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## GRAPHICS:

FADE IN:

1 EXT. ROAD, EASTERN FRONT. EARLY WINTER. DAY 1. 1

Michael, Rudi, Lanzo, Freddie and Stefan in the back of a truck, freezing cold. Shivering despite their heavy coats.

They look older, tired, uniforms not quite so pristine.

Michael sits beside Freddie.

FREDDIE

I heard the shells in the east are ten times worse.

MICHAEL

Why?

FREDDIE

No mud to absorb the impact, the ground's so hard...

RUDI

I heard your hands get so cold you can't fire your rifle.

STEFAN

I heard they have trench parties every night, more beer than you can drink and three women for every man...

LANZO

I like his version.

A beat, then they all laugh as the truck stops and someone shouts an order to disembark.

CUT TO:

2 EXT. LOOS COUNTRYSIDE. EARLY WINTER. DAY 1. 2

A horse and cart delivering supplies: Thomas, Cyril, Anthony, Ben and Kevin unloading it.

As the camera pulls out, we see several mountains of supplies: ammunition boxes, ration boxes, gas masks in cases.

ANTHONY

Ever wondered what we'd be doing if we had stayed at home?

BEN

Looking for a job I suppose...

ANTHONY

Yeah, ain't all bad is it?

CYRIL

Long as you don't get killed.

ANTHONY

Regular wage, food laid on,  
spending all day with your mates...  
Not sure I'd wanna go home even if  
I could.

Corporal Kenny Bond calls out: Kevin lifts up a gas mask.

KEVIN

Who's using gas? Us or them?

The question hangs in the air for a beat.

CORPORAL BOND

Come on, get your kit. Move out!

CUT TO:

3 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD, EASTERN FRONT. EARLY WINTER. DAY 1. 3

Michael, Rudi, Freddie, Lanzo and Stefan in heavy coats are striding forward as part of a larger group of soldiers and horses along a country road. The sound of heavy gunfire in front of them.

Moving in the opposite direction are a dozen civilians, carrying their belongings, children... They are displaced, expressively.

As they pass, the soldiers march past a signpost for .

LANZO

I can smell sausages.

STEFAN

This morning it was bacon.

LANZO

You think it's a Russian secret weapon? They send over smells to distract us?

FREDDIE  
Don't see how, if you're the only  
one who can smell it.

LANZO  
So why are they picking on me?

The others all laugh as they continue marching.

CUT TO:

4

EXT. BRITISH TRENCHES. EARLY WINTER. DAWN 2.

4

His mask eye pieces are now completely fogged up and he has to stop to rip off his mask, he looks around at others all doing the same.

CUT TO:

8

EXT. NO MAN'S LAND. EARLY WINTER. DAY 2.

8



Thomas drinks.

FRANK (CONT'D)  
Better?

Thomas nods, still coughing.

FRANK (CONT'D)  
How old are you son?

THOMAS  
Eighteen.

FRANK  
We can't stay here, we have to keep  
moving upwind...

Another explosion beside them.

THOMAS  
No! I'm alright here!

FRANK

Frank tries to open his tunic pocket but his bloodied fingers struggle with the button, he looks up at Thomas, Thomas helps him open the pocket and Frank takes out a small photograph and holds it. He looks up at Thomas...

FRANK

Bastard.

He gurgles as the breath leaves him and he dies.

Thomas looks down at the photograph in Frank's hand and takes it. It's Frank and his fourteen year old son. Thomas closes his eyes tightly as another shell explodes just above his head, he put hands over his ears.

CUT TO:

13 INT/EXT. RUINS, EASTERN FRONT. EARLY WINTER. DAY 2. 13

Rudi, Lanzo and Stefan inside the ruins defending one side.

Michael and Freddie defending another side of the ruins, firing.

Suddenly several Russian soldiers emerge from behind them, from the river side of the Ruins. They see Freddie first and rush him, knocking him to the floor.

Michael freezes for a beat, but is then faced with a Russian soldier charging him, the Russian hits Michael with force, knocking them both to the floor.

As they fight, there's a huge shout as Rudi, Lanzo and Stefan turn round to see Michael and Freddie being overwhelmed.

The soldier fighting with Michael is shot and falls away from him.

Michael looks at Freddie still fighting with a Russian soldier on the floor.

GO TO: Freddie on his back, the Russian soldier has him pinned down and takes out a knife. As he pulls back his arm to stab, Michael thrusts a bayonet into his side.

Michael watches the Russian grasp his side, then look at Michael in fear and horror. Michael still holding his rifle, the bayonet still in the man.

Freddie freaks out and screams, pushing the Russian off him, and scrambling away.

Michael watches the Russian die and tries to pull out the bayonet, but it's stuck.

He tries again, this time it comes out. He looks at Freddie, a moment between them as though time stands still.



A bullet pings into the wall behind them and Freddie grabs

MI CHAEL

Yeah.

FREDDIE

I would have done... If it hadn't  
been for you.

Michael looks at Freddie and Freddie studies him,  
understanding...

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

He would have killed you too.

Michael nods.

CUT TO:

16

EXT. NO MAN'S LAND. EARLY WINTER. DAY 2.

16

Soldiers climbing out of their shell holes. The land between

Without a word, Lucas walks across and lifts the legs of the British soldier. He and Thomas manage to free the soldier from the mud and carry him to the British side, watched by other soldiers, at first incredulous at the sight, but then slowly both sides merge to collect the wounded, irrespective of their nationality.

A German medic tends a British wounded soldier.

Thomas and Lucas pick up another wounded soldier, German this time, and they walk back to the German line.

Thomas with young German soldiers around him now, some crying, others injured and being tended to. Thomas clearly affected by his proximity to the German soldiers.

CUT TO:

18

EXT. OPEN FIELDS. EARLY WINTER. DAY 2.

18

Later. Soldiers from both sides making their way back to their own lines.

RUDI  
Look at what the Russians have done  
you mean?

A beat.

MICHAEL  
It's all of us Rudi...

A beat, he looks across the barren landscape, smoke in the distance, the boom of guns from somewhere in the distance...

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Look what's happened.  
The whole world is at war.

CUT TO:

20 EXT. BRITISH FRONT LINE. EARLY WINTER. DAY 2. 20

Thomas has found a secluded shell hole, his open back pack on his lap, he sits holding his book of birds.

Thomas, breathing heavily and eyes streaming from the gas, struggling to hold on to his emotions, but loses the battle, he now sobs uncontrollably, like a child, his heart breaking, still holding his bird encyclopedia.

Hold.

In the distance the guns begin to rumble again.

Take his POV, blurred, noisy, disoriented, he vomits, then when he stops retching, he slowly closes his eyes and slumps to one side.

FADE TO BLACK:

21 INT. LITTLE CURIE TRUCK. EARLY WINTER. DAY 3. 21



RUDI (CONT'D)

People who the day before were  
telling you about their home and  
their family, about a book they  
liked or a food they were going to  
eat when they got home...  
Then they're dead.

(beat)

It's hard not to hate the people  
that did that.

MICHAEL

Do you think they hate us?

RUDI

(grins)

You maybe.

A beat, Michael still troubled, he glances at Katie's  
photograph.

RUDI (CONT'D)

Have you been writing home?

MICHAEL

When I can.

RUDI

After a year it's hard to say  
anything new, well it is if you  
leave out the mud, rats, shells and  
dead people.

MICHAEL

You need a system.

(beat)

When you write to your parents,  
tell them you're bored, that  
there's nothing to do, that you're  
safe, that you have lots of food  
and clean blankets so they don't  
worry...

(beat)

Then to your girlfriend...

(beat)

If you ever get one.

(beat)

Tell her that you're fighting the  
French and British single handed.

RUDI

You don't mind lying to your  
parents?

MICHAEL

You think I should tell them that  
I'm cold, wet and covered in lice?  
That there's no food?

(MORE)

That the only time I'm warm is when  
I'm so terrified I wet myself on  
the fire step?

(beat, wry smile)

No.

(beat)

I tell them I'm proud to be  
fighting for my country.

A breathless Freddie enters the Ruins still holding the slip  
of paper.

FREDDIE

We're getting leave!

MICHAEL

When?

FREDDIE

Soon! We're being moved and they're  
giving us four days leave before we  
go.

There's a huge explosion and the bombardment continues with  
renewed vigour.

RUDI

But the good news is, your lungs  
look clear... There's some damage,  
but it won't kill you...

THOMAS

Someone helped me... Dragged me  
from the worst of it.

JOANNA

Then I dare say you owe him your  
life... You should thank him.

Take Thomas' reaction.



Susan smiles. Relieved.

CUT TO:

26 EXT. VILLAGE GREEN. EARLY WINTER. DAY 4. 26

Katie with a letter, sitting with two girlfriends on the wall.

KATIE

There's a lot of fighting, he's so  
brave...

(beat, she reads more,  
then looks up excited)

He's got leave! He's coming home!

CUT TO:

27 EXT. ROAD, EASTERN FRONT. EARLY WINTER. DAY 4. 27

THOMAS  
I need to find my friends, the rest  
of my division. . I had a walk  
round, couldn't see anyone. . .

JOANNA  
That's good news isn't it?  
(of Thomas' look)  
If they were hurt, they'd have been  
brought here.

There's a huge commotion to one side as a horse and cart  
appear to deliver more wounded, medics rush out to attend  
them.

JOANNA (CONT'D)  
Sorry!

Joanna is already running. Thomas watches the chaos as  
Joanna and the medics attend the new intake of wounded.  
He then turns to see the plumes of smoke from the front in  
the far distance.

CUT TO:

29 EXT. COMMUNITY CHURCH. EARLY WINTER. DAY 4.

No-one complains, they say the food  
is all going to the soldiers  
fighting.

MICHAEL

If it is, I haven't seen it!  
Sometimes the bread's so hard, if  
we threw it at the British instead  
of bullets we might cause more

JOANNA

We can only fix bodies.

Thomas watches the young soldier being laid back out on his bed. Joanna passes him some pills from her apron.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

I brought you something - to help you sleep.

Across the CCS, the sedated soldier begins to quieten down, Joanna moves to leave.

THOMAS

Can you stay? Just for a minute?

Joanna glances around the CCS, then sits on the edge of his bed and hands him water to take his pills. Then:

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I always thought my first time in hospital would be falling out of a tree or something, not being gassed and blown up...

JOANNA

It's not really a hospital, it's a CCS.

THOMAS

What's that?

JOANNA

Casualty Clearing station.  
(beat, then leans down,  
sotto)  
Doesn't sound so serious.

JOANNA

The soldiers call them "Little  
Curies"...

(beat)

After my boss, Marie Curie.

(beat)

So I drive the truck, fix it when  
it breaks down and take X-rays...

THOMAS

Where are you from?

JOANNA

A place called Cracow.

A blank look from Thomas.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Austria?

Thomas looks at her - bemused.

THOMAS

I thought we were fighting you.

JOANNA

Oh I'm Polish... We're fighting  
everyone.

Joanna smiles.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Our country was stolen from us a  
long time ago and shared between  
the Austrians, the Germans and the  
Russians...

(beat)

We're not even called Poland any  
more.

And now there's a war, we're on  
different sides, they make us fight  
against each other.

Poland against Poland.

THOMAS

THOMAS  
It's funny to think of someone  
actually wanting all this to  
happen.

JOANNA  
My Father says if you don't want  
war, don't give people a cause they  
are willing to die for.  
(beat)  
How's your chest now?

THOMAS  
Better, I'm not coughing as much.

JOANNA  
You were very lucky.

THOMAS  
I know...

Joanna looks up as the regular medic walks around the beds.

JOANNA  
I must go. And you should get some  
sleep.

THOMAS  
I'd rather talk to you.

JOANNA  
I'll be moving on in a few days, so  
I have an engine that needs oil and  
water...

THOMAS  
Will I see you tomorrow?

Joanna nods, then walks away.

CUT TO:

32 INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE. EARLY WINTER. NIGHT 4. 32

Michael at the sink, he washes his plate and puts it on the  
drainer.

Susan beside him - William, Katie and Sarah at the table.

SUSAN  
It's not that long ago I used to  
have to go and fetch your plates

KATIE  
Come. Let's get some fresh air.

Michael and Katie leave, Susan walks to the table and puts a hand on William's shoulder.

SUSAN  
He seems so much older.

William puts his hand on hers.

WILLIAM  
He's home. That's all that matters.

SUSAN  
And we haven't got enough food to feed him.

WILLIAM  
We'll manage...

CUT TO:

33 EXT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE. EARLY WINTER. NIGHT 4. 33

Michael and Katie together, outside the house. He's pensive, she studies him.

KATIE  
You've been so quiet since you got back, is everything alright?

He turns to look at her.

KATIE (CONT'D)  
Between us?

Michael smiles, strokes her head.

MICHAEL  
Of course...  
(beat)  
It's just strange.  
Being here again.  
That's all.

A moment, Katie watching him.

KATIE  
You can talk to me you know...  
I know you don't want me to worry...

MICHAEL  
There's not much to tell.

KATIE

Liar.

He turns to look at her, not sure how to respond, but realises she needs him to be honest with her.

KATIE (CONT'D)

And that worries me more.  
How bad must it be to make you lie  
to me?

MICHAEL

I don't know how to explain it.  
(beat)  
The words...  
(beat)  
How could you understand? What  
could I compare it to?  
It's...

He falters, Katie holds his hand, helping him to continue.

KATIE

Tell me how you live, where you  
sleep...

A moment.

MICHAEL

We live in trenches. Underground  
most of the time. Like rabbits...

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

...it's noisy and cold... and  
wet... and you spend every second  
wishing you were somewhere else...  
(beat)  
But there's a "nowness" to  
everything... Like you're seeing it  
for the first time, a blade of  
grass in the mud... Colours...  
The sky is amazing.  
You can smell the air.  
Everything is more intense...  
Like your brain's taking it all in,  
knowing that it might be the last  
cloud or the last blade of grass  
you'll ever see...

KATIE

You mustn't say that...

MICHAEL

It's hard not think that way.  
(beat)  
You see... Life.  
(MORE)



MI CHAEL (CONT' D)  
 Disappearing in front of you and as  
 it goes, you realise how precious  
 it was...

(beat)  
 That's why I want us to get  
 married.

KATIE  
 What?

MI CHAEL  
 I haven't got the ring I promised,  
 but will you marry me anyway?

KATIE  
 Now?

MI CHAEL  
 There's no rush.  
 (beat)  
 We've got three days.

A moment between them, excitement, a hint of fear even...

CUT TO:

34 EXT. CHAPEL. EARLY WINTER. DAY 5. 34

Michael and Katie's families look on as Michael and Katie  
 come out of the Chapel, newly married.

CUT TO:

35 EXT. CCS. EARLY WINTER. DAY 5. 35

Thomas waiting outside the Little Curie truck as Joanna comes  
 out. She smiles when she sees him.

CUT TO:

36 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. EARLY WINTER. DAY 5. 36

Michael and Katie in the rolling hills. By the same tree  
 they kissed under, what seems a lifetime ago.

They kiss.

CUT TO:

37 EXT. CCS. EARLY WINTER. DAY 5. 37

Joanna bent down under the bonnet of the car, Thomas standing  
 beside her.

She reaches up to get the spanner resting on the front of the truck where she left it, but Thomas moves it, her hand flailing around looking for it, until she eventually comes out from under the bonnet to look for it. Thomas is holding it with a grin. She smiles and snatches it off him, going back to work.

CUT TO:

38 INT. RUIN NEAR CCS. EARLY WINTER. DUSK 5. 38

With the rumblings of war in the far distance, Thomas and Joanna lay together in a field behind the CCS, they kiss.

The kiss becomes more and their hands start to explore each other's body. This is the first time either of them been intimate, it is faltering, clumsy, apologetic even, but they somehow get to the point where they can make love.

CUT TO:

39 INT. BEDROOM. EARLY WINTER. DUSK 5. 39

Michael's bags packed on the floor of the bedroom. Newlyweds Michael and Katie in bed together. She's asleep, Michael is awake leaning up on one arm, tracing out her features with a single finger.

CUT TO:

40 INT. RUIN NEAR CCS. EARLY WINTER. DUSK 5. 40

A post coital Thomas and Joanna lay down on the floor of the Ruins, both on their sides facing each other, simply studying every detail of each others face as though committing it to memory forever.

He points at a bird which lands on a nearby wall, a blue tit... It stays for a second before flying away.

Joanna pulls up a small but perfect daisy from the ground beside Thomas and hands it to him.

CUT TO:

41 EXT. VILLAGE. EARLY WINTER. DAY 6. 41

Katie, Susan, William and Sarah watch Michael climbing on board a cart with a couple of other soldiers.

He waves at his parents, then shares a look with Katie. She holds up her hand to show him her wedding ring, he does the same with his.

The cart moves away and Michael watches as they grow smaller as he moves away into the distance.

CUT TO:

42 EXT. CCS. EARLY WINTER. DAY 6. 42

Thomas outside the CCS. He's looking out towards the front line. The thunder of an artillery bombardment taking place, plumes of dark smoke spiral upwards. Joanna appears at his side.

JOANNA

You know I could sign one piece of paper and they'd keep you here longer, maybe even send you home.

THOMAS

How can I go home when my mates are still here?

JOANNA

They get men brought here who've held their legs up over the sandbags, so they'll get shot and be sent home.

THOMAS

I know... And I don't blame them for it... But it's not me...

JOANNA

Well then, if you're so determined to go back, you must promise me something.

THOMAS

What?

JOANNA

To keep your head down and stay away from gas.

THOMAS

Promi se.

She leans in to kiss him. Their kiss then interrupted by other soldiers cheering at them from the waiting horse-drawn cart. Thomas grins and runs to get on the cart. Joanna waves, watching him go back towards the front line.

CUT TO:

43 EXT. GERMAN SUPPLY LINE. EARLY WINTER. DAY 6. 43

Michael throwing his kit bag up on to a truck, he's with Rudi, Freddie, Lanzo and Stefan.

RUDI  
You mean she wasn't pregnant?

MI CHAEL  
No!

RUDI  
Then why marry her?

MI CHAEL  
You wouldn't understand, you've got no heart.

FREDDIE  
It's love!

RUDI  
All I'm saying is when the war's over and we all go home as heroes, why limit yourself to one woman?

LANZO  
He might have a point.

MI CHAEL  
One woman is enough for me.  
(to others)  
Do we know where we're going?

FREDDIE  
(shrugs)  
They just said west.

They climb up on to the truck, as it pulls away, Michael looks down at his wedding ring.

CUT TO:

44 EXT. BRITISH SUPPLY LINE. EARLY WINTER. DAY 6. 44

Thomas walks through the supply line, goods and munitions being unloaded. A group of soldiers are on a break, sitting around in a group singing "**Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag...**" Thomas pauses to watch them with a smile, strangely enough it feels good to be back...

CUT TO:

45 INT. BRITISH DUG OUT. EARLY WINTER. DAY 6. 45

Thomas enters the dug out to find Cyril, Anthony, Ben and Kevin on their bunks. They all jump up when they see him.

BEN  
Here he is!

They all greet him.

ANTHONY  
We thought they'd sent you home.

CYRIL  
I told you, he's got nine lives  
this one.

Anthony reacts [he's lost the bet] and puts a chocolate bar into the outstretched hand of a grinning Ben.

THOMAS  
(to Cyril)  
So how's it been?

CYRIL  
The neighbours are a bit noisy, but  
we're all still here.

KEVIN  
So come on then, tell us... Any  
pretty nurses?

THOMAS  
Dozens.

KEVIN  
Didn't bring one back with you I  
suppose?

THOMAS  
Couldn't get her in the bag.

At that moment, there's an explosion and debris falls from the dug out roof and a barrage begins.

Corporal Bond screams into the dug out.

CORPORAL BOND  
Stand to!

46 EXT. TRENCHES. EARLY WINTER. DAY 6. 46

They all scramble to grab their equipment and head out to the fire step, taking up positions.

As the shelling intensifies, Thomas takes out the daisy given to him by Joanna from his tunic pocket and puts it on the trench wall beside him.

FADE OUT.

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