

Attack on Titan

written by

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Based on the work of
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FADE IN:

EXT. WALL MARIA - DAY

Two birds soar freely through a crystal blue sky. The violet petals of a flower sway in the breeze.

EREN JAEGER (V.O.)
From the moment we're born, we are
free. No one can ever take that
from us -- no matter how strong
they are.

We swoop upwards, rising, looking across a field to see --

Wall Maria, fifty meters of brick, stone, and mortar. As we close in on it, we begin to hear the ECHOES of a DULL, RHYTHMIC THUMPING ... BOOM ... BOOM ...

EREN JAEGER (V.O.)
They appeared almost 200 years ago.
From where, or why, no one knows.
All we know is that they crave our
blood.

We ascend, peering over the battlements of Wall Maria to see them ... the TITANS. *Massive, naked, and humanoid*, POUNDING ceaselessly against the stone obstruction.

EREN JAEGER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
We call them *Titans*.

EXT. HUMAN VILLAGE - EVENING

Smoke and flames choke a bloody red sky.

A single, massive foot CRUNCHES through a thatched roof. Reaching inside, a TITAN lifts a SHRIEKING, writhing WOMAN from the wreckage. It raises her up to its YAWNING mouth --

And we are *swallowed up in the blackness*.

EREN JAEGER (V.O.)
Within years, the Titans drove us
to the edge of extinction.

EXT. ROLLING HILLS - DAY

We soar high above the landscape. Among the verdant hills lie three massive, concentric rings of stone: the Walls.

EREN JAEGER (V.O.)
 And so we built the Walls: Maria.
 Rose. Sina. A city, within a city,
 within a city. The only way to
 survive was to fence ourselves in.
 Like *cattle*.

EXT. WALL MARIA - DAY

Before the wall stands EREN JAEGER, ten-years-old. He listens to the DISTANT RUMBLING of the Titans, his small body quaking.

EREN JAEGER (V.O.)
 They've taken everything from us.
 Our lives. Our dreams. Our dignity.

Close in on Eren's face -- is he afraid? No. Behind his blue eyes burns the *rage of all humanity*.

EREN JAEGER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 That's why I'm going to kill them.
Every. Single. One of them.

EXT. SHIGANSHINA - FIELD - DAY

The same pair of blue eyes flutter open, their gaze distant and unfocused. It's Eren, lying in the shade of a tree.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (O.S.)
Eren...

He blinks.

We find focus on MIKASA ACKERMAN, a young girl with cold, dark eyes. In spite of the bright sun, she wears a red scarf around her neck.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (CONT'D)
 Eren. Wake up.

Eren rises, knuckling his eyes. We are in a wide, open field at the edge of a forest. Wall Maria looms in the distance.

EREN JAEGER

Mikasa ... what time is it?

She holds a pair of leather slings in her hands, both filled with gathered sticks. She hands one over to Eren.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

Time to go. I filled it for you.

As Eren stands, Mikasa shoulders her own sling. She pauses.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (CONT'D)

Eren. Why are you crying?

EREN JAEGER

I'm ... I'm not...

Again he blinks, touching his cheeks. Sure enough, they are damp with tears. Eren doesn't seem to know what to say.

Together, the two children set off across the grassy field.

EREN JAEGER (CONT'D)

Mikasa ... could you not tell anyone I was crying?

She glances at him, her expression serenely calm.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

Okay.

EXT. SHIGANSHINA - VACANT ALLEY - DAY

A little boy is shoved to the ground -- this is ARMIN ARLERT, small and timid. As he watches, a foot SQUISHES a leather-bound book into the mud.

Armin looks up to see three BULLIES looming over him.

BULLY #1

What's the matter, heretic? Not gonna fight back?

Armin's lips tremble, but he remains SILENT -- the BULLY doesn't seem to like that. He hauls Armin to his feet.

BULLY #1 (CONT'D)

So now you got nothing to say, huh? Tell me again about how I'm wrong.

ARMIN ARLERT

Y-you're ... you're *wrong*. You can hit me 'til your hands bleed, but it won't change that.

This seems to strike a nerve. The bully raises a fist.

EREN JAEGER (O.S.)

Leave him alone!

Turning, the bullies see Eren Jaeger standing at the end of the alley, still clutching his bundle of sticks. They look him up and down ... and they BURST INTO LAUGHTER.

BULLY #1

You back for more, Jaeger?

Their LAUGHTER persists ... until Mikasa appears beside Eren. The bullies instantly shut up.

BULLY #2

Is that Mikasa...?

BULLY #3

(re: "oh, shit")

Screw this, I'm out of here...

They slink away without another word. Eren puffs out his chest proudly.

EREN JAEGER

See that? One look at me and they ran off!

Armin struggles to stand, and Eren reaches out to help him.

EREN JAEGER (CONT'D)

Hey, Armin. You okay?

Looking embarrassed, Armin picks his book out of the mud.

ARMIN ARLERT

I'm alright ... thank you. I don't know what I'd have done...

EREN JAEGER

What happened this time?

SNIFFLING, Armin gestures to his filthy book.

ARMIN ARLERT

They were saying there was nothing out there ... past the walls. They

(MORE)

ARMIN ARLERT (CONT'D)
 said the world just dropped off
 like a cliff.

He leafs through the pages, pointing to a drawing of what
 looks like an endless horizon of water.

EREN JAEGER
 What's that? A lake?

ARMIN ARLERT
 Bigger -- they call it a *sea*.
 Grandpapa says it's so deep, you
 can never reach the bottom!

Mikasa listens, calm but curious. Eren just LAUGHS.

EREN JAEGER
 Yeah, alright. Whatever you say.

MIKASA ACKERMAN
 That's very interesting, Armin.

Armin shuffles his feet nervously in the dirt.

ARMIN ARLERT
 I ... I want to see it someday. The
 sea. The mountains ... all of it.

Eren looks like he's about to speak, when we hear the
 distant ECHOES of a BRASS BELL. Eren's eyes *light up*.

EREN JAEGER
 That's the Scout Regiment! If we
 hurry, we can see them coming
 through the gate!

He seizes Mikasa by the wrist and takes off running. Armin
 hesitates, then scampers after them.

EXT. WALL MARIA - OUTER GATE - DAY

VILLAGERS line the cobblestone streets. Eren, Mikasa, and
 Armin struggle to see over the towering adults.

Eren clammers aboard a merchant's crate, peering over
 peoples' heads. At the first sight of the returning
 SOLDIERS, his face *brightens* --

But only for a moment. Then he sees the bloody bandages on
 the wounds -- the grim expressions on every face -- the
pale, lifeless arm dangling from a horse-drawn cart.

Eren can only stare, his excitement turning to cold shock. A HUSHED MURMUR runs through the CROWD.

OBSERVER #1

This is *it*? These are the only ones
who made it back?

OBSERVER #2

Serves 'em right, going outside ...
our tax dollars at work, ladies and
gentlemen...

Hearing this, Eren's eyes *flash* with anger. He draws a branch from his bundle and SWATS the man in the thigh!

OBSERVER #2 (CONT'D)

Ow! What the hell!?

But before Eren can strike again, Mikasa seizes him by his wood-carrying satchel, dragging him kicking and flailing away from the crowd.

Looking embarrassed, Armin slinks after his friends.

EXT. SHIGANSHINA - ALLEY - DAY

When they are far from sight, Mikasa casually hurls Eren aside. His bundle of branches is scattered across the dirt. Eren looks pissed.

EREN JAEGER

Mikasa, there's firewood
everywhere!

She stares evenly at him, her dark eyes sharp as pins.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

Eren. Have you changed your mind
about joining the Scouts?

Armin approaches, clutching his filthy book close to his chest. Eren stares at Mikasa a moment -- then he turns away, as if to hide his swelling tears.

EREN JAEGER

Can you help me pick this up?

She does.

INT. JAEGER HOME - DAY

The door swings open, and both Eren and Mikasa enter. They wave to Armin before closing the door behind them.

At the hearth stands CARLA JAEGER, lovely and warm. She smiles at the children as she stirs a pot of stew.

CARLA JAEGER
Welcome back!

Eren and Mikasa dump their firewood beside the hearth. Carla beams at her son.

CARLA JAEGER (CONT'D)
You did a lot of work, Eren! I'm proud of you!

EREN JAEGER
Yeah...

She pinches his ear, cocking an eyebrow slyly.

CARLA JAEGER
Mikasa did it all, didn't she?

EREN JAEGER
...Yeah.

His mother gives Mikasa a knowing smile.

CARLA JAEGER
Take a seat, you two. You're just in time for supper.

Seated at the table is DR. GRISHA JAEGER, tall and shrewd. As the children take their seats, he CLICKS shut a small doctor's bag -- we briefly spy a silver syringe inside.

DR. JAEGER
I must be going.

EREN JAEGER
Going where, pa?

Dr. Jaeger touches his son gently on the head.

DR. JAEGER
There's an epidemic in the interior. I'll be gone for a week.

CARLA JAEGER
Be careful, darling...

DR. JAEGER
I will. Don't you worry.

He kisses his wife, then smiles at Mikasa.

DR. JAEGER (CONT'D)
Be well, you three.

MIKASA ACKERMAN
Eren says he wants to join the
Scout Regiment.

Carla's spoon CLATTERS to the floor. Her hands fly to her mouth, and Dr. Jaeger goes rigid. Eren glares at Mikasa.

EREN JAEGER
You weren't supposed to tell!

Carla seizes her son by the shoulders, her face a plaster-white mask of horror.

CARLA JAEGER
Eren Jaeger! Do you have *any idea*
how dangerous it is out there?!

DR. JAEGER
Eren...

Eren turns to see his father gazing at him grimly.

DR. JAEGER (CONT'D)
Why do you want to do this?

EREN JAEGER
(without hesitation)
I want to see the outside, pa. I
don't want to live in a *fence* my
whole life!
(a beat)
And ... if nobody takes their
place, then they'll have all died
for nothing.

Grisha stares deep into his son's eyes. Whether or not he's satisfied with the answer, we're unable to tell.

With a grim expression and not another word, he stands and puts on his hat. Carla gawks at her husband.

CARLA JAEGER
Well aren't you going to say
anything, Grisha?

Dr. Jaeger simply SIGHS.

DR. JAEGER
I'm afraid there's only so much
words can do, Carla. I'm sorry.

He kisses her once more and opens the door. Then he pauses.

DR. JAEGER (CONT'D)
Eren ... when I return, I think I
have something to show you.

Dr. Jaeger slips something from his pocket: a tiny, brass key. For a moment it glints strangely in the sunlight -- and in the next moment, Dr. Jaeger is gone.

EXT. SHIGANSHINA - WATERFRONT - EVENING

Armin, Eren, and Mikasa sit together at the water's edge.
Eren SIGHS glumly.

MIKASA ACKERMAN
You should forget about enlisting,
Eren. It's a bad idea.

Eren continues to sulk.

The sound of LAUGHTER draws his attention to several
GARRISON SOLDIERS, stumbling drunkenly together through the
street. One of them points right at Eren.

HANNES
(shitfaced)
Hey, look ... tha's the Jaeger kid!
Th' doctor's son! Your daddy saved
my niece, y'know! He's a genius!

EREN JAEGER
I don't think you should be
drinking on your shift, Mr. Hannes.

HANNES just LAUGHS as if Eren has told a hilarious joke.

HANNES
Then ya dunno how boring this shift
gets, kid. 'Sides, we ain't had a
Titan attack in -- what? A hunner'd
years? Nothin' to worry 'bout!

HICCUPING and CACKLING, the drunken soldiers amble away down the street. Armin SHIVERS in the wind.

ARMIN ARLERT

Just because the Walls haven't
fallen yet doesn't mean they'll
stand forever...

A SILENCE falls on everything -- even the wind falters.

Then comes a DISTANT RUMBLE, like THUNDER. The children rise, looking past the clay rooftops to see a tendril of smoke rising into the air.

ARMIN ARLERT (CONT'D)

Look ... what's that?

EREN JAEGER

I don't know...

But Armin wasn't waiting for an answer. He's already off, jogging toward the rising smoke.

EREN JAEGER (CONT'D)

Armin, wait!

Eren takes off after his friend, with Mikasa close behind.

EXT. SHIGANSHINA - STREETS - EVENING

All around, PEOPLE spill out of their homes. They all seem to be staring at one thing -- one thing that Armin sees before either of his friends.

Eren catches up with him, PANTING.

EREN JAEGER

What is it...?

But he already sees...

EXT. WALL MARIA - THAT MOMENT

A single, massive hand grips the top of the wall ... then a skinless, sinewy face rises into view as the COLOSSAL TITAN rears its hideous head.

It blots out the sun, casting a looming shadow over the entire city. It's not just big -- it's utterly Brodingnagian.

For a moment no one can react. And then...

EXT. WALL MARIA - OUTER GATE - THAT MOMENT

The Colossal Titan SMASHES its foot through the main gate!

KA-BOOM!

The EXPLOSION tears a gaping hole through Wall Maria, as dust and debris rains down upon Shiganshina!

EXT. SHIGANSHINA - STREETS - MOMENT LATER

People HOWL in terror! In the middle of the STAMPEDE stands Eren, eyes wide, frozen in fear. Armin tugs at his sleeve.

ARMIN ARLERT

Eren! We have to go!

EREN JAEGER

My house is over there...
(sudden realization)

Ma!

He takes off running, fighting through the crowd! With a GASP, Mikasa hurries after him.

ARMIN ARLERT

Mikasa, wait!

But they're already gone.

EXT. WALL MARIA - OUTER GATE - DAY

As the dust settles, the earth TREMBLES with the sound of enormous FOOTFALLS: DOOM. DOOM. DOOM.

A hulking, grinning TITAN takes its first steps into the city.

EXT. SHIGANSHINA - STREETS - MOMENT LATER

Homes lie in ruin, crushed beneath fallen debris. TODDLERS, abandoned in the street, WAIL for their mothers.

EXT. JAEGER HOME WRECKAGE - MOMENT LATER

Eren tears around a corner to see --

His home. It has been *demolished*, flattened beneath a fallen boulder. Eren GASPS.

EREN JAEGER

Ma!!

He and Mikasa rush forward. Lying *half-crushed* beneath the wreckage is Carla Jaeger, pale and bleeding. Her eyes flutter weakly as the children approach.

CARLA JAEGER

Eren...

EREN JAEGER

Mikasa, grab that end!

Together, the children strain their little arms against the rubble, struggling to lift it ... but it's no use.

DOOM. DOOM. DOOM.

Eren GASPS, lifting his gaze to see the TITANS approaching. One of the monsters turns -- and it *looks directly at him!*

EREN JAEGER (CONT'D)

Hurry!

But the more Eren heaves, the more futile it all seems to become. With tears in her eyes, Carla reaches up and touches her son's face.

CARLA JAEGER

Eren ... listen to me. You have to leave me. Take Mikasa and run...

EREN JAEGER

No...

CARLA JAEGER

There's nothing you can do. Eren, *please...*

DOOM. DOOM.

The Titan draws closer, smiling with *teeth like tombstones*. Carla's eyes grow desperate.

CARLA JAEGER (CONT'D)

Listen to your mother, Eren. You have to go *now*.

But Eren doesn't listen. Even after Mikasa has given up, he continues to fight. His little palms are raw and red.

The Titan is almost upon them. Six steps away. Five. *Four.*

When suddenly -- SOMEONE rushes past the house, hoisting the children up onto their shoulders. It's Hannes, the city guard. His clothes are drenched in blood, and his eyes are wild with fear.

HANNES

Don't look back.

But Eren does look back. He thrashes wildly, SCREAMING as the Smiling Titan claws through the rubble and *seizes Carla Jaeger in its fist*.

Eren reaches out for her, WAILING through his tears.

EREN JAEGER

Mama!!

The Titan's jaws YAWN open. It pauses as if to savor its treat -- then its tombstone teeth SNAP shut.

Mikasa dangles limply from Hannes' arms, CRYING. Eren can only stare, pale and wide-eyed. We see Hannes -- and he, too, is WEEPING.

EXT. SHIGANSHINA - STREETS - EVENING

The buildings SHUDDER with each POUNDING FOOTSTEP. Littering the streets are dead bodies -- and *pieces* of dead bodies.

A black crow BRAYS from its perch atop the rubble.

EXT. WALL MARIA - OUTER GATE - THAT MOMENT

The TITANS pour into the city through the gaping wound in the Wall. On each of their faces is a leering, greedy *grin*.

EXT. SHIGANSHINA - ALLEY - THAT MOMENT

A YOUNG WOMAN cowers alone, SOBBING with her face in her hands. A *black shadow* looms over her, and a string of saliva SPLASHES her shoulder...

It's a TITAN, drooling hungrily. It reaches down and snatches her up as she SCREAMS for mercy.

EXT. SHIGANSHINA - STREETS - MOMENT LATER

A wild-eyed PREACHER marches through the wreckage, READING ALOUD from an open book in his arms.

PREACHER

O, Avarice! Thou hast to thyself
drawn my race, for ev'n in its own
flesh it careth not!

He freezes in the shadow of another TITAN. It plucks him up off his feet, SMACKING its lips eagerly.

PREACHER (CONT'D)

O, Avarice! Thou hast to thyself--

His words dissolve into a BLOODCURDLING SCREAM.

EXT. WALL MARIA - INNER GATE - EVENING

Hundreds of PEOPLE filter through the city's inner gate. Armed GUARDS do their best to calm the PANICKED CITIZENS.

GARRISON GUARD

*Move quickly and calmly! Take only
what provisions you need!*

EXT. ESCAPE BOATS - THAT MOMENT

The SHOUTING EVACUEES fill the riverboat docks, literally *fighting each other* for their places in line. Aboard one of the ferries is Armin Arlert, peering anxiously into the crowd. Armin's GRANDFATHER touches his shoulder.

GRANDFATHER

Sit, Armin...

ARMIN ARLERT

But Eren and Mikasa aren't here...

As if on cue, Armin spies his friends. His eyes light up with hope ... until he notices the haunted, vacant expressions on their faces.

EXT. ESCAPE BOATS - MOMENTS LATER

Eren and Mikasa are ushered into their seats. All around them are praying MOTHERS and CHILDREN without parents.

A GUARD gives a signal, and the crowded ferry begins to depart. The CROWD at the dock surges with PANIC.

GARRISON GUARD
 I'm sorry, but the ferry is full!
 You have to wait for the next one!

EXT. WALL MARIA - INNER GATE - THAT MOMENT

The GARRISON GUARDS hurry the final trickle of EVACUEES through the gate.

GARRISON GUARD
 That's all we can take! Close the gate! Close it!

But the others aren't listening. They stare, mortified, as a HULKING BRUTE of a Titan approaches. It regards the gate a moment ... then *lunges forward* in a full-on sprint!

The guards HOWL in terror.

GARRISON GUARD (CONT'D)
Close the gate! Close the --

Too late.

With a THUNDEROUS CRASH, the Armor-Skinned Titan SMASHES through the inner gate! Dust, debris, and bodies sail through the air, and the Titan SKIDS to a GRINDING HALT.

Wall Maria has fallen.

EXT. FERRY - THAT MOMENT

Armin Arlert gazes in horror at the gaping hole in the Wall.

ARMIN ARLERT
 The Wall ... they really did it...

Mikasa wraps her red scarf closer about her face. Beside her sits Eren, face pale and vacant. As he stares down at his own little hands, a *single tear* drips into his open palm.

Something builds within him; something that makes his small body tremble, and his hands tighten into fists. As those around him WEEP and PRAY, Eren alone rises to his feet.

His mouth twists into a *grimace of hatred*.

EREN JAEGER
I'll kill them.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

Eren...

Mikasa and Armin move to Eren's side. His entire body quakes with fury -- and through it all, he continues to CRY.

EREN JAEGER

I'll kill them all -- I swear by my mother! *Every single one of them!*

Slowly his rage begins to dissolve, giving way to tiny, helpless SOBS. Mikasa takes him by the hand.

As the ferry continues its journey, Shiganshina continues to burn. Smoke rises from the rooftops, choking the sky.

INT. MAP OF CITY WALLS - NIGHT

Illuminated by candlelight is an overhead diagram of all human territory, marked by three concentric rings of ink. The outermost ring, representing Wall Maria, fades before our very eyes.

EREN JAEGER (V.O.)

And so it was that Wall Maria fell to the onslaught of the Titans.

We close in on the second ring, representing Wall Rose.

EREN JAEGER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

That year, the Kingdom declared that all of humanity withdraw behind Wall Rose. An estimated ten-thousand people were consumed.

As we watch, the flickering candlelight fades. The entire map is plunged into darkness.

INT. DREAM WORLD - BLACK FOREST - NIGHT

A flickering flame dances in the gloom.

EREN JAEGER (V.O.)

Pa? Pa, what are you doing?

We *flash* through a series of gruesome images:

A wild-eyed Dr. Jaeger. A syringe inching toward a vein.

DR. JAEGER (V.O.)
Give me your arm...

EREN JAEGER (V.O.)
No!

DR. JAEGER (V.O.)
Give me your arm, Eren!

Flashes: blood clouding the syringe. Dr. Jaeger's tears.

And a familiar brass key.

DR. JAEGER (V.O.)
The *key*, Eren ... remember the *key*!

MIKASA ACKERMAN (V.O.)
Eren!

INT. EMPTY STABLES - DAY

Eren awakens with a GASP. Mikasa kneels beside him, worried.

MIKASA ACKERMAN
Eren. Are you okay?

EREN JAEGER
What ... what happened...?

MIKASA ACKERMAN
You were having a nightmare.

Eren rubs his eyes tiredly, looking troubled.

EREN JAEGER
I feel like I just saw pa...

As though involuntarily, his hand drifts to his chest.
Dangling from a string around his neck is ... the key.

MIKASA ACKERMAN
It was just a dream. Come on --
they're going to hand out food.

Eren touches the key, looking unsure.

EXT. TROST - REFUGEE ENCAMPMENT - DAY

Eren and Mikasa step into the sunlight to see...

A sea of sullen-looking REFUGEES from Wall Maria. They wait in long lines to be handed single loaves of bread.

ARMIN ARLERT (O.S.)

Eren! Mikasa!

They turn to see Armin pushing through the crowd, carrying three loaves in his arms. He beams at his friends.

ARMIN ARLERT (CONT'D)

Grandpapa got them for us! He told them they were for children.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

Thank you, Armin.

But Eren frowns. Looking past Armin, he notices one of the SOLDIERS giving them a dirty look. The man turns to his COMRADES bitterly.

SOLDIER

They couldn't have eaten a few more of these damn freeloaders?

At this, Eren's face goes red with fury. He storms right up to the soldier and KICKS him in the shin!

MIKASA ACKERMAN

Eren!

SOLDIER

Ow! You little brat!

He STRIKES Eren across the face, knocking him to the ground. Armin and Mikasa rush to their friend's aid.

ARMIN ARLERT

I'm sorry, sir, he's just hungry! Please don't be upset!

Eren and the soldier lock angry eyes. Finally, the soldier turns away with a SNEER.

SOLDIER

Damn kids ... it's because of us you're not starving, you know!

And with that he STORMS off, leaving the children alone in the middle of the street.

INT. EMPTY STABLES - DAY

The children sit in the open doorway, quietly eating their bread -- except for Eren. He stares at the loaf, *fuming*.

ARMIN ARLERT

You can't blame them. There isn't even enough food for everyone...

EREN JAEGER

They don't know. They've never seen what it's like.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

So don't be angry at them. Eat.

Eren doesn't respond. He draws his knees up to his chest.

EREN JAEGER

I'm going back.

His friends pause. Armin manages a nervous LAUGH.

ARMIN ARLERT

You ... you can't be serious...

EREN JAEGER

I *am*! I'm going back, and I'm gonna kill all of them! And I ... I don't need *this*!

He snatches up the loaf of bread and hurls it at Armin. Armin picks it up off the ground, looking hurt.

ARMIN ARLERT

But Eren, you have to *eat*--

EREN JAEGER

Shut up! I'm not gonna just sit here, like you! You wanna go on living like cattle, then go ahead! You're nothing but a *wimp*!

Armin GASPS. There is a moment of painful silence. Then...

WHAM! Mikasa PUNCHES Eren in the side of the head. He topples over like a fallen tree.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

If Armin's a wimp, so are we. We ran away, just the same as he did.

Looking shocked, Eren touches his bruised cheek.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (CONT'D)
 We can't even find food on our own.
 So how can we hope to kill a *single*
one of those things?

She takes the loaf of bread from Armin and stuffs it into Eren's mouth. His eyes go wide with surprise.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (CONT'D)
 Eat. I won't let you go hungry.

Eren turns his face down, looking ashamed. He takes the bread and begins to eat.

EREN JAEGER (V.O.)
 Due to the influx of refugees, a
 food shortage was sadly inevitable.

EXT. TROST - REFUGEE ENCAMPMENT - MONTHS LATER

We watch as hundreds of REFUGEES line up for weapons and uniforms, each one of them looking more grim than the last.

EREN JAEGER (V.O.)
 In the following year, the Kingdom
 ordered the displaced people to
 reclaim Wall Maria. It was widely
 accepted as a suicide mission.

Amidst the crowd, we see Armin embracing his grandfather. The old man places his hat on his grandson's head.

EXT. BLOODY BATTLEFIELD - DAY

What may have once been a verdant field is now littered with CORPSES. In the distance, the TITANS continue to roam.

EREN JAEGER (V.O.)
 Of the 250,000 sent -- nearly
 twenty-percent of the population --
 not even two-hundred survived.

The sun dips behind the horizon.

EXT. TROST - ALLEY - NIGHT

The three children sit together, watching the stars. Armin holds his grandfather's hat in his hands, his face downcast. It looks as though he's been crying.

EREN JAEGER
I'm gonna do it.

ARMIN ARLERT
...What?

EREN JAEGER
I'm gonna enlist. I know it's
dangerous ... but I have to.

A pause, long and cold.

ARMIN ARLERT
Me too.

EREN JAEGER
...What?

MIKASA ACKERMAN
I will, too.

Eren gapes at his friends, shocked.

EREN JAEGER
But ... *why?*

MIKASA ACKERMAN
Because you're right. It *is*
dangerous -- and without me, you're
just going to die.

She wraps her red scarf tighter about her neck. Eren looks
at each of his friends, for a moment stupefied.

Then his jaw sets, giving him the look of someone much older
than he truly is.

EREN JAEGER
Alright. We'll do it together.

EXT. CADET TRAINING COMPLEX - YEARS LATER

Standing in the dusy courtyard are rows upon rows of
UNTRAINED CADETS. The drill sergeant, INSTRUCTOR SHADIS,
paces up and down the rows like a hungry wolf.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS
Attention!

Moving as one, the cadets stiffen their backs and salute.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS (CONT'D)
 My name is Keith Shadis, and I am
 your commandant -- and I do not bid
 you welcome.

Eren Jaeger and Mikasa Ackerman stand shoulder-to-shoulder
 with their fellow CADETS. He has matured into a fiery-eyed
 young man, and she, a beautiful young woman.

Instructor Shadis pauses, halfway through one of the rows.
 He looks a CADET up and down -- it's Armin Arlert.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS (CONT'D)
 You!

Armin snaps to attention, saluting with his right fist over
 his heart.

ARMIN ARLERT
 Sir!

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS
 Who the hell are you?

ARMIN ARLERT
 Armin Arlert, sir, from Shiganshina
 District!

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS
 Why did you enlist, Arlert?

ARMIN ARLERT
 For the freedom and glory of
 humanity, *sir!*

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS
 Good! We can use you as Titan bait!
Third row, about-face!

He moves on to the next row of RECRUITS.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS (CONT'D)
 You! Your name!

RECRUIT
 Marco Bodt from Jinae, on the south
 side of --

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS
Louder!!

RECRUIT
Marco Bodt from Jinae!

As Shadis continues his TIRADE, we notice a pair of OFFICERS pacing the perimeter: INSTRUCTOR MARCEL and COMMANDER PIXIS.

INSTRUCTOR MARCEL
 Ah, this brings me back. Though I don't remember all the *shouting...*

COMMANDER PIXIS
 A rite of passage. It breaks them down -- helps us remold them into proper soldiers.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS (O.S.)
Fourth row, about-face!

Instructor Marcel cocks an eyebrow.

INSTRUCTOR MARCEL
 Why is he ignoring some of them?

COMMANDER PIXIS
 Some have been through their rites; you can see it in their eyes.

We close in on Mikasa -- on Eren -- on several OTHERS we will come to know. Sure enough, we see what he means.

EXT. ROWS OF CADETS - THAT MOMENT

Shadis gets right up in another RECRUIT'S face.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS
 Who are you?!

JEAN KIRSTEIN
 Jean Kirstein, sir! Trost District!

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS
 Why are you here?

The boy named JEAN hesitates a moment.

JEAN KIRSTEIN
 I want to join the Military Police, and live safely in the interior!

Elsewhere in the gathering, Eren seems to bristle a little bit at this response. Shadis CHUCKLES sardonically.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS
 Oh? You want to join the Military
 Police, do you?

JEAN KIRSTEIN
 Yes, sir!

Shadis swiftly HEADBUTTS Jean Kirstein in the face, and the
 boy falls to his knees with a YELP of pain.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS
Did I say you could fall down?!

He moves on, stopping at the shortest CADET in the row.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS (CONT'D)
 And just who the hell are you?

The cadet stiffens, attempting a salute.

CONNIE SPRINGER
 Connie Springer, sir! From Ragako
 Village on the south side of Wall
 Rose!

FWOMP! Gripping CONNIE SPRINGER'S head like a melon,
 Instructor Shadis *lifts the boy clear off the ground.*

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS
 You got that salute *backwards*,
 Connie Springer! It's right hand
 over left breast, not left hand
 over right! Fist over heart! Is
 your heart on your right side?!

CRUNCH.

Shadis practically drops Connie into the dirt. In the very
 next row stands a GIRL, her back straightened, casually
 MUNCHING on a boiled potato.

What follows is DEATHLY SILENCE. Eren gapes at the girl
 incredulously. She herself seems absolutely oblivious.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS (CONT'D)
 You...

The drill sergeant stalks forward. The girl continues to
 MUNCH on her potato, clueless -- until Shadis is SCREAMING
 RIGHT IN HER FACE.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS (CONT'D)
Who the hell do you think you are?!

The girl salutes with the potato over her heart.

SASHA BLOUSE
 Sasha Blouse from Dauper Village,
 sir! South side of Wall Rose!

She SPRAYS potato bits as she speaks.

More SILENCE. Shadis stares, speechless.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS
 Sasha Blouse ... why are you eating
 a *potato*?

SASHA BLOUSE
 I ... I was hungry, sir.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS
 No. Why are you eating it *now*?

SASHA blinks, hesitant.

SASHA BLOUSE
 I didn't want it to go cold, sir.

Shadis gives her a look: "*Are you shitting me?*"

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS
 ...No. What made you think you
 could eat a potato at all?!

An awkward pause. Sasha seems truly stupefied by such a simple question.

SASHA BLOUSE
 Are you asking me why people eat
 potatoes, sir?

There is a long, painfully uncomfortable SILENCE. Finally, Sasha breaks the potato in half and *hands a piece to Shadis*.

SASHA BLOUSE (CONT'D)
 Here you are, sir.

She smiles.

EXT. CADET TRAINING COMPLEX - EVENING

The setting sun casts long shadows across the complex. We spy a LONE FIGURE running endless circles around the courtyard: it's Sasha Blouse, PANTING and sweating.

CONNIE SPRINGER (V.O.)

Wow ... he *still* has potato girl running. How long's she been at it?

EXT. CADET BARRACKS - THAT MOMENT

A few familiar CADETS, dressed down in their civvies, watch from the portico of the barracks.

MARCO BODT

Five hours. She seemed more upset about having to miss dinner than anything else...

The cadets catch sight of something in the distance -- a horse-drawn cart, carrying a dozen downcast-looking YOUTHS.

EREN JAEGER

What is that?

MARCO BODT

Dropouts. They asked to work in the fields instead.

Armin looks shocked.

ARMIN ARLERT

But it's only the *first day*...

EREN JAEGER

That's just how it is. You can't cut it here, you have to leave.

MARCO BODT, a freckled boy with a smiling face, eyes Eren.

MARCO BODT

My name's Marco. You never said where you were from.

Eren smiles at Armin, CLAPPING his friend on the shoulder.

EREN JAEGER

Shiganshina. Same as Armin here.

Connie and Marco exchange knowing glances.

MARCO BODT

Then you were *there*, weren't you?

CONNIE SPRINGER

(excitedly)

Did you see the Titan? The Colossal one?

Eren blinks, seeming taken aback.

INT. MESS HALL - NIGHT

A moth flutters excitedly about a candlelit lantern.

EREN JAEGER (O.S.)

That's right. I saw it.

Eren sits at a table, surrounded by his COMRADES. They stare with wide eyes, hanging onto the edge of his every word.

CONNIE SPRINGER

How big was it?! I heard it stepped right over the Wall!

EREN JAEGER

No. It wasn't that big. Just big enough to see over the top.

MARCO BODT

What about the Armored one that broke through Wall Maria?

EREN JAEGER

They call it that. It just looked like a normal Titan to me.

CONNIE SPRINGER

And ... what do *they* look like?

Eren pauses, a spoonful of gruel halfway to his mouth.

FLASHBACK - JAEGER HOME WRECKAGE - EVENING

The Smiling Titan raises the body of Carla Jaeger toward its gaping mouth.

INT. MESS HALL - THAT MOMENT

Eren drops his spoon, his face going white. Seeing his reaction, Marco Bodt frowns.

MARCO BODT

Alright, people. I think that's enough questions for now --

EREN JAEGER

No.

He returns to his meal. Like the SNAP of a finger, his confidence has returned.

EREN JAEGER (CONT'D)

They're not even that big, really. Once I graduate, I'm gonna join the Scout Regiment. I'll kill them with my bare hands, if I have to!

Most of the cadets seem enamored by his conviction -- but then we hear a SNEER from one table away. It's Jean Kirstein, sporting a black eye courtesy of the instructor.

JEAN KIRSTEIN

The Scouts huh? You've got to be damn near suicidal.

Eren glowers at his fellow cadet.

EREN JAEGER

Aren't you the one who wants to join the Military Police? Live the easy life in the interior?

Another SNEER from Jean.

JEAN KIRSTEIN

At least I'm honest, and not some tough-talking pipsqueak.

Before Eren can respond, we hear the distant CLANGING of the late-night bell. As the cadets all rise, Jean and Eren shoot each other final, parting scowls.

EXT. CADET TRAINING COMPLEX - DAY

The cadets line up beside *massive lift machines*, with rope harnesses attached to the hips of their uniforms.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS

This is a test of your aptitude
with a soldier's mobility gear! If
you can't do this, you're not even
fit to be bait!

One-by-one, the lifts hoist the cadets into the air. They
pinwheel their arms wildly, struggling to maintain balance.
As before, the officers observe from the sidelines.

INSTRUCTOR MARCEL

Here they learn the fundamentals of
the mobility harness. A test of
aptitude, if you will.

He smiles, spying Mikasa. She sways gently in her harness,
hardly batting an eye.

INSTRUCTOR MARCEL (CONT'D)

Observe -- completely steady, with
minimal effort. A true natural.
That is what aptitude is all about.

He moves on to the next cadet, and his smile fades.

INSTRUCTOR MARCEL (CONT'D)

Now *this* ... *this*, too, is the
definition of aptitude...

And now we see ... Eren. Dangling upside-down from his
harness, struggling like mad as his PEERS point and GIGGLE.

INSTRUCTOR MARCEL (CONT'D)

Some may have the *will*, of course,
but not always the *skill*.

Instructor Shadis BELLOWS in Eren's face.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS

What are you doing, Jaeger?!
Straighten yourself up!

EREN JAEGER

I'm ... I'm trying!

He hoists himself upward, nearly finding his balance a
moment. Then he tips forward and SMACKS his forehead against
the earth!

EXT. CADET TRAINING COMPLEX - EVENING

The cadets watch from the barracks as Eren continues to struggle with the mobility harness. He now sports a bandage across his forehead. Armin and Mikasa are there at his side.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

Don't try anything fancy. Front and back balance, that's it.

ARMIN ARLERT

You can do it if you just stay calm. Even *I* could do it.

Eren grimaces, but gives Armin a nod.

EREN JAEGER

Okay ... I think I got it. Lift me up, Armin.

Armin nods and CRANKS the lever on the mechanism. Slowly, Eren is hoisted off the ground. For a moment he seems to have his balance, and then...

WHUMP! He tips forward, face-planting into the dirt.

From the barracks, we hear the sound of LAUGHTER. Mikasa looks, scowling to see Jean Kirstein imitating Eren's bewildered facial expression.

INT. MESS HALL - NIGHT

Eren sits with Mikasa and Armin. Opposite them is Connie Springer, smiling smugly.

CONNIE SPRINGER

What can I say? I'm gifted.

EREN JAEGER

(desperate)

Connie, please! There *has* to be some kind of trick!

CONNIE SPRINGER

Hey, weren't you the one saying, "If you can't cut it here, you have to leave?"

Eren's face goes stark white at the prospect. CHUCKLING to himself, Connie rises from his seat. Eren buries his face in his hands, looking humiliated.

EREN JAEGER
I'm so pathetic...

MIKASA ACKERMAN
Maybe you should just give it up.

He looks appalled by the notion.

EREN JAEGER
Not a chance.

MIKASA ACKERMAN
Why not? There's more to being a
soldier than just throwing your
life away. It takes skill.

Eren scowls.

EREN JAEGER
That's easy for you to say...

He turns back to his food, looking grim. Unnoticed by him,
SOMEONE approaches them from behind.

BERTOLT HOOVER (O.S.)
Hi. Um ... I heard you were looking
for advice.

All three of them turn to see BERTOLT HOOVER, tall and
lanky. Eren stares a moment, looking him up and down.

BERTOLT HOOVER (CONT'D)
I'm Bertolt ... Bertolt Hoover. I
think I can help you.

EXT. CADET TRAINING COMPLEX - NIGHT

Bertolt leads Eren and Armin by the light of a lantern.

BERTOLT HOOVER
You're both from Shiganshina,
aren't you? So you know how
horrible they are. The Titans.

ARMIN ARLERT
Have you seen them yourself?

BERTOLT HOOVER
(a long pause)
Reiner Braun -- have you met him?

Eren shakes his head.

BERTOLT HOOVER (CONT'D)
 Reiner and I are from the Southeast
 side of Wall Maria. We didn't
 receive word of the attack until it
 was too late. The Titans showed up
 before the messenger did.

ARMIN ARLERT
 I'm sorry.

Bertolt says nothing more.

They reach the lifting mechanism in the courtyard. The moon
 emerges from behind the clouds, casting everything in a
 silvery glow. Bertolt sets down his lantern.

BERTOLT HOOVER
 Start over from scratch. Begin with
 your belt adjustment...

EXT. CADET TRAINING COMPLEX - DAY

Next morning. All eyes are on Eren Jaeger, strapped into his
 harness. His eyes are steely with determination.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS
 Eren Jaeger. Are you ready?

EREN JAEGER
 Yes, sir!

Shadis nods, and gives the signal. The mechanism begins to
 CRANK, Eren's rope goes taut, and his feet lift off the
 ground. The cadets all watch with bated breath.

For a moment it looks like Eren may fall, and then...

His jaw goes tight. He stops quivering, hanging fully
 suspended in mid-air. He's doing it! The cadets GASP as --

Eren tips forward, once more CRASHING into the dirt.

The crowd goes DEAD SILENT. Armin looks mortified -- but not
 nearly as mortified as Eren. Instructor Shadis frowns.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS
 Let him down.

EREN JAEGER
 No! I can still do it!

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS
 ...Let him down.

Eren, freed from his harness, falls to his hands and knees. He looks as though his whole world has been *shattered*.

Shadis gestures to one of the cadets.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS (CONT'D)
 Hoover. Trade harnesses with
 Jaeger.

BERTOLT HOOVER
 Yes, sir!

EXT. CADET TRAINING COMPLEX - FIVE MINUTES LATER

Eren sways back and forth from his harness. He looks amazed that he hasn't yet fallen.

Instructor Shadis turns Eren's harness over in his hands.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS
 As I thought. Your equipment was
 defective. Your harness had a
 broken clasp.

Eren stares down at his own dangling legs, mouth agape.

EREN JAEGER
 Then, you mean ... you mean I can
 be a soldier after all?

Shadis gives him a look: "*Don't screw up again.*"

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS
 Congratulations, Jaeger. You pass
 this test.

Eren seems unable to believe it. One-by-one, his fellow cadets break out into APPLAUSE.

Slowly, the circumstance of his tiny victory begins to dawn on him -- and Eren hurls his fists into the air, letting out a SHOUT of pure elation!

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Combat boots SLAP through the mud. The cadets slog through torrential rain, led by their horseback-mounted instructor. Each of them carries a heavy knapsack on their back.

Armin Arlert PANTS, his face drenched with sweat and rain. He struggles to keep up with his fellow cadets.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS

Too slow, Arlert! If this were a real mission, you'd be finished!

Armin stumbles, nearly falling into the mud when --

REINER BRAUN (O.S.)

Give it here.

Before Armin can respond, his pack is lifted away by REINER BRAUN: tall, blond, and broad-shouldered. Reiner carries his own knapsack over one shoulder, and Armin's over the other.

REINER BRAUN (CONT'D)

He's gonna *fail* you at this rate. We're being evaluated today!

ARMIN ARLERT

But ... they'll punish you, too, if they see this.

REINER BRAUN

Then keep running and act normal!

Unbeknownst to either Reiner or Armin, the instructor has already seen it. Nevertheless, he acts as if he hadn't.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS (V.O.)

Reiner Braun -- steadfast in both mind and body, and well-respected by his peers.

Armin glances at Reiner -- then at Shadis -- then back to Reiner. In a split-second decision, he *snatches his knapsack* back and presses on running.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Armin Arlert -- physically weak, yet academically brilliant.

INT. CADET CLASSROOM - DAY

At the head of the classroom stands Instructor Marcel. The cadets all lean forward, paying rapt attention.

INSTRUCTOR MARCEL
Surviving historical documents
reveal nothing about the Titans'
origins. We know only what the
Scout Regiment has gathered.

He begins drawing a diagram of a Titan on a blackboard.

INSTRUCTOR MARCEL (CONT'D)
Their bodies operate at much higher
temperatures than human beings. You
may have noticed the steam
emanating from their bodies...

EXT. FOREST TRAINING GROUND - DAY

FWOOSH! FWOOSH!

The cadets ZIP through the trees like BUZZING HORNETS, propelled by the hip-mounted grappling guns of their mobility harnesses.

We close in on three of the cadets, two of which we have already met: Jean Kirstein, Bertolt Hoover, and another; a pale-eyed blonde girl -- ANNIE LEONHARDT.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS (V.O.)
Annie Leonhardt -- while her combat
skills are outstanding, she does
not play well with others.

Each wielding twin swords, the cadets close in on a massive, wooden training dummy with a target fixed to the back of its neck. They each take a pass, SLASHING the target to pieces.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Bertolt Hoover -- though talented,
he lacks self-confidence.

Jean looks back at his slash, noticeably shallower than either Bertolt or Annie's. He CURSES enviously.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Jean Kirstein -- head of the class
on grapple mobility ... and an
insufferable ass.

Jean SWOOPS through the trees, spying an untouched training dummy. His eyes light up.

JEAN KIRSTEIN

You're *mine*.

But before he can make a move, Connie Springer soars straight past him!

CONNIE SPRINGER

Thanks for leading the way, Jean!

Connie launches himself at the target, raising his blades --

Only to have his victory snatched from beneath his nose by none other than potato girl herself, Sasha Blouse.

SASHA BLOUSE

I got it I got it I got it I--!

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS (V.O.)

Sasha Blouse -- instinctive, but eccentric.

Connie can only dangle from his grappling line, humiliated.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Connie Springer -- though agile, he is astonishingly dim-witted.

INT. CADET CLASSROOM - DAY

Instructor Marcel's face is grim.

INSTRUCTOR MARCEL

What makes a Titan more dangerous than anything is its tremendous *vitality*. They are capable of regenerating from almost any wound in a matter of minutes.

A TERRIFIED MURMUR runs through the class.

MARCO BODT

Then, sir ... how do we *beat them*?

INSTRUCTOR MARCEL

(a beat)

There is one way.

He turns back to his Titan diagram, and draws a circle around the back of the creature's neck.

INSTRUCTOR MARCEL (CONT'D)
 Your target is here -- from the
 back of the head to the nape of the
 neck. That is where *these* come in.

He strides to his desk, upon which sit a pair of
military-grade swords. He holds them up, as if to
 demonstrate.

INSTRUCTOR MARCEL (CONT'D)
 A successful strike with these, and
 the Titan will fall.

EXT. FOREST TRAINING GROUND - DAY

A trio of TRAINING OFFICERS stand by at rope pulleys. One of
 them signals the others, and they HEAVE, rotating two more
training dummies into position.

Split seconds later, Mikasa and Eren ZIP past, SLASHING
 through the neck-mounted targets.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS (V.O.)
 Mikasa Ackerman -- exemplary in
 every way. She is perhaps the most
 gifted soldier I have ever met.

She swings through the trees as if on pure instinct. Eren
 follows her, with markedly less finesse.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Eren Jaeger -- lackluster in the
 classroom, marginally better in the
 field ... but driven by a sense of
 purpose that is almost *terrifying*.

Swinging through the trees, Eren lets out a loud HOWL OF
 JUBILATION.

EXT. CADET TRAINING COMPLEX - DAY

The CADETS stand in pairs, practicing hand-to-hand combat.
 Among them we see Eren Jaeger and Reiner Braun. Eren frowns,
 regarding a wooden training dagger in his hand.

EREN JAEGER
 Why are we wasting our time with
 this? We're fighting *Titans*, not
people.

REINER BRAUN
Looks like someone agrees with you.

He nods to Annie Leonhardt, standing alone and looking utterly disinterested. Reiner winks at Eren, and then --

REINER BRAUN (CONT'D)
Oi, Annie!

ANNIE LEONHARDT
...*What?*

REINER BRAUN
We're not boring you, now are we?
Care for a little fight?

Annie glowers at him. She stalks forward, looking thoroughly *pissed* -- and with a sly smile, Reiner pushes Eren forward.

REINER BRAUN (CONT'D)
Alright, you two. Have at it.

EREN JAEGER
...W-what?

But Reiner has already relegated himself to the sidelines.

EREN JAEGER (CONT'D)
Um ... o-okay, then. You know the
drill, right Annie?

Annie responds by settling into a fighting stance. There's nothing awkward about it -- *she knows what she's doing*.

Eren swallows a nervous lump in his throat.

EREN JAEGER (CONT'D)
Okay ... Here I go...

He musters up a half-hearted charge -- and is rewarded with a swift KICK to the shin. He falls to the dirt with a YELP of pain. Annie glances at Reiner.

ANNIE LEONHARDT
Happy?

REINER BRAUN
It's not over 'til you take the
dagger.

Annie SIGHS bitterly and advances on Eren.

EREN JAEGER

Look, I'll just give it to you if--

WHUMP! She sweeps his legs out from beneath him and SLAMS him into the dirt. Eren lies there, breathless, staring into Annie's ice-blue eyes.

ANNIE LEONHARDT

Want to know something? *None of this matters.* We aren't even marked on this exercise.

He opens his mouth to respond -- but she silences him by pressing the wooden dagger against his throat.

ANNIE LEONHARDT (CONT'D)

Why is it that only the best of us can join the Military Police? Why keep the most *capable soldiers* in the *safest territory*? Hm?

She pauses, letting her words sink in. Then she rises and tosses the dagger to Reiner.

ANNIE LEONHARDT (CONT'D)

There. Now *leave me alone.*

And with that Annie STOMPS away, leaving Eren to stare after her in perplexion.

INT. DREAM WORLD - BLACK FOREST - NIGHT

We are back in the darkened world of Eren's nightmares. Through the gloom we see -- Dr. Jaeger WEEPING ... a dripping syringe....

DR. JAEGER (V.O.)

Always remember...

A needle pierces a vein.

INT. MESS HALL - NIGHT

Eren sits beside Mikasa, a troubled frown on his face. In his hand glints Dr. Jaeger's brass key.

JEAN KIRSTEIN (O.S.)

...it's all about the inertia.
Shift your weight into your swing,
and it'll save you gas.

MARCO BODT (O.S.)
Easier said than done, I bet.

Jean and Marco sit a table away, CHATTING with one another.

JEAN KIRSTEIN
Oh, sure. But if you wanna join the
MP's, you gotta know all the
tricks.

MARCO BODT
(re: "if only")
The Military Police ... God, I can
just imagine serving the *King* --

Jean bursts into a fit of LAUGHTER that seems to get on
Eren's nerves.

JEAN KIRSTEIN
Be honest for once, Marco. You'd
want the job 'cause it means a
comfy life in the interior. Right?

EREN JAEGER
It's comfy in the interior, is it?

As if sensing a standoff coming, the surrounding CADETS all
shift their attention to Eren.

EREN JAEGER (CONT'D)
You know, five years ago, *this* used
to be the interior.

JEAN KIRSTEIN
(a scowl)
So what?

Eren glares evenly at Jean.

EREN JAEGER
How come only the best of us can
join the MPs? How are we supposed
to beat the Titans if our best
soldiers are all in the interior?

JEAN KIRSTEIN
You know what? As long as I'm on
the inside, *I don't really care.*

Eren takes a GULP of water from a clay tankard.

EREN JAEGER
 ...You're a piece of shit, Jean.

Jean leaps to his feet, *furiously!*

JEAN KIRSTEIN
 You want to say that again, Jaeger?

EREN JAEGER
 I'll say it three times, if that's
 what you wanna hear!

They get right up in each others' faces, but before things can escalate further, Mikasa places herself between them.

MIKASA ACKERMAN
Stop it. You're making fools out of
 yourselves. *Both* of you.

Eren and Jean continue to glower at one another. Mikasa looks fiercely at each of them.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (CONT'D)
 We're *soldiers*. That means we're in
 this *together*. Now grow up, both of
 you -- and apologize.

Both boys hesitate, glaring darkly at one another. Finally, swallowing his pride, Jean extends a hand.

JEAN KIRSTEIN
 Fine. I apologize.

Eren glances at his outstretched hand a moment -- then briefly SLAPS palms with him. Without another word, they both turn back to their tables.

The door suddenly CREAKS open, and every cadet *stiffens* as Instructor Shadis appears in the doorway.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS
 Is there a *problem*, cadets?

No one says a word. Shadis turns his piercing gaze on Bertolt Hoover, whose eyes practically bug out of his head.

BERTOLT HOOVER
 N-n-no, sir ... not a problem.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS
 Really? So what was that commotion
 I just heard?
 (off their silence)
 (MORE)

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS (CONT'D)
 I hope someone speaks up. I'd hate
 to have to reprimand *all* of you.

Connie Springer looks like his bladder just emptied.

Mikasa's hand shoots into the air.

MIKASA ACKERMAN
 Sasha farted.

Sasha Blouse goes white, food dribbling from her open mouth.

With a disgusted grimace, Shadis turns and exits the cabin.
 As soon as he's gone, the cadets all ROAR with LAUGHTER.

EXT. MILITARY HQ - COURTYARD - NIGHT

Gathered in the courtyard are the cadets of the 104th
 Training Corps, all standing at attention. At the head of
 the group stands Keith Shadis.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS
 Give your hearts!

They salute in unison, fists over hearts.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS (CONT'D)
 From here on, you have three
 options!

He gestures to three flags, each bearing the insignia of a
 different Regiment: Garrison, Scout, and Military Police.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS (CONT'D)
 The Garrison Regiment, defenders of
 the Walls -- the Scout Regiment,
 surveyors of Titan territory -- and
 the Military Police Regiment,
 protectors of the people!

Among the cadets we see Eren, grinning triumphantly.
 Instructor Shadis eyes each of his graduates with pride.

INSTRUCTOR SHADIS (CONT'D)
 Go forth, cadets. From here on, you
 are the soldiers of the King.

EXT. TROST - STREETS - NIGHT

Eren, Armin, and Mikasa sit together in the street. They watch the stars, as they once did many years ago.

EREN JAEGER

We made it. I can't believe we really made it.

ARMIN ARLERT

Yeah ... I guess we did.
(a beat)

Eren. Are you *sure* you want to join the Scouts? Even knowing the risk?

EREN JAEGER

It's what I've been waiting for, Armin. It's all I want.

A silence falls on the three friends. And then...

ARMIN ARLERT

Then I will, too.

Eren blinks, looking taken aback.

EREN JAEGER

Armin...

MIKASA ACKERMAN

Me too.

Eren can only gape at his friends.

EREN JAEGER

Hey, look. You were *top of the class*, Mikasa. You *deserve* to be in the Military Police.

Mikasa continues to stare at the stars. She touches her red scarf, still wrapped about her neck after all these years.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

If you join the Military Police, then so will I. Where you go, I go. I can't lose any more of my family.

Eren stares at his friends, looking deeply moved.

EXT. WALL ROSE - BATTLEMENTS - DAY

Eren gapes at Connie Springer, gobsmacked.

EREN JAEGER

You can't be *serious*, Connie.

Atop the wall stand Eren, Connie, and Marco Bodt, all tending to the iron cannons. Connie grins proudly.

CONNIE SPRINGER

No, I mean it. I'm joining the Scouts, same as you.

EREN JAEGER

I ... I don't know what to say.

CONNIE SPRINGER

Hey, don't get all sentimental, alright? Not like I did it 'cause of you, or anything...

MARCO BODT

That's not what you told me.

Connie's face turns bright red.

CONNIE SPRINGER

Shut up, Marco...

SASHA BLOUSE (O.S.)

Hey, everyone...

They turn to see Sasha approaching. She holds a *raw cut of roast beef*, practically drooling with anticipation.

SASHA BLOUSE (CONT'D)

I stole it from the officers' storehouse! Does anyone want some?

Eren and the others stare at her, astonished.

EREN JAEGER

Sasha -- are you *trying* to get yourself arrested?!

There's a long pause. The cadets glance at one another.

CONNIE SPRINGER

...I'll have some.

MARCO BODT

Yeah, me too.

Sasha SHIVERS with anticipation and places the beef inside a storage crate.

SASHA BLOUSE

We can save it for later, but until then...

She holds a finger up to her lips, miming, "*Shh.*"

As Eren watches his peers, a look of quiet confidence spreads across his face. Looking out across Trost, he can't help but smile.

MARCO BODT

Do you think we can really do it?
Do you really think we can win?

Eren's eyes shine with confidence.

EREN JAEGER

No ... I *know* we can.

KRA-KOOM!

There is a *blinding flash*, a sound like THUNDER...

And the COLOSSAL TITAN is back -- looming over the Wall like a black spectre of doom!

For a moment, all is silent. The cadets can only stare, rooted to the spot, *speechless*.

Then, opening its enormous jaws, the Titan BELCHES out a jet of hot steam that BLASTS the cadets *right off the wall!*

EXT. WALL ROSE - OUTER GATE - THAT MOMENT

With more power than a locomotive, the Colossal's foot SMASHES through the outer gate of Wall Rose! Stone, dust, and debris go sailing into the air!

EXT. TROST - STREETS - MOMENT LATER

Debris rains down upon the town like HELLFIRE. A single, massive chunk of stone and mortar CRASHES to the earth.

EXT. WALL ROSE - THAT MOMENT

One-by-one, the falling cadets FIRE their grapple cables into the Wall! Eren PANTS as his descent slows to a halt.

EREN JAEGER

Damn...

He and his comrades can only stare, horrified, at the gaping hole in Wall Rose.

CONNIE SPRINGER

The Wall...

SASHA BLOUSE

It's happening again!

Eren's face pales as realization slowly dawns on him.

FLASHBACK - JAEGER HOME WRECKAGE - EVENING

The Smiling Titan raises Carla Jaeger toward its mouth...

EREN JAEGER (V.O.)

I'll kill them all!

FLASHBACK - FERRY - EVENING

Little Eren rises, his entire body *trembling* with rage.

EREN JAEGER

I swear by my mother! *Every single one of them!*

EXT. WALL ROSE - THAT MOMENT

Eren stares at the breach, as if lost in a trance.

EREN JAEGER

(a soft murmur)
Every ... single one...

Then, with a SNARL OF FURY, he draws both of his blades!

EREN JAEGER (CONT'D)

Connie! Sasha! Marco! *Everyone!!*
Our target is the Colossal, dead ahead! *Don't let it get away!!*

He *soars* upward, reeling himself in on his grapple cable -- *bursting* through the Titan's steam! As Eren SKIDS to a halt across the battlements, he comes face-to-face with the Colossal Titan...

And if we aren't crazy, it turns its head to *make direct eye contact with him!*

Eren greets it with a smile.

EREN JAEGER (CONT'D)

Hi there.

FWOOM! The Colossal SWEEPS its massive hand across the top of the Wall -- but Eren is already gone -- diving over the edge! He gapes, watching the iron cannons come loose: *Did it do that on purpose?*

No matter. He FIRES his grapple into the Titan's neck and soars directly toward its weak spot! With a mighty ROAR he brings his blades down --

CUTTING through nothing but a steam. As quickly as it appeared, the Colossal Titan has vanished!

Eren can only stare in disbelief.

EXT. WALL ROSE - BATTLEMENTS - MOMENT LATER

Eren rejoins the others upon the demolished battlements.

CONNIE SPRINGER

Did you kill it? What happened?!

EREN JAEGER

I don't know! One minute it was there, then it just disappeared!

Marco Bodt clutches his head in disbelief, staring out at the encroaching swarm of TITANS beyond the Wall.

MARCO BODT

What are we going to do...?

GARRISON OFFICER (O.S.)

You four!

The cadets stiffen as an OFFICER joins them atop the Wall.

GARRISON OFFICER (CONT'D)

You're relieved from cannon duty.
All cadets are to regroup at HQ!

EREN JAEGER

Yes, sir!

Three more GARRISON OFFICERS join the first. Eren watches them longingly as they leap to the Wall's defense -- but then he tears his eyes away.

EREN JAEGER (CONT'D)

Come on -- let's go!

EXT. TROST - STREETS - DAY

As ALARM BELLS CLANG, hordes of PANICKED CITIZENS stampede toward safety. A LITTLE GIRL drops her dolly, WAILING.

EXT. WALL ROSE - INNER GATE - THAT MOMENT

The crush of CIVILIANS has grown outside the gate. People SHOUT and fight for a better position in line. A GARRISON GUARD overlooks the crowd.

GARRISON GUARD

Please remain calm! Take only what
you *absolutely need!*

And suddenly we realize ... *we've seen this all before.*

INT. MILITARY HQ - SUPPLY DEPOT - DAY

CADETS rush to and fro, *frantic*. Mikasa joins Armin and Eren as they refuel their grapple gear. Armin shakes like a leaf.

ARMIN ARLERT

This is *bad* ... we don't even have
the *manpower* to seal the Wall!
They'll get through, and it'll be
just like before, and --

EREN JAEGER

Armin!

Eren puts a steady hand on his friend's shoulder.

EREN JAEGER (CONT'D)

This *isn't like before*. We're *ready*
this time, you hear me?

With a pale face, Armin can only nod.

ARMIN ARLERT
 Okay ... okay. I'm sorry.

Mikasa and Eren give each other grim looks.

EXT. WALL ROSE - THAT MOMENT

POOM! POOM! POOM!

The wall-mounted CANNONS go off in quick succession, PUMMELING the approaching TITANS -- but no matter how many times they are knocked down, they just keep getting back up.

The first of them LUMBERS through the broken gate, its eyes *flashing hungrily*.

EXT. MILITARY HQ - COURTYARD - DAY

The freshly-graduated CADETS stand at attention before their CAPTAIN, all saluting with their fists over their hearts.

CAPTAIN
 As soldiers of the King, your task
 is to defend Wall Rose until
 evacuation is complete! Fight
 bravely, and *give your hearts!*

With a COLLECTIVE SHOUT of affirmation, the cadets disband, hurrying off in every which direction.

Jean Kirstein cowers in a corner with his head in his hands.

JEAN KIRSTEIN
Why...? Why, why, why, why?

Hearing a NOISE, Jean sees a terrified CADET PUKING all over the ground. He watches a moment, speechless. Then, wrinkling his nose in disgust, he rises...

And bumps into Eren Jaeger. Jean's jaw tightens with anger.

JEAN KIRSTEIN (CONT'D)
 Happy now, you *suicidal maniac?*

But as he storms off, Eren catches his arm.

EREN JAEGER
 Calm down...

JEAN KIRSTEIN

I will not! *I'm* not the one who wanted to die! I was on my way to the interior *tomorrow*! Now you want me to just lie down and die?

EREN JAEGER

That's not what I'm saying!

He fiercely seizes Jean by the collar.

EREN JAEGER (CONT'D)

Think back -- think back to those three years in training.

Hearing the SHOUTING, Mikasa is drawn to where they stand.

EREN JAEGER (CONT'D)

You know how many times we came close to dying? Some people *did* die! But we survived!

Jean seems taken aback. They stare at each other in silence for a moment, before Eren releases his grip.

EREN JAEGER (CONT'D)

And if you can survive just *one more day*, then you can leave for the interior tomorrow.

Jean seems to realize that the surrounding cadets are all staring. Looking embarrassed, he storms away past the PUKER.

JEAN KIRSTEIN

Let's go, Daz ... and quit your goddamn crying.

Eren watches him go, shaking his head in exasperation. Mikasa takes him by the hand, frowning deeply.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

Eren. If anything happens, don't try to be brave. *Come and find me.*

EREN JAEGER

But we're in different squads...

MIKASA ACKERMAN

Please.

There is a desperate look on her face. For once, she almost looks ... *scared*. Eren stares into her eyes, surprised.

OFFICER (O.S.)
 Cadet Ackerman! You're in the
 rearguard with the elites. Move!

MIKASA ACKERMAN
 ...Yes, sir.

She gives Eren a final, pleading look before she departs.
 Eren continues to stare after her, frowning.

EXT. TROST - ROOFTOPS - DAY

Staring across the smoking horizon are Eren and Armin,
 joined by cadets WAGNER, CAROLINA, TIUS, and ZERAMUNSKI.

EREN JAEGER
 Hey, Armin. You think they'll
 promote us after this?

Armin blinks, staring meekly at Eren's rogueish grin.
 Slowly, he forces a smile.

ARMIN ARLERT
 Y-yeah ... no doubt.

CADET CAROLINA
 You know, you kids aren't the only
 ones who wanna join the Scouts.

Eren can't help but crack a smile.

EREN JAEGER
 You're kidding. You too?

CADET WAGNER
 And me. How about a little contest?
 See who can kill the most Titans?

From the next rooftop over, an OFFICER signals them.

OFFICER
 Squad Thirty-Four, bolster the
 vanguard!

Eren nods to each of his squadmates.

EREN JAEGER
 Alright -- *let's move out!*

With a ROUSING SHOUT, the cadets draw their blades! They
 soar in unison over the rooftops of Trost, the sun flashing
 off their swords.

EXT. TROST - STREETS - THAT MOMENT

In the distance we see the bobbing heads and distended bellies of the TITANS. *Dozens* of them. Eren's eyes go wide as he notices --

EREN JAEGER
An abnormal!

A single TITAN *lunges* from a rooftop, hurtling straight toward them! The squadmates SHOUT, twisting out of the way.

BOOM! The Titan CRASHES into the side of a building, and the members of Squad Thirty-Four regroup on a nearby roof.

Eren PANTS, dangling off the edge of the building.

EREN JAEGER (CONT'D)
Where's Wagner?!

But even as he asks, the Abnormal Titan turns ... revealing *Cadet Wagner clutched helplessly between its teeth*. The squad can only watch as it SLURPS him down like a noodle.

And in that moment, the team's resolve seems to SHATTER. Cadet Carolina SHRIEKS, and the others go white as ghosts.

All of them, that is, except for Eren.

EREN JAEGER (CONT'D)
You ... you *son of a bitch!*

He BLASTS off toward the Titan, *enraged!*

ARMIN ARLERT
Eren, *wait!*

But Eren isn't listening. He soars at the monster, blinded by hate. So blind that he doesn't even notice the TITAN below him ... until it bites off his left leg.

With a sickening CRASH, Eren's body SMASHES across a rooftop. Armin and his squadmates GASP, horrified! They spring after him, when --

WHAP! A TITAN SWATS Cadet Tius in midair, killing him instantly. Another YANKS Cadet Carolina out of the sky.

CADET ZERAMUNSKI (O.S.)
(a terrified shriek)
Stop!! Please, don't!!

A third TITAN smiles, looking almost playful as it brings Cadet Zeramunski toward its drooling mouth.

Armin can only watch, paralyzed with fear, staring with wide, tear-stung eyes at Eren's dismembered body.

ARMIN ARLERT

No ... w-why...?

Two more TITANS corner Cadet Carolina. She SCREAMS as they each grip a limb, *pulling in opposite directions*.

Armin collapses to his knees, dropping his swords.

ARMIN ARLERT (CONT'D)

Why is this happening...?

DOOM. DOOM.

The clay tiles SHUDDER under LUMBERING FOOTSTEPS. Armin turns to see a BEARDED TITAN eying him greedily.

ARMIN ARLERT (CONT'D)

W-why can't I move...?

The Titan plucks him up, dangling him above its open mouth like a delicious treat. As if suddenly realizing what is happening to him ... Armin begins to SCREAM.

Across the street, Eren lies sprawled across the shingles, bleeding to death. At the sound of Armin's SCREAM, he STIRS.

EREN JAEGER

(a weak whisper)

Armin...

FLASHBACK - SHIGANSHINA - ALLEY - DAY

Eren and Armin are ten years old again. Armin points at the pages of a muddy, leather-bound book.

ARMIN ARLERT

They call it a sea. Grandpapa says it's so deep, you can never reach the bottom!

Little Eren LAUGHS good-humoredly.

EREN JAEGER

Yeah, alright ... whatever you say.

Armin clutches the book close to his chest, his eyes sparkling with wonder.

ARMIN ARLERT
I want to see it someday. The sea.
The mountains. All of it.

EXT. TROST - ROOFTOPS - DAY

Eren, pouring blood, rises onto trembling elbows.

ARMIN ARLERT (V.O.)
I want to see *all* of it...

INT. TITAN'S MOUTH - THAT MOMENT

Armin SCREAMS as he falls into the Titan's mouth. He slides across its slimy tongue, clawing for a handhold --

When Eren seizes hold of his wrist! There he is, inside the creature's mouth, propping open its jaws with his sword!

Eren heaves, pulls --

And with a mighty ROAR, he *hurls his friend to safety!*

EXT. TROST - ROOFTOPS - CONTINUOUS

Armin CRASHES onto the roof, GASPING and covered in slime. He turns back to see Eren clutched in the Titan's jaws.

EREN JAEGER
Armin ... you told me what was out
there ... the sea...

He outstretches a quivering, blood-soaked hand. The two friends lock eyes one last time.

EREN JAEGER (CONT'D)
I want to see it too.

With a CRY, Armin lunges to take Eren's hand --

As the Titan's teeth SNAP shut and *sever his entire arm.*

Blood splashes Armin's face. The Titan GULPS down its victim. Armin SCREAMS BLOODY MURDER.

EXT. TROST - ELSEWHERE - THAT MOMENT

The sky darkens with gathering rainclouds. The WIND RISES -- and Mikasa stiffens, almost as if she's felt something.

EXT. ACKERMAN HOME - THIRTEEN YEARS AGO

Rain pours from a cloudy sky. Nestled among the trees of a forest is a humble-looking log cabin. Picture perfect.

INT. ACKERMAN HOME - DAY

At the kitchen table sits eight-year-old Mikasa Ackerman, wide-eyed and innocent. With a smile, she holds out an embroidered tablecloth to her beautiful MOTHER.

MIKASA ACKERMAN
Mama, I finished it!

NAOMI ACKERMAN
Oh, Mikasa! It's wonderful!

NAOMI ACKERMAN takes it in her hands, smiling sentimentally.

NAOMI ACKERMAN (CONT'D)
My mother taught me this pattern.
And her mother taught her.
(with a wink)
Maybe you'll teach it to your own
daughter someday?

Mikasa blinks with big, brown eyes.

MIKASA ACKERMAN
How can I do that?

NAOMI ACKERMAN
Do what, dear?

The door opens. In walks blond-haired AUGUST ACKERMAN, carrying an armful of wet firewood. Mikasa frowns at him.

MIKASA ACKERMAN
Papa, how do I have a daughter?

August freezes mid-stride, looking like a deer in headlights. Naomi stifles a CHUCKLE as her husband places the wood beside the hearth.

AUGUST ACKERMAN
Um. I, uh, I don't really...

He SNAPS his fingers, as though struck with an idea.

AUGUST ACKERMAN (CONT'D)
You know what? Why don't you ask
Dr. Jaeger when he gets here? He
could tell you!

As if on cue, there is a KNOCK at the door. August smiles.

AUGUST ACKERMAN (CONT'D)
Looks like he's early. Coming!

EXT. ACKERMAN HOME - DAY

Rain PELTS the wooden roof. Standing outside are both Dr. Jaeger and his son, Eren. Eren shivers, wrapping a red scarf closer around his neck.

EREN JAEGER
...Who?

DR. JAEGER
Her name is Mikasa. She's your age.
(a pause)
You know, there aren't many
children out here. Please try to
get along with her.

He KNOCKS again. No answer. Dr. Jaeger looks troubled.

DR. JAEGER (CONT'D)
Ackerman! It's Jaeger!

SILENCE. Frowning, the doctor pushes the door open.

DR. JAEGER (CONT'D)
Is anyone...

But then -- he freezes. His face goes white.

EREN JAEGER
Papa ... what's wrong?

The door swings open to reveal...

INT. ACKERMAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

It's a bloodbath. Lying cold on the floor are the bodies of Naomi and August Ackerman. Dr. Jaeger feels them for signs of life, but ... there's nothing.

Eren can only stand in the doorway, frozen in shock. His father rises, looking grim.

DR. JAEGER

Eren ... have you seen the girl?
Have you seen Mikasa?

EREN JAEGER

N-no...

Dr. Jaeger clutches his son's shoulders.

DR. JAEGER

Listen to me -- I'm going to find help. You wait for me at the foot of the mountain, do you understand?

But Eren can't seem to look away from the grisly sight.

DR. JAEGER (CONT'D)

Eren ... do you *understand*?

EXT. SLAVERS' CABIN - DAY

More rain; an endless downpour. In the shadows of the forest is another cabin with a thatched roof.

INT. SLAVERS' CABIN - MOMENT LATER

Mikasa lies on the floor, catatonic, her face battered and her hands bound by wire. She hardly seems conscious.

ACCOMPLICE (O.S.)

You think she'll sell?

At a washbasin stands a broad-shouldered THUG, scrubbing blood from his hands. He GRUNTS brusquely.

THUG

I dunno. How's her face?

Frowning, the thug's ACCOMPLICE turns Mikasa onto her back.

ACCOMPLICE

Kinda messed it up, didn't ya?
Little young for my taste, anyway.

THUG

I ain't askin' about your *tastes*.
She's a -- whattya call 'em? An
"Oriental." Pretty rare these days,
so she'll sell just fine.

With a SNEER, Accomplice jabs her with his foot.

ACCOMPLICE

Her pop didn't look like no
"Oriental." Little bitch ain't even
pure-blood.

Enraged, Thug KNOCKS the washbasin aside, SPLASHING red
water across the floor!

THUG

That's right! The *mother* was -- and
you went off and *killed* her!

ACCOMPLICE

She was puttin' up a fight! What
was I s'posed to do?

Their words surround Mikasa like fog. She SHIVERS weakly.

THUG

You were *supposed* to be my backup
against the damn *father*!

With a SNARL, Thug wrenches a knife from his belt.

THUG (CONT'D)

Maybe I should stick you with this,
huh? Maybe then I won't have to
worry 'bout splitting the money!

ACCOMPLICE

Try it -- see what happens.

Thug advances, knife raised, when --

There comes a KNOCK at the door.

The two criminals freeze. Thug shoots Accomplice a warning
look -- then he sheathes his knife and cracks the door.
Outside, dripping in the rain, stands Eren Jaeger.

THUG

What do you want, kid?

EREN JAEGER

Um ... hi. I got lost in the woods.
I was looking for somebody, and
then I saw this place, and...

Eren peers past Thug. His gaze falls on Mikasa -- and his eyes widen as he slowly begins to understand.

EREN JAEGER (CONT'D)

And...

Thug seizes Eren by the collar, dragging him inside! He SLAMS the door, and hurls the boy into a corner.

ACCOMPLICE

The hell are you doing?!

THUG

Kid saw the girl. You want him to
run off and tell people about it?

ACCOMPLICE

We can't sell *this* kid! He's a
goddamn boy!

Thug's eyes go dark.

THUG

You think I don't know that?

He draws the knife from his belt. Eren GASPS, backpedaling frantically as the man advances.

ACCOMPLICE

Now wait a minute, let's think
about this --

Accomplice grips Thug by the wrist but -- Thug SLASHES him with the knife, drawing blood! There is a moment of SILENCE.

And then the two men are literally at each other's throats! As they SCUFFLE in the background, Eren hurriedly unbinds Mikasa's hands. He shakes her gently, trying to wake her.

EREN JAEGER

Hey ... hey! You have to get up!

But she hardly bats an eye.

There is a heavy THUD behind them, and Eren turns to see Thug rising to his feet, leaving Accomplice dead on the floor. Thug is bleeding -- swaying like a drunkard. His bloody knife CLATTERS to the floor...

And he turns his gaze on Eren.

THUG

You...

The man seizes him by the throat, hoisting him into the air! On the floor, Mikasa STIRS. Her eyes fall on the knife, lying forgotten beside her.

With trembling fingers, she picks it up. Eren looks desperately into her eyes.

EREN JAEGER

Please ... for me. You have to fight...

But Mikasa can only stand there, quivering, paralyzed with fear. Her hands tremble. Tears pour down her cheeks.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

I ... I can't...

Eren GURGLES in his throat, his strength fading.

EREN JAEGER

You have to ... please. *Fight...*

His thrashing begins to falter. His eyes go dim. Thug SNARLS like an animal -- and the world seems to freeze.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (V.O.)

And in that moment, I remembered...

EXT. ACKERMAN HOME - DAY

The sun shines as Mikasa helps her mother in the garden. She spies a Mantis on a leaf, devouring a dead butterfly.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (V.O.)

I had seen this before. Everywhere I went. Over and over again.

Mikasa's father approaches, smiling, clutching a dead goose.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The weak are meat. The strong eat.

EREN JAEGER (V.O.)
(an echo)
You have to *fight*...

INT. SLAVERS' CABIN - DAY

Mikasa watches in horror as Thug continues to strangle Eren. The little boy's eyes bulge. His arms go limp.

EREN JAEGER (V.O.)
Fight...

Mikasa grips the knife.

EREN JAEGER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Fight...

Her body stiffens.

EREN JAEGER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Fight...

And she lunges forward -- SCREAMING as she plunges the knife into Thug's back! He stiffens, dropping Eren...

But Mikasa doesn't stop there. She pulls the knife out, stabbing him again -- and again -- and again. Thug sways, dripping blood. Then he CRASHES to the floor. *Dead.*

MIKASA ACKERMAN (V.O.)
That day I realized -- this world is cruel. And the only way to survive in a cruel world is to be strong.

Eren COUGHS and SPLUTTERS from where he lies --

But Mikasa can only stare at the blood on her little hands.

EXT. SLAVERS' CABIN - NIGHT

As the Military Police investigate the cabin, a tiny fire burns outside. Beside it are Mikasa, Eren, and Dr. Jaeger. The doctor clutches his son's shoulders tightly.

DR. JAEGER
Eren, I told you to wait! What part of that didn't you understand?!

EREN JAEGER

But, pa ... I saw the hut, and I
had to check...

DR. JAEGER

You could have been *killed!*

EREN JAEGER

But ... what about *her?*

At this, Dr. Jaeger has to pause. He turns to Mikasa. Her expression is placid; stunned. Dr. Jaeger grimaces sadly.

DR. JAEGER

Mikasa ... do you remember me?
We've met before, when you were
very young.

She is silent for a very long moment. Then she nods.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

Dr. Jaeger, sir ... could you take
me home, please? I ... I don't know
the way...

She SHIVERS in the wind, wearing only a thin nightgown.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (CONT'D)

I'm cold...

Dr. Jaeger's eyes soften.

Without a word, Eren steps forward and wraps his own red scarf around Mikasa's neck. She stares at him, speechless.

EREN JAEGER

...Is that better?

Dr. Jaeger touches her gently on the shoulder.

DR. JAEGER

Mikasa. I know this is all very
sudden -- but if you'd like to come
and live with us ... that would
make me very happy. Is that okay?

The little girl's eyes well up with tears.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (V.O.)

This world is cruel...

Finally, it all becomes too much for her to bear. Mikasa BURSTS into tears, CRYING openly as the Jaegers embrace her.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
But it is also beautiful.

We close in on little Mikasa's tear-streaked face.

EXT. TROST - ROOFTOPS - PRESENT DAY

Close in on adult Mikasa, as the rain streams down her cheeks. Her eyes are dark as she brings her red scarf up over her nose.

EXT. WALL ROSE - INNER GATE - DAY

An overstuffed merchant's cart is trapped halfway through the gate, halting the flow of EVACUEES. The civilians PLEAD and BEG, but the MERCHANT isn't having any of it.

MERCHANT
This is worth more than any of you
will make in your miserable lives!
So help us push, or stay back!

At the rear of the CROWD, a MOTHER embraces a LITTLE GIRL.

LITTLE GIRL
Mama, I'm scared...

MOTHER
Shh ... we're going to be okay.
Papa's going to use his cannons and
make the monsters go away...

But the little girl isn't listening. With wide, frightened eyes, she points over her mother's shoulder.

LITTLE GIRL
Mama ... *look*.

DOOM. DOOM.

The ground SHUDDERS under approaching FOOTFALLS. Suddenly -- **KA-BOOM!** A lone TITAN comes STAMPEDING around the corner! The crowd HOWLS in terror.

MERCHANT
Push!! God above, everyone push!

They surge against the cart, crushing each other. The Titan lunges forward, bearing down on them, when suddenly --

Something BLASTS forward like a bullet from a gun. Mikasa's blades flash, BITING DEEP into the Titan's neck! With a CRASH, it pitches forward and faceplants in the middle of the street!

But as the dust settles, Mikasa's gaze falls upon the crowd of evacuees. Her eyes widen.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

What are you doing?

The Merchant shoulders his way toward the front of the group, an oily grin on his face.

MERCHANT

I see *someone* here isn't completely useless. Now make these people help, or they're going nowhere.

Mikasa gapes at the man, looking horrified.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

My comrades are *dying* as we speak because you people haven't been evacuated. They are dying for you.

MERCHANT

(scoffs)

Isn't that your *duty*? Besides, who do you think pays for the meals you soldiers shit out?

Mikasa's jaw tightens.

She hops off the Titan's steaming carcass and approaches the Merchant. The crowd parts, giving her a wide berth -- and given the look on her face, we can understand why.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

If that's the way you feel ... I suppose you understand that *one* death can prevent many others.

The merchant's grin fades as he begins to understand her implication. He retreats slowly until he backs right into his own cart. His BODYGUARDS lunge for Mikasa, but --

WHAP! She strikes them aside with the flats of her swords.

Finally she stands face-to-face with the Merchant.

MERCHANT

D-don't you even try it! I-I'll ...
I'll have you arrested! I'll tell
them what you did! You hear me?

Mikasa raises her sword, her eyes icy cool.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

How can a dead man talk?

She brings the blade down with a heavy THUD, burying it into the wooden cart just *inches* from the Merchant's ear!

He looks like he's just shit his pants.

BODYGUARD

Sir...

MERCHANT

...Move the cart.

EXT. WALL ROSE - INNER GATE - SHORT TIME LATER

The cart has been moved. Mikasa watches the evacuees pour through the open gate, and is about to leave when --

LITTLE GIRL (O.S.)

You're amazing!

There stand the mother and daughter, beaming in admiration. Mikasa eyes them, a distant sadness coming to her eyes. Then she sheathes her blades and gives a soldier's salute.

EXT. MILITARY HQ - DAY

The CLANGING of a BELL echoes across the city. In the distance rises the spire of Military Headquarters ... and there are TITANS *crawling all over it*.

INT. MILITARY HQ - LIBRARY - DAY

The entire building SHUDDERS. Beyond one of the windows we see the bulbous eye of a TITAN, peering inside.

Beneath an officer's desk cower two CADETS, a BOY and a GIRL. The girl is quietly WEEPING, while the boy diligently loads up a flintlock pistol.

FEMALE CADET

We're doomed ... we're *doomed*...

Beside her, the boy finishes his work. He nods, satisfied.

MALE CADET

Perfect.

FEMALE CADET

What good will *that* do?

He responds by putting the barrel in his mouth and BLOWING HIS OWN BRAINS OUT.

EXT. TROST - STREETS - DAY

Quivering in the street is a FEMALE CADET, hunched over the body of her BOYFRIEND. She pumps desperately at his chest -- but he's not moving.

Mikasa touches down beside the girl, watching with a frown.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

Hanna...

The girl GASPS, looking up at Mikasa with wild eyes. Her nose is running, and her eyes are swollen with tears.

HANNA

Mikasa ... p-please ... Franz isn't breathing...

She returns her attentions to the boy, pressing her pink lips to his pale gray ones. *Frantic.*

MIKASA ACKERMAN

Hanna ... he's gone...

And finally we see --

The girl is giving CPR to a corpse that's been bitten completely in half.

EXT. TROST - BELL TOWER - LATER

Mikasa FIRES her grapple high, ascending the bell tower for a vantage point over the city.

The streets are littered with the steaming corpses of TITANS, and on a rooftop below she spies a host of familiar cadets. A frown creases Mikasa's brow.

EXT. TROST - ROOFTOPS - DAY

Jean Kirstein sits at the edge of the building, looking sick. He lifts his gaze as Mikasa SWOOPS down from above.

MIKASA ACKERMAN
The retreat bell's sounded. Why
isn't everyone leaving?

Jean looks away, grimacing bitterly.

JEAN KIRSTEIN
HQ is crawling with Titans, and we
barely even have enough gas to get
there -- let alone climb the Walls.
That answer your question?

Sasha Blouse makes a feeble attempt at a RALLYING SPEECH.

SASHA BLOUSE
Come on, everybody! We can do it if
we work together! Who's with me?

SILENCE. Only Connie Springer raises a timid hand. The rest of them simply stand there, some wounded, others drenched in blood -- but all of them frozen like traumatized statues.

Mikasa looks around, scanning the crowd for a face she just can't seem to find. Her worried frown deepens with each ticking second, until finally...

Her gaze falls on Armin, pale and catatonic.

MIKASA ACKERMAN
Armin!

Armin stiffens at the sound of her voice. He slowly shrivels into himself, shielding his face with both hands. Mikasa kneels beside him, her eyes wide with concern.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (CONT'D)
Armin ... are you okay?

No answer. Mikasa stares at him, at a loss for words.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (CONT'D)
Where ... where's Eren?
(off his silence)
Armin? *Where is Eren?*

Armin trembles. CHOKING back a SOB, he finally looks up. He doesn't have to speak; from the look in his eyes, Mikasa already knows what he's about to say.

ARMIN ARLERT
 (trembling, forced)
 Thomas Wagner. Nic Tius. Millius
 Zeramunski...

With each name Armin lists, the surrounding cadets' hearts seem to plummet even further. Someone begins to CRY.

ARMIN ARLERT (CONT'D)
 Mina Carolina.
 (a tortured moment)
 Eren Jaeger...

A ghostly, horrified GASP rushes through the crowd.

SASHA BLOUSE
 No...

ARMIN ARLERT
 These five ... they gave their
 lives for us. For *all of us*.

Armin BURSTS into tears.

ARMIN ARLERT (CONT'D)
 Eren died to save my life. I'm
 sorry, Mikasa. I'm *worthless* ...
 and I'm *so, so, sorry*...

For what seems like an eternity, the cadets are SILENT. Grim. Then Mikasa gently takes ahold of Armin's hand.

MIKASA ACKERMAN
 Armin...

Again he looks into her eyes, and sees ... *nothing*. She's cold as a stone.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (CONT'D)
 Calm down -- and get up.

Armin is speechless. After helping him to his feet, Mikasa calmly strides to the edge of the rooftop.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (CONT'D)
 Marco. If we made it to
 headquarters, could we refuel our
 mobility gear?

MARCO BODT
 W-well ... maybe. There are so many
 Titans, I mean -- there's no
 guarantee we could get through.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

...I can.

Mikasa looks *lethally* into their eyes of every cadet. She draws her blades, raising one of them over her head.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (CONT'D)

Listen to me -- *all* of you. You people are standing here for only one reason; because you are cowards. You're *cowards* ... and I feel sorry for you.

The cadets -- Jean, Marco, Armin, all of them -- can only gape at her in astonishment. *Is she for real?*

MIKASA ACKERMAN (CONT'D)

That's why I'm taking back HQ -- *alone*, if I have to. If you won't follow me, then stay here and cry. Meet death on your knees, if that's how you want it. But know this...

Her gaze is *ice cold* and *razor sharp*.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (CONT'D)

The only way to win is to *fight*.

And with that, Mikasa *hurls* herself off the edge of the roof. SILENCE, long and frigid -- and then...

A RUMBLE rises up among cadets, as Mikasa's words *light a fire* in their bellies. Finally, none other than Jean Kirstein springs to his feet.

JEAN KIRSTEIN

(re: "fuck it")

Goddammit ... *Hey!!* Did they teach you to let a soldier fight alone?!
Come on!

He leaps after Mikasa, followed closely by a WHOOPING Connie Springer. One-by-one, the others begin to fall in.

SASHA BLOUSE (O.S.)

Yeah, you *wusses!* You gonna let a girl do all your fighting for ya?

With an DESPERATE ROAR, the ragtag bunch of cadets leap into action, bounding from rooftop to rooftop! Even Armin, knees knocking, rises to his feet.

JEAN KIRSTEIN
Stick together, and follow Mikasa!

EXT. TROST - STREETS - MOMENT LATER

Mikasa SWOOPS past throngs of TITANS, blades *flashing* -- one! Two! Three! They *topple like fallen trees*. In a span of *seconds*, she has slaughtered *half a dozen of them!*

Connie Springer gawks at the woman in awe.

CONNIE SPRINGER
Holy ... Mikasa's a *badass!* How's she move so fast?

But only Armin seems to realize, with mounting dread...

ARMIN ARLERT
She's not herself. She's using too much gas ... she'll never make it!

Sure enough -- Mikasa's mobility gear SPUTTERS. Even as she fells another TITAN, her next grapple shot falls short ... and she drops from the air like a dead fly.

With a CRASH, she skips off a clay-shingled rooftop.

ARMIN ARLERT (CONT'D)
Mikasa!

He BLASTS off after her without hesitation.

CONNIE SPRINGER
Armin, wait!

JEAN KIRSTEIN
Dammit, stay together!

But Connie has already split off after him. With a GROWL of frustration, Jean presses forward.

EXT. TROST - ALLEY - DAY

Mikasa lies amongst the rubble, bruised and bleeding, both blades broken beneath her. Slowly, she turns over onto her back. Her eyes are blank. Hopeless. *Dead inside.*

We've seen this look before -- in the slavers' cabin.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (V.O.)
 Why are you doing this to me...?

She reaches toward the gray, cloudy sky.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Why are you making me remember...?

Mikasa tries to stand -- stumbles -- falls to her knees. She stares down at the broken swords in her hands.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Why must I relive this?

We hear the THUNDERING, earth-shaking FOOTSTEPS of an approaching TITAN: DOOM. DOOM. DOOM.

But Mikasa makes no effort to move. Not when its shadow looms. Not when it smiles. Not even when it reaches out for her. She closes her eyes, awaiting the inevitable.

But then...

EREN JAEGER (V.O.)
Fight...

Mikasa's eyelids snap open, and she *whirls* -- SLASHING off the Titan's outstretched fingers! It swipes at her again and she somersaults away, PANTING.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (V.O.)
 Why...?

WHAP! The monster SWATS her away like a bug. Mikasa tumbles across the pavement, GASPING in pain ... but with quivering legs, she forces herself to her feet. Mikasa grips her broken sword in both hands.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Why am I still fighting?

EREN JAEGER (V.O.)
Fight...

And Mikasa's eyes widen in remembrance...

FLASHBACK - SLAVERS' CABIN - DAY

A broad-shouldered Thug strangles the life out of little Eren Jaeger. He looks desperately into Mikasa's eyes.

EREN JAEGER

Please ... for me. You have to
fight...

EXT. TROST - ALLEY - DAY

A single tear rolls down Mikasa's cheek.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (V.O.)

I...

There is a CRASH as another TITAN steps into the alley. Mikasa is trapped between them; a rock and a hard place. No hope for escape.

But her eyes find focus, *glaring* like pinpoints of steel.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I will, Eren. I swear I will. For
you.

Mikasa squares her shoulders, grips her broken blade, and with a WARRIOR'S SCREAM --

FA-**WHAM!**

The Titan behind her *lunges* -- PUNCHING the other one in the face! With a bone-shattering SHOCKWAVE, Mikasa is BLASTED off her feet!

She skids to a halt across the ground -- but as the dust settles, and she lifts her bewildered gaze, she sees...

MIKASA ACKERMAN

...What?

The ROGUE TITAN, easily fifteen meters tall, its blue eyes smoldering with rage. It unleashes an EAR-SPLITTING ROAR as it PUMMELS the other Titan into a twitching, bloody pulp!

ARMIN ARLERT (O.S.)

Mikasa!

Quick as a flash, Armin SWOOPS down and scoops her up.

EXT. TROST - ROOFTOPS - MOMENT LATER

Mikasa and Armin tumble to a halt across a rooftop. As they gather their bearings, Connie Springer joins them.

ARMIN ARLERT
Are you alright?

CONNIE SPRINGER
(dopey)
Yeah, are you alright?

MIKASA ACKERMAN
I ... I'm fine...

But she isn't looking at either of them. Her eyes are still glued to the Rogue Titan. Connie's face pales.

CONNIE SPRINGER
Come on, let's get out of here
before it sees us...

MIKASA ACKERMAN
No. That one's different.

Armin and Connie look at her as though she's lost her mind.

EXT. TROST - STREET - THAT MOMENT

A CADET claws helplessly at a wall, *cornered* by three TITANS. His grapple gear COUGHS and SPUTTERS, out of fuel.

CADET
No, no, no, no, please, no...

EXT. TROST - ROOFTOPS - THAT MOMENT

Jean Kirstein can only watch, mortified, as the helpless cadet's SCREAMS grow louder. Suddenly a FEMALE CADET soars past Jean, *lunging* for the Titan!

FEMALE CADET
Thomas! Get away from him, you monster!

JEAN KIRSTEIN
No! Don't --

Too late. With a terrified SCREAM, the young woman joins her friend in the Titan's clutches. Jean, *sweating* and *shaking*, tears himself away from their BONE-CHILLING SHRIEKS.

JEAN KIRSTEIN (CONT'D)
Everyone, on me! While they're distracted! *Let's go!!*

He and the others are off again, soaring across the rooftops. A TITAN snatches hold of Jean's leg, but with a DESPERATE SHOUT he CUTS himself free!

With a final, delirious push, he *hurtles* toward HQ!

INT. MILITARY HQ - LIBRARY - MOMENT LATER

The windows EXPLODE as Jean, Marco, and the OTHERS come SMASHING into the building! They PANT, breathless, dripping sweat and blood.

SASHA BLOUSE

We ... we made it...

But Jean isn't looking at her. He lies on the floor, staring at two other CADETS cowering beneath a desk. His face twisting with *rage*, Jean hauls one of them to their feet and PUNCHES him in the face!

JEAN KIRSTEIN

You were our *backup*, you cowards!

Marco pulls Jean away, but as he BREATHES, he realizes...

JEAN KIRSTEIN (CONT'D)

Are we the *only ones* who made it?

Beneath another desk, Jean sees the suicidal cadet from earlier, still clutching his pistol. Beside him sits the female cadet, SHIVERING and spattered with the boy's blood.

MARCO BODT

Jean...?

Scrambling away from his comrades, Jean begins to PUKE.

EXT. TROST - ROOFTOPS - MOMENT LATER

Mikasa, Armin, and Connie stare as a POT-BELLIED TITAN approaches the Rogue. The two colossal opponents BELLOW in one another's faces!

ARMIN ARLERT

What are they doing...?

The cadets watch in astonishment as the Rogue *settles into a fighting stance*. The Pot-Bellied Titan lunges --

And the Rogue lands a PUNCH that literally KNOCKS its fucking head off its shoulders!

It *sails* across the city like a meteor!

INT. MILITARY HQ - LIBRARY - THAT MOMENT

There is a faint WHISTLING sound, like an approaching cannonball, when suddenly --

REINER BRAUN
Everybody down!!

BOOM! The Pot-Bellied Titan's head EXPLODES through the wall! Jean goggles it in *bewilderment*.

EXT. TROST - ALLEY - MOMENT LATER

Pot-Belly COLLAPSES. Still alive, it begins to struggle onto its hands and knees --

Until the Rogue Titan CURB STOMPS its severed neck.

EXT. TROST - ROOFTOPS - THAT MOMENT

Mikasa, Armin, and Connie are speechless.

MIKASA ACKERMAN
Did it just...?

ARMIN ARLERT
It hit the weak spot ... it *knew*.

Seeming satisfied with its kill, the Rogue EXHALES a jet of steam and LUMBERS off in the opposite direction.

CONNIE SPRINGER
Yeah, yeah, that's amazing. Now can we get out of here before --

ARMIN ARLERT
Connie, wait! Mikasa's out of gas!

Connie looks horrified; Mikasa, grim and crestfallen.

MIKASA ACKERMAN
He's right. I'm no use to you now.

There is a long moment of silence ... then Armin begins to unfasten his own fuel canisters.

ARMIN ARLERT

Here. You need them more than I do.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

Armin, *no...*

But Armin isn't listening. Working with calm diligence, he exchanges Mikasa's fuel canisters with his own.

ARMIN ARLERT

I don't have much either. Just ...
please, use it carefully this time.

Mikasa's guilty grimace only grows deeper. Her grapple gear HISSES to life once again, and Armin gives a curt nod.

ARMIN ARLERT (CONT'D)

There. I restocked your blades,
too. I'm no good with them, anyway.

Armin pauses, looking pained. He picks up one of Mikasa's broken blades, staring down at his own pale reflection.

ARMIN ARLERT (CONT'D)

Just ... leave this one. For me.

Mikasa steps forward -- takes it from him -- and hurls it off the edge of the roof. Then she takes Armin by the hand, her eyes coldly determined.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

I'm *not* leaving you, Armin.

INT. MILITARY HQ - SUPPLY DEPOT - DAY

Roaming the floor are seven FIVE-METER TITANS, their lips and chins sticky with blood. A pale-faced QUARTERMASTER retreats into the corner, BLUBBERING feebly.

QUARTERMASTER

Please, no ... please, stop...

But the approaching TITAN does nothing but smile.

INT. MILITARY HQ - LIBRARY - MOMENT LATER

The other CADETS heave a desk, struggling to barricade the gaping hole in the wall. Jean sits in the corner, a *haunted* expression on his face.

JEAN KIRSTEIN
They were right there, Marco...

Marco Bodt rests beside Jean, PANTING heavily.

MARCO BODT
What?

JEAN KIRSTEIN
They were screaming for help, and I
just ... *used* them. They were a
distraction...

There is a CRASH -- another TITAN has SWEPT away the cadets' feeble barricade! They SCRAMBLE to evade its groping hand -- but Jean can only stare, wide-eyed, as...

Something IMPACTS its cheek.

EXT. MILITARY HQ - THAT MOMENT

KA-BOOM! The Rogue Titan lands a *skull-cracking haymaker* that BLASTS the other monster right off its feet!

INT. MILITARY HQ - LIBRARY - MOMENT LATER

Mikasa EXPLODES through the window! Connie Springer is right behind her, carrying Armin in his arms.

Connie looks delirious with joy.

CONNIE SPRINGER
We *made it*? I was running on *fumes*!

JEAN KIRSTEIN
(amazed)
Mikasa! You're *alive*...

MIKASA ACKERMAN
Jean. What's our status?

Jean's face turns green. He shakes his head grimly.

JEAN KIRSTEIN
The supply depot is full of Titans,
and we're bone dry. I ... I don't
know what to do...

MIKASA ACKERMAN
It's okay. Armin has a plan.

With all eyes on him, Armin begins to sweat.

ARMIN ARLERT

I-I mean ... it's not much, but
it's probably our best shot...

REINER BRAUN

You got an idea, then spill it.

ARMIN ARLERT

Look out there. At that one. It's
not like the others...

The cadets all peer through the shattered wall, observing the literal CLASH OF TITANS happening outside. Armin is about to continue when Connie cuts him off.

CONNIE SPRINGER

It's an abnormal with some kinda
bone to pick with the others -- and
the best part is, it doesn't give a
crap about us! It's on our side!

A disbelieving MURMUR runs through the crowd of cadets.

ARMIN ARLERT

We've led it this far, and I think
it can buy us the time we need.

Jean gapes at Armin as though he's crazy.

JEAN KIRSTEIN

You think it can--?
(bewildered pause)
Let me get this straight -- you're
saying you want us to put our faith
in *that* thing? In a *Titan*?

Armin looks grimly at each of his comrades.

ARMIN ARLERT

No. I'm saying that right now, that
Titan is the best chance we've got.

There is a long moment of silence. Some of the cadets look skeptical -- others, strangely hopeful.

Armin catches sight of Mikasa, still staring outside. A flood of emotions seem to come rushing back to him. SNIFFLING, he touches Mikasa on the shoulder.

ARMIN ARLERT (CONT'D)

Mikasa ... are you okay?

She looks back at him, blinking. Her mind somewhere else.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

No, I'm ... I'm alright. I just...

Mikasa trails off, returning her gaze to the Rogue Titan. Outside, the sun cuts through the gray rainclouds.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (CONT'D)

I *felt* something from it. Something so familiar ... so *primal*.

EXT. MILITARY HQ - MOMENT LATER

The Rogue faces down a score of its Titan opponents. Throwing back its head, it BELLOWS a challenge into the sky.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (V.O.)

I felt the *rage of all humanity*.

EXT. LORD WALD'S ESTATE - DAY

We are far from the smoke and gloom of Trost. A gorgeous, Victorian-era castle rises from the grassy horizon.

INT. LORD WALD'S ESTATE - LOUNGE - THAT MOMENT

LORD WALD

Check, my friend. Once again.

At a small chess table in a lavish lounge sits LORD WALD, fat and beady-eyed. He shovels a pair of danish pastries into his mouth, SPRAYING crumbs as he LAUGHS.

LORD WALD (CONT'D)

You must be having fun with me. Surely Garrison Commander Pixis would be more skilled at chess?

Across from Wald sits a familiar face: Commander Pixis, from the cadets' training complex. He coolly observes the chessboard as he pours himself a glass of wine.

COMMANDER PIXIS

You give me too much credit, milord.

Another LAUGH from the Lord, when ... a SOLDIER throws open the lounge doors. He stiffens his back and salutes.

SOLDIER

Commander Pixis, sir! The Colossal Titan has broken through Wall Rose!

Lord Wald freezes, a pastry slipping from his pudgy fingers.

Pixis merely strokes his whiskers. Then, with one prolonged GULP, he downs his entire glass of wine. As he stands, he takes the entire bottle with him.

COMMANDER PIXIS

Lord Wald. For your hospitality, and your wine, I thank you.

Pixis pauses, moves a chesspiece, and gives Wald a smile.

COMMANDER PIXIS (CONT'D)

Checkmate.

With a parting bow, Pixis exits the room.

COMMANDER PIXIS (CONT'D)

Prepare the horses, soldier.

SOLDIER

Sir!

INT. MILITARY HQ - ARMORY - FIVE MINUTES AGO

Jean Kirstein blows a thick layer of dust off a wooden supply box. He opens it, frowning at what he sees inside.

JEAN KIRSTEIN

You sure these'll even work?

He lifts a flintlock rifle from the packing straw. All around him, the other cadets do the same.

ARMIN ARLERT

I think they'll do. Here...

Surrounded by more than a dozen CADETS, Armin splays a blank piece of parchment across the floor. Using a pen, he begins to draw a diagram.

ARMIN ARLERT (CONT'D)

Okay, listen...

INT. MILITARY HQ - SUPPLY DEPOT - NOW

The floor TREMBLES with the heavy FOOTSTEPS of the Titans.

ARMIN ARLERT (V.O.)

There are seven five-meter Titans
in the supply depot. To refuel our
gear, we have to take them out.

With the CLACKING of gears, a supply lift begins to descend
from the center of the ceiling. Standing inside are at least
a dozen CADETS, including Armin and Marco Bodt, clutching
the rifles. They cast anxious glances at one another.

ARMIN ARLERT (V.O.) (CONT'D)

There are two ways in: the main
stairwell, which is too small for
the Titans; and the *supply lift*.

INT. MILITARY HQ - ARMORY - FIVE MINUTES AGO

Armin continues his sketch, using "X" marks to point out
Titan positions. He draws a square in the center of the
parchment, filled with little riflemen.

ARMIN ARLERT

We'll lower ourselves in the lift.
That's where the rifles come in.

INT. MILITARY HQ - SUPPLY DEPOT - NOW

The lift CREAKS to a halt halfway to the floor. The riflemen
lower their weapons, aiming outward in all directions.

The oblivious Titans continue to roam -- BOOM. BOOM.

ARMIN ARLERT (V.O.)

I won't lie to you -- we'll be
using our riflemen as bait.

One of the Titans passes mere meters from the cadets. It
pauses ... and *looks directly at Marco*.

INT. MILITARY HQ - ARMORY - FIVE MINUTES AGO

Armin pauses, looking at everyone. His cheeks are pale.

ARMIN ARLERT

The next part is tricky. We'll need
our most athletic seven for this.

We flash through the faces of the chosen seven: Mikasa, Annie, Reiner, Bertolt, Jean, Sasha, and Connie.

INT. MILITARY HQ - STAIRWELL - TWO MINUTES AGO

The seven cadets make their way down the stairs, each holding their twin blades. Connie looks unsure of himself.

CONNIE SPRINGER

So ... what do I do if I miss?

ANNIE LEONHARDT

You *don't*.

Reiner Braun SNICKERS.

REINER BRAUN

And if you do, you can always try shoving that sword up its ass.

INT. MILITARY HQ - SUPPLY DEPOT - NOW

The Titans LUMBER toward the lift, approaching from all sides. The riflemen quiver with fear.

MARCO BODT

St-steady...

In the shadows of the ceiling, we see the seven bladesmen scampering into position among the rafters.

ARMIN ARLERT (V.O.)

While the Titans are distracted, our bladesmen will climb to their vantage points in the rafters. When everyone is in position...

INT. MILITARY HQ - ARMORY - FIVE MINUTES AGO

Armin sets down his pen and looks grimly at his comrades.

ARMIN ARLERT

Riflemen aim for the eyes.
Bladesmen jump in while they're stunned, and...

He shrugs, as if to say, "That's all I've got." The entire group of cadets is SILENT for a very long moment. Then...

MARCO BODT

Alright. I think this could work.

ARMIN ARLERT

R-really? I mean ... I'm more than willing to be talked out of this.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

No, I agree with Marco. This is good, Armin.

The cadets finish loading up their rifles. Drawing in a DEEP BREATH, Jean looks each of his comrades in the eyes.

JEAN KIRSTEIN

We're decided then ... let's go kill some Titans.

INT. MILITARY HQ - SUPPLY DEPOT - NOW

The Titans lurch toward the riflemen, drawing closer ... closer. Armin's finger quivers over the trigger.

ARMIN ARLERT

Not yet...

Footsteps: BOOM. BOOM.

Closer ... closer ... and then...

ARMIN ARLERT (CONT'D)

Fire!!

Our ears RING with the CONCUSSIVE BLASTS of GUNFIRE!

The Titans reel, ROARING, clutching their wounded eyes. All seven bladesmen *lunge* in unison -- SCREAMING as they bring their blades down across their targets' necks!

SLASH! SLASH! SLASH!

Five Titans CRASH to the floor -- while Connie and Sasha tumble onto their asses. Their targets are still alive!

ARMIN ARLERT (CONT'D)

Oh, no...

Sasha begins to back away from her Titan -- and judging by its expression, it is royally *pissed off*.

SASHA BLOUSE
Um ... h-hello there, big guy...

It *lunges*, and with a HOWL Sasha dives out of the way.

Moving like mirror images of one another, Mikasa and Annie spring into action! They leap onto each Titan's shoulders, blades SLICING neatly through their flesh!

The monsters fall to the floor with two DEAFENING CRASHES.

It takes a moment for all of the cadets to realize ... it's over. They've won. As the supply lift is lowered to the ground, a victorious CHEER fills the room.

Armin blinks, amazed.

ARMIN ARLERT
...D-did it work?

Reiner Braun LAUGHS and SLAPS him on the back. Slowly, a smile breaks out across Armin's face. Then he faints.

INT. MILITARY HQ - SUPPLY DEPOT - MOMENTS LATER

The cadets grin as they replenish their gas canisters. The expressions on their faces are something we haven't seen for a long time -- *hope*.

Jean and Marco sit together in silence. After an awkward pause, Marco glances sidelong at his friend.

MARCO BODT
Promise not to be mad at me?

JEAN KIRSTEIN
...What?

Marco hesitates, as though trying to find the right words.

MARCO BODT
You're not brave, Jean. I think you know that.

Jean SNORTS his bitter affirmation.

MARCO BODT (CONT'D)
I also think that's why you're a good leader. You know what it's like to be afraid -- but you can still make the tough decisions.

Jean stiffens, looking Marco directly in the eye. Marco looks right back, and smiles.

MARCO BODT (CONT'D)
I'm alive because you led us here.
I just wanted you to remember that.

Jean's hands tremble, and his eyes grow heavy with guilt. As though ashamed of his own tears, he looks away from Marco.

EXT. MILITARY HQ - DAY

The supply depot doors SHRIEK open, and out pour the revitalized CADETS. They CHEER as they grapple to safety.

Armin joins Mikasa on the roof.

ARMIN ARLERT
Mikasa. We have to go.

But then he pauses, following Mikasa's gaze to see --

The Rogue Titan, fighting against the clutching hands and gnawing teeth of its own kin.

MIKASA ACKERMAN
Why isn't it healing?

ARMIN ARLERT
I don't know. It looks *exhausted*...

BOOM. BOOM. Another Titan approaches, and Armin GASPS.

ARMIN ARLERT (CONT'D)
I ... I *know* that one. That's the abnormal that attacked my squad!

At the sight of it, the Rogue EXPLODES with rage! It *lunges, literally tearing its own arms* from the Titans' clutches! With its *bare teeth*, it RIPS into the abnormal's neck!

The abnormal falls. The Rogue's knees buckle. Then -- with a final EARTH-SHAKING ROAR -- it collapses.

Armin stares, aghast. Mikasa can only frown.

ARMIN ARLERT (CONT'D)
Is it ... *dead*?

MIKASA ACKERMAN
It must be. I'd thought ... I don't know. I thought we could have used it, somehow. An ally, maybe.

At that moment, Jean joins them on the rooftop.

JEAN KIRSTEIN
They're climbing the Wall. We
should go while we can.

But neither Mikasa or Armin respond. Armin, white as a sheet, covers his mouth with one hand. Jean frowns.

JEAN KIRSTEIN (CONT'D)
Are you even *hearing* me? Mikasa...

But then Jean looks ... and he sees it too.

Down below, the Rogue Titan's corpse has begun to *steam* and *shrivel*. The skin at the nape of its neck has receded -- and a drooping, slimy FIGURE emerges from its SIZZLING flesh.

It's Eren Jaeger.

With a GASP, Mikasa dives off the edge of the building.

ARMIN ARLERT
Mikasa!

She SWOOPS down to street level. Mikasa rushes through the thick steam, eyes wide, feet POUNDING against the pavement. Her breaths come in RAGGED GASPS.

Eren's body sags ... and Mikasa is there to catch him.

For a moment she can only hold him. Then, breathless, she presses her ear to his chest, listening desperately for --

BA-DUMP ... BA-DUMP ... the faintest hint of a HEARTBEAT.

Mikasa stiffens. Her lips tremble. She clings to Eren as though afraid to ever let go of him again.

And then she BURSTS into tears.

The other cadets gather around, shock and raw emotion written on all of their faces.

Eren looks as if he is deep in the throes of a dream.

INT. DREAM WORLD - JAEGER HOME - DAY

Dr. Jaeger stands in the open doorway, silhouetted against the sunlight. He draws a tiny, brass key from his pocket.

DR. JAEGER

Eren ... when I return, I think I
have something to show you.

The key glints strangely in the sunlight.

INT. DREAM WORLD - BLACK FOREST - NIGHT

Eren is ten-years-old, his face pale and his eyes
frightened. The key is attached to a string, wrapped tightly
around his little hand.

DR. JAEGER (O.S.)

Promise to keep it with you, son.
Always. Promise to remember.

A small fire CRACKLES in the darkness. Beside Eren kneels
Dr. Jaeger, drawing fluid into a syringe. He is CRYING.

EREN JAEGER

Pa ... you're scaring me.

Dr. Jaeger finishes filling the syringe. He turns to Eren.

DR. JAEGER

Give me your arm, Eren.

Fragmented flashes:

A Titan's teeth CLAMPING SHUT. A severed arm. A needle
piercing a vein.

INT. TITAN'S STOMACH - THAT MOMENT

A pair of blue eyes fly open.

Eren Jaeger GASPS, floundering in the stinking quagmire of a
Titan's guts. Looking around, he sees himself surrounded by
bloated, digesting CORPSES -- and Eren lets loose a SCREAM.

EREN JAEGER

No! No, no, no, no, no, no...

He struggles to stand, slips, and SPLASHES into the bubbling
pond of bile. RETCHING, he reaches up to cover his mouth
with both hands ... but his left arm is gone, severed at the
elbow. In its place is a ragged, bleeding stump.

A NOISE draws Eren's attention. Bobbing in the slime is a
YOUNG WOMAN. She is alive -- and she is CRYING.

VICTIM

Mama, help me ... I'm so scared...

Eren retreats from the SOBBING victim. As he presses his back to the mucus-slicked walls, his body begins to tremble.

FLASHBACK - SHIGANSHINA - DAY

Carla Jaeger stands in the sun. She wears a yellow flower in her hair as she pins a blanket upon a clothesline.

VICTIM (V.O.)

Mama ... *mama* ... I wish you were with me...

The blanket shifts. Carla jumps, startled, as eight-year-old Eren springs out and makes a silly face. Both mother and son begin to laugh MOS.

INT. TITAN'S STOMACH - THAT MOMENT

The victim's PLEAS dissolve into a thin GURGLE as she disappears beneath the steaming surface.

Finally, Eren CHOKES back a SOB. Tears pour down his face, leaving thin streaks through his blood-caked cheeks. As he sinks into the muck, he WEEPS and CURSES.

EREN JAEGER (V.O.)

I'll kill them all!

FLASHBACK - FERRY - EVENING

Little Eren stands at the edge of the boat, eyes shining with tears and rage.

EREN JAEGER

I swear by my mother! *Every single one of them!*

INT. TITAN'S STOMACH - THAT MOMENT

With his remaining hand, Eren *claws uselessly* at the slimy walls of the Titan's stomach. His shoulders heave with SOBS.

EREN JAEGER

With my bare hands ... *my bare hands...*

As we recede into the darkness, Eren's WEEPING fades away.

And then...

EXT. TROST - STREETS - THAT MOMENT

FWOOM!

A single, *massive arm* EXPLODES from the Bearded Titan's throat! The disgusting creature CRASHES to the ground.

Beneath its skin and bones is *something* struggling for freedom. The Bearded Titan SPLITS open like a chrysalis, and from its slimy remains is birthed...

Eren. The Rogue Titan. Fifteen meters tall, with smoldering blue eyes; ROARING with unbridled fury.

Beneath him, the Bearded Titan *twitches*. It begins to rise, a DRIPPING sack of meat, until --

Eren's *enormous foot* comes STOMPING down on the back of its neck -- and he doesn't stop there. SNARLING like an animal, Eren brings his foot down once more.

EREN JAEGER (V.O.)

Get up...

Twice more.

EREN JAEGER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Get up!

Thrice more!

EREN JAEGER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Get up!! Get up so I can kill you again -- and again -- and again!!

Utterly consumed in his own *psychotic bloodlust*, Eren throws back his head and ROARS into the sky!

EXT. MILITARY COMPOUND - EVENING

Eren rubs his eyes, dazed, GROANING. The first thing he notices is Armin, kneeling in the grass beside him.

ARMIN ARLERT

Eren! Can you stand? Can you talk?

EREN JAEGER

Armin...? W-where...?

He lifts his gaze to see dozens of ARMED SOLDIERS surrounding him, weapons drawn. The only thing standing between Eren and their blades is Mikasa.

FRIGHTENED OFFICER (O.S.)
 ...I will tell you one last time,
 Cadet Ackerman -- *stand down*.

Eren blinks, sleepy and confused.

EREN JAEGER
 Mikasa ... what's going on?

There's a collective GASP from the crowd. At the sound of Eren's VOICE, Mikasa turns to look over her shoulder.

MIKASA ACKERMAN
Eren...

FRIGHTENED OFFICER (O.S.)
 So -- you're awake.

Peering past Mikasa, Eren sees an OFFICER standing at the forefront of the soldiers, his eyes hollow with terror.

FRIGHTENED OFFICER (CONT'D)
 Cadet Jaeger -- you and your
 friends stand accused of treason!
 How do you choose to respond?

Eren's mouth hangs open dumbly. He looks truly confused.

EREN JAEGER
 I-I don't...

FRIGHTENED OFFICER
 Take a good, long look!

He points up high, and the cadets lift their gazes to see --

EXT. WALL ROSE - BATTLEMENTS - THAT MOMENT

Two GARRISON SOLDIERS shift one of the Wall's cannons into position -- pointing it *directly at the cadets below*.

FRIGHTENED OFFICER (O.S.)
 If you move from that spot -- if
 you do not answer my questions with
 utmost honesty -- *I will fire this
 cannon!* Do you understand?!

EXT. MILITARY COMPOUND - MOMENT LATER

At the sight of the cannon, Eren's eyes widen with shock. He BLUBBERS incoherently.

EREN JAEGER
S-sir, why am I--?

FRIGHTENED OFFICER
Shut up! I'm the one asking the questions here, not you!

He looks at Eren as though *revolted*.

FRIGHTENED OFFICER (CONT'D)
Now what are you? Human? Or Titan?

Eren draws in a SHARP BREATH. Dead SILENCE fills the courtyard, and all eyes fall on him.

EREN JAEGER
I ... I don't understand, sir!

FRIGHTENED OFFICER
Don't lie to me, you *monster!* We have eyewitness accounts of you emerging from the body of a Titan! *We know what you are!*

The Officer's words hit Eren like a bucket of ice water.

EREN JAEGER
No ... but that was...

His eyes fall on his left arm, fully regrown. The sleeve at his elbow is ragged and torn. It's the same for his leg.

EREN JAEGER (CONT'D)
That was just a dream...

The Officer's face twists into a grimace of rage.

FRIGHTENED OFFICER
Does any of this look like a joke to you?! *You are lucky my men don't slice you to pieces right here!*

Mikasa's eyes flash coldly. She steps forward, raising her twin blades as if beckoning the soldiers to come at her.

MIKASA ACKERMAN
If any of you would care to try that, then please -- step forward.
(MORE)

MIKASA ACKERMAN (CONT'D)
I'd be happy to demonstrate my
skills with a blade.

The Officer SPUTTERS like a kettle, his face going red.

FRIGHTENED OFFICER
You are in *no position* to be making
threats, little girl!

Before Mikasa can say another word, Armin springs forward --
hands raised, wild-eyed!

ARMIN ARLERT
Sir, what you've heard is true! I
saw it with my own eyes! We pulled
Eren from a Titan's body, but he is
not a threat to us, I swear it!

Eren stares at his friend in astonishment. The Officer
simply blinks, confused.

FRIGHTENED OFFICER
W-where ... where is your proof?!
How do you know?!

ARMIN ARLERT
Sir -- if your witnesses saw Eren
emerge from a Titan, then they must
have seen that *same* Titan fighting
and *killing* its own kind!

The soldiers glance nervously at one another. Eren watches
everything closely, still unsure of whatever is happening.

FRIGHTENED OFFICER
W-we see abnormals all the time--!

ARMIN ARLERT
You're wrong! I'm sorry, but you're
wrong! In all our documents on
abnormal Titans, not *one* has ever
attacked another Titan! *Not one!*

A pause. The Officer trembles, sweating profusely. He looks
at his men, as if for guidance -- sees their uncertainty.

FRIGHTENED OFFICER
Th-they're trying to trick us!
P-Prepare to fire!

EXT. WALL ROSE - BATTLEMENTS - MOMENT LATER

Up above, the Garrison Soldiers exchange nervous glances. Nevertheless, they both cover their ears in preparation. One of them grips the firing fuse.

EXT. MILITARY COMPOUND - THAT MOMENT

Armin looks utterly *horrified*.

ARMIN ARLERT

B-but sir! We're willing to share everything we know! W-with a Titan on our side, we could seal the breach in Wall Rose!

But he's grasping at straws, and he knows it. The Officer moves to signal the cannon, raising his hand high.

With wide eyes, Eren looks at his friends -- looks at the cannon. The soldiers. Then...

EREN JAEGER

Sir, I'm human!!

His voice ECHOES throughout the silent courtyard. The Officer hesitates, his hand raised high, when suddenly --

A hand grips his arm.

COMMANDER PIXIS (O.S.)

Now, now, captain. Let's not do something rash.

The Officer whirls, wide-eyed, to see Commander Pixis standing beside him.

FRIGHTENED OFFICER

C-Commander Pixis, sir--

COMMANDER PIXIS

(re: "tisk tisk")

Come now, captain. Don't you recognize honesty when you see it?

The Commander eyes the cadets curiously, seeing the looks of relief on their faces. He almost smiles.

COMMANDER PIXIS (CONT'D)

The least we could do is listen to the cadets' side of this story, don't you agree?

Armin falls to his knees, nearly BURSTING into tears of joy.

EXT. WALL ROSE - INNER GARRISON - EVENING

Jean Kirstein sits alone at a wooden meal table, his face ashen white. With trembling hands, he takes a GULP from his water skin.

CONNIE SPRINGER (O.S.)
 ...Basically we got lucky. Don't
 know what else to say...

The other cadets sprawl across their own tables, exhausted. Sasha Blouse MOANS as though suffering from mortal wounds.

SASHA BLOUSE
 Oh, God ... I'm so *hungry*...

CONNIE SPRINGER
 Hey, Jean, you seen Mikasa? Hey.

Jean doesn't answer. Connie reaches over and pokes him.

CONNIE SPRINGER (CONT'D)
 Hey.

JEAN KIRSTEIN
 (snapping)
 I can't tell you, alright?

Connie blinks, taken aback. The others glance at Jean curiously. As though embarrassed by his own outburst, he looks away from them.

JEAN KIRSTEIN (CONT'D)
 They slapped me with a gag order,
 alright? I can't say anything.

The cadets exchange silent looks of apprehension.

CONNIE SPRINGER
 That's nuts...

JEAN KIRSTEIN
*They're nuts, if they think
 nobody's gonna talk. When word
 about this gets out...*

He and Annie Leonhardt glance at one another knowingly. Everyone looks up as a CROWD OF SOLDIERS shuffles past. An OFFICER signals the cadets.

OFFICER
All of you, fall in!

Jean frowns, looking up to see Marco Bodt among the crowd.

JEAN KIRSTEIN
Marco. What's happening?

MARCO BODT
Not sure. Word is the brass has an
idea to shore up the Wall.

A MURMUR of disbelief ripples through the cadets.

EXT. WALL ROSE - BATTLEMENTS - EVENING

Commander Pixis gazes across the smoking wreckage of Trost. He pulls a silver flask from his breast pocket and takes a GULP.

COMMANDER PIXIS
Guess I'll never find one...

He peers over the edge of the Wall, watching several TITANS ambling through the streets below.

ARMIN ARLERT (O.S.)
...I'm sorry, sir?

Pixis turns. Mikasa, Armin, and Eren stand behind him.

COMMANDER PIXIS
I was just thinking. I wouldn't
mind being eaten by a Titan -- if
she were a stunning beauty.

He cracks a smile. The cadets just stare at him, baffled.

EREN JAEGER
So, um ... do you believe us, sir?

There is a long pause as Pixis contemplates his answer.

COMMANDER PIXIS
So it was your father who did this
to you, was it? The doctor?

EREN JAEGER
I ... I really don't know, sir.

The Commander caps his flask, tucking it back into his breast pocket. Then he turns back to the three cadets and taps his temple with one finger.

COMMANDER PIXIS

For now I'll make a mental note of all you've told me. As long as you and your friends cooperate, Cadet Jaeger, I can personally guarantee your safety.

Eren SIGHS, looking relieved.

EREN JAEGER

Thank you, sir.

COMMANDER PIXIS

Cadet Arlert. You mentioned a plan to seal the breach in Wall Rose.

Eren and Mikasa glance at Armin. He GULPS nervously.

ARMIN ARLERT

W-well ... not a plan, sir. It was just an idea, really ... not even a very good one...

But Pixis simply gives a strange little smile.

COMMANDER PIXIS

By all means -- let's hear it.

EXT. WALL ROSE - INNER GARRISON - EVENING

The SOLDIERS have assembled before the inner gate of Wall Rose. We hear them WHISPER amongst themselves: "*Do they really have a plan?*"

High above them, Commander Pixis steps to the edge of the Wall. He peers out across the crowd, CLEARS HIS THROAT -- and then, with the ROAR OF A LION --

COMMANDER PIXIS

Atten-tion!!

The soldiers instantly go silent. Pixis nods, satisfied.

COMMANDER PIXIS (CONT'D)

As you've doubtlessly heard, we are formulating a strategy to retake Trost District! It involves sealing the breach in Wall Rose!

Scattered GASPS from among the crowd. Pixis remains calm.

EXT. TROST - MASSIVE BOULDER - THAT MOMENT

Amongst the rubble lies a colossal chunk of stone and mortar. It's ten meters across, and at least twelve high.

COMMANDER PIXIS (V.O.)

There is a boulder -- a piece of Wall Rose, knocked free by the Colossal Titan.

EXT. WALL ROSE - BATTLEMENTS - EARLIER

Armin pores over a map of Trost with the Commander, pointing out strategic positions.

ARMIN ARLERT

We don't necessarily have to fight them, sir. If our soldiers can lure the Titans to the far corner of the city, we can clear Eren's path.

Pixis strokes his whiskers thoughtfully.

COMMANDER PIXIS

I suppose it's worth considering.

EXT. WALL ROSE - INNER GARRISON - NOW

We pass through a sea of FACES, some of them familiar. Their eyes are all fixed upon Commander Pixis.

COMMANDER PIXIS

We plan to use this boulder as a plug in the outer gate! To that end, I introduce Cadet Eren Jaeger!

High above, Eren steps up beside Pixis and salutes. He looks pale. Nervous. Awkward.

Down below, the familiar faces can only GASP with shock.

MARCO BODT

...*What?* Eren's *alive?*

Jean Kirstein SHUFFLES nervously. Commander Pixis continues.

COMMANDER PIXIS

What I'm about to tell you may make me seem a madman. Eren Jaeger can transform his own flesh into that of a Titan.

The soldiers -- all of them -- stare at the Commander as though he's lost it. Connie Springer scratches his head.

CONNIE SPRINGER

So is this guy drunk or crazy?

COMMANDER PIXIS

In Titan form, Cadet Jaeger will lift the boulder upon his shoulders and carry it to the breach. It falls upon you to defend him!
However!

A pause. Pixis frowns.

COMMANDER PIXIS (CONT'D)

However ... given the outlandish nature of this mission, those of you who wish to leave may do so now. Without consequence.

For a long, long moment, the crowd is silent. Pixis waits.

Then ... someone walks away. Then another, and another. As the SOLDIERS leave, their BITTER MUTTERS follow them.

"*Screw this.*"

"*This is insane.*"

"*I'm not dying today.*"

Jean Kirstein hesitates, watching them go. Then, moving as though his feet are made of lead, he too walks away.

EXT. WALL ROSE - BATTLEMENTS - FIVE MINUTES LATER

Eren rubs his regenerated left arm, looking troubled. Commander Pixis approaches him, placing his hands on the cadet's shoulders. He looks intensely into Eren's eyes.

COMMANDER PIXIS

I want you to understand something. More than a few of our soldiers are going to die today. Soldiers with names. Families. Their deaths are on us. Do you understand that?

Eren hesitates. Slowly, hesitantly, he nods.

COMMANDER PIXIS (CONT'D)
 Now I'm going to ask you, cadet --
 can you do this? Or not?

Eren GULPS, hesitant.

EREN JAEGER
 I'm ... I'm sorry, sir. It's just
 that I only know as much about any
 of this as you do. To be honest...

He pauses, looking grim.

EREN JAEGER (CONT'D)
 I really don't think I can, sir.

The Commander is SILENT a long time. Then he nods.

COMMANDER PIXIS
 Of course. I asked you the wrong
 question. What I meant was -- are
 you *willing to*, Cadet Jaeger?

Eren blinks, taking a moment to process the question. He
 looks over his shoulder, across Trost -- and beyond.

Slowly, the muscles tighten across his jaw.

EREN JAEGER
Absolutely, sir.

EXT. WALL ROSE - INNER GARRISON - NOW

Pixis gazes across the crowd, his expression grim. Distant.
 Almost exhausted.

COMMANDER PIXIS
 I want you all to think back --
 think back and remember Wall Maria.

A cold, solemn HUSH falls on the remainder of the soldiers.

COMMANDER PIXIS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Remember the refugees. The famine.
 The population purge. Now imagine
 how much worse it would be if Wall
 Rose were to fall as well.

Among the DESERTERS we see Jean, looking ashamed. He freezes
 mid-stride. Shoulders quivering. Hands balling into fists.

COMMANDER PIXIS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 It would be the end of us -- as a
 civilization. As a species.

Back on Pixis -- teeth clenched, eyes fierce.

COMMANDER PIXIS (CONT'D)
 No. We will not yield. If the line
 is not drawn here, it may never be
 drawn at all.

EXT. WALL ROSE - BATTLEMENTS - FIVE MINUTES LATER

Pixis and three GARRISON OFFICERS stand before Eren, Mikasa,
 and Armin. Pixis smiles confidently.

COMMANDER PIXIS
 I would entrust each of these
 officers with my own life -- and so
 I entrust them with yours.

Finally he draws what looks like a broad-barrelled flintlock
 pistol from his belt. He hands it to Armin, along with three
 multicolored flares.

COMMANDER PIXIS (CONT'D)
 Your signals, Cadet Arlert. Green
 when you are in position -- red if
 the plan goes south -- yellow if we
 are victorious.

Armin nods, closing his fingers around the flare gun.

EXT. WALL ROSE - INNER GARRISON - NOW

The Commander looks out at the crowd and spreads his arms.

COMMANDER PIXIS
 If we are to die, let us die here.
 Not as lambs -- but as *wolves*.

He salutes with his right fist over his left breast.

COMMANDER PIXIS (CONT'D)
Give your hearts!

Down below, the CROWD is less than half its original size.
 Nonetheless, the remaining SOLDIERS salute with a SHOUT!

Marco Bodt blinks in surprise as Jean marches right back
 into the crowd, stiffens, and salutes.

EXT. WALL ROSE - BATTLEMENTS - EVENING

Mikasa, Armin, Eren, and the Officers race along the top of Wall Rose. Eren looks pale, sweaty, and slightly worried.

OFFICER

Lemme tell you, I don't feel
confident about putting our lives
in the hands of a brat like you...

But neither Mikasa or Eren are listening to him. They speak in HUSHED VOICES.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

Eren -- are you *sure* you can do
this? Do you even know what to do?
Do you know how to change?

For a moment Eren can only PANT as he runs.

EREN JAEGER

I ... I know I...

A *jolt* --

INT. DREAM WORLD - BLACK FOREST - NIGHT

Flashes: A needle piercing a vein. A severed arm. Blood clouding a syringe.

EXT. WALL ROSE - BATTLEMENTS - THAT MOMENT

A frown deepens across Eren's face.

EREN JAEGER

I just know I have to bleed.

Mikasa looks at him quizzically. The group begins to slow their pace as they approach the giant boulder.

ARMIN ARLERT

Here we are. I don't see any
Titans, so the decoy strategy must
be working.

Armin draws the pistol from his belt, loads a flare, and fires it -- CRACK! -- into the air.

EXT. WALL ROSE - CORNER - MOMENT LATER

Dozens of DECOY SOLDIERS dangle from the Wall by their grappling gear. Below them is a writhing mob of TITANS, all reaching out to grab their bobbing prey.

OFFICER

I repeat, do not engage! Focus on luring them to the Wall only!

Connie Springer is among the decoys. A Titan leaps, its teeth SNAPPING shut just beneath him. He GULPS nervously.

EXT. WALL ROSE - INNER GARRISON - EVENING

An OFFICER peers through a spyglass, eyeing the distant, rising thread of green smoke.

OFFICER

They're in position, Commander.

Pixis draws a DEEP BREATH. His face is pale and determined.

EXT. TROST - ROOFTOPS - MOMENT LATER

The soldiers' grapples BITE DEEP into the brick buildings.

COMMANDER PIXIS (V.O.)

Never before have we won a victory against them. Always have we been running ... *hiding*...

They SWOOP through the city streets, closing in on the boulder. Mikasa is in the lead -- the Officers close behind her. Eren and Armin bring up the rear.

Eren releases his grapple cable, soaring through the air!

COMMANDER PIXIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Let this be the day we change our fortunes. Let this be the day *humanity fights back*.

Eren sucks in a DEEP BREATH, and with an ANIMAL'S GROWL, *sinks his teeth into his own hand!*

EXT. TROST - MASSIVE BOULDER - THAT MOMENT

There's a burst of blood -- a *flash* of light --

And something big CRASHES into the side of a building. As the smoke and dust clears, we see --

Eren. The Rogue Titan reborn. He throws back his head and BELLOWS into the sky!

Mikasa watches, wide-eyed, from the safety of a nearby rooftop. For a moment Eren is still, standing before the enormous boulder. Just ... *staring*.

Then he turns to look directly at Mikasa. She blinks.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

...Eren?

WHOOM!

He aims a PUNCH that SHATTERS the entire rooftop!

EXT. TROST - ROOFTOPS - MOMENT LATER

A DECOY TEAM of familiar-looking cadets stand atop a roof: Jean, Marco, Annie, Connie, Sasha -- all staring at a lone, dense-looking TITAN waddling toward them.

Jean trembles in his boots.

JEAN KIRSTEIN

Steady ... steady...

It LUMBERS closer, hands outstretched. Then...

JEAN KIRSTEIN (CONT'D)

Now!

The cadets scatter just as the Dense Titan *lunges*, teeth bared -- CRASHING face-first into the tiled rooftop!

EXT. TROST - MASSIVE BOULDER - THAT MOMENT

Mikasa scrambles to her feet, her cheek rent and bleeding by a piece of flying debris.

Armin GASPS in *horror* as Titan Eren aims another punch!

ARMIN ARLERT

Mikasa!

But Mikasa is ready -- hurdling over his fist, *leaping* upon his massive face, holding on by a handful of his forelocks!

MIKASA ACKERMAN

Eren, what are you doing?! It's
Mikasa! Don't you *recognize* me?!

The Titan glares at her with burning, wolf-like eyes. Its fingers curl into a mighty, trembling fist.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (CONT'D)

Whatever's happening to you in
there, *snap out of it!*

ARMIN ARLERT

Mikasa, get out of there!

Mikasa GASPS, leaping away just as --

WHAM! Eren swings his fist upward, aiming for Mikasa, but PUNCHING himself in the face! He staggers backwards, CRASHES against the boulder -- and remains still. His busted hands and battered face HISS with steam ... but they don't heal.

Armin can only gape at Eren's slumped-over Titan body.

ARMIN ARLERT (CONT'D)

What happened?!

MIKASA ACKERMAN

I don't know! It's like he couldn't
control it!

One of the Garrison Officers CURSES loudly.

GARRISON OFFICER

Dammit, I *knew* this was crazy!

DECOY SOLDIER (O.S.)

Captains! We have four more Titans
coming through the gate!

But we already hear the FOOTSTEPS: BOOM. BOOM. BOOM.

Gritting his teeth in frustration, Armin loads up another flare and FIRES it into the sky.

EXT. TROST - STREETS - MOMENT LATER

Connie YELPS, barely dodging a swipe from the Dense Titan. A soldier's grappling hook WHIPS past, SLASHING the Titan across its groping hand!

It turns its hungry gaze on Jean. His face pales.

JEAN KIRSTEIN

Oh, sh--

The monster dives toward him, teeth SNAPPING -- and Jean leaps out of the way just in time!

EXT. WALL ROSE - INNER GARRISON - MOMENT LATER

The spyglass officer looks grim.

OFFICER

Red smoke, sir ... that's not good.

A MURMUR of dread runs through the crowd of COMMANDING OFFICERS. Pixis' whole body tenses.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

Shall I order a retreat, sir?

COMMANDER PIXIS

Absolutely not. We're in this to the end -- all or nothing.

EXT. TROST - MASSIVE BOULDER - THAT MOMENT

A TITAN snatches hold of one of Pixis' Garrison Officers. It lifts him, SCREAMING, toward its mouth, when -- SLASH! Mikasa comes BLASTING out of nowhere, CLEAVING neatly through its neck!

Down below, Armin stands upon Eren's Titan shoulders, STOMPING his boots against his friend's massive body.

ARMIN ARLERT

Eren! Eren, you have to wake up!

But the Titan below him doesn't stir a muscle.

INT. TITAN'S BODY - THAT MOMENT

Pressed against the spine, nestled among a web of nerves and sinew, lies Eren's human body. The flesh encasing him QUIVERS with each muffled THUD of Armin's boot.

ARMIN ARLERT (O.S.)
(muffled)
Eren, I know you're in there!
Whatever's happening, *fight it!*

EREN JAEGER (V.O.)
Wh-what...? Where am I...?

We close in on Eren's face, buried within the fleshy tissue. His eyes are glazed, as though in a dream.

INT. DREAM WORLD - JAEGER HOME - DAY

Eren YAWNS. He is ten-years-old again, sitting on his bed, wrapped comfortably tight in a woolen blanket. Sunlight streams in through a window behind him.

EREN JAEGER
That's right ... I'm *home*...

Looking around, Eren sees his father at the kitchen table and his mother at the hearth. They smile at him warmly.

Eren returns the smile, his expression placid as can be.

EREN JAEGER (CONT'D)
Ma ... I missed you...

EXT. TROST - STREETS - EVENING

Jean tears around a corner, towing the Dense Titan behind him. He turns, PANTING, waiting for the monster to catch up.

JEAN KIRSTEIN
That's it ... just a little
further...

It steps closer. Jean pulls the triggers on his grappling gear, and...

Nothing. It SPUTTERS weakly, out of fuel. Jean's jaw drops.

JEAN KIRSTEIN (CONT'D)
 No ... no, no, not now, don't do
 this to me now!

The Titan reaches out for him -- and with a SHOUT of panic,
 Jean darts right between its legs!

EXT. TROST - MASSIVE BOULDER - MOMENT LATER

Another drooling TITAN clambers atop a roof, ready to pounce
 on Eren's slumped-over Titan form when -- Mikasa descends
 from above like a bolt of *living lightning!* KA-BOOM!

The Titan *eats shit*, its neck split wide open! Mikasa stands
 atop its corpse, PANTING, gazing down at Armin.

MIKASA ACKERMAN
 Armin, get away from him!

But Armin isn't listening. He *draws one of his swords*, his
 body a quivering bundle of nerves.

ARMIN ARLERT
 From the back of the head to the
 nape of the neck...

Mikasa stares, horrified.

MIKASA ACKERMAN
 What are you doing?!

ARMIN ARLERT
 Eren is still in there! I'm cutting
 him out!

MIKASA ACKERMAN
 You'll *kill him!*

Armin FIRES his grapples into Eren's Titan shoulders for
 leverage. He points his blade downward, grimacing deeply.

ARMIN ARLERT (CONT'D)
 No it won't ... but it'll hurt.

MIKASA ACKERMAN
 No!!

Too late. Armin stabs downward, PLUNGING his sword into the
 neck of Eren's Titan body!

INT. TITAN'S BODY - THAT MOMENT

Armin's blade cuts through the darkness, SLICING through Eren's human arm. His pupils dilate to the size of a dime.

EXT. TROST - MASSIVE BOULDER - MOMENT LATER

The Titan body SHRIEKS in agony, its shoulders thrashing! Armin holds on for dear life, flailing like a bull rider.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

Armin!

ARMIN ARLERT

I'm fine! Go and help the others!
They need you!

Mikasa is still for a long moment, rooted to the spot. Then, with a GROWL of frustration, she leaps away.

Down below, Eren's Titan form has begun to settle down again. It slumps forward with a SIGH. Armin HAMMERS desperately against it with his fists.

ARMIN ARLERT (CONT'D)

Eren, *please!* If you don't get up now, we're all going to die!

INT. TITAN'S BODY - MOMENT LATER

In the dark confines of the Titan's flesh, Eren SHUDDERS.

EREN JAEGER (V.O.)

Get up...? I don't wanna get up,
Armin ... just let me sleep...

As Armin continues to THUMP on the Titan from the outside, Eren's eyelids flutter weakly.

INT. DREAM WORLD - JAEGER HOME - DAY

Little Eren sits upon his bed, looking puzzled. Outside the window we see Armin, POUNDING on the glass with his fists.

ARMIN ARLERT

Remember your mother, Eren?! Do you remember what they did to her?!

EREN JAEGER

What are you talking about, Armin?
Ma is right here ... she's *fine*.

He wriggles feebly against the confines of his blanket. He's stuck ... and he seems just fine with that.

EXT. TROST - ROOFTOPS - EVENING

Mikasa is surrounded on all sides -- leering, grinning faces *press in on her*. She fights like hell, HACKING at fingers, SLICING off tongues...

But they just keep coming.

INT. DEMOLISHED TAVERN - CONTINUOUS

BAM! Jean SMASHES his shoulder through the door, scrambling inside! As he presses himself into the shadows, we hear the lumbering, approaching FOOTSTEPS of the Dense Titan.

Jean CURSES and CRIES. He hesitantly peeks out the window --

BOOM. BOOM. The Titan is *right there!* But then...

Jean's breath catches in his throat. Outside, lying crushed beneath fallen rubble, is a DEAD SOLDIER. We close in on the fuel canisters of his mobility harness.

EXT. TROST - MASSIVE BOULDER - EVENING

Armin presses his cheek to the nape of Eren's Titan neck. There are tears of desperation welling in his eyes.

ARMIN ARLERT

Eren, please ... you have to
remember. For your mother...

INT. DREAM WORLD - JAEGER HOME - DAY

Eren listens to Armin's words, frowning. A wince of pain flashes across his face -- not physical. Something internal.

ARMIN ARLERT

Do you remember when we were kids?
When the Titans came to Wall Maria?

Eren closes his eyes, brow furrowing.

EREN JAEGER

No ... that was a dream...

ARMIN ARLERT

You swore to kill them all. Don't you remember that? Every...

EREN JAEGER

...single one...

He opens his eyes, and looks at the apparitions of his parents. They are no longer smiling at him.

ARMIN ARLERT

They ate her, Eren ... you never told me yourself, but I knew ... I always knew that you saw *it*.

Slowly Eren stands, his blanket falling away.

ARMIN ARLERT (CONT'D)

Please ... as painful as it is, you have to remember. For all of us.

Lifting his gaze, Eren sees the ceiling peel back as though it were made of paper. In its place we see...

The Smiling Titan, with its *tombstone teeth*. It reaches into the house and plucks up Carla Jaeger in its fist. Eren can only watch, paralyzed with fear.

EREN JAEGER

No ... *stop*...

The Titan raises Carla to its drooling mouth. Eren reaches out for his mother, his eyes shining with tears.

EREN JAEGER (CONT'D)

Mama...

It pauses, jaws YAWNING wide. Then its teeth SNAP shut -- and Eren is doused in a torrent of red rain. He falls to his knees, his eyes hollow with shock.

ARMIN ARLERT (V.O.)

Do you remember, Eren?

Eren's lips tremble.

EREN JAEGER

I remember...

Tears stream down his cheeks. Eren buries his face in his little palms, CRYING.

ARMIN ARLERT (V.O.)
Remember how we wanted to see the
world outside? How we wanted...

EREN JAEGER
...Not to live in a fence...

ARMIN ARLERT (V.O.)
Do you remember why?

Eren's shoulders quiver -- but not with sadness. No ... with *anger*. The blood-slicked floors HISS with heat, and smoke drifts from between the floorboards.

EREN JAEGER
Of course I remember *why* ... it's
because I was *born free*.

He looks directly at us -- not with the eyes of a child -- but with the *blazing rage of a man*.

EREN JAEGER (CONT'D)
Because this world is my
birthright.

The flames of Eren's fury ROAR, rising to consume the dream world all around him.

EXT. TROST - MASSIVE BOULDER - THAT MOMENT

Armin GASPS as a RUMBLE builds within Eren's Titan body.

EXT. TROST - STREETS - MOMENT LATER

Jean springs from the tavern doorway, tearing frantically at the dead soldier's grappling harness.

JEAN KIRSTEIN
Come on -- come *on!*

BOOM. DOOM. Jean GASPS, whirling to see the Dense Titan and its stupid smile. It *reaches out for him!*

MARCO BODT (O.S.)
Jean!

Marco comes flying past, snagging hold of the Titan's attention! Connie Springer swings in, blades raised, and --

WHACK!

He SMACKS face-first into its head, missing spectacularly!
It's left to Annie Leonhardt to deliver the killing blow.

Jean HAMMERS his fuel canisters into place, and together,
the cadets BLAST off into the sky!

EXT. WALL ROSE - BATTLEMENTS - MOMENT LATER

The team tumbles across the battlements, GASPING for breath.

JEAN KIRSTEIN
Are you *crazy*? You could have
gotten yourselves killed!

MARCO BODT
Don't even start with that!

Jean is about to respond, when suddenly ... *they hear it.*

THOOM ... THOOM ... THOOM...

Annie's eyes widen.

ANNIE LEONHARDT
I'll be damned...

The other cadets all turn to see...

EXT. TROST - STREETS - THAT MOMENT

The boulder -- unbelievably heavy. Big as a house, perhaps
even bigger...

And Eren is carrying the whole fucking thing on his
shoulders! Like ATLAS bearing the weight of the world!

The earth TREMBLES beneath his every FOOTFALL: **THOOM! THOOM!**

EXT. TROST - ROOFTOPS - MOMENT LATER

Mikasa stares in awe at the incredible sight. Tears spring
to her eyes, and an involuntary smile reaches her lips.

MIKASA ACKERMAN
Eren...

The clay shingles SHUDDER with each of Eren's footsteps! For
the longest moment, none of the Garrison Officers can do
anything but stare -- *amazed*. Then...

GARRISON OFFICER
*Defend him!! I don't want a single
 Titan anywhere near him!*

Without hesitaion, Mikasa hurls herself off the rooftop!

EXT. WALL ROSE - OUTER GATE - MOMENT LATER

The surrounding TITANS all turn, blinking stupidly. They LUMBER toward Eren, drawn like moths to a flame.

Jean and Connie swing down behind three of them. For a moment they merely stand there, paralyzed with fear.

JEAN KIRSTEIN
 H-hey! Hey, you! Over here, you
 ugly bastards!

CONNIE SPRINGER
 Yeah, this way!

The TITANS halt mid-stride -- then they turn their greedy, beady-eyed gazes on the two cadets.

Jean and Connie GULP. They begin to run, GASPING for breath, trailing the Titans closely behind!

CONNIE SPRINGER (CONT'D)
 (re: "it's working!")
 Hey, they're following us!

JEAN KIRSTEIN
 I noticed!

EXT. TROST - ROOFTOPS - MOMENT LATER

A SOLDIER stares down at the cadets in unmitigated shock.

SOLDIER
 Sir, it's *suicide*, going down
 there! No buildings, no horses --
 if they get cornered...

GARRISON OFFICER
 It's all we can do. On me!

Without another word, the Officer dives off the roof!

EXT. WALL ROSE - OUTER GATE - MOMENT LATER

Each step brings Eren closer to the gate: **THOOM! THOOM!**

His legs **QUAKE** with effort. His nostrils **BLAST** hot steam. His muscles bulge and swell to the point of bursting, but...

He digs deep -- soldiers on. He's not giving up.

DR. JAEGER (V.O.)

Eren...

FLASHBACK - JAEGER HOME - DAY

Little Eren sits at the table with his frowning father. Dr. Jaeger looks evenly into his son's eyes.

DR. JAEGER

...Why do you want to do this?

EREN JAEGER

(without hesitation)

Because...

EXT. WALL ROSE - OUTER GATE - THAT MOMENT

Eren's body trembles -- but his blue wolf's eyes *burn with determination*. He takes one more step forward: **THOOM!**

A **GROWL** builds deep within Eren's chest. All around him, the **TITANS** shovel their **SCREAMING VICTIMS** into their mouths.

EREN JAEGER (V.O.)

Because we are born free ... all of us. *Free.*

FLASHBACK - SLAVERS' CABIN - DAY

Mikasa Ackerman is eight years old, clutching her captor's bloody knife in her quivering hands.

EREN JAEGER (V.O.)

Some don't believe it. Some would see that taken away. So you *fight*.

EXT. WALL ROSE - OUTER GATE - THAT MOMENT

Mikasa races across the battlefield, bee-lining straight toward Eren. She hears a SCREAM -- a GARRISON OFFICER hauls one of his COMRADES from the dripping maw of a TITAN.

He hurls the man to safety ... even as the Titan's teeth come SNAPPING down on him.

EREN JAEGER (V.O.)

*Fight -- no matter the sacrifice.
No matter how cruel the world can
be. No matter how unjust ... fight.*

THOOM! THOOM!

Eren is close now. *So close.* The gate is *right there* when --

A TITAN latches onto his ankle! Eren buckles, trips, feet sliding out from under him! Mikasa GASPS, *horrified.*

MIKASA ACKERMAN

No!!

She hurls herself straight for the Titan, BLASTING her grapple into the back of its neck! But before she can even make her move --

ARMIN ARLERT (O.S.)

Get out of the way!!

Armin comes SWOOPING out of *nowhere*, like a bat out of hell! PLUNGING his blade into the ankle-biter's eyeball! Mikasa lunges, ROARING as she carves through the Titan's flesh!

It falls with a THUNDEROUS CRASH.

Mikasa looks up at Eren, trembling all over, the boulder teetering precariously on his shoulders. For a moment time seems frozen. The battlefield falls SILENT.

And Mikasa's SHOUTS at the top of her lungs:

MIKASA ACKERMAN

Go, Eren!! Go!!

Her SCREAM is matched by Eren's TITAN ROAR --

As he SMASHES the boulder into the gate!

EXT. TROST - ROOFTOPS - MOMENT LATER

The SHOCKWAVE of the impact ECHOES across all of Trost. Dust and ashes drift through the air. The cadets can only stare at the sealed breach -- *dumbfounded*.

JEAN KIRSTEIN

He ... he did it...

For a moment nobody says a word.

Then Connie Springer throws his hands into the air, WHOOPING victoriously!

CONNIE SPRINGER

Yes!! Hell yes!!

He CACKLES like a madman. Sasha Blouse grabs him by the shoulders and kisses him full on the mouth.

As for Jean -- he can still do nothing but stare.

EXT. WALL ROSE - OUTER GATE - THAT MOMENT

Armin falls to his knees, cheeks pale, eyes brimming with tears. He CHOKES back a SOB -- but not of sadness. Of pure, unadulterated *joy*.

He loads up his flare gun and FIRES a shot into the sky.

EXT. WALL ROSE - INNER GARRISON - MOMENT LATER

A GASP. The spyglass officer's eyes widen.

OFFICER

Yellow smoke, sir ... oh my *God* ...
they *did it!*

A SOUND swells from among the crowd of officers. Something we have never, ever heard before:

APPLAUSE. SCREAMS of elation. TEARS of joy.

But as for Pixis, he celebrates silently -- with a GULP from his flask and a strange little smile on his face.

COMMANDER PIXIS

Deploy all reinforcements -- bring
our soldiers home!

As he pockets his flask, we see a flicker of emotion in the Commander's eyes. His brow furrows.

COMMANDER PIXIS (CONT'D)
Comrades. Your sacrifices were not
in vain. This day belongs to you.

There is a heavy, emotional pause.

COMMANDER PIXIS (CONT'D)
Thank you.

EXT. WALL ROSE - BATTLEMENTS - MOMENT LATER

The SOLDIERS atop the wall CHEER with joy, watching the thin
curl of yellow smoke rise from the horizon. Their OFFICER
joins them as they smile and rejoice.

OFFICER
Alright, don't get too excited! We
still have Titans to kill!

Moving with renewed vigor, the soldiers push their cannons
to the edge of the wall and aim down at the TITANS below.

This time, they LAUGH as they slay.

EXT. TROST - STREETS - LATER

Most of the district lies in ruin. The outer gate crumbles
around the giant boulder, and the streets are lined with
corpses -- both human and Titan.

OFFICER (O.S.)
Despite our best efforts to avoid
confrontation, sir, we have lost
roughly thirty percent of our men.

Smoke drifts across the scorched battlefield. Commander
Pixis and his Officers grimly walk across the cinders.

COMMANDER PIXIS
We didn't lose them.

The Officers blink, confused.

OFFICER
Sir?

COMMANDER PIXIS
They died because I gave the order.
If history remembers me at all, I'm
afraid they may brand me a butcher.

Pixis toes the ashes, a pensive frown on his face.

COMMANDER PIXIS (CONT'D)
 I must wonder -- will we be
 remembered as *men*? Or as *monsters*?

INT. DREAM WORLD - DAY

MIKASA ACKERMAN (V.O.)
Eren...

The blue eyes of a child open to see...

EREN JAEGER
Ma...

Eren Jaeger is ten, held in the arms of his mother. She smiles down at him, gently touching his face -- but she says nothing. There are only her tears, falling onto his cheeks.

Slowly, Eren begins to drift away, his eyes fluttering shut.

MIKASA ACKERMAN (V.O.)
Eren ... wake up...

EXT. WALL ROSE - OUTER GATE - EVENING

Amongst the rubble is the steaming husk of Eren's Titan form, spent and shriveled.

On the ground lies Eren himself, cradled in Mikasa's arms. He STIRS, his swollen eyes forcing themselves open. His skin is burnt red, and his hair matted with slime.

EREN JAEGER
 Mikasa ... where are we...?

Mikasa smiles through her tears.

MIKASA ACKERMAN
 The gate, Eren ... you *did it*.

EREN JAEGER
 I did...?

MIKASA ACKERMAN
 Yes. You saved us.

A weak smile creeps across his face -- he begins a LAUGH that devolves into a SPUTTERING COUGH.

EREN JAEGER

Are you going to leave me now...?

He drifts away again -- but Mikasa shakes her head firmly.

MIKASA ACKERMAN

No, Eren ... I'm never going to
leave you.

They stay together among the rubble, wrapped in an embrace.

But as for us, we rise -- past the boulder and the shattered
gate. Past the battlements and the cannons. Past the smoke
and gloom of battle -- and still we rise.

EXT. WALL ROSE - CONTINUOUS

We gaze across the land beyond the Wall: a rolling,
verdurous countryside. In the distance lies the bristling
canopy of a forest -- and beyond that, the jutting
battlements of Wall Maria.

Beyond that?

We can only imagine.

We end as we begin -- on two birds, soaring through the sky.
Free.

FADE OUT