

LEDERER

We have made an interesting discovery her,
Köhler. Listen carefully:
The name of the escaped prisoner No. 11396
is Franz Köhler- born in Alsace -
There isn't any family connection with you,
is there ?.....

KOMMANDANTUR MSCHOW

WILLI KÖHLER is pressing his fingers nervously round
the telephone receiver. Not far from him stands Vera
smoking a cigarette, which the adjutant has offered her.

WILLI KÖHLER

(nervous, hesitating)

... Oh yes, Obersturmführer....
this man... is.. my brother....

VERA'S FACE as she listens intently,
OVER IT

VOICE OF WILLI KÖHLER

.... but I can assure you, I knew
nothing of his trying to escape!

VOICE OF LEDERER

(loud in telephone)

He is not trying any more, it seems
he succeeded!

WILLI KÖHLER

(very nervous)

No, he is in a trap, I shall catch him!

VOICE OF LEDERER

(through the telephone)

Why did you not tell us that your
brother was in the camp ?

WILLI KÖHLER

I wanted.. no, Obersturmführer,
I shall prove the opposite to you,
by trying my utmost to catch him.
Upon my word of honour as an officer
of the SS.....

(This scene will have to be played quickly)

VERA'S FACE with its mysterious smile.

WILLI KÖHLER

..... I shall make it my business
to have him brought to the proper
place to get his punishment.....

.....

VERA'S ROOM on the bed lying an army-uniform, trousers
of which just being thrown on the bed.

VOICE OF VERA

Sorry, could not get you shoes
as well... not the right number.....

VOICE OF FRANZ

It does not matter. I will keep on
these.....

THE SHOES on his feet, then his face. He is looking at
VERA who is nervously walking up and down the room.

VERA

His own brother!..... unbelieving...
The things one learns....
And he is good-looking....

FRANZ

A beautiful beast!

VERA

Don'T talk rubbish

(turns around)

Put on the uniform, unfortunately
you can't change your face.
Your brother will recognise you
in any disguise.....

FRANZ is trying on the jacket of the uniform, still
wearing prison-garb trousers.

VERA walks towards him and buttons up the jacket.
Her pose is crumbling.

VERA

Fits to perfection.

You would have made a smart soldier.

Why were you not called up, Franz ?

FRANZ

I was indispensable for the war effort-
industry... In Alsace they looked for
reliable people... and as brother of an
SS man.....

The look at each other....

VERA

(roughly speaking in order to her her
feelings)

And what happens now ?

FRANZ

I must accomplish my mission.

VERA

You are.....mad!

FRANZ

You will never understand this...
my comrades are to be executed!
hundreds, thousands of them...
they trust me.

VERAS eyes express anger, compassion, contempt.
She is nearly shouting:

VERA

Nobody can demand this of you...

You could have been killed long ago....

FRANZ

I am not a hero... a coward rather...
my best friend had to die, because I
could not make up my mind in time...
he tried it instead of me....

VERA ~~places~~^{puts} her arms around him, then says with unexpected
tenderness:

VERA

There are no more ideals...

no more heroes..

There is nothing. Everybody for himself!

Just to survive, Franz !

Each minute is precious....

FRANZ

(fighting against himself)

That is why I must go , Vera

VERA

But not to the front!

FRANZ

At the latest, in 36 hours.....

VERA

You can't possibly make it, even
if there occurs a miracle and you
get of of this town... and you get
through the lines, ours I mean,
l... and the others over there...
... they will never believe you....

FRANZ

(interrupting her)

All this I have said to myself...
and yet I went.....

VERA goes to the window, turns aside the curtain.

VERA

There he is !

FRANZ stands next to her, both are looking into the
WAITING ROOM, where a thorough check is going on.
WILLI KÖHLER SS and SD men have closed all exits.
Everybody present is being searched.

VERA

They will comb the whole town.

FRANZ

I must go, they will come up here, too.

VERA opens her arms to him, stands near him.

47

VERA

This is the only place where you are safe. You can't leave now. You may think of me whatever you like - but I can't bear the thought that they will catch you.... To-morrow morning, a train leaves for the west with evacuees and wounded..... I shall get you the necessary papers.. a home pass.. I shall give you an address in Hamburg, where you can lie low,-- and then you will start from the beginning....

FRANZ looks at her, then through an opening in the curtain down into the waiting room.

FRANZ

(softly)

Why are you doing it, Vera ?

VERA

(pressed against him)

So that.. there remains some sense,
... in this bloody hell....

BLEND TO:

WAITING ROOM in the early hours of the morning.

People, asleep on benches, on the floor, a few walking around aimlessly. A drunk reels by.

CAMERA BLENDS TO:

VERAS ROOM AT DAWN

Franz and Vera on the bed.

FRANZ wakes up, looks around, sees Vera next to him. Noiselessly he gets up - puts on his - Blanchis - shoes. Puts on the uniform jacket, he already wears the trousers. He looks at the prison-trousers on the floor. Vera moves, smiles in her sleep, but does not wake up.

FRANZ, looks at her, then pulls himself together. He looks at the table, where there are some papers lying.