

THE
C R O W N

Episode 608
"RITZ"



LEFT BANK Pictures

NETFLIX

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LEFT BANK PICTURES: 7th Floor, 175 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7AA

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OVER BLACK: the faint sound of cheering. Celebrating. Like an enormous party is in progress somewhere in the distance.

CAPTION: LONDON, MAY 8th, 1945

1 INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE, CORRIDOR (1945) - DAY (FLASHBACK) 1

YOUNG PRINCESS MARGARET (14) is being led down a grand corridor by an older PAGE. She hangs back as the PAGE walks ahead.

Unseen by him, she cheekily gives him the slip, opens a door off the corridor and disappears inside.

The PAGE turns to find YOUNG MARGARET has disappeared.

WINSTON CHURCHILL (ON RADIO)

Yesterday morning at 2:41 a.m. at General Eisenhower's Headquarters, General Jodl - the representative of the German High Command, and Grand Admiral Doenitz - the designated head of the German state, signed the act of unconditional surrender of all German land, sea, and air forces in Europe to the Allied Expeditionary Forces, and simultaneously to the Soviet High Command.

2 INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE, STATE ROOM (1945) - DAY (FLASHBACK) 2

From the P.O.V. of the Palace: a breathtaking spectacle. A sea of cheering, celebrating PEOPLE stretching as far as the eye can see.

WINSTON CHURCHILL (ON RADIO)

Hostilities will end officially at one minute after midnight tonight, Tuesday the eighth of May. We may allow ourselves a brief period of rejoicing. Today is victory in Europe day. Tomorrow will also be victory in Europe day.

YOUNG MARGARET looks out: spellbound, then, getting an idea.

3 INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE, YOUNG ELIZABETH AND MARGARET'S SHARED 3
DRESSING ROOM (1945) - LATE EVENING (FLASHBACK)

A window is pulled shut and the face of YOUNG MARGARET appears in the reflection. Behind her appears the face of YOUNG PRINCESS ELIZABETH (19) in military uniform. Dutiful and correct even in youth. Through the window they can see the cheering CROWDS outside the Palace.

WINSTON CHURCHILL (ON RADIO)
Long live the cause of freedom! God
save the King!

The PRINCESSES are getting ready in their shared dressing room. YOUNG MARGARET finishes putting on a dress and naughtily puts on riskily acquired make-up. She turns her back to YOUNG ELIZABETH who does her dress up. YOUNG ELIZABETH checks her khaki uniform in the mirror.

YOUNG MARGARET
(spritzing perfume)
Ready?

YOUNG ELIZABETH
Margaret, I'm not sure this is a
good idea.

YOUNG MARGARET
C'mon, the war is over. We have to
celebrate.

YOUNG ELIZABETH
But what if something goes wrong?

YOUNG MARGARET
We'll have Porchey and Peter
Townsend with us. What could
possibly go wrong?

YOUNG MARGARET hurries off.

YOUNG MARGARET
We're escaping the Palace!

4 INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE, CORRIDOR/DOOR (1945) - LATE EVENING 4
(FLASHBACK)

YOUNG ELIZABETH and YOUNG MARGARET join their CHAPERONES for the night, YOUNG PORCHEY and YOUNG PETER TOWNSEND.

An air of excitement and elation. YOUNG ELIZABETH and YOUNG MARGARET look at one another.

YOUNG MARGARET
Right. Out of the servants' door.
Before anyone sees us..

YOUNG ELIZABETH hesitates. Nervous. YOUNG MARGARET takes her by the hand and pulls.

YOUNG ELIZABETH
We can't just break out like this!

They slip out of the Palace through a side door...

5 EXT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE, DOOR/LONDON, STREETS (1945) - NIGHT 5
(FLASHBACK)

Out into the night. The real world. Two PRINCESSES.
Anonymous. And free. For the first time in their lives.

YOUNG PORCHEY
C'mon girls.

YOUNG MARGARET screams in delight as they push through the
vast CROWDS.

YOUNG PORCHEY
Hold your noses!

YOUNG ELIZABETH
Why?

YOUNG PORCHEY
It stinks of alcohol. And sweat.

YOUNG MARGARET
(closing eyes)
It smells of LIFE.

They gawp at the PEOPLE on Regent Street. Dancing arm in arm.
Tossing their hats in the air. And singing songs. It's
riotous and bacchanalian and wild..

6 EXT. PICCADILLY (1945) - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 6

Piccadilly is heaving. A FEMALE ACCORDION PLAYER entertains
the CROWD with 'We'll Meet Again', whilst GIRLS in 'Kiss Me'
hats, carrying Union Jack flags, accost passing MEN for a
kiss.

YOUNG TOWNSEND
Now, Green Park or Trafalgar
Square?

YOUNG MARGARET
I say the Ritz! It's where all the
most elegant people go, *and* it's in
Jeeves and Wooster.

YOUNG PORCHEY
Good plan! The Ritz it is!

YOUNG ELIZABETH
Shouldn't we be in sight of the
Palace?

YOUNG MARGARET
Why? So we can wave to Mummy and
Papa? Honestly, what's the matter
with you!

YOUNG MARGARET takes Young Elizabeth's hand.

YOUNG MARGARET
Can't you be irresponsible just
once?!

7

INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE, DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

7

Present day. Margaret's face: remembering.

ELIZABETH
Margaret?

MARGARET
Oh!

Margaret's reverie is broken. ELIZABETH is dealing a hand of playing cards. They are playing 'Gin Rummy'.

MARGARET
Next week is May 8th. VE Day. Do
you know, it's been over fifty
years, and we have never done
anything to commemorate it.

ELIZABETH
What are you talking about? As
Sovereign I attend VE Day
celebrations every year.

MARGARET
No, I mean OUR VE Day. It was quite
a night. Do you remember?

Elizabeth's face: becomes quiet.

ELIZABETH
Of course, I remember.

MARGARET
We almost lost you. And then we
very much FOUND you! The real you!
The you that you gave up in order
to be the other you.

ELIZABETH
Yes, all right.

MARGARET
Don't you miss her sometimes? She
was so much fun!
(singing)
*"Ooooo, it ain't my fault... oooo,
it ain't my fault!"*

ELIZABETH

And, as I recall, we swore to keep
the events of that evening a
secret.

(revealing her hand)

Gin!

MARGARET

Oh. Well done.

(hates losing)

Revenge?

ELIZABETH

I can't, I'm afraid. Early start in
the morning. I'm expected in
Clapham Junction first thing.

MARGARET

Whatever for?

ELIZABETH

(thinks, distant memory)

Something to do with the local
council's closed-circuit television
system.

MARGARET

And there's the other you.

ELIZABETH

Do you not have anything tomorrow?

MARGARET

No.

ELIZABETH

But Mustique soon?

MARGARET

At the weekend.

ELIZABETH

Good.

MARGARET

Why?

ELIZABETH

I always think that's where you're
happiest.

ELIZABETH goes. We close on Margaret's face.

8 INT. MUSTIQUE, AEROPLANE - DAY 8

MARGARET looks out of the aeroplane window, drink in hand, at the tiny green island of Mustique surrounded by Caribbean sea below. Paradise.

9 EXT. MUSTIQUE, BEACH - DUSK 9

Bare feet on white sand. MARGARET walks along the beach.

10 EXT. MUSTIQUE, THE LAWRENCES' HOUSE - NIGHT 10

An animated drinks party in full flow, at the Palladian-style house of HARDING LAWRENCE and MARY WELLS LAWRENCE (70). MARGARET (overdressed, dripping with diamonds) is joined by MARK and ANOUSKA WEINBERG (56), PATRICK LICHFIELD and ANNUNZIATA ASQUITH (50), NED RYAN and ANNE TENNANT. About forty other guests are at the party too. The alcohol is flowing.

MARGARET

"Green with lust and sick with
shyness
Let me lick your lacquered toes.
Gosh, O gosh, Your Royal Highness
Put your finger up my nose..."

EVERYONE is laughing uproariously.

MARGARET

John Betjeman was so mad for me
that his friend Maurice Bowra wrote
a poem about it!

(she continues)

"Pin my teeth upon your dress,
Plant my head with watercress.
Only you can make me happy.
Wrap me in a woollen nappy.."

Laughter from the GUESTS. But MARGARET is suddenly not feeling a hundred percent...her head hurts.

ANNE TENNANT

Ma'am?

MARGARET

"In a plush and plated pram
Wheel me round St James's, Ma'am.
Let your sleek and soft
galoshes..."

We go into Margaret's P.O.V.: the party starts to blur..

ANNE TENNANT

(quietly)

Ma'am?

It sounds like she is speaking underwater. Blurry faces go in and out of focus, warped out of shape, gruesome, like a house of mirrors...

NED
Is she all right?

MARGARET
(barely able to speak)
"Lightly plant your plimsolled heel
Where my privy parts congeal."

ANNE TENNANT
Get her over to the chaise.

NED
Help! Someone get a doctor!

.. a shadow floats across Margaret's vision then everything turns to black.

FADE TO BLACK.

FRONT TITLE SEQUENCE

CUT TO:

11 INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE, ELIZABETH'S STUDY - DAY 11
Elizabeth's face. Etched with sisterly concern.
She is alone, waiting - anxiously. Finally, the phone rings.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
Princess Margaret, Your Majesty.

A faint, feeble voice the other end.

MARGARET (V.O.)
Hello?

ELIZABETH
(worried)
Margaret? What on earth *happened*?

12 EXT/INT. BARBADOS, BAYVIEW HOSPITAL, BALCONY/BUCKINGHAM 12
PALACE, ELIZABETH'S STUDY - DAY

Margaret's face in close-up. We INTERCUT.

MARGARET
I'm afraid I had a teeny, tiny
stroke. All a bit of a shock.
(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)

One minute I'm in full flow at the
Lawrences', next minute I'm in an
air ambulance unable to feel my
arms and legs.

ELIZABETH

Where are you now?

MARGARET

In hospital. In Barbados.

We widen to reveal she is sitting on a hospital balcony. A
large MALE NURSE places inedible food in front of her.

ELIZABETH

You poor thing.

MARGARET

The doctors assure me I'm going to
be fine.

ELIZABETH

What? I can't hear you properly.

MARGARET

That's because my mouth is still
numb. I could bite off my own
tongue and I wouldn't feel a thing.

ELIZABETH

Are we bringing you home?

MARGARET

Yes, tomorrow, apparently. For
further tests.

(looks at her dinner)

And edible food, with any luck.

(a beat)

I'm smiling as I say that. Not that
you'd notice. Goodbye, Lilibet.

ELIZABETH

See you tomorrow.

13 EXT. BARBADOS, AIRPORT, BOEING 747 - NIGHT 13

MARGARET is carried up the steps of a 747 jet by the large
MALE NURSE. Like a piece of cargo.

PASSENGERS and CREW stare.

14 INT. BOEING 747, FIRST CLASS - NIGHT 14

MARGARET flies back from Barbados in an emptied first class
section of the Boeing aeroplane.

She sits with her feet propped up on a plastic milk crate, clutching ANNE TENNANT's hand. A NURSE (from the Palace) is also on hand.

PEOPLE stare through a crack in the curtain.

15 INT. LONDON, KING EDWARD VII'S HOSPITAL - DAY 15

MARGARET removes her jewellery before lying flat on her back and sliding into an MRI scanner. She is undergoing tests with DOCTORS and SPECIALISTS.

DR THOMPSON (V.O.)
Well, I'm happy to say the stroke
was relatively mild, ma'am.

16 INT. LONDON, KING EDWARD VII'S HOSPITAL, PRIVATE WARD - DAY 16

MARGARET lies in a hospital bed. The royal physician, DOCTOR THOMPSON, is by her bedside. He refers to an MRI scan of Margaret's brain.

DR THOMPSON
And we ought to be able to treat the
condition effectively with just an
aspirin a day to thin the blood,
along with statins to reduce your
cholesterol, and atenolol to lower
your blood pressure.

MARGARET
Right-ho.

DR THOMPSON
But these alone will not be enough,
ma'am, to prevent the risk of a
second, more serious stroke. You
will need to look more closely at
your lifestyle and.. make one or
two modifications.

17 INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE, DINING ROOM - DAY 17

ELIZABETH and MARGARET are having lunch.

MARGARET
So.. no more Chesterfields. No more
whisky. No more sweet treats. Just
lemon barley water...

18 INT. KENSINGTON PALACE, DRAWING ROOM - EVENING 18

At the end of the day MARGARET sits before a MAID who is holding up possible dresses for the following day.

Margaret's BUTLER brings in a lemon barley water and a packet of nicotine gum on a tray.

MARGARET (V.O.)
...nicotine gum, and lots of
"rehabilitation exercises".

19 INT. LONDON, KING EDWARD VII'S HOSPITAL, GYM - DAY 19

MARGARET does occupational therapy with a NURSE. She slowly steps over a series of foam boards. It's surprisingly difficult.

MARGARET over-extends herself in stepping over the boards. Her face crumples in pain. The NURSE calms her down.

20 INT. KENSINGTON PALACE, DRAWING ROOM - DAY 20

Every bottle of whisky is removed by STAFF...

21 INT. KENSINGTON PALACE, BATHROOM - DAY 21

STAFF pour bottle after bottle of Old Grouse down the toilet.

22 INT. KENSINGTON PALACE, DRAWING ROOM - DAY 22

MARGARET sits opposite a SPEECH THERAPIST who holds up the next line of the 'tongue twister' on a big childish card.

MARGARET
A flea and fly in a flue...
Were imprisoned so what could they
do?
Said the flea let us fly,
Said the fly let us flee.
(stumbling)
So they flew through a flaw in the
flue.

The SPEECH THERAPIST makes a gesture, "Enunciate". MARGARET stares.

23 INT. KING EDWARD VII'S HOSPITAL, GYM - DAY 23

MARGARET is undergoing physical therapy with a NURSE: she painstakingly stacks cotton reels one on top of another, testing her fine motor neuron skills.

MARGARET attempts to grip the final reel and the tower comes tumbling down. Frustrated and humiliated, MARGARET swipes the reels off the table with her good hand.

24 INT. KENSINGTON PALACE, DRAWING ROOM - DAY 24
Cigarettes are removed from a drawer by Margaret's STAFF.

25 INT. KENSINGTON PALACE, KITCHEN - DAY 25
STAFF put hundreds of cigarettes into the bin.

26 INT. KENSINGTON PALACE, DRAWING ROOM - DAY 26
MARGARET is having a nap on the chaise longue.
Her MAID and BUTLER enter, see her sleeping body, suddenly
staring, worried she may have had another stroke.
They move closer, concerned. Then...

MARGARET
I'm still alive!

They bolt. MARGARET rolls her eyes.

27 INT. KENSINGTON PALACE, MARGARET'S BEDROOM - DAY 27
MARGARET scours through drawers, looking for something.
Thinks a moment...

28 INT. KENSINGTON PALACE, CORRIDOR - DAY 28
MARGARET hurries to a coat rack, searches the pockets, and
finally finds a cigarette. She lights it, inhales, and lets
out a long sigh of relief.

29 INT. KENSINGTON PALACE, MARGARET'S BEDROOM - EVENING 29
MARGARET is getting her hair done by her HAIRDRESSER, when
ELIZABETH arrives.

ELIZABETH
Bad time? Good time?

MARGARET smiles and gets to her feet. Curtseys.

MARGARET
Honestly, I take a nap and everyone
thinks I've kicked the bucket. Now
you arrive - unannounced - with
anxious looks.

ELIZABETH
I just wanted to see how you are.

MARGARET
I'm well, thank you.

ELIZABETH
Of course you are. But I do hope
you're taking it easy. And
cancelling official engagements?

MARGARET
Some of them, yes. No need to
cancel all of them. You know how I
hate an empty diary.

ELIZABETH listens, concerned.

MARGARET
See? There's that look again! I'm
fine Lilibet. Bouncing back. On the
way up, not on the way out.

30 EXT. MUSTIQUE, AIRSTRIP - DAY 30

The sound of cicadas and waves. Margaret's plane lands in
Mustique; her 'happy place'.

31 EXT. MUSTIQUE, AIRSTRIP - DAY 31

MARGARET disembarks the plane. She feels strong again, back
to her best. LOCALS sweetly lined up to welcome her. Their
very own 'Queen'.

32 EXT. MUSTIQUE, LES JOLIES-EAUX, TERRACE - DAY 32

MARGARET eats a fresh fruit breakfast. Cig in hand. She is
with ANNE TENNANT.

ANNE TENNANT
I thought perhaps a gentle stroll,
a nice siesta, then dinner on the
terrace, just the two of us.

MARGARET
Stroll, yes. But then I'd like a
picnic on the beach with the whole
gang, cocktails at the Cotton Club
and dinner followed by general
bacchanalia at Basil's. I'm only
here for two weeks. I intend to
make the most of it.

ANNE TENNANT
(unsure)
All right. You're the boss.

MARGARET
I most certainly am.

33 INT. MUSTIQUE, LES JOLIES-EAUX - DAY 33

ANNE TENNANT switches on the radio and starts ironing a yellow dress.

34 INT. MUSTIQUE, LES JOLIES-EAUX, BATHROOM - DAY 34

MARGARET stands in the sunken bath of her old-fashioned bathroom, and starts to wash her hair. She uses the handheld shower.

She accidentally hits the button which means the water comes pouring out of the taps, covering her feet.

MARGARET tries to turn the taps off. Her panic increasing...

But she turns off the cold water, not the hot. It's scaldingly hot. She screams out...

MARGARET
(becoming distressed)
Aargh!! Aaaarrrggghh!!

35 EXT. LES JOLIES-EAUX, LIGHT WELL - DAY 35

Radio music plays. ANNE TENNANT finishes ironing the yellow dress, and puts it on a hanger, waiting for Margaret to emerge.

36 INT. LES JOLIES-EAUX, BATHROOM - DAY 36

Boiling water continues to pour out. Steam billows. But instead of panicking, MARGARET stands strangely still, as if frozen to the spot. Her hand goes to her head. She is having another stroke. The now boiling water pours over her feet. Suddenly MARGARET slumps back, her feet still in the bath.

We go into Margaret's P.O.V. Her vision goes wavy. She looks in the mirror but cannot see her own reflection. Clouds of steam rise from the boiling water until it clouds her view completely.

The sound of the bath water turns into the sound of the sea, crashing waves. MARGARET is under water, sinking further and further, down to the bottom...

37 INT. LES JOLIES-EAUX, CORRIDOR - DAY 37

ANNE TENNANT comes out with the dress, knocks on the bathroom door. No answer. That's odd. Then she notices steam is coming from under the door.

ANNE TENNANT
Ma'am? Ma'am!

38 EXT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE, QUADRANGLE - DAY 38

Several weeks later. A people carrier arrives in the Palace quadrangle.

A frail-looking MARGARET is pushed out in a wheelchair, her legs bandaged. It's a shocking, dramatic deterioration.

ELIZABETH is there to greet her.

39 INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE, DINING ROOM - DAY 39

MARGARET has lunch with ELIZABETH and the QUEEN MOTHER. MARGARET sits in a wheelchair. Her speech is slow and slurred. Dogs under the table.

MARGARET
The doctor saw instantly I'd had another stroke, but that, as it turns out, was the least of my problems - because even after he'd stabilised me with a cocktail of drugs, the soles of my feet were so burnt it meant I couldn't stand, never mind walk.

ELIZABETH and the QUEEN MOTHER listen in horror.

ELIZABETH
Why didn't you come home sooner?

MARGARET
Because all manner of humiliating preparations needed to be made; a car had to be specially modified... hand rails needed to be put all over the place, like in a home for geriatrics...

She stares meaningfully at the QUEEN MOTHER.

QUEEN MOTHER
(proud)
I don't have handrails anywhere!

MARGARET

And now I'm back the doctors want
to use leeches on my feet.

(hard to say)

As an anti-coaargullant.

ELIZABETH and QUEEN MOTHER stare.

QUEEN MOTHER

Her voice is a little odd. What did
she say?

ELIZABETH

I think it was 'anti-coagulant'.

MARGARET

They've given me these velcro
slippers instead of shoes. Gone are
the days of heels. Gone are the
days of feet for that matter.

ELIZABETH

Why not try some gentle exercise?
You could use the Palace pool.
Exercise can help with moods, too.

MARGARET

I'd rather die than do exercise.
And seeing as I'm going to be dead
soon anyway, I thought I might as
well go out with a bang. It's my
seventieth birthday this year, and
I've decided I want to celebrate it
with a nice big party.

ELIZABETH

What?

MARGARET

At The Ritz.

MARGARET shoots a meaningful look at ELIZABETH.

MARGARET

Because we love The Ritz, don't we
Lilibet?

ELIZABETH

Do we?

MARGARET

We do. We have such special
memories.

(singing)

"Ooooo, it ain't my fault... oooo,
it ain't my fault!"

The QUEEN MOTHER looks confused.

QUEEN MOTHER
Have I missed something?

ELIZABETH stares daggers at MARGARET.

40 EXT. PICCADILLY, THE RITZ HOTEL (1945) - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 40

VE Day night. 1945. The ROYAL PARTY arrives outside the grand facade of The Ritz Hotel. Arches glowing with light.

At the entrance UNIFORMED DOORMEN turn OPPORTUNISTS away, whilst nodding through the GREAT and the GOOD and the GORGEOUS.

YOUNG ELIZABETH, YOUNG MARGARET, YOUNG PORCHEY and YOUNG TOWNSEND approach in awe.

YOUNG ELIZABETH
Look at how I'm dressed. You think they will let us in?

YOUNG MARGARET
Of course. Just tell them who you are.

YOUNG ELIZABETH
That is the one thing I am NOT going to do.

YOUNG MARGARET
Then you're going to have to bat your eyelids a little.

YOUNG ELIZABETH watches as glamorous STARS are let in.

YOUNG MARGARET
Go on!!!

YOUNG MARGARET takes off Young Elizabeth's hat and pushes her forward. A reluctant YOUNG ELIZABETH hitches her skirt up a little, and bats her eyelashes at one huge DOORMAN. The DOORMAN pauses. Looks YOUNG ELIZABETH up and down...

DOORMAN
Hel-loooo, darling, through you go!

He stops YOUNG PORCHEY.

DOORMAN
Only pulling your leg, sir. In you go!

The DOORMAN stands aside.

41 INT. PICCADILLY, THE RITZ HOTEL (1945) - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 41

YOUNG ELIZABETH, YOUNG PORCHEY, YOUNG TOWNSEND and YOUNG MARGARET enter The Ritz, burst into laughter, then stop - and gawp. It's another world. Of metropolitan elegance and hedonistic decadence.

YOUNG PORCHEY
Will you look at that?!

YOUNG TOWNSEND
What do we do now?

YOUNG ELIZABETH
(terrified)
Dive in, I suppose.

YOUNG ELIZABETH bravely heads inside, disappearing into the party. YOUNG MARGARET follows. YOUNG TOWNSEND and YOUNG PORCHEY look at one another, then follow.

42 INT. PICCADILLY, THE RITZ HOTEL, GRAND BALLROOM (1945) - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 42

YOUNG MARGARET and YOUNG ELIZABETH (followed at a distance by YOUNG PORCHEY and YOUNG TOWNSEND) walk into the famous Ritz ballroom.

A WAITER sails past with trays of pink cocktails. YOUNG MARGARET deftly swipes two off the tray.

YOUNG MARGARET
Yes, please.

The WAITER spins round, winks at YOUNG MARGARET.

YOUNG MARGARET
(handing YOUNG ELIZABETH
the other cocktail)
Cheers and big ears.

The dance BAND begin a traditional song and YOUNG PORCHEY and YOUNG TOWNSEND lead the PRINCESSES onto the dance floor. The music is slow and old fashioned and the dancing a little staid.

Waltzing pleasantly, respectfully, chastely with YOUNG PORCHEY, YOUNG ELIZABETH struggles in her restrictive military jacket.

YOUNG ELIZABETH
I'm going to put this in the
cloakroom.

YOUNG PORCHEY
Let me escort you.

YOUNG ELIZABETH

No need.

YOUNG ELIZABETH goes, leaving YOUNG MARGARET, YOUNG PORCHEY etc dancing.

43

INT. PICCADILLY, THE RITZ HOTEL, CORRIDOR (1945) - NIGHT
(FLASHBACK)

43

YOUNG ELIZABETH gives her coat to the CLOAKROOM ATTENDANT. Then as she turns, she bumps into a group of handsome 'cool' AMERICAN GIs in uniform heading down to the basement.

YOUNG ELIZABETH
I'm sorry.

AMERICAN GI
Excuse me, ma'am.

Young Elizabeth's eyes meet one AMERICAN GI in particular.

YOUNG ELIZABETH
Have a nice evening.

She goes. The AMERICAN GI calls after her.

AMERICAN GI
Wait, don't go up there! Come with us. Way more fun.

They head downstairs. Intrigued, YOUNG ELIZABETH wanders down a corridor towards the stairs. She notices a sign, 'The Pink Sink'.

Intrigued by the sound of music coming up, YOUNG ELIZABETH goes to follow the GIs but meets an older, upper-class English OFFICER on the way up..

OFFICER
I wouldn't go down there if I were you. Americans. Ever heard of the 'jitterbug'?

YOUNG ELIZABETH
I know about the doodlebug.

OFFICER
It's a dance! Banned here. With good reason. It comes from Harlem.

YOUNG ELIZABETH
Where?

OFFICER
A ghetto! In New York.

From downstairs: the opening bars of a cool 'swing' song. Cheers from the (unseen) cool crowd..

OFFICER
Wait! Don't I recognise you?

YOUNG ELIZABETH
I don't think so.

YOUNG ELIZABETH gives him the slip, and goes.

44

INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE, ELIZABETH'S BEDROOM - EVENING

44

Present day. ELIZABETH sits at her mirror getting dressed for Margaret's 70th birthday. A DRESSER is in attendance, helping with the necklace. A knock. PHILIP puts his head round the door.

PHILIP
Right, I'll be off. Will you make my apologies?

ELIZABETH
I will.

PHILIP
And wish the birthday girl a very happy birthday.

ELIZABETH
I will.

PHILIP
Are you taking anyone?

ELIZABETH
Anne. And Porchey will be there.

PHILIP
Good old Porchey.

ELIZABETH
Yes. Good old Porchey.
(pointed)
Always good company. Never lets one down.

PHILIP notices her mood.

PHILIP
Is everything all right?

ELIZABETH
Sorry. I just find myself worrying about Margaret ALL the time.

PHILIP
Hasn't it always been like that?

ELIZABETH

Yes.

(quiet)

I suppose it has.

45 INT. KENSINGTON PALACE, DRAWING ROOM - EVENING 45

MARGARET is getting ready for the 70th birthday party.

The DRESSER guides her stockinged, swollen feet into a glamorous pair of white heeled sandals.

MARGARET

Go on.

MARGARET flinches in pain but gets them on.

46 EXT. PICCADILLY, THE RITZ HOTEL - EVENING 46

A red Rolls-Royce pulls up outside The Ritz. MARGARET is inside the car.

47 EXT. PICCADILLY, THE RITZ HOTEL - EVENING 47

MARGARET emerges from the Rolls-Royce wearing a spectacular silver dress. A small group of concerned ONLOOKERS are gathered outside to watch; MARGARET gives them a brave smile.

48 INT. PICCADILLY, THE RITZ HOTEL - NIGHT 48

Fifty or sixty GUESTS are at The Ritz to celebrate Margaret's 70th birthday: PRINCESS ANNE and the QUEEN MOTHER, PORCHEY and ANNE TENNANT, as well as 'STARS' from the worlds of ballet, music and politics.

At dinner: ELIZABETH sits next to PORCHEY.

MARGARET bravely, heroically, gets to her feet.

MARGARET begins to make a speech, her delivery at times a little staccato and slurred.

MARGARET

Thank you all for coming this evening. As you know I have spent much of my time recently lying in hospital beds and sitting in wheelchairs, staring out of windows at that little patch of blue that prisoners call the sky. But one thing that, throughout it all, sustained me...

She looks in Elizabeth's direction. A dramatic pause, as everyone waits for a eulogy to ELIZABETH.

MARGARET

Memories.

ELIZABETH stiffens.

MARGARET

As it turns out, I have fond memories of quite a few evenings at The Ritz that I'd like to share with you...

Elizabeth's eyes widen.

MARGARET

(struggling with her speech)

One in particular comes to mind... when a very different side of a young Princess Elizabeth was revealed...

ELIZABETH gets to her feet. EVERYONE turns, surprised.

ELIZABETH

And I'm sure everyone would love to hear about that --

MARGARET

Yes they would, Lilibet, which is why I'm telling it!

ELIZABETH

(speaking off the cuff)

But it would miss the point entirely of why we are all here tonight. To celebrate YOU.

A ripple of agreement in the room. ELIZABETH has started, now she has to see this through..

ELIZABETH

As a child I always felt sorry for children who didn't have a brother or a sister. From the day she was born, Margaret Rose has been my constant companion. Rarely able to see other children, we relied on one another and, like Juno's Swans, we were inseparable: we shared a room, wore the same clothes, enjoyed the same activities, in particular managing our collection of wooden horses on wheels that we would groom and water and race.

(MORE)

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

And whenever we got into trouble
Margaret would blame everything on
her imaginary friend, Cousin
Halifax -

Laughter.

ELIZABETH

Honestly, there wasn't a thing
Cousin Halifax wouldn't do -
sounding the air raid bell to wake
the guards. Hiding the gardeners'
tools. He really was very
mischievous!

Laughter.

ELIZABETH

It's not always easy growing up in
a family where one person has to
wear the Crown, being the number
two. But Margaret has been my ally
day in, day out. That is the person
I wanted to tell you about tonight -
not the dazzling, you all know that
already, but the dutiful. Never
wavering, my lifelong companion and
support. Without whom... well, it
would be unimaginable. Dearest
Margaret, many happy returns.

The amassed GUESTS get to their feet to clap and cheer. It's
a huge success and MARGARET is speechless.

49

INT. KENSINGTON PALACE, MARGARET'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

49

MARGARET is on the telephone to Elizabeth from her bed. She
has 'thank you' letters from the party and photos of it from
the gossip pages out before her. Flowers sent for her
birthday decorate the room. She is eating from a box of
birthday chocolates and smoking.

MARGARET

I don't know whether to be touched
or cross.

50

INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE, ELIZABETH'S BEDROOM/KENSINGTON
PALACE, MARGARET'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

50

ELIZABETH is also in bed. We INTERCUT.

ELIZABETH

Why? I've always wanted to sing
your praises in public.

MARGARET

Well, it was both uncalled for and rather thrilling. Everyone is being so *nice*. One should be seriously ill more often.

MARGARET coughs.

ELIZABETH

Listen to that cough. You haven't started smoking again?

MARGARET

No, of course not. That was Cousin Halifax.

ELIZABETH laughs.

MARGARET

Goodnight, Lilibet.

ELIZABETH

Goodnight.

MARGARET hangs up.

Then, quite suddenly, her head starts to pound, as if it's been struck by thunder. Instinctively her hand goes to her head and she slumps back on her pillow. She looks at the pill bottles on her bedside table - empty. She calls out to her maid but her voice is weak and slurred and no one comes.

MARGARET looks over to a table where more aspirin bottles are located. Using the new medical handles that have been installed, and realising the seriousness of this pre-stroke 'aura', she pulls herself out of bed. But stumbles.

MARGARET

Oh!

Now MARGARET lies in the middle of her bedroom floor in her nightgown. Her head is pounding. Her vision darkening. She tries to call out but suddenly she can hardly speak.

MARGARET is having another stroke. She tries to move but cannot: one side of her body is completely numb.

Panicked, she tries to drag herself towards the door, but it's impossible: her limbs are not working. She looks in the direction of the telephone which is just beyond arm's reach. She tries to roll over towards it but cannot.

She has gone into a state of 'spastic paralysis': her elbows have lifted and her hands and knees curl up, so she is in the fetal position.

She lies back in despair and loses track of time, unable to see or hear the ticking clock, the birds singing outside, cars in the distance..

51 INT. LONDON, KING EDWARD VII'S HOSPITAL, PRIVATE WARD - DAY 51

ELIZABETH arrives to visit MARGARET in hospital. Another dramatic setback. MARGARET looks shocking and can hardly see.

ELIZABETH
Hello, you.

MARGARET
And goodbye YOU.

ELIZABETH
Stop it. We'll have you up and out of here in no time.

MARGARET
No, I'm afraid this time it's serious. I can feel it. Or can't feel it, more like. Can't feel anything. Or see anything.

She suddenly looks very frail and frightened.

MARGARET
My body is deserting me, one limb at a time.

ELIZABETH
The doctors tell me you aren't eating.

MARGARET
I'm really not hungry.

ELIZABETH
Well, I brought you these.

MARGARET cannot see as ELIZABETH produces a Tupperware container full of jam tarts. She takes Margaret's hands and puts one into it.

ELIZABETH
Your favourite - jam tarts.

MARGARET
Now, you're talking!

ELIZABETH
And a very pretty walking stick.

She produces a pretty walking stick and puts it into Margaret's hands.

ELIZABETH

For when you get back on your feet?

MARGARET looks towards ELIZABETH. Feeling scared for herself all of a sudden. Knowing she won't get back on her feet. She finds Elizabeth's hand and holds it.

52 EXT. KENSINGTON PALACE, PORTICO - DAY 52

MARGARET sits completely still in her wheelchair with a blanket on her lap, wearing dark glasses.

53 INT. KENSINGTON PALACE, MARGARET'S DRAWING ROOM - DAY 53

MARGARET is listening to classical music on the radio, barely taking it in. She puts a lump of sugar in a cup of tea and ends up spilling it when...

RADIO COMMENTATOR (ON RADIO)

We're on the air with a special program today to bring you an update on the appalling and incredible events that were played out today in the United States. A day when terrorists struck at the very heart of the world's most powerful country. A day of unimaginable chaos and confusion. A day when untold thousands were feared dead. The terrorists weapons: four hijacked passenger planes. Two crashed with awful effect into the World Trade Centre in New York. The third into the Pentagon in Washington...

... news of 9/11 breaks. MARGARET listens to the commentary describing the awful scenes from New York.

54 EXT. KENSINGTON PALACE, NATURAL POND - DAY 54

MARGARET is sitting in her wheelchair in the garden with ANNE TENNANT next to her. Every movement an ordeal.

ANNE TENNANT

(reading aloud from the newspaper)

'A San Francisco husband slept through his wife's call from the World Trade Centre. She left her last message to him on the answering machine. There was really only one thing left for her to say. I love you.

(MORE)

ANNE TENNANT (CONT'D)

She said it over and over before
the line went dead. And
then...oblivion.'

MARGARET

(moved)

So sad.

ANNE TENNANT

And such terrible news about Lord
Carnarvon, too.

MARGARET

Porchey? Why? What's happened?

55

INT. KENSINGTON PALACE, MARGARET'S BEDROOM - DAY

55

ELIZABETH, visibly devastated by the loss, comes to visit
MARGARET.

ELIZABETH

He collapsed as the second plane
hit the towers. Heart attack -
whilst watching it on television.
(deflecting)

Poor Jean.

MARGARET

Poor YOU, too. He was such a
special friend.

ELIZABETH

He would bring horse news which is
the only news I ever really want to
hear. He used to hold up his mobile
phone when horse bidding was
underway so I could hear the
action.

MARGARET

(with meaning)

He was devoted to you.

MARGARET looks at ELIZABETH sympathetically.

MARGARET

Now all those closest to you.. are
abandoning you. One by one.

ELIZABETH

What are you talking about?

MARGARET

Porchey.

ELIZABETH

Yes.

MARGARET
Mummy soon.

ELIZABETH
Ye-es.

MARGARET
(a beat)
Me.

ELIZABETH
Don't you dare!

MARGARET
It's the truth. I'm not thrilled about it. In fact I'm furious about it. I'm not ready to leave this particular party. But we need to discuss it. I have written a very detailed plan for my funeral, you know what a planner I am! And I want your reassurance it will go exactly as I intend. I want to wear my flower dress, not some horrid black thing, and please don't let them put red lipstick on me! For the chapel I want roses and tulips and I want the finale from 'Swan Lake' played on the organ as people arrive. And one more thing. Very important.

ELIZABETH
Yes, of course.

MARGARET beckons ELIZABETH closer.

MARGARET
Promise me that I will actually be dead when they close the coffin?

ELIZABETH and then MARGARET burst out laughing, helplessly.

56

INT. KENSINGTON PALACE, MARGARET'S BEDROOM - EVENING

56

Later. ELIZABETH sits by Margaret's bedside and reads to her from P.G. Wodehouse's *The Inimitable Jeeves*. She reads cheerfully and in different voices.

ELIZABETH
(reading)
"Bertie, old egg!" said young Eustace. "Fancy running into you, the one man in London who can support us in the style we are accustomed to! By the way, you've never met old Dog-Face, have you?"
(MORE)

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Dog-Face, this is my cousin Bertie."

(tailing off)

Is this silly?

MARGARET

No, it's wonderful! Go on.

ELIZABETH

"What are you doing in London?" I asked. "Oh, buzzing round. We're just up for the day. Flying visit, strictly unofficial."

MARGARET

(remembering)

"We oil back on the three-ten."

ELIZABETH

(smiles)

"We oil back on the three-ten. And now, touching on that lunch you very decently volunteered to stand us, which shall it be? Ritz? Savoy? Carlton?"

MARGARET smiles.

MARGARET

(meaningful)

The Ritz, please.

ELIZABETH looks up.

MARGARET

Because we love The Ritz. Don't we?

ELIZABETH

Honestly, you and The Ritz.

MARGARET

No, YOU and The Ritz!! If people don't know about that night they will never fully understand.

ELIZABETH

How irresponsible I was?

MARGARET

The scale of the sacrifice you've made. How much of your true self you've locked up. Hidden away. You caused havoc that night.

ELIZABETH

It was the end of the war.

MARGARET drifts off. ELIZABETH kisses her and gets to her feet. As she reaches a doorway, she stops, and looks back at MARGARET. Conscious it might be the last time.

We fade in music, the sound of celebrations, and...

57 INT. PICCADILLY, THE RITZ HOTEL, BASEMENT (1945) - NIGHT 57
(FLASHBACK)

YOUNG ELIZABETH enters the basement bar. An entirely different world from the floor above: darker, sexier, more mysterious. Sandbags pack the walls. It is lit by candles...

A hip JAZZ BAND strike up the song in the corner with a female SINGER. Bohemian MEN and WOMEN, black and white AMERICAN GIs, GAY MEN are dancing a much faster, more exciting dance than that upstairs. MEN DRESSED AS WOMEN stand statuesquely at the bar. CABARET performers do their thing.

YOUNG ELIZABETH is about to leave the basement, but before she knows it...

AMERICAN GI

You came!

YOUNG ELIZABETH

Actually, I'm with friends upstairs, and really should go.

AMERICAN GI

Why? Down here is the place to be.

YOUNG ELIZABETH

And why is that?

AMERICAN GI

Because down here there is no rank, or background. Just music.

YOUNG ELIZABETH

Well in that case...

She steps forward demurely and puts out her hand. The AMERICAN GI takes it and leads the way.

58 INT. PICCADILLY, THE RITZ HOTEL, GRAND BALLROOM (1945) - 58
NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Meanwhile, YOUNG MARGARET, YOUNG PORCHEY and YOUNG TOWNSEND continue upstairs, in the polite, stiff, posh atmosphere.

YOUNG PORCHEY looks concerned. He goes to YOUNG MARGARET...

YOUNG PORCHEY

Where's your sister?

YOUNG MARGARET
Stop worrying about her. She never
does anything irresponsible.

YOUNG PORCHEY
She's been a long time. I'm going
to look for her.

YOUNG TOWNSEND
I'll come with you, Porchey.

YOUNG MARGARET
All right, wait for me.

59

INT. PICCADILLY, THE RITZ HOTEL, BASEMENT (1945) - NIGHT
(FLASHBACK)

59

YOUNG ELIZABETH continues dancing. A wild party is in
progress.

At that moment, YOUNG MARGARET, YOUNG PORCHEY and YOUNG
TOWNSEND arrive in the basement doorway. The two MEN stare at
the decadent scene which YOUNG ELIZABETH is at the heart of.

YOUNG TOWNSEND
C'mon, Porchey. Let's get her out
of here!

They are about to go over to her, but YOUNG MARGARET stops
them...

YOUNG MARGARET
No don't! Leave her!
(watching in awe)
Look how happy she is!

YOUNG ELIZABETH, clearly happy and in her element is in the
thick of the dance floor, surrounded by black and white
AMERICAN GIs and gay ENGLISH.

The dance floor is getting fuller as nearly everyone has
taken to their feet.

YOUNG ELIZABETH 'cuts loose'; swinging, twisting and turning.
Soon other AMERICAN GIs are hovering for the next round with
this anonymous, magical GIRL.

As YOUNG ELIZABETH gets spun around faster and faster, a line
of AMERICAN GIs wait for their turn but, just as the next
moves forward to take Young Elizabeth's hand, YOUNG MARGARET
steps in.

YOUNG MARGARET takes her place as Young Elizabeth's partner
and they do their version of the jive, swinging out.

It is riotous, thrilling fun. Even YOUNG PORCHEY is letting his hair down and dancing with a woman who turns out to be a MAN DRESSED AS A WOMAN. YOUNG MARGARET looks across the floor at her SISTER in wonderment, at a person she has never seen before. And never will again.

YOUNG ELIZABETH whispers to YOUNG MARGARET.

YOUNG ELIZABETH
Thank you!

60

EXT. LONDON, STREETS (1945) - DAWN (FLASHBACK)

60

YOUNG ELIZABETH and YOUNG MARGARET walk back to the Palace alone, their arms linked, carrying their heels. Giddy after their night of freedom. Walking over the detritus of the biggest party in history. White streamers and Union Jack flags cover the pavements like snow. Empty firework packets. Cigarette stubs.

YOUNG MARGARET
You dark horse. Who'd have known you could... 'jive'! There must have been fifty men chasing you out.

YOUNG ELIZABETH
Don't essdghgaarete.

YOUNG MARGARET
What?

YOUNG ELIZABETH
I said don't exaggerate. It's hard to talk.

YOUNG MARGARET
When you're sloshed?

YOUNG ELIZABETH
When you're chewing gum.

YOUNG ELIZABETH pulls the gum out and throws it away.

YOUNG MARGARET
When did you get that?

YOUNG ELIZABETH
I'm not sure. I think it may have come after a kiss.

YOUNG MARGARET
(shocked, delighted)
Lilibet!

YOUNG ELIZABETH
I didn't *intend* to kiss him. It was
just what everyone *else* was doing
and I didn't want to be rude...
(tails off)
I think Porchey might have seen and
got a bit cross.

YOUNG MARGARET
Oh, dear.

61 EXT. LONDON, STREETS/BUCKINGHAM PALACE, GATES (1945) - DAWN 61
(FLASHBACK)

Finally, they arrive back at the Palace.

YOUNG ELIZABETH
Look. The blossom is out.

YOUNG MARGARET
Yes.

YOUNG ELIZABETH
The sun is rising. What will this
future hold? For us all?

YOUNG ELIZABETH turns to head inside.

YOUNG ELIZABETH
Aren't you coming? We can join
Mummy and Papa for breakfast.

YOUNG ELIZABETH turns to see OLDER MARGARET opposite her. She
is wearing a flower dress.

OLDER MARGARET
I'm afraid not... But I will always
be by your side. No matter what.

OLDER MARGARET gives YOUNG ELIZABETH one last look, then
YOUNG ELIZABETH turns and walks away.

FADE TO BLACK.

CAPTION:

Princess Margaret died peacefully in her sleep at 6:30am on 9
February 2002. She was 71.