

INSIGHT:  
HELL ON EARTH

Written by  
Joseph Murkijanian

Based on the true story of Klarisa Ananian

josephmurk@yahoo.com  
323-253-6402

OPENING TITLE SEQUENCE

EXT. ESTABLISHING SHOT: 1942 PORT OF NOVOROSSIYSK, RUSSIA - DAY

SUPER: NOVOROSSISYSK, RUSSIA

KLARISA ANANIAN (V.O.)

I remember the day the Germans came. It was in the summer of 1942. We lived near a harbor in Navorossiysk. Me and my friends were playing outside when we saw the Nazi trucks coming, dozens of them...

Caravans of German military trucks and tanks descend the curvy mountain roads into the harbor city.

INT. A SMALL ONE ROOM STRUCTURE MADE OF SALVAGED WOOD - DAY

KLARISA ANANIAN, eight-years-old, is skinny and awkward but brimming with life. Her mother, ANNA, has blue eyes and beautiful skin and hair.

She serves a meager meal of fish and bread. ASHOT, in his early thirties, has a muscular build and eats quickly from hunger.

ASHOT

The shoe factory laid off a hundred workers today. Armen and I are going to work on the fishing boats. We have no choice.

His explanation is interrupted by the cries of his toddler son, EDDIE. Anna leans down and adjusts the bedding inside a makeshift cardboard bed. Eddie's CRIES are interrupted by a loud POUNDING on the front door.

Before anyone can react, the door is busted off its hinges. SS SOLDIERS abruptly enter, terrifying the family. They brutally grab Ashot and force him out into the street. SS CAPTAIN GUNTHER HERMAN is tall and blond with steely blue eyes. He stares at Ashot and asks questions in German.

CAPTAIN HERMAN

Do you have your identification papers? What nationality are you? Are you a Jew?

Ashot stares back unsure but realizes they think he is Jewish. Tension mounts. One of the SS Soldiers places a gun barrel to Ashot's head. Terrified, he yells back in Russian.

ASHOT

I am not Jewish. I am Armenian!

CAPTAIN HERMAN

You look Jewish!

Ashot pulls out his crucifix from around his neck and waves it in front of their faces. They still don't believe him, forcing him down onto his knee's. Ashot begs them in German.

ASHOT

Please don't kill me! I'm Christian. I can prove it!

Captain Herman lets him get off his knees. Ashot quickly pulls down his pants and shows them his uncircumcised penis.

The tension quickly subsides. The guns are withdrawn, and Captain Herman starts to smile. Ashot smiles back relieved. Captain Herman commands his soldiers.

CAPTAIN HERMAN

Help his family onto the truck!

CUT TO:

EXT. LARGE ORNATE ESTATE OVERLOOKING THE MAIN HARBOR - DAY

A caravan of German military trucks pull up to the entrance of the home. Written in big red letters is the word JUDEN. It crowns the entrance gates to the estate. Lying near the front door are the mutilated bodies of the resident family. A HUSBAND, WIFE, and TWO YOUNG CHILDREN are spread prone on the floor in pools of blood.

The soldiers quickly escort Anna, Klarisa, and the baby into the home. An SS SOLDIER steps in front of Ashot, blocking his path. Using his rifle, he signals Ashot to help load the dead bodies onto the truck.

INT. ORNATE ESTATE HOME - DAY

The home is lavishly decorated and contains the trappings of a very affluent family. A group of FIVE SS OFFICERS have started to set up headquarters. Captain Herman enters. They all stop to salute him.

OFFICERS

Heil Hitler!

CAPTAIN HERMAN

Heil Hitler!

Captain Herman turns to SERGEANT HANS GURLING, stocky, with a pit bull face.

CAPTAIN HERMAN (CONT'D)

Take the woman and baby into the kitchen, and have her prepare supper for us. Have Officer Luxembour and the child remove the family portraits from the walls.

SERGEANT GURLING

Yes, Commandant. Immediately!

He grabs an empty box and hands it to OFFICER LUXENBOURG, tall, dark hair, dark eyes, and more benignant than the other officers.

OFFICER LUXENBOURG

Ok, sweetheart. Follow me.

Luxembourg heads toward the stairwell and begins to remove the family portraits from the walls. One by one, he hands them to Klarisa as she carefully places them into the box. Another Officer rushes in and hands Klarisa a picture of Hitler. He points to an empty spot on the wall.

OFFICER

Hang this right there!

Klarisa fumbles, trying to hang the picture. He leans in and helps her.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. NOVOROSIYSK HARBOR CITY CENTER - DAY

GERMAN SOLDIERS are herding the CITIZENS onto large military trucks. Many REFUGEES, with different colored triangles sewn onto their clothing, are forced onto the trucks. Ahshot and his muscular friend, ARMEN, are standing near a truck, overloaded with REFUGEES, marked with the Star of David.

Captain Herman and his officers keep a keen eye on the operation. An OLD MAN on one of the trucks is frustrated. He rebels and starts a skirmish, disrupting the cramped occupants. Captain Herman signals a soldier to kill the man.

A soldier violently pulls the old man out and shoots him in the head. Sergeant Gurling looks over to Ashot and Armen.

SERGEANT GURLING

Schnell!

Ashot and Armen run over and move the body to a nearby ditch.

ARMEN

God help us!

ASHOT

(in Armenian)

You know they are going to kill all these people on the truck. Where is God?

FADE TO:

INT. ORNATE ESTATE HOME - NIGHT

Ashot and Anna are staying in the servants' room adjacent to the children's bedroom. Ashot plays a very somber tune on his mandolin. They have all their belongings packed into a suitcase and a couple of pillowcases.

Anna serves her husband some tea from an old copper kettle with a spoon attached by wire. The spoon CLANGS against the kettle as she pours him a cup.

ANNA

(yelling toward the  
bedroom)

Klarisa, come here!

INT. CHILDREN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is expertly kept. Beds are made up with toys and dolls placed neatly throughout the room. Klarisa sits on the bed, playing with a rag doll she has found in the room. She gets up and heads toward her parents.

CUT TO:

INT. SERVANTS' ROOM NIGHT - NIGHT

KLARISA

(excited)

Mama, look. Can I keep it?

Anna holds little Eddie in her arms.

ANNA

Ashot, play something happy!

Ashot stops playing and gestures Klarisa to come over. He brings her close and gives her a loving hug.

ASHOT

Yes, you can keep it!

Her eyes gleam with joy as Ashot breaks out a lively dance tune.

The family moment is again interrupted by the high pitch SQUEAL of truck brakes. Ashot puts down the mandolin and looks out the window.

ASHOT (CONT'D)

They're back! Klarisa, go to the room. We need to rest. Sergeant Gurling said we are leaving for Warsaw early tomorrow.

FADE OUT.

EXT. ORNATE ESTATE HOME - DAY

The SS officers are packing up their cars and trucks and are getting ready to move out. Ashot loads his family and belongings into the back of the truck.

We hear the CLANGING from the tea kettle as he loads the last bag. Inside the truck bed, Klarisa cries, snuggling up to her mother and clutching the rag doll. Anna hugs her daughter.

ANNA

Remember. Whatever happens, the Virgin Mary will protect you.

KLARISA

I know, Mama.

FADE TO:

EXT. WARSAW, POLAND. A SUBSTATION ADJACENT TO THE PASSENGER TRAIN TERMINAL - DAY

A couple of small, run-down buildings, once used to keep track of livestock coming through the cargo terminal, are now manned by NAZI OFFICERS.

Dozens of military trucks pull up and drop off REFUGEES slated to be transported to labor camps.

Hundreds of families of different descents line up and wait to be shipped out on arriving cattle cars. Ashot and his family are in line, waiting with their belongings.

Ashot steps away to survey the situation and to find a clean place for his family. Ashot scans the row of cattle cars. A few moments pass and he returns to rush them on the train.

ASHOT

Come on. I found a clean place.  
Follow me!

He grabs a the pillow case with the tea kettle attached and realizes he needs to do two loads.

ASHOT (CONT'D)

Klarisa, stay right here. I'm going to take Mama and the baby. I'll be right back. Ok, sweetheart?

KLARISA

Okay, Papa!

Ashot secures his wife and baby on the train and turns to retrieve Klarisa. People begin to push and shove as the soldiers command them onto the train. Ashot fights to exit the cattle car. A SOLDIER spots him trying to get off.

SOLDIER

Hey, you. Get back on the train!

Ashot continues to exit, heading for Klarisa. The soldier raises his rifle.

ASHOT

I have to get my daughter. She's right there!

The soldier fires a warning shot above his head.

SOLDIER

Everyone on the train. Now!

He points the gun straight at Ashot's head. Ashot is stunned. He turns back, still looking toward Klarisa. Klarisa stares back confused. The train starts to slowly pull away. Klarisa starts to cry. She screams out, terrified.

KLARISA

Mama! Papa! Come back. Don't leave me!

She clutches the rag doll, sobbing as she watches the train leave the station.

ASHOT  
(yelling)  
I'm going to come and get you!

Anna panics. She screams in horror.

ANNA  
Stop the train. My daughter!

Anna looks down at the rapidly moving railroad ties.

She turns and looks back at Klarisa; she steps forward to begin her jump.

Ashot reaches out and snatches her back into the safety of his arms. Tears well up in his eyes as he hugs her dearly.

ASHOT  
I'm going to find her! I know it.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. WARSAW, POLAND. A SUBSTATION ADJACENT TO THE PASSENGER TRAIN TERMINAL - NIGHT

Hours have gone by. The train station is empty. Klarisa sits on a bench surrounded by the remainder of her family's belongings. In the distance, she hears the RUMBLE of more military trucks nearing the station. As the trucks roll in, we notice they are packed with REFUGEES marked with Stars of David or different colored triangles sewn onto their clothing.

The station begins to get crowded as people are unloaded and herded onto the arriving trains. A young woman notices Klarisa alone and sobbing. ELLA BERNSTEIN is an elegant, 29-years-old with red hair, green eyes, and milk white skin. A bright white star is sewn onto her expensive sweater.

ELLA  
Where are your parents? Why are you here alone?

KLARISA  
(whimpering)  
I don't know. The soldiers took them away on a train and left me here. Are you the Virgin Mary?



ELLA

No, sweetie. My name is Ella  
Bernstein. You can stay with me  
until we find your parents.

KLARISA  
(sobbing)

Thank you.

Ella reaches into her dress pocket and pulls out a piece of  
chocolate.

ELLA

You must be hungry. Here, have some  
candy.

Famished, Klarisa quickly eats the candy.

ELLA (CONT'D)

Is this all your stuff? I don't  
think we can carry it all.

The soldiers begin to usher people onto the train cars.

ELLA (CONT'D)

We have to hurry, sweetie. Just get  
your clothes and what you need. The  
rest has to stay.

The crowd is now being forced to hurry. Klarisa places a few  
items in her pillowcase. She grabs hold of the rag doll. The  
crowd swarms as Klarisa and Ella are swallowed up by the  
multitude of prisoners.

CUT TO:

INT. BARRACKS, MONOWITZ CONCENTRATION CAMP, 85 MILES AWAY  
FROM AUSCHWITZ - NIGHT

Inside the cold and overcrowded barracks, Ashot wanders  
around. He approaches different MEN asking where the trains  
in Warsaw were going. He approaches an OLDER GENTLEMAN.

ASHOT

I was told you worked at the Warsaw  
station?

OLDER GENTELMAN

Yes, for three months.

ASHOT

My daughter was separated from us  
at the substation.

OLDER GENTELMAN  
What time did you get to the  
station?

ASHOT  
Nine am.

The old man's eyes glaze over.

OLDER GENTELMAN  
More than likely she got mixed up  
with the Jews. I'm sorry to say she  
was taken to Auschwitz for  
extermination.

If you are going to find her, you  
must leave soon. They won't kill  
her without a tattoo. But she could  
starve to death.

ASHOT  
(overwhelmed)  
How am I going to get there?

OLDER GENTELMAN  
Once a week, the Gestapo come  
through looking for workers to go  
to Auschwitz. You must volunteer.

FADE OUT.

EXT. MONOWITZ CONCENTRATION CAMP - DAY

Ashot and Anna meet at a barbed wire fence, separating the  
men's and women's barracks.

ASHOT  
Are they feeding you?

ANNA  
They have us working in the fields,  
so it's oranges for breakfast and  
potatoes for dinner.

ASHOT  
I found out Klarisa is in  
Auschwitz. I have to get her out of  
there.

Anna starts to sob.

ANNA

Please find her. Bring my baby back  
to me. Please, God, help us!

Ashot is angry and frustrated.

ASHOT

I don't think God cares, but don't  
worry. Somehow I'll find her and  
bring her back.

ANNA

Don't say that! You're alive  
because I pray for you.

One of the camp guards spots Ashot talking to Anna. He yells  
loudly from across the field.

GUARD

Hey you! Get back over here!

ASHOT

I better go. Take care of my son. I  
will be back.

Anna, crying now, makes the sign of the cross.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. MEN'S BARRACKS, MONOWITZ CONCENTRATION CAMP - DAY

The barrack's door BANGS open. We hear the SOUND of Gestapo  
boots on the floorboards as they abruptly enter the room.  
Ashot quickly wakes up and puts on his shoes. He reaches into  
his pillowcase and pulls out a golden medallion, kissing it  
and placing it around his neck.

GESTAPO COMMANDANT MULLER, evil incarnate, leads three of his  
SOLDIERS into the barracks.

COMMANDANT MULLER

Achtung!! We need five strong men.  
Everyone, stand up, please!

The soldiers quickly move around the barracks, making sure  
the thirty or so men are all standing. Ashot stands at  
attention, flexing his muscles. Commandant Muller, inspecting  
the men, makes his way to Ashot.

ASHOT

(meekly)

I'll go.

Commandant Muller turns and looks surprised.

COMMANDANT MULLER  
What did you say?

ASHOT  
I will go.

Commandant Muller smiles, amused by his courage.

COMMANDANT MULLER  
Did you hear that boys? He wants to  
help us!

The soldiers all smile. They can't believe it. No one ever  
wants to go.

COMMANDANT MULLER (CONT'D)  
Well, all right then.

Commandant Muller points at Ashot and FOUR OTHER MEN.

COMMANDANT MULLER (CONT'D)  
You, you, you, and you, come with  
us.

Ashot grabs his belongings and follows them out.

CUT TO:

EXT. AUSCHWITZ EXTERMINATION CAMP - DAY

Commandant Muller rides in his convertible Mercedes Sedan  
along with other GESTAPO OFFICERS. He is flanked, by two  
military trucks full of LABORERS.

In the distance, Ashot can see the rear entrance to the camp.  
Barbed wire surrounds a large field. Smokestacks from giant  
ovens spew out black smoke. Ashot turns to one of the  
terrified laborers.

ASHOT  
Do you smell that? It's the smell  
of burning flesh.

As they get closer, we notice workers carting out dead  
skeletal bodies from the gas chambers to the ovens. As the  
trucks approach, the laborers in the back of the truck are  
nauseated by the smell of dead bodies. A few start to vomit.  
Others use their clothing to mask the smell. The trucks stop  
about a hundred yards from the ovens.

Commandant Muller and his cronies branch off the road and enter the camp through its main entrance. A few soldiers wearing surgical masks exit the trucks, brandishing their weapons. OFFICER SHULTZ, heavy set with a piggish face, directs the group.

OFFICER SHULTZ  
Everyone out of the truck! Schnell!

The prisoners are terrified. No one moves. One soldier fires a warning shot. The men quickly exit the truck bed. A few still refuse. The soldier walks up and shoots one of them in the head.

OFFICER SHULTZ (CONT'D)  
Anyone else want to stay on the truck?

The stragglers quickly exit. Ashot and a few others stand at attention. In the distance, we see a MASKED, ARMED SOLDIER in a gray uniform. He supervises the other laborers moving the dead bodies. Officer Shultz signals for the man in the gray uniform.

OFFICER SHULTZ (CONT'D)  
You see the man in the gray uniform? You report to him! Go to him now. Schnell!

The men slowly begin to make their way toward the gas chambers.

CUT TO:

INT. AUSCHWITZ EXTERMINATION CAMP, WOMEN'S BARRACKS - NIGHT

Klarisa And Ella are sitting on the floor, bundled up in one of the corners of the barracks.

ELLA  
Are you hungry, sweetie?

Klarisa meekly nods yes.

ELLA (CONT'D)  
I'm going to give you some bread, but don't let anyone see you eat it. Understand?

Klarisa nods again. Ella slowly reaches into her coat pocket and hands Klarisa a small piece of bread. Klarisa turns, facing the wall, and quickly chews the stale bread. A few of the women in the barrack begin to hum a Yiddish folk tune.

We hear a hand accordion begin to play the melody as the women begin to sing in unison.

Ella stands up and in a beautiful commanding voice takes the lead. The mood in the barracks changes, bringing a little tranquility to the unbearable situation. Klarisa looks up to Ella in awe as she crescendos through the lyrics.

The barrack door bangs open. Officer Shultz enters, accompanied by another soldier. The women stop singing. Officer Shultz approaches Ella.

OFFICER SHULTZ

Ella Bernstein, come with me!

Klarisa grabs her dress, trying to stop her from leaving.

ELLA

It's all right, sweetie. I will be right back.

Klarisa starts to cry but releases her grasp. Ella is lead away as the door slams shut behind them.

CUT TO:

INT. GESTAPO HEADQUARTERS, AUSCHWITZ EXTERMINATION CAMP - DAY

Officer Shultz leads Ella and THREE YOUNG BLONDE GIRLS dressed in sleepwear down the hallway toward the officers' lounge. Officer Shultz turns to address Ella. Ella's piercing green eyes size him up.

OFFICER SHULTZ

Fräulein Bernstein, I must ask your cooperation? Commandant Muller has asked for your company.

Ella looks back at the three young girls.

ELLA

You promise me, Officer Shultz. These girls get fed, and I will make your beloved Commandant very happy!

Officer Shultz signals to his SOLDIER.

OFFICER SHULTZ

Get these girls some food!

Officer Shultz opens the door to the officers' lounge. Through the doorway, we see a GROUP OF SOLDIERS with uniforms unbuttoned and partially disrobed. Taking shots and smoking cigarettes, the soldiers are in a very gregarious mood. They all turn to stare at Ella and the girls.

CUT TO:

EXT. AUSCHWITZ EXTERMINATION CAMP, GAS CHAMBER - DAY

Dead, gassed bodies are piled onto a large cart and transported from the gas chambers to the ovens. Ashot, wearing a mask and gloves, is accompanied by SIX OTHER WORKERS.

Ashot uses dental pliers to remove the gold caps from the emaciated bodies. He pulls hard, and a cap pops off. He places the gold cap into a small black bag tied around his waist. From the distance, we see Officer Shultz approach the ovens with a couple of his SOLDIERS in tow.

OFFICER SHULTZ  
(shouting)

Golden boy!

Ashot reluctantly looks up.

ASHOT  
(under his breath)  
Son of Satan!

Ashot puts down the pliers and walks over to Shultz.

OFFICER SHULTZ  
My golden boy, what do you have for  
me today?

Ashot pulls down his mask and then hands Shultz the black bag full of gold. Shultz opens the bag and smiles.

OFFICER SHULTZ (CONT'D)  
Very impressive, Ananian!

Ashot pulls out a black and white picture of Klarisa and hands the picture to Shultz. Shultz glances at the picture.

OFFICER SHULTZ (CONT'D)  
What's this?

ASHOT  
Please Commandant Shultz, it's a  
picture of my daughter.  
(MORE)

ASHOT (CONT'D)

She was mistakenly put in the camp.  
Could you please find her?

OFFICER SHULTZ

I can't guarantee you, but I will  
see what I can do.

Shultz slides the picture into his coat pocket. Ashot puts on the mask and gloves and returns to the gas chamber.

CUT TO:

EXT. AUSCHWITZ EXTERMINATION CAMP - DAY

It has snowed the night before. Klarisa has wandered outside of the women's barracks. She starts down the row of barbed wire fencing.

She begins to notice emaciated dead bodies buried in the snow. Klarisa approaches the end of the building and stops at the restricted area entrance. The guard is bundled up and asleep as she walks by unnoticed.

About a hundred yards away, Ashot works, sifting through ashes. Just as she is about to turn and see him, Ella yells out.

ELLA

Klarisa, come here!

Klarisa turns and steps out of frame. Ashot, feeling something, looks up toward her but sees nothing. Klarisa walks back and meets Ella at the barrack's door.

ELLA (CONT'D)

Come inside sweetie, it's dangerous  
for you to be out here.

KLARISA

I was looking for my parents. Maybe  
they are here somewhere?

ELLA

I know you miss your family, but  
there are very sick people here. If  
you get too close to them, you can  
get sick, too. Do you understand?

Klarisa nods and follows Ella back into the building.

CUT TO:



INT. AUSCHWITZ EXTERMINATION CAMP, COMMANDANT MULLER'S OFFICE  
- NIGHT

Commandant Muller sits at his desk going, through his paperwork. He picks up the phone and dials.

COMMANDANT MULLER

I need to send a message!

He slams the phone down as a YOUNG SOLDIER with pen and pad enters the office.

YOUNG SOLDIER

Yes, Commandant. I am ready for the message!

COMMANDANT MULLER

The message is for SS Commandant Rudolf Hoess. The message is as follows.... Dear revered Commandant Hoess. The Jewish problem is solved. SS Reichsfuhrer Himmler will be very pleased to hear we have completed engineering and construction of the new facility. We will be in full operation within twenty-four hours. Please note, the numbers will double from four thousand to eight thousand, and in time, we have an expected outcome of twelve thousand a day. All three Auschwitz locations will be working at full capacity. Heil Hitler. Your loyal comrade, Commandant Ludwig Muller. End message.

The young soldier steps backward, turns, and quickly leaves. Sergeant Shultz stands at the open door.

OFFICER SHULTZ

Commandant Muller, do you have a moment?

COMMANDANT MULLER

Yes, Officer Shultz. What is it?

Commandant Muller gets up and puts on his Gestapo overcoat and military hat.

OFFICER SHULTZ

It is about Ella Bernstein, Commandant.

Shultz hesitates, not sure of himself. Muller picks up on it.

COMMANDANT MULLER

(smiling)

It is quite a shame, Officer Shultz. Beautiful woman like her. Juden blood. There is nothing we can do.

Muller heads for the door.

COMMANDANT MULLER (CONT'D)

Go ahead and give her what she wants. It will be their last meal.

CUT TO:

INT. AUSCHWITZ EXTERMINATION CAMP, WOMEN'S BARRACKS - NIGHT

Ella and Klarisa and two of the young blonde girls are huddled up together on the floor.

EXT. AUSCHWITZ EXTERMINATION CAMP, WOMEN'S BARRACKS - NIGHT

Officer Shultz stands at the entrance to the barracks with one arm around a paper bag. He pulls out the black and white picture of Klarisa from his overcoat and glances at it as he enters the barracks.

INT. AUSCHWITZ EXTERMINATION CAMP, WOMEN'S BARRACKS - NIGHT

Officer Shultz enters and walks up to Ella and Klarisa. He looks down at Klarisa to get a good look at her. Ella stands up to greet him.

ELLA

Good evening, Sergeant Shultz!

OFFICER SHULTZ

Fräulein Bernstein. Compliments of Commandant Muller.

Shultz hands her the paper bag with bread and vegetables.

ELLA

Thank you very much, Sergeant. We all appreciate your generosity.

Officer Shultz looks down at Klarisa, specifically at her arms.

OFFICER SHULTZ

This young girl. Is she related to you?

ELLA

She is not related to me. She shouldn't be in here!

OFFICER SHULTZ

Nicht jude?

Officer Shultz changes his demeanor.

OFFICER SHULTZ (CONT'D)

(raising his voice)

Attention! Attention, ladies! The camp has had an outbreak of disease. Tomorrow morning, you ladies are scheduled to take a hygienic shower. This is for everyone's safety.

Officer Shultz turns and marches out the door.

EXT. AUSCHWITZ EXTERMINATION CAMP, OVENS - DAY

Ashot is bent over, using a metal screen to sift through the ashes from one of the ovens. A few moments go by, and he is able to extract a couple of gold fillings. He looks up to see Shultz from the distance, waving him over. Ashot, thinking he might have news of his daughter, quickly drops the screen and runs over.

ASHOT

Hello, Commandant Shultz. Did you find my daughter?

OFFICER SHULTZ

No, not yet, but I will be going to visit the other barracks at stations two and three in the next couple of days.

Ashot pulls out his black bag of gold and hands it to Shultz.

ASHOT

Thank you, Commandant. I will be waiting for the good news!

Officer Shultz pulls out a pack of cigarettes and offers one up.

OFFICER SHULTZ

Go ahead, golden boy. Take one for later.

Ashot reaches out and takes one, placing it in his pocket.

ASHOT

Thank you, Commandant!

Ashot turns and heads back to the pile of ashes. He begins sifting for gold.

EXT. AUSCHWITZ EXTERMINATION CAMP, WOMEN'S BARRACKS - DAY

Officer Shultz and FOUR SOLDIERS march through the snow and mud toward the women's barracks. The four soldiers enter abruptly.

INT. AUSCHWITZ EXTERMINATION CAMP, WOMEN'S BARRACKS - DAY

The soldiers stand at strategic spots inside the barracks. Officer Shultz enters.

OFFICER SHULTZ

Attention! Attention, ladies! It's time to go. Everybody line up in the center aisle.

The women start to gather in the center aisle. Officer Shultz walks over to Klarisa and Ella. He waves one of his soldiers to his side. Shultz leans over and whispers into the soldier's ear.

Ella begins to move with the others. Klarisa grips her skirt to follow along. The soldier leans in and stops Klarisa.

SOLDIER

You have to stay here!

Klarisa starts to cry. She grips Ella's skirt tighter.

ELLA

It's all right, sweetie. I'll take a shower, and I will come right back.

KLARISA

But why can't I take a shower, too.

The soldier gets angry and kicks Klarisa away from Ella. Klarisa falls back, hitting her head. He gives Ella a quick push into the line.

SOLDIER

Schnell!

Klarisa sobs as she watches the room empty out.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. AUSCHWITZ EXTERMINATION CAMP, GAS CHAMBER - DAY

A FEW MEN in gray uniforms supervise Ashot and four other workers as they remove the bodies from the gas chamber. Ashot and another worker carry Ella's lifeless body from the gas chamber and load it onto a cart. Ashot notices how beautiful she was. He stares at her as tears well up in his eyes. Breaking down emotionally, he starts to back away from the cart. He falls to his knees, giving up. An armed GERMAN SOLDIER notices what's happening and starts toward Ashot, pointing his rifle.

SOLDIER

Hey you! Get back to work.

Ashot does not respond. The soldier places the rifle to his head.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

I said back to work!

Ashot stares back stoically. The soldier cocks his rifle. From the distance, Officer Shultz yells out.

OFFICER SHULTZ

Halt!

The soldier backs off. Officer Shultz sends another SOLDIER in to escort Ashot back to the ash pile to continue sifting for gold.

CUT TO:

INT. AUSCHWITZ EXTERMINATION CAMP, WOMEN'S BARRACKS - DAY

A few hours have gone by, and the barracks are now empty. Klarisa sits alone at an old, wood burning stove whose fire is about to die. She gets up and decides to take a look outside.

CUT TO:

EXT. AUSCHWITZ EXTERMINATION CAMP, WOMEN'S BARRACKS - DAY

Klarisa looks down the aisle of barbed wire fencing and sees black smoke bellowing from the ovens on a backdrop of blood red skies. Klarisa holds up her rag doll and begins talking to it.

KLARISA

All right, Lucy. Let's see if we can find Papa.

She makes her way down the row of barbed wire and naively passes by the SLEEPING GUARD. Entering the restricted area, she can now see the gas chamber and ovens. Ashot is bent over, sifting through the ashes, using a wire screen.

Klarisa looks at Ashot but doesn't recognize him because of the handkerchief covering his face. Ashot stands up and removes the handkerchief.

KLARISA (CONT'D)

Papa! Papa!

Ashot looks over and sees Klarisa. He can't believe his eyes. He quickly drops everything and runs toward her.

SOLDIER

Now where is he going? Hey! Come back here!

Officer Shultz looks over and sees their reunion.

Ashot joyously yells out to Shultz.

ASHOT

Commandant! My daughter! It's my daughter!

Officer Shultz makes his way to where they are. He opens a nearby gate and lets Klarisa come through. Klarisa jumps into Ashot's arms. They kiss and hug each other ecstatically.

KLARISA

Papa! I knew you would find me!

OFFICER SHULTZ

Take her to your barracks, and hide her. No one can know. Understand?

ASHOT

Yes, Commandant. Thank you!

Ashot holds Klarisa's hand as they start to make their way back to Ashot's barracks.

OFFICER SHULTZ

Keep her out of sight. Tomorrow you  
will go to work at our Stuttgart  
camp.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. TWO LANE GRAVEL ROAD TWENTY MILES OUT OF AUSCHWITZ - DAY

A two lane road is divided by a row of trees and bushes. One side of the road leads north, while the other south. The snow and mud make the road difficult to traverse. The military truck Ashot and Klarisa are in has stalled and is pulled over on the inside of the road. Ashot is working under the hood as the soldiers watch attentively.

Just on the other side of the bushes that divide the road are Anna and Eddie. They are walking in the opposite direction within a group of THIRTY WOMEN AND CHILDREN. The group is lead and flanked by German trucks. A COUPLE OF FOOT SOLDIERS keep an eye out as they slowly march through the snow and mud.

Ashot, standing on the truck's front bumper, looks through the bushes and sees the group of women heading toward him. Thinking nothing of it, he continues to work on the truck's engine.

Anna struggles, carrying Eddie and her few remaining possessions. Tied to a sack slung over her shoulder is the tea kettle with wired spoon. We hear it TINKLE as she maneuvers down the road. Ashot, on the other side of the bushes, hears the familiar TINKLE coming from the kettle.

ASHOT

Oh my God!

He looks through bushes and sees his wife and son.

ASHOT (CONT'D)  
(yelling out)

Anna! Anka!

Anna looks up and sees Ashot through the bushes, standing on the truck's bumper.

ANNA

Ashot?

Ashot joyously slams the hood down and jumps to the ground. He calls to one of the soldiers and points to the bushes.

ASHOT

My wife and son are there! Can I go  
get them?

The soldier looks back puzzled.

SOLDIER

What about the truck?

ASHOT

Truck is good!

The soldier signals the truck driver to try and start it. Ashot makes his way through the bushes. The soldier follows, pointing his rifle.

SOLDIER

Hey, where you going? Come back  
here!

On the other side of the bushes, Ashot hugs Anna and kisses the baby. The soldier nearly trips as he makes his way through the bushes. Upset, he points the rifle.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

Get back to the truck!

ASHOT

Please Captain. Let my family come,  
too!

Just as Ashot finishes the sentence, we hear the GROWL of the diesel motor come to life. Ashot smiles.

ASHOT (CONT'D)

I fixed it!

The soldier changes his demeanor and lowers his rifle.

SOLDIER

All right. Hurry up!

Ashot grabs the sack off her shoulder and the kettle TINKLES again. They both smile as they make their way back to the truck.

CUT TO:

EXT. TWO LANE GRAVEL ROAD, TWENTY MILES OUT OF AUSCHWITZ -  
DAY

The German military truck plows through the snow and mud at close to forty miles per hour, down the gravel road.



Inside the rear of the truck are approximately TWENTY PEOPLE. Ashot, Anna, Klarisa, and Eddie are huddled up together in a corner of the truck. Anna hugs and kisses Klarisa. Ashot does the same to Eddie.

KLARISA

Papa, where are we going?

ASHOT

We are going to Stuttgart, Germany to work at the Daimler Benz factory. We will be good. Germany has all the food.

Ashot quickly pulls out the medallion and kisses it. Anna notices what he just did. She looks back at him quizzically. Ashot still isn't sure about God, but he gives in to Anna.

ASHOT (CONT'D)

All right. Thank God!

Anna ecstatically hugs and kisses Ashot.

FADE TO BLACK.

SUPERIMPOSED:

EIGHTEEN MONTHS LATER.

EXT. STUTTGART, GERMANY. LABOR CAMP BEHIND MERCEDES PLANT - DAY

ESTABLISHING SHOT: The labor camp barracks are behind the factory with fruit orchards in the distance. It's a hot day as the female workers toil in the fields, picking fruit.

INT. LABOR CAMP BARRACKS - DAY

Ashot is dancing and playing his mandolin as the barracks' occupants gather round for the show. He strums the mandolin as Anna breaks out singing a Russian song. Klarisa, now a little older, has gained weight and filled out. She dances around, holding hands with her brother, Eddie.

CUT TO:

EXT. LABOR CAMP BARRACKS - DAY

Camp guard OFFICER KRAUSE has brown hair, green eyes, and a face pock marked with scars. He hears the MUSIC and decides to check things out. He turns and heads toward the barracks.

INT. LABOR CAMP BARRACKS - DAY

Officer Krause enters the barracks quietly and unnoticed. From a distance, he stares at Klarisa dancing and spinning around.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. LABOR CAMP APPLE ORCHARD - DAY

About TWENTY WOMEN are working in the fields, picking apples and loading them onto a nearby truck. Anna, Klarisa, and Klarisa's twelve-year-old friend, GAYANNE, are working together. Klarisa and Gayanne are wearing beautiful sundresses. They run around, chasing each other down the aisles of trees.

ANNA

Klarisa, don't go too far!

Klarisa nods but keeps running as Gayanne follows, giggling. They come to a restricted area of the orchard. Barbed wire separates a group of mature trees loaded with large, bright red apples. Klarisa and Gayanne crawl through a small break in the barbed wire. Klarisa jumps, trying to grab an apple. With no luck, she turns to climb the tree.

GAYANNE

Klarisa! I don't think you should do that!

Klarisa makes her way up the trunk and crawls out on one of the branches.

KLARISA

Don't worry, Gayanne. Just catch the apples!

From a distance, Officer Krause sees Klarisa on the tree.

OFFICER KRAUSE

Hey! You! Get out of there!

He runs toward the girls.

GAYANNE

Get down, Klarisa. He's coming!

Klarisa is stuck. She tries to crawl backward but almost falls off the tree.

KLARISA

Go get my mom. Hurry!

Gayanne runs away just as Officer Krause approaches. Klarisa looks down at Officer Krause.

KLARISA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. Please don't kill me!

OFFICER KRAUSE

I'm not going to kill you. Come down from there!

KLARISA

I can't. I'm stuck.

Officer Krause reaches up and can almost touch her.

OFFICER KRAUSE

Don't be afraid. Slide down the branch. I will catch you if you fall.

Klarisa shimmies down low enough to where Krause can help her down. He fixates on her legs.

CUT TO:

EXT. LABOR CAMP APPLE ORCHARD - DAY

Gayanne, excited and winded, runs up to where Anna is working.

GAYANNE

Auntie Anna, Klarisa is stuck in a tree, and a guard caught her!

Anna looks around and sees another guard standing nearby.

ANNA

Let's wait for this guard to leave. Then you show me where she is.

CUT TO:

EXT. LABOR CAMP APPLE ORCHARD - DAY

Officer Krause has his pants down and is now on top of Klarisa. He humps on her a few last times and gets off of her. Krause pulls up his pants. He looks down at Klarisa and notices she is unconscious. He turns and walks away, buckling his belt.

Anna and Gayanne hide behind some trees waiting for him to leave. When out of sight, Anna and Gayanne run to Klarisa's side. Anna kneels down and places her hands onto Klarisa's face.

ANNA

Klarisa! Wake up! Mama's here!

GAYANNE

Is she dead?

Gayanne starts to cry.

ANNA

No, she just fainted.

Anna slaps Klarisa on the cheek. She finally comes to.

KLARISA

Mama?

ANNA

Yes, sweetheart. I'm here. You are going to be all right. Gayanne, help me.

They help Klarisa to her feet. She can barely move her legs. Anna sees blood on Klarisa's dress. Anna's expression changes her eyes welt up with tears she tries to keep her composure.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Let's get you home. You need to lie down.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. LABOR CAMP BARRACKS - DUSK

DOCTOR GABRALIAN, is in his late forties, heavy set with bushy eyebrows. Klarisa lies on a cot. Having completed his examination, he straightens Klarisa's dress.

DOCTOR GABRALIAN

There is tearing and bruising, but everything else looks all right.

(MORE)

DOCTOR GABRALIAN (CONT'D)

It will be sore for awhile, so keep her off her feet a few days.

Anna covers Klarisa with a blanket and places the rag doll next to her. Klarisa takes the doll and hugs it.

ANNA

Take a nap, sweetie.

Anna and the doctor step back, away from the bed.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Doctor Gabralian, please keep this between us.

DOCTOR GABRALIAN

Absolutely!

ANNA

My husband knows nothing about this. I'm afraid he'll kill that son of a bitch- Krause.

DOCTOR GABRALIAN

Don't worry. It will be our secret.

CUT TO:

INT. DAIMLER BENZ FACTORY, ASSEMBLY LINE - NIGHT

The factory assembly line is buzzing with activity. Hundreds of workers labor on machines. Others struggle to keep up pace on the fast moving assembly lines. ARMED SOLDIERS are stationed throughout the factory, keeping a watchful eye.

Ashot, perspiring, works, stretching leather onto a row of aircraft seats. Across the way is SIMON, short, balding, and good natured. He's wearing a striped uniform with a Star of David sewn onto his sleeve.

Simon struggles to get his stamping machine to work. OFFICER VOGEL, who is in his mid-forties and looks like a rat, notices the stop in workflow and approaches the worker.

OFFICER VOGEL

What's the problem?

SIMON

The machine isn't working. I press the pedal, nothing happens!

OFFICER VOGEL

You stupid Jew!

The soldier grabs Simon by his arm and places his hand into the press. Holding his arm firmly in place, the soldier places his foot on the pedal.

OFFICER VOGEL (CONT'D)

You sure it doesn't work?

Simon is terrified. Ashot watching, hurries over.

ASHOT

Please, Captain, I can fix it!

The soldier stares into Ashot's eyes and then depresses the pedal. The machine whirls, hesitates, and then slams its piston down, crushing Simon's hand. He screams out in pain as air raid sirens begin to WAIL. The factory goes silent as everyone stops working.

They all look up and wait to hear if the bombs are coming. Officer Vogel's mood changes from angry to scared. Ashot, ignoring the sirens, rushes over and wraps up Simon's hand with a rag. Suddenly, the lights on one end of the factory start to go out and, with a domino effect, take the factory into darkness.

CUT TO:

EXT. AERIAL SHOT. DAIMLER BENZ FACTORY - NIGHT

The last few lights go out, placing the whole facility in darkness.

FADE OUT.

EXT. LABOR CAMP BARRACKS - DAY

It's five a.m. The sun is just about to rise. The guards are ushering about thirty women and children out of the barracks and onto trucks headed to the apple orchards. As they leave, other guards are walking the men back from the factory night shift. Anna, Klarisa, and Eddie are accompanied by Gayanne and her mother, ERIN, who has dark hair, brown eyes, and is of Armenian descent. They wave to Ashot as they make their way to the orchards. Ashot smiles and waves back as he enters the barracks.

CUT TO:

INT. LABOR CAMP BARRACKS - DAY

Ashot sits at the edge of his bunk and removes his shoes. On the other side of the barracks, in the Jewish section, Ashot spots Simon with his bandaged hand. Simon recognizes Ashot and waves to him, using his good hand. Ashot waves back.

Ashot sees Officer Vogel enter and confront another GUARD sleeping on his watch. Ashot watches Vogel slap the guard and then walk him out of the barracks. Ashot lays down on the bunk bed, falling asleep from exhaustion.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. LABOR CAMP APPLE ORCHARD - DAY

The sun is about to set. Anna and Erin place their apple baskets onto a cart. The soldiers now round up the women to head back to the trucks. Officer Krause approaches Anna and Erin. Klarisa stares at him, scared to death.

OFFICER KRAUSE

All right, ladies, time to go.

Anna takes Eddie by the hand. They all turn to leave when Officer Krause steps in and stops Anna.

OFFICER KRAUSE (CONT'D)

You wait here.

Anna hands Eddie off to Erin. Klarisa and Gayanne are terrified.

KLARISA

(in Russian)

Mama, don't go with him. He will kill you!

ANNA

(in Russian)

He will kill me if I don't. Go with Erin and Gayanne. I will be all right. Don't worry. Go now!

Erin leads the children back to the trucks.

OFFICER KRAUSE

Please come with me.

Officer Krause leads Anna to an abandoned barn set on a small hill, about fifty yards away.

INT. LABOR CAMP APPLE ORCHARD BARN - DAY

Krause partially closes the barn door behind them. He starts to unbuckle his belt.

EXT. LABOR CAMP BARRACKS - DAY

Erin and the children continue walking to the trucks when Klarisa turns and quickly heads back to the barn.

ERIN

Klarisa, come back here!

Klarisa nears the barn and peeks through the partially open door. Officer Krause struggles with Anna, trying to pin her down. Sitting on top of her, he slaps her into submission.

Klarisa spots an old, rusted, iron skillet on the floor. Just as Krause positions himself for penetration, Klarisa runs, grabs the skillet, and with all her might strikes him on the back of the head. Officer Krause's body goes limp.

KLARISA

Mama, are you alive?

Anna pushes the unconscious Krause off of her. She rolls over and gets on her feet.

ANNA

Klarisa, what did you do? I think you killed him.

KLARISA

I'm sorry, Mama. I thought he was killing you!

Klarisa starts to cry.

ANNA

Oh my God! What are we going to do?

Klarisa starts to cry louder.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Stop crying. Let me think!

Anna dusts herself off. She leans over and grabs Krause's wrist, feeling for a pulse. A moment passes. She picks up the skillet and grabs Klarisa by the hand.



ANNA (CONT'D)

Let's go. I know what to do!

CUT TO:

INT. LABOR CAMP BARRACKS - NIGHT

Klarisa sits in a wooden chair near her bunk bed. Anna has dressed Klarisa in boy's clothing. Using scissors, she makes the final adjustment to Klarisa's new boy haircut.

ANNA

What's your name?

KLARISA

Klarisa.

ANNA

No!! You have to get it right. Your name is Harout!

KLARISA

Please, Mama, not Harout. What about Michael?

ANNA

All right, Michael is good. Just don't forget if a guard wants to know your name, say Michael! You understand?

KLARISA

Yes, Mama. I understand. My name is Michael.

Anna combs her hair and raises a broken piece of mirror for Klarisa to see herself. Klarisa looks at herself and begins to tear up. Anna smiles, trying to hold back her laughter. Klarisa turns and looks at Anna who can't hold it in anymore.

ANNA

(Laughing)

Don't worry. It will grow back. You make a very cute boy!

Klarisa smiles, and they both start to giggle. Klarisa suddenly stops laughing.

KLARISA

Mama, I'm scared. What if he's not dead? He's going to come and kill me.

ANNA

Don't be scared, sweetie. He doesn't know you did it. I just hope no one saw you go into the barn.

KLARISA

If I killed him, am I going to hell?

ANNA

Absolutely not! Officer Krause was a very bad man, and you saved my life. You did good, sweetie. I love you so much.

Anna, in gratitude, hugs and kisses Klarisa with all her being.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Tomorrow morning, I start work in the factory. You stay with the baby and let Papa sleep. I will explain to him what happened. If he asks you what happened, tell him Officer Krause was going to kill me so you hit him on the head with the pan. Do you understand?

KLARISA

Yes, Mama. I understand.

Eddie, sleeping in the bunk next to them, wakes up and looks over to them. He stares at Klarisa very confused. Anna walks over and helps Eddie out of bed. He moves over to Klarisa, checking her out.

ANNA

Eddie, this is your new brother Michael!

Eddie reaches out, asking Klarisa to take him in her arms. Klarisa, smiling, picks him up, hugging and kissing him.

CUT TO:

INT. DAIMLER BENZ FACTORY, UPHOLSTERY DIVISION - DAY

Dozens of women labor at sewing machines and cutting tables. Anna operates an old-fashioned, foot-powered sewing machine. She lines up a stitch for a tattered and torn parachute. She pumps the machine and sews up the tear.

Just as she cuts the thread, the air raid sirens start to WAIL. Again, the factory goes silent. The women look up, waiting to hear planes coming or bombs falling. A few moments pass. Nothing happens, and the sirens go silent. Guards come around and order the women back to work.

CUT TO:

EXT. STUTTGART, GERMANY. DOWNTOWN - DAY

A battalion of THREE HUNDRED AMERICAN SOLDIERS infiltrate a city block of downtown Stuttgart. German soldiers are held up in various buildings throughout the street. American tanks roll up and begin to fire on a building across the way.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL GUARDHOUSE is a New York Irish, red faced, no nonsense guy. Next to him is CAPTAIN RAMIREZ, born in East Los Angeles and tough as nails.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE

Take Company B and surround the back of that building. Let's see if we can flush those Nazi bastards out.

CAPTAIN RAMERIZ

Yes sir, Colonel. I'm on it!

Captain Ramirez takes about TEN SOLDIERS and heads toward the rear of the building. The Germans open fire with machine guns, hitting a couple of American soldiers as they all scatter and head for cover.

Lieutenant Guardhouse ducks behind a tank.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE

(yelling to Ramirez)

Stay where you're at. I'm calling in artillery!

He gets on his radio to call in artillery support.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE (CONT'D)

Alpha rover to fox trot three, over!

ARTILLERYMAN (V.O.)

Go for fox trot three.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE

Grid ES 923 945. Fire for effect, over.

ARTILLERYMAN (V.O.)  
Grid ES 923 945. Firing for effect!

A barrage of shells hit the building, blowing it to smithereens and silencing the German machine gun fire. Quartermaster GEORGE MARDIKIAN, mid-forties, handsome, and formidable, approaches Lieutenant Guardhouse.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE  
Hello, George!

GEORGE MARDIKIAN  
(saluting)  
Colonel Guardhouse, sir! My men have set up a mess tent behind a building about a hundred yards back.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE  
Very good, George. Thank you. We appreciate your help.

George Mardikian turns and heads back to the mess tent. About fifty feet from the tent, he notices a very young, shell shocked AMERICAN SOLDIER sitting on the edge of a log with his helmet removed. George approaches him, lifts him on his feet from under his arm.

GEORGE MARDIKIAN  
Come with me, son.

George walks him over to the mess tent where approximately ten chefs cook feverishly, creating homemade meals for over three hundred soldiers. He walks the young soldier to an open spot at the table and orders a SERVER to bring a meal. The server brings a turkey dinner with all the fixings. The young man's eyes light up as he digs in voraciously.

CUT TO:

INT. LABOR CAMP BARRACKS - DAY

Ashot is fast asleep, snoring in his bunk. Klarisa and Eddie sit on the floor, playing with some broken toys. Klarisa has her rag doll sitting with them as they play. Gayanne walks down the barrack aisle and approaches Klarisa.

GAYANNE  
You look funny dressed as a boy.

Klarisa is not amused.

GAYANNE (CONT'D)  
 My mom said we could play outside  
 as long as we stay close by.

Klarisa turns and looks at Ashot, who's snoring away.

KLARISA  
 I guess it would be all right.

Klarisa grabs Eddie's hand and follows Gayanne outside.

EXT. LABOR CAMP BARRACKS - DAY

A barren field in front of the barracks. Gayanne, Klarisa, and Eddie play kickball in a circle with THREE OTHER CHILDREN. Klarisa kicks the ball to Eddie, who picks it up and runs away with it.

KLARISA  
 No Eddie! Kick it back.

From the distance, we hear the DRONE of a squadron of Luftwaffe fighter planes. They approach quickly, flying very low. Little Eddie drops the ball as he looks up to the planes flying overhead.

The air raid sirens go off and start to WAIL. From a distance, we see soldiers begin to usher the workers out of the factory and into nearby bomb shelters. Erin comes out of the barracks and leads the children into an underground bomb shelter fifty yards from the barracks.

ERIN  
 Come on children. Let's go. Hurry  
 up!

EXT. DAIMLER BENZ FACTORY, UPHOLSTERY DIVISION- NIGHT

Anna and about thirty women laborers are lead out of the factory to a nearby bomb shelter. Anna and a few other women break off from the group and head for the barracks. They are stopped by a GUARD.

GUARD  
 Where are you going?

ANNA  
 To our children!

Anna, from a distance, sees Erin and the children enter the bomb shelter. She breaks into a sprint toward them.

INT. BOMB SHELTER - DAY

The bomb shelter is a hole dug into the ground. It is approximately eight feet deep, fifteen feet wide, and thirty feet long. Anna enters and approaches Erin and the children. Eddie runs up and hugs her, scared by all the commotion. Anna looks over to Klarisa. From overhead, we hear the ROAR of a squadron of B-52 bombers approaching.

ANNA

Where is your father?

KLARISA

He's still inside, Mama!

In the distance, we hear the WHISTLE of bombs dropping from the sky.

EXT. BOMB SHELTER - DAY

Anna sprints back to the barracks and enters through the main entrance.

INT. LABOR CAMP BARRACKS - DAY

Anna enters the barracks, winded from sprinting. Ashot lies on the bunk, fast asleep.

ANNA

Ashot wake up!

She leans over and gives him a quick shake. Ashot springs up in panic.

ASHOT

What? What happened?

A bomb falls and explodes near the barrack window. Ashot, awake, now realizes what's happening. He grabs Anna's hand and leads her out of the building.

CUT TO:

EXT. LABOR CAMP BARRACKS - DAY

A bomb has exploded, destroying a section of the factory and setting everything ablaze. Ashot and Anna exit the barracks and run toward the bomb shelter. Just as they exit, a bomb falls through the center of the barrack building and explodes.

Ashot turns to see a fire burning inside the building. He turns around and heads back into the burning structure.

ANNA

Ashot! Where are you going? Come back here!

ASHOT

There are people still in there!

Ashot sprints back and enters the burning barracks.

INT. LABOR CAMP BARRACKS - DAY

The center of the structure is engulfed in flames. The bomb has left a giant hole in the roof. One of the remaining support beams is engulfed in flames. Ashot enters the building. He looks down the center aisle and sees Simon crawling, using his elbows. Simon looks up through smoke and sees Ashot.

SIMON

Ashot!

Ashot braves his way through the inferno of burning wood and collapsing roof structure. He approaches Simon, helping him to his feet. Ashot lifts Simon over his shoulder and makes his way to the door.

From back in the corner of the building, we hear the SHOUTS of someone yelling out for help. Ashot sets Simon down on the ground outside of the barracks. He turns and heads back into the collapsing building. Officer Vogel is trapped and pinned down by a fallen wood beam.

OFFICER VOGEL

Help! Help me, please! I'm trapped!

Ashot tries to approach Officer Vogel but is stopped by a falling wood beam. Officer Vogel is now surrounded by flames. Ashot steps back.

OFFICER VOGAL

Please don't leave! Help me, please!

Suddenly, the main roof-beam, engulfed in flames, breaks free and lands directly on Vogel, crushing him to the ground. Ashot turns and heads for the exit. As he runs down the aisle, he grabs his sack with the tea kettle attached.

EXT. LABOR CAMP BARRACKS - DAY

Ashot comes barreling out of the building just as the structure implodes. He runs through the camp, heading for the bomb shelter. Bombs explode on each side of him as he jumps feet first into the entrance of the shelter.

CUT TO:

INT. BOMB SHELTER - DAY

Ashot lands on his feet, still holding onto the sack and kettle. Anna takes the sack out of his hand and hugs him.

ANNA

Are you all right?

ASHOT

I think so?

Ashot looks around the bomb shelter.

ASHOT (CONT'D)

Where are the guards?

KLARISA

They left! I saw them change their clothes.

Klarisa turns and points to the German uniforms piled up in the corner.

ASHOT

God damn cowards! This means the Russians are here. We better go. I don't want anything to do with those communist bastards. If they find us, they will kill us.

ANNA

Yes, but we were forced to work for them.

ASHOT

Do you think they care? They expect us to die before we help the Germans!

CUT TO:



EXT. BOMB SHELTER - DAY

Klarisa and Ashot have exited the shelter. Anna and Eddie step out, as well. The factory has been hit with about a half dozen bombs. It burns in the background as Ashot and his family make their way to the main road.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. STUTTGART, GERMANY DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

Aerial shot traveling down the center of the street. Bombed out buildings are still smoldering. From the distance, we see lampposts on fire, lighting up the street like an airport runway. As we approach, we see Ashot and his family walk down the center of the street, huddled together.

Coming down to street level, we notice an ELDERLY RUSSIAN SOLDIER, blind in one eye. He is wrapping a torn up Nazi flag around a stick. He dips it into a vat of gasoline and lights it on fire. He turns with the makeshift torch and places the flames under the SS boot of a NAZI COMMANDER hanging by his neck from the lamp post. The gasoline soaked commander explodes into a ball of flames.

The burning street lamps are exposed to be a row of German soldiers, hanging by their necks, engulfed in fire. Ashot and Anna cover their children's eyes as they walk quickly past the burning corpses.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF STUTTGART, GERMANY - NIGHT

Ashot and his family are a few miles out of the city limits. They move pass houses along the road. Most have been destroyed or have been abandoned by their occupants. Exhausted from walking all day, Ashot stops in front of an abandoned farmhouse.

KLARISA

Papa, I'm hungry!

ASHOT

I know, sweetie. I'll find us some food.

Ashot looks over to the farmhouse and then back to Anna.

ASHOT (CONT'D)

This is a good place to get some rest. I'm going to go take a look. Wait here.

Ashot runs to the back of the farmhouse. He notices a kerosene lamp placed on the ground near the door. He lights the lamp and enters through the back door.

CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED FARM HOUSE - NIGHT

The house has been ransacked- furniture toppled over and cabinet doors left open. Ashot clears a path to the front door. He opens the door and waves Anna and the children to come in.

Anna, Klarisa, and Eddie enter the house.

ASHOT

I'm going to check the kitchen for some food.

Ashot enters the kitchen and begins to check the cabinets. He finds all of them are bare. He opens the pantry door to find more of the same. Frustrated, he sets the kerosene lamp on the floor and falls to his hands and knees. His medallion hangs out of his shirt. He grabs it and secures it back under his undershirt.

Looking down at the pantry floor, he notices a gap in the wood floor. Pressing on a corner of the pantry floor, a wood plank rises up, exposing a secret compartment filled with canned food. He pulls out a couple of cans of beans.

ASHOT (CONT'D)

Anna, come here. I found some food.

Anna enters the kitchen with the children.

ANNA

Oh my God! Thank you, Jesus!

Ashot looks around the kitchen and finds a wood burning stove.

ASHOT

I'll get some wood.

Anna finds a candle and lights it.

ANNA

I'll see if I can find a pot or something.

EXPLOSIONS and GUNFIRE can be heard outside near the house. Ashot turns off the kerosene lamp and Anna quickly blows out the candle.

ASHOT

(whispering)

No one make a sound!

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

INT. ABANDONED FARM HOUSE - NIGHT

Ashot and Anna have brought the kitchen to a somewhat better condition. The wood stove is now burning at full force. The children are laid out on blankets, sleeping on the kitchen floor. Anna pours a cup a tea with her kettle.

ANNA

Where are we going to go? The food will run out in a couple of days.

ASHOT

We have to find out where the Armenians are? The workers at the camp said there were over two thousand Armenians working at Dachau. All those people have to be somewhere around here.

ANNA

How are we going to do that? We don't even know where they are!

ASHOT

I saw an American Jeep. Tomorrow we ask the American soldiers. They will know where they are.

ANNA

I hope you're right!

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF STUTTGART, GERMANY - MORNING

Ashot, Anna, and their children are walking on the side of a gravel road. It's a rural area with a few farms spread out throughout the locality. It is very quiet. All that's heard is the sound of their shoes CRUNCHING the gravel as they walk. Ashot hears something and suddenly stops.

ASHOT

Be quiet. Do you hear that?

ANNA

I don't hear anything!

ASHOT

Shush!

From the distance, we faintly hear the SQUEAKS and RUMBLE of tank tracks traveling on the road.

ASHOT (CONT'D)

Tanks are coming! We have to hide.  
If it's the Russians, they will  
kill me and send you to Siberia!

Ashot leads his family toward the nearest farm house. Approaching the rear of the house, he looks for a storage cellar to hide in. He sees some large bushes between the house and the barn. Hidden between the bushes is a wooden trap door. He lifts the wooden door, exposing a set of wooden steps leading to the storage cellar. Ashot leans in to take a look inside.

ASHOT (CONT'D)

Hello? Anyone in there?

Ashot hears some RUSTLING down from inside the cellar.

ASHOT (CONT'D)

I can hear you! Come out with your  
hands up!

Ashot hears the VOICE of a YOUNG GERMAN SOLDIER.

YOUNG GERMAN SOLDIER

Please don't shoot. I'm unarmed!

We see a blond, blue-eyed teenager as he emerges from the darkness of the cellar.

ASHOT

It's all right. I'm not going to  
hurt you. Come out of there!

The young German soldier climbs out into the daylight, wearing oversized civilian clothing.

ASHOT (CONT'D)  
What's your name?

YOUNG GERMAN SOLDIER  
Ludwig.

ASHOT  
My name is Ashot.

Ludwig extends his hand. Ashot firmly shakes his hand.

LUDWIG  
Nice to meet you.

ASHOT  
I'm going to need your help,  
Ludwig. The Russians will be here  
in a few minutes, and if I could  
find you, I'm sure they will, too.

LUDWIG  
What do you want me to do?

ASHOT  
See that big bush over there? Pull  
it out and bring it over here.

Ashot waves Anna and the children to come over to the cellar. As they approach, Anna pulls out a candle from her bag and lights it as she enters the cellar.

ASHOT (CONT'D)  
Anna, see if you can find some rope  
or twine.

Ludwig comes back with the bush. Anna climbs the steps out of the cellar and hands Ashot a piece of rope. Ashot quickly ties the rope around the roots of the bush. He places the end of the rope through a hole in the wooden cellar door. He hears the VOICES of the Russian soldiers as they approach.

ASHOT (CONT'D)  
Hurry up. Get inside. Be very  
quiet!

RUSSIAN SOLDIER 1 exits the rear door of the house, brandishing his rifle, while RUSSIAN SOLDIER 2 and RUSSIAN SOLDIER 3 approach from around the side of the house.

RUSSIAN SOLDIER 1  
The house is all clear!

From inside the cellar, Ashot pulls the rope that draws the bush over the cellar door, camouflaging the entrance. Russian Soldier 1 and Russian Soldier 2 walk right up to the bush and start to look around.

RUSSIAN SOLDIER 2  
Let's take a look in the barn.

Russian Soldier 1 heads toward the barn.

CUT TO:

INT. STORAGE CELLAR - DAY

A few beams of sunlight shine through cracks in the cellar door. Eddie starts to fidget and begins to sob. Just as he lets out a cry, Anna covers his mouth.

CUT TO:

EXT. REAR OF FARMHOUSE. DAY

RUSSIAN SOLDIER 3  
Did you hear that? It sounded like a baby.

RUSSIAN SOLDIER 2  
You're hearing things!

RUSSIAN SOLDIER 3  
I swear I heard a baby cry! You didn't hear it?

Russian Soldier 1 returns from the barn.

RUSSIAN SOLDIER 1  
The barn is all clear. What's going on?

RUSSIAN SOLDIER 2  
He thinks he heard a baby cry.

RUSSIAN SOLDIER 1  
I didn't hear anything.

RUSSIAN SOLDIER 2  
Fuck the baby. Let's get out of here!

The Russian soldiers return to their battalion. We hear the tank's engine ROAR back to life as they continue down the road.

CUT TO:

INT. STORAGE CELLAR - DAY

Inside the cellar, Ashot has his finger to his mouth, shushing the baby. Eddie stares back, confused but conforming. Anna removes her hand from his mouth. Eddie takes a deep breath and remains quiet. Ashot waits a few moments as the sound of TANK TRACKS dissipates. He pushes the cellar door open and exits.

CUT TO:

EXT. REAR OF FARMHOUSE - DAY

Anna hands Eddie up to Ashot. They all exit the cellar. Ludwig humbly looks down when Anna looks at him.

ASHOT

This is my wife, Anna... my children, Klarisa and Eddie. This is Ludwig.

Ludwig graciously puts out his hand.

LUDWIG

Pleasure to meet you, Frauen.

ANNA

Nice to meet you, Ludwig.

ASHOT

Ludwig, you should hide here for the next few days. Eventually the Russians will leave.

Ashot takes the sack off of Anna's shoulder, opens it, and hands Ludwig a can of beans.

ASHOT (CONT'D)

Here take this. It should last a couple of days.

Ludwig refuses, signaling with his hands.

LUDWIG

Oh no, I couldn't. You have young children!

Ashot tosses the can at him, forcing him to catch it.

ASHOT  
Take it, we have more.

LUDWIG  
Thank you very much! God bless you!

ASHOT  
God bless you. You're going to need it!

LUDWIG  
Where are you going?

Ashot swings the sack over his shoulder, grabs Klarisa's hand and turns to leave.

ASHOT  
I have to find my people.

Klarisa turns and waves goodbye as they head back to the road. Ludwig meekly waves back.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. RURAL ROAD OUTSKIRTS OF STUTTGART, GERMANY - DAY

The road is wet from the morning dew. Temperatures have dropped. Ashot, Anna, and the children are bundled up and back on the road. Little Eddie is being led by Klarisa. She holds his hand as he struggles to keep up. They approach an intersection in the road. One arrow points to Munich. Another points to Nuremberg.

ANNA  
You have no idea where you are going! Look. We are almost out of food.

Anna opens the sack and shows him the last can of food.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
You have us wandering aimlessly around the countryside.

ASHOT  
All right. If you know so much, you choose which way to go.

She looks up and points to the Munich sign. Ashot smiles.



ANNA  
What's so funny?

ASHOT  
You know how far it is? At least a  
hundred miles.

ANNA  
That's not funny!

ASHOT  
We have to find the Armenians.  
Let's go towards Nuremberg. It  
should be much shorter going there.

ANNA  
All right. But I still feel we  
should go the other way.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. SMALL VILLAGE TOWN NEAR NUREMBERG, GERMANY - DAY

Eddie, asleep, is being carried by Ashot. They are coming to the end of the town's main drag. They pass a general store with windows broken out and shelves emptied. About a hundred yards away, TWO MEN in their mid-thirties approach Ashot and his family.

ASHOT  
Look Anna, these guys are Armenian!  
Maybe they know where to go?

Ashot approaches the two men who have the same facial characteristics that he does. He hands the baby over to Anna.

ASHOT (CONT'D)  
(in Armenian)  
Are you Armenian?

The two men look back at him confused. Ashot extends his hand.

ASHOT (CONT'D)  
My name is Ashot. So you're not  
Armenian?

TURKISH MAN ONE  
(extending his hand)  
No, my name is Addai, and my friend  
is Haluk. We are Turkish!

As their hands touch, Ashot's eyes glaze over, as if he's in a trance.

FLASH BACK:

INT. ONE ROOM SHELTER BUILT FROM ROCKS AND WITH A GRASS ROOF - DAY

The room is a converted livestock shelter and has a large wooden door. FIVE YEAR OLD ASHOT is being laid down by his pregnant mother, HASMEEK. She places him in a bed made of hay and a few blankets. She turns and heads toward her husband, HAKOB, who has a large mustache and wears early nineteenth hundreds' clothing.

Hakob sits at a small table in the center of the room, having tea from the family's copper kettle. Suddenly the door is busted wide open by a black horse ridden by a TURKISH HORSEMAN. Hakob stands up as the Turk advances, aiming his sword at Hakob's chest. The sword's main thrust is defused by a medallion dangling from his neck. Hakob falls to his knees and drops forward.

Ashot, hiding under his blanket, looks up just in time to see his mother stabbed in her pregnant belly by the horseman's sword. Ashot focuses in on the face of the horseman. The horse turns and gallops out of the house. Hakob, still alive, crawls over to his wife, lifting and holding her in his arms.

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL VILLAGE TOWN NEAR NUREMBERG, GERMANY - DAY

Ashot releases Addai's hand as he comes back to reality. He focuses on Addai's face. His resemblance to the horseman is uncanny.

ADDAI

Where are you going? You're headed in the wrong direction.

ASHOT

I need to find the Armenians. Do you know where they might be?

HALUK

No, we don't, but you should come with us. We've been finding a lot of gold!

Addai opens a leather satchel full of gold coins and jewelry.

ADDAI

Here, take a couple of coins. You might need them.

ASHOT

Oh no. That's blood gold.

Ashot, disgusted, turns and abruptly leaves. Anna and the children follow him as he continues down the road.

FADE OUT.

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD TO NUREMBERG - DAY

The weather has turned to an on and off drizzle. Ashot, Anna and the children are huddled together under a canvas tarp as they traverse the muddy road. Approximately two hundred yards up the road, Ashot spots a battalion of Russian tanks and soldiers pulled over to the side of the road.

ASHOT

God damn it! Russians.

ANNA

Ashot! You don't have to curse!

ASHOT

We have to go around them. Let's cut through the forest.

ANNA

We need to find someplace to get out of the rain.

Ashot leads them into a forest of dense foliage. After a few minutes of maneuvering through the trees, they come near a clearing. We hear the VOICES of Russian soldiers yelling and commanding people. Ashot leads his family toward some bushes.

ASHOT

Wait here. Be very quiet.

Ashot makes his way to the clearing. He hides behind some rocks, trying to get a view. TWENTY RUSSIAN SOLDIERS have at gunpoint a group of TEN GERMAN SOLDIERS. They dig their own graves.

RUSSIAN COMMANDER VLADIMIR CLACHENKO is scar-faced with a brutal disposition. He watches as TWO SS SOLDIERS shovel mud onto a fellow SS CAPTAIN. The last few shovels of mud suffocate the soldier as he disappears into his argillaceous grave. Commander Clachenko turns toward another SS soldier.

COMMANDER CLACHENKO

(in Russian)

Get inside the hole you Nazi  
asshole... son of a bitch.

The German soldier hesitates. Vladimir viciously hits him on the back of the head with the butt of his rifle, propelling the German, face first, into the muddy hole. Ashot has seen enough. He turns and heads back to Anna and his children.

ASHOT

We need to leave now.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. FOREST ADJACENT TO FARM FIELD - NIGHT

The rain comes down hard as Ashot and family exit the forest and go into a farm field. They head for a bombed out barn in the middle of the field. Part of the barn roof is missing. They enter, looking for a dry spot.

ANNA

We have very little food left.

ASHOT

Tomorrow, with God's help, we will  
find some food.

ANNA

Oh, now you're with God?

ASHOT

I hope there is God. All I see is  
the devil. No God around here!

Ashot clears a corner of the barn. Anna pulls a blanket out of her sack, spreading it out over some hay. Ashot picks up Eddie and places him on the blanket.

ASHOT (CONT'D)

You and Klarisa lay down here.

Eddie nods back in agreement. Ashot gathers some nearby hay and wood and starts a small fire.

KLARISA

Can't we go back to our house,  
Mama?

ANNA

Ashot, she's right. We should go back.

Ashot ignites the fire.

ASHOT

Never! I will die before I go back to those Communist bastards! We are traitors in their eyes. I'm not going to take that chance with our lives. Go to sleep. Tomorrow, we will find the Armenians. Then we have a chance to leave this hell behind us!

Ashot places his arms around his family as they huddle around the small fire.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD TO NUREMBERG. DAY

The sun shines brightly. Storm clouds have cleared, revealing a beautiful landscape. POLISH REFUGEES in groups of five and six traverse the road going both ways. Ashot approaches a blond-haired, Polish family- a HUSBAND, WIFE, and THREE CHILDREN.

ASHOT

(in Russian)

Greetings!

POLISH HUSBAND

Hello!

ASHOT

By any chance do you know where the Armenians may be?

POLISH HUSBAND

Armenians?

ASHOT

Yes, the Armenians!

POLISH HUSBAND

No, no Armenians. We saw Americans maybe a mile up the road.

The Polish family all agree. The husband turns and points up the road.

ASHOT

All right! Thank you very much!  
Good luck!

Ashot, Anna, Klarisa, and Eddie grab each others' hands and continue up the road.

ASHOT (CONT'D)

Let's find the Americans. Maybe they know where they are.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF NUREMBERG. ON A PAVED ROAD - DAY

Ashot and family are yet again at a crossroads.

The signs point to HEIDALHIEM, NERESHIEM, and NUREMBERG.

ANNA

So now which way?

Ashot looks down each road, trying to decide. From the distance he sees a cloud of dust.

ASHOT

We better hide. I think it's a jeep because it's coming very fast.

They move to a forest area about twenty yards away from the road and hide behind some trees. Ashot watches the vehicle as it nears them. The Jeep gets close enough for him to see an American flag attached to its hood.

ASHOT (CONT'D)

It's all right. They're Americans!  
Come on. We have to stop them!

They near the road. Ashot steps out into the middle of the roadway and starts to wave them down.

INT. JEEP. ON A GRAVEL ROAD. DAY

Driving the Jeep is Lieutenant Guardhouse. Next to him is Captain Ramirez, smiling and happy the war is over.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE

What the hell is this guy doing?

CAPTAIN RAMIREZ

I don't know, but you better slow down, or you're going to kill him!

Guardhouse downshifts and applies the brakes. The Jeep comes to a sliding halt a few feet in front of Ashot.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE  
What are you, crazy? You almost got killed!

ASHOT  
I'm sorry, but we need your help.

Guardhouse is upset with the distraction.

CAPTAIN RAMIREZ  
How can we help you?

ASHOT  
We are looking for the Armenians.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE  
(frustrated)  
The Armenians.

ANNA  
We are Armenians!

Ramirez nudges Guardhouse.

CAPTAIN RAMERIZ  
Why do you always have to be so ornery? Sorry, ma'am, for my friend's rudeness. We know about the Armenians.

ASHOT  
Yes, the Armenians. Do you know where they might be?

CAPTAIN RAMIREZ  
Bill, what was the name of that military academy? We were there a few days ago.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE  
(cheeky, he knows)  
You mean the Nazi school? It had some weird name... Funka something.

CAPTAIN RAMIREZ  
Funkkaserne. Your people are there. But you're going the wrong way.

Captain Ramirez pulls out a map.

CAPTAIN RAMERIZ

Let's see. We are here. Funkkaserne is over here! All right. You have to go back that way, and you'll see a sign pointing to Munich. It's a couple of miles from there.

Anna stares Ashot down.

ANNA

(pointing)

So we have to go back that way.

CAPTAIN RAMIREZ

Yes, Mam'am! A few hours on foot, and you'll be there!

Anna continues to stare at Ashot.

ASHOT

Thank you very much. You saved our lives.

ANNA

Yes, thank you for your help.

CAPTAIN RAMERIZ

You're very welcome! Good luck.

Guardhouse revs the engine and takes off in a cloud of dust.

ANNA

What did I tell you? You never listen to me! You were taking us completely in the wrong direction!

ASHOT

All right, I was wrong.

ANNA

Say it! I was right! And you were...

ASHOT

You were right. I was wrong.

Anna smiles victoriously.

CUT TO:



EXT. ESTABLISHING SHOT: FUNKKASERNE CAMP - DAY

Large iron gates protect the entrance to the massive former SS training facility. It has various buildings and training areas.

EXT. FUNKKASERNE CAMP, INSIDE ENTRANCE GATE - DAY

A small guard shack adjacent to the entrance is manned by PRIVATE WILSON, late twenties, brown hair, green eyes, and Southern mannered. He leaves the guard shack and opens the gate for a Red Cross military truck. The truck pulls in, and Private Wilson closes the gate behind them. Red Cross DOCTOR STEVEN MILLER, in his late forties with salt and pepper hair, exits the truck and approaches Private Wilson.

DOCTOR MILLER

Who is in charge here?

PRIVATE WILSON

Yes sir! That would be Lieutenant Guardhouse.

DOCTOR MILLER

I need to speak to him immediately!

PRIVATE WILSON

Unfortunately, sir, Lieutenant Guardhouse is on a survey at another camp about thirty clicks west of here.

DOCTOR MILLER

Well, we need to get a hold of him. My doctors here at the camp have informed me there is an outbreak of TB. We might have to evacuate a section of the camp.

PRIVATE WILSON

Yes sir. I will radio him immediately!

Private Wilson heads back to the guard shack and gets on the radio.

PRIVATE WILSON (CONT'D)

Eagle One to Alpha Rover, do you copy?

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD THIRTY CLICKS WEST OF FUNKKASERNE - DAY

Guardhouse and Ramirez are pulled over, putting water into the radiator of their overheated Jeep.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE  
Go for Alpha Rover, over. Is that you, Private Wilson?

PRIVATE WILSON (V.O.)  
Yes sir. Wilson here!

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE  
What is it, Wilson?

PRIVATE WILSON (V.O.)  
Lieutenant, sir. There is a doctor here from the Red Cross. Says there is a TB outbreak in the camp. He wants you to evacuate.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE  
What? No way. There are almost three thousand people in that camp. Is this guy out of his mind? Do not evacuate. Do absolutely nothing! Do you understand, Wilson?

PRIVATE WILSON (V.O.)  
Yes sir! Do not evacuate. Do absolutely nothing.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE  
I will be there in thirty minutes. Alpha Rover, over and out!

Captain Rameriz slams the hood on the Jeep and jumps into the driver's seat.

CAPTAIN RAMIREZ  
I'll drive.

CUT TO:

INT. FUNKKASERNE CAMP INFIRMARY - DAY

The twenty bed infirmery is full of patients with different degrees of tuberculosis. NURSE MURIEL, mid forties, with a dark Italian look, wears a surgical mask. Nurse Muriel pulls a white sheet over the face of a middle-aged ARMENIAN WOMAN with dark hair and chestnut eyes. Her husband, KREKOR, sits on the edge of a bed next to her, having watched her die.

He clutches his dying FIVE-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER tightly to his chest. The young girl's skin has turned blue. She coughs up blood, splattering it on her father's face. Nurse Muriel takes a few steps over to the next bed where Krekor's thirteen-year-old son, ARTUR, takes his last breath. Nurse Muriel turns and looks across the room for NURSE MARY NIXON, mid-twenties, with light skin, a Southern belle, also dressed with a surgical mask.

NURSE MURIEL

Nurse Nixon, could you come here  
and give me a hand, please?

NURSE NIXON

Yes ma'am. Be right there!

Doctor Steven Miller enters the infirmary.

DOCTOR MILLER

Nurse Muriel, Nurse Nixon, please  
come with me.

The nurses walk over to Doctor Miller and they all exit the infirmary.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD THREE KILOMETERS FROM FUNKKASERNE - DAY

The road sign arrow points 3 kilometers to Funkkaserne.

ANNA

Thank God. We are almost there!

KLARISA

Mama, are there other kids there?

ASHOT

There are a lot of kids there! Come  
on. Let's go.

Klarisa takes off running.

ANNA

Klarisa, come back here!

CUT TO:

INT. FUNKKASERNE CAMP INFIRMARY - DAY

Krekor has made a makeshift noose out of the bed sheets and his leather belt.

With the noose tied to a sewer pipe located on the ceiling, Krekor hangs, his body swinging back and forth. His daughter's lifeless body lies on the bed next to him. Nurse Muriel and Nurse Nixon return to the infirmary. They spot Krekor. Nurse Muriel runs over to Krekor and feels for a pulse.

NURSE MURIEL

Oh my God! Go get help.

Nurse Nixon runs out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. FUNKKASERNE CAMP. INSIDE ENTRANCE GATE - DAY

Private Wilson has opened the entrance's iron gates. Lieutenant Guardhouse and Captain Ramirez, driving the Jeep, speed dangerously into the camp, barely missing the rear of the Red Cross truck. Guardhouse jumps out and approaches Private Wilson.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE

Where's the Red Cross guy?

Doctor Miller exits the building and nears the two soldiers.

DOCTOR MILLER

(extends a hand)

Lieutenant Guardhouse? Doctor  
Steven Miller. Red Cross.

Guardhouse is a little reluctant to shake hands but does anyway.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE

How can I help you, Doctor?

DOCTOR MILLER

We have a problem. The doctor here  
at the camp feels we have an  
epidemic of TB.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE

Look, Doctor Miller, there is no  
way we can evacuate this camp.  
There are over twenty-five hundred  
people in there with nowhere to go!

DOCTOR MILLER

Well, if we don't do something,  
half of them will be dead in a few  
weeks.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE  
 Give me a few moments. I need to  
 call my commander.

Guardhouse turns and heads for the administration building.

CUT TO:

EXT. FUNKKASERNE CAMP ENTRANCE - DAY

Ashot, Anna, Klarisa, and Eddie have arrived and near the guard gate. Klarisa is giddy with excitement. As they near the guard shack, Klarisa can hear the SOUND of children playing. As they walk by the entrance, Klarisa catches a glimpse of TWENTY CHILDREN playing kickball in the center courtyard. Private Wilson is at his post. He exits the guard shack and greets the family.

PRIVATE WILSON  
 (in Armenian)  
 Hello. Welcome!

ASHOT  
 You speak Armenian?

PRIVATE WILSON  
 No, not really. That's all I know.

ASHOT  
 This is my wife Anna, my daughter  
 Klarisa, and my son Eddie.

PRIVATE WILSON  
 (in Armenian)  
 Hello.

ANNA  
 Nice to meet you!

Klarisa waves enthusiastically.

KLARISA  
 Hi! Are you an American?

PRIVATE WILSON  
 Yes, missy. I'm from North  
 Carolina.

ASHOT  
 We are Armenian refugees. We have  
 no place to go, and our people are  
 inside the camp. We also would like  
 to stay with them here.

PRIVATE WILSON

I'm sorry, but the camp is full,  
and there is a tuberculosis  
outbreak. We might have to evacuate  
the camp. Sorry it's for your own  
safety.

The family's excitement dissipates and quickly turns to  
despair. Ashot steps back in disbelief.

CUT TO:

EXT. FUNKKASERNE CAMP. INSIDE ENTRANCE GATE - DAY

Doctor Miller stands near the Red Cross truck. Lieutenant  
Guardhouse and EIGHT SOLDIERS escort Krekor's dead family on  
stretchers into the Red Cross truck.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE

Okay, Doctor Miller. My commander  
says there is an abandoned military  
warehouse about a quarter-mile up  
the road. He wants you to set up a  
quarantine area in the warehouse.

DOCTOR MILLER

What about beds or cots? I need  
supplies!

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE

I will personally make sure you get  
what you need.

DOCTOR MILLER

The problem is we have no idea how  
many are infected?

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE

Look, Doctor, I can't tell you how  
to do your work, but this is the  
best we can do for you now.

DOCTOR MILLER

All right, we can start by  
transporting the rest of the  
patients in the infirmary.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE

Let me find Sergeant Lewis. We'll  
get you the manpower you need.

Guardhouse turns and heads to the guard shack.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE (CONT'D)  
Private Wilson!

PRIVATE WILSON  
Yes sir!

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE  
Get Sergeant Lewis on the radio.  
Tell him I need his boys to help  
the Red Cross.

PRIVATE WILSON  
Yes sir. Right away, Lieutenant!

A work truck passes by and downshifts, causing a loud BACKFIRE. Guardhouse turns quickly, investigating the source. As the truck drives by, Guardhouse spots Ashot and his family bundled up meekly on the corner. Guardhouse crosses the road and approaches them.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE  
Why are you out here?

Ashot's eyes light up.

ASHOT  
Hello, Commander! I'm so happy to  
see you. We were told the camp is  
full.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE  
Who told you that?

ASHOT  
The nice American boy at the guard  
house.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE  
Come with me.

Guardhouse walks back to the guard shack with Ashot and family in tow. As they near, the Red Cross truck backs out.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE (CONT'D)  
Private Wilson, help these people  
check into the camp.

PRIVATE WILSON  
But I thought you said the camp was  
full and you couldn't take anyone  
else, sir!

The Red Cross truck grinds its gears as it drives away.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE  
We have the room now. Let them in.

ASHOT  
Thank you very much, Commander!

Ashot looks down at Lieutenant Guardhouse's worn-out boots. Guardhouse notices and also looks down.

ASHOT (CONT'D)  
I will make you new boots. Size eleven?

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE  
Eleven and a half, but that's not necessary! I'm leaving in a couple of weeks.

ASHOT  
No problem. That's plenty of time!

CUT TO:

EXT. FUNKKASERNE CAMP HOUSING UNITS - DAY

ESTABLISHING SHOT:

The quartering buildings are three stories high with Bavarian style architectural accents. Eight large buildings previously housed up to a thousand cadets. The facility has an assembly hall, cafeteria, shooting range, equestrian center, and a large courtyard in the middle of it all.

INT. FUNKKASERNE CAMP HOUSING UNITS - DAY

An Armenian female camp worker, RHIPSIME, early thirties, with dark hair and green eyes, leads Ashot, Anna, Klarisa, and Eddie down a long hallway toward their new home.

KLARISA ANANIAN (V.O.)  
Our lives in the camp got much better. We finally got a roof over our heads. It was a place we could call home. We even had our own toilet.

They enter a small eight by ten room with a toilet room and sink. Ashot walks up to the toilet.

KLARISA  
What is it, Papa?



ASHOT

It's a toilet! Look, Anna, we have  
a toilet!

Ashot pulls the chain and the toilet loudly FLUSHES. He jumps back startled. Anna has walked over to the window giving way to a view of CHILDREN playing kickball in the center of the courtyard. Klarisa runs up to the open window and sticks her head out.

KLARISA

Mama, look at all the kids! Can I  
go play?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FUNKKASERNE CAMP COURTYARD - DAY

Close to fifty families, MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN, fill the courtyard. Men play board games and cards. Woman sort food and clothing amongst themselves.

KLARISA ANANIAN (V.O.)

There were over twenty-five hundred  
people living in the camp. There  
were reunions.

MONTAGE:

In the courtyard, Ashot approaches a wooden bench with a GROUP OF MEN playing "Nardi" (backgammon). Standing and watching is Ashot's friend, Armen. Armen turns and sees Ashot.

ARMEN

Ashot? Oh my God. It's really you!

Armen reaches out, grabbing and hugging Ashot with all his might.

DISSOLVE TO:

On the courtyard field, Klarisa and her friend, Gayanne, recognize each other. They run and jump into each other's arms.

KLARISA ANANIAN(V.O.)

New friends were made. We were  
happy again!

DISSOLVE TO:

In the courtyard, Anna greets Erin. They hug and kiss.

ERIN

Come with me. I want to introduce  
you to the girls.

Erin takes Anna by the hand and leads her to a wooden table surrounded by Armenian WOMEN. They all smile and joke around as they are introduced to a very happy Anna.

KLARISA ANANIAN V.O.

We all had to work, but it was for  
ourselves. The men made furniture  
and shoes. The women sewed clothes  
and worked in the fields growing  
fruits and vegetables. We weren't  
hungry anymore!

MONTAGE:

INT. FUNKKASERNE CAMP CONVERTED ARMORY - DAY

The armory has been converted to a small factory. On one side, MEN cut and stretch leather while others sew and stitch it into shoes. On the other side, men cut wood and fabricate tables, chairs, and other furniture pieces. Ashot works on a shoe horse, stretching and forming the leather into a boot.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FUNKKASERNE CAMP WAREHOUSE - DAY

The WOMEN have set up a sewing center on one side of the warehouse. Cutting tables and foot-operated sewing machines are busy as the women create new clothing to sell to the local Germans. Anna sits at a sewing machine, applying the final stitches to a wool coat.

EXT. FUNKKASERNE CAMP GROWING FIELDS - DAY

Erin, Gayanne, Klarisa, and Eddie are in the vegetable garden, harvesting red, ripe tomatoes.

KLARISA ANANIAN (V.O.)

Of course we had our problems. A  
lot of the men were shell shocked,  
so they drank vodka all day. Some  
just passed out. Others went  
completely crazy!

EXT. FUNKKASERNE CAMP COURTYARD. SNOW LINED - NIGHT

View from Klarisa's window. A MIDDLE AGE MAN, drunk and shirtless, runs aimlessly around the courtyard, yelling at the top of his lungs.

MIDDLE AGE MAN

Mama jan, why did you leave me?  
Why? Why?

He runs in circles, babbling incoherently. Running out of steam, he trips and falls face first into the mud.

CUT TO:

EXT. FUNKKASERNE CAMP CHURCH BUILDING - DAY

ESTABLISHING SHOT:

A large assembly building near the courtyard has been converted into a church. A wooden cross crowns the entrance. A BRIDE and GROOM are carried on chairs out of the church doors. They are accompanied by about TWO THOUSAND GUESTS as they make their way to the center courtyard.

KLARISA ANANIAN V.O.

Every time there was a wedding, a couple of thousand people showed up. It was the same with funerals.

MONTAGE:

Everyone is now wearing black. It's the same shot as before except now SIX PALLBEARERS carry a wooden coffin over their heads. They exit the church and two thousand camp members follow as they walk toward the exit of the camp.

KLARISA ANANIAN V.O. (CONT'D)

Our best parties were when a baby was born. It would take almost two days for everyone in the camp to personally congratulate the parents and family. After a few births, we figured out a better way.

The center courtyard is full of guests. The NEW PARENTS are on stage holding the NEW CHILD. The father takes the baby from its mother's arms and holds it up for the crowd to see. The camp members CLAP and HOLLER, creating an ear numbing ROAR.

KLARISA ANANIAN V.O. (CONT'D)

We had our own school where we learned to read and write in Armenian. They taught us history, math, and geography. Our favorite lessons were about the United States of America. All our hopes were that we might get to someday live there. To us it was the promised land.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FUNKKASERNE CAMP SCHOOL BUILDING - DAY

Approximately THREE HUNDRED STUDENTS sit quietly, paying attention to their TEACHER who is pointing at a map attached to a chalkboard.

TEACHER

All right, who knows the Capital of The United States of America?

Klarisa enthusiastically raises her hand.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Yes, Klarisa.

KLARISA

Washington, D.C.

TEACHER

Correct! Washington D.C.

CUT TO:

INT. FUNKKASERNE CAMP CONVERTED ARMORY - DAY

Ashot works diligently, creating a new set of boots for Lieutenant Guardhouse. He applies some black wax and gives the boots their final polish. He puts down the rag and wax, grabs the boots, and heads out the door.

CUT TO:

INT. FUNKKASERNE CAMP, ASHOT'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

Ashot enters his room to find Anna bent over changing a blanket on one of the beds.

ASHOT  
Hello, my love!

He puts the boots down and starts to hug Anna from behind.

ANNA  
What are you doing?

She breaks away and walks over to the window. Gazing out the window. The sun shines through her hair. Ashot approaches. He places his hand gently on her cheek, appreciating her beauty.

ASHOT  
Have I told you how beautiful you are?

ANNA  
Stop it! I haven't been beautiful for quite some time.

ASHOT  
Well you are. Where are the children?

ANNA  
They went to Erin's house. Did you see the new blanket I got for Eddie?

Ashot turns her around and starts to passionately kiss her.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. FUNKKASERNE CAMP, LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE'S HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Ashot knocks on the partially open door leading to Guardhouse's office.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE  
Come in!

Ashot enters with boots in hand.

ASHOT  
Hello, Commander. I have those boots I promised you!

Ashot proudly holds them up and hands them to Guardhouse. Guardhouse is completely overwhelmed at how well-made they are.

ASHOT (CONT'D)  
They will last forever. Your son  
will wear them.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE  
No kidding. They are absolutely  
beautiful. You made these here at  
the camp?

ASHOT  
Yes, sir! I want to thank you for  
helping me and my family!

Guardhouse puts the boots down and walks up to his desk.

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE  
I want to do something for you. I'm  
going to write a letter of  
recommendation for you. When you go  
to America you can use it to get a  
job. How do you spell your name?

ASHOT  
America? USA?

LIEUTENANT GUARDHOUSE  
Yes, the USA. Now spell your name!

CUT TO:

EXT. FUNKKASERNE CAMP, ASHOT'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

Ashot, Anna, Klarisa, and Eddie are sitting around a small  
table in the middle of the room. Anna is serving them a hot  
meal of chicken, potatoes, and a variety of vegetables.

ASHOT  
The American commander said we  
might get a chance to go to  
America! He gave me this letter.

He hands Anna the letter.

ASHOT (CONT'D)  
He said I can get a job in the USA  
with that letter. Make sure you  
hide it Anna.

ANNA  
Don't worry. I will put it in my  
Bible.

KLARISA

We are going to America? Can we go to Washington, D.C.? The President of the United States lives there!

ASHOT

Yes, if we get to go, I'll take you to Washington D.C.

ANNA

The girls heard an American Armenian is coming to our camp. They said his name is George Mardikian. He is suppose to be very rich. Maybe he will help us?

ASHOT

Oh my God. Freedom! Please if there is a God? Please help us!

EDDIE

America!

Ashot surprised, picks up Eddie, kisses him, and begins to spin around the room with Eddie raised above his head.

CUT TO:

INT. 1940 CHEVY MILITARY SEDAN - DAY

GENERAL HAIG SHEKERJIAN and GEORGE MARDIKIAN are sitting in the rear of a 1940 Chevy military sedan.

CUT TO:

EXT. FUNKKASERNE CAMP ENTRANCE - DAY

The military sedan is being escorted by a Jeep with two high ranking soldiers. The gates open and the vehicles pull in. They exit the sedan and see a church, a school, and a theater. The camp members all twenty-five hundred have assembled on the courtyard. They are dressed in their best outfits. Everyone seems to have some sort of gift in their hands- flowers, candy, cookies, and bottles of alcohol. They all face the camp entrance, waiting for their esteemed guests. George Mardikian's eyes well up with tears.

GEORGE MARDIKIAN

I'm taking all these people back to the States!

GENERAL SHEKERJIAN

All of them?

GEORGE MARDIKIAN

All of them!

George opens a camera case strapped over his shoulder. He pulls out his Kodak Retina camera and takes a snapshot.

CUT TO:

EXT. CIRCA 1948 POWELL STREET, SAN FRANCISCO - OMAR KHAYYAM'S RESTAURANT. DAY

Establishing Shot: OMAR KHAYYAM'S sign crowning George Mardikian's famous basement restaurant on Powell street. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt's 1936 Ford Phaeton convertible is parked out front of the building's entrance. The car's front license plate reads FDR1.

INT. OMAR KHAYYAM'S BASEMENT RESTAURANT. DAY

We descend into the cavernous, lavishly decorated restaurant below. On the left, at the bottom of the stairs, is the Rubaiyat lounge with velvet banquettes, low Persian lamps, and a gleaming chrome cash register. Tables in the restaurant are contained in curtained chambers straight out of the Arabian Nights.

The walls are decorated with framed inscriptions from "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam". A large table covered with an overwhelming amount of Mediterranean food and drink is set in the middle of the room.

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT sits at the head of the table surrounded by FIFTEEN OF HER FRIENDS and high ranking GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. George Mardikian, wearing his chef hat, brings to the table a large rack of lamb plate with all the fixings.

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

Oh my! George you have definitely outdone yourself. Absolutely divine!

GEORGE MARDIKIAN

I cooked all of this especially for you, Eleanor!

She turns to focus on George.



ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

All right, George. What is it? You need a favor or something?

GEORGE MARDIKIAN

Well, now that you mention it, Eleanor, I do. Something very close to my heart.

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

You know if I can help, you can consider it done. What is it?

George pulls out a black and white picture of the twenty-five hundred Funkkaserne camp members. He hands it to Eleanor. Eleanor takes a good look and passes it around the table.

GEORGE MARDIKIAN

These are my people. They are currently in a refugee camp near Stuttgart, Germany. I have been trying to get them to come to the United States for close to two years with no help from the government.

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

Congress recently signed the Displaced Persons Act, and according to Harry Truman, and I quote, "In its present form, this bill is flagrantly discriminatory. It mocks the American tradition of fair play". And he is absolutely correct! But, as flawed as it is, he signed it because these people need help now! At the very least, it opens the doors to help your people, George.

GEORGE MARDIKIAN

I will do whatever it takes to help them!

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

You need to get sponsors for each family. I'm sure the people at this table can help you. After all, they are very popular. Isn't that right, Senator Cain?

She glances around the room with an omnipresent stare. They all react positively. SENATOR CAIN is tall, dark, and handsome. He smiles at Eleanor.

SENATOR CAIN

Yes, Eleanor, we are blessed.  
George, I would be honored to help  
you. My family owns orange fields  
in Santa Paula Valley. We can get  
them jobs and housing. I'm sure,  
through our church, we can get you  
the sponsors you need!

GEORGE MARDIKIAN

I would be deeply indebted to you  
Senator Cain!

SENATOR CAIN

It is absolutely not a problem.

He glances at Eleanor. She's content.

GEORGE MARDIKIAN

(smiling ear to ear)

I want to thank you all! And  
tonight the dinner is compliments  
of Senator Cain. Please, everyone.  
Eat, drink, and be happy.

Senator Cain is surprised but goes along with it as everyone  
acknowledges his generosity. George signals to the stage  
where his band begins to play a lively Armenian TUNE. George  
walks over to Senator Cain, shakes his hand, and leans in to  
whisper in his ear.

GEORGE MARDIKIAN (CONT'D)

Don't worry. The dinner's on me.

SENATOR CAIN

I love you, George. You're the  
best! By the way, may I keep this  
picture?

GEORGE MARDIKIAN

Of course!

George catches Eleanor's eye and throws her a kiss across the  
table. She smiles back in her preeminence.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. FUNKKASERNE CAMP, ASHOT'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

The song's HARMONY, from the band in the restaurant, blends  
into the music Klarisa plays. She sits on a chair in the  
middle of the room, practicing her accordion.

Ashot stands by her, playing his mandolin and continuing the HARMONY. Suddenly Ashot stops playing.

ASHOT  
Stop playing!

Klarisa stops and looks up to her father.

ASHOT (CONT'D)  
Try playing in a higher note.

Klarisa pulls back on the accordion and hits a higher note.

ASHOT (CONT'D)  
That's it. You got it!

They continue to harmonize the lively Armenian song. The front door opens. Anna enters with Eddie in tow. She walks up to Ashot and whispers in his ear.

ANNA  
I'm pregnant.

Ashot stops playing and contemplates her remark.

ASHOT  
Are you sure?

ANNA  
Yes. I'm sure.

ASHOT  
Oh my God. We're going to have a  
new baby!

He puts the mandolin down and picks Anna up off the ground.

ANNA  
Ashot! Put me down.

Ashot sets her back on her feet.

CUT TO:

INT. FUNKKASERNE CHURCH - DAY

Anna and Erin kneel near the alter praying with their heads bowed. Anna holds a Bible in her hands. She makes the sign of the cross and raises the Bible to her lips.

ERIN  
Anna, could you lend me your Bible?

ANNA

Gladly, Erin. May God answer your prayers.

Anna hands her the Bible.

ERIN

I'm praying we get to raise our children in America.

ANNA

From your lips to God's ears!

CUT TO:

EXT. FUNKKASERNE CAMP COURTYARD - DAY

ESTABLISHING SHOT: The camp gates open to a large celebration. The twenty-five hundred camp members have assembled in the center courtyard.

Sitting at a table overstuffed with food and libation are George Mardikian and his beautiful wife NAZELY. They are accompanied by General Haig Shekerjian and a couple of CAMP LEADERS. A few feet in front of them, the camp members have erected a stage in the courtyard.

A complete orchestra has been assembled on stage for entertainment. FOUR FEMALE CAMP MEMBERS bring plates of skewered meats to the table and distribute them among the guests.

Klarisa appears on stage and approaches a microphone stand, center stage. Ashot, with Mandolin in hand, comes on stage. Anna enters along with the other musicians as they all take their places.

KLARISA

(in Armenian)

Dear honored guests. We welcome you with open hearts and open minds. In the spirit of our ancestors, in the love of Jesus Christ, we accept you into our home, our camp Funkkaserne!

Klarisa steps back, and the band plays the song Klarisa had been rehearsing. She heads to her accordion, picking it up and joining in. Anna steps up to the microphone and joins in with vocals. Ashot, playing the mandolin, begins to dance in the traditional Armenian style. He circles Anna as if serenading her. The audience ROARS in appreciation. Anna smiles, amused, as she belts out the lyrics.

They finish the song with the final notes being played by Klarisa on the accordion. The audience breaks out in applause. Ashot steps up next to Anna, addressing the microphone. He waits a beat as the applause stops.

ASHOT

Now, I have the honor of  
introducing our esteemed guests,  
Mr. and Mrs. George Mardikian.

The crowd breaks out into a tremendous ROAR as George and Nazely make their way to the microphone.

GEORGE MARDIKIAN

Thank you. Thank you!

George pauses, waiting for the crowd to settle down. People begin to CLANG on their glasses, using utensils. The crowd goes silent.

GEORGE MARDIKIAN (CONT'D)

I brought my beautiful wife,  
Nazely, with me this time. And we  
are very honored to be your guests.  
Thank you for all your  
hospitality.. Today is a very  
special day for all of us here.  
Today is the day I am happy to  
announce we now are able to get  
visas to America for all your  
families.

The crowd claps waiting to hear more.

GEORGE MARDIKIAN (CONT'D)

Now, you need to understand this is  
a long process, and it could take  
months for your paperwork to be  
ready. But, I can assure you, each  
and every one of you will  
eventually become an American  
citizen!

The crowd ROAR becomes overwhelming.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FUNKKASERNE CAMP INFIRMARY. DAY

The crowd's ROAR blends into Anna SCREAMING at the top of her lungs. She lies in a bed with her legs spread, going through painful labor contractions. Doctor Gabralian is examining her cervix as Ashot stands near Anna, holding her hand.

DOCTOR GABRALIAN  
The baby is not breached, but the  
head is facing the wrong way!

Anna's contractions subside.

ANNA  
Something's wrong, Doctor. She  
won't come out!

The contractions start again and so do her SCREAMS.

DOCTOR GABRALIAN  
I can see her head. Push! Push,  
Anna!

Anna screams louder, pushing as hard as she can. Again, the  
contractions subside. Anna seems to be slipping out of  
consciousness.

ASHOT  
Doctor Gabralian, something's wrong  
with her?

Doctor Gabralian panics. He gets up, grabs a glass of water,  
and throws it in her face.

Anna reacts, opening her eyes.

DOCTOR GABRALIAN  
Anna, stay with us. I'm going to  
pull her out this time. You push as  
hard as you can! You with me?

She nods in agreement, as the contractions start again. She  
pushes with all her might.

ASHOT AND DOCTOR GABRALIAN  
(in unison)  
Push, Anna!

The baby finally exits to everyone's relief. Nurse Muriel  
runs over with a water basin and towels. BABY RIMA starts to  
cry as the nurse cleans her up.

NURSE MURIEL  
It's a girl!

CUT TO:

INT. FUNKKASERNE CAMP, ASHOT'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

Klarisa is sitting in a chair, cradling her baby sister in her arms. Eddie, who is now a little older and matured, stands in front of them, staring at Baby Rima in amazement. Anna prepares dinner in the background.

EDDIE

What's her name, Mama?

ANNA

Rima.

Ashot bursts into the room like a hurricane. He has a large manila envelope in his hand. He runs around Klarisa and the baby, holding the envelope above his head.

ASHOT

We got it! We really got it!

ANNA

Got what?

ASHOT

We got our freedom! These are our visas.

Ashot opens the manila envelope and pulls out the documents.

ASHOT (CONT'D)

We are going to a place called...  
Santa Paula, California!

They all look back at Ashot with blank stares.

We hear the FAINT PISTON CYCLE of a steamship.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ESTABLISHING SHOT: ATLANTIC OCEAN OFF THE NEW YORK COAST  
- DAY

The USS GENERAL MACRE is an American troop transport vessel with capacity for three thousand plus cargo. As we near the ship, the sound of the PISTON CYCLE becomes more audible. Over the deck, we enter the bowels of the ship where the PISTON CYCLE SOUND multiplies into a hostile drone.

## INT. STEAMSHIP ENGINE COMPARTMENT - DAY

The ship's engine department is damp and dimly lit. Soiled CREW MEMBERS work diligently, maintaining the engine's operations. We move through the engine compartment and into a cargo hold separated by a watertight door. Inside the cargo hold are approximately TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY REFUGEES. People are spread out across the cargo hold. Some lie on cots, others on the ship's floor.

Ashot lies on a cot, fast asleep. Klarisa cradles the baby, sitting on a wooden crate near Anna and Eddie. Ashot starts to SNORE when a few drops of water trickle onto his face. He stops snoring and moves to wipe his cheek when even more water splatters onto his head. Waking up annoyed, he looks up to see where it's coming from. He stands up and examines the ship's hull. A rivet joining two steel plates is spurting out an intermittent stream of water.

ASHOT

Oh my God. The ship has a hole in it!

ANNA

You better tell someone!

ASHOT

Move our stuff before it gets wet. Our visa papers are in there. I'll go get someone!

Ashot exits through the watertight door and into the engine room. He waves down ENGINEER 1, who hears Ashot, yelling over the engine NOISE.

ENGINEER 1

What's the problem?

Ashot points to the cargo bay. He signals the engineer to follow him. They enter the cargo bay, and Ashot leads him to the water leak.

ENGINEER 1 (CONT'D)

Don't worry. It's not bad. I'll send someone to fix it.

The engineer turns and heads back to the engine compartment. A PREGNANT WOMAN sitting nearby turns green from sea sickness. She leans down and vomits.

ASHOT

Anna, I think we need some fresh air. Let's go up to the deck.



They all quickly get up and leave.

CUT TO:

EXT. USS GENERAL MACRE TOP DECK - DAY

Ashot and his family stand on the bow of the ship, enjoying a beautiful sunset. In the distance, we can begin to make out the United States coastline.

KLARISA

Look, Papa. I can see it! America!

ASHOT

Yes, it is!

The sun sets as darkness falls and cloaks the view of land in the distance.

ANNA

We better get back.

They all turn and head for the stairway heading down to the cargo hold. As they near the stairwell, Ashot sees a stream of refugees exiting and carrying their belongings up the stairs and onto the deck. Ashot approaches a REFUGEE.

ASHOT

What's happening? Where is everyone going?

REFUGE

It's flooded down there. We're moving to the front of the ship.

ASHOT

God damn it! Our visa papers!

Ashot rushes down the stairs, pushing past others trying to get out. He enters the cargo hold and sees ENGINEER 2 and ENGINEER 3 trying to shore up a gushing hole. Ashot steps into knee-high water. He wades around the floating debris of personal belongings, looking for his things.

ENGINEER 2

You need to get out right now!

ASHOT

I need my visa papers!

Engineer 3 turns and heads to the stairwell's water tight door. He closes it and moves toward the engine compartment. He grabs Ashot by the arm.

ENGINEER 3

Let's go. We need to seal the compartment!

Ashot sees the tea kettle floating, still attached to the pillowcase. He reaches out and snags it as they exit the cargo compartment. The watertight door SLAMS and CRANKS shut.

CUT TO:

EXT. USS GENERAL MACRE TOP DECK - DAY

CREW MEMBERS move all the REFUGEES toward the bow of the ship. The ship has now taken on a substantial amount of water in its stern compartments, lifting the bow ten feet out of the water. Anna, Klarisa, Eddie, and Baby Rima have been placed on a lifeboat.

CUT TO:

INT. USS GENERAL MACRE NAVIGATION DECK - DAY

The navigation deck is chaotic. NAVY PERSONNEL are running around, performing their duties in panic mode.

CAPTAIN LESSER is in his late fifties and has pale, white skin and piercing blue eyes. He is an excellent captain with a big problem. He turns to his FIRST LIEUTENANT THOMAS JOHNSON who is in his mid-forties, square-jawed, and handsome.

CAPTAIN LESSER

How long until the Coast Guard get here!?

LIEUTENANT JOHNSON

ETA is sixty-five minutes, sir!

CAPTAIN LESSER

Get all the women and children off first. I'm not taking any chances!

LIEUTENANT JOHNSON

Lifeboats are being loaded as we speak, Captain!

CAPTAIN LESSER

Unbelievable! Just a few more miles and she would have made it home!

CUT TO:

EXT. USS GENERAL MACRE TOP DECK - DAY

The SHIP'S CREW MEMBERS are about to lower the lifeboat into the choppy sea. Ashot has approached the life boat. Klarisa stands up and yells.

KLARISA

Papa!!! Papa!

CREW MEMBER

Go ahead. Bring it in!

The lifeboat starts its descent. Ashot tosses Klarisa the copper kettle, attached to the pillowcase. She reels it in just as the lifeboat hits the water. Ashot looks down the side of the ship, contemplating jumping overboard. He looks back toward the length of the ship noticing the ever-increasing slope of the deck. He turns to remove a flotation device strapped to the ship's deck rail.

CREW MEMBER (CONT'D)

Hey you! Don't do that. The Coast Guard is coming!

Ashot throws the flotation ring overboard, climbs the rail, and jumps feet first into the water and out of sight. The crew member runs over to the guardrail and looks over, waiting for Ashot to emerge. A few moments pass and no Ashot. The crew member climbs to the top of the guardrail.

CREW MEMBER (CONT'D)

Where did he go?

The crew member spots a SHARK FIN circling ominously around Ashot's submersion. Ashot abruptly emerges from the depths of the ocean. Getting his bearings, he swims toward the lifeboat with shark in tow.

CUT TO:

INT. LIFE BOAT - DAY

Klarisa leans over the edge of the lifeboat, waving her hands in desperation.

KLARISA

Hurry Papa! Swim as fast as you can! There's a big fish following you!

Ashot turns and sees the shark getting closer. He turns and starts swimming at an adrenaline fueled pace.

He grabs the edge of the boat and pulls himself up as Anna and another WOMAN pull him out of the water and into the boat.

ASHOT  
 (breathing heavily and  
 clutching his family)  
 Thank you! I thought I was going to  
 die!

We see in the distance an armada of Coast Guard vessels traveling at full speed toward the USS GENERAL MACRE.

CUT TO:

INT. COAST GUARD VESSEL - DAY

Ashot has changed out of his wet clothing and is now wearing a borrowed Coast Guard uniform. He sits next to Klarisa with his arm around her, happy to be alive. Anna, Eddie, and Baby Rima sit on a bench nearby.

The Coast Guard Cutter is approaching The Statue of Liberty. Klarisa jumps up from her seat and points as the Coast Guard cutter cruises by Liberty Island.

KLARISA  
 Mama, look it's the Virgin Mary!  
 She's here in America!

ANNA  
 (smiling)  
 No, sweetie, that is the Statue of  
 Liberty. She stands for Freedom in  
 the United States of America.

KLARISA  
 She's beautiful!

ASHOT  
 Yes, she sure is!

CUT TO:

INT. ELLIS ISLAND IMMIGRATION BUILDING - DAY

HUNDREDS OF IMMIGRANTS are crammed into the central waiting room. Most have their visa papers in hand. Ashot, Anna, Klarisa, Eddie, and Baby Rima are sitting in the center of the room, waiting their turn.

Anna turns around to look at the crowd behind her. She spots Erin and her family a few rows behind. Erin recognizes her as they wave to each other.

ASHOT  
 (glancing around the room)  
 Everyone has their visa papers but us!

ANNA  
 Whose fault is that?

ASHOT  
 It's not my fault! How was I supposed to know the ship was going to sink?

ANNA  
 You should have kept them on you.

Sitting at a desk at the front of the room is the MAIN CLERK. He is in his late sixties and has gray hair and a no nonsense attitude. He writes 39 on a piece of paper and raises it up in the air.

MAIN CLERK  
 Thirty-nine. Anybody? Thirty nine?

Ashot looks down at his ticket.

ASHOT  
 That's us!

Ashot raises the ticket above his head. The clerk waves them over. Ashot and family are lead into an interview room.

CUT TO:

INT. ELLIS ISLAND IMMIGRATION INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

IMMIGRATION OFFICER DONALD HENDERSON, mid-forties, light brown hair, and hazel eyes, has an insensitive disposition. Ashot and his family sit quietly, humbled by the officer's presence.

OFFICER HENDERSON  
 Can I please see your visa papers?

ASHOT  
 I'm very sorry, sir. My papers are on the bottom of the ocean.

OFFICER HENDERSON  
You were on the General Macre?

ASHOT  
Yes, sir. We lost almost all our belongings.

OFFICER HENDERSON  
Well, this makes things very difficult for us to process. Do you have anything that will tell us who you are?

ASHOT  
No, sir.

Officer Henderson stands up and moves toward the door.

OFFICER HENDERSON  
Please wait here. I need to speak to a supervisor.

Officer Henderson leaves the room, closing the door behind him.

ASHOT  
Oh my God. They are going to send us back to Russia!

ANNA  
Thanks to you!

Anna has a revelation. She jumps up out of her chair, handing Baby Rima to Ashot and heading for the door.

ASHOT  
Where are you going?

ANNA  
To save us!

Anna rushes out to the hallway where she is noticed by a SUPERVISOR IMMIGRATION OFFICER. He watches her as she runs into the waiting area.

CUT TO:

INT. ELLIS ISLAND IMMIGRATION OFFICE WAITING AREA - DAY

Anna enters the waiting area and approaches Erin and Gayanne. She leans in and kisses both of them on the cheek.

ANNA

Hi Erin, Gayanne. How's everything going?

ERIN

Everything is all right. God heard us, and here we are in America! How about you?

ANNA

We have a big problem. Please tell me you have my Bible?

ERIN

Oh my God. I forgot to give it back to you! I'm so sorry!

ANNA

It's okay, Erin. Please say you still have it!

ERIN

I do. It's right here in my bag.

She opens her bag and hands Anna the Bible. Anna opens the Bible and finds Commander Guardhouse's letter.

ANNA

Erin, you saved our lives! Thank you!

Anna rushes back toward the interview room.

CUT TO:

INT. ELLIS ISLAND IMMIGRATION INTERVIEW OFFICE - DAY

Officer Henderson is now back at his desk, shuffling through papers. Baby Rima is agitated. She WHIMPERS and CRIES as Klarisa tries to comfort her.

OFFICER HENDERSON

We are searching for your application. Unfortunately, this can take quite awhile. We need to have some proof of who you are before we can let you into the country.

Ashot slumps into his chair, in despair, when suddenly the door swings open. Officer Henderson is taken aback as Anna swoops in with Bible in hand. Ashot jumps to attention and approaches the desk.

OFFICER HENDERSON (CONT'D)  
What is this?

ANNA  
It's proof of who we are!

Anna opens the Bible and removes the letter, handing it to Officer Henderson.

ASHOT  
The American Commander at the camp  
gave it to me as a recommendation  
for a job. It has my name on it!

Henderson opens the letter and puts on his reading glasses.

OFFICER HENDERSON  
Well, let's take a look. Can I ask  
why he gave you this letter?

ASHOT  
I made him a pair of new boots.

Officer Henderson scrutinizes the letter. He stops a moment to look over his glasses, at Ashot, and then back to the letter.

OFFICER HENDERSON  
I've seen these letters before.  
Most of them are fake.

SUPERVISOR JOHN WALLACE, stern and authoritative, enters the room and observes the situation.

SUPERVISOR WALLACE  
What's the problem here?

OFFICER HENDERSON  
They apparently have a letter from  
a U.S. Commander.

SUPERVISOR WALLACE  
Let me have a look at the letter.

Officer Henderson hands him the letter. The supervisor reads through it. He notices the Colonel's military seal stamp on the bottom of the letter. Using his thumb, he feels the embossed seal.

SUPERVISOR WALLACE (CONT'D)  
Lieutenant Colonel William  
Guardhouse! Unbelievable. You know  
this man is a war hero!  
(MORE)



## SUPERVISOR WALLACE (CONT'D)

He single-handed took out a German artillery unit and saved hundreds of our soldiers. This letter is authentic! Go ahead Donald. Start the paperwork. I'll approve it!

Officer Henderson shakes his head in disbelief. He shuffles the papers together and pulls a stamp and ink pad from his desk drawer. He folds up the letter and hands it to Ashot.

## OFFICER HENDERSON

(stamping the papers)

Welcome to America!

CUT TO:

EXT. ESTABLISHING SHOT: SANTA PAULA, CALIFORNIA ORANGE GROOVES - DAY

Thousands of orange trees create the seemingly unending groves. They sweep through the valley's two thousand acre site. As we near, we notice the trees are overflowing with huge ripe oranges. In the distance is a development of two hundred American bungalow style homes. Most contain two bedrooms with small front and backyards. We stop at one of the homes in the center of the street.

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL TWO BEDROOM AMERICAN BUNGALOW HOUSE - DAY

A large pot of soup stews on a small four burner stove. Anna lifts the pot lid and gives it a quick stir. Klarisa and Eddie are sitting on the living room floor, playing with Baby Rima. Anna exits the kitchen with a baby bottle full of milk. She picks up Baby Rima and begins to feed her the milk.

## ANNA

Put Eddie's shoes on. We are going into town. Papa said they have stores with anything you can think of.

CUT TO:

INT. 1949 FORD SEDAN - DAY

Ashot sits in the passenger seat with his new friend, NISHAN KERKORIAN, who is built like a boxer. He has dark eyes and a five o'clock shadow. They drive through the housing development on an asphalt paved street.

NISHAN

The orange picking season will be over soon. You need to come to Los Angeles with me. More work and more money!

ASHOT

I don't know anybody in Los Angeles.

NISHAN

Don't worry. My younger brother, Krekor, is a big shot in Los Angeles. Believe me, he can get you a job.

ASHOT

Thank you so much, Mr. Kerkorian. My family will be indebted to you.

NISHAN

Please call me Nishan. And you have to understand, when my parents came here from Armenia, they were like you, broke with just their clothes on their backs. When you're ready to come, you call me!

Ashot glances over to the houses.

ASHOT

It's coming up here on the right. Thank you so much for doing this!

Nishan pulls up and parks in front of the small house. Ashot jumps out and closes the door. He runs and enters through the front door.

INT. SMALL TWO BEDROOM AMERICAN BUNGALOW HOUSE - DAY

Ashot enters to see his family ready to go.

ASHOT

Everybody ready? My friend Nishan is going to give us a ride in his new car.

KLARISA

I'm ready, Papa. Let's go!

EDDIE

Me too! I'm ready!

ASHOT

All right. Let's go!

He opens the door as they all move outside toward the car.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN SANTA PAULA MAIN BOULEVARD - DAY

Nishan pulls his Ford sedan up to a large supermarket on the corner of the street. Ashot jumps out and opens the rear door, letting everybody out. The car door slams shut as Nishan drives away.

They stand in front of the large glass double doors. Ashot pushes the door open and they all enter a massive grocery store with over fifteen aisles of shelves stacked high with a variety of different foods.

ASHOT

Oh my God! It's like a museum of food!

They all have expressions of amazement. Ashot spots the butcher department on the right side of the store. Klarisa and Eddie spot the snack aisle. Anna gazes at all the fruits and vegetables. She quickly makes the sign of the cross.

ANNA

Thank you, God, for bringing us to America!

Nishan enters the store and approaches Ashot and his family.

ASHOT

Let's get what we need. We only have eight dollars!

Nishan steps up behind Ashot and places his hand onto Ashot's shoulder.

NISHAN

You kids go ahead and get whatever you want! Uncle Nishan is going to take care of it!

ASHOT

Oh no. We can't take your money.

Klarisa and Eddie hesitate.

NISHAN

If you don't, I will be very upset.

He stares back seriously a moment and then smiles.

NISHAN (CONT'D)

Don't worry. You can pay me back  
with your new job in Los Angeles.

ASHOT

All right, you have a deal. Thank  
you!

Ashot firmly shakes his hand and gives him a hug. Klarisa  
comes over and hugs him, too.

KLARISA

Thank you, Uncle Nishan!

NISHAN

You're welcome, sweetheart. Now go  
ahead and get what you want.

KLARISA ANANIAN (V.O.)

When we saw that supermarket, with  
shelves on top of shelves all full  
of food, we knew we came to  
paradise! This was the United  
States of America. We dreamed about  
it, and we had finally made it! We  
stayed in Santa Paula a few more  
months. Then we moved to Los  
Angeles.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA CIRCA 1950 - DAY

Aerial view of Downtown Los Angeles on a hot summer day. We  
fly over palm trees and American bungalow homes as we reach  
its tallest building, L.A. City Hall. We descend to the  
street and enter The Garment District. The main drag is busy  
with cars and trucks moving in both directions. MERCHANTS  
push racks of clothing down the sidewalks, trying to avoid  
hordes of SHOPPERS. We move past a row of small dress shops  
and stop at a large warehouse on the corner.

CUT TO:

INT. FABRIC RECYCLING WAREHOUSE - DAY

Piles and piles of various types of fabric scraps are spread out over the ten thousand square foot facility. Flatbed trucks full of old clothing and fabric scraps pull into the docking area. Ashot waits for a truck to back in and drop its load of bundled clothing. The TRUCK DRIVER exits the cab and pulls down on a lever. Ashot watches as the bed tilts back and drops its load. He runs over and quickly drags the bundles over to a sorting area.

The truck leaves and Ashot opens the bundles as he starts to separate the cotton from the wool. There is a man's coat, a woman's dress, and children's clothing. He quickly identifies each piece and throws it into the appropriate pile. Ashot works at a feverish pace. He begins to perspire. The clothing, flying through the air, blurs the picture as Ashot has a flashback to the Auschwitz extermination camp.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. AUSCHWITZ EXTERMINATION CAMP, OVENS - DAY

The clothing is flying into a giant oven. Ashot stands near a cart overflowing with holocaust victims' clothing. He grabs an armful of clothing and throws it into the raging furnace. As he turns to the cart for more, he notices a blue velvet, lace trimmed, baby vest clinging to his chest. He peels it off, holding it in his hands. A moment passes, and his eye's tear up. He breaks down and falls to his knees.

END FLASHBACK.

CUT TO:

INT. FABRIC RECYCLING WAREHOUSE - DAY

Ashot is on his knees, in tears amongst the piles of fabric and clothing. His boss, URI MARKARIAN, six foot three, is a large man with a big heart. He walks up to Ashot and shakes him back to reality.

URI MARKARIAN

Ashot!

Ashot looks up, eyes full of tears.

URI MARKARIAN (CONT'D)

Ashot! You all right?

Ashot realizes where he is and jumps to attention.

ASHOT  
Yes, I'm all right.

Uri helps him to his feet.

URI MARKARIAN  
Come with me.

Ashot, a little skeptical, follows him. Uri leads Ashot to his run-down office. They enter as Uri moves to his desk, opens a drawer, and pulls out a bottle of vodka and a couple of shot glasses. He pours the shots and hands Ashot a glass.

URI MARKARIAN (CONT'D)  
Nishan told me what happened to you in Germany. Let's drink to our health.

ASHOT  
To our health!

Uri CLINKS Ashot's glass. They swallow the shots whole and SLAM the glasses back down on the table.

URI MARKARIAN  
I need you to take the truck and go see Margo. Again, she called and said she has another shipment for us.

ASHOT  
No problem. I'll go right now!

URI MARKARIAN  
No not now. One more shot for the road!

Uri pours another round. They CLINK again and down their shots.

CUT TO:

EXT. CATALINA SWIMWEAR FACTORY, LOS ANGELES GARMENT DISTRICT - DAY

Ashot backs the truck into one of the many loading docks. MARGO MURKIJANIAN, mid-forties, blue eyes, red hair, curvaceous, Armenian, walks over to greet Ashot as he exits the truck.

MARGO  
Hello, Ashot. How are you?

ASHOT

Good day, Margo. I'm doing all right.

MARGO

How's the family? Your daughter Klarisa must be all grown up now!

ASHOT

She's nineteen-years-old and wants to get married. I think she's too young for marriage!

MARGO

I know. It's so hard. You raise them, worry about them, and then they leave you.

ASHOT

I don't know who he is or who his parents are? And I'm supposed to say it's fine?

MARGO

Your wife, Anna. How old was she when you married her?

Ashot hesitates and changes the subject. He points to a large pile of bundled sewing scraps sitting on the dock.

ASHOT

Is this it?

Margo senses his stubbornness.

MARGO

Well, don't feel bad Ashot. My son has a girlfriend I've never seen. And he's also talking about marriage.

Ashot doesn't want to hear it. He leans over and starts loading the bundles onto the truck.

ASHOT

She's still a child.

MARGO

Whether you like it or not, she will eventually become a woman.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNION PACIFIC AVE. CIRCA 1956, LOS ANGELES - DAY

Ashot's 1951 Chevy Skyline is parked in the driveway of a small, two bedroom, nineteen twenties, wood sided home. We hear Klarisa SCREAMING and CRYING from outside the house.

KLARISA V.O.  
But Papa, I love him!

CUT TO:

INT. ANANIAN HOUSE, KITCHEN AND DEN - DAY

Rima, now seven-years-old, and Eddie, now twelve-years-old, sit at a small table in the kitchen nook. Klarisa sits on the couch sobbing. Ashot paces back and forth while Anna stands between them, refereeing the situation.

ANNA  
Why are you being so stubborn?!  
She's in love! Or did you forget  
about love?

ASHOT  
What love? She's too young to get  
married! That's it. I don't want to  
talk about it!

Klarisa's sobbing elevates quickly to balling.

KLARISA  
I'm not a baby anymore! I'm going  
to be twenty-years-old. Mama was  
nineteen when you married her!

Anna grabs Ashot's arm and pulls him into their bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. ANANIAN HOUSE, PARENTS' BEDROOM - DAY

Anna gets into Ashot's space, and her face reddens with anger.

ANNA  
Now, you are going to listen to me!  
Klarisa's life up to now has been  
hell on earth. We have to thank God  
we made it this far! Now she has a  
chance for some happiness. I'm not  
going to rob her of that and  
neither are you!



Ashot stares back dumbfounded.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Now you go out there and tell her  
you'll meet the boy's family. Go!

Anna pushes him out the door and into the living room.

CUT TO:

INT. ANANIAN HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ashot walks up to Klarisa sitting on the couch, head in hands, sobbing. She looks up curiously.

ASHOT

I will meet his family.

KLARISA

Really!

Ashot nods in agreement. Klarisa jumps up excited. She hugs and kisses him. Anna watches from the doorway.

KLARISA (CONT'D)

It's just him and his mother. He  
lost his father during the war.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. UNION PACIFIC AVE - DAY

Margo rides with her son, PETER, mid-twenties, tall, dark haired, and handsome. He sport's an Elvis Presley hair style and drives a 1953 Cadillac Coupe Deville. They drive by the original Quaker Oats Factory.

MARGO

Are you sure you're ready for  
marriage?

PETER

I just got a raise at the Ford  
company. I'm ready!

MARGO

That's not what I'm talking about.  
Are you in love?

PETER  
 Yes, Mother, I love her! Here it  
 is, 3520 Union Pacific.

Peter pulls up and parks in front of Klarisa's house.

INT. ANANIAN HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Klarisa peeks out the living room window and sees the  
 Cadillac pull up.

KLARISA  
 Mama, Papa, they're here!

ANNA  
 (whispering to Ashot)  
 You better be nice to these people!  
 Start by smiling. Don't ruin this.  
 Do you understand?

Ashot forces a smile and nods in agreement.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
 All right, let's go.

CUT TO:

INT. ANANIAN HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ashot and Anna enter the living room. A table for six has  
 been set in the middle of the room. It is stocked with an  
 overwhelming amount of salads, cold cuts, and Armenian food.  
 They all move past the table and exit the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANANIAN HOUSE - DAY

Klarisa excitedly bolts ahead of Eddie, Rima, and her  
 parents. Peter has exited the car and is helping Margo out of  
 her seat. He opens the car's rear door and removes a bouquet  
 of flowers and a bottle of cognac. They all gather on the  
 sidewalk and wait for Margo to exit. Margo turns to face  
 them. She looks up straight at Ashot. Ashot looks back in  
 amazement.

ASHOT  
 Margo?

MARGO  
 Ashot jan!

Anna and Klarisa are surprised.

ANNA

You know each other?

ASHOT

Margo works at Catalina swimsuits.  
It's part of my route. Margo, this  
is my wife, Anna; my son, Eddie;  
and my younger daughter, Rima.

Margo extends her hand.

MARGO

Pleasure to meet you, Anna! This is  
my son, Peter.

Peter extends his hand to Anna and then to Ashot. Eddie walks  
over and shakes hands with Peter in a very manly way.

EDDIE

Nice to meet you.

Peter is impressed. Rima smiles at Peter, and Peter smiles  
back.

PETER

Nice to meet you both.

Peter turns to Klarisa and grabs her hand.

PETER (CONT'D)

Mom, this is Klarisa.

Klarisa approaches Margo. She kisses her on both cheeks and  
gives Margo a big hug.

MARGO

What a beautiful girl!

ASHOT

Please, everyone. Let's go inside.  
We have a big dinner waiting for  
us!

They all move up the walkway toward the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES CIRCA 1955, OUR LADY QUEEN OF MARTYRS  
ARMENIAN CHURCH - DAY

A small Catholic Church at 1339 Pleasant Ave. The church, built in the thirties, is nestled into a hillside with a view of Downtown Los Angeles from its entrance. A steep driveway leads to a large parking lot located near the side of the church. We move up the driveway into a parking lot full of late model Cadillas and Lincolns. We move through a walkway leading to a set of double doors. The doors open.

MOVE TO:

INT. ARMENIAN CHURCH BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

The hall is occupied way over capacity. Approximately five hundred people are seated or standing around the dance floor. Familiar faces from the Funkkaserne Camp for Displaced Persons (DPs) are dotted throughout the crowd.

Klarisa and Peter sit at the main table. Klarisa's family sits on her right side and Peter's extended family sit on the left. Directly behind them on stage is MAESTRO EDWARD HOSHARIAN, mid-forties with jet black hair. He's a composer and looks it.

His eight piece Armenian ORCHESTRA is tuning up, preparing to play. Ashot, Anna, and Margo stand near the entrance, greeting GUESTS as they enter. Simon, who was injured at the Daimlier Company in Stuttgart, enters wearing an expensive suit. With his beautiful wife, SERA, by his side, he approaches Ashot.

SIMON

Ashot jan!

Ashot sees him. They hug as Simon kisses Ashot on both cheeks.

ASHOT

Simon, my friend! I'm so glad you came. I want you to sit with me.

(calling out)

Anna!

Ashot waves Anna over.

ASHOT (CONT'D)

Anna, you remember Simon and Sera?

ANNA

Of course I do! Sera, Simon..

They shake hands. Simon puts out his left hand. Anna acknowledges she knows about his injured hand.

ASHOT  
Sit them at our table!

ANNA  
Absolutely, please come with me!

Anna leads them to the main table. Ashot turns around and is now face to face with his friend, Nishan Kerkorian.

NISHAN  
(in Armenian)  
Ashot jan! Light to your eyes!

They hug. Ashot respectfully kisses Nishan on both cheeks.

ASHOT  
Nishan jan, you look good!

NISHAN  
Thank you. I've been training for a big fight coming up.

The PA system SQUEALS as Eddie Hosharian nears the microphone.

EDDIE HOSHARIAN  
Ladies and gentelman, your attention, please!

The CROWD continues a mild CLAMOR. Guests start to CLANG their utensils on the drinking glasses.

EDDIE HOSHARIAN (CONT'D)  
(in Armenian)  
Honored guests, your attention, please!

The crowd quiets down. Ashot and Nishan turn toward the stage.

EDDIE HOSHARIAN (CONT'D)  
We come together today to celebrate a very special occasion. The marriage of Peter and Klarisa Murkijanian!

Drum beats fill the air as the orchestra builds up momentum.

EDDIE HOSHARIAN (CONT'D)

Let's start the celebration with  
the Shabash Dance!

Clarinets begin to SQUEAL as Klarisa and Peter stand up and enter the dance floor area. The crowd roars in appreciation. Peter starts to dance Armenian style as he circles around Klarisa, accenting the mood. Ashot walks over to the table and stands next to Anna. Nishan reaches into his jacket and pulls out a large roll of money. He runs over to the bride and groom, showering them with hundreds of dollar bills.

Klarisa waves to her parents, inviting them to join in on the dance. Ashot and Anna enter the dance floor as the crowd roars to a louder level. Ashot begins to circle around them doing the famous Hopak Cossack Dance. The crowd roars even louder as he flies through the air, kicking and extending his arms in perfect Cossack style.

A series of characters from the camp, one by one, appear and shower money upon them. Armen, Doctor Gabralian, Simon, and a host of familiar faces take part. Guests start to flood the dance floor. They dance around the family, pinky fingers entwined. The line grows so large it extends into the table area. Eddie Hosharian and the orchestra speed up the pace of the song, adding to the spectacle unfolding on the dance floor.

EDDIE HOSHARIAN (CONT'D)

Opah! Tashi!

Maestro Hocharian turns toward his orchestra with baton in hand. He motions to raise the tempo and finally crescendo to the song's finale.

EDDIE HOSHARIAN (CONT'D)

Thank you! Thank you very much!

The guests clap and cheer as things wind down on the dance floor.

EDDIE HOCHARIAN

Ladies and gentelman, can I please  
have your attention!

The guests all turn and face the stage.

EDDIE HOCHARIAN (CONT'D)

It is my pleasure to introduce a  
man you all know well! The father  
of the bride, Ashot Ananian. Ashot,  
please come up here.

Ashot, a little reluctant, makes his way to the microphone.

ASHOT

Thank you, Maestro Hosharian!

Ashot stares out into the crowd of familiar faces. He loves these people and they all know it. He looks down at Klarisa. Her loving gaze says it all. He pauses a beat and looks back to the crowd.

ASHOT (CONT'D)

Well, here we are all together again! I see everyone looks good and healthy. My wife says I have to buy a Cadillac. She says all the DP's drive a Cadillac.

The men in the audience of guests smile, proud of themselves.

ASHOT (CONT'D)

God bless America!

Ashot's boss, Uri Markarian, stands up and raises his shot glass into the air.

MAN

Ashot jan! I will drink to that!  
God bless America!

The guests all raise their glasses into the air. Someone hands Ashot a shot glass filled with vodka.

ASHOT

God bless America!

He throws the drink back quickly and sets the glass down.

ASHOT (CONT'D)

My new in-law, Margo Murkijanian.

He glances over to Margo who smiles and waves back.

ASHOT (CONT'D)

She said one day my daughter would become a woman and whether I liked it or not, it was going to happen. Well it did!

Everyone turns and smiles at Margo.

ASHOT (CONT'D)

At first I couldn't accept it. After all, she is my little girl. I would give my life for her!

Ashot looks down into Klarisa's eyes. She gazes back with tears of joy.

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK MONTAGE:

INT. GERMAN MILITARY TRUCK - DAY

Klarisa clings to her mother, sobbing in the back of the German Army truck as they are driven from their home.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WARSAW, TRAIN TERMINAL - DAY

We watch from the moving train as Klarisa is left alone at the train station.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AUSCHWITZ CONCENTRATION CAMP - DAY

From Ashot's POV, Klarisa stands alone, clutching her rag doll amongst barbed wire and dead corpses.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LABOR CAMP BARRACKS - DAY

Klarisa pouts, dressed like a boy.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. UNION PACIFIC HOUSE LIVING ROOM - DAY

From Ashot's POV, Klarisa sits on the couch sobbing. She looks up to him with tearful, imploring eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHURCH RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT

Ashot, tearing up, continues his speech.



ASHOT

But now I see the happiness in her heart. The joy in her spirit. I see myself and my beautiful wife.

He looks over and acknowledges her.

ASHOT (CONT'D)

I remember how we fell in love and how happy we were.

ANNA

How happy we are!

The guests love it! A wave of laughter moves through the room.

ASHOT

Yes, she's right. How happy we are! And now, today, how happy Klarisa and Peter are! I want everyone to drink to their health and happiness! Salute!

Ashot and the guests throw back their shots. The guests start to CLAP and CHEER. Eddie Hosharian approaches and hands Ashot his mandolin. Ashot, surprised, takes it into his hands.

ASHOT (CONT'D)

Thank you, Maestro!

EDDIE HOSHARIAN

Ashot Ananian, everyone!

The crowd CHEERS. Eddie Hosharian raises his baton, and the band, on his cue, starts to play the same song Ashot played for George Mardikian at Funkkaserne.

Ashot begins to play the mandolin. He brings the instrument close to the microphone, accenting his strumming.

A procession of GUESTS enter the dance floor and synchronize themselves as they begin to dance with intricate, traditional moves. We spin around with them, in the center, as women and men dance precisely around the perimeter of the dance floor.

KLARISA ANANIAN (V.O.)

My wedding was fantastic. We celebrated until five o'clock in the morning. My father got so drunk, we had to carry him to the car!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DINNING ROOM, MODERN HOME CIRCA 2016. DAY

Close up: KLARISA ANANIAN is eighty-years-old, frail but alert.

KLARISA

Pete and I worked hard and bought a house. In 1957, Joe was born, and three years later, Gregory came. And now, here I am with my beautiful grandchildren.

The camera pulls out to a dining table full of food. Klarisa reaches out and grabs the handle of the famous kettle. She pours hot water into a teacup. The camera pans the table, showing her TWO SONS and THREE GRANDCHILDREN.

KLARISA (CONT'D)

So when I die, I want you to remember what we had to go through so you can have a better life. And remember, when you have a problem, the power of God is inside of you. All you have to do is ask for His help!

YOUNGEST GRANDCHILD

Grandma, you're not going to die!

KLARISA

(smiling)

Don't worry, not today!

END TITLES ROLL mixed with outtakes of cast and crew during filming.

