

**SUSPIRIA**

Screenplay by **Dave Kajganich**

Based on the film written by Dario Argento  
and Daria Nicolodi

**Frenesy** Film

The events of the film take place in the Berlin, 1977. Autumn.

"Dance must be cheerful and show beautiful female bodies  
and have nothing to do with philosophy."

-- Joseph Goebbels, 1937

**Markos Company**

## Revised "Horizontal" Hierarchy

---

Artistic Director and Choreographer	Madame Blanc
Technical Director	Miss Boutaher
Production Manager	Miss Mauceri
Assistant to Artistic Director	Miss Tanner
Touring Director	Miss Griffith
Accountant	Miss Martincin
Repetiteurs	Miss Mandel Miss Millius
Hospitant	Judith
Marketing	Miss Balfour
Archivist	Miss Cotugno
Dramaturgy	Miss Killen
Production Designer	Miss Huller
Stage Manager	Miss Kaplitt
Light	Miss Daniels
Sound	Miss Marks
Drummer	Danielle
Physical Trainer	Pavla
Physiotherapist and Masseur	Miss Verdegast
Secretary	Miss Griffith
Housemother	Miss Vendegast
Maintenance Woman	Alberta
Featured Dancers	Susie Sara Patricia Olga Caroline Sonia Marketa Doll

---

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, STAFF KITCHEN -- DAWN

In a dim institutional kitchen stands a long, marble table with twenty chairs around it.

MISS TANNER (V.O.)  
*Markos.*

MISS MANDEL (V.O.)  
*Markos.*

MISS KILLEN (V.O.)  
*Blanc!*

MISS DANIELS (V.O.)  
*Markos!*

MISS VENDEGAST (50) comes in and turns on the lights. She gets a coal fire going in the heat stove, then another in the cook stove. She fills a big enamel coffee pot.

MISS BOUTAHER (V.O.)  
*Blanc.*

MISS MILLUS (V.O.)  
*Markos!*

MISS MARTINCIN (V.O.)  
*Blanc.*

Vendegast sets out bowls, spoons, and mugs on the table. Muesli. Biscuits. Soon, other women begin drifting in. Some are still in robes, not yet showered. They go about getting their breakfasts and first cigarettes. Some chat casually.

Over it all, the vote continues in v.o. Each voice is strong, decided. We may see flashes of the faces of these women during the vote, which took place the night before. *If an audience expects sinister faces, they'll be surprised: The women of our film are banal, matronly, women you see every day.*

MISS HULLER (V.O.)  
*Markos!*

MISS HOLZMANN (V.O.)  
*Blanc!*

MADAME BLANC (50) herself comes in for breakfast. She has the long-limbed body and high carriage of a dancer, but her energy is not rarified. It's grounded, open. But she looks tired.

MADAME BLANC  
Good morning, everyone.

MISS MAUCERI (V.O.)  
*Blanc.*

MISS MARKS (V.O.)  
*Markos!*

Miss Boutaher comes over to Blanc, still in her hair net.

MISS BOUTAHER  
 Were you able to sleep in a little? It was a long night.

MADAME BLANC  
 Yes, thank you.

MISS BOUTAHER  
 I'm glad.

DANIELLE (V.O.)  
*Markos.*

MISS COTUGNO (V.O.)  
*Blanc.*

Vendegast begins cracking eggs in a bowl, one after another.

PAVLA (V.O.)  
*Markos.*

MISS KAPLITT (V.O.)  
*Blanc.*

MISS VERDEGAST (V.O.)  
*Markos!*

MISS GRIFFITH (V.O.)  
*Markos.*

MISS VENDEGAST (V.O.)  
*Blanc!*

MISS BALFOUR (V.O.)  
*Blanc.*

Blanc gets coffee and takes a seat at one head of the table and talks with Miss Holzmann. MISS TANNER (55) enters. She is smaller in stature than Blanc, but leans hard into everything to compensate. She and Blanc have a moment of eye contact.

ALBERTA (V.O.)  
*Markos!*

A beat, and then, finally:

JUDITH (V.O.)

*Markos.*

There's a V.O. RAPPING, some ritualized version of applause.

MISS TANNER (V.O.)

<< *Markos by three. It's decided. Let no one's vote be held against her. And let the will of the majority proceed. Hail, Markos. >>*

ALL (V.O.)

<< *Hail, Markos. >>*

Miss Tanner takes her coffee and sits beside Madame Blanc. As casually as the others are chatting, Tanner says to her:

MISS TANNER

Markos is asking for you. She wants to know if everything is ready, now that we are clear to proceed.

MADAME BLANC

She knows my concerns about Patricia. But I do agree, we should not delay.

Tanner nods, reassured on this crucial point. She spreads her jam on her toast. Madame Blanc gets up.

MADAME BLANC (CONT'D)

I'll go and tell her now.

CUT TO:

EXT. BERLIN, PLATZ -- DAY

A Berlin *platz* is packed with protestors SHOUTING in organized rage:

CROWD

<< Free Baader! Free Ensslin! Free Schubert! Free Raspe! We are watching! We are watching! >>

(beat)

<< Free Möller! Free Becker! We are watching all you do! >>

*Polizei* observe the protest from half a block away. Some take photos. Leaves drop down on them in the grey afternoon.

PATRICIA (20s), skirts the edges of the protest, hurrying. She's dressed in a old fatigue jacket and leggings, weighed down with an over-the-shoulder bag and duffle. One or two in the crowd recognize her and gesture, but she keeps moving.

CROWD (CONT'D)

<< We remember Mutter Meinhoff! We remember *everything!* >>

She gets to a statue in the *platz* and looks around for someone, as if at a planned rendezvous point. But no one's waiting for her there, and no one comes.

She stays as long as she can. But the police notice her duffle. They begin to point her out between themselves. She gets moving again. When she sees two of the police detach from the group to follow her, she gets around a corner and runs.

CUT TO:

INT. KLEMPERER'S BUILDING, STAIRWELL -- DAY

Patricia hurries up a stairwell to a door on the top landing and RINGS. There is an odd, dark light bulb in a wall socket beside a small sign there. She is singing to herself in spite of her fear. Nico. "The Fairest of the Seasons."

INT. KLEMPERER'S APARTMENT, ENTRYWAY -- DAY

DR. JÓZEF KLEMPERER (80) answers. His face carries his many years, creased along all the lines of longing. But it's still somehow an open face. He sees her fear, her duffle bag.

KLEMPERER

Patricia. What --has happened?

But Patricia dances past him, dragging in her duffle and bag, singing as she goes. It's odd behavior. He shuts the door and follows her back to a worn study lined with bookcases.

INT. KLEMPERER'S APARTMENT, SITTING ROOM -- DAY

Instead of sitting, Patricia dumps her bags behind a stuffed armchair and dances around the furniture, moving to the music in her head. She never once looks directly at Klemperer. He sees her dismay and responds with practiced calm.

KLEMPERER

I have a patient in a few minutes,  
but I can tell him to come another  
time--

PATRICIA

(pleasantly)

They voted. --Can I have a seltzer?  
The bartender will give you one for  
free. I'm afraid.

(singing again)

*I'll be leaving in the fairest of  
seasons.*

Klemperer lowers himself into his chair, not sure he's heard her correctly. She talks loudly, as if over other people in a busy cafe. But she's coding things, just for him.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

This song! I have it stuck in my  
head. I hear it so loud I worry oth-  
ers can hear it, too.

(meaningfully)

Do you understand--?

He decides. He leans over and flips a switch low on the wall near his chair.

INT. KLEMPERER'S BUILDING, STAIRWELL -- DAY

A red bulb next to his door switches on, its FILAMENT BUZZING WITH VOLTAGE. The small sign beside it reads, both in German and English, "In Session."

INT. KLEMPERER'S APARTMENT, SITTING ROOM -- DAY

Klemperer begins writing in his patient notes. We see what must be months of work with her in his tiny handwriting.

PATRICIA

They are going to try to keep her  
alive after all.

He glances up at her. He flips back through the notes. The name "Markos" has come up before, several times. Klemperer has called it a "*besessenheit*." An obsession.

KLEMPERER

Markos?

For a second, Patricia's reaction is physical, violent.

PATRICIA

Don't say that name--!

But then she tries to make herself laugh, as if she's having a very good time.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

I'm not supposed to be here! It's the middle of the day! You're a nice boy. A nice *kumpel*. Isn't that the word? I was right. They are witches.

Klemperer writes. Patricia moves around the room, eyes closed and dancing.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

I left word for Sara to meet me out this morning. She's the one girl there I could give a damn about. She's rich, but she listens. If I leave they may choose her next. I don't want them to hurt her. But she didn't come. She didn't get my note, or--

(beat)

She doesn't know what I know. They've been underground since the war. I found out all of it.

She realizes she's said too many real things in a row and dissembles. She's terrified.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)

I'm having so much fun I don't know why you never brought me here before!

A long beat. Klemperer says, calmly:

KLEMPERER

You think they can hear you now.

She shoots him a look. Then a frightened nod. She dances to a window and begins singing Bowie's "Heroes," again as if she's at some kind of club.

She has her eyes closed now, really trying to put herself in another place and time.

PATRICIA

They took my hair. My urine. They took my eyes. There's more to that building than what you see.

CLOSE ON: In her file, he writes: << Her delusion has deepened into panic. She feels her constructed mythology is confirmed. >>



PATRICIA (CONT'D)  
 But I let them help me. I let them  
 give me things, too. I knew, but I  
 let it happen.

On Klemperer's bookcase, there is a framed photogravure. It's  
 of smiling WOMAN from the 1930s. She smiles at Patricia.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)  
 My mother always told me to write  
 my stories down. I was always tel-  
 ling them, but I never wrote them  
 down before.  
 (forcefully)  
*Kumpel!*

Klemperer looks up. He sees she is crying.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)  
 Did you hear?! Did you understand?

KLEMPERER  
 Patricia--

PATRICIA  
 I'm going back for Sara and then  
 I'll come get my things.

She is weeping now, painfully desperate and afraid.

KLEMPERER  
 Patricia. I think you'd feel safer  
 if you stay at least until the pro-  
 test outside is gone--

PATRICIA  
 They convinced me it was my choice.  
 Rehearsal's at noon-- I'll be mis-  
 sed!

Klemperer gets to his feet. As she rushes out, she tells him:

PATRICIA (CONT'D)  
 If they know, they won't hesitate.  
 They will hollow me out and eat my  
 cunt on a plate!

Then she goes out the door, giving a jolt of surprises to the  
 NEXT PATIENT (Male, 40s) waiting outside. Klemperer listens  
 to her go DOWN THE STAIRS and OUT. He goes to the window.

CLOSE ON: *In the photo on his bookcase, the woman's eyes are  
 pale over her smile. A smile from before the war.*

He looks through the sheer curtain to the street below and watches Patricia hurry back toward the *platz*, then disappear.

NEXT PATIENT (O.S.)  
 (from the door, unsure)  
 Dr. Klemperer?

-----  
 OPENING CREDITS play over the following image:  
 -----

INT. OHIO FARMHOUSE, ADULTS' BEDROOM -- DAY

A MENNONITE WOMAN (50s) lies in a sick bed, silently attended to by women from the community in their modest pastel dresses and hair coverings. She looks ravaged by disease, perhaps cancer. Her frail, wet BREATHING is audible. Horrible SIGHS.

Once the credits are finished, the SIGHS continue in PRE-LAP into the next scene.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL PFAU, SUSIE'S ROOM -- DAY

An young American, SUSIE BANNION (20s), sits in a hotel room going over a set of handwritten directions against a street map of Berlin. She's confused, determined. She has no make-up on. Her freckles stand out on her pale skin with her red hair against her blue eyes.

Susie checks her watch. She grabs a small dance bag, counts the money she has left: 35 Deutsche Marks and a few American dollars she hasn't yet exchanged all in a creased envelope with a church logo in its return address corner. She hides it deep between the mattresses it all and hurries to the door.

INT. HOTEL PFAU, LOBBY -- DAY

She goes to the small reception desk to ask a question, but the two women there have their backs to her, their attention glued to the small television there.

ON THE TV: *A news report, in German, of hijacked Lufthansa flight 181 taking off from an airport in Rome.*

NOTE: This hijacking story is one of the centerpieces of the now-infamous "German Autumn" of 1977, which marked the end of the Baader-Meinhof terrorist era, and which we will see unfolding in real time on televisions throughout the film.

INT. BERLIN SUBWAY CAR -- DAY

Susie has found her way onto the Berlin subway. She looks around, keeping her nerves in check as best she can. She sees armed *Polizei* at various stations watching clusters of youth, both with attitudes like battering rams.

EXT. BERLIN SUBWAY STATION, STAIRS -- DAY

Susie is on the stairs hurrying out of the subway, asking for directions. A woman with too much lipstick half-helps her.

SUSIE

*Pohlstraße*--? It's this way--?

Susie has a rural American accent: Southern Ohio, which is almost West Virginia, but not as thick. She lacks sophistication, but makes up for it with bravery.

EXT. MARKOS COMPANY -- DAY

Susie finally arrives outside a huge old janus of a building--two brick volumes fused down the center, one taller than the other by several floors. It could be a factory, a school, or an austere sort of hotel, but the stonework over the entrance simply reads "Tanz." Dance.

Dead leaves cartwheel around her. Susie stands a moment looking up at the building, gathering herself. Then she goes in.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, ENTRANCE HALL -- DAY

Susie comes in and finds the entrance lobby empty. She looks up at the several floors of balustrades above her. She hears DRUMMING coming from somewhere in the building--a slow SYNCOPATED BEAT--and the SQUEAKS and EXERTIONS of PEOPLE DANCING. A voice CALLS OUT DANCE CUES.

There is a KNOCKING ON GLASS and it takes SUSIE a moment to see MISS TANNER hailing her from an interior window of the office, which looks out onto the entrance hall.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, OFFICE -- DAY

Susie comes in. Miss Tanner, made up now for the day, is all business. Something is wrong at the company today. Susie begins to feel it everywhere.

SUSIE

Miss Tanner--?

MISS TANNER

Miss Bannion, I've been trying to reach you at your hotel. To tell you not to come.

SUSIE

Not come? Why--?

MISS TANNER

Something has come up at the company just today. I was hoping you could reschedule.

A beat. Tanner waits for Susie to offer to postpone it herself, but Susie just stands there, panicked. Tanner sets her jaw.

The secretary, MISS GRIFFITH (50s), is there typing something, her back to Susie. In a small mirror on the desk, Susie can see, though, that Miss Griffith is crying.

Miss Griffith's reflection looks back and she shifts in her chair to cut off the reflection.

MISS TANNER (CONT'D)

Very well. I have a room where you can change and get warm. I'll call the panel down--

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, CHANGING ROOM -- DAY

Susie has changed into a dance leotard and sits, doing some stretches. She tries to manipulate her breathing to calm herself. It's intense to watch her try to control her own body this way. It seems to work.

She must be closer to the practice rooms now, because the DRUMS and DANCE CUES are louder here. Susie closes her eyes. She wants this so badly.

We see a succession of images of rehearsals going on in practice halls, but it's unclear if Susie's imagining them.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, "WHITE" STUDIO -- DAY

Susie comes into a small audition room where Miss Tanner sits at a table with MISS MILLIUS (50) and MISS MANDEL (30). They all say hello, but they, too, are subdued. Susie holds a cassette tape in her hand.

MISS TANNER  
Miss Millius and Miss Mandel are  
the company's *répétiteurs*.

Susie surprises them by asking, directly:

SUSIE  
And Veva Blanc?

MISS TANNER  
As I said, Madame Blanc is occupied  
now.

Susie's disappointment is clear.

SUSIE  
But I was told--

MISS TANNER  
Dear. You have no formal training  
or references. Madame Blanc took  
your *insistance* to come encourag-  
ingly. That's why you're here at  
all.

Tanner is not being cruel, just clear. A beat. Susie nods.

MISS MILLIUS  
(re: the tape, kindly)  
We prefer dancers to audition with-  
out music.

Susie looks at Miss Mandel.

MISS MANDEL  
You can keep time in your head.

Susie puts the cassette on the floor, out of the way, takes  
center floor, and begins. The first movement of her audition  
is so razor sharp and cutting it is startling.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, "IRIS" STUDIO -- DAY

Madame Blanc is in the company's largest studio, leading the  
rehearsal Susie heard from the entrance hall. People are work-  
ing in pairs and trios, all very subdued. Blanc is working  
one-on-one now with SARA (20s), but stops, sensing something  
going on elsewhere in the building.

Sara stops as well, waiting for Blanc.

BLANC  
Sara, do you mind to continue by  
yourself?

Sara shakes her head. Blanc nods to the drummer DANIELLE (60) to continue and walks to the door.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, CORRIDOR/STAIRS/"WHITE" STUDIO -- DAY

Blanc passes dancers smoking in the corridors and rooms where group sessions are going on. She comes down the stairs to the closed door of the "white" studio. She goes in.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, "WHITE" STUDIO -- DAY

Blanc enters and discreetly sits in a folding chair by the door so as not to interrupt. Tanner comes and whispers in her ear, but Blanc doesn't take her eyes off Susie. She watches her, her expression revealing how caught off guard she is by this, and how seriously she is taking it.

Susie, in the middle of her dance, sees, in between spins, that Blanc is now in the room watching. Their eyes, for one split second, meet.

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, TANNER'S OFFICE -- DAY

Susie has been left to wait in Miss Tanner's office afterward where she sits in her street clothes again, dance bag at her feet. She is looking around the office, barely containing her nervousness. There are photos of the company's history back to the 1910s on the walls, and some personal effects of Tanner's on her desk, including a lovely dried lotus pod that's been painted red.

Rehearsal is breaking up and the hallway fills with dancers. Susie catches lines from several conversations, all of them charged.

VOICE #1

*They did it while we were in morning rehearsal. Put her things in shipping boxes.*

VOICE #2

*Do you think she had to go underground or something? With what's going on?*

VOICE #3

(irritated)

*We don't know what happened!*

Susie glances into the hall and briefly meets eyes with one of the passing girls, SARA (20s), aka Voice #3.

But Miss Tanner comes in with MISS VENDEGAST (60s) and closes the door. Miss Vendegast is smiling.

MISS TANNER  
I've just spoken with Madame Blanc.  
Well done, Miss Bannion.

Susie can't stifle the smile spreading across her face. She can barely keep her seat, she is so excited.

MISS TANNER (CONT'D)  
I imagine you'll need to return home to settle things and make arrangements for moving to Berlin--

SUSIE  
No, no. I-- I'm ready now. I can start now.

A beat. Tanner nods.

MISS TANNER  
(re: Vendegast)  
Fine, then. This is Miss Vendegast. She acts as housemother to company members who reside here, which is the majority. We operate as a sort of *collective*.  
(pointedly)  
As we cannot pay our dancers much by way of a salary, we are in a position to offer dormitory-style rooms rent-free, which is one way we've found to sew up the difference.

SUSIE  
You don't charge anything --at all?

MISS TANNER  
Not a mark.

Susie is so relieved, she can't keep the tears out of her eyes for a moment. Miss Tanner softens.

SUSIE  
I'm sorry to cry!

MISS TANNER  
In this company, we understand fully the importance of a woman's financial autonomy.

(beat)

(MORE)

MISS TANNER (CONT'D)

Normally, we'd be full up at this time of year, but we've had a room open.

SUSIE

Patricia's.

She says this matter-of-factly. Miss Vendegast looks at Miss Tanner. Tanner squints at Susie, slightly alarmed.

SUSIE (CONT'D)

Some girls were talking about her in the hall just now.

MISS TANNER

Ah. Now that you're one of us, I won't be coy. Patricia has left the company under sad circumstances. We think she won't be back.

(beat)

So there's room, if you'd like. We can even move you in this afternoon so you don't have to pay another night at your hotel.

MISS VENDEGAST

We'll send one of the girls to help you with your luggage after lunch. Is that all right.

SUSIE

Yes. Thank you. --It's perfect.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, MEZZANINE/ENTRANCE HALL -- DAY

Three stories below, Susie walks back across the entrance hall on her way out, trying to contain her excitement and relief. Madame Blanc watches her through a large dim window. Susie must feel watched because she glances back and then up, all the way up to the ceiling until she's looking right at Madame Blanc. Neither waves. The reason becomes in clear:

*SUSIE'S POV: All Susie can see is the row of mirrors at the very top, hiding the highest mezzanine.*

Madame Blanc must be standing behind one of them, but Susie cannot know this. It is a first visual indication that the very architecture of the building creates tension.

Susie begins to perceive, at the edge of her hearing, someone's labored BREATHING. There's no one in view. The acoustics of three-story hall may explain it. Unnerved, she goes.

CUT TO:



INT. HOTEL PFAU, SUSIE'S ROOM -- NIGHT

A storm is coming down hard and with THUNDER. Susie is in her hotel window looking down to the street. A taxi pulls up. Sara, the dancer from the corridor, gets out.

EXT. HOTEL PFAU -- NIGHT

Sara looks up at the hotel and sees Susie. She waves. Susie waves back, already running to get out of the downpour.

INT. HOTEL PFAU, SUSIE'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Sara comes in soaked. She's clearly from money. She doesn't overtly advertise this. Her clothes are lovely, but it's more in the way she carries herself.

SARA

I'm sorry I'm late. It's the rain. Whenever it rains, everyone in Berlin jumps in a cab. And like an moron, I just let ours go. It'll take an hour to get another one now. Oh I'm Sara. We'll have to take our chances in the street. You have an umbrella?

Susie shakes her head.

SARA (CONT'D)

(looking around)

That's okay. We can borrow one from the hotel if they have them.

But Susie's luggage is still open on the floor, things everywhere.

SUSIE

When you weren't here by six I had to take the room for another night.

SARA

I'm so sorry! Everything was a mess at the Company today.

(off Susie's look)

Why are you smiling?

SUSIE

Berlin. You said "everybody in Berlin" a second ago and I thought: That includes me now. I live here now.

Sara smiles at Susie's guilelessness.

SARA

Yes. Congrats. I heard you here a sensation today.

Susie shrugs, happy. There's a roll of THUNDER.

SARA (CONT'D)

I should maybe go before this gets worse, then. I'll come back in the morning?

SUSIE

If it will be so bad getting a cab, sleep here if you want. We can push the beds apart. I have an extra nightgown--

Sara considers the invitation, surprised and moved by Susie's openness.

SARA

We'll miss dinner, but we can order room service. To celebrate!

(intuiting)

On me! As a "welcome to Berlin."

CUT TO:

They finish plates of meatballs and *Jagerschnitzel*. They also ordered big German beers, which they've drunk. The storm outside has gotten worse. The power goes out for a moment, then comes back on.

SARA (CONT'D)

Have you called your family yet, to tell them?

Sara is a little drunk. The nightgowns are almost comically conservative. Sara looks at the stitching and sees: it's hand sewn.

SARA (CONT'D)

Did you tell me where you're from?

SUSIE

Tell me about Madame Blanc! She came into my audition, but she left right after.

The lights go out and this time they don't come back on. Lightning occasionally brightens the windows, giving them dim light.

SARA

She's incredible. The way she transmits her work, her energy. When it shines on you, it's --addictive, is the word for it. And she's tough-- She kept the company alive through the war--think about *that*--when the Reich just wanted women to shut off their minds and keep their uterus open, there was Blanc.

(beat)

--*La vraie chose!*

SUSIE

Is that French? I don't even know!

There is a SUDDEN DETONATION outside nearby, markedly different from thunder. It shakes the glass. They run and open the window to look. It came from down the street. They can't see from this angle, so Sara leans out, into the rain.

SARA

I can smell it. A bomb.

SUSIE

A bomb?!

Susie keeps her from falling out. Police SIRENS are coming.

SARA

There's a bank that way.

She comes back into the room, looking at Susie.

SARA (CONT'D)

Don't you know what's happening here? The hijackers are negotiating a release for the Stammheim prisoners tonight. There are riots.

Susie doesn't answer.

SARA (CONT'D)

The RAF? Baader-Meinhof?

SUSIE

I don't know what that is.

SARA

They kidnapped an executive. During the war he was Nazi SS. An officer. Now he runs the German *Employer's Association*--

(beat)

(MORE)

SARA (CONT'D)

You don't get how awful that is, do you?

Susie shakes her head: This means nothing to her. Sara shivers and closes the window.

SARA (CONT'D)

I didn't either. Until I came here.  
--And my Father's in the Diplomatic Service.

Susie goes to the bathroom and comes back with a thick towel. She sees Sara is now sitting on the bed in tears.

SUSIE

What is it?!

Susie sits on the bed next to her.

SARA

I'm sorry. All of this-- I'm just worried about a friend. It's been an terrible day.

SUSIE

I heard you talking about her in the hall. I knew something was wrong.

SARA

She just left this morning, telling Ms. Tanner she had a "family emergency." No one knows what to do.

SUSIE

What do you mean?

SARA

She was active, in some political groups. So we don't know where she is, really. If she's in hiding, if she's all right.

(beat)

I just want to know she's if all right.

SUSIE

Is she a very good dancer?

Sara looks at Susie, at her earnestness and innocence. It shouldn't, but it comforts her.

SARA

Yes. Very good. But an even better friend.

SUSIE

Then I bet you'll hear from her tomorrow. --Right?

Sara finally nods, then smiles, grateful for the comfort.

CUT TO:

INT. KLEMPERER'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM -- PRE-DAWN

Dr. Klemperer is already awake when his ALARM CLOCK RINGS. He reaches out to shut it off. While he finds the switch it RINGS so long someone KNOCKS on the wall.

INT. KLEMPERER'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM -- PRE-DAWN

The sky in the tiny window over his toilet is just bluing up with the coming of dawn. Klemperer shaves slowly and carefully in his cracked mirror. One of the two bathroom doors has been sealed up and shelved now, a wall between apartments.

INT. KLEMPERER'S APARTMENT, SITTING ROOM -- DAWN

Klemperer is tying his shoes. It takes a few moments. The RADIO beside him is playing Erik Satie's "Vexations." When he gets his shoes tied, he shuts it off, taps out his pipe, and gets his coat. He makes sure the heat stove screen is closed.

EXT. WEST BERLIN, FRIEDRICHSTRAÙE -- DAY

An early morning sun is drying the pavements from last night's storm. It's shaken leaves out of the trees and plastered them onto the curbs and sidewalks.

Klemperer makes his way slowly up a main avenue in his neighborhood. It is a squatter's part of town, full of art pioneers and youth in revolt. The ones who recognize him nod to him like a grandpa. He buys a morning newspaper beside a subway station. Headlines announce the Palestinian hijackers of Flight 181 have flown the captured Lufthansa to Bahrain.

INT. S-BAHN TRAIN -- DAY

Klemperer rides the train into East Germany. Next to him is a middle-aged PRIEST. His lip is cut and swollen. The other is a WOMAN (20) with bitten nails and a hospital band around her wrist. In her lap is a sleeping BOY (3).

When the train stops at Friedrichstraße Station, everyone is made to get out.

INT. FRIEDRICHSTRAÙE STATION, CHECKPOINT -- DAY

Klemperer is in line to show his papers at the police check.

He is waved through and heads up the stairs into the Russian Sector. One of the armed guards also gives Klemperer a nod, as to a familiar face.

EXT. EAST BERLIN, FRIEDRICHSTRAÙE -- DAY

Klemperer continues down the avenue two blocks. East Berlin is visibly still on its knees from the war, even years later. The rubble and the decay, has the feeling of having been tidied, but not yet confronted.

He turns off and walks toward a small cobbled corner of an otherwise nondescript intersection. There is a small fountain in the stonework, but nothing comes out of it. There is a masonry bench there just wide enough room for two people to sit at the lip of its dry bowl. Klemperer takes a seat there.

We are witnessing a habit, a ritual, possibly a daily occurrence. He says out loud, to no one, like a mantra:

KLEMPERER

<< And maybe today, my love. >>

Then he opens his paper and begins eating his breakfast out of a waxed paper bag he's brought with him.

CUT TO:

INT. KLEMPERER'S APARTMENT, ENTRYWAY/SITTING ROOM -- DAY

Klemperer returns to his apartment to find: No one is waiting. He lets himself in.

INT. KLEMPERER'S APARTMENT, ENTRYWAY/KITCHEN -- DAY

At some point, Klemperer's housekeeper, FRAU SESAME (50s) lets herself in the front door. She sees the door to Klemperer's sitting room is open and he is sitting inside alone. She immediately begins chatting while she takes out her cleaning bucket from under the sink.

FRAU SESAME

<< They're out again today, Doctor.  
For the prisoners. Do you think it  
will end today? >>

INT. KLEMPERER'S APARTMENT, SITTING ROOM -- DAY

Klemperer is not listening. He is looking at the bags Patricia left behind. They've been moved to the corner.

He goes to them. He unzips the duffle and begins looking through it. Clothes. Boots. Then a notebook. He hesitates, and then opens it. It is near full with entries, drawings, hand-drawn maps. He begins reading.

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, STAIRCASE -- DAY

Susie and Sara carry Susie's luggage up to the third floor passing the mirrors Susie saw the day before. She's now reflected in them from just below.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, RESIDENCE CORRIDORS -- DAY

They come into a corridor of dormitory-type rooms. Some of the girls are stealing a few moments in their rooms between breakfast and rehearsal. When Susie appears on the floor, a few come out and introduce themselves.

Susie smiles at them, greets them. One older dancer, OLGA (40), who is on a telephone, hears what's going on and steps out to look, but as soon as she sees Susie, she dismisses her and goes back to the argument she was having on the phone.

OLGA (O.S.)

Why don't you try speaking to me  
like you love me for a change--

Sara rolls her eyes and brings Susie to the end of one corridor, pointing out as they pass a room at the end:

SARA

That's my room--

The hall turns right, then right again revealing a parallel corridor, also with dorm rooms. Susie's is first. They go in.

SARA (CONT'D)

We're sort of neighbors.

SUSIE

I'm glad.

SARA

Settle in. I'll tell Ms. Vendegast we made it. Rehearsal isn't for forty minutes. Listen for the bell.

(off Susie's nod)

Knock on the wall if you need anything, okay? I'm right on the other side.

SUSIE

Sara--

Sara turns back.

SUSIE (CONT'D)

(re: the room)

Is this--?

SARA

No. Olga took Patricia's room. It's the biggest. She said she needed the space.

(sotto)

She's Russian.

With that, Sara goes. Susie looks around the room, excited. It's simple: A bed, a dresser, a desk, an old-fashioned stand with a basin and mirror. But no windows. It's an interior room inside the center of the building.

She has an odd moment of settling into the space, of hearing her own breathing. She pulls a suitcase up onto the bed and flips open the latches to start unpacking.

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, OFFICE -- DAY

A hand pulls a thick cord and then:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, RESIDENCE CORRIDOR -- DAY

The BELL for rehearsal rings in the residents' corridor.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, "IRIS" STUDIO -- DAY

All the dancers are there, stretching. Madame Blanc and Miss Tanner come in.

BLANC

Good morning. Good morning.

Tanner goes to join Danielle at the drums for a moment. Blanc goes right in among the dancers.

BLANC (CONT'D)

We have some happier company business today. I'd like to introduce our new dancer, Susie Bannion. She has come to us from America and I know you'll all make her very welcome.

(beat)

(MORE)



BLANC (CONT'D)

I saw her audition myself. I can assure you, we're lucky to have her.

Everyone smiles and nods to Susie, some come over to hug her or squeeze her shoulder. Olga watches this, irritated by it.

BLANC (CONT'D)

Would you like to say anything, Susie?

Susie looks around the group, unprepared.

SUSIE

Oh-- Um. I don't know! Hello--?  
(laughing)  
I'm sorry. I don't know what to say!

Everyone laughs warmly.

BLANC

I'll talk for now, then: Welcome to our little family. Join in as you feel ready, but there's no rush.

Susie smiles, blushing now. She nods in thanks.

BLANC (CONT'D)

All right. For rehearsal today, we should get right back to where we were last week, with Volk.

(beat)

I've talked to Olga and she will now be dancing the protagonist. Sara, I'd like you to take Olga's part. Is everyone happy with that?

Susie watches Sara receive the news. Sara closes her eyes for a moment, the extent of her outward celebration in front of Blanc. Susie smiles for her.

CUT TO:

The dancers are in the middle of a sequence in which Olga is spinning between clusters of two and three dancers. Susie sits on the edge, watching for now.

Olga's not judging the spaces correctly and is a step or two off in each collision. She's getting increasingly frustrated.

BLANC (CONT'D)

The groups are moving, too, Olga. Just aim yourself ahead of where you *think* you'll cross with them--

OLGA

I am.

She tries this, and it works. But then she stops abruptly.

OLGA (CONT'D)

This is shit. Such *shit*.

Danielle stops PLAYING the DRUM. Tanner sighs.

BLANC

It's all right. I'm pushing.

(to everyone)

Why don't we break for ten?

But Olga's frustration is not about the rehearsal. She's indignant. She says, directly to Blanc and Tanner.

OLGA

You can't even be bothered to respect your own lies.

MISS TANNER

*Miss Chkalov.*

BLANC

(to Tanner)

Oh, let her squeeze if she wants to. It's only pus.

(to Olga)

Patricia's gone, Olga. We don't know why. She said a family issue, but we all know there's a good chance that isn't true. If she's gone into hiding, she wouldn't *tell* us.

OLGA

She would have told *someone*. That's not what happened.

Blanc steps fully into this, taking slow steps toward Olga.

BLANC

Ponto. Now Schleyer. Prosecutors beaten in *Viktoriapark*. Firms burned. A bomb in Kreuzberg last night.

OLGA

She wouldn't do any of that!

BLANC

We know she met with groups that believed in *targets*, Olga.

(MORE)

BLANC (CONT'D)

And these kinds of actions require  
a *lot* of people.

OLGA

But she left them. You *know* she did  
and you know why.

BLANC

(ignoring this)

She wanted to do something with her  
beliefs. We can all admire that.  
And there *are* changes to be made,  
no question. But if she's in some  
cellar filling Beamiester bottles  
with petrol, that's her choice. Who  
won't be sad if she's shot by the  
*polizei*, but what can we do? We all  
tried to talk to her. To give her  
alternatives.

Susie watches all of this, fascinated.

OLGA

You manipulate everything--  
Everyone-- She didn't trust you--!  
Because you're hypocrites.

BLANC

She doesn't trust anyone, Olga. I  
never took it personally. Neither  
should you.

This has reduced Olga to furious tears.

BLANC (CONT'D)

Take Olga up to her room. We're all  
worried about Patricia, but concern  
is no excuse for hysteria.

OLGA

No, Miss Tanner, call *Olga* a cab.  
She's had enough and is going to  
pack her things and get the fuck  
out of this box of rabies.

Olga starts hurrying toward the door.

BLANC

Olga.

Olga points directly back at Blanc and shouts:

OLGA

*Koldun'ya!*

Olga storms out. Blanc lets the intensity in her own face dissipate to show the company the hurt underneath.

BLANC  
I'm sorry for that. It's a hot  
thing we do.

They hear a door SLAM in the near distance.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, HALLWAY/STAIRWAY/HALLWAY -- DAY

Olga shakes with anger as the adrenaline peaks in her system. She takes the stairs two at a time up to the dorm.

At the top of the stairs, ALBERTA (50s) a stocky woman who is the company's maintenance person is sitting in an alcove.

OLGA  
I'm leaving, Alberta. I can't swallow any more of this.

She heads to her room and starts packing a small bag.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, "IRIS" STUDIO -- DAY

Miss Tanner has stepped forward to Blanc's side.

MISS TANNER  
Who is also unhappy? Let's get it  
*all out, all at once--*

Blanc motions to her "that's enough."

BLANC  
I'll talk to Olga later. We've got  
an hour and a half. Can we go on?  
Is everyone all right if we go on?

She waits until enough people nod.

BLANC (CONT'D)  
Who dances the protagonist then? Caroline? Sonia?

SONIA (20s) and CAROLINE (20s) look at one another.

SONIA  
I can't. Not yet.

BLANC  
Caroline, then.

Caroline just stands there. She looks at the door where the sounds of her friend leaving have gone silent.

BLANC (CONT'D)  
That's all right. We'll manage.

A voice from the side of the room surprises everyone.

SUSIE (O.S.)  
I'll dance.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, CORRIDORS/"MIRRORED" STUDIO -- DAY

Olga, bag in hand, comes back down the stairs. Alberta is no longer there. Olga hesitates, as if confused.

*OLGA'S POV: Outside the window, she can see a slice of the street in front of the company. People pass by in their suits and autumn coats. That's where she wants to go, but she staggers the slightest bit and then heads in the wrong direction, further into the school.*

There is no one on this floor that she can see. She proceeds as if in fog, her hands up as if she is having trouble seeing or concentrating. She turns down a second corridor, further away from the front of the building.

Finally, she turns into a studio fully lined with framed mirrors floor to ceiling, and on the ceiling as well.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, "IRIS" STUDIO -- DAY

Blanc turns to find who's said this. It was Susie.

SUSIE  
I know it.

BLANC  
Susie.

SUSIE  
It was in the documentary. I've watched it a hundred times at the library. I know this dance.

BLANC  
Darling. We rehearsed it for ten months before performing it.

SUSIE  
I've seen it performed in person, too. In New York.

Everyone is cringing for Susie at this point. But she doesn't back down.

BLANC

Well. If you want to try, go ahead,  
but--

Blanc moves to her. When she gets to her she says, in a concerned tone, more discreetly.

BLANC (CONT'D)

You've already impressed us.

SUSIE

I know this.

BLANC

You're very sure?

Susie nods. Behind them, Tanner looks increasingly agitated.

MISS TANNER

First do it alone then. We don't  
want to put the others at risk. The  
last thing we need is someone to  
get kicked in the ribs.

Susie nods and goes out onto the floor. She readies herself, waits for the drum beat, and then begins. It's bold, precise, but also wild. Blanc looks at Tanner, then calls out:

BLANC

Stop.

Susie does, half-sure she is about to be dismissed. Blanc goes to Susie and gets on her knees. She takes Susie's left foot and presses her thumb up into the arch.

BLANC (CONT'D)

Clear your head. I want you to  
start over. Are you stretched? This  
is no joke.

Susie nods. Blanc takes her right foot and does the same gesture. Then she does it to each of Susie's hands. It is a hybrid of a massage and something --ambiguous. When she's done, Susie looks at her hand.

SUSIE'S POV: *The imprints of Blanc's thumbs are still white marks on the back of Susie's hand. Like a "T".*

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, "MIRRORED" STUDIO -- DAY

Olga is looking through the haze of her mesmerization for a way out of the room. The door she came in must have shut, but she can see no opening in any wall. No handle.

All she can see is her tiny figure caught in reflections echoing back and forth to infinity.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, "IRIS" STUDIO -- DAY

Now Blanc steps back, way back. She takes a different position this time, and as she does, Tanner moves into a new position. The two women make a triangle now, with Susie as its vertex.

BLANC

Remember, start on one *with* the music. If you feel ill, stop at once.

It's an odd thing to say, but Susie has to get her mind inside what's about to happen. She nods at Blanc. She's ready.

BLANC (CONT'D)

And--

Susie and the music begin.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, "MIRRORED" STUDIO -- DAY

Olga is lost in the reflections. She can only slowly look from one to the other, studying them for a chink, something that can indicate a way out.

As she turns again, her head snaps back with the force of an invisible blow. For a moment, she sees the center of a blue iris. The blow is so powerful it dislocates one side of her jaw out of its hinge. She makes a terrified sound.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, "IRIS" STUDIO -- DAY

Susie pulls her leg back from a *kick*, but does not lunge, it was a hard kick. She then moves into a series of turns that set up the next kick. When she kicks out--

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, "MIRRORED" STUDIO -- DAY

Olga's throat is punched in, as is the scream it shocks out of her. The SOUND she makes instead is horrible to hear. She goes to her knees, one hand on her crushed windpipe.

A pair of successive blows breaks ribs and cracks her sternum. All of the damage is happening under her skin. There is no blood, just agony. She is trying to cry out, but can only make a horrible MEWLING sound. The next kick dislocates a shoulder.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, "IRIS" STUDIO -- DAY

Susie is giving the dance everything she has. It is violent and beautiful to watch. Blanc shoots out a hand and snaps to *Danielle*, hissing:

BLANC

*Keep up--*

Miss Tanner is watching, arms folded, like a proud Papa.

MISS TANNER

(in a whisper)

*Brava brava brava--*

The force of Susie's movements is being intensified exponentially somehow and transferred to Olga. INTERCUT between the two studios:

We watch Susie move through the rest of the solo. Olga moves from being beaten to being pulverized. As muscles are separated from bone, and bones are broken, her silhouette becomes increasingly uncanny.

We see Olga's, Susie's, and Blanc's eyes in close up. Olga is in trauma, Susie is in ecstasy, and Blanc has a melancholy in her expression. She takes no joy, apparently, in this *via dolorosa*.

Olga's form ceases to look human, though it is not yet finished being alive.

Finally, Susie finishes the dance and has to sit immediately on the floor to keep from vomiting. For a moment no one helps her, so astonished are they. Then Blanc get down on her knees at Susie's side.

INTERCUTS END.

BLANC

It'll pass. You're not the first dancer to lose the room.

SUSIE

I'm not usually dizzy.

BLANC

It's my fault. I couldn't help myself. Sara-- take her upstairs now. She can spend the day there.

(getting up, to Susie)

A collapse is a vocational hazard  
I'm afraid.



SUSIE  
I didn't collapse.

BLANC  
You're on the floor. And that's not  
how the dance ends, *cher*.

Susie gets up on her own. She's defensive for some reason.

SUSIE  
I was trying not to throw up in  
your studio.

BLANC  
Susie, it's all right! It was won-  
derful. I'll send Miss Vendegast  
with your lunch early. You're pro-  
bably jet-lagged as well.

Sara and Susie head for the door. When they are out of ear-  
shot, Sara whispers:

SARA  
That was fucking *incredible*--

The other girls all watch them leave. Madame Blanc says to  
Miss Tanner, lightly:

BLANC  
What a surprise. Olga always made  
that piece look like such heavy  
lifting.

The comment has its intended effect. The girls look inspired.

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, SUSIE'S ROOM -- DUSK

Susie is in her room, unpacking. She looks a little hollowed  
out from the events of the afternoon.

She can hear the other girls going about their evening rou-  
tines. Someone is hanging a poster. There is HAMMERING. She  
can hear her own name now and then as well, but not what's  
being said about her. She steps to the closed door to listen,  
but there is a KNOCK and Miss Vendegast comes in with a tray  
of lidded plastic cups.

All have been labelled with initials. Most are full of urine.

MISS VENDEGAST  
How are you feeling, Susie?

Miss Vendegast hands her a cup with her initials on it.

MISS VENDEGAST (CONT'D)

We do this several times a year.  
Unannounced. I need you to fill it.

SUSIE

I just went a little while ago--

MISS VENDEGAST

Half is fine.

Susie takes the cup and goes into the little WC in the hall. She closes the door and gets ready to try to fill it. Miss Vendegast hums to cover the noise.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, RESIDENTS' WC -- DUSK

Susie holds the cup and tries to pee. The WC is tiny.

MISS VENDEGAST (O.S.)

I've also brought the residency forms we'll need you to read and sign. I leave them in your room--

Then memory comes to Susie, forcefully:

CUT TO:

EXT. OHIO FARMHOUSE -- DAY

Work is being done on the house, shingles are HAMMERED into place. A gaggle of Mennonite girls can be seen playing "Crack the Whip" outside, laughing in their pastel dresses.

There are CARNAL MURMURINGS coming from inside the house, out one of the window screens. The girls hear it and come over to peer inside.

GIRL'S POV: *Young Susie's feet are extending out of the closet. She is lying inside, masturbating.*

One of the girls runs to fetch someone. In a moment, Susie's mother comes in and finds her.

SUSIE'S MOTHER is younger here, healthy, not the ravaged woman from the opening credits. Susie (13) is lying on her back with her Mennonite dress pulled up, bonnet off.

Susie's mother reaches in and yanks Susie up by her hair. Susie steadies herself on the door jamb. Susie's sisters look on in horror from the window. Some of the men have come down off the roof as well to see what's going on.

SUSIE

It's all a rhythm, Momma. You draw  
it with your fingers--

Susie's mother sees her fingers in the crack in the thin,  
slatted closet door and pistons it shut. Susie pulls her hand  
free and holds it to her mouth, but even then her eyes smile  
into her mother's blast of shame.

BACK TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, RESIDENTS' WC -- DUSK

In the little WC, Susie thinks of this while her urine begins  
to FLOW into the cup.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, SUSIE'S ROOM -- DUSK

CLOSE ON: Susie places her urine sample with the others.

MISS VENDEGAST (O.S.)

If you feel up to it, Madame Blanc  
invites you to join her for dinner  
in an hour. Shall I tell her you'll  
come?

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, "MIRRORED" STUDIO -- DUSK

The lights are still on in the mirrored studio. Olga's re-  
mains lie on the floor. One eye peers up out of the uncanny  
mess. A single drop of blood stains it.

Blanc and several other MATRONS watch as MISS HOLZMANN (40s)  
and MISS COTUGNO (50s) place silver hooks under Olga's arms  
to drag her out of the room.

It's clear from Blanc's expression that the damage caused to  
Olga is worse than what she'd expected. Tanner comes to her  
side.

MISS TANNER

She couldn't have known what she  
was doing--

BLANC

No. She just carried more current  
than we expected. She's a natural,  
that one.

Madame Blanc is trying to contain her own excitement now.

CUT TO:

INT. KLEMPERER'S APARTMENT, SITTING ROOM -- DUSK

Dr. Klemperer sits in his office, staring in the middle distance. The last light in the sky is fading. The framed photo of his wife smiles at him. He's got Patricia's pale notebook open on his desk.

We see names we know--M. BLANC, SARA, OLGA, HELENA MARKOS-- and names we do not. It is also jammed with little exhibits from Patricia's life--ticket stubs from concerts, newspaper clippings about terrorist actions around Berlin, more than a few programs from dance performances.

One section has drawings of some iconographic symbols, as if from some vulgar religion. It is this symbology that unsettles Klemperer most.

He closes the notebook and picks up the phone. He dials.

VOICE ON PHONE

<< Police. What is the nature of your call? >>

Klemperer looks on the verge of hanging up, but he does not.

KLEMPERER

<< I'm reporting a young woman who may be missing. >>

VOICE ON PHONE

<< Hold the line. >>

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, STAIRS AND CORRIDORS -- NIGHT

Miss Vendegast guides Susie down two flights of stairs and into the staff section of the building. They talk along the way, but the acoustics of the building muffle it. Miss Vendegast knocks on Blanc's door.

After a moment, Blanc answers, wearing now a Japanese silk tunic. She is smiling when she opens the door, but when she sees Susie, it fades.

BLANC

You don't look better. Or are you this pale all the time--?

Blanc nods at Miss Vendegast, who goes, and lets Susie in.

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, BLANC'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Madame Blanc's office is a Beaux-Arts beauty. Its curved walls are painted with a long Japanese garden. A small table is laid with dinner, which Susie and Blanc are finishing.

An arch leads into a dark, smaller circular room that must be Blanc's private studio. Light from the office glints off some kind of lacquered screens there.

BLANC

It's different from being Amish, then?

SUSIE

Yes. The Amish split from the Mennonites in the 17th century.

BLANC

Why?

SUSIE

They worried the Mennonites were becoming too liberal. But they still believe many of the same things.

BLANC

Such as?

SUSIE

Adult baptism. Plain clothing. Non-resistance.

BLANC

"They"? Not "we"? Have you left religious thinking behind you?

Susie offers a small nod.

BLANC (CONT'D)

Oligarchs writing for patriarchs.

(beat)

You don't like to talk about this.

SUSIE

I don't know why we are.

BLANC

I find it hard not to be curious about you. In two days you've managed to audition, be accepted, and dance a lead.

Blanc smiles.

BLANC (CONT'D)

I'm not trying to make you self-conscious.

SUSIE

I came here to dance.

BLANC

But how've you even heard of us?

SUSIE

I went to New York. To the Martha Graham Center. I saw you there three times.

BLANC

Your parents took you?

SUSIE

I went by bus once and hitchhiked the other times.

BLANC

Wasn't that dangerous?

Susie shrugs.

BLANC (CONT'D)

Were you punished for it?

SUSIE

Of course.

A beat. Blanc is moved. She takes Susie's hand for a moment.

BLANC

That's extraordinary.

(beat)

You were right to insist on an audition.

SUSIE

I'm lucky you're doing VOLK. Some of the choreographies makes sense to me, some doesn't. I remember the ones that make sense. WHITE STAR does. This does. All the solos from XENOS--

An odd beat.

BLANC

All mine.

(beat)

(MORE)

BLANC (CONT'D)

How did it feel to dance Volk today  
in front of the one who made it?

SUSIE

I don't know how to put it--

BLANC

Actually, don't. That's a vain  
question. Let me ask a different  
one: While you danced it, what was  
happening inside you-- in your  
body?

Susie thinks.

SUSIE

It felt like what I think it must  
feel like to fuck.

BLANC

(curious, but unfazed)  
Do you mean fuck a man?

SUSIE

No. I was thinking of an animal.

BLANC

You looked joyful. In pain, but in  
joy as well.

Susie nods. A long beat. Blanc smiles, sincerely.

BLANC (CONT'D)

We don't teach dance here, Susie.  
We assume dancers come trained. You  
are not. I don't exactly understand  
*what* you are yet, but I will ask Ca-  
roline to help you with your jumps  
and leaps. Yours are nowhere near  
good enough yet. We must build you  
up now.

SUSIE

So I can dance the VOLK protagon-  
ist when you perform it?

A beat. Blanc leans back in her chair.

BLANC

I'll have to see you do that level  
of dancing again and again. The sim-  
plicity of the choreography is an  
illusion. It's intuitive to watch  
and painful to do.

(MORE)

BLANC (CONT'D)

We perform next month. I'll have to grind you to get there in time.

SUSIE

I can do it.

BLANC

I don't have many options, actually. And I'd rather have someone on who's messy, but alive than another Olga. She was a *matryoshka* doll with legs. I'm relieved she's gone.

(beat)

Thank you for your help in that.

Blanc watches Susie's reaction closely, but there doesn't seem to be any complicity in it. Just grateful excitement.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, SUSIE'S ROOM -- NIGHT

When Susie gets back to her room, Sara pokes her head in. Susie motions her to come in and close the door behind her. She grabs Sara's hands.

SUSIE

I didn't know it was going to be like this! She's so nice.

(beat)

And she wants me to dance in VOLK. The protagonist!

Sara nods, but with less energy than Susie was expecting.

SUSIE (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

SARA

Yes. I'm fine. I was just thinking about Olga. --About what she said today.

Susie remembers.

SUSIE

I'm sorry. I'm on my own little shooting star today. When everyone is so upset--

Sara looks at Susie.

SARA

If I asked you for a favor tomorrow, would you do it?

(MORE)



SARA (CONT'D)

(beat)

We might get caught.

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, STAFF KITCHEN -- NIGHT

In the staff kitchen, Tanner and a few of the other matrons are finishing their own dinners.

MISS TANNER

<< Things can be honed. Blanc is going to work out another approach. How could we have known what would happen? What we are attempting hasn't been done in living memory. >>

MISS KAPLITT

<< How do we know it will work at all? If it killed one girl, it may kill any we try. >>

MISS TANNER

<< Patricia was unwilling. Blanc believes that is the key. >>

MISS KAPLITT

<< It was more than that. >>

MISS TANNER

<< No. We should not have forced it. What a fool. What we offered her! She wanted to blow up department stores instead. >>

Miss Huller, smoking a cigarette over her pork chop, says:

MISS HULLER

<< How do we know no one's planning to blow us up, too. Patricia might have said anything to anyone about us. Anyone might have followed her here. >>

MISS TANNER

<< If she did, we'll know. We cannot despair. We have time yet. >>

From the other end of the table, MISS MARKS (50s) speaks up.

MISS MARKS

<< How much time? The vote was a mistake.

(MORE)

MISS MARKS (CONT'D)

If Markos dies before we can figure this out, we are finished. >>

Several of the women are made frightened by this conversation.

MISS TANNER

<< Markos has strength left in her. She will wait until we find another girl. >>

MISS MARKS

<< You've seen her! She has disease stacked atop disease. How long can she possibly hold on? >>

Without warning, Miss Griffith, the secretary from the front office, takes a knife from the table and cuts her own throat.

The women on either side of her cannot stop her in time. A shocked beat. Then everyone moves at once to lay her down and put pressure on the bleeding. Someone elevates her legs. Miss Griffith looks up at them all as the life drains out of her, already shivering.

MISS MILLIUS

<< Stay with us! Please, stay! >>

Tanner shouts to the women closest to the door.

MISS TANNER

<< Find Blanc now! >>

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, SUSIE'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Susie is sleeping, deep in a dream. Her breathing is not the only BREATHING in the room.

INT. CATACOMBS -- NIGHT (DREAM)

Susie walks through catacombs in her dream. A font of pure white FLAME lights up the bony corridors as she goes. Her feet are bare. Bodies, bent to every attitude--or collected and stored by part--line every inch of wall and ceiling, all leathery, all still.

She goes from chamber to chamber. If something catches her eye, she approaches, no matter if it is low or high up it is. Physics don't matter here. She peers into the face of a dressed bride hung from the ceiling. She peers into the faces of a row of young boys seated on the floor along the wall, all dressed in woolen suits and caps.

All the while, the FONT leads her to the sound of HER OWN BREATHING.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARKOS COMPANY -- DAWN

The street is empty in the early, frosty morning. At the front door of the company stand DETECTIVES HALLE (40) and DETECTIVE MOSER (60). They've knocked. They stomp their feet to stay warm and Moser knocks again. In a moment, the door is opened by Miss Vendegast.

DETECTIVE HALLE

<< Good morning, Ma'am. We'd like to talk to someone in charge, Mrs. Markos if she's here, about a girl named--

(looking at his notepad)  
Hingle. Patricia Hingle. >>

Miss Vendegast says nothing, but he responds as if she has.

DETECTIVE HALLE (CONT'D)

<< Someone named "Blanc," then. >>

MISS VENDEGAST

<< Yes. I am she. Why don't you follow me inside? >>

She stands aside to let them in and they disappear inside the building marked "Tanz."

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, STAIRCASE/CORRIDORS -- DAY

Sara leads Susie down to the first level, past rooms where members of the Corps are rehearsing with the *répétiteurs*, and then further into the building. They come down a corridor and hear some LAUGHTER coming from a further office, but the rest of the floor is quiet. They find a door marked:

"Miss Martincin, Accountant"  
"Miss Holzmann, Touring Director"

It is unlocked. They slip in and close the door silently behind them.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, ACCOUNTANT'S OFFICE -- DAY

In a back room of the office, Sara and Susie move to an alcove where there are half a dozen filing cabinets. They are all locked.

Sara looks through the nearest desk and finds a nail file in Miss Martincin's drawer. She proceeds to slide it into a gap above the drawer, find the latch, and nudge it open.

Susie keeps looking toward the door.

The first cabinet is not what they're looking for. But the second is personnel files, including a file for each dancer. Sara quickly scans through them.

SARA  
Patricia's isn't here anymore.

SUSIE  
Try Olga's.

Sara looks.

SARA  
Everyone's here but them.

Susie looks at through everything on Miss Martincin's desk, in her inbox, but there's nothing.

Sara checks the Rolodex, flipping through the typed cards. A bad reproduction of John Atkinson Grimshaw's "The Lady of Shalott II" hangs over the desk, ignoring them.

SARA (CONT'D)  
I just need a number. For a parent--  
or anyone who can tell us for sure  
she's not in Berlin.

Susie holds up a hand, hearing something. The BREAKFAST BELL.

SUSIE  
Maybe Olga will come back on her  
own, when she cools off.

SARA  
Then why remove her file? As if she  
was never here.

SUSIE  
Blanc may not want her back even if  
she does come.

A dead end. Sara shrugs, not happy. She tosses the nail file back in the drawer and something catches her eye. She pulls the desk drawer out even further and finds, in the back:

At least a dozen tubes of lipstick, worn to varying degrees. And at least as many little eye shadows.

INT. CORRIDORS, MARKOS COMPANY -- DAY

They come silently back out into the corridor. As they turn to head back, another BURST OF LAUGHTER comes from a back office. There is something mocking in it.

Susie takes a step away from Sara to look discreetly around the next corner. Through a door that's half open, Susie can see through one office into the next.

*SUSIE'S POV: Detectives Halle and Moser stand expressionless and naked before Miss Tanner, Miss Huller, and Miss Vendegast, their cocks hanging out. Moser's body is paunchy, with a scar from a bullet wound on his side. Halle has tattoos like a longshoreman and traces of an athletic past lost to beer and schnitzel. Miss Huller steps into view behind Vendegast and Tanner. The women recline in their chairs, chatting over what they like.*

*AN IMAGE flashes in Susie's head next: Detective Halle raised up in some kind of web. His mouth is covered with it, so he is silent. He hangs in a restless void, in some kind of sustained animal release.*

Susie steps back out of view, jolted by these images. Sara hasn't seen what she's seen, so Susie steers her back toward the staircase to the first floor. Susie looks back once, but says nothing.

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, "IRIS" STUDIO -- DAY

Susie and Sara are in rehearsal. Caroline smokes between them. Madame Blanc is walking among them. Miss Mandel and Miss Millius are also there.

BLANC

Now that you're warmed up, I want to tell you some news that might excite you: In addition to putting on VOLK this fall, we will start working on something new. Of my own.

This causes a frisson of excitement among the dancers.

BLANC (CONT'D)

And there's no protagonist in this dance. Instead, we have five equal main parts, and an equal number of secondary parts. Today, we'll improvise, by my direction, with Misses Mandel and Millius.

(MORE)

BLANC (CONT'D)  
 Caroline, Sonia, and Sara also come  
 up. You are the five.

Caroline, Sara, and Sonia step forward. Susie watches, waiting, already knowing there will be something for her.

BLANC (CONT'D)  
 Susie you will improvise with no  
 direction. I'm interested in your  
 instincts here. Consider yourself a  
*radical libre*, moving around the  
 others as you choose.

Susie comes forward. Everyone around her is experiencing a shift in attitude about her. The creator has chosen her muse and, as members of a company, the others must abide. But one can feel how badly they wanted it to be them, to be close to Blanc, and if not her, than close now to Susie.

BLANC (CONT'D)  
 There are basic nine movements to  
 use. Miss Mandel will show you--

SUSIE  
 What is the piece called?

BLANC  
 "ÖFFNEN WEIDER." "OPEN AGAIN."

CUT TO:

All six dancers are in motion. The five principals are in a formation, a kind of rotating crown, pulsing in and out.

Susie darts among them. Within her improvisation, she finds herself paying increasing attention to the floor. She comes to one particular spot, dances over it, comes to it again. Finally, she finds herself reaching out to it, touching the spot, putting her torso on it, then her face. It's strange.

Blanc is watching her closely, wondering what could be prompting this. Then it dawns on her. She shoots a look at Tanner, who levels a mildly defiant look back. Then Blanc looks back at the spot on the floor.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, BLANC'S OFFICE -- DAY

Blanc has brought Miss Tanner to her office. She is enraged.

BLANC  
 << You should have told me. >>

MISS TANNER

<< Why? Mother wanted it. She wanted to feel Susie for herself. Be in the same space. >>

BLANC

<< I thought we agreed to stop using that title. >>

MISS TANNER

<< Markos is and will always be our Mother. >>

BLANC

<< It's offensive. If Markos was truly a Mother, we wouldn't need to save her life. >>

MISS TANNER

<< You should have told her about Miss Bannion yourself. Now Mother wants her. >>

BLANC

<< And if Miss Bannion doesn't want Markos? Are we to waste another girl so quickly? >>

MISS TANNER

<< You mean waste another *dancer*. You were going to keep her for yourself, Blanc. Or is it that you don't want Markos to survive? >>

BLANC

<< I want what's best for all. >>

MISS TANNER

<< Everyone voted. You are not the light we chose to follow. If Markos wants this girl, you must prepare her. >>

(sincerely)

<< Markos will live. We found the girl in time. >>

A beat. It's not exactly how she would put it.

BLANC

<< I won't rush again. I will tell *Markos* when the girl is ready. She must be made to be willing. I will not do it any other way. >>

INT. STAIRWAY/RESIDENTS' CORRIDOR, MARKOS COMPANY -- DAY

After rehearsal, Susie and Sara walk back to their corridor. Susie is a little disturbed.

SARA

Something in the sequence-- the ones-to-twos. I've never seen her use those moves that way before.

(beat)

It's exquisite. The whole thing.

SUSIE

Did anything-- *happen* to you during it?

SARA

What do you mean?

SUSIE

You didn't feel someone there?

SARA

Someone?

Susie considers this. She says, more to herself.

SUSIE

It was Markos.

A beat. Sara looks at her.

SARA

What made you say that?

SUSIE

I don't know.

SARA

(louder than she means)

So why say it?

SUSIE

I didn't mean to make you upset--

SARA

It's just--

(beat)

It's the sort of thing Patricia would say. Don't start bugging out at nothing, too. I couldn't handle it.

They get to their floor and stop at the top of the stairs.



Suddenly there is a SCREAM in one of the room. EXCITED PANIC. Sara and Susie go toward it, alarmed. They see girls racing to their rooms.

SARA (CONT'D)  
What's going on?!

One of the dancers, MARKETTA (20s), tells them, breathlessly.

MARKETA  
Bowie's doing a surprise concert tonight at SO36! For "Helden"! It was just on the radio--  
(almost hysterical)  
If we stand a chance of getting in we've got to go now!

Sara runs for her room. Sonia and Caroline come marching down the hall in ruffled coats, all glossed up now. Sonia screams:

SONIA  
"THE FUTURE BELONGS TO THOSE WHO  
CAN HEAR IT COMING!!!"

CUT TO:

INT. CLUB SO36 -- NIGHT

The girls are crammed into the intimate venue, under racks of hot lights, thirty feet from DAVID BOWIE (30), who is in the middle of "Beauty and the Beast."

DAVID BOWIE  
*That's my kind of highroad, gone wrong. My-my, smile at least. You can't say no to the Beauty and the Beast.*

The crowd is hopping up and down the beat, more or less in unison. The others are ecstatic, but Susie is having trouble staying in the moment. She's hearing BREATHING, SIGHS, even here.

DAVID BOWIE (CONT'D)  
*Something in the night. Something in the day. Nothing is wrong. But something's in the way.*

She covers her ears, but the SIGHS remain.

CUT TO:

EXT. BERLIN, STREET -- NIGHT

The girls walk home from the concert, excited, sated. They come to a *platz* across which they can see cafes. Sara notices the dance matrons sitting outside one and points.

THEIR POV: *Madame Blanc, Miss Tanner, Miss Millius, Miss Mandel, Miss Huller, Pavla, Miss Vendegast, and a few others, are gathered around cafe tables pushed together, having an evening as well. They are brazenly unfashionable. All of Berlin goes on around them, taking no notice.*

EXT. BERLIN, CAFE -- NIGHT

None of the women turn to look at the girls across the street, but they know they are there. Madame Blanc tells the others:

BLANC

<< It's good for her to see us like this. That we're still part of the world. >>

MISS TANNER

(casually)

<< She's already seen a lot. >>

MISS MILLIUS

<< Seen with her heart. Maybe she even senses what's coming. It's not far off now. >>

MISS MANDEL

<< What about the witness? It is not too early to discuss this. Who'll be our witness there? >>

MISS MILLIUS

<< One of our new friends from the *Polizei*? >>

MISS HULLER

<< I like the younger one. >>

They laugh all over again. Miss Huller is a bit more serious about the question.

MISS HULLER (CONT'D)

<< We're forgetting. We already have a witness. >>

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, SARA'S ROOM -- NIGHT

The muffled sound of WOMEN LAUGHING, returning from a night out, can be heard in Sara's room. Sara is not quite asleep. She hears it. It sounds like it's coming from the opposite direction than the hallway, though.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, SUSIE'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Susie is deeply, almost hypnotically, asleep now, deep in a dream.

INT. MUTTERHAUS, THE ROOM OF HOLES -- NIGHT (DREAM)

Susie is naked, sitting on the floor, legs spread, knees up, chest-to-back in a tight line with the other girls. She can't move her arms. She looks and sees the floor is full of smooth holes cut out of the wooden studio floor. Women are reaching up from below through the holes to hold the girls' wrists so they cannot get up.

The room is enormous and dim, but Susie can see other matrons around them, staying a few steps back. The other girls are getting increasingly panicked. Some are crying, begging to be let free.

A sound is in the room with them. A wet, diseased breathing.

At the front of the line, a woman floats forward. She is three feet off the ground. She spreads her robes and her heavyset, aged torso can be vaguely seen in the dark. Something is dripping from between her legs. As she levitates over the first girl--robes sliding over the girl's shoulders--the girl turns her face away from the dripping coming from above, repulsed and afraid. So does the next girl, and the next. The women on the periphery are chanting in the whisper:

WITCHES

*"Mother Is! Mother Is! Mother Is!"*

Susie is trying to fight down her own panic. She's shaking. The Mother approaches just overhead. Susie makes a decision: She throws back her head, opens her mouth, sticks out her tongue to receive the blood.

BACK TO:

INT. SUSIE'S ROOM, MARKOS COMPANY -- NIGHT

Susie shouts, with urgency and defensiveness:

SUSIE

*I know who I am. I KNOW who I AM!*

Sara is suddenly there, shaking Susie awake.

SARA

It's all right. It's all right!

Susie is awake in a snap, able to separate things quickly. Caroline and another dancer, DOLL (30) stick their sleepy faces in as well.

CAROLINE

Is she all right?

SARA

Just a nightmare.

DOLL

The Markos Company special. I'm surprised it took this long.

They disappear from the door.

SUSIE

I'm sorry. I'm-- Did I wake you up?

SARA

I was coming back from the toilet. You scared the hell out of me, though.

(beat)

Move over.

A beat before she realizes Sara is serious. Susie scoots over to make room in the bed.

SUSIE

I never had a sleepover. Just my sisters--

SARA

Well, we're sisters now aren't we?

Sara closes her eyes, happy, and tries to fall back into it.

SUSIE

First one back to sleep wins.

Susie keeps her eyes open, alert. She's jolted. And learning.

CUT TO:

EXT. EAST BERLIN, FRIEDRICHSTRAÙE -- DAY

Klemperer sits at his small fountain in the stonework, finishing his breakfast ritual. He gets up and says to the air:

KLEMPERER  
<< Tomorrow, then. >>

INT. TRÄNENPALAST -- DAY

Klemperer waits to come back into West Berlin in the Soviet-run "Palace of Tears," named so for all the tearful goodbyes of family, friends, and lovers separating again to two sides of a wall that may not permit any further reunions.

Klemperer, who does not have this particular kind of tears, just waits to be let through.

INT. BUNDESKRIMINALAMT, WAITING AREA -- DAY

Back in West Berlin, Klemperer waits in the reception area of a *Federal Criminal Police Station*. The waiting room is packed.

A TELEVISION hanging from the ceiling shows footage of the hijacked Lufthansa at yet another airport. Now it's in Mogadishu.

Klemperer sits in front of a row of posters with a BKA logo at the top and the headline "TERRORISTEN." They feature photos of dozens and dozens of men and women, some with names, others with question marks. Some are crossed out. There's a photo that looks a lot like Patricia, which is not crossed out.

INT. BUNDESKRIMINALAMT, AGENT'S OFFICE -- DAY

Klemperer sits down with BKA AGENT ALBRECHT (40) and AGENT GLÖCKNER (40). Any person passing in the hall causes the agents to glance up as if they are waiting to be summoned to breaking news. But each person passes by.

A crucifix hangs on the wall. One of the Agents is a religious man.

KLEMPERER  
<< The officers said they found nothing amiss. But I-- feel, perhaps, they never went. >>

AGENT ALBRECHT  
<< It's not really your place to speculate on that. Do we agree? >>

Klemperer knows how to respond to questions like these. He looks at the desk and nods.

AGENT ALBRECHT (CONT'D)  
<< You say it's a dance school? >>

KLEMPERER

<< Not a school, but yes, for dancers. >>

AGENT ALBRECHT

<< She'd been threatened there? >>

Klemperer thinks for a moment how to answer.

KLEMPERER

<< I think it's more. She had a delusion about there being a coven of witches at the company. She had this delusion for months. >>

(beat)

<< At the center was a woman she called "Mother Markos." It only just occurred to me since she has been missing that her delusion could be real. >>

Agent Glockener smiles, irritated. Klemperer does not.

AGENT ALBRECHT

<< You believe in witches, Doctor?

(beat)

Do you understand the kind of week we're having? >>

KLEMPERER

<< Not the element about witches, but the one about a organization operating in secret. >>

This pulls the agents' attention in. They stop tracking what's going on in the corridor and give Klemperer their full attention.

KLEMPERER (CONT'D)

<< I've written the names of women she mentioned specifically. >>

He pulls a slip from his wallet and gives it to them. We see the names "Mandel," "Millius," "Huller," "Tanner," "Blanc" and, of course "Markos."

AGENT ALBRECHT

<< And Miss Hingle. Did she have political affiliations, too? >>

Klemperer lies with ease about this.

KLEMPERER

<< Not to my knowledge.

(beat)

I just want to be certain she is safe. >>

CUT TO:

INT. BUNDESKRIMINALAMT, CORRIDOR -- DAY

Agent Glockner escorts Klemperer out.

AGENT GLOCKNER

<< You did right to come. If you see Miss Hingle call us immediately. But we'll look into this. >>

Klemperer says through a joyless smile:

KLEMPERER

<< This isn't the first time we've met, Agent Glockner. >>

Glockner just looks at him, not making a connection.

KLEMPERER (CONT'D)

<< You were a police officer in Schöneberg, yes? You helped me try to locate my wife. >>

He looks at Klemperer, suspicious now.

GLOCKNER

<< Your wife also went missing? >>

KLEMPERER

<< Two years before the Russian charge. >>

Glockner's suspicion fades and is replaced by a kind of pity.

KLEMPERER (CONT'D)

<< Anke Zisman. 1943. From the records, you helped me cross off Poland. I am still grateful. >>

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, "IRIS" STUDIO -- DAY

The company is rehearsing "VOLK." They dance a long portion without stopping.

Some of the dancers are wearing different costume prototypes. Miss Huller, the production designer, stands with Blanc, commenting on the nuances of each option.

Susie is refining every move. She is pushing out of a servant's intuition into her choreographer's intention.

All the dancers are tuned in, but getting exhausted. They reach a place where Blanc calls a stop. She immediately comes over to Susie to confer.

BLANC

Part of a jump is muscle, and that will improve as you condition, Susie, but you have an aversion to them and I don't know why. You're happy to be stuck to the Earth?

Some of the dancers laugh. Susie does as well. She shakes her head.

BLANC (CONT'D)

There is a yield before the push you aren't quite understanding. Caroline-- Do a series, please. Susie watch closely.

Caroline does several jumps in succession.

BLANC (CONT'D)

Now you.

Susie attempts the same moves. They are not as high or as precisely articulated.

SUSIE

(frustrated)

What I really want is to be on the floor here anyway.

BLANC

Of course you do. You're mistaking a limitation for an artistic preference.

SUSIE

At this point, the jumps are opposing the pull of the structure, but it's soon for that, no? The rolls and ground moves are keeping the other dancers pushed down--

(beat)

This could echo that on a slightly higher point of elevation.



Susie does a grotesque, *fast crawling lope* over the floor. It is a truly strange movement. Blanc watches her, not defensively, but really listening.

SUSIE (CONT'D)

If I stayed close to the ground now and went straight into the leaps where you have them later, isn't that more to the point? The resistance is more desperate, no?

A beat as Blanc considers, then rejects this.

BLANC

Your insight's impressive. Your interpretation, less so.

Susie waits for more, still catching her breath.

BLANC (CONT'D)

This dance came out of living in Berlin during the Reich, something you have no way of climbing inside. If you think I'm indicating levels of resistance with levels of height you've not only misunderstood the dance, but my character as well.

Susie concedes with a nod.

BLANC (CONT'D)

You may become a great choreographer. But not before you are a great dancer. Let's get you in the air first.

(beginning again)

*Allez!*

CUT TO:

After rehearsal, the dancers pick up their things and begin filing out. Blanc packs up her bag, her back to everyone. Sara goes to Susie.

SARA

We're going to the Ufer for coffee.

BLANC

(without turning)

Susie, hold on a moment--

A beat. Susie looks at Blanc's back, and shrugs to Sara. Sara gives her a supportive smile and heads out with the others.

We then watch Blanc's face in closeup We see the dancers leaving over her shoulder.

As they go: Caroline collapses in the doorway and begins seizing. Blanc turns and rushes to her side. She has to climb over Caroline's jerking legs and torso to get out in the hall where the girl's head is. Blanc keeps her from swallowing her tongue.

The other dancers watch from both out in the hall and inside the studio, alarmed, helpless.

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, RESIDENCE CORRIDOR -- DAY

Sara, Sonia, and Marketa look in on Caroline. She's propped up in bed, with color in her cheeks. DR. BISCHOFFS (50s) is there, consulting with Miss Vendegast.

The girls pull on their coats and head downstairs. Susie is nowhere around.

EXT. MARKOS COMPANY -- DAY

Sara, Sonia, and Marketa come out into the sunlight and cold and enter the flow of the sidewalk traffic.

SONIA

She hit her head hard. I heard it.  
I hope nothing comes of *that*.

MARKETA

She doesn't eat enough. We all tell her.

They get only a quarter of a block before an old man stands up from a bench and steps forward. It's Dr. Klemperer.

KLEMPERER

I'm looking for a dancer. From your Markos company--

MARKETA

Who are you looking for?

But he already knows the answer. He steps up to Sara.

KLEMPERER

You are Sara?

Marketa and Sonia look at Sara, who is looking at Klemperer trying to place him. She has no idea who he is.

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, CORRIDOR -- DAY

Madame Blanc brings Susie a little further into the company. Susie is doing an admirable job of hiding her nerves, having no idea what is about to happen next. Blanc says, mildly:

BLANC

Certainly, part of the issue is-- and always is--not being able to see your body in space. One angle, in a mirror, or even on film, is not enough.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, "MIRRORED" STUDIO -- DAY

Blanc brings Susie into a small, pitch black studio and turns on the lights. Susie sees reflections of herself and Blanc everywhere she turns. She smiles.

This is the same studio where Olga was killed. The parquet is recently polished. The mirrors clean and streakless.

BLANC

There's a reason the *tour en l'air* is mostly given to men in ballet. They have the strength to achieve it. But it's wrong to think of the goal as height. The goal is having enough space under you. Your two-tos are very close to fine, but the one-to-ones you have to think of differently. Every movement that takes air must be a *coup de foudre*.

SUSIE

I don't understand what that means.

BLANC

A strike of lightning! A bolt of sudden love, actually. Graham used to say: "Every dance is a fever chart. A graph of the heart."

Though she is explaining, Blanc is being more vulnerable than a teacher would be. It carries a very light erotic charge.

SUSIE

That's beautiful. Your dances are beautiful like that.

BLANC

No, Susie. Never. There are two things dance cannot be anymore-- "cheerful," and "beautiful." We are women, aren't we. We must break the nose of every beautiful thing.

Susie nods, trying to understand. She looks at the floor and, for one moment, she sees the parquet in a jumble of pieces as it must have looked when it was being laid, then rotting from disrepair. These images come in a flash and then are gone. Susie catches her breath.

BLANC (CONT'D)

(directly)

If you're going to dance, you must learn one of the languages of dance. It should be French. You'll never learn Russian if you're only starting now. You'd go insane--

(beat)

Are you warm enough here?

SUSIE

Yes, thank you.

BLANC

Stretch if you need to. Otherwise let's watch you jump, here, where you can see every angle.

Susie readies herself and tries a jump. It is *inches* higher. Blanc watches her closely to see if she understands what has happened. Susie tries again and can feel the difference.

Susie is clearly understanding *something*. Something momentous has happened. Her jumps look exactly like Caroline's in their form. They may in fact somehow be Caroline's.

This is a crucial moment and Blanc knows it. If Susie backs away from what's happening, all is lost. But Susie looks her in the eye and tells her:

SUSIE

You see? Sometimes I only need to be told twice.

Blanc's relief is huge. She laughs, delighted, and in her laugh, you can see the young woman she must've been at Susie's age. Susie can't help but laugh as well.

CUT TO:

INT. BERLIN, CAFE IN THE TIERGARTEN -- DAY

Sara has accompanied Dr. Klemperer into the *Tiergarten* where they sit at a window table that looks out onto the park.

ON A TV: The news is showing Lufthansa flight 181 on the air-strip in Mogadishu. The dead body of one of the hostages is unceremoniously tossed down to the tarmac.

The other patrons in the restaurant are watching this, their backs to Klemperer and Sara.

KLEMPERER

She said she was going to come back for you. That she'd left a note--

Sara shakes her head, touched even in her confusion.

SARA

I don't know what to make of any of this. I know the kind of thing she was involved with, but I don't see how any of it could be happening inside the *company*.

KLEMPERER

She describes it in terms of a revolutionary movement in a moment of crisis. A crisis of leadership, and mandate. Stay underground, or come out in force. Stasis, reinvestment, or extinction.

SARA

I *live* there. I have friends there. I don't see any evidence of this at all.

(beat)

No one has ever approached me, or any of the other girls as far as I know--

KLEMPERER

Read this.

Klemperer takes out Patricia's yellow notebook. He turns to a particular passage and waits for Sara to read it. She does, and then looks up at him in surprise.

SARA

But this says "witches."

Klemperer puts his hands together, as if grounding himself.

KLEMPERER

Mother Markos. *Mother Meinhoff*.  
Dance rehearsal, political action,  
paranoia. In Patricia's life, these  
things were of equal influence. And  
that is how transferences happens,  
how delusions are made. A delusion  
is a truth that tells a lie, Sara.

(beat)

Patricia's fantasies might have  
been her way of processing another  
form of oppression or intellectual  
manipulation.

SARA

The company is a --family. There's  
a lot of love there.

KLEMPERER

Love and anarchy have lived in the  
same houses for centuries. They are  
forever friends.

SARA

I sorry. I don't see this.

KLEMPERER

There may be things the police  
missed. Patricia talks about whole  
secret parts of the building. Actua-  
l *rooms* that are hidden--

Sara looks at him, putting something together. But she dis-  
misses it immediately.

KLEMPERER (CONT'D)

--where a chapter could meet, or a  
cell could use as its base.

But Sara gets up and collects her purse.

KLEMPERER (CONT'D)

Miss--

SARA

I don't want to be disrespectful,  
Doctor. I don't. But you're asking  
me and I'm telling you: It's a  
dance company. We are not talking  
about anything else. I'm sorry.

KLEMPERER

Look harder.

SARA

Thank you for caring about Patricia. But I hope you don't come again.

She leaves. Klemperer can't run after her, so he is forced to watch her stride off. She doesn't look back.

EXT. BERLIN, TIERGARTEN -- DAY

Sara walks far enough away to be out of Klemperer's view before she slows down again. She rubs her neck, looking very unsure and alone.

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, BASEMENT LAUNDRY ROOM -- DAY

Sonia and Doll are in the company basement using the washing machines in the costume department to do their personal wash. Caroline is with them, back on her feet. They are talking over the NOISE of the machines.

DOLL

If they aren't already, they will be. I've never see Blanc take to a girl like this.

CAROLINE

Still, she *is* good.

DOLL

She's good, but she's a *péquenaud*.

SONIA

I heard she's from some kind of religious family. From Pennsylvania--

Sonia glances behind her and sees Caroline is on the floor again, seizing even harder this time.

CUT TO:

EXT. BERLIN, POTZDAMER PLATZ -- DAY

Berliners coming home from work are treated to an odd site:

A dozen of the Markos company matrons have come out in startling costumes of black crepe that begin high over their heads and flow to the ground. Their faces are hidden.

They have put out the Markos Company's insignia with a time and date below it on the pavement and perform a public dance to advertise the company's performance of "VOLK," happening in one week's time. They chant, to a SLOW DRUM:

MATRONS

*COME, COME, COME and SEE. COME and SEE the DAUGHTERS.*

As dance, it is something subtle and new. As an invitation, it is a little unnerving. They do gather a crowd, however.

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, RESIDENTS' CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

Most of the dancers have gone to bed. It is just before midnight.

There are a few still brushing their teeth, brushing out their hair for the night, writing letters. The last laugh of the night can be heard, the last switching off of a RADIO. One of two more doors shut for the night.

Sara down the corridor with her shower bucket and sees: There is no light under Susie's door. She almost knocks.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, SARA'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Sara sits up in her desk chair, trying not to fall asleep. She nods off, then snaps awake. She pinches herself, hard. Finally, she hears what she has been waiting for: MUTED SOUNDS and VOICES like the other night. She gets up and goes to put her ear on the wall.

It's there, *behind* the wall. She moves to one corner and goes on her knees to listen in the corner. It's louder there. Then the voices behind the wall pass the room. Sara marks the spot where she's listening and she quickly follows the voices. They *climbs up* the wall until she loses them at the top of the other side.

What's hidden between her and Susie's room is a stairway.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, RESIDENCE CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

Sara comes out to the corridor that links the two residents' hallways. She stands at the midpoint between her room and Susie's. The shaded hall sconces are turned on low, but it's enough for her to see.

Starting at this midway point, she walks toward the shadowy main stairway and counts her steps.



## SUSIE

--39. 40. 41. 42.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

She comes down a floor and counts steps leading *back* in the same direction. She hits a wall inside the recessed door of a big exercise room. The recess is deep, about four feet. The stairway must keep descending.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

She comes down one more floor and counts her 42 steps. She ends up at the door to the "mirrored" studio.

The company isn't heated as warmly at night and she is shivering in just her nightgown. She goes in, but does not turn on the light until she shuts the door behind her.

The light can be seen in the crack under the door.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, "MIRRORED" STUDIO -- NIGHT

Sara knows more or less which mirrored section of wall to go to from inferring where the secret stairs come down. She tries pushing on it, pulling. She runs a finger as far into the crack between mirrors as she can. Nothing moves or suggests movement, until she tries the lip of the wainscoting, which pulls up as if on a hinge. And then the whole wall panel opens like a door.

INT. MUTTERHAUS, FIRST ROOM -- NIGHT

Sara has to open the door wide to let in the light from the "mirrored" studio enough to see. This is a small room with elegant shelves on every wall.

On the shelves are not the stacks of anarchist fliers, laminating machines for fake documents, and firearms she might have been expecting. What she finds are dozens of objects made of silver or porcelain.

Some are figurative: a trio of women, some mythical beasts, a dog. Some vaguely echo body parts and genitals. Some look to be tools for some arcane function or another.

There is a smaller wooden door opposite the entrance which must be where the staircase begins. Sara tries it, but this one is locked. She can hear air rushing under the crack beneath it. The SOUND is hypnotic.

Feeling like she's already overstayed a prudent amount of time, she takes one of the objects from the shelves--a silver hook--and steps back out into the studio.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, "MIRRORED" STUDIO -- NIGHT

She closes up the door and makes sure it's flush with the mirrored panel beside it. Then she hides the silver hook in her nightgown, turns off the light and goes out.

CUT TO:

EXT. BERLIN, STREETS -- DAY

On the street, Berliners heading to work watch TELEVISIONS in a display window. A German Special Forces unit boarded Luft-hansa flight 181 in the night, killed three of the four hijackers, and apprehended the last. The hostages are in the air again, this time heading home to Germany where they will be received with a heroes' welcome.

INT. BERLIN, OFFICES -- DAY

Workers who have arrived early to their offices are gathered around TELEVISIONS there when the news breaks that all of the RAF prisoners at Mannheim Prison were just discovered dead in their cells after an apparent "suicide pact."

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, SONIA'S ROOM -- DAY

Dancers from the company are watching this news in their pajamas, on a TELEVISION set Olga left behind. Some are crying. Sonia says, to no one:

SONIA

That's it for Hanns-Martin Schley-  
er. They've got no reason to return  
him alive now.

Susie is the first to notice:

SUSIE

Where's Sara?

CUT TO:

EXT. FRIEDRICHSTRAÙE -- DAY

Sara is following directions she's written out. She turns off a main street and into the little alley that ends at Klemperer's building.

INT. KLEMPERER'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN -- DAY

Sara and Dr. Klemperer are in his study. Every now and then Frau Sesame glances at them, but they're far away and speaking English. She sees Sara take an odd silver hook out of her backpack.

INT. KLEMPERER'S APARTMENT, SITTING ROOM -- DAY

Sara is listening to Klemperer intently.

KLEMPERER

She wrote of "Three Mothers" lost to time, predating all Christian invention. Pre-Devil. They are the source of all energy and chaos: Mother *Tenebrarum*, Mother *Lachrymarum*, and Mother *Suspiriorum*. Darkness, Tears, and Sighs.

SARA

I saw likenesses of them in the room last night. In porcelain. Very *fine* things. They have money.

KLEMPERER

Patricia named Markos as a devotee of the Three Mothers, and who, in fact, thought she was one of them for a time, but who is now ill and dying.

Sara bites her thumbnail. She sees the photograph of Klemperer's wife on the bookshelf. She takes it in, then looks away.

KLEMPERER (CONT'D)

Patricia thought they were trying to recruit her. Groom her. For a place in the matriarchy. That is how Patricia described their goal: Change violent enough to take us back to a time of matriarchies. The question was whether to enact this change in moderation from the shadows, or step into a new era of public work and constant recruitment. She talks about "Markosites" who were for the formers and "Blancites" who were for the later.

SARA

(horrified, disappointed)  
Madame Blanc is involved in this?

Sara looks at the silver hook now lying on the table. In the full light of day, it just seems bizarre.

SARA (CONT'D)

Do *they* think they are witches?

KLEMPERER

I do not believe in magic. People can organize themselves to perpetrate an evil and call it magic. That I can believe. And you can give someone your delusion. That's religion-- That was the Reich--

(beat)

The Reich had these things, too. Esoteric insignia. Esoteric ritual. The important thing is that what you found points to some kind of underground organization inside the company. These three "Mothers" could simply be code names for founding members, their histories metaphoric.

(beat)

I think you're living with very dangerous people, Sara. Incendiaries.

SARA

Then Patricia could still be in there. In the building, I mean. They could be holding her--

KLEMPERER

I cannot promise the authorities will come to look at a closet full of porcelain and one locked door. Not this week, of all weeks. So stay safe. Alert. Until they come.

Sara begins to gather her things. Klemperer puts a hand on her arm.

KLEMPERER (CONT'D)

(re: the hook)

In fact, leave this here, or put it back. But don't let them find it on you, Sara.

Sara thinks it over. She stands and shakes Klemperer's hand. She leaves it on the table and goes.

EXT. BERLIN, PLATZ -- DAY

Heading home, Sara skirts another protest. This one is getting out of control. The police are no longer at a distance taking photos. They are at attention with riot shield and guns ready on their hips.

The crowd waves photos of Baader, Ensslin, and Raspe. They're all screaming:

CROWD  
 << MURDER!!! MURDER!!! MURDER!!! >>

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, MAIN STAGE -- DAY

The tech team, led by MISS KAPLITT (50s), is building the set for the production of VOLK. Lighting is being rigged and tested. A small house orchestra is rehearsing.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, DRESSING HALL -- DAY

The dancers are getting fittings and haircuts in preparation. Sara is getting her costume altered. Behind her, Miss Marks is cutting Susie's hair in silence.

The chattier MISS BALFOUR (40s) is trimming Caroline's hair, talking to Caroline in French.

MISS CHALISE  
 << Madam wants no bangs on anyone this year. I asked her how am I supposed to remove them if a girl has cut them this way already? She did not have an answer, of course, as she does not cut hair. But, the Madame wants the Madame wants, and so I must do. Thank God you do not have them. >>

Caroline is beginning to tear up, looking more and more desperate. Susie watches this in her mirror. *What's going on?* Every word of Miss Chalise seems to be confusing her more.

MISS CHALISE (CONT'D)  
 << You used to wear bangs when you first arrived, no?  
 (waiting for her answer)  
 Did I dream that up? >>

Finally, Caroline pulls off her salon cape and rushes from the room. Sara looks at Susie in the mirror, then runs after her. Susie watches them go.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, BASEMENT CORRIDOR -- DAY

Sara catches up with Caroline, who has hidden in one of the basement practice rooms and backed into a corner. She is crying so hard, Sara can barely understand her. Sara takes both her hands.

SARA  
 What is it?!

CAROLINE

Parts of me --are just falling *off*.  
Tomorrow I might not even be able  
to talk at all, or dance, or even  
remember who I am!

SARA

You have a condition--

Caroline looks at her, incredulous.

CAROLINE

I've never had seizures before this  
week!

Sara has only seen the one in rehearsal.

SARA

You've had more than one? What did  
they say at the hospital?

CAROLINE

I didn't go to a hospital. Blanc  
brought a doctor to *me*.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, DRESSING HALL -- DAY

Susie watches in the mirror as Caroline's hair is swept up  
and thrown into a garbage pail. Then she watches Miss Marks  
sweeps hers up, but the woman carries the dust pan full of it  
out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, "IRIS" STUDIO -- DAY

The full company rehearses VOLK, spread across the stage like  
a community in tatters, which groups up and falls apart in a  
syncopated rhythm to the score. Even amid the dance, Sara is  
now paying closer attention to Madame Blanc.

She watches as Susie makes all of her jumps and landings. *And  
Blanc says nothing about it.*

Sara is trying to think of any other interpretation, frantic  
to explain what she is seeing any other way. When the dance  
breaks for a moment, Blanc steps in to give Susie an adjust-  
ment. She can't hear the note clearly. But she can hear it's  
in French.

When she looks back to Blanc, Blanc glances over at Sara as she has a million times, but this time it feels ambiguous and terrifying.

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, CORRIDOR/"WHITE" STUDIO -- DAY

When the girls come back through the corridor, Sara appears, grabs Susie's hand. She pulls her into the "White" studio out of view and earshot of another. This is the room where Susie first auditioned.

SARA

Is it true? After all? Is it true--  
(beat)  
TELL ME.

SUSIE

Sara, calm down--

SARA

And don't lie! Are you making some kind of bargain of your own with them?

(beat)

How can you know what things they'll ask of you in return?! What horrible things! Please tell me it's not too late--

SUSIE

Whatever you have in your mind, nothing's wrong. Look at me! Sara!

SARA

You're lying right now.

Sara pleads her with her eyes, frightened and heartsick. Susie takes her hands, smiling, reassuring her.

SUSIE

Nothing horrible is happening, or will happen--

SARA

You just haven't gotten the bill.

SUSIE

Nothing's wrong. Believe me. Everyone's wound up right now. Don't let it get to you, too.

Sara wants badly to believe her.

Susie hugs her, and Sara lets her. But Susie's private expression reveals Sara's words have sunk in.

PRIEST (V.O.)

Is any among you sick? Let him call  
for the elders of the church; and  
let them pray over him, anointing  
him with oil in the name of the  
Lord.

CUT TO:

EXT. OHIO FARMHOUSE, ADULTS' BEDROOM -- DAY

A MENNONITE PRIEST (40s) is praying at the bedside of Mrs. Bannion, sick with advanced cancer as she is in the opening credits.

PRIEST

And the prayer of faith shall save  
him that is sick, and the Lord  
shall raise him up; And if he has  
committed sins--

Mrs. Bannion interrupts him with three heavy words:

MRS. BANNION

My last- child-

Susie's sisters, and some of the neighbors who have come to sit watch over Mrs. Bannion, bristle at this.

PRIEST

It shall be forgiven him--

The TELEPHONE begins RINGING DOWNSTAIRS.

MRS. BANNION

My last child was --my sin. I saw  
the Tempter in her and did not see  
It --for what It was. She was quiet  
in its service for --so long.

(beat)

She is my sin. She is what I have  
smeared upon the world--

The TELEPHONE continues RINGING. One of Susie's twin sisters NAOMI (20s) upset by what her mother is saying, runs out of the room to answer.

INT. OHIO FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN -- DAY

The TELEPHONE's inside a cabinet. Naomi opens it and answers.



NAOMI  
 (thickly)  
 Bannion house.

The other end is SILENT, but she can hear other people TALKING, though muffled. It doesn't sound like English. She sits up.

NAOMI (CONT'D)  
 Susanna?

Nothing.

NAOMI (CONT'D)  
 Susanna. Don't hang up!  
 (beat)  
 Are you all right? Everyone is worried for you. Pastor Pat told mother if you come home and return the money, you'll be restored. He forgives you. Mother forgives you. We all forgive you.

She listens to the silence on the other end. The faint sound of other people's LAUGHTER in the background.

NAOMI (CONT'D)  
 Mother's uncomfortable all the time now. She isn't sleeping. Everyone is pitching in. The Doders especially. They come every night.  
 (beat)  
 Mother asks for you every day. Ten times a day. Are you really so far?  
 (beat)  
 Do you have nothing to say?

Nothing. Naomi waits a long beat, tears coming to her eyes.

NAOMI (CONT'D)  
 If you don't come soon, you won't see mother again, Susanna.  
 (wait, one last beat)  
 I'm putting down the phone now. I love you.

And then she hangs up.

BACK TO:

INT. TELECOM CENTER, BERLIN -- DUSK

Susie is in a plexiglas telecom booth, surrounded by Berliners in the middle of happier calls. She puts her phone down.

She's not crying, but she's frozen, numb, unsure what to do to move forward.

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, BLANC'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Madame Blanc is at her desk, writing a letter, when a small KNOCK comes at her door.

BLANC

*Entre.*

It is Susie. She steps in and shuts the door. Blanc sees she is at a turning point. Susie takes off her coat.

BLANC (CONT'D)

Do you want to talk or dance?

SUSIE

Dance.

Madame Blanc gets to her feet.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, BLANC'S STUDIO -- NIGHT

Blanc takes Susie into her private studio, adjacent to her office. It's the small, circular studio, with all the lacquered screens. There are no mirrors visible. Susie takes off her sweater. Says to Blanc, oddly affectless tonight:

SUSIE

Show me something new.

We see Blanc dance for the first time and she talks as she shows Susie some new movements.

BLANC

Movement is never mute. It is a language. Most dance is illegible, made by people who cannot read it.

(beat)

But, in fact, it is a series of energistic creations written in the air. Like words forming sentences. Like poems. Prayers.

SUSIE

Spells--

Blanc ignores this literal nudge for now.

BLANC

And like sentences, a few letters can be off, or badly written, and the meaning is still there. And that is the difference between you and your sisters here, Susie. I have no trouble reading you, nor do the other matrons.

(beat)

We all see you, Susie. All of us.

SUSIE

All of you.

BLANC

To the very top.

Blanc watches Susie react to this with a simple nod. As they are talking, Blanc begins showing Susie how to move, getting close to her.

BLANC (CONT'D)

You could be a great, great dancer. But whose dances you chose to dance and why will mean everything. Which-ever dance you choose, you will create in yourself the image of its creator, who will need you to empty yourself out so she can be radical to her creations and work *through* you. Do you understand? Who you do it for must be your choice, and a choice you can cherish. Forever.

Blanc moves behind her and raises her arms.

BLANC (CONT'D)

You're in a company now. You must find your right place. What part of the company do you want to be? Not its feet. Other girls can be its feet. Its head? Its heart? Back-bone? Its sex?

SUSIE

Its hands. I want to be this company's hands.

Blanc seems to like this answer.

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, SARA'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Sara lies awake. She hears Susie return for the night. After a moment, she gets out of bed.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, RESIDENTS' CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

She comes around the corner to Susie's door and sees it is closed. There is no light under it. She quietly knocks, but Susie doesn't answer.

INT. SUSIE'S ROOM, MARKOS COMPANY -- NIGHT

Susie lies in bed, awake. She hears Sara's voice whisper:

SARA

I'm not leaving you here, Susie.  
I'm not leaving without you.

Then she is gone.

This makes the part of Susie who is simply a young woman who needs her friend smile. She closes her eyes to sleep amid the BREATHING that has joined her again.

FADE TO BLACK.

ON A TELEVISION: A news story plays about the burials of the RAF prisoners in a Stuttgart cemetery. Thousands of protestors silently observes the burial. *Polizei* with machine guns are posted everywhere.

NEWS REPORTER

<< In response to local protesters who wanted to keep Baader, Ensslin, and Raspe from being interred here, Stuttgart Mayor Manfred Rommel, son of Field Marshall Irwin Rommel, remarked: "I will not accept that there should be first- and second-class cemeteries." He declared, passionately: "All enmity should cease after death."

(beat)

Echoing in a sharper sentiment, BKA Commissioner Horst Harold told the press: "The Baader-Meinhoff era is done. The so-called "German Autumn" is over." >>

EXT. BERLIN -- DAY

Fall marches toward winter. Leaves are all in the street now.

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, SECOND FLOOR CORRIDOR -- DAY

Miss Tanner is coming out of Blanc's office, which she locks behind her. She is balancing a pile of thin boxes, performance gifts for the dancers. All of Tanner's keys are on a knotted ribbon. She puts them in her pocket.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, MAIN STAGE -- DAY

Final checks are being done on lights and sound before the doors are opened to begin letting in audience members for the company's performance. All of the dancers and matrons are in the theatre preparing for the show.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, DRESSING ROOM -- DAY

Susie sits getting her makeup done by Miss Chalice. She sees Sara is not anywhere around.

SUSIE

Have you seen Sara yet?

MISS CHALISE

She came in early. Wanted her hair and makeup first. Then she left.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, TECH STAIRS -- DAY

One of the technicians, JUDITH (20s) opens a side door and finds Miss Tanner on the floor surrounded by boxes. She has fallen down the stairs, only now just regaining her wits. Judith helps her sit up.

JUDITH

<< What happened? >>

Tanner touches her head. It's tender, but there is no blood.

MISS TANNER

<< I must have fallen. >>

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, CORRIDOR -- DAY

Sara comes hurrying down the hall, made up for the performance, Miss Tanner's ribbon of keys in her fist as well as a flashlight. When she gets to door of the "Mirrored" Studio, she lets herself in and locks it behind her.

INT. MUTTERHAUS, FIRST ROOM -- DAY

Sara lets herself into the first secret room behind the mirrored panel and goes to the locked door inside. She begins to try out keys, one after another. There must be thirty on Miss Tanner's ring. Air moving under the door plays a low note across the jamb.

The door springs open and Sara finds herself looking up a narrow, steep stairway. She hesitates only briefly, then goes.

INT. MUTTERHAUS, STAIRWAY -- DAY

The stairway is lit by small electric sconces as she makes her way up it, silently as she can. It moves upward past her and Susie's rooms. Then, when it crests the next floor, it begins *descending* again, widening as it goes, becoming something quite grand by the time it reaches the back part of the building used by the coven, the "Mutterhaus."

INT. MUTTERHAUS, THE APPROACH -- DAY

Sara finds herself in a huge, curved arcade that arcs around before ending at an open archway. The architecture is quickly morphing into something hyper-organic and fluid, an emphatic sort of art nouveau.

There is nowhere to hide if she hears anyone coming. Sara is terrified.

CUT TO:

INT. DRESSING ROOM, MARKOS COMPANY -- DAY

All of the dancers are gathering, made up and costumed.

MISS MILLIUS  
Ten minutes! Ten minutes!

Susie is looking around for Sara, who is still not among them. The girls seem concerned about it, but not the matrons. Susie grows truly worried.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARKOS COMPANY -- DAY

Klemperer comes up the sidewalk to the company and heads to the theatre entrance on one side. He is nervous as well. He shows his ticket to Miss Huller, who gives him a smile and gestures him inside.

INT. THEATRE, MARKOS COMPANY -- DAY

Miss Mandel escorts Klemperer to his seat. The audience is filling up to a full house. He regards her, and the other company women, with what he thinks is a discreet eye. When he looks around the theatre, he begins to see some of the iconography rendered in Patricia's journals around him here. It is unnerving to him.

CUT TO:

INT. THE ROOM OF COMPARTMENTS, MUTTERHAUS -- DAY

Sara comes into a huge tube-shaped room. At the opposite end is an arch with further rooms beyond. Sara moves forward, but she notices, all along the walls of this room, are triangle-shaped recesses in shadow. She stops. She can see in one the shape of a leg, as if someone is crouching there.

She almost screams, but keeps her wits. Trembling, she slowly goes toward whoever it is, flashlight up, but then, impossibly, someone in another recess calls her name.

PATRICIA (O.S.)

Sara.

The person leans out and Sara can see in her light: It is Patricia. She runs and kneels at her side. Patricia's in a strange state--slow, dry-voiced, and cold to touch.

PATRICIA

I wake up here every day now.

Patricia speaks in a normal voice. Sara's is hushed.

SARA

Stand up! Come on! I know how to get out. --Take my jacket.

PATRICIA

She's inside me. She wants me to hold you.

Sara pulls Patricia out of the shadow and sees, with horror, she's pale. Her eyes are rimmed in pale flesh. Her face is a dead girl's face, but without the stiffness of death. All her features hang down. Her jaw is slack.

Sara takes her wrist and checks for a pulse. There must not be one. Sara begins to cry. Patricia delicately pulls her wrist out of Sara's grip and reverses things so that she is now holding Sara's wrist.

Someone is coming down the passage Sara's just come from. She can hear it.

PATRICIA  
They'll take you now.

Sara panics and tries to get up, but Patricia grips her.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)  
She shows me things. On the side of a coffin I think is my rest. She's holding it, holding it back-- Showing me things on the side, like this--

A new expression comes into his face. Blank and cold. A few other girls come out from other alcoves, to come hold Sara. A sound of terror escapes Sara's lips against her will.

PATRICIA (CONT'D)  
A ribbon. For my face. We are tired. We are so tired.

Sara pulls free from Patricia, and runs past the other girls and through the arch just as the figures of a number of matrons appear in the door Sara came in. She only sees them for a split second, but they are naked.

INT. MUTTERHAUS, THE ROOM OF HOLES -- DAY

Sara runs into the next room, a dark room, the edges of which she cannot see. It's the room about which Susie dreamed, with the holes in the floor, but Sara doesn't see them in time.

Within a few steps she puts her leg into one. Her momentum carries her forward and her shin snaps. She shrieks and crashes to the ground.

She awkwardly gets her leg out and begins to back away from the door, dragging the it along with her. The matrons come into the room and see her injury.

MISS MILLIUS  
Keep still, Sara. Lie still.

Some, who are dancers, are in good shape for their ages. Others, who work in administrative capacities, sag. They are all smiling, sort of dancing around the holes in the floor. A few have some of the implements from the first room in their hands. Sara is frightened to the point to frenzy, but also paralyzed now somehow. She can't move at all.

She begs instead.



SARA

FORGIVE ME! PLEASE! I wanted to  
help! I DIDN'T KNOW! DON'T DO ANY-  
THING--

The matrons come in, with calming voices. Pavla goes about setting Sara's leg. It must be very painful, but they hypnotize her as they work and she resists less and less.

Finally, Miss Vendegast puts her hands over Sara's crying brown eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, MAIN STAGE -- DAY

The dancers take their places on stage behind the curtain, checking last looks in a mirror there. Susie looks back one last time and sees: Sara's place is still empty.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, THEATRE -- DAY

The audience is full, except for one ambiguously empty seat next to Klemperer. The audience is lit up when the curtain ascends. The DRUMS begin. He tries to find Sara on the stage among the company, but can't.

As the company performs VOLK, we cut back and forth between the following:

Klemperer realizes Sara is missing. He looks around for her, finally seeing the only empty seat in the house is next to him. Some of the company matrons positioned around the room are watching him casually as much as they are watching the performance. He realizes this.

Susie slowly lets go of her concern for Sara and becomes the dance. Everything begins to fade for Susie except the spell in the air she is creating with her movements, and Blanc who is in one of the wings connecting with her in her mind. *All is the dance. All is the dance.*

The piece is remarkable, giving the audience the feeling of an entire community shattered, but still functioning. At one point, Susie rejects the leaps and goes off-book, incorporating the loping crawl she offered in rehearsal. It's strange and upsetting, but galvanizing to the whole.

Miss Tanner, who is standing beside Blanc mutters:

MISS TANNER

<< This girl is ready, Blanc. It's  
time. >>

But beside her, Blanc's having an orgasm she can barely hide.

Somewhere in the middle of the dance, Sara, flat of affect and somehow walking on her broken leg, shambles onto the stage and takes her place in the performance.

NOTE: *Astute members of the audience may realize Susie and Sara have switched eye color. Susie's are now brown, in keeping with what is apparently Madame Blanc's preference, and Sara's are now blue. It's perverse. Unnecessary. The use of power to feed a fetish. Patricia had these brown eyes. Olga had them. And now Susie does as well.*

The other dancers make room for Sara, and then, one-by-one, really see her. Sara's set, but still-broken, leg is swollen under her leotard. Dancers close to her can hear the fractured bones grinding together as she dances. Sara's face is as rigid in its expression of calm as a doll's.

The audience remains unaware, except for Klemperer, who is watching her too closely not to notice.

Finally, just at the end of the dance, Susie turns and sees Sara for herself. She stops dancing and takes a step toward her. As the curtain comes down, Sara collapses.

She falls within sight of one of the "last looks" mirrors. She sees herself broken, humiliated, dying. She sees that a change has been made to her face. Her eyes are now blue. Susie's eyes.

Three things happen at once:

1.) Madame Blanc rushes from the wing and kneels at Sara's side. Susie slowly comes over, not wanting to see what they've done to Sara, but drawn by the girl's suffering.

BLANC

*Someone please call Dr. Bischoffs.*

2.) As everyone in the audience stands to start shuffling toward the exits, obtuse to what is going on behind the curtain, TWO PLAINCLOTHES BKA AGENTS, including Agent Albrecht, begin moving toward the stage, fast.

3.) Klemperer also makes his way toward the stage, ignoring the matron's gazes. He climbs up the stairs to the wing as quickly as he can manage, and from there sees everyone crowded around Sara. The BKA Agents have taken Miss Tanner aside and are grilling her, but she discreetly stops both with a hand.

Klemperer can see Sara looking directly at him through the chaos of girls around her.

She registers he is there and starts to move her hand, then her arm, with great effort. She curls her hand back toward her face and, with one shaking finger, calls his attention to her now-blue eyes.

He stands there, stunned, facing down what he would have considered an hour ago to be impossible beyond consideration.

Blanc and Susie see Sara's attention focus and look to where she is looking. Klemperer meets their eyes and both Blanc and Susie know: This is the man who called the police. This is the man who directed the attention of the BKA to them. This is the man to whom Patricia referred to them as "witches."

There is nothing Klemperer can do to help Sara anymore from these women. So he turns and flees.

CUT TO:

EXT. TIERGARTEN, BERLIN -- NIGHT

Dr. Klemperer walks home through Berlin's *Tiergarten*. There are people out, but the night is coming on windy.

A dog runs up and stops ten feet in front of him, directly in his path. It has stopped before another dog's turd, which is not even dry. The dog pushes the turd toward Klemperer, and then bares its teeth as if grinning.

Klemperer freezes, waiting to see if the dog will run at him. It doesn't. It gallops off into the darkening trees instead.

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, RESIDENTS' CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

That night is a somber one on the dormitory floor. All the girls are quiet, many in bed early. Some have left flowers in Sara's made bed, or notes and cards.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, SUSIE'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Susie lies in bed. At some point, she can hear WOMEN passing behind the wall. Someone opens her door. It is Blanc. She comes in and sits on the edge of the bed.

BLANC

Are you frightened, Susie?

SUSIE

No.

(beat)

What will they say happened to Sara?

BLANC  
I was worried about you.

SUSIE  
I'm sorry I went off book.

Blanc nearly responds, but finally doesn't. A beat.

SUSIE (CONT'D)  
It's all a mess, isn't it? The mess  
out there. The one in here. The  
mess that's coming. The mess that  
was.

(beat)  
Why are people always so ready to  
think the worst is over?

BLANC  
I could explain it to you. I think  
I'd be wrong to, though.

Susie asks suddenly:

SUSIE  
Because you love me?

Blanc looks troubled by this, frightened herself.

BLANC  
Just close your eyes and sleep. No  
more dreams tonight.

Susie takes Blanc's hand for a moment, squeezes it in thanks,  
and says:

SUSIE  
For everything.

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, "IRIS" STUDIO -- DAY

With VOLK behind them, the company is hard at work on re-  
hearsing OPEN AGAIN. Susie is fully in the free radical role.  
She is astonishing to watch. Her brown eyes are now a fact of  
who she is. No one comments, either by choice or suggestion.

Blanc pushes Susie, as well as the others, very hard. At a  
break, she hands out black sashes. Some of the dancers begin  
putting them around their waists, but Blanc tells them:

BLANC  
I want you to trust your movements,  
your placement.  
(MORE)

BLANC (CONT'D)

These are for your eyes. Move to your start marks and put this over them.

They all go to the top of the dance, find their places, tie on blindfold, and begins again with the music. It must be very difficult, but they are learning it very precisely.

BLANC (CONT'D)

Don't be afraid of it. Your feet know where to go.

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, SUSIE'S ROOM -- DUSK

Something is coming. Energies are gathering and Susie can feel them. She dresses for dinner and puts on her coat. She buttons it up to her chin.

CUT TO:

INT. KLEMPERER'S APARTMENT, SITTING ROOM -- DUSK

Frau Sesame is in the kitchen, HUMMING and making the soup, oblivious. She hears the front door close and goes out to see, with surprise, that Klemperer has *left*. She calls after him, down the stairs:

FRAU SESAME

<< But Doctor, it is almost ready!  
>>

He doesn't answer. She comes back inside, perplexed, even a little afraid.

EXT. BERLIN, PAULSTRASSE -- DUSK

Klemperer comes down a dark street and onto a bridge over the River Spree. He is struggling under the weight of something he is carrying over his shoulders. It is Patricia's duffle. Her other bag is in his hand.

It's a cold enough night that he can see the edges of the river icing up, so he goes further out to the middle of the span over black churning water.

He flips the bag and duffle over the side and listens to them splash below. Only then does he look to see they're gone. He takes the silver body hook out of his coat and throws it into the Spree as well. Then he begins to cry. He is a man who can only feel guilt as he again watches evil approaching.

CUT TO:

EXT. BERLIN, STREET -- DUSK

The entire company, along with most of the matrons, walks along in high spirits.

INT. BERLIN, PARIS BAR -- DUSK

The company is given the back tables at a busy cafe.

Susie sits at one end with Sonia, Marketa, and Doll. The matrons gather at the other. Blanc is there, as are Tanner, Mandel, and Millius. Vendegast sits beside Danielle, who's high laugh has already begun. Miss Huller and Pavla are not present.

MISS TANNER

Girls! Remember the limit! Nine marks. Other than that, choose as you like. You've earned it.

Susie has not been absorbed into any cliques since Sara's departure. She's with the group, but not of it anymore.

Susie seems to understand tonight is meant to be the night for whatever is going to be asked of her. She seems hypervigilant, but not afraid. The matrons certainly understand it. They are already celebrating the end to their long season of worry. Only Blanc looks disconsolate.

CUT TO:

EXT. EAST BERLIN, FRIEDRICHSTRAÙE -- DUSK

Klemperer has come into East Germany tonight. But when he gets to the fountain where he usually sits, a WOMAN (60s) is sitting there. As he walks toward her, he recognizes more and more of her posture, the set of her head. He walks faster to her, When he is almost behind her, she turns.

It is the woman from the photo in his sitting room, aged thirty years. Love fills her face.

"ANKE"

Jozef.

CUT TO:

INT. PARIS BAR, BERLIN -- NIGHT

The girls eat and drink everything in front of them. The matrons have ordered food, but none of them touch it.

Susie notices this, but no one else seems to. She puts her fork down and abstains as well.

CUT TO:

EXT. WEST BERLIN -- NIGHT

Klemperer and "Anke" walk together through the city, back into West Berlin. When they get to the checkpoint, they walk through it unaccosted. None of the guards seem to notice.

"ANKE"

<< Karol had told them about me. He betrayed us. I had minutes to get out. I couldn't find you. I traveled on foot to try for Teplice where I planned to ask Mirek's family to take me in, but I was caught at the border and taken to Terezin. >>

Klemperer tries to interject the first of what must be a million regrets and apologies, but she stops him--she wants to tell him everything first. She caresses his face and he grabs her hand as if it were a bird about to fly away.

"ANKE" (CONT'D)

<< After the liberation I made my way to Zurich, and then to Milan. I've had a life there. A lovely life. I was told you had died in the invasion. >>

Klemperer just shakes his head and lets his eyes go cloudy with tears.

They come up the Friedrichstraße, but when Klemperer tries to lead her in the direction of his apartment, she takes his arm and turns him down Kochstraße, in another direction.

CUT TO:

INT. BERLIN, PARIS BAR -- NIGHT

The girls are quite drunk now. Susie notices Blanc looking at her and the other matrons looking at the girls with growing excitement. Tanner is making her way around the table, touching each girl as she goes, rendering each one a little thicker in affect, hazier in look, beginning a process of mesmerization. She does not touch Susie.

The BREATHING in Susie's head is growing louder, but she seems no longer even intimidated by it. It's simply the sound of something coming now, possibly something great.

SUSIE (V.O.)

I'll go walk in the streets.

Blanc is looking at her, as if she might cry. After a beat, her thoughts responds. Susie can hear them now.

BLANC (V.O.)

If you're sure.

(beat)

Give us time. There is much to be done.

Susie gets up to go. The other matrons watch her with genuine warmth now.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARKOS COMPANY -- NIGHT

As they walk, Klemperer is both aware and unaware they are walking toward the Markos Company. He is now a man thoroughly distracted by his most cherished dream. It begins to snow.

They arrive at the company building, all dark now except for a light on at the entrance. "Anke" stops and embraces him. Before he can protest, the company's front door opens behind them. Women come out. And, like a man slipping under dark water, he feels himself being taken in.

"Anke" becomes recognizable as Miss Huller, who is now laughing.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STREETS OF BERLIN -- NIGHT

Susie begins to walk, taking in the early stirring of Berlin night life. As she walks, the BREATHING is with her, but something odd begins happening as well. Her awareness begins to focus on little moments of sadness or aggression.

She can hear a couple arguing quietly a block away.

BERLINER #1

<< It was wrong to take your father's money. He pays rent, too, and without an income. >>



In a passing car, a child spills a soda on the leather seat. Then she sees the boy's father angrily shove the can into his son's face when he discovers it twenty minutes from now.

She sees a man photographing damage done to his suit shop with a Brownie camera, then the stormtroopers kicking the window in.

She's going forward and backward in time and tasting all the flavors of the continuing patriarchy.

She sees the Berlin Wall being put up, being torn down. She can see a skinhead almost tenderly polishing his his 10-hole boots, then later wiping blood off them. Groups of Muslim men in *keffiyehs* take flags of Jordan out of plastic sleeves, the price tags still on them, even as someone burns them. She observes a lit window in which a young woman is arrested by SS, then the same woman, elderly now, calls in a prescription refill, introducing herself as a Patient Number.

ELDERLY WOMAN

<< Three four oh oh two. Seven one  
one nine. >>

Susie is not afraid of what she's seeing, or of where it belongs in history. Once she adjusts to it, she walks flushed and amazed through these mirages as if through a great museum, humbled by her proximity to things that so delight her. The SIGHING in her head plays as its accompaniment.

INT. MUTTERHAUS, FIRST ROOM -- NIGHT

As Dr. Klemperer is lead into the Mutterhaus, he sees Miss Huller replacing the silver body hook on its shelf, somehow retrieved from the Spree. It is covered with river mud.

MISS HULLER

<< How dirty he made it! >>

They lead him over the threshold and onto the first of the stairs.

KLEMPERER

<< Pity! --Have pity! >>

MISS HULLER

<< What reason is there to pity  
you? You had five years to get your  
wife out of Berlin before arrests  
began. >>

They proceed to lead him up the stairs and then disappear over the arc of the passageway.

MISS HULLER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 << When women tell you the truth,  
 you don't pity *them*. You tell them  
 they are delusional! >>

The witches laugh at Klemperer now, even as he begs them.

CUT TO:

INT. BERLIN, ICE CREAM PARLOUR -- NIGHT

Susie has gone into a shop and eats an ice cream sundae in the front window, like a child might, watching the parade of history pass by outside.

CUT TO:

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, ENTRANCE HALL/STAIRS -- NIGHT

Susie comes in from the snowy night to find the building empty and silent. She can occasionally hear a BURST OF LAUGHTER from far, far away. She climbs the stairs, the dust of clean snow melting on the shoulders of her coat.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, RESIDENCE CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

She can now definitely hear there is a GREAT PARTY going on somewhere behind the walls. No one else is on the floor, but this doesn't surprise Susie.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, SUSIE'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Susie comes into her room to find, laid out on her bed, a long, simple shift dress. As she is putting it on, the light wavers outside her door and she can see the small font of white flame there, waiting.

INT. MUTTERHAUS, STAIRS/APPROACH/TUBE/ROOM OF HOLES -- NIGHT

Susie finds her way into the *Mutterhaus*, led by the font. She climbs the secret stairs and finds the approach. She comes into the tube room, then through the room of holes.

Beyond it, there are more stairs. All the light and noise is coming from below now. She will see it in a moment.

INT. MUTTERHAUS, ROOM OF FEASTS -- NIGHT

Susie comes down a set of stairs that lead to another. The first is part of the building, but the second--

Blanc and a bent woman, misshapen with disease and supported by matrons, wait near the top of this final staircase.

From here there is a view of all below. Susie sees a great room in which a hideous, raucous tableau is taking place.

All the matrons are seated around the huge triangular table. The table is now set with all nature of arcane dishes and crockery. They are feasting. The feasting room has three high stone arches leading to a vast and separate darkness in each direction.

Susie notices Klemperer, stripped naked now, has been put in the center space inside the triangle the table forms. The matrons taunt him, summoning him from one to the next where he is made to eat victuals off of their plates--some of which look like stool, some like organs, perhaps from animals, perhaps not. He is muttering:

KLEMPERER

<< I am not guilty! I remember! I  
am an innocent! >>

His jowls are stained. He is forced to take wine from the matrons' own laughing mouths.

Susie next notices three girls are serving the matrons. All have masks depicting the faces of the The Mothers. Mother of Tears, Mother of Shadows, and Mother of Sighs. Susie can see from the tone of their flesh they are dead. One of the girls, the one masked as Mother Suspiriorum, has noticed her also. She stands looking up at Susie until she is called back into service.

The dead girls serve the matrons who, in turn, needle into the girls' open palms with special tines so the girls' dead blood sauces their plates.

Some of the matrons have noticed Susie at the top of the stairs as well. They raise they cups in her direction, with toasts and great, heaving smiles.

BLANC (O.S.)

Susie. Don't you know who this is?

Susie looks. The bent old woman beside Blanc is looking at her, studying her.

This is HELENA MARKOS (???). She is hard to look at, so weighed down and disfigured by tumors is she. Some lay flat, others are raised up on stalks like warts. She is covered by them, made pregnant by them. She is a horrific vision of age on a human form--not the normal way age treats the body, but the product of time being turned back again and again until the skin and tissue cannot hold so many contradictions. She looks angry to be so tired.

Susie nods. She performs the slightest bow.

SUSIE  
I'm ready, Madame.

Blanc nods, but doesn't respond. Susie says to her directly:

SUSIE (CONT'D)  
You look afraid.

Markos laughs. It is the sound of amused air climbing past whatever tumors lie within.

MARKOS  
She's afraid for *you*, dear.  
(beat)  
Do you know what we have planned  
for you? There'll be nothing of you  
left inside. Only space. For me.

SUSIE  
I came here for this. I know that  
now.

Susie holds out her hand. Blanc takes it.

SUSIE (CONT'D)  
I want what's coming.  
(beat)  
You've all waited long enough.

Markos gives her an almost lascivious look. Susie listens to MARKOS' LABORED BREATHING. This is not the breathing she's had in her head all this time. This speaks only of illness, not of the entire language Susie has been hearing within the sighs.

Then Markos slowly raises a hand. Within seconds, the women below all see the gesture and quiet.

MARKOS  
LET IT BEGIN! IN THE NAME OF THE  
MOTHERS. LET IT BEGIN!

Susie watches as the plates are removed with ritualistic precision. The tables are dismantled and taken to the sides leaving an empty space in the center of the room.

A GREAT MUSIC begins. Klemperer is taken to the base of the staircase to witness what is about to happen. The three dead girls hold the three golden leashes fixed around his neck.

Susie sees the rest of the girls from the company step into the space, entranced somehow, and blindfolded.

They begin the choreography of OPEN AGAIN. They don't seem to know where they are, they just dance. The matrons down on the floor dance among them. All the women are nude. Every shape and state of the female body is on display.

A LOW DRONE begins out of the air, taking its vibrations from the spell of the dance. The girls begin dancing backward now, like a tide going out. Then forward again, coaxing something to come forward from the infinite spaces beyond the room.

HELENA MARKOS

They are summoning what we need.

SUSIE

Death.

HELENA MARKOS

What do you think is happening, girl?

SUSIE

A ritual. To renew you.

HELENA MARKOS

"Renew" is a beautiful word. Do you come to this willingly?

SUSIE

I do.

BLANC

You must have no doubts, Susie. If you do, I will take you back. Take all of this out of your head. You can forget everything.

Markos laughs, smugly.

HELENA MARKOS

Except your jumps. And your kicks and leaps and rolls--

BLANC

I would like this to be pure.

HELENA MARKOS

We know what you would like.

(aggressive)

This is not vanity! Who knows how much longer we must march forward?

SUSIE

I can be both.

Blanc looks at Susie, then at Markos.

BLANC

You see? She doesn't understand!

Blanc steps forward, but Markos holds her with a look.

SUSIE

I do.

HELENA MARKOS

She understands enough. On the floor, girl.

In the vastness beyond the arch opposite the stairs, where light and darkness meet, something is assembling itself. It can be felt before it can be seen. Some of the matrons are sensing it. Blanc is sensing it.

Two matrons, Misses Millius and Huller, step forward to help Susie out of her clothes. Susie is shown to the floor where she kneels and lays of the cold stone. The matrons take her arms to the sides. Susie turns her face down. Markos slowly stands.

BLANC

Something's wrong. You don't feel it--?

Under the arch, a wet blackness is assembling into being.

BLANC (CONT'D)

Markos, this isn't right. Let her up--!

But with a gesture, Markos makes a dash with her hand out at Blanc and Blanc's neck is chopped from behind. Blanc crumples to her knees and slumps back against the wall. The chop has severed her spine, but not her trachea. Her head slides forward until it is stopped by her chest. Then it sits there, face cast downward.

Susie hears this take place, but does not dare look. Markos turns her attention back to Susie.

HELENA MARKOS

We have been on two sides of this too long. You want this, girl?

SUSIE

Yes.

HELENA MARKOS

If you accept me, and accept what we seek, you must put down the woman who bore you to the world.

Susie closes her eyes. She concentrates on the BREATHING, the SIGHS in her head, pulling it into her own rhythm.

HELENA MARKOS (CONT'D)

Think of that false mother now, lying in her reek of pain. Release her from you. You have the Mothers you need now. Death to any other mother.

SUSIE

I am the Mother.

Markos looks down at her, not sure she's heard correctly.

The dancing and singing is frantic, but the witches are not prepared for what happens next. Something black and dripping with the energy of its passage into the world rides out of the space beneath the arch and is suddenly in the room with them.

Some of the matrons SCREAM and move back from it. It's clear nothing like this has been seen before in these rooms. Others are steadfast and continue dancing, terrified, some within feet of it. The mesmerized, blindfolded girls remain in the dance unaware.

Markos herself is looking at the black thing in confused awe. She glances over at Blanc, concerned now that Blanc is behind this, or understands it. But it is Susie who looks up at Markos.

SUSIE (CONT'D)

You've played at this long enough.

Markos opens her mouth in shock. She hisses:

HELENA MARKOS

Who are you?

SUSIE

Whom were you anointed for? Which of the Three?

HELENA MARKOS

*Mother Suspiriorum, girl.*

Susie says, simply, finally coming into her full identity.

SUSIE

I am she.

At the bottom of the stairs, the girl dressed as Mother Suspiriorum hears this and takes off her mask. It is Sara. She looks up at Susie, and holds out the mask. Reverently.

SARA

The Mother! The Mother!

Others who have supported Markos from the start begin to cry, or WAIL OUT. What is happening is akin to Jesus Christ himself walking into a modern Easter service. No one is prepared for one of the Three Mothers being among them.

Markos looks down at Susie, the first twitch of astonishment entering her withered face.

SUSIE

Death to any other Mother.

The black form hears this and spares no glance around, but carries itself up the stairs, past a terrified Klemperer, toward Markos, low to the ground like Susie's improvisations, fast as the shadow of an eclipse crossing the land.

As it climbs, two things happen simultaneously:

INT. OHIO FARMHOUSE, ADULTS' BEDROOM -- DAY

Mrs. Bannion lies, dazed and pale, in her sick bed. Several neighbor women have collected there and are quietly singing a HYMN. Mrs. Bannion fades in and out, in a dream or memory:

*A young Susie (10) is in home school class. She is meant to be memorizing a map of the United States, but keeps turning her workbook back to another page. The girl wants to look at the shapes of Europe instead. Mrs. Bannion, who is teaching her, snaps the page back, impatiently, as if for the tenth time. She hisses:*

MRS. BANNION

*Susannah.*

*Ten-year-old Susie looks up at her, unintimidated, even tolerant for now.*

But Mrs. Bannion is lifted from this memory as something enters the room with her. She has a fraction of a second to see the shadow's face before it overtakes her.

Naomi, who has been sitting with the neighbor women, mending, looks up now into the dead face of her mother.



INT. MUTTERHAUS, ROOM OF FEASTS -- NIGHT

Death reaches Markos, rears up, and tears through the woman's meager magical defenses, then through her flesh. Susie gets slowly to her feet to watch.

When it is finished, it goes loping back down the stairs to every Markosite in the room. They see it coming and SCREAM-- Miss Mandel and Millius, Miss Balfour, Miss Huller, Miss Marks, Pavla, Miss Verdigast, and Alberta. The black thing cuts them down in its killing ebb, leaving the Blancites untouched. Then it uncoils into the void beyond.

Tanner is spared. She's weeping, weeping. The remaining witches find their voices and begin to scream praises. They thought they were about to witness the rebirth of their leader Helena Markos, and instead they have seen the arrival of one of the very Mothers they have only read about for centuries.

MATRONS IN THE ROOM  
*MUTTER! MUTTER! MUTTER SUSPIRIORUM!*

As Susie walks down the stairs, the font of light burns over her head, scattering all shadow, all ambiguity. Up close to it, as Susie is, one can hear the sound of TEN THOUSAND FORESTS BURNING in it.

She reaches up and pulls her throat open along a vertical to form a new mouth to speak out of.

When she reaches the bottom, where Sara stands, she takes the mask from her and puts it aside. Then she takes off Olga's, and then Patricia's, who have come forward, and sets them aside.

She leads them into a dance, telling them as they go:

SUSIE/MOTHER SUSPIRIORUM  
I am here now! I am with you!

Their eyes are rimmed with white. They dance for a time until Susie recognizes they are sad in their state.

PATRICIA  
Mother, we are so tired.

SUSIE/MOTHER SUSPIRIORUM  
What do you ask?

PATRICIA  
To die! To die!

She places a hand briefly on Olga's ruined face, then Patricia's, and lets them die mortal deaths.

She and Sara dance for a time until Sara says to her:

SARA  
Mother, please.

SUSIE/MOTHER SUSPIRIORUM  
What do you ask?

SARA  
To die!

And Susie puts her hand briefly on Sara's face, like a lover would, and then over it until she falls away, as if from a great height, from the mortal world into death.

Susie dances in solo then, charging the air, the room, the coven with her power. Finally, she calls out to the other witches:

SUSIE/MOTHER SUSPIRIORUM  
It is beautiful! Beautiful! Continue the dance!

The dancers wind back up again, but with a force that gives the impression Susie is controlling them now. She enters the dance, leads it, leads it into the air, with no underfoot or overhead, just circles and circles of power.

Klemperer is watching all of this unfold, his mind at the edge of ruin.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. BERLIN, STREETS -- DAWN

Susie is walking down the center of the street through the snow. It SQUEALS under her boots. Lights are burning in some windows, but not many people are out yet. She walks with a gait and confidence that is itself nearly a dance. This is her city now, its people her people.

CUT TO:

INT. MUTTERHAUS, ROOM OF FEASTS -- DAY

The remaining matrons are beginning the long process of cleaning the Room of Feasts. They remove the stained linens from the table. They scrub the stones.

INT. MARKOS COMPANY, HALLWAYS/STUDIOS -- DAY

The dancers are all in the studios rehearsing, oblivious. The company is running again as usual. Miss Boutaher leads the rehearsal. Danielle beats the drum. There's no hint of strangeness in the girls. They remember nothing, it's clear.

BACK TO:

INT. KLEMPERER'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM -- DAY

Klemperer is alive, though unwell. He has survived his night with the coven, but has been shaken past what he can tolerate psychologically.

Madame Sesame brings him tea, a slice of brown bread with a little butter crock, a sliced up pear. She puts it on his bedside table. The room is dim, the curtains nearly shut against the snowy morning. He doesn't want the light.

After a few moments, the door opens and Susie comes in without knocking. Frau Sesame turns in surprise.

FRAU SESAME

<< Good morning. No one taught you  
to knock on a closed door? >>

SUSIE/MOTHER SUSPIRIORUM

<< Wait on the stairs. >>

The housekeeper, coming into her fright, goes.

Susie enters. Klemperer's eyes follow her into the room and to a chair beside the bed. He is shaking. The light from the window is behind her now, casting her nearly in silhouette.

SUSIE/MOTHER SUSPIRIORUM (CONT'D)

I've been thinking about you. I  
wasn't yet in a position to prevent  
what my daughters did to you, but I  
regret it. Truly. I want to make it  
up if I can. I brought a gift.

(beat)

You deserve to know what happened.

KLEMPERER

Please.

But Susie closes her eyes, summoning a path through history to his wife. Her silhouette begins to change as she exerts herself. He can see the outline of Mother Suspiriorum--the halo of darkness.

## SUSIE/MOTHER SUSPIRIORUM

Your wife tried to make it south to Teplice. But she was apprehended by border guards in the woods outside Glashütte and taken, finally, to Terzin instead. Theresienstadt camp.

Klemperer's eyes are already tearing up with this confirmation of his worst nightmare. He clamps them shut. When he opens them, he is looking at the bedside table beside them, where the cut up pear sits in a dish with the knife. It is not a big knife, but it is sharp. And it's within reach.

## SUSIE/MOTHER SUSPIRIORUM (CONT'D)

She lived there only twenty days. On the 11th of November, 1943, the Commandant of the camp, a man named Burger, ordered all 40,000 detained there to stand in the cold for a census. Hours passed. Most were naked. Some hundreds died of exposure.

CLOSE ON: Under the lids, Susie's eyes move here and there as if she is seeing what she's describing.

## SUSIE/MOTHER SUSPIRIORUM (CONT'D)

Your wife had two women with her as she died, who told her she was not alone: An elderly secretary from Denmark and a woman from Moravia, whom your wife had befriended. Her final moments were spent thinking of a birthday in which you surprised her by taking her to hear a concert. Chopin and Brahms. It was the first time you held her hand. She was not afraid. Her thoughts were of you. Only of you.

Susie reaches the end and opens her eyes, back in her mortal form.

She sees: Klemperer is crying through all of this, rocking with silent, hopeless sobs. Hope, even hope scraped thin, was preferable to him than this. She savors his pain.

## SUSIE/MOTHER SUSPIRIORUM (CONT'D)

Be calm, doctor. That's not the gift.

Susie leans in and takes his hand.

## SUSIE/MOTHER SUSPIRIORUM (CONT'D)

Of Anke-- Of Patricia-- Of Sara--  
 Of me-- Of all the women of your un-  
 doing-- When I touch your face, ev-  
 ery memory of them will go. They'll  
 melt in the sun and be gone.

She doesn't ask him if he's ready. She touches the place just in front of his ear. Then she gets up to leave him to the attendant seizure.

Before she goes, though, she reaches into the bedclothes and finds the knife he's taken from the bedside table and returns it so he doesn't accidentally cut himself.

He bucks and spasms in his bed. Once Susie is gone, Frau Sesame rushes to his bedside.

## FRAU SESAME

Doctor! --Doctor!

But he finally comes out of the convulsions. His eyes find her and he looks at her, confused, as if trying to place her.

CUT TO:

INT. MUTTERHAUS, ROOM OF FEASTS -- DAWN

Matrons come up the stairs to the bodies there. One of the matrons stoops down to begin to solve the problem of Madame Blanc. She is astonished to find:

Blanc is still alive. Her eyes look up from her half-severed head. She tries to speak. She blinks at the gathering women.

We follow Miss Huller as she sprints up the stairs to summon help.

CUT TO:

INT. BKA HEADQUARTERS, WAITING ROOM -- DAY

In the lobby is the row of "TERRORISTEN" posters Klemperer saw, with their dozens and dozens of photos of men and women, some with names others with question marks. Many are crossed out. Patricia's looks smudged somehow, now totally unrecognizable.

CUT TO:

EXT. EAST BERLIN, FRIEDRICHSTRAÙE -- DAY

Later in the morning, the streets are filling with people walking to work. Klemperer is no where to be seen.

We END on the image of the ruined fountain where Klemperer used to stop and linger with his wife's memory. It is empty now, and will be from now on.

A wife, a life, an entire war, have been forgotten.

END.