that he is going to kill my mother.

SCENE SIX

EXT. Pittsburgh (1882)

We see **Nellie** walking to work again.

Nellie stops at a man selling issues of the Pittsburgh Dispatch, buys a copy, and then continues walking.

CUT TO: **Nellie** at work. There is a middle aged woman crying but still continuing with her duties. **Friend** emerges and speaks into **Nellie's** ear.

FRIEND:

It was her son.

CUT TO: Break time at work. **Nellie** and **Friend** are sat in their usual place. **Nellie** is eating half of an apple and **Friend** is smoking.

Nellie offers the apple to **Friend** and **Friend** takes a bite.

Nellie gets out her newspaper and begins reading it.

Nellie sighs loudly and shakes her head.

Nellie shows **Friend** an article in the newspaper entitled: "What Girls are Good For".

FRIEND:

You know I can't.

NELLIE:

(reads aloud from article)

FRIEND:

He needs to take a look around himself.

CUT TO: Apollo, 1882. **Nellie** is walking home from work. It is dark. **Nellie** is deep in thought. **Nellie** passes a stationary shop and it captivates her. **Nellie** walks over to the stationary shop and knocks on the door.

SHOPKEEPER:

We're closed.

NELLIE:

I just want a pen. And some paper. I can pay.

SHOPKEEPER:

Closed.

CUT TO: **Nellie** at home, sat at the dinner table with her siblings and **Mary Jane**. The others are all chatting until **Nellie** interrupts.

(CONTINUED)

NELLIE:
Dad had a pen once.

MARY JANE:
I believe so.

NELLIE:
Do we still have it?

MARY JANE:
If we do it'll be in the box.

NELLIE:
I need to borrow it.

MARY JANE:
Why?

CUT TO: **Nellie** sat in her room writing ferociously on the inside of matchboxes and other scraps of card or paper. We hear what she is writing spoken in her own voice.

SELECT EXTRACTS FROM "THE GIRL PUZZLE" to include.

We see **Nellie** sign the article "Lonely Orphan Girl".

CUT TO: EXT. Stationary Shop. Nellie emerges carrying several sheets of paper and an envelope.

CUT TO: EXT. Park, Apollo.

We see **Nellie** sat on a bench copying "The Girl Puzzle" from the scraps of paper onto the paper she has just bought.

CUT TO: Nellie posting her article. On the envelope is written "Editor in Chief; Pittsburgh Dispatch..."

SCENE SEVEN

EXT. Graveyard.

We see the funeral of the child who was killed at the factory, but the entire scene is shown without sound.

The child is buried in a mass grave, in a flimsy card box but there is a catholic **priest** doing a small service. **Nellie** and **Friend** are amongst some of the other people of the factory who are present. **Nellie** is wearing a black coat over her usual pink attire.

The child's **mother** is crying and the **father** is drinking from a bottle of whiskey.

When the **priest** has finished, the **father** throws the bottle at the box his son has been buried in.

The bottle hits the flimsy box so hard that it falls through the box and we can see the child's face.

Mother hits **father** and they fight each other until **Nellie** breaks them up.

SCENE EIGHT

INT. **Nellie's** Mother's house, (1882)

Nellie walks in through the door at home after work. **Mary Jane** is waiting for her.

MARY JANE:
You've got a letter.

NELLIE:
I'm tired mother.

MARY JANE:
Look at the return address.

Mary Jane shows **Nellie** the back of the envelope:

"George Madden (managing editor)

Pittsburgh Dispatch

Pittsburgh"

MARY JANE:
It's that newspaper you always
read. Isn't it?

Nellie snatches the letter and runs upstairs. **Mary Jane** shouts after her.

MARY JANE:
Pink! Pink!

Nellie sits in her bed. She keeps going to open the envelope and then stops herself. Eventually she rips the envelope open.

We see **Nellie's** eyes widen as she reads.

We see the letter, focusing on certain words: "We would be interested in an article length piece elaborating your thoughts on the subject"; "we also extend an invitation to come and visit our offices in Pittsburgh next Wednesday at 10AM"

We see **Nellie's** **mother** and **siblings** spying on her through a crack in the door.

Nellie's mouth tries to make words but it can't find any.

SCENE NINE

The title: THE GIRL PUZZLE comes on the screen in inverted colour, circa 1880s newstype.

EXT. Pittsburgh Dispatch offices.

Nellie is dressed in her best kempt pink dress, pacing up and down outside the building.

A clock from somewhere in the city chimes nine. **Nellie** takes this as a cue to enter the building.

CUT TO: INT. Pittsburgh Dispatch offices.

Nellie approaches the reception desk.

NELLIE:
Elizabeth Cochrane. I'm here to
see George Madden.

RECEPTIONIST:
Are you the new clerk?

NELLIE:
No.

CUT TO: INT. Madden's office.

Nellie is sat waiting for **Madden**.

Madden enters, **Nellie** stands and offers him her hand.

MADDEN:
You're Lonely Orphan Girl?

NELLIE:
Elizabeth Cochrane.

Madden and **Nellie** shake hands.

MADDEN:
I was expecting someone...

NELLIE:
Older?

MADDEN:
Less womanly.

They both sit down.

MADDEN:
Have you considered my idea of
expanding your letter to a fuller
piece?

(CONTINUED)

Nellie fishes a bundle of handwritten pages out of her bag and puts them on the desk.

NELLIE:
I've already written the article.

MADDEN:
You must have a lot of time on your hands.

NELLIE:
I work twelve hour shifts.

MADDEN:
Really?

NELLIE:
Yes. The article is personally important to me. It isn't a pity piece.

MADDEN:
What do you work as?

NELLIE:
I've had a lot of different jobs over the last few years.

MADDEN:
Interesting.

NELLIE:
I'd rather work for you.

Madden nods.

MADDEN:
Leave this with me, I'll get back to you.

NELLIE:
With all of the respect you deserve Mr Madden; the train trip to get here cost me almost all of my savings. I live in Apollo, I can only just afford to get to work. I don't think I could afford to get here for a second interview.

Madden considers things.

MADDEN:
Wait outside. I'll read it.

Nellie leaves the room.

CUT TO:INT. Corridor outside of **Madden's** office.

(CONTINUED)

Nellie is sat in the corridor outside of **Madden's** office.

Nellie waits.

Madden comes back out. He stares **Nellie** down, assessing her carefully.

MADDEN:

You wrote this?

NELLIE:

Yes.

MADDEN:

You're going to need to find a new pen name. It's hard to take a "Lonely Orphan Girl" seriously. And you'll need a few lessons on technique.

NELLIE:

I'm sure I can do that.

MADDEN:

Excellent. And talk to my secretary, she'll organise you a lift home in a cab. On us.

SCENE TEN

INT. **Nellie's** work. Later the same day.

Nellie walks into work in the same dress she had on at the interview.

Friend catches her at the door and tries to stop her.

FRIEND:
He's already pissed off. Just go home. Claim you were ill...

NELLIE:
I don't need to.

Boss emerges from his station.

BOSS:
Cochrane, this is beyond late...

NELLIE:
I quit.

BOSS:
This is no joke girl!

NELLIE:
I've got a new job.

Nellie leaves. **Friend** and **Boss** stare after her in shock.

CUT TO: We see Nellie signing her contract Elizabeth Cochrane AKA: Nellie Bly"

SCENE ELEVEN

On screen: TWO YEARS LATER (1884)

INT. Pittsburgh Dispatch Office.

Nellie is using the office typewriter to type up her handwritten work. **John** approaches **Nellie**.

JOHN:
You're going to be late.

Nellie looks at her pocket watch.

NELLIE:
Shit. I've been at this all night. How do you find time to sleep?

JOHN:
I don't take on extracurricular projects.

NELLIE:
Because you get all the good jobs in the first place. If I have to review one more ladies lunch...I'll probably kill everyone else in the room.

JOHN:
Let me know before you do. It sounds like a good scoop.

NELLIE:
Shut your mouth.

Nellie finished typing and pulls her paper out of the typewriter.

Nellie tries to pull the carbon copy away from the paper, but her fingers keep slipping. **John** helps her.

NELLIE:
Thank you.

They rush together into the meeting room.

MADDEN:
Late.

NELLIE:
I've been doing some research.

MADDEN:
Nellie, as usual this meeting is not just about you.

(CONTINUED)

NELLIE:

Sorry sir.

MADDEN:

Sit down. Both of you.

Nellie and **John** sit down.

The meeting drags on.

MADDEN:

John, we want you on the Fisher murder with Thomas and James. Nellie- you'll be covering the flower show this afternoon. Gossip, inside details, anything you can get.

NELLIE:

This research I've been doing...

MADDEN:

You're all dismissed.

Everyone heads towards the door.

JOHN:

Sorry Nellie.

Nellie stays behind.

MADDEN:

What is it today Miss Bly?

NELLIE:

I've been doing some research and I just need a little start-up money to get Mexico. I want to write about the conditions out there, especially on the border...

MADDEN:

Mexico?

NELLIE:

I can fund 50% of the trip from my salary, but I would need you to front me the rest of the money.

MADDEN:

You want to go to Mexico?

NELLIE:

Yes sir. It's a big story. A lot of potential; people want to see

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NELLIE: (cont'd)
how others live and socially it
would be...

MADDEN:
We can't afford it. We'd have to
pay for you and your chaperone.
We'd have to find you
somewhere... suitable... to stay.

NELLIE:
I don't need a chaperone.

MADDEN:
You want to go to Mexico alone?

NELLIE:
I want to go to Mexico alone.

MADDEN:
You're a crazy woman Nellie.
I understand the pieces on
factory conditions and divorce
settlements because of your
personal history...but Mexico is
a dangerous place.

NELLIE:
I'm not mad. Just determined.
Isn't that why the paper hired
me? Sir.

MADDEN:
I'll consider it. But for now the
flower show is your assignment.

NELLIE:
Yes sir.

SCENE TWELVE

INT. Flower show (1884)

Nellie is at the flower show, nodding when people talk to her, but instead of taking notes she doodles.

CUT TO: INT. Pittsburgh Dispatch offices.

Nellie is back at the office, writing at her desk.

John walks in with a gaggle of men he has been working with including Thomas. They have all evidently been drinking.

THOMAS:
Bly! Nellie Bly! Come get drunk
with us.

NELLIE:
You already are drunk.

The men say "no" out of time with each other.

THOMAS:
Of course not.

NELLIE:
You couldn't even walk in a
straight line.

John begins walking towards **Nellie**. He wobbles as he goes.

THOMAS:
Yes I can.

Thomas clumsily approaches **Nellie** and then suddenly clings on to her.

Nellie tries to wriggle free.

Thomas moves his hands down **Nellie's** hips to her arse. **Nellie** fights hard to get free but can't.

JOHN:
That's enough Thomas. Let her go.

Thomas ignores **John** and moves in to kiss **Nellie**. **John** rushes in and physically yanks them apart.

JOHN:
Thomas, it's time for you to go
home.

THOMAS:
It was only a game.

The rest of the men laugh.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN:
Its time for you all to leave.

THOMAS:
You're not my boss.

JOHN:
No. But I am about a foot taller
than you.

John moves in to intimidate the group. They leave.

JOHN:
Sorry about that.

Silence.

JOHN:
Aren't you going to thank me?

Nellie fills her next words with malice rather than
gratitude.

NELLIE:
Thank you.

JOHN:
So what are you doing for the
rest of the evening?

NELLIE:
Typing this mess up and trying to
make it even vaguely interesting.
It's bloody flowers. Who cares?

Silence.

NELLIE:
And the stupidest thing is that
right behind the party was a
factory bellowing out smog and
everyone was complaining; no-one
seems to realise that factory is
one of the most inhumane work
places in the entire country.

JOHN:
No-one wants to read about that.

NELLIE:
So we should just help them
forget that any of this is
happening? We have to make them
care. That's why I want to go to
Mexico. People are more
interested in the exotic. If we
can get them to sympathize with

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NELLIE: (cont'd)
the conditions in Mexico, they
might start thinking about how
things are at home as well.

JOHN:
I don't think it would work like
that.

NELLIE:
Why not?

JOHN:
Surely people find it easier to
be detached from a place they
aren't even living in?

NELLIE:
The upper classes are already
detached from the poor, even when
they walk past them on the
street. The Mexico piece would
draw them in at least.

Nellie leaves her desk to go and use the office
typewriter.

NELLIE:
By the way, does your wife like
flowers? They've been throwing
them at me all day so that I give
them a good review.

JOHN:
I don't have a wife.

NELLIE:
Sorry I just assumed...

JOHN:
That a man approaching forty
should be married? My mother
regularly makes the same
assumption very clear to me.

Nellie doesn't know what to say.

NELLIE:
Well, I have work to do.

John quietly leaves.

SCENE THIRTEEN

INT. Pittsbrough Dispatch offices.

Nellie is asleep at her desk.

Madden approaches her desk, he picks up a pile of papers and then drops them down next to **Nellie**.

MADDEN:
Meeting. Ten minutes.

Nellie hurriedly adjusts her clothes, buttoning her dress right up to the top so that it looks extremely modest.

John enters, fresh from a full nights sleep.

JOHN:
Morning Bly.

NELLIE:
He caught me asleep at the desk.

JOHN:
Shit.

NELLIE:
He didn't seem to mind. I think he found it amusing. He's already got me going to a stupid dinner party tonight, I can't see him giving me a worse punishment than that.

JOHN:
I like dinner parties.

NELLIE:
Come with me if you want.

JOHN:
I will.

NELLIE:
I was joking.

They both walk through into the meeting room.

MADDEN:
Speaking of expanding horizons, it has come to my attention that we need to start looking at the plight of the working classes, not just in this country, but also in Mexico.

Nellie grins.

(CONTINUED)

MADDEN:

We do, after all, share a border with them. The board have discussed it and they think a social piece set in an exotic context- like Mexico- could draw more attention to the cause than yet another piece about the factory district. We have chosen a very special reporter for this job; someone who's pitch was so convincing it appealed to all the accursed ones up there on the board.

Nellie is blushing.

MADDEN:

John Melton.

John goes and shakes **Madden's** hand. **Nellie** shoves past people in a rush to get out of the room. **Nellie** sits at her desk and stares into space.

There is clapping from inside the room, and then everyone files out.

John approaches **Nellie**.

JOHN:

Nellie...

NELLIE:

Curse you John. Curse you.

JOHN:

I know you worked hard on this, but they were never going to let you go. It wouldn't be safe. If not you wouldn't you rather someone worked this piece?

Silence. **Nellie** looks like she wants to punch **John**.

JOHN:

I'll make it up to you. Let me take you to the dinner party tonight.

NELLIE:

Fuck you John.

SCENE FOURTEEN

On Screen- "Apollo, 1884"

INT. Nellie's mother's house.

The house is the same structure as seen earlier, but it is now been done up using some of Nellie's salary. It has wallpaper, sturdy floors and even gas lamps. It is kept immaculately keen.

Nellie is sat drinking tea with her mother (**Mary Jane**). We occasionally glimpse Nellie's siblings moving through the house.

Nellie and **Mary Jane** are sat in complete, and very awkward silence. **Mary Jane** doesn't know how to respond to **Nellie's** alien role and shift in confidence.

NELLIE:

I came here to ask you something
mother...

MARY JANE:

Why do you never publish articles
under your real name? Is it
because you're a woman? Are you
ashamed of us?

NELLIE:

A lot of people at the Dispatch
office use pseudonyms. The Quiet
Observer for one...

MARY JANE:

A lot of the *men* in the office.

NELLIE:

Yes, they're all men.

MARY JANE:

I'm uncomfortable with that Pink.

NELLIE:

Well, I might not be working
there for much longer.

MARY JANE:

Have you met a man?

NELLIE:

No.

MOTHER:

Then what?

(CONTINUED)

NELLIE:

Have you ever thought of going to
Mexico?

MOTHER:

No.

SCENE FIFTEEN

The title: NELLIE IN MEXICO comes on the screen in inverted colour, circa 1880s newstype.

INT. Pittbrugh train station.

Nellie and **Mary Jane** are stood at the train station. They are barely communicating as they are both terified.

The train comes into the station. Nellie picks up the suitcases and moves to get on the train. Mary Jane puts her hand on Nellie's shoulder to hold her back.

Mary Jane: Elizabeth, are you sure?

Nellie nods.

Nellie boards the train, Mary Jane follows.

Nellie and **Mary Jane** sit down and both gaze out of the window.

SCENE SIXTEEN

EXT. Open air train station, it is shabby and barely a train station at all.

On screen: "The Mexican Border".

The train arrives and **Nellie** and **Mary Jane** dismount. They are stared at from all directions as they move through the platform.

CUT TO: **Nellie** and **Mary Jane** walk across the border into Mexico.

CUT TO: **Nellie** and **Mary Jane** on the streets of Mexico, following instructions written on a piece of paper. Eventually they find their boarding house and **Nellie** knocks on the door.

A **Man** answers the door.

MAN:

Hola.

NELLIE:

We're looking for Leya Marelle.

MAN:

Leya!

Leya comes to the door and speaks in broken English.

LEYA:

Come in.

They go inside.

NELLIE:

Where are our rooms?

LEYA:

One room.

Leya takes **Nellie** and **Mary Jane** downstairs into the basement. **Leya** lights a lamp to reveal dank conditions. There are two metal beds barely elevated above the floor.

Nellie pretends to smile.

NELLIE:

Thank you.

Leya leaves.

MOTHER:

This is one of your worst ideas.

(CONTINUED)

NELLIE:

Maybe.

Nellie sits on the bed, she tries to bounce slightly but it is too hard.

NELLIE:

I'm here to do a job.

MARY JANE:

That you're not even sure they'll pay you for.

NELLIE:

They will. John isn't due to travel in for at least another month. All I have to do is get a couple of good reports in before then...

SCENE SEVENTEEN

MONTAGE- Scenes of Nellie in Mexico alongside lines from her article on the subject.

The lines are the following:

NELLIE:

"In Mexico, as in all other countries, the average tourist rushes to the cathedrals and places of historic note, wholly unmindful of the most intensely interesting feature the country contains: the people"

"Nine women out of ten in Mexico have babies. When at a very tender age, so young as five days, the babies are completely hidden, strung to the mother's back, in close proximity to the mammoth baskets of vegetables on her head."

"The Mexicans are certainly misrepresented, most wrongfully so."

"Late one night when the weather was so cold, a young fellow sat on the curb and kept his arm around a pretty young girl. He had taken off his ragged serape and folded it around her shoulders."

We see **Nellie** and **Mother** investigating the following scenes alongside the lines from **Nellie's** article:

- Hating Mexican food but pretending to like it.
- Discovering a street where every doorway leads to a coffin maker
- Going to ex-pat newspaper editors and interviewing them
- Visiting the floating gardens.
- Looking at horrific factory conditions.

SCENE EIGHTEEN

Nellie is sat in a resturant with **Mary Jane**.

MARY JANE:
I don't think he's going to come.

NELLIE:
He will.

MARY JANE:
We don't have enough money to eat here Nellie.

Joaquin Miller enters.

Nellie stands. **Joaquin** and **Nellie** shake hands.

NELLIE:
This is my mother.

JOAQUIN:
Oh, I should have brought mine.

MARY JANE:
I'm her chaperone.

JOAQUIN:
I understand. Should we order?

NELLIE:
I was hoping we could go elsewhere so that I could ask you a few questions.

JOAQUIN:
I like it in here.

MARY JANE:
We don't have much of our budget left.

NELLIE:
Mother!

JOAQUIN:
Don't worry, I'll pay.

NELLIE:
We couldn't ask you to...

Joaquin waves the waiter over and orders everyone a drink and some food.

JOAQUIN:
What is it you wanted to know? I can't answer anything about Marcus Carr.

(CONTINUED)

NELLIE:

That's exactly what I wanted to discuss.

JOAQUIN:

Journalists. I thought you might be different. Aren't women supposed to be humble.

NELLIE:

Not necessarily.

The waiter brings drinks.

JOAQUIN:

Actually, Miss Bly will be having her gin neat.

NELLIE:

I've grown to prefer tequila.

MARY JANE:

I will not be consuming alcohol.

JOAQUIN:

Keep them coming. Next round, three tequilas. If I get drunk enough I can claim I told you about Carr due to intoxication rather than incompetence.

Nellie laughs. **Mary Jane** looks disapproving.

NELLIE:

Can you start by telling me why Carr was singled out to be locked up by your government in the first place.

JOAQUIN:

Besides his anti-govermental tirades?

NELLIE:

He isn't the only one.

JOAQUIN:

We'll get the others in time.

NELLIE:

Democracy isn't even a consideration for you?

JOAQUIN:

It is a pretty idea; but not a reality.

(CONTINUED)

NELLIE:
What about America?

JOAQUIN:
If you call that a democracy?

There is silence. Then **Nellie** laughs.

The first round of tequila's arrive. **Mary Jane** pushes hers away, **Nellie** drinks it on top of her own, Joaquin cheers her on.

CUT TO: Later in the evening. **Nellie** and **Joaquin** are laughing together and both drunk whilst **Mary Jane** looks awkward.

MARY JANE:
We need to leave now. The boarding house will be locked up soon...

NELLIE:
Not for another hour.

MARY JANE:
We need to go.

JOAQUIN:
You go Mrs Bly, I will look after you daughter.

MARY JANE:
My name is Cochran. Bly is her nom de plume.

JOAQUIN:
Really?

NELLIE:
Yes.

JOAQUIN:
No wonder I couldn't get any real intelligence on you.

MARY JANE:
I'm leaving. Elizabeth, come with me.

JOAQUIN:
Elizabeth? That's so much more attractive than Nellie.

NELLIE:
I'm just going to stay a little longer mother. Will you let me in when I knock?

MARY JANE:
I don't think this is a good
idea.

JOAQUIN:
I'll look after her.

MARY JANE:
Fine.

Mary Jane leaves.

Joaquin and **Nellie** burst into laughter.

CUT TO: **Joaquin** and **Nellie** having sex in Joaquin's huge house (which is strikingly similar to her father's old house). It is a struggle for Nellie to get undressed from her complicated garments.

SCENE NINETEEN

INT. Pittsburgh Dispatch offices.

Nellie walks back in, **John** spits at her.

Nellie sits at her desk and stares into space as the men walk in and through the office into the morning meeting.

Nellie picks up a pen and writes.

Nellie leaves what she has written on her desk, under a paperweight, then she leaves the office without looking back.

We see the note:

"Dear all at the Dispatch. I am off for New York, look out for me. BLY"

SCENE TWENTY

INT. The New York World Offices.

ON SCREEN: The New York World Office, New York, 1887

Nellie is stood outside a door, pausing instead of opening it.

We see the name on the door: Joseph Pulitzer.

Pulitzer opens the door. **Nellie** jumps.

PULITZER:

Miss Bly?

Nellie nods.

PULITZER:

Where's your voice?

NELLIE:

Right here sir.

PULITZER:

Well come in then.

Nellie follows **Pulitzer** inside and they both sit.

NELLIE:

Have you read my work?

PULITZER:

Not many people read the
Pittsbrugh Dispatch in New York.

NELLIE:

Oh. Do you want to take a look? I
brought a portfolio.

PULITZER:

I'm offering you this job because
there is something I need you to
do.

NELLIE:

How have you heard of me?

PULITZER:

You're a female journalist. You
do have a reputation.

NELLIE:

Oh.

(CONTINUED)

PULITZER:

What?

NELLIE:

I was hoping this job would be a
move away from ladies lunches and
all that nonsense.

PULITZER:

It will be.

SCENE TWENTY-ONE

EXT. Run down street in New York.

Nellie is dawdling as she walks down the street. She is dressed in one of her old dresses (one we saw her wear earlier whilst working in the factory). The way she is dawdling makes it immediately obvious to the viewer that **Nellie** is pretending to be someone very different from her usual purposeful self.

We hear a voice over as **Nellie** walks on screen (it is taken from Nellie's writing on her assignment from The New York World)

NELLIE V/O:

"On the 22nd September 1887 I was asked by The New York World if I could have myself committed to one of the Asylums for the Insane in New York, with a view to writing a plain and unvarnished narrative of the treatment of the patients therein and the methods of management. Did I think I had the courage to go through such an ordeal? Could I assume the characteristics of insanity to such a degree that I could pass the doctors, live for a week amongst the insane without the authorities there finding out I was only a 'chiel amang 'em takin' notes?'

Nellie arrives at a boarding house on the street (SIGN: RIDGEWAY BOARDING HOUSE FOR WOMEN) and rings the doorbell.

NELLIE V/O:

I said I believed I could. So I set about getting committed. I worked out that only had to convince a small group of strangers to get there. Yet I couldn't get the thought out of my mind- surely someone would figure me out.

The a woman opens the door.

NELLIE:

Is the matron in?

WOMAN:

Yes, but she's busy. Go around the back.

(CONTINUED)

Nellie walks around the back of the building and rings the doorbell. **Matron** opens the door. She does not look pleased to be disturbed.

MATRON:

What?

NELLIE:

Are you the Matron?

MATRON:

She's sick, I'm standing in.

NELLIE:

I want to stay here for a couple of nights.

Matron opens the door slightly wider.

MATRON:

I have no single rooms, we're overcrowded. You'll have to share with another girl but the cost will be the same.

NELLIE:

How much?

MATRON:

Thirty cents a night.

NELLIE:

I would be glad of that.

MATRON:

You should be.

Matron opens the door wide enough for **Nellie** to get in; **Nellie** enters.

Nellie hands over the money and **Matron** passes her a key.

MATRON:

Third floor, room eleven. Dinner is in the basement. If you want to catch some food tonight you'd better go down right now.

INT. Basement.

Nellie enters the basement and takes a look around at the other women. The women are sat around in poorly maintained clothes, mostly grey and heavily patched. The women are talking as they slowly eat the disgusting food in front of them.

Nellie approaches the counter.

(CONTINUED)

COOK:
Boiled mutton, boiled beef,
beans, potatoes, coffee or tea?

NELLIE:
Beef, potatoes, coffee and bread.

COOK:
No bread.

Cook leaves to the kitchen.

Nellie looks around the room again. The women are staring at her, sizing her up.

NELLIE:
Hello. I'm Elizabeth.

A couple of the women nod at her; but the awkward atmosphere quickly returns. One of the women is knitting lace, another keeps falling asleep and waking herself up with her own snores.

The **Cook** finally comes back and almost throws a tray of food at **Nellie**.

NELLIE:
Thank you.

Nellie sits down in a corner by herself. She slowly tries to eat the food.

A woman approaches **Nellie**- it is **Ann**.

ANN:
We all have our troubles you
know.

Nellie nods.

ANN:
I can see the sadness in your
eyes, but you'll get over it in
time.

NELLIE: (UNCONVINCINGLY)
It's all so sad.

ANNE:
You need to get a job. We all
work here. Have you ever thought
of being a nursemaid?

NELLIE:
I've never worked.

ANNE:

I know a woman who needs a nursemaid.

NELLIE:

All these women...

Nellie leans in to whisper to **Ann** her acting is at first appalling, but she manages convincing paranoia as the conversation and then the night goes on.

NELLIE:

...they look crazy to me. There are so many crazy people about, some of them murderers. I'm scared.

ANN:

We don't look all that nice but at least we're all honest, working women.

Matron comes in.

MATRON:

Bedtime.

Everyone leaves, except **Nellie**.

MATRON:

Everyone! That means you new girl. Room eleven, I told you before.

NELLIE:

I'm scared. I think those other women might be crazy.

MATRON:

Well, they're not. If you want to stay the night, then go to your room right now.

NELLIE:

Can I not sleep on the stairs?

MATRON:

I think that maybe you're the crazy one.

NELLIE:

I am not mad.

MATRON:

Then go to bed.

(CONTINUED)

NELLIE:
I don't want to go to bed.

MATRON:
You will or I'll kick you out.

Another woman, **Mrs Caine** comes back through to the basement.

MRS CAINE:
I was on my way to the basement
and I heard voices...

MATRON:
You should be in bed Mrs Caine.

Mrs Caine goes over to **Nellie** and helps her up.

MRS CAINE:
Whats your name dear?

NELLIE:
Liz.

MRS CAINE:
Come on Liz, I'll take you
upstairs.

INT. Boarding house stairs and corridor.

Mrs Caine leads **Nellie** upstairs and sets her down on her bed.

MATRON:
Lights out.

The lamps outside are extinguished. There is pitch black darkness until **Mrs Caine** lights a candle.

Mrs Caine helps **Nellie** out of her clothes.

NELLIE:
I don't have any pyjamas.

Mrs Caine goes to her wardrobe and gets out one of her nighties.

Nellie puts the nightie on.

MRS CAINE:
I'm sorry its not pink.

NELLIE:
I'm scared of going to sleep. The
other women in this house...they
look dangerous...I don't think
we're safe. I don't think we're
safe! We're not...

(CONTINUED)

Mrs Caine puts her hand on **Nellie's** head.

MRS CAINE:
Feels better? My mum used to do this when we were children. She used to say it helps to contain your brain.

NELLIE:
It is nice.

MRS CAINE:
Are you ready to go to bed yet?

NELLIE:
Ok.

Nellie lies down.

Mrs Caine lies down next to **Nellie**.

MRS CAINE:
Now just close your eyes.

Nellie closes her eyes.

CUT TO: **Nellie** opens her eyes. It is dawn. **Mrs Caine** is asleep on the bed next to her.

Nellie calmly gets up and walks over to the window, the light of dawn is shining through. **Nellie** stares out of the window and reaches out to place her hand on the glass.

Nellie steps back and begins to prepare herself to act "crazy".

Nellie takes in a deep breath and then starts screaming.

The screaming gets louder and louder. **Mrs Caine** wakes up.

MRS CAINE:
Liz!

Nellie screams in **Mrs Caine's** face.

MRS CAINE:
Liz! Calm down! Stop it!

Nellie begins throwing things around and sobbing.

A gang of women shove open the door and then gather in the room.

MRS CAINE:
She won't stop.

A couple of the other women try to hold **Nellie** down, but she fights back.

(CONTINUED)

Matron enters.

MATRON:
I'm phoning the police.

Blackout.

SCENE TWENTY-TWO

Black Screen.

The title: 10 DAYS IN A MADHOUSE comes on the screen in inverted colour, circa 1880s newstype.

INT. A carriage on the way to Blackwells Insane Asylum.

Nellie is restrained in her seat. Next to her are two policemen and a doctor.

The words "Day 1" appear on the screen.

EXT. We see the carriage on a dirt path up the hill to the asylum. The shot should make it evident that the asylum is on a small island (off the coast of New York).

The carriage arrives at the gates.

Nellie is marched though the entrance of the asylum, led by two policemen.

INT. entrance to the asylum. The entrance is a long white corridor. The only furniture is a series of uncomfortable looking wooden benches.

The policemen are marching **Nellie** towards a large iron door fastened with a padlock at the end of the corridor.

Nellie is then led into a small room with three other women sat on uncomfortable benches. Some of **Nellie's** restraints are removed, but like all of the women in the room, her hands and feet are still bound.

The door is closed behind **Nellie**.

NELLIE:
Hello. I'm Liz.

None of the other three rep?ly.

They all sit in silence for a long while.

Eventually one of the women edges along the bench towards **Nellie**. She is called **Jenny**.

JENNY:
I'm Jenny.

NELLIE:
Liz, or Nellie. People call me both.

JENNY:
I know. You said before.

(CONTINUED)

NELLIE:
What is this room?

JENNY:
I don't know.

Silence.

JENNY:
Why are you here?

NELLIE:
Complex reasons. Why are you?

JENNY:
Over-work. I was in a sisters
home, but then the money ran out.

NELLIE:
But you know what this place is?

JENNY:
I'm not insane; just tired.

NELLIE:
Well they think I'm mad so...

JENNY:
Of course they do.

SCENE TWENTY-THREE

The words "DAY TWO" come up on the screen

INT. Small room in the asylum.

Jenny is asleep, but Nellie and the other two women are hyper-alert.

The door is unlocked and two nurses enter. The two nurses grab one of the other three women. The woman screams as they drag her out of the room.

Jenny jolts awake at the sound of the screaming.

The door is closed and bolted.

NELLIE:

Where are they taking her?

Jenny shrugs.

Jenny curls up the best she can, given her restraints, and goes back to sleep.

The other women are all terrified and act of edge.

HANNAH:

They'll have all of us by the end
of the day.

For the first time Nellie looks as if she is regretting the decision to take on this assignment.

CUT TO: Next woman being taken. This woman doesn't scream, she sobs instead.

Hannah hides under the bench.

CUT TO: The nurses come in again. They look around for Hannah, Nellie and Jenny both try not to give away where she is.

The nurses find Hannah anyway and drag her from under the bench. Hannah fights back, grabbing hold of the bench and then kicking out with her bound legs at the nurses.

One of the nurses slaps Hannah several times until she shuts up.

The door closes again.

JENNY:

There's no point to fighting
back.

(CONTINUED)

NELLIE:
What are they going to do to us?

JENNY:
It isn't as bad as it looks.

NELLIE:
Is that a lie?

JENNY:
Yes.

NELLIE:
I can't do this. I have to get
out of here.

Jenny shakes her head.

JENNY:
That isn't going to happen.

NELLIE:
You don't understand. I'm not
supposed to be here.

We hear the scratching of the door opening. Nellie and Jenny both look down, trying not to be chosen.

The nurses take hold of Nellie.

Nellie looks at Jenny.

JENNY:
It's ok.

Nellie doesn't fight back, instead she goes limp and is dragged out of the room.

INT. main ward.

Nellie is dragged into the main ward and sat down on another hard wooden bench.

The ward is a long white corridor with a number of the benches down the middle. Along the edges are the patient's cells (all locked during the day).

All of the windows on the ward are open, making it a freezing cold place. The nurses have plenty of warm layers in their clothes, but the patients do not.

Nellie's restraints are removed.

NELLIE:
It's cold. Can't I go to bed?

NURSE 1:
Stay there.

The nurses leave. Eventually nurse 1 returns with a moth eaten and stained shawl.

NURSE 1:
There.

NELLIE:
It's horrible.

NURSE 1:
People in need of charity
shouldn't complain.

Nurse 1 leaves.

Nellie looks around the ward. The women around her are frequently clearly mad. However if they make any noise they are slapped by one of the nurses.

CUT TO: One woman continues making noise even after being slapped and is ominously dragged away from the ward.

CUT TO: Nurse 2 comes for Nellie.

Nurse 2 leads Nellie into a side room to see a Doctor.

INT. Doctor's room.

The Doctor carries out his physical examination without even acknowledging Nellie.

After the examination the Doctor begins to ask Nellie questions.

DOCTOR:
I've seen that face before.

Nellie panics.

NELLIE:
Then you know me?

DOCTOR:
I think I do. Where do you come
from?

NELLIE:
From home.

DOCTOR:
Where is home?

(CONTINUED)

NELLIE:
I don't know... Cuba...

The Doctor points to Nurse 2.

DOCTOR:
Why don't you try telling Miss
Scolt about yourself.

NELLIE:
I won't talk to women. She isn't
a proper doctor.

DOCTOR:
Alright then, tell me. What do
you do in New York?

NELLIE:
Nothing.

DOCTOR:
Can you work?

NELLIE:
No.

DOCTOR:
You're a woman of the town?

NELLIE:
No!

Silence. Nellie tries to go back to her confused act.

NELLIE:
I don't know what that means.

Doctor nods.

DOCTOR:
You can go Miss Brown.

Nellie leaves. She overhears the Doctor speaking to Nurse
2.

DOCTOR:
She's a hopeless case.

Nellie grins because of her successful; deceit, then looks
dismayed as she walks back onto the freezing ward.

Someone has stolen Nellie's blanket. Nellie frantically
looks for it. Nurse 2 comes up behind her.

NURSE 2:
Sit down Miss Brown.

Nellie keeps looking.

(CONTINUED)

NELLIE:
My blanket!

NURSE 2:
Elizabeth Brown. Sit down right
now.

NELLIE:
Someone stole my blanket!

Nurse 2 slaps Nellie hard.

NURSE 2:
Silence! Sit.

Nellie sits.

SCENE TWENTY-FOUR

INT. The main ward, night.

The night nurses (Night 1 and Night 2).

NIGHT 1:

Right ladies! Line up. Time for
bed!

The patients all line up against the walls at each side of the corridor. Nellie nervously follows.

One by one the Night Nurses put each of the patients into the tiny cell where they will spend the night.

Nellie is put into her cell last.

INT. Nellie's Cell.

Nellie looks distraught as the cell door is slammed shut behind her.

CUT TO: INT. Main Ward. We see the Night Nurses working a mechanism that locks all of the doors and also links them together (in a fire all of the patients would be utterly trapped).

CUT TO: INT. Nellie's Cell. There is a bucket for her to go to the toilet and a thin mattress and blanket on the floor. There is a barred window and it is still early enough for some light to come through.

Nellie sits on the mattress and takes out some leaves of tissue paper from inside her waistband. She takes out a short pencil too.

We see Nellie write: "What have I done?"

CUT TO: Black.

SCENE TWENTY-FIVE

On screen are the words "Day Two".

INT. Nellie's cell.

Nellie is asleep on her bed.

Nurse 1 and Nurse 2 burst in and pull away her blanket.

Nurse 1 and Nurse 2 forcibly undress Nellie and shove her up against the wall. Using a pump and tube mechanism and a large bucket of cold water they spray water at Nellie.

Nellie gasps and splutters.

Nurse 1 and Nurse 2 roughly dry Nellie using the blanket she has been sleeping with.

Nurse 1 checks Nellie's bucket.

NURSE 1:

You need to shit tomorrow night
or we'll have to give you an
enema.

Nurse 1 and Nurse 2 dress Nellie in a dirty grey petticoat; then shove her out into the corridor.

CUT TO: INT. Main Ward.

Nellie watches as the same thing happens to each patient up and down the corridor.

NURSE 1:

Breakfast! Line up!

The patients line up against the wall as they did the night before.

The patients are led in groups of ten into the mess hall.

Finally it is Nellie's turn and we watch her group walk into the mess hall.

CUT TO: INT. Mess Hall.

We see Nellie being served a grey substance and a piece of bread which is burnt black.

Nellie some of the bread and nearly chokes on it.

Jenny comes and sits next to Nellie.

JENNY:

You'll get used to it.

(CONTINUED)

NELLIE:
Jenny?

JENNY:
Me.

NELLIE:
Where did the others go?

JENNY:
Other wards.

NELLIE:
I wonder if they're any warmer.

Jenny shakes her head.

JENNY:
We've got a good lot here.

NELLIE:
It's so nice to see a sane face.

JENNY:
Keep quiet about that. And I got
moved here last night.

NELLIE:
I didn't hear...

JENNY:
I don't scream like some people.
I used to...but I've learnt not
to.

NELLIE:
How long have you been here?

JENNY:
Eight years. They keep moving me
around wards.

NELLIE:
I thought you were here for
overwork.

JENNY:
I was... at the start.

NELLIE:
I'm so sorry.

JENNY:
You're stuck here too.

Nellie looks away.

JENNY:

Don't worry, you'll get used to that as well.

Silence.

JENNY:

Are you going to finish that?

NELLIE:

No.

Jenny checks for nurses then grabs Nellie's bread. Jenny gulps it down, almost whole.

NELLIE:

Slow down!

Jenny talks through her food.

JENNY:

You really will get used to all this.

Jenny ducks and Nellie tries to figure out why. Nellie finds out as Nurse 2 slaps her across the back of her head.

NURSE 2:

Hurry up!

Jenny gets back up.

JENNY:

You're on your own with the soup.

Jenny picks up her own bowl of soup and drinks it down. Jenny grimaces as it goes down as if it was strong alcohol.

Nellie picks up her spoon and tries to eat the soup quickly enough again, but Nurse 2 is coming back around and Nellie quickly copies Jenny. After gulping the soup down Nellie has a coughing fit.

Jenny and Nellie flee the mess hall before Nurse 2 gets to them.

CUT TO: The main ward corridor.

Nellie sits down on one of the hard benches. Jenny sits next to her.

NELLIE:

Can I have a blanket?

(CONTINUED)

NURSE 1:
I gave you one yesterday.

NELLIE:
Someone took it. Can I at least
get the one from my room.

NURSE 1:
No bedcovers on the ward.

Nurse 1 shrugs and continues on her round.

Nellie folds her arms in a desperate attempt to keep warm.

NELLIE:
Let me guess, I'll get used to
it.

Jenny grins.

Jenny and Nellie both try to hide that they're laughing,
but Nurse 1 spots them anyway.

NURSE 1:
Move.

NELLIE:
What?

NURSE 1:
Jenny, move.

Jenny moves to a bench right across the room from Nellie.

NURSE 1:
Don't talk to her.

SCENE TWENTY-SIX

On screen: Day 3

INT. main ward corridor.

Nellie is sat in the same place on the bench.

CUT TO: On screen: Day 4

INT. main ward corridor.

Nellie is sat in the same place again.

Nellie steals someone else's blanket when they go through to see the doctor.

CUT TO: On screen: Day 5

INT. main ward corridor.

Nellie is sat in the same place again.

A fight breaks out on the ward and everyone (including Nellie) goes to watch.

We see that one of the women fighting is Jenny.

An alarm is rung.

Nellie watches as the Nurses break up the fight. Further nurses appear, seemingly from nowhere and help.

Jenny and the other woman are both dragged away.

CUT TO: On Screen: Day 6

INT. Main ward corridor.

Nellie is sat in the same place again with her blanket around her.

We see that under the blanket Nellie is writing with her (now blunt) pencil, in tiny letters on the thin paper she has been concealing.

Nellie hides the paper and pencil up her sleeve as Nurse 2 approaches.

NURSE 2:

Elizabeth Brown, the doctor wants
to see you.

Nurse 2 walks Nellie to the doctor's room. It is a different doctor from last time- Dr Kinier.

Dr Kinier doesn't look at Nellie as he speaks to her; he his more preoccupied with flirting with the nurse.

(CONTINUED)

DR KINIER:
What is your name?

NELLIE:
Nellie Brown. Elizabeth Brown.

DR KINIER:
Where do you come from Miss
Brown?

NELLIE:
Cuba.

DR KINIER:
Cuba! You must be the woman I
read about in the paper. Did you
see it Nurse Jones? You have to
see it.

Dr Kinier rushes away from the office. Nellie panics that she has been discovered.

Dr Kinier returns with a newspaper. Nellie tries to get a look at what it says.

Dr Kinier shows the paper to Nurse 2 who reads it and then giggles.

Nellie gets a look at the newspaper, there is a sketch that looks like her embedded in the writing.

NELLIE:
Can I see it?

Nellie is ignored.

Nellie leans in to take a look again.

We see the words as she does: "Insane girl causes havoc at boarding house, is later dragged to Blackwells insane island..."

NURSE 2:
It's definitely her.

Dr Kinier and Nurse 2 giggle together again.

Nellie coughs.

DR KINIER:
Nurse Jones, I think we'd better
get Nellie back to the ward.

Nurse 2 takes a hold of Nellie and steers her out of the room.

(CONTINUED)

DR KINIER:

Oh and I think she's ready to go
on the walk. Keep an eye on her
and have restraints ready of
course.

SCENE TWENTY-SEVEN

INT. Main ward corridor.

Nellie is sat on her usual spot. We see her writing under the blanket:

"Last night I could not sleep, so I lay in bed picturing to myself the horrors if a fire broke out in the asylum. Every door is locked separately and the windows are so heavily barred that escape would be impossible. In this building alone there are some 300 women..."

Nurse 1 and Nurse 2 parade through the corridor. They are picking out women seemingly at random. The chosen women are pulled up from their seats, and those that struggle are slapped.

Nellie is picked. Nellie gets up willingly, then remembers to act crazy and starts muttering to herself.

The standing women are each given a pair of grubby shoes.

NURSE 1:

Put them on.

Nellie tries to squeeze her feet into the shoes, but they don't fit.

NELLIE:

They don't fit.

WOMAN STOOD NEXT TO NELLIE:

Just stamp down the backs, they won't give you another pair.

Nellie shoves her feet in again, stamping down the backs of the shoes. They still barely fit.

Some orderlies appear and help the nurses to herd the chosen women into a line.

Jenny ends up lined up close to Nellie.

Nellie spots Jenny and speaks to her.

NELLIE:

Where are we going?

JENNY:

On a walk. Just do as they say.

NELLIE:

Alright.

(CONTINUED)

JENNY:
Unless they get distracted.
Personally I tend to leg it if
they get distracted.

NELLIE:
But we're on an island.

JENNY:
I can swim.

Nellie laughs.

JENNY:
I'm not joking.

NELLIE:
I know.

JENNY:
Nice to know you care.

NELLIE:
I do.

Silence.

NELLIE:
I really do hope it works out for
you. When I get out I'll...

JENNY:
Neither of us will ever get out.

Before Nellie can reply an orderly orders the women to
move.

ORDERLY:
Walk!

EXT. They walk out of the ward, down some outside stairs
into the land surrounding the asylum buildings.

SCENE TWENTY-EIGHT

EXT. Hospital Gardens.

We see an aerial view of the several lines of women going on walks through the garden, they worm their way across the screen.

We return to Nellie's group. The line is led by Nurse 1 and Nurse 2, whilst orderlies keep the rest of the line single file by herding the women.

Nellie's line passes a line of babbling women who are shackled together.

NELLIE:

Who are they?

JENNY:

The most violent women on the island.

The shackled women are the first evidently completely "insane" women we have seen. They are visibly mad, talking to hallucinations and struggling to move.

Jenny points to the grimmest looking building on the island.

JENNY:

That's their ward.

The women in Nellie's line are allowed to sit on the grass and take a break. It is freezing outside, but it is also clear that the women are enjoying this small piece of freedom. Unlike on the ward, they are allowed to talk among themselves.

Nellie is sat next to Jenny. Jenny lies back and looks at the sky. Nellie copies.

Nellie spots a woman (Mary) leaning out of the barred windows of the most dangerous ward.

Nellie watches as the woman manages to squeeze through the bars and dangles herself out of the window.

Nellie nudges Jenny and points.

Jenny stares at Mary who is now climbing down the building.

NELLIE:

Should I tell someone?

(CONTINUED)

JENNY:
No. They'll kill her.

NELLIE:
Isn't she dangerous?

JENNY:
It's up to you. I suppose they'll
catch her anyway.

NELLIE:
How do you think she did it?

JENNY:
Don't stare at her. At least give
her a chance.

Mary reaches the ground and wanders towards Nellie's group.

Nellie edges slowly towards where Mary is headed.

When Mary is close enough, Nellie speaks to her.

NELLIE:
Take my blanket.

Mary doesn't speak or move, she just watches Nellie with wide eyes.

Nellie wraps the blanket around Mary and then takes a step back. There is a tense beat.

MARY:
Thank you.

NELLIE:
And wipe your face.

MARY:
I don't have anything to wipe it
on.

Nellie digs out the paper she has been writing on. She hesitates, but then decides Mary needs it otherwise she will be spotted because of the muck on her face. Nellie hands Mary one of the sheets of paper.

MARY:
Why?

NELLIE:
My name is Liz.

MARY:
Mary.

(CONTINUED)

NELLIE:

My mum is a Mary-Jane.

Mary wipes her face.

Nellie points out a spot that Mary has missed.

Mary's face falls.

MARY:

Fuck.

Nurse 2 is stood behind Nellie.

NURSE 2:

Brown move away from her.

Nellie doesn't move, the place has finally broken her. She has given up on acting mad.

NURSE 2:

Now Brown. Step away.

NELLIE:

No.

NURSE 2:

What?

Four orderlies rush over.

NELLIE:

No.

NURSE 2:

Take them both to seclusion.

Mary and Nellie are dragged away from each other to their respective wards.

Jenny and Nellie exchange a glance, then Jenny looks away at the ground.

Mary begins to fight back violently.

Nellie finds herself copying Mary.

CUT TO: INT. Ward Corridor.

Nellie is dragged along the floor for the full length of the corridor and taken to the seclusion room.

INT. The Seclusion Room.

Nellie is held down by the orderlies whilst Nurse 1 forcibly feeds her some kind of early liquid tranquiliser.

(CONTINUED)

Nellie snorts and fights as some of the liquid goes up her nose.

Nellie continues to fight when Nurse 1 is done.

Eventually the drug kicks in and Nellie falls limp.

SCENE TWENTY-NINE

INT. Seclusion Room.

On Screen: Day 7

Nellie wakes up the almost completely dark room. We see the whites of her bloodshot eyes clearly against the dark.

Nellie paces up and down the room.

CUT TO: INT. Seclusion Room.

On Screen: Day 8

Nellie starts screaming in the dark room until she runs out of breath. Sometimes she is demanding to be let out, sometime it I blank screaming.

CUT TO: INT. Seclusion Room.

On Screen: Day 9

Nellie is screaming that she's a journalist.

Nurse 1 and Nurse 2 enter.

NELLIE:

You have to understand, I'm
undercover. I'm a journalist.

The orderlies drag in a bath. Nellie sees that the bath is full of ice and backs away into the corner of the room.

NELLIE:

No. I'm a journalist. I'm only
staying 10 days. I'm writing an
article. I have my notes here...

Nurse 1 and Nurse 2 lift Nellie into the bath.

Nellie screams and struggles but the nurses hold her under.

CUT TO: INT. Seclusion Room.

On Screen: Day 10

Nellie is sat in the corner of the room crying.

CUT TO: INT. Seclusion Room.

On Screen: Day 11

Nellie is silent and curled up in the corner.

SCENE THIRTY

On Screen: Day 11

INT. The New York World Office.

We see Joseph Pulitzer's named door.

The door opens and Joseph leans out to talk to his secretary.

JOSEPH:

Jane, have you heard from Miss
Bly yet?

SECRETARY:

No.

JOSEPH:

She was supposed to phone us
yesterday when she got out.

SECRETARY:

I'll try calling her.

JOSEPH:

That would be great.

SCENE THIRTY-ONE

INT. Seclusion Room.

Nurse 1 bangs on Nellie's door.

Nellie jolts awake.

NURSE 1:
Get up. The doctor is coming to
see you.

Nellie is terrified.

She hears Nurse 1 talking outside.

NURSE 1:
They're finally going to transfer
her to another ward...

CUT TO: INT. Main Office of Blackwells Asylum.

Joseph Pulitzer demands to see Nellie.

GUARD:
Who are you here to visit?

JOSEPH:
No-one. I'm here to get Nellie
Bly out. She's not a patient
she's a journalist. She works for
me. I'm Joseph Pulitzer, I run
the New York World newspaper.

CUT TO: INT. Seclusion Room.

Nellie can hear footsteps coming up the corridor.

Nellie thinks it is the doctor. Nellie is shaking.

The door of the seclusion room opens.

JOSEPH:
I got you a new dress.

Joseph is stood at the door holding up a pink dress.

Nellie fails to react for a few seconds; then she smiles.

JOSEPH:
I should have brought a brush
too.

NELLIE:
I can run my fingers through it.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

INT. Main ward corridor.

Nellie emerges from the seclusion room wearing the pink dress Joseph brought her, and her hair up in a bun.

Nellie walks past the two nurses and Jenny. They all look stunned.

Nellie leans over to talk to Jenny.

NELLIE:

I'm going to get you out of here.

CUT TO: INT. Carriage back to the sea.

Joseph and Nellie sit opposite each other.

JOSEPH:

How was that?

NELLIE:

Horrible.

JOSEPH:

Excellent. I can't wait to read it.

SCENE THIRTY-TWO

INT. Nellie's office at The World.

Nellie is sat at her desk, typing on her very own typewriter.

On the wall is the front cover of The World's tenth anniversary issue. Prominent on it is a photo of Nellie and the title of her article: "Behind Asylum Bars".

There is a knock on the door. Joseph enters.

JOSEPH:
They're ready.

CUT TO: INT. 1880s style mass printing press. The press is spitting out copies of Nellie's book: "10 Days in a Madhouse".

JOSEPH:
Already sold out.

Silence.

JOSEPH:
You don't look happy.

NELLIE:
I just can't stop thinking about them. When we went back...

CUT TO: (Flashback) INT. Main Ward.

Nellie, Joseph and a team of inspectors have returned to inspect the asylum. Only now it has changed. All of the patients are well dressed and warm. The nurses are being kind.

Jenny is nowhere to be seen.

NELLIE:
Where is Jenny?

NURSE 2:
Who?

NELLIE:
She was here when I was.

NURSE 2:
She must have been discharged.

CUT TO: INT. Nellie's office.

(CONTINUED)

NELLIE:

I know she was lying.

JOSEPH:

She probably was. But we've done our best. All that money we raised...

NELLIE:

We don't know that they'll even spend it on the patients.

JOSEPH:

But maybe they will.

CUT TO: Black.

CUT TO: INT. Dangerous Ward.

A woman is bound to the floor by chains. We slowly realise that the woman is Jenny.

Jenny screams and yanks on her chains.

CUT TO: Black.

End.