

Just One Inch

Inspired by The True Story
Of My Ancestors

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OVER BLACK

The sound of many horses GALLOPING.

FADE IN:

SUPER: RUSSIAN EMPIRE, AUGUST 1897

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 and closer. Besides the sound of their HOOVES, the horses WHINNY and SNORT.

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 (30's, in peasant tunic clothes, reddish hair, glasses, short 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 barefoot daughter, FOUR-YEAR-OLD ELIZABETH (reddish-brown hair, brown eyes, in a smock).

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

Elizabeth rushes to look out through the lace curtains in the window. Vladimir quickly follows.

Elizabeth's face lights up with excitement and a big smile.

FOUR-YEAR-OLD ELIZABETH
Horsees.

Vladimir looks out. His eyes widen in fear, jaw drops.

He turns around, signals with a quivering finger over his mouth to Svetlana and Elizabeth to be quiet. He grabs Elizabeth's arm, scurries her to Svetlana.

POUNDING on the door startles Elizabeth. She SCREAMS.

Svetlana angrily motions to Vladimir to go open the door. Vladimir shakes his head, afraid. Svetlana motions insisting he do.

Elizabeth notices her father's fear, starts to CRY, hides behind her mother. Svetlana picks her up, tries to comfort her.

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 holds his chin high, a sign of his arrogance and pride.

SERGEI
Are you Vladimir Kaminskaya?

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

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

Vladimir's body shakes in dreaded fear.

VLADIMIR
But why? I have done nothing
wrong.

Svetlana rushes to Vladimir holding Elizabeth. She stands directly behind him, looks out to see all the riders. The sight of Sergei frightens Elizabeth. She hugs her mother as she averts her eyes.

SERGEI
(to Vladimir)
Get on the horse. I have no time
to explain. His Royal Highness
awaits.

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

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

Svetlana stays at the door as she and Elizabeth watch Vladimir and Sergei mount 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 and Sergei walk closer towards the Tsar (29) seated in the distance.

TSAR NICHOLAS II, who wears a black uniform with a gold epaulette on each shoulder, light blue sash with lots of medals, sits on his red and gold throne. He speaks MOS 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.

Vladimir copies the bow.

SERGEI

Your Majesty.

He backs up, joins many other men in uniform at the side.

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

He 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 with well-trimmed beard, thick mustache curved to his ears, receding hairline.

He eyes the Tsar's stunning German wife, ALEXANDRA (reddish-brown 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. The display of jewels is over-the-top exhibiting great wealth.

Vladimir gulps.

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

The baby squirms and CRIES in the Tsarina's lap.

TSARINA ALEXANDRA
Hush, Tatiana.

Vladimir sees a daughter, OLGA (2, blue eyes, light chestnut hair, short snubby nose), dressed like the Tsarina. She sits on the 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
Yes, Your Majesty.

Nicholas impatiently watches the Nanny leave with the Children then looks sternly 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

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

The Tsar's posture straightens. He furrows his brows, looks displeased, and speaks with a condescending tone.

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 nervously back at the Tsar. His forehead sweats profusely.

VLADIMIR (CONT'D)

Your Majesty, is that a problem?

The Tsar again speaks in a condescending tone.

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, speaks with emotion in his voice.

VLADIMIR

Your Majesty, have I done
something wrong? Am I being
accused of something?

Nicholas looks at his wife, who smiles. The Tsar smiles back, relaxes his posture.

TSAR NICHOLAS

7.

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

Vladimir nods his head over and over nervously in agreement

TSAR NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

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

Vladimir is relieved, smiles.

VLADIMIR

Yes, Sire.

TSAR NICHOLAS

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

The Tsarina nods.

TSARINA ALEXANDRA

I hear your wife is a good cook.

Vladimir'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

8.

She will be honored, Your Majesty.

Nicholas leans forward in his throne, looks sternly him.

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. PETERHOF PALACE KITCHEN - DAY

YOUNG ELIZABETH (8) 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 white pinafore apron over a black dress) gathers a bowl, flour, and honey.

SVETLANA

(smiling)

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

YOUNG 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?

YOUNG 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, sets the pig on the table.

SVETLANA (CONT'D)

You would do well to learn from both of us.

YOUNG ELIZABETH

Yes, Mama.

Svetlana smiles at Chef Cubat, who nods approvingly.

SVETLANA

Watch, Lizzie. I'm going to show
(MORE)

SVETLANA (CONT'D)

10.

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

PRE-TEEN ELIZABETH (11) and Olga (9, tall) lock arms as they walk along a dirt path toward the yellow palace through the beautifully landscaped gardens.

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

Each girl wears a different colored pastel dress and a large matching bow at the end of their braided hair.

Suddenly, the Tsarina SCREAMS loudly from inside the palace.

Startled, Elizabeth stops abruptly. She grabs Olga, and clutches her tightly.

PRE-TEEN ELIZABETH

Oh... my... God, Olga!

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

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

Elizabeth extends her arms.

PRE-TEEN ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

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
(MORE)

OLGA (CONT'D)

11.

to Mama's screams by now.

(to Elizabeth)

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

INT. PETERHOF PALACE BEDROOM - DAY

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

TSARINA ALEXANDRA

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

The DOCTOR comes out from under the bedsheet between the
Tsarina's legs. Serious look. Shakes his head at the Tsar.

TSAR NICHOLAS

(to Alexandra)

But you will, Lexy. I command it!

Alexandra looks sternly at Nicholas.

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 the newborn.

The bedroom doors are opened by two tall ABYSSINIAN GUARDS
as the children and Elizabeth fearfully look in.

Nicholas smiles proudly at his baby.

TSAR NICHOLAS

It's a boy! I have a son!

He raises the baby in the air.

TSAR NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Hail Tsarevich Alexei!

Elizabeth and Olga happily hug while the other children jump up and down for joy.

EVERYONE
(Russian cheer pronounced ура)
Ура.

INT. PETERHOF PALACE GUEST ROOM - DAY

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

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

Svetlana walks up behind Vladimir carefully not to spill the tea, and 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.

SVETLANA
What are you writing, Vladimir?

He stops writing, looks at her.

VLADIMIR
I'm writing a reminder to inform the Tsar the population has doubled resulting in overcrowding with destitute living conditions that may lead to a revolution.

Svetlana nods slowly in understanding.

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

SVETLANA
Elizabeth has become a beautiful young woman, has she not?

Vladimir 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.

Alexei (8, blue eyes, brown hair, in dark trousers, white sailor shirt and hat) holds onto Olga's hand as they walk. (Olga now has wavy shoulder length hair and carries a book.)

Their handsome French tutor, PIERRE GILLIARD, supervises.

TEEN ELIZABETH (19, reddish/brown braid, wearing a vest over an olive-green blouse and skirt) laughs, runs with her hands stretched out, fingers wiggling to grab Alexei.

TEEN ELIZABETH

I'm the big, bad wolf, and I'm
going to get you.

Alexei GIGGLES

PIERRE GILLIARD

Watch out, Alexei. Lizzie's
right behind you!

Alexei SCREAMS excitedly, lets go of Olga's hand, and smiles as he runs away with the tutor frantically running after him.

Elizabeth joins Olga as they walk on.

(Each Romanov girl now wears a knee-length dark blue jumper with white polka dots, hair loose and cut just past shoulders tied back with large white bow.)

They are followed by Tatiana (15, looks like a younger version of the Tsarina), Maria (13) who constantly looks around to see if anyone is watching, and mischievous Anastasia (11) who trips Maria.

As they approach the flower gardens, Olga sits with her back against a tree to read her book.

Teen Elizabeth and Maria, smile, link arms as they stroll

through the maze of flower beds.

Alexei chases a KING CHARLES SPANIEL. Anastasia and Tatiana pick flowers as a FRENCH BULLDOG, a small black POMERANIAN, 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 points to the clouds.

TEEN ELIZABETH

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.

TEEN ELIZABETH

Of course, I can.

Maria looks over, smiles at the tutor who stands by a tree watching them. She continues smiling at him as she speaks.

MARIA

Pierre and I kissed.

TEEN ELIZABETH

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

Maria smiles back at Elizabeth.

MARIA

Well, in my dreams I did. But
I'd like to.

TEEN 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

I hope you do, because you
deserve it.

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

Anastasia holds flowers, approaches Elizabeth. Anastasia
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.

TEEN ELIZABETH

You sound jealous, Nastasya.

Anastasia looks seriously at Elizabeth before they GIGGLE.

EXT. PETERHOF PALACE GRAND CASCADE - DAY

Teen Elizabeth and the royal children walk to the railing
overlooking the GILDED STATUES, CASCADING PALATIAL WATERS,
and WATER JETS soaring skyward.

They sit on a cement bench as they listen to a handsome
musician, BORIS, play SOFT MUSIC on his BALALAIKA.

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

Boris walks closer to Elizabeth and smiles as he sings,
seemingly, just for her.

He finishes his song.

ELIZABETH

That was beautiful, Boris.

The Tsarina steps out from the palace, calls out to the children.

TSARINA ALEXANDRA

Come everyone. Time for tea.

The children excitedly run inside. Elizabeth walks slowly.

Olga looks at Elizabeth, then at her mother.

OLGA

Mama, please. She's such a good friend.

TSARINA ALEXANDRA

I let you socialize with her, Olga, but the staff and their children are not permitted to dine with us.

OLGA

But, Mama...

TSARINA ALEXANDRA

I'm sorry. You have to respect the rules.

Olga looks sorrowfully at Elizabeth.

Elizabeth mouths MOS, "It's okay".

She turns around and watches Boris walk away.

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. PETERHOF PALACE KITCHEN - DAY

ADULT ELIZABETH (24) slices loaves of bread. Chef Cubat stuffs and rolls cabbage. Svetlana stirs vegetables boiling on the stove.

They hear the loud roar of the protestors and rush to the window. They watch...

EXT. PALACE GATES - DAY

...the angry crowd try to pull the iron gates open as they repeat their loud CHANTS.

INT. PETERHOF PALACE KITCHEN - DAY

They speak as they continue to watch the protestors.

ADULT ELIZABETH
Why are they rioting?

CHEF CUBAT
They feel Nicholas doesn't care about them because he's spending money on a war that nobody wants.

SVETLANA
And they're starving as a result. He should take care of the people!
(beat)
Vladimir warned the Tsar this would happen. If we weren't working in the palace, we'd join their protest.

Elizabeth eyebrows arch in surprise. She looks at her mother.

ADULT ELIZABETH

So, you side with the Bolsheviks?

SVETLANA

You don't understand because you've grown up with this life of luxury... living in all the palaces... eating fine food... and being well educated. Look how nicely you're dressed.

ADULT ELIZABETH

But, what's wrong with living a life of luxury?

SVETLANA

We are part of the working class, Lizzie. I think if Vladimir was never recruited by the Tsar, you would understand their anger.

Svetlana looks worried.

SVETLANA (CONT'D)

I hope Vladimir comes home soon.

They walk back to their tasks.

SVETLANA (CONT'D)

I feel sorry for the children. They don't even have a piece of bread to eat while they see the wealthy Romanovs...

(pointing)

...gorging on all this food.

Elizabeth starts to slice another piece of bread. She stops, looks at Chef Cubat.

ADULT ELIZABETH

Pierre, do we have extra loaves?

EXT. PETERHOF PALACE GATES - DAY

Elizabeth and Svetlana each carry two large baskets of

sliced bread. They slowly walk toward the angry crowd yelling and pulling the gates.

Guards try to poke hands with the spear at the end of their rifles.

ONE GUARD notices Elizabeth and Svetlana approaching.

ONE GUARD
Be careful. Don't go near them!

Svetlana GULPS. Elizabeth nods.

As they near the gates, the people see the baskets full of bread. They stop yelling. It is eerily quiet.

Elizabeth looks at most of the children sitting on top of their father's shoulders so they won't get crushed by the mob.

ADULT ELIZABETH
For the children.

Everyone quietly nods.

ADULT ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
If you have a child here, step
forward.

The crowd quietly makes way for those with children to walk closer to the gates.

The fathers help their children down and stand behind them.

Elizabeth and Svetlana walk up closer, hand out the bread to the many children lining the gates.

EXT. HILLTOP NEAR THE BATTLEFRONT - DAY

Nicholas (in long, belted, Cossack fur coat, sword clipped to belt, tall Cossack hat) proudly rides a beautiful white horse. He leads a troop of the Imperial Army.

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

The horses' breaths can be seen in the freezing cold air as it snows lightly.

They approach a GENERAL (long trench belted coat, General cap) standing next to his horse. He stares at a field below.

Nicholas and Sergei dismount. Nicholas looks stoic as Vladimir looks in horror with gaping mouth at the seemingly endless field of dead bodies. Snow falls on some bodies already frozen.

Wounded soldiers walk around dazed like zombies. Some remove the boots of dead soldiers and put them on their frostbitten feet.

FROST forms as everyone speaks.

TSAR NICHOLAS
How many men did we lose?

GENERAL
About 200,000, 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, then 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.

Nicholas looks at all the dead bodies, then back at Vladimir.

TSAR NICHOLAS

(angrily)

Tell him to use all necessary
force!

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

VLADIMIR

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

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

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

TSAR NICHOLAS

You will write what I said!

Vladimir looks dejected, but nods frantically over and over

EXT. ST. PETERSBURG STREET - DAY

An OLDER COURIER arrives behind a platoon of soldiers with
rifles aimed at the crowd. The Courier dismounts, runs
over, hands COMMANDER KHABALOV the Tsar's reply.

Khabalov's eyebrows rise as he reads it, then addresses his
soldiers.

COMMANDER KHABALOV

Men, the Tsar has ordered us to
use force. Fire. Shoot them all!!

INT. IMPERIAL TRAIN - NIGHT

Tsar Nicholas, wearing his imperial bathrobe, enters.
Vladimir, in a plain robe closely behind him, dons his
glasses.

Minister of War ALEXANDER GUCHKOV (glasses, bushy mustache
ending in a finely trimmed short beard, suit and tie) has
have been waiting with TWO LOOK-ALIKE GENERALS in uniform.

TSAR NICHOLAS

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

Guchkov waves a letter.

ALEXANDER GUCHKOV

Sign this.

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

Guchkov looks around at the ornately decorated salon car with 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, and reluctantly signs it.

SUPER: WINTER PALACE, 1917

INT. WINTER PALACE KITCHEN - DAY

Svetlana and Chef Cubat are busy cooking in the white tiled kitchen. Vladimir rushes in frantically, out of breath.

VLADIMIR

Lenin and his Bolsheviks have declared they are the new government. 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!

SIDE ENTRANCE

Vladimir, Svetlana, and Elizabeth (24), quickly flee as LOUD SCREAMS and GUNSHOTS are heard.

ADULT ELIZABETH
(frantically)
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.

ADULT 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 REARS 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 missing Vladimir's head by JUST ONE INCH.

Vladimir opens his eyes.

END CLOSE UP.

He quickly rolls to the side of the road.

The Bolshevik is about to shoot him when Elizabeth rushes out from the bushes.

ELIZABETH

No! Don't shoot him!

The Bolshevik recognizes her.

BORIS

Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH

Boris?

Boris looks ahead at his men, then back at her.

BORIS

Run as fast as you can and
don't look back!

He FIRES A SHOT in the air, then gallops on.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The Kaminskayas rush through the forest stepping over fallen branches, walk 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

To my brother Moyshe's farm...

He smiles at Elizabeth.

VLADIMIR (CONT'D)

...in the Pale. It's where Jews are allowed to live. 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.

ADULT 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 quickly puts her shoes back on.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

As the Kaminskayas walk, they hear the sounds of CHILDREN LAUGHING, CREAKING WOODEN WHEELS, horses NEIGHING, SNORTING, and BRAYING.

They come to a clearing and watch 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.

EXT. FOREST TRAIL - DAY

As they walk along the trail, Elizabeth is tired and bored with nothing to see but fields of wheat and forest. She notices horse dung on the dirt road, and watches as the horse-drawn cart's wheel in front flattens it. This is her entertainment.

A six-year-old girl, MISHA (pretty smile, large brown eyes, curly brown hair) walks up alongside Elizabeth. She carries a WHITE RABBIT.

MISHA

27.

Would you like to hold Latke?

ADULT ELIZABETH

Yes, sure. I would love to hold him.

Misha laughs, hands her the rabbit.

MISHA

Latke's a girl, silly.

ADULT 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.

The sun is about to set, so the caravan stops. The men gather twigs to make a fire as the women prepare food.

Elizabeth hands Latke back to Misha.

As 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.

ADULT 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.

ADULT ELIZABETH

Of course.

EXT. ANOTHER FOREST CLEARING - 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 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. DIRT ROAD - DAY

As the caravan continues in a single line down the curved road, a young male SCOUT rides ahead on his horse.

The Scout hears HORSES and men's VOICES approaching. He stops abruptly, dismounts. He cautiously looks through bushes around the corner. His eyes widen when 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 nearby forest.

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. Suddenly, they hear LOUD SCREAMS, lots of GUNSHOTS, and with each gunshot, Elizabeth covers her ears, closes her eyes, and shudders with each shot.

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

Vladimir slowly raises his hands. Svetlana and Elizabeth slowly copy. They all GULP in unison.

After a few quiet seconds, they turn around cautiously, fearing they are about to be shot. They see no one except... the rabbit.

Svetlana and Vladimir almost faint.

ADULT 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 hugging Latke every few steps.

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

EXT. FOREST - SUNSET

After they walk for miles, Vladimir stops, looks around.

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...

Vladimir doesn't finish his sentence. Elizabeth looks up, 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 of twigs over a small campfire.

VLADIMIR

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

ADULT 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 and swiftly crouch down in fear. Vladimir silences his family with a quivering finger.

CAMPFIRE

A YOUNG BOLSHEVIK kneels, puts his palm over the ashes.

YOUNG BOLSHEVIK

The embers are warm. They're nearby.

FOREST

The Kaminskayas panic and bolt.

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

SVETLANA
Vladimir, I'm stuck!

Vladimir and Elizabeth quickly turn around, look back.

Svetlana hears a GUN COCKING, turns her head and sees the Bolshevik's gun pointed at her.

Look of terror on her face.

SVETLANA (CONT'D)
Please, I beg you, don't!

He spits in her face.

Vladimir and Elizabeth watch with shock as the Bolshevik SHOOTs her point blank in the head. Her bloody babushka drips down her face.

Elizabeth's SCREAM fills the air.

ADULT ELIZABETH
Mama!

Two other Bolsheviks in the forest, ONE TALL, the other SHORT, 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.

ADULT ELIZABETH
But, Mama! We can't leave her!

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

The Bolshevik SHOOTS Svetlana one more time.

The two Bolsheviks run up to the Young Bolshevik. He points with his chin.

YOUNG BOLSHEVIK

They're over there.

The two Bolsheviks give chase.

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 desperately run as the Bolsheviks SHOOT around the trees.

They dead end at a high river bank and look down at the 45 feet wide, deep river below.

Vladimir fearfully looks back at the men approaching.

VLADIMIR

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

ADULT ELIZABETH

I will try, Papa.

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

Vladimir pockets his glasses, grabs Elizabeth's hand. They jump into the river.

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

UNDERWATER SHOT - DAY

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

CLOSE ON

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

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

END CLOSE UP.

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

On the other side of the river, Vladimir and Elizabeth swim to the surface. They GASP for air and cling onto the low-hanging branches so the swift current doesn't sweep 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.

The Tall Bolshevik uses binoculars to scan the river, while the Short Bolshevik watches a large branch float by.

TALL BOLSHEVIK

Where are you? Come on. You
can't get away from us.

The 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 "no".

ADULT 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 furrows her brows, not understanding

ADULT ELIZABETH
My skirt? Why?

VLADIMIR
Because they're not going to
give up until they're certain
we're both 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 the skirt to him.

VLADIMIR (CONT'D)
When you're sure they're gone...

He points with his chin.

VLADIMIR (CONT'D)
...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?

ADULT ELIZABETH
But you're coming with me, right?
He doesn't answer.

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

ADULT ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
Papa, please. Don't do this.
Don't leave me! Please, Papa!

VLADIMIR
Listen to me. You can do this,
(MORE)

VLADIMIR (CONT'D)

Lizzie. You're a strong young woman. Then follow the sun as it sets in the west. The west, Lizzie.

He reaches his pant pocket underwater for 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 do this for you so you will have a chance at life. A better, safer life. Get married, Lizzie. Have lots of children. I know you'll make me proud.

She shakes her head "no". She's hysterical now.

ADULT ELIZABETH

Papa, no! Please.

VLADIMIR

Be brave, Lizzie. If I don't do this, we'll both be killed.

ADULT ELIZABETH

Papa, no! Please. I need you! 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, and stares into her eyes.

VLADIMIR

My love will be with you wherever you are.

He kisses her tenderly on the forehead, then stares again.

He breaks a branch, and lets the current float him away. As he 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!

Elizabeth winces when she hears the Bolsheviks' SHOTS.

She looks at the river. Her eyes widen in shock when she sees the WATER TURN RED.

Her lips quiver as she mouths, "PAPA". She holds one hand over her mouth to keep from crying out, and quietly sobs.

She averts her eyes to the sky. Her head swiftly shakes in disbelief. She looks back at her father.

He is SHOT again still clinging to her BULLET-RIDDEN SKIRT.

TALL BOLSHEVIK

We got 'em. Now we can go.

Elizabeth watches the soldiers leave, but waits. She lowers her head and shakes it slower and slower, and sighs heavily.

Wearing only her long-sleeved blouse, petticoat, and boots, she slips on mud as she struggles to climb out. She uses branches to help, and finally reaches the top of the river bank.

She has an expression of overwhelming shock and drops to her knees. She looks sadly back at the river. Her hands shake as she wipes her eyes with the back of her hands.

ADULT ELIZABETH

I will make you proud. Very proud, Papa. I promise you.

She sniffs back tears. After a while, she stands. With head down, she begrudgingly shuffles her feet along the river bank until she notices it turns right.

Since the sun is about to set, she gathers leaves and branches to cover herself.

EXT. RIVER BANK - NIGHT

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, but she talks fitfully during her sleep.

ADULT ELIZABETH

Why, Papa? Why?

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

The SOUND OF BIRDS SINGING awakens Elizabeth. She sadly watches a bird hop among fallen leaves.

She shuffles towards the riverbank to drink as much as she can, then rips her sleeve off and soaks up water in it before heading for the forest.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Fallen leaves CRUNCH as Elizabeth steps on them. It gets darker and colder the further in she walks. She crosses her arms and rubs them for warmth as she navigates around fallen branches and scattered plants.

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 with MOSQUITOS attacking her and repeatedly tries to swat them off.

Elizabeth walks to the narrow dirt road and cautiously checks both directions before crossing. As she hobbles, she scratches her legs and neck over and over.

She stops to rest and notices mud nearby. She uses it to cover the itchy mosquito bites before she continues on.

Just before sunset 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 walks on YAWNING continuously, her eyes struggling to stay open. Her steps heavy and slow.

Her stomach rumbles from hunger as she scans the surroundings for something to eat. Empty-handed, she starts to hallucinate.

ADULT ELIZABETH

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

Suddenly, TWIGS SNAP.

Startled, reality returns. She stops abruptly fearing Bolsheviks. Her body shakes in dreaded fear. She turns slowly, and.. watches a DEER SPRINT away.

She EXHALES her relief loudly.

She walks on, then slowly struggles to climb a hill.

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

Elizabeth looks at the sun and points which way is west.

The great expanse of forest covering hills she must cross seems overwhelming. She SIGHS HEAVILY.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

As she carefully tries to navigate down the hill, she slips and slides downward on her stomach.

Dazed for a moment at the bottom, she doesn't move.

As she slowly sits up, the discomfort causes her to grimace. She observes her stained petticoat soaked with blood. Her hands tremble as she lifts it, revealing a large gash on her thigh.

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

She gingerly stands and tries to walk, but stops after two steps to pick up a thin branch. She removes its smaller branches to use it as a cane.

With painful steps, she continues, MOANING and GRUNTING. Her braid unravels as she limps.

Totally weak and exhausted, her steps become smaller and slower, body hunched over, eyes open and close slowly.

She stops to momentarily closes her eyes. Her body sways. She's about to drop.

She slowly limps to a tree and sits with her back against it, and instantly falls asleep before nightfall.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The sound of GROWLING awakens Elizabeth.

In the darkness she notices a pack of WOLVES have her surrounded. She is frozen in fear and too weak to do anything.

The wolves inch closer SNARLING with their sharp teeth.

Suddenly, there is a very LOUD ROAR.

The wolves turn around, see a large EURASIAN BROWN BEAR standing on two feet.

The LEAD WOLF boldly inches too close as the bear bellows again. It swings its paw sending the wolf flying.

The wolf hits a tree, falls, and dies.

The other wolves quickly scatter with the bear in pursuit.

To her right, Elizabeth sees the images of her mother and father in the distance urging her to come to them.

She barely manages to rise, and limps toward them, but the images slowly fade away. She dejectedly looks around for them.

The chilly air from a STRONG WIND seeps through her clothes sending shivers down her spine.

She stops by a large rock and huddles against it to shield her for warmth. She shivers as she watches the trees sway violently with leaves floating gently down like snowflakes.

She bows her head and swiftly falls asleep again.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

A ray of sunshine on her face slowly awakens Elizabeth lying next to the rock. She stretches, then walks on.

Finally, she emerges from the forest and spies a stump nearby. She rushes to it to rest for a moment.

When she removes her shoe, she notices a bloody blister.

On the ground beside her foot is a large ugly beetle, its legs frantically moving as she picks it up. She contorts her face, and swallows it.

A flock of GEESE soaring across the dim overcast sky grabs her attention. She shuts her eyes tightly, shakes her head while tears fall.

ADULT ELIZABETH

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

Suddenly, a large ray of sunshine beams down in the expanse of fields ahead.

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

petticoat. She looks out in the distance, and sees... a CABBAGE FIELD.

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

She quickly looks around for a leaf, covers her blister, dons her shoe then excitedly runs to the field.

EXT. CABBAGE FIELD - DAY

Elizabeth plops down in the cabbage patch around her. As she quickly devours some cabbage, it starts to rain. She gazes at the sky with a smile.

ADULT 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. 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 - MORNING

Elizabeth awakens and enjoys a breakfast of more cabbage.

She covers her lap with cabbage leaves until its completely filled then tucks the end of her petticoat into her waistband to secure them.

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

EXT. HAY FIELD - SUNSET

With the sun about to set, Elizabeth stops at a bale of

hay. She sits against it and slowly eats a dinner of more 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 at the clouds between the myriad of twinkling stars. Her voice chokes as she points to the clouds.

ADULT ELIZABETH

Look Maria, that one looks like
my Papa.

Her eyes well. A single tear streams down her face as she watches the cloud float away.

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

EXT. WHEAT FIELD - DAY

She drags her feet as she slowly walks along a dirt road in the hot sun. Sweat evident on her face. She wipes her brow with her arm.

Suddenly, there in the distance.. is a PEASANT MAN and WOMAN harvesting wheat. She smiles broadly as she excitedly sprints to them.

ADULT ELIZABETH

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, and drops the leaves.

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

Spacebo.

EXT. MOYSHE'S PASTURE - DAY

Elizabeth rushes until she sees a man in the distance. She can hardly believe she found him. She runs excitedly oblivious to her pain.

Since she fled the palace, a dirty, thinner Elizabeth finally approaches MOYSHE (40's, reddish beard and mustache like Vladimir, glasses, wearing a vyshyvanka shirt, belt, baggy pants, boots, and cap) as he spreads hay for his cows.

When she stops in front of him, there is a silent moment as her body trembles, her lips quiver.

He stops, taken aback at her appearance.

ADULT ELIZABETH
Are you Moyshe Kaminskaya?

MOYSHE
Da. And you are?

ADULT ELIZABETH
Elizabeth.

She looks into his eyes. She tries to appear energetic, but her face betrays her exhaustion.

ADULT ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
I am your brother's daughter,
your niece. My parents and I
escaped from the Bolshevik
Revolution.

Moyshe looks past her hoping to see them.

MOYSHE
Where are your parents?

Elizabeth hesitates to say the words.

ADULT ELIZABETH
(sotto voce)
They shot my mother.

Moyshe's face pales with shock as he stares at her.

MOYSHE

And... my brother?

Elizabeth cries hysterically. She looks down, bites her lip.

ADULT ELIZABETH

Papa sacrificed his life for me.

Moyshe collapses to his knees, hands shake as he removes his glasses, and cries.

Elizabeth's body trembles as she also gets on her knees.

Moyshe uses his sleeves to wipe his tears, then dons his glasses. He holds her hands, looks at her. They cry together as he hugs her tightly.

After a few moments, Moyshe stands.

MOYSHE

Come.

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 onto the wagon, then climbs on.

Vladimir flicks the reins for the chestnut draft horse to go.

He looks at Elizabeth and smiles.

She smiles back, relieved her ordeal is over. She exhales a LONG, SATISFIED BREATH.

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 a thatched 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, and 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 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.

ADULT ELIZABETH

(sotto voce)

My parents 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.

SUPER: MOYSHE'S FARM, 1918

EXT. BARN - DAY

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

KATYA

Do you miss the palace?

ADULT ELIZABETH

Every time I think of it. But,
this is my new home for now,
and I love you all.

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

She watches Moyshe and the boys shear the sheep. She gets a rake, walks over, and 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 next to Katya.

ADULT ELIZABETH

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

Katya chews with an open mouth.

KATYA

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.

ADULT 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.

Small wooden shops have outdoor tables, and 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.

ADULT ELIZABETH

These should fit. What do you think, Katya?

Katya nods, smiles 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 back with a frightened look.

MOYSHE

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

Look of horror on Katya and Elizabeth.

ADULT ELIZABETH

What? All of them?

Moyshe nods over and over quickly.

Elizabeth's face pales.

ADULT ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Olga?

Moyshe looks in her eyes sadly.

ADULT ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

And Maria?

Elizabeth stares at Moyshe as she processes this.

MOYSHE

The Bolsheviks are on their way!

We need to get you to America.

(to Katya)

Quick, we go home. I will take
her to train 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 exits the house, hands him the suitcase. Moyshe puts the suitcase on the cart, gets on.

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

ADULT 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.

ADULT ELIZABETH

52.

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.

ADULT ELIZABETH

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

Katya nods as her eyes well. She removes her hands from
Elizabeth's face to wipe a tear away with the edge of her
apron.

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

ADULT ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

I love you all, you know that.
You've become like my sister
and brothers. I will miss you,
terribly.

She looks over at the piglet.

ADULT ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Even little, Schnitzel.

Schnitzel SNORTS.

Elizabeth stands as tears flow down everyone's cheeks.

Katya hands her a basket.

KATYA

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

ADULT ELIZABETH

Spasibo. Thank you for everything.

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

Elizabeth manages the step to get on 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.

ADULT ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Goodbye everyone.

Moyshe urges the 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 cookie).

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.

ADULT ELIZABETH

54.

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.

ADULT 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 him.

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. He smiles as he savors it, then opens his eyes.

Elizabeth holds up the rest of the cake, looks at him with pleading eyes.

ADULT 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 for the transatlantic
voyage. You will need to take
the train to Tallinn, then
ferry across. Is that okay?

Elizabeth looks at Moyshe, who nods.

She smiles broadly, hands the Clerk the rest of the honey cake as Moyshe slides Elizabeth's papers to him.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM - DAY

Elizabeth and Moyshe watch a steam train slowly pull up.

MOYSHE

I know your parents look down
with pride.

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

MOYSHE (CONT'D)

You strong, Lizzie. I know...
you will take care of yourself.
You will survive... just like you
did in 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 a wallet from his pocket, hands it to her.

MOYSHE (CONT'D)

Here is your father's wallet.
I've added some money 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.

ADULT ELIZABETH

Thank you with all my heart for
taking care of me, Moyshe, but
I can't accept your money. You've
done so much for me already.

MOYSHE

We are family, Lizzie. You are
my brother's daughter, but you
are like my own flesh and blood.
It gives me pleasure to help you,
but I also do this for my brother.

ADULT ELIZABETH

I understand. I will never forget
you, Moyshe. You have...

The loud Conductor's WHISTLE interrupts her. They stare at each other, 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 happily waves to Moyshe.

Suddenly, she has an expression of overwhelming shock as she realizes that, like her father, she will never see him again. She cries uncontrollably.

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

INT. TALLINN TRAIN TERMINAL - DAY

Elizabeth continues on her solo journey with renewed determination. She exits the train amid other passengers and notices the SIGN with an arrow for the ferry.

She walks with exhilaration 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.

ADULT 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.

ADULT ELIZABETH

I've never been on a ship before.

She smiles, shows him her stamped contract.

AGENT

Well, welcome aboard.

He points to the gangplank.

AGENT (CONT'D)

Go right on, luv.

She looks at the gangplank, then back at the agent. She smiles again, MOUTHS a "thank you", and boards the ferry.

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.

ADULT ELIZABETH

Is there a doctor on board?

PASSENGER

You can go to sickbay. Ask a crew member where it is.

INT. OVERNIGHT FERRY - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

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, early thirties) 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 swings her basket and holds her suitcase as she follows many people toward the ship.

She steps into the road, but doesn't notice two 1917 cars speeding 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 at him. Their eyes lock. She smiles at the handsome young man as Nathan stares at her beautiful face.

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

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

ADULT ELIZABETH
That was you?

NATHAN
Yes. Are you hurt?

ADULT ELIZABETH
No, I don't think so.

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

ADULT ELIZABETH
The Hellig Olav?

He nods admiring her beautiful smile.

ADULT ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
I also have to catch that ship.

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

ADULT ELIZABETH
Okay, yes. Thank you.

He extends his hand to help her up.

INT. CAR - DAY (DRIVING)

Nathan gets in, sits next to Elizabeth.

NATHAN

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

HEINRICH LEIBERMAN, (60's, curly beard, wire rim glasses, brown three-piece suit and tie) tips his hat to Elizabeth.

Nathan points to Heinrich's wife, Ida (50-ish, 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.

ADULT ELIZABETH

(in Yiddish)

It's a pleasure to meet you.
I'm Elizabeth Kaminskaya, but
you can call me Lizzie. All my
friends do.

As the car speeds toward the dock, Nathan can't take his eyes off her.

Elizabeth looks out the window, then back at him, sees him still staring. She likes it, smiles.

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?

ADULT 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

As the Driver hands Elizabeth her suitcase and basket,
Elizabeth looks at Nathan and his parents.

ADULT ELIZABETH
Thank you.

Nathan and his parents smile, nod.

Elizabeth 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.

Nathan watches her as she heads for the gangway down to the
bottom of the ship.

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)

You belong in second-class with us. If you meet me at the top of your staircase after breakfast tomorrow, I'll get you in.

He winks, smiles.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Okay?

ADULT ELIZABETH

I promise I'll try.

She enters 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.

ADULT ELIZABETH

I always keep my promises.

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

ADULT 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 - CONTINUOUS

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

He escorts her to the rail to watch the ocean.

He notices her rub her arms for warmth and takes his jacket off, drapes it over her shoulders.

NATHAN

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

Elizabeth looks sadly at him.

ADULT 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.

ADULT ELIZABETH

I had to survive alone wandering in the forest. My will to live was stronger with every step I took so that my parents didn't die in vain. I wanted to make them proud.

NATHAN

I think you've made them very proud.

He watches her eyes well up during a moment of silence.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Well, we have ten days before we arrive in America. Plenty of time to talk. I want to know everything about you, Lizzie.

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.

ADULT ELIZABETH

I do?

NATHAN

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.

ADULT ELIZABETH
Are you always this charming?

NATHAN
I am when I'm with a beautiful woman 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.

MONTAGE OF SCENES

-- EXT. OUTSIDE DECK - DAY

Elizabeth and Nathan LAUGH LOUDLY while playing shuffleboard.

-- INT. CARD ROOM - DAY

As Elizabeth, Nathan, and his parents play cards, Nathan and Elizabeth give loving looks and play footsie under the table.

Ida and Heinrich take note, smile at each other.

-- INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Elizabeth and Nathan peruse book titles from the shelves.

Nathan looks around, leans in to kiss her. She smiles, kisses him back.

--EXT. OUTSIDE DECK - DAY

Nathan and Elizabeth each hold a book as they approach deck chairs.

Nathan moves the chairs close together and picks up the blanket on one of them.

After they sit, Nathan drapes the blanket on her. He takes her hand, kisses it.

They start to read, then talk and laugh (MOS).

--EXT. OUTSIDE DECK - SUNSET

As Nathan and Elizabeth watch the sunset, he puts his hand around her waist, draws her close. His kiss lingers.

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

They kiss again, more passionately.

END MONTAGE.

EXT. SHIP'S RAILING - DAY

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

Nathan turns, looks into Elizabeth's eyes, holds both hands

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.

ADULT ELIZABETH

What did you say?

NATHAN

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

His eyes search hers.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

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

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

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

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Elizabeth Kaminskaya, will you marry me?

Elizabeth looks at Heinrich, who nods his approval.

She looks back at Nathan.

ADULT 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.

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

They approach Customs Officers wearing uniforms. ONE CUSTOMS OFFICER repeats over and over in English with a loud speaker:

CUSTOMS OFFICER

Open your bags so we can see what's inside.

Since many immigrants don't understand English, utter chaos ensues.

Some people refuse to allow the Officers to open their bags. Some people hold onto their bags and argue in their language; some men fist fight; some are so terrified, they run back towards the ship.

Elizabeth watches an Officer remove a long Italian sausage from one man's bag with the man arguing he needed the food.

As Elizabeth's bags are inspected, the Officer throws everything out of her suitcase onto the ground. Finding nothing, he moves on to the next person leaving Elizabeth's things on the ground.

Elizabeth gives him the stink eye as she puts them back neatly into her suitcase.

She is then quickly ushered into a small boat to be ferried to Ellis Island.

INT. ELLIS ISLAND FERRY - DAY

The third-class passengers are crammed together like sardines in a tin can.

As Elizabeth looks around at the passengers, A GERMAN WOMAN seated next to her strikes up a conversation.

GERMAN WOMAN

They treat us worse than animals.

ELIZABETH

I don't think it's like this in America. My Papa told me many great things about this country.

EXT. ELLIS ISLAND - DAY

Everyone is separated into two very long lines - one for women and children, the other for boys over 15 and men.

There isn't much space between the person in front or back of them. Some people COUGH or look sickly, so Elizabeth covers her nose with the end of Katya's shawl.

As Elizabeth's line moves closer to the building, she notes a sign overhead, "MEDICAL SCREENING".

The line moves with Elizabeth now going inside.

INT. MEDICAL SCREENING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A Doctor quickly examines Elizabeth for eye disease, oral disorders, skin disorders, heart and lung problems.

Elizabeth notices some people having their clothes marked in chalk with letters like "H" and "X" and taken across the room where they are thrown into and locked in a cage.

Elizabeth is ushered into the Great Hall.

INT. ELLIS ISLAND - GREAT HALL - CONTINUOUS

The place is packed with long lines of people speaking DIFFERENT LANGUAGES and CHILDREN CRYING.

As Elizabeth waits her turn in the slow-moving line, her hands shake in nervousness.

She finally approaches a clean-cut Caucasian INSPECTOR wearing a suit and tie sitting behind a table. She stands facing him and smiles.

The Inspector looks up, glares sternly as he studies her for a moment.

Elizabeth's smile dissipates. She gulps.

INSPECTOR
What is your family name?

ADULT ELIZABETH
Kaminskaya.

The Inspector checks his large ledger.

INSPECTOR
Now it will be Kaminsky.

He changes her name in the ledger.

ADULT ELIZABETH
Kaminsky?

The Inspector looks up at her with a piercing glare.

INSPECTOR
You have a problem with that?

She shakes her head "no" rapidly as she bites her thumbnail.

INSPECTOR
Where are you from?

ADULT ELIZABETH
The Soviet Union.

INSPECTOR
So, you're a Communist.

ADULT ELIZABETH
No, Sir. I came here to escape
them, and Jewish persecution.

The Inspector writes in his ledger.

INSPECTOR
Are you traveling alone?

ADULT ELIZABETH
Not now, Sir. I just got engaged
and will be with my husband and
his parents.

Again, the Inspector glares darts at her in a long moment
of silence then makes a little check mark by her name.

INSPECTOR
(pointing to exit)
Go.

EXT. NEAR PIER - 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.

NATHAN
Lizzie, finally! We've been
waiting for three hours.

ELIZABETH
You know something, Nathan.
After being examined and
questioned, no one, not one
person said, 'Welcome to America'.

NATHAN

Americans may not be civil
towards Europeans coming into
their country. I fear it will
take some adjustment on both sides.

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

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - DAY

They all walk down a LOUD, busy street.

MONTAGE OF SIGHTS

They stop and watch with gaping mouths at the roar of life
as people everywhere fill the busy streets and sidewalks:

- People sell goods on sidewalks as men unload goods from
horse-drawn wagons double parked in front of small
shops.
- Children play ball in the middle of the street and stop
to let a mix of model-T cars and trucks maneuver by.
- Men in suits ride bicycles alongside packed street cars
and horse-drawn carts.
- Policemen on horseback yell orders to everyone.

END MONTAGE.

NATHAN

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

(to Ida)

Mama, you need to learn English.

(to Heinrich)

Papa, you and I will open a
clothing store.

(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.

They continue walking and find themselves surrounded by several ITALIAN MEN and boys wearing brass knuckles and carrying bats, hammers, and sticks.

ITALIAN MAN #1

Hey, where youz guys headed?

NATHAN

We're looking for an apartment.
Do you know where we can find one?

ITALIAN MAN #2

There's nuttin for youz here,
so keep walkin', Jew Boy.

ITALIAN MEN/BOYS

Go on. Get outta here.

They continue walking and now find themselves stared at by TEENAGERS that stopped playing soccer in the street. The teens follow them.

TEN IRISH MEN come out of a pub and surround them.

Suddenly a man grabs Ida's purse and runs off with it.

IDA

(screaming in German)

My purse! He took my purse!

Nathan turns around, can't figure out who the thief was.

NATHAN

Which one, Mama?

IRISHMAN #1

(mimicking)

Which one, Mama?

Everyone laughs.

IRISHMAN #2

You're in the wrong neighborhood.
Kikes belong in the ghetto.

Irishman #1 WHISTLES at Elizabeth as he sizes her up and down.

IRISHMAN #1
Wow. Ain't you a beaut.

He gets close to her causing her to back up against the building wall then starts to feel her up.

NATHAN
(shoves the guy)
Leave her alone!

Irishman #1 punches Nathan causing him to fall to the ground. Everyone surrounds him and encourages Irishman #2 to kick Nathan in the ribs, which he does.

Elizabeth pushes her way through the men and shields Nathan.

ELIZABETH
Leave him alone!

A PRIEST intervenes.

PRIEST
Leave 'em be, lads.

The Irish crowd backs up as the Priest offers his hand to Nathan. Nathan holds onto to it as he gingerly rises.

PRIEST (CONT'D)
Come with me. I'll take you
to the Jewish Quarter.

ELIZABETH
Thank you.

The Priest stops under a street sign, "HESTER STREET".

PRIEST
This is where you should be if
you want to stay out of trouble.
It's the Lower East Side. You
(MORE)

PRIEST (CONT'D)
 will find an apartment...
 (pointing)
 ...in one of those brick buildings.
 called the Tenements.
 (beat)
 And a word to the wise... try to
 Americanize yourselves as soon
 as possible.

Nathan shakes his hand with one hand as he holds his ribs
 with the other. He has a hard time speaking.

NATHAN
 (raspy voice)
 We appreciate your help, Father.

The Priest waves as he walks back to the Irish neighborhood

As they walk toward the Tenements, they notice garbage
 piling up in the overcrowded busy streets with clothes
 drying on clotheslines hanging out the windows.

ELIZABETH
 I hate America! It's worse than
 at home. It's overcrowded,
 unsanitary, and dangerous. They
 live like pigs, and everyone is
 prejudiced against Jews. We
 might as well go back home.

NATHAN
 I think we should give it a
 chance here, Lizzie. Maybe
 it'll be better after Papa and
 I open a store. At least we
 now know to have our store in
 the Jewish Quarter.

Heinrich nods.

INT. TENEMENT APARTMENT - DAY

Their apartment consists of only three wall-papered rooms
 and badly stained wooden floors: one bedroom with meager
 second-hand furniture, a kitchen with a small table, four

chairs, a wooden icebox, coal-burning stove, a farmhouse sink, a cast-iron bathtub, and a closet-sized room with a pull chain toilet.

Elizabeth and Ida sit at the table when Nathan enters the kitchen.

ELIZABETH

There's nothing in the icebox.

Heinrich enters.

NATHAN

Okay, I'll give you some money so you and Ida can get some groceries. Heinrich and I will walk around and look for a place for our store. And remember to stay in our area.

ELIZABETH

Sounds like a good plan.

EXT. CLOTHING STORE - DAY

Nathan, Elizabeth, Heinrich, and Ida stand in the street staring at their simple store with a large banner in the window, "GRAND OPENING TODAY".

A line of excited, chattering women has already formed waiting for Nathan to open the door.

Nathan smiles at Elizabeth.

NATHAN

In a week or two, if all goes well, we can get married.

Elizabeth smiles like a Cheshire cat.

INT. SYNAGOGUE - DAY

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

When Nathan stomps on a glass, everyone cheers, "MAZEL TOV".

A very small group of professional Russian dancers raise Nathan and Elizabeth seated in chairs.

After they are lowered, the dancers perform.

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, Elizabeth, and FIVE EMPLOYEES.

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

INT. TENEMENT 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.

ADULT ELIZABETH

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

The Midwife shakes her head sadly as she shows Nathan the stillborn, 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!

ADULT 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, and holds her hand. She
strokes Elizabeth's hair back.

Nathan leaves the room, SLAMS the bedroom door shut.

ADULT ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

(to Ida)

I've never seen him like this.

IDA

He want son to continue family
name.

INT. TENEMENT APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

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 and Nathan's 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.

INT. TENEMENT 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. TENEMENT APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

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

INT. TENEMENT APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

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.

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

ADULT ELIZABETH

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

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

NATHAN

I'm sorry if I reacted poorly.

He kisses her forehead.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

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.

(beat)

We'll try again.

He looks around the small tenement apartment.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

This place is a dump. Business is good. We can afford to move into a nicer apartment. Maybe it'll cheer you up. What do you say?

EXT. NICE APARTMENT - COURTYARD - DAY

Adorable, GIGGLING, GEORGE (3) rides his tricycle as YOUNG RUTH (6, brown Shirley Temple curls) plays with a Raggedy Ann doll.

MIDDLE-AGED ELIZABETH (30's) sits on a bench snapping string beans into a bowl while she watches them.

George starts to ride away headed for a busy street.

MIDDLE-AGED 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.

MIDDLE-AGED ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Stay here next to Ruth.

INT. CLOTHING STORE - DAY

The clock on the wall shows five minutes to five. The five employees head out the door followed by Nathan who is about to lock the door when four men rush in carrying clubs and wear brass knuckles.

NATHAN

What do you want?

One THUG gets in Nathan's face as another uses his club against Heinrich's neck pinning him to the wall.

THUG

There've been a lot of thefts in the neighborhood. We're here to protect you. But it'll cost ya.

NATHAN

We don't need protection.

THUG

Shut up! You're gonna pay us a
fifty dollars every week.
Got that? Jake, here, is gonna
show you a sample of what'll
happen if you don't pay us.

Jake punches Nathan in the jaw with his brass knuckles.

Nathan's face quickly turns to the side with a tooth flying
out. Blood drips down his chin.

THUG (CONT'D)

Give us everything you've got
in the cash register right now.
We'll be back at the end of the
week for our hundred. And you
better have it if you wanna live.

INT. NICE APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ida washes dishes in their nicely decorated kitchen as
Elizabeth sits at the kitchen table with George and Young
Ruth eating.

Nathan storms in, face bruised, eyes glaring. He sits at the
table, SLAMS his fist.

George CRIES. Ruth's body flinches. Both startled by the
sound.

Elizabeth notices Nathan's beat up, bloody face.

MIDDLE-AGED ELIZABETH

Nate! What happened?

Heinrich hangs their hats.

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

NATHAN

Four men came into the store
demanding protection money.

(MORE)

NATHAN (CONT'D)

They said they're going to kill me if I don't pay. Protection! The only protection we need is from them!

Elizabeth rushes to the sink and wets a towel.

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

NATHAN (CONT'D)

I'm okay. Don't make a fuss.

HEINRICH

What are we going to do?

NATHAN

I don't know, Papa. Right now, I'm gonna have a drink.

With a sense of dire urgency, he rushes to the cabinet, opens a bottle of VODKA, and walks out the door.

INT. NICE APARTMENT - CHILDREN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

An ELDERLY DOCTOR listens to the lungs of 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 drops to her knees and cries.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

83.

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

Nathan walks toward his desk. REVEAL: Calendar on wall shows date, "OCTOBER 28, 1929".

SCREAMS are heard coming from outside the store as people out of buildings and gather in the street.

Everyone, including Nathan and Heinrich, rush outside.

EXT. CLOTHING STORE - DAY

Nathan walks up to a HYSTERICAL MAN pacing back and forth with his hands on his temples, elbows out.

HYSTERICAL MAN
The Stock Market just crashed!

Nathan's jaw drops.

INT. NICE APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Elizabeth takes out a honey cake from the oven, sets it on the table as Young Ruth, sits at the table, plays with her Patsy doll. Ida feeds George.

Nathan and Heinrich walk in, hang their hats.

NATHAN
We're gonna have to close the store.

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

MIDDLE-AGED ELIZABETH
Those thugs again?

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

MIDDLE-AGED ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
Nate, the doctor warned you
your liver can't take any more.

NATHAN
(yelling)
You should be more concerned
about how we're going to raise
Ruth without any money!

MIDDLE-AGED ELIZABETH
What are you talking about?

Nathan speaks without looking at her.

NATHAN
We don't have any customers,
and we don't have any money!
And even if we did, those thugs
will take it.

He looks at Elizabeth.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
You don't understand, Lizzie.
We're broke. We have no money
for food. This store is our
livelihood. Without it, the only
jobs Jews can get is selling
from push carts, and those thugs
will still demand protection money.

HEINRICH
We'll be okay, son. 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.

Elizabeth covers her mouth with her hand in disbelief.

INT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

Elizabeth walks in carrying a POUCH in one hand, holding Ruth's hand with the other. She approaches a tall JEWELER at the counter.

JEWELER

Good afternoon. How may I be
of service, Madam?

Elizabeth empties her pouch of JEWELRY on the counter.

MIDDLE-AGED ELIZABETH

Good afternoon. How much can
I get for these?

The Jeweler groans.

JEWELER

Madam, everyone nowadays is
pawning their jewelry. I really
don't need any more.

Elizabeth's eyes well up.

MIDDLE-AGED ELIZABETH

Please, Sir. We need to buy food.

The Jeweler looks down at Ruth, then back at Elizabeth.

JEWELER

Well... I guess I can take a
few more.

Elizabeth smiles at him.

He looks over the jewelry, selects a few items, studies them with a jeweler's loupe.

He looks at Elizabeth again, then goes to the cash register, presses tabs to open it, takes out some cash.

JEWELER (CONT'D)

Here. It isn't much, but it should help.

Elizabeth gives a half smile as she nods.

INT. NICE APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Elizabeth cooks as Ida sets the kitchen table. Nathan and Heinrich walk in, hang their hats.

NATHAN

Something smells good.

MIDDLE-AGED ELIZABETH

Come sit. We're having veal cutlets.

Heinrich and Nathan look at each other, then back at her.

NATHAN

We can't afford veal. Where'd you get the money for it?

MIDDLE-AGED ELIZABETH

Don't worry about it.

NATHAN

Liz...

MIDDLE-AGED ELIZABETH

Okay. Okay. I sold a few pieces of jewelry I don't need.

Nathan slams his fist on the table.

NATHAN

I'm the man of the house! It's my responsibility to provide for us. Don't ever do that again!

He looks at his father.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

I can't take this anymore. Losing George, and now the store... It's too much!

He storms to the cabinet, grabs a bottle of Vodka again, slams the door on his way out.

Elizabeth's eyes well as she looks at Heinrich and Ida.

EXT. CLOTHING STORE - NIGHT

Nathan watches his store burn. He pockets a LIGHTER as he drinks from the bottle.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY (RAINING)

Elizabeth hugs Ruth closely with one hand, holds an open umbrella in the other as it rains heavily. 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?

MIDDLE-AGED 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.

MIDDLE-AGED ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

He was a good man.

Heinrich and Ida nod sadly.

Elizabeth SIGHS HEAVILY.

MIDDLE-AGED ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
I'm afraid now we're going to
have to move back to the
Tenements.

INT. TENEMENT APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Elizabeth sits at the table watching Young Ruth, a very frail Ida, and white-haired Heinrich eat silently.

A deep depression overcomes Elizabeth as she realizes she's all alone now with a child to raise.

MIDDLE-AGED ELIZABETH
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.

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.

MIDDLE-AGED 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?

DIRTY WOMAN

Delicious! Best soup I've ever had.

She extends her hand to them.

DIRTY 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 in unison rapidly.

The two men drink their soup, smile at each other, nod. They hand their bowls to Ida, walk back to Elizabeth.

MAN #1 (CONT'D)

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

MIDDLE-AGED ELIZABETH

Elizabeth. Elizabeth Leiberman.

MAN #1

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

MIDDLE-AGED ELIZABETH

In the Soviet Union. 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: 1940's

INT. ELIZABETH'S NEW YORK APARTMENT - DAY

ELDERLY ELIZABETH (50's) wears a 1940 dress, dons a mink
fur coat, hat, then searches her purse for some money.

ADULT RUTH (20, also in 1940 dress, long coat with real fur
around the collar, and galoshes) grabs her school books.

ELDERLY ELIZABETH

Ruth, can you stop at
Birnbaum's after school and
pick up a pound of hamburger?
I'll make us some stuffed
cabbage for dinner. I'll be
home after work about 5 PM.

She hands Ruth TWENTY-FIVE CENTS.

ADULT RUTH

One pound of hamburger. Got it.

EXT. BIRNBAUM'S BUTCHER SHOP - DAY

Ruth 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 (26, 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.

ADULT 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.

ADULT RUTH

How much are two lamb chops?

MAX

Two? For you and you're husband?

ADULT 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.

ADULT 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...

He nods to Bernie.

MAX (CONT'D)

...that we're going to give a prize to the first person whose name starts with an R.

ADULT 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.

ADULT RUTH
I'm not a nurse yet. I have
two more years to go.

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.

ADULT 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. ELIZABETH'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

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

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

Ruth unwraps the package. Elizabeth shakes her head.

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

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

ELDERLY ELIZABETH
For free?

ADULT RUTH
Yes, can you believe it?

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

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

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

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?

ADULT RUTH
No. I... I... um.

She looks in the counter.

ADULT RUTH (CONT'D)

I came to get a chicken.

MAX

A chicken, huh?

Ruth smiles at him.

MAX (CONT'D)

For roasting, frying, or boiling?

Ruth shrugs.

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

ADULT RUTH

How much?

MAX

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

Her eyes light up.

ADULT RUTH

You mean on a date? With you?

MAX

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

Ruth looks at Bernie, then smiles broadly at Max.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

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

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

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

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

NARRATOR (V.O.)

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

SOLDIERS (ON SCREEN)

Heil Hitler. Zig heil.

MAX

What is the world coming to!

Ruth squeezes Max's hand.

He puts his arm around her.

INT. NEW YORK RESTAURANT - DAY

Max and Adult 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 his finger.

Ruth GIGGLES.

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.

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. ELIZABETH'S 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?

ADULT RUTH

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

Elizabeth smiles, places her left hand over her heart.

ELDERLY ELIZABETH

Mazel tov.

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. He pulls down his pants. Naked butts can be seen as they all squat to defecate.

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.

Suddenly, 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 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.

The boy pierces his bayonet into Max's abdomen.

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

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

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

Max GRIMACES, looks down at his bleeding abdomen.

INT. ELIZABETH'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

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

ADULT 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. Japan has
officially surrendered. Yes,
this is good news, folks. The
war is over!

Ruth perks up.

ADULT RUTH

100.

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

ELDERLY ELIZABETH

Yes, my hearing is very good.

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

SERIES OF SHOTS:

She looks down at the people celebrating in the street.

- 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 SERIES.

Ruth SIGHS deeply.

ELDERLY ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

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

ADULT RUTH

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

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

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

ADULT RUTH (CONT'D)

(into intercom)

Yes?

MAX (V.O.)

(in intercom)

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

Ruth bolts out the apartment door.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

She quickly runs down four flights of stairs.

INT. ELIZABETH'S APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Ruth opens the main door, smiles broadly.

ADULT RUTH

Max! You're home!

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

MAX

Ruthie, dearest. What do you think about taking your mother and moving to California?

SUPER: LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

SENIOR ELIZABETH uses the hospital pay phone.

SENIOR ELIZABETH

Max, we're at Good Samaritan.

(listens)

Okay, I'll tell her.

In the delivery room, Lizzie holds Ruth's hand as Ruth screams to push the baby.

Max rushes in just as a baby girl is born. Max faints.

Elizabeth shakes her head.

SENIOR ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Men!

An exhausted Ruth laughs.

SUPER: HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA, 1950'S

INT. HOLLYWOOD RESTAURANT - DAY

A famous male comedian, LENNY (34), sits at a table, savors his lunch. He closes his eyes, smiles. He snaps his fingers for the waiter.

LENNY

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.

LENNY (CONT'D)

This is delicious!

SENIOR ELIZABETH

Thank you. They were the Tsar's favorite.

LENNY

The Tsar? Well, I feel honored.

He slicks his hair back.

LENNY (CONT'D)

Do you know who I am?

Elizabeth shakes her head.

LENNY (CONT'D)

I'm a fuckin' comedian. My name is Lenny. What's yours?

SENIOR ELIZABETH

Elizabeth, but you can call me Lizzie.

LENNY

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?

SENIOR 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.

SENIOR 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)

They just opened a new restaurant in Vegas called Foxy's. 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.

LENNY

104.

(yells)

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

Frank waves him off.

INT. LOS ANGELES HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Elizabeth fries potato latkes. Lenny sits at the table relaxed with an arm over the top of his chair, other elbow on the table.

He watches eleven-year-old YOUNG RACHEL slice pears and add them to a bowl of berries.

LENNY

What are you makin', honey?

YOUNG RACHEL

Compote.

LENNY

Compote? Grandma teach you that?

Rachel nods.

SENIOR ELIZABETH

Rachel's good at that.

Rachel smiles broadly.

Elizabeth takes a brisket out of the oven. She cuts a thick slice and adds two latkes to a plate, places it in front of Lenny.

Lenny starts to eat, rolls his eyes in delight. He speaks with a mouthful.

LENNY (CONT'D)

I wish you weren't goin' to
(MORE)

LENNY (CONT'D)

105.

fuckin' Vegas. I'm gonna miss
your cooking.

Elizabeth looks at him.

SENIOR ELIZABETH

You remember we agreed you can
eat here as long as you don't
smoke and...

Lenny looks at Rachel.

LENNY

Don't cuss. Yeah, yeah. Sorry.

He slicks his hair back.

Elizabeth smiles as she shakes her head.

LENNY (CONT'D)

Promise me if you don't like
it, you'll come right back.

SUPER: 1970'S

INT. LOS ANGELES HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Elizabeth walks in through the front door carrying a
suitcase.

Ruth walks by, is surprised.

ADULT RUTH

Mama! What are you doing here?

SENIOR ELIZABETH

Well, I think twenty years of
Vegas is enough, and I missed you.

They hug.

ADULT RUTH

I'm going to miss our daily
phone calls.

SENIOR ELIZABETH

I was thinking. I remember when we moved out here you said you wished you had a house in Malibu, and I know on Max's income you'll never have enough to buy it...

(beat)

Well, I made enough money to buy us that house you've been dreaming of.

ADULT RUTH

Really? You did? You made that much?

SUPER: MALIBU, CALIFORNIA, 1980

INT. MALIBU HOUSE - RACHEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

MIDDLE-AGED RACHEL (34) gets into bed as torrential RAIN is heard pounding the roof.

INT. MALIBU HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Elizabeth pours hot tea from a kettle into a glass just as LOUD THUNDER shakes the house.

She cautiously shuffles toward her bedroom with her tea so as not to spill it.

INT. MALIBU HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Elderly Max and Elderly Ruth watch television as LIGHTNING flashes.

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.

ELDERLY RUTH

Should we be worried?

ELDERLY 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.

ELDERLY RUTH

Back still hurting?

Max nods.

ELDERLY 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 she watches trees
fall over and dragged away by rapidly flowing water.

Her eyes fearfully widen.

The house CREAKS. The window GLASS BREAKS LOUDLY.

ELDERLY RUTH

Max. Wake up. Max!

She uses both arms to forcefully wake Max.

ELDERLY RUTH (CONT'D)

Oh my God, Max! Wake up!

The bedroom wall behind the headboard caves 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 - CONTINUOUS

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

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

She opens her eyes and notices her bed wedged against a large tree preventing it from being swept away.

INT. MALIBU HOUSE - RACHEL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

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.

MIDDLE-AGED RACHEL
Grandma? Grandma, where are you?

She looks through the open wall, sees the bed outside.

The water is now knee-high to Rachel, and rising.

MIDDLE-AGED RACHEL (CONT'D)
Grandma, are you there?

SENIOR ELIZABETH
I'm here, Rachel.

Suddenly a large Jeep SUV flows by and wedges between the bed and the house. Rachel studies it. She has a plan.

MIDDLE-AGED 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 hugging her grandmother tightly.

MIDDLE-AGED RACHEL (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

SENIOR ELIZABETH

Yes. Where are your parents?

MIDDLE-AGED RACHEL

Their 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.

SENIOR ELIZABETH

I don't know. But there's one thing I've learned, Rachel. Life throws us obstacles that try to ruin our happiness.

(beat)

You can't give up hope, because hope gives you strength to overcome them.

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?

MIDDLE-AGED RACHEL

Grandma, wake up. We're being rescued.

Elizabeth doesn't respond. Rachel looks worried.

MIDDLE-AGED RACHEL (CONT'D)

Grandma, wake up!

Elizabeth's eyes slowly open. She smiles at Rachel.

Rachel SIGHS her relief, hugs her.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

As they look at the graves, Rachel wipes her eyes. Elizabeth has an expression of overwhelming shock. Rachel speaks to Elizabeth as she stares at the graves.

MIDDLE-AGED RACHEL

In one night... that one horrible
night... I lost both mom and dad.
Both of them. Gone.

(sniffing)

What happened... that horror... will
live with me the rest of my life.

Middle-aged Rachel looks at Elizabeth, notices tears flowing down her face, her grief too much to bear.

RACHEL (V.O.)

It was the first time... the only
time... I saw tears flow down her
face. Burying my mother... her
daughter... was like cutting the
tiny thread holding her heart
together.

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

MIDDLE-AGED RACHEL

Grandma!

Rachel's eyes widen in panic. She rushes to her.

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

Rachel's body shakes. Her eyes well up. Her lips quiver.

She bites her lip trying to stop it, then sadly shakes her head.

RACHEL

(sotto voce)

I love you, Grandma.

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

MIDDLE-AGED RACHEL (V.O.)

In that moment... that brief
period... I felt great love and
empathy for her. I thought of
all her pain... all her suffering...
She lost everyone she loved.
And all the hardships she
endured... yet, she never gave up
hope. I will always miss her.

CUT TO BLACK.

SUPER: For Lizzie
1893-1980

FADE OUT.