

BEHIND ENEMY LINES

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. LEVITTOWN, NEW YORK - DAY

The year is 1950. Row after row of white suburban houses sprawl out as far as the eye can see. The houses are all painted white, and neatly placed in perfect lines. CHARLES, a charismatic all-American eleven-year-old boy, is seen as a small figure exiting his house and making his way to the backyard.

EXT. CHARLES' BACKYARD - DAY

The sky is overcast, and it seems as though it may rain at any second. Through the window of the house, Charles' parents - DAVID, a serious man in his late-thirties, and JOAN, an attractive mid-thirties housewife - are visible. Charles enters the frame, struggling to make his way across the yard, his arms full of supplies that are too big for his small body. He has a shovel, a flashlight, a bucket, a rope, and a newspaper advertisement. The advertisement reads: STOP COMMUNISM! IT'S EVERYBODY'S JOB. He finds a good spot, far enough away from the house. He checks to make sure his parents aren't noticing what he's up to. Inside the house, David is reading the day's paper and Joan is preparing dinner, her back to the window. Charles drops the flashlight, the bucket, the rope, and the advertisement and starts to dig. He has just barely made a dent in the ground when his sister BEVERLY, a headstrong and curious seven-year-old girl, approaches and startles Charles.

BEVERLY

Whatcha doing?

CHARLES

Digging.

BEVERLY

Can I dig too?

CHARLES

Nah, this is a man's job.

BEVERLY

Then why are you doing it?

CHARLES

'Cause this is my right of passage.
You know, into manhood.

Beverly looks at him, confused, and then walks away. Charles goes back to digging.

Beverly returns a few moments later with her own shovel and starts digging a hole a few feet away from the one Charles is working on.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

BEVERLY
Digging.

CHARLES
Well... If you're gonna dig anyway,
I guess you can dig over here.

BEVERLY
Even though I'm not a man?

CHARLES
(Shrugging.) On second thought, I
think this is more of a two person
job.

Beverly grins and goes to help Charles.

INT. HOLE - DAY

Charles and Beverly have made a lot of progress in their digging. Both of the kids are exhausted and muddy. They are deep in the earth, surrounded by dirt walls, and the top of the hole is no longer visible from where they are. They have created an intricate pulley system with the rope and bucket as a way to dispose of the dirt. Beverly takes a break, sitting on the ground and playing with a flashlight. Charles determinedly continues to dig further into the ground.

BEVERLY
It's dark down here. (Charles
ignores her and keeps digging.) Why
do you wanna dig this hole in the
first place? (Beverly waits for
Charles to say something. He
doesn't.) Father's gonna kill you
for messing up the yard. (Still no
response.) I'm hungry.

CHARLES
You can go back up then.

Beverly look up to search for the top of the hole. She can't see it.

BEVERLY
You're not gonna come with me?

CHARLES
I gotta finish this hole.

BEVERLY
How will you know when it's
finished?

CHARLES
When I get there.

BEVERLY
Where's there?

CHARLES
Russia.

BEVERLY
Oh. What's Russia?

CHARLES
It's where the enemy lives.

BEVERLY
Oh. (Beat.) So why do you wanna go
there?

CHARLES
Someone's gotta defend our country.

BEVERLY
You're gonna fight the Russians?

CHARLES
Yeah.

BEVERLY
By yourself?

CHARLES
Well, I guess you'll be there too.

BEVERLY
Do you have a plan?

CHARLES
(Pause.) I don't need a plan, I got
the element of surprise.

BEVERLY
Sounds dangerous.

CHARLES
It probably is.

Beverly looks up at the hole again, squinting, desperately trying to see where it ends.

BEVERLY

I should probably stay to protect you then.

CHARLES

(Sarcastically.) Thanks.

EXT. RURAL IRKUTSK, SIBERIA - DAY

There is a cramped, single-story house in a wide spreading valley aside a dirt road. There are a few scattered trees, and mountain ranges stretch for miles in the background. The land is desolate. The house is run-down, and the living conditions are rough.

PAN TO AN AREA OF GROUND NOT FAR FROM THE HOUSE.

Suddenly, the blade of Charles' shovel breaks through the earth, reaching towards the sky. There is a gravitational shift as the dirt crumbles down around the shovel into the hole, as Charles and Beverly fall upwards into the air and are thrown onto the ground. They land, momentarily disoriented. Charles examines his new surroundings while Beverly picks dirt out of her newly scraped knee. Charles, regaining his composure, leaps to his feet and grabs his shovel. He holds it out as a weapon, poised to attack.

CHARLES

This is it.

Beverly looks around, puzzled.

BEVERLY

Russia?

CHARLES

It's gotta be. I guess it's time to find some Russians to fight.

BEVERLY

There's no one here.

Just then, IVAN, an eager eleven-year-old Russian boy dressed in tattered clothing, and ANNA, Ivan's seven-year-old sister also wearing filthy rags, sprint from the house to where Charles and Beverly arrived. Ivan and Anna only speak in Russian.

IVAN (SUBTITLE)
Who are you?

Beverly and Charles exchange a confused glance.

BEVERLY
What?

Ivan and Anna exchange a confused glance.

CHARLES
(To Beverly:) Shh, Bev. I think
they're the Russians.

ANNA (SUBTITLE)
Where did you come from?

Beverly stands up and takes a cautious step towards Anna, but Charles holds her back.

BEVERLY
(Fascinated.) They don't even sound
like people.

CHARLES
It's because they're not. They're
dirty Russians.

Charles prepares to hit Ivan with the shovel, but as he's taking aim, Charles begins to study Ivan too. He slowly lowers the shovel. Anna notices Beverly's scraped knee, and approaches her.

ANNA (SUBTITLE)
(To Beverly:) Are you hurt?

BEVERLY
(To Charles:) I wish I knew what
she was saying.

Anna looks at Beverly's knee, and without hesitating rips a strip of fabric from her already torn skirt. Anna wraps it around Beverly's knee and ties it there.

BEVERLY (CONT'D)
Oh. Thank you.

ANNA (SUBTITLE)
(To Ivan:) I've never heard anyone
talk like them.

IVAN (SUBTITLE)
I think they're speaking English.

ANNA (SUBTITLE)
English? How did they get here?

Ivan and Anna notice the hole and walk over to inspect it. Beverly follows them. Charles keeps his distance. Ivan and Anna peer into it, and Ivan drops a rock down to see if he can hear it hit the bottom. It doesn't. Ivan and Anna exchange another puzzled look.

BEVERLY
(Pointing down the hole and over-articulating:) America.

IVAN (SUBTITLE)
(To Anna:) Americans? Here?

CHARLES
Beverly! That's secret information!

BEVERLY
(To Charles:) What? They're not the enemy!

CHARLES
Yes, they are! They're Russian!

Beverly studies Ivan and Anna for a second.

BEVERLY
But... they're just like us.

Ivan appears to get an idea. He pulls an old, rusty pocket knife from his pants.

CHARLES
(Alarmed.) He has a knife!

Charles swiftly raises the shovel back over his head, aiming to strike.

BEVERLY
Don't!

Beverly runs between Charles and Ivan. Ivan realizes that the knife was perceived as a threat and gestures apologetically. Ivan then locates a patch of dirt on the ground and uses the knife to carve two circles into it. The first circle is in front of Charles, and the second is a few feet away from the first. Ivan stands up, and takes his place behind the second circle. He then throws the knife into Charles' circle, and it sticks perpendicularly in the ground. Charles and Beverly look at each other, confused. Anna picks up the knife and hands it to Charles, gesturing for him to try to throw the knife into Ivan's circle.

Charles hands his shovel to Beverly, takes the knife and tosses it at Ivan's circle. He misses, and Ivan lets out a good-natured chuckle. He picks the knife up again and throws it into Charles' circle almost dead center.

BEVERLY (CONT'D)
Hey, I wanna try!

IVAN (SUBTITLE)
(To Anna:) I think she wants to play too.

Ivan and Anna laugh, but Beverly picks the knife up out of the ground and throws it into Ivan's circle perfectly. Ivan, Anna, and Charles are all shocked.

BEVERLY
(To Charles:) Gee, Charlie, you made it look hard.

ANNA (SUBTITLE)
Watch this. (To Ivan:) Show them.

Ivan turns his back to the circle, and throws the pocket knife over his shoulder without looking. Once again, it lands in Charles' circle. Charles is in awe.

CHARLES
Whoa! You have to teach me how to-

Charles is interrupted by the faint yet piercing sound of the Federal Civil Defense Administration's "red alert" signal. The children all look around to see where the signal is coming from. They realize it's coming from the hole. They gather around it and gaze into its depths.

BEVERLY
We need to get home before mother knows we're gone!

CHARLES
(To Ivan:) We'll be right back!

Charles and Beverly quickly climb back down into the hole, and disappear underground. Ivan and Anna look at each other, and then back to the hole.

ANNA (SUBTITLE)
Bye.

EXT. CHARLES' BACKYARD - DAY

Charles and Beverly emerge from the hole, and run through mountains of dirt in the yard. The sky is still overcast, and the siren continues to blare as they sprint around the side of the house and enter through the front door.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

David is pacing the kitchen, while Joan sits anxiously on the telephone.

JOAN

(On the phone.) I haven't any idea where- (Pause.) No, they wouldn't run away, they-

Charles and Beverly enter the kitchen, tracking mud behind them and gasping for breath. Joan, leaps out of her chair.

JOAN (CONT'D)

They're here, they're here! (Hangs up.) Where have you two been? We were worried sick about you!

CHARLES

We went to Russia! I mean, we were actually there! At first I wanted to defend our country, but then they were so friendly, I didn't know what to do. I'm real sorry, I didn't mean to let you down. I just couldn't-

BEVERLY

First we dug this hole in the yard, and I didn't know what it was for, honest. And we dug for forever, and then we were in Russia! And there was a girl and a boy there and they gave me this to tie around my knee because I hurt it when we got there and-

DAVID

That's enough, both of you.

CHARLES

No, honest, you have to see! We can bring you!

DAVID

We need to get down into the fallout--

David is stopped by Charles abruptly turning and running out the front door again. Beverly follows suit. David and Joan chase after them, trying to stop them from running back outside.

EXT. CHARLES' BACKYARD - DAY

The siren is still going. As the family rounds the corner of the house, the yard is revealed, fully in tact. The grass is green and smooth, and the only remnant of the day's events is the newspaper advertisement that Charles had seen earlier. It lies on the ground where the hole had been. Charles and Beverly run to it and stop, staring at the undisturbed ground. David and Joan catch up to them.

JOAN

Charles! Beverly! What is the meaning of this?!

BEVERLY

(Patting the ground with her hand.)
It was right here.

DAVID

We need to get back inside immediately. For all we know, the Russians could be attacking us right now.

CHARLES

You don't know that! They're not all bad!

JOAN

Don't talk back to your father that way.

BEVERLY

Charlie's right!

DAVID

Beverly!

CHARLES

It's true, we met Russians and they were just like us.

David and Joan look at the kids sternly.

DAVID

Back inside.

JOAN

Now.

The sky opens up and it begins to pour. Charles and Beverly stare at the ground one last time.

CLOSE UP OF THE NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT, LYING ON THE GROUND
DETERIORATING IN THE RAINFALL.

Charles cannot tear his eyes away from where the hole was.
Beverly looks at him.

BEVERLY

(Whispering to Charles:) I'll
always know.

JOAN

(Impatiently.) Kids!

Beverly turns and starts to walk with David and Joan back
inside. Charles lingers for a few extra seconds before
turning to follow them. The "all clear" signal begins to
play.

FADE TO BLACK.