



RED PLANET PICTURES

The Passing Bells

By
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Episode Three
SCENE LOCKED

Red Planet Pictures Limited

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BLACK SCREEN:

GRAPHICS: 1916

FADE IN:

1 EXT. OPEN FRENCH ROAD. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 1. 1

Establishing shot. Thousands of German soldiers marching across the French countryside.

CUT TO:

2 EXT. OPEN FRENCH ROAD. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 1. 2

A platoon of weary German soldiers taking a break from a march, some eating, some playing football, most just relaxing. Rudi, Freddie, Lanzo and Stefan sit in a group eating from tin plates.

Michael to one side, writing a letter, Freddie closest to him.

FREDDIE

Give her a kiss from me.

RUDI

And me!

LANZO & STEFAN

And me!

A few similar shouts from nearby soldiers. Michael smiles as he seals the envelope.

FREDDIE

Must be coming up to your first anniversary...

MICHAEL

Soon.

FREDDIE

The secret to a good marriage, just spend a week at home once a year.

A beat. Stefan looks around at the assembling troops.

STEFAN

I don't know where we're going, but they don't move this many people without good reason.

RUDI

I hate being reinforcements.

MICHAEL

Why?

RUDI

Well think about it, why do they need reinforcements in the first place?

Because the ones that were there first are dead.

A moment as that sinks in.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 1. 3

Katie sitting alone reading Michael's letter. She finishes, looks thoughtful. Susan puts a comforting hand on her shoulder, Katie forces a smile.

CUT TO:

4 EXT. WOODED ROADSIDE. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 1. 4

Thomas, Anthony, Ben and Kevin are taking a break at the roadside. Men and supplies continue to pass them on the road, Anthony laying back on his kit bag. Thomas looks subdued, a bit miserable...

ANTHONY

Next time someone tells me something's gonna be over by Christmas, I'm going to check which Christmas.

BEN

(watching trucks)

There's something going on.

(beat)

You seen how many big guns they're moving forward?

KEVIN

Yeah, well the more the merrier as long as they're on our side.

Cyril bounds up.

CYRIL

On your feet boys... We've just volunteered.

THOMAS

What for?

CYRIL
Stretcher detail. There's a CCS
two miles away and a couple of
blokes need patching up.

BEN
Two miles!

KEVIN
Haven't they got a cart?

CYRIL
All being used, that's why I
volunteered.

ANTHONY
Wing nut! Two miles carrying a
stretcher, have you gone mad?

CYRIL
I hope so, then they might send me
home. Come on!

CUT TO:

5 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 1. 5

Cyril leads the way with a map as Ben, Anthony, Kevin and
Thomas carry two stretchers, each with a wounded soldier on.

BEN
(nods at Cyril)
Hang on, if this is his idea, how
come he's not doing any of the
carrying?

CYRIL
I'm carrying the map.

ANTHONY
We don't need a map, we can see it!

They look ahead to see the CCS in the distance.

CYRIL
Look, this is my mission, I give
the orders.

KEVIN
You'll be needing your own
stretcher in a minute...

THOMAS
It's okay, we're nearly there...

CYRIL
 Exactly... Beside it's not the
 journey that's important, it's
 what's at the other end...

Cyril grins at Thomas, who has no idea what he's talking
 about...

CUT TO:

6 EXT. CCS. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 1. 6

Cyril, Thomas, Ben, Kevin and Anthony arrive at the CCS and
 deliver the two stretchers to waiting medics.

KEVIN
 (of Cyril)
 I know he's up to something... Come
 on, what's here?

ANTHONY
 A canteen? Hot grub?

BEN
 A roast dinner...

CYRIL
 Better than that.

He grins, then grabs Thomas by the shoulders.

THOMAS
 What?

CYRIL
 Little birdy told me they had a
 visitor...

He spins Thomas round to see a little Curie truck parked.
 Cyril grins. Thomas looks at him.

CYRIL (CONT'D)
 Figured it was worth a two mile
 hike to put a smile on that
 miserable gob of yours...

CUT TO:

7 EXT. CCS. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 1. 7

Joanna watches as a soldier is carried out of her Little
 Curie truck after being x-rayed. Then suddenly Cyril appears
 in front of her.

CYRIL

Excuse me Nurse! - can you come and see my mate please? He's in a really bad way..

JOANNA

I'm not really a nurse, I'll get someone...

CYRIL

No, it's urgent, I think he's broke something!

Cyril leads her behind the truck where Kevin, Anthony and Ben are carrying Thomas by his arms and legs.

CYRIL (CONT'D)

It's his heart we think. Love sick he is, worst case I've ever seen!

Joanna realises it's Thomas and screams, the others let him down and they embrace.

JOANNA

Why didn't you tell me?!

THOMAS

There's a war on, we're not allowed to tell people where we are.

JOANNA

You could have at least told me you were coming!

THOMAS

(glances at Cyril)
I didn't know...

They kiss. There's a "cough" off to the side. They turn to see Cyril, Kevin, Anthony and Ben.

CYRIL

You'll have to excuse his manners, he hasn't got any.

THOMAS

Joanna, these are the boys I wrote about, Cyril, Kev, Ant and Ben.

JOANNA

I'm very pleased to meet you and thank you for looking after him.

BEN

Nothing to do with us, we keep chucking him over the top, but he makes his way back somehow.

ANTHONY
Like a flamin' homing pigeon he is.

KEVIN
Can't get rid of him...

THOMAS
You can get lost now boys...

KEVIN
(to Joanna)
Got any friends pretty as you
nursesey?

THOMAS
Go!

ANTHONY
(to Thomas)
Make the most of it, we've got an
hour.

The four boys drift away.

JOANNA
One hour?

THOMAS
We're moving cross country, have to
catch our battalion up.

JOANNA
How did you know I was here?

THOMAS
Wing nut found out from one of the
medics. Seems they were talking
about this pretty Polish girl who
just turned up driving a truck...

She studies him now, stroking his face.

JOANNA
Are you okay?

TOMMY
'Course.

JOANNA
(gently)
You look tired.

TOMMY
(making light)
I've just walked two miles carrying
a stretcher...

JOANNA
 (wry smile)
 Come on...

She takes his hand and leads him away from the CCS.

CUT TO:

8 EXT. GERMAN TRENCHES. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 1 . 8

Michael, Rudi, Freddie, Lanzo and Stefan in the trenches with the rest of the men, all adding sandbags to the parapet, digging new dug outs. A corporal barking out orders.

CORPORAL
 Dig deep, everything away!

Michael and the others dig.

MICHAEL
 What's going on..?

LANZO
 The British must be planning something.

CORPORAL
 Dig!

CUT TO:

9 EXT. FIELDS. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 1. 9

Thomas and Joanna walking back to the CCS holding hands.

THOMAS
 You wouldn't believe how much stuff they're sending up... it's the biggest push yet.
 It feels like we're near the end...

JOANNA
 I hope so.

He studies her.

THOMAS
 Are you alright? You seem...
 Sad.
 (grins)
 Aren't you pleased to see me?

JOANNA
 Of course.
 (a beat)
 My brother died.

THOMAS

Oh... I'm sorry.

JOANNA

He was fighting at Verdun with the French.

THOMAS

I hear it's pretty bad there. Is your Dad alright?

JOANNA

(tears welling up)

I think his heart is broken.

(beat, gathering herself;)

But he said he will stay on and fight, that he won't go home until Poland is free again.

THOMAS

And when it is, you can take me there to meet him.

JOANNA

I think I want that more than anything else.

She takes his hand.

JOANNA (CONT'D)

Every time I see them bringing someone in a British uniform I feel sick, thinking it could be you...

THOMAS

Hey... You told me to keep my head down remember?

JOANNA

Men never do as they're told.

There's a whistle, Thomas looks across to see Cyril, Kevin, Anthony and Ben.

THOMAS

I have to go.

They embrace, then kiss.

JOANNA

Come back.

A moment between them, Joanna tearful, Thomas takes out a folded piece of paper and hands it to her before smiling and turning to walk away to join the others.

She unfolds the paper to see a sketch of a bird. [The blue tit from Episode 2]

She looks up to see Thomas leaving. He waves.

OUT on Joanna.

CUT TO:

10 INT. GERMAN DUGOUT. EARLY SUMMER. NIGHT 1 10

Michael, Rudi, Stefan and Lanzo and a dozen other soldiers are deep down in a dug out. All looking more than a little terrified in the candle light.

Lanzo looking at an old crumpled photograph of a dog.

A Corporal stands in the dug out entrance.

CORPORAL

The British and French are about to throw everything they have at us. We will withstand it all.

(beat)

When they have finished their bombardment and they think we are all dead, they will come and we will be ready for them.

(beat)

There will be a final mail collection in two hours.

The Corporal leaves, out on the huddle of soldiers in the candle light.

CUT TO:

11 INT. BRITISH DUG OUT. EARLY SUMMER. NIGHT 1. 11

Cyril, Anthony and Ben are unpacking their gear in their dug out along with a few other young soldiers.

ANTHONY

(off other soldiers)

Are they getting younger or are we getting older?

(he calls to the nearest)

Where you lot from?

HARRY (18) looks back at him.

HARRY

I'm Harry. From Lancashire. Southport.

(he nods at boy beside him)

Kenny's with me, the rest of the lads are from Liverpool.

BEN

How long you been out here?

HARRY

We landed yesterday. Finished our training last week.

BEN

You seen a German yet?

HARRY

Not yet.

BEN

You will.

Thomas notices that one of the young boys is scratching, he picks up a small tin can from under his bunk and walks across to sit with the young boy (DEREK).

THOMAS

You itching?

DEREK

Haven't stopped since we got here.

THOMAS

Lice. Everyone's crawling with 'em...

He hands him the tin.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

There's a bit of paraffin in here, rub it on your skin, keeps 'em off... Just careful when you spark up.

DEREK

(takes tin)

Thanks.

(beat)

I'm Derek.

THOMAS

Tommy.

(beat)

How old are you?

DEREK

(tentatively)

Sixteen.

(beat)

I had to try three recruitment offices before I got in.

THOMAS

Does your Mum and Dad know you're here?

DEREK

I left them a note.

A moment between them.

THOMAS

Stick close alright? When you're out there, keep your head down. And write home.

Derek shakes his head.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Your family will wake up every day and think you're dead... Letters are our only way of telling them we ain't.

(beat)

My little brother told me that...

Thomas smiles, Derek does the same as he relaxes a little.

Thomas goes to his bunk and grins as he sees Anthony dealing cards to a couple of the new recruits.

Suddenly Kevin bursts in.

KEVIN

Hey lads, come and have a look!

CUT TO:

12 EXT. BRITISH TRENCHES. EARLY SUMMER. NIGHT 1. 12

Cyril, Anthony, Ben, young Derek and the others all follow Kevin into the trenches to see another several soldiers laughing as they position a battered old piano at the end of the trench.

CYRIL

You're kidding me!

KEVIN

It was in that old bombed out pub we passed...

ANTHONY

Can anyone play it?

CUT TO:

13 EXT. GERMAN TRENCHES. EARLY SUMMER. NIGHT 1. 13

All the soldiers huddled writing letters by candle light. A real air of expectancy.

Lanzo takes his letter to the box by the dug out entrance, kisses it then drops it in before sitting back down.

RUDI

When do you think it'll start?

STEFAN

Tomorrow.

All the officers have been standing round a map all day, that's always a bad sign.

FREDDIE

It feels different.

STEFAN

We're dug in, it'll be alright.

LANZO

You think this is it?

That whatever happens here...

It will be the end of it?

Silence. No-one knows the answer to that... Michael finishes his letter and puts it in a box by the entrance to the dug out, then looks up at the stars.

A moment, then he hears music in the near distance, a piano... people singing.

CUT TO:

14 EXT. BRITISH FRONT LINE. EARLY SUMMER. NIGHT 1. 14

Thomas, Cyril, Kevin, Anthony, Ben and a dozen others gathered around the old piano. Young Derek playing.

They're singing "*Hanging On The Old Barbed Wire*"...

It's surreal, young men in the trenches gathered around an old piano singing, the best of times...

FADE TO BLACK:

15 EXT. BRITISH GUN POSITION. EARLY SUMMER. DAWN 2. 15

A wagon on a narrow gauge track is being pushed uphill towards a huge door by six British soldiers, heaving and sweating. In the wagon is an enormous shell.

CUT TO:

16 EXT. BRITISH FRONT LINE. EARLY SUMMER. DAWN 2. 16

British soldiers in a semi circle around a priest who is giving prayers. On the faces of the boys...

PRIEST (V.O.)
you will not fear the terror of
 the night, nor the arrow that flies
 by day...nor the pestilence that
 stalks in the darkness, nor the
 plague that destroys at midday...
 ...a thousand may fall at your
 side, ten thousand at your right
 hand, but it will not come near
 you...

CUT TO:

17 EXT. GERMAN FRONT LINE. EARLY SUMMER. DAWN 2. 17

German soldiers in a semi circle around a Priest who is giving prayers. On the faces of the boys...

PRIEST (V.O.)
you will only observe with your
 eyes and see the punishment of the
 wicked... If you make the most high
 your dwelling, even the lord who is
 my refuge then no harm will befall
 you, no disaster will come near
 your tent... For he will command
 his angels concerning you to guard
 you in all your ways...

CUT TO:

18 EXT. BRITISH FRONT LINE. EARLY SUMMER. DAWN 2. 18

Tommy, Cyril, Kevin, Anthony, Ben, Derek and the other new recruits all gathered around the priest.

PRIEST
 ...with long life I will satisfy
 him and show him my salvation.
 (beat)
 Amen.

The soldiers all mumble Amen and the Priest moves away.

CORPORAL BOND
 (to Priest)
 Thank you Father...

Corporal Bond watches him go, then checks his pocket watch and turns to address the men.

CORPORAL BOND (CONT'D)
 We're going to shell the shit out
 of them, all day every day until
 there's nothing left.
 Then we'll go and mop up what's
 left.
 (beat)
 We'll be home soon boys.
 Everyone will remember that this is
 where we won the war.
 (beat)
 Here at the Somme.

CUT TO:

19 EXT. BRITISH GUN POSITION. EARLY SUMMER. DAWN 2. 19

We pull out from black to discover we are looking down the
 barrel of a huge piece of artillery. We are above the barrel,
 some thirty feet off the ground. Below, we see men scurrying
 around under camouflage netting, preparing the weapon.

A voice shouts 'FIRE!'

The gun blasts as the screen goes to white.

CUT TO:

20 EXT. GERMAN TRENCH. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 2. 20

A huge explosion as the shell lands on a now empty trench.

CUT TO:

21 INT. GERMAN DUGOUT. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 2. 21

Michael and the others soldiers huddled together in their dug
 out as the bombardment rains down on them, shaking the earth,
 soil and dust falling on them.

Everyone terrified, but grimly determined.

CUT TO:

22 EXT. BRITISH TRENCHES. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 2. 22

Thomas, Cyril, Ben, Kevin, Harry, young Derek and others
 sitting on the fire step, getting their daily rum ration,
 listening to the shells whistling above them and the
 explosions in the distance.

ANTHONY
Poor bastards.

CUT TO:

23 EXT. GERMAN TRENCHES. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 2. 23

Another big explosion on the German trench.

CUT TO:

24 INT. GERMAN DUG OUT. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 2. 24

Michael and the other soldiers huddled underground as the bombardment gets ever louder, shaking the earth around them.

The roof of the dug out caves in, leaving Michael and Freddie trapped. Freddie disappears under a mound of earth. Chaos as the other soldiers manage to clamber out of the dug out.

MICHAEL
Freddie!

Michael struggles desperately across the collapsed dug out and frantically starts digging. The shelling continues unabated, above and around the dug out, sending more earth crashing down on Michael as he digs.

Michael eventually uncovers Freddie, wiping mud from his face, then dragging him out, turning him on his back, struggling to get him to breathe again. Clearing mud from his mouth with his fingers, pouring water into his mouth...

Freddie then starts to cough as Michael forces him to drink water. An exhausted and relieved Michael cradles him in his arms as the bombardment continues.

CUT TO:

25 EXT. CCS. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 2. 25

Joanna watching plumes of smoke from shell fire in the distance, listening to the guttural boom of the heavy guns.

CUT TO:

26 INT. GERMAN DUG OUT. EARLY SUMMER. NIGHT 2. 26

Michael and Freddie shivering alone in the semi darkness as the bombardment continues. Flashes of light through holes in the mud.

FREDDIE
We're gonna die here Mikey, die
here in this hole...

MICHAEL
No we're not.

Freddie starts to sob.

FREDDIE
I don't even know where I am...

MICHAEL
I know...

FREDDIE
I don't want to die...

MICHAEL
Ssshhh...

Michael strokes Freddie's head.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
We're not going to die.
(beat)
We're not going to die.

CUT TO:

27 EXT. BRITISH TRENCHES. EARLY SUMMER. NIGHT 2. 27

The constant "boom" of the big guns.

Thomas, Cyril, Anthony, Ben, Kevin, Harry, young Derek and
the others in their dug out.

CYRIL
They've had six days and nights of
this, with no let up. There can't
be any of them left.

BEN
Let's hope not.

ANTHONY
It's horrible though, it could just
as easily been us.

BEN
Exactly, that's why I aint feeling
sorry for them.

ANTHONY
I'm not saying you should...

BEN
What then?

ANTHONY
(beat)
I don't know.

A moment. Corporal Bond appears.

CORPORAL BOND
Clean your rifles and bayonets then
get some shut eye lads, we go over
the top in the morning. 07.30.
Clear up what's left.

And he's gone. Thomas catches Harry's eye, sees the fear.

ANTHONY
Bloody hell.

CYRIL
We'll be alright.
The shells will have cut a path
through the wire, destroyed all
their trenches...

KEVIN
You go first then, I'll be right
behind you.

BEN
And I'll be behind him.

THOMAS
No-one's survived that... This is
it, it's over...
We could be going home!

A moment, almost with a new resolve, they begin to clean
their rifles.

Thomas carefully puts his bird encyclopedia in his kit bag
and then takes out his cleaning rags for his rifle, as Derek
moves across the dug out to sit down beside him.

DEREK
(forces a grin)
We're going to do some proper
fighting then?

Thomas calm, ready to go.

DEREK (CONT'D)
(lying)
Can't wait.

THOMAS

If there's any shooting... There will be shell holes everywhere, just jump in one and keep your head down.

(beat, glances at the others)

When you get the shout to move up, don't go straight away, wait for a second, there'll be a burst of gun fire wait until it stops, then go...

Run as fast as you can to the next shell hole.

DEREK

They're saying there won't be many Germans left.

THOMAS

It only takes one bullet to kill you.

CUT TO:

28 INT. GERMAN DUG OUT. EARLY SUMMER. NIGHT 2. 28

An exhausted and battered Michael and Freddie are still huddled in the destroyed dug out.

FREDDIE

When do you think they'll come?

MICHAEL

Soon. They must think we're all dead.

FREDDIE

Maybe we are.

Hold on Michael.

CUT TO:

29 INT. BRITISH DUGOUT. EARLY SUMMER. NIGHT 2. 29

Thomas laying on his bunk, going to sleep, thinking about what the following day will bring. He glances over at Derek fast asleep in his bunk, child-like.

CUT TO:

CUT TO:

30 EXT. NO MAN'S LAND. EARLY SUMMER. DAWN 3. 30
Silence. The barbed wire still in place....

CUT TO:

31 EXT. BRITISH TRENCHES. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 3. 31
Thomas amongst all the soldiers that are making their way out of the dug outs to take their place in the trenches, fixing bayonets to their rifles. Corporal Bond walking along.

CORPORAL BOND

Wait until the mine under their line is detonated, then we all go together.
We're not expecting too much resistance so keep moving forward.
 (beat)
Let's finish this up and go home!
We go on the whistle.

Thomas takes his place and looks along the line to his left and right. Cyril, Anthony, Ben, Kevin, young Derek and Harry all look back at him as they wait. All smiling, excited, this is it... An eerie calm.

CUT TO:

32 EXT. GERMAN TRENCHES. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 3. 32
In stark contrast, there is chaos in the German trenches as the ragged, red eyed, exhausted and dishevelled soldiers are all coming out of the dug outs and preparing to defend their lines, setting up machine guns at the parapet.

Freddie and Michael are hauled out of their hole.

An officer barking instructions.

GERMAN OFFICER

The bombardment has stopped,
they'll be coming over.
At your guns!

Michael sees Rudi, Stefan and Lanzo carrying ammunition, he helps them. He settles at a machine gun post and begins to load the gun with trembling hands...

CUT TO:

33 EXT. BRITISH TRENCHES. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 3. 33

Thomas and the others lined up waiting. An officer comes out from the dug out, checks his pocket watch and takes out his whistle.

Cyril is beside Thomas.

CYRIL
How's your guts?

Thomas looks at him.

CYRIL (CONT'D)
I've got butterflies...
How stupid's that?

Me too.

CYRIL
Maybe it's wind.
(beat, grins)
Or worse..

ANTHONY
Who wants a race? Ten bob says I
get to the German trenches first.

BEN
You're on.

All smiles, anticipation...

CUT TO:

34 EXT. GERMAN TRENCHES. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 3. 34

Michael and Freddie and Rudi getting machine guns ready. Others along the parapet doing the same. They are all dishevelled, dirty and afraid.

Michael looks at Freddie, his hands shaking. A look of determination comes on to Michael's face as he grips his machine gun.

CUT TO:

35 38. EXT. GERMAN TRENCHES. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 3. 35

Michael and the others being showered with debris from an explosion close by.

GERMAN OFFICER
Back at your guns!

They all scramble to take up their positions again. Michael looks around for Rudi, but can't see him.

MICHAEL

Rudi!

Then he sees him, dead in bottom of the trench.

GERMAN OFFICER

At your guns!

Michael rushes back to his machine gun, looks at Freddie who holds his machine gun, trembling, staring straight ahead.

Michael takes up his position, anger and fear in his eyes.

CUT TO:

36 EXT. BRITISH TRENCHES. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 3. 36

Everyone waiting.

BEN

Come on... Come on....

CUT TO:

37 EXT. GERMAN TRENCHES. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 3. 37

Michael holding tightly on to the machine gun. Waiting.

CUT TO:

38 EXT. BRITISH TRENCHES. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 3. 38

Thomas waiting. The whistle sounds...

CORPORAL BOND

Come on lads!

Everyone shouts as Thomas, Cyril, Anthony, Ben, Kevin, Harry, Kenny and young Derek scramble over the parapet.

CUT TO:

39 EXT. NO MAN'S LAND. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 3. 39

Thomas, Cyril, Anthony, Ben, Kevin, Harry, Kenny and Derek in a line crossing no man's land.

All looking happy as there's seemingly no resistance.

Cyril turns to look at Thomas with a grin.

CYRIL
Looks like no-one's home!

Cyril barely manages to finish his sentence before the noise of hundreds of machine guns fill the air and bullets whistle all around them.

Thomas watches in horror as Cyril falls beside him.

A shocked Thomas drops to his knees to help Cyril, but he's clearly dead, eyes staring, lifeless.

Thomas looks up along the line to see Harry, then Ben, then Anthony mown down by bullets from the machine gun fire.

He looks further along the line to find Derek looking back at him, traumatised, bewildered.

Thomas now is disoriented, confused, he's lost his bearings. He sees Kevin now, through the smoke, being hit and falling to the floor in a crumpled heap.

CORPORAL BOND (O.S.)
Keep moving!

Thomas stumbles to his feet and rejoins the chaos as he stumbles through no mans land, the sound of machine gun fire deafening, soldiers all around him falling.

Soldiers entangled in the wire, stuck and sitting targets for the machine guns... Thomas holds his rifle tightly and runs. He stumbles and falls into a shallow shell hole, to find it littered with dead soldiers, two young soldiers alive but frightened.

Thomas climbs out of the shell hole and stumbles through no mans land, through the smoke and noise and exploding shells.

CUT TO:

40 EXT. GERMAN TRENCHES. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 3. 40

Michael firing his machine gun, knuckles white as he grips it tightly, soldiers in front of him falling.

CUT TO:

41 EXT. NO MAN'S LAND. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 3. 41

Thomas running through no mans land, around him explosions, young soldiers trapped in the barbed wire, entangled, the more they struggle, the more entangled they become.

He stumbles onwards, knocked sideways by an explosion, then back on his feet, getting his bearings, looking to check which direction everyone else is running, before continuing on his way.

CUT TO:

42 EXT. CCS. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 3. 42

Joanna in the middle of complete chaos as wounded are brought by medics. Some of the lesser wounded help carry stretchers and tend to the badly injured.

Joanna supervises wounded being lifted into her truck, she's about to follow them in when she sees a young soldier in a British uniform being carried past on a stretcher, she freezes, thinking it's Thomas but then the soldier turns his head, it's not him. She takes a breath then goes into the back of her truck.

CUT TO:

43 EXT. NO MAN'S LAND. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 3. 43

Explosions from shell fire and machine gun bullets continue to whistle around Thomas and soldiers as they inch their way forward.

They hit a bank of barbed wire and take cover as a soldier with wire cutters tries to cut a way through.

Thomas moves forward, all hell around him.

CUT TO:

44 INT. THOMAS' HOUSE. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 3. 44

Annie on her hands and knees scrubbing the kitchen floor, a little manic, losing herself in the physicality of it.

CUT TO:

45 INT. COMMUNITY CHURCH. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 3. 45

Katie sits alone kneeling and praying silently.

CUT TO:

46 EXT. GERMAN TRENCHES. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 3. 46

Michael still at his machine gun post as there's an explosion directly in front of them, blowing him off his feet and backwards into the trench.

Michael gets up, turns to see Stefan and Lanzo dead around him. He sees his machine gun destroyed, picks up his rifle and starts to fire over the parapet.

CUT TO:

47 EXT. NO MAN'S LAND. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 3. 47

Thomas disoriented, picking his way through the smoke when a hand grabs him, he turns, ready to fight but then sees that it's young Derek.

There's no joy in the meeting, just acknowledgement that they've found each other, they stumble forward together.

FADE OUT.

48 INT. THOMAS' HOUSE. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 3. 48

Annie swilling out her bucket of dirty water. She stops, as Thomas pops into her head.

CUT TO:

49 INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 3. 49

William moving through upstairs looking for Susan. He finds her curled up asleep on Michael's bed.

CUT TO:

50 EXT. GERMAN TRENCH. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 3. 50

Quiet now.

Michael and Freddie sit in what's left of their trench.

They are bloodied, dirty and weary.

There are no words, nothing to say.

Dead bodies around them slowly being taken away by a stretcher detail, but the young men just sit, staring into space.

CUT TO:

51 EXT. NO MAN'S LAND. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 3. 51

A shell shocked Thomas and Derek sit in a shallow shell hole with a dozen other soldiers.

All exhausted, traumatised by what they've seen and done, staring ahead.

A moment then Thomas stands.

He starts to clamber out of the shell hole.

CUT TO:

52 EXT. GERMAN TRENCHES. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 3. 52

Michael stands without a word, walks to a large breach of the trench and clambers up.

CUT TO:

53 EXT. NO MAN'S LAND. EARLY SUMMER. DAY 3. 53

Thomas reaches the top of the shell hole and, standing alone, looks out around him.

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 images surrounding Thomas - a horse on its side trying to get up, its legs broken; a man drowning in a shell hole full of water; a man stumbling blindly into barbed wire.

Other voices, young men calling out for their Mothers...

Hell on earth.

CUT TO:

54 EXT. NO MAN'S LAND. EARLY SUMMER. DAY. 54

On the other side of no man's land, Michael stands alone, viewing the self-same carnage.

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

Michael's legs turn to jelly, he lowers himself down to sit on the ground.

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

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE THREE