



RED PLANET PICTURES

The Passing Bells

By
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Episode One
SCENE LOCKED

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BLACK SCREEN: BANG! A GUNSHOT!

FADE IN

1 EXT. COUNTRY. LATE SUMMER. DAY 1. 1

A brilliant summer's day. The bluest of skies. A young man, **MICHAEL** (18) is laying in a small flattened circle in the centre of a corn field... laying beside him is **KATIE** (17), they are snogging and petting, though its all a bit fumbled, inexperienced. As Michael's hand moves up Katie's leg and under her summer dress, she grabs him by the wrist. He tries to ignore the fact she's holding his wrist and carry on, but her knuckles whiten as her grip tightens.

KATIE

No!

MICHAEL

Just a little bit...

KATIE

No!

She pushes his hand away and sits up, Michael sits up beside her.

KATIE (CONT'D)

It doesn't feel right.

MICHAEL

(grins)

Does to me.

KATIE

Mum said I should wait until I'm eighteen before I do any funny business.

MICHAEL

That's a whole year. I'll explode!

KATIE

No you won't.

I know there's things boys do.

Katie stands and walks away, Michael follows her.

CUT TO:

2 EXT. FIELDS. LATE SUMMER. LATE AFTERNOON, DAY 1. 2

Michael and Katie running... The sun blazes down on them as he feigns hiding behind a tree, she grabs his sleeve, pulls him towards her.

A moment between them, unspoken, beautiful, innocent eyes, full of love and wonder... They kiss. The kiss becomes more frenzied, this time they won't be able to stop, this time Katie wants him too...

HELEN (O.S.)

Katie!

She breaks away and runs towards the voice.

KATIE

Coming!

Michael watches her go and sighs... Thwarted again.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. KATIE'S HOME. LATE SUMMER. LATE AFTERNOON, DAY 1. 3

A stone-built farmhouse at the bottom of the valley.

Katie's Father **PETER** is in the yard, fixing an old barrow, her Mother **HELEN** watching as Katie joins them, Michael following on behind. Helen looks at Michael as he joins Katie.

HELEN

Michael.

MICHAEL

Mrs Fisher.

HELEN

I think it's time you went home,
Katie has chores.

Michael nods and turns to Katie.

MICHAEL

Bye.

KATIE

(self conscious)

Bye.

Michael turns and walks away, nodding to Katie's Father as he goes. Katie smiles as she watches him walk away.

CUT TO:

4 INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE. LATE SUMMER. DAY 1. 4

A farmhouse kitchen, cluttered and functional. Michael enters the kitchen and takes off his shoes at the door.

His Mother **SUSAN** is preparing a large supper. In from the farm and already at the table are his Father **WILLIAM**, who is bent over a newspaper and Michael's five year old sister **SARAH**.

WILLIAM
 (reading newspaper)
 Austria-Hungary have accused the Serbs of murder. They issued them with an ultimatum at six o'clock last night with the full backing of Berlin.

SUSAN
 (to Michael)
 Wash your hands.

Michael heads to the bowl of water nearby and washes his hands. Over this:

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
 (reads)
48 hours to arrest the people behind the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand and deliver them up or face the consequences. They've also got to publicly condemn all propaganda against the Austro-Hungarian people... and remove the same from all Serbian schoolbooks and public documents.

SUSAN
 Can they do that?

Susan puts a plentiful supper on the table, Michael sits down, ruffles his little sister's hair and digs in.

WILLIAM
 Doesn't really matter what they can or can't do... The point is they want the Serbs to kiss their arses.

SUSAN
 William!

WILLIAM
 They'll hear worse, if it turns to war.

Susan brings a plate of cheese and cured meats and sits down, taking William's newspaper off him and casting it aside.

MICHAEL
 Will we have to fight?

SUSAN

There won't be a war. Now eat your food.

WILLIAM

It's no use lying to the boy.

SUSAN

You've only got one good leg and he's too young, so there will be no more talk of anyone going anywhere to fight.

MICHAEL

I'm not scared.

SUSAN

Well you should be!

WILLIAM

If it comes to it, we'll have to defend ourselves.

SUSAN

If there's a war, then we'll stay on the farm and grow food to feed the army, but I will not send them my children.

(beat)

Michael, move your sister's plate a little closer for me...

Michael glances at his Father who raises his eyebrows in a male bonding expression... Michael then pushes Sarah's full plate closer to her.

Susan eats her food and looks at them both, they eat...

CUT TO:

5 EXT. STREET. LATE SUMMER. LATE AFTERNOON, DAY 1. 5

THOMAS [17, fresh faced, a happy soul, the glass is always half full] is riding a grocery delivery bicycle groaning with food with some gusto in a quite well-to-do street.

CUT TO:

6 EXT. STREET. LATE SUMMER. LATE AFTERNOON, DAY 1. 6

Thomas at the side of a large house, making a delivery to a cheery elderly woman in a cook's uniform, who puts a coin into his hand.

Thomas nods his thanks then moves to get back on his bicycle, as he does so, two young girls walk past across the street.

A well dressed young man passes them, raising his hat, they nod politely, then chatter excitedly once he's passed.

Thomas suddenly feels very childish, self conscious in his tatty clothes and holding his bicycle. He steps on to his bicycle and pedals away.

CUT TO:

7 INT. THOMAS' HOUSE. LATE SUMMER. NIGHT 1. 7

Thomas enters his bedroom and reaches up to a small hand made shelf above his bed, on which are three equally tatty books: an old world atlas, a book about gardening and an encyclopedia about birds. Beside them is an old battered tin which he takes down. He opens the lid and reaches in his pocket to take out the farthing given to him by the cook and he puts it the tin with two other farthings.

CUT TO:

8 INT. THOMAS' HOUSE. LATE SUMMER. NIGHT 1. 8

DAVID and **ANNIE**, a couple in their early forties, sit around with their three children, **THOMAS** (17), **JOHN**(12) and **FAITH** (7). David is reading from a newspaper.

DAVID

"...in Berlin, Kaiser Wilhelm has already pledged his support to Austria-Hungary..

(beat)

The government will make an announcement later today".

David and Annie exchange a look of concern. Thomas sees that look.

CUT TO:

9 EXT. BACK YARD. LATE SUMMER. NIGHT 1. 9

Thomas' Father David fixing a puncture on his bicycle in the back yard, Thomas sits with him. He watches his Father, waiting for his moment.

THOMAS

D'you think there'll be a war Dad?

DAVID

Looks like things are moving that way.

THOMAS

But it's not us, is it?
I mean it's Austria and Germany and
that, but not us... And they're
miles away. Over the channel.
They can't get to us can they?

DAVID

Well all these countries have
agreements with each other, to help
out if the other one's in
trouble...

(beat)

And if Germany go to war with
France then they'll have to invade
the country in-between them.
A place called Belgium.
They're our allies...

(beat)

So we'd have to go and help.

THOMAS

But the Germans... They won't do
that will they? Not if they know
we'd help them?

DAVID

I don't know son.

THOMAS

If they did. Would you go and
fight?

DAVID

(grins)

I'll go if they ask me and I can
cheat me way through the medical.

THOMAS

Wouldn't you be scared?

A moment, David thoughtful, looking at Thomas' open-eyed face
looking back at him, hungry for an answer...

DAVID

You remember Empire Day?

(beat)

Everyone out in the street, up 'til
midnight... singing and dancing...

THOMAS

Yes.

DAVID

Well that's about something.
About who we are.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

It's about us doing our bit for
King and country. For the Empire.
Scared or not.

THOMAS

I'd go too.

DAVID

I know you would son.

(beat)

But it won't come to that.
If there is a war, it won't last a
month.

CUT TO:

10 INT. THOMAS' BEDROOM. LATE SUMMER. NIGHT 1 10

Thomas in his pyjamas, using an old torch, goes to his makeshift bookshelf and grabs the old battered atlas from beside his bird encyclopedia... He lifts the old atlas onto his bed, opens it up and scours the pages, until he finds Europe.

With his finger he traces the outlines of Belgium, then Germany and Austria-Hungary, then France....

11 EXT. VILLAGE. LATE SUMMER. DAY 2. 11

Favour Michael as he and Katie sit on a low wall. A cloth opened between them, cakes inside. Katie in shop uniform.

MICHAEL

What if I get killed? You can't
let me die before we've done it.

KATIE

It was in the newspaper this
morning, that anyone who signs up
to fight now, won't see any
action...
The war will be over by the time
they've finished training.

MICHAEL

What if the training kills me?

Katie grins.

KATIE

You're definitely signing up then?

MICHAEL

Do you want me to?

KATIE

Course I do. Everyone else's
boyfriend is going.

MICHAEL

Oh... So you just don't want to be
stuck with the coward?

KATIE

I didn't say that.

MICHAEL

No, you're right... The two worst
things in a boyfriend.
Being a coward and a virgin.

She laughs. Then leans over and kisses him.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(beat)

I was thinking....
If.... When I sign up, I'll get
wages, proper wages... More than I
get from working on the farm
anyway...

(beat)

So I thought, if you wanted...
I could buy a ring?

KATIE

An engagement ring?

Michael grins as the Church hall clock chimes.

KATIE (CONT'D)

I'm late!

She jumps down off the wall, pecks him on the cheek and
scurries away towards the bakers shop.

MICHAEL

(after her)

You didn't answer me!

She stops and looks back. A beat, she smiles and nods.
Then turns and runs into the bakers shop. Michael watching
her, he beams...

CUT TO:

12

EXT. THOMAS' HOUSE. LATE SUMMER. DAY 2

12

Thomas, riding his bike back to his house, notices a crowd of
people clustered outside his front door.

Finds his Mother and siblings amongst the crowd listening to
his father David read the newspaper to those gathered.

DAVID

(reads)

"...his Majesty's Government declared to the German Government that a state of war exists between Great Britain and Germany as from 11 p.m on August 4, 1914".

Thomas watches the reaction of the adults around him.

CUT TO:

13 INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE. LATE SUMMER. EARLY EVENING, DAY 13

A contrite Michael sits on a couch, his Father on an armchair on the other side of the room, his Mother stands in the centre of the room. Its clear she's been crying.

SUSAN

(to William)

He's too young!

WILLIAM

The army says he's old enough to volunteer.

SUSAN

So we've just handed our job as parents to the army?
We let them decide what's right?
For our son!

WILLIAM

No..

SUSAN

But that's what you've just said.
THEY said he's old enough and so it's alright...

MICHAEL

Why aren't you asking me what I want?

Susan now turns to Michael and snaps at him.

SUSAN

Because I'm the one who puts food in front of you every day!
The one who washes your clothes, makes your bed when you fall out of it and reminds you to brush your teeth every morning.
So no, I'm not asking you!
And do you know why?

(MORE)

SUSAN (CONT'D)
 Because I don't want to hear you
 telling me that you've become a man
 overnight and that you want to join
 the army so you can go and kill
 other men!

MICHAEL
 (stands)
 There's a war, we have to fight.

SUSAN
 Don't be ridiculous, you have no
 idea what you're saying!
 You've had one fight in your entire
 life, you were nine years old and
 you came home crying with a bloody
 nose!

MICHAEL
 (strides out)
 Well don't worry, this time I
 won't!

SUSAN
 Michael! Come back here!

But he's gone, Susan turns to William as he stands.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
 Do something!

But William avoids eye contact, there's nothing he can do.

CUT TO:

14 INT. THOMAS' HOUSE. LATE SUMMER. EARLY MORNING, DAY 3 14

Thomas comes down the stairs, glances back along the hallway
 towards the kitchen, where he can see his Mother Annie
 serving up a generous breakfast to the family. He quietly
 opens the front door, then sees his father's hat and grabs it
 on the way out.

CUT TO:

15 INT. CHURCH HALL. LATE SUMMER. DAY 3 15

A very nervous Michael enters a the church hall full of men,
 he looks very much like a young boy. There are different
 queues at different desks. Michael joins the end of a line
 of men, in front of a middle aged civilian man at an old
 desk.

CUT TO:

16 INT. TOWN HALL. LATE SUMMER. DAY 3 16

Thomas joins one of several queues, all in front of civilian men at desks. He looks at Lord Kitchener's iconic poster on the wall, pointing at him.

CUT TO:

17 INT. CHURCH HALL. LATE SUMMER. DAY 3 17

Michael reaches the middle aged man at the desk.

MIDDLE AGED MAN

Name?

MICHAEL

Michael Lang sir.

The man hands him a sheet of paper. Michael takes the sheet of paper and finds a space amongst all the other young men to fill in his form.

CUT TO:

18 INT. TOWN HALL. LATE SUMMER. DAY 3 18

Thomas in the queue, one more person in front of him already at the desk. He puts on his father's hat, which is too big for him and looks at the man behind the desk.

BLUE SUITED MAN

Name.

THOMAS

Thomas Edwards sir.

Hearing the young voice, the blue suited man looks up and studies Thomas, who raises himself up as much as he can.

BLUE SUITED MAN

Age?

THOMAS

Eighteen sir.

A beat.

BLUE SUITED MAN

Do you mean nineteen?

The man stares at Thomas, who is a little bemused, but eventually cottons on that he needs to be nineteen.

THOMAS

Yes sir?

The blue suited man hands Thomas a sheet of paper.

BLUE SUITED MAN

Over there.

Thomas takes the piece of paper and joins the next line behind **CYRIL**, a nineteen-year-old with huge ears and an even bigger grin. Cyril leans in to Thomas.

CYRIL

You have to be nineteen to go overseas.

THOMAS

Oh.

CYRIL

Not much point signing up and not going anywhere is there?

(offers hand)

Cyril Griffiths.

THOMAS

Thomas Edwards. Tommy.

CYRIL

You can't shorten my name...

Not that it matters, everyone calls me wing nut.

(beat)

No idea why.

Thomas looks at his ears.

CYRIL (CONT'D)

I'm kidding.

Cyril laughs, Thomas relaxes.

CUT TO:

19 INT. CHURCH HALL. LATE SUMMER. DAY 3 19

Michael hands back his sheet of paper, the middle aged man looks at it, then stamps it and hands it back to him, indicating another line. Michael takes his paper and moves to join the next line.

CUT TO:

20 INT. TOWN HALL. LATE SUMMER. DAY 3. 20

Thomas stripped, in a queue to see the medic.

CUT TO:

21 INT. CHURCH HALL. LATE SUMMER. DAY 3. 21
Michael stripped, being examined by the doctor.

CUT TO:

22 INT. TOWN HALL. LATE SUMMER. DAY 3 22
Thomas enters another area with a slip of paper, a man behind a counter stacked with uniforms, a huge pile of boots on one side.

CUT TO:

23 INT. CHURCH HALL. LATE SUMMER. DAY 3. 23
Michael puts on army issue underwear.

CUT TO:

24 INT. TOWN HALL. LATE SUMMER. DAY 3. 24
Thomas stepping out from behind a screen wearing his uniform, looking pleased as punch.

CUT TO:

25 EXT. TOWN HALL. LATE SUMMER. DAY 3. 25
Thomas, Cyril and others step outside the town hall in his uniform, people outside applaud, waving flags.
He notices the two young girls he saw on his bread round earlier, clapping along with everyone else.

CUT TO:

26 EXT. CHURCH HALL. LATE SUMMER. DAY 3. 26
Michael proudly stepping out of the church hall wearing a **GERMAN UNIFORM**. People applaud, he looks very proud.

Around the village, a little more detail is **seen for the first time** now, shop signs are in German, a German, recruitment poster...

Katie comes out of the clearly German bakers now- the window filled with enticing cakes and treats - she turns the sign on the door, it reads: **Geschlossen**.

She runs across the green and pushes her way through the people to see Michael and beams with pride, Michael sees her and puffs out his chest with a grin.

CUT TO:

27 INT. THOMAS' BEDROOM. LATE SUMMER. NIGHT 3. 27

Thomas is folding his uniform neatly, then starts packing the rest of his possessions into a canvas bag. His little brother John and little sister Faith both sit on the bed watching him.

JOHN

Will you have to shoot people?

THOMAS

I suppose. They haven't given me a gun yet.

JOHN

Mum said she was going to the town hall to tell 'em you lied, but Dad wouldn't let her... Said you were old enough to make up your own mind. She keeps crying. Dad's covered in snot, his sleeve's all shiny.

CUT TO:

28 EXT. THOMAS' HOUSE. LATE SUMMER. NIGHT 3. 28

ANNIE is in the back yard having a cigarette. David stands in the back doorway.

DAVID

It'll be all over before he's finished his army training.

ANNIE

Don't, David alright?
Our little boy is going to fight in a war.
Against grown men.
Grown men who will be trying to kill him.

(beat)

So don't think that saying everything will be alright is enough. Because it isn't. Nothing you can say to me will be enough, or make it alright, or make me understand or make me feel any different to the way I do now...

(MORE)

ANNIE (CONT'D)

So just...
Don't.

DAVID

We can't stop him.

ANNIE

Yes we can!

DAVID

For how long Annie? And then what?
He runs away?
He goes over there anyway, only on
his own?
Without knowing his family love
him, that we're waiting for him..?

A moment, Annie stares into space. Then glances up at the light in the bedroom window above her.

DAVID (CONT'D)

This time tomorrow he'll be gone.
And all you'll be able to think
about are the things you'd say to
him if he was here...

(beat)

Well he's here now.

A moment, before David turns away and goes back inside.

OUT on Annie alone.

CUT TO:

29

INT. HAY BARN. LATE SUMMER. NIGHT 3.

29

Michael and Katie have climbed up on top of a huge hay stack in the barn. They are laying down, looking up at the stars through a hole in the roof.

KATIE

It's funny to think that wherever
you go, you'll be able to see the
same stars as me...

(beat)

We'll both be looking at them at
the same time... When I'm looking
at them, I'll know you are too...

A beat, Katie turns to look at him.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Are you frightened?

MICHAEL

No!
 (beat)
 A bit.

Katie starts to stroke his hair.

KATIE

I do love you.

She kisses him, he responds... Then slowly, under the stars, they start to make love... It's awkward, wayward elbows and teeth conspiring to halt proceedings, but they continue...

CUT TO:

30 INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM. LATE SUMMER. NIGHT 3. 30

Susan packing Michael's canvas bag. It's slow and laborious, every item she picks up has a memory attached to it. She sits on the bed and looks around the room, it's a young boy's bedroom which only serves to remind her what she's losing, involuntary tears well up in her eyes.

CUT TO:

31 INT. THOMAS' HOUSE. LATE SUMMER. NIGHT 3. 31

Annie appears in Thomas' bedroom doorway and looks down at him in the bed sleeping, his bird encyclopedia open beside him. She closes it and sits on the edge of his bed and looks around the room: it's a child's room, pictures and charts of birds on the wall.

Then she sees his canvas bag packed on the floor, she opens it to find hastily packed clothes stuffed inside.

CUT TO:

32 INT. THOMAS' BEDROOM. LATE SUMMER. DAY 4. 32

Thomas wakes up to see that his canvas bag has now been moved. He looks at it and sees that it's been repacked. Extra clean clothes and underwear are also folded neatly beside his bird encyclopedia. Along with toothbrush, toothpaste, soap and a towel. He smiles, knowing this represents his Mothers acceptance.

He takes down his old battered tin from the bookshelf and empties out his three farthings, tucking them into his pocket.

CUT TO:

33 EXT. TOWN HALL. LATE SUMMER. DAY 4.

33

Chaos as an old bus waits to transport new recruits. Young men and their families are saying their farewells; Thomas, in uniform, and his family are among them.

Thomas turns and shakes his Dad's hand, but then his Dad hugs him. Thomas then says his good-byes to his siblings John and Faith before looking at his Mum Annie. She can't stop the tears as she embraces him and squeezes him as though she'll never let go, David looking on.

Annie and Thomas part and she looks at him intently.

ANNIE

Whatever you have to do, you come
back to me, do you hear?

Thomas nods. She grabs his arms, looks hard into his eyes.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Promise me.

THOMAS

I promise.

A moment between them and then Thomas picks up his canvas bag and walks to the bus. He looks back and positively beams.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I've never been on a bus before!

Annie laughs through the tears as she watches Thomas climb into the bus.

As the bus pulls away, people cheer and wave small flags as they wave the young men off. Thomas waving.

34 EXT. CHURCH HALL. LATE SUMMER. DAY 4.

34

A slightly less frantic scene as a large horse-drawn cart is waiting outside the church hall to collect a dozen or so new recruits in uniform. Families saying their farewells. Michael stands with his parents and little sister Sarah and Katie. Her parents stand nearby, watching.

Michael embraces his Father, watched by Susan.

WILLIAM

I'm proud of you son.

Michael nods, then stoops down to cuddle Sarah, before straightening up to embrace his Mum.

SUSAN

I've packed you gloves and extra wool socks in case you get cold at night and there's a scarf, I don't know if they'll let you wear it, but maybe if you have it under your tunic..

A moment between them, she half glances at William.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

You don't have to be a hero you know.

Michael nods, then kisses her. He turns to take Katie's hand, he looks at his Mum who nods her approval. They walk to the cart.

MICHAEL

(grins)

At least I won't die a virgin.

KATIE

Ssshhh!

She glances at the parents to make sure they didn't hear, which amuses Michael even more as the driver of the cart rings a bell, the other young men start climbing on.

KATIE (CONT'D)

No! It's too quick!

MICHAEL

Back before you know it.

He picks up his bag.

Everyone there begins handing flowers to the young men about to leave.

Michael and Katie hurriedly kiss and embrace. The bell rings again. Michael moves toward the cart, Katie going with him. He kisses her again and climbs up on to the cart.

The cart prepares to pull away, Katie steps back to join the parents. An elderly woman hands Michael a flower, he takes it with a smile, then stands and throws it to Katie as the cart pulls away. People cheer and wave flags, throwing more flowers..

Katie catches the flower.

William puts a comforting arm around Susan. Katie's parents both hold Katie.

CUT TO:

35 EXT. CARTETON ARMY TRAINING CAMP. LATE SUMMER. DAY 4 35

A slightly bewildered Thomas gets off the bus with all the other young men, none of them quite knowing what to do or where to go. Until a Sergeant-Major **HORACE GREEN** appears. His voice booms above the excited chatter and demands instant silence.

SGT-MAJOR GREEN
Buses 1 to 3, barracks seven and
eight. 4-6, tents row A to D.

Thomas turns to see Cyril bounding up to him with a huge grin.

CYRIL
We're together, come on...

They head off towards the tent together.

CUT TO:

36 INT. THOMAS' TENT. LATE SUMMER. DAY 4. 36

A circular tent with twelve low beds made of straw mattresses on slats of wood. Half a dozen young men are already sitting on their bunks unpacking their bags as Thomas and Cyril enter. They look at remaining empty beds.

THOMAS
Anywhere I suppose?

They grab the nearest empty beds. **ANTHONY**, (21, fair hair, lean and intense blue eyes) is shuffling a deck of cards, he looks at Thomas from the next bed.

ANTHONY
(holds out hand)
Anthony... Ant. Where you from?

THOMAS
(shakes hand)
Cardiff. Tommy.

ANTHONY
You play cards?

THOMAS
Not really.

ANTHONY
Don't worry, I'll teach you.

BEN (19, short and stocky) calls over from the next bed.

BEN

Just give him whatever money you've got now, it'll save time.

ANTHONY

That's Ben, he thinks he's funny.

(beat)

How old are you?

THOMAS

Seventeen.

ANTHONY

I've got a little brother your age, Dad had to lock him in his bedroom.

THOMAS

(grins)

I'd have climbed out the window.

ANTHONY

Good man.

He nods at the next bed.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

That's Kev.

KEVIN (20, jet black hair, olive skin).

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Just don't introduce him to your sister.

BEN

Or your Mum.

Thomas points at Cyril.

THOMAS

This is Cyril. People call him wing nut.

CYRIL

Don't know why.

Anthony, Ben and Kevin all look at Thomas, a beat then he grins. All five then laugh.

CUT TO:

37 EXT. HAMMULBERG ARMY TRAINING CAMP/SQUARE. LATE SUMMER. 37 DAY 4.

FELDWEBEL-LEUTNANT BIERMANN (Sergeant-Major), a gruff looking man in his forties, steps forward to address new recruits.

Michael stands with fellow new recruits, **RUDI** (18, clean cut), **FREDDIE** (17, baby faced) **LANZO** (19, overweight) and **STEFAN** (18, scruffy, amiable).

Biermann points.

BIERMANN

Over there, the British army is gathering, they will be working and training hard, you must do the same if you are to beat them.

ON Michael, glances in the direction Biermann is pointing.

CUT TO:

38 EXT. CARTETON ARMY TRAINING CAMP/SQUARE. LATE SUMMER. 38
DAY 4.

Thomas, Cyril and the rest of the tent are now on the square being addressed by Sergeant-Major Green.

SGT-MAJOR GREEN

While you're at Carteton, it's my job to try and kill you. Those of you that survive will be sent to France to fight the boche. The logic being that if I can't kill you then neither can they.

ON Thomas.

CUT TO:

39 EXT. HAMMULBERG ARMY TRAINING CAMP/SQUARE. LATE SUMMER. 39
DAY 4.

Biermann barking orders as Michael and the others are doing exercises on the square.

CUT TO:

40 EXT. CARTETON ARMY TRAINING CAMP. LATE SUMMER. DAY 4. 40

Thomas and others running across country holding wooden sticks for guns. He looks and sees a woodpecker on a nearby tree.

He then laughs as Anthony and Ben pass him, doing "comedy" run - exaggerated arm movements and knees very high. They pass Kevin and slap the back of his head, he chases after them. Thomas grins.

CUT TO:

41 EXT. MICHAEL'S HUT. LATE SUMMER. NIGHT 4. 41

Michael sits on the wooden steps leading up to his hut, Rudi sits nearby polishing his boots, Freddie is smoking while Stefan writes a letter.

Michael looks up at the bright stars above his head. He smiles as he thinks about Katie..

CUT TO:

42 INT. THOMAS' TENT. LATE SUMMER. NIGHT 4. 42

Anthony, Kevin, Ben and Cyril playing cards, they all groan as Anthony gathers up the money and cigarettes.

Thomas reading his book of birds. Some of the illustrations have pencil rings drawn around them. He turns the page to find an illustration of a woodpecker, he takes his pencil and draws a circle around it.

CUT TO:

43 INT. MICHAEL'S HUT. LATE SUMMER. DAWN, DAY 5. 43

Michael and everyone else in the barracks are packing up, getting dressed, sorting out their equipment.

Lanzo packing food into his bag, Stefan nicks a packet of biscuits, starts shoving them in his mouth, they play fight, crumbs everywhere.

MICHAEL

Where do you think we're going?

FREDDIE

They say run, we run, they say pack... We pack.

Michael reaches over and grabs Katie's photograph, then continues packing.

CUT TO:

44 EXT. HAMMULBERG ARMY TRAINING CAMP. LATE SUMMER. DAWN, 44
DAY 5.

Horses and equipment starting to pull out of the camp, Michael with Rudi, Freddie, Lanzo and Stefan, innocents, all shuffling into line to begin their march.

As the order is given for them to move out, they grin, excited, a spring in their step, feeling part of something.

CUT TO:

45 EXT. CARTETON ARMY TRAINING CAMP. LATE SUMMER. DAWN, 45
DAY 5.

Thomas, Cyril, Anthony, Ben and Kevin sit on the back of a truck driving away from the camp.

BEN

We're going. We're actually bloody well going.

ANTHONY

German's won't know what's hit 'em..

KEVIN

Soon as they get a whiff of Wing Nuts socks...

CYRIL

Oi!

Their laughs trail off and they watch in silence as the camp recedes into the distance.

THOMAS

Do you think we'll come back?

The question hangs for a moment, then.

KEVIN

Bloody right we will.

A moment before Ben breaks the pensive silence:

BEN

Does it matter that I don't speak French?

They all laugh now, slapping Ben, horseplay, young men on an adventure. Everyone in the trucks starts to sing "*It's a Long Way to Tipperary*".

Thomas stops the horseplay before the others. He looks back at the camp disappearing behind them.

Thoughtful, not knowing what the future holds, then he starts to sing along...

CUT TO:

46 EXT. YPRES/GERMAN TRENCHES. LATE SUMMER. DAY 6. 46

Establishing - green battlefield.

Michael, Rudi, Freddie, Lanzo and Stefan are among a dozen soldiers being led through a muddy supply trench by a Corporal.

GERMAN CORPORAL

We've had rain, so the ground is wet, we're putting new boards down but try not to stand in it for too long, it will seep through your boots and rot your feet. Keep your guns and ammunition dry at all times. The enemy are less than two hundred feet in front of you, so keep your heads down!

CUT TO:

47 EXT. YPRES/BRITISH TRENCHES. LATE SUMMER. DAY 6. 47

Thomas, Cyril, Kevin, Anthony and Ben are being led through a supply trench by Corporal **KENNY BOND**.

CORPORAL BOND

Welcome to Ypres, or Wipers for them that can't speak French.

Anthony slaps Ben round the back of the head. They pass two soldiers stuffing jam tins with bits of metal.

CYRIL

What are they corporal?

CORPORAL BOND

Ticklers... The Germans have hand grenades, we don't.

(grins)

So we're improvising.

CYRIL

With jam tins?

CORPORAL BOND

Welcome to the war son.

Thomas starts itching.

CORPORAL BOND (CONT'D)
 You're honoured... Looks like the
 lice have found you already...

Thomas still itching.

CORPORAL BOND (CONT'D)
 When you've dropped your packs off,
 get a bit of paraffin from one of
 the lads, rub it on your skin, they
 hate it...

They continue past other soldiers, cleaning rifles and
 equipment.

CORPORAL BOND (CONT'D)
 We're at stand down now, but
 reconnaissance reckons that the
 Germans have just got a bunch of
 reinforcements in, so it looks like
 we'll have a busy day...
 Morning hate will start in five
 minutes.

THOMAS
 What's morning hate?

CORPORAL BOND
 Every morning we hit them with
 artillery, machine gun and rifle
 fire, in fact we throw anything
 over there we can get our hands
 on...
 Hoping that it makes them think
 twice about doing a morning raid...

The Corporal moves away, shouting.

CORPORAL BOND (CONT'D)
 Stand to!

The trench comes to life as soldiers start getting rifles
 ready and moving up to the fire step.

OUT on Thomas.

CUT TO:

48

EXT. BRITISH TRENCH. LATE SUMMER. DAY 6.

48

Thomas, Cyril, Anthony, Ben and Kevin are all now at the fire
 step, heads down, their guns at the ready, nervous but in
 good spirits.

ANTHONY
 I wonder what it's like to get
 shot?

BEN
Yeah well if you find out, let me know...

ANTHONY
Anyone fancy a bet?

THOMAS
What on?

ANTHONY
Who gets shot first.

BEN
He's actually serious.

ANTHONY
Why not?

KEVIN
Be good though wouldn't it?

CYRIL
Yeah right, good idea, let's all get shot.

KEVIN
Just winged a bit, to go home with.
Just a little scar to show the girls...
(indicates his groin)
Right here..

The others laugh, Thomas smiles, though just a hint of shock by the bawdy nature of the conversation... An officer steps out of the dug out and checks his pocket watch. He nods at the Corporal.

CORPORAL
Come on then! Let 'em know we're here!

The British soldiers all lay their rifles over the top and fire! Not really aiming, just firing. Cyril even has his eyes shut tight.

A couple of soldiers light the fuses and throw over "ticklers".

CUT TO:

49

EXT. GERMAN TRENCH. LATE SUMMER. DAY 6.

49

Michael, Rudi, Freddie, Lanzo and Stefan in their trench on as the "ticklers" explode. The bombardment intensifies and they become terrified and disoriented, but are pushed up on to the fire step by corporals and sergeants..

They fire back, but undisciplined, manic.

Favour Michael, he exchanges a look with Freddie - this is a terrifying experience. Freddie ducks his head below the parapet and squeezes his eyes shut.

Michael wants to do the same, but he steels himself, takes a deep breath then raises himself up and starts firing again.

CUT TO:

50 INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE. LATE SUMMER. DAY 6. 50

Susan and William sitting together holding hands

CUT TO:

51 INT. THOMAS' BEDROOM. LATE SUMMER. DAY 6. 51

Annie sits alone on Thomas' bed.

CUT TO:

52 EXT. BRITISH TRENCH. LATE SUMMER. DAY 6. 52

The artillery kicks in, **ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE** as shells whistle above them and huge explosions around them. A soldier is shot and killed beside Thomas, the first time he's seen a dead body, he stares down at it, distraught. The whistle of a shell snaps him out of it and he looks at the others, all fumbling to reload and fire, dust and smoke and the whistling of shells all around them. Thomas catches Cyril's eye, his face filled with fear, they're a long way from the town hall recruiting station...

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE ONE

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