

One Step Beyond

By

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1. EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

The battlefield is under artillery fire and an American unit is on a charging mission. A man in his 30s, dressed in a dirty soldier's uniform and wearing a helmet, cowered at the back of the line, hesitant to move forward.

This is Ryan Thompson. When he finds his comrades in front of him falling one after another, he pulls out his pistol and fires a shot into his leg.

RYAN

(Pained expression)

Ah !!! Damn it! I got shot! Can anyone help me? please!

Ryan collapses to the ground. At this point Ryan's best comrade, Matthew, finds him.

MATTHEW

Hey! You're hurt! Are you okay? Shall I take you to the backside?

Ryan nodded in pain. Seeing this, Matthew helped him up and took him back to the back of the base for treatment.

CUT TO:

2. INT. FRONTLINE BASE - NIGHT - AFTER THE BATTLE

Ryan's leg is bandaged. He lays on the bed at the base, pulls a photograph of himself with his wife and son out of his shirt pocket, and examines it carefully.

The photograph shows Ryan with his wife and son in an amusement park. In the photo, the three are all smiling happily and clinging to each other, with Ryan wrapping his arms around his wife's waist and his son hugging Ryan's calf.

RYAN

Hope that the war will end soon...

Ryan places the photo in his arms, then closes his eyes and falls into a shallow sleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

3. EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

In another fight after Ryan's return from injury, He drops to the ground, pulls out his pistol again, and tries to shoot himself in the other leg.

Matthew, who is behind him, notices the action. He rushes up and punches Ryan's pistol away, then grabs Ryan by the collar.

MATTHEW

(Angrily speaking)

Last time was the right leg, this time it's the left leg. Where are you going to shoot next time? How about blowing your head off?

Matthew punches Ryan to the ground and holds him at gunpoint. Ryan gets up and drops to his knees.

RYAN

(Begging)

Please do not report this to our superiors, otherwise, I will definitely be executed for cowardice!

(Almost in tears)

My wife and son are still waiting for me at home...

Matthew's eyebrows tighten, he stares at Ryan with a serious expression, gradually lowering the gun in his hand and turning away.

MATTHEW

You make me sick, really.

Matthew picks up his gun and continued to charge forward, leaving trembling Ryan alone on his knees.

CUT TO:

4. INT. FRONTLINE BASE - DAY

There is no fighting on the front line. Ryan sits on the ground to have a rest, he recalls what happened on the battlefield last time and looks around for Matthew, but doesn't find him. At this moment, the communicator rushed in.

COMMUNICATOR

(Breathing heavily)

The Germans have taken over Old York City! They're doing a great purge of the city and all the military families are being taken away!

RYAN

(Standing up quickly)

Shit! My family is still in Old York!

Ryan panics, anxiously pacing in circles, fretting about what to do.

Suddenly Ryan seems to recall something, and then quickly runs to the dormitory area at the base.

CUT TO:

5. INT. MATTHEW'S ROOM - LATER

In the dormitory, Matthew sits on his bed smoking a cigarette, sighing as he examines a photograph in his hands. The photograph shows a woman, Matthew in his youth, and a baby in Matthew's arms.

At this moment, Ryan bursts in. Matthew then hastily tucked the photo under his pillow.

RYAN

I know it, you're hiding in your room smoking again.

MATTHEW

Don't you know it's rude to burst into someone's room?

RYAN

Your family is in Old York City too, right? Don't you know your family has been caught by German? Their lives are in danger now!

MATTHEW

(Hesitating for a moment)

... Since the day I stepped into the military, I was ready to never see my family again, especially in this era. You also should do the same, Ryan.

RYAN

But the German prison is just around here, let's go together and get them out! There is a chance!

MATTHEW

(Putting out the cigarette)
With a coward like you?
(Sneering)
I'll be grateful if you don't hold me back, okay?

After hearing these words, Ryan is anxious, pounces on Matthew, and clung to his thighs in pleading.

RYAN

Please, I really don't know how to save my family with only me! Please!

Matthew throws him off with a hard kick. Looking at the discomfiture of Ryan on the floor, Matthew let out a deep sigh.

MATTHEW

... If you run away again in the next fight, I will blow your head off immediately...

CUT TO:

6. EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

Matthew and Ryan are charging with the troops through a hail of bullets. A shell explodes in front of them, knocking a group of soldiers directly to the ground.

Ryan's pace gradually slows down. When Matthew notices this, he takes out his gun and puts it against Ryan's back. Ryan screams in fear and immediately resumes his speed and charges forward.

Suddenly a shell explodes in front of Ryan and he falls with it, lying motionless on the ground. Matthew kicks his ass hard with a boot to get him up.

MATTHEW

Get up! That shell didn't hurt you, get up, come on!

RYAN

No! Please! I don't want to die!

MATTHEW

Oh, shit! You're a so hopeless fucking
coward!! Shit!! Shit!!

Matthew keeps kicking Ryan's ass, but Ryan just doesn't move.

Matthew suddenly spots a seriously wounded German lying on
the ground. He drags him over and points his gun at Ryan.

MATTHEW

Kill him, or I will blow your fucking
head off.

RYAN

No! No! Please... please don't make me
do this...

MATTHEW

(Loading the gun)

I say kill him!!! Don't make me repeat
it again, thinking about what they did
to your family!

GERMAN

Please don't kill me, I didn't kill
anyone, I was forced to join the army!

MATTHEW

I say kill him!!!!

RYAN

(Closing eyes and holding the
trigger)

Ahhhhhhh!!!!

Ryan finally pulls the trigger and the German goes down with
a thud.

MATTHEW

(stared seriously at Ryan)

Never ever forgive those German
bastards... never...

Matthew plucked that dead German's body with the butt of his
rifle, then dragged him to a nearby crater.

Ryan sits still and trembles in place, his eyes staring unseeingly at the German he has just killed, his eyes had lost their high light.

DISSOLVE TO:

7. INT. THE GREAT HALL OF FRONTLINE BASE - DAY

The officer on the front line faces Ryan, holding a portrait photograph in his hand.

OFFICER

Good job Ryan!

(Pointing to the photo in hand)

Look at who you've taken out, a commander on the enemy front line!

(Patted Ryan on the shoulder)

In recognition of your outstanding service, I hereby appoint you as the leader of the squad you are currently in! Keep up the good work!

RYAN

Thank you, sir...

Ryan salutes the officer and turns to leave, then bumps into Matthew who is waiting outside.

MATTHEW

(Lit a cigarette.)

Now you already have enough people, what are you going to do next?

Matthew looks at Ryan. Ryan is silent, keeps his head down.

RYAN

One squad is still too few... That's too reckless, let's wait a little longer.

MATTHEW

(A little bit surprised)

Huh...? Well, okay, listen to your command, my officer.

Ryan then leaves, leaving Matthew standing in a daze, looking in the direction Ryan left.

MATTHEW (V.O.)
(sneering)
Reckless... Do you really think sanity
is useful?

CUT TO:

8. EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

Ryan led the charge on the battlefield, with Matthew and the rest of his comrades following behind, cooperating very well with Ryan.

9. EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Ryan and Matthew are on a late-night assassination mission. Matthew anchors the position, then Ryan snipes and shoots at the enemy commander directly.

10. INT. THE GREAT HALL OF FRONTLINE BASE - DAY

At the recognition ceremony, Ryan was appointed company commander.

11. EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

During an assault on an enemy bunker, Ryan blew up the bunker alone, under the cover of his comrades. Ryan gave a thumbs up to Matthew, but Matthew didn't pay any attention to him.

12. INT. THE GREAT HALL OF FRONTLINE BASE - DAY

At the recognition ceremony, Ryan was appointed as regimental commander and awarded a medal.

DISSOLVE TO:

13. INT. MATTHEW'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ryan entered Matthew's room, the medals on his chest and the rank on his shoulders indicate that he is now the general commander of the frontline base.

RYAN

Now I am in a position to mobilize the entire front-line force, the time is finally ripe, our families must have been waiting for us for a long time, my friend.

Matthew, however, is not as excited as expected, he smokes a cigarette in the room, and gazes out of the window.

MATTHEW

Officer, I request to refuse to participate in this mission.

(hesitate for a while)

I've said it before, since the day I stepped into the military, I was ready to never see my family again.

RYAN

Why? Isn't your family suffering in prison? Don't you want to rescue your family? They're waiting for you!

MATTHEW

Get out, Ryan, please don't talk about this anymore, please.

Ryan is completely unaware of what is going on. With Matthew's constant repelling, Ryan has to leave the room in silence.

After shooing Ryan away, Matthew takes out the photo hidden under his pillow, sobs as he looks at it. A few tears fall and wet the photo.

MATTHEW (V.O.)

No one is waiting for me... not since a long time ago...

14. EXT. GERMAN PRISON - DAWN

Just after dawn, Ryan orders an attack on the prison. The front-line troops fight bravely and successfully capture the prison suffering only sporadic resistance.

After the battle, the soldiers find the name list of the prison members during the cleaning of the battlefield and then give it to Ryan.

RYAN (V.O.)

(Check the list repeatedly)

So strange, why isn't Matthew's family
on the name list?

(Look around)

My family is on the list... but I
haven't found them anywhere...

The warden is brought to the room Ryan is in. Ryan put down
the list in his hand, sits upright and looks at him
seriously.

RYAN

Where is my family?

WARDEN

What do you mean? Sir? I mean...
what's your family's name?

RYAN

Katharina Thompson and Arthur
Thompson. My wife, and my son.

WARDEN

(take out another roster from his
pocket)

Sir... I'm afraid that they are no
longer here now...

(trembling)

They have left here... a few months
ago...

RYAN

What does "leave" mean?

WARDEN

I mean... they are just the families
of ordinary soldiers and are not
valuable to us... so We just execute
them after figuring everything out...

(Suddenly realize something)

Wait... wait sir, but you are not a
soldier...

RYAN

That's enough, shut up.

Ryan pulls out his pistol and fires a shot at the warden, who
covers his chest and falls down in response.

After the gunshot, the soldiers outside the door rush in.

SOLDIER

What's happened? Are you Ok Commander?

Ryan doesn't respond, standing there rigidly. His head is down, eyes are dim and dark as he stares unblinkingly at the fallen warden.

15. EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

As the general commander of the front line, Ryan leads the charge in the face of artillery fire, shooting all Germans in his path without mercy.

The other soldiers are so inspired and charge forward with Ryan, but they are soon stopped by a German bunker.

RYAN

You guys cover me.

Before the soldiers could dissuade him, Ryan grabs the Bazooka and charges forward. Under the cover of comrades, Ryan rushes into a shelter and leans out to fire a Bazooka rocket. The bunker was then destroyed by the rocket.

The soldiers in the rear, seeing the destruction of the bunker, charged forward with high morale.

When Ryan sees this, he also stands up from the shelter, but as soon as Ryan stands up straight, a bullet penetrates Ryan's head, then he falls to the ground, dead with open eyes. Comrades step over his body and charge forward.

Matt witnesses this and silently goes to Ryan's side, staring into Ryan's dead, unclosed eyes.

MATTHEW

Rest in peace... my bro...

Matthew picks up Ryan's body and drags him back to the base. The family photo in Ryan's shirt falls out of his pocket.

FADE TO BLACK: