

Godspeed

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A Family Story Films Presents

The true story of Emil Zatopek

A Family Story Films

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1 INT. STADIUM TUNNEL. HELSINKI. DAY.

CROWD  
Zatopek! Zatopek! Zatopek!

FADE IN.:

SHOED FEET RUNNING ON PAVEMENT.

A man runs through a darkened tunnel. The cries of the thunderous crowd literally shake the ground.

The man is silhouetted by the light from the far end of the tunnel. Eighty thousand voices cry out in unity.

CROWD  
Zatopek! Zatopek! Zatopek!

As the man exits the far end of the tunnel he disappears into the light.

2 EXT. ZATOPEK HOUSE. EARLY MORNING.

The cries of the crowd slowly fade away.

The sound of snoring echoes through a well-tended backyard garden that boasts a prune, pear, and apple tree. There are also mulberry bushes, two goats, a few hens, and geese in cramped, fenced off sections.

The sporadic snoring can be heard over the sound of bees buzzing around five beehives set off to the side of a humble wood and stone house. Thick shutters cover each window, keeping the early fall chill at bay.

3 INT. BEDROOM. ZATOPEK HOUSE. EARLY MORNING.

The snoring is extraordinarily loud. EMIL ZATOPEK (13) lays in a small double bed. He is a thin boy with big ears and a head that's a little too large for his narrow shoulders. Emil is annoyed as he stares up at the ceiling. Snoring rips through the room again as Emil pulls the pillow around his head and turns to his side.

Laying next to Emil is his little brother JIRI (11). Jiri is also awake and offers Emil a commiserate look.

Emil sits up at the sound of an exhausted "sigh" from across the cramped room.

In another corner is their older sister FRANTA (15), who is

sitting up in an identical double bed she shares with their sister MARIE (16). Marie is facing the wall and apparently still able to sleep. Franta and Emil share a look of wide-eyed exasperation.

In a third, single bed is Emil's older brother BOHUS (14), who is fast asleep and SNORING LOUDLY.

A thoughtful look illuminates Emil's eyes followed by a mischievous grin. He quietly crawls out of bed and tiptoes across the room and out the door.

Franta and Jiri share a look before following Emil out.

4 INT. ZATOPEK HOUSE. KITCHEN. EARLY MORNING.

Emil creeps into the kitchen. The room is small, a porcelain sink, a shelf with some dishes neatly stacked, an icebox and a cupboard. Plain, practical and clean.

Emil opens the cupboard and grabs a small tin as Franta and Jiri arrive.

FRANTA  
(whisper)  
What are you doing?

EMIL  
Shhh!

Jiri can't help but bounce excitedly on his toes. Though he doesn't know what's going to happen, he still grins at Emil with younger brother devotion.

Emil smiles at his siblings then takes a deep breath.

5 INT. BEDROOM. ZATOPEK HOUSE. EARLY MORNING.

The bedroom door opens silently. Bohus is still snoring with vigor, Marie is still miraculously asleep.

Emil leopard crawls the short distance to the bed with the tin in hand. Jiri and Franta arrive in the doorway.

Emil slowly rises as he unscrews the lid. Bohus' snores are in no way rhythmic but come out in guttural bursts.

Emil carefully holds the tin directly over his brother's open mouth waiting for just the right moment.

FRANTA

(whisper)

Emil, no!

Emil bites his lip in anticipation. As Bohus snorts a particularly large snore, Emil turns his wrist, emptying the entire tin of salt into Bohus's mouth.

The reaction is immediate. His brother's eyes shoot open as his snore disintegrates into choked coughing. Jiri bursts out laughing. Though shocked, even Franta can't help but giggle. Marie turns over and opens groggy eyes.

Emil takes a step back and watches Bohus with a look of pure excitement.

His older brother is hunched over, gagging, spitting and trying to breathe. Marie assesses the scene.

MARIE

Emil!

Bohus turn to Emil with a murderous look, he has also figured it out. Emil's excitement dissolves into fear.

FRANTA

Run!

Bohus leaps from the bed as Emil scrambles back, momentarily blocked by Franta and a squealing Jiri. Emil slips past, barely escaping Bohus's lunging grasp.

6 INT. HALLWAY. ZATOPEK HOUSE. SUNRISE.

Emil darts down the hallway as Bohus tries to shout at him. Bohus's voice comes out in a croak.

BOHUS

You're dead!

Emil runs into the main room and over to the door. He pulls it part way open but Bohus arrives and slams it shut. Emil, laughing hysterically, leaps back and dashes into the kitchen and behind the table. Bohus picks up a chair. Emil holds out his hands.

EMIL

Father will kill you!

Bohus suddenly realizes what he is holding and gently sets it back down. He eyes the table and then snatches his father's

ruler.

Emil's eyes widen.

7 EXT. ZATOPEK HOUSE. SUNRISE.

The kitchen shutters slam open as Emil leaps outside, landing with a thud. Bohus drops just behind him as Emil scrambles to his feet and sprints through the garden. Jiri runs out yelling.

JIRI  
Run Emil, run!

At first, Emil is concerned, his face twisted as he exerts himself. But not for long. He is faster than Bohus. He starts laughing as he runs.

We rise higher.

Bohus chases Emil away from the smallest of four humble stand-alone houses at the bottom of Kvetna Street.

higher and higher we rise.

Emil is chased through a wheat field and into the woods along the Lubina river and still, Bohus pursues.

We leave the boys far behind as we follow the river that winds through wooded hills. The leaves painting the trees have begun to change color with the arrival of Fall. we turn to the north as The trees slowly give way to houses and then buildings.

Title card: Koprivnice, Czechoslovakia, 1936.

Koprivnice is nestled between rolling green hills and in the shadow of Beskyd Mountain. In the distance, a number of smokestacks billow thick white plumes from the Tatra (car) manufacturer.

Through the pollution, we fly as the city comes into full view. Into the city, we go. There is a stark austerity to it, a beat down despondency.

This is the middle of The Great Depression and though it is early, a number of men make their way toward the Tatra factory by foot or bicycle.

8 EXT. KOPRIVNICE. CZECHOSLOVAKIA. MORNING.

TWO pairs of Black shod feet walk along cobbled streets.

Emil walks with his brother Jiri. Both carry a notebook and wear button-up cream shirts with black slacks.

A Czech military truck drives past followed by a horse-drawn cart.

The boys pass a storefront that boasts a Nazi flag hanging from a window. They continue past a government building with Czech soldiers on guard and a large Czech flag hanging from the rooftop.

OTA (13), and JAROMIL (12) walk across the street toward the Zatopek brothers. Ota waves at them.

Emil grins at his friends as they join him and Jiri.

OTA CONT'D

Where's your sister?

The other three boys share a grin.

EMIL

She went ahead.

JAROMIL

(teasing)

She's trying to avoid you, Ota. She thinks you are ugly. Emil, tell him. Fran thinks he is a toad.

Ota grimaces as the boys laugh. As they walk past a small store with fresh fruit in the window, a horse-drawn cart shifts to the side to allow a cart to pass. The cart nearly runs into Jiri who steps away and bumps into a well-dressed man wearing a Nazi armband.

GERMAN-CZECH CITIZEN

(In German)

Mind your backs! Filthy Czech!

The boys all turn to watch the man stride away.

JAROMIL

(quietly)

Miserable Germans.

JIRI  
 (at the back of the German)  
 Taking our jobs!

The boys nod as they watch the man disappear around a corner. Ota spits for added emphasis.

EMIL  
 They can have my job. I hate tending  
 the bees! Bohus says theres lots of  
 work in Prague. Plus univerities,  
 museums, cathedrals-

OTA  
 -concerts, cabarets, and girls!

Laughter.

They have arrived at school along with a number of other students. The schoolhouse has an industrial look. They turn in through a wrought-iron gate and walk inside.

9 EXT. ZATOPEK HOUSE. AFTERNOON.

Scores of bees buzz around Emil as he tends a hive. He slides out a frame covered in bees and oozing with honey. He shakes the frame displacing most of the bees then places a corner on the ground and gently brushes off the few bees that remain.

SDP MEMBER  
 Hello young sir.

A young man SDP MEMBER (23) stands at the fence. He is dressed smartly and wearing a Nazi armband.

SDP MEMBER  
 Is your Father-

FRANTISEK (43), Emil's father, is working nearby with Jiri beside him. He is a large, muscular man wearing overalls from the Tatra factory. Frantisek stands tall and takes a few steps toward the fence.

FRANTISEK  
 We're not interested.

SDP MEMBER  
 Sir, I-

FRANTISEK  
 -I know what you are. And I have no

interest in what you're peddling.

SDP MEMBER  
(condescending)  
The Trade Unions will soon be dead and  
then where will you be?

Frantisek turns his back on the man and continues his work.  
He tips a bucket full of waxy honey through a screen.

FRANTISEK  
Good day, sir.

SDP Member is angry. He turns to leave then offers Emil a  
condescending nod.

SDP MEMBER  
The men of our father's generation are  
blind. But the Fuehrer is coming. And  
when he does -

Frantisek turns around and takes a threatening step forward.

FRANTISEK  
Good day, sir!

SDP member sees the look in Frantisek's eyes and takes a  
fearful step back. After a moment he stops himself.

SDP MEMBER  
Heil Hitler.

SDP Member turns on his heel and stalks away. Frantisek is  
angry as he watches SDP Member walk away. He turns back to  
his bucket.

FRANTISEK  
Hand me the spatula.  
(beat)  
Son?

Frantisek holds his hand out for the wooden spatula.

FRANTISEK  
(forceful)  
Son?

Jiri jumps and quickly retrieves a wooden spatula, handing it  
to his father. Frantisek begins to forcefully scrape the comb  
and the honey into the bucket. He is clearly agitated.



Emil carries another frame filled with honeycomb to a table and places it into another pan.

Jiri takes the pan and starts walking it to his father.

JIRI

Ahh!

Jiri drops the pan as his hand goes to his arm, nursing a fresh bee sting.

A ruler appears out of nowhere, whipping Jiri hard. Once, twice, three times, the ruler lands, striking Jiri's bottom, and upper legs. He squeals, trying to escape his father's punishment.

FRANTISEK CONT'D

That's half a pound wasted!

Jiri quickly kneels, trying to save all the honeycomb he can by grabbing big globs of it and putting it back into the pan. Frantisek is angry, almost uncontrollably.

JIRI

I'm sorry, father.

Frantisek shakes, his anger not yet abated. He raises the ruler one more time.

ANEZKA

Frantisek!

Emil's mother, ANEZKA (40) is beautiful and loving and is standing at the door. Emil, Jiri, and Frantisek all turn to her. Anezka has locked eyes with Frantisek.

ANEZKA CONT'D

I was just telling Marie that we should keep some of the honey for our biscuits tonight.

Frantisek's stern expression softens as he lowers the ruler to his side. He nods and begins to wipe his hands on his apron.

FRANTISEK

(looking to Emil)

Finish up.

(to Jiri- almost gently)

Salvage what you can, son.

Frantisek walks into the house. No one else moves.

ANEZKA CONT'D  
Quick now, dinner is ready!

FADE TO BLACK.:

10 EXT. ZATOPEK HOUSE. EVENING.

Winter has come and with it a fresh blanket of snow covering Koporvince. The streets are busy with factory workers but also a large number of soldiers and military vehicles.

Competing with the wind and resounding from inside the Zatopek house the sounds of happy singing can be heard.

11 INT. ZATOPEK HOUSE. MAIN ROOM. EVENING.

The family has gathered around the fire, Frantisek and Anezka sit in sturdy wooden chairs, Marie has a violin out. It is old and beautiful. She is playing it while the family sings along. Jiri and Franta are dancing. Emil sits next to his mother.

They all sing the last line of the traditional Moravian folk song, Prší, Prší - Tancuj, Tancuj (It Is Snowing - Dance, Dance). The dancing stops and everyone laughs and claps happily.

Frantisek beckons Maria to play another song. This one is softer and very melodic, a well known hymn. Kéž na vás Bůh obličej svůj vzhledne" (May God's Face Shine Upon You):As everyone listens, Frantisek retrieves a pipe and a box of matches from his pocket. Emil notices his father watching him with a considering look. Emil meets his eyes.

EMIL  
Father?

Franta starts to sing another song and is quickly joined by Bohus and Jiri.

Frantisek leans forward so Emil can hear him over the music. He speaks in a quiet voice. Anezka is close enough to hear the exchange.

FRANTISEK CONT'D  
Mother tells me you have applied to  
the Bata school in Zlin.

Emil searches his father's face for approval.

EMIL  
 There are no jobs here.  
 (beat)  
 And Bata has a school.

Frantisek doesn't answer for a long moment.

FRANTISEK  
 You want to leave the Sudetenland,  
 hmm?

EMIL  
 Yes.

FRANTISEK  
 You did this on your own?

EMIL  
 Yes, father.

Frantisek strikes a match, placing the flame in the bowl of his pipe. After a moment he leans back and offers Emil a nod.

FRANTISEK  
 It is a good life. Away from here.

Emil smiles at his father's approval. Frantisek turns his attention to Marie, then leans forward and adds his voice to the song.

FRANTISEK  
*"May God's Face Shine Upon You"*

Emil grins at his mother who watches him with a mixture of pride and longing.

ANEZKA  
 You will be a good student and worker.  
 It's not Prauge but it will do. And  
 you should be safe there.  
 (serious)  
 You are capable, never forget it.  
 (beat)  
 And you will come home to visit.

Emil grins at his mother as he stands and crawls onto her lap wrapping his arms around you.

ANEZKA CONT'D  
 I will miss you, Emil.

12 EXT. KOPRIVNICE. CZECHOSLOVAKIA. LATE EVENING.

Snow has been replaced by the fresh buds of Spring. Soft light shines on the cobblestones from a nearby lamppost.

Frantisek stands at the back of a crowded room full of Union Party members. He is just barely inside the door. He is agitated. There is a table at the front with men sitting behind it. A banner behind them reads "International All-Trade Union Federation." It includes the Soviet Hammer and Sickle.

Emil stands just outside the door watching two boys kick a soccer ball against a wall across the street. Above them hangs the SdP flag (Sudeten German Party in Czechoslovakia) with a Nazi flag hanging next to it. Emil approaches the boys.

EMIL

Kick it here.

Boy 1 kicks the ball to Emil who kicks it back. The boys continue to play as Frantisek speaks to another man standing by the door.

There is an outburst from inside the room. Emil turns to see his father stomp out and walk toward their horse and cart with a paper in hand. Emil follows. His father offers an agitated look at the boys playing soccer.

FRANTISEK

Emil! You behave like a child?! The time for games is past!

(beat)

Come, we're leaving!

EMIL

Yes, Father.

Frantisek takes a deep breath then forgets the issues. He looks back toward where the meeting is being held. He and Emil walk to their cart.

FRANTISEK

There are two ways to be fooled son, either you choose to believe what isn't true...

Frantisek crumples the Union flyer that's been stamped with the hammer and sickle of the communist party.

FRANTISEK CONT'D

(glances at the Nazi flag.)  
Or refuse to believe what is.

EMIL

Father?

Frantisek begins to untie the reigns from the cart. He turns and looks at Emil.

FRANTISEK

We are a new nation, a fragile child  
trapped between two rabid dogs. One  
dog,  
(looks toward the meeting)  
offers empty promises in exchange for  
our birthright while the other beast  
prowls at our door. And we have no  
friends, Emil. We are alone. Do you  
understand?

Emil doesn't respond, he listens close, knows what his father says is significant, but doesn't understand. They both mount the cart.

FRANTISEK CONT'D

You were born Czech,  
(meets Emil's eyes)  
free. But freedom costs something. And  
I fear we are not finished paying.  
(looking ahead)  
It's time to grow up.

Frantisek clicks his tongue, flicks the reigns and the horse starts out. As they ride away the Nazi flag looms large in the background.

13 INT./EXT. TRAIN. MORNING.

Emil sits at the window seat of an old steam train as it rolls slowly away from the platform.

The Zatopek family have all come to see him off. Emil waves at them. Jiri breaks into a run as he momentarily keeps up with the train. Emil waves at his little brother until he disappears in a spout of steam.

As the platform is lost from sight, Emil faces forward and studies the interior of the train. He is the youngest occupant by far. He looks small and alone. He retrieves his mother's present from the night before and unwraps the paper.

Inside is an apple picked from the family tree. Emil smiles and takes an enormous bite.

TRAVEL MONTAGE.:

the train chugs through the mountains.

THE TRAIN ROARS THROUGH A LONG TUNNEL.

THE TRAIN rolls over grassy hills.

the train approaches the city of zlin.

The grassy hills fade into a sprawling city that lacks the beauty of Koprivnice but manages to maintain all of its starkness.

Spread throughout the city are a seemingly endless sea of enormous plain white warehouses. Emil watches the approaching city with a mixture of fear and excitement.

At the center of Zlin is the Bata Shoemakers headquarters, rising to an impressive 16 floors.

The train pulls into the station.

14 EXT. ZLIN TRAIN STATION. AFTERNOON.

Emil exits to find a stern man with wire-rimmed glasses DORM MASTER LINDHART (22), waiting at the end of the platform. Lindhart is holding a sign that reads, "*Bata, First Years.*"

Emil retrieves a crumpled piece of paper from his coat pocket and smoothes it out. At the top of the page, the Bata logo looms large. The typed letter reads, "*Emil Zatopek, you have been accepted to the esteemed Bata Shoemaker Training School. You are to arrive in Zlin on the 3 PM train on July 22, 1937.*"

Emil makes his way over as a gaggle of other boys close to his age also arrive. Emil presents his paper to the Dorm Master.

EMIL

Pardon, sir, I am here for the Bata School.

Lindhart ignores Emil who eventually folds the paper and places it back in his coat pocket. The Dorm Master's eyes follow the last young man who joins the group.

LINDHART  
 (ignoring Emil)  
 Take a number.

EMIL  
 Are you talking to-

LINDHART CONT'D  
 (forceful)  
 A number! Take a number!

Lindhart glares at Emil then looks toward a table where an older BATA BOY sits, handing out papers to the newcomers. Emil walks tentatively over, standing next to the table. Bata Boy hands him a slip of paper without bothering to look up. #254 is printed on the paper.

Another boy arrives.

LINDHART CONT'D  
 It seems our last straggler has  
 arrived.  
 (turns on his heel)  
 You will follow me.

The group follows close behind Lindhart who speaks in a sharp tone and walks briskly. He is clearly attempting to project authority. As he speaks Lindhart has the annoying habit of tilting his chin up so he can look down his nose at the newcomers.

LINDHART CONT'D  
 (to no one in particular)  
 The population of Zlin is 26,000. Of  
 those, 13,500 work for Bata. That  
 means more than half of this city  
 exists because of our visionary  
 founder, Tomas Bata.

Many of the boys break into a jog to keep up with the Dorm Master who struts along the cobblestone streets. Emil is not the only one trying to see everything at once.

Bata signs and posters of shoes and inspirational quotes are everywhere. The Czechoslovakian flag is everywhere, there are no Nazi flags in sight.

LINDHART CONT'D  
 Our modern assembly lines were  
 fashioned after those created by the  
 American, Henry Ford.

The group walks along a steep incline toward a set of eight, numbered warehouses with dozens of people walking in and out. The group stops at warehouse number Four. Above the entry is a large sign that reads, *"The young eagles fly towards the sun."*

Just before he enters, Emil turns to look at Zlin. He can see much of it from the top of the hill. The city is thriving and cleaner than Koprivnice. After a moment he realizes everyone else is gone. Emil runs inside to catch up.

15 INT. DORMITORY #4. EVENING.

The inside of the dormitory is enormous, holding three hundred and seventy-five bunkbeds. The warehouse is filled with hundreds of boys between the age of fourteen and sixteen. A sign hangs on a wall, "First to Bata, then to school."

CUT TO.:

Emil trots into a storage corner of the dormitory where the group of boys is collecting blankets from a shelf.

As Emil grabs a blanket, Lindhart starts walking again. All the boys are jogging now, trying to keep up with his impossible pace.

LINDHART CONT'D

Along with traditional studies, Bata first-years are educated in our Shoemaker Basic Training course. Your schedule will be as follows.

16 EXT. BATA FIELD. MORNING.

Emil is one of six hundred teenagers doing jumping jacks. The students have been organized into neat lines that stretch across a large field.

LINDHART V.O.

Every morning at 5 AM you will attend mandatory calisthenics followed by showers and then breakfast.

At the front of the group is a stage where Lindhart leads the calisthenics barking out instructions.

17 INT. DORMITORY #4. EVENING.

Emil and the other boys are jogging to keep up. Lindhart



stops suddenly and raises a finger, wagging it at them.

LINDHART

Promptly at 7 AM, you will report to your shift supervisor. You are expected to be in the factory where you will work until noon.

He begins walking again.

18 INT. BATA FACTORY. MORNING.

Emil works on the assembly line in a warehouse that is a replicant of the dormitory - except for what's inside. He is small and though he is surrounded by hundreds of workers he is very much alone. At the far side of the factory, large sealed chambers emit billows of smoke covering the factory in a thick haze.

LINDHART V.O.

This will be followed by a one hour lunch...

Emil coughs and rubs his eyes. The smell of melted rubber is overwhelming.

19 INT. BATA CAFETERIA. NOON.

Emil sits alone in a large cafeteria filled with hundreds of young men and women. The cafeteria is in a warehouse that is exactly the same as the others, except for what's inside.

LINDHART V.O.

After lunch, you will be back at the factory until 5 PM. Between 5 and 8 are your classes.

All the First Years are exhausted as they eat. While none of the new students talk to each other, the older students seem fairly content and connected.

20 INT. BATA SCHOOL. EVENING.

Still surrounded by hundreds of young men and women, Emil sits at a table with notebook and pencil in hand. The school warehouse is identical to the others.

An instructor speaks from the front, holding a thick piece of leather and pointing to the stitching as he drones on about the importance of the tight stitch.

LINDHART V.O.

Between 8 and 8:45 PM, you will read your textbooks. From 8:45 to 9:00 pm you may take your leisure.

Emil furiously scribbles notes in his booklet.

Sitting nearby is a young couple who are secretly holding hands beneath the table. Emil is intrigued.

CUT TO.:

21 INT. DORMITORY #4. EVENING.

Emil and the rest of the new Bata workers all share the same "overwhelmed" look.

LINDHART

Lights out at 9 PM and not a second later.

The Dorm Master turned his full attention to the boys for the first time.

LINDHART CONT'D

Last but not least, you are expected to sleep with your hands *outside* the covers.

(motions to empty beds)

Your beds have been assigned by number. You may find them now.

Lindhart strides away. Emil and the other boys turn their attention to the pieces of paper they had been given and begin searching for their beds.

Emil passes a number of busy boys, finally finding his bed. Another boy JINDRICH (16), arrives at the same time.

JINDRICH

(friendly)

You want the top or bottom?

EMIL

Top?

JINDRICH

Perfect! I am a bottom bunk fella all the way!

Emil offers Edwin a strange look, but he doesn't notice.

Jindrich offers a hand.

JINDRICH CONT'D

I'm Jindrich. I've a feeling we're  
going to get along just fine!

Emil smiles as he takes Jindrich's hand.

CUT TO.:

The lights are out. Emil is staring at the ceiling with his hands over his covers.

The sound of loud snoring breaks the silence. Emil peaks over the edge of his bed to see that it is Jindrich. He can't help but smile as he rolls onto his back and closes his eyes.

FADE TO BLACK.:

22 EXT. KOPRIVENCE. DAY.

23 INTERCUT HISTORICAL FOOTAGE WITH SHOT FOOTAGE.

Title card: Koprivnice, German Third Reich, Oct 1, 1938.

German columns move leisurely into Emil's hometown of Koprivence.

BBC TV ANNOUNCER V.O

On September 30, 1938, Adolf Hitler, Neville Chamberlain and Edouard Daladier signed the Munich Pact. Thus England and France, as an act of appeasement, have handed the Czechoslovakian borderland, known as the Sudetenland, to Germany.

As the Germans make their way along the road, women wearing shawls, workmen in shabby clothes and children on their way to school all stand silently, watching as their new Nazi overlords arrive.

BBC TV ANNOUNCER V.O

On the same day, Chamberlain declared the Munich agreement as, "Peace for our time," Hitler's army was welcomed by 3 million former German Czech citizens as Germany established control of 70% of Czechoslovakia's coal, steel, and electrical power.

Anezka opens the front door as her children gather. She watches the Nazi arrival of the Panzer tanks with fear filled eyes.

Many of the German residents offer triumphant cheers and one young woman runs up and gives a soldier a flower. But most of the residents of Koprovince just stare blankly.

BBC TV ANNOUNCER V.O  
 Without those resources, the Czech  
 nation will be left vulnerable to  
 complete German domination.

An old German man with a Nazi armband walks next to the soldiers yelling repeatedly.

OLD GERMAN MAN  
 Heim ins Reich! (Back home into the  
 Reich!)

24 INT. DORMITORY #4. MORNING.

Echoes of "Heim ins Reich" fade as the lights blink on.

we are now with our new actor, emil (18).

Emil opens his eyes. He sits up, stretching. He has grown into his large head and no longer has the awkwardness of youth. Though still a young man, his hairline is already receding.

A young man TONDA (16) calls out.

TONDA  
 Post is here. Come and get it. Post is  
 here. Come get your mail.

A number of young men walk over to retrieve their mail, but Emil doesn't move. He continues to stare blankly at the ceiling.

Edwin, who had been laying on the bunk below, stands and leans against the bed.

JINDRICH  
 I'm sure your family is alright. Just  
 because mail isn't getting through  
 doesn't mean anything happened.

A student BEDRICH (16) sits on a nearby bunk.

BEDRICH

I heard they're taking land and  
burning farms, purging all non-  
Germans. Especially Jews.

Bedrich hesitates as he says the last word and meets the eyes  
of another student, EDWIN SCHMIDGALL (16), who sits on  
another bunk. Edwin is clearly concerned.

EMIL

(sits up)

Who told you that?

BEDRICH

All the older boys are saying it. They  
say Hitler won't quit until all of  
Czechoslovakia is his. We'll soon be  
making shoes for the Reich, you'll  
see.

Dorm Master Lindhart who had been walking by and stopped when  
he heard the conversation.

LINDHART

Just let Hitler try and take Zlin.

(looks to Emil)

If he comes, we won't lay down like  
your people did. They'll find we  
aren't as meek as those in the  
Sudetenland. We will fight!

JINDRICH

(sarcastic)

Yeah, you will lead us to a great  
victory.

LINDHART

(furious)

Calisthenics in ten minutes.

Lindhart strides away as Edwin places a hand on Emil's  
shoulder.

EDWIN

(concerned)

I'm sure your family is well, Emil.

LINDHART

(shouts)

Ten minutes to calisthenics!

25 EXT. ZLIN. AFTERNOON.

Nazi flags fly over Zlin. Banners drape the Bata buildings. Soldiers are scattered throughout the city, driving trucks or riding bicycles. The city is far too quiet considering the time of day.

We move along a street rising higher and shifting to a birdseye view.

Below, a door bursts open as a man sprints out. A shot FIRES from inside the house and the man collapses.

From another house, a pair of soldiers forces a screaming woman and her child out the door.

The woman and child pass out of frame as another group of soldiers come into view. The first soldier kicks a door in as two more rush inside.

we rise higher to see that Nazi troops are storming into a number of houses throughout the city.

shouts, screams, and short bursts of gunfire sporadically fill the air.

26 INT. WAREHOUSE. ASSEMBLY LINE. AFTERNOON.

Camera follows a NAZI CAPTAIN (40) as he walks through a factory.

The Captain is followed by five Nazi soldiers as well as Dorm Master Lindhart and an older man, SUPERVISOR (55). Spervisor is sober and fearful, but Lindhart walks tall and wears a Nazi armband.

The Captain walks to an open space in the center of the factory and stands to face the workers. A thick haze of melted rubber hangs in the air.

CAPTAIN

You will stay at your stations!

The Captain nods to his soldiers who spread out as he hands a paper to Supervisor.

CAPTAIN

When your name is called, you will step forward.

Supervisor looks at the list like he is staring into the

abyss. The Captain nods to Supervisor.

SUPERVISOR  
(clears his throat)  
Milos Forman.

An old man slowly raises his hand in defeat. As he steps forward the men are unable to meet his eyes.

SUPERVISOR CONT'D  
Olga Winterberg.

There is wailing as a young woman falls to her knees. Lindhart seems shaken and uncertain.

CAPTAIN  
Continue.

Supervisor slowly lifts the paper and forces himself to continue. Lindhart is beginning to feel uncomfortable.

SUPERVISOR  
Edwin Schmidgall.

Nobody moves.

SUPERVISOR CONT'D  
Edwin Schmidgall.

No one steps forward. The Supervisor looks over to Emil who is standing at his station.

The Captain eyes Emil.

CAPTAIN  
Is that him?

SUPERVISOR  
No... it's his friend.

CAPTAIN  
(to Emil)  
Where is Edwin now?

Emil struggles. He seems unable or unwilling to speak.

LINDHART  
They are not going to hurt anyone.  
They are just sending them to the  
camps.

Emil hesitates a moment longer.

LINDHART  
You will tell them now!

SUPERVISOR  
(pleading)  
Emil!

EMIL  
He was unwell this morning. He... he  
went to the dispensary.

The captain coldly assesses Emil a moment longer before finally turning to Lindhart.

CAPTAIN  
You will retrieve the Jew, now.

LINDHART  
Yes, Captain. I'll find him.

CAPTAIN  
(to the remaining workers)  
Today we purge this city and this  
company. No Jew or Communist is worthy  
of making the boots of the Third  
Reich.

27 EXT. ZLIN. CALISTHENICS FIELD. EARLY MORNING.

Emil is doing calisthenics. Next to him is Jindrich and ANDREG (19). Lindhart is leading the group, yelling out instructions. There is a thin, muscular man, ALI HALUZA (35) standing at the edge of the field. There are also Nazi soldiers watching. While doing jumping jacks, Andreg speaks to Emil.

ANDREG  
I heard the labor camps aren't all  
bad. They just want to keep a watch on  
them, that's all.

EMIL  
(angry)  
The Gestapo are shooting Jews in the  
streets. Do you really think they are  
treated better in the camps?

All three young men quieted at the statement.



Lindhart barks instructions through his bullhorn.

DORM MASTER LINDHART  
Ten Knee Tucks - 1, 2...

Andreg nods toward Lindhart.

ANDREG  
He's more virile than usual.

Emil turns his attention to Lindhart, happy with the change of subject.

EMIL  
He's showing off for that man.

Emil nods to the side of the field at Ali Haluza.

ANDREG  
Who is he?

EMIL  
I don't know, but Lindhart is swooning. Haven't seen him this chipper in years.

JINDRICH  
(shocked)  
That's 'Ali' Haluza!

Both men shrug.

JINDRICH CONT'D  
Champion of the 1500 meters and cross-country?

Emil and Andreg clearly have no idea who he is.

JINDRICH CONT'D  
Czechoslovakia's greatest athlete?  
(excited)  
I wonder why he's here.

EMIL  
Maybe he came to give you pointers on how to run in circles.

Andreg laughs as Jindrich rolls his eyes.

JINDRICH  
Careful, your disdain for organized

sport is beginning to show.

EMIL

You start running and then you end up right where you left off. Except that now you're sweaty and tired. I just don't get it.

JINDRICH

(sarcastic)

Training, Emil, it's called training. And I am pretty good. You'll see.

EMIL

(confused)

What do you mean, 'I'll see?'

JINDRICH

(incredulous)

The race. Tomorrow.

Emil is blank.

JINDRICH CONT'D

They've been announcing it for weeks.

Emil continues to play dumb until Jindrich realizes he's fooling him.

EMIL

God, man, it's all you've talked about!

As if on cue, Lindhart starts barking again. He is now cooling off. The calisthenics finished.

LINDHART

Well done boys.

Lindhart is clearly strutting for his honored guest and the German soldiers.

LINDHART CONT'D

As you know, tomorrow morning Bata will host our yearly race around Zlin. I expect all my boys to run.  
(puffs out his chest)  
And this year I plan to run with you so as to set an example.

Linhart grins at Ali who quirks an eyebrow at him,

unimpressed.

LINDHART CONT'D

Yes.. well... This year we have the added honor to represent Bata to our German friends.

He nods to the German Capitan standing near Ali. The Capitan is also unimpressed.

Anger and incredulity paint Emil's face. Many of the other boys mirror Emil's attitude. Emil raises his hand.

LINDHART CONT'D

Mr. Zatopek?

EMIL

I don't think I can properly represent Bata to the Fatherland.

(beat)

My knee, it's quite sore.

Ali has a slight smile in his eyes as he notes Emil. Lindhart is embarrassed. Clearly, Emil is fine.

LINDHART

The race is mandatory.

EMIL

But I-

LINDHART

Enough! You will run, Emil.

Emil grimaces but says no more. Jindrich grins.

28 EXT. TOMAS BATA AVENUE. ZLIN. AFTERNOON.

Just over one hundred, eighteen-year-old boys are lined up, forming a makeshift starting line. Lindhart is front and center. Jindrich stands next to Emil who is irritated.

JINDRICH

(laughs)

Heard the doc cleared you to run.

Gathered on either side of the street are a few hundred spectators who've come to watch. Lindhart spots Emil.

LINDHART

(grinning spitefully)

Mr. Zatopek, so good of you to join us.

EMIL

(whispers to Jindrich)

Tried to hide in the Library, But Lindhart saw me sneaking in.

German soldiers and Bata executives stand on the platform but it is Ali Haluza who seems to be the center of attention. A BATA EXECUTIVE speaks.

BATA EXECUTIVE

It is my distinct privilege to introduce a national treasure, Jan "Ali" Haluza. Mr. Hauza has recently relocated to our very own Zlin to continue his training and develop a national running program.

The gathered crowd cheers as Ali steps up.

BATA EXECUTIVE CONT'D

He has graciously agreed to officiate today's race.

Bata Executive hands Ali the mic as well as a "first place" medallion.

ALI

Thank you for your kind words.

(to Bata Executive)

It looks like we have some fine athletes in the Bata workforce. It is an honor to be here today.

Excited whispers rise from the onlookers as each of the runners stands a little taller.

ALI

Shall we begin?

CUT TO.:

Emil, Andreg, Jindrich, and the other boys are all crowded together. In the distance, Ali raises the bullhorn to his mouth.

ALI

The distance around Zlin measures  
5,000 meters. You're going to want to  
pace yourselves.

(holds the medallion high)

Remember, everyone can run a race, but  
only one man gets the prize. Run to  
win, gentlemen.

Ali raises a pistol high.

BANG!

The group lurches forward along Tomas Bata Avenue, Lindhart  
is first among them. The road winds its way around the entire  
city.

Emil initially stays in the middle of the pack. As they  
approach an incline many of the boys begin to fall back.

When Emil passes the first few boys it's as if something  
begins to awaken inside him. He spots Lindhart ahead of him  
and he begins to press forward.

As they round another bend, a look of determination enters  
his eyes. Emil lurches forward, passing runner after runner.

More boys begin to fall away as Emil finds his stride. And  
still, Lindhart is in front of him.

He is now one of fifteen or so who are fighting for first  
place. Lindhart is running second. Emil passes more runners  
until he is right beside the Dorm Master. Lindhart looks over  
and grits his teeth in a grimace as he increases his pace and  
pulls away from Emil.

Moments later Emil pulls level. Lindhart is running ragged  
now, his breathing coming in great gasps. Emil smiles at the  
Dorm Master then pulls ahead.

Now it's just Emil and one runner (JINDRICH, 18) who is just  
ahead of him.

Emil pushes himself harder. But each time he pulls even,  
Jindrich smiles at him then quickens the pace. Excitement  
shifts to something more akin to pain as Emil's arms begin to  
flail, giving him an ungainly look. As they round the last  
corner, Jindrich pulls away.

A few dozen Bata employees and Zlin residents have gathered  
near the finish line. Emil can hear their cheers. He pushes

harder but his tank is empty.

Jindrich wins handily, but as Emil stumbles past the finish line he's surprised to hear everyone cheering for him as well. Though breathless, he can't help but smile.

A number of younger students rush in to congratulate him. Emil basks in the post-race euphoria. He turns to find Jindrich grinning at him.

JINDRICH

I thought running was for children.

Emil is bent over, too breathless to respond. Jindrich places a hand on his back.

JINDRICH CONTD

You really should consider training with me.

Emil half speaks half gasps.

EMIL

I keep telling you, I'm not a runner.

JINDRICH

From what I just saw, you could be.

As Jindrich walks off, Emil watches him a moment, contemplating his words.

ALI

He's right. You run like an Octopus, but you have a fire in you.

Emil works his mouth, but nothing comes out. Han 'Ali' Hluza is talking to him.

ALI CONT'D

Meet me at the stadium tomorrow night.  
7 sharp.

Emil still doesn't respond. He is hunched over trying to catch his breath. Ali grabs him by the arms.

ALI CONT'D

Stand up tall. Arms above your head.  
Let the breath in.

Ali grins again then claps him on the shoulder as he walks away to talk to someone else. Emil finally shakes out of his

stupor. He calls out.

EMIL  
Tomorrow night, then. Right.

Ali glances back and offers a wave of agreement before turning his attention back to Jindrich who is grinning like a kid on Christmas morning. The medallion hangs from Jindrich's neck.

29 EXT. ZLIN SPORTS STADIUM. EVENING.

Emil stands alone at the side of Zlin's track. Several young men are running. Jindrich is among them.

The night is cool and each exhale is accompanied by white mist. A sooty haze is a permanent fixture of the track due to the Bata chemical plant fifty meters away.

Emil's eyes scan the track nervously.

ALI  
Run slowly around the track. It's a good warm up.

Emil turns to see Ali stretching between a tree and the equipment shed a few paces away.

EMIL  
Sir, I just came to tell you I don't have the time to give to something like this.

ALI  
You came all the way out here to tell me you don't want to run?

EMIL  
No offense sir, it's just, sport is a wasteful use of time and energy.  
(beat)

ALI  
Who told you that?

EMIL  
Sir?

ALI  
That Sport is wasteful.  
(beat)

Your Father?

EMIL  
I don't think he'd approve.

Ali nods thoughtfully as he continues his stretching.

ALI  
How is your knee?

EMIL  
Pardon?

ALI  
Your knee, man.  
(beat)  
Which one was it?

Before Emil can respond Ali changes the subject.

ALI CONT'D  
Why did you run yesterday?

EMIL  
(annoyed)  
I had no choice.

Emil is offended. Ali is now sitting with his legs out in front of him, bending his body in half with his hands on the grass in front of his toes.

ALI  
No one can make a man run the way you did.

EMIL  
I only wanted to beat that fool, Lindhart. That's all.

Ali chuckles.

ALI  
You beat him. Easily, yes?  
(beat)  
But then you kept running. What I witnessed was an extraordinary- how does your father put it? 'Wasteful use of time and energy?' But it looked to me as though you relished the experience.  
(beat)



There comes a time when a son must  
make his own future.

(beat)

I think you may be capable of  
greatness.

Emil hears his mother's words and is intrigued. Ali stands and  
meets his eyes.

ALI

(suddenly disinterested)

Or maybe not.

Ali suddenly bends to one knee in a strange looking stretch.  
He whispers unintelligibly under his breath. Emil is confused  
by this action but Ali is back on his feet only moments  
later. Before Emil can say anything, Ali has started off on a  
brisk jog. He calls out.

ALI CONT'D

Tomorrow we will talk less and run  
more.

30 INT. DORMITORY #4. NIGHT.

Emil lay staring at the ceiling. The lights are out and the  
sounds of snoring are all around.

FADE TO BLACK.:

31 EXT. ZLIN SPORTS STADIUM. EVENING.

Emil arrives at the edge of the track. Ali is a short  
distance away, on his knee again with his head bowed. Emil  
waits. As Ali stands and begins to stretch Emil takes a half  
step back, into the darkness. He half turns to quietly  
retreat when Ali picks up a clipboard and stopwatch. Without  
looking in Emil's direction Ali waves his arm.

ALI

Time to warm up.

Emil freezes - confused. Ali turns and offers a questioning  
look.

ALI CONT'D

One Lap. Easy pace.

Emil starts to run. As he runs he can't help but grin.

CUT TO:

Emil is on the starting line. Ali stands beside him with a stopwatch. Ali is all business and Emil is beginning to feel nervous.

ALI

I want you to go all out. Show me what you're made of.

Emil nods.

ALI CONT'D

Go!

Emil takes off, running as hard as he can.

RUNNING/TRAINING MONTAGE.:

-- Emil passes the "finish line" as Ali stops the watch. Emil slows to a stop. He shakes his head in frustration, clearly upset with his slow pace.

CUT TO:

ALI

Five laps. Pace yourself.

-- close up of a stopwatch. Ali's voice rings out "go!" The watch starts ticking.

-- Ali runs beside Emil, offering crisp instructions.

ALI

Steady your breathing. Good. Quick breaths will sap your energy.

(beat)

Lengthen your stride. Good.

-- Emil passes the "finish line" again. He looks at Ali but Ali is focused on his clipboard. Emil feels like he is failing and becomes even more frustrated.

-- Ali checks the stopwatch but doesn't say anything.

-- Emil passes the "finish line" again. He is exhausted.

END OF MONTAGE.:

Emil is distraught. Ali hasn't given him any feedback.

EMIL  
I can run again.

ALI  
(distracted)  
I've seen enough.

Ali continues writing notes on his clipboard. Emil notes that other young men are arriving to run. Jindrich catches his eye, grins, and waves.

Finally, Ali looks up.

ALI  
Go get some sleep. I know your day starts early.

Emil nods despondently, turns and walks into the darkness.

FADE TO BLACK.:

32 INT. WAREHOUSE. ASSEMBLY LINE. MORNING.

Emil is back at the assembly line. There is no joy in his work. He angrily uses his tool to punch holes in leather, each punch more forceful than it needs to be.

SUPERVISOR  
Emil. A call came in for you.

Emil looks up, confused. He stands and places the leather and punch on his bench.

SUPERVISOR CONT'D  
Be quick!

EMIL  
Yes, sir.

33 INT. SUPERVISORS OFFICE. MORNING.

Emil stands at a desk in a cramped, second-floor office. A large window offers a view of the entire warehouse.

[[Feels like we are missing a beat here - how do we know he was waiting for this call or that he was worried?EMIL

Hello?

(beat)

Yes, it's Emil.

CAMERA tracks SLOWLY IN ON EMIL'S FACE. THE VOICE IN THE BACKGROUND IS INDECIPHERABLE.

Emil holds the phone to his ear but doesn't say a word.

He can't fight the emotion. He silently wipes a tear from his eye as he exhales a breath he hadn't realized he was holding.

The faint murmur of the phone.

EMIL  
I'm here! Yes, I'm here!  
(clears his throat)  
Yes, sir. Right, thank- yes- I'll be  
there!

Click.

CUT TO.:

Emil nearly skips down the stairs toward the factory floor. He is grinning from ear to ear as he passes an OLDER WOMAN in a Bata management uniform. She looks at him strangely.

EMIL  
I'm fast.

She is confused and Emil laughs, leans in and kisses her cheek then leaps down to the bottom of the stairs.

EMIL CONT'D  
I'm fast!

34 EXT. ZLIN SPORTS TRACK AND FIELD. EVENING

Emil walks up to the sports equipment shed. As he rounds the corner he sees Ali with one knee on the ground and his head bowed. Emil clears his throat.

Ali glances up at him and offers a small smile.

ALI  
You're early.

EMIL  
Sorry, sir.

ALI  
 (smiles)  
 Why?  
 (nod to track)  
 For runners, early is the whole point.  
 (beat)  
 Call me Ali.

Emil laughs nervously but is clearly uncomfortable. He just realized what Ali has been doing.

EMIL  
 You were praying?

ALI CONT'D  
 (smiles)  
 On the track, the Krauts can't tell the difference between praying and stretching.

EMIL  
 (unconvinced)  
 It's dangerous.

ALI  
 (serious)  
 Dangerous? Yes, it is most dangerous.

Emil is confused. Ali puts his arm around Emil's shoulder.

ALI CONT'D  
 Come. Let's begin.

THE SETTING SUN PAINTS THE TRACK IN  
 MAGICAL LIGHT.

CUT TO:

Emil and Ali are warming up. Ali stands with his hands flat on the ground and his legs straight.

Emil tries to touch his toes and struggles to get further than his ankles. He turns to see Jindrich approach.

ALI  
 You're late.

JINDRICH  
 You're early.

EMIL

Early is the whole point.

Jindrich rolls his eyes at Emil.

JINDRICH

Didn't think I'd ever see you here.

EMIL

Ali's going to show me how to run in circles. And then I'll teach you.

Jindrich snorts. Ali also barks a laugh as he turns and begins to run. Emil quickly follows. As Jindrich starts warming up he yells.

JINDRICH

Wait! Is this the lesson?

CUT TO:

All three men are running around the track. Thick soot billows around them.

ALI

Running is a violent internal struggle with pain. The body will break down, it will demand that you stop. So we train our will to keep going.

(beat)

You don't race to see who is fastest. You race to see who's will is the strongest.

CUT TO:

The men sit together at a long table, eating dinner.

Emil is animated as he talks. Though we can't hear what he said, everyone bursts out laughing.

CUT TO:

-- As Emil works the assembly he is also running in place and sweating profusely. He stops a moment and slaps his open palms hard into his thighs multiple times. A buzzer sounds and he grabs his running shoes from below his bench and darts outside.

CUT TO:

-- Ali and Jindrich arrive at the track to find Emil running laps. Both are impressed.

CUT TO:

-- It is early morning as Emil and Jindrich exit the dormitory. Emil stops to assess the distance to the Higher Industrial School. There is a small division of German soldiers on duty in front of the building that stands close to 250 meters away. Jindrich continues walking before realizing he's alone. He looks back to see what appears to be Emil hyperventilating.

JINDRICH

What are you doing?

EMIL

Ali says I need to work on my breathing.

Jindrich offers a confused look.

EMIL CONT'D

I've been trying to make it to the school in one breath. So far, I've only made it two-thirds of the way.

JINDRICH

(incredulous)

I don't think that's what he meant.

Emil shrugs and takes two very deep breaths, then holds his breath on the third intake and breaks into a sprint.

Jindrich cocks his head then shrugs and takes a deep breath. He begins to run. He only takes a few steps before he lets out his breath and looks around to make sure no one saw him.

JINDRICH

Stupid idea.

(shouting to Emil)

It's a stupid idea.

Emil passes the two-thirds mark and makes it three-quarters of the way to the school when his eyes suddenly roll back and he collapses, falling flat on his face.

Jindrich cocks his head. The soldiers watch- confused.

JINDRICH

Emil?

(jogs forward, laughs)  
You're an idiot.

Emil has completely passed out.

CUT TO:

-- The men stumble to a stop. They are breathing heavy as sweat pours off them. They are hunched over, trying to find extra oxygen.

ALI  
(catches breath)  
Pain isn't your enemy. It is as intimate a friend as the runner will ever have.  
(beat)  
Again!

They take off on yet another sprint.

CUT TO:

-- Light snow falls on the track. Ali and Jindrich are stretching as Emil circles round. Emil stumbles to a stop as Jindrich stands and places a hand on his shoulder.

JINDRICH  
Ali and I are having an argument and we need you to weigh in.

EMIL  
(breathless)  
OK.

JINDRICH  
Tell us- what do you think about when you run?

EMIL  
I want to beat my best time.

JINDRICH  
(shrugs/motions to Ali)  
We were both wrong.  
(beat)  
I thought you were imagining the Gestapo kicking your favorite dog.



ALI

And I thought you were constipated.

Ali and Jindrich burst out laughing.

EMIL

What do you mean?

(beat)

What? What are you talking about?

CUT TO:

-- Emil sprints around the track. His arms flap about, ungainly and the faster he goes, the more his face contorts into an agonized mask.

CUT TO.:

-- Twenty young men are lined up, Emil and Jindrich among them. Emil leaps up and down a couple times then slams his palms into his thighs a few times, before readying himself. BANG! They are off. Emil and Jindrich take no time at all to break away from the crowd.

CUT TO.:

Looking as pained as ever, Emil crosses the finish-line twenty or so paces ahead of Jindrich and almost a hundred paces ahead of everyone else.

35 INT. DINING HALL. MORNING.

Emil sits alone, eating breakfast as Jindrich approaches with a newspaper in hand.

JINDRICH

Unbelievable.

Emil offers a questioning look.

JINDRICH CONT'D

When I told the kid with the big ears and the awkward run to join us at the track I never imagined this would happen.

Jindrich throws the paper down in front of Emil. The title reads "*Bata boy breaks Czech 4000 Meter record.*"

Emil can't believe his eyes. He picks it up almost reverently, reading very slowly so as not to miss a word. Ali

arrives with a food tray in hand.

ALI

There'll be no living with him now.

Jindrich laughs.

36 EXT. HILLS OF ZLIN. SUNSET.

The leaves are changing as Fall has come into full swing. Emil arrives to see Ali kneeling in prayer at the track. Emil watches. Though he feels great respect for Ali, this is something he can't understand.

Ali stands and sees Emil. He waves him over.

ALI

Let's change things up today.

EMIL

Great! What do you have in mind?

CUT TO:

Ali and Emil run together. They are not on the track but running along a busy road. They run past an infantry division of German soldiers.

They run down a country road, leaving Zlin behind. Then Ali turns off and into the hills.

EMIL

Where are we going?

ALI

Just a little further.

They run alongside a river. Ali turns again and Emil follows him up an open hillside. Ali stops at the top and Emil arrives a moment later.

In the distance is a Concentration Camp. German soldiers walk the border - a tall chain fence with barbed wire along the top. Long row houses sit inside the compound. Men, women, and children dressed in striped uniforms and achingly thin walk between buildings. There is smoke rising from a stack in a building further off. Ash falls around them.

EMIL

(fearful)

We shouldn't be here.

ALI  
 (angry)  
 No one should be here.

Emil watches the camp with fearful eyes. He speaks in a quiet voice.

EMIL  
 (serious)  
 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed."

Ali's jaw drops.

EMIL CONT'D  
 It's something my mother would say when I was troubled or afraid.

ALI  
 It's Corinthians...

Emil nods.

EMIL  
 (a sense of futility)  
 Mother read her scriptures every night.  
 (beat)  
 Father thought it was a waste of time.

ALI  
 (thoughtful)  
 Why do you run, Emil?

EMIL  
 To win.

ALI  
 And after you win?  
 (beat)  
 Why do you run?

Emil is quiet. Looking down on the camp.

37 INT. DORM #4. ALI'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Thick snow falls on Zlin. Frigid winter has come and very few people are outside.

Emil, Ali, and Jindrich are in Ali's humble dorm room with a small bed and a window. Each chomps happily on an apple and sips on a tin cup of steaming tea.

THUNDEROUS RUMBLING.

Everyone looks toward the ceiling as the room shakes and bits of dust rain down. The men walk toward the window with every eye fixed on the sky.

A number of Soviet planes fly over the city. One plane DROPS A BOMB on a Bata factory warehouse a short distance away.

Spatters of GUNFIRE erupt from Zlin as the Nazi's respond to the attack.

Jindrich and Emil share a fearful look.

In the distance, bombs continue to drop.

A contingent of German's run past the window, shooting at a coming plane. All three men back away as Ali blows out the candle so no light will shine out.

The men sit against the back wall, listening to the sounds of war. Every so often more dust reigns down as a bomb drops uncomfortably close to the dormitory.

FADE TO BLACK.:

38 EXT. DORM #4. MORNING.

Almost a third of Zlin has been reduced to rubble.

Emil, Jindrich and his friends emerge from the dormitory alongside a dozen other young men. Lindhart also stumbles out. All are frightened and weary. Thick smoke billows from dozens of fires still burning throughout the city.

Rolling up Bata road is a long line of USSR troops who attacked the city. The lead jeep is only a few blocks away. Russian soldiers walk alongside the snaking line with weapons ready.

JINDRICH  
(wonderingly)  
They're gone.

LINDHART  
Who? Who is gone?

ALI  
The Germans.

Ali glances at Lindhart's Nazi armband.

ALI CONT'D  
You might want to get rid of that.

Lindhart sees what Ali is looking at and frantically tears the armband off and throws it in some nearby rubble.

EMIL  
What does this mean?

ALI  
We are liberated.  
(thoughtful)  
God help us.

Emil watches the approaching Russian soldiers and vehicles and behind them, the the destroyed ruins of Bata's once proud industry.

39 EXT. AFTERNOON. RUSSIAN HEADQUARTERS. PRAUGE

Emil stands in a recruiting line with Jindrich. A poster behind him shows images a hammer and sickle, the emblem of the Soviet Union.

Another shows heroic Soviet soldiers engaged in the struggle against fascism, portraying the Soviet Union as a powerful and valiant ally. It reads "fight for freedom, liberation, and the defeat of tyranny."

Emil is stoic, but he signs his name to the ledger.

40 INT. ZATOPEK HOUSE. MAIN ROOM. LATE AFTERNOON.

Title card: Oct 1944

The sun hangs low as the Zatopek family sits at the dinner table. Marie is very pregnant and her husband ANZLO (35) sits beside her.

The door opens and in walks a grinning Emil in FULL CZECH MILITARY UNIFORM.

ANEZKA  
Emil!

JIRI  
You're home!

Everyone leaps up and surrounds Emil, laughing as they hug and kiss him.

41 INT. ZATOPEK HOUSE. MAIN ROOM. EVENING.

Emil sits with his family. They sing as Marie plays the Violin. There are children, Emil's nieces and nephews playing and dancing.

42 EXT. ZATOPEK HOUSE. SUNRISE.

The last notes of Marie's melody still linger.

Emil steps outside to find his father splitting wood. He walks over and lays his satchel on a stack of wood then rolls up his sleeves. He places a hand on his father's shoulder.

EMIL  
Sit, father. Let me do this.

Frantisek smiles and hands Emil the ax. He steps away, wiping sweat from his brow as he sits on a nearby stump.

FRANTISEK  
You look good.

Emil chops as he speaks.

EMIL  
I am good, father. Really good.

FRANTISEK  
(curt)  
The uniform fits well.

EMIL  
You approve?

Frantisek shrugs. For a moment all that's heard is the steady chopping of Emil's ax. Anezka exits with a basket of wet clothes. She smiles at Emil then begins hanging clothes on a washing line.

EMIL CONT'D  
Father?

Frantisek cocks his head. He doesn't approve. His distaste for the Russian occupation almost rivals his hatred of the

Nazis.

EMIL CONT'D

I have been running these last years.  
First at Bata and now for the army.

Frantisek seems agitated.

FRANTISEK

What do you mean? For what?

Emil lodges the ax into a thick stump and retrieves his running shoes from the satchel.

EMIL

To win.

Frantisek stands and thoughtfully takes the shoes.

FRANTISEK

What do you win?

EMIL CONT'D

I... I'm good, fast. I have already broken a Czech record.

(beat)

Ali thinks—

FRANTISEK

(looking at shoes)

Ali?

EMIL

He was my coach. He says—

FRANTISEK

You choose this?

(distaste)

What, running for Russia?!

EMIL

I serve Czechoslovakia, my country!  
When I run—

FRANTISEK

(anger)

You serve your country?

(matter of fact)

Enough! It is foolishness. Child's talk.

(beat)

You will stop this.

Emil doesn't respond.

FRANTISEK

(stern)

You will stop running, Emil.

EMIL

I can not.

Frantisek nods. He turns and walks into the house with the shoes. Emil looks to his mother. She doesn't acknowledge Emil but continues with the laundry.

43 INT. BEDROOM. ZATOPEK HOUSE. JUST BEFORE SUNRISE.

Emil is sneaking out of the house. He has his bag over his shoulder. It is dark and he doesn't see his mother sitting in her rocking chair.

ANEZKA

Your father's a proud Czech man.

Emil turns, startled by his mother.

ANEZKA CONT'D

These are unforgiving times Emil.  
Aspirations submit to obligation and  
men are beat down by deference and  
duty.

(beat)

Long ago your father traded his pride  
for the bread that feeds his family.  
To him, running is not just foolish,  
it's selfish.

EMIL

I am a proud Czech man, mother.

(beat)

And I'm fast.

ANEZKA

Yes?

(thoughtful)

You know, when your father was  
young...

Anezka trails off.



EMIL  
Mother?

ANEZKA  
He was also...  
(smiles)  
fast.

Emil walks over to his mother. Hugs her and then walks to the door, turns, nods, and offers a smile. Then he steps outside.

44 INT. ARMY BARRACKS. EARLY MORNING.

Men in bunk beds sleeping in a military barracks.

Hands tightening laces of army boots.

Rucksack being shouldered.

Hand grabbing flashlight.

Grim determination.

Emil steps outside, clicking on the flashlight.

45 EXT. ARMY BARRACKS. BRNO. EARLY MORNING.

The barracks rest at the bottom of a small mountain on the outskirts of Brno. Emil starts to jog toward the base of the mountain, shining his light to illumine the way.

Though he is alone, the sound of cheering fans can be heard alongside Emil's steady breathing.

STADIUM ANNOUNCER V.O.  
The unknown boy from Kopravince takes  
an early lead.

Emil runs up the mountain as the sun rises. Emil leaps over a log.

CUT TO.:

Close up of Emil's chest breaking through the finish line.

CUT TO.:

Emil lands on the other side of the log in thick snow. He stumbles and falls to his knees. He immediately rises and continues forward.

STADIUM ANNOUNCER V.O.  
Emil Zatopek beats the National Czech  
record for the 3,000 meter by nearly  
three seconds!

CUT TO.:

Shoes pounding along a stadium track.

Cheering crowds. The Austrian flag flying high in the  
background.

CUT TO.:

Army boots pounding Across a muddy field.

Emil runs all out, then stops, turns and speeds back in the  
opposite direction.

CUT TO.:

Emil leads the pack. The Ukrainian flag flies high in the  
background.

STADIUM ANNOUNCER V.O.  
Zatopek's run can only be accurately  
described as uncomfortable. With his  
head rolling, his arms flailing, he  
looks more like a man enduring agony  
at the back of the field than a  
winner. And yet, that is exactly what  
he is.

CUT TO.:

It is pouring rain and the snows have gone. Emil speeds  
through the darkness with a flashlight in hand. He is running  
in quick bursts, then slowing again.

STADIUM ANNOUNCER V.O.  
There you have it, ladies and  
gentlemen. Staff Captain, Emil Zatopek  
has officially been selected to  
represent Czechoslovakia in the 1948  
Games of the Olympiad in London.

Emil slows to a stop at the top of the mountain. All of Brno  
is below. As the sun rises, Emil begins his run back down the  
mountain.

46 EXT. ZLIN. TRAIN STATION. AFTERNOON.

Emil steps off the train and onto the platform in Zlin. He is wearing his Staff Captain uniform and shadowed by another man (LIEUTENANT PAVEL 40), who outranks him.

Emil makes his way to the exit as the Lieutenant follows close behind.

A hand clasps Emil on the shoulder.

JINDRICH

Somebody's risen high in the world.

Emil turns and immediately starts laughing as he pulls Jindrich in for a hug.

EMIL

I hear you qualified for London!

JINDRICH

By the skin of my teeth.

EMIL

It's good to see you!

(looking around)

Where's Ali, I'd hoped he'd be here as well. I miss the old man.

JINDRICH

He's waiting at the auto.

Jindrich nods at Lieutenant Pavel who is making his way over.

JINDRICH CONT'D

Who's that?

EMIL

My nanny.

Jindrich is confused. Emil turns and begins the introduction.

EMIL CONT'D

Jindrich, this is Lieutenant Hanus Pavel. He's been escorting me on all my adventures these last months.

(pats Pavel on back)

He's a good Marxist and keeps me on the straight and narrow.

Jindrich shakes Pavel's hand.

JINDRICH

Talk about an impossible job.

EMIL CONT'D

And this is Jindrich Roudny. For better or worse, he's my friend. Also, he occasionally has been known to run.

Jindrich laughs as the two exit the airport.

47 EXT. ZLIN TRAIN STATION. AFTERNOON.

Ali leans against the car. When Emil exits in his uniform Ali quickly hides his grimace with a welcoming smile.

ALI

The prodigal returns!

EMIL

I'm just here to see an old man.

Ali and Emil embrace.

ALI

So good to be seen, my friend!

JINDRICH

Yes, yes, could we move this along, I'm thirsty.

ALI

(laughs)

I know just the place.

As Ali turns to get in the car he notes Emil's handler. Ali's face hardens.

ALI CONTD

Hello, who's this?

Before Emil can run through introductions again Lieutenant Pavel speaks up.

LIEUTENANT PAVEL

(calculated)

The great Ali Haluza. It is a privilege to meet you, sir.

ALI

Is it?

LIEUTENANT PAVEL

(serious)

You are well known in the party.

ALI

(serious)

Will you be joining us?

LIEUTENANT PAVEL

No, enjoy yourself, gentlemen.

(to Emil)

I will see you at the stadium in the morning.

Ali climbs behind the wheel as Emil sits up front and Jindrich sits in the back. As they drive away Ali can't help but glance at Lieutenant Pavel in his rearview.

48 EXT. BAR. ZLIN. NIGHT.

Emil, Jindrich, and Ali sit at a bar. Ali thumbs the Captain's badge on Emil's coat.

ALI

The uniform doesn't suit you.

EMIL

(laughs)

They let me run and they feed me a whole lot better than Bata ever did.

JINDRICH

Good old, Emil. Always thinking with his stomach.

Emil laughs but notices that Ali doesn't join.

JINDRICH CONT'D

On that note, I need to see a man about a dog.

Jindrich leaves the bar. Ali is clearly agitated.

EMIL

What is it? You obviously have something on your mind and I've never known you to hold your tongue.

Ali leans in. He takes a moment to choose his words.

ALI

I know you, Emil. I know that you are a man of integrity and honor. But you're being willfully blind. You have traded one oppressor for another.

(beat)

and worse, you have joined them.

Emil takes Ali's words like a gut punch. He is not offended by his mentor, just hurt.

EMIL

They're nothing like the Nazi's. There are no camps or murders in the streets.

ALI

Not yet, but it's coming. With every move they make they're stripping our freedom and enslaving our nation!

EMIL

(scoffing)

You sound like a fearful old man. I am free, I run for myself when and how I wish! Can't you see that?

ALI

(angry)

You are a fool! They're using you and your ego! And you are blind to it.

Emil takes a half step back, he is hurt. Ali grimaces. He's said too much. Suddenly he softens.

ALI

(earnest)

Son, you are a great runner. The best I have ever seen. You will win and with that comes influence.

I pray God gives you the wisdom and grace to bear it well.

(beat)

Know that when I kneel, I kneel for you.

EMIL

(hurt)

I haven't asked for your kneeling!

JINDRICH

Have you fellas noticed there is a rather lovely lady in the corner who is quite taken with me?

Both men turn so see Jindrich with drinks in hand. He realizes he has walked into something.

JINDRICH CONT'D

Why is it the two of you look like you just drank spoiled milk?

Ali laughs at the joke.

ALI

I was just telling Emil how you think every woman you see is making eyes at you.

Emil meets Ali's eyes with a slight challenge before finally shaking himself out of it.

JINDRICH

That's because they are!

Ali puts his arm around Emil and Jindrich.

ALI

It is good to see you both. My heart is full.

(beat)

Tonight we are together. And that is a beautiful thing.

49 EXT. ZLIN. MORNING.

Emil and Jindrich are warming up on the Bata sports track where they first trained together. On the field is a small stage filled with Bata supervisors as well as a few Czech and Russian soldiers. Ali and Lieutenant Pavel are also on the stage.

JINDRICH

Listen, mate, we need a favor from you.

EMIL

Anything.

JINDRICH

(points)

Do you see that young woman holding  
the Javelin?

Emil finds her quickly. DANA INGROVA (26) has black wavy hair, a slim build and is cute. She is also warming up with a javelin in hand. Emil raises an eyebrow.

EMIL

I sure do.

JINDRICH

That's Dana Ingrova. She just qualified for London and we were hoping Czechoslovakia's favorite son would present her with a congratulatory bouquet.

Emil hasn't taken his eyes off her.

EMIL

Of course. She's beautiful.

JINDRICH

(chuckles)

Easy. Her father is a commander.

Emil nods but his eyes never leave Dana. A voice begins to speak over the PA system.

ALI

Runners, to your marks.

Emil, Jindrich and a handful of young future runners step up to the line.

ALI CONT'D

Today we celebrate those who have qualified for the London Games as well as all our future Olympians. We also are thrilled to be present while my good friend Emil Zatopek runs for yet another record.

The crowd cheers as Emil waves to them.

ALI CONT'D

Runners, on your mark.

Emil and Jindrich stand at the starting line. Jindrich grins



at Emil.

JINDRICH  
Don't embarrass me too much.

EMIL  
Just be sure to hold your breath while  
you run. It'll help.

JINDRICH  
(rolls his eyes)  
Idiot.

Ali is on the platform with a stopwatch in hand. Emil leaps up and down a couple times before slapping his open palms into his thighs, hard.

ALI  
Get set.  
(beat)  
Go!

Emil and Jindrich shoot out of the starting line to the cheers of the gathered crowd.

50 EXT. SPORTS TRACK. ZLIN. MIDDAY.

Emil stands on a stage with several other athletes. He is holding a bouquet. He is sweaty but smiling. Dana is off to the side. Ali is addressing the gathered crowd. A few reporters are spread throughout, taking photo's and writing in notepads.

ALI  
I present to you, Emil Zatopek.

The crowd cheers but Emil isn't paying attention. He has made his way over to Dana.

EMIL  
(whispers to her)  
I have flowers for you.

Dana seems confused and preoccupied. Ali announces Emil's name again.

ALI  
(looking back at Emil)  
Emil Zatopek?

Emil doesn't realize he has been called. He is looking at

Dana.

EMIL  
I mean, I didn't buy them, but these  
are for you.

ALI  
Emil?

DANA  
(whispers awkwardly)  
That's you.

Emil suddenly realizes he's been introduced. He trots up to the mic.

EMIL  
Thank you. Ah... Sorry. Right. It's  
good to be back in Zlin. And thank you  
to the prestigious Bata company for  
hosting this event.

Emil turns his attention to the track.

EMIL CONT'D  
I have a lot of incredible memories on  
this track. It is here while working  
at Bata that I discovered my passion.

Some of the Bata workers and Zlin locals cheer at this.

EMIL CONT'D  
But today we celebrate a new face in  
Czech sports.  
(beat)  
It is my honor to present this bouquet  
to Czechoslovakia's record-breaking  
javelin thrower and the newest member  
of our Olympic team, Dana Ingrova.

Dana walks over to Emil amidst the cheers of the crowd. Emil hands her the bouquet and offers a half hug and peck on the cheek. Dana takes the bouquet and turns her back to Emil, ignoring him as she waves to the crowd.

51 INT. ZLIN PUB. NIGHT.

Emil, Ali, and Jindrich stand in a hotel courtyard. Emil has a small bag over his shoulder.

JINDRICH

(to Emil)

It seems like every time you run you  
smash another record.

Emil is distracted. He is watching a group of athletes  
boarding a red bus. Dana is among them, laughing with another  
girl. Emil answers without looking at Jindrich.

EMIL

Records are made to be broken.

Ali places an arm around Emil's shoulder and pulls him in  
close.

ALI

I believe in you. Make history, Emil.  
And remember why you run.

Emil comes back into the moment. He is uncomfortable but he  
hugs Ali. When he does, Ali whispers into his ear.

ALI CONT'D

Go get her.

Emil is momentarily stunned, then grins at his mentor.

ALI

(lowers his voice)

Godspeed, Emil.

EMIL

And you.

Emil turns his attention back to Dana who is now boarding.

EMIL

(to Jindrich)

I hate abrupt goodbyes mate but, seize  
the day and all that.

Jindrich sees where Emil is looking and offers a grin.

JINDRICH

They're never going to let you on the  
bus.

EMIL

(smiles)

I'll see you in London.

Emil shoulders his travel bag and runs to the bus. Everyone has boarded and the doors are half closed before Emil forcibly stops them.

Jindrich and Ali share a smile as they watch Emil who is clearly making his case to the driver. Emil becomes animated. Finally, he turns and offers the men a thumbs up and a boyish grin before disappearing into the bus.

52 INT. BUS. NIGHT.

Emil walks the aisle of the bus and quickly finds Dana sitting in a middle seat. Next to her is another Javelin thrower for the men's team, ANDLO (24, very muscular). The only free seats are at the very back. Andlo is speaking to Dana and is clearly full of himself. Emil stops just in front of them.

ANDLO

...but if you study my release, you will find...

Andlo trails off as Emil leans in close.

EMIL

Dana, I had no idea you were on this bus. What a happy accident! You are also going to-

Emil thinks a moment then turns his attention to Andlo.

EMIL

Where is this bus headed?

ANDLO

(confused)

Lukov.

EMIL

Exactly,  
(back to Dana)  
Lukov?

The bus lurches forward as Emil places his bag down and perches on the edge of the seat across the aisle. The YOUNG WOMAN who occupies the seat shifts awkwardly over, pushing the YOUNG WOMAN next to her against the window.

EMIL

I'm glad I caught you. Since we're both representing our nation, it would

behoove us to get to know each other.  
Olympic camaraderie and all that.

ANDLO

I am also going to London.

EMIL

Is that so? Good for you-  
(to Dana)  
Did you like the flowers?  
(to Andlo)  
I got her flowers.

Emil places a hand on Andlo's shoulder.

EMIL CONT'D

What's your name?

ANDLO

Andlo.

DANA

(to Andlo)  
The flowers weren't from him. He was  
just the delivery boy.

EMIL

Andlo, the thing is, I like you. It's  
like we're already best mates.  
(leans in)  
But Dana. I'm sorry to say, our  
friendship needs attention.  
(to Andlo)  
I don't even know if she likes  
flowers.

DANA

(incredulous)  
Our friendship?

EMIL

Yes, our professional... sports  
friendship. We currently don't have  
one. But for the sake of our nation, I  
think it is imperative that we remedy  
that. Wouldn't you agree?

Dana laughs at Emil's audacity.

DANA

I suppose I could agree to a...

professional... sports friendship.

EMIL

Splendid! Now, tell me, how long have you been looking for the right fella?

Dana raises her eyebrow.

DANA

Who says I haven't already found him?

EMIL

Andlo?

(beat)

He's a fine enough chap. On his way to London don't you know? But he's not your type.

DANA

And my type is?

EMIL

Tall, strong chin, and fast. Very fast.

Dana laughs.

DANA

And humble.

Andlo is clearly uncomfortable as he leans back into the chair. Emil and Dana are both leaning into each other.

ANDLO

I can move if you... if you like.

Dana and Emil completely ignore Alndlo as he stands and awkwardly squeezes down the aisle. Emil takes the seat without missing a beat.

DANA

(looking straight ahead)

I love flowers.

(beat)

Yellow peonies if you must know.

Emil smiles.

BUS MONTAGE.:

--- Emil is singing a Moravian folk song loudly and off-key.

Dana is laughing and slightly embarrassed at how bad Emil is.  
 --- Emil is standing now, talking to Dana, very animated.

EMIL  
 1922?!

Dana nods.

EMIL  
 What time?

DANA  
 5 PM.

Emil falls into his seat, totally astounded.

EMIL  
 Amazing!  
 (beat)  
 I am exactly six hours older than you.

Dana is confused. Then suspicious.

DANA  
 You're full of it!

EMIL  
 I swear.  
 (eyes get big)  
 You know what this means?

Dana offers a confused look.

EMIL CONT'D  
 You're falling for an older man!

Dana bursts out laughing as she punches Emil in the shoulder.

--- The bus passes through the small town of Lanzhot. Emil spots a quaint looking pub that has all the lights on with lots of people inside. He points it out to Dana.

EMIL  
 Let's get a drink.

He stands and calls out to the Driver.

EMIL  
 Driver, I need to piss!

The driver ignores him. Dana stands and shouts.

DANA  
I need to piss as well!

The driver continues driving as Emil motions to the other athletes, lifting his hands in a chant.

EMIL  
Piss! Piss! Piss! Piss!

Dana and the entire group joins in.

GROUP  
Piss! Piss! Piss!

Finally, the driver pulls over as the entire bus cheers.

53 INT. PUB. LANZHOT. NIGHT.

Emil leads the way into the pub, with a laughing Dana in tow.

EMIL  
Let the games begin!

Dana laughs. A man (OLD FARMER) taps Emil on the shoulder. He is slightly inebriated.

OLD FARMER  
You are the Czech Locomotive?

EMIL  
In the flesh.

OLD FARMER pulls Emil in for a hug, sloshing beer on Dana's shirt. The pub is now full of athletes and locals. OLD FARMER steps back and raises his glass high, speaking loud enough for everyone to hear.

OLD FARMER  
To Czechoslovakia's favorite son!

Everyone raises a glass as Emil offers Dana an apologetic look.

CUT TO.:

Dana and Emil are in the corner of the bar, trying to have a conversation. Andlo is singing a folk song loudly with some of the other athletes.



DANA

Is it always like this?

EMIL

No, there's usually a parade.

Dana laughs again.

The song the patrons are singing comes to an end and the guitarist starts to play a very rhythmic tune. Old Farmer is totally sloshed now and raises his glass high.

OLD FARMER

Zatopek! Zatopek! Zatopek!

It doesn't take long for others to join in.

Emil looks up from his corner table with Dana and shakes his head "no," but when Dana joins in, he barks a laugh then leans in and whispers in her ear.

EMIL

If I'm doing this then you are going  
to join me!

Dana's eyes go wide as Emil grabs her by the hand and pulls her forward. Everyone cheers merrily as Emil begins to move his feet - he is a surprisingly good dancer. Dana laughs as she joins in and the crowd claps along to the music, lending their rhythm to the young lovers dance.

FADE TO BLACK.:

54 EXT. LONDON. AFTERNOON.

Title card: London, 1948 XIV Olympic Games.

We are high above the city.

London still shows signs from the war. Scattered throughout the vibrant city are a number of bombed-out buildings that have yet to be rebuilt.

BBC RADIO ANNOUNCER

The British Broadcasting Company  
welcomes you to the Games of the XIV  
Olympiad. The air is electric as  
Olympians from 59 countries arrive in  
London. Over the next 15 days, these  
elite men and women will be competing  
in 19 sports disciplines.

We fly over Wembley stadium toward  
Wembley park.

OLYMPIC MONTAGE:

--- A fifteen-year-old girl from the US launches into a running handspring on the floor exercise, gymnastics competition.

--- Two men dressed in white with white facemasks leap about, swinging their thin swords.

--- Jindrich runs the 1500 meter and comes in 5th.

--- A Ukrainian young man leaps off of the high dive, doing a triple backflip into a twist before hitting the water with barely a splash.

--- Dana runs with a javelin in hand and thrusts it hard into the air. She is disappointed at where it lands.

55 INT. WEMBLEY STADIUM ENTRANCE TUNNEL. MIDDAY.

Emil makes his way toward the track as a REPORTER walks alongside him, holding a mic. A cameraman follows, filming both men. Many athletes from multiple disciplines also make their way into the stadium. In the distance, the roars of the crowd can be heard.

REPORTER

Emil Zatopek, what should we expect  
for today's 10,000 meters?

EMIL

I expect you will see twenty-six men  
running as fast as they can.

The reporter is taken aback as Emil laughs and continues into the stadium.

56 EXT. WEMBLEY STADIUM. AFTERNOON.

Emil stands at the starting line with twenty-five other men. The blistering sun shines bright with not a cloud in the sky. Though the race has not begun, Emil and the other men are already wiping sweat from their brows.

BBC RADIO ANNOUNCER

We are just moments away from the  
Men's 10,000-meter. World Record  
holder Viljo Heino wearing number 412,

dubbed "The Flying Fin," is the man to beat.

VILJO HEINO wears the Finnish shirt and has a quiet confidence. Emil walks over and offers a hand. Heino looks at him a moment, then ignores it, continuing his stretch.

EMIL

It's an honor to run with you today.

HEINO

(smirk)

May the best Fin win.

Heino turns his back on Emil and continues stretching. Emil chuckles as he walks back to his spot.

Emil begins slapping his thighs hard, then jumping up and down only to slap his thighs again. A couple of the other runners offer quizzical looks.

57 EXT. LONDON. MORNING.

Dana and Emil walk through London, hand in hand. They are obviously in love.

DANA

Are you nervous?

EMIL

(thoughtful)

When I was twelve I ran a race of endurance against a number of boys who were much older than me... and I didn't just win,

(smiles)

I ran nine to ten kilometers further than any of them...

DANA

(smiling)

So even as a boy, you loved running?

EMIL

No. I feared...

(serious)

losing.

58 EXT. WEMBLEY STADIUM. AFTERNOON.

All of the men lean forward in preparation for the start of

the race. Emil slaps his thighs one last time before bending low. For just a moment, everything is still.

BANG!

The group surges forward as the sold-out crowd cheers them on.

59 EXT. LONDON. MORNING.

Emil turns and takes both of Dana's hands, looking her in the eyes.

EMIL

I was 17 the next time I ran. I didn't even want to. But once the race began... everything fell away. And there was only one thing that mattered.

(beat)

Winning.

(offers Dana a knowing look)

From that day till now, it's the only thing I've wanted.

(beat)

Then I met you.

60 EXT. WEMBLEY STADIUM. AFTERNOON.

Emil is in fifteenth place with the other runners at least eighty meters ahead.

BBC RADIO ANNOUNCER

We have just passed the halfway mark of the men's 10,000-meter, Finland's Viljo Heino continues to hold the lead followed closely by Sweden's Bertil Albertsson. The Czech Locomotive, Emil Zatopek who was thought to be a serious contender, trails far behind near the back of the pack.

Emil completes a lap as his eyes return to the sideline where Dana holds a white and a red flag. As he passes, Dana checks her clock and waves the white flag. Frustration registers on Emil's face, but he doesn't increase his pace.

CUT TO.:

61 EXT. LONDON PARK. SUNSET.

Dana and Emil sit in a tree. Emil leans in and kisses her. Dana kisses him back. Emil turns to watch the sunset.

EMIL  
Wouldn't you like to marry me?

Dana turns to look Emil in the eyes.

DANA  
Couldn't we just go on having fun?

EMIL  
We can go on having fun while we're married.

Dana stays silent a moment. She offers Emil a raised eyebrow.

DANA  
How many other girls have you asked?

EMIL  
(mischievous look)  
Six... no, make that seven! Yeah, seven.

Mock outrage. Emil laughs.

EMIL  
(serious)  
You are the first, and, only.

Dana doesn't answer. She leans into his chest and takes in the sunset.

62 EXT. WEMBLEY STADIUM. AFTERNOON.

Dana watches nervously from the sideline. As Emil swings around for another lap, she checks her stop clock and grabs the red flag.

BBC RADIO ANNOUNCER  
World Record holder Viljo Heino remains in first place and with only nine laps to go, the Flying Fin seems to be breaking even further from the pack.

Dana waves the red flag at Emil whose face contorts into a painful smile as he suddenly increases his pace.

## BBC RADIO ANNOUNCER

But what's this? The Czech Locomotive, Emil Zatopek is finally moving. I'd heard of his unorthodox running style, but it is something else to see him in action.

Emil seems to be moving twice as fast as the other men, passing them with ease. After two more laps, Emil has almost caught up with Heino.

The Fin glances back to see Emil on his heels. Heino pushes harder, gaining a few steps on Emil. Emil's arms flail as pain contorts his face.

## BBC RADIO ANNOUNCER

Zatopek runs like a man who is beating his body, giving all he has.

-- From the sideline, Dana takes a half step forward. She knows she is watching history in the making.

Emil pushes harder and comes up beside Heino, then passes him. Heino is angry. No matter how hard he pushes, Emil continues to sail up the track.

Further and further Emil breaks away at an all-out sprint.

Dana leaps up as Emil approaches the back of the pack.

## BBC RADIO ANNOUNCER

With just three laps to go, Zatopek is at least a minute ahead of his nearest competitor. And still, the Check Locomotive continues to gain ground.

Emil meets Dana's eyes as he circles around again.

The crowd is going wild.

FADE TO BLACK.:

63 EXI. LONDON. EARLY MORNING.

The streets are relatively quiet. A small boat floats on the River Thames. Big Ben begins to ring, counting six chimes of the gong.

64 INT. MEN'S DORM. EARLY MORNING.

Emil opens his eyes. He is in a single bed in a small room.

Across from him, another man lay sleeping.

Emil checks his watch then crawls out of bed and starts getting dressed.

65 INT. BUS. EARLY MORNING.

Emil sits on a bus, watching London pass by.

66 EXT. ST. HELENS SCHOOL. LONDON. EARLY MORNING.

Emil walks toward a large building with the words "St. Helen's School," chiseled into the stone above the entrance. A sign hangs beside the door that reads, St. Helen's School is proud to host every female Olympiad for the 1948 London Games.

Emil looks around to make sure nobody is watching and then walks over to a small iron gate at the side of the building. He quickly climbs it and sneaks around to the back of the school that boasts a cozy garden with a deep pool.

Emil searches the second story windows a moment then begins to whistle to the tune of the Moravian Folksong, *V Zarazicah Krajni Dum*.

A few seconds later, Dana arrives at one of the windows and offers a wave of excitement before disappearing again.

Emil plucks a single red rose from a nearby rosebush.

As Dana exits, she grins at Emil who wraps her in a hug, lifting her up and then setting her back down. He bows low and presents the rose.

EMIL

My lady.

DANA

Why thank you, sir!

EMIL

I bought it from the most prestigious flower store in London.

(beat)

Can you believe they had no yellow peonies?

Dana glances at the rosebush with a raised eyebrow. Emil grins as he leans in for another kiss.

Dana's eyes dart to the windows as she places a hand on his chest, stopping him. She takes his hand and walks him toward the back of the garden where they will be hidden from sight.

CUT TO.:

Emil and Dana sit on a bench next to a Koi pond at the back of the garden.

DANA

Of course I want to see it! I can't believe you brought it.

Emil excitedly retrieves a cloth from his coat pocket.

EMIL

I had to show you.

He hands the cloth to Dana who holds it delicately. She beams at Emil before unfolding it to reveal his Olympic gold medal. She stares at it a moment.

DANA

You know this changes everything, right?

EMIL

I know, the girls will be lining up for me now.

Dana offers a look of mock outrage before punching Emil hard in the shoulder. Emil leans in and kisses her. As she shifts her body to move closer, she suddenly screams.

DANA

No!

Emil leaps back in shock.

EMIL

What?

Dana's eyes are on the small ripple spreading through the Koi pond.

DANA

Your medal!

Dana stands with a hand to her mouth. She is horrified. Emil realizes what happened and can't help but laugh.



DANA  
(shock)  
It's not funny!

Emil laughs all the harder. Dana slugs him in the arm.

DANA CONT'D  
Emil! It's not funny! What are we  
going to do?

Dana is pacing with her head in her hands.

DANA CONT'D  
I'm so sorry! I...

Emil takes his shirt off and then starts unbuttoning his pants. Dana is shocked.

DANA CONT'D  
Emil?!

EMIL  
(laughing)  
You don't have to turn around, but I'm  
going to take my pants off now.

Dana turns her back to him, mortified. He climbs out of his pants and removes his socks.

EMIL CONT'D  
Ahhh! I'm such a fool.

DANA  
(back still to Emil)  
What!

EMIL  
I just realized I could have had you  
retrieve it.

DANA  
Mmmhmm, in your dreams.

Emil grins. Wearing only his underwear, he sits on the side of the pond and lowers himself in. Dana turns around to see Emil standing waist deep in the Koi pond.

Emil grins at Dana before going under. Dana leans forward in anticipation.

Emil's hands come out of the water. He is holding the medal

with arms outstretched like a champion.

Dana heaves a sigh of relief. Emil is very impressed with himself. As he climbs out of the pond Dana averts her eyes but not before appreciating Emils physyc.

Emil grabs his clothes and ducks behind a tree to get dressed.

EMIL

I had to fight a couple of fish for  
it, but I can be quite determined when  
I put my mind -

HOUSEMISTRESS

(gasp)  
What are you doing!

Emil turns to see the Housemistress standing with her mouth agape. The older woman immediately averts her eyes as Emil hops on one foot, trying to get into his pants.

EMIL

I wasn't- we weren't...

Dana starts to laugh even as she turns red. She also averts her eyes.

Now wearing only his pants, Emil snatches the rest of his clothes and holds them to his chest.

HOUSEMISTRESS

(shouts and points to exit)  
Get out!

Emil stumbles backward and falls flat on his back then rolls to his feet.

Dana lets out another laugh as Emil shoots her a "really??" look.

EMIL

I swear, we were just-

HOUSEMISTRESS

Now!

Emil runs for the gate and climbs over, donning his shirt even as he runs down the cobblestone street.

67 EXT. WEMBLEY STADIUM. AFTERNOON.

CAMERA PANS AROUND the back of Emil's head AS HE RUNS and comes back to rest on a close up of his muddy face. He is grimacing as if in pain.

Thick rain pours down as Emil runs at an all-out sprint. His face is a mask of agony and the lower half of his body is spattered in mud.

BBC TV ANNOUNCER

Until now Zatopek has run like a man  
in a trance, but look at him go!  
Something has woken the Czech, but  
will it be enough?

Emil is in the fifth position but has a sudden explosion of speed.

BBC TV ANNOUNCER

As we approach the final lap of the  
men's 5,000 meters, the Czech  
Locomotive runs like a man possessed.

Emil's awkward lope sends him past his four competitors. The crowd goes wild as he is now barely a pace behind the lead. The finish line is just ten meters away. Rain soaks the ecstatic crowd, but they don't care. Every eye is on Zatopek.

68 EXT. RUNWAY. LONDON. AFTERNOON.

Emil and Dana walk hand in hand with the rest of the Czech team following close behind. Emil carries a local paper, eying the headline irritably.

Close up of a newspaper headline, "*Czech Locomotive loses by 0.02 seconds!*"

Lieutenant Pavel has been joined by a Soviet man in full uniform (KOMONDARM KIRILL). Both men wait at the plane. Emil walks up the stairs leading to the plane. As he reaches the top and steps inside, Pavel and Kirill step in on either side of him, forcing Emil to let go of Dana's hand. The group blocks the entrance, forcing the rest of the athletes to wait on the steps.

LIEUTENANT PAVEL

Emil, this is Komondarn Kirill. He  
will be your new Commander for the  
foreseeable future.

Emil nods to the man.

EMIL  
Komondarn.

Kiril offers Emil a curt nod.

KOMONDARN KIRILL  
Won't you join us in the front of the  
plane? We have much to discuss.

Emil smiles at his would-be chaperones.

EMIL  
Of course, but could we do it a little  
later? I'd love to-

KOMONDARN KIRILL  
No. We cannot.

Emil turns and offers Dana a frustrated look. She places a  
hand on the small of his back.

DANA  
Go, we can talk later.

Emil rolls his eyes so only Dana can see. He turns to the men  
and motions toward the front of the plane.

EMIL CONT'D  
Shall we?

69 INT. AIRPLANE. DAY.

Emil sits between the two men, clearly awkward about having  
to try to look both men in the eye as they talk.

LIEUTENANT PAVEL  
When you arrive back home, we have a  
number of prepared speeches for you.

EMIL  
Of course. Well, if that is all-

Emil gets up to leave. Kirill places a hand on his shoulder,  
keeping him there.

KOMONDARN KIRILL  
In the coming weeks, you will be  
touring the nation in order to serve  
the Party. We will also be shooting

several short films to show that  
Czechoslovakia stands in solidarity  
with the Soviet Union.

Emil struggles to hide his true emotion for a moment.

KOMONDARN KIRILL  
Is there a problem, Capitan?

EMIL  
I have no time for this, I need to  
train.

Lieutenant Pavel leans in, placing a firm hand on Emil's  
other shoulder.

LIEUTENANT PAVEL  
There is no problem. Our Olympic  
champion is just tired after all his  
exertion.

Emil realizes he has gone too far and forces a smile.

EMIL  
I'm honored to serve my country,  
Kapitan. I assure you, there are no  
problems.

The Komondarn is annoyed at the interaction.

KOMONDARN KIRILL  
It is a pity you are not returning  
with two gold medals. You should know  
that Admiral Abankin considered using  
disciplinary action to ensure you are  
properly motivated in the future. But  
I assured him it was unnecessary.  
(beat)  
Was I mistaken?

EMIL  
(angry)  
No, Komondarn. You were not.

Emil glances back at Dana who is laughing at something.

EMIL  
On an unrelated note.  
(Emil's eyes stay on Dana)  
I have asked Dana Ingrova to marry me.

Emil can't help but smile as he finishes speaking. There is a moment of quiet discomfort. Komondran Kirill looks sternly at Emil.

LIEUTENANT PAVEL  
 (nervous laughter)  
 Emil, that is a fine thing. Let me be  
 the first to congratulate-

KOMONDARN KIRILL  
 That was ill-considered. Dana  
 Ingrova's father is not in good  
 standing with the Party.

Lieutenant Pavel purses his lips and acquiesces, offering a curt nod. Incredulity and anger darken Emil's face. Pavel speaks quickly to stave off an outburst.

LIEUTENANT PAVEL  
 I will make a request immediately. It  
 will be well, Emil.

70 EXT. AIRPORT. AFTERNOON. PRAGUE.

Emil wears his military uniform as he exits the plane. He waves to a crowd of reporters and Czech citizens. As he is whisked in one direction he looks back to see Dana and her entourage, emerge from the plane. She is quickly taken in another direction. They share a smile before the crowds come between them.

71 EXT. AFTERNOON. REVOLUCNI STREET. PRAGUE.

Emil sits in the back of a convertible car. The streets are full as he waves and smiles. "Zatopek" is yelled by many. Pavel smiles and laughs with Emil. Kirill sits stoically in the front seat. A young lady runs out and gives Emil a cup of ice cream. He takes it and eats it as he continues to wave and smile.

72 EXT. PUB. PRAGUE. NIGHT.

Emil and Jindrich sit in a corner of a Pub. They are momentarily alone while Lieutenant Pavel is at the bar getting drinks.

EMIL  
 (angry)  
 When!

JINDRICH

While we were in London.

(beat)

He was denounced a traitor by the Ministry of Justice and interned into the Voina 1 labor camp.

EMIL

(disbelief)

But why? What did he do?

JINDRICH

You know how he was. He spoke too openly about his beliefs, and he's been even more vocal about his faith of late.

Emil is furious.

Pavel sits down with drinks.

LIEUTENANT PAVEL

(cheerful)

It was a good day, no?

EMIL

(vehement)

How long have you known?!

(beat)

About Ali!?

Pavel reacts as though he has been punched in the gut but quickly composes himself. He glances around the bar before speaking in a quiet and placating tone.

LIEUTENANT PAVEL

He spoke regularly against the party, Emil. You've heard him.

EMIL

(loud)

Was this you?!

LIEUTENANT PAVEL

(calmly)

I have a duty to my Party— to my country.

(apologetic)

I did not know this would happen—

EMIL

(furious)

Your country?! You are a coward— a Soviet dog— informing on family and friends. Ali was right, we've become no better than the Nazis!

Pavel can barely contain his anger.

LIEUTENANT PAVEL

You forget yourself! Remember who you are talking to! I serve my country and the party faithfully and you would do well to not say another word!

Pavel stands.

LIEUTENANT PAVEL CONT'D

You are distraught. I will give you some time to gather yourself. But I advise you to remember the uniform you wear and the privilege you have been given to represent our country and our party.

(beat)

I will forget this conversation took place. But never again...

Pavel leaves the threat unsaid. He straightens his Lieutenants coat, gathering himself. He softens just slightly.

LIEUTENANT PAVEL CONT'D

I am sorry about your friend.

Pavel stalks out of the pub.

73 EXT. PRAGUE OLD TOWN SQUARE. AFTERNOON.

Dressed in full military uniform Emil stands on a platform in front of the stunning Prague Castle. He looks down at the speech he has been given. He struggles to hide his disdain. When he finally reads the words to the gathered crowd, his tone is harder than usual.

EMIL

Comrades, men of the red army, my fellow brothers of the Czech military, working men and working women, collective farmers, workers in the intellectual professions, brothers and



sisters. I greet you on behalf of  
Czechoslovakia and the Soviet  
Government.

Montage as Emil speaks in different cities intercut with his  
training.

-- Emil runs through Prague at breakneck speed.

EMIL V.O.

The world press calls me the Czech  
Locomotive. This name was given  
because I run with heart and national  
pride. I run to show the world the  
strength of our nations.

(beat)

We now have Soviet allies, brothers,  
and sisters who together with us are  
building a great future for both our  
nations.

-- Emil is speaking in a town square in another city.

EMIL V.O.

Today the position of our country is  
far better than three years ago. Our  
country is now many times richer than  
it was three years ago as regards to  
our industry, food and raw materials.

(beat)

We experience no serious shortage of  
food. Our entire country, all the  
peoples of our country, support us.  
The spirit of the great Lenin and his  
victorious banner against the German-  
fascist invaders has united us.

-- Emil is running beside a steam train, seemingly racing it.

EMIL V.O.

Friends, the whole world is looking to  
us as examples of common unity. When I  
ran in the London Games of the  
Olympiads, it was with this common  
spirit. The Americans, the British,  
none of the Westerners could catch me.

-- Emil is at the starting line of a new race in a new city.  
The gun fires as the runners surge into motion.

EMIL V.O.

I will always run for my people.

The sound of jubilant crowds begins to rise.

-- Emil is in yet another parade, wearing his uniform and waving -- though his smile feels forced.

-- Emil stands on a high dais addressing dignitaries. An enormous Czeck and Soviet flag loom large behind him.

EMIL

Long live our glorious Motherland,  
Czechoslovakia, her liberty and her  
independence!

(beat)

Under the banner of Lenin.

-- Emil runs alone through a field of wildflowers. The sun is setting behind him.

The camera pulls out as the scene shifts to black and white, further still the camera goes until we are watching Emil run on a TV set.

Emil stands in a hotel room with Pavel and Kirill at his side. The men have just watched the propaganda video together.

KOMONDARN KIRILL

This is very good.

Emil turns away so Kirill won't notice the anger in his eyes.

Kirill hands Emil a folder.

KOMONDARN KIRILL

This is the speech you will give  
tomorrow afternoon when the athletes  
have been presented.

Emil takes the folder but is distracted. He turns to Pavel.

EMIL

I would like to have some time with  
Dana.

Pavel is clearly uncomfortable.

PAVEL

Emil...

KOMONDARN KIRILL

Your request to marry Mrs. Ingrova has been denied.

(beat)

You are Czechoslovakia's national hero and a representative of the communist party.

PAVEL

(conciliatory tone)

As you know, Dana's father and uncle have strong ties to the Democratic Benes Regime and it would send the wrong message.

Emil's disbelief shifts to fury. He is too angry to speak. He stalks angrily toward the door.

PAVEL

Emil!

Emil stops but can't make himself look back. He holds up the file.

EMIL

I have a speech to study.

Emil exits.

74 INT. BACKSTAGE. BALLROOM. EVENING.

Emil waits backstage with every Czechoslovakian Olympian who competed in London. He sees Dana arrive and brightens.

Dana waves conservatively and walks over, discreetly taking his hand. Emil can see she is concerned.

DANA

I've missed you.

Emil struggles to meet her eyes. He is emotional. Angry.

EMIL

They told you?

DANA

(heavily)

They told me.

Emil turns to look Dana in the eyes.

EMIL  
Do you love me?

DANA  
You know I do. But-

EMIL  
Do you trust me?

DANA  
Yes.

Kirill and Pavel arrive. Emil meets Kirills eyes.

LIEUTENANT PAVEL  
They are ready for you.

75 INT. BALLROOM. EVENING.

All of the athletes have lined up at the back of the stage. Emil and Dana join them as the ANNOUNCER continues speaking into the mic touting the greatness of Czechoslovakia, the USSR, and the Olympic team.

Emil is deep in thought.

ANNOUNCER  
... I give you the son of  
Czechoslovakia our national hero, Emil  
Zatopek!

Emil steps into his role, waving happily at the gathered guests as he walks to the mic. The crowd goes wild. He leans in and begins his prepared speech.

EMIL  
The world press calls me the Czech  
Locomotive. This name was given  
because I run with heart and national  
pride. I run to show the world the  
strength of our nations...

Emil pauses and looks back at Dana. After a moment he sets his jaw. He is clearly conflicted but as he speaks from his heart he becomes more confident.

EMIL CONT'D  
Hope and sacrifice. It is these two  
ideas that define a runner. It's these  
two ideas that define everyone on this  
stage. What are our hopes and what are

we willing to sacrifice to attain them?

Emil turns and points to his fellow Olympians.

EMIL CONT'D

(motions to the crowd)

Everyone gathered here today also knows the meaning of these words, hope, and sacrifice. We have lost much over the years, our identity as a country stripped away. We have lived through many trials, yet we are still strong! When I look at the men and women gathered here today, I see a greatness that rivals anything on this platform.

The crowd goes crazy as photographers take pictures. Emil is holding the folder the Komondarn gave him. He has closed it. Emil looks at Dana.

EMIL CONT'D

On a personal note, all my hopes and sacrifice have led me to today... to this moment.

(meets Dana's eyes)

I have an announcement to make.

The Kapitan watches Emil, somewhat confused.

EMIL CONT'D

I have asked Dana Ingrova to be my wife.

The crowd goes wild. Dana is in shock. The Kapitan controls his face. Emil reaches out to her, beckoning her to him. She hesitates only a moment as her eyes dart to the Komondarn. She steps forward and takes his hand.

Journalists scramble to take photos of Dana. A large man (BLUE COLLAR) wearing dirty blue overalls calls out.

BLUE COLLAR

What did she say?

Dana is both worried and... happy.

EMIL

Why don't I let her tell you?

Emil moves aside, giving Dana space to come to the mic. Dana walks up as the photographers snap pictures like their lives depend on it. Before speaking into the mic, Dana whispers to Emil.

DANA  
This is crazy.

Emil just beams at her. Dana steps up to the mic as the crowd quiets. She leans in.

DANA  
I said... yes.

Cheering.

Emil and Dana embrace. Emil glances at the Komondarn and ends the speech correctly.

EMIL  
(into mic)  
Long live our glorious Motherland,  
Czechoslovakia, her liberty and her  
independence!

76 INT. KIRILL'S OFFICE. AFTERNOON.

Emil stands before a fuming Kirill and a very nervous Pavel.

KOMONDARN KIRILL  
(furious)  
You ignored a direct command!

EMIL  
I did, sir.

KOMONDARN KIRILL  
And you did it in front of the entire  
world!

EMIL  
Yes, sir.

Kirill is pacing, deep in thought. Finally, he comes to a decision.

KOMONDARN KIRILL CONT'D  
You were never informed of the party's  
decision.

EMIL  
 (smiles)  
 I was never informed, sir.

KOMONDARN KIRILL  
 You are walking a dangerous road.  
 (shakes his head)  
 The rest of the tour will be canceled.  
 (beat)  
 Lieutenant Pavel, you will make sure  
 everything is prepared.

LIEUTENANT PAVEL  
 Yes, Komondarn.

Kirill turns toward the exit.

EMIL  
 Prepared for what, sir?

Kirill ignores Emil as he stalks out. Emil looks to Pavel.

LIEUTENANT PAVEL  
 (grins)  
 A State Wedding.

77 INT. ZATOPEK HOUSE. MAIN ROOM. EVENING.

It's a beautiful day. The Zatopek family sits at the dinner table. Emil and Dana are with them. There is laughter and love. Anezka is holding Dana's hand.

A knock on the door. Marie answers to find a group of young boys standing at the door.

BOY  
 Is Emil here?

Marie tries to shoe him away, but he is persistent.

BOY  
 We are going to have a race! Is Emil  
 here?

Emil sits at the dinner table with his family. He is embarrassed, he looks worriedly at his father who abruptly stands and nods to Emil.

FRANTISEK  
 (to Emil)  
 Follow me.

Emil is concerned but follows his father out.

78 EXT. ZATOPEK HOUSE. EARLY EVENING.

They walk out the back door. Down to a new, modestly built workshop.

79 INT. WORKSHOP. EARLY EVENING.

Emil stands in the workshop. He walks past a workbench and thumbs a lathe. His father is at the back of the room, he is looking through several shelves and talking to himself.

FRANTISEK

(frustrated)

I know they are here somewhere.

Emil hears laughter outside. He walks to the window and looks out to see the boys from the front door in the yard. Then he glances down and notices a drawer partly open. He opens it further and pulls out newspaper clippings.

He is amazed as he thumbs through them. They are clippings of his races. The 5000 meter European Championships in Oslo, in Geneva, in Switzerland and on and on.

EMIL

(confused)

Do you collect the results from my races?

Still engrossed in his own search, Frantisek turns to see Emil holding the stack of clippings. He freezes, suddenly embarrassed. He clears his throat as he turns away.

FRANTISEK

Only the international ones.

Emil is quiet.

EMIL

I run in Brno next month. Would you and mother come?

His father seems to ignore Emil by continuing his search of the shelf.

FRANTISEK

Ahh, here they are!

He picks up a box and walks over to Emil, handing it to him.



Emil looks down and for a moment. He is emotional. They are the running shoes his father had taken from him years earlier.

FRANTISEK CONT'D

Yes, we will come. But first, there is a race to win.

They walk out of the shed to find the whole family standing on the back porch. Frantisek laughs.

FRANTISEK CONT'D

Come!

The family walk alongside Emil as the waiting boys begin to cheer.

BOY

Emil!

Neighbors join the family as they walk. Eventually, there are a few dozen people. A little boy walking with them says.

LITTLE BOY

He is going to race!

Another OLD WOMAN calls from her window

OLD WOMAN

Zatopek!

Everyone begins to shout "Zatopek!" Emil is shocked and embarrassed as he realizes he is a town hero.

80 EXT. KOPROVINCE. COURTYARD. SUNSET.

Emil is in the start position, he is grinning. Dana is with him. At least 30 boys, girls, young men and even old men have lined up as well.

Frantisek stands to the side.

FRANTISEK

On your mark, get set, go!

Everyone lurches forward, running around the corner, Emil keeps to the middle of the group.

81 EXT. EMIL'S APARTMENT. PRAGUE. EARLY MORNING.

The sun has yet to rise when Dana arrives at Emil's apartment

on her bicycle. She wears a stunning white dress that has no place on a bike. She climbs down and leans the bike against a tree.

She knocks on the door and waits.

The door opens to reveal Emil in his wedding suit.

EMIL

(shock)

Aren't you supposed to be getting married today?

DANA

Is that today?

(beat)

What do you think?

Dana twirls, as Emil whistles appreciatively.

DANA

Well, are you going to kiss me or just stand there gaping?

Emil leans in and kisses his fiance. After a moment she steps back and walks over to her bike.

DANA

If you expect another one you're going to have to catch me.

Dana hops onto her bike and rides away. Emil barks a laugh as he darts to the back shed and grabs his bicycle.

RIDING MONTAGE.:

--- Dana and Emil race across a bridge in their wedding attire. The first rays of the sun pierce the thick trees.

--- Emil stands on his seat, still holding the handlebars. For a few seconds, he stands up tall and spreads his arms wide before almost falling. He quickly sits and barely manages to keep from wiping out. Dana is laughing hard.

--- Dana and Emil race as fast as they can, they are neck and neck. Emil sticks his leg out, pretending to kick at Dana's bike. Both are laughing even as they push for more speed.

82 EXT. FOREST. MORNING.

Emil and Dana lie on the thick grass under a large Oak.

Dana's head rests on Emil's lap.

DANA  
We're really doing this.

Emil sighs happily.

EMIL  
We're really doing this.

For a moment his face darkens. Dana can feel his tension and looks up at him.

DANA  
What is it?

Emil comes back into the moment.

EMIL  
I'd give anything to have Ali here today. He would have been crazy about you.

CUT TO.:

The two lovebirds bike back across the bridge. Emil brings his bike close to Dana's and leans in for a kiss. Dana laughs.

DANA  
You're incorrigible!

After a moment she rolls her eyes and leans in as well. The two kiss while riding across the bridge. Dana yelps as Emil's bike bumps into hers.

CRASH!

Both Dana and Emil fly over their handlebars.

Both let out an audible groan as they lie flat in the middle of the bridge. Emil pushes himself up. His arms are scraped and he is in pain. He crawls over to Dana who is holding a bloody knee. She is shaking.

EMIL  
(worried)  
Are you OK?

It takes Emil a moment to realize Dana is laughing. Emil places a hand on Dana's leg.

DANA

Ow, ow, ow!

EMIL

I'm so sorry!

As Emil helps her up to a sitting position, Dana is still laughing through her groans.

EMIL

I'm sorry... I'm so so sorry!

Emil starts laughing as well.

83 INT. CHURCH. MORNING.

The church is packed. A pianist plays soft music accompanied by the murmur of the crowd. The MINISTER waits at the front. He checks his watch then meets Jindrich's eyes. Jindrich offers a small shake of his head. A number of reporters, stand near the back with cameras in hand.

Anezka and Frantisek are in the front row. Both keep glancing toward the entry nervously. Dana's father stands near the back, also checking his watch.

The doors burst open as Emil and Dana limp in, breathless, with torn dress and suit and boasting fresh stains.

EMIL

Hi...

Emil quickly limps down the aisle as Dana places her arm around her fathers. Emil talks to no one in particular as he arrives at the front.

EMIL

So sorry... we had... trouble with  
the...

Emil trails off as he straightens his tie and turns to face the aisle. The Minister offers a disbelieving shake of his head before motioning to the pianist who starts playing the wedding song.

As Emil's eyes land on Dana, his breath catches. He is suddenly calm and composed.

84 INT. DANA AND EMIL'S APARTMENT. DAY.

Dana and Emil's apartment is basic with a small kitchen and

living room that run together. Emil and Dana slow dance together in the living room.

Emil leans in and passionately kisses his wife, leading her toward the bedroom.

FADE TO BLACK.:

85 INT. DANA AND EMIL'S APARTMENT. MORNING.

Emil and Dana lay in bed. Dana is curled up on Emil. She runs her fingers over his arm and shoulder.

DANA

(whispered)

One day we will fill this house with  
littles. And we will host your parents  
and mine.

(beat)

And we will have parties.

EMIL

And there will be Apple Strudel and  
Coffee and pie with honeyed marmalade  
and-

DANA

Yes,

(laughs)

there will be good food.

EMIL

I love you best.

DANA

I love you best

86 EXT. FOREST. DAY.

Thick snow covers the ground.

Heavy breathing. The crunching of snow.

Emil and Dana run together through the woods. Dana has a slightly annoyed look in her eyes. She stops and doubles over, trying to find her breath.

Emil realizes he is alone and stops. His breathing is relatively normal.

EMIL  
What's wrong?

Dana plops herself down in the snow, laying flat and closing her eyes.

DANA  
You go ahead. I'm just going to lie here and die.

EMIL  
(laughs)  
It's only another five miles. You've got this.

Dana speaks in a sarcastic tone.

DANA  
*'It's just a warmup, Dana. We'll be back before you know it, Dana'*  
(half sits up)  
Well, I hope you're happy because you've killed your wife.

Emil chuckles as he digs into his backpack and retrieves a line of rope.

EMIL  
I've got you.

CUT TO.:

Emil runs through the woods. He is breathless and straining.

The rope has been attached to Dana's belt and wrapped around Emil's waist. As he runs he pulls Dana like a sled through the snow.

Dana lays with her head back and arms folded. One would think she was a queen and Emil her servant. She smiles slightly as she relaxes and stares at the passing treetops.

87 EXT. SPORTS TRACK. OUTER PRAGUE. DAY.

Dana is throwing her javelin. Emil stands across the field and as the javelin nears, he leaps up and catches it.

EMIL  
Careful, this will be powerful.

Emil takes a few running steps and hurls the javelin toward

his wife. Dana runs toward it. She reaches up and snatches the spear as it flies above her head.

DANA  
(laughing happily)  
You might be fast, but you throw like  
a little boy.

EMIL  
(laughs)  
Come then, show me.

Dana doesn't hesitate, she runs forward and hurls the javelin at Emil. As it flies over his head he reaches up and snatches it at the last second.

DANA  
Nicely done!

Emil steps back to throw again.

EMIL  
I will be touring again next week.

Emil throws the javelin. Dana catches it and doesn't say anything.

EMIL CONT'D  
Ali was correct. I was blind. I'm  
little more than a propaganda  
mouthpiece for an ideology of which I  
want no part.

Dana looks around and speaks in a hushed voice.

DANA  
Careful love.

EMIL  
I just want to run and be married to  
you.

Dana throws the javelin back. Emil catches while continuing.

EMIL CONT'D  
Maybe I should use my influence-

DANA  
And what, end up in a camp like Ali?

Emil stands, holding the javelin. He sees Dana's concern. He

smiles and changes the subject.

EMIL  
 (light-hearted)  
 This one's coming in fast. You really  
 might want to duck.

Dana grins at the challenge as Emil hurls the spear.

CUT TO.:

Wide shot of the couple hurling the spear at each other and catching it at the last moment.

88 EXT. OSTRAVA. DAY.

Wearing his Staff Captain uniform, Emil is about to step on stage to deliver a speech before a crowd of a few hundred people. Komondarn Kirill hands him a sheet.

KOMONDARN KIRILL  
 We added a new line to the end.

Emil takes the paper and reads the bottom of the page.

EMIL  
 Yes, Komondarn.

Emil steps onto the stage as the crowd cheers heartily.

89 EXT. SPORTS STADIUM. DAY,

Montage of races, newspapers and, world darkening.

Historical footage of Czech hockey team winning a gold in the 1948 World Championship.

Insert historical footage of Soviet troops arresting Czechs who are marching in the streets.

BBC REPORTER V.O.  
 The number one Hockey team in the world won't be competing in the London World Championship. Just moments before boarding their plane the Stalinist government swept in and arrested the entire Czechoslovakian team on the charge of treason.

TITLE CARD: Paris 1949, 5000 Meter Men's Final.



Emil battles for first with another man, but manages to surge ahead at the last moment and win.

Komondarn Kirill and Lieutenant Pavel watch appreciatively from the sideline.

Closeup of a newspaper headline. "*Zatopek smashes another world record.*"

-- Insert historical footage of a car exploding in the streets of Prague. Many Czechs run from the area as the Soviets sweep in.

BBC REPORTER V.O.

The Czech Spring has been short-lived as the Stalinist Soviets who liberated the country from the Nazi's have begun to crack down on every aspect of society. The hero of Czechoslovakia, Milada Horakova who fought the Nazi occupation has been sentenced to death today on the charge of a "Terrorist Conspiracy."

Cut to actual news footage of Horakova talking.

HORAKOVA (STOCK FOOTAGE)

I remain, on principle, firm in my convictions.

Insert more historical footage.

BBC REPORTER V.O.

Winston Churchill, Albert Einstein and, Eleanore Roosevelt are among those who pleaded for clemency.

-- TITLE CARD: Stockholm 1950, 10,000 Meter Men's Final.

Emil runs like a man in agony. He handily beats his nearest competitor.

Closeup of a newspaper headline. "*The Czech locomotive does it again!*"

-- Insert historical footage of riots in the streets of Czechoslovakia.

BBC REPORTER V.O.

The mood in Czechoslovakia has

darkened even further as neighbor turn  
in neighbor and family spies on family  
in hopes of currying favor with their  
Soviet rulers.

-- TITLE CARD: Oslo 1951, 5,000 Meter Men's Final.

Emil crosses yet another finish line twenty paces ahead of  
his nearest competitor.

Closeup of a newspaper headline. "ZATOPEK! ZATOPEK! ZATOPEK!"

90 INT. STOCKHOLM SWEDEN. AFTERNOON.

Emil has showered. He is in his hotel room getting dressed.  
The phone rings. Emil picks it up.

EMIL

Hello?

DANA O.S.

(weeping)

Oh, Emil. They have taken him! They  
said he is a traitor.

EMIL

Who!? Dana, what's happened?

DANA

He's been sent to a camp! He served  
his country his entire life. He gave  
everything! And now they've taken him  
because some underling called him a  
traitor!

EMIL

Dana, who's been taken?

DANA

(weeping)

My father, Emil. My father. He is the  
most loyal man I know!

Emil sits on the bed, unsure how to respond.

FADE TO BLACK.:

91 EXT. DANA AND EMIL'S APARTMENT. MORNING.

Emil and Dana walk out the front door and exit the apartment.  
Both are bundled with thick coats, hats, and gloves. Two feet

of fresh powder covers Prague.

DANA  
(horrified)  
No...

Emil's eyes land on the two men and one woman standing down the street. They are prisoners who have been stripped down to their undershirts and pants. All five stand in a drift of knee deep snow. All are shivering and have begun to turn blue.

Standing next to the prisoners with Kalashnikovs in hand are two JUNIOR LIEUTENANTS in Czech army uniforms. Emil angrily strides toward the group.

DANA CONT'D  
Emil! There is nothing you can do.

Emil approaches the Junior Lieutenants.

EMIL  
What is the meaning of this?

Both men recognize Emil and stand taller. JUNIOR LIEUTENANT 1 offers a salute.

JUNIOR LIEUTENANT 1  
Kapitan. We were ordered to stand watch on these prisoners.

Emil can't contain his anger.

EMIL  
What have they done?

JUNIOR LIEUTENANT 2  
They condemn themselves, Kapitan. They pray in public and confess to the Christian faith.

EMIL  
(shock / anger)  
But what have they done? This is the penalty for praying?

SOVIET MAJOR  
Is there a problem?

Emil turns to see a man in a Soviet uniform, SOVIET MAJOR striding toward them. He had been watching from the shadows

of a nearby building. Emil stands at attention.

EMIL  
Sir, has this discipline been  
sanctioned?

SOVIET MAJOR  
It has.

EMIL  
My name is Emil-

SOVIET MAJOR  
I know who you are.  
(beat)  
This is no concern of yours Kapitan  
Zatopek.

Dana places a hand on Emil's shoulder.

EMIL  
It is not, Major. But could I plead  
for leniency?

SOVIET MAJOR  
Mr. Zatopek, you have your duty to our  
nation and I have mine.  
(beat)  
The prisoners will stay where they  
are.

The Major turns on his heel and stalks away. Emil can't make himself meet the prisoner's eyes. The oldest man, PRISONER 1 (65) struggles to speak through shivers.

PRISONER 1 CONT'D  
I saw you run once... in...  
(coughs)  
in Zlin. Such determination. You hold  
nothing back.  
(beat)  
We stand with you... we're persecuted  
but not forsaken, cast down but not  
destroyed. It's an honor to meet you.

Emil forces himself to meet the man's eyes.

EMIL  
The honor is mine.

Dana stands a way off but Emil has slowly walked closer to

the men in the snow.

DANA  
(whispers)  
Emil, we must go.

EMIL  
Sir, if you would simply profess your  
loyalty to the party-

PRISONER 1  
Our loyalty has already been given to  
God.  
(half smile)  
Like you, we are holding nothing back.

Emil can't stop the tears.

EMIL  
I'm sorry... I...

PRISONER 1  
Godspeed, son.

Emil wipes away fresh tears as Dana puts an arm around his shoulders and turns him around. As she does, she nods to the old man. He forces another smile and offers Dana a slight nod.

92 EXT. FOREST/MOUNTAIN. DAY.

Emil sprints up a mountain pass. He wears long pants and a long sleeve shirt and runs like a madman, leaping over fallen trees and ducking under thick branches without slowing.

CUT TO.:

-- FLASHBACK OF Emil standing in front of a large crowd in his uniform, delivering his propaganda speech.

EMIL  
Long live our glorious Motherland,  
Czechoslovakia, her liberty and her  
independence!

CUT TO.:

-- Up to the mountain peak, Emil sprints and doesn't slow. Speeding between the trees like a man possessed.

CUT TO.:

Ali and Emil sit at a corner table in the Zlin bar. Ali leans in, speaking passionately.

ALI

You're being willfully blind. You have traded one oppressor for another

(beat)

and worse you have joined them!

CUT TO.:

Close up of Emil running himself ragged. Up the mountain pass he goes.

ALI O.S.

You are a fool! They're using you and your ego! And you can't even see it.

Along the crest, he sprints. A snow-laden Prague rests far beneath.

Emil's face is a mask of agony. The pain is real as he pushes himself faster and further than he has ever run before.

93 EXT. DANA AND EMIL'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Full darkness has fallen as Emil stumbles to his knees in front of his apartment. He stares at his front door with a look of absolute loss. He finally forces himself to look down the road to where the prisoners had been standing.

Though it is dark, a lampost illuminates the shapes of three bodies lying motionless in the snow. The guards are no longer there.

94 INT. DANA AND EMIL'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

The front door opens and Emil stumbles in. He falls to the floor unable to make it a step further. He is coughing. Dana cries out as she runs over.

DANA

Emil!

Dana drops to her knees and tries to help Emil stand. His body is more convulsing than shivering. Dana can't move him. Finally, she brings him close, wrapping her arms around him and stroking his head.

95 INT. BEDROOM. DANA AND EMIL'S HOUSE. MORNING.

A DOCTOR (40) stands over Emil who is in bed and under a mound of covers. He is slick with sweat, shivering and pale. The Doctor speaks to Dana who sits beside Emil holding his hand. Lieutenant Pavel stands in the corner of the room.

DOCTOR

I've heard of horses running  
themselves to death, but never a man.  
It's pneumonia. You need rest.

Emil tries to sit up but is too weak.

DANA

How long?

DOCTOR

Two weeks, maybe longer.

EMIL

Impossible... I have to... to train...

DOCTOR

If you don't heed my advice, not  
training will be the least of your  
problems.

Dana stands, taking the doctor's hands.

DANA

Thank you, Doctor. I'll make sure he  
stays in bed.

Dana walks the Doctor out.

Pavel steps up to the bed. Emil's eyes are closed and he is shivering. He opens his eyes, fighting the exhaustion a moment longer.

EMIL

Helsinki is in s...seven weeks. I  
can't... I-

LIEUTENANT PAVEL

You will remain in bed. Hear me, Emil.  
I will station men at your door if you  
don't heed my words.

(beat)

You will be ready.

FADE TO BLACK.:

96 EXT. PRAGUE. TIMELAPSE MONTAGE.

Timelapse of day fading into night in Prague.

Top-down shot of Emil lying in bed. He is tormented, shivering, soaked in sweat and his eyes are sunken in.

TIMELAPSE OF PRAGUE. SNOW MELTING, DAY AND NIGHT AND DAY AND NIGHT.

Camera slowly floats downward.

The lighting in the room shifts from day to night multiple times. The closer we come to Emil, the healthier he becomes.

Camera ends on an extreme close up of Emil's eyes. The bags and sweat are gone and he is healthy. The look of torment has been replaced by numb HOPELESSNESS.

97 EXT. SPORTS TRACK. PRAGUE. MORNING.

Title card: 2 Weeks Later.

Emil sits on the edge of his bed. He is dressed to run. He is putting on his running shoes. He is frustrated at his weakness.

DANA

Let me help, love.

EMIL

I got it.

Dana moves to help and Emil speaks stronger.

EMIL CONT'D

I said I got it!

DANA

Calm yourself, it will be alri-

EMIL

Three weeks Dana! Three weeks before the games and I can't even tie my shoes!

Pavel arrives.



PAVEL  
Looking ruddy and hale I see.

EMIL  
You're a poor liar.  
(beat)  
Why are you here? Checking in on your  
good little meal ticket?

LIEUTENANT PAVEL  
(clears throat)  
I have something for you.

Pavel hands Emil an envelope.

EMIL  
What's this?

When he reads the inscription his jaw drops. He struggles to contain his emotion.

EMIL  
Where did you- How could...

LIEUTENANT PAVEL  
There was a major who owed me a favor.

Emil can't help himself. He stands and wraps Pavel in a hug, then steps back. His hands shake as he holds the letter.

EMIL  
I need a moment.

Dana stands and places her hand on Emil's shoulder. He gently puts his hand on hers. She kisses his forehead, turns and walks out with Pavel.

CUT TO.:

Emil sits by himself in his room reading.

ALI V.O.  
*"Emil, my friend. I think of you often  
and of our days' training. I count it  
pure joy that I am able to send you  
this letter! Even here in the mines,  
we have heard tales of the Czech  
Locomotive. You have done well.*

CUT TO.:

Emil sits on the grass next to the track, stretching. The sun rises, painting the world in magical light. For the first time in a long time, he is at peace.

He stands, moving slowly. He is still weak. He stares at the sunrise for a moment, then smiles slightly.

ALI V.O. CONT'D

*When last we were together I spoke in anger, words I regret. You are not blind, nor a fool. You are good and kind.*

CUT TO.:

Emil is doing wind sprints on the track.

ALI V.O. CONT'D

*I was told you were recently ill. By God's grace, we are strong... I have learned this is true."*

*(beat)*

*Know I still kneel for you my friend. I believe in you. Godspeed.*

CUT TO.:

Emil continues his "stretching" as he kneels in prayer like his mentor did so many years before. His lips move silently.

Emil keeps his head bowed a moment longer. When he looks up, it is clear he is at peace.

Lieutenant Pavel is walking toward Emil. Pavel is slightly nervous at the sight of Emil praying.

LIEUTENANT PAVEL CONT'D

*That is a dangerous practice.*

Emil stands and offers a happy smile.

EMIL

*(smiles)*

*Dangerous? Yes, it is. Most dangerous.*

CUT TO.:

Emil is running through the streets of Prague. A number of children playing a game of marbles spot him. They point out excitedly and immediately leap up, running alongside him.

ALI V.O. CONT'D

*You don't race to see who is fastest.  
You race to see who's will is the  
strongest.*

(beat)

*\* I once asked you why you run.  
Nothing has changed. **You run to be  
free.***

Emil laughs as he runs faster, leaving the children behind.

98 INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING. DAY.

Jindrich and a number of other athletes talk in the lobby. Outside the double entry doors, twenty or so reporters have gathered with cameras ready.

The reporters start calling out questions and taking pictures as a couple presses their way through. A moment later Emil and Dana enter the building.

JAN ZACHARA, a slim but muscular featherweight boxer stands talking to JOSEF HOLECEK who is a canoer. Dana and Emil are laughing as they enter. Upon seeing the two men, they all embrace happily.

The door opens again to reveal JOSEF RUZICKA, a wrestler built like a brick house. Behind him, a number of young gymnasts enter with a COACH at the lead.

Emil and Jindrich stand together.

A Czech OFFICER steps out from a nearby office.

Everyone quiets.

OFFICER

You may collect your exit travel papers from my office. And good luck.

The group disperses into the office. Before Jindrich goes more than a few steps, the Officer places a hand on his shoulder.

OFFICER CONT'D

Mr. Roundny, your papers were not approved. You will not be competing in Helsinki.

Jindrich is stunned. Emil had half stepped away but comes back at the Officer's words.

EMIL  
What's this now?

The Officer gives Emil an annoyed look.

OFFICER  
Mr. Roundny's father has been  
imprisoned for political offenses. It  
would be inappropriate for him to  
represent the nation in Helsinki.

Emil is furious. More so even than Jindrich who is just  
stunned.

EMIL  
This is bureaucratic drivel. Jindrich  
has been a faithful party member since  
before the war.  
(beat)  
He has earned his place!

Emil ends the last sentence with bite. Jindrich looks up,  
concerned. He places a hand on Emil's shoulder.

JINDRICH  
Emil—

Emil shakes him off as Dana arrives back with their papers in  
hand.

OFFICER  
Mr. Zatopek, this has nothing to do  
with you.

Many of the Olympians have gathered now. All are watching the  
exchange.

EMIL  
Of course, it does! It has to do with  
all of us! If Jindrich cannot run  
then—

Dana places a hand on Emil's shoulder, pulling him back.

DANA  
Emil!

Emil meets her eyes. He clearly wants to continue, but  
Jindrich steps between him and the Officer.

He meets Emil's eyes and places an arm around his shoulders,

forcibly turning his friend toward the door.

JINDRICH  
(whispers)  
Thank you. But enough.

Emil is furious but allows Dana and Jindrich to walk him out.

99 INT. BEDROOM. EMIL AND DANA APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Dana and Emil lay next to each other, both wide awake and staring at the ceiling - both not speaking.

Dana turns onto her side and begins searching Emil's face.

DANA  
This isn't a battle you can win.  
(beat)  
If you insert yourself into this, it  
will only get you thrown into a camp  
somewhere- or worse.

After a long moment, Emil speaks.

EMIL  
Ali warned me. But I didn't listen.

Emil turns to face Dana and places a hand on her cheek.

EMIL CONT'D  
We have traded one oppressor for  
another.

Dana searches Emil's face.

EMIL CONT'D  
I must do something.

Dana sits up, angrily.

DANA  
What will you do Emil?! What was it  
our gold medal-winning national hockey  
team did to get thrown into prison?  
(beat)  
What did they do Emil?!

Emil sits up.

EMIL  
There was a rumor of defections.

DANA

That's right! A rumor and they are dragged out of a pub and arrested. A rumor and the Party bared its teeth! Their national acclaim didn't protect them.

Dana is crying. She takes Emil's face in her hands.

DANA CONT'D

(softly)

Emil, my love. I know your heart. It is good and kind and just, but there is nothing you can do.

(beat)

Please.

Emil can't make himself say the words, but he offers a tight nod. She exhales a great sigh of relief and lays her head against Emil's chest. Emil strokes her hair lovingly, though he is clearly still conflicted.

100 EXT. AIRPORT TARMAC. MORNING.

Thick rain falls as Emil and Dana stand among several athletes laden with heavy backpacks in front of an airplane. Dana has an umbrella.

Jindrich is with them, under his own umbrella. He has no pack. Dana is excited about their upcoming adventure but Emil is sober. A small gathering of the state-approved press takes state-approved photos. There are several Handlers, military representatives, and party members as well. All are boarding the plane.

Athletes are saying their goodbyes to friends and climbing the stairs. Dana hugs Jindrich.

DANA

I will see you soon.

Dana shoulders her bag and turns to climb the stairs. Emil stands frozen, staring at nothing.

DANA

Emil?

Emil doesn't move.

DANA CONT'D

Ready?

Emil shakes himself out of his stupor and meets Dana's eyes.

EMIL

You go in. I'll be right there.

Dana is thoughtful a moment, looks at Jindrich and then nods.

DANA

See you inside.

101 INT. AIRPLANE. MORNING.

Dana walks past joking athletes to her seat. She stows her bag. She is sober as she takes a window seat.

Dana looks out to see Emil talking animatedly with Jindrich.

Lieutenant Pavel has joined the conversation. He is angry.

A friend calls Dana's name but she doesn't hear.

She watches Emil shake his head "no." Both Pavel and Jindrich are animated now. More Party officials join the conversation.

Pavel is furious. He throws his arms high then turns and ascends the stairs.

Dana leaps up.

Camera follows over Dana's shoulder as she pushes past athletes still in the aisle. Near the open door, Pavel talks with a party official. Pavel is angry.

Dana pushes past the last athlete and Pavel sees her. He grabs her by the arms and holds her at the door. He says something but Dana is too distraught to hear. She stands there for a moment looking down at Emil standing in the rain. Emil looks up and their eyes connect. He mouths the words, "I'm sorry" just before the door closes.

102 INT. AIRPORT HANGER. DAY.

Emil holds up his hand, silencing the officer. There are several Party members standing around him and Jindrich.

EMIL

I've made my decision.

(beat)

I will not be running in Helsinki  
unless the entire team is with me.

OFFICER

Then you will not be running.

(beat)

Mr. Zatopek, let me be clear, right now you have simply delayed your departure. However, if you persist in this absurdity, you can consider yourself retired.

(threatening)

And have no doubt that you will be brought before a military tribunal.

As the Officer disappears into his office, Emil watches him go. He is angry and worried. Jindrich stands a short distance away watching in disbelief. Behind him, the airplane takes off.

103 EXT. WOODS. DAY.

-- Emil kneels by the place the dead prisoners died. His lips are moving.

-- Emil runs through the woods as fast and as hard as he can. The day is sunny and bright. He is focused. He pushes himself even harder.

-- Emil leaps over a large, fallen tree, then splashes through a stream, still at all all-out sprint.

-- Emil is high up in the mountains. A crystalline lake stretches far beneath. Emil runs along the edge of a cliff, not slowing.

-- Emil is drenched in sweat and mud when he arrives back at his apartment he finds Jindrich waiting for him.

EMIL

Anything?

Jindrich shakes his head.

JINDRICH

It's been two days. They're not going to change their minds. Emil... I love you for doing this, but the games start tomorrow.

Emil sits and quietly begins to untie his shoes.

JINDRICH CONT'D

If you aren't there, I'll never



forgive myself.

EMIL

And if you aren't there, I'll never  
forgive myself.

Emil simply looks at Jindrich.

JINDRICH CONT'D

And what will this do?

(beat)

You are destroying everything you've  
worked for. Think about Dana?

EMIL

I think about her every day.

(takes a breath and smiles)

Ali once told me that when I am free  
here

(points to head)

and here,

(points to heart)

that no man can take it away. I've  
been running my whole life, running  
toward something I could never attain.

(looks at Jindrich)

Don't you? see. If I compete, I am  
free, if I don't compete, I am still  
free.

(beat)

If I ever run again, it will mean  
something.

Emil trails off as a black car pulls up to his apartment. Jindrich and Emil turn to watch as an Officer exits from the back of the car. He is holding two envelopes. Officer is clearly unhappy with being there.

OFFICER

It seems there's been a... mistake.

(hands Jindrich an envelope)

Your papers were approved after all.

The Officer turns stone cold eyes on Emil and hands him an envelope.

OFFICER CONT'D

Mr. Zatopek.

Without another word, Officer gets back into the car.

Emil and Jindrich watch the car drive away in disbelief.

104 INT. AIRPLANE. DAY.

Jindrich and Emil sit on the plane together. Jindrich still wears a stunned look.

JINDRICH

There'll be consequences for this.  
They aren't going to forget.

Emil nods, he takes on his jovial persona but beneath it is an intensity.

EMIL

It will be easier to forget when I  
win.

Jindrich shakes his head at his friend.

105 INT. OLYMPIC VILLAGE. HELSINKI.

TITLE CARD: Olympic Village, Helsinki, 1952.

Emil and Jindrich walk together, each laden with large rucksacks. Flags from multiple countries hang everywhere as dozens of athletes walk through the streets. The atmosphere is bright and festive.

Emil spots the Czech flag and enters a dormitory. Jindrich stays behind, talking to another athlete wearing the British colors.

106 INT. OLYMPIC VILLAGE. DORMITORY. HELSINKI.

Dana sits alone in her two-bed dorm room. She is curled up tight, staring fearfully at nothing. She looks up as Emil arrives in the doorway.

Dana leaps up and wraps her arms around him.

DANA

Emil!

EMIL

I'm sorry, my love. I-

Dana steps up and instead of an embracing Emil, she punches him hard in the chest. He grunts. She offers an outraged scream and punches him again. Before she can go for the triple, Emil steps in and wraps his arms around her.

Dana melts into him, burying her face in his chest.

For a long moment, the couple just holds each other. Finally, Dana looks up at him.

Dana offers Emil a curt nod as if to say "it's settled," then looks up and places a hand on his chest.

Emil leans in and kisses his wife.

FADE TO BLACK.:

The roars of tens of thousands of people cheering can be heard. Every voice is screaming, "Zatopek! Zatopek! Zatopek! Zatopek!"

107 INT. BBC NEWS. DAY.

SLOW FADE IN FROM BLACK.:

Emil walks through the bowels of Helsinki Stadium toward the men's changing room. He is drenched in sweat and obviously tired, but he is also grinning from ear to ear. Surrounding Emil is a gaggle of reporters and their cameramen. Trailing a short distance behind are Kirill and Pavel.

BBC JOURNALIST

Mr. Zatopek! A moment?

Emil slows his walk but doesn't stop. A CREWMAN shines a portable light in his eyes.

BBC JOURNALIST

*American runner Fred Wilt said, "the only thing any runner could hope for was that Emil Zatopek might have broken his leg while getting out of bed this morning." After winning the 10,000 meter yesterday, and the 5,000 today, how are your legs?*

Emil laughs along with the other journalists. He kicks his legs up, offering the first steps of a Riverdance.

EMIL

They seem to be in good knick.

More laughter. Another man, FRENCH JOURNALIST sticks a mic in Emil's face as they walk.

FRENCH JOURNALIST  
 Can you walk us through your thoughts  
 yesterday as you ran?

Emil inhales deeply, smiling.

INTERCUT RACE MONTAGE TO EMIL'S V.O.:

108 EXT. HELSINKI STADIUM. TRACK. DAY.

Emil, wearing a red top, white shorts and the number 903, is lined up next to another thirty-two men. He jumps a few times to loosen his legs. After a moment a look of intensity enters his eyes as he studies the track.

Emil begins slapping his thighs, hard.

EMIL V.O.  
 It was an honor to run with so many  
 great athletes. I happened to be  
 faster on the day, but it was anyone's  
 race.

The men around Emil are doing their own variation of pre-race rituals. A few eye Emil, wonderingly.

FRENCH JOURNALIST V.O.  
 That's not what I saw. You dominated  
 from the start.

CUT TO EMIL IN TUNNELS.:

Emil is embarrassed at the praise. He stops his walk and for a moment gets serious. Every reporter holds his mic close.

EMIL  
 A good friend once told me, "Everyone  
 can run a race, but only one man gets  
 the prize. Run to win!"  
 (shrugs)  
 And that's what I did.

Emil begins walking again.

CUT TO 10,000M.:

The runners are lined up and perfectly still.

The official shoots the gun, sending a trail of smoke into the air.

The men bolt off the line.

SWISS JOURNALIST V.O.  
You beat your London record by 42  
seconds.

Emil is almost immediately in the lead. By the end of the first lap, he is twenty paces ahead of the nearest runner.

EMIL V.O.  
Records are made to be broken.

BBC JOURNALIST V.O.  
(incredulous)  
Your final time was more than a minute faster than nearly three-quarters of the field. What were your thoughts when you began to lap the other runners?

Emil flies down the track. A couple of runners are ten or fifteen seconds behind him, but the rest are nowhere close.

EMIL V.O.  
I hope the officials don't lose track and move me into last place.

Laughter.

Emil continues to break away from the group, gaining more and more ground.

FINISH JOURNALIST V.O.  
A lot has been written about the way you run and the fact that you look like you are in agony.

Emil's head swings back and forth and he does indeed look like he is in agony. His arms flail awkwardly causing his hands to slap his body with each step. The crowd is on its feet as he crosses the finish line.

CUT TO EMIL IN TUNNELS.:

EMIL  
(laughs)  
I'm not talented enough to run and smile at the same time.

Laughter.

CUT TO 10,000M.:

Emil laps yet another runner, then another. The crowd goes wild as he laps one final runner then breaks through the ribbon.

CUT TO EMIL IN TUNNELS.:

Emil has a faraway look in his eyes. He is already missing it.

SWISS JOURNALIST

Emil, with today's 5,000-meter victory, you now have a consecutive 63 wins with eight world records. How have you been able to maintain this record-breaking pace?

Emil thinks for a moment.

EMIL

You can't jump to the top floor of a building, but if you take the stairs, you can get there one step at a time.

Lots of bulbs flash as reporters jockey to get closer.

SWISS JOURNALIST

Are you the best runner of all time?

Emil's smiles graciously...

CUT TO 5,000M.:

The sky is overcast, but no rain falls.

Emil is one of sixteen athletes sprinting down the track. On the scoreboard in the distance, we see the words, "Men's 5,000 Meter Final."

Emil holds nothing back. Agony paints his face as he loses his lead then gains it back seconds later.

Four men battle for the lead. Emil loses it again and falls back in fourth place. All the other runners are far behind.

Emil suddenly bursts forward, passing all three men with an insane explosion of energy.

Every man, woman, and child in the watching crowd are standing and cheering. Every face painted in wonder.

And then again, a final explosion of speed propels Emil ever further ahead. The man who was his closest competitor gets too close to the sideline and trips, landing hard. He gets back up and continues his run.

Emil breaks through the ribbon 8/10ths of a second ahead of the second place finisher.

Everyone is chanting, "Zatopek! Zatopek! Zatopek!"

CUT TO EMIL IN TUNNELS.:

The Swiss journalist is still waiting for an answer.

Everyone is quiet as they strain to bring their mics in close. Flashing lights and breaking bulbs as a few reporters take pictures.

Emil thinks for a moment then responds thoughtfully.

EMIL

(contemplative)

What's past is past. What I'm more interested in is what is to come.

Emil turns and places a hand on a door marked "*Men's Track and Field.*"

BBC JOURNALIST

What is next for the Czech Locomotive?

Emil stops with the door half opened. He is clearly unsure about what he's about to say. He looks toward Pavel and Kirill as if uncertain.

Lightbulbs flash and break as everyone waits for his answer. After a moment he offers a small smile as he comes to a decision.

EMIL

The Marathon is in two days. Yes?

(beat)

I think I'd like to run in it.

Everyone is shocked and momentarily speechless.

FRENCH JOURNALIST

(almost speechless)

Truly?

Emil grins, steps into the change room and is about to close

the door.

BBC JOURNALIST

Have you ever run a Marathon before?

Self-deprecating laugh.

EMIL

No. Never. But I figure this is as good a place to start as any.

Without another word, Emil closes the door.

109 INT. OLYMPIC VILLAGE. EMIL'S DORM. DAY.

Pavel and Komondarn Kirill stand with Emil in the locker room. Emil has showered and is getting dressed. There are other athletes moving about but they are essentially alone.

KOMONDARN KIRILL

The party will be furious with your announcement.

Emil seems unconcerned.

LIEUTENANT PAVEL

They'll fear you will tarnish all that has been accomplished thus far.

EMIL

(sarcastically)

All that has been accomplished for the Party?

A look of anger enters Kirill's eyes.

KOMONDARN KIRILL

You jest? This is funny to you?!

EMIL

(serious)

Am I laughing?!

(tired)

I don't run for the party, for the motherland or for you.

Emil pulls his t-shirt over his head and glances at the clock.

EMIL CONT'T

Now if you'll excuse me, my wife is



about to compete and I don't want to miss it.

Emil exits the locker room.

110 EXT. HELSINKI STADIUM. DAY.

Emil is jogging through a mammoth tunnel leading into the stadium. As he does, he see's Dana running to meet him. She wears the number 912 on her back.

DANA  
Quick, Zatopek!  
(breathless)  
Give me one of your medals for luck.

Before Emil can respond, Dana spots one of them in his bag and snatches it. She steps in and kisses Emil quickly on the cheek then darts away. Emil stands for a moment with confusion painting his face.

EMIL  
(calls out)  
When do you throw?

Dana calls back as she runs.

DANA  
Now, Zatopek! I throw now!

Emil grins and breaks into a run, following his wife.

CUT TO.:

Emil arrives to find Jindrich at the sideline, also watching.

JINDRICH  
Well if it isn't the Hero of Helsinki.  
(beat)  
The marathon?

EMIL  
Why not?

JINDRICH  
I could think of a few reasons.

EMIL  
I see you beat your record in the  
3000M Steeplechase.  
(beat)

Impressive.

JINDRICH  
I'm no Check Locomotive.  
(looks at Emil)  
Thank you.

Emil nods.

Dana has put the medal somewhere and is stretching as she watches a Soviet woman, ALEKSANDRA CHUDIA, run with her javelin raised. When she gets to the Foul Line, Aleksandra hurls her spear into the air.

All eyes follow the shaft as it reaches the top of its arc then comes back down, piercing the ground. Three judges run over and take a measurement.

JINDRICH  
What is Dana's best distance?

EMIL  
49.9.

A voice comes over the speaker system.

ANNOUNCER  
Soviet, Aleksandra Chudina scores 50.1  
meters.

Both men grimace at the announcement.

JINDRICH  
Ouch.

ANNOUNCER  
Next up, Dana Zatopek of  
Czechoslovakia.

There are a few cheers from the crowd. Dana is focused as she takes three deep breaths then runs with javelin raised.

Dana releases her spear, hopping on her left foot a couple times to keep from going over the Foul Line.

Emil holds his breath.

All eyes stay on the flying lance as it cuts through the air.

When it lands, the three judges run over.

Emil and Jindrich lean forward in anticipation.

Momentary silence.

ANNOUNCER

Czechoslovakian, Dana Zatopek scores  
50.47 meters.

Dana is in shock.

Emil can't contain himself. He throws his arms high and screams. Dana finally processes the announcement and leaps high. She then takes three running steps and does a cartwheel.

Emil hugs Jindrich, still screaming.

EMIL

What am I hugging you for?

Emil turns and runs to Dana.

Jindrich laughs as Emil does a victory run to celebrate with Dana. We have never seen Emil this excited.

The two embrace, Emil still screaming at the top of his lungs.

111 EXT. HELSINKI. EVENING.

Dana and Emil walk hand in hand through the streets of Helsinki. Dana is giddy with excitement. She is carrying her Gold medal, gazing at it every few paces. Emil watches his wife with a wondering look. Dana meets his eyes and smiles.

DANA

You are looking at me as if you've  
never seen me before.

EMIL

That's exactly how I feel.

Emil leans in for a kiss. When he finally steps back he has a mischievous look in his eyes.

EMIL

Admit it, my 5,000-meter victory  
inspired your throw.

DANA  
 (mock outrage)  
 Alright then, go inspire some other  
 girl to throw 50 meters!

Emil barks a laugh as they walk on, hand in hand.

DANA CONT'D  
 Are you sure about tomorrow?

EMIL  
 No.

Dana shakes her head in wonder.

112 EXT. WEMBLEY STADIUM. DAY.

Emil wears his usual red shirt and white shorts. The number 903 has once again been fastened to his shirt. He walks among sixty-five of his fellow runners who mill about near the starting line, stretching and talking to one another.

Emil has a ready smile as he pats Finland's Erkki Puolakka on the back and shakes the hand of Argentina's Reinaldo Gorno.

Emil spots JIM PETERS, an Englishman wearing number 187 and makes his way over.

EMIL  
 Are you Jim Peters?  
 (Peters nods)  
 I'm Emil Zatopek.

Emil offers his hand but Peters doesn't take it.

PETERS  
 (beat)  
 Why the marathon?

EMIL  
 (grins)  
 Why not?

After a moment Peters grudgingly takes his hand.

EMIL  
 Good luck today.

Peters meets his eyes a moment, he has a haunted look. Almost fearful.

PETERS

The rest of us have spent our lives training for this. You're the one who's going to need luck.

113 INT. ZATOPEK HOUSE. KOPROVINCE. PRESENT DAY.

Emil's family have gathered around the radio. All are leaning in with rapt attention.

CZECH RADIO ANNOUNCER

The question the entire world is asking is, can Zatopek do it? Never in the history of the Olympic games has an athlete even attempted such a fete. Training for the 5000 or 10,000 meter is very different than training for a marathon which is a little over 42,000 meters.

Jiri opens the door and runs in.

JIRI

Has it started?

The entire family turns angrily, shushing him. Jiri runs over, leaning in alongside the rest of them.

CZECH RADIO ANNOUNCER CONT'D

In typical Zatopek style, he seems to be introducing himself to the entire field.

Frantisek nods appreciatively.

114 EXT. URANIUM MINE. CZECHOSLAKOVAKIA. DAY.

Three Soviet guards and one prisoner sit huddled around a radio as a number of other prisoners walk in and out of the mouth of a large tunnel. The prisoners carry pick axes or push wheelbarrows laden with heavy stone.

The prisoner who sits with the guards is Ali. His skin is weathered and calloused and he looks like he hasn't showered in days. He is skinnier than before but still muscular. Soot mixed with white powder stain his clothes and skin.

CZECH RADIO ANNOUNCER

Has Zatopek lost his mind? Should he have quit while he was ahead? Only time will tell.

SOVIET GUARD 1 offers Ali a steaming tin cup.

115 EXT. HELSINKI STADIUM. DAY.

All sixty-six men wait at the starting line. They are divided into four rows. Emil jumps up and down a few times then slaps his palms hard against his thighs.

The clock in the background reads 3:28. The race officiator raises his pistol. Emil smiles at the runners around him.

EMIL

Men, today we die a little.

BANG!

The eighty thousand member crowd goes wild as the men surge forward.

Journalists are strewn throughout— each speaking into a camera in his or her own language. As the runner's loop around the track, the word Zatopek is being spoken by every single one of them.

The runners finish the loop then exit the stadium through the tunnel. Outside the stadium, the streets are packed with people waving flags and cheering for their countrymen.

A man lifts up his little girl, pointing out Emil as he runs past. Emil grins and waves at the little girl.

CUT TO.:

Further out they run, leaving the stadium far behind. The crowds have mostly disappeared, though the group passes small clumps of cheering people every half mile or so.

Out of the city, they run as buildings fade into trees. The runners have thinned out. Jim Peters is in the lead with Emil and four other men a hundred or so paces behind.

Emil's smile has been replaced by a look of grim determination and... worry.

Emil pushes himself faster until he has caught up with Peters. Peters glances at Emil but otherwise ignores him.

EMIL

The pace, Peters — is it too fast?

PETERS  
(irritable)

No.

Long pause. Emil is doing the math in his head and it doesn't add up.

EMIL  
Are you sure it's not too fast?

Peters casts a defiant glare at Emil.

PETERS  
If anything, it's too slow.

Peters pushes ahead. Emil thinks a moment then decides Peters must know what he is talking about.

Emil pushes himself to run faster as well.

Running feet. Steady breathing.

Emil is hurting now. A small spot of blood stains his left shoe as a large blister has broken open. Emil runs as if in a trance.

OTA O.S.  
Some of the boys want to have a race.  
Do you want to join?

Emil glances back to see where the voice came from.

116 EXT. KVETNA STREET. WINTER. AFTERNOON.

KOPRIVINCE 1934:

Emil (12) stands with an ax in hand. He looks back to see Ota approaching.

EMIL  
Where are you racing to?

OTA  
It's not that kind of race. It's gonna be a race of endurance. We want to see who can run around the Kvetna Loop the most amount of times.

Emil places the ax on the ground.

EMIL

Tell them to wait. I'll come as soon  
as I'm done.

Ota runs off as Emil places another log on top of a large stump. He grabs his ax and swings.

HELSINKI 1952.:

Emil runs neck and neck with GUSTAF JANSSON of Sweeden. Both men are exhausted. There is no more talking. Every bit of energy is spent on taking the next step. Peters still leads the way by a hundred paces.

KOPRIVINCE 1934:

Emil (12) and ten other boys are lined up on the street, directly in front of the Zatopek house. Emil and his two friends are the youngest of the group. The oldest boy is KAMIL (16).

KAMIL

On your mark, get set, go!

The boys lurch forward. For the most part, the group stays together, though some of the oldest break away from the pack as they round the first corner of the one-kilometer block.

Young Emil easily keeps pace, but his run is awkward at best with his arms slapping against his body and his forward motion more of a bounce than a stride.

A birds eye view follows along as the group rounds another corner.

A jumble of feet. Emil's bare feet stand out in the mix.

HELSINKI 1952.:

Emil's feet slapping against the pavement.

Emil is in pain. He lifts up his shirt to get the feeling of air on his chest.

KOPRIVINCE 1934:

The jumble of bodies has spread out.

As the group passes the Zatopek house again, Jaromir and Ota drop tiredly to the grass as the rest of the boys continue on.



Birdseye view of young Emil running.

HELSINKI 1952:

Birdseye view of Emil and Jansson running side by side.

Running feet.

KOPRIVINCE 1934:

Running feet. The group is small now.

Everyone is breathing heavily.

The kids pass the Zatopek house again as two more boys drop like flies.

Twelve-year-old Emil wipes sweat from his face. He is the youngest still running— the others range between fifteen and sixteen.

Another lap and three more boys collapse. Emil and the last two boys run past the house, Emil looking as pained and awkward as ever.

Halfway through the next lap, another boy drops, heaving to the ground. Only Emil and Kamil are left. Kamil is ahead of Emil, pushing himself hard. He won't be shown up by this little boy.

Kamil is heaving, trying to find breath. Emil is exhausted but determined. He is just behind Kamil who keeps looking over his shoulder at him.

HELSINKI 1952:

Emil has left Jansson behind and is on the heels of Peters who is struggling.

Emil still runs as if in a trance. He blinks and for just a moment he sees young Kamil where Peters should be.

KOPRIVINCE 1934:

Young Emil lopes forward awkwardly, now running neck and neck with Kamil who pushes hard, but Emil continues past.

HELSINKI 1952:

Peters is struggling now. He glances at Emil who is running almost robotically.

Peters pushes ahead but Emil gives one of his signature bursts of speed. As he sails past Peters, he crushes the Brit's soul. Peters collapses on the side of the road in exhaustion.

KOPRIVINCE 1934:

Behind young Emil, we see that Kamil has collapsed and is struggling to breathe. Young Emil doesn't stop. As he turns the corner, all the boys begin to cheer. He is the last one running. He runs past the boys and still, he does not stop.

The cheers grow louder as he continues on.

HELSINKI 1952:

We stay on Emil's face. A look of determination. Steady breathing. Feet pounding the ground.

Jansson tries to catch up, but after giving it his all he barely closes any distance. Emil is a machine.

KOPRIVINCE 1934:

Another lap. The boys cheer again. Emil has done the impossible. And still, he continues running.

A look of pain enters Emil's eyes. But he does not stop.

Another lap with more cheering.

The pain is far worse now.

QUICK CUTS BETWEEN HELSINKI AND KOPROVINCE:

-- Birdseye view of YOUNG Emil passing his house yet again.

-- And again.

HELSINKI 1952:

ANEZKA V.O

We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body...Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting

away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

Trees have given way to city streets. Emil's usual pained look is gone. Every ounce of strength is given to taking the next step.

KOPRIVINCE 1934:

Young Emil passes the house again. His friends have gathered. They watch in awe.

Emil is about to collapse when he see's that his siblings have heard of his impossible feat and come out to watch.

At the sight of his family, Emil forces himself to keep running. He's never seen them look at him the way they are now.

The sun is setting. The look on Emil's face is one of anguish. Everyone including Emil has lost count of the number of loops - is it 25 or... could it be 30? Finally, Emil collapses in complete exhaustion.

Everyone runs over to him with a mixture of unbelief and awe in their eyes. They gather around him, lifting him to his feet and walking him toward the house.

FADE TO BLACK.:

117 INT. ZATOPEK HOUSE. KITCHEN. EVENING.

All of the Zatopek children stand in a line wearing only their underwear. Anezka sits on a wooden stool with a wash towel and a bar of soap in hand. At her feet is a washbasin filled with steaming, murky water.

As Emil steps up, Anezka dips the soap into a bucket of water and lathers him up. He is shivering.

EMIL

I'm cold!

ANEZKA

Then you had better hurry up and get clean, my boy.

Marie is washing her underarms with another washcloth and laughing with Franta who is waiting for her turn with the washcloth - both wear slip style nightgowns. Jiri and Bohus stand in line behind Emil.

Emil squeezes his eyes shut as Anezka lathers his hair. Soapy water runs down his face as she scrubs his shoulders and back.

She turns him around and wipes his eyes then places the cloth on the washbasin. Anezka takes Emil's arm sternly. He yelps but her look silence's him.

ANEZKA CONT'D

If your father knew you spent the entire day running, he would take the belt to you.

(shakes her head)

I might just let him!

Emil eyes the belt hanging on the wall next to the oven and is suddenly very serious.

ANEZKA CONT'D

You could catch your death running in the cold like that.

EMIL

Yes, mother.

Anezka rises, her anger spent. She softens and offers Emil a curious look.

ANEZKA CONT'D

Why did you do it?

EMIL

(looks unsure)

Mother?

ANEZKA

Why did you run for so long after all the other boys had quit?

EMIL

I don't know.

(thinks about it)

Because when all the others could no longer run, I still could.

Anezka has to hide her smile as she shakes her head ruefully.

ANEZKA

(gently)

Finish washing.

118 INT. ZATOPEK HOUSE. KOPROVINCE. PRESENT DAY.

Anezka can't help but smile as she wipes away a tear.

CZECH RADIO ANNOUNCER

With less than a mile to go, Zatopek is nearly two and a half minutes ahead of his nearest competition. And... I can't believe it. He is speeding up! He is actually speeding up!

The Zatopek family are almost on top of the radio now. Frantisek is on his feet, unable to sit. He begins to pace. The radio announcer is so excited it is hard to understand him.

119 EXT. URANIUM MINE. CZECHOSLKOVAKIA. DAY.

The Russian and Czech soldiers are on their feet. They are cheering Emil on through the radio. At least twenty prisoners have left their work and gathered around the radio as well, but the guards don't seem to care.

As everyone cheers loudly, Ali is on his knees, "stretching," with joyous tears run down his face as he laughs silently.

120 EXT. HELSINKI. DAY.

Emil can see the tunnel leading into the stadium now. His look of determination shifts to joy. He offers two thumbs up to the crowd and laughs happily. He can feel it now.

Impossibly, Emil speeds up again.

Even before he enters the tunnel the thunderous cries of "ZATOPEK! ZATOPEK! ZATOPEK!" shake the ground.

The crowd has forgotten country and competition. In this moment it seems as if the world has unified behind one man. "ZATOPEK! ZATOPEK. ZATOPEK!" Emil exits the tunnel, momentarily disappearing into the light.

Emil enters the stadium with a huge smile.

As he breaks through the ribbon the adrenaline of the moment has taken over and Emil doesn't even look tired.

121 INT. ZATOPEK HOUSE. KOPROVINCE. PRESENT DAY.

Everyone is leaping about, cheering and throwing their arms into the air.

CZECH RADIO ANNOUNCER  
 Emil Zatopek has broken the world  
 record by more than six minutes! I  
 can't believe it---

The radio announcer becomes impossible to understand at this point as he screams his narration excitedly.

Anezka is the only one who is not leaping and screaming. She sits down, happy but utterly exhausted.

Frantisek can't contain himself. He exits the house with arms raised, running down the street.

Finally, he stops. Leans over and laughs.

122 EXT. HELSINKI STADIUM. DAY.

Jindrich and others run to Emil, placing a jacket over his shoulders. The stadium shakes with the sound of his name.

-- Pavel stands nearby, shaking his head in amazement. He reaches into his jacket and pulls out a folder titled "Recommended Disciplinary Actions for Zatopek," and begins ripping it up.

Emil looks around excitedly until finally, he sees Dana standing at the bottom of the stands surrounded by a crowd of people.

Dana is waving excitedly as Emil makes his way over.

Emil arrives and receives a passionate kiss.

FADE TO BLACK.:

Insert real-life footage of Zatopek races, interviews, and magazine covers as the titles and credits roll.

INSERT TITLE CARDS: "Over the course of his career, Emil Zatopek set 18 World Records."

"In 1968 Emil protested against the forced occupation of Czechoslovakia by the USSR. The regime had finally had enough and Emil was forced to work in the Uranium mines. During this time the Soviet regime did all in their power to erase his name from history.

"In 1990 he was finally released. The last ten years of his life were spent in a free Czech Republic laughing with Dana and hosting runners and visitors from around the world."