

RUIN

written by
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Author's Note: Although deeply researched and inspired by countless true stories, this is a work of fiction about the human aftermath of the Second World War.

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EXT. LAKESHORE - DUSK

Dusk falls on a quiet lake in some far corner of Germany.

The wind whips across the surface, stirring up ripples.
Faintly, in the background, we hear--

The sound of a man's labored breathing.

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. BARREN LANDSCAPE - RUINED HOME - AFTERNOON

Two eyes, the color of the sea. As they spring open, there's a brief moment of sharp tension - then they go still. *Hollow.*

THE CAPTAIN sits in the ashen ruins of a home, a WEATHERED RIFLE lying heavy on his broad shoulders. Dirty blond hair. Thick beard. Cold eyes. German.

He turns the collar of his worn leather overcoat up against the cold. He's a solemn shell of a man - a powerful frame with nothing left inside.

TEXT: Germany, Fall 1945
Six months after the end of the war.

The Captain racks a bullet into the chamber. *It's time.*

Rising to one knee, he steadies his rifle on the remains of a wall, and sights through the chipped glass scope.

SCOPE POV: A RUNDOWN FARMHOUSE comes into focus. In the circle of the crosshairs, a gray, tired face, a soldier's face. This is KONRAD (20s). Plainclothes and haggard, he holds a BATTERED CARBINE at the ready.

The Captain flicks off the safety on his rifle. In the distance, a small engine coughs and sputters--

SCOPE POV: A battered TRUCK with a cracked windshield pulls up. It's driven by ECKHART (30s), thin and balding. He signals to Konrad as he disappears into the farmhouse.

The Captain wraps his finger around the trigger. Then his hand gently begins to shake. He pulls it back. Closes his eyes. Waits for it to pass. Finally--

He aims carefully, hand steady now. He takes a deep breath. *Lets it out. CRACK.*

SCOPE POV: There's a slight delay, then - BANG. Konrad's head BURSTS OPEN. His body topples to the ground.

The Captain racks another bullet into the chamber.

SCOPE POV: Eckhart rushes out of the farmhouse, stumbling over Konrad's body. He freezes. Our crosshairs are fixed right on his head. Then--

The Captain lowers the rifle by a single degree. *CRACK.*

SCOPE POV: Eckhart's groin EXPLODES. He goes down.

The Captain calmly ejects the shell, and begins the long walk to his wounded target. He's in no hurry.

EXT. BARREN LANDSCAPE - FARMHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Eckhart rolls on the muddy ground, moaning in agony.

NOTE: As the film mixes multiple languages, all non-English dialogue is noted and italicized.

The Captain steps over Konrad's body and approaches Eckhart. The man's eyes focus on the Captain, he registers the rifle. Suddenly understands. In German:

ECKHART

Coward...

He's in too much pain. Spittle collecting on his chin, he can't even get the words out.

The Captain doesn't even blink. He leans down and grabs Eckhart by the arms, dragging him towards the farmhouse.

ECKHART

Wh-what are you doing?

The Captain drops Eckhart on his back, and positions his head between the door and the door-frame.

ECKHART

STOP! Stop! Wait!

The Captain grips the door tightly, then - *WHAM!* He slams it against Eckhart's head with incredible force.

Eckhart's lights go out for a brief moment. He recovers.

ECKHART

You traitor...

WHAM! Another shot to the head.

THE CAPTAIN

Where's Richter?

ECKHART

What?

WHAM! Eckhart coughs out blood and teeth.

THE CAPTAIN

Where is Richter?

Eckhart starts to laugh - delirious with pain.

ECKHART

*They're going to cut you open and
hang your body from a tree.*

Eckhart continues to laugh, madly now. He's losing it.

ECKHART

*You think if you kill us, they'll
let you go? You're a dead man.*

WHAM! The Captain hits him again. He stops laughing.

THE CAPTAIN

You have one more chance.

A terrifying lucidity seems to come over Eckhart. He looks the Captain right in the eye.

ECKHART

"My honor is loyalty."

Eckhart shakily pulls aside his shirt to reveal: A black SS Death's Head Tattoo just beneath his collarbone.

The Captain stares down at it, grey-blue eyes hard as stone. Then, from a distance, we watch as he takes hold of the door and slams it as hard as he can. *Again and again and again.*

The Captain wipes a fleck of blood from his cheek, then bends down and removes a bloody set of DOG TAGS from around the dead man's neck. He puts them in his pocket.

A heavy stillness. Only the sound of the Captain's labored breathing and the MUFFLED CRACKLE OF A RADIO. After a moment, he follows the sound into--

THE FARMHOUSE

In one corner, a 35MM STILL CAMERA and TRIPOD faces a CLEAN, WHITE SHEET tacked tightly to the wall. PHOTO CHEMICALS and PROCESSING TRAYS rest on a nearby table.

On a desk in the other corner is a PORTABLE MILITARY RADIO connected to a rusted MICROPHONE.

MAN'S VOICE (ON RADIO)
*This is Radio Werwolf: voice of the
 German Freedom movement in the
 enemy-occupied territories...*

The Captain takes a step towards the desk, discovers--

Several PASSPORT-SIZED PHOTOS of Eckhart, Konrad, and a few other German men fanned out atop Eckhart's LEATHER-BOUND LEDGER. He brushes them aside, revealing--

OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT-ISSUE PASSPORTS. All of them blank, waiting to be forged and falsified.

MAN'S VOICE (ON RADIO)
*Our duty is to the Reich. Traitors,
 cowards and defeatists shall be
 destroyed...*

One of the PHOTOS suddenly gets the Captain's attention. He picks it up slowly, studies it with a quiet intensity--

In grainy black and white, a man's face, cold eyes and jet-black hair, stares defiantly back at us. A man who has never apologized for anything. This is ANTON RICHTER.

The Captain's hand shakes almost imperceptibly - Richter's eyes taking him back to dark places. He lowers the photo, looks over at the radio transmitter--

MAN'S VOICE (ON RADIO)
*Our love for country has only grown
 stronger in hate. Behind us lie
 ruins, but before us lies the
 future....*

The Captain reaches down and gently turns a knob on the record player - CLICK - transforming the broadcast into nothing but HISSING STATIC.

With that, he gathers the ledger, turns, and steps over the ruined bodies of the dead men out into the morning.

PRE-LAP: *The hum of a speeding engine.*

EXT. EASTERN GERMANY, OPEN ROAD - CREDITS

The Captain roars full speed on his RUSTED MOTORCYCLE down a desolate highway, eyes straight ahead. It's a worn, MATTE-BLACK 1941 ZUNDAPP 750. The growl of the engine is deafening.

TITLE: RUIN

The Captain and his Zundapp speed through a wasteland of burnt fields and demolished buildings. *Everything as far as we can see is ashes and ruin.*

OPENING CREDITS.

GENUINE RADIO WERWOLF BROADCASTS play over everything we see:

RADIO WERWOLF (V.O.)
*Everything we own has been smashed
 and burned by the invading
 Allies...*

Tires grip the asphalt as the Captain floats across the blackness of the road. A ghost in an empty landscape.

RADIO WERWOLF (V.O.)
*Everyone we love, mothers and
 fathers, women and children,
 murdered by Allied bombers...*

He passes an OLD MAN'S CORPSE left to rot on the side of the road, eyes wide open, staring up at the heavens.

He passes an ornate six-hundred year old CATHEDRAL, reduced to a single wall, where GERMAN GRAFFITI is scrawled: *Traitors Beware. Werwolf is watching.*

RADIO WERWOLF (V.O.)
*Germany lies in chaos. A land
 divided. A land without laws. But
 we are here!*

A group of STRAY ORPHANS, ages six to ten, run alongside the road, begging him to stop. They're filthy, malnourished and terrified. He keeps driving.

A FERAL DOG, more bone than flesh, keeps a nervous eye on the Captain and his bike as they race past.

RADIO WERWOLF (V.O.)
*We call all revolutionaries!
 Werwolves! Rise up! We fight and
 die for the German future...*

On the roadside ahead, A SOVIET MILITARY CONVOY has stopped. A handful of RED ARMY SOLDIERS stand around, drinking from a bottle of vodka, piss-drunk, pointing at--

A gnarled, 200-year-old oak tree where the CORPSES OF THREE GERMAN SOLDIERS hang by their necks, swaying with the breeze. CRUDELY-PAINTED SWASTIKAS cover their dirty uniforms.

RADIO WERWOLF (V.O.)
*Death to our enemies! We will win our
freedom! Germany will rise again!*

A few SOLDIERS blearily eye the Captain as he rumbles past, too drunk or too tired to care. The Captain keeps his head down. As soon as he's out of sight--

He rips the throttle, putting distance between him and the Soviets, heading for a DENSE TREE-LINE on the horizon.

EXT. CAMPSITE - DUSK

The Captain sits in an ashen meadow, alone. A small CAMPFIRE trails a weak plume of smoke into the darkening sky. The intermittent CLINK of the cooling motorcycle is all we hear.

With incredible care, The Captain tunes the well-worn bike, working with a set of HOMEMADE TOOLS. His practiced hands oil the chain, gauge tire pressure. For him, it's more than a motorcycle. *It's a companion.*

He digs through his SADDLEBAGS, finds a spare shirt. As he changes, we catch a glimpse of a BRUTAL-LOOKING SCAR, just below his collarbone - the exact same size and shape as Eckhart's "Death's Head" tattoo.

The Captain lays out Eckhart's Leather-bound Ledger, carefully reading and re-reading its orderly pages: NAMES, ADDRESSES, NOTES. *Information on the Werwolves' Operation.*

CAMPFIRE - LATER

It's dark out now. The Captain sits, still and quiet, an unsettling hollowness in his eyes. He stares at the fire, watches it burn.

He's holding something but we can't see what it is. Then--

The Captain raises his LUGER. He calmly places the barrel in his mouth, wraps his finger around the trigger, and holds it there for the longest time.

His breathing is heavy, but his face is impossible to read. Unlike the killings before, his hand is steady, no tremors.

He's not scared. He's not desperate. He's simply nothing at all.

The wood in the fire pops and hisses.

He takes the gun out of his mouth.

EXT. SMALL VILLAGE - THATCHED COTTAGE - LATER

The front door of a cottage bursts open as A GERMAN MOTHER is dragged out by two POLISH POLICE OFFICERS - *thugs for the Soviets*. She screams, desperately reaching back for--

Her six year-old SON, who's being carried out by another POLISH POLICE OFFICER. A SOVIET OFFICER stands nearby, supervising, almost bored. *This family is Volksdeutsche, Polish citizens that are still ethnically-German.*

A gathered CROWD watches as--

The Police Officers toss the mother and her child into the street. She grabs hold of her son, squeezing him tightly, lost in a fit of hysteria. In peasant German (no subtitles):

VOLKSDEUTSCHE MOTHER
PLEASE! PLEASE! PLEASE!

Two more POLISH POLICE OFFICERS emerge from the house, dragging a GERMAN TEENAGE BOY with them. He goes quietly, doesn't resist or fight back - *trying to protect his family.*

The Captain passes through the crowd, watching silently as--

They lead the teen to a nearby JEEP idling in the road. They don't carry guns, but LARGE WOODEN BATONS, stained dark with dried blood.

Most people in the crowd stay quiet, but a few wild-eyed POLISH NATIONALISTS hurl insults at the condemned family--

NATIONALISTS
SEND THEM HOME! They don't belong here anymore!

Suddenly, the little boy breaks free of his mother's grasp, racing over to his brother. He grabs hold of his leg, crying.

One of the Police Officers swats at him with his stick, catching him clean in the jaw. The boy topples to the ground.

VOLKSDEUTSCHE TEEN
NO!!!

The brother snaps, swinging wildly at the Police Officers. He lands a couple of blows, but within seconds--

He's flat on the ground, being beaten by the Officers' heavy batons. *No mercy.*

The mother SHRIEKS in horror while the other Officers hold her down--

The Captain closes his eyes, takes a deep breath. Fights to keep everything inside of him. Then--

Turns and disappears into the crowd.

INT. SMALL VILLAGE - ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

The Captain walks slowly through a filthy alley, carefully scanning the rooftops, searching for something. Finally, he stops at--

A well-hidden COIL OF WIRES running out from a window on the TOP FLOOR of a nearby APARTMENT BUILDING. The wires run up to a carefully-camouflaged RADIO ANTENNA on the roof.

If you weren't looking, you'd never notice it.

GERMAN RADIO VOICE (PRE-LAP)

*There are four Soviet jeeps working
in steady rotation--*

INT. RADIO WERWOLF - BASEMENT STATION - THAT MOMENT

A shabby basement with peeling wallpaper. BROADCASTING EQUIPMENT crowds the wooden desk in the middle of the room.

Hunched over a heavy, oversized MICROPHONE, PETR MÜELLER (30s) sits murmuring in the dim light of a bare bulb, leather HEADPHONES perched on his balding head.

Beside him, KLAUS PLISKA (30s), reads off a missive through a pair of greasy EYEGLASSES.

In the far corner of the room, a SKINNY BLOND KID plays with an SS DAGGER, pouring over a map of Divided Germany.

PETR

*One truck in the camp at all times,
five men per truck--*

Suddenly, Klaus puts a hand on Petr's arm, silencing him.

PETR

What is it...?

KLAUS

Do you hear that?

They both listen, carefully. The kid stares at the men nervously. After a long moment of silence--

Petr returns to his microphone, speaking quietly--

PETR
*We'll find her. Of course. My honor
 is loyal--*

There's a FAINT CREAK from the other side of the door. Klaus signals to Petr again. They go quiet. Listening. Klaus slowly stands, peering curiously at--

The FADED RED DOOR leading to the hall.

Petr sits, frozen. Klaus takes a small step closer, tilts his head, trying to hear above his own heartbeat. The kid grips his dagger tightly.

It's dead quiet. Then--

The DOOR BURSTS WIDE OPEN as the Captain storms into the room. Klaus goes for his gun, but he's too slow--

The Captain SMASHES his face with his LUGER, shattering his glasses into his eyes. Klaus screams, blinded.

Petr tries to stand, but the Captain pistol-whips him back into his chair. In one swift motion, the Captain unsheathes a BLADE and jams it right through Petr's hand, pinning it to the wooden desk. *It's all over in seconds.*

The skinny blond kid stands, paralyzed. His dagger abandoned on the floor. The Captain rounds on him--

THE CAPTAIN
Go home.

He stumbles to the door, fleeing without another look back. The Captain turns back to Petr--

THE CAPTAIN
Tell me how to find Richter.

Petr is in hysterics, half-screaming, half-babbling:

PETR
I-I don't, I-I--

The Captain shoves the barrel of his Luger into the man's temple, pressing Petr's face down onto the rough wooden desk.

THE CAPTAIN
Tell me.

PETR
*I-I haven't seen him since the war.
 Not since Einehof--*

Just then, Klaus staggers to his feet:

KLAUS
Tell him nothing!

He makes a half-blind charge, but he doesn't make it three steps before the Captain blows his head wide-open.

The Captain presses the burning-hot barrel of the freshly-fired Luger into Petr's eye. It sizzles, burning into his sclera like a branding iron.

THE CAPTAIN
WHERE IS HE?

Petr cries out in agony--

PETR
GOD NO! STOP, ANYTHING--

The Captain pulls back the gun. Petr finds his voice:

PETR
He doesn't tell us where he is - he never has, I swear to you! But-but there's a refugee camp, just east of here, near Gross-Rosen--

THE CAPTAIN
Which camp?

PETR
Liegnitz! It's called Liegnitz. There was some girl, she came to the Soviets there, claiming she knew everything about Richter--

THE CAPTAIN
What's her name?

PETR
I don't rememb--

The Captain moves the gun two inches towards Petr's eye--

PETR
Elsa. IT'S ELSA! Richter's whore from the camps! She says she knows where he is!

The Captain loosens his grip for a moment. *That name brings back hard memories.*

THE CAPTAIN
...Elsa's dead.

PETR
*She's not. Two weeks ago she
 registered at Liegnitz. Richter
 sent us here. To kill her.*

The Captain absorbs this, shaken. Slowly, he regains control. He rips off Petr's DOG TAGS from beneath his shirt--

At this, Petr suddenly stops shaking. *It's over for him, and he knows it.* The Captain stares down at him, then notices--

The heavy metal MICROPHONE next to Petr's face. A dim red light burns faintly. *It's been LIVE ON AIR this entire time.*

As both men realize this, Petr screams out:

PETR
*GET TO LIEGNITZ! KILL THE GIRL!
 KILL ELSA! KILL HER!*

The Captain seizes the microphone, raising it high above Petr's head. As he brings it CRASHING DOWN, WE CUT TO--

INT. RICHTER'S LAKE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

ANTON RICHTER (40s), same jet-black hair and jet-black eyes as the photo, sits in the warm glow of a dying lantern, a PORTABLE MILITARY-GRADE RADIO on the table in front of him, listening to--

The steady THUMP of the Captain's violence.

Richter flinches, almost invisibly, with each blow.

At the sound of SOFT FOOTSTEPS from down the hall, he shuts off the radio. The door slowly opens to reveal--

LENI, an adorable blonde-haired, blue-eyed toddler, wearing a white smock and yellow rainboots. She stares at Richter, expectantly, before finally raising her hands. In German:

LENI
Vatti...

RICHTER
Schatzi...

Her lip quivers as she holds out her hands, pleading.

RICHTER
I'm sorry. Is it time to feed the chickens?

Leni gives him a big nod--

LENI
Huhn!

Richter walks over and lifts her up in his arms.

RICHTER
Okay. Let's go feed the chickens.

Leni smiles as he carries her out the FRONT DOOR--

EXT. LAKEHOUSE - THAT MOMENT

A small COTTAGE next to an idyllic LAKE. It's quaint and charming - wood shingles and exposed beams. Nearby is--

A SMALL CHICKEN COOP where a half-dozen CHICKENS run amok. Leni and Richter stand outside the fence, tossing handfuls of grain to the birds. *The whole scene is like something out of a German postcard.*

Richter stares out into the distance, his face suddenly cold and dangerous in the late afternoon light.

PRE-LAP: The angry ROAR of an unruly mob.

EXT. LIEGNITZ REFUGEE CAMP - COURTYARD - SAME

CLOSE ON, a young Polish woman, standing stoic and silent amidst a jeering crowd. Her face is pale and drawn, her eyes are sharp blue points. On her COAT, broken threads form the outline of a STAR OF DAVID, long since removed.

This is ELSA.

POLISH MATRON (O.S.)
Elsa Brzezina!

A stern-looking BARBER takes Elsa roughly by the arm, and pulls her into the clearing at the center of the mob.

They pass a PRETTY WOMAN sobbing uncontrollably, as another BARBER shaves her head with a set of RUSTY HAIR CLIPPERS. He expresses neither joy nor pity.

The pair is one of many. Around them, more hysterical WOMEN are having their heads shaved by more stern-looking MEN while a heavy POLISH MATRON reads their names from a list.

Elsa is shoved onto an empty stool in the middle of this chaos. The Barber begins his work on her.

A CROWD surrounds them, screaming obscenities. A few words are heard above all others:

CROWD
WHORE! TRAITOR!

Elsa quietly stares straight ahead as her shoulder-length hair collects in a messy pile at her feet.

The other women sob, broken and humiliated as--

The heavy Polish Matron moves through their ranks, using a TUBE OF RED LIPSTICK to scrawl a greasy RED SWASTIKA on their foreheads. Finally, she reaches--

Elsa - who stares up at her coldly.

The woman leans forward, brandishing the lipstick, when--

Elsa suddenly seizes her by the wrist. The woman falters, tries to twist loose, but Elsa's grip is too strong. The look in Elsa's eyes is deeply unsettling.

Unnerved, the woman backs away. She tries to play it off:

POLISH MATRON
(to crowd)
This one liked it rough!

The crowd jeers and the woman moves on to her next victim.

HOLD ON, Elsa's face, all fire and fury. Then--

EXT. ALLEY - LIEGNITZ CAMP - MOMENTS LATER

Elsa sits in the dirt, back against a crumbling wall, bawling her eyes out. She rubs her hands over her shaved head, tears running down her face. She is all alone.

Finally, she regains control. She fishes an OLD HANDKERCHIEF from her pocket and fashions a makeshift SHAWL.

Elsa ties it tight. Wipes away the tears. Pulls herself together. One more deep breath, then she's on her feet.

EXT. LIEGNITZ REFUGEE CAMP - COURTYARD - THAT MOMENT

Elsa steers clear of the mob, heading towards a STREET on the far side of the courtyard. She keeps her eyes on the ground, avoiding the stares of the passing CROWD.

Meanwhile--

AT THE OPPOSITE END OF THE COURTYARD

The Captain steps off his Zundapp and surveys the scene. He watches grimly as another YOUNG WOMAN has her head shorn.

The Captain scans the crowd. Just then, he spots--

A familiar-looking GREY JEEP with a cracked windshield. It pulls up and parks at the far edge of the courtyard. A TALL BLOND MAN steps out--

The Captain narrows his eyes, gets a closer look. *He knows this man.* It's ERICH (20s), a cruel, fanatical member of his old Death's Head unit. The Captain suddenly notices--

Erich is searching the crowd, looking for someone. Eventually, Erich settles on a figure in motion.

The Captain follows Erich's gaze. *It's Elsa.* Just as the Captain realizes this--

Erich spots him from across the square, looking just as stunned as the Captain. He immediately looks back at--

Elsa. Walking past the chanting onlookers.

Erich and the Captain lock eyes. They stare at each other, frozen. Then--

They take off, SPRINTING for Elsa at the other end of the crowd. *It's a race and Erich is closer.*

But the Captain is quicker, and he's steadily making up ground, until he hits--

The crowd. All those bodies slow him down. Erich is dealing with the same problem, but there are fewer people between him and Elsa. He's closing in.

At the sound of the commotion behind her, Elsa turns to see--

THE TWO MEN BARRELING TOWARDS HER THROUGH THE CROWD.

She stands, frozen in place for a moment. Taking in this strange scene. Then, she starts to run--

The Captain bulldozes his way through men, women and children. He's getting desperate. He's not going to make it.

Elsa is at the very edge of the square now, running as fast as she can. She's about to break off into an ALLEYWAY when--

Erich bursts out of the crowd, grabs her roughly by the shoulder, and pulls her towards him. Elsa screams, as Erich rips a BLACK SS DAGGER from a sheath on his hip and--

PLUNGES IT STRAIGHT INTO HER BELLY.

Elsa's scream is cut short as she goes into shock. The whole courtyard goes silent, staring, frozen. Elsa's eyes go wide.

As Erich rips the dagger free--

The Captain SLAMS into him, taking the man down hard onto the wet cobblestones.

And like that, the spell is broken - women scream and the crowd scatters. It's chaos as refugees flee, calling out for the military police--

Back on the ground, Erich's knife FLASHES, catching the Captain deeply on his left arm. The Captain grits his teeth and slams Erich's hand down, sending the bloody knife skittering away.

The two struggle, fighting for control. Erich manages to get a big hand around the Captain's throat, squeezing as hard as he can. Desperately trying to breathe, The Captain hammers away at Erich's face and neck, but it's no good.

The Captain is growing weak. On the verge of blacking out.

Elsa lays curled on the muddy ground next to them. As she fights to stay conscious, she realizes with strange clarity - *these men are German.*

The Captain's eyes start to glass over. His hand reaches out for something, anything--

Then, all at once - the Captain seizes a loose COBBLESTONE from the ground and SMASHES it into Erich's head, caving in the blond man's skull.

After a long moment, the Captain staggers to his feet. Struggling to catch his breath, he scans the square. Spots--

Elsa on the ground, face-down. *She's not moving.*

The Captain starts to panic. He whips around to find--

One of the HEADSHAVERS, frozen with fear, staring back at him like he was the Angel of Death.

In an instant, The Captain is inches from the man's face--

THE CAPTAIN

Tell me where to find a doctor.

The Headshaver is dumbstruck. He shakes his head, tries to speak, but nothing comes out.

In the distance, we hear the faint sound of truck engines, shouting voices - *the Soviets*.

The Captain draws his Luger and fires a SHOT into Erich's corpse. The Headshaver snaps out of his trance--

THE CAPTAIN

I need a doctor. NOW.

PRE-LAP: The sound of furious POUNDING on a wooden door.

I/E. NURSE'S HOUSE - DUSK

A heavy wooden door is thrown open to reveal--

The Captain, with a bleeding, unconscious Elsa held in his arms. He's breathing hard. Desperately, he addresses--

MARTA (50s), a short, stout, Jewish nurse with the look of a woman who's seen great darkness.

THE CAPTAIN

She needs help.

Marta is in no hurry. She looks him over. Takes her time before she responds.

MARTA

You're German.

THE CAPTAIN

Yes.

This is not what Marta wanted to hear. But she doesn't close the door. Yet.

MARTA

Is she German?

THE CAPTAIN

She's a Jew.

Marta studies his face. Skeptical.

The Captain lifts Elsa's limp wrist, presenting the CRUDE SERIAL NUMBER TATTOO, black against her pale skin.

Marta glances at it.

MARTA
Bring her inside.

The Captain staggers into the house with Elsa. Marta scans the street outside for witnesses before shutting the door behind them.

INT. NURSE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - A BIT LATER

CLOSE ON, a SERIES of PHOTOGRAPHS of Marta and her family before the war. They look happy, relaxed - the MEN WEARING YARMULKES, the WOMEN WEARING SIMPLE BLACK DRESSES. There was life here once. It's long gone now.

The Captain regards these relics from a dusty armchair in the corner. Their smiling faces make him extremely uncomfortable.

Marta enters, wiping blood from her hands with a ragged cloth. She remains standing.

MARTA
She was lucky.

The Captain stands.

THE CAPTAIN
Is she awake?

MARTA
The blade just missed her liver.
She'll hurt, but she'll be alright.
With rest.

THE CAPTAIN
I need to speak to her.

Marta searches the Captain's face.

MARTA
She's sleeping.

THE CAPTAIN
I'll wake her up.

MARTA
She needs to rest.

THE CAPTAIN
How long?

MARTA
Until she wakes up.

His intensity is making her uncomfortable.

MARTA

How do you know this girl?

The Captain stares at her coldly.

MARTA

Are you the reason they shaved her head?

The same cold stare. Marta's eyes wander to:

THE KNIFE-WOUND ON HIS FOREARM.

It looks bad. Nearly down to the muscle.

MARTA

If you sit at the table, in the light, I can take a look at those wounds.

THE CAPTAIN

How long will she sleep?

MARTA

Sit down at the table.

After a long, tense moment: the Captain sits down at a nearby DINING TABLE with two chairs.

Marta grabs some MEDICAL SUPPLIES from a CABINET and sits across from him.

MARTA

Let me see.

The Captain lays his arm across the table. His breathing shallow and drawn.

MARTA

It's deep. You'll need stitches.

She begins cleaning the wound with gauze and alcohol. After a long moment, the Captain speaks, clipped.

THE CAPTAIN

What do you want for this?

She wipes the dried blood away.

MARTA

You're asking what I want?

THE CAPTAIN

I have cigarettes.

She looks him in the eye.

MARTA
Cigarettes. Is that why you think
I'm doing this?

She shakes her head softly, gestures towards his knife wound.

MARTA
You're lucky. Most soldiers prefer
guns.

The Captain looks at her carefully.

THE CAPTAIN
Why are you helping me?

MARTA
We do the things we're trained to
do.

She looks at him.

MARTA
Why are you helping *her*?

The Captain gives her nothing. Eyes cast down towards his open wound. Marta searches his face.

MARTA
It doesn't matter anyway. All that
matters now is that you're alive.
Survival is the only job we have left.

She cleans the wound softly with the gauze.

MARTA
But there's no training for that.

She looks right at him - sees things inside him he doesn't want anyone to see. He just wants her to stop talking. Now. His hand begins to tremble.

The Captain unholsters his gun from inside his jacket. Points it at her. *He's not entirely in control.*

THE CAPTAIN
Wake her up.

Marta stares back at him and his gun with a look of profound sadness. Finally:

MARTA
Put your gun away. The war is over.

With that, she turns her back on him and walks out of the room. The Captain keeps his gun trained on her as she leaves, even as he crumbles inside.

EXT. NURSE'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

The Captain stumbles into a small, overgrown backyard, closing the BACK DOOR softly behind him. He holsters his gun with shaking hands, pulls up the collar of his coat.

He sits on a stump out in the tall grass, his back against a barren tree. He stares off into the night, drifting.

PRE-LAP: The clink of glasses, the sounds of laughter.

INT. BERLIN BAR, 1941 - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

TEXT: *Berlin, 1941*

The place is packed with drunk, GERMAN SOLDIERS. They're gathered at the bar, arms around each other, singing the *National Anthem of the Third Reich* at the top of their lungs.

SOLDIERS

*Clear the streets for the storm
divisions! The call to arms is
sounded!*

The Captain is among them - younger, clean-shaven, and wearing an impressive, freshly-ironed ALL BLACK WAFFEN-SS UNIFORM. He has a BEER in one hand and his other arm around--

RICHTER, cheerful and more handsome, his SS Death's Head cap polished to a shine. He's the life of the party, a deeply-charismatic man who uses those talents to manipulate others. *A true sociopath.*

They're surrounded closely by the TWELVE MEN who make up the core of their unit (*some of whom we recognize, others we'll meet later*):

AGUSTIN, MAX, KONRAD, ECKHART, PETR, KLAUS, ERICH, WERNER, LEO, OSKAR, ALFONS and SEBASTIAN.

They're all drunk on beer and war, singing at the top of their lungs:

THE CAPTAIN/RICHTER

*The flag on high! The ranks tightly
closed!*

The men erupt in THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE. The Captain's eyes shine with a terrifying conviction.

LATER, AT THE BAR.

CLOSE ON, a WEDDING PHOTOGRAPH of Richter with his arm around a pretty, young GERMAN WOMAN, dressed in white.

RICHTER (O.S.)
*We had the ceremony at the
 Starnberger-See.*

Richter holds the photograph, a little drunk.

RICHTER
*We ate outside near the lake. Four
 hundred and ten people at fifty-
 four tables. Goering was there.*

The Captain sits next to him, swaying on his bar stool.

RICHTER
*When we served the cake, it started
 raining. Nina was so embarrassed.
 Everyone started running inside.
 But Goering just took another bite
 and said, "I don't know why they're
 running. If they think this is bad,
 they should try the cake in
 Poland."*

They share a big, drunken LAUGH. As it dies down, Richter smiles at the Captain fondly.

RICHTER
*I remember when I made Captain. I
 received my medal from the Führer
 himself... As a German, I want to
 personally thank you for your
 service in France, Captain. You're
 a hero.*

The Captain is genuinely moved by this.

THE CAPTAIN
Thank you, Commandant.

Richter glances around the bar, leans close.

RICHTER
*I've been given command of a great
 undertaking. The orders come from
 Himmler himself. What I say here
 cannot leave this bar. Understand?*

THE CAPTAIN
Yes, Commandant.

Richter smiles, pours the Captain another drink.

RICHTER

The war is over. We'll be in Moscow by Christmas. We've won. We can be proud. But many armies have won wars in the past. And for what? Land? Resources? Prestige?

He scoffs.

RICHTER

These rewards are trivial. Germany has the opportunity to do something revolutionary. Something no other nation was able to do. Something truly meaningful. We get to reinvent the world in our image. We decide what it will look like, smell like, taste like. We get to choose who belongs there. And who does not. Do you realize the significance of this, do you understand the power we hold? We will design the future.

The Captain hangs on his every word.

RICHTER

I'm looking for men like you - men of principle - to join me in this mission. To help build the world of tomorrow.

Richter quietly awaits his reaction. Finally, the Captain raises his glass. Proudly:

THE CAPTAIN

"My honor is loyalty".

Richter smiles.

RICHTER

Heil, Hitler.

THE CAPTAIN

Heil, Hitler.

They clink glasses and toss back their shots.

EXT. NURSE'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - EARLY MORNING

The Captain sleeps in the overgrown backyard, back against the old barren tree. It's a rare moment of peace.

Birds call softly in the distance, and he's awake - his eyes falling into that same dead, hollow stare. It takes a moment for him to get his bearings, but when he does, he sees--

Elsa, pale as a ghost, standing over him. Wrapped in a threadbare blanket, she studies him, almost curiously.

Instinctively, he reaches for his pistol, only to find: *the holster is empty*. When he looks up again, he finds himself looking down the barrel of his own gun.

ELSA
(in Polish)
Who are you?

He just stares back at her. She asks again, this time in English:

ELSA
Who are you?

The Captain is silent a long time before responding. In lightly-accented English:

THE CAPTAIN
You were a prisoner at *Einehof*.
Your name is Elsa.

The Captain glances at her tattoo. Elsa notices, pulling her sleeve down to cover it up.

ELSA
You didn't answer my question.

THE CAPTAIN
I don't want to hurt you.

Elsa cocks the hammer, unnerved.

ELSA
What's your name?

He stares back at her, coldly. Even though she's the one with the gun, he looks scarier.

THE CAPTAIN
A man told me you know where I can
find Anton Richter.

She flinches at the sound of that name.

ELSA
Who told you that?

Instead of answering, the Captain lunges.

He wrenches the gun from her hand and slams her to the ground. He aims the barrel right at her head.

THE CAPTAIN
Tell me where to find him.

Elsa clutches her bandaged side, breathing heavily.

ELSA
I don't know.

THE CAPTAIN
You're lying.

ELSA
Why do you want to find Richter?

THE CAPTAIN
Because I'm going to kill him.

This surprises Elsa.

ELSA
Who are you?

THE CAPTAIN
Tell me where to find him.

She considers.

ELSA
I can show you where he is, but you need to take me with you.

THE CAPTAIN
I'm not negotiating.

ELSA
Neither am I.

She sits up, wipes the mud off her hands. In the distance, we hear the low RUMBLE of approaching MILITARY TRUCKS.

ELSA
If you're going to kill Anton Richter, I'm going to watch him die.

They stare at each other for a long, tense moment. Then--

RUSSIAN VOICES call out from the front of the house, arguing. Moments later, Marta bursts out of the back door--

MARTA

It's the Soviets. You need to leave. Now.

The Captain looks down at Elsa, staring up at him defiantly. The VOICES outside continue to argue, louder now, getting closer. He has no other option and she knows it.

EXT. EASTERN GERMANY, OPEN ROAD - LATER

The Captain's Zundapp SCREAMS down the open road. The Captain at the helm with Elsa on the back, arms around his waist, holding just tight enough to stay on the bike and no more.

Overhead a squadron of AMERICAN CARGO PLANES pass on their way to Berlin.

EXT. MEADOWLANDS - SUNSET

A small campfire smokes and spits in the dusk. Elsa sits on a rock, knees drawn up to her chest, clutching her bandaged wound. She rubs her shaven head, still getting used to it.

On the other side of the fire, the Captain adds PETR'S DOG TAGS to his collection.

Elsa breaks the heavy silence--

ELSA

(re: dog tags)

Did you kill all those men?

The Captain ignores her. He puts the dog tags back in his bag, and removes a SEWING NEEDLE. Holds it over the coals.

ELSA

The doctor said you saved my life.

The Captain's eyes meet hers, then drift back to the needle. He bends it, threads it carefully, then rolls up his shirtsleeves, exposing the brutal knife-wound on his forearm.

Elsa winces at the sight of it.

ELSA

I remember that man. From Einehof.
His name was Erich...

The Captain takes a sharp breath in as he works the needle into the soft flesh around the cut. He begins the slow, painful process of stitching it up.

Elsa can hardly watch. But she can't look away.

ELSA

Why was he trying to kill me?

THE CAPTAIN

Because of what you know.

ELSA

About Richter?

The Captain continues working the needle, ignoring her. His body is a mess of scars and bruises.

ELSA

Why are they still fighting for him? The war is over.

THE CAPTAIN

Not for them.

Elsa puts the pieces together in her head, as she watches the Captain push the needle through the last bit of flesh.

ELSA

You never told me your name.

He stares at her. All patience lost.

THE CAPTAIN

Where are we going?

ELSA

To find Richter.

THE CAPTAIN

Which direction?

ELSA

North.

THE CAPTAIN

How far?

Elsa looks at him, really studying him now.

ELSA

What did he take from you?

The Captain's eyes go ice-cold. There's an oppressive, foreboding silence as they stare at each other. Finally, the Captain picks up his Luger, stands, cocks the gun and...

Places it in his holster. He walks off into the woods. As soon as he's gone--

Elsa lets the tears fall. She stares at the dying fire, alone in the darkness.

EXT. MEADOWLANDS - THE NEXT MORNING

Elsa wakes up with a start. The fire next to her is just smoldering ashes. It's eerily quiet. She quickly realizes--

She's all alone. She sits up, in a panic. She scans the surrounding woods, then notices--

A RATION CAN OF PRESSED BEEF, half-full, cooking on the fire. Elsa doesn't wait for permission. She grabs a nearby fork, snatches the can, and desperately wolfs it down.

THE CAPTAIN (O.S.)

There's a refugee camp near Bamberg,
close to the American Zone.

Elsa is startled. She turns around, mouth full, to find--

The Captain, sitting behind her on a fallen log, cleaning his battered RIFLE.

THE CAPTAIN

They have food, beds, doctors. It's
protected.

Elsa slowly scans the campsite, registering the FOOD and SUPPLIES.

THE CAPTAIN

You'll be safe there.

ELSA

I'm not going back to one of those
camps.

THE CAPTAIN

There's a map, on the ground next
to the fire.

Elsa notices the CLOTH MAP beside her.

The Captain is calm and steady. He's formulated a plan and he expects her to follow it.

THE CAPTAIN

When you've finished eating, you're
going to open it and show me
exactly where to find Richter.

ELSA

Did you hear what I said?

He ignores her. Continues cleaning his rifle.

Elsa notices the Captain's FRESHLY-CLEANED PISTOL sitting on the log next to him. She looks back at him, resolved:

ELSA

I said I'm not going back to one of those camps.

THE CAPTAIN

I'll give you a day's supplies and drop you near the main road. You can make it there by nightfall.

The Captain turns away to retrieve his RIFLE SCOPE. The moment he does--

ELSA LUNGES FOR THE PISTOL.

She gets to the gun first. Stumbling back, she keeps the barrel fixed on the Captain's forehead.

ELSA

Stop. Put the rifle down. Slowly.

The Captain just stares at her. He looks vaguely surprised, but there's not a trace of fear. He calmly sets his rifle on the ground.

In one quick movement, Elsa crouches down, picks up the rifle and slings it over her shoulder.

She slowly walks backwards, keeping the gun trained on the Captain the entire time. She grabs his CANVAS RUCKSACK and begins stuffing it, one-handed, with SUPPLIES. As she packs:

ELSA

I told you before, I'm going to find Richter. If you're not going with me, I'm going alone. Now, I'm going to head in this direction--

(gestures north)

And you're going to head in that direction.

(gestures south)

I don't know how you found me, but don't find me again.

The rucksack's nearly full. Elsa throws it over her shoulder. There's a good distance between them now. She softens--

ELSA

Thank you for saving my life.

Elsa has reached the TREE-LINE. One more step and she's gone. Then--

The Captain stands up. Begins striding towards her.

ELSA
STOP. Don't come any closer.

He keeps moving.

She starts to panic.

ELSA
I will shoot you. Do not come any closer!

He's closing in. Only ten feet away now.

ELSA
STOP. RIGHT NOW.

The Captain doesn't stop. He doesn't slow down. He doesn't even look angry.

ELSA
DON'T--

There's no more time. He's too close. She needs to make a decision. The Captain reaches for the gun and--

ELSA POINTS IT STRAIGHT AT HIS FACE AND PULLS THE TRIGGER.

CLICK.

She pulls the trigger again. CLICK, CLICK.

The gun is empty.

In one swift motion, the Captain rips the gun from her hands and STRIKES HER ACROSS THE FACE. Hard.

Elsa collapses to the dirt, face down. Gasping. The empty rifle lying beside her.

The Captain picks it up. Looms over her, a gun in each hand.

THE CAPTAIN
If you point a gun at me again,
I'll slit your throat. Understand?

Elsa nods, defeated.

The Captain looks down at her. His hand lightly trembling. Finally--

THE CAPTAIN

We need gas.

The Captain turns and heads for the Zundapp. Elsa touches her busted lip. She spits blood, watches it mix with the dirt. *That familiar mixture of rage and fear.*

EXT. EASTERN GERMANY, OPEN ROAD - LATER

The Zundapp roars down what's left of the road. The Captain leans over the handlebars as Elsa clings to her seat. She looks out at the passing landscape as they drive:

Endless fields of yellow wheat with vast snow-capped mountains towering in the distance.

A narrow, brown river where a naked CORPSE floats face-down, adrift in its current. It almost looks like he's swimming.

A farmhouse burns, thick plumes of black smoke pouring into the clear blue sky above.

Elsa watches the smoke tumbling up in eddies as they pass.

EXT. LUBIN, THE BLACK MARKET BAZAAR - LATER

The Zundapp pulls up in front of an old, two-story building. DESPERATE-LOOKING MEN wander in and out of its doors.

A REFUGEE carries a BASKET of worthless REICHSMARKS out with him, abandoning it on the steps as he leaves.

As the Captain and Elsa dismount the bike:

ELSA

...what is this place?

THE CAPTAIN

A brothel.

She stops.

ELSA

I'm not going in there.

THE CAPTAIN

You think you're better off out here?

Elsa notices the men outside leering at her. She looks back at the Captain, grits her teeth, and follows him towards the front door. After they disappear inside--

Two TALL, POCKMARKED MEN, watching them from the shadows, stand up and circle around the back of the building.

INT. THE BLACK MARKET BROTHEL - MOMENTS LATER

The place is dusty, dimly-lit, with a large makeshift bar. Greasy, unwashed LABORERS are scattered throughout, perched atop three-legged chairs and split-wood barstools.

The PROSTITUTES, filthy and homely in their knee-length tattered smocks, wander around looking for a date, a hollow look in their eyes.

An overwhelming sadness permeates the room. Man or woman, prostitute or John, no one is happy here.

As the Captain and Elsa enter, all eyes fall on them. Elsa shies away from the stares, but the Captain just heads straight for--

THE DUSTY BAR

They take up a spot near the end. As soon as they do--

A young, DOE-EYED PROSTITUTE approaches the Captain. She can't be a day over 13. Without a hint of emotion, she raises her grey smock and shows him her filthy white panties.

THE CAPTAIN

Go away.

The doe-eyed prostitute drifts away like a ghost. Elsa watches her go, upset and uncomfortable.

The Captain waves over the craggy, old Polish BARTENDER.

BARTENDER

What'd you like?

THE CAPTAIN

Petrol.

BARTENDER

How much?

The Captain places a BOX OF AMERICAN CIGARETTES on the bar.

The Bartender looks at the cigarettes, looks at the Captain. He's suspicious.

BARTENDER

You German?

THE CAPTAIN
Just the petrol.

The Bartender studies him, then Elsa. Finally--

He picks up the cigarettes and disappears down a HALLWAY behind the bar.

ELSA
Where is he going?

THE CAPTAIN
Stop talking.

The Captain scans the room, on guard, searching for threats, escape routes. His eyes land on a CORNER TABLE where--

A HUSKY PROSTITUTE lets a trio of AMERICAN SOLDIERS play with her INFANT DAUGHTER. They bellow with DRUNKEN LAUGHTER as the older one bounces her up and down on his knee. The child CRIES, reaching for her mother.

Elsa watches, heartbroken, lost in some dark memory.

Finally, the Bartender returns, and the Captain turns to Elsa, startling her out of her reverie--

THE CAPTAIN
Let's go.

Elsa nods slowly. The Bartender impatiently gestures--

BARTENDER
Down the hall. Last door on the left.

The Captain turns. Leaving the Bartender behind, he leads Elsa into--

INT. HALLWAY - THE BLACK MARKET BROTHEL - MOMENTS LATER

MOANING, SOBBING, and the occasional SLAP can be heard from behind the many closed DOORS that line the narrow corridor.

The Captain leads Elsa down the hall. We hold on her as they walk, the sounds of sex and violence surrounding them is taking its toll on her. *Taking her back to places she doesn't want to remember.*

They reach the end of the hall - last door on the left. As the Captain raises his fist to knock, something catches his eye. In the GAP AT THE BOTTOM OF THE DOOR, he sees--

Four black columns - THICK SHADOWS, waiting.

The Captain slowly lowers his hand, sensing something.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR - STORAGE ROOM

Two EX-SS SOLDIERS, OSKAR and LEO (20s), the same POCKMARKED MEN from outside, stand with their GUNS pressed against the door. They're listening closely, carefully tracking the Captain by the sounds of his movement.

Behind them, another German, WERNER (30s), stands with his own PISTOL pointed squarely at the door. Next to him stands the Polish Bartender.

This is an ambush.

Nobody moves a muscle. It's dead quiet on both sides of the door. *They can't place the Captain.*

Werner motions to the Bartender.

BARTENDER
(calls out)
You still want petrol?

They all wait, listening for the slightest movement.

HALLWAY

Now the Captain definitely knows something is wrong. Without even looking at her, he slowly pushes Elsa clear of the door.

Elsa stumbles back, holding her breath.

The tension builds and builds...

Until finally, the Captain shifts the smallest step to his left, and a FLOORBOARD CREAKS--

BAM! BAM! BAM! BULLETS suddenly TEAR through the thin wooden door. Rays of harsh sunlight pour through the gaping holes into the hallway.

The Captain throws himself against the wall, just barely clear of the line of fire. Elsa screams as--

All hell breaks loose.

The hallway is flooded by a sea of half-dressed, terrified PROSTITUTES and sweaty, pantless MEN running for their lives.

Elsa is swept up by the hysterical mass, pushed away from the Captain, and through a DOOR into--

THE ROOM NEXT DOOR

She stumbles into the adjoining room, a thin wall the only thing between her and the Gunmen now. She looks around, in a panic, and sees--

The Polish Bartender cowering in the corner.

They lock eyes.

BACK IN THE HALLWAY

The Captain scrambles to his feet. He presses his back to the wall, right beside the shattered door. He waits, then--

The door opens.

The Captain unsheathes his DAGGER.

Oskar steps out, gun-drawn. As soon as he does--

The Captain's blade FLASHES forward--

Instinctively, Oskar raises a hand for protection. The blade punches through his palm and buries itself in his left eye. *He dies instantly.*

STORAGE ROOM

As Oskar collapses into the room, Leo wildly unloads into--

THE HALLWAY

The Captain pivots against the wall on the other side of the door, sharp splinters of wood raking his face and neck.

A FLEEING PROSTITUTE isn't so lucky. A stray bullet catches her in the temple and she topples to the floor.

THE ROOM NEXT DOOR - THAT MOMENT

Elsa screams as Leo's BULLETS rip through the walls around her, shattering a MIRROR above her head.

The SHATTERED GLASS rains down, scratching up her hands and face as it falls. She looks around at the wreckage, eyes falling on a JAGGED SHARD OF GLASS.

THE HALLWAY

On the CLICK of Leo's empty clip--

The Captain spins halfway into the doorway, and grabs Leo by the collar, jamming his gun straight under the man's chin.

The Captain pulls the trigger--

STORAGE ROOM

BANG! Werner watches in horror as Leo goes down. After the shock wears off--

He shakily raises his Luger and squeezes off a few poorly-aimed SHOTS.

THE HALLWAY

The Captain keeps his back pressed against the wall, gun raised, waiting for the right opportunity.

STORAGE ROOM

Werner is sweating heavily now - his gun fixed on the door. He calls out, in German:

WERNER

We should have killed you back at Enehof when we had the chance. I demanded it. But Richter, he refused. He protected you.

THE HALLWAY

The Captain continues to wait, patiently. Ice cold.

WERNER (O.S.)

You were one of his special projects. A pet - like one of his dogs. You and ELSA.

THE ROOM NEXT DOOR

Elsa listens. Werner switches to English:

WERNER (O.S.)

I KNOW YOU'RE HERE, ELSA. I KNOW YOU'RE LISTENING.

Her eyes go wide, heart racing. *She knows that voice.*

STORAGE ROOM

Werner looks to his right and sees--

The open SERVICE DOOR that leads to THE ROOM NEXT DOOR.

He slowly edges towards it, keeping his gun, fixed on the Captain out in the hall--

WERNER

Richter's not here to protect you anymore. You're just a couple of stray dogs now. Ready to finally be put down.

THE HALLWAY

The Captain shifts his weight. By the sound of his voice, he can tell Werner's on the move. He quickly steals a look around the corner and--

BAM! BAM! BAM! Three more SHOTS tear into the door-frame, forcing the Captain back out into the hall.

STORAGE ROOM

Werner keeps moving towards the service door, eyes trained on the Captain. Only a couple more steps now. He finally turns to make a break for it, only to see--

Elsa blocking the entrance, looking like something out of a nightmare. Blood runs down her face from the broken glass.

Werner freezes. Elsa reacts first--

She raises the jagged SHARD OF BROKEN MIRROR, and with both hands, RAMS it straight into Werner's neck. She keeps pushing until the shard is buried deep, slicing open her own hands in the process.

Werner stares at her, stunned, choking on his own blood. He stumbles backwards to the ground, clawing at his throat.

Elsa stands, almost catatonic. She looks down at her trembling, blood-stained hands.

The Captain steps through the doorway, gun raised - then freezes. He looks down at Werner's quivering body. Then up at Elsa, standing motionless.

The Captain swiftly holsters his Luger and grabs two full GAS CANS. He moves towards the door--

THE CAPTAIN

We need to move.

Elsa blinks, coming back from whatever far away place she had gone. She looks down at Werner, as if registering him for the first time. Something suddenly clicks in her.

She kneels down, pulls the BLOODY DOG TAGS from the remains of his throat. And then she's gone.

EXT. ROADSIDE SERVICE STATION - AFTERNOON

A barely-standing old service station, long since looted of anything valuable.

The Zundapp pulls in with a roar. But before the Captain can even shut off the bike, Elsa is off, stumbling to a nearby ditch. She VOMITS until there's nothing left.

The Captain watches from the motorcycle.

Kneeling in the dirt, Elsa begins shaking. As it builds, we realize, she isn't crying - *she's laughing*. But this is not a joyous laughter. It's the laughter of a madwoman.

ELSA

His face--he was so surprised! He looked so stupid--did you see how he looked?

Elsa loses herself to hysteria - years of trauma, loss, all storming inside her.

The Captain watches, betraying nothing.

Eventually, the well runs dry. She stops shaking, stands. She turns to face him, suddenly terrifyingly lucid:

ELSA

Tell me what's going on.

The Captain doesn't react.

Elsa charges him, shoves him as hard as she can--

ELSA

WHO ARE YOU? WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?

She's right up in his face, pounding his chest with both fists--

ELSA

TELL ME.

The Captain struggles to control the violence inside himself.

ELSA

GODDAMN YOU! TELL ME.

He steps forward, pushing her back with his body.

THE CAPTAIN

You've told me nothing. Do you know where we're going? Do you even know where we are?

He stares her down--

THE CAPTAIN

Give me one reason I shouldn't leave you here right now. Because I'm starting to think you don't have the slightest idea where Richter is. I think you saw an opportunity to get out, and you took it. That's it.

Elsa's face goes dark. The accusation touches a deep wound for her - *survivor's guilt*. She suddenly explodes, charging the Captain:

ELSA

I DIDN'T CHOOSE THIS.

The Captain steps back, overwhelmed by the fury and pain in Elsa's voice, as she bears down on him:

ELSA

HE CHOSE ME. He chose me.

Elsa stops, her uncontrollable rage transforming into uncontrollable sadness.

ELSA

Anton Richter raped me every day for almost three years. I lost my mother, my father, my sister, my brothers. *I have lost so much*. But I'm still here. Why? Can you tell me that? Am I such a good whore, that I was worth saving?

Elsa turns her back to him.

The Captain watches quietly, keeping his distance.

Elsa takes a deep breath. She seems suddenly calm - *focused*.

ELSA

Anton Richter has my baby...
Finding her is all I have left.

At this, the Captain goes completely still. A cold uneasiness rising in his chest. *He knows something about this story.*

After a long, tense moment--

THE CAPTAIN

What makes you think Richter has your child?

Elsa turns to face him--

ELSA

Because she's his daughter.

At this, she storms off into a nearby field, wind whipping through the grass around her.

The Captain watches her walk away, consumed by memory. *There's a flicker of deep shame in his eyes.*

EXT. EASTERN GERMANY - NATURE - SUNSET

SERIES: Moments of the German countryside at dusk. It's quiet, peaceful, serene.

EXT. EASTERN GERMANY - SMALL STREAM - DUSK

Elsa sits on a fallen log, listening to the gentle sound of the stream. The rustling leaves. She holds WERNER'S DOG TAGS, absently rubbing away the dried blood.

The Captain approaches slowly, carrying CLEAN BANDAGES. He sits on the other end of the log, and gently takes the bloody dog tags from Elsa.

THE CAPTAIN

They're fleeing Europe...

The Captain lays COMPLETED PASSPORTS for Leo, Oskar and Werner from the brothel on the log next to Elsa.

THE CAPTAIN

...Richter and the rest of the men from Einhof. Forged passports get them to Spain. From there, they travel to South America. Then they disappear.

Elsa reaches down and picks up WERNER'S PASSPORT. Studies his photo, bitterly.

THE CAPTAIN

The names are fake, but they're official passports. They're all stamped from the same place: Zagan. In the Russian Zone.

She looks up at him now, concerned.

THE CAPTAIN
They have someone working inside
the Tracking Bureau.

Elsa looks back at the passport, examines the OFFICIAL STAMP
of the ZAGAN TRACKING BUREAU.

ELSA
Who?

THE CAPTAIN
Read the signature.

She holds the passport closer, squinting as she reads:

ELSA
Alfons Niemann.

Elsa goes cold.

THE CAPTAIN
He was--

ELSA
The doctor. At Einehof. I remember.

The Captain watches quietly as Elsa drifts to a dark place
inside her mind.

ELSA
He's a murderer.

The Captain nods in quiet agreement. He gently takes the
passport--

THE CAPTAIN
Give me your hand.

Elsa offers him her wounded hand. The Captain methodically
cleans and bandages her cuts as Elsa stares right through him.

THE CAPTAIN
The Russians need people - even
Germans - to help re-build the
country.

She considers this, in all its unfairness and injustice.

THE CAPTAIN
We need to go to Zagan, and find
Alfons. He may have Richter's
passport.

Elsa looks down at the deep wounds on her palms. The dried blood. *Remembering.*

ELSA

It felt good to kill that man.
(a breath)
To be the one in control. I'd
forgotten about that feeling...

Elsa looks carefully at the Captain now.

ELSA

So you're going to kill them all?
All the ones who got away.

He finishes tying her bandage. Elsa pulls her hand close to her chest, suddenly seeing the Captain in a new light.

THE CAPTAIN

Not all. Just my unit.

ELSA

What was your unit?

The Captain looks away. Takes a moment before answering.

THE CAPTAIN

When Berlin fell, our mission was
to liquidate the camps. Before the
Allies could see what we'd done.

Elsa looks away, deeply unsettled by his confession. A long quiet moment between them. Then--

She makes a choice. Slowly, she digs A FOLDED-UP PHOTOGRAPH from the hem of her panties. Stares down at it for a long time. Then hands it to the Captain.

B&W PHOTOGRAPH, Richter stands in front of a familiar COTTAGE on a lakeshore with his arm around his wife, Nina.

ELSA (O.S.)

He has a cottage on Lake Müritz.
Outside Elbe, in the British Zone.

The Captain looks up at Elsa. He flips over the photograph, on the back, in Richter's precise hand: "*Lake Müritz. Nina & I, 1938.*"

ELSA

Richter gave me this when he took
my baby. He told me that's where he
was taking her. That it would be a
safe place after the war.

(MORE)

ELSA
That he and his wife... they'd
raise her as their own.

Elsa points to the cottage in the photograph--

ELSA
That's where Richter is.

The Captain nods. A new arrangement has been reached.

EXT. EASTERN GERMANY, OPEN ROAD - MORNING

The Captain and Elsa race down the open road on the Zundapp. They seem united now, Elsa gripping the Captain's chest tightly as they speed ahead. *A single unit - on a mission.*

EXT. ZAGAN, EASTERN GERMANY - AFTERNOON

The Zundapp idles through a bustling town as the Captain and Elsa enter ZAGAN.

The STREETS and BUILDINGS remain mostly intact. STOREFRONTS are open, selling rationed goods. *There's life here.*

Elsa takes everything in as the Zundapp rumbles around a corner to find--

A BUSY STREET

It's lined with SOVIET MILITARY JEEPS, most of them empty. An occasional SOVIET SOLDIER stands, observing:

A CROWD OF CIVILIANS, excitedly marching down the street, waving flags. They're all headed towards the TOWN SQUARE where we hear, faintly, a BRASS BAND warming up--

The Captain pulls over into the mouth of an alley. Switches off the bike. He quietly watches the moving crowd.

Elsa slips off the motorcycle, scans the street:

ELSA
Where do you think they're going?

The Captain just shakes his head, as he keeps his eyes on the Soviet Soldiers at the far end of the street.

Elsa notices an OLDER POLISH COUPLE slowly making their way to the square. She crosses the street to speak with them.

The Captain hangs in the alley, observing their conversation. It's polite, friendly even. He suddenly lowers his eyes as--

A dozen rowdy SOVIET SOLDIERS stroll by, rifles in hand, laughing and whistling as they follow the crowd.

Elsa finishes up, makes her way back. The street is quiet, almost eerily empty now.

ELSA

The Russians brought free beer.

The Captain stares back at her.

ELSA

A new minister arrived, straight from Moscow. They're holding a banquet in his honor.

THE CAPTAIN

The Tracking Bureau?

ELSA

Closed. But they'll all be there. They have to be. State orders.

The Captain nods. In the distance, the brass band begins to play their first song. He starts off towards the music, but Elsa doesn't follow him. He stops, turns to face her.

She struggles for a moment to find the words, then--

ELSA

Alfons delivered my baby.

The Captain avoids her eyes.

ELSA

He's the one... who took her away from me.

Elsa swallows hard, burying her sadness. *Only anger left now.*

ELSA

I want to be the one who kills him.

The Captain studies her face for a long time, realizes she's deadly serious. After a moment--

THE CAPTAIN

How would you do it?

Elsa reaches into her coat pocket and pulls out--

TWO MORPHINE SYRETTES - small tubes of highly-concentrated morphine connected to a thin metal needle. One-time use.

ELSA

The nurse gave them to me. In
Liegnitz... "One to take away the
pain. Two for The Great Beyond."
(pauses)
She told me to use them on you.
While you were sleeping.

The Captain considers this. Stares back at Elsa. *She's calm, cold, determined...* But, ultimately decides--

THE CAPTAIN

It's too dangerous. To get that
close.

Before she can respond, he turns and continues down the street. Elsa collects herself. Pockets the syrettes. Follows him.

PRE-LAP: Swooning, melancholy MUSIC begins to play.

EXT. ZAGAN - TOWN SQUARE - LATE AFTERNOON

A beautiful POLISH GIRL sings '*The Red Poppies of Monte Cassino*', a nationalistic ballad about the triumph of the Polish Army.

She stands on a crudely-constructed stage, in front of a BRASS BAND, at the head of the town square - crowded now with TOWNSPEOPLE, SOVIET SOLDIERS and BUREAUCRATS, drinking beer, swaying happily with the music.

Rows of FIREWORKS line the side of the stage, ready for the evening's festivities.

ON A NEARBY ROOFTOP--

The Captain and Elsa lean against the stone edge, scanning the STAGE below - Elsa using a weathered set of BINOCULARS, the Captain the CHIPPED SCOPE on his worn RIFLE.

ELSA

I don't see him.

The Captain continues to scan the stage, growing anxious.

SCOPE POV: Dozens of cheery bureaucrats - but no Alfons.

TOWN SQUARE

The Polish Girl completes her song, to roaring APPLAUSE. As she steps back and takes a bow--

A lean, silver-haired POLISH ANNOUNCER in a tuxedo steps behind the microphone, addressing the crowd.

POLISH ANNOUNCER

My fellow countrymen, it is with great pleasure and great honor I present to you: Special Minister Vasiliev!

As the Brass Band (poorly) plays an instrumental version of 'The Soviet National Anthem', a group of local GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS file onto the stage to greet him.

ROOFTOP

Elsa scans the stage with her binoculars, she suddenly stops, zeroes in on--

BINOCULARS POV: There, making his way across the stage, is ALFONS NIEMANN. A proud, paunchy German with round eyeglasses and a well-groomed mustache, carrying a cracked LEATHER BRIEFCASE.

ELSA

There. There he is.

The Captain spots him. Narrows his eyes, watching coldly as--

SCOPE POV: Alfons proudly shakes hands with the Minister before taking a seat at the back of the stage.

TOWN SQUARE

The Minister steps up to the microphone and delivers a SPEECH (in Russian, no subtitles) propagandizing Poland's new role in the Soviet Union. As he drones on--

ROOFTOP

Elsa watches nervously as the Captain tweaks the dials on his scope, making final adjustments. He lies flat on the rooftop, stabilizing himself, settling in for the kill.

SCOPE POV: Alfons sits there, legs crossed, oblivious. A man of no moral principle, blending in seamlessly with his former enemies, the new ruling class.

The Captain flicks off the safety, takes a breath. It's a long and challenging shot, and they'll only have minutes to flee once Alfons goes down.

Elsa's breathing is ragged as she waits.

The Captain slowly re-positions his hand over the grip, his eye never leaving the scope. He slowly extends his finger over the trigger when, *it begins to tremble.*

He closes his eyes, makes a fist, tries to steady it. But it's no use. It only gets worse.

Elsa notices that something's wrong, she watches, concerned.

Finally, the Captain reaches for the trigger again, but the tremor is running through his whole body now--

SCOPE POV: The CROSSHAIRS weave back and forth, unable to draw a steady bead on Alfons.

On stage, the Minister finishes his speech, and suddenly the other officials are up on their feet, moving across the crowded bandstand, getting in the way of the Captain's shot--

The Captain is short of breath, fighting to control his shaking hands. He grips the rifle. Suddenly--

Elsa carefully reaches over and puts her hand on his shoulder, forcing the Captain to look at her--

The Captain stares back at her, troubled, but hiding it well. After a long moment, he lowers his rifle--

THE CAPTAIN

It's too crowded. I can't get a clean shot.

Elsa nods gently in support, then watches curiously as the Captain packs up his rifle - processing this new side of him.

INT. CROWDED BAR - NIGHT

In the back of a CROWDED BAR, Alfons sits in a BOOTH, smoking cigarettes and tossing back beers, while he discusses politics with the TIPSY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS surrounding him.

At a SMALL TABLE in a DARK CORNER at the other end of the bar, the Captain and Elsa sit. Watching, nursing their own beers, trying to stay invisible. Nearby--

A small group of drunken SOVIET SOLDIERS pour their beers into a GERMAN HELMET. They raise it over their heads, laughing, as they open their mouths wide to catch the beer streaming out through the jagged bullet-holes.

Elsa watches for a moment, then takes a sip from her glass.

ELSA

I'd forgotten what bars smell like.

The Captain doesn't respond at first. Just when the moment is about to pass--

THE CAPTAIN
What do they smell like?

ELSA
Cigarettes. Beer...

Elsa thinks.

ELSA
My father.

The Captain looks at her now.

ELSA
We lived in Warsaw, and every evening he would go to *Bar Prasowy*. In the old town.

She takes another sip.

ELSA
He said it was so he could read the newspaper in peace. But my mother always said it was so he could watch the pretty girls walk by.

Elsa smiles, relishing the sweetness of that memory - but it fades quickly. She looks at the Captain.

ELSA
I'll never really know what happened to them. Will I?

The Captain looks down at the table. After a long silence--

THE CAPTAIN
Maybe it's better. That you don't know.

Elsa frowns. Considers this.

ELSA
Perhaps.

Their attention suddenly shifts to--

Alfons in the booth. He stands up, stubs out his cigarette, and heads for the bathroom.

The Captain rises, turns to Elsa. She nods, nerves frayed. *She's ready*. Underneath the table, we see--

Elsa snaps the caps off the SYRETTES, revealing their long, sharp NEEDLES.

INT. BATHROOM HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

A dim hallway leading to a LAVATORY. The door is closed - *occupied*. Alfons stands nearby, waiting alone, his BRIEFCASE in hand. He blows his nose in a HANDKERCHIEF, and studies the result before folding it into his pocket.

AT THE OTHER END OF THE HALLWAY--

A figure steps out of the shadows. A young woman with her hands buried in her coat pockets. Elsa.

Alfons looks back at her, registers her face.

Elsa holds her breath, unsure of what to expect. Then--

He smiles politely at her. Gestures to the water closet. In accented Polish:

ALFONS

Five hundred liters of beer and one toilet.

Elsa forces a smile. He doesn't remember her. She can't believe it.

They stand there like that - two strangers waiting for the toilet - as the PARTY prattles on in the background.

IN THE BAR, AROUND THE CORNER FROM ELSA--

The Captain waits, his back against the wall, keeping watch. His PISTOL concealed in the flap of his coat.

BACK IN THE HALLWAY--

Elsa watches Alfons, curiously - almost amazed to see him standing there, totally out of context.

She's starting to make Alfons feel uncomfortable, but not threatened. To him, she's just another naive local.

Finally, the TOILET FLUSHES and an OVERWEIGHT POLISH MAN steps out and lumbers back towards the party.

Alfons turns to Elsa, extends his hand, chivalrously--

ALFONS

After you.

She just stands there, frozen. This is her opportunity, but she's too stunned, too overwhelmed to make her move.

Alfons tilts his head, a hint of recognition flashing across his face.

Elsa can't wait any longer. She pulls her right hand from her coat pocket. Alfons doesn't notice, but in it: she's holding the SYRETTES.

Elsa steps towards him, getting closer and closer, then--

SOMEONE WHISTLES from behind her. She stops, looks back over her shoulder, and sees--

TWO SOVIET SOLDIERS at the end of the hallway. The TALLER ONE calls out to Alfons in Russian:

TALLER SOLDIER

*The Minister would like to speak
with you, Mr. Niemann.*

ALFONS

The Minister?

TALLER SOLDIER

He leaves in one hour.

Alfons smooths his tie and ambles towards the Soldiers. As he brushes past Elsa--

She returns the syrettes to her pocket with a shaking hand. Averts her eyes. As soon as he's gone--

IN THE BAR, AROUND THE CORNER

Elsa joins the Captain. They watch apprehensively, as the Soviet Soldiers usher Alfons out the front door.

ELSA

What do we do now?

The Captain thinks. Just then--

CRACK! CRACK! CRACK! The sound of FIREWORKS from outside.

His eyes narrow. *An idea.*

THE CAPTAIN

Let's go.

And they're on the move.

EXT. ZAGAN - TOWN SQUARE - MOMENTS LATER

CELEBRATORY FIREWORKS LIGHT UP THE SKY above the TOWN SQUARE, completely packed now with PEOPLE, staring up in awe.

CRACK! CRACK! CRACK!

Alfons watches, momentarily hypnotized. Then--

Another WHISTLE from his Soviet escorts. He snaps to attention, follows them to--

A SOVIET MILITARY JEEP parked next to the BAR. The Soldiers get in the front, Alfons gets in the back, and the jeep rumbles away, headed for a nearby ALLEY.

CRACK! CRACK! CRACK! The FIREWORKS continue.

INT./EXT. MILITARY JEEP/ALLEYWAY - THAT MOMENT

The TALLER SOLDIER drives, sharing a cigarette with the SHORTER SOLDIER riding shotgun, both a little drunk. Alfons listens absently from the back as they chit-chat in Russian:

TALLER SOLDIER

I'm going to eat a nice pirozhki.

SHORTER SOLDIER

I don't care about food. Everything tastes the same to me now anyway.

TALLER SOLDIER

What do you mean?

The Shorter One touches a scar behind his ear--

SHORTER SOLDIER

Shrapnel. In Kursk. They say I'll never taste again.

TALLER SOLDIER

A life without pirozhki?!

SHORTER SOLDIER

'Pirozhki.' Who gives a shit. The first thing I'm going to do is fuck my wife.

TALLER SOLDIER

You know, I changed my mind. The first thing I'm going to do is fuck your wife too.

They share a big laugh, when suddenly--

A FIGURE APPEARS in front of them - a man staggering drunkenly towards the jeep, blocking their path.

The Taller Soldier SLAMS on the brakes.

TALLER SOLDIER
Look at this kozyol!

He HONKS the horn. Yells out the window--

TALLER SOLDIER
 MOVE YOU DRUNKEN BASTARD.

Alfons cranes his neck, leaning forward to get a better look out the FRONT WINDSHIELD--

The alleyway is dark. The jeep's low headlights leave the man's face in shadow. He's stumbling drunk--

The Taller Soldier honks the horn again--

The man staggers towards the jeep, steadying himself on the hood for a moment. Alfons squints his eyes, trying to place this man's face. Then--

CRACK! CRACK! The fireworks illuminate the alleyway in QUICK FLASHES OF WHITE LIGHT. In those quick flashes--

A glimpse of the man's face. *Those cold grey eyes...*

Alfons' mouth drops open. He knows this man. *And suddenly he understands everything.* He's about to speak up when--

CRACK! CRACK! More FIREWORKS BURST overhead, providing the perfect cover for--

The Captain to lunge forward and SMASH his LUGER into the back of the Taller Soldier's head. Dropping the big man instantly. Pivoting, the Captain WHIPS the heavy pistol into the Shorter Soldier's forehead, knocking him out cold.

It's all over in a split-second. Before Alfons even has a chance to stand--

The JEEP DOOR opens, Elsa slips inside and--

IMMEDIATELY PLUNGES A MORPHINE SYRETTE INTO ALFONS' THIGH.

Alfons cries out in shock as his body goes limp. He looks at Elsa, eyes trembling, paralyzed by fear and narcotics. Elsa stares back, voice barely a whisper:

ELSA
 Do you remember what you said to
 me, after you ripped my baby out of
 my body, and left me to bleed?

She stares straight into his eyes, channeling all of her pain and grief into this moment. A tear rolls down her cheek.

ELSA

You said 'let go'. You told me I
could make all this pain go away if
I would only 'let go'.

Alfons grabs Elsa's coat, squeezes tightly. He opens his mouth to speak, but nothing comes out. Then--

ELSA PLUNGES THE SECOND SYRETTE INTO HIS THIGH, ELEVATING HIS HEARTRATE, SENDING HIM STRAIGHT FOR: *The Great Beyond*.

Alfons gasps. He sinks into the seat, looking out the front windshield, where he sees--

The Captain, watching in silhouette, like some deathly ghost.

Elsa grabs hold of Alfons' face, forces him to look at her.

ELSA

Let go, Herr Niemann.

Alfons stares straight at Elsa, eyes bulging, breath shallow. He releases his grip on Elsa's coat as his head lolls back--

Elsa holds it tightly, so Alfons has nowhere to look but her eyes. She wants to watch it happen. *She wants to see the lights go out.*

ELSA

LET GO.

CRACK! CRACK! CRACK! Flashes of HAUNTING WHITE LIGHT fill the jeep as the fireworks continues in the background.

Alfons' breathing gets slower and slower, until finally: his eyes go dark, and he slips into *the Great Beyond*.

Elsa stares down at his lifeless face - *feeling all the vengeance, the malice, the pain swirling inside her.*

The other DOOR opens. The Captain stands looking back at her. He glances at Alfons, confirms he's dead. Turns back to Elsa--

THE CAPTAIN

The briefcase.

With that, the Captain is gone. Elsa takes one more look at Alfons' bloated face, then grabs his BRIEFCASE and races after the Captain. As they escape into the shadows--

The jeep sits motionless in the narrow alleyway, the silhouettes of the THREE BODIES inside briefly illuminated by the FIREWORKS BURSTING in the Town Square behind it.

CRACK. CRACK. CRACK...

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. THE BOBER RIVER - DAWN

The Captain washes off the filth from the road in the clear water of a FLOWING RIVER. Behind him--

Elsa sits on the riverbank, neck wrapped with the Captain's worn handkerchief. She struggles with the clasps on ALFONS' BRIEFCASE, finally gets them open--

PAPERS, STAMPS and FOLDERS spill out in a pile on the grass. On top of it all: an SS-ISSUE LUGER P38.

Elsa looks at the pistol, looks at the Captain--

His back is turned, he's washing his face.

In a snap decision, she picks up the gun and pockets it. One more nervous glance up at the Captain--

He didn't notice.

She continues to rifle through the briefcase. Then, in a small pocket of the case, she discovers--

FOUR UNWRAPPED BARS OF CHOCOLATE!

Elsa gasps. She can hardly contain her excitement. She calls out, her voice a rasping whisper--

ELSA
I found chocolate!

She gleefully holds up the chocolate bars. The Captain gives her the faintest smile and returns to his washing.

Elsa tears open one of the bars and chomps into it. Her eyelids flutter, her head falls back - *pure ecstasy*.

ELSA
It's fresh!

The Captain couldn't care less about chocolate - fresh or not. He's started in on his LAUNDRY.

Elsa digs deeper into the briefcase, and finds--

A small STACK OF FORGED PASSPORTS.

She opens one up and sees--

A PHOTOGRAPH of a somber, middle-aged man with sad eyes staring back at her. This is SEBASTIAN - *another member of the Captain's doomed unit who we'll meet later.*

Elsa takes a moment to study his face. Can't place it. She sets the passport aside, opens another one, and goes rigid when she sees--

ANTON RICHTER'S PHOTOGRAPH staring back at her. Shakily, she turns to the Captain.

ELSA
...look at this.

The Captain puts his laundry on hold and approaches. She hands him the passport--

ELSA
It's his.

The Captain nods. Seeing Richter's face again has taken him to a dark place.

ELSA
What does that mean?

He takes one more look at the photograph, then folds the passport and puts it in his back pocket.

THE CAPTAIN
It means he's not going anywhere.

The Captain kneels down and digs around in his own bag.

Elsa finally opens the last PASSPORT in the stack. Her mouth falls open, and all the breath leaves her body.

CLOSE ON, a black-and-white PHOTOGRAPH OF LENI, Richter's young daughter. *This passport is for her.*

ELSA
Oh my God...

Elsa's hands start to shake.

The Captain looks back at her. She can't speak. All she can do is stand, and offer the passport.

The Captain examines it, and immediately understands.

Tears of joy stream down Elsa's face.

ELSA
She's alive... She's alive...

She drops to her knees, breaking down. All those months of not knowing, all that time spent fearing the worst, erased in a moment. *It's the most painful kind of relief.*

The Captain watches her, unsure how to react. He looks like he wants to say something, but Elsa is completely lost in the joy of the moment.

ELSA
I can't believe it...

Elsa smiles, wipes away her tears. Takes a deep breath. She laughs softly to herself.

ELSA
She's alive!

The Captain stares sadly back at her, slowly offers her the passport--

THE CAPTAIN
Keep that safe.

Elsa holds the passport in her lap, gripping it tightly. She wipes her nose with her sleeve. Grins.

The Captain returns to the river, troubled. Continues his washing. He removes his shirt, his back to Elsa as he splashes water over his chest and shoulders.

Elsa watches him, absently. She's in her memories now, her mood darkening.

ELSA
I remember when he chose me. We were standing on the platform, next to the train. He pointed at me and said, 'that one.'

The Captain is listening, but doesn't respond.

ELSA
I thought it meant I was going to be okay.

He keeps washing until finally--

THE CAPTAIN
You survived.

She considers this, uncertain. The Captain turns towards her now, and Elsa notices--

The gruesome BURN SCAR over his old SS DEATH'S HEAD TATTOO.

ELSA
Did it hurt?

The Captain looks down at his chest. At Elsa.

THE CAPTAIN
It hurt.

Elsa stares down at her own tattoo. A permanent reminder. She rubs at it gently.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON, the Captain's SS DAGGER, resting on RED HOT COALS.

The Captain watches as Elsa wraps a rag around her hand and pulls the knife from the fire. She examines the blade - GLOWING WHITE HOT.

She looks at the Captain.

THE CAPTAIN
You have to hold it flat.

Elsa looks down at the outside of her left arm--

143894. Her camp serial number.

She takes a deep breath. Works up the courage. Then--

Elsa presses the burning blade to her skin. It SIZZLES and SMOKES and she SCREAMS IN AGONY. But she doesn't let go. She burns her tattoo until there's nothing left.

The Captain watches.

Finally, Elsa drops the knife. The Captain takes his CANTEEN, pouring COLD WATER on the wound - a vicious, blackened burn.

Elsa studies it carefully, fascinated. With a deep breath, she closes her eyes.

EXT. THE GHOST TOWN - AFTERNOON

The Zundapp rolls into--

A small village at the edge of a dense FOREST, undiscovered by the Soviets, abandoned by the villagers.

It's eerily well-preserved, almost untouched by the war. Except for the fact that it's completely deserted.

DOORS to small COTTAGES sway in the breeze, offering interior glimpses: A dining table is set for Sunday dinner.

A pair of dress shoes sit on the floor by a chair. Fresh laundry hangs in a yard.

It's as if everyone just suddenly vanished into thin air.

Elsa clings to the Captain as they glide down the street, a DIRTY BANDAGE around her arm. The emptiness surrounds them.

EXT. THE ABANDONED HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The Captain pulls over and parks in front of a quaint, old house. It's rustic, charming.

He shuts off the engine. They dismount and study the house. Elsa works the front gate back and forth nervously.

THE CAPTAIN

We could make it to Lake Müritz tomorrow if we leave at dawn. We'll spend the night here.

Elsa smiles bitterly to herself.

ELSA

Home.

INT. THE ABANDONED HOUSE - DUSK

Elsa and the Captain walk carefully into the quiet house, listening closely.

The wind whistles through an open window.

Elsa places a hand over her nose and mouth, wrinkles her face. She turns slowly to the Captain.

ELSA

Smell that...?

The Captain nods. He knows that smell. Death.

He turns and climbs the stairs, performing a thorough sweep of the house.

Elsa glances at the open window, a season of dust and rain has warped the windowsill, stained the curtains.

Upstairs, the sound of heavy boots and sliding furniture. The Captain's diligence.

Elsa drops her satchel on the kitchen table. She wanders into the living room, running her hand along the frame of the door, the grain of the wooden walls - *the feel of home.*

In the corner, sits a dirty BABY CARRIAGE covered in a ragged red blanket. *It stands out - doesn't belong here.*

Elsa stares at it, her breathing goes shallow. She takes a faltering step towards it, visibly upset. Closer and closer, dread building with every step, when suddenly--

She hears the sound of QUIET FOOTSTEPS from behind her--

Elsa turns to see, A YOUNG ROMANI GIRL standing in the doorway, defiant, scared. A SMALL KITCHEN KNIFE clutched in one hand. She's barely twelve years-old. This is VERONIKA.

VERONIKA

(with a gentle accent)

We have nothing left for you to steal.

For a second, Elsa looks like she might cry. She reaches out towards the girl almost blindly. Veronika steps back, afraid. She calls out, in Romanian:

VERONIKA

Josef, Lida, get the twins, we're going!

Veronika brandishes the knife. She backs up slowly into the kitchen, never taking her eyes off Elsa.

JOSEF (7) and LIDA (8) appear behind her, they look terrified. They hold their meager belongings between them.

Elsa kneels down, both hands held out in front of her. She's gentle, open. *We've never seen her like this before.*

ELSA

You're safe, it's okay, you're okay.

At the sound of the voices, the Captain barrels down the stairs, Luger drawn - but before he can say a word, Elsa is hushing him--

ELSA

Wait. It's alright--

As soon as they see the Captain, Josef and Lida begin crying, hiding behind Veronika, speaking in a language neither Elsa nor the Captain understand.

The Captain takes in this bizarre scene, his gun half-raised.

JOSEF

Vero! Vero, help please--

Elsa puts a hand on the Captain's arm, gently dropping his arm to the floor.

From around the corner, two more children, MARKETA (6) and VOJTECH (6) stand, frozen.

VERONIKA
Please. Let us go.

Veronika's eyes are pleading.

ELSA
There are so many of you.

The band of orphans stares at the Captain, at Elsa, afraid. *They've seen only the bad in people for as long as they can remember.*

ELSA
You're okay. It's okay. We have food. Food.

Elsa moves slowly towards the kitchen table, carefully digging out a BAR OF CHOCOLATE--

She turns back to the children, slowly opening the wrapper. Vojtech stares, almost confused by the sight of it.

EXT. THE ABANDONED HOUSE - BACKYARD - DUSK

CRACK. The Captain splits firewood in the backyard, focused, but keeping a loose eye on the two Romani Boys--

Nearby, bathed in the light of a half-broken lantern, Vojtech and Josef clumsily help him stack the pieces.

INT. THE ABANDONED HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Elsa watches the two boys outside through the kitchen window as she digs through a pile of SHRIVELED POTATOES.

Veronika sits nearby, toying with the empty CHOCOLATE WRAPPER curiously.

Behind them, Lida and Marketa play with ALFONS' LEATHER BRIEFCASE, opening and closing its latches, giggling - their fear already forgotten.

Veronika presses the paper wrapper out on the counter, running her hand across, trying to make it perfectly smooth.

ELSA
You can help me... if you like.

Veronika meticulously folds the wrapper and places it in her pocket. She helps Elsa sift through the potatoes. There's an odd emptiness about her, unfitting for a girl her age.

ELSA
You are Romani?

VERONIKA
Yes.

ELSA
All of you?

VERONIKA
Yes. They brought us on the trains.
To the camps.

They work silently for a moment.

ELSA
How do you say "potato" in your
language?

VERONIKA
...*Poovéngro*.

Elsa smiles.

ELSA
In Polish, it is *ziemniak*.

Veronika nods, not giving her much.

ELSA
How did you find this place?

VERONIKA
I prayed for it.

This unsettles Elsa.

VERONIKA
I closed my eyes and talked to God.
Is that not how you found it?

Elsa considers this, but doesn't respond.

ELSA
...are these all your brothers and
sisters?

VERONIKA
We met in the camps. My real
brother is Pawel.

ELSA
Which one is he?

VERONIKA
He is in the *tushni*. I do not know
the word for you.

Veronika gestures to the BABY CARRIAGE in the far corner.

Elsa looks at it. Her face goes ashen as she suddenly
understands. *The smell...*

VERONIKA
He was too hungry.

Veronika finds a rotten potato, sets it aside.

Elsa is devastated. She turns away, on the verge of tears.
Slowly, she gathers herself. Picks up a potato.

ELSA
Kolyska. In Polish we call it a
kolyska.

Veronika finally looks at her. Gives her the faintest smile.
Elsa smiles back.

They listen to the sounds of the children playing in the
background as they peel the potatoes.

INT. THE ABANDONED HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The makeshift family sits around the dinner table, lit by
candlelight, an impressive spread before them. They've
already been sitting a while and half the food is gone.

The Captain and Elsa sit opposite each other - the children
surrounding them.

The atmosphere is relaxed - jovial even.

Vojtech and Josef can't stop giggling. They pick small
potatoes out of the bowl and toss them into the air, trying
and failing to catch them in their mouths.

Every time one of them tries and misses, the other erupts
with laughter. *They're just children being children.*

Veronika laughs, lost in the moment, troubles forgotten. Even
the Captain is smiling.

After another unsuccessful toss by Josef--

The Captain picks the potato off the table.

All attention is on him now, unsure of what to expect. Vojtech and Josef are particularly curious, staring up at him with mouths agape. Finally:

The Captain tosses the potato high in the air and catches it in his mouth. *First try.*

The children's eyes go wide with amazement. They laugh and cheer like it was the greatest thing they've ever seen.

The Captain chews and laughs, completely disarmed. This is a side of him we never expected to see. He locks eyes with--

Elsa, across the table, staring at him with something like gratitude.

INT. THE ABANDONED HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

The house is dark.

Elsa sits in an old chair, the children curled up asleep in the living room around her. She watches them, their chests rising and falling.

The CREAK of a chair in the kitchen draws her attention. She rises softly, heads for--

THE KITCHEN

The Captain sits, wide awake, hunched over the table, eyes far away - his entire body *trembling violently* from an intense panic attack. He slowly turns to see--

Elsa, standing in the doorway, watching him.

His breathing is shallow and quick. He looks like a wounded animal, curled up in a hole, waiting to die.

Elsa takes a small step into the kitchen. Approaches him, carefully - a powerful tenderness in her eyes. She notices the STACK OF PASSPORTS open on the table.

The Captain tenses up as she gets closer. He wants to stand up, wants to leave, but he can't move. He breaks into a cold sweat as the tremors penetrate deep into his core.

She steps up behind him, and stands there, breathing with him. He can feel the warmth of her body, close to his, and it terrifies him. His heart pounds. He can't catch his breath. He tries to stand, but--

Elsa stops him, gently running her fingers through his hair.

The Captain sinks back into his seat. He grunts as his panic intensifies, nearly hyperventilating now. Elsa just holds him tightly as she whispers--

ELSA

Shh.....

The Captain closes his eyes and leans his head back, finally surrendering himself to her touch.

Elsa gently pulls him close, shushing him softly as if soothing a newborn baby.

They stand there like that for a long time. Eventually--

The Captain stops trembling. His breathing slows. Returns to normal. The panic subsides, and he experiences a kind of peace he hasn't felt since before the war.

His body relaxes, all the tension he's been carrying for so long evaporating through Elsa's fingertips. He sinks back into the chair, leaning his head against her stomach.

In the dim light of a single candle, Elsa cradles the Captain's head, gently running her fingers through his hair as he breathes softly, in and out.

EXT. THE ABANDONED HOUSE - BACKYARD - LATER

The Captain, stripped to the waist, digs a small PIT in the backyard. A shuttered lantern casting a faint orange glow.

THE WINDOW

Elsa watches him, blank.

THE BACKYARD

The Captain digs. Beside him, a SMALL BLANKET-WRAPPED BUNDLE.

INT. THE ABANDONED HOUSE - THE NEXT MORNING

Morning comes. It's barely dawn. Elsa fixes her dress, the children curled up in the room around her.

THE KITCHEN

The Captain looks like he hasn't slept. His travel bag sits out on the table in front of him. He's ready to go. Now.

Elsa walks into the room. The Captain glances at her, then shoulders his bag, and quietly walks out of the house into the morning.

Elsa watches him go, reluctant to leave. Turning back into the kitchen one last time, she notices--

A SMALL PILE of their remaining CANNED FOOD and RATIONS arranged on the table.

She stares at it a long moment. Then reaches into her pocket and retrieves a RUSTY CAN OPENER. She gently lays it down on the table. Takes a deep breath, then turns to go--

And there's Veronika, standing in the doorway to the living room. She's wide awake, watching, betrayed.

They say nothing. *There's nothing to say.*

Elsa lowers her head, and walks out of the house.

EXT. ROADSIDE FARMSTEAD - MORNING

Next to a narrow, unpaved road, WHEAT FIELDS stretch as far as the eye can see. The wind rolls through it like swells in some golden sea.

The Zundapp rumbles past, the Captain and Elsa take in the scenery. Finally, they spot--

A tiny FARMHOUSE. The boarded-up windows and pitted roof can't hide the steady plume of smoke rising from its chimney.

The Captain stops the bike and dismounts. Elsa follows. They look at the farmhouse for a moment. The Captain opens Eckhart's Ledger, checking some careful list.

ELSA

What is this place?

THE CAPTAIN

We're ten miles from Lake Müritz.
This is our last man.

Then, without another word, the Captain draws his Luger and heads for the farmhouse.

Elsa takes a few moments before she follows him, still shaken from having left the children behind.

INT. ROADSIDE FARMHOUSE - THAT MOMENT

The door CREAKS open and the Captain steps inside with his gun raised. He moves cautiously past the entrance. Elsa is right behind him, staying close.

They're tense and alert - no idea what to expect. As they round the corner, they're suddenly faced with--

A small FAMILY eating lunch. Seated at an old, rustic table with fresh rolls, hard-boiled eggs, and homemade jam - mother, father, son and daughter. Their attention fixed on--

Elsa and the Captain standing next to the WOOD-BURNING STOVE, his gun aimed squarely at THE MAN FROM THE PASSPORT--

SEBASTIAN (36), the patriarch, aged far beyond his years with thinning hair and deep lines in his forehead. He sits at the head of the table, staring sadly at the Captain.

The CHILDREN aren't more than 10 years old. They stare up at the gun with wide eyes and gaping mouths.

CHRISTINE (34), their mother, places her hands on the table, careful not to make any sudden movements. Her eyes swivel between the gun and her children. She's scared.

The room hums with quiet tension.

Elsa locks eyes with Christine. Looks at the children. She's horrified and ashamed. She wants to leave. But the Captain is in control. In German:

THE CAPTAIN

Stand up.

All the color drains from Sebastian's face as he looks around the table at his family. He knew this day would come - one way or another. He stands.

Christine reaches across, grips his hand, panicked:

CHRISTINE

Sebastian...

Sebastian cradles his wife's face in his hand, comforts her with a look. He bends over and gives her the most gentle kiss on the forehead.

She shuts her eyes. A tear rolls down her face.

Sebastian turns to his children. Kisses them both. They don't quite understand what's happening, but they know it's bad. They start to cry, softly.

He looks at his wife. Tender, but firm.

SEBASTIAN

Stay inside.

She nods her head, trying to hold it together for the kids.

This is all too much for Elsa. She's being torn apart inside. She looks at the Captain.

But he refuses to look at her. He's blocked out everything. Everything except Sebastian:

THE CAPTAIN

Let's go.

Sebastian takes one last look at his family. Then turns to face the Captain who guides him towards the front door. For the first time we notice--

Sebastian walks with a noticeable limp, no doubt a remnant of the war.

Elsa absorbs this. She can't help but look over her shoulder one last time as she follows the Captain outside. The moment she does, she wishes she hadn't:

They stare back at her, pleading for mercy with their eyes.

EXT. ROADSIDE FARMSTEAD - FIELDS - MOMENTS LATER

The three of them march through the fields in a line - Sebastian in the lead, followed by the Captain and his gun, and Elsa in the rear.

Sebastian moves slowly, the tall grass and uneven soil getting the best of his lame leg.

They walk for what feels like forever. Finally:

THE CAPTAIN

Stop here.

Sebastian stops. They're a good distance from the farmhouse now. He turns around to face the Captain and Elsa.

THE CAPTAIN

On your knees.

With great difficulty, Sebastian lowers himself to his knees. He carefully removes his spectacles, holds them in his hands. He looks up at them, a man resigned to his fate. Softly--

SEBASTIAN

Please do not hurt my children.

The Captain gives him a small nod. Then steps forward, and points his Luger at Sebastian's head. But before he can pull the trigger, Elsa puts a hand on his arm--

ELSA

Wait...

The Captain looks at her for the first time since they entered the farmhouse. He's angry - doesn't like her intervening.

Sebastian observes them. He switches to English:

SEBASTIAN

You are Elsa.

This strikes her like a dart in the chest. Hearing her name come out of his mouth creates a connection between them that makes all of this too heavy to bear.

ELSA

Yes...

Sebastian speaks flatly, with an unsettling detachment--

SEBASTIAN

I know what Richter did to you.

Tears pool in Elsa's eyes.

SEBASTIAN

...I was always afraid of the day when my children would ask me "why?" Why did we do this?

(pauses)

I tried to imagine what I would say to them, how I could explain, but... there is no reason. No logic. Death is a void. It offers no explanation. We were its instruments, under its spell.

The Captain keeps the gun pointed at his head, Sebastian's statements weighing heavy on him as well.

SEBASTIAN

I felt so guilty about surviving it all... until I realized the truth about this war.

Sebastian looks right at her, deep into her soul.

SEBASTIAN

There are no survivors.

Elsa lets her tears fall, deeply affected. She opens her mouth to say something when--

CHRISTINE (O.S.)
 (calling out)
FELIX!

They all turn back towards the farmhouse to see:

Way off in the distance, Christine is standing outside the front door, arms wrapped around her daughter while--

FELIX, Sebastian's 10 year-old son, runs full-speed straight toward them. He's just a speck on the horizon right now, but he's getting closer by the second.

CHRISTINE
 (calling out)
FELIX! STOP!

Elsa's face goes pale. She looks at the Captain--

There's panic in his eyes now. He looks down at Sebastian who pleads, desperate.

SEBASTIAN
 Please.... Do it now.

CHRISTINE (O.S.)
 (calling out)
FELIX! COME BACK!!!

Felix keeps running. He's getting close.

The Captain grips the trigger, torn.

SEBASTIAN
 Please. Don't let him see.

Elsa's attention swivels from Felix to the Captain. She wants to say something, do something, but she's paralyzed. Then--

A FLOCK OF BIRDS flutters overhead. They fly towards the TREELINE at the far end of the field. It's strangely beautiful.

Elsa watches them a moment, in a daze. Until finally--

She's snapped from her trance. She turns, raises a hand--

ELSA
 Don't--

BANG. From a distance, we watch as Sebastian collapses face-first into the dirt, smoke rising from the Captain's gun.

Felix immediately stops running. He stands frozen, as he watches his father's body tumble to the ground.

Elsa is stunned. Tears stream down her face. She can't speak.

The Captain lowers his pistol, turns his back on Elsa and the corpse. He takes a few steps into the field.

Elsa watches his shoulders rise and fall with his breathing. She looks back at Sebastian. Then Felix. Her stomach turns.

The Captain looks over his shoulder, tries to steady his shaking hand.

THE CAPTAIN

We need to leave.

He marches through the field, back towards his Zundapp.

Elsa watches him go. Then looks back at the house and the surviving members of the family. *Something breaks inside her.*

EXT. NORTHERN WOODS - LATER

The Zundapp roars down a forest ROAD. Elsa pounds furiously on the Captain's back, screaming over the howl of the engine. He pulls over and Elsa stumbles away from him--

ELSA

You shouldn't have done it in front of his family.

The Captain dismounts his bike, takes a few steps towards her--

ELSA

You shouldn't have done that.

Then, something snaps in Elsa. She suddenly charges him, furious, slapping him hard across the face.

Elsa lashes out, again and again, but the Captain is more concerned with calming her down than protecting himself. Finally, he traps her arms, pulling her close - forcing her into a kind of violent hug.

The Captain holds her like this as she fights him. Just as suddenly, she stops, and sinks into his arms. She allows herself to be held for only a moment before--

Elsa pushes him away, viciously.

ELSA

You murdered him. We murdered him.

THE CAPTAIN

That man was responsible for Chamber Two at Einehof. He murdered four hundred people a day.

ELSA

In front of his son!

THE CAPTAIN

He was there. He deserved to die.

Elsa narrows her eyes.

ELSA

And what about you? You were there too.

The Captain looks away.

ELSA

How many of us have you killed? Do you even know?

The Captain doesn't respond.

ELSA

And children. Did you kill them too?

Something dark flickers behind his eyes. He's shaking now.

There's only the sound of Elsa's shallow breathing, as she stares at him with utter contempt.

ELSA

You think this is about justice? There is no justice. There's just people. Taking what they want.

A long, tense moment as they stare each other down.

Elsa picks up her bag and starts walking down the road.

His hand instinctively goes for his gun, but he stops himself. He watches her until she's a speck in the distance.

EXT. THE BORDER WOODS - DUSK

SERIES: The German countryside at dusk.

The Border Woods. In the distance, clear-cut forests create a desolate no man's land. The dividing line between the Russian and British zones.

EXT. THE BORDER WOODS - CAMP - THAT MOMENT

The Captain sits next to a campfire, alone again. He stares blankly into the flames, a hollow look in his eyes.

He holds his gun in his hands, absently working the safety catch on and off. On and off. *We've seen this before.*

INT. SMALL OFFICE, 1944 - DAY (FLASHBACK)

TEXT: *Einehof Camp II, 1944*

The Captain sits behind a desk, motionless, wearing the same blank stare. He's dressed in his ALL BLACK WAFFEN-SS UNIFORM, which somehow doesn't look as impressive as it did before in the bar.

A RADIO in the corner is tuned to an AMERICAN BROADCAST:

RADIO BROADCAST (O.S.)

--Allied armies in Normandy have pushed closer to their immediate objectives and cut the mainline of German communications in Northern France--

A CIGARETTE burns in an ASHTRAY on his desk - a long, grey cylinder of undisturbed ash. Beside it--

OFFICIAL ORDERS from Berlin. Stamped and signed. The Captain holds them loosely, staring into nothingness.

He's surrounded by forms and reports - the kind of papers you'd see in any office.

But these documents organize and record the deaths of millions. We see fragments: name, date of execution, et al. *It's all very orderly.*

RADIO BROADCAST (O.S.)

--Many of the German strong points along the Rhine have fallen, with more collapsing everyday--

Finally, the Captain snaps out of his trance. He clicks off the radio, gathers his OFFICER'S CAP, and exits into--

THE OFFICE ANTECHAMBER

The Captain's entire unit has gathered to receive the latest update from Berlin. Twelve men standing at attention. *Every man the Captain has killed.*

The Captain joins them, standing stiffly.

A door opens, and Werner steps into the room. In his hand, the same SIGNED ORDERS from the Captain's office. He surveys the men, then begins in emotionless German:

WERNER

In ten days time, our camp will be relocated further west. We don't have the time or resources to transport the prisoner population. Therefore, we must increase our liquidation efforts by a minimum of five hundred percent. We cannot allow anything from this camp to fall into the hands of the enemy.

The Captain glances around at the other men.

WERNER

We have been chosen personally by Commandant Richter to spearhead this great mission.

The men assembled stand taller at this, eyes burning with passion. *They still believe.*

WERNER

This is our solemn duty as defenders of the Reich. We can not, and will not fail.

Werner snaps his heels together, saluting fist to heart.

WERNER

My honor is loyalty.

DEATH SQUAD

My honor is loyalty!

The men chant as one. Again and again and again.

The Captain stands, silent, staring straight ahead. *Haunted.*

SEBASTIAN (PRE-LAP)

Chamber two is down again.

EXT. EINEHOF CAMP II, 1944 - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Thousands of PRISONERS, men, women and children, all starving and emaciated, some naked, some not, stand in lines guarded by groups of SS SOLDIERS holding rifles.

It's lightly SNOWING.

This is a place of abject misery - the absolute worst place in the history of the modern world. Yet, it is organized misery. Everyone knows their place.

The Captain marches through the CROWDS alongside Sebastian. He doesn't spend much time outside his office these days, and the sights and smells are difficult for him to process.

SEBASTIAN

They think it was due to a change in temperature. Last night dropped below zero.

THE CAPTAIN

How long has it been down?

SEBASTIAN

Just under an hour.

THE CAPTAIN

How long is the queue?

SEBASTIAN

Just over fifteen hundred.

Finally they reach--

THE GAS CHAMBER - THAT MOMENT

An enormous, square, concrete BUILDING with no windows.

Fifteen hundred PRISONERS stand outside, stripped completely naked, shivering in the cold. They're being guarded by only a handful of SOLDIERS.

On the side of the building is a LARGE METAL LOCKER containing the MACHINERY that makes the chamber run.

Werner supervises as TWO SOLDIERS (Leo and Oskar from the brothel) tinker with the valves.

The Captain and Sebastian approach. Leo and Oskar immediately drop their tools and salute them--

LEO

Heil, Hitler.

OSKAR

Heil, Hitler.

THE CAPTAIN/SEBASTIAN

Heil, Hitler.

Werner gestures to the locker--

WERNER

*The ventilator's broken. We need
new valves from Gorlitz.*

THE CAPTAIN

How long will that take?

LEO

About twenty-four hours.

SEBASTIAN

That's fifty-six hundred prisoners.

Shivering PRISONERS nearby are forced to listen to their executioners discuss the logistics of their imminent death.

WERNER

We need to organize a firing squad.

Werner turns to Sebastian:

WERNER

*Major, put the women in Block
Eleven into Seven and Eight. Take
six soldiers and three thousand
rounds of ammunition.*

SEBASTIAN

Yes, sir.

To the Captain:

WERNER

*Captain, take these prisoners and
supervise a firing squad in Block
Eleven.*

The Captain hesitates. Werner picks up on this.

WERNER

Is that agreeable, Captain?

The Captain looks from Werner to Sebastian. Feels the pressure of their stares. Finally:

THE CAPTAIN

Yes, sir.

WERNER

Very well.

Werner and the other men spring into action. The Captain looks back at the line of PRISONERS, locks eyes with--

AN OLD WOMAN. Sunken face, sagging breasts. Her deep brown eyes contain a frightening kind of sadness.

The Captain stares at her.

ERICH (PRE-LAP)

NEXT.

INT. BLOCK 11 - LATER (FLASHBACK)

TWELVE NAKED PRISONERS line up in front of a CONCRETE WALL littered with BLOODSTAINS and BULLET HOLES. They each stand a meter apart, facing--

Six SS SOLDIERS with MP40 MACHINE GUNS. Among them, Klaus and Petr from Radio Werwolf, and Leo and Oskar. Off to the side, stand the Captain and Erich from Liegnitz.

Everyone, including the prisoners, gives off the feeling of people simply following orders. The whole operation is sterile, emotionless, and above all, efficient.

ERICH

Set.

The Machine Gun Soldiers raise their MP40s.

THE CAPTAIN

Fire.

The Captain flinches as the twelve prisoners are mowed down by MACHINE GUN FIRE.

The Soldiers wait a moment, make sure they're all dead, then--

ERICH

Clear.

Four JEWISH SONDERKOMMANDO perform the unimaginable task of dragging the bodies of their kinsmen out a nearby DOOR, and stacking them outside in a growing pile.

ERICH

NEXT.

Another DOOR on the opposite end opens and--

Twelve more PRISONERS file in and line up against the wall.

CLOSE ON, the Captain's face as he observes the next killing. *It's getting to him.*

ERICH (O.S.)

Set.

We hear the sound of MACHINE GUNS BEING LEVELED.

THE CAPTAIN

Fire...

TIME PASSES IN MOMENTS:

Flames from the BARREL of an MP40.

The DOOR opens. PRISONERS enter.

The Captain watches, stone-faced.

BURSTS OF MACHINE GUN FIRE.

The Captain looks like he might finally crack, when suddenly--

The DOOR opens - before Erich calls "NEXT" - and Richter steps through it. He maintains his old air of authority, but underneath he looks tired - *beaten*.

The Captain is surprised to see him. He looks at Richter with an odd mixture of reverence and disgust.

The Sonderkommando are in the process of dragging BODIES off toward the pile.

Richter observes this, seems pleased.

ERICH

NEXT.

As another group of PRISONERS file in behind him, Richter approaches the Captain--

RICHTER

Captain.

THE CAPTAIN

Commandant.

Richter salutes:

RICHTER

Heil, Hitler.

THE CAPTAIN

Heil, Hitler.

They shake hands and Richter embraces him with a warm smile. For him, this marks a reunion between old friends. For the Captain, it's something else.

RICHTER

It's good to see you. Although, I didn't expect to find you in here.

THE CAPTAIN

The ventilators in Chamber Two are broken. We've ordered a replacement from Gorlitz but it will take a day to arrive. We've organized a firing squad in the interim.

RICHTER

We can afford no delays at this point.

THE CAPTAIN

I received the orders.

There's a strange unspoken tension running through their entire conversation. *They both know the war is lost, but they're unable to address it.*

RICHTER

You've always been a good soldier. A man of principle. A man who follows orders.

The Captain gives him a perfunctory nod of appreciation.

RICHTER

I know I can trust you with this assignment.

Richter turns his attention towards the ENTRANCE DOOR. He calls out--

RICHTER

Alfons!

As the door opens, we immediately CUT TIGHT ON--

The Captain's face. We can't see what he's looking at, but it horrifies him. HOLD.

EXT. THE BORDER WOODS - MORNING

The BARREL OF A RIFLE is pressed firmly into the Captain's right temple. He opens his eyes slowly--

Above him, THREE SOVIET SOLDERS stand in the rain, rifles leveled loosely at his face. They look a little drunk, passing around a BOTTLE OF VODKA.

The Captain looks up at them, expressionless.

Finally, they start laughing.

Then, a boot SLAMS into his ribs, his face. They STOMP on his right hand BREAKING HIS FINGERS. *This isn't just a beating, it's revenge.*

A rough ROPE binds his hands. Strong arms hoist him off the ground. A rifle butt CRASHES into his head and we CUT TO--

EXT. THE BORDER ROAD, THE TRUCK - DAY

The Captain rides in the back of an open SOVIET TRUCK, badly beaten, face red with blood and dirt. His hands are bound tightly behind his back.

The Soldiers up front sing a SOVIET VICTORY SONG at the top of their lungs, slurring the words.

Trees rush past overhead, the Captain's breath fogs in the cold air. *It's over for him.*

Across from the Captain, one of the Soldier's stares straight back at him. He speaks, in Russian:

SOVIET SOLDIER

*Why did you make me come here? Huh?
You had to start this war, you
stupid shit...*

The Captain looks back at him through bloodshot eyes.

SOVIET SOLDIER

You goddamn stupid shit...

The sound of grinding gears interrupts the Soldier - *the truck is slowing down.*

We pull out from the back of the truck, up and over to reveal--

THE ROAD

There, 40 yards ahead, is Elsa.

She stands by the side of the muddy road, one hand raised, flagging down the truck.

The Soviet Driver and his Navigator leer at her, still drunk. They slow down and stop about ten feet away.

Elsa calls out, in her accented English--

ELSA

I'm looking for my husband.

The two Soviets exchange a confused look. Elsa tries again.

ELSA

Please, comrades, he's not right,
he just wandered off. Have you--

Elsa is cut short as a lean, SOVIET SERGEANT climbs out of the backseat and into the mud. He looks weathered and half-starved with a large scar on his face. He looks unkillable.

The man takes a few, measured steps towards Elsa, before turning to his men, and muttering in rapid-fire Russian.

They break out in raucous laughter - *maybe some crude joke.*

The man keeps walking towards Elsa until he's only a few steps away. He looks her over, genuinely curious.

Elsa is on edge. He could do or say anything.

The Sergeant speaks in soft English:

SOVIET SERGEANT

You shouldn't wander around here by
yourself. In these woods, women
don't last long.

He examines her shaven head, her various bandaged wounds. *She makes for a strange character.*

SOVIET SERGEANT

What do you want, young lady?

Elsa, sweet but stubborn--

ELSA

I told you, I'm looking for my--

SOVIET SERGEANT

--Husband. I know. I heard.

The Sergeant leers at her for a moment, not speaking.

ELSA

Please, sir, my husband isn't right.
We've been traveling, trying to
reach relatives in Hanover... but
last night he wandered off on his
own. Please.

SOVIET SERGEANT

Your papers.

ELSA

Of course.

Elsa digs out her dirty, creased REFUGEE ID PAPERS, handing them to the Sergeant with shaking hands.

The Sergeant turns and gestures to his men, and two Soldiers drag the Captain out of the truck bed, holding him, bruised and beaten, for Elsa to see.

SOVIET SERGEANT

This the man you're looking for?

Elsa starts forward, covering her mouth, aghast.

ELSA

Oh--

She's horrified by the sight of him. But she collects herself. Turns back to the Sergeant:

ELSA

That's him. Thank you for finding him.

The other Soldiers watch her hungrily.

The Sergeant looks over Elsa's Refugee Papers carefully. He notes the unmistakable RED J, and beneath it, in small lettering, "*Einehof II, Jan. 1945*".

SOVIET SERGEANT

You were in Einehof.

ELSA

Yes.

He stares at her. Then gestures to the Captain--

SOVIET SERGEANT

And this man is your husband?

Elsa is less sure of herself now--

ELSA

Yes.

The Sergeant looks at her, almost curiously, like he doesn't quite know what to make of her and her story.

SOVIET SERGEANT

What about his papers?

ELSA

In his back pocket. His trousers.

The Sergeant mutters something to his men, and one of them searches the Captain's pockets. He pulls out--

ANTON RICHTER'S FORGED PASSPORT. The Soldier walks it over to the Sergeant, hands it to him.

The Sergeant studies it. *He knows this is not the same man.* He's caught Elsa in her lie. He knows it, and very quickly, she knows it too.

The Sergeant stares at her for a long time, open passport in hand. Elsa trembles, growing anxious.

Then, in perfectly-accented Yiddish:

SOVIET SERGEANT

Do you love him?

Elsa blinks, surprised. She looks at the Sergeant, more closely now, as if seeing him for the first time. She replies, in Yiddish:

ELSA

I'm sorry?

SOVIET SERGEANT

Do you love him?

ELSA

Of course I do, he is my husband.

The Soviet Sergeant looks back at her. Accepts her reasons, whatever they may be. He hands her both passports.

SOVIET SERGEANT

May God guard you and keep you safe.

He turns back to the truck, to his men, and starts to laugh. A rough, grating laugh. He gestures towards the kneeling Captain, in Russian:

SOVIET SERGEANT

Fuck him. I'm hungry.

The Soldiers hesitate, only for a moment, then cut the Captain's bindings, leaving him kneeling in the mud.

The Soviets climb back into the idling truck, moods swinging back towards revelry.

Elsa takes a few halting steps towards the Captain, putting a hand to his face, checking his bruises, his bleeding lip.

The Soviet Sergeant watches them for a moment as his driver shifts them into gear. He looks like he wants to say something. But instead he turns his attention back to his men, and the BOTTLE in his hands.

Elsa slowly helps the Captain to his feet. The two of them watch the truck drive off down the road for a long time.

A LIGHT RAIN BEGINS TO FALL.

EXT. NOTHERN WOODS, OPEN CLEARING - DUSK

Elsa stands out of the rain near a ROTTING STUMP, lost in her thoughts. She looks worn out, exhausted. She stares down at--

LENI'S PASSPORT, tracing the blurry details of the young girl's face with her finger.

The Captain stands across from her, soaked, leaning against a barren tree. He holds his fractured arm against his chest, head hung low, too tired to even tend to his wounds.

Finally, Elsa breaks the silence. She's not even looking at the Captain. *She needs to tell this story.*

ELSA

When I got pregnant, I hid it from Richter as long as I could. I was sure he would kill me if he found out. But he didn't... He congratulated me.

Elsa smiles bitterly.

ELSA

I started bleeding one day, and they took me to see the doctor. Alfons. It was a girl. They let me hold her all afternoon. But the next day she was gone.

The Captain stares at his feet, unable to face her.

ELSA

When I asked Richter about it, he beat me with one of his boots. I didn't wake up for two days. I never asked about my baby again.

(tears fall)

(MORE)

ELSA

A few days before the Soviets arrived, a guard pulled me from the room they kept me in. He took me to the fields. Everyone was out there, all the prisoners. They had them digging a pit. And even then, we didn't understand. They had us line up next to the pit. Then the soldiers started shooting. The man beside me fell on me as he died...

(pauses)

They just kept falling. The people. It seemed like it would never end. They were so heavy. I couldn't breathe. And then they buried us. I wanted to scream, but I couldn't. I waited until I couldn't hear them burying us anymore. I could feel the blood in my eyes, in my mouth. The smell. I thought I would die there. But I didn't...

Elsa swallows hard.

ELSA

Every day, since then, I just kept asking myself: Why me? Why did I survive? I nearly went mad trying to understand that. But now I know.

She looks up at him, eyes wet with tears.

ELSA

I survived so I could save my little girl.

Elsa stares at him, laid completely bare. Tears run down her face as she sways on her feet.

The Captain stares back, used up.

She takes a step, then another, then she collapses in the Captain's arms. Holding him tightly, fiercely, desperately.

The Captain puts his arms around her slowly. His face is a mess of shame and guilt, as he grips her tightly.

EXT. THE BORDER WOODS, OPEN CLEARING - THE NEXT MORNING

The Captain sits on his Zundapp in the middle of the woods. The rain has eased up.

He climbs off the bike slowly, and we see that it's been stripped, its saddle bags removed, straps and leather all gone. He grips the handle, touches the gas tank. *Saying goodbye.*

Elsa stands nearby, watching as--

The Captain stuffs a DIRTY RAG into the open gas tank of the bike. He sets it AFLAME. He stares at it, eyes shining, as it burns its way towards the tank. Suddenly--

THE BIKE GOES UP IN FLAMES. Roiling orange fire that consumes the steel frame, the rubber tires. Everything.

The Captain watches it burn a while. *This isn't easy for him.* He turns and walks out of the forest onto the muddy road.

EXT. NORTHERN GERMANY - THE BRITISH ZONE - LATER

EXTENDED SERIES: Barbed wire. Train tracks. Muddy roads. Northern Germany rolls by through the window of a moving train. It's calmer here, peaceful even.

- Long lines of REFUGEES on the move fill the horizon.

- A COLUMN OF BRITISH TANKS rolls past, soldiers handing out SPARE RATIONS to civilians on the road.

- A single WINDMILL turns and turns on a barren hilltop.

The SERIES ends on:

EXT. LAKE MÜRITZ - LATE AFTERNOON

It's small and charming - still water surrounded by overgrown reeds and brush. A short distance away is--

THE COTTAGE FROM THE PHOTOGRAPH. RICHTER'S COTTAGE.

FROM A DISTANCE

Elsa and the Captain walk steadily down the muddy, hard-packed road. Tired, filthy, resolved. They slow to a halt, unnerved by the sight of the simple little cottage.

The two of them stand stiffly, Elsa helping keep the Captain on his feet. Their breath fogs in the cold as they take in the scene, watching for signs of movement.

With difficulty, the Captain checks the clip on his PISTOL. With one hand, he locks it back into place.

Elsa starts forward--

THE CAPTAIN

Wait.

She freezes.

They stare at each other. The Captain opens his mouth like he wants to say something. Something important.

But he can't find the words.

Finally--

THE CAPTAIN

Stay close to me.

The Captain heads towards the wooden cabin. Elsa hurries to keep up.

EXT. RICHTER'S LAKE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The two of them move slowly through the tall grass. Nerves frayed.

Elsa stays close to the Captain, tense, barely breathing. She slows a bit as they pass--

A SMALL CHICKEN COOP where a half-dozen HENS strut around, pecking the dirt. One of them stares straight back at her--

Elsa keep moving.

All we can hear is the gentle sound of chickens clucking and the wind blowing through the fields around them.

INT. RICHTER'S LAKE HOUSE - ENTRYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

It's dark. Then the front door opens a crack, and light spills into the dim hallway.

The Captain enters first, gun held shakily in front of him. He moves cautiously, his wounded arm held behind him, hovering over Elsa, protective.

They walk slowly, with no idea what to expect. A chill runs down Elsa's spine as she follows the Captain into--

THE LIVING ROOM - THAT MOMENT

The Captain stands in the doorway, gun extended, frozen - paralyzed by some terrible emotion.

Elsa steps up behind him, sees the reason--

LENI, Richter's young daughter, sits on the floor of the sparse living room, playing happily with her dolls.

On the wall behind her hangs a framed PORTRAIT OF ADOLF HITLER. It seems to stare down at the little blonde girl, who finally looks up, registers the new guests. She smiles.

Elsa's eyes water - a knife in her chest. *There she is. My daughter.* As powerful as the photo was, seeing her in the flesh is almost too much to bear. Elsa can barely breathe.

She drifts towards Leni, hand outstretched, as if in a trance. But before she reaches her--

Leni suddenly looks past the Captain, and waves her little hand. In German:

LENI

Vatti.

The Captain tenses up, breathing hard--

Behind him, Anton Richter stands with a MAUSER PISTOL pressed firmly into the Captain's neck.

Elsa turns. Goes pale.

Finally, Richter speaks, in perfect English:

RICHTER

Hello, Elsa.

Two little words. It's too much for her. All the pain he caused her, the power he held over her, comes rushing back all at once. Tears roll down her cheeks.

Richter turns his attention to the Captain:

RICHTER

Please don't point your gun at my daughter, Captain.

Just like with Elsa, Richter holds some strange power over the Captain. He lowers his shaking hand.

Richter smiles at Leni, in German:

RICHTER

Hello, darling, these are our new friends.

He leans in close:

RICHTER
Give me the gun, Captain.

Richter smiles, carefully taking the Captain's pistol. He walks past him into the living room, brushing past Elsa. She shivers uncontrollably.

Richter sits down in an OLD WOODEN CHAIR next to Leni. He places the two pistols in his lap and looks at the Captain, almost disappointed.

There's a long, tense silence.

Finally, Richter gestures to Leni:

RICHTER
She's beautiful, isn't she?

He picks her up, and places her in his lap.

RICHTER
It hasn't been easy raising her on my own... After Berlin fell, Nina put a bullet in her head. She lost her faith.
(pauses)
That's the real future of Germany. It's not enough for them to defeat us. They want us to destroy ourselves.

The Captain's breathing grows shallow. Richter runs his fingers through his daughter's hair.

Leni doesn't understand English, so she has no idea what's being said. She stares up at Elsa, wide-eyed. She's the first woman Leni's seen in a long time, and their connection is undeniable.

Richter leans in, pointing at Elsa:

RICHTER
This is Elsa.
(pauses)
She's vatti's old friend.

Elsa slowly kneels, almost in a daze. She looks to Leni--

ELSA
That's a very pretty doll you have there. What's her name?

RICHTER
She doesn't understand English.

Leni looks back at her father for guidance. Richter continues to stroke her hair.

RICHTER
She's asking about your pretty doll. Can you show it to her?

Leni looks down at the doll, apprehensively.

RICHTER
Go on. Be a good girl.

She hops off her father's lap, waddles over to Elsa and presents her doll. Elsa examines it--

LENI
Hanna.

ELSA
Oh. Wow. How beautiful Hanna is.

Leni smiles broadly - a child's smile. *Pure innocence.*

RICHTER
She likes you. You'd make a good mother one day.

What little solace Elsa had found immediately turns to ashes. She looks up at Richter, frozen, suddenly confused. *What does he mean - one day?*

Richter picks up on this. Seems surprised.

RICHTER
Wait... Did you think...

He looks at the Captain, studies him. Then, a grin slowly spreads across his face. He turns back to Elsa:

RICHTER
Did you think Leni was your daughter?

Elsa can't breathe. Her world is crashing down around her.

Richter leans back in his chair, savoring the moment. He looks at the Captain, whose face has gone pale.

RICHTER
You mean... He didn't tell you?

THE CAPTAIN
Don't.

Elsa looks back and forth between the Captain and Richter, raw panic building inside of her.

Leni begins to sense the tension in the room. She grips her doll tightly as she tries to understand what's happening.

Richter slowly kneels, addresses his daughter.

RICHTER
*Schatzi... Would you like to go
feed the chickens?*

Leni nods, grinning--

LENI
Huhn!

Richter reaches into his pocket and pulls out a small bag of CHICKEN FEED. As he hands it to Leni--

RICHTER
Not too much, okay?

Leni can barely contain her excitement as she drops her doll, and shuffles out the door into the late afternoon light.

Once she's gone--

Elsa struggles to her feet. Stares at the Captain.

ELSA
What is he talking about?

The Captain won't look at her.

ELSA
TELL ME.

He stares straight at Richter, reeling.

RICHTER
Are you going to tell her, Captain,
or should I?

The Captain trembles. Tears well in his eyes. He's trying to hold it together, but the memories are too much.

RICHTER (PRE-LAP)
Alfons!

INT. BLOCK 11 - DAY (FLASHBACK)

We're back in that moment, amidst the firing squad. Richter is waiting, patiently. The Captain is staring at the door, horrified. Finally, we see why--

Alfons enters, carrying a beautiful, NEWBORN BABY GIRL - just a few days old - wrapped in a GREY WOOLEN BLANKET. The baby is strong and healthy, and when she BAWLS it echoes throughout the room.

Alfons approaches Richter, offers him the crying baby. Instead of taking it, Richter gestures to the line of terrified PRISONERS awaiting execution--

RICHTER

Give it to the one in the middle.

Alfons stiffly walks the crying baby over to the prisoners. He presents it to a stout, naked JEWISH WOMAN, standing in the middle of the line.

The woman looks down at the baby with the deepest kind of sadness. She cradles it in her arms, eyes searching desperately for some sort of explanation.

Alfons starts to walk away when--

RICHTER

Wait.

He stops.

RICHTER

Take the blanket.

Alfons returns to the woman. With great difficulty, he removes the baby's blanket, leaving her naked and squirming in the woman's arms.

No one speaks. No one moves. There's only the sound of the baby CRYING and nothing else.

It's deafening.

Richter folds his hands, satisfied.

RICHTER

Okay, Captain.

The Captain doesn't react. He just stares at the baby, nearly catatonic, listening to her CRY.

RICHTER

Captain...

Finally, the Captain snaps from his trance. He looks at Richter, who stares back at him firmly. *This is his test, his power, his cruelty.*

The Captain looks at Erich. Gives him a small nod. Erich addresses the firing squad:

ERICH

Set.

The firing squad raises their MP40 MACHINE GUNS, drawing a sharp gasp of horror from the prisoners.

The baby's CRYING grows louder... *The woman pleads.*

Everyone waits for the Captain's command. Silence.

The Captain looks at the firing squad. He looks at the baby. He's taking too long and everyone knows it.

The baby's CRYING grows louder...

He looks at Richter, who gazes back, darkness in his eyes. *Do it.*

The Captain turns to the firing squad. He closes his eyes as he dies inside.

THE CAPTAIN

Fire.

HOLD ON, the Captain's face, as we hear the sound of six machine guns unloading into the prisoners. Silencing the baby instantly.

INT. RICHTER'S LAKE HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

Elsa stares at the Captain, ruined, empty. Her eyes fill with tears. Barely audible:

ELSA

No.

The Captain looks at her. The shame on his face is all the answer she needs.

ELSA

NO... NO...

She collapses on the rough wood floor, body wracked by sobs. The Captain watches, breathing heavily, hands shaking violently.

Richter watches Elsa weep for a long moment, savoring it. He looks at the Captain, putting the pieces together--

RICHTER

He used you... He used you to find me.

Elsa and the Captain finally make eye contact, and in a moment, everything they ever had is shattered and gone. She struggles to get the words out:

ELSA

Why...? Why didn't you tell me?

The Captain crumbles under the weight of his own guilt, his cowardice - *crushed by Elsa's gaze and all the words he can't bring himself to say.*

Richter sits comfortably in his chair, watching them fall apart. He starts to smile.

RICHTER

When they took your baby girl's body outside, it took three men to carry the pieces.

Slowly, Elsa stands.

Hollowed out, silent, she looks at Richter sitting in his chair, at his eyes, his smiling mouth.

And then she draws ALFONS' PISTOL from her coat and FIRES TWO SHOTS STRAIGHT INTO RICHTER'S CHEST.

Richter's eyes go big in his head. He looks down at the bullet holes in a kind of stupor, the two guns falling from his hands onto the wood floor.

Elsa stands, smoking gun held firmly, unmoving.

Richter touches the reddening wounds with shaking hands.

RICHTER

Oh.

Slowly, Elsa turns towards the Captain, gun outstretched before her. She struggles to find any words at all.

The Captain takes a step towards Elsa. His eyes pleading, begging her to do it--

Elsa stands stock-still as he approaches. The Captain presses his forehead against the still-smoking barrel.

He grabs the gun with both hands, and holds it tight to his head. He doesn't look away.

THE CAPTAIN

Please.

Elsa searches his face, she wraps her finger around the trigger. The longest moment of their entire lives--

And then Elsa sees Leni. Through the window, in the distance, the little girl happily feeds the chickens. *Free of fear, free of worry.*

Elsa takes one last long look at the fading Richter. The dying man tries to speak, but nothing comes out.

Elsa's face is stone and nothing else.

And then she throws the gun at the Captain's feet.

With that, Elsa turns and walks out of the house. She stops at the doorway for a moment, gently gathering LENI'S DOLL from the floor as she steps outside into the dying light.

EXT. RICHTER'S LAKE HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

Elsa stands in the doorway, takes a little gasp of air, returns to the land of the living.

And then, she walks toward little Leni, standing next to the chicken coop in the grass nearby. Leni looks vaguely worried--

LENI

Vatti?

Elsa kneels down to her level. Almost impossibly calm. She holds up Leni's doll--

Then, she hums a little tune and smiles.

ELSA

We're going to play for a little while. Just you, me, and Hanna.

She raises Leni's doll, makes it dance to the song. Leni breaks out into a giggle, she can't help herself.

ELSA

Are these your chickens?

Leni doesn't understand, but she follows Elsa's gaze. Sees the chickens. She points--

LENI

Huhn!

Elsa smiles. Leni stares up at her with her big eyes, then, offers her the little handful of chicken feed - *your turn*.

ELSA

Thank you, Leni. That's very kind of you.

Leni giggles, and Elsa just leans in and kisses her on the cheek, taking the offered grain. Together, standing in the tall grass, the two of them feed the chickens.

And then the front door of the little cottage slowly opens, and the Captain steps outside.

He takes a step and slowly locks eyes with--

Elsa. Some kind of relief washes over her, but it's mixed with something else. *Disgust. Contempt. Confusion.*

They stare at each other for the longest time. Then, Elsa notices--

The gun still held in his hand.

She looks back at him, at his face. She starts to understand.

Leni tugs on Elsa's hand--

LENI

Essen!

They continue to stare at each other - Elsa and the Captain. Their journey ends here. Or begins here. *A crossroads.*

Finally, Elsa bends down and hoists Leni up into her arms. She looks straight at the Captain, as she speaks aloud to Leni:

ELSA

Come on, baby girl. Let's go into town.

The Captain watches silently as Elsa turns and walks down the road. Towards town, carrying Leni, headed towards a new life.

After a moment, the Captain wanders slowly down to--

THE LAKESHORE

It's dusk. Haunting and beautiful. The wind whips across the water, stirring up little ripples.

The Captain takes it all in - overwhelmed by its beauty, overwhelmed by its emptiness. He holds the dog tags loosely in a bunch in his hand.

He stands there for a long time, holding his gun, studying it carefully. Then--

The Captain looks back over his shoulder - back towards Elsa and Leni. Towards life. *We can't read his face.*

CUT TO BLACK.