

"DEAD FIRE"

A short screenplay

by

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FIRST DRAFT  
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FADE IN:

EXT. LONDON ROOFTOP - DAY

SERGEANT TONY BOWLES peers through the scope of his L115A3 sniper rifle. We CUT TO his scope P.O.V. and a shambling figure walks into the top of frame on the debris-strewn street far below.

A SHOT rings out and the figure's head explodes in a fountain of blood and bone.

We CUT back to see Tony mark a tally in a small notepad by his side. The page is almost filled, indicating hundreds of kills. He shifts position, so his back is against the low wall.

He is wearing urban combat fatigues and he pulls a pack of cigarettes from one of the many pockets. He lights the smoke and breathes in deeply, savouring the moment. A large backpack is lying beside him.

Another SOLDIER runs into and squats down beside Tony. He is carrying a L85A2 rifle and a pair of binoculars hangs around his neck. He pulls off his helmet and sits down on top of it. Tony notices a little blood on his companion's right hand.

SOLDIER

All clear for now, sarge. A meathead jumped out at me downstairs, but I took care of it.

The soldier glances away as he says this, somehow unable to look Tony in the eye.

TONY

Okay, Shaun. Good work. We deserve a breather.

He offers SHAUN a cigarette, but the younger man refuses with a shake of his head. He looks around nervously.

SHAUN

When will they come back for us, sarge? I mean, it's been two days now.

TONY

They'll come back when they come back, corporal. (takes a swig from his canteen) We have plenty of supplies to

last a while yet.

Shaun sighs and slides off his helmet and leans against the low wall beside Tony. He pulls out an energy bar, wrapped in silver foil, and tears it open. He winces slightly and then takes a bite from the cereal snack. They sit in silence for several seconds.

SHAUN

Sarge?

TONY

What is it, corporal?

SHAUN

What the fuck happened?

Tony turns his head towards Shaun.

TONY

What do you mean?

SHAUN

The meatheads. How did they get that way? Why are there so many of them?

TONY

I have no idea, Shaun. Some say it's a virus. Others that its some sort of parasite infecting the brain.

Shaun peers over the edge of the wall. We follow his gaze and see two more figures staggering down the street towards their position.

SHAUN

Here come two more.

Tony looks out over the edge and trains his rifle. A SHOT rings out and one of the figures drops to the broken concrete. A second SHOT misses as the other figure suddenly begins running.

SHAUN

Jesus! I didn't know they could run!

Tony ignores him and squeezes the trigger again. This time the bullet strikes home and the second figure's head disappears in a spray of gore. He sits back down.

TONY

They couldn't run a day ago. Something's changed.

Shaun keeps looking down at the street. Several more shambling figures emerge from the tall buildings that line the road. Then more appear until there are dozens. We hear MOANS and GROANS from far below.

SHAUN

Shit the bed! Sarge, there's a fuckin' army of them down there!

Tony looks down and sighs.

TONY

Not quite an army, corporal, but too many for me to handle by myself. Ready your weapon.

The two soldiers begin firing down at the shuffling horde below. Several of them drop to the ground. A few start running towards the building on top of which Tony and Shaun are located.

In the distance, we hear a terrifying series of SHRIEKS and even more figures come charging around a corner.

SHAUN

Fuckin' 'ell!

Suddenly, the street erupts in flames and the meatheads stagger around on fire before falling down motionless.

Tony and Shaun duck down as an army Lynx helicopter clatters overhead. They peer up and see a man waving down at them.

TONY

Shaun. Radio.

Shaun fumbles his helmet on and brings a microphone to his lips.

SHAUN

Army helo, this is Sniper Unit Delta-Four, come in, please.

He looks to Tony and shakes his head. The Lynx disappears behind some buildings and its DRONE fades into the distance.

SHAUN

This is S.U. Delta-Four. Please respond.  
(pause) Sorry, sarge, they're not replying.

TONY

Probably under orders to maintain radio silence. (he looks back out at the burning street below) At least they took care of most of those meatheads for us.

One figure emerges from the flames and stares directly at us. Its mouth opens and we hear a guttural wail. Tony aims and fires, hitting the creature in the chest. It staggers back, but remains standing.

TONY

Tough bastards.

He fires again, this time drilling a hole in the zombie's skull. It falls, face-down, amid the flames.

Tony scans the area through his scope, but we see no more shambling figures. He sits back down and lights another cigarette.

Shaun hisses through his teeth and looks at his lower arm.

TONY

You okay, Shaun?

SHAUN

Yeah. When that meathead lunged at me downstairs, I caught my arm on a nail sticking out of a window frame. Hurts like hell.

Tony shuffles onto his knees and faces the corporal.

TONY

Here, let me take a look.

Shaun offers Tony his arm and the sergeant carefully folds back the uniform's sleeve. Shaun moans with pain. We see a bloody mess beneath the cloth. A wound that looks like teeth marks is oozing dark blood.

TONY

Jesus, corporal. That must have been a hell of a nail!

SHAUN

I hit it quite hard, sarge. I was staggering back from the meathead.

Tony pulls a bandage and a small bottle from his pack. He twists open the bottle and pouts iodine onto Shaun's wound. The corporal ROARS with agony. Then Tony shakes loose the

bandage and quickly wraps it around the gash, tying a knot when done.

TONY

That should stop the bleeding and keep out any infection.

He glances at Shaun with dubious eyes.

SHAUN

Thanks, sarge.

Tony looks back down at the street. The flames have subsided and we can now see charred corpses littering the thoroughfare.

TONY

(without looking at Shaun)  
You know, my cousin got infected.

SHAUN

Christ, sarge, I didn't know that.

Tony continues surveying the scene below, his grip on the rifle tightening slightly.

TONY

Yeah. She was a hospital nurse when the first cases were coming in. One of them bit her on the hand. Nothing serious. But within an hour, she changed.

He looks down at Shaun and brings the rifle around, aiming it squarely at the corporal's head.

SHAUN

Shit, sarge! What are you doin'?

TONY

Now, corporal, you tell me what really happened down there.

Shaun looks around nervously, slowly shuffling away on his behind.

SHAUN

I... I cut myself on a nail, just like I said.

TONY

Bollocks! That's a bite. I've seen enough of 'em. That meathead got you before you got him, didn't he?

SHAUN

It was a girl, sarge. (sighs) And, yeah, she appeared out of nowhere and bit down on me.

TONY

Fuck!

SHAUN

But you said the iodine would kill the infection.

TONY

It would, if it was a scratch from a rusty nail. (pause) You're gonna change, corporal. You're gonna be one of them.

Shaun stands up and Tony keeps the rifle aimed at his head.

SHAUN

No, sarge. I won't.

Suddenly, he lunges forward, a shot rings out and Shaun disappears over the edge of the building.

TONY

Shaun!

He looks down and we see Shaun falling and crunching on the pavement ten storeys below. Tony sags back down.

TONY

Jesus Christ.

We hear a MOAN. Then another. And another. Tony looks across the rooftop and we see a line of zombies shuffling towards him.

TONY

How the hell did they get up here?

He grabs Shaun's rifle and clicks it to full automatic. He lets rip with a barrage that sends bullets thudding into the approaching rotting bodies. One drops as a bullet destroys its brain. The others keep coming.

TONY

Die, you fuckers!

He fires again until the clip is empty. He rummages through Shaun's pack, but finds no more ammunition.

TONY

Oh, for fuck's sake, corporal.

He grabs his sniper rifle and fells two more meatheads. Then they SCREECH and charge at him. We see terror on his face as they descend upon him.

EXT. SKY OVER LONDON

The Lynx helicopter swings back around and we see the rooftop where Tony and Shaun had been deployed. A rocket fires from the pod on the side of the aircraft and the top of the buildings explodes, sending debris and bodies flying in all directions.

The helicopter flies on and we see the streets of London filled with shuffling forms. In the distance, an explosion is seen and smoke billows from all points of the compass.

The helicopter vanishes in one of the black plumes and we

FADE OUT:

THE END

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