

THE  
HOUSE  
IN  
THE  
CROOKED  
FOREST

by  
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3-22-22

BELLEVUE/ALP  
UTA

*"The world inside had its own rules,  
and those rules were not human."*

-Michel Houellebecq, "The Elementary Particles"

DARKNESS. Blacker than the inside of your fist. All we hear is our own PANICKED BREATH. Like being trapped in a coffin.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
...*shhh... shhhhhh...*

Our jittery POV peers THROUGH THE SLATS OF A FURNACE GRATE...  
we're hiding inside a ventilation duct of a townhouse...

Looking out at a room: peeling walls, 1940s decor. Beyond a closed door, we hear HEAVY FOOTFALLS, MUFFLED SHOUTS, then--

*BLAM!* Door's KICKED OPEN. Our breathing gets stifled; someone's clamped a hand over our mouth to stop our scream as-

**AN SS OFFICER** steps in. Helmet, boots, wintercoat, MP-40 ready. Cold eyes scanning. Behind him, NAZI SOLDIERS storm the townhouse, pulling SICKLY RESIDENTS out of their rooms. There has to be 30 people stuffed into this three-story home.

NAZI SOLDIERS (O.S.)  
***Raus! Raus! Haende hoch!***

Patient as can be, the Officer stalks the room. Opens a faded cupboard. A wardrobe. A closet. Shoves aside ratty suitcases.

Then pauses. Listens. Then turns... TOWARD OUR HIDING SPOT--

BAM! SCUFFLE breaks out in the hallway behind him. He looks to see A SKINNY YOUNG MAN (**FILIP**) wrestling a NAZI for his gun-- the fight goes to the floor-- kicking-- thrashing--

--the Officer sighs, walks out into the hall, unholsters his Rueger, aims it at Filip's head--

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
(a whisper)  
Don't watch.

A HAND COVERS OUR EYES as **BOOM!** COMMOTION... Officer cracks a joke in German, his pal laughs. And as they force the keening evacuees from the house, we finally hear nothing at all.

INT. TOWNHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

CREAK. The vent grate lifts and out comes **RIVKA KRONENBERG**. 30s. Polish Jew. Street-smart survivor. Wears a section of a MAN'S SCARF wrapped around her wrist like a tourniquet. Scans to see the coast is clear. Motions behind her, and out crawls-

--her son, **HUGO**: 9, sweet, smart, anxious on a good day. Dark hair and dark features like his mom. Clutching a threadbare stuffed animal, a floppy-eared grey MOUSE.

Mother & son bone-thin after a year of 200-calorie-a-day ghetto rations. Patchy winterclothes, worn-out shoes.

Rivka checks through the door to make sure the house is empty, then motions Hugo over to--

RIVKA  
This way...

--THE WINDOW, where they gaze out across the rooftops of...

**WARSAW GHETTO, POLAND -- DECEMBER, 1942**

The once-vibrant heart of the city turned urban prison, surrounded by a 12-foot masonry wall. A SPOTLIGHT sweeps from a distant guard tower, its beam catching snowflakes like dust in the sun. A sign reads "*Wohngebiet der Juden Betreten Verboten*" ("Residential area of the Jews, entry forbidden.")

RIVKA  
See that wall below the water tower  
4 blocks away? All we have to do is  
sneak over there, quick and quiet  
as can be. Understand?

He nods but she sees fear in his eyes. She kneels, faces him.

RIVKA  
What am I doing?

HUGO  
Getting us out.

RIVKA  
What are you doing?

HUGO  
Whatever you say.

RIVKAS  
(re: his stuffed mouse)  
And for Borys?

HUGO  
Keeping him safe no matter what.

RIVKA  
Good boy.

And as they make for the door we see it: underneath Rivka's brave face, she's fucking terrified.

INT. TOWNHOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

We stalk them down the hall... past splintered doors and ransacked belongings... and the bloody corpse of young Filip who fought back. Rivka turns Hugo's face away, moving on--

--but then pauses. Glances at Filip's lifeless form. At the BLOODSTAINED WINTERCOAT he's wearing.

EXT. STREET BEHIND TOWNHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The rear door of the townhouse opens a crack. Rivka and Hugo slip through -- Rivka carrying the bloodstained wintercoat.

Down the back steps they go. The darkened street beyond is vacant save for the distant sounds of the ghetto being liquidated: Nazis SHOUT as they stuff prisoners onto trucks. Infants WAIL. Dogs BARK. Gunshots POP, making Hugo flinch.

RIVKA  
(grips his hand)  
Don't let go.

They're off -- ragged shoes moving fast over icy pavement --

--almost halfway across the block when **VROOM!** The sound of a TRUCK ROARING AROUND THE CORNER AHEAD, FAST, as--

THE TRUCK BARRELS INTO VIEW

--a diesel powered OPEL BLITZ loaded with NAZI SOLDIERS--

--but all the Nazis see is a corpse laying face-down in the street, draped in a BLOODY WINTERCOAT. As the truck drives on, Rivka peeks from under the coat, Hugo held close to her.

RIVKA  
UP--

Now we hear it: **BARKING DOGS.** Closing in fast from THE BLOCK BEHIND THEM. Our heroes are on their feet and SPRINTING as--

**A NAZI FOOT PATROL**

--rounds the corner, DOBERMANS straining at their leashes. The dogs catch a scent, rush forward--

--quick -- vicious -- paws scraping--

INTO AN ALLEY

--toward a DUMPSTER -- the dogs scamper up DEBRIS PILES, diving into the dumpster, SNARLING, TEETH GNASHING--

--getting only mouthfuls of the WINTERCOAT our heroine ditched in the dumpster. Because Rivka and Hugo...

ARE ALREADY AROUND THE NEXT CORNER

...rushing through the thin corridor that cuts across the heart of the ghetto like a ribbon of scar tissue--

--SLALOMING around piles of rubble and trash and dead men and the rats that feast upon them--

--and as they come to the next street intersection--

RIVKA

Stop.

She pulls Hugo back, stopping him cold. Because... THIS INTERSECTION IS IN THE PATH OF THE SPOTLIGHT.

Every 30 seconds, the rotating light bathes the boulevard in white. Rivka points to an alley entrance one block north--

RIVKA

Last block. Move on 3...

The spotlight continues its rotation, coming around...

RIVKA

One...

The spotlight DRAWS CLOSER... Rivka primes herself to run...

RIVKA

Two...

CLOSER, CLOSER... Hugo shuts his eyes, steels himself...

*THE LIGHT SWEEPS PAST, Drenching the block in scorching light--*  
--and as soon as it travels onward--

RIVKA

Three.

Rivka MAKES HER MOVE--

–but Hugo FREEZES UP. Jaw tight, HAND CLENCHED AND SHAKING.

Rivka doesn't waste a beat. She GRABS Hugo into her arms and CARRIES HIM. Runs, fast as she can, out into the street--

--the spotlight's beam coming back around again, seconds until it holds them in its pitiless gaze, as--

--Rivka makes a MAD SPRINT for the alley entrance ahead as--

--the spotlight TRAVELS OVER THEIR STREET -- *their cover of shadows rapidly erased by the sweep of the light as--*

THEY DIVE INTO THE DARKNESS OF THE ALLEY

--SLAMMING into a wall, hard-- *OOOF! Out of the spotlight*, spared by microseconds. Hugo, embarrassed for freezing up--

HUGO

*I'm sorry-- I'm sorry, I--*

No time to talk, Rivka sets Hugo down and they flee--

TOWARD THE WALLED BORDER OF THE GHETTO

Rivka runs her hand along the masonry until she finds a LOOSE BRICK down at knee level. Kneels, pulls it free--

--daisy-chains bricks to Hugo, who silently sets them aside. Rivka reaching deeper in, yanks the last brick free, hands it to Hugo, looks back into the tunnel she just formed--

*AND A MAN'S GAUNT FACE STARES BACK from the other side.*

We jolt. Rivka doesn't. This is **ALBIN**, her lookout. Gentile Pole, 40, bald, sleazy.

RIVKA

Albin.

ALBIN

Rivka.

RIVKA

(off his "pay me" gesture)

Let us through, then we pay.

ALBIN

Show me.

(off her hard stare)

I can wait. Can you wait?

She can't. Digs a thin wad of *Zloty* (Polish currency) out of her rucksack, shows it to him through the hole.

We hear a heavy bolt go THUNK, then... a small section of the wall slides out. *A secret smuggler's supply hatch.*

Rivka ushers Hugo through, crawls after him, dragging her rucksack behind her -- bodies *SQUEEZING* through--

EXT. WARSAW GHETTO, ARYAN SIDE - CONTINUOUS

--and out into freedom on the non-Jewish side. As they climb to their feet, Hugo dusting grime off Borys' fur--

ALBIN

Cute rat.

HUGO

He's a mouse. My father gave him to me.

Albin's not listening, guiding them down deserted streets, as-

ALBIN

In there-- now--

They dart into A DARKENED ALCOVE and hold perfectly still in the shadows AS A NAZI JEEP rumbles past. Soon as its gone--

RIVKA

Where's the truck?

ALBIN

Coming. Soon as I signal it.

RIVKA

(puts CASH into his hand)  
Then signal it.

Albin's counting his money. Hugo watches, distrustful. Then--

ALBIN

30.

RIVKA

We agreed on--

ALBIN

As the price for one. Not two.

RIVKA

That's all I have.

ALBIN

Debatable.

(oozes closer to her)  
Suppose I let you hide in my shop  
for the night, and work off your--

He stops cold, looks down to see something unexpected:  
Rivka's holding the tip of a KITCHEN KNIFE to his crotch.

ALBIN  
(a beat, then)  
We'll stick with 30.

RIVKA  
Sold.

Rivka slides the knife back into her sleeve -- she uses the old tourniquet as a KNIFE SHEATHE. Albin draws a flashlight, aims it at the street, clicks it twice. An endless beat. Then an **ORLEN HEATING OIL DELIVERY TRUCK** comes around the corner.

ALBIN  
Congratulations. You're the  
Partisans' problem now.

Rivka and Hugo are already making for the truck, driven by 2 MEN (**ALEKSANDER & MARCEL**) dressed in delivery coveralls and caps. Polish Partisans, insurgents disguised as workers.

MARCEL  
Get in back under the shelf. Huddle  
close, your cousin will kill me if  
you freeze to death on the way.

Rivka nods her gratitude and they climb into the cargo hold, slamming the gate shut as VROOM! They go RUMBLING OFF as...

#### GOD'S EYE VIEW

...we watch Nazi trucks packed with Jews, driving off from the ghetto to the Treblinka-bound trains... and A LONE DELIVERY TRUCK heading out of the city.

#### EXT. COUNTRYSIDE BEYOND WARSAW - NIGHT

The truck's a spark in vast darkness. Warsaw's gone; we're now in deep country. Dense trees, branches thick with snow.

#### INSIDE THE TRUCK'S CARGO HOLD

Rivka & Hugo, hidden below a shelf of barrels. Breath icy. As Rivka stuffs MITTENS over Hugo's hands, eagle-eyed viewers might notice one of Hugo's mittens has a rip in the seam.

RIVKA  
Almost there, just a little farther  
now...

Hugo doesn't respond, mind faraway...

RIVKA  
What's wrong, little one?

HUGO  
(quiet)  
You said run... and I didn't... I  
just...

She pulls his shivering body closer. Getting him to not dwell  
on his emotions by engaging his brain...

RIVKA  
There's a riddle Rabbi Hutner once  
told me: the closer you get, the  
smaller I become. The more you  
retreat, the larger I grow. What am  
I?

HUGO  
Are you...  
(beat)  
...what are you?

RIVKA  
Perspective.

HUGO  
(chewing on it)  
...perspective...?

RIVKA  
Another way of saying "look at the  
bigger picture." Right now, I look  
and see we're alive. And we're  
free. And we're together. And  
that's all that matters.

Hugo's comforted, but unable to let go...

HUGO  
They laughed. When they shot dad.  
Just like they laughed when they  
shot Filip in the house tonight.

Rivka listens. Thinks of all she'd trade to shield him from  
the world. Knowing the world is resistant to such bargains.

HUGO  
...I hear them laughing in my head,  
and I get... I get so...

RIVKA

Look at me... those things in your head, you silence them and keep moving because that's how we survive. How our ancestors survived the past 4,000 years. We don't stop, we don't dwell, we only move forward. Understand?

Hugo nods. Knows this speech cold. Suddenly--

ALEKSANDER (O.S.)

*SHIT-SHIT-SHIT--*

WHAP! A view-slot in the cargo hold slides open, Rivka and Hugo can see through it into the driver's cabin.

ALEKSANDER

Stay low, don't make a sound--

Through the windshield: a **NAZI CHECKPOINT** blocking the road ahead. SS goons in winter uniforms, waiting with machine guns. WHAP! The view-slot slams closed in our faces as--

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE ROAD, NAZI CHECKPOINT - CONTINUOUS

The truck stops at the roadblock. Snow spirals in the lights as THREE NAZI SOLDIERS approach. 2 *GEFREITER* (\*PRIVATE FIRST CLASS): **ENGEL** and **BRANDT**. Ruddy-faced **SGT. LUDWIG** overseeing.

IN THE CARGO HOLD

Rivka and Hugo hold STONE STILL, listening to the Nazis speaking German outside the truck...

HUGO

(a whisper)

What are they saying?

Rivka listens, translating German to Polish in her head...

RIVKA

"Stop the engine and take the keys out."

IN THE TRUCK'S CABIN

Aleksander stares at Engel and Brandt, blank faced. Brandt repeats himself in sub'd German. (*\*Going forward, all German dialogue will be in italics to indicate subtitles.*)

BRANDT

*I said: "Stop The Engine And Remove  
The Key."*

Still no response. Captain Ludwig rolls his eyes, approaches the driver, and says in Polish:

LUDWIG

Turn it off and take out the key.

Aleksander does as told. Makes to set the keys in the console-

LUDWIG

On the dashboard.  
(Aleksander does it)  
Licenses, please.

The Nazi soldiers watch them carefully, guns at the ready, as they hand over licenses. Ludwig peruses with a flashlight.

LUDWIG

Marcel Jasinski and Aleksander  
Zajac. Orlen Heating Oil company...

ALEKSANDER

Problem, sir?

LUDWIG

Just some troublemakers who seem to  
be consistently well-supplied...  
(eyes him)  
Little late for deliveries, no?

MARCEL

There was a fuel leak at the  
poultry plant, they called for an  
emergency resupply--

LUDWIG

Can't have those poor chickens  
freezing to death before they get  
their heads cut off, can we.  
(smiles, to the soldiers)  
Check the back.

Marcel and Aleksander's faces maintain composure...

...as we drift down to discover: there's a wood-grip Vis35  
PISTOL taped to the underside of the dashboard.

CUT TO THE BACK OF THE TRUCK

The cargo hold door SLAMS OPEN. In comes Brandt, Engel behind him. CLICK! Flashlights turn on, as...

RIVKA AND HUGO

...shrink into their hiding spot, watching the flashlights cut darkness, hearing the CLANK of boots approaching as...

BRANDT AND ENGEL

...get closer and closer... peering into every nook and cranny, leaving no inch un-searched, as...

MARCEL AND ALEKSANDER

...sit tight in the truck's cabin, straining for cool, Ludwig appraising them in unnerving silence...

...impossible to tell if he notices the BEAD OF SWEAT coasting down the side of Aleksander's face...

IN THE CARGO HOLD

...Brandt shines his flashlight over HEATING OIL CANNISTERS stacked on shelves, as we pan down to reveal...

...he's standing right over Rivka & Hugo. But they've hidden themselves so well beneath the shelf, he doesn't see them.

He turns to go...

...and Engel notices something Brandt missed: a puff of VAPOR rising from under the shelf -- HUGO'S FROZEN BREATH.

UNDER THE SHELF

Rivka and Hugo watch the Nazi soldiers' boots suddenly stop walking away. A long, heart-stopping beat, then--

WHAM! There he is -- Brandt, kneeling, face to face with our terrified heroes, aiming his rifle at them.

BRANDT

*Get up.*

They have nowhere to go and nothing to do but comply... they rise to their feet, hands up...

BRANDT

*Any more of you in here?*

Sees on their faces the answer's no. Gives a nod to Engel--

ENGEL

*SERGEANT , WE'VE GOT TWO--*

ALL AT ONCE: Marcel SWIPES A PISTOL from his coat--

--Aleksander SNATCHES THE HANDGUN taped under the dashboard and starts SHOOTING THROUGH THE DOOR AT LUDWIG--

--knocking him backward-- *left-- right-- left--*

--Brandt and Engel go wide-eyed as they hear the shots as--

--WHAP! The truck cabin's view-slot slides open and MARCEL AIMS HIS PISTOL THROUGH IT--

RIVKA  
(to Hugo)  
GET DOWN--

Rivka DROPS TO THE FLOOR, covering Hugo as *BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM!* Shots fly overhead as Marcel FIRES WILDLY through the view-slot. Blows wine-dark confetti out of Brandt's chest--

--Engel takes a round in the neck and STUMBLES BACK FIRING, his submachine gun RAKING BULLETS through the wall--

--and into the truck cabin, before--

--WHAM! Engel hits the floor. CLANK! Gun drops out of his hand. He lays, gurgling red through his blown-open neck...

...limply reaches for help as Rivka and Hugo step over him and make their stealthy way out of the cargo hold and into...

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE ROAD, NAZI CHECKPOINT - CONTINUOUS

...the cold night. The world's on mute thanks to the ringing in their ears and the muffling effect of the falling snow.

They make their way to the front of the truck to find...

MARCEL AND ALEKSANDER

Shot to bits inside the cabin. Engel's dying burst of machine gun fire went through the cabin wall and straight through their bodies, painting the seats and windshield crimson.

And that's not all -- the bullets went into the ENGINE, which is now HISSING STEAM and LEAKING FLUIDS.

The truck's useless.

Hugo spots Ludwig's body in the snow nearby. Mesmerized at how the man's bullet wounds leak vapor as hot blood touches cold night air. A TWITCH runs through the corpse.

HUGO  
Is he still--?

WHAM! Behind them, the truck's passenger door SLAMS OPEN and Marcel's bullet-mangled corpse falls out into the snow...

RIVKA  
Marcel--

He's still breathing. Barely. She and Hugo kneel over him. Rivka takes his face in her hands, a quantum of comfort...

MARCEL  
Twen... twenty...

RIVKA  
Shhh... shhh, don't--

MARCEL  
26 kilometers east... the base...  
(coughs blood)  
Stay off the road... be crawling  
with these bastards by dawn...  
(his dying breath)  
Whatever you do, don't... go in the...

His throat catches with a wet rattle. Then no more words. Rivka and Hugo kneel in silence over the dead man, watching the creeping tide of his blood turn the snow red.

Rivka lets go of his hand. Glances out to THE WOODS BEYOND...

...towering snowy trees against the dark, like the world has been leached of color, the way it looks 100 feet underwater. The wind MOANS. But there's another sound too...

A VEHICLE in the distance.

RIVKA  
Move.

Rivka slings on her pack, and she & Hugo RUN FOR IT. Right off the road, over a snowbank, out into--

AN OPEN FIELD

Knee deep snow. Kicking up flurries. Viewed from a distance, they move with the molasses-like torpor of a nightmare.

Behind them on the road, the vehicle gets closer. Headlights around the bend-- close to illuminating the field--

Ahead of them, their only escape: the TREELINE... dark redwoods and pines, a depthless black world...

Rivka looks back. Sees she's got seconds to clear the trees--

RIVKA

GO--

--they SLASH ONWARD through the snow-- INTO THE FOREST as--  
--the headlights SWEEP PAST. Catching no sign of our heroes.

INT. THE FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Almost total dark -- giant timbers tower, a maze of ancient fallen trees, all angles, stretching away--

Rivka and Hugo don't slow. Don't look back. Just race onward--  
DEEPER INTO THE MAZE

--dead trees loom-- ancient ice-beards hanging--  
--it's treacherous-- mom and son moving like hunted animals--  
--and as they pull themselves over timber the size of Smaug's tail, we tighten on HUGO'S MITTEN...

The mitten with the ripped seam. We tighten on the pink flesh of his exposed pinky and ring finger before we--

MATCH CUT TO: Hugo's fingers. Now a dark shade of not-right.

It's hours later. The snowstorm's calmed, moonlight shining in the trees, the arctic world somehow even colder now...

He puts his mittenned hand to his mouth and breathes on it, trying to warm his frostbitten digits back up.

RIVKA

Let me see.

He shows her. She swallows the lump in her throat.

HUGO

Bad?

RIVKA

No. Just need another layer...

She pulls off her scarf, wraps it around his mitten. Another thin layer against the bitter cold.

RIVKA

There...

She's already hustling him onward -- both of them hollow-eyed, fighting exhaustion and hypothermia.

Ascending up a NARROW GULLEY... treadless shoes slippery...

HUGO  
Are we going the right way?

RIVKA  
They said the base is in the north-  
east end of the borderland woods.

HUGO  
Is that where we are?

She has no idea. Hands shaking, she pulls herself up out of  
the gulley and onto a rise in the forest... when she pauses.

Hugo hurries up after her and his eyes go wide when he sees--  
A STRANGE GROVE OF TREES.

More alien landscape than forest.

Trunks grow up from the ground in curves, like upside-down  
question marks, or long witches' fingers snaking up from the  
earth. Snowdrifts fill their boughs.

This is real. A wilderness along the Poland/Germany border  
known as **THE CROOKED FOREST**.

Hugo takes in the ominous landscape before them...

HUGO  
...what is this place?...

And that's when Rivka notices, off in the distance, a  
GLIMMER. Like two shiny coins in the bottom of a well.

HUGO  
...mama?...

Rivka squints into the gloom... sees the two shiny things...

And then winking into existence all around in the dark come  
MORE SHINY PAIRS... the breath catches in her throat...

RIVKA  
Run.

It's **A WOLFPACK** -- FOUR, FIVE, SIX OF THEM--

Rivka and Hugo RUN FOR THEIR LIVES as--

The wolves ERUPT forward as if off coiled springs, chasing--

Glimpses of the animals -- low-slung, dark-furred, bigger than dogs the way New York City rats are bigger than mice, gleaming wet teeth bared to do what they do best...

Rivka and Hugo SPRINT--

--vaulting over the c-shaped trunks, branches WHIPPING PAST--

WOLVES GAINING GROUND

--close enough now that you can hear their wet panting--

--just a few seconds before the pack overtakes our heroes--

--Rivka's hand locked around Hugo's, faces rictuses of panic--

THE ALPHA WOLF *SNARLS* as it gains ground on Hugo...

Rivka pulls him forward and they burst blindly through a DENSE THICKET OF BRANCHES and suddenly--

SHE AND HUGO ARE FALLING

--right off a rock ledge that was hidden by overgrowth--

--SMASHING DOWN into a snowy slope, SLIDING, tumbling, rolling, skidding to a STOP-- wheezing for breath--

--wiping snow and dirt off their faces--

--and that's when something catches Rivka's eye. She does a double-take, unsure if she can *really be seeing this...*

#### A BRICK CHIMNEY

Poking out of the treetops 50 feet ahead.

*There's a fucking HOUSE out here?*

**HOWWWWWLILLL** go the wolves behind them, getting closer.

They RUN FOR IT. Hell-for-leather through the trees--

--and as they get closer, the structure begins to take shape.

AN ANCIENT STORYBOOK MANOR. 3 stories. Dark wood. Steep roof. Stone columns. Overgrown by foliage gone skeletal in winter. A once-grand country home, forsaken, forgotten...

...into the clearing surrounding the house they sprint...

*The house's windows almost resemble eyes in a face, its cavernous entryway a mouth locked in a scream...*

Fleeing across the snow-covered grounds...

UP THE FRONT STAIRS

Rivka grabs the big metal front door handle, twisting it. Nothing happens-- twists it the other way-- strains hard--

RIVKA  
...come on... c'mon...

--and old iron mechanisms go CLICKITY-CLACK and the door GROANS OPEN-- spilling them through its jaws and INSIDE.

INT. VORMELKER MANOR - NIGHT

WHAM! Rivka KICKS the door shut behind her. Jams the door's deadbolt into place, locks it tight.

WHUMPH! Collapses against it, slides to sit, Hugo beside her. Huffing, adrenaline-sick, SPENT. As they lay there...

...it takes them a minute to notice:

HUGO  
...where did they go?...

The howling of the wolves has stopped. Utter silence outside.

A beat, then Rivka and Hugo move over to the--

LIVING ROOM WINDOW

--looking out into the clearing and the forest beyond.

The wolves are right at the edge of the clearing.

They have not moved a foot closer to this house.

But that's not the strange part.

The strange part is, the wolves have their heads low and haunches up, letting out wary snarls...

RIVKA  
...they're leaving...

Indeed. The wolves BACK AWAY, slinking into the forest. As if they've just come face to face with something far above them on the food chain, and have opted to turn tail.

Rivka and Hugo glance at each other, bewildered...

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, HALL/GREAT ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

FWOOSH! A match strikes. Lights an old half-melted candle on a table, Rivka and Hugo's only light, as they make their way--

DOWN THE MAIN HALLWAY

--catching glimpses of the manor. Dust. Cobwebs. Scuttle of rats in the walls. Wind whistling in the DUMBWAITER.

INTO THE GREAT ROOM

The heart of this Grimm's Fairy Tale abode. It *should* be devoid of any traces of human life. But, to our heroes' amazement, the house is still FULLY FURNISHED.

HUGO  
...who lives here?

Rivka's silent, but the answer is clear: they do. For now.

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

Firewood gets yanked from a stack on the hearth, dumped in the fireplace. Rivka & Hugo try to get kindling lit with their candle. The room behind them is 90% shadows.

HUGO  
What if the owners come back?

RIVKA  
We'll be gone at first light.

HUGO  
(points to shelf of books)  
What about the books?

RIVKA  
What about them?

HUGO  
They're all in German.

She looks and sees the titles on the books' spines: indeed, all of them, *auf deutsch*. And now, as they look around the decor of this room, a realization settles in upon them...

HUGO  
Are we-- are we in--

RIVKA  
--must've crossed the border when  
we got lost in the woods--

HUGO  
--we're in *Germany*?

Rivka's internal plumbing suddenly runs with icewater. But she stifles it, keeping on a brave face for her son.

RIVKA  
It's ok. They won't find us here.  
Whoever lives in this house...

Rivka runs a finger along the mantle -- coated in old dust.

RIVKA  
...has been gone a very long time.

She grabs the fire bellows from the tool rack. PSSH! Pumps oxygen into the fireplace. It lights up a bit.

RIVKA  
Remember the story cousin Kasriel taught in temple?

HUGO  
(nods)  
...“For every lock, a key.”

RIVKA  
And what does that mean?

PSSH. PSSH! PSSH! Lighting up more of the space behind them.

HUGO  
That everything has a place where it belongs, because that's how God designed it.

RIVKA  
Exactly. We were meant to find this place. So don't be scared, ok?

*FWOOSH!* The fire IGNITES. Illuminates the FIGURE BEHIND THEM. Hard to get a measure of him in the flickering light. From this vantage point, he looks damn near 8 feet tall.

His eyes fixed on Rivka and Hugo in a glimmering leer. The hairs stand up on the back of Hugo's neck and he turns--

--and SCREAMS as we SMASH TO REVEAL:

That figure we saw looming over them was just a gilded portrait on the wall -- a massive OIL PAINTING. Rivka and Hugo stare at it, both visibly unnerved by the sight.

RIVKA  
 (reads the placard)  
 "Count Hinrich Vormelker..."

**COUNT VORMELKER:** Austere Germanic features. Eyes like wet obsidian jewels. Wears a black *Župan* (tunic) and a necklace with an ASTERISK-SHAPED PENDANT.

RIVKA  
 Be glad that you're rich, old man,  
 because you are not pretty...

Hugo's scared of this thing. Ditto Rivka, to be honest. She lifts the painting, turns it around. *That's better.*

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

Later. The fire is down by half. We drift over the remains of a dinner of hoarded ghetto rations...

RIVKA (O.S.)  
 The day the war ends, we'll be  
 somewhere peaceful and green...

...we find Rivka and Hugo using a sheepskin rug as a quilt. She's reciting a bedtime story, one he knows by heart...

RIVKA  
 ...where on a hot day, you can jump  
 into the river with a great big--

HUGO  
 (adds sound effects)  
 --splash--

RIVKA  
 And amongst the blooming flowers,  
 you can hear the bees going--

HUGO  
 --bzzzzz--

RIVKA  
 And in the evening, the crickets go-

HUGO  
 --chirp--

RIVKA  
 And finally, when darkness falls--

HUGO  
 --we'll watch fireflies dance in  
 the night sky.

She holds him, listening to his breath, absently tugging at a thread on the SCARF TOURNIQUET she wears around her wrist. As sleep claims him, she whispers a phrase in subtitled Hebrew.

RIVKA  
*Peace be with you, my love.*  
 (a whisper, to herself)  
*Peace be with you...*

And they fall asleep like that. Hugo holding his mouse, Rivka holding Hugo. The boy's chin nestled into the swell of her throat, the groove so perfect, forms locked in flawless synchronicity. We pull away, watching them drift off...

Pulling back to the CANDLE burning on the far table...

...when suddenly an unseen breath BLOWS IT OUT.

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, GREAT ROOM - MORNING

The embers of last night's fire smolder in the fireplace of Vormelker Manor. We slowly pan over into the great room-

--when WHAM! HUGO JOLTS UP INTO FRAME -- straight out of a bad dream-- GASPING-- looks around, getting his bearings--

Looks out at the SNOWSTORM PUNISHING the Crooked Forest. Shivers, reaches for Borys. Squeezes him tight.

Quietly, softly, he murmur-sings "Uciekaj Myszko" (A Polish nursery rhyme) to Borys, as if to comfort the scared animal.

HUGO  
*Run little mouse, run to a hole...*

Hugo pauses. Because, just for a second, it sounded like someone was faintly HUMMING ALONG WITH HIM.

Listens. Nothing. Sings a little more...

HUGO  
*So the grey cat will not catch you-*

Stops. Over the moaning wind, he hears... *something*. Trace of a lilting hummed melody coming from somewhere in the house.

*How in the hell...?*

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Hugo makes his way into the hallway leading further into the manor, Borys held tight in his hand...

Listening for the humming... hearing the maelstrom outside...

Then... from down the hall... that humming again... sweet and plaintive... like a music box, serenading a ballerina...

He follows the sound into...

THE DINING HALL

...which is dominated by a BURNISHED PINE TABLE big enough for 50 guests. Hugo follows the sound onward toward a door...

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

--into the silent kitchen. Massive stove. Heavy metal door to a ROOT CELLAR. Stocked bar. Butcher block. And knives. LOTS of them. Paring knife, boning knife, chef knife...

...but also knives of strange shapes, whispered cruelty in their curves and teeth... knives that look like they belong in a surgeon's kit, or on the belt of a hooded executioner...

He stares into a shiny blade... and in the reflection--

SOMEONE MOVES BEHIND HIM -- *HUGO STARTLES* -- *WHIRLS*--

--slams into RIVKA, who catches him, holds him steady--

HUGO  
You scared me--

RIVKA  
I wake up and you're gone, what are  
you--

HUGO  
--I heard a sound from in here,  
like someone was in the house--

RIVKA  
It's a big empty house, Hugo, it  
echoes--

HUGO  
That's not what I heard.

RIVKA  
There's no one here but us--

HUGO  
I heard it, it was real--

BAM! He slams his fist on the butcher block. Winces. Cradles his frostbitten left hand. Rivka softens as we CUT TO:

CLOSE ON A MITTEN

Pulled off Hugo's hand. Two fingertips are white, BLISTERED WITH PUSS, purple spreading down to the second knuckles.

HUGO  
 Is it bad?

Widen to Rivka, with Hugo at the dining room table.

RIVKA  
 Depends.

HUGO  
 On what?

RIVKA  
 How attached you are to your hand.  
 (he blanches)  
 It's ok, we'll replace it with a  
 hook, get you a job on a pirate  
 ship. You'll make a fine buccaneer.

Off Hugo's horror, Rivka winks-- messing with him to keep him from panicking. (And to keep her own gnawing fear at bay.)

RIVKA  
 You'll be fine. Just need some  
 antibiotics. Once we get that hand  
 fixed up and this storm passes,  
 we'll go find the base.  
 (forces a smile)  
 Sound good?

From somewhere we hear a high-pitched shriek--

INT. ELIAS' HOUSE - MORNING

--of A TEA KETTLE BOILING in a cozy kitchen. CLICK! A man's hand turns off the gas. Pours steaming liquid into a mug...

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
 (in German, subtitled)  
*You Poles have always had the  
 strangest relationship with tea.*

A metal tea infuser gets put in the mug. A hand, adorned with a SIG RUNE ring, spoon-stirs the tea in patient circles...

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
*A century ago, it was considered a tool of the occult. Witches reading tea leaves, rituals of Slavic mysticism, so on and so forth. Just one of those things that naturally aroused suspicion...*

Holding the mug is HAUPTMANN (\*CAPTAIN) **JONAS KAISER**. 40. Well built. Gimlet eyes that breathe in detail. Though he sports the insignia of the SS, his demeanor is that of the history teacher next door. (Which he was, once upon a time.)

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*Which brings us to why we're here.*

Reveal: we're in a modest Polish home where furniture's been overturned and A **POLISH FAMILY** is being held hostage by a squad of **4 NAZI PARTISANENJAGER** (\*partisan hunters.) We'll meet them later -- for now, just imagine a pack of foam-mouth dogs and Captain Kaiser is the chain holding them back.

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*Sit with me.*

The Polish father **ELIAS** (50s, blue collar) warily moves into a chair at the kitchen table. Nearby, his wife **MAGDALENA** and their eight-year-old daughter **HANNA** watch, trembling...

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*Last night, two insurgents from the Polish Home Army were stopped at a checkpoint. They tried to shoot their way out, and that unfortunate experiment ended with both of them dead, alongside three of our patrolmen.*

(levels his gaze at Elias)  
*The truck they were driving was registered to Orlen Heating Oil. Your company.*

ELIAS  
*I already told the inspector. The truck was stolen, I reported it--*

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*The keys were in the ignition. Keys that would've had to have been stolen from your office. Which showed no sign of a break-in.*  
 (MORE)

CAPTAIN KAISER (CONT'D)

(beat)

*I'd like to give you an opportunity  
to help me understand why that is.*

Whatever gnawing is happening in Elias' guts, his face remains stone. Kaiser stirs the tea...

CAPTAIN KAISER

*We know there's an underground railroad to a partisan stronghold somewhere in this province. We know it carries food, guns, medicine, and all varieties of vermin from the Warsaw ghetto. What we don't know... is where the railroad ends.*

ELIAS

*Can't help you. The only thing I know about the partisans is that they cost me a truck.*

CAPTAIN KAISER

*A truck which you could replace with the right reward.*

Kaiser smiles. Elias doesn't.

ELIAS

*You come into my home, point guns at my family, and now you want to talk "rewards?"*

WHAM! One of the Nazi soldiers sitting at the table -- a hair-trigger brute named **SGT. ANTON SCHROEDER** -- DECKS ELIAS IN THE JAW. Snaps his head back. Magdalena SCREAMS, Hanna gasps--

WHUMPH! Captain Kaiser kicks Schroeder's chair out from underneath him, sends him to the floor.

Everything stops cold. Everyone shocked to see the captain hit one of his own men. Kaiser aims a finger at Schroeder.

CAPTAIN KAISER

*...what did I say on your first day in this unit?*

But before Schroeder can answer, something catches the attention of the room. Namely--

HANNA

--Elias' daughter, hunched and going *HNNNGH*, as if trying to breathe through a tiny straw. One of the Nazis (**MAX**) asks:

MAX  
*What's wrong with the kid?*

MAGDALENA  
*--oh god her asthma--*

--Elias is already in motion, reaching across the table for a TIN MARKED "**ASTHMANEFRIN**", when--

WHAM! Captain Kaiser's hand SLAMS DOWN on the tin. Traps it.

Locks eyes with Elias. All the warmth has evaporated from his gaze like breath off a mirror.

Slowly slides the tin away from Elias. Opens it.

The device: a 1940 ASTHMA INHALER with powder medicine in a glass chamber with a rubber squeeze-ball dispenser.

As Hanna wheezes helplessly...

HANNA  
*Hnggg... hnnnnnnngggggghhh....*

CAPTAIN KAISER  
 (to his men)  
*What did I say to all of you on  
 your first day in this unit?*

ELIAS  
*Please-- please, she needs that--*

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*Let's refresh your memories.*  
 (to Elias, re: inhaler)  
*This holds about ten doses, yes?*

ELIAS  
*Sir-- Captain-- please, I--*

PSSHT. Kaiser squishes the squeeze-ball and sprays a dose of powdery medicine out into the air. Watches it drift before the child's air-starved face.

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*Or nine.*

Hanna's lungs STRAIN. Elias LUNGES to grab the inhaler but the soldiers train their guns on him and he stills.

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*Where are the partisans hiding?*

ELIAS

I already told you I don't know--

PSSHT. Another dose of medicine puffs out. Hanna's starting to TWITCH, face losing color, straining to breathe...

ELIAS

*Please-- she'll die--*

CAPTAIN KAISER

*I understand your concern for her safety. That's why I'm here.*

ELIAS

What?

PSSHT. Another dose fired into the air.

CAPTAIN KAISER

*I'm fighting for a world where your child -- and all our children -- can be safe from the scourge of the Jewish race. And you...*

PSSHT. Another dose gone.

CAPTAIN KAISER

*...are not just standing in the way, you're helping them.*

ELIAS

*No-- no-- you don't understand--*

PSSHT! Another dose.

CAPTAIN KAISER

*How many Jews have been smuggled out of Warsaw in your trucks?*

ELIAS

*None I swear to you--*

PSSHT! And another.

CAPTAIN KAISER

*How much food has shipped to the partisans in your trucks?*

ELIAS

*I'm begging you--*

CAPTAIN KAISER

*How much medicine?*

PSSHT! And *another*.

ELIAS  
*STOP THIS--*

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*How much ammunition?*

PSSHT! Another.

ELIAS  
*STOP OH GOD PLEASE STOP--*

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*Last dose.*

Elias has tears flowing from his eyes. Keeps his lips sealed. Kaiser shrugs, makes to squeeze the last dose out--

ELIAS  
*The borderland woods. They're  
hiding in the borderland woods. I  
don't know where, it's a camp, they  
move it every few weeks...*

Kaiser, satisfied, looks to his men. As the girl spasms...

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*Anybody remember now?*

SCHROEDER  
*"Never take by force that which can  
be volunteered freely."*

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*Thank you.*

FINALLY, Kaiser plants the inhaler in Hanna's mouth and PSSHT! Administers the last dose into her lungs. She jerks away, gasping. As color returns to her face...

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*There. Nice deep breaths. That's  
it. Who's a brave girl?*

She looks up at him, sucking wind, terrified...

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*You are. Very brave...*

Kaiser rises, gives a nod to one of his men and--

**BLAM!** Elias is executed with a headshot. Warm blood mists. Elias slumps, back of his head a ragged exit wound. The girl stares in frozen-faced horror...

...and as Magdalena starts to SCREAM, Kaiser is already moving toward the door, rattling off plans to the squad.

CAPTAIN KAISER

*Get me a list of every homestead in the borderland woods. Need a base of operations, something with a decent furnace this time, this weather's only going to get worse.*

They exit, SCREAMS still ringing in our ears as we CUT TO:

EXT. VORMELKER MANOR - MORNING

Vormelker Manor stands foreboding in the clearing. The weather's grown crueler, wind ripping through the forest and hissing at the manor's windows. From inside, we can hear...

RIVKA (PRE-LAP)  
*If I was penicillin, where would I be?...*

INT. VORMELKER MANOR - MORNING

Rivka and Hugo hunt for antibiotics. Searching bathroom drawers. Cabinets. Shelves. Bedside bureaus in the guestroom.

Rivka opens an alcove door. Spots FOUR ELECTRICAL BREAKER BOXES on the wall. Something about the sight doesn't sit right with her, tickling curiosity in her brain as we CUT TO--

THE SECOND LEVEL

Where we track them on their "scavenger hunt"...

...glimpses of the paintings and pictures... Count Vormelker at different ages dating back to his childhood... a portrait with his stern parents, a family disfigured by money...

INTO THE SECOND LEVEL MASTER BEDROOM

...past the massive four-poster bed and the **BROWN BEARSKIN RUG** that dominates the floor. Hugo, noticing the bear staring with dead eyes like it might lunge at him, shuts the door.

CUT TO THE THIRD FLOOR BEDROOM

...they ransack every nook and cranny they can find...

IN THE THIRD FLOOR BATHROOM

Rivka opens a DEEP WOODEN CABINET: full of MEDICINE BOTTLES.

RIVKA  
Here we go...

She checks the rows of faded, handwritten labels... and her hand lands on the one with the German writing (subtitled **PENICILLIN.**) She plucks it from the shelf--

--and reveals A BLACK RAT'S TAIL slithering past in the depths of the cabinet. Rivka JERKS BACK, freaked--

--drops the bottle, sending it rolling away--

They stand there, gasping...

...and then Rivka notices the bottle has rolled out into the bedroom and come to a stop at the base of a tall mirror on the wall. She makes for it, and as she bends down to grab it--

--she pauses. Sees something she should really not be seeing.

HUGO  
(off her pause)  
Mama...?

Silence. Hugo comes over, kneels down next to her...

...and it's now we reveal there's an INCH OF SPACE between the bottom of the mirror's frame and the floor.

HUGO  
...what do you see?...

Rivka picks up the bottle, backs away from the mirror, wheels turning in her head...

...runs a hand along the intricate wood carved frame around the shiny glass... tracing with her fingertips... then...

...she pushes the mirror and it OPENS INWARDS LIKE A DOOR. Wooden hinges hidden within the frame emitting a faint creak.

*The "mirror door" opens to reveal...*

A DARK PASSAGEWAY STRETCHING INTO THE INNARDS OF THE HOUSE

RIVKA  
...I knew it...  
(off his questioning look)  
Downstairs. The breaker boxes. Four of them. One for each level.

HUGO

So...?

RIVKA

Hugo, the house is only 3 stories.

Rivka takes a step into the passageway. Hugo doesn't.

HUGO

Where are you going?

Rivka lifts the penicillin bottle into the light -- empty.

RIVKA

Empty bottle won't do you much good. We have to keep looking.

Hugo dredges up his bravery and follows his mother into the passage. We linger on the mirror door as they pass...

...and something odd happens. A THIRD REFLECTION flickers past. Dark, amorphous, silent as a razor through flesh.

INT. HIDDEN PASSAGEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Rivka and Hugo down the hidden passageway. The ribbed ceiling beams give it an organic look, like being inside the digestive tract of some unfathomable creature.

Further on they go... the light of the open door behind them starting to fade... and as their eyes adjust to the dark...

HUGO

(whispers)

...WOW...

There's a NETWORK of hidden passageways snaking off through the walls like a secret circulatory system.

HUGO

...what is this place?...

Rivka has no answer. Ahead of her, she spots--

A FLIGHT OF STAIRS LEADING UP TO A CLOSED DOOR.

They approach. Rivka's hand twists its handle and they peek into the room, scoping it out, before entering...

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

An aristocratic leisure room, lit by a small window. Deep GREEN RUG. Vaulted ceilings. Filament bulbs. Shelves lined with dusty tomes. A bar stocked with pricey liquor. On a shelf, a PORCELINE FOX, teeth bared. And lording over all...

HUGO

...WOW...

**A MASSIVE MURAL.** Think Bosch, "Garden Of Earthly Delights." Gothic surrealist landscape divided vertically into five sections. A mountaintop, sloping down to a wooded valley below... and into the dark, cavernous world beneath that...

Rivka and Hugo stand, dwarfed by this fearsome thing.

CUT TO THE WINDOW

Rivka wipes smudge off the glass. Looks out at the snowy forest. The window is obscured from outside by the chimney.

HUGO

...why build it like this?

*"Because the person who owned this house was fucking crazy,"* Rivka thinks to herself. But what she says is:

RIVKA

Same reason rich people do anything: they can afford to.  
(motions to a door)  
C'mon, little one, let's see what they've got.

CUT TO INSIDE THE ATTIC'S BATHROOM

CLICK! A light sparks to life, revealing a tiled bathroom with a clawfoot tub. As Rivka searches drawers, Hugo checks in the medicine cabinet. His curiosity ever present...

HUGO

It doesn't make sense... why all the secret passages?

RIVKA

If you had the money, would you put secret passageways in your house?

One of the drawers won't open. Stuck. She TUGS at it.

RIVKA

Of course you would. Because little boys love secret passages.

(MORE)

RIVKA (CONT'D)

(tugs harder)

And rich men stop growing up the day they realize they're rich, so they're all little boys at heart.

(tugs even harder)

So they spend their money making childish fantasies into--

BAM! Drawer opens. Rivka's struck silent by what she sees.

HUGO

What is it?

Rivka sharply turns, blocking his view.

RIVKA

I'll check in here, you search the closet. Careful around anything that looks sharp or rusty, ok?

"Sharp or rusty?" Rivka offers no further explanation. Motions to him "run along." And as he goes, we reveal-

--the drawer is a rats-nest of RAZORBLADES. Judging by the dark filth crusting them, shaving wasn't their purpose.

Off Rivka, stomach turning...

IN THE ATTIC

Hugo crosses the cavernous space toward A CLOSET. As he goes, something catches his eye...

The mural on the wall. It draws him closer...

...and as he approaches, we see it: the mural's 5 descending panels depict not just a landscape, but layers of existence.

Tier 5: A heavenly mountaintop. Green grass. FOXES burrowing down into TUNNELS in the mountain, snaking all the way down.

Tier 4: Glassy waterfall flows over the mouth of a deep cave.

Tier 3: Woods. Tall pines. A BROWN BEAR on the prowl.

Tier 2: A meadow with a long table, a great feast surrounded by REVELERS, their faces grotesque parodies of merriment.

Tier 1: A dark subterranean world. Wet rock walls. Hellish torchlight. The details of this section are OBSCURED BY DUST encroaching from the bottom edge of the frame.

Hugo blows the dust away... whoosh... and his eyes WIDEN.

## IN THE ATTIC BATHROOM

Rivka makes to shut the drawer, when... she pauses. Reaches in, gingerly brushes aside crusty blades, and--

## FINDS A LEATHERBOUND BOOK

...buried amidst the blades. Curious, she takes the book out. Leather cover embossed with the word **BORUTA**. And a SYMBOL:

(X)

She flips pages. The book is an ancient religious text. Slashes of ink-splotched handwriting, SKETCHES OF SYMBOLS...

...some kind of printed poem... "The Rites Of Boruta"... one line in particular sticks out to her...

RIVKA  
(a whisper)  
...born of the Wet Room, in  
everlasting servitude...

## BACK IN THE ATTIC

Hugo stares at the mural, transfixed...

Its bottom section is a carnival of horrors happening in some kind of dark, dripping, subterranean space...

Hugo squints into the shadowy imagery and is able to make out-

A YOUNG WOMAN stretched on a rack, elongating her limbs... a MUSCULAR MAN with amputated legs and hands, meat-hooks in his wrist-stumps... a SCARRED MAN using a razor to skin his own leg, making it look as if his calf is wrapped in pink gum...

...and a LITTLE BOY in the shadows, feasted upon by WOLVES -- belly split open, red innards tugged by teeth -- the boy still alive, eyes staring up at nothing in this world--

Hugo blinks -- does the kid in the painting resemble him?

Blinks again -- and the boy in the painting now looks nothing like him. Just a trick of his fevered, malnourished mind.

## BACK IN THE BATHROOM

Rivka flips pages... sketched portraits of different faces.

A girl, maybe 19, whippet-thin, oval face framed by long black hair. A muscular man in his 30s. A bald man in his 40s.

Each one of them wears **A METAL LOCKET** around their neck, with a strange keyhole shaped like an (X) in the middle.

Look carefully, you'll find these faces familiar. They're the people Hugo saw tortured in the hellish mural.

But that's not what Rivka notices.

She notices how each face is frozen in glassy, pleading fear. As if the sketch artist is holding a knife to their throat.

IN THE ATTIC

Hugo takes hasty leave of the mural. Goes to the closet door.

Hinges KEEN as Hugo pushes it open. Wedge of light cleaves the inky black. Shivers, as if standing at a cave's mouth.

WE PUSH INTO THE CLOSET

Tightening on Hugo's hand as he feels around for the lights. His fingers touch cold tile. No sign of the switch.

Not wanting to take another step into this deep, dark space, he reaches further in, feels around more...

Fingers finding no purchase... Then...

*TINK. TINK. TINK.*

HUGO

Hello?

He pauses. Palms going clammy. Faintly, somewhere off in the fathoms of the closet, he can hear it...

*TINK. TINK. TINK.*

The sound of metal tapping on tile. Louder now.

*TINK. TINK. TINK.*

And that's when his hand finds the light-switch. CLICK!

There's a flash of filament igniting, blindingly bright. What Hugo sees in there makes a scream catch in his throat.

**A MAN.** Long wet hair like kelp. Eyes black, all pupil. Pale, veiny, muscular. Both legs amputated above the knee. Both his hands amputated and replaced by SHINY MEAT HOOKS--

--which he uses to pull himself forward along the tiled floor, the tips of the hooks going *TINK. TINK. TINK.*

Hugo's frozen. Body locking up as this monstrosity (aka **THE HALF MAN**) slither-crawls toward him, faster, faster--

THE FILAMENT LIGHT BUZZES OUT

*TINK-TINK-TINK-TINK. FASTER NOW, GETTING CLOSER.*

Light turns back on -- THE HALF MAN'S RIGHT BEFORE HIM--

A hook SLASHES OUT AT HUGO-- he SCREAMS HIS LUNGS OUT--

--SCRAMBLES AWAY-- FEET GO OUT FROM UNDER HIM-- HAULS THE DOOR SHUT, SCOOTING AWAY FROM IT as--

RIVKA

--drops the journal, rushes out of the bathroom, freaked--

RIVKA

*Hugo?--*

She runs to him, pulls the shaking kid into her arms as he gasps and points, words coming out like a jammed Uzi.

HUGO

*In there-- there's someone in there-*

Rivka looks to the closet door, then reaches into the SCARF Tourniquet in her sleeve and draws her trusty KITCHEN KNIFE. Puts herself in front of Hugo, hurls the door open...

...and there's no sign of the Half Man.

HUGO

*He was-- he was there-- I saw him--  
he had these -- these HOOKS--*

She holds him tight, just now noticing...

...the door Hugo just opened isn't to a closet at all: it's a A SMALL WINDOWLESS CELL. Tile walls and floor.

And a DRAIN in the middle.

Hanging from the ceiling: RUSTY IRON SHACKLES.

Her expression goes wan as she realizes: this room is a MINI ABBATOIR. Someone's own personal slaughterhouse.

HUGO

Do you hear it?...

Rivka listens... and at first, there's nothing but the maddening, crystalline silence of the "Drain Room."

But then... her lips part as she hears what Hugo hears.  
*A humming. Faint, melodic, almost childlike.*  
Coming from the DRAIN in the cell's floor.

HUGO  
(whispers)  
*That's what I heard...*

Rivka creeps toward the drain. Hugo right beside her as--  
--she peers into the drain -- seeing only its filth-stained metal grate, and the dark depths below...  
Rivka puts her ear to the drain...  
And the humming drifts off to silence  
The room overtaken by a powerful quiet... all is still...  
**BANG!**

Rivka and Hugo JOLT. Heads on swivels, trying to locate the source of the gunshot-like boom.  
And then... a terrible realization hits Rivka...

RIVKA  
...no...

She's on her feet and SPRINTING--  
--straight to the WINDOW. Looks out...  
We pull away from them, framing their fear-struck faces, drifting back out into the snowy world to reveal...

**THERE'S A NAZI VEHICLE APPROACHING THE MANOR.**

EXT. VORMELKER MANOR, OUTSIDE GROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

**BANG!** Engine BACKFIRES AGAIN as we reveal a fully loaded WANDERER 11 (a steroidal Volkswagen jeep) tearing along what we now realize is a SNOW-CHOKED WOODLAND ROAD LEADING UP TO THE MANOR. Massive studded tires spit dirty white.

INSIDE THE ATTIC

Rivka and Hugo crouch at the window, whispers flying--

HUGO

They found us, they know we're here--

RIVKA

No, no-- impossible, no one knows--

HUGO

*We have to run--*

RIVKA

We can't.

She points out at the window at the growing snowstorm.

RIVKA

We'd be running into a blizzard,  
we'll freeze--

HUGO

Not if we find the base--

RIVKA

The wolves will find us first.

He blanches at the memory of those gleaming teeth.

HUGO

...what do we do?

OUTSIDE THE MANOR

The Wanderer RUMBLES TO A STOP. Exhaust pipe chuffs fumes in the swirling snow. Out climbs Captain Kaiser...

...followed by his loyal attack dog Pfc. Schroeder, cigar smoldering in his teeth. Schroeder eyes the house, not liking what he sees but keeping quiet. Behind him, out comes...

**UNTEROFFICER (\*CORPORAL) OSKAR LANGE:** medic, a junior Mengele who seems to be mentally dissecting everyone he talks to.

**PVT. LUKE VOGEL:** twitchy demolitions man, a walking ulcer, gaunt and unsmiling, sweating in the cold.

**PVT. MAX ALBRECHT:** the interpreter, brainy cynical wiseass.

INSIDE THE ATTIC

Rivka watches as Captain Kaiser starts rattling off orders.

HUGO

What's he saying?...

OUTSIDE THE MANOR

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*Sweep the house, secure the perimeter.*

CLANK! The Wanderer's rear gate SLAMS DOWN, and soldiers efficiently sling on rifles and submachine guns as--

INSIDE THE ATTIC

Rivka makes for the door, FAST--

RIVKA  
 Stay here--

HUGO  
 Mama, wait--

RIVKA  
The only way we survive is to stay hidden.

(pulls him close)  
*I'll be right back. Don't move.*  
*Don't make a sound. Please.*

She plants a kiss on his head, then turns and FLEES THE ATTIC--down the steps, through the secret passageway--out through the "Mirrored Door", into the 3rd story bedroom--hauling ass down the three flights of stairs to the--

LIVING ROOM

--where we see the reason for this panicked fetch-quest: HER GO-BAG is still laying in front of the fireplace.

She ducks low to avoid being seen by the approaching Nazis through the windows-- CRAWLS across the floor--snags her bag, spins to escape back upstairs--STOPS HERSELF-- because--  
--there's still a SMOLDERING LOG in the fireplace.

RIVKA  
 --*fuck*--

She LUNGES for it as--

OUTSIDE

Schroeder and Max approach the steps to the front door as--

INSIDE

--Rivka SNATCHES the smoldering log out of the fireplace with her bare hands, the embers BURNING her fingertips-- agony--

--fights to hold on to it, breaks into a hunched sprint--

INTO THE KITCHEN

--where she flings open the REAR SERVICE ENTRANCE and HURLS the log out into the snow. It's extinguished with a FSSSHT as--

RIVKA

--shuts the door, rushes down the hall toward the staircase entrance, directly in the sightline of the front door--

--RIGHT AS THE FRONT DOOR SWINGS OPEN--

--as Schroeder and Max enter. Rivka takes cover behind the couch. They stalk in, weapons poised, as...

...we follow Schroeder and Max INTO THE LIVING ROOM...

...checking the room's hiding spots. Schroeder beelines for the couch, looks behind it--

--and there's no one there. He moves onward, as we see--

RIVKA HAS SLID HERSELF UNDER THE COFFEE TABLE

--flat on her back, trying her damndest not to breathe as--

Captain Kaiser enters. Sniffs the air.

CAPTAIN KAISER

*Smell that?*

MAX

(re: Schroeder's cigar)

*You mean Schroeder's charming habit, sir?*

CAPTAIN KAISER

*Not unless there's pine tree sap in his cigar...*

Kaiser goes to the fireplace, puts a hand on the steel flu.

CAPTAIN

*There was a fire in here last night.*

Those words register with the group. Tension rising...

SCHROEDER  
*You think the partisans--*

CAPTAIN  
*--if it was them, they most likely evacuated the second they heard our engine. But I don't want to think, I want to know.*  
*(to the full squad)*  
*Two-man teams, level by level. Go.*

The squad breaks off into formation, continuing their search deeper into the house as--

RIVKA

--lays under the coffee table, listening to the sounds of the soldiers searching the house. TRAPPED.

IN THE ATTIC

Hugo, wide-eyed and petrified with his ear to the floor, listens as the Nazis search...

IN THE NEXT LEVEL DOWN

Schroeder and Max check the room, eyes everywhere... including on the MIRROR they don't know is a door. Schroeder eyes it a beat, almost sensing something off about it...

MAX  
*Yep. Still ugly.*

SCHROEDER  
*Asshole.*

They move on to the next room. Upstairs, Hugo listens to their fading footfalls, his own heartbeat JACKHAMMERING AS--

WE SLAM TO A SERIES OF SHOTS

--Doors slamming open. One after another.

--Nazis moving with swift, practiced efficiency.

--And one by one, the teams give the call-out:

THE TWO MAN TEAMS  
*ALL CLEAR!*

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

SLAM! A heavy footlocker lands on the living room floor. Pull back across the living room to reveal--

RIVKA

--still flat on her back under the coffee table, sweating, drained from the endless minutes spent hiding here.

Watching the boots of the Nazi soldiers going in and out of the front door, carrying gear into the house.

SLAM! The next footlocker gets put down across the room.

And something about this one makes her look twice.

**It has a MEDICAL INSIGNIA.**

Rivka's face: bingo. Antibiotics.

And as soon as the boots exit the room, leaving Rivka alone--

She LAUNCHES OUT FROM UNDER THE TABLE--

--commando crawls across the living room--

--peers out the window, sees Nazis unloading the Wanderer. Less than a minute before they're back in the house.

Lickety-split, she lunges to the MEDIC CASE--

Shaking hands straining to silently unlatch it: *CLICK! CLICK!*

RIVKA  
(a whisper)  
...please... come on...

She digs into the case. Searches desperately... her pulse in a paint-shaker... and then...

She finds THE KIT OF ANTIBIOTICS. Snatches it.

Runs for the stairs, just as--

THE FRONT DOOR SWINGS OPEN

--Max and Lange coming into the house with the next load as--

RIVKA

--skitters out of their field of vision, into--

THE HALLWAY ADJACENT TO THE STAIRS

--and just as Max and Lange approach--

--Rivka avoids their eyes by slipping through A DOORWAY--

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, CARRIAGE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

--into the manor's cavernous CARRIAGE HOUSE. Her breath instantly crystalizes in the blistering cold.

She looks around at this turn-of-the-century garage, and is stunned to see it still houses the skeletal, dusty, cobweb choked remains of a **HORSE-DRAWN BUGGY**. In this state, it looks like something designed to carry sinners to Hell.

RIVKA  
(under her breath)  
...this fucking place...

CREAAAAAK! She turns to see THE CARRIAGE HOUSE DOOR OPENING on its rusty hinges, dim grey light sweeping in as--

THE UNLOADED WANDERER

--gets driven into the garage -- Rivka now nowhere to be seen. Vogel kills the engine, climbs out. Hauls the carriage house door shut. Takes a moment to make sure he's alone...

...eyes the creepy buggy. Weirded out. But fails to notice--

RIVKA

--is hiding on the floor of the buggy's driver compartment. Holding her stolen penicillin tight.

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, ATTIC - MORNING

Alone in the attic, Hugo's got his ear to the vent grate. Eavesdropping on the Nazis setting up shop below. Waiting for shouts and gunfire and his mother's scream.

But that's not what he should be afraid of right now.

*Behind him, across the room, the hatch to the DUMBWAITER silently slides open an inch, pushed by forces unseen...*

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, CARRIAGE HOUSE - MORNING

As Rivka lays prone in the buggy, Vogel murmur-sings a song to himself in German as he goes about a little ritual.

VOGEL

*I've been dreaming... of a white  
Christmas...*

He digs out a tube of PERVITIN. (\*Nazi prescription meth.) Dumps a pill into an empty mint tin. Puts the tin on a cluttered table, grinds it into powder with his knife handle.

VOGEL

*Just like the one I used to know...*

He takes the Wanderer's ignition key to shovel some Pervitin into his nose when-- WHAM! The door opens and Vogel SPINS, hiding the tin of drugs under gear on the work table as-

CAPTAIN KAISER

(leans in from doorway)

*Pvt. Vogel. Will you be joining us?*

VOGEL

*Absolutely sir, I was just--*

Captain Kaiser motions: Now. Clear that Kaiser trusts this speed-freak about as far as he can throw him.

VOGEL

*Right away, Captain.*

CAPTAIN KAISER

*Keys, private.*

Vogel shoots one last pained micro-glance at the drug stash he's leaving behind, then follows Jonas into the house, handing the KEYS to him as they enter. Soon as they're gone--

--Rivka drops down from her hiding spot in the buggy.

Moves to the door. Waits a beat. Opens it a crack. Peers down the hallway into the kitchen, where the Nazis are unpacking communication gear on the table.

MAX

*What have we here?*

As Max moves to a kitchen shelf, Rivka slips into the house and out of their sightline, making for the stairwell as--

IN THE KITCHEN

Max snatches a bottle of *Kirschwasser* (high-proof German cherry brandy) from the wet bar. Takes a sniff, smiles...

...but suddenly puts THE BOTTLE BACK AND STRAIGHTENS INTO A HEIL SALUTE (ditto everyone else) as CAPTAIN KAISER ENTERS.

CAPTAIN KAISER

*At ease. Gentlemen, welcome to the base of operations formerly known as...*

Kaiser checks dossier for the name; Schroeder already knows.

SCHROEDER

*Vormelker Manor.*

CAPTAIN KAISER

*Thank you, Sgt. As of this morning, we know the partisan base is somewhere in the woods around this house and our mission is to make it their final resting place. Itinerary is as follows: Lange, communications up by 0900.*

LANGE

*Yes sir.*

CAPTAIN KAISER

*Pvt. Vogel, Pvt. Albrecht, I want maps and intel collated, we need to know the lay of the land.*

VOGEL/ALBRECHT

*Yes sir./Right away, captain.*

CAPTAIN KAISER

*Sgt. Schroeder--*

GROAN goes a floorboard somewhere above. Everyone pauses.

CUT TO RIVKA

--on the stairs, FROZEN, having just set her foot on a creaky board. She gently, gently takes her weight off it as--

BACK IN THE KITCHEN

--a beat, then Kaiser breaks the silence with:

CAPTAIN KAISER

*Get the boiler going, this place has the weatherproofing of a wet sieve.*

SCHROEDER

*I'll get it done, sir.*

CAPTAIN KAISER  
 (exits, over his shoulder)  
*Oh, and Albrecht? Any man in this  
 unit who gets caught drinking on  
 the job sleeps outside tonight.*

MAX  
*Understood, sir.*

Schroeder smirks at Max, liking how Kaiser puts the boots to this twerp. We track Kaiser to the stairs, panning up to see--

RIVKA

--SCRAMBLING over the top step and hiding behind the massive wooden BANNISTER POST at the second story landing, as--

--Kaiser ascends the stairs-- puts a hand on the bannister post that Rivka's hiding on the other side of and--

--continues on into the adjacent MASTER BEDROOM. Leaves the door open -- second he turns around, he'll see her.

CLINK! Kaiser sets the **WANDERER KEYS** down on his bedside table. Rivka clocks it. Wheels turning, as...

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, BOILER ROOM - DAY

FWOOSH! Schroeder ignites the pilot light in a MASSIVE HEATER in the boiler room. It rumbles to life, he stands... suddenly a bit creeped out being alone in this spooky room.

He fingers a CROSS he wears on a chain under his uniform.

He turns to go, and--

--WHAP! Something black and leathery FLIES AT HIM. He JERKS, swatting-- sees it's a DEAD BAT. Hears laughter from... Max.

SCHROEDER  
*Keep at it. Next one's going down  
 your throat.*

Schroeder shoulder-checks him as he brushes past. Max makes to close the boiler room door--

--pauses for a moment. Something about the room -- *how the sweating, twitching pipes of the boiler seem almost alive, organic, insectile* -- makes him shut the door quickly. SLAM!

INT. VORMELKER MANOR - DAY

Frigid wind slithers at the attic window. Hugo, worried sick, pulls his knees to his chest, shivering. Instinctively reaches for his mouse, the way he did this morning...

HUGO  
...gonna be ok, Borys...

...but Borys isn't there.

HUGO  
...Borys?

Hugo looks around -- and spots his stuffed mouse.

Borys is sitting on the lip of the ATTIC DUMBWAITER HATCH.

*How did he get there? The mouse's black plastic eyes glint dimly, offering no answers.*

Hugo approaches the dumbwaiter, reaches out for his mouse--  
--and Borys tumbles backwards off the shelf, into the shaft.

Hugo pauses, spooked; it fell as if tugged by a string.

Or like bait on the end of a hook.

Hugo appraises the portal before him. A beat, then...

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, DUMBWAITER SHAFT - MOMENTS LATER

Hugo leans headfirst through the hatch, peers down into the shaft. The dumbwaiter shaft is a dark, dusty space about the width of a child's coffin. His eyes adjust to the gloom, then-

HUGO  
...there you are...

Reveal: Borys is laying on the lip of a bridging beam inside the shaft, just a few feet down.

Hugo braces himself against the hatch with one arm, reaches into the shaft with his other, trying to grab Borys...

HUGO  
...c'mere...

From below, we watch his dangling hand grasping at shadows the way Jaws watches the feet of swimmers in the ocean...

He strains. Can't reach it. Sighs. Not about to let his father's gift get taken from him.

HUGO  
Stupid thing...

Hugo slides into the dumbwaiter shaft and begins his descent... fighting through the pain in his frostbitten hand.

JERKS his arm away as a spider scuttles past...

...arms and legs splayed for support as if climbing down a chimney, Hugo makes his way lower--

--reaches for the mouse -- clasps his fingers into the animal's fur. Pulls him in close. Turns to climb back up--

And as he goes, something in the shadows below UNcurls.

Something big.

Hugo doesn't notice. He's got his eyes on the hatch above.

Climbs toward it. When suddenly--

**SLAM! THE HATCH DOOR FALLS SHUT.**

Darkness falls like a guillotine blade.

In the dark, Hugo whirls-- blind-- terrified--

HUGO  
-no-- no-no-no-no--

He digs into his pocket, pulls out matches. STRIKES ONE.

Hugo orients himself. Spots the hatch above. Keeps the lit match in his fingers as he starts to climb back up...

...and now we see that SHAPE below is crawling up the shaft after him, spindly and graceful...

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, SECOND LEVEL - DAY

SWEAT beads down Rivka's face as she hides-- watching Kaiser go into the second level bathroom. He closes the door and--

SHE BREAKS FOR IT

--silently races up the stairs, to THE THIRD FLOOR, beating a path down the hall toward--

THE TOP BEDROOM

--straight toward the mirror door. Almost to safety, when--

A FLOORBOARD CREAKS. 20 feet behind her.

And again -- a thump of a footstep -- *CREAK. CLOSER.*

Her blood runs cold as she realizes: someone is IN THE HALLWAY BEHIND. And they are LOOKING DIRECTLY AT HER.

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, DUMBWAITER SHAFT - DAY

FSSHT! Another match strikes, revealing Hugo in the shaft, at the hatch. Tries to open it. Stuck. His voice trembles...

HUGO

...c'mon...

The match burns down to his fingers, singes his flesh-- *ow!* It falls from his grip, plummets--

--and briefly illuminates *THE SHAPE* ten feet beneath him.

Hugo's eyes widen in horror.

It's A YOUNG WOMAN-- stringy hair, black eyes, reaching up with FREAKISHLY ELONGATED FINGERS. Not just her fingers; her arms, legs, torso, even her JAW, all stretched grotesquely.

The falling match WINKS OUT. BLACKNESS.

Hugo just barely manages to STIFLE A SCREAM WITH HIS HAND.

Hyperventilating, he CLAWS at the hatch. No avail.

The sound of **THE LONG GIRL** crawling up the shaft toward him is like a giant black widow skittering up a drainpipe as--

INT. VORMELKER MANOR

*CREAK-CREAK.* The unseen interloper behind Rivka approaches step by step. She doesn't turn around. Mind racing. Finally she raises her hands and says in German:

RIVKA

*Don't shoot.*

*(CREAK CREAK -- closer)*

*I'm unarmed. I'm here alone.*

*(CREAK CREAK -- closer)*

*I was... lost in the woods and I needed a place to get out of the...*

*The figure behind her starts humming a PRETTY LITTLE TUNE. Familiar. The one she heard coming out of the drain.*

Hairs on the back of her neck sticking up, she angles the mirror door to get a view of who's coming toward her...

...and in the mirror's dim reflection, a human form takes shape behind her. It is not one of the Nazi soldiers.

It's a RAIL THIN MAN. 50s. Hairless. Eyes black, all pupil. Naked save for what look like intricate full-body tattoos.

Her lips part as she turns and sees those aren't tattoos...

**The man is covered in SCAR TISSUE.**

His entire body ringed in ropey pink bands, like circles in a tree trunk. His black eyes peer from swollen bulbs of flesh. nostrils split open to reveal candle-white sinus cavities. Lips sliced and healed until the flesh has knitted together, curved in a grisly rictus through which he HUMS THAT MELODY.

Rivka-- *heart in her throat, mind summersaulting, somehow forcing herself not to scream* -- FLEES.

YANKS the mirror door open, veers into the secret passage--  
--hearing the Scarred Man GIBBER as he chases-- *enjoying this-*  
Rivka's breath saws -- sprints for the stairs to the attic--  
EXPLODING THROUGH THE ATTIC DOOR

--looking over her shoulder for the pursuer just as WHAM! The dumbwaiter hatch behind her SLAMS OPEN with shocking force--

--she JOLTS, SPINS-- sees a dust and cobweb-covered HUGO scrambling out of the dumbwaiter like hell is after him--

RIVKA  
--Hugo--

--he slams into the floor, crawling to escape, gasping. She pulls him close as he gesticulates at the dumbwaiter hatch--

HUGO  
*In there-- she's in there--*

Rivka checks the passageway. No Scarred Man. Checks the dumbwaiter. Nothing but dust and cobwebs.

Then she looks to Hugo... pulls him close.

RIVKA  
 (whispers)  
*I saw... I saw them too...*

Hugo holds his mother tight as she says...

RIVKA  
*We have to get out of this house.*

EXT. VORMELKER MANOR - NIGHT

Night has fallen. Vormelker Manor looms in the darkness, snow piling up in drifts around it. Downstairs lights blazing... and in the upper level, in the tiny attic window, a candle...

INSIDE THE ATTIC

An SS MEDICAL KIT gets unzipped. Tube of penicillin gets uncapped. Yellow powder douses onto Hugo's frostbite wounds. Rivka tends to her son, their voices whispers...

HUGO  
*What were those things?...*

RIVKA  
*...I don't know...*

HUGO  
*You... you said we were meant to find this place...*

Rivka has no answer. She applies a field dressing and fresh bandage-wrap to his hand.

HUGO  
*You said the world is designed the way God wants it. But... why would God want to put us--*

RIVKA  
*--I was wrong.*  
 (that gives him pause)  
*We don't belong in this house anymore than we belonged in the ghetto in Warsaw. That's why we keep moving... so we can find the place where we're meant to be.*  
 (beat)  
*I always told you that the day the war ends, we'll be somewhere peaceful and green. Does this place look peaceful and green to you?*

HUGO

...no.

RIVKA

You see a river you can jump in? A sky full of fireflies?

HUGO

...no.

RIVKA

Which means this is just a stop along the way. Nothing more. Now listen closely...

We pull away from them, through the door and into...

THE SECRET PASSAGEWAY, through its shadowy confines...

RIVKA (V.O.)

*Tonight, once the Germans have fallen asleep, we're going to gather our things and slip out through the hidden passage...*

WHOOSH! We pass through the mirror door and into the THIRD FLOOR BEDROOM, then through the hall and down the stairs...

RIVKA (V.O.)

*...we'll go down to the master bedroom on the second level...*

Captain Kaiser crests the landing and we follow him into his bedroom, drifting to...

RIVKA (V.O.)

*Once the Captain's in dreamland, I'll sneak into his room and get the keys to the jeep.*

...the **JEEP KEYS** on his bedside table, near his pillow... Then we pull away, DOWN THE STAIRS to the bottom level...

RIVKA (V.O.)

*Then we make our way downstairs, quiet as can be, because those first floor guest rooms are where the others will be sleeping...*

DOWN THE HALL we go, past the GUEST ROOMS, laden with piles of the soldiers' gear, then through a doorway into--

THE CARRIAGE HOUSE

--where the Wanderer 11 jeep awaits, gleaming in the night.

RIVKA (V.O.)  
*And remember: there's no way to start the jeep quietly. It's going to wake them up. So we'll have to move lickety-split.*

We pull out of the carriage house...

RIVKA (V.O.)  
*And we don't stop til we're safe.*

INSIDE THE ATTIC

Rivka takes Hugo's hand.

RIVKA  
*I'll get us home. Wherever that may be. I promise.*

Hugo swallows his fear... and gives a nod.

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, MASTER BEDROOM/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Later that night. Snow building up in drifts. Alone in his room, Captain Kaiser writes a letter. Handwriting meticulous, beautiful. A photo of his WIFE AND YOUNG DAUGHTER nearby.

Kaiser finishes up the letter, murmurs a goodnight to his family, and starts getting ready for bed as we pull away--

--to reveal MAX peeking up from the downstairs level, watching Kaiser's door close, before we follow Max back to...

THE KITCHEN

...where the rest of the squad sits around a table covered in maps and notebooks and coffee mugs, aftermath of mission prep-

MAX  
*He's done.*

Tension dissipates. Vogel rolls a smoke with his trembly hands. Lange tunes a radio, to a broadcast of "Charlie And His Orchestra" (\*real-life Nazi swing band) and plays the music at low volume. Max reaches for the Kirschwasser when--

SCHROEDER  
*Put it back, private.*

They look over at Schroeder. Who's sitting apart, sharpening his knife, staring down Max. His famous temper tingling...

SCHROEDER  
*You heard what the captain said.*

MAX  
*Funny, I don't see him around anywhere right now.*  
 (smiles at Schroeder)  
*All I see is his shoeshine boy.*  
*Care for a drink, shoeshine boy?*

SCHROEDER  
*His unit, his rules--*

MAX  
*Here we go--*

SCHROEDER  
*--so it is written, so shall it be done. Put the bottle back, private.*

VOGEL  
*Both of you cut it out, you're making my goddamn teeth hurt--*

MAX  
*I didn't know better, Schroeder?*  
*I'd say you were sweet on the captain.*

WHAM! Schroeder rises from his chair, ready to brawl. Max, welcoming the fight. Lange gets in the middle of it--

LANGE  
*I should point out that the captain might frown on his Sergeant beating a soldier to death with a bottle of brandy, regardless of how much that soldier may richly deserve it.*

(to group)  
*I suggest we all get some sleep.*

A tense beat... then Schroeder backs down. For now. As the group disperses, we PULL UP INTO THE VENTILATION GRATE, to...

THE ATTIC

...where Rivka and Hugo eavesdrop, waiting... waiting...

EXT. VORMELKER MANOR - NIGHT

The witching hour is upon us. We creep through the blizzard-choked forest towards Vormelker Manor, all its windows dark.

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, 3RD FLOOR BEDROOM - NIGHT

3rd floor bedroom. The image is slowly swept aside, replaced by Rivka & Hugo's faces; we were just looking at the mirror door's reflection as the door was pushed open from behind.

RIVKA  
(scans the room, then)  
Go.

They slip past -- Rivka with her go-bag slung over her shoulder, Hugo with Borys clenched tight in his fist as--

THEY MAKE THEIR WAY DOWN THE STAIRS

--and toward the door to the 2nd Floor Master Bedroom. The door's open a crack. Rivka pushes it a bit further and sees--

CAPTAIN KAISER

--in bed, on his back, motionless. Breathing evenly.

She steels herself... and moves into...

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, 2ND FLOOR MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

...the bedroom. Crawling toward the bedside table.

When suddenly, Captain Kaiser rolls over and looks at her.

Rivka's heart JUMPS--

--then she realizes: he sleeps with his eyes open.

Rivka watches his chest rhythmically rise and fall for a moment... his eyes glassy, unseeing...

Then she makes her move. Inch by inch, toward...

...**THE WANDERER KEYS** on his bedside table... almost there...

She reaches for the keys... silently puts a hand on them... close enough to feel his exhaled breath on her hand...

Curls her fingers around them...

CLINK. Kaiser STIRS.

Rivka, clutching the keys, FLATTENS HERSELF on the floor beside his bed. Frozen still.

Above her, Kaiser shifts... sits up... unbearable tension...

...then he ROLLS BACK OVER and sleep reclaims him.

As Rivka listens to his breath regain its slumber-rhythm, she creeps away across the floor, out of the room as we CUT TO:

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Rivka and Hugo stealth past guest bedrooms where the rest of the squad sleeps, before sneaking through a doorway into--

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, CARRIAGE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

--the CARRIAGE HOUSE. Rivka shuts the door behind her, trying to muffle the click of the knob. Then looks to--

THE WANDERER

--their only hope of escape. From somewhere we hear HINGES GROAN as we CUT TO--

THE HEAVY DOUBLE DOORS OF THE CARRIAGE HOUSE

--getting slowly pushed open into the wind, iron hinges complaining. Rivka & Hugo now have a clear exit as--

INT. WANDERER INSIDE CARRIAGE HOUSE - NIGHT

*CLICK!* Key in the ignition. Rivka at the wheel, Hugo at her side. She tests the stick shift, familiarizing herself...

RIVKA  
(points to a handle)  
I turn the key, you hold on tight.

He nods. Rivka sucks in a breath. Steels herself.

Her trembling fingers grip the key... turn it...

...and *CLICK!* Nothing happens.

Tries again. *CLICK!* Nothing.

Tries again. Same result.

Hugo looks to her, eyes wide. Rivka, fighting for calm.

RIVKA  
It's ok... Grandpa's tractor used  
to do this on cold mornings... hand  
me that kit?

Hugo hands hear an AUTO MAINTENANCE TOOLBOX from off the floor. She rifles through it...

RIVKA  
Ok...

She finds a container of ANTI-FREEZE. And a FLASHLIGHT. Which she hands to Hugo, and motions for him to follow as she--

CLIMBS OUT AND GOES AROUND TO THE FRONT OF THE WANDERER  
--where she lifts the hood's lid, props it up on a strut.

Hugo aims the flashlight at the shadowy depths of the Wanderer's engine compartment, turns it on-- *CLICK!*

And we reveal something that takes their breath away.

**THE ENGINE IS MISSING.**

Wires hang like strands of torn ligaments, MELTED AND SINGED, as if some massive flaming claw ripped the engine free.

HUGO  
...how... how did...

They suddenly... DRIP! A droplet of something wet and black hits Hugo's shoulder. His wide eyes find the spot.

Hugo shines the flashlight's beam UPWARDS, to reveal--

THE ENGINE'S CRANKSHAFT, strung from the rafters with black twine (that almost resembles a rope of human hair.) Grease drips off it.

The slow creep of the flashlight's beam reveals...

MORE ENGINE PARTS

...sparkplugs, valves, pistons, timing chain...

...all strung up from the rafters, dripping dark fluids. Metal clinking gently -- *tink, tink, tink...*

Rivka and Hugo stare in horror as they realize: *the entire engine has been broken down into its smallest components and strung up like animal parts in a slaughterhouse.*

RIVKA  
(a whisper)  
...impossible...

She realizes: something does not want them to leave this house. Something wants them to stay so it can play with them.

The wind picks up, and the clinking metal gets louder, like a windchime -- *TINK, TINK, TINK...*

Hugo's flashlight beam drifts through the shadows above, revealing more of the dismembered engine...

...pausing on a strange looking piece. Curved. Steel. Sharp.

...and that's when Hugo realizes he's looking at A MEAT HOOK.  
Attached to the wrist-stump of a human arm.

*THE ARM SPRINGS TO LIFE, SWIPES THE HOOK DOWNWARD AT HIM.*

Hugo SCREAMS. Rivka HAULS HIM BACK-- the hook SLICING AIR--  
THUMP! The flashlight hits the ground and GOES OUT, AS--

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sgt. Vogel -- who wasn't exactly *sleeping* to begin with-- snaps up from bed. *The fuck did he just hear?*

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, CARRIAGE HOUSE - NIGHT

WHUMPH! Something HEAVY DROPS FROM THE CEILING, hits the ground HARD. And begins DRAGGING ITSELF TOWARD OUR HEROES as--

RIVKA

--gobsmacked, some distant part of her brain remembering Hugo's words about the "the man with the hooks"-- grabs Hugo--  
--rushes for the OPEN DOUBLE DOORS OF THE CARRIAGE HOUSE when--  
**KA-BLAM!** The doors SLAM SHUT with shocking velocity as--

INSIDE THE HOUSE

--Vogel reacts to the sound-- pulls on his coat and rushes out of his room to go investigate as--

IN THE CARRIAGE HOUSE

--Rivka PUSHES ON THE DOORS WITH ALL HER MIGHT--

--they don't budge--

--she puts her back to the doors and digs her heels in, trying to force the heavy bastards open when--

--she and Hugo pause.

The Half Man is nowhere to be seen. Vanished into icy air.

HUGO  
...where is he...?

Then they hear--

THUMP THUMP THUMP! Audible from within the manor: boots approaching the interior door to the carriage house--

RIVKA  
Hide.

Hugo FREEZES UP, just like we saw him do back in Warsaw. Jaw tight, HAND CLENCHED AND SHAKING.

THUMP THUMP -- footsteps closer--

--Rivka DRAGS HUGO into hiding on the other side of the Wanderer-- when Rivka suddenly looks up and realizes THE VEHICLE'S HOOD IS STILL UP. She unlatches it--

--the hood FALLS, about to land with a concussive boom--

--but Rivka CATCHES IT and silently lowers it into place as--

THE DOOR OPENS

VOGEL steps in. Looks around. Eyes scanning. Listening...

VOGEL  
...hello?

Silence. And more silence. And then--

WHAM! Impact like a thunderclap -- Vogel jolts--

--and sees it's just the wind WHIPLASHING the carriage house double-doors against each other. Shakes his head...

VOGEL  
This fucking house...

Shaking off the spooks, he goes over to the double-doors and LATCHES THEM SHUT. And if he were to turn, he'd notice--

RIVKA AND HUGO

--pinned tight against the Wanderer, hiding behind one of its massive WHEEL WELLS. Vogel just turns around and exits frame.

Goes to the door he entered through. Glances back into the house to make sure no one's following. Then...

...turns and heads back into the carriage house. Rivka and Hugo hold statue-still as they hear him approach.

Tight on their faces as his out-of-focus shape passes by in the BG, leaving only his frozen breath behind...

A long, torturous beat. Then...

VOGEL (O.S.)  
*There you are.*

Rivka and Hugo FREEZE. Then we reveal...

Vogel's not talking to our heroes, but to **HIS STASH OF PERVITIN** hidden away amidst the gear on the work table.

VOGEL  
*Missed you...*

CLINK! He opens the mint-tin and scoops up some of the Pervitin powder with the tip of his knife.

Puts the knife to his nose, sniffs. His face registers sweet relief. Leans his head back, nasal-drip slithering down...

...and that's when he sees what's hanging in the rafters.

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, FIRST FLOOR - NIGHT

BAM! The door to the carriage house EXPLODES OPEN and in comes Vogel, peaking on speed and wild-eyed, yelling--

VOGEL  
*WAKE UP! EVERYONE WAKE THE FUCK UP!*

As he runs on to rouse the rest of the squad, we LINGER on the door to the carriage house--

--as Rivka and Hugo slip through, back inside, as we CUT TO:

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

On the dining room table: a mess of **SPARKPLUGS** and small **ENGINE BITS**, still connected to their strings. Evidence. "Of what" is yet to be determined. Captain Kaiser sits, sipping tea, deep in thought as a STORM OF DIALOGUE rages around him.

MAX  
*I'm telling you, it's the partisans-*

LANGE  
*How would they know we're here?*

MAX

*Maybe the fact that we arrived in a  
Wanderer 11 flying swastika flags?*

LANGE

*Your theory requires them being  
able to sit still and spy on us for  
hours in subzero temperatures.  
Without some kind of structure to  
shield them from the elements,  
they'd freeze to death in hours.*

MAX

*And if anyone's an expert on how  
long it takes someone to freeze to  
death, it's you doc.*

LANGE

*Thank you.*

Vogel, still jittery from the speed, cuts in.

VOGEL

*How is it that NO ONE is asking the  
obvious question?*

MAX

*Why are your pupils the size of  
Lake Muritz?*

VOGEL

*How did they disassemble an engine  
in COMPLETE SILENCE?*

(off their pause)

*I used to work in my uncle's Uri's  
mechanic shop. Taking an engine  
apart is NOT something done quickly  
or quietly. We would've heard them.*

That statement settles in on the group. Finally...

MAX

*Maybe your uncle Uri was just a  
shitty mechanic.*

Vogel's about to take a swing when Captain Kaiser puts a hand on his shoulder, stops him cold.

CAPTAIN KAISER

*Pvt. Vogel. You have a theory?*

VOGEL

*I'm only asking questions, sir.*

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*You don't think this was the work  
 of our enemies.*

VOGEL  
*We would've heard them, sir.*  
 (beat)  
*I think this was... something else.*

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*Such as?*

VOGEL  
*I just have... a bad feeling about  
 this house.*  
 (to the others)  
*You're telling me I'm the only one?*  
 (to Schroeder)  
*I know you feel it. Been fondling  
 that crucifix since we got here.*

Kaiser looks to Schroeder.

KAISER  
*Sergeant?*

SCHROEDER  
*Respectfully, sir, this whole  
 countryside is a hive of gypsies,  
 witches, pagans and godless mystics  
 and nothing about it agrees with me  
 one bit.*  
 (off Kaiser)  
*But people... talk about these  
 woods. And about this house. Those  
 prisoners we caught in June? They  
 surrendered rather than hide here.  
 I heard them whispering at night.  
 Telling these... stories...*

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*What kind of stories?*

SCHROEDER  
 (let's just go with...)  
 ...folklore.

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*So... "ghost stories."*

We drift up through the ceiling, up to--

THE ATTIC

--where Rivka and Hugo listen through the vent.

CAPTAIN KAISER (O.S.)  
*There are men within the Reich who believe in the occult.*

BACK DOWN IN THE DINING ROOM

Captain Kaiser continues...

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*I am not amongst them. If any of you are, I recommend keeping that information private.*

Vogel has the grace to look ashamed.

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*What I believe is that our enemies know we're here, and they're intent on striking fear in our hearts.*  
 (looks around the table)  
*A mission which, from the looks of things, they have succeeded at.*

Kaiser leans in, his voice lowering...

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*The only advantage the Partisans have is that of the home-field. We need to equalize that. We need to know what the locals know.*

MAX  
*"Locals?" Sir, all due respect, this area is almost uninhabited--*

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*"Almost."*

He lays out a MAP onto the table, points to a spot...

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*I saw it on the way in...*

The sound of BLIZZARD WINDS TAKES OVER AS--

EXT. VORMELKER MANOR - MORNING

--*SLAM!* The manor's front door FLIES OPEN into the GALE FORCE SNOW. It's morning, storm's raging. Kaiser leads Schroeder and Max out of the house, bundled, weapons loaded.

CAPTAIN KAISER (V.O.)  
*Only two kilometers east of here.  
 I'll take a team on foot, the rest  
 stay behind to stand guard...*

Behind them, Lange and Vogel stand guard at the house, watching their compatriots head off into the howling white.

And above them, visible in the attic window...

RIVKA AND HUGO: watching, trapped, as SNOW FLURRIES PAST--

EXT. HUT IN THE CROOKED FOREST - MORNING

--to reveal A LITTLE HUT made of sticks and debris. Smoke spirals from a ramshackle chimney. Tighten on the front door--

CAPTAIN KAISER (V.O.)  
*It's a little structure, too small  
 to be any kind of insurgent base.  
 Looks like whoever lives there has  
 been there for generations...*

BAM! Front door's KICKED OPEN by Kaiser's men as we CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS BEYOND VORMELKER MANOR - DAY

Kaiser, Schroeder and Max march their prisoners through the snowstorm at gunpoint. 3 *Deutsch-jüdische Bauern* (\*Jewish German peasants): grandpa (**BRAJAN**, 80, eyes of a stroke survivor.) Grandkids (**SZYMON** & **URSZULA**), early 20s, scared.

But when they come out of the trees to see VORMELKER MANOR, Brajan suddenly stops cold. Whispering to himself. Schroeder, putting on a hardass show for Kaiser, mad-dogs him...

SCHROEDER  
*Keep moving, old man.*

But Brajan doesn't. It's as if his feet have been frozen to the ground. Just staring at the house in dumbstruck terror.

SCHROEDER  
 (aims gun at him)  
*I said keep moving--*

Brajan doesn't even look at Schroeder or at the weapon aimed at him. He's only looking at the house. And then...

MAX  
*Oh my God-- is he--*

Reveal: the old man's bladder has let go, stain spreading.

SCHROEDER  
*Disgusting.*

WHAM! Schroeder kicks the old man in the back of knees, sends him down. Szymon turns to intervene, Urszula stops him.

SCHROEDER  
Walk.

Brajan just SCREAMS. No words, only unintelligible noises.

The Nazis force Szymon and Urszula to keep moving. Schroeder grabs Brajan by the collar and drags him through the snow, kicking and keening toward the Manor as we RISE TO REVEAL...

RIVKA AND HUGO

...in attic, listening to the panicked screams of the old man getting LOUDER AND LOUDER AS WE SMASH TO:

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, KITCHEN - DAY

RIP! Pliers yank a nicotine-yellow fingernail OFF A FINGER, leaving blood and exposed raw flesh. Someone HOWLS as we--

WIDEN TO BRAJAN

--at the kitchen table, seething in pain as he's pinned to his chair by Schroeder while Lange removes his fingernails one by one with the pliers. Until--

CAPTAIN KAISER (O.S.)  
*Enough for now, gentlemen...*

Captain Kaiser enters, Max in tow. Tosses a dishrag to Brajan for his hand, sits down across from Brajan.

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*Good afternoon.*

The old man lists in his chair. Even without the torture and his deep fear, he seems not-all-there.

MAX  
*Don't think he's much of a talker.*

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*Nod your head for yes, shake it for no. Do you understand?*  
 (a nod)  
 (MORE)

CAPTAIN KAISER (CONT'D)  
*Your name is Brajan Kantor and you live with your adult grandchildren Szymon and Urszula Kantor, correct?*

(a nod)

*Kantor is a Jewish last name. Your family is Jewish, yes?*

(a beat, then a nod)

*Would the Kantors like to leave here alive today?*

(a nod)

*Are you aware of the Polish Home Army stronghold near these woods?*

(a nod)

*Do you know where it is located?*

A long beat... and we RISE TO REVEAL...

RIVKA AND HUGO

...spying from a hiding spot on the second level landing as--  
 DOWN IN THE LIVING ROOM

--Brajan finally nods his head: "yes."

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*Write it down.*

Kaiser hands a pencil and a pad of paper to him. The old man's trembling, bloody fingers take the pencil...

...struggling to write... and then...

SNAP! Cracks the pencil in half. Flicks the halves at Kaiser like coins to a bum. Smiles. And says clearly, in German:

BRAJAN  
*Fuck you.*

ON RIVKA AND HUGO

Breath held, waiting to see how this will shake out...

DOWNSTAIRS

Brajan stares down his interrogators.

BRAJAN  
*We give answers, you release us?*  
*Please. I'll take a bullet before I bend the knee to the SS. Besides...*  
 (darkens)  
*...you killed us the moment you brought us through the door.*

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*What are you talking about?*

BRAJAN  
*My grandchildren and I will never leave this house alive. The house will see to that, rest assured.*  
 (off his confusion)  
*There's a reason why living things stay away from this place. Why the wolves won't get near it. Why even the trees recoil from it.*

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*I don't follow...*

BRAJAN  
 (trace of a smile)  
*...you will.*

As Brajan continues, we drift away INTO THE HOUSE...

BRAJAN (V.O.)  
*This house was once the estate of Count Hinrich Vormelker...*

...WHICH IS NOW FULL OF PEOPLE: Hordes of SOIREE GUESTS in 19th century finery. Music on the phonograph. Wine flows.

BRAJAN (V.O.)  
*A nobleman with more in common with Roman emperors than modern man...*

Holding court at the massive table: COUNT VORMELKER. A man who changes the power dynamic of any room just by existing in it. We push in on him, the light subtly darkens...

BRAJAN (V.O.)  
*He was a practitioner of **Boruta**...  
 Mysticism that he adopted and disfigured in his own image....*

...and as we pull back, we see HE'S NOW IN A DARK ROOM with wet walls. Candles cast hellish light on scrawled SYMBOLS. Vormelker, now wearing only the mask, a leather apron, and that necklace with the STAR SHAPED PENDANT on it. He's holding that PEELER KNIFE we saw in the kitchen earlier...

BRAJAN (V.O.)  
*He would lure people to his manor.  
 Those he saw as unclean. Jews, gypsies, deviants...*

BACK TO BRAJAN

...as he struggles to get out the next part:

BRAJAN  
*And he... he would...*

**WE SHOCK CUT TO SCREECHING STUTTERY IMAGERY**

--A THIN GIRL on a rack, being stretched.

--A MUSCULAR MAN getting MEAT HOOKS bolted into his wrists.

--A BALD MAN forced to peel his own skin off inch by inch.

BACK TO BRAJAN

BRAJAN  
*Torture them. Til their minds  
 cracked and their hearts stopped.  
 And then...*

SHOCK CUT TO

--COUNT VORMELKER, reciting an incantation (from a familiar leatherbound book), over the bloody unmoving corpse of THE SCARRED MAN... whose eyes suddenly POP OPEN.

BACK TO BRAJAN

BRAJAN  
*...he'd recite their name in a  
 resurrection spell. Bring them back  
 to life and start all over again.*

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*...why?...*

BRAJAN  
*Subject a soul to enough pain and  
 horror, it breaks... and becomes  
 your slave in the afterlife.*  
 (motions)  
*This house is a slave quarters.  
 Inhabited by the souls of his  
 victims. They serve him now. He  
 watches from beyond as they toy  
 with us. His idea of heaven.*

Across the room, Schroeder finds himself speaking out of turn-

SCHROEDER  
*What does he want?*

BRAJAN

*The same thing any master wants:  
more slaves.*

(beat)

*They will come to claim us, add us  
to their ranks. No stopping them.*

*If you had any mercy in you, you'd  
kill us all right here and now.*

The Nazis chew on that for a moment. Unnerved by the fact that Brajan 100% believes what he's saying.

On the landing, Rivka and Hugo feel their guts turn icy as-

IN THE KITCHEN

Max breaks the silence:

MAX

*Do I still need to be here, or--?*

CAPTAIN KAISER

*I think our friend needs some time  
in the cellar to sort himself out.*

(to Schroeder)

*Put him with the others.*

Schroeder grabs Brajan and HAULS HIM OUT OF HIS CHAIR. Drags him out of the room, past the STAIRS as we SWOOP UPWARDS--

OVER RIVKA AND HUGO

--peeking over the bannister to see Schroeder open the door to **THE ROOT CELLAR**. Viciously HURLS Brajan into its foggy, frigid mouth. Szymon & Urszula already shivering inside.

CAPTAIN KAISER

*We'll revisit in an hour. Or two.*

Szymon SNARLS INVECTIVE at him as SLAM! The door shuts. Kaiser slides a deadbolt into place, locking them in. Turns to exit, leaving his men to stand guard. He heads upstairs--

JUST AS RIVKA AND HUGO DART BACK INTO HIDING.

A second after he walks past...

HUGO

(whispers)

What do we do?

RIVKA

(a beat)

Their prisoners know the woods.

(MORE)

RIVKA (CONT'D)  
They'll know where the base is.  
We'll break them out and--

HUGO  
--but the soldiers, won't they...?

Rivka's brain spinning like a slot machine...

RIVKA  
We have to get them out of the  
house long enough for us to get to  
the root cellar. We grab the  
villagers and escape to the base.

HUGO  
What about the wolves?

RIVKA  
Whatever's in this house is worse.

Hugo seems to agree with that. But he has to ask:

HUGO  
How do we get the soldiers out?

And off Rivka, we CUT TO:

QUICK SHOTS

CLINK! Rivka steals a KIRSCHWASSER bottle from the attic bar.

THUNK! Yanks the cork out. Steals a slug for herself.

RIP! Tears a section of the lace curtains off. Feeds it into  
the bottle, making a Molotov cocktail.

ROAR goes the blizzard outside as Rivka forces the attic  
window open and shimmies through--

EXT. VORMELKER MANOR, ROOFTOP - SUNDOWN

--OUT ONTO THE ROOF. She's in treadless shoes on an icy roof  
sloping down to 60 feet of fuck-all.

RIVKA  
(whispers to herself)  
...ok... ok...

Wind buffets her. She white-knuckles the window-frame.

RIVKA  
...hand it to me...

Hugo hands over the Molotov cocktail and a book of matches.

RIVKA  
Back in a flash, little one.

...and, carefully, starts making her way up the steep roof...

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, KITCHEN - SUNDOWN

Down in the kitchen, Schroeder stands guard at the root cellar door, ignoring the sounds of someone trying to BEAT THEIR WAY OUT. *BANG BANG!* The door SHUDDERS from the impacts.

Suddenly, a different sound. A WOODEN GROAN from above.

ON THE ROOF WITH RIVKA: she pauses, just having set her foot on a CREAKY SECTION OF THE ROOF.

DOWN IN THE KITCHEN

Max pauses cleaning his **SERVICE PISTOL** and looks up. Ditto Schroeder. *What was that?*

*BANG BANG!* They're distracted by more impacts from inside the root cellar. Schroeder slams his fist on the door.

SCHROEDER  
*Quiet.*

EXT. VORMELKER MANOR, ROOFTOP - SUNDOWN

Raked by airborne snow, Rivka inches OUT TO THE ROOF'S FAR EDGE. Looks down over the GUT-CHURNING DROP below her... feels her palms go clammy despite the cold...

...then gathers herself. Using her body as a windblock, she digs out a MATCHBOOK. Tries to get a match lit.

RIVKA  
...c'mon...

Fizzles out between her fingertips. Tries again. Fails.

RIVKA  
...c'mon...

And if you look very carefully, you might notice something.

Behind her, there's the CHIMNEY.

And coming out of the chimney, covered in black soot, are **PALE WHITE FINGERS**. *LONG ONES.*

*Longer than any in real life could possibly be, curling over the lip of the brick like roots made of bone...*

Something is pulling itself out of the chimney right behind her. And she doesn't notice because--

FSSSSHT! She lights a match. Cups it, keeps it lit.

RIVKA

Yes...

She lights the lace curtain "fuse" in her Molotov cocktail. Gets a good flame going. Knowing this next part is do or die--

--she winds back to hurl the Molotov off the roof, toward the woods surrounding the property--

--and just before she can throw it--

SPINDLY LONG FINGERS DIG INTO HER HAIR AND PULL.

She's YANKED BACKWARDS-- SCREAMS-- sound eaten by the wind-

--bottle drops from her hand--

--she SLAMS into the snowy roof--

IN THE KITCHEN

--the Nazis glance upward at the sound--

ON THE ROOF

--Rivka fights to free her hair from the hand's grip--

--but the hand is suddenly GONE. Quick as it came.

She looks around -- sees nothing but BLINDING SNOW FLURRIES.

Then-- she GASPS, realizing--

*THE MOLOTOV COCKTAIL*

*--is a couple feet away, lodged in a roof snowdrift -- fuse burning-- she's about to get firebombed by her own explosive--*

RIVKA

--NO--

She dives for the bottle-- grabs it, flame licking at her--

--CHUCKS IT, SENDS IT SAILING OFF THE ROOF--

*KABOOM! EXPLODES IN MID-AIR RIGHT OUTSIDE THE MANOR --*

--raining FIERY GLASS and flaming booze all over the grounds outside, bits of debris tinkling against the windows as--

INSIDE THE MANOR

The Nazis are on their feet, talk flying--

MAX	VOGEL
--hell was that?--	--fucking AMBUSH--

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*Outside! Form a perimeter, anything  
 that's not us, take it down--*

Weapons get brought to bear, fresh ammo clips getting snapped in as everyone goes SPRINTING OUT OF THE HOUSE--

--where we go SWOOPING UP AND AWAY FROM THE NAZIS--

OVER THE ROOFTOP

--just in time to find Rivka slithering back into the--

ATTIC WINDOW

--where WHUMPH! She hits the floor. Her cheeks are full of frozen blood vessels, flying on terror and adrenaline--

RIVKA  
Let's go.

Hugo tosses her Go-Bag and they flee as we SMASH TO:

EXT. VORMELKER MANOR, GROUNDS - EVENING

The Nazis stalk through the trees, weapons up, on the hunt...

INT. VORMEKKER MANOR, KITCHEN - EVENING

Rivka and Hugo rush down to the kitchen. Not noticing, amidst the detritus on the table, MAX'S PISTOL, half assembled.

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, ROOT CELLAR - EVENING

BAM! BAM! BAM! In the foggy mists of the root cellar, Szymon and Urzsula work together, desperately BASHING at the locked interior door handle with pieces of metal shelving. Curiously, Brajan sits on the floor behind them, not helping.

SZYMON  
 ...c'mon you bastard...

BAM! Another impact. No result. Szymon winds back again, swings his bludgeon into the handle--

THE DOOR OPENS FROM OUTSIDE -- just barely. Szymon and Ursula lift their bludgeons, ready to attack--

--the door opens more to reveal adorable HUGO. And Rivka.

SZYMOM

...you're not... with... them...

(Rivka shakes her head)

Who are you?

RIVKA

We're the ones getting you out. Can you get us to the partisan base?

BRAJAN (O.S.)

You won't make it there.

Brajan's finally broken his silence. All eyes go to him.

BRAJAN

You won't even make it past the front door.

SZYMOM

Don't listen to him, he's crazy--

BRAJAN

(fixes his gaze on her)

*The house will not let you leave.*

SZYMOM

Bullshit. What about the Germans?

They were able to *waltz right out*--

BRAJAN

The house is under the control of Count Vormelker. He favors his own kind...

EXT. WOODS BEYOND VORMELKER MANOR - NIGHT

The Nazis form their perimeter around the property...

BRAJAN (V.O.)

*..the demon that dwells in here is the same as the monsters out there.*

...Captain Kaiser coming across the remains of the Molotov cocktail, smoldering in the snow. Spots a piece of scorched glass from the bottle. Label still readable. **Kirschwasser**.

Just like inside the house. Gears turn in his mind as...

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, ROOT CELLAR - NIGHT

Brajan's breath clouds as he talks.

BRAJAN

People like us are what it wants.  
People who it sees as *unclean*--

URSZULA

Enough.

Urszula stands over Brajan, sticks out her hand--

URSZULA

Get up, Grandal. Now. We're leavi--

Brajan's arthritic hand GRABS HER BY THE WRIST. Stares into his granddaughter's eyes and pleads with her.

BRAJAN

Please. Sweet girl. Don't run.  
(quiets)  
Better... if it ends in here.

Urszula's tears start to flow as she realizes her grandfather intends to wait for death in this frozen cell.

SZYMON

Let her go.  
(Brajan doesn't)  
You want to stay here and die,  
that's your choice.  
(beat)  
I said let her go--

He WRENCHES Brajan's hand off her wrist, breaking free and--

THEY'RE MOVING FOR THE EXIT

--Urszula trying to grab Brajan, Szymon hustling her along, Rivka and Hugo right behind them--

--Rivka glances back at Brajan, who sits against the wall, head bowed, murmuring a prayer.

He's not praying for himself. He's praying for them.

EXT. WOODS BEYOND SYAMSNKI MANOR - NIGHT

The Nazis continue their search as we rack focus to the house... trace of a movement in a window, courtesy of...

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, KITCHEN - NIGHT

...Rivka, Hugo, Szymon and Urszula make their way down the hall from the kitchen, beating a path toward...

THE FRONT DOOR

...freedom a mere twenty feet in front of them.

RIVKA

(to Hugo)

There's Germans in the woods and I don't know exactly where. When we get through that door, we run and we don't stop. Understand?

Hugo nods, but something's gnawing at him...

HUGO

(re: Brajan)

What if he's telling the truth?

SZYMOM

He's a superstitious old fool and it's only gotten worse with age.

They get to the door. Szymon twists the knob. Everyone steels themselves as he opens the door a few inches. Peeks out.

SZYMOM'S POV: scanning the snowy moonlit landscape beyond.

No sign of the Germans. No sign of anyone. Clear shot.

Rivka grips Hugo's hand tight as--

SZYMOM

Retracts his head from the cracked door, looks to the group--

SZYMOM

Let's g--

And right then, a hand ringed in bulbous pink scar tissue  
GRABS HIM BY THE THROAT FROM BEHIND--

--YANKS him back, and *SLAM-CRUNCH!* SHUTS THE DOOR AGAINST HIS SKULL HARD ENOUGH TO BREAK IT. He collapses as--

--Urzsula SCREAMS into her hands, Rivka pulls Hugo against her, his scream muffled by her stomach as--

*CRUNCH! CRUNCH! CRUNCH!*

The heavy wooden door gets REPEATEDLY SLAMMED SHUT by some terrible unseen force outside, *pulverizing Szymon's head with each blow, skin and bones caving in, his body TWITCHING as--*

EVERYONE FUCKING **RUNS**

--blind, vertiginous panic--

--Urszula moving so fast she twists out of a shoe-- sprinting with one bare foot--

--Hugo's face a rictus of horror, Rivka hurrying him along--

URSZULA

--this way--

--straight down the hall leading to--

**THE SERVICE ENTRANCE ON THE SIDE OF THE HOUSE**

--where Urszula throws the door open--

--looks out-- sees no one--

RIVKA

*Wait-- wait-- don't go out--*

Urszula's already moving. Wood CREAKS as she descends the outdoor steps leading up to the service door.

Head on a swivel. Looking for threats everywhere at once.

Everywhere but DOWN.

*A MEAT HOOK slips out from the empty riser space between the steps, pointy end aimed upwards and--*

*SNAP-GUSH!* The hook goes through her foot.

The scream catches in her throat-- she FLOPS FORWARD--

--in agony, she twists around to see--

**THE HALF MAN**

--smiling his rotten-tooth grin, ensconced in shadows under the deck stairs, her foot a piece of bait on his hook as--

RIVKA

--looks out to see Urszula get DRAGGED BACK BY HER FOOT--

--straight through the gap between the steps. Her scream is cut off as her ribcage is IMPLDED by the too-tight space--

--and then she's pulled through, gone. Ripped from view. Rivka, hand over her mouth, fighting back waves of nausea--

--then realizes--

RIVKA  
Hugo, WAIT--

Hugo's already out of the service FOYER, into--

THE SUN ROOM

--its panes of glass covered in frost-- Hugo running for the--

SUN ROOM DOOR

--leading out to the snowy world beyond. He pushes it open.

RIVKA  
STOP!

It's right in front of them. An open exit. Straight route out of this deathtrap. Better to brave the cold and the wolves than whatever it is that lives within this house...

...but as Hugo makes to run out, Rivka GRABS HIM.

RIVKA  
Don't.  
(off his look)  
The old man's right, we go through  
that door, we die--

HUGO  
We can't stay in here--

RIVKA  
We can't run--

BRAJAN (O.S.)  
*Listen to your mother, boy...*

They turn to see Brajan. Staggering into the sunroom. Then they notice he's holding the SERVICE PISTOL we saw Max cleaning on the table earlier. Reassembled. Loaded.

BRAJAN  
Better to die by your own hand than  
let his slaves claim you...  
(MORE)

BRAJAN (CONT'D)  
 (puts gun to his head)  
**Better to die here than in the Wet Room.**

Rivka, seeing what's about to happen, BURIES Hugo's face against her as **BLAM!** Brajan shoots himself in the temple. Blood and gray matter fly. Crumples to the floor, dead, as--

--Hugo screams into his mother's stomach, sound muffled, as--  
 IN THE WOODS

Captain Kaiser hears the shot, yells to his men--

CAPTAIN KAISER  
**INSIDE! NOW!**

One by one, the Nazis turn and RUSH THE HOUSE as--  
 INSIDE

Rivka snatches the gun out of Brajan's dead hand before she and Hugo RUN FOR THE STAIRS, seconds to get hidden as--

OUTSIDE

The Nazis STORM INTO THE HOUSE, sweeping through, guns up as--  
 KAISER  
 --suddenly pauses. Eyes go to the ceiling, listening--  
 --are those footfalls he hears?

VOGEL (O.S.)  
*Holy SHIT--*

Commotion from the front foyer. Sounds like someone's puking. Kaiser approaches, and as he comes around the corner--

INTO THE FOYER

--where he sees his men surrounding... something...

VOGEL  
*...the fuck did this...?*

--and as he gets closer, he finally sees--

SZYMON'S CORPSE

--with a messy wash of blood, bone, brain and teeth where the head once was. Gore streaks the door, the bludgeoned wood dented and chipped. Sledgehammer would've been more surgical.

CAPTAIN KAISER  
 (calm, even)  
 ...well then.

Behind them, Lange enters, brushing snow out of his hair.

LANGE  
*Found the others, sir. The old man  
 shot himself with Albrecht's  
 service pistol in the sun room.*

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*And the girl?*

LANGE  
*Under the service stairs with a  
 crushed ribcage and some kind of  
 puncture trauma on her foot.*

MAX  
*Step on a nail?*

LANGE  
*More like a railroad spike.*

VOGEL  
*With all due respect, how do we not  
 see what's right in front of us?*

They look to Vogel, who's drenched in sweat and bad vibes.

VOGEL  
*There are guns and knives all over  
 this house. But whoever killed our  
 prisoners didn't use those, did  
 they? No, they didn't, because why  
 shoot someone when you could--*  
 (motions to Szymon)  
*--bash their head in with a door,  
 or crush their ribcage like a bug?*

LANGE  
*This was the Partisans trying to  
 silence them before they talked--*

VOGEL  
*You want to silence someone, you  
shoot them. This...  
 (motions to Szymon)  
 ...this is something else. Whatever  
 did this enjoyed it.*

SCHROEDER  
*You mean "whoever."*

VOGEL

*You heard what I said. There is a presence in this house. Tell me I'm lying, Sgt.*

Vogel stares down Schroeder, who's wavering... knowing in his heart Vogel's right, but terrified of looking the fool. When--

**TAP-TAP-TAP.** They look over to see...

...Captain Kaiser, away from the group, ear to the wall, gently TAPPING with the butt of his pistol. Tap-tap-tap.

Moves to the next wall, repeats the process. Tap-tap-tap.

SCHROEDER

...Captain?

Another wall. Tap-tap-tap.

Does silent arithmetic in his head. Then...

...moves over to an old PHONOGRAPH in the living room. Selects a record from the collection. Puts it on. A STRAUSS SONATA crackles to life. Kaiser cranks the volume to 11...

UP IN THE NEXT LEVEL

...Rivka and Hugo find their eavesdropping cut off by the swell of the classical music, as...

DOWN IN THE LIVING ROOM

...Captain Kaiser motions his men over, huddled around the phonograph speaker. Voice covered by the music...

CAPTAIN KAISER

*I found a fragment of the explosive outside.*

He lifts a chunk of charred liquor bottle glass.

CAPTAIN KAISER

*Kirschwasser. This house is stocked with it.*

SCHROEDER

*What are you saying, sir?*

CAPTAIN KAISER

*I'm saying the attack didn't originate from outside...*

*(whispers)*

*...someone is hiding in this house.*

And off the apprehensive stares of his men, we *SMASH TO:*

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, ATTIC - NIGHT

Rivka and Hugo, slumped, back against the door to the secret passage, Hugo between her knees. Both sweat-drenched, shivering with stale adrenaline. Rivka holds the pistol...

HUGO

(barely a whisper)

They're going to kill us. Those men  
downstairs. Or those... *things*--

RIVKA

I won't let them touch you.

He glances to his mother. She's got her eyes on the gun. Weighing unspeakable options. Voice drained of color...

RIVKA

...that was the vow I made. I'd  
never, ever let them touch you.  
Because I already let them take  
someone from me.

HUGO

...you didn't let them take dad...

This is the hardest news Rivka's ever had to break. But she might not ever get another chance to get this off her chest.

RIVKA

You had a fever. Wouldn't break.  
Your father and I snuck out after  
curfew to find medicine. A patrol  
chased us. We went through a window  
into the basement. Could've hid  
there, but... a piece glass cut my  
wrist open...

(beat)

All I had to do was stay silent.  
Hold it in. Not cry out. But I did.  
And they heard it, and--

QUICK POP: a darkened basement, suddenly *LIT UP BY THE MUZZLE FLASHES OF MACHINE GUNS*, spraying ammo through a window--

BACK TO RIVKA AND HUGO

Rivka holding tears back through sheer force of will. She lifts her wrist, the one with the SCARF TOURNIQUET on it.

RIVKA

Last thing your father did was give me this for the wound on my wrist.

(beat)

He was only thinking of me, even at the end. Even after what I did...

(voice trembling)

You want to know why I always say "Keep it silent? Don't stop, don't dwell, keep moving?" It's because I know what happens when you stop. I know what happens when you cry out.

Hugo's never seen her this vulnerable. Taken aback...

HUGO

You didn't do it...

(beat)

...I did.

RIVKA

You don't understand--

HUGO

I was the reason you went out that night--

RIVKA

No. Look at me.

He does. And sees a light dawning in his mother's eyes.

RIVKA

It wasn't you.

HUGO

Then how could it be you?

Rivka pauses, considering, when--

--they hear a WOODEN SCRAPING NOISE FROM BELOW as--

DOWNSTAIRS: the Nazis move heavy furniture to pull up the living room rug. Hunting for hidden doors, passages.

VOGEL

Nothing here--

KAISER (O.S.)

Keep looking!

UP IN THE ATTIC

Eavesdropping Hugo & Rivka share a glance.

RIVKA

We have to get out of here before  
they find this room.

HUGO

How? Those things won't let us--

RIVKA

Think about what the old man said.  
Those... spirits... they're just  
Vormelker's victims. Trapped in  
here, just like us...

There's an idea taking shape in Rivka's eyes. All at once she RUSHES to dig out something from a drawer...

RIVKA

I think they want something...  
(searches further)  
...same thing we've wanted since  
the day the Germans came to Warsaw.

HUGO

What?

RIVKA

(finds it)  
...to be free.

She pulls it out: **THE LEATHERBOUND BOOK WITH THE (X) COVER.**

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, LOWER LEVEL - NIGHT

BAM! BAM! Doors get kicked open as we follow the squad of Partisan Hunters through the house, searching room by room as-

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, ATTIC - NIGHT

Rivka turns pages fast, reads ancient text, with Vormelker's sketches filling the blank pages between chapters.

RIVKA

*"Those the Master has broken will  
be chained to him in the hereafter,  
for as long as the key exists..."*  
(points to a sketch)  
Look... the locket...

Rivka points to the sketch of the Long Girl's face... and sure enough around her neck, there's a LOCKET with strange shaped keyhole in the middle shaped like an (X)

RIVKA  
Just like the others...

She turns pages to reveal: the same locket around the necks of the Half Man and the Scarred Man. Same (X) shaped keyhole.

RIVKA  
All his victims... they all still  
wear the locket...

HUGO  
(echoing familiar words)  
...“For every lock a key.”

Rivka nods. Flips pages to a disturbing tableau: Vormelker, on a throne, his 3 prisoners at his feet, their lockets connected to chains held in his fist. Animals on leashes...

RIVKA  
...look at his necklace...

Hugo zeroes in... and we see it too: the ASTERISK SHAPED PENDANT on his necklace is actually...

HUGO  
...it's a key.

RIVKA  
“Those who the Master has broken  
will be chained to him, for as long  
as the key exists--  
(to Hugo)  
--this is it. This is how we get  
out. Find the key and destroy it.

HUGO  
How do we find it?

Rivka flips through to the last page of the journal...

...and the last drawing depicts FOUR STONE COFFINS in a dungeon. One small one containing The Half Man, a long one for The Long Girl, the next holding The Scarred Man...

...and the final one containing Count Vormelker, a vial of poison held to his lips... and the KEY around his neck.

And scrawled beneath it in the count's brambly handwriting...

RIVKA  
“Born of the wet room, in  
everlasting servitude...”

Rivka's lips part in realization...

RIVKA

He entombed himself with his slaves  
in the Wet Room...

HUGO

...wearing the key.

RIVKA

That room is somewhere in this  
house. We just have to--

BAM! They jolt at the SUDDEN NOISE from off in the house...

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, VARIOUS ROOMS - NIGHT

--the Nazis move through the house, ripping paintings off walls, overturning bookcases, checking every closet and under beds. No stone unturned...

CAPTAIN KAISER

(to Schroeder & Vogel)

*You two, sweep the third level.*

SCHROEDER

*Yes sir.*

We follow them UP THE STAIRS, THROUGH THE DOOR--

INTO THE 3RD FLOOR BEDROOM

--charging in like rodeo bulls. Ripping the place to shreds, searching everywhere. We pull away...

THROUGH THE MIRROR DOOR, DOWN THE PASSAGE, TO THE ATTIC

...where Rivka and Hugo listen with their ear to the wall. Hearing the Nazis tear apart the bedroom beyond...

The sounds get LOUDER, MORE FEROCIOUS... then

...all goes quiet.

An apprehensive look between them, as...

IN THE THIRD FLOOR BEDROOM

Vogel finishes searching the bathroom, comes out into the bedroom, shaking his head...

VOGEL

*Nothing up here...*

SCHROEDER  
Goddammit...

Schroeder snatches a lamp. CRASH! Hurls it against the wall.

SCHROEDER  
Where...

Throws a chair across the room -- CRACK!

SCHROEDER  
THE FUCK...

Grabs a wooden jewelry box, winds back to throw it.

SCHROEDER  
ARE THEY?

Throws it and we hear GLASS SHATTER. Then a THUMP as the box lands on floorboards in an echoey space.

Both Schroeder and Vogel STOP IN THEIR TRACKS.

And look to see it: the jewelry box WENT RIGHT THROUGH THE MIRROR DOOR, OBLITERATING IT, REVEALING THE SECRET PASSAGE.

SCHROEDER  
 (after a beat)  
...Captain?

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, ATTIC - NIGHT

In the attic, Rivka and Hugo listen in horror as...

SCHROEDER (O.S.)  
*There's something up here... Some kind of... passageway...*

*Oh shit.* Rivka slumps against the door. Knowing they've only got moments before this place is crawling with SS.

Hugo looks to his mother, terrified... and we SMASH TO:

A HEAVY BUREAU

--Rivka and Hugo pushing with all their might, sliding their makeshift barricade into place in front of the attic door as--

WE WHOOSH BACKWARDS THROUGH THE DOOR, DOWN THE SECRET PASSAGE

--the floor zipping past beneath us until-- CRUNCH! Jackboots step on broken glass. Reveal--

CAPTAIN KAISER

--stepping on the shattered remains of the mirror door as he enters the secret passage.

CLICK! Turns on his flashlight and peers into the musty corridor. His men right behind him, weapons ready.

SCHROEDER

*Captain, I--*

He holds up a hand -- *shhhh*. Everyone pauses. They hear--

IN THE ATTIC

--*SCRAAAPE* goes the bureau across the floor as--

IN THE PASSAGEWAY

Kaiser hand signals his men, they get in formation and follow him down the corridor, coming around the corner to see--

THE ATTIC DOOR

--picking up the pace as--

IN THE ATTIC

Rivka and Hugo hear the footsteps approaching.

RIVKA

*Hurry--*

They push the bureau harder-- *almost there--*

--footsteps close in on the door--

--Rivka and Hugo STRAIN--

--and WHAM! They get it into place RIGHT AS THE DOOR GETS PUSHED OPEN-- slamming into the barricade. BLOCKED.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR

--Schroeder lifts his machine gun, but Kaiser stops him.

KAISER

*Whoever's behind that door knows where the stronghold is. We need them alive and talking.*

*(off his dumb stare)*

*Knock. It. Down.*

The men follow orders, ATTACKING THE DOOR WITH SHOULDERS, FEET, FISTS AND GUN BUTTS AS--

IN THE ATTIC

Rivka and Hugo back away as the door JOLTS AGAINST THE BUREAU BLOCKADE. Like there's a horde of sprinter-zombies outside.

*BAM BAM BAM* goes the onslaught. Panicked eyes searching for an escape, Rivka's landing on--

RIVKA

*There--*

THE DUMBWAITER HATCH

--she grabs Hugo's hand and they run for the hatch--

--throwing it open and--

--reveal the **HISSING FACE OF THE SCARRED MAN, COMING UP THROUGH THE SHADOWS--**

--Hugo SCREAMS, Rivka slams the dumbwaiter shut--

OUTSIDE THE DOOR

--the Nazis pause, looking to each other--

MAX

*Is there a kid in there?*

INSIDE THE ATTIC

Rivka and Hugo are TRAPPED. Nowhere to run. *BAM BAM BAM!* More slams at the door. Jolting objects on shelves around the room--

--and that **PORCELAIN FOX** we saw earlier falls off a shelf and lands on the green carpet.

Rivka doesn't notice. She puts herself between the door and Hugo, pistol in her slippery grip, breath shallow...

...but Hugo's got his eyes on that FOX FIGURINE.

The noisy world seems to quiet as he lifts it... gears churning in his mind, connections sparking as he looks to...

THE MURAL

...and zeroes in on the top tier of the painting...

*...the grassy mountaintop, where a family of foxes go down a hole into an antfarm-like tunnel system snaking downward...*

Hugo's eyes narrow... seeing the full levels of the mural.

*...the glassy waterfall over the cave entrance, the brown bear in the forest below, the massive pine table in the meadow below that... the cavernous underworld below...*

Rivka's grip on the pistol tightens.

THE DOOR STARTS TO CRACK.

HUGO

*Mama?--*

RIVKA

*Stay behind me, little one--*

HUGO

*Mama, look--*

He grabs her, makes her look at the mural...

HUGO

*The painting... it's the house.*

Rivka has no idea what he means. Neither do we. Until...

HUGO

Each level matches the mural.

(points)

The top is where the foxes live.

(points)

The hidden cave below that.

(points)

The bear in the forest, like the bear rug in the 2nd floor bedroom--

RIVKA

(seeing it)

The long table on the first level--

HUGO

--the Wet Room underneath.

BAM BAM BAM! The door behind them won't hold much longer.

RIVKA

We'll never make it past them--

HUGO

We don't have to.

He points to the top of the painting: *the family of foxes is disappearing down into a hole in the grass, into the tunnel system leading down the underworld below.*

HUGO  
The carpet...

Rivka looks... the carpet in the attic is the same shade of green as the grass in the painting.

Instantly, they rush for the edge of the carpet and begin YANKING IT UP, ripping rug-nails out of the floor, POP-POP!

And as they pull the carpet back, they reveal

**A TRAP DOOR IN THE CORNER OF THE ATTIC FLOOR.**

Steeling herself, Rivka pulls open the trap door...

...and reveals a NARROW SPIRAL STAIRCASE beneath, going down into the inky bowels of the manor.

Rivka looks to her son, awed...

RIVKA  
How did you...

HUGO  
"Perspective."

Rivka's never been more proud of her son as--

BLAM! Their barricade slides a little farther out of place.

Rivka and Hugo already descending into the spiral staircase--  
--Rivka reaching up to pull the rug back over the trap door--

KABLAM! The next blow to the door KNOCKS THE HEAVY BUREAU OVER. The door swings wide, the Nazis pour in, and--

--the room before them is DEVOID OF THEIR QUARRY. The corner of the carpet is back in place, covering the trap door. As everyone soaks in the sight of this attic and the mural...

MAX  
This is... quite the room.

KAISER  
Search it.

They spread out into the attic, weapons up, hunting...

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, SPIRAL STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Lit only by match-light, Rivka and Hugo descend the spiral staircase as if down a towering black spinal column...

Claustrophobic. Impossible to see what's around the corner.

Step by step they go, jaws clenched in terror, as...

...they go lower, seeing the staircase has a landing leading to a hidden hatch to the BOILER ROOM, its infernal light visible through the grate...

...downward they go... descending beneath the boiler room, the walls starting to DRIP WITH HEAT VAPOR...

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, ATTIC - MOMENTS LATER

CREAK! Kaiser pushes the attic closet door open with his rifle barrel. Flips the lights on.

The filament bulbs flicker to reveal the MINI-ABBATOIR we saw earlier. Takes him a moment to register what he's looking at.

CAPTAIN KAISER

(a whisper)

...good god.

SCHROEDER (O.S.)

*Captain?*

Captain Kaiser exits the closet to find Schroeder approaching, holding up the LEATHERBOUND (X) BOOK.

SCHROEDER

*What do you make of this?*

Kaiser takes the book and flips through the pages... seeing page after page of disturbing occult detritus...

There's a strange new fear running cold in Kaiser's blood, doesn't like it one bit.

CAPTAIN KAISER

*I look forward to throwing it in a fire, along with everything else in this house.*

(to his men)

*We have to keep looking. Move out.*

The men follow his orders and exit the room. Kaiser lingers a moment, transfixed by the unsettling imagery in the journal.

SCHROEDER

*Captain?*

CAPTAIN KAISER

Go.

Schroeder joins the others, leaving Kaiser alone. Flipping through pages. Entranced. Then...

SNAP! Forces himself to shut the book. Turns to exit--

--and then stops. Notices something. A glint on the floor.

Bends down and lifts up a SHINY LITTLE NAIL. A few DISTINCT GREEN STRANDS clinging to it. Wheels turn in his head as...

...he realizes: it's a CARPET NAIL. Ripped from the floor.

CAPTAIN KAISER

Clever.

He makes for the LUMPY FAR EDGE OF THE CARPET, pulls it back AND REVEALS THE TRAP DOOR BENEATH. A smile forms on his face.

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, SPIRAL STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Rivka and Hugo reach the bottom of the spiral staircase, arriving at a heavy door the color of sackcloth.

RIVKA

Stay close to me.

Hugo ain't moving an inch from her side. She puts a clammy hand on the door, pushing it open, into..

A DIM DRIPPING CAVERN OF A ROOM. Too dark to make out shapes.

HUGO

(whispers)

...what's that smell?

Rivka uses her matches to light a candle on the wall, and it all becomes clear: they've just stepped into...

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, THE WET ROOM - CONTINUOUS

...**THE WET ROOM:** Hell's sub-basement. Walls carved with incantations. The heat of the boiler room above makes the walls sweat. Their eyes adjust, taking in the features...

Ceremonial ROCK SLAB with chains and shackles, stained dark.

A TORTURE RACK with levers, wheels and pulleys. Some fixtures designed for arms and legs, some for fingers, toes, jawbones.

RIVKA

This... this is where he'd torture  
these poor souls to death and bring  
them back for more...

Her eyes scan the words etched on the wall:

RIVKA

*"Et ressurrectionis erimus"....*  
(beat)

The incantation the old man talked  
about. The resurrection spell.

HUGO

Look...

Hugo points, in the crimson-tinged shadows... lining the far  
wall, 4 STONE COFFINS. Source of the smell Hugo mentioned.

Instead of lids, the coffins have locked CAGE BARS.

HUGO

He... he buried them all alive...

The long coffin contains the FREAKISHLY STRETCHED SKELETON OF  
THE LONG GIRL. The next shorter coffin: remains of THE HALF  
MAN, one of his meat-hooks clinging to the bars of his  
coffin. The next: the mummified corpse of the SCARRED MAN.

All still wearing the LOCKETS around their desiccated neck-  
bones. All looking like they died begging.

Hugo shivers, backs away in horror and disgust.

RIVKA

Don't look.

He won't. Rivka steps forward, moves to the FOURTH COFFIN...

This one has an ornate lid lined with etchings. Rivka sinks  
to her knees. Sets down the pistol on the ground. And uses  
both hands to slide the heavy lid off the coffin...

...and there's the decayed remains of Count Vormelker. Strips  
of leathery flesh over bone.

And yes, on a chain around his neck, the ASTERISK SHAPED KEY.

RIVKA

(a whisper)

...yes...

She reaches for it, and--

CLICK. The unmistakable sound of a PISTOL COCKING.

Heart in her throat, Rivka turns to see--

CAPTAIN KAISER -- in the doorway of the Wet Room, standing behind Hugo, his service pistol aimed at them.

Hugo tries to run to Rivka, Kaiser GRABS HIM.

Puts the gun to his head. Holds him still.

Rivka & Kaiser appraise each other. In the light of this hellish room, bloodstained Rivka looks downright DEMONIC.

CAPTAIN KAISER

*Put your hands behind your head.  
Face the wall. Get on your knees.*

Kaiser presses the gun barrel hard into Hugo's cheek.

CAPTAIN KAISER

*Show me you understand.*

Rivka stares daggers at him. But finally does it -- puts her hands behind her head. Faces the wall. Sinks to her knees.

But as she does so, we follow her eyes to the ground...

...to where the pistol rests by Vormelker's coffin. She's blocking Kaiser's view of it with her body.

Kaiser approaches... holding Hugo hostage... looking into the coffins at the remains of Vormelker and his victims...

Even for an evil bastard, this is stomach-churning shit.

CAPTAIN KAISER

*...what is this place?*

She gives nothing but silence.

CAPTAIN KAISER

*Is this your... home?...*

Still only silence from Rivka. Her eyes dart to the gun. Kaiser kneels down, face to face with Rivka.

CAPTAIN KAISER

*...who are you people?*

Rivka SPITS IN HIS FACE. Intentionally provoking him.

WHAM! Kaiser DECKS HER. Knocks her flat. Hugo YELPS. As she hits the ground and curls into the fetal position--

--eyes the gun-- now within snatching distance--

CAPTAIN KAISER  
*I'll ask one last time.*  
 (aims gun at Rivka)  
Who. Are. Y-

*BLAM!* Rivka doesn't even lift the gun, just twists it toward Kaiser's boot and FIRES.

Blood GOUTS from his boot-- he HOWLS-- reels back--

--Hugo TWISTS OUT OF HIS GRIP-- RUNS--

--Kaiser swings his gun at Rivka and--

--she blocks his arm, knocks it away, sends it skidding-

Aims her pistol up at him from the floor. Hand steadies.

RIVKA  
*We're the ones you bastards  
 should've killed in Warsaw.*

*BLAM BLAM BLAM!* Rivka EMPTIES THE GUN INTO HIM. Torso punched with holes. Blood and viscera mists from exit wounds.

Kaiser STAGGERS. Pale. Jaw slack. Veers backward into the wall, slides to the floor, leaving a thick dark smear behind. Looks down at his wounds, his breath going shallow as--

RIVKA

--rises. Keeps the gun trained on him. Steps over the gibbering wreck of a man. Snatches the KEY NECKLACE off of Count Vormelker's corpse. Grabs Hugo, huddled in the corner.

RIVKA  
 Time to go, little one.

Hugo looks back to see if Kaiser's coming after them. He's busy trying to keep his intestines inside his body.

Rivka and Hugo rush INTO THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE

--up the stairs--

--toward the closed TRAP DOOR--

--Rivka pushes it open--

--just in time to see Schroeder and the squad rushing into the attic, having heard the gunshots. Seeing this bloody, haggard wretch of a woman emerging from a hole in the floor.

MAX  
*Holy... SHIT--*

WHAM! Schroeder's rifle butt SLAMS INTO HER FACE.

Hugo cries out as she's knocked BACKWARDS DOWN THE STAIRS--

--pistol dropping from her hand--

--world doing summersaults--

--before CRACK! BLACKNESS. And finally... we *SNAP TO*:

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, WET ROOM - NIGHT

SMACK! A hand slaps Rivka across the face. She stirs.

SMACK! Next one wakes her up. She blinks, cradling her jaw and her bruised head, eyes taking in the scene before her...

She's slumped against the wall on the floor in the Wet Room. Vogel guards Hugo, tied up on the floor. Kaiser's on the stone slab, which Lange is treating as a surgery table, Max assisting him, trying to stop the bleeding. The wounds are not cooperating. His mouth emits rattling groans.

SCHROEDER  
*Fix him.*

RIVKA  
*...what?*

SMACK! Schroeder belts her again. Hugo cries out. Schroeder gives the kid a look like he's gonna smack him next.

SCHROEDER  
*Fix Him.*

RIVKA  
*...I'm not a doctor.*

SCHROEDER  
*Doesn't need one. He needs you.*

Kaiser's LUNGS EMIT A WET GURGLING.

RIVKA  
*I don't understand.*

SCHROEDER  
*Yes you do.*

RIVKA

*I don't--*

SCHROEDER

(grabs her)

Don't FUCK WITH ME, WITCH.

Rivka pauses -- realizing the implications of that last word.

SCHROEDER

*I knew the moment we laid eyes on this house. Didn't want to believe it, but I knew in my heart what was hiding here...*

(off her silence)

*You were powerful enough to toy with our minds, destroy our vehicle, slaughter our prisoners and savage my captain, so I believe you must be powerful enough to save his life. And that's what you're going to do. Do you understand?*

Rivka remains silent. Schroeder winds up to backhand her--

SCHROEDER

*I said DO YOU UNDERSTA--*

--and she suddenly lets out an animalistic *HISS*.

He freezes. She looks up at him. A Kubrickian glower-smile spreads across her face, voice taking on dark timbres. Getting into character as a demon from Nazi nightmares.

RIVKA

*I understand. Do you understand?*

The other soldiers have stopped what they're doing.

MAX

(whispers)

*...the fuck is this woman?...*

RIVKA

*There is no word for what I am.*

Even Hugo's hit pause, glancing at his mom; *what's she doing?*

RIVKA

*Think of yourselves as flies and this home as a web...*

(beat)

*...so guess what that makes me?*

Even for these hardened soldiers, its enough to make their blood run cold. Schroeder keeps it off his face.

SCHROEDER  
*...a spider is no match for a wolf.  
 You are in a room full of wolves.*

RIVKA  
*I'm in a room full of dead men.*

SCHROEDER  
 (shakes his head)  
*My captain said to never take by force that what can be volunteered. So you're going to volunteer to bring him back. Or we're going to throw your son in the furnace so you can watch him burn.*

Off Schroeder's motion, Vogel makes to GRAB HUGO--

RIVKA  
STOP.  
 (they pause)  
*I... I have a way...*

And it's now we see what Rivka's eyes are locked on.

**et resurrectionis erimus**

The spell etched on the wall. A Hail Mary, her last hope...

RIVKA  
*...a resurrection spell...*

That's all Rivka needs to say -- Schroeder drags her over to Captain Kaiser's rapidly draining body on the stone slab.

SCHROEDER  
*Do it.*  
 (puts a gun to her)  
*Now.*

MAX  
*Sergeant?*

Everyone glances over at Max.

MAX  
*With respect, sir-- we don't know what we're dealing with--*  
 (off his stare)  
*How do we know she's telling the truth?*

SCHROEDER

*I'm the ranking officer now,  
private, these are my orders.*

MAX

*Just saying our experience dealing  
with witches is somewhat limited--*

SCHROEDER

*I'm not letting the captain die.*

MAX

*I think we're past that--*

SCHROEDER

*You questioning my orders, private?*

MAX

*Sir, I'm just--*

SCHROEDER

*Are. You. Questioning. My. Orders?*

MAX

*Yes sir, I am, because your orders  
are  fucking insane!*

BLAM! Schroeder aims his pistol and SHOOTS MAX IN THE CHEST.

Max looks down at the smoking hole. His mouth a perfect O. Everyone freezes. Deafened by the gunshot in the stone room.

And in that moment, Rivka takes advantage of the fact that everyone's looking away: she slides her KNIFE out of her hidden sheath and slips it to Hugo, who covers it as--

WHUMPH! Max collapses. Schroeder looks to the others.

SCHROEDER

*Anyone else have questions about my  
orders?*

*(sees that no one does)*

*Get to work.*

All eyes on Rivka, who bows her head in chilling reverence...

...as, unnoticed by everyone else, Hugo silently starts using Rivka's knife to cut his way out of his binds, as...

Rivka swallows hard... praying this crazy plan works...

...and begins to recite the spell on the coffin lid...

RIVKA  
*Resurrezione incantore... quid opus  
 qol...*

SCHROEDER  
 (sotto, to Lange)  
*What's she saying?*

LANGE  
 (sotto)  
*I don't know, it's in Latin and you  
 just shot our interpreter.*

RIVKA  
*Pentulum carbonis quinque...*

HUGO: cuts away at his binds, getting closer to freedom.

THE NAZIS: watch in growing fascination/fear, as...

CAPTAIN KAISER: starts to STIR on the slab.

RIVKA  
*...nexto illiad, crassum gatis  
 acida herba potionum et quondum...*

Kaiser's fingers start to tremble.

RIVKA  
*quid facium... pentaculum carbonis  
 dudiri, et pone defunct animam...*

Kaiser's eyeballs twitch beneath their shut lids.

RIVKA  
*...lucernis aqqudunt loco et  
 moigutis...*

HUGO: sawing away at the last bit of his binds...

SCHROEDER: face lighting up with the hope of a zealot...

LANGE AND VOGEL: fear creeping into their expressions...

RIVKA  
*...puntitis a pantaquam aspergit...*

Kaiser's mouth OPENS...

...everyone watches, breathless...

...then Kaiser stills. Goes slack. All signs of life we saw  
 moments before -- ceased. A deadly silence takes hold.

SCHROEDER  
No... NO...

All eyes turn to Rivka. Schroeder's blood boiling...

SCHROEDER  
*You lying snake. It didn't wor--*

VOGEL  
Sergeant?

Schroeder STOPS COLD. Because he hears something.

Ditto everyone else.

The sound they're hearing is a FAINT HUMMING.

Count Vormelker's theme, you might call it.

All the Nazis look to the slab...

...where Captain Kaiser's corpse hums that pretty tune.

SCHROEDER  
*...Captain?...*

As the Nazis close in around the slab, mesmerized, Rivka takes a step back, getting closer to Hugo...

SCHROEDER  
*Captain, can you hear--*

WHAM! Kaiser SITS UP. Like a puppet jerked by strings.

Everyone JOLTS BACK. Rivka, seeing what's about to happen, glances to Hugo -- hurry.

Hugo keeps working the knife against the ropes as--

Schroeder's expression turns from hope to horror as he sees the damndest thing happen before his very eyes.

**Captain Kaiser is CHANGING.**

He opens his eyes to reveal their hazy blue has been replaced by the depthless obsidian of the Count Vormelker's eyes.

The blonde in Kaiser's hair is replaced by a creeping black.

His cheeks become gaunt, sallow, sunken.

He SMILES at his men with Count Vormelker's smile -- *that same madcap leer that threatens to split his head in half.*

*As if the Count is seeping through Kaiser's pores, remaking him in his own image, a gruesome parody of his former self.*

**COUNT KAISER** slides himself off the slab... zombie-like...

...Schroeder too stunned to move...

...Lange and Vogel, panicky fingers on gun triggers...

Count Kaiser levels a bony finger at his men and CACKLES. Then takes a step toward them and--

ALL AT ONCE

Vogel and Lange freak out and *BRAAAAAP!* OPEN FIRE ON COUNT KAISER WITH THEIR MP-40's, riddling the man with bullets.

Rivka and Hugo react as--

COUNT KAISER DOESN'T GO DOWN.

HE HISSES WITH HATRED AT HIS MEN.

And, as if summoned by the sound, his slaves emerge from the shadows around the room. Attack dogs, ready to pounce...

**THE SCARRED MAN. THE LONG GIRL. THE HALF MAN**

Schroeder, Vogel and Lange realize they're SURROUNDED--

VOGEL

--ohgod--

ALL AT ONCE: Vormelker's slaves POUNCE ON THE NAZIS as--

HUGO cuts through the last of his binds as--

RIVKA pulls him up and together they RUSH FOR THE EXIT--

--dodging the raging chaos all around them as--

*SCHROEDER, VOGEL AND LANGE are savaged by Vormelker's slaves.*

Vogel gets a MEAT HOOK through the cheek. The Long Girl reaches DEEP INTO LANGE'S MOUTH, snake-like arm tearing apart his insides. The Scarred Man on Schroeder, and everywhere he touches, flesh strips away as if by acid. Schroeder SHRIEKS as he watches his own bare hand get DEGLOVED as--

COUNT KAISER

--delights at this Grand Guignol, before he notices RIVKA AND HUGO ARE GONE. He lets out a noise like a mouse-fattened viper crawling over a rock pile, CRESCENDOING WITH RAGE--

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, SPIRAL STAIRCASE - MOMENTS LATER

SHOES POUND as Rivka and Hugo race up the stairs from the Wet Room, Rivka gripping VORMELKER'S KEY in her sweat-slick hand--

RIVKA

*Hurry-- we have to get to the furnace and destroy the key--*

BOOM-BOOM-BOOM! Heavy footfalls. Rivka peers back down the spiral staircase and sees--

--COUNT KAISER coming after them -- FAST for a guy riddled with bullets and his guts trying to push their way out-

RIVKA

GO!

They flee like Satan is after them-- Up to the next landing of the spiral staircase--pushing through a doorway into--

INT. VORMELKER MANOR, BOILER ROOM - CONTINIOUS

--THE BOILER ROOM, where Rivka SLAMS the door shut. Holds it closed as Count Kaiser ASSAULTS it from outside--

RIVKA

(holds out the key)

*I'll hold the door-- take the key--  
dump it in the furnace--*

Hugo looks to the FURNACE, 20 feet away, its fiery open mouth-

--takes the key from his mother's hand--

--and RUNS. Straight for the furnace--

--when suddenly a MEAT HOOK EMERGES FROM THE SHADOWS and loops around his ankle. RIVKA CRIES OUT--

Hugo-- breath knocked from his lungs-- sent sprawling forward. Key falling out of his hand and bouncing away--

Hugo's wide eyes looking back to see-

THE HALF MAN

--his right meat hook around Hugo's ankle, pulling him back, his left hook REARING BACK to swing down and gut him--

--CLANG! The hook strikes the stone floor instead of flesh as-

--RIVKA PULLS HUGO FREE--

--and in the process, has yanked the Half Man's right meat-hook out of its stump, still dangling off Hugo's ankle.

Rivka grabs the hook-- her only weapon-- then rises--  
--as we pull back to reveal the full tableau.

With Rivka no longer holding the door shut, it's been flung wide. Count Kaiser framed within it. Glowering.

Slithering toward Rivka and Hugo: Vormelker's Slaves.

Rivka hefts the hook. Puts herself between the demons and her son. They're going to have to get through her.

RIVKA  
Hugo? Grab it on three. One.

Count Kaiser and his slaves close in.

RIVKA  
Two.

Rivka's slippery fingers grip the base of the hook. Hugo looks to the key on the floor. A few feet away.

Vormelker's Slaves inch forward, breath wet...

RIVKA  
THREE.

Rivka launches into battle, SWINGING THE HOOK. Like a lion-tamer with one whip against four beasts.

And Hugo... FREEZES. Jaw tight, HAND CLENCHED AND SHAKING.. Just watching in horror as--

SHUNK! The Half Man puts a hook into Rivka's calf and she goes down screaming--

--scrambles to get away, almost does, but the Long Girl's serpentine arm catches her by the hair and pulls her back--

AND STILL HUGO CAN'T FUCKING MOVE.

Until he sees that Count Kaiser is laughing. Mocking, cruel. Like the Nazis in Warsaw. Like the men who shot his father.

Louder and LOUDER... we tighten on Hugo...

QUICK POP: *Rivka and Hugo in the truck outside Warsaw...*

RIVKA  
*That's how we survive...*

BACK TO HUGO IN THE BOILER ROOM

He remembers her words... and like magic... his hand STILLS.

His eyes harden. MAKES HIS MOVE. SNATCHES the key. Seconds before the SCARRED MAN'S bulbous pink hand can grab it.

DARTS FOR THE FURNACE. Rivka catching a glimpse of it as she fights for her life-- *an unmistakable pride in her face as--*

HUGO HURLS THE KEY INTO THE FURNACE. Count Kaiser's face darkens as the key falls INTO THE BLAZING HEAT... and then...

**IT EXPLODES INTO FLAMES.** Like it's soaked in nitroglycerine.

The furnace WARPS and fire spews out--

--Rivka hauling Hugo away, ducking for cover, looking to see--

VORMELKER'S SLAVES-- the LOCKS around their necks DISSOLVING TO ASH. Color returns to their eyes.

Unchained at last, they turn to Count Kaiser... and something flashes across his face: fear.

Then, with all preamble dispensed with, his freed slaves SWARM HIM with inhuman speed and UNLEASH AGONY ON HIM.

Like a pig being torn apart by a pack of jackals -- flesh stripped away like wet paper -- spine pulled through the thin membrane of his belly -- dying screaming--

Rivka turns Hugo away, shielding him from the horror, as--

HUGO

Mama--

Hugo sees something. Rivka sees it too. THE BOILER IS ON FIRE. DITTO THE WALLS AND CEILING. FLAMES SPREADING.

They turn and flee for the door-- almost there-- Rivka grabs the door knob, PUSHES -- IT WON'T OPEN-- heat-warped shut.

They STRAIN, PUSHING HARD-- the door refuses to move--

BOTH PUSHING IT WITH ALL THEIR MIGHT. But it's no use. They're going to burn to death in this room.

And that's when A SPINDLY LONG HAND REACHES FOR THEM.

They turn, faces frozen, to see it's The Long Girl, flanked by The Scarred Man and The Half Man. The girl reaches out...

...and gracefully twists the knob. The door swings wide open as if on freshly oiled hinges. Rivka and Hugo look to the three spirits... who nod... a silent bargain reached...

...and without a word, mother and son exit the inferno, into-

**THE HALLWAY:** where the fire is already eating the walls of the manor, curtains of smoke veiling the world as--

--limping on her hook-punctured leg, Rivka and Hugo beeline for the front door. Pulls it open, when--

--WHAM! A hand grabs at her from below.

**SCHROEDER** -- crawling after them. Much of his flesh stripped away, replaced by velvety scar tissue. Mangled, still alive.

SCHROEDER  
...help... helpme...

Rivka pauses. Then says, in subtitled Hebrew...

RIVKA  
Peace be with you.

And SLAM! SHUTS THE DOOR IN HIS FACE. Leaving him to burn.

EXT. VORMELKER MANOR, FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Rivka and Hugo carefully make their way down the front steps of the house. They back away from the burning structure, out into the snowy night, watching the manor GO UP LIKE A TORCH.

Schroeder's screams become fainter and fainter, dying out...

Rivka holds Hugo against her. Both stunned into silence. Until... they hear it. From behind.

GROWLING. Oh god no... They turn to see...

**THE WOLVES.** Emerging from the trees, drawn by the warmth and light of the fire... and by their defenseless prey. Rivka and Hugo, too drained to run, just watch the animals close in...

RIVKA  
...I'm sorry, my love, I'm sorry...

He holds her tight. At least they'll go down together, free from the prison of Vormelker Manor.

The ALPHA WOLF SNARLS-- rears back to make his attack and--

**BRAAAAPP!** The wolf gets PULVERIZED BY MACHINE GUN FIRE. Goes down in a bloody skid. The other wolves SCAMPER AWAY as--

HEADLIGHTS -- come sweeping out of the trees--

A TRUCK. Emerging from the snowy road in the woods.

Not a Nazi jeep; a SIMPLE FARM VEHICLE. The men inside it wear shopworn winter clothes. One of them, in the truck bed, hefts his still-smoking VICKERS EKM7 MACHINE GUN.

The truck stops. The driver, a bearded brawler named **SEBASTIAN**, takes in the sight before him: mother & son, covered in blood and ash and grime, eyes numbed, standing before a FLAMING MANSION in the night.

SEBASTIAN

Quite the fire you have there. Can see the smoke from Poland.

RIVKA

Who goes there?

SEBASTIAN

Polish Home Army. Who are you?

A beat... and an exhausted little laugh escapes Rivka's lips.

INT. PARTISAN'S TRUCK, IDLING - MOMENTS LATER

Rivka & Hugo pile in next to Sebastian. Rivka digs a familiar animal from her coat: Borys the mouse. Hands him to Hugo.

A scrap of childhood that no Reich or revenant could steal.

The truck departs... and as it goes, we see Rivka's hand reach out the window. Holding something...

The SCARF TOURNIQUET.

She drops it into the snow.

INT. TRUCK - MOVING - NIGHT

Hugo hugs Borys tight. Looks up to his mother. And sees...

Rivka's crying.

At long last, letting it out.

Tears of relief. Triumph. Survival.

Their hands join tight.

The truck drives on. Leaving the BURNING MANOR behind.

Its collapsing roof releases a galaxy of SPARKS.

They almost look like fireflies.

**FADE TO BLACK.**