

FADE IN ON...

EXT. DEMOLISHED CITY - NIGHT

The place is in complete ruins. What was once apparently a vibrant, lively urban area has been transformed into a crushed pile of rubble and smoke.

Bombed out buildings line the dirty street, which is full of debris of all kinds. Cars and other vehicles lie mutilated all over the place. Smoke billows from a few random spots of wreckage.

The faint, yet perfectly clear sound of footsteps can be heard in the near distance.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP OF FEET

As we follow a pair of feet walking through the rubble, occasionally tripping and stumbling over the remains of the recent devastation.

MAN'S VOICE

So they told us that we'd be dropping in behind enemy lines, which I suppose must have been the only thing they were right about. I haven't seen one of them Krauts yet, not to mention any of my own.

PAN UP to reveal a DARK FIGURE, clearly a man. He is dressed in Airborne fatigues, cradling an M1 Carbine rifle. His dark green helmet is covered in little pieces of brush and netting.

Considering the fact that he's a soldier, he doesn't seem to be too aware or even worried about what is around him.

SOLDIER

You're actually the first person I've seen in the last few hours. Can you believe that? All these guys who jumped with me and I ain't seen a single one of 'em.

PAN LEFT to reveal a young woman walking next to the paratrooper. She is a very young girl, most likely in her teens. She walks next to her new friend, though hardly paying any attention to what he's saying. Unlike him, she is terrified and alert, scanning every new sight with paranoia and curiosity.

SOLDIER

(continued)

I figure either I'm the only one who's where I'm supposed to be, or I got

dumped in the worst place possible.
What do you think?

The young girl still pays no attention to the paratrooper.

SOLDIER

(continued)

Yeah, I agree. I got fucked, that's what happened to me. I'm the only unlucky son of a bitch who didn't land where I was supposed to.

He finally begins to glance around the town, finally noticing the extent of the damage and what's happened to the place.

SOLDIER

(continued)

But wow, will you look at this place. I never thought I'd ever see anything like this. It ought to make a hell of a story for my buddies when I get home. Look at all this, will ya? If only I could have been around for this fight, think I could have done some good.

He swings his rifle up on his shoulder.

SOLDIER

(continued)

An' I can't wait to get the chance to use this old thing.

He stares at the rifle affectionately in a way that is almost creepy.

SOLDIER

(continued)

Ah, hell.

He grasps on to it and without warning, fires a round into the air. The girl nearly jumps out of her skin, losing her balance momentarily.

The soldier does not even seem to notice the effect his action had on her. He just stares at the rifle lovingly.

SOLDIER

(continued)

You know what this rifle reminds me of? Hunting back home when I was growing up. The girls back home always used to tell me that killin' little animals was terrible, but I loved it. Nothin' like that feeling when you get the first one.

The soldier turns to the girl, now walking sideways.

He raises the rifle to his shoulder and points it straight at her. She looks at him worriedly, unsure of what he is doing.

SOLDIER

(continued)

You sit there, staring at...waiting for the right time, which is the hardest part 'cause all you wanna do is pull that trigger.

CLOSE UP of the MAN'S FACE as he closes on eye, sending the sight of his other straight down the barrel, which is pointing at the girl's face.

She turns away, trying to ignore his strange behavior, but it is clear that she is growing increasingly anxious.

SOLDIER

(continued)

But when that time comes, and believe me, you know when it's time. You pull that trigger and--BAM!

His crazed energy and volume makes her jump again. He finally lowers the gun, slowly, eerily.

SOLDIER

(continued)

That little thing drops dead and I'll tell ya, it's a hell of a feeling. I mean I haven't ever had a problem with killin' animals, and I keep wondering if I got it in me to kill a man. But the way I look at it, these men are animals too an' I'll be doin' some good. Right?

BEAT.

The girl suddenly stops dead in her tracks, staring off into the distance. The paratrooper stops beside her, examining the meaning of her look.

SOLDIER

What's wrong?

He turns and looks in the direction she's looking. There is a large building just on the other side of the street, the only one in the area that hasn't been blown to shreds. It stands completely intact and whole.

SOLDIER

(pointing to the building)

That one? What's that?

The girl looks back to the paratrooper. She puts her hands

together, palms flat, making a sign of worship. She mumbles something in a foreign language, French maybe.

SOLDIER

A church? Is that a church? You want to go in there?

He motions for the two of them to enter the church. She nods.

INT. CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

The place is completely dark, not a single thing can be seen.

We can hear the footsteps of the couple as they enter, their breathing irregular.

SOLDIER

Damn, I can't see a thing. Hold on here a minute.

CLICK.

A light flickers to life as the soldier lights a zippo lighter, illuminating only a small portion of the interior. Around him are pews and small tables arranged in a strange fashion. It seems as though they are not the first people to be in this church since the fighting began.

The young girl is making her way through the mess of random objects in a way that makes the place so familiar to her. She turns to face the soldier, who is following close behind.

She motions to him for the lighter. He hands it to her.

SOLDIER

Ya know, I've never been that close to the good Lord, but he and my parents are like this.

He puts clasps his hands together, signifying some sort of close bond.

The young girl has now made her way to the front of the church. From the small bit of light, we can make out a long row of neatly placed candles along the altar. She begins lighting them one by one.

SOLDIER

Hey, good thinking, we could use some more light in here. Anyway, what was I saying? Oh, that's right, God. Well, my parents are all about this stuff. They're always going on about how important it is to be close to God and how it makes you a stronger, better

person and all that. They used to make me go to church with 'em every Sunday, probably hoping that some of that stuff would rub off on me. But what can I say? I've just never been that close to God. Is that my fault?

The girl is still lighting candles, almost to the end of the row.

SOLDIER

(continued)

Exactly, there isn't anything I can do about it.

He approaches the front pew and tosses his weapon onto it, the sound echoing throughout the building. He takes his helmet off and sets it on the pew as well.

SOLDIER

(continued)

My parents even gave me this before I left home.

He reaches into one of his many pockets and pulls out a rosary, shakes it around in his hand.

SOLDIER

(continued)

I mean, don't get me wrong, I know what this is all about and I know how to use it, but I suppose it won't come in handy until I'm out there about to die. Right? Speaking of that, did I mention that I haven't seen a single bit of action since I've been here, not the slightest. I mean, hell, they put me through all that training, learn how to throw grenades, how to fire the rifle, how to load it, you know, then I get dumped here and there's nothing. I should be out there right now looking for it.

His voice is almost cut off by the sound of a distant...BAM, BOOM! The sound of nearby combat, continuing irregularly every once in awhile for a brief moment.

He jumps out of the pew and runs to the nearest window, looking excited and nervous at the same time. He stares out there for the longest time.

SOLDIER

Something's goin' on out there. I should be out there with the rest of 'em, but I'm in some church instead.

By this time, the young girl has finished lighting the candles and the place is now fairly bright. She moves away from the altar and takes a seat in the front pew.

The soldier sits back down next to her. He grabs the rosary once again and hands it to her.

SOLDIER
(continued)
Here, take this, 'cause I think you'll have more of a need for it once the fightin' starts.

He moves it a little closer to her and she takes it, reluctantly.

BEAT.

The two stare at each other for the longest time and share a moment of silence, their eyes glazed and still on one another.

Finally, the young girl ruins the mood. She brings her fingers to her lips as though she is smoking a cigarette, her curious eyes still on the soldier.

SOLDIER
A cigarette? Sure, you bet.

He pulls a pack of cigarettes out from a pocket and hands her one. She lights it with his zippo and takes a long, well-deserved hit.

SOLDIER
I think I'll have one myself.

He finds another cigarette and lights it immediately. Then the most unexpected thing happens.

YOUNG GIRL
(with a thick accent)
You...American?

The soldier is shocked, almost in disbelief for what he has just heard. His eyes bulge out of his head.

SOLDIER
You speak English?!

YOUNG GIRL
Yes, little.

SOLDIER
Well, why didn't you say something before? All this time I thought you had no idea what I was saying.

YOUNG GIRL

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