

MOTHER SEACOLE

screenplay by

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based on the book

by

Mary Seacole

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FADE IN:

EXT. LONDON - CHARING CROSS ROAD - SIDEWALK - DAY

It is a cloudy overcast day, the rain has stopped and the traffic has returned to the street. On the sidewalk is MRS. MARY JANE SEACOLE, a 49 year old Creole/Scottish blend lady in bright red and yellow attire, straw bonnet with red ribbons, attempting to hail a Hansom cab. Mrs. Seacole is a stout figure of light tan complexion, not tall, with bright eyes and strong features.

SUPER: "LONDON, ENGLAND, AUGUST 1854"

Mrs. Seacole finally secures a cab and climbs into the front, closing the folding wooden door.

INT: LONDON CAB

In the cab, Mrs. Seacole gives directions to the middle-aged, grey-haired, hardy, heavy-set, bearded, DRIVER, through a trap door near the rear of the roof.

SEACOLE

Take me to the War Department. Do you know where it is?

DRIVER

Horse Guards Avenue, is it?

SEACOLE

Yes, that's it.

CITY TRAVEL - MONTAGE

The cab moves south down Charing Cross Road.

Numerous Hansom cabs pass back and forth dodging wheeled carts.

A horse-drawn omnibus moves slowly down the opposite side of the street.

WAR OFFICE BUILDING

DRIVER

Here, miss, this is it.

SEACOLE

How much now?

DRIVER

A shilling, please.

She pays the driver through the hatch in the back, he releases the cab door, and Mrs. Seacole exits.

Mrs. Seacole sees a brass plaque on the side of the building reading "WAR DEPARTMENT" and moves toward the doors.

INT. WAR DEPARTMENT LOBBY.

There is a large reception desk at the end of a short hall with a tall, well-dressed YOUNG MAN #1, dark suit, striped tie, standing to the side. Several other men are moving back and forth up and down the hall and between the various doors. Mrs. Seacole proceeds to the desk.

SEACOLE

Pardon me.

YOUNG MAN #1

Yes.

SEACOLE

I'm here for an interview with the Secretary-at-War.

YOUNG MAN #1

What is this about? He's very busy.

SEACOLE

About the nurses.

YOUNG MAN #1

Nurses? What nurses?

SEACOLE

(flustered)

The post of hospital nurse. The army has issued a call for nurses for the Crimea.

YOUNG MAN #1

That is not something we are doing here.

SEACOLE

Your Secretary Sidney Herbert asked Miss Florence Nightingale to gather nurses to nurse soldiers in the war.

YOUNG MAN #1

Yes, but --

SEACOLE

I am experienced and available.

YOUNG MAN #1

Might I suggest that you contact the Quartermaster-General's Department? We have no information here.

(writing)

Here, this is their address.

SEACOLE

Surely --

YOUNG MAN #1

(abrupt)

They may be able to help you.

SEACOLE

Thank you. Yes, thank you.

Mrs. Seacole takes the note and looks at the address as she heads for the front door.

EXT. HORSE GUARDS AVENUE

Mrs. Seacole hails and enters another Hansom Cab.

QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT BUILDING

At the department building, Mrs. Seacole exits the Hansom cab and moves toward the front doors.

INT. QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT - LOBBY.

A short, thin, ELDERLY MAN #1, rather gaunt, with grey hair is seated at the back of the short lobby.

SEACOLE

Is this the Office of the
Quartermaster?

ELDERLY MAN #1

It is. May I help you, madam?

SEACOLE

May I see Mr. James Freeth?

ELDERLY MAN #1

And your business, please?

SEACOLE

The War Department addressed me to
your Mr. Freeth regarding the post
of army nurse.

ELDERLY MAN #1

Are you sure you have the correct
department?

SEACOLE

See, look at the address.

Mrs. Seacole shows the man the paper for him to read.

ELDERLY MAN #1

Perhaps they misunderstood your --

SEACOLE

I have several letters of reference from British officers in Kingston, Jamaica, that will attest to my medical skills.

ELDERLY MAN #1

That is most admirable but we here supply equipment, provisions and supplies to the troops, not medical personnel.

SEACOLE

But, they sent me here.

ELDERLY MAN #1

Yes, well they misunderstood, you see. We supply a lot of things but not nurses.

SEACOLE

Why then has Miss Nightingale issued a call to recruit and train women to serve as army nurses?

ELDERLY MAN #1

That certainly is true that she has done just that but --

SEACOLE

Then, Where do they recruit?

ELDERLY MAN #1

That is the question. Will you excuse me a moment?

The Elderly Man #1 leaves the desk, opens the adjacent door, and disappears inside. Mrs. Seacole busies herself looking at the pictures on the wall. In a moment the man returns.

ELDERLY MAN #1

I think I have your answer. Here is the address of the Medical Department. I am told that they are the ones in charge of this affair.

The Elderly Man #1 hands the paper to Mrs. Seacole and she glances at the document.

SEACOLE

The Crimean War will be over before I have completed an interview.

ELDERLY MAN #1

It certainly seems that you have been passed around.

SEACOLE

Thank you, you are a kind man.

ELDERLY MAN #1

Good luck in your quest.

Mrs. Seacole pockets the paper and heads for the front door.

SIDEWALK

Mrs. Seacole again attempts to hail a Hansom Cab.

EXT. MEDICAL DEPARTMENT - SIDEWALK

The cab pulls up in front of the building and Mrs. Seacole exits after paying the driver. She checks the number of the address on the paper.

Mrs. Seacole sees the front of the building with the sign indicating the "MEDICAL DEPARTMENT."

Mrs. Seacole heads for the building and opens the front door.

INT. MEDICAL BUILDING - LOBBY

There are a number of women sitting in chairs in the lobby; women come and go through open doors. YOUNG LADY #1, mid-twenties, in starched white blouse and dark blue skirt, sits at the lobby desk in the back. Mrs. Seacole walks over and addresses her.

SEACOLE

Excuse me.

YOUNG LADY #1

Yes.

SEACOLE

Is this the Medical Department?

YOUNG LADY #1

Yes, may I help you?

SEACOLE

I am here to be interviewed and apply for the position of army nurse.

YOUNG LADY #1

Oh! Well! We do have others waiting. Here, go over this information sheet while you wait. Your name, please?

SEACOLE

Seacole. Mrs. Jane Seacole.

YOUNG LADY #1

Spell it, please.

SEACOLE
 (spelling it out)
 It is, S E A C O L E.

YOUNG LADY #1
 Thank you. Be seated please, over
 there.

The Young Lady #1 points to the row of chairs against the hall where a number of women are sitting. Mrs. Seacole moves to the last chair and takes a seat.

SAME - 90 MINUTES LATER

Mrs. Seacole's head snaps back after she almost dozes off. She looks at the chairs which are now empty; she has not been called to the front. Mrs. Seacole looks at her watch and decides to confront the Young Lady #1.

SEACOLE
 Miss, it has been 90 minutes by my
 watch, all these ladies are gone.

YOUNG LADY #1
 Just a minute.

She goes into one of the closed doors and in a minute comes back to the desk.

YOUNG LADY #1
 It appears that there will be no
 more interviews today, sorry.

SEACOLE
 When did you plan to tell me? Never
 mind.

Mrs. Seacole turns in a huff and starts toward the front door as the Young Lady #1 calls out.

YOUNG LADY #1
 Mrs. Herbert, the wife of the
 secretary of war is interviewing at
 his private residence.

SEACOLE
 Then I shall go to that address,
 Good day.

YOUNG LADY #1
 Goodbye.

The young woman turns back to the desk as Mrs. Seacole moves for the front door.

INT. SECRETARY OF WAR PRIVATE ADDRESS - GREAT HALL - LATER

Mrs. Seacole enters the front door and moves to OLDER LADY #1, a tall middle-aged woman in a grey suit, who is standing in the middle of the hall.

SEACOLE

Is this Mrs. Herbert's private address?

OLDER LADY #1

Yes.

SEACOLE

I am made aware that Elizabeth Herbert, the secretary's wife, is interviewing for the nurse vacancies.

OLDER LADY #1

Yes, but you need an appointment to be --

SEACOLE

(adamant)

The newspaper did not indicate an appointment was needed and I have traveled back and forth between departments all day. I demand to see Mrs. Herbert and be interviewed.

OLDER LADY #1

One moment, please.

The Older Lady #1 goes into one of the side rooms and a minute later MIRANDA ECKHART, a short, plump, well-dressed, middle-aged woman walks down to Mrs. Seacole.

MIRANDA ECKHART

I am Miranda Eckhart. I am not sure Mrs. Herbert can see you --

SEACOLE

I am not leaving until she does.

MIRANDA ECKHART

Very well. Have a seat, over there, if you please. I will check.

Mrs. Seacole moves to the upholstered chair and sits as Miranda Eckhart disappears through another door. Men and women come and go; some stop to look curiously at Mrs. Seacole. After a while Miranda Eckhart returns and goes to Mrs. Seacole.

MIRANDA ECKHART

As I suspected, the full complement of nurses has been secured. I am sorry that your offer could not be entertained. Mrs. Herbert is unable to see you.

SEACOLE

(strongly)

May I speak with one of Miss Nightingale's companions as Mrs. Herbert is unavailable, you say?

MIRANDA ECKHART

(frustrated; hesitant)

Come this way, please.

INT. SIDE OFFICE

Miranda Eckhart and Mrs. Seacole enter the room and Mrs. Seacole is introduced to ABIGAIL BRIGHT, a young woman with short hair, a dark blue dress and walking shoes.

MIRANDA ECKHART

I am sorry but this lady insists on seeing Mrs. Herbert.

(introduces Mrs. Seacole)

Mrs. Bright, this is? I am sorry, I did not get your name.

SEACOLE

Mrs. Seacole.

ABIGAIL BRIGHT

Thank you Mrs. Eckhart, I will handle this. Please have a seat Mrs. Seacole. I am Abigail Bright and I work with Miss Nightingale.

Miranda Eckhart leaves as both women sit in chairs across from each other in front of the desk.

SEACOLE

You advertise for nurses for the front yet no one appears eager to talk with me.

ABIGAIL BRIGHT

Are you a professional nurse?

SEACOLE

Here, I have letters of recommendation from doctors in Jamaica and Panama.

Mrs. Seacole hands Abigail Bright the letters which Ms. Bright starts to read.

SEACOLE

You are dealing in the Crimea with cholera, diarrhea, dysentery, many other diseases in which I have experiences. I have treated wounds in knife and gun fights as well.

ABIGAIL BRIGHT

Where did you receive your training?

SEACOLE

My mother ran a boardinghouse in Kingston for invalid British army and navy officers. I learned nursing and herbal medicine from my mother in the yellow fever epidemics.

ABIGAIL BRIGHT

No professional training, though?

SEACOLE

I was trained by working with the sick, you see. In Panama I ran a boardinghouse and served as a nurse as needed. There was a cholera epidemic, you see. I was the only local nurse for miles.

ABIGAIL BRIGHT

These references are quite complimentary. However, I am afraid that at the present, well, we do not have any openings.

SEACOLE

But you advertised in the paper, just this day.

ABIGAIL BRIGHT

Perhaps an oversight on someone's part. Is your mother or husband with you?

SEACOLE

My mother and husband are both dead.

ABIGAIL BRIGHT

I am sorry. But, thank you for stopping by. We appreciate your offer of help.

Abigail Bright rises, hands Mrs. Seacole the recommendations, and looks at Mrs. Seacole indicating the interview is over. Mrs. Seacole slowly rises and starts for the door, then turns back.

SEACOLE

(harshly)

If there had been a vacancy, would you have asked me to fill it?

(pause)

No, I think not.

Mrs. Seacole turns and exits the office door.

EXT. SIDEWALK

Mrs. Seacole leans against the building in the twilight, tears running down her cheeks.

SEACOLE

(harshly)

They don't want a yellow skin woman to be a nurse in their Crimea war? Well, they'll find my offer will be entertained by me.

Mrs. Seacole moves slowly down the street as the dusk deepens and the gas street lights are lit.

INT. MRS. SEACOLE'S ROOMS - KITCHEN - 3 DAYS LATER

Mrs. Seacole is filling a water kettle at the sink when the DOORBELL to her flat RINGS.

Mrs. Seacole places the kettle on the stove, lights the burner and heads for the front door through the sitting room.

SEACOLE (O.S.)

Come in. I'm in the kitchen.

Mrs. Seacole starts back to the kitchen with MRS. CAVENDISH, a rosy-faced, middle-aged, plump, blond woman following behind her.

MRS. CAVENDISH

I brought you a bit of soup. It was too much for just me.

Mrs. Cavendish hands Mrs. Seacole the soup.

SEACOLE

Well, aren't you nice. I was on the way to bring you the rent.

MRS. CAVENDISH

No matter.

SEACOLE

No, no, just you wait. You sit now, we'll have some tea.

MRS. CAVENDISH

Don't bother, now.

Mrs. Cavendish sits as Mrs. Seacole leaves the kitchen and walks into the sitting room.

SEACOLE (O.S.)

No bother, just let me get my purse.

MRS. CAVENDISH

You worry me, such a sour face you had last two days.

Mrs. Seacole enters the room with some money in her hand and goes to Mrs. Cavendish.

SEACOLE

(hands her the rent)

Here you are. Those were the days after the entire British establishment rejected me. No more sour face now. I know what to do.

Mrs. Seacole works with the kettle, cups and saucers, and the biscuit tin during the following.

MRS. CAVENDISH

Have you made up your mind about your trip?

SEACOLE

(excited)

Yes, Yes I have. Let me show you my cards that were sent. I had them printed.

MRS. CAVENDISH

Cards? Sent where?

Mrs. Seacole searches for the cards through the writing materials on the table.

SEACOLE

Cards to my sons and their leaders in the Crimea. Here we are.

Mrs. Seacole takes a card and hands it to Mrs. Cavendish, and sits at the table while pouring tea for them both, placing some biscuits from the biscuit tin on a plate.

SEACOLE

Read that and see what I have done.

Mrs. Cavendish reading aloud.

MRS. CAVENDISH
 Lets see. British Hotel. Mrs.
 Seacole, Late of Kingston, Jamaica.
 (to Mrs. Seacole)
 Is there a British Hotel there?

SEACOLE
 No, not yet. Read on.

Mrs. Cavendish continues reading the card.

MRS. CAVENDISH
 Respectfully announces to her former
 kind friends, and to the Officers of
 the army and navy generally, that
 she has taken her passage in the
 screw-steamer Hollander to start
 from London on the 25th of January,
 1855.

SEACOLE
 These cards were sent to the
 Mediterranean to my friends before
 Sebastopol.

MRS. CAVENDISH
 Well, I never. So you are really
 going?

SEACOLE
 Certainly. Under my own cost it
 appears. The managers of the Crimean
 Fund refused to give me a passage to
 the camp.

MRS. CAVENDISH
 Way out there, alone?

SEACOLE
 I have friends who knew me in Jamaica,
 were under my care. Also, doctors
 who will vouch for my skill. Not
 alone, no.

MRS. CAVENDISH
 It'll be hard.

The front DOORBELL RINGS.

SEACOLE
 Now who can that be at this hour.

Mrs. Seacole leaves the room as Mrs. Cavendish looks at the
 card in her hand. Mrs. Seacole returns with an envelope in
 her hand.

SEACOLE

It's a letter, my soul, from whom?

MRS. CAVENDISH

(smiling)

Open it, you'll see, dearie.

Mrs. Seacole sits, opens the envelope, reads the letter, and a broad smile spreads over her face.

SEACOLE

It's providence, Mrs. Cavendish, providence, the signature is by my old friend from Panama, Thomas Day. Mercy, mercy.

MRS. CAVENDISH

Good news?

SEACOLE

Very good news. Mr. Day is in London and wishes me to call upon him. He's staying not far from here.

MRS. CAVENDISH

From Panama, you say, well, who would believe such a thing.

SEACOLE

I would. Thomas is a great friend. Wait a minute, I have the miniature drawing of him he gave me. Just a minute. In my bedroom, I think.

Mrs. Seacole rises and rushes out of the room.

FLASHBACK - EXT. PANAMA - DAY

Cruces is the same damp, dirty town. The California crowd from the gold-fields, those rude, coarse, gold-diggers in gaily colored shirts, still litter the dirty, muddy, street. The hotels are filled with motley groups clothed in a picturesque variety of attire.

Mrs. Seacole is helped off of the boat by her brother, EDWARD, a middle-aged husky man, dark complexion, weathered features, of strong build. Local porters gather up her luggage.

SUPER: "CRUCES, PANAMA, 1853"

EDWARD

Careful, sister. Let me help you past this junk here.

Edward gives his sister a big hug and leads her forward to his hotel.

SEACOLE
 Brother, you're getting stout.

EDWARD
 (laughing)
 Our whole family grows stout.

SEACOLE
 (smiling at him)
 Are you referring to me?

EDWARD
 Not so. What a grand day that you
 have returned. Come, go to my hotel.

Mrs. Seacole and Edward, followed by the porters, march up the overgrown, dirt road past buildings that appear ready to fall down. The debris of a fallen house partially cover three long boxes.

SEACOLE
 What are these three boxes?

EDWARD
 Three Irishmen killed in a row a
 week ago. Seems it's nobody's
 business to bury 'em.

SEACOLE
 Things here never change, do they?

EDWARD
 (laughing)
 Not so I can tell.

INT. EDWARDS'S HOTEL

Mrs. Seacole and Edward enter the hotel and he seats her at a table in the lounge.

EDWARD
 I'll have 'em bring you somethin'.

Edward leaves as THOMAS DAY, a short wiry man, dark hair, muscular frame, about Mrs. Seacole's age, sees them come in and rushes into the room. Mrs. Seacole rises, exclaims, and gives Thomas a hug.

SEACOLE
 Lordy, Thomas Day, you're still here.

THOMAS
 Still here. Mary Seacole, you are
 looking fine.

SEACOLE
 Sit with me, sit.

Mrs. Seacole looks him over.

SEACOLE
Still in your prime.

THOMAS
(laughing)
This prime beef has mellowed a lot.

SEACOLE
(laughing)
Careful, the Indians don't fry you.
Are the people at the mine still
behaving? Are you still
Superintendent?

THOMAS
So far. The mine is winding down, I
fear. Gold comes harder and harder
to find.

SEACOLE
You remember when I found that shiny
gold sand and found out it was fool's
gold?

(laughing)
My fortune disappeared in a flash.

THOMAS
I remember when you saved my life
after I fell ill. I remember that.

SEACOLE
You were lucky.

THOMAS
Not so lucky was your husband Edwin
He was my cousin and my best friend.

Mrs. Seacole reaches over and touches Thomas' hand.

SEACOLE
(sadly)
Eight years it is since I lost both
Mother and my dear Edwin. I think
many times about them. Don't let me
lose you too.

INT. MRS. SEACOLE'S KITCHEN (BACK TO PRESENT)

Mrs. Seacole returns to the kitchen with a small framed
picture in her hand. She sits and hands the frame to Mrs.
Cavendish.

MRS. CAVENDISH
Very handsome. He's a white man!

Seacole's eyes narrow and she sits and stares for a moment as Mrs. Cavendish inspects the picture.

SEACOLE
(quietly)
Yes, he is. Please!

Mrs. Seacole rises and motions to take the frame from Mrs. Cavendish, who also rises.

MRS. CAVENDISH
Very nice though.

SEACOLE
Well, now I have to get myself ready.
Thomas and I have plans to make.
Thank you for the soup.

MRS. CAVENDISH
Ah, yes. Well I'll be goin'.

Mrs. Seacole moves to the sink as Mrs. Cavendish takes the hint and moves to the front door and exits.

SEACOLE
Yes, he is white. You and all the
rest can . . .
(sighing; shakes head)
Never mind.

Mary takes off her apron and heads for the bedroom.

EX. SIDEWALK - CURB SIDE - HOURS LATER

Mrs. Seacole exits a hansom cab in front of a hotel and heads for the front door which is opened by a doorman.

INT. LOBBY

She walks to the front desk and addresses the CLERK #1, a pale redhead with a wrinkled shirt.

SEACOLE
I have received a letter from Mr.
Thomas Day to call upon him here.
Will you advise Mr. Day?

CLERK #1
(startled)
Certainly, your name please.

SEACOLE
Seacole, Mrs. Seacole.

The Clerk #1 writes then RINGS a BELL and a Porter appears.

CLERK #1
Take this note to Mr. Day in room
204.

The Porter starts up the stairs.

CLERK #1
Please have a seat in there while
you wait.

The clerk #1 points to a small alcove away from the lobby proper. Mrs. Seacole turns and looks at the distant area, turns and looks at the clerk, then walks away.

SEACOLE
Thank you.

The Clerk #1 looks curiously at Mrs. Seacole as she moves away. A number of men come and go and stare at Mrs. Seacole as they proceed on their way.

After a few minutes, Thomas Day comes down the stairs with hat and coat. Clerk #1 points in Mrs. Seacole's direction, and Thomas moves with great exuberance toward her.

THOMAS
Dear Mary. What a sight for my eyes.

SEACOLE
Thomas. You will never know how
overjoyed I was to receive your
letter. What are you doing in London?

THOMAS
Let us go to a small restaurant I
know. The people here are too
curious.

SEACOLE
I see that. Probably thought I was
your maid.

She and Thomas both laugh at the thought that Mrs. Seacole would be anyone's maid.

THOMAS
Come along.

Mrs. Seacole and Thomas head for the front door and exit.

EXT. SIDEWALK

They exit the hotel and Thomas walks Mrs. Seacole down the street. He points ahead of them.

THOMAS

We can walk, it's only a couple of blocks down there.

RESTAURANT

THOMAS

Here we are.

SEACOLE

Looks very nice.

Thomas pulls open the door and ushers Mrs. Seacole into the restaurant.

INT. RESTAURANT

Thomas and Mrs. Seacole enter the restaurant and Thomas motions to one of the waiters.

THOMAS

Two for tea please, back table.

The waiter nods and takes Thomas and Mrs. Seacole to a table in the back of the restaurant. As they sit, Thomas speaks to the waiter.

THOMAS

Tea and biscuits, please.

The waiter nods and moves away.

SEACOLE

When your letter arrived, I was overjoyed to realize that you also are in London.

THOMAS

My ship stopped in Kingston and I learned of your voyage to London. Shipping interests called me to the Crimea and so --

SEACOLE

Crimea! Thomas, God is working in our lives in this way. My plans are made to leave for the Crimea on January 25.

THOMAS

Really? Why?

SEACOLE

To nurse my sons. Open my British Hotel. The British have rejected me so I will go there on my own. My boys are dying and I have the skills to help.

THOMAS

But, the War Department and Florence Nightingale are asking for nurses.

SEACOLE

Yes, maybe white nurses. No one, not even Miss Nightingale's associates will listen. I will raise a British Hotel as I did in Jamaica. You must help me.

THOMAS

Mary, that will cost a lot of money.

The waiter arrives with the tea and biscuits and leaves them on the table. He moves away as Mrs. Seacole prepares the tea.

SEACOLE

My savings I can use to set up the hotel. You must help me to get a building and ship my supplies.

THOMAS

Is that all. You and your schemes.

SEACOLE

The nursing will be free and We will charge for home comforts the army can't provide. That will keep us going.

Mrs. Seacole takes one of the biscuits and passes the plate to Thomas.

THOMAS

My dear, only for you would I even consider an outrageous scheme such as this.

SEACOLE

Outrageous indeed. We will do business as Seacole and Day. Proprietors of the British Hotel and restaurant to the soldiers.

THOMAS

How can I say no?

SEACOLE

You can't, say you won't.

THOMAS

I leave next week for Balaklava to seal some contracts. You leave in January. That gives me time to survey the area, to determine our prospects.

SEACOLE

Where can I reach you by letter?

Thomas takes out a business card and gives it to Mrs. Seacole.

THOMAS

This is the address of the company I will visit. The nearest post office is in Constantinople. I will write you there from Balaklava after I arrive.

SEACOLE

Then it is settled. We drink to our British Hotel. We meet in Balaklava.

Mrs. Seacole raises her cup as they smile and clink their cups together in confirmation of their contract.

EXT. LONDON - DOCKSIDE - MORNING

Mrs. Seacole is starting up the gangplank of the screw-steamer Hollander, a porter is carrying her baggage. We see the side of the ship and the name "HOLLANDER." At the top of the stairs MR. SIKES, a tough looking, heavy-set sailor, with salt and pepper beard, stops her with a greeting.

MONTAGE: "THE HOLLANDER - JANUARY 25, 1855"

MR. SIKES

Mami Seacole, well, bless me, now.

SEACOLE

Mr. Sikes. Are you working this ship?

MR. SIKES

I'm Supercargo here. Where you be going?

SEACOLE

To the war, Mr. Sikes, to see my boys. It is better now I know you watch my possessions. Did my boxes arrive?

MR. SIKES

Now why didn't I place the name with your lovely face. Yes, all here. You can see them later.

SEACOLE

Such a long while since we lost your brother at Kingston, such a sweet lad. Very sad.

MR. SIKES

You did him great service before he died, just remember that. Come along to your cabin.

Mr. Sikes turns and motions to one of the ship's porters.

MR. SIKES

Porter bring those bags this way. We'll get your settled, Mrs. Seacole.

SEACOLE

I'm ready.

Mr. Sikes and Mrs. Seacole move across the deck, followed by the porter, as the ship's HORN SOUNDS and CHAINS RATTLE across the side as the anchor is lifted.

LEAVING ENGLAND - MONTAGE

The ship moves down the Thames River heading for the sea.

Mrs. Seacole and the other passengers move around the deck watching the ships moving up and down river.

The ship reaches the mouth of the river and glides into the channel.

Those on board watch as the shores of England slowly fade in the distance.

EXT. HOLLANDER - TOP DECK - DAYS LATER

Mrs. Seacole is standing on deck with Mr. Sikes as the ship Hollander pulls into port of Gibraltar.

SUPER: "PORT OF GIBRALTAR"

MR. SIKES

We stop here, Mrs. Seacole, for bout three hours. If you go ashore, watch your time now. I can send someone with you.

SEACOLE

No, no, I'll take care. No need for someone with me.

GIBRALTAR - LATER

Mrs. Seacole is walking from the cliff side into the market where various shops are open for the number of tourists that parade from place to place. Two army officers stroll past the shop where Mrs. Seacole is standing.

Captain #1, a thin man, dark hair, with thick dark beard, leaning on a cane, spies Mother Seacole and nudges Captain #2, a tall officer with blonde hair and a blonde beard and a bandaged hand.

CAPTAIN #1

(loudly)

Well, bless my soul, old fellow, if this is not our good old Mother Seacole.

Mrs. Seacole turns around and with some difficulty recognizes the two officers, with Crimean beard.

SEACOLE

Two of my favorite boys. Look at you all bearded. You're both captains now. Well, how are you both?

CAPTAIN #2

What in the world are you doing here?

SEACOLE

On the way to Balaklava. What happened to you?

CAPTAIN #2

War, Mother, war happened.

CAPTAIN #1

And you are going to the front, old lady, you of all people in the world?

SEACOLE

Why not, my sons? Won't they be glad to have me there?

CAPTAIN #2

By Jove! Yes, mother.

CAPTAIN #1

It isn't many women, God bless them, we've seen to spoil us out there.

SEACOLE

You look spoiled well enough.

CAPTAIN #2

But, it's not the place even for
you, who knows what hardship is.
You'll never get a roof to cover you
at Balaklava, nor on the road either.

CAPTAIN #1

Come, Mother, sit down, we'll treat
you this time round.

They shepherd Mrs. Seacole over to a table, catch a waiter,
and order some wine and glasses. They all sit as the waiter
brings the wine and glasses.

SEACOLE

Do you think I shall be of any use
to you there?

The waiter pours wine for the three.

CAPTAIN #2

Oh, you surely will.

CAPTAIN #1

There's nothing there like you served
us in Jamaica. They will love you.

SEACOLE

Then I'll go were the place a hundred
times worse that you describe it.

CAPTAIN #2

Just prepare yourself for living out
in the open.

SEACOLE

(laughing)

Why I'll rig up a hut with the packing
cases, and sleep, if need be, on
straw, like Margery Daw?

Mrs. Seacole recites part of the child's rhyme as the men
keep time on the table.

SEACOLE

"See-saw, Margery Daw, Sold her bed
and lay on the straw;" "Sold her bed
and lay upon hay;" and pisky came
and carried her away."

They all laugh and Captain #1 pours another glass for them
from the Spanish wine.

CAPTAIN #2

He was a terribly naughty fellow
that pisky. Well, all I can say is
good luck to you and God bless you
there.

They raise their glasses and toast each other.

HOLLANDER - LATER

Mrs. Seacole arrives on the deck of the Hollander and
approaches Mr. Sikes who is organizing cargo.

MR. SIKES

Ahoy, did you enjoy the land again?

SEACOLE

Oh, Yes. Sons of mine greeted me.
They are on route back to England
from the war.

MR. SIKES

Almost ready to ship out.

SEACOLE

Good. It's a long journey. Three
thousand miles is a long journey.

Mrs. Seacole moves away from Mr. Sikes toward the stairs
leading down into the ship.

EXT. MEDITERRANEAN SEA - DAYS LATER

We see in the distance a spot on the horizon which is the
Island of Malta.

MALTA - LATER

Mrs. Seacole comes up from below and watches at the railing
of the ship as the vessel pulls into the wharf of the Island
of Malta

SUPER: "MALTA"

After the gangplank is set, some of the passengers leave as
this is their destination. Mrs. Seacole starts to go down
the gangplank when Mr. Sikes stops her.

MR. SIKES

Mother, we'll be gone in an hour.

SEACOLE

Yes, I know. I want to deposit these
letters in the Malta post. I won't
be long.

MR. SIKES

Don't tarry now.

SEACOLE

No.

Mrs. Seacole hurries down the plank and walks toward the customs house and drops her letters in the postal box on the building. She sees some Englishmen coming out of the building and recognizes an old friend, Dr. Francis.

SEACOLE

Dr. Francis, here Dr. Francis.

DR. FRANCIS

Well, what have we here? Mrs. Seacole. What are you up to now?

SEACOLE

Traveling to Balaklava to help my boys.

DR. FRANCIS

Really? Well, they certainly need you there. It is frightful what is happening to our soldiers.

SEACOLE

I plan to interview with Miss Nightingale to advise her of my intentions.

DR. FRANCIS

Let me help. I will give you a letter of introduction.

SEACOLE

We are leaving almost now.

DR. FRANCIS

You sit on that bench and I will find a pen and paper in the customs building. You wait, I will be right back.

Dr. Francis rushes over to the building as Mrs. Seacole sits upon one of the rough benches of the pier and waits nervously for Dr. Francis to return.

The ships move in the harbor, the laborers haul the boxes of freight to and from the vessels that have landed.

After a time, Dr. Francis comes out of the building and hands Mrs. Seacole an envelope.

DR. FRANCIS

This will help, I am sure. The hospital is at Scutari, opposite Constantinople. You will find it I am sure.

SEACOLE

I never get lost, Dr.

DR. FRANCIS

They need much help. I just returned from Scutari and it is a hell-hole. War is not a nice pastime for soldiers.

SEACOLE

Thank you Doctor Francis. Good journey to you.

DR. FRANCIS

And to you, May God bless your efforts.

HOLLANDER

Mrs. Seacole climbs onto the ship as preparations are underway for the vessel to sail. The ENGINES START, the ANCHOR CLANGS, the ship's HORN SOUNDS, and the ship leaves the harbor.

EXT. CONSTANTINOPLE - DAYS LATER - DUSK

The boat gingerly glides into the docking wharf in Constantinople and the anchor is set, the ropes adjusted to the dock. The line of buildings rise up along the shore line outlined by the setting sun.

SUPER: "OTTOMAN EMPIRE, CONSTANTINOPLE"

Dusk settles on the city as the crew sets the watch for the night.

EXT. CONSTANTINOPLE - DAY

Mr. Sikes is working the cargo crew, collecting the items to be offloaded in the city. Mrs. Seacole comes up from below and heads for Mr. Sikes.

SEACOLE

Good morning.

MR. SIKES

And To you. Your journey is almost ended.

SEACOLE

So, we are happy.

MR

Goin' into town?

SEACOLE

Yes, to the post office, if I can find it. There should be letters from Mr. Day waiting for me.

MR. SIKES

Be careful, a lone woman in this city must be careful of cunning-eyed Greeks.

SEACOLE

(laughing)

More dangerous than a cunning-eyed Creole lady?

MR. SIKES

(smiling)

Just be careful.

Mrs. Seacole moves over to the gangplank and starts down the ramp.

CITY STREET - LATER

We see Mrs. Seacole standing with a young Greek Jew, she names JEW JOHNNY, a lynx-eyed fellow, short and hairy, but muscular. They are on the sidewalk of a city street gesturing and pointing. The young man points down one of the streets and he and Mrs. Seacole moves off in that direction.

JEW JOHNNY

I come with you to place.

SEACOLE

Thank you, but I can find it. You told me your name was what?

JEW JOHNNY

Johnny, it is Johnny, I Greek Jew.

SEACOLE

It appears as if every guide in Constantinople is named Johnny.

JEW JOHNNY

You call me Jew Johnny.

SEACOLE

Jew Johnny, fine.

JEW JOHNNY

Just me Jew Johnny.

SEACOLE

Look, I thank you for being my guide through the streets these last few days but the post office is just a few --

JEW JOHNNY

It's okay. I show you anyway.

SEACOLE

But you stay outside, okay?

LARGE BUILDING

Mrs. Seacole and Jew Johnny walk up to the building. Mrs. Seacole opens one of the doors, gestures for Jew Johnny to stay outside, and enters the main post office of Constantinople.

INT. POST OFFICE

Mrs. Seacole enters the post office where a few customers are in attendance. She walks up to one of the mail counters and addresses CLERK #2, a swarthy short fellow, with wiry hair.

SEACOLE

Excuse me.

She raps on the counter to get his attention.

SEACOLE

Excuse me, do you speak English? English? Speak English?

He moves toward the counter's cage opening.

CLERK #2

No need shout. I am speak English.

SEACOLE

Letters were sent to me here from a Mr. Thomas Day.

CLERK #2

Your name?

SEACOLE

(spelling)
S E A C O L E. Mrs. Seacole.

The clerk #2 leaves his counter and goes to the rear of his area. Waiting, Mrs. Seacole spies one Englishman and his wife at another counter who look at Mrs. Seacole and then look at each other and say something. Turkish women in the back peer at Mrs. Seacole and jabber excitedly, some pointing her way.

Finally, the Clerk #2 returns to his counter.

CLERK #2
No, no letter for Mr. Day.

SEACOLE
(put out)
Not for Mr. Day, from Mr. Day to me.

CLERK #2
You say Day!

SEACOLE
You took my name, the letters are
addressed to Mrs. Seacole.

CLERK #2
(perplexed)
I hear you say Day!

SEACOLE
Are you sure you understand English?
From Mr. Day to me, Mrs. Seacole.
Seacole!

The clerk #2 stares hard at Mrs. Seacole and moves off again, looking back at her twice before he disappears.

Mrs. Seacole moves to the written posters on the wall to see if there are any English writings but finds none. Customers come into the post office and conduct business with other clerks.

The Clerk #2 returns now with some letters in his hand.

CLERK #2
Identification, please.

SEACOLE
What?

CLERK #2
This is English. Identification,
please.

SEACOLE
Yes.

Mrs. Seacole searches through her bag and pulls out her identification and hands it to the Clerk #2. He looks at the papers and walks over to another clerk. They discuss the papers between themselves, looking at Mrs. Seacole a time or two. The Clerk #2 returns to his post.

CLERK #2
Your letters.

SEACOLE

Thank you.

CLERK #2

You thanked.

He looks at Mrs. Seacole suspiciously as she walks away and toward the door.

EXT. CITY STREET

Mrs. Seacole walks out of the post office and meets Jew Johnny sitting on the curb.

SEACOLE

Your talents with language were sorely needed in there.

JEW JOHNNY

I always needed in there.

SEACOLE

Perhaps true.

Mrs. Seacole and Jew Johnny start down the street. They spy a small tea shop on the street and decide to stop, have tea, and read her letters.

SEACOLE

We'll have tea in that shop.

JEW JOHNNY

Good place, good tea.

TEA SHOP

Mrs. Seacole and Jew Johnny approach the counter and Mrs. Seacole addresses the man in the shop.

SEACOLE

English?

The man shakes his head and places his finger to his lips indicating he does not.

JEW JOHNNY

(in Arabic,
subtitled)

Two tea, please.

The owner prepares the teas and hands both to them. Mrs. Seacole takes out her change purse and rubs her fingers to indicate money.

SEACOLE

How much?

JEW JOHNNY
You have coins?

SEACOLE
Here, what they are I don't know.

Jew Johnny looks in her coin purse and extracts a coin and pays the owner who nods his head.

JEW JOHNNY
You need me, not be gypped.

SEACOLE
Gypped, by who?

Jew Johnny looks puzzled. He and Mrs. Seacole sit down as she prepares to open a letter.

JEW JOHNNY
You go soon. Leave Jew Johnny?

SEACOLE
In two days, we go.

JEW JOHNNY
You need me speak language. I speak French too.

SEACOLE
I trust it is better than your English.

JEW JOHNNY
Nothing here for me. I go and help you very much. Carry and speak language.

SEACOLE
I do need someone. There is not much pay in the job.

JEW JOHNNY
No matter pay. I make do.

SEACOLE
Where is your family?

JEW JOHNNY
No family here.

SEACOLE
Tomorrow, we will talk and see what we can work out.

JEW JOHNNY
Good job.

Mrs. Seacole turns her attention to the letters and opens the first letter from Thomas.

THOMAS (V.O.)

Dear Mrs. Seacole, I arrived in Balaklava and was immediately disappointed with the condition of the harbor. Boats are crammed into a narrow landlocked basin, so filled with shipping boats of all kinds. The wharves are lined with boxes of supplies that have nowhere to go. Soldiers are lying sick, wounded and dying without proper care. There is nowhere to sleep but on the ships, it is a horrendous situation. When you arrive we must immediately move outside of the city and build something where we can work.

JEW JOHNNY

Letter is okay?

SEACOLE

No. Oh, Thomas, what a dreary account. I can't read another word. What have I bought for myself?

Mrs. Seacole rises and she and Jew Johnny move down the street.

EXT. WHARF - AFTERNOON - NEXT DAY

Mrs. Seacole is helped into a Caicque (Turkish Rowboat) by the Turkish boatman. The man pushes off and begins to row across the water.

TRIP ACROSS WATER - MONTAGE

The calm water ripples behind and follows the moving boat.

Larger boats are crossing in front of the boat at a distance.

The outlined skyline of Constantinople is disappearing behind Mrs. Seacole and the boat.

The shore and the small town of Scutari appear in the distance as the boat moves forward to a dock down from a large building.

EXT. SCUTARI SHORELINE - LATER

As they land, the boatman exits the boat and steadies the craft as Mrs. Seacole makes her way to the front and is helped out of the vessel. Mrs. Seacole speaks to the Turkish man with gestures, hands him some money and waves goodbye as she walks up the slight ascent to the hospital door.

INT. HOSPITAL WARD

Mrs. Seacole moves down the long ward of suffering soldiers lying in the beds with orderlies moving back and forth. Tears come to her eyes.

There are many men, some reading books, or a newspaper, as the female nurses passed noiselessly. Mrs. Seacole recognizes one of the patients and goes to him.

SEACOLE

Sergeant, How are you?

SERGEANT #1

No, It can't be. Mother Seacole, where did you come from.

SEACOLE

(smiling)

A little rowboat brought me here.

Sergeant #1 turns and calls to his buddies in adjoining beds.

SERGEANT #1

(loudly)

Soldier, lookie here.

The sergeant takes Mrs. Seacole over to a young fellow with a shaven bandaged head and bright eyes

SOLDIER #1

Mother Seacole! Mother Seacole!

He brightly shakes Mrs. Seacole's hand and wearily falls back on his pillow.

SEACOLE

What a sight you are for these eyes.

Mrs. Seacole sits on the bed beside the fellow as the Sergeant #1 stands by.

SOLDIER #1

Why are you here? What are you doing here? I last saw you in Jamaica.

SEACOLE

I'm on the way to Balaklava to nurse such as you.

SOLDIER #1

Oh, Mother, you won't find it like Jamaica.

SEACOLE

No, I expect not.

SOLDIER #1

When you go, take plenty of vegetables
and eggs, mother; we never saw eggs
over there.

SEACOLE

I will, I will. You rest now.

Mrs. Seacole moves away from the soldier and spends time
with a number of the soldiers, replacing a slipped bandage,
or easing a stiff one, muttering soothing words to them.

SEACOLE

There, that should feel better.

Doctor #1 stands off to the side, watching Mrs. Seacole work
with the patients, then goes up to her.

DOCTOR #1

Thank you Mrs. Seacole.

SEACOLE

Doctor, what a surprise.

DOCTOR #1

You're the surprise. Has Jamaica
sent you away?

SEACOLE

There is need here and I come to
help. Here is a letter from our
mutual friend to Miss Nightingale.
She has need of help, I know.

Mrs. Seacole hands him the letter which he reads.

DOCTOR #1

(mumbling to himself)
Wait a moment.

He motions NURSE #1, a short blonde woman in a white starched
uniform, to come over.

DOCTOR #1

This is my friend, Mrs. Seacole.
Here, this is a letter from a
physician we both know to Miss
Nightingale. Will you look after
her for me, help her see Miss
Nightingale?

Doctor #1 hands Nurse #1 the physician's letter and turns to
Mrs. Seacole.

DOCTOR #1

Mrs. Seacole, I must go but please let me know if you need help. Nurse, it is late and Mrs. Seacole needs a place to sleep for the night after her interview.

NURSE #1

Yes, doctor. This way, please.

DOCTOR #1

Mrs. Seacole, I hope we can talk later.

Nurse #1 and Mrs. Seacole start down a long corridor as Doctor #1 moves to the patients.

KITCHEN

Mrs. Seacole and Nurse #1 enter a room which is used as a kitchen. There are pots of soup, broth, and arrow-root on the stoves.

NURSE #1

Please wait here. Just so you know, Miss Nightingale has the entire management of our hospital staff, but I do not think that any vacancy might --

SEACOLE

Excuse me, ma'am. I am bound for the front in a few days.

NURSE #1

(puzzled)

Oh. If you would sit, I will inform Miss Nightingale.

Nurse #1 leaves the room as Mrs. Seacole looks for a clean chair and sits. Nurses move quietly in and out of the room tending to the stove and supplies.

KITCHEN - LATER

Mrs. Seacole is about to fall asleep when Nurse #1 enters the room and beckons her to follow.

NURSE #1

Ma'am? Please follow Me, ma'am.

Mrs. Seacole rises and follows Nurse #1 out of the kitchen.

OFFICE

Mrs. Seacole is ushered into another room by Nurse #1. Standing next to a desk is FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE, a slight figure in nurses' dress, with a pale, gentle, and firm face.

NIGHTINGALE

That will be all, nurse.

The nurse exits and Mrs. Seacole stands in front of Nightingale waiting. The letter from the doctor is at her side.

NIGHTINGALE

I read the letter from the doctor

SEACOLE

He was overly kind.

NIGHTINGALE

(impatiently)

What do you want Mrs. Seacole? Is there anything that we can do for you? If it lies in my power, I shall be very happy.

SEACOLE

My purpose is to meet and advise you of my plans to open a comfort area and nursing facility outside of Balaklava.

NIGHTINGALE

I see. Of course, we cannot provide you any supplies for such a venture.

SEACOLE

No. This is a project of my own and my partner Thomas Day. I am keen to help my boys survive this war.

NIGHTINGALE

Well then, I wish you a good voyage and success.

SEACOLE

Yes, well, one request, I am afraid. I dread the night journey by Caicque and the improbability of my finding my ship again. Is there an unoccupied bed that I may borrow for the night?

NIGHTINGALE

Unoccupied beds are at a minimum just now. I will discuss this with my head nurse.

SEACOLE

I am most grateful. You are busy
and I appreciate the opportunity to --

NIGHTINGALE

Not at all. If you will wait in the
kitchen, someone will contact you.

SEACOLE

Thank you.

Mrs. Seacole moves toward the door of the office and leaves
the room.

WASHERWOMEN'S QUARTERS

Nurse #1 enters the room with Mrs. Seacole following.

NURSE #1

This couch is available. Let me
know if you need anything.

Mrs. Seacole punches the couch and sits on the side looking
forlorn and a little out of sorts.

EXT. HOLLANDER - TOP DECK - MORNING

Mr. Sikes is sitting on a box having a draw on his pipe when
he spies Mrs. Seacole coming up on deck.

MR. SIKES

Mrs. Seacole. You made it back.

Mrs. Seacole walks over and sits beside Mr. Sikes.

SEACOLE

Just a bit mangled by the sleeping
facilities but not the worse for
wear.

MR. SIKES

Did you see her?

SEACOLE

Yes. The hospital is stuffed full
of my boys, all longing for some
comfort and cheer. Depressing it
was.

MR. SIKES

Tomorrow we lose you. The Albatross
is ready to ship out.

SEACOLE

Well, let it. My plans are perfected,
my purchases made, and my passage
secured.

MR. SIKES

Early mornin' we'll transport your things to 'em and that is that.

SEACOLE

You are very kind to me.

MR. SIKES

You took good care of my brother, Jimmy, You're special to me.

SEACOLE

He was a lovely lad. Yes, that is that. I'll be on my way. Well, let me check my things and then a rest I need.

Mrs. Seacole rises and moves toward the stairs to her deck.

EXT. BAY OF CONSTANTINOPLE - AFTERNOON - NEXT DAY

Mrs. Seacole and Jew Johnny are in a boat with her boxes moving from the Hollander to the Albatross, a transport laden with cattle and commissariat officers for Balaklava.

It is a terrible day, with strong wind and a strong current that make the boat rise and fall. Water from the small waves splashes into the boat drenching all aboard.

The boat reaches the Albatross and the passengers and the cargo are brought on board.

BLACK SEA - DAY

The Albatross steams through the gentle swells of the Black Sea toward the port of Balaklava.

BLACK SEA JOURNEY - MONTAGE

The ship passes other vessels in the Black Sea, a large freighter causes heavy wells in the water.

Some of the crew move across the deck, addressing the needs of the ship, as the Albatross reaches the open water.

The strong wind throws waves of water across the back deck of the ship as it plows through the disturbed water.

In the distance the dark rock-bound coast is slowly coming into view.

The Albatross reaches the entrance to the harbor and lays-to while a small boat from the ship makes its way to the harbor-master for leave to enter the port.

On the left, there are clouds of light smoke which is the city of Sebastopol, now under Russian control.

Mrs. Seacole, Jew Johnny, and the other passengers come up to look at the surrounding land and city.

EXT. DECK OF ALBATROSS - DAY

Captain #3 of the ship is on deck directing the placement of the cargo.

CAPTAIN #3

You there. Move those boxes to the right. Move lightly.

CREW #1

Yes sir.

A boat arrives at the side of the ship and CREW #2, a muscular man in naval cotton scrambles up the ladder onto the deck and goes to Captain #1.

CREW #2

Here's your order, Captain. Ship is cleared for mooring 35.

CAPTAIN #3

Go up and give this to the Bosun and advise the engineer. I'm up to the bridge

CREW #2

Yessir.

THE MOORING - MONTAGE

Captain #3 moves inside as the Crew #2 disappears around the deck.

The ship slowly moves through a narrow channel and emerges into a small landlocked basin.

Numerous ships of every size and variety fill the basin, their masts crowd the sky.

As the Albatross, gently moves to her appointed mooring, the crew works the ropes and anchor.

SUPER: "BALAKLAVA"

The sun sets on the horizon lending a hazy, smoky glow to the scene and an unreal quality to the landscape.

INT. ALBATROSS - CABIN - DAY

Mrs. Seacole has dressed and is organizing her belongings as a KNOCK on the DOOR startles her.

SEACOLE

Who's there?

THOMAS

It's Thomas, let me in.

Mrs. Seacole goes opens the door and greets Thomas day.

SEACOLE

You're a sight to behold. I wondered how to find you.

THOMAS

They advised me your ship was in last night. We organized quarters for you on board the Medora, a ship down the dock. You have to vacate this ship. As soon as it unloads, they are leaving.

SEACOLE

What about our stores?

THOMAS

No warehouses here, just stack them on the shore, I'm afraid. We'll find someone to protect them.

SEACOLE

Doesn't sound good.

THOMAS

You don't know the worst. The Medora is an ammunition ship. Lots of ammunition on board.

SEACOLE

What? Heaven help me.

THOMAS

Come on, I'll help you get organized.

SEACOLE

I have a surprise for you.

THOMAS

Oh, what?

SEACOLE

It's called Jew Johnny.

INT. MEDORA CABIN - NEXT DAY

Mrs. Seacole and Thomas are sitting on the small bed in her cabin on the Medora.

SEACOLE

This morning, Thomas, I sent out letters to my friends here, advising of my arrival.

Thomas stands and surveys the surrounding.

THOMAS

The Medora cabins are not bad. What do you think?

SEACOLE

It's a cabin. No, it is fine. My friend Captain Peel from the 97th is here and I sent my first letter to him.

THOMAS

Good idea. Jew Johnny is bunked with the deck crew. He's looking for someone to guard our cargo.

SEACOLE

Poor kid. Some of the medical officers I knew in Kingston received my correspondence as well. Oh, and most important, a letter to Sir John Campbell, who is a division commander.

THOMAS

Do you know everybody in this war?

SEACOLE

No. None of the Russians.

THOMAS

You realize that some of our supplies are now sitting on the ship Nonpareil which was ordered back out to sea. Someone will have to talk with Admiral Boxer, the Port Admiral to get them back in the harbor.

Mrs. Seacole rises with the letters she has been shuffling and places them in a box.

SEACOLE

That is me, I guess. The Admiral has a kind heart, I think, under a rough husk. All right, let us go. I'll ask the Captain to escort me.

EXT. WHARF - LATER

Mrs. Seacole and Captain #1 are hurrying along the wharf passing numerous piles of cargo, slimy water and lots of debris.

Piles of stores, boxes, sacks, bundles of hay, lay in muddled heaps on the quayside. Rubbish and refuse floated and stagnated in the water.

Men are loading boxes from numerous ships on carriers.
Turkish men have tin cups of tea for sale.

INT. ADMIRAL'S OFFICE

Mrs. Seacole and the Captain #1 are ushered into the office of ADMIRAL BOXER, an older, overweight, feisty looking man with a long mustache and a scowl on his face

BOXER

What is it you two want?

SEACOLE

I am Mrs. Seacole, Admiral, the Captain escorted me here.

BOXER

What is your business, I am busy?

SEACOLE

My stores are on the Nonpareil which is not allowed into the harbor to unload --

BOXER

Do you know how many ships are in the harbor or waiting to harbor?

SEACOLE

Quite a few.

BOXER

Damn it, we don't have time to unload stores from all and every civilian who should not be here anyway.

SEACOLE

I am here to provide comfort and nursing to your wounded.

BOXER

We have doctors for that. All right, I will issue an order for the Nonpareil to enter. But, you had better make sure the damn job is completed in a hurry.

SEACOLE

We will. Thank you for your --

BOXER

Goodbye.

Mrs. Seacole and the Naval Captain #1 turn and make leave of the Admiral in a hurry.

BOXER

(mumbling to himself)

Damn women, coming out to a place
where they are not wanted. Piss
poor stuff.

EXT. WHARF - DAYS LATER

Mrs. Seacole, with the help of two laborers and Jew Johnny,
finish the job of raising the tarpaulin over the stores which
are stacked on the shore.

Mrs. Seacole sets up her counter under a tarpaulin and brings
out the stores she has purchased. Soldiers and wharf workers
line up to purchase her goods.

SICK WHARF - LATER

Mrs. Seacole, dressed in her yellow dress, blue bonnet with
the red ribbons, is among the ambulances helping to move the
sick and wounded into the transport ships that will carry
them to hospitals in Scutari.

Long trains of mules and ambulances come to the ship dock
where doctors and navy men work to arrange the stretchers on
the wharf waiting to be lifted.

Mrs. Seacole sees an artilleryman, SOLDIER #2, in a dirty
uniform, sallow face, dirty hair, bandaged arm, stretched
upon a pallet, groaning heavily.

SEACOLE

Easy, son.

She works with his bandage, easing the stiff dressings.

SOLDIER #2

Ha! This is surely a woman's hand.

SEACOLE

Let me fix this bandage, You'll be
fine.

SOLDIER #2

God bless you, woman, whoever you
are. Thank you.

SEACOLE

Quiet now, they will get you soon.

Mrs. Seacole moves back to the row of soldiers waiting to be
lifted up and works with their bandages. DOCTOR #2, a pale,
thin man, balding, wearing a doctor's coat, comes up to
Mrs. Seacole as she works on a wounded soldier and touches
her shoulder.

DOCTOR #2

How do you do, Ma'am? Much obliged to you for looking after my poor fellow

SEACOLE

A heart-wrenching sight, it is.

DOCTOR #2

Very glad to see you here.

Doctor #2 moves on and Mrs. Seacole moves over to a soldier whose bandage has loosened and while she is helping, Admiral Boxer silently comes up behind her and looks on, his hands behind his back. He watches the sick being lifted.

She moves from soldier to soldier checking their bandages and clothing to ease their pain. The Admiral moves over to Mrs. Seacole.

BOXER

I am glad to see you here, old lady, among these poor fellows.

SEACOLE

Thank you, Admiral.

One soldier is raised somewhat awkwardly and groans loudly. The Admiral gestures at them.

BOXER

(sputtering)

For God's sake take more care.

The ambulances continue to arrive and the wharf is now busy with those taking care of the new arrivals.

WHARF - DUSK

Mrs. Seacole and Jew Johnny are behind the counter taking items from the boxes and setting them up in other containers.

SEACOLE

Johnny, are you sure you want to do this?

JEW JOHNNY

Ya, me keep crooks out. They no steal with me here.

SEACOLE

Will you be safe, you staying out here all night?

JEW JOHNNY

Sure, Me okay.

SEACOLE

Then I'll leave you. Come get me if something happens.

JEW JOHNNY

No bad happen, me okay.

Mrs. Seacole leaves and goes down the wharf as Jew Johnny fixes a soft seat among the boxes and settles down.

The wharf is quiet as the workers have either gone to their beds or in one of the liquor shacks away from the shore.

WHARF - NIGHT

Johnny is awakened by the SOUND of SCRATCHING. He looks around the corner and sees a large Turkish man opening a box and placing packages of butter in a sack.

JEW JOHNNY

(in Arabic; subtitled)

Hey, stop you.

The Turk turns and runs with Johnny chasing him down the wharf. The Turk turns into the area behind the engineer's quarters and disappears into a door. Jew Johnny stands looking at the closed door.

WHARF - MORNING

Mrs. Seacole, Jew Johnny and OFFICER #1, a short, portly man in an officer's uniform, from the Provost Marshall's office, walk rapidly down the wharf toward the door in back of the engineer's office. They reach the door and Mrs. Seacole brazenly opens the door and starts inside.

INT. TURK'S ROOM

Mrs. Seacole, Jew Johnny and Officer #1 enter the room and see the Turk asleep on a dirty bed in the cluttered and filthy room.

SEACOLE

You, get up.

Officer #1 hits the bottom of the Turk's feet with his club.

OFFICER #1

On your feet.

JEW JOHNNY

Butter, where butter?

OFFICER #1

You, get up, Stand aside.

The Turk stands, moves aside, and Officer #1 searches beneath the bed, pulls out a dirty sack, looks inside. He holds up one of the packages.

OFFICER #1
Miss, is this yours?

SEACOLE
Yes.

JEW JOHNNY
He take. Steal it.

Officer #1 hands the sack to Mrs. Seacole and takes another look under the bed.

OFFICER #1
What's this, now?

The officer pulls out a two-dozen case of sherry.

JEW JOHNNY
That our drink.

OFFICER #1
This yours?

SEACOLE
Yes, that is ours.

The officer hands the case to Jew Johnny.

OFFICER #1
You can leave. I'll take care of him.

SEACOLE
Thank you officer. I wish we could catch more of these vermin.

OFFICER #1
Hard to do. They're masters of thievery.

EXT. WHARF

Mrs. Seacole and Jew Johnny move across the wharf with the items that were stolen.

JEW JOHNNY
We catch some back.

SEACOLE
Yes, some. These rascals have stolen hundreds of pounds more.

SICK WHARF - LATER

Mrs. Seacole is again on the sick wharf attending to the soldiers as they arrive from the front on ambulances and wagons. Stretchers are all over the wharf as doctors move from one to the other checking their wounds and applying bandages.

She moves over to a artilleryman on a stretcher and applies some salve or medicine and works a bandage on his wound.

As she finishes, Mrs. Seacole hears her name called out, rises, and turns to see a familiar face. SEAMAN #1 waves to her from a stretcher, a slim muscular young man in naval cotton, rugged face, only one leg. She moves over to the man waving and smiling.

SEACOLE

Never would I think of seeing you here.

SEAMAN #1

(excitedly)

Why, as I live, if this ain't Aunty Seacole, of Jamaica!

SEACOLE

Bless you, my boy.

SEAMAN #1

Shiver all that's left of my poor timbers, if this ain't a rum go, mates!

Mrs. Seacole sits on a large timber next to his stretcher.

SEACOLE

Ah, I'm sorry to see you in this sad plight.

SEAMAN #1

Never fear for me, Aunty Seacole. I'll make the best of the leg the Rooshians have left me. I'll get at 'em soon again, never fear.

SEACOLE

You bear your troubles well, my son.

SEAMAN #1

Eh, do I Aunty? Why, look'ye, when I've seen so many pretty fellows knocked off the ship's roll altogether, don't you think I ought to be thankful if I can answer the bosun's call?

Mrs. Seacole pours Seaman #1 some of the lemonade she is carrying.

SEACOLE
 Forget the Russians. You need to
 work on getting well.

Seaman #1 sips the lemonade and lies back on the stretcher.

SEAMAN #1
 (more serious)
 You don't think my messmates will
 think less of us at home for coming
 back with a limb or so short?

SEACOLE
 Think less? They'll shower medals
 on the likes of you.

A smile comes over his face as he closes his eyes.

INT. MEDORA CABIN

Mrs. Seacole is seated at a small table writing when the
 door opens and Thomas Day sticks his head in the door.

THOMAS
 Some good news.

Thomas enters the room and moves over to Mrs. Seacole as she
 turns.

SEACOLE
 I need some.

Pulling out a sheet of paper from his pocket.

THOMAS
 This is a leave I obtained to erect
 buildings here.

SEACOLE
 Is it true, at last?

THOMAS
 Not only that, I discovered a bit of
 land, just two or three miles from
 the wharf where we can build.

SEACOLE
 That far from the boats?

THOMAS
 Here's the good thing. The land is
 just down the road from the British
 Headquarters and not far from the
 French camp.

SEACOLE

Perfect, just wonderful. Away from all of this thievery and close to my boys.

THOMAS

It's a little place called Spring Hill.

SEACOLE

When can I see it?

THOMAS

Tomorrow. I borrowed two horses, it's an easy ride.

SEACOLE

(laughing heartily)
Me, on a horse?

THOMAS

Why not. The railway is not far from there, so we can move large materials. The Admiral has already provided some rubbish from the harbor and I hired two English sailors to work on the shed.

SEACOLE

Shed, Just a shed?

THOMAS

You need a place to stay. A shed first, while we build the hotel.

SEACOLE

I'm ready for anything.

EXT. WHARF - MORNING

Mrs. Seacole and Thomas are on the borrowed horses, riding down the wharf, away from the shore.

COUNTRYSIDE

The sun is shining in a cloudless sky as Mrs. Seacole and Thomas move down a dirt road past the British Headquarters Building.

They move across the landscape toward a small stream snaking in front of them.

As they reach the plot of land beside the stream, there are two men working with lumber and iron, raising a building.

THOMAS

Here we are.

Mrs. Seacole and Thomas dismount and move over to the two men, SAILOR #1, and SAILOR #2. Scores of building materials are stacked in separate piles around the site.

THOMAS

Hello, you there.

SAILOR #1

We need more nails.

SAILOR #2

And some more help.

THOMAS

This is Mrs. Seacole. She is the owner of this establishment.

SAILOR #1

Hello, ma'am.

SAILOR #2

You expect to live here?

SEACOLE

Certainly. If you build it.

SAILOR #1

We'll do that.

SEACOLE

Goodness, one of you is short and the other tall. I may have to call you Big Chip and Little Chip.

SAILOR #2

My buddies call me worse.

Mrs. Seacole and Thomas move over to the stream and observe the landscape.

SEACOLE

Does this waterway ever get larger.

THOMAS

Don't know. Hope not. This is the only spot of land available.

SEACOLE

We need more help here.

THOMAS

There is a Turkish Pacha has a headquarters not far from here. He commands a Turkish Division, is willing to help. You and Jew Johnny can go over and see him tomorrow.

SEACOLE

Me! See a Turkish Pacha?

THOMAS

That's why you need Jew Johnny.

They see a horse drawn carriage come over the ridge and move toward them. In the carriage is CHEF ALEXIS SOYER, a medium-sized transplanted Frenchman with dark hair, dark half-circle beard, a large French style cap worn at a rakish angle, dressed in an embroidered silk suit in shades of violet and green, and SOLDIER #6

Mrs. Seacole and Thomas walk over to meet the carriage as Soyer and Soldier #6 step out of the carriage. Thomas strides up to Soyer and shakes his hand.

THOMAS

Chef, this is a very great pleasure.
Mrs. Seacole, this is Chef Alexis
Soyer.

SEACOLE

My goodness. Welcome.

SOYER

The world has heard of Soyer,
n'est-ce pas? This is my guide.

Soldier #6 touches the brim of his hat to Mrs. Seacole.

SOLDIER #6

Please to meet you.

THOMAS

What are you doing so far from
Balaklava?

SOYER

We visit Land Transport Hospital
down the road. I work with Miss
Nightingale, advise army on cooking.

SEACOLE

Is she here?

SOLDIER #6

Miss Nightingale arrived last week.

THOMAS

Well, Chef, see what we are building.

SOYER

This structure, what?

SEACOLE

Come see. Our British Hotel.

Mrs. Seacole motions Chef Soyer to follow her and she leads him to the edge of the building site.

SEACOLE

Over there is where the commissary will be, stoves for meals, provisions for sale. In the back, sick beds.

SOYER

Yes, good food needed for soldiers here, not sick beds.

SEACOLE

But --

SOYER

Not make money with sick beds.

SEACOLE

Over there, that area, is where we will have beds for visitors.

SOYER

No, no, no, please. The visitors will be few in number. And, they sleep on board the vessels in the harbor.

SEACOLE

But, the officers need --

SOYER

The officers, they sleep under canvass in the camp. You make money with good stock of hams, wines, spirits, ale.

SEACOLE

Yes, I will have all of that.

SOYER

And sauces, pickles, some porter. I am running on, excusez-moi!

SEACOLE

No, you are helpful.

SOYER

Provide a few preserves and dry vegetables. You make money like that.

Soldier #6 moves over to Chef and Mrs. Seacole.

SOLDIER #6

Chef, sir, we will be late.

SOYER

Ah, yes.

Mrs. Seacole follows Chef Soyer as he moves back to Thomas and shakes his hand.

SOYER

I see you in Balaklava?

THOMAS

Tomorrow.

SOYER

À demain.

Chef moves to Mrs. Seacole and kisses her hand and motions to Officer #6 to the cart.

SOYER

Good luck to you. If I may help,
Thomas knows to find me. Au revoir.

Soyer and Officer #6 drive off in the cart as Mrs. Seacole and Thomas walk toward them.

THOMAS

Good advice?

SEACOLE

Yes, good advice. We must make money
in this venture. Look Thomas.

THOMAS

At what?

SEACOLE

At what we are building. I wish
mother was here, she would be so
proud of us.

THOMAS

Proud of you.

FLASHBACK - INT. JAMAICA - BOARDINGHOUSE

Mary hands a glass of liquid to a British officer who is one of the invalids cared for in their establishment. Fifteen year old Mary Jane Grant is as yet unmarried and goes by the name of Grant, her Scottish father's name.

MOTHER (O.S.)

Mary, would you come in here?

SUPER: "JAMAICA, THIRTY-SIX YEARS EARLIER"

SEACOLE

Yes, mother.

Mary walks to the kitchen door and passes out of the room.

KITCHEN

Her MOTHER, a pleasantly plump Creole woman, dressed in a Jamaican print dress, hair cut short in curls, light complexion is straining a green liquid into one of the bottles on the counter.

Mary enters and walks over to her mother at the sink.

SEACOLE

Yes, ma'am.

MOTHER

Are you through with the patients?

SEACOLE

For now.

MOTHER

Then come over here and help me.
You must learn to make my
preparations. Herbal medicine is
what I do and what you must learn to
do.

SEACOLE

It's difficult to remember.

MOTHER

Mary Grant, of course it difficult.
Good things in life always hard,
remember that.

SEACOLE

Yes, ma'am.

MOTHER

You must work at hard things if you
want to make a success. This
boardinghouse I leave to you. British
officers pay good if you nurse them,
make them well. You no work in field.

SEACOLE

No, I won't. I'll be a doctress,
like you.

MOTHER

Hard work and you inherit career.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NEXT DAY

Jew Johnny and Mrs. Seacole are on horses moving down a dirt road.

They ride down a slope toward a gathering of tents and head for the large tent in the middle. Jew Johnny leans over and speaks to one of the Turkish Soldiers.

JEW JOHNNY
(in Arabic; subtitled)
Place of Pacha?

The soldier points in the direction of the large tent. Mrs. Seacole and Jew Johnny move to the tent and dismount.

JEW JOHNNY
(in Arabic; subtitled)
Thomas Day send Mrs. Seacole see
Pacha.

The soldier points to opening in tent and escorts them forward.

INT. PACHA TENT

Mrs. Seacole and Jew Johnny enter the large tent where the PACHA, a dark, wizened, older Turkish man, suited in a high ornate turban and soldier outfit is seated on a cushioned chair, behind an ornate table, smoking on a Turkish water pipe.

JEW JOHNNY
(in Arabic; subtitled)
Mr. Pacha, here Mrs. Seacole.

PACHA
(in Arabic; subtitled)
Where Is Mr. Day?

JEW JOHNNY
(in Arabic; subtitled)
Not here. Mrs. Seacole come to visit.

The Pacha stands up and addresses the Turkish guard.

PACHA
(in Arabic; subtitled)
Bring them chairs.

A Turkish guard moves two cushioned chairs to the front of the Pacha's table and The Pacha, Mrs. Seacole and Jew Johnny sit.

SEACOLE
Tell him that we appreciate his offer to help in the building of our hotel. Can he provide carpenters for the building?

JEW JOHNNY

(in Arabic; subtitled)

Mrs. Seacole gives thanks for your offer to help. Is Turkish carpenters okay to work on building?

PACHA

(in Arabic; subtitled)

I advised Mr. Day that just now we are not in battle. We have men skilled in carpentry and I can provide for your use. You will pay of course.

JEW JOHNNY

(in Arabic; subtitled)

He say can provide. Must pay.

SEACOLE

Tell him, we are glad to pay for the help.

JEW JOHNNY

(in Arabic; subtitled)

Pay is okay.

PACHA

(in Arabic; subtitled)

Tomorrow morning, I will send two men to your location.

JEW JOHNNY

Two men, tomorrow.

The Pacha stands and comes around the table to Mrs. Seacole as both she and Jew Johnny stand. The Pacha takes Mrs. Seacole's hand and kisses her ring.

PACHA

(in Arabic; subtitled)

I look forward to visiting your hotel in the future.

JEW JOHNNY

Says he visit you soon.

Holding her hand, the Pacha escorts Mrs. Seacole to the opening of the tent as Jew Johnny follows. Mrs. Seacole waves at the Pacha as She and Jew Johnny exit the tent.

EXT. SPRING HILL - NEXT DAY

Mrs. Seacole and Jew Johnny are moving boards from a pile to the site of the shed where the two soldiers are working when two Turkish carpenters arrive.

Jew Johnny moves to them and engages the men in conversation. He takes the two to the site and provides translation for

the sailors and Turkish carpenters as Mrs. Seacole watches from a distance.

Just then, a TURKISH OFFICER #1, a tall, muscular man with a long black beard, smart headdress, comes over the hill, heads for Mrs. Seacole and bows to her.

TURKISH OFFICER #1
I carpenter, Captain in Pacha army.
Have desire to work as carpenter
with you, Pacha says okay.

SEACOLE
You speak English.

TURKISH OFFICER #1
Me speak little English.

SEACOLE
You speak good English. We need
your help. Those men over there,
introduce yourself and they will
tell you what to do.

TURKISH OFFICER #1
I thank lady for work. I be good
man to work at this.

SEACOLE
Good.

Turkish Officer #1 moves over to the other men as Mrs. Seacole stands with hands on hip staring.

SEACOLE
(to herself)
I'll call you Captain Ali Baba.

SPRING HILL SHED - WEEK LATER

The large shed is completed. Rain is coming down in buckets as Mrs. Seacole and the workers are racing to get some of the supplies outside of the shed under a number of tarps. The stream is full and threatening to overflow its banks.

Jew Johnny is dragging a tarp to some of the furthest supplies when he spies a man running down the hill to them gesturing and yelling.

The man reaches Jew Johnny and he immediately runs toward the shed where Mrs. Seacole has retreated for cover.

INT. SHED

JEW JOHNNY
Run away. Man say dam away.

SEACOLE

Away. What do you mean?

JEW JOHNNY

Dam explode, umm, say blow up.

With this announcement, there is the THUD of WATER hitting the shed and flowing into the interior.

Boxes are swamped as Mrs. Seacole and Jew Johnny attempt to keep supplies from washing away through the shed doors in the large volume of water.

SEACOLE

Get that box.

Mrs. Seacole rushes through the door after one of the boxes.

EXT. FLOODED CREEK SIDE

The small creek has flooded its banks and is a foot high in the surrounding land. Mrs. Seacole rushes after the floating box, loses her balance, and is rolled over by the stream. With some difficulty reaches the shore. She wades back to the door of the shed as the water recedes.

INT. SHED

Mrs. Seacole surveys the disaster, rights a chair and sits with her head in her hands. Jew Johnny looks into the boxes of supplies shaking his head.

SHED - DAYS LATER

The inside of the shed has been righted and Mrs. Seacole is arranging some of the supplies. Three soldiers are chatting on the back of the shed, enjoying some of Mrs. Seacole's claret. The door opens and Jew Johnny comes in followed by the Turkish Pacha and two of his Turkish soldiers. One is carrying the Pacha's pipe.

JEW JOHNNY

Go outside, look. He come to see about flood. Bring chickens, lambs, look here eggs.

Mrs. Seacole motions to the Pacha.

SEACOLE

Come in please.

Jew Johnny hands the basket of eggs to Mrs. Seacole who points to the back table and chairs and the Pacha moves to the table and sits, one Turk places the pipe on the floor beside him and both Turks sit at the side of the Pacha's chair.

PACHA

(in Arabic; subtitled)
The flood caused great damage. I
hear of your disaster. My gift.

JEW JOHNNY

He hear about flood, bring things.

SEACOLE

Thank the Pacha. Ask if he would
like a drink.

JEW JOHNNY

(in Arabic; subtitled)
She say thanks. Offer drink.

One of the Turks inserts little red-hot pieces of charcoal
at intervals in the pipe. The Pacha points to the men at
the back table.

PACHA

(in Arabic; subtitled)
Same thing they drink.

SEACOLE

Isn't he Muslin? Can he drink liquor?

JEW JOHNNY

He drink everythin'. He Pacha.

Mrs. Seacole shrugs and goes to the counter, pours a glass
of her claret and with the bottle in her hand, takes it to
the Pacha. He takes a drink, smiles, nods his head and takes
the bottle. The Pacha motions to Jew Johnny to sit and talk
with him.

PACHA

(in Arabic; subtitled)
This is very good, what I like.
Tomorrow I send Araba with glass
doors and window-frames.

JEW JOHNNY

He say he send wagon with glass doors,
window frames for hotel building.
Tomorrow

SEACOLE

Thank him. Let him know our
appreciation for his generosity.

JEW JOHNNY

I tell.

Mrs. Seacole moves toward the soldiers at the back table,
fills their glasses as the Pacha and Jew Johnny converse in
Arabic.

BUILDING BRITISH HOTEL - MONTAGE

Captain Ali Baba and the two turks are lifting and setting in place iron bars for the long floor room.

Jew Johnny and the two soldiers are finishing the sties for the animals that are on the premises.

Mrs. Seacole is directing the workers that are completing the two wooden houses with sleeping apartments for her and for Thomas Day.

Jew Johnny herds the sheep and pigs into the enclosures.

Thomas inspects the work on the stables for the horses and mules they have purchased as one of the workers brings the horses to their enclosures.

EXT. BRITISH HOTEL - SUMMER

The building is almost complete. Mrs. Seacole and Thomas are standing in front of the British Hotel, a two story building that has been constructed on the site. A Union Jack flutters above their heads.

The little kitchen with the stoves and shelves is complete. They are finishing the out-houses for the servants and a canteen for the soldiers.

SEACOLE

Almost

THOMAS

Almost what?

SEACOLE

You know what I mean. It is almost finished.

THOMAS

Never, it never is, with you. We will be building here --

SEACOLE

Thomas, if it were finished completely, we could go home right now. Part of the joy is knowing that there is something else to do.

THOMAS

Is there some purpose behind that reasoning?

SEACOLE

It is my idea of happiness. Serving my boys is my purpose. Did you get the other supplies?

THOMAS

Came in yesterday. The boys will bring them tomorrow.

SEACOLE

Good. We have the 97th coming by tomorrow and I need those things.

INT. BRITISH HOTEL - MAIN ROOM - DAY

The inside of the British Hotel is filled with customers wanting stores, dinners, lunches; loungers and idlers seek conversation and amusement.

Customers surround the counter ordering and then leaving with their packages. The black cooks are behind the counter filling orders from the soldiers and laborers.

Mrs. Seacole is passing among the customers, greeting friends, laughing with them when she arrives at the table of OFFICER #2 and OFFICER #3, both uniformed British soldiers.

OFFICER #2

Mrs. Seacole, you promised me rice pudding. Didn't you say rice pudding?

SEACOLE

I did. And, if you behave yourself, you might get rice pudding.

OFFICER #2

(laughing loudly)

I am damned to hell then for I cannot behave.

OFFICER #3

It was Sunday, wasn't it George, that we came by and mother was closed. Locked up.

OFFICER #2

Damn well it was. Tight as a drum.

SEACOLE

You know we don't open on Sunday. Would you deny me a day of rest?

OFFICER #2

(slyly)

Nothing would I deny you.

SEACOLE

Get on with it. Wait a minute.

Mrs. Seacole leaves the officers and disappears through the kitchen area door.

KITCHEN

SEACOLE

Do we have rice pudding ready?

One of the black cooks hands her two large shallow pans of rice pudding.

Mrs. Seacole exits through the kitchen door balancing the trays in her hands.

MAIN ROOM

Mrs. Seacole enters the main room displaying the pans of rice pudding.

SEACOLE

(shouting)

Rice pudding day, my sons.

She places the pans on the counter and the black cooks scoop out the pudding into small glass containers. The two officers rush to the counter as other soldiers rush after them.

Mrs. Seacole stands back with her hands on her hips looking gleefully at the rush to the counter.

SEACOLE

Patience, patience, boys. There is more.

Mrs. Seacole moves over and sits at a side table next to CAVALRY OFFICER #1, lean and fit, blonde hair and beard and mustache.

SEACOLE

Where are your friends from this morning?

CAVALRY OFFICER #1

They are on the way. I'm glad that you sit with me. I heard some very pleasant news about a purchase you have made.

SEACOLE

Purchase. My purchase?

CAVALRY OFFICER #1

It is rumored that you are now in possession of a young porker from a ship in Balaklava. Is that true?

SEACOLE

It is no secret. We often purchase farm animals.

CAVALRY OFFICER #1
 Ah, but this a delicacy that is not
 always available here. You are, I
 understand, resolute to fattening
 the young thing.

SEACOLE
 True. Why are you so interested?

In walks the two friends of Cavalry Officer #1. They stride
 over to the table and pull up chairs and sit.

CAVALRY OFFICER #1
 I was just inquiring of Mother Seacole
 regarding the disposition of the
 porker we talked about.

CAVALRY OFFICER #2
 Yes, We are very interested in the
 fate of the young animal.

SEACOLE
 Interested, are you?

CAVALRY OFFICER #3
 Interested, yes. We three are
 interested in purchasing a proprietary
 ownership of part of the fellow.

CAVALRY OFFICER #2
 Yes, we look forward to acquiring
 one of the four legs, when that
 occasion presents itself

SEACOLE
 You wish to buy one of the legs,
 now?

CAVALRY OFFICER #1
 Exactly.

CAVALRY OFFICER #2
 The idea precisely.

SEACOLE
 I can offer you one leg if that
 opportunity presents itself.

CAVALRY OFFICER #1
 Splendid. My fellows here will attest
 to that fact that you offer one leg
 when and if available.

SEACOLE
 Now that you are all here. You might
 want to, perhaps, purchase something?

Mrs. Seacole stands, starts away, turns, and looks at the three soldiers who are smiling broadly, shakes her head and walks towards the kitchen.

EXT. BRITISH HOTEL STABLES - MANY DAYS LATER

Mrs. Seacole is pitching hay to one of the horses when she hears the sound of shouts and laughter. She looks up the hill and sees Cavalry Officers #1, #2, #3, riding toward her.

CAVALRY OFFICER #1
(laughing)
Mother Seacole!

CAVALRY OFFICER #2
(shouting)
Old lady! Quick!

CAVALRY OFFICER #3
(laughing)
The pig's gone.

Mrs. Seacole rushes to the pig sty and discovered that it is empty. She runs to the back door and calls out.

SEACOLE
Jew Johnny, Jew Johnny, come, quick.

Jew Johnny rushes out of the back door of the British Hotel and runs to Mrs. Seacole.

JEW JOHNNY
What is?

SEACOLE
Come, come, the pig is stolen.

Mrs. Seacole and Jew Johnny follow the three officers on horseback. They move up the trail away from the hotel and see in the distance a horseman wave his cap.

The three officers, Mrs. Seacole, and Jew Johnny reach a little hollow and there are two Greek thieves huddling on the ground. The porker is still panting from his ordeal.

SEACOLE
Thievery. In the middle of the day.

Turning to one of the officers.

SEACOLE
Lock them up.

CAVALRY OFFICER #2
That we will do. These pig rustlers
will answer to a higher authority.

CAVALRY OFFICER #3
Our fellow will take them to the
provost marshall.

CAVALRY OFFICER #1
You take our friendly porker in hand.

SEACOLE
Jew Johnny, tie that lead rope.

The officers and their friend herd the two Greek thieves
while Mrs. Seacole and Jew Johnny move down the trail back
to the hotel.

Cavalry Officer #1 rides up to Mrs. Seacole.

CAVALRY OFFICER #1
My very special leg has had a narrow
escape. Please think and see if
your projected date of his demise
should not be advanced?

SEACOLE
Tomorrow, then. Tomorrow.

Cavalry Officer #1 touches the brim of his hat to her, smiles
and rides off. They start again toward the hotel.

JEW JOHNNY
I sorry for little pig, he go.

SEACOLE
If I don't do something, these
soldiers will drive me to distraction.
I have already promised fourteen
legs, I expect. And five times as
many other parts.

JEW JOHNNY
That take miracle.

Jew Johnny smiles mischievously at Mrs. Seacole and nudges
the pig faster down the trail.

EXT. BRITISH HOTEL - MORNING

Mrs. Seacole is walking toward the stables where Jew Johnny
is preparing the horses for their ride to the Land Transport
Hospital.

JEW JOHNNY
They ready. Why I go?

SEACOLE
To help me carry this food.

JEW JOHNNY

They have food. Land Transport
Hospital give food.

SEACOLE

They don't have mince pies and sponge
cake. Some of our friends are in
there and they barely get enough to
eat.

Jew Johnny helps Mrs. Seacole up on her horse and gives her
a bag which she slings on the saddle horn. Jew Johnny mounts
his horse and lifts the bag onto the saddle.

JEW JOHNNY

You go because of Nightingale.

SEACOLE

Not entirely.

JEW JOHNNY

You know she come there. You no
like her.

SEACOLE

(imitating)

She no like me. Let's go.

Mrs. Seacole and Jew Johnny ride up the hill and disappear
into the distance.

LAND TRANSPORT HOSPITAL - LATER

Mrs. Seacole and Jew Johnny ride up to the front of a white-
washed building. They dismount, take their bags, and enter
the building.

INT. HOSPITAL WARD

In one of the corridors, Mrs. Seacole stops a nurse, talks
to her, and motions Jew Johnny to follow.

Half-way down the hall, Mrs. Seacole stops at a section of
the ward and greets the five men in the hospital beds.

SEACOLE

We found you.

The men respond in unison as they move around her.

MEN

Mother Seacole.

Mrs. Seacole places a sack on one of the tables and
distributes the individually wrapped pies to the men.

SEACOLE

Take your time now. No need to eat them right away.

Jew Johnny comes into the room.

JEW JOHNNY

Someone want see you.

SEACOLE

Who?

He points to the hallway.

JEW JOHNNY

You go out there.

SEACOLE

Show them the food.

Mrs. Seacole moves into the hall and sees Florence Nightingale standing against a window.

NIGHTINGALE

Mrs. Seacole. You are here again.

SEACOLE

These men are friends and customers of mine. I came to cheer them --

NIGHTINGALE

That is laudable but we have talked before and the hospital does not approve of the herbal remedies you bring.

Conversation ceases as two nurses pass pushing a cart.

SEACOLE

Mince pies, That's what I brought.

NIGHTINGALE

That is clever of you but we provide all of the food they need.

SEACOLE

You remember that Sir John Hall, your inspector-general of hospitals gave me his sanction to prescribe my herbal remedies in the Crimea.

NIGHTINGALE

And you may do so. In your own establishment, not here.

SEACOLE

My remedies are herbal medicines.
My mother and I have nursed hundreds
of people with these medicines.

NIGHTINGALE

At the moment our nurses are currently
preparing to administer the morning
prescriptions. You may want to come
back another time.

SEACOLE

I will leave then, if I am in the
way.

NIGHTINGALE

Thank you for thoughtfulness.

Mrs. Seacole moves back to the ward and calls to Jew Johnny.

SEACOLE

Johnny, come along, we are asked to
go.

Jew Johnny collects the empty bags and follows Mrs. Seacole
down the hall as Florence Nightingale watches.

INT. BRITISH HOTEL - MAIN ROOM - LATER

Mrs. Seacole rushes into the room with Jew Johnny not far
behind. She addresses Thomas who is seated at the counter.

SEACOLE

Herbal remedies, that is what she
calls my medicines.

JEW JOHNNY

Better no go back.

THOMAS

Who said that?

JEW JOHNNY

She go see Nightingale.

THOMAS

You won't win there.

Mrs. Seacole moves around the counter and starts rearranging
the items on the shelves and counter.

SEACOLE

Creole women have trained in herbal
arts for a long time. We cared for
sick slaves on British plantations
when no one else did.

THOMAS

You don't have to worry about your reputation.

SEACOLE

She sees a yellow skin woman not like her.

THOMAS

Maybe not.

SEACOLE

I think so. American prejudice is creeping in here too. If not that, then what?

THOMAS

You serve liquor. Uptight people don't like that.

SEACOLE

Still, they go to their London clubs and get drunk.

THOMAS

Not the ladies. The men don't care.

JEW JOHNNY

Many dark in face out here. No matter. I take care horses.

Jew Johnny exits out of the front door.

THOMAS

The British Hotel is your job. You take care of your sons here.

SEACOLE

That's what I shall do.

EXT. BRITISH HOTEL - MORNING

The sound of ARTILLERY FIRING is heard as Mrs. Seacole rushes out of her cabin in back of the hotel. Loud EXPLOSIONS RICOCHET as missiles hit the ground.

Mrs. Seacole has a large bag slung across her shoulder containing lint, bandages, needles, thread, and medicines to assist the wounded.

Jew Johnny and Thomas rush out of the front door of the hotel with sacks containing bread, cheese, sandwiches, cooked fowls, tongues and hams, wine and spirits and place the packages into a small mule cart. They both get into the cart and proceed to follow Mrs. Seacole.

Mrs. Seacole leads the cart up the hill and both disappear up and over the rise.

TCHERNAYA - LATER

Mrs. Seacole, Thomas and Jew Jerry arrive on the Fediukine Heights, above the battlefield below, as the ARTILLERY BLASTS increase in intensity.

SUPER: "TCHERNAYA BATTLEFIELD, AUGUST 15, 1855"

SEACOLE

Thomas, set up the supplies back
There.

THOMAS

Jew Johnny, take the cart and mules
away from the ridge. They're
Frightened.

Mrs. Seacole stands at the edge of the heights with a number of civilian onlookers at the battle raging below.

The Russians advance into battle with 47,000 infantry, 10,000 cavalry, and 270 cannons. They are in the process of crossing the narrow Traktir Bridge over the Tchernaya River. French, Sardinian, and Ottoman troops are defending.

The attacking Russians meet stiff resistance from the French, Sardinians, and Ottoman troops. Going in regiment by regiment, the assault troops of the Russian Army accomplish nothing.

Prince Michael Gorchakov orders General Read to deploy the entire division against the French, and they force the French back up the Heights.

The Russians come under fire from the Sardinians and are driven back. At 10 o'clock, in the morning, Gorchakov orders a general retreat. The dark-plumed Sardinians, and the red-pantaloon French spread out in pursuit.

SEACOLE

Thomas, I am going down. Watch the
stores.

THOMAS

I'll see you in a minute.

Mrs. Seacole, with her medicines, starts down a path from the heights to the field of battle. She races to the first soldier and finds a number of them are dead. One soldier is moaning and she stops and addresses his wounds and offers a sip of water.

SEACOLE

I'm here to help. Hold still.

OFFICER #4

My arm.

SEACOLE

Yes, this will clean it off. Let me dress this.

OFFICER #4

God bless you, woman.

Scores of military are now moving over the battle field. The plunderers are busy everywhere. The French strip the dead of what is valuable.

Mrs. Seacole moves to another nearby soldier badly shot in the lower jaw. She inserts her finger into his mouth to feel for the bullet and his teeth close around his finger.

SEACOLE

Help. Someone help with this.

ORDERLY #1, a tall man in a dirty coat streaked with blood rushes over to her.

ORDERLY #1

What's the trouble.

SEACOLE

Can't get his mouth open.

ORDERLY #1

Hold on.

The orderly is able to get the jaw open enough so that Mrs. Seacole removes her finger.

SEACOLE

Oh, thank you.

Orderly #1 moves over to other wounded soldiers as the ambulances arrive on the scene. Thomas comes down to the battlefield and moves to Mrs. Seacole.

THOMAS

Jew Johnny is watching the stores.

SEACOLE

Help the orderly there lift that man in the ambulance.

Thomas rushes to help as Mrs. Seacole sees another ambulance orderly struggling with a wounded Sardinian soldier and helps lift the man into the ambulance.

Mrs. Seacole spies FRENCH OFFICER #5, a leggy, handsome man, with dark hair and beard, who is wounded on the hip. She rushes to his side, opens her bag, and dresses the wound.

OFFICER #5
Thank you. That stings.

SEACOLE
Yes, but it will help you. See if
you can stand.

OFFICER #5
You're Mother Seacole. Don't send
me to the Land Transport Hospital.

SEACOLE
You can go to my hotel.

Officer #5 stands with Mrs. Seacole's help and they move
across the field when she spies Thomas.

SEACOLE
Thomas, Thomas!

Thomas rushes over and shoulders Officer #5.

THOMAS
Where are you going?

SEACOLE
Take him up to the cart. He is going
with us.

THOMAS
With us, but we --

SEACOLE
Just go, I'll explain later.

Thomas places his arm around the Officer #5's shoulder and
they start up the hill.

The field is now full of soldiers and emergency help. Mrs.
Seacole walks around, checking to see if any are still alive.
She reaches down and picks up a Russian metal cross. Mrs.
Seacole walks past a Russian officer, stoops, and removes a
button from his coarse grey coat.

INT. BRITISH HOTEL - BACK ROOM

The two beds in the room are occupied with two patients, one
of the patients has dysentery and the other patient is the
Officer #5. Mrs. Seacole enters the room and moves to the
Officer #5 and checks his hip injury.

SEACOLE
This looks better today.

OFFICER #5
Yes, thank you. You save my life.

SEACOLE

God did that. I will send the cook
in with some broth.

Mrs. Seacole moves to the second beds where a British soldier
is staring at the ceiling.

SOLDIER #7

Mother, I am still running off.

SEACOLE

Did you drink my liquid?

SOLDIER #7

Yes, but it doesn't work.

SEACOLE

It takes time to work on dysentery.
They tell me you released only once
today.

SOLDIER #7

Yes, only once.

SEACOLE

Yesterday, it was three or four times.
You are getting better. I'll send
in another drink.

SOLDIER #7

Thank you, Mother.

Mrs. Seacole rises and walks toward the door of the room.

EXT. BRITISH HOTEL - THREE WEEKS LATER

We hear the continuous sound of ARTILLERY BLASTS as they
send a perfect hail of shot and shell upon the battered city
of Sebastopol. The din is so loud and constant that Mrs.
Seacole has spent a sleepless night.

Thomas and Mrs. Seacole are coming out of the stables in the
back, Thomas has a pail in his hand as they head for the
horses.

THOMAS

The shelling's getting heavier.

SEACOLE

You can't sleep with that awful
pounding. There can't be much of
Sebastopol left.

THOMAS

They say there is a great ship blazing
in the harbor.

SEACOLE

We better get there early in the morning if we want to be of any help.

THOMAS

Do you have the supplies ready?

SEACOLE

The cooks are working on the food. I dread what we will see when we get there.

THOMAS

It won't be pretty.

SEACOLE

Never is.

They reach the back door of the British Hotel and both enter.

EXT. CATHCART'S HILL ROAD - EARLY MORNING

The sun is just rising on a cold and wintry day. The ARTILLERY BOMBARDMENTS knife through the cold, still air.

Mrs. Seacole, on her horse with her bandages and medicines, and Jew Johnny and Thomas, with the creature comforts packed in their mule cart, are on the road to Cathcart's Hill.

They Go through one checkpoint where the officer recognizes Mrs. Seacole and waves her and the mule cart past.

Down the road is another checkpoint where she is stopped until the officer checks inside and then waves her past.

CATHCART'S HILL

Mrs. Seacole, Thomas and Jew Johnny remove the supplies and move to the edge of the hill, listening to the BLASTS of the CANNONS, watching the fire in Sebastopol slowly destroy the city.

The cannonading suddenly stops and outside Sebastopol in the distance, the French tumble out of their advanced trenches and roll into the Malakoff like a human flood.

SEACOLE

What's happening

THOMAS

There, the Malakoff, the French have attacked.

JEW JOHNNY

Is end now?

THOMAS
Just the beginning.

MALAKOFF - MONTAGE

At the Malakoff, the Russians and French fight in desperate hand to hand battles.

Every casemate and every traverse is taken and retaken time after time as each side attack and counterattack. The Russians retreat up the side of the hill around Sebastopol.

The Russian positions around the city come into range of the French siege GUNS which POUND the city into rubble and mow down the massed Russian soldiers along the whole line.

Wounded French soldiers are now appearing on the edge of Cathcart's Hill as they escape the Russian counter attack.

CATHCART'S HILL

Mrs. Seacole watches the soldiers climb the hill and approaches one of the wounded.

SEACOLE
Son, come here.

Mrs. Seacole reaches a soldier who is hit in the mouth, and dresses his wound.

SEACOLE
Hold this there for a while, my salve
will stop the bleeding.

There is a WHISTLING CRASH as a shell from the Russians falls near Mrs. Seacole, and she immediately drops to the ground.

SEACOLE
Oh!

The adjacent soldiers laugh and are amused at her unladylike position on the ground.

She rises from her incumbent position as one of the soldiers picks up a piece of the huge shell and brings it to her. Thomas and Jew Johnny rush to her.

THOMAS
Are you okay?

JEW JOHNNY
You hit?

SEACOLE
No, no nothing.

Mrs. Seacole brushes herself off as a soldier mounts the ridge holding his bleeding hand. She seats him on a box and proceeds to dress his hand.

Jew Johnny distributes the supplies as Thomas helps soldiers that are staggering into their view.

Night falls as the Russians file over the bridges to the north side. The night sky is lit by a lurid glow from the glare of the blazing town.

Mrs. Seacole has been watching the destruction but the bitter wind has chilled the three of them. They leave the scene on the horse and mule cart and return to the British Hotel.

SEACOLE

Thomas, let us go. It is too cold.

THOMAS

Nothing else to see, tonight.

Mrs. Seacole and Thomas move over the flat to the cart where Jew Johnny is sitting.

SEACOLE

Jew Johnny, we are leaving.

JEW JOHNNY

With me, okay.

The three of them pack up the goods that are left and start down the hill.

BRITISH HOTEL - NEXT MORNING.

A large mule wagon is leaving the hotel filled with Mrs. Seacole, Jew Johnny, Thomas, a few of their friends, refreshments for the soldiers. They are heading for the fallen city of Sebastopol.

CATHCART'S HILL

Mrs. Seacole's entourage reaches a checkpoint on the road to Sebastopol upon Carthcart's hill. General Garrett's tented quarters is situated just to the side of that point. Their caravan is stopped by SOLDIER #3, A typical British soldier in dirty uniform.

SOLDIER #3

You, stop. No further. Off limits to civilians.

SEACOLE

Where is General Garrett?

SOLDIER #3

His headquarters over there.

Mrs. Seacole dismounts and starts for the headquarters tent.

SOLDIER #3

You can't go --

SEACOLE

I certainly can. Step aside.

Mrs. Seacole pushes the soldier aside and marches to the headquarters of the General and disappears inside.

Two soldiers join Soldier #3 and they talk together, pointing to the headquarters tent.

Mrs. Seacole reappears at the door of the tent and moves back to Soldier #3 and hands him a paper.

SOLDIER #3

(reading)

Pass Mrs. Seacole and her attendants,
with refreshments for officers and
soldiers in the Redan and in
Sebastopol.

He hands the paper to Mrs. Seacole as she returns to her horse and mounts.

SEACOLE

Now stand aside, please.

The entourage then starts up and passes the dumbfounded soldiers standing at the side of the checkpoint.

SEBASTOPOL

Mrs. Seacole and the group enter a city where many parts were still blazing furiously. EXPLOSIONS ERUPT in many directions.

The group disperses and her male friends go off in various directions as Mrs. Seacole, Jew Johnny and Thomas stop when four soldiers approach. They offer refreshments to the soldiers.

THOMAS

Stop and have some refreshments.

SEACOLE

My boys, my sons, you are our heroes.

The boys stop and Mrs. Seacole and Jew Johnny provide food and drink for the men.

SEACOLE

Thomas, look.

Mrs. Seacole points to a French soldier wearing a silk shirt, torn lace upon his wrists, a parasol above his head, who mincingly imitates the walk of an affected lady, to the delight of his comrades.

Frenchmen are seen inside the destroyed buildings plundering the houses.

Mrs. Seacole, Thomas and Jew Johnny move down the streets, some buildings have fires still blazing. Periodic RIFLE FIRE from the Russians in the surrounding hills cause them to watch for an opportunity and then gallop across an exposed site.

Other soldiers off to the side are dancing, yelling, and singing, some of them with Russian women's dresses fastened round their waists, and old bonnets stuck upon their heads.

THOMAS

You keep tight to us, Mrs. Seacole.

Jew Johnny points to his head and makes a circle at his ear.

JEW JOHNNY

Crazy men. We go.

Mrs. Seacole is looking through a hole in one of the buildings and finds a cracked bell as Thomas and Jew Johnny move off down the street.

Mrs. Seacole mounts her horse, turns, and does not see Thomas or Jew Johnny. She rides to an intersection and looks all ways as a group of Frenchmen with their American sailor buddy reach her.

The American looks at Mrs. Seacole, pulls aside his French buddy and whispers loudly.

AMERICAN #1

(in French; subtitled)

Look. See her, a Russian spy.

Frenchman #1 strides up to Mrs. Seacole's horse and points to Mrs. Seacole.

FRENCHMAN #1

(in French; subtitled)

Stop. I arrest you.

The group of Frenchmen surround and hold the horse barring her way.

SEACOLE

What is he doing? Stop, I say.

AMERICAN #1

Arresting you as a spy.

One Frenchman pulls on the reigns and Mrs. Seacole hits him over the head with the cracked bell. Other Frenchmen move in and Mrs. Seacole battles them with her bell.

SEACOLE
(yelling loudly)
Thomas, help me! Thomas!

At this point Officer #5 comes upon the scene and sees Mrs. Seacole on the horse. He rushes up to the horse and addresses the French soldiers.

OFFICER #5
(in French; subtitled)
Stop now. What are you doing?

The soldiers stop, salute and back off from the horse.

FRENCHMAN #1
(in French; subtitled)
We arrest Russian spy.

OFFICER #5
(in French; subtitled)
You are buffoons! This is no spy.
Leave! About your business!

The French soldiers again salute and rush off down the street.

OFFICER #5
Mrs. Seacole. My apologies for this
ridiculous farce. How are you?

SEACOLE
Lucky you happened my way. Your
wound, sir?

He waves with the rotation of his hand to Mrs. Seacole.

OFFICER #5
Comme ci, comme ca.

Thomas and Jew Johnny rush up to the scene.

THOMAS
Where did you go? I looked around
and --

JEW JOHNNY
We so worry --

SEACOLE
Greet my officer, cured in my hospital
and now my rescuer.

THOMAS
Good day, Sir. Rescued from what?

OFFICER #5

I must go.

The Officer #5 kisses her hand and walks away.

JEW JOHNNY

Close you stay now.

SEACOLE

Close I will stay. Let's move on.
Thomas, we must find the temporary
hospital I know they will set up.

The group moves down the street as EXPLOSIONS SOUND in the city.

INT. MRS SEACOLE'S BEDROOM

Mrs. Seacole has been attacked by illness in the Crimea winter. She is in bed covered by warm clothing, a roaring fire in the hearth. The door opens and Jew Johnny comes in.

JEW JOHNNY

Your sickness feel better, no?

SEACOLE

Don't know what better is. I'll be
up tomorrow.

JEW JOHNNY

Need more blankets?

SEACOLE

Heavens no. I want no more cover.

JEW JOHNNY

(broad smile)

You have visitor. Man come to measure
you?

SEACOLE

Do what?

JEW JOHNNY

He from Sappers and Miners. He hear
you terrible sick. They sympathy
you.

SEACOLE

Just sick, not terrible sick.

JEW JOHNNY

(laughing)

He measure for coffin.

SEACOLE
 (incredulous)
 For coffin?
 (thinking; she bursts
 into laughter)
 What in the world?

JEW JOHNNY
 All men think you go to heavenly
 place.

SEACOLE
 Coffins are a luxury not normally
 available here but explain that mother
 is not terrible sick and thank him
 for his concern.

JEW JOHNNY
 I explain thanks for concern.

SEACOLE
 He could measure you.

JEW JOHNNY
 (stunned)
 No measure.
 (wiggling his finger)
 I be here long time.

Mrs. Seacole breaks into a curious smile as she watches Jew
 Johnny storm out of the room

EXT. BRITISH HOTEL - AFTERNOON

Snow covers the yard and the surrounding landscape as winter
 takes hold of the Crimea with bitter cold and biting winds.
 Soldiers in winter dress rush toward the front door.

INT. BRITISH HOTEL - MAIN ROOM

The room is decorated nicely for the season and is filled
 mostly with Mrs. Seacole's British officers. There is general
 laughter and group singing in various parts of the room.

SUPER: "CHRISTMAS, 1855"

British OFFICER #6, a cast on his arm, comes up to Mrs.
 Seacole who is filling the cups of soldiers at a table.
 Angry cries abound for the plum-pudding promised an hour
 ago.

OFFICER #6
 Darlint, there will be a mutiny if
 the aforementioned pies don't arrive.

SEACOLE
 (laughing loudly)
 Darlint, yourself. There will be a
 Mother Seacole massacre if those
 hearty fellows keep up the din.

OFFICER #6
 Just advising, old dear. Not part
 of the rebellion.

SEACOLE
 (smiling)
 Old dear, indeed. Let me see.

Mrs. Seacole moves to the kitchen door and calls inside.
 Plum pudding, please.

She moves away and a black cook brings out large dishes of
 pudding and sets them on the counter. There is a mad rush
 to be first in line for the sumptuous feast.

Mrs. Seacole moves to a table with OFFICER #7 and OFFICER
 #8, both rugged, well developed men who are friends and knew
 her in Jamaica.

OFFICER #7
 Sit, Mother, sit and tell one of
 your tales.

SEACOLE
 I am out of tales. It is too cold
 for this island girl.

OFFICER #8
 Take cheer. This is your last winter
 here.

SEACOLE
 You are so sure?

OFFICER #7
 The Russkies are freezing in the
 hinterlands, no Sebastopol for
 comfort. There's talk of an
 armistice.

SEACOLE
 Talk, talk. All they do is talk.

OFFICER #8
 That's what they do best.

OFFICER #7
 The Tzar has accepted Austria's
 demands so, why not ours.

Their conversation is interrupted by the SINGING of a group of officers who, in a group, parade around Mrs. Seacole's table.

SEACOLE

You are wrong. We will be here another year and maybe longer.

OFFICER #7

Now, don't destroy the Christmas cheer we all feel. Think on the high road.

SEACOLE

No high road here, only very cold low road.

MAIN ROOM - LATER

Mrs. Seacole is alone, sitting with her cold lunch as Thomas enters from the front door stomping his feet.

The decorations give the appearance of wear after a riotous evening with the officers.

THOMAS

Have you been out? Cold!

He hangs up his coat and hat and moves over to Mrs. Seacole.

SEACOLE

Warm yourself. There's some turkey left.

THOMAS

I'll get it.

Thomas disappears into the kitchen as Mrs. Seacole continues her meal. He returns with a plate of food.

SEACOLE

No pudding?

THOMAS

Didn't think so? I found a mince pie slice was left.

SEACOLE

I'm worried, Thomas. The boys were talking about leaving soon, when they sign the armistice.

THOMAS

That might take months.

SEACOLE

Peace will be our ruin, you know that. We have too much ordered if they make peace.

THOMAS

I'll see what we can cancel. Some of the orders may already be heading our way.

SEACOLE

See what you can do.

Mrs. Seacole rises and starts for the kitchen with her dishes.

SEACOLE

Worry is all I can do now, just worry.

EXT. BRITISH HEADQUARTERS - PARADE GROUND

Soldiers are standing in numerous huddles adjacent to the headquarters building. The snow is still on the ground. Soldiers stomp their feet and flail their arms attempting to keep warm as they await an announcement.

SUPER: "FEBRUARY 29, 1856"

An officer rushes out of the front door waving a paper in the air.

OFFICER #9

(shouting loudly)

Armistice. It's signed. Armistice, boys.

Soldiers throw their hats in the air. There is loud shouting from the soldiers and hurrahs knife through the air. Soldiers hug each other and loud laughing erupts.

EXT. BRITISH HOTEL - SPRING - DAY

There is a large mule drawn cart in front of the hotel. Workers are loading carts and crates from the hotel into the wagon. Mrs. Seacole watches and periodically gives instructions.

Thomas rides down the hill into the scene, dismounts, and walks over to Mrs. Seacole.

SUPER: "MARCH, 1956"

THOMAS

It's official. The General announced that the Treaty of Paris has been signed. They're going home.

SEACOLE

And look what we still have. This will be our ruin, I tell you. Our customers are leaving and we have all of this.

THOMAS

Sell for what you can get.

SEACOLE

I can get nothing. The horses I sold for a song. All the livestock almost given away.

THOMAS

Do the best you can.

SEACOLE

We have boxes and boxes of wine. Well, the Russians won't get them.

One of the workers drops one of the boxes with a loud CRASH. Jew Johnny rushes out of the hotel.

JEW JOHNNY

What wrong? What happened?

Mrs. Seacole rushes over to the wagon and sends the worker inside as Jew Johnny picks up the package.

SEACOLE

See what we have to deal with?

Jew Johnny takes the dropped box back into the hotel. Thomas walks over to Mrs. Seacole at the wagon.

THOMAS

I rented the store in Balaklava. We can set up the business there and try to get some money back. There are living quarters.

SEACOLE

My heart is sick. I see nothing but debt before us.

Mrs. Seacole moves over to the wagon and the workers as Thomas watches helplessly, and scrapes the dirt with the toe of his shoe.

EXT. BALAKLAVA - DAYS LATER

The wharf is filled with ships waiting to transport the soldiers back to their native countries.

The streets are busy with merchants hawking their goods. Travelers on horse and mule carts move through the streets.

Mrs. Seacole and Thomas' store has their British Hotel sign on the front.

INT. BALAKLAVA STORE

Mrs. Seacole and Jew Johnny are setting up shelves and unloading boxes.

JEW JOHNNY

No more. Room gone, no more wine space.

SEACOLE

Where are the other cases?

JEW JOHNNY

They out back.

Mrs. Seacole moves to the back door of the store and exits.

EXT. STORE

Mrs. Seacole exits store, surveys the boxes and cases of wine, and on impulse turns and sees a hammer by the building. She takes the hammer and returns to the cases, hammering and breaking up the cases.

SEACOLE

(harshly)

Forty-eight shillings a dozen, I paid for you.

Mrs. Seacole kicks over the broken cases and out of the cases flows the wine. Passersby hold out their hands to catch the ruby stream. Jew Johnny rushes out of the building door.

JEW JOHNNY

What you do? Don't.

SEACOLE

They offer me four shillings not forty-eight, now they get nothing.

JEW JOHNNY

Maybe I sell.

SEACOLE

All of my people are gone. Who do you sell to?

Jew Johnny shrugs and walks back into the building. Mrs. Seacole leans against the wall, the hammer dangling in her hand.

EXT. CATHCART'S HILL ROAD

Mrs. Seacole has borrowed a horse and is riding up the trail on the Cathcart's Hill road. She arrives at the top and ties the horse. Taking a letter from her pocket, she moves around the hill to the stump of a tree by some graves, sits and reads.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

My Dear Mrs. Seacole. As you are about to leave the Crimea, I avail myself of the only opportunity which may occur for some time, to acknowledge my gratitude to you, and to thank you for the kindness which I, in common with many others, received at your hands, when attacked with cholera in the spring of 1855. But, I have no language to do it suitably.

Mrs. Seacole rises and moves to a grave headstone, and dropping to the ground, she brushes the lettering on the stone, then again reads.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

I am truly sensible that your kindness far exceeds my claims upon your sympathy. It is said by some of your friends, I hope truly, that you are going to England. There can be none from the Crimea more welcome there, for your kindness in the sick-tent and your heroism in the battle-field, have endeared you to the whole army.

Mrs. Seacole, rises, moves to the farthest edge of the hill, stares out at the distant sea before her, then reads.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

You have been an instrument in the hands of the almighty to preserve many a gallant heart to the empire, to fight and win her battles. Please to accept this from your most grateful humble servant, W. J. Tynan.

We hear the SOUND of the WIND over the plains as Mrs. Seacole moves to other graves, lingering long over many a mound that bears the names of those she was familiar with in life. Stooping down, she picks up pebbles, simple wild-flowers, tufts of grass.

She throws the pebbles, tufts of grass and flowers into the wind and the pebbles fall, the rest flutter away as she slowly moves back to her horse.

EXT. STEAMER - DOCKSIDE - DAYS LATER

Mrs. Seacole, Thomas and Jew Johnny are standing beside the gangplank of a crowded steamer ready to sail.

SEACOLE

You're sure now, nothing else you need?

JEW JOHNNY

Johnny okay. I sell left things. I be okay.

THOMAS

We will miss you. You can come to England.

JEW JOHNNY

I Greek person. I Jew. Maybe go to Holy Land sometime.

SEACOLE

My friends have promised to look after you.

JEW JOHNNY

They get drunk, I look after them.

Mrs. Seacole gives him a hug and a smart kiss on the forehead. Thomas grasps Johnny's outstretched hand with both of his hands.

LEAVING BALAKLAVA - MONTAGE

Mrs. Seacole and Thomas walk up the gangplank and stop on the ship's deck, turn and wave to Jew Johnny.

The crew takes up the gangplank and the SOUND of the ENGINES fills the air as the ship pulls away from the dock.

In the open sea, Mrs. Seacole and Thomas stand on the back deck for their last look at the shores of the Crimea.

We see the dock and the shore line fade into the background beyond the waves behind the ship.

EXT. LONDON - ROYAL SURREY GARDENS - SIDEWALK

Mrs. Seacole steps out of a Hansom cab in front of the Royal Surrey Gardens onto the sidewalk where she is met by two soldiers, veterans of the war in the Crimea.

SUPER: LONDON - ROYAL SURREY GARDENS, AUGUST 26, 1856

The soldiers greet her with salutes, take her arms and shepherd her into the front door.

INT. MUSIC HALL

Mrs. Seacole is lead up the front stairs of the large hall onto the first balcony and given a prominent seat.

The hall is filled with eight tables, end to end, entirely populated by soldiers in uniform, veterans of the Crimean War. The lord mayor of London, the colonels and the generals of the army, the lords, are seated in boxes to the side.

Soldiers are seated at the front dais, the speaker standing at the front is SERGEANT-MAJOR EDWARD EDWARDS, a tall older soldier, in full dress uniform, bearded with hair combed across the front of his forehead, who concludes his address.

EDWARDS

Stand and join me. We raise our glasses to all of those who fought in the fields or suffered in the trenches of the Crimea, who obeyed the call to the memorable struggle of 1854 and 1855.

The soldiers stand and a glad HURRAH SOUNDS from the gathered mass as they raise their glasses and drink.

EDWARDS

And let us remember those brave lads who are not with us tonight. Our soldiers who fell on the field of battle for they also receive the admiration and gratitude of a grateful nation.

A loud cheer emanates from the soldiers as they drink to their fallen comrades.

EDWARDS

To conclude, I give recognition tonight to those fair hands that provided the touches of home that cheered us, bound up our wounds, and brought joy to a joyless existence. To the good old soul who knew neither friend or foe but treated all with kindness and respect. To Mother Seacole.

Cheering and applause fill the hall as Edwards raises his glass to the spot in the balcony where Mrs. Seacole is seated. Four soldiers jump up and race up the stairs, help Mother Seacole down the stairs to a chair where she and the chair are lifted up on the shoulders of several soldiers.

The soldiers surge forward toward Mrs. Seacole and almost upturn the chair. Two burly sergeants jump up and protect her from the pressure of the crowds pushing in.

Mrs. Seacole smiles broadly as soldiers reach out to touch her and voice their joy at her presence while she is chaired around the gardens hall.

INT. LONDON BANKRUPTCY COURT - DAYS LATER

Mrs. Seacole and Thomas enter the large door to the building and seek out a seat on a long bench in the lobby of the London Bankruptcy Court waiting to be called into the courtroom.

SUPER: "BANKRUPTCY COURT"

SEACOLE

Thomas, I am frightened that they will not release us from this bankruptcy.

THOMAS

Our lawyer thinks differently.

SEACOLE

How can he?

THOMAS

They have compiled the accounts very accurately and the assignees have voiced no opposition.

SEACOLE

The shop in Aldershot would have saved us from this embarrassment but I failed.

THOMAS

Don't criticize your efforts to pay our creditors. We both tried but there were no customers and we owed too much to too many.

SEACOLE

What an ending to our grand design.

The door to the courtroom opens and a clerk comes out and calls out.

CLERK #3

Calling case for Seacole, Mary, and Day, Thomas Jr., provision merchants and traders.

Mary and Thomas look at each other, slowly stand up, walk toward the clerk as all three disappear through the doors which close behind them.

INT. MRS. SEACOLE'S HOME - SITTING ROOM - DAYS LATER

Mrs. Seacole is sitting at a writing table looking at a letter she has started to write.

SEACOLE

(reading)

Lord Rokeby, my Lord, with much gratitude, I beg to offer you my sincere thanks for your letter, which I read in the Times and would publicly acknowledge your present . . .

Mrs. hesitates and looks into space seeking the correct word.

SEACOLE

. . . your present as well as past kindness to me but I fancy you, my Lord might object to me placing your name in the public papers.

SEACOLE (V.O.)

(writing)

Consequently, I take this means of expressing to you my gratitude for the interest you take in my case. I am fully aware of the kind feelings yourself and the army have towards me and this knowledge tends to sustain me in my present difficulties and far from regretting my visit to the Crimea I feel proud indeed that I have had the opportunity to gain the esteem of your lordship along with many others in the army.

SEACOLE

(to herself)

What else, my Lord, do I say?

SEACOLE (V.O.)

And indeed I must rather suffer my present poverty with the knowledge that the Almighty permitted me to be useful in my small sphere, than have returned wealthy without the esteem and regard of the brave defenders of this country.

SEACOLE

This country. No, our country.

SEACOLE (V.O.)

(writing)

Brave defenders of our country.
Trusting your Lordship will excuse
the liberty I have taken in thus
writing to your Lordship, I am your
Lordship's very humble and grateful
servant.

The DOORBELL RINGS.

SEACOLE

(calls out)

One moment.

Mrs Seacole carefully folds the letter and places it in an envelope. The BELL RINGS again and she goes to the door and lets Thomas, holding a newspaper, into the room.

Mrs. Seacole directs Thomas to the sitting couch and they both sit.

THOMAS

I bought this paper at the corner.
Have you seen it?

Thomas hands her the paper pointing to one portion of the page.

SEACOLE

Lord Rokeby's letter, yes I have. I
just finished my response to his
Lordship.

THOMAS

Well, it is not in the press yet,
but Punch Magazine has organized a
Grand Military Festival to last four
days in July at the Royal Surrey
Gardens. It is dedicated to you.

SEACOLE

Four days?

THOMAS

The Seacole fund they set up is for
you, and Lord Rokeby is one of the
sponsors.

SEACOLE

Just as I was feeling forgotten.
They are very kind to me.

Thomas points to another part of the paper.

THOMAS

The paper reports that the Queen met with Florence Nightingale yesterday.

Mrs. Seacole takes the paper from Thomas and looks at the article.

SEACOLE

Miss Nightingale was honored for her work in the war, it is expected.

THOMAS

And the Queen? Is it not expected for you?

SEACOLE

The Queen may or may not call for me, I do not begrudge her meeting with Miss Nightingale. I spent my time with the soldiers and that is my legacy, which they continue to acknowledge.

THOMAS

But surely you --

Mrs. Seacole turns and places the paper on a side table.

SEACOLE

Thomas, I set out to become a Crimean War heroine, whatever that could mean, and I accomplished my goal. I feel no prejudice from friends nor enemies.

THOMAS

No regrets?

SEACOLE

No regrets. The British won their war and I won my war with the detractors who saw me only as a yellow skin woman from Jamaica.

THOMAS

On another subject, my interests in the Antipodes call upon me. They need my administration if I am to be successful.

SEACOLE

You journey, again?

THOMAS

A ship leaves first of next week and I have booked passage.

SEACOLE

You will miss the festival.

THOMAS

The festival is for you.

SEACOLE

What a journey we have both traveled together, Thomas, Panama,

THOMAS

London, Balaklava,

SEACOLE

Spring Hill. Now, back to London and, yet you travel away again. Just you know that I followed your advice.

THOMAS

Advice?

SEACOLE

I commenced writing my life story, my journeys to distant lands.

THOMAS

You are too clever.

SEACOLE

With a publisher and an editor to guide me. It will be called, Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands.

Thomas reaches out, takes her hand and holds it tight.

THOMAS

I will read it with warm remembrance of our journeys together.

Thomas and Mrs. Seacole sit with their hands clasped, smiling at the memories of years.

INT. ROYAL SURREY GARDENS - MUSIC HALL - DAYS LATER

The hall is decorated with English, French, Sardinian, and Turkish flags, a magnificent transparency conspicuous above LOUIS ANTOINE JULLIEN's orchestra. Mr. Jullien is a portly young man, open coat, fancily embroidered white shirts, lace wristbands folded back over his coat sleeves, a large mane of black hair, and a mustache.

The hall is filled with the sound of up to 10,000 people, soldiers and general public, on three balcony levels. The crowd is somewhat of a character more "exclusive" than is customary at musical performances.

They attend the first of four concerts to create a fund for Mrs. Seacole.

The orchestra brings the audience to its feet at the end of a rigorous rendition of a musical favorite as Mrs. Seacole enters the center gallery in the front of the hall followed by Lord Rokeby on one side and Lord George Paget on the other.

They are followed by the members of her illustrious committee composed of the Commander-in-Chief, three dukes, one duchess, two marchioness, two earls, one countess, a lord and lady, a lt. general, a major general, and a right honorable gentleman.

As they are seated, Mr. Jullien turns and makes an announcement to the crowd.

JULLIEN

Distinguished persons have joined together tonight, with you, to honor the lady who bears the title of mother of our soldiers.

The crowd erupts in sustained cheering and applause.

JULLIEN

Please. In order that we do this, the services have formed a united military band. The 1st and 2nd Life guards.

Cheers from the crowd.

JULLIEN

The royal Horse Guards Blue.

The crowd cheers a second time.

JULLIEN

Please, in order that we do this in a timely manner, hold your applause until I finish the list, thank you. The Grenadier Guards, the Coldstreams, Scots Fusileers Royal Engineers, Royal Artillery, and the Marines, nine in all. Now you may cheer.

There is sustained applause and cheering from the assembled audience. Mr. Jullien turns and motions for the band members to rise and he conducts a series of military pieces familiar to the audience and to the soldiers.

Mr. Jullien then announces the vocalists that have gathered at the front.

JULLIEN

We are honored to have the pleasing voices of the Royal Surrey Choral Society who will entertain you with a few vocal selections.

Mr. Jullien conducts the orchestra as they sing. After the choral selections Mr. Jullien turns to the front.

JULLIEN

Ladies and Gentlemen, now a word from Lord Rokeby.

There is APPLAUSE as Lord Rokeby addresses the crowd.

ROKEBY

Lord George Paget
(points)
and I are honored to head a committee which seeks to right the wrongs that have recently fallen upon our friend. Few names are more familiar to the public now, and during the late war, than that of the lady we gather here tonight to honor. Using her own funds, she traveled to the Crimea soon after the British troops landed. She provided aid with creature comforts from her store, in most cases without payment, or any hope of it. She nursed the sick, succored the wounded and performed the last offices to many of the most illustrious dead. I have witnessed her devotion and her courage. She will not be forgotten.

The audience cheers, shouts, stomps their feet.

ROKEBY

Unfortunately, She was ruined by the peace which erupted in the Crimea through no fault of her own. It is hoped that the proceeds of this festival will enable her to again establish her career of usefulness and purpose to her sons, our soldiers. I give you Mother Seacole.

The hall is filled with loud applause and cheering as Lord Rokeby turns and motions for Mrs. Seacole to stand in her box.

Mr. Jullien and the orchestra play a rousing patriotic piece.

A loud chant of "Seacole," Seacole," from thousands of voices fills the hall as Mrs. Seacole smiles on the crowd amid tremendous and continued cheering.

FADE TO BLACK.

BLACK SCREEN - WHITE LETTERING

Mary Grant Seacole lived for twenty-four more years, dying on May 14, 1881, at her home at 3 Cambridge Street, Paddington, as an independent woman.

She was not forgotten during her lifetime. Friends in omnibuses, in river steamboats, in places of public amusement, in quiet streets, old familiar faces would spring up to remind her of the months spent on Spring Hill addressing the needs of her boys. A life well lived.

FADE OUT: