

Treatment

Bloodlands

A Chilling Love Story of a War Untold

Based on the book "Underground" by Antanas Sileika

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Pre-Title Sequence:

A slender birch tree sapling by the railroad trembles in the spring breeze.

A distant rumble is heard from an approaching steam train. Several carriages pass and as they do, the sapling which has taken root impossibly close to the tracks, shudders wildly under the train's passing. A kind of flailing craziness gives the tree an almost human character. The birch continues to quiver as the wheels of the steam train still visible, pass into the distance.

The sapling comes to a standstill.

FILM TITLE: BLOODLANDS

1940. Spring

The Petronas Manor, Marijampole district: around 40 acres of land bordering the railroad track with the forest beyond. One of God's clowns, Albinas, a solidly built young man with a child's mind and manners, the son of the Petronas family. Since early childhood he has been compelled by a sense of duty or equally compelled to lying on the grass and talking to himself or his favourite cow Violetta.

Violetta quietly grazes near the giant elm and moos gently upon recognizing her approaching friend. Albinas has seized a crude broom from the inside of the partly hulled out elm. He sets to work, sweeping the leaves around the tree and, as he sweeps, he murmurs under his breath:

"Little leaves of mine, little fallen soldiers. As the autumn comes, there will be many little leaves, many little soldiers...have to sweep...not their place on the walk."

The senior Petronas, watching from his yard, sighs despondently.

The next day, carts with elaborate furniture and a large clock with pendulum roll into the Petronas Manor. Old Gotlieb sighs to Petronas, "We will be taken somewhere. If we return, I know that you will return it, as you are a good neighbor, Joseph. If we don't return, then it will be a keepsake in our memory." The clock was very stylish. The Petronas boys Lukas, Vincentas and Algis and their young sister Veronika help to bring the furniture into the house.

The young Albinas is in charge of a most important duty. At different times of the day he carries meals and refreshment to the Zimmerman family, who are hiding in the Petronas' barn. On such visits, he always pats twelve year old Rina on her head and says:

"Albinas loves Rina. Albinas will protect Rina from anyone." Then, he plays with Idzelis' "peyos," and laughs like a child. For three years, Idzelis entertains Albinas' playing with his "peyos." These little rituals added colour to their day.

A column of Jews marches along the dusty road, led by armed men, "White-Banders" one of whom is freckled and missing two front teeth. There are many Jews, exactly 201: men and women, children and grandparents. They walk with their luggage and a few other possessions, sensing, but not yet knowing their fate. The Germans are already waiting adjacent to the forest. The men are the first to be stood by the edge of the pit. Gotlieb's wife, Leja, understanding what is about to happen, lets out a curdling scream in the face of the toothless guard, "I curse you." A rifle butt brutally strikes her in the face.

Albinas idles one day waving at the Russian soldiers as they drive past the front of the manor. "God wouldn't let me work today", he would explain to his mother. The Russians have arrived, the Germans have left; for the Zimmerman family, hiding was no longer necessary. The Zimmermans offer an emotional farewell to the Petronas' family for saving their lives. Rina is already fifteen. Albinas insists that he will marry Rina, crying with childlike tears when it is explained that he cannot marry her, only love her from afar.

1944 Summer

Coming across the fields surrounding the Petronas Manor, into a forest that flanks the property, Lukas and Vincentas, now young men, arrive with a single rifle. In the forest they come across a fawn. Vincentas, gentle of heart refuses to shoot the animal. Lukas, a sharp shooter, has no second thoughts and shoots his prey.

A corpulent boy in uniform from their area, Ignacas, stops the two boys. Ignacas is a new partisan in the woods.

NKVD soldiers have come to the Petronas Manor asking for food, preparing to expropriate their livestock the collaborators ride up to the Manor in a truck.

Albinas clings to the neck of his favourite cow Violetta and tearfully pleads for them not to take it. The NKVD Major steps forth and shoots Albinas in the forehead.

On the way back from the hunt, Lukas and Vincentas hear gunshots from the house.

Lukas abandons the carcass slung around his neck and he and Vincentas run. When they are close enough to see their mother grieving over the body of Albinas as the NKVD soldiers are

leaving the house, Lukas tries to seize the rifle from Vincentas who prevents him. As they wrestle, the Soviets depart raising the dust on the road.

Lukas and Vincentas' father instructs them to immediately go back to Kaunas where they can hide as students. Their mother and sister Veronika agree. The youngest brother Algis has no idea - he is in shock that Albinas is dead.

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Six weeks later

Lukas attends the philology faculty of Kaunas University, while Vincentas studies at the seminary. One evening a small enclave of students are together entertaining themselves with poetry. Rimantas, a tall bespectacled poet of eccentric airs, recites some of his hideous, pretentious poems while Elena, a beautiful girl visiting her sister Ona, gazes adoringly. Lukas and Vincentas are in the gathering with a few other young men, another young woman and Lozorius, who is older than them but also something of a larrikin.

The local KGB officer Giedrunas interrupts the group. It turns out Giedrunas too is interested in Elena. He makes overt gestures to save her from unwanted attention but also to keep her to himself. Elena distracts Giedrunas with entreaties to dance. So Giedrunas dances with Elena and Rimantas with Ona to an old Dolski's record. Lukas' has a keen eye on Elena and he suppresses his disappointment.

Lozorius and Lukas confer. Lukas intervenes in the dance between Giedrunas and Elena. He convinces Elena to go to the movie theatre with him.

That evening, some of the students head to the Romuva movie theatre as a group, to watch the movie "Tarzan."

Before the main feature, a newsreel is shown of party activists from Mariampole, and the ideological importance of their activities. Two young men on the screen enthusiastically shake hands and - one of them is Giedrunas.

"He told me you would be his anyway", asks Lukas gingerly.

"He thinks so", says Elena, she takes Lukas' hand.

*

Vincentas has been missing for a few days. Ona reveals to Lukas that Elena has departed as well.

In a bombed out library, Lukas and Rimantas discover in the archives, comments made by teachers about each student. The descriptions are oddly detailed but easily misconstrued; in the wrong hands it could be used as incriminating evidence where there is no crime. They decide to burn the records so that the communists cannot use them to gather intelligence on the student population.

A few days pass. Lukas arrives at his dormitory to find Lozorius and Vincentas lying on his bed. Both are beat up and bruised, with Vincentas' mangled glasses sitting crookedly on his face.

"Where have you been for the last three days?" Lukas shouts.

"In jail, the Cheka," Vincentas replies calmly.

"Looks like they treated you well?"

"They beat us, but not too badly. Some got it much worse. They tried to force us to sign that we would work for them,"

Vincentas remains matter-of-fact.

"Did you sign?" Lukas asks anxiously.

"I did not" Vincentas shoots an accusing glance at Lozorius. Lozorius jumps off the bed and begins to feverishly pack his belongings into his backpack.

"Yeah, I signed, and you would have too in my place. We must go into the forest. I know a man there. Here, we will have no life"

"I also cannot return to the seminary. Who is going to believe that I was let go without signing anything or betraying anybody?" Vincentas states logically.

"And what will you do there in the forest, in the winter?"

Lukas smiles.

"The same as everybody else, freeze and fight for truth," Vincentas says with resolve.

"I've seen how you fight," Lukas smiles sarcastically.

At dawn, the sun peaks over the horizon, the impressive partisan camp is visible. More accurately, there are several camps, one next to the other. Campfire flames blaze from deeply dug holes; on the other side of the fence four cows graze; the aroma of barley stew, wafts across the camp from a boiling kettle. A few hundred men engage in morning preparations.

The platoon commander, Flint, a bearded officer in his forties, smoking a pipe, warmly greets Lozorius then turns his attention to the two brothers.

"What can you do, and what do you want?"

"We don't want to be slaves. Isn't that enough?"

"It's not enough," laughs Flint.

Flint appoints Vincentas as platoon chaplain, Lukas is entrusted with writing newsletters, coordinating the printing of materials and listen to foreign radio news. They are now partisans.

At breakfast, everyone sits down at long, unadorned tables, where, to his surprise, Lukas recognizes Elena. She serves food to the men, and is equally surprised to see him. "Meet my brother, Eel," she said as her face surged red with embarrassment.

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Winter 1944

Some weeks have passed and snow has arrived. Early in the morning, Lukas, and Vincentas are assigned a mission.

Lukas and Vincentas, led by Eel and Nightingale reach the main road leading into the city. Lukas and Vincentas attach newsletters to three posts, while Eel and Nightingale hide explosives under a third post. They then hide behind some bush by the road and lie in wait.

Soon, a Studebaker truck appears and stops at the first post. Out jump three Collaborators who begin tearing down the newsletters. The explosive goes off.

Two of the Collaborators are torn to shreds. The third, wounded, with a bloody face, turns screaming whilst covering his face to protect his empty eye sockets from the cold air. The officer in the Studebaker flees, leaving his screaming comrade to fate.

Nightingale orders Vincentas to shoot the blinded Collaborator. Vincentas refuses. Lukas quickly picks up the gun and without hesitation, takes down the Collaborator with a clean shot to the chest.

Lukas and the still corpulent Ignacas are chopping wood. Although it is winter, Lukas is working bare-chested. Lukas is more resilient and strongly built than Ignacas who struggles with the physical demands of the Partisan army. Unable to keep pace, Ignacas sits and pulls out a pack of home grown tobacco. Ignacas offers it to Lukas, who declines and keeps working; Ignacas then rolls one for himself using a piece of Soviet newspaper. He points Lukas' attention to the paper with a smile. Ignacas tells him that Elena is working undercover in the offices of the KGB. Giedrunas is her boss, which makes it easier for her to gather intelligence.

*

Flint calls his troops for mobilisation. The next big mission is a show of force taking the partisans to the outskirts of Merkine. Led by Flint, the artisans stage an assault on Merkine. Their objective is to destroy the collaborators' command centre.

They are met by fire as they break from the tree line. Meanwhile, a sniper in the church belfry pins down the group with Nightingale, Eel and Lukas and begins firing at them. The group change directions, trying to stay out of the line of fire. They move past the corpses of other dead Partisans on display - their brothers in arms. On the way into the town centre, Eel, carrying a *Panzerfaust*, slips and falls in a pool of gasoline coming from an overturned Studebaker.

In the middle of Merkine, the partisan group manage to reach a stucco-rendered building where the armed collaborators are clustered. Being careful of the sniper fire, the partisans shoot out the windows. Eel still carrying the anti-tank weapon, is able to fire it through the window, killing everybody inside. However the exhaust from the RPG bounces off a nearby wall and ignites Eel's petrol-drenched clothes. As he stands up trying to put out the fire, a sniper's bullet finds him. Dead on the ground, his body keeps burning. Lukas works a shot to kill the sniper in the belfry.

Afterwards, the group gather the bodies of their fallen. Vincentas is sent out to fetch either a sled or Flint's group.

Vincentas tries to reach the market square, but he gets lost in the crenulated streets of Merkine. He wanders around town and, for some reason, stops at a school. Seeing the students huddled on the floor in fear of the gun battle, he manages to preach to them about love for the motherland, and loyalty to one another.

Now completely lost, Vincentas steps out of the school to go on with his mission when he sees two silhouettes through the mist. Thinking that they are friendly, he raises his hand mistakenly. Upon realising they are Soviet soldiers he is unable to release the safety on his rifle.

Flint, and the men pick up the tortured and desecrated bodies from the square's pavement, along with the remains of the fallen. They pull out of Merkine back into the woods. Lukas notices Vincentas is absent. Nightingale reassures Vincentas is fine. They leave the town square.

Vincentas has been tied to an old tree with wires. His eyes are gouged out, blood streams from his mouth from where his tongue has been removed. Blood is spattered all over his groin. Admiring his own handiwork is a toothless, freckled man formerly a "white-bander", now a "Stribas".

The Stribas works over Vincentas, who is tied to a tree with ropes and wires. A Russian officer calmly smokes, allowing the Lithuanian to do his dirty work. Vincentas is half dead. Going in and out of consciousness, he tries to say, something but without a tongue, it is impossible. The Stribas then cuts into Vincentas' arm below the elbow, and peels the skin off, like a glove. The Stribas gloats. The Russian officer orders the Stribas to finish the job.

Untying Vincentas from the tree, the Stribas throws Vincentas into a pit. They cover him with a few shovels of dirt and are about to go eat dinner when Vincentas suddenly moves. The Stribas places a heavy headstone on top of him so there would be no chance of him climbing out.

*

Spring 1945

At last, spring arrived. The men crawl out of their bunkers into the fresh air, finally able to wash up in the river and to do their laundry.

Elena appears in the camp with news for Flint, Lukas is drying out his printed material in the warm sun whilst listening to BBC news. The news broadcast echoed throughout. "The war is over!" shouted Lukas, so that everyone would hear. "The Germans have surrendered!"

The news spreads quickly through the camps. The men rejoice that the fascists have met their end, and now, America and Europe will annihilate the Soviets. Someone starts a song, and soon there are campfires and dancing. Elena dances with everyone. Lozorius beckons her to stay with him, Elena turns to Lukas laughing.

"Will you accompany you to the station today," she asks gingerly.

"No," Lukas replies, pleased for a moment to see her disappointment "I have a better idea".

The two of them career into the forest on the one bicycle falling off together as they begin to kiss long and passionately, like two people who play hide-and-seek with death on a daily basis.

Elena returns to the camp to speak with Flint, Lukas tries not to lose his cool and follows her at a distance. Flint clearly sees through their charade.

"Come here my little doves. I have some thoughts."

*

At the office of the communist headquarters in Mariampole, Giedrunas and his communist party cohorts prepare themselves for a big wedding party. Giedrunas' sidekick is a female officer Nadja who has seen and done things that have developed in her a poor value for human life and a contempt for the world. She is a waspish murderess and a vampish seductress and so seduces Giedrunas before attending the wedding party of Elena to Lukas - her little sacrilegious act of contempt towards Elena, whom she knows Giedrunas fancies.

At the wedding party three other party workers with their secretaries join in the festive crowd. Giedrunas threatens the accordionist into playing something more Russian and less Lithuanian. The accordionist plays with gusto in fear for his life.

In the adjacent room, Lukas offers Elena one last chance to pull out of the plan. Elena refuses, she is determined to see her vengeance through. They smile to one another and enter the room, guns blazing. The communist party guests are shot to pieces by the two. Going through the guests, Lukas takes great pleasure in shooting the NKVD major that killed Albinas. Lukas shatters the accordion with a bullet so that the accordionist will not betray. The accordionist flees. Taking a book, Lukas shoots Elena's sister Ona in the leg so as not to cast suspicion on her either. Giedrius, lying in a pool of blood, moves a little. Elena finishes him off with a shot in the head.

Nightingale waits for them outside with a horse-drawn cart.

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The next day, Nightingale passes by the house of a farmer on the river to get some food and to hand over newsletters for distribution. Approaching the yard, he sees the landlady gesturing that there is an armed collaborator in the house. Nightingale quietly opens the door. Eating and drinking at the table is the freckled, toothless Stribas. But now, he has a new set of golden teeth in his mouth. Nightingale stands next to him with a German Schmeisser in his hand.

"So, this is it" mumbles the Stribas, unable able to reach for his rifle.

"This is it, let's go," Nightingale wasn't very talkative.

Nightingale marches the toothless Stribas at gun point to a spot behind the bushes near the river. Two shots echo, after a while, a dead body floats down the river.

*

Lukas and Elena seal their marriage in a romantic ceremony - A welcome moment of modest festivity to distract from the daily life of the partisans and the murderous wedding party. Nightingale is in front of the Church standing watch with his machine-gun in hand. He smokes and looks into the door of the Church that is slightly ajar.

Down the nave of the Church, Elena in national dress; and Lukas in uniform are undergoing the rite of marriage before a Priest. Gathered in the pews are Flint and a small bunch of uniformed partisans including Ignacas, who serves as best man.

The newlyweds spend their first night in a bunker prepared especially for them. Fellow partisans have brought chocolate and a bottle of cognac shaped like the Eifel Tower as a gift.

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Winter 1945

Elena is pregnant. Elena and Lukas are happy in their own way, even though they live out in the forest. The conflict has quietened down enough as with Christmas approaching. Christmas is celebrated, if but modestly.

At the Christmas Party, as the soldiers are exchanging traditional *Plotkaele*, good wishes and jokes, Elena returns to the bunker to a waiting Lukas, trembling, frightened, and white as a sheet.

"I'm bleeding heavily Lukas. What should we do?"

There is only one solution: hurry to see doctor Urbonas in Merkine. Nightingale escorts them atop the horse drawn cart, concealing a machine gun. The entire trip, Elena cries silently.

Doctor Urbonas awakens the Nurse, who lived in his home and brings the fragile Elena into the operating room behind his office.

Nightingale, with his machine gun, has taken a place in the shadows of the house, whilst Lukas sits stoically by the traditional Christmas table, still uncleared so lost souls might feast. Tears, one after another, roll down Lukas' cheeks. With a heavy heart, he turns to God, "You let your son be killed for all our sins, but for what sins did you kill my child? Take me instead of him."

But God makes no answer. The doctor appears in the doorway.

"She will live and God will let you have more children. I'm giving you some bandages and penicillin. She is not quite awake but hurry, those heathens don't celebrate Christmas." Seeing Luke's tear stained face, he adds:

"I can only console you by saying that, he who has not been born, has not died. And besides, who would want to be born in these terrible times?"

The next two days, Lukas nurses Elena every which way he knows how. They cannot speak, only embrace and sigh deeply. The hurt is so deep that no words can describe.

Flint canvasses for ideas on how to get support. A proposal is raised to send somebody over the border into Poland to contact the resistance movement there but none of the main people are able or willing to make the journey. Everyone knows that Lukas won't go. There is no resolution, just the problem of how to continue fighting effectively without harming people on their own side.

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Autumn 1946.

Ignacas has found the partisan life difficult for his constitution and gingerly asks for Lukas' advice about the amnesty announcement from the Soviets. In a few sharp sentences, Lukas tears apart his illusions about the Soviet government's humanism. "At best, you'll end up in Siberia. They are not stupid, and not easily fooled." Ignacas makes some covetous comments about how lucky Lukas is to have Elena.

Along the forest road, Lukas and Elena are on the way to meet Lukas's parents when a storm moves in quickly overhead. They stop to refresh themselves in an abandoned house. Whilst eating beetroots, Elena suddenly becomes troubled and challenges Lukas, saying that they should desert. Lukas is irritated by her and makes her vow that if he ever betrays the resistance, she will shoot him.

Elena responds that he should swear the same regarding her. Lukas does so. Elena becomes darkened and bursts out of the house suddenly and into the rain, Lukas follows.

Lukas and Elena cautiously approach Lukas' family manor. Out in the yard, his sister Veronika gasps upon seeing Lukas. Weeping, she tells Lukas of her harrowing experience on the previous day. Four collaborators shot their youngest brother Algis, cutting him in half. Two of the four collaborators were local residents: Chirvinskis and his son. Lukas lies to his father about Vincentas, pretending he is still alive and well, somewhere in the forest. Lukas' mother only has enough time to

offer her blessings as Lukas and Elena head out to exact justice from Chirvinskas.

Lukas and Elena force Chirvinskas and his son to dig pits - their own graves. Chirvinskas swears that it wasn't he or his son that did the shooting. Lukas thinks about letting the younger collaborator go but Elena shoots them both, much to Lukas' surprise. Elena tells him her cruelty is his making and walks back into the forest.

In the forest that night, Lukas and Elena find the abandoned house and make passionate love.

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Spring 1947

A runner comes running into camp to tell Flint that the Russians are coming. Flint instructs everyone to move into the reserve bunkers.

The bunker is occupied by nine partisans, all new recruits and all relatively younger than the old guards. Lukas, and Flint are at one end and Elena, Nightingale are at the other. A short company of the Russian Army surround the bunker. A NKVD Major leads the company made up of three platoons.

Fearful, Ignacas looks around in all directions. He does not know the exact location of the bunker, but all the while, he loudly urges the partisans to surrender, promising amnesty and riches. Almost breaking out into tears, he swears that he is speaking the truth.

Ignacas waddles uncomfortably. A wire is protruding from his pants leading to the NKVD major's wrist. The unseen wire under his clothes is tightly wrapped around his manhood. If he tries to run, he may have a chance to live but not a chance to survive as a man.

Ignacas stumbles on one of the entrances to the bunker camouflaged by branches and leaves. He gestures to the Major.

In the bunkers, the partisans begin burning their documents but the vents are clogged shut by the NKVD.

One desperate partisan Wolf, places his gun barrel in his mouth and fires. Having heard the shot, the Russian soldiers hope that, if alive, they would all give themselves up. Ignacas keeps imploring with his voice going hoarse.

At dusk, the partisans slide a stick with a white flag up one of the air vents. The Russian soldiers approach carefully. The partisans open the bunker vents and throw out a torrent of grenades at the Russians. After the grenades explode, the

partisans try to shoot their way out against the NKVD. A handful of partisans fall as they retreat. The other partisans are retreating and returning fire at the same time.

Lukas is some distance from the chaos, running close with Nightingale. Elena has fallen behind. Machine-gun fire hits her in the legs, then a grenade explodes and Lukas turns back to witness Elena fall to the ground.

Lukas stops running, but Nightingale drags Lukas deeper into the forest and Flint takes them to safety. There are no other survivors from the bunker. Flint orders Nightingale to get a distraught Lukas out of Lithuania and into Poland.

The remaining group are ordered by Flint to head to another base near Merkine. Lukas is given a mission: contact the outside world and get the West to send help.

Heading towards Poland, Lukas is accompanied by Nightingale. Slowly and laboriously, they trudge through knee-deep snow across a desolate East Prussia. Upon reaching the Polish border, Nightingale offers facetious advice about dealing with Poles and they embrace.

Lozorius is waiting for Lukas outside of a bakery in Gdansk. Everything has been arranged for them to head for Sweden.

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In Sweden, a former embassy worker Zoly appears as their contact. Thanks to Zoly's connections, Lukas has been invited to speak to representatives of Western intelligence agencies but none of them are willing to provide the support for which Lukas is looking. Lukas realises the partisans are doomed. The West has no intention of going to war with Russia, least of all, over the Baltic States. Worse still, they would only help if Lukas first pledges his allegiance to their cause. Lozorius urges Lukas to be a realist, but Lukas wants no part in the spy business and storms off.

1947 Spring

Lukas meets Monika in a DP camp in Germany where he give an impassioned speech about the partisan struggle. Monika is on this occasion is accompanied by Zoly who sits next to her and greedily rubs her thigh to her disdain.

After Lukas' speech, Monika congratulates Lukas and invites him to visit her in Paris if he should come to town.

"Sorry for your loss", she says, after introducing herself.

"How did you know?", Lukas is taken aback.

"I told her", says Zoly, appearing from nowhere.

Monika works for Zoly in his Paris bureau. Zoly regularly makes sexual advances on Monika which she strictly refuses. Having been rebuffed of his demand, Zoly warns her that, if she requires assistance in the future, she now knows what would need to be done.

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In Paris, Zoly cajoles Monika into seeking out Lukas who is working as a concierge. Lukas meets with Zoly in his office. Zoly presents intel from Lithuania: a new mission from Lozorius, a plan to get Lukas back into the country. All the other details are unknown except that Lukas would have to take orders from Lozorius. Flint is now dead. Lukas rejects the offer, suspecting a trap.

As Monika falls for Lukas, she colludes with Zoly to find a way to keep Lukas employed in Paris so that he can stay with her. Zoly offers a book deal and in exchange Monika lets Zoly have his way with her body.

Visions of Elena haunt Lukas everywhere. She's there behind his back when he writes; he sees her reflection in the mirror; in the cacophony of the street, he hears her resonant laugh among the people.

Lukas pours over his writing in the Paris apartment. Monika quietly approaches him, slightly bent over and sending a breath, fogging up his glasses. Lukas in some fit, stands up abruptly and admonishes her:

"Please don't do that again."

Seeing he has upset her he lies:

"You know that I love you."

He is ashamed.

"Will you marry me?" Lukas says quietly.

"Of course Lukas, I've already been like a wife to you for the past 6 months."

One evening at the bar where Luke usually drinks his Calvados brandy with beer, Zoly appears.

As they converse, Zoly mentions that Lozorius requested Lukas' assistance back in Lithuania...and that Elena is alive. This also could be a set up.

For Lukas, he runs the risk of not knowing, he has to return, if not for Lozorius, then certainly for Elena.

Monika is determined to go with him, but he refuses to further discuss the matter with her.

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Winter 1949

Lukas parachutes back in to Lithuania, landing between trees. Nightingale greets him. Nightingale angrily asks why Lukas returned. Lukas tells him that he heard Elena was alive. They head towards Lozorius' bunker. On the way they encounter eight collaborators but they do not exchange fire.

Lukas and Nightingale seek out Lozorius. Lozorius confirms Elena is alive, living in Merkine with forged identity documents. Lozorius asks how Lukas knew of this. Lukas says he got the message from Zoly who said it came from Lozorius. Lozorius points out that his radio transmitter has been broken for months. Lukas understands that Zoly set him up. All the same Lozorius says he desperately needs Lukas' help to return to the West. The partisan cause is totally lost according to Lozorius and he wants to get out. Nightingale suggests that Lukas shoot Lozorius because his conduct is treacherous.

Lukas, Nightingale, and Lozorius listen to 'Voice of America', from Lozorius' radio. The soothing Lithuanian voice from far away Washington tells them the Americans will come to liberate them soon. Nightingale sarcastically says the Americans promised the same thing last Easter.

Lukas and Nightingale head across country. They come to a farmhouse where the farmer tries to poison Nightingale. Nightingale figures out the plan and tries to force the farmer to drink the poisoned milk. The farmer confesses and begs for his life "we have children", he says. Nightingale shoots the man "and don't we also have children?" The Farmer's wife intervenes and Nightingale shoots her too. He tells their children to run to a nearby farm.

The men stop at the farmhouse of Justinas and his wife Aldona in search of food. The men are admitted and fed. Nightingale begs to see Justinas' children. Justinas grudgingly allows. He also slips a note to Nightingale. The men leave and Nightingale cries somehow unprompted. Nightingale explains to Lukas that Justinas is the man who married his ex-wife Aldona, a woman he had to abandon to fight with the partisans. Justinas made a promise to Nightingale that he would raise the children as his own but in exchange, Nightingale had to stay away. Nightingale would visit the farm and watch the children from afar. This was why Nightingale kept disappearing and also why Nightingale would not flee to the West.

Then, Nightingale shares with Lukas Elena's whereabouts in Merkine; it is written on the little note from Justinas.

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The next day, the tall, bespectacled poet Rimantas arrives at Lukas's bunker with a bundle of his poems. He is expecting a warm welcome, as he is now eager to become a partisan and edit the underground press. Lukas and Nightingale tell him to leave, but Rimantas will not. Lozorius accepts him on the basis of their old friendship from their varsity days in Kaunas but Nightingale and Lukas order Rimantas to leave and by another route.

Nightingale accompanies Lukas to the outskirts of Merkine and takes a letter from him in case something should happen. He embraces Lukas warmly before quickly disappearing into the forest.

Meanwhile at Lozorius' bunker, Rimantas reappears and opens the bunker cover; he doesn't expect to see Lozorius snoring on a cot with an empty bottle of vodka next to him. Rimantas contemplates for a moment; he then pulls out a grenade from his satchel and goes outside. After a lengthy pause, with great determination, he tosses it into the bunker, closes the cover and moves aside. The explosion tears the cover off the bunker. To Rimantas' horror, out crawls Lozorius, bloodied and shredded and very much alive. He is hell bent on chasing Rimantas, shooting at him wildly. Rimantas runs through a muddy field towards his waiting squad of collaborators. With his shoes getting stuck in the mud, he falls face first into the muddy quagmire; once down, he fearfully waits to be shot. Lozorius comes running onto the field; seeing the waiting collaborators, he stops. Realizing it is all over, he screams, "Nobody can kill me, only me." He puts the gun barrel in his mouth and pulls the trigger.

In the distance Nightingale hears the echoes of the explosion and the gunshot but does not realize their significance. He sees smoke rise beyond the trees in the distance, up ahead. He changes directions, moving away from the column of smoke. Out of the clear blue sky, Nightingale is shot in the chest. He falls to the ground. NKVD soldiers emerge from the thickets and ransack his body. They find Lukas' letter and toss it aside with a derisive laugh.

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Lukas is wandering the streets of Merkine at twilight. He sees an old woman with a black headscarf sweeping the empty street. Leaving the scene, she turns to Lukas and laughs a hideous, toothless laugh. Lukas recoils. She is like a portent of Death. The street is suspiciously empty and he hesitates. Before spotting a light lit at the address he was given for Elena's house.

Lukas knocks on the basement apartment door. Elena, whose head is enveloped with a scarf to hide her scars, does not acknowledge Lukas until she turns the radio on. She then asks, "Why did you come back?"

Lukas tells her it is to rescue her from Lithuania. Elena says it is a foolish notion and that it is impossible. She reveals that Lukas has a son. That she was pregnant when captured and therefore the Soviets bargained for whatever they wanted. He cannot remove his gaze from Elena and his son, a small boy whom she holds in her arms. Until this moment, Lukas had no idea of his existence. Just before dawn, Elena tells him not to go out with guns blazing but to accept surrender; that way it offers a chance for her and the child to live.

Approaching the doorway, Lukas embraces Elena for the last time, urging her never to blame herself. He closes the door as the bright searchlights find him. He raises his arms outstretched and Christ-like.

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Mariampole 1961

Monika arrives at a café. By coincidence she encounters Ignacas with whom she furtively inquires about the fate of Lukas Petronas. Ignacas denies any knowledge, he directs her to the cleaning woman on the floor who also denies any knowledge; it is Elena, somehow aged beyond her years after her time in Siberia. Elena asks why Monika wants to know about Petronas. Monika tells her it is because Lukas was her husband. Ignacas intimidates Monika for asking questions about Lukas and threatens her. Monika leaves. She gets into a Volga waiting for her.

In the Volga, Zoly expresses that his wife Monika is in Lithuania to find out what happened to Lukas Petronas. The Driver of the vehicle offers up a poetic answer for Zoly, laced with religious longing, an almost hagiographic account. The driver is a much older Rimantas.

Later that night, Elena home with her son, tries to conceal her tears. Hope springs eternal right next to the well of despair.

<The End>