

RUIN

written by
Matthew K. Firpo & Ryan Firpo

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

Latest Revision: 1.6.17

Sam Warren | LBI Entertainment

STW@LBient.com | +1.310.775.8613

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EXT. LAKESHORE - DUSK

Dusk falls on a quiet lake in some far corner of Germany. The wind whips across the surface, stirring up ripples. We hear:

The sound of a baby crying, a woman pleading. A memory.

Other voices begin to call out, desperate, helpless. Louder and louder. Then--

A short burst of MACHINE GUN FIRE.

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. BARREN LANDSCAPE - RUINED HOME - AFTERNOON

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

THE CAPTAIN sits in the ashen ruins of a home, a WEATHERED RIFLE lying heavy on his broad shoulders. Dirty blond hair. Cold eyes. German. He's a solemn shell of a man - a powerful frame with nothing left inside.

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

The Captain turns the collar of his worn motorcycle jacket up against the cold. He's wearing a threadbare DISPATCH RIDER'S UNIFORM - tan trousers, high boots, all state insignia long since torn off.

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

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

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

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

SCOPE POV: A battered GERMAN JEEP WITH A CRACKED WINDSHIELD pulls up. It's driven by ECKHART (30s), an older officer-type. He signals to Konrad as he climbs out and disappears into the farmhouse.

The Captain wraps his finger around the trigger. Takes a deep breath, lets it out slowly. He squeezes. CRACK.

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

The Captain racks another bullet into the chamber.

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

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

SCOPE POV: Eckhart's groin explodes in a red cloud of blood. He goes down.

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

EXT. BARREN LANDSCAPE - FARMHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Eckhart rolls on the muddy ground, moaning in agony, blood pooling between his legs.

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

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

ECKHART

Traitor...

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

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

ECKHART

Wh-what are you doing?

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

ECKHART

Stop! Stop! Wait!

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

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

ECKHART

Coward...

WHAM! Another shot to the head.

THE CAPTAIN

Where's Richter?

ECKHART

What?

WHAM! Eckhart coughs out blood and teeth.

THE CAPTAIN

There's blood pooling behind your eyes. That's your brain swelling. I'd say you can only take two more before your skull starts to cave in.

Eckhart starts to laugh - delirious with pain.

ECKHART

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

Eckhart continues to laugh, maniacally. He's losing it.

ECKHART

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

WHAM! The Captain hits him with another head shot. He stops laughing.

THE CAPTAIN

Where is Richter?

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

ECKHART

"My honor is loyalty."

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

ECKHART

Remember, Captain?

The Captain stares down at it, grey-blue eyes hard as stone. Then, he takes hold of the door and slams it as hard as he can. Again and again. *Until there's nothing left.*

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

A heavy stillness. Only the sound of the Captain's labored breathing and the DISTANT STATIC OF A RADIO. After a moment, he follows the sound inside.

IN THE FARMHOUSE

A ragged SS BANNER hangs from the wall, twin lightning bolts on a field of black.

The Captain surveys the room.

On a desk nearby, a dented MILITARY RADIO hisses static, the MICROPHONE hanging loosely, abandoned.

Beside it, Eckhart's LEATHER-BOUND LEDGER sits open, names and dates scrawled in a careful hand. The Captain collects the ledger off the table, then--

Stares at the hissing radio for a long moment.

He gently turns it off with a CLICK.

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

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

EXT. EASTERN GERMANY, OPEN ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

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

Everything as far as we can see is ashes and ruin.

TITLE: RUIN

EXT. EASTERN GERMANY, ON THE ROAD - CREDITS

The Captain and his Zundapp speed through a wasteland of burnt fields and demolished buildings - *the aftermath of the worst war in human history.*

OPENING CREDITS.

The sound of AUTHENTIC NEWS BROADCASTS from the period play over everything we see:

BRITISH NEWS ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 Hitler is dead. War is over. And
 Germany lies divided--

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

SOVIET NEWS ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
*--the Allies occupy its lands, we
 Soviets in the East, the French in
 the West, the Americans in the
 South, and the British in the
 North--*

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

He passes an ornate six-hundred year old CATHEDRAL, reduced to a single wall in the center of an abandoned village.

GERMAN NEWS ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
*--curfews are now in effect in all
 occupied zones. Remember your
 papers, remember your nearest aid
 centers. Refugees must remain in
 districts--*

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

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

AMERICAN NEWS ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
*--six months ago, German High
 Command surrendered unconditionally.
 We're working now to rebuild Europe,
 to help its people, but please don't
 fraternize--*

The landscape starts to fill out - people and buildings, some still intact. He's approaching a town.

On the roadside ahead, A SOVIET MILITARY CONVOY has stopped, two MILITARY TRUCKS and a handful of RED ARMY SOLDIERS. They harass a caravan of REFUGEES, shoving them down onto their knees. *It's just thinly veiled looting.*

A few of the Soldiers work on changing a busted tire. They stare at the Captain as he rumbles past, suspicious, but too weary to do anything about it.

The Captain studies one of the Soldiers carefully. The bloodstains on his uniform. The machine gun in his hands.

EXT. CAMPSITE - DUSK

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

With incredible care, The Captain tunes the well-worn bike, practiced hands oiling the chain, gauging tire pressure. For him, it's more than a motorcycle. *It's a companion.*

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

The Captain lays out Eckhart's Leather-bound Ledger, carefully reading and re-reading its orderly pages.

CAMPFIRE - LATER

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

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

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

His breathing is heavy, but his face is impossible to read.

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

The wood in the fire pops and hisses.

He takes the gun out of his mouth.

EXT. VILLAGE OUTSKIRTS - SOVIET ZONE - MORNING

CLOSE ON, CONCENTRATION CAMP PHOTOGRAPHS. Black and White. Piles of emaciated corpses lie in shallow graves. Horrific images of absolute brutality.

GERMAN WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Lies. All lies.

The photographs are posted on an OFFICIAL PLACARD by the side of the road. The words "REMEMBER THIS!" are written in English, German, and Russian along the top.

A small CROWD, mostly German, has gathered around it to look.

An older GERMAN WOMAN, upper-class before the war, is completely outraged:

GERMAN WOMAN

It's Soviet propaganda. Absolutely disgraceful.

The Captain sits on his motorcycle, just up the road. Eckhart's Ledger held open in his hands. He stares at the photographs, listening to the conversation.

GERMAN WOMAN

Now they're only letting Jews across the borders. Can you believe that? In our own country.

GERMAN MAN

The Jews have always wanted special treatment. Now look where we are.

The German Woman looks at the placard one last time, shakes her head. She wanders off muttering to herself.

GERMAN WOMAN

Impossible. Just absolute lies.

A quiet fury burns in the Captain's eyes.

Finally, he pulls his attention from the woman. He looks down at the open ledger, then up at a well-hidden COIL OF WIRES that run out from the basement window of a nearby house.

The wires run up to a carefully camouflaged RADIO ANTENNA near the roof. If you weren't looking, you'd never notice it.

GERMAN RADIO VOICE (PRE-LAP)

Zagan received the paperwork this afternoon.

INT. RADIO RATLINE, BROADCAST STATION - MOMENTS LATER

A shabby basement, paper missives line the walls, BROADCASTING EQUIPMENT crowds the wooden desk in the middle of the room.

Hunched over a heavy, oversized MICROPHONE, PETR MÜELLER (30s) sits murmuring in the dim light of a bare bulb. Beside him, KLAUS PLISKA (30s), reads off a list through a pair of filthy EYEGLASSES.

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

PETR

*They need two days for processing.
All departure information will be in
the drop. A cargo ship leaves
Barcelona--*

Suddenly, the cellar door opens with a CLICK. It swings slowly inwards on rusty hinges.

Everyone looks up at the open doorway and sees--

The Captain standing at the top of the SMALL STAIRCASE, Luger leveled carefully ahead of him.

The Captain and the two men share a brief, half-second of recognition. Then--

He storms into the room and SMASHES his boot into Klaus' face, shattering his glasses into his eyes. Klaus screams, blinded.

Petr tries to stand, but the Captain pistol-whips him to the floor. *It's all over in seconds.*

The skinny blonde kid stands, paralyzed. His dagger abandoned on the floor.

The Captain rounds on him--

THE CAPTAIN

Go home.

He stumbles to the door, fleeing without another look back.

Nearby, Klaus writhes on the floor, trying to claw shards of glass from his eyes.

The Captain unsheathes a BLADE and grabs Petr by the back of his head - he slams him onto the table, and hacks off Petr's index finger at the knuckle.

THE CAPTAIN

Tell me how to find Richter.

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

PETR

I-I don't know, I--

The Captain slams his blade into the desk, inches from Petr's face.

THE CAPTAIN

There are more important pieces a man can lose.

PETR

I-I haven't seen him since the war. Not since Einehof - he doesn't tell us anything!

Just then, Klaus staggers to his feet:

KLAUS

Tell him nothing!

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

Petr finds his voice:

PETR

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

THE CAPTAIN

Which camp?

PETR

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

THE CAPTAIN

What's her name?

PETR

I don't rememb--

The Captain jams his knifepoint into Petr's bloody stump. Petr screams out in agony--

PETR

Elsa, it was Elsa! His whore. Richter's whore back at the camps! She said she knew where he was!

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

THE CAPTAIN

...Elsa's dead.

Petr shakily points to a DOSSIER half-buried on the messy desk nearby--

PETR

*She's not, four months ago she
registered at Liegnitz - it's all
in there.*

The Captain collects the file, then turns back to Petr. He rips off Petr's DOG TAGS from beneath his shirt--

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

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

As both men realize this, Petr screams out:

PETR

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

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

INT. RICHTER'S LAKE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

ANTON RICHTER (40s), dark black hair, a small, cruel mouth, sits in the warm glow of a dying lantern. A PORTABLE MILITARY-GRADE RADIO on the table in front of him. He's listening to--

The steady THUMP of the Captain's violence.

Richter flinches, almost invisibly, with each blow.

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

LENI, an adorable blonde-haired, blue-eyed little girl. She's wearing pajamas and sleepily rubbing her eyes. In German:

LENI

Vatti?

RICHTER

Yes, my darling?

LENI

I had a bad dream.

RICHTER
*Oh no! Come over here and tell me
 about it.*

Leni shuffles over and climbs into her father's lap. He wraps his arms around her gently.

RICHTER
What happened in your dream?

LENI
Mutti came home.

RICHTER
You saw mutti?

LENI
*She had flowers and she was
 carrying me with the flowers.*

RICHTER
That sounds like a nice dream.

LENI
*But you were gone and I was looking
 for you. And there was an army man
 and he was all red. And mutti
 didn't care that you were gone.*

Richter considers this. He cradles her softly.

RICHTER
*I'm sorry you had a bad dream, mein
 schatz. Very soon, we're going to
 travel far away from here. Away
 from all the army men and all the
 bad dreams.*

Leni snuggles her face into Richter's shoulder as he rocks her to sleep.

Richter stares at the radio, his face suddenly cold and dangerous in the darkening room.

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

EXT. LIEGNITZ REFUGEE CAMP - COURTYARD - SAME

CLOSE ON, A PRETTY WOMAN'S face sobbing uncontrollably.

A stern-looking BARBER shaves her head with a set of RUSTY HAIR CLIPPERS. He expresses neither joy nor pity.

The pair is one of many. Around them, more hysterical WOMEN are having their heads shaved by more stern-looking MEN.

In the middle of them all, a YOUNG WOMAN sits, stoic and silent as her head is roughly shaven. Her face is pale and drawn, her eyes are sharp blue points.

On her COAT, broken threads form the outline of a JEWISH STAR, long since removed.

This is ELSA.

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

CROWD
WHORE! TRAITOR!

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

The other women sob, broken and humiliated as--

A STOUT POLISH MATRON moves through their ranks, using a TUBE OF RED LIPSTICK to scrawl a greasy RED SWASTIKA on their foreheads. Finally, she reaches--

Elsa - who stares up at her coldly.

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

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

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

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

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

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

EXT. LIEGNITZ REFUGEE CAMP - ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

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

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

Elsa ties it tight. Wipes away the tears. Pulls herself together. One more deep breath, then she stands up and heads back out into--

EXT. LIEGNITZ REFUGEE CAMP - COURTYARD - THAT MOMENT

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

Meanwhile--

AT THE OPPOSITE END OF THE COURTYARD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Elsa. Walking past the chanting onlookers.

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

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

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

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

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

THE TWO MEN BARRELING TOWARDS HER THROUGH THE CROWD.

She stands, frozen in place for a moment. Taking in this strange scene. Then, she takes off running.

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

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

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

PLUNGES IT STRAIGHT INTO HER BELLY.

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

As Erich rips the dagger free--

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

And like that, the spell is broken - women scream and the crowd scatters, it's chaos.

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

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

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

His eyes start to glass over. His hand reaches out for something--

Then, all at once - the Captain seizes a pair of RUSTY HAIR CLIPPERS from the cobblestones, and jams them, blade-first into Erich's face. Right through the bottom of his jaw into his brain. *He dies instantly.*

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

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

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

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

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

THE CAPTAIN

Tell me where to find a doctor.

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

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

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

THE CAPTAIN

I need a doctor. NOW.

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

I/E. NURSE'S OFFICE - DUSK

A heavy wooden door is thrown open to reveal--

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

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

THE CAPTAIN

She needs help.

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

MARTA

You're German.

THE CAPTAIN

Yes.

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

MARTA

Is she German?

THE CAPTAIN
She's a Jew.

Marta studies his face. Skeptical.

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

Marta glances at it.

MARTA
Bring her inside.

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

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

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

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

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

MARTA
She was lucky.

The Captain stands.

THE CAPTAIN
Is she alive?

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

THE CAPTAIN
I need to speak to her.

Marta searches the Captain's face.

MARTA
She's sleeping.

THE CAPTAIN
I'll wake her up.

MARTA
She needs to rest.

THE CAPTAIN
How long?

MARTA
Until she wakes up.

His intensity is making her uncomfortable.

MARTA
How do you know this girl?

The Captain stares at her coldly.

MARTA
Are you the reason they shaved her
head?

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

THE KNIFE-WOUND ON HIS FOREARM.

It looks bad. Nearly down to the muscle.

MARTA
If you sit at the table, in the
light, I can take a look at that
wound.

THE CAPTAIN
How long will she sleep?

MARTA
Sit down at the table.

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

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

MARTA
Let me see.

The Captain lays his arm across the table.

MARTA
It's deep. You'll need stitches.

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

THE CAPTAIN
What do you want for this?

She wipes the dried blood away.

MARTA
You're asking what I want?

THE CAPTAIN
I have cigarettes.

She looks him in the eye.

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

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

MARTA
Most soldiers prefer guns. Not
blades.

The Captain looks at her carefully.

THE CAPTAIN
Why are you helping me?

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

She looks at him.

MARTA
Why are you helping *her*?

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

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

She cleans the wound softly with the gauze.

MARTA
But there's no training for that.

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

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

THE CAPTAIN

Wake her up.

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

MARTA

Put your gun away. The war is over.

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

EXT. NURSE'S OFFICE - BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

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

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

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

INT. BERLIN BAR, 1941 - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

TEXT: *Berlin, 1941*

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

SOLDIERS

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

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

Richter, same cruel mouth, SS Death's Head cap polished to a shine. They're surrounded closely by the TWELVE MEN who make up the core of their unit (*some of whom we recognize, others we'll meet later*):

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

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

THE CAPTAIN/RICHTER
*The flag on high! The ranks tightly
closed!*

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

LATER, AT THE BAR.

CLOSE ON, a PHOTOGRAPH of a pretty, young GERMAN WOMAN.

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

Richter holds the photograph, a little drunk.

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

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

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

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

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

Richter's eye shine with passion.

RICHTER
*We need men like you to help build
the world of tomorrow.*

The Captain is genuinely moved by this.

THE CAPTAIN

Thank you, Commandant.

Richter glances around the bar, leans close.

RICHTER

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

THE CAPTAIN

Yes, Commandant.

Richter smiles, pours the Captain another drink.

RICHTER

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

He scoffs.

RICHTER

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

The Captain hangs on his every word.

RICHTER

I'm looking for men like you - men of principle - to join me in this mission.

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

THE CAPTAIN

"My honor is loyalty".

Richter smiles.

RICHTER
Heil, Hitler.

THE CAPTAIN
Heil, Hitler.

They clink glasses and toss back their shots.

EXT. NURSE'S OFFICE - BACKYARD - EARLY MORNING

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

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

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

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

ELSA
(in Polish)
Who are you?

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

ELSA
Who are you?

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

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

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

ELSA
You didn't answer my question.

THE CAPTAIN
I don't want to hurt you.

Elsa cocks the hammer, unnerved.

ELSA
What's your name?

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

THE CAPTAIN

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

She flinches at the sound of that name.

ELSA

Who told you that?

Instead of answering, the Captain lunges.

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

THE CAPTAIN

Tell me where to find him.

Elsa clutches her bandaged side, breathing heavily.

ELSA

I don't know.

THE CAPTAIN

You're lying.

ELSA

Why do you want to find Richter?

THE CAPTAIN

Because I'm going to kill him.

This surprises Elsa.

ELSA

Who are you?

THE CAPTAIN

Tell me where to find him.

She considers.

ELSA

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

THE CAPTAIN

I'm not negotiating.

ELSA

Neither am I.

She sits up, wipes the mud off her hands.

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

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

We hear the RUMBLE of approaching MILITARY TRUCKS in the distance. Moments later, Marta bursts out of the back door--

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

The Captain looks down at Elsa who stares up at him defiantly. The rumble of the trucks grows louder. *He has no other option and she knows it.*

EXT. EASTERN GERMANY, OPEN ROAD - LATER

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

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

EXT. MEADOWLANDS - SUNSET

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

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

Elsa breaks the heavy silence--

ELSA
(re: dog tags)
Did you kill all those men?

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

ELSA
The doctor said you saved my life.

The Captain's eyes meet hers, then drift back to the needle.

ELSA

I remember that man. From Einehof.

The Captain bends the needle, threads it carefully. He rolls up his shirtsleeves, exposing the brutal knife-wound on his forearm. Elsa winces at the sight of it.

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

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

ELSA

Why was he after me?

THE CAPTAIN

Because of what you know.

Elsa puts the pieces together in her head. After a moment--

ELSA

You never told me your name.

THE CAPTAIN

Where are we going?

ELSA

To find Richter.

THE CAPTAIN

Which direction?

ELSA

West.

THE CAPTAIN

How far?

ELSA

Who are you?

The Captain continues his surgery, grunting as he pushes the needle through the last bit of flesh, finished.

There's an oppressive, foreboding silence.

Elsa shrinks into herself, unsettled. Tears pool in her eyes but she won't let them fall. Finally:

ELSA

I'm not afraid of you.

They lock eyes for a long, intense moment. Finally, the Captain picks up his Luger, stands, cocks the gun and...

Places it in his holster. He gives her one more look and walks off into the woods. As soon as he's gone--

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

EXT. MEADOWLANDS - THE NEXT MORNING

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

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

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

THE CAPTAIN (O.S.)

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

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

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

THE CAPTAIN

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

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

THE CAPTAIN

You'll be safe there.

ELSA

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

THE CAPTAIN

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

Elsa notices the CLOTH MAP beside her.

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

THE CAPTAIN

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

ELSA

Did you hear what I said?

He ignores her. Continues cleaning his rifle.

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

ELSA

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

THE CAPTAIN

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

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

ELSA LUNGES FOR THE PISTOL.

The Captain isn't fast enough. Elsa gets to the gun first. She springs to her feet, stumbling back, gun fixed on the Captain's forehead.

ELSA

Stop. Put the rifle down. Slowly.

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

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

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

ELSA

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

(gestures west)

And you're going to head in that direction.

(gestures east)

(MORE)

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

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

ELSA
Thank you for saving my life.

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

The Captain stands up. Begins striding towards her.

ELSA
STOP. Don't come any closer.

He keeps moving.

She starts to panic.

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

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

ELSA
STOP. RIGHT NOW.

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

ELSA
DON'T--

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

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

CLICK.

She pulls the trigger again. CLICK, CLICK.

The gun is empty.

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

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

The Captain picks it up. Looms over her, a gun in each hand.
Matter-of-factly:

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

Elsa nods, defeated.

The Captain looks down at her. Finally--

THE CAPTAIN
We need gas.

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

EXT. EASTERN GERMANY, OPEN ROAD - LATER

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

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

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

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

A gnarled, 200-year-old oak tree where the CORPSES of three
German Soldiers hang by their necks, swaying with the breeze.
CRUDELY-PAINTED SWASTIKAS cover their dirty uniforms.

Elsa studies the bodies carefully as they pass.

EXT. LUBIN, THE BLACK MARKET BAZAAR - LATER

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

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

As the Captain and Elsa dismount the bike:

ELSA
...What is this place?

THE CAPTAIN
A brothel.

She stops.

ELSA
I'm not going in there.

THE CAPTAIN
You think you're better off out
here?

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

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

INT. THE BLACK MARKET BROTHEL - MOMENTS LATER

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

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

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

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

THE DUSTY BAR

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

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

THE CAPTAIN
Go away.

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

The Captain waves over the craggy, old Polish BARTENDER.

BARTENDER
What'd you like?

THE CAPTAIN
Petrol.

BARTENDER
How much?

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

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

BARTENDER
You German?

THE CAPTAIN
Just the petrol.

The Bartender studies him, then Elsa. Finally:

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

ELSA
Where is he going?

THE CAPTAIN
Stop talking.

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

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

Elsa watches, heartbroken, lost in some dark memory.

The Captain turns away, trying to disappear. The Soldiers eye
him for a moment, wary.

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

THE CAPTAIN
Let's go.

Elsa nods slowly. The Bartender impatiently gestures--

BARTENDER
Down the hall. Last door on left.

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

INT. HALLWAY - THE BLACK MARKET BROTHEL - MOMENTS LATER

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

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

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

Four black columns - THICK SHADOWS, waiting.

The Captain slowly lowers his hand, sensing something.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR - STORAGE ROOM

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

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

This is an ambush.

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

Werner motions to the Bartender.

BARTENDER
(calls out)
You still want petrol?

They all wait, listening for the slightest movement.

HALLWAY

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

Elsa stumbles back, holding her breath.

The tension builds and builds...

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

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

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

All hell breaks loose.

The hallway is flooded by a sea of half-dressed, terrified 14-year-old PROSTITUTES and sweaty, pantsless MEN running for their lives.

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

THE ROOM NEXT DOOR

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

The Polish Bartender cowering in the corner.

They lock eyes.

BACK IN THE HALLWAY

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

The door opens.

The Captain unsheathes a six-inch DAGGER.

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

The Captain's blade FLASHES forward--

Instinctively, Oskar raises a hand for protection. The blade PUNCHES right through his palm and buries itself in his left eye. He dies screaming.

STORAGE ROOM

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

THE HALLWAY

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

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

THE ROOM NEXT DOOR - THAT MOMENT

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

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

THE HALLWAY

On the CLICK of Leo's empty clip--

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

Leo screams as the barrel is forced into his mouth, knocking out his front teeth. The Captain pulls the trigger--

STORAGE ROOM

BANG! Werner watches in horror as Leo is sprayed across the walls. After the shock wears off--

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

THE HALLWAY

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

STORAGE ROOM

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

WERNER

*Richter was wrong about you. You
never really believed. Not like the
rest of us.*

THE HALLWAY

The Captain continues to wait, patiently. Ice cold.

WERNER (O.S.)

*Did you really think we would let
you kill him? You and some Jewish
whore?*

THE ROOM NEXT DOOR

Elsa listens.

WERNER (O.S.)
I KNOW YOU'RE HERE. ELSA. I KNOW
YOU'RE LISTENING.

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

STORAGE ROOM

Werner looks to his right and sees--

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

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

WERNER
WHEN I FIND YOU, I'M GOING TO SPLIT
YOU OPEN FROM THE INSIDE. RICHTER'S
NOT HERE TO PROTECT YOU NOW!

THE HALLWAY

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

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

STORAGE ROOM

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

Elsa blocking the entrance. Blood runs down her face and hands from the broken glass. She looks like something out of a nightmare.

Werner freezes. Elsa reacts first--

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

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

Elsa stands, trembling, almost catatonic. She stares down at him, hands bleeding freely - her blood mixing with his.

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

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

THE CAPTAIN

We need to move.

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

She kneels down, pulls the BLOODY DOG TAGS from the mess that was his throat. And then she's gone.

EXT. ROADSIDE SERVICE STATION - AFTERNOON

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

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

The Captain watches from the motorcycle.

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

ELSA

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

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

The Captain watches, betraying nothing.

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

ELSA

Tell me what's going on.

The Captain doesn't react.

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

ELSA
WHO ARE YOU?

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

ELSA
TELL ME.

The Captain struggles to control the violence inside himself.

ELSA
GODDAMN YOU!

He steps forward, pushing her back with his body.

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

He stares her down--

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

Elsa's face goes dark, furious. With a short, shuddering breath, she turns her back on the Captain, trying to calm herself. Then--

She digs a FOLDED SCRAP OF PAPER from the hem of her panties. As she unfolds it, she begins reciting from memory:

ELSA
Anton Rudolf Richter. Born April
20th, 1904 in Hannover. Married
Nina Keppler, August 12th, 1940.

She's got his attention.

ELSA
Promoted to *Sturmbannfuhrer* in the
Waffen-SS on March 18th, 1939.
Commandant of Einehof, Camp II,
July 23rd, 1941.

She finally turns to face him. Presents the paper: RICHTER'S PERSONNEL FILE.

ELSA

When the guards abandoned the camps, I found his file. When I showed it to the Soviets they laughed at me - then beat me until I couldn't walk. When I showed it to the Polish Police Force, they shaved my head and called me a whore.

The Captain glances at the file, then back at Elsa.

ELSA

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

Elsa takes a breath, considering something. *How much does she want to tell him?* Finally--

ELSA

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

She gives him a long hard look. Then--

Turns and storms off into a nearby field, wind whipping through the grass around her.

As the Captain watches her walk away, there's a flicker of something like shame in his eyes.

EXT. EASTERN GERMANY - NATURE - SUNSET

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

EXT. EASTERN GERMANY - SMALL STREAM - CONTINUOUS

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

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

THE CAPTAIN
Give me your hand.

Elsa offers him her wounded hand. The Captain cleans the cuts, methodically, without speaking. They don't look at each other. Finally--

THE CAPTAIN
What makes you think Richter has
your child?

ELSA
Because he took her from me. At
Einehof.

THE CAPTAIN
Many babies were taken at Einehof.

ELSA
She's his daughter.

The Captain goes still. *He knows something about this story.* After a long moment, he continues wrapping Elsa's bandages.

THE CAPTAIN
They're fleeing Europe.

She looks at him now.

THE CAPTAIN
Richter and the rest of the men
from Einehof. Forged documents get
them to Spain. From there, they
travel to South America. Acquiring
a passport for a child will be more
difficult, but Richter has men who
will help him.

The Captain finishes her bandages, tying them off carefully. Elsa pulls her hand close to her chest.

ELSA
So you're going to kill them all?
By yourself?

THE CAPTAIN
Not all. Just my unit.

The Captain looks up at her. She wants more.

THE CAPTAIN

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

Elsa stares at him, but he won't meet her eyes. She looks off
into the woods, considering something. Finally:

ELSA

That man in the brothel, he brought
me food sometimes. Richter used to
let him watch.

Elsa goes cold.

ELSA

The moment I heard his voice... I
decided I would kill him.

The Captain looks at her. She's deadly serious.

ELSA

And that felt good. To be the one
in control. I'd forgotten about
that feeling.

Elsa studies her bandaged hands, then turns to the Captain.

ELSA

I want to help you. Let me help you
kill them.

The Captain thinks long and hard about this.

THE CAPTAIN

I've killed hundreds of people.
Very few of them deserved it.

She's unsettled by his confession.

THE CAPTAIN

I'm not doing this because it feels
good. I'm doing this because it
needs to be done.

A long quiet moment. Elsa stares into the woods beyond.

ELSA

Outside Elbe. Across the border. In
the British Zone.
(looks at him)
That's where Richter is.

The Captain nods slowly. A new arrangement has been reached.

EXT. EASTERN GERMANY, OPEN ROAD - MORNING (MONTAGE)

The Captain and Elsa race down the open road on the Zundapp.
On a mission.

THE CAPTAIN (O.S.)
They're stopping any Germans who
try to cross the border. Without a
clean passport Richter can't go
anywhere.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT (MONTAGE)

Elsa and the Captain sit next to the fire, the open ledger on
a log between them.

THE CAPTAIN (O.S.)
There's a man. Alfons Niemann.

Elsa studies a PHOTO of a cold-looking man, clean-cut and
blonde. This is ALFONS (30s).

THE CAPTAIN (O.S.)
He was Richter's driver.

EXT. ZAGAN, CENTRAL TRACKING BUREAU - MORNING (MONTAGE)

A tall, beige government building, untouched by the war,
patrolled by SOVIET SOLDIERS.

THE CAPTAIN (O.S.)
Now he works in the Central
Tracking Bureau for the Soviets.

INT. ZAGAN, CENTRAL TRACKING BUREAU - MORNING (MONTAGE)

In a shabby office, ALFONS NIEMANN, sits behind a desk,
sorting through a neat stack of documents.

THE CAPTAIN (O.S.)
They've paid off the right people,
so he can supply German officers
with forged passports. He helps
them disappear.

The documents are various PASSPORTS and VISAS of all types.
Most of the PHOTOS are stone-faced, German men. He STAMPS
each one with an OFFICIAL SOVIET SEAL.

THE CAPTAIN (O.S.)
Richter is scheduled to receive his
passport next week.

CLOSE ON, a 10.100s RED CROSS PASSPORT with a PHOTOGRAPH of
Anton Richter as it's stamped by the official seal.

INT. ZAGAN TENEMENT BUILDING - 4TH FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The glint of sun off a RIFLE SCOPE. Elsa and the Captain look
out from the busted shutters of a fourth floor tenement
apartment, gutted long ago.

Elsa holds the scope to her eye, looking into the Central
Tracking Bureau across the way. She watches--

Alfons working at his desk, focused on his papers.

THE CAPTAIN (O.S.)
When he leaves work, we can take
him on the streets.

Elsa lowers the scope. Looks at the Captain. He's busy
scanning the dirty boulevard below. He registers the
PEDESTRIANS, THE SOVIET SOLDIERS and OFFICERS...

THE CAPTAIN
Too crowded here. No guns.

He continues looking, then points to a NEIGHBORING ALLEY,
across from a TRIO OF STREET MUSICIANS playing a Strauss waltz.

THE CAPTAIN
We'll do it there.

Elsa follows his gaze. Sees the alley.

THE CAPTAIN
Can you get him into that alley
alone?

They lock eyes.

ELSA
I can do that.

She holds his gaze another moment, then--

The Captain turns, grabs his rucksack, and heads for the
DOOR. Elsa raises the scope. Takes one last look at Alfons.

EXT. ZAGAN CITY STREETS - DAY

Alfons slips out of the rundown government building, LEATHER BRIEFCASE tucked under his arm, coat pulled high against the cold, and begins his long walk home.

The streets are crowded with BUREAUCRATS and CIVILIANS making their own commutes. Alfons cuts through them with practiced efficiency, stepping over piles of rubble in the road.

We can hear the STREET MUSICIANS playing their waltz in the distance as Alfons walks. He's about to pass right by the alley, when suddenly--

Elsa, an OLD SHAWL draped over her head, steps out in a hurry and crashes straight into him--

ELSA

*Oh! Please, sir! You must help me.
There's a man in the alley. He's
been stabbed. I think he's dying!*

Elsa gasps, catching her breath, pure panic.

ALFONS

*(head down)
Sorry. I can't help you--*

He goes to step around her, but Elsa stops him--

ELSA

Wait!

She looks him right in the eyes:

ELSA

He's German.

This gets his attention. Alfons takes a moment to study her. *Do I know this woman from somewhere? Finally--*

He nods. Scanning the street cautiously, Alfons follows Elsa as she leads him towards the alley - the MUSICIANS' waltz approaching its crescendo.

They're just steps away now... Then--

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Comrade Niemann!

Alfons stops right at the mouth of alley, and turns to see--

A SOVIET MILITARY JEEP, with two OFFICERS, idling in the middle of the road. A SOVIET CAPTAIN waves him over.

Alfons takes one more look at Elsa, hesitates, then turns and hurries over to the idling jeep. Elsa slips off into the alley, finds the Captain--

THE CAPTAIN

What happened?

The Captain keeps his back to the wall. He speaks quietly as Elsa watches Alfons and the car.

ELSA

Two Soviet officers. In a jeep.
He's talking to them.

THE CAPTAIN

Guns?

ELSA

I can't see.

The Captain takes a quick glance around the corner. Turns back to Elsa.

THE CAPTAIN

Keep watching.

The conversation between Alfons and the Soviet Officer escalates, some kind of disagreement. Finally:

The Soviet Officer steps out and opens the back door. He gestures for Alfons to get inside. Alfons bows his head, reluctantly starts to climb in--

Elsa's eyes go wide:

ELSA

He's getting in the jeep.

The Captain risks another look. Frowns. Then he's back against the wall.

ELSA

He's inside. They're going to leave.

Elsa is panicking.

ELSA

What do we do? What do we do?

She looks at the Captain. He's gone quiet, thinking fast, but there's no more time.

The jeep shifts into gear, Alfons securely in the back seat, BRIEFCASE in hand.

Without another word, Elsa's gone. The Captain puts an arm out to stop her but it's too late.

As the Soviet Jeep pulls away, Elsa suddenly throws herself hard against the side of the moving car. *A perfect stage fall.*

She goes down hard on the cobblestones. Moaning, she clutches her chest, making a scene.

The Soviet Officers scramble out of the jeep, as the Musicians cut their waltz short, running to Elsa's side.

Alfons watches from the back of the car, curious, concerned.

PASSERSBY begin gathering as the Soviets argue with one another in Russian:

SOVIET DRIVER

She just threw herself right at us!

SOVIET CAPTAIN

*You idiot, were you even looking
where you were going?*

Alfons looks at Elsa, realizes it's the same girl who asked him for help. *Strange.*

He climbs out of the back seat. Steps closer. She looks vaguely familiar - *how does he know this woman?*

It's chaos as the LOCALS argue about what should be done, and the Soviets try to calm the crowd.

Alfons stands at the back. Yes, he knows that face. He moves to get a better look, then locks eyes with Elsa.

She gives him the smallest nod. And Alfons remembers exactly who she is.

As he opens his mouth to shout--

There's the Captain, standing behind him like a ghost. His DAGGER flashes silently, opening Alfons' throat before he can say a word. No one notices a thing.

Alfons turns, clawing at his throat. He sees the Captain. He understands.

The Captain carefully lays Alfons beneath the jeep. Removes his DOG TAGS. Takes his BRIEFCASE. Disappears.

On the street, Elsa is being helped to her feet, brushing herself off. *She saw everything.*

ELSA
 (insistent, to crowd)
 I'm okay, I'm alright, thank you.

The Musicians resume their waltz.

The Soviets return to their jeep, confused - searching for Alfons. They look up and down the street as--

Elsa vanishes into the crowd.

EXT. UPSTREAM, THE BOBER RIVER - LATE AFTERNOON

The Captain washes the blood and gristle from his hands in the flowing RIVER.

Elsa sits on the riverbank, struggling with the clasps on ALFONS' BRIEFCASE. She finally gets them open--

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

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

His back is turned, his attention on the running water.

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

He didn't notice.

Taking a short, halting breath, she continues to rifle through the briefcase. Then, in a small pocket of the case, she discovers--

FOUR UNWRAPPED BARS OF CHOCOLATE!

Elsa gasps. She can hardly contain her excitement.

ELSA
 (calling out)
 I found chocolate!

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

Elsa tears open one of the bars and almost bites her finger off as she chomps into it. Her eyelids flutter, her head falls back - pure ecstasy. She calls out:

ELSA
 It's fresh!

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

Elsa digs deeper into the briefcase. She finds--

A small STACK OF FORGED RED CROSS PASSPORTS. They're stamped with a LARGE RED "J" (Jewish).

She opens one up and goes rigid when she sees--

Anton Richter's photograph staring back at her. Shakily, she turns to the Captain.

ELSA
...Look at this.

The Captain puts his laundry on hold and approaches. She hands him the passport. He examines it.

ELSA
This was for him.

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

ELSA
What does that mean?

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

THE CAPTAIN
It means he's not going anywhere.

The Captain kneels down and digs around in his bag.

Elsa continues to rifle through the briefcase and finds another PASSPORT. When she opens it, her mouth falls open, all the breath leaves her body.

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

ELSA
Oh my God...

Elsa places her hand over her mouth, starts to tremble.

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

The Captain accepts the passport, examines it, and immediately understands.

Tears of joy stream down Elsa's face.

ELSA

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

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

The Captain watches her, unsure how to react.

ELSA

I can't believe it...

Elsa smiles, wipes away her tears. Takes a deep breath. It's like a great weight has been lifted from her. She laughs softly to herself.

ELSA

She's alive!

The Captain offers her back the passport--

THE CAPTAIN

You should keep that safe.

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

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

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

ELSA

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

The Captain hears her, but doesn't respond.

ELSA

I thought it meant I was going to be okay.

He keeps washing until finally--

THE CAPTAIN

You survived.

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

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

ELSA
Did it hurt?

The Captain looks down at his chest. At Elsa.

THE CAPTAIN
It hurt.

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

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

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

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

She looks at the Captain.

THE CAPTAIN
You have to hold it flat.

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

143894. Her camp serial number.

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

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

The Captain watches.

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

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

EXT. THE GHOST TOWN - AFTERNOON

The Zundapp rolls into--

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

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

DOORS to small COTTAGES sway in the breeze, offering interior glimpses: A dining table is set for Sunday dinner. A pair of dress shoes sit on the floor by a chair. Fresh laundry hangs in a yard.

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

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

EXT. THE ABANDONED HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

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

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

THE CAPTAIN

We'll spend the night here.
Tomorrow we leave at dawn.

Elsa smiles bitterly to herself.

ELSA

Home.

INT. THE ABANDONED HOUSE - DUSK

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

The wind whistles through an open window.

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

ELSA

Smell that...?

The Captain nods. He knows that smell. Death.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

VERONIKA

(with a gentle accent)

We have nothing left for you to steal.

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

VERONIKA

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

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

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

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

ELSA

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

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

ELSA
Wait. It's alright--

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

The Captain studies the bizarre scene, his gun half-raised.

JOSEF
Vero! Vero, help please--

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

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

VERONIKA
Please. Let us go.

Veronika's eyes are pleading.

ELSA
There are so many of you.

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

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

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

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

EXT. THE ABANDONED HOUSE - BACKYARD - DUSK

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

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

INT. THE ABANDONED HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

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

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

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

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

ELSA

You can help me... if you like.

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

ELSA

You are Romani?

VERONIKA

Yes.

ELSA

All of you?

VERONIKA

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

They work silently for a moment.

ELSA

How do you say "potato" in your language?

VERONIKA

...Poovéngro.

Elsa smiles.

ELSA

In Polish, it is ziemniak.

Veronika nods, not giving her much.

ELSA

How did you find this place?

VERONIKA

I prayed for it.

This unsettles Elsa.

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

Elsa considers this, but doesn't respond.

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

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

ELSA
Which one is he?

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

Veronika gestures to the BABY CARRIAGE in the far corner.

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

VERONIKA
He was too hungry.

Veronika finds a rotten potato, sets it aside.

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

ELSA
Kolyska. In Polish we call it a
kolyska.

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

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

INT. THE ABANDONED HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

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

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

The atmosphere is relaxed - jovial even.

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

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

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

After another unsuccessful toss by Josef--

The Captain picks the potato off the table.

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

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

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

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

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

INT. THE ABANDONED HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

The house is dark.

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

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

THE KITCHEN

The Captain sits, wide awake, eyes far away. Elsa stands in the doorway, watching him.

She takes a step into the kitchen. He finally turns to look at her. The room is charged with tension.

She takes another step towards him. She's trembling, even in the dark we can see that.

The Captain hasn't moved, not even an inch. His eyes follow her as she steps closer, only a foot away now.

She stands over him, starts to cry, perfectly silent.

Elsa grabs his hair, grips it tightly, violently. She wants it to hurt.

The Captain does nothing.

She straddles him, pinning him to the seat. She's still holding his hair, looking him right in the eyes. A tear rolls down her cheek.

The Captain closes his eyes, hands at his sides. He's shaking, softly.

Elsa reaches down between her legs and unbuckles his pants. She pulls her panties aside, and with a sharp moan, lowers herself on top of him.

She pulls his head towards her chest, holding his collar in the other hand, gripping it as hard as she can, her knuckles going white. She moves on top of him, writhing.

Elsa moans, softly, more pain than pleasure. This is not an act of lust. It's an act of violence. We see desperation in her face. Desperation and shame.

She hates him and she needs him. She hates that she needs him.

The house is quiet. Only the sounds of shallow gasping breaths in the kitchen.

The Captain buries his face in her chest - grunts.

Elsa doesn't stop. She's pulling his hair again - hard. More tears. More anger. She arches her back suddenly, violently.

He lets out a long, slow breath as he climaxes.

They're silent for a long time, staring at each other in the dark room, catching their breath.

Then Elsa climbs off of him and walks out of the room, back to the sleeping children.

EXT. THE ABANDONED HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

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

THE WINDOW

Elsa watches him, blank.

OUTSIDE

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

INT. THE ABANDONED HOUSE - THE NEXT MORNING

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

THE KITCHEN

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

Elsa walks into the room. She doesn't even look at him. She walks straight out of the kitchen to the bike outside. The Captain doesn't move.

We hear the sounds of buckles and straps, the rustling of shifting cans, feet on gravel.

Elsa comes back in through the front door, her arms full of the last of their CANNED FOOD and RATIONS. The Captain looks at the small pile as she places it down quietly on the table.

The Captain stands up, shoulders his bag, and walks out of the house. He doesn't look back.

Elsa takes out a RUSTY CAN OPENER, and lays it down on the table beside the food. She turns to go--

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

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

Elsa turns and walks out of the house.

EXT. ROADSIDE FARMSTEAD - MORNING

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

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

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

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

Then, without a word, the Captain draws his Luger, cocks it. He heads for the farmhouse.

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

INT. ROADSIDE FARMHOUSE - THAT MOMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The room hums with quiet tension.

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

THE CAPTAIN

Stand up.

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

Christine reaches across, grips his hand, panicked:

CHRISTINE

Sebastian...

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

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

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

He looks at his wife. Tender, but firm.

SEBASTIAN

Stay inside.

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

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

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

THE CAPTAIN

Let's go.

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

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

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

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

EXT. ROADSIDE FARMSTEAD - FIELDS - MOMENTS LATER

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

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

They walk for what feels like forever. Finally:

THE CAPTAIN

Stop here.

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

THE CAPTAIN

On your knees.

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

SEBASTIAN

Please do not hurt my children.

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

ELSA

Wait...

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

Sebastian observes them. He switches to English:

SEBASTIAN

You are Elsa.

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

ELSA

Yes...

Sebastian speaks flatly, with an unsettling detachment--

SEBASTIAN

I know what Richter did to you. I helped him. We all did.

Tears pool in Elsa's eyes.

SEBASTIAN

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

(pauses)

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

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

SEBASTIAN

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

Sebastian looks right at her, deep into her soul.

SEBASTIAN

There are no survivors.

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

CHRISTINE (O.S.)

(calling out)

FELIX!

They all turn back towards the farmhouse to see:

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

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

CHRISTINE

(calling out)

FELIX! STOP!

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

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

SEBASTIAN

Please.... Do it now.

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

Felix keeps running. He's getting close.

The Captain grips the trigger, torn.

SEBASTIAN
Please. Don't let him see.

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

A FLOCK OF PHEASANTS flutters overhead. They fly towards the TREE-LINE at the far end of the field. It's oddly beautiful.

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

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

ELSA
Don't--

BANG. A dime-sized hole opens Sebastian's forehead. He collapses face-first into the bloody dirt.

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

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

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

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

The Captain looks over his shoulder:

THE CAPTAIN
We need to leave.

He marches through the field, back towards his Zundapp.

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

EXT. THE BORDER WOODS - LATER

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

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

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

ELSA
You shouldn't have done that.

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

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

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

Elsa pushes him away, violently.

ELSA
You murdered him. We murdered him.

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

ELSA
In front of his son!

THE CAPTAIN
He was there. He deserved to die.

Elsa narrows her eyes.

ELSA
And what about you? You were there
too.

The Captain looks away.

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

The Captain doesn't respond.

ELSA
And children. Did you kill them
too?

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

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

ELSA

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

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

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

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

EXT. THE BORDER WOODS - DUSK

SERIES: The German countryside at dusk.

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

EXT. THE BORDER WOODS - CAMP - THAT MOMENT

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

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

INT. SMALL OFFICE, 1944 - DAY (FLASHBACK)

TEXT: *Einehof Camp I, 1944*

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

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

RADIO BROADCAST (O.S.)

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

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

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

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

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

RADIO BROADCAST (O.S.)
--Many of the German strong points
along the Rhine have fallen, with
more collapsing everyday--

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

INT. OFFICE ANTECHAMBER, 1944 - DAY (FLASHBACK)

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

The Captain joins them, standing stiffly.

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

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

The Captain glances around at the other men.

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

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

WERNER

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

Werner snaps his heels together, saluting fist to heart.

WERNER

My honor is loyalty.

DEATH SQUAD

My honor is loyalty!

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

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

SEBASTIAN (PRE-LAP)

Chamber two is down again.

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

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

It's lightly SNOWING.

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

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

SEBASTIAN

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

THE CAPTAIN

How long has it been down?

SEBASTIAN

Just under an hour.

THE CAPTAIN

How long is the queue?

SEBASTIAN

Just over fifteen hundred.

Finally they reach--

THE GAS CHAMBER - THAT MOMENT

An enormous, square, concrete BUILDING with no windows.

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

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

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

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

LEO
Heil, Hitler.

OSKAR
Heil, Hitler.

THE CAPTAIN/SEBASTIAN
Heil, Hitler.

Werner gestures to the locker--

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

THE CAPTAIN
How long will that take?

LEO
About twenty-four hours.

SEBASTIAN
That's fifty-six hundred prisoners.

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

WERNER
We need to organize a firing squad.

Werner turns to Sebastian:

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

SEBASTIAN

Yes, sir.

To the Captain:

WERNER

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

The Captain hesitates. Werner picks up on this.

WERNER

Is that alright with you, Captain?

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

THE CAPTAIN

Yes, sir.

WERNER

Very well.

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

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

The Captain stares at her.

ERICH (PRE-LAP)

NEXT.

INT. BLOCK 11 - LATER (FLASHBACK)

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

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

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

ERICH

Set.

The Machine Gun Soldiers raise their MP40s.

THE CAPTAIN

Fire.

The Captain flinches as the twelve prisoners are mowed down by MACHINE GUN FIRE. *It's his first time in the killing room.*

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

ERICH

Clear.

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

ERICH

NEXT.

Another DOOR on the opposite end opens and--

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

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

ERICH (O.S.)

Set.

We hear the sound of MACHINE GUNS BEING LEVELED.

THE CAPTAIN

Fire...

TIME PASSES IN MOMENTS:

Flames from the BARREL of an MP40.

The DOOR opens. PRISONERS enter.

The Captain watches, stone-faced.

BURSTS OF MACHINE GUN FIRE.

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

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

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

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

Richter observes this, seems pleased.

ERICH

NEXT.

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

RICHTER

Captain.

THE CAPTAIN

Commandant.

Richter salutes:

RICHTER

Heil, Hitler.

THE CAPTAIN

Heil, Hitler.

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

RICHTER

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

THE CAPTAIN

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

RICHTER

We can afford no delays at this point.

THE CAPTAIN

I received the orders.

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

RICHTER

You've always been a good soldier. Competent, loyal and reliable. A man of principle. A man who follows orders.

The Captain gives him a perfunctory nod of appreciation.

RICHTER
*I know I can trust you with this
assignment.*

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

RICHTER
Alfons!

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

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

EXT. THE BORDER WOODS - MORNING

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

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

The Captain looks up at them, expressionless.

Finally, they start laughing.

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

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

EXT. THE BORDER ROAD, THE TRUCK - DAY

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

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

Trees rush past overhead, the Captain's breath fogs in the cold air. *It's over for him.*

Across from the Captain, one of the Soviet Soldier's sits staring straight back at him. He speaks, in Russian:

SOVIET SOLDIER
*Why did you make me come here? Huh?
 You had to start this war, you
 stupid shit...*

The Captain looks back at him through bloodshot eyes.

SOVIET SOLDIER
You goddamn stupid shit...

The sound of grinding gears interrupts the Soldier - *the truck is slowing down.*

We pull out from the back of the truck, up and over to reveal--

THE ROAD

There, 40 yards ahead, is Elsa.

She stands in the middle of the muddy road, one hand raised, flagging down the truck.

The Soviet Driver and his Navigator leer at her, still a bit drunk. They slow down and stop about ten feet away.

Elsa calls out, in her accented English--

ELSA
 I'm looking for my husband.

The two Soviets exchange a confused look. Elsa tries again.

ELSA
 Please, comrades, he's not right,
 he just wandered off. Have you--

Elsa is cut short as a lean, SOVIET SERGEANT climbs out of the backseat and into the mud. He looks weathered and half-starved with a large scar on his face. He looks unkillable.

The man takes a few, measured steps towards Elsa, before turning to his men, and muttering in rapid-fire Russian.

They break out in raucous laughter - *maybe some crude joke.*

The man keeps walking towards Elsa until he's only a few steps away. He looks her over, genuinely curious.

Elsa is on edge. He could do or say anything.

The Sergeant speaks in soft English:

SOVIET SERGEANT
You shouldn't stand in the road
like that. Most men don't stop.

He examines her shaven head, her various bandaged wounds. *She makes for a strange character.*

SOVIET SERGEANT
What do you want, young lady?

Elsa, sweet but stubborn--

ELSA
I told you, I'm looking for my--

SOVIET SERGEANT
--Husband. I know. I heard.

The Sergeant leers at her for a moment, not speaking.

ELSA
Please, sir, my husband isn't right.
We've been traveling, trying to
reach relatives in Hanover... but
last night he wandered off on his
own. Please.

SOVIET SERGEANT
Your papers.

ELSA
Of course.

Elsa digs out her dirty, creased REFUGEE ID PAPERS, handing them to the Sergeant with a steady hand.

The Sergeant turns and gestures to his men, and two Soldiers drag the Captain out of the truck bed, holding him, bruised and beaten, for Elsa to see.

SOVIET SERGEANT
This the man you're looking for?

Elsa starts forward, covering her mouth, aghast.

ELSA
Oh--

She's horrified by the sight of him. But she collects herself. Turns back to the Sergeant:

ELSA
That's him. Thank you for finding
him.

The other Soldiers watch her hungrily.

The Sergeant studies Elsa's Refugee Papers carefully. He notes the unmistakable RED J, and beneath it, in small lettering, "*Einehof, Jan. 1945*".

SOVIET SERGEANT
You were in Einehof.

ELSA
Yes.

He stares at her. Then gestures to the Captain--

SOVIET SERGEANT
And this man is your husband?

Elsa is less sure of herself now--

ELSA
Yes.

The Sergeant looks at her, almost curiously, like he doesn't quite know what to make of her and her story.

SOVIET SERGEANT
What about his papers?

ELSA
In his back pocket. His trousers.

The Sergeant mutters something to his men, and one of them searches the Captain's pockets. He pulls out--

ANTON RICHTER'S RED CROSS PASSPORT. The Soldier walks it over to the Sergeant, hands it to him.

The Sergeant studies it. *He knows this is not the same man.* He's caught Elsa in her lie. He knows it, and very quickly, she knows it too.

The Sergeant stares at her for a long moment, open passport in hand. Elsa trembles, growing anxious.

Then, in perfectly-accented Yiddish:

SOVIET SERGEANT
Do you love him?

Elsa blinks, surprised. She looks at the Sergeant, more closely now, as if seeing him for the first time. She replies, in Yiddish.

ELSA
I'm sorry?

SOVIET SERGEANT
Do you love him?

ELSA
Of course I do, he is my husband.

The Soviet Sergeant looks back at her. Accepts her reasons, whatever they may be. He hands her both passports.

SOVIET SERGEANT
May God guard you and keep you safe.

He turns back to the truck, to his men, and starts to laugh. A rough, grating laugh. He gestures towards the kneeling Captain, in Russian:

SOVIET SERGEANT
Fuck him. I'm hungry.

The Soldiers hesitate, only for a moment, then cut the Captain's bindings, leaving him kneeling in the mud.

The Soviets climb back into the idling truck, moods swinging back towards revelry.

Elsa takes a few halting steps towards the Captain, putting a hand to his face, checking his bruises, his bleeding lip.

The Soviet Sergeant watches them for a moment as his driver shifts them into gear. He looks like he wants to say something. But instead he turns his attention back to his men, and the BOTTLE in his hands.

Elsa slowly helps the Captain to his feet. The two of them watch the truck drive off down the road for a long time.

A LIGHT RAIN BEGINS TO FALL.

EXT. THE BORDER WOODS, OPEN CLEARING - DUSK

Elsa stands out of the RAIN near a ROTTING STUMP, lost in her thoughts. She looks worn out, exhausted. She stares down at--

LENI'S PASSPORT, tracing the blurry details of the young girl's face with her finger.

The Captain stands across from her, soaked, leaning against a barren tree. He holds his fractured arm against his chest, head hung low, too tired to even tend to his wounds.

Finally, Elsa breaks the silence. She's not even looking at the Captain. *She needs to tell this story.*

ELSA

When I got pregnant, I hid it from Richter as long as I could. I was sure he would kill me if he found out. But he didn't... He congratulated me.

Elsa smiles bitterly.

ELSA

I started bleeding one day, and they took me to see the doctor. It was a girl. They let me hold her all afternoon. But the next day she was gone.

The Captain stares at his feet, unable to face her.

ELSA

When I asked Richter about it, he beat me with one of his boots. I didn't wake up for two days. I never asked about my baby again.

(tears fall)

A few days before the Soviets arrived, a guard pulled me from the room they kept me in. He took me to the fields. Everyone was out there, all the prisoners. They had them digging a pit. And even then, we didn't understand. Then the soldiers started shooting. The man beside me fell on me as he died. I landed in the pit beneath him. Then...

(pauses)

They just kept falling. The people. It seemed like it would never end. They were so heavy. I couldn't breathe. And then they buried us. I wanted to scream, but I couldn't. I waited until I couldn't hear them burying us anymore. I could feel the blood in my eyes, in my mouth. The smell. I thought I would die there. But I didn't...

Elsa swallows hard.

ELSA

Every day, since then, I just kept asking myself: Why me? Why did I survive? I nearly went mad trying to understand that. But now I know.

She looks up at him, eyes wet with tears.

ELSA

I survived so I could save my little girl.

Elsa stares at him, laid completely bare. Tears run down her face as she sways on her feet.

The Captain stares back, used up.

She takes a step, then another, then she collapses in the Captain's arms. Holding him tightly, fiercely, desperately.

The Captain puts his arms around her slowly. His face is a mess of shame and guilt, as he grips her tightly in his arms.

EXT. THE BORDER WOODS, OPEN CLEARING - THE NEXT MORNING

The Captain sits on his Zundapp in the middle of the woods. The rain has eased up.

He climbs off the bike slowly, and we see that it's been stripped down, its saddle bags removed, straps and leather all gone. He grips the handle, touches the gas tank. *Saying goodbye.*

Elsa stands nearby, PASSPORTS in hand, watching as--

The Captain stuffs a DIRTY RAG into the open gas tank of the bike. He sets it AFLAME. He stares at it, eyes shining, as it burns its way towards the tank. Suddenly--

THE BIKE GOES UP IN FLAMES. Roiling orange fire that consumes the steel frame, the rubber tires. Everything.

The Captain watches it burn a while. *This isn't easy for him.* He turns and walks out of the forest onto the muddy road.

EXT. NORTHERN GERMANY - THE BRITISH ZONE - LATER

EXTENDED SERIES: Barbed wire. Train tracks. Muddy roads. Northern Germany rolls by through the window of a moving train. It's calmer here, peaceful even.

- Long lines of REFUGEES on the move fill the horizon.

- A COLUMN OF BRITISH TANKS rolls past, soldiers handing out SPARE RATIONS to civilians on the road.

- A single WINDMILL turns and turns on a barren hilltop.

The SERIES ends on--

EXT. THE LAKE - LATE AFTERNOON

It's small and charming - still water surrounded by overgrown reeds and brush. A short distance away is--

A COTTAGE, untouched by war.

It's quaint - wood shingles and exposed beams.

The whole scene is like something out of a German postcard.

FROM A DISTANCE

Elsa and the Captain walk steadily down the muddy, hard-packed road. Tired, filthy, resolved. They slow to a halt, unnerved by the sight of the simple little cottage.

The two of them stand stiffly, Elsa helping keep the Captain on his feet. Their breath fogs in the cold as they take in the scene, watching for signs of movement.

With difficulty, the Captain checks the clip on his PISTOL with one hand. Locks it back into place.

Elsa watches him carefully, then starts forward--

THE CAPTAIN

Wait.

She freezes.

They stare at each other for a long time. The Captain looks like he wants to say something. Something important.

Elsa watches him... *but he can't find the words.* Finally--

THE CAPTAIN

Stay close to me.

The Captain turns and heads towards the wooden cottage.

Elsa hurries to keep up.

EXT. RICHTER'S LAKE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The two of them move slowly through the tall grass. Nerves frayed.

Elsa stands just beside the Captain as they approach the house, tense, barely breathing.

All we can hear is the sound of the wind blowing through the fields around them.

INT. RICHTER'S LAKE HOUSE - ENTRYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

It's dark. Then the front door opens a crack, and light spills into the dim hallway.

The Captain enters first, gun extended shakily in front of him. He moves cautiously, his wounded arm held behind him, hovering over Elsa, protective.

They move slowly, with no idea what to expect. A chill runs down Elsa's spine as she follows the Captain into--

THE LIVING ROOM - THAT MOMENT

The Captain stands in the doorway, gun extended, frozen - paralyzed by some terrible emotion.

Elsa steps up behind him, sees the reason--

LENI, Richter's young daughter, sits on the floor of the sparse living room, playing happily with her dolls.

On the wall behind her hangs a framed PORTRAIT OF ADOLF HITLER. It seems to stare down at the little blonde girl, who finally looks up, registering the new guests. She smiles.

Elsa's eyes water - a knife in her chest. *There she is. My daughter.* As powerful as the photo was, seeing her in the flesh is almost too much to bear. Elsa can barely breathe.

She drifts towards Leni, hand outstretched, as if in a trance. But before she reaches her--

Leni suddenly looks past the Captain, she waves. In German:

LENI
Hello, vatti!

The Captain tenses up, breathing hard--

Behind him, Anton Richter stands with a MAUSER PISTOL pressed firmly into the Captain's neck.

Elsa turns. Goes pale.

Finally, Richter speaks, in perfect English:

RICHTER
Hello, Elsa.

Two little words. It's too much for her. All the pain he caused her, the power he held over her, comes rushing back all at once. Tears roll down her cheeks.

Richter turns his attention to the Captain:

RICHTER
Please don't point your gun at my daughter.

Just like with Elsa, Richter holds some strange power over the Captain. He lowers his shaking hand.

Richter smiles at Leni--

RICHTER
Hello, darling, these are our new friends.

He leans in close to the Captain:

RICHTER
Give me the gun, Captain.

Richter smiles, carefully taking the Captain's pistol and walking past him into the living room. He brushes past Elsa, and she shivers uncontrollably.

Richter sits down heavily in an old wooden chair. He places the two pistols in his lap and looks at the Captain, almost disappointed.

There's a long, tense silence. Richter picks up Leni, and places her in his lap.

RICHTER
It hasn't been easy raising her on my own. After Berlin fell, I found Nina in our home with a bullet-hole through her head. She lost her faith.
(pauses)
That's the real future of Germany.
(MORE)

RICHTER
It's not enough for them to defeat
us. They want us to destroy
ourselves.

The Captain's breathing grows shallow. Richter runs his
fingers through Leni's hair.

LENI
Vatti, is he an army man?

Leni doesn't understand English, so she has no idea what's
being said.

RICHTER
He was, schatzi. But not anymore.

LENI
Why did he have a gun?

RICHTER
Because he's very confused.

Richter stares straight at the Captain, who fights to
maintain control as everything crumbles inside.

LENI
And who is that?

Leni points at Elsa who stiffens as the little girl points at
her. Richter looks her up and down. Pure contempt.

RICHTER
That is Elsa.
(pauses)
She's vatti's old friend.

Leni stares up at her in wonder - like she was some mythical
creature. The first woman she's seen in a long time.

Elsa slowly kneels, almost in a daze. She looks to Leni--

ELSA
That's a very pretty doll you have
there. What's her name?

RICHTER
She doesn't speak English.

Leni looks back at her father for guidance. Richter continues
to stroke her hair.

RICHTER
*She's asking about your pretty
doll. Can you show it to her?*

Leni nods her head, apprehensively.

RICHTER
Go on. Be a good girl.

She hops off her father's lap, waddles over to Elsa and presents her doll. Elsa examines it--

ELSA
Oh. How beautiful she is.

Leni responds with a little grin. This is the first woman she's spoken with in ages, and the connection is undeniable.

LENI
Her name is Hannelore.

ELSA
Hannelore? That's her name? That's a wonderful name.

Leni smiles, broadly - a child's smile. Pure innocence. It brings tears to Elsa's eyes.

RICHTER
She likes you. You'd make a good mother one day.

What little solace Elsa had found immediately turns to ashes. She looks up at Richter, frozen, suddenly confused. *What does he mean - one day?*

Richter picks up on this. Seems surprised.

RICHTER
Wait... Did you think...

He looks at the Captain, studies him. Then, a grin spreads across his face. He turns back to Elsa:

RICHTER
Did you think Leni was your daughter?

Elsa can't breathe. Her world is crashing down around her.

Richter leans back in his chair, savoring the moment. He looks at the Captain, whose face has gone pale.

RICHTER
You mean... He didn't tell you?

THE CAPTAIN
Don't.

Elsa looks back and forth between the Captain and Richter, raw panic building inside of her.

Leni begins to sense the tension in the room. She grips her doll tightly as she tries to understand what's happening.

Richter slowly kneels, addresses his daughter.

RICHTER

Leni, can you go gather some pretty flowers? We want to give our friends a very nice bouquet when they leave.

Leni nods, excited.

LENI

There are sunflowers!

With that, she picks up her doll and skips towards the door, slipping out into the late afternoon light.

Elsa struggles to her feet. Stares at the Captain. With all her strength:

ELSA

What is he talking about?

The Captain won't look at her.

ELSA

TELL ME.

He stares straight at Richter, reeling.

RICHTER

Are you going to tell her, Captain, or should I?

The Captain can't move. Tears well in his eyes. He's trying to hold it together, but the memories are too much.

RICHTER (PRE-LAP)

Alfons!

INT. BLOCK 11 - DAY (FLASHBACK)

We're back in that moment, amidst the firing squad. Richter is waiting, patiently. The Captain is staring at the door, horrified. Finally, we see why--

Alfons enters, carrying a beautiful, NEWBORN BABY GIRL - just a few days old - wrapped in a GREY WOOLEN BLANKET.

The baby is strong and healthy, and when she BAWLS it echoes throughout the room.

Alfons approaches Richter, offers him the crying baby. Instead of taking it, he gestures to the line of terrified PRISONERS awaiting execution--

RICHTER

Give it to the one in the middle.

Alfons stiffly walks the crying baby over to the prisoners. He presents it to a stout, naked JEWISH WOMAN, standing in the middle of the line.

The woman looks down at the baby with the deepest kind of sadness. She cradles it in her arms, eyes searching desperately for some sort of explanation.

Alfons starts to walk away when--

RICHTER

Wait.

Alfons stops.

RICHTER

Take the blanket.

Alfons returns to the woman. With great difficulty, he removes the baby's blanket, leaving her naked and squirming in the woman's arms.

No one speaks. No one moves. There's only the sound of the baby CRYING and nothing else.

It's deafening.

Richter folds his hands, satisfied.

RICHTER

Okay, Captain.

The Captain doesn't react. He just stares at the baby, nearly catatonic, listening to her CRY.

RICHTER

Captain...

Finally, the Captain snaps from his trance. He looks at Richter, who stares back at him firmly. *This is his test, his power, his cruelty.*

The Captain looks at Erich. Gives him a small nod. Erich addresses the firing squad:

ERICH

Set.

The firing squad raises their MP40 MACHINE GUNS, drawing a sharp gasp of horror from the prisoners.

The baby's CRYING grows louder... *The woman pleads.*

Everyone waits for the Captain's command. Silence.

The Captain looks at the firing squad. He looks at the baby. He's taking too long and everyone knows it.

The baby's CRYING grows louder...

He looks at Richter, who gazes back, darkness in his eyes. *Do it.*

The Captain turns to the firing squad. He closes his eyes as he dies inside.

THE CAPTAIN

Fire.

CLOSE ON, the barrels of six MP-40 machine guns as they unload into the prisoners, silencing the baby instantly.

The Captain stares off at something we cannot see. Eyes hollow, vacant. He turns from the horror, walks away.

We hear only a distant ringing. Faint sounds barely reach us. Richter turns, shouting at the Captain, but he just pushes past him, out of the Cell Block and into the winter cold.

Men from his unit call after him, Richter watches him leave, eyes going cold and hard.

Time passes in a series of visceral moments:

- At the front gates of Einehof, the Captain shoves past the SS MILITARY POLICEMEN, walking out into the snow.

- Erich, Werner, and Eckhart tackle the Captain just outside the gates, knocking him out cold as he struggles.

- A CELL DOOR slams hard, as the Captain is thrown into a filthy MILITARY PRISON. Richter watches as BOOTS and TRUNCHEONS smash into the Captain's huddled body on the concrete floor. We hear the distant sound of BREAKING BONES.

- The Captain, months later and deeply starved, drifts through the now-abandoned prison, out into Einehof proper. Only smoking ruins where cell blocks once stood, piles of bodies lay out in the cold. *The Captain takes it all in.*

- The Captain rides full-speed on an open road. His cold blue eyes hollowed out. We hear the distant sound of a CRYING BABY, as loud as the roar of his engine. *For him, the only thing left is revenge.* The CRYING grows louder and louder until--

ELSA (PRE-LAP)

No...

INT. RICHTER'S LAKE HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

Elsa stares at the Captain, ruined, empty. Her eyes fill with tears. Barely audible:

ELSA

No.

The Captain looks at her. The shame and guilt clear on his face is all the answer she needs.

ELSA

NO... NO...

She's crying, hysterically now.

RICHTER

When they took your baby girl's
body outside, it took three men to
carry the pieces.

Elsa breaks down completely. The Captain watches her, devastated. They finally make eye contact, and in a moment, everything they ever had is shattered and gone.

Richter sits comfortably in his chair, watching them fall apart. He starts to smile.

Slowly, Elsa stands.

Hollowed out, silent, she looks at Richter sitting in his chair, at his eyes, his smiling mouth.

And then she draws ALFONS' PISTOL from her coat and FIRES TWO SHOTS STRAIGHT INTO RICHTER'S CHEST.

Richter's eyes go big in his head. He looks down at the bullet holes in a kind of stupor, the two guns falling from his hands onto the wood floor.

Elsa stands, smoking gun held tightly in her steady hand. She holds it firmly, unmoving.

Richter touches the reddening wounds with shaking hands.

RICHTER

Oh.

Slowly, Elsa turns towards the Captain, gun outstretched before her. She struggles to find any words at all.

The Captain stares back at her.

He takes a step towards her. His eyes pleading, begging her to do it--

Elsa stands stock-still as he approaches. The Captain presses his forehead against the still-smoking barrel. He wraps two hands around the gun, he holds it tight to his head. He doesn't look away.

THE CAPTAIN

Please.

Elsa searches his face, she wraps her finger around the trigger. The longest moment of their entire lives--

And then Elsa sees Leni. Through the window, in the distance, the little girl curiously searches for all the flowers she can find. *Free of fear, free of worry.*

She takes one last long look at the fading Richter. The dying man tries to speak, but nothing comes out.

Elsa's face is stone and nothing else.

And then she throws the gun at the Captain's feet and turns and walks out of the house.

EXT. RICHTER'S LAKE HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

Elsa steps outside into the dying light. She stands in the doorway, takes a little gasp of air, returns to the land of the living.

And then, she walks toward little Leni, sitting in the green grass nearby. Leni looks vaguely worried--

LENI

Where's vatti? What was that sound?

Elsa kneels down to her level. Almost impossibly calm. She picks up Leni's doll from the grass.

Then, she hums a little tune and she smiles.

ELSA

We're going to play for a little
while. Just you, me, and Hannelore.

She raises Leni's doll, makes it dance to the song. Leni
breaks out into a giggle, she can't help herself.

ELSA

How many flowers did you find?

Leni lifts up her messy BOUQUET with two hands.

LENI

All of them!

Leni laughs, and Elsa just leans in and kisses her on the
cheek, taking the offered bouquet from her hands.

ELSA

Thank you, Leni. They're beautiful.

Leni turns back. She smiles, bashful.

And then the front door of the little farmhouse slowly opens,
and the Captain steps outside.

In his hand, he holds the DOG TAGS collected from all of his
kills. *His entire unit.*

He takes a step and slowly locks eyes with--

Elsa. Some kind of relief washes over her, but it's mixed
with something else. Disgust. Contempt. Confusion.

They stare at each other for the longest time. Then, Elsa
notices--

The gun still held in his hand.

She looks back at him, at his face. She starts to understand.

Leni tugs on Elsa's hand--

LENI

Where's vatti?

They continue to stare at each other - Elsa and the Captain.
Their journey ends here. Or begins here. A crossroads.

Finally, Elsa bends down and hoists Leni up into her arms. She
looks straight at the Captain, as she speaks aloud to Leni:

ELSA

Come on, baby girl. Let's go into town.

The Captain watches silently as Elsa turns and walks down the road. Towards town, carrying Leni, headed towards a new life.

After a moment, the Captain wanders slowly down to--

THE LAKESHORE

It's dusk. Haunting and beautiful. The wind whips across the water, stirring up little ripples.

The Captain takes it all in - overwhelmed by its beauty, overwhelmed by its emptiness. He holds the dog tags loosely in a bunch in his hand.

He stands there for a long time, holding his gun, studying it carefully. Then--

The Captain looks back over his shoulder - back towards Elsa and Leni. Towards life. *We can't read his face.*

CUT TO BLACK.