

CANDIDATE C

The Fallen King

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CUT TO:

1 EXT. CAERPHILLY CASTLE COURTYARD - DAY

1

The year is 2059. In 2054 everyone over the age of 18 fell into a zombie-like state. Together they had made a formidable force and those under the age of 18 were left to fight them off and fend for themselves. Those over the age of 18 became known to the kids as 'The Fallen'. Most of The Fallen had gone by now and it was usually clear who had turned and who hadn't. It created a sense of unison between under 18 year-olds, who had formed into cohesive groups in places of safety.

In the centre there are people fighting in a make-shift arena. The camera follows PERCY and JENNY as they study the adeptness of the new recruits.

PERCY

I'm leaving tomorrow, you know...

JENNY

Yeah, figured as much. I still don't think you should go though. It's a hell of a way, London is. And the odds aren't exactly in your favour.

PERCY

Jenny...

JENNY

What do you want me to say? It's dangerous. I don't think you should go. And we need help here. As much as we can get. I mean, look at them. They don't know the first thing about swords.

Jenny gestures to the mess of children and armour. Her motherly instincts told her that these kids shouldn't be fighting even if they were capable of it.

PERCY

It's not hard. As long as you know the difference between the bit you hold, and the sharp bit you prod them with you can't go much wrong.

JENNY

You'd think anyway.

PERCY

You know as well as I do that it needs to be done, I've got to go, as much as we both hate it.

JENNY

You don't hate it at all! I saw you. You can't wait to escape from here, run off with Matt or whatever his name was. Smitten you were. You're fine just leaving me here to run the place.

PERCY

What, because you don't love that idea? You basically run the camp anyway, lets face it. And you do it ten times better than if I ever tried to help! I don't know how you do it, it's amazing, wonderful, spectacular, inspired.

JENNY

Flattery wont change my mind. Don't go.

PERCY

As soon as we find it we can all escape from here. Or would you like another winter in these freezing towers?

JENNY

You know I wouldn't.

PERCY

Then what is it?

JENNY

Its just I don't think I could-

Somebody calls for Jenny in the distance.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Look, I um, I better go. I'll come up and check ~~your~~ packing's all ship shape.

PERCY

And try to convince me to stay  
again I'm sure.

Jenny runs off. Percy watches her leave before turning and  
walking off in the opposite direction.

CUT TO:

2 INT. PERCY'S ROOM - NIGHT

2

PERCY is closing a RUCKSACK as JENNY enters.

JENNY

Have you finished packing?

PERCY

Only just, I made it in the end.

JENNY

Toothbrush?

PERCY

And toothpaste.

JENNY

Underwear?

PERCY

Uh huh.

JENNY

A book to read on the way?

PERCY

Only because I knew it would be on  
your checklist, I'm never going to  
actually have a need for most of  
this crap.

JENNY

What if you get bored? And how did  
you know I'd have a checklist?

PERCY

Because you're you. Of course  
you've got one!

Jenny slyly takes out a piece of paper from her pocket with  
a list on it. She scrunches it up and throws it into the bin  
behind her. Percy sees this and smiles triumphantly.

JENNY

There, it's gone. You don't have to listen to my checklist any more.

PERCY

Look, I'll come back as soon as I can. I wont talk to - no, I wont even look at any strangers... except if they're under 18 then I might. The rest I'll stay far away from. What else? I'll wash. At least once a month, whether I need to or not.

Percy beams at his joke. But then, looking at Jenny's lack of amusement, changes his smile to a more reassuring look.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Look, I promise. I'll be back before you can say 'Holy Grail'.

JENNY

Funny.

Percy yawns.

JENNY (CONT'D)

You're right. Seeing as you're so dead set on going, I better let you get some sleep, I'll be back to see you off tomorrow morning.

PERCY

Night.

CUT TO:

3

EXT. CASTLE GATES - DAY

3

A group of children are standing at the gates. Percy hugs each one. It's an emotional send off. He comes to Jenny last and gives her a lingering hug.

PERCY

Soon.

JENNY

You'd better be right.

CUT TO:

4 EXT. LONDON, TWICKENHAM - DAY 4

Hardly recognisable to us, London is a wasteland. Most buildings have been entirely demolished, only a few crumbling landmarks remain standing, most of them are in ruins.

PERCY, tired, stumbles along an nondescript riverside. ✓

SMASH CUT TO:

5 EXT. LONDON, TWICKENHAM RIVERSIDE - DAY 5

Along what we can now assume is the Thames, is a fishing boat with two boys sitting inside, fishing. The Thames is looking even murkier than usual. ✓

PERCY

Hate to break it to you two, but I, um... I don't think you're gonna catch much in that water. Nothing could ever live in it before, let alone now.

BOY #2

How old are you?

PERCY

16. You?

BOY #1

I'm 15, he's 14.

BOY #2

You jumped us.

BOY #1

It's worth a try not like there's much else to do around here.

PERCY

Can't argue with that logic.

BOY #1

You look tired, an' it's getting dark. We've a big place with loads of other people so it's pretty secure. You want us to take you?

PERCY  
How far's it?

BOY #1  
Not too far, we can take you  
easily. Get in.

Feeling tired and reluctant to continue walking PERCY steps cautiously onto the rickety boat and they start travelling down stream. Its tiring work and they switch over who's controlling the oars every now and again, its only slightly faster than walking and so getting anywhere takes a long time.

BOY #1 (CONT'D)  
Where 've you come from? Not round  
here I'm assuming.

PERCY  
Why not here?

BOY #1  
You look a state, mate. Like you've  
been travelling for ages. Plus...  
your accent kinda gives you away.

PERCY  
I've travelled from Wales, but only  
because I was over visiting  
grandparents during The Fall. Leeds  
before that.

BOY #1  
Cardiff?

PERCY  
Close. Just north. Caerphilly  
Castle? I'd never heard of it but  
visited it the day before The Fall  
and it claimed in the brochure  
that, back in the day, it was one  
of Britain's most secluded and  
secure castles. ✓

Percy uses air quotes whilst saying "secluded and secure".  
Or some BS like that. Figured you  
couldn't go much wrong heading  
there though, even if the brochure  
was talking a load of crap. I guess  
if you'd survive anywhere it'd be  
in a big ass castle. Anyway. What  
about you? London?

BOY #1

Yeah both of us from near here. How long did it take you?

PERCY

Ages. The bridge to cross from Wales to England had collapsed so I had to go a really long route. Honestly taken damn near two months to find this place - plus food and shelter. Wasn't easy. ✓

BOY #1

Seems a lot of hassle. Was the set up not good in Cadilly?

PERCY

Caerphilly.

BOY #1

Yeah, that 'un.

PERCY

Not too bad. I mean, we could hold our own against The Fallen. Probably only because there are fewer of them in the countryside.

BOY #1

So, Why exactly are you here, then?

PERCY

Bit of a long story.

BOY #1

Well, we got a while 'till we get there. an' if you don't finish you can tell us the rest over food.

PERCY

Okay, well...

Percy looks as though he's about the start telling a story. Just before he does we fade into...

FADE TO: ✓



6 EXT. CAERPHILLY CASTLE COURTYARD - DAY - FLASHBACK

6

PERCY and JENNY are watching the training practice that was seen earlier in the courtyard arena of the first scene.

JENNY

They need to be ready.

PERCY

And they will be. Some of them only started training a couple of days back. Give them a chance.

JENNY

We're running low on supplies. The food we have at the moment can't sustain all of us for much longer.

PERCY

You're right, I think we need to send out a hunt.

JENNY

You were all sent out yesterday.

PERCY

For survivors, not food.

JENNY

You didn't bring back either though.

PERCY

Well, just because we didn't see any food, doesn't mean there isn't any. Especially as we weren't looking for it. I thought we had enough.

JENNY

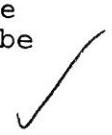
We never have enough.

PERCY

We'll go out again today then.

JENNY

Every time you head out we lose kids. They're not just expendable soldiers, Percy! We're meant to be looking after them, after all.



PERCY

Then don't send them.

JENNY

And go out by yourself? No.

PERCY

I can take The Fallen easily. And there'd be no one to slow me down. I'll just scan the area.

JENNY

And what then?

PERCY

If there is food close I'll come back and we can send out a force to gather it all. Streamline the scavenge. Less time wasted and it makes it safer when we send out a large group.

JENNY

What if there's not.

PERCY

There will be somewhere. There has to be. We'll have to go into the city and ravage some stores otherwise.

JENNY

God help us if it comes to that.

PERCY

We'll be fine. As long as these ones end up being decent fighters.

JENNY

Hmmm.

PERCY

Well?

JENNY

I'm not sure we have a choice, we have to send someone. Not that you'd listen if I said 'no' anyway, mind you. I'll come with you, just in case.

FADE TO:

7 EXT. FOREST - DAY - FLASHBACK 7

As PERCY and JENNY are tying their horses up, they hear hooves approaching.

PERCY  
Shit. Jen, what do we do?

JENNY  
Over here! Stay down.

PERCY  
What now?

JENNY  
Shh. Get your javelin ready just in case.

PERCY  
I can hit the weakest one to frighten them off.

JENNY  
Quieter. And don't, it's not worth the risk. What if you miss? They'll see where we are. Only do it if you have a completely clear shot.

MATCH CUT TO:

8 EXT. FOREST - DAY - FLASHBACK 8

We see a group of boys, also on horse back.

MATTHIAS  
Guys, shut up. Someone's over there.

THOMAS  
Who?

MATTHIAS  
How the hell am I s'posed to know? Stay here they're hiding. We can't go scaring them else they won't help us. Hold up here for a minute till I call you over.

Matthias walks over to PERCY AND JENNY cowering behind a bush.

MATTHIAS (CONT'D)

Umm, Hi?

JENNY

How old are you?

MATTHIAS

17, don't worry. How old are you two.

JENNY

Both 16.

PERCY

Who are you?

MATTHIAS

Matthias, But call me Matt.

PERCY

I'm Percy, this is my friend Jenny.

JENNY

Hi.

MATTHIAS

Nice to meet you two. You haven't seen about five boys and three or so girls by any chance?

PERCY

Here?

MATTHIAS

Well, yeah? Here.

PERCY

Don't think so. Why?

Matthias, paranoid, looks around seemingly to check there was no one eavesdropping.

MATTHIAS

We got ambushed.

PERCY

Really?

MATTHIAS

Yeah, they were slightly younger so we told them to run, but can't find them any more.

PERCY  
Who's 'we'?

Matthias gestures for the others he was with at the start to go over to him. They're in the distance, unnoticed by Percy who seems to be somewhat distracted.

PERCY (CONT'D)  
Ah, them.

JENNY  
Where are you headed? Guessing you're not from here - we haven't seen you before at least.

MATTHIAS  
Searching for the Holy Grail.

JENNY  
The Holy Grail? What are you planning on doing with that? Summon bloody Harry Potter or something?

PERCY  
Huh?

JENNY  
The Holy Grail, Percy.

PERCY  
The song?

JENNY  
The myth.

MATTHIAS  
Its going to save us all.

PERCY  
What?

MATTHIAS  
The chalice that Jesus had at the last supper. It will heal those who have fallen.

Percy and Jenny give each other a look, which Matthias spots.

MATTHIAS (CONT'D)  
I know how crazy it seems, but you have to trust me. You two should come, God knows we need more fighters.

JENNY  
I'm not sure it's a-

PERCY  
We'll do it.

JENNY  
Wait, what?

PERCY  
You want this to end surely?  
Everything to be back to the way it  
was, to normal.

JENNY  
It will never be normal.

PERCY  
It's the next best thing.

JENNY  
It's a bloody myth! You can't go.

Beat.

JAMES  
Umm, Matty? Forgetting something?

Beat.

MATTHIAS  
Forgetting? ... What?

JAMES  
The young'uns?

MATTHIAS  
Oh yes. Err... We all better be  
off, still gotta look for the  
others. If you see them, give us a  
shout. If you want to come with us,  
then just head for London. We'll be  
easy to find, catch us up. Nice  
meeting you.

PERCY  
You too.

SMASH CUT TO:

9 EXT. BATTERSEA POWER STATION - DAY

9

Percy snaps out of his flashback. He's lying sideways on one of the benches on the boat, he'd fallen asleep. The two boys have stopped listening they've moored the boat and have almost reached the power station. They're walking quite slow and one with a slight limp. Embarrassed, Percy shakes his head and pretends he knew they had left his side before following them up the hill.

PERCY

Hold up!

Percy eventually catches them up.

BOY #1

Took your time, much.

PERCY

You had an unfair advantage - I was still on the boat.

BOY #1

You were tired. At least we woke you - you'd probably still be sitting on the boat otherwise. So, what's your name, anyway?

PERCY

Um, Percy.

BOY #1

I'm Adam, an' he's Peter.

WIPE TO:

10 INT. BATTERSEA POWER STATION - DAY

10

ADAM

Come on in, we'll find you a room. It'll probably be a bit cold. Despite being in a power station, we've got no electricity. The main hall should be hot though - we've got a fire going in there.

A group of younger children walk over to help Percy with his equipment.

CUT TO:

11 INT. BATTERSEA POWER STATION HALLWAY - DAY 11

We see Percy walking out of his room. One boy who was waiting outside the room leads him down to the main hall. Everything seems overly formal.

WIPE TO:

12 INT. BATTERSEA POWER STATION, GRAND HALL - DAY 12

In the centre of the Power Station there is a large patch of grass. Some are training in the corner, whilst others are sitting down talking, and the younger kids seem to be playing a game of tag.

The Grand Hall was to the side of this green area and PERCY had to walk through a large arch to enter. The other wall was makeshift, corrugated iron and wood instead of the brick wall on the other side. There was a fire in the middle of the room and the dining table followed the shape of the room, but a couple of metres from the edge.

Peter, whom we can recognise from earlier on the bus, is sitting on a chair by the fire, it seems more like a throne when compared to everyone else's.

JACOB

This was just made for you sir.

Jacob, a 9 year old boy, hands Peter a SWORD.

ADAM

From Dan?

JACOB

Yeah, he made it special 'cos Peter asked him to.

ADAM

You asked him to?

PETER

Not for me, although I wouldn't mind it, it's balanced perfectly.

ADAM

For who then?

PETER

Keep up the spirits in camp. Whoever proves they deserve it gets to keep it. Simple as.



ADAM

Ahh, clever. Then they can come out  
and help us past the gates.

PERCY

May I have a look?

PETER

Here.

Percy takes it and swings it around a couple of times,  
checking for the balance. It fits perfectly in his palm,  
almost as if it were made for him.

FADE TO:

13

INT. BATTERSEA POWER STATION - PERCY'S ROOM - NIGHT

13

PERCY walks into the room. Exhausted he collapses onto the  
bed.

Someone knocks on the door. Percy sits up.

PERCY

Yeah, you can come in.

The young boy who gave Peter the sword earlier in the day  
walks in.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Do you need me for anything?

JACOB

No, Adam just wanted to know if you  
were all set or if you wanted  
anything to drink or eat.

PERCY

No, I'm all good thanks.

JACOB

Cool. I'll go tell Adam.

PERCY

Hold on. Actually, I was just  
wondering before hand. How many  
kids are there here?

JACOB

Last week we were 'bout 150 I  
think. Usually stay about that

Words:  
2512

JACOB  
amount, Peter says. People join,  
others leave.



## Commentary – The Fallen King

The original idea for my script was from the poem written in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century called 'Li Contes del Graal: Perceval, ou Le Conte du Graal; By Chrétien de Troyes' for which I found a translated copy (originally written in French). The poem is about a young knight named Perceval who, after being told he's the son of a great knight in King Arthur's kingdom, goes on a quest to find the Holy Grail. This story, written by Chretien du Troyes in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, was never finished, as de Troyes died before completing it. Since then many authors have made their attempt at finishing the story. The reason there are so many who have endeavoured to recreate it is ultimately because no one knows how de Troyes intended to finish it, even what type of ending it would be. In terms of chivalric tales, this one didn't fit with the well-known mould that most fit. Previous Arthurian tales had also not ended like a usual chivalric tale would. I found it hard to assimilate all of the versions of the story that I wanted to into my own version, so I began by setting in in a Medieval world. However, this didn't have the desired effect, it didn't resonate with a modern audience. During a workshop in school, some of the feedback I got was that the old fashioned language sounded awkward to read for a contemporary reader. Because of these reasons, I decided to set it in a different time period. I would have done more colloquial language but kept it as a period drama show, similar to 'Merlin' on BBC, about King Arthur, however that themes I wished to incorporate didn't work with this. Instead I set it in the future in a dystopian society because that gave me much more flexibility with what would seem realistic and what could happen in the course of the plot.

Each version of the story since it was first created is different because it is manipulated by the social, political, and cultural context of the era. Like the game Chinese whispers, the story was remoulded more and more as time went on with different bits added and taken away, like the addition of the Wasteland, stemming from T S Eliot's poem *The Wasteland*, which I was inspired by after seeing the T S Eliot award's. Despite no description of or even reference to the Fisher King in Chrétien de Troyes poem, Eliot decided to have the Fisher King living on a wasteland which would be healed and made fertile once the young knight asked a certain question about the Grail. *The Wasteland* in T. S. Eliot's poem is used as a commentary on the state of modern society. I decided to add in the wasteland situation for the added reason of it being a physical manifestation of the injury that the Fisher King sustained. It highlights a medieval aspect of what was considered important for a member of royalty – producing an heir. I kept some other aspects of Medieval life like having a 'camp' being referenced, and setting half of the action within the walls of a castle. The lack of modern technology also hints to an older time. In my writing of a screenplay, I found it difficult to swerve away from simply falling into prose, and so my first draft contained a large amount of narrative. In the actions I tended to over describe, or add in sections that would be at the actors' jurisdiction, not the job of the writer. For example, in the first draft of scene four I explained in too much depth what the room would look like – an unnecessary addition to the script. Keeping the introductions as concise as possible was one of the main corrections that I concentrated on for the second draft. Another thing that I did in the first draft was an overuse of eclipses, which would be something that the actor would use at their own discretion.

One of the modern film adaptations, starring Robin Williams, was set in the 60's and the character of Perceval (in this tale named instead, Perry) was trying to find the Holy Grail (a pan from a local bank building) because he was mentally ill and deluded as to what it was after suffering a traumatic event. For my piece, I wanted the Holy Grail to be a real object which was carried with as much importance to the characters in the piece as it would have

had to the corresponding characters in the original. Because religion was so key in the original tale and the society surrounding its creation – I didn't want to omit this aspect entirely as many modern versions had. The original story was written in the Middle Ages, a time of unimaginable religious fervour where people were willing to sacrifice everything for their religion, there are many examples of this even, like the Crusades which happened at the same time as the original poem was written. I wanted the audience to be able to imagine a real object that would be deeply important to them if they were out in the situation, unlike the relevance it had in Terry Gilliam's version of the fisher king, where it only had importance to Parry, and no one else.

Despite this, I didn't want the tale to be too overtly Christianised because it wouldn't resonate with a modern audience. I imitated the style of references used in 'In the Flesh' written by Dominic Mitchell because there were only symbolic references, for example when 'Simon's strapped down arms are out stretched into a Jesus Christ pose' or when Kieran asks 'So yer washing yer hands of me?' alluding to Pontius Pilate. Therefore, I added in no overt references but instead I used biblical names for my characters. Like, Matthias who replaces Judas of Iscariot after he betrays Jesus – this wouldn't be obvious to start off with but become clear later on in the script as there are parallels between them. I also made reference to the bible by keeping the holy grail from the original. We find out later in the script through the convention of flashbacks that Matthias has been sent by The Fallen King who we don't meet until much later in the story to gather troops (disciples) and that he has replaced Jude, a character who betrayed the Fallen King. Although these references are clear because they are similarly sounding modernised versions of the names in the bible, this would hopefully not be clear from the offset.

In scene 8 I named Jacob and Adam Boy 1 and Boy 2 because I wanted it to be obvious that its set from the perspective of Percy, who as of this point, didn't know their names. As soon as these are found out, the names change to Jacob and Adam. The names are again Biblical in style with Adam obviously being a reference to the story of Adam and Eve – Adam being the first man. Adam talks much more than Jacob and is clearly in control whereas Jacob seems calmer and more relaxed. The etymology of the name Jacob is often suggested to mean 'wrestler' and 'God' which foreshadows later on in the script, where we find out that the 'Fallen King' is actually Jacob. Similarly to the way that in the Fisher King movie by the director Terry Gilliam, I decided to modernise the name 'Perceval' to make it 'Percy'. Genevieve was a warrior who protected Paris from Attila the Hun, I chose this as a basis for the name Jenny because of its association with names of that time, but also because the character of Jenny is a motherly figure who protects everyone in Caerphilly Castle from the fallen – including the older ones like Percy. In my original script she was Percy's mother, but once I decided to set it in the future she changed to become a character similarly to the way Wendy in *Peter Pan* acted. I showed this relationship by having Jenny and Percy speaking very colloquially to each other as if they were old friends and also adding in lines like 'lingering hug' or when they 'shared a look' the nonverbal communication being very important between them as indicating what their relationship is like.

I used the convention of flashbacks in order to give the characters a backstory to gradually input context so that the audience wouldn't be kept completely in the dark the whole way through. There are other smaller references to the past, but not all of these would be picked up on the first time round, and instead, similarly to the names, would be noticed afterwards. 'In the Flesh' has a similar 'God-like' character like The Fallen King called the 'Undead Prophet' which is what I based my character on. Although not featured very often in

either script, I wanted to imitate the atmosphere and sense of mystery that surrounds my character. In the flashbacks I used a fade to signal the beginning and end of them. Within the flashback scenes I used more smash cuts because it mimicked how memories can often seem jolted and out of order when they don't come naturally. The coherency of the flashbacks starts to decrease, and this would cause the audience to question the validity of the original flashbacks. This would also cause the audience to hopefully question their own judgement of Percy's character. During the Middle Ages – when the original was written – there wasn't much thought on moral philosophy because they tended to be more focused on metaphysics. This changed during the Renaissance period. Seeing as there were some new renditions of the fisher king myth during the renaissance, I didn't want to neglect this aspect of the story entirely because one of the main aims for my piece was to amalgamate some of the most important aspects of the story from each time period that it has been written in. If I were to rewrite my piece, I would give a clearer trigger for the flashback because in some places they seemed slightly out of place and this could have been rectified by the addition of a line or two. Another theme of my piece was the fear of time passing which I think resonates with a wide audience. Because people only become one of The Fallen after the age of 18, when you legally become an adult, and get given extra responsibility. The disease which causes The Fallen is a manifestation of how the children view adulthood. The irony being that they have to grow up too early due to the circumstances of The Fallen – mimicking the real world where children are asked to make decisions that will impact their future, despite still being young.

Words: 1806

