

# **NEVER LOOK AWAY**

An original screenplay

by

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## 1. INT. DRESDEN ART MUSEUM - DAY

KURT, a small 5-year-old boy with steel grey eyes gazes at the distorted, grimacing faces of soldiers from the hands of Otto Dix, the twisted colors and shapes of Kirchner, Heckel and Schmidt-Rottluff, the bizarre world of Paul Klee. At Kurt's side is his AUNT ELISABETH, an 19 year-old blonde of seductive beauty. They are part of a group of maybe two dozen adults, all ears to a self-confidently eloquent EXHIBITION GUIDE:

### GUIDE

(nodding with regret)

Modern art. Yes, ladies and gentlemen. Before the National Socialists took charge, Germany, too, had its share of "modern" art, meaning: something different just about every year - as follows from the word itself.

Ironic chuckles from the audience.

### EXHIBITION GUIDE (CONT'D)

But the Germany of National Socialism once again demands a German art which, like the entirety of a nation's creative values, must be, and shall be, eternal. Bearing no such eternal value for its nation, it can be of no higher value even today.

As they stroll past paintings of unconstrained prostitutes, yellow hydrocephalic heads, smirking captains of industry, African-style sculptures...

### EXHIBITION GUIDE (CONT'D)

The German woman is ridiculed and equaled to prostitutes.

The paintings appear to confirm this.

### EXHIBITION GUIDE (CONT'D)

The soldier is portrayed either as a murderer or as the victim of senseless slaughter, all this in an attempt to destroy the German people's deeply rooted respect for a soldier's bravery.

Indeed, the paintings could lay some claim to such a message. They continue on.

#### EXHIBITION GUIDE

And madness, mental illness, is elevated to a defining principle. Can one truly assume that the eye of certain individuals makes them see things other than they really are? That there actually are men who see in their compatriots nothing but degenerate cretins? That these individuals perceive, or, as they might put it: "experience", fields as blue, skies as green, clouds as sulfur-yellow, and the like?

The intensity of the paintings Kurt sees could indeed suggest this.

#### EXHIBITION GUIDE

There are only two possibilities: Either these so-called "artists" really do see and believe the things they are showing us here - in which case all one would have to determine is whether the root of such a ghastly impediment was an accident or a genetic defect. Should the former be the case, our heart goes out to these sad souls; if it is the latter, however, the case should be looked into by the Reich Ministry of the Interior, so that at least we can avoid further proliferation of such repulsive impairments. Or, on the other hand, these "artists" do not even believe themselves that their perceptions are real and nonetheless choose to pester the nation with this humbug - such an offense would fall, clearly, under the domain of criminal justice.

They have reached the next hall and stop in front of a Kandinsky canvas: colorful streaks, arcs, blotches with blurred, colored edges.

#### EXHIBITION GUIDE (CONT'D)

What does this have to do with art? How can this possibly elevate our souls? Where is the craft in this? For art comes from craft.

He turns to the youngest person there - Kurt.

#### EXHIBITION GUIDE (CONT'D)

(kindly)

I think you could do this, too.

Little Kurt gives a shy shrug.

EXHIBITION GUIDE (CONT'D)

Of course you could. Have a go. And when you've finished, ask your parents if they'll give you a Reichsmark for it.

Laughter from his audience.

EXHIBITION GUIDE (CONT'D)

You know how much they paid Mr. Wassily Kandinsky for this? 2000 Reichmarks. More than a German worker's yearly wages. What does your Papa do?

KURT

Right now, he's out of work.

EXHIBITION GUIDE

(ignoring this)

2000 Reichmarks out of the working German people's taxes.

The group heads on. Kurt and Elisabeth's eyes stay on the Kandinsky canvas.

KURT

(to Elisabeth)

Maybe I don't want to be a painter after all.

AUNT ELISABETH

(whispers in his ear)

Don't tell anybody, but I like it.

## **2. EXT. DRESDEN ART MUSEUM - ROAD OUTSIDE - DAY**

In the background we see a poster on the building:  
TOURING EXHIBITION: DEGENERATE ART. FREE ENTRY.

The street Kurt and Elisabeth are walking along is decorated with pictures of Hitler wreathed with garlands, swastika flags and banners announcing DRESDEN GREETES THE FÜHRER.

Two men wearing hats gaze at Elisabeth as she walks past, their eyes gleaming.

KURT

Did you see the way they looked at you,  
Aunt Elisabeth?

She is well aware of the effect she has on men.

AUNT ELISABETH

On Monday nobody here will have eyes for  
me. They'll all be cheering the Führer.

KURT

I think you're better than Hitler.

She smiles at a compliment she is unlikely to have heard  
before. They reach a bus stop just as the bus arrives.  
The destination board indicates the last stop  
"Großschönau". They board the vehicle.

## 2A. INT. BUS - DAY

The BUS DRIVER is an elderly man with kind eyes. He  
knows Elisabeth.

BUS DRIVER

So, you're taking your nephew on an outing? And  
when are you taking me on an outing?

Elisabeth smiles good-naturedly. The driver hands little  
Kurt a bonbon.

## 3. INT. MOVING BUS / EXT. STREETS IN DRESDEN - DAY

The large bus winds its way through the streets of  
Dresden, the capital of the state of Saxony. Elisabeth  
and Kurt are sitting right at the back in the near-empty  
bus. The boy gazes out of the buildings they pass, his  
expression melancholy.

KURT

(pointing)

Over there, that's where our apartment  
was.

AUNT ELISABETH

(nodding)

You miss your friends...

Kurt doesn't reply.

AUNT ELISABETH

(teasing)

I know who you miss... That cute little girl with the flaming red braids... What was her name, Johanna, right?

KURT

(embarrassed)

No, not just Johanna...

He goes silent. The mood changes. He is very earnest, almost looks like he is about to cry.

AUNT ELISABETH

Who else do you miss. Sometimes it helps to just get it out.

KURT

The Schröders - you know, that old couple who are always holding hands, like little children. I miss them. And Tilo, their dachshund. Whenever I called him, he always ran to me...

He chokes up.

AUNT ELISABETH (CONT'D)

But it's only 75 km from our house to Dresden. You can visit them as often as you like. There's a bus every two hours. Was it so difficult to get here today?

Aunt Elisabeth looks out the window, with yearning.

AUNT ELISABETH (CONT'D)

But you're right, of course. Dresden is unbeatable in its beauty.

WIDE SHOT: As the bus drives over the Augustus bridge, in the b/g we see the baroque splendor of Dresden in perfect sunlight. Aunt Elisabeth was not exaggerating.

TIME CUT: By now the landscape outside the window of the bus has become more rural.

Aunt Elisabeth lifts her nephew onto her lap. The boy is pleased to be so close to the beautiful girl. She strokes his hair.

AUNT ELISABETH (CONT'D)

Aren't you even a little bit happy that you've moved in with us?

Kurt shrugs. At this precise moment he might well be.

AUNT ELISABETH (CONT'D)

And you can climb the tree behind the house again. Do you remember last year, when we were looking for you everywhere, and just as we were about to call the police you dropped an acorn on Uncle Günther's head? Not many 5-year-olds can climb like you!

She tickles him a little. He laughs.

AUNT ELISABETH (CONT'D)

(quietly)

You know, I think your father is very brave, not joining the Party. One signature and he could have kept his job as a teacher, and the apartment.

KURT

He says that if a man isn't prepared to suffer for his beliefs there is either something wrong with the man or the beliefs. He says it's criminal the way the Nazis...

AUNT ELISABETH

(interrupts, whispering)

I know... But you don't talk to anybody else like this, do you?

Kurt shakes his head.

KURT

Mama says she'll persuade him to join anyway. And then after the war that will be his capitol.

AUNT ELISABETH

(laughs)

His capital!

She looks down tenderly at the boy. She is holding him like a little child. But since he is no longer quite so little, he is lying in her arms almost like a lover. Her breasts are close to his face and his hands. He gazes up. She notices this. He realizes that she has noticed but still doesn't back away.

AUNT ELISABETH (CONT'D)

You'd really like to touch them, wouldn't you?

Kurt doesn't deny.

AUNT ELISABETH (CONT'D)

But you mustn't...

Her voice is so gentle and soft that it hardly sounds like a real rejection. She kisses him quickly on the lips, half maternally.

**4. EXT. GROßSCHÖNAU CENTRAL BUS STATION - DUSK**

Elisabeth thanks the bus driver as they step out. The streets are empty, the bus station not even boasting a building. We have the clear impression that we are out in the provinces. No other passengers are around. The driver moves the bus over to a parking area with half a dozen other buses. Elisabeth takes little Kurt by the hand and walks in that direction herself. Through the windshields of the buses we see the drivers eating their lunch sandwiches.

KURT

What is it, Aunt Elisabeth? Did you forget something?

Elisabeth gives him a mysterious smile and stands in the middle of the area, surrounded by the buses. Apparently the drivers all know her: they smile at the attractive girl. She folds her hands together in a pleading gesture, and the bus drivers nod to each other. One of them leans on the horn, and then another, and soon they are all hooting their horns together. The deep, full sound penetrates everything. Elisabeth closes her eyes, lays her head back and raises her arms as if in prayer, a sort of ecstatic gesture as she relishes the deep reverberations that penetrate her entire body. An extreme musical experience. Little Kurt is completely bewildered. After a few moments the drivers stop hooting.

Elisabeth emerges from her trance, pulls herself together, blows kisses to the drivers and takes Kurt by the hand, leading him away.

AUNT ELISABETH

(to Kurt)

To paint a picture which gives you that feeling. That's what they're trying to do, those degenerate artists...

The drivers smile, shaking their heads (clearly this is not the first time) and then go back to their sandwiches and newspapers.



## 5. EXT. STREET IN DRESDEN - DAY

Garlands of flowers hang from the streetlamps and house fronts, there are swastikas everywhere, and the sidewalks are packed with people. At a bend in the road 100 girls in the uniform of the BDM (the Hitler Youth organization for girls) are standing to attention. A young, confident SS man is walking through the rows of girls, choosing the healthiest, blondest and prettiest of them.

SS MAN

You come to the front. You, to the front.

The girls comply. We gather from the loud shouting and screaming that Hitler's convoy is approaching. Suddenly the SS man sees Elisabeth, who gazes straight back at him with open, intelligent eyes.

SS MAN (CONT'D)

You, in the first row. Come on. You'll hand him the flowers.

He takes a bouquet of flowers from another girl and hands them to Elisabeth. She acts as though she is in some sort of trance. Suddenly the convoy comes round the corner, and there he is, the Führer, ADOLF HITLER. Familiar from a thousand PORTRAITS, PHOTOGRAPHS, NEWSREELS, STATUES, MEDALS, COINS, STAMPS AND PAINTINGS (INTERCUT in rapid succession).

The SS man leads Elisabeth to the front of the crowd. Hitler's open car stops. The Führer gazes at her with his icy blue eyes, takes the flowers, pulls her close, kisses her on the cheek, hands her a swastika pennant and continues to gaze into her eyes even when the convoy starts moving again, until he can no longer see her. The other girls, excited and curious, surround Elisabeth and bombard her with questions.

## 6. INT. WALTERSDORF - MAY FAMILY HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Little Kurt uses his own key to enter the house. Inside the narrow hall there is a large, dark wooden wardrobe, mounted antlers on the walls. The room is filled with the sound of PIANO MUSIC from the living room: Bach's composition "Sheep May Safely Graze". For some reason, Kurt feels uneasy. He follows the sound of the music. When he enters the living room he sees Elisabeth sitting at the piano, playing the music. She is naked. She doesn't turn to face him. He lowers his eyes.

AUNT ELISABETH  
(without turning round)  
Don't look away.

He looks up again.

AUNT ELISABETH (CONT'D)  
Don't look away, Kurt. If you never look away, your gaze will become strong as steel. You will see the truth. And everything that is true is beautiful...

She carries on playing, lost in the melody. He comes closer, gazing at the naked woman.

AUNT ELISABETH (CONT'D)  
This piece is called "Sheep May Safely Graze". But you mustn't let anybody notice, if you're a sheep. Or you can never graze safely. That's for sure.

She suddenly stops playing. Now she presses one key repeatedly, playing the same note again and again. Kurt is becoming increasingly disconcerted by her behavior.

AUNT ELISABETH (CONT'D)  
You know, this note makes everything alright. This note. The whole power of music, of life itself, of the universe, is contained in this note. People look for the Secret Code, for the Theory of Everything. But here it is: the A in the octave above middle C on the Blüthner piano in the Mays' living room in Waltersdorf. Nothing can ever happen to us, because we have this note.

She starts weeping about the note, laughing about the note.

AUNT ELISABETH (CONT'D)  
And now that I have found it, I can play it everywhere.

She gets up from the piano and gazes at Kurt.

AUNT ELISABETH (CONT'D)  
On the table...

She picks up a heavy crystal glass ashtray and hammers it down on the glass top of the sofa table until the room is

filled with a menacing smashing sound. Elisabeth seems content.

AUNT ELISABETH (CONT'D)  
Even on my head...

She starts hitting herself over the head with the ashtray, again and again, until blood starts seeping through her hair down onto her face.

KURT  
Aunt Elisabeth, you're bleeding.

At this moment Kurt's mother, WALTRAUD, and his grandmother, MALVINE, appear.

GRANDMOTHER MALVINE  
Elisabeth, for God's sake, what are you doing?!

Elisabeth beams at her.

AUNT ELISABETH  
Playing a concert for the Führer!

**7. INT. WALTERSDORF - DOCTOR'S OFFICE - CONSULTATION ROOM -  
LATE AFTERNOON**

Malvine seems years older. Waltraud, Kurt's mother, has come along for the consultation. The doctor, DR. MICHAELIS, is sitting behind his desk in a white coat with his tie neatly fastened.

GRANDMOTHER MALVINE  
"Youthful delusion" - that makes it sound almost harmless.

We hear Elisabeth's voice raised hysterically in the waiting room outside.

AUNT ELISABETH (O.S.)  
(through the door)  
Mild schizophrenia, youthful delusion! I can hear everything! Ha, ha, ha!

DR MICHAELIS  
Nothing that cannot be healed by a short break, I should say.

WALTRAUD  
A short break in...

DR MICHAELIS  
... an institution, yes.

The two women look at each other.

GRANDMOTHER MALVINE  
We would really like to try giving her some rest at home first. She worked extremely hard for the school leaving exam. And then she went straight into the secretarial course without a break. Perhaps it's simply over-exertion.

Elisabeth comes back into the room. She strolls over to a small table where there are several photographs of Dr Michaelis with his family.

AUNT ELISABETH  
(calls over to them)  
Is this your wife? You hate her, am I right? I can see it, by the way you stand next to her.

She imitates his posture in the photograph with eerie precision. Dr Michaelis stares at her, shocked. Elisabeth realizes this has offended him.

AUNT ELISABETH (CONT'D)  
You can ignore that. After all, I'm crazy.

DR MICHAELIS  
(harshly)  
Kindly wait outside until we have finished talking. I shall not ask again.

Elisabeth strolls out of the room casually, as if to stress that she is doing so of her own free will.

DR MICHAELIS (CONT'D)  
(lowering his voice)  
Schizophrenia is a serious condition, so I'm obliged to ask: are there other cases of mental illness in your family?

GRANDMOTHER MALVINE  
Heavens, no!

DR MICHAELIS  
Depression?

CLOSE-UP: a Nazi party badge is visible on the lapel of the doctor's jacket, under his white coat.

WALTRAUD  
(attempting to smile)  
We're all cheerful.

The doctor studies them.

DR MICHAELIS  
We doctors are the guardians of the flow of genetic biology. I have to report this case to the Health Department. The decision about committal might not be up to you.

GRANDMOTHER MALVINE  
(resting a hand on his arm)  
Dr Michaelis. Franz. I knew your parents. Even your grandparents. Please. Don't report it.

Dr Michaelis remains motionless for a moment. Then he pulls his arm back.

DR MICHAELIS  
Just because it is you, Frau May... But tell me immediately if her condition worsens.

Malvine is afraid that even by thanking him she may change the situation. She gets to her feet.

GRANDMOTHER MALVINE  
Goodbye.

DR MICHAELIS  
Heil Hitler.

GRANDMOTHER MALVINE  
Yes, of course. Heil Hitler.

WALTRAUD  
Heil Hitler.

The two women walk out. Dr Michaelis is alone. He crosses to the picture of his wife. He gazes at it and places it face down on the table. Then he reaches for the phone.

## **8. EXT. MAY FAMILY HOUSE - DAY**

Little Kurt awakes in his room to beautiful sunshine spilling in through the windows. He hears sounds, sits up

in his bed to look outside. A white ambulance pulls up. Two orderlies dressed in white get out. Kurt comes running up in his pajamas and sees them drag Aunt Elisabeth out of the house. Her two brothers, GÜNTHER and EHRENFRIED, embrace her, as if wanting to hold on to her. Waltraud is standing next to her husband JOHANN. When Kurt's father sees the small boy, he tries to send him back into the house, but Kurt ignores him. Elisabeth is fighting desperately, biting and scratching the orderlies, until they give her an injection of scopolamine to sedate her.

KURT'S PERSPECTIVE: THE PICTURE BECOMES BLURRED, AS IF TO ALLEVIATE THE SHARP PAIN.

Kurt's mother holds her hand over the boy's eyes. But he pushes the hand away, determined to see everything. She covers his eyes again, and again he pushes her hand away, automatically stepping to one side.

Elisabeth has calmed down and is weeping in silence. She gazes at little Kurt out of the ambulance window, calmer now, and waves to him. He waves back. She tries to say something to him through the window.

CLOSE-UP: ELISABETH'S LIPS MOUTHING THE WORDS: "NEVER LOOK AWAY!"

The ambulance drives off. They are left standing there, paralyzed: grandmother Malvine, Kurt's father Johann, his mother Waltraud and Waltraud's two brothers. Uncle Günther rests his hand briefly on Kurt's head.

GÜNTHER  
(always the optimist)  
She'll be back soon.

But somehow nobody believes this.

## **9. INT. BERLIN - FÜHRER'S CHANCELLERY - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

INSERT TITLE: Berlin, 1940

A high, long room in functional gray Nazi bombastic-classical style. 20 men sit at a long conference table, all in SS uniforms, all aged between 50 and 60. This is no typical group of SS officers: these men are more intelligent, more precise, better-groomed and more pampered than your usual SS thugs. At the head of the table is the psychiatrist DR BURGHARD KROLL, handsome, malcontent, slightly effeminate. He has the quiet manner

of a man who is accustomed to people listening when he speaks.

DR KROLL

I'd like to begin by congratulating you, my dear colleagues: since the introduction of the relevant law the weakest percentile of the German population has been rendered infertile. 400,000 individuals. A proud figure. A contribution towards positive breeding that future generations will thank you for. It is now my hope that we shall one day live in a world where the streets are completely free of mongoloids, the mentally ill and other deformities.

This vision seems to appeal to his listeners.

DR KROLL (CONT'D)

But it is time to shift into second gear. As a result of the British air raids, we have an increased need for auxiliary hospital places. We cannot permit a situation where a wounded German soldier is denied a place in a hospital because it is being used to nurture and maintain useless life.

He pauses and looks round the room. The response is common consent. His gaze rests for rather longer than necessary on CARL SEEBAND, a slim man of about 40 who gazes back at him with piercing blue eyes. Seeband is sitting more erect than the others, his suit fits better than the others, his hair is more neatly styled than the others - he exudes order and control more than anyone else in the room. Is there something in Kroll's expression indicating personal attraction?

SEEBAND

(formal and pragmatic)

How can we help? What can we do?

DR KROLL

Thank you for that question, Carl.

He produces a sample medical file.

DR KROLL (CONT'D)

Gentleman, from now on you are not just doctors and SS officers. You are judges at the Genetic Health Court. What does this mean? Well, any patient you have

sterilized or will sterilize in the future, whose medical file you mark with a blue minus sign...

CLOSE-UP: A PEN MAKES A BLUE "-" ON THE FORM

DR KROLL (CONT'D)

... remains in the institution, and will be looked after. However, if we find a red plus sign on the medical file, we understand that the life in question is a worthless one, and the patient will be transferred to one of three special institutions in the eastern part of the Reich, to be relieved of his meaningless existence. Your pen is your sword.

**10. INT. DRESDEN GYNECOLOGICAL HOSPITAL - CORRIDORS - DAY**

Aunt Elisabeth, three years older, and calmer, is wearing a white hospital gown. She is led through the white corridors by an attendant. A NURSE holding a medical file stands outside a large door with a sign that proclaims in large brass letters that this is the office of Professor Carl Seeband. When the attendant appears with Aunt Elisabeth, the nurse presses a button next to the door.

**11. INT. DRESDEN GYNECOLOGICAL HOSPITAL - SEEBAND'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Professor Seeband is sitting at his desk on the far side of the large office. He places one last sheet of paper on the impeccably tidy desk into a file.

He is wearing a brilliant white doctor's coat over his suit, and we notice an SS badge on the lapel. The tie is perfectly knotted. A small light bulb next to the intercom turns on. Seeband presses a button. All his movements are perfectly controlled and practiced, almost mechanical, but not without a certain grace.

The door opens. The nurse enters and places the medical file on the desk in front of Seeband.

NURSE

(whispers)

Examination and preliminary interview:  
Elisabeth May. 23 years old. Psychiatric  
patient for three years. Diagnosis number



14. Sterilization scheduled for today  
1545 hours.

Seeband picks up the file and dismisses the nurse with a gesture.

NURSE (CONT'D)  
(to Elisabeth)

You may enter. The form of address is  
"Herr Professor".

The attendant waits outside. Elisabeth takes a few hesitant steps into the room. The door is closed behind her. She is alone in the large room with the Professor. Seeband studies the file and, without looking up, points to a chair on the other side of the desk.

SEEBAND

You can sit down.

She walks over and sits down. A few seconds pass.

AUNT ELISABETH

Good day.

SEEBAND

Heil Hitler.

AUNT ELISABETH

Why should I heal him? *You're* the doctor.

She giggles a little at her joke. Seeband looks up, his face lacking all expression.

AUNT ELISABETH (CONT'D)  
(meekly, like a child)

Heil Hitler... Excuse me, I always have to say whatever comes to my mind. That's my problem.

SEEBAND

Is that your only problem?

AUNT ELISABETH

You will have to answer that one.

Seeband makes a note.

Elisabeth points to a framed water-color on the wall, a landscape with a rainbow.

AUNT ELISABETH

Is that by your... daughter?

Seeband clearly does not wish the conversation turned to his family.

SEEBAND

Why do you think you are here?

AUNT ELISABETH

Because I sometimes don't think very properly.

Seeband notes down her reply.

SEEBAND

Do you know what kind of hospital this is?

Elisabeth shakes her head.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)

A gynecological hospital.

She doesn't seem particularly impressed. Elisabeth continues to gaze at the water-color.

AUNT ELISABETH

A very nice girl, your daughter. I can see from the picture. Not what you would really call artistically talented. I suppose you might even be pleased by that? But a lot of heart. I have a nephew the same age. Unfortunately he's very talented. I sometimes take him to exhibitions, to encourage him.

SEEBAND

Very well, now please go and get on to the examination chair in the next room. Take off your...

Now we hear a loud shout on the other side of the door.

MAN (OFF)

(through the door)

I insist on speaking to the professor!

We also hear the voice of the nurse, who is trying to calm the man down. Seeband gets to his feet.

SEEBAND

Excuse me a moment.

He crosses to the door, and when he opens it, a man aged about 50 is gazing at him with such hatred that even Seeband is taken aback.

MAN

Well, there he is.

SEEBAND

Herr Lohse-Wächtler.

Seeband leaves the room, closing the door behind him. Elisabeth can't hear anything else.

On the spur of the moment she reaches out for her file, where Seeband has been writing his notes. A few phrases leap out at her:

CLOSE-UP: "Diagnosis 14: schizophrenic disorder"... "To render infertile"... "Sterilization appointment 1545 hours".

In shock, Elisabeth closes the file and pushes it back across the desk.

Seeband comes back into the room. As he closes the door, we see the man outside being led away by two attendants.

When Seeband sits down at his desk he notices immediately that the file is in a slightly different position. He looks Elisabeth in the eye, severely.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)

It would have been better had you not seen that.

AUNT ELISABETH

I am from a healthy background. I know I'm healthy.

SEEBAND

(pointing to the file)

Three experts are of a different view.

She leaps up.

AUNT ELISABETH

No! No!

SEEBAND

(severely)

Sit down again.

He addresses her with such authority that she obeys. He presses the button next to the intercom. Immediately the attendant enters and approaches Elisabeth, who is sitting in her chair.

SEEBAND

You will now go to the examination room and then to the operating theater, and you will cooperate. Otherwise we shall have to strap you down, and everything will be more difficult and more painful.

Elisabeth looks round desperately, wringing her hands. She suddenly leaps up and runs past Seeband to the furthest corner of the room, as far away as possible, pressing her back against the wall.

AUNT ELISABETH

(pleading)

Please... Herr Seeband... Herr  
Professor... Please... Please!

The attendant tries to grab hold of her, but it's difficult to pull her out of the corner.

AUNT ELISABETH (CONT'D)

(increasingly hysterical)

Please... For the Führer... I shall have children, healthy, Aryan children, please, please, please. Herr Professor. I will give them to the Führer, as we are supposed to. And my children will also give their children to the Führer. For the war. You need soldiers, don't you? Who else is going to fight...? Who else is going to fight...? I'm only sometimes confused... Not very often at all... Please. Don't take my children away from me.

She has become very weak and now allows the attendant to lift her to her feet and lead her towards the door.

But after a few steps suddenly she pulls free and leaps at Seeband, grabbing his feet like a sinner in a biblical painting.

AUNT ELISABETH (CONT'D)

(shrill, in despair)

You are a father too, aren't you...?  
Please, for your daughter... She paints

too... She could be my sister... I could  
be your daughter... Papa! Papa!!

Seeband is horrified and revolted but doesn't want to touch Elisabeth himself. The attendant struggles, trying to pull her free.

CLOSE-UP: a tear falls onto Seeband's highly polished shoe, splashing there.

The attendant drags Elisabeth to the door. She is still gazing at Seeband, stretching her arms out to him. Tears are flowing down her cheeks. The door is closed behind her. For a moment we can still hear Elisabeth outside; then there is silence. Seeband presses the button of his intercom.

SEEBAND

Andrea. I will not perform the operation on Fräulein May myself. Assign Blockmann.

ANDREA (V. O.)

(over the intercom)

But he is scheduled for the delivery room today.

SEEBAND

(impatiently)

Then change the schedule!

He turns off the intercom. He looks down at the damp tear stain on his shoe, takes out a handkerchief and wipes it dry. As he is about to put the handkerchief back in his pocket he looks at it in disgust, and drops it into the garbage can. Then he picks up Elisabeth's file. After hesitating briefly he reaches for a pen and draws a red cross in the appropriate box.

## 12. EXT. ARNSDORF SANATORIUM - DAY

INSERT TITLE: 1941

The May/Barnert family step off a bus onto a dusty village street. They have all made an effort with their appearance. Ehrenfried and Günther are in their army uniforms, Kurt - now nine years old - is in his Hitler Youth uniform, complete with armband, and Johann is wearing his best suit. Malvine and Waltraud are in summer dresses.

GRANDMOTHER MALVINE

You all look very nice in your uniforms.  
Elisabeth will be pleased.

They approach the sanatorium. Waltraud notices something and turns to her husband.

WALTRAUD  
(strictly)

Johann...

He turns to her with a guilty expression. She gives him a meaningful look. He reaches into his pocket and hands her something. A Nazi party badge. She pins it to his lapel as if he were a little boy.

JOHANN  
(sadly, resigned)

I know: after the war it will be my capital.

WALTRAUD  
And don't forget the salute. Heil Hitler.

Johann nods reluctantly. They climb the broad steps to the sanatorium.

EHRENFRIED  
(whispers to Johann)

If you really can't bring yourself to say it, just say "three liter" very fast. Nobody will notice.

WALTRAUD  
(to Kurt)

Don't say anything about your painting. And not a word about the nudies...

She raises an admonishing index finger. Kurt looks ashamed.

WALTRAUD (CONT'D)  
(to Günther)

And keep quiet about enjoying Heine's books. We don't have any hobbies, and we know nothing about art or culture... except Richard Wagner, of course.

She says this so seriously that suddenly everybody starts laughing, including grandmother Malvina and Waltraud herself.

13. INT. ARNSDORF SANATORIUM - RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

The large reception area of the sanatorium. On one side about 10 uniformed nurses posing for a group photo. A photographer has set up a camera on a tripod in front of them. Kurt watches with interest.

Two other nurses are standing at the reception desk. One of them now leaves the counter and goes over to join the group, while the other turns to Johann.

NURSE

Heil Hitler.

Johann takes a deep breath.

JOHANN

Three liter!

Ehrenfried suppresses a grin: he is the only one who heard what Johann really said.

JOHANN (CONT'D)

We have an appointment to visit one of your patients, Elisabeth May. I'm Johann Barnert, her brother-in-law. These are her brothers, Ehrenfried and Günther. Her sister Waltraud, her mother Malvine.

The nurse looks through her file.

NURSE

Fräulein Elisabeth May was transferred the day before yesterday.

WALTRAUD

Transferred? That's impossible.

NURSE

Orders from Central Office.

WALTRAUD

But where to?

Another nurse approaches the reception desk.

NURSE #2

(to Nurse #1)

Käthe, we're waiting.

She indicates the group of nurses who have assembled for a photograph. The nurse who has been talking to Johann

nods to indicate she is coming, and the other nurse goes back to the group.

WALTRAUD

(repeats)

Where has she been transferred to?

NURSE

(checking the file)

Großschweidnitz Hospital.

GRANDMOTHER MALVINE

Großschweidnitz? That's two days from here! How are we supposed to visit her? We have to work. And the boys are on a brief leave from the front.

The nurse can't help them. She waves to the other nurses to indicate she is coming as quickly as possible; they beckon her over urgently for the photograph. Little Kurt is still watching closely.

NURSE

I can't tell you any more than that. And now I have to go. Heil Hitler.

Nobody from the family replies. Grandmother Malvine begins to cry. Kurt gazes at the group of smiling nurses, making the image blurred...

#### **14. EXT. RUSSIA - ROAD OUTSIDE STAVROPOL - DAY**

INSERT TITLE: Russia, 1943

It is the middle of winter. Uncle Günther and Uncle Ehrenfried are at the Eastern Front, marching into a small town in Russia with a company of 40 men.

OFFICER

Reconnaissance in groups of two.  
Rendezvous back here in 30 minutes.

Günther and Ehrenfried walk through the town, the civilian population watching them with fearful, awed expressions. A little Russian boy holding a camera tugs at Günther's sleeve and points to the camera, indicating that he wants to sell it.

RUSSIAN BOY

One Reichsmark. One Reichsmark.



Günther laughs.

GÜNTHER

I can't drag a camera all the way to Moscow. But you take a photograph.

The boy doesn't understand.

GÜNTHER (CONT'D)

You - click, click - send to Germany? I give you one Reichsmark. You keep camera.

Now the boy understands. Günther gives him an army postal envelope, complete with stamp and address, which the boy gazes at in amazement. The boy indicates Günther should stand next to a wall. It is the most desolate background for a photograph one could imagine, but Günther complies.

EHRENFRIED

(dryly)

"Dear Mummy, we would like to share with you the magnificence of our lives here."

RUSSIAN BOY

*Ulibatsa.*

He gestures to indicate his meaning: smile. Günther has to smile at this. The boy focuses the picture - not entirely successfully - and presses the shutter release. Günther hands him a one Reichsmark coin and pats him on the head, which again surprises the boy.

EHRENFRIED

(cynically)

What are the chances, would you say, that he really will send the photograph back home?

GÜNTHER

Significantly higher than the chances that we really will make it to Moscow.

EHRENFRIED

(anxiously)

Sshh! If you talk like that, we won't get further than that wall...

MONTAGE:

**A15. INT. MAY FAMILY HOUSE - NIGHT**

INSERT TITLE: 13<sup>th</sup> February 1945

Kurt, now 13 years old, and somewhat too tall for his cot, awakes from the sound of airplane engines ROARING outside. He sits up to watch them from his window, then decides to run outside.

**15. INT MAY FAMILY HOUSE - NIGHT**

In the backyard, Kurt watches American and British warplanes race across the sky with a menacing THUNDER. They seem close enough to touch. And there are more and more of them.

Suddenly something moves down from the sky. Thin strips of metallic foil - hundreds and thousands of them - rain down from the sky like glittering snakes.

Malvine, in her dressing gown, comes out and stands next to the boy.

GRANDMOTHER MALVINE

Metallic foil. I read about that. It's to interfere with the radio and radar.

Moments later the city some distance away begins to glow with flames, and we hear muffled EXPLOSIONS.

**16. INT. MOVING BUS / EXT. STREETS IN DRESDEN - DAY**

The bus driver we know from the opening sequence is driving through an archway in Dresden. Suddenly there is the ROAR of aero-engines, a WHISTLING sound and a CRASH as a bomb HITS the roof of the building he is driving through. It COLLAPSES, burying and killing the bus and everybody inside it.

**17. INT. DRESDEN - APARTMENT - NURSERY - NIGHT**

ONE SHOT: A MOTHER runs into a nursery when she hears the approaching BOMBERS.

MOTHER

Johanna! Johanna!

But before she can reach the bed where her ten-year-old daughter Johanna (flaming red hair) is sleeping, the incendiary bomb STRIKES. The room is TORN APART, the mother immediately killed by shrapnel. The little girl is

set on fire; she leaps up but then collapses in a ball of flame.

**20. INT. DRESDEN - APARTMENT HOUSE - CELLAR - NIGHT**

ONE SHOT: An elderly couple, holding hands like little children, rush to make their way to the air raid shelter, along with their little dachshund. They buried by falling masonry as the bomb STRIKES.

**21. EXT. MAY FAMILY HOUSE - NIGHT**

INTERCUT HIGH ANGLE SHOTS of young Kurt standing in the garden, who can only see the bombers overhead and the distant flames, but can imagine what is happening there. His mother has joined him. We see the distant fires reflected in their faces. His mother places her hand over the boy's eyes, but he pushes her hand down. She does not try again. More and more bombers are approaching in the skies overhead.

KURT'S POV: He BLURS THE IMAGE of the bombers.

**22. INT. EASTERN FRONT - WAREHOUSE IN WITEBSK - SIMULTANEOUS**

Ehrenfried and Günther, frost on their now bearded faces, are lying close together among other German soldiers huddled in field sleeping bags inside an icy cold warehouse. We see large signs in Cyrillic letters on the walls. Suddenly an ARTILLERY SHELL CRASHES through the roof. The German soldiers leap up. Another SHELL HITS. A fragment of shrapnel strikes Ehrenfried in the throat, cuts open his carotid artery. Günther leaps over to him and attempts to staunch the blood. Ehrenfried tries to say something but can't produce a single word. He dies in his brother's arms. Günther, enraged and desperate, grabs his gun and runs over to the door, standing with his back to the wall just next to it. He's ready to run outside... when a salvo of machine gun fire smashes through the thin walls of the warehouse. Pinpricks of light create a graphic depiction of the holes made in the wall by the bullets. And suddenly we see blood appear at four places on Günther's uniform: the bullets have also gone through his body. He slumps down the wall, dead.

**23. INT. GROSSCHWEIDNITZ CLINIC - CORRIDORS - SIMULTANEOUS**

In Großschweidnitz a group of 20 psychiatric patients is led down a white tile spiral staircase. Several patients with Down's syndrome are among them. One of them keeps on kissing the walls, while another clutches the hand of the attendant with complete trust. Among them Aunt Elisabeth, now very thin, her eyes hollow from misery and malnutrition, looking like a mummified child. She also allows herself to be led without complaint, but at the same time she watches everything very closely. They have reached their destination, and now the patients are led into the "shower room".

**24. INT. GROSSCHWEIDNITZ CLINIC - "SHOWER ROOM" - CONTINUOUS**

Inside this white-tiled room the patients obediently spread out so each one is standing underneath a shower head. They look up, puzzled, because nothing happens when they turn the taps. It suddenly becomes apparent that only the patients themselves are left in the room. The door is locked. And then carbon monoxide emanates from tiny holes in several pipes that run the length of the room. Some of the patients don't understand what's happening. Others begin to scream or weep.

Elisabeth stands there quite calmly, watching what is happening around her. A few of the patients with more presence of mind run over to the door and hammer on it, trying to open it. But it is sealed so tightly that it doesn't move in the slightest.

**25. INT. GROSSCHWEIDNITZ CLINIC - OUTSIDE "SHOWER ROOM" - CONTINUOUS**

The medical staff standing on the other side of the door look grave and tense.

Gradually it becomes quieter inside the shower room. The hammering on the door becomes weaker and finally stops completely. Then the face of the young woman with Down's syndrome appears once again in the small window of the door. When she sees the attendant, she gives him a friendly smile, kisses the glass and then suddenly adopts an expression of pain. Her face registers astonishment followed by great sadness. And finally she collapses. Then silence.

**26. INT. GROSSCHWEIDNITZ CLINIC - 20 MINUTES LATER**

The room is being washed out with a hose by two SS men, the bodies cleaned. Then they are dragged outside. Elisabeth is lying there, her eyes wide open, as if even in death she were still watching her murderers. The SS attendant is disconcerted by this.

ATTENDANT

You take this side.

**27. INT. EASTERN FRONT - WAREHOUSE IN WITEBSK - SIMULTANEOUS**

German soldiers rush past the bodies of the two brothers, their death merely a part of normality.

**28. EXT. MAY FAMILY HOUSE - EARLY DAWN**

Kurt is still standing in the garden, staring skywards. Now the Allied planes are returning home. The fires have spread, and the city of Dresden is burning in the distance like the vision of hell by Hieronymus Bosch.

END OF MONTAGE

**29. INT. MAY FAMILY HOUSE - DAY - 8th MAY 1945**

INSERT TITLE: 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945

Kurt, 13 years old, no longer a child and not yet a man, is gazing with his steel-grey eyes through a crack in the drawn curtains of the living room window.

Waltraud and Malvine are sitting at the table, listening to the radio. There are three other women with them.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

People of Germany, the Bolshevik hordes are approaching. They are already outside Dresden. They know no mercy. They plunder, rape and murder. You have seen in newsreels the images of mutilated German women and children in East Prussia. Lock your doors, arm yourselves. And, just as our heroic troops are doing, resist in every way possible!

Suddenly Kurt sees two Russian soldiers approaching the house. He sees them alternately in and out of focus.

KURT

(strangely calm)

They are here.

WALTRAUD

No! No!!

(whispering in panic)

Did you lock the door?

The door is locked, and every item of furniture that can be moved has been pushed in front of it to keep the chair in place that has been wedged under the doorhandle: a chest of drawers, sideboard, an armchair, and right in front of it even a wardrobe. On these pieces, they have piled everything that is at all heavy.

The soldiers walk up to the front door. Everybody inside becomes silent. We see from inside that the doorhandle is pushed down, then up, then down again.

We hear the muffled guttural voices of the two Russian soldiers as they walk around the house. The curtains are drawn. Suddenly the barrel of a gun smashes through the window, the curtain is torn down with a jerk, and Kurt and the women find themselves looking a Russian sergeant aged about 40, in the eye. He appears angry, dirty and exhausted. He points his gun at the people standing above him inside the house.

RUSSIAN SERGEANT

*Stoitje. Halt. Stay there.*

GRANDMOTHER MALVINE

(to the other women, calmly)

Don't move. We don't want to anger him.

Showing considerable agility, the sergeant leaps onto the window ledge and into the room. His uniform is torn and ragged.

RUSSIAN SERGEANT

(to Kurt, indicating the door)

*Atkroi dwerj.*

The meaning is clear, but Kurt hesitates.

GRANDMOTHER MALVINE

Do it, Kurt.

Kurt walks over to the wardrobe which has been placed right in front of the chair that is holding the door and tries to push it away, but he's too small and weak. The sergeant laughs, walks over and tips the wardrobe with a powerful shove. It falls and smashes on the ground. The door is now free. The sergeant gestures to indicate that Kurt should unlock it. Kurt turns the key in the lock.

RUSSIAN SERGEANT

*Atkroi.*

Kurt opens the door. A Russian soldier is standing outside, a private aged about 18 who is only slightly taller than Kurt. They exchange glances. The sergeant beckons him inside and gestures to indicate that Kurt should leave.

RUSSIAN SERGEANT (CONT'D)

*Woann!* (Get lost!)

Kurt looks over at the women one last time. Waltraud nods to him. He walks out of the door. The sergeant locks it behind him and then comes over to look at the women more closely.

RUSSIAN SERGEANT (CONT'D)

(to the private, in Russian, subtitled)  
Choose one.

The young soldier hardly dares look at the women, but after glancing at them surreptitiously he finally raises one hand a little and points at Waltraud. The sergeant points his gun at her.

RUSSIAN SERGEANT (CONT'D)

*Frau!* Come!  
(to the other women, his voice harsh)  
Halt. You stay! You stay!

The other women nod. The sergeant leads Waltraud up the stairs, the young soldier following them.

He takes her into the first bedroom he finds, which happens to be Elisabeth's room.

**30. INT. MAY FAMILY HOUSE - AUNT ELISABETH'S ROOM - DAY**

The sergeant crosses to stand next to the bed, still pointing his gun at Waltraud.

RUSSIAN SERGEANT

(to the private, dryly, in Russian)  
It's a little tricky with clothes.  
Undress her.

The young private starts to undress Waltraud. He is not rough with her. He kisses her bare shoulder. Clumsily, awkwardly - and then passionately. The private is standing with his back to the sergeant, but Waltraud can see the sergeant, who now makes a rotating gesture with his Tokarev pistol, indicating that she should show a little enthusiasm. Waltraud therefore returns the private's embrace, kissing him. Satisfied by this development, the sergeant leans back against the wall.

**31. EXT. MAY FAMILY HOUSE - TREE TOP - SIMULTANEOUS**

Kurt has climbed a tree and is gazing straight into the bedroom. He can't look away. He sees the picture alternatingly in and out of focus: His mother lying on the bed with the private. The sergeant watching with an expression of interest.

**32. EXT. ROOF OF DRESDEN TOWN HALL - DAY - LONG SHOT**

The Soviet flag is raised on the tower of the bombed Dresden Town Hall in the Old Market, to the cheers of the onlooking Russians. Beneath the sculpture of Bonitas with her outstretched arms we see the completely ruined city.

**33. INT. DRESDEN GYNECOLOGICAL HOSPITAL - STAIRS - DAY**

A squad of uniformed Soviet NKWD men (secret police) climbs the battered staircase of the Gynecological Hospital. We see that the roof is missing, and there is rubble everywhere.

**34. INT. DRESDEN GYNECOLOGICAL HOSPITAL - CORRIDORS - CONTINUOUS**

The men march along the corridor with harsh, rapid steps until they encounter two young doctors.

NKWD OFFICER



Professor Seeband?

The doctors are all too willing to point out their boss's office. They watch the Soviet soldiers as they march on until they reach the office. Just as they are about to knock at the door they notice that there is a large hole in the the wall alongside it, so they can in fact walk straight into Seeband's formerly tidy office.

**35. INT. DRESDEN GYNECOLOGICAL HOSPITAL - SEEBAND'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Seeband has been expecting this visit. He is standing upright behind his desk, a white coat over his civilian suit, as if posing for an official photograph.

SEEBAND

Careful.

He indicates a hole in the floor through which we can see the room below. The men walk around it.

NKWD OFFICER

Herr Seeband?

SEEBAND

Professor Seeband. Yes, that's me.

He surrenders to the Soviets, holding out his hands; he is immediately handcuffed and led away.

**36. EXT. SOVIET PRISONER OF WAR CAMP MÜHLBERG - DAY (ESTABLISHING)**

Undernourished German prisoners gather in small groups, closely guarded by equally undernourished Soviet soldiers.

**37. INT. SOVIET PRISONER OF WAR CAMP, MÜHLBERG - COMMANDANT'S OFFICE - DAY**

A large but simple office. An adjutant is using an axe to chop up a valuable Rococo commode which has been brought up in a wheelbarrow, tossing the pieces of wood into a heating oven.

Seeband is sitting opposite the stocky CAMP COMMANDER, NKWD MAJOR ALEXANDER MIKHAILOVICH MURAVYOV, just as Elisabeth was sitting across from him not so many years

ago. The Commandant is smoking a non-filter Gospodin cigarette and studying Seeband's file, checking some items with his interpreter and shaking his head in genuine moral indignation.

MURAVYOV

Herr Seeband...

SEEBAND

Professor Seeband.

MURAVYOV

(in Russian, to the interpreter, incredulously)  
What did he say?

INTERPRETER

(in Russian)

He wants you to call him "Professor".

Muravyov smiles at this impertinence, gets to his feet and sits on the desk so the seated Seeband has to look up at him. The cigarette smoke disturbs Seeband, who is very obviously a non-smoker, but he tries not to indicate this.

MURAVYOV

*Ladno* ("Alright"), Professor.

He suddenly slaps Seeband very hard across the face.

MURAVYOV (CONT'D)

(in Russian)

Where is Burghard Kroll?

The interpreter translates.

SEEBAND

Who?

The interpreter translates.

MURAVYOV

(in Russian, with subtitles)

Burghard Kroll? Your boss in the...

(he reads)

... Reich Medical Workgroup. We know about the meetings in Berlin.

He holds a photograph in front of Seeband's face.

SEEBAND

I do not know what you're talking about.

I do not know that gentleman.

The interpreter translates.

Muravyov hits Seeband across the face again, this time even harder.

SEEBAND

I still do not know him.

MURAVYOV

(losing his temper)

The only reason we don't hang you immediately is that we are going to behave better than you swines. We have laws. But since there are so many of you swine, it takes us a while to find all of you and slaughter you. Just like you found and slaughtered anybody you didn't like.

The interpreter translates simultaneously, without any expression. Seeband listens closely, displaying no emotion. Muravyov seems to be wanting to argue with him, to defeat him by reason.

MURAVYOV (CONT'D)

If my child is born not completely healthy, then he deserves to die? Is that right?

Seeband is always prepared to enter into a duel of intellect.

SEEBAND

The space and resources available to us on this earth are not unlimited. Who should have access to them? The healthy or the sick?

This argument enrages Muravyov almost as much as the fact that he can't immediately think of any counter argument.

MURAVYOV

Well, Soon there will be one more space available, that's for sure.

### **38. INT. DRESDEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY**

Kurt's father, visibly aged, is wearing a greasy suit. His hair is neatly combed, he is shaved, and he is sitting with his hat in his lap, also at a desk in a

simple office. He forces a smile. It's a job interview. Facing him is a German SCHOOL PRINCIPAL with a Communist Party badge on the lapel of his jacket.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL  
(looking at the application folder)  
You have not indicated whether you were a member of the Nazi Party.

Johann does not respond.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)  
Were you a member of the Party?

JOHANN  
Principal... For many years I...

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL  
Yes or no, Herr Barnert.

JOHANN  
Yes.

The Principal calmly gets to his feet: the interview is over.

JOHANN (CONT'D)  
I am not a Nazi. Three quarters of all teachers were in the Party.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL  
And it is to the remaining quarter that we shall entrust our children. Good day.

**39. EXT. SOVIET PRISONER OF WAR CAMP, MÜHLBERG - SEEBAND'S CELL - DAY**

Seeband has built himself a razor from a piece of broken glass, a few bits of wood from a crucifix and a shoelace. He is shaving himself. He hears a conversation in Russian between two of the guards and repeats the words they are saying quietly to himself. Suddenly one of them hears him.

GUARD  
What is this? Are you repeating what we're saying?

Seeband knows this could be dangerous.

SEEBAND

I beg forgiveness.

The guard looks into the cell and sees the improvised razor, which impresses him.

GUARD

(in German)

You are learning Russian?

SEEBAND

*Ja staraius.*

(Subtitle: I am trying)

The Russian guard gazes at him, somewhat in awe of Seeband.

GUARD

You'll still be hanged.

**40. INT. SOVIET PRISONER OF WAR CAMP, MÜHLBERG -  
COMMANDANT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Loud screams of agony from Muravyov's WIFE, who is lying on the bed, pale and perspiring. Muravyov is beside himself, pacing up and down like a man obsessed, trying repeatedly to talk to his wife. But she doesn't respond. A Russian ARMY DOCTOR is sitting at her bedside, taking her blood pressure. There is a nurse next to him.

MURAVYOV'S WIFE

Hot! It's hot!

Muravyov, thankful there is something he can do, rushes to open the window. At that moment another CRY OF PAIN from his wife.

**41. INT. SOVIET PRISONER OF WAR CAMP, MÜHLBERG - SEEBAND'S  
CELL - SIMULTANEOUS**

Seeband is sitting on the lower bunk in his cell, reading a Russian military pamphlet, saying some of the words out loud and repeating them in an attempt to learn them. He underlines other words and then writes them out on a scrap of paper. Another German prisoner offers him a hand-rolled cigarette from the top bunk. Seeband refuses with a gesture, not bothering to look: he is not interested in comradeship or cigarettes. Another LONG CRY OF PAIN can be heard in the distance. At the side of the scrap of paper he makes a note in a table he has constructed, with columns headed "Pre-contractions",

"Dilation" and "Contractions", together with estimated times.

**42. INT. SOVIET PRISONER OF WAR CAMP, MÜHLBERG -  
COMMANDANT'S BEDROOM - SIMULTANEOUS**

The Army Doctor is clearly uneasy. Sensing this, Muravyov becomes even more anxious.

MURAVYOV

How can it possibly take so long?

ARMY DOCTOR

I can't do anything until the  
contractions begin. We have to wait.

Muravyov again starts pacing up and down, wringing his hands. He lights a cigarette but immediately flings it away.

**43. INT. SOVIET PRISONER OF WAR CAMP, MÜHLBERG - SEEBAND'S  
CELL - CONTINUOUS**

Seeband knocks against the bars of his cell until an obtuse-looking guard appears.

GUARD

*Schto?*

SEEBAND

Comrade! Preliminary contractions can't  
last that long. The baby is in the wrong  
position.

The guard stares at him blankly.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)

The interpreter.

The guard still doesn't understand.

SEEBAND

*Perewotchik.*

He points in the direction of the muffled screams.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)

(in Russian)

*Ja magu pamotsch. Ja wratsch, nemjetzki wratsch. Pozawitje Perewotschika. Srasu.*  
(Subtitle: I can help. I am a doctor. German doctor. Call the interpreter. Quickly.)

**44. INT. SOVIET PRISONER OF WAR CAMP, MÜHLBERG - SEEBAND'S CELL - SHORTLY AFTERWARDS**

The interpreter, looking sleepy and annoyed at having been woken up, is now standing next to the guard outside the cell.

INTERPRETER

I can't help you.

SEEBAND

If you do not tell the Major I can help, you will have to shoot me here and now. Because I promise you that I will tell him his wife had a chance and you prevented her from taking it.

CUT TO:

**45. INT. SOVIET PRISONER OF WAR CAMP, MÜHLBERG - COMMANDANT'S BEDROOM**

Muravyov, distraught and disheveled, addresses the interpreter in Russian.

SEEBAND

What is he saying?

INTERPRETER

He is suspicious. He asks why you want to help.

Seeband gazes straight at Muravyov.

SEEBAND

I want to help because I can.

The interpreter translates while Seeband turns to Muravyov's wife. Her face as white as a sheet, bathed in perspiration. She is talking to herself, panicking.

MURAVYOV'S WIFE

(in Russian, with subtitles)

A gypsy woman predicted I will never have children. How could I believe I am stronger than destiny?!

Seeband ignores this and feels her abdomen.

SEEBAND  
(to the army doctor)  
Which week?

The interpreter translates.

ARMY DOCTOR  
(in Russian)  
36.

SEEBAND  
Blood pressure?

The Army Doctor says a number; the interpreter translates.

MURAVYOV'S WIFE  
How could I believe I can have children?!

SEEBAND  
(firmly)  
Tell her that she will definitely have one child. And if she wants, many more after that.

Amazed that Seeband has understood this so well, the interpreter translates his words.

SEEBAND  
(to the men)  
The baby is in a transverse position. During the contractions the uterus is too hard for me to turn it. I shall open the amniotic sac from inside. In a pause between contractions, I turn the baby.

The Interpreter starts translating, then falters.

INTERPRETER  
I am a military interpreter... I...

Seeband understands.

SEEBAND  
(indicating the army doctor)  
Tell him to prepare an anesthetic.



The interpreter translates.

The army doctor hands Seeband a pair of rubber gloves which are clearly not new. Seeband puts them on and then points to the bottle of vodka Muravyov is drinking. He indicates that Muravyov should pour the vodka over the gloves he and the army doctor are wearing. Muravyov does so. The nurse holds up a towel, and the army doctor is about to take it.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)  
(in Russian, strictly)  
Do not dry. Do not touch anything.

The army doctor puts an ether mask over Muravyov's wife's face and drips some ether on it. She becomes calm.

CLOSE-UP: Seeband's face as he turns the baby, concentrating hard: he is in his element.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)  
Now I have the legs...  
(he pulls)  
Now I place the index finger in the baby's mouth, press the chin against the chest and lever his head out...

The translator translates.

After a few seconds, we hear the cry of a newborn baby  
O/C.

SEEBAND  
Parenj. Zdadowij parenj.  
(Subtitle: A boy. A healthy boy)

SEEBAND (CONT'D)  
And a healthy, magnificent mother. I congratulate you, Major.

Seeband takes off the gloves and extends his hand for Muravyov to shake. The Commandant doesn't take his hand but instead embraces Seeband and kisses him.

MURAVYOV  
Whoever saves a life, saves the whole world. You have saved my world, Professor. Nobody will harm a hair of your head. You are now under my personal protection.

He opens the door and turns to his adjutant.

MURAVYOV (CONT'D)

Get the guest room ready for the Professor, and give him some of my clothes.

**46. EXT. FIELDS IN WALTERDORF - AG**

INSERT TITLE: 1948

Kurt is sitting high up in a tree, gazing across a field. Silent, contemplative, watchful, the way we now know him.

CLOSE-UP of Kurt's face. Suddenly we see his expression lighten, his mood change as an insight strikes him. He straightens up. The insight remains.

He opens his arms wide.

LONG SHOT: displaying great agility, Kurt climbs down from the tree. Even his gait has changed: slower, more deliberate and self-contained now.

He strides towards the CAMERA. Suddenly, possessed by exuberance, he starts running towards the CAMERA and then out of the shot.

EXTREME LONG SHOT: Kurt runs across the fields.

CLOSE-UP: as he runs and jumps his expression is one of sheer bliss, the kind of emotion seldom granted to anybody in a lifetime.

**47. EXT. MAY FAMILY HOUSE - DAY**

When Kurt gets back to the house he is breathless, serene and inspired.

His father is sitting at a plastic table by the door, trying to repair an electrical appliance. The components are spread out in front of him. When he sees Kurt approaching he gives him a weary, affectionate wave.

KURT

(euphorically)

Father! You don't have to worry any longer! Now I understand!

JOHANN

What... What is it you understand?

KURT

Everything... How everything is  
connected, what everything means... The  
fact that everything is linked...  
Everything...  
(almost bashful about his happiness)  
The code of the world...

His father smiles, rather bewildered.

KURT

I never have to worry again, never have  
to be afraid again. I am untouchable.

JOHANN  
(smiling mildly)

That's nice.

KURT

No, Father, you don't understand... You  
don't have to worry either. I don't even  
have to be an artist any more. I can  
choose any profession and will still find  
the Truth!

Johann picks up his dog and strokes it; it's hard to say  
who looks more disheveled, Johann or the dog. In any  
case, he is as far removed from Kurt's spiritual state as  
could possibly be.

JOHANN

I'm happy for you, really.

Waltraud comes out of the house. Kurt runs up to her,  
twirls her round for a few steps, embraces her and runs  
into the house. She looks very worried.

After a moment Kurt comes out again, carrying a small  
camera.

KURT

I have to preserve this moment!

He takes a picture of his father with the Pomeranian in  
his arms, another of his mother in her flower-patterned  
apron, and then runs back inside.

JOHANN

I know who you are thinking about. But  
he's different.

**48. EXT. DRESDEN STREETS - DAY**

Kurt is now 19 years old, a man, though since he is so slim and agile, he still has a boyish air. He is walking through a typical ruined street in the inner city of Dresden to his workplace, carrying a worker's satchel. All around him the "rubble women" are hard at work clearing up the ruins from the war.

INSERT TITLE: 1951

**49. INT. DRESDEN - SIGN WORKSHOP - STAIRS - DAY**

Kurt races up the stairs of the building, slowing down at the second flight because the stairs are being cleaned: it's a hard job, involving a cloth and a bucket of water, and now we see that one of the two people doing this work is Kurt's father Johann. Kurt greets him briefly; this daily encounter may be a routine, but it is still uncomfortable for them both.

**50. INT. DRESDEN - SIGN WORKSHOP - STUDIO - DAY**

Kurt is working at a long table, painting with incredible dexterity the words of a large banner: "The German Democratic Republic - Savior of Peace". On an adjoining table there is another banner: "Learning from the Soviet Union means Learning Victory." And: "Always Remember at Work: Your Aim is Achieving the Five-Year Plan." Each of the letters is a meter high. Kurt, a burning cigarette between his lips, paints the letters freehand, while the others all use stencils.

YOUNG PAINTER

Why do you do it that way? So you can feel better than the rest of us?

KURT

Do what?

YOUNG PAINTER

The work. Like that.

(indicating the banners)

Drawing freehand while we have to sweat away with stencils. Are you showing off? Why do you do it?

Kurt gazes at his colleague, his expression puzzled and blank.

KURT

I do it because I can.

He bends over the banner again.

**51. INT. DRESDEN - SIGN WORKSHOP - EVENING**

The others have gone. Figuring that he is now alone, Kurt puts away his brush with red paint, picks up a stick of charcoal and starts working on his own drawings, which have a Cubist/expressionist style.

But the foreman is watching and now switches on the light in the room. Kurt quickly shoves the drawings out of sight under the sign and picks up a paintbrush. A small glass of paint tips over and spills onto the letters. Kurt quickly blots it off and finishes one of the letters. The foreman comes over to him.

FOREMAN

You can take the materials home with you if you want, as long as you bring them back the next day.

Kurt remains silent.

FOREMAN (CONT'D)

Next month there are applications for the Academy of Art.

Kurt suspects this may be a trap.

KURT

(cautiously)

I'm content with this work.

The foreman lifts up one end of the banner and pulls out the drawings; Kurt realizes there's no point trying to disown them.

One of the sketches is a skull in the style of Picasso. Then three more skulls in Beckmann style. An erotic charcoal drawing that looks like something by Kokoschka, but next to it we see the contorted, broken body of a man. A third sheet of paper, looking like a blend of Odilon Redon and Kubin, shows a scary human face, hardly recognizable, with the body of an animal.

FOREMAN

(really annoyed)

What's the idea? Does this help the working man? Give your father more strength when he's cleaning the stairs? You do want to help him, don't you? Didn't you even arrange for him to get the job.

Kurt has no idea whether he is going to be dismissed now, punished in some other way, or what.

The foreman studies the drawings. He's still annoyed, but he looks at them with the kind of intensity that any artist hopes to provoke. His expression softens.

FOREMAN (CONT'D)

You've been through a lot of shit, haven't you?

It is more of a statement than a question.

FOREMAN (CONT'D)

But do you really think it helps to wallow in it? Do you think that helps create a world where your children will have better lives than you? That's what communism is all about.

He looks at the drawings a moment longer.

FOREMAN (CONT'D)

I'll support your application.

Before Kurt can respond:

FOREMAN (CONT'D)

The girls at the Academy are prettier than here.

## **52. EXT. DRESDEN ACADEMY OF ART - DAY**

The foreman wasn't exaggerating. The young women walking up the outside steps of the Lipsius building, which is still magnificent despite the visible effects of the bombing, are as beautiful as could be.

## **53. INT. DRESDEN ACADEMY OF ART - LECTURE THEATER - DAY**

The fine lecture theater is in darkness, although in a few places it hasn't been possible to repair the bomb damage, and here the sun streams through in large beams of light which are clearly visible in the cloud of cigarette smoke that fills the room. The lecture theater is packed with students, all happy to be here. A gaunt Professor, HORST GRIMMA, a painter about 60 years old with a friendly, open face, is lecturing with great commitment and warmth. He picks up a new photograph (showing a painting of a group of surveyors at work in the countryside) and places it on the surface of an old episcopes. He projects the image on the screen next to the blackboard, where two words have been written: Socialist Realism.

PROFESSOR GRIMMA

Can you see that here somebody has abandoned all vanity and devoted himself entirely to the service of the cause? The service of the people?

He allows the image to have its effect on them.

PROFESSOR GRIMMA (CONT'D)

Naturally we do not ask from you the coarse, naturalist "aesthetic" of fascism, which replaces art by kitsch in the most bourgeois fashion.

Now he shows reproductions of fascist works of art by Arno Breker, Josef Thorak and Willy Kriegel.

PROFESSOR GRIMMA (CONT'D)

And naturally we do not want mechanical, photographic-style copies in naturalist mode. What we require from you, what we need from you, is a creative, analytical, realist style that arises from the union of reality itself and your artistic relationship to it. Work on your attitude, on your craft - and the right art will come out of you of its own accord.

He changes the image again.

PROFESSOR GRIMMA (CONT'D)

Naturally we are well able to differentiate between a Salvador Dalì, this supporter of Hitler and Franco who elevates schizophrenia and paranoia to a higher level of existence...

He depicts postcards from the West showing Dali's dream pictures: burning giraffes, the skin of a face on stilts, William Tell's gigantic phallus growing out of his backside.

PROFESSOR GRIMMA (CONT'D)

... and a passionate anti-fascist like Pablo Picasso, who created powerfully realistic pictures demonstrating a genuine solidarity with the working classes...

He now shows some of Picasso's earlier works: the barefoot girl, the poor old man in the chair - but then he adds the Blind Man's Meal and the Beggar with Child from Picasso's Blue Period.

PROFESSOR GRIMMA (CONT'D)

... although he very soon slipped into a decadent, obscene formalism. Why? Because he wanted to be considered an innovator, not a traditionalist.

Now he shows a series of Picasso pictures where color and form dissolve: breasts and tongues on the beach, female figures melting away.

PROFESSOR GRIMMA (CONT'D)

Innovation, creative independence, artistic freedom - words that initially sound extremely attractive to an artist. "Me, me, me." But a modern artist can only achieve real freedom if he serves the interests of the people. The "me, me, me" stance leads to misery.

Professor Grimma looks up to see whether this point has been accepted and understood.

He is extremely serious about everything he says.

PROFESSOR GRIMMA (CONT'D)

At best it will lead to being subsidized by decadent, wealthy "collectors", exploiters of the working man who delight in maintaining that they have nothing in common with the people, not even the same taste in art, and for whom art can therefore never be perverse and absurd enough.



The professor seems passionate about this.

PROFESSOR GRIMMA (CONT'D)

Now, there are fashionable theories which claim that the condition of mental sickness is in a sense a higher state, so schizophrenics and paranoics can achieve spiritual heights within their madness that are not accessible to ordinary people.

He shows some particularly "sick" paintings: nightmare landscapes made flesh in the works of Max Ernst, early works by Francis Bacon with their own shrill power.

PROFESSOR GRIMMA (CONT'D)

But these theories did not develop by chance. They are characteristic of an epoch of decadence, of the disintegration of civil culture: decay, mysticism and pornography. Empty forms, artificial constructions, squares, lines, circles, globes and dice. All that, just in order to be considered an "innovator"? Yes, it's innovative, it's new. But it's also wrong. And vain. And stupid. Undemocratic. Decadent. Don't be like that. Be different. Be different.

#### 54. INT. DRESDEN ACADEMY OF ART - STUDENTS' STUDIO - DAY

Several students are working at their easels on pictures of the scene that has been set up in front of them, a muscular working man is leaning on a heavy hammer.

STUDENT

Would you please turn this way in profile again?

WORKER MODEL

(in a high voice and heavy Saxon accent)  
Where? Who said that?

The students laugh: the man's voice is completely at odds with the scene. An entirely different student replies.

STUDENT #2

Me.

WORKER MODEL

(getting upset)  
Oh, I almost think you're doing this  
deliberately to make me cross!

The students laugh even more, and the worker storms off.

Kurt has made more progress with his picture than the others. He has understood what is required and has transformed the man's everyday shirt into a mint-grey East German workers' blouse, inventing a factory landscape in the background and giving the man a proud, masculine expression.

The worker comes back with Professor Grimma, having complained. Although the professor doesn't take him entirely seriously either, he's still annoyed that his students' jokes are interrupting the work.

PROFESSOR GRIMMA  
Is this a kindergarten or what?!

The professor walks around, looking at the students' efforts and becoming increasingly irritated.

PROFESSOR GRIMMA (CONT'D)  
Yes, I'm beginning to think it is...

The pictures really aren't anything special, awkward first-year attempts. But when he comes to Kurt's easel he stops. Pleased, he beckons the worker, who comes over and studies the picture of himself.

WORKER MODEL  
(in his falsetto)  
Yes, I think you have captured the  
essential me.

Now not even the professor can hold back a laugh.

## 55. INT. DRESDEN ACADEMY OF ART - STUDENTS' STUDIO - NOON

The model has left, and the last of the students are going to lunch. The only two left are Kurt and MAX, the student sitting next to him, an athletic, slim young man with smooth black hair. Max has produced a mediocre copy of Kurt's ideas with a very similar factory landscape. Now Max also gets up to leave.

MAX  
(to Kurt)  
You coming?

Kurt is so engrossed in his work that he doesn't reply.

MAX

(annoyed, impatient)

Can I at least have my cap back, then?

Kurt hands it to him: he has painted Max's Lenin-style cap to cover the head of the worker in his picture, thus creating a perfect example of socialist realism.

MAX (CONT'D)

What more do you want? Yes, your picture's best.

But Kurt is apparently still not content with it.

MAX

Man shall not live from bread alone, you know?

Kurt smiles but refuses to be distracted.

MAX

...but from ever pretty girl he might meet in the canteen, right?

KURT

I'll be along soon.

But Max seems to know Kurt won't bother coming, so he turns and walks off. After a moment another student sticks his head round the door and triumphantly holds up two Faber Castell pencils, calling to Kurt.

STUDENT #4

A girl in the Fashion Department is giving away Western pencils!

**56. INT. DRESDEN ACADEMY OF ART - CORRIDORS AND STAIRS - CONTINUOUS**

This, Kurt doesn't need to be told twice. He runs out and along the corridor, and then with astounding agility races up the outside edge of the staircase and reaches the upper floor before the crowd.

57. INT. DRESDEN ACADEMY OF ART - FASHION DEPARTMENT -  
CONTINUOUS

Sewing machines, sewing tables, rolls of material, dressmakers' dummies wearing extravagant outfits. It all makes a powerful contrast to the neo-Baroque ruins that house the Fashion Department.

An excited little group has gathered around one of the sewing tables. Kurt joins them. Max is slightly in front of him. He turns and grins at Kurt. Kurt catches a glimpse of the girl, sitting regally at her sewing table, smoking, a large box of pencils at her elbow. She is handing them out with a gentle smile. Suddenly, through the crowd, their eyes meet. It is a trance-like moment.

STUDENT

Elisabeth! Me too, please!

The sound of this name causes Kurt to snap out of his trance. She turns to the student who called out. Suddenly Max leans over and whispers in Kurt's ear.

MAX

(determined)

Don't even bother trying. She's mine.  
Watch and learn how it's done!

Ignoring this, Kurt picks up from a nearby table a sheet of paper with a clothes pattern and starts folding it.

Max has reached Elisabeth, but suddenly finds himself intimidated by the beautiful girl. She picks up the last of the pencils and looks at the labels.

ELISABETH

(reading the labels)

F, 2B or 4B?

When Max doesn't reply she looks up.

ELISABETH (CONT'D)

Well?

MAX

2B, thanks. But what I'd like even more  
than a pencil is...

Elisabeth has already turned to the next student.

ELISABETH

F or 4B?

Max steps aside and sneaks a glance at Kurt, hoping his friend hasn't seen the way he was rejected. But Kurt has. Max walks off.

The small crowd disperses. Only Kurt is left.

KURT

Your name is Elisabeth?

She nods, smiling at his serious expression as he asks.

ELISABETH

Do you want one? There's only 4B left.

She holds out a shining green Faber Castell pencil. Suddenly he sticks out his tongue. There is a razor blade on it. He takes it between his fingers and, with considerable dexterity, cuts four notches in a kind of open box that he has produced at great speed by folding the clothes pattern. It suddenly becomes apparent that he has created a perfect origami ashtray for four cigarettes.

He takes the pencil and presents her with the ashtray in exchange. Then he pretends to swallow the razor blade again. When she laughs he puts it back with the other razor blades on her table.

KURT

A golden pheasant like you shouldn't use a normal ashtray.

ELISABETH

(indignant)

Golden pheasant? I can't let you get away with that.

KURT

I completely agree. A walk? In the park?

She looks bewildered.

KURT (CONT'D)

So I can correct my misapprehension?

**58. EXT. DRESDEN - PARK - DAY**

They are walking along side by side in silence. Sometimes he looks over at her. Elisabeth is increasingly surprised that he doesn't utter a word.

They come past a large building in ruins with a banner hanging on it, proclaiming in large letters: "Learning from the Soviet Union means Learning Victory". We see from a place where some paint was spilt onto it that it is the very banner Kurt painted himself. But he doesn't say anything.

ELISABETH

I thought you wanted to talk to me.

KURT

I wanted to go for a walk with you.

ELISABETH

Very well, then I'll make conversation.

He gestures to indicate that she should proceed.

ELISABETH (CONT'D)

Socialist realism... is that really your kind of art?

He considers this for a moment.

KURT

Probably about as much as Lotte Ulbricht's is your kind of fashion.

He is still gazing steadily at her.

ELISABETH

Why do you keep looking at me like that?

KURT

You remind me of someone.

ELISABETH

Would you like to paint me?

KURT

I don't know. Would you like to make a suit for me?

She laughs. However, it isn't entirely clear whether he was joking.

ELISABETH

I have to get home.

KURT

May I accompany you? Just to the door?

They walk through the ruins of Dresden until they come to an area of large villas and stop in front of a spectacular building from the late 19th century, Wiener Strasse 91.

**59. EXT. SEEBAND'S VILLA - CONTINUOUS**

There is a wooden sign at the door: Gret Palucca Dance School. Through the large windows we see couples dancing, and we hear jaunty music.

KURT  
You're taking dance lessons?

ELISABETH  
(laughs)  
I live here. The house belongs to us.

Kurt looks up admiringly at the magnificent building.

KURT  
Well, you haven't really proven me wrong about the golden pheasant thing.

ELISABETH  
We were just lucky: the house wasn't even hit once. Before the war the whole street looked like this.

They both look at the ruins which the majority of the buildings around them have been reduced to. She looks at him again. He gazes back steadily. It is a moment of silence that neither of them finds uncomfortable.

ELISABETH  
You have such confidence. Certainty. Almost as if you knew something.

He gazes at her, shaking his head modestly, smiling slightly.

ELISABETH (CONT'D)  
Goodbye, Kurt.

KURT  
Goodbye...

He falters. Thinking he has forgotten her name, she responds with an indignant laugh.

ELISABETH

Elisabeth!

KURT

Could I call you something else? Maybe you have a nickname?

ELISABETH

(taken aback)

Everybody calls me Elisabeth, really...

KURT

"Really" always means precisely the opposite is true.

ELISABETH

(laughs)

Alright. My father calls me Ellie.

He likes the name.

KURT

Goodbye, Ellie.

Ellie walks through the gate into the garden, closes it behind her and turns back. He is standing there motionless, gazing at her.

KURT (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Elisabeth.

#### **60. INT. MAY FAMILY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY**

Kurt is sitting at the kitchen table, working on a drawing of Ellie in which she is smoking, looking seductively glamorous. He is also smoking, though with him it makes him look more like a proletarian. Next to him there is also a new sketch of the Seeband Villa in Wiener Strasse. The house also seems to have impressed him.

His desk is very tidy. On an adjoining table we see a small collection of pictures that Kurt has cut out of newspapers, including one of the British Lancaster bombers, and one of a group of nurses that looks very similar to those in the sanatorium all those years ago. Alongside this are several works of literature bound in beige, with gold titles.

Suddenly we hear a woman scream loudly. Then again.



Kurt leaps up and runs out, following the sound of the next scream and racing up the stairs to the attic. He pushes aside sheets and shirts that have been hung up here to dry, which are blocking his view. Finally he finds his mother standing in front of a laundry basket, and then he sees the body of his father hanging from a beam by a rope. Once again, his eyes blur the image.

**61. INT. DRESDEN ACADEMY OF ART - STUDENTS' STUDIO - DAY**

Kurt enters. Everybody turns to look at him. He walks over to his chair and sits in front of his easel. Max squeezes his shoulder. The professor approaches.

PROFESSOR GRIMMA

You could have taken off a few days more,  
Kurt.

Kurt shakes his head, picks up his brush and starts mixing the paint. He looks over at the worker who is again standing in front of them as a model. Kurt starts painting.

MONTAGE

- Kurt works on the painting through lunch.
- Kurt gazes at the models with his steel-grey eyes.
- As well as the male worker there is also a woman... looking less than dignified as she picks her nose.
- Kurt peers critically at his painting.
- Kurt paints over the face of the woman.
- Kurt working into the night on his painting.
- Professor Grimma comes round, looking at the students' efforts. When he reaches Kurt he has to fight back his emotions and pats his young student on the shoulder appreciatively.
- Close-up: Kurt has given the proud working woman, visible in profile next to the male, the face of Ellie. Her face is at precisely the angle that Ellie's face was when he first saw her and sketched her. Even when he was looking at her, he had always been thinking of the completion of his painting...

END OF MONTAGE

ELLIE (O.C.)

A golden pheasant as a proletarian?

Kurt turns round.

Her expression indicates that she has heard what happened. She has in her hands a suit and shirt which she holds up to him.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

You are now my seminar project.

He smiles and starts to get undressed, gazing steadily at her as he unfastens his belt, takes off his pants, unbuttons his shirt... until he is wearing only underpants. His body is muscular, youthful, without much hair. But if he hoped to disconcert Ellie, he hasn't succeeded: she gazes at him closely, a sensation he enjoys. He puts on the shirt and suit. It fits perfectly and looks very good. The material is coarse and natural, cut wide: suddenly he looks like a important artist. He catches a glimpse of himself in a mirror.

KURT

I'll never take it off.

CUT TO:

**62. INT. SEEBAND'S VILLA - ELLIE'S ROOM - NIGHT**

The suit is on the floor next to Ellie's clothes in her large, old-fashioned room on the third floor of the villa. They are lying on her bed, naked, kissing tenderly, gently. He gazes at her.

KURT

It's far too easy to love you. You're so beautiful, it's almost unromantic.

She laughs a little and hits him playfully with a pillow.

KURT (CONT'D)

Do you love me?

She stops, taken aback by the question.

KURT (CONT'D)

Do you love me? Otherwise... It doesn't work... with me.

She doesn't understand.

KURT (CONT'D)

Otherwise it doesn't work.

ELLIE

I love you.

He becomes more passionate and aroused.

KURT  
(very openly)

Really?

ELLIE

Yes.

Now he can let himself go.

ELLIE (CONT'D)  
I love you! Really, I love you.

**63. INT. SEEBAND'S VILLA - ELLIE'S ROOM - NIGHT (SEVERAL HOURS LATER)**

They are lying in bed. The two young bodies are only lit by the moonlight and the flame of a candle. Kurt strokes Ellie's back. She seems calm, relaxed, as we have not seen her before.

ELLIE

Will you still be able to look me in the eye tomorrow?

KURT

What do you mean by that?

ELLIE

When we see each other tomorrow, completely normal, fully dressed, in the Academy, with the teachers...  
(correcting herself with a laugh)  
Professors! With the other students in the canteen... Will you look at me in exactly the same way?

KURT

(tenderly, serious, meaningful)  
No.

She smiles.

Suddenly the room is filled by the light from a car headlight. She freezes and listens. We hear voices. A door is OPENED. We hear the CRUNCH of gravel. Ellie sits up straight.

ELLIE

My parents!

KURT

I thought they lived in Chemnitz?

She leaps over to the window, peers out cautiously: down below we see the figures of three adults, two women and a man, who have emerged from a car and are approaching the front door.

She looks round. There is no key in the door, and there's no closet or any place where Kurt could hide.

INTERCUT: close-up of highly polished men's shoes coming up the stairs.

ELLIE

My father!  
(going pale)  
My God, what shall we do?

Kurt gives her a look as if to say: "We'll just have to let this play out". But her expression is one of such despair that he now opens the window, climbs onto the ledge and jumps out - still completely naked - towards the fir tree which is a good three meters away.

After her initial shock Ellie looks round the room and sees his suit; she sweeps it up with a quick gesture, flings it out of the window, leaps into bed, pulls up the sheet and pretends to be asleep.

A second later the door opens to admit... Carl Seeband. A little older but just as controlled and precise as ever. He sees Ellie lying there, looks over at the open window, comes into the room and closes it. He crosses to gaze down at Ellie for a moment, leans forward as if to kiss her - but merely blows out the candle. Then he walks out of the room.

**64. EXT. SEEBAND'S VILLA - FIR TREE/ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS**

Kurt is climbing down the tree, still about 6 meters from the ground.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
(coolly)

Good night, Frau Hellthaler.

At the same time FRAU SEEBAND, an elegant, attractive blonde in her mid-40s, comes back out of the house to pick up two bags she left by the front door. She sees the

stray clothes lying on the ground, frowns in surprise and picks up the pants. Then she looks up at the tree in front of her, branches trembling suspiciously.

**65. EXT. SEEBAND'S VILLA - FIR TREE - CONTINUOUS**

Kurt has reached the lowest branch and now jumps to the ground, rolling over and getting to his feet, a manoeuver which brings him face to face with Frau Seeband. He is stark naked, while she is very dressed in a Dior-style suit with a fur collar and hat. She gazes at him in surprise, curious, the suggestion of a wry smile on her face.

By now she has picked up all the clothes, including his socks and underpants, and hands them to him without a word. He takes them, also without speaking, gazes at her for a moment longer than strictly necessary and then runs off. Frau Seeband picks up the bags and goes back into the house.

**66. INT. SEEBAND'S VILLA - ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS**

As Frau Seeband walks back into the house her husband is coming down the stairs. She gives no indication of what has happened.

FRAU SEEBAND

Elisabeth?

SEEBAND

Sound asleep. She left a candle burning;  
when is she finally going to grow up?!

FRAU SEEBAND

Yes, young people...

It sounds more wistful than disapproving.

**67. INT. DRESDEN ACADEMY OF ART - CANTEEN - DAY**

Kurt is having lunch with friends. Suddenly Ellie appears, wearing tight pants and a soft, light-blue pullover which emphasizes her figure. Kurt looks up at her and blushes. Ellie attempts to downplay her uncertainty by appearing confident, but the others assess the situation correctly, get to their feet and leave

making various excuses. Ellie sits down, determined not to allow any awkwardness between her and Kurt to develop.

ELLIE

Thanks for risking your life to preserve my reputation. But don't ever do anything that reckless again.

Kurt attempts a reckless smile, but he has to express what is worrying him.

KURT

Did your parents...?

ELLIE

They didn't notice a thing. Not a thing.

Kurt is surprised to hear that her mother said nothing.

ELLIE

They're moving back to Dresden. My father is getting his old job back, as hospital director. But he has to rent out two of the rooms in our house. Otherwise he'll get into trouble with the Residence Allocation Office. He's going to put up a sign tomorrow.

KURT

But the dance school is there?

ELLIE

That's only the first floor. We have seven bedrooms upstairs. For me, my parents and Papa's "secretary".

There is a scornful undertone as she says this last word. She gazes steadily into Kurt's eyes.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Would you perhaps like to be the first to discover that sign tomorrow, quite by chance?

There are large trees outside the big windows, and the powerful sunshine projects the shape of leaves alternating with areas of bright light over her face and body. It's like a painting. Kurt can do nothing but stare at her.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

I mean, they couldn't really hold it against me if I fall in love with a tenant they themselves have chosen.

KURT

But... your mother? Don't you think she might sense something?

ELLIE

Oh, Mama! She's such an innocent. You don't have to worry about her. She won't suspect a thing. Really, not a thing.

From her intonation we gather there may be something that her mother ought to suspect about Seeband.

**68. EXT. SEEBAND'S VILLA - DAY**

Seeband's secretary, FRAU HELLTHALER, opens the door.

FRAU HELLTHALER

Yes?

KURT

I've come about the sign. Is the room still to rent?

FRAU HELLTHALER

We put the sign up a quarter of an hour ago.

KURT

Is that a yes?

She beckons him inside and indicates a chair where he should sit.

**69. INT. SEEBAND'S VILLA - ENTRANCE HALL - CONTINUOUS**

FRAU HELLTHALER

(calls)

Frau Seeband. Somebody has come about the room.

FRAU SEEBAND

(calls back)

That was quick.

She comes down the stairs looking very elegant: it's obvious where Ellie got her fashion sense. Kurt gets to his feet almost reluctantly, hardly daring to meet her eye. She slows down briefly when she recognizes him but then walks on.

FRAU SEEBAND (CONT'D)

That really was quick.

She extends her hand, and he shakes it is shyly as a schoolboy.

KURT

(murmurs awkwardly)

Kurt Barnert.

She gazes at him with interest. Frau Hellthaler is still standing next to them.

FRAU SEEBAND

What is your profession?

KURT

I'm a student.

FRAU SEEBAND

Fashion.

KURT

Painting.

FRAU SEEBAND

Painting...

Her intonation is almost dreamy, and so gentle that he finally looks up.

We hear a door being opened upstairs, and then a man's footsteps walking toward the stairs.

SEEBAND (O.S.)

(from above, authoritatively)

Frau Hellthaler. Come up here, would you?

FRAU SEEBAND

(calls up, still gazing at Kurt)

Carl, there's a tenant for one of the rooms. Do come down for a moment.

Seeband comes down the stairs, his every movement precise, wearing reading glasses and holding an open file. He gazes at Kurt. Kurt looks straight back at him.



Seeband's POV: Kurt's face, the lower lip twitching very slightly.

Kurt's POV: Seeband narrows his eyes in professional scrutiny.

When Seeband has reached the bottom of the stairs he crosses to Kurt and stands directly facing him.

SEEBAND

You have facialis.

Kurt doesn't understand.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)

Facialisparese - partial facial paralysis.  
(pointing to his mouth with one finger)  
The hanging corner of the mouth. Did you  
have an accident at some point, or  
borreliosis?

Kurt tries hard to straighten the corner of his mouth.  
Frau Seeband takes the file from her husband and passes  
it to Frau Hellthaler.

FRAU SEEBAND

(to Frau Hellthaler)

Would you be so kind and take this up to  
the office? Then my husband can have a  
few words with... the tenant.

Frau Hellthaler complies.

FRAU SEEBAND (CONT'D)

(to Kurt)

My husband is a doctor; it is his  
passion. That means occasionally one gets  
a free diagnosis.

SEEBAND

You should have that examined. Cortisone  
can help. Failing that - surgery.

FRAU SEEBAND

(to her husband)

Kurt comes with the best recommendations.  
(Kurt looks astonished)  
We have already agreed on the rent. But  
of course it's your decision whether he  
gets the room or not.

Seeband gazes at Kurt: he doesn't like the way the young  
man looks straight at him.

FRAU SEEBAND (CONT'D)  
Kurt wants to be a painter.

KURT  
I am a painter.

SEEBAND  
The facade of the house is starting to peel. Perhaps we could set that off against the rent.

KURT  
I'm not that kind of painter.

SEEBAND  
Then what kind are you?

KURT  
A painter of pictures.

SEEBAND  
Socialist realism?

KURT  
Is there any other kind?

SEEBAND  
I hope not.

Frau Seeband gives her husband a gentle, imploring look: this is the only way she can mollify him.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)  
You can have the room anyway.

KURT  
Thank you, Herr Seeband.

SEEBAND  
Professor Seeband.

**70. INT. SEEBAND'S VILLA - ELLIE'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Two burning candles and two glasses of wine next to the bed. Silent, passionate sex. Ellie is on top, and when a slight sound emerges from Kurt's lips she places her hand over his mouth. He laughs. She holds his mouth closed more tightly, and this becomes part of their love-play. They roll around on the bed, laughing silently.

**71. INT. SEEBAND'S VILLA - FRAU HELLTHALER'S ROOM -  
SIMULTANEOUS**

TOP VIEW: we see the muscular back of a man during sexual intercourse. Also silent. THE CAMERA MOVES BACKWARDS AND TO ONE SIDE. Now we recognize that it is Carl Seeband's back, and underneath him is Frau Hellthaler. As he penetrates her she gazes at him with an expression that blends devotion, arousal and despair.

**72. INT. SEEBAND'S VILLA - STAIRS/CORRIDORS - NIGHT**

Kurt creeps down the stairs, clutching his shoes, and then along the corridor. He hardly makes a sound. Just as he very cautiously pushes down the door handle of his room, the door of the room opposite opens - and Seeband comes out, Frau Hellthaler in the background, naked. Everything is revealed to Kurt. Seeband keeps himself completely under control and retains the upper hand.

SEEBAND

What are you doing up so late?

KURT

I... I've been out.

Seeband sniffs briefly.

SEEBAND

Alcohol? Hardly conducive to good work.  
You should get to bed.

Seeband closes the door and strides up the stairs without looking back. After a moment Kurt enters his room, as planned.

**73. INT. SEEBAND'S VILLA - PARENTS' BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Frau Seeband is lying in the double bed, eyes wide open, facing away from the door. Her expression is one of sadness, but it also reveals her love for Seeband. He knows she is awake.

SEEBAND

I don't like that Kurt. We must make sure  
Ellie doesn't get too friendly with him.

FRAU SEEBAND  
(motionless)

Why?

SEEBAND  
So she can marry well, of course.  
(amiably)  
Just as you married well.

He lies down on the bed next to her, placing one hand on her side. After a moment's hesitation she places her hand on his; despite everything she is grateful for this small indication of affection.

**74. INT. SEEBAND'S VILLA - KURT'S ROOM - DAY**

Bright sunshine penetrates at the window. Kurt enters his room and finds Seeband there, gazing quite openly at his pictures.

KURT  
Professor Seeband, about yesterday; of course I would never...

But Seeband doesn't want to hear this, retaining the upper hand as always.

SEEBAND  
(interrupts)  
You have a new subject. Me. For the directors' gallery.  
(indicates a sketched portrait of Lenin)  
That style, more or less. We start tomorrow at four in the afternoon. In my office at the hospital.

He strides out of the room.

**75. INT. DRESDEN GYNECOLOGICAL HOSPITAL - SEEBAND'S OFFICE -  
four in the afternoon**

Seeband's secretary shows Kurt into his office. Kurt is carrying his easel and a primed canvas. The radio is on.

SECRETARY  
The Professor will be here in a minute.  
You may take a seat.

She walks out.

Seeband's office seven years after we last saw it. The desk is still in the same place. Everything else has been refurbished in the style of a 1950s executive office. There is a wood-paneled Mende radio on a corner table.

Kurt walks round the room, gazing at the chair and the walls with such intensity, it is almost as though he senses something.

Seeband enters.

SEEBAND

I thought you could set up your easel here.

Seeband has arranged everything: the perfect background with a bay window and several medical diagrams.

Kurt sets everything up as required. Seeband asks Kurt to turn up the radio: a news bulletin.

NEWS ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

(with conviction)

Since the people of the German Democratic Republic unanimously desire peace and the unification of Germany, Prime Minister Grotewohl has presented the government of West Germany in Bonn with proposals for free elections throughout the whole of Germany. These proposals were rejected by the Western powers and the Adenauer government, in line with their war policy.

Seeband adopts a practiced pose, his hands casually in his jacket pockets. He knows it makes him look attractive, wise, understanding and relaxed. The perfect doctor, hospital director and man. And he maintains this pose without moving in the slightest. Kurt first sketches his outline on the canvas in charcoal.

NEWS ANNOUNCER (V.O. CONT'D)

As a further consequence of this war policy, the government in Bonn and the western occupying powers have introduced strict border and customs controls at the demarcation line, in order to emphasize the separation of the Western German region from the German Democratic Republic and thus deepen the division of Germany.

By now we can see clearly that Kurt has accurately captured on the canvas Seeband's pose.

NEWS ANNOUNCER (V.O. CONT'D)

The lack of any corresponding protection at the borders of the German Democratic Republic has been exploited by the Western powers in order to infiltrate increasing numbers of spies, terrorists and smugglers into our country. Up to now these individuals have been able to return without any obstacle across the demarcation line to West Germany after performing their criminal activities.

Kurt begins to apply paint to the canvas.

NEWS ANNOUNCER (V.O. CONT'D)

Consequently we are obliged to take measures in order to defend the peaceful interests of the German Democratic Republic. The Ministry of State Security has been given the task of implementing these measures.

After an hour Seeband glances at the clock, gets to his feet and crosses to look at the canvas Kurt is working on. He switches off the radio.

SEEBAND

That's pretty much what I had in mind. Very good. We will continue tomorrow at four o'clock. Three sessions should be enough?

#### **76. INT. SEEBAND'S VILLA - ELLIE'S ROOM**

Ellie is lying in bed, naked, half under the sheets. She stretches seductively. Kurt is sitting on her sofa, looking through the family photograph album.

ELLIE

Why are you looking at those terrible pictures? I look awful in them. Come over here.

But Kurt ignores her. He is looking at a photograph of Seeband at the beach, leaning forward, his arms around his wife and Ellie, who are in front of him.

CLOSE-UP: Seeband's face in the photograph.

ELLIE (V.O. CONT'D)

(disappointed)

You aren't looking at me at all...

She has come over to him and is looking over his shoulder.

KURT

Why does even the most idiotic amateur snapshot have more reality than my painting?

ELLIE

Papa likes it.

KURT

That's exactly the point. Hardly anybody likes a photograph of himself. Everybody is supposed to like a painting. The photograph must be truer.

Kurt looks further through the album: photographs of Seeband with the staff of the clinic.

KURT

Why did your father go to work in Chemnitz anyway? He was hospital director here before.

Ellie seems reluctant to reply. Kurt waits it out.

ELLIE

He doesn't want us to talk about it...

Kurt waits.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

(hesitantly)

During the war Papa treated the wives of Göring and Goebbels...

REACTION from Kurt.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

(quickly)

... simply because he's the best gynecologist... They came 200 km from Berlin, as if nobody there was capable of doing a smear test... Just imagine! Anyway, as a reward they made him an honorary member of the SS. He couldn't

refuse. But of course after the war it was hard to explain to the Russians that he didn't have anything to do with the Nazis otherwise. They combed through all the archives but couldn't find anything against him.

Kurt looks at the picture again. Maybe he really was reading something into it which didn't exist. But he still can't respond to Ellie's caresses.

KURT

Today the Professor called me a Willi Sitte type artist.

ELLIE

But that's good. I mean, he's successful.

KURT

(scornfully, almost to himself)  
Willi Sitte type... I think I have to get out of here.

ELLIE

Out of where?

But she knows exactly what he means.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

You're not serious... But things are going so well for us here... I could never leave Mama.

Kurt gazes ahead thoughtfully.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

You were just saying that, weren't you?

She takes his silence as agreement and kisses him. Now he returns the kiss.

## 77. EXT. DRESDEN ACADEMY OF ART - DAY

INSERT TITLE: 1956

Professor Grimma intercepts Kurt at the entrance to the Academy of Art.

PROFESSOR GRIMMA  
(excitedly)



Your diploma work convinced the committee. They have selected you to paint the mural for the new Museum of Hygiene. The theme is "The Joy of Life Under Socialism."

(friendly, making a confession)

It's a job I think some professors would also have liked.

KURT

A mural?

PROFESSOR GRIMMA

Yes.

KURT

I'm not a muralist.

PROFESSOR GRIMMA

Kurt, we both know you can do it.

KURT

I'm sorry. That's not for me. That's pure decoration.

PROFESSOR GRIMMA

(bewildered)

You would immediately have guaranteed work. Even money.

KURT

It's not me.

PROFESSOR GRIMMA

(disappointed)

Me, me, me.

The professor walks off.

**78. INT. SEEBAND'S VILLA - ELLIE'S ROOM - NIGHT**

Kurt and Ellie are lying completely motionless, Kurt on top of her, their arms outstretched on both sides. Each part of one body is touching the corresponding part of the other. They are still breathing heavily. Kurt now moves his hands slightly so that each last one of his fingers is precisely on top of hers. She kisses him.

KURT

(whispers)

No, don't move... Please.

She becomes motionless again, her cheek against his.

KURT (CONT'D)

(whispers)

This way I can imagine that we are one body.

For several moments they breathe in unison. Silence.

ELLIE

(whispers)

I'm pregnant.

At first Kurt doesn't react at all.

KURT

(whispers)

Then you fully belong to me now.

She looks at him curiously; this isn't the reaction she had been expecting.

KURT (CONT'D)

(smiling gravely)

With me, I mean.

She rolls over to one side, kisses him and gazes into his eyes.

KURT (CONT'D)

We have to tell them. Ellie.

ELLIE

Maybe we should start by telling them that we are together. To divide the shock into little pieces?

KURT

I think your mother might have already guessed something...

ELLIE

It's not Mama I'm worried about. Papa will be devastated. I'll always be 12 years old to him.

**79. INT. SEEBAND'S VILLA - PARENTS' BEDROOM - SIMULTANEOUS**

Seeband is lying on the bed, making notes. He is aware that his wife isn't asleep.

SEEBAND

I think Ellie is pregnant.

FRAU SEEBAND

What??

SEEBAND

For several weeks now the temperature of her hand has been slightly elevated, but no cold symptoms. Yesterday she left the room twice at dinner, didn't touch her porridge at breakfast, and held onto the chair when she got up... The 3<sup>rd</sup> month, I'd say. Maybe the 4<sup>th</sup>.

FRAU SEEBAND

My God, she's still a child herself!

SEEBAND

The problem isn't her age but the man.

FRAU SEEBAND

Who could it be?

He gives her a look which says: "Spare me the games".

SEEBAND

Leptosomic, melancholic, heavy smoker, facial paralysis, a "painter". This is not the genetic material I want for our descendants. We must prevent it.

FRAU SEEBAND

But how?

SEEBAND

(calmly)

After 30 years as a gynecologist I can tell you I have rarely seen a relationship survive an abortion.

## 80. INT. MUSEUM FÜR HYGIENE - ENTRANCE HALL - DAY

Kurt is standing on high scaffolding, painting the "Joy of Life" mural. He is basing the work on a number of drawings, including one of Ellie in a white bathing suit. He makes her belly slightly extended, as if in pregnancy. Now the real Ellie enters. She is about to call to him but changes her mind at the last minute and instead

watches him at work for a while. He is engrossed in his work, content.

**81. INT. LUISENHOF RESTAURANT - EVENING**

An elegant restaurant with thick carpet, livreed waiters and a string quartet. Ellie has even given Kurt a fashionable tie. Seeband is telling a medical anecdote.

SEEBAND

... The psychotic thinks two and two make five, while the neurotic knows two and two make four - but it worries him.

Frau Seeband, Ellie and Kurt laugh politely.

ELLIE

There's something we want to tell you...

SEEBAND

(quickly)

About the Academy of Art? I'm always very interested in that.

ELLIE

No... although... there is news on that front, too. You see, Kurt has been given the job of painting the mural in the Museum for Hygiene.

SEEBAND

(to Kurt)

Painting walls after all?

KURT

It's a fresco with the theme "Joy of Life".

ELLIE

And on that subject...

Seeband has become very still. Neither Kurt nor Ellie says anything.

SEEBAND

What is it, my child? Nothing unpleasant I hope - my nerves, you know.

ELLIE

We are... together.

SEEBAND

You are working on the fresco as well?

ELLIE

We are a couple. We have been for some time.

SEEBAND

A couple of students.

ELLIE

A... couple in a loving relationship.

Seeband acts as though this devastates him. He looks over to his wife for help, although she looks back at him as if to say: "Don't lay it on too thick".

ELLIE

And there's something else...

SEEBAND

(interrupts, as if overcome)

That's really... big... news...

ELLIE

Yes, and as well as that...

SEEBAND

My God, I have to take this in first. My God... this is really out of the blue...

He starts coughing and reaches for a glass of water. It is empty.

ELLIE

(to a waiter)

Please bring the Professor some water. Quickly!

Seeband takes a drink of water. Then he looks at the two youngsters with a mild smile.

## **82. EXT. DRESDEN STREETS - NIGHT**

They are walking home, Ellie and her mother in front, Seeband and Kurt slightly behind.

They have something to talk about.

SEEBAND

I am pleased you broke the news to us. And I'm glad you did so at an early stage. You see, there is something you should know about Ellie.

They walk along in silence for a couple of seconds.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)

We don't want to worry Ellie unnecessarily, so we have never really talked to her about it, but... When she was a little girl Ellie had a serious infection in the pelvis, which left scar tissue in the fallopian tubes and consequently caused considerable cilia damage.

KURT

Cilia...?

SEEBAND

Cilia are the tiny hairs in the mucus of the fallopian tubes which transport the fertilized egg to the uterus.

Kurt doesn't understand a word of this.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)

At present we are looking for a way of treating it with surgery. But if she were to become pregnant before then, the chances are extremely high that she would experience extra-uterine gravidity - an ectopic pregnancy, with the cell growing where the fallopian tube is. And that could well lead to extremely dangerous internal bleeding.

Kurt goes pale.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)

I must therefore warn you, though not for the same reasons that normally motivate fathers of daughters to warn a young man, not to become intimate with her, until we have been able to alleviate this condition. A pregnancy at this point in time could be life-threatening for Ellie.

Seeband studies Kurt as the young man walks alongside him in silence.

SEEBAND

You do understand? Life-threatening.

Kurt looks up at the two women walking somewhat ahead of them.

Ellie senses his gaze, looks round and surreptitiously blows him a kiss. Kurt smiles gratefully. They walk on.

KURT

(with a huge effort)

And if she were already pregnant?

SEEBAND

(acting shocked)

Then I would have to examine her immediately.

Seeband stops in his tracks. Kurt walks a few steps further and then also stops, turning back to Seeband, who is looking at him enquiringly. Kurt nods gravely. The women have also realized that something has happened; they stop and look back at the men, puzzled.

**83. INT. SEEBAND'S VILLA - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE BATHROOM - NEXT MORNING**

SEEBAND (V. O.)

There is no reason to despair just yet: it's quite possible that everything has proceeded correctly during the nidation, and that I shall soon be a proud grandfather.

Kurt is pacing nervously up and down outside the bathroom door, now smoking quite openly in the house. The door opens, and Seeband comes out, in a doctor's coat, with rubber gloves. He is not yet facing Kurt, who can see through the open door that Ellie is lying with her upper body on the bottom of the empty bathtub, on her back, her thighs open and extended upwards, knees bent, her calves resting on two stools. Between them is an empty chair with a doctor's bag. Frau Seeband is sitting next to her, stroking her daughter's face tenderly. Seeband closes the door, looking grave, and walks towards his study. Kurt follows him.

SEEBAND

I must act immediately. The pregnancy is considerably more advanced than I had feared - it's already the third month.

**84. INT. SEEBAND'S VILLA - SEEBAND'S STUDY - CONTINUOUS**

They have reached Seeband's study. He takes a sterile cloth from a drawer and places on it two forceps and various curettes - the instruments required for an abortion.

KURT

An... abortion?

SEEBAND

If I do not remove the fetus she will not survive the pregnancy.

KURT

Here?

SEEBAND

We have a reputation to maintain.

KURT

Is it really the only way? Really?

SEEBAND

Are you doubting my professional ability?

Kurt doesn't reply, which makes Seeband even colder.

SEEBAND

Would I put myself through something like this... and my daughter!... if it were not absolutely necessary?

Seeband goes back into the bathroom. Kurt remains in the corridor. He can hear quiet sobbing behind the door. He gazes at the door, making the image blurred...

**85. INT. SEEBAND'S VILLA - DINING ROOM - EVENING (MOS)**

They are all in the dining room, which is elegantly paneled with white wood. Ellie looks pale and thin. Kurt's expression is one of silent rage. Frau Seeband looks guilty, while Frau Hellthaler has an air of suppressed desperation. The only person talking and eating heartily is the Professor.

**86. INT. SEEBAND'S VILLA - ELLIE'S ROOM - NIGHT**



Ellie is lying in bed without any pillows, stretched out like a corpse. Kurt is sitting next to her with his back against the wall. Although her face looks almost relaxed, a stream of tears is continuously flowing down her cheeks.

ELLIE

(in a monotone)

He had an SS uniform made for himself. For hours he would practice in front of the mirror, trying out different poses until he found the best ones.

**87. INT. SEEBAND'S VILLA - SEEBAND'S STUDY - FLASHBACK**

Seeband in front of the mirror. Six-year-old Ellie enters the room and watches him.

ELLIE (V. O.)

He didn't care that I could see him: I was only a little girl. There was a grinning skull on the cap. In silver. A skull.

CLOSE-UP: THE SILVER SKULL on the SS cap. It has been placed on a chair at exactly Ellie's height. The little girl gazes at it uneasily.

ELLIE (V. O.)

A doctor is supposed to heal people. He's supposed to heal.

**88. INT. SEEBAND'S VILLA - ELLIE'S ROOM - THE PRESENT**

ELLIE

(in despair)

Am I always going to be at his mercy?

Now she weeps without inhibition.

**89. INT. DRESDEN GYNECOLOGICAL HOSPITAL - ENTRANCE AREA - EVENING**

A formal ceremony is taking place, with 100 doctors and dignitaries in suits. Several uniformed Soviets.

We see Kurt, Ellie and also Frau Seeband, who is standing next to her husband. The Minister of Health is making a speech in Seeband's honor:

MINISTER OF HEALTH

... a gifted doctor, a humanist, one of the founders of our Socialist Republic - in short, a fine example for all members of his profession. And today, 11 December, the anniversary of the foundation of the German Democratic Republic, it is my honor to present him with the Robert Koch Medal and the title Distinguished Doctor of the People.

With a flourish he places a bronze medal on a ribbon around Seeband's neck, handing him a certificate, a small box and an envelope. Applause.

MINISTER OF HEALTH (CONT'D)

(to Seeband)

Here's a small version, for everyday use. And a certificate to frame. (smiling, he whispers with reference to the envelope) Take care of this: 8000 marks inside!

Seeband steps up to the podium.

SEEBAND

Thank you, Minister, for those kind words, of which I am not deserving.

He catches the eye of his daughter, who is gazing at him without any love. She is standing in the Directors' Gallery, where there are paintings of the directors over the last decades. The paintings are all very similar. Kurt's work fits in perfectly - a fine work of craftsmanship.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)

As a doctor and a member of society I merely do my duty. I am simply one wheel in the huge machinery of international socialism, just as the painter of this far too flattering portrait of me is only a small wheel, his style indistinguishable from the other painters here...

Kurt meets Seeband's eye with an impassive expression.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)

... just as we are all only small wheels on a large train which, with the help of the Soviet Union, is moving steadily towards that great terminal station: Communism.

Applause. Several people approach Seeband to congratulate him. Kurt, standing with Ellie near his painting, overhears two men who lean forward and study it through their glasses.

DIGNITARY 1  
(to his companion)

Who was it by?

DIGNITARY 2

It doesn't say. Willi Sitte, probably. One of those.

DIGNITARY 1

I just wonder how long it will take the news to get around that Mr Eastman has invented a device which does this sort of thing itself - but much better!

The two men laugh and walk on. Ellie and Kurt stand silently, watching Seeband and his wife at the other end of the room as they accept expressions of congratulation. A little further away Frau Hellthaler is standing by herself. She is also watching Seeband and his wife. Among the people congratulating Seeband is a uniformed Soviet officer, a slim, good-looking man who whispers something quietly into Seeband's ear when he approaches. For a moment Seeband seems startled; then he nods briefly to the Russian officer, who walks on. Seeband's wife addresses him, apparently asking about the incident.

REVERSE ANGLE:

We are with Seeband and his wife.

SEEBAND

I am to report to KGB Headquarters in Berlin tomorrow. That's all he said.

Now the two of them notice that Kurt and Ellie are watching them from the other end of the room. Frau Seeband nods to them in greeting.

FRAU SEEBAND

Looks like that plan didn't work either.  
They are closer than ever.

SEEBAND  
Patience, Martha, patience.

**90. EXT. KGB HQ KARLSHORST, BERLIN - DAY**

A grey stone building, intimidating Nazi-style architecture. Soviet guards in front. A taxi pulls up, and Seeband gets out. The guards inspect his papers. An adjutant is waiting and leads him inside.

**91. INT. KGB HQ KARLSHORST, BERLIN - GENERAL'S OFFICE - DAY**

Seeband, the miniature of the Robert Koch medal on his lapel, is shown into the office of Alexander Mikhailovich Muravyov. Muravyov is several years older, his shoulder now adorned with a general's star. When he sees Seeband he sends the young adjutant (the man who gave Seeband the message at the award ceremony) out of the room. Only when the adjutant has left does Muravyov embrace Seeband, kissing him on both cheeks. The overpowering smell of Russian cigarettes still disturbs Seeband.

MURAVYOV  
(genuinely moved)  
Carl, Carl...  
(something occurs to him)  
Wait, I must show you something.

Muravyov has, in the meantime, leaned German, though he speaks with a strong Russian accent. He crosses to his desk and picks up a framed photograph of a very handsome 13-year-old boy, which he shows to Seeband. Seeband nods appreciatively. Tears come to Muravyov's eyes. Then he has to laugh, and again he kisses Seeband on both cheeks. Suddenly he becomes serious.

MURAVYOV (CONT'D)  
Carl, I'm being transferred. Back to Russia. I won't be able to protect you any longer.

Seeband is shocked, though he makes an effort not to reveal this.

MURAVYOV (CONT'D)

All the others have been caught. On paper we are still hunting for Burghard Kroll and the "medical coordinator of the Dresden region for the euthanasia program".

(he glances meaningfully at Seeband).

I can't guarantee my successor won't re-open the investigation and start questioning doctors and nurses again.

Seeband lowers his eyes uneasily.

MURAVYOV (CONT'D)

You have to leave the country as well. And never come back. Apply for permission to emigrate, for you and your wife. It will be approved. These days Wernher von Braun is building space rockets for the Americans. As far as we can see, nobody in the West would be interested in your SS past any more... Nobody will suspect the truth.

(dryly)

Let's hope our side doesn't, either.

We sense that his loyalty to Seeband has taken its toll on Muravyov.

MURAVYOV (CONT'D)

(openly trusting, confidentially)

You can't tell me anything about Kroll? Where he is? Who else was at those meetings?

(almost pleading)

You would help me a great deal.

SEEBAND

I never met the gentleman. I don't know anything about him.

Muravyov nods. He knows this is a lie. He looks at Seeband rather sadly and then reaches out his hand.

MURAVYOV

We shall never meet again, my friend. I hope I have repaid my debt to you.

Seeband also reaches out to shake hands.

**92. INT. SEEBAND'S VILLA - SEEBAND'S STUDY - EVENING**

Seeband is sitting at his desk, Frau Hellthaler at her place, while he dictates letters to her.

SEEBAND

... to make sure we can avoid a bottleneck in the occupancy. Yours respectfully, Professor Dr. etc.

Frau Hellthaler is taking all this down in shorthand, on a notepad, writing quickly. Now she closes her file and is about to get to her feet.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)

There is another letter.

Frau Hellthaler sits down and opens her notepad again.

SEEBAND

To Dresden Municipal Council, Department for Internal Affairs.

Frau Hellthaler writes this.

FRAU HELLTHALER

Reference?

SEEBAND

(watching her closely)

Application to relinquish citizenship of the German Democratic Republic.

Frau Hellthaler freezes.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)

"After due deliberation I, Professor Dr. Carl Seeband, hereby request permission for myself and my wife Martha to emigrate immediately to the Federal Republic of Germany." Write it!

Frau Hellthaler does so.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)

"For political reasons it is no longer possible for me to remain in the German Democratic Republic. My daughter Elisabeth, who is of age, will remain in the GDR, since she continues to believe in the GDR and in the socialist world view. I leave to her my property, Wiener Strasse 91. With best respects, Professor Dr. etc."

Frau Hellthaler is still writing, although large tears are dripping onto her notepad, blurring the lines.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)

Do you have all that? Kindly deliver it in person to the Town Hall tomorrow.

Frau Hellthaler gets to her feet without looking at him and hurries out of the room. Seeband places his documents in a drawer of his desk.

**94. EXT. WESTERZ MOUNTAINS - COUNTRY INN - TERRACE - DAY**

INSERT TITLE: 1957

A country inn that could almost be in Austria, with heavy wooden tables and a large terrace that has a beautiful view of the mountains of Saxony. Martha, Ellie, Kurt and Seeband are sitting at a table. Ellie is sitting with her father. She is resting her hand on his. Kurt is talking to Martha.

FRAU SEEBAND

(to Kurt)

Are you thinking about your mother?

Kurt shakes his head.

FRAU SEEBAND (CONT'D)

I'm sorry he didn't invite her.

Seeband, the Robert Koch medal still pinned to his lapel, taps his wine glass without getting to his feet; he doesn't want to attract too much attention.

SEEBAND

Dear Ellie. Dear Kurt. You have now been my son-in-law for two hours. I shall be leaving my daughter in your hands when we leave the country at the end of the month. There is only one thing I would like to pass on for your journey through life: It is not enough to be "good". I have seen many men who were just "good" passed over, dispossessed, even annihilated. If you want security in this world, no matter what you do, you have to be the best. Not one of the best. The best.

SLOW FADE TO WHITE

**95. INT. SEEBAND'S VILLA - BREAKFAST NICHE - MORNING**

Kurt and Ellie are having breakfast, looking cheerful.

ELLIE

(reading from a letter)

... and thus I find myself in Oldenburg,  
in the Sanderbusch Clinic, with every  
prospect of taking over when Erkner  
retires two years from now. Take care of  
yourself. Your Papa."

KURT

Well, it looks as though he's landed on  
his feet again.

**96. INT. DRESDEN SOCIALIST PARTY HQ - CONFERENCE ROOM -DAY**

INSERT TITLE: 1961

Kurt, almost 30 years old, is again on a scaffolding  
painting a large mural: the Workers Uprising. This time  
in an even more impressive-looking official locale.

In the hall below several party delegates are watching,  
clearly pleased with what Kurt is doing. His old friend  
Max is assisting him, mixing the paint from red pigment,  
linseed oil and chalk. Kurt hands Max the bowl of paint  
and indicates he should fill in the outline with color.

MAX

(happily)

Really?

Max starts work. Kurt watches as he applies the paint  
with enthusiasm. Kurt looks at the painting itself:  
muscular workers in white shirts with familiar hammers  
and tools. Capitalist lackeys in black, suppressing them.  
Kurt shakes his head involuntarily at the sameness of it  
all. He watches his friend painting eagerly, contentedly.  
Kurt is pensive.

KURT

How much would you give for my Wartburg?

MAX

Are you kidding me? Do you know how long  
a normal mortal has to wait to get a car  
like that?



KURT

I just don't like it any more. 300 marks?

Max gazes at him for long time, silent and serious; here has a good idea what his friend is planning.

MAX

Kurt, in the West they even don't do painting any more. These days painting is considered bourgeois.

KURT

(skeptical)

I thought for them "bourgeois" was good?

MAX

(now uncertain)

Oh, what do I know!

Kurt laughs.

MAX

Of course we all want to get rid of you. Of course we do. But you've got a life here. You have money. You're becoming famous. I mean... I get girls to go to bed with me because I'm your assistant. You can handle the apparatchiks like nobody else... Next year you're going to be 30, so you're not so young anymore... You're... Why?

KURT

Because none of that matters.

MAX

Then what does matter?

KURT

The truth.

MAX

And who says what is true?

KURT

(smiling)

Me, me, me.

Max has to laugh at this. He takes off one of his shoes, turns it over and pulls the heel to one side to reveal a secret compartment containing folded banknotes. He counts them.

MAX

260?

KURT

Fine. Do you need canvases?

MAX

You mean you have some?

KURT

In my studio - with pictures on them.

MAX

What?!

KURT

Paint over them. All of them, please.

Max is speechless.

KURT

I don't want to see them again. Believe me. Nothing I've painted there is right.

MAX

But what about the murals? Those you can't destroy.

KURT

I expect other people will take care of that.

MAX

Alright, then at least let me drive you in my new car.  
(Kurt is about to object)  
Only to East Berlin, I mean.

MONTAGE (MOS)

**97. EXT. EAST GERMANY/EAST BERLIN BORDER - EVENING**

INSERT TITLE: 13 March 1961

The border between East Germany and East Berlin: there is a barrier across the road, with barbed wire and a guardhouse. A Russian soldier in a jacket that is much too warm for the German weather crosses to Kurt's Wartburg, and Max hands him their IDs through the window.

SOVIET SOLDIER

What is purpose of your visit to Berlin?

MAX

I'm just the driver.

KURT

We are assistants at Dresden Art Academy,  
and we're going to a meeting at the  
School of Visual and Applied Art in  
Weissensee.

The soldier opens the trunk of the car. It only contains two briefcases, though they are both very full. He opens the larger of them. It contains several of the beige leather volumes with gold titles we have seen previously in Kurt's possession. The soldier picks one of the books and opens it: the collected works of Thomas Mann.

He opens the other briefcase. It's full of photographs: family photographs. The soldier extracts a few of them. We see Johann with ruffled hair and a pointed beard. A picture of the Seeband family at the beach, with Seeband holding his hands around his wife and daughter as if to protect them. We see Aunt Elisabeth with little Kurt. A group picture of nurses. And Uncle Günther against a wall in Russia: that picture really did make it back.

The soldier puts the photographs back in the briefcase, closes the trunk, signals that Max can drive on and then beckons the next car.

**98. EXT. EAST BERLIN - FRIEDRICHSTRASSE STATION - ENTRANCE - NIGHT**

The dim light of the distinctive yellow streetlamps illuminate the steps leading up to the station of the Berlin tramway. They are so crowded that the police are overwhelmed and have given up trying to check everybody.

The Wartburg pulls up outside. Kurt turns to his friend Max and shakes him by the hand. Max can hardly look him in the eye. Ellie rests a grateful hand on his shoulder.

They head over to the steps, trying to look inconspicuous, Kurt carrying the two briefcases and Ellie only with her handbag.

EAST GERMAN POLICEMAN

Halt!

Ellie and Kurt freeze. But the policeman is addressing someone else; he stops a man climbing the steps with a large suitcase. Kurt and Ellie walk on.

**99. EXT./INT. EAST BERLIN - FRIEDRICHSTRASSE STATION - PLATFORM - NIGHT**

Kurt and Ellie are standing at the platform of the tramway with a large number of other people. The tram arrives on time. Everybody boards in orderly fashion. Ellie and Kurt don't even sit down.

ELLIE

(whispers to Kurt)

They almost make it too easy...

KURT

Not for much longer.

TRAIN DRIVER

(over loudspeakers)

Next Station: Zoological Garden, West Berlin.

They get out.

MONTAGE: the West

- Bright lights and neon advertising on the Kurfürstendamm, the main shopping street of West Berlin. It's a different country.

**100. INT./EXT. WEST BERLIN - DAY**

- Policeman in their ridiculous blue uniforms.
- On a color TV in a shop for electrical appliances the weekly lottery draw is being televised.
- The huge Refugee Center in Marienfelde, where Kurt and Ellie are allocated camp beds, next to them families with screaming children.
- A government office (a desolate place even in West Berlin) where each new arrival is issued with a little Western money from a petty cash box.

- Ellie, wearing a bra, is washing her only blouse in one of the many washbasins of the communal bathroom.

**101. INT. DRESDEN ACADEMY OF ART - LECTURE THEATER - DAY**

Professor Grimma walks into the lecture theater looking cheerful. There is a letter on his desk. From Kurt. He opens it.

KURT (V. O.)

Dear Professor Grimma. By the time you read this I shall be in the West. I couldn't talk to you about it before, because that would have involved you in a criminal act. You were always very good to me, so I hope you will believe I have not taken this decision lightly, and it was not done in the hope that I might one day be driving a fancy car.

Professor Grimma is visibly moved.

**102. INT. MUSEUM FOR HYGIENE - ENTRANCE HALL - DAY**

Uniformed Stasi officers stand guard as the Joy of Life mural is painted over by workmen using rollers on long handles to cover it with flat white.

Another painter is applying the obligatory green horizon over the white at waist height.

**103. INT. DRESDEN SOCIALIST PARTY HQ - CONFERENCE ROOM -DAY**

The same Stasi officers and the two party officials who watched Kurt paint the mural originally are now ensuring that everything is covered over. Several workmen are nailing wooden planks onto the wall.

Right at the back we see Professor Horst Grimma. Almost in tears.

END OF MONTAGE

**104. INT. WEST BERLIN STUDIO/APARTMENT - DAY**

A small apartment full of paintings, realistic portraits, realistic street scenes in GDR style. WERNER BLASCHKE, a cigarette in the corner of his mouth, is painting a portrait of a plump 12-year-old boy squirming in front of him in his Sunday best.

BLASCHKE

(in a strong Saxon accent)

Stay still, Klaus, or you'll spoil your father's birthday present for Mummy.

He turns to Kurt, who is gazing at the painting.

BLASCHKE (CONT'D)

How old are you again?

KURT

29. Almost 30.

BLASCHKE

(impressed)

You look younger.

(getting back to business)

Yes, in that case Munich is a good idea. People there have plenty of money. They always need portraits, landscapes too. What I wouldn't advise is Düsseldorf.

KURT

Düsseldorf?

BLASCHKE

It's all modern art there. Avant-garde! And if you didn't study at their Academy, you don't stand a chance anyway. It's a kind of Mafia. Munich is good. Hamburg is good. Berlin...? Well, middling, as you can see for yourself.

He points to poor Klaus, who thinks he is being ordered to introduce himself.

KLAUS

(obediently)

Good day.

BLASCHKE

Stay still!

TITLE: DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART

ESTABLISHING: the Academy. A huge neo-Renaissance building still displaying bomb damage. A large banner, in appearance not unlike the ones Kurt used to paint, proclaims: OPEN HOUSE DAY. Visitors are pouring inside. Kurt looks nervous. He stubs out his cigarette and walks in.

**106. INT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS**

Kurt enters the Academy. A Porter is sitting behind the desk near the door; Kurt walks over to him and shakes the astonished man by the hand.

KURT

Good morning. My name is Kurt Barnert. I phoned about a tour.

The Porter gives Kurt a skeptical look (Kurt still has a lot to learn about etiquette here in the West) and points to the next door without saying a word.

**107. INT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - ENTRANCE HALL - CONTINUOUS**

There is a table in the entrance hall with a sign saying: "Tours for Applicants. Wait Here." Kurt waits patiently, watching the people who walk past him and enter the Academy. Most of them are curious locals in search of a scandal, judging by the straps of conversations Kurt overhears ("... punched him in the nose in the middle of the lecture...", "... said Heil Hitler, and claimed it was just a form of provocation...", etc).

PREUSSER (O.S.)

(loud, brisk)

You're still under 26 I hope?

Kurt turns round.

HARRY PREUSSER is standing behind the table, a stocky man in his early 30s with very short black hair and a broad, confident face. He is studying Kurt with piercing eyes and takes his silence as a yes.

PREUSSER (CONT'D)

Good. And what you want to do? Sculpture?  
Action? Installations?

KURT  
Painting... actually.

Preusser laughs.

PREUSSER  
(mocking Kurt's mild Saxon accent)  
"Pointing?"

It is a long time since Kurt encountered anything like this, and he's more surprised than offended.

PREUSSER (CONT'D)  
No offence. I'm from the east myself.  
Mecklenburg.

He sets off on the tour, Kurt following. They walk between a series of sculptures consisting of sheets of metal made to revolve by electric motors.

PREUSSER (CONT'D)  
Take a look around. Nobody really does painting anymore. People want something new - an idea.

They walk on, past naked models covered in chalk.

KURT  
An idea?

PREUSSER  
Yes. But not something like that: something new, or at least in new packaging. Like Yves Klein, who says: I am claiming ultramarine for myself. I am even going to patent it. It is now called Yves Klein Blue. And I shall only express myself with this color. I will paint the naked breasts of a beautiful woman with Yves Klein Blue, and she will rub the paint against the breasts of another beautiful woman. I shall paint sponges with Yves Klein Blue and stick them to canvases with Yves Klein Blue.

They now come to another studio where a young female student cuts slits in her monochromatic canvases in grandiose gestures.



PREUSSER (CONT'D)

(whispers to Kurt)

Of course, it's no good if someone had the idea first. Lucio Fontana has been slashing canvases for the last six years. What's the point of just repeating it? But Katrin has lovely firm breasts, so we let her do what she likes...

They walk on through various studios, all linked like pearls on a string. One of the studios is particularly crowded. Here ADRIAN SCHIMMEL, a good-looking young man with fashionable black sunglasses, smooth black hair and sensuous lips, is standing in front of a wall of paintings which consist of repeated patterns in vibrant colors.

PREUSSER (CONT'D)

That's Adrian Schimmel. The name says it all...

("Schimmel" = "mold".) (Preusser whispers)  
His real name is Adrian Finck, son of the chairman of Mannesmann. Prig. But he's got international connections - even in Paris and New York, they say. And he can talk, that's for sure. But is the wallpaper idea enough?

Finck is explaining his wallpaper pictures to an elderly couple, his manner extremely self-important.

ELDERLY MAN

Yes, I think it's very pretty. But isn't it still what you might call... wallpaper.

ADRIAN SCHIMMEL

Yes, but you see, it only looks that way. That's exactly what we artists are searching for: that which is hidden behind the decorative. The emptiness, expressed by the holes I punched in it. The banality, incorporated in the material linoleum that I applied to it. The senseless stridency visible in the neon colors in which I rolled my work. Thus it becomes obvious than in art even the facade, yes, even wallpaper always speaks the truth. And that is precisely what brought you here. You have a deep sense of the artistic; otherwise you would not have ended up here. Piet Mondrian presents you with utopia. I

present you with the truth. Your friends see some pretty wallpaper. You see the level behind it.

ELDERLY WOMAN

(impressed)

And... is it possible to... purchase something like this?

ADRIAN SCHIMMEL

It is. That's what so fantastic about art.

Preusser leads Kurt away with a dismissive wave.

PREUSSER

Money always makes money... You know how it is. But no artist should have to talk about his work like that. He just wants to prove to his successful family that he can be successful even without them. Money is all that counts for that...

(a sudden moment of introspection)

Whereas I want to prove to my unsuccessful family that I can be successful in spite of them. Money is all that matters there, too... Families... it's all shit.

They walk on, past studios and exhibition rooms Preusser doesn't consider of interest.

PREUSSER

But you must be younger than 26 when you get the idea. Otherwise it's no use.

KURT

Why?

PREUSSER

Just think about it: Picasso was 26 for Les Demoiselles d'Avignon. Duchamp was 25 when he painted Nude Descending a Staircase. And Michelangelo was 24 when he did the Pietà.

The next studio Preusser guides Kurt into contains a few bizarre wooden constructions. The wooden framework of a gazebo, the individual beams connected by potatoes. And a wooden stool with a hole in the middle of the seat where a stick hangs down, attached to an electric motor; as the stick turns, the potato at the end of it revolves around another potato on the floor.

A slightly effeminate, gaunt young man with very long blond hair, yellow sunglasses and a beige polo neck is operating the machine. He is explaining it to a child, who looks fascinated.

PREUSSER

What do you call that?

ARENDR IVO

"Device to make a potato circle another."

PREUSSER

No more dots?

ARENDR IVO

(innocently, shaking his head)

At the moment I'm more interested in potatoes.

PREUSSER

This is Kurt. From the East. Painter. Wants to study here.

Ivo shakes hands with Kurt, giving him a friendly smile.

ARENDR IVO

So I suppose Harry already subjected you to his speech about "the idea"?

KURT

You don't believe it?

ARENDR IVO

If you are looking to create the supreme masterpiece, it might be right. I mean, mastery has to be measured somehow. But personally, I'm more interested in: potatoes.

PREUSSER

Come on, before you get corrupted.

Ivo gives Kurt a friendly farewell smile.

As they walk away:

PREUSSER (CONT'D)

Arendt Ivo: what he wants, nobody knows. He used to do everything in big dots, all the same color, that he printed on

boards. Could have been a real idea. And now that. And in a couple of months he'll be doing something completely different.

Preusser and Kurt have come to the end of a long corridor. Here there are a large number of visitors crowded round a series of windows overlooking another studio.

Brightly illuminated, standing between semi-abstract water-colors that seem to have been painted with blood or liquid soil, a man in a beige safari suit, fedora and fisherman's vest is working with a white mass. He spreads the oily substance he takes from a tub with a spatula into the corners until it fills them completely. He seems entirely engrossed in what he's doing. All around him there are rolls of black-grey felt, placed upright and as tall as a man. Kurt is not unmoved by the whole spectacle.

PREUSSER (CONT'D)

(with a certain pride)

Our Professor... Antonius van Verten. But I guess you've heard of him even in Saxony.

Kurt shakes his head.

PREUSSER (CONT'D)

A true original... He'd probably like me to say: 'legend'. Always wears that hat. One time a really sexy student seduced him - just to see him without the hat.

He grins over at Kurt.

PREUSSER (CONT'D)

He kept it on, even in bed...

(he laughs)

Only works with felt and animal fat. Why?

(mocking but also envious)

That remains his big, legendary secret. Sometimes he uses rabbit blood. He told the sexy student that when he was a kid he once shot a rabbit - and never recovered from it. We have to attend all his lectures - they're obligatory - but he never looks at anything we do. He says the only person who knows if you're doing it right is yourself... I think he simply doesn't care about us. Well... We don't care about him either.

Preusser's dismissal doesn't sound too convincing. Kurt gazes in fascination at the wild movements of the mysterious teacher.

PREUSSER (CONT'D)

But whether you're accepted, whether you get a studio - it's all completely up to this madman.

Preusser senses that Kurt is impressed by van Verten.

PREUSSER (CONT'D)

Come on, he's not that interesting.

Soon they come to a large studio which is packed with canvases and sculptures, all covered in hundreds of nails. Several people are standing in front of them, gazing at them.

KURT

(dryly)

So this is one of those "ideas"?

Preusser ignores him, because a very attractive young woman is standing in front of one sculpture, which looks like a small tree of nails.

PREUSSER

(to the young woman)

Does it appeal to you, this sculpture?

YOUNG WOMAN

Yes.

Preusser picks up a few nails and a hammer from a work table and starts working on the sculpture.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)

(overwhelmed)

You are the artist?

His practiced movements indicate that he is.

PREUSSER

It's still not quite right. I can only see that now you're standing next to it.

(gestures to her with his palm upright)

That's right...

(gestures to his sculpture)

That isn't.

YOUNG WOMAN

(blushing)  
What are you trying to express with this work?

PREUSSER  
(gravely, with emphasis)  
Precisely what you're experiencing right now.

The girl is suitably impressed. Preusser presents her with a nail, and a meaningful look. She takes it as if it were a holy relic and walks on, dazed. Preusser gazes after her while Kurt takes a closer look at the works.

PREUSSER  
I was 23, by the way.

**108. INT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - VAN VERTEN'S OFFICE - DAY**

There is something inexplicably artistic even about his office. Van Verten, again wearing his hat and fisherman's vest, is looking through Kurt's application form. Kurt is sitting opposite him.

CLOSE SHOT OF APPLICATION FORM:

Under "Age" Kurt has written "26".

VAN VERTEN  
You haven't submitted a portfolio.

KURT  
I wasn't able to bring anything with me.

VAN VERTEN  
What have you done up to now?

KURT  
Painting.

VAN VERTEN  
In East Germany?

KURT  
Yes.

VAN VERTEN  
Socialist realism?

It is more a statement than a question, so no reply is required.

Van Verten picks up a West German tabloid newspaper, the Bild, and points to a headline about the construction of the Berlin Wall, along with a photograph of the massive undertaking.

VAN VERTEN

So now they really have built a wall. Did you feel that coming?

KURT

"Nobody has the intention" - always means precisely the opposite is true.

Van Verten studies the photograph closely, speaking almost to himself.

VAN VERTEN

But somehow it's almost art, that wall - a piece of landscape art. The craftsmanship involved in the execution is completely un-interesting; hundreds of thousands of people have problems with it...

(shaking his head)

Consistent German madness.

Kurt has nothing to say to this. Van Verten puts the newspaper down.

VAN VERTEN (CONT'D)

What kind of art do you like?

Kurt shrugs his shoulders, genuinely stumped. He honestly doesn't know. His sincerity impresses van Verten, who looks up and gazes at Kurt for a long time.

VAN VERTEN (CONT'D)

You don't like talking about yourself, do you? But your eyes tell me that you have seen more than any of us.

He signs the application form and stamps it twice, once with "Enrolled" and once with "Studio".

VAN VERTEN (CONT'D)

These are the only conditions for you, just like everybody else:

(raising one finger)

That you come to the lectures.

(raising a second finger)

That you never ask me to look at anything  
you do. Agreed?

Kurt nods.

VAN VERTEN (CONT'D)

In any case you're the only one who knows  
if it's good or not.

**109. INT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - KURT'S STUDIO - NIGHT**

There's a metallic buzz as neon lights come on to reveal a small, industrial studio, much smaller than Kurt's workshop in Dresden. Smaller than Preusser's, which is adjoining it: we can see the examples of nail art in the background through the double connecting doors. Which are now open. Kurt and Ellie enter the studio.

KURT

One step forwards, two steps back.

ELLIE

Oh come on! Don't tell me you can't do  
anything you like here.

KURT

Yes, but if I only knew what that is...

She gives him a seductive look and unbuttons her blouse: she isn't wearing a bra underneath. She kisses him and quickly unfastens his belt...

ELLIE

Maybe... first of all... to inaugurate  
this studio?

**110. INT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - LECTURE THEATER - DAY**

A lecture theater, the rows of seats rising towards the back. The ceiling, which was destroyed by bombing, still hasn't been replaced. Down at the front van Verten is standing next to a pair of easels, both covered in sheets. He pulls away the sheets to reveal the election posters of Adenauer and Brandt: "No Experiments - Vote For Adenauer" and "Prosperity for Everyone. Forwards with Willy Brandt".

VAN VERTEN



Who are you going to vote for? The SPD?  
The CDU?

He looks round. Some of the students call out: "SPD!", "German Piece Union!", "CDU!". Others whistle and boo in protest after each party is named.

VAN VERTEN (CONT'D)  
(firmly)  
Don't vote for anyone.

It goes very quiet in the lecture theater.

VAN VERTEN (CONT'D)  
Never vote for a party again! Vote for art. It is either-or. Only in art is freedom not an illusion. Only the artist can give people back their sense for freedom after this catastrophe. Every individual, whether he's a garbage man or a farmer, has the chance to be an artist. If he develops his own subjective abilities without limitations. If you are not free, completely free, then nobody else will be. By making yourselves free you are making the world free. You are priests, revolutionaries, liberators. Make your burnt offerings!

He then uses a lighter to set both posters on fire at the bottom. The flames quickly rise.

**111. INT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - KURT'S STUDIO - DAY**

Kurt is standing over a canvas, dripping paint onto it from a brush like Jackson Pollock. The fact that the shades are a little more monochromatic than Pollock's doesn't make it more original, either. Preusser peers inside and shakes his head mockingly. When he has left Kurt pours the whole bucket of paint over the canvas in frustration.

**112. INT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - KURT'S STUDIO - DAYS  
LATER**

Kurt has painted a canvas in beige-orange. Now he picks up a razor blade and is about to apply it to the surface.

PREUSSER (O. S.)  
Don't tell me you've joined the slashers.

Kurt turns to look at him with a sly expression as if to say "Wait and see!" and then cuts through the canvas in three places. Red paint begins to ooze through the open slits like blood from wounds. The paint starts dripping down the canvas. Preusser steps closer and sees pouches full of paint attached to the rear of the canvas. He nods, impressed, and pats Kurt on the shoulder.

PREUSSER

That's almost an idea. You learn fast.

MONTAGE

**113. INT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - KURT'S STUDIO - DAY/NIGHT**

- Kurt paints shop-window mannequins
- He builds totem poles
- Now dressed like Andy Warhol, he dips a dozen mounted antlers in white paint
- Preusser glances inside, nods in reluctant admiration and then goes back to his nail creations

**114. INT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - LECTURE THEATER - DAY**

Van Verten again has something on the podium with him covered in a sheet.

VAN VERTEN

What I am now going to show you - is art. You should never be afraid to call art by that name. Most people talk about "works" and "images" and "objects". By doing so they diminish their own art. I don't want you to be diminished. I want you to make art. And this... is art.

He pulls away the sheet - to reveal a monumental sculpture by Arno Breker: the "Head of the Aryan warrior". The students are horrified. People call out loudly: "Nazi!", "Down with Nazi art!" Somebody throws an apple: it hits van Verten hard on the chest. He remains standing motionless. Somebody else throws a tin can. It hits him on the head, and the cut begins to bleed. He still remains motionless.

VAN VERTEN (CONT'D)  
(calmly, almost to himself)

I would like you to have Arno Breker's creative power. I would like you to produce a body of work like his.

Again he is hit hard by an object that is thrown.

VAN VERTEN (CONT'D)

I would like you to remain as true to yourself as he always was to himself.  
(almost whispering)  
Even if, like me, you can't abide it.

**115. INT. CLOTHING FACTORY - WORKSHOP - DAY**

Ellie is working at a sewing machine among two dozen other women. Hard, manual labor. But she looks somehow content, as if she had a wonderful secret.

Suddenly she looks up and clutches her belly. The sewing machine continues to operate, the material bunching up and tearing. Tears spring to her eyes. She gets to her feet, swaying slightly.

**116. INT. CLOTHING FACTORY - TOILET - DAY**

Ellie is standing naked at a washbasin, scrubbing the blood from her skirt while tears run down her cheeks. Suddenly, she collapses. Her body thuds against the door, breaking the flimsy lock. Two fellow seamstresses rush toward her, concerned.

**117. INT. KURT AND ELLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

It is dark in the apartment. Kurt opens the front door and turns on the light, surprised that nobody appears to be home. But then he sees Ellie sitting in a chair, motionless and pale.

ELLIE

The sixth time, Kurt. This time it was as far as the third month.

Kurt stops in his tracks. His clothes are covered with specks of gray paint.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

I went to see the doctor. I will not be able to have children.

Kurt is shaken. He still can't move.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

And you know what he said? It was the abortion. Not cilia damage.

(bitterly)

By wanting to keep it so pure, he succeeded in extinguishing his own bloodline.

She begins to weep. Kurt kneels next to her, holding her tight.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

We'll never have children, Kurt...

He is also deeply upset.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Your pictures... Your pictures have to be our children. Yes? Alright?

Kurt embraces her in silence. He nods.

#### 118. INT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - LECTURE THEATER - DAY

Van Verten enters the lecture theater without any work of art to display, looking defeated, distracted today. He stands there for a moment as if wondering what he can talk about. Nothing occurs to him. He looks in his bag. He finds a catalogue of the works of Wilhelm Lehmbruck. He holds up the book, but nobody can see it properly. One of the students sets up an episcope with an extension cord. Van Verten places the book on it and looks at it as he was seeing the image for the first time. Projected on the wall is an photo of Lehmbruck's sculpture Kneeling Woman.

VAN VERTEN

Have you all studied Lehmbruck?... If not, please do so. For your own sakes... He said: "Each work of art must retain something from the first days of creation... As if it were still divine... As if it were yet emerging from the primeval mass, from the ribs..."

Van Verten falters and then stops: it is as though the urge to touch, to teach, to communicate, simply isn't there today.

VAN VERTEN (CONT'D)

No, wait... perhaps... Has anybody had an insight this week that he can share with us?

He crosses to the wall and pulls out the plug of the episcopes. Nobody says anything. Then:

KURT

Lottery numbers...

The other students laugh, thinking he's making a joke.

KURT (CONT'D)

No, really. The lottery numbers. If I say six numbers at random - 5, 7, 23, 29, 44, 11 - that's just stupid. But if I read you the winning numbers from the lottery...

(picking up a newspaper from the desk of the student next to him)

... 2, 17, 19, 25, 45, 48 - then suddenly they have a true quality, something forceful, almost beautiful...

More laughter, as if he had simply continued the joke. Van Verten looks very serious, almost as if he hasn't been listening. Or as if Kurt's words have moved him deeply.

KURT (CONT'D)

(disconcerted)

That was... my... insight.

Van Verten fumbles around for a few more moments in his old leather briefcase. Then he looks up at the students.

VAN VERTEN

You can go. I have nothing for you today.

A little surprised, the students pack up their things. Kurt too.

VAN VERTEN (CONT'D)

Kurt, would you come over here for a minute?

While the others walk out Kurt comes down to the front, looking anxious. When he gets there Van Verten waits until everyone else has left and then turns to face Kurt.

VAN VERTEN (CONT'D)

I would like to see your art.

KURT

When?

VAN VERTEN

Whenever you like. If you like. Just let me know.

Van Verten picks up his bag, tips his hat in farewell and walks out.

**119. INT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - PREUSSER'S STUDIO - EVENING**

Kurt is standing next to his friend, looking uneasy, while Preusser carries on hammering in his nails.

PREUSSER

What is there to think about? If he likes your work, you get a gallery, and then you can buy your girlfriend...

KURT

I'm married.

PREUSSER

... then you can buy your wife and your girlfriend a car. Soon you'll be able to exchange your pictures for classics. Van Verten swapped a chair covered in animal fat for a Courbet!

KURT

At least there were a few nails in it.

Preusser smiles angrily and hammers a little harder.

KURT (CONT'D)

(honestly)

I just don't know whether it's good enough, what I'm doing. Somehow I feel it isn't.

PREUSSER

But it's all subjective anyway! And if it weren't subjective, it wouldn't be art, it would be craft.

Craft. An insult.

PREUSSER (CONT'D)

At the end of the day, it's all a matter of luck, isn't it? And the fact that van Verten is interested in your stuff, for whatever reason, means you're in luck. Anyway, he doesn't want to be wrong. Right now, he's ready to discover something brilliant in your work. Don't stand in your own way.

Kurt goes back into his part of the studio and looks at his pictures. The CAMERA shows only his face. He doesn't look convinced. Suddenly the hammering stops. Preusser appears behind him. He also gazes at Kurt's work.

PREUSSER

(comforting)

It's good, your work. Really. It's good.

## 120. INT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - KURT'S STUDIO - MORNING

Kurt opens the door. Van Verten storms in, rushing over to the pictures in excitement, with something akin to hunger in his eyes. But after a few steps his movements become slower and slower. His initial enthusiasm changes into reservation. Silence. Van Verten is deeply disappointed. Kurt can see this - and suffers silently.

VAN VERTEN

During the war I was a radio operator with the Luftwaffe. I was a terrible radio operator, and my pilot was a terrible pilot. Not really surprising after only four weeks' training.

(he laughs a little)

We were shot down on our second sortie, over the Crimea. The pilot was killed immediately.

## 121. EXT. CRIMEA - OPEN FIELD - EVENING (FLASHBACK)

The smoking wreckage of a Junkers JU88 in the rough, sparse countryside. In the distance we see a few mud huts

and craters from bombs. The pilot's dead body is hanging out of the cockpit upside down. The canopy of the rear cabin has been smashed, and a young van Verten is inside, covered in blood, his head smoking, his hair smoldering. Suddenly three Tartar peasants with felt hats APPEAR in long, black leather coats with fur collars.

VAN VERTEN (V. O.)

The Tatar nomads got me out of the wreckage with burns that really should have killed me. These peasants, the very peasants I was dropping bombs on, pulled me out of the wreckage...

The nomads extinguish the fire with blankets and haul van Verten's shattered body out of the plane.

VAN VERTEN (V. O.) (CONT'D)

... and looked after me using whatever they had. They rubbed animal fat into my wounds and wrapped me in felt blankets.

#### **122. INT. CRIMEA - MUD HUT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)**

An old Mongolian woman pours a little broth between the lips of the young Van Verten, who is wrapped up in blankets like a cocoon.

VAN VERTEN (V. O.)

I stayed with them for a year. Then I surrendered to the Americans.

#### **123. INT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - KURT'S STUDIO - DAY**

VAN VERTEN

If I ask myself what I truly know, what I have truly experienced in my life, what I can claim without lying, it's the animal fat on my skin, the homeland of animal fat, of felt. When other people talk to me about love, about women, about their children or about sex - I know what they mean only because I experienced that fat and felt on my skin.

As he speaks he also seems to experience this in the present, submerging himself in the feeling.

VAN VERTEN (CONT'D)



My life before then was totally uneventful. My childhood was happy and sheltered, a couple of slaps across the ears, not many.

(he laughs quietly)

My teachers liked me. I wanted to be a businessman, like my father. I didn't have any "artistic talent".

(he shrugs)

And I haven't experienced anything since then, either. I'm still cheerful. I spent the last days of the war in an army hospital with friendly nurses. Very friendly nurses.

(he laughs quietly again)

Afterwards I had pretty rapid success and was appointed professor here. But the fat and the felt - those I understood... I understood them as deeply as Descartes understood that he existed. "I think, therefore I am". Descartes had questioned everything. Everything. Everything could be an illusion, a trick, his imagination. But then he understood that something had provoked that very thought within him, and consequently something must exist... and that something he decided to call "myself"... But who are you? What are you?

He points to the pictures.

VAN VERTEN (CONT'D)

Not that.

He gets to his feet, picks up his stick and raises his hat in a gesture of farewell. He therefore allows Kurt to be the first to see the terrible scars on his bald head. Part of the skull is missing, and the rest - even after 20 years - is melted, raw flesh. As if nothing had happened, as if this has been nothing but a usual, polite greeting, he puts his hat back on and vanishes out of the door.

Kurt doesn't say a thing.

He remains there, gazing at his pictures. Imitations. Without love.

The janitor comes in to take out the trash.

KURT

Herr Münster, a question.

(indicating the pictures)  
Can I throw these out with the garbage?

The janitor looks round at all the canvases and frowns.

JANITOR  
No - they wouldn't take that much.

KURT  
Any idea how I can get rid of it?

**124. EXT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - INNER COURTYARD - NIGHT**

Kurt and Herr Münster are alone in the courtyard. All Kurt's paintings have been dumped in a large construction container, doused in petrol and set alight.

**125. INT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - KURT'S STUDIO - DAY**

Kurt enters and turns on the fluorescent lights, which buzz as they come to life.

But he only stands there, in front of his empty canvas, unable to paint a thing.

**126. INT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - KURT'S STUDIO - NIGHT**

It is night now. Kurt turns off the light. He hasn't painted a thing. He walks out.

**127. INT. KURT AND ELLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Kurt walks into the apartment. Ellie has been waiting and gives him a kiss on the cheek.

ELLIE  
How was your day?

KURT  
Productive.

**128. INT. OLDENBURG - SEEBAND VILLA - LIVING ROOM - EVENING  
(M.O.S)**

A BLURRED IMAGE which comes into focus. A still photograph of Carl and Martha Seeband, smiling on the balcony of their hotel in Positano, Italy. A slide. The Seebands are showing their holiday photographs. Seeband himself adjusts the focus of the projector. The family living room is in darkness. Ellie and her mother are sitting on the sofa. Kurt is on a chair slightly to one side, smoking.

It's a fine, modern villa. Life is still good for the Seebands: only the style has changed. Beige carpets, modern Wagenfeld interiors.

More slides are shown: Seeband and his wife on the beach, with big hats and exotic cocktails; in a Roman amphitheater; in front of the small Lufthansa plane that is going to bring them home; inside the plane - the 1<sup>st</sup> class cabin. Everything spells prosperity.

**129. INT. OLDENBURG - SEEBAND VILLA - DINING ROOM - EVENING  
(LATER)**

The women have gone through to the kitchen, while the men are sitting at the table.

SEEBAND

Re-commence your studies at the age of 30? When I was 30 I was chief physician in Dresden. When Mozart was 30, he was dead.

What can Kurt say in response?

SEEBAND (CONT'D)

I do understand you don't want any support from me. And that's admirable.  
(leaning forward and whispering)  
But factory work? Is that a life you want for your wife?

Kurt looks uneasy.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)

I have a suggestion. I am on good terms with the director of the gynecology clinic in Düsseldorf. He frequently invites me there for consultations. I'll get you a part-time job there, something suitable. Maybe three hours each morning.

Agreed? Then you'll have an income, and you'll still have time for... painting.

**130. INT. MOVING TRAIN - NIGHT**

Ellie and Kurt are sitting in silence on the wooden seats of the third class train compartment, digesting the evening as they travel home.

Suddenly Ellie breaks the silence:

ELLIE

Can't he just vanish from our lives? Just leave us alone?

KURT

Perhaps the job will help with that.

**131. INT. UNIVERSITY OF DÜSSELDORF GYNECOLOGICAL HOSPITAL - STAIRS - MORNING**

On the staircase, which bears a startling resemblance to the one outside the sign factory 10 years earlier, Kurt is cleaning the large steps; even the bucket he uses looks very much like the one his father had...

**132. INT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - KURT'S STUDIO - AFTERNOON**

Kurt is sitting in silence in front of a blank canvas. Dirty. Exhausted. It doesn't look too likely that he's about to have a great idea.

SEEBAND (V. O.)

So this is the newest in art? White on a white background?

Kurt turns. His father-in-law is standing there, looking immaculate, the image of power. A perfect suit, a long black cashmere coat.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)

(dryly)

"Allegory of Emptiness" - that could be the title. Maybe it will be a sensation.

ANGLE ON: Preusser is listening as Seeband speaks.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)

Come on, I'll take you to dinner. My driver's waiting.

**133. INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - EVENING**

A simple West German Italian restaurant. Seeband orders in Italian, for Kurt as well, and then hands the menus back to the waiter. He gets straight down to business, taking an envelope out of his slim leather document case, producing from inside it a form and a square of four passport photographs.

SEEBAND

This has to be taken to the passport office in Bonn so they can issue my permanent passport. It's all ready to be picked up. I was thinking - why don't you do it for me? That way you can earn a bit more money. Here's the authorization.

He takes a 20 mark note from his briefcase.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)

The administration fee is 10 marks 50. You can keep the rest. I'll call by next week to pick up the passport. Agreed?

Kurt nods. He can't even bring himself to smile.

A newspaper boy enters the restaurant with a thick pile of BILD papers wedged under his arm.

NEWSPAPER BOY

(calls out)

Burghard Kroll, Nazi Murderer caught after 16 years.

Kurt looks up. Is there any response from Seeband? If so, it's hardly perceptible. Some people in the restaurant buy a newspaper. Not Kurt and Seeband.

The meal is served.

SEEBAND

(jovially, in Italian)

That smells delicious.

They start eating.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)

Kurt, it's not too late for you to start something completely new. It just has to be something reasonable. You're a punctual fellow and not workshy. Perhaps something in Postal Administration. I was just reading that they're looking for young men. Becoming a civil servant wouldn't be a bad idea at all.

Seeband produces a silver cigarette case from his inside pocket, opens it and takes a cigarette; he then offers to Kurt, who also takes one.

KURT

(startled by the realization)

You smoke?

Seeband lights his own cigarette and then Kurt's. He does so with great precision and elegance.

SEEBAND

63 is the right age to start. The consequences will hardly catch up with me.

He smiles and then glances down at his watch.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)

You finish your meal, take your time. I'm afraid I have to dash. All my best to Ellie.

He gets to his feet, crosses to the waiter and pays. Through the large window of the restaurant Kurt sees his father-in-law get into the back of the waiting Mercedes. His expression is serious. Kurt finishes his cigarette, puts it out and gets to his feet. As he crosses to the door he sees that a plump CUSTOMER at another table has put aside the cover section of the BILD newspaper.

KURT

May I?

The man looks up briefly.

MAN

The politics section? You can have it. All I need is the sports pages.

Kurt takes the newspaper, rolls it up and walks out of the restaurant.

**134. INT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - KURT'S STUDIO - SHORTLY AFTERWARDS**

Kurt comes back to his studio with the rolled-up newspaper. He sits down on the stool in front of the blank canvas. He places the newspaper on a side table, where it slowly unrolls of its own accord.

He stares at the blank canvas for several moments.

Preusser appears.

PREUSSER

(scornful, angry)

"White on a white background"...  
"Allegory of Emptiness"... Your father-in-law?

Kurt remains silent.

PREUSSER (CONT'D)

What an asshole.

Kurt still doesn't say anything. Preusser comes over, trying to say something comforting.

PREUSSER (CONT'D)

You know, for the first time I'd like somebody else to succeed more than me.

Kurt still doesn't turn round.

PREUSSER (CONT'D)

Your mistake is that you're still bound to the easel and canvas. Do something with...

(looking round)

... dust, or... broken glass or rubber bands. Painting is just dead. Like folk dancing and lace-making and silent movies.

Kurt is too demoralized to discuss it.

PREUSSER (CONT'D)

(with sympathy)

I only want the best for you, you know. Otherwise I'd just let you go on like this. I mean, it's too late for us to become doctors now.

Kurt attempts to give him a friendly smile, which doesn't quite work. Preusser goes back into his studio.

After staring at the blank canvas for a few more minutes Kurt reaches for the newspaper, which has now unrolled itself. The headline: NAZI MURDERER CAUGHT AFTER 16 YEARS. And a black & white picture of Kroll, a three-quarters shot from behind, in a hat, guarded by a policeman. Underneath the words: "Burghard Kroll surrenders to authorities." Kurt stares at it for a long time.

Suddenly he picks up a pencil (4B) and a ruler from his table and quickly draws a grid over the picture.

With great dexterity he tears the photo out of the paper, places the canvas sideways on the easel and pins the photo to it with two drawing pins.

He picks up a stick of charcoal and copies the contour of the picture on to the canvas as an outline.

And then he starts painting. He copies the photograph precisely. In black and white. Until the picture is finished and is identical to the photograph. And yet not completely identical. Underneath the picture he paints the precise letters of the caption of the newspaper, freehand, as he used to do in the poster workshop: BURGHARD KROLL SURRENDERING TO THE AUTHORITIES.

The picture is finished. One of the canvases is now a completed painting.

Kurt turns off the light.

### **135. INT. KURT AND ELLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Ellie is waiting for Kurt. She is surprised and overwhelmed by his ardent greeting: before he has even closed the door he kisses her, undresses her and takes her with a passion he has not shown in a long time.

### **136. INT. UNIVERSITY OF DÜSSELDORF GYNECOLOGICAL HOSPITAL - STAIRS - MORNING**

Kurt is washing the stairs with precision and enthusiasm. He looks thoughtful. Almost content.



**137. INT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - KURT'S STUDIO - DAY**

Kurt enters with his briefcase full of photographs. He chooses one of them.

Kurt's POV, a sort of POV OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS: When he has chosen a picture he draws a grid on it and pins it to the easel.

It is a picture of Aunt Elisabeth as a young woman, holding little Kurt. She is smiling, while little Kurt is gazing into the camera with a precociously serious expression.

The picture takes shape on the canvas. Kurt even recreates the texture of the photograph and the serrated edge.

FLASH: HIS LAST MEMORY OF AUNT ELISABETH AS SHE IS TAKEN AWAY AND MOUTHS THE WORDS THROUGH THE WINDOW OF THE AMBULANCE: "NEVER LOOK AWAY!" HIS BLURRING OF THE IMAGE SO IT WOULD BE BEARABLE.

Kurt gazes at the picture he has just painted, not yet content with it. Something is missing. He picks up a fine brush and uses it to blur the sharp contours.

Then he places the picture of Kroll's arrest on the easel and also blurs the contours here. Only now do the pictures gain their full force.

Kurt goes out of the room to fetch something.

Preusser enters the empty studio and sees the two pictures of Kroll and Aunt Elisabeth.

Kurt comes back with the episcopo from the lecture theater.

PREUSSER

(points to the pictures)

What's this?

KURT

I don't know either. But I think that's it.

PREUSSER

(genuinely baffled)

Painted copies of photographs.

Kurt laughs and closes the blinds. Preusser goes back into his studio. Kurt has to close the interconnecting doors to make his studio dark enough.

KURT

Sorry.

He turns on the episcopo, pointing it at the blank canvas. He puts a photograph under the episcopo. We don't see what the picture is, but from his reaction we see that it doesn't have the effect he wants. He exchanges it for another photograph. Still no good. And another.

Then he sees Seeband's envelope on the table. He opens it and takes out the passport photographs. He looks at them and puts them underneath the episcopo. That's it.

He starts painting. All four of the passport photographs in one picture. Seeband's perfect poses, each very slightly different.

He opens the large wooden shutters, and the room becomes bright again. He leaves one of the windows open to get some fresh air and gazes at the picture in the light of day. It's ready. He puts it with the other two: now he has three finished paintings.

He looks more closely at the picture of Aunt Elisabeth. He sees one place where a brushstroke is not quite perfect and puts it back on the easel to fix it.

A slight gust of wind causes one of the shutters to swing closed. In the darkness the projected passport photographs can suddenly be seen on the canvas alongside the picture of Aunt Elisabeth. For one eerie moment Aunt Elisabeth is standing next to Professor Seeband. Then the shutter swings back open. Aunt Elisabeth is all alone again.

Kurt freezes. He crosses to the window, hesitates and then closes the shutter again, looking almost apprehensive. The pictures fit together curiously well.

He places a fresh canvas on the easel and starts painting.

Aunt Elisabeth and Professor Seeband, together again after 20 years.

Once more, Kurt changes the image he is projecting on the canvases: now Burghard Kroll is projected over the picture. Almost like in a feverdream, the heads are so

close that they seem to be born out of one another, the face of the accusing child in between.

**138. INT. KURT AND ELLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Ellie and Kurt, now just as close together. He is lying on top of her, as they did so many years ago in Wiener Strasse. They are bathed in sweat, breathless. Kurt moves one arm slightly so his body covers hers precisely.

**139. INT. UNIVERSITY OF DÜSSELDORF GYNECOLOGICAL HOSPITAL - STAIRS - DAY**

Cleaning the stairs in the hospital has become a welcome exercise. Kurt is in a world of his own.

Suddenly Seeband enters through the main door with a group of other medical dignitaries. He comes up the stairs, and as they pass Kurt, Seeband clearly sees him but doesn't say anything. When they have vanished above him, Kurt carries on washing the stairs.

**140. INT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - KURT'S STUDIO - DAY**

Kurt is just stretching a new canvas when the door to his studio opens.

SEEBAND (O.C.)

(harsh, arrogant)

I imagine you will understand why I didn't introduce you this morning? It would not have been appropriate.

He hangs his coat on a hook next to the door.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)

Well, how is the world of art? And even more importantly: do you have my passport? I've come to collect it.

Now he turns - and sees in front of him the picture of Burghard Kroll.

FLASH: KROLL AND SEEBAND AT THE MEETING IN THE FÜHRER'S CHANCELLERY 20 YEARS EARLIER.

He sees the picture of Aunt Elisabeth.

FLASH: THE YOUNG AUNT ELISABETH DESPERATELY CLUTCHING HIS LEGS AND BEING DRAGGED AWAY BY THE ORDERLY.

He sees the picture of himself.

And then Seeband sees the picture of them altogether, bodies and faces superimposed, united.

Seeband's face twitches. But he can't look away.

Preusser enters. Seeband looks over at him briefly, confused, then at Kurt, and then back at the pictures.

For the first time Seeband is not at all an imperious figure. All his authority has vanished. He is a scared old man. Very weak. A little man who is petrified of Kurt.

SEEBAND (CONT'D)

I... have to... go I'm afraid. Thank you... excuse me.

He backs out as if unwilling to turn his back on the paintings. His posture bent. He takes his coat, drapes it over his arm and backs out of the door, closing it behind him.

Preusser looks over at Kurt.

PREUSSER

Have you ever seen anything like that?  
What did you say to him? What was wrong with him?

Kurt is also staring over at the door incredulously, still in agitation and excitement over what just happened.

KURT

(honestly)

No idea.

The spell has been broken.

MONTAGE:

**141. INT. UNIVERSITY OF DÜSSELDORF GYNECOLOGICAL HOSPITAL - STAIRS - DAY**

As Kurt is washing the stairs, this time almost with a smile on his face, the door opens once again - and

Preusser enters with Arendt Ivo and Adrian Schimmel. Each of them is carrying a bucket, and they start helping Kurt, fooling around. With a group of them doing the dirty work, it turns out to be lots of fun.

INTERCUT WITH:

**142. INT. KURT AND ELLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Naked embrace, passionate and close. They roll over the bed and fall to the floor, rolling further, still kissing, laughing.

INTERCUT WITH:

**143. INT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - KURT'S STUDIO - DAY**

Now Kurt begins a spurt of productivity, and the canvases (INTERCUT) get bigger and bigger.

- The nurses at Arnsdorf 48 cm x 60 cm
- Portrait of Johann with dog 80 cm x 60 cm
- Uncle Günther, almost brought to life again in the picture 87 cm x 50 cm
- The four-engined Lancaster bomber, complete with bombs, over Dresden; a newspaper clipping 130 cm x 180 cm
- The Seeband family at the beach 150 cm x 200 cm
- A door giving us the sense that something ominous took place behind it, five panels 205 cm x 100 cm

Kurt stands in front of his own pictures, almost surprised by them. Then he turns off the light.

**144. INT. KURT AND ELLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Kurt opens the door. Ellie walks towards him gravely, graciously, striding steadily like a queen.

KURT

If you knew how beautiful you look right now.

ELLIE

I'm pregnant.

He is staggered.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

The fourth month. I went to the doctor.  
The fourth month. We are going to be  
parents!

Kurt sinks to his knees and embraces her, pressing his  
head against her belly, kissing her belly, weeping.

Ellie herself can hardly believe it and also starts  
weeping.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

We are going to be parents. We are going  
to be parents.

**145. INT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE KURT'S  
STUDIO - DAY**

Kurt is standing in the corridor with his camera, talking  
to Ellie, who is inside his studio and peering out. Only  
her head is visible.

KURT

It's Sunday. There's nobody here. I  
promise.

Finally she steps out of the studio, looking nervous. She  
is completely naked. He leads her to the stairs, runs  
down to the floor below and stands on the landing,  
looking up at her.

KURT (CONT'D)

Please, there's nobody here. Please, like  
yesterday. Please tell me again. And then  
come down the stairs.

Ellie is hesitant at first but then resolves that if  
she's going to do this, she will either have to do it with  
absolute dignity, or not at all.

ELLIE

(quietly)

I'm pregnant.

And now she comes down the stairs, moving with gentle,  
majestic steps, her head slightly lowered. Kurt is so

impressed that he forgets for a moment to take a photograph. Then he does so.

**146. INT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - KURT'S STUDIO - DAY/NIGHT**

Kurt is painting a huge canvas, the biggest he has ever stretched. It is his monumental picture "Nude on Staircase". He has to climb a ladder to finish it.

**147. INT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - KURT'S STUDIO - DAY**

Kurt opens the shutters, and light floods into the studio. Preusser, Arendt Ivo and Adrian Schimmel are standing here, looking at the painting.

HIGH ANGLE: WE SEE THE MEN FROM BEHIND THE CANVAS, THE TOP OF THE CANVAS IN THE BOTTOM EDGE OF THE SHOT.

Kurt looks over at his friends almost shyly. They are engrossed in gazing at the picture.

PREUSSER

Now that's not potatoes, is it?

Ivo is about to respond but decides to continue looking at the picture instead.

PREUSSER (CONT'D)

Should we show it to van Verten? I think we could find a gallerist for it.

ADRIAN

Oh, what the hell! This doesn't deserve a provincial gallerist. Kurt, what do you say I become your gallerist?

PREUSSER

Adrian Schimmel, the gallerist?

ADRIAN

Adrian Finck.

Ivo rests one hand on his shoulder.

IVO

You're not as bad as you always pretend to be, you know that?

Adrian Finck stretches his hand out to Kurt Barnert.

ADRIAN

50-50?

Kurt shakes on the deal.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

But first we don't sell a thing. First we hold a big exhibition of your work, with press conference and TV. International attention.

PREUSSER

Paris?  
(reverently)  
New York?

Adrian Finck shakes his head.

ADRIAN

Documenta. Kassel.

He says this with such assurance that nobody doubts the wisdom of his choice.

#### **148. INT. DOCUMENTA KASSEL - DAY**

INSERT TITLE: Kassel 1968

A large modern exhibition hall with Kurt's paintings hanging on the walls, some framed. A group of journalists are here for the preview, strolling from one picture to the next, gazing at them with interest. They are making notes and recording their comments in Dictaphones.

So here they are, the "Nurses", the portrait of Kurt's father as "Johann with Dog", Uncle Günther as "Soldier", Aunt Elisabeth and Kurt as "Mother with Child". The Seebands are "Family at Beach", the portrait of Seeband's passport pictures simply "Portrait". The Lancaster bomber. And in the middle, towering above everything, the overwhelming "Nude on Staircase". There is only one picture missing.

INTERCUT

#### **149. INT. DÜSSELDORF ACADEMY OF ART - ANTONIUS VAN VERTEN'S OFFICE**



Van Verten enters his office. There is a painting on his desk, wrapped in paper, with the traditional red bow. He opens it. It is the overlapping portrait of Seeband, Kroll, Aunt Elisabeth and young Kurt.

Van Verten sits down and gazes at it. He smiles seriously. Then he picks up a hammer, hammers a nail into the wall and hangs the painting behind his desk.

BACK TO SCENE:

**150. INT. DOCUMENTA KASSEL - DAY**

About 80 folding chairs have been set up on one side of the exhibition hall, facing a podium with a table covered in a black cloth and two chairs.

Attendants guide the journalists over to the press conference. Kurt is sitting on the podium with the director of documenta, ARTHUR KASTNER.

Ellie is standing at the back of the room, a one-year-old child in her arms: a little girl. Kurt smiles over at her. She raises the baby's arm and waves back with it. Adrian Finck is standing next to Ellie, excited but happy.

Arthur Kastner taps the microphone.

ARTHUR KASTNER

Are there any questions for Kurt Barnert?

He looks round. The last of the journalists are taking their seats.

ARTHUR KASTNER (CONT'D)

Then perhaps I will put the first question. Herr Barnert, most of your pictures are based on amateur photographs or magazines. But the picture "Nude on Staircase" is surely a homage to Duchamp?

KURT

Yes.

Anybody who was expecting a longer explanation is disappointed. A sprinkle of laughter. Kastner takes it with good humor.

JOURNALIST #1

The magnificent painting "Mother and Child" we can see here. Who is depicted there? You and your mother?

Kurt begins to speak, but we can hardly hear him. A technician pushes the microphone closer to him.

KURT

No. It's just a snapshot. It doesn't really matter to me who I paint.

The journalists murmur together.

JOURNALIST #2

But if you paint a portrait, you must know the person...

KURT

It's actually better if I don't know them.

Sounds of astonishment.

KURT (CONT'D)

Then I see better what is really there.

JOURNALIST #2

Is that the reasoning behind the passport photographs from a machine? A photograph without an author?

KURT

Yes.

JOURNALIST #2

So by painting an army officer you are not making a statement about the German Army?

KURT

No. I don't make statements. I make pictures. Photographs. Photographs by other means.

JOURNALIST #3

If you take even the composition from a snapshot - surely that means everything is very random?

KURT

Not random. Real. Genuine. Consistent. Only reality is consistent. Every reality is consistent.

JOURNALIST #4

What do you mean by that?

KURT

If I say six numbers now it's just stupid, meaningless. But if the six numbers are the winning numbers from the lottery, then they mean something, they have coherence, value, almost beauty... and truth. That's how it is with the photographs. I want the truth.

The journalists look impressed but also confused. Kurt gazes at them calmly with his steel-gray eyes.

The baby begins to cry. Ellie tries to calm her, but she can see there's no point. She gives Kurt a surreptitious wave and walks off.

ARTHUR KASTNER

Yes, Herr Meybert, your question?

JOURNALIST #5

What will be next for you? More painted, slightly blurred copies of photographs?

KURT

No, I've had enough of them for a while. Right now I'm interested in color charts.

JOURNALIST #5

Color charts?

KURT

Yes...

**151. INT. DOKUMENTA KASSEL - SHORTLY AFTERWARDS**

Journalist #3 is standing in front of the picture of Ellie on the stairs, holding a microphone. His CAMERAMAN, a tall, thin hippie with a ponytail, doesn't look happy.

CAMERAMAN

(indicating the breasts and crotch)  
That'll get us into trouble.

The journalist moves on to the next picture, the smiling German soldier.

CAMERAMAN (CONT'D)

That'll get us into trouble as well.

The journalist looks round and comes over to stand in front of the picture "Mother and Child". The cameraman gives him the thumbs-up and starts filming.

JOURNALIST #3

Magazine images chosen at random, passport photographs from machines, snapshots from family albums - all painted in blurry style. With these pictures, which admittedly have genuine force in some mysterious way, Kurt Barnert seems on his way to becoming one of the leading artists of his generation - in painting, a supposedly long dead medium. But, like so many of his generation, he has no statement to make, no stories to tell, and nothing to say. He is rejecting artistic tradition, side-stepping the auto-biographical and is thus creating, perhaps for the first time in the history of art... a body of work in which the artist is almost irrelevant.

The camera CLOSES IN on the picture of "Mother with Child" behind him until the reporter is OUT OF SHOT.

JOURNALIST #3 (O.C., CONT'D)

Was that good?

CAMERAMAN (O.C.)

Super.

## 152. EXT. DOCUMENTA KASSEL - NIGHT

Kurt comes out of the Fridericianum at night.

ADRIAN

You sure you don't want a lift to the hotel?

KURT

I'd like to walk a bit.

ADRIAN

You were good today. It was good. It's going to be good.

Adrian drives off. Kurt turns up the collar of his coat and sets off through the cold night.

He comes past a large bus station: there must be 20 buses here. After hesitating briefly he walks towards them.

**153. EXT. KASSEL - CENTRAL BUS STATION - NIGHT**

LONG SHOT: we see Kurt walk up to the cab of one bus and speak to the driver.

Through the windshield of the bus we see the driver pick up his radio and talk to the other drivers.

Kurt takes up position in the center, the buses all around him. One of them hoots its horn, and then another. In the last 25 years the quality of bus horns has improved. A dozen buses are now hooting, creating a deep, dense, moving drone. Kurt opens his arms as if to draw in the sound and closes his eyes. He looks happier than ever before.

FAST CUTS, AT HALF-SECOND INTERVALS: THE VARIOUS SURFACES OF ABSTRACT PICTURES THAT ARE TO COME: LAYERS OF THICK PAINT MERGING INTO ONE ANOTHER, MOVED WITH A WIDE BLADE. DEEP RED GIVES WAY TO BRILLIANT YELLOW. BLUE TO GREEN, GREY TO LILAC.

When the hooting stops, CUT TO BLACK.

THE END