

IRON RIBBON

Screenplay by

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Story by

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SHOOTING SCRIPT
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The sound of a tumultuous crowd bleeds in as we open on:

1 EXT. PALAIS DE JUSTICE, PARIS - DAY

1

A huge CROWD pulses and writhes outside the imposing edifice of the courtroom, fighting to get a better view of the steps, as GENDARMERIE, arranged uniformly in front of the grand building, do their best to keep control.

SUPER: **PARIS, FRANCE.**

FEBRUARY 1925.

A path is cleared. A door opens and, beyond the struggling Gendarmerie, a WOMAN is led out of one of the buildings flanking the main chamber, escorted by two COURT OFFICIALS. This is STANISLAWA UMINSKA (23), or 'Stasia' to her friends.

She is painfully thin, pale and tired, with huge eyes in a child's face. Her hair is lank, her clothing plain and sober.

The moment she appears, the crowd surges towards her, screaming Stasia's name. The Gendarmerie struggle harder than ever to keep control.

Stasia seems completely oblivious to it all, either stoic or vacant, it is impossible to tell.

Hands grab at her, frenzied. One EXCITED WOMAN rips off Stasia's shawl - a keepsake - then has her work cut out as other WOMEN try to steal it from her clutches.

Stasia either doesn't notice or doesn't care. She is led quickly towards the courtroom and as her figure recedes the Gendarmerie finally begin to regain their authority.

As Stasia and the officials ascend the steps to the Grand Hall, the doors open elegantly, a sense of ceremony prevailing. She is whisked inside and we follow her into--

2 INT. PALAIS DE JUSTICE, GRAND HALL - CONTINUOUS

2

-- the ornate interior of the Grand Hall. The murmuring within abates as the doors slam shut. The officials pull Stasia to a stop, the bedlam outside replaced by silence.

The court itself is full to the brim, not only with OFFICIALS and members of the LEGAL TEAMS, but also with myriad SPECTATORS. All eyes come to rest on Stasia.

Stasia's two escorts lead her past the dock, to the counsel table at the front, where her representative, HENRI ROBERT, anxious and twitchy, awaits her.

Robert says something to her but she doesn't hear. Instead she turns, gazing across the aisle to where the prosecutor, DONAT GUIGNE (50s, dignified, immaculately dressed) stands. They lock eyes - Guigne's concerned, Stasia's apathetic.

A door opens near the bench and all present climb to their feet as three JUDGES enter. JUDGE MOUTON leads, his age, dress and gravitas all indicate he is the one in charge here.

They take their seats at the bench and the rest of the courtroom also sits, save for Stasia, Guigne and Robert.

For a moment there is only silence as Judge Mouton studies the waif in front of him.

MOUTON

Stanislawa Uminska. You have been charged with the crime of murder. For this crime, the maximum penalty is death. The court has now heard all the facts in this case. Do you have anything left to say before we pass judgement?

3 CLOSE ON STASIA

3

Stasia looks up at her audience, with soft, hopeless eyes.

She shakes her head slowly. A tear rolls down her cheek.

The sound of movement and a gun enters the frame. Stasia presses it to her temple.

4 ON AUDIENCE

4

A gunshot rings out and an assembled WELL DRESSED AUDIENCE gasp, covering their mouths in shock. The room holds it's breath. The sound of running and--

5 INT. TEATR NARODOWY - EVENING

5

--the curtains close across the stage of a lavishly decorated theatre, a woman's inert body in the centre, gun in hand, surrounded by a CAST of players who mourn for her silently.

It is now clear that the gunshot did not take place in the courtroom at all, but was instead the denouement of a play.

The assembled audience bursts into applause and when the curtains open once more, the delighted patrons unanimously climb to their feet.

SUPER: **WARSAW, POLAND**

18 MONTHS EARLIER

The cast walk back on to a rapturous ovation, the largest cheer reserved for Stasia, who emerges last, resplendent in stage make-up, a beautiful ingenue with a beaming smile.

She stares out into the audience, moved and elated by the response. Down in the front row, she spots JULIAN TUWIM, (30, but looks older despite his dandy suit) who stares up with a mixture of awe and pride, clapping harder than anyone.

6

INT. BACKSTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

6

The cast exit the stage through the wings, Stasia last of all, still buoyed by the audience's response.

ARNOLD SZYFMAN, the show's director - 40s, rotund, his horn rimmed glasses and well-pressed suit marking him out as an important fixture - greets her near her dressing room with a kiss on the cheek, handing her a large bouquet of flowers.

SZYFMAN

You get more magnificent with every play we do.

Stasia takes a breath. Let's it all sink in.

STASIA

Did you see them out there. That was... Maybe now's the time to do another film. Do you think? Or too soon? Do you know anyone?

SZYFMAN

Shall we let the dust settle on this show first?

STASIA

I need some scripts. I'll start looking tomorrow. If you hear of anything...

SZYFMAN

Slow down. Enjoy this moment. Don't worry about tomorrow.

TUWIM (O.S.)

What an opening! You were a sensation!

They turn to see Tuwim making his way towards them past the STAGE CREW. The crew bustle past them as they talk.

TUWIM (CONT'D)

You're the toast of Warsaw! We should celebrate.

SZYFMAN

Julian.

TUWIM

Arnold.

SZYFMAN

(to Stasia)

I'll see you at the party. Forget
Warsaw, you're going to be the
toast of Poland.

Szyfman heads off.

TUWIM

And toast needs buttering up. So
let me buy you a drink or several
and tell you how perfect you are.

STASIA

You know I can't.

TUWIM

And exactly why can't you?

STASIA

I need a clear head for tomorrow.
And clear skin. There's the party--

TUWIM

A party, you say? A theatre party?
How terribly dull.

STASIA

If you hate the theatre so much,
why are you here?

TUWIM

For you. Come on, we'll see the
city. Who wants to sit in a stuffy
room with a bunch of bourgeois
socialites?

STASIA

You're a bourgeois socialite.

TUWIM

I know. But the difference is, I
know how to drink until I'm not.
You can see for yourself.

STASIA

Not tonight I can't. Besides,
there's my reviews to wait for.

Stasia moves into--

7

INT. DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

7

--and Tuwim joins her inside.

TUWIM

My dear, those who can, do. Those who can't, teach. And those who can't teach, review. There's nothing for you in those reviews that you didn't see in every single one of those faces in the audience tonight. That was your review.

STASIA

Julian...

TUWIM

Oh no, the full name. How ghastly.

Stasia begins to take off her make up and accoutrements.

STASIA

I don't have time for gaiety. The after show is for the reviews, meeting people, networking, I--

TUWIM

You come and see the city with me, and I'll introduce you to people far more interesting and influential than you'll ever meet at one of Szyfman's parties. You're the toast of Poland, you deserve butter, not margarine!

Stasia laughs and cringes in equal measures.

STASIA

I thought you were supposed to be a poet.

TUWIM

A poet has to know his audience.

STASIA

Fine. One night. Just so long as you introduce me to all the finest people.

TUWIM

Of course.

She takes a breath, still a little torn. Then she commits, grabs a vanity case filled with make up. She looks to Tuwim.

STASIA

So, who's going to be there?

JAN ZYZNOWSKI (mid-thirties, strong features covered by a smattering of stubble, his smart attire more out of necessity than interest in such things) holds court in front of a selection of dark, abstract paintings, surrounded predominantly by attractive WOMEN who hang on his every word.

It is a vernissage. The GUESTS are all well-dressed, musing over art half of them don't really understand.

JAN

I think war is the cornerstone of why any man creates great art. Whether it is a literal war, a war of the self, a war of ideas. It's conflict. Without conflict, art is meaningless.

GUEST

What about futurism?

JAN

Exactly. I said great art. Futurism is a poor imitation of deranged Russian trends. The product of a cretin's brain afflicted by dropsy.

The surrounding crowd laugh.

ANGRY MAN (O.S.)

(yelling)

Zyznowski!

Jan and the crowd look towards the sound.

ANGRY MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Zyznowski!

The ANGRY MAN comes into view. He is barging past shocked guests, searching, his attire at odds with his surroundings.

SECURITY PERSONNEL arrive just as he spots Jan.

ANGRY MAN (CONT'D)

You!

He starts to move towards Jan, fury in his eyes, but is pulled back by security. The crowd watches, stunned.

ANGRY MAN (CONT'D)

Get off me!

Jan holds up his hand, completely unfazed. He signals to let the man go. The security men oblige, and the Angry Man starts to lose his bluster. He slowly approaches Jan.

ANGRY MAN (CONT'D)

So you're Jan Zyznowski?

JAN

If you bought a painting and you don't like it, then I'm afraid there are no refunds.

ANGRY MAN

My wife...

JAN

Yes?

ANGRY MAN

She's my wife!

JAN

The logic does seem to hold up, yes.

ANGRY MAN

You stay away from her, you hear me?

JAN

I'm afraid I have no idea who your wife even is.

The Angry Man is dumbfounded by Jan's indifference. The man looks around, gestures to the art hanging on the wall.

ANGRY MAN

You call this art?

JAN

(leaning in, whispering)

No, I call it a way of dealing with killing young men with my bare hands while my friends died around me, covered in their own blood and shit. That's what I call it.

(suddenly upbeat)

But the aesthetes and dilettantes say something about virtuosity and dynamic expressionism, so who am I to argue?

Jan and the Angry Man stare at each other, the latter aware he has picked the wrong fight. The Angry Man spits in Jan's face, one last attempt at defiance.

RANDOM GUEST (O.S.)

Uh oh...

Without looking and unseen by the Angry Man, Jan reaches behind him towards a table, his fingers closing around the neck of a champagne bottle.

Meanwhile, the Angry Man has lost all of his bravado.

Jan reconsiders and takes his hand off the bottle. He pulls out a handkerchief.

JAN
You enjoy your night.

The Angry Man backs away then shuffles out through the crowd while Jan wipes his face.

JAN (CONT'D)
Say hello to your wife for me!

Jan puts the handkerchief away and turns his attention back to the assembled guests.

JAN (CONT'D)
Sorry about that. Occupational hazard.

Jan downs a glass of champagne. He gives a look towards the Angry Man who is making his way out and his eyes land upon...

...Stasia and Tuwim, the former a little nervous - her eyes never settling as she takes in the room and the echelons of power within - and the latter trying far too hard.

JAN (CONT'D)
(to the guests)
Excuse me.

Jan returns his empty glass to the table and heads across the room to the two new arrivals.

JAN (CONT'D)
Tuwim, you old rascal!

TUWIM
Younger than you, Jan.

JAN
But you'd never know it.

They embrace warmly. As they do, Jan whispers in Tuwim's ear.

JAN (CONT'D)
(re: Stasia)
Who is this?

Jan moves back, waiting to be introduced.

TUWIM
Well, it's wonderful to see you too.
(beat)
Jan, this is Stasia Uminska.

JAN

Stanislawa Uminska! So this is the beautiful lady I've heard so much about.

STASIA

Really?

JAN

Yes. I hear you're quite the thing.

TUWIM

Jan always was one for flattery.

(to Stasia)

Can you give us a moment? Maybe get us a couple of drinks.

STASIA

And they say chivalry is dead.

JAN

It's not dead quite yet, but I do think Tuwim here has just proved it is terminally ill.

Stasia laughs.

TUWIM

I just need a quick word with Jan here, that's all.

She looks from one to the other, coquettishly suspicious. She moves off to a table replete with beverages and while there, unseen by Jan and Tuwim, checks her hair in a mirror.

JAN

I understand what you see in her now. And why she only sees you as a friend.

TUWIM

Try not to be too charming. Please? I do quite like this one.

JAN

I can make no promises, old boy. That's like asking an elephant to forget.

TUWIM

Wonderful.

Stasia returns with an orange juice and a champagne, passing the latter to Tuwim.

JAN

Not drinking?

STASIA
I have to look after my voice.

TUWIM
Why don't you go and get yourself
one Jan?

JAN
(smiling at Stasia)
Oh no, I've got plenty to drink in,
right here.

Stasia laughs, flushed with embarrassment. Tuwim sighs,
shakes his head. He leans in to Jan.

TUWIM
If you're going to stab me in the
back, at least use a sharper knife.

STASIA
So what do you do, Jan?

JAN
An array of things. I'm a writer,
for one. But art is my passion.
This is my exhibition.

STASIA
These are yours?

JAN
They are. Every one. Would you like
me to show you around?

Stasia glances at Tuwim.

JAN (CONT'D)
Not one of them is as beautiful as
you, but hopefully some will come
close.

Jan offers his arm.

STASIA
Well if it's your exhibition, how
could I say no?

She takes his arm. They move off towards some of his works.

Tuwim watches them go. As they cross the room, Jan beckons a
DIGNIFIED GENTLEMAN over. He leans in and whispers something
to the gentleman. The Gentleman glances at Stasia, gives a
nod and walks away.

Tuwim stands alone, at a loss, dejected. Then he spots a
BEAUTIFUL WOMAN moving to view a painting beside him.

TUWIM

Not one of these is as beautiful as you. They don't even come close.

The Beautiful Woman is taken aback for a moment, then breaks into a bashful smile. Tuwim offers his hand.

TUWIM (CONT'D)

Julian Tuwim.

Across the room, Stasia is looking at one of Jan's paintings. Jan's eyes are firmly on Stasia.

STASIA

They're incredible.

JAN

Thank you.

STASIA

What made you want to be an artist?

JAN

It was so that one day I'd have an exhibition and in turn get the chance to meet someone like you.

Stasia smiles. She knows this is a line, but it is working.

STASIA

You say that to all the women, don't you?

JAN

But for once I actually mean it.

Stasia smiles up at him coyly. The Dignified Gentleman returns, handing Jan a folded piece of paper, before moving off. Jan glances at the contents surreptitiously, then pockets the paper. He turns back to Stasia.

JAN (CONT'D)

Why don't we get some air?

Stasia knows she shouldn't, but her smile tells him yes.

9

EXT. ART GALLERY - NIGHT

9

The vernissage is still in full swing. Stasia and Jan exit, Jan draping Stasia's shawl over her shoulders as they go.

A group of PHOTOGRAPHERS waits nearby. They see the pair and flashbulbs pop as they scramble to get the best shot. Jan is unfazed, offering up a broad smile, but Stasia seems somewhat startled. A series of camera flashes sees us--

MATCH CUT TO:

10 INT. COMMISSARIAT BACK ROOM - NIGHT

10

--another flashbulb. This one spotlighting Stasia's tired, vacant face.

POLICE PHOTOGRAPHER (O.S.)
(in French)
Turn to your left.

Stasia just stares vacantly ahead.

POLICE PHOTOGRAPHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
To your left, please.

She slowly turns to her left. Some blood and body matter still dapple the side of her face.

SUPER: PARIS, JULY 1924

The POLICE PHOTOGRAPHER crosses over and uses a tissue to wipe off the last remaining traces of gore from her. Stasia doesn't seem to know or care. The photographer heads back to take one final picture.

Another flash takes us to--

11 INT. COMMISSARIAT BOOKING ROOM - NIGHT

11

A BOOKING OFFICER takes a silent Stasia's fingerprints, moving her hands for her. An ARRESTING OFFICER waits nearby.

BOOKING OFFICER
Has she said anything yet?

ARRESTING OFFICER
She doesn't even seem to know who she is, never mind what she's done.

BOOKING OFFICER
Crazy bitch.

The Booking Officer releases her right hand and grabs her left hand, moving it to the desk, and we--

MATCH CUT TO:

12 INT. JAN'S CAR - NIGHT

12

Jan hand, placed gently over Stasia's.

Jan drives through the picturesque streets of Warsaw, Stasia in the passenger seat. They look at each other - electric. Jan returns his attention to the road.

STASIA
I don't normally do this.

JAN
Sit in cars?

STASIA
Not with men I've just met.

JAN
And what does an illustrious
starlet normally do with her time?

STASIA
Work. Rehearse. Isn't that how one
becomes illustrious?

JAN
Life shouldn't just be one long
rehearsal, you know.

Jan turns and smiles at her. Stasia returns it. He faces
front, and comes face to face with...

...a HUGE black and red moth. He jumps out of his skin.

JAN (CONT'D)
Jesus Christ!

The car swerves wildly as Jan jumps and Stasia lets out a
short shriek of shock. Jan sets the car straight again,
batting at the moth and struggling to regain his composure.

The shock abates for Stasia and she begins to laugh.

STASIA
Are you alright?

The moth is nowhere to be seen. Jan finally smiles.

JAN
He took me by surprise.

STASIA
I agree. It wasn't a fair fight.

JAN
(composing himself)
You know, I was only pretending to--

The moth flies past his face again.

JAN (CONT'D)
Shitting hell!

Stasia laughs. The moth lands on the dashboard. Jan checks
the road then moves his hand up, ready to squash it...

STASIA
No, no, no!

Stasia stops him just in time. She gently scoops up the moth and looks at it. Smiles. Jan watches, still a little wary of the insect. Stasia slowly puts her hand out of the window.

Jan is mesmerised by her. Stasia watches the moth fly away into the night.

MATCH CUT TO:

13 INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT 13

A moth flutters outside a dirty window.

Stasia, sitting across from an INTERVIEWING OFFICER, stares at it, seemingly unaware of the man's presence. When he talks, the sound is muted, barely registering at all.

The interviewing officer gives up, leans back. Sighs.

Stasia continues to stare out the window and we--

MATCH CUT TO:

14 I/E. JAN'S CAR/DARK TRACK - NIGHT (AS PREVIOUS) 14

Stasia stares out of the window as the car winds it's way up a dark, secluded track. She turns back to Jan, exaggerated concern on her face. She looks a question at him.

JAN

Not much further.

STASIA

Until...?

JAN

You'll see.

STASIA

Why am I trusting you?

JAN

Because you're young and naive. But you'll learn.

STASIA

If you're going to kill me, can you just get it over with? Don't let me suffer. I'm not good with pain.

Jan laughs. He notices she is looking at him. He motions with his head to the windscreen.

She follows his gaze as the car drives out into--

15 I/E. JAN'S CAR/BEAUTY SPOT - CONTINUOUS

15

The car emerges onto a plateau, with breathtaking views of the city beyond.

The view steals her breath.

Jan pulls the car to a stop. Stasia takes the view in.

STASIA

I can't imagine why anyone would want to live anywhere else.

JAN

Oh, I don't know... I sometimes yearn for something quieter. A little haven where I can write and paint.

STASIA

I could never leave this city. Not now. What if it forgot me? Where else would I go?

JAN

You know, when I was young we spent a lot of time in the south. My parents used to take me hiking in the Beskidy Mountains. Apparently it was supposed to help with my anger.

STASIA

Did it?

JAN

No. I just got angry that I had to go hiking. But I could happily go back there now. Just lose myself in my work. Or head back to Paris, maybe. See the Moulin Rouge. Montmatre at sunrise. Finally show one of my paintings in the Louvre.

STASIA

Well, I'm never leaving Warsaw. The people, the food, the theatre, the music.

JAN

You like the music? That's such a shame. We could have been so good together, too.

STASIA

Maybe I just need someone to educate me then.

JAN

I think you've got things pretty well figured out. But you're right.
 (looking directly at her)
 I don't know why anyone would want to leave this view behind.

They stare at each other. Close. Then Jan leans in to kiss her. She puts a finger to his lips, stopping him.

STASIA

You're going to have to do better than that, you know?

JAN

Oh, don't worry. I've barely even started.

Stasia smiles, coquettish. She opens her door and we--

MATCH CUT TO:

16 EXT. PARISIAN COMMISSARIAT - NIGHT 16

Music plays.

The door of an awaiting police vehicle opens. Stasia, in handcuffs, is led towards it by the Arresting Officer and a POLICE DRIVER. A few REPORTERS trail them, shouting questions that go ignored. The officers help Stasia into the van.

17 INT. POLICE VEHICLE - MOMENTS LATER 17

Stasia sits alone in the back of the vehicle, staring out as it moves through the dark and bleak Parisian streets.

MATCH CUT TO:

18 INT. JAN'S CAR - NIGHT (AS PREVIOUS) 18

SERIES OF SHOTS

Music continues as we see Jan and Stasia driving through the gloriously lit streets of Warsaw:

- Talking animatedly
- Laughing together
- Teasing each other
- Sitting in comfortable silence
- Holding hands tenderly

19 INT. POLICE VEHICLE - NIGHT 19

Music continues. Stasia sits alone. She stares out, completely vacant. An oppressive, industrial style building looms in the distance like a vast mausoleum, dark and forsaken - prison.

20 EXT. STASIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT 20

Jan's car pulls up in a slightly less affluent part of the city. Inside the car, Stasia looks confused.

Jan climbs out and walks around the car, subtly checking the folded paper as he goes, noting the corresponding tenement building. He opens Stasia's door for her. A perfect gentleman. She gets out slowly, surprised.

JAN

Madame.

STASIA

This is... How did you...? I didn't tell you where I lived...

He motions her forward and they walk towards her house.

JAN

It seems there's nothing that the right amount of respect and renown can't get you.

STASIA

I'm not sure if I should be impressed or scared.

JAN

As long as you have strong emotions about me, I don't mind either way. Indifference would be an affront.

Stasia smiles. A beat. She becomes more sober.

STASIA

I should tell you, I'm not looking for a relationship.

JAN

Isn't that supposed to be my line?

STASIA

I can't. I have too much--

He leans in and kisses her. She doesn't resist. She loses herself in it. He pulls back and they look at each other, Stasia's breath caught in her throat.

JAN

Good night, Stasia Uminska.

STASIA

Good night.

After a moment, she moves up the tenement steps, opens her door and moves inside. She turns and gives Jan a warm smile.

We angle on Jan, at the bottom of the steps, watching, until the door first obscures him and then swings closed.

MATCH CUT TO:

21 INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT 21

The door slams shut on Stasia's prison cell. Footsteps and a dim light recede. The prison is in darkness. Somewhere, someone is sobbing.

Stasia, now in plain prison garb, stands with her back to the bars, looking at her tiny cell, as dark and oppressive as a crypt - just a bed, a seat, a sink, a rudimentary toilet.

MATCH CUT TO:

22 INT. STASIA'S TENEMENT BUILDING - AS PREVIOUS 22

Stasia stands at the door, lost in thought. A contented smile spreads across her face. She closes her eyes and sighs.

MATCH CUT TO:

23 INT. PRISON CELL - AS PREVIOUS 23

Stasia stands inside her grimy cell, looking out through the bars. From somewhere in the prison comes the sound of banging, then screaming. Neither seems to register with her.

Somewhere a woman shouts something in French, vicious, angry.

Stasia moves to the bed. She sits, slowly. After a pause, she lowers herself until she is lying on her side.

MATCH CUT TO:

24 INT. GUIGNE'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING 24

Guigne sleeps on his side in bed. It is still dark outside.

A phone rings, loudly, rousing him. His wife, CÈCILE, wakes with a start. She calms. Huffs her disapproval.

CÈCILE
*I will never get used to that
 thing.*

Cécile settles as Guigne pulls himself slowly out of bed.

25 INT. GUIGNE'S STUDY - MOMENTS LATER 25

Guigne crosses to his phone. Lifts the receiver.

GUIGNE
This is Donat Guigne.

26 INT. GUIGNE'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING 26

Guigne returns and starts to get dressed. Cécile keeps her head buried in her pillow, searching for sleep.

CÈCILE
It's late.

GUIGNE
It's early.

CÈCILE
You should throw that phone out.

Guigne doesn't reply. Continues dressing.

CÈCILE (CONT'D)
What is it this time?

GUIGNE
A murder. Some Polish artist.

27 EXT. PADEREWSKI PARK - DAY 27

Jan stares off into the distance, distracted. The sound of jovial laughter comes from all around him.

TUWIM (O.S.)
 Jan?

Tuwim's voice brings him back to the moment.

Jan sits beside Stasia on a blanket, across from Tuwim and the Beautiful Woman from the art gallery, NATASZA. The remains of a picnic sit between them all.

FAMILIES and COUPLES row boats on the lake nearby.

TUWIM (CONT'D)
 Did we lose you there, old chum?
 (to the others)
 (MORE)

TUWIM (CONT'D)

He's used to the conversation of 15-year-old girls, so this is all probably going over his head. Shall we talk about hopscotch instead?

JAN

Jealousy is such ugly attire. Must be why you wear it so well.

The ladies try not to smile at this, but they fail.

TUWIM

Oh, that's funny is it? Well, may I implore you all politely, yet firmly, to kiss my arse.

STASIA

I think I'd prefer ice cream.

NATASZA

Mmm. Me too.

(stroking Tuwim's hair)

Not that you don't have a lovely backside.

Stasia stands, beckons Natasza.

STASIA

Come on, then.

Jan grabs Stasia's hand to stop her. He pulls her down to him, tender. They kiss. Smile at each other lovingly.

JAN

Okay, be gone.

Stasia smiles at Jan. She takes Natasza's hand and the two walk off across the park. Jan and Tuwim watch them walk away.

TUWIM

I don't think I've ever seen you like this. You being so insufferably happy does make it very hard to hate you, you know? But don't worry, I'm nothing if not tenacious.

No reply from Jan. With one of his hands, Jan absently toys with a small piece of card, lost in his thoughts.

TUWIM (CONT'D)

What's wrong with you? Shouldn't you be telling me the best lunatic won?

JAN

Hmm?

TUWIM

You're not losing interest already,
are you?

JAN

In what?

TUWIM

If you hurt her, I'll...probably
write a very strongly worded poem
about it.

Jan stops toying with the card. Returns it to his pocket.

JAN

Oh God, not another poem, please!

TUWIM

I mean it.

Jan looks to Stasia in the distance, a dark look on his face.
A flash takes us to--

28

INT. JAN'S STUDY - EVENING

28

A flashbulb illuminates Stasia posing for a photograph.

STASIA

Was my hair alright? Should we take
another?

JAN

It was perfect. Although...

Jan crosses to her, camera still in hand.

JAN (CONT'D)

You know what would make these
photographs more memorable...?

He begins to pull her dress down over her shoulder. Stasia
slaps his hand and moves away, coyly. As they talk, she
begins to absently open drawers, flirtatious.

STASIA

You dirty old man. Is that why you
bought that camera? To take naughty
pictures of the girls you bring
back here?

JAN

How dare you besmirch her
reputation. My camera knows nothing
of the pleasures of the flesh.

STASIA

Hmm...I don't believe a word of it.

Stasia absently rifles through one of the desk drawers. Stops. Pulls out a medal - a cross on a ribbon.

STASIA (CONT'D)
What's this?

JAN
Oh, that's nothing. Just a--

STASIA
(reading)
'To the valiant'. This is a medal
of honour.

JAN
It was a formality, I'm sure.

STASIA
You just have it hidden away.

JAN
It didn't seem important.

STASIA
You're a hero.

JAN
I'm definitely not that.

She moves around the desk, back to Jan. Puts the medal down.

STASIA
That's a shame. Because maybe a
hero could take whatever
photographs he wanted.

JAN
I guess I'm out of luck then.
Because I'm just a man who didn't
die.

He throws the medal back into the open drawer.

JAN (CONT'D)
Killing doesn't make you a hero. No
matter what people might say.

She puts a hand to his face. Sees the pain there. Kisses him, long, passionately. When she finishes, she starts to slowly slide down her dress, whispering in his ear.

STASIA
Then you best be a villain, and
take advantage of me before I
change my mind.

She sits up on the desk, sultry and alluring, in just her underwear. She gives him a smile.

Jan doesn't need to be asked twice. He moves to the camera, gets it ready and takes the picture.

As the flash goes off we--

CUT TO:

29

INT. COMMISSARIAT DARK ROOM - MORNING

29

A photo is being developed. It swims into clarity - a close-up of Jan's bloody face, part of the skull blown away.

The TECHNICIAN lifts the photo out of the developing fluid and hangs it up to dry. We pull back to see Guigne and the POLICE COMMANDANT approach it.

GUIGNE

So this is the poet?

COMMANDANT

Writer.

GUIGNE

Hmmm. And what about this couldn't wait?

COMMANDANT

The victim is quite famous out in Poland. And his killer...she's not quite what you'd expect.

GUIGNE

Wait, so we know who the killer is?

COMMANDANT

We do. Stanislaw Uminska.

GUIGNE

And we have her in custody?

COMMANDANT

She's already in a cell.

Guigne sighs, rubs a hand across his face.

GUIGNE

It doesn't seem to me like this was all that urgent. If you wake my wife up that early again, it's my body they'll be photographing at a crime scene.

He heads for the door. The Commandant follows.

COMMANDANT

The killer was a rising star too. Beloved in Poland.

(MORE)

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

The news is spreading. Fast. So you might want to get ahead of this one.

Guigne opens the door and heads into--

30

INT. COMMISSARIAT CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

30

Guigne and the Commandant head out into the corridor.

GUILGNE

But we know it was her?

COMMANDANT

Yes. She even admitted it.

GUILGNE

It doesn't really sound like you need me at all.

COMMANDANT

The thing is...everyone else who was there says she is innocent. She was the only one there who said she was guilty. And she hasn't spoken a word since.

Guigne pulls up again.

GUILGNE

I don't understand. What does that mean? That doesn't make sense.

The Commandant can only shrug. Guigne signs an 'okay'. Nods his resignation. He might be needed after all.

31

INT. PRISON CORRIDOR - TRACKING WITH GUILGNE - DAY

31

Guigne is led down a dingy corridor by a BURLY GUARD. Behind him, two GUARDS drag a FEMALE PRISONER from her cell.

FEMALE PRISONER

(screaming desperately)

No! No! No!

Guigne ignores the clamour. The cells he passes include a wide array of PRISONERS, from those peacefully sleeping to those meekly watching from their bunks, to those violently threatening at their cell bars.

Guigne puts a hand instinctively under his nose, stifling the stench of effluvia and filth. The Guard notices. Smiles.

BURLY GUARD

Yeah. Smells like a bag of old arseholes in here.

The sound of mayhem from outside, and Guigne turns to see through a window the sight of a FERAL PRISONER and a SMALL PRISONER involved in a fight in the yard.

The Feral Prisoner is viciously attacking the latter, knocking her to the floor, out of shot, before raining down kicks, stamping on her. THREE GUARDS rush to tear the feral woman away but the rest is lost to us as Guigne continues on.

The Burly Guard pulls up and motions to Stasia's cell. Guigne moves to the bars and looks in.

32 INT. STASIA'S CELL - CONTINUOUS 32

Stasia lies awake on her side on her bed. Guigne looks in at her, confused as to how this woman could be a murderer. He turns back and nods at the Burly Guard to leave them.

For a while, Guigne just watches her, both of them unmoving. Eventually, Stasia begins to roll on to her back and we--

MATCH CUT TO:

33 INT. JAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING 33

Stasia lies awake next to Jan. Sun streams in through the sheer curtains. We see Stasia in profile staring up contentedly, Jan's sleeping face close, only half of it visible behind Stasia's supine form, the two halves of their faces making one.

Jan wakes with a start, moaning in pain, startling Stasia. He breathes heavily.

STASIA
What is it?

His breathing settles. He looks at her. Gets his bearings.

JAN
Just a bad dream.

She looks at him, unconvinced.

JAN (CONT'D)
The perils of war.

He gives her a sad smile, and she buys the lie. She strokes his face tenderly.

He kisses her. Moves his kisses to her neck. She smiles, arches her neck, welcoming it. Then she catches herself.

STASIA
I have to go.

JAN

But real life is so boring.

He pulls her back in. Resumes kissing her. She lets him.

JAN (CONT'D)

Five more minutes. Before you go
and transcend reality.

STASIA

You know I can't.

JAN

Yes, you can.

STASIA

Uh-uh.

She shakes her head. Starts to extricate herself. He tries to kiss her lips and she covers her mouth. Shakes her head.

STASIA (CONT'D)

I just woke up.

He ignores her protests, moving her hand, kissing her lips.

JAN

Oh! Yeah. Yeah, that tastes like a
bin.

She closes her mouth, clamps a hand over it, horrified.

JAN (CONT'D)

But you should know by now, I like
you dirty.

He kisses her mouth again, passionate. She tries to fight him off, playful. They wrestle, Stasia giggling.

STASIA

No! No!

Jan let's out a grunt of pain and pulls up. Stasia faces him, concerned. He puts a hand to his back. Moans. Breathes. Deep.

STASIA (CONT'D)

Are you alright? What's wrong?

JAN

I think you're just too strong for
me.

STASIA

I think you spend too much behind
that desk. Your body is wasting
away.

JAN

So the pen is not so mighty after
all.

She puts a hand to his face. They kiss passionately, the pain
abating, her caress curative.

She pulls up. Looks at him earnestly. Studying his face.

STASIA

Never leave me.

A look crosses his face, but he catches it. He smiles,
brushes her hair off her cheek and leans in to kiss her.

34

INT. TEATR NARODOWY - DAY

34

Stasia bursts through the doors, followed by Jan.

The ACTORS on stage turn to look. Szyfman, on the floor at
the front of the empty auditorium, turns much more slowly.

SZYFMAN

Nice of you to join us, Miss
Uminska.

STASIA

I'm so sorry.

She puts her things down on a chair near the back.

SZYFMAN

Right. Top of Act 2. Lets go!

The actors take their places. Stasia slips off her shoes and
runs up on to the stage. Jan watches from the doorway.

SZYFMAN (CONT'D)

We'll go from Agnes's entrance.
Full energy everyone please.

Stasia crosses to centre stage and begins to sing. It is
nothing short of stunning. Jan watches, enrapt.

Jan pulls a card out of his pocket. Looks at it. Turns it
over. An address is scrawled on the back, almost illegible.

He gives one last look to the stage, then leaves.

35

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

35

Stasia packs away her belongings, while the other actors make
their way out. The Leading Man says goodbye to her as he
passes and she nods a farewell at him.

Arnold crosses quietly to Stasia. She doesn't seem to notice. He moves into her eyeline. Finally gets her attention.

STASIA

Hi. Sorry.

SZYFMAN

We'll see you at ten tomorrow?

STASIA

Yes! Yes, of course. I'm sorry about today...

SZYFMAN

No need to be. I was young once. It's all good grist for the mill. Emotional fodder. Bathe in it. Remember it. But do try to get here on time.

STASIA

I won't be late again. This is my priority. I promise.

SZYFMAN

My mother used to say that 'promises are like babies - easy to make, but hard to deliver'. While you're working for me, you'll do well not to make either.

She tries a smile. Nods.

SZYFMAN (CONT'D)

Good. Ten am. Don't be late.

STASIA

I pr-- I won't.

Szyfman gives a nod and walks off towards backstage.

TUWIM (O.S.)

(sing song)

Someone got in trouble...

Stasia jumps at the sound of his voice. She looks towards the door and sees Tuwim standing there nonchalantly. She puts a hand to her chest, calming.

TUWIM (CONT'D)

I didn't realise I was so terrifying.

STASIA

You're as bad as Szyfman, lurking around, all theatrical.

TUWIM

My histrionics are all my own, and
carefully curated, thank you.

Tuwim crosses down to Stasia, looks to where Szyfman exited.

TUWIM (CONT'D)

Is old Arnold treating you well?

STASIA

Of course he is. That man is a
darling. He's the apple of my eye.

TUWIM

He's looking more like an orchard
these days.

STASIA

You are terrible!

There is a loud bang and Stasia lets out a little shriek.
Something falls to the floor near the window at the back of
the auditorium. Stasia and Tuwim move back to see...

...a small bird twitching and convulsing on the floor far
below the window, it's wings and probably back are broken.

Stasia puts a hand to her mouth. She crosses to it.

She bends, scoops it up gently. Looks to Tuwim helplessly.

TUWIM

I think you need to put it out of
your misery, my dear.

She shakes her head.

TUWIM (CONT'D)

It's the kindest thing.

STASIA

I can't.

Tuwim nods his understanding.

TUWIM

You wait outside.

Stasia lies the bird on the floor. She moves back sadly,
retreating as Tuwim approaches the helpless bird.

Stasia waits outside the theatre, on edge. Tuwim exits the
theatre. Moves to join her. She eyes him suspiciously.

TUWIM

Shall we?

STASIA

Why are you here?

TUWIM

Well it wasn't to commit avian atrocities, that's for sure.

STASIA

Where's Jan? He was supposed to be here.

TUWIM

Let's get a drink, hey?

He begins to walk away. She follows.

STASIA

What does that mean?

TUWIM

That I desire to consume fermented beverages forthwith.

STASIA

Why isn't Jan here?

TUWIM

He couldn't make it, so asked me to come along, that's all.

STASIA

Where is he?

TUWIM

I'm sure it's nothing to worry about.

Stasia pulls up.

STASIA

Julian.

TUWIM

He wouldn't tell me. You know Jan. He's all theatre. But one rarely knows what's going on backstage.

Stasia glares at him: Tell me!

TUWIM (CONT'D)

Stasia, he gets like this. Just...his ego often doesn't leave room for other people. I find with Jan...it's best not to get your hopes up.

STASIA
No. He loves me.

TUWIM
When has that ever mattered?

Stasia shakes her head. Defiant. She turns and walks the opposite way, leaving Tuwim at a loss.

TUWIM (CONT'D)
Stasia! Stas--

He gives up, knowing it is no use.

37 EXT. JAN'S HOUSE - EVENING 37

Stasia bangs on Jan's front door. No reply. She bangs again. Nothing.

STASIA
Jan? Jan?!

She stands back and looks at the house. No signs of life.

She takes a seat on the steps outside.

38 INT. JAN'S STUDY - CONTINUOUS 38

Through the sheer curtains, Stasia can be seen on the steps below, her back to the house.

Jan looks down at her, unseen. He moves across to his writing desk in the darkness. He opens a drawer, pulls out a vial of liquid and a small case. Puts them on his desk. Sits.

He stares at the vial. Morphine. He is hesitant. Not sure what to do. Finally, he relents. He opens the case, revealing a syringe inside. He plunges the needle into the vial.

39 EXT. JAN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 39

Stasia hugs herself against the cold. She starts to shiver but refuses to move.

GUIGNE (PRELAP)
Stasia!

40 INT. PRISON INTERVIEW ROOM - NIGHT 40

Stasia sits at an interview table opposite Guigne, hugging herself. She is shaken from her reverie by Guigne's voice. She looks up at him - a pen in his hand, ready to write.

GUIGNE
(in English)
You can hear me, then?
(beat)
Can you understand me? Do you
understand what I am saying?

She looks down at the table, unable to meet his gaze.

GUIGNE (CONT'D)
Can you talk me through what
happened last night?

Stasia shakes her head - a violent tremor. She looks down. Starts moving the fingers on one hand, slow and precise, as though to check she is still part of her physical form.

GUIGNE (CONT'D)
What if I ask you questions, and
you can answer yes or no? Just nod
for yes, or shake your head for no.

Stasia continues to move her fingers, focussed only on that.

GUIGNE (CONT'D)
I can see things have been
traumatic for you. I am just here
to help. To find out what really
happened. Can you help me help you?

More of the same from Stasia. The fingers. Another tremor from her head. Guigne puts his pen down.

GUIGNE (CONT'D)
I'm a man of God. I believe in
redemption. And in absolution. The
curative power of confession.
(beat)
When I was a child, I stole a
pastry from the tin my mother kept
in the pantry. When my parents saw
it was gone, my brother was blamed.
I was the picture of innocence,
while he was always roughhousing,
playing truant. And so I let him
take the punishment. But I felt so
terrible about it, that I barely
spoke for a week. It wasn't until
confession that I told anyone. And
once I had, I felt released.
Absolved. I paid my penance and I
was free. And what's more, I
started to realise that my brother
was culpable too. He had taken food
from me that morning. I was hungry -
it wasn't just selfish desire. So,
I asked myself, who was really to
blame?

Stasia doesn't look up. Tears roll down her cheeks. He pulls out a handkerchief. Offers it to her. She doesn't notice.

GUIGNE (CONT'D)

Did he ever hurt you?

She shakes her head again, almost too urgent. An opening...

GUIGNE (CONT'D)

What did Jan do to you, Stasia? How did he hurt you?

Stasia can only stare at him through moist eyes.

41 INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

41

A costumed Stasia sits alone in front of a mirror, crying. She puts a hand to her face, sobs. Then she finds some resolve. Takes a deep breath. Pulls herself together. She wipes her eyes. Touches up the make up around them.

She steels herself. Stares at herself in the mirror.

STASIA

Get yourself together. This is what you want. Not him. This.

(beat)

Now get out there and smile you stupid little girl.

She puts on her best actress smile. She stands and we track with her as she heads--

42 INT. BACKSTAGE - TRACKING WITH STASIA - CONTINUOUS

42

--past members of the CREW to the wings. She looks out on to the stage, takes a breath, then heads out into the bright lights - a grand entrance.

43 INT. TEATR NARODOWY - NIGHT

43

The show is over. The audience gone. The stage empty.

Stasia sits on the edge of the stage in her ordinary clothes.

Szyfman walks in to the auditorium. Takes a seat.

SZYFMAN

You promised me you wouldn't be late again.

STASIA

I wasn't.

SZYFMAN
You didn't show up at all today.

STASIA
I hit every line.

SZYFMAN
Oh, there was someone up there who
looked like you and moved like you.
But it wasn't you.

Stasia is silent.

SZYFMAN (CONT'D)
'These violent delights have
violent ends. And in their triumph
die, like fire and powder.' You
know, you'd make the perfect Juliet
if we ever found you the right
Romeo. Move on. You've got too much
to offer the world to be brought
down by this. If you need time,
talk to me. But do not let him
diminish your talent. There could
be a thousand Jans, but there will
only ever be one you.

Stasia nods.

STASIA
I'll be back tomorrow. I won't
promise. But I will be.

SZYFMAN
I don't doubt it.
(standing)
Sleep well.

Szyfman heads for the exit, leaving Stasia alone.

44

INT. TUWIM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

44

A dark hallway. A loud banging on the front door at the other
end. Incessant. It stops for a moment then resumes.

A light flicks on. Tuwim moves into view, pulling on clothes
as he goes.

Tuwim opens the door and the banging finally stops. Stasia.

STASIA
Where is he?

Tuwim glances back into the house, but her feral voice draws
his attention back.

STASIA (CONT'D)
 I'm not going to let that
 narcissistic bastard ruin my life.
 Now tell me where he is!

Tuwim sighs, knowing he has no choice.

45 INT. SIMON I STECKI NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

45

Stasia and a resigned Tuwim enter the bustling nightclub - a raucous party in full swing.

Stasia seems a little taken back. Out of her depth. A boisterous DRUNKEN COUPLE stumble past Stasia, startling her.

TUWIM
 This isn't you. Do you really need
 this drama?

STASIA
 (resolute)
 All the world's a stage, Julian.

TUWIM
 Yes, my dear, but some plays are
 bloody awful.

Stasia moves on in, this kind of revelry foreign to her. COUPLES get intimate on sofas. DWARVES entertain the drunks.

Moving around a corner, she spots Jan. He holds court, charming as ever, standing on a long padded bench seat, surrounded by an enrapt audience of seated PATRONS, a glass of liquor in hand, well on his way to being drunk.

Stasia stalks over to his table.

JAN
 ...and I had never seen anything so
 intensely--

Jan spots Stasia and he is stopped in his tracks. They stare at each other for a moment. He tries to carry on. Fails.

JAN (CONT'D)
 --so intensely...uh...
 (beat)
 Will you all excuse me, for just
 one moment?

He walks across the table, past other patrons, and jumps down onto the floor, moving to Stasia.

JAN (CONT'D)
 What, huh...what are you doing
 here?

STASIA
It's been three weeks.

JAN
Now's not the time.

STASIA
When is the time?

Jan takes her elbow, guides her to a quiet alcove.

JAN
I can see you're upset.

STASIA
That observant artist's eye never fails you, does it?

JAN
You need to go. Now.

STASIA
I just want to know why. Just tell me why, and then I can get on with my life.

JAN
Stasia, go home.

She shakes her head, defiant.

JAN (CONT'D)
Go home, Stasia.

STASIA
No.

JAN
What do you want me to say?! Huh?
What do you want?!

STASIA
Tell me I'm wrong. Tell me there is nothing here. Tell me you don't want me. Then just let me get on with my life.

JAN
Stasia...

STASIA
Tell me.

JAN
If I do, will you go?

She doesn't answer. They stare at each other.

A WELL DRESSED DANDY cavorts past them followed by a drunken cortège of patrons. Jan pulls Stasia into--

46

INT. LAVATORY - CONTINUOUS

46

The lavatory is empty. The door shuts behind them muting the sounds of carousing.

Stasia and Jan stare at each other, each defiant.

Jan moves towards her. Stasia pushes him away. Stares at him. He moves for her once more, his face dark.

STASIA

No!

She pushes him again but this time he deflects her hands. She tries again but he has her arms. Stasia struggles against him as he pushes her back towards the wall.

She hits the wall and they are kissing. Passionately. Ravenous for each other. Now, Stasia takes charge. She pushes him into a cubicle and slams the door shut.

INSIDE CUBICLE

Stasia leans back against the cubicle wall, while Jan covers every inch of available skin with desperate kisses.

They both breathe heavily, aching for this. Stasia pulls up her dress as Jan works his trousers down. His lips barely leave her skin as she gasps, then moans, as he enters her.

His lips find hers, then move on, her features creased in pleasure. She grabs hold of the top of the cubicle.

Their bodies stay entwined, slick with sweat, until finally they are both complete. Their bodies slow, and their breathing begins to steady. Then their eyes meet, just inches apart. Words aren't needed now.

He puts a hand to her face. Rests it there as they breathe each other in. She puts her hand to his face, her thumb on his lips. He smiles and that is all she needs to see.

She grabs some tissue paper. Out of frame, she cleans herself up. Lets her dress drop down. Smooths it out. He begins to hitch up his trousers with his free hand.

Stasia slips free. He watches as she leaves the cubicle, briefly checks her hair and face in the mirror then exits.

Jan does up his trousers, exhausted. He leans against the cubicle wall, breathing deeply. He grimaces in discomfort.

He reaches into his jacket and pulls out a 10mg vial of morphine. Drinks it in one. Drops the empty vial on its side on the pristine white toilet cistern.

He exhales heavily, grimacing once more. He gets his breath and heads for the exit. We hold on the vial and--

MATCH CUT TO:

47 INT. PARIS HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

47

In a series of camera flashes we see:

-- An empty vial of morphine on its side on a white cabinet.

-- Another vial of morphine lies discarded on the floor.

-- A syringe lies at the foot of a bed on crisp white sheets.

-- The bed itself is empty, the top of the sheets and the wall behind are caked in blood and brain matter.

A camera flash brings the blood into sharp relief.

Near the doorway, Guigne studies the scene with BETIT, the lead investigator. Other INVESTIGATORS catalogue evidence while the CRIME SCENE PHOTOGRAPHER takes his last shots.

GUIGNE

(in French)

*I don't understand how a woman
could do this.*

BETIT

*These days, women just want to
prove they can do anything a man
can do.*

Guigne gives Betit a look. Guigne crosses, past a chair that has been knocked over, to the murder weapon - the revolver sitting on a table. He lifts it. Sniffs it. Nothing.

A YOUNG NURSE has entered. She hands Betit a coffee.

BETIT (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Guigne turns to see this. As the nurse makes to leave:

GUIGNE

Have you paid her for that?

BETIT

Excuse me?

GUIGNE

Investigating officers are unable to accept any handouts at a crime scene, no matter how small or insignificant they seem.

BETIT

(bemused)

It's just a coffee.

Guigne looks at Betit. He means it. Betit relents. He pulls out some coins from his pocket and holds them out for the nurse. The nurse looks from Betit to Guigne, confused.

BETIT (CONT'D)

It's alright. Take it.

The nurse tentatively takes the money.

GUIGNE

Did anyone else take coffee this morning?

The other investigators stop what they are doing and turn to Guigne. Most of them step forward, begrudging and abashed, and hand over money to the bewildered nurse.

When they are done, Guigne nods at the nurse. She gives a nervous smile, then turns and exits.

Guigne returns the gun to the table. Looks to the bed.

BETIT

When was the last time a woman went to the cutter?

GUIGNE

Not in my time.

Betit crosses to Guigne. Through the window he sees reporters and photographers waiting outside the hospital doors below.

BETIT

Something for the proles to look forward to then. A pretty little rolling head. If she wanted fame, she'll have it now.

GUIGNE

What do we know about her motives?

BETIT

Does it matter?

GUIGNE

Not to me. But we need to know.

ANNA (O.S.)
She had to do it.

The two men turn to see a different nurse in the doorway. This is ANNA LEVASSOR, 42, plain-faced and precise.

GUIGNE
Excuse me.

ANNA
She's innocent. She had to do it.

GUIGNE
How can both be true?

ANNA
She had to. He had to die. He had to.

48 INT. JAN'S STUDY - EVENING

48

A lamp smashes against a wall with a deafening bang.

Jan lets out a cry of rage as he swipes the contents of his writing desk to the floor.

Stasia watches from across the room, horrified.

Another roar of anger and a chair explodes against the wall.

Jan stands in the midst of his destruction breathing heavily. He looks around and his eyes fall on the terrified Stasia.

JAN
 You should go.

STASIA
 Just talk to me.

JAN
 GO!

Her silence signals her refusal. She bends down to tidy up some of the mess. He watches until her hand falls on a card.

JAN (CONT'D)
 Put that down. Put it down!

She does so, scared by his tone. She stands. Looks at him.

STASIA
 What happened?

JAN
 Nothing happened. I just want you to leave.

STASIA

No. Not again.

He signals to the chaos around him.

JAN

Is this what you want? Is it?
Because this is all I can give you.

STASIA

We both know that's not true.

She crosses to him. Touches him. He lets her.

STASIA (CONT'D)

I'm not going anywhere.

Jan's fist clenches, hard. Stasia doesn't see this.

STASIA (CONT'D)

Talk to me. What is it?

JAN

I'll ruin you, do you know that?

He looks at Stasia. She kisses him. When she moves back to look at him, he is calmer.

STASIA

What happened? Was it the war
again? Were you back in France?
Back at the front?

He opens his mouth to talk but changes his mind.

STASIA (CONT'D)

It's alright. It's okay.

She caresses his hair while he stares at her earnestly.

JAN

You go up. I just need a moment.

She sees there will be no arguing about this. She kisses him, then heads for the door. Jan watches until she is gone.

He grabs a bottle of liquor from the sideboard. Pours a large glass. He slumps to the floor. Downs his drink. Breathes.

He puts the tumbler beside him and picks up some papers from under shards of broken glass from a picture frame. He reads them sadly, then lets them fall to his lap. He turns his attention to the glass.

Jan picks up a shard of glass, a photograph of Stasia below it. He stares at it's brutally sharp point. He looks from the photo to the door, stares intently.

He closes his hand around the shard of glass. Squeezes. Blood trickles between his fingers, flowing first onto the photo of Stasia, then down onto the papers around him, and we--

CUT TO:

49 INT. LEGAL OFFICES - DAY

49

A stack of papers is being shuffled together at a desk. The top sheet is stained with blood. On it, the words: EXAMINING PHYSICIAN'S REPORT.

The papers are held by PHILIPPE, Guigne's attentive and often flustered assistant. Guigne stands nearby, impatient.

GUIGNE

Bring that all with you.

Philippe grabs together several piles of papers.

GUIGNE (CONT'D)

Not the arrest forms. Just the notes. Not those, Philippe, the case notes.

Guigne sighs and heads towards the exit, donning his hat as he goes. He reaches the door, and heads out into--

50 EXT. PARIS STREET - CONTINUOUS

50

Guigne leaves the offices to find himself mobbed by REPORTERS and PHOTOGRAPHERS. Guigne is confused by the furore.

VARIOUS REPORTERS

Prosecutor Guigne, do you have any comment on the Uminska case?/Mr Guigne, where is Miss Uminska now?

Philippe exits the building, taken back by the scene. Guigne moves on, doing his best to ignore the reporters.

REPORTER 1

Is it true that the doctors at Paul-Brousse all claim she is innocent?

This stops Guigne. Philippe watches on, impotent.

GUIGNE

Do you really have nothing better to do than ask irrelevant questions? This case is on-going and therefore I have no comment at this time.

He moves on again. Reporters shout more questions.

REPORTER 2

Will you still be asking for the death penalty, even in these circumstances?

Guigne pulls up again, rising to it in spite of himself.

GUIGNE

And what circumstances are those exactly? The suspect has admitted murder. And your insistence on sensationalising this case only makes a guilty verdict more necessary. The world is watching, gentleman, and the world needs to understand that murder will never go unpunished, no matter what the circumstances. Now, if you have any further questions, please feel free to shout them into a wall.

Guigne moves on, ignoring the questions shouted at his back.

VARIOUS REPORTERS

Mr Guigne! Mr Guigne!

Philippe moves in front of the baying crowd of journalists, his hands raised in front of him, holding them back.

PHILIPPE

Stop! Stop!

CUT TO:

51 INT. DARK ROOM - ON STASIA - NIGHT

51

A blindfolded Stasia pulls up sharply in a dimly lit space, her hands raised in front of her.

She has knocked into something. A chair. She touches it, then moves on cautiously, nervous, feeling her way.

She stumbles into another chair, knocking it over, and lets out a shriek of surprise. She settles. Moves on.

She finds a table. Feels around. Nothing. She finds a second table and her hands light upon something. Paper. Bound. She moves her fingers across it and finds a ribbon. A bow.

A small round of applause and a cheer from behind her.

REVEAL FULL ROOM - AN UPSCALE BAR

The lights come up in the bar. Stasia is in the middle of the room, while Jan, Tuwim and Natasza stand near the door, Jan's hand on a light switch. All of them are dressed for winter.

Stasia takes the blindfold off, blinking against the light, and looks at the prize in front of her. A script, tied up with a bow. On the front: 'The Little Gigolette by Julian Tuwim.' Stasia turns to the others at the door.

STASIA
What is it?

Jan, Tuwim and Natasza move over to Stasia.

TUWIM
It's yours.

STASIA
What do you mean it's mine?

TUWIM
I wrote it for you. Your very own cabaret.

Stasia is stunned. She opens the script. The first page is a dedication: 'Inspired by the talent of her generation.'

She flicks through the short script.

JAN
And I've found the money. The theatre. We have Szyfman to direct.

NATASZA
And I was there when he wrote it?

Stasia puts a hand to her mouth, overcome with emotion.

STASIA
I don't know what to say.

TUWIM
I believe it starts with 'vod' and ends in 'ka'.
(shouting off)
Michal!

Stasia kisses Tuwim, hard and chaste, then throws her arms around Jan. He lifts her up off the floor.

MICHAL, the proprietor, enters from a back room.

TUWIM (CONT'D)
I think we're ready to celebrate!

Jan is being violently sick in a dingy alley, bracing himself against a wall. He finishes, catches his breath, then doubles up once more as a fresh wave of vomiting hits.

When this wave is over, he looks down to see bile amongst the vomit, yellow and green.

He straightens a little, breathing heavily. Wipes his face. He looks drawn, tired. He straightens the rest of the way and flinches, tensing up and grunting in pain.

53

INT. BAR - NIGHT

53

Lively music plays inside the now bustling bar. Stasia drinks a shot of vodka with Tuwim and Natasza. Stasia shudders and cringes, sticking her tongue out in disgust. She picks up a lit cigarette and takes a long draw.

TUWIM

Again?

Stasia nods, then exhales a plume of smoke.

Tuwim signals to a WAITER.

Jan enters the bar, crosses to the table, drinks down his own shot of vodka.

STASIA

Where did you go?

She throws her arms around Jan, cigarette still in hand.

JAN

I just needed some air. Too much to drink I guess.

STASIA

We've only just started.

JAN

You have a show tomorrow.

STASIA

Who cares? We're celebrating!

JAN

I know. But...

STASIA

Let's stay! Let's dance!

She puts the cigarette in her mouth and leads him through an arch to a small dance area in front of a LIVE BAND.

Stasia dances beside other DRUNKEN REVELLERS, exuberantly and impressively. Jan watches, smiling.

Jan pulls Stasia in close, slow dancing now, sensual. She kisses him long and hard. Breaks away. Stares up at him, smitten. Looks around - none of this is better than him.

STASIA (CONT'D)

Let's go home.

JAN

Are you sure?

STASIA

I don't care where we are, as long
as you're there.

She smiles at him and takes his hand.

Back at the table, Tuwim and Natasza are having a lively conversation. Julian drinks down a large tumbler of liquor.

NATASZA

Why would you want to do that?

TUWIM

Why wouldn't I?

Stasia and Jan return, cosy, Stasia nestling in to Jan. Jan is doing his best to hide his pain.

TUWIM (CONT'D)

Jan! Settle this for us, old boy.
Should I pen a sprawling, epic poem
all about trains, and their
infinite beauty?

JAN

No.

He looks to Stasia. She shakes her head.

TUWIM

Oh, what do you know? Philistines,
the lot of you! We shall just have
to drink until I am as crass as you
are.

He downs a vodka and holds up fresh shots for Stasia and Jan.

STASIA

We're going.

TUWIM

No! The night is still in diapers.
You cannot both just abandon this
nascent infant we have conceived so
lovingly together.

STASIA

What on earth are you talking
about?

TUWIM

I have no idea to be honest.

NATASZA
I never know what he's saying.

TUWIM
Fine! Just go!

Tuwim picks up the script and hands it to Stasia.

TUWIM (CONT'D)
Look after our baby. We're going to
milk it for all it's worth.

JAN
You should never milk a baby,
Tuwim.

STASIA
If we have children, you are never
looking after them.

Jan is somewhat taken back by this, but it goes unnoticed as
Tuwim sticks out his tongue in reply to Stasia.

Natasza smiles and cuddles in to Tuwim. Tuwim throws up his
arms, yelling to everyone and no one:

TUWIM
More vodka! To fame and fortune!

He looks around for where his next shot might come from.

54 INT. PARIS PRINTING PRESS - NIGHT 54

Sheets upon sheets of newspaper are pulled through a large
press, the front pages all bearing Stasia's face.

55 INT. PRISON CORRIDOR - NIGHT 55

A stern-faced PRISON OFFICER stalks down the eerily quiet
corridor towards Stasia's cell.

The camera pans down to pick out his hand as it reaches into
his waistband. He withdraws a blade and the camera pans back
up to his face, focussed, intent.

The guard reaches Stasia's cell. He looks inside to her
sleeping form, her head inches from the bars.

The guard leans down, blade in hand. He grabs Stasia's hair.

She wakes with a start, terrified. Her eyes find the guard.
He puts a finger to his lips - 'shhh'.

He pulls her hair tighter, his body now obscuring our view as
he moves the blade down towards her.

56 INT. GUIGNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 56

From down the hall, the phone rings, rousing a sleeping Cécile. She looks at the space beside her. Empty, sheets untouched. She looks to the clock - nearly midnight. She sighs, disappointed but not surprised.

57 INT. GUIGNE'S STUDY - MOMENTS LATER 57

Guigne is at his desk, on the phone, paperwork before him.

GUIGNE (INTO PHONE)

I've already told them, if there was a credible threat, we would know about it. This investigation will not be dictated by the media. If anyone is putting her in danger, it is them! She stays where she is.

PRELAP: A slicing sound takes us to--

58 INT. PRISON CELL/CORRIDOR - AS PREVIOUS 58

Stasia is tensed up, eyes closed, awaiting pain or death. There is nothing. She opens her eyes.

The guard holds up a few locks of her hair to show her.

PRISON GUARD

A little something for your fans.

The guard pockets the shorn hair, then reaches back through the bars to grab another handful, and we--

MATCH CUT TO:

59 INT. JAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 59

Jan and Stasia lie in bed, two spoons, undressed and under the covers, Jan toying with her hair while Stasia reads Tuwim's script. Jan takes the ribbon and bow from the script and starts arranging it in her hair.

STASIA

What is a Gigolette? Is it a good thing?

JAN

That depends entirely on one's point of view.

She turns to kiss him. He smiles at her. Adjusts the bow and ribbon slightly in her hair.

JAN (CONT'D)

There. It's the perfect metaphor
for you. Beautiful and delicate.
With a penchant for disorder.

She slaps his chest playfully and when he flinches back, a
wave of pain comes. His body tenses up.

STASIA

Who's the delicate one?

He pants, clutching his side. Stasia grows concerned.

STASIA (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

JAN

Pass me my jacket?

STASIA

Your jacket?

JAN

Please!

She sees the jacket on a chair. Grabs it. Passes it to him.

He rummages through the pockets, Finds an ampoule of
morphine. He drains it in one. Lies back, calming.

STASIA

What is that?

She takes the ampoule from him, looks at the label.

JAN

It's nothing.

She grabs his jacket. Searches the pockets. Finds other
vials, some empty, some full.

STASIA

Morphine? Why are you taking
morphine?

JAN

It's nothing. It's... Sometimes...
it helps.

STASIA

With what?

JAN

The memories. The...the persistence
of being.

STASIA

You should have told me. I don't want secrets, Jan.

JAN

I know. I'm sorry. I know I like to talk, but I'm...I'm not always as comfortable expressing myself as you might think.

STASIA

You're a writer!

JAN

Exactly. That's how you know just how damaged I am.

She nods her understanding. Moves closer to him. Puts a hand on his cheek, her face close to his.

STASIA

Just talk to me. I want you to be able to share everything with me.

He nods. Kisses her.

STASIA (CONT'D)

No more secrets?

JAN

No more secrets.

He caresses her face, gives her a strained smile, closes his eyes. She kisses his forehead and he turns over the sleep.

Stasia sits up and puts the vials back in Jan's pocket. She stops, her fingers having fallen on something. She pulls it out. A card. The card Jan has been seen with earlier.

It is a business card. Dr Turski. She turns it over. An address is scrawled on the back.

She looks from the card to Jan's restful form.

60

INT. JAN'S STUDY - NIGHT

60

The light flicks on and Stasia crosses to Jan's desk. The room is tidy, immaculate. She searches through drawers, hunting for anything that might be unusual. Any clues.

The first two drawers yield nothing. Then, in the third, a blood-stained syringe. More empty vials.

She hunts through the drawer. Finds more - unfilled prescriptions with Turski's signature. She pulls them out, scans them. Puts them back.

She opens another drawer. Nothing. Moves to another. She pulls up. Stares down, concerned.

In the drawer is a revolver.

THE revolver.

Stasia reaches in. She picks it up and we--

CUT TO:

61 INT. GUIGNE'S STUDY - NIGHT

61

Guigne sits behind his desk, the revolver in his hands. He studies it.

A knock draws his attention to Cécile in the doorway.

CÈCILE

Are you coming to bed?

GUIGNE

Soon.

CÈCILE

Are you still thinking about her?

GUIGNE

Everyone sees her as a saint. A martyr. But she did it. She killed him. I don't understand. It makes no sense.

CÈCILE

She's said she's guilty. So what does it matter?

GUIGNE

The burden of proof still falls to me, no matter how she pleads. The probative value of confession, like this gun, like all other evidence in our possession, is all subject to the judge's own determination. It's still down to me to prove it.

CÈCILE

And you think staring at that gun all night will help? Why does it matter so much?

GUIGNE

Why does it matter? This woman murdered someone. She put a bullet through his brain.

(MORE)

GUIGNE (CONT'D)

No matter what her reasons or motives, she took the decision out of God's hands. None of us get to play God, Cécile.

CÈCILE

No, I suppose not. For some of you it's a full-time job.

Guigne has no reply.

CÈCILE (CONT'D)

I'm going to bed.

GUIGNE

I'll be in soon.

CÈCILE

No, you won't.

Cécile leaves, closing the door behind her.

Guigne sighs. Leans back. He turns the gun over in his hands.

GUIGNE

Why did you even have a gun?

He leans forward. Holds the gun out in front of him, at arm's length, looks down the barrel and--

62

EXT. FAIRGROUND - NIGHT

62

BANG!

A GUNSHOT rings out. A dull thud resounds in response.

REVEAL

a rifle, in the hands of a YOUNG MAN. He cocks the gun, pulls the trigger and another target on the SHOOTING GALLERY falls.

Across the midway, Stasia watches, fascinated by the steady cock of the hammer and fire of the gun.

Someone GRABS her, startling her out of her reverie.

It is Jan. He smiles at her, amused. She doesn't return it.

JAN

I'm sorry I'm late.

He moves in for a kiss, but she avoids it.

JAN (CONT'D)

What?! I had things to finish up.

She looks at him, trying to keep a river of emotions under the surface, and mostly failing.

BANG!

Another gunshot startles her.

JAN (CONT'D)
Are you alright?

She tries to speak, but can't. Her lip trembles.

CARNY (O.S.)
Who wants to shoot next?

Jan turns to see the CARNY behind the shooting range.

CARNY (CONT'D)
Three targets takes a prize!

JAN
She will!

Jan takes Stasia's hand, playful. Stasia stares at Jan. Shakes her head quickly, resolute.

JAN (CONT'D)
Come on, it'll be fun. If not now,
then when? There's no time but now.

This seems to strike a chord with her. She relents a little. Lets him lead her hesitantly toward the shooting gallery.

Jan takes out money and pays the Carny, and in return is passed the rifle. He places the rifle into Stasia's hand, but her eyes won't leave Jan's face. He smiles.

He moves her chin gently so she is looking at the targets. Guides the gun up with her, slow and tender. She feels him close. Looks at him again. Jan smiles, soft.

He moves his head into the crook of her neck. Her breathing is shallow, catching in her throat.

JAN (CONT'D)
Just breathe...

He puts his hand over hers, uses her thumb to cock the gun.

JAN (CONT'D)
And when you're ready, just let
go...

Her breathing steadies. Focussed. Slowly, she starts to squeeze the trigger...

...but she can't do it. She lowers the rifle. Passes it to Jan, then walks away.

After a moment of confusion, Jan rushes to catch up with her.

JAN (CONT'D)

Stasia!

She turns to him, her eyes sad and hollow.

STASIA

I know.

JAN

Know what?

A beat. Her lip trembles. She reaches into her coat and pulls out Jan's unfilled prescriptions. Slaps them against his chest. He takes hold of them. Looks at them.

STASIA

I went to see Turski.

Jan looks up. The lie, his constant omission, is over.

STASIA (CONT'D)

How long have you known?

(beat)

Is it why you stopped seeing me?
Why you kept pushing me away? Has
it been that long?

Her chest jerks as the tears come, her whole body shuddering, hyperventilating as she faces the reality in front of her.

Jan tries to hold her, but she pushes him away.

STASIA (CONT'D)

No!

JAN

Stasia!

He moves for her again, but again she fights him off.

STASIA

You're not even going to fight it?

JAN

There's nothing they can do.

STASIA

That is not true! That's... He told
me there was hope.

She grabs the papers, finds a specific one. Points.

STASIA (CONT'D)

He told me... They can help you. In
France. There's hope. But you've
given up?!

JAN

I've fought wars before, Stasia.
I'm not doing it again.

STASIA

What about me?!

JAN

What about you?! You get to live!

STASIA

You think watching you die is a
life? Julian was right about you.
Your ego really doesn't leave room
for anyone else, does it?

JAN

You're not the star of this show,
Stasia. This is my curtain call,
not yours!

Stasia cannot believe what he is saying.

STASIA

You self-obsessed, narcissistic...
coward!

JAN

Only Stasia Uminska could make
someone else's death all about her.
I'm the one who has to die!

STASIA

And how romantic that must be for
you. To die in your prime. How
predictably poetic for you. You
don't even care about what you're
leaving behind!

JAN

Of course I do.

STASIA

Not as much as you care about
yourself, clearly.

JAN

Well, just think of all the columns
you'll feature in when I go. All
that extra attention you'll get as
the poor starlet who watched her
boyfriend die. I bet those victuals
will nourish you far more than I
ever could.

STASIA

If this is who you really are, then
maybe you deserve to die.

This one cuts Jan, but he refuses to show it.

JAN

Life is death, Stasia. It's suffering and pain. And when you've seen as much of it as I have you realise it's an inevitability that's not worth fighting.

STASIA

Well, then you're going to die alone, Jan. Because I'm not going to just watch you surrender.

(a beat, disgusted)

Some soldier you are.

Tears stream down her face as she walks off down the midway.

Jan watches her go. He turns to walk the other way, but can't. He stops, completely torn as to which way to go.

ACROSS THE MIDWAY

Stasia tries to hold herself together but the tears are streaming down her face as she makes her way through the CROWDS. She wipes the tears away, tries her best to be stoic.

JAN (O.S.)

Stasia, wait!

She keeps on walking. Jan moves into view, pushing through the crowds, desperate to reach her.

JAN (CONT'D)

Stasia!

She ignores him, continuing on her way until he catches up with her and spins her around.

Stasia immediately slaps him in the face. Hard. A few passers-by pull up, stunned, stopping to watch for more fireworks.

Jan and Stasia stare at each other for a moment.

JAN (CONT'D)

I'll go. To Paris. I'll fight.

STASIA

How can I believe you?

JAN

Because without you, I'm nothing.

He looks around, spots some weeds protruding from the earth and dirt beside him. He plucks one of the weeds out, stalked, small bright leaves flowering on one side.

He goes down to one knee, folding the two ends of the weed round as he does, tying it off to create a circle. A ring, the small flower almost forming the stone.

He looks up at Stasia.

JAN (CONT'D)
No more lies. I'll fight. I
promise.

He holds up the 'ring'. Stasia laughs in spite of herself.

She puts a hand to her mouth, overcome with emotion. Jan stands, putting the 'ring' on her finger. A smattering of people who have stopped to watch break into applause.

Stasia wraps her arms around Jan. Tight. Like she might never let go. Until a thought takes her, something more pressing.

STASIA
We have to get you to Paris.

JAN
It's not that easy.

STASIA
Yes it is. We just go. Now. Today.

JAN
Stasia, we need money. More than I
have.

STASIA
(overlapping)
I don't care. I don't care.
Whatever it takes.

JAN
Then first we need to find a doctor
who can take me.

He looks at her earnestly and we--

CUT TO:

63 INT. DR ROUSSY'S OFFICE - DAY

63

DR ROUSSY, 49 - his slow and precise movements and the calm that underpins them may be the reason he looks younger - sits at his desk doing paperwork. There is a knock at the door.

ANNA (O.S.)
Dr. Roussy?

Roussy looks up to see Guigne in the doorway, hat in hand. Anna Levassor stands beside him, his escort.

ROUSSY

Yes?

GUIGNE

I'm Donat Guigne, I'm the prosecutor--

ROUSSY

I know who you are.

GUIGNE

May I come in?

ROUSSY

You're a prosecutor, not a vampire. You don't need my permission.

Roussy carries on working. Guigne edges in to the room. Anna, eyeing Guigne with distrust, leaves them.

GUIGNE

I have some questions regarding Stanislaw Uminska.

ROUSSY

I'm sure you do.

GUIGNE

What can you tell me about the night Jan Zyznowski was killed?

ROUSSY

Nothing you don't already know.

GUIGNE

Were you there that night?

ROUSSY

Mr. Guigne, I have been led to believe Miss Uminska has confessed to the murder of Jan Zyznowski, correct?

Guigne nods.

ROUSSY (CONT'D)

Then I'm not quite sure what you need me for.

GUIGNE

Dr. Roussy, do you understand the precedent this could set if she were to be found innocent? People could use mercy as an excuse for any murder.

ROUSSY

Jan was a dead man before he even walked in here. She did everything she could to keep that man alive. Everything. So if you want a comment from me, you have it.

Guigne considers a question he has failed to ask.

GUIGNE

Dr Roussy, did anyone actually witness her pull the trigger?

ROUSSY

No. But either way, does it really matter? Isn't the result the same?

GUIGNE

His life or death was God's choice to make. No one else's.

ROUSSY

She confessed Mr. Guigne. You've already won. So I'm not going to make your job any easier for you.

Guigne stays where he is, unused to such dismissals.

ROUSSY (CONT'D)

Good day, Mr. Guigne.

Roussy continues his work, the conversation clearly over.

64

INT. LEGAL OFFICES - DAY

64

A frustrated Guigne enters the well-appointed prosecution offices, leaving the frenzied noise of reporters outside.

Philippe and several ASSISTANTS work at their desks. A number of different newspapers, each baring photographs of Stasia and Jan, are evident throughout the room.

Guigne moves swiftly through the room, passing Philippe.

GUIGNE

(as he passes)

What do you have from Warsaw?

PHILIPPE

Well--

GUIGNE

Walk with me.

Guigne continues on to his office. Philippe scrambles together some paperwork and follows.

PHILIPPE

Uh, well--

65

INT. GUIGNE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

65

Guigne enters his own office, grand and tidy but plain. Prosaic. He hangs up his hat. Philippe is close behind.

PHILIPPE

There's not a great deal we didn't already know.

GUIGNE

I'd like you to look into whether anyone might have had reason to want Zyznowski dead.

PHILIPPE

Yes, of course.

Philippe finds a relevant page while Guigne pours a drink.

PHILIPPE (CONT'D)

One thing I did find interesting was that Miss Uminska sold almost everything she owned before they came to Paris.

GUIGNE

Why?

PHILIPPE

To pay for treatment it seems.

GUIGNE

How does that help us right now?

Philippe doesn't know.

GUIGNE (CONT'D)

Wait, so she was penniless when she killed him?

PHILIPPE

Um...I would...uh...yes?

GUIGNE

Would she have stood to make money from his death? Life insurance? Assets?

PHILIPPE

I didn't--

GUIGNE

For heaven's sake, Philippe, do you need me to do your job for you?

Guigne crosses to his desk. Sits. Philippe composes himself.

PHILIPPE

*No. No...It does seem, though...
that she really did just want to
save him. She seems so repentant.*

GUIGNE

*She's an actress, Philippe. Of
course she seems repentant.*

PHILIPPE

*It just doesn't seem like this
should be classed as murder.*

GUIGNE

*Ending a life is murder. The law
says so very clearly.*

PHILIPPE

*Well, with due respect, sir, maybe
the law needs to change?*

GUIGNE

*And maybe you need to go and do
your job instead of postulating
excuses for guilty women.*

PHILIPPE

Yes, sir.

Philippe slinks out, leaving Guigne to ruminate. He looks down at his desk. There is a photograph of Stasia there.

He pulls it out - a promo shot for The Little Gigolette. He studies it, hoping for an answer it can never give.

66 EXT. MUSIC HALL THEATRE - EVENING

66

Crowds of THEATREGOERS make their way into a bustling theatre. The marquee above the entrance reads: THE LITTLE GIGOLETTE and STANISLAWA UMINKSA.

On another panel are the words: OPENING NIGHT and SOLD OUT.

67 INT. MUSIC HALL BACKSTAGE - EVENING

67

CAST MEMBERS wait in the wings. Further back, Tuwim and Szyfman wait nervously. Szyfman touches his own mouth.

SZYFMAN

I feel sick.

TUWIM

*That's probably all the arse-
licking you've been doing.*

SZYFMAN
 (checking the time)
 I can't do this.

TUWIM
 She'll be here.

68 INT. MUSIC HALL AUDITORIUM - EVENING 68
 The majority of AUDIENCE MEMBERS have taken their seats.

69 INT. MUSIC HALL BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS 69
 Stasia enters dashing for her dressing room.

SZYFMAN
 Two minutes until curtain.
 Szyfman and Tuwim follow Stasia, but she barely notices them.

70 INT. MUSIC HALL DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 70
 Stasia dashes in and hurriedly begins to change into her costume for the show. Szyfman and Tuwim join her in the room.

SZYFMAN
 It's opening night, Stasia!

STASIA
 It's opening night... Julian can say a few words to woo them.

SZYFMAN
 I know things are hard, but it's not just your reputation on the line here.

TUWIM
 It's okay. I'll delay them.

Szyfman looks from Tuwim to Stasia. Takes a breath.

SZYFMAN
 Don't do this to me again, Stasia. We can recast you know.

STASIA
 No, no! No! Please! I need this, Arnold. Please.

Szyfman begrudgingly nods, understanding. He turns to Tuwim.

SZYFMAN
 One minute. And make it funny.

TUWIM

As if you even need to ask.

Szyfman leaves. Tuwim turns to Stasia who is now dressed.

TUWIM (CONT'D)

Are you alright?

The edifice crumbles and Stasia breaks down into tears. Tuwim moves to her, takes her in his arms, comforting.

STASIA

He's...And there's still no word from Paris. And...I'm so scared, he'll... It's so unfair. It's...

TUWIM

Only the good die young, my little gigolette. That's why all old people are miserable arseholes.

Stasia manages to laugh at this in spite of herself. She breaks away from Tuwim, wiping her eyes.

TUWIM (CONT'D)

It's far from over yet. Jan's too stubborn to die this young. Now, put some colour on that beautiful face of yours and go and show the world you're not giving up either.

She nods. Composes herself.

TUWIM (CONT'D)

That's my girl.

Stasia takes a deep breath, almost believing she is okay.

71

INT. MUSIC HALL STAGE WINGS - LATER

71

Stasia waits in the wings, stage-ready. All sound is MUTED, distant, save for Stasia's breathing.

On stage Tuwim milks the crowd. Stasia watches as he puts an arm out towards her, announcing her entrance. As Tuwim exits off the far side, we follow Stasia as she glides on to the--

STAGE

The sound of music bleeds in as the bright lights hit her. She is back in her element. She lets out a long, high note which she holds majestically. At the end of the note, she pauses to rapturous applause.

The song resumes and Stasia bursts into an energetic routine.

AUDITORIUM

The audience are entranced. Jan watches, mesmerised as ever.

Until the pain arrives. A grunt. His breathing changes.

He closes his eyes, grips the armrest as sweat starts to bead his forehead. Other audience members begin to notice.

He gets up and makes his way along the row, excusing himself.

Jan locks eyes with Stasia on stage, between verses. She struggles to mask her concern. He gives her a smile and signals to her as best he can that he is okay.

A tear falls down her cheek as she continues, the audience drawn in by her performance even more.

Jan makes it to the aisle and heads for the exit.

72 INT. MUSIC HALL TOILETS - MOMENTS LATER 72

Jan crashes into the toilets, out of breath. The sound of Stasia's song can be heard through the walls.

He pulls the leather morphine case out of his pocket, fumbling it to the floor in his haste.

He opens the case, then takes his tie off, wrapping it around his arm as a tourniquet. He lifts up the syringe to find...

...the needle is broken. He breathes heavily.

JAN
(under his breath)
Shit.

He looks around the fetid room.

73 INT. MUSIC HALL AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS 73

The song continues. Stasia has been joined by other cast members, some dancing, some singing - a stunning spectacle.

74 INT. MUSIC HALL TOILETS - CONTINUOUS 74

Jan looks around for something, anything he can use.

He spots one of the tiles is cracked. Moves to it. Kicks at it until the small broken section falls away. He picks it up, examines the jagged point.

He brings the jagged edge to his arm. Pokes it into his vein.

Blood flows out of the wound. He pulls out the morphine vial and the pipette beside it. Draws out fluid. He inserts the pipette into his arm and squeezes the morphine into the vein.

75 INT. MUSIC HALL STAGE - CONTINUOUS 75

The song reaches a crescendo, Stasia's emotions fueling an unbeatable performance. It is a thing of pure beauty.

76 INT. MUSIC HALL TOILETS - CONTINUOUS 76

Sat on the floor, Jan leans back against the wall, relief flooding him, the squalid surroundings a sharp contrast to the beauty of the theatre.

He stems his bleeding arm with his hand.

Through the walls we hear the song come to a dramatic end. The audience bursts into fervent applause.

77 INT. CAR - LATER 77

Stasia drives, a drowsy Jan slumbering in the passenger seat.

78 INT. JAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 78

Stasia sits on the bed, the phone in her hand, waiting for a connection. The phone connects. Stasia keeps her voice low.

STASIA
Arnold? It's Stasia.

79 INT. JAN'S STUDY - CONTINUOUS 79

Jan sits at his desk. He stares at a framed picture of Stasia - the picture she posed for in this same room.

80 INT. JAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS 80

Stasia listens as Szyfman talks.

SZYFMAN (ON PHONE)
I wish I could help more but I don't have the money to give.

STASIA
I'll do anything.

SZYFMAN (ON PHONE)
Never say those words to a man, Gigolette. I do have an idea though. We do our Romeo and Juliet.
(MORE)

SZYFMAN (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
The public adores you now more than
ever.

STASIA
I don't care what they think of me.

SZYFMAN (ON PHONE)
Still, the money we could make now
would get you to Paris ten times
over. No question.

81 INT. JAN'S STUDY - CONTINUOUS 81

Jan drains a glass of liquor, then moves to one of the desk drawers with purpose. He opens it, but it is nearly empty. He puts his hand where the missing item should be, confused.

Jan opens other drawers. Nothing. He goes back to the first drawer. Rifles through. He finds something. Retrieves it.

82 INT. JAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS 82

Stasia continues her phone call.

STASIA
Just tell me when we can begin.

SZYFMAN (ON PHONE)
I'll make the calls first thing.

STASIA
Thank you.

Stasia hangs up the phone and puts her head in her hand.

83 INT. JAN'S STUDY - CONTINUOUS 83

Jan holds a single bullet, pinched between two fingers. He studies it. But the moment has passed. He closes his hand around the bullet and shuts his eyes, resigned.

84 INT. JAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS 84

Stasia opens the top drawer of her dresser. She pulls out a nightdress to wear, revealing Jan's gun hidden beneath.

She checks she is alone then swiftly moves the gun to the bottom of the drawer, piling garments on top to conceal it.

She pushes the drawer shut.

MATCH CUT TO:

85 INT. GUIGNE'S OFFICE - DAY

85

Guigne shuts his desk drawer. He locks it and places the key in his pocket as he rises from his chair. Philippe, who sits across from Guigne, also rises, papers in hand.

GUIGNE

We keep it brief. Explain we are pursuing the death penalty and that we have no other suspects at this time.

Guigne grabs his own pile of papers from his desk and signals for Philippe to go ahead.

As Philippe walks through the door, a piece of paper slips free from his stack and drifts to the floor behind him.

86 INT. LEGAL OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

86

Guigne picks up the piece of paper.

GUIGNE

Philippe...

He makes to hand the paper back to Philippe but pulls up as he reads it's contents.

INSERT

Scrawled on the paper and underlined twice are the words:
STASIA BROUGHT GUN TO PARIS, NOT JAN

BACK TO SCENE

Guigne fixes Philippe with a serious look.

GUIGNE (CONT'D)

What is this?

Philippe realises what it is and quickly snatches it away.

PHILIPPE

Oh, it's just...uh...

GUIGNE

Why didn't you mention this?

PHILIPPE

Well, I, I just, I didn't...

GUIGNE

Were you withholding information from me?

PHILIPPE

It really...it...didn't seem relevant at the time, sir.

GUIGNE

Get your belongings together.

PHILIPPE

Excuse me?

GUIGNE

Clear your desk and collect your belongings.

PHILIPPE

But, sir...

GUIGNE

Now.

Guigne stares at Philippe, waiting for him to comply.

The other investigators and assistants have stopped to watch the exchange. Philippe looks around for help but finds none.

Philippe moves to his desk. He gets his things together, loading them into a box. Guigne watches, emotionless.

Guigne addresses the other assistants.

GUIGNE (CONT'D)

I realise there are some of you here, maybe many of you, who do not believe Miss Uminska should be found guilty. But let me remind you, that when it comes to the law, our own beliefs and personal convictions are irrelevant. Stanislaw Uminska might look innocent, she might be a beautiful and enigmatic star, but she is also a murderer. Do not let that fact escape you for a single moment.

Philippe has finished packing, his work files left out on his desk. He looks to Guigne. Guigne says nothing. Just waits.

Resigned, Philippe reluctantly heads for the door. The rest of the team watch in stunned silence. Once he is gone:

GUIGNE (CONT'D)

Alright, back to work!

Guigne heads for the door. As he opens it, we--

CUT TO:

87 INT. GUIGNE'S HOME - NIGHT 87

Guigne opens the front door and steps into the dimly-lit hallway. He hangs up his hat. Listens. The house is silent.

GUIGNE

Cécile?

He walks along the hall to the dining room. Looks inside.

On the table is a lavish dinner set for one, the food covered with a cloche. Candles sit unlit in the centre of the table.

88 INT. GUIGNE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 88

Guigne crosses the room. He pulls back the cloche revealing a sumptuous repast. In the centre of the table is a handwritten note. He picks it up. Reads: HAPPY ANNIVERSARY.

Guigne closes his eyes. Sighs.

89 INT. GUIGNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 89

Cécile lies on the bed, facing away from the door, her eyes open, a single bedside lamp glowing.

Guigne edges the door open and steps gingerly inside. Stops.

GUIGNE

I'm sorry I missed dinner.

(no response)

It was a long day. I had to let Philippe go.

(still no response)

I feel quite rotten about it.

Cécile spits a contemptuous laugh. Wipes away a tear before it can form.

GUIGNE (CONT'D)

What's funny?

Finally, Cécile turns to him.

CÈCILE

Is this your apology?

Guigne doesn't know what to say.

CÈCILE (CONT'D)

I ask you for one evening a year. I don't think that's unreasonable.

One evening. But you forgot, because yet again you are lost in the world of Stasia Uminska.

(MORE)

CÈCILE (CONT'D)

*And now you are here, it is still
the only thing on your mind.*

GUIGNE

I don't think you--

CÈCILE

She shouldn't even be on trial!

GUIGNE

That's a ludicrous thing to say.

CÈCILE

*All she did was love that man. I
can see why you might think that is
a crime, though.*

GUIGNE

Cécile...

Cécile turns back over.

CÈCILE

Good night, Donat.

She turns out the light.

90

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT

90

Stasia lies in bed, awake, unkempt, her face drawn.

A hushed voice comes to her from the cell behind her.

FEMALE INMATE (O.S.)

*Psst. Hey. Writer killer. I've got
a blade here with your name on it.*

The inmate sniggers, quiet and menacing. There is silence for
a moment. Then...

THUDDING, shockingly loud, as the inmate bangs on the wall
between the cells. Stasia doesn't even flinch.

FEMALE INMATE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Your time will come, pretty girl.

STASIA

(whispered, to herself)

I hope so.

Stasia stares ahead for a few moments longer, then turns over
on to her other side. She comes face to face with...

A MAN. Despite the darkness, it is clear it is Jan, lying on
the bed beside her, his eyes wide, desperate. He screams.

91 INT. JAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

91

Stasia is woken with a start. From the darkness comes noises. The sound of vomiting. A toilet flushes. Movement.

Stasia reaches for the light, flicks it on, revealing...

Jan walking softly across the now mostly sparse room, anything of worth having been sold. Stasia calms.

STASIA

Are you alright?

JAN

It's been a long, dark night of the bowl.

Stasia smiles as Jan climbs into bed.

STASIA

How long have you been waiting to say that for?

JAN

Oh, about two hours or so.

Stasia caresses him tenderly. A beat.

STASIA

You can't go alone.

JAN

To the bathroom?

STASIA

To Paris.

JAN

Darling, this whole trip is predicated on you being Juliet tomorrow night. And then every other night. They've paid you. They need you. Your cast needs you.

STASIA

We could--

JAN

It's not an option. And I won't let you. You'll have no career left if you pull out now. So, no...

She puts a hand to his face, tender.

STASIA

Then I shall cut you out in little stars. And see you in Paris soon.

Stasia kisses him, as though she might never let him go.

92 INT. JAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING 92

Bright sunlight streams in. Stasia sits on the edge of the bed. Numb. Lost. Alone.

93 I/E. PARIS TRAIN STATION - NIGHT 93

Jan alights the train amongst a flurry of PASSENGERS, a single suitcase in hand. In his weakened state, he struggles to walk through the crowd, buffeted every which way.

SUPER: PARIS, MAY 1924

Finally, Jan has to support himself against a pillar. He catches his breath as he waits for the crowd to pass him by.

94 INT. PARIS HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT 94

A simple and sparse hotel room. The door opens and Jan enters. He crosses to the bed and puts his suitcase down on top. He takes a moment to look at his surroundings.

--He puts some clothes neatly in drawers.

--He puts his shoes under the bed, perfectly aligned.

--He places a quire of paper and a single gold pen on the nightstand, making sure they are straight and tidy.

Jan sits on the bed, exhausted.

He opens up his leather morphine case, pulls out a vial. Empty. Pulls out another. Shakes it to be sure. The same.

Jan opens the drawer of the nightstand and reaches to the back, pulling out a bundle of cash, making sure he has every last bit. Checks it. Pockets it.

He knocks back a glass of liquor and heads for the door.

95 INT. JAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT 95

Stasia sits at her dresser. She puts on her make up, slowly and deliberately, in front of the mirror.

96 EXT. TEATR NARODOWY - NIGHT 96

The marquee is emblazoned with ROMEO & JULIET.

- 97 INT. AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS 97
 AUDIENCE MEMBERS file in and take their seats.
 The camera tracks away from them, pulling back until we are--
 ON STAGE
 --behind the curtain. STAGEHANDS, make final checks to the breathtaking set, moving pieces of scenery into position and flying others out of the way.
 Szyfman watches from the wings.
- 98 INT. JAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT 98
 Stasia puts on jewellery, slow and composed, her face blank.
- 99 EXT. PARIS STREET - NIGHT 99
 Jan walks to a pharmacy. Closed. He sighs. Looks around. Nothing of use. Until he spots a dark alley off to his right.
 He touches a hand to his pocket, the money beneath the fabric, glances around, then heads for the alleyway.
- 100 INT. TEATR NARODOWY AUDITORIUM - NIGHT 100
 The audience are in their seats, hushed, ready for the performance to begin. They wait, expectantly.
- 101 INT. STAGE WINGS - CONTINUOUS 101
 Szyfman looks at the empty stage, the curtain still drawn. The STAGE MANAGER is next to him, waiting for his command.
 SZYFMAN
 Call it.
 The Stage Manager nods sadly and walks backstage. Szyfman meanwhile heads for the curtain.
- 102 INT. TRAIN - NIGHT 102
 Stasia sits on a crowded train, as it pulls out of Warsaw, two large suitcases close to her.
- 103 INT. TEATR NARODOWY - NIGHT 103
 Szyfman stands at the front of the stage, staring out at the empty auditorium, as the crew dismantles the set behind him.

A filthy, rat-infested back alley. Feculent. Diseased.

Jan approaches two FIGURES, both of them lost to the shadows.

As they come into view, we see they are a pair of low-life SLEAZEBALLS. They eye the weak Jan like prey.

Jan says a few words. Holds up an empty vial of morphine.

The two men look at each other. The larger, tall and wiry, checks their surroundings. Nods. Asks Jan something.

Jan gives a cursory glance around. Pulls out his money.

The larger man slams his head into Jan's face, taking Jan straight to the dirty, damp ground. He follows this with a vicious kick to the stomach. Jan cries out in pain.

The smaller man grabs up Jan's dropped money.

Jan gets to one elbow, trying for the money. Before he can move further, the larger man drags Jan to a sitting position and punches him hard to the face, leaving Jan semi-conscious.

While the smaller man makes off with the money, the larger man checks Jan for anything of worth. Finds Jan's watch. Strips it from his wrist. Jan looks his assailant in the eye, weak but resolute. Jan gets an elbow to the face in return.

The larger man moves off, following his departed compatriot. Jan rolls over, pulls himself up on to all fours.

JAN

Hey!

The larger man turns, surprised to see Jan struggling to his feet. The man pulls out a switchblade, flicks the blade out.

MUGGER

Stay down.

Jan makes it to his feet and staggers towards the man. The man backs away, knife held firmly in front of him.

Jan steadies his gait, gaining more speed with every step.

The large man runs, and Jan does his best to give chase. He doesn't make it far. Jan pulls up, out of breath.

In agony, Jan uses a wall to lower himself first to his knees, then to a seated position.

He takes a few deep breaths. He looks at his less than salubrious surroundings and his eyes flutter closed.

105 I/E. PARIS TRAIN STATION - MORNING

105

Stasia walks along the platform, struggling with her luggage, holding it close, tight, glancing around nervously.

A loud bang makes her jump, the noise reverberating around the platform. She pulls up and looks around to see...

...a freight train being loaded by several RAIL WORKERS on another platform. They laugh and smoke. One HEAVY-BROWED WORKER regards Stasia with interest from across the tracks.

Stasia looks around, at once concerned and embarrassed. She takes a quick confirmatory glance into her bag and sees...

...the gun nestled inside. It's presence emboldens her. She steadies her nerves and hauls her luggage towards the exit.

106 INT. HOTEL LOBBY - MORNING

106

Stasia waits anxiously beside her bags at the desk.

A smilingly attentive FEMALE HOTEL CLERK returns. She does her best to speak in English for Stasia.

CLERK

I am sorry, it seems Mr Zyznowski did not, uh, return last night.

STASIA

What do you mean?

CLERK

Uh, I...uh...I do not know if I can say any more.

STASIA

What does that mean? Listen, my fiancé is ill. He is gravely ill. I need to see him. You understand?

The clerk glances around, clearly unsure.

Stasia pulls out some money, slides it across the desk.

STASIA (CONT'D)

Please!

The clerk looks at the money, then to Stasia. The clerk touches the money back towards Stasia.

CLERK

There was an incident. Last night...

107 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

107

Stasia rushes along a corridor, desperate. She looks through a doorway, nothing. Backs quickly to the next. Still nothing.

Stasia moves on. She reaches another room just as...

...Anna Levassor exits it. The two women collide, but it barely stalls Stasia. She looks past Anna, into the room, but there is no sign of Jan. She turns to Anna.

STASIA

Jan Zyznowski?

The nurse points to down the hall.

ANNA

Salle soixante trois.

STASIA

I don't understand...

ANNA

Sixty three.

Stasia dashes off down the hall.

108 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

108

Stasia enters to see Jan, in bed, eyes closed, his face mottled with purple bruising, cuts cleaving the skin below.

She stops in her tracks. Jan opens his eyes, a slow laborious task. But the sight of Stasia brings a smile to his face.

JAN

(hoarse)

You should see the other guy.
Absolutely fine, not a scratch on
him. Very ugly though, so I think I
have the moral victory.

He gives her his best smile. Stasia crosses to him, lightly runs her fingers over the gnarled skin of his face.

STASIA

I told you, you shouldn't have come
alone.

JAN

Oh yes. I forgot about your
training in the martial arts.

STASIA

I will hit you.

Jan smiles. Stasia strokes his hair, studies his face.

STASIA (CONT'D)
What happened?

JAN
I was celebrating. I had some drinks and things just got a little out of hand.

STASIA
Celebrating? You got this drinking?

He nods.

STASIA (CONT'D)
What were you celebrating?

JAN
It's good news. I saw Dr. Roussy. They can operate this week and then the radium therapy can start. He has total faith. Says I'll be home in no time.

STASIA
Really?

JAN
Really.

She covers her mouth, overcome with emotion. When she kisses his face, he lets out a groan of pain. Smiles. Studies her.

JAN (CONT'D)
Poor old Szyfman. I thought you might at least do the first show for him. But I can't say I'm sad you didn't.

STASIA
So what now?

JAN
We get out of here. And we celebrate. We enjoy Paris.

109 INT. TAXI - EVENING

109

Stasia sits with Jan in the back of a taxi, kissing him longingly. The DRIVER looks spots them in his rearview mirror, and shakes his head in disapproval.

STASIA
I missed you.

JAN
It was barely 24 hours.

STASIA

That's 24 hours too long.

She kisses him again. The Driver clears his throat loudly to signal his disapproval. Stasia and Jan can't help but laugh. She takes his hand. Cuddles into him.

The taxi pulls up outside a bustling bar.

DRIVER

Monsieur.

JAN

This is it. The best bar in Paris.

STASIA

Is this where you came last night?

JAN

Last night?

STASIA

Yes. Celebrating.

JAN

Oh, yes. Yes, uh, no. No, that was somewhere else.

He puts his hand to his pockets. Realises something.

JAN (CONT'D)

I don't have my money. I must have left it at the hotel.

STASIA

But you haven't been back to the hotel.

JAN

Then I must have spent it. Now pay the man, so we can paint this town red, yes?

He smiles, kisses her cheek and then climbs out of the car, leaving Stasia confused and unnerved.

110 INT. CABARET BAR - NIGHT

110

Stasia and Jan sit in a booth watching a cabaret show. They laugh and cheer, cocktails in front of them.

Jan whispers something to Stasia. She laughs. Caresses him. Watches him watching the show and enjoying every minute.

The show ends and they stand to applaud. Jan downs his drink and calls over a WAITER for more alcohol.

Jan turns and kisses Stasia excitably.

111 INT. DANCEFLOOR - NIGHT 111

Lively music plays. In a series of shots we see Jan and Stasia dance together amongst a sea of REVELLERS, eyes only on each other. At times exuberant, at others slow.

112 INT. BAR - NIGHT 112

The bar is closing. Jan and Stasia stand at the bar, close.

STASIA

Things are going to be okay, aren't they?

JAN

Of course they will.

He smiles, brushes away a rogue hair from her face.

JAN (CONT'D)

I'll be right back.

He turns towards the lavatories, but only makes it a few steps. He turns slowly back to Stasia and she gives him an adoring smile.

And then Jan's eyes roll to the whites, his legs buckle and his head connects with the bar with a sickening thud.

113 INT. PRISON VISITING ROOM - DAY 113

Guigne sits in front of a vacant Stasia. A GUARD watches on.

GUIGNE

He was a compulsive liar, wasn't he?

Stasia looks up, taken back by the comment, but only briefly. Then she is back to staring at the table between them.

GUIGNE (CONT'D)

Is that why you did it? Was it the lies? Or something else? Something more? You know, the whole world believes the stories. Your perfect relationship. But nothing's perfect, is it? He controlled you. Manipulated you. Bent you to his will. Your friend Tuwim said as much himself.

(seeing her surprise)

Oh, don't worry, he's come here defending you. Defending Jan too.

(MORE)

GUIGNE (CONT'D)

But it's my job to look between the lines. And so I ask myself, why did Jan lie? Pushing and pulling you like the tides. And how did you feel when you discovered those lies? These injustices.

Stasia looks away. Silent tears fall. Her lips trembles.

Guigne looks uncomfortable, almost rueful, seeing this. He goes to say something. Changes his mind. He checks the time.

GUIGNE (CONT'D)

Good day, Miss Uminska.

Guigne stands, gathers his belongings and heads out into--

114 INT. PRISON CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

114

--where he is surprised to find Tuwim waiting.

TUWIM

Bravo. You really know how to speak to the ladies. I think she likes you. She couldn't shut up. May I?

GUIGNE

She's all yours. What's left of her, anyway.

He walks off down the corridor, but Tuwim's voice stops him.

TUWIM

You know, not all lies are borne of cruelty, Mr Guigne. When the truth is so insidious, deception may just be a kindness.

115 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - EVENING

115

Jan lies in a bed, which is wheeled along a corridor by NURSES. Stasia follows, holding Jan's hand, nervous.

They reach a pair of swinging doors and the nurses push the bed through. Stasia releases Jan's hand, stops. She lets the doors swing closed and watches through a small rectangular window as Jan's form disappears towards the operating room.

116 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

116

Stasia sleeps on a row of chairs. The sound of horrifying screams wakes her. She looks up, instantly alert.

NURSES, including Anna, rush through the double doors. Stasia tries to follow, but Anna stops her. Stasia can only look on as another desperate scream emanates from the operating room.

117 INT. OPERATING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 117

Jan is on the operating table, surrounded by the operating team - DR. PAUL (his surgeon), an ASSISTANT SURGEON and NURSES in their scrubs. His abdomen is open, skin and muscle peeled back. The operation is in progress, brutal, primitive.

But Jan is AWAKE.

He is struggling to move, as members of the panicked medical team hold him down, some of them shouting commands in French.

Blood flows from the open wound, his skin clamped in place, his liver visible amongst the gore and other viscera.

The nurses enter to offer assistance. Several of them hold Jan down, freeing up the ANAESTHETIST to administer more anaesthetic. It subdues Jan, then renders him unconscious.

The room begins to calm. The surgeons take a moment to compose themselves before returning to their task - focussing on Jan's insides, a butcher's slab of offal and ichor.

118 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT 118

Stasia sits, waiting, every nerve on edge, terrified.

119 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - MORNING 119

Many hours have passed, but Stasia has not moved. She is still wide awake, wired, the adrenaline failing to subside.

A noise takes her attention to the double doors. Jan's bed is wheeled out into the corridor by two nurses, a third following behind. Stasia rushes over to them and looks down at Jan's unconscious form.

STASIA

Jan?

The nurses move the bed into Jan's room. Stasia tries to follow, but the third nurse holds her at the door.

NURSE

Please wait.

The nurse moves inside and the door shuts. Stasia watches through a window as they prepare Jan's room for his recovery.

120 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

120

Stasia sits in a chair beside Jan's bed, her hand on his. She hasn't slept in hours, maybe days. Jan is asleep.

Stasia pulls up his night shirt to reveal a jagged, vicious wound, sutured shut. It runs from his sternum almost to his naval then runs diagonally down towards his right hip.

A knock on the door makes Stasia jump. She quickly pulls down his shirt and looks up to see Dr. Roussy in the doorway. His face kind, inquisitive almost. Stasia looks at him earnestly.

ROUSSY
How is he doing?

STASIA
He's sleeping mostly. But there is a lot of pain.

ROUSSY
I spoke to the surgeon this morning.
(he considers his words)
He isn't completely happy with the healing process. He has suggested waiting a little longer before I start the therapy.

STASIA
How much longer?

ROUSSY
I don't know. We have to wait and see.

STASIA
It will cure him though, yes?

ROUSSY
Radium therapy is experimental.
(beat)
The truth is we don't know.

Stasia nods. Trying her best to be stoic.

STASIA
The morphine doesn't seem to be helping. He's always in pain.

ROUSSY
I'll talk to the nurses.

STASIA
Thank you.

He gives her a polite smile, then leaves her to her thoughts.

121 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - SERIES OF SHOTS

121

--Jan cries out in agony. Stasia stands by the door screaming for the nurses who finally rush in to offer assistance.

--Stasia gives a sedated Jan a bed bath.

--Night time. Stasia sleeps folded up into a small chair beside Jan's bed.

--Stasia shaves a heavy-eyed Jan. She rinses the blade, turns back. He beckons her closer. She leans in. He rubs his face across hers, smearing lather over her. She stares at him in open-mouthed but amused shock. Jan looks proud of himself.

--Stasia inspects Jan's wound. It looks infected.

--Anna Levassor shows Stasia how to prepare and administer morphine injections.

--Stasia feeds Jan who does his best to smile and make jokes. Stasia wipes sweat from his brow between mouthfuls.

GUIGNE (PRELAP)

Wait, wait, wait. Go back.

122 INT. GUIGNE'S OFFICE - DAY

122

Guigne stands in his office, mid-pace.

His new deputy, DUPUIS, sits facing Guigne's empty chair from across the desk. The newspaper in his hands shows a picture of Stasia and Jan in Warsaw, smiling, happy, healthy.

DUPUIS

Uh..."never left the hospital?"
"Fed him meals and wiped the sweat from his brow?"

GUIGNE

No, no, the morphine.

DUPUIS

Oh, uh...
(he reads)
"...struck up a close friendship with a nurse, Anna Levassor, who showed Miss Uminska how to administer morphine to her moribund fiancé."

GUIGNE

She's hiding something.
(off Dupuis' look)
Miss Levassor. I thought as much when I met her. Why would she teach Stasia to administer morphine?

DUPUIS

It doesn't say.

GUIGNE

No, of course it doesn't say. But we need to find out.

Guigne grabs the newspaper. Looks at it.

GUIGNE (CONT'D)

Why is this even news? It's like an advertisement for clearing her name.

Guigne shakes his head. He moves to sit at his desk. Reads.

GUIGNE (CONT'D)

"Her love, devotion and constant optimism gave Zyznowski new hope of winning the battle against the disease."

(he looks to Dupuis)

She really stayed at his side all that time?

DUPUIS

As far as I know, once she arrived at the hospital, she barely left.

Guigne flips the newspaper over to view the top half of the page. He stares at the photo of Stasia and sighs, maybe starting to see some grey amongst the black and the white.

123 EXT. COURTROOM - DAY

123

Guigne and Dupuis arrive at the court. They are met with boos and jeers from a small group of PROTESTORS, mostly women, who stand outside the courtroom, armed with FREE STASIA placards.

Guigne and Dupuis fight their way through, the former collected and focussed, the latter uneasy.

124 INT. COURTROOM - DAY

124

The preliminary hearing. Stasia sits at the counsel table in an almost empty courtroom. Henri Robert stands at her side, speaking words we cannot hear.

Stasia stares vacantly ahead, a shadow of her former self. Guigne stands beside his own table across the aisle, Dupuis seated behind. Guigne regards Stasia curiously, intensely.

MOUTON (O.S.)

(in French)

Prosecutor Guigne?

The judge's voice shakes Guigne from his reverie. He looks to the bench where the three judges look at him expectantly.

GUIGNE

Yes, Your Honour...

Guigne takes a breath, ready to begin.

ROBERT

(to Guigne)

We can stop this madness now. This doesn't have to go to trial.

GUIGNE

(to the judges)

We disagree. We believe there should be no plea, as this case and it's outcome is very much in the public interest. A precedent needs to be set. Especially with Europe's media circus making light of it all. Our office still advocates the death penalty for Miss Uminska.

MOUTON

Very well. Mr. Robert do you have anything else to add?

ROBERT

(in English)

My client does not deny that it was she who ended her fiancé's life. That is not in question. However, I do not believe that such a sentence is equitable or indeed that such a term as murder can even be applied in this instance. We assert that while she killed her fiancé, she killed him for love.

GUIGNE

With all due respect, Your Honour, the only part of that sentence that holds any importance is the word killed. She killed him. We cannot say murder is okay. We simply can not.

Mouton turns and murmurs something to the judge at his right. The second judge nods his agreement.

MOUTON

(in French)

Trial shall be set for two weeks.

Robert is clearly disappointed, but Stasia doesn't react. Guigne collects his papers together - just another job done. He gives Stasia one last glance, then turns to Dupuis.

GUIGNE

Find out more about Anna Levassor.

Dupuis nods his accord.

125 INT. HOSPITAL SUPPLY ROOM - DAY

125

Boxes and boxes of medicaments. Anna looks from one box of vials to another, searching. Finds what she is looking for: morphine. She checks around to make sure she is alone.

Anna grabs several morphine vials, stashing them in different pockets. She then takes vials from several other boxes to fill up the spaces left by the missing morphine.

Anna checks once more that she is alone, straightens her clothing, then heads casually for the door.

126 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

126

Stasia cleans the angry, infected wound on Jan's torso.

Jan, asleep, looks weaker, fading away. His face is healing but his body is bruised and has a yellow tinge to it now.

Anna watches from the door, moved by Stasia's tenderness. Stasia notices her.

STASIA

It's still not healing.

ANNA

Once the radium course is over, the wound should heal faster.

STASIA

He's in pain. All the time.

Anna checks the corridor - safe. She moves back inside and pushes the door to. She crosses the room, drawing a handful of vials from her pocket, pressing them into Stasia's hand.

ANNA

We're forbidden to give extra, but if he needs it... Hide them somewhere safe. And I'll get more when I can. As much as you need.

Stasia nods. Anna cradles Stasia's head in close, comforting her. Stasia checks Jan is still asleep.

STASIA

(quietly)

The doctor is worried. Jan's not responding in the way they thought.

ANNA

I know. But there's still hope.

Anna releases Stasia, strokes her hair back into place.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Get some rest. You need to have the strength he hasn't.

As Anna heads for the door, Stasia stuffs the vials down the side of her chair, between the cushion and the wood. She looks at the illicit cache then back to Anna in the doorway.

STASIA

Get me more.

ANNA

I will.

Anna smiles a farewell and moves in to the corridor.

127 INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS 127

Anna walks a few steps, checks she is alone, then pauses to glance into her pocket.

Several vials of morphine are nestled inside. She rearranges her clothing to conceal them better, then walks on.

128 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING 128

Jan's bed is gone. Stasia stands by the window, looking out at the ugliest street in Paris. A world foreign to her.

Anna stands close behind her, comforting, tender.

129 INT. OPERATING ROOM - EVENING 129

Jan is operated on, the room calm, the procedure easy.

130 INT. HOSPITAL TREATMENT ROOM - DAY 130

Stasia lies in a bed beside Jan's. An OLDER NURSE uses primitive looking tools to draw and store blood from her arm.

Jan's own arm is prepped for a transfusion. In the space between the two beds, Jan and Stasia hold hands.

The anaesthetist waits, ready to perform the transfusion.

The nurse hands the anaesthetist the first bag of blood which he hangs above Jan's bed, while the nurse moves on to a second bag. The anaesthetist begins the transfusion.

STASIA (PRELAP)
I'm scared.

131 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING

131

A dozing Jan is roused by Stasia's voice. He is lying in bed, Stasia holding his hand. His eyes stay closed as he speaks.

JAN
Don't be.

STASIA
Are you not?

JAN
Of dying? No. I'm not scared of dying. I'm just disappointed.

He opens his eyes. Looks at her, solemn, enervate, frail.

JAN (CONT'D)
I want you to do something for me.

STASIA
Anything.

JAN
There are two things. The second will come soon. But first...in the drawer...

He motions his head to the night stand. Stasia, opens it, cautious, and is taken back by what she finds. She pulls out a ream of paper, the pages scrawled on in Jan's handwriting.

STASIA
What is this?

JAN
A book. Something I started in Warsaw. I need you to help me finish it. I have a story to tell.

Stasia meets his eye, terrified by what else he might ask.

132 INT. GUIGNE'S DINING ROOM - EVENING

132

Guigne and Cécile eat dinner in silence, opposite ends of the table, an infinite space between them. Finally, Cécile breaks the silence.

CÈCILE
I bought something today.

Guigne waits but Cécile says no more.

GUIGNE

Is that it? It's a good story, you should tell it at dinner parties.

Cécile shakes her head, snorts her disapproval.

GUIGNE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. What did you buy?

Cécile continues to eat. She gives a look over to the sideboard. Guigne follows her look. A book. He looks to Cécile to elaborate but she does no such thing.

Guigne wipes his mouth with his napkin. Stands. Crosses to the sideboard. He picks up the book. Examines the cover.

The book is: 'From the Dirt' by Jan Zyznowski. He looks back to his wife, disappointed.

CÈCILE

You should read it.

GUIGNE

I know full well what it is purported to be about.

Cécile is silent, focussed on her food.

GUIGNE (CONT'D)

It's fantasy. Fiction. Literature cannot prove innocence.

Nothing from Cécile. He opens the book. Flicks through, lands on a page near the end. He reads.

GUIGNE (CONT'D)

"Pernicious, open prostitution, love to the limits of perversion - all this dragged her into a disease of holiness." What is that even supposed to mean?

Cécile puts down her cutlery, finally gracing him with her attention. She shakes her head, her smile devoid of humour.

CÈCILE

It's always the same with you. You think you can make sense of the ending without understanding the beginning. They are the words of a dying man. You should read them. Then you might see that it was kindness, not murder.

GUIGNE

I think I'll retire for the night. I seem to have lost my appetite.

He replaces the book and moves back to the table. He drains what is left of his wine.

CÈCILE
Would you not kill me for love?

GUIGNE
The law says we shall not kill.

CÈCILE
And the law has never been wrong before? Everything that was once legal was always right?

For once, Guigne has no answer.

CÈCILE (CONT'D)
Would you not kill me for love? No matter how much I begged? Or how much pain I was in?

Again, Guigne is silent. She puts her cutlery down.

CÈCILE (CONT'D)
No. You wouldn't.

She rises, her appetite gone. She moves across to Guigne.

CÈCILE (CONT'D)
But you will do everything you can to make sure this poor, wounded girl dies. If you can't see the insanity in this, then you're not the man I thought you were. You're not a man at all.

He moves to place his hand gently on hers, but she moves it before he can. She crosses to leave the room. As she goes:

CÈCILE (CONT'D)
There are blankets in the wardrobe for the chaise.

Guigne watches her go.

Moments later, Guigne sits down at the table, the novel in his hands. He looks at the cover for a moment, contemplating.

Finally, he opens it up and begins to read from the start.

Stasia sits at a table, transcribing passages for a novel that Jan dictates weakly from his bed. He is tired, drawn.

JAN

"'What is more selfish than love',
he thought with a fever burning
brain, until his delirium made him
fall asleep."

Stasia writes down his words, diligently.

JAN (CONT'D)

"Watching through the crack in the
door of someone else's life
described his world very well."

Stasia looks up to him, feeling the weight of his pain.

JAN (CONT'D)

(restating)

"Watching through the crack--"

STASIA

I've got it.

She turns back to the page, noting down his words.

JAN

I think that may be enough for
today.

Stasia finishes writing. She takes a moment. Eventually she
finds the strength to look at him.

STASIA

He's dying, isn't he?

JAN

He is.

STASIA

And Helena?

JAN

She comes to Paris from Warsaw. To
be with him.

She nods, understanding.

STASIA

What happens then?

JAN

He asks the second thing of her.

STASIA

What does he ask?

JAN

He asks her to kill him. He knows he will never survive, and the pain is too much. It steals his sanity.

STASIA

How can he ask that of her?

JAN

Because he is too scared to do it himself. She was always the strong one. The soldier.

STASIA

(standing)

I hope she says no. Because Helena would never agree to that. Never.

A tear rolls down her cheek as she suppresses the hurt and pain that boil beneath the surface.

JAN

People do crazy things for love.

STASIA

There are some things people would never do. Not even for love.

JAN

As much as he wants to end his own suffering, he also wants to end hers. She's sacrificed too much for him already.

STASIA

Well...it will be interesting to see what happens in the book when she says no.

JAN

She has to do it.

STASIA

She won't.

Defiant, Stasia moves for the door.

134

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - A SHORT TIME LATER

134

Stasia sits in a chair, crying desperately, silent except for her hyperventilating breaths.

Anna strokes Stasia's hair tenderly, comforting. Stasia now gives voice to her cries, wailing, a mortally wounded animal.

STASIA

He wants to give up! He wants....
he...he...he wants...

Stasia's wails again as words fail her. Anna looks towards the closed door of Jan's room.

Stasia lets out another anguished cry and we--

CUT TO:

135 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT 135

Jan cries out in agony. He looks skeletal now, a wraith. He squeezes Stasia's hand, hard, as he fights against the pain.

Another wave of agony and another wild scream from Jan.

Stasia grabs a vial from her stash. Loads a syringe.

She draws back the covers as Jan's frail body writhes against the pain. His arms are skin and bone, a plethora of veins to choose from, but many already marked with tracks.

Stasia administers the morphine, but the pain does not abate at all. Stasia looks on, shocked, completely at a loss. Jan gives another deafening scream then suddenly there is--

136 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING 136

Silence. Jan is propped up in bed. He breathes in shallow, strained rasps.

Stasia sits by his bedside, shell shocked.

JAN

(barely a whisper)
You say you love me.

His voice snaps her out of her stupor. She looks to him.

JAN (CONT'D)

One bullet would say more about
your love than anything else you
could ever do.

Jan begins to cough. Stasia can only look at him. After a few moments, she manages to stand. Crosses to his side.

STASIA

I'd give you anything. Any part of
me. But if all you crave is death,
you will have to find someone else
who can give it to you.

Stasia grabs her coat and heads for the door.

We now see that Anna has been watching from the doorway. Stasia passes her without saying a word. Anna watches her go.

Anna moves in to the room, alone with Jan now. His eyelids are heavy, his face drained, the fatigue of pain absolute.

Anna moves Jan a little, almost to a sitting position.

ANNA

Can you eat?

He shakes his head no, almost imperceptible. Anna nods her understanding, sadly. Checks his jug of water.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I'll bring more water.

As she goes to leave, Jan's hand grips her arm, tight. Desperate. He turns his head, slow and deliberate, to look her in the eyes. There is fear there, for both of them.

JAN

Please help me.

For a moment, her composure is gone. Then, she peels his fingers from her arm, laying his hand gently on the bed.

ANNA

I'll get the doctor.

Jan watches her go. As she leaves, his eyes fall on the shaving razor, on a table near the bed.

He moves, slowly, first sitting up straight, then swinging his legs over the bed, and finally trying to stand, his weight on the night stand.

He reaches out, but the razor is too far away. He inches closer then lunges for it, but his legs give way under him. He crumples to the floor, his bones thudding brutally hard against the floor. He screams in pain.

But the razor is there, on the floor beside him. He slides the blade out from its casing. Brings it to his wrists.

But he can't do it. He begins to sob. Lets the blade fall.

Dr. Roussy enters, followed by Anna and another nurse. They rush to Jan and begin to haul him up while he weeps.

A137 EXT. SACRÉ COEUR - ESTABLISHING - DAY

A137

Rain lashes down on the majestic edifice of The Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Paris as it looms over Montmatre.

137 INT. SACRÉ COEUR - CONTINUOUS 137

The oppressive gloom inside the basilica is matched only by the eerie quiet. A few WORSHIPPERS pray, but mostly the church is empty.

138 INT. SACRÉ COEUR CONFSSIONAL - CONTINUOUS 138

Stasia sits inside the claustrophobic stall. A PRIEST is silhouetted on the other side of the latticed partition, an obscured shadow, a faceless judge.

PRIEST

How long has it been since your last confession?

STASIA

I don't remember. Years.

PRIEST

What brings you back now?

STASIA

(a beat)

Why does God punish us?

PRIEST

Only He knows his plan. His tests allow us to grow. To understand our own fundamental nature.

STASIA

He's a sadist.

PRIEST

God is not the cause of our pain. He is the salvation beyond it. There are two paths in life. We can repent our sins and live to help others or we can live selfishly, doing only what is right for us. There is no misery in life unless we choose to view it so.

STASIA

Is it always a sin to kill?

PRIEST

Of course.

STASIA

Then why have we fought so many Holy wars? Why do we kill in God's name? Inquisitions. Crusades.

PRIEST

What are you asking, my child?

STASIA

The man I love is dying. I truly believed there would be a miracle. That if I loved and believed intensely, I could make it so. But there are no miracles. I see that now. We keep finding ways to prolong his misery, to keep him breathing when Death's fingers are grasping every part of him, and I wonder now - when his body wants to die, is it more of a sin to kill him, or to keep him alive?

PRIEST

Ending a life is murder in the eyes of God. No matter what.

STASIA

Even if death is the greatest kindness we can offer?

PRIEST

It's not a gift for you to give.

Stasia stares ahead in silent contemplation.

139 INT. HOSPITAL SUPPLY ROOM - DAY 139

Anna steals more vials of morphine. A swift, practiced process. She doesn't even seem nervous about it anymore.

140 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY 140

Jan is asleep when Anna enters. She crosses to Stasia's luggage which is neatly stacked in the corner of the room. She begins to unlatch the top suitcase, checking to make sure the noise has not roused Jan.

She takes out several vials from her uniform, then changes her mind, returning two to her pocket.

She pulls back the lid of the case but before she can put the vials inside, she is stopped in her tracks by...

...the sight of Jan's revolver.

She looks back to Jan. Still sleeping.

Anna places the vials in the case and picks up the gun. She turns it over in her hands, fascinated.

JAN (O.S.)

It's a toy that fits every hand.

Anna drops the gun back into the case, startled. She turns to see Jan watching her through slitted eyes.

JAN (CONT'D)

She won't do it. She can't.

Anna closes the suitcase. Stands. Moves towards Jan.

ANNA

I have a sister. Crippled. Always in pain. Yet I hold out hope for a miracle every day. I think love might well be a mental disorder. An illness that sends us crazy. She loves you too much, that's why she can't do it.

JAN

And you? Could you? Would you spare me this pain?

She stares at Jan, considers this a moment. Maybe she could? This fact unnerves her.

ANNA

I should go...

Anna heads for the door. As she leaves we--

CUT TO:

141 INT. PRISON CORRIDOR - DAY

141

Anna exits a room, wearing civilian clothing. We track with her down the corridor until she passes a MAN walking the opposite way, carrying a leather briefcase.

She glances at him as she passes.

The man looks back and we see it is Guigne. He watches her departing, then we track along with him as he walks towards the room Anna has just vacated.

Guigne reaches the room and heads into--

142 INT. PRISON VISITING ROOM - DAY

142

Stasia sits at a table, quiet, lost within herself. The PRISON GUARDS in attendance pay her no mind.

Guigne crosses to the table. Puts his briefcase down. Sits.

GUIGNE

Miss Levassor came to see you?

Stasia looks at Guigne, silent.

GUIGNE (CONT'D)
Were you two close?

Stasia doesn't answer. She looks down at the table.

GUIGNE (CONT'D)
How close? What aren't you telling
us about that night, Stasia?

Stasia says nothing. Guigne pulls out Jan's novel.

GUIGNE (CONT'D)
I read Jan's book. Your defence
team say making you write it put
permanent psychological pressure on
you. They are not very good. They
don't seem to grasp the enormity of
the situation at all. Now, if I
were defending you, I would--

He catches himself.

GUIGNE (CONT'D)
The guards tell me that you still
rarely speak. That you don't cry.
Tell me, do you not mourn for Jan?

STASIA
The dead don't need our tears. It's
the living who need them.

Guigne is taken back by her speaking up.

STASIA (CONT'D)
Why are you here, Mr Guigne?

He doesn't really know. Or maybe he does...

GUIGNE
I want to know - do you believe you
should be punished for what you
did? Paris seems to think not. But
I want to know what you think.

STASIA
Have you ever loved someone so much
you would do anything for them?
(off his silence)
Then maybe you will never
understand this. But this was the
greatest gift of love I could ever
give. And I should die for it. I
want to die for it.

GUIGNE
You're not afraid of death?

STASIA

'There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.'
That is true even for death. I was scared my whole life. Of failure. Loneliness. Scared of myself. Everything I ever did was out of fear. But I'm not scared anymore.
(beat)

I already died that day. The world holds no more fear for me.

GUIGNE

You can't really believe that? That murder is the greatest gift you can give? You people see deception as a virtue. Murder as a gift. It makes no sense.

STASIA

I don't need to convince you, Mr Guigne. I don't want to convince you. I want you to do what you do best.

Guigne is taken back, shaken somewhat. He sees her pain.

GUIGNE

I still don't understand it. How you could kill for love.

She puts a hand on his. Fixes him with an intense look.

STASIA

How could you not?

Guigne takes this in.

143 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

143

Jan is doubled up in bed, foetal with pain. He cries out desperately. Stasia stands by the bed, riven by helplessness.

144 INT. LEGAL OFFICES - DAY

144

Guigne and the legal team stand around Dupuis' desk. Dupuis pulls out pictures of Jan in his final days - close ups on lesions, bruises, scars, yellowing and necrotic skin.

DUPUIS

The cancer had metastasized earlier than they realised.

Dupuis lays out more photos - Jan emaciated beyond all recognition, all but his grotesquely swollen abdomen.

145 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - AS PREVIOUS 145

Dr. Paul rushes in. Several NURSES including Anna follow.

STASIA
Help him! HELP HIM!!!

DR. PAUL
(to the nurses)
Take him through.

Three of the nurses wheel the bed out of the room. Stasia tries to follow but Anna holds her back.

DR. PAUL (CONT'D)
Look at me. Look at me.
(when she does)
We can operate. Today. Right now.
But you need to understand, if this
doesn't work, things will only get
worse. There is a high chance we
will just be prolonging his pain.
Are you sure that is what you want?

STASIA
(almost venomous)
Save him.

Dr Paul looks almost disappointed. He nods his assent.

146 INT. LEGAL OFFICES - AS PREVIOUS 146

Guigne looks at the photos with distaste, uneasy.

DUPUIS
*The doctor's performed a final
operation to try and save Mr.
Zyznowski. It was not successful.*

Guigne looks uneasy.

147 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY 147

Jan lies in bed, his face a mask of death, too weak to struggle. He grimaces at each wave of pain.

Stasia is holding his hand. Jan turns to her, their eyes meeting. They stare deep into each other for a long time. She nods her head, signalling agreement to some unspoken pact.

148 EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY 148

Dr. Roussy exits the hospital, his shift over.

Guigne approaches him from behind, having lay in wait.

GUIGNE

Dr. Roussy?

Dr. Roussy glances back to see Guigne. He sighs as though at a mild annoyance, not breaking stride.

ROUSSY

If you need to speak to me Mr. Guigne, you can make an appointment inside.

GUIGNE

Wait. Please. I need to know - do you think she was right? To do what she did. Based on what you know.

Begrudgingly, Dr. Roussy stops. Turns to Guigne. Addresses him as though a child.

ROUSSY

Jan would have lived for another eight days at most. Or rather he would have been dying for another eight days. Without anything to abate the pain. That girl did not take his life away. His life was lost. She shortened his agony. That is all. Now if you have any other questions, please make an appointment like anyone else.

Dr. Roussy heads on his way, leaving Guigne alone.

149

INT. GUIGNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

149

Guigne lies awake on his side, Cécile asleep beside him.

A phone rings, loudly. Cécile wakes. Huffs her disapproval. Guigne doesn't move. The phone continues to ring.

CÈCILE

Are you going to get that?

GUIGNE

No. It can wait.

Guigne turns on to his side. He reaches a hand across to Cécile. Places his hand over hers. She lets him.

150

INT. DR ROUSSY'S OFFICE - DAY

150

Dr. Roussy sits in his chair, gentle, doing his best to be a comforting presence. Stasia sits across from him, waiting.

ROUSSY

Jan has asked me many times to end this. To give him an easy death.

STASIA

I don't understand. He said you could cure him. That you said he would be home in no time.

ROUSSY

We never said that. He always knew the outlook was grave.

She lets this sink in.

ROUSSY (CONT'D)

There is nothing more we can do for him, Stasia. Maybe if I were only his friend and not his doctor... Maybe I could... My suggestion is you both go back to Warsaw. Spend what time you have left together in the comfort of your home. Who knows how long that might be.

STASIA

No.

Dr. Roussy looks at her, somewhat bewildered.

STASIA (CONT'D)

Thank you, but no.

She is resolved, ready to face the truth.

151 EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

151

Stasia pushes Jan out of the hospital, his frail body folded into a wheelchair, covered with blankets against the elements despite the bright sunshine and summer heat.

He breathes deeply, the fresh air and sunlight a panacea, if only for a while.

JAN

Where are we going?

Stasia smiles but doesn't answer.

152 EXT. LOUVRE - EVENING

152

A queue of TOURISTS wait in line outside the Louvre.

Stasia pushes Jan's chair towards the entrance, cutting the queue. An ATTENDANT waves them inside.

ATTENDANT
Go straight through.

Stasia smiles her thanks, while Jan looks confused.

153 INT. LOUVRE - EVENING

153

Stasia pushes Jan past paintings and exhibits. Classics.

JAN
Thank you.

STASIA
What for?

JAN
For breaking me out. For bringing
me here. Letting me see this place
one last time.

He grimaces in pain. Breathes deeply.

STASIA
What do you need? Morphine?

JAN
I could use a drink.

STASIA
You definitely shouldn't be
drinking.

JAN
What, are you worried it might kill
me?

Stasia doesn't reply. She slows up, somewhat wounded by his
levity, but almost smiling in spite of herself.

JAN (CONT'D)
Sorry. Gallows humour.

She kisses his head and wheels him on.

JAN (CONT'D)
I honestly can't imagine anything
better than this right--

She wheels him around a corner to see...

...pride of place on the wall, a work we have seen before. At
his vernissage and in his home. One of Jan's paintings.

Stasia brings him to a stop and he stares at it in awe.

JAN (CONT'D)
I finally made it to the Louvre.

They both stare at the painting, soaking in the moment.

JAN (CONT'D)
 You're something quite remarkable,
 you know that?

From behind we watch as Stasia puts her hand out for Jan to take. She tenderly holds his hand as they stare at his work.

154 EXT. MONTMARTRE - NIGHT

154

Stasia sits beside Jan's wheelchair under a starry sky. They look up at the awe-inspiring sight of infinity above them.

STASIA
 When you go, I'm coming with you.

JAN
 No, you're not.

STASIA
 I am.

JAN
 There's life in death, Stasia. Your
 life. The life you'll give to
 others.

An intense wave of pain hits Jan. He tries to ride it out, but can't. Jan yells out in pain.

A COUPLE walking nearby look over, disturbed and confused by the sound. Rather than helping, they cross the street away from them, hurrying their step.

Stasia pulls out a syringe and morphine, deftly prepares it and injects him. The pain eases but not a lot.

STASIA
 I'll take you back.

JAN
 No, no. Please. Let's stay until
 sunrise.

Stasia is torn, but relents. After all, this is his night. Jan closes his eyes against the pain.

STASIA
 Sometimes, when I close my eyes,
 I'm back in Warsaw, riding in your
 car, like we used to. It's the
 night we met, and this is all just
 a bad dream.

JAN

And who's to say it isn't?

(beat)

There's one chapter left. Finish it for me. Only you know how the story ends.

STASIA

It will end with Helena's death then. So they are always together.

JAN

I'll always be here with you. Just close your eyes.

Stasia does all she can to stay strong.

JAN (CONT'D)

Love never really dies. And we're never truly gone until the last person forgets us. That's why you have to live. To keep me alive. This isn't the end. Not for you.

STASIA

For Helena, you mean.

JAN

For either of you.

He looks back up to the stars and she follows his gaze, the pain gone from his face, but never leaving his eyes.

155 EXT. MONTMARTRE - SUNRISE 155

From a distance we see Jan and Stasia staring up as the sun rises over Montmartre. It is breathtaking.

PRELAP: A wild howl of pain.

156 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY 156

Jan cries out in agony. He writhes on the bed. Turns to Stasia who stands beside his bed.

JAN

Please, please, please. Do it...

She shakes her head rapidly, her face filled with indecision.

Jan cries out again and Stasia moves into action. She retrieves a vial of morphine, then two, grabs a syringe. She tries to hold him still to inject him.

STASIA

Hold still. Hold still.

He calms slightly and she manages to find a vein. Injects him. The pain eases, but not much. She lets the first vial fall to the floor. Gives him the second dose.

Jan begins to settle. His breathing steadies. He looks at her through doped eyes. A tear rolls down his hollow face. He smiles at her. Nods. His eyes close.

STASIA (CONT'D)

It's going to be okay. You're going to be okay.

Stasia moves across the room on weak legs, leaving the second vial on its side on the cabinet. She reaches the suitcase.

She opens it, sits beside it. Retrieves the gun from inside. She looks at it, like an alien artefact. She reaches back into the case, withdraws a single bullet.

Stasia puts the bullet into the gun, slowly and precisely.

A noise draws her attention to the door, the gun still in her hand. Footsteps.

Anna appears in the doorway. She looks in to see Stasia on the floor, the gun nowhere in sight, Stasia's hand hidden behind her back. Anna looks from the open suitcase to Stasia.

ANGLE ON GUN

From behind Stasia, we see the gun hidden behind her back with Anna framed in the doorway.

ANGLE ON ROOM

Anna looks from Stasia to Jan.

ANNA

Is he sleeping?

Stasia nods, tries a smile.

STASIA

Yes. Sleeping.

ANNA

Good.

Anna moves into the room, crossing to a nervous Stasia.

Anna leans down, kisses the top of Stasia's head, then exits.

Stasia stands. She crosses to the bed, the gun in her hand. She looks down at her beloved. Touches his face.

Jan's eyes flutter open for a moment. He smiles at her. Then his eyes flutter closed once more.

Stasia leans in. Kisses him on the lips. She holds the kiss and brings the gun up, placing the muzzle under his chin.

157 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS 157

The corridor is empty. Silent. Other rooms leading off the corridor, likewise. Everything is totally still.

The silence is shattered by the sound of a single gunshot.

A moment later, a nurse appears in the corridor, then another, both rushing to the sound, towards Jan's room. A third appears, walking slowly, confused. As the first nurse runs into the room, we--

CUT TO BLACK

158 INT. COURT CHAMBERS - DAY 158

Guigne dons his black robes, soberly. Meticulous. Sombre.

159 EXT. PALAIS DE JUSTICE - DAY 159

Guigne walks towards the court room, decked out in his formal robes. A large CROWD waits outside, the size and fervour of the throng surprising him. Some call out, others sob.

Some onlookers hold placards: 'NOT GUILTY', 'FREE STASIA', 'PARIS IS WITH YOU'.

Guigne has to jostle his way through as POLICE OFFICERS do their best to keep order.

160 INT. PALAIS DE JUSTICE, GRAND HALL - DAY 160

The courtroom is silent, sedate, a sharp contrast to the mayhem outside.

The three judges look across a courtroom packed with SPECTATORS. Amongst them, near the front, is Anna Levassor.

The prosecution and defence teams stand behind their respective tables on opposite sides of the central aisle.

Judge Mouton looks to Stasia, as thin and pale as a spectre. When she speaks, her voice is barely more than breath.

MOUTON

Does the defendant understand me?

STASIA

Yes.

MOUTON

And how does the defendant plead?

STASIA

Guilty.

There is commotion in the court room. Judge Mouton bangs a gavel, surprising all in attendance.

MOUTON

This is not a theatre!

The courtroom settles.

MOUTON (CONT'D)

Can the defendant please repeat?

STASIA

(slightly louder)

Guilty. I plead guilty. And I ask for the maximum punishment. I ask for death.

The courtroom descends into chaos once more. Judge Mouton bangs his gavel once more for order.

MOUTON

Any more and I shall empty the courtroom!

The commotion abates and then dies. Judge Mouton turns his attention back to Stasia.

MOUTON (CONT'D)

Very well. Then we shall begin.

161

INT. PALAIS DE JUSTICE, GRAND HALL - LATER

161

All in attendance are seated except for Henri Robert. He is stood, ready to give his opening statement to the judges.

ROBERT

Your Honours, this is a case, unlike any other we have seen in these halls. The letter of the law has no precedent in such judicial proceedings as these. Indeed, when the facts have been revealed, I believe you will see that we can compel that cold letter of law to silence in this sorrowful case.

The judges wait for more, but Robert is done.

MOUTON

Is that it?

Robert looks to his co-counsel, somewhat taken back. The co-counsel has nothing. Robert turns back to Mouton.

ROBERT

Yes, Your Honour.

Mouton looks somewhat disappointed. Robert takes his seat.

MOUTON

Monsieur Guigne?

Guigne stands. He looks at his notes in front of him. Reads the words in silence, caught by indecision.

He looks from the judges to his notes. Makes a decision. He pushes the notes aside and looks directly at Stasia.

GUIGNE

I am...so deeply saddened that my duty dictates that I must stand against you here today. And I deeply regret that the human written law I am guarding does not allow me to express how full my heart is for you. In spite of my best efforts to see only the faults in your character, I have thus far failed to find any. How much more would I rather be in the role of your defender in this case. Your story is a beautiful legend, a tale of true love, despite it's tragic ending...

He pauses, allowing the weight of his words to be felt throughout the room. He closes his eyes, searches for strength within himself.

He turns to the judges.

GUIGNE (CONT'D)

I share your judgment in advance, Your Honours, and I bow to it. But despite my sympathy and pity for the defendant, we can not make light of murder, no matter what the circumstances. And even though there was no malice, no ill-will, and only love imbued in this act, the only verdict we must return is guilty, and the only punishment, that which the defendant herself has solicited. Death.

The crowd murmurs. Mouton nods. Guigne sits, filled with regret, despite firmly believing the truth of his words.

162 INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT 162

Stasia lies awake in her prison cell.

163 INT. GUIGNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 163

Guigne lies awake in bed, alone in spite of Cécile's slumbering presence, trapped in a cell of his own making.

164 INT. ANNA'S HOME - NIGHT 164

Anna sits awake on a chaise, still fully dressed, deep in thought and racked with doubt.

165 INT. PALAIS DE JUSTICE, GRAND HALL - DAY 165

In a series of shots we see:

--Dr Roussy giving evidence. Tears flow freely down his face as he gives his testimony.

--The Older Nurse gives her own testimony, emotional, speaking directly to Stasia from across the room, pity and sadness etched into her face. Stasia watches, impassive.

--Guigne listens to testimony from his seat. He turns to look at Stasia who remains stolid, lifeless, devoid of emotion.

--Henri Robert holds up a letter, addressing the court as he walks towards the bench. He places the letter on the bench

ROBERT

This is a letter from Monsieur Zyznowski's own mother in Warsaw, full of compassion and forgiveness for Miss Uminksa, calling for her release and complete pardon...

--Anna Levassor watches the proceedings intensely, nervous.

166 EXT. PARIS STREET - DAY 166

The trial is front page news. The headline: GUILTY?

PEOPLE gather around their papers, reading voraciously about the proceedings.

167 INT. PALAIS DE JUSTICE, GRAND HALL - DAY

167

Tuwim is on the stand. Robert examines him.

ROBERT

And how long have you known the
defendant, Monsieur Tuwim?

TUWIM

Two years now. And the deceased
even longer.

ROBERT

And how would you characterise
their relationship?

TUWIM

Intense. Perfect. Absolute. There
is no doubt in my mind that
whatever Stasia did, she did only
out of love. This mercy was an act
of obedience to Jan. She was
completely subordinate to him. She
would have done anything he asked.

ROBERT

No further questions.

Robert sits. Mouton turns to Guigne.

MOUTON

Monsieur Guigne?

GUIGNE

No questions, Your Honour.

168 EXT. PALAIS DE JUSTICE, PARIS - DAY

168

Police struggle to keep the swollen crowd in check.

A chant begins:

CROWD

Innocente! Innocente!

A surge comes and the police struggle to maintain control.

169 INT. PALAIS DE JUSTICE, GRAND HALL - DAY

169

Henri Robert addresses the judges.

ROBERT

Your Honour, throughout history,
the law has been proven wrong time
and time again.

(MORE)

ROBERT (CONT'D)

And yet we continue to see constitutional change as a taboo. As a travesty of contemporaneousness. These seismic shifts become mired in controversy instead of being seen for what they so often are - progress. A way of discarding archaic views about life and morality - views painted in broad strokes, in black and white - and a pathway to making sense out of the murky grey of this modern world. Whether that shift starts here, today, is not for me to know or indeed something I ask. What I do ask is that you see this case for what it is - a tragedy, one for which the defendant has already paid the highest possible penalty through her selflessness. By showing nothing but mercy and love to the man she adored.

Robert takes his seat. The courtroom is quiet. Judge Mouton thinks on this. He turns to Guigne.

MOUTON

Any final words for the court, Monsieur Guigne?

Guigne stands. He considers his words.

GUIGNE

There is no doubt that the case of these two lovers is one of tragedy. That two lives were ended that day. But as much as the defence counsel believes in constitutional change, there is a deeper consideration to make. This case is no longer just about Miss Uminska. No. This entire trial is now itself a danger. Not for the defendant - protected in part by her youth, her pain and her fame - but for society. No one has the right to kill another - not by excess of hatred nor by excess of love.

(MORE)

GUIGNE (CONT'D)

Where is he, the learned man that would dare to say: "this man is lost, I have the right to kill him." At that man, I would say: "do you know what science will discover tomorrow?" To whoever said those words the day before Pasteur's discovery we would have no choice but to shout "you, sir, are a murderer!" The danger here is not for Miss Uminska, but to the possible sanctification, through her acquittal, to the right of any of us to kill to reduce suffering. To allow the accused to claim the dead was shouting "I want to die, kill me!" But even then, who can guarantee that at the last moment he would not wish to retreat from death? The dying believe in life, just like galley slaves believe in freedom. No! "Thou Shalt Not Kill." These are the great words of the bible, a tenet that continues to dominate our constitution and the laws in all great civilizations. And so it should. No one has the right to kill. And nor did she. But today we decide whether or not justice must bow to pity. The law does not punish acts unknowingly committed, but only condemns criminal intentions that we have seen were not present in this case. Maybe today is the day when the inflexible, unyielding law will give way to love and compassion. Maybe. That decision is yours.

A number of the assembled women in the courtroom are crying. The men present are clearly moved. Anna Levassor hangs on every word. Guigne now addresses the crowd.

GUIGNE (CONT'D)

But if the defendant does come out free, do not surround her with applause. Do not hail her a hero. Let her instead move away in silence, in contemplation and perhaps with remorse.

(to Mouton)

Your Honour, with anguish, we await your verdict.

Guigne sits, drained, physically affected, his imperturbable demeanour finally cracked. The courtroom waits in silence.

CUT TO:

The proceedings are over. The judges stand and file out of the courtroom while Guigne thinks on what he has done.

170 INT. DELIBERATION ROOM - DAY 170

The three judges sit in an ornate chamber.

JUDGE 2

I'm afraid her guilt is not in question. The law gives us no option.

Mouton nods, considering this.

MOUTON

Are we all in agreement?

171 INT. COURT HOLDING ROOM - DAY 171

Stasia sits alone, silent, deep in contemplation, her face impassive, but her eyes intense. From outside, comes the muted sound of the crowd.

172 EXT. PALAIS DE JUSTICE, PARIS - DAY 172

The huge crowd pulses and writhes, fighting to get a better view of the steps.

A path is cleared and two officials lead Stasia towards the court. The crowd surges towards her, many screaming her name, the officers struggling against them. Stasia is impassive.

Hands grab at her, her shawl ripped from her. A fight ensues amongst the crowd for the pilfered prize.

Stasia is whisked towards the courtroom. As she ascends the steps, the doors open and we follow her into--

173 INT. PALAIS DE JUSTICE, GRAND HALL - CONTINUOUS 173

-- the ornate interior of the Grand Hall. The doors slam shut and the officials and Stasia pull to a stop, the clamour replaced by silence. All eyes come to rest on Stasia.

Stasia is led to her table where Robert says something she doesn't hear. Her eyes are locked on Guigne's.

The assembled crowd climbs to its feet as the judges enter.

The judges take their seats at the bench and other than Stasia, Guigne and Robert, the rest of the courtroom sits. For a moment there is only silence.

MOUTON

Stanislawa Uminska. You have been charged with the crime of murder. For this crime, the maximum penalty is death. The court has now heard all the facts in this case. Do you have anything left to say in your defence before we pass judgement?

Stasia shakes her head. The courtroom holds its breath.

Mouton proceeds.

MOUTON (CONT'D)

To give death to a human being is a crime. A crime, you confess to have committed. A crime punishable by death. But in any crime, it is necessary to look for the motive. There can be no question here of malice, nor revenge, nor of any other low intent. You acted only out of charity, to put an end to the suffering of the one you loved. The law says death shall be your sentence. But the law is not absolute. It is our belief that the act itself was, for you, both crime and punishment.

(he pauses)

We hereby acquit you of all charges of murder. You are free to go.

Stasia does not react. Guigne however looks relieved, thankful, just for a moment until...

...the courtroom bursts into applause.

Guigne looks around the room, disappointed by their joy.

Tuwim stands near the front, staring over at Stasia with a mixture of awe and pride, clapping harder than anyone.

Anna has a hand clasped to her mouth, tears of joy streaming down her face. Stasia seems detached from the entire proceedings, the only one displaying no emotion.

The judges stand and make their way out of the courtroom.

The applause continues. Stasia looks across, locks eyes with Guigne. He nods his approval at her. She just looks at him, almost disappointed that his words may have saved her.

Then an arm is grabbing her. Anna. Anna pulls her friend in to a tight embrace, a hug Stasia partly returns. Stasia's eyes are still staring off, her mind somewhere else entirely.

ANNA

Let's go.

Anna takes Stasia's hand and leads her towards the door.

Guigne's team are talking to him, but he doesn't hear. His eyes are on Stasia, watching her leave.

When she is lost to sight, Guigne gathers together his notes and exhibits, placing them into a file. A final picture remains. A photograph from the hospital. Two empty vials of morphine. He looks at it, then tucks it into his file.

174 INT. UNIDENTIFIED ROOM - MEDIUM CLOSE ON ANNA - DAY 174

Anna, back in her nurse's uniform, looks out of a window. She is on edge. She glances back into the room, nervous. Furtive.

She pulls two vials of morphine from her uniform. Looks at them. She picks up a gun and moves off into the room.

175 EXT. PRISON - DAY 175

Stasia leaves the prison through the front gate.

She stands outside, completely alone, lost. She looks back at the prison, the perfect metaphor for how she feels.

176 EXT. ANNA'S HOME - DAY 176

A blood-spattered and sorrowful Anna is led out of her front door in handcuffs by a POLICE OFFICER. Other OFFICERS mill around the house, moving in and out.

As Anna is led away, we follow one officer into--

177 INT. ANNA'S HOME - CONTINUOUS 177

The officer walks along the hallway and then into the--

178 FRONT ROOM 178

--where we see two vials of morphine forsaken on the ground. The camera moves on picking up a pillow smeared with blood, holes blown through it, a syringe, more blood on the floor.

The camera pans up to find a body on a sofa, its bones bent and twisted, crippled, deformed.

The DEAD WOMAN'S eyes are open, her nose broken, an almost innocuous, bullet hole in her cheek. Another bullet has taken off one side of the crown of her head.

Blood covers the sofa and walls behind.

OFFICER (O.S.)

Who is she?

OFFICER 2 (O.S.)

The killer's sister. The suspect claims it was mercy. That her sister was an invalid, that she begged for death.

We hold on the body as they talk, other officers milling past the corpse, continuing to examine the crime scene.

179 EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

179

Stasia stands in front of Jan's grave, flowers in hand. She crouches beside the headstone, placing the flowers in front.

STASIA

God chose that I should live. So you got your wish.

She waits, as though for a reply. She is met only with silence. She kisses the fingers of her left hand then touches them to the name on Jan's tombstone.

From afar we watch her waiting silently beside his grave.

180 EXT. WARSAW - DAY

180

Establishing shots of Warsaw, bustling with life.

SUPER: WARSAW, APRIL 1925

181 I/E. WARSAW TRAIN STATION - DAY

181

Tuwim waits on the platform as a train pulls in.

PASSENGERS alight. Tuwim scans the crowd for a familiar face. For a long time, nothing. Then finally, there she is - the last one off the train, and slow to get moving. Stasia.

He rushes over to her, embraces her. She even returns the hug, but perhaps not as enthusiastically.

He releases her. Looks at her, elated at her return, but still sympathetic to her enduring pain.

TUWIM

Welcome home, little one.

She gives him a sad smile. He takes some of her bags, and they make their way along the platform.

182 EXT. WARSAW STREETS - EVENING

182

Stasia walks along the streets of Warsaw beside Tuwim. She wears a wide brimmed hat, her head turned away from potential prying eyes, hiding her face each time there is a PASSER-BY.

TUWIM

How does it feel to be home?

STASIA

It doesn't. Feel like home.

They pass a news stand - the headline declaring 'HEROIC STARLET RETURNS'.

Stasia stops to take it in. Shakes her head, disappointed.

TUWIM

What? You're a national treasure.

STASIA

It says I'm a hero.

TUWIM

You are. To lovers everywhere.

STASIA

I'm not a hero. I'm just someone who didn't die.

Tuwim moves to her, comforting.

TUWIM

The people here adore you, that's all. They love you.

STASIA

I don't need their love, Julian.

TUWIM

Come on. It's not much further.

STASIA

I should go back. I'm not ready for this.

TUWIM

But then you'll miss the surprise.

STASIA

I don't want surprises.

TUWIM

Please. For me.

Begrudgingly, she nods. They walk on.

183 EXT. TEATR NARODOWY - EVENING

183

They reach the theatre. Stasia stops in her tracks.

STASIA
What are we doing here?

TUWIM
You'll see.

She doesn't move. He opens the door. Holds an arm out to her.

TUWIM (CONT'D)
Come on. The surprise isn't a wine.
It won't get better with age.

She takes a breath. Steadies her nerves. Heads inside.

184 INT. TEATR NARODOWY - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

184

Stasia enters the dim foyer, followed by Tuwim. Stasia looks around, confused, while Tuwim moves to the auditorium door. She follows him and he opens the door ushering her into the--

185 AUDITORIUM

185

Stasia enters to see a huge CROWD waiting for them, smiling expectantly at the newcomers' arrival. A party.

A banner reads: *Welcome Home*. A picture of Jan is nearby.

Stasia looks at the gathered guests, aghast. Everyone is there - Szyfman, Natasza, former cast mates, stage hands, all of WARSAW'S ELITE among them.

STASIA
Oh no. No, no, no...

Stasia turns and heads back out the way she came, leaving the gathered guests, bemused, unsure of what to do.

Tuwim heads for the door after her. Szyfman tries to give the crowd a smile - what can you do?

186 EXT. TEATR NARODOWY - CONTINUOUS

186

Stasia exits the theatre, followed a moment later by Tuwim.

TUWIM
Stasia, wait. Wait!

He catches up to her. Stops her. She looks at him, wounded.

TUWIM (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I didn't...

Szyfman exits the theatre, and they turn to the sound. Stasia looks from Tuwim to Szyfman and begins to walk away.

Szyfman moves for Stasia. His words pull her up.

SZYFMAN

Stasia, where are you going?

STASIA

Anywhere but there.

SZYFMAN

Why?

STASIA

A party? Am I to celebrate? What do I have to revel about, Arnold?

SZYFMAN

The future? You still have one, you know.

STASIA

Why do you even care? I let you down. I let everybody down.

SZYFMAN

You did what you had to. Besides, we now stand to make even more of your potential. A dizzying career awaits you.

STASIA

No, it doesn't.

SZYFMAN

The people in that room will make a star of you.

STASIA

A star? A dying light, a billion miles away... Sounds about right.

She smiles sadly, looks from one to the other.

STASIA (CONT'D)

Goodbye.

She turns. Begins to walk away.

TUWIM

Stasia!

SZYFMAN

You were born for this. What else will you do?

Szyfman and Tuwim can only watch as she walks away.

187 INT. TEATR NARODOWY - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT 187

The theatre is dark, deserted.

Stasia walks around backstage, reaching out to touch posters, props, curtains and other relics from her past. She reaches the wings and heads out onto the--

188 STAGE 188

She crosses to centre stage. Looks out into the auditorium. It is empty. Abandoned. No one is watching her.

She stares out for a moment. A smile touches her lips.

189 AUDITORIUM 189

A little while later, Stasia is walking along the centre aisle, heading for the exit, passing rows of empty seats, the stillness a warm blanket around her. She reaches the door.

Stasia closes her eyes as she opens the door and--

190 EXT. WARSAW STREET - NIGHT 190

--Stasia steps out of the theatre onto a deserted street. A car pulls up. Jan's car.

She looks inside. Jan, full of life and vitality, leans over to look up at her from within. He gives her a dazzling smile.

Stasia climbs into the car.

191 I/E. JAN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 191

Inside, the two lovers look at each other, a contented smile on each of their faces.

Finally, Jan shifts the car into gear and drives away.

In the passenger seat, Stasia lets out a breath. She closes her eyes, her smile widening, and we--

FADE TO BLACK