

THE 28TH PRISONER

Written by

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EXT. STREETS OF VIENNA - 1922

The streets are serene, birds sing, children play.

A small bespectacled boy, self-assured and cocky, VIKTOR FRANKL (17) dressed for mountain climbing and burdened by his heavy nap sack, toddles to the house of a friend.

CARD: VIENNA, AUSTRIA - 1922

INT. SCHNEIDER RESIDENCE/BEDROOM

The kicked-out chair crashes, and the body of a dead young man quivers in its last dance of death. Swaying back and forth, the rope untwists to reveal JOHANN SCHNEIDER (17).

EXT. SCHNEIDER RESIDENCE/FRONT PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

Viktor approaches the porch. The front door isn't latched, and with each knock he pushes the door open a little wider.

VIKTOR
Johann? Johann?

Viktor sheepishly peers into the house.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
Johann? Herr Schneider? Frau
Schneider? It's Viktor. Is anyone
here?

INT. SCHNEIDER RESIDENCE/FOYER

Viktor glances quizzically around the disheveled living room before walking inside. He leaves the door ajar.

On the coffee table lies Johann's report card showing a failing grade of 5 listed under Mathematics.

VIKTOR
(quietly to himself)
Johann, you failed the Matura exam?

This is a life shattering event, and Viktor is suddenly concerned.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
Hello? Johann? Where are you?

INT. SCHNEIDER RESIDENCE/HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Viktor searches each room slowly pushing the doors open.

INT. SCHNEIDER RESIDENCE/JOHANN'S BEDROOM

Viktor stops in the doorway when he sees Johann's lifeless body hanging from the noose.

VIKTOR

Johann!

HUBERT (O.S.)

Johann, is anyone here?

VIKTOR

Hubert! I'm in his room. Hurry!

Viktor hugs Johann's dangling torso to lift the body, as if this can save Johann's life.

HUBERT GSUR (17) blond, ruggedly handsome, and dressed in his climbing outfit rushes in.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

Unhook the noose.

Following orders, Hubert rights the chair, stands on it, and unties the noose. Viktor and Johann crumple to the floor. Johann's body rests on Viktor's lap.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

Johann, what did you do? What did you do?

INT. FRANKL RESIDENCE ON CZERNINGASSE/VIKTOR'S BEDROOM

Viktor sits in the pile of psychology and philosophy books that litter the room. Books by Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler, Carl Jung top the heap.

Viktor reads from one, tosses it aside and picks up the next. He furiously scribbles notes, searching for answers they do not offer.

VIKTOR

Idiots.

He addresses an envelope to Dr. Sigmund Freud, Berggasse 19, Vienna, Austria. The letter starts out "Dr. Freud, What, in your opinion, is the meaning of life? I write this as a dear friend has died at his own hand....."

EXT. PRATER PARK - DAY

Viktor, Hubert, JOSEPH, PAUL POLAK, and other CLASSMATES debate philosophy.

CLASSMATE #1
It was Schopenhauer.

JOSEPH
It was Nietzsche.

VIKTOR
Nope. It was Max Stirner. He said existence is an endless war of each against all. He was the original Nihilist.

JOSEPH
The first, maybe, but not the best.

He reads from Nietzsche's book "Will to Power."

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
This collapse of meaning, relevance, and purpose will be the most destructive force in history, constituting a total assault on reality, and nothing less than the greatest crisis of humanity.

VIKTOR
Collapse of meaning is the most destructive force?

Viktor's mind wanders, lost in thought.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
(quietly, to himself)
If the collapse of meaning is the most destructive, perhaps the pursuit is the most constructive?

EXT. RAX MOUNTAINS - DAY

Viktor and Hubert are tied together as they climb. Vienna sits majestically in the background.

VIKTOR
Hubert, why do so many doctors think they know all the answers?

HUBERT

That's funny, coming from a medical student.

VIKTOR

It was Johann's suicide that started me on this search for answers. Freud talks about the pleasure principal, but that's not why Johann killed himself. Adler talks about the need for power and superiority.

HUBERT

But Johann didn't kill himself over that either.

VIKTOR

No. It was something else.

HUBERT

What?

VIKTOR

That's why I started searching for answers. I've been formulating my own ideas for some time.

HUBERT

Really? What?

VIKTOR

I believe that all people need to have a reason for being. All people need to have meaning in their lives. I believe it's more powerful, and more motivating than either pleasure or power.

HUBERT

But, how? How do you find meaning?

VIKTOR

I think in a few different ways. Through work, through deeds.

HUBERT

Like devoting yourself to a cause; something worth fighting for?

VIKTOR

Exactly. And also, I think, through love. By loving someone or something.

HUBERT

Hmm.

VIKTOR

So far I've named this idea
Logotherapy.

HUBERT

Logotherapy?

VIKTOR

From the Greek. Logos for meaning,
and therapy for healing. I believe
that a person can heal by finding
meaning in their life.

HUBERT

And you think Johann would still be
alive if he had some greater
purpose in his life?

VIKTOR

I don't know. But my guess is that
when he failed the Matura exam, he
may have lost his reason for
living. Really it should have
signaled a change of direction for
him. My theory isn't complete yet,
but..

HUBERT

I think you may be on to something,
Viktor. From what you tell me of
Freud and Adler's theories, they
seem so rudimentary. To live for
only pleasure or power, well, it
seems like a waste.

They near the top of the mountain.

VIKTOR

People are not so simple. Anyway
this is what started me thinking,
searching.

HUBERT

You know, Viktor, that even a dwarf
can see further if he stands on the
shoulder of a giant.

They stand at the top. Viktor is a good foot shorter than
Hubert. He looks way up into Hubert's face. They both get
the joke.

INT. ROTHSCHILD HOSPITAL/MEETING ROOM (1937)

Viktor addresses the small audience of DOCTORS and NURSES.

Nurse TILLY GROSSER (22) quite attractive and petite stands in the back of the room next to her co-worker GRETE. Tilly has caught Viktor's eye.

CARD: ROTHSCHILD HOSPITAL, VIENNA - 1937

VIKTOR	GRETE
It was only a few years ago	(whispers to Tilly)
that two hundred students	You think he's cute?
committed suicide every year.	
That's in Vienna alone.	

VIKTOR	TILLY
Thanks to the volunteers at	(whispers to Grete)
the new suicide center, last	Who, him?
year there were none.	

Tilly shakes her head no, but her eyes betray her. Viktor is instantly smitten. Grete watches their exchange.

VIKTOR	GRETE
We help the student realize	Liar.
that failing the Maturas is	
not the end of their life,	
but perhaps a change of	
direction.	

The CHARGE NURSE scans the room to see who's talking. Tilly and Grete straighten up and smile as she looks in their direction.

VIKTOR

And although their parents may be initially disappointed, it will pass. Their parents will continue to love them, whether they're a doctor or a ditch digger.

Polite applause tapers off. Viktor shakes the hands of Doctors as they exit.

DOCTOR

Your Logotherapy sound interesting. Do you have more information on it?

VIKTOR

Soon, I hope. I've started a book.

DOCTOR

I look forward to it.

Viktor gathers notes but watches Tilly's progress toward him and the door. He strategically turns to bump into Tilly as she passes by, but instead he nearly knocks her over.

VIKTOR
(embarrassed)
I'm so sorry. Are you alright?

GRETE
Tilly, are you okay?

TILLY
Yes. It's nothing. I'm fine.

Grete grins coyly at Tilly.

VIKTOR
I'm Viktor. Viktor Frankl.
Is it Tilly?

GRETE
I'm Grete.

Viktor and Tilly focus on each other. Grete is completely ignored, and makes her exit.

GRETE (CONT'D)
See you tomorrow.

Grete winks at Tilly as she leaves. Tilly smirks back.

INT. FRANKL RESIDENCE ON CZERNINGASSE - NIGHT

TILLY'S smiling face. She grabs Viktor by the hand and leads him off the makeshift dance floor in the living room. The home is filled with celebration.

Among the GUESTS are Viktor's father GABRIEL and his mother ELSA. Viktor's brother WALTER and his wife ELSE. Viktor's sister STELLA and her husband WALTER BONDY.

Tilly's GUESTS include her Mother EMMA and her Aunt HERTE WEISER. Viktor's friends include Joseph, Paul and OTTI POLAK, Hubert and ERNA GSUR.

Tilly is stunning; the envy of every girl there. Viktor proudly parades his sweetheart about the room.

The two stop at each cluster to introduce Tilly. Walter eyes Tilly and gives Viktor the nod of approval.

VIKTOR
 Thanks Walter. Was I right?
 (to Tilly)
 My brother Walter. You'll meet him.

Tilly leads Viktor to two women, Tilly's Aunt and Mother.

TILLY
 Viktor, this is my Aunt Herte. My
 Mother you already know.

AUNT HERTE
 So this is the famous Doctor
 Frankl. The man that Tilly won't
 stop talking about.

VIKTOR
 I wouldn't believe everything I
 hear.

AUNT HERTE
 It's nothing but complimentary.

VIKTOR
 Oh, in that case, it's all true.
 It's such a pleasure to meet you.
 Good evening Emma. Are you having
 a nice time? Did you get enough to
 eat?

AUNT HERTE
 Yes, yes, yes. It's all lovely.

She leans in to kiss Tilly on the cheek.

AUNT HERTE (CONT'D)
 Happy birthday, Dear.

Emma smiles as Viktor and Tilly make the rounds.

EMMA (O.S.)
 I've never seen her so happy.

Viktor and Tilly join a group of Viktor's friends.

VIKTOR
 Joseph, Paul, Otti, Hubert, Erna,
 this is Tilly.

HUBERT
 No wonder he's been hiding you.

Erna nudges him.

ERNA
 (to Tilly)
 Never mind him, dear.
 (to Viktor)
 Is this more than a birthday
 celebration Viktor?

PAUL
 Is it?

OTTI
 Spill, Viktor.

VIKTOR
 No, no, no. It's Tilly's birthday
 party. That's all.

HUBERT
 For now. But I've seen you with a
 lot of girls Viktor.

PAUL
 A lot of girls.

They nod.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 But Tilly here, she's something
 special, isn't she?

VIKTOR
 Perhaps.

Tilly hides her face behind Viktor's shoulder.

ERNA
 Are you blushing dear?

OTTI
 How sweet.

ERNA
 I like her Viktor.

OTTI
 Me too. But Viktor, she's much too
 sweet for an old grouch like you.

VIKTOR
 Tilly, don't you listen to a single
 word they say about me.

INT. FRANKL RESIDENCE/HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Viktor pulls a small leather box out of his jacket pocket and presents it to Tilly. Her smile broadens as she lifts the lid, revealing a small enamel globe with lettering on it.

She turns the pendant in the box to read it.

TILLY

"The whole world turns on love."

VIKTOR

The jeweler said it was one of a kind.

Viktor fastens the necklace around Tilly's neck. Tilly's face is beaming as she models her new globe necklace for Viktor.

EXT. STREETS OF VIENNA - NIGHT

The glass from store windows shatters as it crashes on the cobblestone streets.

CARD: KRISTALLNACHT - NOVEMBER 1938

Chaos ensues. MEN dressed in brown smash windows and terrorize JEWS. Bonfires catch the shards of glass on the cobblestones streets, creating the effect of glistening diamonds.

INT. ROTHSCHILD HOSPITAL/SUICIDE WARD - DAY

The hospital ward is chaotic and overflowing with SUICIDE PATIENTS. The patients sit while being interviewed by various DOCTORS and NURSES as they complete intake forms. The patients are distraught, traumatized, and in shock.

DR. POETZL, Viktor's mentor and supervisor walks from one PATIENT to his next. He walks by Viktor and leans in.

DR. POETZL

Have you ever seen it so crazy?

VIKTOR

No. The world has gone mad.

Viktor returns to his patient.

WOMAN PATIENT #1

They killed my husband. Clubbed him
to death when he tried to stop
them. He spent his lifetime
building the business. We both did.

Nearby, another DOCTOR completes the intake form.

WOMAN PATIENT #2

I have nothing else to live for.
Please, just let me die.

INT. ROTHSCHILD HOSPITAL/SUICIDE WARD - DAY

Yellow stars are conspicuously affixed to Viktor's clothing
and all PATIENTS. Otherwise the chaotic hospital ward hasn't
changed.

CARD: 2 YEARS LATER.

Viktor Frankl, clipboard in hand stands face-to-face with a
WOMAN PATIENT.

WOMAN SUICIDE PATIENT #3

...When everyone was killed. Why
do you try to save me when the
Nazis only want me dead?

A NURSE walks over to Dr. Frankl and interrupts him.

NURSE

Doctor Frankl, you have a telephone
call.

Her look conveys the seriousness of the situation.

VIKTOR

I'm sorry. Will you excuse me one
moment?

The patient nods her approval as she dabs her tears. Viktor
and the nurse walk together to the Nurse's Station.

NURSE

(whispering)
It's the American Embassy!

VIKTOR

(on phone, yelling over
noise)
This is he...
Wonderful...
(MORE)

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

And what about my parents, Gabriel
and Elsa Frankl.
Please, can you check again? ...
Okay, thank you.

Dr. Poetzl overhears the conversation, excuses himself from
his PATIENT, and meets Viktor before he can walk back to his.

DR. POETZL

(loud whisper)
Viktor?

VIKTOR

They approved a visa for me, and
Tilly - if we get married. But
they didn't approve my parents.

DR. POETZL

Perhaps they just haven't been
approved yet.

VIKTOR

But if they're approved after I
leave, they probably won't make the
journey on their own. If I go - I
may never see them again.

DR. POETZL

So what are you going to do?

Viktor shakes his head.

VIKTOR

I don't know yet.

EXT. STREETS OF VIENNA - NIGHT

The streets are littered with rubble. He comes upon St.
Stephan's Cathedral; Stephansplatz.

Viktor stops and looks at the majestic church. He hears
ORGAN MUSIC coming from inside. He lifts his satchel to
cover the yellow star on his jacket and enters.

INT. ST. STEPHAN'S CATHEDRAL - NIGHT

PARISHIONERS enjoy the concert. Viktor sneaks into one of
the back pews. He puts his head down and prays. His voice
quivers though he speaks quietly, almost in a whisper.

VIKTOR

Please God, I need a sign; some sort of indication from you. What should I do? Stay, and do what I can to protect my parents? Or do I go to America?

INT. ST. STEPHAN'S CATHEDRAL - LATER THAT NIGHT

Viktor is still in prayer, though the music has stopped and the church has emptied. He finally shuffles out.

INT. FRANKL RESIDENCE CZERNINGASSE / LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Viktor trudges in the front door and sees a large block of marble with a Hebrew letter on it. His father Gabriel hears the door and enters the room.

GABRIEL

Long day?

Viktor nods, and points at the stone tablet.

VIKTOR

Father, what's this?

GABRIEL

I was on clean up detail today at Leopoldstädter Temple. Well, where the Temple used to be. I found this in the rubble.

VIKTOR

Is it from the ten commandments?

GABRIEL

Yes. This letter appears in only one of the commandments. The fifth.

Viktor looks up at his father as he speaks.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Honor thy father and thy mother.

Viktor smiles. He has received his answer.

INT. JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

Decorated with a Chuppah, the traditional Jewish wedding song Ashir Shirim plays.

Family and friends watch as Viktor's stomps his foot and crushes a wine glass with a loud POP.

WEDDING GUESTS

Mazel Tov!

Viktor and Tilly kiss. As they part, the yellow Star of David affixed to their wedding attire becomes apparent.

INT. FRANKL RESIDENCE/VIKTOR'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Viktor and Tilly sleep. We hear a TELEPHONE RING.

CARD: 1940

Elsa knocks on the door and opens the door a crack.

ELSA

Viktor! Telephone. It's the Gestapo.

Tilly is overcome with dread.

TILLY

No! Viktor?

VIKTOR

I'm sure it'll be fine. After all, they're on the phone, not at the door with rifles. Don't worry.

TILLY

So what do they want?

VIKTOR

I don't know.

INT. KOMMANDANT'S OFFICE - MORNING

Viktor is dressed in a heavy coat and carries his doctor's bag and a small suitcase.

The GESTAPO CLERK leads Viktor into the Kommandant's private office and motions at him to sit at the desk across from the KOMMANDANT.

The Kommandant is dwarfed by the Nazi flags behind him. He reads and ignores his guest for a moment. Finally, he looks up at Viktor.

KOMMANDANT

Viktor Frankl?

VIKTOR
Yes, Herr Kommandant.

KOMMANDANT
How is it that you are still living
in Vienna?

VIKTOR
I don't know exactly, Herr
Kommandant. Perhaps I best serve
the Third Reich in my current
position at Rothschild Hospital?

KOMMANDANT
Oh. And what is it that you do
there?

VIKTOR
My duties are those of a doctor,
Herr Kommandant, but as a Jew, my
credentials have been stripped.
My official title is Jew-Caretaker
for Neurology and Psychiatry.

KOMMANDANT
Yes. And why didn't you use the
Visa provided to you, and go to
America?

His knowledge surprises Viktor.

VIKTOR
I decided to stay and care for my
parents.

KOMMANDANT
So, are you the same man who wrote
the article that appeared in the
Medical Journal last month?

Viktor is again surprised.

VIKTOR
You are familiar with my work, Herr
Kommandant?

KOMMANDANT
I am familiar with *everything*.

The Kommandant stands up and walks in slow circles around
Viktor, pausing occasionally to emphasize the threat.

KOMMANDANT (CONT'D)

Tell me, great doctor, what would you recommend in this case? I have a friend that has confided in me a serious problem. I want to know how you would treat him.

VIKTOR

Of course, Herr Kommandant. I will assist your *friend* in any way I can.

KOMMANDANT

He says that he is not able to perform, you know, with women.

VIKTOR

The trust of a friend with such a personal matter is admirable.

KOMMANDANT

Just answer the question.

VIKTOR

Yes. Of course. May I ask, do you know if your friend has always had this problem, or is this a recent development?

KOMMANDANT

This is new, I think.

VIKTOR

Did anything happen to your friend recently to cause this, say an accident or something?

KOMMANDANT

No, not that I know of. He is in fine health.

VIKTOR

As I haven't given your friend a thorough examination, my diagnosis is only speculative, of course.

KOMMANDANT

Of course.

VIKTOR

Fortunately, I have had some success treating other patients with this problem.

(MORE)

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

I may suggest a type of therapy that I created called paradoxical intention.

KOMMANDANT

What is this paradoxical intention?

VIKTOR

In cases similar to your friend's, I have found that the problem may be two-fold. Like every man, he may have experienced impotence at one time.

KOMMANDANT

Every man?

VIKTOR

Yes, Herr Kommandant. Every man. If your friend experienced this, he may have had some fear it would reoccur.

KOMMANDANT

Perhaps.

VIKTOR

I call this fear anticipatory or performance anxiety. Your friend fears that he will not be able to perform. He anticipates it, worries about it, and then that's exactly what happens.

The Kommandant gently nods, following Viktor's logic.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

It's the fear that provokes the symptom; not the symptom itself. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy, and can be a never-ending cycle.

KOMMANDANT

So how do you stop this cycle?

VIKTOR

My suggestion is going to surprise you. It will be difficult, but he should not attempt intercourse for six months.

KOMMANDANT

Six months!?!

VIKTOR

Yes. Your friend should think only of his wife's enjoyment, and not of himself. He should romance her, hold her hand, kiss her, and touch her in any way she enjoys. But under no circumstances is he to have sexual intercourse with her.

KOMMANDANT

Are you certain? If you are playing with me Herr Frankl...

VIKTOR

Believe it or not, this is all that's needed.

KOMMANDANT

And this will really work?

VIKTOR

Amazingly well, Herr Kommandant.

KOMMANDANT

If this doesn't solve his problem, well, let's just say that I'm sure I wouldn't want to be you. You may go now.

VIKTOR

Back to the deportation line, Herr Kommandant?

KOMMANDANT

No. I have crossed you off the list for now. You may go home.

Viktor bows as he backs up to the door.

VIKTOR

Thank you Herr Kommandant. Thank you.

EXT. VIENNA TRAIN STATION - DAY

PEOPLE wearing yellow stars fill the chaotic station. Viktor, Tilly, Gabriel, Else, and Tilly's mother Emma stand in heavy coats and carry suitcases.

Viktor's friend Joseph stands nearby. He's also dressed in a heavy coat and carrying a small bag.

CARD: SEPTEMBER 1942, TWO YEARS LATER.

Paul Polak approaches the group.

PAUL
Viktor. I'm sorry I'm late. I
just got word that Hubert has been
sentenced.

Viktor is wide-eyed. Joseph, eavesdropping, joins the group.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Joseph! Not you too? Hubert's
sentence is in. Death. By
guillotine.

VIKTOR
Oh, poor Hubert. His intentions
were admirable. No one can speak
against Hitler. How's Erna taking
it?

PAUL
She's putting on a brave face...
Not well.

Viktor opens his suitcase and hands Paul an onion-skin copy
of his manuscript. The original manuscript stays in the case.

VIKTOR
Please give this to Erna, and send
my love. It's all I can do.

Paul nods. The Gestapo approaches, and Paul cuts it short.
He hugs Tilly.

PAUL
Take care of him, and yourself.

TILLY
Thank you, Paul.

He shakes Viktor's hand, which morphs into a hug.

PAUL
I hope to see you again soon, my
friend.

Paul tucks the pages under his arm.

VIKTOR
Me too.

The goodbye was under the watchful gaze of the Kommandant.
As Paul leaves the Kommandant whispers to a nearby GUARD.
The Guard brings Viktor over.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
Herr Kommandant.

KOMMANDANT
Doctor Frankl.

VIKTOR
Yes Herr Kommandant. How is your
friend?

KOMMANDANT
Very well, thank you.

VIKTOR
I'm glad to hear it.

Viktor leans in to whispers.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
He didn't last a month, did he?

The Kommandant smiles.

KOMMANDANT
I have orders. All remaining Jews
are being sent to Theresienstadt.

VIKTOR
I understand. Thank you for the
last two years.

The Kommandant nods and the Guard escorts Viktor back to his
family.

EXT. VIENNA TRAIN STATION (A FEW HOURS LATER)

As Viktor and his family move up to board the cattle car, the
same Guard pulls them out of line, and puts them in a regular
train car with seats. Almost first class.

The train pulls out of the station, leaving Vienna.

**EXT. THERESIENSTADT - DAY (STOCK FOOTAGE FROM PROPAGANDA FILM
"HITLER GIVES THE JEWS A CITY")**

Reality of the camp contrasts greatly with the Hitler
propaganda film.

Viktor, Tilly, Gabriel, Elsa, and Emma march toward the front
gate with Joseph and the many other PRISONERS, escorted by SS
OFFICERS.

Theresienstadt is muddy, drab, brown, and grey.

INT. THERESIENSTADT / DORM ROOM - DAY

Tilly, Elsa, and Emma are as thin as their threadbare clothes. Viktor hurries in. The untold story of the beatings he received is evidenced by his broken eyeglasses.

CARD: TWO YEARS LATER

VIKTOR

I am being sent... to Auschwitz.

ELSA

Viktor!

VIKTOR

I have one hour to pack.

TILLY

I'm going with you.

EMMA

No!

TILLY

You're my husband, and you're not leaving here without me.

EMMA

Tilly, no. You must stay.

VIKTOR

You have good work in the factory. You're safe here. Stay and care for your Mother; my Mother.

TILLY

I'm going, and not another word will be said about it.

Everyone realizes that further discussion is pointless.

VIKTOR

Okay. We must pack. Quickly.

Tilly smiles. She's won.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

My manuscript!

EMMA

Do you think they'll let you keep it?

ELSA

The lining of your coat. Sew it into the lining of your coat.

TILLY

Go get it. I'll do it.

INT. THERESIENSTADT / DORM ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Tilly pulls apart the seam as Viktor packs his small suitcase. Elsa and Emma gather items and fold clothes.

Viktor hands Tilly the manuscript, an inch thicker than when he left Vienna. She inserts it into the lining, threads a needle, and stitches it closed.

Viktor looks at his Mother.

VIKTOR

Mama, before I go, I must ask you for one thing.

ELSA

Anything, Son.

VIKTOR

Mama, I would like your blessings.

ELSA

(dismissive)

Viktor, we will see each other soon. Back home in Vienna.

VIKTOR

Mama, I beg of you.

ELSA

Okay.

She searches his face, and finally accepts that this could be goodbye. Viktor drops to his knees. Else stands over him, her hand on his head.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Viktor, my son. I give you all of my blessings. From me, and if he were alive, your Father would join me.

Viktor kisses the hem of her skirt. He rises, and they hug.

VIKTOR

I will say the Kaddish for him
every night.

ELSA

I know you will. You are a good
son.

VIKTOR

Thank you Mama.

**EXT. AUSCHWITZ II CONCENTRATION CAMP/COURTYARD - EARLY
MORNING (OCTOBER 1944)**

CARD: AUSCHWITZ

The train sits inside the famous gates that read "Arbeit
Macht Frei."

SS GUARDS move down the track and slide open the doors on the
cattle-cars. MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN PRISONERS jump down.

AUSCHWITZ ARRIVAL GUARDS

Get out, out. Faster. Get off the
train. Men in one line. Women and
Children in the other. Schnell.
Schnell.

COURTYARD - TRAIN CAR

The train car door opens.

To calm the new arrivals, and perhaps to drown out their
screams, JEWISH ORCHESTRA MEMBERS are assembled to perform a
concert. The CONDUCTOR nods at the Members.

CONDUCTOR

Waltz of the Masquerade.

The Orchestra begin "Waltz of the Masquerade" by Aram
Khachaturian. With the melody playing, the melee becomes
surreal.

After three days of travel, Viktor and Tilly are emaciated.
A few died on-route, and their BODIES are piled in a corner
of the car.

Viktor assists other PASSENGERS down and Tilly hands down
their luggage. From this vantage point Viktor notices the
GROUP OF ATTRACTIVE WOMEN near Barracks 24.

NEAR BARRACKS 24

LUSTY KAPO #1 takes off his woolen gloves and slips them half into the front of his coat. He yanks the hair of a BLONDE WOMAN, then her breast. Horrified, she lets out a cry and breaks free.

Lusty Kapo looks at her, then at the DARK-HAIRED WOMAN standing next to her. He punches the Dark-Haired Woman to the ground, then kicks her hard in the face.

Blonde Woman freezes. The Kapo smiles at this, then lifts her dress to grab her crotch. She stands there without flinching.

The other women look away or turn their eyes to the ground. Just behind the commotion stand LUSTY KAPO #2 and #3, who laugh and cheer their friend's success.

COURTYARD - TRAIN CAR

With all of the commotion, this scene goes unnoticed by most everyone except Viktor.

Viktor looks at Tilly while he nods toward barracks 24.

VIKTOR
(whispering)
Tilly, do you see the women near
barracks twenty-four?

He searches her face to see if she understands their destiny.

As the train car is now empty, Viktor lowers Tilly and jumps down to join her. A PRISONER approaches with a cart to remove the dead.

COURTYARD - PRE-SELECTION AREA

The two join in line, but are side by side as they move up to the front.

VIKTOR
Promise me that you'll stay alive.

Tilly looks at him blankly. He nods again toward the group of women. She grasps Viktor's words.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
I forgive you if you must break our
vows of marriage.
(MORE)

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

The most important thing is that
you stay alive.

Tilly shivers, either from cold or thought.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

After the war we'll return to
Vienna and spend our lives
together. But you must stay alive,
at any cost.

Tilly fingers the globe on her neck and smiles reassuringly
at Viktor.

TILLY

I will.

Trying to prolong their separation as long as possible, the
two catch glimpses of each other as they progress through the
lines.

The two years spent in the camps have not made Viktor any
more robust. He approaches the front of the line to meet his
fate, as decided by DR. MENGELE.

With a simple flick of the wrist or nod of the head, Dr.
Mengele systematically sends the Old, the Young, and the Weak
Prisoners to the left (death), and the strong, able-bodied
Prisoners to the right (life).

Viktor reaches the front of the queue and Dr. Mengele
nonchalantly nods to the left. The GUARDS instruct the Group
wait for more before marching off.

Viktor spots Joseph in the "right" group. He searches his own
Group of pitiful Prisoners for a familiar face and finds
none. In a moment of bravery, he sneaks over to the right
Group and joins his friend Joseph.

Settled in, Viktor searches for Tilly but has lost her in the
crowd.

VIKTOR

(whispers)

Tilly.

INT. AUSCHWITZ CONCENTRATION CAMP / PRE-SHOWER AREA

NAKED MEN PRISONERS, hiding behind bundles of their clothes
are queued up to receive striped uniforms. Viktor shuffles
along in line, but realizes that he is giving up his last
treasure, the manuscript for his book.

Viktor rips the coat lining and removes his manuscript. He pleads with a GUARD twice his size.

VIKTOR

Please, Sir. May I keep this. It is my life's work.

GUARD

You're both worth nothing here.

Joseph shakes his head at him, pleading, but Viktor holds tightly to the manuscript.

This is fun for the Guard. A swift gut-punch and Viktor doubles over. The pages fall to the wet floor, and the Guard kicks them, scattering them. Joseph and the other Prisoners must move through the line, trampling them.

Viktor lost his wife, his life's work, and a big piece of his soul, all in the blink of an eye.

EXT. AUSCHWITZ CONCENTRATION CAMP COURTYARD - 3 DAYS LATER

A train has just emptied into the courtyard. It's the same scene as earlier; A PRISONER loads the cart with more DEAD BODIES.

Else and Emma are directed to the same direction as the cart full of Dead. The two bravely march toward the gas chamber.

The cycle continues on, as Viktor, Joseph, and other PRISONERS climb into the train car. They're off to provide slave labor in another camp.

EXT. DACHAU: KAUFERING III SUBCAMP / WORK DETAIL - DAY

CARD: KAUFERING III, A DACHAU SUB-CAMP.

Under the watchful eye of the GUARDS, the PRISONERS dig for a new barracks to be built. Viktor is among them.

The tools consist of pick-axes and shovels which are worn to the nub. Viktor works methodically, never stopping to rest.

Suddenly there is a burst of commotion, as TWO PRISONERS run into the nearby electrified fence. All work stops to duck bullets from the GUARDS' rifles. The two hit the fence and stick. We don't know which killed them first; the bullets or the electricity.

The Prisoners go back to work, unmoved by this everyday occurrence. Casually a GUARD approaches.

SS GUARD

We received reports that one of you rats stole two potatoes. Who? Who among you wants to die today?

The Prisoners look around. A few glare at PRISONER #1.

SS GUARD (CONT'D)

No one? Suit yourselves. No one eats tonight.

INT. KAUFERING III/BARRACKS BUILDING - EVENING

The mood is especially sour. The Prisoners are angry, and avoid Prisoner #1.

Tensions climax. Prisoner #2 lunges for Prisoner #1. A scuffle breaks out.

PRISONER #2

You! You're the reason we don't eat tonight.

Prisoner #3 steps in to pull Prisoner #2 off Prisoner #1.

PRISONER #3

Hey. Stop it. Given the chance, every one of us would've done the same thing.

(to Prisoner #1)

You okay?

Prisoner #1 picks himself up and nods.

PRISONER #2

I'm just so tired of being hungry.

PRISONER #4

I don't know if I can take anymore of this.

The light bulbs go dark. The only light source is dim moonlight through the open stairwell. The prisoners grumble.

PRISONERS

(ad lib - grumbles)

Ugh, no.

PRISONER #5

Without the lights to pick off lice, no one sleeps tonight.

PRISONER #4

Work a full day tomorrow without
food and sleep.

PRISONER #2

The fence looks better every day.

PRISONER #4

At least I could choose my death.
It would all be over in a moment.
No more starvation. No more
beatings. No more humiliation.

PRISONER #2

With dignity. They're going to kill
us all sooner or later. It's the
only decision I have left to make.
How do I want to die?

Prisoner #2 and #4 are reaching an agreement; a suicide pact,
and other prisoners nod in agreement.

JOSEPH

(whispering to Viktor)
You need to say something.

VIKTOR

Me?

JOSEPH

Who better? Or more will die
tomorrow.

The prisoners continue their moaning. Viktor, no longer
cocky and self-assured, gropes for words but gains momentum.

VIKTOR

This is the sixth winter of..

OLD PRISONER

Shh..

The room becomes quieter.

VIKTOR

This is the sixth winter of the
second world war, and our situation
is not the most terrible that I can
think of. Look at our losses.
Many are limited to wealth,
careers, health, our positions, and
our happiness. But these losses
are only temporary.

(MORE)

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

I believe all of these things can be restored to us. Everyone who is still alive today has a reason for hope. In our current situation it would be impossible to expect anything from life. But we can't give up. It doesn't really matter what we expect from life, but rather what life expects from us. Each one of us is unique, and we each have a destiny to fulfill that no one else can do for us. Each one of us has a reason to live; a reason as unique as we are. Even if you cannot come up with a reason right now, perhaps it's in your future. A child you will father, a life you will save, perhaps it's a deed you will do. Every one of us is unique. No life can be repeated, and no one can be replaced.

He points to Old Prisoner.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

Didn't you say that you have completed two scientific volumes of work, but that you have two more to finish?

OLD PRISONER

Yes.

VIKTOR

Can anyone else finish this work for you?

OLD PRISONER

No. No one.

VIKTOR

And you.

He points to PRISONER #3.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

You have two young daughters studying in England. Safe.

PRISONER #3

Yes.

VIKTOR

If you die, who will take care of them when the war is over?

Prisoner #3 shakes his head.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

One of my favorite quotations is from Friedrich Nietzsche: "He who has a why to live can bear almost any how." We all have a why to live. For me, I have four reasons. First, I'd like to rewrite my manuscript, get it published. The second is to return to Vienna, my home, and to climb my beloved alps again. Third, I hope to study the psychology of the survivors. Finally, I dream of seeing my family again, my wife, and those I love. Human life never ceases to have meaning, even if that life is full of misery. Even if we don't know what that meaning is. If our loved ones are waiting for us, they would not want us to disappoint them. So I ask you, what is your why?

Viktor has just summarized Logotherapy, healing through love, works and deeds. As the barracks lights come the Prisoners don't move. They reflect on what they've just heard. A few have moist eyes. Some limp toward Viktor to shake his hand.

EXT. KAUFERING VI TURKHEIM SUBCAMP - DAY (MAY 8, 1945)

CARD: TURKHEIM - MAY 1945

The Guards have deserted the camp. Only PRISONERS remain. Viktor is among them.

A truck full of U.S. SOLDIERS arrives at the gate. The Soldiers are healthy, strong, youthful, well fed, and clean, compared to the thin, dirty, sickly looking, and weak prisoners.

One Soldier approaches the locked gate. Finally, the prisoners realize...

PRISONERS

Americans! Americans!

Many Prisoners are in shock. Some who are strong enough cheer. Others run into the Barracks to fetch the others.

INT. BAD WORISHOFEN HOSPITAL - DAY

CARD: BAD WORISHOFEN HOSPITAL - JUST AFTER THE WAR.

The once-beautiful Hotel Sonnenhof is now a make-shift hospital with various stations to process the Prisoners. A beautiful Oz-like setting in vivid color, it's surrounded by fields of wildflowers.

Viktor, in well-worn clothes and a pair of women's floral shoes. His bald head is sprouting hair. He works as a Doctor.

We overhear a couple of MEN, former prisoners, talking at a nearby check-up station.

MAN #1 IN BACKGROUND

May God cut off my hand if it is
not stained with German blood
within the year.

He defiantly raises his fist.

PRISONERS

Yes. Justice. Every German is to
blame. An eye for an eye.

MAN #2 IN BACKGROUND

You seek only revenge?

MAN #1 IN BACKGROUND

What else is left?

EXT. FIELD OUTSIDE BAD WORISHOFEN HOSPITAL - DAY

Spring has filled the nearby fields with magnificent color of a million wildflowers. Butterflies and bumble bees hop from one flower to the next. A family of deer graze nearby.

In sheer bliss, Viktor lets the wildflowers and grasses envelope him. He bathes in the sunlight, and quietly repeats this verse from Psalm 118:5.

VIKTOR

I called to the Lord from my narrow
prison, and He answered me in the
freedom of space.

(MORE)

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

I called to the Lord from my narrow prison, and He answered me in the freedom of space.

EXT. FIELD OUTSIDE BAD WORISHOFEN HOSPITAL - LATER THAT DAY

Viktor hears WHISTLING and sits up. The top of his head pokes above the grasses and wildflowers as he watches a MAN approach.

Almost upon him, Viktor stands and startles him.

VIKTOR

Hello?

The Laborer jumps, and drops something in the dirt.

DUTCH LABORER

Mijn hemel, je liet me schrikken!

VIKTOR

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to scare you. Are you alright?

DUTCH LABORER

Ja. I think so.

He looks at his empty palm and realizes it's empty.

DUTCH LABORER (CONT'D)

You made me drop my trinket! You must help me to find it!

VIKTOR

Yes, of course. I'm sorry. What is it we're looking for?

DUTCH LABORER

It is a necklace. It is a globe.

Viktor looks at him.

VIKTOR

Really?

Viktor looks enthusiastically for the necklace. He is the first to see the blue and gold metal in the dirt.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

Here it is.

Viktor picks up the chain and looks at the globe. Impossible, but it is the same necklace.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
 May I ask you, where did you get
 this necklace?

DUTCH LABORER
 It was in a warehouse in Bad
 Worishofen. Stuff from Auschwitz.

VIKTOR
 I wonder sir, may I buy it from
 you? I've been working at the
 hospital...

He points across the field toward the hospital.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
 ...So I have a little money saved.

DUTCH LABORER
 And you want to buy *this* necklace?

VIKTOR
 Yes, please, for my wife in Vienna.

DUTCH LABORER
 How about ten marks?

The exchange is made. The laborer gloats at the huge profit
 he made.

VIKTOR
 Thank you.

EXT. RIDING IN AN OPEN TRUCK/STREETS OUTSIDE OF VIENNA - DAY

Viktor wears a suit, previously owned by some poor soul who
 was sent to the gas chamber. Clinging to the necklace, he
 rides in the back of an open truck with other PASSENGERS.

After the war Austria was jointly occupied by the United
 States, Soviet Union, United Kingdom and France - until 1955.

ARMED SOLDIERS walk the streets, often terrorizing its
 inhabitants. It is still a war zone.

**EXT. RIDING IN AN OPEN TRUCK/RATHAUSPLATZ, OUTSIDE VIENNA
 CITY HALL - DAY**

Many buildings lie in ruin. PEOPLE scavenge through debris
 piles in search of anything valuable. Shot up, bombed, and
 in rubble, Viktor anguishes over his beautiful city in ruins.
 One of his four reasons for staying alive is gone.

The truck stops and Viktor jumps down, along with most of the other passengers. He walks up to the DRIVER.

VIKTOR

Do you know, is there a headquarters, or place to get information?

TRUCK DRIVER

Try Altersheim, the Jewish Old Folks Home on Malzgasse.

VIKTOR

I know it. Thank you again.

Viktor walks up the street. Others follow behind.

INT. ALTERSHEIM DORMITORY ROOM - EVENING

The open dormitory room has been divided into two sections with hospital screens.

One side contains cots, many of which are now occupied with the group from the truck. The cots are filled with bed-bugs; no one rests.

The other side is a cafeteria with small tables. A few seats are occupied with PEOPLE eating soup and bread. Viktor sits at a table with DOCTOR TUCHMANN and sips coffee.

DR. TUCHMANN

Doctor Frankl, In addition to being the Doctor in charge, I'm the communication officer. I receive most of the information on Jewish residents from Vienna.

VIKTOR

Yes.

Dr. Tuchmann speaks slowly. Like feeding a baby bird, he waits for Viktor to swallow each word before he offers more.

DR. TUCHMANN

I have information about your family.

VIKTOR

You do?

DR. TUCHMANN

Yes. I'm afraid the news is not good.

VIKTOR

My Father died when we were in
Theresienstadt, but I know nothing
about anyone else.

DR. TUCHMANN

First, news of your brother,
Walter. We believe that Walter died
in Mauthausen a year ago. We know
only a little, but from the few who
were lucky enough to transfer out,
it was one of the worst camps. No
one survived long; days or weeks.

Viktor takes a deep breath, absorbing the information.

VIKTOR

My Mother. Do you have any word
about my Mother?

DR. TUCHMANN

She was sent to the gas chambers of
Auschwitz, about a year ago.

VIKTOR

That's about the time I left there.

He takes a moment to remember her.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

My poor Mama.

DR. TUCHMANN

And finally, your wife Mathilda.

Viktor looks eagerly at Dr. Tuchmann, clinging hopefully to
the globe necklace in his hand.

VIKTOR

Tilly.

DR. TUCHMANN

Tilly. She died just four months
ago in a subcamp of Dachau called
Bergen-Belsen.

Viktor sighs. The globe necklace clinks as it falls on the
table.

VIKTOR

How? Do you know how?

DR. TUCHMANN

Typhus. Her camp was liberated on April fifteenth by the British. They found sixty-thousand women alive, but half died within weeks. Starvation and freezing temperatures fueled the typhus that overran the camps. Tilly died on April sixteenth.

VIKTOR

I thought if I was alive, surely she must be too. She was young and healthy. I'm just an old man.

DR. TUCHMANN

The estimates are that only one in twenty-eight prisoners survived the camps.

VIKTOR

I am that twenty-eighth prisoner, Doctor Tuchmann. I'm the one that lived, though I have no idea why.

INT. ALTERSHEIM DORMITORY ROOM - EARLY NEXT MORNING

Viktor hasn't moved, catatonic since the previous night.

Dr. Tuchmann arrives at work, clean and refreshed.

DR. TUCHMANN

Let's get you something to eat. Then let's get you settled into an apartment, a new job. We'll get your life back.

Viktor looks up, completely defeated, his face swollen and red from a night of tears. It's a ridiculously impossible task.

INT. PREVIOUS FRANKL RESIDENCE ON CZERNINGASSE

Viktor stands in the building hallway and knocks on the front door of an apartment. A plump OLD WOMAN answers.

FRAU TUCKE

Viktor! My heavens. How are you?

VIKTOR

I am well, Frau Tucke, thank you. I'm sorry to disturb you.
(MORE)

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

I have come for the box we left
with you. Do you still have it?

FRAU TUCKE

Of course. Let me get it for you.

She leaves the door open but leaves the foyer.

FRAU TUCKE (OS) (CONT'D)

How are your parents? Your mother
Elsa? I have thought of her often.

She walks back to the open door carrying a small wooden
crate.

VIKTOR

I'm afraid they both died, Frau
Tucke, in the camps.

Frau Tucke becomes superior, indignant as she hands him the
box.

FRAU TUCKE

Well, yes. We *all* suffered in the
war, Viktor.

Enraged, Viktor turns red-hot mad. He looks down into the
box and grits his teeth in an effort to maintain composure.

The open box contains his Father's phylacteries, paperwork,
his medical degrees, the Savonarola bust, fencing foils, and
his climbing tools and rope.

VIKTOR

Thank you again Frau Tucke. Good
day.

INT. APARTMENT ON MARIANNENGASSE - DAY

A new HOUSEMATE, a young woman opens the door for Viktor. He
enters, carrying a typewriter and his box.

HOUSEMATE

Doctor Frankl? Doctor Tuchmann
sent word that you'd be arriving.
Let me show you to your room.

They walk through the house. Every room is filled with
additional HOUSEMATES.

VIKTOR

How many people live here?

HOUSEMATE

You make eighteen. I understand
you're the new House Manager?

Viktor nods as she opens the door to the room.

HOUSEMATE (CONT'D)

Well, here it is.

It's dingy and dark. All but one small window is boarded up
with cardboard. (Most windows shattered with wartime bomb
blasts, and replacement glass was scarce).

It isn't much. A single bed, table and two chairs, an enamel
stove used for heating and cooking. Along one wall are built-
in shelves with some half-full medicine bottles, probably
stuck there for years.

VIKTOR

Thank you.

Viktor closes the door and sets down his belongings. He
collapses in a corner. Shivering, he curls into the fetal
position.

FRAU TUCKE (V.O.)

We *all* suffered in the war.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT ON MARIANNENGASSE

Viktor Frankl rises from his corner and sits in a chair. He
gazes out the small window in his empty room.

The chatter of his Housemates filters into the room.

He wanders over to the set of shelves. Some of the larger
items are now on display: the bust, fencing foils, the
Tefillin boxes, and his climbing gear.

Viktor retrieves the rope and crumples back into his chair.
His eyes wander to the truss in the center of the room.

He unfurls the rope and ties a noose. He drags his chair
under the truss and steps on the seat. He secures the noose,
and proudly admires his handiwork.

His suicidal thoughts are interrupted when a ROOMMATE knocks
at his door.

VIKTOR

Yes? What is it?

WOMAN ROOMMATE
 It's Marta, my daughter. The
 Russian soldiers... She was...

Caught - Viktor quickly removes the noose leaving it in a pile on the floor. He forgets his pain and walks out.

INT. NEIGHBOR'S APARTMENT ON MARIANNENGASSE

The room is slightly larger but nearly as sparse as Viktor's. A few WOMEN ROOMMATES huddle around to comfort MARTA (15) as she cries and moans.

VIKTOR
 I'm so sorry. How can I help?

MARTA
 (hysterical)
 Get out of here.

The protective women surrounding Marta waive him off, and Viktor returns to his own little corner of hell.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - DAY

Viktor looks at the mound of rope, but decides instead to crumple into his familiar corner.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Viktor awakens to a KNOCK on the door, and answers.

VIKTOR
 Yes?

WOMAN NEIGHBOR
 (softly)
 Marta has calmed down. Doctor Frankl, can you look at her, make sure that she's okay, she'll recover?

VIKTOR
 Of course.

Viktor feels needed, and stands a little straighter before he walks out the door.

EXT. STREETS OF VIENNA - DAY

The only reason for him to leave the security of his small room is to forage for food. He approaches Vienna's famous Naschmarkt; individual stalls with a variety of goods, though inventory is scarce.

EXT. GETREIDEMARKT STREET, BAROQUE DISTRICT - DAY

Carrying his bag, Viktor exits the market and heads for home. TWO AMERICAN SOLDIERS approach him.

AMERICAN SOLDIER #1
English?

Viktor nods.

AMERICAN SOLDIER #1 (CONT'D)
Do you know how to get to the ring?

VIKTOR
Ring Strasse. Yes.

Viktor points up the street.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
Yes, you only need to go up any street toward the right, about three blocks. You'll reach Ring Strasse.

AMERICAN SOLDIER #1
Thanks.

Out of nowhere, the Soldier delivers an uppercut to Viktor's jaw and he hits the ground hard. He lands on his side, crushing his groceries.

The Soldiers laugh as they walk away. Viktor gingerly stands, shakes it off, and surveys the damage.

He watches the Soldiers as they continue up the street.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING

Viktor creates bite-sized open faced sandwiches of bread, cheese, and a slice of Hungarian pepper. He eats in silence, occasionally rubbing his sore jaw.

Drawn to it like a moth to a flame, Viktor can't take his eyes off the pile of rope in the corner.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - DAY

Viktor lies in his familiar heap, looking at the rope. There's a KNOCK on the door, and he looks at it without moving.

NEIGHBOR #1 (O.S.)
Doctor Frankl?

NEIGHBOR #2 (O.S.)
He's got to be in there. I didn't see him leave.

Another KNOCK.

NEIGHBOR #1 (O.S.)
Doctor Frankl?

NEIGHBOR #2 (O.S.)
Perhaps you can get Kurt to fix it?

NEIGHBOR #1 (O.S.)
It's his job.

NEIGHBOR #2 (O.S.)
I wonder if he's okay in there?

They give up. Viktor sighs. Eventually his eyes wander back to the pile of rope.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - DAY

With great resolve, Viktor arises from his heap and walks toward the rope. He lifts the rope, winds half in preparation to throw it over the truss.

The typewriter catches his eye. He steps back to the shelves, and extracts out a sheet of typing paper for a suicide letter. He inserts it into the typewriter. No typing ribbon.

VIKTOR
Ribbon.

He riffles through the box. Viktor uncovers a photo of him and his family. He sighs. Then he spies a photo of Tilly. He takes Tilly's photo and crumples into an emotional mess.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
Oh Tilly, I miss you so much. I'm so sorry that I didn't save you. Please forgive me. Please forgive me that I lived.
(MORE)

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
 Please forgive me that I lived.
 that I lived.
 I lived.
 I lived.
 I lived...

Temporarily relieved of his anguish, Viktor runs out of the room.

EXT. RESIDENCE OF PAUL AND OTTI POLAK - DAY

Viktor stands on the porch as Paul opens the door.

VIKTOR
 Thank God you're still here. I was
 afraid...

PAUL
 Viktor!

They hug, and walk inside.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 Oh, how it's good to see you.

Otti walks in from the other room.

OTTI
 Viktor? Viktor Frankl? I thought
 I heard your voice.

She hugs the frail man delicately. She rolls her eyes at Paul, shocked over seeing him so thin.

INT. RESIDENCE OF PAUL POLAK - MINUTES LATER

The two are settled in the living room. Otti brings in coffee.

OTTI
 I'll leave you two to catch up.

VIKTOR
 Thank you Otti.

PAUL
 Thank you, hun.

Otti leaves the room.

PAUL (CONT'D)

We get more information everyday. The lifespan for people in the camps was about three months, but you survived nearly three years.

VIKTOR

Yes. I just realized that my life was spared for some reason. There must be something that I'm here to do.

PAUL

Hang on.

Paul gets up and walks into his living room. He returns with an envelope, and hands it to Viktor.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Perhaps this'll help?

Viktor opens the package to find 125 onion skin papers; the draft of his book. The title page reads "The Doctor and The Soul"

VIKTOR

My manuscript!

Then it hits him.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

The one I gave you for Hubert?

PAUL

Yes.

VIKTOR

Was his sentence carried out?

PAUL

Yes. A year ago. Hitler's men, well it became worse when it was obvious we were losing the war.

He takes a gulp of coffee.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Erna said your book gave Hubert great comfort in the end.

Emotional, Viktor looks down and leafs through the pages.

VIKTOR

Thank you, Paul.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - DAY

Viktor is obsessed and manically types, reconstructing the book taken from him in Auschwitz.

INT. MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS / PITTERMANN'S OFFICE - DAY

Viktor, still doubting his own value and worth, is dwarfed by the grand desk of BRUNO PITTERMANN.

BRUNO PITTERMANN
You wrote a second book too?

VIKTOR
Once I started typing, I just
couldn't stop.

BRUNO PITTERMANN
What's it about?

VIKTOR
The philosophy of the camps.

BRUNO PITTERMANN
Oh? So, what's next on your
agenda?

VIKTOR
Work. I'm think I'm ready to start
work. Is there anything available?

BRUNO PITTERMANN
Here.

He slides over a few blank pieces of paper.

BRUNO PITTERMANN (CONT'D)
Sign these.

Viktor picks up the pen.

BRUNO PITTERMANN (CONT'D)
On the bottom, like a letter.

Viktor follows instructions.

BRUNO PITTERMANN (CONT'D)
Let me see what I can find. Okay?

VIKTOR
Okay. Thank you.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT

Viktor sits at his typewriter, pecking away.

NEIGHBOR (O.S.)
This is his place.

ERNA (O.S.)
Thank you.

Viktor looks up with a KNOCK at the door. He considers answering it.

ERNA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Viktor? It's Erna.

Viktor rushes to open the door.

VIKTOR
Erna?

He throws his arms around Erna in a warm embrace. His eyes well up. He steps back, wipes his eyes, and welcomes her inside.

ERNA
I was so happy to hear of your
return to Vienna... From Otti.

VIKTOR
It's home, such as it is.

Erna walks around the room, surveying his lifestyle. She's not impressed, and gives Viktor a judgmental eye.

ERNA
It's so good to have you back.
Vienna wasn't the same without you.

She pauses for a solemn moment.

ERNA (CONT'D)
I suppose it will never be the
same.

Viktor picks up on the queue.

VIKTOR
I'm so sorry about Hubert.

ERNA
Thank you.

VIKTOR

He was a brave man, a hero.

Erna nods.

ERNA

Yes. He had to stand up to it. He could never understand hatred of Jews. In fact, he had great respect for Jewish people.

VIKTOR

I know.

ERNA

He told me that it started at your Bar Mitzvah. He was so impressed with your discipline, the dedication, the amount of learning you did, at such a young age. Anyway, he never understood it. The hatred. The blame. He thought it was jealousy.

VIKTOR

He was my best friend. I loved him.

ERNA

I know.

The two are close to a full blown crying festival.

ERNA (CONT'D)

Too bad he was such an idiot sometimes. I mean, standing up to the Third Reich.

She laughs, immediately lightening the mood. Then she explains herself.

ERNA (CONT'D)

It helps me when I'm overcome with it all.

Viktor nods in understanding.

ERNA (CONT'D)

Enough!

She shakes off the sadness.

ERNA (CONT'D)

What are you up to now, Viktor?

VIKTOR

Well, you'll be happy to learn that I finally finished my book. It only took me two months.

ERNA

You mean ten years; ten years and two months.

VIKTOR

Yes. But my second book only took nine days.

ERNA

How good can it be if it only took nine days to write it?

VIKTOR

I don't know. You tell me.

He hands her a copy of "Man's Search for Meaning."

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

Oh, and here.

He hands her a copy of "The Doctor and the Soul."

ERNA

Thank you, Viktor. So what's next? Another book?

VIKTOR

No. I don't know.

She looks around at the dreary apartment. She finally spies Viktor's pile of rope, and the noose at the end of it. Shocked, she looks at Viktor.

ERNA

So what do you do all day?

Viktor becomes sheepish; shrugs his shoulders.

ERNA (CONT'D)

Well you must do something?

Viktor shakes his head.

ERNA (CONT'D)

Come to dinner on Friday. It won't be much, but I'll stretch my ration card as far as I can. Paul and Otti will be there. Promise me?

VIKTOR

Okay.

ERNA

In the meantime, clean this place up, will you? The stores are starting to get some deliveries of glass. Let some light in this dingy place.

She looks again at the rope.

VIKTOR

Okay.

ERNA

Six O'clock. Be on time.

She gives him a hug.

ERNA (CONT'D)

It really is good to have you back.

She opens the door to exit.

ERNA (CONT'D)

Bye.

Viktor closes the door after her, and looks at his rope.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - DAY

Viktor walks in carrying a window pane of glass. He carefully sets it down, then removes the cardboard from the window. The place is immediately brighter, more cheerful.

He brushes off the window frame, places the glass inside, and tacks a small nail to hold in the glass.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - DAY

The place has had a thorough cleaning. The only thing that hasn't moved is the rope.

Viktor steps back to admire the last remaining apartment window, now filled with glass.

He hears MUFFLED VOICES from the street and looks through his new window glass. PEOPLE are picking up rubble on the street. He looks around his apartment, grabs his only jacket, and walks out.

EXT. STREET BELOW VIKTOR'S APARTMENT

Viktor joins in the work, helping his Neighbors clear rubble, sweep sidewalks, and bring Vienna back to life. This manual labor is similar to his days in the camps.

He straightens up to relieve his back, surveys his city, and smiles.

INT. MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS / PITTERMANN'S OFFICE - DAY

Viktor sits again at Bruno Pittermann's desk.

BRUNO PITTERMANN

I've got some good news for you.
As you know, many positions in the
hospitals were occupied by Nazis.

VIKTOR

Yes.

BRUNO PITTERMANN

They're now vacant. I have two
positions that may interest you.
The first is Director of Steinhof
Hospital. This is a prestigious
job with a salary to match!

Viktor, with his broken eyeglasses, dressed in the suit he wore out of the camps, doesn't feel or look prestigious.

VIKTOR

I headed the Neurology department
before it was Aryanized. The
hospital director rarely saw
patients. He spent all of his time
in search of patrons, donors.

BRUNO PITTERMANN

That's the first item listed on the
job description.

VIKTOR

And the other position?

BRUNO PITTERMANN

Head of Neurology and Psychiatry at
the Polyclinic, the city hospital.

VIKTOR

In this position I'd be able to
continue my work; I'd see patients?

BRUNO PITTERMANN

Well, yes. They're part of The University of Vienna. You'd teach classes too.

VIKTOR

This sounds perfect. And my apartment is so close.

BRUNO PITTERMANN

So then, Policlinic?

INT. POLICLINIC / VIKTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A perk of his new job, Viktor finally has a new pair of eyeglasses.

He uses them to peruse the Curriculum Vitae of DR. BAUMHACKLE, a blond in his mid 30's with the biggest, Aquiline nose he's ever seen on a man.

VIKTOR

I have many positions to fill.

DR. BAUMHACKLE

Yes, Herr Primarius. I am eager to work, and available to start immediately.

VIKTOR

You are overqualified for this position. Why haven't you applied at Zentrum or Steinhof, Doctor Baumhackle?

DR. BAUMHACKLE

I have, Herr Primarius.

VIKTOR

Yet, here you are at the people's clinic; probably the least prestigious hospital in Austria.

DR. BAUMHACKLE

I was a physician in the Third Reich.

Viktor's disappointment is obvious.

VIKTOR

You worked in the camps?

DR. BAUMHACKLE
 No, Herr Primarius. I was a
 hospital surgeon. Primarily, I
 cared for soldiers.

VIKTOR
 So no hospital in Vienna will hire
 a Nazi doctor? A *former* Nazi
 Doctor.

DR. BAUMHACKLE
 There isn't a post available
 anywhere in the world for someone
 like me.

VIKTOR
 Well, we need doctors, especially
 doctors eager to work.

DR. BAUMHACKLE
 That I am, sir.

VIKTOR
 And you would have no problem
 working for a Jew?

DR. BAUMHACKLE
 No, Herr Primarius.

VIKTOR
 Okay, Doctor Baumhackle. I will let
 you know.

DR. BAUMHACKLE
 Thank you, Sir.

INT. POLICLINIC / HALLWAY - LATER THAT DAY

Viktor walks down the hallway holding a chart, and looking
 for a patient's room. Two NURSES pass by mid-conversation.

NURSE #1
 Well, God doesn't give you more
 than you can handle.

NURSE #2 giggles.

NURSE #2
 No. I guess not.

Viktor stops, storms over to them, and interrupts.

VIKTOR

Graveyards are full of people, and God gave them more than they could handle. That is disparaging to everyone in this ward. Either refrain from such remarks, or seek employment elsewhere.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING

Viktor is still stomping and slamming things. The nurses seem to have set him off. His eyes linger on the rope in the corner.

With instant resolve, he stomps out.

EXT. RESIDENCE OF PAUL POLAK - MINUTES LATER

Viktor storms up to the porch.

INT. RESIDENCE OF PAUL POLAK

Paul hears the commotion and walks to the door. He opens it to find Viktor.

PAUL

Hi Viktor. Everything okay?

Viktor storms in.

OTTI

Hello Viktor. Would you like to join us?

VIKTOR

No. I'm sorry. I should go.

OTTI

No. You stay.

Otti moves the full dinner plates from the table and places them in the oven. Viktor looks like hell, and she gives him an encouraging squeeze before she exits the room.

Paul and Viktor sit on the couch as the daylight fades.

VIKTOR

Paul, I'm sorry to disturb your dinner. Really, we can talk later.

PAUL

It's not a problem. Dinner can wait.

VIKTOR

It's just, I don't know who else to talk to.

PAUL

What is it, Viktor?

VIKTOR

Well, now that the war's over, isn't it supposed to be better?

PAUL

Well, we have to make it better. We're all responsible for our own happiness.

VIKTOR

Paul, I'm so filled with rage. I'm still so close to giving up.

PAUL

Viktor, after everything that you've been through, it would be odd if you weren't. The last time you were here, you said there's a reason that you survived.

VIKTOR

But I don't believe it anymore. I thought I had it figured out. I hoped. I never really knew why anyone would take their own life. What a pompous idiot I was. I was going to heal the world with love and work. Work.... I sound a lot like the Nazis, don't I? Arbeit Macht Frei.

PAUL

Viktor, you sound nothing like the Nazis, so stop that talk immediately. As to why you must go through this, I don't know the answer. But you are in despair. You're suffering. Anyone can see it. Perhaps there is a reason.

VIKTOR

A reason to suffer?

PAUL
Not the suffering itself. But
perhaps it will help you to better
understand your patients.

VIKTOR
If I survive it.

INT. POLICLINIC / VIKTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Viktor is buried in files when his assistant, DR. SCHOBER enters.

DR. SCHOBER
Herr Primarius? May I interrupt
you?

VIKTOR
You are interrupting me, Doctor
Schober.

DR. SCHOBER
I'm sorry, yes, but there is a
patient here, and, well, I thought
you would want to see her.

VIKTOR
I'm busy right now. Can't you
handle this?

DR. SCHOBER
Yes, but... Please?

Highly inconvenienced, Viktor follows Dr. Schober out.

INT. POLICLINIC / HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

FRAU WEINSTEIN (mid 40s) sits patiently as Dr. Schrober and
Viktor enter the room.

DR. SCHOBER
This is Doctor Frankl. This is
Frau Weinstein.

FRAU WEINSTEIN
I'm pleased to meet you Doctor
Frankl.

DR. SCHOBER
Please Frau Weinstein, will you
relay the story to Doctor Frankl?

FRAU WEINSTEIN

Yes, of course. Doctor Schober remarked what an unusual bracelet I'm wearing.

She holds up her wrist to display a gold charm bracelet. The charms are actual baby-teeth, dipped in gold.

FRAU WEINSTEIN (CONT'D)

A tooth from each one of my children. I always saved their first tooth. My husband had this made for me, you know, before the war. You see, this one is from Marta, age fourteen, this one is from Gregor, age thirteen, this one is from Jakob, age eleven. Evelyn...

DR. SCHOBER

A total of nine children! What a houseful she must have with nine. She must be so proud of them all.

FRAU WEINSTEIN

But you see, the list that I gave you, that was each child's age when they died. Every one, taken from me and gassed at Auschwitz.

Viktor is aghast.

VIKTOR

Every one? Killed? How can you wear such a bracelet? Such a reminder of all you have lost?

FRAU WEINSTEIN

You see Doctor, I came in for a complete physical examination today because I leave next week. I have been chosen to head up a new orphanage. Soon I will have one hundred children to care for. The strength to do this work, it comes from this bracelet.

Viktor searches her face, and then lights up. An epiphany. He gets it. He takes her hands and kisses her on the cheek.

VIKTOR

God bless you. And thank you.

He nods and smiles at Dr. Schrober before he exits.

INT. POLICLINIC / VIKTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Viktor types furiously as he talks to himself.

VIKTOR

It's not the suffering itself, but what she did as a result. How could I have missed it? There are three ways to find meaning. Maybe more. Who knows? Through love, through works and deeds, and as a result of suffering. Not the suffering itself. I can find no reason or meaning in that. But it can act as a catalyst, propel one further.

He realizes that his own suffering may propel him further.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Viktor walks in with his small burlap bag of groceries. As he unloads the bag, the pile of rope in the corner draws all of his attention.

Viktor picks up the rope and unties the noose. He coils it and ties it in a bundle. He grabs carabiners from the book shelf and walks out.

EXT. RAX MOUNTAINS - DAY

Viktor climbs alone as Vienna sits majestically in the background.

Viktor is a functional, but not pretty climber. He gets the job done.

He fumbles while reaching for the next handhold and nearly falls. Finally grasping the handhold, he pulls himself up another few inches.

EXT. RAX MOUNTAINS - MOMENTS LATER

He is nearly at the top when a poisonous Tiger snake slithers within inches of his hand. In one gutsy move, he grabs the snake behind the neck and clings to the mountainside with one hand.

His fingertips can't hold him. He loses his grip of the mountain, dropping instantly.

He jerks as the carabiners and rope do their job, saving him. As he dangles, he throws the snake out as far as he can and it drops to the ground - dead.

Viktor is shaking from the near death experience. Panting, he pulls himself up the rope and grabs the handhold.

VIKTOR

(to God)

You're crazy if you think I'd let a tiger snake kill me after everything I've been through.

EXT. RAX MOUNTAINS - MOMENTS LATER

At peace with the world, Viktor sits on the mountaintop, taking in the scenery.

EXT. BASE OF RAX MOUNTAINS - MOMENTS LATER

While walking home, Viktor jumps as he almost steps on his dead snake.

VIKTOR

You're not so scary now.

He opens his rucksack, retrieves a sweater, and uses it to pick up and examine the snake. Wrapping it carefully, he deposits it into his rucksack. A trophy kill.

INT. POLICLINIC / DENTAL DEPARTMENT NURSES STATION - DAY

The Nurses station is busy and swarming with NURSES. Nurse #1, (the same Nurse that Viktor yelled at earlier), talks with a DOCTOR.

NURSE #1

Yes Doctor. I'll ask Orthopaedics.

DOCTOR

No. I know they're full too. Try Neurology.

NURSE #1

Isn't there another department we could try first?

The Doctor glares at her and walks away. Nurse #1 is joined by three other NURSES, one of which is ELLY SCHWINDT (20).

Elly sparkles with joy and wears a constant smile. Quick to laugh, she disarms and warms the soul of everyone she meets.

NURSE #2
(explaining to the others)
He's the one who yelled at us.

NURSE #1
Yeah. He's bad news.

NURSE #3
Well don't look at me. He's yelled at me too.

They look as Elly rolls her eyes.

ELLY
I'll talk to him.

Nurse # 1 and Nurse #2 are surprised.

ELLY (CONT'D)
I'll find him right now and ask him if we can use a bed in his department. How bad can he be?

NURSE #1
You'll find out.

Elly, in her starched white uniform and the only shoes she owns: men's combat boots three sizes too large, clomps down the hall.

INT. POLICLINIC / HALLWAY - DAY

Viktor and Dr. Schober lead a group of INTERNS on rounds. Elly approaches the Group with all the confidence of an attractive 20 year old.

ELLY
Herr Primarius?

VIKTOR
Yes.

ELLY
I am from the dental department. We have a patient coming out of surgery, but have no more beds available. We were wondering if it would be possible to use one of yours for two or three days, four at the most?

Viktor is speechless.

During the awkward silence, the Interns look at each other.

Elly give Viktor a curious look. The silence is becoming weirder by the moment.

VIKTOR
Uh. Yes. I'll make the
arrangements immediately.

ELLY
Thank you.

Elly smiles and clomps off.

Viktor nods to Dr. Schober and the two step away from the group for a private discussion.

VIKTOR
Did you see her eyes?

DR. SCHOBER
Yes, I suppose so. Why do you ask?

Viktor is smitten, and smiles for the first time in years.

INT. POLICLINIC / DENTAL DEPARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Elly casually walks back and the Nurses rush to join her.

ELLY
We can have a bed in Neurology.

NURSE #1
He agreed?

ELLY
Yes. I don't know what all the
fuss was about.

NURSE #2
Did he yell at you?

ELLY
No. But there is something strange
about him.

NURSE #1
But he didn't yell?

Elly shakes her head.

NURSE #1 (CONT'D)
That is strange.

INT. POLICLINIC / DENTAL DEPARTMENT

Viktor walks up to the busy Nurse's station and searches for the Nurse with the lovely eyes, Elly Schwindt.

He spies her, cups his cheek, and walks over.

ELLY
Herr Primarius. How can I help you?

VIKTOR
Oh, hello Nurse. I'm so glad I ran into you. I have developed such a toothache.

She smiles at him. She's not stupid.

ELLY
You have? Well, we can't have that. Let's get you in to see a dentist right away.

VIKTOR
Oh no! I have a horrible fear of dentists.

Elly chuckles, never losing her warm smile.

ELLY
Oh. So, why are you here then?

VIKTOR
I think I'm think I'm trying to decide which is worse; the pain or the fear.

ELLY
Have you come to a decision?

VIKTOR
I'm not sure.

Elly is completely uninterested in this strange man.

ELLY
The only way I'll see a dentist is if I'm lassoed and dragged there.

The two saunter back toward the nurse's station.

ELLY (CONT'D)

Okay then.

She picks up a file at the Nurse's station and walks away abandoning him there. His ego deflated, he instantly drops his hand from his cheek and walks away.

EXT. ELECTRIC STREETCAR - EARLY MORNING

Elly sits among many PASSENGERS on her morning commute. One of Vienna's few automobiles T-Bones the streetcar just behind the driver with a blood-chilling CRASH.

Elly is thrown to the other side and hits her head with a loud THUD. Three are killed.

INT. POLICLINIC / NEUROLOGY PATIENT WARD - DAY

Elly awakens to find herself in a Hospital ward with five other WOMEN PATIENTS. She is anything but attractive, with bandaged cuts and bruises. Dried blood mats her hair.

She opens her eyes to see Viktor sitting next to her, then falls back asleep.

INT. POLICLINIC / NEUROLOGY WARD - NEXT MORNING

Elly, awake, and sitting up in bed. The Neurology Nurse smiles as she places Elly's empty food tray on a cart.

ELLY

Thank you so much.

NEUROLOGY NURSE

You're welcome. You're feeling okay this morning? You're appetite is back.

ELLY

My appetite was never a problem.

The Nurse smiles at this, then moves on to the next bed and removes the tray. Here lies KLARA, slightly past her prime but she makes a reasonably successful effort at looking her very best.

KLARA

Oh, thank you. Say, do you know when Doctor Frankl will be back to check on me? My head hurts awful.

NEUROLOGY NURSE

He's usually starts his rounds by ten, but if you need to see a doctor right away, his assistant Doctor Schober is here. I'll be happy to find him for you.

KLARA

No, no. I don't think it's *that* bad. I can wait for Doctor Frankl. Thank you.

NEUROLOGY NURSE

Ring for me if you change your mind. I'm sure that one of the Doctors can see you right away.

KLARA

I will, Dear. Thank you.

The Neurology Nurse moves on to the next Patient.

Klara gets out of bed to grab a small cosmetic suitcase and returns. She props herself up, opens the case, and riffles through the various potions. The long valiant effort begins. She glances at Elly.

KLARA (CONT'D)

What's your name, Dear?

ELLY

Elly. Elly Schwindt. And yours?

KLARA

I'm Klara. That's Dahlia, that's Sophie. You'll get to know all of us soon enough. Why are you here?

ELLY

I hit my head. There was an accident on the streetcar.

KLARA

Really? Oh that must be awful. Nothing permanent I hope?

ELLY

I hope not.

KLARA

Do you know why I'm here?

ELLY

Not exactly, but because you're ill
of course.

KLARA

No, silly. I want to become Misses
Doctor Frankl.

Klara beams at herself in the suitcase mirror.

KLARA (CONT'D)

That's right. He's such a nice man,
and handsome, and well, most
important, he's available.

ELLY

Doctor Frankl is nice?

KLARA

And handsome.

INT. POLICLINIC / NEUROLOGY PATIENT WARD - LATER

The Patients are sufficiently dolled up when Viktor enters
with his Entourage. Everyone except Elly.

Viktor smiles at Elly.

KLARA

Doctor Frankl. Oh Doctor Frankl.

He gets her chart and visits her bedside first.

VIKTOR

Yes, Frau Holtzer.

She smiles a seductive smile.

KLARA

No, no, no. It's Fraulein.

He looks in her chart.

VIKTOR

Oh yes, Fraulein Holtzer.

KLARA

That's better.

Viktor is aware of her flirtation, but it's more of a
nuisance than anything else.

KLARA (CONT'D)

Yes, Doctor Frankl. Did the Nurse tell you? I have been experiencing some pain in my head.

Viktor looks past Klara, and smiles at Elly.

Elly smiles back.

INT. POLICLINIC / NEUROLOGY PATIENT WARD - MOMENT LATER

Viktor approaches Elly's bedside. He is warm and compassionate.

Klara never takes her smiling eyes off Viktor.

VIKTOR

Fraulein Schwindt, you're looking much better now.

ELLY

Thank you.

VIKTOR

You've suffered a concussion, though it's difficult to know the severity, other than to watch for the symptoms.

ELLY

I remember the accident, but nothing afterwards.

VIKTOR

You lost consciousness. You slept for a full day. Did you have any trouble eating your breakfast? Any nausea?

ELLY

No.

VIKTOR

Blurred vision, or dizziness?

ELLY

No.

VIKTOR

Any confusion?

ELLY

No more than normal.

Elly has a friendly chuckle that could warm anyone, especially Viktor. He smiles.

VIKTOR
Headache?

ELLY
Yes, but it's not bad now.

VIKTOR
So, the best thing we can do now is let you rest, and wait and see.

ELLY
Okay. Someone contacted my parents?

VIKTOR
I believe so.

ELLY
Thank you Herr Primarius.

VIKTOR
You're welcome.

He hesitates.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
Elly.

Klara is wide-eyed and slack-jawed.

Viktor exits, and Klara glares at Elly.

INT. POLICLINIC / NEUROLOGY PATIENT WARD - A WEEK LATER

Klara's bed is now occupied by another PATIENT, and Elly's bruises are a faint memory. Viktor walks in and addresses Elly.

VIKTOR
Well, I believe you're well enough to go home now.

ELLY
When can I return to work?

VIKTOR
Right away. If you have any symptoms, I'll be nearby. You know where to find me.

ELLY

Yes I do.

As an afterthought.

ELLY (CONT'D)

How's your tooth?

VIKTOR

About the same I guess.

ELLY

Okay. Thank you again.

INT. POLICLINIC / HALLWAY - DAY

Elly Schwindt approaches. She is twirling a lasso made of braided gauze. Viktor smiles and waits for her. She flips the lasso over his head, adjusts it, and walks off towing him behind her. Both are smiling, as are the WITNESSES to the round-up.

Although Elly is half of Viktor's age of 40, she's blonde and Catholic, the pair do not look ill-suited to each other. She's warm and full of life, and he's been given a second chance at life.

INT. POLICLINIC / DENTAL DEPARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

The two have arrived. Elly helps Viktor remove the lasso, which he won't part with.

VIKTOR

Elly, I must confess. I'm not afraid of Dentists, and I don't have a toothache either.

Elly looks at Viktor.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

I wanted to see you again.

ELLY

And?

He blurts out.

VIKTOR

Would you like to come over to my apartment and see a snake?

Elly is stumped. Is that the best he's got?

ELLY
A snake? A snake?

VIKTOR
Please? Will you please meet me at
the entrance at the end of your
shift. Six o'clock?

Elly turns and walks away. She shakes her head and repeats.

ELLY
A snake.

INT. POLICLINIC / EMPLOYEE ENTRANCE - EVENING

Viktor waits hopefully, impatiently. We see from the timeclock that it is 18:10. Elly rushes up, scans the timecards for her own name and punches out.

VIKTOR
I wasn't sure if you were coming.

ELLY
And miss such an intriguing
opportunity?

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Viktor and Elly walk into his dark apartment. He turns on a light and fires up the enamel-painted stove.

VIKTOR
It'll warm up shortly. Leave your
coat on until then.

Viktor walks over to the shelves and extracts a jar. His snake floats in formaldehyde. He hands it to Elly who bursts into laughter.

ELLY
Oh. It's dead.

Viktor realizes that his invitation failed to mention this.

VIKTOR
You thought I kept a live snake in
my apartment?

He laughs. It has been a long time.

EXT. POLICLINIC / EMPLOYEE ENTRANCE

Late to work, Elly rushes toward the employee entrance. Something catches her eye and she glances at the window to Viktor's office.

Her lasso is proudly hanging from the curtain rod. She laughs like a schoolgirl, which until recently, she was.

INT. POLICLINIC / HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Elly walks the halls in search of Viktor. She finally hears him before she sees him.

VIKTOR (O.S.)

(yelling)

...To do your job right. If you can't do it, there are hundreds of applicants happy to fill your shoes.

NURSE (O.S.)

I'm sorry.

Elly approaches as the NURSE rushes past her, wiping tears from her eyes. Elly expresses empathy.

Viktor fumes and continues his angry, one-sided conversation. He doesn't see Elly as she watches his tirade.

Elly shakes her head, turns and walks away.

INT. POLICLINIC / DENTAL DEPARTMENT - DAY

Elly quietly discusses a case with a CO-WORKER as Viktor approaches. He waits until the Co-worker leaves.

VIKTOR

Where have you been hiding yourself lately?

ELLY

I'm sorry Viktor, but work has kept me very busy.

VIKTOR

Can you join me for dinner tonight?

Elly hesitates.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

Some time this week?

ELLY
Viktor, I'll try.

She loads her arms with patient charts.

ELLY (CONT'D)
I really must go.

Viktor watches her walk away.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Viktor sits at his dining table alone and lonely. He pushes away his half-full soup bowl, and returns to the fetal position in the corner.

INT. POLICLINIC / NURSES STATION - DAY

Viktor stands behind the counter of the Nurses Station, his head buried in a file.

Elly shares an animated conversation with a Co-worker as they walk by, which morphs in Elly's warm and joyful laugh. Elly's laugh is poetry in motion and it's a pleasure for all to witness.

All except Viktor, who is crushed.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Viktor lies in bed, in the all-too familiar fetal position.

INT. POLICLINIC / DENTAL DEPARTMENT - MORNING

Elly stands alone as Viktor approaches. She can't avoid him.

VIKTOR
Hi Elly. How are you?

ELLY
Good. You?

VIKTOR
Elly, I know I've done something to screw this up. Please, can we talk?

Elly quickly runs through possible excuses.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
Please, will you join me for lunch
today?

ELLY
Well, I don't...

VIKTOR
It's my treat. Here.

He hands her two meal-ticket coupons.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
My office? Will you stop on the
way?

ELLY
Well...

VIKTOR
Noon?

Elly looks at him, coupons in hand.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
Please?

He walks away, not giving her a chance to refuse. She looks
at the coupons in her hands, then watches him walk away.

INT. POLICLINIC / DENTAL OPERATING ROOM - DAY

A PATIENT lies back in the chair as the DENTAL DOCTOR
operates. Elly assists the surgery. The clock reads 10:10.

INT. POLICLINIC / DENTAL OPERATING ROOM - DAY

A PATIENT lies in the chair as the DOCTOR operates. Elly
assists the surgery. The clock reads 11:45.

The Doctor adjusts the Patient chair to a sitting up
position.

DENTAL DOCTOR
That'll do it. Will you go over
Post-Op with the Patient?

ELLY
Yes, Doctor.

She smiles at the Doctor and Patient.

INT. POLICLINIC / VIKTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Viktor sits at his desk. Elly walks in with two sack lunches provided by relief workers for Jews. Light rain is visible through his window.

VIKTOR
Terrific. You beat the rain.

ELLY
Yes, by minutes.

VIKTOR
Thank you for picking them up.
Coffee?

ELLY
Please.

Viktor exits as Elly opens the bags and sets up their lunch on Viktor's desk. He returns moments later with two cups of coffee. They sit.

A NEUROLOGY INTERN KNOCKS on the office door but walks in before Viktor has responded.

VIKTOR
(yelling)
Did I say you could enter?

INTERN
I'm sorry Herr Primarius.

He backs out of the room. Elly glares at Viktor.

ELLY
Viktor?

VIKTOR
I'm sorry.

They eat their lunch in silence for a moment.

ELLY
Why did you have to yell at him?

Viktor resembles a child being scolded.

ELLY (CONT'D)
You are so nice sometimes, and at other times, you're so angry.

VIKTOR
I'm not angry at you.

ELLY

Not right now. But what if I'm next?

VIKTOR

I couldn't be angry at you.

ELLY

You say that now. But Viktor, it frightens me. What is it that makes you so angry?

He pushes aside his lunch and takes a swig of coffee.

VIKTOR

Elly, you know I'm Jewish.

She nods.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

Where do you think I was during the war?

ELLY

I don't know. Vienna?

VIKTOR

I was, until nineteen, forty-two. But then I was sent to the camps.

Elly pushes aside her lunch, and focuses in on Viktor.

INT. POLICLINIC / VIKTOR'S OFFICE - AN HOUR LATER

Outside Viktor's window, the sprinkles have given way to rain. Elly wipes tears from her eyes.

ELLY

Everyone?

VIKTOR

My sister Stella went to Australia with her husband. I haven't heard from them, but I believe they're alive.

ELLY

I'm so sorry. You poor, poor man.

There is nothing but compassion in Elly's eyes. Compassion and pity.

ELLY (CONT'D)
Heavens. Is that the time?

She quickly picks up the trash and cleans off Viktor's desk.

ELLY (CONT'D)
I'm late for work. Again.

She's opens the door.

VIKTOR
Elly. Thank you.

She smiles and closes the door behind her. Rain drops hit the window glass.

INT. POLICLINIC / DENTAL DEPARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Elly rushes back under the scornful eye of Nurse #1, who is busy sterilizing dental equipment.

ELLY
I'm so sorry. I had a lunch date and lost all track of time.

NURSE #1
With?

Elly jumps in to assist Nurse #1 with her work.

ELLY
Well, you're not going to believe me.

Nurse #1 is all ears.

ELLY (CONT'D)
Doctor Frankl.

NURSE #1
Why on earth would you have lunch with him?

ELLY
I got to know him a little when I was sick.

NURSE #1
But he's such a monster.

ELLY
No, not when you get to know him. Besides, I feel sorry for him.

NURSE #1
Why would you feel sorry for him?

ELLY
He had a rough time in the war.

NURSE #1
We all did.

ELLY
Not like him.

NURSE #1
Isn't he old enough to be your
Father?

Elly shrugs.

NURSE #1 (CONT'D)
Is he at least Catholic?

Elly shakes her head.

ELLY
It was just lunch.

ELLY (CONT'D)
(whispers so she can't be
heard)
And an invitation to dinner.

EXT. POLICLINIC / EMPLOYEE ENTRANCE - EVENING

Elly waits for Viktor, who rushes to join her.

VIKTOR
The one benefit of going to the
camps, is that I receive double
ration coupons. This is a good
thing, because I ruin half of the
food I cook.

ELLY
Cooking I can do, when I can get
ingredients. Let's see what we can
find at the Naschmarkt.

The two walk towards the streetcar.

EXT. POLICLINIC / EMPLOYEE ENTRANCE - NEXT EVENING

Elly waits for Viktor, who rushes to join him.

ELLY
Hope you're up for my Gulasch.

VIKTOR
I can't wait.

They walk toward Viktor's home. In a bold step, he takes her hand.

EXT. POLICLINIC / EMPLOYEE ENTRANCE - NEXT EVENING

Viktor wait for Elly, who rushes to join him.

VIKTOR
Naschmarkt?

ELLY
Yes.

They walk toward the streetcar.

ELLY (CONT'D)
It's a lovely evening. Let's walk.

VIKTOR
A wonderful idea.

He takes her hand as they walk. She smiles at him, and he returns it.

ELLY
Viktor, I've had a lot of time to think about your time in the camps. About your Mother, your Father, your Brother. Your Wife.

ELLY (CONT'D)
Your anger, Viktor, it's a problem. But apart from that, I don't sense any real hatred from you. Viktor, how do you avoid the bitterness? The vengeance?

VIKTOR
Elly, I'm one of the lucky ones. But I wonder, why did I survive? Why me? There are so many people, far better than me, who deserved to live.

ELLY
You all deserved to live.

Viktor smiles at this.

VIKTOR

My only guess is that I was spared
for a reason. There must be
something that I'm here to do.
Whatever it is, I hope that I'm
worthy of the task.

Elly looks at Viktor without pity, but with sincere
admiration.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT EVENING

Viktor and Elly finish their soup. Elly clears the table.
Viktor follows.

ELLY

Thank you for dinner.

VIKTOR

Well, thank you. After all, you
did the cooking.

ELLY

But it was your ration coupons that
bought the food.

VIKTOR

I'm happy to share...

He watches for Elly's reaction as he pushes a boundary.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

With you.

Elly smiles.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

May I walk you to the streetcar?

ELLY

No. I'll be fine. But I have to
hurry.

Viktor walks Elly to the door. Suddenly unsure of himself,
he asks.

VIKTOR

Elly, your being here, is it out of
pity?

Elly looks blankly at him.

ELLY
Viktor, I have to go.

She gives him a quick peck-kiss as she puts on her coat.
Viktor opens the door for her.

ELLY (CONT'D)
I'll see you tomorrow.

INT. POLICLINIC / VIKTOR'S OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

Viktor's office is empty, but his doctor's coat hangs on a hook behind the door. Elly deposits a slip of paper in the pocket and walks out.

INT. POLICLINIC / OPERATING THEATER - LATER THAT DAY

Viktor wears this same Doctor's Coat as he performs a spinal tap. The PATIENT lies on his side hugging his knees as Viktor inserts the needle. Two NURSES and an ORDERLY stand at the ready. INTERNS watch the procedure from the theater.

VIKTOR
The needle is injected into the thecal sac. This sac contains the cerebrospinal fluid.

Viktor slowly pulls back on the plunger, sucking fluid into the syringe.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
We only need a few drops. The fluid can us help diagnose serious infections such as meningitis, encephalitis, or syphilis, and bleeding or cancer of the brain and spinal cord, and of course multiple sclerosis.

Viktor withdraws the needle and carefully places it on the metal tray. Nurse #4 covers the tray and walks out. Viktor bandages the puncture hole, then removes his gloves and washes his hands.

Nurse #5 and the Orderly assist and remove the Patient.
Viktor addresses the Audience.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
Are there any questions?

Out of habit, he puts his hands in the pockets of his Doctor's coat. He discovers the slip of paper and pulls it out.

A DOCTOR in the Audience stands.

DOCTOR IN AUDIENCE
Yes, Doctor. Did you place the
needle between L-3 and L-4?

Viktor ignores the question as he reads the paper. "It is not pity, but love - Elly"

Viktor suddenly remembers he's not alone and looks up.

VIKTOR
I'm sorry?

DOCTOR IN AUDIENCE
Between L-3 and L-4?

VIKTOR
Yes. The thecal sac is widest at
that point.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
(abruptly)
Anything else?

He doesn't give them time for a response.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
Thank you.

Viktor is nearly kicking up his heels as he hurriedly exits the theater.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Viktor is pacing, jumping out of his skin with nervous anxiety. A KNOCK on the door and Viktor runs to answer it. Elly wears a man's coat over her white smock and combat boots, and is the most beautiful thing Viktor has ever seen.

He takes her hand and welcomes her inside.

VIKTOR
Elly. I've loved you since the
moment I saw you.

He kisses her with great tenderness, respect, and passion. He unbuttons and removes her coat, then takes her hand and leads her to the bed.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Viktor paces the room. There's a KNOCK on the door.

He takes her hand and welcomes her inside. They kiss as he removes her coat and stumble toward the bed.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Viktor paces the room. Elly's familiar KNOCK on the door.

He takes her hand and welcomes her inside. They kiss and giggle as he removes her coat and stumble toward the bed.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Viktor paces the room. Elly's familiar KNOCK on the door.

He takes her hand and welcomes her inside. He reaches to kiss her and she stops him.

ELLY

Wait. Viktor. We need to talk.

He's crushed. He steps back to give her space, then motions for her to sit at the table. He joins her.

VIKTOR

Elly, what's wrong?

ELLY

Nothing... I think. It depends.

VIKTOR

What is it?

ELLY

Viktor. I'm pregnant.

Viktor let's out a yelp.

VIKTOR

You're sure?

ELLY

Yes.

VIKTOR

This is fantastic!

ELLY

So you're happy about it?

VIKTOR
Are you kidding? I am the happiest
man in the whole world.

Elly is relieved.

ELLY
I hoped you would be.

Then it hits him, and he sobs.

VIKTOR
But Elly, I can't marry you.

ELLY
What?

VIKTOR
Elly. I am married.

ELLY
What?!?

INT. MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS / PITTERMANN'S OFFICE - DAY

Viktor walks in as Mr. Pittermann sits behind his desk.

VIKTOR
Hello Herr Pittermann. Thank you
for seeing me.

BRUNO PITTERMANN
My pleasure Doctor Frankl. How is
your work at the Policlinic? Well,
I hope?

VIKTOR
Yes, it is. Very well indeed.
Thank you again for your help.

BRUNO PITTERMANN
Good. Good.

VIKTOR
Herr Pittermann, I am here to
inquire about another matter.

BRUNO PITTERMANN
Yes?

VIKTOR
It is regarding my wife, Mathilda
Frankl.

BRUNO PITTERMANN
 Didn't she...

VIKTOR
 Pass away? Yes. In the camps.

BRUNO PITTERMANN
 So, how can I help?

VIKTOR
 I need some sort of official
 confirmation. Something for legal
 purposes.

Bruno gives him a questioning look.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
 You see, I've met someone.

BRUNO PITTERMANN
 That's terrific. Good for you.

VIKTOR
 Yes, and a complete surprise.

BRUNO PITTERMANN
 I'll inquire with the Red Cross and
 get back to you.

VIKTOR
 Thank you, Herr Pittermann.

INT. NINTH DISTRICT OFFICES, JULY 18, 1947 - DAY

A JUDGE presides over a Civil Ceremony, the only option for a Jew and a Catholic. Elly wears a new blue dress, much too big for her small frame. Still, there's no hiding her baby-bump. Viktor wears his only suit.

This joyous occasion is shared with a few FAMILY and FRIENDS, including Tilly's Aunt Herte, now Viktor's only "family."

JUDGE
 (loudly, to room)
 Viktor Emil Frankl and Eleonore
 Katharina Schwindt.

They stand.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
 Are you ready?

Viktor and Elly smile at each other.

VIKTOR
Your Honor, we couldn't be more
ready.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - DAY

Viktor and Elly have taken over more rooms in the apartment,
and it now has the homey atmosphere of a woman's touch.

CARD: TWO YEARS LATER

One-year old daughter GABRIEL FRANKL, (Gabby) sits in the
middle of the floor. Elly ties her shoelaces.

VIKTOR
Your first pair of shoes.

She stands up, butt first, and clomps around like Elly did in
her combat boots.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
Oh look. She's got your walk.

ELLY
Oh shush. Gabby's a big girl now,
with big girl shoes.

Gabby delights in this.

Elly and Viktor share a loving glance.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - DAY

Now 40 years older, Elly and Viktor still share the same
loving glance.

The apartment is fully furnished, complete with mementoes and
photos accumulated over the last 40 years together.

CARD: 40 YEARS LATER

ELLY
I'll finish typing the letters and
bring them with lunch.

VIKTOR
Thanks. See you later at the
University.

They kiss goodbye. Viktor walks out the door and Elly sits
down to the typewriter.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF VIENNA / LECTURE HALL - DAY

Viktor stands before a lecture hall full of STUDENTS.

VIKTOR

Will you pass these back?

Viktor hands a stack of papers to two Students who distribute sheets of paper as he speaks.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

We found that the likelihood of a patient attempting another suicide directly correlated to their score on the Purpose of Life test, which is being passed out right now. This test has also been used in a few Prisons to determine whether the inmate had a sense of purpose or meaning. Once the concept of meaning was introduced, the recidivism rates went from forty-four per cent to seven percent.

Elly walks into the back of the Lecture Hall and sits. Viktor nods and smiles at her.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

In addition to tonight's reading, please take a few minutes to complete the P I L test. We'll discuss scoring it after you've completed it. See you tomorrow.

Viktor gathers his things and walks to the back to join Elly.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

Ready?

They exit the building.

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF VIENNA - DAY

Elly carries their lunch but Viktor relieves her of the paperwork.

ELLY

How has your day been?

VIKTOR

Good. Yours?

ELLY

Good. All of your typing is done.

VIKTOR

Thank you.

They sit down at a picnic table to eat. Viktor hands Elly items from the lunch basket and she spreads out their lunch.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

I received a phone call this morning. There will be a huge commemorative for the fiftieth anniversary of the Anschluss. They have asked me to speak.

ELLY

What an honor.

VIKTOR

Yes, it is. Not only me. Others will be speaking too.

ELLY

Is there any specific topic, or do they just want you to talk about the war in general?

VIKTOR

The gist of it is to remind people of the horrors of the war, the Holocaust. Evidently people have forgotten.

ELLY

No one who lived through it could possibly forget. But the younger generation only have the stories from their parents, and what they learn in school.

VIKTOR

It's not for a few months. First Brazil, then Chicago.

INT. CHICAGO HOTEL - EVENING

Viktor, Elly, DON KLINGBERG, TOM McKENNA, and 4 OTHERS peruse the menu in an upscale restaurant.

CARD: CHICAGO - 1987

The waiter brings a bottle of wine, pours a touch into Don's glass, who tastes it and nods. As usual, Viktor holds his small Audience captive.

VIKTOR

It was wild.

The Group chats as the waiter divides the bottle among the eight glasses, serving the women first.

GUEST #1

This was in Brasilia?

VIKTOR

Yes!

ELLY

(laughing)

I was so embarrassed.

The Group is eating up the story.

VIKTOR

They ripped the blouse right off of her.

ELLY

You'd think I was Marilyn Monroe.

VIKTOR

It's a good thing I had a jacket.

ELLY

Then Security jumped in.

GUEST #2

Whoever heard of a Psychiatrist requiring their own security detail?

ELLY

Or a Psychiatrist's wife? Right?

The Waiter has finished pouring and Tom raises his glass.

TOM

A toast, for Elly. Elly, you are the warmth to Viktor's light.

DON

Well said.

TOM

To Elly.

ALL AT TABLE

To Elly.

Elly blushes as they sip from their glasses. She smiles at Viktor.

EXT. CHICAGO HOTEL

Viktor and Elly stand at the hotel entrance as the valet hails a taxi for them.

The valet opens the car door as Viktor hands him a one dollar bill.

VIKTOR

(to Valet)

Thank you.

They climb into the back seat.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

(to driver)

University of Chicago, please.

ELLY

We're going to Billings Auditorium.

TAXI DRIVER

I know where it is.

INT. MOVING TAXI IN CHICAGO - EVENING

TAXI DRIVER

Your accent... Where are you from?

ELLY

Vienna.

TAXI DRIVER

Are you going to a lecture?

ELLY

Viktor is speaking.

TAXI DRIVER

Oh. What's the topic?

VIKTOR

What is wrong with today's youth.

TAXI DRIVER

Oh.

VIKTOR

The topic was assigned to me.

TAXI DRIVER

Oh.

VIKTOR

Since I don't live here, perhaps you know better. What is wrong with today's youth?

He ponders the question for only a moment.

TAXI DRIVER

That's simple. They kill each other, they kill themselves, and they take dope.

Viktor smiles at Elly.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO / BILLINGS AUDITORIUM - EVENING

Viktor sits on a panel and is introduced by DON KLINGBERG.

DON KLINGBERG

Viktor Frankl is the creator of Logotherapy, considered the third Viennese school of Psychotherapy, behind Freud's psychoanalysis and Adler's individual psychology. His will to meaning is extremely popular all over the world, and is becoming more well-known in America. Please welcome Doctor Viktor Frankl.

The AUDIENCE applauds.

VIKTOR

I'd like to thank Doctor Klingberg for his kind introduction and his invitation to speak this evening. I hope you have no trouble understanding me. You'll notice that I speak in perfect accent without the slightest hint of English.

The audience chuckles.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

On the way here tonight I asked our Taxi Driver what he thought were the problems of today's youth. He said they kill each other, they kill themselves, and they take dope. Aggression. Depression. Addiction. These are the most conspicuous symptom of the collective neurosis of our time. People are caught in a pervasive feeling in meaninglessness. It is usually accompanied by a feeling of emptiness; the existential vacuum. Having meaning, a purpose greater than yourself is not a requirement for life, but it is a requirement for a good life.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO / BILLINGS AUDITORIUM - LATER THAT NIGHT

The Lecture has ended and the Audience mill about. STUDENT #1 and STUDENT #2 walk up to Viktor, Elly and Don Klingberg.

STUDENT #1

Doctor Frankl? I really enjoyed your lecture tonight. Thank you. May I ask you, do you use Logotherapy on all of your patients?

VIKTOR

I find that Logotherapy is useful in about half of my Patients, and other forms of Psychotherapy are used on the other half.

DON KLINGBERG

Whereas I use Logotherapy on all of my Patients, but about half the time.

STUDENT #2

How many sessions do you normally need to see results?

DON KLINGBERG

Surprisingly few.

VIKTOR

Often one to three, depending on the situation.

DON KLINGBERG

Most psychotherapy insist that people are full of neurosis requiring years of therapy.

VIKTOR

Yes. But Logotherapy takes the approach that people are generally well adjusted, with a specific problem or situation they seek assistance with. Usually no more than three sessions is needed.

STUDENT #1

Well, that's fine for Doctors who work on a salary, at Hospitals or Universities. But I plan on going into private practice. Where's the income stream in that?

STUDENT #2

Yeah.

Doctors Frankl and Klingberg look at each other. The Students walk away.

STUDENT #1

(to Student #2)

No wonder it's not more popular in America.

EXT. VIENNA AIRPORT - EVENING

Viktor and Elly, weary from the long flight wait at the baggage carousel with other TRAVELERS, including a SKINHEAD.

Two SKINHEAD friends strut towards the luggage carousel.

SKINHEAD #1

Hey Bro.

VIKTOR

(quietly to Elly)

Oh no.

A large suitcase slides down the conveyer. Skinhead #3 brutally shoves Viktor out of his way. Viktor hits the ground. They laugh.

SKINHEAD #3

Out of my way old man.

SKINHEAD #2
 Good one. Matzah-gobbler.

SKINHEAD #1
 Jew-Brew

Elly drops to help him up, and TRAVELERS rush up.

TRAVELER #1
 Get out of here.

Skinhead #2 pushes him to the ground too.

TRAVELER #2
 I'll get the Police.

But the Skinhead has collected his luggage. It's obvious they own the world as they saunter out, undisturbed by anyone.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING

Viktor's head is bandaged, as he opens the door to a RABBI and other event ORGANIZERS, who walk into the room. They notice the bandage on Viktor's head.

RABBI
 Thank you for seeing us. We won't stay long. We smell your dinner cooking.

The Organizers nod in unison.

RABBI (CONT'D)
 I'll get right to the point. You are aware that neo-Nazis are being credited for the recent synagogue bombings?

VIKTOR
 Yes, I read that.

RABBI
 Neo-Nazi groups are growing in cities all over Europe.

ORGANIZER #1
 Both in the size and number of them.

ORGANIZER #2
 America too.

VIKTOR

Yes.

RABBI

Well, the Organizers are expecting thirty to forty thousand people at the anniversary of the Anschluss.

VIKTOR

That many?

ORGANIZER #1

And it will be Nationally televised.

RABBI

We need to use this opportunity to address this issue.

ORGANIZER #2

This has to stop.

ORGANIZER #3

We must speak out against the Holocaust, against anti-Semitism, against Nazis and neo-Nazis.

ORGANIZER #2

Against all Germanic people.

Surprised that someone said it aloud, they all look at Organizer #2.

Elly has overheard this from the kitchen. She leaves her cooking to look in at the Group.

VIKTOR

You'd like me to speak out against the entire race of people?

ORGANIZER #2

We need to let them know that we're not going to tolerate this.

ORGANIZER #1

We must stop this now, before it escalates any further.

VIKTOR

The event is tomorrow. You'd like me to rewrite it by then?

ORGANIZER #4

You don't have to rewrite the entire speech. We have a list of points we would like you to make.

He hands the list to Viktor, who glances at it briefly.

VIKTOR

And if I don't?

RABBI

Doctor Frankl, we are not threatening you. But we are hoping for your cooperation.

ORGANIZER #4

All of the other speakers are on board with this. We need a unified message. We can't be too soft on this topic. We can't look the other way. We can't let the Holocaust happen again.

ORGANIZER #3

We need them to remember.

VIKTOR

Let me give it some thought.

Viktor walks them to the door.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

Thank you.

As they exit, Organizer #5 who remained silent gives Viktor a look of contempt. He lingers, and is the last one to walk out.

Elly walks in from the kitchen.

ELLY

That Rabbi has never approved of the fact that you married a Catholic girl. What are you going to do?

Viktor and Elly walk back into the kitchen. She dishes up some goulash and hands Viktor a plate.

VIKTOR

I don't know.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Viktor sits at his desk rewriting his speech.

EXT. VIENNA CITY HALL SQUARE - NIGHT (MARCH 10, 1988)

The AUDIENCE of 35,000 people attend a Memorial for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Anschluss. A Banner hangs behind the stage which reads "In Memoriam - 1938"

CARD: VIENNA CITY HALL SQUARE - MARCH 1988

SPEAKER #1

Each of us knew what was going on.
We saw the chimneys burn and the
ashes fall like snow over our
crops. We did not cry out. We did
not fight. This makes us just as
guilty as the perpetrators of these
horrid acts.

The Audience is filled with shame.

EXT. VIENNA CITY HALL SQUARE - MOMENTS LATER

SPEAKER #2

I will finish with two quotes, both
from Edmund Burke. The first is
the only thing necessary for the
triumph of evil is for good men to
do nothing. There's a reason it
was called the Anschluss, or the
war of flowers, and we welcomed
Hitler into Vienna with flowers,
not bullets. The second quote is
those who don't know history are
destined to repeat it. In case you
forgot Hitler and the horrors of
the Holocaust, you have been
reminded tonight. Even to this day
the Nazis, or neo-Nazi movement has
a stronghold in this city and
Europe. We must take any action
necessary to end it, here and now.

The Audience offers perfunctory applause.

EXT. VIENNA CITY HALL SQUARE - MOMENTS LATER

The MC walks to the podium.

MC

Tonight's final speaker is Doctor
Viktor Frankl. Doctor Frankl...

He starts the applause and sits as Viktor approaches. The audience is less than enthusiastic.

Viktor stands at the podium; a half dozen microphones partially obscure his face. Slightly nervous, he exchanges a smile with Elly, sitting in the front row.

VIKTOR

Ladies and Gentlemen, on this day, the fiftieth anniversary of the Anschluss, I hope you indulge me as I remember: my father - he perished in the Theresienstadt camp, my brother - he was killed in Mauthausen, my mother - she was gassed in Auschwitz, and my first wife - she had to give her life in the Bergen-Belsen camp. And yet I must ask you not to expect from me a single word of hatred. For whom should I hate? I only know the victims, not the perpetrators.

The Audience was beat-up by the previous speakers, but Viktor is not on the attack. The Audience, comprised of people from every race and religion, warm up to Viktor.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

At least I don't know them personally - and I refuse to call anybody collectively guilty. Those who spoke out against Hitler were killed or sent to the camps. And having been to the camps myself, I don't blame anyone for not wanting to go there. But even in the camps it was possible to find a Guard or Kapo who would show a little kindness, which provided a glimmer of hope. And occasionally you'd meet a malicious prisoner. In reality there are two races of people, and only two: the race of decent people, and the race of indecent people. This segregation runs across all races, nations, religions, and political parties. As history has shown us over and over again, any society is capable of a holocaust.

(MORE)

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

Since Auschwitz, we know what man
is capable of. And since
Hiroshima, we know what's at stake.

Viktor and Elly again share a loving glance as the audience
applauds.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - THAT NIGHT

Viktor and Elly walk up the stairs to their door. A swastika
made from human feces has been smeared on their front door.

ELLY

Someone didn't like your speech.

Carefully, Viktor opens the door as Elly waives off the
smell. They enter the house. Elly returns wearing rubber
gloves and carrying a pail. As if this is an everyday
occurrence, she sets to work.

EXT. INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY /SAN DIEGO - DAY (1992)

The Campus is active with STUDENTS sailing past on Bicycles,
Skateboards, walking, sitting in groups.

CARD: INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY / SAN DIEGO - 1992

INT. INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY /SAN DIEGO - MOMENTS LATER

Viktor, now 87 years old, wears thick eyeglasses and lost 90%
of his eyesight. Elly leads him into the classroom, seats
him at his desk and takes a seat in the back of the room.

Viktor has slowed considerably. No longer an animated
speaker, he remains seated through his lecture. His STUDENTS
are respectful, but as Californians, much more informal.

VIKTOR

Maslow with his Hierarchy of Needs
stated that needs need to be met,
physical needs, safety, love,
etcetera must be satisfied before
man could begin to self-actualize.
But years later, Maslow concurred
with my findings; that a person
needs to have a sense of purpose
and meaning above everything else.

A Student raises his hand.

STUDENT #3
Doctor Frankl?

VIKTOR
Yes?

STUDENT #3
May I ask, how many books did you
publish before going to the camps?

VIKTOR
None.

STUDENT #3
How many papers?

VIKTOR
Two.

STUDENT #3
And since the camps?

VIKTOR
(modestly)
I don't know.

STUDENT #3
I looked you up. Over thirty books,
and seven-hundred papers.

VIKTOR
More or less.

STUDENT #3
Using your own Logotherapy,
wouldn't you conclude that you
found meaning in your life as a
result of suffering, and through
your work and deeds?

Viktor smiles and searches for Elly's face somewhere in the
back of the classroom.

VIKTOR
Perhaps. But the most powerful of
the three, by far, is to heal
through love.

A FEMALE STUDENT raises her hand.

FEMALE STUDENT
Doctor Frankl?

VIKTOR

Yes.

FEMALE STUDENT

I think the meaning of your life is to help other people find the meaning in theirs.

Viktor smiles at her.

VIKTOR

I hope so. But the larger question is, what's the purpose of your life? All of your lives?

The students ponder this for a brief moment.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

Have a good weekend.

Viktor waits for Elly to join him, and they walk arm-in-arm out of the classroom.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CARD: 1997

Both Viktor and Elly lie sleeping. Viktor awakens suddenly and grabs his heart.

VIKTOR

Elly! Elly!

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY (1997)

Viktor lies in the hospital bed. His HEART DOCTOR is there to discuss his options. In the room are Elly, his daughter GABY (50) her husband FRANZ (50) Viktor's Granddaughter KATHARINA (28) and Grandson ALEX (25).

HEART DOCTOR

Unfortunately the only option is heart bypass surgery, but I doubt you'll survive it.

VIKTOR

Let me talk to my family about it.
Thank you Doctor.

A solemn moment. The family is anxious, distraught, and a few shed an occasional tear.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
 I cannot help myself, but I see
 nothing tragic in these
 circumstances.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

CARD: SURGERY DAY, 2 DAYS LATER

The family haven't left Viktor's side. ORDERLIES enter the room with a gurney, and lift Viktor onto it.

VIKTOR
 (to Orderlies)
 Just a moment.

He calls Elly over close to him.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)
 (whispers to Elly)
 I want to thank you once more,
 Elly, for all that you have done
 for me in your life. You succeeded
 in turning a suffering man into a
 loving man. Thank you.

The orderlies wheel him out of the room.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Viktor is wheeled down a long white hallway.

ELLY (V.O.)
 Viktor never regained consciousness
 after surgery. He died three days
 later, on September second, nine-
 teen, ninety-seven. This was two
 days after Princess Diana's death,
 and three days before the death of
 Mother Teresa.

EXT. VIENNA GRAVEYARD - JEWISH SECTION

We see the tombstone of Viktor Frankl. It is covered in pebbles, a traditional sign of respect for Jewish people.

ELLY (V.O.)
 Over his career and in the camps,
 Viktor Frankl was personally
 credited with saving over thirty-
 thousand lives.
 (MORE)

ELLY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

His creation of the suicide prevention center has saved hundreds of thousands more. The short, one-hundred page book he wrote in nine days sold over fifteen million copies and has been translated into thirty languages. The United States Library of Congress named it one of the top ten of the Twentieth Century.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE VIKTOR'S APARTMENT - DAY

CARD: THE FOLLOWING YEAR

Dr. Baumhackle and his big, Aquiline nose are still quite recognizable fifty years later. He shuffles up to The Frankl's front door holding a vase of flowers, and knocks. He waits, but no one answers.

A NEIGHBOR opens her door and walks into the hallway from an adjacent apartment.

NEIGHBOR

Oh, are those for Frau Frankl?

DR. BAUMHACKLE

Yes.

NEIGHBOR

Here. Let me take them from you. I'll give them to her when she returns.

She looks over the bouquet.

NEIGHBOR (CONT'D)

There's no card. May I tell Frau Frankl who they're from?

DR. BAUMHACKLE

She'll know. I've delivered flowers on this day for the last fifty years. Doctor Frankl hired me right after the war.

Elly walks up the stairs carrying groceries.

ELLY

Doctor Baumhackle! Has it been a year already?

The Neighbor hands the vase back to Dr. Baumhackle as Elly unlocks the door. The two enter the apartment.

ELLY (CONT'D)
You're looking well. Can you stay
for coffee?

DR. BAUMHACKLE
Yes. That would be nice.

INT. VIKTOR'S APARTMENT

Elly walks into the kitchen to deposit the bag of groceries. She returns and relieves Dr. Baumhackle of the vase of flowers. She places them on a shelf next to a photo of herself and Viktor.

This photo is an Actor portrayal of the actual photo of Viktor and Elly Frankl from biography "When Life Calls Out To You", page 176. Fade from our actors to the actual photo of Viktor and Elly Frankl.

ELLY (O.S.)
It won't take but a minute, Doctor
Baumhackle.

Show actual Frankl photos as the film credits run.

THE END