

WAR LOST

by

Derek Boyes

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Derek Boyes
4 King Street
West Malling
Kent
ME19 6QT
01732 870 999
derek.delfilm@gmail.com

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EXT. NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTRYSIDE - DUSK

1

Title: 7th July 1940.

The peaceful countryside is disturbed by the rumbling of a black Austin 18 that appears over the brim of the hill and drives away from a picturesque village.

The car heads along a winding country road surrounded by rolling hills.

2

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DUSK

2

The Austin pulls up outside a run-down farmhouse.

Gladys, a stern woman, escorts a dirty ragged 12 year-old girl to the front door and knocks loudly.

GLADYS

Mr Baxter?

She impatiently knocks again.

GLADYS (CONT'D)

Mr Baxter!

She is about to knock again, when the front door opens to reveal STANLEY BAXTER, a weathered looking man in his late fifties.

Gladys gives him a disapproving stare before easing the shy girl out from behind her.

GLADYS (CONT'D)

This is Audrey.

Stanley looks down at the dishevelled girl. She has a big brown label attached through her coat button hole and a cardboard gas mask box hung around her neck. He looks agitated by her presence.

STANLEY

I asked for a boy!

GLADYS

Well as you failed to turn up to the village hall today, I'm afraid you don't get to choose. Now please make sure she reports to Miss Hamilton at the village school at nine o'clock tomorrow morning.

She turns and heads back to her car. Stanley chases after her.

STANLEY

What blimming use is she on a farm?

GLADYS

Mr Baxter, may I remind you that by law it is your obligation.

She climbs back into the car and drives off, leaving him standing there looking frustrated.

Eventually he turns back to Audrey. She is scared stiff. He nods for her to go inside. She does as she is told. He sighs, following her in.

3 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT.

3

Stanley's son JIMMY (14), pours a jug of cold water over Audrey's soapy head. She gasps unable to breath. She is sat in a tin bathtub by the stove with her knees tightly curled up to her chest.

JIMMY

You never had a wash before?

Jimmy scrubs her dirty face with a cloth while Stanley picks up Audrey's filthy clothes with some tongs and shoves them into the stove fire.

He steals a look at Audrey. She is quite pretty now that all the dirt has been removed. Agitated, he grabs the towel and throws it over to Jimmy.

STANLEY

Make up the bed in the front room.
She'll have to wear your old clothes for now.

Stanley grabs his pipe and tobacco tin and heads outside. Jimmy is not pleased.

JIMMY

Out you get then.

Audrey shakes her head, shivering with cold. He sighs.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Suit yourself.

He throws the towel on the floor and storms off up the stairs.

Once Audrey hears the floor boards creaking above, she jumps out of the tub, grabs the towel and wraps it tightly around herself.

4 EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

4

Stanley lights his pipe and paces up and down the yard puffing deeply. The Farmhouse is bathed in moonlight.

He stops at the gate and looks out into the night with a troubled expression.

5 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT.

5

Audrey peeks through the blackout curtain, peering down at Stanley leaning against the gate. She can tell he is not happy, even with his back to her.

Sensing he is being watched, Stanley turns around, looking up at her window.

Audrey scrambles off the bed with fear, letting the drapes fall back over the window. She stands frozen in the middle of her make-shift room, dressed in an oversized shirt. She listens intently.

The front door clunks shut, followed by Stanley's footsteps on the stairs. Audrey panics, blows out the candle and scrambles under her bed covers.

The footsteps stop outside her room. The bedroom door latch snaps up. Audrey closes her eyes, pretending to be asleep. The door opens quietly. Stanley, in silhouette, steps into the room. He stands over her, lingering hesitantly.

Audrey dare not even breath, waiting anxiously for him to do something, but he just stands there staring. Eventually he turns back and closes the door behind him.

Audrey opens her eyes, listening to his footsteps heading towards his room, followed by a bedroom door closing. She takes a deep breath as her eyes begin to well.

Eventually she turns over to face the wall and sobs into her pillow.

6 EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAWN

6

Title: Five weeks later (15th August 1940).

It is a fresh misty morning. Audrey is struggling to carry milk from the barn on a shoulder yoke.

Jimmy leaps out from behind a hay stack, making her jump. She spills some of the milk.

JIMMY

Careful, you don't want to ruin
that pretty dress of yours.

Audrey tries to ignore him, but he blocks her path.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

(referring to her dress)
Me Dad get you that?

AUDREY

No.

JIMMY

Liar!

AUDREY

Mrs Hamilton did actually.

She tries to get past again but once more he blocks her.

JIMMY

Teacher's pet too then hey?

Audrey tries a third time but he grabs her by the arm.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

He's MY Dad not yours!

Jimmy leans in with a threatening stare. Behind him Stanley steps out of the backdoor.

STANLEY

What you playing at lad?

Jimmy quickly backs down, grabs the crank handle from under the tractor seat and inserts it into the front of the engine. He gives Audrey another dirty look as he turns it. The tractor suddenly coughs and spurts to life.

Stanley dumps a load of farm equipment on the back of the tractor as Jimmy climbs aboard.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

If there's not enough leaves to fill the cart, top it up with nettles on the way back.

Jimmy reverses the tractor out of the barn, while Stanley opens the gate for him. As Jimmy pulls away he stares at Audrey again. She sticks her tongue out at him.

Stanley waves at Jimmy as he passes, before retrieving the post from a wooden box fixed to the fence. He flicks through several letters. One is addressed to Audrey. He surreptitiously slips it into his pocket and closes the gate.

When he turns around, Audrey is standing in front of him. He gives her an irritated look, offering out the letters.

She snatches them out of his hand and hurriedly fingers through them. Her face drops with disappointment. He grabs them back.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Satisfied?

She turns back to her chores. Stanley watches her. His eyes linger. He nervously wet his lips and looks around the farm to check it is empty.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Audrey!

She turns around. He swallows.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Come on inside for a minute will you.

She stares at him. He feels exposed, wishing he could take it back, but then she drops her rake reluctantly and does as she is told. Surprised, he looks around the empty farm once more before following her in. He locks the door behind him.

We move slowly away from the farmhouse not wanting to hear the disturbing sounds of Audrey's muffled protest.

Eventually the tranquil sounds of the countryside drown out her attack.

7 INT. KITCHEN, FARMHOUSE - MORNING

7

Stanley, hot and sweaty, comes down stairs, tucking his shirt back into his trousers and zipping up his flies.

He turns on the tap and washes his hands and face with the freezing cold water. He stands up straight and closes his eyes, letting the water run down his face.

Audrey's figure darts across the kitchen behind him. Stanley opens his eyes and turns around to see her disappearing out of the front door.

He steps over to the window and peers out to see her running as fast as she can towards the valley.

He catches his reflection in a mirror hanging on the wall. He is disgusted by what he sees and starts weeping uncontrollably.

8 EXT. FARM YARD/FIELD - MIDDAY

8

With tears running down her face, Audrey runs and runs and runs.

She scrambles up a hill and eventually running out of energy, collapses on a ledge close to the top.

Through the blustering wind she hears the distant sound of bombing and the crack, crack, crack of machine gun fire.

She sits up and looks across the horizon towards the coast. Far off in the distance are the faint patterns of dog fight trails in the sky. She stops crying, sniffing and wiping the tears from her face. She is mesmerised.

The bombs and gunfire die down and she is suddenly aware of something behind her.

She turns around to see a sheep staring right at her, chewing on a mouthful of grass. She crouches down, edging a little closer. It continues to chew, its eyes fixed on her.

She pulls up some grass and offers it to the sheep. It seems to consider it, but then runs away alarmed. Audrey frowns.

Through the wind, she hears the faint sound of a struggling engine behind her. She stands up and turns around.

A plane appears through the clouds. The left engine is on fire and is pluming with smoke. Her eyes widen in amazement.

It is heading in her direction, getting bigger and bigger and bigger. It's German. A Heinkel III bomber. The enormous plane begins to tilt as it drops from the sky towards her.

Fear fills her stomach. She runs as fast as she can up the hill to find cover on the other side, but the plane is coming in too fast.

The sound of the engine gets increasingly louder. It is upon her, spiralling out of control. There's no more time left. She drops to the ground in a terrified ball, as the bomber swoops past just metres above her head. The sound of the engine roars through her body.

Audrey looks up and leaps to her feet, her eyes glistening with adrenaline. There is an almighty crunch of tearing metal and splintering of tree branches. A huge ball of fire rises out of the woods in the valley below.

Inexplicably drawn to the smouldering wreckage, Audrey races down the hill.

9

EXT. WOODLAND - DAY

9

Audrey hurries through the wood, but as she comes across the shredded rear wing of the plane, she slows right down. The branches in the trees above have been sheered clean off.

A few hundred yards in front is the smouldering remains of the bomber plane. All that is left is a charred twisted shell, barely visible through the thick black toxic smoke.

She ducks under a half fallen tree to find one of the pilots, now a burnt and twisted mess on the woodland floor. His feet are bare and his charred clothing has been partially stripped from his body, due to the impact.

She cautiously steps around him, looking deeper into the remains of the cockpit. The smell of burning flesh is overpowering. She covers her nose with her hand. Through the smoke she glimpses another black charred body slumped in the pilot seat.

Unable to stomach any more, she turns to run only to see a third Luftwaffe pilot slumped against a tree, with his head hanging down. He is not nearly as burnt, but still looks dead.

Audrey approaches him. He is clutching something in his hand. Curious she leans down and gently slides the piece of card out of his hand.

She steps back and looks down at the photograph. It shows a man and a girl who look like father and daughter. The girl is a similar age to Audrey.

The pilot suddenly coughs heavily. Audrey jumps. He lifts his head up and looks up at her. Audrey flees in horror.

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

10 EXT. VALLEY/WOODLAND - DAY 10

Audrey runs as fast as she can through the woodland and out into the valley. She is terrified!

11 EXT. FIELD - DAY 11

Audrey runs across the freshly ploughed field.

Panting heavily, she reaches the fence at the top edge and is about to climb over but stops.

Jimmy has arrived back on the tractor with a huge pile of sugar beet leaves. Stanley opens the gate for him and he parks up next to a large corrugated drum.

She watches them forking the leaves off the cart and into the silage drum. She looks down and opens her hand to reveal the German pilot's photo still in it.

12 EXT. CORNFIELD - DAY 12

Audrey slumps down against a hay bail and looks out to the beautiful green countryside. She tilts her face up to the sun and closes her eyes, taking in the summer heat.

The peaceful sounds of rural England are broken by the sound of approaching vehicles at the bottom of the field.

She opens her eyes to see two black cars and an army green truck, with a white military police sign on, heading towards the crash site.

She pulls the photograph carefully out of her pocket and studies it in more detail. She is mesmerised by the sense of joy between the man and the girl.

13 EXT. FARMHOUSE - DUSK 13

The farmhouse is in silhouette against a red sky. Audrey is standing at the edge of the field, hesitating. Eventually she traipses towards it.

14 INT. KITCHEN, FARMHOUSE - DUSK 14

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

The back door opens. Audrey walks in. Stanley ignores her.

She 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 quietly. Jimmy is agitated by her appearance.

JIMMY
Busy day Audrey?

She ignores him and continues to eat.

She reaches for the last piece of bread, but Jimmy grabs it first and stuffs it in his mouth on purpose.

She throws her bowl of stew over him. He jolts back in his chair, scalded by the hot liquid. He lunges at her.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
You stupid bloody scab!

He chases 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!

Audrey stops at the stairs and looks around with horror. Jimmy holds his cheek, stunned into silence. Stanley looks back at Audrey. Scared, she runs upstairs.

15 INT. AUDREY'S BEDROOM/ATTIC - NIGHT 15

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.

16 INT. KITCHEN, FARMHOUSE - DUSK 16

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 and they both sit in silence. Jimmy tries not to cry.

17 INT. AUDREY'S BEDROOM/ATTIC - NIGHT 17

Audrey eventually steps away from the door.

She notices a wooden chair by the dresser and quietly props the back of it up against the door handle to stop anyone from entering.

She sits back on the edge of her bed and stares at the light under the door.

18 EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT 18

The wind howls across the fields. A gate clanks in it's bracket.

19 EXT. FIELDS - DAWN 19

A dozen torchlights, evenly spread across the fields, move back and forth, edging closer to the farm.

20 INT. AUDREY'S BEDROOM - DAWN 20

Hearing banging, Audrey wakes with a start and sits up. She immediately checks that the chair is still wedged against the door. It is.

Three more bangs on the front door echo through the farmhouse. Audrey hears Stanley opening his bedroom door.

STANLEY

Alright!

His footsteps pass her bedroom and hurry down the stairs.

Audrey peeks through the blackout curtains to see several home guards scouring the fields with sticks.

She leaps out of bed and starts getting dressed.

21 INT./EXT. BACKDOOR, FARMHOUSE - MORNING

21

Stanley opens the door, still buttoning up his shirt. Jimmy appears behind his father in just his vest and underpants.

HOME GUARD

Sorry to bother you so early this morning Mr Baxter. An enemy plane from the raid on Tyneside yesterday came down on the other side of the 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 in the area.

STANLEY

On my farm?

HOME GUARD

Would you mind if we had a look.

STANLEY

No, not at all.

Audrey barges past Jimmy.

AUDREY

Can I help?

Jimmy slaps Audrey over the head

JIMMY

What use would you be?
(to the home guard)
Let me find the kraut
bastard for you!

STANLEY

Jimmy!

HOME GUARD

The lad can join us if he wants.

(to Jimmy)

Just as long as you stay close to
the other men and do as they say.

Jimmy looks to Stanley who nods. Jimmy runs excitedly back up
stairs to get dressed.

STANLEY

Well in that case...

He grabs his coat and turns to Audrey.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

You stay here and make a start on
the cow shed.

Audrey looks at him blankly.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Off you go then.

She looks at the home guard.

HOME GUARD

Your father just wants you safe
love that's all.

AUDREY

He is NOT my Dad!

She storms out the door and heads towards the farthest cow
shed, leaving the Home Guard feeling awkward.

HOME GUARD

Right then, follow me.

Stanley follows him around towards the front of the farmhouse
where the rest of the search party have regrouped.

Moments later Jimmy, now dressed, stumbles out of the house
and hurries after them.

22

INT. COWS SHED - MORNING

22

Audrey reluctantly picks up a spade and dragging it along the
ground, stops in front of a huge pile of manure. She takes a
deep breath before shovelling a load into the barrow and then
stops.

Cowering in the corner of the paddock is the German pilot,
holding his open palms up at her in desperation. He looks
terrified.

PILOT

Please!
(In German; subtitled)
I have to get home.

Audrey looks confused. She doesn't understand him. The pilot suddenly cowers back into the corner.

Audrey spins around to see two home guards in front of her.

VOLUNTEER

We need to take a quick look around
if you don't mind.

She doesn't know what to say. The two volunteers step into the paddock, but Audrey stops them.

AUDREY

There's nobody here, I've already
checked.

Before they can protest, Audrey turns her back on them and carries on with her work.

Too embarrassed to dispute her statement, the men move on. As soon as they disappear around the corner, she drops the shovel and turns back to the pilot.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Quickly!

She beckons him to follow her. Surprised, he scrambles to his feet. He follows her out of the paddock and through an alley between two farm buildings.

23 EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY 23

Audrey and the pilot emerge from the alley and climb over a fence. She checks nobody can see them before guiding him along the winding stream towards the next valley.

24 EXT/INT. ABANDONED DRYSTONE HUT - DAY 24

Audrey leads the pilot towards a partially collapsed hut. They cautiously enter.

AUDREY

You'll be safer here.

He looks around at the scattered old bits of broken furniture and abandoned household paraphernalia.

He spies an old bicycle among the rusted junk and scrambles over to it, pulling it out to examine it.

It's very rusty, but most of the essential parts are there.

As he looks around for more useful bits of scrap, Audrey takes the photograph out of her pocket and looks at it hesitantly.

The Pilot eventually notices what she is looking at and stops. She steps forward and offers it back to him. He takes the picture and looks at it, then back at her.

PILOT

Thank you.

He pockets it safely.

PILOT (CONT'D)

I need to find a boat.

He makes a 'wave' movement with his hand and taps his chest.

PILOT (CONT'D)

...I have to get back to Germany.

She doesn't understand.

He grabs a broken dowel from a upturned chair and crouching down, draws a crude boat in the dirt. He places the photo on the ground and draws a house around it, then a line 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 loses his voice, suddenly filled with emotion. He has to recompose himself.

PILOT (CONT'D)

...she is sick, very sick.

He can no longer control his emotions and starts to sob uncontrollably. Audrey is taken back.

PILOT (CONT'D)

(Weeping)

I have to be with her. She's all I have.

He pretends to cradle a baby and then with his fists clenched and arms crossed, thumps them on his chest.

She notices a wedding ring on his finger.

AUDREY

What about your wife?

He looks up at her confused. She taps the picture.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
Where's her mother?

PILOT
Mother?

He swallows and shakes his head.

PILOT (CONT'D)
She was killed.

He imitates the sound of a bomb exploding. Audrey's heart sinks to her stomach. He sniffs, wiping tears from his eyes.

AUDREY
What do you need, tell me what you need and I'll get it!

He looks surprised. He tugs on his jacket, opening his palms out.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
Clothes, you need clothes. I can get you clothes. What else? Food? You want some food? Water?

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

PILOT
Yes, thank you ...and some tools, ...oil ...and, and a torch.

She looks blankly at him. He mimes fixing and oiling the rusty bike beside him and pretends to use a torch light.

AUDREY
Okay yes, I think understand.

She backs away and points behind her.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
I better get back or they'll miss me. You stay here. Don't go anywhere till I return? Just stay here.

He nods, only partially understanding. She turns and runs.

***** TO READ MORE PLEASE CONTACT DELFILM *****