

Ararat
by
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FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST -- NIGHT

MONTAGE. Images in quick flashes.

German troops hunt ragged children who run in the woods.

Six rail-thin, filthy kids sleep on a hilltop, spread out like spokes of a wheel, heads to the center, feet out. JANA and ANELIE, girls of 17. EWA, a girl of 13. Freckled 12-year-old HANNA has hair six inches black at the roots and six inches blond at the ends. Two 12-year-olds sleep in each other's arms, a boy named MATEUSZ and a tiny girl, SALOMEA.

The children hiding, one tending a sick girl.

Salomea killing and eating a rat.

The children sleeping in a circle again.

Germans and Russians skirmish as children hide in a hedgerow.

Salomea running from a farm with potatoes, chased by a dog.

The kids sleep in their circle. SALOMEA has a nightmare.

EXT. A HILLTOP -- DAY

Bavaria. SOUNDS of an army moving: trucks, shouts, mortar rounds, gunfire. Children sleep.

SALOMEA (V.O.)

A tidal wave covered the earth. It killed everything alive, before and behind, and the waters receded. Six of them washed ashore on the mountain. Still alive. Somewhere, a dove was looking for an olive branch. Here, of all places.

From Salomea's point of view we see Mateusz stand. He sniffs the air and reaches for her. Salomea stands and he puts his hand on her shoulder.

MATEUSZ

I smell smoke. There might be a cabin. Can you see the Russians?

The girl says nothing, dazed, slack-jawed.

MATEUSZ (CONT'D)

Don't let them see you. Long night.

The girl shivers and pulls his arm around her.

MATEUSZ (CONT'D)

We can't stay here. What are we supposed to do, carry her?

Salomea walks to a sick girl, and then looks back at him.

INT. ARMY TENT -- DAY

England, late 1944. BILLIE KELLY, a U.S. nurse, deals cards to a U.S. COLONEL and two British OFFICERS.

BILLIE

Sir, war's been going three years.

BRITISH OFFICER

Five years actually.

BILLIE

I stand corrected.

BRITISH OFFICER

You people are five hours behind us. Must be why you're always late for wars.

BILLIE

We must have learned the trick from Neville Chamberlain.

COLONEL

Mind your manners, Lieutenant. And I don't need to hear any fairy tales about death camps. We heard all that crap in the first war. ...You want a career in the Army? Take some friendly advice.

Billie points to the map on the wall.

BILLIE

Alright, we're not allowed to talk about the Jews. Eastern front, sixty million people. The Germans rolled through like a tidal wave, three million soldiers, death squads, burning down villages.

(MORE)

BILLIE (CONT'D)

Hitler said he was going to strip the land clean so Germans could live there - like the locals were insects that needed killing.

BRITISH OFFICER

Mein Kampf. Top marks.

BILLIE

Then the Russians marched back the other way, tidal wave, destroying everything they didn't steal. Must be ten, twenty million dead.

COLONEL

We haven't finished with France.

BILLIE

What about the people who survive? I fold, gimme the cards.

BRITISH OFFICER

What the devil -

Billie scoops up the cards and lays them out in four rows of thirteen.

BILLIE

Already we can't handle the refugees here in England, it's only in the thousands. What if it was a million? No homes, no food? Parents looking for their kids, kids looking for...anyone to feed them?

COLONEL

You want to bring in the New Deal for all of Europe?

BILLIE

Ever play this? Concentration. You take turns, flip over cards, until you find a pair - two black queens, two red tens. Takes forever.

COLONEL

What's your point?

Billie begins flipping cards.

BILLIE

This is Europe. Child here, parent there, can't find each other.

(MORE)

BILLIE (CONT'D)

Now imagine instead of fifty cards,
there are ten million cards.
Refugees in camps, homeless. How
will these people find each other?

BRITISH OFFICER

Think this is some sort of game?

BILLIE

Let's ask the Red Cross about a
tracing system. New kid in a
refugee camp, put their name on a
card, where they came from, where
they are now, and the camp they
were in, the concentration camp
that you still don't believe in.

COLONEL

I didn't say I didn't believe it.

BILLIE

Kid gets a card, parent gets a
card, we match em all up. If we
don't, that's millions of people
lost, starvation, dysentery, rape...
Leave a mess like that, twenty
years from now, we're here to fight
World War Three, a hundred million
people with bigger guns.

COLONEL

It will only work if all the camps
do the cards. And you'll have a lot
of people without a match. Orphans.
You think you're ready to manage a
refugee camp? Way down in Bavaria?

BILLIE

Let you know in a few weeks.

COLONEL

What's that book?

BILLIE

Phrase book. Polish. A lot of the
refugees will be from Poland.
Please let me try the Red Cross...

COLONEL

You're really sold on this...Have
fun selling this to our general.

BILLIE

You aren't coming with me?

COLONEL
Oh, I'll be behind you. Way, way,
way behind you.

EXT. OUTSIDE A GERMAN REFUGEE CAMP -- NIGHT

U.S. SOLDIER stands at the entrance to a camp, 1945, slowly tearing a loaf to bits. Another SOLDIER sleeps on a bench. Anelie comes out of the trees. Her voice is rough.

ANELIE
Don't shoot!

SOLDIER
Hello? Joe, wake up. Get the lieutenant.

ANELIE
Please, don't shoot!

SOLDIER
Come out where I can see you.

ANELIE
You are a soldier? Give me a loaf of bread and I keep you warm tonight. Don't hurt me.

She undoes two buttons.

SOLDIER
Keep me warm. How many of you out there? No, put your shirt on. My wife would bust my head.

Billie arrives. Anelie, disoriented, sits on a bench.

BILLIE
How many more of you are out there?

ANELIE
Six. Now.

BILLIE
This is not that kind of camp. Okay? In the morning you'll see - no chimneys. So stop trying to sleep with my soldiers.

SOLDIER
The bread is free.

ANELIE

All the bread I want?

BILLIE

No, not all you want, we're short of everything. But enough to stay alive. And you'll be safe.

Billie takes her pulse, Anelie begins to cry with relief.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

How many of the others are sick?

ANELIE

All of us. The Nazis marched us west, and then they ran. So we walked until we got here.

BILLIE

You walked from...

ANELIE

I thought it was from Poland but it might have been Czechoslovakia.

BILLIE

Good God. This is Germany.

ANELIE

We couldn't tell, we mostly walk in the dark. There were more, but they couldn't...I had to leave them behind. I couldn't save them all.

BILLIE

Corporal, two jeeps.

SOLDIER

They'll just panic and run away.

BILLIE

Run away? I don't think they could crawl away. Bring chocolate. Tell the medic to start with their feet. Come on. No rifle. Just the Colt.

SOLDIER

You're sure?

They find five kids on the ground as in the first scene. Hanna, Ewa, Jana, Mateusz pointed north-south-east-west; Salomea nestled in the boy's arms. They get to their feet, Salomea warily waving a knife. A MEDIC arrives.

MEDIC

Which one do I take first?

As more MEDICS arrive, Jana falls to the ground.

BILLIE

After her, take the little one, she smells like a latrine.

MEDIC

God. Disgusting.

The medic eyes Salomea, who slowly puts away her knife.

INT. HOSPITAL -- NIGHT

Billie tucking children into beds.

EXT. THE WOODS - NIGHT

A bit of sunlight on the horizon. Billie joins the soldier on patrol on the camp perimeter.

BILLIE

What are we doing out here?

They find the kids from the earlier scene (minus Jana), same positions as before, in the woods.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

We had beds for them. What are they doing out here?

SOLDIER

Third night in a row. We put them to bed, round midnight they hop out of bed and come out here. They only want our food - they're afraid to stay inside. They all face in different directions. And one of them is always awake.

He tosses a rock. Salomea leaps up instantly with a knife. For the first half of the script, Salomea moves like an animal when she's in the woods, almost feline. The soldier shines a flashlight on his hand, revealing a slice wound.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

That kid with the knife? Don't try to sneak up on her in the dark.

BILLIE
Come back to your beds. It really
is safe. No need to be afraid.

Salomea recognizes Billie.

SOLDIER
Weren't there six of them?

BILLIE
Girl last night. Pneumonia.

Salomea stares at Billie.

INT. BILLIE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Billie is calling on an Army telephone.

BILLIE
Colonel. I need more help. All
these kids are sick. I got guards I
don't need, I need a doctor,
nurses. I don't care about the
other camp, I need help here...What
do you mean, make do? Am I supposed
to have the truck drivers doing
diagnoses?...Yes sir. ...Yes sir.

INT. HOSPITAL WARD -- DAY

A dozen children in bed. Billie approaches Ewa, drinking
water, with a splinted arm, and Anelie.

BILLIE
The wards are safe, you don't need
to run into the woods every night.
...But we're short food, drugs,
nurses. Some folks forgot we're
here. So I'm asking for some help.

ANELIE
What do you want?

BILLIE
The adults are at a camp down the
road --they've been overrun with
disease. They were supposed to help
here, but... Anyway, you kids are all
I have. We need to put up some
tents, maybe a dining hall. I'm
asking the boys to help.

EWA

I told you. They're putting us to work, just like the Germans.

ANELIE

Ewa!

BILLIE

No, it's not like the Germans. You can lay in bed all day, for all I care. Be bored to death in a few days, but you still get three hots and a cot. But if you help me, we can take care of all these kids keep coming through. Maybe find their parents.

EWA

How do you find them, exactly?

BILLIE

I have medics, supply guys, drivers - they don't know what happened in those camps, not like you do. I need to help get the kids settled, help the medic, and do our cards.

ANELIE

Cards?

BILLIE

Each person comes in, gets a card. Name, the camp they were in. Then somewhere else there's another card with the parents... With a little luck, we match parents and kids.

EWA

Like Black Peter.

BILLIE

Black - yes! The card game.

EWA

Black Peter. Match up the cards.

BILLIE

It's chaos: some children, I don't even know their names. I want to start with girls from the hospital.

ANELIE

Why us?

BILLIE
You're still sick. The healthy
girls can do laundry, dig potatoes.

ANELIE
So the camp is for children?

BILLIE
They built a camp for adults first,
they got hit with typhus. They sent
me here to set up this camp for the
children, to protect you.

She points to three dazed BOYS in bed, staring into space.

BILLIE (CONT'D)
These kids, not only don't they
have families, some of them..well
you can see, staring at the
ceiling, wetting the bed. Never
seen anything like it. ...Who here
knows German and English?

ANELIE
Me. Anelie. And Ewa with the big
mouth.

BILLIE
Okay, so how are all of you,
anyway? Ewa, the hand...?

EWA
Arm. The Nazis broke my arm. I
really do have a big mouth.

Billie, concerned, steps toward Anelie.

BILLIE
And Anelie..

ANELIE
Syphilis and gonorrhoea.

BILLIE
Syphilis AND gonorrhoea? How on
earth did a girl your age --

She pulls back in shock.

BILLIE (CONT'D)
Oh God --

ANELIE

How do you think a fourteen-year-old girl survives a place like Treblinka 1? Then the road here, all those soldiers?

Billie, overwhelmed, reaches for Anelie, eyes Ewa.

BILLIE

Sorry, I'm sorry - and she knows?

ANELIE

I did it so she wouldn't have to. Your medic gave me penicillin. You think I should be ashamed?

BILLIE

You got these kids here alive....So are you girls going to sleep here in the camp, or keep running out into the woods?

EWA

There's the one girl, the one who doesn't speak...

BILLIE

I know. She pops up every few days and then disappears. I don't know how to help her if she won't stay.

ANELIE

Are you ready for...everything you're going to see and hear in this camp?

BILLIE

This war was my ticket to see the world. Got captured in the Philippines. Lost twenty pounds and a couple of teeth, how do I look?

ANELIE

This is not the Philippines. And it's not a card game. You haven't got a clue.

Ewa pulls Billie aside.

EWA

Anelie thinks she's protecting me from the big bad world. I was owned, shall we say, by a Nazi colonel.

(MORE)

EWA (CONT'D)

He took me to half the death camps
in Europe. Quite an education.
Don't tell Anelie.

Billie opens a door and finds Salomea hiding and watching.
She runs.

EXT. COMPOUND -- DAY

From Salomea's point of view in the trees we see a typical
army post, although this one has a wooden frame which was
used as a gallows. The sergeant lifts a corpse out of a jeep,
lays it near a newly dug grave in the camp graveyard. Billie,
Hanna, Mateusz, Anelie and Ewa follow on foot.

EWA

Jana. We got her here alive! I
thought the Americans could fix
anything.

ANELIE

Pneumonia. Without us she wouldn't
have gotten this far.

EWA

She saved us all. Billie, we'd like
to say goodbye to her. Just us. We
came a long way together.

Billie walks to the jeep. The children move Jana's body
closer to the grave. Salomea appears at the edge of the
trees. The others see her.

MATEUSZ

It's Jana.

Salomea looks at the body, stunned; she nods and watches as
the others kneel by the body. Then she sees the long line of
graves next to Jana's.

In a moment, Mateusz heads toward the tents and Billie
crosses to him.

BILLIE

Mateusz?

MATEUSZ

Mati.

BILLIE

You're okay?

MATEUSZ

Got food and a toilet, we got you instead of the SS.

BILLIE

The girl with the knife, where did you find her?

MATEUSZ

She found us one day in the woods, I was asleep, she was beating me with a stick.

BILLIE

What?

MATEUSZ

She woke us up, the Germans were coming. Every night she watched over us. Then I started watching with her.

BILLIE

Because you see well in the dark?

MATEUSZ

I thought she was lonely.

BILLIE

Is she?

MATEUSZ

She never speaks. Don't know if she can.

BILLIE

Should I be worried about her?

MATEUSZ

She killed wild animals and ate them. You saw her scars, the bites?

BILLIE

Don't remind me. But who is she?

MATEUSZ

Wonder who she was before the war.

EXT. COMPOUND -- DAY

Salomea is on the watch again, looking at the compound. MATEUSZ, with aviator sunglasses, lies in the sun, his head against a building. LEON, a giant boy of 14, arrives with JAKUB, a tough boy of 12.

LEON
See, there he is again.

JAKUB
Every day he's in that same spot.

LEON
Wearing those sunglasses.

Jakob walks over, taps Mateusz' foot with his own.

JAKUB
Hey, what's your name?

LEON
Where did you get the glasses?

JAKUB
You know the rules, everybody shares.

SALOMEA approaches with candy bars. She examines the new arrivals, snaps her fingers at them, waves at them to back up as she walks around Mateusz' feet. She drops a candy bar on his chest. Without looking he gropes until he finds it.

MATEUSZ
Ah. You're fantastic.

She returns her gaze to the new arrivals.

JAKUB
(to the girl)
Who are you?

Leon adjusts his jaw with his hand.

LEON
We've met...We just wanted to talk to him.

She looks down at Mateusz, then back at them. And slowly shakes her head.

JAKUB
So what's the story with this kid -

LEON

Hey. Let's get soup in the dining hall.

Her face relaxes; she gives Leon a tiny nod. She sees the soldier whose hand she cut, takes him by his good hand, and leads him to the hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL -- DAY

Salomea looks up at the soldier. She takes a look at his gun. She leads him into an exam room. She uses her knife to slice off his bandage, examines his hand and re-bandages it. She looks him in the eye and nods. Disappears.

INT. DINING HALL - DAY

The hall is crowded with kids playing. Billie buttons a boy's shirt. Anelie enters, carrying a baby and a piece of paper.

A fight erupts at a table, an aggressive teenage boy named DANIEL and a teenage girl named RUTA.

RUTA

Keep your stupid coal miner fingers to yourself!

Daniel moves toward her but Billie intervenes.

BILLIE

Daniel! Why don't you go to the boys' dorm for now.

DANIEL

I'm not going anywhere.

ANELIE

Daniel!

He glares at Anelie and leaves.

ANELIE (CONT'D)

One of them explodes like that every day. This baby only shuts up when I hold her. Can you find these people? The medic wants to see them.

BILLIE

(takes Anelie's paper)
Elka Piechowiak.

Throughout the scene, Billie's Polish pronunciation is terrible; Anelie's is perfect.

ANELIE
Govno. Piechowiak! Chodz tutaj.
(Shit. Piechowiak! Come
here.)

The children begin to listen, puzzled.

BILLIE
Judita Lewkowicz.

ANELIE
Lewkowicz.

BILLIE
Sala Przybyl.

ANELIE
Przybyl.

BILLIE
Maria Niewiadomski.

Anelie hands off the squawking baby, points to the list.

ANELIE
Niewiadomski. I think the baby
could read them better. Give me
that!

BILLIE
No wait, I've got it, here's a
short one! Leja Zale.

ANELIE
Zale.

BILLIE
Rachela Skrzypczak.

ANELIE
Skrzypczak.

BILLIE
Skrzypczak.

ANELIE
Skrzypczak! O Moj Boze!
(Oh my God!)

Anelie puts her hands on her head, appalled.

BILLIE
I'm sorry.

Billie looks in her phrase book.

BILLIE (CONT'D)
Przepraszam.
(I'm sorry)

ANELIE
Przepraszam. Przepraszam!

The kids nearby are laughing.

BILLIE
And more kids from ...Czechoslovakia.

Billie shows Anelie the list; Anelie breaks up laughing.

ANELIE
Let me read these. You tormented
these children enough for one
morning.

She looks up and is shocked to see Salomea smiling.

EXT. THE COMPOUND - NIGHT

Salomea, holding a rifle, wakes the sleeping guard. He leaps to his feet. She hands him his rifle.

SOLDIER
We keep meeting like this. Could we
have some kinda signal so I don't
shoot you?

She swats his arm and points. A truck is coming.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)
Thanks, kid. Danke? Spasiba?

A girl is rounding the corner of a tent, heading toward the compound, when Salomea grabs her and pulls her back.

The truck stops. Russian soldiers hop out. Two other girls scream when they see the Russians, who smile at the girls.

INT. BILLIE'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

GALINA, a female Russian army major, enters with KOLYA, a male Russian lieutenant age 19, and YURI, an officer. Billie is working; she stands. Anelie works with cards.

GALINA
Lieutenant.

BILLIE
Major. What does the Red Army want here? You're a long way from home. It's got to be close to midnight.

GALINA
I have a list of people in your camp. You turn them over to me.

ANELIE
We will do no such thing. Is this why you showed up at midnight?

GALINA
This is the Yalta agreement. All citizens of the Soviet sectors will be turned over to the Red Army for processing. Your president agreed, and your army has ordered it.

BILLIE
I don't understand -

GALINA
People from Ukraine, Byelorussia...

ANELIE
Just load them up on trucks and make them disappear?

GALINA
If you interfere, my general will call your general, and either way, I come back with my truck. I arranged for Kolya here to stay and keep an eye on things. Kolya, you report in to Yuri every night.

She leaves. Kolya, insolent, lights a cigarette.

BILLIE
Listen up. No smoking. Hospital, off limits. Girls' dorm, off limits. You piss me off, you're on a truck back to Russia, general or no general.

ANELIE
We can't give these children to the Russians. You know what will happen to them?

BILLIE

What am I supposed to do?

INT. BILLIE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Colonel enters as Billie does paperwork. Billie is surrounded with child-related flotsam, including comic books.

COLONEL

Good news. Red Cross got the camps to play along with your card game.

BILLIE

It only works if they all do it.

COLONEL

We have a new problem. Roosevelt told the Russians they can process their own refugees. Now the Russian army is running all over Germany looking for Russians, Ukrainians, the works.

BILLIE

What if these people don't want to go back?

COLONEL

Too bad. If you see any Russian troops, hide the Russian kids.

BILLIE

That's dozens of kids! As it is I have all these children who -- they're like little cadavers, sitting in a corner, staring, peeing themselves. How am I supposed to help them?

COLONEL

I have a possible solution, but you may not like it.

MP enters with SOMMER, a German doctor in his 50s. Billie eyes the MP and is suspicious.

COLONEL (CONT'D)

This is Doctor Sommer. MD. German.

BILLIE

You better tell me the rest.

COLONEL

Sommer had special orders for certain children. Orders from a Doctor Mengele. For example, he sent pairs of Jewish twins to Mengele. In Auschwitz.

BILLIE

Let me guess. You didn't know a thing.

SOMMER

It wasn't hard to guess. When so many Jews disappeared -

COLONEL

Mengele wanted to prove Hitler's breeding theory, increase the Aryan race by creating more twins. So he experimented. He'd infect twins with diseases to see which died first. Chopped off healthy limbs. Injected dyes into their eyes.

BILLIE

You're serious.

COLONEL

In his spare time Mengele taught the SS how to use the gas chambers. That's your pal Mengele. You're an easy conviction, abetting mass murder. But I'm just one lawyer, and I have a hundred Nazis worse than you on my shit list.

BILLIE

So why are you here?

COLONEL

You said you need a doctor.

BILLIE

I need a real doctor!

SOMMER

I am a real doctor. I treated women and then pediatrics.

COLONEL

Pediatrics. Perfect fit.

BILLIE

Perfect fit??

COLONEL

We're short of doctors! Army sent em all home. This is all I can give you, until winter.

BILLIE

He's practically a murderer. He should have done something.

COLONEL

I think he's just stupid. Or gutless.

SOMMER

I will confess to gutless. A lot of that going around in those days.

BILLIE

Well, thank God I'm an American. Part of me is itching to get back home, forget this awful place. Turn on the shower and wash it all away. ...Christ. Germany.

SOMMER

Yes, go back to America, nice and safe. I studied surgery in California. Pretend that you're not in a German camp, you're in a camp in California, filled with those Japanese farmers who were interned. Americans hate the Japanese.

BILLIE

Yes, and -

SOMMER

The speeches in Congress - these nasty brown people invaded our land, kill them all! It would have been the easiest thing for Roosevelt to give the order - kill the Japs. Very popular. And there you are in an army uniform, with orders to kill.

BILLIE

No American officer would ever give those orders.

SOMMER

(smiles, ironic)
Really? What a relief...Say they do give you the order. You refuse.

(MORE)

SOMMER (CONT'D)

Good for you! You run from California to Arizona, look at the barbed wire along the border, protecting you from the Mexicans after your army stole their land. New Mexico, more barbed wire, cages for the few Navajo and Apache your soldiers didn't exterminate.

BILLIE

Now wait a minute --

SOMMER

Next stop, Texas. Hot place, Texas. Good thing you're not a Negro, or there would be no toilet to use, or drinking water. Then up to Tennessee, where your soldiers built that clever bomb that killed those people at Nagasaki... Colonel, you must know about the Liberty League. Shall I tell her, or...?

COLONEL

A bunch of army veterans and business people hatched this plot to overthrow FDR and set up a dictatorship.

SOMMER

Third Reich West! Tell her who the new Fuehrer was going to be.

COLONEL

Douglas MacArthur.

SOMMER

Fraulein, your point is well taken - right now, I would rather be anything, than a German. But if you think your country could never do these things, you may be too naïve to do this job.

COLONEL

Okay, this was a mistake.

SOMMER

(leafs through comic book)
Your army is doing amazing things here - feeding and clothing your enemies, the world has never seen conquerors like you. You should be proud.

(MORE)

SOMMER (CONT'D)

You Americans are a great people,
but you didn't just come down from
Mount Olympus. Or Planet Krypton.

COLONEL

You can give that speech at your
trial. Be glad you weren't caught
by the Russians. You'd be dead
already.

SOMMER

Fraulein. The longer you let me
live free and work, the more damage
I can undo. You want to treat all
these dying children by yourself?

Outside, the MP sees Salomea staring at his gun. He looks at
his gun, sets it aside, and smiles at her. She's suspicious:
she's used to German and Russian soldiers.

INT. DINING HALL - DAY

Anelie, Ewa, Mati and Hanna reconnect over Cokes.

ANELIE

What do we know about that girl?

HANNA

She has an SS knife.

MATEUSZ

Not afraid of the dark.

HANNA

She's a thief.

EWA

She hates leaving people behind.
Bet there's a reason for that. And
the most obvious bit. Mati...

MATEUSZ

What?

EWA

She's is madly in love with you.
Head over heels. Even before you
two stayed up night after night --

HANNA

Ewa!

MATEUSZ

She's not in love. She hasn't even said a word.

EWA

When a girl is in love, her words never say what she means anyway.

HANNA

I think she just loves lost puppies. When Mati was sick she never left his side.

EXT. CAMP COMPOUND - DAY

From the trees Salomea watches kids play and sing. Supply truck arrives. Anelie approaches with a list. SERGEANT gets out of the truck with paperwork. Daniel saws wood.

SERGEANT

You again. Last time, you took everything but my skivvies.

ANELIE

I'm trying to save lives.

SERGEANT

Here we go...

ANELIE

Please give us more bread and potatoes? We ran out this month.

He sees her distressed look.

SERGEANT

Army rules....See what I can do.

ANELIE

Thank you. Daniel, the beer hall, can we save the roof?

DANIEL

Most of it. I can't work miracles.

ANELIE

Haha! The roof - I need hammers, nails, saws. Soap, blankets, tents, coal. ...And penicillin.

SERGEANT

Anything else?

ANELIE

Vegetables. Ewa needs pencils.
...And, whose bright idea was it to
send fifty pounds of ham to a camp
full of Jewish kids?

SERGEANT

They don't eat ham?

Anelie eyeroll.

ANELIE

How about women's underwear? Or
children's?

SERGEANT

I can get men's underwear real
easy. General principle's the same.

Another tragic look from Anelie.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)

Sorry.

ANELIE

Fine. The smallest underwear you
have. These girls are the size of
plucked chickens...Can you find me
clothes that aren't all army green?

SERGEANT

This is the Army, not Macys.

ANELIE

I'm not asking for diamonds and
mink. It's all we can do to keep
the children from dying. Look at
the size of my graveyard! ...Some of
the children stare into space all
day, I need to turn them back into
children again. What does the army
have that kids can play with?

SERGEANT

We got baseball gear -

ANELIE

These kids never heard of - fine,
they can just figure it out.

SERGEANT

Have you tried the black market?

ANELIE

I should go to those people, and
sell...what?

Salomea looks into the truck and is in awe of the massive
piles of food. She taps the back of the truck, intending to
watch for the return of this miraculous vehicle.

ANELIE (CONT'D)

Hey. You can have one. Two if you
tell me your name.

Salomea grabs a fat spud, gives Anelie a look, and runs. The
truck backs up a foot but stops when a small boy of 12 runs
behind it. This is TREBLINKA PAWEL. He is clutching a potato.

ANELIE (CONT'D)

Hey, stop!

The boy, still frightened from his near-miss with the truck,
runs. Anelie runs after.

ANELIE (CONT'D)

Hey, stop! Come here!

TREBLINKA PAWEL

It's mine!

ANELIE

Yes, you can keep the potato.

TREBLINKA PAWEL

It's mine!

ANELIE

But if you give it to me, we'll
cook it for you. You don't have to
eat it raw.

TREBLINKA PAWEL

You can't have it!

ANELIE

We'll cook it and give it back, I
promise!

TREBLINKA PAWEL

The whole potato?

ANELIE

Yes!

TREBLINKA PAWEL

I don't have to share it?

ANELIE

It's all yours. I'll even find you
a bigger one.

TREBLINKA PAWEL

You will?

ANELIE

Yes. Now go to the hospital for
your blanket.

TREBLINKA PAWEL

My own blanket?

ANELIE

Yes, you don't have to share that
either. It's not that kind of camp.

TREBLINKA PAWEL

Promise?

ANELIE

Promise. You alright now?

Pawel hands over the potato, pokes her.

TREBLINKA PAWEL

I don't get it back, I'm coming for
you.

Anelie goes to the door where the truck is being unloaded.
ADAM, 16, is coming out.

ANELIE

Do me a favor. Find me the biggest
potato we have.

ADAM

What??

ANELIE

Don't ask. Big potato.

INT. BOY'S DORM - DAY

Pawel marks his name on his blanket with a pencil.

EXT. A FIELD - DAY

Now Salomea's treeline perch offers the spectacle of sport.
In the field, baseball, with four sacks for bases.

Confused fielders stand right on the bases: Leon, Jakub, and JOZKA, a girl of 10. Adam is in the outfield. Anelie at the plate consulting a manual. The sergeant watches, appalled.

ANELIE

Ready to have some fun? Adam, you are the shoot stop. You stand right behind the second base.

ADAM

I can't see you.

ANELIE

Just do what you're told! We're here to have fun! Now throw the ball!

The child on second throws the ball toward Anelie. She stands astride the plate, holding the bat as though she's chopping wood. She flinches but bats the ball down in front of her. It rolls to a stop.

ADAM

What happened?

ANELIE

Now you three chase the ball.

ADAM

Why?

The three infielders, still confused, run to the plate. Jozka picks the ball up, smiling.

JOZKA

Does this mean I won?

SERGEANT

Stop it. Stop it! Give me that bat!

He begins directing the kids and hitting grounders. The kids run and shout; more kids come to play. Anelie smiles.

A solid hit heads to the trees. Salomea pops out of the brush, fetches it, throws it badly. She watches the game.

Ruta approaches Anelie.

RUTA

Thank you for the underwear.

ANELIE

Sure.

RUTA

You know the underwear has this
sort of hole in it? In the front?
I think this is for a boy.

(clasp hands, look up)

I ask God for underwear. GIRL'S
underwear. I'm a girl! Is this
another one of your little jokes?

New kids arrive in a truck and Ewa begins herding them. Some are calm, some afraid, a few are crying. One tries to run off. Salomea, at the edge of the woods, intercepts him with a whistle and a candy bar. She takes his hand and nods to Ewa.

EWA

Hey knife girl. Last night a boy
ran off, headed toward the hill. Do
you know where -

Salomea nods and runs.

ANELIE

You called her knife girl?

EWA

If she doesn't like it she can tell
me her bloody name. She must have
one.

INT. THE DINING HALL - DAY

Billie, Anelie and Ewa sort out kids who don't know which camp they came from: Leon, Jakub, Jozka; ROCHA, a girl of 7; and Treblinka Pawel. Hanna with the two-tone hair enters.

BILLIE

What happened to your hair?

HANNA

The Catholics.

She laughs at Billie's confusion. Anelie reads a card.

ANELIE

Okay, you're a total mystery. Come
here, little criminal. We'll have
to take you to...the witch.

JAKUB

What?

ANELIE

She's a good witch. She can sort you out in a few minutes. Take your card and stand in that line.

JAKUB

She's not going to turn me into a rat, or something?

ANELIE

Not unless you misbehave.

EWA

Next! Hello. Let's see the card.

Go to Ewa meeting Leon. Adam manages the cards. Ewa, easily the cleverest child in camp, points across the room at a pile of cards.

EWA (CONT'D)

Anelie, you have a stack for Lvov and a stack for Lemberg, it's the same place!

(to Leon)

You're not sure which camp you were in?

LEON

Sorry.

EWA

It's okay. Munich. Can you read?

LEON

Of course.

EWA

Did the camp have a big sign on the gate? German? Arbeit macht frei?

LEON

Arbeit -- yes.

EWA

Hmm... Sachsenhausen, Flossenburg, Auschwitz, Terezin...The camp had lots of shaygetz, or was it all Jews?

LEON

Shaygetz. Goyim.

EWA
 Adam, this one's Dachau. Hugs!
 Alright, you're safe now.

She hugs Leon.

EWA (CONT'D)
 Next! Let's see the card.

Cutting to another Ewa interview.

EWA (CONT'D)
 Lots of typhus in your camp?

JAKUB
 Yes, how did you know?

She touches his face; he's nervous.

EWA
 You're okay?

JAKUB
 Yes.

EWA
 Lots of Russians there?

JAKUB
 (smiles)
 You really are a witch.

EWA
 Adam -- Bergen-Belsen.

Adam writes. Ewa kisses Jakub who recoils.

EWA (CONT'D)
 Relax, you're home now. You need
 the doctor. Next! Give me the card.

Ewa interviewing another child.

EWA (CONT'D)
 You came into the camp by train?

JOZKA
 No. No train tracks. We were in
 trucks.

EWA
 Chelmno camp! And you're alive!

JOZKA

I was lucky. The Germans heard the Russians coming and drove all the trucks into the woods. They were ordered to execute us but the guards in my truck ran away. The rest of my family...they were in a different truck...

(a stricken look)

Lucky me.

EWA

Well, we got you, safe and sound.
Hugs!

She sees Salomea behind a door.

EWA (CONT'D)

I have your card. "That girl in the forest with the scary SS knife"...?

Salomea gives her a look and watches the other kids.

Ewa interviewing another child.

EWA (CONT'D)

Okay, separated from your family in winter '43. You were in Treblinka 2, not Treblinka 1?

TREBLINKA PAWEL

I don't know.

EWA

Did you see two fences, one behind the other, with pine branches stuck in it?

TREBLINKA PAWEL

No.

EWA

Did you see the zoo for the officers' kids, with foxes and a big peacock?

TREBLINKA PAWEL

No!

EWA

Did your parents work in a quarry, turn big stones into little ones -

Pawel, who had been getting more upset at the lack of progress, brightens.

TREBLINKA PAWEL
Stones, yes!

EWA
Thank God. Treblinka 1. One of your parents may be alive.

TREBLINKA PAWEL
Not both of them?

EWA
(cautious)
It's possible. Hugs! Next - your card?

Ewa meeting SONYA, a terrified blond girl of 17, blue eyes. Sonya is practically shaking.

EWA (CONT'D)
It's okay. Hmm...Outside the fence, there's a minefield? Achtung minen?

SONYA
Yes.

Ewa is suddenly alert.

EWA
And - wait, how old are you? Let me look at you.

She stops, horrified.

EWA (CONT'D)
...Landmines. Come here. Closer. Whisper to me. You were in Sobibor.

SONYA
Sobibor. I think so.

EWA
You were raped. By those guards in that SS building.

The girl's look says it all. Ewa hugs her tight.

EWA (CONT'D)
Adam. Go get Anelie - no wait, get Billie, not that Kraut doctor!
(to the girl)
(MORE)

EWA (CONT'D)

It's okay. It's not your fault. And you have lots of company.

EXT. COMPOUND -- DAY

The sergeant walks the perimeter. He sees smoke in the trees. Salomea runs deep into the woods where a few possessions lay on a blanket. She proceeds to eat a potato which she has roasted on a small fire. Next she begins skinning a rabbit.

INT. HOSPITAL -- DAY

Billie and Ewa carry in an unconscious GIRL.

BILLIE

How many pills did she take?

EWA

All she could find. Don't you lock up all the medicines?

BILLIE

I will now.

Sommer arrives.

SOMMER

You have the bottles?

He examines them.

SOMMER (CONT'D)

How long ago? We'll need to pump her out - Billie, we need -

BILLIE

I got it.

He takes her pulse and they go to work on her.

EWA

She was doing well, we moved her to the girls' dorm. I don't understand. She just wanted to die. We have others like that. They get better, and then go over the edge... Could happen to any of us.

INT. BILLIE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Billie is asleep at her desk, Anelie and Ewa sort paperwork. Sommer enters; Billie wakes.

BILLIE

Doctor?

SOMMER

The MPs follow me everywhere.

BILLIE

It's that or prison.

SOMMER

I watch the children. I've never seen anything like it. I've had to watch from a distance, mostly -

ANELIE

I told you, we can't have a German doctor going into those wards every day. The children are terrified.

SOMMER

But I can help them -

ANELIE

You do the surgery, leave the rest to us.

SOMMER

You and the nurse, you're not even supposed to be doing diagnoses.

ANELIE

Diagnosis is easy. Starvation, typhus, rape and lice, broken record.

SOMMER

You're a child!

ANELIE

(quietly, to him)

Stay away from the children. Tell them about Mengele. Tell me about those people, the women, the looks on their faces when they knew.

BILLIE

Anelie.

SOMMER

Lieutenant, you've seen shell shock?

BILLIE

Sure. It's all over the place.

SOMMER

The first war, I was a medic. We thought shell shock was from the actual shaking, the impact from the artillery. But there were too many patients for that. On the front line, one man in ten had shell shock. The boys who stayed for a month or two, they all had it. The generals called them cowards and sent them back up. The doctors have no clue, they try electric shock, lobotomy, cocaine.

BILLIE

But our camp, it's mostly children. They're not soldiers.

SOMMER

(takes Anelie's hand)

Yes they are. These children are soldiers, they fought a war, but they had no weapons. They saw things more terrible than most soldiers ever see, and they were only children. The children have shell shock. We try to turn them back into children - first we need to heal them.

ANELIE

So where is all this going?

SOMMER

You're building the new building?

EWA

Need a roof and then the stove.

BILLIE

We need a new hospital ward.

SOMMER

If my idea works, you won't need it. Instead of just shoving all these sick kids into hospital beds, let's try and help them.

BILLIE

I need the space!...What's your plan?

SOMMER

Anelie. Take the children who wet the bed. The night screamers. Put them in the new building.

ANELIE

The bedwetters?

SOMMER

The ones who have it bad. That's your shell shock ward. Then we...try some things until something works. It's never been done, there's no textbook, but there must be a way to help them. If we succeed, we can get them out of the hospital completely. Let me try this.

BILLIE

The Army wouldn't like it. Anelie?

ANELIE

The children in that ward might feel like they're being punished.

Anelie points at Sommer.

ANELIE (CONT'D)

...But I think the szkop may be right. Let's try it.

SOMMER

And you stop chasing me away?

ANELIE

You work daytime. The children with the night terrors - there's no way a German is going to talk them through nightmares like that.

SOMMER

She's right... What's a szkop?

EXT. COMPOUND -- DAY

Sommer walks outside and sees Treblinka Pawel.

SOMMER

Hey, boy.

He has called out more harshly than he intended.

SOMMER (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. Can you help me?

TREBLINKA PAWEL
With what?

SOMMER
What's a szkop?

TREBLINKA PAWEL
It's a ram that's been castrated.

Pawel, smiling, looks him over.

TREBLINKA PAWEL (CONT'D)
Baaaaah.

This exchange makes Pawel's day. Salomea comes over, watching the retreating Sommer.

SALOMEA
Baaaaah.

They smile.

EXT. THE TREES AT THE EDGE OF THE CAMP - DAY

Anelie calls to Billie behind a building.

ANELIE
Lieutenant, come quick.

They approach the trees and find a dead man. A child follows them and screams.

ANELIE (CONT'D)
It started when the MPs arrived at the other camp, to collect people for that Red Army truck. These Russians begged me to hide them from the Russian soldiers.

BILLIE
Hide them? What are they, crazy?

ANELIE
They can't go back to Russia. One of them begged the American to shoot him and the other tried to cut his throat. Then this one -

BILLIE

His neck?

ANELIE

Hanged himself from the tree. The people on the list, they're terrified. We can't send them to Russia.

BILLIE

I asked the colonel. He can't do a thing. Keep the kids away - they're all nervous wrecks as it is.

Billie walks behind the kitchen and sees Salomea. Billie half-hides. Salomea approaches a cook who hands her two small potatoes; she looks piteously at him and he returns with two big ones. She nods, sees Billie and runs into the trees.

INT. THE SHELL SHOCK CABIN -- DAY

From a corner Salomea watches Billie and Anelie enter the new ward, Anelie carrying slips of paper. Sitting in a circle are Rocha, Pawel, Ruta, Jozka, Jakub, Leon. At the other end are the three sleeping BOYS, about ten years old. We will later learn that two of their names are ISAAC and JOSHUA.

ANELIE

Who are these three here?

BILLIE

First one, catatonic. He finally started eating. Second one, talked to Ewa once. Third one is very violent, he's sedated.

ANELIE

You sure you're ready to put them in this ward of ours?

BILLIE

Two of them are Russian. I don't suppose you've ever seen an insane asylum, the smells, the screaming, the violence. You know what's worse than throwing an innocent child in a cage for the rest of his life? Throwing him in a cage for life, in Russia. I let you build this ward because it may be our only chance to save some of these kids.

Anelie approaches the kids who are awake. Mateusz listens, holding his aviator shades. The kids bring cards and Anelie flips through them.

ANELIE

Everyone take a card, write down the best hiding place you ever had. Hiding from the Nazis. I saw you play in the compound, hide and seek, you're all very good at it. Who hid in a potato sack?

ROCHA

My mother smuggled me out of town that way. I was smaller.

ANELIE

Hiding in the attic - you had to be quiet all day?

RUTA

It was awful.

ANELIE

Hid under a woman's dress, how big was this woman? Hiding in a garbage cart, hole in the ground, a hollowed-out couch...Jozka?

JOZKA

I hid in the quarantine ward. They didn't think anyone would be crazy enough to hide there.

ANELIE

You had our doctor test you?

JOZKA

(smiles)
I'm okay.

ANELIE

Jakub?

JAKUB

Gestapo trapped us by the river. We hid in the reeds, in the water. They fired shots over our heads. They got my sister but they missed me. I hid behind my sister's body.

ANELIE

If you're afraid you don't have to tell your story, okay? Rocha again?

She rubs her back.

ROCHA

I hid in a haystack. They stabbed me with a pitchfork. But I didn't scream. It's still infected.

ANELIE

Mateusz? The pilot glasses work?

MATEUSZ

(waves the glasses)
They're great.

ANELIE

So you hid in a sewer.

Salomea comes closer to listen.

JOZKA

Oh my God! Ew!

MATEUSZ

I'm not stupid, it was the rain sewer, not the toilet sewer. But when it rained, the toilet tunnel backed up into my tunnel and I had to climb up into a manhole. The water workers brought me bread. The SS was obsessed with finding me, they called my name on the radio truck every night. I was trapped.

JOZKA

How many days were you down there?

MATEUSZ

A year. I had no light for a year. I can't see well in the sunlight.

He holds up glasses. Salomea's jaw is on the floor.

JOZKA

We thought you were a movie star.

RUTA

I thought I was the hide-and-seek champion. I have to give the award to Hollywood here. Let's see the glasses!

He puts them on. Hanna watches intently.

KIDS

Hollywood!

ANELIE

Okay, another question. What's the bravest thing you ever saw?

RUTA

Boarding the train - Papa pretended he didn't know me, to keep me safe.

JAKUB

A woman threw a baby into a stranger's baby carriage, to save her son.

HANNA

I knew a priest who forged birth certificates for Jewish children. He persuaded Catholic families to take us. He taught us prayers, the rosary. He even dyed my hair blonde, Aryan-like.

Hanna holds up the ends of her hair.

HANNA (CONT'D)

The latest fashion from Paris.

ANELIE

When you found us, you were a blonde.

Mateusz is watching Hanna.

TREBLINKA PAWEL

I escaped a roundup, the Gestapo chased me to an apartment building. I opened a door and a woman was there, stranger. I just said Mama. The Gestapo came round the corner.
(smiles)
And she put her arms around me.
Kept me for six months.

ANELIE

Alright, enough for today.

TREBLINKA PAWEL

Hey.

Anelie sits next to Pawel.

TREBLINKA PAWEL (CONT'D)
Ewa tries to find our parents. You
can tell us the truth, you know.

ANELIE
Most of you...It's a waste of time.
Your parents have passed away.

TREBLINKA PAWEL
I know.

ANELIE
But telling that to these children..

TREBLINKA PAWEL
Anelie. They already know.

Billie enters.

BILLIE
They did it! The war is over!

ANELIE
What do you -

BILLIE
In Japan, they dropped this big
bomb, they surrendered!

ANELIE
Your husband made it through okay?

BILLIE
They don't know where he is. You
know how long it's been since I've
seen him? I might get an R and R.

ANELIE
R and R?

BILLIE
We get a few days, alone together.

ANELIE
You'd leave us here?

EXT. COMPOUND -- DAY

Salomea from a distance watches kids play. Kolya approaches
Anelie.

KOLYA

Hey. My commander gave me nothing to do but sit and spy on you. It's rather disappointing so far. Can I help?

Sounds of commotion from a building.

ANELIE

We're having a problem with fights.

INT. DINING HALL - DAY

Anelie and Kolya enter the hall. They see Leon grabbing Jakub's head and trying to punch him. Kolya grabs Leon while Anelie pulls Jakub away.

LEON

Let me go!

KOLYA

Hey! You sit.

ANELIE

Angry boys. Fighting a war. Having a man in the dorm might help. Second idea. Billie says you're a spy. ...See that girl? Go spy on her.

They watch Salomea, who has followed the Russian suspiciously.

KOLYA

That's the girl from the forest. I hear she doesn't speak to anybody.

Anelie unlocks drawer, pulls out knife.

ANELIE

She doesn't speak at all. We found her in the woods. She runs off for days at a time. She likes knives. Can you find out where she's from?

KOLYA

You tried talking to her?

ANELIE

We all did. She may be beyond help.

Sommer enters. Anelie sorts cards; he helps.

SOMMER

You've heard of a man called Jesus Christ? He tried to carry all the pain of the world on his shoulders. Not to spoil the ending of the book, but Jesus dies. All that pain from other people crushed him.

ANELIE

What in the world...??

SOMMER

Ewa. She listens to every child, the horror stories, then she lies to them, giving them hope, those cards. I've been wondering who's going to crack first, her or you.

ANELIE

What about you? You never sleep. Are you crucifying yourself to atone for your sins? You're pushing the shell shock thing so hard -- I admit it, you were right, you win.

SOMMER

Yes, I'm try to cut a few years off of my time in purgatory. ...Purgatory, it's a place where...

Anelie stands, puts her hand to her chest.

ANELIE

I know all about purgatory. First-hand experience. ...You're not Mengele. Just his idiot stooge. Hold yourself together so you can keep helping me. If Ewa can't find their parents, at least you and I are going to try to cure them. The shell shock.

SOMMER

Cure them? I just want them to stop cowering in fear when I walk in the room.

Ewa enters, slides her arm inside Anelie's, sighs.

EWA

God, these tiny babies. Arms and legs like mop handles. We're raising a species of scarecrows.
(distressed)
(MORE)

EWA (CONT'D)

You know what I want to see, just once? I want to open the door and see fat children come in. Fat babies are happy babies. Then I want to find one of their parents. Just one.

Anelie and Sommer exchange a look.

INT. DINING HALL - DAY

Salomea watches Mateusz draw on paper, glasses hanging from his shirt. His artistic personality is a total mismatch for the hard-nosed Hanna. Salomea is now close enough to listen.

HANNA

Hey Hollywood. We're not in the woods anymore. Why do you keep following me?

MATEUSZ

I'm not -

She sees his drawings.

HANNA

...Hey, that's me! What are you doing?

MATEUSZ

I'm making a comic book.

HANNA

A what?

MATEUSZ

Comic book. You know, like Spring-Heeled Jack, Desperate Dan?

Seeing her blank look.

MATEUSZ (CONT'D)

Lord Snooty, Dick Turpin, Varney the Vampire?

HANNA

What? I'm a vampire??

MATEUSZ

No! Those are comic books from London. It's how my father taught me English. This one's mine.

(MORE)

MATEUSZ (CONT'D)

Someday I'll be a painter, or else
the movies, kiss all the girls.

HANNA

Keep me out of your silly stories -
wait, let me see.

MATEUSZ

I did a nice job on your hair, see?

HANNA

(a hand to her chest)
You made me a little bit curvy.

MATEUSZ

Sorry.

HANNA

No no, now I've got something to
look forward to. Fatten up on this
army food...What does this Russian
word say? Dalmatian Girl?

MATEUSZ

Clever, right? Because your hair is
in two colors. And you have a few
freckles.

HANNA

You named me after a dog.

MATEUSZ

You're not a dog - it's only a --

HANNA

Turned me into a Dalmatian.

MATEUSZ

Look how beautiful I made you!

HANNA

Give me that thing so I can draw
YOU.

(glares, arms upraised)
Stupid Sewer Boy. Kills his enemies
with his toilet smell.

MATEUSZ

I'm already in there. Aviator Boy.

HANNA

What??

Intrigued, she looks.

HANNA (CONT'D)
With the dark glasses - clever.

MATEUSZ
You and I go on adventures. Fly
through outer space. Use our atom
bombs against the Nazis.

He raises his brows, takes her hand.

MATEUSZ (CONT'D)
There's a rumor we run off to get
married. Isn't that a delicious
idea?

HANNA
Not if Sewer Boy wants to keep
breathing.

Salomea creeps over to look; Mateusz notices, she flees.

MATEUSZ
I'm starting a new one tonight.

HANNA
Let me. I'll write it. You draw.

MATEUSZ
Ask Anelie for paper. She's
starting to get irritated with me.

HANNA
Pencils?

MATEUSZ
No, I draw all my pictures in
blooooood.

HANNA
You're crazy.

MATEUSZ
Of course I need pencils. Thanks,
Dalmatian -
(he stops abruptly)

HANNA
Go ahead, call me a Dalmatian, just
one time, I dare you. On this
planet my name is Hanna. ...I wish
you could make my eyes blue!

She takes a deep breath, without looking up.

HANNA (CONT'D)

Mati. Remember that night by the river? We were sure you were going to die. They were already arguing over who would get your shoes and your shirt! When you woke up the next morning, I almost -

Deep breath, composes herself.

HANNA (CONT'D)

When we found you, Anelie said "No boys. Too much trouble."

MATEUSZ

What changed her mind about me?

HANNA

The little forest girl. She didn't say anything but she refused to leave without you. The little girl is boss. I just wish I knew what her voice sounds like.

Hanna hides her eyes with his glasses. Salomea approaches, afraid, croaking voice.

SALOMEA

Salomea. I'm Salomea.

EXT. THE COMPOUND -- DAY

A truck arrives; children get out. One sees the old gallows frame and screams. Salomea follows the child's gaze and looks sadly at the frame, which she hadn't noticed before.

ANELIE

No, shh. Nobody uses that anymore.

EWA

Let's tear that damn thing down.

ANELIE

No. Get me some lumber and rope.

EXT. THE COMPOUND -- DAY

The gallows, being converted into a swingset.

EXT. THE COMPOUND -- DAY

NEW ARRIVALS stare, shocked, as kids play on the swings. Ewa and Anelie watch.

NEW KID

(smiles)

You let the boys play on the gallows? You people are crazy.

EWA

This was a prison camp. Children arrive, they think they're back with the Nazis. The bedwetter children, it's not good for them. Can we make them feel safe again, like they're home...?

Pawel approaches and hugs Anelie.

TREBLINKA PAWEL

Anelie, thank you! You know how long it's been since I had my own toothbrush?

ANELIE

The Fritzes didn't think you'd be around long enough for cavities. So you like hugs now? From girls?

EWA

Does this look like a Nazi camp?

TREBLINKA PAWEL

It IS a Nazi camp.

ANELIE

Not now. What scares you when you look at this place?

TREBLINKA PAWEL

German signs, anything with "Jude" in it. Don't do sirens or roll calls, don't do the haircuts and delousing on the first day. And the German doctor, just hearing him -

ANELIE

We need a doctor and he's all I've got. Okay, what else?

INT. GIRL'S DORM -- DAY

The girl's dorm is painted pink and red; Ruta and other girls paint pictures on one of the walls.

BILLIE

Pink and red. You've got our girls in a building that looks like a whorehouse.

ANELIE

And it doesn't look like Treblinka. When these girls wake up, they see the pictures and they know they're not with the Nazis anymore.

(points, whispers)

I think that is supposed to be Valentino. It's really terrible.

RUTA

(irritated)

Hey! That one's mine!...One thing terrifies all of them - dogs. Can we go to the local farms, find some puppies? Little ones, the ones that don't grow up into monsters.

ANELIE

Yes, little yappers, not the woof-woof.

Salomea enters and is delighted with the pictures and colors.

INT. SHELL SHOCK WARD - DAY

A scarecrow/dummy with a Hitler mustache lays on a bed. Children beat it with sticks; Anelie watches. Feathers fly.

KIDS

Hitler is dead! Hitler is dead!

INT. BILLIE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Anelie walks in with a black eye.

BILLIE

My God, what happened?

ANELIE

We had a skit in the ward. We dressed a scarecrow like Hitler and the children beat the hell out of him with sticks. One boy hit me on the back swing.

BILLIE

Oh no.

ANELIE

His apologies were totally heart-rending, he made me cry. In my good eye.

BILLIE

Let me see.

ANELIE

The children needed it. We were short of food all week, everyone was jumpy. Mateusz is putting on a play, cheer them all up.

INT. BILLIE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Billie working, Salomea enters with a watch.

SALOMEA

Somebody was in my bag.

BILLIE

Well. You can talk.

SALOMEA

You get your watch back, when I get my knife back.

After a year's silence Salomea sounds like Vito Corleone, to the end of the script. Billie puts her hand on the drawer holding the knife.

BILLIE

You sit.

Kolya enters and blocks Salomea's escape.

KOLYA

Ah, yes, your card just says "girl found in the forest". You can talk. You speak any Russian...?

SALOMEA
(withering look, perfect
French)
Enchante.

KOLYA
Anyone comes near you, you push
them away. Anyone comes near while
you're sleeping, you punch them in
the face, you never even wake up -
I hope you outgrow that before you
get married! You want everyone to
think you're tough.

SALOMEA
And I mind my own business.

KOLYA
Yes, I know, you don't care about
anybody. Except that's not really
true. The three little boys, if
anybody picks on them, you attack
like a wolverine. I think the
little one likes you.

He ignores her murderous glare.

KOLYA (CONT'D)
And that girl who was sick, you
carried messages to her boyfriend,
rain or snow.

SALOMEA
You're a spy!

KOLYA
And you're a romantic under that
ferocious disguise. And you don't
want to be alone. So tomorrow, you
give back her watch, and we'll
talk. ...How did you get an SS dagger
away from an SS man?

She gives him a blank stare.

INT. BILLIE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Billie sees her watch on her desk. She unlocks her drawer and
finds it empty. She exits.

EXT. COMPOUND - DAY

Continuation. Billie sees Salomea scrutinizing her from a distance, cleaning her nails with her knife. Billie crosses to her and sits.

BILLIE

You don't have to pee in the woods. We have a latrine. It's safer. But we're short of everything, we can't have thieves. ...There were six of you when you came here, but one girl died. We're making a gravestone. What was her name?

Salomea gives Billie a long look.

SALOMEA

Jana. When I was sick she refused to leave me behind. I would have died.

Kids chase puppies across the compound.

EXT. COMPOUND -- NIGHT

Mateusz comes out of the latrine and finds Salomea in front of him. She takes his hand.

SALOMEA

Mati. We're safe. We're really safe here. The Americans. I can't believe it. We're safe!

She starts to cry and can't stop. She hugs him hard. She puts her hands on her stomach.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)

I'm like a big clenched fist that can't let go. We're safe!

He smiles and wipes away her tears.

MATEUSZ

We're safe for now. But the Russians want to take us away. Watch that Kolya boy. Especially you girls, you know what those soldiers are like. You feel better?

SALOMEA

I don't remember what it's like,
not being afraid. Thank you. Thanks
for....just thank you.

INT. DINING HALL -- NIGHT

Sommer, Mateusz and Hanna stage a performance of one of their
comic books for the bedwetters ward.

MATEUSZ

Dalmatian Girl, distract him while
I fire the atomic bomb!

Hanna waggles her chest at Sommer.

HANNA

Come, liebchen, give us a kiss.

MATEUSZ

Save yourself, Myszko!
(my mouse)

Hanna looks at her audience and bites her knuckle in mock
fear, diving to the ground. Mateusz pops a paper bag; Sommer
staggers comically several times and falls to the ground.

HANNA

Aviator Boy! Come, let's escape to
outer space, my love!

Wild applause. Hanna and Mateusz bow and take off bits of
costume. Kids file out. Sommer sits up.

RUTA

(laughing)

That was amazing - you made water
squirt out of my nose.

SOMMER

This is silly, I had to die in the
last three episodes.

MATEUSZ

The whole thing is silly. Give the
people what they want. Killing you
is very popular.

Hanna helps Sommer up and holds his hand, as a child would do
with her father.

HANNA

It's good for these children, to laugh at the SS man. Turn the monster into a clown. You want them to heal, right?

SOMMER

Am I a monster?

HANNA

You play one perfectly. The children laugh so we keep doing it.

Salomea gives Sommers' shoulder a reassuring pat, straightens his shirt, and laughs.

Ewa enters.

EWA

Hanna? ..We tracked down that card.

HANNA

My parents?

EWA

Same name, wrong family. I shouldn't have said anything --

Hanna shakes loose and runs off.

EWA (CONT'D)

Why am I even doing this?

INT. DINING HALL - DAY

SZYMON, late thirties, thin, with a sack; visits an exhausted Ewa. Daniel and Adam peel potatoes.

EWA

This Szymon. He's with the Jewish group, he visits the camps.

SZYMON

You boys want to go to Israel? Give up on finding any family alive?

DANIEL

There's a new war coming. This time the Jews get to fight back.

SZYMON

Another young lad wants revenge.
Son, the fighting in Israel, there
are no Nazis to kill. You want to
fight, you'll get your chance, once
the British let us in...

(to Adam)

What about you? Another hothead?

ADAM

I don't want to go to Israel.

SZYMON

Well, I have another project. Nazis
are hiding in Germany. We put on
our detective hats, hunt them down.

DANIEL

You be a detective while I fight.
Some of us want to show what we're
made of.

SZYMON

Get your Jewish Hero scouting
badge? Already got mine, thank you.
Mauthausen. Bottom of a pit, a
quarry. 186 steps go up, a man on
each step with a block of stone. He
gets to the top, he's tired, he
falls on the man behind him. We all
go down like dominos. The SS loved
it, like watching clowns at the
circus. I broke three toes and my
arm. So I'm a quiet detective now.
...Ewa, my offer stands. We're
building a Jewish intelligence
service, can you imagine?

EWA

I'm going to France. I'm going to
teach, and cook, and make babies.

He sees Salomea.

SZYMON

And you. In Israel our girls are
soldiers too.

Salomea, horrified, backs away.

SZYMON (CONT'D)

I forgot. We have a spy network
that runs from here to Jerusalem.
Soil from the Mount of Olives.

He points to the sack.

EWA
In Jerusalem?

SZYMON
When God comes to earth to raise
the dead, the people buried in this
soil will be raised first.
(points outside)
Those people buried on your hill
there - I'd say they deserve to go
to the head of the line. I'd
sprinkle this all over Auschwitz if
the Russians would let me.

EWA
Magic Jehovah Dust? I stopped
believing all that about the time
they put me on the train.

SZYMON
We'll see what you believe when
you're old.

EWA
You mean when I'm looking Death in
the face? Me and Grim Reaper, we're
old friends.

SZYMON
In the war, so many dreams were
crushed - this one is too nice not
to hang onto.

Ewa holds some dirt. Looks at the ceiling.

EWA
Hey, Big Boss! Don't come get me
just yet, alright? You have enough
of us up there already.

Salomea puts her hand the dirt.

ANELIE
(points to Salomea)
You think this is going to work?
The girl from the forest?

KOLYA
You saw her with the shell shock
kids. Her name is Salomea.

They approach Salomea and find she's tearing up.

SALOMEA

Can I have some for Jana's grave?

EXT. STREET IN A SMALL TOWN - NIGHT

This is a nightmare scene. A German truck is parked. An officer brings a family out of one home and proceeds to the next. A MAN is pulled out of that house and thrown in the truck. A boy watches from an attic. He screams. It's Leon. Quick jump to the next scene.

INT. THE SHELL SHOCK WARD -- NIGHT

Salomea consoles the bedwetters. Leon wakes from the nightmare. Salomea crosses quickly to him.

LEON

Papa!

SALOMEA

Look at the room. You're here with me now. There's no danger. Another nightmare. This is all normal.

LEON

I'm not going to fall sleep.

SALOMEA

Take a deep breath, we'll go for a walk. We can go to the latrine.

LEON

I think I did that already.

SALOMEA

The cook is up doing breakfast, we can get some sugar cubes.

LEON

It's midnight. When do you sleep?

SALOMEA

Daytime. Anelie is daytime, I work nightmares and bedwetters. ...It was good to hear you laugh. Yesterday. Billie came and sang songs, those terrible American jokes.

LEON

In America every farmer's daughter must be pregnant! ...Where was God when all this happened? The war.

SALOMEA

You're angry, afraid, you fight
with everybody. You and me, two
peas in a pod. We're going to help
you. Somehow.

EXT. TRAIN STATION -- NIGHT

Another nightmare, a FAMILY boarding a train as a German
SOLDIER watches. We hear a WHISTLE.

INT. THE SHELL SHOCK WARD -- NIGHT

Continuation. The train WHISTLE links us back to the ward,
and see Salomea consoling a child, who wakes up screaming.

SALOMEA

Wake up. Come on now. It's me.
Salomea.

JAKUB

Sorry.

SALOMEA

You were doing so well.

JAKUB

The train whistle. Most people hear
that and they think, "A train, an
adventure!" In Lodz a train means
another family disappears.

SALOMEA

Tonight we do the scary part.
Think. The most terrible day in the
camps, the one thing that gives you
nightmares... It's okay, you're here
with me now, this is how we do it.
Tell me the story.

He's frightened. She has crayons and paper.

JAKUB

I can't. Not like this.

SALOMEA

Then draw a picture. Or write it
down... Now. Deep breath.

JAKUB

Sometimes I feel like a turtle,
hide in a shell so no one hurts me.

SALOMEA

Draw the monster. You want red and black colors, blood, monster stuff?

He draws.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)

Get the monster out of your head and on the paper, then put him in a drawer. Then draw a nice picture, sunshine, children, and nail it to the wall, you see it every day.

JAKUB

Will you stay here?

SALOMEA

I'm here every night.

JAKUB

What if your family comes for you?

SALOMEA

This camp is my family. It's you.

JAKUB

You don't worry about what comes next?

SALOMEA

The future? For us the past was the ghettos and the ovens, and we survived all that. How bad could the future be?

JAKUB

Yeah.

SALOMEA

Don't be so worried about nightmares, that you forget how to dream. ...Your drawing is lovely. Like Picasso but with red instead of blue. A lot of red.

She hears a cry.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)

Here, keep drawing.

She rushes to Jozka who is crying. Two other children begin crying. Salomea looks piteously at Anelie.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)
This is impossible.

Anelie goes to a kid, holds him, Kolya following.

Billie enters.

BILLIE
Where do you need me?

Salomea points to the three catatonic children.

SALOMEA
Keep them calm.

BILLIE
No change?

Salomea shakes her head. Billie sits by them.

SALOMEA
So when is the army sending help?

EXT. COMPOUND -- DAY

A young COUPLE runs down the road toward the camp. The sergeant steps out in the middle of the road.

MAN
Please, help us. Hide us.

SERGEANT
Hide you? Who are you hiding -

A Russian truck rounds the bend at high speed. The sergeant stands in the road, forces them to stop. Billie runs up.

BILLIE
What's going on?

Three Russian SOLDIERS dismount from the truck. Galina emerges from the driver's seat and stands on the running board, a cheap Russian cigarette dangling from her lips.

RUSSIAN
You found our runaways.

WOMAN
Get away! This is an American camp!

RUSSIAN
Russians. They belong to us.

BILLIE
Yalta agreement.

MAN
We don't want to go!

BILLIE
I don't have any choice.

EWA
(angry)
You're not helping them!

BILLIE
Wish I could.

EWA
They're coming back to take some of
our children. Can we hide them?

BILLIE
Can't. If the army finds out,
they'll yank me out of here. The
Russians want Adam, Mati, Sonya...

EWA
You can't give them Adam!

The soldiers take the pair away; the woman screams. Kids
watch, terrified. Salomea takes the hand of a crying child.

INT. THE GIRLS' DORM -- DAY

A girl leads Hanna, who is covering her eyes, into the dorm.
Salomea is at the doorway.

SALOMEA
Rapunzel with the magic hair. Okay,
bring her in.

Hanna opens her eyes. Mateusz painted a huge picture of her
on the wall, crazy hair and all.

HANNA
You gave me blue eyes!

MATEUSZ
(whispers)
You smile finally. They let me in
so I could paint. I love you Hanna.

HANNA
 Oh babisiu, babisiu...
 (baby)

She kisses him and he hugs her. Salomea looks at the painting.

SALOMEA
 Sacre merde.

Billie translates in her head, and laughs.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)
 Jean Valjean has more panache than
 I thought... Hanna's a lucky girl.

Salomea looks at Mateusz.

EXT. COMPOUND -- DAY

Rocha hears crying. She stops at the latrine and Ewa emerges, her face a mess.

EWA
 Baby. Sorry, you need the latrine?

ROCHA
 Are you alright?

EWA
 One scary monster story after
 another. Let's see about lunch.

Ewa wipes her eyes. They head to the dining hall, hand in hand. A PLANE is heard overhead.

ROCHA
 Samolot!

She runs. Ewa chases her.

EWA
 It's the Americans. It's alright.

Rocha smiles sheepishly, looks at the sky.

ROCHA
 Sometimes I get scared.

EWA
 Me too.

INT. BILLIE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Anelie and Billie at work. A cup of coffee appears in front of Billie. She looks up to see Salomea retreating.

BILLIE

Brace yourself. Remember we talked about the other camp? Ask the women there to come here, help out?

ANELIE

With luck we find a nurse.

BILLIE

They caught up to the typhus, now it's influenza.

ANELIE

We can't bring them here! The flu could wipe us all out! ...So no more help is coming. I'm so tired. ...Some of the adults want to look at the children once it's safe...?

BILLIE

Sure. More adoptions.

ANELIE

What about the sisters from Latvia?

BILLIE

We can't separate them. They have no family. We need a solution.

ANELIE

You know what is hard on the girls? All those years in the camps, never had underwear. ...Can we get the army to push up our bread quota?

BILLIE

Why? Got more kids coming?

ANELIE

No. These children have seen people starve to death. They're afraid. They steal food and hoard it.

BILLIE

So, the bread...?

ANELIE

Each night at supper, we pull out bread, tell them they can take put a piece under their pillow. So they know there's always more. I bet they sleep better.

(shrugs)

I'm frantic. We're trying everything. We managed to get a few children to graduate out of the shell shock ward, but it's only a few, and I can't tell what's working and what isn't.

Adam enters, holding cards.

BILLIE

Adam?

ADAM

Ewa, talking to the children. Ewa knows every awful thing that happened to them. She carries it all in her head. Ewa was yelling at the children today -- they were shattered even before they came in.

ANELIE

You're joking.

ADAM

Yesterday, Ewa was in the latrine crying. Never takes a day off. I told her to take a break, she bit my head off. She wants to do it all herself.

ANELIE

So you think...

ADAM

She's going to splatter like an egg. She's going to end up in the shell shock ward, peeing the bed.

ANELIE

I tried talking to her. ...If she cracks, Sommer will take care of Ewa, just do your best to work through the children.

ADAM

I can't do what Ewa does. She's brilliant.

EXT. GIRLS' DORM - DAY

Billie and Anelie see Ewa sitting in the corner, drained. In a bed is Salomea, asleep, thrashing, clutching her knife.

BILLIE

What happened to Salomea? The war?

ANELIE

We didn't even know she could talk. She was so ragged and dirty when we found her, she must have been living in the woods like an animal, for months. We had to wash her -- bruises, sores, animal bites, stab wounds. She cries in her sleep. Don't try to touch her.

INT. DINING HALL - DAY

Ewa doing intake, large group of children including OSWIECIM PAWEL, a small boy of twelve.

OSWIECIM PAWEL

I got to the camp, I lost track of my parents and my brother -

EWA

Oh no no...

OSWIECIM PAWEL

SS pulled me out for special duty -

Ewa begins crying and can't stop.

EWA

I'm sorry, I'm so sorry...

ADAM

Kurwa. Pawel, get the doctor...

(to Ewa)

Deep breath. Just take a minute.

Adam takes her in his arms.

EWA

Adam, don't let me go.

Sommer enters.

SOMMER

Ewa. Come with me.

EWA
 (sobbing)
 Adam. I can't go, I've got to --

OSWIECIM PAWEL
 It's alright.

EWA
 The cards -

ADAM
 Ewa. I've got them.

Sommer and Ewa leave. Adam reads a card nervously.

ADAM (CONT'D)
 Wojciech? Parents, the ghetto,
 Majdanek. You have a brother?

OSWIECIM PAWEL
 Is that girl okay?

ADAM
 She's one of us.

Anelie enters with new refugees. Adam walks over.

ADAM (CONT'D)
 The doctor has Ewa at the hospital.
 What am I going to do without Ewa?

ANELIE
 You need to learn quickly. Today we
 have fifteen new arrivals. Running
 away from the Red army. There are
 more Russian units coming our way.

ADAM
 It's not their sector.

ANELIE
 They're seeing what they can get
 away with. The whole countryside is
 terrified.

ADAM
 We've got to protect them.

ANELIE
 But how?

He remembers a card in his hand.

ADAM

Oh. Anelie. You told Ewa to pull your card out of the stack. You don't want us to find your family?

Adam looks at the card, figures it out.

ADAM (CONT'D)

The Germans got your whole family?

ANELIE

(smiles)

My whole family? They got my whole village, everyone I ever knew. I was on a hilltop chasing a goat. I heard trucks and screams. I smelled smoke. I came down, the whole town was ash. The only living thing was the goat. Him running off, saved my life.

She touches his face.

ANELIE (CONT'D)

You're sweet. Look for someone else's family. You see why we can't tell Ewa?

He nods. She puts her hand on his shoulder.

ANELIE (CONT'D)

Ewa. How hard it must be, to love something so fragile. Just to watch her.

He nods again.

ANELIE (CONT'D)

You're ready for the next batch? I watched my first village burn down. We're going to save this one.

EXT. THE OLD HILLTOP - DAY

Salomea and Mateusz walk in the woods; Salomea watches the road nearby.

MATEUSZ

What are we doing up here?

SALOMEA

We're on watch, just like when we were running from the Fritzes.

She hears trucks, throws him to the ground.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)
The Russians are back.

MATEUSZ
Way out here? What do they want?

SALOMEA
They want you. Ukraine, right? I saved you once, I'm not letting the Russians take you.

INT. SHELL SHOCK WARD -- NIGHT

Salomea sits by Jozka's bed.

SALOMEA
The ark came to rest on Mount Ararat. Noah opened a window and sent out a dove to see if the water had receded. But the dove could find nowhere to perch so it returned to Noah. He waited seven days and again sent out the dove. When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf!

JOZKA
They were safe? And God promised never to destroy the world again.

SALOMEA
It's been a long time since I bothered with the Bible. Give me Moliere and I'm happy. ...Quiet in here, we got a few of you out to the regular dorms this week.

JOZKA
Back home I had so many friends. Here... I can't even talk to people in the ward.

SALOMEA
We need to help each other. Go make friends. I know it sounds silly -- you give love to someone, it costs you nothing --

JOZKA

Why did I live while they all died?
My cousin was a nurse, kept people
alive. She died and I lived. How
did I get the lucky ticket?

SALOMEA

That's why they call it luck.
People have been trying to make
sense of war for years, it's like
making sense of a tornado.
Surviving is not a sin, you know.
Maybe you go be a nurse too.

JOZKA

I don't know how those children can
tell the scary stories in front of
everyone. I don't know how to be...
normal.

SALOMEA

Someday life will be normal. You'll
have a home, meat in the kitchen, a
bathtub.

JOZKA

So what happens to me? Am I going
to be in a bed like this forever?

SALOMEA

When you first came, you had
nightmares every night. Soon,
you'll be ready for the girls'
dorm. We painted it pink! Make
friends. New game: think of your
best memories from before the war.

JOZKA

My mother braiding my hair, singing
to me. ...Um, grandpa and his
chocolate. ...And the harvest
festival, all the dancing.

SALOMEA

Every night at bedtime. Say it over
and over. Mama. Chocolate. Dancing.
No more nightmares.

JOZKA

Mama. Chocolate. Does that work?

SALOMEA

Who knows, you're my first one.
Focus on the chocolate - nobody
ever had a nightmare about
chocolate.

Crosses to Kolya who is reading a newspaper.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)

New kids get here, they're scared,
angry, sit in a corner. Then a few
weeks with food and a bed and they
settle down. Really it's love that
cures them, making friends.

KOLYA

But every one is different.

SALOMEA

The ghetto children, afraid of
starving, they steal bread. The
ones who hid - terrified of getting
caught. The ones from the death
camps, they have it worst. Before I
had my own nightmares - now I see
everyone else's, a new movie every
time I sleep. That's what made Ewa
crack up. So when is it my turn?

KOLYA

The girl who isn't afraid of
anything?

SALOMEA

Who else do you know, sleeps with a
knife? I'm afraid of everything.
I'm going to crack up like Ewa.

She points to three children asleep at one end of the ward,
the same hard-core patients who were there in Act 1.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)

Boy on the left is worse, cries all
night. Second one, no change. Third
one, been two days since he
attacked anyone. We tried talking
to them, leaving them alone... They
may be in that corner a long time.
That could be me in that bed. I
used to be a child. What am I now?

KOLYA

Take a night off, before you end up
like Ewa.

A boy wakes and cries. Salomea heads toward him, weary, but Leon raises his hand.

LEON

Let me help.

They sit near the crying boy; Leon mops the boy's forehead with a cloth.

LEON (CONT'D)

Champion bedwetter. It's embarrassing when a girl comes to take him to the latrine and gives him his underwear.

SALOMEA

You want to help me?

LEON

Somehow I feel better helping people than beating them up.

SALOMEA

(smiles)

Some tough guy you are. You ready to move back in with the boys?

Anelie enters.

ANELIE

Kolya. Have you heard from your army?

KOLYA

Not a thing.

Anelie pulls Salomea into a corner.

ANELIE

Careful with the Russian. Something is up. Lots of trucks out there. I don't want people to panic. Quietly pass the word, curfew every night. Sundown. It's dangerous to wander around at night.

They look outside and see a platoon of GIs.

ANELIE (CONT'D)

Americans watching the Russians. The children are nervous, they can smell trouble.

SALOMEA

Let's distract them. What if we had
a dance?

Salomea crosses to the three catatonic boys and sits between
two of them with a book.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)

Shakespeare last night. And now
Rostand. Cyrano de Bergerac and the
beautiful Roxanne!

She strokes the hair of one of the boys.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)

And someday you are going to tell
me a story. You will. I'm more
stubborn than you. ...We begin our
story at the Hotel du Bourgogne.
Musketeers, pickpockets, Spaniards
and nuns come to see a play...

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Sommer is giving a shot when Salomea enters.

SALOMEA

Okay, I surrender.

SOMMER

What?

SALOMEA

The more I read, the worse my
headaches get.

Next we see Sommer fitting Salomea with granny glasses. She
looks at her book. She smiles.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)

They're perfect.

They walk through the hospital and see Ewa asleep.

SOMMER

I've had her sedated for days.

INT. GIRLS' DORM -- DAY

Salomea sits by a stove, reading with her glasses low on her
nose.

Her cool schoolteacher demeanor is a long way from the wildcat she was in Act 1: she is becoming the girl she was before the war. She waits for the morning rush to end so she can sleep. Four girls stand at the other end of the dorm.

OLDER GIRL
God, not again.

SECOND OLDER GIRL
What on earth -

OLDER GIRL
She peed the bed.

YOUNG GIRL
I'm sorry.

OLDER GIRL
God, how old are you?

SECOND OLDER GIRL
Why don't you go back to the bedwetters?

YOUNG GIRL
I'm sorry.

OLDER GIRL
And you smell.

SECOND OLDER GIRL
Let's just take her stuff to the -

YOUNG GIRL
No!

The girls jump when they hear four loud BANGS. Salomea has whacked the stove with her book to get their attention. She glares at them, looking over the rims of her glasses. They look at her and then at each other.

SECOND OLDER GIRL
Let me help you change your sheets.
We have any extra underwear?

OLDER GIRL
Here are some of those boy pants
with the hole.

YOUNG GIRL
That's fine.

SECOND OLDER GIRL
You were doing so well. What happened?

YOUNG GIRL
I haven't had a nightmare in four, five days. I don't know.

INT. GIRLS' DORM - DAY

Rain. Hanna and Ruta stand by Salomea who sleeps, thrashing, on the floor, Hanna with a long stick.

RUTA
Good thing she sleeps during the day. I've never seen nightmares like hers. Not even in the shell shock ward.

HANNA
I'll give you my dinner, if someone else does it.

RUTA
You lost the bet fair and square. It's your turn.

HANNA
Alright, back up.

She pokes Salomea twice. The first has no effect; the second causes Salomea to leap up as though she's been electrocuted, looking for a fight. Ruta retreats swiftly to the wall.

HANNA (CONT'D)
Hey hey hey! Sally Salami! You told us to wake you up!

Salomea rubs her face.

SALOMEA
What did they make for dinner?

HANNA
No more meat. Just potatoes. Those two boys ran away again. They're in the woods. It's raining.

SALOMEA
Let's go find them. Ask Anelie and Leon to keep an eye on the ward.

INT. BILLIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Salomea and two BOYS, wet, stand before Billie who puts blankets over them. Anelie arrives.

BILLIE

I told the Colonel about the underwear, the girls. He went to the officer's wives in London, and brought us this.

She pulls out a huge pair of underwear out of a box. Anelie, 95 pounds, collapses in hysterics. The two boys are shocked.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

You and Ewa could both get in here. The colonel had problems explaining this at the checkpoint.

ANELIE

We need to be nicer to him.

BILLIE

Never heard you laugh like that.
(to Salomea)
We need food. You still have connections to the black market?

SALOMEA

Who, me?...Give me the silk underwear, the stockings. I can sell them.

Salomea pulls a giant bra from the box, holds it to her chest, sighs.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)

A girl can dream. ...If only we had more cigarettes to sell.

BILLIE

Sell my husband's watch. And that spam.

SALOMEA

What do you need?

BILLIE

Children's shoes. No more turnips!

SALOMEA

It's turnip season. If I don't buy them, we run out of food.

Mateusz enters.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)

There's a man who makes fake documents for refugees so the Russians can't take them. We need an artist, to draw the seals and letterheads. He pays well.

MATEUSZ

I'll do it for free. It's the right thing to do.

SALOMEA

(incensed)

Take the money so we can buy medicine and shoes. If it makes you feel better, give him a discount.

MATEUSZ

What's a fair price on the market?

SALOMEA

I'll go with you. Let me do the talking. ...Billie. I have a confession. When I finished with the black market, there's a burned out bookstore, I spent a nickel on a copy of Rimbaud. The poet. My favorite since I was little.

BILLIE

French poetry?

SALOMEA

That's me. Even during the war. Nose in a book.

INT. DINING HALL - DAY

Ewa braids a girl's hair and Billie sorts cards.

BILLIE

Ewa, I'm so sorry, I should have pulled you out sooner --

EWA

You remember Monsieur Rosenzweig from the other camp? I'm helping him take care of his girl? He wants to adopt me. Take me to France.

BILLIE

What about your own parents?

EWA

This is Ewa the witch. My parents got on a train. We know where the train went. I talked to the other camps. No sign anywhere.

BILLIE

You're giving up?

EWA

I'm letting go. Saying goodbye.

BILLIE

I'm sorry.

EWA

I've already shed all those tears. ...Well, maybe a few more.

BILLIE

Once you get to France, write a letter to your children.

EWA

My children?

BILLIE

Write the whole story, your parents. So they're never forgotten.

EWA

That's brilliant.

BILLIE

Write about us. We're your family too. Everyone says you're magical.

EWA

They say I'm a witch. It's not the same. Is Adam doing his job, the children?

BILLIE

Relax, it's not your job now. Got a dozen kids helping. Leon, Pawel.

Anelie and Sommer enter.

ANELIE

Hey. You really frightened me.

Anelie touches Ewa's face. Ewa smiles.

EWA

We made it through alive. I stole a beer, come on.

The girls leave. Billie tosses cards on a table, pulls out a bottle of whisky and sits in a chair.

BILLIE

Grab a chair... Getting cold.

He sits next to her, coat in his lap, and drinks.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

I've lost Ewa. My little witch. You know how long it's been since I had an adult conversation, no children?

SOMMER

You have children at home?

BILLIE

Home? My husband and I, last four years, we've had a month together, total. So, instead of having my own kids, I watch these kids here roll by, like broken cars I want to fix. I'm a nurse and I can't fix em. Somebody broke their hearts. On purpose. Explain that to me, Sommer. You were there.

The emotions of four terrible years catch up to her. She trembles; he drapes a jacket around her.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

Thought I had it bad when I was a POW. This has been a long war.

(gesturing with the cards)

Had this stupid magic card game that was going to put the world back together.

She gives him a despairing look. His hand is on her shoulder.

SOMMER

Your optimism is a sweet thing, keep hold of it. You didn't find parents, but you healed so many children. You saved them... Your husband is a soldier?

BILLIE

Yes. I have no idea where he is.
They should have heard by now.

SOMMER

Let's hope he didn't use up all of
his luck marrying you.

BILLIE

Dammit, now I'm going to cry.

She puts her hand on his. She hears a distant truck HORN. She touches his shoulder.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

The Russians are here. Find Anelie!
And you stay out sight!

Billie wipes her eyes, rushes out.

EXT. TREES NEXT TO A LATRINE - NIGHT

Salomea, Mateusz and Hanna prepare to go to the dorms.
Mateusz points to the dining hall.

MATEUSZ

So what are those people doing out
of bed? The older kids?...Trouble?

Salomea suddenly stops, looks at him, wary.

SALOMEA

Ukraine, right?

A truck rolls into the compound. Salomea grabs a little girl.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)

Mati, go hide! Hanna, help him!

Russian soldiers exit the truck: Galina leads them swiftly
across the camp. Kids scurry away.

INT. DINING HALL - NIGHT

Anelie assembles refugees Galina wants to take, Daniel and a
robed Sonya among them. U.S. MPs protect them. Galina arrives
with soldiers led by Yuri, and nods to Kolya. Billie holds a
stack of documents.

The American and Russian soldiers eye each other. A tense
silence descends.

BILLIE
Major. Another night visit.

GALINA
I see you have some friends.

BILLIE
These people are Jews. They said
Stalin doesn't want the Jews back.

GALINA
Orders change every day. Today he
wants everybody.

ANELIE
I have the people you wanted here.
Make sure no one disappears
mysteriously.

GALINA
Is there some trouble?

ANELIE
We have all the MPs on duty. We
were on the radio with American
judge advocates for three days.

GALINA
We have orders. I need to be on my
way, it's late -

ANELIE
(gesturing with a file)
The lawyers say you have no control
over the Poles, so the lads from
the Polish Home Army, we can take
them out of your stack. Lighten
your load. The other allies don't
recognize Russia's seizure of the
Baltics, so those Latvian girls,
leave them off too.

GALINA
I have my orders -

BILLIE
I don't work for the Red Army.

ANELIE
(holding up papers)
These four here, mistaken identity.

GALINA
I was told to take them.

ANELIE

Can you prove who they are?

GALINA

Seems like half the people in Europe have fake names, fake papers...

ANELIE

Isn't it awful? You'd think they had a reason to hide from the Red Army. ...These two, there's a dispute as to where they were born -

GALINA

They were born east of the bend in the river. Byelorussia!

ANELIE

The border is under dispute. Could be a long time to determine if they're yours. These two ran off.

GALINA

Either you find them or we will.

BILLIE

How many men did you bring? I can have an armored company here lickety-split. You are out of your sector. And we have runaways all the time, especially when your truck rolls into the area.

GALINA

I'll be calling my general.

BILLIE

You do that...Once we corrected your paperwork, the only name left was this girl in the corner.

GALINA

Young Sonya. Raised in Poland, but born in Russia.

Sonya clings to a U.S. MP; another MP steps forward and looks over the Russian troops.

ANELIE

She has pneumonia, the doctor can't release Sonya for quite some time.

GALINA
I don't believe you.

ANELIE
And I don't care. Are you a doctor?
She's contagious. It's for your own
safety. We're all allies.

GALINA
So I only get one, and I have to
wait until she's cured? And you
talked to the lawyers?

ANELIE
Sorry you wasted a trip. Oh, wait.
Not a total waste. Got ten cans of
ham I can't use. Help yourself.

Galina looks at the ham. She looks at the American MPs, who
stare right back, ready for trouble.

GALINA
You have paperwork on these people?

ANELIE
Took all night. We knew you were
coming.

She glances at Kolya -- just long enough.

GALINA
Kolya - you told them we were
coming?

KOLYA
I didn't know it was a secret.
We're allies.

Yuri glares at Kolya. Galina sits and puts her head in her
hands. A horrified laugh.

GALINA
Oh God. ...Yuri, take our boys to
their kitchen and feed them.

YURI
But the Colonel said -

GALINA
Go! Eat!

Russian guards leave, glaring at the U.S. MP's.

GALINA (CONT'D)

Yuri has big flapping ears...Kolya, I should shoot you right now. You people should be thanking this boy. Most of you people would have ended up in the gulag. You, boy, you were in the resistance?

Daniel steps forward, proud.

DANIEL

We destroyed trains, bridges -

GALINA

You cut the power lines in the capital?

DANIEL

We burned gas tankers, sabotage.

GALINA

Yes, you launched an uprising. Stalin doesn't like uprisings. If you get on my truck, tomorrow Yuri shoots you in the head. My advice, don't get on the truck.

And Daniel steps back again.

DANIEL

I thought we were on the same side?

GALINA

We had the same enemy, he's dead now. And you Polish Jews, don't go back home - the locals took your houses, they'll kill you. A lot of Jews being killed right now. Still.

Galina points to the female refugees.

GALINA (CONT'D)

...And you girls? You see a truck with Red Army soldiers, get off the street. Get inside, away from the windows, never let the men see you. I spent three years in the field with them, slept with a pistol in my hand every night. So you, with the pneumonia, take your time recovering. ...And you, boy.

She gestures for Kolya to approach.

GALINA (CONT'D)

You told the Americans we were coming. That man Yuri? Political officer. Tonight he's going to tell Moscow it's your fault the truck is coming back empty. And then what do you think happens to you?

KOLYA

You mean...

GALINA

(indicates Sonya)

Take this sick girl, steal a jeep, and run. Roosevelt slammed the door on refugees but Truman will let you in. You have the soul of a poet. Be a taxi driver in Brooklyn, or grow wheat in Kansas. And make babies with blond hair and blue eyes.

Sonya is embarrassed by the baby idea but she likes the run-away part. She shakes Kolya's hand.

SONYA

My name's Sonya. Get us out of Germany and we'll manage the rest.

ANELIE

So you're letting Kolya go? Is this some sort of trick?

GALINA

Let me tell you something. You were from Warsaw, a starvation ghetto? Leningrad was a starvation city. Hitler issued an order - "Leningrad must be erased from the face of the Earth." He went before his adoring troops in Munich and said "Leningrad must die of starvation."

ANELIE

You're joking.

GALINA

The invading army was told not to accept our surrender, because they would have to feed us. They wanted to run us out into the countryside, then burn the city to the ground. I'll never understand it.

ANELIE

What do you mean?

GALINA

Think of the effort Hitler put into killing my city way up north. And killing you Jews. All the soldiers, the railroads, guns, to run those camps? Just to kill unarmed people. If he had put all that effort into fighting the war, he could have marched all the way to China, conquered the world. In the end, you and I killed Hitler. It was us.

ANELIE

So Hitler came to Leningrad.

GALINA

The blockade. Two years. Some nights we had hundreds of fires. In one night Hitler managed to bomb five hospitals. They bombed the power plants, the water plants. No oil or coal could get to us.

ANELIE

How did you stay warm?

GALINA

We didn't. All the furniture was burned, slept on the floor. My piano, watched it burn for hours. Then we burn houses - we want the shelter, or the wood for fuel? And the trees. A whole city devouring itself, committing suicide. We prepared for invaders, but Hitler didn't want to fight us.

ANELIE

He didn't?

GALINA

He wanted to starve us to death. A quick death with a bullet or poison gas was too good for us. His troops stole all the food for miles, then bombed the food warehouses.

ANELIE

How did you feed all those people?

GALINA

We didn't. We tried to bring food across the lake -- boats in the summer, trucks when the lake froze. Imagine driving a truckful of flour across ice, with artillery coming down around you -- forget about braking, you couldn't even steer. The Americans sent a little food through the Arctic, like feeding an elephant with a teaspoon.

ANELIE

What did you do?

GALINA

When the food boats were sunk in the lake, we sent down divers. Can you imagine, diving in that freezing water? The ration was four ounces of bread a day, and half of that was sawdust. Didn't know whether to eat it or burn it. And it was at the depot, a long walk when it was twenty below.

BILLIE

Twenty below. Fahrenheit? Celsius?

GALINA

Twenty below, does it matter?...We found two thousand tons of sheep guts, and made this edible glop out of it. Sheep intestines. Imagine the smell. Then we ate the horses, dogs, cats. We learned to sleep with our small children, so the rats wouldn't try to eat them. And eat the corpses...

ANELIE

Was it only the rats who ate the corpses?

GALINA

On a really bad day we'd pray for that fat war profiteer to catch a bullet in the head, he weighed three hundred pounds. Being fat was a capital offense.

ANELIE

So did you...

GALINA

It tastes like stringy pork. To this day I can't eat pork. And the men. Imagine being surrounded by a million Russian men with no vodka to drink? No vodka, no food, only one thing on their mind, watching the women like wolves...The Germans found seven million of us there. In the end there were four hundred thousand, plus the soldiers.

EXT. A RUSSIAN CHURCHYARD -- DAY

Galina shovels snow, then use a lump of coal to draw a flower on the wall of the church above the burial site.

GALINA (V.O.)

First winter, a hundred thousand starve each month. Bodies stacked like logs til summer. I buried my daughter in the snow, the ground was too hard. I like to think she wasn't eaten by the animals. Or anything else. If you live to be a hundred, you'll never see anything like watching your own child starve.

INT. DINING HALL - NIGHT

Continuation, Galina, troops, and the people from the camp.

ANELIE

All those people starved to death?

Galina points toward the tree line.

GALINA

More Jews died in Leningrad than in Dachau there. The death toll in Leningrad was worse than Auschwitz. This is why I'm not afraid about letting Kolya off and lying to my boss. After this trip I might get the gulag. But after Leningrad, the gulag would be a holiday! After you were raped, you ate your neighbor's cat and ate your neighbor... I will never be afraid again.

(to Anelie)

(MORE)

GALINA (CONT'D)

My daughter would have grown up like you. ...If all else fails, I'll blame it all on you, Kolya. Hide before Yuri finishes his soup.

SONYA

Come with me.

Sonya looks at Kolya and leads him to a door.

GALINA

(calls out)

Yuri. Get my ham. Give it to the general, maybe it keeps me out of the gulag. I'm not eating it. Ham.

Galina and Anelie share a look. Galina exits, then returns and speaks from the doorway.

GALINA (CONT'D)

I forgot. Anyone here from Auschwitz?

ANELIE

Me. I'm Polish, I'm not on your list.

GALINA

You're still alive. Come with me. I have something in the truck.

ANELIE

Do I look stupid?

GALINA

I won't throw you into my truck. It's worse than that. It's a box.

EXT. THE COMPOUND -- NIGHT

Galina, Anelie, an MP and Billie go to the truck which is surrounded by Russians. Ewa, Adam and Salomea arrive, wary.

GALINA

Back up, boys. No funny business this time.

Yuri brings a crate. The MP watches the Russians.

GALINA (CONT'D)

We found twenty crates like this at Auschwitz. The SS left it behind.

Yuri opens it, and Anelie looks in, pulling out a tiny dress.
Ewa and Adam come to look also.

ANELIE
Children's clothes.

GALINA
I heard your children are wearing
rags.

Anelie smiles, then sees what the clothes mean.

ANELIE
These came from Auschwitz?

GALINA
We found clothes. Toys. Glasses...
And teeth. The gold fillings.

ANELIE
There's a name written in the
collar. Leah Greenspan. Adam!

EWA
Here's another. Abraham Duberstein.
Adam, write down the names you find
in here. Tell the Red Cross what
happened to these children.

BILLIE
So all these children are...

Anelie holds up a dress.

ANELIE
Auschwitz. Leah Greenspan is not
coming back for her clothes.

YURI
Hey! Medved!

Ewa and Adam look up, startled.

ADAM
Medved? My name is Lieberman.

YURI
Medved. A bear. Look in the corner.
Must be in there by mistake.

Adam plucks out a teddy bear.

SALOMEA
I'll take that.

She looks at the bear, horrified. She looks at Yuri.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)
We have a boy who sucks his thumb,
needs a pal like this one.

GALINA
Yuri, put the men on the truck.
I'll just be a minute.

The soldiers leave. Galina holds a dress like a child; all the emotions of Leningrad hit her at once.

GALINA (CONT'D)
Bozhe! Bozhe moi!
(God!)

She looks at Billie. Wipes her eyes. Pats her belly.

GALINA (CONT'D)
Take good care of your children.
Fill their bellies.

INT. THE SHELL SHOCK WARD - NIGHT

Salomea takes the bear to a child's bed and slides it into a sleeping boy's arms. Anelie enters.

SALOMEA
Where's Mati?

Anelie looks puzzled.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)
Is that truck gone? Where is he?

Runs out in a sudden panic.

EXT. THE WOODS - NIGHT

We hear "SOMEONE IN LOVE", the Bjork version. Mateusz and Hanna hold hands, climb their old hill. Mati looks at the sky; Hanna kisses him. Mati lays down with his head against a tree; Hanna curls up on top of him. They talk, but we can't hear them. Hanna falls asleep, and then Mati too.

EXT. THE WOODS - DAY

The song still playing, Mati and Hanna come down the hill. Salomea sees them and hits Mateusz like a bullet, throwing her arms around him, crying.

SALOMEA

Mati! I thought the Russians took you, you weren't with the boys!

HANNA

Sorry. He was with me. My fault.

Salomea slaps his arm hard, three times.

SALOMEA

You scared me to death!

Salomea has never consciously thought about how much she loves Mati or what kind of love it is, but it's all there in the look she gives Hanna.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)

You take care of him!

EXT. THE WOODS - NIGHT

Dawn breaking. Sonya and Kolya hug Salomea, climb onto a horse cart. He puts a coat over her.

SALOMEA

Wait. I'll grab some food for you.

She runs off. Nervous silence. They share a look.

KOLYA

You speak any Russian?

SONYA

No. You speak any Polish?

KOLYA

No. We're going to Belgium. Do you speak any...? What is it, Belgian?

She laughs, and he does too.

KOLYA (CONT'D)

English it is... They can't take us once we get to Bastogne. It will be safer if we tell people we are married. If they take me away and ask me what my wife's favorite color is...

SONYA

(smiles at him)
Yellow.

INT. DINING HALL - DAY

A dozen ADULTS file into the hall during lunch.

BILLIE
They're here.

SALOMEA
Who are those people? Are we
getting more grownups to help us?

BILLIE
I wish they were. They finally
ended the quarantine at the other
camp. Some of these people lost
children in the war, they may want
to adopt some of our kids. You
can't tell the children. Please.

The children figured it out. Rocha is surrounded by five
adults, smiling, chatting. Along a wall Jakub and Leon watch.

JAKUB
Goodbye to Rocha. She's adorable.

LEON
Let's play some baseball. This is a
waste of time. Shopping for babies.

He kicks a chair on the way out.

ANELIE
I thought adoptions would help.
What about the children left
behind?

INT. DINING HALL - NIGHT

Billie drinking coffee, Salomea sharpening her knife on a
stone. The sergeant enters.

SERGEANT
I'm back. Two days away from
getting my boat to New York,
Colonel yanks me out. Because I
speak Polish. Why am I here?

The GI watches Salomea's knife work, fascinated.

SALOMEA
I'll take him on the Pee Watch
tonight.

(MORE)

SALOMEA (CONT'D)

...Finally they send more grownups.
Did they forget we're here?

Hanna and Mateusz kiss in a doorway. Anelie enters.

ANELIE

Hey, Superman, I catch you at it
again, you really will fly through
outer space!...Pawel is having
trouble with the big kids.

SALOMEA

Treblinka Pawel or Oswiecim Pawel?

ANELIE

Auschwitz.

SALOMEA

You're serious.

She marches off.

ANELIE

That's the boys' ward, no girls --

INT. BOY'S WARD - DAY

Salomea enters the ward like John Wayne. OSWIECIM PAWEL sits
in the corner, eyes watering. Leon stands with other boys in
a circle. He sees Salomea and gestures around the room.

LEON

Sally Salami. What are you doing
here? Boys only.

SALOMEA

You see that boy in the corner? You
know where he came from?

LEON

(beginning to deflate)
Just having a little fun.

Salomea lowers glasses, stares, same soft voice.

SALOMEA

I thought you stopped all this. I'm
trying to help these children and
you make it worse... You're on the
Pee Watch tonight. Nine o'clock.

She begins to leave.

LEON

I'm not going on the Pee Watch.

Salomea turns, amazed he had the nerve to speak. Examines him top to bottom. Holds up nine fingers.

SALOMEA

Nine o'clock. Don't make me come find you.

JAKUB

You better just do what she says.

SALOMEA

Sunday there's a dance. We need boys. Bring your friends... And Pawel too.

Treblinka Pawel glares at Leon and walks over to Oswiecim Pawel, holding his blanket.

TREBLINKA PAWEL

Your name is Pawel?

The newcomer expects another attack.

TREBLINKA PAWEL (CONT'D)

I'm Pawel too. Here, take it. It's not so bad here.

The newcomer sees that the blanket has his name on it.

INT. SHELL SHOCK WARD - NIGHT

Almost dawn. Salomea hands the ward off to Anelie.

ANELIE

You know what you can do for me?
The knife? Throw it in the latrine.
You'll sleep like a baby.

Mateusz enters.

MATEUSZ

Couldn't sleep.

ANELIE

You know what you need to do? Paint this ward. Like you did with Hanna's picture in the girls' dorm.

Sergeant approaches.

SERGEANT

I was here last night. I had no clue. What do you need me to do?

ANELIE

Teaching the kids, Polish and English. Help with the boys.

SERGEANT

Panna - sorry - what's your name --

SALOMEA

Salomea.

SERGEANT

Pretty name.

She beams.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)

Let me know if you have another wild night like last night.

SALOMEA

Last night was easy. Wait til three children go off like a fire alarm all at once. They set each other off, like barking dogs.

SERGEANT

So come get me then.

SALOMEA

Do you soldiers adopt children? There are these three boys, so far they won't even talk. If we can't find a -- never mind. It's hopeless... Hey. Souvenir.

She hands him her knife.

SERGEANT

I know guys collect these, show em off to the folks back home. I figure you should only have one if you actually killed an SS guy.

Salomea thinks, takes it back. They share a look. Salomea crosses to where the three catatonic boys sleep.

SALOMEA

What will to happen to you? The camp will shut down.

(MORE)

SALOMEA (CONT'D)

I can't take you, Billie can't take you, I won't let the Russians take you. I need you to talk to me. Please. Babisiu.

INT. BILLIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Anelie and Salomea try to convince the Colonel to let Sommer stay; Sommer listens.

COLONEL

You're telling me to keep this Fritz out of jail? There's no way.

ANELIE

We need Sommer. We're overwhelmed. Some children take weeks before they even talk. Some won't be fixed for years. They don't remember their lives, all they know is fear.

SALOMEA

Every day a setback, someone raises a hand, a boy thinks he's going to be hit.

COLONEL

You're doing so well with that shell shock ward, there are only a few kids over there right now.

SOMMER

Colonel, the thing that drives a soldier insane isn't bombs, it's fear. Day after day his platoon doesn't get hit, but he waits for it to happen, and after a month the fear makes him crack. These children lived in fear for years. Seeing friends arrested, beaten, shot, knowing they're next. And a soldier can run away. These children were trapped in camps, in ghettos, in attics. We could be at this with the children for years.

COLONEL

We wrote the charges for war crimes, we read Hitler's papers. He drew a line down the middle of Europe and said everybody east of the line, kill em.

(MORE)

COLONEL (CONT'D)

Keep a few alive for slaves. He ordered the buildings in Paris blown up -

SALOMEA

Paris??

COLONEL

His general refused to do it, or else there would be no Paris now. Forty million homeless, just in Europe. ...My point is, you see your one room with shell-shock kids. The whole world has shell shock now. So...I can't let you stay here - you can practice in the jail, treat prisoners for shell shock. It really is everywhere.

Anelie, distraught, pulls Sommer aside.

SOMMER

You and Salomea know the children. The other kids are helping.

ANELIE

I want one more thing. It's embarrassing. You hover over me, make sure I don't crack up. I have a goal. Working with the children, I never realized how badly I want to be a mother someday.

SOMMER

So you pulled me over here to propose marriage.

Anelie smiles for a moment.

ANELIE

Some terrible things happened in Poland. Some injuries. I need to know whether I can have children. I need you to look me over.

SOMMER

Last month you didn't want me near the children, now you want to show me your...

He vaguely gestures at her middle.

ANELIE

It's more embarrassing than that.
I'm wearing men's underwear.

SOMMER

In that camp. ...Jesus, what did they
do to you?...Where were you?

ANELIE

It's not important.

SOMMER

Anka.

ANELIE

Auschwitz. Josef Mengele. I think
you know him.

SOMMER

Anka.

ANELIE

I didn't want to throw that in your
face like that. But if you really
had no idea what Mengele was up to,
now you're going to find out. ...I'm
afraid. I need to know the answer.

INT. SHELL SHOCK WARD - DAY

Mateusz has finished sketching outlines of a mural depicting
kids playing. He begins to paint. One of the catatonic boys
begins to watch. Salomea watches the boy, and then Mateusz.

INT. HOSPITAL -- NIGHT

Sergeant and Salomea carry a girl in; she cries and screams
nonstop. Sommer, Billie and Hanna are in the ward.

BILLIE

What happened?

HANNA

Nobody knows. She went off like an
air raid siren.

BILLIE

We can't have her here in the
hospital making all this noise. The
shell shock ward won't work. Take
her to my tent. Doctor...

SOMMER

I'll give her a sedative.

BILLIE

Got room for me in the girls' dorm?

HANNA

We're doing our hair tonight. For the dance.

INT. DINING HALL -- NIGHT

A dance fueled mostly by singing, stamping, clapping. The girls have prettied up as well as they can. Leon, Jakub and Pawel enter; Pawel beams at Salomea who is transformed, a total girly girl. Salomea smiles at Pawel.

SALOMEA

(to Leon)

Thank you. Come dance with me.

LEON

I don't know how.

SALOMEA

First, hold my hand. Second, jump around like an idiot. I know you can do that.

JAKUB

Sally, he's afraid of girls.

She stands on a box to match Leon's height, kisses him.

SALOMEA

Problem solved. He's not afraid anymore. Let's dance.

A phonograph plays. Mateusz and Hanna dance, in their own world; Salomea watches. Other couples join them.

LEON

What do I do now? It's a slow one.

SALOMEA

Leon, just hold me.

He does. Billie enters with a man in his late thirties; she turns off the music.

BILLIE

Good night for a party. Boys and girls, I'd like you to meet -

Ruta shrieks and runs to meet the man.

RUTA

Papa!

The other kids watch, a few tears. Ewa pulls Billie aside.

EWA

First time the cards actually worked.

A bit later Salomea approaches Hannah.

HANNA

No glasses tonight? So...Leon?

SALOMEA

(guilty smile)

Leon was picking on Pawel. We fix Pawel, then we fix Leon.

HANNA

You're never happy unless you're rescuing somebody.

SALOMEA

Leon is a child. He's like every bully in the world, he's afraid. ...It's a shame Anelie couldn't be here, if there's anyone who needs a boy's arms around her....Any signs of that Russian truck?

HANNA

No, thank God.

Jozka approaches, smiling.

JOZKA

I don't want the shell shock ward anymore. Can I move to the dorm with the girls?

Salomea nods.

TREBLINKA PAWEL

Jozka, you promised me a dance!

Jozka beams. Dinah Shore's "SOMEONE IN LOVE" is playing.

EXT. BY THE LATRINE -- NIGHT

DINAH still sings in the distance. Mateusz stands by the latrine; Salomea comes and takes his hand. He is wary.

SALOMEA

You're a mystery. A million people
kill each other, run for their
lives, and in the middle of a war...
all you want is to draw those magic
outer space pictures...

He shrugs.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)

You and Hanna look so sweet
together. You be gentle, Hanna's
not a tough old boot like me.

She leaves. Hanna exits the latrine.

HANNA

Sally Salami. It's no surprise that
tough old boot saved your life in
the woods. She'd rather die than
admit she loves anybody.

MATEUSZ

She saved me because I can see in
the dark. Didn't want to stand
watch alone at night. That's what
she says anyway.

Mateusz walks toward the music a bit. From 50 feet off,
Salomea turns and looks at him. The light is dim but from
experience they can read each other's faces. She smiles and
nods at him.

She turns; a look of shock crosses her face.

SALOMEA

Mati. Mati!

She runs back to Mateusz, drags him away from Hanna.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)

Come here. I must be going crazy.

They run to the dance and see two boys outside the hall,
listening to the music. It's two of the catatonic boys from
the bedwetters ward. They hold hands. One sucks his thumb.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)

You'll frighten them. Me first.

She approaches slowly. They notice her. The thumb-sucker clings to the other boy, named Isaac.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)
Hello. I'm Salomea. It's alright.
You want to go back to bed?

Isaac shakes his head. Salomea kneels by them.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)
Want something to eat?

Isaac shakes his head, points at the dining hall.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)
The dance. Lots of children. You sure?

He smiles and nods.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)
I'll stay with you.

She turns to Mati.

SALOMEA (CONT'D)
(overjoyed)
I don't believe it. I read to him
night after night...

Mati hugs her hard. The boy pulls on her hand.

ISAAC
The other boy. Needs a toilet.

Mati kneels in front of the thumbsucker.

MATEUSZ
I got this one. Mocz? Mocha?

The thumbsucker grabs his crotch and nods.

MATEUSZ (CONT'D)
Let's go pee.

Mati takes his hand and they go pee.

Salomea takes the other boy by the hand and they enter the dance. Billie sees the boy. Shocked, she bulls her way through the dancers. Salomea holds up a hand.

SALOMEA
Nice and easy.

The boy points at Billie.

ISAAC

You brought me chocolate. You're a doctor.

Billie touches the boy's face; he smiles.

BILLIE

I'm just a nurse. Can't believe it!

INT. HOSPITAL -- DAY

Anelie sits on a bed in a robe. Sommer approaches.

ANELIE

I didn't think you were going to put me under.

SOMMER

Salomea is covering for you. You missed the dance.

ANELIE

(impatient)
Sommer. Babies?

SOMMER

Well, you've got a chance.

ANELIE

(relieved)
Thank you.

SOMMER

From what I saw today, Mengele was no surgeon. I wouldn't trust him to slice ham. He sliced a sample out of your uterus, there was scarring, infection, I did some repair work. There is a risk of complications...

ANELIE

Like any other girl. I feel so much better.

SOMMER

Somehow I think those babies are coming. You had a nasty reaction when you woke up. Did you have a reaction to the anesthetic when Mengele did it?

ANELIE

What anesthetic? Mengele didn't even wash his hands. I was a specimen, a piece of bad meat, heading for the oven. The only reason he kept me alive was...well, you saw. ...I'm afraid. I have hope now. Babies. Hope can kill you.

EXT. THE WOODS - NIGHT

Salomea and Leon sit under a tree. She curls up in his lap.

SALOMEA

I'm drunk. Need a nap. Keep your fingers to yourself.

LEON

They say you try to kill people in your sleep.

SALOMEA

I don't try, I succeed. That man from Israel wants me to be a soldier, kill Arabs. I'm going to teach children. Dumas pere, Queen Margot. I won't teach them about the queen's lover.

LEON

You're missing a toe. Frostbite?

SALOMEA

In the woods. Rather lose a toe than let the Russian boys find me. My body is a map of the war.

(points to her calf)

I survived when all of Warsaw burned around me, the next day a wild dog tried to eat me for lunch.

(points to her thigh)

This one - no peeking! Bullet. A hundred people in the woods. I could only save one.

LEON

You saved one in the woods?

SALOMEA

Her name was Jana. She was in my dream last night.

He sees she's becoming sad and tugs down her dress.

LEON

Let's fold up the map for the night. You want to be a teacher?

She smiles.

SALOMEA

Lesson One. When a girl drags a boy into the woods, she doesn't want a chat. I already showed you once.

A quick hard kiss.

LEON

In movies they do those short hard kisses. Like birds peck at seeds.

SALOMEA

Well, try the other way, then.

He does. It's long and sweet. She approves.

EXT. COMPOUND - DAY

Ewa prepares to board a truck.

EWA

We swore to stay together.

ANELIE

War's over. Go to France.

Ewa hugs Anelie, Billie, and Salomea. Adam runs to the truck and shares a long look with Ewa.

EWA

Now listen carefully.

She takes his face in her hands, kisses him, the real thing.

EWA (CONT'D)

Dijon. It's in France. Come find me in summer. Want me to say it again?

ADAM

I missed that first part...

Ewa laughs and kisses him again.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Great to see you smile again.

EWA

You know how many of these children found their parents? Almost none.

ADAM

Look at the people we helped.
Salomea rejoined the human race.
Anelie became queen of the camp.
Hanna and Mati fell in love. And
you found a family.

EWA

I found you.

She boards the truck with her new father.

EXT. A BELGIAN COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Kolya and Sonya roll toward an MP post, Belgian flag on top.
Soldiers observe them. Kolya helps her down from the cart.

KOLYA

Belgium. We did it. ...Remember our
story, we need to convince them
we're a married couple, so what we
should do is --

She takes his face and kisses him.

KOLYA (CONT'D)

Actually we should be arguing. If
we're fighting, then they'll really
know we're married.

She laughs.

KOLYA (CONT'D)

But the kiss was nice too. Here's a
rude question. Have you ever been
kissed by a boy?

She keeps Sobibor a secret for now.

SONYA

Kissed? No. Not a single kiss.

KOLYA

A young innocent. Why don't I just
hold your hand.

They approach the MPs hand in hand.

INT. BILLIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Billie, Anelie and Sommer work, Colonel drinks coffee.
Salomea enters.

SALOMEA

Good news. The old man who ran the market is in jail. Now his wife is in charge, I can get food half price. Our food problems are over!

BILLIE

How did he get arrested?

SALOMEA

(guilty smile)

Never you mind. ...I even got beef!

COLONEL

More good news. The only reason we were nice with the Russians, let them load people onto trucks, is we needed them to give back our POWs, the ones they liberated in the east. They just sent the last batch of our guys. Now you can stall em all you want. We're not helping the Russians hunt people anymore.

Billie, Anelie and Salomea applaud.

COLONEL (CONT'D)

Did you really buy the life of a Jewish girl for ten cans of ham?

BILLIE

Wartime is loaded with irony, sir.

COLONEL

U.S. Army ham. We're gonna end up in the stockade. ...Well, doctor, the other lawyers are done with you.

SOMMER

So quick?

COLONEL

You do two years with the other POWs... Miss Anelie wrote a statement for you, got your sentence cut in half.

Anelie has an embarrassed smile.

COLONEL (CONT'D)

You were right, you know. Hitler got ideas from us. When he was a kid, he played cowboys and Indians. He wanted to get rid of the Jews, he read about the Indians: forced marches, starvation, disease, prison camps. He called the Russians "Redskins".

Exit; MPs enter.

ANELIE

You're going to jail! If they -

SOMMER

The guards will push me around, yell at me. You did that to me for months.

ANELIE

(smiles)

Sorry. We have no fences, most of the MPs left. Why didn't you run?

He points to kids playing. He departs with the MP. Anelie surprises herself by getting emotional.

HANNA

You're okay?

ANELIE

I'm being silly.

HANNA

You're like all these other kids. You need a good cry. Got an idea.

INT. DINING HALL - NIGHT

Hanna and Mateusz perform Romeo and Juliet. Kids cry, Anelie most of all. Hanna kneels next to a "dead" Mateusz.

HANNA

O comfortable friar! where is my lord?
I do remember well where I should be,
And there I am. Where is my Romeo?
Go, get thee hence, for I will not away.
What's here? a cup, closed in my true love's hand?

(MORE)

HANNA (CONT'D)

Poison I see hath been his timeless
end
O churl! drunk all and left no
friendly drop
To help me after? I will kiss thy
lips;
Haply some poison yet doth hang on
them,
To make me die with a restorative.

She kisses him.

HANNA (CONT'D)

Thy lips are warm.

Hanna pulls out Salomea's knife; two kids flinch. She pretends to stab herself.

HANNA (CONT'D)

O happy dagger! This is thy sheath;
there rust, and let me die.

She falls lifeless on Mateusz. The kids, almost as one, take deep breaths. Then huge applause and wiping of eyes.

MATEUSZ

You silly girls, I'm not really
dead!

They laugh. Salomea wipes her eyes too.

SALOMEA

Crying makes me feel better. What
on earth is wrong with me?

HANNA

Sally Salami, want your knife back?

Still smiling, Salomea looks at the knife, shakes her head.

EXT. COMPOUND -- DAY

Anelie and Billie watch Sommer heading for an MP jeep. Anelie and Billie hug Sommer.

Anelie sees the colonel's driver - a CORPORAL in a motorcycle with a sidecar.

ANELIE

I'm a genius. Colonel, can you stay
an extra day? Your driver too.

COLONEL

Sure, but why?

Next the corporal is giving the kids rides in the sidecar, as they scream with delight.

OSWIECIM PAWEL

We're going to outer space!

On his final return, Anelie takes the colonel's hand, shyly, and smiles.

ANELIE

Thanks.

INT. GIRLS' DORM - DAY

Most of the staff has been gathered.

MATEUSZ

They said come to the girls' dorm!

HANNA

I've got my eye on you.

MATEUSZ

Nobody naked in there...?

BILLIE

My husband is coming to London.
They found him. Bad leg and all.

ANELIE

We can give you a honeymoon break,
keep the kids out of your hair -

BILLIE

Anelie. I'm going to Washington.

ANELIE

Who will take care of the children?

BILLIE

Anka, you've been doing it for
months. I've been at the hospital
nonstop since the doctor left.

ANELIE

But I'm only -

BILLIE

The army is sending more officers. But the kids, the shell shock, it's your show, so show the new guys the ropes. And next year they open the German colleges. My colonel got you on the list.

ANELIE

A university? What do I study?

BILLIE

It's your dream. You follow it. I think you can do anything.

ANELIE

Haven't really had time for dreams.

BILLIE

Dream of being a nurse.

ANELIE

And make babies...So what do we do once you're gone?

BILLIE

Just love these kids. I don't think there's a problem in the world that love can't fix. I'm a sentimental idiot. ...And keep pushing to find homes for these kids. The thought of leaving them when I go...

INT. SHELL SHOCK WARD - NIGHT

Bedtime. Billie and Salomea survey the ward. Mateusz' mural is coming along spectacularly.

SALOMEA

Look at all the new faces. The children who came to the shell shock ward when we began - they're gone now. They got better, they're in the dorms. Except these three.

Billie looks at the three patients who have been in the ward since Act 2. They go to the third catatonic boy.

TREBLINKA PAWEL

He'll be the last one.

The thumbsucker plays with blocks on the floor.

ISAAC

When I first got here, the camp was so dark and sad. Then they brought me here, and every day the children talk more, laugh more. Salomea reads to me, she's funny.

TREBLINKA PAWEL

Funny? Salomea?

ISAAC

I heard the dance, the clapping and singing. I sat up and went for a walk.

Isaac points to the thumbsucker.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

He talked to me. His name's Joshua. Salomea, come teach me some more.

Salomea grabs a book. He curls up next to her.

SALOMEA

This is the scene where they kill each other with swords. See if you can make out the letters.

Billie sits on the floor next to the thumbsucker; he curls up against her, still sucking his thumb.

BILLIE

Joshua. I wanted to say goodbye. I'm going to find my husband. I would love to talk to you, just once, before I go.

He looks at her, and goes back to his blocks.

EXT. THE COMPOUND - DAY

Everyone comes out for Billie's departure. Billie hugs Hanna, Mateusz, Anelie.

BILLIE

One more stop.

She walks to the graves with Salomea who kneels, crying. They sprinkle dirt on a grave together.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

Jana. You see? I remembered.

SALOMEA

Jana. Thank you.

They share a long hug. Joshua and Isaac give Billie hugs. Joshua says the one thing guaranteed to make Billie lose it.

JOSHUA

I hope you find your family.

Joshua takes Salomea's hand, smiling. Billie gets into the jeep and looks at the children.

BILLIE

Who will take care of you? Where on earth are you all going to?

KIDS

To outer space! We love you, Billie!

The jeep rolls out. Young kids take off their coats and run after, trailing their coats behind them like capes.

KIDS (CONT'D)

Aviator Boy! Dalmatian Girl!

SALOMEA (V.O.)

The waters receded. Three years on, they were still waiting in their camps and their tents. A hundred thousand children. Waiting.

INT. SHELL SHOCK WARD - DAY

Isaac and Joshua sit on a bed playing cards; Salomea and Leon sit in two chairs, Salomea sleeping calmly as she leans on Leon's shoulder. Salomea wakes up and leaps to her feet.

The third catatonic boy, still in his bed, smiles.

BOY

Roxanne, Roxanne, Roxanne...

On the third "Roxanne" the boy turns to see Salomea. Look of joy on Salomea's face.

FADE OUT.

THE END.