

Should Ben & Cass try to quit one another?

in final chapter, Ben sends message from England to Jones, who conveys it to Cass?
--it would send her to Hill 57 to find Agnes, and be told of what she witnessed--
the coaches running Purcell to death.

Or is this needed? Would it satisfactorily resolve the plot to have Ben corner Loudon at USO show and discover Purcell was to have replaced him on the varsity, and thus the doomed eleven does not include Ben?

Ben in one of his pieces?
his script ? voice-over

comes to be told

My name does not matter, nor who I am in this story as it unfolds. Call me the twelfth man, although it cannot be told without the influence of women (any more than the Odyssey can). From the very start the twelfth man was something created, something we all...

^{young}
Eleven men and their war. And the women.

String of Pearls

Novel based on doomed Montana State football team of '40-'41, all eleven dead in WWII.

Narrator, as it emerges in course of narrative, is the last one alive. He's a writer of some kind, in military PR work, and it comes to the attention of the military brass (maybe through inquiry of a sportswriter, a la Bill Stern; Stern evidently showily made the ~~dead~~ all-dead Mt St team his "All-American" squad late in war) that the team is being whittled away by the war--a nasty propaganda angle they don't want to hand **to Lord Haw Haw or Tokyo Rose. At end of the book, the brass are whisking him off into apparently harmless USO-type duty and put him aboard a plane w/ musicians-- Glenn Miller's plane. (or it could be Joe Kennedy's?) Last item in the book thus is a newspaper piece about Miller's plane lost, similar to hometown paper pieces that have announced other deaths of the team members.

**And/or a US Senator from Montana--Wheeler?--is threatening to raise hell and investigate.

String of Pearls/2

Narrator probably has to confide in someone within military--chaplain? buddy?-- as he becomes aware of arithmetic of fate creeping toward him. Whoever he confides in vows to pass along his accumulated record of what's happened to the doomed team.

Possible plot elements:

or a movie?

--narrator could be at work on book, maybe a novel, about the team, from some angle that half the team doesn't want touched, half wants that story told.

--the angle could be "the twelfth man", a player who died in bootcamp-like practice, perhaps running up to the white rock M. The hard-as-nails coach and the Bill Stern-like sportswriter/caster turn that death into "inspirational" story behind the team's undefeated season.

--narrator could be Hollywood-connected, a la Alvin Josephy, through a relative; this would add to the military brass's worries, that Hollywood would get hold of the fate of the team.

--narrator probably should be involved w/ ^{*}wife-girlfriend of a teammate; or his wife/girlfriend was involved w/ one? They need to dance, as unobtrusively as possible but yet hinting toward the title, to Miller band's "String of Pearls".

** or coach's wife?*

String of Pearls/3

--should one team member be from Two Medicine/Scotch Heaven family, or make this a break from that backdrop?

- one player can have become a medical corpsman, and even so gets killed by landmine
- one or more of them could cross paths w/ Sgt Lyle Rozier in New Guinea.
- one of them at Attu?

show characters in the wrong, once in a while

The texture in our heads

How do I put a sense of the land into this story?

String

Malmstrom: ferrying planes to Russia(?)

- Ben goes home to GV from there (by wartime bus)
- * (Possible opening scene)
- women pilots? (Dave Walter source)

- on bus rte from GT# to GV, Ben remembers football scores as he passes thru towns (Fairfield & Choteau; Twin Sulphur Springs?)

- goes to see a dead teammate's parents (in his dad's car, on rationed gas)

- in GV: somebody greets(?) him, "war hero's home."

- several of football team become pilots, due to gd reflexes

- duffel bag: war bag?

When Ben needs to go to Ft. Peck to visit Del's folks, he asks his dad for loan of car and ration book for gas. Bill is embarrassed--Cloyce has used up the coupons.

Ben instead turns to Tom Harry in the Medicine Lodge, who has his sources. He loans Ben his Packard (from Bucking), turning down money. "There's a war on, didn't you know that?"

Ben has asked how the tires are. "Thin as....," he's told, but Tom tells him to throw a couple of spare tires in the trunk.