

THE WAY THINGS ARE

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ON SCREEN GRAPHIC

"If we were to wake up some morning and find that everyone was the same race, creed and color, we would find some other causes for prejudice by noon." Friedriche Aiken

This story is based on true events related to the over 400,000 German POWs who were sent to prison camps in the U.S. during WWII, and the thousands of Mexican migrant workers who came to the US at the same time.

EXT. HARBOR - ENGLAND - NIGHT - JUNE 30, 1944

German POWs are lined up to board a freighter. Their dirty faces match their uniforms.

CLOSE ON BOOTS - some are worn, others newer but dirty.

PAN UP from one set of shoes to...

JOSEF HERTL shuffles with the rest. He's 20, afraid and tries hard to keep his oversized helmet on his head. He struggles to stand erect, the burden of his heavy pack hanging hard against his slight frame.

The men around him are mostly older, war scarred. Resigned.

A US MILITARY POLICE MAN shoves some of them forward.

Josef picks up his pace to fall in line.

US MP

Move it along you stinkin' Nazi kraut bastards. You won't be comin' back here for a long time.

FRIEDRICH GOETZ, another young POW, moves in beside Josef.

FRIEDRICH

(in German)

What did he say?

JOSEF

(in German)

He said we're going on a nice vacation.

FRIEDRICH

(in German)

You're lying. This is nothing to joke about.

JOSEF
 (in German)
 If you can't laugh, you die.

FRIEDRICH
 (in German)
 We could die anyway.

Josef shrugs which makes his helmet go cockeyed again.

US MP
 Knock off the chatter and keep
 moving.

Josef starts to salute, joking, but stops himself. He and Friedrich keep moving.

A second US MILITARY POLICE joins the other.

US MP 2
 Where they taking this bunch?

US MP
 Midwest. They'll probably work the
 fields, factories. Stuff you and I'd
 be doing if we weren't here shovin'
 fuckin' krauts on a freighter.

US MP 2
 Seems too good for 'em. Up to me, I'd
 shoot everyone of 'em right here and
 beg forgiveness later.

US MP
 Ain't that the truth.
 (back to the POWS)
 Come on, assholes. Let's move it!

PULL BACK to reveal a thousand German POWs lined up in two
 different lines boarding the freighter.

ON THE SHIP'S HORN BELLOWING:

CUT TO:

ON SCREEN GRAPHIC: JUNE 1, 1944 ONE MONTH EARLIER

EXT. US AND MEXICAN BORDER CROSSING - NOGALES - DAY

HORNS ARE HONKING on both sides of the crossing. Mexican
 Federales and US MILITARY POLICE are directing traffic,
 checking IDs.

A GROUP OF MEXICAN FAMILIES are gathered on the US side in a parking lot. Enough Mexicans to fill half a dozen buses. They stand in small groups. Silent.

Their shoes are worn. Their clothes are tattered. What little they have is in small bags and make shift back packs.

CLOSE ON the GONZALEZ FAMILY - MARIA (16), her sister DOLORES (13), her father JUAN (late-30s), and her mother CAROLINA (late-30s). Their clothes are neater than those of the others in the group. Their shoes aren't as worn. But they still carry all they own in small bags and worn duffels.

Juan keeps a close eye on everyone and everything around him.

Caroline keeps her daughter's close. An arm around each.

US BORDER GUARD #1
All right. All of you spics start
makin' a line. The buses will be here
before you can say U-S-A!

The sun is high in the sky.

A BABY CRIES out in the group. It's hot and everyone is slow to move.

Juan pulls his family aside.

JUAN
(in Spanish)
No matter what, we have to stay
together. We get on the bus, we get
off the bus, together. Understood?

MARIA AND DOLORES
(in Spanish)
Yes, Papa.

MARIA
(in Spanish)
Where will they take us?

JUAN
(in Spanish)
Wherever there is work to be done. We
will work and we will be free. Mr.
Roosevelt wants us here. They need
us.

MARIA
 (in Spanish)
 Why couldn't Grandma come?

DOLORES
 And Aunt Carmen?

JUAN
 (in Spanish)
 They are too old.

MARIA
 (in Spanish)
 I wish I was too old.

CAROLINA
 (in Spanish)
 Shush, you will be too old before you
 know it.

Six buses pull up near the group. As each one passes, we see the destination signs on cards in the windshield. Nebraska. California. New Mexico. Oregon. Arizona. Colorado.

MARIA
 (in Spanish)
 Which one are we on?

JUAN
 Nebraska.

The Mexicans pick up their belongings and slowly head to the buses.

BORDER GUARDS direct them to different buses.

US BORDER GUARD #1
 Come on, the buses aren't going to
 wait. Keep it movin'.

Maria takes her mother's arm and as they are directed to the Nebraska bus. Juan and Dolores are right behind her.

We follow Maria and her family on to the bus, past young families, middle-aged men and children.

Before they can find a seat, the bus lurches forward, forcing them into any open seat to keep from falling.

FROM MARIA'S POV out the window we see the other buses being boarded by families and young people just like her.

As her bus pulls away, it passes a sign that says Welcome to the United States of America.

EXT. SCOTTSBLUFF, NEBRASKA - EARLY-MORNING - TWO DAYS LATER

The bus is on Hwy 71 coming into the town from the south. Maria awakens as the bus starts to slow down. Dolores is asleep with her head on Maria's shoulder. Juan is wide awake sitting in the bench seat across the aisle from his daughters. Carolina is asleep against the window.

FROM MARIA'S POV we see Scotts Bluff rising like a monolith from the plains to the west. Other small buttes scattered around it.

The bus passes fields of sugar beets, beans and corn.

Mexicans are at work, bent over in the morning sun, hoeing weeds in the beet and bean fields.

Maria looks over at her father.

MARIA

Papa?

Juan gives her a reassuring smile.

Maria turns away looking out the window, wipes away a tear.

EXT. BUS STATION - SCOTTSBLUFF - DAY - LATER

The bus comes to a stop at the small bus station. A small, white clapboard building with a parking lot with a couple of horse ties left from another era, and enough room for half a dozen cars.

There's a bar across the street with a simple neon sign that says Bar.

A mechanic's shop next to it - Harry's Auto

A 1930s Model A pick up is the only vehicle in the bus parking lot.

As the Mexican families come off the train, HERMAN KUKAS gets out of the pick up.

He's a big man, six two, tops 250 lbs, late 50s. His knees have seen better days. So have his overalls, and the battered farmers cap on his head with a worn John Deere logo on the front.

All of the Mexican families get off the bus and wait.

Herman lumbers toward the group. Taking his time. His knees won't let him go much faster.

He stops in front of them, takes off his cap, wipes his brow, revealing the pronounced farmer's tan on his face.

HERMAN
Any of you speak English?

Juan raises his hand.

HERMAN (cont'd)
You, what's your name?

JUAN
Juan, senor. And, this is mi familia.

He gathers his wife and daughters around him.

HERMAN
No sons?

Juan looks at his family, not understanding.

HERMAN (cont'd)
No hijos?

JUAN
No, senor, mi esposa, Carolina. Y -
and mi hijas, Maria y Dolores.

Herman walks around the family. Like he's looking at cattle.

HERMAN
All right, come with me.
(points to the rest
of the group)
Anyone else?

JUAN
Senor?

HERMAN
Anyone else with you?

JUAN
No understand. Lo siento, senor.

Herman looks at the group standing by the bus. It's mostly families, a couple of young men. He points to GILBERT and AURORA, a young man and woman on their own. Motions them over.

HERMAN
You, two. Come with me.

They quickly join Juan and his family.

Herman heads to his truck and motions for the group to follow.

HERMAN (cont'd)
Get in the truck and let's go.

As Juan, his family and the two men get in the truck, a newer pickup pulls up and stops abruptly next to Herman.

CLOSE ON SIGN ON THE DOOR - Scottsbluff County Extension

DAVID SCHAEFFER gets out quickly. A thin, nervous man with penchant for following the rules.

He rushes up to Herman before he can get in his truck.

DAVID
(to Herman)
Herman, where you going?

HERMAN
Takin' my Mexicans and gettin' back to work.

DAVID
You can't just show up and start picking these people.

Herman walks past David toward his truck.

HERMAN
Why not? I helped pay to get them here.

DAVID
They've been assigned.

HERMAN
Yep, to me.

Herman is now at his pickup, gets in, starts it, and puts it into gear.

DAVID
There's paper work!

HERMAN
Bring it by later.

He drives out of the parking lot with Juan, his family and Gilbert and Aurora hanging on in back.

David is left to stare after him.

AT THE BACK OF THE PICKUP, the Mexicans hang on as Herman makes his way out of the bus station parking lot.

MARIA
(to Juan in Spanish)
Papa, where are we going?

JUAN
(in Spanish)
I think to this gringo's farm.

MARIA
(in Spanish)
To work? For him?

JUAN
(in Spanish)
Yes, I think to work for him.

FROM THEIR POV as they drive slowly away, they see David with the other Mexicans, separating them. Putting some back on the bus.

Maria reaches for her father's hand. Carolina holds Dolores tight. Gilbert puts his arm around Aurora's shoulder.

EXT. HERMAN KUKAS FARM - THIRTY MINUTES LATER

The farm house is small, square, painted white with dark blue trim. The yard is mostly dirt but neat with a small patch of grass in the front. Roses sit up next to the house on either side of the front door. Large cotton woods provide some shade from the sun. Everything is kept and in its place.

Herman pulls up and stops in front of an outbuilding away from the farm house. A smaller version of the farm house with an outhouse nearby.

He struggles to pull himself out of his pickup and walks toward it, not waiting for the Mexicans to join him.

Juan and the others get out of the back of the pickup and follow him hesitantly.

HERMAN
All right, here's where you'll stay.

He continues to the front door and opens it.

HERMAN (cont'd)
It's the original homestead. But
better than the clapboard shacks on
some of the other farms.

INT. FARM WORKERS HOUSE - SAME TIME

Inside it's a bare bones affair. Concrete floors, painted wooden siding on the walls. A small kitchen with running water at the sink. A small gas stove and a refrigerator.

A worn kitchen table with six mis-matched chairs around it.

An old sofa sits against a wall with a nightstand and a lamp. There's double bed with a metal frame against another wall.

Herman flips a switch on the wall that turns on an overhead light in the main room and one in the kitchen. New curtains cover the windows.

HERMAN
There's a bedroom back there. Guess
you'll have to figure out who gets
it.

Juan and the others look around checking things out.

HERMAN (cont'd)
There's an outhouse out back. The
other small room there has a bathtub.
You'll have to fill it with water
from the sink or the pump outside.
(pause)
The curtains. My wife made them.

He looks at the Mexicans and takes a breath.

HERMAN (cont'd)
Be outside in one hour.

He gets a blank look.

HERMAN (cont'd)
(pointing outside and
holding up one
finger)
Outside. One hora.

JUAN
Si, senor. Una hora.

HERMAN
All right, then.

The Mexicans watch him leave.

CAROLINA
(in Spanish)
This is small but better than we had.
No dirt floors.

JUAN
(in Spanish)
And running water.

MARIA
(in Spanish)
But where will we sleep, Papa?

Juan looks around and smiles at his daughter.

JUAN
(in Spanish)
We have plenty of choices. We'll
figure it out.

EXT. HERMAN KUKAS FARM - SAME TIME

Herman is taking a couple of bags of groceries out of the pickup cab.

His wife, EVA, late-50s, comes out a side door of the house. She's a tall woman, thin, worn, the prairie wind having blown away any pretense and most of her femininity. She wears a blue faded gingham dress, and wipes her hands on a dish towel as she walks to Herman.

EVA
I saw you picked up the Mexicans.

HERMAN
Yep.

EVA
You couldn't a got more men?

HERMAN
Didn't like the look of 'em.

He's got his hands full as he stops in front of her.

HERMAN (cont'd)
Don't worry, they'll all work just
fine.

(MORE)

HERMAN (cont'd)
 Besides, one of 'em speaks a little
 English. Not like the bunch we had
 last year.

Eva wipes her hands nervously on the towel.

EVA
 We can sure use the help.

HERMAN
 Yep. Not gettin' any younger. And the
 boys ain't comin' home any time soon.

He moves past her.

EVA
 That county guy give you any grief?

HERMAN
 Schaeffer. Always.

He gives her a smile and turns back to give her a peck on
 the cheek.

HERMAN (cont'd)
 Now let's get some food in these
 folks. They're gonna need it.

EXT. HERMAN KUKAS FARM - EARLY EVENING

Eva sets a large picnic table with two freshly baked
 chickens, mashed potatoes, corn on the cob.

She calls to their house.

EVA
 Herman, time to eat.

Herman comes out the door and heads to the small migrant
 workers house.

INT. MIGRANT WORKERS HOUSE - SAME TIME

Maria is looking out one of two front windows.

Carolina is wiping down the small counter around the sink.

MARIA
 (in Spanish)
 Papa. Mama. The big gringo is coming.

JUAN
 (in Spanish)
 We don't call him that. Call him
 patron.

There's a KNOCK on the door.

Juan answers the door.

FROM HIS POV Herman stands just outside.

JUAN (cont'd)
 Senor?

HERMAN
 My wife made you all some supper.
 Kind of early, I know, but figure you
 all were hungry.

He gestures to the table outside.

Juan looks past him, sees the table with the food.

JUAN
 Senor, we - uh - we eat?

HERMAN
 Yes, eat. All of you. Come on now.
 Before it gets cold.

He turns and leaves. Doesn't wait to see what Juan and the
 others will do.

JUAN
 (in Spanish to family)
 Come. They are feeding us.

DOLORES
 (in Spanish)
 Oh, Mother Mary, thank you. I was
 ready to eat my fingers.

MARIA
 (in Spanish)
 Dolores!

CAROLINA
 (in Spanish)
 We may not get fed again until we can
 get some beans and rice.

Juan and his family go to the door. He stops and sees
 Gilbert and Aurora aren't moving.

JUAN
 (in Spanish)
 You're part of this family now. We
 eat. You eat. We sleep. You sleep.

GILBERT
 (in Spanish)
 Thank you. Thank you.

JUAN
 (in Spanish)
 Don't thank me. Thank the patron.

Juan waits until Gilbert and Aurora are out the door. He
 turns back and looks at the main room and sparse kitchen.

JUAN (cont'd)
 (in Spanish)
 Thank you, God. It is not big, but
 it's a start. Thank you.

He crosses himself, then steps outside and closes the door.

INT. FREIGHTER - ATLANTIC OCEAN - DAY

Josef and Friedrich are outside on the main deck, looking
 out over the rail at the ocean.

Other POWs mill about. They are all shaved and wear clean
 uniforms.

FRIEDRICH
 (in German)
 How much longer before we get to the
 United States?

JOSEF
 (in German)
 Don't be so impatient, Friedrich.
 We're out on the ocean. The sun is
 shining. We do not have to do
 anything except keep ourselves clean.
 And they feed us better than the
 German Army did.

FRIEDRICH
 (in German)
 You think we'll go home?

JOSEF
 (in German)
 The war won't last forever, my
 friend.

(MORE)

JOSEF (cont'd)
The Allies are too strong now and the
Wehrmacht is not. We will go home.
(beat)
For now, we make the most of it.

A SHIP'S WHISTLE sounds off.

FRIEDRICH
(in German)
Must be lunch time.

JOSEF
(in German)
You watch yourself, Friedrich. You'll
go home looking like a sausage.

FRIEDRICH
(in German)
There are worse things to become!

The two turn away and head toward a door other POWs are filing through. A group of Nazi POWs stand to one side of the door.

As Josef and Friedrich walk past, GERHARD HOFFSCHNEIDER, stops them. He's a big, hard ass Nazi in his late 20s. Battle worn and a scar running across his left cheek as proof. American equivalent of a staff sergeant. His uniform is neat, his boots clean.

GERHARD
(in German)
You two are spending a lot of time
together. You don't speak much with
the rest of us.

JOSEF
(in German)
We've been talking about where we're
going, what we'll be doing.

Gerhard turns to the other Nazi POWS.

GERHARD
(in German)
I think these two are planning a life
together.

The other Nazis laugh at the joke.

GERHARD (cont'd)
(in German)
Is it true, little man, you're
planning a life together?

JOSEF
No, we're just talking.

From behind them...

US MILITARY POLICE
There a problem here?

Gerhard doesn't move. He gives the MP a hard look.

JOSEF
No, no sir. Not a problem.

US MILITARY POLICE
You speak English?

JOSEF
My father taught...at the university.

US MILITARY POLICE
Well, school boy, get you and your
fellow krauts down the stairs and
into the mess hall.

(beat)
NOW!

JOSEF
Yes, yes, sir.
(to Friedrich in
German)
Come on, let's go.

He moves his way past Gerhard who barely makes way for him.

US MILITARY POLICE
(to Gerhard)
You too, move it!

Gerhard joins the line and the other Nazi POWS fall in
behind him.

GERHARD
(in German and
smiling to the MP)
One day, my boot will be on your neck
and my knife in your throat.

US MILITARY POLICE
Shut the fuck up and keep it movin'!

Josef looks behind him and Gerhard flashes him a snide
smile. Josef gives him a wave.

EXT. BEET FIELD - SCOTTSBLUFF - DAY - TWO WEEKS LATER

Juan, Carolina, Maria and Dolores are hoeing the weeds from around the beets. Each of them hoeing their own row.

Gilbert and Aurora are working two other rows separately.

Maria stops and stands. Sweat lines her face. She wipes it and looks at the blisters forming on her hands.

MARIA

(in Spanish to Juan)

Papa, this is too hard. We should find something else.

Juan keeps hoeing.

JUAN

(in Spanish)

This is what we must do. At least it is work. And we work together.

He stops and looks at his daughter.

Dolores has stopped in the row next to Maria's. Carolina keeps hoeing.

JUAN (cont'd)

(in Spanish)

Before you know it, this will be easy. In September, maybe we look at the two of you going to school.

This gets her attention.

MARIA

(in Spanish)

School?

JUAN

(in Spanish)

Yes, school. If we are working here, you both need to learn here.

DOLORES

(in Spanish)

What about you and Mama?

JUAN

(in Spanish)

Don't worry about us. We do what we need to do. Someday you will do the same for your family.

(MORE)

JUAN (cont'd)

(beat)

Now, no more talk. We have work to do for the patron.

MARIA

(in Spanish)

I wish we could go to school now.

JUAN

(in Spanish)

Get back to work before someone comes by and makes you work even harder.

Maria gets back to hoeing.

MARIA

(in Spanish to Dolores)

We will get to go to school, little sister.

DOLORES

(in Spanish to Maria)

I wonder if they have the nuns here.

MARIA

(laughs then in Spanish)

Maybe not. I don't think they have Catholics in the United States.

JUAN

(in Spanish)

Girls, back to work! Dios mio.

With the girls out of ear shot, Carolina stops hoeing and goes to Juan's side.

CAROLINA

(in Spanish)

School? We do not know if we will be here for school. You should not fill them with such things.

JUAN

(in Spanish)

We will be here, my love. We have nowhere else we need to be but here.

(motioning around him)

Look, the land is rich, the big buttes are like guardians. We will make a home here. I believe it is God's wish for us.

CAROLINA
 (in Spanish)
 I hope you are right.

She sees Herman drive up in his pickup.

CAROLINA (cont'd)
 (in Spanish)
 We must get back to work.

She and Juan return to hoeing.

LATER - NOON

Herman lumbers up and looks over their work.

HERMAN
 (to Juan)
 Take a break. Lunch time.

Juan drops his hoe and the others do the same and follow him in Herman's direction.

Herman stops at his truck. Eva gets out of the front and the two hand out sandwiches, apples to each of them.

JUAN
 Gracias, senor. Gracias.

HERMAN
 Much trabajo. Need to eat.

JUAN
 Si, senor, thank you.

The Mexicans find spots under a large cotton wood tree and sit down to eat.

EVA
 You're learning Spanish?

HERMAN
 Someone has to. Otherwise, how are they going to learn English?

EVA
 Same way our parents did when they were Germans coming from Russia. They just did.

HERMAN
 I suppose.
 (MORE)

HERMAN (cont'd)

(beat)

I'll take you back up to the house, I need to run into town.

EVA

Good, I need some things.

Eva gets in the pickup. Herman goes back to the Mexicans.

HERMAN

Eat then back to work. Trabajo.

Juan looks at the others, seeing if they understood. Then to Herman.

JUAN

Si, senior. Trabajo.

HERMAN

Good. Good. Bueno.

He turns to go. Juan interrupts.

JUAN

Gracias, senior.

HERMAN

You're welcome.

Juan watches Herman leave in his pickup.

Maria looks at her hands and looks out at the fields.

Scotts Bluff in the distance.

MARIA

(in Spanish to herself)

Like guardians. What will you guard us from?

EXT. GROCERY STORE - SCOTTSBLUFF - MID-MORNING

Herman pulls up outside the store. It's a cinder block building on the main road into town. Big windows up front advertising various specials on meat, eggs, fruit.

The parking lot is big enough for a couple dozen cars. Old pick ups, like Herman's. A few older 1930s cars. A new 1943 Buick Special sits by itself in the lot.

Herman walks past the Buick as the owner gets out.

This is STEVE SANDERS, one of the wealthier people in town. He manages the sugar beet factory and owns several farms he leases outside of town. He's in his 40s, and wears a fresh set of dungarees, a new shirt and a straw cowboy hat and new boots.

STEVE

Herman. Haven't seen you since the beet planting meeting in March. Counting on a big harvest for the factory this year. Everything ok?

Herman barely stops, forcing Steve to walk alongside him.

HERMAN

Yep.

STEVE

Heard you got some of the spics came up from Mexico.

Herman stops.

HERMAN

Yeah, the migrants, you mean.

STEVE

Sure. How they workin' out for you? Heard they're mostly a lazy lot.

HERMAN

Not sure where you heard that, but so far they seem to be working out just fine.

STEVE

Only been a day or two, right?

Herman nods and starts to walk away. Steve is forced to keep up again.

STEVE (cont'd)

Hey. I heard they were finally bringin' German POWs to Camp Scottsbluff. Trucked the last Wops outta there. Those guys did nothing, just nothin' but drink whatever they could get their hands on.

HERMAN

Yeah, Schaeffer told me 'bout the Germans the other day.

STEVE

God knows we could use some more good help around here. All I can do to keep the sugar beet factory going with what help I got and with harvest coming up in a couple of months. I tell you what, those krauts will know how to put in a day.

They stop at the entrance to the store.

HERMAN

Yeah, we could use some more help.

(beat)

I got a lot of errands yet. We'll see you around.

STEVE

Oh, yeah. Yeah. See you at church?

Herman walks away, waving behind him.

EXT. MIGRANT WORKER HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

The Mexicans walk slowly up to the house. Tired, dirty.

Maria is first to a hose and turns it on and begins washing herself. Dolores joins her.

MARIA

(in Spanish)

It feels good. No.

DOLORES

(in Spanish)

Yes. It's good we don't have to go to a well.

Aurora joins them, reluctantly. Juan, Carolina and Gilbert wait.

Then Maria turns the hose on her sister and they and Aurora start playing with the water.

CAROLINA

(in Spanish)

Girls!

She moves to stop them, but Juan gently holds her back.

JUAN
 (in Spanish)
 It's okay. Let them be children for a
 bit longer.

Carolina visibly relaxes, takes Juan's hand.

CAROLINA
 (in Spanish)
 You're right. We should, too.

She pulls Juan into the water fight. They motion for Gilbert
 to join them.

As the group plays with the water...

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - KUKAS FARM HOUSE - SAME TIME

Herman and Eva are at their kitchen table eating chicken
 soup, bread, cheese and fresh cabbage.

The SOUND of LAUGHTER comes through the kitchen window.

FROM their POV we see the Mexicans playing in the water.

EVA
 That's different.

HERMAN
 Yeah.
 (beat)
 That was the boys once.

EVA
 Yeah, I remember.
 (beat)
 I wish they were here. Too many
 aren't.

Herman puts his hand on hers.

HERMAN
 They'll be back. Then maybe we'll all
 get to play in the water.

EVA
 We're too old.

HERMAN
 Yeah, I guess.

CUT TO: Maria and the others playing happily with the hose.

EXT. MIGRANT WORKERS HOUSE - EVENING - LATER

Juan is outside sitting on an old bench. Maria joins him.

JUAN
(in Spanish)
Maria, here sit with me.

He makes room for Maria to join him on the bench.

MARIA
(in Spanish)
I am glad we came.

JUAN
(in Spanish)
Really? Now you are glad?

MARIA
(in Spanish)
Yes. It is hard, but I am thankful...
to you and Mama. Our house is better,
and you and Mama are happier.

Juan takes his daughter's hand.

JUAN
(in Spanish)
You are a good daughter. I hope you
meet a nice Mexican boy and give us
lots of grand babies!

MARIA
(in Spanish)
Papa! That is a long way from now.
(beat)
We should learn English.

JUAN
(in Spanish)
Yes, we should. I will ask el patron
for a radio.

MARIA
(in Spanish)
A radio?

JUAN

(in Spanish)

Remember. We had that radio in Mexico and sometimes we would get English stations late at night. I would stay up to listen.

(beat)

I wish I would have listened more.

MARIA

(in Spanish)

Can we ask tomorrow? I want to learn as much as I can before school.

JUAN

(in Spanish)

Yes, tomorrow I ask for a radio.

MARIA

(in Spanish)

Thank you, Papa.

JUAN

(in Spanish)

Now, go to bed. It's another day of work tomorrow.

MARIA

(in Spanish)

I will meet someone, Papa. One day. And give you and Mama lots of grand babies.

She kisses him on the cheek and he watches her leave. Then looks back up at the night sky. He wipes his eyes before getting up to go inside.

EXT. BEET FIELD - SCOTTSBLUFF -- MID-DAY - WEEK LATER

The Mexicans are in the fields working. They stop to watch a CONVOY OF ARMY TRUCKS drive up the dirt road nearby.

Herman pulls up in his pick up, making his regular lunch stop.

Maria drops her hoe.

CLOSE ON HER HANDS as she removes her gloves. The blisters from before have turned to callouses.

She grimaces a bit as she watches her father join Herman.

JUAN
(pointing to the road)
Senor. The trucks?

HERMAN
Army. Bringing German prisoners.
Soldiers. To work.

Juan nods but isn't sure what to make of this.

JUAN
We still work...for you?

HERMAN
Yea, you still work for me.

He reaches into the pick up and pulls something from the front seat. It's a radio.

HERMAN (cont'd)
Here's that radio you asked for. It's used but should still work.

Juan takes it like it's the best gift ever.

JUAN
Oh, senor. Muchas gracias. Thank you.
Thank you.

HERMAN
It's okay.

As Herman drives away, Maria joins her father.

MARIA
(in Spanish to Juan)
Papa. El patron gave us a radio?

JUAN
(in Spanish)
Yes. We can listen tonight.

MARIA
(in Spanish)
What will we listen to?

JUAN
(in Spanish)
Anything we can. Now let's eat and get back to work!

INT. MIGRANT WORKERS HOUSE - EVENING - LATER

Carolina and Aurora are finishing cleaning up. Juan and Gilbert are sitting at the table. Maria and Dolores are on the couch, the radio sitting by itself on an old end table.

MARIA
(in Spanish)
Papa. Can we turn it on now?

JUAN
(in Spanish)
Yes, of course.

He gets up and fiddles with the radio until they HEAR Bing Crosby singing Swinging on a Star.

Juan lets it play a bit before he motions to Carolina and offers her his hand.

JUAN (cont'd)
(in Spanish)
Come, my love. Let's dance.

MARIA
(in Spanish)
Yes, mama. Dance with Papa!

Carolina reluctantly puts down her dish towel and takes her husband's hand.

As they dance, Maria grabs her sister, Gilbert takes Aurora's hand and they all dance.

EXT. HERMAN KUKAS FARM - SAME TIME

Herman is walking from their shed to their home. We HEAR the music coming from the migrant worker house.

He stops and watches them dancing. Smiles to himself then sees Eva in their kitchen window watching.

INT. HERMAN KUKAS FARM - SAME TIME

As Herman enters, we HEAR the same song playing in their home.

EVA
Care to join them.

She reaches her hand to Herman. He takes it and they move together and dance.

Eva looks up at Herman as they move to the music.

EVA (cont'd)

The boys would be surprised if they saw this.

HERMAN

Yeah, I 'spose they would.

(beat)

The war will be over soon. Krauts are on the run. Japs can't be far behind.

EVA

And our boys will be home...where they belong.

She puts her head against his shoulder.

HERMAN

Yes, where they belong.

EXT. POW TRAIN - MORNING - LATER

The train moves across western Pennsylvania. They pass an Amish farmer and rich farm land.

INSIDE THE TRAIN

FRIEDRICH

(in German)

It looks like home.

JOSEF

(in German)

There are Germans living here. Maybe distant relatives.

FRIEDRICH

(in German)

Are they hated like we are?

JOSEF

(in German)

I don't think so. Just blacks and Mexicans...and Chinese... and Japanese. And we don't have to worry about it. We'll be in a prisoner camp.

FRIEDRICH

(in German)

What if we want to escape? It's our duty.

JOSEF

(in German)

Look at how big everything is,
Friedrich. Where will you go? We stay
in the camp. We do what we need to
do. And when the war is over, we go
home.

Friedrich watches the landscape go by. The green hills. A
small farm. And another.

FRIEDRICH

(in Germany)

Nothing is blown up here.
(beat)
Goebbels said we bombed America.

JOSEF

(in Germany)

He lied. Now get some sleep. We have
a long trip.

Josef leans back, closes his eyes.

FROM Friedrich's POV we see more of Western Pennsylvania go
by.

EXT. HIGHWAY 26 - EAST OF SCOTTSBLUFF - MID-MORNING - THREE
DAYS LATER

There are two buses with German POWs. They pass Chimney
Rock. Courthouse Rock. Jail House Rock. The formations rise
up from the open prairie - like monuments to unnamed gods.

Then fields of sugar beets, beans, corn and hay.

Mexican workers are out working, bent over in the heat.

The buses turn off the highway on to a narrow two-lane road
that quickly turns into rutted dirt and gravel.

They pass more fields, more workers. An occasional pickup
going in the opposite direction.

EXT. CAMP SCOTTSBLUFF - LATER

The buses pull into Camp Scottsbluff. There's a single guard
post and the camp is surrounded by a ten foot high fence.

The water tower with Camp Scottsbluff emblazoned on the
front of it is the highest structure on the property. It
overlooks a couple dozen buildings.

A PLANE takes off from the nearby municipal air field.

German POWs already based here are gathered to meet the new POWs.

A BUS GUARD comes off the first bus and yells into the bus.

BUS GUARD
All right, everybody off! Here's your
new home until this war is over.

Josef and Friedrich form up with other POWs as they come off the bus.

FRIEDRICH
(in German to Josef)
You are right about us not escaping.
Three days by train, a day by bus.
We're in the middle of nowhere.

JOSEF
(in German)
I heard the prisoner camps are better
than where we trained at? Maybe it
won't be so bad.

FRIEDRICH
(in German)
Maybe we will at least get fed!

As the POWs exit the buses, a German officer, OBERST HEINRICH SCHULLER, steps forward. His uniform is neat, his face shaved and his hands clean. Not a hair on his head is out of place.

The commander of the POW camp, LT. COLONEL CLYDE DEMPSTER looks on from the porch of the camp headquarters.

SCHULLER
(to Bus Guard in
English)
I'll take it from here.

BUS GUARD
They're all yours.

SCHULLER
Danke.

He steps forward and waits until the men are all gathered.

SCHULLER (cont'd)
(in German)
Fall in!

The POWs quickly do so.

SCHULLER (cont'd)

(in German)

Welcome to Camp Scottsbluff. While you are here, you will be provided with three meals a day, showers, time for recreation, reading materials and educational opportunities. In exchange you will be working for local farmers and business owners. This is all in accordance with the Geneva convention. German officers will not be required to do manual labor. All officers are to report to me immediately following this briefing. Are there any questions?

Someone yells out Heil Hitler.

Dempster starts to step forward, but Schuller looks back at him.

SCHULLER (cont'd)

(to Dempster)

Forgive this, Colonel. I will handle.

(to POWs in German)

I understand your desire to express your loyalty to the Fuhrer. However, you are forbidden to do so in public while you are here.

(beat)

Now each of you are assigned a barracks by name. Wait for your name to be called. While you are here I expect you to follow the discipline of a good German soldier. Dismissed!

The POWs break up and we HEAR names being called out. GOETZ, Friedrich...HERTL, JOSEF...HOFFSCHNEIDER, GERHARD..

Gerhard moves in behind Josef and Friedrich.

GERHARD

(in German)

Well, this should be fun. All of us sharing a barracks.

ON DEMPTSTER next to Schuller.

DEMPTSTER

That Heil Hitler thing isn't going to be a problem now is it?

SCHULLER

No, Colonel. The men will comply.

DEMPSTER

Good. The new ones are already spoken for so the sooner they get settled, the better.

SCHULLER

Yes. That won't be a problem.

INT. BARRACKS - CAMP SCOTTSBLUFF - FEW MINUTES LATER

It's clean and tidy. Wooden floors and walls. Enough bunk beds to sleep 100 soldiers. A new duffel sits on each bed.

A German POW stands at ease by the door. As Josef and Friedrich enter with the other POWs...

GERMAN POW LEADER #1

(in German)

Grab a bunk, they have not been assigned. Each bunk has a duffel with your camp clothes. You will wear these not your German uniform. Wake up is at 6, roll call at 6:30, breakfast at 6:45. Dinner at noon. Supper at 5:30. Lights out at 10. The latrine is out the door and to your right. There is running water - hot and cold. Supper is in twenty minutes.

After he's gone...

FRIEDRICH

(in German to Josef)

This is incredible. We didn't get anything like this when we were in training.

JOSEF

(in German)

Perhaps it is meant to make us go soft so we cannot fight

FRIEDRICH

(in German)

Then I become soft!

EXT. HERMAN KUKAS FARM - TWO DAYS LATER

We see the Mexicans working in the fields.

Herman is coming out of the house as a military car pulls up. He freezes. Watches them stop and TWO ARMY OFFICERS -- LT. SULLIVAN and LT. MCMANN in full dress uniform exit the car slowly, deliberately.

ON JUAN in the field. He stops and sees the car and two officers.

MARIA

Papa?

JUAN

(in Spanish)

It's okay. Keep working.

BACK TO the officers with Herman.

LT. SULLIVAN

Herman Kukas.

HERMAN

I know what this is. Just tell me which of them has died.

Eva is out of the house at Herman's side.

LT. MCMANN

Ma'am. Maybe we should go inside.

EVA

No, here is fine. Which one?

The two officers exchange a look. It's not good.

LT. SULLIVAN

I am First Lieutenant John H. Sullivan.

LT. MCMANN

I'm First Lieutenant Terrence McMann.

LIEUTENANT SULLIVAN

The U.S. Army regrets very much to inform you that your son Captain Lawrence Herman Kukas No. 73842 was killed in action on the night of June 15th in France. Death was instantaneous and without any suffering.

Eva grabs Herman's arm.

EVA

Larry. Herman it was Larry.

HERMAN

(to the officers)

You're not finished, are you?

Lt. Sullivan and Lt. McMann retain their composure and professionalism.

LIEUTENANT MCMANN

The U.S. Army regrets very much to inform you that your son Captain Samuel Alexander Kukas No. 84953 was killed in action on the night of June 15th during the Battle of Saipan. Death was instantaneous and without any suffering.

Eva nearly falls to the ground. Herman holds her up, tries to stand more erect. Stares ahead, holding it together.

HERMAN

Both of them? The same night.

LIEUTENANT MCMANN

Yes sir.

HERMAN

Their bodies?

LIEUTENANT MCMANN

We were unable to retrieve them. They will be buried near where they died.

LIEUTENANT SULLIVAN

Their effects will be sent to you in due course.

EVA

Their effects? Not their bodies?

(beat)

Herman. They're gone. Both of them are gone.

LIEUTENANT SULLIVAN

Ma'am, sir. It's our duty to remain here with you to ensure your safety and well being.

EVA
 Our safety! Our well-being! What
 about our sons? Who was making sure
 they were safe and well?!

Herman puts his arm around her shoulders.

LIEUTENANT MCMANN
 Ma'am.

EVA
 Go. Please. Just go!

LIEUTENANT SULLIVAN
 Sir?

HERMAN
 I think it's best you leave.

The two lieutenants get back in the car and leave.

Herman puts his arm around his wife and leads her into the house. Before they get inside...

JUAN
 Senor. Everything all right?

HERMAN
 It's okay, Juan. Go on back to work.

EVA
 Both of them, Herman. Both of them.

Juan watches them both go inside. From inside we HEAR Eva cry out, a gut wrenching sob, followed by another.

EXT. HERMAN KUKAS FARM - SUNDAY - AFTERNOON

The yard is full of cars and pickups.

Steve Sanders gets out of his new car dressed for a funeral. His wife, THELMA SANDERS, takes out a casserole and brings it into the house with her. Her husband right behind her.

The Mexicans stand outside their house. Dressed as neat as they can be.

MARIA
 (in Spanish)
 Papa. This is so sad. They lost both
 sons.

JUAN

(in Spanish)

Yes, I cannot imagine if I lost one of you girls. If you were both gone, my heart would go with you.

Carolina comes out with a dish of freshly made tamales.

CAROLINA

(in Spanish)

Are you sure this is a good idea?

JUAN

(in Spanish)

He is our patron. We must honor him and their grief.

Maria takes Dolores' hand. Juan takes the dish from Carolina and she puts her arm through his.

When they get to the door of Herman and Eva's house, they hesitate. Then JUAN knocks.

There are VOICES from inside, foot steps going to the door. It opens and DOROTHY KRAFT answers. She's a pinched, tightly bound woman. Her black dress is new. Her dark hair short and tight against her skull.

DOROTHY

Yes?

JUAN

Senor Herman. We. We pay our respects.

HERMAN (O.C.)

Who is it?

DOROTHY

I think it's your Mexicans.

She makes no move to let Juan in or take the dish he has in his hand.

MARIA

(in Spanish to Juan)

Papa. We should go.

Juan smiles and stares ahead at the woman. Then Herman is at the door.

HERMAN

Juan. Carolina.

JUAN
 Senor Herman. We have tamales.

HERMAN
 Tamales?

JUAN
 Pay our respects.

Herman takes the plate.

HERMAN
 Thank you. Uh. Do you want to come
 in?

FROM JUAN'S POV we can see the inside of the small home is full of farmers and their wives. Several talk with Eva. The others are looking at the door waiting to see what will happen.

JUAN
 No, Senor. We are so sorry for sons.
 That is all.

HERMAN
 Okay. Thank you. Gracias.

JUAN
 De nada, Senor.

Herman closes the door slowly, but from outside we HEAR.

DOROTHY (O.C.)
 Good thing you didn't let them in.

HERMAN
 Would've been just fine if I had.

Juan turns away from the door.

JUAN
 (n Spanish)
 Come. Let's go listen to some music.

EXT. HERMAN KUKAS FARM - TWO DAYS LATER - DAY

The Mexicans are working in the field when an Army truck pulls up in the yard.

CORPORAL DELBERT JOHNSON, an Army Guard gets out from behind the wheel, followed by six German POWs riding in the back Josef, Friedrich, Gerhard, STEFAN SCHNABEL, LUDWIG BRAUN, EMIL KRAUSE.

Herman comes out moving more slowly than usual.

CORPORAL JOHNSON
Herman Kukas?

HERMAN
Yes.

CORPORAL JOHNSON
I have the six POWs you had asked
for.

HERMAN
I already have enough help.

He motions to Juan and his family out in the field.

CORPORAL JOHNSON
I understand. But you signed for
them, so until you work it out with
your county agent, you've got them to
do whatever you need done.

HERMAN
Christ, you've got to be kidding?

CORPORAL JOHNSON
No sir.

HERMAN
I don't want those bastards anywhere
near here! You know one of my boys
was killed by some krauts. Other was
killed by Japs. You bringin' me some
a them too?

CORPORAL JOHNSON
I'm sorry, sir. I'm sure you can work
it out later.
(pause)
You don't have to feed 'em. They have
lunch and water.

HERMAN
Well, thank God for that. Christ!

The POWs stand waiting.

CORPORAL JOHNSON
We're here until four. I'll be
standing guard.

HERMAN

Goddamn. Looks like I don't have a choice. What about you? Do I need to feed you?

CORPORAL JOHNSON

No sir. I'll be fine.

HERMAN

(to POWs)

I don't 'spose any of you bastards speak English.

Josef hesitates, then steps up.

JOSEF

I do, sir.

HERMAN

Well, good. Follow me. And grab a shovel and hoe over there against the shed.

The POWs follow Herman and each end up at the same field Juan and the others are working.

HERMAN (cont'd)

See what they're doing. They're hoeing the weeds from around the beets. You know beets? They came from your country.

JOSEF

No sir. I lived in the city.

HERMAN

Hmmph. Allright. Do what they're doing. You'll break at lunch. Christ.

Herman leaves the POWs where they stand.

GERHARD

(in German)

Well, smart boy, what are we doing?

JOSEF

(in German)

We hoe.

Josef grabs a hoe and picks a row. He finds himself in the one next to Maria.

Friedrich is in the row next to Josef.

Gerhard goes for the next row.

Corporal Johnson finds a tree and sits beneath it to watch.

Maria barely looks up when Josef goes to the row next to hers. But she watches from the corner of her eye.

Juan stops hoeing and watches the POWS start to work. Carolina sees him and stops working, too.

CAROLINA
(in Spanish)
Who are they?

JUAN
(in Spanish)
German prisoners. From the war. I think they are at the camp where the Army trucks go.

CAROLINA
(in Spanish)
Will they take our work?

JUAN
(in Spanish,
reassuring)
Not if we work harder.

He gets back to work, but Carolina pauses. Watching Josef next to Maria.

ON JOSEF doing his best to hoe correctly. But he's not. He's going too deep, nicking the beets in the ground.

Maria notices.

MARIA
No. You are wrong.

Josef stops and takes her in. She is sweaty, her legs dirty, but her hair is black, long, shiny. Her eyes bright, dark brown. Her skin darker from the days already spent working in the sun.

JOSEF
You speak English?

MARIA
A little.
(beat)
You hoe too deep.

She uses her hoe to show him how not to go so deep.

Josef gives it another try. Maria nods approvingly.

MARIA (cont'd)
Bueno.

JOSEF
Bueno?

MARIA
Uh, good. Good.

She gives him a smile and goes back to work.

JOSEF
My name is Josef.

Maria stops and points to him.

MARIA
Josef?

JOSEF
Yes, Josef.

MARIA
(pointing to herself)
Maria.

JOSEF
Maria.

MARIA
Si, yes, Maria.

She gets back to work. Giving him a look out of the corner her eye.

MARIA (cont'd)
Work, Josef. We work.

Josef watches her work, then starts hoeing again. Doing a better job.

OFF Carolina's look as she watches the two of them, then goes back to work herself.

EXT. KUKAS FARM - NOON - LATER

The Mexicans come into the farm yard and sit together under one of the old cottonwoods. They have their lunch - cold tamales.

The POWs sit under another cottonwood in the yard. Corporal Johnson hands out their lunch. Cold sandwiches and an apple.

GERHARD

(in German to Josef)

This is shit. We work hard. We should get more.

(beat)

Tell him!

CORPORAL JOHNSON

What's going on?

JOSEF

He's hungry. He wants more food.

CORPORAL JOHNSON

You're lucky you get that much. Now eat up!

GERHARD

(in German to
Corporal Johnson)

This is shit.

He puts his uneaten lunch back in the bag. Wads it up and throws it on the ground.

INT. KUKAS FARM - SAME TIME

Dorothy Kraft is at the kitchen window watching what's going on.

Eva sits at the kitchen table staring at a fully cooked chicken sitting on the table. An empty plate in front of her.

PHOTOS of her two sons scattered in front of her.

Dorothy turns and sees Eva hasn't touched any food in front of her.

DOROTHY

Eva, you should eat.

EVA

Not very hungry right now.

(beat)

I think I'm going to go lie down.

DOROTHY

All right. I'm right here if you need anything.

EVA

Thank you, Dorothy, you really don't need to stay. Herman can take care of things.

DOROTHY

It's okay. Least I can do.

Eva gets up and walks slowly to a bedroom off the kitchen and closes the door.

Dorothy looks out the window and FROM HER POV we see the POWs sitting away from the Mexicans.

She puts the chicken in a casserole dish, puts the rest of the meal she made in another container and goes out the door.

EXT. KUKAS FARM - SAME TIME

Dorothy comes to the POWS balancing the food.

Corporal Johnson notices and jumps to his feet.

CORPORAL JOHNSON

Here, ma'am. Let me give you a hand with that.

DOROTHY

Thank you. Make sure those POWs get this. Didn't look like they got enough to eat with the work they do?

CORPORAL JOHNSON

Ma'am. They're fine.

DOROTHY

Well, give it to them anyway.

CORPORAL JOHNSON

(motioning to the
Mexicans)

What about them?

DOROTHY

I think they'll be just fine.

(beat)

And make sure you get some for yourself.

She heads back to the house, ignoring the Mexicans.

CORPORAL JOHNSON

(to Josef)

Hey. Tell your buddy over there that nice lady just brought him more food.

JOSEF

Just for us?

CORPORAL JOHNSON

Looks like.

JOSEF

(motioning to the
Mexicans)

What about them?

CORPORAL JOHNSON

Just you. Imagine that.

JOSEF

(in German to other
POWs)

That food is for us. Help yourselves.

GERHARD

(in German)

Good job, little man.

He pats Josef on the head as he goes to the food.

Josef sees the Mexicans looking their way.

Maria looks away when she sees him noticing.

Josef takes some chicken and potatoes, puts them on a couple of Army plates and heads toward Maria. He hands the plates to Maria.

JOSEF

For you, your family.

MARIA

Gracias, no. You take it.

The Mexicans all look at Josef, not saying anything more.

JOSEF

All right. I will leave this here.

He sets the food down. Before he leaves.

MARIA

(hesitant)

Thank you.

Josef gives her a smile then walks away.

CAROLINA
 (in Spanish to Maria)
 Be careful, Maria. They are
 prisoners. They are Germans. They do
 not like people like us.

MARIA
 (in Spanish)
 Like us?

CAROLINA
 (in Spanish)
 People who are not white.

Juan, Carolina, Gilbert and Aurora grab their hoes and head
 back to the fields.

Maria and Dolores stay back a moment.

DOLORES
 (in Spanish)
 Come on! We have to do as Papa says.

MARIA
 (in Spanish)
 Yes, but I think I will have some of
 that chicken first.

She grabs a piece. Dorothy does the same and they go back to
 the field together.

Josef watches them walk away. Gerhard comes up to him.

GERHARD
 (in German)
 You think she is pretty? Prettier
 than the German girls waiting for us
 back home?

JOSEF
 (in German)
 There are no German girls waiting for
 me back home.

GERHARD
 (in German)
 Ha. Perhaps German boys then.

CORPORAL JOHNSON
 All right. Enough chatter! Let's get
 back to work.

The POWs grab their hoes and head for the fields.

EXT. MIGRANT WORKER HOUSE - EVENING - LATER

Carolina and Maria are cleaning dishes in a wash basin. Dolores sits next to the radio on the makeshift table listening to Glenn Miller, "I'll Get By As Long As I have You."

MARIA
(in Spanish)
The POWs today. What do you think they do...in the camp?

CAROLINA
(in Spanish)
I don't know. They are war prisoners. In Mexico, the prisoners like that barely get food.

MARIA
(in Spanish)
I wonder how they got caught.

CAROLINA
(in Spanish)
It doesn't matter. They are here now. A long way from home.

MARIA
(in Spanish)
Kind of like us, Mama.

Carolina puts her towel down and faces Maria.

CAROLINA
(in Spanish)
No, not like us. They are prisoners. They killed people. The sons of the people we work for. We came here to be better. When the war is over, they will go home and who knows what they will do.
(beat)
Not like us.

She stares hard at her daughter. Wipes her hands on the towel. Then goes outside without another word. This catches Maria off guard.

MARIA
(in Spanish)
Yes, Mama.

EXT. MIGRANT WORKERS HOUSE - SAME TIME

Juan is sitting on the bench humming "Sitting on a Star."
Carolina sits down abruptly next to him.

CAROLINA
(in Spanish)
We need to find a church.

JUAN
(in Spanish)
A church? Here?

CAROLINA
(in Spanish)
Yes. Ask Mr. Herman. We've been away
from one for too long.

Juan looks back at their house and sees Maria drying a dish.
Dolores by herself at the radio.

JUAN
(in Spanish)
Okay, I will ask el patron tomorrow.

Carolina takes his hand.

CAROLINA
(in Spanish)
Thank you.

FROM THEIR POV we see a star filled sky. No moon.

EXT. CAMP SCOTTSBLUFF - SAME TIME

Josef and Friedrich are walking the perimeter of the camp.
They pass a bunk house where a group of POWs are playing
cards, laughing and having fun.

FRIEDRICH
(in German)
I still don't believe this is a POW
camp. My cousin is in a Russian camp.
I got a letter from him, before we
were captured. They get fed once a
day. Broth and stale bread.

Josef keeps walking, and doesn't respond.

FRIEDRICH (cont'd)
(in German)
Josef? Did you hear what I said?

JOSEF
(in German)
Yes, stale bread.

Friedrich grabs his arm and stops him.

FRIEDRICH
(in German)
It's that Mexican girl isn't it?

JOSEF
(in German)
What?

FRIEDRICH
(in German)
Josef. Josef. Josef. Forget whatever
you're thinking. We're prisoners.
She's...

JOSEF
(in German)
What? Not German?

FRIEDRICH
(in German)
No, she's not a prisoner.

JOSEF
(in German)
Yeah, you're right. It's stupid.

FRIEDRICH
(in German)
Very. Very. Stupid.
(beat)
Come on. Let's go see what's in the
recreation building.

JOSEF
(in German)
You go along. I'm going to stay out
here a bit.

FRIEDRICH
(in German)
Ok. Remember. We're prisoners. The
war will be over. We go home.

Josef waves him off and watches as Friedrich walks toward
the recreation building, other POWs joining him.

JOSEF

(to himself)

What is your story, Maria? Maybe
there will be another time for you to
tell me.

EXT. OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE CHURCH - SCOTTSBLUFF - SUNDAY

Herman's pick up pulls up in the dusty lot outside the small
church.

Mexican workers are filtering into the church. Some in small
groups. Others with their families greeting each other in
Spanish.

Juan and his family sit in the back of the pick up. It comes
to a stop and they get out. Each of them dressed as neatly
as they can be.

CAROLINA

(in Spanish)

I knew they had to have a Catholic
church here.

Herman and Eva sit together in the cab of the pickup.

HERMAN

(to Juan)

I'll be by at 11.

JUAN

Si, senor. Eleven. Si. Gracias.

Juan watches Herman leave as he turns to follow his family
inside.

An Army truck pulls up.

MARIA AND DOLORES

(in Spanish)

Papa?

They watch as TWO MILITARY POLICE exit the vehicle and let a
dozen German POWs out of the back of the truck. Josef is one
of them.

Carolina sees them. Other Mexicans stop and stare.

CAROLINA

(in Spanish)

Come. We need to go inside.

She gathers her arms around her family, but not before Maria and Josef see each other.

He gives her a wave, but Maria's back is already turned.

INT. OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE CHURCH - SAME TIME

It's a small church with a raised stage, pulpit and crucifix. Two stained glass windows on either side of the crucifix depict Christ's birth and death.

Juan and his family bow, cross themselves and find an open pew as the POWs and their guards enter and stand against the back wall. The POWs cross themselves without bowing.

Maria looks back. Her mother takes her hand, distracting her.

FATHER BENEDICT enters. He's old, even for a priest, but that doesn't diminish his energy.

He steps up to the pulpit, looks out at the congregation, settles on the POWs.

FATHER BENEDICT

(in Spanish)

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God, and the
communion of the Holy Spirit be with
you all. Grace to you and peace from
God our Father and the Lord Jesus
Christ.

CONGREGATION

(in Spanish)

And with your spirit.

FATHER BENEDICT

(to POWs in English)

You are welcome here in the house of
the lord.

Josef folds his hand in front of him and bows his head toward the priest.

FATHER BENEDICT (cont'd)

(in Spanish)

Before we begin, let us welcome the
newcomers to our church.

Some of the Mexicans turn and look at the POWs.

Others shake the hands of the people next to them.

Maria turns back to look at Josef as Carolina greets the woman sitting next to her.

EXT. OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE CHURCH - LATER

Father Benedict is at the door taking the hands of some of the parishioners.

Herman and Eva are in their pickup waiting.

Juan and Carolina come out of the church. Maria and Dolores behind them.

JUAN
(in Spanish to
Carolina)
Happy?

CAROLINA
(in Spanish)
Si, maybe here Maria and Dolores can
meet other Mexican kids.

OFF CAROLINA'S LOOK we see groups of young Mexican boys and girls talking to one another.

CAROLINA (cont'd)
(in Spanish to Maria
and Carolina)
See there are others from Mexico
here. I think we will be back.

Maria and Dolores follow Carolina's look to the group of Mexicans.

CORPORAL JOHNSON (O.C.)
Ok, let's load 'em up!

This gets Maria's attention as she looks back at Josef and the other POWs being loaded back into the truck.

JUAN
(in Spanish)
Come, we need to go. We'll be back.

They walk to where Herman and Eva wait in their pickup.

ON HERMAN and EVA in the pickup truck.

HERMAN

(to Eva)

Didn't take any of the krauts for Catholics. Thought they were all atheists.

EVA

I thought they were all Lutherans, like us.

She gives Herman a half-hearted smile.

HERMAN

Might be. Either way, they shoulda kept the bastards at the camp.

Juan and his family get into the back of the pickup. Juan pats the side of the pickup signaling they're in.

ON JOSEF as he watches them leave from the back of the Army truck.

EXT. SAM'S CAFE - SCOTTSBLUFF - LATER

Herman pulls his pickup into a parking spot in front of the cafe.

Before he and Eva get out...

EVA

You sure this is a good idea?

HERMAN

I'm hungry. They have to be, too.

He doesn't wait for an answer, and gets out.

HERMAN (cont'd)

(to Juan)

We're going in for a bite...to eat. Come on.

Juan looks at his family, then to Herman.

JUAN

I don't know senior.

MARIA

Papa, I'm hungry.

HERMAN

(to Maria)

You're English is getting better.

MARIA

Gracias, Thank you. We. We will join you.

CAROLINA

Maria.

MARIA

(in Spanish)

We need to start to know this place.

She gets out of the pickup, followed by Dolores.

They walk past a US War Bonds sign in the window. Another that says "We reserve the right to refuse service to anyone."

INT. SAM'S CAFE - SAME TIME

TWO FARMERS in their Sunday best sit at a table with half eaten pieces of pie in front of them.

An OLDER COUPLE sit in a booth with a full meal of meat loaf, potatoes and gravy, and peas.

Another booth has a YOUNG FARM COUPLE with THREE YOUNG KIDS.

FARMER #1

What do you think of those German POWs that came in?

FARMER #2

I got half a dozen workin' the beat and bean fields now.

FARMER #1

What about the spics?

FARMER #2

Didn't want 'em. Got no place to put 'em and I wasn't sure what I'd get. Least the Germans are hard workers.

As Farmer #1 is about to speak, Herman and Eva come in. Juan, Carolina, Maria and Dolores right behind them.

SAM, the late 60s owner of the place, comes out of the kitchen at the same time.

SAM

Herman. Ain't seen you and Eva in here for awhile.

(MORE)

SAM (cont'd)
Sorry to hear about your boys. Damn war can't end soon enough.

HERMAN
Yeah, guess we're not the only ones.
You got a table for us?

Sam looks over Juan and his family.

SAM
Sure, you and Eva can have that booth right over there.

HERMAN
Need one for all of us.

SAM
(hesitates)
Well, Herman...you know we don't serve them here.

HERMAN
Who?

SAM
(nods toward the Maria and her family)
Them.

HERMAN
Since when?

SAM
We had some trouble a couple weeks ago. Guess you didn't hear.

HERMAN
No, I didn't.
(beat)
Well, they won't be any trouble.

JUAN
It's okay, Senor Kukas, we can wait outside.

HERMAN
No, we'll all just leave.

SAM
Now, Herman...

HERMAN

Sam, Eva and I been comin' in here since we were kids and you're dad owned this place. He served Japs, spics and a lot of others he probably shouldn't have.

(beat)

Do the right thing and let these people join us.

The rest of the patrons have stopped what they're doing and watch.

Sam looks at them, but no one's saying anything.

SAM

Fine, you and Eva, take that booth. They can have that table, the one next to it.

HERMAN

Good man.

He looks around and sees everyone staring.

HERMAN (cont'd)

You can all go 'bout your business now. It's Sunday anyway.

Herman and Eva grab the booth.

JUAN

Gracias, Mr. Kukas.

HERMAN

Let's order and eat. Might not be back here for awhile.

Juan and his family sit down. Maria sits next to her father.

MARIA

(in Spanish)

Papa? These people don't like us.

JUAN

(in Spanish)

They don't know us. Come. We get to eat together.

Maria looks around the room.

The Two Farmers stare, one shakes his head.

The Young Couple have gone back to eating.

The Older Couple look at one another, then around the room. The old man leaves money on the table and his wife joins him as they walk out the door.

Sam sees them.

SAM
Wait, you didn't get the rest of your order.

The Old Man waves without turning. Leaving Sam staring after them and others watching Sam.

EXT. KUKAS FARM - EARLY MORNING

Maria and her family are coming from their house heading to the fields.

The jeep with the German POWs pulls into the farm yard as Herman comes out of his house.

Maria sees Josef. She raises her hand slightly to wave, careful not to have it be too obvious.

Josef responds, more obvious.

CAROLINA
(in Spanish)
Maria. We have work to do.

MARIA
(in Spanish)
Si, Mama. I know.

Maria grabs her hoe and joins the rest of her family in the fields. She watches as Josef does the same. Finding himself once again beside her.

The sun is shining through the nearby trees. A MOURNING DOVE coos somewhere in the trees.

JOSEF
It's good to be here and not in the war.

Maria stops and smiles at him.

MARIA
Si. Beets are better than bullets.

CAROLINA
(in Spanish)
Maria! Work!

MARIA

Si, Mama.

Josef smiles at her. They both keep hoeing while they talk.

JOSEF

Your mother, she cares about you.

MARIA

Si, sometimes too much.

(beat)

Your mother, she misses you?

JOSEF

Yes, and my father.

MARIA

No brothers? Sisters?

Josef shakes his head.

MARIA (cont'd)

What will you do? When the war is over?

Josef stops hoeing and looks at Maria

JOSEF

I know what I won't be doing.

MARIA

And what is that?

JOSEF

Hoeing beets!

MARIA

(laughing)

Maybe we both will not be hoeing beets then.

CAROLINA (O.C.)

Maria, work!

MARIA

Si, Mama!

Joseph and Maria get back into hoeing, but not before exchanging a smile.

PULL BACK to see Maria and her family and the POWS working as the sun beats down.

INT. MIGRANT WORKER HOUSE - EVENING

Carolina and Aurora are finishing cleaning the kitchen.
Dolores, Juan and Gilbert are listening to a newscast.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)

Meanwhile, on the Western front, the allied command is pushing the Germans further out of France. The Germans continue to put up a fight even though their prized Luftwaffe has been decimated. Now back to some music.

BING CROSBY SINGS Back in the Saddle Again.

From the window, Carolina sees Maria sitting on the bench. She wipes her hands on a towel.

AURORA

(to Carolina in Spanish)

Are you okay?

CAROLINA

(to Aurora in Spanish)

Yes, I just need to get some air.

EXT. MIGRANT WORKERS HOUSE - YARD - SAME TIME

Maria is sitting on the bench in the yard, looking up at the stars as her mother joins her.

From their POV, they can see Herman and Eva in their small living room. They are both reading, the SOUND of the same radio station playing in Maria's home, can be heard coming from Herman and Eva's home.

CAROLINA

(in Spanish)

They are good people.

Maria nods and hugs herself a little tighter. Carolina sits next to her.

MARIA

(in Spanish)

I miss home, Mama. My friends, Grandma.

Carolina puts her arm around her daughter.

CAROLINA

(in Spanish)

Me too.

(beat)

But you will meet others. Make friends. The past is where we are from, not where we are going.

MARIA

(in Spanish)

You sound like Papa.

CAROLINA

(in Spanish)

I think that's what happens...when you live and love with someone for a long time.

MARIA

(in Spanish)

I want that, too, Mama. I want what you and Papa have.

CAROLINA

(in Spanish)

You will. You will meet a young man who will love you like I love your father and have babies you will love as much as we love you and Dolores.

(beat)

As long as he is a good Mexican boy.

MARIA

(in Spanish)

What if he isn't?

CAROLINA

(in Spanish)

That would not be good or God's will.

She kisses Maria on the cheek.

CAROLINA (cont'd)

(in Spanish)

Don't stay out here too long. We have another long day in the fields.

MARIA

Yes, Mama.

Carolina leaves Maria.

From her POV, we see Herman and Eva stand and hold each other as they dance to the music on the radio.

A breeze kicks up and Maria puts her arms around herself to keep warm.

EXT. SCOTTSBLUFF COUNTY FAIR GROUNDS - EARLY AUGUST - DAY

CLOSE ON SIGN - WELCOME TO SCOTTSBLUFF COUNTY FAIR

The grounds are set up for the fair with 1940s style rides, carnival attractions, livestock pens, and a rodeo.

People of all ages and backgrounds are on the grounds.

We HEAR CROWD NOISES and MUSIC from the different rides.

Herman's pickup pulls up and parks in the makeshift parking lot in the adjacent field.

He and Eva get out of the cab. Maria and her family climb out of the back.

EVA

We haven't been to the fair since the boys...

HERMAN

I know. We need the break. So do they.

MARIA

(in Spanish)

Mama, this is almost like the carnivals at home!

CAROLINA

(in Spanish)

Yes, it is!

MARIA

Thank you, Mr. Kukas.

HERMAN

It's fine. Meet back here in two hours.

He hands Juan some money.

JUAN

No, senor. I cannot.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out some money, too.

JUAN (cont'd)

We have money.

HERMAN

Ok, then. Two hours.
 (to Eva)
 Let's see what's new.

Eva takes Herman's arm as they walk off.

MARIA

(to Juan)
 Papa, what do we do first?

JUAN

Follow me!

With that, he leads his family through the grounds.

ON CARNIVAL PARKING LOT

Three large Army troop transport trucks pull up and park.

Corporal Johnson is on the passenger side. The DRIVER is another soldier.

DRIVER

This seems like a bad idea. These
 guys are prisoners.

CORPORAL JOHNSON

Yeah, probably. Guess we're trying to
 make sure when they go home they
 don't all become Nazis again.

DRIVER

Or communists.

CORPORAL JOHNSON

Let's get 'em off the truck. Anyone
 not here when they're supposed to be
 gets arrested and put in the brig.

The two men exit the truck and head to the back.

Josef, Friedrich, Gerhard and another nine prisoners are
 crammed in the back.

CORPORAL JOHNSON (cont'd)

All, right. Everyone out!

The prisoners jump down from the truck and form up at the
 back of each of the three trucks.

CORPORAL JOHNSON (cont'd)

Listen up. You all have about two
 hours to enjoy some freedom.

(MORE)

CORPORAL JOHNSON (cont'd)
The US government thinks you should see how we do things here. Stay in your groups. There will be two of us watching you at all times. Anyone tries to escape, you will be arrested and thrown in the brig.

(to Josef)
You. I need you to repeat what I just said to everyone who didn't get it.

Josef looks around hesitantly then steps forward.

JOSEF
(in German)
We have two hours. We will have guards. Anyone tries to escape, they will be arrested.

As the group moves out, Josef spots Maria at an arcade game.

JOSEF (cont'd)
Corporal Johnson, can we try the arcade games first?

CORPORAL JOHNSON
Yeah, go ahead.

Maria and Dolores are trying their hand at shooting ducks. Both keep missing.

Juan is trying to throw a baseball through different sized holes a couple of booths down.

Maria is too focused to notice Josef standing next to her.

JOSEF
Point it to the right.

Maria turns forgetting she is holding the play rifle, but points it directly at Josef.

He playfully holds up his hands.

JOSEF (cont'd)
I was only trying to help. I swear.

MARIA
Josef. You're here?

JOSEF
Yes, I was one of the lucky ones.

MARIA
You want to try?

She hands him the play rifle

JOSEF

Sure.

He shoulders it then proceeds to hit one bulls eye after another.

CARNIE

Nice shooting, kid. Pick your prize.

Stuffed animals of varying sizes stare back at them.

JOSEF

(to Maria)

Which one would you like?

Maria turns to Dolores.

MARIA

(to Dolores)

Dolores, you pick.

From behind them...

FARM KID

Come on. Hurry it up, spics. Some of the rest of us want a turn.

A group of older teen age boys in short sleeve shirts and overalls are gathered around Maria and Josef, waiting to take their turn.

FRIEDRICH

(to Josef in German)

Choose something then let's go.

Josef exchanges a look with the Farm Kid, then to the Carnie.

He points at a white stuffed polar bear.

JOSEF

(to Carnie)

That one.

The Carnie hands him the polar bear.

FARM KID

Wait. You're krauts. Aren't you krauts 'sposed to be locked up?

Josef starts to move toward the kid like he's going to go after him.

MARIA
Come we can go.

She takes Josef by the arm and leads him away. Dolores and Friedrich follow.

Once they are out of ear shot.

JOSEF
He shouldn't have said that to you.

MARIA
They are words.

JOSEF
You understood him?

MARIA
Enough.

She takes the polar bear.

MARIA (cont'd)
Thank you.

JOSEF
Which one of you gets it?

Maria hands it to Dolores.

MARIA
We'll share.

She takes Josef's hand. Josef is taken by surprise.

MARIA (cont'd)
Come. Let's see what else we can do.

Maria lets go of Josef's hand and walks away.

DOLORES
(to Maria in Spanish)
I am going to go find Papa and Mama.

FRIEDRICH
(in German to Josef)
Have fun.

JOSEF
(in German)
Where are you going?

FRIEDRICH
 (in German)
 Joining the others.
 (points at his wrist)
 Two hours. Don't get arrested!

MONTAGE SHOTS:

Josef and Maria at another carnie booth, playing a version of corn hole

...a ring toss. Josef wins another toy to give to Maria.

...riding a small roller coaster

...a Ferris wheel.

The Ferris wheel stops with Maria and Josef at the top.

FROM THEIR POV the sun is starting to set against the open plains and Scotts Bluff.

JOSEF
 It's beautiful.

MARIA
 Yes. It is.
 (beat)
 Papa says the bluff is like a guardian.

Josef looks hard at it.

JOSEF
 Yes, I can see it.

Josef take Maria's hand and she lets him hold it.

JOSEF (cont'd)
 Do you miss home?

MARIA
 Yes. But not right now.

They look at each other, hesitate and kiss - not passionately, just sweet.

FROM BELOW....

FRIEDRICH
 (in German)
 Josef, it's time. We have to get back or we'll be arrested.

Juan, Carolina and Dolores are beside Friedrich.

JUAN
 (in Spanish)
 Maria, what are you doing up there?
 Time to go.

She quickly lets go of Josef's hand, and leans over the side of the Ferris Wheel chair to see her parents.

MARIA
 (in Spanish)
 Si, Papa, but we're not moving.

And on that...the Ferris wheel starts to move.

JOSEF
 Maria?

MARIA
 Si.

JOSEF
 I like you. I like seeing you
 everyday in the fields.

MARIA
 I like you, too, Josef.

Josef steals a look at her. Maria stares ahead then turns, smiles, and kisses him on the cheek.

When they reach the platform, they are swarmed by Friedrich and Maria's family.

FRIEDRICH
 (in German)
 We have to hurry or they'll come
 looking for us.

JUAN
 (in Spanish)
 We can't keep el patron waiting.
 Come.

He notices the stuffed toy she's carrying.

JUAN (cont'd)
 (to Maria in Spanish)
 You won this, too.

MARIA
 (in Spanish)
 No, Papa. Josef did, for me.

JUAN

Okay.

He leads Maria away without giving Josef a second look.

Josef is glued where he stands watching Maria leave.

FRIEDRICH

(to Josef in German)

Are you crazy? Let's get going.

He takes Josef's arm and leads him away.

JOSEF

Ok, Ok.

INT. ARMY TRANSPORT TRUCK - LATER

Josef, Friedrich, Gerhard and the other prisoners ride in quiet.

GERHARD

(in German)

I saw you little man. Tonight with the 'spic.' I heard that's what they call them here, "spics!"

Josef smiles at him.

JOSEF

(in German)

They also call them by their name.

GERHARD

(in German)

Maybe. But the white girls here are almost like the girls at home. White, blonde and big breasts.

This gets a laugh from the other prisoners.

GERHARD (cont'd)

(in German)

It's almost worth being on my best behavior, so I can go into town more often.

JOSEF

Yeah, maybe.

Josef returns to his thoughts. Gerhard stares at him with a mean sneer.

INT. MIGRANT WORKERS HOUSE - NIGHT - LATER

Maria and Dolores lie in the bed in the corner of the main room.

DOLORES
(in Spanish)
Maria, are you asleep?

MARIA
(in Spanish)
No, I'm awake. Why?

DOLORES
(in Spanish)
You let the German boy hold your hand. Why?

MARIA
(hesitates, then in Spanish)
I think I like him.

DOLORES
(in Spanish)
He's not Mexican.

MARIA
(in Spanish)
No, he's not.

DOLORES
(in Spanish)
Papa and Mama said we should marry someone from home.

MARIA
(in Spanish)
I'm not marrying anyone right now!

DOLORES
(in Spanish)
You might and if you do he should be Mexican.

MARIA
(in Spanish)
Go to sleep Dolores. You are getting ahead of yourself.

DOLORES
 (in Spanish)
 Maybe, but I will meet a good Mexican
 boy here and make Papa and Mama
 happy.

MARIA
 (in Spanish)
 Hmm, I hope you make yourself happy,
 too.

DOLORES
 (in Spanish)
 If they are happy, I will be happy.

MARIA
 (in Spanish)
 Go to sleep, little sister.

OFF Maria staring at the ceiling, shaking her head then
 rolling over to go to sleep.

INT. MIGRANT WORKERS HOUSE - SAME TIME

Juan and Carolina lie in their bed together. Carolina is
 wide awake, listening to everything that was just said.

CAROLINA
 (in Spanish)
 What will we do?

JUAN
 (in Spanish)
 About what?

CAROLINA
 (in Spanish)
 You know about what? The German boy.

Juan puts his arm around Carolina and draws her close.

JUAN
 (in Spanish)
 For now, we watch.

CAROLINA
 (in Spanish)
 I think we should stop it before it
 goes any further.

JUAN
 (in Spanish)
 It will go as far as God thinks it
 should.

CAROLINA
 (in Spanish)
 I hope that is not too far.

JUAN
 (in Spanish)
 Close your eyes, my love, and get
 some sleep.

OFF JUAN and CAROLINA as Juan drifts off to sleep and
 Carolina lies next to him, eyes open.

EXT. CAMP SCOTTSBLUFF - MAIN YARD - MORNING

The POWS are lined up standing in formation. Dempster steps
 up on the stage at the front. Schuller joins him.

DEMPSTER
 (to Schuller)
 Call your men to order.

SCHULLER
 (in German)
 Attention!

The POWs come to attention in perfect unison.

DEMPSTER
 Last night, three of your own were
 captured. They had attempted to
 escape while in town during the fair.
 Let me remind you that you are in the
 middle of the United States of
 America. There is no German occupied
 territory or German friendly state
 you can go to for thousands of miles!

Dempster nods to Schuller who repeats this in German.

DEMPSTER (cont'd)
 I understand it is your duty to try
 to escape. But this is one duty you
 are wasting your time trying to
 follow.

Schuller repeats this again in German.

DEMPSTER (cont'd)

The camp is on lock down for the next two weeks. The only one's who get to come and go are the ones working with the local farmers. Dismissed.

Dempster leaves as Schuller finishes translating Dempster's remarks.

SCHULLER

(in German)

Fall out! If you are working outside the camp today, get into your work groups.

Josef and Friedrich head to where Corporal Johnson is waiting for them. Before they get there Gerhard falls in beside them.

GERHARD

(in German)

You know the three who tried to escape didn't try hard enough.

JOSEF

(in German)

Or maybe it's stupid to try. The war will be over and we'll be going home.

Gerhard steps in front of him.

GERHARD

(in German)

Your duty is to the fatherland, not this country or that brown piece of meat you make eyes at while the rest of us work in the fields.

Josef starts to charge at Gerhard. Gerhard opens his arms like 'come on, let's go at it.'

CORPORAL JOHNSON (O.C.)

Problem here?

Josef backs down. Gerhard goes to pat Josef on the head. Josef swats his hand away.

JOSEF

No, we're fine.

CORPORAL JOHNSON

Good. Then get in the fucking jeep and let's get to work.

Josef, Friedrich, Gerhard and the other prisoners head to the jeep.

GERHARD

(in German under his
breath to Josef)

One day, I will teach you what it
means to be a good German, little
man.

EXT. KUKAS FARM HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

Juan is at the door. Gives it a quick knock. He waits patiently but briefly before Herman comes to the door.

HERMAN

Juan, something wrong.

JUAN

No, senor. I...I have a request. It's
okay, if you cannot.

HERMAN

Go ahead.

JUAN

I know that the harvest is coming up
in a few weeks.

Herman doesn't respond.

JUAN (cont'd)

Well, I want my girls to start
school. I think it starts soon.

HERMAN

Yeah, day after Labor Day.

JUAN

It's okay. Yes?

HERMAN

Yeah. The other migrants send their
kids.

JUAN

Oh, gracias, Senor. Thank you!

As he leaves, Eva joins Herman at the door.

EVA

You know we may not be able to keep
them around after the harvest.

HERMAN

Yeah, I know. But they're good workers. I'll see about finding something for them to do 'til spring.

INT. MIGRANT WORKERS HOUSE - MORNING - DAY AFTER LABOR DAY

Carolina is brushing Dolores's hair in front of an old mirror hanging in the bathroom. Maria stands next to them, brushing hers.

Juan pokes his head in.

JUAN

(in broken English
and Spanish)

Look at my girls! So beautiful!

MARIA

Papa, you were supposed to wait outside!

JUAN

I could not wait to see you off on your first day of school!

CAROLINA

(in Spanish)

Go, you can see them when we're finished.

JUAN

All right, all right. And listen to how much English you know now!

MARIA

Oh, Papa.

CAROLINA

(in Spanish)

I am so proud of you both. This will be a good day.

There's a knock on the door.

CAROLINA (cont'd)

(in Spanish)

Patience, Papa.

EVA (O.S.)

Sorry to interrupt.

Carolina turns abruptly and sees Eva standing in the doorway.

EVA
I'm sorry.

CAROLINA
No. No. It's okay.

Eva hands Carolina a wrapped package.

EVA
I brought something...for the girls.

Carolina takes it, hands it to Maria. Maria opens it and pulls out two new dresses and two pairs of shoes.

EVA (cont'd)
Couldn't have 'em go to school
without new clothes.

MARIA
Gracias, Mrs. Kukas!

CAROLINA
Gracias. Gracias.

Dolores is holding the dress up to her.

EVA
Well, I better let you finish getting
ready. Bus will be here soon.

She leaves and the girls laugh and twirl holding their dresses.

EXT. MIGRANT WORKERS HOUSE - MORNING - FEW MINUTES LATER

Juan stands outside waiting, pacing.

MARIA
Papa.

Juan turns and sees both daughters in their new dresses and shoes, beautiful brushed hair.

JUAN
Angels. I am seeing angels.
(beat)
And your English. You are learning.

MARIA
Practice, Papa...and the radio.

A school bus pulls into the yard and honks.

Juan and Carolina hug their daughters.

JUAN

Remember...

MARIA

I know, Papa. Be kind, be smart, and don't let others make you feel bad about yourself.

The bus honks again.

Carolina hands them each a small brown bag.

CAROLINA

Here. For lunch.

MARIA AND DOLORES

Thank you, Mama.

They grab each others hands and run to the bus.

CAROLINA

(to Juan in Spanish)

Will they be ok?

JUAN

They are in God's hands today.

ON SCHOOL BUS

Maria and Dolores grab a seat just as the bus starts to pull out of the Kukas farm yard.

We SEE the other kids looking at them. It's a mix of white kids and migrant worker kids. But the white kids sit with each other and the migrant worker kids sit with other migrant worker kids.

Maria looks out the window of the bus and sees the Army jeep with Josef and the other POWs pull up. She waves at Josef who does the same. Dolores notices but doesn't say anything.

INT. SCOTTSBLUFF HIGH SCHOOL - LATER

Maria and Dolores walk into the school. It's all brick, clean...and mostly white students.

Maria pulls out a piece of paper.

MARIA
 (to Dolores)
 Here. Your first class is in the room
 over there.

DOLORES
 (in Spanish)
 There's more than one class? I can't
 do this.

MARIA
 You have to.

DOLORES
 Okay, but find me..at lunch.

MARIA
 Yes. You'll be fine. Let's make Papa
 and Mama proud.

Maria watches Dolores go to her classroom. As she heads up
 the stairs, the Farm Kid from the county fair bumps her.
 He's with a group of other farm and city kids - mix of girls
 and boys.

FARM KID
 (beat)
 Look, it's the spic from the county
 fair. Hey everyone, her boyfriend's
 one of the Nazi krauts out at the POW
 camp.

This brings a laugh from most of the crowd.

FARM KID (cont'd)
 Your Nazi boyfriend won't be here to
 help if you get into trouble!

Maria ignores it and keeps going.

MARIA
 (to herself)
 Be smart. Be kind. And don't let them
 make me feel bad about myself.

EXT. KUKAS FARM - MID-SEPTEMBER - LATE AFTERNOON

The Mexicans and POWs are in from the field. Hot, sweaty,
 tired.

Corporal Johnson stands within earshot.

Herman is in front of his tractor, climbs down stiffly, then joins the resting group.

HERMAN

Beet harvest starts tomorrow.

He points to the tractor and a contraption at the back.

HERMAN (cont'd)

The tractor will be pulling this. It will loosen the dirt around the beets. You all will pick the beets out of the ground.

He picks up a loose beet from the ground and holds it in front of him in his left hand. In his right is a small machete. In one easy movement, he whacks the green off the top of the beet.

HERMAN (cont'd)

You take the top off like that. The beets go in the wagon, the tops go on the ground. Try not to cut off a finger...or worse. Understand?

There are some nods among the group.

JOSEF

Sir, who will drive the tractor, and the wagon?

HERMAN

I'll drive the tractor. My wife will drive the pickup. The rest of you will be picking up beets.

(beat)

We start in the morning.

As the POWs head to the jeep and the Mexicans head to their house, Maria stops her father.

MARIA

Papa, we will have to miss school won't we?

JUAN

Yes, but only for a week, maybe two.

MARIA

Papa, we just started.

JUAN

I know, mi hija.

Maria takes a deep breath.

MARIA

Ok, Dolores and I will work extra hard to catch up when we go back.

Juan takes his daughter's face in his hands.

JUAN

I know you will. Now let's get cleaned up. Your mother said she is making carne asada stew.

EXT. KUKAS FARM - MORNING - NEXT DAY

It's a beautiful clear day. The sun is rising against the sides of Scotts Bluff, turning the bare rock pink, then yellow, then white.

Herman is on the tractor steering it up a row of beets.

Eva is in the pickup pulling a wooden sided cart behind it.

The Mexicans and POWs are working side by side on either side of the cart. Picking up beets, slicing off the tops, tossing the beets into the cart. Just like Herman showed them.

Josef watches Maria working quickly and smoothly. She catches him looking at her and gives him a smile.

CAROLINA

Careful, Maria. Watch what you are doing?

MARIA

Si, Mama.

The tractor, the truck and cart and the workers are all in a rhythm.

When the cart is full, the work stops.

The Mexicans and Germans head to the shade of the cottonwood trees to get water.

Herman trades places with Eva in the pickup.

HERMAN

I'll take this load to the factory.

EVA

We need a bigger cart. Or another truck.

HERMAN

I'll see if Steve knows anyone who is done or hasn't started yet.

EVA

Herman...it's a good harvest this year.

HERMAN

Yeah, yeah, it is.

He drives away in the pickup as Eva watches him.

LATER

The Mexicans and Germans are finishing lunch.

Herman pulls into the field with the pickup and empty cart, followed by a larger truck with a bigger enclosed bed.

The truck stops and half a dozen other Mexican workers and POWs climb out of the trucks.

Herman stops as Eva walks up.

HERMAN

Got some help.

EVA

I see that.

(waving at the
drivers in the other
trucks)

Michael! Frank!

The drivers honk and wave.

EVA (cont'd)

Too bad we don't have an extra tractor.

Just as she finishes saying that, another tractor pulls in and heads out into the field stopping at the rows next to where Herman's tractor sits.

Herman gives her a smile.

HERMAN

Let's get to work.

He gets back on the tractor.

Eva gets in the pick up and drives it back out to the field.

As the Mexicans and POWs, head back to the field, Josef stops Maria.

JOSEF

Maria, are you okay going back out?

MARIA

Of course. Bet I can top more beets than you.

JOSEF

You're on!

They both walk quickly out to the field and get to work topping beets.

LATER

The POWs are grabbing a last drink of water and heading to the Jeep.

Maria's family is cleaning and putting away the machetes.

Josef is helping Maria clean up.

JOSEF (cont'd)

So, what will happen now?

MARIA

What do you mean?

JOSEF

The harvest. What will you, your family do?

MARIA

Stay. Work here, somewhere.

JOSEF

The other prisoners. They say the other workers have to go back to Mexico at the end of the harvest.

MARIA

That's not true!

JOSEF

I hope it's not.

Juan comes up to finish cleaning up.

MARIA

(near tears)

Papa, what will happen now? Josef said we may have to go back, to Mexico. You said this would be our home. We would stay here!

Corporal Johnson calls out from the where the rest of the prisoners are waiting.

CORPORAL JOHNSON

Hertl. Let's go.

MARIA

Papa?

JUAN

We will talk at home.

Maria turns to Josef.

JOSEF

I hope you get to stay, Maria.

Juan leads Maria away.

JUAN

(to Josef)

It was not your place to say this.

MARIA

Papa?

CORPORAL JOHNSON

Hertl!

Josef looks after Maria and Juan leaving, then trots back to the Jeep.

INT. KUKAS FARM - LATER

Herman is washing up at the bathroom sink. Eva is reflected in the mirror.

EVA

We had a good harvest.

HERMAN

Yeah, one of the best.

EVA

Juan and his family...?

HERMAN

I'm doing what I can to keep 'em here.

EVA

I like them, Herman. I hope they can stay. Besides, we need the help.

HERMAN

Yeah, yeah we do.

She walks away as Herman looks at himself in the mirror.

EXT. KUKAS FARM - MORNING - TWO WEEKS LATER

Herman is loading up the pick up with suitcases, farm tools, and some crates of eggs.

Juan walks up with one more bag.

JUAN

Senor Kukas, you have been good to me, my family.

(beat)

You could have treated us like the others do. Like cattle. Tools.

HERMAN

Not our way.

JUAN

Si, maybe all men should be like us, senor.

HERMAN

Maybe. Might be a pretty boring world.

JUAN

Perhaps, but maybe everyone gets along and there are no wars, no dying.

HERMAN

Wouldn't that be something. Don't think it's possible.

He stops and looks out over the open land.

HERMAN (cont'd)

You'd think all that open plains would mean more open minds. Seems just the opposite, don't it?

JUAN

Senor, everything in God's name is possible.

Herman faces Juan.

HERMAN

I guess you'd have to believe in God for that to be true.

(beat)

You're a good man, Juan. Better than me.

JUAN

No, senor. I am just a man with a family.

Herman looks over to where Carolina, Dolores and Maria stand near the house.

Maria tries to hold back her tears. Dolores can not.

Gilbert and Aurora are bringing their few belongings out of the house with them.

HERMAN

Your family doesn't want to go back to Mexico?

JUAN

The harvest is over. We don't want to, but I understand we must.

HERMAN

Your girls started school, they like it?

JUAN

Si, but they can work if they must.

Gilbert and Aurora bring up their bags and put them in the back of the pickup.

HERMAN

Gilbert, you ok going back to Mexico?

GILBERT

Si, senor. My wife, we have family.

HERMAN

Ok, go ahead and get in. We'll be off shortly.

(MORE)

HERMAN (cont'd)

(to Juan)

I've been trying to get you work somewhere else, but damn Germans got most of it. I could still use the help. So could Eva.

JUAN

(hopeful)

Senor, we would do anything, anything to stay.

HERMAN

I can't pay much, government only pays through the harvest.

JUAN

It's okay, if we stay, we work, no matter what.

HERMAN

Maybe your girls could work at the camp after school. Heard they needed some kitchen help.

JUAN

Si, si, senor. Anything. We will do it.

Herman looks at Gilbert and Aurora waiting in the back of the pickup. Then at Maria, Dolores and Carolina. Then back to Juan.

HERMAN

Ok, I'll talk to the county agent again. Get your green card extended.

JUAN

We're staying?

HERMAN

Yeah, for now. Grab your bags out of the back.

Juan goes to hug Herman but stops and extends his hand instead.

JUAN

Gracias, senor. Gracias.

He wipes his eyes.

JUAN (cont'd)

I will tell my family.

He starts to walk away, then remembers Gilbert and Aurora.

JUAN (cont'd)
 (to Gilbert and
 Aurora in Spanish)
 I'm sorry you cannot stay, too.

GILBERT
 (in Spanish)
 It's ok. We want to go home. We'll be
 back in the spring.

JUAN
 (in Spanish)
 Go with God, my friends.

He shakes Gilbert's hand and grabs his family's bags out of the back of the pickup.

Herman watches as Juan runs to his family.

CAROLINA
 Juan, we are not leaving?

JUAN
 No, mi amor. We are staying. El
 Patron wants us to stay and help.

MARIA
 Papa! We're not going back to Mexico?

DOLORES
 What about Grandma?

JUAN
 We save money and we bring her here.

He takes his family in his arms.

JUAN (cont'd)
 Here is our home.

MARIA
 Thank you, Papa. Thank you.

JUAN
 It is God's will, Maria. We are
 blessed.

INT. SUGAR BEET FACTORY OFFICE - DAY - TWO DAYS LATER

Herman and Juan sit in the waiting area. The SECRETARY types away, not paying them any attention.

The door to Steve Sanders office opens.

STEVE

Herman, thanks for waiting. Helluva harvest this year. Got enough beets to keep half the state in sugar. Come on in.

Juan starts to join them.

STEVE (cont'd)

No, you stay out here.

HERMAN

He's with me.

STEVE

Well, all right then.

INSIDE STEVE'S OFFICE

It's not fancy. But there is a big wooden desk and chair behind it. Some assorted pictures of Steve with other business men. A photo of him, his wife, teen age daughter and son.

Steve goes to his chair. Herman and Juan take a seat.

STEVE (cont'd)

So, what can I help you with?

HERMAN

Juan and his family are staying through the winter. I'd like you to find him work here at the factory.

STEVE

Does he speak English?

HERMAN

Ask him yourself?

Juan doesn't wait to be asked.

JUAN

Yes, senor, I speak English. Not well, but I understand.

STEVE

You work hard? Know how to take direction?

JUAN

Direction, senor?

STEVE

Orders, you know how to follow orders? The krauts they send us can definitely do that. It's like it's in their blood or somethin'.

Juan looks at Herman for help here.

HERMAN

Juan's the best worker I've had or seen in some time. He works hard, doesn't complain and pretty much does whatever asked.

STEVE

Family? You have family here?

JUAN

Si, yes, my wife and two daughters.

STEVE

I'm not hiring any of them am I?

JUAN

No sir. My wife, she works with Mrs. Kukas. My daughters, they'll work at the camp, after school.

STEVE

The camp?

JUAN

Si, the prisoner camp. She'll be helping in the kitchen.

STEVE

Well, that's convenient. I'm getting a couple of the prisoners working here for awhile. Couple of the younger ones. Josef and Friedrich or something like that.

HERMAN

We know them. They worked for me. Hard workers.

STEVE

(to Herman)

Hmmm. I 'spose you'll want this one back come Spring?

HERMAN

You'll get other migrants by then.
And doesn't look like there will be a
shortage of prisoners either, way the
war is going.

Steve thinks about this for what feels like an eternity.

STEVE

(to Herman)

I assume you'll be his chauffeur.

HERMAN

I'll get him here and back.

STEVE

All right. Have him here Monday
morning by 7.

Herman and Juan stand up to leave. Juan reaches out to shake
Steve's hand, but Steve puts up an open hand instead.

STEVE (cont'd)

That'll do.

(to Herman)

If this doesn't work out...

HERMAN

Yeah, it will.

OUTSIDE THE SUGAR BEET FACTORY

As Herman and Juan walk to the pickup.

JUAN

Thank you, senor. I will not let you
down.

HERMAN

I know you won't. Let's see if he
does. Come on, we've got some errands
to run.

EXT. SCOTTSBLUFF HIGH SCHOOL - EARLY OCTOBER - AFTERNOON

Maria stands with another group of Mexican migrant worker
kids. Dolores is right behind her. Waiting for the bus.

She has a small flier in her hand about the dance.

DOLORES
 Maria, did you see this? We should
 go.

Maria takes the flier and looks at it.

CLOSE ON THE FLIER - it says Scottsbluff Harvest Dance.

MARIA
 We'll ask Papa and Mama tonight.

DOLORES
 Maybe you'll dance with one of the
 boys from school.

Maria gives her a smile then moves in with the other kids as the bus pulls up.

INT. MEETING HALL - LUNCH ROOM - EVENING

It's decorated in a harvest theme - straw bales, scare crow, wagon wheels.

Popular 1940s MUSIC plays over the loud speaker system.

A few teen and older couples dance together.

White kids and older adults talk among themselves.

Migrant worker kids and their parents and other adults by themselves.

Maria and Dolores enter with Juan and Carolina behind them.

DOLORES
 I can't believe we were able to come.
 Thank you Papa.

Dolores sees some Mexican kids standing by themselves. She waves at them.

JUAN
 Go, be with your friends.

DOLORES
 Maria...join us!

MARIA
 I'm going to get something to drink.

Dolores runs off to her friends. Maria leaves her parents and goes to the punch bowl.

JOSEF (O.C.)

Here alone?

Maria turns to see him standing behind her.

Friedrich is coming through the door and waves. Other POWs are with him. Guards escort them in.

MARIA

Josef, they let you come to the dance?

JOSEF

Yeah, good behavior or something.

He grabs a cup and fills it for her.

JOSEF (cont'd)

I'm glad you didn't have to go... after the harvest.

He hands her the cup and their fingers touch. They let it linger for a moment.

MARIA

Mr. Kukas said we could stay.

(beat)

I got another job, after school.

JOSEF

Another job? Not in the fields in winter.

MARIA

No, at the camp. In the kitchen.

JOSEF

The camp? You'll be making us breakfast?

MARIA

(laughs)

More like cleaning the dishes.

JOSEF

So we both will have new jobs. I will be helping at the factory. They need people who know how to fix things. I guess I will be fixing things.

MARIA

Then you will see my father there.

JOSEF

I will like that. I think you are like your father.

MARIA

I hope that is a good thing.

JOSEF

It is a wonderful thing.

(beat)

You know, the war -- it is not going in Germany's favor. The rumor is that it could be done this spring. More prisoners are coming.

MARIA

And you will go back then?

JOSEF

Not then, but sometime. I think I would like to come back here one day, though.

Maria smiles and holds his look.

Bing Crosby Swing on a Star starts playing, breaking the serious mood.

MARIA

I love this song. Do you dance?

JOSEF

Your parents. They are okay with us dancing?

Maria looks over at them. Juan takes Carolina's hand and smiles and gives Maria a nod.

MARIA

Si, I think it is okay.

She takes him out on the dance floor and they dance. Holding each other a respectable distance.

ON JUAN AND CAROLINA

JUAN

Shall we dance, mi amor?

CAROLINA

Juan, I don't...

JUAN

Come. We dance...and we keep an eye
on our daughter.

He offers his hand to Carolina and they both go on the dance floor.

Friedrich and two other POWs are dancing with a couple of older local girls.

Migrant worker kids and younger adults stand off to the side. Only a couple are on the floor dancing.

LATER

The music has stopped. Josef and Maria walk off the floor. The last of three couples still dancing.

All of the migrant worker kids are gone. Only Maria's family, the POWs and the locals remain.

ARMY GUARD

All right, let's move it out. It's late.

Josef takes Maria's hands.

JOSEF

When do you start...at the camp?

MARIA

Tomorrow.

JOSEF

Then I hope I see you tomorrow.

MARIA

Me, too.

Dolores interrupts them.

DOLORES

Maria, come on. We have to go. Mama and Papa are waiting.

MARIA

Okay, okay. I'm coming.

She holds on to Josef's hands, then lets go.

Friedrich comes up and joins Josef as Maria leaves.

FRIEDRICH

Come on lover boy, we have to go.

EXT. KUKAS FARM - THANKSGIVING

The trees are bare and a light dusting of snow lies across the yard and the barren open fields.

A few remaining pumpkins sit unpicked in the garden.

In the distance, more snow covers the top of Scotts Bluff, glistening in the fall sun.

INT. KUKAS FARM - SAME TIME

A large table sits in the kitchen, seating for eight. A folding table in the small living room nearby is being used for the plates of food.

Eva is putting out fresh beans, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, home made biscuits and jelly.

EVA

(to Herman)

Grab the good plates. The ones in the back bedroom vanity.

As Herman leaves, there's a KNOCK on the door.

Eva opens the door to Juan, Carolina, Maria and Dolores.

EVA (cont'd)

Come in. Come in. Get out of the cold.

She notices that Carolina has brought some food.

EVA (cont'd)

Carolina, you didn't have to bring anything.

CAROLINA

It's nothing.

JUAN

She lies. They are her homemade tamales. They are everything.

EVA

Go ahead and put them on the table, in the living room.

Herman comes out with the dishes.

JUAN

Mr. Kukas, can I help?

HERMAN

No, I got this. Thanks.

Another KNOCK.

HERMAN (cont'd)

(to Eva)

You invited someone else?

Eva looks at him, like maybe she did. She goes to the door.

Josef and Friedrich stand outside with Corporal Johnson.

EVA

Josef, Friedrich. Come in. Corporal Johnson, will you be joining us.

CORPORAL JOHNSON

No ma'am. I don't think these two are going anywhere. I'll be back around 5 to pick them up.

EVA

Will you at least take some food with you?

CORPORAL JOHNSON

No, ma'am. We have a big Thanksgiving dinner waiting for us back at the camp. Thank you anyway.

EVA

All right, but any leftovers are going with you when you come back.

CORPORAL JOHNSON

Yes, ma'am.

Johnson leaves and Josef and Friedrich stand awkwardly inside as Eva closes the door behind them.

EVA

Hang your coats up there. And come in.

Josef catches Maria's eye and gives her a big smile and a shoulder shrug.

EVA (cont'd)

I think we're about ready to eat. Everyone grab a plate and take as much as you'd like. We have plenty.

JUAN

Thank you, Mrs. Kukas.

EVA

Well, we have a lot to be thankful for, including all of you.

Herman pulls Eva aside, a wine glass in hand.

HERMAN

(under his breath)

You invited the POWs?

EVA

(whispering)

Just the good ones. Now let's pour some wine and let's eat.

Herman salutes his wife with his empty glass and starts pouring.

HERMAN

All right, everyone grab a glass. Maria, Dolores you, too.

Everyone gets a glass and stays together in the kitchen.

HERMAN (cont'd)

This started out a hard year.

(he looks at Eva)

But we try not to look back. Farming teaches you that. But we - Eva and me - well, we couldn't have done this without all of you. This meal is about the best way we know to show our thanks. Here's to you and a new season.

ALL

Cheers!

Juan steps forward.

JUAN

May I also give a toast.

Herman motions for him to continue.

JUAN (cont'd)

We came here with very little. Only what we could carry, but we have so much now. We are all blessed. Thank you and Mrs. Kukas...and our father in heaven. Salud.

ALL

Salud.

HERMAN

All right, let's eat!

When no one is looking, Josef takes Maria's hand and gives it a squeeze.

PULL BACK from the kitchen out the window and SEE everyone grabbing food and sitting down.

EXT. CAMP SCOTTSBLUFF - MID-DECEMBER - SUN DOWN

Snow is blowing sideways. A typical plains blizzard with nothing stopping the wind from blowing snow into four and five foot high drifts around the buildings.

A single strand of Christmas lights outlines the HQ building. They are loose enough to bang against the eave.

A BUGLER can be heard playing taps cutting through the sound of the wind.

Two ARMY SOLDIERS struggle to bring down the US flag and keep it from touching the ground. They get it folded and head to the HQ building.

INT. CAMP SCOTTSBLUFF -- HQ - SAME TIME

The two soldiers enter as Dempster is there to greet them.

DEMPSTER

How bad is it?

ARMY SOLDIER #1

Can't see but a few foot in front of your face, sir.

Dempster's Aide is also in the room.

DEMPSTER

(to Dempster's Aide)

Any prisoners offsite?

DEMPSTER'S AIDE

Yessir. A couple working on a farm about ten miles from here. One more at the beet factory. Rest are all accounted for here.

DEMPSTER

Anyone here working who's not a prisoner?

DEMPSTER'S AIDE

Yes, some kitchen help. Two Mexican girls.

DEMPSTER

Ok, everyone stays put. Call the factory. Tell them to keep the prisoner there. I don't think they're going anywhere. Same with the farm... if you can get them on the line.

(beat)

And the two girls here. Put them up in the bunkroom. I don't want them anywhere near the prisoner population.

DEMPSTER'S AIDE

Yes sir.

(to Army soldiers)

You two, bring the two girls here. I'll start making some calls.

INT. SUGAR BEET FACTORY - LATER

Juan and Josef are finishing cleaning equipment when Steve joins them.

STEVE

(to Josef)

Well, looks like you're staying here tonight. Camp just called. Storms too bad for them to send anyone to get you 'til it passes.

JOSEF

What about Mr. Ramirez?

STEVE

Not sure, but I doubt anyone's going to get through to get him either.

(beat)

There's a small room in the back with some cots. Should be blankets and pillows, too. You all can figure out who sleeps where.

After he leaves...

JOSEF

Well, let's go see where we're
spending the night.

INSIDE COT ROOM as Juan turns on the light.

Three cots are shoved up against the walls. A pile of
blankets and a couple of pillows are haphazardly stacked on
one. The overhead light flickers off and on.

JOSEF (cont'd)

I guess it could be worse.

JUAN

It will be a long night Let's see if
there's anything to eat.

INT. CAMP SCOTTSBLUFF - KITCHEN - LATER

Maria and Dolores are cleaning up the kitchen when the two
Army guards come in.

ARMY GUARD #1

You two speak English, right?

MARIA

Yes, why?

ARMY GUARD #1

Looks like you're both staying the
night.

MARIA

I don't understand.

ARMY GUARD #1

The storm is too bad to drive. The
Colonel is having you stay in HQ
until we see what it's like in the
morning.

MARIA

Ok, but how will our parents know?

ARMY GUARD #1

We're trying to call everyone now.
Finish up here, grab your things and
come with us.

Maria looks out at the POWs staring their direction.
Including Gerhard.

The Army Guard notices.

ARMY GUARD #1 (cont'd)
 Don't worry, you'll be safe. You'll
 have a room to yourselves and we'll
 have a guard outside through the
 night.

DOLORES
 Maria, we stay here? Papa and Mama?
 How will they know?

MARIA
 Papa. He's at the factory with Josef.
 They are probably stuck there, too.
 (beat)
 Come on, tonight is in God's hands.

She and Dolores grab their coats and follow the soldiers.

OFF GERHARD watching them.

INT. CAMP SCOTTSBLUFF - HQ - LATER

Maria and Dolores follow the Army Guard into the building as
 snow blows in behind them.

The wind sucks the door shut HARD startling the two girls.

ARMY GUARD #1
 All right, there's a room with a
 bunk, blankets and pillows. First
 door to the right. Bathroom is across
 the hall. Running water if you want
 to clean up. No shower or bath
 though. I'll be right here. Another
 guard will be here in about two
 hours.

MARIA
 Thank you.

INSIDE HQ BUNK ROOM as Maria and Dolores turn on the single
 bulb overhead light.

It's sparse but clean. A bunk bed is built against a side
 wall. Each bed is perfectly made with a pillow and an extra
 blanket. A small wooden stove with wood stacked next to it
 sits in a corner.

MARIA (cont'd)
 Let's see if we can get this going
 first.

She puts in some small kindling and lights it with matches sitting on the wood. It takes off fast and she's able to get a log on.

MARIA (cont'd)

There. Now we won't be so cold.

DOLORES

Are we going to be ok?

MARIA

Of course, we are safe here.

DOLORES

What about Papa...and Mama?

MARIA

I'm sure they are fine. Come, I brought some food from the kitchen. We can eat then get to bed.

LATER

Both are in bed - Maria in the top bunk, Dolores at the bottom. The WIND CAN BE HEARD HOWLING outside. The room is nearly pitch black with a hint of light coming through the windows from the lights in the prison yard.

DOLORES

Maria, you see Josef here everyday, don't you?

MARIA

Yes, almost. Some days he comes back after I come home.

DOLORES

Has he kissed you?

MARIA

Dolores?

DOLORES

Well. Has he?

MARIA

Yes, but that is all?

DOLORES

I hope a boy kisses me someday.

Maria leans over the side of the bunk bed.

MARIA

He will. I'm sure of it. Now it's late, try to get some sleep.

DOLORES

If Josef asks you to marry him, will you go to Germany with him?

MARIA

Dios mio. You are getting way ahead of yourself! I am not going anywhere and neither is he.

.

DOLORES

Promise.

MARIA

Promise.

DOLORES

Do you love him?

A long pause.

DOLORES (cont'd)

Do you?

MARIA

I...I don't know.

DOLORES

But you like him. Very much?

MARIA

Yes, very much.

DOLORES

Mama and Papa, do they like him?

MARIA

I don't know.

DOLORES

There are Mexican boys at school and church. I see them looking at you.

MARIA

Yes, I know.

DOLORES

But you like Josef.

MARIA
You need to get to sleep.

DOLORES
(beat)
I love you, Maria. I hope you will be
happy with whatever happens with
Josef.

MARIA
I love you, too.

Dolores rolls on her side and shuts her eyes.

Maria lies awake, eyes open.

MARIA (cont'd)
(whisper)
Blessed father, please keep everyone
safe tonight.

INT. SUGAR BEET FACTORY - COT ROOM - SAME TIME

Juan and Josef huddle around a small crate. An empty tin of sardines and a package of crackers litter the top of it.

The light from the single bulb continues to flicker. There are a couple of candles lit around the room for extra light.

The WIND BLOWS outside the factory. Somewhere in the building, METAL CLANGS AGAINST METAL.

JOSEF
We don't get time to talk much when
we're here working.

JUAN
We have the time now.

JOSEF
Yes, I guess we do.

JUAN
What would you like to talk about?

Long pause.

JOSEF
You know I like your daughter. I like
her very much.

JUAN

Yes, I saw that the first time you looked at her.

JOSEF

You did? You don't mind?

JUAN

I mind. Her mother minds more.

(beat)

The war will be over, you will go home and it will break Maria's heart.

JOSEF

I don't think it's that serious.

JUAN

You are either blind or fooling yourself, my son.

JOSEF

(beat)

So, what should we do?

JUAN

If I was my father, I would forbid you to see her. Maybe even threaten you.

Juan sees the look of fear come to Josef.

JOSEF

If that is what you want, I will do it...but it would hurt.

JUAN

You are lucky, I am not like my father. At least, not like that.

(beat)

We are not put on this earth to hurt one another. We bring joy. We bring love. Do you love Maria?

JOSEF

I don't know.

JUAN

Then you should think on this and decide. I believe she loves you.

JOSEF

The people in town. The Nazis.
Others. They don't like it. I see it.
I hear it.

JUAN

There will always be those who hate
what they do not understand..or want
to.

(beat)

Now, it's late. We should sleep...and
pray this storm passes by morning.

A long pause.

JOSEF

Thank you, Mr. Ramirez. Maria is
lucky to have you as her father.

JUAN

Yes, yes she is a lucky girl. Just
promise me that you will do
everything possible to not hurt our
Maria.

JOSEF

I promise.

JUAN

We will see.

Josef turns off the light, rolls on his back and stares at
the ceiling. The candles throwing shadows against the wall.

INT. BUNK ROOM - HQ

Light is shining through the cracks on the sides of the pull
down shade.

Maria wakes first and rolls up the shade. Snow has drifted
up against the windows. The fire in the stove has gone out,
but there are still hot coals.

Shivering, she puts some kindling in the stove, gets it
going and throws in a log.

There's a knock on the door.

Maria opens it slowly and sees Colonel Dempster is at the
door.

DEMPSTER

Morning, hope you and your sister got some sleep.

MARIA

Yes, thank you. Are we able to go home?

DEMPSTER

Might be a couple hours yet. All but the main roads are being cleared. Rest are all drifted shut. You can stay in here if you like. It's Sunday anyway, so you won't need to go to work.

MARIA

Our parents?

DEMPSTER

Best I know is your dad's at the factory with one of the POWs. Your mom and the Kukas' are fine. We were able to reach them by phone before the lines went down. Might be a few days before those are up.

(beat)

You need anything?

MARIA

No. Thank you.

DEMPSTER

Kitchen's still working so I'll have one of the guards bring you something.

MARIA

Thank you.

Maria gives him a smile and closes the door.

DOLORES

Are we going home?

MARIA

Not just yet, but everyone's fine.

She puts her coat on and walks to the front door. When she opens it, her mouth drops.

FROM HER POV snow drifts are piled up to the eaves on most of the buildings. Small drifts are scattered around the rest of the yard.

A few prisoners are outside starting a snowball fight.

Maria closes the door and goes back to the bunk room.

DOLORES

How long will we be here?

MARIA

I don't know, but there is more snow than you can ever imagine. Come on!

Dolores quickly gets dressed and the two of them go outside.

She and Maria timidly pick up the snow, then put it to their tongues.

They start throwing it in the air...then at one another.

They see a Friedrich lie in the snow and make a snow angel and they do the same. For a moment they are children again.

MARIA (cont'd)

I wish Momma and Papa were here.

DOLORES

And Josef?

MARIA

Yes, and Josef.

She throws snow at Dolores and the two start a snow fight of their own.

INT. COT ROOM - SUGAR BEAT FACTORY - SAME TIME

Josef is awake. Juan is getting his shoes on.

JUAN

Come on. Let's see what the storm left.

Josef follows Juan to the front door of the factory and opens it to piles of snow everywhere. Drifts nearly half way up the forty-foot tall sides of the building.

They step outside. Juan stares mesmerized.

JOSEF

You've never seen snow before have you?

JUAN

No, only in pictures.

He reaches down and picks up a handful. He puts it to his mouth and tastes.

JUAN (cont'd)

I think it is the frozen breath of God.

The moment is broken by a loud HORN. It's a giant truck with a snowplow coming their direction.

It stops and the door opens.

SNOW TRUCK DRIVER

You boys look like you slept the night.

JOSEF

Yeah we did.

SNOW TRUCK DRIVER

Get in. I'll get you home.

Juan and Josef get into the truck and it drives off.

EXT. KUKAS FARM - LATER

The snow plow stops in the road. The yard is covered in snow.

Drifts are piled against one side of the Kukas house...and the migrant worker home. A drift blocks the entrance to the tractor shed where the tractor and Herman's pick up are parked.

Juan gets out and Carolina is immediately out the front door of the Kukas house.

JUAN

(to Snow Truck Driver)

Thank you.

(to Josef)

Maria is probably still at the camp. Make sure she gets home.

JOSEF

I will.

Juan closes the door and gets through the snow as quickly as he can.

FROM JOSEF'S POINT OF VIEW we see Juan and Carolina hug.

EXT. CAMP SCOTTSBLUFF - ENTRY GATE

The snow truck pulls up, stops at the guard gate. A narrow walk has been shoveled from the guard house to the gate.

JOSEF

(to Snow Truck Driver)

Can you wait here? We need to get
Juan's daughters and get them home.

SNOW TRUCK DRIVER

(cheerily)

Why not? It's almost Christmas.

Josef gets out and talks with the guard. He nods and escorts him back into the prison yard, behind the entrance. He gets on a radio in the guard booth.

OUTSIDE HQ where Maria and Dolores are still playing in the snow, Dempster's Aide steps outside.

DEMPSTER'S AIDE

Looks like you two just got an
earlier ride home. Grab your things.
A guard will take you to the gate.

AT THE GUARD GATE Josef is stomping his feet to keep warm.

MARIA (O.C.)

Josef! Josef!

Josef looks up and Maria and Dolores are wading through the snow. Maria as quickly as she can. A GUARD trying to keep up.

Josef runs through the snow to meet her. They hug and fall into the snow. Laughing.

MARIA

You are all right?

JOSEF

Yes, and your father is back at your
home with your mother.

(beat)

And you're okay.

MARIA

Yes, yes. I am now.

Josef looks at her, taking her in.

JOSEF

Maria, I love you. I don't know what we do from here, but I needed to tell you.

MARIA

I love you, too, Josef.

They kiss and realize the guard, Dolores and Friedrich are standing near them.

ARMY GUARD #2

Ok, come on. What the hell. These two need to get home and that snow truck isn't waiting all day.

Josef and Maria stand and ignore the fact that they are covered in snow.

JOSEF

I love you, Maria. I can't say it enough.

Maria gives him a smile, then runs back and kisses him one more time.

DOLORES

Oh, dios mio. Come on. Let's go.

They get in the snow truck and drive away. As they do...

ARMY GUARD #2

(to Josef)

Come on. Let's get you back to the barracks.

INT. CAMP SCOTTSBLUFF - MESS HALL AND KITCHEN - CHRISTMAS EVE

The mess hall is decorated with lights on the walls and a tree with lights in the corner. CHRISTMAS CAROLS play on a radio on a stand in a corner.

Maria is in the kitchen making mashed potatoes. Josef comes up behind her and puts his hands around her eyes.

JOSEF

Guess who?

MARIA

Santa Claus.

She turns to face him. Checks to see if anyone is looking.

JOSEF

We're alone. I already checked.

He pulls her around a corner where they are completely out of sight.

JOSEF (cont'd)

I got you something. For Christmas.

He hands her a small box.

MARIA

How?

JOSEF

We make money here. I saved and when they took us to town after the snow storm, I found this. For you. Open it.

Maria carefully undoes the wrapping paper and reveals a necklace sized box. She opens it and inside is a silver necklace with a silver snow flake hanging from it.

MARIA

A snowflake.

JOSEF

I want you to remember the day I told you I love you.

MARIA

I will never forget that day. I love it.

JOSEF

Here. Let me help you put it on.

Maria turns and lets him. She faces him to show it off.

MARIA

What do you think?

JOSEF

It's beautiful. You're beautiful. Merry Christmas.

Maria kisses him.

MARIA

Merry Christmas.

(beat)

You know in Mexico we don't give gifts for Christmas.

JOSEF

You don't?

MARIA

No, we celebrate for days and days
and days. We eat. We honor our Lady
of Guadalupe, the Immaculate
Conception.

JOSEF

I think maybe I would like that.

MARIA

Well, we are not in Mexico. We are
here. So, I got you something, too.
Stay right there.

She goes around the corner and comes back with a small
loosely wrapped package and hands it to him.

Josef pulls out a set of rosary beads with a cross.

JOSEF

It's beautiful. Where did you get
them?

MARIA

The church. My father gave us money.

Josef kisses her.

JOSEF

Thank you. Every time I hold them I
will think of you.

MARIA

Merry Christmas, Josef.

A timer goes off.

MARIA (cont'd)

The potatoes! I have to go back to
work. Go! I will see you when we
serve dinner.

JOSEF

I love you.

MARIA

I love you, too.

Josef passes a TWO OLDER WOMEN heading into the kitchen to
help Maria.

JOSEF
Merry Christmas!

EXT. KUKAS FARM - EARLY APRIL

The grass in the yard is still brown, but daffodils and tulips are coming up in the garden.

The green on the sides of Scotts Bluff look brighter.

Herman is looking over the beet fields. Juan is with him.

JUAN
We start planting the beets soon?

HERMAN
Tomorrow. We had two frosts.
Everything points to a warm spring
from here on.
(beat)
You ready for another season?

JUAN
Of course, that's why we stayed,
senor.

HERMAN
All right then. I'll show you what
we'll be doing. Let's make sure that
old tractor fires up again.

They head to the tractor shed, while Eva and Carolina work in the garden.

INT. CAMP SCOTTSBLUFF - KITCHEN - LATER

Maria is working in the kitchen. A large pot of water is heating on the stove.

From BEHIND HER...

GERHARD (O.C.)
So the little spic is still here
making our meals...maybe hoping it's
our last supper.

Maria turns and Gerhard stands within inches of her.

GERHARD
You are vermin, you know. You have
twisted Josef's mind.

CLOSE ON THE BOILING WATER IN THE POT.

GERHARD (cont'd)
I see you holding hands, walking in
the yard. What else do you hold?

He grabs her hand and forces it against his crotch.

GERHARD (cont'd)
Maybe you grab this. I know you'd
like it. Maybe we try and see.

Maria struggles to get her hand free.

GERHARD (cont'd)
Or maybe if your hands weren't so
nice Josef wouldn't want to hold
them.

He starts to put her hand toward the boiling water.

Maria SCREAMS!

From BEHIND Gerhard.

JOSEF
STOP!!

As Gerhard turns, Josef charges and knocks him to the
ground. It forces him to let go of Maria's hand.

Gerhard's hand knocks against the pot with the boiling
water. The water falls on his face, scalding the side of it.

Gerhard SCREAMS out in pain.

CORPORAL JOHNSON comes rushing in with two other guards.
They pull Gerhard to his feet.

CORPORAL JOHNSON
What the hell's going on?

MARIA
He tried to attack me.

CORPORAL JOHNSON
Get him up and to the infirmary. Then
stick him in the brig.
(to Josef)
You, back to your barracks.

The two pull Gerhard to his feet. The side of his face is
bright red and starting to swell up. He struggles against
the guards.

GERHARD
 (in German to Josef)
 You're dead, little man, then your
 little brown girl friend is next.

They lead him out.

JOSEF
 (to Maria)
 You ok?

Maria nods.

CORPORAL JOHNSON
 That's enough. Get back to your
 barracks.

INT. CAMP SCOTTSBLUFF - MAIN MEETING HALL - MAY 8, 1945

The POWS are filing in. Schuller stands to the side with
 Dempster.

Extra guards are at each of the exits.

When everyone has been seated, Schuller steps to the front.

SCHULLER
 (in German)
 Men, soldiers of the Third Reich.
 Today, Germany officially surrendered
 to the Allies. As far as the world is
 concerned. The war between the Allies
 and the Fatherland is over.

There's muffled outcries. Becoming louder among the Nazis.
 some shouting out "No." and "Lies."

SCHULLER (cont'd)
 (in German)
 Quiet! It's true. The Fuhrer took his
 life a few days ago and Field
 Marshall Wilhelm Keitel accepted
 Germany's unconditional surrender.

Gerhard stands up, the side of his face red but healing.
 Other Nazi prisoners join him.

GERHARD
 (in German)
 Lies! The American dogs want us to
 believe it's over so they can keep us
 here to go soft and rot from boredom.
 I will not accept this!

DEMPSTER
 Guards, take him away!

Army guards move in and grab Gerhard and two other Nazis near him. The other prisoners back off and back down.

Gerhard tries to fight back.

GERHARD
 You can't beat me. The Third Reich
 has just begun. We did not, we will
 not surrender!

DEMPSTER
 Shut him the fuck up!

The guards drag Gerhard to his feet and to the door. He starts singing Deutschland Uber Alles as he's being drug out the door and down the hall.

GERHARD (O.C.)
 (singing in German)
 Deutschland, Deutschland, uber alles,
 Uber alles, Deutschland.

The room is silent as the last sound of Gerhard singing dies out.

Friedrich to Josef.

FRIEDRICH
 We're going home, Josef. We're going
 home.
 (yelling it out)
 We're going home!

The realization that their time at the camp is nearly up sinks in.

Some men start cheering. Others start singing German beer drinking songs.

DEMPSTER
 (to Schuller)
 Go ahead, Schuller. Join your men.

Schuller sees the men celebrating.

SCHULLER
 Thank you, Colonel, but I think I'll
 go to my room instead. For me, this
 is not a reason to celebrate.

EXT. CAMP SCOTTSBLUFF - KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Maria is throwing away old food when Josef finds her. He stands there without saying anything.

MARIA

Josef?

JOSEF

It's really over, Maria. The war in Europe it's over.

Maria drops the pot she had the old food in and goes to him. Hugging him.

He holds his arms to his side then awkwardly puts them around her.

MARIA

They are sending you home?

JOSEF

No, not right away. I don't know.

MARIA

When will they tell you? How long... do we have? Before you go?

JOSEF

I don't know. I don't know.

MARIA

You have to stay. If you go, I will never see you again.

Josef holds her hands in her face.

JOSEF

No, Maria. No, I promise, no matter what I will come back. I will. We will get married. We will have our own farm.

(beat)

Maybe there's a way for me to stay. Maybe Mr. Kukas can help. We have to try. Anything.

Maria nods her head, tears coming slow, running down her face.

MARIA

I love you, Josef. More than anyone or anything. I love you.

Josef holds her tight as she cries against him.

JOSEF
I love you, too. My sweet Maria.

INT. MIGRANT WORKERS HOUSE - LATER

Juan, Carolina and Dolores sit around their table finishing dinner. The radio plays patriotic US music, celebrating the end of the war in Europe.

A PICKUP DOOR shuts in the yard. Maria enters the house and stands in the doorway.

CAROLINA
Maria?

MARIA
Mama.

Maria starts to cry, and Carolina, Juan and Dolores come to her and hug her.

CAROLINA
(in Spanish)
It will be okay, my sweet Maria. It will be okay.

INT. CAMP SCOTTSBLUFF - HQ - A WEEK LATER

Dempster is with his aide in his office. A set of film canisters sits on his desk.

DEMPSTER
They really want us to show them these.

DEMPSTER'S AIDE
They think...they hope it will make sure they don't go back and start it all over again.

DEMPSTER
Have you seen these

DEMPSTER'S AIDE
But you and I have both seen some of the photos.

DEMPSTER
Shit. This could get ugly with the Nazi bunch in there.
(MORE)

DEMPSTER (cont'd)
Get me more guards again. I don't
want another incident like we had.

DEMPSTER'S AIDE
Yes sir.

INT. CAMP SCOTTSBLUFF - MAIN MEETING HALL - LATER

The POWs are filing in again, but there's a lighter air
among most of them. They horseplay a little. Others are
joking with one another.

Except for Gerhard and the other Nazis. And Josef.

Dempster comes in with Schuller behind him. Schuller stops
Dempster where no one can hear them.

SCHULLER
Is this really necessary?

DEMPSTER
If it was up to me, I wouldn't show
it. But I have my orders.

SCHULLER
Then I can't be responsible for how
some of these men may react.

DEMPSTER
I understand.

Dempster walks to the front to address the POWs.

DEMPSTER (cont'd)
The film you are about to see was
taken at various camps discovered
across Germany, Poland and other
areas occupied by German forces over
the last six years. I have been
ordered to show you this film and you
are ordered to sit through it and
keep your mouths shut. If anyone, I
mean anyone decides they need to say
something, I will have you thrown in
the brig.
(beat)
That's all.

The lights dim and the film begins...image after image of
Nazi atrocities at concentration camps. Piles of dead
bodies. Jews being led into gas chambers. Emaciated Jews
standing outside in the freezing cold. Laboratories.

ON THE FACES OF THE POWS reacting to what they are seeing. Some look away. Others stare, trying not to.

Gerhard and his fellow Nazis look on. Sneering. Nodding approval.

Josef cannot take it. He leaves the room and runs outside.

INT. CAMP SCOTTSBLUFF - KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Maria is working with three OLDER WOMEN making the evening meal.

Josef is in the doorway. Breathing heavily. Clearly upset.

JOSEF

Maria. Can we talk?

MARIA

Of course.

JOSEF

I need to see you, tonight.

MARIA

I'm leaving soon.

JOSEF

No, at the farm. I will find a way to leave, get there. Meet me by the big tree near the field tonight.

MARIA

Are you okay?

JOSEF

I just need to be with you, alone.

MARIA

Okay, tonight.

She kisses him on the cheek, then goes back to work.

Josef backs out the door and gives her and the Old Women a weak wave.

EXT. KUKAS FARM - NIGHT

Josef waits near the big cotton tree where Maria and he first met. It sits far enough away from the Kukas home and the migrant workers home to not be seen.

The full moon shines through the leaves.

The white rock of Scotts Bluff is more illuminated. It sits like a hulking behemoth ready to be awakened from its millennial nap.

A RUSTLE BEHIND Josef startles him. He turns abruptly and sees Maria illuminated in the moon light.

JOSEF

You came?

MARIA

Of course. I told them I needed some air. Come sit down. Hold me.

They sit down at the base of the tree. The limbs and leaves over them, like a blanket about to be laid upon them.

MARIA (cont'd)

And you, how did you get here?

JOSEF

I walked. I pretty much can come and go. They trust me.

MARIA

I'm glad you're here.

Josef hesitates then spills it out.

JOSEF

They showed us films, Maria. Movies of bad things the Nazis did to people. To Jews - young, old, women..babies. Horrible things. Why?

MARIA

Oh, my sweet Josef.

She wipes a tear from his eye.

JOSEF

We can be better can't we? Maybe we can be a better example. Make a family one day that is better. We're different, but we found each other. We love each other.

MARIA

Shh. Shh. Yes, I believe that.

JOSEF

I don't want to leave you here. I can't go back. I--I need to protect you. If they make me go, I won't. I'll find a way to stay.

MARIA

Josef.

He stops and looks at her.

MARIA (cont'd)

I love you. All we have for now is this. No one, nothing can take that away from us.

JOSEF

You're right. I love you, too.

He kisses her. At first, lightly, but the longing, the possibility of being away from each other, takes over. They kiss and fall into each other's arms.

LATER

Josef has his shirt off and holds Maria tight, her bare shoulders covered by his jacket.

JOSEF (cont'd)

I need to get back.

MARIA

So do I. But I will see you tomorrow. We start working the fields again.

JOSEF

Yes, then I will see you every day. And we will figure this out.

Josef helps her to her feet and kisses her once more.

JOSEF (cont'd)

I will love you forever, Maria.

MARIA

And always, Josef. My one and only.

He watches her walk back to her home in the moonlight. She looks back at him once more, blows him a kiss and goes inside.

Josef looks up at the moon and heads back to the road and to the camp.

EXT. CAMP SCOTTSBLUFF - NIGHT

Josef walks past the guard at the front gate. Smiling to himself. Whistling "Edelweiss."

The GUARD nods as he walks by.

As Josef passes by the main hall and out of sight of the guard...

GERHARD (O.S.)
Look who's back. The spic lover.

He steps out of the shadows stopping Josef. Three other German Nazi POWs are with him. They surround Josef.

GERHARD
It's past curfew...and you were out of camp on your own. Tsk. Tsk. Tsk.

Josef moves to get past him, but Gerhard stops him.

GERHARD (cont'd)
Uh, uh, uh. You're not going anywhere.

JOSEF
Face it, the war's over.

GERHARD
(to the other Germans)
Listen to this little fuck. The war is over.

They snicker. Then Gerhard shoves Josef to the ground.

GERHARD (cont'd)
The war is over because of weak soldiers like you.

Josef tries to get on his feet. Gerhard kicks him in the stomach, knocking the air out of him.

GERHARD (cont'd)
You're a puny shit. You and your friend Friedrich. Maybe the two of you are lovers, too.

Josef gets up and runs at Gerhard. Gerhard trips him.

GERHARD (cont'd)
You like dark meat and men. You're a disgrace to the Father Land.

Josef is on his feet.

JOSEF

You're the disgrace. You and everyone
who killed all those innocent people.

GERHARD

(to the other German
POWS)

Oh, look the little shit is angry.

Josef comes at Gerhard, fists flying. Gerhard tries to dodge them, but Josef lands a solid one to Gerhard's face. And another. Forcing Gerhard back on his heels.

JOSEF

(breathing hard)

You're a disgusting animal. Germany
lost because of people like you. You
and every other Nazi like you will
pay for it.

Gerhard is seething now, enraged. Without saying a word, he comes at Josef and puts all of his weight into a solid punch to Josef's face. CRUNCHING bone.

He hits him again, as the other Nazi POWs grab and hold Josef.

GERHARD

You, worthless, piece of shit.

Gerard turns away as the other German POWs let loose of Josef, struggling to stay on his feet.

He's breathing heavy. Face bloody, swollen. Josef gets a grin on his face.

JOSEF

That the best you can do?

FOOTSTEPS approach.

GERMAN POW #1

(in German)

Leave him. The guards are coming.

Gerhard looks at Josef, still grinning at him, trying to wipe the blood and snot from his face. Then at the other German POWs.

Then back at Josef.

GERHARD

Then they find him...dead.

With that, he puts everything he's got into a kick to Josef's head, snapping his head back hard.

Josef hits the ground...unmoving.

Gerhard stands over him, spits on him.

The FOOTSTEPS are getting closer.

GERMAN POW #1

Come on.

Gerhard gives Josef's lifeless body a final kick for good measure, pulls the rosary beads Maria made Josef from Josef's neck and tosses it on Josef's lifeless body. Then runs off with the other Nazi POWs.

CLOSE ON JOSEF's battered face.

We SEE TWO CAMP GUARDS rush up reflected in his eyes.

EXT. KUKAS FARM - MORNING - NEXT DAY

The morning is idyllic. BIRDS SING and dart among the trees showing the start of their spring foliage. The sun is up over the horizon.

Juan is in the field helping Herman load a seed spreader.

Carolina is outside their home, hanging laundry.

Dolores and Maria come out of the house - Dolores ready for school. Maria dressed to go to work at the camp.

CAROLINA

(to Dolores in
Spanish)

You have everything?

DOLORES

(in Spanish)

Yes, Mama, just like yesterday and
the day before.

The school bus pulls up next to the yard and honks.

DOLORES (cont'd)

(in Spanish)

I have to go.

(MORE)

DOLORES (cont'd)
(calling out to her
father)

Bye, Papa.

She runs to the bus. But before she gets to it, the Army POW truck pulls up.

Maria stops, waiting anxiously.

Carolina notices.

But there's something different.

Friedrich gets out, shoulders slumped. There's no Gerhard. And there's no Josef.

Friedrich hesitates then walks slowly to Maria.

Maria walks to him, hesitant.

Carolina watches.

Dolores stops just short of getting on the bus.

Juan stops helping Herman.

FROM his POV we see Friedrich and Maria talking. Friedrich is shaking his head.

Maria's hands go to her face. And she falls to the ground, weeping uncontrollably.

CAROLINA
(in Spanish)
Maria!

She, Dolores, and Juan rush to Maria's side.

INT. KUKAS FARM - BEDROOM - LATER

Maria lies in a bed asleep. Carolina and Dolores sit by her side. Juan sits on the other.

Herman is at the door way.

HERMAN
Juan.

Juan looks up. He's haggard. Eyes swollen and red.

Herman meets him in the hall way.

HERMAN (cont'd)

How is she?

JUAN

Heartbroken. He promised he would not hurt her this bad.

HERMAN

It wasn't his fault.

Juan nods.

JUAN

The man who killed Josef?

HERMAN

It was Gerhard and a couple of other Nazi POWs. He'll be tried, hung.

Juan looks back into the room.

JUAN

And he will go to hell.

HERMAN

Probably.

(beat)

Look, she can stay here as long as you want. We can make up the couch for you or Carolina.

JUAN

Gracias, senior. Gracias.

Herman puts a hand on Juan's shoulder and leaves him staring at his daughters and Carolina. Then out the window.

From Juan's POV we see the freshly plowed fields, green trees and Scotts Bluff in the distance.

BACK TO Maria lying in bed, eyes closed.

MONTAGE of MARIA and JOSEF

Theme music plays while we SEE

Maria and Josef first meeting in the fields.

...Josef offering her food.

...first kiss at the fair.

...at the dance.

...holding each other.

INT. BEDROOM - KUKAS FARM - LATER - SUNSET

Maria lies in bed, her eyes open. Alone. She turns to look out the bedroom window. And begins to cry.

EXT. KUKAS FARM - EARLY SPRING - 1946

Maria is standing where she first met Josef.

The sun is rising and the wind blows gently through the new leaves coming out on the cotton wood trees.

She looks back at her parents working in their yard, planting vegetables.

Dolores is getting on the school bus. She turns and waves at Maria. Maria returns the wave and looks back to the sun.

BABY COOING off screen.

Maria looks down at the brown haired, blue eyed baby in her arms.

MARIA

Baby Joseph.

She puts her finger toward his mouth and he grabs it.

MARIA (cont'd)

I met your father here. He would love you, so much.

CLOSE ON BABY JOSEPH.

MARIA (cont'd)

You're a part of him. A part of me. You belong here, my sweet boy.

BACK TO MARIA

A tear comes to her eye as Baby Joseph COOS and he grabs at the necklace with the snowflake that Josef gave her.

MARIA (cont'd)

It will be better for you. I promise.

We PULL BACK to see her silhouetted against the backdrop of the fields and Scotts Bluff.

ON SCREEN GRAPHIC -

By the summer of 1946 all of the POWs at Camp Scottsbluff were returned to Germany. Mexican migrant workers continued to return each year for the sugar beet crop. Some eventually found a way to stay and make this their home.

THE END