

Script under option to:
WALDEN MEDIA

DR MARY WALKER

John Royan

OVER BLACK

"It is the times which are behind me."

Dr. Mary Edwards Walker, 1864

FADE IN:

THE MEDAL OF HONOR

The 1904 version of our nation's highest honor, lying on a chiffonier next to an old Bible, a silver pocket watch and a pair of wire-rimmed glasses. The impressive medal embossed in gold with a single word:

"VALOR"

AN OLD WOMAN'S TREMBLING HANDS

Pick it up and pin it to a black short coat. We stay on the hands as the old woman finishes dressing.

She slips on a pair of boots under her black pants.

Clips the pocket watch to her vest and checks the time.

Buttons her coat and adjusts her bow tie and the upright collar of her white shirt, just so.

Dons a black top hat.

Finally puts on the glasses and a BLURRED IMAGE comes into focus giving us our first good look at

DR. MARY EDWARDS WALKER (84)

A venerable, declining, pillar of dignity, gazing stoically at herself in the mirror of the chiffonier.

INT. MARY'S HOME - DAY (1917)

Mary, dressed like a well-to-do man, enters her foyer and takes a black umbrella from a rack by the door.

She stands there a moment thinking, steeling herself for the world outside, finally opens the door and steps out into a blaze of sunlight.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Mary walks down a sidewalk past two fashionably dressed LADIES who look askance at her masculine clothing, TITTING.

Farther on, a group of BUSINESS MEN at an OUTDOOR CAFE notice Mary approaching.

BUSINESS MAN #1
What in God's name is that?

BUSINESS MAN #2
That, gentlemen, is our local lady
doctor. Fancies herself a man.

BUSINESS MAN #3
A lunatic's more like it.

They burst out in derisive LAUGHTER.

Mary hears them but doesn't break stride.

EXT. CITY STREET - FARTHER ON - SAME

Mary proceeds proudly down the busy street, waddling a little
with age, her umbrella-cane CLICKING off the sidewalk.

People in horse-drawn carriages and WWI era cars do double-
takes. A RUDE BOY SHOUTS an insult from a car.

Across the street, a bearded OLD SOLDIER outside a shop
watches Mary. Stares at her in vague recognition then comes
after her, limping through traffic.

OLD SOLDIER
Pardon me, ma'am...

Mary keeps walking.

OLD SOLDIER (CONT'D)
Ma'am... Doctor Walker!

Mary stops and turns. The man doffs his cap and approaches.

OLD SOLDIER (CONT'D)
I thought it was you. You are Doctor
Walker, aren't you?

MARY
Do I know you, sir?

The Old Soldier, who has a birthmark under his eye, cracks a
toothless smile.

OLD SOLDIER
Well, no, not rightly, ma'am, but if
not for you I woulda lost this leg.
(taps his bum leg)
You told me not to let em amputate,
told me to threaten to shoot em if
they did. And by God it worked,
they let me alone... Don't you
recall?

Mary moves toward the trolley as it approaches.

MARY

I'm sorry, but the war was a long time ago and I gave that advice to many young men.

(off his disappointment)

But I'm glad for you, sir, very glad... Where was it we met?

OLD SOLDIER

Georgia, ma'am... Chickamauga.

Mary looks gravely at the Old Soldier, nods knowingly then boards the trolley.

Mary takes a seat. Looks out at the Old Soldier limping away. Stares after him a moment then looks off into space with faraway eyes, REMEMBERING...

EXT. HORSESHOE RIDGE - CHICKAMAUGA WOODS - DAY

Legions of trees... and FOG, like white soup blanketing the ground where through a veil of light and shadow we see

UNION SOLDIERS. Scores of them. Crouching in the brush. Hiding among the trees. Old and young alike poised for battle. Their war-weary faces grim, alert or terrified.

A boot steps in mud raising bloody water out of the ground.

A CAPTAIN

Moves along a line of soldiers kneeling half in and out of the fog. The trees around them mutilated from battle. Bullet-ridden trunks, shredded branches, perforated leaves.

He stops at a Napoleon 12 pounder and her crew. Nods to one of the CANNONEERS.

THEIR POINT OF VIEW

Of the Rebel side of the woods, the ominous shadows moving among the trees. The gleams of bayonets. The phantom-like silhouettes of infantry and horsemen.

THE CAPTAIN

Checks behind him. The entire woods speckled with blue. A battered company of Union regulars waiting among the trees.

CANNONEER

(whispered)

Hey, Captain.

The Captain turns to a CANNONEER beside him, a beardless boy of seventeen.

CANNONEER (CONT'D)

What the hell does Chickamauga mean, anyway? If I'm gonna die here, I'd sure like to know.

CAPTAIN

Chicka's an old Cherokee word... means blood.

CANNONEER

And Mauga?

CAPTAIN

More blood.

A moment of quiet then suddenly BOOM-BOOM-BOOM-BOOM-BOOM! Confederate cannons unload on the Union line.

BALLS OF FIRE engulfing the men. Flames and splintered wood spewing everywhere. Ripping men apart. Their CRIES drowned by the DEAFENING EXPLOSIONS.

One blast blows a hole in a line of men. Another sends a cannon barrel spinning through the air.

Trees fall. Mud soars. Bodies thrown all over the place. The torrents of hell unleashed on earth.

THE UNION SIDE RETURNS FIRE

Greets the charging Confederates and their REBEL-YELLS with grapeshot and a hail of hot lead.

The front line falls, but the REBEL FORCE sweeps in like a wave. Swords raised. Guns blazing.

A slaughter beyond intense. Men fighting like lions. Shooting, stabbing, stumbling over roots and dead comrades. Killing with atavistic hatred at point blank range.

Swords slice through arms.

Gun stocks bash in faces.

The Union Captain in the middle of the fight grappling with a Rebel Soldier. Hands squeezing. Feet shifting. Their grimacing faces just inches apart.

A CANNONBALL EXPLODES and rockets a branch through the head of the Rebel Soldier. Knocks the Union Captain to the ground.

He lies under the fog, stunned. Soldiers rushing by.

SUDDENLY AN ENRAGED REBEL

looms over him, bayonet plunging.

The Captain rolls. Draws a pistol and fires.

Puts a hole in the Rebel's face.

He drops on the Captain. Who hides under the corpse from the wave of Rebel soldiers overrunning the position.

AN OVERVIEW SHOWS

the Rebels advancing all across Horseshoe Ridge. The CACOPHONY OF BATTLE FADING as we...

PULL UP AND AWAY to an expanded view of the numerous engagements on either side of Chickamauga Creek - site of one of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Under a weak winter sun a travel-weary troop of UNION CAVALRY escorts a dozen supply wagons through the woods.

DR. MARY WALKER (31)

in one of the wagons, bundled against the cold in a black overcoat and felt hat, a FAT SERGEANT riding beside her.

Mary's pretty, plainly so, with brown, sensitive eyes that gleam with intelligence. Hands in her pockets, she sits in a torpor brought on by the monotony of the long bumpy ride.

An OFFICER rides up alongside the wagon and looks contemptuously at Mary's pants in view below her coat.

Shares a look with the Sergeant who spits tobacco juice on Mary's boot. The two men taking amusement at Mary's expense.

With perfect aplomb Mary wipes her boot on the Sergeant's pant leg then plants two firm eyes on the Officer.

He scoffs and rides on.

Mary looks at the Sergeant who doesn't dare turn his head.

EXT. UNION CAMP - CHICKAMAUGA - NIGHT

Rain. The cavalry and wagons enter a sea of white tents surrounded by trees.

Soldiers emerging from the canvas homes and from around drowned campfires to unload the wagons. OFFICER COMMANDS heard over the pattering rain.

Mary surveys the harsh camp conditions. Looks to her driver who has climbed off the wagon.

MARY

Sergeant.

She goes after him as he walks away.

MARY (CONT'D)

Sergeant!

Fat Sergeant turns and holds his hat against the rain.

MARY (CONT'D)

Excuse me, but you were suppose to take me to Colonel McCook? This is a bivouac. I have to report to headquarters.

FAT SERGEANT

And I have to report to a latrine, ma'am. No one said nothin bout no headquarters. Haul you to the 52nd Ohio, those were my orders.

(re: the tents)

Well, here tis. Night now. And mind the mud. Don't wanna meet the Colonel with your *pants* mucked up.

He SNICKERS and walks off.

Leaves Mary alone in the rain. She goes to the wagon bed. Pulls her surgeon's kit and suitcase from under a tarp and walks off through the mud. HERE ENDS THE SCRIPT EXCERPT.

Contact Walden Media for inquiries about this script.