

Just One Inch

Inspired by The True Story
Of My Ancestors

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OVER BLACK

People TALKING, cell phones RINGING TUNES.

A MALE VOICE calls out loudly--

MALE VOICE

Next.

FADE IN:

SUPER: LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 2009

INT. DRUGSTORE - PHARMACY COUNTER - DAY

A line of people, some preoccupied with their phones, forms in front of a SIGN, "PHARMACY".

RACHEL STEIN (65, face drawn and tired, lips puckered in a pout, long wavy gray hair pulled back into a bun) is two places away from the front of the queue.

One place away is LAKEISHA SULLIVAN (30's, African-American, glasses, impeccably dressed, religious as evident by the RHINESTONE CROSS around her neck).

Lakeisha carries adorable, fat-cheeked, DIJON (2), holding a TEDDY BEAR while he sucks his fingers.

Rachel smiles at him.

As the line steps forward in unison, Dijon drops his bear and screams.

Lakeisha steps forward toward the awaiting Pharmacist, BURT as Rachel picks up the teddy bear.

LAKEISHA

Umm, Lakeisha Sullivan. S-u-l-l-i-v-a-n.

As Burt steps away from the counter and begins to search through plastic baskets with small paper bags, Dijon squirms and kicks to getaway.

Rachel hands Dijon the teddy bear, addresses Lakeisha with a smile.

RACHEL

Looks like you have your hands full. My kids used to squirm like that.

LAKEISHA

Ha. And this is mild. He's like this when he doesn't get enough sleep. You know how it is.

RACHEL

(remorseful)

Not really. I've taught thousands of children for forty years, but I never had one of my own.

Lakeisha feels a slight ping of empathy.

LAKEISHA

(facetious)

I dunno. After today, all day, I think I'd be game to put little Dijon here up for sale, maybe switch places with you..

Burt returns, scans the barcode on a bag.

BURT

That'll be forty-three eighty.

Lakeisha has difficulty opening her purse with Dijon squirming.

LAKEISHA

Let me find my wallet. Gimme a sec.

Rachel reaches towards Dijon.

RACHEL

I can hold him for you, if you'd like.

LAKEISHA

He doesn't always take to strangers, but...

She leans toward Rachel. Rachel takes Dijon into her arms as Lakeisha smiles broadly.

Lakeisha hurriedly searches her purse, then abruptly looks at the ceiling.

LAKEISHA (CONT'D)

The kitchen table. It's on the kitchen table.

An incredulous Burt doesn't look pleased, just stares.

As Rachel balances Dijon on one hip, she removes a debit card from her purse.

RACHEL

Have no fear, 'Mastercard is here'.

Lakeisha turns to Rachel with a look of surprise.

LAKEISHA

No, no. I can't.

Rachel gives a half-smile, hands Dijon back to Lakeisha.

RACHEL

No problem. Don't worry about it.

Burt swipes the card. Lakeisha wears a bemused expression.

LAKEISHA

This is really... I mean, sometimes I wonder about us. Humanity. But, it's people like you...

RACHEL

Yeah, I wonder about us, too, sometimes.

Burt returns the credit card. He staples the receipt to Lakeisha's bag, hands it to her. Lakeisha turns to Rachel.

LAKEISHA

Okay, so thanks... uh...

RACHEL
Rachel. Rachel Stein.

4.

LAKEISHA
Really, really thanks, Rachel.
And he's still for sale if
you're interested.

Rachel laughs.

LAKEISHA (CONT'D)
(to Dijon)
Say 'bye' to the nice lady.

DIJON
Bye-bye.

Rachel waves and mouths "BYE" to Lakeisha, turns to Burt.

RACHEL
Hi, Burt. I need a refill of
my migraine medicine.

EXT. CROSSWALK - DAY

Rachel exits the corner drugstore, steps into the crosswalk as the pedestrian signal flashes a countdown from 10. She sees Lakeisha holding Dijon's hand a few strides ahead.

Lakeisha is unaware when Dijon drops the bear again. She continues walking.

Just as she steps onto the curb, Dijon pulls away and dashes for his bear.

LAKEISHA
Dijon, no! Come back here!

Rachel eyes widen as she notices a car race around the corner.

She rushes to Dijon, grabs him, and quickly pulls him out of the car's path.

Off balance, Rachel falls and hits the back of her head on the pavement.

CUT TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK

Indistinct chatter, then --

RACHEL'S P.O.V.

Blurred figures focus into DOCTOR EMERYK KOPINSKI (60's, Polish), and an Asian NURSE who talk indistinctly.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Doctor Kopinski turns to Rachel lying in bed.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI

Hey, there she is. How are you?
I'm Doctor Emeryk Kopinski.

Rachel winces as she touches the bandage on her head.

RACHEL

Like a drum... a massive one...
is pounding in my head.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI

Well, you banged your head pretty
good, so that doesn't surprise
me. We did X-rays and an MRI.
If all is good, I'll give the
thumbs up to discharge you. In
the meantime, let us know if
you're feeling any dizziness or
nausea.

RACHEL

Uh, I will. Thank you, doctor.

As Doctor Kopinski strides away, Rachel scans the room and double takes at the sight of a large RHINESTONE CROSS. It's Lakeisha who's buried in her phone.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Ms. Sullivan. Lakeisha?
(concerned expression)
Is Dijon okay?

Lakeisha looks with a startled expression that turns to

wonder. She makes her way to Rachel's bed.

LAKEISHA

He's fine. He's good. Thank God.
And thanks to you. I mean, I
joked about givin' him away, but...

Tears well in Lakeisha's eyes as she stares and sniffles.

RACHEL

I'm happy he's okay. Real happy.

LAKEISHA

My husband came and got him.
He'd had enough proddin' and
pokin' for one day. And probably
you too?

RACHEL

Well... You know...

Rachel's face contorts in anguish as she touches her head.

LAKEISHA

Rachel? Nurse. Should I get the
nurse?

RACHEL

I'm okay. I'm fine...

Lakeisha wears an incredulous expression.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

It's just that... It's... We were
this close to dying.
(holds fingers close)
Just one inch. Me and Dijon. And
I... I'm thinking... Well, actually,
I'm not sure what I'm thinking.

Rachel searches Lakeisha's curious eyes.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

The truth is... I don't want to
burden you. And, anyway, it's
probably nothing.

Lakeisha smiles as she pats Rachel's hand.

LAKEISHA

Sorry, listenin' to the superhero
who just saved my kid's life. I
wouldn't call that a burden.

Rachel bites her lip, then after several long seconds--

RACHEL

I'm thinking... Who would've cared
if I died. Who? Everyone in my
family's passed on. Everyone.
It's just me... Just me.

Rachel's tears flow as Lakeisha has an empathetic
expression. Lakeisha pulls a tissue from a box nearby and
hands it to her.

LAKEISHA (CONT'D)

What about your friends?

Rachel shakes her head 'no', wipes her eyes.

RACHEL

They moved away or died. All
of them. Every last one of them.

Rachel stares sadly into space, then at Lakeisha.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

And all this today has me
thinking... exactly what is all
of this about?

Lakeisha's eyebrows rise in surprise.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I mean, for 40 years my purpose
was teaching. It gave meaning to
my life. But, last week... Last
week I retired. And that... along
with the near miss today makes
me question, why am I still
alive? What is my purpose now?

Rachel wipes tears from her cheeks as Lakeisha twirls the cross between her forefinger and thumb while she thinks.

LAKEISHA

My auntie. When she was about your age, she had a stroke. Paralyzed one whole side of her body. I went to see her, and I was expectin'... I don't know what I was expectin', but nothin' good.

(beat)

I get there, and she's sittin' up in the bed with this huge smile, happy to see me. She says she's okay because if she's still alive, if she's still standin', it must mean God has another plan for her.

Rachel looks with a furrowed brow as she ponders.

RACHEL

I don't know. For me. I don't...

Dr. Kopinski KNOCKS on the door, approaches. Lakeisha takes note of his serious look.

LAKEISHA

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

RACHEL

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

Lakeisha nods, pats Rachel's hand.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI

Well, I'm sorry to say, the MRI revealed a tumor.

Lakeisha shakes her head in disbelief as Rachel stares at the Doctor with gaping mouth.

RACHEL

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

DOCTOR KOPINSKI

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

RACHEL

I've been getting migraines.

Doctor Kopinski nods.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI

Well, my advice is to remove
the tumor before it metastasizes
and becomes inoperable.

RACHEL

I don't want the operation. I
just want to go home.

Lakeisha's eyebrows furrow.

Dr. Kopinski's face shows his disappointment with her
decision.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI

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

RACHEL

Six months... Six years... What does
it matter? I have nothing to
live for.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI

Why don't you take a moment
to give it more thought. I
can come back later.

Rachel stares out the window, doesn't reply.

Dr. Kopinski shakes his head in bewilderment as he leaves.

RACHEL

10.

I'd like to go for a walk. Clear my mind. Can you help me up?

LAKEISHA

Um... that was a nasty fall you took. You sure?

RACHEL

Barring it didn't knock the last of the common sense out of my head... I'm sure.

Rachel swings her legs to the side of the bed. Lakeisha helps her stand. Rachel dons her volunteer jacket over her hospital gown, dons hospital slippers.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

There. See... I'm fine.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Rachel and Lakeisha walk to the end of the hall, stop to read the large letters of a quote on the wall.

CLOSE ON WALL

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

END CLOSE UP.

RACHEL

That's very profound. Isn't it? Our ancestors struggled and sacrificed so much so we can have a better life, and then pass that world on to the next generation, and the next...

A flash of sadness shows on Rachel's face. She turns to Lakeisha.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

(sotto voce)

Mine did to me. But... I let them down.

Lakeisha nods as Rachel's lips begin to tremble. Then through tears--

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I am the last leaf on my family tree. It's a shame it all comes to an end with me.

Rachel looks at the wall again, SIGHS deeply.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I never married. It always seemed like there was plenty of time. And there was, until there wasn't.

LAKEISHA

Ah, you're talkin' the 'M' word, aren't you?

RACHEL

Yes. Menopause. And it has pretty much guaranteed the family legacy ends with me. The last leaf. So, that's why I think I've let my ancestors down.

Lakeisha momentarily touches Rachel's shoulder.

LAKEISHA

I think you're wrong. I'm sure they're up there lookin' down on how you made a difference in so many lives. No doubt in my mind they're proud.

Rachel glances down. After a BEAT --

LAKEISHA (CONT'D)

I'd love to hear more 'bout your ancestors.

RACHEL

But it's a long story. What about Dijon? I mean... Dijon's got to be asking for his mom.

LAKEISHA

His dad's takin' care of him.
Let's sit. Yes. Let's sit over
there.

She points toward a row of chairs against the wall.

RACHEL

Well... if you're sure you
want to hear it...

Lakeisha smiles as she nods.

LAKEISHA

I want to hear the whole story.
Don't leave anything out.

As the women sit, Lakeisha leans in with anticipation.

CUT TO BLACK.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

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. 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, then 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

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 and Vladimir stop at the bottom of the red carpeted stairs leading to the Tsar. Sergei 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. He 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, 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

18.

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

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
(MORE)

TSAR NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
me. You will live in a guest
room at each palace with your
wife and child, and you will be
well-provided.

The Tsarina nods.

TSARINA ALEXANDRA
I hear your wife is a good cook.

Vladimir's eyebrows rise, surprised the Tsarina knows that.

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

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

VLADIMIR
She will be honored, Your Majesty.

Nicholas leans forward in his throne, looks sternly at 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. MONPLAISIR 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. She shrugs as she smiles.

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
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, space between her front upper teeth) lock arms as they walk along a dirt path toward the yellow palace through the beautifully landscaped gardens.

Walking behind them is Tatiana (7, reddish hair), MARIA (5, overweight, rosy cheeks), and Margareta holding three-year-old ANASTASIA's hand (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 and Olga stop abruptly. They grab each other 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.

OLGA

Tatiana, Maria, come here.

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

OLGA (CONT'D)

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

(to Elizabeth)

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

INT. PETERHOF PALACE BEDROOM - DAY

Alexandra sweats profusely trying to give birth. She SCREAMS.

TSARINA ALEXANDRA

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 his newborn.

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

Nicholas smiles proudly at his new 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 ura)

Ypa.

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
(MORE)

VLADIMIR (CONT'D)
inform the Tsar the population
has doubled resulting in
overcrowding with destitute
living conditions.

Svetlana nods slowly in understanding.

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

SVETLANA
She 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
(to Alexei)
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.

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.

The other children pick flowers here and there and chase a KING CHARLES COCKER SPANIEL. 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.

SUPER: 1917**EXT. ST. PETERSBURG STREETS - DAY**

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

ALL MEN
Down with the war!

ALL WOMEN
Daite Khleb. Give us more bread!

MEN, WOMEN, CHILDREN
Down with the Tsar!!

INT. MONPLAISIR KITCHEN - DAY

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, 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. MONPLAISIR 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. 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 of their rifles.

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. They quietly make way for those with children to walk closer to the gates.

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

EXT. 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.

At the top of a hill, they approach a GENERAL (long trench belted coat, General cap) standing next to his horse. He sadly 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 quickly 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 - 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.

COMMANDER KHABALOV

32.

(addressing soldiers)

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
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!

Out the SIDE ENTRANCE, the Kaminskayas quickly flee as LOUD SCREAMS and GUNSHOTS are heard.

ADULT ELIZABETH

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

VLADIMIR

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

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

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, but 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 afraid of what's about to happen.

CLOSE ON

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

END CLOSE UP.

Vladimir opens his eyes. 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

35.

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

SVETLANA

I'm tired. My feet hurt.

VLADIMIR

Okay, we'll rest.

As they rest, Vladimir removes Svetlana's shoes, rubs her
feet.

SVETLANA

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

VLADIMIR

To my brother Moyshe's farm...

He looks at Elizabeth.

VLADIMIR

...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
(MORE)

VLADIMIR (CONT'D)

36.

maybe. Okay, six or seven at the most.

(pointing)

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 (MOS), then shakes their hands.

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

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

MISHA

Would you like to hold Latke?

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.

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. *Spacibo*.

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. ROAD - DAY

The caravan continues in a single line down a curved dirt road. A young male SCOUT rides ahead on his horse.

The Scout hears HORSES and men's VOICES approaching. He stops abruptly, dismounts. 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, 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.

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

Vladimir SNAPS the rabbit's neck. Elizabeth's body winces.

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 crouch down in fear. Vladimir silences his family with a quivering finger. He looks back and watches as a YOUNG BOLSHEVIK kneels, and puts his palm over the ashes.

YOUNG BOLSHEVIK

The embers are warm. They're
nearby.

The Kaminskayas panic and bolt.

Svetlana's skirt gets caught on a branch. She frantically tries to free herself. She 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 then 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
run, Lizzie! Run!

As Vladimir and Elizabeth desperately run away, the Bolshevik SHOOTS Svetlana one more time.

The two Men 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 and urinates on her.

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

44.

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

CLOSE ON

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

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

END CLOSE UP.

END FLASHBACK.

SUPER: LOS ANGELES, 2009

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Lakeshia touches her heart.

LAKEISHA

45.

So, umm, that was the second
time one inch saved an ancestor?

Rachel nods over and over.

OLDER RACHEL

Yes, my grandmother, Lizzie.

Rachel stares into space, then smiles. She looks at
Lakeisha.

OLDER RACHEL (CONT'D)

I am alive because of that one
inch. Just one inch... That's all.

Lakeisha nods in understanding.

LAKEISHA

Wow. It's amazing how somethin'
so small can be so important.
So, then what happened?

OLDER RACHEL

On the other side of the river...

RESUME FLASHBACK

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

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 shoulder.

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...
(points with chin)
...go that way following the river
until it turns to the left. No,
to the right. Yes. It turns to
the right, Lizzie. Got it?

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,
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. 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

48.

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' FOUR SHOTS.

Her eyes widen in shock when she sees the WATER TURN RED.
With quivering lips, she mouths (MOS), "PAPA". She holds
one hand over her mouth to keep from crying out and breaks
into quiet, panicked 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.

She lowers her head and sighs heavily. She tucks her
father's wallet inside her blouse between her breasts while
she watches the soldiers leave.

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.

With an expression of overwhelming shock, she drops to her
knees and 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 and forces herself to stand. With head lowered, she reluctantly shuffles her feet along the river bank until she notices it turns right.

With the sun setting, she gathers 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.

Finally, 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 walks 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 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, and slowly struggles to climb a hill.

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

At the top, she 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.

Frozen in fear, she notices a pack of WOLVES have her surrounded, but she is too weak to do anything.

The wolves inch closer, SNARLING 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.

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 in the dark, but the images slowly fade away. She dejectedly looks around for them.

The chilly air from a STRONG WIND makes her shiver.

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 sleep.

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 a boot, 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 boot, and 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 it's completely filled. She 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 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 the side of 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. The leaves drop. She smiles.

Not knowing what to say, they just point to a nearby pasture.

ADULT ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Spacibo.

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.

As 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.

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

MOYSHE
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 shakes 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.

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.

He looks at Elizabeth and smiles. She smiles back, relieved her ordeal is over, and exhales a LONG, SATISFIED BREATH.

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

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

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

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, cleans the stalls.

INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

59.

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 killed the Tsar, his wife, and all the children!

Look of horror on Katya and Elizabeth.

KATYA
What? All of them?

Moyshe quickly nods over and over.

Elizabeth's face pales.

ADULT ELIZABETH
Olga?

Moyshe looks in her eyes sadly.

ADULT ELIZABETH (CONT'D)
And Maria?

Moyshe slowly nods.

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 her new clothes.

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

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, then 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)

62.

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 Chestnut 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

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.

Silence for a moment as he eyes the cake. He looks down at
his ledger.

CLERK

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

Elizabeth looks at Moyshe, 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
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.

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

ADULT ELIZABETH

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.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Elizabeth finds a seat near an open window, quickly leans out the window, and...

EXT. TRAIN - DAY

...happily waves to Moyshe.

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

Elizabeth watches three Bolsheviks on horseback rush up to Moyshe and question him MOS. One SHOOTs Moyshe in the chest killing him instantly. Another Bolshevik points to the train.

Elizabeth quickly darts back inside, eyes tearing, face in shock.

The Bolsheviks gallop after the train.

One Bolshevik rides alongside the back of the train. He stands on his horse waiting for the right moment to jump onto the back platform of the train.

Just as he's about to jump, the train starts to cross a tall bridge over a deep ravine between two mountains.

The Bolshevik sits and gallops on the train tracks. His horse trips, and the Bolshevik falls off the bridge with his horse.

The other two Bolsheviks slow their horses to carefully traverse the bridge. They gallop again once they reach the other end, and continue after the train which is now out of sight.

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

67.

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.

As she shows him her stamped contract, they hear the SOUND OF HORSES approaching and look at their direction. They see the two Bolsheviks gallop towards them.

AGENT

Hurry, get on board!

He blows his whistle alerting several Estonians to appear with rifles. They quickly form a shield standing in front of the pier.

The Bolsheviks see Elizabeth running up the gangplank.

They FIRE at her.

Their BULLETS HIT THE SHIP just as she goes inside.

The Estonians SHOOT and kill both Bolsheviks.

INT. FERRY — DAY

Elizabeth, emotionally drained and out of breath, rushes toward a crew member who is crouched behind chairs.

ELIZABETH

Where is my cabin, please?

The crew member points to the staircase leading to the bottom of 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, late twenties) has a hard time walking toward the doctor's office as the ferry sways 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.

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 PEELS 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,
long-sleeved blouse, skirt to her ankles, 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.

(MORE)

ADULT ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

71.

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.

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

Why? 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, and 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

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 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, the couple give loving looks and play footsie under the table.

Ida and Heinrich take note, smile at each other.

-- INT. LIBRARY - DAY

76.

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.

NATHAN

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 U.S. 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 with some people refusing 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 and MUTTERS ANGRILY to herself 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 they are ferried to Ellis Island.

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

Russia.

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

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

Probably because Americans are
not happy about Europeans coming
into their country. It'll 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.

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

BEGIN MONTAGE:

- 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.

IRISHMAN #1

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

IRISHMAN #2 WHISTLES at Elizabeth as he sizes her up and down.

IRISHMAN #2

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.

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
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.

As they walk toward the Tenements, they notice garbage
piling up in the 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.

NATHAN

I think we should give it a
chance here, Lizzie. Maybe it'll
be better after Papa and I

(MORE)

NATHAN (CONT'D)
open a store. At least we now
know to have our store in the
Jewish Quarter.

Heinrich nods.

INT. TENEMENT APARTMENT - DAY

As the Kaminskayas enter their apartment, they stare with gaping mouths near the doorway and scan the dilapidated wall-papered rooms, badly stained floors, second-hand furniture, small kitchenette with icebox, and closet-sized room with pull chain toilet.

Elizabeth lets out a BIG SIGH of disappointment.

NATHAN
Well, life doesn't always go
the way we want it to.

ELIZABETH
You're right about that.

NATHAN
We need to just make the best
of it.

Heinrich, Ida, and Elizabeth nod.

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

Nathan leaves the room, SLAMS the bedroom door shut.

ADULT ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

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 angrily tosses his empty bottle aside,
and 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 (MOS) 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 hair.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

88.

Lizzie. It's okay.

Elizabeth opens her eyes, stares into space.

ADULT ELIZABETH

(sotto voce)

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. 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. Whatta you say?

EXT. NICE APARTMENT - COURTYARD - DAY

Adorable three-year old GEORGE rides his tricycle as six-year-old RUTH (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. 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.
(MORE)

THUG (CONT'D)

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

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. 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

91.

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 - NIGHT

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

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

As 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.

EXT. CLOTHING STORE - NIGHT

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

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY (RAINING)

Elizabeth hugs Ruth closely with one hand, holds an open
umbrella in the other. Heinrich holds a large oversized
umbrella over him and Ida. They all stare at Nathan's pine
casket in the open grave.

Above the sound of the rain, the Rabbi's MEMORIAL PRAYER is
heard.

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

YOUNG 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.

YOUNG 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.

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, OLD WOMAN whose unbrushed hair and raggedy clothes convey 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?

OLD WOMAN
Delicious! Best soup I've ever
had.

She extends her hand to them.

OLD 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 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

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
(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)

102.

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!

INT. NEW YORK RESTAURANT - DAY

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

as if toasting.

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

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

104.

I better go tell Ruth.

INT. ELIZABETH'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ruth cries as Max tells her the news (INAUDIBLE DIALOGUE).

Elderly 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. Their urine waters the roots of the trees

Max joins several men who use their small shovels 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. 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, sees 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 boy's 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.

He 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 (54) 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 that
Japan has officially surrendered.
Yes, this is good news, folks.
The war is over!

Ruth perks up.

ADULT RUTH

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.

MONTAGE 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 MONTAGE.

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.

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. He 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

(yells)

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

Frank waves him off.

SUPER: 1960'S

INT. LOS ANGELES HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

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

MIDDLE-AGED RUTH

Mama! What are you doing here?

SENIOR ELIZABETH

(hugging)

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

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

MIDDLE-AGED RUTH
Really? You did? You made that
much?

SUPER: MALIBU, CALIFORNIA, 1980

INT. MALIBU HOUSE - RACHEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

MIDDLE-AGE RACHEL gets into bed as torrential RAIN is heard
pounding the roof.

INT. MALIBU HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Senior Elizabeth (87) 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...

ELIZABETH'S BEDROOM

She notices the bed missing.

MIDDLE-AGE RACHEL

113.

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-AGE 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-AGE RACHEL

I'm coming. Don't move!

EXT. MALIBU HOUSE - NIGHT

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-AGE RACHEL

Are you okay?

SENIOR ELIZABETH

Yes. Where are your parents?

MIDDLE-AGE 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
(MORE)

thing I've learned, Rachel.
Life throws us obstacles that
try to ruin happiness. Don'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 with the water rescinded.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Rachel, face etched with sorrow, stands facing two HEADSTONES. Tears streak down her face.

Elderly Elizabeth has an expression of overwhelming shock with the weight of her sadness apparent in her downcast eyes.

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

OLDER 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 headstone. She clutches her chest, collapses, and dies.

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

MIDDLE-AGE RACHEL

Grandma!

She gets on her knees. Her hands tremble as she swiftly lifts Elizabeth's head and shoulders, and holds them in her lap. She stares at Elizabeth's face.

Rachel's body shakes, eyes well up, lips quiver. She bites her lips trying to stop them, then sadly shakes her head.

(sotto voce)

I love you, Grandma.

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

A moment of silence to process this.

END FLASHBACK.

SUPER: LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 2009

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Older Rachel looks at Lakeisha.

OLDER RACHEL

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

Lakeisha puts her arm around Rachel.

OLDER RACHEL (CONT'D)

This great woman... this heroic
woman became my idol. She taught
me many things... but I think...
I know... her perseverance
impressed me the most. I miss
her dearly. I always will.

Lakeisha's eyes well in tears. She removes her glasses,
wipes her tears with her hands, then sighs deeply.

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

OLDER RACHEL (CONT'D)

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

Lakeisha nods in understanding.

LAKEISHA

I certainly relate to your story.
I mean... I understand the
sacrifices a mother makes for a
child... the struggles, yes the
struggles of being a mother.

Dr. Kopinski approaches, smiles at Rachel.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI

So, what have you decided?

OLDER RACHEL

I don't see the point in having
the surgery this late in my life.

Dr. Kopinski doesn't look pleased, just stares.

Lakeisha's eyebrows arch in surprise.

LAKEISHA

Seriously? After you just told
me the most wonderful story of
resilience?

Lakeisha SIGHS, touches her Cross as she thinks.

LAKEISHA (CONT'D)

The Bible says, 'Trust in the
Lord, have faith, do not despair.'
You know what that means? It
means... never give up, Rachel.
To do so... is a sin.

Rachel stares at her blankly.

Lakeisha looks down as she thinks of another approach.

LAKEISHA (CONT'D)

Remember when you told me... how
did you say it? Oh yes... you
felt you were letting your
ancestors down. Well... I agree
with you. I think you are... now.

Rachel searches Lakeisha's eyes as she takes this in.

LAKEISHA (CONT'D)

117.

You should take a lesson from your ancestors. They never gave up. I mean... for you to give up... that would be a disgrace to their memory and all that they went through. A disgrace, Rachel.

She stares angrily at Rachel.

LAKEISHA (CONT'D)

Your grandmother's courage and perseverance... those were her... her gifts to you. And now... this is how you repay her? In this respect... I think she would be ashamed of you!

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

LAKEISHA (CONT'D)

Right now, you need surgery. What would your grandmother tell you?

Rachel stares sadly into space for a long moment. Her eyes well up. She speaks softly without looking at Lakeisha.

OLDER RACHEL

She would tell me to live... yes, to live... if only to honor all the sacrifices my ancestors made for me to have... a life.

She bites her lip as she looks at Lakeisha.

OLDER RACHEL (CONT'D)

Are you sure you're not Jewish?

LAKEISHA

Huh?

OLDER RACHEL

'Cause you're laying all this Jewish guilt on me.

Lakeisha laughs.

OLDER RACHEL (CONT'D)

But, you're right... absolutely right. She would be ashamed of me.

Tears flow down her cheeks. She looks sadly to the side.

After a brief moment, she looks at Doctor Kopinski.

OLDER RACHEL (CONT'D)

Okay, let's do it. Let's take it out.

Lakeisha smiles, pats her hand.

LAKEISHA

Don't worry. I'll be right here when you wake up.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI

(smiling)

I'll go reserve the O R stat.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Rachel lies in bed with her head completely bandaged. Lakeisha sits next to the bed holding her hand.

LAKEISHA

I'm glad you decided to have the surgery.

Doctor Kopinski strides in smiling.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI

Am I interrupting?

OLDER RACHEL

No, not at all. Come in.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI

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

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

DOCTOR KOPINSKI (CONT'D)

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

Rachel looks at Lakeisha.

OLDER RACHEL

There's the one inch again.

Lakeisha smiles in understanding.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI

Well... feel better. I'll check in on you later.

OLDER RACHEL

Yes, please do. Thank you.

Just before Doctor Kopinski leaves he looks back at Rachel and smiles.

Rachel looks at Lakeisha and SIGHS deeply.

OLDER RACHEL (CONT'D)

I still don't understand why I'm still alive, Lakeisha. What do I do with my life now?

LAKEISHA

I think... this would be a great story for a book. And the book would be like your child... your legacy. I mean... you could preserve their story for posterity so it won't be forgotten. What do you think of that?

Rachel smiles broadly at the idea.

OLDER RACHEL

120.

I like that, but my great grandfather was a scribe... he had a gift. Who am I compared to that?

LAKEISHA

Well, I just happen to be a novelist. I know structure... and you know the story.. I would be honored to co-author, or be your ghost writer. My gift to you for saving Dijon.

OLDER RACHEL

I'm starting to think our chance meeting was meant to be. What are the odds of running into an author?

LAKEISHA

There you go. You see... you never know God's plan.

Lakeisha pats Rachel's hand. She searches her purse for a pen and pad of paper, puts them on the nearby table.

LAKEISHA (CONT'D)

I'll leave this here in case you want to jot down some notes.

LAKEISHA (CONT'D)

Well, I better get goin'. I'll see you tomorrow.

OLDER RACHEL

Thank you, Lakeisha. I really appreciate you... your concern... your help. I'm so happy to have you as my friend.

Lakeisha smiles broadly.

LAKEISHA

And vice versa.

After Lakeisha leaves, there is a KNOCK on the door.

OLDER RACHEL

Come in.

Dr. Kopinski enters.

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

OLDER RACHEL (CONT'D)

Is there something wrong?

DOCTOR KOPINSKI

No. I... I was wondering... I'm glad you decided to have the surgery because... well... I was wondering if you'd like to have dinner with me some time.

Rachel EXHALES DEEPLY, relieved it wasn't bad news. Her eyes light up. She imitates Maria's flirtatious ritual her grandmother taught her. She tilts her head, licks her lips, then smiles.

OLDER RACHEL

Yes, of course. I'd be delighted.

Dr. Kopinski grins like the Cheshire cat.

DOCTOR KOPINSKI

Great. So... yeah... get well soon.

OLDER RACHEL

Yes. Thank you. I will.

As Dr. Kopinski leaves, Rachel smiles up at the ceiling, then looks down at the pen and paper. She reaches for it.

She thinks, then starts to write.

CLOSE ON PAPER

FOR LIZZIE, 1893-1980

END CLOSE UP.

FADE OUT.