

WHAT WAS HIDDEN

Written by

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*"Some things are hidden to survive."*

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BLACK AND WHITE

INT. KRAKÓW APARTMENT - EVENING - 1939

A well-appointed apartment. Not ostentatious—tasteful. Books.  
A sideboard.

A RADIO murmurs low in the background.

At the dining table sits ISAAC (40s), composed,  
precise—banker's posture even at rest.

Across from him, RIVKA (late 30s), elegant, attentive, hands  
folded around a teacup.

Their daughter, ANNA (8), plays on the floor nearby with her  
friend SARAH (8).

The TELEPHONE RINGS.

Sharp. Intrusive.

Isaac looks at it. A fraction too long.

He rises, crosses the room, lifts the receiver.

INTERCUT - TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

INT. KRAKÓW APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

INT. OPPELN APARTMENT - NIGHT

Isaac's brother, LEON (40s), tense, speaks quickly but  
quietly.

LEON

Isaac. Listen to me.

Isaac closes the door to the sitting room, lowering his  
voice.

ISAAC

Leon—what is it?

LEON

They're everywhere. Trains, trucks.  
Not passing through.  
They're staying.

Isaac sits.

ISAAC  
Soldiers?

Leon hesitates, then commits.

LEON  
Hitlerites. In numbers.  
I've seen this before, Isaac. This  
is not an exercise.

A beat. The radio hums on the other side of the door.

ISAAC  
You're certain?

LEON  
Certain enough to call you at  
night.

Leon exhales, steadying himself.

LEON (CONT'D)  
You remember what they did here.  
The laws. The arrests.  
They haven't forgotten us.

Isaac says nothing.

LEON (CONT'D)  
Kraków is too visible. Too Jewish.  
You must leave. Not just travel,  
but disappear.

ISAAC  
Where?

LEON  
Anywhere they won't look first.  
Pretend. Become Catholics. Quiet.  
Temporary.

Isaac closes his eyes.

LEON (CONT'D)  
Take only what you can carry.  
Do it before the morning trains  
stop meaning anything.

Silence.

LEON (CONT'D)  
Promise me.

Isaac swallows.

ISAAC  
I promise.

The line clicks dead.

BACK TO SCENE

Isaac remains seated, receiver still in hand.

Behind him, Rivka stands in the doorway. She has heard enough.

Their eyes meet.

No questions.

Isaac replaces the receiver carefully.

Rivka returns to the kitchen.

RIVKA  
Anna, it's time for Sarah to go  
home now.

ANNA  
Aw Mama, you said Sarah could stay  
for dinner.

RIVKA  
I'm sorry honey, perhaps some other  
time.

Anna turns to Sarah.

ANNA  
I'm sorry.

SARAH  
That's OK, Mama's making pierogi  
tonight. I love her pierogi.

Rivka helps Sarah on with her coat.

Anna and Sarah hug like the best friends they are.

Sarah exits.

INT. APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Isaac opens a drawer. Removes documents. Jewelry. A watch.  
Cash.

He sets them on the table.

ISAAC

Pack small.  
We will leave tomorrow after work.

Anna looks up.

ANNA

Where are we going Papa?

Isaac looks at Rivka with pain in his eyes, knowing he is about to lie to his daughter.

Rivka looks back with the same dread in her eyes, not knowing what is happening, but knowing it is bad.

ISAAC

We are going to your Uncle Leon's  
Anna.

ANNA

For how long?

Isaac kneels in front of her, steady, gentle.

ISAAC

Until it's safe to come home.

Rivka watches him. She knows better. She says nothing.

Rivka stands alone at the front door.

Mounted on the doorframe: a MEZUZAH.

She reaches for it.

Her hand trembles, then steadies.

She removes it slowly, deliberately.

She holds it to her breast, whispering a silent prayer.

For a moment, she leans her forehead against the door.

Listens to the building. The city.

Nothing unusual.

She turns away.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. BANK - AFTERNOON

Nearly closing time at the bank.

Isaac rises from his desk and walks to the teller station.

He slides a paper to the teller.

ISAAC  
I need you to handle this quietly,  
for me personally.

The teller picks up the note and her eyes widen.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
My brother Leon in Oppeln is in  
trouble, we're leaving for there  
this afternoon to help him out.  
Please bring it to my office when  
you can.

Isaac walks to the safety deposit box room, where he  
withdraws a key and opens a box.

Inside is a large bag and a mass of papers.

He removes the bag from the box, but leaves the papers.

He closes the box, relocking it.

Isaac returns to his office and looks longingly out the  
window.

The teller arrives with a large satchel.

Isaac stands and takes it from her.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Thank you.

The teller leaves as Isaac opens the bag, filled with cash.

He puts the bag from the safety deposit box into the satchel,  
closes the satchel, and without a word exits the bank.

DISSOLVE TO:

COLOR

EXT. OLSZA STREET - DAY (PRESENT)

A modern SUV idles at the curb.

Quiet street. Trees. Fences.

JACK CARTER (40s) steps out first – confident, well dressed, measured.

Then EMILY CARTER (late 30s).

Then LUCY (8), alert, observant, already watching the house.

The REALTOR (50s), polite, efficient, unlocks the gate.

It CREAKS.

Lucy smiles at the sound.

EXT. FRONT GARDEN – CONTINUOUS

The garden is overgrown, but intentional.

Paths still visible beneath leaves.

REALTOR  
Built before the war.  
Vacant a long time.

Jack nods. Emily takes in the facade.

JACK  
Why vacant?

The Realtor hesitates – just enough.

REALTOR  
Ownership issues.  
Inheritance.  
These things can take... decades.

Emily looks at the windows.

EMILY  
When was the last time someone  
lived here?

REALTOR  
Best we can tell it was during the  
war. The records from back then  
are, as you can imagine, hard to  
find.

Lucy wanders ahead, trailing her fingers along the fence.

LUCY  
It doesn't look broken.

Emily hears that.

INT. HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

The door opens.

Light spills into the space.

Dust hangs in the air – not neglect, but stillness.

The foyer is elegant.

A curved staircase.

Solid craftsmanship.

Jack steps inside, impressed.

JACK

They don't build like this anymore.

Emily lingers at the threshold.

She steps in last.

The Realtor gestures.

REALTOR

Original floors.

Original layout.

Lucy looks up the staircase.

LUCY

Who lived here?

The Realtor smiles politely.

REALTOR

Families.

LUCY

Do you think people disappear when  
no one remembers them?

JACK

People disappear when no one's  
alive to remember them.

EMILY

Or when no one's willing to.

Emily studies the banister. The walls. The silence.

She nods – not convinced, but accepting.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sunlight through tall windows.

The room is empty, but purposeful.

Emily crosses to the front door again.

Touches the doorframe.

She frowns – faintly.

EMILY

Jack...

JACK

Yeah?

EMILY

Do you ever get the feeling a place  
remembers things?

Jack smiles – affectionate, dismissive.

JACK

Houses remember people.  
People remember stories.

Lucy sits on the floor, right where the table once would have  
been.

She looks around.

LUCY

I think they left fast.

A beat.

The adults exchange a look.

The Realtor clears his throat.

REALTOR

Shall we see the rest of the house?

Emily nods.

INT. REAL ESTATE CLOSING OFFICE - DAY (PRESENT)

A modest, professional office. Neutral walls. Frosted glass.

Nothing flashy – efficient, orderly.

At the table sit JACK, EMILY, and LUCY.

The REALTOR is present, relaxed now.

Across from them, the CLOSING AGENT (60s), precise, courteous, leafs through documents.

The agent slides papers forward.

CLOSING AGENT  
These are the final transfer  
documents.  
Once signed, the property is  
officially yours.

Jack signs easily.

Emily hesitates – not uncertain, just present.

She signs.

Lucy swings her feet under the chair, bored but attentive.

The agent gathers the papers, then pauses – genuinely curious.

CLOSING AGENT (CONT'D)  
If you don't mind my asking...  
Americans don't usually buy here  
unless there's a story.

A beat.

Emily glances at Jack. He nods – her choice.

EMILY  
My grandmother was from Kraków.  
She left just before the war.

The agent looks up now.

CLOSING AGENT  
Jewish?

Emily shakes her head.

EMILY  
No, Catholic.  
She survived, but my grandfather  
didn't.

Jack shifts slightly – supportive, not performative.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
He came back to Poland to fight  
with the resistance.  
He was killed before the end of the  
war.

The agent absorbs this quietly.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
My mother was raised by my  
grandmother alone.  
She married young, at sixteen, to  
lighten my grandmother's burden.  
I was born when she was seventeen.

Lucy looks at her mother – learning something new.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
That made me eligible for  
citizenship by descent.  
We wanted to come back.  
To trace what was lost.

The agent nods – respectful.

CLOSING AGENT  
That's more common than people  
think.

Jack leans forward.

JACK  
Do you know who owned the house  
before?

The agent opens a separate folder – thicker, older.

CLOSING AGENT  
Until recently, no.  
The title was frozen for decades.

He taps the folder.

CLOSING AGENT (CONT'D)  
Church records.  
Baptismal registries. Death  
notices.  
The local Catholic parish has been  
digitizing everything.

Emily listens carefully now.

CLOSING AGENT (CONT'D)  
The family name was Regulski.  
There are no surviving heirs.  
The last claim was unresolved until  
these records surfaced.

JACK  
So the house just, waited?

The agent allows a small, tired smile.

CLOSING AGENT  
Many of them do.

Emily looks down at the documents in front of her.

EMILY  
No family left?

CLOSING AGENT  
None we could locate.  
The title is clean.

The Realtor clears his throat gently.

REALTOR  
Which is why it finally came to  
market.

Lucy looks up.

LUCY  
What happened to them?

No one answers immediately.

The agent closes the folder.

CLOSING AGENT  
Records tell us where people were,  
not always what happened to them.

Emily nods.

She signs the final page.

The agent stamps it.

CLOSING AGENT (CONT'D)  
Congratulations.

Jack exhales - relieved.

Emily doesn't.

She looks at Lucy.

EMILY  
Ready to go home?

Lucy thinks.

LUCY  
I think we already are.

Emily smiles – unsettled.

DISSOLVE TO:

BLACK AND WHITE

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - KRAKÓW - EVENING - AUGUST 1939

Dusk settles over a quiet street.

A modest HOUSE - solid, respectable, unfamiliar.

Isaac stands at the gate with a small suitcase in one hand.

Rivka holds Anna's coat closed at the collar.

No one speaks.

Isaac unlocks the gate.

It opens reluctantly.

INT. HOUSE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

The front door opens.

The space is empty but intact.

Clean floors. Bare walls.

They step inside.

The door closes behind them.

The sound echoes, longer than expected.

Anna looks around, confused.

ANNA  
Papa, I thought we were going to  
Uncle Leon's.

Isaac removes his hat. Sets it carefully on a small table that isn't there anymore, his hand hovers, then adjusts.

He kneels in front of her.

Measured. Gentle.

ISAAC  
There are complicated things  
happening now, Anna.

She frowns, processing.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
This will be our home for a while.  
Maybe longer.

Anna looks past him taking in the unfamiliar rooms.

ANNA  
Why didn't you tell me?

Isaac chooses his words with care.

ISAAC  
Because some things have to be  
understood slowly.  
And some things have to be changed.

Rivka watches from a few steps away. Silent. Composed.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
I will explain everything to you.  
But not tonight.  
In the coming days.

Anna nods—not satisfied, but trusting.

Isaac stands.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

They move through the room.

Their footsteps are the first in some time.

Rivka runs her hand along the mantel. Dust gathers on her fingers.

She wipes it discreetly on her coat.

Isaac checks the windows. The locks.

Practical. Reassuring.

Anna peers down a hallway.

ANNA  
Does anyone live upstairs?

ISAAC  
Not anymore.

Anna absorbs that.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Sparse. Functional.

A table. A chair. Nothing personal.

Rivka opens a cabinet. Empty.

She closes it.

Isaac sets the suitcase down.

ISAAC  
We'll make it comfortable.

Rivka meets his eyes.

A look that says: I know what this costs.

INT. HOUSE - STAIRCASE - EVENING

Anna ascends a few steps.

Stops.

Looks back down at her parents.

ANNA  
Will I still go to school?

Isaac smiles, too quickly.

ISAAC  
Of course. But it will be a  
different school.

Rivka looks away.

INT. UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - NIGHT

A bare room.

One window. Curtains drawn but thin.

Anna sits on the edge of the bed.

Rivka removes Anna's shoes.

Unlaces them slowly.

Carefully.

As if time might cooperate if handled gently.

Isaac stands at the doorway.

Watching both of them.

INT. HOUSE - FRONT HALL - NIGHT

Isaac stands alone.

He looks at the DOORFRAME.

Bare.

No mezuzah.

He reaches up, then stops himself.

Lowers his hand.

DISSOLVE TO:

COLOR

INT. OLSZA HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

The basement stair creaks under careful footsteps.

LUCY descends slowly, one hand on the rail, the other gripping a small flashlight. The beam wobbles, then steadies.

The basement isn't frightening - just unused.

Concrete floor.

Exposed beams.

Shelves built by someone who expected permanence.

Lucy moves past:

- old jars
- folded newspapers
- a wooden crate with rusted hinges

She pauses at a CARDBOARD BOX tucked against the wall.

The box is labeled in faded pencil – illegible now.

Lucy kneels.

Opens it.

Inside: GLASS CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS – hand-blown, thin, imperfect. Some clouded with age. Wrapped carefully, each in tissue paper.

Lucy lifts one.

Silvered. Slightly oval.

Not factory-perfect.

She turns it in the light.

Her face changes – not wonder, but concentration.

She notices:

- it's heavier than expected
- something shifts inside

She shakes it gently.

Nothing rattles.

EMILY (O.S.)

Lucy?  
Are you still downstairs?

Lucy startles.

Her fingers slip.

CRASH.

The ornament shatters on the floor.

Lucy gasps – sharp, guilty.

She crouches, bracing for reprimand that doesn't come.

Among the shards, she notices something intact.

A TIGHTLY ROLLED PAPER, bound with age, not string.

Lucy picks it up delicately.

Unrolls it halfway.

Ink.

Dark.

Intentional.

HEBREW LETTERS.

Lucy doesn't know the language – but she recognizes it isn't random.

She fully unrolls it.

The flashlight beam trembles.

EMILY (O.S.)

Lucy?

Lucy doesn't answer.

She gathers the parchment and bolts for the stairs.

INT. OLSZA HOUSE - STAIRCASE / HALLWAY - DAY

Lucy climbs fast.

Too fast.

She nearly trips at the top.

INT. OLSZA HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Emily stands at the counter sorting documents from the closing.

She looks up as Lucy barrels in.

EMILY

Lucy! Slow down...

Lucy thrusts the parchment forward.

LUCY  
I broke something.  
But look.

Emily takes the paper.

Her fingers stiffen slightly as she unrolls it.

She studies the script.

Her expression shifts – curiosity to unease.

EMILY  
Where did this come from?

LUCY  
Inside a Christmas ornament.  
In the basement.

Emily looks up – sharply now.

EMILY  
Inside it?

Lucy nods.

Emily glances toward the basement door, then back to the paper.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
Jack?

INT. OLSZA HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jack enters, dusty, energized from inspecting the upstairs.

JACK  
What's up?

EMILY  
Lucy found some Christmas ornaments  
in the basement. She dropped one,  
and this was inside of it.

Emily hands him the parchment.

Jack turns it carefully, respectful without knowing why.

JACK  
That's Hebrew.

Emily watches his face.

EMILY  
You're sure?

JACK  
Pretty sure.

I can't read it – but the script's unmistakable.

Lucy shifts her weight.

LUCY  
Is it important?

Jack looks at her, then back at the paper.

JACK  
Someone thought it was.

Emily exhales – controlled, but shaken.

EMILY  
There's a synagogue nearby.  
I saw it when we were driving.

Jack nods.

JACK  
Let's go there and ask if someone  
would know.

Emily folds the parchment carefully.

EMILY  
Lucy – thank you for not throwing  
this away.

Lucy nods, solemn.

INT. SMALL SYNAGOGUE - STUDY - DAY

A modest room.

Bookshelves bowed under weight.

A desk worn smooth by years of use.

The RABBI (60s) sits opposite the family.

Jack hands him the parchment with both hands.

The rabbi accepts it with care.

Unrolls it slowly.

Reads.

Silence.

Not awkward – deliberate.

Lucy watches his face, trying to read meaning.

Finally, the rabbi smiles, and looks up.

RABBI  
This is a klaf.

Emily leans forward slightly.

EMILY  
A what?

RABBI  
A handwritten parchment.  
Placed inside a mezuzah.

He gestures gently to the text.

RABBI (CONT'D)  
These are verses from Deuteronomy.  
The Shema.  
A declaration of faith.

Lucy frowns.

LUCY  
Why would someone put it in an  
ornament?

The rabbi pauses.

This question lands harder than expected.

RABBI  
They wouldn't.  
Not normally.

Emily glances at Jack.

EMILY  
It was inside a Christmas ornament.

The rabbi's eyebrows rise – just slightly.

RABBI  
Inside it?

Emily nods.

The rabbi looks back down at the parchment.

Rereads a line.

RABBI (CONT'D)  
A mezuzah is meant to be visible.  
To be touched.  
To be kissed when one enters a  
home.

He looks up again.

RABBI (CONT'D)  
This was hidden.

Lucy shifts in her seat.

LUCY  
Why hide it?

The rabbi considers her carefully.

RABBI  
Because sometimes being seen is  
dangerous.

Silence.

Emily swallows.

EMILY  
Would someone... expect to come  
back for it?

The rabbi gently re-rolls the parchment.

RABBI  
Almost always.

He hands it back to Emily.

RABBI (CONT'D)  
Whoever hid this believed the house  
would remember them.

Lucy looks at her mother.

LUCY  
Does it?

Emily doesn't answer.

Jack rests a hand on Lucy's shoulder.

DISSOLVE TO:

BLACK AND WHITE

INT. HOUSE - FRONT HALL - EVENING - AUGUST 1939

The front door opens.

ISAAC steps inside carrying a LARGE CARDBOARD BOX, worn at the edges, tied with twine. It is heavier than it looks.

He pauses just inside the door, listening.

The house is quiet.

Unclaimed.

He sets the box down carefully, as if it could bruise.

ANNA appears from the hallway, bright with curiosity.

ANNA  
Papa! What did you bring?

Isaac straightens his coat, buys himself a moment.

ISAAC  
Come here.

Anna steps closer, eyes fixed on the box.

ANNA  
Is it for me?

Isaac almost smiles.

ISAAC  
It's for all of us.

Anna crouches beside the box, eager.

ANNA  
What is it?

Isaac exhales, then answers simply.

ISAAC  
Christmas tree ornaments.

Anna freezes.

She looks at the box.

Then at him.

ANNA  
Like the Catholics have?

ISAAC  
Yeas Anna, like the Catholics have.

ANNA  
But it's August. Christmas is in  
December.

Isaac kneels so they are eye to eye.

Rivka stands in the doorway behind them, already knowing this moment has arrived.

ISAAC  
Anna, before long, some very bad  
men will come.

Anna's excitement drains away.

ANNA  
Here?

Isaac nods once.

ISAAC  
Everywhere.

A beat.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
These men do not like Jews.

Anna swallows.

ANNA  
Did we do something?

Isaac answers immediately.

ISAAC  
No.

He places his hand over hers.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
We did nothing wrong.

Silence settles.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
But because of them, we must  
change.  
We must become Catholics.

Anna blinks, trying to assemble this.

ANNA  
Like, pretend?

Isaac considers the word.

ISAAC  
Yes. We must pretend. To survive.

Rivka steps closer but does not interrupt.

Isaac stands.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
From now on, my name will be Joseph  
Regulski.

The name sounds unfamiliar in the room.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Your mother's name will be Francis  
Regulski.

Rivka nods – accepting, not agreeing.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
You may keep your first name. Anna.

Anna is safe.

Anna relaxes slightly.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
But your last name will be  
Regulski.

Anna tests it.

ANNA  
Anna... Regulski.

Isaac nods.

ISAAC  
You must remember it.  
And never forget it.

Anna looks at her mother.

ANNA

Mama?

Rivka kneels beside her.

RIVKA

Papa is keeping us safe.

Anna nods – trusting, frightened.

Isaac unties the twine and opens the box.

Inside: layers of GLASS CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS, carefully wrapped. Beneath them, a BIBLE, dark-bound, well used.

Isaac removes the Bible.

Holds it a moment.

Then hands it to Anna.

ISAAC

You will begin reading this.

Anna opens it, reverent without understanding.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

The second part.  
The New Testament.

She flips through unfamiliar pages.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

The first part, you already know by heart.

Anna nods, uncertain.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

I have enrolled you in the parish school.

Anna looks up sharply.

ANNA

A new school?

ISAAC

Yes.

ANNA

When?

ISAAC

Next week.

Rivka turns away briefly.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

It is very important that no one  
there knows you are Jewish.

Anna frowns.

ANNA

What if they ask?

Isaac doesn't hesitate.

ISAAC

Then you say you are Catholic.  
You say your name is Regulski.  
And you say nothing else.

Anna absorbs this carefully.

ANNA

Even my friends?

ISAAC

Especially your friends.

Anna closes the Bible and hugs it to her chest.

INT. UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Anna sits on the edge of the bed.

The room is bare. Temporary.

She opens the Bible again.

Reads a few lines.

Her lips move silently.

She stops.

Sets it aside.

She reaches for a NOTEBOOK and a pencil.

Writes carefully, neatly, speaking as she writes:

"16 sierpnia 1939.

Dziś Tata powiedział, że musimy mieć nowe imiona i zostać katolikami.

Tata to Józef Regulski.

Mama to Franciszek Regulski.

Ja jestem Anna Regulski.

Dał mi Biblię do czytania.

Zacznę szkołę w przyszłym tygodniu."

ANNA

16 August 1939.

Today Papa said we need new names.

Papa is Joseph now.

Mama is Francis.

I am still Anna, which Papa said is good because Anna can be many kinds of people. Our last name will be Regulski.

Papa gave me a Bible. It is heavier than my other books.

He said to read the second part first because I already know the first part, even though I did not know it had parts.

Mama did not smile, but she fixed my hair very carefully.

I am not supposed to tell anyone.

She closes the notebook.

Turns off the light.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS - FRONT HALL - NIGHT

Rivka stands alone.

She holds the MEZUZAH in her hands.

She opens it slowly.

Removes the KLAF.

The parchment unfurls slightly.

She presses it flat with trembling fingers.

She looks toward the staircase.

Listens.

Then returns to the box.

Selects a single ornament, silvered, hollow.

Removes the cap.

Carefully slides the klaf inside.

Replaces the cap.

She holds the ornament up to the light.

For a moment, it looks ordinary.

She presses it to her chest.

Whispers:

RIVKA  
For safekeeping.  
For our home.  
For our faith.

She places it back in the box.

Closes the lid.

Her hand remains on it.

DISSOLVE TO:

COLOR

INT. OLSZA HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON (PRESENT)

Late light slants across the kitchen table.

EMILY and LUCY sit side by side.

Quiet. Expectant.

From the hallway comes the sound of careful footsteps.

JACK enters, carrying the CARDBOARD BOX OF CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS.

He sets it down gently, as if it might bruise.

Lucy leans forward.

LUCY  
Are those the rest of them?

Jack nods.

JACK  
All I could find.

He opens the box.

Ornaments, one after another – silvered, clouded, hand-blown.  
Each wrapped individually, deliberately.

Jack selects one.

Holds it up.

Shakes it lightly near his ear.

Nothing.

He shakes it again – firmer.

Still nothing.

Emily watches him closely now.

EMILY  
Maybe it was just the one.

Jack doesn't answer.

He removes the small metal cap.

Peers down into the narrow opening.

Tilts it.

Nothing visible.

He turns the ornament toward the window, squints.

Still nothing.

Jack exhales – patient, analytical.

JACK  
Hold on.

He crosses to a drawer, opens it, rummages.

Finds a SMALL FLASHLIGHT.

He switches it on and shines it down into the ornament.

He freezes.

JACK (CONT'D)  
There's something in here.

Emily straightens.

Lucy slides off her chair, steps closer.

LUCY  
Is it paper?

Jack nods slowly.

JACK  
Looks like it.

He tries to shake it loose.

Nothing moves.

He looks up at Emily.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Do you still have your eyebrow  
tweezers?

Emily blinks – then nods.

EMILY  
I think they're in the bathroom  
drawer.

She stands, moves quickly but without panic.

Lucy watches Jack, barely breathing.

Emily returns moments later and hands Jack the TWEEZERS.

Jack steadies the ornament.

Carefully inserts the tweezers.

Adjusts.

Misses.

Tries again.

Then – resistance.

He pulls gently.

A TIGHTLY FOLDED PAPER emerges inch by inch.

Emily covers her mouth without realizing she's done it.

Jack sets the ornament down.

Unfolds the paper carefully.

The handwriting is neat. Dense. Deliberate.

JACK  
It's Polish.

Emily leans closer.

EMILY  
Can you read it?

Jack shakes his head.

JACK  
Not really.

He scans the top line again.

JACK (CONT'D)  
But, that looks like a date.

He points.

JACK (CONT'D)  
18 November, 1939.

A silence drops over the table.

Lucy looks between them.

LUCY  
That was during the war, not long  
after the Germans invaded Poland.

Emily nods, barely.

Jack lays the paper flat on the table.

Doesn't touch it again.

He looks back into the box.

Selects another ornament.

We don't yet see what's inside.

But we know why he's checking.

COLOR

INT. OLSZA HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The kitchen table is now completely covered.

About TEN SMALL PIECES OF PAPER, each yellowed, each different in size and handwriting, laid out carefully.

The BOX OF ORNAMENTS sits empty on the floor.

JACK, EMILY, and LUCY stand over the table.

Tired. Wired.

Jack picks one up.

JACK

They all start with dates.

Emily notices the same.

EMILY

Different days.

Different handwriting pressures.

Lucy points.

LUCY

That one looks neater.

Like she was trying harder.

Jack nods.

JACK

Let's put them in order.

They begin arranging the papers.

Dates emerge.

August. September. October. November.

History organizing itself.

The clock on the wall reads 10:47 PM.

Lucy yawns - then catches herself.

LUCY

Can we read just one.

Emily glances at Jack.

Jack studies the papers again – the weight of unknown words.

JACK  
Not tonight.

Lucy's shoulders fall.

LUCY  
But we already found them.

Jack softens.

JACK  
I know.  
And that's exactly why we stop.

He gathers the papers carefully into a neat stack.

JACK (CONT'D)  
We don't know what's in these yet.  
We should read them when we're  
rested.

Lucy nods – disappointed, but thrilled.

Lucy heads to her bedroom.

EMILY  
We're deciding a lot for her.

JACK  
That's what parenting is.

EMILY  
Sometimes.

Jack doesn't argue further. But the line lands.

INT. OLSZA HOUSE - HALLWAY - LATER

Lights go out one by one.

The kitchen is left in darkness.

On the table, the stack of papers waits.

COLOR

INT. OLSZA HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Morning light fills the room.

A kettle whistles softly.

JACK and EMILY sit at the table with coffee.

The stack of papers remains between them.

Suddenly –

LUCY rushes in, still in pajamas.

LUCY  
Can we read one now?

Emily smiles.

EMILY  
Good morning to you too.

Lucy climbs into her chair.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
What do you want for breakfast?

Lucy doesn't hesitate.

LUCY  
Later.

Emily raises an eyebrow.

EMILY  
Later what?

Lucy leans forward, hands clasped.

LUCY  
Please, Mommy.  
Just one.  
Then I'll eat anything you want to  
make me.

Jack chuckles softly.

JACK  
Anything?

Lucy nods emphatically.

LUCY  
Anything.

Emily looks to Jack.

Concern flickers across her face – just briefly.

EMILY

One.

Lucy beams.

Jack reaches for his TABLET.

Opens a translation app.

He carefully places the FIRST PAPER on the table.

Smooths it flat.

Snaps a photo.

The tablet processes.

Jack reads aloud – slowly, deliberately.

JACK

16 August, 1939.

Today Papa said we must have new names and become Catholics.

Papa is Joseph Regulski.

Mama is Francis Regulski.

I am Anna Regulski.

He gave me a Bible to read.

I will start school next week.

I am not supposed to tell anyone.

Silence.

Lucy looks from the tablet to her parents.

LUCY

What does it mean, Daddy?

Jack exhales.

Shakes his head gently.

JACK

I don't know, honey.

He looks at Emily – then back to Lucy.

JACK (CONT'D)

Maybe we'll learn more as we keep reading.

These are messages from the past.

Lucy processes this.

Then—

LUCY  
Read the next one!

Emily stands.

EMILY  
We had a deal.

Lucy sighs – dramatic, but obedient.

LUCY  
Okay.

Emily moves to the stove.

Her back to them now.

Her shoulders tighten slightly.

Jack watches her.

The tablet remains on the table.

Breakfast cooks.

History waits.

INT. OLSZA HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING (CONTINUOUS)

Emily stands at the stove, eggs sizzling softly.

Jack sits at the table, tablet in hand.

Lucy watches him closely – barely blinking.

Jack hesitates over the stack of papers.

Emily doesn't turn around.

LUCY  
Just one more.

JACK  
Do you promise to eat your whole  
breakfast then?

LUCY  
I promise!

Jack nods.

He selects the SECOND PAPER.

Flatter. More worn.

He smooths it carefully, photographs it with the tablet.

The translator processes.

Jack reads.

JACK

19 August, 1939.

Today was my first day at the new school.

We prayed standing up. The words were not in Hebrew and not in Polish. They sounded like they were made of stones.

I moved my lips so Sister would not think I forgot how to pray. I did not forget.

The girls all knew when to sit down.

I sat last.

No one said anything, so I think that was all right.

Lucy leans closer.

LUCY

What's Latin?

Jack answers gently.

JACK

Another old language.

Like Hebrew.

But used by Catholics back then.

He continues reading.

JACK (CONT'D)

The teachers are women dressed all in black.

They wear long clothes and white pieces on their heads.

They are called nuns.

Lucy's eyes widen.

LUCY

Like in the movies?

Jack nods.

JACK

Kind of.

Emily flips an egg.

Her movements are precise.

Jack goes on.

JACK (CONT'D)

One of the girls asked me why I did not know the prayer.

I said I was sick and my throat hurt.

This was not true.

Lucy winces.

LUCY

Did she get in trouble?

Jack shakes his head.

JACK

Not that day.

He scrolls.

JACK (CONT'D)

Everyone has beads they hold when they pray.

I asked Mama what they are called.

She said rosary.

I asked if we have one.

She said not yet which means later.

Papa says learning fast is important.

I think this is because slow things get noticed.

JACK (CONT'D)

.

Jack stops reading.

Lucy looks up at him.

LUCY

What's a rosary?

Jack searches for words.

JACK

It's, a way of counting prayers.

Lucy considers this.

LUCY  
Like numbers?

JACK  
Like memory.

Emily turns from the stove now.

She dries her hands on a towel.

EMILY  
Keep going.

Jack scrolls again.

JACK  
Mama said we will learn.  
Papa says learning quickly is  
important.

Jack lowers the tablet.

The kitchen is quiet.

Breakfast smells fill the room.

Lucy looks thoughtful now – not excited.

LUCY  
She was pretending.

Emily nods.

EMILY  
She was surviving.

Lucy absorbs this.

LUCY  
Did she forget who she was?

Jack answers softly.

JACK  
No.  
She wrote it down so she wouldn't.

Emily looks at the stack of remaining papers.

There are many left.

EMILY  
Eat your breakfast, Lu.

Lucy sighs – but smiles.

LUCY  
Okay.  
But after, we read another one.

Emily meets Jack's eyes.

A look that says: We've opened something.

Jack nods.

The tablet rests on the table.

The past is no longer abstract.

It is a child learning new prayers, in a new language, while remembering the old ones silently.

DISSOLVE TO:

BLACK AND WHITE

INT. KITCHEN – MORNING

Isaac sets three cups on the table.

He adjusts one slightly.

Then again.

Then stops himself.

He leaves it imperfect.

Isaac moves to the sink and washes his hands.

Only then does he sit.

Isaac bows his head.

His lips part ready to begin.

Nothing comes.

A beat.

He starts again.

This time, the words come – practiced, automatic.

ISAAC  
Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu,  
Melech ha'olam, hamotzi lechem min  
ha'aretz.

*Subtitle: "Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth"*

He does not look relieved.

INT. ANNA'S BEDROOM – MORNING

RIVKA folds Sarah's sweater.

Smooths it.

Folds it again – tighter this time.

She unfolds it.

Folds it looser.

She exhales – annoyed at herself.

Leaves it.

EXT. PARISH SCHOOL – MORNING – AUGUST 1939

A solid stone building. Modest. Orderly.

A small CROWD OF CHILDREN gathers at the entrance, some with parents, some alone.

ANNA stands beside RIVKA, clutching a small satchel.

Anna wears a simple dress. Plain. Careful.

Rivka adjusts Anna's collar. Too carefully.

RIVKA  
Remember.

Anna nods.

ANNA  
I'm Anna Regulski.

Rivka forces a smile.

RIVKA

And?

ANNA

And I am Catholic.

Rivka kneels, eye to eye.

RIVKA

You don't volunteer anything else.

Anna nods again.

A BELL RINGS.

Children begin to file inside.

Rivka kisses Anna's forehead.

Anna hesitates, then turns and joins the line.

Rivka remains standing long after the doors close.

INT. PARISH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - MORNING

High ceilings. Stone floors.

Footsteps echo.

A NUN (50s), severe but not cruel, ushers the children forward.

NUN

Quietly. Hands to yourselves.

Anna watches everything.

The walls.

The crucifixes.

The unfamiliar order.

INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING

Wooden desks in neat rows.

A large CRUCIFIX at the front.

Two NUNS stand near the blackboard, habits crisp, faces composed.

Children shuffle to their seats.

Anna sits near the middle.

She smooths her dress.

Looks around.

Everyone else seems to know where to go.

A nun raises her hand.

Instant silence.

The children rise.

Anna rises a beat late.

Hands fold. Heads bow.

NUN (LATIN)

In nomine Patris, et Filii, et  
Spiritus Sancti.

CHILDREN

Amen.

NUN

Angelus Dei, qui custos es mei, me  
tibi commissum pietate superna,  
illumina, custodi, rege, et  
guberna.

CHILDREN

Amen.

Anna freezes.

She watches lips moving around her.

She moves her lips too.

No sound.

Her eyes flicker—checking if anyone notices.

No one does.

The prayer ends.

Children sit.

Anna sits last.

Her heart pounds.

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

Chalk scratches against the board.

Lessons proceed.

Reading. Numbers. Repetition.

Anna is bright and keeps up easily.

This part is familiar.

A GIRL beside her leans over.

GIRL  
You didn't know the prayer.

Anna stiffens.

ANNA  
I was sick.

GIRL  
You don't sound sick.

Anna swallows.

ANNA  
My throat.

The girl shrugs and accepts it.

The danger passes.

INT. CLASSROOM - MIDDAY

Children open small lunch bags.

Bread. Apples. Wrapped parcels.

Anna unwraps hers.

Simple food.

She eats carefully.

Across the room, a BOY holds a string of beads.

He fingers them absently.

Anna watches.

Curious.

She leans toward the girl again.

ANNA  
What are those?

GIRL  
His rosary.

ANNA  
What is it for?

The girl looks at her confused.

GIRL  
Praying.

Anna nods as if she understands.

She does not ask more.

EXT. PARISH SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Children spill out.

Parents wait.

Rivka spots Anna immediately.

Relief floods her face.

Anna runs to her.

RIVKA  
How was it?

Anna considers.

ANNA  
Different.

Rivka nods.

They walk home.

INT. REGULSKI HOUSE - EVENING

Dinner is quiet.

Isaac watches Anna closely.

ISAAC  
Did anyone ask questions?

Anna shakes her head.

ANNA  
Just about prayers.

Isaac stiffens slightly.

ISAAC  
And?

ANNA  
I moved my lips.

Isaac exhales.

Rivka reaches for Anna's hand.

INT. ANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Anna sits at her desk.

Notebook open.

She writes carefully.

Her pencil presses hard.

She pauses and listens to the house.

Writes more.

Closes the notebook.

She looks at the Bible on her nightstand.

She touches it, but does not open it.

She lies down.

She stares at the ceiling.

INT. PARISH SCHOOL - SECOND DAY - MORNING

The same prayer.

Anna stands sooner this time.

Moves her lips with more confidence.

She watches the rhythm.

Learns the pattern.

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

A nun passes out small BOOKLETS.

NUN  
For catechism.

Anna takes one.

The cover reads: Catechismus.

She traces the letters with her finger.

INT. CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

A nun notices Anna watching the rosary again.

NUN  
You don't have one?

Anna hesitates.

ANNA  
Not yet, Sister.

The nun nods.

NUN  
You will.

Not a threat.

A certainty.

INT. REGULSKI HOUSE - NIGHT

Rivka stands at the sink.

Anna approaches.

ANNA  
Mama? What is a rosary?

Rivka stills.

She turns slowly.

RIVKA  
It's a way of praying.

ANNA  
Do we have one?

Rivka shakes her head.

RIVKA  
Not yet.

She dries her hands.

Kneels.

RIVKA (CONT'D)  
We will learn.

Anna nods.

INT. ANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Anna writes again.

Careful. Exact.

She stops.

Adds a line.

Closes the notebook.

Hides it beneath folded clothes.

INT. PARISH SCHOOL - THIRD DAY - MORNING

Prayer again.

Anna knows when to stand.

When to bow.

She is almost convincing now.

Almost.

INT. CLASSROOM - END OF DAY

Children laugh.

Trade pencils.

Normal.

Anna smiles—just enough.

EXT. PARISH SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Rivka waits.

Anna exits.

She looks older than she did three days ago.

Rivka notices.

They walk home together.

INT. REGULSKI HOUSE - EVENING

Isaac sits with papers.

Anna passes him.

Pauses.

ANNA  
Papa?

ISAAC  
Yes?

ANNA  
If I say the prayers out loud, does  
that mean I forget the others?

Isaac looks at her.

He chooses his words.

ISAAC  
No.

He kneels.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
It means you remember them  
silently.

Anna nods.

Satisfied.

She goes upstairs.

Isaac remains kneeling for a moment longer than necessary.

DISSOLVE TO:

COLOR

INT. OLSZA HOUSE - LUCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lucy is in bed, blankets pulled to her chin.

The room is dim, lit by a small bedside lamp.

JACK stands at the doorway, ready to turn off the light.

LUCY

Daddy?

Jack turns back.

JACK

Yeah, Lu.

Lucy hesitates – choosing her words.

LUCY

Can you read me one more message?  
So I can think about it before I go  
to sleep.

Jack studies her face.

This isn't stalling.

This is processing.

JACK

One.

Lucy smiles – grateful.

Jack sits on the edge of the bed.

Retrieves his TABLET from the nightstand.

He selects the next folded paper from the stack beside him.

Carefully smooths it.

Snaps a photo.

The tablet processes.

Jack reads softly, slower than before.

JACK (CONT'D)

2 September, 1939.

Papa says the Hitlerites are coming soon.

Mama gave me a necklace with a cross. She said to wear it all the time, even when sleeping.

Papa says the cross will help. I think it helps people see us faster.

School is closed today.

I liked that until Mama did not like it.

Silence settles in the room.

Lucy stares at the ceiling.

LUCY

They were scared.

Jack nods.

JACK

Yes.

Lucy turns her head slightly.

LUCY

Did the crosses help?

Jack thinks before answering.

JACK

Yes, they helped. Very much so.

Lucy absorbs this.

She shifts under the covers.

Then her eyes move.

Upward.

Just above her bed.

Mounted on the wall – simple, unobtrusive – a WOODEN CROSS.

It's been there since they bought the house.

Lucy hadn't questioned it.

Until now.

LUCY  
Daddy...

Jack follows her gaze.

Sees it.

A beat passes.

LUCY (CONT'D)  
That was already here.

Jack nods slowly.

JACK  
Yes it was.

LUCY  
Do we have one of those at home?

JACK  
No.

LUCY  
Why not?

JACK  
We never needed one.

Lucy studies the cross.

LUCY  
Do you think that was Anna's?

Jack doesn't answer right away.

He reaches up and gently turns off the lamp.

The room darkens, leaving only the outline of the cross faintly visible.

JACK  
I think, someone wanted whoever  
slept here to be safe.

Lucy turns onto her side.

Pulls the blanket closer.

LUCY  
Can we read another one tomorrow?

Jack smiles in the dark.

JACK  
First thing.

Lucy nods – already drifting.

Jack stands quietly.

Looks once more at the cross above the bed.

Then at his daughter.

He steps out.

INT. HALLWAY – CONTINUOUS

Jack closes the door softly.

The house settles.

The past has crossed another threshold.

DISSOLVE TO:

BLACK AND WHITE

INT. REGULSKI HOUSE – EARLY MORNING – SEPTEMBER 1939

Muted light filters through lace curtains.

The house is awake before it wants to be.

ISAAC sits at the small kitchen table, fully dressed, coat on.

A radio sits in front of him.

It is ON.

We do not hear the broadcast clearly—only tone.

Urgent. Formal. Repeating.

Isaac does not move.

CLOSE ON: RADIO DIAL

A hand tightens on it.

Isaac turns the volume down.

Not off.

Never off.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

RIVKA is awake, seated on the edge of the bed.

She has already dressed.

She ties a scarf around her hair.

Reties it.

Ties it again.

She hears the radio through the wall.

She closes her eyes.

INT. ANNA'S BEDROOM - SAME

ANNA lies in bed, eyes open.

She is already wearing her school dress.

Shoes placed neatly beneath the bed.

She waits.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Rivka enters.

Isaac looks up.

They do not greet one another.

He turns the radio slightly so she can hear.

A pause.

Rivka understands.

RIVKA  
Poland?

Isaac nods.

ISAAC  
This morning.

Rivka sits.

She folds her hands tightly in her lap.

RIVKA  
Are they saying where?

Isaac shakes his head.

ISAAC  
Everywhere.

The word lands heavily.

Silence.

INT. FRONT HALL - SHORTLY AFTER

Isaac stands on a chair.

In his hand: a WOODEN CROSS, newly purchased, plain.

Rivka watches from below.

Isaac holds the cross up to the wall above the doorway.

He hesitates.

Looks at Rivka.

She nods once.

Isaac drives the nail in.

The sound echoes too loudly.

He hangs the cross.

Steps down.

They both stare at it.

It looks permanent.

INT. ANNA'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Anna sits on her bed.

Isaac enters carrying another CROSS.

Smaller.

He holds it up.

ISAAC  
We're putting one here.

Anna nods.

ANNA  
Like in school.

Isaac forces a smile.

ISAAC  
Yes.  
Just like in school.

He nails it into the wall above her bed.

The hammer shakes slightly.

Anna watches.

ANNA  
Is it because of the Hitlerites?

Isaac stops.

Turns to her.

ISAAC  
Yes.

He sits beside her.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
They have crossed the border.  
They are coming quickly.

Anna absorbs this.

ANNA  
Will they come here?

Isaac doesn't answer immediately.

ISAAC

Yes. Soon. We must be prepared.

Anna swallows.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rivka enters holding two CROSS NECKLACES.

She places one around Anna's neck.

Adjusts it.

Her hands linger.

RIVKA

You must wear this at all times.

Anna nods.

Rivka places the second necklace around her own neck.

She does not look at Isaac while doing so.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

A small pile on the table:

- Two ROSARIES
- A folded parish pamphlet
- A prayer card

Isaac stands over them.

ISAAC

We have to learn these prayers.  
All of them.

Anna picks up the rosary.

Runs the beads through her fingers.

ANNA

How long do they take?

Isaac considers.

ISAAC

As long as they take.

Rivka places her hand over Anna's.

RIVKA  
We will practice tonight.

Anna nods obediently.

INT. FRONT HALL - MID-MORNING

Anna puts on her coat.

Ties her shoes.

She moves with routine.

Prepared.

She picks up her school bag.

Rivka watches.

RIVKA  
Anna...

Anna looks up.

RIVKA (CONT'D)  
There will be no school today.

Anna freezes.

ANNA  
But it's a school day.

Rivka kneels.

RIVKA  
The school is closed.

ANNA  
Because of the invasion?

Rivka nods.

RIVKA  
Yes.

Anna processes this slowly.

ANNA  
Tomorrow?

Rivka hesitates.

RIVKA  
We don't know yet.

Anna looks at her bag.

ANNA  
Should I still practice the  
prayers?

Rivka smiles sadly.

RIVKA  
Yes.  
Just think, when school reopens,  
you will know them well just like  
all your classmates.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATE MORNING

Isaac stands at the window.

Watches the street.

People move quickly.

Too quickly.

A neighbor crosses himself before entering his building.

Isaac notices.

He steps back from the window.

INT. KITCHEN - NOON

Rivka sets food on the table.

No one eats.

The radio is on again.

Louder now.

Isaac listens intently.

Anna watches his face.

ANNA  
Papa?

ISAAC  
Yes?

ANNA  
Are we still Catholics?

Isaac kneels in front of her.  
Places his hands on her shoulders.

ISAAC  
Yes. That will keep us alive.

Anna nods.  
Satisfied.

INT. ANNA'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Anna sits on her bed.  
The cross above her casts a faint shadow.  
She fingers the rosary.  
Whispers along with Rivka, who sits beside her.  
Latin words.  
Carefully repeated.  
Still unfamiliar.  
Down the hall, Isaac listens.  
The house has become a place of instruction.

INT. FRONT HALL - EVENING

Isaac stands beneath the cross above the door.  
He reaches up.  
Touches it.  
Hesitates.  
Lets his hand fall.  
The radio speaks again.  
The invasion is no longer rumor.  
It is fact.

INT. ANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Anna lies in bed.

The cross hangs above her.

The rosary rests on the nightstand.

She looks at both.

She closes her eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

COLOR

INT. OLSZA HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Morning light filters through the window.

JACK and EMILY sit at the table with coffee.

Quiet. Thoughtful.

Footsteps.

LUCY enters, still in pajamas.

Her eyes are red.

She has clearly been crying.

Emily notices immediately.

EMILY  
Hey, what's wrong?

Lucy climbs onto her chair slowly.

She doesn't answer right away.

LUCY  
I'm scared.

Emily reaches for her hand.

EMILY  
Of what?

Lucy swallows.

LUCY  
I think something bad happened to  
Anna.  
And I'm scared something bad could  
happen to us.

Emily looks up at Jack.

Jack hesitates, then speaks.

JACK  
I read her another note last night.  
Before bed.

Emily's expression hardens.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Anna wrote that the Germans had  
invaded Poland.

Emily exhales sharply.

EMILY  
Jack... You shouldn't have done  
that.

The look is not angry - it's protective.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
We talked about this.

JACK  
She asked.

EMILY  
So did Anna.

Lucy looks between them.

LUCY  
No - don't stop.

Emily turns back to Lucy.

EMILY  
We're not stopping.

Lucy nods quickly.

LUCY  
I just, I don't want Anna to be  
alone in my head.

Emily softens.

She considers.

EMILY  
Your father and I need to talk  
about how we do this.  
Okay?

Lucy nods – reluctantly.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
But right now, let's take your mind  
off things.

Lucy looks up.

LUCY  
How?

Emily smiles.

EMILY  
Let's go for a walk.  
Into town.

Lucy thinks.

Then nods.

EXT. OLSZA NEIGHBORHOOD / STREETS - DAY

A gentle walking montage.

The family moves through OLSZA together.

– Lucy presses her face to a bakery window

– Jack buys pastries they don't need

– Emily laughs, surprised at herself

They wander.

EXT. SMALL MARKET - DAY

Lucy samples fruit from a vendor.

Jack pretends to bargain badly.

Emily shakes her head, smiling.

EXT. ICE CREAM STAND - DAY

Lucy struggles to keep her scoop from melting.

It melts anyway.

She laughs.

Emily wipes her hands with a napkin.

Jack takes a photo on his phone - instinctively,  
protectively.

EXT. PARK BENCH - LATE AFTERNOON

Lucy leans against Emily.

Content now.

Jack watches them.

The world feels intact.

For the moment.

INT. OLSZA HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

The family enters, tired but lighter.

Lucy drops her shoes by the door.

She pauses.

Turns back to her parents.

LUCY  
I feel better now.

Emily smiles.

EMILY  
Good.

Lucy hesitates.

LUCY  
I hope Anna had days like that  
sometimes.  
Days where she forgot to be scared.

Emily looks at Jack.

Jack nods slightly.

Lucy takes a breath.

LUCY (CONT'D)  
Can we read another note?

Emily sits.

This time, she is deliberate.

EMILY  
Here's how this is going to work.

Lucy listens carefully.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
Your father and I will read the  
notes first.  
Every time.

Lucy's face falls – just a little.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
And we'll decide together if it's  
something you should hear.

Lucy considers this.

LUCY  
What if it's sad?

Emily meets her eyes.

EMILY  
Then we'll make sure you're not  
alone with it.

Lucy nods.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
And no more notes before bedtime.

Lucy looks at Jack.

Jack nods – firm but gentle.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
If we need to talk about them as a  
family, we do it during the day.

A beat.

Lucy exhales.

LUCY

Okay.

Emily smiles.

EMILY

Deal?

Lucy nods.

LUCY

Deal.

Jack reaches for Lucy's hand.

They sit together.

The stack of notes remains on the table.

Waiting.

But no longer in control.

DISSOLVE TO:

BLACK AND WHITE

EXT. OLSZA STREET - MORNING - AUTUMN 1939

The same street.

But quieter now.

Windows shuttered.

Signs partially removed.

A German NOTICE posted on a lamppost.

RIVKA and ANNA walk side by side.

Anna holds Rivka's hand tightly.

EXT. BAKERY WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

The same bakery.

The display is thinner, nearly empty.

Fewer loaves.

No pastries.

Anna stops.

Peers through the glass.

ANNA  
Mama...?

Rivka follows her gaze.

A SMALL SIGN is taped to the window.

"Nur für Deutsche."

Rivka places her hand gently on Anna's shoulder.

RIVKA  
Not today.

Anna nods.

They move on.

EXT. STREET CORNER / MARKET AREA - DAY

The market still exists.

But stalls are fewer.

A GERMAN SOLDIER stands nearby, rifle slung casually.

A VENDOR weighs apples.

Rivka approaches cautiously.

VENDOR  
One kilo.

Rivka hands over coins.

The vendor hesitates.

Glances toward the soldier.

Removes one apple from the scale.

Hands the rest to Rivka.

Rivka does not protest.

She takes the bag.

Anna notices the missing apple.

Says nothing.

EXT. MARKET - CONTINUOUS

Anna watches another CHILD lick sugar from her fingers.

Laughing.

German language.

Anna looks down at her shoes.

Rivka shifts position—blocking Anna slightly from view.

The soldier's eyes linger.

Then move on.

EXT. ICE CREAM STAND - LATE MORNING

The stand is still there.

Closed.

A CHAIN looped across the front.

A sign hangs crooked:

"Closed until further notice."

Anna stops.

Looks up at Rivka.

ANNA  
Is it broken?

Rivka kneels.

Straightens Anna's coat.

RIVKA  
No.

She stands.

RIVKA (CONT'D)  
Just... not for now.

They walk past.

EXT. PARK BENCH - DAY

The same park.

Leaves fall.

A BENCH.

Empty.

Rivka and Anna sit.

For a moment, they rest.

Anna swings her legs slightly.

She smiles, briefly.

Then -

A GERMAN VOICE offscreen.

Rivka stiffens.

Two SOLDIERS cross the park.

Laughing.

Rivka rises immediately.

RIVKA

Come.

Anna looks confused.

ANNA

But we just...

Rivka takes her hand.

Firm.

They leave the bench behind.

EXT. STREET NEAR PARISH SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

The school.

Closed.

Doors locked.

A NOTICE posted.

Anna reads it silently.

ANNA  
Will it open tomorrow?

Rivka does not answer.

They stand there a moment longer.

Then turn and walk away.

A NEIGHBOR passes.

Avoids eye contact.

Another neighbor crosses herself as she passes Rivka.

Anna notices.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
Mama...?

Rivka squeezes her hand.

RIVKA  
Keep walking.

INT. REGULSKI HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

Sparse food on the table.

Rivka peels the apples.

Thin.

Careful.

Anna watches.

ANNA  
Did I do something wrong today?

Rivka stops.

RIVKA  
No.

ANNA  
Then why -

Rivka kneels.

RIVKA  
The city has changed.

Anna considers this.

ANNA  
Will it change back?

Rivka does not answer.

She resumes peeling.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Anna sits on her bed.

The CROSS above her.

The ROSARY on the nightstand.

She fingers the beads.

Counts silently.

She stops.

Looks toward the window.

Outside - boots on pavement.

Voices in German.

Anna lies down.

Pulls the blanket tight.

EXT. SAME STREET - NIGHT

The street again.

Curfew quiet.

Lights out.

A TRUCK passes slowly.

German markings.

This is the same street Lucy walked laughing.

INT. REGULSKI HOUSE - NIGHT

Rivka stands at the window.

Curtain drawn back just enough to see.

She watches the truck disappear.

She closes the curtain.

Leans her forehead against the glass.

Listens.

INT. ANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Anna whispers softly.

Latin words.

Careful.

Practiced.

ANNA

Pater noster, qui es in caelis,  
sanctificetur nomen tuum.  
Adveniat regnum tuum.  
Fiat voluntas tua, sicut in caelo  
et in terra.  
Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis  
hodie,  
et dimitte nobis debita nostra,  
sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus  
nostris.  
Et ne nos inducas in tentationem,  
sed libera nos a malo.  
Amen.

She finishes, crosses herself, and stares at the cross.

ANNA (CONT'D)

(whisper)

Please let us stay.

No answer.

EXT. PARK BENCH - DAWN (NEXT DAY)

The bench again.

Empty.

Leaves undisturbed.

The park waits.

DISSOLVE TO:

COLOR

INT. OLSZA HOUSE - KITCHEN - MIDDAY

Lunch is underway.

Sandwiches. Soup. Ordinary food.

JACK, EMILY, and LUCY sit together at the table.

The stack of papers is nearby, but no longer centered.

They've tried to normalize the space again.

Lucy eats quietly for a moment.

Then -

LUCY

Can we read another note?

Jack and Emily exchange a glance.

EMILY

Lucy, it's been a while.

LUCY

It's been more than a week.

Jack sets his fork down.

JACK

We were kind of hoping you'd forgotten about them.

Lucy looks genuinely surprised.

LUCY

Why would I forget?

Emily sighs softly.

She looks at Jack.

Jack nods.

JACK

Okay.

One more.

Lucy smiles, but stays still.

She's learned restraint.

Jack retrieves his TABLET.

Selects the next folded paper.

Smooths it.

Snaps a photo.

Before reading aloud, he holds the tablet slightly away from Lucy so only he and Emily can see.

They read silently.

Jack looks up.

Emily meets his eyes.

A long beat.

Emily nods once.

Jack turns the tablet toward himself again.

JACK (CONT'D)

22 November, 1939.

Today Papa brought home ornaments.  
He said we will put them on a  
Christmas tree.

My school is still closed, but we  
go to church on Sundays for the  
prayers.

We have all learned the rosary and  
how to cross ourselves.

Many more shops have closed, and we  
can no longer go to the park.

Everywhere there are men in  
uniforms with guns.

We must not look at them when we go  
to the shops.

Papa says if we stay good  
Catholics, we will be happy again  
one day."

Silence settles over the table.

Lucy chews slowly.

Thinking.

Then -

LUCY  
Why does being Catholic make them  
happy?

Jack looks to Emily.

Emily takes a breath.

EMILY  
That was a long time ago.

Lucy waits.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
Things were very different then.  
The soldiers didn't bother  
Catholics the way they bothered  
Jews.

Lucy frowns.

LUCY  
Why?

Emily pauses.

This is the line.

She chooses it carefully.

EMILY  
That's a big story.

Lucy leans forward slightly.

LUCY  
I can listen.

Emily smiles - sad, loving.

EMILY  
I know you can.  
But some parts of it... you're  
still a little young for.

Lucy considers this.

She nods, not fully satisfied, but trusting.

LUCY  
Will you tell me someday?

Emily reaches across the table and squeezes her hand.

EMILY  
Yes.  
I promise.

Lucy looks back at the stack of papers.

LUCY  
Anna didn't know yet either.

Emily freezes - just for a second.

Jack notices.

EMILY  
No.  
She didn't.

Lucy resumes eating.

The adults do not.

The house holds the silence.

INT. OLSZA HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Lucy is at the counter, coloring.

The house is calm again.

JACK and EMILY sit at the table with coffee.

Between them: the remaining stack of folded notes.

Lucy hums softly to herself.

Emily watches her for a moment.

Then -

EMILY  
Lucy, honey... would you mind going  
upstairs and washing your hands?

Lucy looks up.

LUCY  
Why?

Emily smiles gently.

EMILY  
Dinner's almost ready.

Lucy considers this.

LUCY  
Can I pick the plates after?

EMILY  
Of course.

Lucy hops down and heads upstairs.

Her footsteps fade.

The house settles.

Emily exhales.

She looks at Jack.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
Let's read one.

Jack nods.

He selects the next note.

Smooths it.

Takes out his tablet.

Snaps a photo.

The translator processes.

He hands the tablet to Emily.

Emily finishes reading.

Jack waits for her reaction.

She sets the tablet down.

Looks anywhere but at him.

Jack nods – understanding something unspoken.

She hands the tablet back to Jack.

EMILY (CONT'D)  
Read it.

Jack nods.

Reads aloud - quietly.

JACK (READING)

5 December, 1939.

Papa did not come home today.  
Mama says he was taken to answer  
questions. She says he will come  
back, but she said it to the table,  
not to me.

I practiced my prayers and did not  
forget the old ones.

Mama told me to pack a small bag.

I asked where we are going.

She said soon, which I think means  
before dark.

Silence.

The tablet rests on the table.

Emily stares at it.

EMILY

She wrote that like a weather  
report.

Jack nods.

JACK

Children do that.  
They make it manageable.

Emily swallows.

EMILY

Lucy can't hear this.

Jack doesn't hesitate.

JACK

No.

Emily looks toward the staircase.

Lucy's voice can be heard faintly, singing to herself.

EMILY

If we keep going, this doesn't get  
easier.

JACK

No.  
But it gets clearer.

Emily folds the note carefully.

Places it at the bottom of the stack.

EMILY

This one stays with us.

Jack nods.

JACK

For now.

Emily presses her fingers flat on the table.

EMILY

My grandmother never talked about  
Kraków.

Jack looks at her.

JACK

Maybe this is why.

Emily nods once.

Upstairs, a toilet flushes.

Footsteps begin again.

Emily straightens.

Jack slides the tablet away.

Lucy reenters the kitchen, rubbing her hands dry on her  
pajamas.

LUCY

Can we read another one now?

Emily smiles.

EMILY

Not today.

Lucy pouts – briefly.

LUCY

Tomorrow?

Emily kneels so they are eye to eye.

EMILY  
Tomorrow we'll read one together.  
I promise.

Lucy studies her face.

Satisfied.

LUCY  
Okay.

Lucy returns to her coloring.

Emily and Jack exchange a look.

Jack gets up and starts the dishwasher.

Stops it.

Starts it again.

Watches it run.

Emily notices.

Says nothing.

The audience knows what Lucy does not.

The story has crossed a line.

INT. OLSZA HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Lucy bounds into the kitchen, energized, hopeful.

LUCY  
I'm ready!

Jack looks up from his coffee.

JACK  
For what?

Lucy grins.

LUCY  
The next note.

Emily and Jack exchange a look.

This time it's not hesitation, it's habit.

Emily gestures to the chair.

EMILY

Sit first.

Lucy obeys instantly.

Jack reaches for the next folded paper.

Smooths it.

Takes out his tablet.

Snaps a photo.

He angles the tablet slightly away from Lucy so only he and Emily can see.

They read silently.

Emily's expression softens, then tightens.

She nods.

Jack turns the tablet back toward himself.

JACK

1 January, 1940.

School will start again next week.

It will be good to go back.

For the first time, we had Christmas and a real Christmas tree.

Mama and Papa gave me presents. I like Christmas.

Yesterday I saw my friend Sarah from our old neighborhood.

I told her we live here now.

Papa seemed sad after I told him and said we must not talk to our old friends.

He went outside for a long time.

Mama took me into the kitchen and taught me how to make pierogi.

It took a long time. We ate them for dinner when Papa finally got home.

Lucy listens intently.

This one is gentler.

She smiles.

LUCY

She liked Christmas.

Emily nods.

EMILY

Yes.

Lucy tilts her head.

LUCY

What's pierogi?

Emily smiles for the first time in the scene.

EMILY

They're like dumplings.

Lucy's eyes widen.

LUCY

Dumplings?

EMILY

With potatoes.  
Sometimes cheese.

Lucy thinks about this.

Then -

LUCY

Can you teach me how to make them?

Emily looks at Jack.

Jack smiles.

JACK

Sounds like a good dinner plan.

Lucy claps once, contained joy.

LUCY

Tonight?

Emily nods.

EMILY

Tonight.

Lucy hops off the chair and heads for the fridge, already imagining.

Jack watches her, then looks back at the tablet.

JACK  
He went outside for a long time.

Emily nods quietly.

EMILY  
He knew what that meant.

Jack folds the note carefully.

Places it back in the stack.

Lucy returns, holding a juice box.

LUCY  
I hope Anna liked making pierogi  
with her mama.

Emily kneels beside her.

EMILY  
I'm sure she did. Just like you'll  
like making them with me.

Lucy smiles.

LUCY  
I think she liked when things felt  
normal.

Emily doesn't answer right away.

Then -

EMILY  
So do I.

Lucy sips her juice.

The kitchen fills with ordinary sound again.

But the note lingers, a holiday remembered, a friendship  
quietly severed, a father outside doing what he must do.

DISSOLVE TO:

BLACK AND WHITE

EXT. REGULSKI HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON - 1940

The street is quiet.

Too quiet.

ANNA stands at the front window.

Her face lights up.

She sees someone.

She opens the door before Rivka can stop her.

EXT. REGULSKI HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

SARAH (8) stands across the street.

Thinner than before.

Eyes darting.

Anna runs to her.

ANNA

Sarah!

Sarah startles - then forces a smile.

SARAH

Anna...

Anna grabs her hands.

ANNA

We live here now.

She points proudly to the house.

ANNA (CONT'D)

We're Catholics now.

Sarah's smile flickers.

She says nothing.

Anna chatters.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I go to church.

I know the Catholic prayers.

Sarah reaches into her coat pocket.

Pulls out a SMALL NOTEBOOK and PENCIL.

She writes.

Quickly.

Deliberately.

Anna doesn't notice.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
You should come see my room...

Sarah closes the notebook.

Slips it back into her pocket.

SARAH  
I have to go.

She turns.

Anna watches her leave - confused, but still smiling.

INT. REGULSKI HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Anna bursts inside.

ANNA  
Mama!  
Papa!  
I saw Sarah!

ISAAC freezes.

The color drains from his face.

ISAAC  
Where?

ANNA  
Outside.  
I told her we live here now.

Isaac's breath catches.

ISAAC  
Did she write anything down?

Anna hesitates.

ANNA  
She had a notebook.

Rivka covers her mouth.

Isaac does not hesitate.

He grabs his coat.

ISAAC  
You must never speak to your old  
friends.  
Never.

Anna nods, frightened now.

Isaac is already at the door.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Isaac moves fast.

Controlled.

He spots Sarah halfway down the block.

ISAAC  
Sarah.

She stops.

Turns slowly.

He approaches.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Give me the notebook.

Sarah hesitates.

Her eyes fill.

She pulls it out.

Hands it to him.

Her head drops.

She knows.

Isaac opens it.

We DO NOT SEE WHAT IS WRITTEN.

We see only his face.

It collapses inward.

He closes the notebook.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
Come with me.

Sarah obeys.

EXT. REGULSKI HOUSE - BACK YARD - DUSK

They enter through the back gate.

The yard is enclosed.

Quiet.

Isaac stops.

Sarah stands behind him.

SARAH  
I didn't want to.

Isaac does not turn.

ISAAC  
I know.

A long silence.

The wind moves the trees.

Isaac closes his eyes.

WE DO NOT SEE THE ACT.

A window.

A curtain stirs.

Sound fades.

No struggle shown.

No violence depicted.

Only time passing.

EXT. BACK YARD - LATER

Isaac stands alone.

Shaking.

He retrieves a SHOVEL from the garage.  
Begins digging.  
The earth resists.  
He digs anyway.  
Each movement mechanical.  
Unforgiving.

INT. ANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Anna sits on her bed.  
The cross above her.  
She listens.  
The sound of digging faintly carries through the wall.  
She hugs her knees.

ANNA  
(whisper)  
Papa...?

No answer.

EXT. BACK YARD - NIGHT

The hole is finished.  
Isaac stands over it.  
The shovel leans nearby.  
He looks toward the house.  
Toward Anna's window.  
He wipes his hands on his coat.  
Once.  
Twice.  
Then he sinks to his knees.

INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

Isaac stands alone.

Isaac's hands are raised slightly, as if unsure what to do with them now.

He lowers them.

Looks at his palms.

They are steady.

They are clean.

He goes to wash them anyway.

The water runs.

He scrubs.

Harder.

Longer.

He stops.

Stares at his hands.

They are still clean.

He turns the water off.

Does not dry them.

Lets them drip.

That realization lands harder than shock.

He waits for something to happen - shaking, collapse, prayer.

Nothing comes.

Isaac turns toward the wall.

On it: a faint shadow where a religious object once hung.

He reaches for his chest - instinctively - where his prayer book should be.

It isn't there.

He lets his hand fall.

For the first time, Isaac does not pray.

He does not cry.

He simply understands:

This is a man who crossed a line and will never return to the person who stood on the other side.

He steps back - not in fear, but in recognition.

INT. KITCHEN - PRE-DAWN

Rivka sits rigidly at the table.

She has not moved.

Isaac enters.

She does not look at him.

Between them, on the table: a rosary.

It is placed carefully. Deliberately.

Isaac stares at it.

Rivka finally speaks - quietly, without accusation.

RIVKA

You should say something.

Isaac opens his mouth.

Nothing comes.

He looks at the object again.

Then - slowly - he pushes it away.

Not violently.

Not angrily.

As if it no longer belongs to him.

Rivka watches this.

The smallest fracture crosses her face - not horror, not rage.

Recognition.

RIVKA (CONT'D)

Then don't.

She stands.

Picks up the rosary.

Holds it a moment.

Then puts it away, somewhere Isaac cannot see.

She exits.

Isaac remains seated.

A man alive - and spiritually exiled.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Isaac sits at the table.

Hands folded.

Rivka enters.

Their eyes meet.

She knows.

He nods once.

Rivka closes her eyes.

A single tear falls.

RIVKA

Survival doesn't mean you stay  
whole.

It just means you stay.

INT. ANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Anna lies awake.

The cross looms above her.

She clutches her rosary.

Her lips move.

Silent.

She does not finish the prayer.

She turns her face to the wall.

INT. ANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1940 - LATER

Anna sits on her bed, knees drawn up.

The cross above her casts a long shadow.

She hears footsteps in the hall.

The door opens.

ISAAC enters quietly.

He closes the door behind him.

He does not speak at first.

He sits beside her on the bed.

Places his hand gently on her back.

Anna stiffens—then relaxes.

ISAAC  
I heard you moving.

Anna nods.

She does not look at him.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
You don't have to be afraid  
tonight.

Anna finally turns her head.

ANNA  
I am not afraid.

Isaac studies her.

He knows this is not true.

He reaches over and tucks the blanket around her shoulders.

His eyes drift to the desk.

The NOTEBOOK lies there.

Open.

He notices the broken pencil.

ISAAC  
Were you writing?

Anna nods.

A pause.

ANNA  
I didn't mean to.

Isaac reaches for the notebook.

Anna watches him carefully, but does not stop him.

He picks it up.

Glances at the page.

His face changes.

Not shock.

Recognition.

He closes the notebook.

ISAAC  
Try to sleep.

Anna hesitates.

ANNA  
Papa... am I still good?

Isaac answers immediately.

ISAAC  
Yes.

He leans down and kisses her forehead.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
You have always been good.

Anna nods.

Turns onto her side.

Isaac waits until her breathing slows.

Then he stands.

Takes the notebook with him.

INT. REGULSKI HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The house is quiet.

RIVKA sits at the table, hands folded.

Isaac enters.

He places the notebook on the table between them.

Rivka looks at it.

Then at him.

RIVKA  
She wrote again.

Isaac nods.

He opens the notebook.

Reads.

Rivka watches his face as he turns pages.

She does not need to read the words.

She knows.

Isaac closes the notebook.

ISAAC  
We can't leave this here.

Rivka inhales sharply.

Isaac meets her eyes.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
We must leave soon.

Rivka nods.

RIVKA  
Where?

Isaac shakes his head.

ISAAC  
Somewhere that doesn't know us yet.  
Further away.

A silence.

Isaac opens the notebook again.

He opens it to the first blank page and begins writing.

When he is finished writing, he slowly tears out the written pages.

One by one.

The sound is loud in the quiet kitchen.

Rivka closes her eyes.

Isaac folds the pages carefully.

Not hiding.

Preserving.

He looks around.

His gaze lands on the CARDBOARD BOX beneath the counter.

The box of CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS.

He crouches.

Opens it.

The ornaments catch the light.

Fragile.

Hollow.

Isaac picks one up.

Turns it in his hand.

Removes the small metal cap.

He unfolds one page.

Rolls it tightly.

Slides it inside the ornament.

Replaces the cap.

He looks at Rivka.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
If we're searched...

RIVKA  
They won't look there.

Isaac nods.

He continues.

One page per ornament.

Methodical.

Reverent.

Rivka helps now.

She hands him ornaments.

Watches the pages disappear.

Rivka rises.

RIVKA (CONT'D)  
Wait, there is one other.

She walks to the bedroom, then returns with the klaf.

She kisses it, and hands it to Isaac.

Isaac kisses it, then slides it into an ornament.

RIVKA (CONT'D)  
What about the rest of the  
notebook?

Isaac holds it.

Considers.

ISAAC  
We take it.

Rivka nods.

Isaac closes the box.

Ties the twine.

He places his hand on it.

ISAAC (CONT'D)  
One day, someone might find these.

Rivka swallows.

RIVKA  
Will it be safe for them to know?

Isaac thinks.

ISAAC  
It will be necessary.

They sit in silence.

Upstairs, Anna sleeps.

Downstairs, memory is dismantled. Not destroyed, just hidden.

INT. ANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Isaac returns.

He looks at Anna sleeping.

Isaac looks once more at the cross above her bed.

Then he turns off the light.

EXT. STREET / WINDOW VIEW - DAWN

Morning arrives.

The world continues.

Isaac stands at a window, watching people move outside – ordinary, unaware.

Behind him: the house is quiet.

Too quiet.

Outside, church bells begin to ring.

They are distant. Routine.

Isaac does not react.

The bells continue without him.

After a long beat, Isaac speaks – not to God, not to anyone.

ISAAC  
(quiet)  
We lived.

The words hang there - unfinished.

He does not say "so that others could."

He does not say "it was worth it."

Because it wasn't.

The bells fade.

Isaac remains - alive, unmourned, unforgiven.

DISSOLVE TO:

COLOR

INT. OLSZA HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

The table is almost bare now.

Only one folded note remains.

It sits apart from the others.

The paper is thicker.

The handwriting is different - steadier, older.

JACK, EMILY, and LUCY sit together.

No one rushes.

Jack picks up the final note.

He and Emily exchange a look.

As before, Jack lifts the tablet and snaps a photo.

He angles it away from Lucy.

Jack and Emily read silently.

Emily's breath catches.

She nods.

Jack lowers the tablet.

He reads aloud.

JACK (READING)

3 January, 1940.

It is time to leave here.

Things have become too difficult.  
We have no destination, but will  
know where we belong once we get  
there.

May God guide us, protect us, and  
provide for us.

If this is ever read, I pray you  
have the peace that has come to  
elude us.

Isaac, Rivka, and Anna.

Joseph, Francis, and Anna.

Silence.

Lucy looks at her parents.

LUCY

What happened to them?

Emily takes a moment.

This time, she does not deflect.

EMILY

We don't know yet.

Lucy frowns.

LUCY

But you said they left.

EMILY

They did.

LUCY

Then where did they go?

Emily reaches for Lucy's hand.

EMILY

Tomorrow we can go to the bureau of  
records.

We can start looking.

Lucy considers this.

LUCY

Together?

Emily nods.

EMILY  
Together.

Lucy leans back in her chair.  
She looks around the room.  
The house feels different now.  
Quieter.  
As if it has said everything it can.

INT. OLSZA HOUSE - FRONT HALL - NIGHT

The house is quiet.  
Not ominous - settled.  
A single lamp glows near the front door.  
JACK stands on a chair, carefully removing the WOODEN CROSS  
from above the doorway.  
He works slowly, deliberately - not in anger.  
EMILY watches from below.  
LUCY sits on the stairs, hugging her knees.  
The cross comes free.  
Jack holds it in his hands.  
No one speaks.  
He looks at Emily - a silent question.  
Emily nods.  
Jack sets the cross gently on a nearby table.  
It is not discarded.  
It is not hidden.  
Just... set down.  
Lucy watches this closely.

INT. OLSZA HOUSE - LUCY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lucy stands beneath the wall above her bed.

Bare now.

Where the cross once hung.

Emily steps in behind her.

Lucy looks up.

LUCY  
Was that Anna's?

Emily kneels.

Considers.

Answers honestly.

EMILY  
It was part of her pretending.

Lucy absorbs that.

LUCY  
Did she have to?

Emily doesn't answer right away.

Then -

EMILY  
Yes.

LUCY  
If Anna had to pretend to believe,  
what do we believe?

EMILY  
We believe in taking care of each  
other.

LUCY  
That's enough?

EMILY  
It's what we have.

Lucy nods.

She understands more than she should.

Lucy reaches into her pocket.

Pulls out the ROLLED PARCHMENT – Anna's writing.

Carefully wrapped.

She looks at it.

Then at the empty wall.

LUCY  
Can we put this somewhere?

Emily looks at Jack.

Jack steps forward.

INT. OLSZA HOUSE – FRONT DOOR – MOMENTS LATER

Jack opens the door.

Cold air enters.

Emily holds Lucy's coat closed.

Lucy clutches the parchment.

They step outside together.

EXT. OLSZA HOUSE – FRONT DOOR / DOORFRAME – NIGHT

Jack stands on the step.

He holds a SMALL MEZUZAH CASE – newly made, simple.

Nothing ornate.

Emily watches.

Lucy stands beside her father.

Jack looks at the doorframe.

Hesitates – just long enough to feel the weight of history.

Then he affixes the mezuzah.

Not ceremoniously.

Not defiantly.

Just, deliberately.

Lucy watches closely.

CLOSE ON: LUCY

She reaches up.

Touches the mezuzah.

Then - instinctively - brings her fingers to her lips.

A small gesture.

Unforced.

Uninstructed.

Emily's breath catches.

Jack watches - stunned.

Not because it's religious.

But because it's chosen.

DISSOLVE TO:

BLACK AND WHITE

INT. REGULSKI HOUSE - FRONT HALL - NIGHT (1939)

Isaac stands beneath the empty doorframe.

No mezuzah.

No cross.

Nothing.

He looks at the bare space.

Then lowers his eyes.

Steps away.

DISSOLVE TO:

COLOR

EXT. OLSZA HOUSE - NIGHT

Lucy steps back inside.

The mezuzah remains.

Quiet.

Visible.

Emily lingers.

Looks once more at the doorframe.

At the small object Isaac could not keep.

She exhales.

The front door closes.

The mezuzah catches the light.

Inside the house - a family moves forward remembering without pretending.

DISSOLVE TO:

BLACK AND WHITE

EXT. REGULSKI HOUSE - NIGHT - JANUARY 1940

The house is dark.

No lights in the windows.

Snow falls lightly - not enough to cover, just enough to hush sound.

The FRONT DOOR opens.

ISAAC steps out first, carrying a small suitcase.

He pauses.

Looks back at the house.

Once.

Then steps aside.

RIVKA emerges, bundled in her coat, a bag slung over her shoulder.

She turns, closes the door carefully.

No hesitation.

No looking back.

ANNA appears last.

She stands on the threshold.

The darkness beyond the doorway seems deeper than the night itself.

She looks back into the house.

At the stairs.

At the place where her room is.

She reaches into her coat pocket.

Pulls out her ROSARY.

She hesitates - just for a breath.

Then slips it back into her pocket.

Closes her hand around it.

She steps outside.

Isaac closes the door.

The lock turns softly.

The sound echoes.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The street is nearly empty.

Curfew quiet.

Boot prints already mark the snow - not theirs.

Isaac takes Rivka's hand.

Rivka takes Anna's.

They begin to walk.

No destination spoken.

Only direction.

Their footsteps are careful, measured.

They pass the bakery.

Dark.

They pass the market.

Empty.

They pass the park.

Benches buried in shadow.

Anna glances once toward the ice cream stand.

It is only a shape now.

She tightens her grip on Rivka's hand.

EXT. STREET CORNER - NIGHT

They reach the corner.

A decision point.

Isaac stops.

Listens.

Nothing.

He turns left.

They continue.

The streetlights grow fewer.

Darkness thickens.

EXT. EDGE OF NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Houses thin out.

The road narrows.

Snow crunches louder now.

Anna stumbles slightly.

Rivka steadies her.

Anna looks up.

ANNA

Mama?

Rivka leans down.

RIVKA

Yes?

ANNA

Will we know when we belong?

Rivka does not answer immediately.

RIVKA

Papa will know.

Anna looks at Isaac.

He does not turn.

But his grip tightens.

EXT. DARK ROAD - NIGHT

They walk farther.

The house is no longer visible.

Neither is the city.

Only the road.

Only motion.

Anna's hand slips into her pocket again.

She touches the rosary.

Counts one bead.

Then another.

Her lips move.

No sound.

The family becomes smaller in the frame.

Then silhouettes.

Then shadows.

Then nothing.

HOLD ON THE EMPTY ROAD.

Snow continues to fall.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD

*Some choices do not save us.*

*They only decide who survives.*