

First Three Pages from WONDER DRUG by Caitlin McCarthy

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Short Summary of WONDER DRUG:

WONDER DRUG chronicles the story of DES (diethylstilbestrol), a supposedly groundbreaking form of synthetic estrogen that instead became one of the most devastating medical disasters in history. Told across three different time periods, the script chronicles DES's tumultuous rise and fall, as well as the generations of women and families whose lives it affected.

For more information, please visit: www.wonderdrugthemovie.com.

FADE IN:

BEGIN MAIN TITLE SEQUENCE:

During the VOICE-OVER of an elderly E. CHARLES DODDS (early-70s), we see images of real DES advertisements, pills, bottles, and news articles --

DODDS (V.O.)
My work has affected millions
around the world...many who don't
even know it. I wanted to help
others, but it's true what they
say: A man is not old until regrets
take the place of dreams.

An illustration of a "pregnant" woman, chained to and holding a bomb emblazoned with a skull and crossbones and Distilbène (DES brand name).

DODDS (V.O.)
(after a pause)
That has been a bitter pill to
swallow.

END MAIN TITLE SEQUENCE

A black screen.

SUPER: "INSPIRED BY ACTUAL EVENTS."

CUT TO:

EXT. DODDS' HOME - NIGHT

A quaint home in London. All of its lights are out, except in the attic.

SUPER: "LONDON, 1938."

INT. DODDS' HOME - ATTIC OFFICE - NIGHT

INSERT DOCUMENT IN TYPEWRITER. The letterhead reads:
"PROFESSOR E. CHARLES DODDS, COURTAULD INSTITUTE OF
BIOCHEMISTRY, THE MIDDLESEX HOSPITAL MEDICAL SCHOOL, LONDON
W.1."

The sound of TYPING is loud, as the title of an article emerges: "ESTROGENIC ACTIVITY OF CERTAIN SYNTHETIC COMPOUNDS."

INT. DODDS' HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

CONSTANCE DODDS (mid-30s) sleeps alone in a double bed. The hand beside her delicate face reveals a simple wedding band.

Her peaceful sleep is first disturbed by the sound of TYPING, then by a child CRYING.

Constance sits up. She glances at her husband's side of the bed. It hasn't been slept in yet.

The typewriter DINGS, then continues to BANG away.

INT. DODDS' HOME - ATTIC OFFICE - NIGHT

A younger E. CHARLES DODDS (late-30s), a modest biochemist, continues to TYPE feverishly. He does not hear the attic stairway door CREAK OPEN.

Constance comes into view, wearing a robe over her nightgown.

CONSTANCE

Charlie, Ralph has school in the morning.

Dodds doesn't stop TYPING. Constance moves closer.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)

Edward Charles Dodds.

DODDS

Constance. Please.

Dodds continues to TYPE.

Constance forces him to stop by sitting on his lap. As she wraps her arms around his neck, he places his hands on her waist.

DODDS (CONT'D)

(chuckling)

You win, Connie. But only for a moment.

Constance glances at the document in the typewriter.

CONSTANCE

What on earth is...I can't even pronounce it.

DODDS

Diethylstilbestrol. It's a wonder drug.

CONSTANCE

For who?

DODDS

Menopausal women.

CONSTANCE

They can't wait until morning?

DODDS

I have to beat the others.

CONSTANCE

(teasing)

Everyone's after menopausal women?

DODDS

They're after synthetic estrogen.
It's a simple pill. No more
painful estrogen shots. No more
risk of overdose. It'll
revolutionize treatment.

CONSTANCE

So we're going to be rich?

DODDS

If this leads to consultancies.
I'll buy you a bigger house, where
you won't hear me.

Dodds kisses Constance's cheek.

DODDS (CONT'D)

Happy?