

**Just One Inch**

Inspired by A True Story

**OVER BLACK:**

A school BELL RINGS.

**FADE IN:**

**INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY**

High school teacher RACHEL STEIN (60's, gray hair pulled back into a bun) walks out from the Main Office.

In the overhead paneled lights, her face appears drawn and tired with a mirage of wrinkles. She is solemn with the corners of her mouth turned slightly downward, and her lips puckered in a pout.

The loud sound of EXCITED STUDENTS and LOCKERS SLAMMING CLOSED is heard as she joins the crowd of cheerleaders, jocks with the school's emblem on their sweaters, and other students anxiously rushing to exit the school's front door.

Rachel walks slowly with her head down as the students zip past her.

Exuberant teacher, STEPHANIE, joins her. Though only in her twenties, she has a mature expression far beyond her years.

STEPHANIE

Why so glum, Rachel?

Rachel SIGHS DEEPLY.

RACHEL

This is my last week. Forty years went by so fast. Word of advice Stephanie, get married. Don't be married to your job. Life goes by so fast. You'll regret it if you don't find someone to love. I wish I had.

Stephanie nods her understanding.

STEPHANIE

I'm so sorry. So, what are your plans for retirement?

RACHEL

Don't know. Right now, I've got to get to the pharmacy. I keep having these migraines.

Stephanie stops.

STEPHANIE

Oh, darn. I forgot my daily planner. I have to go back. Take care of yourself, Rachel. See you tomorrow.

Rachel waves, continues out the door.

**INT. DRUGSTORE - DAY**

Rachel gets in line at the pharmacy "PICK UP" counter.

In front of her is a young African-American MOTHER with long braids tied together into a pony tail and gigantic gold hoop earrings. She holds a two-year-old BOY with a small TEDDY BEAR in one hand and sucking his middle fingers of the other hand.

Rachel smiles at him.

The child drops his bear, starts CRYING. The Mother walks forward toward the counter to the awaiting male PHARMACIST.

Rachel picks up the bear, walks toward them.

MOTHER

(to Pharmacist)

Lakeisha Sullivan.

While the Pharmacist searches through bags in a plastic basket, the child throws a tantrum. He squirms and kicks to get away.

RACHEL

Looks like you have your hands full.

MOTHER

He didn't have enough sleep last night. You know how it is.

RACHEL

Not really.

The Pharmacist returns.

PHARMACIST

That'll be forty-three eighty.

The Mother has difficulty opening her purse with the child squirming.

RACHEL

I can hold him, if you'd like.

The Mother smiles, shoves the child into Rachel's arms. She searches her purse, then looks at the Pharmacist with frustration.

MOTHER

I left my wallet on the kitchen table.

Rachel smiles.

RACHEL

I'll take care of that for you.

MOTHER

Really?

RACHEL

Sure. No problem.

Rachel hands the child and bear to her, takes out her credit card.

As the Pharmacist staples the receipt to the Mother's bag, the Mother turns to Rachel.

MOTHER

Thanks. That was kind of you.

Rachel smiles as the Mother takes her medicine, leaves.

Rachel turns to the Pharmacist.

**EXT. CROSSWALK - DAY**

Rachel leaves the corner drugstore, sees the pedestrian signal flash a countdown from 10.

She quickly enters the crosswalk, notices the Mother and child ahead. The child drops the bear again.

Rachel rushes over, bends down to pick up it up. She stands, YELLS to the Mother now on the sidewalk.

RACHEL  
Ms. Sullivan!

The Mother and child turn around.

Rachel doesn't notice a car turning the corner until the last second.

Her eyes widen fearfully as she backs up quickly to avoid getting hit. She falls backwards, hits the back of her head on the street. Rachel's world is spinning.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

Rachel opens her eyes, hears DOCTOR EMERYK KOPINSKI (80'S, Polish ancestry), and an Asian NURSE talking indistinctly to each other.

The Doctor turns his attention to Rachel. His teeth are crooked, but they make his smile enchanting.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI  
Hi, I'm Doctor Emeryk Kopinski.  
How are you feeling?

RACHEL  
Like drums are beating in my head.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI  
That's pretty common for your  
(MORE)

DOCTOR KOPINSKI (CONT'D)

type of injury. You hit your head pretty hard. X-rays didn't reveal anything, but just to be safe, we did an MRI. If it looks good, then we can discharge you.

(to Nurse)

Let me know immediately if she complains of dizziness or nausea.

NURSE

Yes, doctor.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI

(to Rachel)

I'll be back when we get the results.

RACHEL

Okay. Thank you.

As he leaves, the Nurse pulls the thin cotton blanket up.

Rachel stares into space, then looks at the nurse.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Is there a Rabbi in the hospital?

NURSE

Yes, there is a Rabbi. In fact, I just saw him down the hall. Would you like to talk with him?

RACHEL

Yes, I would.

As the Nurse leaves, Rachel rests her eyes.

A moment later, she is awakened by a SOFT KNOCK. A very old Orthodox RABBI (side curls, prayer shawl, yarmulke, glasses), cracks the door open.

RABBI

Hello. I'm Burt Goldblum. May I come in?

RACHEL  
Sure. Shalom Rabbi.

He opens the door wider, enters.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
I'm Rachel. Rachel Stein.

RABBI  
Nice to meet you, Rachel. I heard  
you would like to talk.

RACHEL  
I'm sorry. I'm not very religious.  
I don't even go to temple.

The Rabbi pulls a chair closer to her bed, sits.

RABBI  
That's okay. We can still talk.  
You'll find I'm a good listener.  
What troubles you?

Rachel searches his eyes.

RACHEL  
I'm confused about the meaning  
of life.

RABBI  
The meaning of life? Why does  
this bother you, my child?

RACHEL  
I feel like I've served my  
purpose being a teacher, but  
I don't know what I'm supposed  
to do now.

Rabbi Goldblum pulls the tip of his beard as he thinks for  
a second.

RABBI  
We never know God's plan. But I  
say this, if you're still alive,  
then God has other plans for you.

Rachel's eyebrows arch in surprise.

RACHEL  
Other plans? What could he  
possibly have in store for me?

Rachel stares out the window sadly, then looks back at him.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
Can you help me up? I'd like  
to walk as we talk.

RABBI  
Sure, but I would be happier if  
you were in a wheelchair.

The Rabbi helps her stand up next to the bed. She grabs the blanket, wraps it around her hospital gown, dons white cotton hospital slippers.

RACHEL  
See, I'm fine. Let's walk.

**INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY**

The Rabbi and Rachel slowly walk down the corridor.

RACHEL  
I could feel the car whisk by  
me with just one inch separating  
us. One inch has been lucky for  
me and my ancestors.

RABBI  
One inch?

She nods.

They stop at the end of the corridor, read the saying in large letters on the wall.

**CLOSE ON WALL**

I FOUND A FRUITFUL WORLD BECAUSE MY ANCESTORS PLANTED IT  
FOR ME. LIKEWISE, I AM PLANTING IT FOR MY CHILDREN.  
TALMUD TAANIT 23A.



END CLOSE UP.

RACHEL  
That's very profound.

She turns toward the Rabbi.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
I almost died today. If I had  
died, who would care? All my  
friends and family have passed  
away. Menopause ended my chance  
of having any children, so I am  
the last leaf on my family  
tree.

Rabbi Goldblum looks at her with empathy in his eyes.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
My ancestors struggled and  
sacrificed so much. It's a  
shame it all comes to an end  
with me. I feel like I've let  
them all down.

RABBI  
Nonsense, my child. I'm sure  
they are all very proud of  
you.

Rachel looks sadly down at the floor.

RABBI (CONT'D)  
Where did your ancestors come  
from?

RACHEL  
(pointing)  
Let's go sit over there.

They walk to some chairs, sit.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
My ancestry dates back to a  
scribe for the Tsar of Russia.

**FADE OUT.**

**BEGIN 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 in the moonlight 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)

11.

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 stunning German wife, ALEXANDRA (red-Gold hair, large blue eyes), seated to the left of 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 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 the 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 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 before 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

(raises 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  
(MORE)

TSAR NICHOLAS (CONT'D)  
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's eyebrows rise, 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 Sergei to come forward.

TSAR NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

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 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'll 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 smiles 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.

**SUPER: ST. PETERHOF PALACE, 1904**

**EXT. PETERHOF PALACE - GARDENS - DAY**

Elizabeth (11, hair in long braid with bow at end) 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 Margareta 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 Margareta's skirt, while Anastasia CRIES. Margareta picks up Anastasia, tries to comfort her.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

(extends arms)

Tatiana, Maria, come here.

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

OLGA

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

(MORE)

OLGA (CONT'D)  
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  
(laughs)  
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. Nicholas 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 ura)

*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 the GRAND CASCADE with gilded statues and water jets soaring skyward.

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, and smiles.

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 smiles 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

(watches Pierre)

I hope you do, because you  
deserve it.

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.

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 and 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.

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. He waits for a reply.

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

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

(waves 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, and 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 out of breath.

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  
Down with the Tsar!

BOLSHEVIK #2  
Let's kill him!

BOLSHEVIK #3  
And everyone in the palace!

Vladimir, Svetlana, and Elizabeth (25), quickly 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. She 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.

**END OVERALL FLASHBACK.**

**SUPER: PRESENT DAY**

**INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY**

Rachel winces, closes her eyes. She pinches the top of her nose together.

RABBI

Are you all right?

RACHEL  
It's another migraine.

She looks up at the Rabbi.

RABBI  
Let's go back.

RACHEL  
No, I'm okay. Anyway, that was  
the first time one inch made a  
difference.

Rabbi Goldblum nods in understanding.

RABBI  
It's amazing how something so  
small can be so important.

Rachel nods, continues.

RACHEL  
The Bolshevik gallops on as...

**RESUME OVERALL FLASHBACK**

**EXT. WINTER PALACE - DAY**

...Vladimir 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.

SVETLANA  
I'm tired. My feet hurt.

VLADIMIR  
Okay, we'll rest.

As they rest, Vladimir removes Svetlana's 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 an area in the west called the Pale where Jews are allowed to live.

He smiles 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

(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 at 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 husband who nods approvingly.

Anya 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 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 and 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 seriously 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 SHOTS 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?

ELIZABETH  
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.



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

END CLOSE UP.

**END OVERALL FLASHBACK.**

**SUPER: PRESENT DAY**

**INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY**

Rabbi Goldblum shakes his head over and over.

RABBI

*Veys mere.* So, that was the second time one inch saved an ancestor?

Rachel nods over and over.

RACHEL

Yes, my grandmother, Lizzie.

Rachel stares into space, then smiles. She looks at the Rabbi.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I am alive because of that one inch.

**RESUME OVERALL FLASHBACK**

**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 them.

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 two more times.

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

SHORT BOLSHEVIK

They must have drowned. Let's go.

TALL BOLSHEVIK

We can't go until they are  
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 Bolsheviks 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 grabs Elizabeth's head. She  
cries into his chest. He pulls her head back with one hand,  
looks into her eyes.

He looks back at the Bolsheviks, then back at her again.  
Tears flow down his cheeks.

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 holds her 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,  
(points 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.

His eyes search hers.

VLADIMIR (CONT'D)

I want you to have a better,  
safer life. Get married, Lizzie.

(MORE)

VLADIMIR (CONT'D)

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 breaks 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 one hand over her mouth to keep from crying out,  
and quietly sobs hysterically.

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 with head down 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, cups her hand to drink.

She turns around, walks into the forest, crosses her arms and rubs them for warmth as she steps around fallen branches, plants, and holes.

Nearing a dirt road, she HEARS HORSES NEIGHING and quickly drops to the ground not realizing she's 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. As she checks both directions, she scratches her legs and neck. She sees no one then hobbles across the road, and continues to scratch as she walks.

She spies MOSS by a tree and sits to eat it. While she eats, she notices mud next to her, uses it to cover the mosquito bites.

After a short rest, she rises, walks on.

Just before sunset she 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.

The SOUNDS OF OWLS and WOLVES HOWLING keep her entertained.

**EXT. FOREST - DAY**

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

She finds a spot, lifts her skirt, squats to urinate.

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 and 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. She talks in her sleep.

ELIZABETH

Why, Papa? Why?

The sound of strong WIND awakens her. 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.

As she walks on, she looks around for something to eat, but 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 it to take her shoe off, sees a large 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. Excitedly, she sprints to the field. Adrenaline prevents her from feeling any pain.

**EXT. CABBAGE FIELD - NIGHT**

Elizabeth plops down in the field. As she quickly devours some cabbage, it starts to rain. She looks up and 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 to let 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. Then 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 fields with 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 slowly 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. A single tear streams down her face.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

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. Suddenly, there in the distance is a MAN and WOMAN harvesting wheat.

She excitedly runs to them.

ELIZABETH

(smiles)

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, bloodshot eyes, dirty face, 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 runs excitedly.

A dirty, thinner 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 and CRIES. He uses his sleeves 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 their mother, terrified at what they see.

MOYSHE

(to Elizabeth)

This is wife, Katya, Ivan  
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 quickly 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.

Katya gives her another bowl of tyurya.

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

53.

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

(chews 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 who nods.

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. He 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. He slowly nods.

And Maria?

Elizabeth stops talking as emotion fills her. She sways, then faints.

Moyshe catches her before she hits the ground.

MOYSHE

(to Katya)

They are searching for anyone  
who lived with the Romanovs!  
Quick, we go home. I will take  
her to the train for America  
while you stay, take care of farm.

**INT. FARMHOUSE - UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - DAY**

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 walks up to him, hands him the suitcase.

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. She waves.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Goodbye everyone.

Moyshe urges his horse to go.

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

**INT. TICKET OFFICE - DAY**

Moyshe and Elizabeth walk up to a pudgy CLERK with a walrus mustache sitting behind a wooden counter eating pryaniki (gingerbread).

Moyshe 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 a piece of cake on the counter in front of the Clerk.

The Clerk looks at it. He smacks his lips, then 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 just like you  
did in the forest.

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.

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, and 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**

Elizabeth exits the train amid other passengers.

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, 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.  
(points 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 CABIN - DAY**

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

cabin. 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.

PASSENGER

You don't look so good.

Elizabeth nods slowly trying to keep from upchucking.

ELIZABETH

Is there a doctor on board?

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.

Nathan accidentally bumps into Elizabeth's leg. He speaks English 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.

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 to help 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.

Elizabeth looks at Nathan and his parents.

ELIZABETH  
 Thank you.

Nathan and his parents smile, wave.

She walks over to the SIGN for THIRD CLASS, hands her contract to the elderly FEMALE AGENT in ship uniform.

FEMALE AGENT

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

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

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

Elizabeth waives at Nathan. He smiles, waives back.

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

Nathan can't take his eyes off her.

MALE AGENT

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 Male Agent 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 with Katya's shawl over her shoulders 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 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. I bet they  
were wonderful parents.

She nods sadly.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Well, we have almost three  
weeks 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 (CONT'D)

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

68.

Yes. They sparkle like little  
diamonds floating in pools  
of chocolate.

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

ELIZABETH

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.

They stare at each other and smile.

**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 about three weeks, 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  
(MORE)

NATHAN (CONT'D)  
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.

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

A Young Man in suit and tie gestures to her 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

72.

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 and watch with gaping mouths at the 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.

(MORE)

NATHAN (CONT'D)

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

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**

75.

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  
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 (in 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

78.

(to baby)

Hello, Ruth Liberman.

**SUPER: 1925**

**EXT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - COURTYARD - DAY**

Adorable, GIGGLING, three-year old GEORGE rides his tricycle as one-year old RUTH (brown 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 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 sick 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 address his employees.

NATHAN

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  
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 pockets 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 dissolves 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 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, wait in line. 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 LB.

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?  
(to 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. Fifty year-old Elizabeth 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)

89.

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  
(MORE)

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

90.

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

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  
enlist and give that son-of-a-  
biscuit 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

93.

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.

MAX

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, coughs)  
First time.

Joey notices Max's hands shaking.

JOEY

94.

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

Max nods, takes another drag.

TYRONE

Were you drafted?

MAX

(nods)

I would never sign up for this.

JOEY

I did. I have six sisters and my  
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.

Their naked butts can be seen as they squat to defecate.

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.

They fire at Japanese men who are perched way up near the top of the trees. Dead Japanese soldiers fall from the trees like coconuts.

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.

**END OVERALL FLASHBACK.**

**SUPER: PRESENT DAY**

**INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY**

A young Hispanic man with a bullet hole in his shoulder is wheeled by.

Rachel shows empathy, then looks at Rabbi Goldblum.

RACHEL

My father always reminded me  
my whole life that if the  
bullet that hit his helmet  
had been one inch to the  
right, I wouldn't have been  
born. What luck, huh?

RABBI

I would call it God's plan.

RACHEL

Yes, well, I don't know if God  
planned for us to bomb Hiroshima,  
but thank God that pretty much  
ended the war.

**RESUME OVERAL FLASHBACK****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

98.

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.

**END OVERALL FLASHBACK.**

**SUPER: PRESENT DAY**

**INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY**

Rachel SIGHS HEAVILY, stands.

RACHEL

After they married, they moved  
(MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
to Los Angeles. My father got a  
job as a meat cutter. Then my  
mother gave birth to me.

RABBI  
And your Grandmother?

RACHEL  
My Grandmother got a job as a  
cook in Hollywood. And again,  
cooking helped her and my  
family survive.

**RESUME OVERALL FLASHBACK**

**SUPER: HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA, 1959**

**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? Well, I feel honored.

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

(yells)

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  
(MORE)

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)  
house in Malibu? Well, I made  
enough money to buy that house  
you've been dreaming of.

RUTH  
You did? You made that much?

**SUPER: PRESENT DAY**

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

Rachel and the Rabbi walk into Rachel's room. Rachel sits  
on the bed. The Rabbi sits in the chair next to her.

RABBI  
So, what finally happened with  
your Grandmother?

RACHEL  
In 1980 tragedy struck when we  
lived in Malibu. And once again  
my Grandmother's desire for an  
uncomplicated life had an obstacle.

**RESUME OVERALL FLASHBACK**

**INT. MALIBU HOUSE - NIGHT**

**BEGIN MONTAGE:**

- Thirty-four-year-old Rachel gets into bed as torrential  
RAIN is heard pounding 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 LOUD 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 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. As she climbs on top of the car, the wiper breaks.

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, and 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

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. But, never give  
up hope, Rachel. 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?

RACHEL

Grandma, wake up. We're being  
rescued.

Elizabeth doesn't respond.

RACHEL  
Grandma, wake up!

Elizabeth's eyes open. She smiles at Rachel.

Rachel SIGHS her relief, hugs her.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
(to Man)  
We're okay.

**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.)  
In that one night, I lost both  
my mother and father. The horror  
of what happened is something  
that will live with me the rest  
of my life. And 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 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. All the pain and suffering of losing everyone she loved, and all the hardships she endured under the most difficult circumstances, yet she never gave up.

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

RACHEL (CONT'D)

(sotto voce)

I love you, Grandma.

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

There is another moment of silence before we hear,

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

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

**END OVERALL FLASHBACK.**

**SUPER: PRESENT DAY**

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

Rabbi Goldblum's eyes well in tears. He removes his glasses, wipes them with a handkerchief.

Rachel wipes her tears with the knuckles of each index finger. She sniffs in her runny nose.

RACHEL

I had her buried with Katya's shawl because it meant so much to her.

The Rabbi nods in understanding.

RABBI

And, you my child. You lost everyone.

She nods sadly, looks down, tears flow down her cheeks.

RACHEL

This is why I question the meaning of life.

The Rabbi is about to speak, when Dr. Kopinski approaches. Rabbi Goldblum takes note of his serious look.

RABBI

I can come by a little later if you'd like.

RACHEL

No, please, I'd like you to stay.

Rabbi Goldblum nods.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI

Well, the MRI revealed a tumor.

Rabbi Goldblum shakes his head in disbelief. Rachel stares at the Doctor with a gaping mouth.

RACHEL

What? I fell, and now I have a brain tumor?

DOCTOR KOPINSKI

From the size of it, apparently, you've had this for quite a while. Have you had any headaches, blurred vision, or dizziness?

RACHEL

109.

Yes. I get migraines. I was on my way to the pharmacy when I almost got hit by that car.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI

We need to remove the tumor otherwise, it could metastasize and spread to other organs. Then it would be inoperable.

Rachel shakes her head.

RACHEL

I don't want the operation. I just want to go home. I see no point in continuing with my life.

The Doctor furrows his brow, is clearly disappointed at her decision.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI

This is not something to be taken lightly. It's terminal. If we don't operate, you understand, you probably will have only six months to a year at the most.

RACHEL

I'm not going to have the surgery. What does it matter if I die in a few months or a few years? You don't understand I have nothing to live for.

Doctor Kopinski looks in frustration at Rabbi Goldblum.

RABBI

Yes, you do. You have yourself. Live for yourself, Rachel. Fight to stay alive.

RACHEL

But, don't you see? I'm the  
(MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
end of the line. It doesn't  
matter.

Doctor Kopinski crosses his arms.

Rabbi Goldblum SIGHS, speaks slowly, calmly.

RABBI  
Someone once said, 'We are  
born, and then we die'. What  
counts is what we do in-between.

Rachel searches his eyes as she takes this in.

RABBI (CONT'D)  
The Talmud says, 'Even if a  
sharp sword is right at your  
neck, never despair Gods Mercy!'  
Never give up, Rachel. To do so  
is a sin.

Rachel stares sadly into space, thinks about this.

RABBI (CONT'D)  
You should take a lesson from  
your grandmother. To give up  
would be a disgrace to her  
memory. Her courage and  
perseverance are her gifts to  
you, and this is how you repay  
her? In this respect you are  
letting her down.

Rachel reacts as if what the Rabbi said was a slap in the  
face.

RABBI (CONT'D)  
Right now, you need surgery,  
and I'm sure she would advise  
you to have it.

She stares at him during a long moment as she thinks.

RACHEL

(sotto voce)

You're right. You're absolutely right. I need to live if only to honor all the sacrifices my ancestors made in order for me to have a life.

She looks at Doctor Kopinski.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Okay, let's take it out.

Rabbi Goldblum pats her hand.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI

I'll go reserve the OR stat.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

Rachel lies in bed groggy with her head bandaged. Rabbi Goldblum sits on a chair next to her.

RABBI

Nah. You see? Things happen for a reason. I'd say the accident was a blessing because you didn't know about the tumor. I'm glad you decided to have the surgery.

Doctor Kopinski walks in smiling.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI

Am I interrupting?

RACHEL

No, not at all. Come in.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI

I have good news. Fortunately, the tumor was in a good location.

Rachel looks perplexed at the doctor for what she considers an inane response.



RACHEL  
A good location?

DOCTOR KOPINSKI  
Had the tumor been one inch in  
either direction, it would have  
been inaccessible. You are very  
lucky, young lady.

Rachel looks at the Rabbi.

RACHEL  
There's the one inch again.

Rabbi Goldblum smiles in understanding.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI  
Fascinating, I, too, have missed  
death by just one inch. I  
remember hiding under a one-inch  
thick floorboard to evade Nazis.

RACHEL  
Really? I would love to hear  
more about that.

Their eyes lock in on each other. He smiles.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI  
Another time, perhaps. Well...  
feel better. I'll check in on  
you later.

RACHEL  
Yes, please do. Thank you.

As Doctor Kopinski exits, Rachel looks at Rabbi Goldblum.  
She SIGHS deeply.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
I still don't understand why  
I'm still alive. What do I do  
with my life now?

RABBI  
Maybe you are meant to write  
(MORE)

RABBI (CONT'D)  
about your ancestors... their  
struggles, sacrifice, your  
Grandmother's survival. Think  
about it, my child.

RACHEL  
I will. I definitely will.

Rabbi Goldblum pats her hand.

RABBI  
It's been a pleasure talking with  
you, Rachel. Get well soon.

RACHEL  
Thank you, Rabbi.

Rabbi Goldblum exits.

After a few seconds, Rachel carefully reaches for the  
phone, speaks inaudibly.

Moments later a VOLUNTEER KNOCKS, enters.

VOLUNTEER  
Hello, did you ask for pen and  
paper?

RACHEL  
Yes, I did. Thank you.

The Volunteer smiles, hands it to her, exits.

There is another KNOCK on the door.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
Come in.

Dr. Kopinski enters again.

Rachel has a worried look fearing he has some bad news.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
Is there something wrong?

DOCTOR KOPINSKI

No. I... I was wondering. I  
know we hardly know each other,  
but I'd like to get to know  
you better and hear some more  
about your courageous Grandmother.

Rachel EXHALES DEEPLY, relieved it wasn't bad news.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI (CONT'D)

When you're feeling better,  
would you like to have dinner  
with me?

Rachel's eyes light up. She imitates Maria's flirtatious  
ritual her grandmother taught her. She tilts her head,  
licks her lips, then smiles.

RACHEL

Yes, of course. I'd be delighted.

Dr. Kopinski grins like the Cheshire cat.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI

Great. So, get well soon.

RACHEL

Yes. Thank you.

As Dr. Kopinski leaves, Rachel smiles up at the ceiling,  
then looks down at the paper.

She thinks, then starts to write.

CLOSE ON PAPER

FOR LIZZIE, 1893-1980

END CLOSE UP.

**FADE OUT.**