

Ruben the Jewish Baker.
(photo)



Opening his bakery takes little effort due to his 30 years of business. Ruben can now manipulate his keys and latches with his eyes closed. With a heavy sigh, he looks at the calendar upon the wall.
"Monday, October 27, 1942"
Just another chilly Monday in the Village of Krupki, Belarus. Three dozen loaves of bread are nearly baked inside the oven. Ruben knows the smell will drift across the village urging a quick sale. "Ding Ling!" the front door opens to the beautiful Mia, daughter of Elam. "Good morning Ruben!" Mia says with a smile of anticipation. "How are things at the University?" "Wonderful, but no time to chat..." as she purchases three loafs and sprints for the exit. Ruben gazes upon Mia's beautiful long hair and youthful curvy figure. Ahhh Mia....just turning 24 years old, yet she still fetches for her family. Elam and Marta has three other beautiful daughters, all looking to follow Mia's lead and relish in life. --The day slowly continues on with gray chilly skies. Business is good as the baked goods clear the shelves. Suddenly Eli the paperboy panics inside the doorway. "They're coming!" the stricken boy shouts. "Who?" "The Black Shirts! The SS!" he shivers looking out the windows. A motorcycle pulls up in front of the bakery, followed by two large trucks. "JEWS here!" a soldier points towards Ruben's Bakery. Several guards jump from the truck and surround the storefront.

Within seconds, the customers of five men, a woman, including Eli are arrested.

"Papers now!" demands a soldier with impatient eyes.

Each paper reveals Jewish heritage, as each are thrust upon a covered truck.

As the truck begins moving, Ruben is confused and worrisome about his business and future.

"Where? Into the forest?" each question with anxiety. (photo)



Finally coming to a stop, added guards with barking dogs surround the truck.

"OUT! EVERYONE!" the guards command with snarling dogs.

The woman is tossed from the truck and dragged by her hair.

She is brave and struggles against the guards with futility.

Yet all are confronted with a horrific scene.

Naked families consisting a 27 men women and children cower nearby between scattered piles of clothing.

"UNDRESS! STRIP EVERYTHING!" the guards shout with barking dogs.

Eli looks stunned between Ruben and the lone woman in the group.

Yet the delay is brief as rifle butts descend upon their heads.

Ruben dodges a bayonet as he rips the buttons from his shirt.

Eli too ducks a blow as he drops his pants upon the ground.

The woman customer, now bottomless, is ripped of her slip from behind.

Naked, she never bothers to turn and look at the brute holding her underwear.

Once naked, each are kicked forward to join the nude gathering.

Eli shivers from fear and the cold as he scans the naked families.

Ruben recognizes sisters Bettina and Dara hugging naked, alone without their parents.

Long time customers Jacob and his daughter Elise, are both seen in a naked embrace.

"Why? What crime did we do?" Ruben asks the gray clouds above.

Suddenly a soldier divides the mass into groups of ten.

Naked women sob as they are pushed about between the men.

No distinction is made as naked men are pushed between women.

Such trivial matters are lost here, all are equal.

Ruben gasps at the sight of the beautiful Mia.

His first customer of the morning, Mia now stands amid her parents and her three younger sisters. Flanked by Elam and Marta at each end, they stand entirely naked, hooked by their elbows.

It appears staying locked together rivals the need to cover their modesty.

In this brief moment, Ruben notices Marta's full breasts and artistic curves, yet each daughter looks identical in a smaller scale.

From Mia's youthful curves down to her baby sister's hairless stick figure.

While gazing, Mia slowly lifts her eyes and looks directly at her favorite baker. Unaware of their common nudity, she nods farewell as she's pushed towards the yawning pit.

"LINE UP!" is heard moments before....

TAT TAT TAT TAT TAT....

The bodies twist and turn in anguish as the bullets rip without mercy.

Ruben is shaken by what he has just witnessed.

Such fragile beauty and innocent life shattered without reason, Why?!?!

Without delay, the next group of ten is kicked towards the pit.

The families stumble together in a passive like stupor.

TAT TAT TAT TAT TAT....

All the victims twist and fall exactly upon the previous group.

Suddenly, Ruben is pushed against the woman beside him.

Their naked bodies slap together, yet she neither looks nor cares.

Eli too is shoved towards the pit, he stumbles naked without covering his genitals.

It is understood, such trivial matters are lost now, all are equal.

As the pit approaches, the hapless group line up single file(photo)



Struggling composure, Ruben looks down upon the carnage below.(photo)



TAT TAT TAT TAT TAT....

Like a boxer punching his chest, the wind is knocked from Ruben's lungs

as his body collapses.

Spiraling downwards he impacts the soft naked bedding below.

Flopping like a ragdoll, he recoils from the fall and gasps for air.

Slowly gaining his wits and bearings, he understands he is injured.

He cannot feel his toes nor move his legs, so he fears the worst.

Surrounded by naked bodies, he opens his eyes and grasps upon a nearby leg. (photo)



"Shema Yisrael" Ruben prays.

Random moaning is heard from the left and right as each victim copes with their mortal wounds.

"Papa...?" a weak, injured young girl calls out.

Across from Ruben, a woman suffers a lung injury and coughs up blood. (photo)



TAT TAT TAT TAT TAT....another salvo followed by the graphic sound of victims falling.

"Clap, Flop, Clomp" Ruben witnesses the broken bodies smashing down.
Followed by another chorus of moaning dead.
No mercy shots, no concern is taken by the killers.
After each salvo, all are left as they fall, slowly to perish on their own.
TAT TAT TAT TAT TAT....
"Flop, Wap, Whomp!" A woman violently slams upon a young boy's corpse. Absorbing her full weight, his eyes remained open and static.
Ruben reflects: Perhaps he is the lucky one, oblivious of this orgy of hell and the sounds of the suffering.
"Aughhh"
"Cough..."
"Ohhh..."
"Papa...." the weak injured girl repeats her call.
TAT TAT TAT TAT TAT....
"Clap, Slop, Plump..."
"Papa....."
Ruben begins to drift into unconsciousness during the carnage.
TAT TAT TAT TAT TAT....
"Flop, Slap, Clomp" Unconscious, Ruben is jostled as naked corpses build.
Unaware of the pause, Ruben lays still as a SS soldier lurks above the death pit.
Pistol in hand, surveying the nude static corpses below.
Ruben is passed over, assumed to be dead, yet a familiar sound...
"Papa..." is heard.
"POP" finally silences the nine year old Emma Ribstein.
Followed by "POP POP POP" as moaners and twitchers are squelched.
The shoes, clothing and valuables are now harvested.
By late afternoon, the SS guards have since retired for the day.
Leaving the pit open for tomorrow's work, the corpses remain exposed.
Like a can of worms, arms legs breasts and genitals intermix together.
All ages, irrespective of sex, lay together silent without shame.
The only audible sounds are birds singing and flies buzzing above.
The work of the SS Einsatzgruppen appears complete for another day.
However, Ruben suddenly is awakened by a kick to his head and a crushing knee across his windpipe.
"Arrrgh!" Ruben bellows preferring the coup de grace of a bullet.
With blurry vision, his eyes adjust upon a woman crawling across the naked corpses. In her mid twenties, the injured woman navigates across the fleshy obstructions like a chameleon lizard.
As she climbs outside the pit, I recognize the young woman....
"Mia! May God be with you!" (photo)



