

First Five Pages from WONDER DRUG by Caitlin McCarthy

Copyright and WGA registration held by Caitlin McCarthy.
www.caitlinmccarthy.com

Short Summary of WONDER DRUG:

WONDER DRUG is inspired by the true story of DES, seen as a medical miracle to help women with pregnancy issues and a cash cow for pharmaceutical companies upon its creation in 1938. However, by 1971, the reality of what the consequences are for taking badly tested, yet FDA approved, drugs like DES and the corruption of the pharmaceutical industry behind it becomes apparent. This is a hot-button issue that the public needs to be made aware of, because similar things are happening with drugs today. Set in Boston, Massachusetts, WONDER DRUG interweaves the lives of a Big Pharma executive, feminist doctor, and thirtysomething newlywed across different decades.

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

FADE IN:

BEGIN TITLE SEQUENCE

Images show historical progress of mass-produced pharmaceutical drugs.

Circa 1940s: Black-and-white clips of old machines slowly pumping out little white pills.

Circa 1970s: Photorealistic clips of mainstreamed pill manufacturing.

Circa Present Day: Muted color clips of hospital Pixus machines doling out pills like an ATM machine...

...and handheld digital footage of pharmacy-automated machines shooting down pills into plastic bottles.

END TITLE SEQUENCE

A black screen. We hear the sound of a PENCIL moving across paper.

DODDS (O.S.)
And there you have it --

CUT TO:

INT. 1938 - COURTAULD INSTITUTE - BIOCHEMISTRY LAB - DAY

A hand draws the chemical structure for diethylstilbestrol (DES).

DODDS (O.S.)
-- synthetic estrogen.

The hand belongs to CHARLES DODDS (late-30s), a robust yet modest biochemist.

Dodds looks around the lab, but there's no one to witness his triumph.

He puts down the pencil and stares at the drawing. He adjusts his glasses, as if he can't believe his eyes.

SUPER: "LONDON, 1938."

A smile crosses his face, then disappears upon hearing FOOTSTEPS behind him. He quickly covers the drawing with his hand.

LAWSON (O.S.)
Professor Dodds?

Dodds turns to face his earnest assistant, WILFRED LAWSON
(early-30s).

DODDS
Yes, Lawson.

LAWSON
Should I prepare another sample?

DODDS
There's no need.

Dodds raises his hand from the drawing. Lawson's eyes widen.

LAWSON
I'll lock the door.

Lawson regards the drawing as one would a sacred object.

LAWSON (CONT'D)
(ecstatic)
After all this time, it now seems
so...obvious! Just wait until
everyone hears. A university lab
trumped the corporations with all
their money. We've won the global
race for synthetic estrogen!

Dodds beams, then abruptly folds the paper.

DODDS
We can't tell a soul. We're in
extreme danger of being anticipated
-- by the Germans, especially.
They've been pushing hormone
research for years. I shudder to
think why....

Dodds tucks the drawing inside his lab coat pocket.

LAWSON
We're going to be rich!

DODDS
No. We're working with a grant
that covers the cost of this
research, but prevents our
discoveries from being patented.

Dodds stands to exit the lab.

DODDS (CONT'D)
It's not about money. It's about
history.

Dodds walks across the lab to the door. He looks back at
Lawson.

DODDS (CONT'D)
(excitement returning)
This will change women's medicine.
Or medicine, period. No more
painful estrogen shots. No more
risk of overdose. Just a simple
pill. We need to publish this
before someone else does.

INT. DODDS' HOME - CHARLES' ATTIC OFFICE - NIGHT

The sound of RAPID TYPING is loud.

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

We then see the title of an article: "ESTROGENIC ACTIVITY OF
CERTAIN SYNTHETIC COMPOUNDS."

INT. DODDS' HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

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. The sheets haven't been slept in yet.

The typewriter DINGS, then continues to BANG away.

INT. DODDS' HOME - CHARLES' ATTIC OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Dodds continues to TYPE feverishly, not hearing the ATTIC
STAIRWAY DOOR creak open.

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

CONSTANCE

Charlie, this is the third straight night. Ralph has school in the morning.

Dodds doesn't stop TYPING. Constance moves closer.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)

What is so important about this article?

DODDS

You wouldn't understand, Connie. It's complex.

Constance gives him a look.

CONSTANCE

I've met the competition. They're in that photo with you.

She glances at a framed black-and-white photo on the wall.

INSERT PHOTO. Two rows of men, dressed in suits, pose together. Dodds stands in the center of the back row. The footer reads: "MEMBERS OF THE FIRST CONFERENCE ON THE STANDARDISATION OF SEX HORMONES, LONDON 1932."

Dodds continues to TYPE.

Connie 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

You win, darling.

(beat)

Estrogen is a hormone that plays an important role in the female body. As girls grow up, it's what makes them turn into women. When they get older, they make less of it.

CONSTANCE

(joking)

So I'll turn into a man someday?

DODDS

(chuckling)

No, Connie. When women make less estrogen, some of them start to feel sick. My new discovery --
(referencing document)
-- will make them feel better.

(MORE)

DODDS (CONT'D)
It'll also get me consultancies.
I'll be able to buy a bigger house,
where you won't hear me.

Dodds kisses Constance's cheek.

DODDS (CONT'D)
Happy?

CONSTANCE
Yes. Come to bed.

Constance stands and extends her hand.

DODDS
I only have two pages left....