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GRAPHICS:

FADE IN:

1 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 1

Establishing.

Grey, rain lashing down across barren fields, shell holes filling with rain water and the ground a patchwork of mud and barbed wire.

Rats running through a trench.

CUT TO:

2 INT. THOMAS' HOUSE. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 2

He looks up at the parapet, a small bird lands on a sandbag, it pecks away for a moment before another explosion sends it on its way.

CUT TO:

4 EXT. GERMAN TRENCHES. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 4

Rain. Michael and Freddie amongst soldiers in their trench, sitting on the fire step. Weary. Dispirited.

FREDDIE

Three years ago we were fighting over a patch of ground ten miles from here.

MICHAEL

We're bringing troops back from the east.

FREDDIE

So we get more troops... And the Americans have joined the British.

(beat)

Whatever happens, we just go round in circles, the whole world going nowhere...

Fighting over the same field.

MICHAEL

We can still win.

FREDDIE

Win what?

An artillery barrage. Michael and Freddie take cover. Shells explode around them, then they suddenly stop.

A beat. Freddie takes out a periscope, peers over the top.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

(shouts)

The wire's down!

Silence. Everyone nervous as they anticipate what's coming.

A cacophony of whistles in the near distance, all the German soldiers know what this means, they all ready themselves for the onslaught.

There are shouts nearby, the sound of rifle fire.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

They're coming!

Michael and Freddie exchange a look. They fire their rifles over the parapet, an urgency to their actions now.

Michael and Freddie firing, when in an instant there's total confusion as a dozen British soldiers start to jump over the parapet.

They begin to fight, other German soldiers coming up from the dug out to join, more British soldiers coming over the top.

Michael is knocked to the floor, he's dropped his rifle, he crawls to try and pick it up, turns his head to see a British soldier pointing his rifle and bayonet at him.

CUT TO:

5 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 5

Behind the lines, British soldiers gathering, ready to move out. Horses, carts and supplies. Derek and Thomas getting their kit together.

DEREK
Where are we going?

THOMAS
They're moving us back up to
Wipers...
All this time... Three years...
And we'll be right back where we
started.

A beat.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
What if it never stops?

DEREK
Ay?

THOMAS
What if...
(beat)
What if no-one wins and no-one
gives up? What if...

Thomas looks around at the desolation, the haunted faces of other soldiers looking back at him...

THOMAS (CONT'D)
This is all there is, all there's
ever going to be?
(a beat)
They tell us we're moving forward,
or north or east...
Or back where we started.
Half the time we have no idea where
we are.
(beat)
(MORE)

We fire at these figures in the distance, but we don't really know who we're shooting at.

They tell us they're German, but they could be French or British or American and we wouldn't know...

(beat)

This isn't a war like I read about in school...

Like I thought it was going to be. We're not conquering anything, marching into towns with flags...

(beat)

So what if?

What if it never ends?

DEREK

Wars end.

THOMAS

But there's never been a war like this has there?

Not with the whole world fighting...

(beat)

So if there's never been a war like this... How do we

DAVID
It won't be long before he's back
in that bed and you shouting up at
him to shift himself...

Annie shakes her head.

ANNIE
We've lost him.

DAVID
Of course we haven't.

ANNIE
Yes we have.
Even if he comes back.
(beat)
He won't be the same boy who left
will he? Our little boy...
How could he be?

DAVID
You have to stop thinking like this
Annie.

ANNIE
Then tell me he will.

David looks at the floor.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Lie to me!

David is just as lost.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 7

Thomas stands to attention front of Kenny Bond. Now a
Sergeant.

SERGEANT BOND
There's no leave before we go
Tommy, sorry.

THOMAS
It's just I haven't seen her for a
month, one of the lads said there's
a little Curie at the CCS.

SERGEANT BOND
Orders. We have to move out this
morn'ing.

Thomas nods, gutted but accepting.

SERGEANT BOND (CONT'D)
Been a rough ride ay? In the thick
of it.

THOMAS
Same for everyone.
I'm just...
(beat)
Tired. You know?

SERGEANT BOND
Yeah.

A moment, Kenny thoughtful, he looks Tommy up and down, he's bedraggled, a troubled child... Something in him relents...

A moment, then he takes a slip of paper, signs it, then hands it to Thomas.

SERGEANT BOND (CONT'D)
There's a prisoner detail leaving
in half an hour, could use another
man.
The camp is half a mile from the
clearing station.

Thomas' eyes light up.

BRITISH SERGEANT
I dare say they'd let you stop off
there, if something terrible
happened, like you sprained your
ankle on the way.

Kenny winks at Thomas.

THOMAS
Yes Sergeant. Thank you Sergeant.

A beat, Derek nods, Thomas pats him on the arm and picks up his kit bag and walks away, Derek watching him go.

Thomas walking through the chaos of men and horses preparing to leave, he reaches a fenced off area and sees Corporal Gatnam Singh Kapur with two other British soldiers. Thomas hands him the slip of paper.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

The Sergeant said you needed a hand.

GATNAM

Mission of mercy he said.

(grins)

CCS is on the way.

Gatnam strides away and shouts to the other two soldiers guarding twelve ragged German soldiers sitting in a group, one of the soldiers giving them water and cigarettes.

GATNAM (CONT'D)

MI CHAEL
What?

FREDDIE
We fought hard, now we're
prisoners, what else can we do?

MI CHAEL
We can escape. Get back to our
lines.

Michael determined, Freddie concerned.

CUT TO:

10 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 10

Derek alone, as everyone starts preparing to leave. Derek stops as he sees a young British soldier, no more than a boy, being marched past, held by two soldiers. Sergeant Bond is beside Derek as everyone watches the young boy marched past.

DEREK
What's going on?

SERGEANT BOND
Deserter.
(beat)
Off to a firing squad.

A shocked Derek catches the eye of the young boy, who is clearly terrified. A moment between them.

SERGEANT BOND (CONT'D)
Time to move out.

Sergeant Bond walks away, leaving Derek to grab his kit and to start the march with everyone else. He glances back at the young boy being led out of sight.

Derek marches on, troubled, unable to shake off what he's just seen.

A fusillade of shots rings out from behind him. Everyone else turns to look around except Derek.

CUT TO:

11 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE ROAD. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 11

The prisoner party stops, the CCS can be seen in the distance.

GATNAM
Okay, we'll take a break here.

As everyone sits down to take a break, Gatnam joins Thomas.

GATNAM (CONT'D)
You've got an hour. A minute
longer, you'll be a deserter.

GO TO: Michael, sitting at the roadside, watching a single British soldier running across the adjoining field.

CUT TO:

12 EXT. CCS. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 12

The usual chaos of the CCS, carts arriving with injured soldiers, walking wounded waiting their turn.

Thomas walks through the melee, past a group of American soldiers.

He then sees Joanna's truck parked and there she is, supervising a soldier on a stretcher being lifted out. She then sees Thomas - a moment between them through the crowd. She makes her excuses to the medic with her and runs to embrace him.

CUT TO:

13 EXT. CCS. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 13

Thomas and Joanna have moved to the front of her Little Curie truck.

THOMAS
I haven't got long, they're moving
us on again and I had to see you...
Can you get a break?

JOANNA
Wait..

She kisses him then runs back to the truck and talks to the female radiographer. Thomas looks around at the walking wounded, soldiers, beaten and battered, exhausted, mentally shot...

The moment is broken by Joanna running back to him with a big smile, she grabs Thomas' hand and they walk away.

CUT TO:

14 EXT. CCS/ COUNTRYSIDE. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 14

Thomas and Joanna have found a quiet spot behind the CCS. They stop and sit together.

JOANNA
Are you al right?

THOMAS
I am now.

She strokes hi s cheek.

JOANNA
All those sweet boys...

A moment, then he kisses her, she looks troubled, something on her mind.

JOANNA (CONT'D)
Wait...

THOMAS
What's wrong?

A moment, Joanna trying to form the sentence in her head,

I don't know how it all works and that, but I could find out...

He stops, sensing her unease.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

What?

Thomas knows from her reaction that something is wrong.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I just thought..

JOANNA

I want to marry you.

THOMAS

Then what's wrong?

A moment.

JOANNA

I always dreamed the day I'd get married...

I'd be on my Father's arm.

(beat)

But I don't know where he is, I don't even know if he's still alive...

THOMAS

He's alive and we'll wait for him.

JOANNA

You don't mind?

THOMAS

No.

A beat, Joanna laughs with her next thought;

JOANNA

JOANNA

Maybe we don't need to do it right now?

Thomas relaxes, then looks at Joanna's tummy, strokes it.

THOMAS

But what about when it comes?

(Looks at station)

You can't stay here...

JOANNA

I could go home... but I don't have one. I can't go back to Cracow.

(beat)

One of the medics said there's a convent not far from here...

THOMAS

16 EXT. CCS/COUNTRYSIDE. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 16

Thomas is saying goodbye to Joanna, he's giving her a note.

THOMAS
This is the address, I'll write and
tell them you're coming...

Joanna nods.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
You go as soon as you can.

JOANNA
I will.

They kiss. Thomas walks away down the approach road,
turning and waving as he goes. Joanna waves back, not
knowing if she'll ever see him again.

CUT TO:

17 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE ROAD. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 17

The prison party preparing to leave as Gatnam sees Thomas
running back to join them.

GATNAM
Okay, on your feet!
(to Thomas)
How was she?

THOMAS
(huge grin)
Beautiful. Thanks corporal.

Take Thomas' POV, Michael amongst them but lost in the group.

GO TO: Michael looking at Thomas as he briefly turns around.

Michael then glances at the woodland which stretches out to
his left, then the guards.

FREDDIE
I can't do this...

Michael looks at Freddie, who's embarrassed but certain.

MICHAEL
You have to come with me.

FREDDIE
No!
(beat)
I can't do it anymore... I'm
done... It's over..

MICHAEL

We don't know where they're taking us.

FREDDIE

We're prisoners of war.

MICHAEL

What does that mean? How do we know they're not just taking us somewhere to shoot us?

FREDDIE

They can't.

MICHAEL

How can you say that? After all we've seen?

FREDDIE

I'm tired Mikey.

A moment between them, Freddie looks down.

MICHAEL

I need to get back to Katie.

(beat)

I need to finish this, for Stefan and Lanzo... And Rudi. Finish it and go home!

FREDDIE

I know.

Michael nods, he puts an arm on Freddie's shoulder, then looks again at the woods.

MICHAEL

I'm a fast runner and I'm used to running through fields, they won't catch me.

FREDDIE

No but a bullet will.

MICHAEL

I have to try.

Michael clearly ready to run.

FREDDIE

Wait! I'll get you a head start.

MICHAEL

How?

FREDDIE

(nods)

I'll run that way, not far and not fast, as soon as they shout, I'll stop and put my hands up.

(beat)

It should give you a few seconds.

Michael smiles, and holds his shoulder.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

See you when the war's over.

Freddie and Michael wait for the guards to be talking amongst themselves. Michael nods.

Freddie starts to walk away from the group, then run, the guards see him and panic, shouting for him to stop. Michael takes his chance to jump unseen through the hedgerow and start running across the field towards the woods.

The guards shouting at Freddie, raising their rifles. Freddie stops running and slowly raises his arms, a smile beginning to form his face, just as a shot rings out from behind him.

CUT TO:

18 EXT. FIELD. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 18

Michael stops running as he hears the shot. He turns to see Freddie slump to the floor.

CUT TO:

19 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 19

On the shocked young soldier who fired the shot, he looks

21 EXT. WOODLAND. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 21

Gatnam and Thomas enter the woodland. Gatnam gives a signal for Thomas to go left, he goes right.

CUT TO:

22 EXT. WOODLAND. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 22

Thomas searching the woodland.

CUT TO:

23 EXT. WOODLAND. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 23

Michael stops to catch his breath, leaning against a tree. He hears a twig snap and ducks down.

Thomas appears, he slows down to a walk, he sees a bird in the trees. On Michael crouching, hearing Thomas walking closer.

Michael glances to the edge of the woods, should he hide or run? A moment, then he stands up and runs.

Thomas sees birds flutter out of the area fifty yards or so in front of him, just catching a glimpse of Michael running. He shouts:

THOMAS

Here!

Thomas gives chase, through the trees.

He sees Michael running and raises his rifle; Michael in his sights, he obviously has a clear shot at Michael's back, but for some reason he hesitates. He moves his finger back to the trigger. But doesn't fire.

And Michael reaches the edge of the woods, disappearing from view.

An out of breath Gatnam joins Thomas as he lowers his rifle.

GATNAM

Where is he?

THOMAS

Long gone. We'll never catch him.

Gatnam catches his breath.

GATNAM

Lucky bastard.
Come on then. Let's get back.

Thomas glances over his shoulder at where Michael had been, before following Gatnam back through the woodland.

CUT TO:

24 INT. BRITISH DUG OUT. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 24

A thoughtful Derek sits on his bunk, three or four other soldiers on their bunks as Thomas enters. Derek looks up.

THOMAS
 Didn't think I'd leave you on your
 own did you?

Thomas ruffles Derek's hair and then starts to unpack his kit, not really seeing how troubled Derek is.

CUT TO:

25 INT. GERMAN DUG OUT. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 25

Rain outside. The boom of the heavy guns. Michael puts down his new kit bag and rifle and sits on a bunk.

Suddenly there's laughter, he looks up to see Rudi, Freddie, Lanzo and Stefan fooling around on the other bunks.

But then the image has gone as quickly as it came, nothing but Michael's imagination. He sits and looks at the empty bunks, feeling very alone.

CUT TO:

26 EXT. GERMAN TRENCH. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 26

Rain. Michael steps outside for some air. , a sentry is in position on the fire step. He nods at Michael. Michael nods in acknowledgement.

CUT TO:

27 EXT. BRITISH TRENCH. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 27

Rain. Whistling of shells. Derek sits alone on the fire step, troubled, simply staring into space. He looks down at his feet, engulfed in the mud and water at the bottom of the trench.

His hands are dirty, red and sore. An explosion, startling him.

Then another and another, increasingly loud. He looks at the others, but no-one's reacting. Then it's silent again - just the sound of the rain.

CUT TO:

28 BATTLE OF THE SOMME. 28

BACK TO:

29 EXT. BRITISH TRENCH. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 29

Derek startled by the image, looks at the others in the trench, again there is no reaction from them.

Back to silence, just the sound of the rain. Then there's a RATTLE of machine gun fire.

CUT TO:

30 - BATTLE OF THE SOMME. 30

BACK TO:

31 EXT. BRITISH TRENCH. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 31

Derek.

CUT TO:

32 - THE YOUNG DESERTER BEING LED AWAY. 32

BACK TO:

33 EXT. BRITISH TRENCH. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 33

Derek. Silence again. The rain falling.

Derek stands and starts to wade through the trench, he turns a corner then passes Thomas as he comes out of the dug out.

Then to Thomas's horror, Derek climbs up on to the fire step, then the ladder and over the parapet, walking away into no-man's-land. Thomas drops his mug of tea, then looks along the trench at the Corporal taking to an Officer, he barks at a nearby soldier.

THOMAS
Cover for us!

Thomas then climbs up and follows Derek over the parapet. He sees the shape of Derek through the rain, walking calmly away from the trenches.

CUT TO:

34 EXT. GERMAN TRENCH. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 34

Erich is standing on the fire step on look out. He thinks he sees a shape through the rain, he stares closer and on the other side of the wire he sees a British soldier walking away from the British trenches, a second soldier running towards him.

Erich lifts his rifle and takes aim as Michael joins him on the step.

MI CHAEL
What is it?

ERI CH
There's someone out there.

Derek in his sights.

CUT TO:

35 EXT. NO MAN'S LAND. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 35

Rain. Derek trudging through the mud.

CUT TO:

36 EXT. GERMAN TENCHES. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 36

Derek in Erich's sights, his finger on the trigger. Michael grabs a pair of binoculars and looks out across no-man's-land.

One British soldier is walking, a second one is running as best as he can through the mud to catch him.

ERI CH (O. S.)
I'm going to shoot him.

CUT TO:

37 EXT. NO MAN'S LAND. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 37

Thomas gaining on Derek.

THOMAS
Derek!

But Derek can't or won't hear him, he stumbles a little and as he does so, a bullet whizzes past him.

CUT TO:

38 EXT. GERMAN TRENCHES. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 38
Erich hastily reloading, then he puts his rifle back over the parapet to take aim.

CUT TO:

39 EXT. NO MAN'S LAND. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 39
Derek striding as Thomas launches himself at him, they both fall to the ground as another bullet whizzes past them.

Derek fighting Thomas.

DEREK
Get off me!

THOMAS
You'll get us both killed!

Thomas grabs Derek and forcibly drags him across the mud and they roll into a shell hole, it's almost full of water but it gives them sufficient cover, Thomas pushes Derek's head down from the rim.

CUT TO:

40 EXT. GERMAN TRENCHES. WET WINTER. DAY 1. 40

THOMAS

And how you gonna get there you
daft sod?

Derek now faces Thomas, pleading.

DEREK

Please, just let me go.

THOMAS

(beat)

If I could, I'd carry you all the
way home on my back, I swear it,
but there's no way through...

(beat)

There's Germans and one side and
our officers on the other.

Someone else with people worrying
about 'em...

DEREK

I'm so scared all the time.

THOMAS

I know and so am I.

(beat)

So don't leave me to be scared on
my own okay?

(beat)

It's dark now.

We can't see any light at the end
of the tunnel...

But there will be, if we grit our
teeth and don't give up, there will
be....

A beat, Derek buries himself into Thomas' chest, Thomas holds
him as tight as he can. Derek struggles to catch his breath
as he fights the uncontrollable urge to sob.

He loses the battle and sobs violently, Thomas holding him
tighter still...

CUT TO:

42

EXT. GERMAN TRENCHES. WET WINTER. DAY 1.

42

Erich steps down from the fire step with his rifle.

ERICH

They've gone.

Michael looks out over no man's land, wondering if the
sobbing he hears through the sound of the rain is in his

William takes her hand.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

When I go into the village and see the other mothers, it's hard to look at them.

I smile and nod, but I can't look them in the eye any more.

(beat)

It's hard not to feel a little guilty that our son is still alive when there's isn't.

WILLIAM

That's only natural.

SUSAN

Maybe that's the problem. That we've created a world where something like that is normal.

WILLIAM

Michael will be alright. In his letters he says he's being looked after, that he's safe, not too close to the fighting.

SUSAN

And when we write to him what do we say? That there is no food? No oil? No medicine?

(beat)

No.

(beat)

We tell him that everything is alright, that everything is exactly as it was the day he left. That the fire is burning in the grate, food on the table and his bed freshly made waiting for him.

WILLIAM

(wry smile)

One of those is true.

A moment.

SUSAN

If we're lying to him, what if he's lying to us? What if things are so bad, he's afraid to tell us? How can he bear it?

CUT TO:

44

INT. THOMAS' HOUSE. WET WINTER. NIGHT 1.

44

An exhausted Annie enters her house, she takes off her coat to reveal dirty work clothes, coming home from the munitions factory. She notices her hands, dirty and scarred.

A moment, before she wearily walks through to the sitting room. As she enters, she sees Joanna sitting on the sofa, David opposite her. Joanna stands as Annie enters, she now has a small bump. A moment between them, before they hug.

CUT TO:

45

EXT. BRITISH TRENCH. WET WINTER. NIGHT 1.

45

Thomas stands on the fire step and looks out across the same