

= Le Dernier Combat =

Le Dernier Combat (French pronunciation : ? [l? d??nje k? ? ba] , English : The Last Battle) is a 1983 post @-@ apocalyptic French film . It was the first feature @-@ film to be directed by Luc Besson , and also features Jean Reno 's first prominent role . Music for the film was composed by Éric Serra . The film was the first of many collaborations between Besson , Reno and Serra . A dark vision of post @-@ apocalyptic survival , the film was shot in black and white and contains only two words of dialogue . It depicts a world where people have been rendered mute by some unknown incident .

= = Plot = =

The film opens to a shot of an abandoned office , where the main character (Pierre Jolivet) , who is only identified as ' The Man ' in the end credits , is having intercourse with a sex doll . The Man is then seen attempting to salvage parts from abandoned vehicles , but returns to his dwelling empty handed , where he works on building a makeshift aircraft . The Man ventures outside the office building he lives in , which is surrounded by a desert wasteland . A group of men are shown surviving in the wasteland . They hold a man , ' The Dwarf ' (Maurice Lamy) , captive , and force him to retrieve water for them . The Man , who has been observing the survivors , makes his way to their camp , stabs their leader , ' The Captain ' (Fritz Wepper) and retrieves a car battery . Survivors pursue The Man , though he is able to escape in his now completed aircraft .

'The Brute ' (Jean Reno) is seen approaching a hospital with a box containing canned food . The Brute rings a bell , and ' The Doctor ' (Jean Bouise) , instructs him to place the canned goods on the ground and back away from the door . The Doctor then takes the goods and closes the door before The Brute can get inside .

The Man 's aircraft crash lands at night . The following morning he continues on foot . The Brute returns to the hospital with a new box of items , though this time he constructs a device that will keep the door open long enough for him to enter the building . The plan works , however , once back inside the building The Doctor pulls a lever which closes a secondary iron bar gate preventing The Brute from entering . The Man finds an abandoned bar , get himself heavily intoxicated and passes out . When he awakes , he ventures outside where he is amazed that it is raining fish . While searching for a way to cook the fish , The Man encounters The Brute . A fight ensues ; the Brute gains the upper hand though The Man is able to escape .

The Man , now badly injured , wanders around until he finds The Doctor . The Doctor treats The Man and cooks him some fish . The Doctor inhales a form of gas that allows him to , with some difficulty , say a single word : Bonjour . The Man also takes the gas and is able to reply with the same word . Both are ecstatic about being able to speak . The Man and the Doctor bond over table tennis and painting , before The Man ventures outside into a sandstorm to retrieve a painting he found in the bar . The Brute , who has been living in the bar , returns and notices the painting is missing .

The Doctor prepares some food and blindfolds The Man . He leads The Man to a part of the hospital where a woman is kept , and gives her the food . The Brute sets fire to the front door of the hospital , though The Doctor and The Man extinguish the flames . The Man and The Doctor go to bring food to the woman again , and The Man gives her a wrapped gift . They then catch The Brute attempting to saw through the iron bar gate , though are able to scare him off .

The Doctor and The Man prepare food for the woman , yet this time The Doctor permits the man to not be blindfolded , and encourages him to comb his hair . Meanwhile it is revealed that The Brute has breached the iron gate to the hospital . The Doctor is killed on the way to the woman when chunks of rock rain down from the sky . The Man , who does not know how to find the woman without The Doctor , attempts to locate her , though he is confronted by The Brute . A fight ensues , with The Man eventually killing The Brute . The Man then locates the woman 's room , though is devastated when he discovers that The Brute had already killed her .

The Man repairs his aircraft , and flies back to the original survivors he encountered . He kills their

new leader and frees The Dwarf . The Dwarf shows the Man where The Captain keeps his concubine (Christiane Krüger) . The Man greets her with a warm smile , which she returns .

= = Themes = =

Writing in the book *The Films of Luc Besson* , Susan Hayward , director of Film Studies at the University of Exeter , considered *Le Dernier Combat* and *The Fifth Element* to be Besson 's two film 's which focus on the theme of environmental damage , as waste and pollution are visible throughout both films . Capitalism was also considered to be a theme ; consumer commodities were said to be signs of death , such as the abandoned cars in the desert and the floating washing machines in a flooded abandoned factory .

= = Production = =

Besson described the film as an " imaginary excursion " , stating he got the inspiration for the film from an abandoned cinema he saw in Paris . Thinking of all the other abandoned buildings there must be in Paris , Besson decided to create a world where all these places were together , and combined this idea with a previous suggestion that he make a feature @-@ length version of his 1981 debut short film , *L 'Avant Dernier* . *Le Dernier Combat* was primarily filmed in Paris , with scenes depicted as begin in the desert filmed in Tunisia . Locations for filming in Paris included a former Électricité de France building that was demolished the day after filming was completed , and the derelict area where the Bibliothèque nationale de France was later constructed . The film was shot in black and white and contains only two words of dialogue .

= = Reception = =

The film attracted 236 @, @ 189 viewers at the French box office . *Time Out* gave a favourable review , calling the film a " welcome addition to the post @-@ holocaust barbarism [film] boom . " Steve Macfarlane from *Not Coming to a Theater Near You* gave a moderately positive review , stating " While the film 's heart is syrupy @-@ sentimental (who 's shocked ?) , its surfaces are clean , incremental , reverently silent ? appropriate , given that ... humankind has lost its ability to speak . " Janet Maslin from *The New York Times* called it " a bravura first film , using the simplest means , yet managing to incorporate humor , pathos , suspense and even a well @-@ articulated definition of basic human needs . " Dave Kehr from the *Chicago Reader* also gave a positive review , stating : " The absence of dialogue ... is a cleverly executed stunt , but it is also an effective alibi for a technically proficient filmmaker who really has nothing to say . Another John Carpenter is born , which is by no means a bad thing . "

= = Accolades = =

Le Dernier Combat won Best Film , Best Director and the Audience Jury Award at *Fantasporto* in 1984 . It also won Best Film and Best Director at the 1983 *Sitges Film Festival* , and won the Critic 's Prize at the 1983 *Brussels International Fantastic Film Festival* . It was nominated for Best First Work at the 1984 *César Awards* .

= = Home media = =

Adam Tyner from *DVD Talk* gave a positive review of the DVD release in August 2001 , awarding it 4 out of 5 stars for video , audio and content , though awarding it 0 stars for extras , noting the only extras were trailers for other films . The same DVD was released alongside Besson 's 1997 film , *The Fifth Element* as a ' Luc Besson 2 @-@ pack ' . Upon reviewing the 2 @-@ pack in April 2003 , Ron Epstein from *DVD Talk* gave the *Le Dernier Combat* DVD 3 ½ out of 5 for video , audio and content , though also giving it 0 stars for extras .

