

TKO
STUDIOS
No. 1 OF 6

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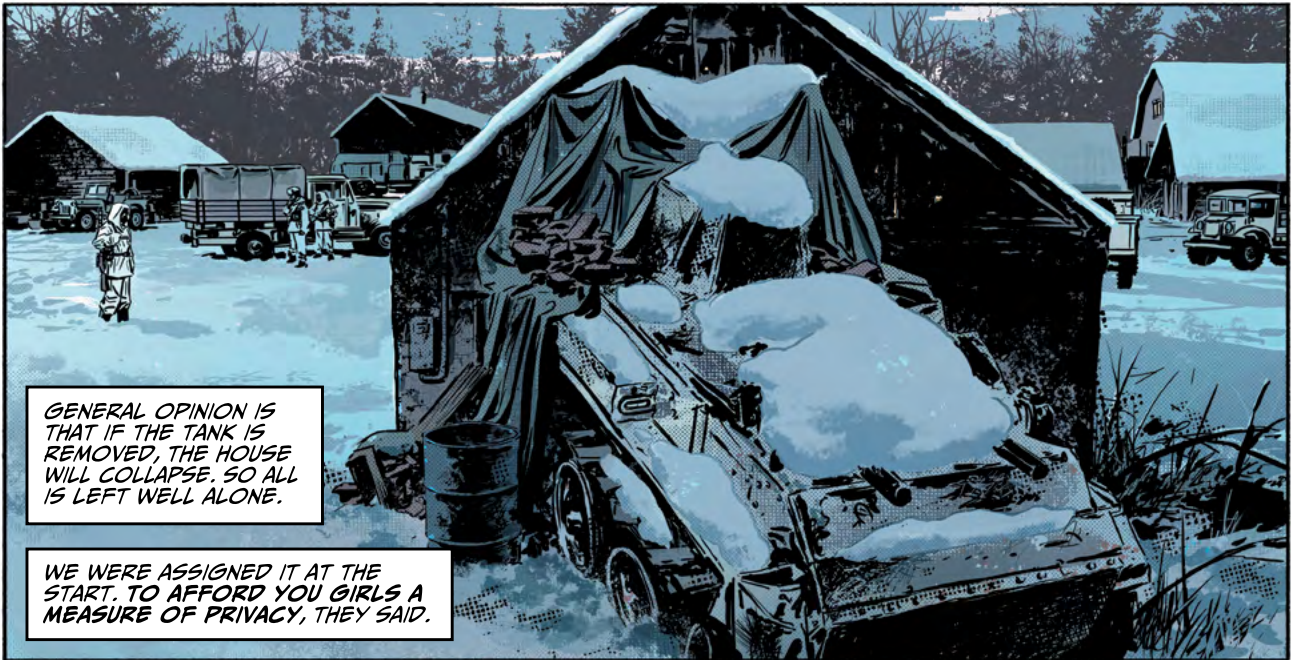
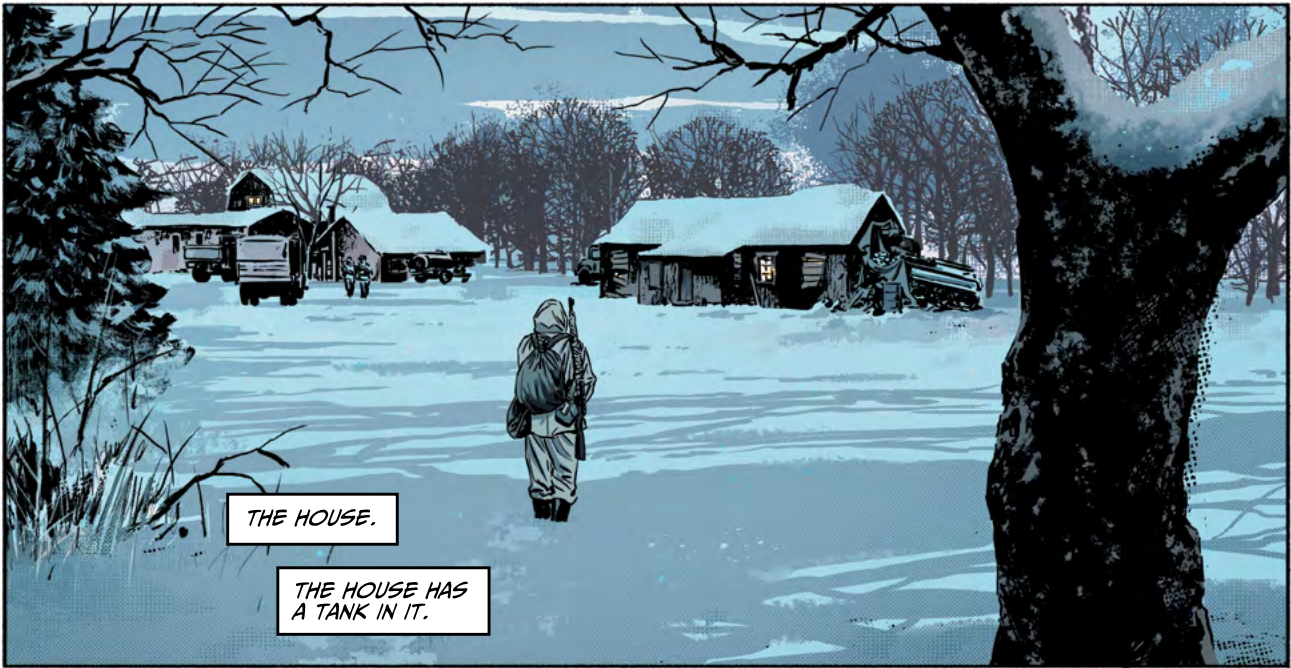
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1: WORDS TO LIVE BY







DO THEY WANT ME...?

ONLY JUST BEEN BROUGHT IN. I EXPECT THEY'LL LET YOU KNOW.



HEH HEH HEH.

PUSS-PUSS-PUSS-PUSS...

WHAT'S FOR DINNER?

DON'T KNOW. THEY'RE LATE TONIGHT.



MAYBE PUSS-PUSS-PUSS-PUSS...

OH, MARI!

BETTER THAN WHAT'S GOING IN THE POT DOWN THE ROAD IN LENINGRAD.



NATA...!

WELL, WE'VE ALL HEARD THE STORIES...

YES, AND THAT'S WHAT THEY ARE. STORIES.

LET'S NOT, MM?



SORRY,
YRINA.

FORGET IT.

THE GUN.



THE GUN HAS A NAME, MADE
UP OF WORDS AND NUMBERS.

A MEASUREMENT IN
MILLIMETRES, A DECIMAL
POINT, ALL BEFITTING A
PRECISION INSTRUMENT.



CALL IT A RIFLE,
I WAS TOLD--



BUT IT IS A GUN.



THIS IS GETTING
INCONVENIENT.

IF THE TARGET APPEARS,
AND THEY'RE STILL HERE?



I SHOOT. AND
THEY LOOK UP.

WEAPONS IN THE AIM—
AT LEAST—BY THE TIME
I DROP THE GRENADES.



GET A COUPLE. SHOCK THE
REST. START SHOOTING.

BUT.



IF I DON'T GET THE
TWO WITH THE M.P.40s
STRAIGHTAWAY.

IF WHOEVER'S WITH THE
TARGET HEARS THE RUCKUS.

IF I WOUND INSTEAD OF
KILL, ONE SINGLE TIME.



IF ONE OF THEM—JUST ONE—IS THE KIND I DON'T NEED HIM TO BE, A HARD-AS-NAILS VETERAN WHO KNOWS THAT FIGHTING THROUGH THE SHOCK IS HIS ONLY WAY TO STAY ALIVE.



I'VE SEEN IT DONE.

I'VE DONE IT.



SO.

WAIT.



WHAT ELSE IS THERE, AFTER ALL.



I'M GETTING
TIRED. AREN'T YOU
TIRED?



SO I'LL MAKE IT
SIMPLE FOR YOU: WHOEVER
TALKS FIRST GETS TO LIVE.
THE OTHER TWO GET TAKEN
INTO THE WOODS AND
GUESS WHAT.

ANYONE?
NO?



ON WE GO,
THEN—



...SO NEVER BE AFRAID TO COME AND SPEAK TO ME. THAT'S WHAT I'M HERE FOR.

OH, HELLO, COMRADES. DINNER! I SHOULD GET OUT OF YOUR WAY.



MM-HM.

I HEAR YOU DID WELL THIS AFTERNOON, SARA. THEY ARE VERY PLEASED WITH YOU.



GLAD TO HEAR IT, COMRADE LIEUTENANT.

OH, SARA, YOU REALLY DON'T HAVE TO CALL ME—

RAISA, DO YOU WANT TO STAY AND EAT WITH US? THERE'S MORE THAN ENOUGH TO GO AROUND.

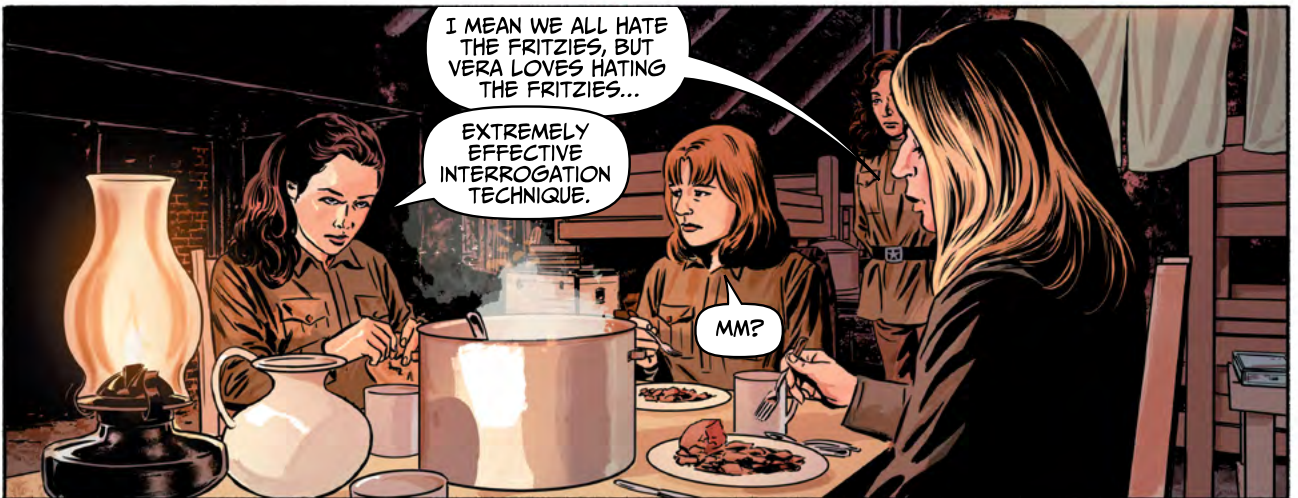
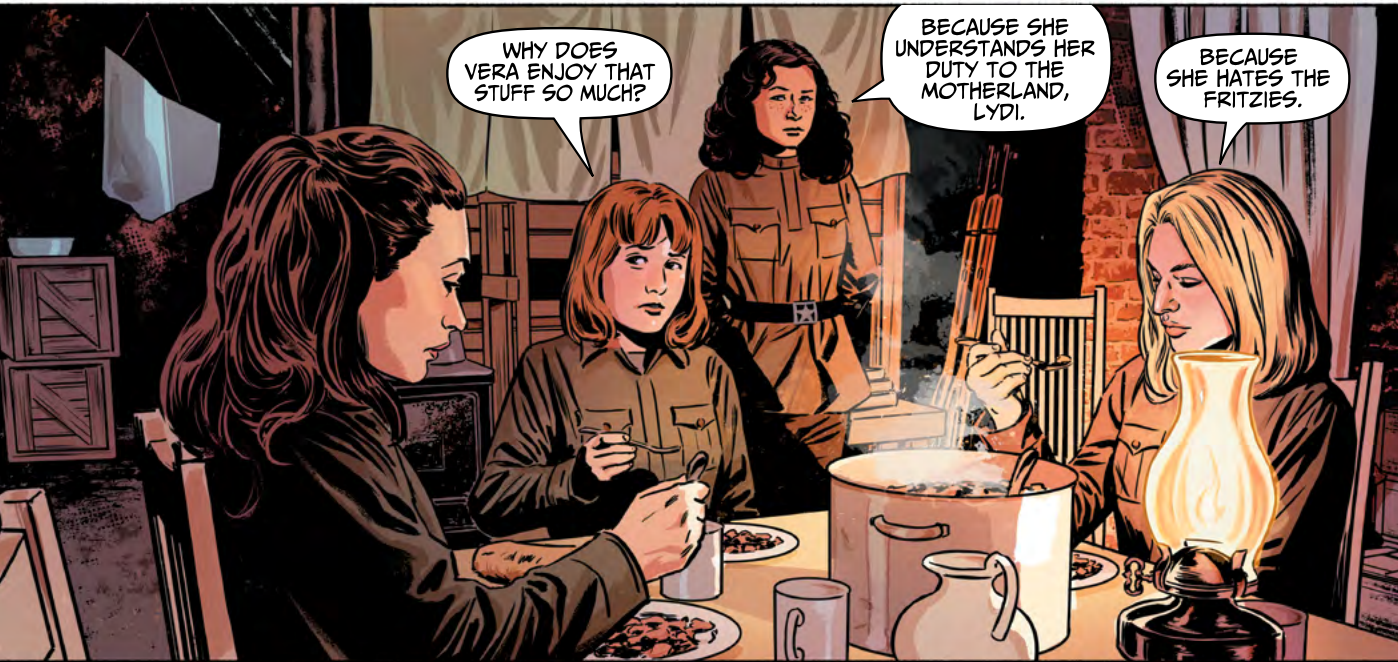
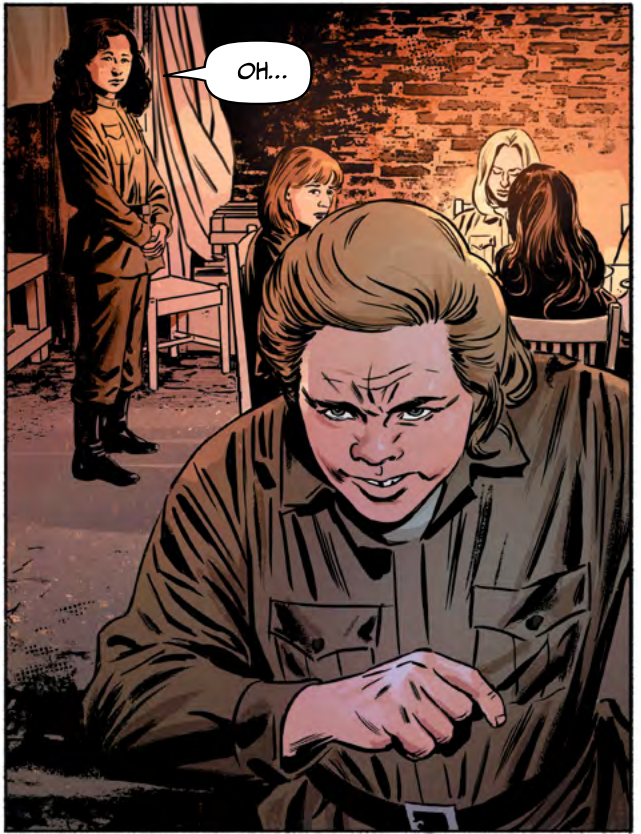


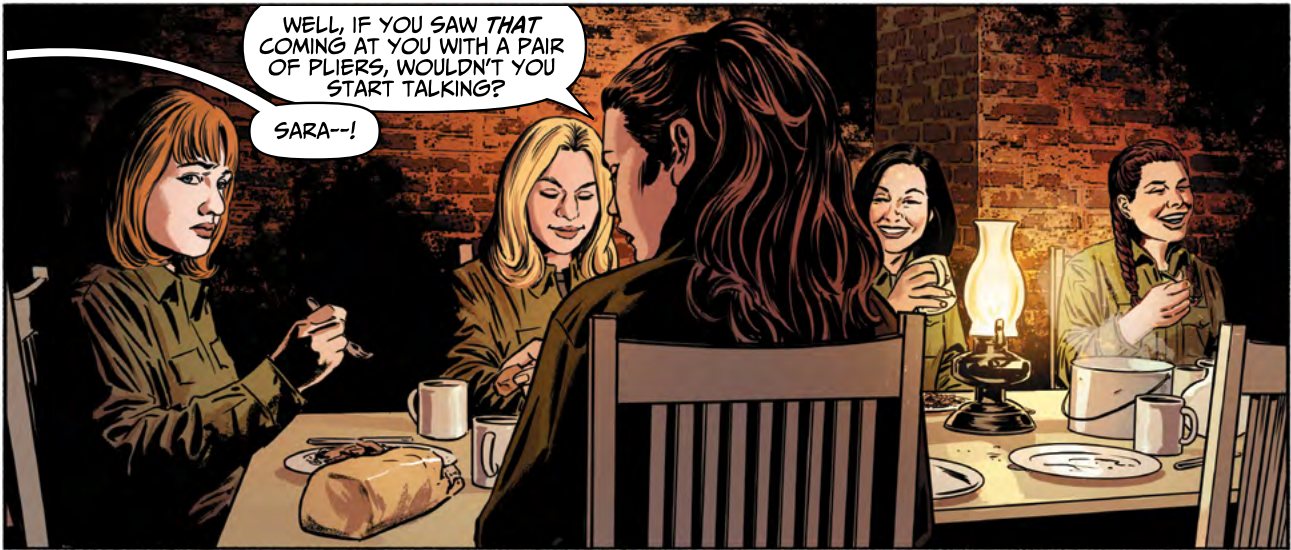
OH NO, NO! NO, I'VE ALREADY EATEN.

HMH.

I SHOULD BE GETTING OUT OF YOUR HAIR.

VERA?





WELL, IF YOU SAW *THAT* COMING AT YOU WITH A PAIR OF PLIERS, WOULDN'T YOU START TALKING?

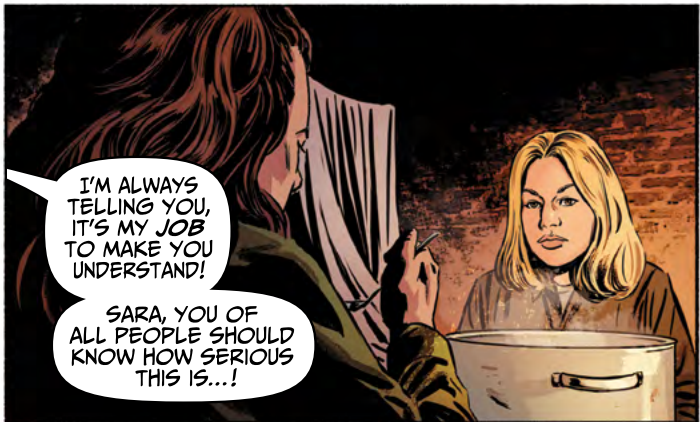
SARA--!



NOBODY TALKS! IF YOU'RE TAKEN ALIVE YOU DO NOT TALK! YOU GIVE THE FASCISTS NOTHING!

IT WAS A JOKE, RAISA.

IT'S NOT A LAUGHING MATTER...!



I'M ALWAYS TELLING YOU, IT'S MY *JOB* TO MAKE YOU UNDERSTAND!

SARA, YOU OF ALL PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW HOW SERIOUS THIS IS...!



YOU KNOW, IF WE'RE TAKEN ALIVE, WHAT WE SAY OR DON'T SAY WILL BE THE VERY LEAST OF OUR WORRIES.

WH...?

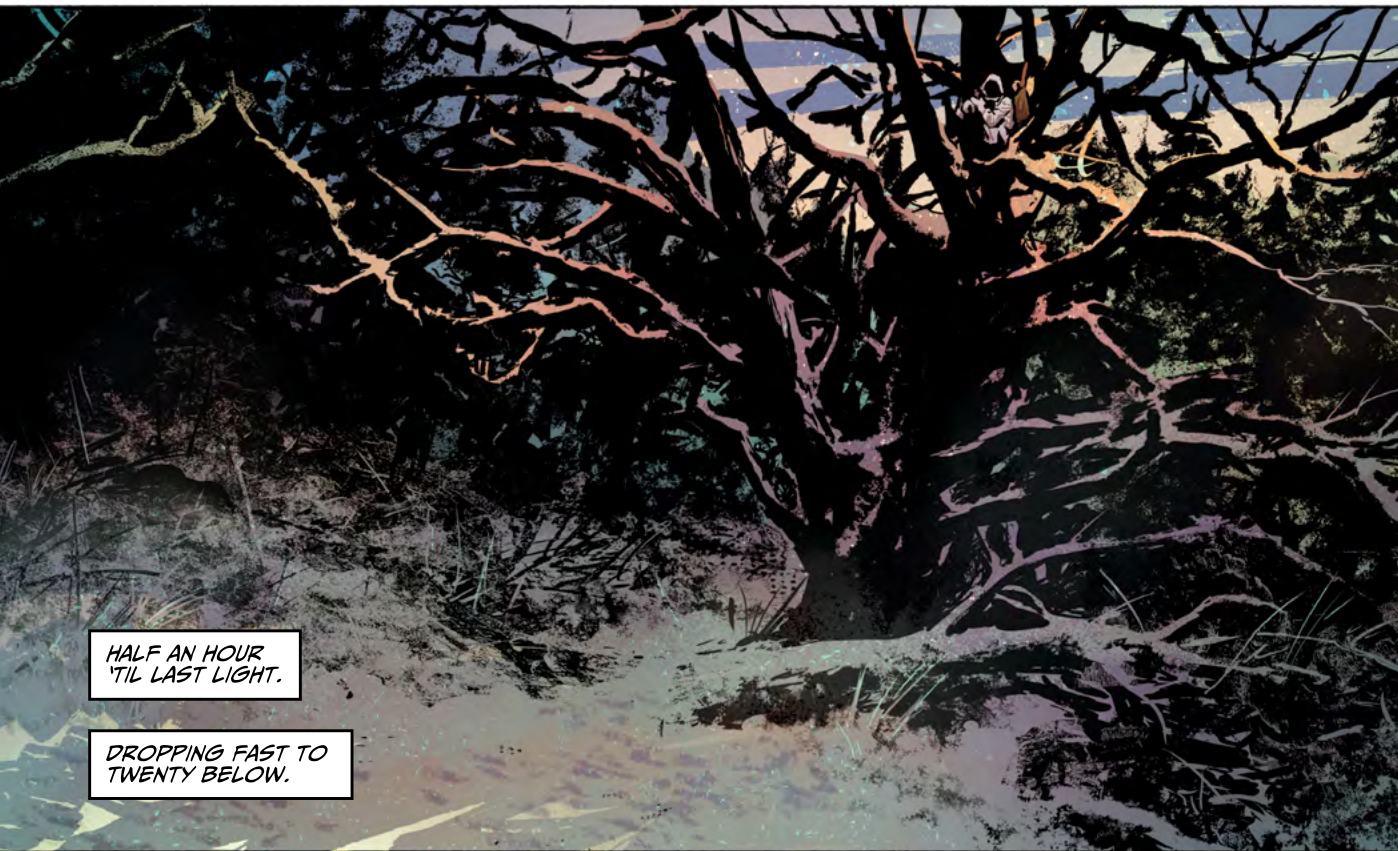
WHICH IS WHY WE DON'T INTEND TO BE TAKEN ALIVE.



UM. I SHOULD, I SHOULD LEAVE YOU TO YOUR DINNER.

SEE YOU TOMORROW.





HALF AN HOUR
'TIL LAST LIGHT.

DROPPING FAST TO
TWENTY BELOW.



COME ON IF
YOU'RE COMING.



YOU?



NO.

ALL THAT WAVING, ALL
THAT SHOUTING: YOU'RE
A CAPTAIN AT THE MOST.

NOT A COLONEL.







IT'S LIKE A ROUTINE. YOU GET THE FEELING HE'D SOUND THE SAME, WHETHER WE WERE BEING OVERRUN BY TANKS OR HE WAS SHOPPING FOR SOCKS.

IRINA RECKONS IT'S MEANT TO ALARM US, TO SHOW US THIS IS NO PLACE FOR WOMEN...

WHICH MAKES NO SENSE.

UNLESS HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND WE LIVE HERE.

COMRADES? GIRLS?

GIRLS, CAN YOU IMAGINE? IF ONE OF YOU GOT THIS NAZI, AT THE *EXACT MOMENT* HE WAS GIVING HIS FASCIST SALUTE?

HE RAISES HIS HAND, AND HE SAYS THOSE FILTHY WORDS—CAN YOU IMAGINE WHAT IT WOULD DO FOR—

I THINK THAT PART WAS A JOKE TOO.

EVERY DAY WE GO LOOKING FOR TROUBLE.



MOST WORK IN PAIRS, AS SHOOTER AND SPOTTER. SOME PREFER TO BE ON THEIR OWN.



VERA AND DARYA,
MARI AND NATA.

LYDI STILL UNDER
'KINA'S WING.



WE'RE TOGETHER AS FAR
AS THE CHECKPOINT.



AFTER THAT WE AREN'T.

THERE YOU ARE.



LET'S SAY SEVEN
HUNDRED METRES.

I'VE DONE BETTER, BUT
ONLY ON THE RANGE.



THINK ABOUT
THE DISTANCE.

THINK ABOUT THE
WHISPER OF WIND.

THINK ABOUT THE
DYING LIGHT.

THINK ABOUT THE
BULLET, NESTLED
SNUGLY IN ITS CASING.



OUT THERE, NAKED AT THE END OF ITS
PARABOLA, IT WILL BE NOTHING BUT A
TUMBLING WAD OF LEAD.

SO GIVE IT THE HEIGHT
IT NEEDS TO TUMBLE.



BREATHE.





BREATHE.

BREATHE.

HOLD IT.



LET IT OUT.



FOR THE MOTHERLAND,
I USED TO SAY.

THE REST STILL DO.
BELIEVERS ALL.

'RINA AS A MATTER OF
FAITH. LYDI WITH ALL HER
BRAVE YOUNG HEART.

VERA GROWLS IT ALOUD
WITH EVERY SHOT.

FOR THE MOTHERLAND.
I RECALL THE FLARE OF
WARMTH IT BROUGHT, THE
COMFORT ON EACH STEP
THROUGH HELL.

BUT THOSE DAYS
ARE BEHIND ME NOW.
THE WORDS I NEED
I CANNOT SPEAK.

TO ACCOMPANY A BULLET
I CAN NEVER FIRE.

TO BE CONTINUED

WANT TO KEEP READING?



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