IN DARKNESS

Written by David F. Shamoon

Based on the book In The Sewers of Lvov
by Robert Marshall
INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

A nice, middle-class living room with a side bedroom. Clutching a flashlight, LEOPOLOD SOCHA, late 30s, searches, flinging clothes and underwear from a chest of drawers.

SOCHA FLICKS open a small penknife, which he uses to SLASH open a mattress. Feathers float out, as he rummages, looking.

SZCZEPEK, early twenties, also working class, approaches. He opens his sack for Socha. A small amount of cutlery.

Socha grimaces, getting angrier. Szczepek trains his flashlight on a beautiful silver cross on the wall, reaching for it.

PLEASE NOTE: All dialogue is in Polish except where indicated otherwise.

SZCZEPEK
Look!

Socha grabs Stefek’s arm, shaking his head.

The SOUND of someone approaching the front door. A questioning look from Socha. Szczepek merely shrugs.

FOOTSTEPS and the sound of giggling. Socha hides behind the door. Szczepek ducks out of sight.

A male and female figure, slightly drunk, enter the room. Socha grabs the male and SMASHES him to the wall, as Szczepek FLICKS on the light.

The male is a skinny BOY of sixteen in a Hitler Youth outfit. Socha stops in mid-punch, confused. The female screams.

Socha turns to see that the female is also a teenager. Szczepek and Socha exchange confused glances.

BOY
(in German, to GIRL)
Tell them there’s nothing of value here.

GIRL
(in Polish, to the men)
His parents are away. They left nothing valuable here.
CONTINUED:

Socha has let go of the boy, who slowly backs toward a desk with drawers.

SOCHA
(to girl, in Polish)
What are you doing with a Kraut piece of shit?

GIRL
What business is it of yours?

The boy quickly opens the drawer and pulls out a revolver which he points at Socha, shaking almost uncontrollably.

BOY
(in German)
Okay, hands up, Polack pig!

All freeze. The boy’s face is contorted with fear as he tries to steady his hands.

GIRL
(in German)
Go ahead, shoot!

The boy squeezes the trigger. CLICK! Empty. CLICK! CLICK!

Socha grabs the gun and SLAPS the boy, cutting his lip as he crumples in tears. The girl goes to comfort him.

SOCHA
(to girl)
Get yourself a nice Polish man!

Socha tucks the gun under his shirt, as Szczepek grabs the loot sack and pulls Socha toward a blacked-out window.

EXT. OPEN AREA - LATER

It is EARLY DAWN. To the side is a forested area. Panting, Socha and Szczepek slow down. The BARKING is distant.

Both men start to laugh when they notice feathers stuck to their sweating faces.

Socha brushes some from Stefek’s hair, with familiarity.

The two men walk near the forest.

Other BARKING dogs come closer, mixed with boots CRACKING twigs and branches in the forest. Socha and Szczepek go for cover and observe.
Through a clearing: naked women, different ages and sizes, run, pursued by German soldiers and a few Ukrainian militiamen SHOUTING ORDERS in GERMAN and UKRAINIAN.

The group are chased into a thicket, where they suddenly stop. Utter silence with the exception of a dog’s YELP.

A BARRAGE and light of gunfire.

SOLDIER (O.S.)
(in German)
Check to see if any are breathing.

EXT. STREET - LATER

At a manhole, Socha and Szczepk are in WORK CLOTHES: cloth caps, heavy work coveralls and waist-high rubber boots, held by braces over their shoulders. Szczepk stands lookout, clutching the sack. Both look around them warily.

Out of a leg pocket, Socha pulls a metal rod ending with a hook. He CLICKS it into the manhole cover, and with a quick JERK, raises it.

It CLANGS to the cobbled pavement. They scurry down with practised ease.

INT. CHAMBER - MOMENTS LATER

In a small area off to the side, Socha removes some bricks. He takes out a sack and inserts the just stolen loot into it, before returning the sack to its hiding place.

INT. SOCHA’S APARTMENT - LATER

A large room with three chairs and two beds, one a child’s, the other a double. Faded, peeling wallpaper.

Attempts at luxury: An elaborate crucifix. An ornate pillow and a flamboyant doll.

A ratty easy chair and dresser and, off to the side, a tiny kitchen with a table. On the table is a large wash tub, with scrubbing board, the equipment of a washerwoman.

Socha tiptoes in. STEFCIA, a small, delicate girl of 9, on the child’s bed, coughs.

On the double bed, Wanda, early thirties, SWITCHES ON the lamp and groans at the bedside clock.

WANDA
Where were you?
Continued:

SOCHA
Blocked pipe.

Amused, Wanda notices a few forlorn feathers on Socha.

WANDA
Was it blocked with chickens?

Socha doesn’t react to her little joke. Stefcia breaks into another coughing spasm. Wanda looks at her with a worried glance.

Socha slips behind a curtained partition to change.

WANDA (cont’d)
She needs fresh fruit, or this will go on ‘til summer.

SOCHA
Fresh fruit? I didn’t even know what an orange was at her age.

WANDA
You were also living on the street at her age.

Socha emerges. He notices Stefcia’s foot sticking out from under the quilt and carefully tucks it in.

Just as Socha gets under the covers, Wanda sits up, yawning.

SOCHA
What are you doing?

WANDA
It’s Sunday. We need to get up for Mass.

SOCHA
(pulling her back)
Come on, we have time...

He tickles Wanda. She giggles.

WANDA
Stop that, you fool! Stefcia will hear.

Socha doesn’t stop.

WANDA (cont’d)
Poldek...something’s bitten me...
Wanda lifts her nightgown, and turns her back to him.

WANDA (cont’d)
Can you see it?

SOCHA
I can’t see a thing.

WANDA
Well, it itches terribly. Scratch me, Poldek...

Socha gently scratches her back. Wanda moans with delight and slips out of her nightgown. He turns her over, as they start to make love.

EXT. GHETTO STREET – DAY

A German soldier FILMS, as a Ukrainian militiaman TEARS off the blouse of a middle-aged Jewish woman. She tries to cover her nakedness, while he HITS her with a stick. A civilian DRAGS another, older woman by her hair along the pavement. Others are beaten with whips and rifles. A young man, running away, is SHOT dead.

A group of Jews – including women and old men – surrounded by onlookers kneel on the paving and brush the cobblestones with toothbrushes.

JACOB BERESTYCKI, 30, with a beard and side curls, dances on a barrel to the amusement of other Ukrainians while other Jews dance. A GERMAN SOLDIER SNAPS at Berestycki’s feet with a whip.

GERMAN SOLDIER
(in German)
Dance, monkey, dance!

The German soldier, fed up with the entertainment, grabs Berestycki off the barrel, and wielding a large knife starts to cut Berestycki’s curls and beard.

And then, impatient, PULLS the rest of the beard off, as blood gushes from the torn flesh. Berestycki SCREAMS in pain.

EXT. JEWISH GHETTO – DAY

PAULINA CHIGER, late 30’s, running at full speed.

She wears a white armlet with a Star of David, above the right elbow. Behind her, we see German and Ukrainian soldiers throwing children onto trucks. Their mothers try to get their children back, wailing.
CONTINUED:

Rapid GUNFIRE fills the air, amidst screams of children and BARKED ORDERS in GERMAN and UKRAINIAN.

On the periphery of the frame, soldiers grab children to the anguished CRIES of their mothers.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Paulina runs. We are only conscious of the action around her: women TEARING into rooms looking for their children as GUNFIRE continues outside. Heavy BOOTS climbing stairs.

VARIOUS WOMEN’S VOICES
Channah! Shmuel! Answer me, Chava! Jozef, where are you!

INT. CHIGER’S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paulina BURSTS into the room - empty. She checks the hiding place in the cupboard. Nothing. She runs out.

INT. STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

Paulina runs up the steps of an old apartment building in the ghetto, avoiding a wailing woman cradling her murdered child.

INT. BASEMENT WORKSHOP - CONTINUOUS

IGNACY CHIGER, 40’s, is supervising other, equally emaciated workers, manufacturing ropes. Eight Jews work at a table. The ropes are hanging from the ceiling.

Paulina BURSTS in and all look up.

PAULINA
Ignacy! The children!

Chiger grabs his wife and opens the cover of a big stove.

Paulina starts to weep, as her children's little arms reach out. She hugs them.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

YANEK GROSSMAN, late 30’s, sleeps beside his older wife SARA. Rachela, sleeps nearby.

On a floor straw mattress lies CHAJA, early 20’s. One or two others share the cramped room.

Yanek rises from his bed and lies next to Chaja. He fondles her, but she SMACKS his hand away. He tries again and again she pushes him away.
CHAJA
Yanek, your wife! You’ll wake her!

He turns away, distraught. His hand shoots down to his crotch and he gasps as he comes. Giggling, Chaja rolls on top of him, clamping her hand on his mouth, SHUSHING him. He kisses her ravenously, as she continues giggling, giving in to him.

Sara opens her eyes, witnessing it all. Rachela awakens, but Sara covers her eyes.

INT. GHETTO ENTRANCE - DAY

Mundek stands by the fence separating the ghetto from the street on the Aryan side. The fence is partly wooden, partly made of barbed wire. With SHLOMO LANDSBERG, 30’s, and Itzhak Frankiel, late 20’s, he shows leather goods and textiles to a Ukrainian farmer.

The farmer gives some eggs and leaves with a leather coat.

Mundek looks up to see Szczepek walking toward him. He quickly gives the others the eggs, and they leave, Landsberg limping.

Thinking he’s about to make a sale, Mundek goes up to the barbed wire fence holding out a leather purse for Szczepek. When he is close, Szczepek reaches in and PUNCHES him.

SZCZEPEK
That’s for the fake engagement ring you sold me, Yid!

Mundek falls with a bloody nose – and a slight smirk.

INT. YANEK’S CELLAR - NIGHT

With every muscle straining, Mundek POUNDS the hammer while Yanek holds a lamp. Berestycki, his face scarred from having his beard ripped off, peers down along with Yanek.

The hatch is open above; behind Berestycki we can see Chaja, KLARA KELLER (20’s), her sister MANIA KELLER (teens), Rachela and Sara being busy in the room.

INT. SEWER - NIGHT

Ceilings vault, claustrophobic and dank, with walls glinting from the moving carbide lamp. Curtains of cobwebs hang from the ceiling.
CONTINUED:

Socha deftly negotiates the 3-foot ledge by the RUSHING Peltew River, lamp aloft, leaning forward to avoid hitting the arching roof. Szczepek scurries to keep up.

SZCZEPEK
It’s Marysia’s Saint’s Day next week. She expects a nice present.

SOCHA
Why not give her a good fuck and be done with it?

SZCZEPEK
I’m serious! We should sell some of this shit.

SOCHA
I told you, the market’s bad. You can buy decent jewelry from a Yid for a few sausages. You need patience, Szczepek, patience.

INT. CHAMBER - MOMENTS LATER

The carbide lamp’s BUZZING mingles with other echoing SOUNDS. Socha removes the bricks and extracts the sack. He pulls out an ornate silver candelabra.

Szczepek
I think Marysia’s going to leave me!
  (beat)
Aleksy, her new neighbor...she says they’re just friends...I think the bastard’s fucking her.

SOCHA
Ach, come on!

SZCZEPEK
No, really! He’s clever, he knows how to talk.

Socha EMPTIES the new stash into the sack. He replaces the candelabra last, stroking it, admiring it.

SZCZEPEK (cont’d)
Poldek...I love her!

SOCHA
So beat her! A man who loves, beats!
SZCZEPEK
You beat Wanda?

Socha bursts out laughing.

SOCHA
Are you mad? She’s the one who beats me!

SZCZEPEK
You’re teasing me again.

Socha laughs, pats Szczepek on the cheek, like a little boy. Then:

SOCHA
Did you hear that?

Szczepek shakes his head.

SOCHA (cont’d)
That...

A faint THUD.

SZCZEPEK
So?

SOCHA
So – it’s coming from the ghetto.

Socha smirks.

INT. YANEK’S CELLAR – SAME TIME

With Mundek holding the lamp, Berestycki now POUNDS the hammer on the chisel. Yanek, Landsberg and Chiger stand by.

A block of masonry COLLAPSES into the river with a SPLASH. Berestycki almost follows it, but Chiger grabs him in time.

The men look at each other, elated, ready to go down to the sewer. They descend one after another.

INT. YANEK’S CELLAR – MOMENTS LATER

Mundek eases himself down the shaft...

INT. SEWER – CONTINUOUS

...into flashlights. He blinks until he sees Socha and Szczepek. Chiger, Yanek, Landsberg and Berestycki are beside them, grim.
Socha trains his flashlight on the Star of David armbands.

SZCZEPEK
(to Mundek)
So...we meet again...

A silence, as Mundek and Szczepk glare at each other. The others are a little perplexed, but say nothing.

Chiger extracts a wristwatch from his pocket and holds it up.

CHIGER
It’s Swiss.

Szczepk and Socha exchange glances.

CHIGER (cont’d)
Take it! You can get a lot for it.
(to Socha’s skepticism)
You don’t believe me? Here, take it. If you don’t get at least 500 zlotys, you can turn us in.

Szczepk tentatively takes the watch, examines it, dazzled.

SOCHA
We’d get more if we just report you.

MUNDEK
Not if we’re dead. We’ll never surrender alive, you’ll have to kill us first.

Szczepk is about to hand the watch back.

SOCHA
All right, 500 plus the watch.

Szczepk shoots Socha an incredulous look, about to protest.

CHIGER
I have to go up for the money.

SOCHA
We’ll come with you.

The Jews exchange glances.

SOCHA (cont’d)
Just to make sure.
INT. YANEK’S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Socha’s head pokes up to see Paulina with KRYSTYNA, 7, on her lap, helping put on BRIGHT RED FELT BOOTS, with PAVEL, 4, beside them.

As Socha lifts himself up, Paulina immediately puts down Krystyna and stands in front of her children, guarding them. The four of them stare at each other in silence, the kids peeking from behind their mother. A small smile plays on Socha, but the others remain serious, suspicious.

Chiger emerges and a wave of fear and anger washes over him as he notices his family.

CHIGER
Paulina! What are you doing here?

Socha makes a face at the kids, but Krystyna remains serious, although Pavel giggles. When he notices his sister’s demeanor, however, he stops laughing.

PAULINA
I was giving them a few minutes of air, Ignacy!

PAVEL
I had to make pee pee, Papa!

PAULINA
(leading kids out)
Come on, children...

CHIGER
I’ll get the money.

Berestycki, Mundek, Yanek, Landsberg and Szczepak are now in the room.

SOCHA
(to Mundek)
What’s your name?

MUNDEK
They call me Korsarz.

SZCZEPEK
A proper name for a thief.

Mundek glares defiantly at Szczepak, but Socha smiles at this. Chiger enters, counting the money.
SOCHA
Listen, I know the sewers better than my own wife. It’s not a place for you.

BERESTYCKI
There is no place for us.

SOCHA
Although...there are parts of it where...
The Jews don’t dare speak.

SOCHA (cont’d)
And for the right price...

CHIGER
Name it.

Szczepak is dumbfounded.

SOCHA
Five hundred zlotys...a day.

CHIGER
Done!

SZCZEPEK
(dragging Socha aside)
Poldek! Are you crazy? Fuck, they’ll catch and hang us!

SOCHA
Listen, we can always turn them in! Let’s first find out how much they have.

Mundek simultaneously takes Chiger aside.

LANDSBERG
(in Yiddish)
That younger one...he’s scared, he’ll talk.

YANEK
(in Yiddish)
Never trust a Polack!

CHIGER
(in German)
Speak German.
CONTINUED: (2)

MUNDEK
(in German)
It’s two against four. We can easily finish them off.

BERESTYCKI
(in Yiddish)
You can’t just kill them!

MUNDEK
(in German)
Why not? This is a war.

BERESTYCKI
(in Yiddish)
Which would turn into a massacre. Twenty of ours for one of theirs.

CHIGER
(in German)
Forget it, we have no choice.

All are silent as reality sinks in.

SOCHA
(to group)
Do we have an agreement or not?

Chiger hands Socha the money.

CHIGER
Consider this a down payment, the rest when we need you. But how do we get in touch?

SOCHA
I’ll find you, don’t worry.
(going down the shaft to the sewer)
Fuck, I should’ve charged more.

INT. SOCHA’S APARTMENT - DAY

Socha cuts up an orange while Stefcia munches on another one. On the stove, steam rises from a large pot full of clothes.

Wanda comes in carrying the next portion of dirty whites. She sees the orange with surprise. Socha tries to hide his pride.

SOCHA
This is for you.
CONTINUED:

WANDA
Save it for Stefcia.

SOCHA
It’s all right, we’ll get more.
   (then)
I got a raise.

Wanda smiles, goes over and awkwardly kisses him.

SOCHA (cont’d)
Don’t tell anyone. People are envious.

Wanda nods in agreement and throws the dirty whites into the steaming pot.

INT. BAR – EVENING

A RAUCOUS smoke-filled joint. At the bar with Szczep, Socha drains his vodka in one gulp, SLAMS the glass down.

SOCHA
(to bartender)
This time, don’t be so fucking stingy, Zdzichu!

Zdzich refills Socha’s glass.

BORTNIK (O.S.)
Socha? Is that you? Socha!

Socha turns around to see ANTON BORTNIK, mid-30’s, resplendent in the uniform of a Ukrainian Auxiliary Police officer, drink in hand, approaching him with a smile.

SOCHA
Bortnik! It’s been a while!

BORTNIK
(referring to stripes)
See? Got promoted!

Szczep waits awkwardly to be introduced.

SOCHA
Oh, this is Szczep, he works with me. This is Bortnik, my, uh –

BORTNIK
(to Szczep)
- fellow guest at Lonski.
CONTINUED:

SZCZEPEK
(to Socha)
So you were caught?! You said that you never...

Socha laughs nervously.

BORTNIK
Poldek was a veteran. Let me tell you something. Lonski was full of scum, snitches and faggots. But Socha? He was someone you could trust. Brother, I’ll never forget it! Never!

Szczepek absorbs this, impressed.

BORTNIK (cont’d)
(points to stripes)
See this? It means I can help my friends, even my friends’ friends. You need anything...
(KNOCKS on table)
All you do is ask...

Bortnik lets this sink in, before signalling Zdzich.

BORTNIK (cont’d)
Hey, Polack! Your best vodka for my friends!

Bortnik turns back to Socha and Szczepek, oblivious to their shock at his ‘Polack’ remark.

BORTNIK (cont’d)
I just returned from training near the Baltic. They’re tough mothers, but the Germans are the best thing to happen to Ukrainians and Polacks. Ah, here we are!

Bortnik beams as Zdzich brings over the drinks.

EXT. GHETTO ENTRANCE - DAY

Through the open gate under the viaduct, a convoy of trucks, full of armed soldiers, drives into the ghetto. Loud SOUND of engines.

INT. SEWER - SAME TIME

Socha is in a tunnel. Water trickles from a pipe.
CONTINUED:

SOCHA
(calls out)
It’s a back-up.

EXT. GHETTO SQUARE - MOMENTS LATER

Mundek looks through a workshop window to see running German and Ukrainian soldiers surround the now panicked Jews. They force them to MARCH, three by three, including Jewish police. Suddenly, the soldiers start shooting at the marching people without warning.

Gestapo officers MARCH a larger group of Jewish police. They stop at a nearby wall.

The officer aims his revolver at a Jewish policeman. One of the other policemen makes a run, but is MOWED DOWN.

ON Mundek with Landsberg.

OFF SCREEN, the Officer EXECUTES the policemen. GUNSHOT, screams, GUNSHOT...

INDIVIDUAL SCENES: People frozen in horror like rabbits...A hand...Someone running through the light of the window...Germans rush in and pull a woman clinging to the door frame...Someone opens a window, tries to jump out of it...

More OFF-SCREEN GUNSHOTS and shouts, as Mundek leans towards Landsberg.

MUNDEK
Gather everyone...Klara,
Mania...meet at Yanek’s...time to
go down!

INT. SEWER - CONTINUOUS

Socha and Szczepak SLOSH through a tunnel. Socha stops at the sound of a faint GUNSHOT. He and Szczepak look at each other.

INT. SEWER - SAME TIME

Now RUNNING, Socha and Szczepak approach the main chamber, through which the Peltew ROARS.

EXT. GHETTO - SAME TIME

Mundek is about to cross to another building, when a phalanx of twenty SS and Ukrainian soldiers approach it.
Mundek waits behind a wall, breathless.

UKRAINIAN SOLDIER
(through loudspeaker, in Polish)
Jews, come out!
(silence)
It's no use, surrender!

Ten ragged men dash out, machine guns BLAZING. Soldiers fall. Hand grenades BLOW UP two vehicles.

At first stunned, the soldiers recover and MOW the Jews down. A flame-thrower INCINERATES the building from which the fighting Jews ran out.

Mundek leaps into a nearby storeroom.

Socha and Szczepok walk quickly, as people rush by, screaming, pushing, bumping. More distant GUNFIRE.

Mundek wades through the recesses of a double storeroom. Through a hidden hole in the wall...

He extracts a box and opens it. He withdraws a revolver, checks for bullets and tucks it under his shirt.

It is now full of panicked people, shouting, screaming, GUNFIRE from above. Socha and Szczepok are pushed to the wall as people fall into the water.

A YOUNG WOMAN holding a screaming baby clutches Socha.

Socha breaks free of her, and he and Szczepok lurch forward.

SZCZEPOK
(to Socha, above the DIN)
Poldek! Why don't we just go home!
CONTINUED:

Socha looks at Szczepak uncertainly.

INT. YANEK’S ROOM – LATER

Mundek enters to see it filling up with terrified people, SHOVING to get to the cellar’s opening.

VARIOUS VOICES
(in Yiddish)
The hole’s this way! Where’s Ruth?
Don’t push! DON’T PUSH!

Yanek tries to take control over the strangers flowing into his room. He PUSHEs back, screaming.

YANEK
(in Yiddish)
OUT! GET OUT OF MY ROOM! ARE YOU FUCKING DEAF? THIS IS MY ROOM! IT WAS MY IDEA!

Yanek tries to block the entrance.

Mundek scans the crowd, sees Klara and Mania being jostled with Chaja, Yanek, Sara and Rachela. No one pays attention until Mundek FIRES his revolver in the air. People scream, cower, then make way for him. Smirking, Yanek offers Sara his hand.

SARA
(in Yiddish)
We’re not going with you, Yanek!

YANEK
(in Yiddish)
What?!

SARA
(in Yiddish, indicating Chaja)
Her or us...

YANEK
(in Yiddish)
Sara, now is not the time –

SARA
(in Yiddish)
Do you think I’m blind? Her or us! I know which one you want.

Yanek says nothing. The surrounding crowd, including Mundek, is entranced.
CONTINUED:

SARA (cont’d)
(in Yiddish, to Chaja)
Take your prize, you bitch!

Sara SPITS on the floor, grabs Rachela and runs out of the room, pushing her way through the crowd of people. Chaja blushes with embarrassment.

INT. SEWER - CONTINUOUS

Socha and Szczepok elbow their way, overwhelmed. A WILD MAN, weeping hysterically, grabs Socha and offers a white handkerchief. Glinting in the handkerchief are DIAMONDS.

WILD MAN
Please...! Help me! Take, take!

SZCZEPEK
Poldek! Forget the others!

Socha is torn, but then reaches for the diamonds. A man JOSTLES the wild man, and the diamonds TUMBLE into the river, followed by the man himself, with a SCREAM.

INT. YANEK’S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Frantic, Chiger arrives with his children and Paulina, with Pavel clutching her neck.

PAULINA
I’m sorry, Krysia’s impossible, she wouldn’t leave without her boots.

Krystyna glances at her red felt boots, then gives everyone a smile of shy defiance.

MUNDEK
Where the fuck is our Polack Moses?

YANEK
(to Chiger)
So much for your down payment!

Mundek notices people squeezing down the shaft. He FIRES his gun, narrowly missing someone’s foot. Screams.

MUNDEK
These people go down first!

SOCHA  (O.S.)
Korsarz! Chiger!
Chiger shoots a triumphant glance at Yanek, as he and Mundek rush to the hole in the cellar. They look down at Socha, grinning, with Szczepek beside him.

SOCHA (cont’d)
You thought we weren’t coming, didn’t you?

Clutching Chaja, Yanek is at the hole, ready to go down. Mundek stops him.

MUNDEK
The youngest first.

Yanek throws Chiger a dirty look. Chiger gathers Krystyna from the ledge to the cellar. She whimpers, resisting him. Pavel joins in, clinging to Paulina.

CHIGER
Krysia, please! You must go down!

KRYSTyna
No, Papa, no! It stinks!

Exasperated, Chiger gently pushes Krystyna’s squirming body down the hole. Her cries become more insistent.

INT. SEWER - CONTINUOUS

Socha grabs Krystyna’s red boots as she slips into his arms.

SOCHA
Listen to me. You’re going to be safe here, I promise. I want no more crying, do you understand?

Krystyna immediately stops whimpering.

SOCHA (cont’d)
Do you understand?

Krystyna slowly nods her head as he puts her on her feet.

INT. CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

Chiger reaches for Pavel, who clings to his mother, crying.

PAULINA
It’s all right, Ignacy. We’ll go down together.
MUNDEK
(turning to Mania)
You’re next.

Mania starts to descend, stops, overwhelmed.

MANIA
I can’t! I CAN’T! I’ll die in there! It’s a tomb!

Mania climbs out of the cellar. Klara grabs her.

KLARA
Mania!

Mania mutely shakes her head. Klara shakes Mania, but the girl is hysterical.

KLARA (cont’d)
(to Mundek)
I’m staying with her.

MUNDEK
Klara, please!

KLARA
I can’t leave her, Mundek!

YANNEK
Get going, damn it!

Everyone erupts into a screaming match.

CHAJA
(in Yiddish)
Mania, you’re holding everyone up!

YANNEK
(in Yiddish)
You’re going to get us killed!

SOCHA (O.S.)
What’s going on?

MUNDEK
(to Klara)
You can’t stay!

KLARA
Don’t tell me what to do! Who’re you to tell me what I’m supposed to do?

Panic infects the room, now clogged. Mania tries to push through, but can barely move.
BYSTANDER 1
(in Yiddish)
Stop pushing!

BYSTANDER 2
(in Yiddish)
I can't breathe!

BYSTANDER 3
(in Yiddish)
What’s holding everything?!

Klara starts to follow Mania, but Mundek grabs her. They struggle.

KLARA
Let go of me! Let go of me!

Mundek roughly grabs Klara’s arm and pushes her down the cellar, making her STUMBLE. He then grabs Mania and pushes her forward.

MUNDEK
Spoiled brats!

INT. SEWER - LATER

A real-life Hades: flashlights dance on walls as people STUMBLE along the narrow ledges, shouting, screaming, crying. Some force weaker ones into the water.

A distant EXPLOSION. The screams become louder.

Lamps aloft, Socha and Szczepk lead the bedraggled group: the Chigers each hold a child; Mundek; Klara; Mania; Yanek helps Chaja negotiate the slimy floor; Berestycki; Frankiel; Landsberg, limping with difficulty.

Also, four other men and six women, including IRENA, 19, holding onto Daniel, same age; plus a 14-year-old BOY and his younger sister who have attached themselves.

As they SLOG, disembodied wails, shouts and screams ECHO. Exhausted people BUMP into them.

Mania weeps, terrified, nursing her arm. Klara is sullen.

A dead rat by Mania’s foot. She screams.

KLARA
Oh, come on! It's dead.
MANIA
Shut up! I'm scared!

Mania looks around in terror which now overwhelms her.

MANIA (cont’d)
I want to go back!

Klara realizes that the group is moving on.

KLARA
Mania, we’ll be lost if we don’t keep up!

MANIA
So what! I don’t want to die in this place!

Mania lurches away, but Klara grabs her and SLAPS her, hard. Mania SLAPS her back and tries to escape again.

Klara grabs Mania by the hair and twists her arm behind her.

KLARA
Do you think I want to look after you, you stupid brat?!

Crying, Mania struggles to free herself. Mundek returns to them, horrified, and tries to intervene.

KLARA (cont’d)
Stay out of this, Mundek!

Mania struggles loose, but Klara grabs her blouse, RIPPING it. Now Mania is furious and attacks Klara.

MANIA
I hate you, you bitch!

The two girls proceed to HIT, scratch and pull each other’s hair, their screams echoing in the chamber. Mundek continues to intervene and only manages to get HIT by one of them.

MUNDEK
Girls! Stop it, STOP IT!

They finally separate, more out of exhaustion than anything else. Each nurses her bruise, scratches, looking at each other with hatred.

MUNDEK (cont’d)
Mania...it’s certain death above, you saw it!

(MORE)
And Klara, she's your little sister, the only family you have...

As though this is a sudden revelation, Klara starts to cry. This prompts Mania to weep. They tentatively move to each other, and fall into each other's arms. Mania starts to walk towards the group moving away. Klara holds her, kisses. Mundek follows them.

INT. SEWER - LATER

Bent over, stumbling along a smaller passage, the group is exhausted, on edge. Yanek notices Berestycki clutching a ratty, once-elaborate sack. He grabs it and opens it, extracting tefillin (phylacteries).

YANEK
(in Yiddish)
You couldn’t have brought anything we could eat?

Socha snatches the bag and returns it to Berestycki.

CHIGER
(holding Krystyna)
For the love of God, Socha, can’t we rest a few minutes?

SOCHA
When I tell you.

Mundek turns to Klara and offers her his hand as she steps over a puddle. She ignores him. He holds Mania's hand - she doesn't resist.

INT. CHAMBER 2 - LATER

They enter to find that many others have found this place. Socha is not happy. The exhausted group finds spots and slumps down. Krystyna leans against Landsberg. He shrugs her off, irritated. Berestycki kicks away at the rats.

Two dozen strangers, some recognizable from Yanek’s room, are spread out on the oozing floor. A few clutch candles.

SOCHA
You can stay here for now.
(BLOWING out candles)
They suck out the air.

Socha leaves with Szczeppek.
VARIOUS VOICES (O.S.)
(in Yiddish)
Is a Feldman here? Naomi...are you there? Rothfield? Mama? Mama?!

EXT. STREET - LATER

Dawn. Socha traipses through a deserted street, the air acrid with smoke from the nearby ghetto. His face is pinched.

The terrible silence is interrupted by the CLIP CLOP of a horse DRAGGING a wooden wagon. Full of corpses, various ages, with Jewish stars, some with mouths frozen open in terror.

Socha hurries on, rounds the corner. He almost collides with four Ukrainian militiamen, eyes feral from the killing frenzy, uniforms flecked with blood.

Startled, one of them raises his rifle, ready to shoot. Socha’s hands fly up. The militiaman COCKS his rifle anyway.

SOCHA
(in Ukrainian)
Don’t shoot! Not a Yid!
(them)
I know Bortnik, Anton Bortnik!

Another MILITIAMAN gently pushes his comrade’s rifle down.

MILITIAMAN
(to his comrade, in Ukrainian)
Anton’s cleaning up the ghetto.

EXT. GHETTO STREET - LATER

A German soldier KICKS IN the door of a ruined building and throws in a grenade which EXPLODES.

The militiamen march Socha, hands still in the air. The RAT-TAT-TAT of machine guns punctuate the silence.

MILITIAMAN
(in Ukrainian)
Hey, Bortnik! This Polack says he knows you.

Bortnik is with a couple of other militiamen. A pile of dead bodies in the corner of a courtyard. One of the policemen pulls someone out of the staircase and SHOOTS him in the head.
CONTINUED:

BORTNIK
(turns around)
Socha?
(in Ukrainian, to
militiaman)
He’s all right.
(to Socha, in Polish)
What the fuck are you doing here?

SOCHA
My job! There was a blockage.

BORTNIK
You’re lucky they found me.
(beat)
See any Yids down there?

SOCHA
Only dead ones. They caused the
blockage.

BORTNIK
Tell me if you find any live ones,
okay?

SOCHA
Absolutely.

BORTNIK
It is our duty.

Socha stands at attention.

SOCHA
Yes, herr officer!

They both laugh. Bortnik PATS Socha on the back.

INT. SOCHA'S APARTMENT - SUNSET

Socha STUMBLES in. Wanda goes to him, as he peels off his
grimy clothes.

WANDA
You look like hell.

SOCHA
Tired...just tired.

WANDA
Do you want me to draw the bath?

In his underwear, Socha sits on the bed. He nods.
Wanda gathers his clothes and goes to the stove to pick up a large pot with boiling water. She looks out the window.

WANDA (cont’d)
Have you heard? There must be nothing left of the ghetto. Did you see anything?

Socha shakes his head. Wanda pours boiling water into a wash tub, then adds some cold water from a bucket.

WANDA (cont’d)
(crossing herself)
Those poor people!

Naked, Socha submerges himself into the steaming wash tub. He snorts with pleasure.

SOCHA
They’re offering rewards to turn them in. Some are making a pile.

Wanda starts washing his back.

WANDA
God will punish them for that.

SOCHA
(testing her)
But...they killed our Lord. The Bible says, his blood be upon them and their children...Father Tadeusz said...

WANDA
Ah.. That's just politics. I'm telling you, just think...Jews are the same as us...and our Lady and the apostles...all Jews. Even Jesus.

Wanda blushes at her outburst. Socha looks up and kisses her.

INT. GROCERY - DAY

Socha PLUNKS down an assortment of bread, potatoes, onions, a few sausages on the dingy counter. The old WOMAN VENDOR behind the counter grins toothlessly, as she adds up the bill.

WOMAN VENDOR
You must be having quite a party!
Socha warily smiles.

WOMAN VENDOR (cont’d)
That will be four hundred and forty zlotys.

SOCHA
What? That seems high...

WOMAN VENDOR
The onions are ten zlotys each and -

SOCHA
They were five last week!

WOMAN VENDOR
You can afford it, Mister Socha.

Socha tenses up, on guard.

WOMAN VENDOR (cont’d)
A week ago your wife had no cash.
(beat, unwavering smile)
And suddenly you're shopping for an army...

Both understand. Socha quickly hands her the money.

INT. CHAMBER 2 - DAWN

In the dim light from a grate, Klara stirs. Her eyes adjust to the empty spot beside her.

KLARA
Mania?
(silence)
Mania?!

Klara stands up, HITS her head on the low ceiling. Panicked, she STUMBLES about, awaking the others.

KLARA (cont’d)
Mania! Has anyone seen Mania?!

BOY (O.S.)
Is Mania your sister?

Klara STUMBLES to the teenage boy.

BOY (cont’d)
She stepped on me as she was leaving.
KLARA
Leaving! Where’d she go?

BOY
I was asleep. She was crying she didn’t want to die here.

Klara is lost, not knowing what to do.

KLARA
I must find her! I must -

MUNDEK
Klara!

KLARA
(lurching at Mundek)
You bastard! This is all your fault! Your fault!

Klara collapses into tears. Mundek looks helpless. He tries to hold her but Klara pushes him back, looking at him with hate. Mundek turns around, grabs the bucket standing in the corner and moves towards the exit to fetch some water.

INT. SEWER - DAY

With handkerchiefs wrapped around their faces, Socha and Szczepek enter. They push corpses aside to make a pathway. Dead bodies float by on the river.

INT. CHAMBER 2 - SAME TIME

Using a mirror shard, Irena applies lipstick, then pinches her cheeks. Her hair is brushed, in contrast to the others. She smiles at Daniel who looks at her adoringly.

Chaja picks lice from Paulina’s hair. On her lap, Pavel plays with a toy truck that was salvaged. Klara sits, listless.

CHAJA
I never thought I’d miss the ghetto!

PAULINA
You can go back whenever you want!

Krystyna sleeps against her mother’s shoulder. Berestycki reads from a tattered book. Chiger translates from the garish German newspaper "DAS REICH", by the carbide lamp’s glow.
Listen to this..."The Fuehrer's mighty armies continue to triumph over the Polish-Jewish nest of scorpions!"

All right, Chiger, we all know you speak that fucking language.

The language of Heine. You should learn it. But I suppose ignorance is bliss for you, eh Grossman?

A shuffling SOUND from the pipes. Everyone holds still. A circular motion from a lamp.

Socha and Szczepk enter, removing the handkerchiefs.

Every square inch is taken up by a person. All eyes are on the two men, expectant, greedy as they open their tool bags.

Szczepk smiles at Pavel, making a funny face. The boy hides his face in his mother's skirt, then peeks out at Szczepk.

They hand out chunks of bread, which are devoured silently. Klara approaches them.

Up there...did you see my sister?

Szczepek uneasily looks at Socha. After a beat:

Anyone left alive was taken to Janowska Camp. The ghetto is empty.

Klara fights to hold it in. Paulina places a comforting hand on her. Mundek looks away. Yanek simply stares ahead.

Suddenly, Socha points to Chiger, Yanek and Mundek.

You, you and you. Follow me.

Socha stands with Mundek, while Yanek and Chiger sit on the large, crudely hewn limestone blocks in this new chamber.

I'm moving you here. It's safer.
They survey the space: A cold draft WHISTLES through an unseen crack. A nearby trench carries pieces of unmistakable shit. A rat SCURRIES by.

MUNDEK
For who, you or us?

Ignoring him and using his flashlight, Socha points to various crevices and wall indentations.

SOCHA
Look. Plenty of hiding places, just in case.

YANEK
And how do we fit everyone into this shit hole?

SOCHA
I never said I’d take care of every Yid in Lvov. Such a big group – it’s too dangerous.

Silence, as the men absorb this.

CHIGER
And exactly how many are worth saving?

SOCHA
Ten.

CHIGER
Mister Socha...twelve, fourteen at least.

Socha merely scowls at Chiger.

INT. CHAMBER 2 - LATER

Back in the old chamber, small knots of Jews whisper, eyes darting suspiciously. Socha stands aside, observing.

Frightened, Irena and Daniel hold onto each other. She tries to pick up on the whispers. The teenagers look at each other, tense, unknowing.

Mundek, Yanek, Chiger, Paulina, Klara and Chaja cluster. Conversations collide like ping-pong balls.

YANEK
(in Yiddish)
I’ve chosen seven already.
"IN DARKNESS" SCRIPT

CONTINUED:

CHIGER
(in German)
Oh? And who made you God, Grossman?

YANEK
(in Yiddish)
It was my room, I took all the risk! It was my idea!

CHIGER
(in German)
Which I alone am paying for!

YANEK
(in Yiddish)
And that makes you better than us?

CHIGER
(in Polish)
Before the war, you wouldn’t even be in the same room as me!

CHAJA
(in Yiddish)
Listen to the professor who refuses to speak Yiddish! All your education didn’t buy you any sense, bringing children into such a hell hole!

PAULINA
(in German)
No doubt you would’ve left them to the Germans to take care of! Like your boyfriend did with his family!

Chaja is about to attack Paulina, but Yanek holds her back.

MUNDEK
(in German)
Enough! We’re running out of time!

Socha is getting irritated. Silence, then:

CHIGER
(counts on fingers, in German)
We are four. Yanek, Chaja, Mundek, Klara. That’s eight. Landsberg, Berestycki...
YANEK
(in Yiddish)
Why Landsberg? He’s a cripple.

CHIGER
(in German)
At least he’s not a mental cripple. Landsberg, ten, Frankiel makes eleven.

Yanek and Chiger glare at each other.

PAULINA
(in German)
What about Irena?

SOCHA
(calls out)
Why don’t you speak the mother tongue, damn it! Not that I give a shit what you’re saying.

Yanek gives a nod to Socha, then continues in Polish.

YANEK
Frankiel is more useful.

KLARA
What about those two?
(meaning the teenagers)
They have no one!

The teenage girl looks up, sensing she’s being discussed.

MUNDEK
(in German)
I’m staying. I don’t trust those Polacks.

SOCHA
(approaching the group)
Time’s up. Who are the lucky ones?

CHIGER
We’ve narrowed it to twelve.

SOCHA
I said ten.

MUNDEK
I’m staying.
SOCHA
Not unless I say so. You’re coming.

CHIGER
Sir, we beg you, twelve. Like the twelve disciples.

SOCHA
Of course a Yid wouldn’t know, but the traitor Judas was the twelfth.

BERESTYCKI
Matthias replaced Judas, after he killed himself. It remained twelve.

A pause. Socha looks at Berestycki with surprised admiration.

SOCHA
All right, twelve, but no more.

Paulina flashes a smile at Irena who breaks down in relief. She goes to Paulina and hugs her.

PAULINA
(qiely)
You can come with us!

IRENA
And Daniel too?

The women unclutch and Paulina looks at Socha.

IRENA (cont’d)
I won’t leave without him.
(indicates teen boy and girl)
And these kids...we shouldn’t leave them, it’s not right!

SOCHA
So now you want to make it thirteen? Why not fourteen, twenty! You give a finger and a Jew will take your arm!

PAULINA
Mister Socha, I beg you!

SOCHA
Forget it, Mrs. Chiger! It’s eleven or nothing. Of course, they can always take the place of your children, it’s up to you.
CONTINUED: (4)

Paulina clams up, chastened.

INT. CHAMBER 2 - LATER

As they get ready to leave, the chosen group avoids looking at the half dozen to be left behind, already pariahs.

Unable to bear it, Paulina goes to Irena, starts to say something, gives up. Their eyes hold. Tearfully, Paulina turns away, joining the others.

INT. SEWER - LATER

Lamp aloft, Socha leads Mundek, Klara, the four Higiers, Yanek, Chaja, Frankiel, Berestycki and Landsberg through a series of tunnels. Each carries belongings: pots, pans, lamps, a pillow. A cascade of sewage periodically DRENCHES them from above. The ceiling becomes progressively lower.

INT. CHAMBER 3 - CONTINUOUS

The exhausted group SLUMPS on the rocks and the slimy floor. Klara shivers from the draft. They cover their noses. Pavel VOMITS. Paulina silently reproaches Socha as she comforts him.

Chiger takes Socha aside.

CHIGER
We are grateful for what you’ve done, Mister Socha, we are.
(beat)
But...can you do something... we’re only eleven now and five hundred zlotys a day is a lot.

SOCHA
Out of which I have to buy all your bread, potatoes, sugar...

CHIGER
I know, but you must still clear...

SOCHA
Less than seventy zlotys which I share with Szczepek.
(beat)
You’re bargaining over your own life! You’re no different than any other Yid!

Chiger flushed. Socha stalks away. Socha gives Szczepek a signal and they both stalk away.
EXT. STREET - DAY

In their work clothes, Socha and Szczepek walk by the rubble of the ghetto. Something catches Stefek’s eye. He scurries and unearths a beautiful embroidered table cloth. He shakes off the dust to reveal an old blood stain.

SZCZEPEK
Marysia will love this!

SOCHA
There’s blood on it!

SZCZEPEK
It can be washed off. It’s a perfect size, too.

Szczepek spots something else: two dolls, one blond, one brunette, entwined in each other’s arms. Szczepek picks them up and brushes ash off them. He hands them to Socha.

SZCZEPEK (cont’d)
For your Stefcia.

SOCHA
She’ll be pleased...thanks.

SZCZEPEK
A souvenir of the ghetto from Uncle Szczepek.

INT. SOCHA’S APARTMENT - LATER

Socha TRUDGES up the stairs to Wanda and Stefcia, small and scared, between Bortnik and a militiaman at the entrance.

BORTNIK
Ah, Socha, I was just asking your charming wife where you were. I need your help. There are rats in the sewers!
(to Socha’s blank look)
Yids! Live ones, too!

WANDA
Poldek knows nothing about that!

Socha shoots her a reassuring look that also says, ‘shut up’.

SOCHA
I told you I’ve seen corpses only.
BORTNIK
A woman on Peltowna Street called us to say she smelled cooking onions coming from her toilet. I smelled it myself.

Bortnik unfolds a map of the sewers.

BORTNIK (cont’d)
Thanks to the Italians who built our sewers, we have very precise maps.
(points)
Look, they must be there. So if we get in through this manhole, we’ll be very close. Am I right?

SOCHA
(unwillingly)
Yes...

BORTNIK
(to Wanda)
No one knows the sewers better than your husband. Eh, Poldek?

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Bortnik walks with Socha, with the militiaman behind.

BORTNIK
I don’t mean to insult you, Poldek, but aren’t you tired of living in that hole?
(to Socha’s reaction)
Listen...I live in a beautiful home, my kids play in our own garden in the summer. And you know who gave it to us? A rich Yid family I never even met!
(lets out a hearty laugh)
Like magic!
(SNAPS fingers)
Mine! Everything! The Germans pay five hundred zlotys, cash, each.

Socha is impressed.

BORTNIK (cont’d)
Just pray we find Yids down there.
INT. SEWER - MOMENTS LATER
Socha leads Bortnik and the militiaman from the ladder. A shadow DASHES by. The antsy militiaman SHOOTS.

INT. CHAMBER 3 - SAME TIME
Mundek hears the SHOT.

INT. SEWER - CONTINUOUS

BORTNIK
(to the militiaman, in Ukrainian)
Why don’t you announce us, idiot?

INT. SEWER - LATER
An oval tunnel. Socha leads the way, his face glistening with sweat. The others follow, single file. SLOSHING of water.

INT. SEWER - LATER
The men come to a four-foot high tunnel. Bortnik and the militiaman, increasingly disgusted, hesitate.

Bortnik stops, takes out the plan and looks at it in the flashlight.

BORTNIK
It must be very close, right?

SOCHA
Yeah...

Crouching on all fours, they crawl into the tunnel.

INT. CHAMBER 3 - LATER
Socha emerges first out of the tunnel. He casts his lamp around the familiar chamber, as Bortnik, pistol drawn, and the militiaman with machine gun, emerge.

They stop at the chamber’s entrance, to avoid the water mixed with excrement.

Nothing. All clear.

Bortnik, disappointed, walks around, his flashlight dancing relentlessly on the inky crevices. The light picks out the cobwebs. The oozing ground seems to be crawling with shit.

SQUEAKING rats. Bortnik is repulsed.
Socha notices, jutting from an abutment: a RED FELT BOOT.

SOCHA
I can check over there if you want.

Bortnik nods, relieved.

Lamp aloft, Socha goes to the abutment. Glancing quickly back at the others, his foot gently pushes the boot, encasing Krystyna’s little foot, out of sight.

Socha’s lamp picks her out, eyes and mouth clamped tight, hiding behind Paulina who’s pressed to the wall, her back facing Socha. She shoots him a look of naked fear, presses closer still. Pavel clings to her, saucer-eyed.

For an eternity, he stares at them, and the others, some trembling, also pressed against the wall. Occasionally, his eyes flick to Bortnik waiting expectantly. Finally:

SOCHA (cont’d)
(calls out)
Nothing here!

INT. CHAMBER 3 - MOMENTS LATER

Empty. The walls of the chamber seem to move as the bodies, now in shadows, slowly peel away. Sobs of relief from the women. A lamp is lit.

With one trembling hand, Paulina takes out of her mouth a GLASS CYANIDE VIAL, with a skull and bones marking. She holds her other hand out for Krystyna to place her vial.

Klara almost faints, but Mundek holds her up.

KLARA
I can’t take this! Mundek, you’ve been up, take me with you!

MUNDEK
It’s dangerous...

KLARA
Please, just for a few minutes. I’m going mad!

INT. A ROOM - LATER

Mundek and Klara enter the pillaged room. Furniture remnants, thrown clothes, broken bottles. Klara squints at the window.
KLARA
Everything looks red!

MUNDEK
You haven’t seen daylight in weeks.

Klara approaches broken windows, searching outside. A family carts loot on wheelbarrows from an empty, burned-out house.

Disappointed, she turns her attention to the room. Broken plates and furniture are scattered everywhere. She picks up an old pair of shoes, holds them to her foot. They’re too big. She looks up to see Mundek staring at her. She blushes.

Mundek continues rummaging. He finds another pair of shoes, hidden under rubble. He takes them out, dusts them.

MUNDEK (cont’d)
(indicating a ruined bed)
Sit there.

Klara sits down and Mundek kneels in front of her. He takes hold of her foot and removes her worn shoes.

KLARA
Am I Cinderella?

Mundek says nothing as he holds her foot for just a few beats too long. Klara feels the erotic charge and giggles nervously. He slips on the new shoe which fits. He then slips on the other shoe, as the two of them look at each other.

Klara stands up and the spell is broken. Mundek rises too. They both laugh, a little nervously.

KLARA (cont’d)
Do you miss Germany?

MUNDEK
I haven’t seen my family for four years. The letters stopped two years ago. It’s not home anymore.

Klara goes to a tray of cups and saucers by another window. She notices smoke in the distance.

KLARA
Look, Janowska.

Mundek goes up to her, standing very close. He looks at her with longing.
KLARA (cont’d)

Why is there smoke?

MUNDEK
I don’t know.

Klara’s eyes stay fixed into the distance.

KLARA
The man who hung my father, who actually pulled the rope, had just promised he would save him.
(pause)
Papa’s last words were, “Be good to Mania. She’s spoiled but she has a good heart.” We always fought, so he had to make me promise...

Klara turns to face Mundek. They look into each other’s eyes for a few beats.

KLARA (cont’d)
So...what can we take with us?

Mundek goes to a bed, still usable.

MUNDEK
If we take this apart, we could get it down.

Mundek goes to a small kerosene stove and lifts it, testing its weight.

MUNDEK (cont’d)
This should work.

In a corner between the rubble, a gutted schoolbag, with notebooks and crayons tumbled out. A children’s book of HANSEL AND GRETEL. Mundek crouches as he turns the items around in his hand.

Klara returns to the tray of cups and saucers and lifts it.

KLARA
What about this?

MUNDEK
(referring to the child’s items)
Krysia will like these...
The approaching rhythmic CRUNCH of marching boots. Klara takes a step, and the heel of her new shoe BREAKS. She wobbles and drops the tray. CRASH!

SOLDIER (O.S.)
(in German)
What was that?

Mundek immediately moves Klara behind a wall, his hand clamped over her mouth. They are transfixed as the boots CRUNCH nearer. And then stop.

The SQUEAK of a door opening. Endless silence as Klara and Mundek hold their breath. The CRUNCHING boots recede. Mundek releases his hand.

KLARA
I’m so sorry!

MUNDEK
Well...you’ll never make it as a waitress.
(serious)
I told you this was dangerous, but you insisted! You’re stubborn as a donkey...no, a mule...what is the stubbornest animal, I forget...

KLARA
A reindeer...?

Klara bursts into quiet laughter. Mundek moves forward and kisses her on the lips, gently. A moment of silence and she moves back.

KLARA (cont’d)
We’d better get back.

Mundek swallows hard, tries to hide his frustration.

MUNDEK
Yes, well...what are you waiting for?

INT. SOCHA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Socha, Wanda and Szczepak are enjoying vodka in front of a just consumed meal. All are tipsy, sweaty, in good moods.

Stefcia plays with Stefek’s dolls in a corner.
SZCZEPEK
So she looks at the tablecloth and says, “That’s nice”. “Nice!” After all the trouble I took cleaning it! I told her to go fuck herself.
(takes a swig of vodka)
She told me she’d rather fuck Aleksy!

First shock, then laughter. Socha reaches for Wanda’s hand.

SOCHA
Wanda, we must find Szczepk someone just like you.
(beat)
But a few years younger.

Mock anger as Wanda HITS Socha, laughing. Szczepk guffaws. In the mirth, Wanda suddenly notices Szczepk’s watch.

WANDA
Szczepk, is that new?

Socha tries to signal, but Szczepk isn’t paying attention.

SZCZEPEK
What, this?
(holds it up)
From Mister Chiger. It’s Swiss!

Socha coughs, but Szczepk ignores him.

WANDA
Mister Chiger?

SZCZEPEK
Yes! One of our Jews. Poldek, didn’t you tell - ?

Szczepk finally notices Socha’s discomfort.

WANDA
Jews...? Poldek...

SOCHA
We just found some Jews hiding -

WANDA
And...what? You’re helping them!?

SZCZEPEK
Mrs. Socha...
SOCHA
Wanda, we’re being paid!

WANDA
So that’s your ‘raise’!

SOCHA
So much for “the Jews are like us” and Jesus being a Jew!

SZCZEPEK
Jesus was a Jew?

WANDA
This is different!

SOCHA
I did it for you – and Stefcia!

WANDA
No, you didn’t! Don’t you dare say you did it for us!

Wanda, distraught. Socha goes to comfort her.

WANDA (cont’d)
Don’t touch me!

Silence. Stefcia looks at her parents with trepidation.

SZCZEPEK
What do you mean, Jesus was a Jew?

INT. CHAMBER 3 – NIGHT

Yanek and Chaja try to make love as quietly as possible, stifling their moans of ecstasy.

Under the carbide lamp, Krystyna and Pavel are sound asleep against Paulina, who smirks at Chiger, irritated. She holds his hand gently. Chigier pulls her closer in an embrace. Frankiel, Landsberg and Berestycki SNORE.

Klara listens intently, titillated. She finally steals a glance and her eyes meet Mundek’s. She quickly looks away, embarrassed. She smiles as Yanek and Chaja climax.

Mundek clenches his fists and looks at Klara turned away.

INT. BAR – EVENING

Socha and Szczepkek sit at a table, quietly drinking. Bortnik enters, walks over, pulls up a chair.
SOCHA
How are you, Bortnik?

BORTNIK
Have you heard? I told you! I did!
They were there! They found a bunch
of Yids in the sewer. We missed
out.

SOCHA
(holding it in)
Too bad. How many were there?

BORTNIK
(shrugs ignorance)
They left the bodies to rot.

SZCZEPEK
Any survivors?

BORTNIK
I only wonder...They couldn't have
lasted this long without someone's
help. Fuck, someone must have
helped them. I'd like to get my
hands on the son of the bitch!

Szczepek drains his glass, trying to control his trembling.

SOCHA
Shit, so much money... If there are
any Yids left, don't worry -
they'll be ours!
   (drains his glass)
I have to go.

BORTNIK
What's your hurry? I'm buying the
next round.

SOCHA
We have work to do.
   (stands up)
Coming, Szczepek?

BORTNIK
You look like you could use another
drink, Szczepek.

A tense beat. Szczepek finally rises.

SZCZEPEK
You heard the boss.
EXT. BAR - MOMENTS LATER

A cold autumn wind blows. Socha walks quickly, Szczepk lags.

SOCHA
We’d better hurry...

SZCZEPEK
What if they talked before they were killed?!

SOCHA
If they did, we’d be hanging by now. Come on!

Szczepk
No Poldek. I can’t help you anymore. No more.

Socha sees that argument is futile. He turns and hurries away.

INT. SEWER - LATER

Socha LEAPS off the ladder, and strides through the maze, carbide lamp aloft.

INT. SEWER - MOMENTS LATER

Rounding a corner, Socha sees Mundek, sweating, illuminated by a dim lamp, bullet-ridden bodies all around him.

He drags the body of the teenage boy and DUMPS it into the rushing Peltew, while feverishly muttering the Kaddish. He barely looks up to glower at Socha, then returns to dragging corpses. Socha helps him.

SOCHA
What about the others...Did they...?

MUNDEK
They must not know!

SOCHA
Then...they’re all right?

Socha is overcome with relief. Mundek bends to lift the next corpse: Irena, red lipstick matching her bloodied head.
CONTINUED:

MUNDEK
That should have been me.
(beat)
Who lead the murderers here?

A beat until Socha realizes he is being accused.

SOCHA
Go to hell, vermin!

Socha abruptly straightens up and walks away.

INT. CHAMBER 3 - DAY

Wearing his tefillin, Berestycki mumbles prayers.

YANEK
(to Landsberg, in Yiddish)
Look at that idiot!
(yells to Berestycki, in Yiddish)
God’s not listening, stupid!

Frankiel and Landsberg chuckle. Krystyna tries to draw, concentrated, tongue sticking out, by the lamp. Pavel tries to see what she's doing and unintentionally knocks her hand. Krystyna SMACKS him. He starts wailing, milking it.

PAULINA
Krysia!
(cradles Pavel)
Shh...shhh...

Yanek grabs Mundek’s revolver and aims it at Pavel. Mundek is ready to tackle Yanek, but Klara holds him back.

YANEK
STOP IT! Stop it or I’ll shoot you, I swear! There is no crying here!

Pavel cowers into Paulina’s lap.

YANEK (cont’d)
(to Berestycki, in Yiddish)
And you! Stop your fucking praying!

CHAJA
Yanek!

YANEK
(in Yiddish)
SHUT UP! I’ve had enough of you!
CONTINUED:

No one dares move, as Yanek waves the gun, demented.

YANEK (cont’d)
(in Yiddish)
Enough...enough!

EXT. STREET - DAY

At an open manhole, Szczepek lies on his belly. With a rope, he lowers a small, lit kerosene lamp, with an attached angled mirror. Socha crouches beside him, blowing on cold fingers.

SOCHA
Well?

SZCZEPEK
The flame’s still red.

SOCHA
(lowered voice)
They got the others, not ours.

Szczepek says nothing.

SOCHA (cont’d)
Has it changed?

SZCZEPEK
It’s safe. No methane today.

Szczepek pulls up the lamp.

SOCHA
Did you hear what I said?
(checks around)
The Jews -

SZCZEPEK
What Jews?

Szczepek straightens up, SPITS on the ground and walks away.

INT. CHAMBER 3 - DAY

In a right-angle corner of the basin, lit by carbide lamps, Krystyna performs an old Hebrew or Yiddish song. Pavel is beside her, trying to mimic her, but mostly picks his nose. Some stand, sit on the floor or perch on makeshift furniture.

Some of the group start to sing with her, for this song reminds them of a happier past. Yanek and Landsberg wipe away tears, as does Chaja.
Klara is beside Mundek. As she sings, she gently takes hold of Mundek’s hand. He looks at her tenderly, gratefully and cuddles her.

Socha enters. He stands besides the others quietly. Klara notices him and moves back of Mundek. Socha sees it. Mundek's eyes meet Socha's and turns around angrily.

The song ends and there is silence. Remembering herself, Paulina starts to CLAP. Others start to APPLAUD.

SOCHA
Krysia, you sing beautifully.

Krystyna blushes with pride.

SOCHA (cont’d)
(refers to the ceiling)
But you must sing in a low voice.

Chiger takes Socha aside.

CHIGER
I’m out of money, Socha.
(to Socha’s dismay)
Don’t worry. Right after the occupation...

INT. JEWISH CEMETERY - NIGHT

Socha removes a flat box from under a tombstone and hides it under his shirt.

CHIGER (V.O.)
....I hid some jewelry and gold in my house. Get a good price, and I can continue paying you.

He walks away between the row of tombs and line of trees. He stops by one of the head stones carved with a relief showing two folded hands. He holds his hands up to match them.

INT. CHAMBER 3 - NIGHT

Under the carbide lamp, the group sleep close to each other for warmth, oblivious to rats SCURRYING over their feet.

Yanek checks Chiger’s pants pockets, while Landsberg rummages Paulina’s dress. Frankiel keeps watch with Mundek’s gun.

Nothing. Frankiel signals for them to leave, but Yanek goes to Chaja, asleep. He stares at her, softly. He reaches out, about to touch her.
CONTINUED:

Frankiel nudges him with the gun. Yanek joins them in slinking quietly out of the chamber, Landsberg limping.

INT. SOCHA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Socha helps Wanda hang big white sheets in the airy attic. Pigeons fly below the beams.

One of the sheets sticks to Wanda, accentuating her breasts.

Socha tiptoes to her and grabs her through the sheet. She screams, laughing. He pulls the sheet down from her face.

WANDA
Let me do my work, silly man!

SOCHA
You don't have to work anymore...
I want to show you something.

Socha goes to an old chest, unlocks it and extracts Chiger’s treasure box. He opens it to Wanda’s astonishment.

SOCHA (cont’d)
It’s Chiger’s. I’m supposed to sell it for him.

Wanda touches the jewelry. She tries on one of the diamond rings, admiring it. Then another. She CLASPS on a bracelet.

SOCHA (cont’d)
You’d never have to work again, you’d have your own maid...
  (locks eyes with her)
It would be so easy!
  (to Wanda’s accusing look)
They’re not even grateful for all we’re doing. All they do is demand.

Wanda admires her arms and fingers, considering.

WANDA
Stefcia’s such a skinny little thing. How long do you think it’ll take her to die when they hang her?

Wanda abruptly tears off the jewelry as if it is poisonous. Socha is stung sober, but says nothing.

EXT. STREET - DAY

It is now wintry cold as Socha prepares to go down the manhole.
INT. CHAMBER 3 - SAME TIME

Berestycki quietly removes his tefillin.

The toll shows: pasty faces, skin scabby. Leaning on Paulina, Pavel listlessly plays with his truck. Krystyna draws children going to school. Chaja, eyes puffy from crying, boils soup on the stove that Mundek liberated.

A SOUND in the pipes, followed by a rotating flashlight beam.

Mundek grabs a pan and hides by the entrance. Chiger takes a shovel and positions himself on the other side.

Socha enters. The men lay down the weapons, but all are edgy.

SOCHA
I signalled. Why so scared?

BERESTYCKI
It’s been a while, Socha. We thought you weren’t coming back.

MUNDEK
Or worse.

Socha is stung, but says nothing. He looks around.

SOCHA
Where’s Yanek?

KLARA
(after a beat)
He left with Landsberg and Frankiel. We don’t think they’re coming back.

Chaja wipes away tears.

SOCHA
They’ll be caught, they’ll - (realizing)
You thought they already talked!

CHAJA
Yanek won’t talk, he won’t!

SOCHA
Nice you have such faith in him.

Socha opens his tool bag, and hands the treasure box to Chiger. With Paulina hovering, Chiger opens the box.
CHIGER
I thought you were going to sell -

SOCHA
I’m not coming back.
(letting it sink in)
I’m risking my life, my family’s
life - for what? Only complaints
and accusations! And now this, this
betrayal...it’s too much. Szczepek
was right to drop it.

Mundek suddenly grabs the shovel and wedges the handle
against Socha’s throat. Socha chokes, trying to fight him.

KLARA
Mundek!

Paulina buries her children’s heads into her lap.

MUNDEK
He’s going to walk out of here
straight to the Gestapo.

KLARA
He could’ve done that and kept the
jewels! He didn’t have to return!

MUNDEK
We should’ve killed him long ago.

KLARA
Mundek...for God’s sake...!

Mundek lets go. Grasping his throat, Socha retches. He looks
at Klara, then at the terrified children and staggers out.
Chiger tries to stop him, but Socha pushes him away.

SOCHA
You can all die like dogs.

INT. SEWER - DAY

Mundek crawls on his elbows along a “forty”, a tunnel 40
centimeters in diameter, a pail of water held in his teeth.
He stops to catch his breath.

INT. CHAMBER 3 - LATER

From the same pail, Paulina carefully carries her tin cup to
Pavel, lying listlessly, and gives him a sip, pulling it away
before he can take too big a gulp.
EXT. STREET - DAY

The bare trees RUSTLE in the wind. A sound of CHORAL SINGING comes from the church.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

As Chiger stands watch, Klara examines mouldy bread, discards it. Mundek picks it up and puts it into the sack. A truck APPROACHES. They all hide, barely missing the headlights.

INT. CHAMBER 3 - DAY

Klara and Chaja take some potatoes from a sack, nearly empty. Chiger erases answers to an old newspaper crossword puzzle. He starts to write, but the pencil lead breaks. He flings it irritably. Paulina observes this with contempt, Pavel nestled on her lap. Krystyna draws.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

A light snow falls as Socha and Szczepak trudge from work.

SOCHA
We need to do another job.

SZCZEPEK
You mean like - ?

SOCHA
I've got two addresses we haven't hit.

SZCZEPEK
I thought...

SOCHA
What?

SZCZEPEK
The Jews...

SOCHA
(feigning ignorance)
Jews? What Jews?

A beat, as Szczepak understands. He smirks. Socha does too.

SZCZEPEK
Poldek...I wasn’t scared just for myself. Marysia’s having a child.
Szczepek pounces on Socha, fighting with animal ferocity. But Socha is the stronger and ends it by punching Szczepek on the nose. He stays on the ground, moaning and holding his nose while Socha stands over him.

Socha (cont’d)
Wipe your nose, you little snot!
(walking away, mumbling)
Coward, brat...patsy!

INT. CHAMBER 3 - DAY

Krystyna takes tiny, careful bites from the mouldy bread.

Pale, Chaja stands up. Only to CRUMPLE in a dead faint. Klara rushes to her, as does Mundek. The two help her onto the bed.

Klara
She needs water.
(to Mundek’s hesitation)
She can have my portion.

Mundek still doesn’t move.

Klara (cont’d)
Mundek, please! Now!

Mundek reluctantly leaves. Klara strokes Chaja’s forehead. She opens her eyes.

Chaja
Do you think Yanek’s still alive?

Mundek arrives with a tin mug of water. Klara lifts up Chaja and gives it to her like a child. Mundek observes, moved by Klara’s tenderness.

INT. ABANDONED APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The walls are intact, although blackened from earlier flames. A dusting of snow has seeped into the room.

Socha, his breath visible in the cold air, RUMMAGES through the meager leftovers: shattered furniture, a broken toilet, glass and plate shards.

The SOUND of something dropped in another room. He tiptoes to investigate. Mundek is POKING around, finds a hammer, stashes it into his pocket and leaves the building.
CONTINUED:

Socha goes back to FERRETING. He finds a dusty bottle of wine, deposits it in his jacket pocket.

GERMAN SOLDIER (O.S.)
(in German)
HEY! What are you doing?

Socha cautiously approaches a broken window to investigate in the ruined courtyard below.

EXT. COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

From Socha’s POV: Snow covers the ground. A teenage GERMAN SOLDIER, swimming in his uniform, nervously points his rifle at Mundek, his hands in the air. THEY SPEAK GERMAN TO EACH OTHER THROUGHOUT.

MUNDEK
There, to join the group.

Mundek gestures toward a group of Jews hauling the rubble of another building a distance away.

GERMAN SOLDIER
You’re late!

MUNDEK
Of course I’m late - I don’t have a watch!

INT. ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Socha smiles to himself.

GERMAN SOLDIER (O.S.)
All right, go on.

Socha turns away from the window.

GERMAN SOLDIER (O.S.) (cont’d)
Wait!

Socha stops short, returns to the window.

EXT. COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

The militiaman’s rifle is up again on Mundek.

INT. ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Socha ducks back.
CONTINUED:

GERMAN SOLDIER (O.S.)
You look healthy. Maybe you’re a partisan.

Socha is alarmed, but stays frozen.

MUNDEK (O.S.)
Don’t you see I’m a Jew?

MILITIAMAN (O.S.)
There are Jewish partisans!

MUNDEK (O.S.)
I’m telling you, you’re stopping me from doing my work!

Socha returns to the window.

EXT. COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

GERMAN SOLDIER
Shut the fuck up! Shut up or I’ll shoot! SHUT UP!!

MUNDEK
Please! You’ll be killing an excellent worker. PLEASE!

Socha looks on, torn by indecision.

EXT. COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

The soldier COCKS his rifle, about to shoot. Socha descends upon Mundek.

SOCHA
(to Mundek in Polish)
Where the fuck were you, you fucking vermin!

Socha PUNCHES Mundek hard.

SOCHA (cont’d)
(to startled soldier in Polish)
Thanks for finding this piece of shit!

(to Mundek, HITTING him)
When I’m finished with you, you won’t have any ass left, Yid!
MILITIAMAN
(to Mundek in German)
What’s he saying?

SOCHA
(to soldier, in Polish)
This filthy Jew was supposed to help me down in the sewer. And then he just wanders off!

The militiaman now points the rifle at both of them.

GERMAN SOLDIER
(to Mundek, in German)
What the fuck is this Polack saying...!?

Socha keeps rattling on, not allowing Mundek to translate.

SOCHA
(to soldier, in Polish)
Look, I’m a sewer inspector. Here, I have identification...

Socha PATS his pockets, ensuring the wine bottle is visible. The soldier points to it with his rifle.

GERMAN SOLDIER
(to Mundek, in German)
What’s that in his pocket?

SOCHA
(to soldier, in Polish)
This?
(extracts bottle)
I got it at that Yid house. Would you like some?

Suddenly silence. The soldier is frazzled. Mundek finds his opening.

MUNDEK
(to soldier in German)
He’s offering you his wine.

GERMAN SOLDIER
(to Mundek in German)
So... trying to bribe me!

MUNDEK
(in German)
Oh no, no!

(MORE)
Socha approaches the militiaman.

GERMAN SOLDIER
(in German)
He is! You’re both coming with me.

Socha HITS the militiaman’s throat with the bottle.

The soldier DROPS his rifle, retching. Mundek pounces on him and HAMMERS him on the head. The boy COLLAPSES.

Mundek DRAGS him out of sight. Socha holds him while Mundek repeatedly BASHES his skull. Blood spurts on the snow.

The two men SCURRY away, checking around them. They COLLAPSE against a secluded wall, panting, trying to process.

Mundek casually wipes the blood off the hammer on his sleeve. He grabs the bottle from Socha, uses the claw to loosen the cork, then POPS it open with his teeth and takes a swig.

Trembling now, Socha grabs the bottle and drinks deeply.

SOCHA
What in God’s name were you doing there?

MUNDEK
None of your fucking business!

Socha leaps on Mundek with such ferocity, they TOPPLE against the wall. Socha is about to smash his face.

MUNDEK (cont’d)
You want to add me to that little goy we just killed?

SOCHA
(releasing Mundek)
I – I didn’t kill...

Mundek knows he’s hit a nerve, and leaves. Socha looks at the dead boy. He RETCHES UP the red wine, speckling the snow.

INT. CHURCH – DAY

Socha is in the confessional, haunted.

PRIEST (O.S.)
You may start, my son.
CONTINUED:

SOCHA
Bless me, Father, for I have
sinned. It has been -
(trying to remember)
- Easter since my last confession.
These are my sins.

Silence.

PRIEST
You may go on.

The priest peeks through the dividing lattice. Socha has left.

INT. SEWER - DAY

Socha trudges in work clothes, along with SAWICKI, older with a beer belly, also in work clothes.

SAWICKI
Let your brother find his own
fucking job, I tell her, there’s a
damn war on, it’s hard on everyone.
Then she says -

SOCHA
Sawicki, we don’t have much time,
we need to find that blockage.
Let’s split up, and meet back here
in ten minutes.

Sawicki is miffed he can’t complete his story.

SAWICKI
All right, “boss”.

INT. SEWER - MOMENTS LATER

Socha’s flashlight penetrates the dark void of a pipe. He is about to turn around.

Muffled crying. He backs himself into the pipe.

INT. SEWER - MOMENTS LATER

Socha enters an empty, silent chamber, to hear:

KRYSTYNA (O.S.)
Shhh!

His flashlight finds Krystyna, huddled with Pavel.
PAVEL
We got lost, Mister Socha!

SOCHA
Where are your parents?

KRYSTYNA
(wary, unfriendly)
We wouldn’t be lost if we knew.

SOCHA
(a small smile, then)
They must be very worried.

SAWICKI (O.S.)
SOCHA!

SOCHA
Wait here, I’ll be back.

INT. SEWER - MOMENTS LATER

SAWICKI
(a little annoyed)
Where were you?

SOCHA
I think I found something. I can take care of it myself.

Sawicki doesn’t move.

SAWICKI
You will?

SOCHA
Yes, yes. Go home...your brother-in-law can come here tomorrow. Something can be arranged...

SAWICKI
He’s a hard worker.
(beat)
Sure you don’t need my help?

Socha nods reassuringly.

INT. SEWER - LATER

The children drag their feet as they TRUDGE behind Socha, lamp aloft, on the ledge.
CONTINUED:

Socha stops, bends down and picks up Pavel, who wraps his arms around his neck. He gives the boy a slight hug.

He looks down at Krystyna who looks up at him. He smiles and extends his hand. She tentatively takes it.

INT. CHAMBER 3 - MOMENTS LATER

Chiger tries to comfort a distraught Paulina. The rest are catatonic with anxiety and sorrow.

SOCHA (O.S.)
Korsarz!

All freeze. Chiger grabs the shovel.

SOCHA (O.S.) (cont’d)
I have the children!

Everyone is stunned. Paulina rushes to the entrance.

As soon as Socha and the children enter, Paulina grabs the kids, clutching them and sobbing. Remembering herself, Paulina leaps on Socha, holding him and continuing to sob.

PAULINA
Thank...you...thank...you...

SOCHA
It’s all right, Mrs. Chiger.

He pats her, all the while looking at the others, physically deteriorated since he last saw them.

An awkward silence. Socha relaxes. He’s made a decision.

SOCHA (cont’d)
If it’s all right, I can continue as before...

(after a beat)
Mister Chiger, you still have the jewelry, don’t you?

CHIGER
Yes. Ready to be sold.

MUNDEK
Just don’t expect a hero’s welcome from me, Socha.
Socha lays down a few potatoes, sugar and some bread. While the woman vendor tabulates the charge, her daughter ANIELKA helps put the stuff in a bag.

WOMAN VENDOR 2
You missed quite a show. They strung up ten good Poles in revenge for one German soldier. And then they shot another forty...

SOCHA
A German soldier?

WOMAN VENDOR
Someone smashed his head in with a hammer. Whoever did it was a hero, if you ask me! Can you imagine? A hero, but someone else paid for it! Hard times. Those poor people are still hanging!

ANIELKA
I can show you!

Socha quickly gathers the groceries and leaves. Anielka runs after him.

Socha, carrying the groceries, rounds the corner.

Ten corpses hang from crude, makeshift gallows, including an old woman and a teenage boy. Militiamen and passersby mingle, under the watchful gaze of a couple of German SS officers.

Pinned to the victims' bodies are identical signs with a picture of the teenage German soldier Socha and Mundek killed in German, Ukrainian and Polish: "IN RETALIATION! FOR THE BRUTAL MURDER OF KURT GOLTZ ON 5 JANUARY 1944, BRAVE MARTYR AND SOLDIER."

Socha walks past, trying to avoid looking at the bodies. But then he glances up. One of the bodies is Szczepek...hanging, his head lopsided, neck broken.

Socha stands petrified until he notices a Ukrainian soldier glaring at him. He walks away quickly.
INT. SOCHA’S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

Carrying the package, Socha CLIMBS the stairs. The package TEARS and its contents TUMBLE down the steps. Socha sinks to the step.

Figures come into view, Wanda and Stefcia climbing up. Stefcia immediately kneels to pick up the fallen groceries.

WANDA
Stefcia!

Stefcia ignores her mother, continues helping. Wanda glares accusingly at Socha.

SOCHA
They...hung...Szczepek!

Wanda holds on to the railing to keep from falling.

WANDA
Stefcia...upstairs...now!

Stefcia knows her mother means business and TROTS upstairs.

WANDA (cont’d)
I hope you’re satisfied!

SOCHA
No! No, Szczepek hasn’t helped for months! It was random! For something completely different... he was innocent!

Wanda leaves abruptly.

SOCHA (cont’d)
Wanda!

But all we hear is the CLACK of her shoes going upstairs.

INT. CHAMBER 3 - DAY

Mundek and Klara peel potatoes, which they PLOP into a pot.

KLARA
I keep dreaming I’m eating my mother’s plum cake.

MUNDEK
I don’t dream about food.
KLARA
(flirty)
Oh, then what do you dream of?

Mundek laughs bashfully. Klara blushes. They both know what he dreams of. Klara turns serious and quiet.

MUNDEK
What?
(lowered voice)
Mania?

Her eyes filling up, she nods.

KLARA
Mania always picked out all the plums and ate them. I told on her to Mama, and I was mad she always got off so lightly. I was supposed to set the example. Mundek...I sometimes wonder if I can go on.

MUNDEK
Klara...

Mundek grabs her hand and kisses it tenderly.

MUNDEK (cont’d)
Klara...you will go on...

KLARA
(suddenly angry)
Don’t be so sure!

MUNDEK
If you don’t live, I won’t live.
And I have every intention of living a long and happy life.

Klara smiles through the tears. She takes his hands, still clasping hers, and kisses them.

Distant oncoming FOOT STEPS.

Klara quickly COVERS the pot. Others turn off lamps. Mundek and Chiger push the women and children into a corner.

The beam of a steady flashlight approaches. Mundek grabs the shovel.

Sawicki takes a few cautious steps into the chamber and Mundek SMASHES his head with it, sending him SPRAWLING.
Bloodied, Sawicki staggers up and runs, with Mundek and Chiger in pursuit.

SAWICKI
HELP!!

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS
Socha walks toward the open manhole in his work clothes.

SAWICKI (O.S.)
JEWS! I FOUND JEWS!!

Socha hides behind a building, as Sawicki lurches out.

INT. SEWER - SAME TIME

The group is in FULL FLIGHT through the labyrinth, lugging whatever belongings they can from the chamber.

Krystyna is on Chiger’s back and Paulina carries Pavel, as they SLOSH and LURCH through a tall elliptical tunnel, the trough of which is less than 4 inches wide.

Paulina’s wooden clog gets wedged in the trough. Trying to twist her foot free, she sobs in pain and panic. Chiger turns back, and attempts to dislodge the shoe.

Lantern ahead, as everyone freezes. It is Socha. He runs over to Paulina, kneels and extracts her foot from the shoe.

Socha scoops Paulina onto his back and they’re off again. Chiger liberates the shoe itself.

INT. SEWER - MOMENTS LATER

They approach a sixteen-inch wide tunnel. Socha indicates to leave their belongings there.

SOCHA
Come on! Head and shoulders first.
The rest will follow.

The children wiggle through first, followed by Paulina. Chaja hesitates. She squeezes in, but gets wedged at the waist. She becomes frantic.

SOCHA (cont’d)
Crawl! Just crawl, damn it!

Mundek grabs her by the leg and pushes her through.
KLARA
Be careful - !

INT. CHAMBER 4 - MOMENTS LATER

They reach an L-shaped chamber with a dry floor. Everyone is panting, but exhilarated. The soft SOUND of an organ and hymn singing from above. They all look up.

PAULINA
It’s a real palace.

SOCHA
We are right beneath Our Lady of the Snow.
(crosses himself)

BERESTYCKI
You can hear everything.

SOCHA
Which is why you should speak quietly. No yelling.

PAULINA
(to Chaja)
You’ve been stealing extra food.
(to her reaction)
You got stuck - in the pipe.

CHAJA
My coat’s heavy, can’t you see?

Paulina scrutinizes Chaja, who tries to ignore her.

SOCHA
We must return for your belongings.

INT. SEWER - LATER

In a narrow pipe, Chiger, Berestycki, and Paulina. Socha and Mundek pass them the belongings taken from the old chamber.

Mundek leans towards Socha. He waits a moment until the others have gone ahead.

MUNDEK
I was trying to get into Janowska.
(to Socha’s puzzled look)
When we - I killed that soldier. I was trying to get into Janowska.
SOCHA
Have you gone completely mad, Korsarz?

MUNDEK
Probably. But I’m going to try again, Socha. I need your help.

SOCHA
(stops, seething)
You know what happened when that boy was killed? Fifty innocent Poles, executed! As a lesson!
(emotional)
Including Szczepek. They hung him!

MUNDEK
Our Szczepek?

SOCHA
He leaves an unborn child.
(to Mundek’s stunned reaction)
Now don’t bring Janowska up. Ever again.

INT. CHAMBER 3 - DAY

Sawicki, head now bandaged, stands with Bortnik in the old chamber, now completely empty.

SAWICKI
I’m telling you, there were pots, pans. Someone removed them.

Bortnik looks at Sawicki skeptically.

SAWICKI (cont’d)
Well, how do you think I got this? From a ghost?

INT. SOCHA’S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Carrying packages, Socha and Stefcia climb the stairs to the apartment entrance. Wanda waits there, blocking the doorway.

Out of breath, Socha stops. Beads of sweat glisten on him. And then he COLLAPSES. Wanda rushes to him.

INT. SOCHA’S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Socha lies on the bed, as Wanda lifts his feet up.
SOCHA
I’m all right...the groceries...

WANDA
When are you going to stop this
stupidity?

SOCHA
I’m just a little tired...Stefcia,
the groceries...

WANDA
She’s putting them away. You
stubborn fool, you’ll never stop.
If the Gestapo don’t hang you,
you’ll die of exhaustion!
(then)
What am I going to do with you?

Wanda looks at Socha with love mixed with exasperation.

WANDA (cont’d)
I’m tired of fighting with you.
(then)
If it will help...I can do half the
stores.

A small smile from Socha.

WANDA (cont’d)
Remember, Stefcia. Never marry a
mule, or you’ll end up braying like
one.

Stefcia giggles. Wanda smiles wanly. A beat. Socha looks at
her. Wanda suddenly embraces him.

SOCHA
(calls out)
Stefcia...go outside and play!

INT. CHAMBER 4 - CONTINUOUS

The hanging carbide lamp casts a soft glow over the group,
sleeping, huddled.

Paulina sleeps with a child on each side. On her belly rests
a children’s book open to an illustration of HANSEL & GRETEL.

Soft crying awakens Mundek. He lifts himself to see Klara
comforting a tearful Chaja. Mundek rises and approaches them.
CONTINUED:

KLARA
Go back to sleep. It’s all right.

Suspicous, Mundek lingers. Finally, he turns to leave.

CHAJA
(whisper)
Mundek! I’m having a baby.

Mundek is stunned, Klara irked.

CHAJA (cont’d)
I wanted him to know, Klara. He understands.

KLARA
Socha won’t! He mustn’t find out!

MUNDEK
A baby is hard to ignore, Klara!

KLARA
We’ll deal with him once it’s born.

MUNDEK
And when will that be?

KLARA
She doesn’t know...

MUNDEK
It’s Yanek’s?

KLARA
It’s ours!

Chaja and Mundek look at her.

KLARA (cont’d)
It’s ours, you understand? All of ours...

MUNDEK
Poor kid! As if one set of parents isn’t enough.

Chaja and Mundek chuckle. Klara doesn’t.

INT. SEWER – DAY

Socha walks along a ledge, his carbide lamp aloft, with Mundek behind him, also dressed in a sewer worker’s outfit.
MUNDEK
I don't know how you work in this. My feet feel twice as big.

SOCHA
Well, you know what they say about men with big feet...

Both men laugh. Something catches Socha’s eye. He shines his lamp, signals Mundek. Entangled on the river steps are the bullet-ridden, bloated bodies of Yanek, Frankiel and Landsberg.

SOCHA (cont’d)
Still sure you want to get into Janowska?

MUNDEK
Mania may still be alive. In any case, Klara has to know.

Socha affectionately grabs Mundek by the scruff of his neck.

SOCHA
And I always thought that Yids were cowards!

113 EXT. STREET - LATER
Socha and Mundek emerge from a manhole into the street.

114 EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS
Socha and Mundek walk past passersby who pay no attention. Mundek is exhilarated by this brief taste of freedom. A few German soldiers smoke cigarettes outside a café, a couple of whom look straight at them.

115 EXT. FACTORY - LATER
KOVALEV, the caretaker, opens the door to Socha and Mundek. They enter as he checks that no one has followed them.

116 INT. FACTORY - CONTINUOUS
A large warehouse. Half-made chairs, stools, tables made of cheap wood silently wait to be finished. Prisoners work in the background.
KOVALEV
(to Mundek)
So you’re the genius who wants to get into Janowska.

Mundek smiles slightly.

KOVALEV (cont’d)
(referring to the prisoners)
They return to the camp in the evening. One of them will change places with you for two days. He’s looking for his wife in the ghetto. I told him it’s no use, but...

SOCHA
Won’t the guards know he’s missing?

KOVALEV
They don’t give a shit as long as there are fifty in each brigade.
(to Mundek)
You’d better have a good story, though, just in case.

MUNDEK
What if he doesn’t return?

KOVALEV
Oh, he will. His son’s in the camp.

Socha hands Kovalev money, but he refuses.

KOVALEV (cont’d)
God will owe me.

Impressed, Socha puts his money away. He takes Mundek aside.

SOCHA
So...tomorrow.

MUNDEK
Remember, if anyone asks...

SOCHA
You’re out ‘shopping’.

The two men look at each other with emotion.

MUNDEK
You better go.
INT. FACTORY - LATER

HAMMERING. SAWING. Behind a pile of wood waiting to be transformed, Mundek puts on the prisoner’s uniform.

EXT. JANOWSKA ROAD - EVENING

Following tram tracks, the workers, with Mundek in his new uniform among them, crawl on hands and knees past a high concrete wall. Dogs BARK. Beside Mundek is a sickly prisoner who wheezes as he crawls.

The tracks end at the entrance of: THE CAMP. Two massive rectangular columns encompass an imposing gate.

Atop each column, the German eagle and swastika. One column reads “ZWANGSARBEITS-LAGER DER SS”.

EXT. JANOWSKA CAMP - MOMENTS LATER

A sign reads: “ARBEIT MACHT FREI”.

The inmates stand in separate U-shaped groups of five, surrounded by SS men and Ukrainian police, accompanied by large dogs. An orchestra of sixty of them PLAYS a waltz.

Shivering, Mundek stands beside the sickly prisoner. He wears the worker’s top (CIVILIAN CLOTHES). On his breast is a yellow triangle with a red rectangle beneath showing the number 114.

A black car GLIDES IN and out steps Untersturmführer WILHAUS, tall, mid-thirties.

GUARD

KAPPEN AB!

The inmates immediately remove their caps, but Mundek does not have one. An SS MAN does a silent head count. As he approaches, Mundek tries to avoid his gaze. The man stops.

SS MAN

(in German)

Where’s your cap?

MUNDEK

(in German)

Someone stole it, sir.
CONTINUED:

SS MAN
(in German)
You’re as good as dead without your cap, vermin!

The SS man points his revolver at Mundek. A SHOT, as Mundek flinches. It is Wilhaus’s revolver. Wilhaus strides over, a smile pasted on his face.

WILHAUS
(in German to SS man)
This Jew is healthy, can’t you see? If you must use a bullet...

Wilhaus grabs the sickly prisoner’s cap, BLASTS his head.

WILHAUS (cont’d)
(in German to SS man)
...use it wisely.

Smile intact, Wilhaus hands the blood-spattered cap to Mundek.

INT. CHAMBER 4 - SAME TIME

Socha enters to a beehive of activity. Chiger SCRUBS his hands and arms in a bowl of steaming water.

Another bowl BUBBLES on the stove. Berestycki inserts a pair of old scissors into it.

Krystyna and Pavel carefully lay out ratty towels.

Paulina SQUEEZES water out of a cloth, making a compress.

Chaja is sweating, in labor. Klara holds her hand.

Socha is aghast. Chaja squeezes Klara’s hand, trying to suppress a scream. Paulina dabs her sweat and tears.

CHAJA
I’m sorry, Socha! I’m sorry!

SOCHA
Do you realize the danger? Do you?! The baby’s cries will bring down half the city!

Another contraction. Chaja lets out a yelp. Paulina peeks under Chaja’s cover.

PAULINA
The head! I see the baby’s head!
Klara lifts Chaja into position for the final push.

**KLARA**
Here, bite my shoulder, it’ll be easier!

Chaja pushes. A robust CRY as Klara takes the baby.

**PAULINA**
A boy! We have a boy! Even Yanek, the father, didn’t know. But I could tell! I wonder what he’ll say.

**SOCHA**
He’ll say nothing! He’s dead!

Chaja collapses into wails and sobs. Everyone is shocked, but Socha is too enraged to notice. Chaja’s tears fall on the baby, as Chiger cuts the umbilical chord. Klara hastily wraps him up.

**PAULINA**
Careful of his head! Careful!

Krystyna pushes through the adults, Pavel close behind.

**KRYSTYNA**
Let me see! Let me see!

**PAVEL**
Is he real?

Klara hands the bundle to Chaja. She then turns to Socha with contempt:

**KLARA**
Get out! Now! You’ve upset her enough!

Choral SINGING can be heard from above, as the church service begins. Socha simply stalks out.

**EXT. FACTORY - NIGHT**

Kovalev speaks to Socha through a cracked open door.

**KOVALEV**
He still hasn’t returned.

**SOCHA**
Don’t worry, he won’t talk.
All are asleep. Chaja, Paulina and Klara are together. The baby clutches Paulina’s finger as she gives him drops of water and hums a lullaby. Klara is still awestruck.

KLARA
(in Yiddish)
I wish we could find a mohel, to do it right.

CHAJA
(in Yiddish)
He’s not being circumcised.

KLARA
Chaja!

PAULINA
But he must be...!

CHAJA
I said no! Now give him to me! He’s not yours!

Klara is hurt. Paulina reluctantly hands over the baby.

CHAJA (cont’d)
Dim the lamp, please, we need to sleep.

Paulina dims the lamp.

Wanda and Socha lie in bed, whispering. Stefcia is asleep.

WANDA
A baby?! But how - ?

SOCHA
Shh! She always wore bulky clothes. You couldn’t tell.

Silence as Wanda processes. Then she looks at Socha. From his expression, she knows what’s coming.

WANDA
Oh, no! No! I’m not taking in any baby!
Socha continues looking at her in silence. Then:

    WANDA (cont’d)
    You say it’s a boy?

    SOCHA
    A perfect one.

    WANDA
    Circumcised?

    SOCHA
    They’re not stupid!

A long beat as Wanda thinks.

    WANDA
    We could say he’s my brother’s.
    We’re taking care of his son while
    his wife is in the hospital.

A growing smile from Wanda. Socha tries to hide his joy.

INT. JANOWSKA CAMP KITCHEN - DAY

Mundek queues at the entrance, holding a tin bowl. Outside, a
skeletal cadaver hangs upside down, head immersed in a tank
of water. The BLUE DANUBE WALTZ, on a scratchy phonograph,
PLAYS over the loudspeaker.

As he moves down the line, Mundek addresses no one in
particular, whispering:

    MUNDEK
    Do you know Mania Keller? Does
    anyone know a Mania Keller?

Various inmates either SHUSH him or look at him vacantly.

A ladle SLOPS dirty steaming water into Mundek’s bowl and a
thin piece of dark bread is given.

    VOICE (O.S.)
    I know a Mania Keller...

INT. CHAMBER 4 - DAY

Socha enters, excited. The men are dazed, Paulina cradles her
children, crying. Klara, dry-eyed, stares into space. Chaja
faces away in bed.

    CHIGER
    The baby’s dead.
CONTINUED:

Socha stops, speechless.

CHIGER (cont’d)
She killed him...Chaja, she
smothered him. It’s for the best.

KLARA
For the best?! FOR THE BEST?!
(to Socha)
You did this! You killed him!

SOCHA
What? No! I came to say...I found
someone...I – I – my wife agreed...
we’d take care of him!

Socha looks at Chaja, inert, facing the wall. He searches the
 group. They avoid his agonized look.

PAULINA
She wants us to throw the body into
the river.

SOCHA
No! No, you can’t! A burial, he –
he must have a proper burial.

INT. CHAMBER 4 – LATER

Tearful, Paulina finishes wrapping the baby’s body. Klara
touches Chaja’s shoulder to get her up. She remains inert,
facing the wall, her face a frozen mask.

INT. SEWER – MOMENTS LATER

Through the labyrinth, Chiger carries the bundle, as in a
hammock, trailed by Socha, Klara and Berestycki.

INT. SEWER – MOMENTS LATER

SHUFFLING backward through a narrow pipe on his elbows,
Chiger carries the ‘hammock’ in his teeth.

INT. CHAMBER 5 – CONTINUOUS

Wearing his kepa, Berestycki stands by a hole dug in the
wall. Chiger places the body in it. Stony silence.

BERESTYCKI
"Yeetgadal..."
(stops)
"Yeetgadal v' yeetkadash..."
CONTINUED:

Berestycki stops, tears off his kepa. Muffled sobs from the others. Only Klara is dry-eyed. She looks at Socha, anguished.

INT. SEWER - LATER

The group is ahead. Socha, deep in thought, and Klara trail.

KLARA
Maybe it really is for the best.
I’m sorry I - it’s just that...

Silence, as Klara struggles, afraid to say it.

KLARA (cont’d)
Mundek’s never been away this long.

SOCHA
He’s in Janowska.

Klara stops, stunned, trying to process.

SOCHA (cont’d)
He went looking for Mania.

Klara’s sobs echo in the silent vault. Socha reaches out a comforting hand, but lets it drop.

EXT. JANOWSKA CAMP - EVENING

Mundek talks across a double barbed wire fence to Mania. She is hollow-eyed with a shaved head.

MANIA
Klara shouldn’t feel guilty. I couldn’t have lived in that sewer.

MUNDEK
And you can here?! Mania, I got into this hell, I can get you out!

Mania shakes her head, turning to leave.

MUNDEK (cont’d)
Mania, please!

MANIA
Tell my sister I love her.

A mad-looking bald woman barrels toward them, screaming.
131 CONTINUED:

SARA
Where’s the bastard?! Where’s my husband!?

Mundek is confused, but then recognizes Sara Grossman. She grabs him through the wire.

SARA (cont’d)
How could he leave me like this?!
Where is Yanek? For the love of God, where is he?

Mundek tries to free himself.

MUNDEK
(in German)
Mrs. Grossman, your husband’s dead!

SARA
LIAR! Where is he, where is Yanek, is he with that whore?!

WOMAN (O.S.)
Guard coming!

Mania tries to pull Sara back, but she is strong, her arms now cut and bleeding from the barbed wire.

MUNDEK
Mrs. Grossman, Yanek is dead!

MANIA
(to Mundek)
Go, just go, run!

SARA
I want him to get me! It’s hell in here! Rachela’s dead! My baby!
Dead! Where is he?!

Mundek finally extricates himself and quickly walks away.

Sara continues screaming and clawing at the barbed wire, as Mania tries to pull her away. A single SHOT, and Sara’s screaming stops. Mundek doesn’t look back or break his pace.

132 EXT. FACTORY - NIGHT

Kovalev opens the door to Socha, does his usual check.

133 INT. FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

Socha enters. Mundek steps out, wearing his OLD TOP.
SOCHA
(holding in his emotion)
Come on, there isn’t much time.

Kovalev hustles them to the door. He peeks out, then quickly SHUTS the door. A dog’s YAPPING.

KOVALEV
The foreman!

Kovalev hustles Socha and Mundek off.

The door latch OPENS and in steps NOWAK, the foreman, holding a Yorkshire terrier, GROWLING, straining to leap out.

NOWAK
Kovalev?
(no answer)
KOVALEV!
(mutters)
Where is that fucking Ukrainian?

He puts the terrier down as Kovalev enters.

NOWAK (cont’d)
Everything all right?

YAPPING, the terrier SCURRIES to a cupboard. Nowak exchanges a look with Kovalev and follows the dog to the cupboard.

INT. CUPBOARD - CONTINUOUS

Socha and Mundek stand in the darkness, sweating.

KOVALEV (O.S.)
Ah, I see he’s found them!

Socha and Mundek stay frozen. The cupboard door opens and in pops Kovalev’s hand. He grabs a package on a shelf by Socha’s head, then closes the door.

INT. FACTORY - CONTINUOUS

Kovalev starts to undo the package.

KOVALEV
My lard sandwiches. Want some?

NOWAK
Thanks, we’ve eaten.

Nowak scoops the terrier who is still excited.
CONTINUED:

NOWAK (cont’d)
He thinks he’s a German shepherd.
See you tomorrow.

INT. SEWER – LATER

As soon as they descend the ladder:

MUNDEK
Any news from ‘the palace’?

Socha smiles at Mundek’s vulnerability in asking the question.

SOCHA
Chaja had a baby...

MUNDEK
Oh, thank God! Boy or girl?

Socha doesn’t answer, torn. Mundek looks at him, questioning.

SOCHA
A beautiful boy. He was...

Mundek stops short. He understands, silently heartbroken.

MUNDEK
Was?
(searches Socha’s face)
I know my way from here.

Socha nods. They part ways.

INT. SEWER – SAME TIME

Klara, walking alone, SNIFFS the air. She sees a spout SHOWERING soapy water. She reaches out and holds the soapy water to her nose, enjoying the fragrance.

Checking around, she starts to undress.

INT. SEWER – MOMENTS LATER

As he rounds a corner of the labyrinth, Mundek sees Klara, naked under the spout, at the same time she sees him. She covers herself with her hands. Mundek quickly looks away.

MUNDEK
I – I’m sorry...

KLARA
Mundek!
Klara goes up to him and touches his face. Mundek looks at her, as tears stream down his face.

MUNDEK
Mania wouldn’t come, Klara! She wouldn’t come...I tried! I’m sorry...I - I -

Klara kisses Mundek like a child. Now both are crying.

KLARA
It’s all right! It’s all right! Oh, Mundek, it’s all right!

Klara leads Mundek under the soapy spout, washing away his guilt and pain. With her help, he TEARS OFF his clothes.

They make love slowly, tenderly, desperately trying to heal each other’s wounds.

EXT. RIVER - DAY
Snow and ice begin to melt as spring arrives.

INT. CHAMBER 4 - DAY
Socha excitedly opens a small bundle. Matzoh. Everyone is astonished.

SOCHA
Soon it’s Passover, yes?
(then)
I found them in a Jewish house.
They’re old but you can still eat them. And look...

Socha brings out a new Hebrew prayer book. Berestycki takes the book and gently strokes it, overwhelmed.

Very proud of himself, Socha notices Krystyna, by herself.

SOCHA (cont’d)
Krysia! Don’t you want to see?
Come!

Krystyna doesn’t budge.

PAULINA
She doesn’t eat, she doesn’t talk.
She tore up all her drawings. I don’t know what to do.
Continued:

SOCHA
(going to Krystyna)
What’s the matter, Krysia?

Krystyna’s blank stare continues. Socha looks at the anxious group. He lifts Krystyna up.

EXT. STREET NEAR MANHOLE - MOMENTS LATER

With Krystyna on his back and perched on the ladder, Socha opens a manhole cover. He lifts her to the shaft of light.

She squints out to a perfect early spring day. A pigeon hops nearby. A barking dog chases it away.

SOCHA
Breathe deeply.

She does so.

SOCHA (cont’d)
Again, come on.

Another deep breath. Music wafts in from a café.

INT. SEWER - MOMENTS LATER

Socha lowers Krystyna and still holding her, hops off the ladder and dances to the music. She smiles, then giggles.

He looks over to see Paulina, weeping, beside Chiger. Pavel is beside them.

PAULINA
Socha...we can’t pay you anymore.

CHIGER
Friday’s payment was the last. We have nothing left. Nothing.

Socha is silent. He lowers Krystyna, and together they head back to the chamber.

Pavel runs up to him.

PAVEL
Can I have a piggyback, Socha?

Socha lifts him up. The boy giggles with delight.

PAVEL (cont’d)
Come on, Socha, come on!
Paulina immediately takes Pavel.

**PAULINA**
Another time, Pavel.

Socha takes Chiger aside and walks him to the manhole.
The two men are out of sight of the others.

**SOCHA**
Do the others know you have no money?

**CHIGER**
I didn’t want to panic them.

Socha presses some money bills into Chiger’s hand.

**SOCHA**
Good. This is Friday’s payment... make sure you pay me in front of the others. I don’t want them to think that I’m a sucker who works for nothing.

Chiger nods, speechless.

143 **INT. SOCHA’S APARTMENT/STAIRCASE - NIGHT**

Socha and Wanda are wakened by loud KNOCKING. Socha groggily checks the clock, then Stefcia to see her sleeping.

Socha OPENS the door to Bortnik and MAX, a fellow officer, both loudly drunk.

**BORTNIK**
Socha - !

Socha steps into the hallway, leaving the door ajar.

**SOCHA**
Quiet, I have a kid sleeping! D’you know what time it is?

**MAX**
Come on, my good man, buy us a Schnapps.

**SOCHA**
I’m broke and you’re already drunk.

Wanda lies in bed, now listening with growing concern.
BORTNIK (O.S.)
You never come out with me anymore!

MAX (O.S.)
The night is young! Come on!

BACK TO SCENE:

SOCHA
I told you -

MAX
(to Bortnik in Ukrainian)
You said this Polack was a barrel of fun!

BORTNIK
(to Socha in Polish)
Are you making me a liar to my friend here? Let us in!

Socha reluctantly lets them in. Now awake, Stefcia sits in bed looking at the goings on.

With a shawl on her shoulders, Wanda lays vodka glasses and lard on the table.

Silence, as Bortnik and Max sit stiffly on the CREAKY chairs. Socha reaches for a box on the floor and takes out some bread, onions and two oranges.

STEFCIA
But Papa, they’re for the Jews!

Stefcia immediately realizes her mistake. Bortnik and Max sober up. Wanda goes pale. Socha tries to collect himself.

BORTNIK
(goes to Stefcia on bed)
You’re such a pretty little girl. What Jews are you talking about?

SOCHA
Oh, she’s...

BORTNIK
Shh...let her talk.

Stefcia looks at her father in the tense silence. She then hops off the bed and runs, barefoot, to the corner. She takes out the two dolls that Szczepek gave her, from an old pram.
These are the Jews! And they’re hungry!

But why Jews, my little sweet?

Uncle Szczepek brought them from the ghetto where all the Jews live. So these are little Jewish girls.

But one of them is blond.

Jews can be blond!

Bortnik laughs, breaking the tension.

She’s a clever one!

She’s going to have her First Communion. And we want you to come, eh, Poldek?

Oh, we insisting.

Socha POURS vodka, and pushes the food toward the men.

I think Stefcia’s Jews won’t mind sharing these with you. Please... make yourselves at home.

Everybody laughs as the two men indulge. Stefcia rocks the dolls in her arms. Wanda turns her back to them and her smile disappears, replaced by tension.

Socha CLOSES the door on the men, as Wanda CLEARs the plates. He turns around, furious. He REMOVES his belt and moves toward Stefcia, who is frozen with fear.

Didn’t I tell you...

Wanda DROPS the plates and steps in front of Stefcia.
WANDA
Don’t you dare!

Socha tries to get around her, but Wanda won’t let him.

WANDA (cont’d)
This is all your fault! You brought this danger on us, not her!

Socha tries again. Stefcia cries, cowering.

SOCHA
But she must learn...

WANDA
And when will you learn? It wasn’t enough they hung Szczepek?

Wanda turns around and clutches her daughter, protectively. Socha THROWS his belt on the floor, angry and humiliated.

INT. CHAMBER 4 - NIGHT

Candles bathe the group as they celebrate Passover. The prayers are led by Berestycki, who reads from the Haggadah.

The pieces of matzoh are carefully divided and distributed.

Chaja stares into space. Mundek is lost in thought. Klara squeezes his hand under the table. Mundek gives her a little smile.

From above, CHORAL SINGING starts to intermingle with Berestycki’s prayers.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The CHORAL SINGING continues but on another day. Socha and Wanda sit in church, in their Sunday best.

Stefcia stands in a group of girls in white gowns and flower chains as she takes her First Communion. Her face glows with delight.

Wanda squeezes Socha’s hand. He has tears in his eyes.

The SOUND of thunder. Darkness, lightning, heavy rain PELTS the tin church roof. Socha looks up anxiously.
EXT. CHURCH VESTIBULE - LATER

People are cramped in the church vestibule. Through an open gate, a heavy rainstorm can be seen. A few passers-by caught by rain run to share shelter with the faithful.

The children laugh, push each other. Socha looks at the puddles, then up and around. Stefcia clings to her girlfriend. Bornik lurks behind them.

Socha leans toward Wanda and whispers something.

WANDA
Are you mad?

SOCHA
(whispers)
Shhh...I have to move them to the upper chamber...

WANDA
(loud whisper, checking around)
But...it's Stefcia's First Communion!

SOCHA
It won't take long...just to check.

WANDA
Poldek!

Socha turns and runs out into the rain.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Socha runs in the POURING rain. Wanda follows him.

WANDA
Poldek!

Socha turns around impatiently, as Wanda catches up.

WANDA (cont’d)
If you leave, you’ll never see me or Stefcia again!

SOCHA
Wanda, please! It won’t be long!

WANDA
I’ve had enough, do you hear me?
(then)
(MORE)
CONTINUED:

WANDA (cont'd)
I’m your wife, damn it! You have a
daughter, remember?! But you don’t
care what happens to us as long as
you have your bloody Jews!

SOCHA
(checks around)
Quiet! Someone will hear you!
(quiet, softer)
Wanda…they’ll drown if...

Wanda’s eyes fill with tears. She turns around and dashes back to the church.

WANDA
(mumbling)
Murderers! Child killers!

She almost bumps into Bortnik, who has witnessed the argument.

BORTNIK
Is everything all right, Mrs.
Socha?

Distraught, Wanda doesn’t stop. Bortnik thinks for a moment, then starts walking quickly after Socha.

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EXT. STREET - LATER

Still in his soaked Sunday clothes, Socha strides purposefully in the rain. He rounds a corner to see German privates DIGGING UP the cobblestones.

Surrounding them are military buildings. A Gestapo OFFICER oversees everything. A private plants something into a manhole.

A few militiamen stand guard, soaked and unhappy. One of them is Max, Bortnik’s fellow officer. Socha runs over to him.

MAX
Ah…Socha!

SOCHA
What are they doing?

MAX
They’re laying mines. A surprise gift for the Soviet army.

Bortnik has caught up, panting and wet.
BORTNIK
Socha, what...?

Socha is momentarily surprised to see Bortnik, but is too upset. The Gestapo officer approaches, angry.

SOCHA
Do you realize what’s right below here? Gas pipes! If that drill hits one, everything will blow up! Immediately!

Bortnik glances at the officer, glowering, then back at Socha.

BORTNIK
They’re leaving. Do you think they give a shit?

OFFICER
(in German)
What’s going on?

BORTNIK
(in German)
Oh, nothing, sir...

SOCHA
(to Officer)
Gas! Gas!

Socha imitates the digging, then makes an exploding gesture. The officer looks quizzically at Bortnik.

BORTNIK
(in German)
Gas pipes beneath, sir. He’s a sewer inspector.

The officer looks at Socha’s intense face.

OFFICER
(in German, to Bortnik)
All right, go down with him. If he doesn’t show you pipes exactly below us, shoot him immediately!
(to the others)
Stop digging, until further notice.
INT. SHAFT/OVAL FEED TUNNEL - MOMENTS LATER

The swollen Peltew is rough, water SLOSHING over the ledge. Agitated and clutching the carbide lamp, Socha tries to hurry. Bortnik is behind, pistol drawn.

BORTNIK
For both our sakes, I hope you’re telling the truth about the pipes.

SOCHA
I thought the Germans were your friends.

BORTNIK
We did, too. They’re just our enemies’ enemies.

EXT. STREET - SAME TIME

Rain now POURS down hard, overflowing gutters, making little rivers in the street.

INT. SEWER - SAME TIME

From an incoming pipe, water GUSHES hard onto the basin’s floor, then follows the shallow depression across to the exit pipe on the other side.

INT. CHAMBER 4 - SAME TIME

Mundek and Chiger, stripped to the waist, have their backs to the pipes, vainly trying to stop the RUSHING water.

INT. SEWER/MAIN TUNNEL - SAME TIME

The Peltew is rapidly overflowing onto the ledge.

BORTNIK
Why did you leave the church?

SOCHA
I was stupid. I left my tools down here.

Socha shines his light on pipes.

SOCHA (cont’d)
Satisfied?
INT. CHAMBER 4 - SAME TIME

The group struggles to stay afloat as the surging water rises half way up the wall. The stove, pots and schoolbooks flow out like toys.

INT. SEWER - SAME TIME

The river overflow is now calf-deep. Socha is ahead, signalling Bortnik to hurry up.

INT. CHAMBER 4 - SAME TIME

The water rises. Chiger clutches Krystyna.

KRYSTYNA
(screaming)
Make it stop! Papa, make it stop!!

CHIGER
I can‘t, Krysia! Oh, God...!

Chiger looks around desperately, as though searching for God.

BERESTYCKI
(mumbling)
Sh‘ma Yisroel...adonai eloheinu...
adonai ehad!

The group looks at each other, and then, one by one:

ALL
Sh‘ma Yisroel, adonai eloheinu,
adonai ehad!

INT. SEWER - SAME TIME

Bortnik has caught up to Socha.

BORTNIK
These tools...they must be worth a lot. You left your daughter’s First Communion...and your wife crying.

Socha’s face suddenly is concerned, but he says nothing.

BORTNIK (cont’d)
Where are your tools? Or maybe you were just trying to save the rats?

The schoolbooks flow past. Followed by the stove, pots, pans, Pavel’s toy truck. Bortnik stops, raises his gun.
BORTNIK (cont’d)
You are trying to save rats.

SOCHA
I don’t know what you’re talking about.

BORTNIK
It was right in front of me all along! You’re hiding Yids!

SOCHA
You’re mad.

BORTNIK
The only one from Lonski I trusted. You betrayed me! You betrayed us all!

Bortnik COCKS his gun.

SOCHA
Shoot me and you’ll never find your way back.

BORTNIK
Tell me the truth! At least tell me the truth!

No answer. Socha walks away, scared shitless. His flashlight is turned off, making it hard to see him.

BORTNIK (cont’d)
SOCHA!

Socha keeps walking.

BORTNIK (cont’d)
Socha, come back!

Bortnik SHOOTS, missing him. Socha disappears down a tunnel.

INT. TUNNEL – CONTINUOUS
Socha runs through the tunnel, knee-deep in water.

BORTNIK (O.S.)
SOCHA! Goddamn you!

INT. CHAMBER 4 – SAME TIME
Paulina barely holds up Pavel.
PAULINA
Breathe slowly, don’t gulp!
Chaja bobs on the water, resigned.

INT. SEWER - SAME TIME
The water is waist deep. Socha prays under his breath.

SOCHA
Pater noster, qui es in caelis,
sanctificetur...

BORTNIK (O.S.)
(fainter)
SOCHA!

INT. CHAMBER 4 - SAME TIME
The disjointed prayer is drowned by the RUSHING water.

ALL
Sh’ma Yisroel, adonai eloheinu,
adonai ehad!

EXT. STREET - SAME TIME
The flood EXPLODES a manhole cover onto the street, followed by an ERUPTION of water.

INT. SEWER - CONTINUOUS
Desperate, terrified, Bortnik SLIPS. His lantern FALLS.

INT. CHAMBER 4 - SAME TIME
Klara clings to Mundek. He tries to push her higher.

MUNDEK
Look up, Klara, look up!
Klara, teeth CHATTERING, starts to lose consciousness.

MUNDEK (cont’d)
Don’t give up, not now! KLARA!

KLARA
I only wish we’d fucked more!
Mundek fiercely kisses her, like it’s the last time. The water continues to rise.
Socha rounds a corner. A ROAR, as water from a tunnel TORPEDOES him into the Peltew, rapidly carrying him away.

Pitch black. We only hear Socha’s moans, followed by his hand SCRAPING, looking. It finally finds a flashlight, which he turns on. We see him: his face cut up, a black eye, his clothes soaked.

He looks at the ledge floor, a few drowned rats beside him.

Socha painfully gets to his feet and almost SLIPS on the ledge. He lurches along the ledge, dazed.

He sees Bortnik, dead, his body stuck on the outlet grating. We can see the river and trees swinging in the wind through the hole.

He recoils and continues lurching ahead like a man possessed.

At the entrance, a pile of the Jews’ belongings, disfigured by the flood waters and caked in mud.

Exhausted, battered. Socha stops. He can’t enter the chamber.

And then, muffled weeping. From a child.

Socha enters to see: shivering, soaked, covered in silt...

The group, all ALIVE.

Socha stands, not daring to believe his eyes.

BERESTYCKI
A miracle...The water just...went away.

Socha rushes to Krystyna and Pavel and lifts them up.

PAVEL
Aren’t you glad to see us, Socha?

Socha can only nod. Pavel pats his back. Socha looks at the group, disbelieving. He suddenly starts to laugh.
SOCHA
You all look like shit!

MUNDEK
So do you!

They all start to laugh, none of them believing they’re alive. Then Socha collects himself.

SOCHA
I’ll get you some dry clothes.

INT. SOCHA’S APARTMENT - LATER

As he enters the apartment. Empty.

He checks the closet. Empty except for his clothes.

Socha gathers some clothes for the group which he stuffs into his bag. He stops, looks around the empty apartment.

He realizes that he has lost everything. Overwhelmed, he sinks to the floor.

SAME SCENE - DAWN

Exhausted and dirty, Socha remains asleep on the floor.

The door UNLOCKS. Socha opens his eyes. Wanda steps in, as if she forgot something. Surprised, she looks at her husband lying on the floor. They look at each other. For a long time.

Wanda squats down beside him.

SOCHA
(referring to sack)
I - I must take them these clothes.
They...

WANDA
Shhh...don’t speak...

INT. CHAMBER - LATER

Wanda follows Socha through the entrance, both clutching sacks of clothes. It’s the first time she’s seen this group of Jews: pale, emaciated, shivering creatures, covered in silt - yet human. Everyone is speechless until:

PAVEL
Mama, is that an angel?
SOCHA
This is my wife - Wanda.

The group and Wanda continue to look at each other in wonderment. Mundek smiles a little. Wanda smiles back.

WANDA
We - brought you a change of clothes. Don’t worry, I’ll wash the dirty ones.

EXT. STREET - DAY
SUPER: July 28, 1944
The THUNDER of bombs...

INT. CHAMBER 4 - CONTINUOUS
...are REPEATED, muffled. The group looks up, full of hope and trepidation.

The incarceration of 14 months is obvious. They are thin, ghost-like, encrusted with grime.

Chiger paces, at the breaking point.

The earth SHAKES, as another bomb EXPLODES nearby. ARTILLERY is closer now, mixed with muffled shouting VOICES.

SOLDIER (O.S.)
(in Russian)
Sergey...over here! Over here!

Machine GUN FIRE. A SOUND of heavy vehicles, the vault VIBRATES, dust and pieces of rubble fall from the ceiling.

MUNDEK
(listens intently)
Russian!

Mundek lurches to the entrance. Chiger grabs him.

CHIGER
Where the hell are you going? It’s dangerous out there!

MUNDEK
It’s been dangerous for a while, Chiger.

Like a drunk, Chiger SLAMS Mundek against a wall.
CONTINUED:

PAULINA
Ignacy!

CHIGER
Shut up, Paulina! I’m in charge. No one makes a move without my permission!

Mundek easily pushes him away. Chiger collapses.

Paulina rushes to embrace her husband, who is now sobbing.

Krystyna and Pavel stay rooted, weeping, uncomprehending.

A loud BANGING on one of the pipes.

SOCHA (O.S.)
Korsarz! Chiger! You’re coming out!

Stunned silence.

SOCHA (O.S.) (cont’d)
Korsarz, come alone! I’ll show you a safer spot for the others to come out.

KLARA
What is he saying, Mundek?

Mundek lurches out the entrance.

INT. SEWER – MOMENTS LATER

Mundek approaches a brilliant beam of light shining down through a wide-open manhole cover.

SOCHA (O.S.)
Korsarz – over here!

Mundek stumbles up to the white light. A hand reaches through – Socha’s hand. Mundek grabs it...

EXT. STREET – CONTINUOUS

...and STUMBLES onto the street. He is bent over and yellow from jaundice. He immediately collapses into Socha’s arms. Socha panics, TAPPING Mundek’s face.

Mundek opens his eyes, smiles. Overcome with relief, Socha hugs him like a baby.
EXT. COURTYARD – MOMENTS LATER

The courtyard of an apartment block. The ARTILLERY is intermittent, distant.

An OLD WOMAN, shuffles out as Socha LIFTS the manhole covers, then grabs Pavel, handed over by Chiger. She notices Mundek, helping Socha.

OLD WOMAN
(crosses herself)
Jesus and Mary! Where did you come from?

MUNDEK
From the dead, madam. From the dead.

The woman flees, screaming.

People peer from the apartment balconies, pointing.

Out of the manhole, the group emerges, some bent, caked in dirt and grime, barefoot, dazed at the harsh light.

Their POV: Everything is bathed in blood red. Klara blinks. Berestycki stumbles. Socha and Mundek help him sit on the ground to the side.

Pavel runs to Paulina and buries his head. Both sob.

PAVEL
I’m scared, Mama! I want to go back! I want to go back!

Chaja looks up and lets the sun wash her face. She and Socha lock eyes. She goes to him and puts her hand on his arm. She smiles slightly. And Socha smiles back.


Wanda, holding a tray of cakes and glasses, pushes through. Stefcia, close behind, holds a bottle of vodka.

WANDA
Coming through! Coming through!

Wanda stops dead and looks at the group, disbelieving. She looks at Stefcia, also stunned.

Mundek comes forward and nods to Wanda and Stefcia, his eyes full of gratitude and understanding.
WANDA (cont’d)
(catching herself)
Please...eat!

They simply stare, overwhelmed at the offering.

Stefcia grabs a couple of cakes, and holds them out for Pavel and Krystyna, who look at Paulina for permission. She nods for them to go ahead.

First, Krystyna, then Pavel, each solemnly take a cake, but are too dazed to do anything with it.

A couple of teenage girls giggle, nervous. An old man crosses himself. Another man loudly SPITS on the ground. A few people leave, whispering.

Klara wraps her ragged coat closer, embarrassed and defiant. The tension is excruciating. Finally:

SOCHA
What are you all staring at? Huh?
Haven’t you anything better to do?

He CLAPS his hands as though chasing animals away.

SOCHA (cont’d)
Go on! If you can’t help, move on!

Slowly, reluctantly, the crowd disperses. Socha grabs a glass of vodka and swigs it. He looks at the group, still dazed. Some try to smile.

SOCHA (cont’d)
It’s over, you’re safe. Now eat!
Wanda went to a lot of trouble.
(to Wanda)
My Jews. These are my Jews!
(to others)
These are my Jews! My work.

We hold on Socha’s smiling sun-lit face.

FADE OUT

FADE IN SUPERS (Each sentence a new super):

“Socha’s Jews” spent 14 months in Lvov’s sewers.

On May 12th 1945, Leopold Socha was killed, saving Stefcia from an out-of-control Russian army truck.
At his funeral, someone said: "It's God's punishment for helping the Jews."

As if we need God to punish each other.

The survivors escaped from Soviet Lvov and lived out their lives in Israel, Europe and the United States.

In 1978, Leopold and Wanda Socha were honored as the Righteous among the Nations by the State of Israel.

Just as he predicted, Mundek Margulies and his wife Klara lived a long and happy life. They died less than six months apart in 1997.

This film is dedicated to all of them.

FADE OUT