

FIRST DAY

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Winter woodland. Snow.

A deer scratches at the snow, bends to eat the grass beneath. It looks up suddenly and dashes away.

Eight men ski down a trail in the woods. They all wear military winter camouflage suits with back-packs. They are armed with a variety of rifles and sub-machineguns. One carries a huge machinegun on a harness.

They weave their way in single file through the trees. The sun is low on the treeline behind them.

The lead skier, THOR, 30s, competent, signals a halt and comes to a stop. The others stop behind him.

Thor removes his goggles and lifts binoculars to his eyes. He scans the terrain ahead.

The next man, BEAR, 30s, huge, slides up beside Thor.

BEAR

What do you think?

Thor keeps the binoculars to his eyes as he answers.

THOR

The trail widens out for about two hundred and fifty meters. Perfect place for an ambush.

Bear squints ahead, scans from side to side.

BEAR

We still going that way?

Thor lowers the bino's, glances at Bear.

THOR

Have to; no time to skirt the area. Alert the men. We move fast...

BEAR

Yes Sarge.

Bear moves back to the other men. Thor stows the binoculars and puts his goggles on.

At the back of the group are MAGNUS, 20s, greenhorn, and ERIK, 30s, steel-eyed sniper.

MAGNUS
Where are we headed?

Erik shrugs.

ERIK
The Sarge knows, so that's all I
need to know.

MAGNUS
(disappointed)
Are you not even a little curious?
This is nothing like my old unit,
we were--

BEAR (O.S.)
Curiosity killed the cat, Private.

Magnus turns to see Bear. Magnus smiles a sheepish apology.

BEAR
(fatherly)
If you want to survive your first
day with us son, keep the noise
down and your eyes peeled - we may
be heading into a little trouble...

Thor looks back, Bear signals, and Thor moves off. The other
skiers fall in behind him.

EXT. THE CLEARING - DAY

The forest edge. The odd snowflake drifts by.

An open area of some two hundred metres slopes down to a
frozen river spanned by a wooden bridge.

The skiers enter the clearing from the treeline, hunkered
low, moving fast, in two quite extended columns, that weave
in and out of each other.

Thor reaches the bridge first.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

A rickety old wooden bridge, like something out of the Dark
Ages.

Thor skis onto the bridge, a sub-machinegun in each hand.

BEAR (O.S.)
Ambush!

O.S. gunfire.

Thor spins around.

All up the slope, enemy soldiers climb out of the snow on either side of the clearing. They fire at the skiers.

The skiers return fire.

Men fall on both sides.

Bear, at the back of the group, unslings his machinegun and mows down the enemy.

The skiers are better quality soldiers and soon shoot down all the enemy.

The skiers catch their breath, look around for more targets. None appear.

THOR

Bear, Magnus, check them.

Thor gestures at the enemy with a sweeps of his arm. Bear and Magnus move off towards the fallen soldiers lying in blood-spattered snow.

THOR

Erik, come with me. Martens, Brand, defensive positions by the bridge. Keep your eyes peeled.

Thor and Erik ski over the bridge and head towards a low ridge.

MARTENS and BRAND, both in their 30s, take up a defensive position on the bridge.

EXT. THE CLEARING - DAY

Bear and Magnus check out the bodies - there are no survivors.

Magnus flips over a body with his foot, peers down at the man. Bear checks one of their own dead men nearby, releases a few buckles.

MAGNUS

Who are these men, Bear? This one is definitely a Swede.

BEAR

Ex-military types... mercenaries - like us - from all over the north. Hard men... Here, catch...

Bear throws a satchel to Magnus who catches it with ease.

MAGNUS
(puzzled)
What's this?

BEAR
Did they teach you nothing in your
last unit? It's a nine-pouch C4
satchel charge with chemical fuses.

Magnus stares at the satchel with wide, fearful eyes.

BEAR
Think you can manage this as well?

A rectangular package about the size of a violin case slams
into his chest. He reads the stenciled letters blazoned
across it.

MAGNUS
(excited)
Whoa... A portable rocket launcher!
What kind of mission is this?

Bear grins.

BEAR
Search... and destroy.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

Martens frowns, looks around.

MARTENS
Brand, do you hear that?

Brand looks down the river to where it bends and goes out of
sight among the trees.

O.S. a feint humming noise.

BRAND
Yeah... it sounds like a--

A helicopter gunship rounds the river bend and swoops down
towards the bridge.

BRAND (CONT'D)
(shouts)
Chopper!

The helicopter opens fire with machineguns. Twin trails of bullets rip over the bridge. Martens and Brand are cut to pieces.

EXT. OPEN GROUND - DAY

Bear dive for cover and unslings his machinegun. He aims at the chopper, squeezes the trigger. It jams.

BEAR

Shit!

Without hesitation, Magnus prepares and fires the rocket as the chopper turns to face them.

The chopper evades. The missile flies past.

BEAR (CONT'D)

(louder)

SHIT!

MAGNUS

It's okay...

Magnus taps the case over the words "Heat Seeking". They turn to watch.

The missile flies in a tight arc and hits the helicopter in its exhaust duct.

The helicopter explodes and slowly tilts over. The pilot leaps out as the helicopter crashes and explodes again.

Bits of smoking helicopter land around the clearing.

BEAR

(impressed)

Good shot, lad!

EXT. HELICOPTER CRASH SITE - DAY

The pilot crawls in the snow towards a discarded submachine gun, jump-suit smolders in places.

The pilot's gloved hand grabs the gun.

A boot steps onto the pilot's arm. A muffled groan. Erik stands over the pilot.

He rolls the pilot over with a kick. The pilot's helmet rolls to one side. Reveals a beautiful young woman. She stares up at him.

Erik is transfixed as she painfully lifts and aims the gun.

O.S. A gunshot. A hole appears in the pilots forehead. Erik snaps out of his trance.

Thor holsters a pistol.

THOR
Move out.

Thor walks away.

Bear and Magnus walk past. Bear claps a hand on Erik's shoulder as they pass.

BEAR
Come on Erik.

Erik blinks, shakes his head and follows the others.

ERIK
(in awe)
She's a real Valkyrie...

MAGNUS
(half-listening)
Huh?

BEAR
Erik thinks all the girls he meets
in this game are Valkyries.

ERIK
But she was a real one - a pilot,
see? One day I will find myself
one... or two... just for me...

Bear laughs.

THOR(O.S.)
Pick up the pace, we're running out
of time.

They jog after Thor.

EXT. CLIFF-TOP - DAY

The four men crawl to the edge of a low ridge and peer down into a valley.

About two miles away is the Great Hall - a huge viking-style longhouse. A large number of horses are tethered outside along with a few snowmobiles.

MAGNUS

Wow, it's huge. Very traditional.
Any viking lord would have been
proud of that place.

THOR

Mm, the owner is a traditionalist -
one of the last and greatest...

BEAR

Looks like his bodyguards are with
him.

MAGNUS

Won't they have heard the gunfire
and explosions? Surely they will be
on full alert now.

THOR

I doubt it. The main battle rages
on the far side of the valley.
Listen.

O.S. Far off sounds of a major battle.

Thor looks at Magnus with obvious approval.

THOR (CONT'D)

By the way, that was nice work back
there Private.

MAGNUS

(proudly)

Thank you Sarge.

Bear claps Magnus on the shoulder. They grin at each other.

THOR

In fact, you are now in charge of
the C4. When we get down there, set
charges at the base of the major
structural timbers. No-one gets out
in one piece - alive or otherwise.

Magnus nods.

MAGNUS

So who exactly is our target,
Sarge?

THOR

A very dangerous old man.

BEAR

He has many names and many warriors.

ERIK

And he's a master of disguise.

THOR

But these things need not worry you - we're here to blow up every occupant of the building - the explosion does not have to be selective. Come on...

They shuffle back from the cliff-top.

A black horse near the Great Hall stamps a hoof into the earth, shakes it's head.

EXT. THE GREAT HALL - DAY

The sun is very low on the horizon.

The four men move stealthily from the treeline, in the shadow a few out-buildings and past the tethered horses.

Bear strokes their muzzles and hind quarters - murmurs to them with a calm voice.

The black horse follows on behind them as they pass. It's bridle is not tethered as the others are.

Magnus and Erik sneak under a shuttered window. Magnus sets a charge to a huge timber post while Erik covers him.

O.S. Raised voices inside the hall.

ODIN (O.S.)

If that is so, then where is he?

SERVANT (O.S.)

In the thick of the fighting sire.

ODIN (O.S.)

Damn him to the depths of hell. And where is that other fool I have the misfortune to call son?

SERVANT (O.S.)

I have not seen him for hours, my lord.

ODIN (O.S.)
Damn him too!

Thor and Bear stand either side of another window. They talk with hushed voices.

THOR
Go to the other corner Bear, there
may be a patrol.

Bear moves away.

LOKI (O.S.)
Looking for something brother?

Thor spins to see LOKI, 30s, black hair, evil grin. Loki swings an ornate hammer at Thor's head.

Thor catches the hammer.

THOR
Hah!

Loki runs him through with a sword held in his other hand.

LOKI
Hah to you!

Thor spits blood. Loki laughs. Thor falls to the floor.

LOKI (CONT'D)
You lose this time Thor.

BEAR (O.S.)
Loki! You bastard!

Bear runs at Loki, transforms into a huge bear as he runs.

Bear rears over Loki who thrusts his sword deep into Bear's chest. Bear falls on top of Loki, with a crunch of breaking bones.

Magnus peers around a corner.

MAGNUS
What.. the ... hell...

Viking warriors appear from around the side of the building. They wear chain armour, horned helms and have drawn swords.

Erik opens fire, drops a couple until a javelin hits him in the chest. He staggers towards Magnus, points at the open window.

ERIK

(gasps)

The C4... blow the hall...

Warriors hack Erik down, others run towards Magnus.

Magnus shoves a detonator in a block of C4 and throws the satchel through the window. He dives away from the building.

A huge explosion. The building disintegrates.

The warriors are caught in the blast.

Debris rains down on the area.

Silence.

Magnus climbs to his feet; alone. All lie dead around him. He stands there dumbfounded

The sun finally drops beyond the horizon.

O.S. Instantly a horn sounds, followed by another, and more - up and down the valley.

Groups of warriors and soldiers in all manner of historical dress walk into view on the other side of the ruins. Weapons held forgotten in their hands. Some carry burning torches, which plant in the ground.

They see Magnus and let out a roar of .. joy!

ODIN, an old man with an eye-patch, armour and clothes torn and smoldering, climbs to his feet amid the debris of the hall.

He sees Magnus, laughs in admiration, and walks towards Magnus. As he does, his clothes and armour repair themselves.

As he walks through the ruins, the building begins to reform behind him - splintered timbers fly through the air, to recreate the structure of the hall.

ODIN

Congratulations warrior. I see you are one of the new generation; that prefer modern weaponry to the traditional sword and spear.

MAGNUS

Who... who are you? What is this place?

Odin frowns.

ODIN
 (disbelief)
 Who... am I?
 (realization)
 Ah, I see! Even more remarkable,
 your success! I, my young warrior,
 am Odin, the All-father... You are
 in Valhalla... and this is my Great
 Feasting Hall.

The hall has totally reformed by now. Odin throws open a door to reveal the inside of the huge hall.

Vikings eat drink and wench.

MAGNUS
 (shocked)
 Val- Valhalla!?

Thor and Loki share a drink and a joke. Thor spots Magnus and raises a tankard in salute.

Bear bites into a huge side of beef, and flashes a sharp-toothed grin at Magnus.

Eric sits between two scantily clad warrior women who wear winged helmets. He waves at Magnus.

The significance slowly dawns on Magnus.

Thor appears and thrusts a tankard into Magnus's hand. They touch tankards. Magnus shakes his head, smiles wanly.

Odin laughs, claps a hand on Magnus's shoulder and wanders off into the hall.

ODIN
 (bellows)
 Ale! Fetch me ale!

Magnus watches him go.

MAGNUS
 Battles all day, feasting and
 wenching all night... I think I
 might get to like it here.

Thor nods.

THOR

Of course you will! You didn't do
too badly for your first day lad -
to say you're dead!

They both laugh and walk into the hall.

The door closes behind them. Snow falls.

FADE OUT.

THE END