



# LASSEN

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## THE MAKING OF A LEGEND

FINAL INTERNATIONAL FEATURE FILM TREATMENT | OCTOBER 2026

Historical biographical drama • Target runtime: 135–145 minutes • English / Danish

## THE FILM

A young Danish sailor, furious at the occupation of his homeland, enters Britain's secret war. His gift for danger makes him an extraordinary commando. But success gives him a dangerous faith in his own instincts, and the men who follow him will force him to learn a harder definition of courage: the duty to bring others home.

The story travels from Høvdingsgaard in South Zealand to the merchant fleet, clandestine training in Britain, a spectacular maritime seizure off West Africa, the occupied Greek islands and a narrow road between the waters of Lake Comacchio. It begins in the final darkness and returns there only when the audience understands what Anders stands to lose.

**HISTORICAL INTEGRITY:** This is an original dramatized film treatment grounded in published historical scholarship and the official Victoria Cross citation. Private conversations, emotional motives, some supporting characters and linking scenes are proposed dramatic reconstructions. No imagined dialogue is presented as a quotation from the historical record. The scene chronology uses **VERIFIED EVENT**, **DOCUMENTED CONTEXT**, and **DRAMATIZED SCENE** as distinct labels.

## THE THREE-ACT STORY

### ACT I — A GIFT WITHOUT DISCIPLINE

1920–1942. The boy from the estate becomes a sailor, then an outsider in Britain's secret war. Operation Postmaster proves that the impossible can be done—and tempts him to believe that audacity is enough.

### ACT II — THE PRICE OF COMMAND

1942–1944. Loss, the Small Scale Raiding Force, the SBS, Crete and the Aegean teach Lassen that tactical victories have human costs, including for civilians who cannot escape after the boats depart.

### ACT III — THE LAST ORDER

1945. With peace close enough to imagine, Lassen leads eighteen men into an exposed diversionary raid at Comacchio. His final act turns the question of personal bravery into a choice about other lives.

## THE STORY — CONTINUOUS LONG-FORM TREATMENT

### 03 OPENING IMAGE — THE MARSH

The darkness offers no horizon. Water presses against the sides of the road and the men have to trust the scouts ahead of them. Lassen holds still long enough to hear a movement beyond the nearest bank. Then the scene releases him, decades younger, into a Danish morning so bright it almost hurts.

The man at the front of the patrol pauses without raising a hand. The men behind him freeze one after another, an almost imperceptible ripple along the road. Water lies on both sides, blacker than the sky. The leader listens to a noise from the far bank: metal on stone, then nothing. He looks very young. The mud on his face cannot quite conceal the fair hair beneath his cap. This is Major Anders Lassen. His men know the difference between his silence when he is thinking and his silence when he is afraid; tonight they cannot tell which it is.

One of the scouts returns on his knees, pointing into the dark. Anders studies the direction, then turns to the man nearest him and checks his equipment with a touch, as though he were a father fastening a child's coat. A faraway gun fires. No one flinches. The sound of a bird rising from the reeds carries us out of Italy, out of the war, and into a Danish woodland twenty years earlier.

The black water of the Comacchio lagoon barely moves. A man is breathing through his nose to keep his teeth from chattering. In front of him Anders Lassen crouches in the reeds, his pale hair darkened by rain. There is no speech to announce his courage. He tests the ground with his boot, waits for the faint mechanical rattle ahead, and puts a hand against the chest of the soldier about to follow him. A movement of two fingers holds the patrol in place. Somewhere beyond the water a sentry coughs. The whole war has contracted to a sound and a decision.

The flare has not yet burst when the image changes. The same hand is smaller, clean, and resting on the bark of a tree in South Zealand. Morning light passes between branches. The boy Anders watches a bird settle and then turn sharply toward something beyond the frame. He has seen the bird react before he has heard the approaching footsteps. He smiles, not because he has won anything, but because he has understood the world for a second before anyone else. This is the ability that will save him and, eventually, fail him.

The patrol stops when the man behind Lassen catches his sleeve. No one speaks. The soldier points at a black gap between reeds; something has disturbed the surface of the water. Lassen waits, counting without moving his lips. A second ripple comes from another direction. He has two pieces of information and neither agrees with the map. Behind him, a man whose hands were steady at the briefing is struggling to control his breathing.

The film begins close to the ground. Boots pull free of mud. A hand signals halt. Somewhere ahead, an unseen German weapon is being readied. The man leading the patrol is Anders

Lassen, now a major. We see his face only briefly. A whisper passes down the line; he checks that the youngest man understands the withdrawal signal. Then a flare burns overhead.

Before we see the attack, cut to the bright silence of a South Zealand forest years earlier. This opening establishes the film's central visual rhyme: the boy who learned to read a landscape has become a man who reads it to survive. It also creates a narrative promise: the audience knows where the journey ends, but not what the journey will cost.

Lassen turns and presses two fingers against the man's wrist: stay. For a second the patrol is no longer a formation but a collection of people holding one another in the dark. A faint metallic tap carries over the water. Lassen lifts his head. Cut before the source is revealed.

## 04 CHILDHOOD — HØVDINGSGAARD

Suzanne watches him from the doorway as the household returns to its rules. Anders has brought the outdoors inside with him: mud on his boots, a torn cuff, the faint smell of wet leaves. His father wants an explanation. The boy wants to know why the explanation matters more than what he has learned.

At Høvdingsgaard, the boy disappears from a formal family gathering before the first course. Suzanne finds him in the stable yard, kneeling beside a dog with a thorn lodged in its paw. He has forgotten his jacket and the adults waiting inside. He has not forgotten the dog. His mother watches him work, then holds out the jacket without reproach. The boy asks whether animals know when a person is lying. She answers that they know when a person is afraid. He considers this for a long time.

Later his father takes him across the fields. Anders is told to remain still while a bird settles within range. His finger tightens. The bird moves into the open, but another bird crosses behind it. Anders lowers the gun. His father asks why he did not take the shot. 'I wasn't sure,' he replies. The father nods once. At supper the same boy interrupts an adult and is sent away from the table. The film refuses to solve him in a single scene: restraint and recklessness already occupy the same child.

His mother provides an emotional anchor without becoming a fictionalized saint. His father and the household represent tradition, status and duty. The young Anders is affectionate in flashes, difficult in others. Small domestic frictions establish a young man who wants to be judged by what he can do rather than by what others expect him to become.

We meet Anders in motion before we meet him at a table. He runs a narrow path beside wet fields, stops abruptly, and notices something the adult accompanying him has missed. He is praised for observation, then corrected for refusing to explain himself. At dinner he is expected to sit still and behave with a formality that seems almost physically painful.

Høvdingsgaard is not a sentimental postcard. There is work before breakfast, wet boots in the hall, the sound of a door being shut against a winter wind. Anders can be generous and

exasperating within the same minute. When an adult instructs him to remain indoors, he obeys until he notices a stable hand struggling with a frightened horse. He leaves the room without permission and calms the animal. The breach of discipline is undeniable; so is the practical kindness. At the family table his explanation makes everything worse, because he cannot understand why doing the useful thing is not the same as doing the right thing.

At Høvdingsgaard, the young Anders returns late from the woods with a torn sleeve and a bird's feather tucked into his pocket. The household is already assembled for supper. He stands in the doorway, aware that he has broken a rule and unwilling to pretend otherwise. His mother asks whether anyone has been hurt. He shakes his head. His father asks whether he has learned anything. Anders says he has learned where the deer cross when the wind turns.

It is the wrong answer to a serious question, and he knows it. Later his mother finds him at the window, looking into the black garden. She does not excuse his behaviour. She asks him to imagine what it feels like to wait for someone who does not come home. He has no answer. Years later, waiting for a missing patrol, he will remember the question without remembering the room.

At night, Suzanne finds the boy awake. He does not want to leave home, he tells her; he wants the world beyond it to make room for him. She does not pretend she can promise that. She closes the door quietly, leaving the question with him.

Suzanne does not predict greatness. She sees a boy who can read weather and faces but not always consequences. She asks him whether he would have gone to the stable if another person had already been helping. Anders has no ready answer. The question is small enough to be forgotten by the family and important enough to echo decades later. The scene must be presented as invented domestic dialogue, not recovered family testimony.

## 05 SCHOOL — THE MISFIT

When the other boy asks why Anders went ahead without warning, Anders has no answer that sounds generous. He had seen the shortest path and assumed everyone else would see it too. For the first time, the consequences of being right leave him ashamed.

At school, a teacher asks the boys to calculate a bearing. Anders gives the right answer by an unapproved method. He is ordered to repeat the procedure. He does so, impatiently, and makes a careless mistake. The class laughs. Afterward a fellow pupil tells him that being right is not much use if everyone wants you to fail. Anders tries to laugh it off, but the observation hurts.

During a walk, the same friend twists an ankle. Anders spots a shorter route back and strides ahead without explaining his plan. When he returns, the other boy has been left frightened in the dusk. 'You always know where you're going,' the friend says. 'The trouble is, the rest of us don't.' Anders says nothing. Years later, men with rifles will need to know exactly where he intends to lead them.

A parallel montage contrasts schoolroom geometry with the practical geometry of tracking, tides and navigation. In one world he is reprimanded for refusing to follow a procedure; in another he quietly solves a problem no one else notices. This tension will later return in the British army, where an unconventional officer must learn the difference between questioning an order and endangering a team.

Outside school, Anders studies the direction of wind across a field and correctly predicts a change in weather. Inside, he has been marked down for ignoring procedure. Neither scene proves that institutions are wrong. Together they show his unfinished education: he must learn that being right is not the same thing as earning the trust of a group.

A teacher places a practical problem on the blackboard. Anders solves it quickly by a method different from the one required. The teacher refuses to accept the work; Anders refuses to concede that a correct answer can be wrong. The confrontation is not staged to make the adult foolish. The lesson is about demonstrating a process others can verify. Later, a classmate is punished because Anders has persuaded him to follow an improvised shortcut. Anders is genuinely surprised by the cost imposed on someone else.

The classmate does not accept an easy apology. He asks Anders to stop making every shared undertaking into a test of Anders Lassen. The line lands harder than a reprimand. That evening Anders attempts to repair the damage with an awkward practical gesture, returning something he borrowed and completing the other boy's task. He still finds it easier to act than to speak.

A school exercise sends a group of boys across unfamiliar ground with instructions not to separate. Anders identifies a shorter route and takes it without warning the others. By the time he reaches the meeting point, one boy has twisted an ankle and the group is late. Anders can explain exactly why his route was better. The master is not interested. He asks whether Anders was meant to arrive alone.

For once the boy cannot turn the exchange into a joke. At night the injured classmate refuses the apology Anders has rehearsed. He wants a promise that next time Anders will tell the others what he intends. Anders considers the promise, then offers his hand. It is not reconciliation, but the first time he understands that trust is a practical obligation rather than an emotion.

## **06 THE SEA — FIRST FREEDOM**

The sea is not an escape from discipline. A line badly secured endangers the man who will touch it next; a careless bearing becomes another sailor's sleepless watch. Anders learns to admire the men who do not need to announce that they are competent.

On a merchant ship, Anders is stripped of the privileges of home. A senior sailor makes him redo a badly secured line while rain lashes the deck. The older man is not interested in his

family, his schooling or his explanations. The line must hold. When a squall comes, it does. Anders looks at the rope with an expression of private gratitude.

On night watch, the sea gives him a different education. A distant light seems to move against the chart. He asks to alter course; the officer makes him check the bearing first. The light proves harmless. Hours later Anders notices a real danger, and the officer listens. The difference is not that the young Dane has become obedient. He has begun to understand that another person's judgment can make his own instincts more useful.

The sea is the first environment where he discovers a disciplined freedom. He can be difficult, but when something goes wrong he is useful. Foreign ports and overheard reports gradually bring the threat of European war into view. A recurring image of a ship crossing open water later echoes the small craft that carry special forces toward occupied shores.

Ports pass in fragments: unfamiliar languages, oil-stained quays, newsboys calling out European headlines. The world is expanding and contracting at once. Anders writes home with cheerful brevity; what he does not say is that he has begun to understand how quickly nations and individuals can lose control of their own destinies. These are illustrative dramatic moments, not claimed incidents.

The ship is a machine made of interdependent human labour. Anders arrives with strength and confidence, and discovers that a line tied carelessly can injure a man he likes. An older sailor makes him untie and secure the same knot again and again. Nothing dramatic happens; the absence of disaster is the achievement. During a squall, the lesson returns when a loose fitting threatens the deck. Anders reaches it without hesitation, but only because another sailor has already secured him. Courage is suddenly a partnership.

The film widens its horizon as Anders joins the maritime world. Shipboard life is not romanticized: watches are long, the work is repetitive and authority can be harsh. Yet the vessel offers what he wants — practical responsibility and a world beyond the familiar. He learns to trust weather, machinery, charts and the competence of others.

On the merchant vessel a watch officer gives Anders a chart and asks him to calculate a course. Anders has the answer before the officer has finished speaking, but he has omitted the current. The officer makes him begin again. Hours later the ship is caught in rough weather. A loose object breaks free on deck, and Anders moves toward it before seeing another sailor already securing the line. They work together without a word.

On night watch he sees lights on a distant coast. The officer beside him can name the port, the current, and the dangers invisible in the darkness. Anders listens. For once he does not need to challenge authority to feel free. In the ship's log his contribution is reduced to a few words. The camera stays with him looking outward long after the official entry is complete.

When the danger passes, the officer asks for the course again. Anders takes longer this time, checks the figures and hands over the chart. There is no praise, only the next job. That absence

of ceremony feels like freedom. In his bunk he starts a letter home, describes the sea in two cheerful sentences and stops when he reaches the part about missing Denmark.

## 07 APRIL 1940 — THE OCCUPATION

News of Denmark's occupation passes from mouth to mouth before it can become a plan. One sailor fears for his family. Another worries who now owns the ship. Anders is furious with them for discussing practicalities, until he understands that the practicalities are precisely where allegiance will be tested.

A wireless announcement reaches the ship in the Persian Gulf. Denmark has been invaded. Around Anders, the crew responds with bewildering variety: anger, practical questions, fear for wives and children at home, and an insistence that a sailor's first duty is to keep the ship safe. Anders wants the captain to make a declaration immediately. The captain wants to know which orders are lawful and which course protects the crew. The argument ends without a resolution.

That night Anders stands beneath the Danish flag. The water has not changed; the stars are indifferent. He writes the date in a notebook and then cannot find words for the rest of the page. A crewman joins him and says that staying alive is not the same as surrendering. Anders hears the warning, but it is not enough for him. He has discovered a country he cannot reach and a war he cannot yet enter.

The invasion is heard before it is seen. A wireless voice reports German forces entering Denmark. Around Anders, sailors react differently: disbelief, practical concern, a determination to preserve their jobs. Anders asks whether the vessel will obey instructions coming from an occupied homeland. No one answers quickly. The silence exposes a moral fault line that ordinary shipboard routine cannot resolve.

A radio bulletin interrupts the ship's routine. The invasion of Denmark is delivered in the flat, inadequate voice of a distant announcer. The captain wants confirmation; a sailor asks what will happen to wages; another fears for his family. Anders demands to know why nobody is doing anything. The question is sincere and useless. There is no German soldier to confront on this deck, only the sea and the practical obligation to keep a vessel safe.

The crew divides over what loyalty requires. A man who has children in Denmark insists that survival is not cowardice. Anders hears only surrender. Hours later he finds the same man carefully folding a letter that cannot yet be sent. For the first time Anders understands that the other sailor's caution is not indifference. He cannot share it, but he must learn to respect it.

The wireless operator repeats the bulletin because no one believes him the first time. Denmark has been invaded. A sailor asks whether the report includes Copenhagen; another asks whether the government has surrendered. No one knows. Anders looks from face to face and discovers that the same news can produce fear, fury and silence. In the mess, the crew argue about families left behind and orders that may come from occupied Denmark.

He calls caution cowardice and immediately sees the injury in an older man's face. Later he finds the man on deck and attempts an apology. The older sailor says that a man with no children can afford simple answers. Anders remains at the rail long after the other man has gone. The next morning he begins asking what it would take to reach Britain.

**Historical anchor: the occupation news reached Lassen aboard Eleonora Mærsk in the Persian Gulf on 9 April 1940. The shipboard conversations in this treatment are imagined.**

## 08 PASSAGE TO BRITAIN

The officer behind the desk is not impressed by anger. He turns a page, asks for a date, and waits while Anders struggles to translate conviction into useful qualifications. Seamanship. Navigation. Stamina. The ability to keep moving in darkness. For the first time, the interview begins to sound like an opportunity.

Britain offers no heroic arrival. At a desk a clerk misspells his name, asks him to wait and sends him to another office. He passes a row of wounded servicemen outside a railway station and a mother coaxing her child down into an air-raid shelter. His private urgency meets a country that has already been living with danger for months.

At an interview he declares that he wants to fight. The officer across the desk asks what he can do. Anders begins with anger and is stopped. He tries again: navigation, seamanship, languages, marksmanship, endurance. The officer asks how he behaves when another man gives an order he dislikes. Anders takes too long to answer. The officer closes the file, then opens it again. 'We may have somewhere to test that.'

A civilian air-raid shelter provides a moment of recalibration. He watches ordinary families accept danger without theatrics and understands that resistance can look like endurance rather than attack. When a British officer finally interviews him, Anders offers skills instead of patriotic rhetoric: ships, rifles, navigation, languages, stamina. He is beginning to understand that his anger needs an organisation before it can become useful.

Britain offers no triumphant welcome. The port is crowded with uniforms, paperwork, damaged buildings and people who have their own war to survive. Anders is another foreign volunteer with an accent and a story officials must check. He is asked to wait. Waiting is the one task he finds intolerable.

Britain is busy fighting its own war. Anders waits under a leaking station roof with men who have lost homes, units, and relatives. The bureaucracy treats him as another case to be assessed. When an interviewer asks what he wants, he answers that he wants to fight. When asked what he can do, he lists the things he knows: handling boats, reading a coast, navigating at night. The interviewer makes him demonstrate rather than merely claim them.

The scene ends not with an acceptance speech but with Anders standing in cold rain while someone marks his name on a list. He is no longer the son of a Danish estate; he is a candidate whose future depends on proving useful to strangers.

At a British office Anders waits beneath a notice asking volunteers to be patient. A clerk mispronounces his name; Anders corrects him too sharply. A second interview begins badly when an officer asks for documents Anders cannot produce. He offers seamanship, fieldcraft and the knowledge of how men behave aboard small boats. The officer asks for proof rather than enthusiasm. Outside, an air-raid warning interrupts the street.

Anders follows strangers into shelter and watches a woman keep two children calm by making a game of counting the seconds. He had imagined Britain as a nation of fighters. Here, resistance is a mother refusing to let fear decide what her children see. He returns to the office quieter, ready to be tested instead of admired.

## 09 RECRUITMENT — THE UNCONVENTIONAL SOLDIER

He reaches the objective and turns, expecting the others to be behind him. They are not. In the quiet after the exercise the instructor does not accuse him of cowardice or vanity; he simply counts the missing men. Anders has to stand there until the count is finished.

A training exercise begins with Anders ahead of everyone else. He reaches the objective and signals success, only to discover that the rest of his group has been cut off. The instructor walks him through the imaginary casualties. Anders protests that the target was reached. 'By whom?' the instructor asks. 'And who gets home?' The question stays with him longer than the punishment.

At dusk he finds the slowest trainee practicing knots with numb fingers. Anders kneels beside him and shows him a quicker method, then stops himself. He lets the man finish the knot his own way. When the exercise is repeated, Anders waits at a junction until the last man appears. He does not make a speech about leadership. He simply turns only when everyone is present.

Training introduces firearms, navigation, physical endurance and clandestine techniques. Anders is not the best at everything. He makes errors, challenges instructors and must learn that precision matters more than bravado. His familiarity with hunting and boats gives him an edge in fieldcraft. His impatience makes him vulnerable during team exercises.

Training gives the audience the pleasure of watching a gifted novice encounter limits. Anders moves confidently through an exercise, reaches the objective and discovers that his haste has exposed the rest of the team. The instructor does not shout. He asks for the names of the men Anders has just placed in danger. It is a harder punishment than humiliation.

That night Anders asks the slowest man in the section to walk the course with him. He does not apologise theatrically. He asks where the signals became unclear and listens to the answer. At

dawn the group runs the exercise again. They arrive later, together, and without the imaginary casualties. Anders does not smile; the achievement is less intoxicating and more important.

During an exercise Anders reaches a marker before the rest of his section. He is pleased until the instructor asks where his men are. One has missed a signal; another has been left exposed on open ground. The instructor orders the whole team to walk the route again in daylight and identify every moment when the plan depended on information Anders never shared.

He returns to the same training ground after the others have gone. This time he marks where every man will stand before he chooses his own route. The exercise is imaginary; the lesson it carries will eventually become a matter of life and death.

On a training course Anders reaches the objective ahead of everyone else. He expects approval. The instructor quietly points out that the rest of his team would have been exposed on the approach. In the rehearsal's fictional accounting, two men are dead because he did not check behind him. Anders argues that the mission succeeded. The instructor replies that no mission succeeds if its people cannot return.

By the end he has stopped defending himself. That evening he finds the quietest recruit repairing a strap and asks how the man would have approached the crossing. The answer is slower, less exciting and almost certainly safer. At the next exercise Anders waits until every man has seen his signal. The objective is reached later, but the team arrives together.

## 10 GUS MARCH-PHILLIPPS

March-Phillipps does not flatter him. The captain shifts a marker on the chart and asks how the men get home if the boat fails to appear. Anders offers an answer. The captain asks for a second. Neither man smiles, but the argument lasts longer than an ordinary dismissal would.

Gus March-Phillipps first notices Anders over a chart. The young Dane proposes a route that looks brilliant until the captain asks where the boat will be when the tide turns. Anders answers from memory. March-Phillipps slides the tide tables toward him. The silence is more devastating than a reprimand. Anders recalculates and finds another route. The captain looks up with the faintest suggestion of a smile.

Their arguments become a language of trust. March-Phillipps believes that audacity without an exit is vanity; Anders believes that excessive caution can become its own form of failure. After a difficult rehearsal, they sit on a cold pier sharing tea that tastes of metal. Neither apologizes for the day's disagreement. March-Phillipps hands Anders the corrected chart. He has marked the young man's better route in pencil.

On a second evening, March-Phillipps invites Anders to challenge the plan in front of the entire group. Anders does so too eagerly and embarrasses a more experienced man. Afterward the captain tells him that truth offered without tact can be another way of displaying oneself. Anders resents the lesson, then finds the offended man and asks him to show him a detail of the

operation. It is the first time we see him deliberately repair a relationship rather than win an argument.

March-Phillipps studies Anders across a chart table without inviting him to sit. He asks for the landing point, then the withdrawal route, then the alternative if the tide turns. Anders answers the first two questions and hesitates at the third. The captain moves a matchstick across the map to block the harbour mouth. 'Now what?' The young Dane studies the coast again, finds an imperfect answer and begins to explain it.

March-Phillipps stops him: show me. The ensuing argument lasts long enough for both men to forget their ranks. When it ends, the captain folds the chart and says that a useful man must know when his own cleverness is dangerous. Anders leaves angry, then returns to borrow the map. Their partnership begins not with affection but with an argument neither wants to abandon.

After the others leave, the two men remain over the chart. March-Phillipps points at the line of retreat rather than the target. Lassen notices. In the days that follow, he begins drawing the route home first.

Gus March-Phillipps has heard that the young Dane is impossible. He studies Anders across a map and asks how a small boat would reach a coast with the tide turning. Anders gives a confident route. Gus asks what happens if the return boat is lost. Anders begins again. Neither man raises his voice. The relationship starts because the older officer takes Anders seriously enough to expose the weakness in his answer.

## 11 A NEW KIND OF WAR

The men discover one another by the sounds they make at work: a mechanic swearing at an engine, a navigator tapping a pencil, a sailor correcting a knot without comment. Anders begins to understand that the most valuable man in a raid may be the one nobody notices.

The raiding unit becomes a collection of trades and temperaments. One man can coax life from a reluctant engine. Another can estimate a tide by watching the shoreline. A third counts every round of ammunition twice. Anders knows that he can run farther and move faster than most of them; he also knows that none of that will start an engine at sea. Their competence begins to feel like an entirely new kind of family.

During a night rehearsal the extraction craft does not appear. The men wait in the dark while the planned timetable dissolves. Anders wants to move toward the rendezvous; the engine specialist insists that the boat will approach from a different angle if the wind has shifted. They wait. He is right. Anders says, quietly, 'Next time you tell me sooner.' The man replies, 'Next time you listen sooner.'

The ensemble becomes important. Men from different backgrounds develop private jokes and rituals, but each has a distinct practical function. Anders is drawn to the unit because

competence counts. He must also learn that success depends on listening to specialists whose talents differ from his own.

The new unit becomes a family built around competence rather than affection. One man knows engines, another explosives, another coastal navigation. Their rehearsals look almost absurdly repetitive until a boat engine fails during a night exercise and every repeated instruction suddenly matters. Anders learns the names of equipment specialists he initially overlooked.

On a windswept pier the raiding party rehearses embarking in darkness. Each man has a task. The engine mechanic counts revolutions by sound; the navigator feels for a mark on a wet chart; the explosives specialist checks a case whose contents cannot be replaced. Anders knows how to get the boat ashore, but he is surprised by how much he does not know about the work of the others.

During one rehearsal the engine fails and the landing time slips away. He reaches for the starter himself. The mechanic pushes his hand aside and diagnoses the fault in seconds. The men laugh afterward, but the lesson remains. The next night Anders asks the mechanic what he needs before anyone else is given an order. The boat leaves on time.

A small wooden vessel appears absurdly fragile against the Atlantic. On the long passage from Poole toward Sierra Leone, routine becomes suspense: a seam must be checked, water rationed, a bearing verified. Anders knows the sea and earns the crew's respect in ordinary work before any raid. The crossing is not a montage of heroic poses. It is a test of patience and competence that takes weeks.

In the galley men reveal themselves by their habits: one counts supplies, one repairs a tool that others would discard, another writes home without admitting he is frightened. Anders begins to understand the practical value of knowing them as individuals. When an engine note changes in darkness, the right man hears it first. Lassen follows his judgment rather than insisting on his own.

**Historical anchor: the Maid Honor voyage from Poole to Sierra Leone took place in August–September 1941, after Lassen joined the force in April. It was not a direct assault mission.**

## 12 OPERATION POSTMASTER — THE PLAN

In Santa Isabel the harbour seems indifferent to the plotting taking place beyond it. A waiter clears glasses. A guard leans against a wall. Ships settle on their lines with the tide. Each ordinary action is a possible disturbance in the operation's fragile schedule.

Anders studies the mooring arrangements while other men argue over intelligence, local cooperation and timing. He sees a practical solution to one obstacle but learns that the obstacle is connected to three others. March-Phillipps insists that the operation belongs to the entire team. When Anders asks what happens if they are discovered, no one offers a comforting

answer. The question is not whether the raid can be imagined; it is whether all its fragile pieces can be made to happen in the same few minutes.

The British operation seeks to remove Axis-associated vessels from Santa Isabel without triggering an open confrontation with Spain. The planning sequence plays as a heist: reconnaissance, harbour layout, crew routines, tug movements and timing. Anders is one operative among a carefully coordinated team, not the sole architect of the mission.

Cross-cut a social event on shore with the raiders preparing in darkness. Glasses are set out. A rope is checked. A harbour official closes a ledger. Every detail seems innocent until the audience understands how the whole enterprise depends upon it. A senior officer reminds the men that the best outcome is a silent departure, not a firefight.

The team adjusts the timing and assigns each man a narrow responsibility. Anders dislikes the waiting, but the waiting is the plan. Before departure he looks at the chart one last time and sees not an adventure but dozens of ways to fail.

In a room full of charts, the objective is described with unnerving simplicity: take vessels from a neutral Spanish harbour without provoking a diplomatic crisis. The planners speak of tides, moorings, tugs, shore leave, and the movements of crews. The plan is so delicate that a waiter arriving late at a social gathering could matter as much as an armed guard. Anders is one member of a larger operation; the film must not give him credit for its entire conception.

Santa Isabel appears almost peaceful. From a distance the harbour looks like a painting: moored vessels, warm light, people gathering for an evening's entertainment. In a planning room, the men study the same place as a machine of vulnerable connections. A tide table, a mooring line, a patrol route and a single unexpected witness could decide the operation. Anders proposes a direct approach; a colleague points out that a successful seizure which exposes British involvement could still be a political disaster.

## 13 OPERATION POSTMASTER — THE NIGHT

The rope is wet and difficult to handle. For a few seconds the entire operation appears to depend on a small piece of stubborn material. Then a vessel shifts, almost imperceptibly. What had looked immovable begins to leave the harbour.

The vessels begin to move. There is no grand battle, only the terrifying prospect of an engine refusing to start or a light turning toward them at the wrong moment. Once the harbour is behind them, the men allow themselves to breathe. Someone laughs; another man swears softly and sits down. Anders grins into the wind. He has helped make the impossible happen, and success feels dangerously like proof that his instincts cannot fail.

Back aboard, the men replay the raid with competing versions of what nearly went wrong. Anders describes his own narrow escape with theatrical confidence. March-Phillipps interrupts him to praise the sailor who held a line steady at the critical moment. The mood changes.

Anders looks at the quiet man, understands the correction, and raises his cup to him. His ambition to be exceptional has been made to share the room with other people's courage.

The vessels are taken and moved out of the harbour. In the aftermath the men laugh from exhaustion, then confront the scale of what they have done. Anders feels the intoxicating force of a successful mission. This is the point where professional confidence begins to shade into a dangerous conviction that daring will always be rewarded.

The vessels are moving and the men are still afraid to celebrate. Only when the harbour has vanished do they begin to laugh. Anders is almost radiant with the thrill of success. An older officer watches him and worries that this spectacular result has taught a dangerous lesson: that ingenuity can always rescue an audacious plan from its risks.

The harbour's ordinary sounds become unbearable. Music drifts from shore. A rope drags over a bollard and makes a noise that seems to fill the night. Anders braces his weight against it; another man gestures for patience. They wait while footsteps pass somewhere beyond the quay. When the signal finally comes, movement begins in several places at once. For a few seconds the whole operation appears to be working, and then an engine hesitates.

The operation is filmed with long periods of quiet punctuated by sudden practical obstacles. Ropes snag, engines threaten to give the game away and the men must improvise without losing the schedule. Rather than inventing a large gun battle, the film honours the audacity of an operation built on deception and surprise.

The harbour sequence begins in near stillness. A light glows from a building ashore. Footsteps cross a quay. A rope slides against wet timber and briefly refuses to move. Every small sound seems enormous. We remain close to Anders but periodically cut to other members of the team, reminding the audience that the plan depends on simultaneous actions.

The harbour is a place of small noises. Water strikes a quay. A line sticks. Someone ashore laughs. Anders feels the urge to force a stubborn piece of equipment and is stopped by a colleague who knows that speed is not always quietness. The moment is tense because the audience understands exactly what discovery would mean. We stay with the physical labour of moving a ship, not an invented battle.

Anders looks toward the dark entrance of the harbour. There is no time to confer. A hand goes up, another line is cast off, and the vessels begin to move. Only well beyond the lights does he permit himself to laugh. His companions are laughing too, but March-Phillipps studies him as though the night's greatest danger has not yet been understood: success can teach arrogance.

## 14 RAIDS ON OCCUPIED COASTS

The landing is over in minutes. The return takes longer. In the boat no one knows how to speak about the man they have left behind, or the man they killed. Lassen checks the equipment twice, not because it needs checking, but because his hands require a task.

After a brief violent encounter, the boat carries them away in silence. A man with blood on his sleeve keeps trying to explain that he is not badly hurt. Anders cleans a weapon that is already clean. At headquarters, an operational summary reduces the night to a few sentences. The men who were there remember every breath. The specific raid depicted here remains a placeholder until a documented operation is selected.

The occupied coastline is colder and more intimate than the tropical harbour. A landing party crouches in a boat while the shoreline appears and disappears in mist. A wrong landmark forces an argument conducted in whispers. Anders wants to press on; another man insists the tide is turning. The eventual decision reveals whether he has absorbed March-Phillipps's lessons.

An apparent tactical victory leaves a disturbing aftertaste. Anders sees the consequences of close-range killing. The film does not condemn him for fighting Nazi forces, but refuses to turn death into spectacle. Silence after violence is as important as the violence itself.

After an encounter at close range, the boat is full of silence. One man's hands shake as he tries to light a cigarette. Anders cleans equipment that does not need cleaning. A report will call the raid efficient. The film remains with the men for whom efficiency now has a face and a memory.

The next shoreline is cold, narrow and almost invisible. A man in the boat says the landmark is wrong. Anders wants to continue; the navigator insists they have drifted. For the first time the audience understands the price of a few degrees on a compass. They land farther from the objective than planned. The approach takes too long, and an encounter in the dark becomes violent at close range.

Nothing about it resembles the tidy movement of rehearsal. Back aboard, a soldier cannot stop looking at his hands. Anders offers him water and receives no answer. The official report will reduce the operation to timings and results. In the boat, nobody is interested in either. The sequence remains a proposed composite until a documented raid is selected.

## 15 LOSS OF THE MENTOR

The message comes while the men are occupied with ordinary work. Gus is dead. Anders asks whether anyone has confirmed it. No one mistakes the question for disbelief. He finishes the task in front of him and only afterward discovers he has nothing to do with his hands.

News of March-Phillipps's death reaches the unit during a routine preparation. A man is oiling an engine; another is cutting a piece of bread. No one knows how to behave when the news is read. Anders asks what is certain, then returns to his work. His hands perform familiar movements long after the task is complete.

At the next briefing a younger commando proposes a daring shortcut. Anders opens his mouth to agree, then hears March-Phillipps's question in his memory: where is the way out? He asks

about extraction instead. The younger man looks disappointed. Anders recognizes that expression. It is his own, from years earlier. The lesson has cost him someone he loved.

The mentor's absence shifts responsibility. Anders can no longer imagine that someone more experienced will always absorb the hardest decisions. The loss also foreshadows the vulnerability of small raiding forces: even brilliant planning cannot eliminate chance.

The news of March-Phillipps reaches the unit while a man is trying to repair a damaged piece of equipment. Someone asks for the message to be read again. Anders says nothing. He takes the broken object from the other man's hands and works at it long after the repair is finished. At the next briefing the chair at the end of the table is occupied by a different officer.

The news of Gus March-Phillipps' death reaches Anders while he is occupied with routine work. He was not on the raid in which Gus died, according to the Anders Lassen Foundation; the film must not place him there. Anders asks a practical question, receives the answer, and continues repairing equipment. Only when the room empties does he sit where Gus once sat and look at the maps spread before him.

The new man presents a plan that assumes an extraction boat will arrive precisely on time. Anders hears himself interrupt with the question March-Phillipps always asked. What happens if it does not? The room falls silent. He has inherited a habit of doubt, and with it a responsibility he had once mistaken for obstruction.

A younger soldier later suggests a shortcut during a briefing. Anders hears his own old impatience in the proposal. He asks the question Gus would have asked: how will they withdraw if the boat fails? It is the first time the audience sees his mentor survive as a habit of mind rather than a memory.

**Historical anchor: March-Phillipps died on a 1942 raid while Lassen was absent because of an injury; the treatment does not place Lassen at his death.**

## 16 THE SBS — A LARGER THEATRE

The islands appear like stepping-stones in a sea too large to cross safely. Each cove suggests concealment; each village contains people who cannot leave when the boats depart. Anders studies the chart and begins to see the places between his targets.

The Aegean is beautiful in a way that makes concealment difficult. At dawn, islands appear like stone ships on a pale horizon. By night the same coast becomes a maze of coves, ridges and uncertain loyalties. Anders is no longer the gifted recruit waiting to be tested. Men now wait for him to decide.

The Special Boat Service opens a new chapter. The Aegean is visually beautiful and strategically unforgiving. Islands, straits and isolated garrisons create a landscape in which a handful of men can matter enormously. Boats are fragile, weather unpredictable and extraction uncertain.

The Mediterranean offers light that seems almost cruelly beautiful. A boat crosses brilliant water by day, then enters a cove at night with its engine silenced. Anders has reached a theatre where maritime instinct and land warfare meet. He can judge a shoreline, but the human geography is less legible: loyalties, occupation authorities, local resistance and fear.

The Mediterranean is blindingly bright by day and impenetrable at night. Anders enters a unit where he is again expected to prove himself. George Jellicoe and the SBS operate across a fragmented geography in which one island can be an enemy base and the next a refuge. Maps show water; they cannot show loyalty, hunger, or fear.

Anders signs off on an operation and realises that his name now stands beside the risk carried by every man. He must decide who goes ashore, who stays with the boat, and when incomplete information is sufficient. The exhilaration of action is increasingly mixed with the loneliness of command.

The Mediterranean looks impossibly bright after the grey northern coasts. At sea, beauty offers no protection. A small craft moves toward an island whose cliffs give no safe landing in the rising wind. Anders reads the coast instinctively, then asks the local guide to describe the people who live beyond it. The guide does not answer immediately. He wants to know whether the British will leave before dawn and what happens if the Germans search the village afterward.

Anders has prepared an extraction for his own men. He has not prepared an answer for the villagers. He folds the map, calls the team together and revises the objective. Some are disappointed. He is beginning to understand that command includes people who are not under his command.

## 17 THE AEGEAN — THE ISLAND WORLD

The Greek intermediary will not answer until Anders explains what happens after the raid. The British will be gone before daylight. The families in the village will still be there. Lassen looks back at the map, and a route that was simple a moment earlier becomes complicated.

A Greek fisherman watches the approaching British boat without waving. He knows the coast better than any man aboard, and he knows that the occupiers will still be there when the raiders have vanished. At a table inside a darkened house, he draws the location of a patrol with a finger in spilled salt. Anders asks how many Germans. The fisherman asks how many British boats will return for his family if the Germans come searching.

When Anders returns to the shore after the mission, the fisherman is waiting. The British can report success, but the man asks only whether anyone saw the path to his house. Anders says he cannot promise safety. The fisherman nods, neither grateful nor hostile. This refusal of easy absolution follows Anders back to the boat, where the men are celebrating a mission whose consequences have not yet finished unfolding.

The raiders enter a village that has already endured years of occupation. A fisherman knows a safe path, but helping them may bring reprisals upon his family. Anders initially asks only whether the route is passable. The fisherman asks who will protect the village after the British depart. Anders has no immediate answer. The operation changes because the civilians' lives are not an afterthought.

In a whitewashed room a Greek contact places a loaf of bread on the table and divides it between several children before speaking to the soldiers. The delay irritates Anders until he notices that the family is listening from the next room. The contact knows a path through the hills, but it passes a farm whose owner has already been questioned by occupying forces.

Anders traces an alternative with his finger. It is longer, and the boat will have to wait closer to daylight. He asks whether there is another way. The contact says there is always another way for men who can sail away. The words remain with Anders during the return crossing, when the lights of the village disappear behind the headland.

The intermediary spreads a hand over the map to cover the village. For the British it is a symbol beside the road. For him it contains names, children, elderly people and the consequences of a failed escape. Lassen moves his pencil.

At dawn a local woman quietly removes evidence that strangers passed through her house. The British have gone, but the danger has not. The film allows the audience to remain with her after the commandos leave. This proposed sequence needs Greek historical consultation and should not be attributed to a specific family without evidence.

## **18 FIRST AEGEAN MISSION**

The patrol reaches the intended point and finds the landscape altered by a fact absent from the briefing. There is no time to ask London what to do. Lassen weighs the target against the men, the guide and the houses beyond the ridge, and gives an order that will disappoint those who came to fight.

The patrol climbs a stony path under a moon that keeps breaking through cloud. The men have been told to expect an empty outbuilding near the objective. Instead, a lamp burns behind its shutters. A child's voice carries into the night. Anders holds up a hand. The explosives man looks at his watch. The tide will not wait for them.

The first major Aegean set piece follows an SBS patrol from briefing to extraction. The men travel in darkness, navigate by limited reference points and reach an objective only to find conditions different from intelligence reports. Anders must revise the plan without exposing the entire force.

A landing is prepared with painstaking confidence and immediately complicated by reality. The expected beach is exposed; an unfamiliar light appears above the village; the guide says the

patrol must wait. Anders measures the loss of darkness against the possibility of harming civilians. The men watch him decide.

A raider wants to continue after the agreed withdrawal point. Anders sees the appeal of an additional success and the cost of remaining. The choice to leave is not a loss of courage. It is evidence that the man who once raced ahead of his section has learned to protect the group.

The action sequence is organized around decisions, not explosions. When an unexpected civilian presence complicates the objective, Anders delays rather than force an immediate attack. The mission remains tense because restraint costs time. The audience sees the beginning of his evolution from instinctive attacker into a more complex commander.

The men lie exposed in the cold and resent the lost time. When they finally move, the target is approached from a less favourable direction, but the civilians are no longer in danger of being caught between forces. On the return voyage nobody calls the operation spectacular. The patrol has survived, and that has become a meaningful victory.

A patrol lands beneath a steep ridge and climbs toward its objective. The route is harder than intelligence suggested; one man slips and sends stones rattling down the slope. Anders freezes the column. Above them a light appears in a window that should have been dark. A messenger reports civilians near the intended approach. The obvious choice is to push ahead before dawn, but Anders orders a delay while the guide checks the track.

**Historical anchor: the Crete/Kastelli action is associated with Operation Albumen in 1943. Operational specifics, the roles of named participants and exact destruction claims require checking against war diaries and Thomas Harder's detailed account.**

## 19 THE COMMANDER AND HIS MEN

A younger soldier repeats one of Lassen's jokes too loudly. Later an older man asks the major whether he heard the fear underneath it. Anders had not. The next time he checks the patrol he speaks to the same soldier without an audience.

A new arrival treats Lassen's reputation as permission to be reckless. He volunteers for every dangerous job and laughs at the older men who check their equipment twice. Anders watches him misjudge a small crossing and nearly pull another soldier into the water. Later he tells him that bravery is not contagious, but stupidity is. The young man is wounded by the rebuke.

That evening Anders finds him sitting alone, repairing a torn strap. He does not withdraw the criticism. Instead he sits down and helps. They speak about home, neither wanting to say very much. The younger man asks if Lassen is ever frightened. Anders answers that fear is useful until it begins to give orders. For once the reply is less a boast than a confession.

The older veteran who challenges Anders is not an antagonist. He is the man who will carry an injured comrade when the officer is already moving toward the next danger. At first Anders hears his cautions as resistance. Gradually he learns to ask for them before a briefing. The

change is small enough that only the veteran notices; he begins to answer without waiting to be invited.

A junior soldier copies Anders's swagger and nearly makes a mistake. Anders recognises himself in the boy and responds more sharply than intended. Later he explains the real reason for his anger: the unit cannot afford imitation of courage without imitation of preparation. Their evolving relationship gives the final operation an emotional audience beyond the protagonist himself.

The soldiers around Anders must not exist only to die for his character development. Give each a private life in glimpses: a badly folded photograph, a letter written in an unexpectedly elegant hand, a promise to learn a trade. In the boat they joke about trivial things because the alternative is to imagine the landing.

Anders is admired, but admiration does not erase friction. He can be generous with food, impatient with a poor knot, and unexpectedly gentle with an exhausted soldier. The same men who joke about his disregard for uniform convention depend on his judgment when the sea turns rough. They do not need a speech to know whether he will share their danger.

A younger soldier admires Lassen's reputation but mistakes recklessness for courage. An older noncommissioned officer challenges Anders privately after a briefing. These can be composite characters, or replaced by documented comrades when archival research establishes suitable figures. The conflict is not whether Anders is brave; everyone knows he is. It is whether his men can trust him to bring them back.

He learns to ask a question he once considered a sign of weakness: who has not spoken? In the silence of the briefing room, an overlooked soldier identifies a flaw in the plan. Lassen corrects it without pretending the idea was his own.

After a difficult return, a subordinate asks Anders why he always goes first. Anders offers a practical answer about seeing the ground. The soldier tells him that when the commander disappears ahead, the others cannot always know what he intends. Anders has to decide whether leading from the front means being first or being understood.

A young volunteer watches Anders clean his weapon and asks how many raids a man must survive before he stops being afraid. Anders answers with a joke and sees the boy take it seriously. Later an experienced sergeant challenges him privately: the men will copy whatever he does, including the things he does because he is angry.

The criticism stings. At supper Anders sits beside the volunteer and asks about home. The boy speaks of a shop he hopes to reopen. The conversation lasts only a few minutes, but the next time Anders assigns a dangerous task he can no longer think of the man merely as the fastest runner. He knows what might be lost with him.

## 20 MORAL FRICTION

The argument begins with an apparently minor alteration to a route. The man who proposes it sees a faster way to the objective. Lassen sees the possibility of a wounded man carried back through the same narrow passage. The room falls quiet when he rejects the shortcut.

An operation leaves behind an argument no one can settle. The men have accomplished their immediate task, but a local contact believes the raid has made his community less safe. Anders begins to explain the military necessity and stops when he sees that the man is not asking for an explanation. He is asking who will stay.

Back at the base, a colleague tells Anders that no commander can save everyone. Anders answers that this does not relieve a commander of having to count them. The disagreement remains unresolved. It becomes part of the weight he carries from one island to the next.

In the next briefing he insists upon a change to the withdrawal plan to protect local contacts. Someone accuses him of becoming cautious. He answers that caution for other people is not the same thing as fear for oneself. The exchange is invented, but the ethical question is central to the story.

A mission can be militarily justified and still leave devastation in its wake. The film resists invented atrocities or a simple redemption plot. Instead, Anders confronts a civilian who fears the consequences of an Allied raid. The encounter is uncomfortable because both are right about different parts of the danger. Anders can leave by sea; the civilian cannot.

The guide is not found. There is no speech about the cruelty of war. Anders writes the missing man's name in the margin of his notebook, beside a list of supplies. The audience understands that responsibility sometimes means keeping an absence visible when the official report cannot.

After an operation, an officer reports that the objective was achieved and the enemy position damaged. The figures are correct, but a local guide has not returned. Anders insists on searching for him. A colleague argues that a second patrol would risk more lives for an uncertain chance. Anders looks at the men waiting for his order and realises that neither choice is clean. He sends a small reconnaissance rather than the full force and stays awake until it returns.

**Historical anchor: operations on Paros had grave consequences for Greek civilians, including the execution of guide Nikolas Stellas. The film must not convert these events into a fictionalized, consequence-free victory.**

## 21 LETTERS FROM HOME

The paper has crossed seas and censorship offices to reach him. A few sentences from Denmark describe weather, family news and ordinary inconvenience. He rereads the least important sentence, because it describes a world in which nobody has to count ammunition.

He begins a reply in which he tries to describe a Greek morning. The page fills with harmless details because the truth cannot be sent home. He crosses out a sentence about being tired. In the end he writes that he is well and that the sea is beautiful. He knows how little this tells her. He seals the envelope anyway.

The narrative contrast is crucial. Anders has agency, movement and weapons; his family has little knowledge of where he is. A letter arrives months late. The mother reads between its cheerful lines and recognizes how little he is willing to say. The distance between them becomes emotional, not just geographical.

A letter from Denmark is an object with weight. It has crossed borders, been delayed and handled by strangers. Anders reads it once for information and again for the ordinary details: weather, household news, a familiar name. He smiles at something no one around him understands. Then he folds it carefully and puts it away.

A letter from Denmark arrives with a crease through the address. Anders carries it for hours before opening it. The news is domestic: weather, a repair, a family gathering he has missed. These details strike harder than any declaration of love. He tries to answer in the same ordinary tone, but every sentence about his own life is either untrue or forbidden.

He begins a reply and tears the paper in half. Nothing he can say about his work will make sense at home, and the details that might explain him are the details he cannot send. He starts again with the weather.

In Denmark Suzanne receives news in fragments. The family cannot see the places where he serves or know what the silence between letters means. A domestic scene continues after the letter is read: a meal must be prepared, an ordinary task completed. War has entered the house without a soldier ever appearing in it.

## **22 1944 — GREECE IN TRANSITION**

Victory no longer means the same thing to everyone in the room. A destroyed bridge might hinder retreating Germans, but it might also leave a village isolated. Lassen hears a plan he would once have embraced and asks who will be living there after the soldiers are gone.

As German power weakens in Greece, every victory produces new uncertainties. A bridge may be more valuable intact than destroyed. A radio contact may be more important than a captured post. Anders learns that the map is changing faster than orders can arrive. Local allies disagree among themselves, and the British cannot pretend those disagreements do not exist.

As German control recedes, the political and human landscape grows more complicated. Liberation is not a simple switch from darkness to light. Armed groups, exhausted civilians, and competing claims about the future crowd the same streets. Anders is trained to identify military objectives; now he must navigate the consequences of victory for people whose political future he cannot decide.

The room waits while he weighs a map against information that cannot be drawn on it. He orders a reconnaissance instead. Outside, the men watch a convoy disappear over a ridge without firing a shot. For some this feels like failure. For Anders it is evidence that the war has become harder to understand even as victory draws closer.

A briefing begins with a target marked in red. By the time it ends, the mark has been crossed out. German withdrawals, shifting alliances and uncertain local intelligence have changed the value of the objective. A younger officer is furious at the wasted preparation. Anders, who once would have agreed, asks whether attacking would now endanger the very people the operation is meant to help.

## 23 THE POSSIBILITY OF PEACE

The others speak of homes, professions, weddings. Anders listens with the attention he gives to a foreign language. When asked what he will do, he offers a joke. It earns a laugh and saves him from answering.

Men begin to talk about the end of the war. One intends to open a shop. Another has promised to return to a woman whose photograph has faded almost beyond recognition. They argue about food, trains and what civilian clothes will feel like. Anders listens as though they are discussing a foreign country.

A comrade asks him what he will do in Denmark. Anders says that he will go home, then stops. Home has remained fixed in his imagination while he has changed beyond anything he can describe. He cannot picture himself at a dinner table without hearing a motor, a warning, a footstep outside. He does not say this. He asks for the next assignment.

The first conversations about peace sound almost indecent in a military camp. Men imagine bakeries, wives, railway stations and mornings without orders. Anders listens with genuine interest but contributes little. His silence is not proof that he is incapable of civilian life; it is the uncertainty of a man whose adult identity has been built during war.

A soldier talks about a shop he intends to open. Another wants only to see his daughter. Anders joins the conversation but cannot produce a convincing picture of his own future. When pressed, he jokes about returning to sea. The joke does not entirely hide his uncertainty.

A quiet conversation with a comrade allows the film to explore survival without making an unsupported diagnosis. Anders admits that he cannot imagine an ordinary morning. The exchange is brief. The next day he is back at work, demonstrating the habit of turning discomfort into action.

He imagines a Danish shore in summer. For a few seconds there is no enemy, no timetable, no one depending on his next signal. The image is attractive and almost unbearable. His problem is not that he loves violence; it is that the war has become the place where his abilities have a clear purpose.

A friend asks whether he thinks he will ever be content. Anders says that contentment sounds suspiciously like waiting. They laugh, but the joke hangs between them. At dawn he is first to rise, and his friend watches him prepare for another day as though motion has become the only language he trusts.

At the end of the conversation he is alone. He tries to picture the estate after the war: a breakfast table, familiar voices, no orders to give. The image will not stay still long enough to comfort him.

One evening the men begin listing what they will do when the war ends. One wants a small house; another wants never to hear an engine again. Anders listens and smiles at the right moments. When asked about Denmark he describes the woods at Høvdingsgaard, the smell of wet earth and a road he could walk with his eyes closed. Then he stops. He can picture the place but not himself living there.

## 24 TRANSFER TO ITALY

The Italian ground is flat, wet and without the familiar refuge of stone. A man can see a long way across the marsh and still have no idea where an enemy is hiding. Lassen folds the map and goes to examine the actual shoreline.

Italy greets the men with rain and mud. The island light has gone. Shallow water runs between reed beds, and the horizon offers no reassuring landmark. A soldier jokes that the sea has followed them inland. Nobody laughs very much. Rumours of an approaching Allied victory make every new order feel more expensive.

Anders examines the ground with the concentration of a hunter. The men notice how much he enjoys understanding a difficult landscape. But this place offers a cruel difference: water hems in every route. When he asks about withdrawal, the briefing officer admits that some details remain uncertain. Anders does not argue. He asks for the maps again.

Italy enters as a landscape of exhaustion. Rain has flattened the reeds; soldiers move along narrow roads between waterlogged fields; artillery is heard from positions no one can see. Unlike the Aegean, there is little horizon. The world seems to have shrunk around the men.

The move to northern Italy replaces open sea and rocky islands with embankments, flooded fields and canals. Anders is briefed on a larger Allied offensive. His patrol will be a small part of an operation designed to create confusion about where the main blow will fall. The geography looks flat on the map and treacherous underfoot.

The men arrive in northern Italy and discover a landscape that refuses their familiar habits. There are no clean coves, no steep island paths, only shallow water, embankments and reeds that hide distance. An officer describes the larger offensive and the part their small unit must play. Anders studies the route in silence. He asks where the wounded can be brought back and what happens if the water rises.

The camera that once travelled across oceans now remains close to boots, reeds and narrow causeways. Anders studies a route with incomplete information. The lack of reconnaissance is not a contrivance; the official Victoria Cross citation specifically notes that no previous reconnaissance was possible for the final patrol.

The questions surprise a newcomer who knows him only by reputation. Later Anders walks to the edge of the marsh and listens. The place seems empty. He hears birds, a distant engine and a sound that might be metal striking stone. He stays until the light fails, trying to learn its language.

## 25 THE COMACCHIO OPERATION

The briefing leaves gaps that cannot be filled. There has been no opportunity to reconnoitre the precise route. The mission requires a disturbance large enough to distract German defenders and prisoners who can be questioned. Lassen studies the strip of road between two reaches of water.

Anders studies a narrow road between stretches of water. He sees the danger immediately: little cover, restricted movement, no easy way around a defended point. A young soldier asks why they must take such a risk when the war is almost finished. Anders answers that the war is not finished for the men who will fight tomorrow. The room falls quiet. He has given the answer he believes, not the reassurance anyone wanted.

The briefing explains the operational purpose in plain language. The patrols must confuse and pressure German defenders, supporting a larger Allied advance. Anders studies channels and defensive positions. The plan depends on darkness, surprise and movement through difficult terrain.

The briefing must explain the diversion clearly enough that viewers understand its purpose. Lassen's patrol is not being asked to win the Italian campaign; it is being asked to influence where the enemy looks. This disproportion between a tiny unit and a large offensive is the essence of special operations, and the source of the scene's suspense.

The map of Comacchio becomes a dramatic object. Channels that look harmless on paper are difficult to cross; a few metres of exposed ground may separate cover from disaster. Lassen challenges an assumption about the approach, not to display brilliance but because he has learned to distrust tidy diagrams. A subordinate raises the possibility of withdrawal if the route becomes blocked.

Anders draws a route along the north shore of Lake Comacchio. The officers know that the land may not match the chart. The men ask what happens if the way forward becomes a narrow strip between water on both sides. Anders answers with the withdrawal signals and contingencies, but cannot remove the uncertainty.

At the Comacchio briefing, the maps are laid flat beneath lamps that make the water look like dark glass. The men are told what their movement may achieve for the wider Allied attack. One soldier asks whether the enemy knows the war is almost over. Nobody answers. Anders identifies the narrowest part of the route and asks for the withdrawal signal to be repeated.

He then makes each section leader explain the plan back to him. The ritual takes time and feels excessive until one man notices that two groups have understood the rendezvous differently. The mistake is corrected. Anders looks at the corrected chart with no satisfaction. He has learned how many lives can depend on a small question asked before departure.

## 26 THE EVENING BEFORE

One man repairs a strap. Another tries to remember the name of a place he wants to visit after the war. Lassen checks the men's equipment, then returns to the map. There is no farewell speech; nobody has been told this will be a final journey.

On the evening of 8 April the men prepare as they always do. Someone discovers a missing button. Someone else checks a photograph, then hides it before he can be teased. Anders moves among them, noticing what they have forgotten. He adjusts a strap, corrects a weight distribution and asks a man about his boots. It is an ordinary commander's work, made unbearable only by what the audience knows.

A brief joke passes between Lassen and a veteran. For a moment they are simply tired men who have done this too many times. Anders sits apart with the map and listens to the sounds beyond the camp. Five years earlier, Denmark had been occupied. He has carried that date through the war without knowing that it will also mark the end of his life.

The evening is built from small acts of preparation. A man sharpens a pencil; another discovers a torn seam and repairs it; someone tries to remember the exact ingredients of a meal he wants when he gets home. Anders moves between them checking practical details. He offers a brief joke, then corrects a piece of equipment without embarrassment or ceremony.

The evening is filled with small tasks: checking ammunition, adjusting straps, testing a torch, sharing the last hot drink. A man jokes about how soon the war will end. Another quietly folds a letter. Anders moves between them, asking precise questions about equipment rather than delivering a grand speech.

The evening before the patrol is filled with unremarkable work. A man darns a sock. Another checks the fastening on his equipment for the third time. Someone tells a joke that earns only a tired smile. Anders moves between them, inspecting without fuss. He notices a frayed strap and replaces it himself rather than summoning its owner. When the men have settled, he takes a moment alone.

The film resists the temptation to foreshadow death with ominous dialogue. Instead, it lets the audience experience the cruelty of hindsight. Each ordinary gesture may be the last of its kind.

A map, a letter or a family photograph may serve as a symbolic prop only if it is not passed off as a documented possession.

He tries to picture Høvdingsgaard in spring, the particular colour of a field after rain. A voice calls from the doorway; the patrol is ready. He puts the thought away. Nothing in the scene announces a final farewell. The force of it comes from the possibility, shared by everyone present, that there will be another morning.

The youngest soldier asks a practical question about the return route. Lassen answers without irritation, making sure the man repeats the signal correctly. It is a small act of leadership, unnoticed by anyone who will later write about the battle.

One soldier admits that he is frightened of drowning more than of enemy fire. Anders does not ridicule him. He asks which part of the route worries him and assigns another man to stay close. This is proposed dialogue, designed to show leadership through attention. Later, when the patrol enters the marsh, the audience remembers the conversation.

## 27 THE APPROACH

The landing does not deliver them into the open marsh but onto a narrow road, water on either side. The scouts go forward. Behind them the others follow with the peculiar care of men who know that a stumble can be louder than a shout.

A challenge comes out of the dark. For an instant the patrol hangs between concealment and discovery. An answer is given: fishermen returning home. The words do not settle the suspicion. The men begin to move again. Then machine-gun fire tears across the road from the first position, and from positions farther back. The space that seemed empty a moment earlier becomes a trap.

The operation is shot in close perspective. Visibility is poor; sound carries across water. Men advance in a narrow formation and pause at every suspicious movement. Their equipment is heavy and their escape routes uncertain. The soundtrack privileges breathing, water and distant artillery over music.

The patrol discovers that the apparent route is a narrow road with water on both sides. The official citation records this terrain and the presence of two scouts ahead of Lassen. The scene is staged at walking speed. There is nowhere to spread out, nowhere to disappear, and little room to improvise if firing begins.

A voice comes from a position beside the road. The patrol tries to answer as fishermen returning home, an element recorded in the official citation. For a few seconds language seems capable of preserving the silence. Then machine-gun fire opens from more than one position, and the patrol's carefully controlled world breaks apart.

They move out in darkness. The first hundred yards are slow because the ground gives beneath their boots. A man loses his footing and catches the sleeve ahead of him. The sound of water seems to travel across the entire lagoon. Lassen waits until the disturbance settles. The route is narrower than the map suggested, and the reeds make the opposite bank difficult to judge.

The men pass messages by touch. A distant flash lights the horizon without revealing the source. The patrol continues because stopping in the open is its own kind of danger. Every few paces Anders checks the spacing behind him. The camera stays with the line, never giving the audience a safe overview of the terrain.

**Official citation anchor: the final patrol found itself on a narrow road with water on either side; Lassen advanced behind two scouts. The challenge and ensuing gunfire followed after approximately 500 yards.**

## 28 CONTACT

The challenge comes from the dark. An answer about fishermen briefly appears to satisfy the sentry. The patrol moves again, hoping to close the distance. Then a machine gun opens up and the night loses all shape except the road, the water and the fire.

The first burst drives the patrol into the smallest cover the road can offer. Someone calls for a wounded man. The men cannot see all the guns, but they can hear their fire intersecting. Anders understands that remaining where they are will let the positions destroy them one by one. He moves toward the first post with grenades while the others try to keep the enemy occupied.

The explosion is sharp and intimate. The first position falls silent. Anders does not stop to admire what he has done. A second post is still firing. He attacks again, and the patrol pushes forward behind him. Two prisoners are taken amid the confusion. What the men experience as a sequence of desperate seconds will later become a paragraph in an official citation.

Contact is sudden but not chaotic to the viewer. A challenge is heard; a flash briefly reveals a firing point; men fall into shallow cover that offers little protection. Lassen has seconds to weigh alternatives. Remaining still risks being pinned down. Retreat risks exposing the entire patrol. Moving forward risks his own life.

The first bursts are disorienting rather than spectacular. Water leaps beside the men. A wounded soldier falls against another. Anders understands that the line of men is exposed and that hesitation will multiply casualties. He begins moving toward the nearest position while others seek what cover the road offers.

A challenge cuts through the darkness. Before anyone can answer, fire strikes the water beside the patrol. Men drop against the embankment. Someone calls that the route back is exposed. Lassen listens to the direction of the bursts and looks toward the enemy position. His decision is made in a space too small for heroism to feel grand. He orders the men to hold while he moves toward the source of fire.

The film stays with the soldiers' experience: confusion, fragments of shouted information and brief glimpses of muzzle flashes. Anders decides to move forward. He is not invulnerable; he is acting because he believes the alternative will cost more lives.

The camera never gives him a godlike view of the battlefield. He has fragments: muzzle flashes, a gap in the firing, the sound of a man calling for help. The audience should experience his judgment under uncertainty, not a choreographed display of invulnerability.

## 29 THE FINAL ASSAULT

Lassen attacks the first position with grenades. Under covering fire from his men he moves against the second. Two prisoners are taken. The patrol has already suffered casualties, and the amount of fire it can return is shrinking. The third position remains ahead.

Lassen continues because the patrol cannot withdraw while the guns command the route. His courage is not an appetite for applause. It is an increasingly desperate attempt to make a few yards of ground safe for the men behind him. The action remains subject to primary-source verification.

When Anders is hit, the film does not instantly turn him into a monument. He experiences shock, pain and the practical realization that his men remain exposed. His decision to prevent further losses is the culmination of the character arc: the boy who sought danger now uses his last strength to protect others.

The Victoria Cross citation records Lassen attacking enemy positions with grenades, silencing two posts, and capturing prisoners. The film must respect that sequence and its limits. We see the terrible proximity of the fighting: the distance of a thrown grenade, the moment before a machine gun stops, the shock of a soldier who expected to die and is still alive.

The attack unfolds in fragments of light. Lassen moves toward one position, pauses as fire crosses the ground ahead and changes direction. Behind him his men try to keep sight of his movement without exposing themselves. A burst of noise is followed by a silence that lasts barely a second. Then another position opens fire. The audience is denied the clean geometry of an action spectacle: a man can see only what is in front of him.

## 30 THE ORDER TO WITHDRAW

A cry of surrender rises from the third position. Lassen advances to bring the defenders out. A burst of machine-gun fire strikes him. Even as he falls, he throws another grenade; his men rush the position. When they try to carry him, he refuses. Their ammunition is nearly gone and the withdrawal cannot wait.

The survivors hesitate. To leave him is to break every instinct formed by months of service together. The man nearest him begins to argue, but Anders has already made the calculation.

They have prisoners, wounded comrades and a route that remains exposed. His order is not a romantic gesture. It is a terrible piece of military arithmetic.

The men retreat through the marsh, carrying the knowledge that they have left their commander behind. No swelling score accompanies the withdrawal. The sound of the lagoon returns. The sequence ends with Anders alone in the dark, and then cuts away before his death becomes spectacle.

The survivors' dilemma is the emotional centre of the climax. Their instinct is to go back. Their commander has taught them to bring one another home. Yet attempting a rescue may expose more men to the same fire. The instruction to withdraw is therefore both an order and a terrible reversal of everything they feel.

When Lassen is hit, the change is almost invisible. His movement stops. One man begins toward him and another pulls him down as fire resumes. The patrol has to decide whether to attempt a rescue or obey the withdrawal order. The moment is cruel because both instincts are honourable. A message passes from man to man, each repeating it to ensure that it has been heard.

The patrol leaves. The camera remains close to the faces of men who are obeying an order they hate. Their survival is not uncomplicated relief. Every step away from their commander feels like betrayal, even though it is the last act of trust he asks of them.

They begin to move away, carrying what wounded they can. No one delivers a speech. The men leave with the knowledge that survival may depend on abandoning the person who has repeatedly brought them home. The exact last order and circumstances of his death require strict historical corroboration.

## **31 9 APRIL — FIVE YEARS**

In Denmark the date has a different weight. Five years earlier the occupation began on 9 April. Here, on the same date, the man who refused to accept it lies on the Italian shore. The film does not need a speech to force the connection.

Morning comes to Italy on 9 April 1945. In Denmark, the fifth anniversary of the occupation passes under German rule. The coincidence is not announced by a character. It is allowed to exist in the cut between two places: the cold water beside the road and a familiar Danish landscape where spring has begun.

A radio in a Danish house reports the date. Elsewhere, men who survived the patrol struggle to account for what happened. The film resists a grand statement about destiny. A young man who spent five years trying to fight his way back to a free Denmark has died before he can see it.

A brief image of Denmark in spring recalls the opening forest without implying a supernatural connection. Ordinary life is returning somewhere beyond the frame. Anders will not be there to see it.

The dramatic idea is not destiny but distance: a son dies abroad for a country that will not know of his death immediately. The film holds the contrast between the scale of world events and the private scale of grief.

Morning comes on 9 April 1945, the fifth anniversary of Germany's invasion of Denmark. The coincidence is factual and devastating without added symbolism. The war is nearly over in Europe; Lassen is twenty-four. The film lets the date stand against the silence of the marsh.

The date is spoken almost casually when a soldier checks a watch: 9 April. Five years earlier the news of Denmark's occupation had reached Anders across another body of water. The film does not interrupt the battle with a triumphant montage. Instead, a brief sensory echo returns: a ship's wireless crackle, a flag moving in a windless harbour, the silence of men who do not yet know what they will do.

In Italy, the remaining patrol is still trying to survive. The coincidence of dates belongs to history; its meaning belongs to the audience. The man who refused to accept the occupation will not live to see his homeland free.

## 32 AFTERMATH — THE SURVIVORS

The report must be concise: objective, opposition, casualties, prisoners. The survivors know other details that will never fit into its columns: the sound of a voice, the weight of a man's arm, the moment they obeyed an order they wished they could refuse.

A survivor gives his account to an officer. He describes the road, the positions and the order to withdraw. The officer asks for numbers and timings. The survivor tries to answer but keeps returning to one detail: Lassen's insistence that they leave. He is not being evasive. It is the part he cannot make fit inside an operational report.

The surviving men face a difficult truth: they lived partly because another man did not. Their memory of him is complicated — courageous, demanding, infuriating, loyal. This ambivalence makes the tribute more credible.

After-action paperwork is an unexpected form of drama. A survivor tries to describe the distance between two positions and realises that memory has become unreliable. An officer asks him to start again. The witness is frustrated, then understands why precision matters. The report will outlive them all.

The mission's objectives have been met, but the men do not experience success as victory. Someone lays out Anders' equipment. Another cannot bear to look at it. We do not invent a melodramatic breakdown. The absence of his ordinary presence is enough.

After-action reporting reduces chaos to coordinates, times and names. The men struggle to describe their commander's conduct. An officer asks for precision because the record will matter. Their grief emerges in the effort to be accurate. The film does not invent an immediate unanimous verdict that Lassen was a legend.

Their memories of Lassen are contradictory in the most human way. One recalls his courage; another recalls his impatience; a third remembers an absurd joke. No single speech defines him. The film allows the survivors to become custodians of an incomplete truth, and shows that their survival carries its own burden.

The survivors must tell officers what happened. They remember fragments in different orders. The report needs positions, times, casualties and results. The men remember a voice in the dark and the weight of a comrade's hand. The distinction between official record and private memory becomes the film's final ethical question.

At dawn the survivors return to a place where other men are eating breakfast. The contrast is unbearable. A medical orderly asks for names. A soldier begins with the wounded and then cannot say Lassen's name. Another completes the list. Someone removes wet equipment and discovers mud inside every seam. The men are asked to describe what happened in order, but memory will not obey the sequence of the report.

### **33 DENMARK IS LIBERATED**

Liberation comes to Denmark without him. The flags appear in windows and streets. The country has a future again. At home, the news of victory and the news of his death belong to the same spring, and no celebration can make the two agree.

When Denmark is liberated in May, the streets fill with flags and people embracing strangers. At Høvdingsgaard the news is both joyous and incomplete. Suzanne has a country again. She does not have her son. The film stays with the contradiction rather than turning the family's grief into a patriotic illustration.

The liberation of Denmark is presented through sound: the radio announcement, footsteps on stairs, doors opening onto streets where people are suddenly unafraid to speak. Families embrace. Flags appear. The joy is real and deserves its full weight.

The film's most painful contrast is that his aim has been achieved. Denmark is free. Anders is absent. An empty place at a family table can communicate more than a speech about sacrifice.

In Denmark, liberation arrives as noise: bells, voices, feet running on cobblestones, windows thrown open. The family home hears the news that the occupation has ended, but another message has already changed its meaning. The film refuses an easy cross-cut between public celebration and private grief. Instead, a room is shown after the visitors have gone.

A chair remains empty; the light changes on the floor. Someone opens a drawer containing a photograph of Anders before the war, younger than the man remembered by his comrades. The freedom he fought for has arrived. It cannot return him. The family scene is proposed dramatic reconstruction and must be developed with care for surviving testimony.

## 34 THE VICTORIA CROSS

The award is announced in words of exceptional bravery and leadership. For the men who followed him, the citation names an action they remember as noise, fear and the necessity of getting away. For the family, it gives public meaning to a private absence.

The posthumous Victoria Cross is announced in September 1945. The official citation supplies a factual account of the final patrol, though it is a military commendation rather than a complete personal biography. We can hear a restrained portion read while watching the faces of those who knew him.

Elsewhere, a surviving comrade hears of the honour and remembers a very different detail: Anders leaning over a map, refusing to leave until every man understood the route. The film acknowledges the Victoria Cross without allowing a ceremony to become the emotional climax. That climax has already occurred in the marsh.

A medal is small enough to rest in a hand. It cannot convey the weather of the lagoon, the sound of a frightened man breathing, or the long passage from a Danish childhood. The ceremony should honour Lassen without pretending that recognition resolves grief.

A citation is read aloud in formal language. The words are precise, dignified and necessarily incomplete. They describe conduct under fire, not the boy in the woods, the difficult school pupil or the man who struggled to answer letters from home. A family member receives the decoration while the camera remains close enough to register the physical weight of a small object.

## 35 EPILOGUE — THE FOREST

The fields at Høvdingsgaard are unchanged in ways that seem almost cruel. Wind passes through the trees. Someone walks a path Anders once knew. Nothing in the landscape explains what became of him, yet every familiar sound can summon him back.

The final image returns to the boy's first lesson: a decision not to take a shot because another life stood behind the target. In Italy, his last decision was made with the same knowledge, enlarged by everything the war had taught him. The film ends not on a battlefield but in the silence of the place where he first learned to listen.

The final image reprises the childhood landscape without claiming that the boy foresaw his fate. Wind moves through trees; the woods are indifferent to the war. An adult family member may walk the path, but only if that choice can be supported or explicitly presented as symbolic.

On screen: Major Anders Frederik Emil Victor Schau Lassen, 22 September 1920 – 9 April 1945. Posthumous recipient of the Victoria Cross; three-time recipient of the Military Cross. Buried at Argenta Gap War Cemetery, Italy. The closing credits may include authenticated photographs and archival material, carefully captioned.

The final image returns to South Zealand. Wind moves through trees. There is no adult Anders standing among them and no ghostly reunion. We remember a boy whose attention was always drawn toward the horizon. A bird rises suddenly from the undergrowth, and the sound carries us back to the marsh before resolving into silence.

This section is deliberately separate from the film narrative. It identifies the research boundary between documented biography and invented cinematic interpretation.

- Anders Frederik Emil Victor Schau Lassen was born on 22 September 1920 at Høvdingsgaard, South Zealand; he attended Herlufsholm and Lundby Realskole and went to sea before joining British service in 1941.
- Operation Postmaster took place at Santa Isabel on Fernando Po in January 1942; Lassen participated in the British covert operation to remove Axis-associated vessels from a neutral harbour.

Years later, the landscape around Høvdingsgaard changes with the seasons. A path runs through the woods, and wind moves across the grass. There is no apparition of Anders and no imagined speech from the dead. A young person pauses at the edge of the trees, listening to a sound that the audience heard at the beginning. The camera remains where it is as the figure walks on.

We have spent the film learning what Anders could do in danger; the final image asks what remains of a life beyond the circumstances that made it famous. The answer is neither a military statistic nor a myth. It is a person remembered differently by family, comrades and country.

## HISTORICAL CHRONOLOGY AND SCENE STATUS

This is a production chronology rather than a claim that every dramatic scene is independently documented. The scene numbers and scene intentions derive from the previous integrated manuscript; classification below makes the evidentiary status explicit.

Status key: VERIFIED CORE = the historical event is supported by the listed published source, but its dialogue and staging are dramatized. INFERRED = plausible transition or emotional interpretation not independently attested. FICTIONAL COMPOSITE = created scene or character requiring clear treatment as invention. RESEARCH REQUIRED = operation or participant needs primary-source checking. A source for an event does not authenticate its imagined dialogue.

01 THE BLACK WATER | Chapter 03 | Dramatic reconstruction

FICTIONAL COMPOSITE • Sources: —

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

02 A SIGNAL IN THE DARK | Chapter 03 | Dramatic reconstruction

FICTIONAL COMPOSITE • Sources: —

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

03 THE BOY IN THE TREES | Chapter 04 | 1920s–1930s

INFERRED • Sources: S1, S2

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

04 THE FAMILY TABLE | Chapter 04 | 1920s–1930s

INFERRED • Sources: S1, S2

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

05 AN UNFINISHED FAREWELL | Chapter 04 | 1920s–1930s

INFERRED • Sources: S1, S2

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

06 THE ANSWER AND THE RULE | Chapter 05 | 1920s–1930s

INFERRED • Sources: S1, S2

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

07 THE COST TO A FRIEND | Chapter 05 | 1920s–1930s

INFERRED • Sources: S1, S2

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

08 A DECKHAND AMONG STRANGERS | Chapter 06 | Late 1930s–1940

INFERRED • Sources: S1, S2

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

09 NIGHT WATCH | Chapter 06 | Late 1930s–1940

INFERRED • Sources: S1, S2

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

10 A WIRELESS MESSAGE | Chapter 07 | 9 April 1940

VERIFIED CORE • Sources: S1, S2

Narrative purpose: dramatizes the documented event while retaining its essential historical outcome.

11 THE FLAG ASTERN | Chapter 07 | 9 April 1940

VERIFIED CORE • Sources: S1, S2

Narrative purpose: dramatizes the documented event while retaining its essential historical outcome.

12 A FOREIGNER IN BRITAIN | Chapter 08 | Late 1940–January 1941

INFERRED • Sources: S1

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

13 AN INTERVIEW | Chapter 08 | Late 1940–January 1941

INFERRED • Sources: S1

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

14 A LESSON IN RESPONSIBILITY | Chapter 09 | Early 1941

FICTIONAL COMPOSITE • Sources: S1

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

15 THE SECOND ATTEMPT | Chapter 09 | Early 1941

FICTIONAL COMPOSITE • Sources: S1

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

16 THE MAN AT THE CHART | Chapter 10 | April 1941 onward

VERIFIED CORE • Sources: S1, S3

Narrative purpose: dramatizes the documented event while retaining its essential historical outcome.

17 A NEW KIND OF TRUST | Chapter 10 | April 1941 onward

FICTIONAL COMPOSITE • Sources: S1, S3

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

18 A BOAT AND A TIMETABLE | Chapter 11 | 1941–42

INFERRED • Sources: S1, S3

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

19 MEN WHO DEPEND ON ONE ANOTHER | Chapter 11 | 1941–42

INFERRED • Sources: S1, S3

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

20 THE HARBOUR AS A CLOCK | Chapter 12 | January 1942

VERIFIED CORE • Sources: S1, S3

Narrative purpose: dramatizes the documented event while retaining its essential historical outcome.

21 AN IMPOSSIBLE THEFT | Chapter 12 | January 1942

VERIFIED CORE • Sources: S1, S3

Narrative purpose: dramatizes the documented event while retaining its essential historical outcome.

22 ACROSS THE WATER | Chapter 13 | January 1942

VERIFIED CORE • Sources: S1, S3

Narrative purpose: dramatizes the documented event while retaining its essential historical outcome.

23 THE SHIPS MOVE | Chapter 13 | January 1942

VERIFIED CORE • Sources: S1, S3

Narrative purpose: dramatizes the documented event while retaining its essential historical outcome.

24 A COAST WITHOUT SHELTER | Chapter 14 | 1942

RESEARCH REQUIRED • Sources: S1, S3

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

25 THE PRICE OF CONTACT | Chapter 14 | 1942

RESEARCH REQUIRED • Sources: S1, S3

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

26 THE MISSING COMMANDER | Chapter 15 | 1942

VERIFIED CORE • Sources: S1

Narrative purpose: dramatizes the documented event while retaining its essential historical outcome.

27 A NEW SILENCE | Chapter 15 | 1942

INFERRED • Sources: S1

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

28 A SEA OF ISLANDS | Chapter 16 | 1943

VERIFIED CORE • Sources: S1, S2

Narrative purpose: dramatizes the documented event while retaining its essential historical outcome.

29 A DECISION ABOUT RISK | Chapter 16 | 1943

INFERRED • Sources: S1, S2

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

30 THE VILLAGE THAT REMAINS | Chapter 17 | 1943–44

FICTIONAL COMPOSITE • Sources: S1, S2 (theatre only)

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

31 A WARNING | Chapter 17 | 1943–44

FICTIONAL COMPOSITE • Sources: S1, S2 (theatre only)

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

32 AN UNCERTAIN LANDING | Chapter 18 | 1943–44

FICTIONAL COMPOSITE • Sources: S1, S2 (theatre only)

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

33 THE WITHDRAWAL | Chapter 18 | 1943–44

FICTIONAL COMPOSITE • Sources: S1, S2 (theatre only)

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

34 THE BURDEN OF A NAME | Chapter 19 | 1943–44

FICTIONAL COMPOSITE • Sources: S1, S2 (theatre only)

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

35 A PRIVATE CHALLENGE | Chapter 19 | 1943–44

FICTIONAL COMPOSITE • Sources: S1, S2 (theatre only)

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

36 AN ORDER AND ITS CONSEQUENCES | Chapter 20 | 1943–44

FICTIONAL COMPOSITE • Sources: S1, S2 (theatre only)

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

37 THE PEOPLE LEFT BEHIND | Chapter 20 | 1943–44

FICTIONAL COMPOSITE • Sources: S1, S2 (theatre only)

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

38 LETTERS CROSSING THE WAR | Chapter 21 | 1943–44

FICTIONAL COMPOSITE • Sources: S1, S2 (theatre only)

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

39 THE ROOM AFTER READING | Chapter 21 | 1943–44

FICTIONAL COMPOSITE • Sources: S1, S2 (theatre only)

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

40 A CHANGING GREECE | Chapter 22 | 1944

INFERRED • Sources: S1, S2

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

41 THE OPERATION NOT UNDERTAKEN | Chapter 22 | 1944

INFERRED • Sources: S1, S2

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

42 THE WORD AFTER | Chapter 23 | 1944–45

FICTIONAL COMPOSITE • Sources: —

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

43 WHAT PEACE MIGHT REQUIRE | Chapter 23 | 1944–45

FICTIONAL COMPOSITE • Sources: —

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

44 THE ROAD TO ITALY | Chapter 24 | Early 1945

VERIFIED CORE • Sources: S2, S5

Narrative purpose: dramatizes the documented event while retaining its essential historical outcome.

45 A DIFFERENT LANDSCAPE | Chapter 24 | Early 1945

INFERRED • Sources: S2, S5

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

46 THE MAP OF COMACCHIO | Chapter 25 | 8 April 1945

VERIFIED CORE • Sources: S4, S5

Narrative purpose: dramatizes the documented event while retaining its essential historical outcome.

47 NO RECONNAISSANCE | Chapter 25 | 8 April 1945

VERIFIED CORE • Sources: S4, S5

Narrative purpose: dramatizes the documented event while retaining its essential historical outcome.

48 EQUIPMENT BEFORE DAWN | Chapter 26 | 8 April 1945

FICTIONAL COMPOSITE • Sources: —

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

49 ORDINARY TALK | Chapter 26 | 8 April 1945

FICTIONAL COMPOSITE • Sources: —

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

50 THE LANDING | Chapter 27 | Night of 8–9 April 1945

VERIFIED CORE • Sources: S4

Narrative purpose: dramatizes the documented event while retaining its essential historical outcome.

51 THE NARROW ROAD | Chapter 27 | Night of 8–9 April 1945

VERIFIED CORE • Sources: S4

Narrative purpose: dramatizes the documented event while retaining its essential historical outcome.

52 THE CHALLENGE | Chapter 28 | Night of 8–9 April 1945

VERIFIED CORE • Sources: S4

Narrative purpose: dramatizes the documented event while retaining its essential historical outcome.

53 THE FIRST BURST | Chapter 28 | Night of 8–9 April 1945

VERIFIED CORE • Sources: S4

Narrative purpose: dramatizes the documented event while retaining its essential historical outcome.

54 THE FIRST TWO POSITIONS | Chapter 29 | Night of 8–9 April 1945

VERIFIED CORE • Sources: S4

Narrative purpose: dramatizes the documented event while retaining its essential historical outcome.

55 THE THIRD POSITION | Chapter 29 | Night of 8–9 April 1945

VERIFIED CORE • Sources: S4

Narrative purpose: dramatizes the documented event while retaining its essential historical outcome.

56 THE WITHDRAWAL | Chapter 30 | Night of 8–9 April 1945

VERIFIED CORE • Sources: S4

Narrative purpose: dramatizes the documented event while retaining its essential historical outcome.

57 THE MAN WHO STAYS | Chapter 30 | Night of 8–9 April 1945

VERIFIED CORE • Sources: S4

Narrative purpose: dramatizes the documented event while retaining its essential historical outcome.

58 TWO NINTHS OF APRIL | Chapter 31 | 9 April 1945

VERIFIED CORE • Sources: S2, S4

Narrative purpose: dramatizes the documented event while retaining its essential historical outcome.

59 A COUNTRY STILL WAITING | Chapter 31 | 9 April 1945

INFERRED • Sources: S2, S4

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

60 THE SURVIVORS SPEAK | Chapter 32 | April 1945

INFERRED • Sources: S4

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

61 WHAT A REPORT CANNOT CONTAIN | Chapter 32 | April 1945

INFERRED • Sources: S4

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

62 A LIBERATED COUNTRY | Chapter 33 | May 1945

VERIFIED CORE • Sources: S2

Narrative purpose: dramatizes the documented event while retaining its essential historical outcome.

63 A FAMILY WITHOUT ITS SON | Chapter 33 | May 1945

INFERRED • Sources: S2

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

64 THE AWARD | Chapter 34 | September 1945

VERIFIED CORE • Sources: S4, S6

Narrative purpose: dramatizes the documented event while retaining its essential historical outcome.

65 THE PRICE OF RECOGNITION | Chapter 34 | September 1945

INFERRED • Sources: S4, S6

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

66 HØVDINGSGAARD AGAIN | Chapter 35 | After 1945

FICTIONAL COMPOSITE • Sources: S1

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

67 THE SILENCE OF HOME | Chapter 35 | After 1945

FICTIONAL COMPOSITE • Sources: S1

Narrative purpose: establishes character and emotional continuity.

## HISTORICAL FACT-CHECK REGISTER

**22 September 1920** — Lassen was born in Denmark; childhood at Høvdingsgaard and hunting are documented. *SOURCE: Harder; Anders Lassen Fonden*

**9 April 1940** — News of Denmark's occupation reached him on Eleonora Mærsk in the Persian Gulf. *SOURCE: Harder*

**January–April 1941** — SOE training preceded transfer to the Maid Honor force in April. *SOURCE: Harder; Anders Lassen Fonden*

**August–September 1941** — Maid Honor sailed from Poole to Sierra Leone; the voyage took 41 days. *SOURCE: Lex; Harder*

**January 1942** — Operation Postmaster seized Italian Duchessa d'Aosta and German Likomba in neutral Spanish Fernando Po. *SOURCE: Lex; Harder*

**1942** — Lassen served in the Small Scale Raiding Force; March-Phillipps was killed while Lassen was absent. *SOURCE: Anders Lassen Fonden; Harder*

**1943** — Lassen served with the SBS in the Mediterranean; Operation Albumen involved an attack on Kastelli airfield. *SOURCE: Lex; Anders Lassen Fonden*

**1943–44** — Aegean operations involved Greek local support and serious risks of reprisals; Paros requires sensitive, precise depiction. *SOURCE: Harder*

**8–9 April 1945** — An officer and seventeen other ranks raided Lake Comacchio; the narrow road, three German positions, mortal wounding and refusal of evacuation are in the citation. *SOURCE: London Gazette no. 37254*

**4 September 1945** — His posthumous Victoria Cross was gazetted. *SOURCE: London Gazette no. 37254*

## WHAT IS DRAMATIZED

Childhood conversations, the recurring sound motif, training exercises, the personal confidences of fellow soldiers, Greek civilian dialogue, family letters not directly sourced, specific private reactions to March-Phillipps's death, and Lassen's inner thoughts are original dramatic inventions. The screenplay should not attribute these words to historical people as verbatim statements.

## RESEARCH AND CLEARANCE SOURCES

- The London Gazette, issue 37254 (4 September 1945), Victoria Cross citation: <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/37254/supplement/4469/data.pdf>
- Thomas Harder, Anders Lassen's War / Special Forces Hero: <https://thomasharder.dk/en/anders-lassens-war-operation-postmaster-comacchio>
- Anders Lassen Fonden, historical overview: <https://www.anderslassenfonden.dk/historie>
- Lex.dk, Anders Lassen: [https://lex.dk/Anders\\_Lassen](https://lex.dk/Anders_Lassen)

- The National Archives, Victoria Cross registers: <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/victoria-cross-registers-1856-1944>

Original wartime diaries, unit operational records, family correspondence, location permissions, photographs and any protected source text require separate access and rights clearance. Public historical facts are not exclusive film rights; specific source expression may be protected.