

COURAGE: OUR CREDO

Written by

Erik Dabrowski
&
Hayden Bownds

Erikdabrowski@alum.calarts.edu
Haydenadambownds@gmail.com

OVER BLACK:

Inspired by true events...

SUPER: EASTERN POLAND, 1941

INT./EXT. HOUSE - CELLAR - DAWN

Dark. Cold. Jostling of panic. A VEHICLE screeches to a stop outside. VOICES speak RUSSIAN.

FADE IN:

A small flicker from a worn candle slowly illuminates a man, woman, MITCH (16) and his little brother, Tomek.

Villagers SCREAM from outside. Then GUNSHOTS. The woman pulls them in tight and weeps a prayer.

WOMAN V.O.

(Polish)

Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord
is with thee...

The candle plumes out as the front door cracks open. FOOTSTEPS pace around. Russian soldiers DELIBERATE.

WOMAN V.O. (CONT'D)

(Polish)

...Hail Mary, full of grace. The
Lord is with thee. Holy Mary,
Mother of God, pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death.

She bangs on her chest to the rhythm of the prayer. The others join in, louder and louder and then -

BANG!

The cellar door swings open. Two soldiers drag Mitch out of the house by his feet. They set him atop a military caravan.

The woman is carried out, CRYING. The man gets a swift punch to the head while being taken to the convoy.

A child CRIES from a distance. The soldiers redirect their attention, aiming their guns.

A frightened woman, SARA (30's), cradles her daughter, WANDA (6), as they dart from behind a house into the forest.

The soldiers fire several rounds as she makes her escape.

Tomek stands idle in the havoc. He and Mitch lock eyes. He turns to find himself facing the barrel of a gun. BANG!

INT./EXT. ZYLA'S HOUSE - MARY'S ROOM - NIGHT

The room is dingy. The fall breeze rustles the hand-sewn curtains over the window.

MARY ZYLA, (16) jubilant and strong, jolts up, holding her stomach in pain. The sheets are stained crimson.

She cries in agony and climbs out of the bed, tiptoeing around her room. She strips off the tainted sheets.

SIDE OF HOUSE

The waded sheets fall to the ground as she climbs down a lattice. She clutches her stomach and tramples off.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

A Buck races through the foliage. It stops near some brush, unknowingly becoming the target of a rifle.

Holding aim is ANTHONY ZYLA, (15), inquisitive and tenacious. He squints his eye and cocks the hammer.

LAWRENCE ZYLA, (40's), wise and firm, sits warmly beside him. Anthony fires the shot. The buck goes down. Lawrence smiles.

EXT. GAME PREP AREA - DAY

The buck's been skinned. Lawrence cuts the meat and sets portions aside. Anthony watches. A SNAP draws his attention.

FIELD

Anthony paces over and spots a small rabbit caught in a trap. He snatches it out and holds it up by its ears.

ANTHONY

We caught one!

Lawrence bends down beside him. He pets the rabbit.

LAWRENCE

She's just a kit. Probably wandered away from her mother.

ANTHONY

Ma' could make a fine stew.

LAWRENCE

Just skin and bones. Hasn't had a chance to live a life deserving of death. We have more than enough with the buck.

Lawrence pets her once again and stands. Anthony kisses it and lets her loose.

They watch the rabbit trail into the forest. Anthony aims his rifle and mocks a shot.

INT. ZYLA'S HOUSE - DAY

ANNA ZYLA (40's) prepares an early morning breakfast. She tidy's the house. She opens the front door and gleans out.

Anthony runs in from the field. He's got a big piece of the buck they've just slaughtered.

ANNA

Must have been a big one.

She takes the meat from him.

ANTHONY

Sure was. I only take the best.

ANNA

Ugh-huh, and you're going to help me cook it, right?

He gives her a dubious look and grabs her dish towel to wipe the sweat from his brow.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Ah-ah! You know better than that!

He folds the towel and sets it aside.

ANTHONY

Sorry, ma. Mary not up yet?

Anna's apprehensive and slices the meat.

ANNA

Go grab your father. I'm making breakfast.

ANTHONY

Can't. We're heading into town.

He grabs a slice of pie and starts for the door.

ANNA

Hold on a minute. Had to start
hiding it from your sister.

She walks into the other room, then comes back. She hands him
a small package of thread.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Get two this time.

He takes it and kisses her cheek, then trots out.

INT. ZYLA'S HOUSE - MARY'S ROOM - DAY

Anna KNOCKS on the door.

ANNA

Mary! It's nearly noon. Better not
find you still sleeping.

She comes in, noticing the vacant room and the sheet-less
bed. She resolves with a look at the open window.

INT. HOSPITAL - EXAMINING ROOM - DAY

Mary lies in a bed facing the window, clutching her stomach.
The curtain lifts from a slight breeze.

A doctor sits on the edge of the bed, checking her breathing
with a stethoscope.

He takes it off and steps over to JOHN (19), who waits
impatiently nearby.

JOHN

Is she going to be okay?

DOCTOR

She'll heal with time.

JOHN

And what about the baby?

The doctor grips John's shoulder, consoling.

DOCTOR

The hemorrhaging was too much. It caused blockage...

John leans against the wall.

JOHN

We can try again, right?

DOCTOR

I'm sorry.

He sighs and goes. John composes himself and sits with Mary.

JOHN

He says you're going to be fine.

Mary faces away, silent.

JOHN (CONT'D)

At least we still have each other.

MARY

How am I to tell this to my family?

JOHN

Mary...

Mary faces him.

MARY

Keeping this a secret was hard enough. Now I have to tell 'em I'll never have kids.

JOHN

Maybe it's best you didn't.

Mary turns back over and CRIES.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

The small village bustles. People stroll the streets. Stop at different vendors. Cull together in conversation.

There's a small roadside attraction surrounded by people in the center of town.

INT. MEAT MARKET - DAY

A clerk hands Lawrence a few zloty's, then takes the now packaged remains of the buck. Lawrence and Anthony leave.

EXT. VILLAGE - SAME

Lawrence and Anthony are positioned next to some vendors. Anthony shows a small trap to a passerby.

ANTHONY

It's real sturdy. Hand crafted.

Anthony hands it over. The man inspects it.

PASSERBY

It is nice. Got any larger ones?

Lawrence grabs another from the cart. He hands it over with his left hand, which is handicapped. The man's taken aback.

ANTHONY

Caught a rabbit just this morning.

GEORGE O.S.

A rabbit? Bet you couldn't catch a rat with one of those things.

Anthony and Lawrence turn to see GEORGE, (40's) stepping out of a bank and heading over. He's well dressed and portly.

LAWRENCE

No, George. Don't think I've got one big enough for you.

The passersby hands the trap back to Anthony and strides off.

GEORGE

Looks like that shack of yours. Tell me, has it crumbled yet?

LAWRENCE

It will if you keep driving away my business.

GEORGE

Think that hand's doing it for you.

They put the trap back and continue on. George follows.

LAWRENCE

Shouldn't you be with the fools so eager to give away their money?

GEORGE

Speaking of fools, thought more on that loan? You'll get a good rate.

LAWRENCE
We're doing just fine.

He looks to Anthony. Anthony shies his head away.

GEORGE
Poor boy'll wind up as crude as you
with principles like those.

Lawrence reaches into his pocket. He pulls out the zloty's
and hands it to Anthony.

LAWRENCE
Go get your mother's supplies.

Anthony does as he's instructed and runs away.

GEORGE
My boy's about ready to start his
own firm.

LAWRENCE
I see him from time to time. Ought
to tell him to stick around for
dinner once in awhile.

GEORGE
My boy dining with the Zyla's? Have
to have half a brain. Better half a
brain than half a hand, I suppose.

He laughs.

LAWRENCE
Glad you could find time for
insults in between lunches.

George's LAUGH dissipates as they reach the center of town.

INT. CLOTHING STORE - SAME

Anthony stands along a rack of assorted sewing threads. He
grabs two packages and races up to the counter.

CLERK
Where's your mammo today?

ANTHONY
She's at the house. Preparing a
buck I took this morning.

CLERK
Well you give her my best, ya hear?

ANTHONY

Yes, sir.

He pays the clerk and skips out.

EXT. VILLAGE CENTER - SAME

Anthony stuffs the packages into his pocket and notices a beggar nearby. He looks at the remaining change in his hand.

He steps over and gives it to the man. He smiles and redirects his focus to a -

CARNY O.S.

Step right up! A test of strength.

CARNIVAL

A CLANG chimes from a test your strength game with a sledgehammer and bell.

The man who just hit steps away as Lawrence and George approach the crowd. The CARNY paces around the men.

CARNY

Who's next? Who dares to showcase their strength? Are you man enough?

The men CHATTER, but no one ponies up. George smirks at Lawrence and prances over, rolling up his sleeves.

CARNY (CONT'D)

You sir. You believe you have what it takes?

George SCOFFS and takes the hammer from the carny. He slams it down and the dumbbell peaks the top. DING! Men APPLAUD.

GEORGE

What say you, Zyla?

LAWRENCE

Sure was a mighty swing.

GEORGE

Give it a shot, if you dare.

CARNY

Sounds like we've got a challenge! Let's hear it!

Anthony stands behind the crowd, watching from a distance. George holds out the hammer. Lawrence doesn't take it.

GEORGE

If you can't do it... It's okay to be scared.

George looks to the men, egging them on. They APPLAUD and CHEER. Anthony watches Lawrence stand idle.

ANTHONY O.S.

My father's a veteran. Not scared of anything. No one knows that better than you, sir.

Anthony runs through the crowd and snatches the hammer from George as he looks away. Anthony holds it out for Lawrence.

ANTHONY

He can do it!

Lawrence looks reluctant.

GEORGE

We're waiting...

ANTHONY

Come on, Pa. You can do it.

Lawrence takes the hammer and looks at the bell, then to George. He throws the hammer to the ground.

The crowd BOO'S. Anthony's heart drops in embarrassment.

GEORGE

Just what I thought.

George ambles away. Lawrence and Anthony stand apart, staring at each other. A man hits the machine. The DING fades into -

INT. ZYLA'S HOUSE - MARY'S ROOM - DAY

Mary SOBS hard in Anna's arms.

MARY

I'm sorry, mamó. Don't be mad. I just see the way you and papa look at each other. I want that.

ANNA

You've still got a lot of growing to do. There's still time.

MARY

But I'm not able to have children.

Anna pulls her away and looks at her , earnestly.

ANNA

The Lord has His plans. And His timing.

She wipes away Mary's tears and hugs her once more.

MARY

Are you going to tell papa?

ANNA

You know nothing gets by your father. Just rest now.

Mary lays back in bed. Anna closes the door as she leaves.

INT. ZYLA'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The family eats in silence, save for Mary.

LAWRENCE

Where's Mary?

ANNA

She's not feeling well today.

They share a tacit look. Anthony picks at his food.

ANNA (CONT'D)

And what's with you?

ANTHONY

Nothing. May I be excused?

Anna perks up.

ANNA

No you may not.

LAWRENCE

Yes...

Anna looks at Lawrence.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

You're excused.

Anthony gets up and starts to leave the room.

ANNA

Ah-ah. Where does that dish belong?

Anthony grabs his dish and takes it into the kitchen.
Lawrence rubs his wounded hand in pain.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Something I'm missing here?

LAWRENCE
Nothing you haven't witnessed
before. That boy's so hard-headed.

ANNA
He reminds me of his father more
and more each day.

Lawrence smiles.

LAWRENCE
What's with Mary? Let me guess,
John had something to do with it.

Anna smiles, empathetically.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
She's resilient. Like her mother.

Anna grabs his handicapped hand and kisses it.

INT. ZYLA'S HOUSE - MARY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Mary brushes her hair in front of her mirror. Long, gentle
strokes. She stops and stands. Lifts up her nightgown.

She rubs her stomach. Tears begin to well, then - KNOCK -
KNOCK at the door. She quickly jumps into bed.

MARY
Come in.

Lawrence comes in with a plate of food.

LAWRENCE
Ma said you weren't feeling well.
Thought you may be hungry.

He sets the plate on a side table and sits beside her.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
How are you?

MARY
I feel much better.

Lawrence notices she's been crying.

LAWRENCE
How are you really?

She turns over to prepare herself. Takes a breath, then...

MARY
I need to tell you something.

He leans in and touches her stomach.

LAWRENCE
God never gives us more than we can
bare. Even when we think it may be.

She faces him and CRIES. He holds her.

MARY
You knew? Did mom...?

She pulls out of the hug.

LAWRENCE
She didn't have to. I was a boy
once, believe it or not.

She looks away.

MARY
Are you mad?

LAWRENCE
I'll be mad later. You just heal.

He kisses her forehead and heads for the door.

MARY
Why didn't you say anything?

LAWRENCE
Knew you'd tell me when you were
ready.

MARY
I'm sorry for lying to you.

Lawrence looks rejuvenated.

LAWRENCE
Why don't you have him over one
night? No need sneaking around.

She smiles, sheepishly.

MARY

I love you papa.

LAWRENCE

I love you, manya.

INT. ZYLA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Anthony sits in a chair, reading the bible. Lawrence descends the stairs, entering the room. He watches for a brief moment.

LAWRENCE

Which chapter tonight?

Anthony peers over the bible, seeing him.

ANTHONY

For we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in sight of men.

LAWRENCE

Ah, Corinthians. What about this one? Don't work to make yourself look good, flattering people, but act like slaves of God, carrying out His will from the heart.

Anthony becomes more comfortable as Lawrence comes near.

ANTHONY

What happened to your hand?

LAWRENCE

You know what happened to my hand.

ANTHONY

I also know you could've hit the bell, but you didn't even try.

LAWRENCE

Strength isn't demonstrated by what you're capable of physically. It's shown from here.

He touches over Anthony's heart.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

There's always going to be times when your strength and courage are tested - but it's through humility that they're truly demonstrated.

He may be getting through to him.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Don't stay up too late.

Anthony watches Lawrence leave. He closes the bible and sets it on a bookcase among many other books.

INT. ZYLA'S HOUSE - ANNA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Anna lies in bed waiting. She beams as Lawrence comes in with a lantern. He undresses and crawls in beside her.

ANNA
How is she?

LAWRENCE
She's going to be just fine. Her mother raised her right.

ANNA
And your son?

LAWRENCE
Boy's going to be the death of me.

They share a LAUGH.

ANNA
I'm proud of you.

He grabs her and they kiss, passionately.

INT. BARN - DAY

Mary's on her knees, milking a cow. Anna ambles in.

ANNA
How's my girl today?

MARY
I'm well.

ANNA
I was talking about the cow.

Anna pets the cow. Mary looks at her. They smile.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Ah, there's that beautiful smile.

Mary seems more relaxed. Anna reaches into her apron pocket and retrieves the thread Anthony bought earlier.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Got something that may help occupy
your mind.

She hands it to Mary.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Keep you from stealing mine.

She stands and hugs Anna.

MARY

Thank you, mamó.

Mary runs out of the barn. Anna watches, relieved.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Lawrence gaits behind a horse, plowing the crops. He stops and looks at the sky. Black clouds are rolling in.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Anthony plucks vegetables from vines and puts them into a basket. Lawrence comes near.

LAWRENCE

How's the yield?

Anthony holds up a meager basket.

ANTHONY

Better than last year, I'd say.

Lawrence nods, then looks back into the sky.

LAWRENCE

Look's like were due for a storm.

INT. ZYLA'S HOUSE - MARY'S ROOM - DAY

Mary sits in a rocking chair, stitching the thread together. She's enthralled in her work.

KITCHEN

Vegetables scatter the counter and boiling pots steam on the stove. Anna CHOPS a tomato in half. The CHOP echos into -

EXT. ROOF - DAY

Lawrence HAMMERS a nail through a newly replaced shingle. Anthony ascends a ladder and hands him a new one.

ANTHONY

Why can't it just be finished?

LAWRENCE

Nothing's ever finished. When you're sick you medicate. Thirsty you drink. Just the way it is.

He takes the shingle from Anthony.

ANTHONY

Wish God would give us a new house.
Why don't you take George's offer?

Lawrence stops and shoots him an incredulous look.

LAWRENCE

If you have no money to pay, why
should your bed be taken from you?

Anthony looks away.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Come here.

Anthony climbs up next to his father. Lawrence gives him the shingle and the hammer.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Line it up next to the others.

Anthony does so. Lawrence takes a nail pressed between his lips and hands it to him.

ANTHONY

You want me to do it?

LAWRENCE

If He can't trust us to take care
of what we have now, how can he
trust us with anything new? Look.

He points out his property to Anthony.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
One day this'll all be yours.

Anthony's not thrilled as he looks out at the nominal land.

ANTHONY
It's not enough.

LAWRENCE
Son, It doesn't matter how much you
have. It's what you do with what
you're given.

Anthony steadies the hammer and slams it over the nail. A
CRACK of thunder rolls above.

INT. ZYLA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

RAIN pats on the roof as the Zyla's finish dinner. Drops of
water drip down on to Lawrence's plate.

LAWRENCE
Damn. Thought we got 'em all.

Anthony laughs.

ANNA
I'll get a pale.

Mary and Anna clear the table. Lawrence and Anthony remain.

ANTHONY
Guess carpentry's not my calling.

LAWRENCE
What do you think is your calling?

Lawrence sits back. There's tension in the air.

ANTHONY
I want to serve my country. Like
you. It's something to be proud of.

This doesn't sit well with Lawrence.

ANNA O.S.
You don't have to fight someone
else's war to be proud.

Anna stands in the doorway with a pale, stone faced.

ANTHONY

I want to do something honorable.
Pa, I hear how men talk about you.
You're better than that.

LAWRENCE

Let them talk. You're a damn fool
to believe there's honor in war.

ANTHONY

There's also respect.

LAWRENCE

There's also loss!

He holds up his hand. Mary comes in from the kitchen.

ANTHONY

If that were to happen to me I
wouldn't hide behind it shamefully.

ANNA

Anthony Zyla! How dare you speak to
your father like that!

MARY

There's also respect in hard work
and raising a family. Listen to Pa.

ANTHONY

As you did? Tell me, where's the
respect in a family before wedlock?

LAWRENCE

Enough!

Lawrence jumps up from his seat and slams his fist on the
table right as there's a KNOCK at the door. They look over.

LIVING ROOM

Lawrence opens the front door to reveal Sara with Wanda at
her side. Both look exhausted and starving.

SARA

Help...

LAWRENCE

Anthony, heat some supper.

Anthony darts away. Lawrence and Anna help Wanda and Sara
into the house.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The Zyla's hover around as Sara and Wanda scarf some soup. Sara finishes and takes a moment. She then lets out a WAIL.

SARA
They're all dead!

ANNA
Kids - Mary, take the little one upstairs.

Wanda starts CRYING. Mary takes her upstairs. Anthony follows, but lingers behind the staircase and eavesdrops.

LAWRENCE
Take it easy. What happened?

MARY'S ROOM

Mary leads Wanda in and sets her atop the bed. She CRIES.

MARY
It's alright. Don't be frightened.

She brushes her hand across Wanda's cheek. She grabs a stuffed bear next to her pillow and hands it to Wanda.

MARY (CONT'D)
When I'm scared I hold him close.
He'll protect you.

Wanda settles. Mary sits next to her and holds her tight.

MARY (CONT'D)
What's your name, little one?

WANDA
Wanda.

MARY
Well Wanda, you're safe now.

DINNING ROOM

Sara prepares herself through the hysterical CRIES.

LAWRENCE
Was it the German's?

ANNA
Isn't the invasion further west?

Sara tries to run out of the house. Lawrence grabs her.

LIVING ROOM

He sits her on the couch and kneels down beside her.

SARA

We're not safe here. We must go.

She tries to run again. Lawrence stops her.

LAWRENCE

Stop. You're not going to get very far out there. Not in this.

She collapses in his arms. Anna brings over a blanket and pillow. Lawrence lays her on the couch.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

You'll be safe here. Just rest.

Sara curls up. Anna tucks her in. She falls fast asleep. Anthony comes in. He and Lawrence share an unspoken look.

ANTHONY

Papa...

Lawrence grips his shoulder and nods. Enough said.

INT. ZYLA'S HOUSE - MARY'S ROOM - DAY

Mary yawns awake on the floor. She sees Wanda sitting in bed.

WANDA

Where's my mom?

INT. ZYLA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mary leads Wanda down the stairs. Anthony wakes in the chair with his rifle across his lap.

Sara's nowhere in sight. Anna stands next to Lawrence, who reads a note griped in his hand.

Anna looks over to Mary and Wanda at the stairs.

EXT./INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - DAY

Lawrence BANGS on the door. George Answers.

GEORGE
Zyla? So you've changed your mind?

LAWRENCE
What? No.

GEORGE
Then to what do I owe the pleasure?

LAWRENCE
I assure you, there is no pleasure
in us meeting today.

Lawrence hands George the note. He browses over it. His smile fades dramatically.

He looks over Lawrence's shoulder, seeing Anna and the kids with Wanda in their buggy.

GEORGE
What is this?

LAWRENCE
I was hoping you could tell me. She showed up on my doorstep last night ranting of pillaging. She left, claiming the girl's yours.

John leans through a window inside and waves out to Mary. She returns a wave and a hopeful smile.

GEORGE
And you believed her? She could be a raving lunatic for all you know.

LAWRENCE
Indeed. She'd have to be if this letter's truthful.

Lawrence looks back to his family - then back to George.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
What of it, George? I don't have means for another mouth to feed.

George looks over to John staring out the window, then back to Lawrence.

GEORGE
Some whore shows up claiming her bastard's mine is erroneous.

He tries to slam the door, but Lawrence grips it.

LAWRENCE

George...

GEORGE

All that's mine is in this house.
Now take that stump out of my door
or I'll give you another one.

Lawrence lets go and steps away as George slams the door.

LIVING ROOM

George leans against the door. He looks over to John.

GEORGE

You're never to see that family
again.

JOHN

But father...

GEORGE

End of discussion.

John's face drops as George marches off.

EXT. BUGGY - SAME

Lawrence climbs in the carriage.

ANNA

What'd he say?

He looks to Wanda, then back to Anna. He grabs the reins and they trail off.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The house is packed. A CHOIR sings a hymn. REVEREND MARK,
(60's), stands at the center SINGING.

The Zyla's and Wanda, SING along in a pew. The choir stops.
The congregation sits.

REVEREND MARK

Everyone turn to the book of James.

People flip through their bibles. Anna helps Wanda flip to
the right passage.

Mary watches her mother. They smile to each other.

REVEREND MARK (CONT'D)
 We're all faced with peril in our
 lives. Though we may fear at first,
 it's our heavenly Father who gives
 us strength to endure hardships.

Lawrence looks over a few rows and spots George with his
 family. He tries ardently to avoid eye contact.

Lawrence looks back, noticing Anthony watching him.

REVEREND MARK (CONT'D)
 James twelve states - Blessed is
 the one who perseveres under trial
 because, having stood the test,
 that person will receive the crown
 of life that the Lord has promised
 to those who love him.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

People scatter away. Anna and Anthony pace away with Wanda.
 Mark stops Lawrence.

REVEREND MARK
 You seem troubled today, Lawrence.

LAWRENCE
 Touching message today, reverend.

REVEREND MARK
 Only preach what I'm compelled to.

They walk down towards the Zyla's buggy.

LAWRENCE
 I thought I was rasing my family
 right. As of late, I'm not so sure.

Anthony lifts Wanda inside as Mark and Lawrence approach.

REVEREND MARK
 Who's this little lady?

Wanda's bashful and hides behind Anna.

ANNA
 This is Wanda. Our newest edition.

Mark throws his arm over Lawrence's shoulders, guiding him
 away from the carriage.

REVEREND MARK
She's not Mary's, is she?

LAWRENCE
It's a little more complicated than that, I'm afraid.
(They stop)
You haven't heard rumors of soldiers in the area, have you?

REVEREND MARK
No. No I haven't. What's happened?

LAWRENCE
She was left with us the other night. Her mother claimed Russian soldiers were taking captives.

REVEREND MARK
Russians? If that were true, then I'm sure we would of heard by now.

LAWRENCE
You're right. Lord give me the strength.

REVEREND MARK
Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we'll reap a harvest if we don't give up.

LAWRENCE
Thank you, reverend.

REVEREND MARK
I'll put up an offering for you and your family. Say, where is Marisha?

EXT. BEHIND THE CHURCH - SAME

Mary and John are against the building. Mary kisses him, fervidly.

MARY
I miss you terribly. I can barley sleep at night.

JOHN
I miss you, too...

MARY

Like you said, at least we have
each other, right? We'll try again,
once we're married.

She tries to kiss him again, but he's not into it.

JOHN

Manya, stop.

MARY

What? What's wrong?

He steps back.

JOHN

Our families - their differences.
People like us don't get married.

Mary's heart drops.

MARY

But I love you, John. I thought you
loved me.

She steps away. He grabs her arm, pulling her back.

JOHN

I do love you. And I always will.
But from a distance.

Mary's put back. Tears well in her eyes. She pulls out a
scarf she's been sewing and hands it to him.

MARY

I made this for you.

He admires it and throws it around his neck.

JOHN

I love it.

He kisses her, but she doesn't kiss him back. He gives a half
smile and trots away. She just stares down at the ground.

John runs past Lawrence as he approaches. Mary slowly pads up
to him, her face in her palms. He holds her.

INT. ZYLA'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Wanda and the Zyla's, save for Lawrence, set the table.
Anthony picks at some food. Anna swats his hand away.

ANNA

Wait for your father.

Lawrence comes in looking spiffy.

LAWRENCE

Ready to eat?

They join hands in prayer.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

...Though there are things we can't understand at the time your infinite wisdom is sufficient to carry us through. In the loving name of the Father...

BANG! BANG! BANG! Sounds from the door, throwing Lawrence out of his prayer. Everyone stiffens.

WANDA

Mamo!

LAWRENCE

Stay here.

LIVING ROOM

Lawrence answers the door to be met with two soldiers brandishing rifles at him.

CAPTAIN CHRISTOPH MOROVITZ, (30), zealous, comes up the stoop.

CHRISTOPH

Good evening. My name is Captain Christoph Morovitz of the Red Army.

LAWRENCE

What can I do for you, captain?

Christoph steps into the house.

CHRISTOPH

As you may be aware, we are in the midst of war...

LAWRENCE

It's further west, no?

CHRISTOPH

Do not interrupt me, sir. As the territories become commandeered, Poland's been appropriated.

Anna and the kids come in.

ANNA
Lawrence, what's going on?

LAWRENCE
Everything's alright.

CHRISTOPH
I was just informing your husband
all property and what lies therein
is now under Soviet control.

ANNA
Wait a minute...

CHRISTOPH
I've been given orders to execute
all those unwilling to comply.

He grabs his gun strapped around his waist. Lawrence backs away, shielding his family.

LAWRENCE
No need for that. We will comply.

CHRISTOPH
Good. You've five minutes to gather
your things and board the caravan.

ANNA
That isn't nearly enough time.

A soldier steps forward and hands Christoph a torch.

CHRISTOPH
If the authority of my voice hasn't
evoked urgency, perhaps this will.

He throws the torch into the living room. The curtains engulf in flames. The soldiers exit as the fire spreads.

CHRISTOPH (CONT'D)
As you Poles might say,
(Polish)
I suggest you get a move on.

He recites it eloquently before exiting. The Zyla's panic. Everything blazes quickly.

MARY
Papa!

LAWRENCE

Anthony take the girls outside! Let
the animals loose.

Anthony picks up Wanda and guides Mary outside. Lawrence runs
up stairs. Anna runs into the kitchen.

BEDROOM

Lawrence races in. Smoke rises from the floor. He runs to his
closet and stuffs hand fulls of clothes into a rucksack.

He sprints out.

KITCHEN

Anna stuffs a potato sack with as much food as she can. She
meets Lawrence in the -

LIVING ROOM

He grabs her hand, heading for the door. She turns back and
grabs a family portrait. They run out.

FRONT YARD

A military convoy stretches as far as they can see. Many
soldiers stand at guard.

Two soldiers escort Anna and Lawrence over to the caravan
where Mary, Wanda and Anthony sit, encaged.

A soldier hits Lawrence in the back, prompting him to speed
up. They step inside the vehicle.

They huddle together amongst many other strangers as the
convoy drives away.

Tears stream down Anna's cheeks as she watches her house burn
to the ground.

EXT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The caravan slows in front. George HOLLERS and CRIES as he's
escorted into another vehicle by a soldier.

Mary leans up, seeing John punch a soldier, then run out of
the house. The soldier aims his gun and shoots him.

He falls to his knees, wearing her scarf. He and Mary lock eyes. The soldier steps behind him and executes him.

Mary BALLS in hysterics. The convoy trails on.

EXT. CARAVAN - DAY/NIGHT

Night turns into early morning and they press on. Mary SOBS in Anna's arms.

Anthony, sits back, frightened. Lawrence holds Wanda. He looks out and sees soldiers dumping bodies into a pile.

Two soldiers throw another body on top. It's Sara. Lawrence shakes his head and shields Wanda away.

The soldiers light the bodies on fire. Time passes.

Night has fallen and they're still trucking through the mountainous terrain. Snow falls.

It's cold and the Poles cuddle together for warmth in the wooden trucks.

They stop at a camp site. The soldiers make a fire and prepare food. All the Poles remain encaged.

People SCREAM and CRY as a soldier opens the back of the truck. He FIRES several rounds into the sky. They go silent.

He LAUGHS and shoves a large pot into the back. He throws dishes at them, then slams the door shut.

People fall to their knees in haste, scavenging the food. The Zyla's are towards the back and won't be eating tonight.

EXT. TRAIN DEPOT - DAY

The caravan arrives. Soldiers direct the Poles out and into many train cars. Christoph's on a platform with a bullhorn.

CHRISTOPH

Women and children in this car, men
in that one. The sooner we get you
boarded, the sooner you can have a
decent meal.

All the men step away from their women and children. CRY'S and SCREAMS.

Lawrence and Anthony stand aside as Anna, Mary and Wanda get into one of the cars.

The women CRY as they whisper their goodbye. Lawrence and Anthony stay strong, their eyes moored to them.

A woman tries to grasp her husband, but a soldier pulls her back, throwing her to the ground. Christoph joins the havoc.

Her husband hits the soldier. Christoph hits him with his gun. The Soldiers throw his bloody, rag doll body inside.

INT. MALE TRAIN CAR - MOVING - DAY

The car brims with men. Anthony and Lawrence find a spot and huddle together. Anthony finally CRIES. Lawrence holds him.

INT. FEMALE TRAIN CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

This car is just as packed. Anna and Mary sit on either side of Wanda. She CRIES. Anna smiles to Mary consoling her.

Her smile quickly fades as she pans across the train car at all the frightened women and children.

It's nearly quiet, save for a woman's WAILS. Anna holds Mary and Wanda tight.

INT. MALE TRAIN CAR - MOVING - DAY

Days have passed. Blood oozes from the man's head, who is now dead. The men try to keep composure.

PRISONER

Throw him off.

This doesn't sit well with other men.

PRISONER (CONT'D)

He's dead. We need the space.

PRISONER 2

I'll do it.

The two prisoners open the door and roll the dead man out. Anthony watches the body flounce against the snowy terrain.

INT. FEMALE TRAIN CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Total silence now. Anna gives Wanda to Mary.

ANNA

Take her.

Mary takes Wanda as Anna squirms over to the once wailing woman. She rolls her over. She's dead. Other bodies lay near.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Help me.

KATHRYN, (16), trembles as she rises to help Anna.

ANNA (CONT'D)

We have get rid of the bodies.

Kathryn looks at her, stern.

KATHRYN

These are people. We can't just throw them off the train.

ANNA

Ever heard of typhus? Close quarters like this - it's a breeding ground. Now Help me.

A few other women help them. Mary watches as they throw the bodies out of the train. They toss out the crying woman.

Anna watches her body plummet off a cliff. She creeps back to Mary and Wanda. Mary looks at Anna, venerated.

EXT. CAMP - DAY

The convoy of military vehicles park at the camp's perimeter. Dozens of barracks buildings lie within a barbed wire fence.

COMMANDER ZLOYKOV, (40's), a decorated soldier paces out and stands at the front.

He readies himself and takes a swig from a flask. Then straightens his medals on his chest as Christoph boots over.

CHRISTOPH

Trains should be arriving momentarily.

(beat)

I just want to say it's an honor to be serving under you, sir. Your reputation is that of legends.

ZLOYKOV

A soldier of my grandeur should be commanding his battalion. Not overseeing this Polish filth.

CHRISTOPH

I couldn't agree more. Once we deal with these swine we shall return to duty as gentlemen. Me at your side, I should only hope.

Zloykov eyes him up and down for the first time.

ZLOYKOV

You've got a zeal in you. I like that.

The train WHISTLES from a distance. Christoph stands at attention. Zloykov looks over, annoyed.

The trains arrive. It's the Tokyo train station at eight AM. A deluge of frightened people fill the camp.

Hundreds of people run around in pandemonium looking for their loved ones. The Zyla's find each other, save for Mary.

LAWRENCE

Where's Manya?

ANNA

She was just here. Mary! Mary!

They search for her through the sea of people.

FRONT

Zloykov looks amused as he watches the people scatter in panic. Christoph has a bullhorn.

CHRISTOPH

Should I make the announcement?

ZLOYKOV

No. Not yet.

CROWD

Some train cars over, people still spill out. Mary joins.

MARY

Mamo!

Her voice is lost in the CACOPHONY. People rush past her, knocking her to the ground.

She's nearly trampled, but a hand reaches down, helping her.

MARY (CONT'D)
 I need to find my family. Don't
 leave me, please.

She takes his hand as they inch their way through the crowd.
 Mary spots the Zyla's.

MARY (CONT'D)
 There!

Anna embraces her as the prisoner blends in the crowd. They
 huddle together. Lawrence sees Mark and ushers him over.

REVEREND MARK
 Oh, Lawrence.

He's very frightened.

INTERCUT BETWEEN - FRONT & CROWD:

Zloykov nods. Christoph FIRES several rounds with his gun.
 The panicky people go silent. Zloykov takes the bullhorn.

ZLOYKOV
 Welcome to Siberia. Under duress of
 the Red Army, Poland has been
 returned to it's true authority;
 the Soviet union. As prisoner's of
 war, you've been sequestered here
 to serve a single use; aiding the
 front lines and constructing
 barracks for our fellow comrades.
 If unwilling or unable to fill your
 purpose - you will be corrected.

The prisoners stand still, listening. Mark trembles. Zloykov
 signals soldiers.

ZLOYKOV O.S.
 You will find no mercy in escape.
 Those caught in sedition will be
 eradicated and displayed.

The soldiers march into the crowd and pull aside the
 handicapped and elderly people.

ZLOYKOV O.S. (CONT'D)
 Insubordination will not be
 tolerated. Those who inform me or
 my comrade's of any details leading
 to an escape will be granted
 immunity and freed.

A large crowd begins to form. A soldier skips over Lawrence, but then circles back.

SOLDIER
Step forward.

Anthony grabs Lawrence's arm.

ANTHONY
No!

SOLDIER
Step forward, now!

Lawrence looks to Anthony, calming. He steps into the growing line of elderly and handicapped. Soldiers stand behind them.

Zloykov glances over all the prisoners.

ZLOYKOV
Welcome to your new home.

He nods to the soldiers. Their guns aimed - ready to execute. Lawrence steps forward.

LAWRENCE
Commander! Please, wait.

Zloykov looks at him, surprised. Christoph removes his gun and moves to head down, Zloykov stops him.

ZLOYKOV
What is it?

LAWRENCE
If you just give us a chance. I know we can be of use.

CHRISTOPH
Give the order. I'll shut him up!

ZLOYKOV
No, no. Wait a minute.
(to Lawrence)
You think you can prove your worth, than by all means.

Zloykov spots soldiers unloading artillery trunks out of their convoy. He leans over to Christoph.

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)
Tell them to stop unloading.

Christoph takes the bullhorn.

CHRISTOPH
Soldiers, at ease.

They stop and step away. Zloykov takes back the bullhorn.

ZLOYKOV
Bring those trunks to the artillery
bunker. If you're able.

He smiles. The disabled people scurry over to the -

CONVOY

They try to pick up a large case, but it seems impossible.

LAWRENCE
Come on. Work together. 1-2-3.

Some of the people fall to the ground. The Zyla's watch in agony from the crowd.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Again! 1-2-3.

They give it another shot. Lawrence takes the bulk of the trunk, but it's beyond his ability.

Sweat bullets race down his cheeks. Zloykov whispers inaudibly to Christoph.

Christoph joins the soldiers down below. They push the people to their knees. Lawrence clenches his eyes shut. This is it.

Christoph raises his rifle.

CHRISTOPH
Fire!

Several GUNSHOTS. Everyone goes down - save for Lawrence. He looks up at Zloykov.

ZLOYKOV
Your determination and leadership
have saved you. Don't disappoint.

Mary, Anthony, Wanda and Anna run over to Lawrence. Anna falls to her knees and holds him.

The crowd marches into the camp, led by soldiers. Mark remains. Hands folded, whispering a prayer.

Zloykov and Christoph approach him.

CHRISTOPH
Move in with the rest.

He doesn't budge. Christoph points his gun at him. Zloykov grabs a crucifix from around Mark's neck.

ZLOYKOV
A man of faith?

REVEREND MARK
I'm a reverend.

Zloykov LAUGHS and yanks the necklace off.

ZLOYKOV
God doesn't live here. Now fall in!

Christoph hits Mark with his gun. He SQUEALS, then rushes into the camp behind the rest.

EXT. CAMP CENTER - DAY

All the prisoners cull around, scarfing minimal food rations.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

The Zyla's enter, noticing the triple-stacked bunk beds and many people. It's a stark contrast from their shack.

Lawrence guides Anthony to a bunk. Anna gazes at the scene and cries. Mary holds her. Wanda stands safely at her side.

LATER

They're all in one long bed, snuggled close together. Lawrence and Anna hold each other for warmth.

Mary, Wanda and Anthony have most of the blanket.

LAWRENCE
Bet you didn't think we'd still be
sleeping with the kids at our age.

Anna nudges a laugh which quickly morphs into sincerity.

ANNA
I almost lost you today.

LAWRENCE
But you didn't.

She quietly cries. Lawrence wipes away her tears.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
We must stay strong. For the
children.

He kisses her forehead. They hug and try to sleep.

INT. BARRACKS - DAY

A RUSSIAN ANTHEM sounds from an alarm outside. Mary slowly wakes and jolts up, slamming her head on the bunk above.

She rubs her head. Anna comes to her side.

MARY
I thought it was just a dream...

Anna hugs her. Lawrence sits on the edge of the bed.

LAWRENCE
What is that?

JACOB (30's) lays up in the adjacent bed.

JACOB
Work.

EXT. CAMP CENTER - DAY

Christoph stands next to Zloykov at the front. All the prisoners stand together, listening.

Mary holds Wanda's hand. She cradles the stuffed bear in the other. The anthem ends.

ZLOYKOV
Everyday you will wake to mother
Russia's anthem and salute her
flag. Then you may begin your work.

He looks to Christoph.

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)
Would you like to add anything?

Christoph takes the bullhorn and steps forward.

CHRISTOPH
This is the final day rations are
provided.

(MORE)

CHRISTOPH (CONT'D)
Hence forward you'll be given wages
to provide for yourselves. All
Prisoners, salute.

The crowd salutes the Russian flag in unison.

EXT. FORREST - DAY

CRACK! A tree smashes down through the lush, green forest.

Lawrence takes a blade and he and Anthony chisel off the
branches. Men saw other trees.

ANTHONY
Are we supposed to work to death?

Lawrence looks beyond Anthony, spying Soldiers watching them.

LAWRENCE
Just keep working. Help me.

They shave off the leaves and branches as best they can.
OWEN, 20's comes over.

OWEN
Take your time.

Lawrence and Anthony stop and listen.

OWEN (CONT'D)
What do you think happens to us
when there's no more trees to cut?

Anthony looks to Lawrence.

OWEN (CONT'D)
Think about it.

He joins other prisoners at a fallen tree. Lawrence continues
at his pace, but Anthony slows a bit.

INT. BARRACKS - DAY

Mary sweeps the floor with Wanda. She's teaching her, but
mostly trying to distract her.

Anna rummages through her potato sack and finds the family
photo. She looks to Wanda and Mary, gripping it dearly.

She sets it on top of the stove. She pulls out a few
vegetables and potatoes and studies them.

Thirteen altogether for a family of five. A scrawny soldier barges in, startling them. He grabs Wanda and jerks her away.

WANDA

Marisha!

MARY

Where are you taking her?

Wanda reaches, only griping Mary's fingers. Mary rushes over, watching Wanda squirm in the soldier's arms. Anna hugs her.

INT. SEWING BARRACKS - DAY

A soldier leads Anna and Mary inside. Dozens of women sit at sewing machines. No one seems to notice as they come in.

There's only one spot available. He pushes Mary into the chair and speaks RUSSIAN. He ushers Anna out. Mary CRIES.

KATHRYN O.S.

Don't let them hear you cry.

Mary looks behind her, seeing Kathryn sewing away.

KATHRYN

The work keeps coming. Just have to do it or they'll replace you.

Mary turns around and starts sewing together fabrics.

EXT. SCHOOL BARRACKS - DAY

Christoph and Zloykov pace toward the school building.

CHRISTOPH

They're calling it Operation Barbarossa.

ZLOYKOV

It's been nearly three months since the German's have invaded the west and here I stay - teaching the repugnant youth of a country that no longer exists.

CHRISTOPH

Who better, sir? Your allegiance is invigorating. I can only aspire to be as decorated some day.

They stop. Zloykov rubs his shoulder down to his few medals.

ZLOYKOV

Yes. I'd say you're well on your way, captain.

Christoph tries to conceal his excitement as he salutes, then tramps off. Zloykov sips his flask.

INT. SCHOOL BARRACKS - DAY

Kids, ages five to twelve, sit frightened in their desks as Zloykov enters. A soldier gives a salute and exits the room.

Zloykov takes a switch from his desk and paces around the front, staring with disgust.

ZLOYKOV

Consider it a privilege you've been espoused into this great republic.

He faces the chalkboard with the Russian anthem written out.

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)

You're the youth of the nation and will adopt its language, its culture...

KID O.S.

My pa said we'd only be here for a short while. That we'd be going home soon.

Zloykov faces him. He slowly edges his way closer and closer. He bends down, right in the kid's face.

ZLOYKOV

Your pa's intention's are admirable but he's a short-sighted man.

Zloykov slams the switch down on the kid's desk.

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)

You belong to Russia now. Siberia is where you are and it is here that you shall remain!

The kid curdles in his seat. Zloykov heads back to the front. Wanda hugs her bear tightly. Her eyes glisten.

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)

Now class, repeat. Union indestructible republics free Splotila forever Great Russia.

(MORE)

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)
Long live the united, mighty Soviet
Union, created by the will of the
peoples.

The class joins in, butchering the anthem in RUSSIAN.

INT. WASH ROOM - DAY

A soldier throws Anna to the floor, then leaves. INGRID,
(30's), helps her up.

INGRID
Are you hurt?

Anna stands.

ANNA
I'm fine.

Ingrid guides Anna towards giant wash buckets.

INGRID
You can help me.

She dumps a large sack of soldier's uniforms into the bucket.
She hands Anna a large wooden spoon.

INGRID (CONT'D)
Here. I'm Ingrid.

ANNA
Anna.

They stir the soapy water.

INGRID
You must be a new arrival.

Anna nods.

ANNA
How long have you been here?

INGRID
I'm not sure anymore.

They continue to work in silence.

EXT. FORREST - DAY

Anthony and Lawrence drag a tree near a small horse carriage.

ANTHONY
We can't stay here.

LAWRENCE
Be quiet.

ANTHONY
We have to do something.

Lawrence drops the log. PETE (40's) runs over and helps him lift it. The soldiers didn't see. Lawrence nods appreciative.

PETE
Can't let them see that your smart.

ANTHONY
How long have you been doing this?

PETE
Long time now. Had me digging irrigation trenches when I first arrived. You want to talk labor...

They throw the log into the horse carriage among many others.

LAWRENCE
Nothing we're not used to. I'm a carpenter. Lawrence.

He holds out his hand. Pete shakes it.

PETE
Pete. I worked at the steel mill before I came here. What about you?

Anthony takes a moment, about to open his mouth...

LAWRENCE
He's my son, Anthony.

They shake hands and walk alongside the carriage to a -

CLEARING

They unload the logs into a large pile.

LAWRENCE
What are we building?

PETE
Word is they're using most of the supplies to aid Leningrad and other Russian outposts.
(MORE)

PETE (CONT'D)
 With the rest we build housing for
 the over spill of troops.

Lawrence nods to a group of men.

LAWRENCE
 I recognize a few of them from our
 barracks. Who are they?

PHILLIP (30's) unloads a second carriage with Owen and Jacob.
 Pete points them out.

PETE
 That's Owen. Phillip and Jacob.
 Have to stick together. There are
 others, but you'll meet them later.

EXT. CAMP CENTER - DAY

A large pot of soup sits atop a table. Slices of bread next
 to it. Anna, Mary, Ingrid and others prepare a scanty lunch.

INGRID
 We get water at the well.

Mary steps forward.

MARY
 I'll get it.

Anna looks at her, worried.

MARY (CONT'D)
 I'll be fine, mamó.

EXT. WELL - DAY

Mary pulls on the rope, drawing up the bucket. She's startled
 as Mitch climbs out.

MARY
 What are you doing down there?

Mitch peeks his head out and looks around.

MITCH
 Are you alone? Any soldiers around?

MARY
 I'm alone.

He climbs out, firmly cradling a bucket.

MITCH

You didn't see nothing, okay?

She's speechless.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Got it?

MARY

I didn't see anything.

He looks around, then races off. She watches him. He looks back at her before disappearing around the corner.

EXT. CAMP CENTER - DAY

Mary comes back with a bucket of water. All the men congregate at the table, scarfing the minimal food.

Anthony runs over and grabs the bucket from her. He sets it on the table, then gives her a big hug.

ANNA

What took so long? You okay?

MARY

I'm fine.

Her and Lawrence embrace. She notices scabs and bruises on his hands. The family hugs together. Their new life.

INT. MITCH'S BARRACKS - DAY

Mitch bursts through the door with the bucket and goes straight into the -

BATHROOM

He dumps the bucket inside the toilet. It's gravel. He takes a stick and stirs it in. He GAGS, but continues.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

People quietly CHATTER around the room. Wanda lays curled up in the bed. Anna lays beside her.

ANNA

What did you learn today?

WANDA

About Russia. We learned a song.

She begins to SING the anthem. Anna's uneasy as Lawrence comes in. He sits on the bed and cracks his back.

He grimaces in pain as he removes his boot. His sock is bloody. He takes it off.

There's a large blister on his heel. Anna rips a piece of her dress and wraps his foot. She just smiles at her husband.

LAWRENCE

I remember when I got you that dress. You loved it.

ANNA

Still do.

A small pale sits next to the bed. She dips a rag and washes his feet. Mary comes in with her hands full of hay.

Anna stands to greet her. Lawrence looks around, not recognizing anyone from earlier.

ANNA (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

MARY

I have an idea.

Mary sets the hay aside and goes to Wanda, who's excited to see her.

MARY (CONT'D)

Hi.

WANDA

Hi.

Mary reaches into her pocket and pulls out a slice of bread. She hands it to Wanda and kisses her arm. Anna comes over.

MARY

I was thinking I could sew this together - as a mattress. Look...

She shows her a quilt that she's started to sew together. Anna smiles to her, then scratches her head, vigorously.

ANNA

Where's your brother?

EXT./INT. MITCH'S BARRACKS - NIGHT

Anthony peeks inside the window. Mitch sits on a bunk, facing Phillip, Jacob, Owen, and Pete.

PHILLIP
Jacob's out there now.

MITCH
How much food do we have stored?

The men pull out small portions of food that they've hidden. From the back of the room, Mark watches them closely.

Jacob comes in cradling a bucket. Mark sees him go straight into the bathroom, then looks back to the group.

Mitch nods to Pete. Pete grabs a bucket from under his bunk and darts out of the door. Jacob joins them.

JACOB
We're almost through. I'd say another couple days or so.

MITCH
There's another trip to the village next week. We gather whatever supplies we can. We leave then.

Owen hits Mitch's arm as Mark approaches. They go silent. Mark kneels to their level.

REVEREND MARK
Whatever you're planning I want in.

OWEN
We ain't planning nothing. Get out of here!

REVEREND MARK
Please! I don't belong here.

Anthony continues to watch from the window outside.

MITCH
Who do you think you're talking to? Look around. No one belongs here.

PHILLIP
Looks like trouble to me.

REVEREND MARK
I'm a God fearing man. Trustworthy. I can be vouched for.

MITCH

Don't know what you're talking about. Sorry.

Mitch lays back in his bed. Owen grabs Mark's collar, throwing him back as he takes a bed beside Mitch.

Mark slowly slithers away to his bunk and CRIES. Phillip and Jacob stand at the foot of Mitch's bed.

PHILLIP

What are you thinking?

MITCH

I'm thinking soon I'll be out of here. Beers and gonlonka. Maybe it's time I settle down. Find myself a wife. Have a kid or two.

PHILLIP

That's nice, but I meant about him.

He nods to Mark.

MITCH

He deserves to get out of here just as much as we do.

Mitch turns over and stares blankly. Jacob exits the barracks. Anthony watches him.

INT. ZLOYKOV'S OFFICE - DAY

The office is elegant. Zloykov slouches at a desk, dangling Mark's crucifix. He's bewitched as he swigs a vodka bottle.

KNOCK - KNOCK from the door.

ZLOYKOV

Enter.

HENRY, (30), a warm soldier, comes in with an envelope.

HENRY

This arrived for you, commander.

ZLOYKOV

Ah - just what I've been expecting. Knew I'd be called to rejoin arms.

He looks at the letter. It's addressed from Joseph Stalin. He smiles, then looks back to Henry.

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)
Was there something else?

HENRY
No, commander.

ZLOYKOV
Leave then.

Henry gives him a salute, then exits. Zloykov races to his desk and grabs a letter opener.

He quickly pulls the letter out and skims over it. His smile quickly morphs to abhorrence.

He shreds the letter and throws it into the fireplace. He chugs hard on the vodka, then throws the bottle at the wall.

EXT. CAMP CENTER - DAY

The RUSSIAN ANTHEM alerts everyone to wake up. Prisoners schlepp out of their barracks in assembly.

They salute the Russian flag as a TRAIN whistles in the distance. They stride over to the -

FENCE

Lawrence and Anthony stand with Pete, Owen and Jacob.

JACOB
More unlucky bastards.

ANTHONY
Where will they all go?

PETE
What do you think we're building?

OWEN
Who's the smart one, huh?

He and Pete LAUGH. Anthony looks at Lawrence.

FRONT

Zloykov addresses the new arrivals.

ZLOYKOV
...You've been sequestered here to
serve a single use;
(MORE)

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)
aiding the front lines and
constructing barracks for our
fellow comrades...

FENCE

The men watch all the new frightened people cull around.
Soldiers approach with their rifles.

SOLDIER
Get back to work.

The group disperses. Mark stays and watches, fearful.

FRONT

Zloykov continues to address the people.

ZLOYKOV
...Those who inform me or my
comrade's of any details leading to
an escape will be granted immunity
and set free.

FENCE

The same soldier grabs Mark's shoulder and shoves him away.

EXT. FORREST - DAY

Lawrence and Anthony cut at a tree with an axe.

ANTHONY
I heard them, Pa.

LAWRENCE
Forget it, Anthony. There will be
no talk of that. Do you understand?

ANTHONY
You may be okay with being held
against your will, but I'm not.

LAWRENCE
Son, there's a time to follow your
intuition and there's a time to be
foolish. Trust me on this one.

Anthony doesn't like this.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
 You will not be joining them. Is
 that clear?

ANTHONY
 Yes, sir.

Anthony ambles to another tree and chops at it. Lawrence
 watches, then wipes the sweat from his forehead.

GEORGE O.S.
 Lawrence?

Lawrence turns and almost looks pleased to see George.

LAWRENCE
 Oh great. Just when I thought it
 couldn't get any worse.

Lawrence goes back to chopping the tree. George comes over.

GEORGE
 They killed my boy. He's gone.

George breaks down in a SOB. As much as they have their
 differences, it doesn't mean a thing now.

Lawrence holds George as he CRIES on his shoulder.

LAWRENCE
 He's with the Lord now. Take solace
 in that.

Christoph relieves a guard and takes his post. He paces over
 to Lawrence and George.

CHRISTOPH
 Why aren't you chopping?

LAWRENCE
 Just showing the new guy what to
 do, sergeant.

CHRISTOPH
 That's captain. Get to work.

He paces off. Lawrence hands George an axe. They chop a tree.

INT. SEWING BARRACKS - DAY

Mary, Kathryn and other women sew fabrics. Mary looks out the
 window and sees Mitch run from the well.

Before she knows it the sewing needle pierces through her hand. She jumps up in pain. Kathryn comes over.

KATHRYN

Let me see.

She takes Mary's hand and wraps it in a cloth.

KATHRYN (CONT'D)

Can't let it get infected.

MARY

What are you a doctor?

KATHRYN

My dream was to be a pediatric nurse. Seems impossible now.

Mary rubs her stomach as tears well in her eyes.

MARY

A dream is something no one can take from you. Hold on to it.

Kathryn smiles to her.

KATHRYN

You're a good seamstress. Where'd you learn to sew?

MARY

My mammo. It's something I always wanted to do.

KATHRYN

Hey, when we get out of here you'll sew the finest garb. Sold in every store. You're going to be rich.

Mary holds up her wounded finger.

MARY

And you're going to be the finest nurse. Every sick child will be made well. All thanks to you.

They LAUGH, hopeful and go back to work.

EXT. FORREST - DAY

George and Lawrence saw through a large laid over tree.

MITCH O.S.
You Lawrence Zyla?

Lawrence turns to see Mitch slowly chopping small shrubs, inching closer to him.

LAWRENCE
Who want's to know?

Mitch motions for him to step away from George. They come to a secluded part of the forest.

MITCH
You know a reverend named Mark?

LAWRENCE
I do. Why - what's this about?

MITCH
Just seeing if he's kosher.

LAWRENCE
He's a man of the cloth. How much more kosher do they come?

MITCH
All I needed to know.

He starts chopping shrubs away from Lawrence, near Jacob and Phillip. Lawrence watches the men converse.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Anna and Ingrid remove the buckets from under the toilets. Anna holds her nose and GAGS.

INGRID
You get used to it after awhile.

Anna shrugs as they take the bucket outside.

EXT. DUMP - DAY

Ingrid, Anna and others dump buckets of excrement into a large trench. A soldier blows a WHISTLE. Ingrid perks up.

ANNA
What is it?

INGRID
We're going into town.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Anna, Mary and Ingrid, among many other women are escorted into a small village by soldiers.

MARKET

Soldiers banter with the owner at the front, haggling down the prices of meat in RUSSIAN.

Anna and Mary browse over the supplies. Ingrid carries flour and vegetables to the front.

She drops some potatoes on the floor. The soldiers act salacious as she scoops them up.

Anna opens her palm revealing only a few Russian rubles. She grabs flour, spices and a head of cabbage.

She comes around the corner and spots a packet of strawberry seeds. She shows Mary. They smile and walk up to the -

COUNTER

Anna sets her things down and pays. The owner gives her very little change. Mary points to a small piece of candy.

MARY

That too, please.

Anna isn't thrilled, but relents. The owner gives her the candy. Anna gives him the last of their money.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Anna prepares dinner at the stove. Mary wanders over to Wanda, who lies in her bed. She holds out both fists.

MARY

Pick a hand.

Wanda chooses one. Mary opens, revealing the piece of candy. She gives it to her. She shows her the strawberry seeds.

MARY (CONT'D)

Do you know what these are?

WANDA

Strawberries.

MARY

That's right. In two to three weeks they'll be ready. Do you like strawberries?

Wanda nods.

MARY (CONT'D)

Me too. We just have to find a pot.

Jacob enters the barracks and gathers some of his things. Anthony notices and approaches him.

ANTHONY

You're escaping, aren't you?

Jacob shoves Anthony to the wall.

JACOB

You don't know what you're talking about, kid.

ANTHONY

I heard you guys. Been watching.

Jacob raises his fist. He's frightful. Lawrence comes over.

LAWRENCE

Everything all right over here?

Jacob relents upon seeing him.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Go on.

Anthony scurries off. Jacob looks hopeless. Lawrence grabs Jacob's bag and hands it out to him.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Good luck.

Jacob trembles as he takes the bag and runs out.

INT. MITCH'S BARRACKS - NIGHT

Mitch, Owen, Pete and Phillip gather near Mitch's bed. Their supplies are under the bunks. Jacob runs in and joins them.

Mitch lays out sticks and leaves, displaying the camp. He points to different leaves, demonstrating their plan.

MITCH

These are the barracks. This is us.

He points to five small sticks, then looks around.

PHILLIP

What?

MITCH

Just need something for the well.

Owen spits on the floor. Mitch looks up at him. He shrugs.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Thanks...

He goes back to his demonstration.

MITCH (CONT'D)

We take cover from the lights here.

He points to a leaf, then points to the spit.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Should be a clear shot. Undetected.

JACOB

When do we go?

MITCH

During the guard switch. Tonight.

(Looking them over)

There's still time to turn back.

PETE

I'd rather die knowing there was a chance than stay and never take it.

The guys CHIME in, encouraging. Mitch walks over to Mark's bunk. He lays there repeating a prayer.

MITCH

Zyla vouched for you. We leave at ten, if you still want to come.

Mark sits up.

REVEREND MARK

How?

MITCH

Through the well.

People CLAMOR at the other end of the barracks. Mitch redirects his focus, then back to Mark.

MITCH (CONT'D)
Guard switch.

He rushes away. Mark sits, contemplating.

INT./EXT. SOLDIERS BUNKER - NIGHT

Dozens of drunken soldiers play cards. They LAUGH and are belligerent. Christoph is among them and still composed.

MUSTACHE SOLDIER
Some are so beautiful...

BEARDED SOLDIER
These Poles are swine and you are calling them beautiful?

MUSTACHE SOLDIER
Not saying I want to marry one. But where's the harm in a good time?

CLEAN SOLDIER
Why not? We are stuck here just as they. Deprived of our manhood. I can't remember the last time I laid beside a woman.

Christoph stamps over to the table, drunk as hell.

CHRISTOPH
Deprived of your manhood? You're a disgrace wearing the Soviet coat of arms. I pity the woman who lays beside you. All of you.

He spits at the men.

CHRISTOPH (CONT'D)
Disgusting!

CAMP GROUND

He takes a large swig of vodka and wobbles away. He spots Kathryn running with a basket of clothes.

CHRISTOPH
You there!

She stops dead in her tracks. He approaches.

CHRISTOPH (CONT'D)
What are you doing out past curfew?

KATHRYN

The commander said it was urgent to get these uniforms back tonight.

Christoph grabs the basket to look in and inadvertently spills it over. Kathryn bends to pick it up.

KATHRYN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, sir.

He kneels beside her and sniffs her hair. He ogles her up and down as he helps pick the uniforms up.

CHRISTOPH

No need for an apology. An act of chivalry. See we're not all so bad.

They stand with the basket.

CHRISTOPH (CONT'D)

Come, I'll be your escort.

Kathryn looks frightened, but feigns a smile. They trot on a few yards past the barracks.

KATHRYN

I think we past it, sir.

CHRISTOPH

No. It's this way.

His grip becomes stronger.

KATHRYN

Sir, you're hurting me.

He shoves her against a building, fading into the darkness.

CAMP CENTER - LATER

Christoph slicks his hair back and lights a cigarette. He notices a shadow and draws his gun, throwing his cigarette.

CHRISTOPH

You there, halt!

The shadow abruptly stops and cowers as Christoph approaches. He cocks the hammer of his gun and aims.

INT. ZLOYKOV'S OFFICE - NIGHT

A mouse races through a maze. It's getting closer to a block of cheese. Zloykov grabs it by its tail and holds it up.

BANG - BANG at the door. Zloykov pops the cheese into his mouth and throws the mouse back in the maze.

ZLOYKOV

What is it?

He paces away from the maze as Christoph barges in.

CHRISTOPH

This man has something to tell you.

He pulls Mark in by his collar.

ZLOYKOV

Come to make a confession,
reverend?

EXT. CAMP CENTER - SAME

Mitch, Pete, Owen and Jacob hurry across the field, taking shelter from a looming spotlight above.

The well's a few yards away. The spotlight moves past them.

MITCH

Go!

The four men trek over to the well. CRASH! Mitch jumps back against the wall.

Another CRASH sounds from the other side of the wall. It's glass shattering.

Jacob looks over to Mitch. Mitch waves them on. The spotlight comes close to Mitch. He ducks. It's gone now.

This is his chance. He darts forward and runs right into Mary. They both fall to the ground.

MITCH (CONT'D)

What the hell are you doing?

He notices the spotlight coming back their way. He grabs her and ducks behind the wall.

MARY

You're trying to escape...

MITCH
Aren't you?

MARY
I needed a pot.

She holds it up. He looks for the spotlight.

MITCH
Get out of here. Go back to your
barracks.

She doesn't move.

MITCH (CONT'D)
Go!

MARY
You're very unbecoming, you know
that?

She darts away in the darkness. He leans back against the wall, watches the light as it passes, then takes a breath.

INT./EXT. WELL - TUNNEL - SAME

Jacob leads Phillip, Owen and Pete through the tunnel. They climb upwards, seeing the end of their journey.

BEYOND FENCE - SAME

Jacob's arms pop out of the soil, then his whole body. He leans over and helps Phillip out.

Pete peeks his head out when they hear a CLICK. They turn to see Zloykov, Christoph and Henry facing them, guns drawn.

Jacob trembles. Zloykov nods. Henry clenches his eyes shut.

INT. BARRACKS - SAME

The Zyla's gather at a small table for a family dinner. Very minimal portions of food.

Mary comes through the door with the pot. Wanda smiles as she joins them. They all clasp hands.

LAWRENCE
Dear Lord, we thank you for your
guidance, love and mercy.
(MORE)

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Allow this food to nourish our
bodies. Give us your strength and
protec...

GUNSHOTS explode through the campgrounds. Lawrence stops mid sentence and grips Anthony and Anna's hands, tightly.

Anthony looks at Lawrence, understanding. Wanda CRIES. Mary grabs her and holds her, safely.

INT. WELL - TUNNEL - SAME

Mitch is on all fours when Pete's dead body flails down and SPLASHES in the water below. He freezes. Owen climbs out.

OWEN

Run!

Mitch gathers himself. They quickly climb out of the well.

EXT. CAMP CENTER - DAY

A new ALERT sounds. Zloykov, Christoph, Henry and other soldiers are at the front. All prisoners assemble.

ZLOYKOV

Last night was our first, and for
your sake, only escape attempt. As
promised they were corrected.

Jacob, Phillip and Pete's bodies are tied to spikes.

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)

Let it be known there is no
tolerance for disobedience.

Zloykov hands Christoph a burning torch. He lights the bodies on fire. Prisoners MOAN in horror.

He points to two large barrels at his feet.

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)

Thanks to these men, this will now
be your water supply each week. I
suggest you make it last.

He kicks over one of the barrels, spilling most of the water down onto the ground.

The crowd disperses in defeat. Mary observes, not seeing Mitch. Anna scratches her head and ushers Wanda away.

George stands next to Lawrence. Anthony looks to Lawrence, knowing that could have been him.

GEORGE
God have mercy.

George and Anthony walk away. Lawrence looks back and sees Mark with Zloykov. He turns and follows the men.

CAMP CENTER

Zloykov looks down to Mark. Christoph and Henry stand aside.

REVEREND MARK
I did what you asked.

ZLOYKOV
So you did.

REVEREND MARK
You said I'll be set free.

ZLOYKOV
And you shall. From your sins. You betrayed your people. A man devout as yourself should understand the consequences of his actions.

Zloykov kneels down, face to face.

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)
Remember what I said upon your arrival? God doesn't live here.

Mark's face drops. Zloykov rises.

HENRY
Should we put him in isolation, commander?

Zloykov looks to Mark once more, then presses on.

ZLOYKOV
Toss him to the wolves.

Christoph shoves Mark back as they follow behind Zloykov. Mark notices Owen and Mitch watching from afar.

WELL

Three soldiers throw c-4 down the well. They pace away. It EXPLODES. Mitch's heart sinks.

INT. SCHOOL BARRACKS - DAY

The class is in full swing. Zloykov is animated as the class SINGS the Russian anthem in unison.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Lawrence and Anthony shave leaves and twigs off of a large tree with a blade.

Mitch and Owen pass by, but don't acknowledge them. Lawrence notices. He looks at Anthony.

ANTHONY

What's that about?

LAWRENCE

Nothing.

INT. SEWING BARRACKS - DAY

Mary and Kathryn sew fabrics. Mary finishes one and holds it up for Kathryn's approval.

MARY

What do you think?

Kathryn doesn't show any interest and continues her work. Mary watches for a moment, then sews another.

Henry strides over to the girls.

HENRY

Zloykov requests his sheets in his barracks by sundown.

KATHRYN

They'll be finished soon.

He nods and exits.

INT. WASH ROOM - DAY

Ingrid and Anna fold laundry.

INGRID

Starting to reconsider my career path for when we get out of here.

The women LAUGH, but Anna soon COUGHS intensely, drawing her to her knees. Ingrid aids her.

ANNA

I'm fine. I'm fine. Just a little coughing fit.

She gets up and goes back to work. Ingrid's concerned.

EX. SHOOTING RANGE - DAY

Zloykov assembles a rifle at a table. Christoph approaches.

CHRISTOPH

Is that the Tokarev SVT-40?

ZLOYKOV

This was intended to be the Red's service rifle. You're probably more familiar with the Mosin.

CHRISTOPH

She's beautiful.

Zloykov stops and looks up at him.

ZLOYKOV

Come. Take a shot.

Christoph takes the rifle and aims at a target yards ahead. Zloykov runs his hand down Christoph's arm, to his hand.

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)

Something as beautiful as this needs to be gripped hard and firm. Allowing it to feel your the one in command. Then release.

BANG! Christoph shoots a bull's eye. He lowers the gun and looks into Zloykov's eyes.

CHRISTOPH

A weapon this fine can't resist the target with such adroit guidance.

Zloykov gently fixes Christoph's collar. They're transfixed.

HENRY O.S.

Commander, sir.

Christoph quickly shoves away and rushes off. Zloykov's irritated as Henry comes over.

ZLOYKOV

What is it now?

They stride away from the shooting range.

HENRY

Thought you'd want to know ground troops are positioned to take Berlin. Albania, Bulgaria and Romania are currently occupied.

ZLOYKOV

Another battalion will be joining us before Christmas. Only a matter of time before Germany's surrender.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Anna tries to be discrete as she scratches her head. She and Wanda prepare dinner at the stove.

MARY

Wanda!

Mary sets aside the quilt she's sewing as Wanda runs up. She pulls up the pot containing the strawberry seeds.

WANDA

Is it ready?

MARY

Not yet. We have to plant it now.

WANDA

Look!

Mary sees a rat run across the floor, escaping in the wall.

MARY

It's okay. Just a rat. He can't hurt us.

They wander over to the door. Anna stops her.

ANNA

Ingrid told me about a kale plant that grows by the northern fence. Do you think you could pick some tomorrow before sun up?

MARY

Sure, mamó.

She kisses Anna's cheek. Her and Wanda leave.

EXT. CAMP CENTER - NIGHT

Mark wanders around amidst the barracks trying to remain undetected. He looks starving.

He turns the corner, meeting Owen. He comes toward him. Mark turns to find Mitch behind him. Other prisoners encircle him.

REVEREND MARK

Please!

Mitch slams his fist across his head. Mark goes down. Owen gets a few good hits in.

Mitch hits him once more. Other prisoners beat him. Mitch backs away and watches.

MITCH

That's enough.

But it's not. The prisoners are ruthless and continue beating him to a pulp. Mitch ebbs back and can only watch the havoc.

INT. SEWING BARRACKS - NIGHT

Kathryn finishes stitching some sheets. She twists them tightly between her hands as tears well in her eyes.

EXT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Mary and Wanda bury the pot beneath the soil.

MARY

It needs a little water everyday.
Do you think you can do that?

WANDA

I will. If I just close my eyes I
can already taste them.

MARY

Soon enough.

EXT. NORTHERN FENCE - DAY

It's Dawn. Mary paces along the weed-lined fence. She stoops down and picks one of the stalks.

MITCH O.S.

It's the other one.

Startled, she flies around. Mitch sulks up against a shed.

MARY

You again?
 (Observing him)
 You've been crying.

He wipes away his tears. Mary sits down beside him.

MARY (CONT'D)

Bet you're glad that wasn't you.

MITCH

They were my friends. And that's
 important in place like this.

MARY

It's okay to weep when you grieve.
 But you must also remember to
 rejoice everyday you take a breath.
 (Realizing)
 I sound like my parents.

He really looks at her for the first time. Instant chemistry.

MITCH

When you've always been on your own
 your only instinct is to survive.

Recognizing a moment, he skips over to the fence.

MITCH (CONT'D)

This place will make you do things
 you never knew you're capable of.

He scoops up a bunch of kale and takes it to her.

MITCH (CONT'D)

I'm all on my own again.

She grabs the kale, but also his hand.

MARY

You don't have to be.

She smiles and squeezes his hand. He smiles back.

INT. SEWING BARRACKS - DAY

The RUSSIAN ANTHEM sounds. Mary rushes through the building
 gleaming, with pep in her step.

MARY

Kathryn? Kathryn, are you here yet?

The building is empty. Mary notices Kathryn's basket sitting on her desk, but no sheets.

A CREEK comes from the back of the room. She rushes over, finding Kathryn's body hanging from a rafter by the sheets.

Mary tries to hold her up, but her body falls to the floor. She holds her and SOBS.

EXT. CAMP CENTER - DAY

All prisoners face the flag as the ANTHEM ends. Mary stands with the Zyla's.

Soldiers carry Kathryn's body out of the barracks. Henry stands with Zloykov and Christoph at the front.

HENRY

What should we do with him?

He points to Mark's near unrecognizable body.

ZLOYKOV

Leave him.

The soldiers stand at guard. The prisoners scatter to their jobs. Mark's dead body just lies there, untouched.

MONTAGE:

EXT. CAMP CENTER - DAY/NIGHT

Mark's body decomposes.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Anthony, Lawrence and men cut trees. They look even more emaciated at this point.

EXT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Wanda waters the strawberry vine. Mitch and Mary are with her. Mitch leaves and nods to Lawrence as he arrives.

INT. MITCH'S BARRACKS - NIGHT

Owen comes in. He pulls two bottles of vodka from his shirt.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

The men lay down cement for the construction of a building.

EXT. CAMP CENTER - NIGHT/DAY

Mary and Mitch sit together. She looks happy. Owen races away toward a fence. A soldier shoots him in the back. He dies.

Mitch grieves on Mary's shoulder as soldiers toss Owen's body out of the camp.

INT. SCHOOL BARRACKS - DAY

Wanda learns more Russian.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Anna is more ill. Lawrence sits by her side. It's winter now. There is frost on the strawberry vine.

The Zyla's are starving. Very little food. They lure the mouse out the wall with crumbs. Then cook it for dinner.

Wanda's bear's in a corner. A button replaces an eye.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Mitch notices a fence at the corner. He sees only one guard pacing back and fourth.

Lawrence takes off his boot and finds a maggot inside of his blistered foot. He holds it up.

EXT. CAMP CENTER - DAY

The seasons have come and gone. Mark's body is nothing more than a skeleton by now.

END MONTAGE:

INT. MEAT MARKET - DAY

Dolls hang on a shelf behind the owner of the store. The following conversation is in Russian.

OWNER

Pretty, huh? Perfect for a girl
your age.

Standing at the opposite side is Wanda, once a kid, now a full blown woman at nine years old.

She sets flour, vegetables and other cooking ingredients down on the counter.

WANDA

Just this. How much?

The man's smile fades. He rings her up.

OWNER

Five rubles.

Wanda lays down the money, takes her supplies and exits.

WANDA

Thank you.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

Men construct a foundation atop the cement base. Others bring wood over. Anthony HAMMERS a wall together.

Lawrence writes on a clipboard. He's now very thin. George comes over. He's lost weight, too.

GEORGE

You're doing a fine job, Lawrence.
Place is really coming along.

LAWRENCE

That your way of saying you want to
be reassigned?

GEORGE

Even through it all, you've still
got your wit.

George LAUGHS and pats Lawrence's shoulder.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Lawrence, listen...

A military vehicle arrives.

PRISONER
Zloykov. Look alive.

Lawrence sees Zloykov step out of the car. Back to George.

LAWRENCE
You were saying?

George is uneasy.

GEORGE
Nothing.

He goes to the construction. Zloykov hands Henry a flier.

ZLOYKOV
You there!

Lawrence heads over.

LAWRENCE
Yes, commander?

ZLOYKOV
You've come along way. The men
respect you.

LAWRENCE
Thank you, sir.

Mitch and another prisoner trolley up with the horse buggy
and lumber. He stops and watches.

ZLOYKOV
I just received word that more
barricades are needed for our
troops. I'm trusting you to
organize a team and fetch
additional lumber.

Mitch runs up to Lawrence.

MITCH
I've brought back what was left. I
think I know where there's more.

ZLOYKOV
Looks like you've found your first
volunteer. At ease.

Zloykov drives away. Lawrence looks at Mitch.

EXT. CAMP CENTER - DAY

Henry nails a flier to a post stating: *Volunteers needed for the Ander's Army. Report to Barracks twelve.* He walks away.

The men pour in from the forest and see the sign. Anthony's captivated by it.

EXT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Mary and Mitch sit close together.

MARY

Tell me something.

MITCH

What do you want me to tell?

MARY

Tell me about your life before.

MITCH

Nothing much, really. My brother Tomek and I were orphans. Roaming place to place. They killed him.

MARY

I'm so sorry.

She rests her head on his shoulder.

MITCH

We found refuge with a man and his wife. Only planned to stay a day or so. If we hadn't, he'd still be alive and I wouldn't be here.

MARY

Then we would have never met.

They look deep in each other's eyes.

MITCH

We've got to get out of here. For Tomek. For everyone.

Wanda steps out and picks strawberries.

WANDA

I think they're ready.

Mitch and Mary go to her.

MITCH

Hi, Wanda.

She smiles.

WANDA

Look!

They gather around. Wanda points out a ladybug on her finger.

MITCH

Ladybug's are good luck.

Wanda's entranced. The ladybug flies away.

MARY

Take them inside. I'll be in in a minute.

Wanda does so.

MITCH

I should get back.

They smile he turns to go, then turns back to Mary.

MITCH (CONT'D)

There's a better life than this.
You'll see.

He passes Lawrence as he walks toward the barracks. He nods to him. Lawrence stares back, curiously.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Mary holds a broken compact and brushes her hair. Wanda eats a strawberry from a bowl on the table.

She goes to Mary and sits in her lap. Mary brushes her hair.

MARY

A good woman keeps her hair long
and brushed. That's how you attract
a man.

(she stops)

But you're too young for that.

(she looks at her)

Or are you?

Anna COUGHS from the stove. Mary rushes over.

MARY (CONT'D)

Mamo, go lay down. I'll finish up.

Anna staggers over to the bed. Mary looks at the food. Barely enough. Lawrence comes in. He kisses her and closes his eyes.

LAWRENCE

Venison and potatoes. My favorite.

He hands her a small sack of wood chips. She grimaces.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

We just have to pretend. At least it's filling.

Mary dumps the wood chips into the stew. He goes to Anna.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

How are you feeling, sweetheart?

ANNA

The days are long, but the years are short.

LAWRENCE

And He still provides. It will be Wigilia soon.

She coughs hard. He squeezes her hand. She looks at Mary and Wanda at the stove. She nods to Lawrence.

Lawrence walks over to Mary.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Go see mamó.

Mary glides over and kneels at the bedside.

ANNA

Look at you. So beautiful.

Anna touches her hair.

ANNA (CONT'D)

All grown up. Both of you. And she needs you.

MARY

Mamó...

ANNA

You'll raise her right.

Lawrence comes back and comforts Mary. She starts to CRY. Anna wipes her tears.

ANNA (CONT'D)

You're a woman now. My angel.

Mary kisses her head as Anna shuts her eyes to sleep. Mary and Lawrence head into the kitchen.

Anthony comes in. Mary hands him a small ration of food.

ANTHONY

They're asking volunteers for the
Ander's Army. I'm going to enlist.

This agitates Lawrence.

LAWRENCE

You'll be signing your death the
moment you do that.

Anthony looks over to Anna.

ANTHONY

We can wait and die here or we can
fight - at least there's a chance.

LAWRENCE

A chance? They'd rather risk you
dying than to see their men killed.

Anthony considers.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

The commander's asked us to go back
into the forest. I'd like you to
oversee the men.

The front door swings open. Christoph tramps in. Everyone stands at attention.

CHRISTOPH

There's going to be an influx of
soldiers. Everyone must give a
portion of their rations.

Soldiers take most of their food. Christoph sees the bowl of strawberries and pours them into a sack.

He takes out two and tosses them onto the table. Anna sits up, trying to appear healthy.

He sees her and slowly edges forward. Lawrence steps back.

CHRISTOPH (CONT'D)

Who's responsible for this?

He grabs Anna's quilt. Mary steps up.

MARY

I am, sir.

Christoph looks at her, then drops the quilt to the floor. He walks toward the door. Turns back to Mary.

CHRISTOPH

Report to the commander's office
tomorrow after chow.

He and the soldiers leave.

INT. ZLOYKOV'S OFFICE - DAY

Zloykov and Christoph finish a discussion at his desk. A
KNOCK at the door.

ZLOYKOV

Enter.

Mary steps in.

MARY

You wanted to see me, commander.

He rises and heads toward her.

ZLOYKOV

Yes, yes. Come in.

Christoph starts to head out.

CHRISTOPH

And regarding the other issue?

ZLOYKOV

Deal with it.

Christoph leaves. Mary stands, uncomfortable.

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)

The captain says you're quite the
seamstress.

MARY

I know a little.

ZLOYKOV

As you may have noticed, our
soldiers have a tendency to wear
through their uniforms.

(MORE)

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)
Finding good help is nearly impossible. Are you up for the task?

MARY
I can do it.

He steps closer to her.

ZLOYKOV
I didn't ask if you can do it. Are you willing?

MARY
I am, commander.

ZLOYKOV
Very well. You'll be given the uniforms to tailor daily. They must be returned to me every evening before curfew.

MARY
Yes, commander.

INT. WASH ROOM - DAY

Ingrid dumps a load of uniforms into the laundry. A soldier bursts in, scaring her. He looks around then slams the door.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

The men continue to construct the building. A soldier escorts Anthony and Mitch, along with others toward the forest.

Lawrence nods and stares long at Anthony while he tries to pick up a large log. George rushes over to help.

GEORGE
Only one thing a stare like that could mean.

LAWRENCE
Yeah? What's that?

GEORGE
John used to give me looks like that. Probably for good reasons.

They throw the log into a pile of others.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

He's a man now, Lawrence. This place changes you. For the better or the worse.

LAWRENCE

Maybe. But he's still my child.

GEORGE

Children have to grow up sometime. At least you'll get to see yours.

He and Lawrence stop. George becomes sincere.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Listen, there's something I want to say. Been eating at me for quite some time. I never thanked you...

A prisoner runs to the site.

PRISONER

They're killing all those suspected of typhus!

Lawrence runs like we've never seen before.

EXT. CAMP CENTER - EVENING

Lawrence approaches the edge of the center. Many people are escorted out of their barracks and lined before soldiers.

They execute them. From a distance, Anna's escorted out by a soldier. She falls to her knees before Christoph.

Lawrence and her lock eyes right as Christoph SHOOTs her through the head. He falls to the ground.

CHRISTOPH

Put the families in quarantine. Disgusting.

Christoph trots off. Everyone scatters away. Lawrence runs over and holds Anna's dead body in disbelief.

Soldiers throw the bodies into a pile and set them on fire. Henry bends down to Lawrence.

HENRY

I must take you and your family to quarantine.

Lawrence looks him dead in the eyes.

LAWRENCE

I'm going to bury my wife.

Henry sighs and looks around. He takes out his pocket watch. Opposite the clock is a picture of him, his wife and baby.

HENRY

You've got twenty minutes before
the next shift change.

Who knows whether he checked the time or empathized?

LATER

Snow falls. Mary, Wanda and Anthony stand at the entrance to the barracks, CRYING.

Lawrence comes out holding Anna in a white sheet. He leads them to a spot at the -

EXT. NORTHERN FENCE - NIGHT

Mary and Wanda stand aside as Lawrence and Anthony dig a grave. Lawrence gracefully lays her inside.

Henry sympathizes from a distance as they fill the grave.

INT. QUARANTINE - FRONT - NIGHT

Locks of hair fall to the floor. Mary BALLS as a soldier shaves her head.

BUNKER/QUARANTINE

Lawrence, Anthony, Wanda and Mary all lay in silence with shaved heads. Time passes. Wanda and Mary lay face to face.

WANDA

When are we getting out?

MARY

Soon, sweetie.

WANDA

Don't be sad, mammo.

MARY

You don't have to call me that.

WANDA

I know.

Mary holds her so tight.

EXT. CAMP CENTER - NIGHT

The Zyla's are released. Anthony takes Wanda to the barracks. Mary see Mitch standing yards away watching her.

She doesn't move. He smiles and runs to her. He grabs her hand and leads her behind the -

EXT. BARRACKS - SAME

He rubs her scalp and smiles. She is still mourning. He kisses her passionately. A moment devoid of time.

EXT. CAMP CENTER - SAME

Prisoners dance and SING with makeshift instruments. Lawrence observes the site. George runs over, handing him a container.

LAWRENCE

Good to see merriment for a change.

GEORGE

Some of us pulled together rations
for your family.

(Polish)

Happy Wigilia!

Lawrence takes it. George pulls him into an embrace. Guards stand back and watch the festivities, LAUGHING and mocking.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Mary dumps the container into four dishes. She sets the table. Anthony, Wanda and her sit down.

Lawrence holds the quilt and smells it. Mary looks over.

MARY

Papa, you need to eat.

He comes over. They look expectant as they join hands.

LAWRENCE

Dear Lord...

Is all he can muster. This tough man has reached his limit as he SOBS. Anthony and Mary console him.

INT. SEWING BARRACKS - DAY

Mary's heartbroken as she stitches uniforms together.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

Lawrence writes on his clipboard. Mitch loads supplies into the carriage. Lawrence goes over to him.

LAWRENCE

I see you have eyes for my daughter.

MITCH

I do.

LAWRENCE

This is no place to start a family. And certainly not the time.

MITCH

If family isn't reason enough to go on, than I don't know what is.

LAWRENCE

Word is your planning an escape.

MITCH

Found a route through the forest. Only one guard on patrol.

LAWRENCE

And what am I to tell my daughter when you're captured and killed?

Mitch deliberates.

MITCH

She'd understand. But that's not going to happen.

He's about to step away.

MITCH (CONT'D)

I wouldn't ask your daughter's hand without her father's permission.

LAWRENCE

We'll see when the time comes.

Lawrence holds out his hand. Mitch shakes it, smiles and runs off. Anthony comes over.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
I know what you're going to say.

ANTHONY
You can't keep making my decisions for me.

LAWRENCE
We just buried your mother. I will not bury you too.

ANTHONY
If I don't go with them, then I'll bear arms and fight.

Anthony frowns, then chases after Mitch.

INT. ZLOYKOV'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Mary KNOCKS on the door holding a basket of uniforms. Christoph straightens his jacket, then leaves. Mary enters.

INT. ANDER'S BARRACKS - NIGHT

The barracks is packed with prisoners in soldier's uniforms. A soldier sits at the front as Anthony comes in.

ANTHONY
I'd like to enlist.

ENLISTING SOLDIER
Sign the ledger.

Anthony does so.

ENLISTING SOLDIER (CONT'D)
Can you shoot?

ANTHONY
I can.

ENLISTING SOLDIER
Training's in a couple days.

Anthony finds a bunk amongst other young, naive men.

EXT. MITCH'S BARRACKS - NIGHT

Mitch stands to the side as Mary paces around.

MARY
Why? Why must you go?

MITCH
I told you there's a better life
than this.

She looks away. He grabs her chin.

MITCH (CONT'D)
And it's with you. And Wanda. But
not here. At least there's hope to
bring back help.

Tears stream down her cheeks.

MITCH (CONT'D)
We're going to get out. All of us.

They kiss.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

Lawrence HAMMERS the structure together. He stops and sees
George, Mitch and a few others heading into the forest.

LAWRENCE
I assume you're following along.

He goes over to George.

GEORGE
Suppose my chances are the same
weather I stay or go.

LAWRENCE
You seen Anthony?

GEORGE
I'll make sure he doesn't come.

George stares into Lawrence's eyes, then shakes his hand.

LAWRENCE
So long, George.

George heads into the forest. Mitch shakes Lawrence's hand,
then runs away. Lawrence opens his hand, finding a note:

God won't let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he'll provide the way of escape. 1 Cor. 10

Lawrence grips the note and smiles.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The line of men find a spot a few yards away from the fence. They unload their tools and pretend to work.

A lieutenant grabs two prisoners, directing them to cut down a large tree. They do as they're instructed.

EXT. CLEARING - SAME

Lawrence works on the building, but continues to look around for Anthony. Christoph drives up. Henry approaches.

HENRY

Out for a drive, captain?

CHRISTOPH

It's a good day. Thought I'd
relieve the lieutenant on guard.

Lawrence perks up. He looks to the forest, then back to Christoph. Henry points him in their direction.

EXT. FOREST - SAME

The lieutenant is occupied with the men cutting a large tree. Mitch and the guys take this as their moment.

They run over to the fence and clip the barbed wire. They get enough removed for a clearing.

Two men climb through. CRACK! The tree falls, blocking their escape. Mitch and George try to move it, but to no avail.

A wounded hand reaches under - it's Lawrence. The three of them get the tree high enough to climb under.

LAWRENCE

Go! I can't hold this forever!

George smiles to Lawrence.

GEORGE

I'll never forget this.

LAWRENCE
Get out of here.

George makes his escape.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Your turn.

MITCH
Why are you doing this?

LAWRENCE
If we've no hope than we're dead
already.

BANG! A bullet thrusts through Lawrence's shoulder. He drops the tree. Christoph runs toward them with his pistol.

BANG! BANG! Mitch jumps for cover. Lawrence does likewise.

Mitch grabs a log and throws it at Christoph. It hits him in the face. He and Lawrence race over.

The other soldier FIRES. Mitch takes the pistol and kills him.

Christoph tries to get up. Lawrence hits him and climbs on top of him. Mitch stands back.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Get out of here.

He and Lawrence share a ventering look. He darts away.

With his wounded hand, Lawrence grabs a rock and stares deep into Christoph's eyes.

He then bashes the rock into his face, repeatedly.

INT. ISOLATION - NIGHT

Two soldiers throw Lawrence down to the floor. Moonlight seeps through the crack in the door.

Lawrence rises and stares up at the starlit sky.

EXT. BARRACKS - SAME

Mitch holds Mary as they look at the stars.

MARY
What's going to happen to him?

He grabs her and hugs her tight. She CRIES.

MITCH

He's a hero.

MARY

We're never getting out of here.
None of us.

MITCH

We will, Mary. I promise.

MARY

Why do you have so much courage?

MITCH

The human spirit is strong. If you
allow it to be.

He puts her hand over his heart. His HEART BEATS loud.

MITCH (CONT'D)

This is because of you. You're my
courage. I love you, Mary. And I
love Wanda.

They kiss.

EXT. CAMP - FRONT - DAY

Christoph lies inside of a coffin. Soldiers load it into a
military vehicle. Zloykov salutes, then closes the door.

EXT. SHOOTING RANGE - DAY

All prisoners amass behind a fence. Anthony and other
prisoners are dressed in soldier's uniforms.

ZLOYKOV

(through bullhorn)

Be proud. Show your country's pride
and support our brave souls willing
to fight in the Ander's Army.

Prisoners shoot at targets yards out. Anthony nails every
one. Zloykov motions Henry to remove everyone but Anthony.

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)

Who taught you to shoot, son?

ANTHONY

My Pa.

Mary, Mitch and Wanda watch at the fence. A soldier releases a boar. It runs around the yard, afraid.

Anthony steadies his aim and kills it instantly. He looks up at Zloykov for approval. He winks, then nods to a soldier.

ZLOYKOV

You'll do wanders for the Ander's.
But we're not at war with boars.

Anthony reloads his rifle and finds himself face to face with Lawrence. His jaw drops. Mary collapses into Mitch's arms.

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)

Have the prisoner step back.

The soldier hits Lawrence in the stomach. He bends over, then rises and paces backwards.

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)

Take aim.

ANTHONY

Commander, that's my pa!

ZLOYKOV

He committed treason. He's a
prisoner.

Anthony doesn't know what to do. Lawrence reaches the wall. They stare at each other.

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)

Take aim! Fire!

Anthony doesn't move.

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)

Fire! That's an order.

Anthony reluctantly takes aim and fires a miss.

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)

If I didn't know better I'd say
that was a close one. But I do. Now
shoot him.

Anthony takes aim once again and fires another miss. Lawrence clenches his eyes shut.

Zloykov is pissed. He gestures to a soldier. He drags Mary and Wanda over. Zloykov holds his pistol to Mary's head.

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)

If you don't kill him, then I'll
kill them both. Perhaps starting
with her.

He puts the gun to Wanda's head. She starts WAILING. Anthony trembles. He and Lawrence lock eyes.

Lawrence nods to him. Anthony takes aim. Henry stands back and shields his eyes. BANG! Lawrence's body goes limp.

Anthony cascades to his knees. Zloykov smirks. The soldier escorts the girls back to the rest of the prisoners.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Anthony comes through and collapses to the floor, BALLING.

EXT. BARRACKS - DAY

A line of prisoners, now dressed in soldier's uniforms, march towards the front of the camp. Anthony holds Wanda.

ANTHONY

You be good, you hear?

He sets her down as Mary slowly comes over.

MARY

I can't believe you're leaving. Not
like this.

ANTHONY

Mary - I...

She stops him.

MARY

You did what you had to.

She hugs him, tighter and tighter.

ANTHONY

I promise to write.

They let go. He smiles and falls in line. She COUGHS hard.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

The structure is coming along. Mitch rises up and wipes sweat from his head. He continues piecing the roof together.

INT. SCHOOL BARRACKS - DAY

The class is silent. They stare forward at Zloykov. He sits disheveled, taking long swigs from a vodka bottle.

ZLOYKOV

Recite our nation's anthem.

Wanda and the CLASS recite the anthem in Russian, perfectly.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Mary's at the stove. She COUGHS, fiercely. Wanda helps her prepare food. Mary goes over to the bed.

MARY

Finish up sweetie. I just need to lay down for a minute.

Mitch enters. He kisses Wanda's head, then goes over to Mary.

MITCH

Feeling any better?

MARY

Much. Now.

They smile. CRASH! Mitch looks over to Wanda.

WANDA

Oops!

The family portrait is shattered on the floor. Wanda picks it up and starts to CRY. Mary runs over.

MARY

It's okay, sweetie.

The three of them hug together.

INT. SEWING BARRACKS - DAY

Mary finishes sewing a uniform and COUGHS into a cloth. She looks at it. There's blood. Her eyes glisten.

EXT./INT. ZLOYKOV'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Mary dries her eyes, then knocks on the door. Zloykov answers, vodka in one hand and his shirt unbuttoned.

MARY

Here are the last of the uniforms.

She steps in.

ZLOYKOV

No acknowledgement of my rank?

He takes a big swig. She looks disgusted.

MARY

Here are the uniforms, commander Zloykov.

ZLOYKOV

Better. I didn't spend fifteen years scrubbing scum and kissing ass to not be revered.

She tries to step past him.

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

MARY

May I leave now? I'm very tired.

ZLOYKOV

You're tired? Know what I'm tired of? Not getting the recognition I deserve! I am a decorated commanding officer for one of the greatest dictators of the century and here I am watching after a bunch of abhorrent swine, pissing and moaning everyday.

Mary's frightened and backs away. She hits her head on the wall. She rubs away the pain.

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)

That hairstyle suits you. Reminds me of someone. Someone very dear.

He takes a swig of vodka and throws the bottle aside. He unbuttons his pants and comes toward her.

She tries to dart away, but he grabs her and throws her up against the wall. He turns her around. She scratches at him.

He throws his shirt into the basket of uniforms. He inserts himself, raping her vigorously.

He becomes cognizant of his actions and throws her over his desk. She falls on the floor next to the basket of uniforms.

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)

Get out - never come back!

He turns his back to her. She scoops herself up and runs out.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Mary rushes in CRYING. Mitch and Wanda are over the stove. Mary runs in and lays in the bed. Wanda comes over.

WANDA

Mamo, what's wrong?

Mary's silent. Mitch approaches.

MITCH

Wanda, go finish supper.

Tears streak Mary's cheeks. Wanda takes a moment, then goes.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Mary, talk to me. What is it?

She just lays there. He sits beside her and notices her dress is torn. He grabs it and concludes.

MITCH (CONT'D)

I'll kill him.

He jumps up and races out. Mary chases after him.

EXT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Mitch nearly sprints. Mary grabs him and swings him around.

MARY

You'll just get yourself killed.

MITCH

Am I supposed to just allow this?
There's no hope in that.

She glares, then holds something up.

MARY

Maybe there is hope...

It's a patch from Zloykov's shirt. Mitch grabs it.

MARY (CONT'D)

I have an idea.

She COUGHS hard.

INT. ZLOYKOV'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Zloykov writes a letter at his desk. He is severely drunk. A KNOCK at the door.

ZLOYKOV

What is it?

Henry comes in with a box.

HENRY

This came for you, sir.

ZLOYKOV

Set it over there.

He points to a corner and swigs the vodka.

HENRY

It's addressed from commander Joseph Stalin.

Zloykov perks up and ushers him forward.

ZLOYKOV

I was just preparing to write our fearless leader.

Zloykov opens the box, revealing an ivory gripped pistol and a note. Zloykov snatches it.

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)

(Reading)

For your bravery and sincere allegiance to the Red Army. Please accept this as my deepest gratitude. Your friend and commander, Joseph.

He lowers the letter in defeat. Grabs the vodka and chugs.

HENRY

It's a nice letter, sir.

ZLOYKOV

Yes. It is nice, isn't it? And what about the pistol? Let's not forget about that.

He snatches the pistol out of the box and inspects it.

HENRY

It's beautiful. Nicely decorated
for a lavishly decorated commander.

Zloykov looks at Henry, then cowers into his chair.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Sir, are you all right?

Zoykloph retrieves a binder from his desk, begrudgingly.

HENRY (CONT'D)

What's that, sir?

Zloykov tosses it to Henry and chugs on the vodka.

ZLOYKLOPH

Open it.

Henry does so. The ledger has many different names of soldiers, their rank and medals assigned to them.

HENRY

This is some kind of Ledger?

It looks like Zloykov could start crying right now. He's imbued with shame. He looks at the pistol again.

ZLOYKOV

I've never even fired one of these.
At least with the intention of
hurting anyone.

Henry steps closer.

HENRY

Commander, you're such a great
leader. What are you saying?

Zloykov rises and becomes animated as he shows Henry the medals pinned to his chest.

ZLOYKOV

The decorations I wear so proudly -
they aren't mine. The names in that
ledger are the heros I was
privileged to serve with. Only I
didn't serve. I cowered as they so
nobly laid down their lives.

Henry's demeanor is surmise. Zloykov finishes the bottle. He throws it at the fireplace.

Glass shatters. He grabs the clip from the box and loads bullets into it.

ZLOYKOV (CONT'D)

This war has taken everything from me. Can't keep it a secret anymore.

No sympathy from Henry.

HENRY

Stolen valor is of the highest offences.

ZLOYKOV

Do you really think I'm worried of offending anyone now? I've never been strong!

Henry takes a moment.

HENRY

We're only as strong as the lies we keep.

Zloykov knows this.

ZLOYKOV

Get out of here!

Henry collects himself, then walks out.

EXT. ZLOYKOV'S OFFICE - SAME

Henry steps out with the ledger. He saunters away when, BAM! A gunshot sounds from inside the office. He just presses on.

INT. WASH ROOM - DAY

Ingrid folds laundry. Mary comes in.

INGRID

Mary, what are you doing here?

MARY

There's a uniform that needs stitching.

She goes to a pile of folded laundry and sifts through it. Ingrid comes over.

INGRID

I just washed these. They're fine.

Mary finds a high ranking guard's uniform and holds it up.

INGRID (CONT'D)
Your mother was a good woman. I'm
terribly sorry.

Mary smiles to her.

MARY
This is the one.

Mary starts to go. Ingrid tries to stop her.

INGRID
If a uniform is missing, I'm
responsible...

Mary COUGHS and falls to her knees. Ingrid bends to aid her
and grips the uniform. She recognizes Mary's desperation.

INGRID (CONT'D)
How long have you had that cough?

MARY
It's been weeks.

INGRID
Could be pneumonia. Without proper
care...

Ingrid slowly lets go of the uniform. Mary nods and runs out.

EXT. ZLOYKOV'S OFFICE - DAY

Two soldiers carry Zloykov's body out of the office. Henry
stands at the porch with another young soldier.

HENRY
Keep this quite. I don't want word
spreading through the camp.

YOUNG SOLDIER
Yes, sir. What to do with the body?

Henry watches as they pass by with Zloykov's body.

HENRY
Toss him to the wolves.

He leaves.

EXT. BEYOND THE CAMP - DAY

The soldiers open the gate and toss Zloykov's body into the snow. It lands awkwardly against a tree.

There's a smile on his face that morphs into -

EXT. AFRICA - FRONT LINE - DAY

A dead soldier's body lies on the ground among many others. Anthony and other soldiers run through a full blown battle.

GUNSHOTS echo through the atmosphere. Anthony SHOOTS some German soldiers. He and other men duck in a fox hole.

A GRENADE explodes right by them. One of the soldiers dies. The other soldiers run the opposite way.

Anthony shakes his head, then runs out into the battle.

INT. SEWING BARRACKS - DAY

Mary stitches together a uniform. She sews patches from other uniforms on to the new one.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Wanda teaches Mitch Russian at the table.

MITCH

(Russian)

I must dispose of these.

He butchers it. Wanda stops him.

WANDA

No. Like this...

She repeats the words perfectly. Mary comes in more fatigued now. Mitch comes over and helps her into bed.

MARY

I'm fine. I just need to lie down.

MITCH

Wanda, bring water.

Wanda grabs a ladle of water from a small bucket and comes over. Mary sips and lays back. She hands Mitch the uniform.

MARY

Three days may be too late.

He looks at her. Then to Wanda.

EXT. SOLDIERS BUNKER - NIGHT

Mitch, now in the uniform, walks past a Russian soldier.

SOLDIER

(Russian)

Evening, officer.

They salute. Everything seems fine.

INT. SOLDIERS BUNKER - NIGHT

Soldiers are passed out. Some are drunk and rowdy. No one notices Mitch come in. He looks around, then heads into the -

KITCHEN AREA

He scavenges food, filling a rucksack. He drops a can. It makes a loud CLANK. He looks around. Undetected.

A soldier approaches him. Their conversation is in Russian.

DRUNK SOLDIER

What are you looking for?

MITCH

We're out of vodka. Thought we could use another bottle.

The soldier opens the cabinet above.

DRUNK SOLDIER

There's plenty here.

He grabs a bottle and holds it out for Mitch. He rises and takes it. They stare into each other's eyes.

DRUNK SOLDIER (CONT'D)

Perhaps you don't need anymore.

The soldier LAUGHS and heads back into the other room. Mitch takes a deep breath and calms himself.

He creeps back into the -

BUNKER

He looks over the passed out men. He spots a large knife attached to a soldier's belt.

He sneakily grabs it and walks out the front door.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

Mitch, now in regular clothes, loads the small carriage with the supplies. Men work on the building.

He looks over the camp at all his hard work and sighs.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Mary's wrapped in a blanket on the edge of the bed. Wanda packs the rest of their supplies.

MARY

Put on all your clothes. It's going to be cold.

Mitch comes in.

MITCH

If we're doing this the time is now. Guards switch in ten minutes.

The family look each other over. This is it.

WANDA

Wait!

She runs out of the barracks. She comes back in moments later with the strawberry plant.

WANDA (CONT'D)

We can't leave this.

MITCH

I love you both. Very much.

They all hug, which could be their last.

EXT. CAMP CENTER - NIGHT

Mitch, now in the soldier's uniform, wheels the small wagon towards the gate. A soldier spots him. Mitch stops.

Their conversation is in Russian.

SOLDIER

Where are you taking that this time
of night?

MITCH

These bodies are to be thrown
outside the camp.

The soldier slowly comes over, studying him. Mitch is on his
toes. The soldier lifts a blanket draped over the carriage.

Mary and Wanda pretend to be dead.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Typhus. Many more. Must dispose of
the bodies before it spreads.

The soldier drops the sheet and steps back.

GATE SOLDIER

Burn them. That will prevent
spreading.

Mitch now looks at the man, not knowing how to respond.

MITCH

Commander Zloykov's ordered...

GATE SOLDIER

Commander Zloykov?

HENRY O.S.

What's going on here?

The men look away to see Henry quickly approaching.

GATE SOLDIER

He says he's been ordered by
commander Zloykov to dispose of
these bodies outside camp.

Henry looks at the soldier, then to Mitch. Maybe recognizing.

HENRY

It's the guard switch. I'll assume
this post.

GATE SOLDIER

But sir...

HENRY

I'm the officer in command. Now do
as you've been ordered.

The soldier stands at guard and salutes him, then walks away. Mitch stands, petrified.

Henry opens the corner of the sheet, but doesn't look inside. He looks at Mitch and comes closer.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Get rid of these bodies. Far from
this camp.

Mitch just glares. Henry opens the gate and ushers him through. Mitch nods and leads the carriage out, almost.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Halt!

This is it. Caught! Mitch drops the carriage and is statuesque. Henry slowly comes over.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Take this with you.

He hands Mitch Zloykov's ledger. Mitch takes it. Henry shuts the gate and watches Mitch haul the carriage to freedom.

ANTHONY V.O.
Dear Mary, words can't begin to
describe the hole that encompasses
my heart. The only words that
resound are - father was right.
There is no honor in war.

MONTAGE:

EXT. TERRAIN - DAY

Mitch and Wanda pull Mary in the carriage through the snowy, mountainous terrain. It's very difficult.

A WOLF howls in the distance. Mitch picks Wanda up and sets her inside.

EXT. BATTLE FIELD - AFRICA - DAY

Anthony fights amongst hundreds of soldiers. Many die all around him, but his courage is un-stifling.

ANTHONY V.O.

As I hunker down and fight to survive every moment of every day, someone else's fight, I can only think of ma, pa, you and Wanda. How I'd give anything to be with you all again.

EXT. TERRAIN - DAY/NIGHT

Mitch trudges through the snowy mountainside. Wanda walks at his side. Mary looks very sick and huddles for warmth.

A wolf comes across their path. Wanda climbs into the carriage. The wolf races over. Mitch takes out the knife.

ANTHONY V.O.

I write this letter knowing it will never reach you, but somehow writing it gives me comfort and fills my hollow heart.

It's night. Mitch has made a fire. Mary and Wanda sit together for warmth. Mary stitches something together.

ANTHONY V.O. (CONT'D)

They say the war will end soon, God willing I'll live to see it.

Mitch hands them a pan of food. The wolf roasts in the fire.

EXT. AFRICA BATTLE - NIGHT

A soldier hands Anthony a plate of food. He eats the small ration and looks fearful.

ANTHONY V.O.

I hope you're well and know how truly sorry I am. In God's time we'll meet again. With all the love I know to give, sincerely, Anthony.

He finishes writing the letter.

EXT. EDGE OF POLAND - DAY

The snow is drying up the further they press on. Mary is looking worse, but the confidence is high in Mitch and Wanda.

Wanda wears the wolf's fur that Mary stitched for warmth.

EXT. BATTLE GROUND - DAY

German soldiers surrender. Ander's soldiers CLAP and CHEER. Anthony steps to a fellow soldier.

ANTHONY
What's happening?

ANDER'S SOLDIER
The war's over. We're going home.

He runs away CHEERING. Anthony throws his gun to the ground.

EXT. CAMP CENTER - DAY

All the prisoners run out CHEERING. The guards stand aside.

END MONTAGE:

EXT. OUTSIDE VILLAGE - DAY

Mitch stops the carriage atop a hill. He looks down to espy their village below. Mary's still as Wanda cuddles her.

Mitch comes back to the carriage.

WANDA
Are we home?

MITCH
Soon. Just hold on, Mary.

He caresses her cheeks, then leads them down the hill.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Mitch stops the carriage in the middle of town. The buildings are burned and derelict. He paces away and looks around.

MITCH
Help! Is anyone here?

Nothing. This is a ghost town. Until a head pops out of a window. Then another, then many more.

People start coming out of the buildings and rush over. Mitch smiles, elated.

MITCH (CONT'D)
Help us please. She's sick.

A man comes over and looks at Mary.

MAN

We must get her inside.

Mitch collapses on the ground against the carriage and watches the townsfolk help Mary and Wanda toward a building.

A sincere man comes over to Mitch.

SINCERE MAN

Is the war over?

Mitch doesn't respond.

SINCERE MAN (CONT'D)

What was it like in there?

Mitch looks exhausted. The man helps him up.

SINCERE MAN (CONT'D)

You walked all this way from
Siberia? How did you survive?

Mitch looks at Mary and Wanda, then to the man.

MITCH

Courage...

He passes out.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Mary lays on a gurney appearing much better. Mitch comes in and sits beside her. He's cleaned up and looks better, too.

MARY

You did it. I love you.

He grabs her hand and kisses it. Wanda comes over. Mitch picks her up and gives her a big hug. He sets her down.

WANDA

He'll keep you safe.

Wanda lays her bear beside Mary. She holds it, warmly. She pulls Wanda into a big hug.

EXT. ZYLA'S HOUSE - DAY

Mitch, Mary and Wanda stroll up in a horse buggy to the remains of their burned down house.

Adjacent to it, many townsfolk are nearly finishing the construction of a brand new house.

Mary holds Wanda tight. George comes over to greet them.

WANDA

Is that for us?

GEORGE

Sure is, little lady. May not be what you're used to, but I think you may find it suiting.

MARY

George. I don't know what to say.

GEORGE

You don't have to say anything.

MITCH

Let's go check it out!

Mitch and him hug each other. A vehicle races up the drive. It parks. Anthony steps out. Mary's smile fades.

They stand and look at each other for a few moments in disbelief, then run into each other's arms.

George and the rest of the crowd APPLAUDS.

INT. NEW HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Mary, Wanda and Mitch tour the house with glee.

LIVING ROOM

Anthony tours with George.

GEORGE

Your father was the greatest man I ever knew. Couldn't swallow my pride to tell him when he was alive. But I'm telling you now.

ANTHONY

I know just how he'd respond. Test your own actions, then you can take pride in yourself without comparing yourself to others.

He smiles and shakes Anthony's hand.

GEORGE
He raised you well.

INT. BURNED HOUSE - DAY

Mary and Anthony sift through the charred remains.

MARY
It's all gone.

Anthony spots something under a burnt bookcase. He lifts it, finding his bible perfectly in tact. They stand, awestruck.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Wanda plants the strawberry vine. A ladybug flies onto a leaf. She grabs it and runs over to the -

BARN

Mary milks a cow. Wanda runs in.

WANDA
Look!

She shows Mary the ladybug. It flies away. They hug.

WANDA (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

MARY
Come. I'll show you.

Mary teaches her to milk the cow.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Anthony trails behind a horse, tilling the land. Mitch plants other crops. Time passes.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Anthony and Mitch hunt. A CRACK sounds from the bushes. Anthony steadies his rifle towards the shaking brush.

MITCH
It's yours.

The same rabbit as before, now grown and healthy appears.

Anthony raises his gun, staring at the rabbit. They have a moment. He looks back to Mitch.

INT. NEW HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mary prepares dinner at the counter. Mitch comes in. They kiss. Wanda rolls out dough. He picks her up and spins her.

MARY

No meat?

Anthony comes in and looks them over.

ANTHONY

Not tonight. Besides it's Wigilia.

Wanda YELLS in excitement.

DINNING ROOM - LATER

Mitch, Mary, Wanda and Anthony join hands around the table. Vegetables, bread, and traditional dishes lay out.

MARY

Who'd like to say grace?

WANDA

I will...

They bow their heads.

WANDA (CONT'D)

Dear Lord, we give you thanks.

(She stops)

We thank you for what we went through. Bringing us out. And giving us a new home. I thank you Lord for my momma and my papa and uncle Anthony...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MARY AND MITCH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

SUPER: DECEMBER 24, 2004.

Mary (70's) and Mitch (70's) hold hands with Wanda (50's) and her teenage kids. The house is much lived in now.

They pass each other a Eucharist, while Wanda prays.

WANDA

...Without your grace and mercy we wouldn't be who we are today. We thank you Lord that at a time like this we are still surrounded with love and with the people we love.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARY AND MITCH'S HOUSE - SAME

Anthony's on the roof. He looks out over the land. The crops are in full bloom. The land is healthy. He smiles.

BACK TO:

INT. MARY AND MITCH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

WANDA

We owe it all to you. In our heavenly Father's name, amen.

BAM - BAM - BAM comes from the roof. The kids GIGGLE.

WANDA (CONT'D)

Who is that?

KNOCK - KNOCK at the door.

The kids answer. Anthony's in a Santa costume. Beard and all.

ANTHONY

(Polish)

Merry Christmas Eve!

Mary clasps her hands together, excitingly as he comes in.

MARY

(Polish)

Mother of God!

The family gathers, joyously. Anthony picks up his niece and carries her into the -

LIVING ROOM

He drops a sack of toys. The kids gather around. As Anthony sits with his niece in a chair, she kicks a photo over.

He bends down and picks it up.

NIECE
Sorry, uncle Anthony.

ANTHONY
Uncle Anthony? I'm Santa...

He tickles her as she pulls at his beard and LAUGHS, noticing the picture.

NIECE
Who's that?

It's the family portrait. Wanda, Mitch and Mary come in and watch. Anthony looks to Mary.

WANDA
Those are your grandparents.

Wanda sets the photo on a bookcase next to a stack of Anthony's letters, Zloykov's ledger and the bible.

The wolf's fur hangs above.

Mary comes over and gives her a hug. They look out at all their family. Wanda's daughter cradles the bear in her arms.

MITCH
All right, everybody. Let's eat.

They scatter towards the kitchen. She drops the bear, following after everyone.

Mary steps over and grabs it. She holds it up, smiles, then goes into the kitchen with her big, jubilant family.

FADE OUT:

THE END

CREDITS ROLL:

- OVER 325,000 POLES WERE DEPORTED INTO LABOR CAMPS. MORE THAN A THIRD OF THEM DID NOT SURVIVE.
- MARIA & MIECZYSLAW WRZOSEK WERE MARRIED 65 YEARS BEFORE MARIA DIED IN 2015 AT AGE 89 FROM RETURNING CANCER. MIECZYSLAW FOLLOWED SHORTLY AFTER IN 2017.
- THEY FOUGHT TO LIVE UNTIL THE VERY END AND CONTINUE TO FIGHT THROUGH THEIR FAMILY.
- THIS FILM IS DEDICATED TO ALL THE FAMILIES THAT STRUGGLED TO GIVE THEIR CHILDREN A BETTER LIFE THAN THEIR OWN.