

THE SINGING TREE (Winner: 2013 Moondance Film Festival)

By

Marilyn Pesola & Peter Moss

Based on the novel by Peter Moss

Marilyn Pesola/

Peter Moss

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FADE IN:

EXT. TRANSIT YARD -- BLUMENWALD, BAVARIA -- MORNING

A train pulls alongside another, stops on the siding. SS GUARDS with machine guns slide the doors open.

Hundreds of JEWS disembark at gunpoint, clutching meager possessions, hoping not to be noticed as they are herded into the Yard.

The Yard teems with Jews. Women and Children, older bearded Men. All wear the yellow Star of David.

Formerly a civilian train station on the edge of a small town, Blumenwald is now a transit point where Jews are detained, then boarded onto other trains for the death camps.

In the Yard a stilted Watchtower with wrap-around windows. The former Booking Hall with a raised platform is now the personnel barracks.

Barbed wire surrounds the Yard up to the Siding. In the center of the yard, a Nazi flag flies.

SUPER: BLUMENWALD TRANSIT YARD, Bavaria, 1942

EXT. YARD -- MORNING

In the Yard is KURT HELLMANN, 24, the unarmed civilian Stationmaster. His uniform is similar to SS uniforms but a different color, with no insignias. A sensitive, cultured man, he is ill-suited for what's to come.

With him is LT. HANS BECKER, 35, a shrewd, calculating man who thinks Hellmann's job should belong to the SS and will do what it takes to make that happen. A Megaphone hangs on the left side of his belt, a pistol on the right.

Nearby is CPL. DEIDER MULLIN, 25, Becker's yes-man.

A BOY of 10, runs past them. Hellmann runs after him, grabs his arm. He pulls the rebellious Boy back to Lt. Becker, never once looking at the Boy's face.

LT. BECKER

Why is it that you never look at
children's faces? A bit squeamish,
are we?

Hellmann says nothing.

Lt. Becker signals to Cpl. Mullin, who comes over. He hands the Child over to Mullin, along with a sly wink.

LT. BECKER (CONT'D)
Mullin, put him where he belongs,
then go to my quarters and fetch my
pocket watch. I seem to have
forgotten it this morning.

Hellmann and Becker continue checking the morning manifest as a CORPORAL pushes his way through the crowd toward Hellmann. He snaps his heels and gives the Nazi salute.

SOLDIER
(to Hellmann)
Telephone call for you, Herr
Hellmann.

HELLMANN
Thank you, Corporal. Excuse me,
Lieutenant Becker.

Hellmann and the Corporal climb the watchtower steps.

INT. WATCHTOWER -- MORNING

Along one wall, a communications radio, a teletype, a PA system, a telephone.

Armed GUARDS stand on each side, watching for escapees.

Hellmann and the Corporal enter. The Corporal sits in the only chair. Hellmann picks up the phone.

HELLMANN
Hellmann speaking.

VOICE (ON PHONE)
Clear the line! The Fuhrer's train
will be there in ten minutes to
inspect the troops!

HELLMANN
Who is this?

VOICE (ON PHONE)
Do not ask questions, just obey
orders!

HELLMANN
It is not possible to clear the
line. We are disembarking hundreds

HELLMANN
of deportees that just arrived, and
we have hundreds more in the Yard
waiting for transport out.

VOICE (ON PHONE)
I don't care who or what is on it.
Clear the line! You hear me? Clear
the line! Immediately!

The phone goes dead.

Hellmann replaces the receiver, panics for a second. What
should he do? He picks up the microphone.

HELLMANN
Attention! Attention! Clear the
tracks! Clear the tracks
immediately! This is an emergency!

EXT. YARD -- MORNING

Lt. Becker looks up at the Watchtower, sees Hellmann give a
signal in the window. He unhooks his Megaphone, puts it to
his lips. He turns and shouts,

LT. BECKER
Reload manifest and clear the
tracks!

The Guards shove the Jews, moving them back toward the rail
cars with their rifles.

Women and Children SCREAM, some trip and fall. Two GUARDS
fall beneath moving feet.

EXT. WATCHTOWER WINDOW -- MORNING

Hellmann, appalled by the ensuing chaos, disappears from the
window.

EXT. YARD -- MORNING

Confusion reigns as Hellmann picks his way through the melee
to Lt. Becker. All around him, people are dying. Hellmann
tries not to notice.

HELLMANN
Can we not do this in an orderly
fashion, Lieutenant?

LT. BECKER

Orderly? You gave an order to clear the tracks! What the hell is going on?

HELLMANN

The Fuhrer's train is due in ten minutes.

LT. BECKER

What?!

HELLMANN

The Fuhrer's personal train. He's coming down this line to inspect the troops.

LT. BECKER

What troops? There ARE no troops in the area!

Hellmann blanches. That never occurred to him. He recovers after a moment.

HELLMANN

I don't like it anymore than you do, Lieutenant, but I must follow orders.

LT. BECKER

Without asking questions? Did you think we can reload all these Jews in ten minutes?

HELLMANN

I can't question a direct order. He said to clear the line. NOW!

Lt. Becker turns to go, then stops. He whirls around to face Hellmann. If looks could kill...

LT. BECKER

I told Colonel Richter that this job was not for a civilian when he selected you for Stationmaster. That should have been my appointment. I'm going to see to it that you're ...

RAT-A-TAT-TAT! A staccato burst of GUNFIRE. Several more Guards open fire on the frightened Crowd.

The Jews move away from the train, back toward the Watchtower.

Hellmann and Becker are separated by the moving Crowd. Guards begin shooting the Jews in order to get them to stop. There's lots of SHOUTING. SCREAMING. GUNFIRE.

Hellmann sees Becker draw his pistol, begin SHOOTING. Hellmann jumps onto the platform to escape being trampled.

GUARDS ARE SHOOTING at will now, trying to get the mass of humanity under control but failing miserably.

Hellmann is forced to look at their faces, sees their fear. He looks around for Becker but doesn't see him.

He sees a screaming MOTHER hold a BABY above the frantic crowd. Hellmann looks at her. She pleads with him.

MOTHER

Take him! Please save him!

Hellmann looks at, then reaches for, the Baby. Before he can grab the Baby, the Mother falls to her knees. She protects her Baby as best she can but both soon disappear beneath the crush of feet.

ON HELLMANN

A horrified look on his face.

ON THE CROWD

The Guards have lost it. It's pure slaughter! Women and Children fall like broken dolls.

Hellmann screams.

HELLMANN

NO, NO, NO-O-O-O!

In the b.g., Lt. Becker climbs the stairs to the Watchtower.

EXT. BLUMENWALD CITY STREET -- DAY

Hellmann drives an SS motorcycle with an empty sidecar. He pulls up to a building with a Nazi flag over the door.

INT. SS HEADQUARTERS -- DAY

A large waiting room with three doors. Wooden chairs line the wall beneath B&W photos of Hitler and other SS dignitaries. A Nazi flag in one corner.

Hellmann chooses a chair next to a window and looks out.

HELLMANN'S P.O.V.

A boarded-up building across the street with a faded chalk Star of David and the words "Juden Hauser" (Jew house).

Hellmann bows his head, as though repenting for the sins of others.

A STAFF OFFICER opens a door and crooks a finger at him.

OFFICER
Colonel Richter will see you now.

INT. RICHTER'S OFFICE -- DAY

A large room with a pot-bellied stove in a corner. A conference table with Col. Konrad Richter, a fatherly-looking 60, at one end. Papers are spread out before him. A telephone at his elbow.

The Staff Officer indicates that Hellmann is to sit at the opposite end of the table, then exits and closes the door.

COLONEL RICHTER
Yesterday one hundred and twenty-three Jews were shot and two guards were killed. Tell me, what made you clear the tracks?

HELLMANN
I received an urgent phone call.

COLONEL RICHTER
Who was the caller?

HELLMANN
He wouldn't say. He said I must not ask questions, just obey orders. I was to clear the line because the Fuhrer's train was due in ten minutes.

COLONEL RICHTER
And you believed him?

HELLMANN
I received a direct order. It is not my place to challenge it.

Col. Richter shuffles some papers.

COLONEL RICHTER
Did the caller explain why the
Führer's train was on your line?

HELLMANN
He said the Führer was on his way
to inspect the troops, that the
line must be cleared. Now!

COLONEL RICHTER
What was your response?

HELLMANN
I said it was not possible to clear
the line since we were disembarking
the morning manifest. There were
hundreds of people near the tracks.

COLONEL RICHTER
How did he react?

HELLMANN
He said, "Do as you are told, and
do it now." Then he hung up.

COLONEL RICHTER
So you did what you were told? You
cleared the line?

HELLMANN
The urgency in his voice was enough
to convince me that I had only
minutes to spare before the arrival
of the Führer's train.

COLONEL RICHTER
Did you think the Führer's train
might actually be traveling on your
line?

HELLMANN
How was I to know any different?

Col. Richter leans back in his chair, lights a cigarette. He
inhales deeply before speaking.

COLONEL RICHTER
I see. Why do you think an
anonymous caller would want to
convey this kind of false
information?

HELLMANN

Three reasons. One, he is jealous of my appointment and the responsibility I exercise at such an early stage in my career. Two, he knew there would be evacuees in transit and wanted to produce the massacre that resulted. Three, he is a security officer testing the system to see how personnel react under stress.

Col. Richter thumbs through his papers, selects one, reads it.

COLONEL RICHTER

Since you entered into service with the State railway, your record has been spotless. That is why I promoted you to Stationmaster.

Col. Richter puts down the paper and looks at Hellmann, who hangs his head in shame.

HELLMANN

I have failed in my duties. I request to be relieved of my duties and dismissed from service.

COLONEL RICHTER

Out of the question. There's a drain on manpower and an urgent need for experienced Stationmasters such as yourself to run the transit system.

HELLMANN

Then post me to another station.

COLONEL RICHTER

That, too, will not be possible. It would take too long to train a replacement.

HELLMANN

But Lieutenant Becker said ...

COLONEL RICHTER

Yours is a key post in this sector. Your branch carries some of the heaviest traffic in the system. Lieutenant Becker is needed where he is.

HELLMANN

What, then, is your verdict?

COLONEL RICHTER

I am not here to pass judgment, but to gather evidence and submit a report to Berlin. You may return to your post. Dismissed.

Hellmann stands.

COLONEL RICHTER

You are the youngest stationmaster in State service, are you not?

HELLMANN

Yes, sir.

COLONEL RICHTER

In the future, only I will give an order, since I am in charge of this sector. Understood?

HELLMANN

Yes, sir.

COLONEL RICHTER

I selected you for this Transit Yard because you know how to follow orders.

(smiles)

Too well, it seems. Dismissed.

Hellmann exits the room and Col. Richter reaches for the phone.

COLONEL RICHTER

Get me Lieutenant Becker.

EXT. TRANSIT YARD -- WINTER -- DAY

Hellmann stands beside Lt. Becker, who has the daily manifest. A dusting of snow on the ground. Both wear greatcoats against the cold, as do the Guards.

Crowds of Jews huddle near the Booking Hall. Among them is RACHEL TELLER, 18, a feisty gal with a thick mane of dark hair.

Rachel scans the Yard, then makes her way onto the raised platform. She slips into the Booking Hall, unnoticed.

INT. BOOKING HALL -- DAY

At one end of the deserted ticket counter, an armed GUARD with his back to her. Rachel ducks into the nearest inner door.

EXT. YARD -- SAME TIME

Hellmann walks toward the platform, then enters the Booking Hall.

INT. BOOKING HALL -- DAY

Hellmann enters the door through which Rachel has disappeared.

INT. HELLMANN'S QUARTERS -- DAY

A small room with a bed, an old upright piano littered with sheet music, a desk with a telephone, a wardrobe with a full-length mirror on one door, a tiny kitchen area.

Hellmann removes his coat. He opens the wardrobe. He's shocked to see Rachel crouched inside.

Rachel stares defiantly back at him, her fists clenched as though ready to strike him. Something about her fear stirs him.

A sudden KNOCK on the door.

Hellmann closes the wardrobe. Coat over his arm, he opens the door to Lt. Becker.

LT. BECKER

One of the Jews is missing.

HELLMANN

He can't have gotten far.

LT. BECKER

It's a young woman.

Hellmann puts on his coat.

HELLMANN

I'll help you find her.

EXT. YARD -- DAY

Hellmann and Becker search the yard for Rachel. Hellmann's face reveals nothing. Lt. Becker's face is angry.

They look under the platform, search the train before it's loaded with human cargo.

INT. BOOKING HALL -- DAY

They search the quarters by opening doors and looking inside.

Lt. Becker's hand reaches for Hellmann's door knob.

The sound of the train HUFFING as it pulls out of the station.

Hellmann thinks fast.

HELLMANN

You can't be serious. I just came out of there a little while ago. I can assure you, she's not in there.

LT. BECKER

Then you won't mind if I take a look.

HELLMANN

If you must ...

Lt. Becker sticks his head inside the door, sees the wardrobe. He's about to step inside to investigate when Cpl. Mullin appears.

CPL. MULLIN

Lt. Becker, you have a phone call.

Lt. Becker is already inside Hellmann's quarters.

LT. BECKER

Take a message.

CPL. MULLIN

It's Colonel Richter. He says it's urgent.

Lt. Becker hesitates, torn between his duty to find the missing Jew or bow to a superior's command. Hellmann helps make up his mind.

HELLMANN

She's not anywhere to be found. It looks like she made good her escape.

Lt. Becker steps back into the hallway.

LT. BECKER

She's here somewhere. She'll wish she was dead when I find her.

Hellmann closes his door.

EXT. BOOKING HALL -- NIGHT

Hellmann returns to his quarters.

INT. HELLMANN'S QUARTERS -- NIGHT

Hellmann draws the black-out curtains. He goes to the wardrobe, looks at it. Will she still be there? He opens the wardrobe. She's still there.

He offers a hand to help her out. She trembles with cold and poor circulation. He wraps his coat around her shoulders, leads her to the bed.

She sits but is afraid to look at him. Hellmann sits beside her. He is much taken with her.

HELLMANN

How did you get in here?

RACHEL

When no one was looking.

Rachel stares at the floor. She does not know what is to become of her now that she has been discovered.

HELLMANN

They'll shoot you if they catch you.

RACHEL

They'll have to catch me first.

HELLMANN

I'll look after you. My name is Kurt Hellmann.

RACHEL
Rachel Teller.

She looks warily at him.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Why should I trust you?

HELLMANN
There's no one else you CAN trust.
Besides, the train has already
left. You have dropped out of the
system.

Hellmann goes to the kitchen to fix her a sandwich.

RACHEL
Why didn't you turn me in?

HELLMANN
There's been too much killing
already. You're young. You have
your whole life ahead of you.

RACHEL
I'm a Jew. There IS no life ahead
of me. Think I don't know what
waits for me in the camps? I've
escaped before, I can do it again.

He brings her the sandwich and a glass of water. She eats
like she hasn't eaten in a week.

HELLMANN
You've escaped? From where?

RACHEL
The Warsaw Ghetto, the first time.
They loaded me and my family - my
mother, father, and Rivkah, my
sister - onto a train. They said we
were going to a work camp but
everyone knew we were going to the
death camps.

Hellmann goes back to the kitchen to make another sandwich.
He brings it to her, along with another glass of water.

HELLMANN
I've never been to the camps. I
hope I never have to go.

RACHEL

We were on our way to Auschwitz when some of the men kicked a hole in the side of the rail car. My father threw my sister out first. She landed in a ditch and ran away, just like my father told her to. Next went my mother, who was to look after Rivkah, but her dress got caught on something and she was sucked under the moving train.

Rachel begins to cry, then dries her eyes on her sleeve.

RACHEL

Then my father threw me out. "Run, Rachel, run!" he yelled. Then he jumped but a train guard shot him when he got to his feet. I ran through the night until I came to a haystack. I hid there for two days before the farmer found me.

HELLMANN

Did he hide you? Many of the locals hide the Jews.

RACHEL

He was a Ukraine who was working with the Nazis to help capture escapees. I was put on a train, and here I am.

Rachel's pain is reflected on Hellmann's face.

HELLMANN

Do you think Rivkah got away?

RACHEL

I hope so.

INT. HELLMANN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Hellmann is in bed, asleep. Alone.

INT. HELLMANN'S ROOM -- DAY

Hellmann prepares a breakfast of coffee and pastry. He looks at Rachel, who goes to the piano bench and sits down.

HELLMANN

I hope I'm not deceiving both of us
by keeping you here.

Rachel looks at him, begins to softly play Liszt's
"Consolation No. 3."

Hellmann stops what he's doing, turns to look at her. He
faces a reality he's ignored up to this point.

HELLMANN (CONT'D)

What we are doing to the Jews is
evil. We are nothing more than a
"waiting room" for the camps.

RACHEL

My family had a motto they lived
by: Do not fight evil. Let goodness
take its place.

Hellmann thinks about that, nods his agreement.

HELLMANN

Where did you learn to play
"Consolation No. 3"?

RACHEL

My mother taught me. And Rivkah.

HELLMANN

You must not play the piano when I
am not here, or make any noise at
all. You must stay under the bed
when I am not here.

Hellmann gets his coat from the wardrobe and leaves.

EXT. YARD -- DAY

Preoccupied with his thoughts, Hellmann goes about his
duties like a robot.

BEGIN SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1) Checking the morning manifest,
- 2) Unloading a new trainload of Jews.
- 3) Reloading them onto another waiting train.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. HELLMANN'S QUARTERS -- LATER

Hellmann returns for lunch. There is no sign of Rachel. He goes to the kitchen and fixes two sandwiches, makes coffee.

He passes a sandwich and cup of coffee to Rachel under the bed, then silently eats his own lunch.

BEGIN MONTAGE

Black-out curtains are always drawn in Hellmann's quarters.

- 1) Hellmann and Rachel at the piano.
- 2) Hellmann plays, Rachel turns the music pages
- 3) Rachel plays, Hellmann turns the pages.
- 4) Loving looks between them as they cook small meals together.
- 5) A tender kiss as a deep love grows between them.

END MONTAGE

EXT. TRANSIT YARD -- DAY

Hellmann and Becker are loading the day's manifest when an OLD MAN jumps from a rail car and runs wildly toward the rear of the waiting train. Open space but no place to hide.

Cpl. Mullin overtakes the Old Man and drags him back by the hair, where he is dropped at Becker's feet.

Becker puts a foot on the Man's back to keep him down.

LT. BECKER

Name?

OLD MAN

Yakov Wloch.

Becker finds the Man's name on the manifest and draws a line through it.

LT. BECKER

(to Cpl. Mullin)

Give him the pill.

Cpl. Mullin marches the Old Man to the center of the Yard, then stops him. He shoulders his machine gun, withdraws his pistol, shoots the Old Man in the back of the head.

ON HELLMANN

a look of horror on his face. He turns and vomits.

INT. HELLMANN'S QUARTERS -- LATE NIGHT

Hellmann enters and hangs up his coat as though in a trance.

Rachel has prepared a meal and begins to serve it up. She has made a table from a wooden crate and placed it near the bed.

An upset and angry Hellmann heads for the piano. He takes his anger out on Rachel.

HELLMANN

I thought I told you to stay under
the bed!

RACHEL

It has been two weeks. No one has
come around. I'm careful not to
make any noise. I do not cook
anything when you're not here. Cold
food only.

He pounds the keys on the old piano, scaring Rachel. Then, his anger spent, he plays "Consolation No. 3."

Rachel cowers by the bed, unsure of what he'll do next.

HELLMANN

All this killing makes me sick!
They shot an old man who tried to
escape today.

He looks at Rachel and his face softens.

HELLMANN (CONT'D)

If I ever lost you, I could never
bear to hear this music again.

There's an angry KNOCK on the door. Hellmann looks at Rachel, puts a finger to his lips.

HELLMANN (CONT'D)

What is it?

LT. BECKER (O.S.)

What is all that racket in there?

HELLMANN

I couldn't sleep so I took it out
on the piano. Sorry. I'm back in
bed now.

LT. BECKER (O.S.)

See that you stay there.

Hellmann goes to Rachel and kisses her. A sensuous kiss.

HELLMANN

We must find a way to get you out
of here. (beat) I will sneak you
out on my motorcycle. You can hide
under a blanket in the sidecar.
We'll go tomorrow night.

He gazes into her eyes. She returns the look. He takes her
hand, leads her to the bed, where one thing leads to
another...

INT. HELLMANN'S ROOM -- MORNING

Hellmann opens the kitchen black-out curtains just enough to
let in a sliver of sunlight. The extra bit of light will
brighten Rachel's day.

Rachel looks lovingly at him, then smiles.

HELLMANN

Be very quiet today, and stay away
from the window.

Hellmann leaves.

Rachel makes the bed, cleans up the kitchen. A butterfly
lands on the windowsill in front of her. She tries to raise
the window. It CREAKS ...

EXT. HELLMANN'S KITCHEN WINDOW -- MORNING

A SENTRY is posted near the window. The creak startles him.
He turns, sees Rachel. The butterfly takes wing.

EXT. BOOKING PLATFORM -- LATER

Hellmann walks along the platform. He stops when he sees a
smiling Lt. Becker and Cpl. Mullin emerge from the Booking
Hall. Between them, a handcuffed Rachel.

LT. BECKER

They found her staring out your window. She has no papers. Your concubine, I presume?

Hellmann looks at Becker, then at Rachel, who returns an expressionless gaze.

RACHEL

I do not know this man.

Lt. Becker smiles knowingly at Rachel's remark.

LT. BECKER

She has been well trained. My compliments, Hellmann. What do you have to say?

Hellmann's in a pickle. If he says the wrong thing, his life is on the line.

HELLMANN

I have never seen this woman before.

Becker regards Hellmann with disdain. Without proof, he can do nothing.

LT. BECKER

Very well. She will meet her fate in the camps. Corporal Mullin, put her in line, but watch her. She's a slippery one.

Hellmann watches as Rachel is marched into the Yard. Her handcuffs are removed and she is shoved into a boarding line.

Cpl. Mullin steps away, but not very far.

A frail MAN behind Rachel clutches his chest. He topples into Rachel, pushing her and the others in line forward. A circle forms around the fallen Man.

Guards push their way through. Cpl. Mullin steps in to help.

Rachel blends into the surrounding chaos, then makes a break for it.

EXT. BOOKING PLATFORM -- MORNING

Hellmann sees Rachel run alongside the tracks.

HELLMANN
(to himself)
Run, Rachel, run!

He moves along the platform, hoping ...

EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS -- MORNING

A TRAIN approaches, belching black smoke. It's an Express to the camps. A long line of boxcars filled with Jews.

Rachel stops, turns for one last look at Hellmann before running between the tracks of the speeding train. If she times it right she can put the train between her and the Guards and make good her escape.

A GUARD points and shouts,

GUARD
Over here! An escapee! Over here!

Other Guards join the pursuit, rifles at the ready.

EXT. RAISED PLATFORM -- MORNING

Hellmann turns, sees the train, its long line of rail cars filled with human cargo.

EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS -- MORNING

The Guards gain on Rachel.

Rachel looks back. The train is gaining on her! She nearly slips on the tracks as the train bears down on her.

EXT. STEAM LOCOMOTIVE -- MORNING

The ENGINEER leans out the window, sees Rachel. A snide grin as he pulls the whistle chain, gives the engine more steam. No way he's ever going to stop for a Jew.

EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS -- MORNING

Rachel keeps running. Her hair flows behind her like a flag.

A Guard closes in.

EXT. YARD -- MORNING

Hellmann races along the Yard, not caring who might be watching.

HELLMANN'S P.O.V.

A Guard grabs Rachel by the hair and yanks her off the tracks a split second before the train passes them.

Hellmann drops to his knees, raises his head and howls,

HELLMANN

Rachel! Rachel! No-o-o-o!

His words are lost in the roar of the train.

INT. WATCHTOWER -- MORNING

Lt. Becker watches Hellmann. A knowing smile stretches across his lips.

EXT. YARD -- LATER

Lt. Becker clutches Hellmann's arm, pulls him toward a circle of Guards around Rachel, who's tied to the flag pole.

LT. BECKER

(to Hellmann)

Now, then, you will see the fate of your whore. You should have told me the truth and spared her life.

Hellmann is terrified but he remains stoic. To crumble now is to sign his own death warrant.

HELLMANN

She is not my whore.

LT. BECKER

You have been keeping her hidden ever since she disappeared. You have been aiding and abetting the enemy.

HELLMANN

You have no proof of that.

LT. BECKER.

Right now, I am making the rules.

Lt. Becker goes to the firing squad, confers, then returns to Hellmann.

Rachel does not look at Hellmann, who stares at her. He is unable to hide his anguish at what's about to happen.

Lt. Becker clicks his heels together, raises his arm, then suddenly drops it.

LT. BECKER (CONT'D)

NOW!

The Guards fire and Rachel slumps forward. Hellmann turns and vomits on Becker's boots.

INT. LT. BECKER'S QUARTERS -- AFTERNOON

Becker is on the phone with Col. Richter. INTERCUT as needed.

LT. BECKER

Today I found the missing Jew woman in Hellmann's quarters. He's been hiding her since she disappeared two weeks ago.

COL. RICHTER

Are you absolutely certain of that?

LT. BECKER

It's the only answer.

COL. RICHTER

Is it? She couldn't have snuck in there this morning from another hiding place? Lieutenant, your disdain for Hellmann is not much of a secret, you know. Don't think I don't know who was behind that call about the Fuhrer's train.

Becker is getting angrier by the minute.

LT. BECKER

He was hiding a Jew, I tell you!

Col. Richter sighs loudly. This isn't going the way he'd hoped.

COL. RICHTER
Did you put her on the train to the camps?

LT. BECKER
Yes.

Col. Richter looks at his wristwatch.

COL. RICHTER
It's late. Tell Hellmann I want to see him first thing tomorrow.

Becker smiles. At last things are going his way.

LT. BECKER
Do you want me to bring him in, sir?

COL. RICHTER
He knows how to follow orders.

INT. HELLMANN'S QUARTERS -- SAME TIME

A dazed Hellmann returns to his room. He stands before the mirror, a horrified look on his face. He hates himself for not saving Rachel. That hatred will stay with him forever.

He removes a knife from a drawer. In front of the mirror, he rips off his shirt, grips the knife in his right hand. He grits his teeth, then draws the knife enough to draw first blood. Angrily he carves a crude swastika above his left nipple.

In the mirror he regards his bloody handiwork - and himself - with a look of hatred.

EXT. WATCHTOWER -- NEXT DAY

Hellmann descends the stairs and approaches Lt. Becker, who stands beside a motorcycle with a sidecar. With him is Cpl. Mullin.

LT. BECKER
(to Hellmann)
Pack a bag. I'm sure you won't be coming back.

Hellmann looks at Becker's feet.

HELLMANN

You really should clean your boots,
Lieutenant.

Lt. Becker looks with disgust at his boots, then gives Hellmann a look of hatred.

Hellmann gets on the motorcycle and drives away.

Cpl. Mullin turns to Lt. Becker.

CPL. MULLIN

Maybe we should have told him the
phone call was a joke.

LT. BECKER

You ever mention that to anyone,
I'll give you the pill myself.

EXT. HIGHWAY (MOVING) -- DAY

As Hellmann rides the street toward Col. Richter's office, images of Rachel flash through his mind.

A SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1) Rachel's smile
- 2) Rachel playing the piano
- 3) Rachel hiding in his wardrobe
- 4) Rachel shot dead.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. COL. RICHTER'S OFFICE -- DAY

Hellmann passes by Col. Richter's office. He rides off into the perverbial sunset.

A lonely portrait of Hellmann as he rides out of town and out of the war, his heart as empty as the sidecar.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN:

EXT. WAREHOUSE DISTRICT STREET, RIO DE JANEIRO -- DAY

RUTH GOLDING, 29, a pretty, independent woman, carries a duffel bag and a satchel. She stops at a sign over a door that says "Census da Borboleta," which is illustrated with a butterfly.

SUPER: RIO DE JANEIRO, 1952

Wearing pants (practically unheard of at that time) she consults a piece of paper, then enters the building.

INT. CENSUS OFFICE -- DAY

Unoccupied desks cluttered with folders, books, phones, manual typewriters. Windows are opaque with grime. On one wall, a large map of Brazil.

A balding older MAN behind a messy desk at the head of the room, a phone to his ear. He is Ruth's Handler.

He motions her to the chair beside his desk.

HANDLER

She's here now ... Manaus? ... Is that a confirmed sighting?

The Handler hangs up, turns to Ruth.

HANDLER (CONT'D)

How was your trip from New York?

RUTH

Long.

HANDLER

You're in for an even longer trip. We have tracked our Scavenger butterfly. It has now undergone its metamorphosis and is stationary in Manaus.

He goes to the map and points at Manaus.

RUTH

A long ways from Rio.

HANDLER

Five days by train. You up to it?

RUTH

I wouldn't be here if I wasn't.

HANDLER

Most of the time we send out squads of two to four but they're all busy with other missions. You'll have to go it alone. We have also confirmed the identity and migration of our Carnivorous butterfly to be here.

He points to Sao Luis.

HANDLER (CONT'D)

And the elusive Granville is here.

He points to jungle area laced with rivers large and small.

HANDLER (CONT'D)

This one is so rare that we have no photos, although we are aware of a distinguishing mark that resembles a bent cross on its chest. You will have to be a taxonomist on this one and collect the information yourself. No one knows exactly where its nest is, or even what it really looks like.

He returns to his desk. He opens a drawer and withdraws three file folders, each one with a name typed on it.

HANDLER (CONT'D)

Maps and all the information you'll need are in these files.

He hands her the file folders.

RUTH

So I have two in hand and one in the bush.

The Handler nods.

HANDLER

I understand you requested this mission.

RUTH

Yes.

He leans back in his chair, briefly studies her.

HANDLER

Mind if I ask why?

RUTH
I've never been to Brazil before.

Her answer seems to satisfy him.

HANDLER
After each mission is complete,
send a cable with the words
"mariposa libre" and its
classification.

He hands Ruth a business card with the needed information.

RUTH
What does "mariposa libre" mean?

HANDLER
The butterfly is free.

EXT. RUBBER PLANTATION, BRAZIL -- AERIAL VIEW -- DAY

A once-stately 2-story mansion with veranda that has fallen into disrepair on the outskirts of O Varayo, a sleepy river town. A second-story on stilts sags dangerously. A tree grows through a broken window.

A decrepit barn, some rickety outbuildings. Chickens pecking in the dirt yard.

Beyond the yard, rows of rubber trees end in a wall of jungle where RUBBER TAPPERS tend to the latex buckets.

SUPER: RUBBER PLANTATION, O VARAYO, BRAZIL

INT. MANSION / MAIN HALL -- DAY

Piano music echoes through the once-stately room. A pair of overstuffed chairs, a lamp or two. A small table with a chess set and two chairs. A sweeping staircase.

A gleaming grand piano dominates the room. Its raised lid rears up like the wing of a giant black butterfly.

Hellmann, eyes closed, plays "Confidencias" by Ernest Nazareth. He wears his everyday uniform: a faded white linen suit, a white shirt a bit frayed at collar and cuffs. A bowler hat rests on the bench beside him.

Now known as Kristian Hardy (for clarity he will be referred to as Hellmann throughout), the preceding years haven't aged him much.

A quiet but intelligent INDIAN BOY of 4 runs up to Hellmann, who stops playing.

HELLMANN

Eduardo!

He lifts Eduardo onto his lap and hugs him.

HELLMANN (CONT'D)

How would you like to go for a ride today?

Eduardo smiles and scrambles down from Hellmann's lap.

EDUARDO

I am ready now, Uncle Kristian.

Eduardo's mother and Hellmann's housekeeper, ESTANCIA, early 40s, comes into the room.

ESTANCIA

(to Eduardo)

Ready for your nap?

HELLMANN

Not yet, Estancia. I will take him for a ride first.

Estancia is not pleased.

ESTANCIA

Do not keep Eduardo long. It will rain soon and he must have his nap.

EXT. RUBBER PLANTATION -- DAY

Hellmann and Eduardo ride a horse between a row of rubber trees toward the jungle wall. Both wave to the Rubber Tappers, who wave back.

Hellmann pretends to inspect the latex buckets as they ride by but he could care less.

Hellmann passes GOMEZ, 20, a Tapper with a pony tail and a bad attitude. Gomez watches Hellmann ride away with a look of disdain before he returns to his work.

Hellmann gallops his horse toward the jungle wall, much to Eduardo's delight.

EDUARDO
Faster, Uncle Kristian! Faster!

EXT. JUNGLE WALL -- DAY

The horse suddenly WHINNIES, then rears and paws the air.
Hellmann holds onto Eduardo while trying to control his nervous horse.

EDUARDO
What makes the horse scared, Uncle Kristian?

HELLMANN
Maybe a snake or some other animal.

The horse circles nervously. Hellmann looks at the vegetation, decides there's nothing there. He doesn't notice the fresh mound of earth with the horse so nervous from the scent of fresh blood.

Hellmann turns the horse back toward the mansion. It begins to rain. Hard.

INT. TRAIN LEAVING RIO DE JANEIRO -- DAY

Ruth sits in a hot, crowded car, hemmed in by PASSENGERS sitting and standing.

In front of her, a year-old CHILD on the hip of a weary pregnant Indian WOMAN who's hanging onto a leather strap. The Child stares at Ruth.

Ruth stands and offers her seat to the Woman, who gratefully accepts. Ruth holds out her hands.

RUTH
May I hold him?

The Woman hesitates, then hands her Child to Ruth, who grins at it.

Suspicious at first, the Baby's face breaks into a smile.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1) Ruth, squeezed between TWO MEN, nods off, hugging her satchel, her duffel between her feet
- 2) Aerial shot of a train chugging along
- 3) Ruth offers some of her lunch to a hungry young BOY
- 4) Ruth reads a file folder
- 5) The train pulls into Manaus station

END SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. MANAUS TRAIN STATION -- DAY

Ruth pays for a locker, then stuffs her duffel inside. Carrying her satchel, she heads for the exit.

EXT. MANAUS TRAIN STATION -- DUSK

In front of the station, a city bus waits. Ruth hurries toward it and boards. The bus pulls away.

EXT. CITY STREET -- LATER

Ruth walking. She stops and pulls a piece of paper from a pocket, then continues walking. She stops at the edge of a field.

Across the field, a house surrounded on three sides with trees and other shrubbery.

She crosses the field, snuggles into the shrubbery to wait.

EXT. HOUSE -- DUSK

No lights come on inside the house as the sky darkens.

EXT. HOUSE -- NIGHT

Car headlights turn into the driveway and stop. A MAN gets out. He briefly turns and faces the direction where Ruth is hiding. It's none other than Col. Richter.

Ruth lifts her pistol equipped with a silencer. She shoots. A perfect head shot that drops Richter instantly.

Ruth pulls a folder from her satchel, drops it near Richter's body, then ignites it. Richter's name is clearly visible on the folder. She attaches a business-sized card to Richter's shirt pocket with a paper clip.

INSERT CARD:

"This man has been identified as SS
Col. Wilhelm Richter, a Nazi war
criminal."

Standing in front of Richter's car headlights, Ruth pulls a piece of paper from her pocket, a pen from another pocket, and crosses off the name at the top of her list.

INSERT LIST: WILHELM RICHTER, HANS BECKER, KURT HELLMANN

EXT. RUBBER PLANTATION NEAR JUNGLE WALL -- DAY

Ten half-naked INDIANS dig a trench. SHOVELS dig into the ground, throw off their load. One shovel gets stuck in something, comes up bloody.

INT. MAIN HALL / MANSION -- DAY

Hellmann and FATHER LORENZO, 36, the local priest, play a game of chess. A rumble of THUNDER. A hard RAIN PELTS the windows.

Hellmann studies the board for his next move while Father Lorenzo looks out the window.

FATHER LORENZO
It's raining again.

More LIGHTNING. Another CLAP OF THUNDER. Father Lorenzo involuntarily shivers.

HELLMANN
There's nothing to fear in nature,
Lorenzo, only in man.

FATHER LORENZO
Are you speaking from experience?

Hellmann moves a chess piece.

HELLMANN
What else can I speak from?

It's Father Lorenzo's turn to study the board.

FATHER LORENZO
I wonder what kind of storms
brought you to O Varayo?

HELLMANN
The same kind that brought you
here, I suppose.

FATHER LORENZO
I came because the Indians needed
me.

Fr. Lorenzo moves a chess piece amid another BOOM of
THUNDER.

HELLMANN
They didn't need you, you needed
them. You brought your God when
they had their own.

FATHER LORENZO
So you mean to tell me you don't
believe in God?

HELLMANN
Not your God. Not a God who lets
bad things happen to innocent
people.

FATHER LORENZO
There's only one God.

HELLMANN
Then I reject Him.

FATHER LORENZO
I never knew you didn't believe in
God. That explains why you never
come to church.

Hellmann gives Father Lorenzo an intense look, though it's
possible he might be thinking of something else.

HELLMANN
There's a lot we don't know about
each another.

Father Lorenzo grimaces as Hellmann moves a piece that ends
the game.

HELLMANN (CONT'D)
Checkmate!

ESQUAMILLO, 42, Hellmann's overseer and Eduardo's father, runs into the room, a troubled look on his face.

ESQUAMILLO
Come quickly, *Patrono*. We have a problem.

Father Lorenzo rises. He looks from one man to the other.

FATHER LORENZO
What kind of problem? Will you need my help?

HELLMANN
I'll send for you if we need you.

Hellmann and Esquamillo watch Father Lorenzo leave.

HELLMANN (CONT'D)
What is it, Esquamillo?

ESQUAMILLO
We need your advice, *Patrono*. You must come.

EXT. MANSION VERANDA -- DAY

On the veranda steps, Eduardo whittles a stick. When Hellmann and Esquamillo come out, Hellmann bends over and takes Eduardo's arm.

HELLMANN
Come, Eduardo. We must solve a problem.

Eduardo drops his knife and stick and stands, eager to go.

ESQUAMILLO
(surprised)
You wish Eduardo to come with us?

HELLMANN
Why not? Your son should learn something about running a rubber plantation. He will take your place as overseer some day.

Esquamillo opens his mouth to argue but decides against it.

EXT. DIGGING SITE -- DAY

Frightened WORKERS stand in front of the open trench close to the jungle wall where Hellmann's horse acted up.

HELLMANN

What is wrong, Esquamillo?

ESQUAMILLO

We have found a body.

The nervous Workers part to reveal the young Girl in her shallow grave. Along with the shovel cut, an ugly gash splits her neck.

Hellmann buries Eduardo's face against his body to shield him from the gruesome sight. He turns to a nearby Worker and hands Eduardo to him.

HELLMANN

Take him to his mother. Now!

The Worker runs away, carrying Eduardo. Hellmann turns to Esquamillo.

HELLMANN (CONT'D)

Why didn't you tell me? Why did you let me bring Eduardo?

ESQUAMILLO

You said to bring him. Who am I to argue?

HELLMANN

(outraged)

YOU are his father!

ESQUAMILLO

And you are the boss. You said he should learn--

HELLMANN

Not this! Oh, Christ, not this!

Hellmann wipes his brow with a handkerchief. He goes to the grave, forces himself to look at the dead Girl, then turns and vomits.

He rises, turns to Esquamillo, a sick look on his face.

HELLMANN (CONT'D)

Who would do such a thing?

ESQUAMILLO
Someone who wanted her found.

HELLMANN
Why?

ESQUAMILLO
To blame you.

HELLMANN
Why me?

ESQUAMILLO
Because you are responsible for
what happens on your land.

Hellmann sees the Workers inching away from the grave.

ESQUAMILLO (CONT'D)
The Workers have had no part in
this.

HELLMANN
Of course not!

Esquamillo goes to the huddled Workers and talks to them,
then returns to Hellmann.

ESQUAMILLO
They think it is Gomez. He took his
things and left last night. They
thought he was running from his
gambling debts.

Hellmann forces another look at the dead Girl.

HELLMANN
So he was a worker here. Does her
family know?

ESQUAMILLO
One of the diggers went to tell her
tribe.

Both turn at the sound of approaching feet.

ESQUAMILLO (CONT'D)
Here they come now.

A DOZEN INDIANS approach, a lone WOMAN among them. All
except the Woman and the DIGGER wear hunting paint and carry
spears or bows.

At the edge of the grave, the Woman drops to her knees and cradles the dead Girl's head. A low KEENING escapes her lips.

Hellmann winces at her pain.

FLASHBACK. EXT. BLUMENWALD SIDING -- DAY

A young Mother holds her Baby out to Hellmann.

MOTHER

Save him! Please save him!

Hellmann reaches out but Mother and Child are knocked beneath trampling feet.

BACK TO SCENE

A smoldering TRIBAL LEADER steps over to Hellmann. He's big, beef on the hoof. He looks lean and mean in his war paint.

TRIBAL LEADER

You will hand over the man who did this. Now!

HELLMANN

We will ... as soon as we find him.

TRIBAL LEADER

This is your land. You are responsible for this girl's death.

Hellmann wipes his brow again, intimidated by the man's size.

TRIBAL LEADER (CONT'D)

You must deliver the killer to us or pay the price yourself. It is the law of our tribe.

HELLMANN

If by the third moon I have not found the killer, I will come alone to your village and take his place. Your tribe will have its justice.

TRIBAL LEADER

Three moons is too long.

HELLMANN

Two moons.

The Tribal Leader contemplates this, then shakes his head.

TRIBAL LEADER

One moon. If you do not find him
before the next moon, I will come
for you.

INT. TRAIN CAR -- DAY

Ruth is on another train, heading for her next assignment. This train is not so crowded. She studies another file amid the CLICKETY-CLACK of the rails while eating a banana.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS -- NIGHT

The train speeds away into the night.

INT. CENSUS OFFICE IN RIO DE JANEIRO -- DAY

Ruth's Handler is making notes in a file. The door opens.

A Western & Brazilian Telegraph MESSENGER hands him a telegram.

The Handler opens the telegram.

INSERT TELEGRAM: SCAVENGER MARIPOSA LIBRE - RUTH

The Handler looks up at the Messenger, digs in his pocket, then flips him a coin.

HANDLER

That will be all. Thank you.

INT. MAIN HALL / MANSION -- DAY

Hellmann makes his way up the staircase.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY -- DAY

Hellmann walks down a long hallway. Chandeliers hang askew. Half the bulbs are missing.

He disappears into the third left doorway, into what he calls his Music Room.

INT. MUSIC ROOM -- DAY

The room is a mess. A tree grows through a broken window. Fallen leaves litter the floor. Peeling paint hangs from the ceiling like stalactites.

An escritoire and chair in one corner. A dusty canopied bed along one wall leans toward the center of the floor, which sags dangerously.

Hellmann makes his way along the wall towards the escritoire. He settles into the chair and pulls a tattered journal and pen from one of many drawers. He begins writing.

HELLMANN (V.O.)

My Dear Rachel: The horrors of Blumenwald haunt me still. Today we found the body of a young Indian girl. I watched the mother cradle her dead daughter. I remembered another mother who pleaded for me to save her baby at Blumenwald. Sadly, I have failed them both.

Eduardo appears in the doorway and watches Hellmann write. His sudden sneeze alerts Hellmann to his presence.

Hellmann turns just as Eduardo is about to step into the room.

HELLMANN

Stay there, Eduardo. I will come and get you. You know you are not to come into this room without my help.

Hellmann and Eduardo sit on the floor, backs against the wall, just inside the doorway. A breeze stirs the leaves on the tree, which plays music only Hellmann can hear.

HELLMANN (CONT'D)

Do you hear the music, Eduardo?

Strains of FAINT MUSIC.

Eduardo listens, then shakes his head.

HELLMANN (CONT'D)

The leaves are singing. See how they move? Listen real hard and you can hear their music.

Hellmann closes his eyes. The music grows STRONGER. It is "Consolation No. 3" that only Hellmann can hear. (NOTE: This is Rachel's song, the only music Hellmann ever hears in this room.)

MUSIC STOPS

on Eduardo. He doesn't hear anything.

EDUARDO

What is it singing, Uncle Kristian?

HELLMANN

A song from another land.

Eduardo reaches out, picks up a fallen leaf and puts it to his ear. He looks at Hellmann and smiles.

Hellmann laughs, then removes the leaf from Eduardo's hand.

HELLMANN (CONT'D)

No, not like that. You have to listen to the breeze as it skims the leaves and plucks them like the strings of a harp. Lean back and close your eyes. Listen with your heart as well as your ears.

The leaves rustle slightly.

Eduardo leans back and closes his eyes. A smile slowly spreads across his face. He nods as though to a musical beat. Maybe he does hear something.

EXT. MANSION YARD -- SAME TIME

Father Lorenzo quickly approaches the mansion, an angry look on his face.

INT. KITCHEN -- DAY

A POUNDING on the door brings Estancia and her mop. She steps aside to let Father Lorenzo enter.

FATHER LORENZO

Where is he, Estancia?

ESTANCIA

Upstairs, in the music room.

Estancia resumes mopping the floor after Father Lorenzo leaves.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY -- DAY

Father Lorenzo marches down the hallway, peering into doorways.

FATHER LORENZO
Where are you, Kristian?

Hellmann's head appears in a doorway.

HELLMANN
We're here, in the music room.

INT. MUSIC ROOM -- DAY

Father Lorenzo, about to step into the room, is stopped by the sight of the tree, his anger forgotten.

Hellmann shifts Eduardo over, then himself. He pats the floor beside him.

HELLMANN
Come join us, Lorenzo.

Father Lorenzo sits, then stares at the tree.

FATHER LORENZO
Why do you call this the music room
when your piano is downstairs?

HELLMANN
The piano is for the music I choose
to play. Up here, the tree sings to
me.

FATHER LORENZO
The tree ... sings? How can that
be?

HELLMANN
It's like a giant tuning fork that
resonates with whatever's in your
heart. For you, I'm sure it will
sing hymns. For Eduardo it might be
the songs of his tribe.

Father Lorenzo looks around the room.

FATHER LORENZO
I never suspected this side of you.

HELLMANN
See how little we know each other?

FATHER LORENZO
I keep no secrets from you.

HELLMANN
The secrets we keep from each other
are the ones we keep from
ourselves.

FATHER LORENZO
There is one secret you have kept
from me -- that you have pledged
your life if you fail to find the
killer of that poor child.

HELLMANN
It's not much of a secret if all of
O Varayo knows it.

FATHER LORENZO
It's a terrible sin you commit.
Tantamount to a suicide pact.

HELLMANN
Take it up with your God.

FATHER LORENZO
It is not your crime. You have no
right to atone for it.

Hellmann looks off into the distance, remembering ...

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. BLUMENWALD TRANSIT YARD -- DAY

Rachel being shot, slumping forward from the flagpole.

END FLASHBACK

HELLMANN
You do not know what I may need
atonement for.

EXT. O VARAYO -- DAY

A dusty village on the river's edge not far from Hellmann's plantation. A restaurant/saloon, a church, a hotel, a fish market, a bank, a dry goods store, a telegraph office.

INT. RIVERFRONT SALOON -- DAY

Hellmann sits at a table near the window overlooking the river, a glass of beer in front of him.

Most of the tables are full of DINERS. A few PATRONS drink beer at the bar.

INT. SALOON FRONT DOOR -- DAY

A tall MAN in a 3-piece suit with a newspaper under his arm walks in and looks around. He sees Hellmann and proceeds to his table. He is ALBERTO DE LA CRUZ, 50, Hellmann's sales agent.

Alberto sits and signals the BARTENDER to bring him what Hellmann has.

ALBERTO

As your sales agent, I must tell
you that delivery prices are rising
and latex prices are falling.

The Bartender sets a glass of beer in front of Alberto. He waits while Alberto digs in a vest pocket for a coin, then leaves.

HELLMANN

Clearing the rain forest for cattle
production is hurting all the
rubber plantations, not that we are
rich to begin with. Far from it.
What is that under your arm?

Alberto removes the newspaper and lays it on the table.

ALBERTO

It seems The Avengers have
assassinated another Nazi. This
time in Manaus.

HELLMANN

Who, or what, are The Avengers?

ALBERTO

They are the Jewish death squads, the *Nokim*, which means Avengers in Hebrew. After some of their captured Nazis escaped or were released from prison, they decided to take matters into their own hands to make sure it doesn't happen again.

Hellmann reaches for the paper.

HELLMANN

May I?

Hellmann opens the newspaper, blanches at the headline.

INSERT NEWSPAPER HEADLINE: "NAZI ASSASSINATED AT HOME"

Hellmann forgets about Alberto and reads the story.

ALBERTO

It appears that Lieutenant Richter was living in Manaus, right under everyone's nose. Of course, he was known as Adam Wagner. Said he was from the Ukraine. I wonder if he knew that Adam is the Hebrew word for "man."

Alberto laughs at the irony and Hellmann looks up.

HELLMANN

How do you know that?

ALBERTO

It's in the story. Also in the story is a pile of ashes next to the body. I wonder what that signifies.

HELLMANN

A file maybe? May I keep the paper? It's not often we get news from the outside world.

ALBERTO

Sure. This is big news everywhere in Brazil.

Alberto drains his beer and gets up to leave.

ALBERTO (CONT'D)

Let me know when your next shipment is ready and I'll cable you the new price index.

Hellmann is so engrossed in reading the paper he is not even aware when Alberto leaves.

INT. HELLMANN'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Hellmann tosses and turns. His face is sweaty, distress clearly evident on his face.

HELLMANN'S DREAM: INT. COURTROOM -- DAY

The current Hellmann is in the witness box.

PROSECUTOR

Are you known as Kurt Hellmann?

HELLMANN

I answer to the name of Kristian Hardy.

PROSECUTOR

We realize that only the initials remain, but you once answered, did you not, to the name of Kurt Hellmann?

HELLMANN

Yes.

PROSECUTOR

You prided yourself on your work as the youngest stationmaster in Germany, did you not?

HELLMANN

Yes.

PROSECUTOR

Hundreds of people passed through your station each day. Where were they going?

HELLMANN

I knew only that they were destined for the concentration camps.

PROSECUTOR
What was taking place in those
camps?

HELLMANN
I do not know.

PROSECUTOR
(stunned)
You do not know?

HELLMANN
I did not know at the time.

PROSECUTOR
Hundreds of thousands of people
passed through your station each
year, all going to the death camps.
Did you not consider what was going
to happen to them, Herr Hellmann?

HELLMANN
No, I did not. It was not my
business to know. I was a mere
stationmaster. My job was to see
that the passengers were cleared
and that the trains left on time. I
could not allow myself to know what
was going on.

PROSECUTOR
What did you do to the prisoner
known as Rachel Teller?

HELLMANN
I loved her. I shall always love
her.

PROSECUTOR
Call Rachel Teller to the stand!

Rachel Teller enters as beautiful as she is young ...

BACK TO PRESENT

Hellmann, still asleep, suddenly sits up in bed and yells,

HELLMANN
Rachel!

... which awakens him. His eyes are wild, his breathing
erratic.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SAO LUIS STREET -- LATE AFTERNOON

Ruth and her satchel window shop. She stops in front of a butcher shop and looks in the window. She looks at the POSTED HOURS. The shop closes at 5 p.m.

RUTH'S P.O.V.

Hans Becker, the butcher behind the meat counter, wears a bloody apron. He hands an elderly WOMAN a wrapped package.

Ruth turns, sees a coffee shop across the street.

INT. COFFEE SHOP -- LATE AFTERNOON

Ruth eats a sandwich at a table in front of a large plate glass window with a perfect view of the butcher shop.

She takes a sip of coffee, then reaches into her satchel and pulls out a folder. She finishes her sandwich while reading.

Finished with her meal, Ruth checks her watch.

INSERT WATCH FACE: 4:45

Ruth closes the folder and slips it into her satchel.

EXT. BUTCHER SHOP -- A FEW MINUTES LATER

Ruth is once again looking in the window.

RUTH'S P.O.V.

There is no one inside. Not even Becker.

She opens the door. A bell TINKLES to announce her arrival. She steps in, turns and locks the door. She flips the window sign to "CLOSED."

INT. BUTCHER SHOP -- DAY

The Butcher comes out, wiping his hands on his blood-splattered apron.

BECKER
Can I help you?

RUTH

I hope so.

She bends down to put her satchel on the floor, straightens up with the silenced pistol in her hand.

Becker's hands reach for the ceiling, a frightened look on his face.

BECKER

Don't shoot! Please don't shoot!
I'll give you all the money in the
cash register, just please don't
shoot me!

Beads of sweat pop out on his forehead.

RUTH

I'm not interested in your money.

BECKER

What then?

Ruth motions with her pistol to the door Becker just came through.

RUTH

Anyone back there?

BECKER

They go home at four-thirty.

RUTH

Is this your shop?

BECKER

Yes, it is.

Becker offers a weak smile, as though ownership should have a positive bearing on his situation.

RUTH

Okay, into the back room.

Becker's feet seem nailed to the floor.

RUTH

NOW!

INT. BACK ROOM -- DAY

A windowless room with blood-stained tables. Blocks of wood hold a variety of knives on each table. Nearby, a rack of meat saws. Rolls of meat-wrapping paper.

BECKER

If you don't want my money, what do you want?

RUTH

Your cowardly life.

Becker is very afraid. His face drips sweat. His eyes sweep the room for a potential escape route. There is none.

BECKER

My life? Why?

RUTH

First we're going to play a little game.

BECKER

What kind of game?

RUTH

The sweating game. You're going to have some time to think about dying.

BECKER

Please ... I have a wife and two small children. How will they live without me?

RUTH

Would you rather I shoot them instead?

BECKER

(eyes wide)

NO! Please, no!

Ruth pulls up a nearby stool and sits.

Becker remains standing, his hands still in the air.

RUTH

But it was okay for you to shoot defenseless women and children in Blumenwald, was it not?

BECKER

That was war! Things were different then. I was only following orders.

RUTH

Who gave the order?

Becker's thoughts are almost visible as they roll around his mind, searching for a scapegoat who might save his sorry ass.

BECKER

It was Col. Richter who gave the orders to shoot if things ever got out of hand. The Jews were stampeding. We couldn't control them any other way. We had no choice but to start shooting.

He smirks. He's about to find out that his fate is already sealed, no matter what he says.

BECKER (CONT'D)

They were only Jews, after all. No harm done. The war was about getting rid of the Jews, was it not?

Ruth's face hardens.

RUTH

My parents and grandparents were in that yard. You were there. That's all I need to know.

Becker drops to his knees and pleads.

BECKER

I was under orders to shoot, I tell you! Check with Colonel Richter! He'll verify that!

RUTH

Colonel Richter is beyond verifying anything.

Ruth gives him a rueful grin.

Becker suddenly gets what she's saying. He closes his eyes. Maybe he's praying for deliverance from a situation he can't control.

Before Becker can open his eyes to protest, Ruth's bullet finds his forehead.

Ruth ignites Becker's file, then drops a card on his now bloodier apron. She pulls out her list, crosses off Becker's name.

INSERT LIST: Only Hellmann's name remains without a line through it.

INT. HELLMANN'S MUSIC ROOM -- NIGHT

Hellmann writes in his journal.

A breeze stirs the tree and it "sings" Rachel's song.

HELLMANN (V.O.)

My Dear Rachel: Today I read that Col. Richter has been assassinated. He was found in Manaus, where he had been working as a brakeman for the railroad. How ironic that he would continue with a railroad. Nazi war criminals are being executed by Jewish death squads called The Avengers. It won't be long before they find me. They will shoot me and I will finally be free of the atrocities I sent the Jews to. And for not saving you.

INT. MAIN HALL / MANSION -- MORNING

His jacket and hat on the bench beside him, Hellmann plays Ernesto Nazareth's "Eponina" waltz.

Esquamillo runs into the room, an excited look on his face.

ESQUAMILLO

We have found Gomez, *Patrono!*

Hellmann stops playing.

HELLMANN

Gomez?

Hellmann's face registers a question. He's forgotten who Gomez is.

ESQUAMILLO

The man who killed the Indian girl!
He has been seen in town.

Hellmann's eyes widen in surprise. Or maybe fear.

HELLMANN

You expect me to go and capture him?

ESQUAMILLO

I will go with you to see that no harm comes to you.

HELLMANN

I don't even know what he looks like.

ESQUAMILLO

I will point him out to you. He's about twenty years old and the only man around here with a pony tail.

HELLMANN

I doubt he will meekly surrender.

ESQUAMILLO

We will go well armed.

HELLMANN

I have never fired a gun.

Esquamillo grows impatient with Hellmann's excuses.

ESQUAMILLO

We will take some Tappers with us. We must hurry before he disappears.

Hellmann rises from the piano. He puts on his hat and jacket.

HELLMANN

Very well, but I will remain unarmed. You come to my defense only if he turns violent.

EXT. RIVERFRONT SALOON -- LATER

Hellmann, Esquamillo, and three TAPPERS look discouraged. The Tappers and Esquamillo are armed with rifles.

ESQUAMILLO

We have looked everywhere. He is not here.

Hellmann looks relieved.

HELLMANN

Or maybe he was never here. He is most likely long gone. Why would he hang around here, a wanted man?

ESQUAMILLO

Maybe just to see you punished for his crime. I have seen it before.

HELLMANN

How can the man hate me when I don't even know him?

ESQUAMILLO

That is what we must find out.

Hellmann and his Men begin their journey home, which takes them past the church. Hellmann is surprised to see Father Lorenzo leaning against the doorway, arms folded.

FATHER LORENZO

A hunting party?

HELLMANN

You're very astute, Lorenzo.

FATHER LORENZO

The killer of the Indian Girl, I presume?

HELLMANN

No. The killer of rumors.

EXT. CENSUS BUILDING -- RIO DE JANEIRO -- DAY

A telegraph MESSENGER enters, telegram in hand.

EXT. RIVER DOCK -- DAY

Ruth wanders the dock area. She stops to talk to two BOAT OWNERS.

RUTH

Are you going upriver?

MAN #1

How far?

Ruth removes a piece of paper from her pocket.

RUTH

Pampaas. I understand I must ride a bus from there to O Varayo.

MAN #2

We don't go that far but the men two slips down go there often. If you've got money, they'll take you anywhere.

She walks two slips down, stops in front of a small river boat with an outboard. It's only slightly larger than a dug-out but very old.

Two shabbily-dressed MEN drink bottles of beer on the slip. One of them is Gomez, the killer of the Indian girl. He has grown a mustache and cut his hair.

His partner, ALVAREZ, about 30, is a reticent man with an eye patch.

RUTH

Hello. I understand you go to Pampaas.

GOMEZ

We go there. Why do you go there?

RUTH

How far is this town?

GOMEZ

About twenty miles upriver.

RUTH

How far is O Varayo from there?

GOMEZ

About ten miles. You must take a bus from Pampaas to O Varayo. This river does not connect with the river there.

RUTH

Will this piece of junk you call a boat get me there?

Gomez is offended by her remark but doesn't say anything.

GOMEZ

It will get you there and back.

RUTH

Then I wish to hire you to take me there. It may be a while before I need to come back.

Gomez eyes Ruth's considerable bankroll as she peels off some bills and hands them to him.

GOMEZ

Get aboard, then.

EXT. RIVERBOAT (MOVING) -- LATER

Ruth sits in the bow, her duffel and satchel at her feet. She reads a file as they chug along.

Gomez and Alvarez huddle near the motor, glancing at Ruth, planning something.

The engine stops. Ruth looks up.

RUTH

What's the problem?

Gomez grabs a paddle and advances toward Ruth, a look of smug determination on his face. Brawn over brains.

RUTH (CONT'D)

I said, what's the PROBLEM?

As Gomez continues toward Ruth, her hand slides into the satchel and comes up wearing a pistol.

A lustful smile splits Gomez's lips. He holds the paddle like a baseball bat, prepares to swing.

Ruth FIRES.

The bullet knocks the paddle out of Gomez's hand and the force throws him overboard.

Ruth trains her pistol on Alvarez, who raises his hands like a trained monkey.

Gomez grabs the side of the boat, struggles to get in.

RUTH (CONT'D)

I hope for your sake there are no piranha in the river.

Ruth signals with her pistol for Alvarez to help Gomez into the boat.

RUTH (CONT'D)

(to Gomez)

Don't ever try that again. Next time I'll shoot you and then ask questions. You may or may not be alive to answer.

Ruth keeps her gun trained on them as a smoldering Gomez turns to start the motor.

INT. RIVERFRONT RESTAURANT/SALOON -- NEXT DAY

Hellmann and Father Lorenzo eat lunch. The PATRONS at the next table leave behind a folded newspaper.

Hellmann reaches over and grabs it. When he opens it, the headline shocks him.

INSERT NEWSPAPER HEADLINE WITH A PHOTO OF LT. BECKER:

"Murdered Butcher Was A Nazi"

Father Lorenzo sees the stricken look on Hellmann's face.

FATHER LORENZO

What's the matter, Kristian? You look as though you've seen a ghost.

Hellmann recovers somewhat as Father Lorenzo takes the newspaper. Hellmann pushes his plate away.

HELLMANN

Such a horrible death.

FATHER LORENZO

Did you know this man?

HELLMANN

What on earth makes you ask that?

FATHER LORENZO

The look on your face when you saw the story.

HELLMANN

Murder shocks and horrifies me. A shooting death makes me ill.

FATHER LORENZO

How is one death more horrible than another? Once you're dead it doesn't really matter.

Hellmann takes back the paper and continues reading.

FATHER LORENZO (CONT'D)

It says there that The Avengers go by their own biblical law of an eye for an eye, which evidently trumps judicial law. I'm afraid that won't sit well in God's eyes.

Hellmann contemplates that. It gives rise to a look of angst as he looks at Father Lorenzo.

HELLMANN

What happens when we die? Are we with your God for eternity? Do we sing with the angels, or are we reunited with loved ones?

FATHER LORENZO

I'd like to think we go with God.

That doesn't sit well with Hellmann, who thinks it over.

HELLMANN

I'd like to think we spend eternity with loved ones.

INT. MAIN HALL / MANSION -- DAY

Hellmann plays "Confidencias" but ends up frustrated and pounds the hell out of the keyboard.

INT. MUSIC ROOM -- LATER

Hellmann sits on the floor by the door, head against the wall, the open journal in his lap. He begins to write:

HELLMANN (V.O.)

My Dearest Rachel: It is only a matter of time before the death squads find me. They've already found Lt. Becker. If they've found him, they'll find me. I only hope the end is quick and that we will be together for all eternity.

The tree stirs with echoes of "Consolation No. 3".

INT. RESTAURANT -- DAY

Hellmann, Esquamillo, and Eduardo have the remains of their meal on their plates.

ESQUAMILLO

There has been no sign of Gomez.

HELLMANN

As I've said all along, he is long gone.

ESQUAMILLO

I will not let you sacrifice yourself to the Indians. We will find Gomez, I promise you.

Eduardo looks out the window, watches a banged up bus approach in a cloud of dust. Dogs and chickens scatter. When it stops, it unloads one passenger. Ruth.

EDUARDO

Look, the bus.

All three watch as the bus pulls away, leaving Ruth with her duffel, another large bag, and the satchel at her feet.

HELLMANN

A tourist? Can it be?

ESQUAMILLO

If so, she's the first in months.

HELLMANN

Obviously in need of directions. I will see you later, Esquamillo. Come, Eduardo.

EXT. STREET -- DAY

Hellmann and Eduardo approach Ruth. A few MEN stop to stare at Ruth. They may never have seen a woman in pants before.

HELLMANN

May I be of assistance?

RUTH

Can you point me to a hotel?

HELLMANN

Certainly. If you allow it, Eduardo and I will accompany you to the Trocadero.

Hellmann bows and doffs his hat. He picks up her duffel bag. Ruth carries the equipment bag. Eduardo drags the satchel. They begin walking toward the hotel.

HELLMANN (CONT'D)

I am Kristian Hardy, at your service. We don't get many visitors to O Varayo. Are you a tourist?

Ruth gives him the once-over look, likes what she sees.

RUTH

I'm a taxonomist. I identify and classify rare Amazon butterflies.

HELLMANN

Butterflies? I didn't think you'd need so much equipment for butterflies.

RUTH

Most butterflies live in treetops. I need climbing gear to get to them.

HELLMANN

What is your name? Where are you from?

RUTH

I'm from New York. My name is Ruth Golding.

Hellmann stiffens. Images of Nazi hunters flash through his mind.

HELLMANN'S NAZI IMAGE:

High-stepping marching MEN in yamalkas and army fatigues, with shouldered rifles and holstered pistols, right arms up and out in the Nazi salute.

BACK TO PRESENT

HELLMANN

Golding? Are you Jewish by any chance?

A twinkle in Ruth's eye as she puts out a feeler.

RUTH

Yes. Are you German by any chance?

That takes Hellmann by surprise.

HELLMANN

Does my accent show?

Ruth ignores that but studies Hellmann intently.

RUTH

You have an unusual name for a German. Did your parents immigrate?

HELLMANN

My parents died many years ago. I decided to live out my days here.

RUTH

Interesting choice.

Ruth looks at Eduardo and smiles.

RUTH

And who is this handsome little man?

HELLMANN

I'm sorry. Eduardo, this is Ruth Golding. All the way from New York. Ostensibly to collect butterflies.

Eduardo solemnly shakes her hand.

RUTH

Ostensibly?

HELLMANN

Give me time to get used to the idea.

RUTH

For the record, I don't collect butterflies. I collect information on them.

HELLMANN

A gatherer of information! Now you really excite my curiosity. Perhaps I can be of some assistance.

RUTH

Perhaps.

Ruth studies him for a moment. Her face softens and she smiles as they enter the Trocadero Hotel.

INT. TROCADERO LOBBY -- DAY

They arrive in the lobby. Hellmann drops the duffel at the desk and rings the bell.

No one pays attention to Eduardo as he unzips the satchel and peers in.

EDUARDO'S P.O.V.

Ruth's pistol lies in the bag.

BACK TO SCENE

SENORA REMEDIOS, a heavy-set Portuguese woman in her 50s, ambles out from the back room. Her face breaks into a smile when she sees Hellmann.

SENORA REMEDIOS

Ah, Mister Kristian, so nice to see you again.

Hellmann turns to Ruth.

HELLMANN

This is Senora Remedios. She will take good care of you during your stay.

EXT. JUNGLE TRAIL -- LATE AFTERNOON

Hellmann and Eduardo follow a trail behind the mansion. Hellmann leads the way.

EDUARDO

Where are we going, Uncle Kristian?

HELLMANN

In search of butterflies.

EDUARDO

Why?

HELLMANN

To help the lady.

EDUARDO

The lady with the pistol?

Hellmann stops walking, turns and looks at Eduardo.

HELLMANN

How do you know she has a pistol?

EDUARDO

I saw it in her satchel.

HELLMANN

You saw a pistol in her satchel,
Eduardo? Are you sure? A pistol?

Eduardo makes a pistol with thumb and forefinger and aims it at Hellmann as they continue walking.

EDUARDO

Bang! Bang!

HELLMANN

And all that rope! Enough to set up
a gallows. But the pistol ... the
pistol. Now that scares me.

Eduardo picks up a dead branch and begins swatting
vegetation since Hellmann seems to be talking to himself.

HELLMANN

Information gathering ... butterfly
collector. I wonder if she's the
one rounding up the last of us
diehards.

EDUARDO

Are we there yet, Uncle Kristian?

HELLMANN

Almost.

They step into a clearing surrounded by very tall trees. One
of them a magnificent fungus-covered mahogany that stands
out from the rest.

Hellmann sees a butterfly land on the fungus.

HELLMANN

Look, Eduardo, a butterfly! It is
one I have never seen around here
before.

EDUARDO

(points)
Look, another one!

Hellmann looks up at the tree canopy.

HELLMANN

I will bring Ruth Golding here to study the butterflies.

INT. RESTAURANT -- SAME TIME

Ruth interviews local MEN to help with her search for her elusive butterfly. The Men ring her table three deep.

RUTH

Do any of you know anything about butterflies?

The Men look questioningly at her but no one answers.

RUTH (CONT'D)

I see. I am looking for a specific butterfly. The Granville. Has anyone seen a butterfly they've never seen before?

The Men look at each other, shrug their shoulders as if to say, Who has time to look at butterflies?

RUTH (CONT'D)

All right. Next question. I am also looking for a colleague who disappeared in this area some years ago. He is a white man, about my age.

Ruth looks at the Men, most of whom shake their heads.

RUTH (CONT'D)

I see. Okay, that's all for today.

As the Men disperse, Ruth hands each one a coin. She's almost ready to leave when in walks Father Lorenzo. He approaches her table with a friendly smile.

FATHER LORENZO

I'm Father Lorenzo. I hear you're looking for local help to find rare butterfly nests. Any luck?

RUTH

I'm afraid not. They are either too uneducated or they've never bothered to look at a butterfly.

FATHER LORENZO
What exactly are you looking for?

RUTH
A needle in a haystack.

INT. RUTH'S HOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

Ruth, not to be duped again, takes her bankroll and divides it into 2 equal stacks and one small one. One stack is spread evenly into her left bra cup, the other into the right. The small stack goes into her pocket.

INT. RESTAURANT -- LATE NIGHT

Ruth dines alone, her satchel at her feet. The restaurant is almost ready to close for the night.

Hellmann enters and approaches her table.

In a darkened corner a MAN lights a cigarette. The flame momentarily lights up Gomez's face.

HELLMANN
Good evening. Mind if I join you?

RUTH
Not at all. Where's your son?

HELLMANN
Eduardo is not my son, though I love him as if he were. He's the son of the couple who run my rubber plantation. His mother, Estancia, is my housekeeper and her husband, Esquamillo, is my overseer.

RUTH
You're not married?

HELLMANN
No. There was only one woman I ever loved. A long time ago. She died at the hands of the Nazis.

Ruth's face shows a sudden interest.

RUTH
I see. You still love her? You're still grieving?

HELLMANN

Yes. But I'm here to discuss butterflies.

RUTH

What about them?

HELLMANN

I know of a perfect spot to conduct your study. Eduardo and I saw some strange butterflies there today.

RUTH

That is not how I normally operate.

HELLMANN

How do you operate?

RUTH

Usually alone. Others tend to get in the way.

Ruth continues to eat while Hellmann mulls things over.

HELLMANN

I will carry your equipment and will speak only when spoken to. That way, you are free to do whatever it is you do.

She thinks over Hellmann's offer as she pushes her plate away. She dabs at her mouth with a napkin.

RUTH

I am looking for a specific butterfly, the Granville. It's a very rare butterfly.

HELLMANN

What does it look like?

RUTH

I don't know.

HELLMANN

Then how will you know when you find it?

RUTH

It has a special mark. I will know it when I see it.

HELLMANN

Four eyes are better than two.

RUTH

I suppose I could use some help.
The equipment is not heavy but it
is cumbersome. Okay, meet me here
at dawn tomorrow.

IN THE DARK CORNER

Gomez rises out of the darkness and crosses the room.
Suddenly he's behind Ruth. He hooks an arm under her
chin and hauls her upright, his knife at her throat.

GOMEZ

I will take the rest of your money
now.

Hellmann jumps up, a show of bravado for the lady.

HELLMANN

Take your hands off her!

GOMEZ

I'll deal with you later.
(to Ruth)
I want your money! NOW!

Gomez pushes harder on the knife. It only makes Ruth
angrier.

GOMEZ

You will give me your money NOW!

Ruth reaches into her pocket, hands him a few folded bills.

RUTH

I guess I didn't pay you enough.
This is all I have with me, you
piece of shit! I should have left
you in the river.

HELLMANN

(to Ruth)
You KNOW this man?

RUTH

He was on the outboard I hired to
get here. He took an unexpected
swim at my urging.

HELLMANN

(to Gomez)

What do you mean, you'll deal with me later?

GOMEZ

Now is not the time.

Gomez throws Ruth to the floor, then runs out.

An angry Ruth scrambles to her satchel, pulls out her pistol, and runs after him.

Hellmann seems frozen to the spot. He hears Ruth yelling.

RUTH (O.S.)

You bastard! Come out and show yourself! I'll finish what I started on the river, you piece of piranha meat!

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Hellmann joins Ruth in the street. There is no sign of Gomez.

Ruth turns to Hellmann.

RUTH

Well? Aren't you going after him?

HELLMANN

With what?

RUTH

Here, take my pistol.

HELLMANN

I have never shot a gun.

Ruth stares at him. It's quite possibly the most shocking thing she's ever heard.

RUTH

You live in the jungle and you've never shot a gun?

HELLMANN

No. Never.

RUTH

Why not?

HELLMANN

People with guns kill other people.

RUTH

Sometimes they have it coming.

HELLMANN

No one has the right to take another's life. No one!

RUTH

Well, I'm going after him to get my money back.

Ruth runs down the street.

Hellmann takes off after her, catches her by the arm. He pulls her to a stop.

HELLMANN

You'll never find him in the jungle at night. You'd have a hard enough time during the day.

RUTH

I suppose you're right.

Ruth admits defeat by shoving her pistol into her belt and turning back toward the restaurant.

Hellmann follows.

HELLMANN

Look, I'm sorry I yelled at you.

RUTH

Apology accepted. By the way, what did he mean when he said he had unfinished business with you? Who is he?

HELLMANN

I don't know. I've never seen him before.

EXT. TROCADERO HOTEL -- NEXT DAY

Hellmann and Eduardo wait for Ruth.

Ruth appears, a camera on a strap around her neck. She carries a notebook. Her pistol is visible in her belt.

PASSERSBY stare. A woman wearing not only pants but carrying a gun?

HELLMANN

Are you planning on shooting the butterflies?

Ruth laughs and looks at Eduardo, who stares at her gun.

RUTH

(to Hellmann)

Only with my camera. The gun is for protection. I assume it's safe for Eduardo to come?

HELLMANN

Yes. There are no lions or tigers here.

Eduardo reaches for Hellmann's hand.

HELLMANN (CONT'D)

(to Ruth)

Next time, conceal your pistol. It makes me nervous. There's been enough killing in this world.

EXT. CLEARING -- DAY

Eduardo finds three butterflies and Ruth shoots frame after frame.

RUTH

(to Hellmann)

Did you know that butterflies have scales on their wings?

HELLMANN

No, I didn't.

RUTH

If you look at a butterfly wing under a microscope, it looks like snake skin.

HELLMANN

A lot of things aren't what they seem.

Ruth studies Hellmann, a questioning look on her face.

RUTH

I'm still wondering why that man has unfinished business with you. Could he have worked for you at one time?

HELLMANN

It's possible. Esquamillo does all the hiring and firing.

RUTH

What do you do?

HELLMANN

I pay the bills.

Ruth seems concerned.

RUTH

I'd watch your back if I were you.

INT. HELLMANN'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Hellmann has a disturbing dream.

DREAM SEQUENCE: EXT. GRAVEYARD -- DAY

Ruth kneels and examines a tombstone as Hellmann watches.

RUTH

Whose is it?

HELLMANN

The only woman I have ever loved.

RUTH

What was her name?

HELLMANN

Rachel.

RUTH

How did she die?

HELLMANN

She was shot for trying to escape
from a transit yard.

RUTH

Why didn't you stop it?

HELLMANN

I had to follow orders.

Ruth pulls out her pistol and SHOOTs Hellmann.

BACK TO PRESENT

Getting shot awakens Hellmann. It also scares the crap out
of him.

He puts on a robe and leaves the room.

INT. MUSIC ROOM -- NIGHT

Hellmann writes in his journal. In the b.g. a soft
"Consolations No. 3"

HELLMANN (V.O.)

My Dearest Rachel: "A woman named
Ruth has come to town. A Jewish
woman. She says she's collecting
information on butterflies but I
think she is here for me. If the
Indians don't get me, Ruth probably
will. At any rate, we shall be
together soon."

INT. MAIN HALL -- DAY

Hellmann and Father Lorenzo play chess. Hellmann
contemplates his next move.

FATHER LORENZO

What have you done to find Gomez?

HELLMANN

Esquamillo has lookouts posted
around town.

FATHER LORENZO

Do you know this man?

HELLMANN

No.

FATHER LORENZO

So, he knows who you are but you have no idea who he is.

HELLMANN

That's about it.

Hellmann makes his move. Without much thought, Father Lorenzo moves his piece.

FATHER LORENZO

Maybe he plans to let the Indians deal with you, then take over your estate. You are a squatter here, are you not?

HELLMANN

I was in the beginning, but I paid the back taxes long ago.

FATHER LORENZO

With you gone, he may take it by force.

HELLMANN

Over my dead body.

FATHER LORENZO

Maybe that's what he's counting on.

HELLMANN

If that is to be my destiny, then so be it.

INT. RUTH'S HOTEL ROOM -- DAY

Ruth is at the table, writing in a notebook.

A KNOCK on the door.

She opens the door to find a distressed-looking Father Lorenzo.

RUTH

What a surprise. Come in, Father.

They seat themselves at the table.

RUTH (CONT'D)

What can I do for you?

FATHER LORENZO

I'm worried about Kristian and his pact with the Indians.

RUTH

What pact? I don't know what you're talking about.

FATHER LORENZO

A young Indian girl was killed on his land before you arrived. The Indians hold him responsible. If he can't find the real killer soon, Kristian will sacrifice himself to the Indians.

RUTH

What will they do to him?

FATHER LORENZO

Most likely kill him. Their law is to do unto others as you have been done unto.

Ruth pours each of them a glass of water from a pitcher on the table.

RUTH

What can I do? I barely know the man.

FATHER LORENZO

He won't listen to me or Esquamillo. Maybe he'll listen to you. But I warn you, his mind is made up. He WILL sacrifice himself. For the life of me, I can't figure out why.

RUTH

It sounds like he's depressed. Did you know he's still grieving for a lost love?

This surprises Father Lorenzo.

FATHER LORENZO

No. It seems Kristian tells me only what I want to hear. I've accused him of keeping secrets.

Ruth takes a sip of water to give herself time to think.

RUTH

What kind of secrets?

FATHER LORENZO

This Indian pact, for one thing. I found out about it from a parishioner. Kristian usually tells me nothing.

RUTH

Perhaps he's depressed over losing his lady love.

FATHER LORENZO

That must have happened a long time ago. He's been here for years but he's never been known to have a woman.

RUTH

Some people never recover from depression.

Father Lorenzo seems lost in his thoughts until he remembers something.

FATHER LORENZO

When I showed him the newspaper with the story of the recent Nazi assassinations, he seemed ... I don't know ... stricken.

Ruth appears a little stricken at this.

RUTH

How long have you known Kristian?

FATHER LORENZO

I came here five years ago. He was here when I arrived. No one seems to know where he came from.

Ruth studies Father Lorenzo intently. She knows she's grasping at straws but she can't help herself, and that puzzles her.

RUTH

Do you think he was in the war? Maybe he's suffering from shell shock.

FATHER LORENZO

You mean combat stress? The breaking point of soldiers during war?

RUTH

It's a possibility.

FATHER LORENZO

I doubt he was in the war. It's not in his nature to take a life.

RUTH

Not even his own?

FATHER LORENZO

Apparently someone else must do it for him.

EXT. JUNGLE -- DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS

- 1) Hellmann, Ruth, and Eduardo hack their way through the jungle.
- 2) Eduardo scampers like a monkey among the branches in the tree canopy while tied to a safety harness
- 3) Hellmann makes notations in Ruth's notebook while Ruth photographs butterflies.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. TROCADERO HOTEL -- MORNING

Hellmann waits for Ruth. He wears a white shirt and white linen pants, a machete in a scabbard. He doesn't wear a hat in the jungle.

EXT. JUNGLE -- LATER

Hellmann carries Ruth's equipment bag as he hacks his way through the thick vegetation ahead of her.

Ruth carries her satchel, her camera around her neck.

A monkey SCREECHES, announcing their presence in the jungle. It makes Ruth nervous.

RUTH

Are you sure there's no wild animals here?

HELLMANN

There's plenty of wild animals here.

Ruth stops.

RUTH

You said there weren't any!

Hellmann continues hacking away.

HELLMANN

I said there were no lions or tigers here.

Ruth catches up to Hellmann after nearly losing sight of him in the vegetation.

RUTH

Let's stop to rest a bit. Maybe it wasn't such a good idea to go so deep into the jungle.

HELLMANN

I can see a little clearing up ahead. We'll rest there.

They sit and lean against a tree. Ruth pulls a canteen out of her satchel, takes a drink, passes it to Hellmann.

RUTH

Where are we?

HELLMANN

In the jungle.

RUTH

Smart ass! Where in the jungle?

HELLMANN

I don't really know.

RUTH

Then how will we find our way out?

HELLMANN

Through the vegetation I hacked.

Ruth looks where they came from. There's no sign that they had hacked their way through.

RUTH

The vegetation is so thick you can't tell where we've been.

HELLMANN

Then you will have to climb a tree and look around.

Ruth looks up at the tree they're under.

RUTH

I guess this one will do.

She takes out her climbing gear and gets it ready.

HELLMANN

Do you need any help?

Ruth seems a little pissed off.

RUTH

I can manage.

Hellmann doesn't know what to say so he says nothing.

Ruth removes her pistol and holds it out to Hellmann, grip first. He steps back, his hands up in front of him.

RUTH (CONT'D)

What's your problem?

HELLMANN

I don't like guns.

RUTH

Just hold it while I climb up.

HELLMANN

I'd rather not.

Ruth is clearly at the end of her patience.

RUTH

Doesn't anyone carry guns around here?

HELLMANN

I don't.

Exasperated, she finally lays on it on the ground. She begins her climb and disappears into the tree foliage.

HELLMANN

Can you see anything up there?

RUTH (O.S.)

Not yet. I have to get above the tree line.

Leaves and chunks of bark and branches fall as she climbs higher.

RUTH (O.S.)(CONT'D)

I think I see something!

HELLMANN

What do you see?

RUTH (O.S.)

A river. A small one.

HELLMANN

Which direction?

RUTH (O.S.)

West.

HELLMANN

That's our river. The El Varayo. Come down and we'll head for it.

EXT. JUNGLE -- LATER

Hacking through the vegetation once more, Hellmann's shirt is soaked with sweat.

Ruth, following behind, is exhausted from lugging the equipment bag. Her clothes and hair are damp with sweat.

RUTH

Let's stop and rest.

She drops where she stands and digs the canteen out of her bag. She takes a swallow and hands it to Hellmann, who remains standing as he drinks.

RUTH (CONT'D)

How did we get so lost?

HELLMANN

I guess I should have marked our trail. I've never been this deep in the jungle before.

Ruth is tired, hungry, and cranky.

RUTH

You've never done a lot of things
before. You must have led a charmed
life.

Behind Hellmann, a large snake unwinds from a branch and inches toward him.

Ruth pulls out her pistol.

Hellmann sees the pistol, thinks it's aimed at him.

RUTH

Don't move.

HELLMANN

Ah, so it's finally come to this,
the real reason you're here.

No matter how much he wants to die, being faced with the immediate possibility is frightening. He's not had time to prepare.

Ruth SHOOTs and Hellmann faints.

Ruth kneels over him, feels his carotid for a pulse, finds it. She rips open his shirt to give him air. Her eyes widen at the swastika carved into his chest. It's the "mark" she's been looking for.

When Hellmann comes to, Ruth is holding the dead snake over him.

HELLMANN

Am I dead?

RUTH

No, but the snake is.

HELLMANN

Snake?

RUTH

This snake was coming at you from a
branch behind you.

Hellmann sits up, discovers his shirt open, snaps it shut.

Ruth studies him intently. The wheels spinning in her mind are almost visible.

Hellmann gets to his feet, looks up at the canopy.

HELLMANN

You mean you weren't ...?

Hellmann looks around, a strange look on his face.

RUTH

What's wrong?

HELLMANN

We have to get out of here. No trees are moving. It's too still.

A FLASH OF LIGHTNING, a distant ROLL OF THUNDER.

HELLMANN (CONT'D)

It gets dark quickly under the canopy and it'll rain soon. We don't want to be here in a downpour.

EXT. JUNGLE -- DUSK

Ruth follows Hellmann as he slashes his way through the rain and jungle vines with a vengeance. Both are soaking wet.

RUTH

What did you mean when you said, "It's finally come to this"?

HELLMANN

Of me finally having to face the music.

RUTH

What music? Isn't it time we stopped playing games?

Hellmann stops slashing and turns to her.

HELLMANN

Now is not the time to discuss it. We really must get out of here before dark or we'll never find our way out.

EXT. JUNGLE WALL -- DUSK

It's raining quite hard as Ruth and Hellmann stumble out of the jungle and into a row of rubber trees. FLASHES of LIGHTNING light their way. BOOMS of THUNDER fuel their flight as they run toward Hellmann's mansion.

INT. MANSION KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Hellmann and Ruth sit at the table, the remains of a meal in front of them. Both are dressed in robes and drink tea. Their wet clothes hang on chairs in front of the kitchen fireplace to dry. Estancia is busy at the sink.

A heavy RAIN POUNDS against the windows.

Estancia clears the table, then washes their dishes. She tries not to listen to their conversation but there has never been a white woman in their house before so she's curious.

HELLMANN

(to Ruth)

You'd better stay here tonight.
Estancia, please see that a room is prepared for her upstairs.

ESTANCIA

I will prepare the room next to the music room.

HELLMANN

Thank you.

RUTH

You have a music room upstairs?

HELLMANN

Such as it is.

Estancia finishes cleaning up but leaves their tea things on the table. She prepares to leave the room.

ESTANCIA

Will you need anything else?

HELLMANN

No, thank you. Good night.

Estancia leaves and an awkward momentary silence hangs over Hellmann and Ruth.

RUTH

Let's start with the carving on your chest.

Hellmann knows the time has arrived to come clean. He closes his eyes with relief at unburdening his tortured soul.

HELLMANN

I directed the train traffic to the camps during the war. My real name is Kurt Hellmann.

UNDER THE TABLE

Ruth's hand slips into her robe pocket, comes out with the pistol. She lays it on her lap, her finger on the trigger.

Hellmann opens his eyes and looks intently at Ruth.

HELLMANN (CONT'D)

It was awful. I couldn't look at the children's faces. Then I found a young Jewish girl hiding in my quarters.

RUTH

What did you do with her?

HELLMANN

I kept Rachel hidden for two weeks.

RUTH

What happened then?

HELLMANN

First, we fell in love. Then she was discovered. The lieutenant, Lieutenant Becker, had her shot right in front of me. There was nothing I could do to save her.

A sharp intake of Ruth's breath, then a slight, self-satisfied smile.

She sees the depth of his anguish and her face softens. She looks at Hellmann differently now.

RUTH

I'm sorry for your loss. It must have been painful for you.

HELLMANN

It was beyond words. I carved the swastika in my chest so I would never forget my own guilt. My own cowardice for not saving Rachel.

RUTH

Your own guilt? How could you have stopped it? You would have been shot as a traitor.

Ruth's eyes widen at a sudden thought.

RUTH (CONT'D)

You were a stationmaster? A CIVILIAN during the war?

HELLMANN

Yes. I began as a ticket seller when I was eighteen and studying classical music. Then the war came along and changed the nature of the traffic on my line. Shortly after that, Colonel Richter moved me up to stationmaster.

RUTH

So you weren't even armed. You couldn't have saved Rachel even if you'd had a chance.

UNDER THE TABLE

Ruth slips the pistol back into her robe pocket.

HELLMANN

But I did nothing to prevent her execution. There must be something I could have done, even though I could never take another's life.

RUTH

Not even to save your own?

Hellmann hangs his head.

HELLMANN

Especially to save my own. It's not worth saving.

Hellmann gets up and goes to the window.

HELLMANN (CONT'D)

It'll be a full moon in a few days. No trace of the girl's murderer.

RUTH

So you're going to sacrifice your own life?

Hellmann turns to look at her.

HELLMANN

You know about that?

RUTH

Father Lorenzo told me. He said you will be committing suicide if you do it.

HELLMANN

I gave my word. I cannot go back on it.

Hellmann goes to the stove and retrieves the teapot. He pours hot water into their cups.

RUTH

Nonetheless, Father Lorenzo is worried about you. Suicide is against God's law.

Hellmann returns the teapot to the stove and sits in his chair. He drops a fresh tea bag from the bowl on the table into his cup, adds a little sugar.

HELLMANN

Lorenzo worries needlessly.

RUTH

He'd rather light a candle than curse the darkness. He thinks you might be suffering from shell shock. From the war.

Hellmann sips his tea, adds a little more sugar.

HELLMANN

What do you think?

RUTH

That he's right. I think you're looking for redemption in all the wrong places. All you have to do is go see Father Lorenzo.

HELLMANN

I'm not looking for forgiveness.

RUTH

What are you looking for?

HELLMANN

Peace.

RUTH

Is that why you came to Brazil?

HELLMANN

I thought I could achieve some good here by protecting the Indians from the land grabbers. And to hide from the Nazis who probably considered me a traitor. Not to mention a Nazi hunter like you.

Ruth's eyes widen at Hellmann's keen perception.

RUTH

How did you know I was a Nazi hunter?

HELLMANN

Who else would carry a gun under the guise of a butterfly collector?

RUTH

So that's what you meant when you said that was the real reason I was here. You thought I'd shoot you instead of the snake.

HELLMANN

You aimed your gun at me and I thought--

RUTH

I was aiming at the snake. Why would I shoot you? I didn't know your story.

HELLMANN

But I didn't know that.

Ruth sips her tea.

RUTH

Tell me about the Indians.

HELLMANN

If I don't find the child killer, I've offered myself in his place.

RUTH
And you have no idea who he is?

HELLMANN
None.

Ruth sighs. She's all out of ideas.

RUTH
But he knows who you are.

HELLMANN
Evidently.

RUTH
Could it be the man who accosted me
in the restaurant?

HELLMANN
I don't know. It's possible.

RUTH
He said he had some business with
you.

Ruth ponders that thought, comes to a conclusion.

RUTH
I'm sure it's Gomez. The problem
is, we have to find him.

HELLMANN
We?

RUTH
Yes, we. Now, if you don't mind,
I'd like to get some sleep.

Hellmann walks Ruth upstairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY -- NIGHT

They stop at the top of the stairs. Hellmann points down the hallway.

HELLMANN
Fourth door on your left.

RUTH
One question bothers me. How did
you escape Blumenwald?

HELLMANN

I was to report to the Colonel's office in town the day after after Rachel was shot. I kept going.

Ruth smiles at the simplicity of it.

RUTH

What about Germany? How did you get out?

HELLMANN

I helped a small band of Jewish refugees find a ship bound for the Mediterranean. I went with them.

Ruth gives Hellmann a goodnight peck on the cheek.

RUTH

Good night. Sleep well.

HELLMANN

You, too.

Ruth and Hellmann depart in opposite directions.

INT. MUSIC ROOM -- LATER

Hellmann sits in his customary place on the floor, writing in his journal. Faint strains of "Rachel's song."

HELLMANN (V.O.)

Dearest Rachel: I couldn't sleep tonight. Ruth and I became lost in the jungle today. She pulled a gun and I thought she was going to shoot me but it turns out, she shot a snake that was eyeing me for a meal. She is a Nazi hunter who was after me but she saved my life instead. I am too tired to figure it out, dear Rachel. I wish I could fall asleep and wake up next to you.

Hellmann drifts off to the refrains of Rachel's song.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY -- EARLY MORNING

Ruth comes out of her room in the same bathrobe. As she passes the music room, she sees Hellmann asleep on the floor, the journal by his side.

She leans over and picks up the journal and reads his last entry first. She flips through the journal, reading bits and pieces here and there.

Hellmann stirs.

Ruth places the journal back where she found it and returns to her room.

INT. RUTH'S ROOM -- MORNING

Ruth is in a conundrum. She paces her room like a caged animal. She has found her man but now things have changed. She has heard his story and she believes him.

She stops pacing; she's made up her mind about whatever's troubling her.

She leaves the room.

INT. KITCHEN -- MORNING

Ruth enters the kitchen. Estancia is busy cooking breakfast and Eduardo eats his. He is surprised to see Ruth.

EDUARDO

Is Uncle Kristian coming?

RUTH

I think he may still be asleep.

Estancia puts a plate of food on the table.

ESTANCIA

For you, Miss.

Ruth grabs her dry clothes from in front of the fireplace.

RUTH

Let me change first.

She heads for the pantry, closes the door behind her. When she comes out, she finds Hellmann eating her breakfast.

HELLMANN

I didn't want it to get cold.
Estancia is fixing you a fresh
plate.

Estancia places the food in front of Ruth.

EDUARDO

Are we looking for butterflies
today?

RUTH

Not today, son. My mission here is
finished.

Eduardo's face registers disappointment.

HELLMANN

You and I will go into the jungle
some other day, Eduardo. I promise.

Eduardo, momentarily placated, scampers off to make his own
entertainment.

RUTH

I want you to come into O Varayo
with me after we eat. I have a
plan.

HELLMANN

What kind of plan?

RUTH

To flush out Gomez.

HELLMANN

How do you intend to do that?

Ruth blots her lips with a napkin and pushes her plate away.

RUTH

By flashing some money around. Word
will get around, then he will come
around. He wants money for
something. Especially my money.

HELLMANN

I'll get Esquamillo to come with
us.

RUTH

No. Gomez is essentially a coward.
Another man will keep him away.

EXT. O VARAYO -- DAY

Hellmann and Ruth, with her satchel, enter the restaurant.

INT. RESTAURANT -- DAY

Very few PATRONS before the lunch hour. Hellmann and Ruth sit at the far end of the bar.

The Bartender sets a glass of beer in front of each of them.

Ruth pulls her bankroll out of her pocket and slowly counts out money for the Bartender. She leaves her bankroll on the bar top.

HELLMANN

So what's your story? Are you really a butterfly collector? Aside from hunting Nazis?

RUTH

Not a butterfly collector--

HELLMANN

Yes, I know, a collector of information.

Ruth shrugs as if to say, "what does it matter now?"

RUTH

I actually am a botanist. What brought me to Brazil is to look for those who killed my brother, my parents and grandparents in the war.

Hellmann nods. He understands now.

HELLMANN

Richter, Becker, and me.

RUTH

Let me finish. My parents and my younger brother were visiting my grandparents in Paris when Danneker demanded the transportation of ten thousand Jews from the southern zone of Paris. He wanted to free France of Jews as quickly as possible. Foreign Jews were arrested along with other Jews and sorted out later at mustering centers.

Ruth takes a swallow of beer as though to wash away the terrible taste of her words.

HELLMANN

I never knew they were emptying the Jews out of France.

RUTH

By Danneker's order to the Vichy Government. Then he ordered the children, including my brother, housed in UGIF centers. My brother was never heard from again.

Tears well up in Ruth's eyes.

HELLMANN

How old was he?

RUTH

Twelve.

HELLMANN

Where were you when this was going on?

RUTH

I was in college in New York, studying for final exams. I was to join them in Paris after my exams.

They both take long swallows of beer.

RUTH

With the Vichy government under orders of the Nazi occupiers, a convoy left Paris for Auschwitz ...

HELLMANN

... and eventually stopped at Blumenwald.

Ruth nods, then looks at Hellmann, raw emotion on her face. She puts her face in her hands and sobs. Deep, cleansing sobs.

Hellmann puts an arm around her to comfort her.

Ruth sniffs, then ...

RUTH

Whew! I've never told anyone that before.

She disengages herself from Hellmann and wipes her tears with the backs of her hands. She releases a final, cleansing sigh.

RUTH (CONT'D)

I feel ... I don't know, lighter somehow.

HELLMANN

You needed to get it out. Life is not worth living if it's fueled by hatred. Look what it did in Germany. That war wrecked so many lives.

RUTH

Especially the Jews.

HELLMANN

Particularly the Jews.

Hellmann orders another round of beer. They remain silent until the Bartender places the beer in front of them, then moves to the other end of the bar.

Hellmann looks closely at Ruth.

HELLMANN

You're still angry.

RUTH

You could say that.

HELLMANN

It sounds like you want revenge.

Ruth looks at him, then scans the restaurant area.

RUTH

And you want redemption.

Hellmann smiles.

HELLMANN

Do you think we'll succeed?

RUTH

Not for lack of trying.

EXT. ALONG THE RIVER -- LATER

Hellmann and Ruth walk along the river. Ruth checks the boats that go by.

RUTH

So much for my plan. Gomez didn't show.

HELLMANN

Give him time.

He stops walking and turns her to face him.

HELLMANN (CONT'D)

I think you should go back to New York.

RUTH

I want to stay and help you with Gomez.

HELLMANN

He will find me when the time is right.

RUTH

That's what I'm afraid of.

HELLMANN

It's time I fought my own battles. Go back to New York and live your life. The war is over.

Ruth searches his face to see if he's sincere or not.

RUTH

But not for you.

HELLMANN

It'll never be over for me. I died when Rachel did. Inside, I mean.

RUTH

I don't believe that.

HELLMANN

The composer Franz Liszt said, 'The wind plays in the leaves of a tree, life unfolds and develops between them, but the tree stays the same.'

RUTH

Meaning the only thing that lives
in you is Rachel. No wonder you let
that tree grow in your music room.
It keeps you close to Rachel.

HELLMANN

Yes.

RUTH

What are you going to do?

HELLMANN

I don't know yet.

Ruth ponders something as they walk, then stops and removes
the pistol from her belt. She holds it out to him.

RUTH

Use this for protection.

HELLMANN

I told you, I don't like guns.

RUTH

Then learn to like them. The world
is full of wicked people.

She continues to hold the pistol out to him.

HELLMANN

Here is a beautiful motto for you
to live by. It was Rachel's motto:
Do not fight evil. Let goodness
take its place.

An ah-ha moment for Ruth. A new way of looking at life she
had never considered before.

The transformation is evident on her face.

RUTH

Please take this. I won't be
needing it anymore. Talking to you
has helped me enormously. That's
why I think you should talk to
Father Lorenzo. I read something
once that said, "Change your mind
and you change the world."

HELLMANN

The world doesn't change.

RUTH
Maybe not, but how YOU relate to it
changes everything.

Hellmann finally takes the pistol and puts it in his coat pocket.

Ruth is embarrassed at the sudden tears that spring to her eyes. She looks away. It is one thing to give up her pistol, another to give her emotions away twice in one day.

RUTH (CONT'D)
One more thing before I go. Your
painful memories of Rachel have
elevated Rachel above all earthly
women. Let them go.

HELLMANN
But they're my memories and I wish
to keep them.

Hellmann and Ruth depart in separate directions.

EXT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE -- O VARAYO -- DAY

Ruth enters the telegraph office.

INT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE -- DAY

Ruth stands at the counter writing out her message. With a smile she holds it up to read.

INSERT MESSAGE: ELUSIVE GRANVILLE MARIPOSA LIBRE - RUTH

She removes Hellmann's file from her satchel and rips it into tiny shreds, then lets them fall like snowflakes into the trash bin at the end of the counter.

EXT. TROCADERO HOTEL -- LATER

Ruth and her bags wait for the bus that lumbers toward her in a cloud of dust. It pulls up to her and stops.

She takes one last look around, then boards.

The bus drives away, scattering chickens, dogs, and dust.

INT. FATHER LORENZO'S CHURCH -- NIGHT

Father Lorenzo, his arms held out in a blessing, cites the Benediction to the handful of people in his congregation. Among them, Alvarez, the man with the eye patch. Gomez's yes-man.

FATHER LORENZO
Amen. Go in peace.

Father Lorenzo turns to extinguish the candles behind the altar as everyone gets up to leave. Everyone except Alvarez, who gets up and approaches Father Lorenzo.

ALVAREZ
A word, Father?

Father Lorenzo turns to Alvarez.

FATHER LORENZO
Yes? How can I help you?

ALVAREZ
I have a message for Kristian Hardy.

FATHER LORENZO
How can I help?

ALVAREZ
Tell Mr. Hardy that Gomez wants to meet with him. Tomorrow morning at noon. In the clearing with the mahogany tree.

FATHER LORENZO
Why doesn't Gomez tell Kristian this himself.

Alvarez turns, walks away.

ALVAREZ
Just tell Mr. Hardy to be there.
Tell him to bring a gun.

INT. MUSIC ROOM -- NIGHT

Hellmann sits in his customary spot on the floor, eyes closed, listening to the tree sing Rachel's song. A single candle on the floor sends ghostly shadows around the room.

Father Lorenzo appears in the doorway.

FATHER LORENZO

I have a message for you, Kristian.

Startled, Hellmann opens his eyes.

HELLMANN

What? What message? From whom?

FATHER LORENZO

A man came to the church after services this evening. He said the man you are looking for, Gomez, will be waiting for you in the clearing with the magnolia tree at noon tomorrow. You are to bring a gun.

Hellmann gets to his feet.

HELLMANN

What man? What did he look like?

FATHER LORENZO

An Indian, with a patch over one eye. I've never seen him before. Who is he?

HELLMANN

I don't know anyone with one eye.

FATHER LORENZO

And to bring a gun! What good could that possibly do? You aren't going to go, are you?

HELLMANN

Of course. I must see what he wants.

FATHER LORENZO

Don't be foolish, Kristian. Guns mean only one thing.

HELLMANN

Yes, a duel. At least the man has a sense of honor.

Hellmann goes to the tree, caresses the leaves.

FATHER LORENZO

That tree holds no answers, Kristian. Seek answers only from God.

Hellmann turns to face Father Lorenzo.

HELLMANN

All right. I'll accompany you back
to your church.

Father Lorenzo is so stunned his knees almost fail him. Then
on his face, a look of pure joy.

FATHER LORENZO

Then let's go before you change
your mind.

EXT. LORENZO'S CHURCH -- NIGHT

Hellmann and Father Lorenzo enter the church.

INT. CHURCH PARLOR -- NIGHT

They sit at a table.

HELLMANN

I wish to make a confession.

FATHER LORENZO

Since you have said that you don't
believe in God, I cannot give you
absolution. It cannot be given to
someone who doesn't believe in God.

HELLMANN

Then listen as a friend instead of
a priest.

Hellmann gets out of his chair and kneels in front of Father
Lorenzo, who's elated at last to finally save Hellmann's
soul.

FATHER LORENZO

There is no need to kneel if this
is informal, Kristian.

Hellmann bows his head.

HELLMANN

Please, Father, I need to do this.

Hellmann shoots a pleading look at Father Lorenzo.

FATHER LORENZO

Very well, proceed.

HELLMANN

I do believe in God. I was just angry at Him for allowing all the horror in the world.

FATHER LORENZO

That is not God's doing. It is man's doing. Men starts wars and initiate the killing of the innocent and the poor of the world. God doesn't have anything to do with it.

HELLMANN

Then why does He permit it?

FATHER LORENZO

That is part of the free will He bestows on us. Maybe some day we'll discover what that really means.

Hellmann bows his head, ready to begin his confession.

FATHER LORENZO (CONT'D)

Since you have just now professed a belief in God, your salvation is at hand.

HELLMANN

It's too late for me, Father. I directed too many Jews to the death camps during the war. A young woman I loved was shot in front of me and I did nothing to save her. I was a coward.

FATHER LORENZO

You're not a coward. You're a kind and thoughtful man. It was a time of war, Kristian.

HELLMANN

A poor excuse for man's atrocities.
(sighs)
Thank God Germany lost.

FATHER LORENZO

There are no winners in war, Kristian.

Hellmann looks up, sees Father Lorenzo make the sign of the cross.

HELLMANN

I am not prepared for communion.

FATHER LORENZO

In your heart you have been preparing for many years.

Hellmann bows his head again.

HELLMANN

When they nailed Christ to the cross, he said, "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do." I was one of them. I knew not what I did. Please forgive my past and future sins.

Tears of happiness in Father Lorenzo's eyes as he lays a hand on Hellmann's head.

FATHER LORENZO

You are forgiven.

Father Lorenzo extends a hand to help Hellmann up.

HELLMANN

Thank you. You have been a friend to whom I have denied much.

INT. MUSIC ROOM -- NEXT MORNING

Hellmann sits at his escritoire, writing on a piece of paper. A bound document is off to one side.

He pulls out a wooden stamp, opens an ink pad, presses the stamp into the ink. He stamps the paper he has written, then folds and stuffs the documents into an envelope.

The tree is strangely silent.

INT. MAIN HALL -- LATER

Hellmann, dressed in his customary white linen suit, plays "Confidencias." Eyes closed, he's really into the music.

Eduardo runs in and pulls on his sleeve.

Hellmann stops playing, a look of joy on his face.

HELLMANN

Eduardo! Come give me a hug.

Eduardo climbs onto the bench, stands, and gives Hellmann a hug.

Hellmann closes his eyes and squeezes Eduardo until he grunts, then sits Eduardo beside him.

HELLMANN

Chop Sticks?

Eduardo nods and places his right hand on the keys. Hellmann places his left hand on the keys, then nods to Eduardo. They play "Chop Sticks" together.

When they finish, Hellmann looks at Eduardo for a long moment.

HELLMANN

Do you think I'm a coward?

Eduardo shakes his head "no" vigorously.

HELLMANN

Do you know what a coward is?

EDUARDO

No.

HELLMANN

Do you know what shell shocked is?

Again Eduardo shakes his head "no."

HELLMANN

I'm going to miss you.

Eduardo's eyes widen as he looks at Hellmann.

EDUARDO

Where are you going?

Hellmann looks out the window. It's a nice sunny day.

HELLMANN

I wish I knew.

Hellmann lifts Eduardo off the bench and sets him on the floor.

HELLMANN

Go fetch your father for me.

Eduardo, sensing something is up, is hesitant to leave.

HELLMANN

It's okay, Eduardo. I just want to give him something.

Hellmann continues playing "Confidencias" until Esquamillo appears. He extracts the envelope from his coat pocket and hands it to Esquamillo.

ESQUAMILLO

What's this?

HELLMANN

The deed to the plantation and my last will and testament. It's about time I gave it to you. You are now the *patrono*.

Esquamillo is so surprised he can hardly speak.

ESQUAMILLO

But ... but why? Are you leaving?

HELLMANN

I have outlived the length of my shadow, dear friend. My time here has come to an end.

INT. MUSIC ROOM -- LATER

Hellmann is once again at the *escritoire*. He pulls open a drawer and extracts Ruth's pistol. He opens the cylinder, shakes out all the bullets. He puts one into the cylinder and the rest in a drawer.

He spins the cylinder.

EXT. JUNGLE TRAIL BEHIND MANSION -- DAY

Hellmann walks the trail to the clearing and his date with destiny. He smiles at the butterflies that flit about. He doffs his hat at the monkeys screeching at his presence.

There's a bit of a spring to his step, as though a heavy weight has been lifted. For the first time since the war, Hellmann is looking forward, not backward.

EXT. CLEARING -- DAY

Hellmann emerges from the vegetation and steps into the clearing. Gomez stands at the other end, near the mahogany tree.

They walk toward each other until they are 20 paces apart. Both hold their pistols at their sides. All jungle sounds have ceased.

GOMEZ

Did you come alone?

HELLMANN

Yes. What is this about?

GOMEZ

Now that your Annie Oakley has left, we can settle your debt to my family.

HELLMANN

And what debt is that?

GOMEZ

When I was a boy, my father encroached on Indian land that borders your estate. When you were the local adjudicator ...

HELLMANN

I still am.

GOMEZ

... you pronounced in favor of the Indians. My family lost their squatter's rights. My father died in poverty and I vowed revenge.

Hellmann gets angry at hearing this.

HELLMANN

You killed the Indian girl because of this grievance against ME?

GOMEZ

She came from the tribe you returned my family's land to. I wanted to let the Indians deal with you but it looks like they're not going to do anything so I'm forced to play my hand. With you gone, I can retake the estate.

Hellmann smiles again.

HELLMANN

I'm afraid not. You see, I
transferred the deed over to my
overseer this morning. It's signed,
sealed, and delivered.

IN A TREE

a group of monkeys silently watch the two men below.

A single SHOT echoes from the clearing. It scares the
monkeys. They SCREECH and flee.

Butterflies rise up, up, up from the trees in a colorful
cloud.

FOLLOW the butterflies as they disperse to reveal ghostly
images of Rachel and Hellmann walking hand in hand in a sea
of heavenly clouds, a look of love upon their faces.

FADE OUT

THE END