



RED PLANET PICTURES

The Passing Bells

By
Tony Jordan

6th April 2014

Episode Five
SCENE LOCKED

Red Planet Pictures Limited

13 Doolittle Mill

Froghall Road

Amphill

Bedford

MK45 2ND

STRICTLY PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

© Red Planet Pictures Limited 2014

BLACK SCREEN:

GRAPHICS: 1918

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)
Nearly there...

CUT TO:

2 INT. THOMAS' HOUSE. WINTER FOG. DAY 1. 2
David sits with John and Faith. Some dry bread and a tiny
glass of milk each in front of them. All looking at the
ceiling, then each other. Another scream, then silence.
A baby cries.

CUT TO:

3 INT. THOMAS' HOUSE/BEDROOM. WINTER FOG. DAY 1. 3
The midwife is passing the newborn baby to Joanna.

MIDWIFE
It's a boy.

Joanna looks at her new baby adoringly, then up at a beaming
Annie.

STANDING BESIDE ANNIE is Thomas in uniform. But there's no
joy in his face at the birth, he looks old, dirty and tired.

CUT TO:

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

Tommy!

Derek hands him the letter. Tommy rips open the letter watched eagerly by Derek. Tommy reads. A moment, then:

THOMAS

It's a boy!

Thomas takes out a small photograph of a baby.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

They called him Thomas.

Then Thomas shouts to the other soldiers all around him.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

It's a boy!

A huge cheer goes up along the ranks... Thomas beaming, looking at the small photograph of his new born son.

CUT TO:

8 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. WINTER FOG. DAY 2. 8

German soldiers, horses and gun carts preparing to move. Michael helping to load up equipment on one of the carts with **ERICH**.

Erich watches an officer pass, before continuing... Michael listens as he loads the cart, but doesn't really engage.

ERICH

Its not just the food riots at home, there's talk of revolt here too, soldiers laying down their arms... Even the Navy...

Erich studies Michael.

ERICH (CONT'D)

You don't say much.
You like fighting in the same stinking field for four years?

MICHAEL

I go where they send me.

ERICH

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)

I've got a wife, a family.
A house to build, a life to have.
I can't get that until this is
done.

ERICH

You still think we can win?

MICHAEL

I don't think about winning any
more, I just think about staying
alive. Going home.

Michael goes back to loading the cart.

CUT TO:

9

INT. THOMAS' HOUSE. WINTER FOG. DAY 2.

9

Joanna in the chair with the baby, singing a Polish lullaby
as David enters with the newspaper and makes a bee-line for
her.

DAVID

There's an article about Poland.

He sits beside her, lifts newspaper.

DAVID (CONT'D)

(reads)

"....as revolution grows across
Europe and there's talk of an
armistice, some stability was found
as talks began to form a
provisional Polish government..

(beat)

It's hoped that it will take
control of a new People's Republic
of Poland within weeks!

David looks at Joanna and smiles.

JOANNA

Can I keep it? To show my Father?

David hands her the newspaper, she looks at it, then down at
her baby and beams...

CUT TO:

10

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE ROAD. WINTER FOG. DAY 2.

10

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)

We're pushing them back, but they've dug in.

DEREK

Some of the new lads were saying the Germans might have had enough now the Americans have joined us... Bloke from the Irish guards said he heard their Navy had given up as well...

THOMAS

(wry smile)

Don't tell me...

It'll all be over by Christmas.

DEREK

That's what they're saying.

THOMAS

They said it in 1914. And 1915, and 16 and 17...

DEREK

Alright... But what if they're right this time and we can go home?

THOMAS

Then I'll kiss everyone I see from here to Blighty..

Thomas glances at a toothless man beside him.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

(grins)

Maybe not everyone.

DEREK

It has to be over soon, I don't know if I can do much more...

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:

11 EXT. GERMAN TRENCHES. WINTER FOG. DAY 3. 11

Michael, Erich and other German soldiers are laying out barbed wire across a field from a huge coil.

ERICH
Move back, dig in, move back, dig
in... We've done nothing but go
backwards for a month.
(beat)
Why don't we just keep going back?
All the way home?
Throw down our guns and go?

Michael finally snaps.

MICHAEL
Do you think I want to be here?
Do you think any of us want to be
here?
(beat)
But we are.
And I haven't spent four years
watching people I loved die all
around me... to drop my rifle and
run home.

Michael pushes Erich forcibly in the chest and moves away to work on the wire further down. He works with an anger now, a frustration as he uncoils the wire.

A moment before Erich appears to continue working alongside him. A moment, Erich studying Michael.

ERICH
I'm sorry.

Michael still avoids eye contact, Erich grabs the wire to stop Michael working.

ERICH (CONT'D)
 I've watched my friends die too...
 (beat)
 I suppose I can smell the end of
 it... And I'm just as frightened by
 that as I am of fighting.

Michael looks at him now. Understanding.

He hands him the wire cutters and they go back to work.

CUT TO:

12 EXT. BRITISH TRENCHES. WINTER FOG. DAY 3. 12

The sound of heavy guns. Thomas, Derek and others walking through the trench system. Sergeant Kenny Bond at the front.

SERGEANT BOND
 Alright they've dug in two hundred yards ahead and put wire down, so artillery will let them know we're here.

More shells whistle overhead, preceding explosions as Thomas, Derek and others scurry to the front line trench.

A shell hits just above them, four soldiers are blown from the fire step, they lay bleeding on the floor of the trench.

SERGEANT BOND (CONT'D)
 Medics!

Derek freezes, staring down at one of the injured soldiers, but not knowing what to do.

SERGEANT BOND (CONT'D)
 Move yourselves!

As a medic appears to help the soldier, Thomas grabs Derek and they jump up on to the fire step and start to help replace the sandbags blown away.

CUT TO:

13 EXT. THOMAS' HOUSE. WINTER FOG. DAY 3. 13

David stands on his doorstep, reading the newspaper to neighbours gathered around him. Annie beside him, as is Joanna holding the baby.

DAVID
 (reads)
 "...the Allies have asked Germany to state their terms for an armistice..."

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)

But every time a shell goes off I jump out of my skin, my hands are always shaking...

My nerves are shot...

(beat)

I don't want to die.

THOMAS

Just stay close to me, you'll be alright.

A moment, Derek takes a breath.

DEREK

D'you think I'm a coward?

THOMAS

No... Don't ever say that.

A beat, Thomas looks around the dug out at the weary young soldiers on their respective bunks.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

We're all scared, every single one of us...

DEREK

Maybe you're just more used to it than I am...

THOMAS

Every time I leave this dug out, my stomach is churning, my mouth is dry and all I can think about is if this is my last day...

Sometimes my hands are shaking so much, I have to wedge my arm into the sandbags to fire me rifle.

So no. I'm not used to it...

And you know what? I'm glad I'm not...

(beat)

There's nothing wrong with being scared, just means you're human. Being scared will keep you alive.

Derek nods, understanding. Grateful for the comfort.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Get some sleep....

Derek stands.

DEREK

Thanks Tommy.

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)
Its 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
history...
(beat)
Wonder what people will make of it?

Tommy lays down on his bunk - He turns his head to look at the tiny photograph of baby Tommy pinned to the wall.

CUT TO:

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:

22 EXT. GERMAN TRENCHES. WINTER FOG. NIGHT 3. 22
 Michael on sentry duty, looking up at the same stars. He seems old, tired, the fight draining from him...

CUT TO:

23 INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE. WINTER FOG. NIGHT 3. 23
 An excited Susan sits with William.

SUSAN
 I can't believe he's coming home.

WILLIAM
 Nothing's been announced yet.

SUSAN
 The papers say it's over!

WILLIAM
 The fighting doesn't just stop, they have to agree terms. The price may be more than we're willing to pay.

SUSAN
 But we have no choice.

WILLIAM
 Choice or not. They're politicians, it will still take time.

SUSAN
 But they won't keep fighting will they, not while they're talking?

WILLIAM
 Probably.

SUSAN
 But that's stupid. If everyone knows it's over, why let more boys die?

WILLIAM
 That's not how they see it.

SUSAN
Why not? Don't they have children?

William holds her.

CUT TO:

24 INT. THOMAS' HOUSE. WINTER FOG. NIGHT 3. 24

Joanna is putting the baby to sleep in a cot, she tiptoes out to find Annie on the landing. Annie smiles.

ANNIE
Doesn't seem that long I was
putting his Dad to bed in the same
room.

Joanna smiles.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry...

JOANNA
My father died for something he
believed in, so I'm sad... but I'm
proud too...
Just like little Thomas will be of
his Daddy when he comes home...

Annie nods. A moment between them, united in their love of Thomas.

CUT TO:

25 EXT. BRITISH TRENCHES. WINTER FOG. DAY 4. 25

Early morning, soldiers all drinking tea, shaving, burning lice from clothes, the usual morning routine as the Sergeant Bond strides through the trench.

SERGEANT BOND
Kaiser Bill's chucked in the towel
lads, we've got 'em on the run.

THOMAS
What's that mean Sergeant?

SERGEANT BOND
Means he's abdicated, they'll be
like headless chicken now...
Be home by Christmas!

The news travels around the trench, Derek joins Thomas.

DEREK
Did you hear?

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 **FLASHBACK: BATTLE OF THE SOMME.** 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 sound-track 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:

40 EXT. BRITISH TRENCHES. WINTER FOG. DAY 5. 40
The British soldiers sit along the fire step with their first mug of tea of the day. Thomas sits beside Derek.

DEREK
Monday morning...

THOMAS
Ay?

DEREK
Did me diary this morning, and saw it was Monday...

THOMAS
Damn. Missed Sunday roast again yesterday.

DEREK
(beat)
Beef and yorkshire puddings, swimming in gravy.

A moment.

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
 Right.

SERGEANT BOND
 It's all quiet over there, but keep
 your head down in case they've got
 a sniper on watch.

THOMAS
 Don't worry about that.

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 **FACING MICHAEL...**
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 upper hand, dirty and clumsy, fearful. Both breathing heavily with the exertion.

CUT TO:

51 INT. CORRIDOR. WINTER FOG. DAY 5. 51

More shaking hands. A man on the telephone. The war is over.

CUT TO:

52 EXT. NO MANS LAND. WINTER FOG. DAY 5. 52

Thomas and Michael fighting, Thomas struggles to reach his rifle. He can't get it but manages to pull off the bayonet.

CUT TO:

53 EXT. CORRIDOR. WINTER FOG. DAY 5. 53

The Allies looking pleased, shaking hands, convivial. Pats on back.

CUT TO:

54 EXT. NO MANS LAND. WINTER FOG. DAY 5. 54

Thomas and Michael fighting, Michael sees his rifle and frees one of his arms to reach for it, as he does so, this gives Thomas the opportunity to thrust the bayonet into Michael's ribs.

Almost in the same moment, Michael has picked up his rifle and fired a shot, shooting Thomas.

Both boys now separated and looking at each other in disbelief, both realising they've been badly wounded.

CUT TO:

55 EXT. BRITISH TRENCHES. WINTER FOG. DAY 5. 55

A radio operator is listening intently. He suddenly tears off his headphones and runs through the trenches.

CUT TO:

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 then 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:

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.

A moment.

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 battlefield becomes greener and the thousands of soldiers turn into thousands of white crosses.

FADE OUT.

CREDITS:

Picture box beside credits, real photographs of young British and German boys, in their teens at war.