

SAVING HELGA

Screenplay
by
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A fictional story
inspired by true events

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Note: Unless otherwise indicated, all dialogue spoken by
Germans will be in the German language and subtitled

Memories...

'Although I didn't know it at the time, as the Gestapo slammed the door behind them, they were also slamming the door on my youth, my innocence, my family happiness and, ultimately, my father's life.'

A refugee remembering Kristallnacht

"England became my home, my great love. And today, on the anniversary of Kristallnacht, the night on which my happy childhood ended, I am intensely grateful to England, this good and compassionate country that saved my life."

Another refugee

BLACK SCREEN

Silence - then...

OVER BLACK WE HEAR people screaming, shouting, glass being smashed, gunshots, fires crackling...

THEN NEWSREEL FOOTAGE slowly FADES UP. Grainy black-and-white. Absolutely shockingly, frighteningly, real.

WE SEE Nazi storm troopers smashing everything Jewish. Burning, demolishing, assaulting Jews who dare to complain to them.

SUPER:

'GERMANY - NOVEMBER 1938'

THEN WE HEAR the strident tones of a newsreel commentator becoming emotional about Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass).

NEWSREEL COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

...On November 9th, Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels announced a government sanctioned reprisal against the Jews. Synagogues were ravaged and then burned. Jewish shop windows were broken. Jews were beaten, raped, arrested, and murdered. Throughout Germany and Austria, the pogrom rampaged.

NOTE: Newsreel footage of Kristallnacht to accompany all commentary

NEWSREEL COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

Police and firefighters stood by as synagogues burned and Jews were beaten, only taking action to prevent the spread of fire to non-Jewish owned property and to stop looters on the orders of propaganda minister Goebbels.

Blazing synagogues, shops having their plate-glass windows smashed and books being burnt are graphically shown.

Pavements are littered with broken glass.

The Star of David is painted on shop fronts to depict Jewish ownership of a business.

NEWSREEL COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

By the end of the rampage, gangs of
Nazi storm troopers had destroyed
7,000 Jewish businesses. They set
fire to more than 900 synagogues,
killed 91 Jews and deported 30,000
Jewish men to concentration camps.

INT. CINEMA - SOUTHERN ENGLAND - NIGHT

Of everyone watching in the small-town cinema no one is
more shocked than SALLY GOODMAN.

Others cough, some fidget, and one Jewish woman cries
openly at the images on the big screen.

Watching dumb-struck are the above-named Sally, 28, and her
husband, PETER, 29.

The booming voice of the commentator goes into overdrive as
he questions us...

NEWSREEL COMMENTATOR (V.O.)

Where will it all end? The world
holds its breath while it waits.
Surely not another war?

SALLY

Those bloody Nazis, don't give
tuppence for anyone.

She brings a handkerchief to her eyes. Peter squeezes an
arm.

Sally watches as a girl of about ten is pictured standing
alone, weeping buckets.

Stirring music accompanies pictures of terrified people
running this way and that from the Nazis - except for one.

SALLY

I could scoop that little girl up
in my arms.

-- Sally's a special kind of woman - one who wants children
but can't conceive. She's a warm-hearted individual who's
made her mark as a primary school teacher.

Her petite figure is what attracted Peter in the first
place - along with a mumsy sort of face, and those
captivating hazel eyes.

-- Peter, on the other hand, is happy to let things muddle
through.

He's a fairly stocky kind of guy, and a dependable sort. Just suited to his job as an architectural technician.

Peter's responsible for producing drawings and coping with the requirements of safety on a building site.

But he's got a few years yet before letters are put behind his name.

SALLY

I'd like to adopt that little girl.

PETER

I know you want a family, love, but taking in a young German girl's a bit much -- what about the language barrier?

SALLY

We'd muddle through. Soon get to understand what she's saying.

PETER

What about your job? You couldn't look after a refugee and still work.

SALLY

I don't know...

The newsreel ends on a light-hearted piece about holidays abroad.

Germany isn't on their recommended list though.

For the rest of the show the couple sit immersed in the feature film, as Robert Donat battles spies wanting to damage England.

Some things never change.

At the end of the film they stand for the National Anthem before filing out with the crowds to...

EXT. STREET

It's a cold November evening as Sally and Peter leave the cinema and their breath hangs like smoke in the still air.

They're a very affectionate couple and hold hands as they make their way to the bus station.

Their seven years of marriage shows no signs of itching yet.

Jostling crowds from the cinema mingle with them.

Looks like everyone has the same idea; to get home as quickly as possible.

PETER

You okay love. You seem out of it?

SALLY

Can't get that little girl out of my head.

PETER

Little girl?

SALLY

Yeah, the one in the newsreel.

PETER

Oh.

They walk in silence to the bus station.

And from that...

INT. BUS - LATER

The bus is crowded, mostly with people who've been to see the film.

A couple sitting in front of our two stars are also discussing the newsreel.

WOMAN

Shan't sleep tonight worrying about those poor people. Treated worse than animals.

MAN

(couldn't care less
attitude)

Not our problem -- we've got enough to worry us without thinking about them.

Sally and Peter exchange meaningful glances and raised eyebrows.

The woman doesn't answer. The rest of the journey is in silence... until

PETER

Our stop coming up love.

SALLY

Okay.

The conductor rings the bell, the bus grinds to a halt with a squealing of brakes.

Sally, Peter and two or three others hop off.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

It's only a short walk from the bus stop to the Goodman's house. The night is chilly - it's November after all - but arm-in-arm Sally and Peter have their love to keep them warm.

The street lights twinkle in the evening gloom. Sometimes a car chugs past, or occasionally a cyclist pedals quietly by, all togged up for the cold weather.

It's a nice part of town - nothing fancy though. A modern (well it was then) estate of suburban semi's. Three beds - and luxury of luxuries - a bathroom with a flushing loo.

There's even a concrete drive to park a car - if you can afford one, most can't.

SALLY

I'm ready for a cup of tea.

PETER

Wouldn't mind a beer meself.

They laugh together and walk off.

EXT. THE GOODMAN'S HOUSE - LATER

Peter inserts a key and opens the door.

INT. THE GOODMAN'S HOUSE - SAME

They take their coats off in the

HALL

And we follow them through into...

THE KITCHEN

Not much to mention here; it's typical of the period. Few cupboards, sink, cooker - what else do you need?

There's also a walk-in pantry with a marble shelf.

Peter switches a radio on. It crackles into life near the end of the news as a BBC NEWS READER tells us...

BBC NEWS READER (V.O.)
Further reports also state that city parks and restaurants are out of bounds to Jewish people. And schools will soon be segregated. ... Meanwhile Jewish people in Berlin have vowed to fight on against the Nazi oppression.

Peter switches the radio off.

PETER
Don't see how those people can fight against the Nazis. Bloody swines!

SALLY
Must be terrible living there.

PETER
Well, if you're Jewish.

SALLY
Jewish or not, they're all human beings.

Sally fills an old kettle and plugs it in to a dodgy socket.

It must be okay as the kettle soon starts to sing. Sally prepares a brown earthenware teapot with a couple of spoons of tea.

She sits at a wooden kitchen table, a thoughtful look on her face.

Peter notices, he's pretty quick on the uptake.

PETER
Still thinking about that little girl?

SALLY
'fraid so.

PETER
Tell you what -- shall I make some enquiries about fostering a kid from Germany?

SALLY
Oh, I'd love you to do that for me.

PETER
For both of you.

Sally gets up, kisses Peter on the cheek.

PETER
(laughing)
I'll be on for it tonight then, eh?

SALLY
What ever d'you mean?

PETER
A little bit of how's yer father?

Sally giggles

SALLY
You should be ashamed of yourself.
(after a pause - more
giggling)
Do you want some tea?

PETER
Before -- or after?

Sally pretends to slap his face.

Peter's arms enclose her body.

PETER
D'you know something? I love you a
bit more every day.

SALLY
Me too.

They kiss passionately.

The stage is set...

INT. SALLY & PETER'S BEDROOM - LATER

Peter is in bed propped up on his elbows. He wolf-whistles as Sally shimmers towards him in a loose fitting robe which displays most of her cute figure.

PETER
People'ud pay good money to see
what I can see.

She gets into bed and lies on top of him.

Following her hot bath she's covered herself in Olde English lavender talc.

Peter sniffs appreciatively.

PETER
My God (sniff) you smell gorgeous,
(sniff) I could eat you with a
spoon.

SALLY
Afterwards -- perhaps.

They kiss deeply. Their mouths hungry... their desire at boiling point...

Peter moves Sally over and slides on top. She inhales a sharp intake of breath as he enters her.

SALLY
Oh, that feels soooo good.

Soft. Warm. Familiar. They know each others bodies perfectly.

The rhythm, slow to begin, increases as their passion rises...

Sally, her eyes closed, her breathing getting deeper, is wound up as she begins to reach her climax.

SALLY
(loudly)
Don't stop, don't stop, oh I love
you, I love you, I loooove you,
honeybunch.

PETER
Not too loud, petal -- old Alf next
door'll hear you.

SALLY
He -- uh, he might want -- to join
in.

PETER
Steady on -- you'll put me off
-- my breakfast.

SALLY
Don't stop -- you're -- uh --
you're doing fine.

Peter finishes, savours the moment, then rolls off Sally.

PETER
Just gets better every time.
(a pause, laughing)
(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

Do your school kids know what you get up to at night?

SALLY

I'll tell 'em when I get there tomorrow if you like.

PETER

They'll be wanting pictures next.

LATER

They sit up in bed, their backs resting on plumped up pillows.

Sally moves down and rests her head on Peter's chest.

She looks into his face. Her eyes sparkle.

SALLY

You weren't kidding when you said you'd try and find out about fostering, were you?

PETER

Course not, darling.
(he kisses the tip of
her nose, yawns)
Now I'd better get some sleep.
Work tomorrow, somebody's got to
bring home the bacon.

SALLY

(giggling again)
Love you to bits.

PETER

Love you too -- crocodile chops.

Yet more tittering from Sally.

They make themselves comfortable in each others arms, settle down for sleep.

Peter extends an arm out of bed and turns the table lamp off.

INT. HELGA'S APARTMENT - BERLIN - DAY

SUPER:

'HELGA'S HOME - BERLIN - NOVEMBER 1938'

It's a classy two-bedroomed apartment in a good district of Berlin.

-- Thirteen-year-old HELGA MULLER lives there with her mother HANNAH,33, and her father HERSCHEL,39.

-- Hannah is a young mum, emotional at times as anyone would be after the horrors of Kristallnacht.

As becomes her status as the wife of a prominent businessman in Berlin, she dresses very tastefully.

She also wears some expensive jewellery.

-- Herschel is equally smart. He wears pinstripe suits almost exclusively during business hours.

He only allows himself to dress down in a baggy sweater and old trousers relaxing at home.

-- Helga is a bright, pretty girl with jet black hair, she is advanced for her tender years.

She used to enjoy school. Lately, there's been bullying and name calling like Schmutziger Jude (dirty Jew) which has upset her a great deal.

She has retreated within herself and now spends hours in her room reading.

When we join them Helga has just returned from school. Her face bears the tell-tale bruising of a punch and she looks dishevelled and upset.

NOTE: The following dialogue is in German with English subtitles.

Her mother greets her in the hallway.

HANNAH

My darling what has happened to your face?

HELGA

I fell over at school. It is nothing.

HANNAH

You say it is nothing, but it needs attention.

HELGA

Mama please do not fuss over me. I am all right. How is Papa?

Helga brushes her mother aside.

HANNAH

Papa is upset at what has happened
-- but you know him, he will bounce
back.

HELGA

Maybe not this time, it was
dreadful, and scary.

Helga wipes her eyes with a handkerchief she pulls from a
sleeve.

Her mother watches and sighs deeply.

End of subtitles

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Peter stands at a police desk.

He looks anxious as the sergeant tries to explain the
government's position on fostering.

SERGEANT

We've no news yet sir. I reckon it
could be a week or two before we
hear about those German kids coming
here.

PETER

Can't you make some enquiries
though? You never know what the
Nazis might do in that time.

SERGEANT

(patiently)

Now, sir, I know you're anxious but
there's nothing I can do until the
Government makes up its mind.

PETER

Well that says it all. They do
nothing but talk -- and those poor
kids over there have to sit and
wait.

SERGEANT

I think they'll get their arses off
the seats a bit quicker with this
problem. Give it a few days -- see
what happens.

PETER

Thanks for your time.

He exits the police station.

The sergeant sighs and returns to his form-filling.

INT. HELGA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

NOTE: German dialogue with English subtitles

Helga sits at a kitchen table eating a meal of kosher chicken.

Her mother is washing dishes.

They are startled by thunderous bangs on their main door.

HELGA
Somebody's in a hurry.

As if to answer Helga the 'somebody' announces himself...

FATTY GESTAPO MAN (O.S.)
(shouting)
Gestapo. Open up.

BANG, CRASH, BANG.

The door rattles in its frame.

Hannah opens the door warily.

She sees two men in long raincoats and trilby hats standing there. Meet SWEATY GESTAPO MAN and FATTY GESTAPO MAN.

-- One of the men is thin, he's the sweaty one. The other is hard-faced, tubby, and wears a sinister smile and the distinct perfume of body odour.

SWEATY GESTAPO MAN
Where is Herr Muller? We've come for him.

HANNAH
He's -- he's not here. Why do you want him?

SWEATY GESTAPO MAN
That need not concern you.

He walks so close to Hannah that she smells his breath and recoils - ugh, it's an overdose of sauerkraut.

SWEATY GESTAPO MAN
You are a lying bitch.

HANNAH
No, no...

FATTY GESTAPO MAN
No matter whether she's lying or
not -- we'll see for ourselves.

The two men push Hannah aside and enter the kitchen.

They search thoroughly, even opening cupboards and
searching under the table.

Satisfying themselves he's not there they move to...

THE LIVING ROOM

With the same eagerness they tear the place apart.

Grunting to themselves in frustration they move to...

THE MAIN BEDROOM

Where they rip through wardrobes, throwing clothes
everywhere.

They pull out Herschel's suits. Rifling through pockets and
flinging the expensive garments to the floor.

In their frustration they walk over the clothes to search
under the bed.

Not a sign...

Herr Muller is not here.

They move to...

HELGA'S BEDROOM

A newspaper and assorted books lie on the bed, they fling
them onto the floor in annoyance.

Helga's room is given the same treatment. Satisfying
themselves that he could not possibly be hiding in a
bedside cabinet they rush to...

THE BATHROOM

Could he be hiding in the toilet bowl?

These spooks take a look. Surprise, surprise - he's not
there either.

Nor is he in the medicine cupboard.

Brains are not their strong point.

Returning to...

THE LIVING ROOM

FATTY GESTAPO MAN

Okay -- he's not here. When will he be back?

HANNAH

I do not know. He's inspecting the shops that the Nazis destroyed.

SWEATY GESTAPO MAN

Bitch. You lowlifes deserve all that's coming to you.

HANNAH

What have we done to you. We live our lives peacefully. We are good Germans. My father-in-law fought for Germany in the last war, we...

Fatty Gestapo Man backhands her across the face.

She is sent tumbling by the ferocity of the slap given by the man's meaty hand.

HELGA

Leave her alone, you -- you horrible swine.

FATTY GESTAPO MAN

(to Helga)

You want the same?

(turning to Sweaty Gestapo Man)

Come, we go. Leave these pigs in their own mess.

SWEATY GESTAPO MAN

Tell him -- we'll be coming back.

They exit the apartment, almost pulling the door off its hinges as they slam it behind them.

Helga rushes to her mother, puts an arm round her.

HELGA

Mama, why are they doing this to us -- what have we done to them?

HANNAH

If I knew the answer to that, I'd be wiser than Solomon.

She pulls Helga to her side. Kisses her hair.

END OF SUBTITLES

EXT. THE GOODMAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Peter ambles along his street, he has a worried look on his face.

He turns into the driveway of his home, puts a key in the lock and enters.

INT. THE GOODMAN'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

He walks into the...

KITCHEN

Sally is washing clothes the old-fashioned way, by hand.

She turns as Peter enters, a smile crosses her face but rapidly disappears as she notices Peter's expression.

SALLY

Hello sweetheart, something the matter?

PETER

I went to the police station today...

SALLY

And?

PETER

...The sergeant couldn't tell me anything. Said the Government was still deciding what to do.

SALLY

Let's hope they don't take too long. Heard on the radio that the Nazis are doing house searches for people who run businesses.

PETER

That's rotten. What they gonna do with 'em when they find them?

SALLY

Send them to camps of some sort or other.

PETER

My God. Those bastards are disgusting.

SALLY

Do you know anybody who could help us?

PETER

I'll ask my boss tomorrow.

(beat)

What's for dinner, I'm starving?

SALLY

Made you a big steak pie, and there's trifle for afters.

PETER

My favourites. Want any help?

SALLY

No, it's all under control. Thanks love for trying to find out for me.

(smiling,
afterthought)

Shall we have an early night?

Peter grins broadly as he settles down on a kitchen chair with the evening paper.

INT. HELGA'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

A key is heard and the door opens to admit HERSCHEL.

He sees the worried looks on the faces of Helga and her mother.

NOTE: GERMAN dialogue with English subtitles

HERSCHEL

My loves, what is wrong?

HANNAH

Two horrible men from the Gestapo have been here. They said they'd come for you.

The colour drains from Herschel's face.

HERSCHEL

Did they say why?

HANNAH

It is because they are arresting all Jewish businessmen.

HERSCHEL

Then I must leave. Find somewhere safe.

He paces the room, muttering to himself, clicks his fingers.

HERSCHEL

I know where to hide. In the woods is a cabin. Do you remember, we took Helga up there when she was a baby for picnics? It is still there, I am sure.

HANNAH

Winter is approaching. You will die of the cold.

HERSCHEL

I will die at the hands of the Nazis if I stay here.

He throws his hands in the air.

HERSCHEL

At least I stand a chance of living.

HANNAH

I suppose I could bring food and clean clothes to you.

HERSCHEL

And candles and newspapers.

HANNAH

Yes, those too.
(thinking)
But how will you get to the cabin?

HERSCHEL

I will leave after dark tomorrow -- and walk to it.

HANNAH

My darling, it's six kilometers at least.

HERSCHEL

Then I'll have to walk six kilometers. What else can I do?

HANNAH

Can't we leave Germany, go to America or England? Those countries don't persecute Jewish people.

HERSCHEL

I could make some inquiries at the embassies tomorrow as long as I'm careful -- don't want to have any run-ins with Nazis.

HANNAH

And the cabin?

HERSCHEL

That is my next choice.

HANNAH

But what of the curfew for Jewish people?

HERSCHEL

It gets dark by four o'clock. I will leave then. There will be a lot of people about. I can melt into the crowds.

HELGA

Papa, I don't want you to go. I am very worried for your safety. Isn't there something else that can be done?

HERSCHEL

My little love, I wouldn't leave you if I had an alternative.

He folds his arms around Helga.

Tears roll down his cheeks.

EXT/INT. RUINED SHOP - DAY

Herschel approaches what's left of one of his main shops. He sighs when he sees the devastation.

IN THE SHOP

Herschel surveys the damage done to his shop on Alexandersplatz after the Nazis plundered it.

Expensive dresses ravaged by fire hang at crazy angles from hangars.

They are ruined beyond salvation.

Herschel moves steadily round his property, moving carefully over broken glass. His shoes make a crunching sound as he moves.

On every flat vertical surface the Star of David is crudely painted together with the slogan JUDEN AUS (Jews out).

He is startled by a sharp voice, a feared STORM TROOPER.

STORM TROOPER
(in German with
English subtitles)
You! What're you doing?

HERSCHEL
(in German with
English subtitles)
I am inspecting the damage done to
my shop.

STORM TROOPER
Papers.

The storm trooper clicks his fingers sharply, points his Luger pistol menacingly at Herschel.

STORM TROOPER
Now!

Herschel fishes his papers from an inside pocket, hands them to the storm trooper.

The storm trooper flicks roughly through them. Satisfies himself that they're genuine.

Handing them back, he deliberately lets them drop to the floor.

STORM TROOPER
Pick them up, dirty Jewish pig.

As Herschel goes to pick them up he is kicked in the stomach and falls into broken glass.

He tries to get up and notices his left hand is bleeding.

STORM TROOPER
Ha! You cut yourself on your own
glass.

Herschel holds out his hand which is bleeding profusely.

HERSCHEL
Is not my blood the same colour as
yours?

STORM TROOPER
Huh!

The storm trooper marches off.

Herschel watches him go and spits violently at the spot where the storm trooper had been standing.

HERSCHEL
(making a fist of his
right hand)
One day, my friend.

INT. HELGA'S APARTMENT - LATER

Herschel enters. He has a bandage on his left hand.

Hannah goes to him, kisses his cheek, notices the bandage.

HANNAH
What has happened?

HERSCHEL
I cut my hand. It is nothing to get
upset about.

HANNAH
Who put the bandage on?

HERSCHEL
A kind man at the British embassy.

HANNAH
You have been to the embassies,
what did they say?

Herschel moves away from Hannah. It's obvious he's having a heart-rending moment.

HANNAH
My love, it was bad news?

HERSCHEL
It wasn't all bad. The Americans
would accept us, but we'd have to
wait five years -- five years of a
living hell here.

HANNAH
And the British?

HERSCHEL
They won't accept us, well not you
and me.
(he sobs)
But they are working on a programme
called Kindertransport and Helga
would be able to leave for England
on that.

HANNAH

Oh, no.

Hannah chokes back tears, runs from the room dabbing her eyes.

Herschel follows her to...

THE MAIN BEDROOM

Hannah lies on the bed, weeping freely. Herschel goes to comfort her.

HERSCHEL

My darling, at least Helga would be spared of more pain here.

(a pause)

She would have a better life in England. Jewish people are treated as equals there.

HANNAH

I can't bear the thought of my little Helga leaving us. We may never see her again.

HERSCHEL

Who knows what will happen? Maybe Hitler will be defeated by his own party -- maybe sanity will return to our country.

HANNAH

We can't rely on maybe's.

She buries her head in a pillow, shakes with weeping.

End of subtitles

EXT. HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT - ESTABLISHING - DAY

The Union flag flies proudly atop the Westminster tower on a shiny-bright November morning.

INT. HOUSE OF COMMONS - COMMITTEE ROOM - SAME

A large delegation representing Jewish and non-Jewish child refugees are gathered to hear Home Secretary SIR SAMUEL HOARE explain the government's decision on the issue of allowing children access to Great Britain.

They wait expectantly; there's excited chatter among the group.

Finally the Home Secretary appears.

SIR SAMUEL HOARE
Gentlemen, er, ladies and
gentlemen, thank you all for being
so patient.

He clears his throat.

SIR SAMUEL HOARE
I can tell you that following a
debate in Parliament the decision
has been taken to allow children
from infants up to the age of
seventeen to be admitted to this
country.

Murmuring in the audience.

SIR SAMUEL HOARE
Currently no upper figure is
envisaged.

A figure in the gathering stands. This is DAVID SOLOMON,
secretary of the Movement For the Care of Children From
Germany.

The Home Secretary notices, indicates for him to speak.

DAVID SOLOMON
Sir, we are most grateful for the
reassurances you have given us. To
this end we will meet the expenses
of the travel arrangements and
provide a bond of £50 for the safe
return of the children when
circumstances permit.

SIR SAMUEL HOARE
That is most gracious of you, sir.
(a pause)
But how will you arrange for the
children to be fostered?

DAVID SOLOMON
We shall invite people to contact
us through the help of the news
media.

SIR SAMUEL HOARE
The Government will make
announcements on the BBC and
through national newspapers of the
decision -- that should help you.

A man in his fifties, ANGRY VOICE stands. He has an attitude.

ANGRY VOICE

It's fine looking after the children -- but what about the two million Jewish men and women who've lost their livelihoods? Are they just to be forgotten?

SIR SAMUEL HOARE

Sir, much as we'd like to help, it would be impossible to admit that many people to our country at the present time.

ANGRY VOICE

You're condemning them to death. I hope you can live with that.

SIR SAMUEL HOARE

I'm sorry sir, we cannot at this time do anything to assist.

Angry voice throws his arms in the air in frustration, sits down noisily.

INT. THE GOODMAN'S- KITCHEN - DAY

SUPER:

'TWO DAYS LATER'

Peter enters, he waves a newspaper.

PETER

Look at this!

SALLY

What's all the excitement?

Peter lays the paper on the kitchen table.

He points to a news story on the front page, and stabs at it with a finger.

PETER

Look! Can you believe it?

Sally looks over his shoulder.

INSERT

Front page of newspaper with headline:

"MOVEMENT IN PLACE TO RESCUE JEWISH CHILDREN FROM THE NAZIS"

BACK TO SCENE

SALLY
That's marvellous.

She reads on.

SALLY
Says here to contact this group if
you want to offer a home.

She turns her face to Peter, it's flushed with excitement.

SALLY
Oh Peter, don't you see? This is
just what we've been waiting for.

PETER
Steady on, love. We need to think
it through first.

SALLY
And while we're thinking about it a
child could be murdered by the
Nazis. What's to think?

PETER
All right, I take your point.

He goes to Sally, kisses her on the cheek.

SALLY
I just want to help save a little
child, that's all.

PETER
I know, I'm sorry.

Sally gives him a sly glance - there's a hint of a smile
there too.

SALLY
So you should be.

PETER
Do you want me to call the
organisation and offer our name?
There's a phone number in the
paper. I could ring it when the
boss goes to dinner.

SALLY

Oh, Peter, that would be great.
Thank you.

Peter goes to Sally, puts an arm round her.

PETER

Might not get many more chances for
early nights.

SALLY

Now now, you've had your ration for
this week.

She pinches his cheek, does a trademark giggle.

EXT./INT. STREET - DAY

Peter walks to a telephone kiosk, goes inside.

IN THE BOX

We look over his shoulder as he dials a number.

Peter inserts two pennies in the box. As the called number
answers he presses button A.

PETER

Hi, my wife and I are interested in
fostering a child from Germany.

(listening, nodding
head)

Yeah, that's right. Any night.

(listening)

It's Thamesbury 247, just ask for
Peter Goodman. Thank you, goodbye.

Peter replaces the receiver. Leaves the box.

INT. THE GOODMAN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Peter enters, sees Sally reading a newspaper.

She smiles.

SALLY

Hello, sweetheart.

Peter walks over to her, kisses her neck.

PETER

Spoke to the refugee people today.
Had to answer some silly bloody
questions.

SALLY

'spose they have to be careful who they let children come to.

PETER

Anyhow, they want to check us out -- make sure we're not axe murderers.

SALLY

When?

PETER

Soon. They asked for my phone number. Said I was calling from a phone box. They'll ring me at work when they're coming.

SALLY

Well, we'll just have to wait I suppose.

PETER

That's about it.

They exchange glances.

SALLY

Thanks for doing that Peter.

She walks over to Peter, puts arms around him.

He runs his hands over her rear.

SALLY

Naughty, what would my pupils say?

PETER

I'll bet the boys'ud be jealous.

They both laugh at his remark.

INT. ROSE AND CROWN PUB - DAY

Peter is standing at the bar with a work colleague, BRIAN, all floppy hair and goofy teeth.

BRIAN

I think it's real big of you and Sal, Pete. Don't think I could do it.

PETER

Well, it was her idea. Got to keep the little woman happy or I might not get my night-time cocoa.

BRIAN

Night-time coc.. Oh I get it. Mucky er, lucky bugger. She's a real dish.

PETER

When you going to get a woman to look after you?

BRIAN

I'm a bit slow in that department, Pete. Got any tips?

PETER

Just look for someone as wonderful as my Sal.

Brian smiles at Peter.

They finish their drinks, exit the pub.

INT. THE GOODMAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sally and Peter wait anxiously for the adoption people to call.

Sally paces the living room. Peter looks on in amusement.

PETER

You'll wear the carpet out, love.

SALLY

Just wish they'd hurry up.

PETER

Steady on, it's only five to seven. They're not late.

SALLY

Suppose I'm just a bit worried. What if they think we're not suitable?

PETER

(off Sally's look)
Why wouldn't we be?

SALLY

Don't know.

PETER

Come here.

He pats his lap. Sally drops on it, puts an arm on his shoulders. Peter kisses her swan-like neck.

PETER

You are a silly little goose.

SALLY

Must be time for them to come now.

CLOSE on the clock as it ticks around monotonously to 7.03.

The couple are startled by a loud knock on their front door.

Sally leaps up from Peter's lap, looks thru net curtains covering the living room window.

In the light from a nearby street lamp sees a man and woman at their front door.

SALLY

(sotto)

Think it's them.

Peter goes to...

THE HALL

He opens the front door... a middle aged couple stand there.

Meet ALAN WILLIAMS, 40's, and ELIZABETH WATSON, 30's.

Both are dressed conservatively, and wear hats.

The man, Alan, extends a hand.

ALAN

Good evening, I'm Alan Williams from the adoption agency, this is my colleague, Miss Elizabeth Watson.

Peter shakes their hands.

PETER

I'm Peter, please come in.

They enter the house, Peter ushers them in to...

THE LIVING ROOM

As they enter Sally gets up from a chair.

PETER

Darling, this is Mr. Williams and Miss Watson. This is my wife, Sally.

Sally extends a hand.

SALLY

How do you do?

ALAN

Alan and Elizabeth, please. Let's get one thing straight first of all. We're not here to catch you out or trip you up, or anything like that. We just need to be sure that a refugee can feel safe and secure with the foster carers.

SALLY

Please sit down.

(a beat)

Can I make you a cup of tea?

She gestures to the sofa. They sit.

ALAN

That would be a life-saver, thank you.

Sally exits the room.

ELIZABETH

May I ask what your occupation is Peter?

PETER

Certainly, I'm an architectural technician.

ALAN

What's that exactly?

From O.S. the sound of a kettle boiling, cups rattling.

PETER

I produce architectural drawings and make sure all safety requirements are met on a new site.

ELIZABETH

That sounds like a highly skilled job. Does it tire you out?

PETER

No, it's fairly straightforward.
I only work with the architect and
another technician so it's not too
mind boggling.

ALAN

(laughing)

I'll bet you flop into an easy
chair when you get home at night.

PETER

No, I usually help Sally get the
dinner ready, do the washing up and
so on.

ALAN

Steady on, you're making me feel
embarrassed. I like to read the
paper and have a quiet cup of tea
when I get home.

Sally returns with a tray laden with cups, biscuits, milk
and sugar, oh... and a teapot.

SALLY

Shall I be mother?

They all laugh.

ALAN

Peter's been telling us that he's a
good help around the home.

Sally looks up at Alan as she begins pouring the tea.

SALLY

Yes, he is, bless him.

ELIZABETH

Do you have an occupation, Sally?

SALLY

I'm a primary school teacher.

ELIZABETH

So how would you manage with a
young child living with you?

SALLY

I intend to leave my job if we're
accepted.

ELIZABETH

But wouldn't that hurt you
financially?

SALLY

Peter's parents said they'll give us a weekly payment -- they're quite well off.

ELIZABETH

Is that so?

ALAN

Would a child have a bedroom to itself?

PETER

Certainly. I'll show you when you've had your tea.

She hands cups to Alan and Elizabeth.

LATER

There is a general feeling of goodwill as laughter filters through the room.

Alan checks his watch.

ALAN

I say, it's getting on a bit, Liz. Mustn't keep these good people any longer.

Alan and Elizabeth rise from the sofa.

ELIZABETH

Thanks very much for the refreshments, Sally.

ALAN

We'll be in touch very soon, I can promise you that. By the way, that was a lovely cup of tea, thanks.

The two couples shake hands, Peter sees them to the front door, returns to Sally.

SALLY

Now we've got to play the waiting game.

PETER

I think we'll be all right love.

SALLY

What makes you say that?

PETER
Just a feeling I get. They seemed
to be impressed.

SALLY
Hope you're right.

PETER
Course I am, aren't I always?

Sally closes up to Peter. Kisses his mouth.
Peter encircles her, strokes her buttocks.

PETER
Still say you've got a lovely bum.

SALLY
You're getting worse.

PETER
Uh, I thought I was getting better.

They both chuckle.

INT. HELGA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

NOTE: German dialogue with English subtitles

Herschel and Hannah sit together round a neat dining table.
They have coffee and biscuits before them.

HERSCHEL
We must discuss it with her, my
love -- it's only fair she should
know.

HANNAH
I truly cannot bear the thought of
losing her.

She wipes her eyes.

HERSCHEL
Perhaps one day, she comes back.

He turns away, brings a silk handkerchief to his eyes.

HERSCHEL
When she gets up, then we tell her.

HANNAH
She's going to be very upset. She
will not understand.

HERSCHEL

I think she will. We must not underestimate her intelligence.

He rises and puts an arm round his wife's shoulders.

HERSCHEL

I hate this situation as much as you.

LATER

Hannah and Herschel sit in silence; only their thoughts to chew over.

They hear the lavatory flush.

HERSCHEL

She's up.

HANNAH

I dread this moment.

Helga opens the door to the kitchen, sees the glum faces of her parents.

HELGA

Mama, Papa, what is wrong, have I upset you?

She goes close to her mother.

HELGA

Mama, I remember you asked me to tidy my room and put unused clothes away. I have not done it yet, I am sorry.

HERSCHEL

No, no, that is not what's wrong. My little darling come here, sit down -- we must speak to you.

HELGA

I feel in my bones that something is terribly wrong -- please tell me.

HERSCHEL

You know of the problems for Jewish people in Germany, and they are going to get worse.

HELGA

Yes, I know.

HANNAH

For your safety, we are sending you
to England until good times return.

HELGA

To England -- but why?

HANNAH

(choking back tears)

For your safety, darling. We cannot
--oh...

Hannah breaks down and exits the room.

Herschel seizes the moment.

HERSCHEL

It is the only way to protect you
from the wicked people in our
country.

HELGA

But what would I do in England,
where would I live, what about
money -- food and school?

HERSCHEL

You will live with an English
family. They will become your
foster parents until the bad times
are over. We will arrange it with
the British authorities to get some
good people who will look after
you.

Helga replies forcefully, stamps a foot down hard.

HELGA

No, no, I cannot leave you and Mama
-- I cannot -- will not.

HERSCHEL

Helga, please.

Helga exits the kitchen in tears.

Herschel holds his head in his hands as emotion takes over.

Tear drops trickle down his cheeks and stain the pine
table.

His shoulder's shake as uncontrolled sobbing overwhelms
him.

EXT. HELGA'S SCHOOLYARD - DAY

Helga's school is of mixed faith - but not for much longer.

Helga has told two Jewish friends, ANNA and BABEL, about the plans to send her to England.

ANNA
Don't think I'd want to go away.

BABEL
Me neither.

Two non-Jewish girls approach.

From their arrogant swagger it's obvious they are looking for trouble. Gobby one, MARIA, taunts Helga.

MARIA
Why don't you go and live in Israel
with the other dirty Jews?

Anna leaps to her defence.

ANNA
Leave her alone you horrible
creature.

MARIA
Don't talk to me like that or I'll
scratch your eyes out.

ANNA
What have we done to you?

MARIA
You're dirty Jews, dirty Jews.

The other girl, FREDA, joins in.

FREDA
Dirty Jews, dirty Jews.

HELGA
I've had enough.

She gives her friends a glance which says 'I mean business'. Her friends show they will help.

HELGA
(off their looks)
Let's take 'em.

Helga, Anna and Babel set about the two troublemakers.

Punching, scratching, even spitting and clothes pulling as only girls pushed to the limit can.

It's all mixed in with some pretty loud shouting.

Other girls gather round. Depending on their religious beliefs, they either shout encouragement to Helga or Maria, or contempt for both.

INT. SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - SAME

A TEACHER has heard the commotion. Looks thru window, rushes out the classroom.

EXT. HELGA'S SCHOOL - YARD - SAME

The teacher speeds to the girls.

TEACHER
Stop it, stop it!

As the girls cease the warfare...

TEACHER
What's the reason for the fighting?

HELGA
We were teased because of being Jewish, sir.

TEACHER
How many times have I told you -- I will not tolerate this behaviour. All of you, inside -- now.

They meekly oblige.

INT. SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - SAME

The girls face the angry teacher.

TEACHER
All right -- what was it about?

HELGA
We were just having a disagreement sir. It was nothing.

TEACHER
It didn't sound like nothing. I warn you, any more disturbances like this will lead to serious consequences. Dismiss, all of you.

The pupils file out of the classroom.

The teacher is joined by the Head of School.

HEAD OF SCHOOL
More racist trouble?

TEACHER
I'm afraid so. Can't see an end to
it, especially as Goebbels and
Heydrich approved Kristallnacht.

HEAD OF SCHOOL
Quite.

The Head sighs.

HEAD OF SCHOOL
There's not going to be room in
this country for people like us
much longer.

TEACHER
(sinister smile)
There isn't now.

The Head Teacher gives his colleague a nervous glance.

End of subtitles

EXT. STREET NEAR PETER'S HOME - NIGHT

Peter has a spring in his step as he approaches his home.
He's even whistling a popular tune of the day.

He turns into his drive and approaches the front door.

Sally opens it for him - it's obvious she's near to tears.

INT. PETER'S HOME - SAME

Peter steps in to the...

HALLWAY

...sees Sally's red eyes.

PETER
Hello darling -- what's happened?

SALLY
I've had a visit from Alan
Williams. He said that we're a
borderline case for adoption. I
asked him what that meant but he
wouldn't tell me. He just said that
they'd be in touch.

PETER
 What the hell does he mean,
 borderline case? What a bloody
 cheek.

SALLY
 He left a phone number, said you
 can call him if you want.

PETER
 You're damned right -- I'll call
 him first thing in the morning.

Peter hangs his overcoat on a hook.

PETER
 But he'd better have some good
 reasons for making us a borderline
 case.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE GOODMAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Peter approaches home with a heavy heart.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - SAME

As he walks to his front door it opens, framing Alan in the
 hall light.

He waves as he sees Peter.

ALAN
 Hello.

PETER
 Hello. Have you come to rub it in?

ALAN
 Not at all.

Sally peers round the door.

SALLY
 Alan's here with good news, Peter.

PETER
 (jaded)
 Really.

ALAN

I've come to tell you that we've decided to recommend you as adoptive parents.

PETER

What's brought about the change of heart?

ALAN

(squirming)

Well we've had a discussion at the office and realised that all along you'd be ideal -- just what we're looking for really.

PETER

What if I told you that we've also had a change of heart.

SALLY

Peter!

PETER

Well.

ALAN

You haven't have you?

PETER

No, we haven't -- but let's hope you don't mess other people up like you have with us.

ALAN

I'm truly sorry, Peter, I really am.

PETER

So what happens next.

ALAN

I'll get back to you with details of the child -- you know name, age and so on. You'll also get details of where to collect the youngster and their number.

PETER

Number?

ALAN

Yeah, each child will have a number on a card round their neck.

(afterthought)

(MORE)

SALLY

Long as that?

ALAN

On a day-to-day basis we have to get intelligence from Germany, and that isn't easy at the moment with Hitler and the Nazis.

PETER

Those bastards are appalling animals. They shouldn't share the same planet as the rest of us.

ALAN

I wouldn't disagree with you there.

Alan walks to the gate. Waves an arm.

ALAN

I'll get back to you as soon as I can.

INT. HELGA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - SAME

NOTE: German dialogue with English subtitles

Lately Helga has been staying in her room. Herschel and Hannah mope about on auto-pilot.

HANNAH

We should get Helga out here. We must talk to her.

HERSCHEL

I'll call her.

He exits to...

INT. OUTSIDE HELGA'S BEDROOM.

HERSCHEL

Helga, my love, will you come out and talk to us.

HELGA (O.S.)

What about?

HERSCHEL

We must explain to you about leaving Germany.

HELGA (O.S.)

Go away. Leave me alone.

HERSCHEL
I insist that you come out.

HELGA (O.S.)
I won't -- I won't.

HERSCHEL
Then I shall come in and bring you
out.

HELGA (O.S.)
Don't you dare.

Herschel opens her bedroom door, walks into...

INT. HELGA'S BEDROOM - SAME

Herschel goes to Helga, puts a hand on a shoulder. She
brushes it off.

HELGA
Go away. I cannot believe you want
to send me to England.

HERSCHEL
My darling -- that's the last thing
we want to do, but we have no
option.

Herschel's eyes fill up with tears.

HERSCHEL
Surely a clever girl like you can
see that and understand the
position your Mama and I are in.

HELGA
No I don't understand. The Nazis
are not harming children.

HERSCHEL
Give them time. They are being very
cruel to us because we're Jewish,
whether child or adult.

HELGA
I haven't seen any cruelty to my
friends.

HERSCHEL
It is cruelty to children when the
parents are seized is it not?

HELGA

Yes, I suppose so. But you haven't
been seized have you?

Herschel sits on the bed, looks deep into Helga's eyes.

HERSCHEL

If you only knew what this is doing
to your Mama, you would cooperate
with us. What else can I say to
convince you?

Silence from Helga.

HERSCHEL

Please come and talk to us.

Helga gets up from the bed.

HELGA

All right -- just for a few
minutes.

HERSCHEL

Thank you, my darling.

They leave the bedroom, return to...

THE LIVING ROOM

Hannah looks up and smiles as she sees them return.

HANNAH

My Helga, come here. Let me hold
you.

Helga moves close to her mother. Hannah encloses her arms
around her.

HANNAH

You must believe how much we love
you. How much it is hurting us to
even consider sending you to
England.

She stifles a sob.

HANNAH

It is for your safety.

HELGA

What about your safety, surely that
matters too?

HERSCHEL

We shall survive -- we are older,
no one will harm us.

HELGA

You are not old, not like Mr.
Weissman down below.

HERSCHEL

Well we're more worldly-wise
-- that's what I meant. We shall be
all right.

HELGA

Tell me more about going to
England, Papa.

HERSCHEL

You come from a good home. I shall
make sure you go to a good home
with nice people who will look
after you properly -- as we have
tried to do.

HELGA

I'm not sure. How can you be
certain I will be properly cared
for?

HERSCHEL

There's an organisation in England
called Kindertransport. It was set
up to look after people like you.
They check everybody who wants to
adopt a German child very
carefully.

HELGA

How do you know this?

HERSCHEL

Because I have a friend who gets an
English newspaper sent to him. He
showed me. It was in there.

HELGA

Do you have the newspaper for me to
see?

HERSCHEL

I will ask my friend if he still
has it. And if I get it will that
convince you?

HELGA

Perhaps...

Herschel looks over to Hannah. Her eyes are deep-set in her face and red with almost non-stop crying.

End of subtitles

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Sally is supervising young children as they scream and shout their way thru the morning break.

From the corner of an eye Sally sees head teacher MOLLY GIBSON approaching.

She's a bit of a mini storm trooper who doesn't put up with any nonsense; from kids or teachers.

MOLLY

You wanted to see me Sally?

SALLY

Oh, yes Miss Gibson. I need to talk in confidence with you.

MOLLY

Very well, come to my office after school.

(to the children,
claps hands
together)

Calm down, you're like a lot of heathens -- stop screaming Jane.

Two or three children laugh, the brave ones who are out of her line of sight.

INT. OUTSIDE HEAD TEACHER'S OFFICE - LATER

Sally approaches Miss Gibsons office and knocks on the glass.

Molly beckons her to enter.

INT. HEAD TEACHERS OFFICE - SAME

Sally enters.

MOLLY

You wanted to see me.

SALLY

Yes, actually, I -- I wanted to tender my resignation.

MOLLY
(incredulously)
What?

SALLY
Peter and I are going to adopt a
German child after all the trouble
over there. So I won't be able to
work for much longer.

MOLLY
Sally, are you sure you've thought
this through?

SALLY
We've both discussed it at great
length.

MOLLY
Well I'll be very sorry to lose
you, as will the children -- you're
very popular with them you know.

SALLY
Yes, I love them too.

MOLLY
Thanks for letting me know. Please
put it in writing.

Sally nods and exits the office.

EXT. CABIN IN THE WOODS - DAY

NOTE: German dialogue with English subtitles

Herschel cautiously approaches a log cabin which stands in
a clearing in the woods.

All appears to be quiet as he gently opens the door which
squeals on its rusty hinges.

He pokes a head inside. His nose wrinkles and he retches at
the musty smell.

A shuffling noise suddenly startles him as a rasping VOICE
(ABEL) calls out;

VOICE
Who's there?

Herschel recoils in horror.

VOICE
I said who's there? Show yourself.

HERSCHEL
I mean you no harm, stranger.

VOICE
Well then, come on in.

INT. LOG CABIN - SAME

Herschel enters warily.

The cabin has a tiny window with cracked glass. In the gloom he sees a raggedly dressed man of about forty.

VOICE
What's your business here?

HERSCHEL
I am fleeing the Gestapo.

The Voice spits on the cabin floor.

VOICE
Those bastards, are they after you too?

HERSCHEL
Yes.

VOICE
What did you do to become a wanted man?

HERSCHEL
I had the misfortune to be born Jewish

Voice shuffles over to Herschel.

VOICE
That is not a misfortune, we are God's people, friend.

HERSCHEL
How long have you been here?

VOICE
Only a few days.
(toadying, patting
Herschel's pockets)
You mightn't have a piece of bread
or some water about your person --
might you?

Herschel produces a bar of chocolate Hannah gave him before he left home.

HERSCHEL

You are welcome to this my friend.

Voice grabs the chocolate bar, opens it and scoffs it with a disgusting smacking of chops.

It is downed in seconds by Voice, who slaps Hershel on the back.

VOICE

Thank you my dear friend.

Herschel holds out a hand.

HERSCHEL

We are comrades -- my name is Herschel.

Voice takes the offered hand.

VOICE/ABEL

I am Abel.

Herschel looks around the cabin. Apart from a rickety old chair, no other home comforts show themselves in the gloomy interior.

Herschel grabs Abel's hand.

HERSCHEL

What have you been pursued for?

VOICE/ABEL

Same as you, Herschel. Same as you.

HERSCHEL

Are you sleeping in that?

He indicates the chair.

VOICE/ABEL

No, I have some old rags. Just lie on the floor.

Herschel looks at the floor. It's filthy. He shivers.

HERSCHEL

Don't think I could lie down on that.

VOICE/ABEL

You can have the chair -- better'n nothing.

HERSCHEL

Thank you.

(remembering)

My wife will be bringing me some food later -- oh, and candles. We can share the food...

He permits himself a smile.

HERSCHEL

...And the light.

LATER

It's dark inside the cabin now and Herschel sits on the chair in a half-conscious state.

He comes round with a start as the cabin door opens.

HANNAH

Herschel, are you there my love?

HERSCHEL

My darling, thank you for coming. Please enter and meet my new friend.

Hannah steps in and searches in the gloom to see who Herschel is referring to.

HANNAH

You are losing your mind? I see nobody.

ABEL

(out of the gloom)

I am here madam. I exist, I promise you.

HANNAH

I will light a candle.

She searches in a basket, produces a candle and some matches.

HANNAH

Have you a table in here?

HERSCHEL

I regret a table is sadly missing.

HANNAH

I can only put the candle on the floor then.

She lights the candle, turns it sideways to let hot wax drip on the floor and sticks the candle in it.

HANNAH
Ah, now I see you.

ABEL
And I see you dear lady.

Abel turns to Herschel.

ABEL
You never said that you had such a beautiful wife, my friend.

HERSCHEL
I like to keep it quiet.

HANNAH
Hush now the pair of you. I've brought you some food and drink. You can share it with your nameless friend.

ABEL
I am Abel, my lady -- and thank you, you are very generous.

HANNAH
I have brought you Matzah bread and chicken, oh, and a newspaper -- enjoy. And now I must go. It will be too dark to see my way out of the woods if I leave it any longer.

HERSCHEL
Thank you my love. Please be careful on the way home.

He kisses her cheek.

HERSCHEL
Do please take great care.

HANNAH
I promise you faithfully.

Hannah exits the cabin.

OUTSIDE THE CABIN

A hand brings a handkerchief to her eyes.

Soft weeping is heard.

Hannah's long dress rustles the grass outside the cabin as she moves swiftly away into the murky night.

IN THE CABIN

The two men hungrily devour the food that Hannah brought.

She also supplied a bottle of Cel-Ray soda which they share.

Finally, as the food and drink are exhausted Abel moves to his makeshift bed of rags, lies down.

From somewhere deep inside Abel's gut comes a loud burp.

ABEL

That was good food. Best I've had today.

Out comes a bellowing laugh.

HERSCHEL

Quiet my friend. Don't want to alert the Gestapo.

Herschel slumps in the chair and closes his eyes, opens them and blows out the candle.

Relaxes back in the chair.

LATER

Herschel wakes Abel as he begins to snore loudly. Herschel tries to ignore it until... suddenly another sound reveals itself... that of German Shepherds. Barking, howling, and getting closer and louder.

Herschel stands and moves to the window.

His blood runs cold as he sees the beams of two torches in the woods.

He rushes to Abel, shakes him awake.

HERSCHEL

Get up man -- people coming.

Abel rouses himself, speaks groggily.

ABEL

Wha -- what people.

HERSCHEL

Can't you hear the dogs?

ABEL
(cups an ear)
You sure?

BANG! The door is flung open. The beam of a high powered torch sweeps the cabin.

SS GUARD
You. Come out here.

As Herschel gets up from the chair he stumbles, knocking it over. He and Abel meekly leave the cabin.

EXT. CABIN IN THE WOODS - CONTINUOUS

They stand shivering as the guard looks them over.

Another guard has two German Shepherds straining at their leads, baring teeth and growling ominously.

SS GUARD
Who are you?

Herschel looks at Abel, he shrugs.

HERSCHEL
(to the guard)
I am Herschel Muller.

ABEL
I am Abel Weisner.

SS GUARD
Jews?

HERSCHEL
Yes.

The mean-faced guard points his Mauser 98K rifle menacingly at them.

SS GUARD
Come, on we go.

HERSCHEL
Go where? I must let my wife know.

The guard smiles twistedly.

SS GUARD
Your family will be the last thing on your mind when you see the lovely future we have in store for you.

HERSCHEL
My wife, my daughter. I need to see them.

SS GUARD
(mockingly)
My wife, my daughter.
(firmly)
Enough of your shit. We go NOW.

HERSCHEL
I insist -- I must see my family.

SS GUARD
Move.

HERSCHEL
Just answer me this -- who betrayed us?

SS GUARD
Your wife was seen in the woods by a hunter. He informed us. So you see, you can blame it all on her. Now move.

HERSCHEL
At least tell me where we are going.

A rifle butt in the back is Herschel's reward for questioning the guard again.

They move off into the darkness. Only the torch beams mark their progress.

As the beams disappear behind trees we...

CUT TO:

INT. HELGA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Hannah has laid out toasted bagels, butter and jam with freshly brewed coffee.

Now she awaits the appearance of her daughter.

At last...

Helga appears.

HELGA
Good morning, Mama. Are you well?

HANNAH

I am fine. Thank you for asking.

Hannah looks away, stifles a sob.

HANNAH

I took food and drink to Papa last night.

HELGA

How is dearest Papa?

HANNAH

He's -- he's managing.
(brighter now)
He's with a friend he met at the cabin.

HELGA

I'm so pleased for him. I do hope it's not too long before he can come home to us.

HANNAH

I fear that may be some time. Things are getting difficult for us in Germany.

She turns away from Helga. Wipes her eyes.

HANNAH

I shall be going to see him later, at dark. Your love will be given.

HELGA

If I write a few words to Papa will you pass them to him?

HANNAH

Yes of course. He will like that.

HELGA

Then I shall write them when I return from school.

HANNAH

As you wish, darling.

EXT. RAILHEAD - BERLIN - DAY

It's a cold November morning as a collection of cattle trucks are lined up. Clinking and clanking as the buffers collide.

The SS are supervising the despatch of Jewish men to, God knows, but probably Dachau, or Buchenwald, or Auschwitz.

At the head of the trucks an engine is blowing off steam and smoke into the freezing atmosphere. Its brake pump pants noisily.

The straggling line of men shuffle slowly forward. Many are haggard and dressed in rags.

Herschel is among them.

He is unshaven and his clothes are dirty. He shambles along like a man twice his age.

He weeps openly. Occasionally he cries out for Hannah.

HERSCHEL
My darling , oh Hannah.

An SS GUARD approaches.

SS GUARD
Shut up, or I shoot.

HERSCHEL
(tearfully)
I need to contact my wife.

SS GUARD
Not in this life you second-rate
bastard.

HERSCHEL
Why won't you let me tell my...

The guard raises his Luger pistol.

SS GUARD
One more word and you're dead meat.
Move on.

In his desperation Herschel makes to speak again.

The guard fires point blank at his head. Herschel drops to the ground. Blood begins to ooze from his mouth.

Herschel, the loving husband, the dotting father, lies dead on the rough gravel of a soulless Berlin railhead.

The guard kicks his lifeless body

SS GUARD
Stupid Jew.

Abel has witnessed the killing of his friend.

ABEL
(shouting)
Bloody murderer.

SS GUARD
You want it too.

ABEL
He was an innocent man. All he
wanted was to be left in peace.

Herschel's body lays where it fell.

A light sprinkling of snow begins to flutter down from a
leaden sky.

It begins to cover Herschel.

The ragged line of desperate men drag themselves forward
without so much as a backward glance to him.

EXT. CABIN IN THE WOODS - DAY

Hannah makes her way hesitantly to the cabin. She
approaches the door, opens it gently.

HANNAH
It is only me darling. I've brought
fresh supplies.

No reply.

Hannah opens the door fully, looks in.

The candle is still where Hannah left it. The newspaper is
strewn across the floor.

Abel's rags are where he dropped them. The chair lies on
its side as if there's been a struggle.

Hannah enters...

THE CABIN

She looks around for any sign of where Herschel may be.

There's nothing to explain the disappearance of her husband
- or Abel.

She begins to cry in despair.

HANNAH
Where are you?

She goes to the door, pokes her head outside.

HANNAH
HERSCHEL.

Some crows fly off disturbed by the cries of the desperate woman, cawing loudly.

Hannah rights the chair, sits down and weeps.

INT. - HELGA'S APARTMENT - LATER

Hannah enters the apartment. She looks devastated. Helga is shocked.

HELGA
Mama, what is wrong?

Hannah sits - she's exhausted.

HANNAH
He's gone.

HELGA
Papa?

HANNAH
I think the Gestapo must have him.

HELGA
Oh, no.

HANNAH
What other explanation can there be. What else can you think of for his disappearance?

Hannah breaks down.

HANNAH
This is no life for you. I want you to go to England, darling. You'll be free of the Gestapo there.

HELGA
I cannot leave you alone, Mama.

HANNAH
Yes, you must go -- I will be all right here. It's the men the swine want, they leave women alone.

HELGA
In that case they'll leave me won't they?

HANNAH

I don't want to take the chance.
 Tomorrow I shall go to the British
 Embassy and try to make some
 arrangements for you to leave. It
 might only be for a few months.

HELGA

What can I say? You've made up your
 mind.

HANNAH

You know it's what Papa wanted.

Helga, in tears, runs to her room. Hannah is also in tears.
 She hears a commotion outside, dries her eyes, looks out
 the window.

She sees SS men marching up the street, their boots echoing
 on the metalled road surface.

An elderly Jewish man with a straggly white beard steps off
 the pavement. He shakes a fist and badmouths them.

Two of the SS use their rifle butts to beat him.

Other SS men stand around and jeer - some laugh loudly.

The old man falls, cut, bleeding, he's left where he fell.

Hannah makes a fist and shakes it at them.

HANNAH

(sotto)

You evil mongrels.

EXT. BRITISH EMBASSY - DAY

SUPER:

'December 1938'

Hannah approaches the embassy with her heart jumping. Her
 eyes are red from a night lying awake.

She enters the building with a sense of apprehension.

INT. BRITISH EMBASSY - SAME

As she enters a young British woman greets her. Let's call
 her RUBY to match her lips.

RUBY
Good morning, can I help you?

HANNAH
Deutsch sprechen?
(do you speak
German?)

RUBY
Nein. I'll fetch someone who does.

She indicates to Hannah to sit on a bench, and goes off.

-- She soon returns with a man, FREDDIE, who approaches and shakes Hannah's hand.

He's a typical civil servant type - all brown tweed and a small moustache. He has a cut glass accent to boot.

NOTE: German dialogue with English subtitles.

FREDDIE
So, Mrs er...

HANNAH
Muller.

FREDDIE
...Mrs Muller what can I do for
you?

HANNAH
I have a daughter, she's thirteen,
I want her to go England.

FREDDIE
We have a program called
Kindertransport, have you heard of
it?

HANNAH
Yes, my husband explained it. I
want Helga to go to a good family
who will take great care of her.

FREDDIE
We make sure all refugees go to
nice homes.
(afterthought)
Where is your husband in all this?

HANNAH
I think he's been taken by the
Gestapo. He's disappeared.

Freddie nods, and with typical British understatement...

FREDDIE
Oh, that's too bad.

HANNAH
What is next?

FREDDIE
You need to bring a photograph and
her birth certificate in to us.
We'll arrange for a German stamp on
them and then issue a temporary
travel visa.

HANNAH
Is that all?

FREDDIE
Your daughter is allowed one small
suitcase by the German authorities,
plus the clothes she'll be wearing.
I will contact the adoption agency.
Tell them that we want a good
family to foster -- er, Helga, did
you say?

HANNAH
Yes. I will arrange things at home
for her.

FREDDIE
Times are tough here aren't they?

HANNAH
Yes.

Hannah breaks down. Freddie puts his arms round her.

FREDDIE
(soppy voice)
Can I get you a cup of tea?

End of subtitles

INT. THE GOODMAN'S - KITCHEN - DAY

Sally hears the letter box rattle as the postman delivers
the mail.

She leaves the kitchen, returns with several letters.
Discarding some she rips one open, her eyes light up as she
rapidly scans it.

SALLY

YIPPEE!

She reads the letter again and starts jumping like a mad thing round the kitchen.

She runs into ...

THE HALL

Grabs her coat from the hall stand, stuffs the letter into a pocket, checks her hair in the hall mirror.

SALLY

(to herself, sotto)

Sally Goodman, you look a bloody mess. Oh, sod it, I'll get something special for Peter's dinner.

She slips her feet into shoes, picks up her handbag and exits the house.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Sally waltzes along the street swinging her handbag and humming to herself.

She spies neighbour, ALF, absent mindedly reading a morning paper as he bumbles along.

He notices Sally and smiles.

ALF

(raising his cheese-cutter hat with a knowing smile)

Good morning Sally, how are you?

SALLY

I've never felt better Alf. You okay, and Jean?

ALF

Mustn't grumble.

(laughing)

You look as if you've won the pools.

SALLY

It's nearly as good. Must dash Alf, in a hurry -- see ya.

She rushes off, leaving Alf lifting his hat and scratching his bald head.

ALF
Well I'll be buggered.

EXT. WILHELMSTRASSE - BERLIN - DAY

NOTE: German dialogue with English subtitles

Hannah strides along this main thoroughfare towards the British Embassy.

In her left hand she carries a large brown envelope. Stitched on her right arm, the obligatory star that brands her a Jew.

As she trundles along two SS GUARDS approach her.

SS GUARD #1
Where you going Jew woman?

He pushes her roughly.

HANNAH
To the British Embassy. I have my daughter's papers to arrange a visa for her to go to England.

SS GUARD #1
Are you going to England too?

HANNAH
No.

SS GUARD #1
Well I'm sure we can find somewhere pleasant for you.

HANNAH
What do you mean?

The other SS guard laughs.

SS GUARD #1
Oh, it could be Dachau or Buchenwald -- somewhere where you can relax.

Both guards laugh out loud, begin to push her again.

SS GUARD #1
Be on your way.

HANNAH
 (pleading)
 My husband has disappeared
 -- please help me find him.

SS GUARD #2
 What are we, your private
 detectives? He'll be at one of our
 holiday camps. Now be off with you.

HANNAH
 But all I wanted...

She doesn't get a chance to say more as SS guard #1
 withdraws a night stick and threatens her.

SS GUARD #2
 Go, while you still have the
 opportunity.

The SS guards swagger away, laughing to themselves.

Poor Hannah shuffles off, mopping her eyes as she walks.

INT. BRITISH EMBASSY - MOMENTS LATER

Hannah walks in and immediately spies Freddie.

HANNAH
 Freddie, Freddie.

Freddie turns and sees Hannah.

FREDDIE
 Hello again, Mrs er...

HANNAH
 (cutting in)
 It's Muller.

FREDDIE
 I'm so sorry, I see so many people
 Mrs Muller. You've brought the
 documents?

Hannah passes them over.

HANNAH
 I hope they're all right.

Freddie takes them out of the envelope, scrutinises them.

FREDDIE
They're absolutely fine, Mrs
Muller, bang on.

HANNAH
How long will it be for me to get
them back for Helga?

FREDDIE
Unfortunately that depends on the
Germans. I'll put our stamp on them
today and issue a visa -- then it's
down to the Krauts. Oh I'm sorry,
shouldn't have called them that.

HANNAH
Don't mind me. I had a run-in with
two SS swines just near here.

FREDDIE
I shouldn't say this, but Germany
is getting too big for its boots.

HANNAH
When shall I call back?

FREDDIE
Give it two weeks Mrs Muller.

End of subtitles

INT. THE GOODMAN'S - KITCHEN - NIGHT

It's the end of Peter's working day as he breezes into the
kitchen.

He strides over to Sally, who is peeling potatoes for the
evening meal, kisses her neck.

SALLY
I've got you your favourite for
dinner.

PETER
What you on a plate?

She laughs.

SALLY
You know what I mean. It used to go
cluck, cluck.

PETER
Oh, pigeon pie again. Just love it.

SALLY
We got a letter today from the
adoption agency.

She hands Peter the letter.

He reads and re-reads it.

PETER
Really pleased for you, love.

SALLY
Aren't you pleased.

PETER
Yeah.

SALLY
Why did you say you were pleased
for me -- but didn't say you were
pleased too?

PETER
(backsliding)
You know I'm pleased we've been
officially accepted as foster
parents.

Sally looks him deep in the eyes.

SALLY
You're not just saying that?

PETER
(holds Sally's hand)
Come on, don't let's fall out. How
about an early night?

SALLY
(pulling away)
No I don't want to -- not tonight.

Peter picks up a newspaper, sighs, plonks himself on a
kitchen chair.

EXT. BRITISH EMBASSY - DAY

SUPER:

'TWO WEEKS LATER'

Hannah drags herself wearily along like an old woman to the
British Embassy.

Her face shows the pain she is suffering at the thought of Helga leaving Germany.

She gets to the steps leading up to the entrance, looks for guidance from the heavens, then mounts the stairway with her heart racing.

She heaves the heavy double doors open and enters...

INT. BRITISH EMBASSY - SAME

NOTE: German dialogue with English subtitles

She goes to the reception desk.

HANNAH
Freddie, bitte.

The reception clerk motions her to sit.

Hannah gazes around. Her look shows she somehow feels safe and cut off from the brutal world outside.

Suddenly Freddie appears. He smiles as he sees Hannah.

NOTE. Following dialogue in German with English subtitles.

FREDDIE
Hello again Mrs Muller. Good to see you. I've had some news from the adoption agency in England. They've got a young couple in the south who are suitable.

HANNAH
I see.

FREDDIE
They're both about your age, have a nice house and the man has a good job. Helga will be well cared for by them.

Hannah weeps.

HANNAH
I'm pleased she'll be all right, as long as you're sure.

FREDDIE
Yes, they've been thoroughly vetted, that I promise.

Freddie looks at Hannah who is crying continuously.

FREDDIE

Let me get you a drink, coffee,
water?

HANNAH

Just water please.

Freddie goes off for the drink.

Hannah curls up in her chair, tries to hide her face.

Freddie returns with a glass of water.

HANNAH

You're sure Jewish people are
treated well in England, Freddie?

FREDDIE

They are treated no differently to
British people.

HANNAH

That is a blessing.

FREDDIE

I've received the papers back from
the Germans so now I'll make
arrangements here for Helga's
travel. I'll be in touch with the
adoption people so that they can
inform the foster parents.

HANNAH

What do I do now?

FREDDIE

Just get a small suitcase ready for
Helga to go on the next refugee
crossing. Here are her papers.

Freddie hands the brown envelope back to Hannah.

FREDDIE

Helga will have a good life in
England. She'll be free of the
trouble here. Can I get a cab for
you?

HANNAH

We are not allowed to ride in cabs.

FREDDIE

How bloody stupid? This country, I
ask you, what next?

INT. HELGA'S APARTMENT/HELGA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Hannah is packing Helga's clothes in a small suitcase. She cries as she carefully folds dresses and underwear and inserts them in the small compartment.

HANNAH
(to herself)
My darling.
(she hugs clothes)
My darling.

Helga enters, dismayed at what she sees.

HELGA
Mama, at least let me do that
myself.

HANNAH
I am just putting a few essentials
in for you darling.

HELGA
I'll take a bigger suitcase.

HANNAH
The authorities will not allow it.

HELGA
To hell with the authorities!

HANNAH
Helga, I'm shocked.

HELGA
Well.

HANNAH
The man at the embassy said you
can't take a bigger suitcase, and
that's that.

End of subtitles

INT. THE GOODMAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sally and Peter are relaxing by a roaring coal fire. Sally is knitting and Peter is reading a magazine.

A knock at their front door makes them exchange glances.

Peter rises, leaves the living room...

AT THE FRONT DOOR

Peter opens the door to see Alan standing there.

ALAN
I've got some news.

PETER
Come in.

Peter ushers him into

THE LIVING ROOM

ALAN
Hello again. Hope you don't mind me dropping in on you like this.

SALLY
You're always welcome.

ALAN
I've got you a girl, Sally.

Sally's eyes light up.

SALLY
Fantastic.

She claps her hands.

ALAN
She's thirteen, lives in Berlin, and is apparently an only child. The father's gone missing and his wife thinks the Gestapo have picked him up.

SALLY
How horrible.

ALAN
'Course nobody there'll tell her anything.
(a pause)
Anyway, the girl will be coming to England by ferry from Rotterdam to Harwich. The refugee people'll put her on a train to London, and you'll have to pick her up from there. Can you manage that?

PETER
Yes, that's not a problem.

Sally jumps around with excitement.

SALLY
When, when, when?

ALAN
Still the unknown I'm sorry to say.

Sally's face drops.

SALLY
Will it be long?

ALAN
Just as soon as the embassy get
another batch of refugees together.
Please be ready.

SALLY
You bet we will, won't we Peter?

Peter nods 'yes'.

INT. HELGA'S APARTMENT - DAY

SUPER:

'MARCH 1939'

NOTE: German dialogue with English subtitles

Hannah and Helga face each other. It's obvious they've both
been crying.

HANNAH
I don't know when you'll be going.

HELGA
I feel as if you've betrayed me,
Mama.

HANNAH
Perhaps you should feel that what
I've done will save your life.

HELGA
What of poor Papa. Have you tried
the authorities?

Hannah splays her hands out - frustration.

HANNAH
No one will tell me anything.

HELGA
Do you think they'd help me
-- with me a young person?

HANNAH
It's worth a try.

HELGA
Then I'll try.

MUCH LATER

Helga returns home. She's been sobbing and looks very upset.

HANNAH
You have been so long, my darling,
I was worried about you.

HELGA
I shouldn't have bothered. No one
helped me. Some of them even
laughed -- how could they?

She takes her top coat off, throws it on the floor in frustration.

HELGA
I hate them, I hate then. I hate
Germany. I shall be glad to get
away from this country. I just wish
you could come too.

HANNAH
If only I could.

EXT. BERLIN RAILWAY STATION - DAY

SUPER:

'APRIL 1939'

An early morning shaft of sunlight shines on Helga and Hannah as they stand outside the platform behind a barrier.

They wait for the SS to check that each child has the necessary documentation to depart for England.

A long snaking line of children and parents wait patiently. Each child has a card with a number on it hanging round their neck. Helga's is number 401.

The train sits in the station waiting for the precious cargo to board.

At last! The SS GUARD replaces the barrier with his own immovable body.

Other SS guards stand around grinning and jeering.

SS GUARD
Papers, show your papers. No
papers, no travel.

The patient people move forward. One by one the children detach themselves from their parents with a snatched last-minute kiss and a weepy 'Goodbye' before making their way to the train.

One child's papers are incorrect.

SS GUARD
No good, no travel.

MOTHER
What is wrong with them?

SS GUARD
All wrong. Go away.

MOTHER
But he must go.

The SS guard pushes her away.

SS GUARD
Go!

MOTHER
Please tell me what is wrong.

The SS Guard pushes the mother away so forcefully that she falls over.

There is murmuring in the straggling line of people.

A MAN vents his anger.

MAN
(shouting)
Why can't you tell her what is
wrong?

But the SS guard just keeps checking the papers of others.

Soon it's Helga's turn.

HELGA
No Mama, please, please.

HANNAH
You must go darling. Be brave.

SS GUARD
Is she going or not?

HANNAH
She's going - if only to get away
from the likes of you.

The guard fixes a stare that would drill holes in concrete. He checks the papers, hands them to Helga and waves her through.

HANNAH
Take care, take care.

Hannah turns and shuffles away. Her handkerchief continually mopping her eyes.

End of subtitles

EXT. THAMESBURY STATION/PLATFORM - DAY

Sally and Peter stand on the platform waiting for the early train to London.

Sally shivers in the cold air of the open platform.

SALLY
Hope the train's not late, we don't
have much time to get to Liverpool
Street station.

PETER
We'll be all right. Are you getting
excited now?

SALLY
You betcha.

Peter puts an arm round her.

PETER
Tell you the truth, so am I.

SALLY
Oh Peter, I was beginning to think
you didn't care.

PETER
You silly little duck.

Sally laughs and cuddles up to Peter just as smoke from the arriving train appears above the chimney tops of nearby houses.

The fussy little steam train makes it - on time - and comes to a halt with a screeching of brakes.

INT. TRAIN CARRIAGE - SAME

Sally and Peter climb aboard a third class carriage and manage to sit together in the compartment.

As they settle themselves down Sally turns to Peter, kisses him on the cheek.

SALLY
(whispering)
I love you so much.

Peter turns to her and mouths 'I love you too'.

They hold hands.

EXT. STEAM TRAIN - DAY

The little train disappears into a tunnel.

EXT. MARYLEBONE STATION/LONDON - LATER

The train arrives puffing and panting.

Shudders to a halt.

Passengers disgorge from the carriages.

Sally and Peter leave arm-in arm. Peter checks the station clock.

PETER
Ten past ten. Helga should arrive at Liverpool Street at eleven twenty-three. So we've got plenty of time to get there.

SALLY
How?

PETER
Just a few stops on the tube, love.

They walk...

OUTSIDE THE STATION

PETER
Can you remember Helga's number?

SALLY
It's engraved on my heart, four - o
- one.

They approach the entrance to the tube station, go inside.

INT. LIVERPOOL STREET STATION/LONDON - LATER

The couple are standing on the concourse of the station.

Peter looks up at the clock.

INSERT

Station clock showing time of 10.56

BACK TO SCENE

PETER
Time for a drink love.

SALLY
If we're quick.

INT. STATION PLATFORM - LATER

Sally and Peter are standing nervously together waiting for Helga's arrival.

Peter checks the station clock again.

PETER
Five minutes to zero.

SALLY
This is definitely the right
platform?

PETER
Yeah, I checked with a porter.

SALLY
(smiling)
Should'a known.

PETER
Eh?

SALLY
You're always so careful.

Peter smiles at her.

PETER
Someone's got to be.

Sally feints a punch to his chest. Puts an arm round him.

SALLY
God - trains coming. This is it.

PETER
Bang goes our early nights.

SALLY
That's all you think about.

PETER
Keeps me from straying.

Sally's laugh is drowned out by the sound of the train.

First to leave the train are several adults with obligatory clipboards.

Peter approaches one.

PETER
We're looking for Helga Muller,
number 401.

The FUSSY LITTLE MAN consults his clipboard.

Turning over several pages he turns to Peter.

FUSSY LITTLE MAN
You are?

PETER
Peter Goodman, with Sally, my wife.

FUSSY LITTLE MAN
Address?

PETER
Fourteen Chestnut Close,
Thamesbury, Bucks.

FUSSY LITTLE MAN
Good. Can't be too careful.

PETER
What happens now.

FUSSY LITTLE MAN
Miss Muller is in the fourth
carriage. We'll go and get her.

Peter waves to Sally to join him.

SALLY
Is there a problem?

PETER
No, this chap was just checking us
against the details he's got.
Helga's in the fourth carriage.

Sally holds Peter's hand.

SALLY
I'm so nervous.

PETER
I am a bit.

They reach the fourth carriage which is all compartments.

Fussy little man opens the first door.

FUSSY LITTLE MAN
Helga Muller.

No response.

He checks the next four with the same result.

Sally and Peter exchange nervous glances.

At the sixth a shy young girl arises.

HELGA
Hier.

FUSSY LITTLE MAN
Lassen sie bitte.

Helga leaves the carriage.

She looks thoroughly miserable.

FUSSY LITTLE MAN
Hier ist Sally und Peter.

Helga does a slight curtsy to them.

Sally doesn't stand on ceremony, she puts an arm round her.
Turns to the fussy little man.

SALLY
How do I say welcome to England?

FUSSY LITTLE MAN
Willkommen in England.

Sally repeats it to herself. Then...

SALLY
(to Helga)
Willkommen in England.

Helga lets her emotions go, puts her arms around Sally.

HELGA
Danke.

Helga motions Peter to join them.

He does so, willingly.

SALLY
(to fussy little man)
Can you tell Helga we are going
home now.

FUSSY LITTLE MAN
(to Helga)
Wir gehen jetzt nach Hause.

HELGA
(in halting English)
I am -- very -- happy.

FUSSY LITTLE MAN
(in German)
Helga, you will enjoy yourself with
Sally and Peter, ya?

HELGA
I am.

FUSSY LITTLE MAN
Well, appreciate your new life.
(to Sally and Peter)
Look after her, she's had some bad
experiences.

PETER
We will take as much care of Helga
as if she was our own child.

Sally squeezes Peter's arm. He's hit the spot with that
remark.

Sally puts an arm on Helga's shoulders.

SALLY

Come.

Fussy little man watches them walk away. He smiles.

FUSSY LITTLE MAN

(to himself)

If only they were all as nice as
that young couple.

EXT. BUS STOP - LATER

It's starting to get dark as Sally, Peter and Helga alight from the bus. The weather has turned nasty and very cold. Sleety rain drops heavily on them.

Sally motions to Helga to run with her. Peter takes her small suitcase and jogs along behind.

They soon reach the house and Peter inserts his key and ushers the girls inside.

He looks up at the sky which has turned almost black.

PETER

Looks like we're in for it. Sod it,
who cares, we're home now.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Sally puts a match to the fire which is soon roaring up the chimney.

SALLY

Need some more coal love, and some
sticks so that I can get Helga's
room nice and warm.

PETER

Message received and understood.

Peter exits.

Sally turns to Helga.

She mimics eating and drinking.

HELGA

Yes -- please.

SALLY
I'll show you to your room first.
It's a schlafzimmer isn't it?

HELGA
Ya.

SALLY
This way.

LATER

Sally has arranged a small table with food spread out.
The fire has warmed the living room up nicely.
The three sit around toasting their toes.
Helga looks calm, tired, but reasonably happy.

SALLY
Tomorrow you write letter to
mother.

Sally mimics writing.

HELGA
Yes. Mama will wonder.

Helga gets a bit tearful at the thought of her Mama.
Sally notices and puts her arms round her.

SALLY
We'll take care of you, little
flower.

Helga lifts her tear-stained face and smiles.

INT. GOODMAN'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - MORNING

Sally and Peter sit together, drinking Camp instant coffee.

PETER
What you two gonna do today?

SALLY
Thought I'd take Helga shopping for
some Jewish food.

PETER
That's a good idea -- never thought
of that.

Peter scratches his head.

PETER

There's a shop sells Jewish food on Kingsbury Street. Seen it through their window.

SALLY

Yeah, course, I've been trying to think where I could get some. Thanks.

PETER

All part of the service.
(checks his watch)
Hell, look at the time, I'll be late for work.

SALLY

Tell your boss you've been up all night settling Helga.

PETER

Can't use that excuse for lateness. Say hello to our little girl for me.

He kisses Sally's cheek and leaves.

EXT. SHOPPING STREET - DAY

Thamesbury's a far cry from the busy streets of Berlin. But at least everyone's friendly.

Sally and Helga walk the main shopping parade. Helga is wide-eyed as she looks around.

She suddenly stiffens as she sees an army cadet in full uniform approaching.

As he gets closer to Sally, BERT stops.

BERT

Hello Mrs Goodman, how are you?

SALLY

I'm great thanks, Bert. Meet Helga, a little German girl Peter'n'me rescued from the Nazis.

BERT

Hello Helga, I'm Bert.

He holds out a hand, Helga cautiously offers hers.

Sally realises Helga's fear

SALLY
(pointing to Bert)
Friend.

HELGA
Friend?

SALLY
Yes. One -- of -- my -- school
-- pupils.

Bert smiles, salutes, walks off.

EXT. KINGSBURY STREET - LATER

Sally carries a brown paper bag. She stops at a small shop,
turns to Helga.

SALLY
Jewish food.

Helga nods. They go inside.

INT. JEWISH SHOP - SAME

As they enter the tiny establishment a fussy little man in
a brown coat appears. This is AARON HELMAN.

AARON HELMAN
Good morning ladies, what can I get
you?

SALLY
This is Helga from Germany. We need
some Jewish food for her.

AARON HELMAN
You want Jewish food? Jewish food I
have plenty of.

SALLY
Well can you recommend what I need
to buy?

AARON HELMAN
You say the young lady is from
Germany? I speak German.

SALLY
Oh, wonderful.

NOTE: German dialogue with English subtitles.

AARON HELMAN

Now young lady -- what do you want?

HELGA

I'd like some Matzah bread, cream cheese, bagels oh, and some apple jam. Do you have any Jewish cakes?

AARON HELMAN

I can do all that for you. What cake would you like?

HELGA

Apple cake, please.

AARON HELMAN

Apple cake I can do.

HELGA

That will be all for now, thank you.

Aaron shuffles around his shop, places items on the counter, then he scribbles the prices down on a scrap piece of paper.

He packs the goods in a brown bag.

AARON HELMAN

That will be one pound, seven shillings.

End of subtitles.

HELGA

(to Sally)

No money.

SALLY

How much?

AARON HELMAN

One pound, seven shillings, please.

Sally opens her purse, places a £1 note and three half crowns down.

Aaron picks up the money, goes to the register.

AARON HELMAN

(handing back change)

Thank you, a tanner change.

Sally and Helga make to leave the shop.

SALLY
Thank you, Mr, er.

AARON HELMAN
Aaron Helman -- at your service.
Call again.

EXT. KINGSBURY STREET - SAME

As they walk out the shop, Helga turns to Sally, grabs an arm.

HELGA
Sank you.

SALLY
You are very welcome. Now to
Smith's for a dictionary, and then
home.

Sally puts an arm on Helga's shoulders.

Helga moves closer to her.

SALLY
You are safe now, sweetheart.

HELGA
Safe. Not understand.

SALLY
No Nazis here.

HELGA
That is good.

As Helga puts an arm round Sally...

Sally's expression says it all: 'I'm the cat that got the cream.'

INT. THE GOODMAN'S - LATER

Sally and Helga sit round a dining table. An English-German dictionary is in evidence.

Sally points to a word. Helga repeats it.

Helga points to a word. Sally repeats it.

Peter bursts in from work. Goes to Sally, kisses a cheek.

PETER

Hello Helga.

(turns to Sally)

Got some news, love. There's a new class starting up for people from Germany to learn English. Thought our little poppet could go.

SALLY

Be a lot easier than using a dictionary.

(thinking)

Where is it?

PETER

In St. Margaret's Hall, off Exchange Street. Starts next Tuesday at seven.

SALLY

Right then, Helga can go.

Helga looks up at the mention of her name.

PETER

There's just one thing; it's two bob a week.

SALLY

We can manage that, can't we?

PETER

Yeah, I think so.

SALLY

Well, we'll have to afford it. After all, she's worth it.

PETER

'course she is, aren't you Helga.

Peter places a hand on Helga's shoulders.

Helga might not understand, but she smiles anyway.

SALLY

Now that's sorted I'd better get some dinner on. Helga, come and help me, please.

Sally beckons Helga. She nods to Peter and follows Sally.

EXT. STREET NEAR THE GOODMAN'S HOME - NIGHT

Helga is walking along the street. She has a school satchel on her shoulder.

She is with another girl of about the same age who is also German, and Jewish. This is HELENE.

They are laughing and joking together.

SUPER:

'MAY 1939'

Note: German dialogue with English subtitles.

HELGA

Did you see that goofy boy from Hamburg?

HELENE

He kept making eyes at me.

HELGA

Did you return them?

HELENE

I stuck my tongue out.

HELGA

Oh, here's my foster father. I expect he's looking for me.

HELENE

Are they good with you?

HELGA

Yes, they're lovely people. I'm very lucky. You?

HELENE

My foster father's strange. He came into my room while I was getting dressed.

HELGA

What did you do?

HELENE

Screamed at him to get out.

HELGA

Did he?

HELENE

He stared at me for a while, then left.

HELGA

Poor you.

End of subtitles

Peter catches up with them.

PETER

Hello girls.

They both return the greeting.

PETER

How was it tonight, Helga?

HELGA

It -- was -- nice -- sank you.

PETER

That's very good.

HELGA

Are you -- look -- for me?

PETER

No, I'm just going to get a bottle of beer from the pub.

HELGA

I -- home going -- now.

PETER

Would you like me to get anything for you?

HELGA

No sank you.

PETER

I'll see you later, bye girls.

Peter goes off for his weak beer.

German dialogue with English subtitles

HELENE

He's nice, isn't he?

HELGA

I saw him first.

The girls burst out laughing - walk off.

End of subtitles.

INT. THE GOODMAN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Helga sits at the kitchen table eating a toasted bagel. She wears a 'girlie' dressing gown Sally bought her.

Sally sits next to her.

SALLY

What would you like to do today,
petal?

HELGA

Petal.
(grins)
I go to tidy my room, it's messy.

SALLY

Well it's a lovely day, would you
like to go to the zoo instead? We
could have an ice cream -- make it
a girls' day out.

HELGA

Yes -- sank you.

The letterbox clangs as the postman delivers the mail.

Sally goes to pick up the letters. Returns, glum face.

SALLY

Nothing for you, I'm sorry.

HELGA

Poor Mama, I hope she's all right.
I do worry, also poor Papa, miss
them lots...

Helga gets up from the table, runs up the stairs, goes to
her bedroom in floods of tears.

Sally follows her, goes into...

HELGA'S ROOM

Helga is lying on the bed. Her body shakes.

Sally puts her arms round her, draws her close.

SALLY

Instead of the zoo we'll go to the German Embassy in London, see if they can help.

HELGA

Oh, can we?

SALLY

Of course. Peter'n'me love you a lot. Nothin's too much trouble.

HELGA

Sank you, sank you.

She kisses Sally's cheek.

HELGA

You are like my second Mama.

SALLY

You get dressed, we can catch the ten-forty if we hurry.

EXT. GERMAN EMBASSY - LONDON - DAY

Sally and Helga walk into Belgrave Square, home of the German Embassy.

SALLY

I'll leave you to do the talking.

HELGA

I'll ask them if they have any news of my parents.

(worried little face)

Scared of what they tell me.

SALLY

I'm with you, love. Don't be frightened. They might not even be able to help.

INT. GERMAN EMBASSY - LATER

Sally and Helga sit on a bench - waiting, waiting.

At last an official approaches. He speaks in English.

OFFICIAL

(German accent)

Miss Muller, I am very sorry to keep you waiting.

HELGA

You have news?

OFFICIAL

All I can tell you is that the Berlin police have been asked to check the address you gave me. I can do no more.

Helga looks totally dispirited.

OFFICIAL

If you care to call back in a few days...

SALLY

We live in the country, it might be difficult.

OFFICIAL

In that case I shall give you a card with my name and telephone number. Please call me in a week.

HELGA

(taking card)

Sank you.

SALLY

That's very kind of you.

The official clicks his heels.

OFFICIAL

Not at all.

Sally and Helga leave the Embassy. Helga looks close to tears.

The official is approached by OFFICIAL #2.

OFFICIAL #2

(in German with
English subtitles)

Missing parents?

OFFICIAL

(in German with
English subtitles)

What's happening in Germany in our names is a disgrace. I hadn't the heart to tell that little girl what the truth might be.

The two officials exchange worried glances.

EXT. STREET NEAR THE GOODMAN'S HOME - DAY

As the two get off the bus...

SALLY

I'll get Peter to ring the embassy.
They might take more notice of a
man.

HELGA

Do you think so?

SALLY

Well it's worth a try.

They walk on, Sally has an arm across Helga's shoulders.

INT. THE GOODMAN'S - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Peter enters from work. He has a worried look.

PETER

Hello darling.

SALLY

Any news?

PETER

Oh yes. Your friendly German's been
busy. Seems Helga's mum is in a
camp, hang on a sec...

(he pulls a scrap of
paper from an inside
pocket)

...called Ravensbruck.

SALLY

What sort of camp?

PETER

The chap was very honest. He said
it was a concentration camp for
Jewish and gypsy women. He has no
news of her father though.

SALLY

Oh my God. What're we going to tell
Helga?

PETER

Where is she?

SALLY

Out with that friend, Helene.

PETER

Perhaps we'd better tell her the truth.

SALLY

It'll break her heart -- just as she seems to be settling down with us. What's this Ravensbruck anyway?

PETER

The German chap said it was forced labour.

(bangs fist on the table)

How can the Germans be so evil?

SALLY

Perhaps we'd better tell her that it's a camp for women. Say that he's still making enquiries about her father.

PETER

Yeah, you're right.

As if on cue Helga bounces in, all bright-eyed, bonny-faced and full of life.

HELGA

Hello Sally und Peter. Have you any news about Mama and Papa?

PETER

Yes. The German man told me your Mama is with a lot of other Jewish women in a camp. He is still making enquiries about your Papa. I have to call him again in a few days.

HELGA

So Mama is all right. Do you have the address so I can send her a letter?

PETER

I will get that next time I speak to the embassy man.

HELGA

Sank you so much.

PETER

It's a pleasure to help you.

Helga hops to Peter, hugs him.

HELGA
 I love you, you are kind.
 (turning to Sally)
 I love you too.

PETER
 And we love you very, very much,
 little angel.

HELGA
 I go to my room now. Is that all
 right?

SALLY
 Of course, petal.

Helga smiles at them both, exits the kitchen.

Sounds of Helga running up stairs two at a time.

PETER
 Hate telling her lies.

SALLY
 I know what you mean. She doesn't
 deserve it, bless her.

EXT. PHONE BOX - DAY

Peter opens the phone box door. Enters...

PHONE BOX

He pulls a scrap of paper from his top pocket, places two pennies in the box and lifts the receiver, dials the number on his paper.

INTERCUT PETER PHONE BOX/EMBASSY OFFICIAL

The distant number answers. Peter presses button A.

PETER
 Yes hello, can you give me some
 information please?

EMBASSY OFFICIAL
 (German accent)
 What do you need to know.

PETER
 The little German refugee who's
 staying with us would like to
 contact her Mama in Ravensbruck.

EMBASSY OFFICIAL

I see.

PETER

Well can you give me the address please?

EMBASSY OFFICIAL

That is not possible.

PETER

How does she contact her Mama?

EMBASSY OFFICIAL

Not possible.

PETER

(getting frustrated)

So you people just grab your citizens off the street and lock them up in prison camps. You must be very proud to be a German right now.

EMBASSY OFFICIAL

I have told you it's not possible to contact a pris... someone in Ravensbruck. Goodbye.

The distant phone goes down with a click.

PETER

The arrogant bastard.

He smashes the receiver back on its cradle.

INT. THE GOODMAN'S KITCHEN - LATER

Peter returns home, he's in a thumping temper. Sally notices the look on his face.

SALLY

(off Peter's look)

I can see it's not gone well.

PETER

I'd thump that bugger at the embassy if he was here right now.

SALLY

Never known you talk like that before, sweetheart. Don't think I like it.

PETER

Do you know what he said? Not possible when I asked for the address of Helga's mother. Nothing's possible with the way Germany's going. Hitler should be strung up.

SALLY

How can we tell Helga?

PETER

I'm working on it. Where is she?

SALLY

In her room.

PETER

Just hope she stays there a bit longer till I've calmed down.

SALLY

So do I.

(tactfully)

I'll make you a cup of tea, and you can have one of those choccy biscuits I got for Helga.

PETER

Don't know what I'd do without you. You're such a sweetie.

SALLY

It's because I love you. Even if you are a bad-tempered sod at times.

She places her arms round him, kisses him deeply.

PETER

In normal circumstances I'd have been taking you upstairs now.

SALLY

If it was normal circumstances I'd have let you.

They laugh together.

LATER

Peter sits at the kitchen table, it's obvious he's thinking hard.

Sally sees him, wonders.

SALLY

Penny for 'em.

PETER

I was just wondering whether to visit the German Embassy, see if I can speak to a proper official and not some jumped-up lackey who answers the phone.

SALLY

I s'pose it might work.

PETER

I'd go to Germany myself if I thought I could get Helga's mother released.

SALLY

That's a bit drastic, love.

PETE

Yeah well, I just can't bear to see little Helga's face if I tell her I've met a brick wall so far.

SALLY

Know what you mean.

PETER

How much have we got in Martins' Bank?

SALLY

About forty five pounds. I'll draw ten out tomorrow if you want to go to London.

PETER

It's the only way left open to us.

Sally looks worried as...

Sound of footsteps on the stairs and...

Helga enters the kitchen. Sees anxious faces of Sally and Peter.

HELGA

Is something wrong?

SALLY

Peter has to go to the German Embassy to see someone.

HELGA
Will I be able to write to Mama?

PETER
I have to go and sign some papers
first.

HELGA
Then I will be able to write a
letter.

PETER
I hope so, angel-face. I just hope
so.

Helga's angel-face drops.

HELGA
So do I.

INT. GERMAN EMBASSY - DAY

Peter marches in, a determined look on his face. As he goes
to the information desk an official stops him.

OFFICIAL
Do you have an appointment?

PETER
Do I need one?

OFFICIAL
Yes sir. If you wish to see a
higher authority.

PETER
Christ -- you people make me sick.
I've travelled here today from the
country to try and get something
sorted and all I hear is 'do I have
an appointment'.

OFFICIAL
I'm sorry sir, but you do need to
have made an appointment. If you
tell me the nature of your enquiry
I'll try and get someone to see
you. If you'd care to wait.

PETER
I'd rather discuss it with a higher
official -- oh, I didn't mean to
sound rude.

OFFICIAL

I quite understand. Please take a seat.

The official indicates a row of chairs.

LATER

Peter is getting bored - he stifles a yawn as...

The official returns. He looks pleased with himself.

OFFICIAL

If you'd care to follow me.

Peter is ushered to a lift. The official presses a button and the doors open.

INT. GERMAN EMBASSY - SECOND FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

The lift arrives, the doors open and Peter and the official exit.

The official walks down a long corridor, Peter following.

They stop outside an impressive door. The official knocks.

LOUIS BIERMANN (V.O.)

Eingeben.

The official opens the door, waves Peter into...

INT. LOUIS BIERMANN'S OFFICE

A large leather-topped desk, filing cabinet, several chairs...

...and a framed portrait of Adolf Hitler.

The Germans know which side of their bread is buttered.

OFFICIAL

(German with English subtitles)

The Englishman to see you, sir.

LOUIS BIERMANN

Danke.

LOUIS BIERMANN, 40's, (think Curt Jurgens in Battle of Britain) impeccably dressed in a smart morning suit, walks from behind his desk, shakes hands with Peter.

LOUIS BIERMANN
 (strong German
 accent)

My name is Louis Biermann, I am
 head of the Legal and Consular
 section at the embassy. Tell me how
 you would like me to help you.

PETER
 Well I desperately need some help
 and no mistake. I'm Peter Goodman,
 by the way.

Louis indicates to Peter to sit in a leather chair.

LOUIS BIERMANN
 Can I order a coffee for you Mr
 Goodman?

PETER
 That would be very acceptable,
 thank you.

Louis waves to the official.

LOUIS BIERMANN
 Two coffees please, and some of
 those English biscuits I adore.

He smiles at Peter.

LOUIS BIERMANN
 Tell me your story.

PETER
 It's like this...

Peter relaxes in his chair.

DISSOLVE TO:

Peter shifts round in his chair, leans forward.

PETER
 ... So you see the difficulty we're
 in.

LOUIS BIERMANN
 I do indeed. Let me think.

He ponders the query for a moment.

LOUIS BIERMANN
 You say that you'd even be prepared
 to bring Hannah Muller to England.
 (MORE)

LOUIS BIERMANN (CONT'D)

Maybe I could arrange a visa and passport -- maybe not. These are difficult times in my country. I truly cannot promise anything at this stage, I hope you understand.

PETER

Yes sir, I do understand. But I also feel that's it's my duty to do anything I can for Helga who's pining for news of her parents.

LOUIS BIERMANN

I admire you for that. Please give me a few days to make enquiries on your behalf. I promise to do everything in my power to help you. Take my card and feel free to call me direct.

He hands Peter a business card.

PETER

I'll ring in a week if that's acceptable. I am most grateful to you sir for seeing me.

LOUIS BIERMANN

Perfectly acceptable. Goodbye.

They shake hands. Peter exits.

Louis Biermann sits at his sumptuous desk, rubs his chin, picks up the phone, dials.

As the called person answers...

LOUIS BIERMANN

(in German with
English subtitles)

Alder, Louis here, will you come to my office please, I have important work for you?

Louis replaces the phone, sits back in his 'executive' chair, drums fingers on his desk.

EXT. RAVENSBRUCK CONCENTRATION CAMP - DAY

SUPER:

'Ravensbruck Concentration Camp - May 1939'

NOTE: German dialogue with English subtitles until indicated otherwise.

It's toil, toil, toil for the unfortunate women incarcerated in this hell-hole.

Sadistic SS female guards watch over the unfortunate creatures destined to work till they drop, get shot or face the rope.

No mercy is shown by the guards over the prisoners as, whips in hand, they watch over them.

On this particular work party is our own Hannah, and about a dozen others.

It's a far cry from the comfortable home she once shared with her husband and daughter.

That is until the Gestapo seized her for the 'criminal offence' of being a Jew.

She is digging the earth to make a vegetable garden to provide food for the swaggering bullies who watch over the 'prisoners'.

As she stumbles over a spadeful of heavy soil...

FEMALE GUARD #1
Pick it up, dirty animal.

HANNAH
The earth is too heavy.

The guard cracks her whip.

FEMALE GUARD #1
(screaming)
Next time you feel this.

HANNAH
I'm not used to heavy work.

FEMALE GUARD #1
Am I supposed to feel sorry for you?

HANNAH
(on dangerous ground.)
You might show some understanding.

This time the guard doesn't answer Hannah, she whips her, across her back.

Hannah cries out like a wounded animal.

FEMALE GUARD #1
Back to work.

Muttering among the other prisoners.

FEMALE GUARD #1
Anyone else want to taste my whip?

The guard makes the whip crack. Murmuring stops.

At last the working day ends. The inmates will be invited to celebrate with a slap-up meal: stale water, cabbage soup and iron hard bread.

Yesterday they had stale water, cabbage soup and iron-hard bread.

And tomorrow...?

And after a meal like that there's always bed and the hope that sleep will wipe out the day's miseries.

Except that it won't. Because however tired they are the weepers, snorers and those that cry out in the wee hours will keep everyone awake until sheer exhaustion takes over.

INT. RAVENSBRUCK/SLEEPING QUARTERS - NIGHT

A hundred poor souls are crammed into a dirty, smelly block built for thirty.

Three or four to a bed makes for cosy nights, keeps the cold chills away.

Hannah tries to get to bed first so that she has a small space on the edge. At least she can turn away from the foul smell of her neighbour's breath.

As Hannah gets undressed RUBE, who's in her late 50's, notices the wheal marks on Hannah's back.

RUBE
Christ, woman, that back needs seeing to.

HANNAH
It will be all right.

RUBE
No, really, it needs a doctor.

HANNAH

No doctor in here is touching me.
Haven't you heard about the
experiments they carry out on
people?

RUBE

They can't all be like that.

HANNAH

Which world do you live in? This
place is pure evil.

Suddenly the hut door is flung open.

A swaggering SS guard stands on the threshold.

SS GUARD #2

Hannah Muller. Is Hannah Muller in
here?

HANNAH

I am Hannah Muller.

SS GUARD #2

Come with me -- now.

Hannah timidly walks to the door. Looks at the hard face of
the guard.

HANNAH

What is wrong?

SS GUARD #2

You'll find out.

Hannah leaves the hut, walking behind the guard.

HANNAH

Where are we going?

SS GUARD #2

Be quiet.

INT. RAVENSBRUCK/THE BUNKER - LATER

At last the guard stops outside a forbidding looking door.

She opens the door to a dark, damp cell known as the
'bunker'.

SS GUARD #1

Get in.

Hannah gingerly steps inside the cell. No bed, chair or anything to make life more comfortable is provided -- apart from a dirty old mattress on the floor.

HANNAH

Why?

SS GUARD #1

Don't question me, Jew.

HANNAH

Please tell me why.

SS GUARD #1

Shut up.

The cell door shuts with a loud clang.

Hannah breaks down and cries loudly.

HANNAH

Why me? God's sake. WHY ME?

Hannah plops down on the mattress, leans up against the wall. She is so weary that almost immediately she feels sleep taking over her body.

Some hours later the door opens and a MALE GUARD stands there.

MALE GUARD

Hannah.

HANNAH

(weakly)

Yes.

MALE GUARD

Please come with me.

Hannah goes to stand but falls over. The male guard goes to offer a hand.

MALE GUARD

Up you get.

He pulls Hannah to her feet.

HANNAH

Thank you. That's the first act of kindness I've been shown here.

MALE GUARD

We're not all savage animals.

(changing tactic)

(MORE)

MALE GUARD (CONT'D)

Come with me please, the commandant
wants to see you.

HANNAH

The commandant -- for what does he
want me?

MALE GUARD

I honestly don't know.

EXT. RAVENSBRUCK CONCENTRATION CAMP - SAME

It's bitterly cold as the guard leads Hannah to see the
commandant.

A light sprinkling of snow begins to obliterate the
harshness of the camp.

The guard notices Hannah shivering, he does the
unthinkable...

MALE GUARD

Hannah put my thick coat on until
we get inside.

Hannah looks at him wide-eyed.

HANNAH

Your coat?

MALE GUARD

Just until we get inside, that's
all.

He slips the coat off, hands it to Hannah.

HANNAH

I shall never forget your kindness.
Please tell me your name.

MALE GUARD

Just call me Karl. But not in front
of other SS people. I would be in
trouble.

HANNAH

I'll always remember you, Karl.
Thank you so much.

Hannah gladly slips the coat on.

The guard ushers her inside...

INT. OUTSIDE COMMANDANTS OFFICE - LATER

The guard stops at the door. He gives Hannah a smile.

MALE GUARD

Don't look so worried. He won't
bite you.

Hannah hands the coat back to him.

HANNAH

Bite, shmite, it's not his bite I'm
worried about, Karl.

The guard raps on the door.

HANS GRUBER (O.S.)

Enter.

INT. COMMANDANTS OFFICE - SAME

Hannah and the guard enter the office which is sparsely
furnished in typical military style.

-- There's a desk, filing cabinet, and a chair on which is
seated HANS GRUBER, commandant of Ravensbruck.

He isn't the friendliest of people judging by his stern
features which are not helped by his monocle and small
clipped moustache (think Donald Pleasence in a James Bond
movie).

MALE GUARD

(salutes)
Hannah Muller, sir.

HANS GRUBER

Thank you.
(to Hannah)
Confirm your name and status.

HANNAH

Hannah Muller of Berlin. What more
do you need to know?

HANS GRUBER

You are a Jewess, wife of Herschel
Muller, businessman of Berlin?

HANNAH

I am.
(anxiously)
You have news of his whereabouts?

HANS GRUBER

I do not.

HANNAH

He just disappeared.

(defiantly)

The vile Gestapo no doubt will have picked him up. Where would they take him?

HANS GRUBER

Perhaps he just made the choice to get away.

HANNAH

He would never desert me and our girl, Helga.

HANS GRUBER

She has gone to England, I understand?

HANNAH

She has escaped from the wicked things going on in this country.

HANS GRUBER

(menacingly)

I see.

The commandant picks up some papers, flicks through them.

HANS GRUBER

You seem to have friends in high places, Muller.

HANNAH

I could do with some help now if that's the case.

HANS GRUBER

Have you heard of Heinrich Himmler?

HANNAH

I have.

HANS GRUBER

He has asked me to release you into the hands of an Englishman. What do you know of this?

HANNAH

Truthfully I know nothing of this Englishman. Who is he?

HANS GRUBER

His name is Peter Goodman. Does that help you?

HANNAH

It could be the man who has taken in Helga, that's my daughter by the way, and become a foster parent.

HANS GRUBER

Himmler has asked that you meet this Goodman person at Berlin's main railroad station.

HANNAH

I am overwhelmed.

HANS GRUBER

You should be.

HANNAH

When will it be sir?

HANS GRUBER

As soon as we can arrange it. In the meantime I will hold your passport and visa in my office.

(to the guard)

Take her.

HANNAH

Thank you sir.

The commandant waves her away.

End of subtitles

EXT. PHONE BOX - DAY

Peter wearily opens the phone box door, goes...

INSIDE PHONE BOX

He fishes in his top pocket for the business card given to him by Louis Biermann.

Nervously dials the number. Presses button A, the coins fall.

INTERCUT: Phone Box/Louis Biermann

LOUIS BIERMANN

Hello, Louis Biermann here.

PETER

Hello Mr Biermann, it's Peter Goodman. We spoke a week ago about Hannah Muller.

LOUIS BIERMANN

Ah, Peter. I have some wonderful news for you. Hannah Muller will be released from Ravensbruck camp and will meet you on a Berlin railway terminus. She will have her passport and travelling visa, but little else.

PETER

That is absolutely fantastic. What do I do next.

LOUIS BIERMANN

Can you come to my office tomorrow, there's some papers to sign? I'll tell you about getting to Berlin.

PETER

I should be able to get the day off tomorrow. My boss is very understanding.

LOUIS BIERMANN

I'll see you about eleven, is that suitable for you?

PETER

It certainly is, thank you so much for what you've done.

LOUIS BIERMANN

I am so glad I could help.

Peter replaces the receiver, leaves the box.

INT. THE GOODMAN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Peter flings open the kitchen door, his face is red with excitement. He lifts his hands in the air.

PETER

Ta-dah!

SALLY

You're in a good mood.

PETER

Hannah's coming. How about that?

SALLY
How did you manage it?

PETER
It was the chap at the embassy.
Where's Helga?

SALLY
At her language class till eight.

SALLY
Where you meeting Hannah?

PETER
Berlin.

SALLY
Sorry, did you say Berlin?

PETER
I did. I don't want Helga to know
-- it's got to be a surprise.

SALLY
She'll know something's happening
if you're missing for a few days.

PETER
Just tell her I'm working on a
project in London.

LATER - IN THE KITCHEN

Sally is cooking a late dinner as Helga is expected back soon. Peter is sat waiting for his meal.

PETER
As I'm going to the embassy
tomorrow I'll ask Helga to write to
her Mum. Just say that they'll send
it in their official pouch to
Germany.

SALLY
Hey, that's a good idea love. Smart
thinking.

PETER
Yeah, then I can hand it to Hannah
in Berlin, the job's a good 'un.

EXT. RAVENSBRUCK CONCENTRATION CAMP - DAY

NOTE: German dialogue with English subtitles

The rain falls like stair rods from a leaden sky.

The working party faces back-breaking efforts to turn the waterlogged soil over.

They wear only normal work clothes which are sodden.

Predictably, the guards have protective clothing.

Hannah has tears, or rain, or both, slipping down her cheeks as she struggles to lift the soil.

FEMALE GUARD #1

Muller!

Hannah doesn't hear, carries on working.

Suddenly, she feels a dig in her ribs as the guard pokes her with the whip.

FEMALE GUARD #1

I'm calling you.

HANNAH

Oh, I'm sorry.

FEMALE GUARD #1

Come with me.

The guard leads her inside the...

SLEEPING QUARTERS

Indicates a bundle of clothes on a bunk.

FEMALE GUARD #1

Put them on.

HANNAH

Can I at least get dry first?

FEMALE GUARD #1

You'll be wanting perfume to mask your smell next.

HANNAH

I just wanted to get warm.

FEMALE GUARD #1

PUT THEM ON!

Hannah obeys.

FEMALE GUARD #1
 You might have friends in high
 places but it won't buy you any
 favours here.

HANNAH
 (wicked gleam)
 I'll mention your name to Herr
 Himmler next time I see him.

That changes the guards temper.

FEMALE GUARD #1
 Just put them on, please.

Hannah smiles to herself, satisfied.

End of subtitles

INT. LOUIS BIERMANN'S OFFICE

Peter is quite relaxed, drinking coffee and eating Louis'
 biscuits.

LOUIS BIERMANN
 Alder Gunther has all the necessary
 documentation to travel on our
 official plane to Berlin and back.

PETER
 I can't thank you enough Herr
 Biermann. Just wait until our
 little girl sees her Mama again. I
 wish we had news of her Papa
 though.

LOUIS BIERMANN
 I have made some enquiries, but so
 far nothing. I will keep trying. By
 the way, call me Louis.

PETER
 Thank you, Louis. I dare say Alder
 will update you with all the
 details.

LOUIS BIERMANN
 Yes. I hope all goes well and that
 you meet the lady in Berlin as
 planned. So there, that's my good
 deed for the day.

PETER
No, not for the day, Louis, for a
lifetime.

They shake hands - friendship assured.

INT. BERLIN HAUPTBAHNOF(CENTRAL) STATION - DAY

Peter and ALDER GUNTHER walk into the station. They are
looking for signs that Hannah and her 'minder' are here.

As they scour the station...

An SS GUARD approaches them.

NOTE: German dialogue with English subtitles

SS GUARD
Are you Alder Gunther?

ALDER
I am.

The guard gives a messy salute.

SS GUARD
I have brought Hannah Muller for
your collection.

ALDER
So where is she?

SS GUARD
I left her eating breakfast and
having a drink in that refreshment
room over there.

He points to a small 'cafe' type establishment.

ALDER
Can we go for her please?

They walk in the direction the guard indicated, go
inside...

INT. REFRESHMENT ROOM - SAME

SS GUARD
I left her here...

Hannah is not where the guard indicates. A half-eaten meal
and an unfinished coffee are on the small table.

ALDER
 Maybe she's in the toilet.

SS GUARD
 I'll get a server to look.

The guard goes off to ask a waitress to check the toilets.
 He shows her Hannah's official photograph.

ALDER
 (to Peter, in
 English, German
 accent)
 Hannah's gone missing. A woman is
 checking the toilets.

Peter looks worried.

PETER
 I hope she's there. Don't even know
 what she looks like.

ALDER
 The guard has a photo.

The waitress comes out of the toilets, shakes her head.

The guard returns.

BACK TO GERMAN

ALDER
 (to the guard)
 Show us the photo.

The guard produces Hannah's passport. It shows the face of
 a woman who has suffered a great deal of trauma in the past
 few weeks. Peter and Alder study it closely.

ALDER
 I suggest we split up and meet back
 here in a half hour. Tell me what
 is she wearing?

SS GUARD
 Brown coat, brown hat. She is
 carrying a small parcel.

ALDER
 (to Peter)
 We'll split up. Meet back here in a
 half hour.
 (remembering)
 Look for a woman in a brown hat and
 coat.

PETER

Shall I wait near the refreshment room in case she comes back to finish her meal?

ALDER

Yes, that will be good. I am worried about the time because our plane leaves Berlin at five p.m. We must be on it.

PETER

Surely we'll find her before then.

ALDER

The woman has suffered a lot of stress. She might think this meeting is just a trap.

PETER

I hope she'll want to see her daughter; that should be enough to know it's not an ambush.

ALDER

I'll go around the station, come back in another entrance. Back here in half an hour.

Alder and the guard leave in different directions.

Peter makes his way back to the refreshment room.

He goes to the counter, orders a coffee (in English).

He is served by a surly looking waitress who slaps a coffee on the counter.

WAITRESS

Ein mark.

It is only then that Peter realises he doesn't have any German money.

PETER

Sorry, no money.

A hand taps Peter on the shoulder.

He turns round to see a little woman in a brown coat and hat. She carries a small parcel.

PETER

Hannah?

HANNAH

Peter?

She clasps her arms around him. Hugs him tight.

The surly waitress tut-tut's and turns away.

PETER

Come with me.

From that, he takes her hand, leads her on to the...

STATION CONCOURSE

PETER

We -- have -- to -- wait -- here.

Hannah's arms go round Peter.

PETER

You -- are -- safe -- now.

They stand motionless for some time. Both seem glad that they found each other.

HANNAH

Helga?

Peter remembers the letter Helga wrote to Hannah. Retrieves it from an inside pocket, hands it to her.

Hannah tears the envelope open, cries as she reads it.

Peter kisses her forehead.

PETER

See -- Helga -- soon.

HANNAH

Ya, Helga, mein kleines Mädchen.

She begins to cry again, just as Alder joins them.

ALDER

Thank God you found her.

PETER

She found me.

BACK TO GERMAN

ALDER

(to Hannah)

I am Alder, from the German Embassy
in London.

(MORE)

ALDER (CONT'D)

We will be flying back to England at five p.m. Then you can go to Peter's house to live with Helga.

HANNAH

Thank you so much. Tell Peter how I am grateful to him for looking after my daughter.

ALDER

You are safe now, and when the guard returns we'll go to the airport and fly back to London.

BACK TO ENGLISH

ALDER

Hannah says, thank you.

Peter gives her a squeeze just as the guard returns.

Alder speaks to the guard, shakes his hand. The guard hands Hannah's papers to him, salutes Peter, pats Hannah on the arm and leaves.

ALDER

Let's get back to London.

The three leave the station.

EXT. LONDON AIRPORT - NIGHT

As they leave the airport...

An embassy car draws up. Hannah is shepherded inside. Peter and Alder join her.

INT. CAR - SAME

ALDER

My instructions are to take you to Thamesbury.

PETER

That's really good of you. Wasn't looking forward to the train journey back home.

From that...

The car sets a course north-west for Buckinghamshire.

Hannah is asleep before leaving Middlesex.

PETER

Poor thing, she's worn out. But my Sally'll take care of her.

ALDER

She'll need plenty of rest after her ordeal at Ravensbruck.

PETER

Yeah, I've heard some dreadful stories about that place.

ALDER

It shames my country.

PETER

Not all Germans are Nazis. Just look at you and Louis. What you've done for us was wonderful.

They sit in silence until the car enters Thamesbury.

And then...

DRIVER

Which way, sir?

PETER

Straight on for a quarter of a mile, it's the next turn to the right, number fourteen.

The car draws up smoothly outside Peter's house.

PETER

(to Alder)

Can you wake Hannah, then ask her to wait outside. I want it to be a nice surprise for Helga.

ALDER

Like to see their faces.

PETER

Thanks again for everything, Alder.

(thinking)

Do you want to come in and see them together again?

ALDER

I think the moment is theirs. It was my pleasure to help.

They shake hands, Peter steps out the car, which moves off.

EXT. THE GOODMAN'S - SAME

Peter walks to his front door, opens it quietly, then pushes it almost closed.

INT. THE GOODMAN'S

He walks into...

THE KITCHEN

Sally runs to him, kisses him.

SALLY

Glad you're back. Did you have any trouble finding Hannah?

PETER

(yawning)

Not really. God, I'm glad to be home. Where's Helga?

SALLY

In her room doing English revisions.

PETER

I'll call her down. Hannah's waiting outside.

Peter goes to...

THE HALL

Calls upstairs.

PETER

Helga, there's a friend of yours at the door.

Helga appears.

HELGA

Peter, did Mama's letter go?

She comes bounding down the stairs, hugs Peter.

PETER

Yes it's gone all right.

(hastily)

There's a friend waiting at the door to see you.

Helga goes to the door; in the dark she sees a woman.

As the woman steps into the light from the hall...

HANNAH
Mein kleines Mädchen.

Hannah holds out her hands to Helga.

HELGA
(screaming)
MAMA, Mama. I can't believe it, my
dearest Mama.

Hannah steps into the hall, and...

Helga and her Mama hug, cry, hug and kiss each other.

Helga turns to Peter.

HELGA
Sank you, my second Papa.

PETER
We're very happy for you both.

Hannah moves to Peter. Kisses his cheek.

HANNAH
Danke, Peter.

Sally joins Peter. They look on, clasp hands, smile.

SALLY
It's good that they're back
together.

PETER
It was worth all the effort, even
though I've now got three women to
contend with.

As they see the joy on the faces of Helga and Hannah...

They laugh, they kiss and hold each other tightly.

Sally's beaming face over Peter's right shoulder...

SALLY
(whispering and
winking)
Guess which one's the boss!

FADE TO:

EXT. LIVERPOOL STREET STATION - LONDON - DAY

SUPER:

'Epilogue: London - September 2003'

It's a warm Autumn morning, birds sing in nearby trees, and a blinding shaft of sunlight beams down on a lasting reminder of an exceptional achievement.

A very elderly lady proudly walks out the station. Comes face-to-face with the Kindertransport memorial.

She gazes at the brave faces of children who were spared from Nazi atrocities by English foster parents.

A tear trickles down her cheek. She wipes it away.

HELGA
(to herself, German
accent)

Sank you Sally and dear Peter. Sank
you, sank you so much for what you
gave up for Mama and me.

Now she's really crying...

HELGA
Rest in peace you lovely people.
You saved Helga -- and Mama.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END