ATYP ON DEMAND
A TOWN NAMED WAR BOY

SCRIPT EXCERPT 1: CAIRO

Note:  
A “/” indicates characters speaking over each other

Snow  Our ship swings into the Harbour and / anchors.
John  It isn’t long till rumours are flying -
Snow  - we’re going to disembark and ...
Huddo  Get into the action, Tommy boy! How’s that for lifting your morale?!
Tom  Three cheers for the King! Hip hip!
        (They cheer three cheers and climb to the top of the boat to get a better view of the action in the water below them)
Snow  Locals swarming around the boat trying to sell / inferior goods.
Huddo  Like Johnny Walker, I’m still going strong! We hit Cairo like a train!
Snow  Woah! Cairo!
John  /  Cairo!
Snow  Cairo! You city of sin and shame!
Huddo  I love every disgusting inch of you! Every dirty little alley, every dusty back room bar - the pyramids are marvellous, but I could spend the rest of my days quite happily in the arms of your temptation! This is the home of the most - the most degrading sights of the universe! I love youse all!!
John  I am attracted and repulsed!
Huddo  Have you finally gone mad Vincent? What’s wrong?
John I’ve got a tooth ache!

Snow He’s got a tooth ache.

Huddo I can show you a fine way to make your pain disappear my friend!

John No, no -

Snow Life here is not too bad!

John I don’t like this place –

Snow Look at the bright side!

John There is no bright side to this / country Snow!

Snow Mate, I have come to the conclusion that Egypt is the best washer -woman country in the globe. Dry in two hours and the sun draws the dirt out.

Huddo That’s the least of all her blessings!

Snow A sunny Sunday in Sunland!

John *(giving him two fingers)* This is how I feel about things arse up here!

Huddo Let’s go and get a skin full.

Snow Beer, beer glorious beer!

Huddo A bottle a day keeps the doctor away!

Snow Beer on the desert is bloody glorious off the ice!

Huddo Duck into Cairo –

John Too dangerous!

Huddo Take it easy!

John Last time we went in there was a riot between / the natives and their troops;

Huddo It was a row, it wasn’t a riot!

John Two killed on Good Friday Huddo!

Huddo So what?

Snow That’s their business!

Huddo They’re not Christian!

John I am!
Snow    Since when?
John     My tooth is killing me –
Snow     Because you’re a Believer?
Huddo    I never felt better!
Snow     Nor thirstier!
Huddo    Talk about bloody dry!
Six A. M!!

What?!

He needs his beauty sleep!

Shut your trap ya mongrel!

Fall in! Come on you lot! Shake a leg and look lively! We’ve got a war to get to on time, you know? Fall in, fall in! / That’s an order! Here we go!

Signalling! – Another language! Three days training at the ranges. My first shot with an Army rifle! Hit the target.

Don’t know how you managed that.

I don’t reckon I can shoot a man.

You’ll do all right. I’ll / watch out for you.

Huddo?... Where are you mate?!

I’m right here, Snowy! By the seaside! Quick March!

(They start whistling a marching song underneath)

Full equipment, pack and sea bags – impossible to stand up, it is so slippery. March off from Broadmeadow Station; fall down and get up caked with mud. All the way to Port Melbourne I sketch on randomn bits of paper. Give them out to strangers on the stations as we pass through.

What’s he doing that for?

What are you doing that for?

They can keep ‘em - to remember me.

He reckons they’re gonna remember him.

You’re jokin’.

That’s what he said,

He’s mental.

How about “optimistic”?

May be a long time before we’re home again.
Hudo  Port Melbourne!
Snow  Embark on transport.
Hudo  A White Star Liner –
Snow  “Ceramic.”
Hudo  This! – is a very fine ship.
John  At one pm we steam away –
Hudo  No civilians on the wharf.
John  Only the Harbour Master to wave adieu.
Hudo  He’s throwing little sketches down to them now too – you see him?
Snow  Optimism?
Hudo  No mate, that’s bloody disturbing.
Snow  (to John) How the hell did you get in the army son?
John  My mother signed a letter.
Snow  (to Hudo) Like it was a school excursion.
John  I’ll be seventeen in June.
Snow  My God.
John  I know how to shoot. My uncle taught me.
Snow  You from the bush?
John  Riverina.
Hudo  We better stick together, I reckon.
Snow  Christ.
John  Sounds good to me.
Snow  Right. Thanks Hudo.
Hudo  He’s gonna need protection.
Snow  Yeah – well he’s got a whole bloody army to do that now.
John  Good Bye Australia!
Snow  Good Bye Australia?
John  Hello war!
Snow Here we go.
Huddo Rest of the day arranging kit on board. Noise and confusion.
Snow Fixing up / hammocks –
Huddo Picking out the / best spots –
John Getting in each other’s way
Snow Three thousand souls on board “Ceramic”.
John I meet bloke named Bell.
Huddo He is very bitter against the Germans –
John - and he always has a knife
Huddo - which he is always sharpening.
John He says he will show the Germans no mercy.
Huddo No mercy?
John Looks like he means it.
Snow Means what, mate?
John Murder.
Huddo Bloody murder.
Snow Down on the beach, dripping with blood – boys walk in the sand at midnight.
Huddo What’s that?
(Doctors office. Snow starts another chocolate)

Tom What are you eating?
Snow Nothing.
Tom I know it’s not the Taj Mahal but – you’re welcome to come inside.
Snow I’m fine here.
Tom Chocolates.
Snow You got chocolates?
Tom Of course. (beat) I can offer you a choice between the chair or the couch.
Snow Is this a test?
Tom No. It’s an offer of the chair or the couch. I think you... This is not a test.

(Snow sits)

Snow Did I pass?
Tom You’re making progress. Are you comfortable?
Snow Yes.
Tom All right. Begin.
Snow Begin what?
Tom Speaking.

(silence)

Snow What do you want me to say?
Tom You were a Signaller. You survived.
Snow Here I am.
Tom How did you do that?
Snow I was lucky.
Tom You make you own luck.
Snow No sir.
Tom You believe in God?

(pause)

Snow I believe in the beach.
Tom: What do you do — when you go to the beach? (pause) Do you meet friends? ... Do you swim?

Snow: I go in darkness.

Tom: By yourself?

Snow: I’m never by meself. A man’s always got his mates.

(Huddo and John enter the scene. They sit with Snow. Pause)

Snow: I met another angel last night.

Tom: Another angel?

Snow: Yeah.

Tom: At the beach?

Snow: Skin like silk and eyes like / sapphires and — ohhh... She was perfect.


Snow: I’m a lucky man Johnny. / What can I tell you? I live a charmed life.

John: Well — yes that’s one way of putting it — “lucky” for sure.

Tom: Who’s Johnny? (pause) You said — “I’m a lucky man, Johnny.” Who’s Johnny? ... Am I Johnny?

(beat)

John: Where did you meet your angel Snowy?

Snow: Nah — you don’t wanna know.

Tom: Details are important.

John: Tell him about your angels, mate. Tell him the stories you tell us.

(beat)

Snow: She saw us when we were marching.

John: They love the boys in uniform. / Don’t they?

Huddo: How would you bloody know, Johnno?
John  I know. They notice me –
Huddo  You’re bloody dreamin’ mate.
John  I have a few pretty faces / turn my way!
Huddo  Listen to bloody Romeo over here will ya? Romeo of Randwick Racecourse!
John  Now, why would / you say somethin’ like that?!
Snow  Hey fellas?... This is my story isn’t it?
Tom  Yes.
Snow  What?
Tom  This is your story... I’m listening.

(pause)

Snow  I think ... I have fallen in love.
Tom  / Fallen in love?
Huddo  Again? / He says it! He falls in love every Saturday night!
John  Bloody hell, Snow!
Snow  It’s bloody serious!
Huddo  The serial offender!
John  How many sweethearts have you got now, Snowy?
Huddo  Three or four, I’d say.
John  This is number five!
Huddo  He’s been counting!
Snow  How can a man count his love!
Huddo  You’re a bloody a fire cracker, mate!
Snow  I refuse to leave affection unfulfilled!
Huddo  But what will they do without you? Who are they going to dream about when they lay down / their pretty little heads?
Snow  I love each with all my human heart.
Huddo  I feel nothing but pity for these poor lovely things.
Snow: And, I feel the same for you mate. But I will return to hold their hands.
(loudly coaching Snow) You gotta create an illusion of strength! He’s a big brick bastard this dirty Russian, he’s not gonna go down easy! You gotta lay him out flat! Bang!

He looks bigger than a Lightweight.

Don’t worry about / that sunshine.

Bigger they are / the harder you hit ‘em.

Rush him from the bell.

Crowd him the corner.

Defend, defend and then attack!

Or attack, attack, defend! Either way. Okay?!

Got that?!

Got what? /

Ding, ding!

There’s the bell!

Hell!

Oh / that must’ve bloody hurt.

Didn’t stand a chance.

You right, Snow? Can you stand up?

(Snow is laid out flat on his back. He is breathing very heavily and then)

Did I win?

You’re getting better.

Put up a good show.

Bloody murder...

What’s that?

I said, we’ll spend some solid time together, working on your defence.
Snow: Good. Good, thanks... I am at Manly with Muriel. Weather - beautiful - sea - like glass.

Huddo: Concussed again.

John: Yep.

Huddo: I’ll get the salts.