

ASHES

written by

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EXT. CADET TRAINING BASE - EVENING

Through the RIFLED (SPIRAL) barrel of a CANNON. CADET POTTER, a scrawny, nervous 17 year old peeks down the opening.

BLAINE (O.S.)
We'll get them this time.

CADET BLAINE confident & kind. Puts an arm over Potter's shoulder giving him a reassuring squeeze.

BLAINE (CONT'D)
Your hand okay?

Potter looks down at his hands. The knuckles are scrapped and the insides of this pointer and middle finger are red.

POTTER
...Yeah. Yeah...

Suddenly:

LTN. DUBOIS (O.S.)
Gun's crew...load!

SERIES of CUS ON HANDS:

- Hand #1 grabs a SHELL
- Hand #2 rips open the BREACH (rear opening) of the gun
- Hand 1 shoves the shell into the breach.

CADET (O.S.)
Clear!

- Hand #2 SLAMS the breach shut and using only the pointer and middle finger pulls the COCKING PIN sharply down.
- Hand #1 shoots into the air signalling the gun is ready to fire.
- LTN. DUBOIS, a stoic and old salt looking mother trucker looks down her nose.

LTN. DUBOIS
FIRE!

- Hand 1 swipes their hand down to strike a LANYARD triggering the firing pin.

CLICK! (a dry fire)

Ltn. Dubois glances down at her watch shaking her head: 05:49. She looks up.

We finally take on our surroundings revealing 8 young staff cadets (17-18) on edge with anticipation surrounding the NAVAL FIELD GUN (cannon). We've dropped in on a cagey battle to make the varsity football team.

LTN. DUBOIS (CONT'D)

The base record is 2.34 seconds. I know course cadets who can hit 3 seconds. Next!

The whole procedure happens again with 2 new cadets. POTTER at the back of the line nurses his hands. BLAINE gives him an elbow in his side.

MONTAGE:

- BLAINE's speed is unmatched, working well with many cadets.
- Other cadets fumble and are cut from try outs.
- POTTER and BLAINE are a great team, moving fast.
- POTTER yells-

POTTER

Clear!

- A fraction too early and the other CADET starts closing the breach as Potter's fingers are still in the barrel. Lt. Dubois with lightning fast reflexes grabs hold of the breach stopping it dead.

LTN. DUBOIS

Potter. Next time you do that you'll lose a finger. Or worse... you're off the team. I've seen enough for today.

The other cadets cast dirty looks to POTTER as they close up the gun for the evening.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Dissonant loud snoring. Rows and rows of bunk line the walls.

Potter on the bottom bunk lies awake unable to sleep. He looks upward whispering.

POTTER

Blaine?..Hey man... I've been thinking about a medical dismissal.

Still nothing. Potter shakes the bed.

POTTER (CONT'D)
Blaine I'm masturbating.

Silence. Potter yanks himself up to peek onto Blaine's bunk. It's empty. The linens are perfectly tight.

INT. BARRACKS BATHROOM - NIGHT

Potter creeps through the door, flooded in the White LEDs.

POTTER
If you're in here shining your
boots again I'm going to kill you.

He turns the corner and freezes clocking FEET HANGING from a STALL. POTTER almost laughs, unable to control his reaction.

INT. SHIPS OFFICE

Ltn. Dubois' lips are moving but Potter isn't hearing any of it. He stares at an URN between them

LTN. DUBOIS
His parents are replying as usual.
Near's I can tell, you were the
closest person to him... Also this
note was enclosed to you.

He opens it up. "I've always though if I was to go, they throw me a parade and shoot my ashes out of a cannon. That's the only regret I'll have. Don't have too much fun without me."

LTN. DUBOIS (CONT'D)
Everyone will understand if you
need to take some time off...

POTTER
(sharply)
No.

EXT. PARADE SQUARE - DAY

Blinding sun. A parade with groups of marching cadets. Potter stands at attention by a new gun partner CADET KELLY who gives him a unsure glance. Ltn. Dubois takes her position.

LTN. DUBOIS
Guns crew!....LOAD.

Potter springs into action.