

ADVERSITY

Inspired by a True Story

OVER BLACK:

A school BELL RINGS.

FADE IN:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

High school teacher RACHEL STEIN (60's, gray hair pulled back into a bun) writes on the whiteboard as students walk in, take their seats.

As three muscular students enter, they harass a very thin HAASHIM (wears a backpack over his sweatshirt with hoodie and dastār on his head).

One boy punches the backpack while another taps the top of the dastār over and over. The third whispers something in Haashim's ear.

Haashim's face shows his frustration.

HAASHIM

Leave me alone!

Rachel turns around when she hears this. She is about to reprimand them, when the BELL RINGS to start.

The boys quickly take their seats.

The class is quiet with everyone's attention on Rachel.

Rachel stands in front of her desk. She is about to address the class when the sound of SOMETHING LARGE HITS THE FLOOR, and startles everyone.

She looks over at Haashim. His backpack is on the floor. He angrily covers his head with his hoodie, buries his head into his folded arms on his desk.

Rachel looks at the lesson plan written on the whiteboard.

CLOSE ON WHITEBOARD

THE ROMAN EMPIRE WAS ONE OF THE LARGEST IN HISTORY.

END CLOSE UP.

She looks at Haashim again, then sits on the edge of her desk.

She scans the crowded classroom. There is a long moment of silence before she SIGHS deeply, speaks slowly and softly.

RACHEL

Sometimes life seems difficult
and we want to give up. I want
to tell you a story about what
my ancestors taught me, and
hopefully, it will help you.

The students look puzzled at each other, then back at her.

FADE OUT.

START OVERALL FLASHBACK

OVER BLACK

The sound of many horses GALLOPING.

FADE IN:

SUPER: RUSSIAN EMPIRE, AUGUST 1897

(NOTE: All dialogue is in English with a Russian accent.)

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

It's very dark, but we can see many horsemen in red Russian Royal uniforms, wool hats, tall black boots, with their long sabers holstered at their sides.

They gallop closer. Besides the sound of their HOOVES, WHINNYING and SNORTING of the horses can be heard.

Dust flies up from the dirt road as they rush through a charming rustic village of unpainted wooden houses with grass growing on the roofs.

EXT. WOODEN HOUSE - NIGHT

HAPPY RUSSIAN MUSIC is heard coming from one of the

candlelit houses in the distance.

The music gets LOUDER as the horsemen approach the house.

INT. WOODEN HOUSE - NIGHT

VLADIMIR KAMINSKAYA (early 30's, in peasant tunic clothes, reddish hair, glasses, mustache, short red beard) SINGS as he plays RUSSIAN MUSIC on his BALALAIKA in a large candlelit room.

His 20-ish wife, SVETLANA (small mole on her right cheek, apron over her plain peasant skirt and blouse) dances in front of the fireplace with their four-year-old barefoot daughter, ELIZABETH (reddish-brown hair, brown eyes, in pink smocked dress).

EXT. WOODEN HOUSE - NIGHT

The horsemen stop in front of the house.

One rider, SERGEI ABRAMEVICH (with very long mustache), jumps off his horse. He approaches the door as another soldier holds onto Sergei's reins.

Sergei BANGS on the door. He twirls the end of his mustache then BANGS again. The music stops.

INT. WOODEN HOUSE - NIGHT

Vladimir looks out through the lace curtains in the window. His eyes widen in fear.

He turns around, signals to Svetlana and Elizabeth to be quiet.

BANGING on the door again is heard inside. Svetlana angrily motions to Vladimir to go open the door.

Vladimir shakes his head. He is afraid.

Svetlana motions insisting he do.

EXT. WOODEN HOUSE - NIGHT

The rusty door CREAKS as it opens slowly.

Vladimir is shocked to see the man at his door.

He looks at the other men on horses behind, all look similar with long mustaches and long beards.

He notices two riderless horses.

He looks at SERGEI whose face is lit by the candlelight coming from inside.

SERGEI

Are you Vladimir Kaminskaya?

Vladimir nods nervously, looks at the men on horses again.

SERGEI (CONT'D)

I am Sergei Abramevich of his Majesty's Royal Court. Tsar Nicolas II demands your presence. You are to come with us.

Vladimir's body shakes in dreaded fear.

VLADIMIR

But why? I have done nothing wrong.

Svetlana rushes to Vladimir holding Elizabeth.

She stands directly behind him, looks out to see all the men on horses.

SERGEI

Get on the horse. I have no time to explain. His Royal Highness is waiting.

SVETLANA

Vladimir, what's happening? Are you being arrested?

VLADIMIR

I don't know, Svetlana. Go back inside.

She stays at the door watching Vladimir and Sergei get on the horses and GALLOP off.

EXT. WINTER PALACE - NIGHT

Vladimir, Sergei, and the horsemen ride under an arch to enter the red with yellow trimmed palace. Only the sound of the horses' HOOVES on the cobblestones is heard.

INT. GREAT THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

Vladimir sweats profusely as he follows Sergei through white gilded doors revealing a long ornate rectangular room. The sound of PEOPLE TALKING suddenly stops.

As Vladimir walks, he looks up at the three-tiered chandeliers and the white columns along the sides of the room.

He notices several people looking at him as they walk along the second-floor balcony that surrounds the room.

MUFFLED VOICES are heard as Vladimir sees the 29-year-old Tsar seated in the distance. TSAR NICHOLAS II, who wears a black uniform and red sash, sits on his red and gold throne as he speaks to his wife, the TSARINA, seated next to him.

Sergei stops at the bottom of the red carpeted stairs leading up to the Tsar. He quickly bows.

SERGEI

Your Majesty.

He backs up, joins many other men in black uniform with blue sashes standing to the side.

Vladimir fearfully stands alone in front of the first step to the throne. It is eerily quiet now.

He looks up, notices the wall behind the Tsar having a two-headed gold eagle on red tapestry, the Tsar's symbol of power.

Vladimir has a closer look at the handsome Tsar (well-trimmed beard, long mustache curved to the sides) wearing a jewel-encrusted hat-like crown with brown mink around the edges. The display of jewels is over-the-top displaying great wealth.

Vladimir gulps.

He eyes the Tsar's German wife, ALEXANDRA (red-gold hair, large eyes), seated next to the Tsar holding their 6-month baby daughter, TATIANA.

He notices the Tsarina's elaborately embroidered white lace dress, blue sash, pearl necklace, diamond and pearl crown.

He watches the baby squirm in the Tsarina's lap. It CRIES.

TSARINA ALEXANDRA

Hush, Tatiana.

The Tsar furrows his brows as he takes note of Vladimir eyeing his wife.

Vladimir sees a daughter, 2 1/2 years, named OLGA (blue eyes, light chestnut hair, short snubby nose), dressed like the Tsarina. She sits on floor next to her mother.

Alexandra looks to plain-looking Irish Nanny, MARGARETTA, on her left who speaks with a Limerick accent.

TSARINA ALEXANDRA (CONT'D)

Margaretta, take Olga and Tatiana to the nursery.

MARGARETTA

(bowing)

Yes, Your Majesty.

Nicholas watches the Nanny leave with the children. He looks at Vladimir.

TSAR NICHOLAS

You are Vladimir Kaminskaya?

Vladimir nods his head slowly in a kind of bow.

VLADIMIR

I am, Your Majesty.

TSAR NICHOLAS

I am told you are the only one in
(MORE)

TSAR NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
the village who knows how to read
and write. Is that so?

Vladimir looks at the Tsar.

VLADIMIR
Yes, Sire, in seven languages,
French, English, Italian, Russian,
German, Polish, and Yiddish.

The Tsar's posture straightens. He furrows his brows, looks displeased.

TSAR NICHOLAS
You are a Jew?

Vladimir looks down, fearful of what might happen if he says "yes". BIG SIGH, then he looks up at the Tsar.

VLADIMIR
(sotto voce)
Yes, Sire.

Vladimir looks at Sergei, then back at the Tsar.

VLADIMIR (CONT'D)
Your Majesty, is that a problem?

TSAR NICHOLAS
I thought my father, Tsar
Alexander, expelled all the
Jews during the Pogrom.

Vladimir looks sadly down at the floor.

Nicholas studies Vladimir for a few silent seconds.

VLADIMIR
(raising his head)
Your Majesty, have I done
something wrong? Am I being
accused of something?

Nicholas looks at his wife, who is smiling. The Tsar relaxes his posture.

TSAR NICHOLAS

Vladimir Kaminskaya, I have heard you are a good man, that you are a hard worker and do as you are told.

Vladimir nods his head over and over nervously in agreement.

TSAR NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

I have decided that you will be my scribe. You will write the legal documents and laws as I decree. You will also write my messages so the leaders of other countries, who do not speak our language, will understand what I am saying. You will also translate all replies and books I wish to read. Do you understand?

Vladimir is relieved, smiles.

VLADIMIR

Yes, Sire.

TSAR NICHOLAS

You will always be available to me. You will live in a guest room at each palace with your wife and child, and you will be well-provided.

The Tsarina nods.

TSARINA ALEXANDRA

I hear your wife is a good cook.

Vladimir smiles, surprised the Tsarina knows that.

VLADIMIR

Yes, a great cook, your Majesty. She makes the most delicious breaded cutlets.

TSAR NICHOLAS

Well then, she will cook
alongside my chef, Pierre Cubat.

VLADIMIR

She will be honored, Your Majesty.

Nicholas leans forward in his throne, looks sternly at
Vladimir.

TSAR NICHOLAS

You will be carefully watched
at all times Vladimir Kaminskaya.
You and your family will not
leave this palace or its gardens
for any reason unless I command
it. Again, do you understand?

Vladimir nods.

Tsar Nicholas motions to Sergei to come forward.

TSAR NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

(to Vladimir)

Sergei here, will show you to
your quarters. We will start in
the morning.

VLADIMIR

Yes, Sire. Thank you.

Nicholas waves them away.

Vladimir and Sergei bow as they walk backwards a few steps,
then turn around and head for the door.

Vladimir leans closer to Sergei.

VLADIMIR (CONT'D)

(sotto voce)

What happened to the last scribe?

SERGEI

He was executed for disobeying
the Tsar.

Vladimir's eyes widen.

SUPER: PETERHOF PALACE, 1901

INT. MONPLAISIR KITCHEN - DAY

Eight-year-old Elizabeth (long hair in a braid with bow at end) stands on a chair next to a long rectangular wooden kitchen table. Behind her is a wall having blue and white glazed Dutch tiles.

She watches as Svetlana (in chef's attire of a white pinafore apron over a black dress) gathers a bowl, flour, and honey.

SVETLANA

Lizzie, someday you will have a family of your own, so it is important for you to learn how to cook.

ELIZABETH

I want to cook just like you, Mama.

French CHEF PIERRE CUBAT walks by carrying a large roasted pig on a silver platter. He speaks with a French accent.

CHEF CUBAT

What? You don't like my cooking?

ELIZABETH

I do, but I like mama's better.

Chef Cubat looks at Svetlana. Svetlana shrugs as she smiles, then looks at Elizabeth.

SVETLANA

Lizzie, Pierre is a famous chef.

Cubat lifts his chin in pride as he sets the pig on the table.

SVETLANA (CONT'D)

You would do well to learn from both of us.

ELIZABETH

Yes, Mama.

Svetlana looks at Chef Cubat, who nods approvingly.

SVETLANA

Watch, Lizzie. I'm going to show you how to make the most delicious honey cake that Pierre and I have created. The Romanovs love it.

EXT. PETERHOF PALACE - GARDENS - DAY

Elizabeth (11, hair in long braid with bow) and Olga (9, tall, hair also in braid with bow) lock arms as they walk along a dirt path toward the yellow palace through the beautifully landscaped gardens.

Walking behind them is Tatiana (7, reddish hair), MARIA (5, overweight, rosy cheeks), and Margaretta holding three-year-old Anastasia's hand. ANASTASIA is a chubby blue-eyed child with reddish hair and very short bangs.

Each girl wears a different colored pastel dress and a large matching bow in their hair.

The Tsarina SCREAMS loudly from inside the palace.

Startled, Elizabeth stops abruptly. She grabs Olga, clutching her tightly.

ELIZABETH

Oh my God, Olga!

They look at each other with wide eyes, then back at the children.

Maria hides her face in Margaretta's skirt, while Anastasia CRIES. Margaretta picks up Anastasia, tries to comfort her.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

(extending arms)

Tatiana, Maria, come here.

Tatiana and Maria run to Elizabeth and Olga for a group hug

OLGA

12.

It's okay. It's only Mama
giving birth again. You should
be used to Mama's screams by now.

(to Elizabeth)

I hope it's a boy this time,
otherwise, we'll be hearing more
of her screaming. She's just
going to keep giving birth until
they have an heir.

INT. PETERHOF PALACE - BEDROOM - DAY

Alexandra sweats profusely trying to give birth. She
SCREAMS from pain.

TSARINA ALEXANDRA

No, no, I can't. I can't do this!

The Doctor comes out from under the bedsheet. Serious look,
shakes his head at the Tsar.

TSAR NICHOLAS

(to Alexandra)

But you will. I command it!

Alexandra looks sternly at Nicholas as if she wants to kill
him.

TSARINA ALEXANDRA

You command it?

She SCREAMS as she pushes the baby out, then falls back
onto her pillow totally drained of energy.

The Doctor bows as he hands Nicholas his son.

Nicholas smiles at the baby, kisses its forehead. As he
looks into the baby's eyes, it urinates into the Tsar's
face.

Alexandra covers her mouth to hide her laughter, then
touches her heart at this loving moment.

TSAR NICHOLAS

(laughing)

It's okay.

A female servant hands the Tsar a towel.

He wipes his face with one hand as he cradles his son in the other.

Two Abyssinian Guards open the doors as Nicholas rushes out with the baby.

INT. PETERHOF PALACE - DAY

The Tsar carries the baby as he passes one ornate room after another until he reaches...

THE GRAND HALL

A large GROUP of people await the news of the newborn.

Nicholas rushes in as servants open the double doors for him. Everyone bows in unison. He smiles proudly.

TSAR NICHOLAS

It's a boy. I have a son!

He raises the baby in the air.

TSAR NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Hail Tsarevich Alexei.

GROUP

(Russian cheer pronounced ура)

Ура.

INT. PETERHOF PALACE - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Vladimir sits at a small wooden desk in front of a window, writes a letter using a quill he dips in ink every few seconds.

He stops writing, looks out the window, and watches.

EXT. PETERHOF PALACE - GARDENS - DAY

The children age as they run through a LABYRINTH OF TALL HEDGES in a game of tag:

- Elizabeth (gorgeous shape with thin waist) to 19.

- Olga (still tall, holds a book) to 17.
- Tatiana (younger version of the Tsarina) to 15.
- Maria (very beautiful now) to 13.
- Anastasia (slender now, very pretty) to 11.

All of them slowly chase Alexei (8 years old, tall for his age, dark blue eyes, brown hair, in sailor outfit).

Elizabeth and Maria smile, link arms as they walk on the grass near a fountain.

The other children pick flowers here and there and chase a Cocker Spaniel. A French Bulldog, a King Charles Spaniel, several kittens, and cats follow.

Elizabeth lies down on the lawn watching the clouds.

Maria lies next to her on her side, reties the bow at the end of Elizabeth's long braid.

ELIZABETH

(pointing)

Look, Maria. That one looks like
your papa.

Maria lies on her back, looks up.

MARIA

Yes, I can see his curly mustache.

They GIGGLE. Maria rolls over onto her stomach, looks at Elizabeth.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Lizzie, can you keep a secret?

Elizabeth rolls on her side facing Maria, puts one hand under her chin like a pillow.

ELIZABETH

Of course, I can.

Maria looks over, smiles at the tutor, Pierre Gilliard.

He stands by a tree watching them.

She continues smiling at him as she speaks.

MARIA

Pierre and I kissed.

ELIZABETH

You did not! You're only 13!
Your father would kill you.

Maria looks back at Elizabeth.

MARIA

Well, in my dreams, but I'd
like to.

ELIZABETH

In my dreams I'd like to live
a nice, uncomplicated life with
my true love, and have a family
as wonderful as yours.

MARIA

(watching Pierre)

I hope you do, because you
deserve it. I want lots of
children.

Maria gets up, smiles broadly, walks briskly toward Pierre.

Anastasia approaches Elizabeth with flowers in her hand,
looks at Maria laughing with Pierre.

ANASTASIA

She's such a flirt. Watch. She's
going to tilt her head as she
plays with her braid, lick her
lips, and then smile.

Maria does exactly that.

ELIZABETH

You sound jealous, Anastasia.

Anastasia looks seriously at Elizabeth. They GIGGLE.

INT. PETERHOF PALACE - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Standing next to a small, but ornate table, Svetlana pours tea into a glass from a samovar.

She walks up behind Vladimir carefully not to spill the tea, places it on the desk next to him.

Leaning over to hug her cheek to his, a gold heart-shaped pendant on a black velvet choker emerges.

She looks out the window, sees Elizabeth, proudly smiles.

SVETLANA

She has become a beautiful young woman, has she not?

Vladimir smiles as he nods while watching Elizabeth.

VLADIMIR

Most definitely so.

EXT. PETERHOF PALACE - GARDENS - DAY

Elizabeth and the royal children walk to the railing overlooking the cascading palatial waters.

They sit on a bench as they listen to a handsome musician playing SOFT MUSIC on his BALALAIKA.

Elizabeth has a beautiful smiling face, and seems smitten by him. She imitates Maria's flirtatious ritual.

SUPER: 1917

EXT. ST. PETERSBURG STREETS - DAY

Thousands of furious Russian MEN, WOMEN, and CHILDREN (in long coats to the ankles, men wear hats, women wear babushkas) carry flags and signs as they demonstrate. Their SHOUTS fill the air like thunder.

ALL MEN

Down with the war!

ALL WOMEN

Daite Khleb. Give us more bread!

MEN, WOMEN, CHILDREN

Down with the Tsar!

INT. MONPLAISIR KITCHEN - DAY

Chef Cubat supervises twenty-four-year-old Elizabeth stuff and roll cabbage as Svetlana, at the stove, adds vegetables to a pan of boiling water.

ELIZABETH

Why are they rioting, Mama?

Svetlana shakes her head with a furrowed brow.

SVETLANA

They're hungry.

CHEF CUBAT

They feel Nicholas doesn't care about them because he's spending money on a war that nobody wants. He should take care of his own people.

Svetlana looks worried, looks at Elizabeth.

SVETLANA

I hope Vladimir comes home soon.

Elizabeth nods with a worried look.

EXT. NEAR THE BATTLEFRONT - DAY

Nicholas (in long, belted, heavy Cossack fur coat, sword clipped to belt, tall Cossack hat) rides a beautiful white horse. He leads a troop of the Imperial Army. The horses' breaths can be seen in the freezing cold air as it snows lightly.

Vladimir (in belted Cossack coat, Ushanka hat) rides a brown horse behind the Tsar.

At the top of a hill, they approach a General (long trench

belted coat, general cap) standing next to his horse staring at a field below.

Nicholas looks with gaping mouth in horror at...

...the seemingly endless field of dead bodies. Snow falls on some bodies already frozen. Wounded soldiers walk around dazed like zombies. Snow falls on some bodies already frozen.

FROST forms as everyone speaks.

TSAR NICHOLAS

How many men did we lose?

GENERAL

About twenty thousand, Your Majesty.

Nicholas shakes his head sadly.

A teenaged Courier arrives on horseback.

He takes a telegram out of his satchel, leans down, hands it to Vladimir.

Vladimir reads it with a furrowed brow, rushes to the Tsar.

VLADIMIR

Your Majesty, it says the people are uprising at Petrograd and are demanding an end to the war. Women are also demanding you feed the children bread. Commander Khabalov wants to know your orders.

TSAR NICHOLAS

Tell him to use all necessary force.

Vladimir looks down at the telegram sadly, then looks up at the Tsar.

VLADIMIR

19.

But, Sire, these people are hungry. You would kill them just because they are demanding bread?

Nicholas stops, turns around, pokes his index finger into Vladimir's chest.

Vladimir gulps, eyes widen as he fears he is about to be shot.

TSAR NICHOLAS

You will write what I said!

Vladimir looks dejected, but nods frantically over and over.

INT. IMPERIAL TRAIN - NIGHT

Tsar Nicholas, wearing his imperial bathrobe, enters the ornately decorated salon car.

Vladimir, in a plain robe closely behind him, dons his glasses.

Minister of War ALEXANDER GUCHKOV (also wears glasses, bushy mustache ends in a finely trimmed short beard, suit and tie) has have been waiting with two generals in uniform.

TSAR NICHOLAS

What is so important, Minister Guchkov, that you disturb me at this hour?

ALEXANDER GUCHKOV

(waving a letter)

Sign this.

Nicholas gestures to hand it to Vladimir, which he does.

Guchkov looks around at the thick upholstered walls and Art Nouveau furniture. He SCOFFS.

Vladimir stares at the Tsar a few seconds before speaking sadly.

VLADIMIR
Sire, by signing this, you
agree to abdicate.

The impatient Minister snatches the letter from Vladimir,
shoves it into the Tsar's chest.

ALEXANDER GUCHKOV
Sign this, or I will kill you
here and now!

Nicholas has a far-away look for a few seconds. He picks
up a pen from his desk, leans over, reluctantly signs it.

INT. WINTER PALACE - KITCHEN - DAY

Svetlana and Cubat are busy cooking in the white tiled
kitchen. Vladimir rushes in.

VLADIMIR
Bolsheviks are on their way!
Quick, Svetlana, we must go!
Where's Lizzie?

EXT. WINTER PALACE - DAY

Hundreds of BOLSHEVIKS on horseback, wave their rifles,
yell as they swiftly approach the palace.

BOLSHEVIK #1
Let's go, Comrades!

BOLSHEVIK #2
Down with the Tsar!

BOLSHEVIK #3
Power to the people!

Vladimir, Svetlana, and Elizabeth (25), flee out a secret
side entrance.

LOUD SCREAMS and GUNSHOTS are heard throughout the palace.

ELIZABETH
Why must we go? Why do they
want to kill us?

VLADIMIR

No time for questions. We need
to go. Quickly, this way.

As they run along a dirt road next to a forest, Elizabeth
hears GUNSHOTS, frightfully looks back, sees horsemen
approach.

ELIZABETH

Papa, horses!

VLADIMIR

Run!

The horsemen are too close. Vladimir shoves Svetlana and
Elizabeth to the side of the road.

They fall, get up, run into the forest looking back at
Vladimir.

Vladimir freezes in fear as a horseman is about to run into
him. He backs up quickly, falls backwards onto the ground.

The horse stops in front of him. It stands on its hind legs
and BRAYS as it shifts its front legs in the air.

Elizabeth covers her mouth to prevent herself from
screaming. Svetlana tries to run to her husband. Elizabeth
pulls her back, shakes her head "no".

Vladimir's eyes widen in fear as he watches the horse's
foot coming down in SLOW FREEZE FRAMES towards him.

He closes his eyes tightly.

CLOSE ON

The horse's foot lands just missing Vladimir's head BY ONE
INCH.

Vladimir opens his eyes.

END CLOSE UP.

He quickly rolls to the side of the road, then runs as fast
as he can to join his family.

He looks back fearfully through the trees, sees the Bolshevik turn around headed back with his gun out of its holster.

VLADIMIR

Run! Hide!

The Bolshevik stops his horse, scans the forest for any movement.

Seeing nothing, he FIRES A SHOT in the air, then gallops off to join the others.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The Kaminskayas walk through the forest over fallen branches, around fallen trees, around rocks, up a hill, down a ravine.

ELIZABETH

Papa, I'm tired.

VLADIMIR

Okay, we'll rest.

As they rest, Svetlana removes her shoes, rubs her feet.

SVETLANA

Where are we going, Vladimir?
We have no home. What is your
plan?

VLADIMIR

My brother Moyshe has a farm in
the west.

He looks at Elizabeth.

VLADIMIR (CONT'D)

You will love Moyshe, Lizzie. He
has a wonderful sense of humor.
And a farm. Oy, such a farm. Lots
of room for us to build a home.
And animals. So many animals.

ELIZABETH
How far is it, Papa?

VLADIMIR
It should take another three or
four days to get there. Five maybe.
Okay, six or seven at the most.

He looks around, points.

VLADIMIR (CONT'D)
We need to keep going this
direction.

He looks up at the sun, points in a different direction.

VLADIMIR (CONT'D)
No, this way. We follow the
setting sun until we get to
the river. Then follow it, and
head north. Now come, let's go.

Svetlana puts her shoes back on.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

The Kaminskayas walk until they come to a clearing.

They hear the sound of children LAUGHING, CREAKING wooden
wheels, horses NEIGHING, SNORTING, and BRAYING.

They see a small caravan with horse-drawn wagons and carts,
some people riding bicycles, some pushing wheelbarrows full
of items.

Many children walk alongside with their parents. Some women
wear babushkas on their head, some wear shawls.

The Kaminskayas swiftly walk over to the caravan.

Svetlana and Elizabeth smile, nod at everyone as Vladimir
speaks to three men (inaudible), then shakes their hands.

They join the caravan with everyone quietly walking,
totally fatigued.

As they walk, a little girl, MISHA (pretty smile, large brown eyes, curly brown hair) walks up alongside Elizabeth. She carries a white rabbit.

MISHA

Would you like to hold Latke?

ELIZABETH

Yes, sure. I would love to hold him.

Misha laughs, hands her the rabbit.

MISHA

Latke's a girl, silly.

ELIZABETH

Yes, how silly of me. My name's Lizzie, short for Elizabeth. What's your name?

MISHA

I'm Misha.

They continue walking with Elizabeth stroking Latke.

MISHA (CONT'D)

Latke is very smart. She will come to you if you call her name.

As the sun is about to set, the caravan stops.

The men gather twigs to make a fire as the women prepare food.

Elizabeth hands Latke back to Misha.

Misha kisses Latke between the ears. Several children run past her carrying handkerchiefs and other pieces of cloth.

Elizabeth and Svetlana watch the children spread them over tall grass in the nearby field.

ELIZABETH

25.

(to Misha)

What are they doing?

MISHA

They do this every night. The cloth collects the morning dew. Then you wring them out, and you have water.

ELIZABETH

(smiles to Svetlana)

Of course.

EXT. ON ROAD - NIGHT

Everyone in the caravan sits around the large campfire, eating, with unintelligible talking.

A middle-aged overweight woman named ANYA (wears a small head scarf) sees Vladimir and his family huddled around the campfire with no food taking glimpses of the others eating.

She looks at her bald husband, who nods approvingly.

The woman smiles, scoops bowls of soup for them out of her kettle. She and her husband bring the bowls to them.

SVETLANA

Thank you. That is very kind of you.

The woman sits next to them as they devour their soup while her husband goes back to their wagon.

ANYA

I'm Anya, and that loveable man over there is my husband Avraam. We are from Petrograd. My husband and I are going to Riga and then sail to Finland.

Vladimir nods as he continues SLURPING his soup.

SVETLANA

We are headed west to my brother-in-law's farm.

Svetlana notices Anya smile at Elizabeth.

SVETLANA (CONT'D)

Do you have any children?

She shakes her head sadly.

ANYA

No, they were killed during
the demonstrations.

Svetlana and Elizabeth exchange looks, then look back at Anya.

SVETLANA

I'm so sorry.

ANYA

Yes, well, I blame the Tsar.

Vladimir looks at Svetlana, signals with a finger to his mouth for her to say nothing.

Svetlana nods.

Anya collects the empty soup bowls from each of them.

ANYA (CONT'D)

You can sleep under our wagon.
It'll protect you from the
night dampness. We'll give you
some blankets.

VLADIMIR

Most kind of you. Thank you.

Avraam plays his VIOLIN. Others play an ACCORDIAN, BANDURA,
and a BALALAIKA.

Everyone SINGS, dances, LAUGHS.

Men pass around bottles of VODKA, drink from the bottles.

EXT. ON ROAD - DAY

The caravan continues in a single line down a curved dirt

road. A young male SCOUT rides ahead on his horse.

The Scout hears HORSES and men's VOICES approaching.

He stops abruptly, dismounts, cautiously looks through bushes around the corner.

He spies a troop of soldiers marching toward the caravan.

He swiftly mounts his horse, GALLOPS back.

He alerts everyone as he rides from the front to the end of the caravan. He repeats over and over to everyone.

SCOUT

Soldiers are heading right
toward us. We cannot continue!

Vladimir frantically looks over at the forest nearby.

VLADIMIR

(to his family)

Come. We'll go through the forest.

Others abandon their wagons, hide wherever they can. Most hide beneath the five-foot tall rye growing nearby.

Many follow Vladimir's family, including Misha carrying Latke. They scatter.

Those with horse-drawn carts remove the horse's reins from the cart. They follow the Scout, and flee.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The Kaminskayas crouch below bushes, anxiously watch the soldiers march by.

They hear LOUD SCREAMS, lots of GUNSHOTS, and with each gunshot, Elizabeth winces.

They wait a long time after the last GUNSHOT, then look at each other. Vladimir nods. They stand and walk cautiously.

After only a few steps, they hear a RUSTLE OF LEAVES, then

TWIGS SNAP behind them. They freeze with eyes wide in dreaded fear.

Vladimir slowly raises his hands. Svetlana and Elizabeth copy.

They all GULP in unison.

After a few quiet seconds, they turn around slowly, fearing they are about to be shot.

They see no one except... the rabbit.

Svetlana and Vladimir almost faint.

ELIZABETH

It's Latke! Come here, Latke.

Latke obeys, hops toward Elizabeth.

Elizabeth picks her up, looks back through the trees hoping to see Misha.

She fears Misha was shot, sadly looks at the rabbit, hugs it.

The Kaminskayas continue silently walking with Elizabeth carrying Latke.

They cross a road, enter the forest on the other side.

EXT. FOREST - SUNSET

The Kaminskayas stop after walking for miles.

VLADIMIR

We'll camp here for the night.

Svetlana drops to the ground totally fatigued.

They all take off their shoes, rub their sore feet.

VLADIMIR (CONT'D)

The river should be close.

He looks at Svetlana and Elizabeth.

VLADIMIR (CONT'D)

If anything, God forbid, happens
to separate us...

Elizabeth looks worriedly at her mother.

VLADIMIR (CONT'D)

...ask anyone in the village where
Moyshe lives. They will direct
you to his farm.

SVETLANA

What are we going to do for food,
Vladimir? I'm hungry.

VLADIMIR

We will eat what the land
provides. Insects, plants, moss...

He doesn't finish his sentence.

Elizabeth looks up at Vladimir, sees him staring at Latke.

Her lip quivers. Tears flow down her cheeks as she hugs
Latke dearly. She lowers her head, slowly extends Latke to
him, then closes her eyes knowing what's about to happen.

As Vladimir SNAPS the rabbit's neck, Elizabeth's body
shudders.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Vladimir looks at Elizabeth staring at Latke being cooked
on a spit over a small campfire.

VLADIMIR

I'm sorry, Lizzie, but we have
to eat.

ELIZABETH

I know, Papa.

VLADIMIR

Let's gather branches and leaves
to cover ourselves.

They cover themselves, and fall asleep.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The Kaminskayas leave the campfire smoldering and continue walking. Svetlana reties the babushka over her head as she walks.

Suddenly they hear VOICES. They crouch down in fear. Vladimir silences his family with a quivering finger.

The VOICES get closer. A YOUNG BOLSHEVIK YELLS.

YOUNG BOLSHEVIK

Over here!

The Kaminskayas panic, and bolt.

Svetlana's skirt gets caught on a branch. She frantically tries to free herself, cries out to Vladimir.

SVETLANA

Vladimir, I'm stuck!

Vladimir and Elizabeth stop, quickly turn around.

Svetlana hears a GUN COCKING, turns her head, sees the Bolshevik's gun pointed at her. Look of terror on her face.

SVETLANA (CONT'D)

Please, I beg you, no!

He spits in her face.

Vladimir and Elizabeth watch with shock as the Bolshevik SHOTS her point blank in the head. Her babushka becomes bloody.

Elizabeth's SCREAM fills the air.

ELIZABETH

Mama!

Two other Bolsheviks in the forest stop, run in the direction of Elizabeth's scream.

Elizabeth desperately tries to rush back to her mother, but Vladimir grabs her arm, pulls her towards him. She tries to fight him off.

VLADIMIR

No, Lizzie. We can't stop.
They'll kill us, too.

ELIZABETH

But Mama! We can't leave her!

VLADIMIR

There's nothing we can do. Now
run, Lizzie! Run!

The Bolshevik SHOOTs Svetlana one more time as the other men run up to him.

YOUNG BOLSHEVIK

(pointing with chin)

They're over there.

The two men pursue Vladimir and Elizabeth.

The Young Bolshevik bends over, snatches the velvet choker with heart-shaped pendant from Svetlana's neck, pockets it.

He opens his fly, urinates on her.

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

Vladimir and Elizabeth frantically run to a high river bank. They look down at the 45-foot-wide deep river below.

Vladimir fearfully looks back at the men quickly approaching.

VLADIMIR

Do you think you can hold your
breath under water until you
get to the other side, Lizzie?

I will try, Papa.

The men aim again, but trees are in their way.

Vladimir pockets his glasses, grabs her hand. They jump into the river.

The men quickly reach the river bank, SHOOT at them.

EXT. UNDER WATER - DAY

As Elizabeth and Vladimir swim underwater, bullets zip past them.

CLOSE ON

ONE BULLET moves slowly in freeze frames, just misses Elizabeth BY ONE INCH.

END CLOSE UP.

Her eyes widen in fear as she panics. She stops swimming for a moment, then her adrenaline helps her swim faster.

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

On the other side of the river, Vladimir and Elizabeth swim up to the surface, gasp for air. Branches hang down towards the river covering their faces.

They hold onto branches so the fast-moving river doesn't take them away. Only their faces are above water line.

The Bolsheviks don't see them. They continue to SHOOT into the river.

A TALL BOLSHEVIK uses binoculars to scan the river, as a SHORT BOLSHEVIK watches a branch float by.

SHORT BOLSHEVIK

They must have drowned. Let's go.

TALL BOLSHEVIK

We can't go until they are
(MORE)

TALL BOLSHEVIK (CONT'D)
confirmed dead, or we'll hear
it from the Commander.

He scans the forest on the other side of the river.

TALL BOLSHEVIK (CONT'D)
Where are you? Come on. You
can't get away from us.

They only hear the sound of the RIVER and TREES RUSTLING
in the wind.

Vladimir notices Elizabeth quietly crying.

VLADIMIR
Are you okay? You're not shot?

Elizabeth shakes her head.

ELIZABETH
They killed Mama. Why, Papa?
I don't understand. Mama's
dead. Why?

Vladimir looks down sadly, then looks into her eyes.

He looks back at the soldiers, then back at her again.

VLADIMIR
Give me your skirt, Lizzie.

ELIZABETH
My skirt? Why?

VLADIMIR
Because they're not going to
give up until they're certain
we're dead.

Elizabeth takes a deep breath, removes her skirt under
water.

She comes up, holds onto a branch with one hand, her
skirt with the other. She hands it to him.

VLADIMIR (CONT'D)

When you're sure they're gone,
(pointing with his chin)
go that way following the river
until it turns to the left. No,
to the right. Yes. It turns to
the right, Lizzie. Got it?

ELIZABETH

But you're coming with me, right?

He doesn't answer.

She looks at him fearfully realizing what he's about to do.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Papa, please. Don't leave me!
Please, Papa.

VLADIMIR

Listen to me. You can do this,
Lizzie. Then follow the sun
as it sets in the west. The
west, Lizzie.

He reaches his pant pocket underwater, takes out his wet
wallet.

VLADIMIR (CONT'D)

Give this wallet to Moyshe and
tell him to get you a ticket to
America to stay with your cousin
Galina and her husband.

He searches her eyes.

VLADIMIR (CONT'D)

I want you to have a better,
safer life. Get married, Lizzie.
Have lots of children. I know
you'll make me proud.

She shakes her head.

ELIZABETH

Papa, no! Please.

VLADIMIR

Be brave, Lizzie. I do this for
you so you will have a chance
at life. If I don't do this,
we'll both be killed.

ELIZABETH

Papa! I beg you. Please don't
do this! I love you.

She clings to him tightly refusing to let go.

He pushes her back, stares into her eyes, kisses her
tenderly on the forehead, stares again.

VLADIMIR

My love will be with you
wherever you are.

He pulls a branch, and lets the river float him away.

As Vladimir floats, he uses the branch to hold Elizabeth's
skirt at water level.

The Bolsheviks see what looks like two people floating.

SHORT BOLSHEVIK

There they are!

Vladimir is SHOT dead in the river still clinging to
Lizzie's BULLET-RIDDEN SKIRT. The water turns RED.

Elizabeth sees the blood and her father floating away.

She holds both hands over her mouth to keep from crying
out. She reaches one arm out to him, then covers her mouth
with it, and quietly sobs hysterically.

TALL BOLSHEVIK

We got 'em. Now we can go.

Elizabeth watches the soldiers leave, but waits. She closes
her eyes, shakes her head over and over in disbelief.

Wearing only her long-sleeved blouse, petticoat, and

buckled shoes, she struggles to climb out of the river using branches to help.

She slips on mud, then finally reaches the top of the river bank.

She has an expression of overwhelming shock as she realizes all she has lost... family... friends. She drops to her knees, and looks sadly back at the river. Her lips quiver as she wipes her eyes with the back of her hand.

Elizabeth SIGHS deeply, then stands.

She walks slowly along the river bank for a long time until she notices it turns right.

Just before sunset, she gathers leaves and branches.

EXT. RIVER BANK - NIGHT

Elizabeth covers herself with the branches.

Her eyes try to close, but she fights them when she hears NOISES, fearful they might be from Bolsheviks.

The sound of the RIVER lulls her to sleep.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Elizabeth awakens to the sounds of BIRDS SINGING. She watches a bird hop among fallen leaves.

She rises, walks to the river. She cups her hand to drink.

She turns around, walks into the forest. She crosses her arms, rubs them for warmth.

She steps around fallen branches, plants, and holes.

Nearing a dirt road, she HEARS HORSES NEIGHING. She quickly drops to the ground in muddy water.

After Bolsheviks pass, she rises. MOSQUITOS attack her over and over. She swats at them, slaps them off her body.

Elizabeth walks to the road. She checks both directions, scratches her legs and neck. She sees no one, then hobbles across the road, continuous to scratch as she walks.

She spies MOSS by a tree, sits to eat it. While she eats, she notices mud next to her. She rubs it on her mosquito bites.

She rises, walks on.

She stops just before sunset, tears her sleeve off, lays it out in the open to catch the morning dew. She gathers leaves and branches to construct her bed.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Elizabeth can't sleep. The branches covering her move as she scratches all night.

She listens to the SOUNDS OF OWLS and WOOLVES HOWLING.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Elizabeth rises, checks the sleeve. She squeezes a couple drops, then tucks it into her waist.

She walks on yawning constantly. Her eyes try to close as she drags her feet.

Her STOMACH GROWLS. She looks around for food, but finds nothing. She starts to hallucinate.

ELIZABETH

Yes, Your Majesty. I would love
some more tea, and if you please,
another slice of my mother's
honey cake.

She carefully climbs up a hill.

At the top, she looks at the sun and points which way is west. She looks at the great expanse of forest over hills that she must cross. Seems overwhelming. She SIGHS heavily.

She cautiously tries to navigate down the hill, but slips and slides downward on her stomach.

Dazed for a moment, she doesn't move.

She slowly sits up and WINCES from the pain. She notices her dirty petticoat is sopping blood from her thigh. Her hand shakes as she raises it revealing a large cut.

She removes the ribbon from her braid, uses the sleeve as a bandage, ties the ribbon to hold the sleeve in place.

She gets up gingerly. Her braid unravels as she limps.

She picks up a branch, removes smaller branches, and uses it as a walking stick. She MOANS and GRUNTS as she limps. With smaller, painful steps, she continues.

Totally exhausted, she gingerly sits with her back against a tree for support. Struggling to keep her eyes open, she falls asleep before nightfall.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Elizabeth sleeps fitfully, talks in her sleep.

ELIZABETH

Why Papa? Why?

She is awakened by the sound of strong WIND. The chilly air causes goosebumps on her skin, and the cold seeps through her clothes sending shivers down her spine as she watches the trees sway.

She huddles against the tree to shield her, and crosses her arms for warmth. She bows her head and CRIES herself to sleep.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

A ray of sunshine on her face awakens Elizabeth lying next to the tree.

Her arms and hair are full of ANTS. She frantically scratches her head to get them out of her hair, then

brushes them off her body.

She finds a spot, lifts her skirt, squats, urinates.

As she walks, she looks around for something to eat. Finds nothing.

She steps around ant hills and spider webs, brushes one web out of her hair, then walks out of the forest.

She spies a STUMP, walks toward it. She rests on the stump, takes her shoe off, sees a blister.

On the ground to the side of her foot, she notices a BEETLE. She picks it up and contorts her face as she swallows it.

She watches as a flock of GEESE fly in the dark cloudy sky. She closes her eyes, shakes her head, CRIES toward the sky.

ELIZABETH

Papa, I can't do this anymore.
I'm so tired... and hungry... and
thirsty.

She stops crying, wipes her tears with the bottom of her petticoat.

She looks out at the expanse of fields in front of her, and then, in the distance she sees... a cabbage field.

She can't believe her eyes, forcefully blinks to make sure she's not dreaming.

She quickly looks around for a leaf, covers her blister, dons her shoe. She sprints to the field. Adrenaline prevents her from feeling any pain.

EXT. CABBAGE FIELD - NIGHT

Elizabeth plops down in the field, quickly devours some cabbage. It starts to rain. She looks up, smiles at the sky.

ELIZABETH

Thank you, Papa.

She rolls some cabbage leaves like a cup to catch the rain water, and drinks one, two, three cupfuls as the rain drips down her face.

She stands, extends her arms out, twirls around in circles. She GIGGLES as her hair and clothes become dripping wet.

Suddenly the rain stops and a ray of sunlight kisses her forehead. She stops twirling, closes her eyes, and lifts her chin letting the sun warm her face.

She EXHALES A LONG BREATH of relief.

She lies down and falls asleep with, for the first time, a gentle smile that reflects her contentment.

EXT. CABBAGE FIELD - DAY

When Elizabeth awakens, she eats more cabbage.

She puts cabbage leaves onto her lap until it's full. She tucks the end of her petticoat into her waistband to hold the leaves.

She stands and walks along a dirt road passing fields of wheat, rye, and round bales of hay.

EXT. HAY FIELD - SUNSET

As the sun is about to set, Elizabeth stops at a bale of hay. She sits against it and eats some cabbage.

She opens her father's wallet and studies a photo of herself as a baby with her parents. Her lips quiver. Tears roll down her cheeks while she uses her index finger to stroke her parents' faces.

She lays down, looks up at the clouds between the twinkling stars.

ELIZABETH

Look Maria, that one looks like
my Papa.

Her eyes well. Her voice chokes.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

41.

I miss you, Maria. I miss all of
you.

She fights her eyes to stay open and finally falls asleep.

EXT. WHEAT FIELD - DAY

She walks along the dirt road again, sees a MAN and WOMAN
harvesting wheat.

She excitedly runs to them.

ELIZABETH

(smiling)

Hello. Do you know where I can
find Moyshe Kaminskaya's farm?

They look her up and down with gaping mouths, astonished to
see her disheveled hair full of hay, torn blouse, petticoat
full of cabbage leaves, and exposed legs with one bandaged.

Elizabeth notices their look. She lowers her petticoat to
cover her legs dropping the leaves.

They don't know what to say, point to a nearby pasture.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Spacebo.

EXT. MOYSHE'S PASTURE - DAY

Elizabeth power walks until she sees a man in the distance.

She can hardly believe she found him. She sprints.

A dirty, thinner, weaker Elizabeth finally approaches
MOYSHE (reddish beard and mustache like Vladimir, glasses,
wearing a vyshyvanka shirt, belt, baggy pants, boots, and
cap) as he spreads hay for his cows.

She stops in front of him. A silent moment as her body
trembles, her lips quiver, she cries hysterically as she
speaks.

ELIZABETH

Are you Moyshe Kaminskaya?

He stops, is taken aback at her appearance.

MOYSHE

Da. And you are?

ELIZABETH

Elizabeth. I am your brother's
daughter.

As she tells him what happened (inaudible dialogue), Moyshe collapses to his knees. He removes his glasses, CRIES. Uses his elbow to wipe his tears.

Elizabeth also gets on her knees.

He holds her hands as he looks at her. He hugs her tightly. They CRY together.

Moyshe stands.

Elizabeth is too weak, struggles to stand. He helps her up.

With one arm around her, he guides her to his wagon.

He helps her up, then flicks the reins for the chestnut draft horse to go.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Moyshe pulls on the reins for his horse to stop in front of an old two-story weather-worn wooden house with grass growing on its roof.

A horned GOAT with a long beard stands on the roof happily munching his lunch.

MOYSHE

Sasha, get down!

Elizabeth smiles as she looks around.

There are two long handmade wooden benches along the front of the house, lots of baskets, hanging onions, and barrels to collect rainwater.

Between the house and huge barn is a well supplying fresh

water. Lots of Pavlovskaja and Orloff CLUCKING CHICKENS everywhere.

INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

As Moyshe and Elizabeth enter, she notices four small children playing with a piglet on the floor.

A middle-aged woman in traditional embroidered Sarafan costume and shawl stops cooking. . She looks over and is also shocked at Elizabeth's appearance.

The children cower behind her, terrified at what they see.

MOYSHE

(to Elizabeth)

This is my wife, Katya, Ivan is twelve, Rebecca nine, Mikhail seven, and Dmitri, four.

(to everyone)

This is my niece, Elizabeth.

KATYA's face softens. She walks over with the children walking behind her holding onto her apron.

She kisses Elizabeth on both cheeks, covers her with her shawl.

KATYA

Welcome. Welcome.

MOYSHE

She's hungry, Katya. Give her some *tyurya*.

KATYA

Da. Da. Come, sit.

Moyshe and Elizabeth sit at the table as the children go back to playing with the piglet, but keep eyeing Elizabeth.

Katya prepares a bowl, places it in front of Elizabeth along with homemade bread.

Starving, Elizabeth devours the soup, dips the bread to sop up every drop.

KATYA (CONT'D)

Where are your parents? Did
they not come with you?

Elizabeth stops eating, looks sadly at the bowl.

ELIZABETH

(sotto voce)

My mother and father were killed
by Bolsheviks as we fled.

Katya puts her hand over her mouth in disbelief, shakes her head.

Elizabeth has a far-away look as she puts an elbow on the table, chews her thumbnail.

Moyshe sees this, waves a finger at Katya not to say another word.

MOYSHE

Let's not talk about this now.
You eat.

EXT. BARN - DAY

Elizabeth wears her hair in a bun, an apron over her blouse with a simple skirt, boots, scarf. She looks like a peasant girl now. She smiles broadly at Katya as they milk cows.

KATYA

Do you miss the palace?

Elizabeth stands, fills a METAL BOTTLE with the milk, looks at her weathered hands. She wipes the sweat on her forehead with her sleeve.

ELIZABETH

Strangely, no. This is my new
home now, and I love all of you.

She watches Moyshe and the boys shear the sheep.

She walks over, gets a rake, cleans the stalls.

INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Elizabeth hands plates of freshly baked honey cake to everyone sitting around the fireplace. Faces light up as they eat.

KATYA

Ah. This is good!

Elizabeth sits down next to Katya.

ELIZABETH

I have good memories of my mother teaching me how to make this honey cake.

KATYA

(chewing with open mouth)

I will show you how to preserve fruit, maybe add them to the cake.

MOYSHE

Katya trades her kompot in the village for supplies. You can trade your honey cake for what you need.

ELIZABETH

Really? Then I can get some new clothes.

Elizabeth looks at Katya nodding.

She rests her head on Katya's shoulder, watches the fire.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Everyone in the village trades goods outdoors like a flea market with lots of horse-drawn wagons and carts all lined up next to each other filled with food, clothes, tools.

Shops have outdoor tables. Some people trade or sell goods from their wheelbarrows.

Elizabeth stands next to Katya in front of a wooden table full of clothes. She holds up a pretty white cotton blouse

and a long blue velvet skirt in front of her.

ELIZABETH

This should fit. What do you
think, Katya?

Katya nods, looks at the seller.

KATYA

We will give you a delicious
honey cake with kompot for both.

The seller nods.

Moyshe sees a crowd gathering around someone.

He walks over, listens, then rushes with a frightened look
toward Elizabeth and Katya.

MOYSHE

The Bolsheviks just killed the
Tsar, his wife, and the children!

Look of horror on Katya and Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

What? All of them?

Moyshe nods over and over quickly.

Elizabeth's face pales.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Olga?

Moyshe looks in her eyes, sadly, slowly nods.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

And Maria?

She sways, then faints.

Moyshe catches her before she hits the ground.

MOYSHE

47.

(to Katya)

They are searching for anyone
who lived with the Romanovs!
Quick, we go home.

INT. FARMHOUSE - UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - DAY

Katya hands Elizabeth a small suitcase, rushes downstairs.

Elizabeth quickly packs, including the new blouse and
skirt.

She struggles with the suitcase down the narrow staircase.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Moyshe waits by his horse-drawn cart, stuffs papers and
money into his pockets.

Elizabeth hands him the suitcase.

MOYSHE

I will take you to the train for
America.

(to Katya)

You stay, take care of farm.

Katya nods.

Moyshe puts the suitcase on the cart, gets on.

Katya takes her shawl off, places it on Elizabeth's head,
then strokes Elizabeth's cheek.

ELIZABETH

Oh no, Katya. I couldn't take
your favorite shawl.

KATYA

I want you to have it.

She reaches out, holds Katya's hands, looks into her eyes.

ELIZABETH

I will cherish it always. You've
been like a mother to me.

Katya puts her hands on each side of Elizabeth's face, smiles, as she stares into her eyes.

KATYA

Send us a telegram when you get
to America.

ELIZABETH

I will. And I promise I will
write you a letter every day.

Elizabeth looks at the children, gets on her knees down at their level. She motions for a group hug.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

I love you all, and I will miss
you and your little piglet,
Schnitzel.

Elizabeth stands. Katya moves in closer, hands her a basket.

KATYA

Here, for your journey. Your
honey cake, my kompot, and some
sandwiches.

ELIZABETH

Spasibo. Thank you for everything.

Katya kisses her on each cheek before hugging her tightly, then makes herself release her.

Elizabeth gets onto the wagon, sits with basket on her lap.

She inhales, exhales a long, deep BREATH as she takes a last look at the farm.

Moyshe urges his horse to go.

Elizabeth waves.

The children run behind the wagon until they cannot run any more. They stop and wave.

INT. TICKET OFFICE - DAY

Moyshe and Elizabeth walk up to a pudgy CLERK with a walrus mustache sitting behind a wooden counter.

Moyshe eyes the Clerk eating pryaniki (gingerbread). He slides Elizabeth's papers toward the Clerk.

MOYSHE

I need passage to America for
my daughter. Third class.

Elizabeth looks at Moyshe, smiles at being called his daughter.

The Clerk slowly licks his fingers. He looks sternly at Moyshe, slides the papers back to him.

CLERK

Sorry, all ships are full.

Moyshe snatches the papers, walks away angrily, but Elizabeth doesn't follow. He stops, looks back at her.

She stares at the Clerk who takes another bite of his pryaniki, chewing with mouth open.

Moyshe shakes his head, walks back, stands next to her.

Elizabeth looks down dejectedly, SIGHS HEAVILY, slowly lifts her head.

ELIZABETH

I see you are a man who
appreciates good food.

She puts her basket on the counter. She lifts the cloth covering the food, breaks off a piece of the honey cake.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

I can assure you this will be
the best honey cake you will
ever taste.

She places the piece of cake on the counter in front of the Clerk.

The Clerk looks at it. He smacks his lips, wipes his fingers on his vest.

He takes a bite of the cake and closes his eyes. As he savors it, the rich moist flavor brings a smile to his face. He opens his eyes.

Elizabeth holds up the rest of the cake.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
Please, Sir. I'd like to go to
America.

It is silent for a moment as he eyes the cake. He looks down at his ledger.

CLERK
The Hellig Olav departs from
Kristiania. You will need to take
the train to Tallinn, then ferry
across. Is that okay?

Elizabeth looks at Moyshe.

He nods.

She smiles broadly, hands the Clerk the rest of the honey cake.

Moyshe slides Elizabeth's papers to him.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM - DAY

Elizabeth and Moyshe watch a steam train slowly pull up, stop.

MOYSHE
I know your parents are looking
down with pride.

Elizabeth's eyes start to well, she smiles clenching her lips together to keep from crying.

MOYSHE (CONT'D)
You're strong, Lizzie. I know
(MORE)

MOYSHE (CONT'D)
you will take care of yourself.
You will survive.

He hands her a piece of folded, faded paper.

MOYSHE (CONT'D)
This is cousin Galinda's address
in New York. I will send her a
telegram of your arrival.

Elizabeth nods in understanding.

He pulls out her father's wallet from his pocket, gives it
to her.

MOYSHE (CONT'D)
There is enough money here
to help pay for what you need.

Elizabeth clutches the wallet to her heart. Tears slowly
flow down her cheeks. She wipes a tear from one eye with
her finger.

ELIZABETH
Thank you with all my heart for
taking care of me. I will never
forget you, Moyshe. You have...

The loud Conductor's WHISTLE interrupts her. They stare at
each other, then hug tightly, neither one wanting to let go

Elizabeth boards the train. Moyshe hands her the suitcase
and basket. He waves goodbye over and over.

She blows him a kiss, goes inside.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Elizabeth finds a seat near an open window, quickly leans
out the window, waves to Moyshe.

She cries uncontrollably knowing that, like her father, she
will never see him again.

The train's WHISTLE BLOWS just before the train CHUGS away.

INT. TALLINN TRAIN TERMINAL - DAY

52.

Elizabeth exits the train.

She notices the SIGN with an arrow for the ferry, walks toward the exit carrying her suitcase and basket.

EXT. TALLINN DOCK - DAY

Elizabeth approaches the ferry's black AGENT (with white bushy lambchops beard, a yellow hooded rain jacket with hood down) who stands by the gangplank and smokes a pipe.

ELIZABETH

Is this the ferry to Kristiania?

AGENT

Aye, 'tis.

He notices her fearfully looking up at the two white masts contrasting the dark cloudy sky behind them.

AGENT (CONT'D)

Don't worry about the sails, luv.
She'll get you there.

ELIZABETH

I've never been on a ship before.

She smiles, shows him her stamped contract.

AGENT

Well, welcome aboard.
(pointing to gangplank)
Go right on, luv.

She looks at the gangplank, then back at the agent. She smiles again, nods a "thank you".

She boards the ferry.

The gangplank is raised. The ship sets sail.

INT. OVERNIGHT FERRY - STATEROOM - DAY

There is nothing but four bunkbeds in the tiny third-class

room. Elizabeth sits up on her bed. The ferry rocks so much it makes her queasy. She puts her hand over her mouth.

Another FEMALE PASSENGER, on her bunkbed across from Elizabeth, notices this.

FEMALE PASSENGER

You don't look so good.

Elizabeth nods slowly trying to keep from upchucking.

ELIZABETH

Is there a doctor on board?

FEMALE PASSENGER

You can go to sickbay. Ask a crewmember where it's at.

INT. OVERNIGHT FERRY - HALLWAY - DAY

Several other seasick passengers wait in line in front of the doctor's office. Elizabeth takes a pail from a pile by the door, sits in line on the floor with her back to the wall.

NATHAN LEIBERMAN (tall, young, handsome, late twenties) has a hard time walking toward the doctor's office as the ferry sways very violently.

He accidentally bumps into Elizabeth's leg. He speaks to her with a German accent.

NATHAN

Oh, excuse me. I don't have my sea legs yet.

Elizabeth manages a half-smile.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

I've sailed the Baltic Sea many times, but this is the first time I've felt sick.

Elizabeth is too nauseous to say anything.

The ship rocks fiercely. He puts his hand over his mouth, grabs a pail, sits down next to her.

EXT. KRISTIANIA PIER - DAY

Elizabeth is happy to disembark the ferry. She carries her suitcase and basket, follows many people toward the ship.

She steps into the road as two 1917 cars speed towards her.

The first car whisks by very closely.

She loses her balance, falls backwards onto her derriere. Her suitcase flies out of her hand. The latch opens spewing her clothes onto the street.

The cars SCREECH to a sudden stop.

Nathan opens the door, rushes toward her.

NATHAN

Are you okay?

She doesn't answer, continues picking up clothes.

He picks up some clothes, hands them to her.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Do you speak English?

Elizabeth looks up at him. Their eyes lock. She smiles at the handsome young man as Nathan stares at her beautiful face.

ELIZABETH

My father taught me five languages.
English was one of them.

NATHAN

You're the girl from the doctor's
office.

ELIZABETH

That was you?

NATHAN
Yes. Are you hurt?

ELIZABETH
No, I don't think so.

NATHAN
We're in a hurry to catch the
Hellig Olav.

ELIZABETH
The Hellig Olav?

He nods.

She smiles excitedly.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
I also have to catch the ship
before it leaves.

NATHAN
Come, ride with us. It's the
least we can do.

ELIZABETH
Okay, yes. Thank you.

He extends his hand. She holds it as he helps her up.

The driver of the second car puts her suitcase and basket
in his car.

INT. CAR - DAY

Fifty-year old HEINRICH LEIBERMAN, (curly beard, wire rim
glasses, brown three-piece suit, and tie) tips his hat
to Elizabeth.

Nathan gets in, sits next to Elizabeth.

NATHAN
I'm Nathan. Nathan Leiberman.
And this is my father, Heinrich,...

Nathan points to Heinrich's forty-something wife, Ida

(thin, in long-sleeved blouse, skirt to her ankles, and small hat).

NATHAN (CONT'D)
...and my mother, Ida.

IDA
(with Yiddish accent)
No English.

ELIZABETH
(in Yiddish with English subtitle)
It's a pleasure to meet you. I'm
Elizabeth Kaminskaya, but you can
call me Lizzie. All my friends do.

The ship's horn BLARES.

HEINRICH
We must be the last ones.

NATHAN
Yes, Papa, but we made it.
(to Elizabeth)
Are you also sailing second-class?

ELIZABETH
No, I'm in third-class.

NATHAN
You seem too refined to be in
third-class.

Before she can reply, they arrive at the check-in table.

EXT. KRISTIANIA DOCK - DAY

The Driver hands Elizabeth her suitcase and basket.

She walks over to the SIGN for third-class, hands her contract to the elderly female CREWMEMBER in ship uniform.

FEMALE CREWMEMBER
You will be sharing a stateroom
with a family of three and
another single woman.

Elizabeth nods in understanding as the Crewmember stamps the contract, hands it to her.

The Leibermans receive a cordial greeting with respect by the middle-aged male PURSER also in ship attire.

Elizabeth mouths, "thank you", waives at Nathan. He smiles, waives back.

Elizabeth heads for the gangway down to the bottom of the ship.

Nathan watches Elizabeth. He can't take his eyes off her.

PURSER

Welcome aboard. After going up the gangway, the Host will have a crewmember direct you to your cabin. Your luggage will be waiting inside your cabin. Here is a map of the ship.

NATHAN

Papa, can I see the map?

The Purser continues with Heinrich and Ida, as Nathan studies the map.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Lizzie. Lizzie, wait! Come back.

Elizabeth turns around, walks back to the pier. Nathan speaks softly so no one will hear.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Lizzie, I have an idea. There is a staircase from your deck to where we are on the second-class deck. You see here?

He points on the map.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Meet me at the top of your staircase after breakfast tomorrow. Okay?

ELIZABETH
Okay, I'll try.

She walks along the gangway again as Nathan returns to the table.

INT. SECOND-CLASS DECK - DAY

Elizabeth wears her new white blouse and blue velvet skirt as she waits at the top of the staircase.

Nathan approaches, smiles when he sees her. He looks around to see if anyone is watching, then unlatches the rope. He politely offers his hand.

She gladly accepts it, steps up onto the second-floor deck.

Nathan kisses her hand, then re-latches the rope.

NATHAN
I was afraid you wouldn't show up.

ELIZABETH
I always keep my promises.

Nathan offers her his elbow, escorts her to the door leading to the outside Promenade.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
Are you sure I'm allowed?

He looks at her outfit.

NATHAN
You'll fit right in.

A totally beaming Elizabeth holds onto his elbow.

EXT. OUTSIDE DECK - DAY

As they walk along the second-class promenade, Nathan and Elizabeth nod to other passengers also out for a stroll. They walk to the rail, watch the ocean.

NATHAN

Why are you traveling alone?
Where's your family?

Elizabeth looks sadly at him.

ELIZABETH

They were killed by Bolsheviks.

Nathan shakes his head sadly, puts a reassuring hand on her arm.

NATHAN

Oh, I'm so sorry.

She nods sadly.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Well, we have a week and a half
before we arrive in America.
Plenty of time to talk. I want
to know everything about you,
Lizzie. I want to know your
dreams, your hopes...

She nods, smiling at that thought.

NATHAN

Let's make a pact to meet every
day after breakfast. Okay?

She smiles, stares into his eyes.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

God, you have the most incredible
eyes.

ELIZABETH

I do?

NATHAN

Yes. They sparkle like diamonds.

Elizabeth GIGGLES, tilts her head, fidgets with her long braid, licks her lips, and smiles like she learned from Maria.

ELIZABETH

60.

Are you always this charming?

NATHAN

I am when I'm with a beautiful
girl like yourself.

Nathan winks. Elizabeth blushes.

They hear music like, "LET ME CALL YOU SWEETHEART" played
by a live band.

Nathan twirls Elizabeth, brings her in close to him. They
gaze into each other's eyes for a long time.

For the moment, Elizabeth's past suffering is forgotten.
She's beaming.

INT. CARD ROOM - DAY

As Elizabeth, Nathan, and his parents play cards, Nathan
and Elizabeth give loving looks.

They play footsie under the table.

Ida and Heinrich take note.

EXT. OUTSIDE DECK - DAY

Nathan and Elizabeth sit on deck chairs with a blanket over
each of them. He takes her hand, kisses it, then holds it.

EXT. OUTSIDE DECK - SUNSET

As Nathan and Elizabeth watch the sunset, he puts his hand
around her waist, draws her close. He stares deeply into
her eyes.

She smiles as she strokes her index finger along his cheek.

They kiss passionately.

EXT. SHIP'S RAILING - DAY

Elizabeth and Nathan hold hands as they watch the ship sail
towards the Statue of Liberty. Nathan's parents stand next
to them.

Nathan turns, looks into Elizabeth's eyes.

NATHAN

Lizzie...

He pauses as he feels his chest. He starts to sweat.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

God, my heart is pounding.

He wipes his sweaty palms on his coat, holds both of her hands, looks into her eyes.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Lizzie, I'm madly in love with
you.

The ship's HORN BLARES loudly. Nathan rolls his eyes at the untimeliness of it.

ELIZABETH

What did you say?

NATHAN

I know we've only known each
other for over a week, but Lizzie,
I love you with every sliver of
my heart. I can't imagine my
life now without you.

His eyes search hers.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

When we land, the thought of you
disappearing into this huge
country and us never seeing each
other again, has my stomach tied
up in knots.

He pauses as he gets down on one knee. Other passengers see this, stop, and watch.

Elizabeth smiles broadly, looks at Ida who smiles, touches her heart.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Elizabeth Kaminskaya, will you
marry me?

Elizabeth looks at Heinrich, who nods approval.

She looks back at Nathan.

ELIZABETH

Yes, I would be proud to.

Everyone APPLAUDS as they kiss for a long time while the
ship's HORN BLARES again.

Elizabeth rests her head on Nathan's shoulder as they sail
past the Statue of Liberty.

EXT. STARBOARD DECK - DAY

As the ship docks, Nathan, his parents, and Elizabeth look
over the rail at the pier.

NATHAN

Lizzie, you have to go through
Ellis Island. We don't have to
because we're second-class. We'll
wait for you there.

(pointing)

You see? Right there. Don't
worry about how long it will
take. We'll wait for you.

Elizabeth nods.

EXT. NEW YORK PIER - DAY

Third-class men in suits and hats, women and young girls in
long dresses and coats, a hat or shawl over their heads,
young boys in shorts to their knees, jackets over tunic
shirts, and caps on their heads, all carry a suitcase or
basket. There is excitement in the air as they disembark
the steamship.

Elizabeth, wearing Katya's shawl over her head, is one of
them.

EXT. ELLIS ISLAND FERRY - DAY

All the wooden bench seats are crammed with the third-class passengers as they are ferried to Ellis Island.

INT. ELLIS ISLAND - GREAT HALL - DAY

The place is packed. It's very noisy with the sounds of DIFFERENT LANGUAGES and CHILDREN CRYING. Elizabeth finds an open seat, looks around while she waits to be called.

Some people COUGH, look sickly.

Elizabeth covers her nose with the end of Katya's shawl.

A Young Man in suit and tie gestures three fingers with one hand and points with the other hand to TABLE 3.

Elizabeth approaches a Caucasian OFFICIAL also in suit and tie sitting at Table 3. She stands facing him.

The Official looks up, studies her sternly.

OFFICIAL

What is your family name?

ELIZABETH

Kaminskaya.

The Official writes in his large ledger.

OFFICIAL

Now it will be Kaminsky.

ELIZABETH

Kaminsky?

The Official looks up at her with a piercing glare.

OFFICIAL

You have a problem with that?

She shakes her head "no" rapidly.

The Official STAMPS the papers, gestures for her to continue to another line.

As she walks toward a sign that reads "MEDICAL SCREENING", she notices two large American flags hanging from the side walls. She smiles proudly.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - DAY

Elizabeth walks up to the Leibermans seated at a bench. Heinrich and Ida are asleep head-to-head. Nathan stands excitedly when he sees her.

Heinrich and Ida open their eyes, smile when they see Nathan and Elizabeth kiss.

They all walk down a busy LOUD street.

They stop, watch with gaping mouths at roar of life:

BEGIN MONTAGE:

- Children play ball in the street, a mix of model-T cars and trucks.
- Men in suits riding bicycles.
- Packed street cars and horse-drawn carts.
- Policemen on horseback.
- Men unloading goods from horse-drawn wagons.
- People selling goods on sidewalks.
- People everywhere.

END MONTAGE.

NATHAN

You see this? This is America.
And we need to adjust to this
if we are going to survive.

(to Ida)

Mama, you need to learn English.

(to Heinrich)

Papa, you and I will have a job.

(to Elizabeth)

And Lizzie...

He whisks her up.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

...we will marry and start our
family.

Elizabeth LAUGHS as he spins her around.

INT. SYNAGOGUE - DAY

Nathan and Elizabeth stand before a Rabbi under a CHUPPAH. Elizabeth wears Katya's shawl over her head.

Nathan steps on a glass.

A very small group of professional Russian dancers cheer, "MAZEL TOV", then dance.

Heinrich and Ida each toast with a glass of wine.

HEINRICH

To love.

IDA

L'Chaim.

Heinrich puts his glass down, extends his hand. They dance.

INT. CLOTHING STORE - DAY

The store is packed with customers buying flapper dresses, fox stoles, nylons, and snakeskin shoes from Nathan,

Heinrich, and Elizabeth.

Business is good. Nathan counts the cash register money, smiles at Elizabeth.

NATHAN

Now is a good time to start our family.

Elizabeth blushes.

INT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Elizabeth lies on her bed drenched in sweat. She SCREAMS, as a MIDWIFE helps deliver the baby. The Midwife and bed are full of blood.

The Midwife cuts the cord, slaps the baby's bottom.

ELIZABETH

66.

What's wrong with it? Why
isn't it crying?

The Midwife shakes her head sadly as she shows Nathan the dead baby, then covers it up. She takes it away as Elizabeth cries.

Nathan is beside himself. He angrily paces rapidly.

NATHAN

I had a son. A son, Lizzie!

ELIZABETH

I'm sorry, Nate. I really did
try. Please, I'm sorry.

Nathan storms by Ida, who shakes her head. Ida walks over to Elizabeth, holds her hand, strokes Elizabeth's hair back.

Nathan leaves the room, slams the bedroom door shut.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

(to Ida)

I've never seen him like this.

IDA

He want son to continue family
name.

INT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Nathan searches cabinets until he finds a bottle of VODKA.

He sits at the table, drinks straight out of the bottle.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Elizabeth, Nathan, and his parents stare with looks of shock and depression at the baby's simple headstone.

A disheveled-looking Nathan drinks from another bottle.

As Elizabeth, Ida, and Heinrich place stones on the headstone, Nathan tosses his empty bottle aside, walks away.

CLOSE ON HEADSTONE

BERNARD LEIBERMAN

DECEMBER 15, 1920 - DECEMBER 15, 1920

END CLOSE UP.

INT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

A deeply depressed Elizabeth stares at herself in the bathroom mirror. She cuts off her long braid, continues to stare at herself.

Ida walks by, takes note.

INT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nathan and Heinrich return from work, hang their hats. Ida informs Nathan (inaudible dialogue) about Elizabeth.

INT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Nathan rushes to their bedroom to find Elizabeth in a fetal position on the bed.

NATHAN

Lizzie.

Elizabeth doesn't acknowledge his presence. Nathan lifts her upper torso, sits on the bed next to her. He places her head on his lap, strokes her short head of hair.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Lizzie. It's okay. We'll have more children.

Elizabeth opens her eyes, speaks very softly and slowly as she stares into space.

ELIZABETH

I let you down, Nathan. I'm sorry.

Nathan lifts her up to a sitting position, grabs her by the shoulders.

NATHAN

68.

Look at me.

She closes her eyes and shakes her head.

He gently shakes her.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Open your eyes, Lizzie, and look at me.

She opens her eyes.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry if I reacted poorly.
It was wrong of me. I was just caught up in the emotion of losing our child. It wasn't your fault. I don't blame you, so don't ever blame yourself.

He kisses her forehead.

SUPER: 1922

INT. HOSPITAL DELIVERY ROOM - DAY

With feet in stirrups and drenched with sweat, Elizabeth struggles to give birth as a NURSE in long white dress and white cap wipes the sweat with a towel. The HOSPITAL DOCTOR, wearing a white lab coat, uses forceps to help remove the baby.

HOSPITAL DOCTOR

It's a boy!

Elizabeth hears the baby CRY. She SIGHS in relief, smiles broadly, collapses from exhaustion.

NATHAN

Good job, Lizzie. I love you.

After the baby is cleaned, the Nurse hands the baby to him.

NATHAN

This one we shall call George,
after my grandfather.

SUPER: 1924

INT. HOSPITAL DELIVERY ROOM - DAY

An exhausted Elizabeth watches anxiously as a very OVERWEIGHT DOCTOR holds a female baby up by its feet. He slaps its rear end. It CRIES.

He hands the baby to Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

She has the same mole on her
right cheek like my mother,
Svetlana.

NATHAN

What shall we call her?

ELIZABETH

The book of Ruth says there is
hope in the most devastating
times of our lives, so what
about Ruth?

Nathan nods approvingly, addresses the baby.

NATHAN

(to baby)
Hello, Ruth Leiberman.

EXT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - COURTYARD - DAY

Adorable, giggling, three-year old GEORGE rides his tricycle as one-year old RUTH (brown Shirley Temple curls) plays with a Raggedy Ann doll.

Elizabeth sits on a bench snapping string beans into a bowl while she watches them.

George starts to ride away headed for a busy street.

ELIZABETH

George, stop!

Elizabeth runs to him, grabs him by the back of his shirt, yanks him and his bike just as he is about to go into the

street.

George GIGGLES as Elizabeth EXHALES her relief.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
Stay here next to Ruth.

INT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - CHILDREN'S BEDROOM - DAY

An ELDERLY DOCTOR listens to the lungs of 3-year-old George lying in a crib.

There are three papers on the wall next to the crib. Each paper has a small hand that gets larger with age. The paper on the left has a hand with number one on its palm. The center paper has a number two. The third paper has the largest hand with a number three.

The Elderly Doctor looks up sadly at Nathan and Elizabeth.

ELDERLY DOCTOR
He has pneumonia. I'm sorry, but
he won't live through the night.

Look of shock on Nathan. He picks up a child's wooden chair, SLAMS it against the wall.

Elizabeth faints.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Elizabeth holds Ruth. Next to them Heinrich and Ida both wipe their eyes with a handkerchief.

Nathan drinks from a bottle again as the small pine casket is covered with dirt.

A Rabbi SINGS a memorial prayer in Hebrew.

INT. CLOTHING STORE - DAY

There are no customers. Nathan paces as Heinrich stares out the store window and the other five employees lean against a wall or talk to each other.

NATHAN

71.

(to employees)

We've got a lot of bills and no customers. I'm sorry, but we have to let everyone go. It's either that or close the store.

There is shock and sadness on everyone's face. The employees slowly gather their belongings.

As they exit the store, four imposing men quickly walk in carrying clubs and wearing brass knuckles.

INT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Elizabeth takes out a honey cake from the oven, sets it on the table in their sparsely decorated kitchen as Ida washes dishes, and Ruth (6), sits at the table, plays with her new Patsy doll.

Nathan and Heinrich walk in. Heinrich hangs their hats as Nathan sits down at the table, SLAMS his fist.

Elizabeth notices his beat up, bloody face, rushes to him.

ELIZABETH

Nate! What happened?

Ida walks over to Heinrich, concerned. He's okay.

NATHAN

Some men came into the store demanding protection money. They said they're going to kill me if I don't pay. Protection! The only protection we need is from them!

Elizabeth goes to the sink, wets a towel.

She rushes back to Nathan, tries to wash the blood. Nathan shoves her hand away.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Papa, we 're going to have to close the store because of this damn Depression.

HEINRICH

72.

What are you going to do with
all the inventory?

Nathan puts his elbows on the table, cups his forehead.

Heinrich walks over, pats him on the back.

HEINRICH (CONT'D)

We'll be okay, son. We'll think
of something.

NATHAN

How are we going to make any money?

HEINRICH

I have money in the bank.

NATHAN

Banks are closed. I doubt you'll
ever see that money again!

Heinrich's eyes widen with panic. He looks at Ida gaping.

Nathan gets up, takes a bottle of VODKA out of the
cupboard. He sits down again, chugs it.

ELIZABETH

Nate, I'm more concerned about
your drinking. The doctor warned
you your liver can't take any
more.

NATHAN

You should be more concerned
about how we're going to raise
Ruth without any money.

Elizabeth shakes her head disapprovingly. She smiles at
Ruth, cuts her some cake.

Nathan gets up, accidentally knocks his chair over, grabs
the bottle, walks out angrily.

EXT. CLOTHING STORE - NIGHT

Nathan watches his store burn. He closes a LIGHTER, then

drinks from a bottle.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

It rains heavily. Elizabeth hugs RUTH closely with one hand, holds an open umbrella in the other. Heinrich holds a large oversized umbrella over him and Ida.

They all stare at Nathan's pine casket in the open grave. Above the sound of the rain, the Rabbi's MEMORIAL PRAYER is heard.

When the Rabbi is finished, Elizabeth and Ruth walk closer to the grave. They look at each other.

RUTH

Now?

Elizabeth nods.

Ruth grabs some mud. She throws it onto the casket.

The rain dissolve the mud into brown water flowing down the sides of the casket.

Ruth looks up at her mother, watches tears flow heavily down Elizabeth's cheeks.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Mama?

ELIZABETH

I'm okay, Sweetheart.

She wipes her tears with her finger as she continues to stare at the grave, then turns to Heinrich and Ida.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

He was a good man.

Heinrich and Ida nod sadly.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

I was thinking of what we can do now for money. I can cook, so

(MORE)

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
maybe we can make a deal with
Jerry at the market since he's
not selling much of his produce.
I can make some simple soups.
Then with your help, we can sell
them.

Heinrich and Ida look at each other, nod.

RACHEL (V.O.)
So, my grandmother once again
had to find a way to survive,
and cooking was the answer.

EXT. NEW YORK SIDEWALK - DAY

TWO MEN in 1930's suits and hats, walk around a corner, see
a long line of people.

MAN # 1
What's going on?

MAN #2
I don't know, but it sure smells
good.

They stop, watch Heinrich collect money from an elderly,
dirty WOMAN whose unbrushed hair conveys that she is
homeless.

HEINRICH
That'll be five cents.

The Woman pays, walks forward to Elizabeth. Elizabeth
smiles as she hands her a bowl of soup and Ruth hands her
a spoon.

ELIZABETH
There you go. Enjoy.

The Woman's eyes widen. She smiles, walks past Elizabeth,
quickly drinks the soup.

She hands her empty bowl and spoon to Ida, who puts them on
a tray.

The Woman walks contentedly towards the two men.

MAN #1

Was it good?

WOMAN

Delicious! Best soup I've ever had.

She extends her hand to them.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Can you spare a nickel? I want to get some more.

Man #1 takes a nickel out of his pocket, hands it to her.

She runs excitedly to get in line again.

MAN #1

(to Man #2)

Let's get in line.

They follow the woman, get in line, and wait. The line moves quickly.

The two men drink their soup, smile at each other, nod.

They hand their bowls to Ida, walk back to Elizabeth.

MAN #1

That's the best soup I've ever tasted. What's your name?

ELIZABETH

Elizabeth. Elizabeth Leiberman.

MAN #1

Well, I'm Benjamin Kravitz. I own Ziggy's Deli. Where'd you learn to cook like that?

ELIZABETH

In Russia. My mother cooked for the Tsar and taught me.

MAN #1
A real Jewish, Russian cook.
Just what our deli needs!

Man #2 nods over and over.

SUPER: 1941

EXT. BIRNBAUM'S BUTCHER SHOP - DAY

Ruth (17, wears a 1940 dress, long coat, and galoshes) walks along a snow-plowed sidewalk to a butcher shop.

A SIGN on the door reads: CLOSED FOR FUNERAL. She turns around, walks down the block.

INT. BERNIE'S BUTCHER SHOP - DAY

Ruth enters, approaches the counter.

MAX (19, wears a bloody white apron and a baseball cap backwards) adds a tray of cutlets to the display case. He can't take his eyes off Ruth.

Ruth looks at hamburger meat in the case with a handwritten sign, 20 CENTS.

She takes out her change purse, then sees lamb chops.

The shop's owner, BERNIE (bald, overweight) walks in from the back room carrying a large slab of brisket and smokes a cigar. He sees Max smitten with her.

MAX
(to Ruth)
Haven't seen you here before.
What can I get you, gorgeous?

Ruth looks around to see who he's addressing, can't believe he finds her pretty.

RUTH
I usually shop at Birnbaum's,
but they're closed for a funeral.

MAX
A funeral, huh?
(addressing Bernie)
Sounds like fate to me. Whatta
ya think, Bernie?

Bernie, shakes his head, SCOFFS. Max looks back at Ruth.

RUTH
How much are two lamb chops?

MAX
Two? For you and you're husband?

RUTH
I'm not married. It's for me and
my mother.

MAX
For you and your mother, huh?
What's your name, sweetcakes?

Max smiles broadly.

RUTH
Ruth. Ruth Leiberman.

MAX
The lamb chops are sixty-five
cents a pound.

Max sees the dejection in Ruth's face.

MAX (CONT'D)
But today Ruth, is your lucky
day. I was just telling Bernie
here..
(nods to Bernie)
...that we're going to give a prize
to the first person whose name
starts with an R.

RUTH
No way!

Ruth looks at Bernie to make sure it's okay with him.

Bernie shrugs.

As Max wraps the lamb chops, he keeps eyeing Ruth. He notices her holding a BOOK ON NURSING.

MAX

My heart is palpitating. I think I need a nurse.

Ruth looks down at her book.

RUTH

I'm not a nurse yet. I'm just reading about becoming one.

MAX

(to Bernie)

Beautiful and smart!

Max leans over the counter with the package.

MAX (CONT'D)

Here you go, Nurse Ruth.

She smiles broadly as she reaches for it.

RUTH

Thank you... uh... uh...

Max doesn't answer. He smiles as he studies her face.

BERNIE

Max. His name's Max. Max Stein.

Max winks.

MAX

You sure are the cat's meow, Ruth.

Ruth blushes, smiles broadly. She smiles at Bernie.

Max watches as she exits the shop.

MAX (CONT'D)

I'm going to marry that woman.

Bernie swipes his hand in the air, SCOFFS. He shakes his head as he swings a CLEAVER DOWN on the slab of brisket.

MAX (CONT'D)

What! The heart wants what the heart wants.

INT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Ruth enters, sets the package on the counter. Elizabeth (50) enters.

RUTH

Birnbaum's was closed, Mama.
So, I went to Bernie's.

Ruth unwraps the package. Elizabeth shakes her head.

ELIZABETH

Lamb chops? I thought I asked you to get hamburger for stuffed cabbage.

RUTH

You did, but the great-looking butcher gave me these for free.

ELIZABETH

For free?

RUTH

Yes, can you believe it?

ELIZABETH

Ok. Then I'll stuff the cabbage with lamb.

Elizabeth gets a sharp knife.

RUTH

And tomorrow I'll get us a chicken, okay?

ELIZABETH

Are you sure you're going back
just for a chicken?

Ruth smiles broadly.

INT. BERNIE'S BUTCHER SHOP - DAY

Ruth excitedly enters the Butcher shop.

MAX

Well, look what the cat brought in.
Hello, nurse Ruth. Is Birnbaum's
still closed?

RUTH

No. I... I... um.

She looks in the counter.

RUTH (CONT'D)

I came to get a chicken.

MAX

A chicken, huh?

Ruth smiles at him.

MAX (CONT'D)

For roasting, frying, or boiling?

Ruth shrugs.

Max realizes she didn't come just for a chicken. He takes one out of the counter, stealing glances of her as he wraps it. He leans over the counter to hand it to her.

RUTH

How much?

MAX

For you, nothin', Sweet Stuff.
I'm glad you came back. The
'Maltese Falcon's' playing at the
picture show. Would you like to
see it?

RUTH
 (eyes light up)
 You mean on a date? With you?

MAX
 Uh, huh. Unless you'd like to
 go with Bernie.

Ruth looks at Bernie, then smiles broadly at Max.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Max and Ruth approach the movie theater booth with a sign showing 24 CENTS to enter. As Max pays, he winks at Ruth.

Ruth can hardly contain her excitement. He takes the tickets, proudly extends his elbow. They go inside.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

They share a box of popcorn as black and white NEWSREEL SCENES play on screen. A NARRATOR describes the action as SOLDIERS march in front of a reviewing stand with Adolf Hitler saluting.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 German soldiers march with
 precision past Adolf Hitler, as
 other soldiers flanking them,
 carry Nazi flags. The soldiers
 salute Hitler as they pass.

SOLDIERS (ON SCREEN)
Heil Hitler. Zig heil.

Ruth squeezes Max's hand. He puts his arm around her.

Film footage shows a German panzer tank pounding a church as it advances through the streets of Belgium.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 The Germans have invaded France
 and Belgium.

MAX
 What is the world coming to!

INT. PIZZA RESTAURANT - DAY

Max and Ruth eat pizza for lunch in a small booth. They each take a slice of pizza from the plate, bump the point as if toasting.

Max feeds the point of his pizza to Ruth. She does the same to him with hers.

He wipes the sauce off her chin with his finger, then licks it.

Ruth GIGGLES. A serious look replaces her smile.

RUTH

I'm worried about the war.
Promise me you won't enlist.

Max holds her hand. Ruth strokes his hand with her thumb, looks into his eyes.

MAX

Not if I don't have to, my
little honey bear.

Max wolfs down his slice of pizza, takes another one.

MAX (CONT'D)

Tell me about your mother. How
are you two fixed for money?

RUTH

My mother, Elizabeth, is a cook.
She's the chef at Ziggy's.

Max looks pleasantly surprised.

MAX

Ziggy's? I love that restaurant!
They have the best cabbage soup
and cutlets. And the potato
latkes and blintzes are to die
for!

Ruth's smiles, but it quickly dissipates.

RUTH

83.

My mother has a bad heart. She
watched her parents get killed.
Then she lost two sons, and my
father, who died of alcoholism.

Max shakes his head sadly.

MAX

No wonder she has a bad ticker
with all she's been through.

There is commotion with lots of people rushing by the
window outside. A TEENAGER runs inside.

TEENAGER

President Roosevelt just
announced the Japanese attacked
Pearl Harbor yesterday!

Ruth grabs Max's hands. They look seriously at each other.

MAX

I guess that means we're going
to war.

Ruth's eyes well up.

They both stand. He kisses her forehead, hugs her tightly.

SUPER: 1943

INT. BERNIE'S BUTCHER SHOP - DAY

Max reads a letter with furrowed brows, looks away, SIGHS.

MAX

Well Bernie, looks like you're
gonna hafta find another helper.
My number's been selected.

Bernie walks over. Max hands him the letter, Max removes
his apron.

BERNIE

I wish I wasn't so old so I can
(MORE)

BERNIE (CONT'D)
enlist and give that son-of-a-
bitch Hitler a piece of shrapnel
up his wazoo.

MAX
I better go tell Ruth.

INT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ruth cries as Max tells her the news (inaudible dialogue).

Elizabeth watches as Max gets on one knee.

MAX
Ruthie, dear. My little lovebug.
When I return, will you marry me?

RUTH
Yes, of course. I was hoping
you'd ask.

Elizabeth smiles, places her left hand over her heart.

ELIZABETH
Mazel tov.

Ruth takes the silver ring off her finger, hands it to him.

RUTH
Wear this to remind you of your
promise.

Max kisses the ring, places it on his pinkie. They kiss.

SUPER: JAPAN, 1944

EXT. AMERICAN SHIP - DAY

An American ship with decks full of soldiers, sails towards
an island seen in the close distance.

Max gets onboard a landing craft, joins three other
American soldiers (19-22) who are smoking.

Their boat splashes into the ocean.

May I?

One of them, JOEY, reaches out his pack, speaks with a New Jersey accent.

JOEY

Sure, here.

Max takes one.

JOEY (CONT'D)

I'm Joey, that's Sergio, and this big guy is Tyrone, better known as Gargantuan.

Six-foot-nine, muscular, TYRONE lights the cigarette for him, speaks with an Irish accent.

Max takes a puff, then coughs and coughs.

TYRONE

You ever smoke before?

Max shakes his head, then coughs.

MAX

First time.

Joey notices Max's hands shaking.

JOEY

Well, this is as good a time as any to start.

Max nods, takes another drag.

TYRONE

Were you drafted?

MAX

(nodding)

I would never sign up for this.

JOEY

I did. I have six sisters and my
(MORE)

JOEY (CONT'D)

mother to support. Combat pay is pretty good, not to mention the benefits.

TYRONE

I wish we were in Germany instead of Japan. I want to kill Hitler with my bare hands.

MAX

From the looks of you, I think you could actually do it, Gargantuan.

Their landing craft comes ashore.

EXT. JAPANESE FOREST - DAY

The American soldiers advance cautiously with rifles ready. Not a word is said. They nervously point their rifles at the slightest NOISE.

After a while, a Sergeant raises his hand to stop. He spirals his index finger signaling, "this is the place".

The soldiers spread out with some soldiers facing trees. They lay their rifles down against the trunks, unzip their pants.

Max joins several men who use their small shovel to dig a hole.

He removes his helmet, sets it down next to him on his left side. To his right is Tyrone. They pull down their pants.

Several soldiers stare at Tyrone, smile at each other.

TYRONE

(sotto voce)

What? You've never seen an Irish ass before?

JOEY

None as pretty as yours.

The men snicker with MUFFLED LAUGHS.

Max holds his shovel like a cane for support as he defecates. It is very quiet. He looks up at the sky through the tall trees gently swaying in the breeze.

A soldier near him FARTS LOUDLY.

A sniper's BULLET hits Max's helmet with a CLANK.

Max looks down.

REVEAL: a bullet hole in his helmet.

The American soldiers grab their rifles as pants go unzipped. Others stand and SHOOT with their pants down at their ankles.

Max dons his helmet with bullet hole clearly visible, advances cautiously through the forest. It is eerily quiet.

Suddenly a small Japanese soldier comes up from the ground behind him, sticks the end of his bayonet into Max's back.

Max stops walking, drops his rifle, raises his hands. He turns around slowly.

He faces a young teenaged boy in uniform with his finger on the trigger.

Max grabs the rifle, pulls it upward. A SHOT GOES OFF, but the boy holds on tightly. They struggle.

Max gets pierced in the abdomen by the bayonet.

He kicks the boy in the groin causing the boy to pull the rifle back out.

Max grabs the rifle away, and uses the butt of it to knock the boy unconscious. He aims the rifle at the boy, then lowers it, refusing to kill him.

Out of breath and visibly shaking, Max drops to his knees, and CRIES. He takes his helmet off, stares at the child who Almost killed him.

Max GRIMACES, looks down at his bleeding abdomen.

INT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Elizabeth sits in a comfortable armchair, peels potatoes over a large bowl on her lap.

Ruth lies on the small couch next to the RADIO listening to MUSIC with her eyes closed. The music is interrupted by a RADIO ANNOUNCER.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

We have breaking news that Japan has officially surrendered. Yes, this is good news, folks. The war is over!

Ruth perks up.

RUTH

Mama. Did you hear that? It's over!

ELIZABETH

Yes, my hearing is very good.

LOUD CHEERS are heard coming from outside. Ruth gets up, walks to the window.

She looks down at the people celebrating in the street.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

- Some people wave flags or hug, kiss strangers.
- People form a conga line.
- Some men grab women and dance.
- Papers fly from tall buildings like snow.

END MONTAGE.

Ruth SIGHS deeply.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Ruth, why don't you go out and celebrate with your friends?

RUTH

Because Mama, I haven't heard from Max. I don't know if he's alive or dead. He should have mailed me a letter by now. How can I celebrate?

Tears flow down Ruth's cheeks as she watches couples hugging and kissing.

The apartment BUZZER goes off. Ruth slowly walks over to the intercom.

RUTH (INTO INTERCOM) (CONT'D)

Yes?

MAX (V.O.) (IN INTERCOM)

Ruthie? It's me. I'm..

Ruth doesn't wait for him to finish his sentence. She bolts out the apartment door.

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

Ruth quickly runs down four flights of stairs.

INT. NEW YORK APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Ruth opens the main door, smiles broadly.

RUTH

Max! You're home!

They both smile soaking in each other's eyes. They kiss for a very long time.

RACHEL (V.O.)

After they married, they moved to Los Angeles. My father got a job as a meat cutter. Then my mother gave birth to me. My grandmother got a job as a cook in Hollywood. And again, cooking helped her and my family survive.

INT. HOLLYWOOD RESTAURANT - DAY

A famous male COMEDIAN (34, looks like Lenny Bruce), sits at a table, savors his lunch. He closes his eyes, smiles. He snaps his fingers for the waiter.

COMEDIAN

These are the best fuckin' veal cutlets I've ever had. I want to meet the fuckin' cook.

The waiter goes to the kitchen.

Elizabeth comes out wearing an apron and hairnet. She slowly walks over wiping her hands with a towel.

COMEDIAN (CONT'D)

This is delicious!

ELIZABETH

Thank you. They were the Tsar's favorite.

COMEDIAN

The Tsar?

He slicks his hair back.

COMEDIAN (CONT'D)

Do you know who I am?

Elizabeth shakes her head.

COMEDIAN (CONT'D)

I'm a fuckin' comedian. What's your name?

ELIZABETH

Elizabeth, but you can call me Lizzie.

COMEDIAN

Well, Lizzie. I'm gonna eat here every fuckin' chance I get.

Elizabeth smiles.

A famous blue-eyed singer and actor, FRANK sits at a booth with his friends nearby. He gestures with his index finger for Elizabeth to come over. She obliges.

FRANK

Did you make these sandwiches?

ELIZABETH

Is there something wrong with the food, Sir?

FRANK

No, honey. My friends and I were just saying these are the best sandwiches we've ever tasted. I just wanted to thank you. My egg sandwich is perfect. And when my guests are happy, I'm happy.

He stuffs a twenty-dollar bill into her pocket. Elizabeth smiles.

ELIZABETH

I'm glad you're all enjoying them.

She starts to walk back to the kitchen.

FRANK

Just a minute, Honey.

Elizabeth's smile dissipates. She turns around, puts her hand in her pocket, pulls out the money thinking he changed his mind. She walks back to the booth.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I know the owners of Foxy's in Vegas. They could sure use a good cook like you. Whatever they're paying you here, I'll make sure Foxy's doubles it.

Elizabeth happily puts the money back inside her pocket.

COMEDIAN

92.

(yelling)

What the fuck, Frank. Don't take her away!

Frank waves him off.

RACHEL (V.O.)

After three years in Vegas, my grandmother came home to live with me and my parents.

INT. ELIZABETH'S LOS ANGELES HOME - DAY

Elizabeth walks in through the front door carrying a suitcase. Ruth walks by, is surprised.

RUTH

Mama! What are you doing here?

ELIZABETH

I got tired of Vegas, and I missed you.

They hug.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Remember when we moved out here, you said you wished you had a house in Malibu? Well, I made enough money to buy that house you've been dreaming of.

RUTH

You did? You made that much?

RACHEL (V.O.)

So, we moved into a house in Malibu, and then tragedy struck in 1980.

INT. MALIBU HOUSE - NIGHT

BEGIN MONTAGE:

- Thirty-four-year-old Rachel gets into bed as torrential RAIN is heard pounding on the roof.

- Max and Ruth watch television in the Master Bedroom as LIGHTNING flashes.
- In the kitchen Elizabeth pours hot tea from a kettle into a glass just as THUNDER shakes the house.
- She cautiously walks toward her bedroom with her tea so as not to spill it.

END MONTAGE.

INT. MALIBU HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

A WEATHER REPORTER on TV stands in front of a map.

WEATHER REPORTER (ON TV)

Rain, rain, and more rain. With the recent Agoura fires, the danger now becomes mudslides.

RUTH

Should we be worried?

MAX

Naw, I don't think so. We don't have a hill or mountain near us. I feel sorry for the people near PCH.

Max fidgets with the pillows behind him.

RUTH

Back still hurting?

Max nods.

MAX

Carrying those slabs of beef has a toll.

He reaches over to the night stand. Swallows a couple Percocet.

Ruth turns off the tv and lights. Both fall asleep.

Ruth is awakened by a loud CRACKING SOUND. She looks out her window from bed.

In the moonlight trees fall over, are dragged away by rapidly flowing water.

Her eyes fearfully widen.

The house CREAKS. The window GLASS BREAKS LOUDLY.

RUTH

Max. Wake up. Max!

She uses both arms to try to forcefully wake him.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Oh my God, Max! Wake up!!

The bedroom wall behind the headboard caves in onto them. Their bed is pushed to the other side of the room. Mud pours in quickly, covers them.

INT. MALIBU HOUSE - ELIZABETH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

One wall collapses. Water quickly fills Elizabeth's room.

Her bed floats outside like a boat. Rain pours on her. She opens her eyes.

Her bed wedges against a large tree preventing it from being swept away.

INT. MALIBU HOUSE - RACHEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rachel wakes up, rushes through ankle-high water towards her parent's bedroom, only to find it demolished.

She runs to her Grandmother's bedroom.

RACHEL

Grandma? Grandma, where are you?

She looks through the open wall, sees the bed outside wedged against the tree. The water is now knee-high around Rachel, and rising.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Grandma, are you there?

ELIZABETH

Yes, Rachel. I'm here.

Suddenly a large JEEP SUV flows by and wedges between Elizabeth's bed and the house. Rachel studies it. She has a plan.

RACHEL

I'm coming. Don't move.

Rachel quickly wades through the water towards the SUV.

She steps onto the back bumper, puts one foot on the wiper, and climbs on top of the car. She holds onto the roof rack as she slithers slowly across the roof on her stomach. She carefully steps down onto the hood of the car, jumps onto the bed.

She lies in bed with her grandmother, holding her tightly.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

ELIZABETH

Yes. Where are your parents?

RACHEL

(voice chokes)

Mom and Dad's room is gone!
I don't know where they are.
What are we going to do?

Elizabeth kisses her on the forehead, hugs her tightly.

ELIZABETH

I don't know, Rachel, but
there's one thing I learned.
Never give up hope. Hope
gives you strength.

EXT. MALIBU HOUSE - NIGHT

The house slides off its foundation. All the walls of the house cave in, followed by the roof.

EXT. MALIBU HOUSE - DAY

The sun rises revealing Elizabeth and Rachel asleep in the bed still wedged against the tree.

A large lifeboat with two RESCUERS paddles down the now calm water towards Elizabeth and Rachel.

RESCUER #1

Hello. Are you okay? Anyone hurt?

Elizabeth doesn't respond.

RACHEL

Grandma, wake up!

Elizabeth's eyes open. She smiles at Rachel.

Rachel SIGHS her relief, hugs her.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

As they look at the graves, Rachel (34) wipes her eyes. Eighty-seven-year-old Elizabeth has an expression of overwhelming shock.

RACHEL (V.O.)

My grandmother, well... her
grief was too much to bear.

Rachel looks at Elizabeth, notices tears flowing down her face.

RACHEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It was the first time I saw
tears flow down my grandmother's
face. Burying her daughter was
like cutting the tiny thread that
was holding her heart together.

Elizabeth steps forward, places a stone on Ruth's gravestone. She clutches her heart, collapses, and dies.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Grandma!

Rachel rushes to her. She kneels.

She swiftly lifts Elizabeth's head and shoulders, holds them in her lap. She stares at Elizabeth's face. A moment of silence.

RACHEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

In that moment, I felt great love and empathy for her, for all the pain and suffering of losing everyone she loved, and for all the hardships she endured.

Rachel's body shakes. Her eyes well up. Her mouth quivers. She bites her lip trying to stop it.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

(sotto voce)

I love you, Grandma.

She cries uncontrollably, buries her head into Elizabeth's chest as she hugs her tightly.

END OVERALL FLASHBACK.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Rachel looks up at the ceiling, SIGHS DEEPLY. She looks at her students eager to hear more. It is very quiet.

RACHEL

This great woman became my idol.
She taught me many things, but
I think her perseverance
impressed me the most.

The students nod. Some wipe their tears.

The BELL RINGS to end class, but no one moves.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

So, your key word for today is
adversity. My grandmother suffered
under the most difficult
situations.

She looks at Haashim.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
But, did she give up?

Haashim shakes his head.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
When faced with adversity, you
have two choices. Either give
up and feel sorry for yourself,
or go forward and try to overcome
the obstacle preventing you from
being happy.

Haashim nods in understanding. Rachel smiles.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Okay, see you all tomorrow.

As students walk out, Rachel watches the three harassing boys walk over to Haashim. They apologize inaudibly and shake hands.

Hashim follows the boys out. He stops next to Rachel, smiles broadly at her.

HAASHIM
Thank you. I know you told your
story to help me.

Rachel nods. She has a satisfied smile as she watches him leave.

She gathers her paperwork, then her purse from a drawer, heads for the door.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

As she walks down the hall filled with students and teachers, a young twenty-something teacher, STEPHANIE, comes out of her classroom, joins her.

STEPHANIE
Everyone's talking about the
wonderful lesson you taught
today.

RACHEL

I'm glad, because if they learn
this one lesson, then I've made
a difference in their lives. I
know it did for one young man.

(beat)

See you tomorrow, Stephanie.

Stephanie nods. She watches Rachel walk ahead and go out
the door.

SUPER: FOR LIZZIE, 1893-1980

FADE OUT.