

THE WHITE CIRCUS

by Clyde Henry Productions
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EXT. A VAST MECHANIZED BATTLEFIELD - NIGHT

A hellish landscape: skeletal trees, winding trenches, tanks, air ships and soldiers- their features erased by thick mud and gas masks.

The dead outnumber the living. Bodies are punctured and burned by bullet holes, bomb blasts, shrapnel tears, gut wounds and bayonet jabs. With every exploding shell a thousand pounds of mud is flung up into the sky, unearthing a decade of corpses.

In a trench, a machine gunner and his crew fire wildly as the enemy advances through a cloud of green gas.

A shell explodes, blowing the crew to pieces.

The machine gun points straight up, surrounded by bodies and flames. The rising heat causes the gun to discharge a bullet, POP! and then another and another, like popcorn on a hot stove.

Through the trench walls we see a sliver of sky.

POP! POPPOPPOP! POPPOP! Into the gun's path flies a small solitary plane-

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPLANE COCKPIT

A young PILOT, no older than 16, is frightened.

First there is the THUMP of bullets hitting the plane's belly. Then an awful shuddering while the instruments flash red and warning buzzers BUZZ.

The cockpit fills with smoke and the Pilot panics.

The plane pitches and rolls. The landscape spins wildly. The Pilot grabs at the mouthpiece hanging from his leather helmet-

PILOT

Pilot speaking, pilot speaking-
trainer 127.

Ohg!...Mayday!

(choking on smoke)

May-...ukh...

The Pilot desperately pushes and pulls at the buttons within reach, finally hitting one marked EJECT-

With a WHOOSH! the Pilot and his seat are ejected upwards-

The Pilot shoots straight up, until, reaching equilibrium before falling, he is momentarily suspended...

On one side of him is a tall range of mountains and, a few yards away, his ejection seat, hanging in the air. Below him lies the battlefield, stretching as far as the eye can see.

He stares in wonder as thousands of white ghosts rise like steam above the battlefield, and up into the clouds.

Then he falls.

Faster and faster. The Pilot frantically pulls at his ripcord until his parachute opens with a snap of air.

FADE TO:

MOVIE PROJECTION

The sounds of war fade into the sounds of cowboys and Indians fighting, and then into a black and white montage of horse riding, gunfights, lassos, scalping, and so on, an exuberant and absurd display of Western movie clichés.

PULL BACK TO:

INT. CHATEAU PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

The cowboy film is projected onto the wall of an opulent salon.

Watching the film is the BARON. We see him from behind. He's enormous, with pointed ears sprouting from a fat, neck-less pig's head.

He laughs with gusto, cheering as the film's hero shoots down a chandelier, knocking the moustachio'd villain unconscious.

The Baron's chubby, nervous servant, ELFRIEDE, wrestles with the projector. Reams of film unspool to the floor about her.

THEN:

There's a whining sound as an airplane SHOOOOOOMS overhead, rattling the windows-

CRASH!

The Baron scrambles to the window, his clumsiness made worse by bowed legs and a tight Prussian-style officer's uniform.

With the lights on, the penthouse's gaudy splendor is revealed: The Baron's taste evokes Liberace, Muammar Ghadaffi, or Michael Jackson's Neverland Ranch.

The place is filled with oversized toys, paintings, antique musical instruments and, in the corner, a bear-sized steel cage.

From the window, the Baron and Elfriede gape at a ribbon of smoke rising from the centre of town.

The Baron runs from the window to a spiral stone staircase, which he clambers up in order to get a better look from the roof-

CUT TO:

EXT. CHATEAU ROOF

The Baron's chateau is on a hill and from the roof the Baron can observe the entire town:

It is a small Alpine village, isolated by mountains and surrounded on all sides by a wide, swift river.

Most of the town has been bombed to rubble except for the city centre and chateau, which is virtually untouched.

The Baron squints at the night sky. He gasps in fright as a white parachute glides down towards the city square.

BACK TO:

INT. CHATEAU PENTHOUSE

Ten fat, pink fingers dig in a drawer filled with bullets and oversized nerve tranquilizers.

The Baron pops one of the pills into his mouth and washes it down with a glass of whiskey.

He fits the bullets into the chamber of a custom, long barrelled gold-plated revolver.

CLOSE ON: He absently puts a blue "liqui-gel" tranquilizer instead of a bullet into one of the gun's six chambers.

The Baron spins the gun on his finger like a cowboy.

Elfriede watches apprehensively.

The Baron holsters the pistol then draws it again, aiming at the chandelier in the ceiling.

BARON

Old Sure Hand. Look how steady.

Even as he says it, his hand trembles...

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

The parachute lies draped over the cobblestones, concealing the struggling Pilot, who looks ghostly under the silk sheet.

Panicked, he pulls at the parachute till he is free, then collapses, coughing up smoke and hacking thick goo from his lungs.

Still wheezing, he raises his goggles, wiping black soot from his eyes. He has a naive face of the sort that makes women want to either take care of him or molest him. He's tall and unbalanced, with overgrown hands and feet like a puppy.

The town is picturesque but gloomy. The square is lined with shops, though nothing has been open for a long time. The bins in the bakery are bare and the meat shop window is empty and full of dust. An ominous wooden scaffold stands in place of a cafe sign.

The centre of the square is dominated by the statue of a long-dead local military hero.

A lone PIGEON, mangy, nervous, one-eyed and one-legged, sits on his head.

The Pilot's airplane hangs above him, embedded at a 45 degree angle into the masonry of the town's church. One engine still burns, sending showers of sparks into the air.

The Pilot hears a sound like squeaky wheels; faint at first but growing louder.

The Pigeon poops on the statue's head and flies off.

The Pilot turns towards the noise and gapes, astonished, as a brown BEAR weaves toward him on a tricycle.

The Bear is scruffy and underfed and has a heavy iron lock about his neck, hanging from a rusted chain.

The Bear ignores the Pilot and halts under the plane. He stares up at the plane's second, undamaged engine. He grunts with satisfaction and claps his hands.

PILOT
(meaning to say "Hey!")
Heghhh!

The Bear turns for a moment. His look is dismissive and indifferent.

He throws a rope around the plane and, with the agility of an old circus hand, climbs up.

The Pilot collapses into a coughing fit and the Bear looks down. He notes the maple leaf embroidered on the Pilot's shoulder.

His disdain is replaced by curiosity.

He knocks on the plane's fuselage with a wrench- there is a gold maple leaf painted there.

BEAR
(deep voice, thick Russian
accent)
Canadian?

The Pilot nods.

BEAR
(earnestly)
You have been to Alaska.

PILOT
(retching)
Nahhgbbb...

The BEAR leans forward, not understanding.

PILOT
(pointing at his mouth)
Ukkgh chh sllhg.

BEAR
(understanding and
nodding)
Smoking too much cigar.
Of course, I am not doctor.

The Bear laughs, low and wheezy.

The Pilot is dumbfounded.

BEAR
Shake head yes or no. You have been
to Alaska?

The Pilot shakes his head no. Immediately the Bear loses all interest and goes back to the engine.

Suddenly, the ground below them trembles. The Bear's ears prick up.

The tremor grows stronger, the plane rattles, and there is an ominous rumble.

The Bear looks anxiously towards the sound.

He slides down the rope and leaps onto his tricycle. He peddles away furiously-

-then stops at the edge of the square. He glances back.

The Pilot is frozen in place, looking petrified and vulnerable.

BEAR
(yelling)
Run, Canadian
(cycling away)
-if you want to live!

The Bear hurries down a narrow street, his bike squeaking as he disappears around the corner.

The Pilot hesitates a moment then runs after the Bear- He takes two steps then snaps backwards violently. He's still attached to the parachute.

The sound grows louder. It's the roar of some infernal, monstrous machine; a troop carrier or maybe a tank.

The Pilot fumbles with his parachute clips.

A pair of headlights and a blinding, probing spotlight lights up the edge of the square.

At the last possible moment the clips snaps open and the Pilot sprints out of the square.

CUT TO:

EXT. COBBLESTONED, CURVING STREET

The Pilot runs through a maze of streets and alleys.

He comes to a crossroads and stops. He wheezes and coughs, unable to take a deep breath.

The Bear is nowhere to be seen. It's empty and quiet. There are no street lamps or lights in any of the windows.

The Pilot leans on the window of a mannequin shop, his breath haggard and whistling.

Behind the glass is a display of figures, wigs, and hanging body parts. The mannequins' glassy stares are eerie and disconcerting.

He stumbles on.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE

Six robotic, Teutonic DEATH SQUAD KNIGHTS march into the square, followed by a large, dangerous looking military vehicle. The vehicle stops, its engine idling, rumbling and sputtering like a bull.

A tall, androgynous, leather-clad figure steps out of the vehicle. The face is concealed by a medieval iron helmet, but the manner is unmistakably commanding and dangerous. This is LENI.

She takes in the plane and the maple leaf insignia.

Leni whistles, short and sharp, and the Knights disperse throughout the square, pointing lights that are embedded into their chests into every crevice.

They smash in doors and shatter shop windows, hoping to frighten the intruder into the open.

Leni, meanwhile, leans down and fingers the silk cloth of the parachute. The square is empty. The pilot has escaped.

She calculates: Four streets converge on the square. Two are blocked by barbed wire fences. The third is the route of the Death Squad vehicle.

That leaves one exit.

She stands and raps the ground with her cane. The Knights snap to attention. She points to the Pilot's escape route and hurries back to the car.

CUT TO:

EXT. NARROW STREETS

The road ends at the river's edge. The Pilot stops and looks back, panting.

He's all alone. He gazes to either side of him, and takes in the bombed out remains of two iron bridges.

There's no way off the island.

He pulls a compass from a pocket in his suit. The glass is smashed. The needle spins once without conviction then falls off.

The Pilot sits, his head in his hands. He's lost and scared.

He hears music, dissonant and eerie, as if from a melting phonograph. He looks towards the sound-

Along the river is a row of wooden shacks and over one of these, a working street lamp.

At the light's edge a drunk zips up his pants and sways into the open door of a cafe.

Warily the Pilot approaches.

On the glass is a painted sign reading "**Cafe Romantik**".

There is hazy movement through the window: About a dozen men play cards around a table.

SUDDENLY:

The Pilot is lit up by a bright spotlight-

Two of Leni's metallic Death Squad Knights lurch down the street towards him.

The Death Squad car swerves along the river road towards the cafe.

The Pilot jumps through the doorway-

CUT TO:

INT. CAFE ROMANTIK

PILOT
(trying to say "Help me")
He-gh mehh

Every eye in the room is on the Pilot.

The card players stare at him with blood-shot, booze-soaked eyeballs. They are dressed in tattered army uniforms and their faces are horribly disfigured.

These are the AUTOMATON MEN; wounded war veterans who are half man, half machine. Their amputated limbs and organs have been replaced by iron parts, cogs and wheels.

In the corner sits a man with a record player in place of a chest. The needle is a nail set into his finger.

Tending the bar is a mechanical WAITRESS. Her torso is upholstered like a dressmaker's dummy in green felt. Her head is an oval of polished pine, stained and chipped like an old tooth.

Spotlights arc through the window. The Death Squad vehicle screams to a stop.

The Pilot spies an open door at the back of the bar. He runs for it, slip-sliding in an ankle high layer of glass and debris.

As he passes the Waitress, she reaches for him.

With a cry of revulsion the Pilot sidesteps her and leaps through the door and out into a back alley.

MOMENTS LATER:

The door opens and Leni steps in with two Knights behind her.

One Automaton (He has cigarettes stuffed into every crevice in his face, creating a halo of smoke) looks up from his cards-

THE FOG

It's a cold night for alligators.

LENI

(cold and calm)

Where is he?

The Fog grunts and resumes the game. Leni is patient and in control.

LENI

Where is the pilot?

A television hangs from the ceiling behind her. It shows a black and white football game. The action is incomprehensible through layers of dust and static.

One man, twitching relentlessly, tries to look around Leni to follow the action-

SHAKEY

Did everybody score?

The Fog flicks a smoke at Leni's backside.

THE FOG

Move your ass.

Leni unholsters a pistol with an attached bayonet. In one motion she slices through a tube under The Fog's arm.

Oil sprays everywhere. The Fog's legs collapse and he falls to the floor.

LENI

Where is the pilot?

He slips in oil, unable to stand. Leni digs her heel into his chest-

LENI

Where is-

Another Automaton with a bomb embedded in his skull grabs her wrist.

TICK

Get out! No girls allowed-
(looking at the knights)
-and no rats.

Leni's eyes narrow.

She grabs a steel nut on Tick's chest and turns it sharply. He screams and falls to his knees. She twists the nut tighter, till his agony is unbearable.

LENI

Where?

Finally, an Automaton whose smashed and reassembled face recalls some demented Picasso portrait, steps forward. His name is PAPI.

His eyes are watery and weak. He has been sitting apart while the others laughed.

PAPI

Stop. I'll tell you.

Leni loosens her grip.

TICK

Papi. Keep your mouth shut.

Papi does, but his eyes dart to the back of the room for an instant. Leni follows his gaze.

The Waitress is leaning over the bar, looking out the back door with her hands over her heart.

The door is open.

Leni chuckles and drops Tick to the floor.

Leni pauses at the bar to wipe the oil from her blade with a rag. The Waitress cowers.

As Leni exits the cafe TICK spits on the floor in disgust.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARKET SQUARE

The square is the site of a long abandoned farmers market. In the centre is a wooden pissoir.

CUT TO:

INT. WOODEN PISSOIR

The Pilot hides inside, kneeling in the small, dark space. He heaves and trembles, stifling tears. He stares through cracks in the wood, looking for Knights, Automatons, or perhaps some new horror.

Somewhere below him, a latch clicks open.

With a frightened start he quiets down, edges into the shadows, and holds his breath...

The toilet pushes forward, revealing a trapdoor underneath. A small, thin BOY emerges.

His clothes are patched and undersized, his skin is pale like a cave salamander, and he has a slingshot slung over his shoulder. He has the dumb, fearless look of a predatory animal.

He opens the pissoir door and slips out into the square.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARKET SQUARE

The Boy slides down a side street, quiet and stealthy.

Moments later, clanking steps announce the appearance of Leni and the Death Squad Knights.

Leni shouts an order and the Knights stop.

She looks long and hard at the pissoir.

The wood creaks, just a little.

The Knights step forward and raise their arms; in place of hands they have machine gun barrels.

Leni raises her hand-

LENI

Stay.

The Knights pause and Leni stalks forward.

LENI

(gently, maternal)

Are you hurt?

The door remains closed.

LENI

They're gone. Come out.

Inside the pissoir, the Pilot shivers with doubt.

LENI

We're here to help.

Silence.

Leni shrugs and beckons to the Knights.

RATATATATATATATATAT!

The pissoir explodes into splinters. The structure collapses, revealing-

Nothing but a bullet-ridden porcelain toilet.

Leni kicks at the remains. Perplexed, she looks around the square.

Nothing...

CUT TO:

INT. SEWER

In the sewer below the pissoir, a band of moonlight reveals the Pilot's wide eyes.

He crouches in the dark until he hears the Knights walk away.

He holds back tears, trying to act like a man and not a boy...but it's too much and a sob escapes.

Embarrassed, he wipes his cheek, sneezes into his sleeve...

He fumbles around in his suit, unzips a pocket and produces a cigar-sized flashlight.

He flashes the beam of light around-

He's in a damp, stone tunnel.

The Pilot steps into the dark.

FADE TO BLACK,
OPEN ON:

INT. CABARET

A stone cellar is the setting for a cabaret. The crowd is lively- people are drinking and laughing- but also watchful, wary of speaking too loudly. There is a forbidden, illicit quality to the gathering.

Everyone is dressed up as well as they are able. The ladies wear dresses, the men suits and hats, but their faces are lean and their clothes shabby and falling apart at the seams.

The tables and chairs are made of overturned barrels and crates. The cigars are rolled with newspapers. The liquor they drink is moonshine; clear or yellowish brown or dyed red to resemble wine. The flowers on the table are crafted from yellowed newspaper advertisements and expired passports. Everything is covered in a layer of dust and soot.

Onstage is LULA, the cabaret's MC.

She wears an elaborate costume with two false legs, two false arms and a false head; this gives the impression of a man and woman in coitus. It's difficult to tell where the costume begins and the woman ends.

Lula wears a painted moustache and bowler hat-the woman's head of the costume is the false one.

LULA

So I says to Mathilde: "Last week the Baron ordered a hanging".

"Oh! That's good news" she tells me.

"How so?"

"...It means they're running out of bullets!"

The crowd laughs. They adore Lula.

With a flourish Lula pulls down a butcher's diagram of a pig and its various cuts of meat. In place of the head is a caricature of the Baron.

The crowd hoots and hollers.

Lula picks up a cookbook. She flips through the pages and stops-

LULA

(licking her lips)

Roast Rib of Pork!

She pauses, looking out at her audience, then turns the page:

LULA

(pantomiming the action)

Then marinate two weeks in honey and beer...smoke overnight on birch embers.

The audience shifts in their seats. They are so hungry that speaking about food makes their stomachs rumble. Even Lula seems caught up in the spell.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Goddammit Lula. Have mercy!

LULA

Now where were we? Truffles, butter...sour cream. Yes...Oh here we are!
Three hours in the oven, till the meat is ready to peel itself off the bone.

Their mouths water. They chew nervously on their fingers.

LULA

Wait pretties! We have to make the
sauce! Take one glass of red wine
and pour it in. Take one glass of
white wine and pour it in.

Lula mimes the action; taking a drink each time.

LULA

Then...a pint of sherry...six shots
of vodka...a finger of
Beaujolais...
Two fingers of Madeira...a gallon
of champagne.
(pausing)
Now throw that fat pig in the trash
and serve!

The crowd laughs, their tension relieved like a rolling wave.

CUT TO:

UNDER THE CABARET STAGE

The stage is crudely made: Plywood nailed to tables and
chairs and skirted with cloth.

In the darkness under the stage is an iron grate. Hands
appear from below, grip the bars, and push the grate aside.

The Pilot emerges from the floor, rust in his eyes and the
flashlight between his teeth.

He pulls himself up.

Above him he hears creaking floorboards and the muted sounds
of Lula regaling the crowd.

He crawls through a labyrinth of wooden legs towards the
cloth at the stage's edge.

LULA

(voice)

And now, ladies and *gentlemen*,
raise your glass to our lovely
songbird...Mona Blume!

The Pilot peers between a tear in the cloth and looks out
onto a roaring, clapping crowd.

Above him, he hears footsteps...high heels on wood.

The cellar goes quiet as a church.

VOICE
 (singing)
*I want to die with you, why don't
 we die ensemble.*

The voice is clear and unaccompanied, its tone youthful but weary. This is MONA BLUME.

MONA
*Let's forget this stormy weather,
 why don't we die together.*

She's captivating. The crowd forgets their empty bellies.

From under the stage, the Pilot realizes an extraordinary thing.

Though half the crowd are dressed as men, including many with fake moustaches, they are *all* women. There isn't a single man in the room.

A piano player and accordionist join the song.

Mona steps into the crowd and the Pilot sees her for the first time:

She's a pale, red headed beauty. Childlike, but with a posture bowed by troubles and worries beyond her years.

The Pilot is moonstruck.

MONA
*You know I'd like to die with you,
 why don't we die ensemble...*

The tune picks up pace and Mona dances from table to table.

A woman pulls Mona to her and forces a kiss. The crowd roars with pleasure.

CLOSE ON: Whilst being pawed, Mona deftly slips a cigarette pack from the woman's blouse.

She presents the pack to the audience, who applaud. She slips it into her garter.

Another woman dances with Mona, nuzzling her neck before dramatically dipping her to the floor.

Mona plucks a bottle of wine from her table.

Finally, her act comes to a feverish, energetic end:

MONA

*I'd like to die with you, why don't
we die ensemble.*

*Let's swallow lots of pills, let's
soak ourselves in gas.*

*We don't have to leave Havana, just
think we'll reach nirvana.*

*I'd like to die with you, why don't
we die...ensemble!*

The song ends to great applause. Mona bows and skips back to the stage.

LULA

Bravo! Extraordinaire!

(more clapping)

Ladies and gentlemen, you have such
poetic souls!

(laughter)

You see beauty in every piece of
shit.

(mock boos)

Boozers and wretches all of you!
Save a glass for a New Years toast!

Now one for the boys!

Onto the stage come two women dressed in soldier's dungarees, with thin moustaches. They have wooden rifles over their shoulders and sing a mock marching song:

SOLDIERS

*Goodbye to the company of women!
Hello to the company of men!*

*How fleeting is the company of
women! How steadfast is the company
of men!*

Under the stage, the Pilot crawls towards the back curtain between chairs and table legs. He's looking for a way backstage.

He hears voices-

MAN'S VOICE

(tremendously excited)

Mona...we escape tonight!

The Pilot lifts the curtain to see a dressing table and cracked mirror. Mona's face is fragmented by the broken glass.

He's smitten; her pupils seem like an oil slick, swimming with reflections of light.

MAN'S VOICE

You understand? I find airplane engine. We go!

It's the Bear with the tricycle. The Pilot edges closer-

Mona kicks off her boots and slips out of her stockings and garters. Her legs are white, her feet filthy with soot and sweat.

She pulls up her dress and the Pilot gets a glimpse of small diamond shaped breasts-

BEAR

Do you hear?

MONA

It's really possible? You think we can fly out of here?

BEAR

Not flying! I take engine, I put on boat. We go up river! We are free!

She shakes the cigarette pack over the table; out drops a single bent butt with lipstick stains. She drinks from a wine bottle and makes a face.

MONA

Blecch.

Impatient, the Bear grabs her with both arms and spins her around.

BEAR

(exasperated)

Mona please. This is *great* plan!

MONA

Tonight?

BEAR

(growling)

Yes, we go tonight! You trust me, no?

MONA

(weakly)

Of course.

BEAR
Is been difficult for us.

MONA
No Misiu. It's not you.

BEAR
No?

Mona shakes her head and buries her head in the Bear's chest.
She pets the fur at the nape of his neck.

MONA
I feel like I'm already old. I
can't begin all over again.

BEAR
(stroking her hair)
You will see...Everything is better
in Alaska.

Just the two-
(the bear sniffs the air)
of us!?

The Bear growls in the Pilot's direction. With a swoosh of a
paw fast enough to catch a slippery salmon, he pulls the
Pilot into the room.

BEAR
Humrph! Canadian!

How do you sneak here?

The Pilot doesn't answer the question. He blushes, eyes
locked on the floor. He's never been this close to a half-
naked girl before.

Mona covers up and looks at him in wonder, as if he is a rare
tropical plant. It is the first time in many years she has
seen a young man.

The Bear cuffs the Pilot on the head.

BEAR
(laughing)
Delivering basket to Grandma?

Red faced, the Pilot pushes the Bear with both hands, but
can't move him. With a laugh the Bear pushes him back.

The Pilot puts up his fists like he's seen boxers do in
newspaper photos.

MONA
(looking towards stage)
Stop.

The Pilot throws a punch. The Bear's catcher's mitt of a paw catches his fist and squeezes.

BEAR
You kidding me, clown?

MONA
(in a harsh whisper)
Stop!

They freeze. She points towards the stage curtain. There is no sound from the theatre- no singing or music or creaking chairs.

Mona, the Bear and Pilot behind her, pulls back the edge of the curtain.

CUT TO:

INT. CABARET

Lula, the MC, steps cautiously up a set of stairs leading to the cellar door. All eyes are on her.

She stops outside the door.

She peers through the keyhole...

SCHVIKKK! A knife blade slices through the keyhole, deep into Lula's eyeball.

BANG! a bullet shoots through the same hole knocking her backwards.

She falls end over end in her costume and lands in a heap of limbs at the bottom of the steps.

A single scream erupts from the crowd.

The door bursts open- It's the Death Squad Knights with Leni, front and center, gripping her smoking pistol/bayonet.

She pulls off her helmet and glares triumphantly around the room. Her face is feline and cruelly attractive.

There is pandemonium in the cabaret and the room erupts into chaos. The women are hysterical, turning away from the door and piling against each other, frantically trying to find an escape.

One of the dancing soldiers pushes her way to Lula's body.
Her name is KUKA.

She sobs, trying to turn her over, but is picked up by a
Death Squad Knight and thrown aside like a doll. She smacks
the piano with a CLANG.

BACK TO:

INT. BACKSTAGE DRESSING ROOM

Mona wants to fight but the Bear holds her back.

MONA
(crazed)
Let me go!

BEAR
You want to die?

Mona stares wild-eyed at the Bear, as if she doesn't
recognize him.

BEAR
This is not to think! This is yes
or no question.

Mona shakes her head.

The Bear motions to a small window at ceiling height.

BEAR
(harsh whisper)
This way.

Mona remembers the Pilot-

MONA
Come with us.

BEAR
No!

MONA
(emphatically)
Misiu.

BEAR
(harsh whisper)
No.

MONA
She'll kill him.

He grabs Mona, but she breaks away-

A short burst of gunfire explodes in the cabaret. The Bear looks anxiously towards the curtain.

BEAR

Ok. He comes. Go! Go!

He hoists Mona up. The Pilot jumps and pulls himself through behind her.

Just before leaving, the Bear grabs two bottles of wine from the dressing table.

He squeezes his fat rump out the window and shuts it behind him.

An instant later the stage curtain is torn down by one of the Knights.

The dressing room is empty.

The Knight looks up at the cellar window.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACK OF CABARET BUILDING

Mona, the Bear and the Pilot huddle at the rear of the cabaret building.

They are squeezed between the wall and a barbed wire fence. Beyond the fence is a pockmarked field of ruins.

BEAR

(to Mona)

I go to plane. You go to bridge!

(to Pilot)

You go...crawl in hole.

MONA

He's coming with us!

BEAR

Impossible. Boat has one, two seats.

MONA

But it's his engine isn't it?

(to the Pilot)

It's your plane that crashed?

The Pilot nods vigorously.

The Bear grabs the Pilot by the collar and shoves him towards Mona-

BEAR
This makes you happy, to go with
boy?

MONA
(stung)
Misiu...Please.
Is there no other way?

BEAR
(bitterly)
Maybe Helicopter.

The Pilot nods. He likes this suggestion. The Bear and Mona stare at their feet.

MONA
No...No of course not...

We have to make sure he's safe,
till the Canadians come to rescue
him.

The Pilot is doubtful. The Bear beats his forehead in frustration.

BEAR
No time.

MONA
Oh shush! I'll take him home. Then
meet you at the bridge. Besides...
(shivering)
I can pick up something warm.

Mona is wearing a thin ragged dress and her arms are bare.

MONA
(poking his chest)
You have a coat-

BEAR
This is excuse. Always excuse.

MONA
I'll be quick. *I promise.*

The Bear scoffs, then uncorks a wine bottle and takes a drink.

BEAR
(jabbing Pilot's chest)
You are responsible. Is your job
she gets to boat.

The Pilot salutes. A gesture both earnest and ridiculous.

BEAR
If not-

He bares red soaked teeth.

BEAR
I eat you. Not joke.

The Pilot nods, believing him.

BEAR
Go.

Mona kisses his muzzle.

MONA
Be careful.

Mona climbs the fence and leaps to the other side.

The Bear lopes off on all fours. He looks back briefly, then turns the corner and disappears out of sight.

The Pilot looks skeptically at the fence.

MONA
Follow me.

The Pilot climbs, snagging his ankle on the ragged wire. Though he doesn't notice, water from his pressure suit begins to trickle out.

With Mona leading, they disappear into the shadows.

CUT TO:

INT. CABARET

Leni evaluates her work: Moans, sobs, bruises, running make up, and broken lips.

LENI
All I ask is you obey the rules.

Now clean yourselves up. I expect
you at the factory before dawn.

One of the women is a skeletal old creature, blinded by cataracts. She hisses at the rest of the women kneeling around her-

MATHILDE

I warned you.

Leni turns to exit, then pauses at Lula's body. Kuka is lying over her. She's shocked past the point of tears.

With a finger, Leni raises Kuka's chin. She tears off her glued on moustache.

LENI

(to herself)

I wish this whole town had one throat.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACK OF CABARET BUILDING

The lone Death Squad Knight looks at the spot where Mona, the Pilot, and Bear escaped out the window.

Then up at the scrap of fabric hanging on the barbed wire.

There are footprints on the other side where the Pilot and Mona jumped down.

The Knight crashes through the fence.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD OF RUINS

Mona leads the Pilot towards her hideout: the ruins of a travelling circus. Though designed to withstand wind and rain, it has met its match in artillery shells and incendiary bombs.

There are no colorful tents, banners, or gold-braided curtains. The big top and Ferris wheel are reduced to steel frames, bent by heat into waxwork skeletons.

The animal cages and caravans are spread in a circle around an enormous crater, looking like smashed toys in the sandbox of some ferocious child.

Mona leads the Pilot towards the base of the Ferris wheel.

Fifty feet above them is a wooden caravan; caught in the wheel's spokes like a beetle in a web, flung there, presumably, by the same explosion that created the crater.

Mona pulls a rope and a counterweighted ladder unrolls from the caravan down to their feet.

MONA
(ironically)
Home.

CUT TO:

INT. MONA'S CARAVAN HIDEAWAY

Mona flicks a match and lights a candle, carrying it to a crate doubling as a table.

The hideout is small and cramped and the floor is sloped at an angle. As they walk in the caravan rocks back and forth like a cradle.

The place is a perfect reflection of a passionate, disordered young mind, with piles of books, photos, cut up newspapers, and clothing covering every surface. White paper stars hang from the ceiling on strings.

Mona's coat, fur-lined and a size too big, is draped across a mattress. She slips it on then hurries to the corner where she burrows into a stack of clutter, searching for something.

The Pilot is transfixed by her. He sits at the table, watching Mona's every move.

She pulls a suitcase from the stack and throws it towards the doorway.

Next, she pulls a heavy iron wrench out. She stands and swings it around-

MONA
What do you think? Could you crack
a skull with this?

The Pilot tries to speak-

PILOT
Ig Gakh.

MONA
Oh your voice-

PILOT
 (pointing at his throat)
 Ignnn vggss

Mona has a flash of inspiration. She slips the wrench in her pocket, then crosses the room and produces a portable typewriter.

She puts the typewriter down on the table.

MONA
 Now paper-

She disappears to find paper.

The Pilot spies a photo lodged in the typewriter. He pulls it out:

A young girl sits on the wood steps of a caravan. This is YOUNG MONA. Beside her sits a red headed woman with an Oriental robe, sequined tights, and costume pearls. This is Mona's mother, PAVOT BLUME...

MONA
 (voice)
 A gift from my uncle. I called him my uncle but he was just one of the clowns. He said "there's a novel in here somewhere but I've never found it."

...On the step behind them is a clown in Pierrot costume. He laughed or turned his head while the photo was taken, so his face is a blurry smear.

MONA
 (voice)
 I've never found it either. It's yours if you want it.

Curiously, the Pilot slips the photo into his pocket. A moment later Mona reappears at his side.

MONA
 And tra la la-
 (threads paper)
 there!

The Pilot looks at the machine. His finger hovers uncertainly over the letter "x".

MONA
 You can spell can-!?

Mona steps back, realizing that she's stepping in a puddle under the Pilot's foot.

The Pilot looks down and is mortified. His leaking suit looks just like he's peed himself.

MONA
(sympathetic)
I'm sorry, this all must be
terrifying.

He shakes his head vigorously and types as quickly as he can.

He points to the paper-

He's written **not p watr from suit**

Mona is confused. The Pilot gestures to his suit as he types:

He writes **pressur suit for flying**

She nods, half understanding.

MONA
Your flying suit is leaking?

The Pilot nods and types again. Pointing to the yellow maple leaf on his shoulder, he shows her the paper:

It says **canadian invention**

MONA
(laughing)
How strange!
(then, seeing his face
staring expectantly)
You must be very proud.

Yes, he nods. She laughs again, a flirtatious, musical laugh. He smiles, broad and toothy. He tries to laugh but coughs till he's blue in the face.

Mona pats him on the back.

MONA
Are you OK?

He's OK as long as she's touching him. Their faces are close.

MONA
You miss home don't you?

The Pilot thinks about it. He shakes his head 'no'.

MONA

I never had a home- without wheels.

Though Mona and the Pilot couldn't be more different in temperament, she being old for her age and he young, they see in the other a mirror of their own melancholy; the heroic loneliness found only in youth.

Mona turns her head and breaks the spell. She steps over to a window and opens the shutters. Her body trembles with an inner turmoil.

The window is filled to the edges with potted plants and flowers. More plants hang from hooks in the ceiling.

The candle flickers out, leaving just the pale moon through the window.

Mona looks at the flowers.

MONA

They'll die without me.

She looks at the Pilot curiously. His face is lit up with teenage yearning-

MONA

We're like bubbles on a pond.
Someday we'll burst and be gone-

THEN:

The room lurches and tilts forward.

Furniture, books, and cutlery slide across the floor and Mona and the Pilot go tumbling after.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOMBED OUT CIRCUS

The Death Squad Knight stands at the base of the Ferris wheel. His fist has been replaced by an ominous steel ball.

The wheel turns. Its motion is stumbling and there is an awful racket of grinding gears.

The caravan heads downwards, turning like a playing card stuck in the spokes of a giant bicycle wheel.

BACK TO:

INT. CARAVAN

Mona and the Pilot roll with the debris, trying not to be crushed. First the room is on its side then upside down.

They fail to realize that the cabin has reached the ground.

The robot bursts into the room, chest lamp blazing like a police spotlight.

The next moments are bedlam: Mona and the Pilot, the turning wheel, and the Knight's relentless smashing fist reducing all to splinters as the robot pursues Mona and the Pilot around the revolving cabin.

The Pilot dodges. The steel ball crashes through the caravan's floor.

Mona ducks. The fist smashes through the side wall and the ball gets stuck between the Ferris wheel spokes.

The Knight pulls with such power that it is not the fist that moves but the whole cabin. The wheel moves up, the cabin slips down, and the Knight's arm tears clean off.

The Knight stumbles, unbalanced.

Mona attacks the Knight from behind with the wrench, beating on his head with great ferocity.

The robot throws her aside.

Below, the machine's works are strained to the breaking point.

The Knight's remaining hand withdraws, replaced in a blink by the long-barrelled machine gun.

The grinding gears seize and the wheel lurches to a stop.

The Knight takes a step backwards to avoid falling and steps right through the cabin's door.

Bullets riddle the wall above the Pilot's head as he falls-

-crashing from one spoke to another, end over end, then smashing to the ground with a sound like ten thousand dinner plates being dropped.

Mona and the Pilot peer through the door to the ground below:

The robot sparks and smokes. Its chest plate snaps opens.

Inside the chest is a large trench RAT on a running wheel.
Its head is attached to electrodes.

The Rat coughs and shudders.

MONA
Monster!...

Oh!-

The cabin pitches downwards and Mona nearly follows the Knight. The Pilot pulls her back from the brink.

MONA
Jump.

The Pilot looks at Mona in alarm. The cabin teeters on the edge.

MONA
Jump!

Mona pushes the Pilot out the door and leaps after him.

The cabin lets go and crashes to the ground, crushing the robot.

Above, Mona and the Pilot hang from the spokes of the circus wheel.

Somehow, the cabin has landed upright. The Knight's two feet stick out from the edge.

Mona laughs. The Pilot doesn't understand why.

Mona slides down the spoke and steps nimbly to the next one.

MONA
Come on,
(still smiling)
I don't think you can stay here
anymore.

Under the cabin, the Knight is unmoving...except for a soft red glow and a sound: BEEP BEEP BEEP.

FADE OUT.

OPEN ON:

EXT. LONG VIEW OF TOWN, MOUNTAINS, & CHATEAU

From across the mountains there's a barrage of antiaircraft

fire. A pair of black, bird-like fighter planes come zooming over the peaks, followed by a slow-moving airship.

The aircraft sweeps over the island. Two powerful spotlights illuminate the town.

The airship slows to a crawl over the Baron's chateau. Several wooden crates attached to balloons release from the plane's belly and drift down to the chateau's roof.

CUT TO:

INT. CHATEAU PENTHOUSE

The Baron sits behind a large desk. On the desk is a phone, the gold pistol, a tumbler of whiskey, and a plate of blue liqui-gel pills.

The Baron is manic.

BARON

Where were you? I cannot work this phone. What is the secret number?

Leni stands before the desk. She says nothing.

BARON

This is not acceptable!

There is a BUMP! as the wooden crates land on the roof.

Neither the Baron nor Leni seemed concerned as plaster dust drifts down from the ceiling.

BARON

Well, did you catch him?

LENI

Not yet. Baron, one of the knights is in distress.

BARON

Probably running from a cat, ha.

No?

(dismissively)

That can wait.

The phone rings shrilly and the Baron jumps. The sound pains him. He picks up the phone-

BARON

Mama?

MALE VOICE
 (older, strong German
 accent)
 No, you fool.

BARON
 Oh, Papa.

PAPA
 Bad news. You cannot come home.
 Maybe next year.

BARON
 ...But it was a joke!

PAPA
 Shooting Vienna's greatest pianist
 is no-

BARON
 Remember Papa, he went like this-
 (clutches chest)
 And then he went Agggkkkkk
 (lurches around room)
 And then-
 (laughing)
 he knocked the lamp over.

The Baron looks at Leni for approval.

LENI
 Baron-

He holds a finger up to his lips.

PAPA
 The police did not find this funny-

BARON
 (derisively)
 The police.

PAPA
 Your Mama wants to talk to you-

BARON
 Wait! Papa...Would the allies send
 a superspy to kill me?

PAPA
 (barking)
 Are you drinking?

BARON
(weakly)
I am enjoying a seasonal beer.

PAPA
Listen to what your imbecile son is
up to!

PAPA hands the phone over.

There is another BUMP! on the roof.

MAMA
Honey, sweet puppy.

BARON
Mama!

MAMA
Honey, do not drink so much. It is
peasant-like.

BARON
(whining)
I miss you so much.

Papa can be heard in the background saying something
unintelligible.

MAMA
Your brothers say hello. Johannes
is filming the Olympics and Klaus
is leading a tank division into
Brazil-

PAPA
(grabbing phone)
-Which is what you would be doing
if you were not such a fuck up!

MAMA
(wrestling with phone)
Please, darling!

Impatiently Leni turns on her heels. The Baron covers the
receiver-

BARON
(to Leni)
Wait!

MAMA
Papa says good night and happy new
year!

...I nearly forgot. Check the roof tonight. I sent you a care package.

BARON
(wiping plaster from his jacket)
Yes-

MAMA
Have to run! Goodbye, puppy!

BARON
Goodnight Mama...

The Baron hangs up the phone. He has a gloomy look to him.

LENI
(coldly)
Yes?

With shaky hands the Baron pours himself a very tall glass of whiskey.

BARON
Find your missing robot. The enemy may be nearby...
I feel these random events are somehow connected.

He pops a blue pill and drinks the whisky in a gulp.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHATEAU GATE

The chateau is surrounded by a stone wall. There is only one way in: An iron gate wrapped with rusted vines of barbed wire.

With a mechanized hum, the gate opens and the Death Squad vehicle guns through the entrance. The gate swings closed quickly behind it.

Mona leads the Pilot out of the shadows. They sneak across the street, and press themselves against the stone wall.

MONA
I need your help.

The Pilot looks at her questioningly.

MONA

Put out your hands. Boost me up.

The Pilot cups his hands, and Mona puts a foot in them. He lifts her to the first horizontal bar of the gate.

She climbs the rest of the way, and with effort, squeezes through a small gap between the gate, the statue, and the barbed wire.

Mona jumps down on the other side. She's scratched herself on the wire and her thigh is dappled with drops of blood. She reaches through the bars and takes her coat.

The Pilot holds out his foot, as if to say, me next, but Mona shakes her head.

MONA

No. Go to the bridge. Meet Misiu there.

The Pilot shakes his head.

MONA

Don't worry. It's safe.

PILOT

Bu- bu- N....Nnx

Mona turns away-

MONA

I'll meet you. I promise.

The Pilot shakes the iron bars of the gate.

MONA

(alarmed)

Quiet! It's dangerous here.

The Pilot stops. He looks at her, dismayed.

MONA

Go.

He stays.

Mona steps back to the gate.

She takes the Pilot's hands through the bars. She leans forward, her forehead to his.

Tenderly, she kisses his closed eyes. She kisses him like she'll never have the chance again.

Then she turns and hurries away. The Pilot touches his face, thunderstruck.

Mona looks back and smiles.

MONA

Now go! He won't eat you, unless
you have a fish in your pants.

She laughs then disappears into the woods.

The Pilot picks up the suitcase and walks off, grinning.

CUT TO:

INT. CHATEAU PENTHOUSE

The Baron stands at the balcony window. He peers anxiously through the curtains.

PAPA

(voice echoing through
room)

*There are consequences to killing
Vienna's greatest pianist.*

The Baron spins around. His forehead is soaked with sweat.

There's nobody there. Only Elfriede, on the other side of the room, pouring him a drink.

The balcony doors swing open in the wind. The curtains flap and snow swirls into the room.

A red headed woman leans over the balcony rail, her back to the Baron. She wears an Oriental silk robe and her feet are bare. The wind buffets her robe like a flag.

CLOSE ON: Her feet arch upwards as she tips over-

A child's hand tugs at the Baron's pants.

GIRL'S VOICE

You've mopped up her blood. But I
haven't forgot.

The Baron yelps and spins in horror-

Standing beside him is a very intense little girl with red hair. It's Young Mona.

Behind the girl is the steel cage. Inside the cage is the snarling Bear. Mona steps over and strokes the Bear's ears through the bars.

BARON

Who? How-?

YOUNG MONA

I'm coming for you.

Elfriede taps The Baron's shoulder. The Baron screams and Elfriede drops the whiskey.

CUT TO:

INT. CHATEAU

Mona steps through the chateau's front hallway. It's dark, quiet, and empty. There's a vaulted ceiling, a floor to ceiling fireplace, and a wide, curving staircase.

Bracing herself, she takes the wrench from her pocket and walks up the curving staircase.

At the top is a door framed by light.

She hears voices.

BARON

You want my buttons don't you?

BANG!

A gunshot sounds from inside.

The Baron swings open the door, wild eyed and confused, holding the still-smoking revolver in his hand.

Beyond him, near the dining table, Elfriede stands upright with a queer look on her face. She blanches...and falls face forward onto the table.

The Baron gestures toward the fireplace grate-

BARON

Be honest...Do you see a face in there?

The Baron squints at Mona and cocks his head to the side.

BARON

Poppycake?

There is a mirror next to the door. In it we see Mona as the delusional Baron sees her; not as Mona but as her mother, Pavot.

Her face is very much like it was in the photo, except that she is older and has a sickly, pale demeanor.

The Baron rushes at her, arms outstretched-

BARON
(deliriously happy)
My little Poppycake!

Mona raises the wrench but she is not fast enough and the Baron crushes her to his chest, forcing Mona to lose her grip.

She beats on his shoulders but the Baron is too strong. He kisses her face, waltzing her around the room.

MONA
(gasping)
No...stop!

BARON
How I have missed you! Where have
you been?

Mona struggles like a deer in a lion's grip. The Baron spins her around with dizzying speed. We see Mona, then Pavot, Mona Pavot Mona Pavot Mona Pavot Mona Pavot...

FADE TO:

EXT. NARROW WINDING STREET

The Bear drags the engine along the river road towards the bridge. He has improvised a sled and pulls the whole heavy contraption with a rope tied around his chest.

He stops abruptly and stands high on his haunches, his ears twitching. He hears-

The Death Squad vehicle sliding through the streets, barreling through the snow.

CUT TO:

INT. DEATH SQUAD VEHICLE

Inside, Leni is hunched over the steering wheel. She is driving fast, consulting a green-lit radar screen with a blinking red light.

She turns the corner and-

SCREEECH!

She's face to face with the Bear. She swerves to avoid the airplane engine. The car loses control and crashes into a building.

The engine sputters and spits. A wisp of smoke rises from the engine. From our view it is not clear whether the Bear has been hit or not.

Leni stumbles out on shaky knees. She tries to take her helmet off but it's dented and stuck. She struggles like a dog with its face stuck in a jar.

With a yell and a jerk the helmet comes off.

There is a gash on her cheek.

She steps over to inspect the accident. The Bear lies, unmoving, on the ground between the car and the building.

There is a deep red splotch on the snow under his head.

Leni's scowl turns to a laugh.

Back in the car, Leni backs the damaged vehicle up, and drives away.

The pool of red spreads on the snow.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOMBED OUT BRIDGE

The Pilot waits under the bridge.

Across the river is a spectacular mountain range. The war is on the other side. From this distance the artillery sounds just like fireworks.

The ground is littered with fish heads and bones, discarded bolts, and rusted containers.

In the scaffolding of the bridge is an object hanging by ropes:

It is the Bear's "boat". It looks like a junk yard submarine; little more than fins bolted onto a big rusted oil container.

It doesn't appear seaworthy. More like the dream of someone who once saw a diagram in Popular Mechanics.

The Pilot ducks down low, watching as a pair of Death Squad Knights march down the road, searching.

He's not scared. This is turning into a pretty fine adventure.

He thinks of Mona.

Mona...the kiss, droplets of blood on her thigh, stockings, the freckles on her chest...

He reaches down to the zipper pocket of his g-suit.

He squeezes a hand into the suit to find Mona's photo...

Suddenly he sits upright.

Something else is down there. He rummages around-

-pulls out two crumpled photos.

The first is of Mona, her Mother, and the clown.

The second is of the Pilot. He's dressed in farm clothes. He's holding a chicken in his arms like it's his best friend in the world. Behind him is a field of wheat, a lonely farmhouse, and a train track stretching to infinity.

The Pilot angrily tosses the photos away. In frustration he kicks Mona's suitcase, which flies open as it lands a few feet away.

Guiltily, the Pilot rushes over to close it.

He frowns, puzzled.

The suitcase is empty.

The Pilot is frozen with anxiety and dread.

Mona never had any intention of leaving the island.

With the typewriter slung over his arm, the Pilot runs back towards the chateau.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOMBED OUT CIRCUS - FERRIS WHEEL

Leni stands close to Mona's caravan. The Death Squad Vehicle idles nearby.

It's snowing and Leni's breath turns to vapor.

She kneels down.

There in the snow, amongst the wreckage of the cabin, is a single poppy. Its neck is bent at the stalk.

Leni arches an eyebrow.

She surveys the cabin. It's upright but the impact has crushed it into a diamond shape.

She sees the feet of the Death Squad Knight sticking out from underneath it.

Her lip twitches and a shadow of emotion crosses her face.

Leni hurries back to the car.

CUT TO:

INT. CHATEAU PENTHOUSE

The Baron and Mona spin, spin, till the Baron lets go and they both go crashing to the floor.

Mona is too dizzy to rise. The room rolls under her feet like a ship in a stormy sea.

The Baron has his back to her. He's standing in front of an elaborate hi-fi set up. His pistol is in its holster.

He turns-

BARON

You swooned, my sweet!

With a delighted smile he tilts a record sleeve at Mona.

BARON

Remember? Our favorite!

It's a children's record, with the title "I Want to Play with You!" On the cover is a family singing along: Mother, father, and little blond children, like a Swiss chocolate ad.

Mona pulls herself up with the help of a side table.

The Baron lacks the dexterity to work the record needle.
Finally he succeeds and claps his hands with glee-

BARON

Aha!

The song begins-

RECORD

*I want to play with you, why don't
we play ensemble...*

The tune is the same as Mona's cabaret song, but the lyrics are vastly different and the spirit is pre-war, gay and romantic.

The Baron turns the sound up to an ear bleeding decibel.

Mona throws a plaster bust, which misses his head by a foot and smashes into fragments against the wall.

The Baron, singing along, takes no notice.

Mona leaps onto the Baron's back, strangling him and clawing at his eyes. He stumbles forward, skipping the record with a CCCZZZZZK sound.

BARON

(excited)

Arrrgh...Sumo wrestling match!

The Baron flings Mona over his head. She smashes against a dresser and lies in a daze.

RECORD

*Let's forget this stormy weather,
why don't we play together.*

The Baron stalks towards her in a wrestlers stance. He pushes his face to within an inch of hers-

BARON

Ha ha! I shall devour you!

Mona slaps him.

BARON

(in a child's voice)

You *hit* me!

With a wail he slaps her back with all his strength. Mona's head snaps back violently.

BARON
(teary)
No hitting!

He grabs Mona by the foot and pulls her across the room. She scrambles to get away, clawing at the floor, gripping onto a table leg.

RECORD
*I want to play with you, why don't
we play ensemble...*

The Baron wrenches Mona from the table. He pins her down, one hand over her mouth, and lifts up her dress. Mona's moth-bitten panties are thin as tissue paper.

He slaps her bottom with his hand.

SLAP! SLAP! SLAP!

He's having a grand time-

She bites him!

BARON
Owghh!

The Baron leaps up. He looks down at his bleeding hand-

BARON
(whimpering)
Mamma....

-then at Mona, eyes popping in disbelief.

With both hands he pushes her down, then leaps onto the couch and raises his arms-

BARON
Flying neckbreaker!

With a bellow that shakes the windows the Baron leaps onto Mona.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHATEAU GATE

Outside the chateau, the Death Squad vehicle idles, waiting for the chateau gate to open. The Pilot sneaks up behind the car.

With a screech of tires, the car skids onto the chateau grounds, sliding through the snow.

The Pilot slips in before the gate closes.

There is a long winding path to the chateau. The Pilot spies a single light on, near the topmost floor.

He eyes an ash tree that reaches all the way up to the window.

The Pilot charges up the hill, taking a straight route through the woods, racing Leni to the chateau.

CUT TO:

INT. CHATEAU PENTHOUSE

Mona groans under the Baron's weight, her breath knocked out and her ribs nearly snapped.

BARON
Submit! Accept defeat.

He smacks the floor with his palm to demonstrate how it's done.

Mona grabs desperately at the Baron's ears, pulling with all her might.

This arouses him.

BARON
Oooooohh! Not yet not yet!

He squirms and his body shudders like Jello.

Mona reaches....reaches...for the pistol on his belt.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHATEAU GROUNDS

The Pilot arrives at the bottom of the tree. He tightens the strap on the typewriter and climbs with lithe swiftness.

The Death Squad car pulls into the chateau's garage.

CUT TO:

INT. CHATEAU PENTHOUSE

The song ends and the needle skips with a rhythmic CHIK.
CHIK. CHIK.

The Baron is astonished to discover that there is a pistol
barrel poking his nose.

The gun is heavy and Mona's hands shake.

BARON

Oh no.

Mona squeezes the trigger-

TAP TAP

Mona glances over-

The Pilot at the window!

The Baron reaches for the gun.

Leni bursts into the room.

Mona pulls the trigger, but the Baron gets his thumb stuck
between the hammer and the firing pin-

BARON

(in pain)

YAAAAAIIIGGGHH!

Leni strides over. With one hand she grips Mona's throat and
with the other she takes the pistol, forcing Mona's arm
towards the window.

Leni squeezes the trigger twice, hitting the Pilot squarely
in the head and chest.

Mona cries out.

The Pilot drops from the window like a stone.

CUT TO:

VIEW OF PILOT FROM WINDOW

The Pilot lies far below on the snow, motionless. He's a
bloody mess and his arm is pulverized from the fall.

CUT TO:

PILOT'S VIEW

Snow falls down gently. The sky is a deep, azure blue...

FADE TO:

OUTER SPACE

Stars, planets, galaxies, revolve; their clocklike movements sped up as if in time lapse, revealing the hidden rhythms and patterns of a vast universe.

Galaxies turn to abstract forms; an infinite, hypnotic pattern...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE

It's snowing. Cold wind throws drifts of powder all around. The leaning statue of Mary and the baby Jesus is covered in a layer of snow.

The Pigeon on the head of the statue leans away from the wind, his feathers blowing. It's a miserable night and he's trying to sleep.

The Pigeon dreams of the town before the war-

DISSOLVE TO:

THE PIGEON'S DREAM

The town square is lit by a golden, late summer sun. The cobblestones are covered by hundreds of fat, clucking pigeons. It's the height of the town's flower festival and the square is full of cafe tables and colored umbrellas.

All the townspeople are there, dressed in summer finery. There are dandys, ladies, and working men with scarves around their necks. They chase their children around the square and the children chase the pigeons.

Leni is there; a younger, prettier version of herself. She holds an infant on her lap and sits with her husband, an aristocratic older gentleman who is the town's MAYOR.

He's much too old for her but Leni kisses his cheek and dotes on him as he feeds the pigeons and makes faces at the baby.

The Pigeon flies off the statue and into the air, and we gain a view of the whole town from above.

He flies over the mountains- there were once green fields and farms where there is now tanks and trenches.

The Pigeon wakes-

BACK TO:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE

It's still snowing and cold. With his one good eye the Pigeon spies a pale Boy standing at the statue's base.

The Boy aims his slingshot.

The Pigeon is tired and decides it's no longer worth it to fly away.

The Boy fires.

FADE TO:

EXT. TOWN ROOFTOPS

The chimneys and rooftops are covered with a blanket of snow.

In the distance a man sleepwalks across a rooftop, his hands stretched straight out in front of him.

The Sleepwalker is an older man with a long gray beard, dressed in a tattered overcoat that covers a ragged tuxedo.

He is so frail and thin that his pants have fallen around his ankles. Despite his ratty appearance, this is clearly the town's MAYOR, Leni's husband.

He reaches the end of the roof and falls...onto a telephone wire, which he walks across with Chaplin-like grace.

The wire brings him to another roof and he continues onward, oblivious.

FADE TO:

EXT. RECYCLING PLANT (THE DESTRUCTOR)

A crane towers ominously over the river in silhouette. Beside it stands a red brick warehouse topped by iron smokestacks. Surrounding this building are tall, snow covered dunes.

Up close, we see that the dunes are made up of collected battlefield detritus: Tank parts, shell casings, shrapnel, barbed wire- and dead soldiers (a mix of nationalities); all of it thrown together into one gruesome heap.

Picking over the piles are the man/machine war veterans, the Automatons. They are stripping the dead, trying a metal pot on for a hat or a bazooka for a leg, looking for anything useful: Food tins, booze, or tobacco.

Papi spots something:

There, half covered in trash, is a body.

It's the Pilot, the typewriter still over his shoulder. His eyes are bruised slits, frozen blood clings to his cheeks. He looks like a corpse.

Papi is strangely moved.

The Automatons gather around. They peer down at the Pilot.

SHAKY

Who is it?

PAPI

(a remembered poem, under
his breath)

Cover him..cover him soon...with
masses of flowers...

Hide that red wet thing I must
somehow forget.

Bubbles of blood form on the Pilot's lips.

PAPI

He's alive! Pick him up!

CUT TO:

INT. RECYCLING PLANT

The inside of the warehouse is dominated by "The Destructor", a terrible and beastly machine with a chest of valves and gauges and a head of chimneys rising up into the ceiling like a cathedral organ.

An oversized glossy color photo of the Baron hangs on the wall. He's smelling a rose.

Around the Destructor are piles of sorted items: Leather boots, soldiers arms and legs, helmets, shovels, and so on.

Two Automatons stand at one end of the machine, holding the Pilot's body between them. With a heave they throw him and the typewriter into a trough that looks not unlike the back end of a garbage truck.

They also throw in some bolts and nuts, an adjustable desk lamp, and a dented tea kettle.

Meanwhile, at the other end of the machine, Papi stands at the controls, which look very much like an old fashioned telephone switchboard.

He re-plugs the wires, then presses a button.

With a chug, the machine comes to life. Gears grind, pistons hammer, and the Pilot is upended into the Destructor's bowels-

We follow the Pilot along a conveyor belt of horrors. He is chopped and filleted, probed and drilled by saws, scalpels, and machinist tools.

The tea kettle is cut jaggedly open and jammed onto his skull. His chest is scooped out and his twisted arm is pulled from the socket.

Electrodes and wires stick to him like squid's tentacles. He's shocked again and again, his body jumping with electricity.

Outside the Destructor the Automatons stare expectantly at the metal bars of a conveyor.

The wheels spin, and out comes a ghastly little object made of the Pilot's bloody hand, his leather helmet, a cord, and a light bulb.

The machine chugs to a stop.

Papi drops his head. The other Automatons are silent. There is a palpable sense of failure.

Tick leans over and pulls on the cord.

The light bulb goes on.

TICK
(shrugging)
It works.

Papi turns away, gags.

The wheels roll again. The Pilot is shuttled out standing up.

His eyes are wide open and blank. He is pale, with eyes and lips rimmed with black oil; a teen Bela Lugosi.

He's alive but he's an Automaton now, with a tea kettle skull cap, a flexible lamp in place of an arm, and Mona's typewriter embedded into his chest.

His eyes flutter, he falls-

Papi reaches out and catches him before he hits the floor. He's not breathing. Papi slaps his face once, and again.

The Pilot gasps for air. He takes deep fish-like breaths.

Shakey leans in close-

SHAKEY

Don't worry kid...troubles are
nothing but shadows in a pretty
picture.

CUT TO:

INT. CELLAR CABARET

Lula's body is on the stage surrounded by candles. Her costume has been removed and a sheet covers her body. Around her the women sing a mournful hymn.

The celebration has become a funeral.

Kuka doesn't sing with the others. She collapses next to the body, overcome with grief and anger.

A WOMAN tries to comfort her, help her to her feet-

WOMAN

Hush Kuka. You're not to blame.

KUKA

(emotional)

I can't live without her.

Kuka struggles up with the woman's help. She touches Lula's cheek and pauses. She looks out at the women in the cellar-

Their passivity and hopelessness makes her furious.

KUKA

Her death will mean something.

Kuka grabs the woman by the shoulders.

KUKA

Are we church mice, hiding in our
holes?

It's time to fight.

CUT TO:

INT. CAFE ROMANTIK

The Pilot sits at the card table with the other Automatons.
He looks lobotomized: His eyes are clouded over and he's
stiff as a plank.

There's an untouched glass of beer in front of him. Nuts and
bolts rest on the bottom of the glass, turning the drink a
rusty red.

The card game is played without interest in the outcome; It
is a ritual of boredom and forgetting.

Papi sits opposite the Pilot. He plays the game but is
troubled. It is as if he is seeing the bar for the first
time:

*Bare fluorescent lights...Shuffle, deal, slap down cards,
shuffle, deal...On the television the football match is stuck
at 0-0...The table is a forest of pint glasses...*

THE FOG

(snapping his fingers)

Let's go Papi!

He's missed his turn.

PAPI

I'm going home.

The music stops.

PAPI

I'm going home.

The Automatons stare dumbly.

TICK

(angrily)

Go then.

PAPI

I will go!

TICK
 (dealing the cards)
 Go then!

PAPI
 I'm going!

TICK
 Go!

PAPI
 I will!

TICK
 Go!

PAPI
 I will.

TICK
 Then go!

PAPI
 I will.

TICK
 Then go!

Papi stumbles to his feet. He weaves and bobs like a punch-drunk fighter.

PAPI
 ...I *will* go.

TICK
 Go then.

AUGUSTE
I will.

TICK
 Go.

PAPI
 ...I will.

Papi takes a couple of steps towards the door. With each exchange Papi loses conviction and the pauses grow longer.

PAPI
(mumble)
I....

TICK
What?

Papi says something unintelligible.

TICK
Sit down.
(quietly)
Sit down.

Papi slumps back down in his chair, defeated.

The music resumes. The cards are shuffled, dealt, played.

Papi grabs the beer from the Pilot. The Pilot watches with sullen disinterest.

Papi swirls the bolts around till it turns a rusty black, then drinks.

At the other table, Shakey stands up.

SHAKEY
What time is it?

He looks around the room.

SHAKEY
I gotta get home.

CUT TO:

INT. CHATEAU PENTHOUSE: DINING AREA

The dining table is set for three.

The Baron is wearing a smoking jacket and on his head is an Indian feather headdress.

He pours himself champagne (missing the glass) and raises his hand:

BARON
May your moccasins make happy
tracks in many snows.
(drinks and swallows)

Your turn. A New Year's toast!

Leni looks at him blankly.

The Baron smashes the table with his fist-

Leni raises an eyebrow.

LENI

(dryly)

What would you like me to say?

BARON

Oh, something you like- To poetry
or flowers or smiles or sunshine or
walks or waterfalls-

LENI

To liberty.

BARON

Liberty. Perfect!
(looking down the table at
a third guest)

To love and liberty!

MONA

Mpppph. Whppppnnnph.

Mona is covered in a sack from her head down to her bare legs. A rope is wound tightly around the sack and the chair she sits on. She struggles and squirms.

BARON

(in between bites,
pointing at her with his
knife)

Tell me. Who are you? Who is your
accomplice, the saboteur-

By what means did you communicate?
Do you have a secret radio
transmitter?

MONA

MGFFFPHHHHGH!

The Baron makes a frustrated gesture to Leni, as in, 'fix this, let her talk'.

Leni steps behind Mona. She grabs the sack around Mona's face and pulls it roughly. Mona groans.

Leni unsheathes her bayonet; the blade is close to Mona's face.

LENI
(whispered)
Your mother lasted years. I give
you one night.

Leni slices through the fabric. The hole reveals Mona's lips,
nose, and eye.

Mona screams, a blood curdling, defiant yell. The Baron
cringes and holds his ears in pain.

Leni presses the blade to Mona's throat to shut her up.

BARON
(hushing them)
Quiet voices.
Who are you?

Mona says nothing. Leni laughs. She pulls the sack down
roughly, unveiling Mona's face.

LENI
Baron, It's Pavot's little girl.

BARON
Poppy?

LENI
(impatiently)
No, Mona.

BARON
(thinking, a far away look
on his face)
The wee thing who took my bear?
Impossible!

LENI
That was years ago, Baron.

The Baron leans across the table and looks at Mona closely.

BARON
Hmm...Mona Blume...*Mona* Blume.
I remember! Delightful! Why have
you come home?

MONA
This isn't a home. It's a prison.

BARON
True. My exile is bitter...and
unjust. But why are you here?

MONA

Why? You murdered my mother.

BARON

(aghast)

Murdered your mother? No. Never.

The Baron waves his hand dismissively-

BARON

I had nothing to do with it. She
jumped off the balcony, right there-

MONA

You *pushed* her!

BARON

No, no. She was a sad person.

(patiently)

It's called 'morbid depression'.
More often than not you're born
that way.

MONA

She wasn't *sad*. You made a deal.
You told her the children would be
safe.

LENI

(waving her hand)

Too many mouths to feed.

BARON

(philosophically)

You know, my uncle Willy took his
own life. Climbed into a lion pen
at the zoo.

I asked Mama, "why would he do
that?"

She looked at me and said,

"Sometimes people just need a fresh
start".

Mona lunges forward and Leni pushes her back into her seat.

LENI

Why is everyone a saint when
they're dead?

Your mother was a collaborator and
a whore. There was nothing noble
about her.

BARON
(whining)
I'm the interrogator.

Leni holds her hand up, quieting him. He throws his napkin on
the table.

LENI
I'm not judging her. But *you* did.

MONA
(shaking her head)
Never. I loved her.

LENI
Yes, once...but she *changed*, didn't
she?

It begins in the eyes...

Mona pales. Leni moves in.

LENI
(imitating Mona)
I loved her.

One kind word from you, a touch,
and your mother would still be
alive.

The Baron freezes with his lips in a shocked "O".

Mona is suddenly scared, as if Leni has gotten close to
something she hasn't even admitted to herself.

MONA
What are you saying?

LENI
There are roles we can't play
forever, Mona. Her smile wore out.

MONA
No...No, he pushed her.

LENI
But *you* broke her heart.

MONA
(desperately)
He pushed her.

LENI
She was already dead.

CLOSE ON Mona's eyes-

FADE TO:

MONA'S MEMORY: INT. BEDROOM, CHATEAU PENTHOUSE

The room is dark, save for a sliver of moonlight between the curtains. Under the bed covers is a bulky, dark shape, rising and falling with uneven, wheezy breaths.

Young Mona stands at the doorway. She's repulsed by the stench of illness and decay.

The table next to the bed is covered in pills, a morphine needle, and used handkerchiefs which spill over onto the floor. On the floor is a chamber pot filled to the brim with urine.

Mona tiptoes into room. Face pinched with revulsion, she reaches down and picks up the full chamber pot. For a moment she glances down at the bulk: it's Pavot. She's asleep. Her face is puffy and her skin is so thin that blue veins stand out on her forehead.

Mona turns to sneak away.

PAVOT
(a whisper)
Please don't go. Come here my love.

Mona freezes. Pavot's cough is thick with phlegm.

PAVOT
(smiling thinly)
I'm so tired of being ill. It just seems to linger.

Come, dear. Let me hold you.

Mona steps to the doorway.

PAVOT
(teary)
Don't be frightened.

Just sing that song for me. How
does it go?

Shaking her head, Mona escapes into the hallway.

PAVOT
(sternly)
Mona! Don't you walk away from me-

MONA!

MONA!

Mona closes the door, but her mother's voice follows, her
pleading turning to shrieks and howls.

BACK TO:

INT. DINING AREA

LENI
...She had pretty hands. Even after
she ruined her body, her hands were
still lovely.

MONA
Stop it...

LENI
It's not really about revenge, is
it Mona?

MONA
Stop...

Mona makes a thin choking noise...

BARON
(wiping his eyes)
Oh treachery!

Leni snorts at him in disgust-

BARON
I am crying because she is crying.

Leni is uncomfortable by the emotions on display, even
repulsed.

Mona sees this...it's a revelation.

MONA
(emotional)
You don't understand. You *can't*
understand can you?

Leni snorts.

MONA
You don't feel anything. Love.
Pity. Guilt...

There's *nothing* in there.

Leni smacks Mona in the mouth. Mona spits pink onto the table cloth.

MONA
(defiant)
Even cruelty...It's an act isn't
it?

A clock has more personality.

Leni's cheek spasms.

LENI
(mechanically)
Your bear is dead.

Mona looks up in alarm-

LENI
Where *was* he going with that
airplane engine?

It takes a moment for Leni's meaning to sink in.

The light starts to go out of Mona's eyes.

Leni straightens up. She meticulously wipes her hands clean.

LENI
I'm taking a hot bath.

She reaches into a pocket and removes a thin chain link with a brass key. She lobbs it at the Baron-

LENI
Put her in the cage. I'm not done
with her.

The Baron stares at Leni in a daze, still caught up in the drama.

BARON
Yes...of course. If you think
that's best.

MONA
(whispering)
Misiu...Misiu...

FADE TO:

EXT. NARROW WINDING STREET

Under his thick coat of snow, the Bear moans...

Twitches.

And shakes vigorously, sending up a cloud of powder.

He sees the red stain on the snow and leaps up, patting his fur, searching for the wound. Instead, he sees a broken wine bottle on the street.

It was the wine! He laughs heartily, happy to be alive.

Laughter turns to concern. How long has it been?

He examines the engine. It's slipped off the sled, but isn't damaged, only scratched and dented.

The Bear gets to work.

CUT TO:

INT. CAFE ROMANTIK

The cafe's electric lights fade in and out.

TICK
Serge's out of beer.

The lights go off and on again to half power.

TICK
(to the Pilot)
You. Get Serge a beer.

The Pilot sullenly ignores him.

TICK
Get Serge a beer!

The Pilot slowly turns his head to speak.

PILOT
 (with a mechanical rattle)
 GLKKKLKLKLKLKLKLKLKLK

The Pilot looks down at his chest. Stiffly and methodically, he types on the typewriter keys.

A piece of paper emerges from the typewriter as from an electric printer.

He fishes the paper out of his chest, hands it to Tick:

It says **kiss my ass.**

Tick looks at the paper, then at the Pilot, who has an expression of stupid insolence.

With brute strength Tick punches the Pilot's keyboard. The keys jump up, sticking. The Pilot gags and spits up into his hand-

Close on his hand: there is oily black blood and the **x** from his keyboard.

TICK
 Get Serge a beer.

He points to a closet at the back of the cafe.

Inside is an Automaton permanently attached to some sort of bicycle dynamo. He's powering the electricity by pedalling, but he's losing steam, holding out an empty beer glass.

The Pilot stands. Before walking off he kicks the table, which overturns glasses and sends cards flying.

The Pilot shuffles, zombie-like, over to the bar.

Behind the bar stands the Automaton Waitress. She's hour glass shaped, with swelling hips and a soft green bosom.

An electrical plug runs from an outlet in the wall to a steel plate on her lower back. It's clear she has been abused: she's scratched, dented, and shards of beer glass stick out of her head, along with a playing dart.

The Pilot reaches over the bar, and with his mechanical hand, removes the dart from the Waitress' head.

She's flabbergasted. No one has ever treated her humanely.

CUT TO:

STYLIZED INTERIOR OF WAITRESS'S CHEST

An arrow pierces a wooden log. A beating heart materializes inside the log and a drop of blood appears.

BACK TO:

INT. CAFE ROMANTIK

The Waitress swoons and puts her arms around the Pilot. She leans in, as if to kiss him, and he mashes his lips against her wooden face.

They kiss until the Pilot pulls away with a yelp. There's an inch long splinter in his lip.

The Waitress reaches over and delicately tugs it out.

The Pilot's lip is bloody and his eyes are half closed.

They lean against each other, swaying.

She pushes her hips into his and her plug strains at the wall...His tea kettle head starts to steam.

Music fills the bar. It's "I Want to Play with You". At the sound of the familiar melody the Pilot goes rigid, listening intently.

In the corner, Papi leans over the record playing Automaton, who is passed out.

He has snuck the record on, and is staring wistfully at the picture on the sleeve: Mother, children, and...Father, his face handsome, smiling and *intact*.

The amorous Waitress takes no notice, until the Pilot pushes her away from him. He sees, on the Waitress's head, a vision, like a projection: It's Mona's face: her shocked expression when she saw the Pilot at the Baron's window.

The Pilot's eyes uncloud. He stumbles away from the bar...

Tick storms over to the record player.

He takes the record off and snaps it in two over his knee.

TICK
Slime! Pure slime!

Papi cannot contain his surprise and anger.

He smacks Tick in the face. Tick hits back, a hard drunkard's punch that sends Papi reeling.

KSSSHHHCH! The sound of breaking glass.

All eyes turn to the front window: There is a Pilot-sized hole in the glass.

The Waitress runs after the Pilot, her plug breaking away from the socket.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAFE ROMANTIK

Outside, the Waitress runs out of power; she weakens...stumbles...and falls.

The Pilot stands in the street, staring up at the chateau.

A superimposition appears, of Mona's face. That same image, her shock, seeing him in the window, and her fear.

He must save her!

The Waitress' consciousness fades to black as the Pilot lurches towards the chateau.

BACK TO:

INT. CAFE ROMANTIK

Papi and Tick are on the floor, tugging and scratching at each other. Nuts, bolts and scraps of metal fly off like fur in a badger fight.

Spurred on by the violence, the others join in and the cafe descends into chaos.

Irritated by the noise, Shaky turns up the volume on the television set. The commentary is in some vaguely Italian/Spanish gibberish.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAFE ROMANTIK

The Waitress lies inert.

The Heart in the log is still.

The Waitress twitches.

The arrow piercing the Heart moves as the Heart jiggles...The arrow is pulled inside, absorbed with a sucking slurp.

Quietly at first, but then growing louder, her heart beats.

She stirs...pulls herself up on one arm.

Her heart pulses, puh PUM, puh PUM, injecting life back into her.

The Waitress stands unsteadily...

Follows the Pilot's footprints in the snow.

BACK TO:

INT. CAFE ROMANTIK

Papi has been beaten senseless. Tick means to kill him.

In a final act of desperation Papi bites down into the bomb stuck into Tick's skull. His metal jaw cuts deep.

Somewhere inside the bomb an alarm clock rings....

CUT TO:

EXT. CAFE ROMANTIK

Ka-BOOOOOM!

The cafe explodes, blowing the front window out and shooting flaming debris out onto the street.

The television lands on it's side. Before sputtering out, there is a last exclamation from the commentator:

GOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOLLL!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

CUT TO:

INT. CABARET

A fierce debate rages amongst the women. Kuka points a finger at Mathilde-

KUKA

We live and die like beasts! Our husbands and brothers are dead and our children are gone forever.

WOMAN'S VOICE

I've seen a child.

WOMAN 2

(shushing her)

Not now! It was a ghost you saw.

WOMAN 1

He was no ghost. Why would-

WOMAN 2

Shush!

KUKA

No one will help us. We have to fight back.

WOMAN 3

We're weak. We have no weapons.

KUKA

There are many of us-

MATHILDE

Shush Kuka. You are speaking like a fool. Listen to me. All of you listen-

MATHILDE points a finger at the women.

MATHILDE

I will talk for the meek- the meek who have kept us alive these many years.

KUKA

(with scorn)

This isn't life-

MATHILDE

We have had many funerals for heroes...If you fight them, tomorrow we will have a funeral for you too, and everyone who goes with you.

KUKA

That's a cowards speech.

MATHILDE

No, a *survivor's*.

Sisters. Mothers. All this will
pass. We will be here in spring. We
will walk in the grass.

(to Kuka)

We will tend the flowers on your
grave.

We will live.

The women are ashamed to meet Kuka's eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAFE ROMANTIK

The force of the explosion has knocked down phone lines
across from the cafe. The Sleepwalker (the town's ex Mayor)
marches along the roof and, agile as a tightrope walker,
continues down the telephone wire to the ground.

He follows the wire's twists and turns along the street, then
stops, perplexed. He looks down at his feet. The wire, a
black line on the white snow, has ended with a frayed tip.

The Sleepwalker is stuck.

CUT TO:

EXT. NARROW STREET

The Pilot plods stiffly down the river road, towards the
chateau. The Waitress trails behind him like a puppy.

She tries to get his attention-

Shoo! He gestures. He doesn't have time for this, he has to
save Mona.

She throws her arms around him, knocking them both to the
ground.

He untangles himself and shoves her away. He types a note on
the typewriter, rips the page from his chest and gives it to
her. It says:

go

And further down the page:

you are free

The Waitress cocks her head. She doesn't understand.

He mimes the sentiment, stretching his arms, as if to say, the world is yours, go do what you want.

She clutches the paper to her chest as if he has written a love letter.

The Pilot throws his hands up in the air in exasperation.

BEAR
(voice)
Canadian!

The Bear charges over. He takes in the Pilot's transformation. The Pilot ignores him, intent on the chateau. Intent on saving Mona.

The Bear stops him with a paw.

BEAR
(growling)
Where is she?!

The Pilot points at the chateau. The Bear roars in anger.

BEAR
What happened to you?!!

The Pilot pushes against the Bear impatiently. He wants to help Mona, not answer stupid questions.

The Bear knocks on the Pilot's kettle head, BONG BONG.

BEAR
What you have in there- Can of
beans?
(shaking him, frantic)
What *happened*?

The Pilot types out a sentence, one finger at a time.

BEAR
You must be joker! Faster!

The Pilot pulls the paper from his chest. Hands it over.

It says: **i will save her**

BEAR
What?!!

The Pilot points at the chateau. (The Waitress snatches the paper and adds it to the first two).

BEAR

How do you save her? Leap over
gate? Smash wall with little fists?

The Pilot types:

i love her

BEAR

Love? How can you love girl you
don't know?

What is color of her eyes?

The Pilot doesn't understand.

BEAR

Her eyes, What color?

The Pilot gestures as if to type, then stops-

BEAR

No? And what is girl's name you
love so much?

The Pilot is stunned.

BEAR

(wearily)

You should not have let her go...

I get her. You stay.

The Bear turns and bounds away from them towards the chateau.

The Pilot pauses...looks up at the chateau, then at the Bear.
He lurches after him and the Waitress brings up the rear.

CUT TO:

INT. CHATEAU PENTHOUSE

The lights are dim and Mona is alone, locked in the bear
cage. The sack is over her head, so that only her lips and
an eye can be seen through the gash.

She twists her head. She's biting through the thick burlap at
her shoulder.

From a small hole a single finger emerges, and another...Mona twists and squirms in the sack. It's like watching a bird hatch; first a hand appears, then an arm...

She rips the cloth from her face, sucks in a deep breath.

Mona pushes and pulls at the cage door. It's locked and won't budge. Mona looks to see if there's anything that might help her escape.

The cage is lined with yellowed newspapers. There's an advertizement, a stylized painting of a mountain stream, a pair of Kodiak bears, a leaping salmon.

Underneath, the text reads-

"COME TO ALASKA. YOUR DREAMS ARE ALREADY HERE"

She breaks, finally, choking and gasping, her body wracked by great sobs...

VOICE

KOO KOO!!!

Mona jumps and spins around: It's the Baron. He's wearing tailored jammies with train patterns.

His laugh sticks in his throat when he sees Mona's tear stained face and puffy eyes.

BARON

Usually people feel better after getting things out in the open.

I know something about this. My Papa forced me to see a psychoanalyst.

(confidentially)

I have had eleven nervous breakdowns.

He looks around, as if to check if anyone else is listening. He gets very close to the cage bars.

BARON

(quietly)

I too cry from loneliness.

You must never *never* leave here Poppy.

CUT TO:

EXT. ICY CLIFF NEAR BRIDGE.

The Bear stands in front of a large, vertical, sewer grate. A spectacular frozen jet of ice drops from the grate to the river. Above him is the dark shadow of the chateau.

The Bear grips the grate with his paws and heaves. It doesn't budge. He heaves again and again but it won't move.

The Pilot watches from a distance, the Waitress behind him.

The Bear roars at the sky, then leans his head against the bars, dejected.

The Pilot approaches slowly.

BEAR
(quietly)
It was not froze before.

The Pilot pulls on the bars. The Bear snorts in derision.

The Pilot types a short note to hand to the Bear, but the Waitress snatches the paper for herself.

The Pilot has a fit.

PILOT
(howling)
AAAARRRRRRGHHH!

With his voice comes a flood of dark oily muck, thick like mud from a river. The Waitress cowers like a dog that's been smacked.

He snatches all the papers she's gathered in her arms and pushes them rudely into her face, then throws them to the wind.

The papers fly away in an instant.

With a mighty smack the Bear punches the Pilot to the ground.

BEAR
Don't treat her like animal!

The Pilot puts up his fists.

BEAR
I can kill you for nothing!

The Pilot tries to stand up, but the Bear holds him down.

BEAR

All you monkeys are the same. All
you make is disaster!

I am bear! I am for mountain! I am
for Alaska!

The Bear rattles the lock and chain around his neck.

BEAR

Why you want animals to play like
people? Monkeys pay money to look
at me on bicycle, and you can do
bicycle for free.

The Bear shakes the Pilot senseless.

BEAR

You call me Franz or Coco,
different names, same stupid
tricks. Every peasant with nickel
is master to me.

Know why bear *speaks*? Does circus?
Because monkey beats it into him!

Now *I* beat you!

The Bear strikes him once, twice, as the Pilot covers his
face.

Then-

CREAK. GROAN.

They look towards the sound-

The Waitress tugs at the sewer grate. With a groan of metal
it comes off with a shower of ice and rusty bolts.

She tosses the grate aside with superhuman ease.

The Pilot and Bear are frozen in tableau. The Bear's paw is
raised and the Pilot's hands are up in self defense.

There is a quiet moment, as the three look from one to the
other.

Finally the Bear shakes his head and laughs.

He extends his paw to the Pilot on the ground.

BEAR

You are man or boy?

The Pilot looks at the Bear, then the paw...

He takes the Bear's paw and stands.

He walks to the Waitress. He wipes a smear of black muck from her face.

PILOT
I...I'm sorry.

His voice is tinny as if it's coming from a ham radio speaker. The Waitress shyly tucks her head into her chest.

BEAR
Follow me.

The three step up into the sewer pipe-

CUT TO:

EXT. CAFE ROMANTIK

Outside the ruined cafe, the Sleepwalker stands inert, still stuck at the end of the wire. An icy wind blows up from the river and the Pilot's typed pages swirl by him.

A page whorls over his head, another sticks to his leg and another hits him squarely in the face, held in place by the wind.

The Sleepwalker slowly raises his hand and peels the paper away.

He holds it a few inches from his eyes, peering at it.

It says: **you are free**

The Sleepwalker blinks, his eyes widen, and he remembers!

DISSOLVE TO:

SLEEPWALKER'S MEMORY

The Sleepwalker's flashback is told as a backwards-running film; a series of images starting from the moment he became catatonic. He looks as he did in the Pigeon's dream: distinguished, wearing the purple sash of a Mayor.

The Sleepwalker has collapsed on his knees in anguish, holding the broken body of his dead son in his arms...

The baby lands at his feet.

Against a backdrop of smoke and fire, Leni, his wife, stands on the balcony above him, and flings the baby into the air.

Leni comes out onto the balcony, holding the baby. Her eyes reflect the flames of the burning town. She has a curious expression on her face—the chaos and devastation of the bombing excites her; the mask of wife and mother is off. She looks down without feeling at her son and husband.

The Sleepwalker runs through the burning streets of the town. He is almost home. He is desperate to protect his wife and son.

The town is occupied! Soldiers and Death Squad Knights storm the streets.

The town is under attack; bombs go off, buildings burn, planes fly overhead. The Sleepwalker is out on the streets, confused, shell shocked, bleeding from the ears.

Panic at the circus. Bombers overhead. The beams holding the tents splinter, as animals, performers, and townsfolk shriek and flee in terror.

A delightful evening under the big top, a slow motion montage: acrobats, clowns, a cycling bear, and the graceful, sequined Pavot Blume: *Upside down, arms stretched, long legs scissoring the trapeze bar.*

The Mayor looks up in wonder and delight.

BACK TO:

EXT. CAFE ROMANTIK

It has all come back to him. The Sleepwalker stands, with his hands held out as if he's still holding the baby...his hands fall.

He's awake...He's the town's MAYOR once again.

With what dignity he can muster he pulls up his pants.

He strides towards the chateau with great purpose.

CUT TO:

INT. SEWER TUNNEL

The Pilot, Bear and Waitress make their way through the sewer tunnel.

There are crude chalk drawings on the walls. In style a cross between the naive drawings of children and the cave paintings of hunter/gatherers. There are birds, cats, flowers, the sun, stick people...and death squad robots.

The tunnel widens into a spacious cave- we are directly under the chateau.

The cave is flooded by an underground lake, and the town water pipes run at all angles through the space. The air is humid and steamy.

Dozens of children sleep on the pipes. They are pale and dirty like the Boy from the pissoir.

He is there too, sleeping, entwined with other children. Next to him is a pile of pigeon bones- the children's New Year's meal.

The children sleep fitfully. Water from the pipes drips into the lake with a PLOP PLOP...

FADE TO:

CHILDREN'S DREAM/MEMORY

...PLOP.

At the bottom of a deep stone well is a pool of dark water surrounded by a thin ledge and an adjoining tunnel.

Shivering little boys and girls sit on the edge, while more children drop with a PLOP into the water.

Far above, at the mouth of the well, Death Squad Knights pick up children and hurl them down into the depths.

The awful sound echoes down into the well: wailing women, crying children, and the rat a tat tat of gunfire.

Below, some children have crawled up onto a narrow ledge. Others pull themselves up like frogs onto a riverbank.

BACK TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND CAVE

For the Pilot, Bear and Waitress to get to the chateau they must walk over the pipes and ascend a ladder on the opposite side.

The Bear points this route out, and motions that they must be quiet. They cross the slippery pipes, stepping carefully over the sleeping children.

As they pass a little group huddled against the hot pipes, the Pilot notices something peculiar-

A girl of about thirteen or so has a little bundle in her arms: a baby with purple white skin that has never been exposed to sunlight.

The baby wakes. Its clear blue eyes open impossibly wide, and it wails.

All the children wake up. They see the three intruders, and hiss- baring feral baby teeth.

The slingshot wielding Boy takes command. He fires off a couple of stones from his pouch- One clangs off the Pilot's chest, nearly knocking him in the water, and the other hits the Waitress' wooden head, stunning her.

BEAR

Run for ladder!

They are swarmed by grasping, punching children. The Bear pulls away from them but the Pilot and Waitress are stuck- the children stand firmly on the Pilot's shoes.

The kids are all over him, tugging and punching. Little hands reach into all his pockets. He gets one foot free, then the other, losing a boot in the process.

The Pilot breaks away, with a child still clinging to him, and hurries across a long thin pipe, balancing like an amateur tightrope walker with a monkey on his back.

He throws the kid into the water, then turns and smacks his head on a pipe.

The children laugh.

The Bear stares at them in amazement, then slaps his forehead-

BEAR

Circus is for *kids*!

The Pilot shakes off the pain and stares at him questioningly.

BEAR

Again!

The Pilot doesn't get it, but turns and accidentally smacks his head on another pipe. Again, the children laugh.

The Pilot slips, landing, groin first, on the pipe below.

The children roar hysterically.

The Bear whistles, and all the children look his way. He does a handstand and a cartwheel.

The children gasp and clap.

As they are distracted, the Pilot and Waitress catch up to the Bear. The Bear bows with a flourish, and the trio turn and run for the stairs-

The slingshot Boy blocks their way. He's not laughing and holds a sharp pair of nail scissors in his hands. He pokes at the Bear, wounding him with swift little jabs.

The Bear flings out his paw, slicing the boy's face and knocking him into the water.

The other children stop watching and run at them.

The Bear drops to all fours. His roar is ferocious. The children back away.

The Boy is up on the pipes again, and looks even more menacing with three great gashes on his face. He bellows an order, and the children start throwing whatever they can find-stones, pipes, sticks, till the air is thick with missiles.

The Bear, Waitress, and Pilot dash up the ladder.

The Boy pursues, the children behind him.

BEAR

(to the PILOT)

Turn the wheel!

Next to the Pilot is a pipe and a valve as large as a steering wheel. He grips the valve and turns with all his strength.

It sticks then gives with a squeak. A jet of boiling water shoots out between the Pilot and the children, cutting off their pursuit.

The three hurry up the stairs. Behind them is a cloud of steam and the sound of children howling with rage and pain.

CUT TO:

INT. CHATEAU PENTHOUSE

The Baron and Mona sit close to each other, the cage between them; a bizarre tete a tete:

MONA
You can't threaten me. I'm not
afraid to die.

BARON
Nor I.

MONA
It's all I think about.

BARON
In glorious victory. No, glorious
defeat.

MONA
(quietly)
All I ever think about.

The Baron absentmindedly fingers the chain around his neck.

BARON
You poor thing, I want to take you
to bed with me...cuddle with you
like a warm blanket.

CLOSE ON: Mona reaches a hand around the Baron's neck-

MONA
Set me free then.

She strokes his ear...The Baron shivers with pleasure.

MONA
Unlock the cage.

BARON
No! I cannot.
(glancing downstairs)
I will be scolded.

Mona gives him a cold look.

MONA
(sternly)
Leave.

The Baron steps back, a little hurt.

MONA
Leave! I want to be alone.

The Baron nods sadly.

BARON
I have the curse of empathy.

Tomorrow, I promise, everything
will be as you remember.

He flicks off the light.

BARON
Goodnight Poppy.

The Baron exits the room..The instant he disappears Mona
produces the key and chain, hidden in her palm.

MONA
Sweet dreams.

She reaches through the bars, unlocks the door.

Ever so slowly she opens the cage...it creaks on old hinges.

Mona slips out of the cage to the floor. She kicks her legs
free of the sack, and squirms to free her arm.

The lights flick on-

BARON
Oh I cannot sleep! I am so excited!

The Baron sees Mona.

He is very angry.

CUT TO:

INT. BOILER ROOM - CHATEAU BASEMENT

The Waitress helps the Pilot through a miniature door up into
the chateau's boiler room. There is a large, noisy boiler
covered in meters and gauges.

The Bear and Pilot tiptoe over to an open door and peer around it-

They look into a room that was once the servants' dining area. Around a long wooden table sit five Death Squad Knights. They are still as statues. The trapdoors in their chests are open, creating little bridges from the Knights to the dining table.

The table is adorned with silver trays that hold fresh fruit, roast chicken, and delicacies. Scurrying over the table are enormous trench rats, gnawing at the food.

The Pilot grabs a broom that's leaning against the wall. He nods to the Bear, as if to say "I'm ready". The Bear nods back and they rush into the room-

The Bear charges, grabs one of the rats and severs him in half with his claws. The Pilot smacks a rat to the floor with his broom.

The Bear smashes another with his paw.

The Pilot has a rat cornered and swipes at it. The rat bares its teeth and lunges. The Pilot yelps and drops the broom-

The Waitress pushes the Pilot aside and calmly squashes the rats' head with her heeled boot.

The last rat scurries into a Knight's armored chest plate and, without waiting for it to close, starts running on the treadmill.

The Knight stands and raises its machine gun-

The Pilot is the closest. He grabs a fork from the table and skewers the rat in the machine.

The rat screams and squirms. The Pilot jabs the fork in further, and the rat dies with a high pitched screech. The Knight freezes in place.

Quiet.

One of the empty Knights tumbles forward, its pointy snout sticking into the table.

The Bear looks at the Pilot with grudging respect. The Pilot still holds the fork like a weapon.

An open door reveals an unlit stone staircase leading to the chateaus's first floor.

The three companions step up into the dark.

CUT TO:

INT. LENI'S ROOM

Leni's room is in the chateau's stone basement. It's furnished with Spartan simplicity like a monk's chamber or soldier's quarters.

Leni lounges in an iron tub. Her skin is red from scalding hot water.

She sits up in alarm. Something is wrong.

CUT TO:

INT. CHATEAU HALL

The Pilot, Bear and Waitress slink through the shadows of the great hall. The curved staircase leads up to the Baron's door, framed by electric yellow light.

There's screaming from above- Mona!

The Pilot and Bear nearly trip each other up in their eagerness to be the first up the stairs.

Despite their desperation there's an unmistakable competition to be the first up the stairs and to the door of the penthouse suite.

The door is locked. They smash it together, tumbling into the room-

CUT TO:

INT. CHATEAU PENTHOUSE

The Bear and Pilot leap to their feet, ready for anything.

The room is empty...The cage bars are bent...there's nobody there.

BARON
(voice)
Drop the fork.

The Baron is on the balcony. With one hand he holds Mona out over the edge, her bare legs kicking..

In the Baron's other hand is the pistol, pointing at the Pilot.

He drops the fork.

CUT TO:

INT. BOILER ROOM

Leni bursts into the room. Wet, wearing only a towel, she looks oddly vulnerable, like a cat caught in the rain.

She scans the room, takes in the dead rats...One of them is still alive, barely.

Leni bends down. She holds its little paws in her hands. She turns her face away and breaks its neck with a snap.

Close on Leni's face: There's a tear on her cheek.

She senses she's not alone. She looks towards the adjacent boiler room-

It's filling with children. Shark-white skin and chattering teeth.

Leni backs against the wall, trapped.

The frame fills with children's silhouettes...

CUT TO:

INT. CHATEAU PENTHOUSE

The Baron aims his pistol. The Pilot holds his hands up like a bank teller facing Billy the Kid. Mona hangs perilously over the balcony's edge. The Bear pads cautiously forward.

BARON

(to Pilot)

Greetings, villain. Your work was, shall I say, formidable?

MONA

(seeing the Bear)

Misiu!

BARON

Silence! I am talking to my nemesis.

Keep those hands high.
Only a master of subterfuge could-

BEAR
Give her to me. We leave.

The Baron's jaw drops.

BARON
The bear talks?
(to himself)
...Of course, the kaiser had a
talking orangutang.

BEAR
Do not do something stupid.

The Baron's face contorts-

BARON
Do not tell me what to do!

I drink when I like and I shoot
whom I like-

The Baron pushes the gun barrel hard into Mona's ribs- she
screams in pain.

The Pilot rushes at the Baron. The Baron aims and shoots-

CRACCKKK! Right in the forehead.

The Pilot's head snaps back and there's a sound like a marble
rolling around in a steel bucket. He stumbles backwards and
falls into the Waitress's arms. His eyes roll up in his head.

The Bear springs forward-

The Baron shoots at the ceiling.

The surprised Bear looks up-

There's a bullet hole next to the crystal chandelier.

The Baron shoot again and this time the chandelier drops,
pinning the Bear.

BARON
(gleeful)
Ha ha! It worked!

A bell tolls.

BONNNNGGG!

The sound is so close it shakes the furniture. The Baron clutches his ears, dropping Mona over the edge. She screams-

Mona catches onto the balcony railing. She holds on, her legs dangling a hundred feet above the courtyard.

The Baron holds his head in agony and leans out over the balcony.

From his perspective, we see the source of the bells:

In an adjoining tower of the chateau, the Mayor wildly swings a rope attached to a great bronze bell.

MAYOR
(shouting to the wind)
Firemen assemble! The town is in
peril!

The steady BONG rings out throughout the town.

The Baron takes aim and shoots at the Mayor.

He misses, instead hitting the bell, which rings with the ricocheting bullet. The Mayor falls forward, now swinging with the bell as he dangles from the rope.

The Bear roars. He pulls himself along the floor, towards Mona, with the heavy chandelier on top of him.

The Baron fires again, this time hitting one of the balloons attached to the supply shipment that was sent earlier.

The balloon explodes. The balloon next to it explodes...

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE CABARET

At the sound of the bells the women rush into the street.

They watch as a great ball of fire rises up into the sky from the chateau rooftop.

KUKA
(triumphantly)
How many signs do you need?

CUT TO:

INT. CHATEAU PENTHOUSE

BONNGG!

The Pilot blinks, and blinks again. He smacks the side of his tea kettle skull and rolls his head to the side- the crushed bullet falls out the spout.

He sees Mona, and the Bear who is still far from the balcony.

BONG.

Mona's fingers slip.

PILOT

Mona!

The Pilot speaks! He tries to stand but the Waitress clings to him.

The Baron has one eye closed, he's aiming carefully at the Mayor.

RING!! RRRINGG!! It's the phone.

The Baron is frozen by indecision: Shoot or get the phone?

The Pilot tugs at the Waitress's hands, but she won't release him. He looks back, pleading-

PILOT

Please.

The Baron rushes to the phone.

PILOT

(desperate)

Please!

The Waitress will not let him go.

BARON

(into phone, exasperated)

Oh! Mama! This is not a good time!

Mona looks down at the cliff and the river far below.

She closes her eyes.

She imagines seeing her mother's silk robe, torn on the rocks.

She falls.

A hand snatches her by the hair.

She screams.

The Pilot has her!

His arm is an extendable lamp, with an elbow made up of a hinge and two springs.

Her weight breaks the hinge and she drops with a shout-

-but bounces up, held from falling by the unravelling springs.

Mona grabs the mechanical wrist with both hands. She swings to and fro above the chasm.

BARON
(distracted)
No Mama. I don't need those
vitamins. They're for pregnant
ladies. Listen!

One spring snaps!

He reaches out with his other hand and pulls on the stretching spring...

Straining, tears in his eyes...Pulling.

Mona comes tumbling over the balcony railing like a tuna onto a ship's deck, bowling the Pilot over.

Before Mona can catch her breath the triumphant Pilot kisses her with all the verve and panache of Errol Flynn's Robin Hood.

Watching them, the Bear growls...The Waitress turns away, overcome by a black jealousy.

The Baron is locked in heated debate with his mother. He's red-faced.

BARON
But I *like* to go barefoot. There is
no draft...I have floor heating in
the bathroom.

Mona and the Pilot rush over to help the Bear. The Baron remains distracted.

The Waitress slinks away, and out the door.

Reluctantly, the Bear takes the Pilot's hand, who helps him to his feet.

Just then, a stone crashes through the window, and rolls to a stop on the carpet. The Baron gawks at it, surprised.

Another rock flies in, smashing a vase on the table.

BARON
(losing patience)
Mama, I must hang up!

The Baron pulls the phone cord its full length to look out the window-

His eyes bug out.

All the women of the town are pouring through the open chateau gate, armed with torches, hammers, and shovels.

BARON
No. Don't get Papa! Mama, I have to
go, I AM BEING RUDE TO MY GUESTS!

He slams down the phone, wincing with acute embarrassment. He turns to his captives.

The room is empty.

They're gone.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHATEAU ENTRANCE

The horde of women stand before the Chateau. The mob is in a frenzy. With all her might little Kuka swings an axe at the wooden door.

To their surprise the door swings open-

Mona fills the frame, with the Bear and Pilot standing behind her.

MONA
(wild eyed, triumphant)
He's upstairs.

The women stream into the reception room.

Mona turns to follow the women, but the Bear holds her back-

BEAR
Kill him, this changes nothing.

He puts an arm around the Pilot-

BEAR
Come with us.

MONA
Don't you see? It's over.

BEAR
Not for you.
(sadly)
Never for you.

Her smile sags, then springs back into a grin. She takes their hands as if to dance a jig.

MONA
Soon. Let's the three of us go
to...?

BEAR
(deadpan)
Alaska.

Mona skips in a circle with the Bear and Pilot.

MONA
To Alaska! Wherever and whatever
that is!

Mona bounds up the stairs in the women's wake.

BEAR
Go to her.

The Pilot does as he's told.

CUT TO:

INT. CHATEAU PENTHOUSE

The Baron is alone. He has barricaded the door with a piano. He hears the shouts of the women below.

With all the dignity he can muster he buttons his coat, with its many medals. He stands behind his desk and picks up his pistol, "Old Surehand".

The piano goes PLOONHNK! as many bodies push against the door in concert. An axe splinters the wood.

With great, foolish dignity, the Baron raises the pistol to his forehead.

The door is ajar, the axe breaks through, hands push through the cracks, voices raised in triumph.

BARON
La commedia e finita.

He squeezes the trigger and-

SQUELCH!

Half of the Baron's face is covered in bright blue gunk. (The last bullet was the blue anxiety pill he accidentally loaded into the gun earlier)

The Baron pulls the trigger again and it clicks.

The women burst through the door, pushing the piano aside.

The Baron yelps and runs up the spiral stairs to the roof, closely followed by Mona, Kuka, the women, and finally, the Pilot.

The Mayor appears at the door of the penthouse. He's startled by the display.

The grandfather clock reads one minute to midnight. It's nearly New Years.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHATEAU ROOF

The Baron is surrounded by women. They drag him towards a noose that has been tied to the remaining floating balloons.

He is kicked, punched, and clawed on the way.

BARON
Why are you doing this? What have I done?

The Pilot watches intently from the side. Mona pushes her way through the crowd.

Kuka wraps the noose around his neck. She and a half dozen women hold him down so he won't fly off- Just yet.

Mona comes face to face with the Baron. She slaps his face hard. The women roar their approval.

MONA

I've imagined this moment in a thousand ways. I've cursed you every day.

Kuka kicks the Baron's backside.

KUKA

To the Devil with you!

The women howl. The Baron looks at Mona with child-like, frightened eyes.

BARON

(blubbering)

I want to go home now. I want to go home.

He breaks into tears. He looks small, pathetic and weak. Mona backs away a step, disgust mixed with...pity.

This wasn't how it was supposed to go.

MONA

You're never going home. Not ever.

The Baron nods, sniffing.

KUKA

Mona, don't waste your time.

Mathilde, the old woman, pokes her face in.

MATHILDE

Hang him!

Mona forces the Baron to look her in the eye.

MONA

Do you know how much pain you've caused? How many people you've hurt?

BARON

I...

Around them, the women start a count-down to midnight.

WOMEN'S VOICES

Ten!...Nine! Eight! Seven! Six!
Five!

MONA
(desperate)
Stop! He has to explain-

BARON
I...

Mona moves in to hear over the rabble.

MONA
Yes-

BARON
I...I wrote a song.

WOMEN'S VOICES
Four! Three! Two! One!

BARON
(loudly, to everyone)
Wait! I wrote a very funny song!

The women let go and the Baron chokes, jerked up into the sky with the balloons.

The women cheer and embrace.

The Pilot observes Mona:

She's not celebrating. She watches, stunned, as the Baron floats away.

The Pilot goes to her, but between them is a barrier of surging, cheering women.

He finds himself face to face with the Mayor, who holds out his hand.

MAYOR
(with a bow)
Enchante Monsieur.

Behind them, Mona disappears into the crowd.

Raising his arm, The Pilot forgets the broken springs and his hand flops about like a slinky.

PILOT
(awkwardly)
Hello sir.

MAYOR

Goodness!

(then, recovering)

I pray you can forgive my
scandalous appearance.

I am the Mayor you see.

(gesturing to the town)

The flower capital of Europe.

The Mayor puts his hand on the Pilot's shoulder and surveys
the town.

MAYOR

(ironically)

Troubles are nothing but the
shadows in a beautiful picture.

The Pilot looks at him, startled.

MAYOR

That was my campaign slogan.

CUT TO:

EXT. SEWER TUNNEL

Water trickles from the sewer tunnel. The broken grate lies
where the Waitress had discarded it.

Leni emerges from the gloom.

She clutches a shredded child's blanket around her. She's
desperate-eyed and shivering, bloody and scratched from head
to toe.

She looks over her shoulder-

The Baron's limp body, hanging from the balloons, floats away
from the chateau and out over the town.

Leni shudders. She is a shocking sight: Her hair is torn to
the scalp in places. The white of her eye is blood red.

She scurries down the icy path and out of sight.

CUT TO:

INT. CHATEAU PENTHOUSE

The party turns riotous. The air is thick with pillow
feathers.

The stereo's volume is cranked to the brink of human tolerance. Furniture is flung out the window and drapes set afire.

In the bedroom, women tear the Baron's sheets and clothes to ribbons and traipse about in his robes and furs.

CUT TO:

INT. CHATEAU PANTRY

The Bear leads the way, followed by half a dozen women. He opens up the walk-in fridge:

The fridge is full to bursting with sausages, cheese, fruit, chocolate, wine, cognac, and on and on. The half-starved women rush inside and attack the shelves.

CUT TO:

INT. CHATEAU BASEMENT

Two women push open the door leading to the basement. One holds the Baron's golden pistol and the other a hammer.

One of them is the woman who had claimed to see a child earlier at the cabaret. The other her friend who said she was seeing ghosts.

At the bottom of the stairs they discover a curious and grisly collection: A child's shoe, a torn bath towel, and a bloody pair of nail scissors.

Light spills from the room around the corner. With raised weapons, the women charge in-

Their surprise at encountering six empty Death Squad Knights is nothing compared to the sight of three china-white, ragged little girls gnawing away at the leftovers on the table.

The girls stare up at the women in fascination.

The pistol and hammer clatter to the floor.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHATEAU GARAGE

The garage door is opened up. Inside is the Death squad car, bicycles, and a Bugatti convertible.

Two women gun the engine of the Bugatti and shoot out into the snow. The car slips on the ice and careens straight into a tree.

They spill out and, though one has a bloody nose, they throw their arms around each other, laughing.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHATEAU ENTRANCE

Outside on the chateau lawn the Pilot looks desperately for Mona amongst the revellers.

A flaming chair crashes through the window and lands a few feet away.

The Bear emerges from the entrance pushing a wheelbarrow filled to the brim with whiskey, wine, and sausages. He waves enthusiastically at the Pilot.

PILOT
(anxious)
I lost her!

BEAR
(sniffs the air)
There!

Just then Mona streaks by on a heavy black bicycle she's taken from the garage.

She cycles past them, sliding on the snow.

BEAR
Ha! Go slow!

She zooms down the hill, out of sight behind the trees.

They follow on foot. The Bear wraps a paw around the Pilot's shoulders and hands him a sausage.

BEAR
Eat! You are skinny!

The Pilot grins and takes a bite.

PILOT
To Alaska!

CUT TO:

EXT. CHATEAU PATH

Mona rides recklessly down the wooded path away from the chateau.

She slips and slides, branches smack her cheeks like whips, but she rides faster and faster.

The wind and cold streak her face with tears.

She soars through the chateau gates and out onto the snow covered streets.

Her eyes blaze, senseless.

In a powerful, strange voice, she sings; an unbroken, single note, a ghostly lamentation, almost inhuman.

The note never wavers.

Ahead of her is a curve in the road, a low fence, and beyond the fence the bridge-

and the boat...

CUT TO:

EXT CHATEAU GATES

The Bear and Pilot come out of the gates. They are smiling, passing a bottle from mouth to mouth.

They hear Mona's song and stop. The sound echoes off the town's walls.

Abruptly the note cuts off.

The wheelbarrow is abandoned. Sausages and whiskey spill onto the street.

They run.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOMBED OUT BRIDGE

Beyond the mountains artillery crackles and pops.

The Bear's submarine, with airplane engine attached, bobs up and down in the river's shallows. It is tied to a rock on the shore.

Above it the bridge looms like the wing of a great crow.

The Pilot and Bear hop the fence between the road and the river.

The Pilot shrieks, pointing-

Below them, near the water, lies the bicycle. It is bent grotesquely out of shape.

They scramble down the embankment.

A trail of blood in the snow.

Leading to Mona.

Head cracked. Face down.

They turn her over.

PILOT
(voice shaking)
Mona.

Mona's eyes are open and glassy. Her forehead is split from eyebrow to hairline.

She tries to sit up. She gasps in pain.

The Bear howls and licks at Mona's wound, making deep, inhuman noises.

The Pilot looks away. He's overcome by emotion.

Then, out of the corner of his eye-

He sees a slender white hand pull the submarine hatch down.

The Pilot is speechless.

He pokes the Bear.

The Bear holds Mona in his arms. His brown eyes well with tears.

The Pilot pokes him again-

PILOT
I'm sorry...but the um...

With a loud CHUG CHUG CHUG the airplane engine coughs to life. The Boat pushes off from the shore.

The propeller spins with an ear splitting WHINE.

Now the Bear jolts up.

BEAR
(aghast)
Lenin's holy ghost!

CUT TO:

INT. SUBMARINE

Inside, Leni has already mastered the machine's controls.

With a triumphant gleam in her eye she pushes the throttle down. The submarine vibrates with the engine's power.

BACK TO:

EXT. BOMBED OUT BRIDGE

The Pilot, Bear and Mona are showered with icy mist as the propeller gains speed.

The motor's sound is deafening. The boat bucks and shakes in anticipation.

The submarine dips and disappears under the water, a trail of bubbles in its wake.

Then-

FLOOOOOOSH!

The submarine rockets up into the sky like a Fourth of July firework.

High over the river the boat loops once, then twice, towards the mountains.

CUT TO:

INT. SUBMARINE

Leni's eyes widen with pure animal terror.

BACK TO:

EXT. BOMBED OUT BRIDGE

The Pilot's mouth is an "O". The Bear's face a tragic mask.

They watch as the ship crashes into a mountain side with a little puff of smoke.

The Bear buries his face in his paws.

Mona laughs.

A sound bright and clear in the winter air.

The Bear chuckles despite himself, deep in his chest, low and wheezy.

BEAR
Not...very good...submarine.

The Pilot grins toothily.

Mona takes the Pilot's hand.

Her skin is pale as marble.

MONA
We'd be so happy if everything was
different.

She touches the Bear's cheek-

MONA
Kiss me one last time.

But there's no time.

She closes her eyes.....

FADE TO:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE.

The sky has turned from deep blue to gray. It will soon be morning.

The children play in the town square.

They are gathered in a circle holding the Pilot's white parachute. They swing it up and down so that it rises and falls, rises and falls.

FADE TO:

EXT. NARROW STREET

The Waitress stares into the window of the mannequin shop.

Inside, amongst the wigs, hands, arms and legs there is a plastic bust of a pretty red headed woman.

The reflection in the glass seems to impose the mannequin's eyes, hair and smile onto the Waitress's blank wooden face.

Yearning, she touches the glass...

FADE TO:

EXT. BOMBED OUT CIRCUS

In the sky beyond the Ferris wheel there is a pale yellow light.

CLOSE ON: A red poppy half buried by the snow. A hand, the Pilot's, picks it up gently.

He steps into Mona's cabin.

Inside the cabin a broken table has been fixed up with three legs and a crate.

On the table is a small garden of damaged plants. They've been replanted in an assortment of cups, cracked vases, and pots. Their bent leaves and broken stalks are held up by strings and wooden splints.

The Pilot puts the poppy in a chipped tea cup with a handful of earth.

Behind him, a wispy, transparent GHOST appears in the doorway and glides into the cabin. It looks not unlike a person covered in a white sheet.

The apparition floats just out the Pilot's sight.

The Pilot picks up a water pitcher. With care he waters all the plants.

They are alive, leaning towards the approaching dawn.

The sun bursts over the mountains and the cabin fills with color.

The Ghost drifts into him-

CUT TO WHITE

TITLE CARD

With the click clack of a typewriter, the title appears on the screen, one letter at a time-

THE WHITE CIRCUS

THE END