

A SCHOOL TEACHER

by

Olga Tremaine

Inspired by a true story

olga_tremaine@yahoo.com

Copyright © 2012-present. This screenplay may not be used or reproduced without the expressed written permission of the author.

FADE IN:

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

A dull pencil stub lays Cyrillic letters on a yellow margin of an old newspaper.

SUPER: NAZI OCCUPIED BRYANSK (USSR) - WINTER 1942

The pencil lead breaks but girl's hands force it to scribble.

Poorly dressed but well postured MRS. TATIANA (25), moves between the desks. She watches her pale and skinny STUDENTS (8) writing. MARINA (8) covers her face, silent tears drop on the desk.

MRS. TATIANA
Marina, what's wrong?

Mrs. Tatiana approaches. She notices Marina's pencil is broken. She offers hers, new and sharp. The girl's lips smile in a silent thank you.

The school bell rings and the kids pack their belongings. One by one they hand their class papers to the teacher.

Mrs. Tatiana sits down at her desk and starts grading.

There is no one in the classroom now, except for Marina at her desk and the teacher. Mrs. Tatiana checks her watch, glances at Marina. Returns to her work, makes notes.

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

It's dark outside the window now. Mrs. Tatiana is still at her desk, her face is tired, she rests her head on her hands. Marina still scribbles on the piece of paper.

MRS. TATIANA
Marina, it's been so long, won't your parents be looking for you?

Suddenly the girl starts sobbing.

MRS. TATIANA
Marina?

MARINA
Oh, Tatiana Sergeivna, they took my Dad away last night...

MRS. TATIANA

Who? They?

Marina nods. Tatiana comes up to hug the girl.

MRS. TATIANA

What about your mom? Is she okay?

MARINA

Mom, she left to Poland a month ago, for work. Potatoes, she promised to bring back potatoes from the fields...

MRS. TATIANA

Are you hungry?

The girl doesn't respond, just wipes her tears.

MRS. TATIANA

Come on, I have fresh borscht at home. Get dressed.

Marina pulls her fur hat on.

INT. MRS. TATIANA'S DINING ROOM - EVENING

Dark wood log walls, old photographic portraits in black and white.

A big oak table without a tablecloth. Little Marina eats at the table, her head peeks just above the plate full of steaming soup. Mrs. Tatiana watches her in silence, smiles.

MARINA

(as she chews)

Tatiana Sergeivna, who are these people on the wall, underneath Vladimir Lenin?

MRS. TATIANA

Well, these are my parents.

MARINA

Do you have a husband?

MRS. TATIANA

No. Not any more...

Marina's eyes drift to the corner where there is a portrait of a young man in a Soviet uniform.

MARINA

And children. Do you have any children?

Mrs. Tatiana lowers her eyes.

MRS. TATIANA

I had a little girl but she passed away two years ago, from typhus.

They hear the front door creak, SOMEONE stumps into the mudroom, not visible yet. Mrs. Tatiana seems startled, clears her throat.

MRS. TATIANA

...She'd be a little younger than you now.

Marina listens to her, finishing the soup.

MRS. TATIANA

You should stay with me until your mother returns back to the village.

KLAUS (30) throws the door open and lets a cloud of frosty air in. He enters shivering, rubs his red hands together. Marina is curious, studies him.

KLAUS

(German accent)
Frau, have anything to eat?

He pulls his wool pants off and leaves them by the fireplace.

KLAUS

Pot roast smells good, what else is there, borscht? And something to drink.

Marina gawks at him, a piece of bread seems got stuck half way in her throat.

KLAUS

(to Marina)
What are you staring at?
(to Mrs. Tatiana)
Hurry up, I'm starving.

Mrs. Tatiana, serious, scurries into the kitchen. Marina's eyes well up, fearful.

Klaus plops down at the table. Rubs his hands. Eyes the girl. She motions to get out of the table, but his big hand grabs her by the wrist.

KLAUS
Going somewhere?

She stays. Mrs. Tatiana brings a few plates of steaming food. Marina stares at her, eyes questioning, but Mrs. Tatiana avoids looking back, returns to the kitchen.

Klaus chomps his food.

KLAUS
Your mother cooks well--

MARINA
Where is my Dad?

Klaus stops chewing.

MARINA
I live four doors down. Last night
at three in the morning two polizei
knocked on the door and told my Dad
to get dressed--

Klaus smirks. Mrs. Tatiana watches them from behind the curtain that separates the kitchen from the dining room.

KLAUS
Your father was smart enough to
understand you've lost the war.

MARINA
I'd rather die than be your slave!

Klaus jumps up from the bench and grabs the girl by her collar.

KLAUS
Shut up you little snot.

Marina struggles to free herself. Klaus laughs at her efforts. He suddenly opens his hand and lets her lose balance and tumble on the floor.

Mrs. Tatiana leans away from the curtain. Marina runs into the kitchen.

MARINA (O.S.)
I thought you are a good person,
Tatiana Sergeivna!

She runs out of the house, Mrs. Tatiana follows.

EXT. MRS. TATIANA'S HOUSE, STREET - NIGHT

MRS. TATIANA
Marina, stop! Can I explain?

Marina, without her hat or coat, stumbles and falls onto the snowy sidewalk. She turns.

MRS. TATIANA
They ordered to provide him food
and shelter, I had no choice.

Marina, tears streaming down her face, sprints down the street. Mrs. Tatiana runs after her.

MRS. TATIANA
Marina! Wait!

Mrs. Tatiana, out of breath, stops, watches the little girl's dark figure fading away.

MRS. TATIANA
Come to school tomorrow, Marina! Do
you hear me? Marina!

INT. MRS. TATIANA'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Mrs. Tatiana enters as Klaus finishes his meat and potatoes.

KLAUS
And now bring some tea, Frau. And
sit down with me. I feel lonely
today.

He shoots her a sleazy wink. She nods and goes to the kitchen.

INT. MRS. TATIANA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mrs. Tatiana's trembling hands pour tea into a mug. She puts it onto a tray.

Mrs. Tatiana turns back, she can see the Klaus' silhouette through the curtain. He's still at the table.

She pours white powder from a small glass ampulla into the mug. She takes a full breath, takes the tray and steps into the dining room.

FADE OUT.