

Dark Forces

by

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FADE IN:

INT. COMMON ROOM, ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD - DAY

Caption: Oxford, 1910

A rowdy party. Boys having a good time drinking, smoking, dancing to music. In a corner four students are playing cards. Among them, OSWALD RAYNER, 22, youthful, handsome looking.

STUDENT #1
(to Rayner)
Your shout.

On Rayner's cards: Seven of Diamonds, Eight of Diamonds, Ten of Spades, Ace of Diamonds, Seven of Clubs.

RAYNER
(studying his cards)
Diamonds.

STUDENT #1
Alright, diamonds are trumps.
Minimum stake three shillings,
maximum stake...

STUDENT #2
The rights to your father's
inheritance!

The boys all laugh as they put their stakes into the centre of the table.

STUDENT #1
(to Student #2)
Get on with it you cheeky sod.

Student #2 leads with a Jack of Spades. It is the highest card of the round.

Student #3 then leads with a Six of Clubs. Rayner beats it with his Seven of Clubs, but Student #1 beats it with a Ten of Diamonds.

STUDENT #3
(to Rayner)
That's a funny looking diamond.

Rayner says nothing, he leads the next hand with his Ace of Diamonds. Onlookers mutter judgmentally. Student #1 plays a Nine of Diamonds, Student #2 has no trumps, plays the Nine of Hearts. Student #3 plays the Queen of Diamonds.

RAYNER
Is that more to your liking?

Student #1 smirks confidently as he leads with a Queen of Spades. Student #2 beats it with a King of Spades. Student #3 plays the Jack of Hearts. Rayner cannot win, plays his Seven of Diamonds.

STUDENT #3

(to Rayner)

How about that? It is to my liking
after all.

Rayner says nothing.

STUDENT #1

Last hand. Let's see if Oswald can
win back some pride.

Student #2 leads with the Ten of Hearts. Student #3 beats it
with the King of Hearts. Rayner, feeling confident, plays
his Eight of Diamonds.

STUDENT #1

(enjoying this)

Oh Oswald, it pains me, it really
does.

Student #1 plays the Jack of Diamonds. The onlookers mutter
again, it's clear they think Rayner blew it.

STUDENT #1

So I think that makes Harry and me
the winners. But when your opponent
leads with an ace trump it was
never in doubt.

Student #1 and Student #3 collect the winnings from the
middle of the table.

STUDENT #3

Another game?

RAYNER

Not for me.

STUDENT #1

Smart thinking. Come on then
Bowden, you can fill in for Rayner.

Rayner leaves the table. A student approaches him, this is
FELIX YUSUPOV, 23, boyish looks. He is drunk.

YUSUPOV

Well Oswald that was the most
tragic display of cards I have ever
seen. What possessed you to play
that hand?

RAYNER

It was a miscalculation. I thought
the diamonds would see me through.
I was wrong.

YUSUPOV

You play that game like a frightened child. You need some wine in you! Calm the nerves and make the bold moves!

RAYNER

Thank you Felix, but I would rather keep my inhibitions today.

YUSUPOV

Oh where's the fun in you? We are graduates of the finest university in the world. We are the pioneers, the greats. My friend we are the ones to make history.

Yusupov sloshes his drink over Rayner.

RAYNER

Right now Felix you are the one making a bloody mess.

YUSUPOV

Listen to me Oswald. One day we will have a choice to become great men, or be the men who look up to the great men. But today, that choice is a long way away, so you might as well drink.

RAYNER

(caving)

Alright. Just one.

YUSUPOV

Ha ha!

(pours him a drink)

There you are my friend.

The two take a drink.

RAYNER

What will you do after this?

YUSUPOV

I will go back to Russia.

RAYNER

Have you got something prepared?

YUSUPOV

Ha! When I return I shall be the richest man in the empire! My brother, may God rest his soul, my brother's death was the greatest thing that ever happened to me. It is sad, yes, but it is my right to

(MORE)

YUSUPOV (cont'd)
 claim my family's fortune. So when
 I go home I do not need to prepare
 anything except a guest room for
 you. You must come to St Petersburg
 and stay with me. Promise me
 Oswald, promise me you'll stay.

RAYNER
 Of course. But not right away. I
 intend to find work first.

YUSUPOV
 (groans dramatically)
 Where is the fun in work?

RAYNER
 I must work Felix. Something in law
 perhaps.

YUSUPOV
 (groans dramatically)
 Oh Oswald, you bore me!

RAYNER
 I'm sorry Felix, but your vision of
 grandeur and greatness is not mine.

YUSUPOV
 Then I will have to live the life
 for both of us!
 (shouts to the room)
 To everlasting grandeur!

The boys all cheer and toast the prospect. Yusupov puts his
 arm around Rayner.

EXT. NO MAN'S LAND - NIGHT

Caption over action: 1916

A soldier peeks over the lip of a shell crater. This is JOHN
 SCALE. 34, boot polish on his face masks his striking,
 handsome features. Three more soldiers lie in wait in the
 crater.

Scale's POV: A maze of wire guarding the German front line.

Scale beckons his men to follow him as he crawls out of the
 crater. A flare goes up, the men freeze. When darkness
 returns they crawl to the wire.

SCALE
 (whispers)
 Wire cutters.

A soldier hands him a set of heavy pliers. Scale tentatively
 snips the wire, pausing after each cut, listening.

EXT. GERMAN TRENCH - NIGHT

Scale and his men drop silently into the trench.

Scale's POV: Light from a dugout up ahead

SFX: German voices and laughter coming from the dugout.

Scale beckons his men to follow quietly. They line up outside the dugout. Scale gives his men a nod before taking out a grenade, pulling the pin, and after three seconds tossing it into the dugout. The explosion is terrific, cries of wounded Germans pierce the night as Scale and a soldier storm inside.

INT. GERMAN DUGOUT - NIGHT

The dugout has been destroyed, bunks, food, ammunition, all sorts of supplies lie ruined about the place. Three Germans lie dead, another two are wounded.

SCALE

Collins!

The soldier lunges at one of the Germans. They wrestle. The other German tries to help but Scale beats him over the head with a spiked club. Scale then joins the struggle, forcing the German into submission.

SCALE

(to soldier)

Time to go.

EXT. GERMAN TRENCH - NIGHT

Scale and the soldier emerge with the wounded German.

SCALE

(to soldiers)

Withdraw!

The soldiers haul the German over the parapet.

EXT. NO MAN'S LAND - NIGHT

Scale and his men run blindly through the night, the German being carried on one of the soldier's shoulders. A machine gun fires into the darkness.

SFX: Machine gun bullets zip past them.

On Scale: Full of adrenaline, not fear.

EXT. BRITISH WIRE - NIGHT

Scale and his men approach the British trench in complete darkness as the machine gun fire continues. Scale squints to see the silhouette of a British sentry.

SCALE
(shouting)
Private!

SENTRY
(calling)
Major?!

SCALE
That'll do! No point bothering with
the password!
(to raiding party)
On me.

As Scale and his men reach the British line, a flare goes up. The machine gun targets them. Instinctively, Scale and his men rush towards the British trench. As they jump to safety, British rifle fire covers them.

INT. BRITISH DUGOUT - NIGHT

The German is lowered into a chair. Scale stands before him.

SCALE
Search him.

A soldier removes the German's coat and searches through the pockets. Finds the German's paybook, hands it to Scale.

SCALE
(reading)
36th Infantry Division?

The German nods frantically.

SCALE
Sprechen sie Englisch?

The German nods again.

SCALE
How long have you been in the line?

GERMAN
(nervous)
Two days.

SCALE
Where were you before?

GERMAN
Flers.

SCALE
In the line?

The German shakes his head.

GERMAN

Field camp.

SCALE

(to soldier)

Message for Division. 36th Infantry Division moved into the line from Flers camp. Fully operational and well supplied with food and ammunition.

(to other soldiers)

Take him to the clearing station, get that leg seen to. Then see he's escorted to HQ for interrogation.

The soldiers carry the prisoner from the dugout. Scale lights a cigarette and collapses onto his bed.

On Scale: Exhaustion, relief, discomfort.

Scale rolls over and finds a letter on his bed. Confused, he opens it and lies back, reading.

On letter: Maj. John Scale: Reassigned. Recommended for special duties.

We see the letter is signed 'C', in green ink.

On Scale: Curious.

Close on 'special duties'.

INT. BRITISH HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

The soldier relays the news to an officer.

INT. CYPHER'S OFFICE, BRITISH HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

A telegraph operator receives a note from the officer. Taps the message through the telegraph machine in code.

INT. CYPHER'S OFFICE, LONDON - DAY

A man in a suit collects a stack of documents and stows them in his briefcase. Exits the office.

EXT. 2 WHITEHALL COURT - DAY

We see the man enter the building. Although the audience does not know it yet, this is the headquarters of MI1c.

On door plaque: 2 Whitehall Court

INT. CYPHER'S OFFICE, MI1C LONDON HEADQUARTERS - DAY

The man in a suit arrives in the office. Rows of telegraph machines and their operators are working. The man heads to one of the operators. Sets his briefcase down and pulls out the documents.

MAN IN SUIT
Frontline reports as of this
morning.

The operator takes the top report and starts tapping at his telegraph machine.

INT. CYPHER'S OFFICE, PETROGRAD - DAY

Almost identical to the London cypher offices, only the men are wearing Russian uniforms. One man is in a suit, Oswald Rayner, 28, dashing.

Rayner is handed a stack of encrypted messages. He takes the first one and begins decoding it on a piece of paper.

CUT TO:

INT. CYPHER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Rayner is still decrypting messages. He pauses, rubs his bleary eyes, before starting on the next message.

On paper: 36th Division. Fully fitted at Flers. Two days at the front.

Rayner translates the message on his typewriter. When he finishes, takes the sheet to the other side of the room where a Russian Intelligence Officer sits. Rayner hands him the sheet.

RUSSIAN INTELLIGENCE OFFICER
(reading)
The 36th Division?

RAYNER
(weary)
That's what the message said.

RUSSIAN INTELLIGENCE OFFICER
(calling)
Sascha!

Another Russian comes over. They converse in hushed voices.

RUSSIAN INTELLIGENCE OFFICER
Thank you Sascha.
(to Rayner)
Mr Rayner. The 36th Division was reported as being in action in the East eight days ago. It was destroyed. You expect me to believe it is now at full strength and as we speak holding the line in France?

RAYNER

That is the report I received. You know this is not the first time the Germans have pulled a trick like this.

RUSSIAN INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

Perhaps. But I will make a note of it all the same. Continue with your work.

Rayner heads back. He looks at his watch, then looks around, expectant.

As he sits down, a Russian soldier dumps another pile of messages on his desk.

RUSSIAN SOLDIER

More for you Mr Rayner.

RAYNER

(sighs)

Looks like it's going to be a late one then.

RUSSIAN SOLDIER

Where is Mr Alley? Is it not his shift?

RAYNER

Late. Again.

EXT. PETROGRAD BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

A squalid alleyway, clearly a dodgy part of town. One man hovers in a doorway smoking a cigarette. Another man strides past, this man is STEPHEN ALLEY. 40, slick-backed black hair, moustache, courageous/determined looking face.

EXT. STREET CORNER - NIGHT

Alley hovers in the shadows at the end of the alleyway.

On Alley: Alert.

Alley looks around, checks behind him that he hasn't been followed.

Alley's POV: A house on the other side of the road.

Alley checks his surroundings again before crossing the road towards the house.

EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT

Alley climbs over a wall and drops silently into the garden.

Alley's POV: Looks up at the top window, a light is on.

Alley approaches the back door. He turns it, it's locked. Looking around the garden, he spots an axe next to chopped firewood. Seizing the axe, he wedges it into the gap between the door and the frame, leaning against it to force it in.

On Alley: Checks the room above for disturbance. All calm.

Alley steadies himself, then tugs the axe to wrench the door free. After a few attempts, a big enough wedge is created to loosen the door from the frame. As quietly as he can, Alley holds the door ajar as he discards the axe, and slowly opens the door.

INT. HOUSE: GROUND FLOOR - NIGHT

Alley stealthily makes his way through the house.

SFX: People in coitus.

On Alley: Looks up to the ceiling, unimpressed.

Alley pokes through belongings, he's clearly looking for something. Whatever it is, it's nowhere to be found.

On Alley: huffs.

Alley pulls out a revolver, checks it's loaded, and cocks it.

Alley makes his way up to the second floor, carefully placing his feet on the stairs, sensitive of creaking floorboards.

INT. HOUSE: SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

Alley edges towards a closed door, light spills into the hall around the edges.

SFX: A woman's laughter.

On Alley: Steeled.

Alley bangs the door open.

INT. HOUSE: BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alley finds two interrupted lovers, shocked at his presence. Alley trains the gun on the man.

ALLEY
(in Russian)
Downstairs.

Alley pockets the revolver and walks out. The man jumps out of bed and hurriedly throws on garments.

On woman: Terrified, confused.

To be Continued...