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SCENE LOCKED

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BLACK SCREEN:

GRAPHICS:

FX: JOANNA SCREAMING

FADE IN:

1 INT. THOMAS' HOUSE/BEDROOM. WINTER FOG. DAY 1. 1

Joanna in labour, with midwife and Annie looking on.

MIDWIFE

Come on my lovely, one big push...

Joanna holds Annie's hand tightly, Annie smiles at her.
Joanna screams again as she pushes.

MIDWIFE (CONT'D)

4 EXT. FIELD. WINTER FOG. DAY 1. 4

Thomas sitting in a shell hole with half a dozen other young soldiers, the constant whistling of shells all around them.

CUT TO:

5 INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE. WINTER FOG. DAY 1. 5

Katie sitting at the table with little Sarah, William is skinning a rabbit as Susan enters.

She has a basket - Katie and Susan look up expectantly.

WILLIAM
How was it?

Susan turns away, but William steps in front of her and he pulls her hair aside to show a black eye.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
What happened?

SUSAN
There was hardly any food, people
were fighting

She darts a glance at Sara, pulls her fringe back down, then takes out a small, crumbling loaf, three unappetising looking potatoes and two eggs.

A dejected William looks at Katie and Sarah at the table.

Now SITTING AT THE TABLE IS MICHAEL. He looks old beyond his years, dirty, dishevelled.

CUT TO:

6 EXT. GERMAN TRENCHES. WINTER FOG. DAY 1. 6

A weary Michael sitting in the trench, shells exploding around him.

With dirty hands, he is opening an old letter from Katie. He reads it again, then smells it, just for an instant finding himself home.

He reaches inside the envelope and pulls out a small photograph, his family with Katie...

CUT TO:

7

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE/ROAD. WINTER FOG. DAY 2.

7

Thomas amongst a larger group of soldiers and horses moving across country. Pick up Derek running from the back of the group carrying a letter. He eventually reaches Thomas.

DEREK

ERIC H

There's no food, we're losing
ground every day.

MICHAEL

No-one's fighting for what's here.
We're fighting for what's at home.
(beat)

British soldiers, horses and equipment snaking across the countryside. Thomas walks with Derek.

DEREK

So what's at Mons?

THOMAS

More fields.

DEREK

And more Germans I suppose.

THOMAS

Can't think why else they'd send us.

(beat) 180 189 Tm/TT4.0 1 Tf (More fields.)w2wi g.

THOMAS
You'll be alright.

DEREK
No, I mean it Tommy, I think I'll
go mad.

THOMAS
Just stick with me alright? We'll
go home together.

Derek forces a smile, wanting to believe that more than
anything.

CUT TO:

EXT. GERMAN TRENCHES. WINTER FOG. DAY 3.

Annie looks at Joanna and smiles.

DAVID (CONT'D)

....it will be remembered that President Wilson promised to communicate the German request for an armistice to the Associated Governments, having satisfied himself that the reforms went a certain way. The two courses now open are: for Germany to offer terms or for the Allies to give their own..."

Over this second section, a postman appears and moves towards Annie who listens to the postman and then points at Joanna.

Joanna hands the baby to Annie as she takes a telegram from the postman.

A moment, then Joanna takes the baby back and hands Annie the telegram before going back inside.

David, frowning, notices something's wrong. He hurries through the excited crowd towards Annie, who hands him the telegram.

ANNIE

Her Dad was killed three days ago.

CUT TO:

14 EXT. GERMAN TRENCHES. WINTER FOG. DAY 3. 14

The artillery barrage continues, the whistling of shells and explosions all around the German lines.

Michael trying to fire over the parapet, but is struggling to find a gap in-between the shells to do so.

There's an explosion, men blown back from the parapet, wounded, Michael rushes over to help them, tending wounds.

CUT TO:

15 INT/EXT. SERGEANT'S DUG OUT/ BRITISH TRENCH. WINTER FOG. 15 DAY 3.

Thomas is with Sergeant Bond.

SERGEANT BOND

I'm not sure we'll get any more leave son, not while the top brass think we've got 'em on the run, all we're hearing is push forward.

THOMAS
I've got a baby Sergeant.

SERGEANT BOND
I know... But if this armistice happens, we'll all be home for good soon.

THOMAS
You think it will?

SERGEANT BOND
It'll happen, just don't ask me when.

(beat)
Hopefully before that nipper of yours starts school...

Bond grins, Thomas a bit crestfallen.

SERGEANT BOND (CONT'D)
(beat)
I'll ask. Alright?

Thomas nods, moves to leave then stops.

THOMAS
Sergeant, any chance of moving young Derek back to the supply trenches? He's dead beat.

SERGEANT BOND
Go out there and find me a man who isn't.

CUT TO:

16 EXT. BRITISH TRENCHES. WINTER FOG. DAY 3. 16

Thomas comes out of the dug out, passing a small group firing mortars from the floor of the trench. It's noisy, a heavy gun barrage constantly whistling over their heads.

Thomas sees Derek up on the fire step and joins him. Derek is clearly uncomfortable, leaning into the sandbags on the parapet, his eyes tightly shut.

Thomas looks over at him, concerned. He reaches out and squeezes his shoulder. Derek looks at him, then nods. They'll get through this together.

CUT TO:

17 INT. GERMAN DUG OUT. WINTER FOG. DAY 3. 17

Michael and half a dozen other German soldiers stopping to eat, they look down at their meagre rations.

A moment before Erich enters.

ERICH
All the officers have been called
back to the command tent.

MICHAEL
You think this is it?

ERICH
(shrugs)
Something's happening.

They all sit in silence.

CUT TO:

18 INT. CORRIDOR. WINTER FOG. DAY 3. 18

High ranking British Army officers and politicians huddled in a group, deep in discussion.

Then hand a document to a waiting private, who runs along the corridor.

CUT TO:

19 INT. CORRIDOR. WINTER FOG. DAY 3. 19

Two high ranking German officers, pacing outside large doors. The doors open and a General comes out, subdued, fearful. They exchange a look, no need for words, it's not good news.

CUT TO:

20 INT. BRITISH DUG OUT. WINTER FOG. NIGHT 3. 20

Thomas on his bunk flicking through his bird encyclopedia. A moment, before Derek comes and sits beside him.

DEREK
Wasn't much use today, was I?

THOMAS
We've marched miles in the past few weeks, you're just tired that's all. We all are...
But you're doing brilliantly...
Head down, push on 'til the job's done, remember?

DEREK
I'll try Tommy.
(beat)

He looks down at Thomas' book.

DEREK (CONT'D)
Why you always reading that?

THOMAS
(beat)
Reminds me of home I suppose. It's
the first book I ever got, must
have been about six...

He shows Derek the markings he's made, and sketches in the back.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
I mark off the ones I've seen.
Sketch them sometimes too.
I don't think people realise how
beautiful birds are...
(beat)
It's funny when you see them out
here, they even land on the barbed
wire sometimes...
Something so beautiful, right in
the middle of something so ugly...

A beat.

DEREK
You think it's right what
everyone's saying?
That the fighting will stop soon?

THOMAS
We'll see.

Derek smiles and walks away to his own bunk. Thomas
carefully puts away his bird encyclopedia.

Derek sitting on his bunk, thoughtful:

DEREK
S' funny innit? In a hundred years
from now, none of us will be
here...

He lays down.

DEREK (CONT'D)
All this, will be ancient

21

EXT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE. WINTER FOG. NIGHT 3.

21

Katie sits alone on the hillside, looking up at the stars and thinking of Michael.

CUT TO:

Why not? SUSAN
Don't they have children?

William holds her.

CUT TO:

THOMAS

I heard.

DEREK

So that's it then?

THOMAS

Well they haven't told us to start packing up to go home yet.

DEREK

They will though won't they?
I mean if the Kaiser's gone...
That's good isn't it?

Thomas looks into Derek's very excited face, loathe to disappoint him.

THOMAS

Yeah, it's good. Won't be long now.

Derek beams as a shell whistles overhead and an explosion nearby.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

(grins)

All we need now is for someone to tell that lot!

Everyone scurries to get on their helmets and gear, putting their stuff away.

Now more explosions as shells burst above and around the trenches.

CUT TO:

26 EXT. GERMAN TRENCHES. WINTER FOG. DAY 4. 26

Michael and Erich on the fire step, firing across no-man's-land.

There's an explosion and Michael is hit by some shrapnel, he holds the side of his head, Erich concerned.

Blood on Michael's hand as he pulls it away from his face, which is bleeding a little.

MICHAEL

I'm alright.

Erich nods and the two men go back up to the fire step to continue firing.

CUT TO:

- 27 INT. CORRIDOR. WINTER FOG. DAY 4. 27
German boots striding along a corridor, a sense of purpose.
CUT TO:
- 28 EXT. BRITISH TRENCHES. WINTER FOG. DAY 4. 28
Thomas, Derek and the others on the fire step, firing back
across no-man's-land.
The fighting is hard, dirty. Noisy.
CUT TO:
- 29 INT. CORRIDOR. WINTER FOG. DAY 4. 29
Four high ranking Allied officers gathered in a huddle.
Conspiratorial.
CUT TO:
- 30 EXT. MONS BATTLEFIELD. WINTER FOG. DAY 4. 30
Establishing.
Barren landscape, barbed wire, artillery shells landing,
smoke and chaos.
A shell lands in no mans land and rips a section of the
barbed wire.
CUT TO:
- 31 EXT. BRITISH TRENCHES. WINTER FOG. DAY 4. 31
Derek on the fire step, anxious, head down, the noise
deafening him, the explosions sapping his courage.
Thomas putting a hand on his shoulder, comforting him.
Derek gritting his teeth, buoyed by Michael's support.
CUT TO:
- 32 INT. CORRIDOR. WINTER FOG. DAY 4. 32
British men in suits, politicians gathered in a huddle,
debating.
CUT TO:

33 INT. BRITISH DUG OUT. WINTER FOG. NIGHT 4. 33
 Thomas laying in his bunk. Staring into space, lost in his own thoughts.

CUT TO:

34 _____ 34
 FOR THE FIRST TIME WE RISE UP AND SEE THE FULL SCALE OF THE WAR: -

A twenty mile front, sixty thousand men, dead or injured, the landscape scorched

Somewhere in the near distance the sound of a young boy sobbing, his heart breaking... The boy has no physical presence, it's impossible to pick him out from the thousands of injured and dying, his sobbing just becoming the soundtrack to the image.

From a different perspective, but exactly the same image. Fields strewn with tens of thousands dead, dying or injured. British, French and German boys.

The young boy sobbing can still be heard, but it's more distant now.

We pan up, looking down all the while at the battlefield, littered with crushed and broken bodies, the full horror of the first day of the Somme..

CUT TO:

35 INT. GERMAN DUG OUT. WINTER FOG. NIGHT 4. 35
 Michael sits bolt upright from his nightmare, tears streaming from his eyes, breathing heavily.

It takes a few seconds for him to regain his composure. He looks around the dug out, sees everyone else asleep on their bunks, realising it was a nightmare...

He lays back down, turns and sees the photograph of Katie with his family on the wall.

He takes it down and holds it... the only comfort he can find..

CUT TO:

36 INT. CORRIDOR. NIGHT 4. 36
Men in suits reading a document, one of them with a pen making changes.
CUT TO:

37 INT. CORRIDOR. NIGHT 4. 37
Another corridor. Men in suits being given a document by a German soldier, they read it, discuss. An air of acceptance.
CUT TO:

38 INT. CORRIDOR. NIGHT 4. 38
Men in suits, a British soldier strides along with a document and hands it to them. They read it quickly; react. Good news.
CUT TO:

39 EXT. MONS BATTLEFIELD. WINTER FOG. DAY 5. 39
Establishing. Sunrise.
CUT TO:

EXT. BRITISH TRENCHES. WINTER FOG. DAY 5.

DEREK (CONT' D)
Just think, at home...
Everyone going back to work after
the weekend...
Another week starting.

Derek looks up.

DEREK (CONT' D)
It's quiet.
(beat)
They were shelling us this time
yesterday.

THOMAS
(grins)
Maybe they're having a lay in...

Sergeant Bond walks through the trench, giving soldiers a tot
of rum in their mugs as he goes.

He reaches Thomas and Derek.

SERGEANT BOND
Morning lads...

THOMAS
Sergeant.

SERGEANT BOND
Looks like a shell's taken out a
section of the wire... They don't
want to leave it 'til tonight..
(beat, looks at Derek)
Your turn Del, shouldn't be more
than five minutes...

Thomas sees Derek's expression, senses his fear.

THOMAS
S'alright Sergeant, I'll do it...

SERGEANT BOND
(points)
Dead in line with the next elbow,
you should be able to pull it back
together and tie it.

THOMAS

The sergeant nods and moves away.

DEREK
You didn't have to do that, it's my
turn.

THOMAS
You'll only get tangled up in the
wire and I'd have to come and get
you anyway...

DEREK
Thanks Tommy.

Thomas stands and walks along to an old wooden box, he takes
out a small coil of wire and wire cutters.

He climbs up on the fire step.

THOMAS
Give me a shout when dinner's
ready...

And with a smile Thomas gently lifts himself up and over the
parapet.

CUT TO:

41 EXT. NO MANS LAND. WINTER FOG. DAY 5. 41

Thomas slowly crawling along towards the wire.

CUT TO:

42 INT. CORRIDOR. WINTER FOG. DAY 5. 42

Extreme CU of Armistice agreement being signed.

CUT TO:

43 EXT. NO MANS LAND. WINTER FOG. DAY 5. 43

Thomas slowly crawling, getting closer to the wire.

CUT TO:

44 EXT. GERMAN TRENCHES. WINTER FOG. DAY. 5 44

Erich up on the fire step looking out over no mans land with
his rifle, he looks closer, not sure if he saw someone
moving.

CUT TO:

45 INT. CORRIDOR. WINTER FOG. DAY 5. 45
 Extreme CU of Armistice agreement. A counter signature being made.

CUT TO:

46 EXT. NO MANS LAND. WINTER FOG. DAY 5. 46
 Thomas reaches the wire and finds the break.

CUT TO:

47 EXT. BRITISH TRENCHES. WINTER FOG. DAY 5. 47
 Derek is up on the fire step, looking out over no mans land.

CUT TO:

48 EXT. NO MANS LAND. WINTER FOG. DAY 5. 48
 Thomas crawls into position at the break in the wire, then clambers up on to his knees to grab it.

As he does so he finds himself ...

Michael with wire cutters and a coil of wire.

The two young men, both on their knees, feet apart, stare at each other, neither knowing what to do.

Michael looks down at his rifle laying on the ground, Thomas sees this too.

As Michael reaches down, Thomas lurches forward and the two young men begin to fight.

This is not a fight with any prowess from either, if anything it resembles a playground fight, awkward, messy, fumbling and child like. Both fighting more out of fear than valour.

CUT TO:

49 INT. CORRIDOR. DAY 5. 49
 As Allied politicians and high ranking soldiers get news of the signing, they start to shake hands. Quiet jubilation.

CUT TO:

50

EXT. NO MANS LAND. WINTER FOG. DAY 5.

50

Thomas and Michael rolling in the mud, neither gaining the

56 EXT. NO MANS LAND. WINTER FOG. DAY 5. 56

Thomas and Michael fall down together, their bodies becoming strangely entwined, both looking at their wounds.

Both frightened, trying to move but can't, suddenly the years seem to fall away from them and we realise they aren't young men, they are boys...

Frightened boys in a field in Belgium.

CUT TO:

57 EXT. BRITISH TRENCHES. WINTER FOG. DAY 5. 57

A concerned Derek looking out over no mans land, then he hears a commotion.

He turns to see the radio operator excitedly sharing news with soldiers.

There are understated celebrations, more relief than elation, the odd handshake or pat on the back, then they simply sit in silence.

Weary.

Derek looks out to no mans land.

CUT TO:

58 EXT. NO MANS LAND. WINTER FOG. DAY 5. 58

On Thomas - now bleeding from the mouth, he gulps to get some air.

A bird lands on the barbed wire above his head, he looks at it.

THOMAS' POV of the bird, a moment before it flies away, Thomas' vision becomes hazy, disoriented.

CUT TO:

59 EXT. NO MANS LAND. WINTER FOG. DAY 5. 59

On Michael, trying to stay awake, he rolls slightly so that he's looking up at the sky.

CUT TO:

- 60 _____ 60
A young carefree Michael chasing Katie down the hill.
CUT TO:
- 61 EXT. NO MANS LAND. WINTER FOG. DAY 5. 61
Michael struggling to catch a breath. Tears in his eyes.
CUT TO:
- 62 INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE. WINTER FOG. DAY 5. 62
Katie, Susan, William and little Sara around the kitchen table, a family meal. Warmth.
CUT TO:
- 63 EXT. NO MANS LAND. WINTER FOG. DAY 5. 63
On Michael, struggling to stay awake, the sky swirling above him.
CUT TO:
- 64 EXT. NO MANS LAND. WINTER FOG. DAY 5. 64
Thomas turns his head, his vision blurred, as he turns his head he can see a solitary poppy a foot away from him.
CUT TO:
- 65 INT. THOMAS' HOUSE. WINTER FOG. DAY 5. 65
Joanna holding the baby, talking to him. Telling him about his Daddy.
CUT TO:
- 66 _____ 66
Thomas coming out of the town hall in his uniform, fit to burst with pride.
CUT TO:

67

EXT. NO MANS LAND. WINTER FOG. DAY 5.

67

Thomas crying as he dies, he looks across to see Michael, he looks into his eyes and sees the same fear, in that exact moment they become kindred spirits, in a look they know they are no different, they are exactly the same.

Thomas slowly lifts his arm.

His hand reaches out to Michael...

Michael slowly reaches out too...

An understanding...

Neither want to die alone.

Two young grubby hands reaching out to each other...

Their hands entwine, holding on to each other with all the strength they still possess, a look between them...

And Thomas Edwards and Michael Lang both die.

Their two bodies grotesquely entwined.

Then we see Cyril, then Anthony and Ben, then Kevin and Rudi, Lanzo, Freddie and Stefan. All standing in no mans land.

Then Michael and Thomas stand.

The battlefield is surreal, there are more poppies now, more red, more vibrant.

The two young bodies still entwined on the ground...

Cyril takes Thomas' hand.

Rudi takes Michael's...

They all turn and walk away, as we pull back and up, this group of ten young men, become ninety, then hundreds, then thousands, then tens of thousands.

All walking away from us holding hands.

A solitary bell begins to ring... The Passing Bells...

Then the image changes, the light begins to change, the