

THE RIVER

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Final Version.

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FADE IN:

EXT. SMALL PICTURESQUE FRENCH VILLAGE - DAY.

It is a beautiful sunlit day. Well loved cottages line the narrow and yet empty streets. Trees that have stood for centuries cast dappled shade across the ground, as they sway in the gentle breeze.

The piercing sound of BIRDSONG makes way to the gentle lap of water as a nearby river flows steadily along. All is peaceful, all is perfect.

EXT. RIVER - DAY.

Insects gracefully swoop and glide over the glistening and undulating surface of the water.

The serene moment is suddenly shattered as water erupts in a frenzy of foam and noise. Breaking through the surface is a semi-naked young man in his 20's. Gasping for air, he struggles to free himself from the engulfing hold of the river.

YOUNG MAN
(distorted by the
water)
Help! . . .Help.

He continues to struggle as the strong current momentarily drags him under the water, only to return him exhausted a few seconds later.

YOUNG MAN (cont'd)
(exhausted)
Help.

EXT. RIVER/UNDERWATER - DAY

No longer able to fight he begins to slide down into the depths. The world above becoming distant as he sinks further.

Two arms suddenly appear and grab him round the waist. The figure of a man in his late 20's wearing a shirt and trousers comes into view. He begins to kick hard, fighting the current as he pulls the young man towards the light dancing across the water's surface.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Once again the calmness of the water is shattered as the two men explode through the surface.

Keeping one arm around the young man, the older one begins to swim to the riverside. Sweeping his arm through the flowing water he manages to reach for the grassy bank. Grabbing hold of some long grass he pulls himself and the young man to the side. Breathing heavily from the effort he pushes him onto the grass. The young man weakly claws at the grass to pull himself up.

EXT. RIVERSIDE BANK - DAY

Water cascades off the older man as he climbs out and pulls the youngster further onto the grass. The older man slumps back, exhausted.

The young man raises his hand in thanks. Still trying to catch his breath the older man nods in acknowledgement.

Coughing as he moves, the young man staggers to a nearby pile of clothes and a towel.

The older man shakes the water off and walks towards a jacket and shoes which are lying on the ground. He picks them up, dusting remnants of grass off the jacket.

Now clothed the young man puts on his jacket and the two begin to walk towards each other. Suddenly they both falter and stop.

WE REVEAL that the older man is holding the uniform jacket of a German Soldier. The young man is wearing the uniform of an Allied soldier. It is EUROPE 1944.

The two men stand motionless. Surprise has frozen them in time. They stand for a moment not sure what to do.

The Allied soldier begins to extend his hand towards the German.

ALLIED SOLDIER
(respectfully)
Thank you.

The German soldier extends his hand and they shake hands. He nods respectfully.

GERMAN SOLDIER
(with an accent)
I think this river not so good for
swimming.

ALLIED SOLDIER
(smiling)
Yes.

Both men are distracted by an ominous LOW RUMBLE which
breaks out in the distance.

GERMAN SOLDIER
I must go now.

ALLIED SOLDIER
OK.

GERMAN SOLDIER
Good-bye.

The two walk away in opposite directions. The sound of the
BIRDSONG returns as does the lap of the RIVER, however it is
now accompanied by the distant THUD of shells exploding.

FADE TO BLACK