

Short Film

By

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FADE IN.

EXT. GRASSY OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN - DAY

(2D scene) The wind rustles the tall grass in the field. There is a golden hue to the scene. A small family is standing at the edge of the town. DANIEL, a middle aged man in a continental uniform, checks his SHOULDER BAG with nervous energy. His wife, ELEANOR, steps up to him and fixes his collar, while his son, TOMMY (10), looks morosely at the grass.

Daniel puts on his TRICORN HAT with an excited grin. Eleanor returns the smile and then embraces him tightly. When they release each other, Daniel turns to his son. Tommy is still looking resolutely at the ground. His father tilts his chin up with thumb and forefinger. Tommy's face crumples as tears start to roll down his face. He throws himself into his father's arms.

When they part, Tommy steps back and puts his hand to his forehead in a salute which Daniel returns. Daniel turns away from the town and his family and begins his journey. The scene dissolves.

FADE TO:

EXT. SNOWY BATTLEFIELD - MORNING

(3D scene) Daniel, lying unconscious in the snow, awakes suddenly. The scene now has little warmth or color. He is much more rugged now and looks tired and battered. The uniform he once wore proudly is sooty and torn. He sits up slowly, GRUNTING as he does so.

He takes in the battlefield. Dead men wearing both blue coats and red coats lie now in the snow. Though they were enemies, they now lay across another; one in death. The cold, morning sun leaks over the mountain and pours golden light through the leftover battle haze and onto the smoky and bloody snow. Muskets rest abandoned by their owners and cannons bury their heads wearily into the snow.

Daniel searches and listens for life, but he cannot even hear the morning bird's song. He tries to rise but HISSES and falls back. Examining his right thigh, he finds a bullet wound. Opening his SHOULDER BAG and pouring out the unused bullets, he finds some wrapping cloth.

EXT. SNOWY BATTLEFIELD OUTSKIRTS - MORNING

Leaving behind the silent battlefield, Daniel makes his way through the snow into the forest and toward the rising sun. His leg is wrapped up now but he has a noticeable limp.

SUPERIMPOSED: (TITLE OF FILM)

EXT. FOREST - MORNING

Daniel is pushing his way through the deep snow drifts. His BREATH is visible in the frigid air.

EXT. FOREST DELL - DAY

With labored BREATHING, Daniel climbs up the steep dell. The noon sun shines off the snow which makes it horribly bright.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

There is a large stretch of sloping woods. Daniel slips slightly as he steps onto icy patches.

EXT. FOREST GORGE - NIGHT

Daniel looks at the ground, watching where he steps. He suddenly finds himself face to face with a deep, misty gorge. Stumbling backwards, Daniel scrambles away from the danger. He looks around, trying to figure out how to get around it. To his left he sees a fallen log perfectly reaching across the gorge. He plows over to examine it.

The log must have fallen some time ago for there is a thick layer of snow resting on it. Daniel sees icicles dangling from beneath it from where the snow melted and then froze again. He reaches out and brushes some snow off of it.

Taking a deep BREATH, Daniel ungracefully climbs over the roots of the tree. He puts a foot tentatively on the snow-covered wood and then the other. After a few unsteady steps, Daniel slips and falls down onto the log. Vertigo sets in and he clings to it, BREATHING shakily. Calming himself down, he lifts his torso up but his hand slips out and he falls down again.

Daniel, with face scrunched up in fear, holds tightly to the log. His BREATH comes out like smoke in the air. Slowly, he opens his eyes and looks up the the end of the log.

Sitting there with his knees to his chest and face buried in them, is Daniel's son, Tommy (2D character). There is a golden aura surrounding him. He is shivering with fear. Dumbstruck, Daniel mouths his son's name. He reaches out. As he does the scene transitions to a memory.

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

(2D scene) As he reaches out, Daniel is no longer in his dirty uniform. He is clean shaven and tidier. Instead of the log, he is now straddling the roof of his house, looking at Tommy on the other side. He looks down the roof and sees the cobblestone street bellow.

GULPING, he turns back to his son. Tommy glances up at his father with a worried look. Now more sure of himself, Daniel crawls across the roof. He reaches out to help his son. Tommy gives him a knowing smile. Daniel blinks.

EXT. FOREST GORGE - NIGHT

(3D scene) When he opens his eyes, he sees nothing but the branches of the snow-covered log. Letting his hand fall, he looks around. He had made it across the log. Tommy is nowhere to be seen. Shaking his head vigorously, Daniel climbs over the branches and continues his trek through the woods.

EXT. MISTY FOREST - DAY

Except for the dark wood of the pines, the forest is completely white with fog. Daniel shuffles through the snow drifts. His limp is very pronounced and his BREATHING very heavy. A deadened look has overcome his face.

Pausing in his tracks, he lurches to one side and nearly falls over in exhaustion. Daniel looks over at a nearby tree and then stumbles into the snow. He clumsily crawls over the its roots and slumps himself into the rough bark.

He rests himself with his lips parted and his eyes dull. The billows of his BREATH breaks the monotony of the fog. He is suddenly overcome with a fit of shivering and tries to pull his scarf over his face. The cold being victorious, he falls over to the ground in a fetal position. Daniel's shivering BREATHING slows to become rhythmic and slow.

The scene transitions to a memory.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

(2D scene) Instead of snow, Daniel is lying in his clean, warm blankets. His coat once again changes to a clean shirt and his face becomes clean and well kept. He sleeps peacefully and a bird is heard SINGING somewhere outside. The scene has a golden hue.

A young voice breaks the silence.

(CONTINUED)

TOMMY
Papa... Papa...

Daniel stirs and sleepily pulls the sheets over his mouth.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Come on, pa, wake up.

The bird continues its SONG as Daniel blearily opens his eyes. He sees his son and wife standing over him smiling lovingly. Eleanor steps forward. Though her face is lined, her blue eyes still have a beautiful youthfulness.

As he focuses his sights on her, she begins to grow blurry. So to, does the bird's SINGING fade. The room grows bright and Daniel blinks.

EXT. MISTY FOREST - DAY

(3D scene) The blurry shape that had been his wife comes back into focus and Daniel realizes that the form is now a FOX. The creature sees that he is awake and runs away in fright.

Daniel watches it disappear into the fog. He shakes his head violently and GROWLS as he rubs his shoulders. Getting up, he sees the sun coming through the clouds and walks away from it.

EXT. MISTY MEADOW - EARLY DAWN

The last of the trees disappear in the mist as Daniel plows his way into a meadow. It is snowing and he looks worried as the WIND picks up. The dark clouds in the sky have put out what little sunlight there was. His hair and clothes are being tossed about in the ever increasing GUSTS.

EXT. BLIZZARD MEADOW - DAWN

Daniel slowly makes his way through the snow drifts, holding his coat tightly around him in an attempt to keep his hands warm. The WIND is now a gale and snowflakes fly in swirling patterns like a swarm of angry bees.

He is looking around, taking one step one way and then turning and taking on step another way. A look of terror comes over his face and his frantic steps look panicked. He stops, huddling into his coat.

In the GALE, he suddenly hears a warm voice.

(CONTINUED)

ELEANOR

Daniel.

Daniel spins around and with searching eyes.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Daniel, over here!

He spots a golden light through the dark flurry. Stumbling over to it, he can just make out the form of his wife. The scene transitions as a memory takes over.

EXT. MEADOW - DAY

(2D Scene) A light breeze RUSTLES the long grass and the sun shines brightly in the blue, summer sky. The scene once again has that golden hue to it. The warm LAUGHTER of his wife brings a smile to Daniel's clean face. He is wearing his freshly starched outdoor clothing. Eleanor is now clearly visible. She smooths her skirt and the breeze toys with her blonde hair that is put into a loose braid.

Daniel, no longer limping, approaches her. However as he does, a playful look dances on her face. She turns and gaily runs away from him. LAUGHING, he chases his wife. Despite her skirt, she is remarkably quick on her feet and is able to avoid his attempts at grabbing her.

One attempt ends poorly for Daniel as it results in him falling face-first into the tall grass. By the time he gets up, Eleanor has gained some distance on him. He gets up and starts to follow her. But, as he runs, the scene around him begins to fade. He blinks.

EXT. SNOWY TOWN OUTSKIRTS. - MORNING

(3D scene) Daniel, now battered and dirty, is running through the snow. His limp has returned as has his weary expression. The blizzard has subsided to a light snowfall but the mist remains. He only runs a few paces, when he BUMPS into something hard that causes him to stumble.

Looking around, he sees a wooden sign.

ON SIGN

Smithston Ahead.

ON DANIEL

Daniel GASPS and looks up. His tired face breaks into a wide grin. With a greater speed than ever, he makes his way down the sloping hill. The mist is thick as he hurriedly slips and slides down the hill.

EXT. TOWN - MORNING

The ground levels out and the dark forms of buildings now come into view. Daniel, looking exuberant, halts as he sees them. However, his grin quickly turns to a look of horror.

The mist clears somewhat to reveal the burned remains of a town. The brick buildings stand roofless and windowless. Some have collapsed and crumbled onto the street. Charred remains of furniture and clothing are strewn around the skeletal buildings. There are no signs of life anywhere.

Daniel limps down what used to be the main street that was now layered thick with snow due to neglect. In the town center is an especially large pile of rubble. Sticking out of the pile, haughty and mocking, is a BRITISH FLAG. Daniel, with a look of shock on his face takes in the scene. His arms dangle at his sides as though he can no longer feel the biting cold.

As he stands rooted to the spot, A gust of wind BLOWS through the town. A FLAPPING sound, independent from the British banner is heard. Daniel looks down and sees a the stars and stripes of the COLONIAL FLAG wrapping around his leg in the wind. It cannot hold on for long and is taken away to his right. He follows its process with his eyes and watches as it leads to a building at the end of a street.

Daniel's eyes widen and he slowly shakes his head as dread overcomes his expression. He sprints off toward the building, slipping along the snowy road. What was once his home now is nothing but a blackened and crumbling shell of bricks and fallen beams.

He clambers over a pile of rubble and searches the house. Frantically, he pushes aside burned furniture and digs through collapsed bricks. After searching for some time, he finally falls to his knees in utter despair. His SOBS echo around the forlorn home.

A faint voice joins the low WHISTLE of the wind.

TOMMY

Pappa!

Daniel shakes his head, not bothering to look up. Someone else calls out.

ELEANOR

Daniel! Daniel!

(CONTINUED)

Daniel bends low to the sooty floor and covers his head as though trying to escape the noise. FOOTSTEPS can be heard disturbing a brick pile and SLAPPING the floor of the house. Eleanor and Tommy, both looking dirty and worn, look down at Daniel on the floor.

TOMMY
(softly)
Papa, we're here.

Tommy reaches down and touches his father's shoulder. Daniel freezes. Then, turning around, he stares at his family. Slowly, he takes Tommy's hand. A fresh wave of tears streams down his sooty face and he embraces his child. Eleanor falls to his side and he holds them both tight. The family that had no home nor money cried tears of joy as though they could want nothing else but each other.

EXT. TOWN - MORNING

The small family left the crumbling home still holding each other tight. The mist is gone and the sun peaks over the woody hills, sending its rays through the trees. Eleanor bends down suddenly and picks up the COLONIAL FLAG. She grins at her husband with a look of determination on her face.

EXT. SNOWY HILL - MORNING

Plowing through the snow, the family heads toward the rising sun. The vibrant colors of the waving flag being carried on Daniel's shoulders stands out against the white forest.

FADE OUT.