



RED PLANET PICTURES

The Passing Bells

By
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**Episode Two
SCENE LOCKED**

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BLACK SCREEN: The sound of artillery in the distance, the distant rumblings of war.

GRAPHICS: 1915

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, expressionless.

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

LANZO

I can smell sausages.

STEFAN

This morning it was bacon.

LANZO

You think its 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

Coming off the blasted battlefield. The stillness of dawn. Close on a crowbar hacking open a wooden box; packing straw is pushed aside to reveal a large skull and crossbones hazard symbol on a shell.

PAN UP to find a gas-masked man carefully lifting the shell out of its box.

A voice off shouts: "FIRE!"

CUT TO:

5 EXT. BRITISH FRONT LINE. EARLY WINTER. DAWN 2. 5

British soldiers, all ready and waiting to move behind a wall.

CORPORAL BOND

Masks on!

Everyone fiddling to get masks on, then a second shout.

CORPORAL BOND (CONT'D)

Come on lads!

Huge shouts go up and they all head over the wall and begin running over open fields.

CUT TO:

6 EXT. NO MAN'S LAND. EARLY WINTER. DAY 2. 6

Gas shells releasing gas.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. LOOS OPEN FIELDS. EARLY WINTER. DAY 2. 7

Thomas running. His mask starts to fog up, as a machine gun opens fire somewhere nearby. He's running, but clearly can't see where he's going.

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

The gas cloud suddenly starts to change direction as the wind changes.

CUT TO:

9 EXT. BRITISH TRENCHES. EARLY WINTER. DAY 2. 9

Corporal Bond with binoculars looking at the men in front of him and the gas cloud changing direction.

CORPORAL BOND
(to himself)
Shit!

CUT TO:

10 EXT. NO MAN'S LAND. EARLY WINTER. DAY 2. 10

Thomas, Cyril, Kevin, Anthony and Ben all running, advancing towards the German lines, but with their masks off. Then the gas hits, their eyes start streaming, soldiers fall over, disoriented. British soldiers gassed by their own shells, coughing, crying, vomiting. Chaos. Thomas struggles to put his mask back on.

CUT TO:

11 EXT. RUINS, EASTERN FRONT. EARLY WINTER 2. DAY. 11

A barren landscape, ice on the ground. Cold. The rumbling of big guns. Pick up Michael, Freddie, Rudi, still wearing heavy coats, coming to a halt outside some large ruins.

FREDDIE
When the war's over I'm going to
learn a trade, start my own
business. A tailor maybe...
I'll make the best suits in Berlin.

MICHAEL
And I'll come and buy one.

RUDI
We'll all buy one.

MICHAEL
As long as we get discount.

STEFAN
I've never had a suit, not a real one... I wore one of my Uncles' once... He was a foot taller than me, Mum said I looked like I was hiding in it, not wearing it...

LANZO
I hate suits, they make me itch.
But I'll come if you open next to a cake shop.

FREDDIE
Deal.

RUDI
With a girl assistant... Blonde...
Who has a weakness for a good looking man in a suit.

MICHAEL
That's a bit dangerous, next to a suit shop.

STEFAN
You haven't thought this through have you?

Lanzo slaps the back of Rudi's head as a corporal appears.

CORPORAL
Rifles ready.

The mood swiftly changes as they get their rifles together.

CUT TO:

12 EXT. NO MAN'S LAND. EARLY WINTER. DAY 2. 12

Complete confusion, gas clouds drifting, people stumbling over the dead. Thomas alone, he falls into a shell hole, bodies strewn out around him, he takes off his mask again, his eyes streaming.

FRANK, a man in his forties, jumps in to lay beside him. Thomas breathing heavily catching his breath, terrified. He looks at Thomas' mask and grins.

FRANK
Not much use are they?
(beat)
Cough it up.
(hands him water flask)
Here.

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

It's not safe.

THOMAS

I'm staying here!

FRANK

You got a Dad?

THOMAS

Yes.

FRANK

Well he'd never forgive me if I let
you.

Frank grabs Thomas roughly by the scruff of the neck and drags him out of the shell hole, they run until they're clear of the gas cloud and jump into another shell hole and take cover in a shower of gunfire and exploding shells.

There's another ear splitting burst of fire and a young man is shot ten yards in front of them as he runs for the safety of the shell hole.

Before Thomas can react, Frank has already run to the boy and starts to drag him to safety, but before he can get back, they are both cut down by machine fire.

THOMAS

No!

A sobbing Thomas leans over the rim of the hole and somehow manages to grab Frank and drag him back into the shell hole. Frank is literally shot to pieces.

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 puts 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 Michael's arm.

RUDI

Come on!

Michael and Freddie are swept up and away as the battle continues.

CUT TO:

14

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

14

Thomas in his shell hole beside Frank's body, his breathing is heavy, strained. Eyes streaming. Shouts and sobs from the injured all around him.

Three traumatised young men lay opposite Tommy in the shell hole, simply staring into space.

Thomas closes his eyes.

Then the big guns stop.

A beat, then Thomas is woken, startled by a whistle... He looks around, there's an eerie silence. Thomas and the other boys all look at each other, not knowing what's going on...

A moment before Corporal Bond appears in the shell hole.

CORPORAL BOND

They've parlayed a cease-fire so both sides can tend to the

wounded...

(beat)

Move up!

The Corporal moves on to the next shell hole. Thomas and the others slowly stand to see the others all around them doing the same.

CUT TO:

15

EXT. FIELD, EASTERN FRONT. EARLY WINTER. DAY 2.

15

A weary Michael opens his eyes. Leaning against a wall of the Ruins. The ground littered with bodies in Polish/Russian uniforms. German soldiers tending to injured etc.

Michael opens and closes his fingers... Lost in his own thoughts... A moment, before Freddie sits beside him.

They sit in silence for a moment.

FREDDIE

I thought we'd had it...

MICHAEL

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
the two sides is littered with dead and injured from both
sides.

Then slowly, the Germans start to appear from their positions
too, equally horrified at what they see.

On Thomas as he takes in the horror of it all, tears welling
up in his eyes.

GO TO:

The Germans as they look out over the injured and corpses at
the British now facing them.

Both armies standing in silence, facing each other across a
sea of bodies.

CUT TO:

17

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

17

A priest walks through the British dead collecting ID tags
and wallets etc. Medics tending the wounded.

Soldiers from both sides start to ferry the wounded from
where they lay and carry them back towards their own lines.

Thomas finds himself alone in the midst of the dead, still,
struggling to breathe, eyes streaming, almost robot-like he
grabs the shoulders of one of the wounded, but then realises
he's alone; he tries to pull the barely conscious soldier out
of the mud whilst fighting back tears, frustrated at his
weakness.

He stops. Beaten. He looks up to see a young German
soldier a few feet away, their eyes meet. LUCAS.

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.

Silence.

Thomas looks out across no mans land and catches the eye of Lucas who helped him.

Both armies look on each other, then there's a whistle and they all slowly turn away to return to their positions.

CUT TO:

19 INT/EXT. RUINS. EARLY WINTER. DAY 2. 19

Soldiers resting, gathered around fires, feeding horses etc. Lines of Polish/Russian prisoners being led away.

Michael, Lanzo, Stefan, Rudi and Freddie looking out over the scorched landscape.

MICHAEL

My father used to talk about this place... He came here as a boy... Gorlice and Tarnow... He went hiking in the hills, fished in the Dunajec... He said it was the most beautiful place on earth.

Take their POV of the barren landscape.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Look what we've done to it.

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

JOANNA (O.S.)

Thomas...? Can you hear me...?

FADE IN:

Eyes focus and slowly open to reveal **JOANNA**, a young medical assistant in her late teens; she is standing over Thomas.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Do you know where you are?

(beat)

You've been hurt. Do you remember?

He loses focus again.

JOANNA (CONT'D)
 Thomas. Try and stay with me...

FADE TO BLACK.

22 EXT. RUINS. EARLY WINTER. DAY 3. 22

A solitary figure running along the ruined building. It is Freddie, holding a slip of paper in his hand.

A shell explodes nearby.

CUT TO:

23 EXT. RUINS. EARLY WINTER. DAY 3. 23

Michael, Rudi and Stefan resting on the ground. Michael has a blanket around his shoulders. He is holding a photograph of Katie. The shelling stops. Rudi looks up.

RUDI

You think they've run out of shells?

MICHAEL

Maybe.

RUDI

The new kids that got here yesterday, said that at Christmas... On the western front... Some of the British came out of their trenches to play football...

MICHAEL

Do you believe it?

Rudi shrugs.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Not much of a war if we don't hate each other.

RUDI

I don't think I did when we got here... When it started, I just thought of them as hats on sticks... like a game at the fairground.

(beat)

But then when you see people actually die.

(MORE)

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)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

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

Look like they haven't run out of
shells!

CUT TO:

24 EXT/ INT. LITTLE CURIE TRUCK. EARLY WINTER. DAY 3. 24

Thomas slowly opens his eyes and looks around him. He's inside a "Little Curie" X-Ray truck; Joanna peers over the FEMALE RADIOGRAPHER's shoulder at an X-ray. Joanna turns to see him waking.

JOANNA

Welcome back.

THOMAS

Where am I?

JOANNA

Belgium.

THOMAS

Still?

Joanna smiles. Thomas looks around at his surroundings - confused.

JOANNA

Aside from all your other injuries,
you inhaled a good deal of gas.

(MORE)

JOANNA (CONT'D)

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.

THOMAS

I wish I could.

Joanna realises.

JOANNA

Sorry, I wasn't thinking...

THOMAS

Was anyone else hurt? My
friends...

JOANNA

I'll ask...

(beat)

Now let me see if they can find you
a bed.

Joanna leaves the truck, Thomas looks around at the
equipment.

CUT TO:

25

INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE. EARLY WINTER. DAY 4.

25

Susan, William and Sarah sit at the kitchen table - eating a
more meagre breakfast. William reading a letter, Susan
eagerly looking on.

WILLIAM

(reads)

...I have met some very good
friends and we have all made a pact
to look out for each other...

SUSAN

It's good that he has friends.

WILLIAM

(reads)

Mostly we are bored, but we are
safe and have lots of food and
clean blankets so don't worry.

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

Michael, Rudi, Freddie, Lanzo and Stefan climbing up into a horse drawn cart.

The cart pulls away and Michael looks back at the plumes of smoke as Gorlice recedes into the distance...

CUT TO:

28 EXT. CCS. EARLY WINTER. DAY 4. 28

Thomas sits on a low wall outside, wrapped in a coarse blanket, sketching a bird on his pad. The rumblings of war in the distance. He coughs, not as violently as before.

The distinctive "Little Curie" truck is parked outside the CCS, soldiers being examined. A moment before Joanna comes out for a break; she sees Thomas and walks across to join him.

JOANNA

How's your chest?

THOMAS

Sore.

JOANNA

It will be for a while yet, all the coughing and retching... It will ease.

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.

29

Michael sits on the back of a horse and cart as it stops
outside the Church hall. He climbs down, grabbing his kit
bag and thanking the driver. As the cart pulls away again he
looks around him at what was his home.

The village looks very different to when he left it. No
euphoria now, the people look tired. A long queue snakes
away from the baker's shop - the window is now empty - as
people queue for food. The recruitment posters look old,
tatty, from another time.

He then sees Katie running towards him, he lifts her off her
feet in an embrace and they kiss.

KATIE

Your Mum said I could come and meet
you, if I promised to take you
straight home.

She links his arm and they start to walk away, passing a
middle-aged woman, clutching half a loaf of black bread.

MICHAEL

Everyone seems older. Weary...

KATIE

People are struggling, things are
hard to get hold of.
(MORE)

KATIE (CONT'D)

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
damage.

CUT TO:

30

EXT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE. EARLY WINTER. LATE AFTERNOON, DAY 4 30

Susan and William watch as turnips and swedes from their farm are loaded on to a flat bed army cart before being driven away by a soldier. Susan and William exchange a concerned look.

The crop cart passes Michael and Katie walking towards his house arm in arm; Sarah sees them first, she shouts.

SARAH

Mummy!

Susan and William see Michael and they all run to greet him.

Susan is clearly shocked by Michael's appearance, he seems weary, older than his years, she glances at William, but he strides forward to take Michael's bag.

Susan steps forward now to embrace him tightly, Katie looking on.

SUSAN

Thank God...

CUT TO:

31

INT. CCS. EARLY WINTER. NIGHT 4.

31

Thomas back in bed: everything's much quieter, no rumbling in the distance, the odd groan or shout from the injured. Then a commotion, one of the young soldiers is screaming and hiding under his bed, male medics pull him out and hold him while he's medicated.

Thomas notices Joanna walking through the hospital - the only women in a world of male army medical staff and patients.

As the young soldier is sedated, she arrives at Thomas' bed.

THOMAS

Will he be alright?

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.

THOMAS
How long will I be here?

JOANNA
That's up to the Medical Officer,
I've finished with you.

THOMAS
I thought...

JOANNA
I just do X-rays.
My hospital is very small and parked outside.

She hands water to Thomas

THOMAS
The truck...

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.

Pole against Pole.

THOMAS

That's terrible.

JOANNA

My Father and brother are fighting
with the French.

(beat)

They say this is the war we've been
waiting for... The one that will
give us back our homeland.

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

Its not that long ago I used to
have to go and fetch your plates
from under your bed...
Now look at you, washing them
yourself...

Michael smiles. Katie joins them and holds his hand.

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)

MICHAEL (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?

MICHAEL

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

KATIE

Now?

MICHAEL

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

Promise.

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?

MICHAEL

No!

RUDI

Then why marry her?

MICHAEL

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.

MICHAEL

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.

END OF EPISODE 2