

'VACCIE'

by

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EXT. NORTHUMBRIAN VALLEY - DAY

In the middle of a Northumberland valley lies a remote stone brick farmhouse.

A misty lake sits between a barren but beautiful grass valley, broken up by the occasional thicket of evergreens.

Title: Thursday 15th August 1940. 12:05

EXT. FARMHOUSE, NORTHUMBRIAN VALLEY - DAY

The front door bursts open to reveal Audrey, twelve, eyes wide with horror and filling with tears. She stumbles out of the house, running blindly towards the gate.

Behind her STANLEY BAXTER, over-weight, early sixties, hurries after her in a panic, sweating, trying to pull up his trousers.

STANLEY

Where you going? Audrey, wait!
Come back!

He trips over his trousers, falling to his knees, out of breath.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Audrey!

He looks terrified.

He breaks down, whimpering into the grass, as Audrey continues to run up into the valley.

CUT TO:

EXT. NORTHUMBRIA VALLEY - DAY

With tears running down her face, Audrey runs and runs and runs. From high above, she appears as a small spec, running through the sheep field. She continues along the worn path that runs beside the crag.

She scrambles up the steep incline, slowing with exhaustion. Finally reaching the peak, she collapses to her knees with despair and screams into the blinding wind, her eyelids squeezing out the pain.

Through her gasps for breath she hears distant rumblings that are not thunder. She opens her eyes, squinting from the bright light of the midday sun.

She sniffs, wiping away the tears from her cheeks and then shades her eyes from the sun with her hand.

Far on the horizon, barely visible below the cloud line are the specks of two dozen or more swarming planes, with the occasional flashes of light and bassy booms from ground artillery. It is mesmerising.

The faint sound of a struggling engine becomes audible through the deafening wind. Audrey searches the sky for the source, but there is nothing to see but low hanging cloud.

The sound increases and yet still there is nothing.

A moment later and a plane finally emerges from the clouds. The left engine is aflame, leaving a trail of black smoke.

Audrey stands up, her eyes widening in awe.

The German Heinkel III bomber is heading straight towards her, getting bigger and bigger and bigger.

The plane starts to tilt, its left propeller stalling. It's going to crash.

Audrey scrambles to get out of its way, but the plane is coming in too fast. There's no time.

She drops to the ground in a terrified ball.

The flaming bomber swoops past, just metres above her head, the sound of the engine roaring through her body.

Moments later there is an almighty explosion of tearing metal and splintering tree branches.

Audrey opens her eyes in disbelief - It missed her! She scrambles to her feet and peers over the brim of the hill, down into the adjacent valley.

Plumes of smoke and debris from the aircraft are scattered across a small thicket of trees.

Inexplicably drawn to the wreckage, she hurries down the hill.

EXT. THICKET - DAY

Audrey comes running through the trees, slowing down cautiously. She passes the partial, but distinct swastika symbol on a shredded part of a burning wing.

The trees above have been sheered clean off.

She ducks under a half fallen tree, looking up again to see a severely burnt and twisted body, partially cover by structural remains of the plane. His feet are bare and his charred clothing has been partially stripped from his body, from the impact.

Further back is the crumpled smouldering remains of the cockpit. Through the thick toxic smoke is another black charred body hanging from the pilot seat, still strapped in.

She covers her nose with her hand, trying not to gag.

This is too much.

Audrey tuns away in horror, only to spot through the trees, a third Luftwaffe pilot slumped against a tree at the edge of the thicket. His head hanging low.

She approaches him with caution. He is not nearly as blackened, but still looks dead. Congealed blood is stringing slowly from his nose and down his jacket.

She notices he is clutching something in his hand.

Audrey leans down and gently prises the piece of card out of his blackened hand, keeping her eyes on him all the while, but he does not move.

She steps back and looks down at the card, turning it over. It's a photograph of a young girl, a similar age to Audrey, cuddled sheepishly up to a proud man in full Luftwaffe uniform. They must be father and daughter.

The pilot suddenly coughs heavily, choking on the blood.

Audrey steps back with fright.

He lifts his head up to look at her, reaching out, but Audrey looks horrified and runs.

He tries to call out something in German, but can't stop coughing.

EXT. STILE - DAY

Audrey reaches the stile, panting heavily. As she clammers over it, she looks back across the crag to see if she is being followed.

Smoke still rises from behind the valley.

She continues to run down the hill, back towards the farmhouse.

In the distance, she can see Stanley's son Jimmy, fifteen, arriving back on a tradesman's carrier bicycle.

EXT. FARM, YARD - DAY

Audrey slams into the stone wall, catching her breath before peering around the corner.

Through a gap in the wooden gates to the yard, she can see Jimmy is now forking a huge pile of sugar beet leaves off the back of a trailer into a corrugated silage drum.

STANLEY

How long you been back?

Audrey is startled to see Stanley coming out of the farmhouse.

JIMMY

A few minutes.

Jimmy hands Stanley some coins.

STANLEY

You've done well son.

Stanley hesitates, looking around anxiously.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

You seen Audrey this morning?

Jimmy huffs, shaking his head.

JIMMY

Skiving off again?

Twitchy, Stanley heads back in doors.

Audrey slips away again.

EXT. CRAG PATH - DAY

Audrey slumps down against a stone wall and looks out to the beautiful green countryside. She tilts her face up to the sun and closes her eyes.

The distant sound of a vehicle brakes the silence. She looks down into the valley to see an army green truck with a white military police sign on the canvas.

She pulls the photograph carefully out of her pocket and studies it in more detail.

She seems mesmerised by the sense of joy between the pilot and his daughter.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DUSK

The farmhouse is in silhouette, set against a dramatic red sky. Audrey appears at edge of the field.

She looks apprehensive. Eventually she takes a deep breath and traipses towards it.

INT. KITCHEN, FARMHOUSE - DUSK

Stanley and Jimmy devour their stew like wild animals, mopping up with some bread.

The back door opens. Audrey steps in sheepishly, closing the door behind her.

Stanley ignores her.

She hesitantly helps herself to stew, there is barely enough for her and she has to scrape the pot.

She sits down on the seat farthest away from Stanley and sips her stew, keeping her head down.

Jimmy is agitated by her appearance.

JIMMY

Busy day Audrey?

She ignores him and continues to eat her stew. She reaches for the last piece of bread, but Jimmy grabs it first and stuffs it in his mouth on purpose.

She instinctively throws her remaining stew over him in retaliation. He jolts back in his chair, scalded by the burning liquid.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

You stupid bloody scab!

He lunges at her her, chasing her around the table, but Stanley grabs hold of him.

STANLEY

That's enough!

JIMMY

Why do you always stick up for her?
She does nothing around here and
you just let her get away...

Stanley hits him across the face.

STANLEY

I said that's enough!

Hearing the strike, Audrey stops to look back. Jimmy holds his cheek, stunned into silence. Stanley looks back at Audrey. Scared of him, she hurries upstairs.

INT. AUDREY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Audrey scrambles into her room and slams the door behind her. She puts all her weight behind it, expecting Stanley to come after her, but he doesn't.

INT. KITCHEN, FARMHOUSE - DUSK

Stanley sits down and continues his supper trying to pretend nothing ever happened.

Jimmy is still in shock.

STANLEY

For goodness sake Jimmy sit down
will you!

He does as he is told. They both sit in silence, Jimmy trying not to cry.

EXT. FARMHOUSE/FIELDS - DAWN

The sun has already risen above the horizon, pushing back the night sky.

Below, a dozen men, evenly spread across the fields, move back and forth, prodding the ground with sticks, edging closer to the farm.

A member of the Home Guard approaches the front door and knocks loudly several times.

INT. AUDREY'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Audrey wakes with a start and sits up, checking the bedroom door where a chair is now wedged against it.

She breathes a sigh of relief.

The front door bangs three more times, echoing through the farmhouse.

STANLEY

Alright!

Stanley's footsteps head down the landing, passing her bedroom door and down the stairs.

Audrey leaps out of bed.

INT./EXT. FRONT DOOR, FARMHOUSE - MORNING

Stanley opens the door, still buttoning up his shirt. Jimmy appears behind his father, also putting his clothes on.

HOME GUARD

Sorry to bother you so early this morning Mr Baxter. An enemy plane from the raid on Tyneside yesterday came down in the adjoining valley.

Audrey thunders down the stairs, catches everyone's attention. She quickly recomposes herself.

HOME GUARD (CONT'D)

We believe one of the crew members survived and may be hiding out.

STANLEY

On my farm?

HOME GUARD

Quite possibly. Would you mind if we...

STANLEY

No, not at all.

Jimmy pushes forward.

JIMMY

I know all the places to hide around here!

HOME GUARD

That's very helpful.

The home guard looks to Stanley, as he grabs his shotgun from the wall. Stanley nods his approval, gathering some extra shells.

HOME GUARD (CONT'D)

Just stay close to your Father...

He pulls out an service whistle on a lanyard, from his uniform.

HOME GUARD (CONT'D)

...and take this just in case you get separated. If you see anything suspicious, give it a good hard blow.

Jimmy nods excitedly.

Stanley passes Jimmy his coat and grabs his own, turning to Audrey, who tenses up.

STANLEY

Best you get on with your morning chores.

Jimmy pulls a face at Audrey, as Stanley slams the door behind them.

Audrey can hear their muffled voices.

HOME GUARD

I hope I didn't scare your daughter, she looked a little...

JIMMY

She's not his daughter, she's just a stupid Vaccie!

STANLEY

Jimmy!
(to the home guard)
She's tougher than she looks, believe me.

Audrey huffs and feeling downtrodden, heads off down the hallway and towards the kitchen. She opens the door and gasps with surprise.

Halfway in the back door, frozen in his tracks, is the German pilot.

He stares back at her terrified, holding his finger to his lips and then puts his open hands up in desperation.

PILOT

Please!
(in German; subtitled)
I mustn't get caught. I have to get home.

She looks confused. She doesn't understand him. Stanley, Jimmy and the homeguard are walking around into the yard.

She frantically beckons him in.

INT. AUDREY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Audrey leads the pilot into her room and puts the chair against the door again.

AUDREY

Sit.

She gently nudges him down onto the bed, takes his photograph out of her pocket and offers it back to him.

He hesitantly takes it from her. His hand is shaking.

PILOT
(In German; subtitled)
Thank you.

She is taken back by the sincerity in his eyes.

PILOT (CONT'D)
*I need to find a boat. I have to
get back to Germany.*

He makes a wave movement with his hand and taps his chest.
She doesn't understand.

He sees a pencil sticking out of a notebook beside her bed
and placing the photo on the bare floorboards, draws a house
around it, followed by a crude boat, drawing an arrow from
the boat to the photo.

PILOT (CONT'D)
A boat to Germany

He taps the girl in the photo.

PILOT (CONT'D)
My daughter...

He suddenly loses his voice and has to recompose himself.

PILOT (CONT'D)
...I am all she has left.

He grabs her hand and squeezes it tightly with both of his.

PILOT (CONT'D)
I have to get back to her.

He starts to sob uncontrollably. Audrey is shocked. She
notices a wedding ring on his finger.

AUDREY
What about your wife?

He looks up at her confused. She points to his ring. He
takes in a deep breath and shakes his head.

Audrey's heart sinks to her stomach. He sniffs, wiping his
eyes.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
Let me help you. What do you need?

He looks confused.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
Food, Water?

She pretends to put food in her mouth. He nods.

PILOT

Yes, yes thank you

She turns to exit, but he grabs her arm, holding up his finger, pulling out a German-made navigators map enthusiastically from his jacket. He lays it on the bed. It is a map of Northumbria.

He taps his chest and then points to South Shields.

She nods.

He taps the ground and circles the Northumberland area, shrugging. Asking her to show him where he is on the map?

She nods in acknowledgement and turns the map around to study it. He watches her impatiently.

Eventually she identifies their location and points to an area north-west of Newcastle.

AUDREY

We're just here. ...I think.

His eyes fill with hope and he quickly spins the map back round to study it further. His finger trails down to South Shields again and taps it, looking up at her.

PILOT

There are commercial vessels crossing the Channel here, with equipment and supplies for your troops. If I can get on board one of them, there's a chance I can get back to my daughter.

Audrey smiles politely even though she has no idea what he just said.

He scrambles across the bed and pulling the curtain aside, points down to Jimmy's bike in the yard. He then points to himself and then to South Shields on the map and then to the boat drawing on the floor.

She suddenly understands everything and nods in approval, tugging on his jacket and trousers.

AUDREY

Clothes, you'll need proper clothes!

Filled with renewed energy and zest, she signals for him to follow her.

Hesitantly he does.

INT. STANLEY'S BEDROOM, FARMHOUSE - DAY

Audrey bursts into Stanley's bedroom and opens the wardrobe. She starts rifling through his clothes.

The pilot stands in the doorway, glancing down the hallway, looking very uneasy.

She pulls out a pair of trousers and a shirt from the back and holds them up to him for size. She swaps them around, eventually hands him a different pair.

She glances through the window to make sure nobody is coming, then opens the chest of drawers and grabs underpants, a vest and some socks. She is about to close the drawer when she spots something underneath.

She pulls out a wad of letters she thought she had sent to her Mother, held together with an elastic band.

She stands up and looks back at the Pilot with utter shock.

She opens the top letter in the pile to check they are definitely hers. Her eyes scan back and forth reading: "Dear Mother" and at the end, "please write back soon, I miss you so very much. All my love Audrey."

Audrey weeps with relief, stuffing them all in her pocket.

She slides the drawer shut, hands him his underwear and hurries him out of the room.

INT. LANDING, FARMHOUSE - DAY

Audrey shoves the Pilot back into the bedroom and signals him to get changed, indicating to push the chair up against the door.

AUDREY

Just in case!

She closes the door and heads downstairs.

INT. KITCHEN, FARMHOUSE - DAY

Audrey bursts into the kitchen and quickly shoves an apple and some bread in her pinafore pocket. She grabs a container to fill with water, but as she turns to the sink, she sees Jimmy standing there in the doorway looking shocked.

JIMMY

What are you doing?

AUDREY

I... I'm hungry.

There is a creak upstairs. Jimmy blows the whistle. Audrey panics and runs towards the stairs.

INT. STAIRS, FARMHOUSE - DAY

Audrey scrambles up the stairs, but Jimmy pulls her back, pushing past her, heading for her bedroom.

INT. AUDREY'S BEDROOM, FARMHOUSE - DAY

Jimmy bursts into the room, but to his (and then Audrey's) surprise, the Pilot is nowhere to be seen.

Jimmy searches the room in a manic frenzy, but there is no sign of him.

VOLUNTEER
(from downstairs)
You alright fella? What is it?

Jimmy checks his own room and Stanleys to no avail and rushes down the stairs, past the volunteer. Audrey, confused, heads back down after him.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Jimmy comes flying out of the house to find his Father, the Home Guard and several more volunteers rushing to his aid.

STANLEY
Jimmy, what is it?

JIMMY
She's hiding him!

Audrey comes out in protest.

AUDREY
I'm not hiding anyone!

JIMMY
I just caught her stealing food for him!

AUDREY
I wasn't stealing anything! I was hungry!

JIMMY
Liar!

STANLEY
Well where is he lad?

JIMMY

I don't know, but I know she's
hiding something, I can see it in
her eyes!

The home Guard relax, thinking the boy's got carried away.

Jimmy grabs her.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Just look at her!

AUDREY

Ow! Get off me!

STANLEY

Jimmy!

VOLUNTEER

Hey now fella, easy!

The man prises Jimmy's hand off her arm, but he's not finished.

JIMMY

You're a traitor!

He spits at her.

Stanley quickly intervenes, grabbing the boy's arm and yanking him away to one side.

STANLEY

What's the matter with you lad?
Calm down!

Jimmy is livid. His eyes burning into Audrey, as the concerned volunteer puts a reassuring hand on her shoulder

Stanley hits him hard across the head, stunning him into submission.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Enough!

The first Volunteer comes back out of the house.

VOLUNTEER

It's all empty up there as far as I
can see.

Stanley looks up at Audrey's bedroom window, pondering.

STANLEY

Right then Jimmy, as you know these valleys so well, you can make up for wasting everyone's time by helping these men locate all the derelict buildings around here, to make sure the bastard's not hiding there.

He pats Jimmy on the back and nudges him towards the Home Guard. The Home Guard tips his hat to Stanley.

HOME GUARD

Much obliged.
(to his men)
Right then gentlemen, lets crack on.

Humiliated, Jimmy droops his head down and leads the volunteers off the farm.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Watching Jimmy lead the men off into the valley, Stanley calmly addresses Audrey, who stands tentatively behind him.

STANLEY

What happens on this farm is nobody else's business you hear? ...and that can apply for whatever it is that you're up to. Agreed?

She is trembling with fear unable to speak. He turns his head slightly. She steps back.

AUDREY

Yes.

STANLEY

Now get on with your chores!

He walks away. Audrey immediately picks up the fork and starts shovelling manure into the barrow, glancing up at her room. Desperate to know where the pilot went.

INT. KITCHEN, FARMHOUSE - DUSK

Audrey walks in looking a complete wreck. Stanley and Jimmy are sitting in front of empty bowls, cleaning them up with the last of the bread.

She looks in the pot on the stove. There is nothing left.

JIMMY

As you've already eaten today, I didn't think you'd be hungry.

She looks like she is about to cry, but holds it in and heads straight to the hallway.

Jimmy and Stanley exchange looks.

INT. BEDROOM, FARMHOUSE - DUSK

Audrey enters the room, wedging the chair against the door and collapses on the bed, trying not to cry.

In the far corner of the ceiling, a discreet loft hatch begins to slide quietly aside, making her jump.

She stares into the pitch black square. Eventually the Pilot's face emerges, with his finger to his lips.

She gets up, beaming with relief, as he carefully lowers himself down, using her shoulder for balance.

Audrey can't wait and hugs him tightly as if he were her own father. The Pilot is taken back, comforting her in return.

Eventually Audrey pulls away. She points at him, at herself and then pulling out her wad of letters, points at her Newcastle address.

He looks unsure.

AUDREY

It'll be safer for you. People will think you're me Dad.

He points at himself.

PILOT

Father?

She nods, her eyes deadly serious.

He points at himself, then at her, then away from them both and at the floor, resting his cheek against his closed palms to symbolise sleep.

AUDREY

We leave when they're asleep.

He puts his thumb up. She does the same. He then climbs back up into the loft hatch and lays the lid back on.

Audrey's heart is pumping with adrenaline.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

The farm is illuminated by a crisp full moon.

EXT. LANDING - NIGHT

Audrey's bedroom door opens slightly to reveal a pair of eyes peering out. Stanley can be heard snoring. All is clear.

Audrey and the pilot creep out onto the landing and head down the stairs. They wince as the occasional floorboard creaks under their feet.

INT. KITCHEN, FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Audrey and the Pilot creep through the dark kitchen and reaching the back door, turn the door knob to find it has been locked.

The other door to the hallway squeaks closed, revealing Jimmy, hidden in the darkness behind it, pointing his Dad's shotgun at them.

AUDREY

Jimmy, open the door!

JIMMY

What, so you can run off to Germany, you nazi cow! ...Dad!

AUDREY

He has a young daughter. He has to get back to her, that's all.

JIMMY

You think I'm stupid? ...DAD! get down here now!

He steps forward, raising the gun more directly. She blocks the pilot.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

I'll shoot you too if I have to.

AUDREY

Jimmy please, just let us go.

A groggy Stanley struggles down the stairs.

STANLEY

For God's sake Jimmy what's all the..

He appears in the doorway in his underwear.

JIMMY

I told you she was hiding him!

Stanley's face fills with anguish.

STANLEY

Jimmy put the gun down!

He tries to take it from the boy, but he retreats.

JIMMY

What are you doing?!

Stanley stands in front of the pilot.

STANLEY

I said put the gun down lad.

JIMMY

No!

Stanley attempts to move Audrey out of the way, but she recoils back with fear, stumbling over herself.

The penny suddenly drops for Jimmy and the Pilot.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

What did you do?

Stanley has no words.

Jimmy looks at Audrey for an answer, but all she can do is look down in shame, shaking her head, weeping.

AUDREY

Please just let us go!

Stanley suddenly grabs the shotgun from his son and yanks it from him. Pointing it back at him.

STANLEY

Just give them the damn key!

Crying from such betrayal, he pulls it out of his pocket and throws it onto the floor. Audrey scrambles to pick it up and frantically fumbles to unlock the door. Finally opening it and dragging the pilot out with her.

In despair, Stanley lowers the gun and tries to comfort his son, but he too flinches backwards.

JIMMY

Get away from me!

Jimmy slowly collapses into a twisted ball of writhing pain on the kitchen floor. Stanley can do nothing.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

The Pilot and Audrey clamber onto Jimmy's bicycle and flee the farmhouse, peddling down the hill, in the moonlight and eventually disappearing into the misty valley.

Lit only by moonlight, the pilot and Audrey hurry away from the farmhouse, wheeling the bicycle up onto the country road.

The pilot climbs onto the bike. Audrey sits in the basket frame welded into the handlebars. She checks she has the letters to her mother, squeezing them tightly with anticipation.

The pilot senses her anguish and places his hands gently on her shoulders.

She takes one last look back at the farmhouse, before tapping him to go.

The pilot places both hands on the handlebars and pushes away with his foot.

The bike wobbles at first, but as he picks up speed the front wheel begins to steady as they accelerate down the hill.

Gradually they fade into the misty valley below.

THE END