

SOME SECRETS  
DON'T STAY BURIED



**BLAZE**  
MOTORS

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Blaze Motors by Robert E. Britt

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PROLOGUE

In 1939 the Soviet Red Army began occupying the eastern provinces of Poland. Many of the region's inhabitants were deported and moved into forced labor camps which were, for all practical purposes, prisons. Some managed to flee before the army arrived and a few performed acts of sabotage so the Soviets could not take advantage of the Polish infrastructure. These acts were considered treason and those perpetrating them, if caught, were summarily executed.

INT. 2ND FLOOR OFFICE (1939 POLAND)

Man, late 30's is sitting behind an imposing wooden desk writing. Wall safe behind him hangs half open. Phone rings.

BLAZEK

Yes (pause) Okay then. It's time.  
(Pauses...listening) Thank you.

Hangs up phone and exits office.

INT. OVERLOOKING FACTORY FLOOR

Stands on catwalk overlooking the factory floor and scans the length of the floor. The floor is one long bay containing trucks in various stages of production. Workers are walking briskly about the floor, but not working on trucks. They are systematically stripping the factory of machinery, dies and tools. Piotr Blazek picks up the terry phone (loud speaker system microphone) keys the mic and clears his throat. All workers come to a stop and look up as Blazek's voice cuts through the low din of activity.

PIOTR BLAZEK

They are only twenty kilometers  
from here.

Workers glance worriedly at each other, but remain mostly silent.

PIOTR BLAZEK

Finish up. Get what you can and  
take it out to the mine. We'll all  
meet out there in 20 minutes.

## INT. 2ND FLOOR OFFICE

Piotr Blazek returns to office and loads contents of safe into a metal box which he places into a canvas back pack

## INT. OVERLOOKING FACTORY FLOOR

Factory workers more hurriedly but with purpose hand loading pieces of equipment into the trucks which have been backed into the factory bay. (metallic clanging and low murmur of voices)

## EXT. A DIRT AND GRAVEL ROAD LEADING THROUGH WOODS - NIGHT

Two trucks travel down an overgrown gravel/dirt road wandering through a forest. Scattered light snow is on the ground. Trucks approach an old style mine entrance, turn around and back close to the entrance.

## EXT. MINE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Area is lit by scattered torches placed in the ground. Trucks are greeted by men coming out of cave/mine. Piotr Blazek exits "shotgun" seat of lead truck. Man separates from group and approaches Blazek.

LANEK FISCHER

Mr. Blazek, most of the dies have been salvaged and are deep in the main run of the mine.

PIOTR BLAZEK

Did we get any of the transmissions for the new line?

Another man joins them. Lanek Fischer gives him a look. Shomper shrugs his shoulders.

LANEK FISCHER

Paul, how many engines and trannys did we get out?

SHOMPER

We have twenty five sets in the back (nods towards the mine) and there are supposed to be another ten or so on the last truck.

Blazek nods and motions to the hillside above the mine.

(CONTINUED)

PIOTR BLAZEK  
Are they done up there?

LANEK FISCHER  
The charges are set, but...

PIOTR BLAZEK  
But what?

LANEK FISCHER  
I still don't think they'll find  
this place Mr. Blazek. We lay low  
and they'll move on. Then we're  
back in business.

PIOTR BLAZEK  
I'm not getting into this again.  
It's not a debate. Twenty nine  
truck loads went over this same  
trail (gestures to the road) makes  
it pretty obvious that the road  
has had traffic recently. The  
Russians will see that burned out  
factory and put two and two  
together.

LANEK FISCHER (GASPS)  
Burned out!

PIOTR BLAZEK  
There is no way they are taking my  
life's work. My blood was in the  
mortar and my sweat built the  
business. No one is going to turn  
that against our people.

SHOMPER  
What!?!

PIOTR BLAZEK  
I threw the match myself. No one  
was taking it down but me.

(Flashback to)

EXT. FACTORY - THREE COVERED TRUCKS PARKED OUTSIDE OPEN BAY  
DOOR - DUSK

Men are tying down covers over the back of large trucks.  
Piotr Blazek approaches drivers of the first two trucks.

(CONTINUED)

PIOTR BLAZEK (TO DRIVERS)  
Move 'em out!

Blazek windmills arms emphatically to stress urgency.

PIOTR BLAZEK (TO THIRD DRIVER)  
Wait here for me.

HEINRICH BELLOW  
Anything I can help you with Mr.  
Blazek?

PIOTR BLAZEK  
No, Heinrich, I just have something  
I need to take care of. And I think  
you can just call me Piotr. We're  
all in this together now.

HEINRICH BELLOW  
Okay Mr. Blazek.

Blazek raises eyebrows, questioning look on his face.

HEINRICH BELLOW  
I mean.. Piotr. I'll be right here,  
if you change your mind.

PIOTR BLAZEK  
Thank you, Heinrich.

Piotr walks to the factory, resigned to the task at hand.  
(Deep breath and sigh) Teary look is in his eyes, but a  
quick head shake brings a steely look of resolve.

INT. CAMERA AIMED OUT TO ROLL DOOR. BLAZEK OUTLINED BY TAIL  
LIGHTS OF DEPARTING TRUCKS. CAMERA PIVOTS AS HE PASSES

Piotr Blazek walks resolutely to some waiting 5 liter steel  
gasoline cans and begins splashing fuel on walls and  
machinery. Nearly empties final can, but then uses it to  
create a vapor trail to the open bay door. Throws final can  
to floor and pulls a wooden match from his shirt pocket,  
strikes it on the door frame. . He looks at the match  
briefly to make sure it has a solid flame

EXT. FACTORY CAMERA SHOT FRAMED ON ROLL DOOR WITH DARK  
OUTLINE OF BLAZEK'S BACK CENTERED - DUSK

Piotr Blazek tosses the match to the still wet trail of  
gasoline on the floor. A small flame is seen as he holds his  
hand out to the side. A bright flame erupts and he turns and  
walks to the waiting truck, never looking back.

EXT. SHOT OF BLAZEK APPROACHING TRUCK

Driver stands by the open door of the truck mouth agape, looking on as the factory erupts and explosions occur as oil reservoirs ignite.

PIOTR BLAZEK (TO DRIVER)  
Let's go.

DRIVER  
But we..

PIOTR BLAZEK  
We have to let it go. Now like I said, let's go.

He heads around and gets into the "shotgun" seat.

EXT. FACTORY - COVERED TRUCK PARKED OUTSIDE OPEN BAY DOOR

Driver and Blazek get into last remaining truck and drive away silhouetted by the flames of the erupting factory as it is consumed.

(Flash forward back to mine)

EXT. MINE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Blazek stands with arms crossed looking at Shomper and Lanek Fischer. His face is set with grim determination.

PIOTR BLAZEK  
Now get everybody clear and blow it.

LANEK FISCHER  
I still think

PIOTR BLAZEK  
Blow it!

Blazek gestures towards the trucks

PIOTR BLAZEK  
Move those trucks out.

Lanek Fischer moves over to two men standing 50 meters to the side of the mine entrance. They look at him and we hear muted conversation between them. Blazek bends over and picks up his backpack and a torch and heads into the woods. He reaches a large tree, sticks his torch into the ground,

(CONTINUED)

drops his back pack and picks up a shovel that was leaning against the tree. He takes a compass out of his pocket, takes ten measured steps and starts digging. A loud explosion and a flash of light silhouette him as he goes about his task.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Close up on Blazek as he pats the earth over the refilled hole, scatters some leaves over the disturbed dirt and walks back to the tree. Once there he takes the time to build a cairn of stones near the base of the tree. He takes a leather notebook out of his back pocket and writes a brief note. (fade out)

EXT. WOODS. - NIGHT

Torch bobs through woods and as it approaches we see Blazek carrying the torch and shovel. Camera pans as he approaches landslide which now covers the min entrance. Steam arises from the newly exposed earth. The steam is contrasted by the beginnngs of a snow storm.

PIOTR BLAZEK (TO HIMSELF)

Perfect.

He mounts the last remaining truck and they slowly start down the dirt lane.

EXT. SHOTS OF STOPPED TRUCK -NIGHT

The truck stops several times and men dismount from the front and rear as Blazek directs them in placing trees and objects to make the road seem neglected and to slow any future traffic. The work is mostly silent punctuated by occasional grunts generated by the efforts of the laborers. The scenes progress down the road, and are punctuated by Blazek's directions.

PIOTR BLAZEK

That'll do. Let's move on to the next one. (He ad libs encouragement and directions such as "good work" "little more" "yeah, leave it there" and finally "one more and we're done" etc

After the third log has been placed

(CONTINUED)

HEINRICH BELLOW (TO BLAZEK)  
Do you think that'll do it?

PIOTR BLAZEK  
With any luck the snowfall will be heavy and complete the picture. If not, well, twenty logs wouldn't hide what we've been up to. Keep your fingers crossed.

HEINRICH BELLOW  
If we don't get our families away this will be the least of our problems.

PIOTR BLAZEK  
Chin up. At least we've had some warning.. and reliable transportation to get us all the hell out of here.

HEINRICH BELLOW  
We built them right (as he pats the hood of the truck)

Blazek slaps the man's back as he proclaims

PIOTR BLAZEK  
and we'll do it again!

HEINRICH BELLOW  
Yes, sir. That we will.

They get in the truck and gravel spits as the truck speeds away from the last log (which partially obstructs the road)

EXT. FUNERAL SCENE 1987 - AFTERNOON

Small crowd gathered around a grave site.

PRIEST (IN MID-SENTENCE)  
...and hope. Peter Blazek was a man who overcame many obstacles in his life. From his early success in Poland interrupted by the war, to his eventual arrival in the United States; he was the man I would picture whenever anyone would say the word perseverance. Peter left behind a legacy of struggle and triumph and will be missed by both family (nods at wife and daughter)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PRIEST (IN MID-SENTENCE) (cont'd)  
 and friends. (nods to crowd.) In  
 sure and certain hope of the  
 resurrection to eternal life  
 through our Lord Jesus Christ, we  
 commend to Almighty God our brother  
 Peter and we commit his body to the  
 ground; earth to earth; ashes to  
 ashes, dust to dust. The Lord bless  
 him and keep him, the Lord make his  
 face to shine upon him and be  
 gracious unto him and give him  
 peace.

Most of the crowd stands quietly by as the casket is lowered into the grave. As it lowers the gravestone is exposed. Piotr J. Blazek June 5, 1901 - 11/4/1987. Once the coffin hits bottom the crowd disperses. The priest walks up to the two women.

PRIEST  
 Ruth I'll be stopping by your house  
 tomorrow, as we talked about...

RUTH BLAZEK  
 Thank you Father. And for the  
 eulogy. It was lovely. Peter would  
 have liked it. (tears flow gently  
 down both cheeks) I... (breaks down  
 a bit)

LIDA SUTTER  
 Mom (she embraces her) Father..

Lida nods to the priest and he walks away. She holds her mother for a few moments and the tears wane. A young man approaches them.

EREK FISCHER  
 I'm sorry to approach you at a time  
 like this.

LIDA SUTTER  
 Yes?

EREK FISCHER  
 I am here to pass on a message from  
 my grandparents. They send regrets  
 and condolences to your family.

LIDA SUTTER  
 Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

She starts to turn to leave and he looks lost. She turns back to him. Ruth also is looking on, curious.

LIDA SUTTER

I'm sorry. My mind is not here at the moment. Your grandparents are...?

EREK FISCHER

Lanek and Kate Fischer.

Ruth rushes to him and embraces him.

RUTH BLAZEK

My boy, my dear boy. You must come with us. (to Lida) This is a tale that gets another chapter...

Lida leads her mother to the waiting car.

RUTH BLAZEK

Carl this is Erek. He is a dear friend of the family. He is visiting from the old country.

Erek and Carl shake hands.

CARL SUTTER

Nice to meet you.

EREK FISCHER

You as well, sir.

Carl then holds the door open and helps Ruth into the back seat. Erek does the same for Lida and gets into the shotgun seat. Carl gets into the driver seat and closes the door. He starts the car and they leave the cemetery.

EXT. CEMETERY CAR DRIVING AWAY

Car heads through the gated entrance of the cemetery and is seen speeding away.

INT. CAR

LIDA SUTTER

A few people will be at the house Mom. Elke is already there getting things ready.

(CONTINUED)

RUTH BLAZEK

Thank you Lida. I don't know what I would have done without you and Elke these past couple months.

LIDA SUTTER

We're here for you Mom and we'll just keep taking it day by day.

CARL SUTTER

Anything we can do for you, just say the word Mom. Anything.

They drive on in silence.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - SUTTER CAR PULLS IN TO DRIVEWAY - DAY

Carl gets out and opens the door and helps Ruth out and walks her to the house. The front door opens as they approach and we see Elke, Carl and Lida's 20 Y.O. daughter.

ELKE SUTTER

Grandma.

Arms outreached and they hug, both crying gently.

ELKE SUTTER

Come in. People are just starting to get here.

Elke whispers to her mom

ELKE SUTTER

Who is that? (nodding at Erek)

LIDA SUTTER

We'll talk later...

INT. LIVING ROOM LATE 70'S DECOR BLAZEK RESIDENCE 1987

ELKE SUTTER

Can I get you anything? Coffee, tea, water?

Elke helps her grandmother to an easy chair.

RUTH BLAZEK

I think coffee would be nice, dear. Thank you. (pause) for everything.

(CONTINUED)

Elke exits to the kitchen and returns with a mug of coffee and then is busy at a table of hors d'oeuvres. Carl and Lida sit on the sofa near Ruth. Erek stands off to one side and sips at a drink. He walks over to Ruth Blazek.

EREK FISCHER

Mrs. Blazek..

RUTH BLAZEK

Please call me Ruth. No, you are like family. Call me Grandma.

EREK FISCHER

Grandmother, thank you. This is all so awkward for me, and even in the middle of all of this, you are so gracious and welcoming.

RUTH BLAZEK

We are family. Without your grandfather I may never have made it to Gotska Sandoen and back with my Piotr.

She tears up again and he comforts her with an arm around.

People start arriving and small talk is exchanged.

Close shot of Ruth with her mug of coffee. (She is 69 years old and again alone)<fade out on her face>

EXT. FRONT LAWN STONE HOUSE NOVEMBER 1939 - DAY

<fade in on young Ruth's face>

RUTH BLAZEK

I'm not going without you.

PIOTR BLAZEK

I will meet you at Uncle Vaclav's house in Olsztyn. No arguments. We can't take any chances with you or Lida.

RUTH BLAZEK

But why can't you go with us?

PIOTR BLAZEK

Without my papers I won't be allowed through the checkpoints. I was a fool to forget them, but I have to try to recover them. At

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PIOTR BLAZEK (cont'd)  
 least you have yours and Lida's.  
 Lanek will make sure you get to  
 Vaclav's. I'll be there soon.

PIOTR BLAZEK (TO LANEK)  
 We've always been like brothers,  
 but for this, I owe you everything.  
 (whispering in his ear) If I am not  
 there in two days do whatever you  
 think best to protect them.

LANEK FISCHER  
 I will take care of them my friend.  
 (to Ruth) We must go now.

Ruth throws herself into Blazek's arms sobbing.

PIOTR BLAZEK  
 You must go now. We don't have  
 time. Take this.

He hands her the leather bound notebook.

PIOTR BLAZEK  
 Keep that safe. (nodding at the  
 notebook, clutched in her hand)  
 I love you and we'll be together  
 soon.

He hugs Lida and takes off down the lane. Lanek, Ruth and  
 Lida get into one of the Blazek trucks and head out of town.

EXT. FARMHOUSE OUTSIDE OLSZTYN - NIGHT

Blazek truck pulls up and into open barn. Lanek, Ruth and  
 Lida exit and are greeted by Ruth's uncle Vaclav Vanek.

VACLAV VANEK  
 Lanek! Where is Piotr?

LANEK FISCHER  
 He had to go back to get some  
 papers. He'll be here by morning.  
 He told me to get them here as soon  
 as possible.

VACLAV VANEK  
 Ruth, (hugs) I am so glad to see you  
 safe. And Lida.. (hug) How are you  
 my little angel?

(CONTINUED)

Lida (3 years old) smiles but says nothing. She does hug him back.

VACLAV VANEK

Oh, you're the shy one now, are you? We'll see about that. (to Lanek and Ruth) come let's get out of the cold and into the house.

They leave the barn and head toward the house.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE OF BIALYSTOK - DAY

Piotr Blazek runs through the streets of Bialystok and arrives in Kleosin (a suburb) at the doorway of a small townhouse. He pauses for a moment and then opens the door and strides purposefully into the home.

INT. SMALL ROW HOME

PIOTR BLAZEK

Suzanna! Suzanna! Where are you?

He searches through the house and while he is in the back a young woman comes down the stairs.

SUZANNA HOFFS

Piotr, what are you doing here?

PIOTR BLAZEK

You have to get out of town. It won't be safe for you here.

SUZANNA HOFFS

What are you talking about? We'll be fine.

PIOTR BLAZEK

Hasn't anyone talked to you about the Russians? They'll be here any minute. (more to himself than to her) I knew I couldn't trust that boy to deliver the message. To think I almost left without making sure.

SUZANNA HOFFS

I don't know what I should take. I have to gather the

Piotr Blazek interrupts

(CONTINUED)

PIOTR BLAZEK

You don't have time. Get your son and head north. Here. (hands her a wad of money) I'm sorry it's not more, but it's all I can do. Try to get over to Sweden. It won't be safe anywhere in Poland until this damn war is over. We can't trust the Russians any more than the Germans. Do you still have that Citroen I gave you?

SUZANNA HOFFS

Yes, it's out back.

PIOTR BLAZEK

Get Alex and don't waste any time. I told your husband I would always watch out for you, but I never anticipated this. You have to take care of yourself from now on.

SUZANNA HOFFS

I've always appreciated your help, Piotr, but do you really think

PIOTR BLAZEK

You don't have time to think. Just go. Get him and go.

Air raid sirens start to squeal in the background getting louder and louder as the conversation continues

PIOTR BLAZEK

Damn. It's starting already. You don't have time to pack, just grab what you can and run.

SUZANNA HOFFS

But what about you? What is Ruth doing? Have

PIOTR BLAZEK

Don't worry about them, they are on their way to Olsztyn. Ruth has family there. I'm joining them as soon as I see you driving away. Now hurry.

The back door opens and a young boy, Alex Hoffs, about 8 years old, comes racing in. He stops short when he nearly collides with his mother

(CONTINUED)

ALEX HOFFS

Mamma, what is going on? Uncle Piotr what are the sirens for?

PIOTR BLAZEK (ACTIING JOVIAL)

It's just a game Alex. But no time for that now. You're going for a car ride.

ALEX HOFFS

Where are we going this time, Uncle? Another carnival or perhaps the horse farm again? I loved those horses, they were so huge!

Alex's eyes are wide with anticipation of another adventure with his "Uncle" Piotr.

PIOTR BLAZEK

Not this time. Maybe next time, Alex. This time your mother is taking you to the sea!

PIOTR BLAZEK (TO SUZANNA)

Hurry now. You have no time to waste. (to Alex) Grab your overcoat, you don't want to catch cold. The beach breeze will send chills down your spine if you aren't bundled up tight.

Suzanna comes back down the stairs with a large satchel and a back pack.

SUZANNA HOFFS

Thank you Piotr. (she hugs him) You have been so good to me and Alex since Anton was killed. You never had to do any of this.

PIOTR BLAZEK (PUSHES HER GENTLY AWAY)

All of it will be for nothing if you don't leave now. Now go.

EXT REAR OF TOWN HOUSE - DAY

They exit the house and Alex and Suzanna get into the car. It starts up and they drive away. Alex is waving excitedly at Blazek from the back seat. Blazek waves back once and then starts to head toward whatever remains of his factory. He had an old Mercedes in one of the out buildings.

EXT. SMOLDERING FACTORY - DAY

Piotr Blazek cautiously approaches the grounds of the factory when he sees a group of Russian soldiers coming from the other direction. Bombs are heard in the distance, but they grow closer. Explosions and gun shots are heard intermittantly. One of the soldiers spots Blazek.

RUSSIAN SOLDIER 1

You. Stop right there. Raise your hands where I can see them or I'll shoot.

Piotr Blazek starts to comply and then dodges around the corner and starts running for his life. Russian soldier 1 fires a couple shots, but they ricochet harmlessly off the walls of the building Blazek ducked behind. Three of the soldiers begin to give chase, but after a few blocks have lost him, as he knows the streets and they are strangers to the city.

EXT. BIALYSTOK ALLEYWAY - DAY

Piotr Blazek comes around a corner and ducks into doorway. He grabs the knob and turns it. The door is unlocked! He opens the door and moves inside.

INT. HOUSE - LIT ONLY BY EXT LIGHT THROUGH WINDOW

Doorway bursts open and Piotr Blazek enters the room. He quickly closes the door, closes the deadbolt and peers out the lone window. Sees soldiers running past.

EXT. BIALYSTOK ALLEYWAY - DAY

Shot of soldiers running down alley and camera spins as they run past the doorway Piotr Blazek bolted just moments before.

INT. HOUSE - LIT ONLY BY EXT LIGHT THROUGH WINDOW

Piotr Blazek waits a few minutes and exits the building.

EXT. BIALYSTOK ALLEYWAY - DAY -1939

Piotr Blazek enters the alley and furtively moves away from the direction of the soldiers. The air raid sirens are still blowing and explosions and gunfire are heard in the distance. Piotr Blazek runs through town and eventually comes back to the Hoff's residence. He enters.

INT. SMALL ROW HOME - HOFFS RESIDENCE 1939

Piotr Blazek enters the living room and collapses on a sofa, chest heaving from the effort of his run. <fade out>

EXT. FARMHOUSE PORCH - NIGHT

Vaclav leads Ruth, Lanek and Lida to the door and opens it.

INT. VANEK LIVING ROOM

Fire is roaring in the background and plain, but well made furniture fills the room. Ruth and Lida are greeted by Vaclav's wife, Frieda.

FRIEDA VANEK

Come in, come in. Such a journey  
and on a cold, cold night as this.  
Give me your coats and go warm by  
the fire! After hugs I mean, of  
course. Always we need hugs.  
Especially from you my dear.

She goes to one knee and gives Lida a hug. Lida is all smiles now in a familiar environment. Frieda stands and hugs Ruth. She takes their coats and hangs them nearby and Ruth and Lida warm their hands by the fire.

FRIEDA VANEK

Where is Piotr? Still out at the  
truck? Can't he leave that go for  
one night?

VACLAV VANEK

He is still in Bialystok.

Frieda looks at him questioningly. He shakes his head discretely.

VACLAV VANEK

Business to take care of. As do we.

(CONTINUED)

FRIEDA VANEK

Can't it wait until the morning?

VACLAV VANEK

It's an ugly business, but we don't have time to mince words. It is only a matter of time and we must get ready. (quietly) We'll wait until Lida is in bed.

INT. VANEK KITCHEN LATER THAT NIGHT

The four adults sit around the table with drinks. (maybe coffee or something stronger)

VACLAV VANEK

I have already discussed this with Piotr as you know. It's just a matter of when we go.

RUTH BLAZEK

He should be here soon. Tomorrow at the latest.

VACLAV VANEK

Ruth, we have no desire to leave without him. We can wait one, maybe two days, and then we have to go. We have the Russians to the east. You know they are already in Bialystok, and the Germans coming in from the east. The only way to go is north. Gdansk offers us passage to Gotska Sandoen.

RUTH BLAZEK

I don't understand. Gotska what?

VACLAV VANEK

It is an island. Swedish. They are remaining neutral in this whole thing. It stinks of cooperation with those Nazi bastards.

FRIEDA VANEK

Vaclav! There is no use getting into name calling. It doesn't serve us. (to Ruth) We can wait out the war there on Gotska Sandoen, and then reclaim what is ours. There is no way we will be able to elude the armies that surround us.

(CONTINUED)

RUTH BLAZEK

Piotr and I talked of the risks and knew we had to protect Lida. He was very adamant about that.

LANEK FISCHER

I am staying.

RUTH BLAZEK

But Lanek why? We could use the extra help to escape north.

LANEK FISCHER

I have already made some contact with the resistance movement and think that we'll be able to sabotage things and help drive them away. I can at least try to shorten your stay in Sweden.

Lanek smiles grimly and he and Vaclav nod to each other.

VACLAV VANEK

I would also like to stay.

FRIEDA VANEK

Vaclav, no!

VACLAV VANEK

No. I'm not staying, but I would like to. I have no choice really. I have made the contacts to get us out of here. I doubt they would trust anyone else if I was not involved. I would not forgive myself if anything happened to any of you because I wasn't there.

INT. VANEK LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

VACLAV VANEK

We have to leave tonight. We can't wait any longer.

RUTH BLAZEK

I am staying.

FRIEDA VANEK

You have to go. You know that Piotr would not agree to staying. For Lida. (nods to outside)

EXT. FARMHOUSE OUTSIDE OLSZTYN - AFTERNOON

Lida is playing with a doll. <fade>

INT. LIVING ROOM LATE 70'S DECOR BLAZEK RESIDENCE 1987

Elke and Lida are cleaning up the remains of the post-funeral gathering. Lida picks up an old doll left on the floor.

LIDA SUTTER

One of the children must have found this. I'm glad it can still give someone pleasure.

She places it tenderly on a shelf. Elke nods and looks over at her grandmother.

ELKE SUTTER

She seems to be handling things pretty well considering.

LIDA SUTTER

It's not like it was a total surprise. He was 86 years old, and with all the abuse his body took over the years...

ELKE SUTTER

Why do you think they just let things hang like that?

LIDA SUTTER

It's the way. I mean, Dad was ever stoic. Never one to let anyone into his thought process. It comes from the years hiding and in the camp. You can't just put those things away, even if you want to. He didn't live there. But, at least according to Mom, he just never recovered his vitality. His ... lust for life. We'd see glimpses. Like when you were born. But not really even then.

ELKE SUTTER

Didn't he- (interrupted by the arrival of)

(CONTINUED)

RUTH BLAZEK

Can I help?

LIDA SUTTER

Mom, you don't have to do-  
(interrupted)

RUTH BLAZEK

I know I don't HAVE TO but  
sometimes keeping busy helps. I  
heard you two talking...

ELKE SUTTER

It was mostly me prying, Grandma. I  
still don't really know. I mean, he  
would talk, but not really about  
anything that mattered.

RUTH BLAZEK

When he first found me in Reading I  
pretty much went into shock. I knew  
he'd been killed. My Uncle Vaclav  
told me a family friend had seen  
the body...

INT. SMALL ROW HOME - HOFFS RESIDENCE 1939

Piotr Blazek appears in the dark doorway and sits on the sofa clutching a small bowl of cold gruel. He has the beginnings of a beard, likely 10 days worth of stubble. Unkempt. He still wears the same clothing. He quietly eats the unappealing slop in his bowl mechanically. Sounds of footsteps are heard and he tenses up, puts down the bowl and goes to the window. He pulls aside the curtains slightly and we see a group of soldiers walking down the street. Every so often they post a flyer and then move on. There is idle chat amongst the soldiers. They move out of sight and Piotr Blazek closes the curtain. He moves to the door and exits through the front door.

EXT. FRONT OF HOFF RESIDENCE MORNING 1939

Door opens and Piotr Blazek walks over to flyer posted on the wall. It is a proclamation regarding people wanted for sabotage and war crimes. Piotr Blazek frowns as he sees his name on the list. There is a reward offered for information. The people on the list are to be shot.

(Blazek has not left the Hoff residence in days, but knows he must get out of Bialystok or risk capture)

He returns to the house.

INT. SMALL ROW HOME - HOFFS RESIDENCE 1939

Piotr Blazek enters and heads up the stairs. The camera follows him to a bedroom, where he quickly packs up a back pack with some clothing, compass and a map. He glances around the room, spies his heavy coat, dons that and the back pack and leaves.

EXT REAR OF TOWN HOUSE - 1939 DAY

Piotr Blazek appears out of the doorway and scans the alley way. The coast is clear and he heads north.

EXT. STREETS OF BIALYSTOK - DAY

He dodges any people he sees, and is appalled at the rubble that is seen throughout the city. At one point he sees the corpse of a man who was in the vicinity of a bomb explosion in the past few days. He glances around and with a look of grim determination kneels down.

EXT. BOMBED STREET SITE IN BIALYSTOK. DAY  
 (tight shot of Piotr Blazek  
 and then close up of papers.  
 Rolph Friedman is the name  
 seen on them.)

Piotr Blazek searches the pockets of clothing. In an inner jacket pocket he finds identification papers and he exchanges those for his own. He doesn't pay any attention to the yellow Star of David that is sewn onto the coat. His only thoughts are that the ruse may buy him time to escape and the new identity may ease him through check points. Piotr Blazek continues cautiously walking north. He approaches a check point in the city. It will be the first test of his new identity.

EXT. BIALYSTOK STREET - ROAD IS BLOCKED WITH SOLDIERS  
 CHECKING PAPERS - DAY

Piotr Blazek is in line with others as soldiers perform their task in a perfunctionary manner. Blazek becomes nervous as he sees the soldier checking papers is the same one who shot at him the week before. He can't react without arousing suspicion.

(CONTINUED)

RUSSIAN SOLDIER 1

Papers!

PIOTR BLAZEK (AS FRIEDMAN)

Here they are sir.

RUSSIAN SOLDIER 1

What is your business in this area?

PIOTR BLAZEK (AS FRIEDMAN)

I am going to a friend's butcher shop to try and find something for my son's birthday dinner.

RUSSIAN SOLDIER 1

Waste of time if you ask me.

Piotr Blazek stands patiently, but tensed and ready to bolt, if the situation calls for it.

RUSSIAN SOLDIER 1

Okay. Move along.

PIOTR BLAZEK (AS FRIEDMAN)

Thank you sir.

RUSSIAN SOLDIER 1

Next! Papers..now!

PEDESTRIAN 1

Here they are...

Piotr Blazek moves quickly away from the check point sweating. He ducks into an alley way and leans against the wall. As he regains his composure he emerges and continues heading north.

INT. VANEK LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

VACLAV VANEK

Yes. Piotr was very specific. He told me we had to leave by the 17th. We have overstayed that by a day hoping he would come, but we have to leave tonight, with or without him. But you and Lida are coming with us.

LANEK FISCHER

I am also coming with you.

(CONTINUED)

RUTH BLAZEK

What ?!?

LANEK FISCHER

I promised Piotr that I would watch over you until he returned. For everything he has done for me, I can do no less.

VACLAV VANEK

Get everything together. We will go after dinner.

Ruth leaves the room to get Lida and finalize their packing leaving Lanek, Vaclav and Frieda alone. Vaclav and Frieda start to leave as well and Lanek stops them.

LANEK FISCHER

Vaclav.. I have to tell you something important.

Vaclav and Frieda exchange a glance.

VACLAV VANEK

I have nothing to hide from her.

Lanek shrugs and continues.

LANEK FISCHER

It's not good. I talked to my contacts in the resistance and what they had to say...

VACLAV VANEK

Just spit it out

FRIEDA VANEK

There is no need to spare me. Too much has happened already.

LANEK FISCHER

Some of their men found a body in Bialystok. It was in bad shape, but the papers in the coat pocket were Piotr's.

Frieda gasps, and Vaclav puts his arms around her.

LANEK FISCHER

I... Piotr saved my life once. I will not allow anything to happen to either Lida or Ruth. That is why I must go with them.

(CONTINUED)

VACLAV VANEK

We will wait to tell Ruth. She is strong, but right now she doesn't need any distractions. We all have to keep our focus on getting out of Poland.

<fade out> and fade in to

EXT. ROAD TO GDANSK - NIGHT

Blazek truck is traveling down the road with the headlights off, but running lights on. Zoom in to

INT. TRUCK CAB - NIGHT

The mood in the cab is tense. Vaclav is driving. Lanek is in the back of the truck keeping watch to the rear. Lida sleeps in the back while her mother and Frieda sit quietly nearby.

EXT. ROAD TO GDANSK - NIGHT

Vaclav sees headlights. Camera shot shows hood of truck and two points of light in the distance.

VACLAV VANEK

Hang on. I'm pulling over.

EXT. ROAD TO GDANSK - NIGHT

Truck pulls off the road and into the woods. Vaclav shuts off the engine and running lights.

INT. TRUCK CAB - NIGHT

VACLAV VANEK

Everyone keep quiet and keep your heads down back there, in case anyone would look over. We'll move out after they have passed. Lanek, be ready just in case.

INT. TRUCK CARGO AREA - NIGHT

(shot is tight on Lanek in the rear of the truck)

He quietly checks the pistol tucked into his waistband and gets a rifle from the floor of the truck.

LANEK FISCHER

Ready.

(camera is looking out of the back of the truck towards the road)

A car goes by as they all hold their breath. A few minutes pass and Vaclav starts the truck.

EXT. ROAD TO GDANSK - NIGHT

Truck pulls out of the woods and heads down the road. <fade out>

EXT. WHARF GDANSK - 1939 - DAY

Vaclav is standing by the gang plank of a non-descript tramp freighter talking to the ship's captain.

VACLAV VANEK

So it is settled then?

CAPTAIN SEGEL

Four adults and one child. Yes. And you've made arrangements on Sandön?

VACLAV VANEK

Yes.

CAPTAIN SEGEL

We are launching in less than an hour, so get everyone on board. We aren't made for passengers, but the trip is a short one. Just get below deck and stay out of sight.

VACLAV VANEK

Thank you.

Vaclav moves to a nearby alley and re-emerges with Frieda, Lanek, Ruth and Lida. Amid the hustle and bustle of the docks no one pays much mind to the five Poles who are just a small group among the many people fleeing the carnage of war. The five make their way to the gang plank and board the ship.

EXT. GOTSKA SANDOEN ISLAND - 1940 - DAY

Lanek Fischer is seen exiting a barn, trudges across a field and goes to the side door of a farmhouse. He is carrying a bucket of fresh milk.

INT. WIGSTEN FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - SANDOEN ISLAND

The door opens and Lanek Fischer enters and places a bucket of milk on the counter. Kate Wigsten is standing by the sink. Vaclav and Frieda Vanek are seated at the kitchen table eating breakfast.

LANEK FISCHER

Just the one this morning.

KATE WIGSTEN

It may be time to think about getting another cow. She is starting to get older and with the slowing milk production...

Ruth Blazek walks into the kitchen goes to the stove and pours a cup of coffee. She sits down at the table.

VACLAV VANEK

Morning Ruth.

RUTH BLAZEK

Good morning Vaclav. (pauses, then continues) I have decided that I am going home. I had that dream again last night that Piotr was in trouble, and I just can't stay here any longer thinking that he may need my help.

VACLAV VANEK

Ruth, we've been through this. Even if your dream was true, Lanek's contacts have said that it is impossible for someone to get to Bialystok without incredible risk. And then there is the matter of locating Piotr, even assuming he is still in that area. Impossible!

RUTH BLAZEK

I don't care. Piotr would do it for me. How can I do less for him? I am leaving. There is no talking me out of it this time. It's been a year.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RUTH BLAZEK (cont'd)  
If he was able to get here without help, he would be here now.

Vaclav exchanges glances with Lanek, still standing by Kate, and with Frieda.

RUTH BLAZEK  
What? I see you look at each other. I am not crazy. I must do something.

VACLAV VANEK  
It's not that we think you are crazy Ruth. We know what you are going through. We have seen it ever since we got here. Even Kate has seen the change since we've arrived.

RUTH BLAZEK  
What is it then? Because I am a woman you think I cannot defend myself. Do you think I'm not smart enough? I can do this.

VACLAV VANEK  
It's not that.

RUTH BLAZEK  
What then? Lida? She can stay here. She has you all. You are family. You too, Kate. I don't know what we would have done if you hadn't opened your home to us.

Kate nods.

VACLAV VANEK  
Ruth. It's. I'm sorry. This should have been said before, but first with the escape and then finding this place and everything. (pause) The time never seemed right. It probably never would, but now we must..

RUTH BLAZEK  
What Uncle, what? You talk in circles.

LANEK FISCHER  
Piotr has been killed, Ruth.

RUTH BLAZEK  
No. There are so many rumors.  
(becoming hysterical)

LANEK FISCHER  
I wish it were a rumor.

RUTH BLAZEK  
It cannot be true.

LANEK FISCHER  
One of our men saw the body  
personally and pulled his papers  
out of the jacket. I have them in  
my room...I'm sorry.

Ruth screams and leaves the room. Silence is punctuated by  
the exchanged glances and then Frieda follows after Ruth.  
<fade out>

INT. WIGSTEN FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - SANDOEN ISLAND - MID  
MORNING

Breakfast dishes have been cleared and Lanek and Vaclav are  
about to go out the door when Ruth returns.

RUTH BLAZEK  
I still cannot stay. (she is calm  
and has a flatness to her speech.)

VACLAV VANEK  
Ruth, I know this has been a shock,  
but there is no use..

RUTH BLAZEK  
You and Freida have been talking of  
America.

Vaclav starts to object.

RUTH BLAZEK  
I heard you. And I agree. There is  
nothing for us in Poland. Lanek has  
said that all property has been  
confiscated and those who  
"deserted" have been labeled  
traitors, so I say we leave. Let's  
make a new start. A fresh start.

(CONTINUED)

VACLAV VANEK

We have looked into it. We can do it. I say it is a good idea. (to Kate) Thank you. We were desperate and you gave us shelter. I will never forget.

KATE WIGSTEN

I was not in a good place either. My parents had both been killed in that accident. I needed your help as much as you needed a place to stay, but, of course, you are welcome. I thank you all as well.

RUTH BLAZEK

Then it's settled. We are going to America.

LANEK FISCHER (QUIETLY)

I am not going.

VACLAV VANEK

What!? What of your promise to Piotr?

LANEK FISCHER

Ruth has Lida and you and Frieda, and as she said, she is strong, and capable. But I have reason to stay.

He looks at Kate and she joins him. They hold hands.

LANEK FISCHER

As you just said Vaclav, we owe her, and she needed us. She still needs help, but that obviously is not the only reason I stay. We are in love and we both have what we need right here.

There is general congratulations from all to Kate and Lanek. Hugs back slaps, etc.

VACLAV VANEK

But we are still going. Going to America.

RUTH BLAZEK

Piotr would not have wanted me to stop living. We go.

Lida enters the room.

(CONTINUED)

RUTH BLAZEK

It is down to the four of us now.

EXT. ROW HOME - READING, PA - DAYTIME - JANUARY 1946

A bundled-up man walks through the windy streets of the city. He checks a slip of paper occasionally. He finally arrives at a small row home and again pulls the paper out of his pocket. He double checks, nods his head, brushes off his jacket and knocks firmly on the door. At the last second he takes off his fedora. The door opens to reveal Ruth Blazek.

PIOTR BLAZEK

Hello Ruth.

Ruth looks at Piotr gasps and falls to the floor as she faints.

INT. BLAZEK LIVING ROOM - READING PA JANUARY 1946

Piotr is sitting on the sofa holding Ruth's hands and patting on them gently. She awakens from her faint and begins to cry.

PIOTR BLAZEK

There there. Everything will be alright.

RUTH BLAZEK

But they told me

PIOTR BLAZEK

I am here now. We are together. I found you.

RUTH BLAZEK

But what...how?

PIOTR BLAZEK

It is a long story, but the story ends here, and starts here and we are together. That's all that matters.

They hug as Ruth continues to cry. Lida (now 8 years old) enters the room.

RUTH BLAZEK

Lida, this is your Papa. You remember Papa, yes? Just like in the pictures?

(CONTINUED)

This is not really very accurate. Piotr is a shell of his former robust self, but Lida sees the man she once knew as Papa and walks to him a bit unsure and shy. Piotr sees this and is gentle as he wraps his arms around the girl he left as a baby years before.

PIOTR BLAZEK

Papa is home now my little Lida.  
You are not so little now are you?  
You are a big girl. Papa is here to  
stay. (He includes Ruth in this  
announcement.)

LIDA BLAZEK

Papa where have you been? Why did  
it take you so long to get here? I  
missed you Papa.

PIOTR BLAZEK

It was the war my little flower. It  
is a sad story, but we are starting  
a new story now.

They get up and walk to the kitchen arm in arm.

<fade out>

INT. BLAZEK LIVING ROOM - READING PA - 1958 - AFTERNOON

Lida comes down the stairs. She is 20 years old. Yells back  
to the kitchen.

LIDA BLAZEK

Mom! I am going out to work. I'll  
be back around 9:30.

RUTH BLAZEK (ANSWERS FROM THE KITCHEN)

Drive carefully. I love you!

LIDA BLAZEK

Love you, too. See ya.

She opens the door and almost runs into father coming in.

LIDA BLAZEK

Bye Daddy. Love you.

PIOTR BLAZEK

Always in a rush. I love you, too,  
my flower. See you later.

He hangs up his jacket and calls back to the kitchen.

(CONTINUED)

PIOTR BLAZEK  
Are you back there?

RUTH BLAZEK (ANSWERS FROM THE KITCHEN)  
Coming.

PIOTR BLAZEK  
Thats Okay. I'm coming back.

He heads back to the kitchen

INT. BLAZEK KITCHEN - READING PA - 1958

Piotr (now known by the Americanized name Peter) enters the kitchen, walks over to his wife who is at the stove, and gives her a kiss on the cheek.

PETER BLAZEK  
Another day in.

RUTH BLAZEK  
How is your back doing?

PETER BLAZEK  
It could be worse. No. It is fine.

RUTH BLAZEK  
Really?

PETER BLAZEK  
Yeah. It is actually better. You'd think after everything that something like this wouldn't even bother me. We're getting old.

RUTH BLAZEK  
You maybe. I refuse.

PETER BLAZEK  
I don't refuse, but I am still young when it counts.

He comes up behind her and gives her a tight hug. She turns and they kiss. They are like teenagers; still in love.

<fade out>

INT. BLAZEK LIVING ROOM - READING PA - FEB 1946 - MORNING

Ruth is sitting on the sofa of the living room reading the paper and drinking a cup of coffee. Peter comes down the stairs on his way to the kitchen. Ruth puts down the paper and stands.

RUTH BLAZEK

Can I get you something for breakfast?

PETER BLAZEK

Yes. Eggs would be good. Do we have any of that bacon left?

Ruth follows him into the kitchen.

INT. BLAZEK KITCHEN - READING PA - 1946

RUTH BLAZEK

I think so. Let me pour you coffee.

Peter sits at the table and Ruth brings him coffee.

RUTH BLAZEK

You didn't sleep well.

PETER BLAZEK

Did I wake you?

RUTH BLAZEK

It would be hard to sleep through some of that. You called out in your sleep.

PETER BLAZEK

I wonder if the nightmares will ever go away.

RUTH BLAZEK

Maybe it would do you some good to talk about what happened.

PETER BLAZEK

I told you before I don't want to do that. (angrily)

RUTH BLAZEK

Peter. I'm not going to try to make you do anything. It's not my place, but if you would just talk about it maybe you can get it out of your

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RUTH BLAZEK (cont'd)  
system. Not details. I know it  
pains you.

She rubs his shoulders and he relaxes a bit.

PETER BLAZEK  
I met a young boy on the train to  
Auschwitz. Of course at the time we  
had no idea where we were going.  
Keeping us ignorant was probably  
not any plan; they just treated us  
like animals. You wouldn't tell a  
goat or a cow about your plans for  
them, would you?

Ruth shakes her head and sits down at the table.

PETER BLAZEK  
No. And I think in their eyes we  
were even less. No value at all. I  
had heard of a camp at Treblinka.  
That was our rumored destination.  
But we got rerouted. We were in  
that boxcar for days without food,  
and there was very little water.  
They would spray the cars down with  
hoses and we would try to catch  
some. Even in that short bit of  
time some people died. And there  
was nothing we could do. I told  
that boy, his name was Jacob, that  
we had to stay strong. When we  
finally got to Auschwitz it got  
worse yet.

EXT. AUSCHWITZ RECEIVING - 1939 - DAY

Screeching train wheels are heard as they grind to a  
stop. Sound of train doors sliding open. Clerks are  
standing alongside the cars calling out names listed on  
their clip boards.

CLERKS (V.O.)  
Berger, Freidman, Gralewski (fades  
as other clerks voices come up

CLERKS (V.O.)  
Huddle, Keller, Minzer, Rothstein..

Prisoners are emptied out of the rail cars and are greeted  
by SS troops with whips and dogs.

(CONTINUED)

SS GUARD 1

Keep moving. Keep moving. Listen for your names and follow the instructions.

SS GUARD 2

No talking. Move into the camp now. Quickly quickly. Move along.

They are marched through the main gate of the prison camp. They come to a large brick building, the in-processing center, and they enter.

INT. AUSCHWITZ IN-PROCESSING - 1939 - DAY

Long tables are set up inside the center and the prisoners are sorted into groups. Sounds of typewriters are heard in the background.

CLERKS (V.O.)

Women to the front. Men to the rear.

SS GUARD 1

Keep moving. (cracks a whip) No talking!

CLERKS (V.O.)

Next!.. Listen for your names...Move to the next table. Keep moving.

Men and women are separated and the women move into a separate area of the building.

SS GUARD 2

Women to the front. Men to the rear.

SS GUARD 1

Move along! Move along! (to guard 1) They are so stupid. Can't even follow simple instructions.

Once the groups have been segregated more instructions begin. Jacob Keller and Piotr Blazek are standing together. All the men of the train are spread around the room. Most are very weak from the effects of the train ride and lack of food and sleep.

(CONTINUED)

SS GUARD 1

Take all your clothing off and  
place it on the hooks to the rear.  
Quickly. Quickly.

JACOB KELLER (TO BLAZEK)

I don't understand.

PETER BLAZEK

Shh. quiet. Do as they say.

SS GUARD 2

Quiet! The next person who makes a  
sound will be shot. Listen only. Do  
as we say. Quickly.

The men begin undressing and hanging up their clothing on  
the wire hooks on the wall. Close up shot of man hanging up  
his clothing. Tight shot of another hand hanging up a  
jacket. And another hand hanging up a hat.

SS GUARD 1

Form lines to the tables. (to the  
barbers and the guards) Time for  
the animals to get their hair cuts.

The naked men and boys go through a shaving process. All of  
their bodies are clipped with shears, as if they were sheep.  
The barbers are not trained and there is blood dripping from  
several of the men. They stay in order and next are set for  
tattooing. Shots of bare feet shuffling along a cement  
floor. Some have drips of blood on them.

SS GUARD 2

Place your left forearm on the  
table palm facing down.

The first man in Blazek's group sits for the tattoo.

TATTOO MAN 1

Hold still or this will be worse.

The tattoo work is a harsh process which consists of a  
"sanitary" wipe-down of the arm and the needlework dipped  
into ink. What started as a tight shot of one man zooms  
out to a wide shot of the factory of tattoo work. Tattoo men  
glance down at clip boards and checks names off lists.  
Mechanical process. Back to tight shot of the first man in  
Blazek's group. The man gasps as the needle work begins.  
This switches to a tight shot of Jacob Keller also gasping.  
Blazek switches places with Jacob, so he is to be tattooed  
first. Blazek whispers to Jacob.

(CONTINUED)

PIOTR BLAZEK

Be strong. Stay quiet. Follow my example.

Piotr sits down and maintains a blank expression on his face as the needle and ink is applied. When it is done he gets up and nods to Jacob. Jacob mimics Piotr's behavior, but his eyes do well with tears.

INT. BLAZEK KITCHEN - READING PA - 1946

Peter is rocking slightly on his chair and gripping his coffee mug with both hands.

PETER BLAZEK

He was just a boy, but he became a man that day. They took our clothing and gave us the striped uniform and wooden shoes. Wooden shoes! And to make those worse, no socks. They didn't want us to be able to run, but we could barely walk at first. It is surprising what atrocities you can get used to. Because I was able bodied, I ended up getting sent to Auschwitz camp three, called Monowitz. That was the last time I saw Jacob Keller.

Peter's chest is heaving and his speech is beginning to break up a bit.

RUTH BLAZEK

Maybe that's enough for now.

PETER BLAZEK

I am almost done. I may as well just tell the rest. (pause) Some of the men at Monowitz fell ill. Others just may have been old or tired or whatever, but they were taken away when they couldn't work as well. New men showed up all the time. We had to get up at 430 in the morning every day. They would march us back and forth to the chemical plant to work our 12 hour shifts. Those damn shoes made the walk and the work even worse!

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE OF MONOWITZ JUNE 1941 - EARLY EVENING

The work detail is marching back to Monowitz. There are armed SS guards on all sides of the group occasionally cracking the whips they carry, but only a few soldiers are really needed. Most of the men are somewhat gimpy because of the discomfort caused by the wooden clogs.

SS GUARD 3  
Step along. Keep moving.

SS GUARD 4 (AT REAR OF GROUP)  
Keep going. (cracks his whip)

Sounds of airplanes overhead cause the guards to look up. Allied planes are strafing the factory area and are dropping bombs. The men of the work gang drop to the ground and scatter as the explosions and gunfire erupts. One of the guards tries to shoot at the planes and is "rewarded" by returning gunfire. Piotr Blazek sees an opportunity and runs away barefooted kicking off his clogs.

EXT. WOODS NEAR MONOWITZ JUNE 1941 - DUSK

Shot is from just inside the woods facing towards Monowitz. Piotr Blazek's head is seen peering from around a tree. He sees that no one is around and makes a mad dash to the tree line. Camera swivels and he is seen disappearing deeper into the woods.

INT. BLAZEK KITCHEN - READING PA - 1946

Close up of Peter sitting at the table. He lets out a deep breath.

PETER BLAZEK  
That's really all of it. The rest is just sleeping during the day and traveling, mostly through the woods, at night. By that time there were a lot of Allied raids going on, so there was a lot of confusion on the Nazi side...no one was really looking for one escaped Jew.  
<fade out>

INT. LIVING ROOM LATE 70'S DECOR BLAZEK RESIDENCE 1988

Elke comes down the stairs and Ruth is sitting on the sofa watching television and is also scanning the paper.

ELKE SUTTER  
Grandma?

RUTH BLAZEK  
Yes, dear?

ELKE SUTTER  
I've come to a decision.

RUTH BLAZEK  
What is that honey?

Ruth puts down the paper and pats the sofa next to her. Elke sits down.

ELKE SUTTER  
I'm going to Bialystok.

RUTH BLAZEK  
What? What in the world?

ELKE SUTTER  
I've always wanted to visit your homeland, and now, with everything that has happened... It just makes me realize we can't put things off. Time is so precious.

RUTH BLAZEK  
But dear you can't just run off. It's not that easy. You -

ELKE SUTTER  
I've been planning this over the past couple weeks. I got my passport last year when we were going to go to France, so that's already taken care of, and...well, I also have a guide, so you don't have to worry.

Erek enters from the kitchen.

EREK FISCHER  
It's true Grandmother. I have to head home anyway, and really, as you know, it's not that far from Gotska Sandoen to Bialystok.

EXT. NYC AIRPORT - DAY

Elke and Erek exit a taxi and get their bags from the trunk and check in at the curbside luggage.

<fade out>

EXT. SHOT OF PLANE IN AIR

Plane lands at Bialystok airport and a set of stairs is wheeled out. Among the passengers departing the plane are Elke Sutter and Ekek Fischer.

EXT. IN FRONT OF HOTEL IN BIALYSTOK - EVENING 1988

A taxi pulls up to the Hotel Branicki and Erek Fischer and Elke Sutter emerge. They gather their few pieces of luggage from the trunk and go up to the hotel.

EREK FISCHER

You made reservations here?

ELKE SUTTER

It looked nice online, but more importantly it's close to the house and factory.

INT. LOBBY HOTEL BRANICKI 1988 - NIGHT

She looks around the lobby as they approach the front desk.

ELKE SUTTER

It's a little fancier in person.

They step up to the desk.

ELKE SUTTER

Hello. I have reservations for a room. The name is Sutter.

HOTEL CLERK

Sutter. Yes. Have here.

He hands the paperwork to Erek.

ELKE SUTTER

That's mine. Thank you.

She glares at clerk a bit and then speaks to Erek

(CONTINUED)

ELKE SUTTER

I made this reservation thinking I would be traveling alone, but there are double beds in the room, so we should be fine, don't you think?

EREK FISCHER

Yes. Of course.

They get their room key and proceed to the room.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - 1988 - NIGHT

Door opens and we see Elke and Erek enter and place their bags on the floor. Elke takes her carry-on and opens it up on one of the beds. She pulls out a map of the city.

ELKE SUTTER

Okay, I've already marked this. The highlighted areas are the hotel, my grandparent's old house and the location of the factory. The old mine location is just a guess from the clues in Grandpa's journal, but it should be close.

Erek looks on with interest.

ELKE SUTTER

I rented a car for tomorrow, I'd say we get a good night's sleep and get on it first thing in the morning. What do you think?

EREK FISCHER

I am beat. The last week has been nothing but stop and go and time zone changes. It's good to be back in the same zone as home.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - 1987 - MORNING

Elke and Erek are finishing up morning routines.

ELKE SUTTER

I feel like a kid on Christmas morning. All my life I've heard stories of Poland. Whether from the neighbors or my parents. I can hardly believe I am here.

(CONTINUED)

EREK FISCHER

I don't want to how do you say rain on parade, but this country is not Disneyland. You know? It's still very much a soviet state. We must be careful. The pretense of the tourist visiting the mother land has to be kept up at all times.

ELKE SUTTER

Do you think we'll run into any trouble?

She is sobered up by his short speech. Her enthusiasm is somewhat abated.

EREK FISCHER

We must be cautious. That's all I'm saying. If we run into any trouble, please let me do the talking. A Swede visiting is not so unusual, and my grandfather made sure my Polish was good.

They leave the room map in hand and cameras around their necks playing the tourist angle to the hilt.

EXT. IN FRONT OF HOTEL IN BIALYSTOK - DAY 1988

Erek and Elke get into their rented car and drive away.

EXT. FRONT OF HOTEL IN BIALYSTOK - DAY 1988

Rear view of car as it pulls away. Camera pivots to hotel window. Blinds are pulled apart and eyes, nose and a mustache are seen.

INT. LOBBY HOTEL BRANICKI - DAY - 1988

Rear shot of man backing away from the blinds. His face is never fully exposed. He pulls a notepad out of his jacket pocket and writes in it. He puts that away and then picks up a lobby hone and begins a call. It is in Polish and subtitled. We only get his side of the conversation.

AGENT PERZNIANKO

Yes? They just left the hotel. No. A rental car. Blue Mercedes. 4 door. plate is B dash KS dash 521. Okay.

He hangs up the phone and leaves the hotel.

INT. CAR DAY

Elke unfolds and studies the map giving Erek directions. She also has the leather journal from her grandfather out and is checking that as well.

ELKE SUTTER

If you go down to the fourth intersection and make a left. <fade out>

ELKE SUTTER

Yes. that's it. I recognize it from the pictures. It's strange that it's hardly changed in all this time.

EREK FISCHER

That is the way over here. Things don't change the way they do in America. We keep to tradition. Change is not always good.

They stop the car and get out.

EXT. FORMER BLAZEK HOUSE BIALYSTOK - 1988

Elke and Erek walk up to the front door.

ELKE SUTTER

I feel like this is almost a fairy tale. It's surreal being here... Walking where my grandparents walked. Standing at their doorway.

EREK FISCHER

How about knocking on their door? (smiles and gestures at the door) How's that going to feel? (he gestures)

ELKE SUTTER

Okay, okay. (laughing)

Elke knocks on the door and it is answered by

JACOB KELLER

Yes? Can I help you? (in Polish)

(CONTINUED)

Jacob Keller is speaking Polish, This section is subtitled. By the time we get inside the subtitles are dropped and EreK is acting as a translator between Jacob and Elke.

EREK FISCHER

Please excuse us for interrupting your day. We are visiting the area. My friend Elke(gestures to Elke) has come from America to see her grandparent's house, this house. If it is inconvenient we can come back another time.

Keller is about 60 years old. He is startled at EreK's speech and grows a bit wide eyed.

JACOB KELLER

And who were her grandparents?

EREK FISCHER

Piotr and Ruth Blazek.

At this the old man transforms and reacts with happiness and perhaps joy.

JACOB KELLER

Please. Come in. You have indeed found the right house.

INT. FORMER BLAZEK HOUSE BIALYSTOK - 1988

ELKE SUTTER

Thank you for inviting us in. I've heard my grandparents talk about this place, but I never thought I would see it.

JACOB KELLER

It is my pleasure. Can I get you something to drink? Or maybe you are hungry? My wife can easily put something together.

ELKE SUTTER

No, but thanks for the offer. I really just wanted to see this house with my own eyes. My mother was born here.

She looks around and notices that things seem 'preserved' to some extent. Not much has been updated since the war. Puzzled she asks

(CONTINUED)

ELKE SUTTER

Forgive my asking, but this  
furniture and the wall hangings..

JACOB KELLER

They are mostly here from your  
parent's time, as far as I am  
aware. They were here when I moved  
in in 1946. The house was in need  
of cleaning then, and I believe  
hadn't been lived in in years. The  
war was a time of great transition.  
Things were not always what they  
appeared to be and neither were  
people.

ELKE SUTTER

Pardon?

JACOB KELLER

May I tell you a story? Would you  
indulge an old man?

ELKE SUTTER

Certainly.

JACOB KELLER

I knew your grandfather.

ELKE SUTTER

But how? where?

JACOB KELLER

Patience. It's not a long story,  
but maybe you have not heard it. I  
met your Grandfather on the train  
to Auschwitz in 1940.

EXT. ROLLING TRAIN WITH ROW OF BOXCARS -1940 DAY

Zoom in to Nazi soldiers on rear of caboose smoking  
cigarettes and looking bored.

INT. BOX CAR DAY ROLLING TRAIN

Wide shot of boxcar packed with Jews marked with the Star of  
David. Zoom to a young boy who seems alone in the sea of  
humanity. He has tears in his eyes. He is standing next to  
Piotr Blazek.

(CONTINUED)

PIOTR BLAZEK  
It is good that you are crying.

JACOB KELLER  
What?

PIOTR BLAZEK  
It shows you have fear and you know what we are heading toward. But now you have to let that go.

JACOB KELLER  
How can I do that? We are all going to die.

PIOTR BLAZEK  
No. We are not all going to die. It may be true that many of us will die, but some won't. You know the difference?

JACOB KELLER  
No.

PIOTR BLAZEK  
It's your will. Your will and my will. We have to stay strong in here. (gestures to heart) and here (gestures to head) and you will get through this. One way or another.

JACOB KELLER  
One way or another?

PIOTR BLAZEK  
I can't tell you you won't die, but if we stick together and stay strong. We may survive.

INT. FORMER BLAZEK HOUSE BIALYSTOK - 1988

Elke is wide eyed and slack jawed looking at this old man.

ELKE SUTTER  
Auschwitz? But that was for Jews.

JACOB KELLER  
That is a common belief. We were the majority there, but there were also Poles, Gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses, Homosexuals and other "inferior types" along with people  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JACOB KELLER (cont'd)  
 who were political outcasts and  
 dissidents. But your grandfather  
 was a Jew and a Pole, like me.

ELKE SUTTER  
 That's not right. We were, are  
 Catholic.

JACOB KELLER  
 It was a strange time. It started  
 with a misunderstanding or maybe  
 that's not the right word. He told  
 me of switching papers with a man  
 named Rolph Friedman. It may have  
 saved him from being executed for  
 his so called crimes against the  
 state, but it also took him down  
 another path I'm sure he didn't  
 foresee.

EXT. STREET I BIALYSTOK - 1939 - DAY

Piotr Blazeck approached the final check point inside  
 Bialystok. He knew after this the countryside would free him  
 and he could rejoin his family. He trudged to the line which  
 formed just inside the north gate. After a nervous wait he  
 was next.

RUSSIAN SOLDIER 2  
 Papers!

PIOTR BLAZECK  
 Here.

RUSSIAN SOLDIER 2 (AFTER A GLANCE AT THE  
 PAPERWORK)  
 Move to the side.

PIOTR BLAZECK  
 I'm sorry sir, what?

RUSSIAN SOLDIER 2  
 Move to the side Juden. Over with  
 them. (gestures to waiting area)  
 Now! move it. You have no star  
 displayed and we have an agreement  
 with the Germans. Move.

PIOTR BLAZECK  
 But I-

(CONTINUED)

Soldier 2 jumps up and shoves rifle into Blazek's ribs, two other soldiers also jump and they escort him to the holding area.

RUSSIAN SOLDIER 2

You are lucky to not be dead now.

RUSSIAN CAPTAIN

What's going on here?

RUSSIAN SOLDIER 2

This man was giving me back talk

RUSSIAN CAPTAIN

It is no matter. Load them all on the train. This is the last group we have to send. I almost want to keep them, but the treaty they signed binds us. But after today, we can keep them for our own. We have camps to fill, too. Work to be done.

He looks at Piotr Blazek.

RUSSIAN CAPTAIN

He looks fit. Probably a good worker... no matter. Get them all to the station. (to himself) Treblinka, Majdanek, Auschwitz what difference does it make? Poor bastards.

INT. FORMER BLAZEK HOUSE - BIALYSTOK - 1988

JACOB KELLER

He was already on the train when I was loaded up. We heard we were supposed to go to Treblinka but there was some issue and they diverted us. Some people in our car died for lack of water. It was such a long ride. Stop.. start.. stop.. start... We had days to talk. The last time I saw him was the day we arrived at Auschwitz. He gave me courage to take the tattoo like a man, even though I was only ten. I didn't cry then. (pause) It was two years later when I heard he escaped. I managed to survive until the Americans came. He was right.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JACOB KELLER (cont'd)  
My will kept me alive while others  
died around me. I never forgot him  
and I remembered his story of  
Bialystok and the factory, so I  
came here and eventually moved into  
this house thinking someday he  
might return and I would thank him.

Elke stares in disbelief.

JACOB KELLER  
I had nearly given up hope... and  
now here you are. It's not the  
same, but now I can put it to rest.  
He was a good man.

ELKE SUTTER  
We are going to the factory now. Is  
there anything you can tell us  
about that? Is it even still there?  
I would just like to take a photo  
for my grandmother.

JACOB KELLER  
Sure, it is still there. Of course  
its not Blazek Motoren anymore.  
It's now a textile plant. She  
wouldn't recognize it at all. It  
was torn down and rebuilt. Just the  
address is the same. I do have  
something for you.

He leaves the room and goes upstairs.

EREK FISCHER  
Do you still want to go to the  
factory? Seems pointless.

ELKE SUTTER  
I need to stand on those grounds.  
Just to say that I was there. That  
was my grandfather's glory. His  
greatest success.

EREK FISCHER  
I might disagree with that.

He looks at her and it is obvious that he is attracted to  
her.

(CONTINUED)

ELKE SUTTER

Well..I.. (she is also falling for this handsome young man who has come into her life)

Jacob comes back down the stairs with a photo album.

JACOB KELLER

I salvaged everything I found here and put it together in this album. Please take it and give it to your grandmother. I'm sure it would mean a lot to her. It has meant a lot to me to put it together.

He hands Elke the album. She looks through it and is surprised to see photos of her grandparents and the factory. Included also are birth announcements and other memorabilia.

ELKE SUTTER

I don't know what to say. This is incredible. Thank you so much.

She hands the album to Erek and spontaneously gives Jacob a fierce hug. He is stunned at first, but then returns the hug and tears are running down his face.

JACOB KELLER

And there is one more thing. I don't think anyone else knows of this. Perhaps some of the men who worked with your grandfather, but not many of them either.

He hands her an index card.

JACOB KELLER

This is not for your grandmother or your mother. They might not understand. There was a woman and a little boy.

INT. BLAZEK MOTOR TRUCK COMPANY JUNE 1933 DAY

Piotr Blazek is on his knees cradling the body of Anton Hoffs. Hoffs has a head and shoulder wound and blood is pouring onto Blazek's clothing. Piotr is sobbing)

PIOTR BLAZEK

Anton. I am sorry. I thought the patch would hold. The pressure must have jumped up. Anton! Can you hear me?

(CONTINUED)

ANTON HOFFS

Piotr. Piotr. It is getting dark.  
Are you still holding me? I can't  
feel you.

PIOTR BLAZEK

I am here Yanik. I am holding you.

ANTON HOFFS

Piotr. My wife. My boy. Piotr.

PIOTR BLAZEK

They will never want. As long as I  
stand on this earth Anton I swear.  
They will never want.

ANTON HOFFS

Piotr. I'm cold. I'm cold.

INT. FORMER BLAZEK HOUSE - BIALYSTOK - 1988

JACOB KELLER

He didn't let them want either.  
There was nothing funny going on.  
Your grandfather wasn't like that.  
He returned to Bialystok the night  
he sent your mother and grandmother  
on to make sure that Suzanna and  
Alex also got away. That is how he  
ended up getting caught. That card

EREK FISCHER

Yes?

JACOB KELLER

That card is Alex's address. At  
least it was. I think he is still  
there. He knows where the mine is.  
I know you know what I am talking  
about. The mine, and the trucks and  
everything your grandfather worked  
to save. But Alex also has respect  
and he would not give that  
information up. But he will, to you  
Elke.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - FORMER BLAZEK HOUSE BIALYSTOK - 1988

Door opens and Erek and Elke exit, followed by Jacob Keller.

JACOB KELLER

Now remember what I told you. My contact information is in the back of that album. Tell your Grandmother to write. She still knows Polish, I'm sure. No need for a translator for us. Thank you for that son. (to Erek)

EREK FISCHER

My pleasure sir.

JACOB KELLER

And take her (gestures to Elke) to see Alex Hoffs. He will take you where you need to go. Tell her! (Erek translates)

ELKE SUTTER

Thank you so much Mr. Keller. we will talk to Alex, and we will come back to see you as well. I will also pass on all that you have said. It has been wonderful to meet you. I can't thank you enough for your help.

There are parting hugs and handshakes and Elke and Erek get back into the rental car.

EXT. SITE OF FORMER BLAZEK TRUCK WORKS 1988 - DAY

Site is now a textile plant. Elke's rental car pulls up to the front of the plant.

INT. CAR DAY

Elke and Erek are sitting in the front seat of the rented Mercedes.

ELKE SUTTER

Well, Jacob was right. Nothing even remotely like the pictures that he had or that my grandfather had shown me.

(CONTINUED)

EREK FISCHER

It has been almost fifty years since the fire. That's quite a while. Do you still want to go into the place?

ELKE SUTTER

I think maybe I'll just

EXT. SITE OF FORMER BLAZEK TRUCK WORKS 1988 - DAY

During this conversation a guard in a glass booth at the entrance gate of the textile mill walks up to the car and taps on the passenger window. Eke, startled, is cut off mid sentence and follows the gestured direction to roll down her window.

TEXTILE GUARD (SUBTITLED POLISH) SPEAKING

TO ELKE

What are you doing here? You need to move along!

EREK FISCHER (ALSO SUBTITLED POLISH)

We're lost can you tell us how to get to the Hotel Branicki please?

TEXTILE GUARD (SUBTITLED POLISH) SPEAKING

TO ELKE

What's the matter with you? Too good to speak to me? (getting angry) Huh?

ELKE SUTTER

I don't speak Polish, I'm American. (This is the only phrase she knows in Polish)

TEXTILE GUARD (SUBTITLED POLISH) SPEAKING

TO ELKE

Move along or I will report you to the police!

He moves back and writes down their license plate number and walks briskly back to the guard shack. He picks up the phone and is talking excitedly and gesturing to the car. Elke and Erek leave.

INT. CAR DAY

ELKE SUTTER

What the hell was the matter with that guy? It's not against the law to park on the street is it?

EREK FISCHER

I told you. Things are different here. The police and security people are very uptight. This is why I have only been here once before. My grandfather showed me around a bit, but the authorities were really on him. They don't like people who renounce their citizenship. Even though it was so long ago, he is still on lists. We were followed around and quickly told to get out of Poland. It wouldn't surprise me to find they are watching us as well. I think the most organized thing around here is the police and government agencies.

ELKE SUTTER

But we aren't doing anything illegal. How can they hassle us?

EREK FISCHER

This isn't the U.S. Elke. I keep telling you this. We have very few rights. Probably more than the citizens here, because our governments would cause all kinds of issues if we were harmed, but still it's better just to keep things low.

INT HOTEL ROOM 1988 NIGHT

Elke and Erek prepare for bed.

EREK FISCHER

Elke may I ask you something.

ELKE SUTTER

Of course. After what we've been through..

He approaches her and puts his hands on her waist.

(CONTINUED)

EREK FISCHER  
I think we've been avoiding this.

ELKE SUTTER  
I'm not really sure-

EREK FISCHER  
You know what I am talking about.

He leans in and they kiss.

ELKE SUTTER  
Erek...I'm not sure if this is a  
good idea.

They separate slightly but neither is willing to take their  
arms from the other.

EREK FISCHER  
Elke, I've felt something for you  
almost from the first moment I saw  
you at your parent's house. I saw  
you looking at me then, and thought  
that perhaps you found me  
attractive as well..

ELKE SUTTER  
I did.

EREK FISCHER  
And this time together has only  
made me think stronger of you.

ELKE SUTTER  
I am feeling the same way.

Lights fade as they kiss again. This time neither pulls  
back.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - 1988 - MORNING

Erek is heard whistling from the bathroom as Elke gets up  
and gets dressed. Only one of the beds has been slept in,  
the other is still made. Once Elke is dressed a knock is  
heard on the door.

ELKE SUTTER  
Did you order room service?

EREK FISCHER  
No.

Erek goes to the door.

(CONTINUED)

EREK FISCHER

Who is there? (in Polish)

AGENT PERZNIANKO

This is Agent Perznianko of the Bialystok Police Force. (In accented English) Please open the door I need to speak with you.

EREK FISCHER (QUIETLY TO ELKE)

We'd better let him in and just cooperate. (Loudly in English) Yes, officer, of course you may come in. One second please.

Erek glances around the room to make sure nothing is amiss, and then opens the door. Perznianko enters the room and does a quick survey of the premises.

AGENT PERZNIANKO

Passports please.

ELKE SUTTER

What is this about?

AGENT PERZNIANKO

Miss Sutter, correct? There is no need for questions at the moment. Unless I am asking them. I am being polite right now, so please, let me see your passports.

Erek and Elke both give him their passports. He looks at them, pulls out his notebook and checks the record.

AGENT PERZNIANKO

Yes, they seem to be in order. What is your business in Poland Miss Sutter?

ELKE SUTTER

I am on vacation doing some genealogical research and sight seeing.

AGENT PERZNIANKO

And you, Mr. Fischer?

EREK FISCHER

The same. I am accompanying my friend Miss Sutter and acting as a sort of tour guide.

(CONTINUED)

AGENT PERZNIANKO

This is not your first time here,  
is it?

EREK FISCHER

I was here as a boy with my father,  
basically doing the same thing we  
are now. Ancestral home and all  
that.

AGENT PERZNIANKO

You may not remember, as you were a  
boy, but you were asked to not  
return. We had serious concerns  
about your grandfather and his  
connections to radical elements.

EREK FISCHER

As you said, I was just a boy. I  
knew we had to leave, that was all.  
As far as radical elements, my  
grandfather and my father are both  
farmers. No radical thoughts there.

AGENT PERZNIANKO

We'll decide that. Very well, all  
seems to be in order. We will be  
keeping an eye on you. On you both.  
So if you think of anything you  
forgot to tell me, or perhaps just  
want to talk, know we will be  
nearby...for your own safety, of  
course. Good day.

Agent Perznianko leaves the room as quickly as he entered.

ELKE SUTTER

What the hell was that about?

EREK FISCHER

I really have no idea, but we had  
better tread lightly. The sooner I  
am out of this country, the better.

ELKE SUTTER

We have to meet with Alex Hoff's.  
Once we talk to him, we can find  
the mine.

EREK FISCHER

Don't you think you should let me  
in on what is going on? After last  
night, and all we said, and what

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

EREK FISCHER (cont'd)  
our families mean to each other. I  
think you can trust me.

ELKE SUTTER  
Before they left for Olstyn our  
Grandfathers put together a plan  
to deny the Russians or the Nazis  
everything they had worked so hard  
to build. The plan was to hide the  
key components and rebuild after  
the war. That first part went  
pretty well, but the second part...  
Even now I don't know exactly what  
we can do, but at least we can see  
if anything has survived these  
fifty years. If so, well, we can  
try to make plans from there. The  
key to all of this is the mine.  
That's what I meant with finding  
Alex. If he can lead us there...

EREK FISCHER  
We can't waste time. Perznianko  
probably will think we'll run  
scared straight out of the country,  
so that's what we'll have to do.

INT. LOBBY HOTEL BRANICKI - DAY - 1988

Erek and Elke get off the elevator with all their luggage.  
They walk to the front desk and ring the bell.

HOTEL CLERK  
Yes?

ELKE SUTTER  
We need to check out early. Our  
business in Poland is complete.

HOTEL CLERK  
Yes. There is day charge extra to  
leaving early. Yes?

ELKE SUTTER  
Fine. The sooner we can get out of  
here the better.

She glances at Erek and then turns back to the clerk who  
presents her with the bill.

(CONTINUED)

HOTEL CLERK  
To sign here, please!

She signs and they turn to leave.

HOTEL CLERK  
Thank you to come again please!  
Good bye.

EXT. FRONT OF HOTEL IN BIALYSTOK - DAY 1988

Erek and Elke load the luggage in the Mercedes and get in the car.

INT. CAR IN FRONT OF HOTEL DAY

ELKE SUTTER  
I think we should be okay.

EREK FISCHER  
We have to keep an eye out for anyone following us. What is that address for Alex?

Elke gets out the file card and the map.

EXT. IN FRONT OF HOTEL IN BIALYSTOK - DAY 1988

Camera is focused on the Mercedes as it pulls away from the hotel. A second car starts and follows the Mercedes out of sight.

INT. UNMARKED POLICE CRUISER - BIALYSTOK - DAY

Plainclothes detective gets out his radio and raises it to his ear. Conversation is all subtitled Polish.

DETECTIVE  
I've got them.

AGENT PERZNIANKO - IN V.O.  
Do not get too close and do not interfere. Whatever you do do not let them see you.

DETECTIVE  
I have done this before, sir. They are kids. They won't even think to look in the rear view mirror.

(CONTINUED)

AGENT PERZNIANKO

They are not stupid, and they are up to something. I bet my career on it. Just stay with them and let me know where it leads you.

DETECTIVE

I will.

EXT. BIALYSTOK SUBURB. DAY

Mercedes pulls up to a non-descript small duplex.

INT. MERCEDES

Elke checks the card against the number on the curb and nods. They get out of the car.

EXT. BIALYSTOK SUBURB. DAY

Elke and Erek walk up to the door and knock. The knock is answered by a man in his late fifties. Alex. (conversation is subtitled Polish)

ALEX HOFFS

Yes. What do you want?

EREK FISCHER

We are friends of Jacob Keller. May we come in?

ALEX HOFFS

Jacob Keller? What is this about?

EREK FISCHER

Please, let us come in and we can explain. I don't want to stand on the street. You understand?

ALEX HOFFS

Yes. If you are friends of Jacob's. Come in.

INT. LIVING ROOM HOUSE OF ALEX HOFFS -1988

Alex takes them into his living room and gestures to the sofa. He takes a seat in an easy chair. Erek does a running translation of his and Alex's conversation for Elke.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX HOFFS

So what is this about?

EREK FISCHER

We are here about Blazek Motoren.  
And the mine.

ALEX HOFFS

Who are you? What do you want from  
me?

EREK FISCHER

Who I am is of no consequence  
really. She (gestures) is Piotr  
Blazek's granddaughter and she  
would appreciate your help to get  
back what rightfully belongs to her  
family.

EXT. BIALYSTOK SUBURB DAY

Black four door sedan pulls up to the curb a half block from  
the Hoff's residence.

INT. UNMARKED POLICE CRUISER - BIALYSTOK SUBURB - DAY

Detective turns off car and gets out his radio.

DETECTIVE

I am at 20 Grażyny Bacewicz. They  
have entered the home. Should I  
wait?

AGENT PERZNIANKO

Of course you should wait. They  
won't be there long. I can assure  
you. Keep me posted.

INT. LIVING ROOM HOUSE OF ALEX HOFFS -1988

ALEX HOFFS

It's been so long. I know exactly  
the place you want to go. I've been  
going there since I was a boy. The  
first time with your grandfather.  
The mine was right by a horse farm.  
I was there just about six months  
ago actually. I only dare go in the  
fall. Usually no one is around. Do  
you have a car?

(CONTINUED)

EREK FISCHER

Yes.

ALEX HOFFS (TO ELKE)

I loved your grandfather. Without his help I don't know how mother would have survived the loss of my father. Can I see him? Maybe go to the States?

EREK FISCHER

That is part of the reason we are here. Time waits for no man, and unfortunately Mr. Blazek has passed on. (Alex starts to quietly cry - Erek says to Elke in English) He was asking about your grandfather. I told him of his death. (Elke also gets teary at the thought of her grandfather helping this man so many years ago.)

ALEX HOFFS

We can go to the mine now, if you like. I will show you what I have done.

EREK FISCHER

We would like that. The police have been harassing us; following us before, and we need to keep moving to stay ahead of them.

EXT. BIALYSTOK SUBURB DAY

Alex, Erek and Elke come out of the Hoffs house. They get in the Mercedes and speed off. The unmarked cruiser follows them.

ALEX HOFFS

Your grandfather was like a favorite uncle to me. Whenever he would show up I knew something magical was going to happen. One time he took me to a horse farm and I actually got to ride on a horse. It is one of the greatest memories of my childhood. You may think I am just rambling. An old man and his memories, but no. It is lucky for us all that that trip stayed in my memory because we also took a walk in the woods nearby.

(CONTINUED)

ELKE SUTTER

It sounds like a lovely time, but  
what does that have to do with us?

ALEX HOFFS

This is what I am getting to now. I  
remember when I was impatient, too.  
But you are young.

Elke starts to apologize for interrupting, but Alex stops  
her.

ALEX HOFFS

No need. No need. I know I am  
wandering around the story, but  
here's the point. We walked through  
the woods and he told me a ghost  
story about a cave. And right at  
the end we arrived at the mouth of  
the mine. It scared me at the time,  
but later I remembered the story  
and the mine, and it all came  
together when I talked to Jacob  
Keller. I put two and two together  
and got an answer. But here we are.  
I will show you instead of telling.

EXT. RURAL ROAD OUTSIDE BIALYSTOK - DAY

The Mercedes stops and Alex Hofffs, Elke Sutter and Ere  
Fischer emerge. They walk down a trail that leads off the  
road.

EXT. RURAL ROAD OUTSIDE BIALYSTOK - DAY

The black sedan pulls up behind the Mercedes. The driver is  
on the radio as he pulls up.

INT. UNMARKED POLICE CRUISER - RURAL BIALYSTOK - DAY

Detective is talking on the radio. (Perzianko is V.O.)

DETECTIVE

That's right. On highway 682, look  
for my car. It's about 6 miles from  
town.

AGENT PERZNIANKO

Don't lose sight of them.

(CONTINUED)

DETECTIVE

Head down the trail when you get here. Call me when you arrive.

AGENT PERZNIANKO

We should be there in ten minutes. no more than that. Good work.

EXT. DIRT TRAIL BORDERED BY A FENCED IN PASTURE WITH HORSES  
- DAY

The conversation started in the car continues as they walk down the trail.

ALEX HOFFS

See. The horses. Just like '39. Things have not changed so much out here.

EXT. DIRT TRAIL DAY

The detective follows them, but stays out of sight.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Alex, Elke and Erek turn off the trail and head into the woods.

ALEX HOFFS

The mine is just ahead. Here is the last part of my story, because this all is now yours. I have been out here many nights. My wife thinks I am crazy for astronomy. I even had to buy a telescope. It hasn't even been out of the box. But my shovel has.

EXT. MINE ENTRANCE - DAY

Alex walks up to the side of the hill. It is overgrown with weeds and brush. He reaches down and brushes some leaves aside and lifts a sheet of wood that uncovers a tunnel.

ALEX HOFFS

This has taken me a long time, but now that you are here, it was worth it. Follow me.

(CONTINUED)

He props up the board and enters the narrow tunnel. He lights a torch that was stuck in the ground. Elke pulls a flashlight out of her back pack. But stops short of entering.

ELKE SUTTER

I feel silly saying this, but after the drive and with all the excitement. I have to go.

EREK FISCHER

What?

ELKE SUTTER

You know. (she shrugs and gestures toward the woods to one side of the hill)

EREK FISCHER

Oh. Ah.

ELKE SUTTER

I'll try to hurry.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Elke jogs off and once in the woods pulls her grandfather's notebook out of her back pack, along with a compass. She looks around for a large tree near a cairn. The dusting of snow partially obscures the cairn, but she spots it and a large stump nearby. She puts her back to the stump and checks the compass and takes ten paces. She pulls out a hand held metal detector and it buzzes a "found" signal. She then gets out a garden trowel and begins to dig. She uncovers the metal box and quickly removes the burlap sack it contained and places it into her backpack. She reburies the empty box and then returns to the mine.

EXT. MINE ENTRANCE - DAY

Elke jogs into view and rejoins Alex and Erek

EREK FISCHER

I was starting to get worried.

ELKE SUTTER

Things got a bit complicated and I didn't.. well. Never you mind. Here I am. Let's go in.

Alex picks up the burning torch and leads the way into the mine.

INT. MINE

Alex leads the way to a bunch of crates and exposed truck parts. The mine is lined on both sides with them. Erek and Elke are amazed and exchange cries of "You have to see this" and "Wow, check this out" etc. Ad libbed. This is interrupted by

AGENT PERZNIANKO

Yes, I do have to "check this out"  
as you say.

Alex, Erek and Elke are frozen as they hear the voice and see a half dozen government agents and police with flashlights surround them.

AGENT PERZNIANKO

I must say "bravo" for uncovering this and leading us to this amazing historic find. We truly appreciate it. This will make an excellent addition to the Bialystok war museum. The famous Blazing Blazek Motor Truck Company. The fire. The deserters. History.

ELKE SUTTER

But this is the property of my grandfather. How can you possibly think we would just give it up?

AGENT PERZNIANKO

Well, you can try to fight the system. Eventually you might even win. Very doubtful, but who would have even thought you'd get this far? If you were smart, you would just leave now.

EREK FISCHER

Elke. This goes back to what I was saying. Things don't work the same here.

AGENT PERZNIANKO

You should listen to your friend Miss Sutter. You are both guests in this country, but it is a delicate situation should you decide that you want to challenge me. It can be made political and I think with people from three countries conspiring to defraud our

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

AGENT PERZNIANKO (cont'd)  
government, I am thinking that  
perhaps charges might be in  
order... or you can just walk away  
now.

ALEX HOFFS  
I am leaving sir. (to Erek) Tell  
her I am sorry, but I cannot stay.

ELKE SUTTER  
We will leave also. Don't feel bad  
Alex, I appreciate what you've done  
for me.

AGENT PERZNIANKO  
That is a smart choice. I think a  
direct path to the airport would be  
a good decision as well, since  
you've already checked out of your  
hotel... We do know everything  
you've been up to. And I will make  
sure you listen to me now.

Elke, Erek and Alex leave.

EXT. MINE ENTRANCE - DAY

Alex Elke and Erek emerge from the mine and walk quickly  
toward the car.

EREK FISCHER  
I'm surprised that you let that go  
so easily.

ELKE SUTTER  
Just keep walking. I don't think we  
are out of this yet.

EREK FISCHER  
What do you mean? They let us go.

ELKE SUTTER  
Until the plane is in the air,  
let's just say that I'm paranoid. I  
think that's what you've been  
telling me all along, right, this  
is a different country and things  
are not always what they appear?

(CONTINUED)

EREK FISCHER

Yes, but...

ELKE SUTTER

Can you ask Alex if he would return the car to the rental office? And that we appreciate all he's done?

Erek speaks to Alex in Polish. A short conversation occurs

EREK FISCHER

She wants you to return the car. Can you do that for us?

ALEX HOFFS

Certainly. But what is going on?

EREK FISCHER

I'm not quite sure, but when I find out, I'll let you know.

ALEX HOFFS

She seems very clever, like her grandfather.

EREK FISCHER

I think she got some of his genes for sure.

EREK FISCHER (TO ELKE)

He's got it covered.

EXT. RURAL ROAD OUTSIDE BIALYSTOK - DAY

They emerge from the path and climb into the car. Elke gets in the back and starts rooting through her backpack.

ELKE SUTTER

Yes!

EREK FISCHER

Can you tell me what's going on now?

ELKE SUTTER

Let's just get on that plane, then we'll have time to talk.

EXT. BIALYSTOK AIRPORT. DAY

A plane is taking off and Alex is driving down the road in the Mercedes

INT. AIRPLANE

Elke once again has her backpack in her lap.

ELKE SUTTER

The trucks were my grandfather's dream. I never even considered they would be there after all this time, or that they would still be in good condition. The time to uncover them, and the red tape that would have been involved... I don't even want to think about it. Perznianko thought that was all we wanted and that worked out just fine for me. I know what the real treasure is.

She starts to pull the sack out of her pack to show Erek.

ELKE SUTTER

This is what <fades out>

INT. BLAZEK LIVING ROOM - READING PA - 1988 - AFTERNOON

Elke is in the living room sitting on the sofa with her grandmother. First she takes the album from Jacob Keller and gives it to her grandmother.

ELKE SUTTER

This is from a friend of grandfather's. He met him on the way to Auschwitz, but eventually made his way back to Bialystok.

Ruth gasps with amazement as she sees things she thought lost to time.

Elek then takes the burlap sack out of her backpack and begins handing framed photos to Ruth. They are wedding shots and baby shots of Lida. Ruth is crying and Lida comes and sits on the other side of her. Last photo they look at show Ruth in her wedding dress wearing a diamond necklace and matching bracelet. The bracelet shows because her wedding and engagement rings are the focus of the shot. As she is looking at the photo, the last items Elke pulls from the sack are the necklace and bracelet. As she hands them to Ruth we see the engagement ring is now on Elke's finger.

(CONTINUED)

THE END

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