

TIME TO TIME

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. FIELD - GERMANY - NIGHT (1945)

A WOMAN (18) RUNS - skeletal body, barefoot, shaved head, enormous eyes filled with fear. Her prisoner uniform, a crudely made smock/dress, is filthy and torn.

A YELLOW STAR is sewn to her smock.

Behind her, total and complete darkness. A smattering of lights glow within it - in the distance - giving off a cold, blueish-white luminescence.

Dogs BARK. German GUARDS SHOUT in alarm.

A SIREN WAILS.

Searchlights switch on behind her, illuminating a CONCENTRATION CAMP encircled by sentry watch platforms and barbed wire fencing.

The searchlights reveal the shape of the camp, its dark and terrifying outline, but not its interior.

BLAM! A single rifle shot.

The woman clutches her side, falling to the ground - she does not cry out - and crawls on her belly.

Her left arm splashes into water and mud. Her fingers dig into the muck, pulling her arm out of the water, exposing her forearm and a blue TATTOOED NUMBER.

INT. BEDROOM - AMERICA - DAY (1986)

The woman is now 59, a GRANDMOTHER. She sits at a desk, arm fully extended so that the tattoo is visible, but the number is blurred and faded after so many years.

The bedroom window is open and a slight summer breeze plays with the curtains.

The grandmother rips a small piece of paper from a notebook and scribbles ONE WORD on it with a pencil, pressing so hard graphite flakes fall around the letters as she writes. She holds the frayed edges of the paper down with her fingertips.

When she finishes writing the last letter, the pencil tip breaks.

Then she glances at a black and white PHOTOGRAPH lying on the desk. It's stained, edges frayed, and because of the creases, clear it's been folded many times.

She releases the torn piece of paper. Its edges curl up so that the word isn't readable and the breeze picks it up, blowing it slightly across the surface of the desk.

Turning her attention to the photograph, she flattens it out - with care - and studies it.

It's a family photo, taken on a farm in Germany. The date is written in an elegant fountain pen cursive, barely legible in the top right corner: AUGUST 1, 1938.

CHILDREN, YOUNG ADULTS, PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS pose in the photograph, surrounded by big leafy beech and oak trees, a barn in the background.

The grandmother is in the middle, but she's 10 years old, happy, healthy, full of life.

Every face in the photograph BUT HER OWN has been SCRATCHED OUT with an X. Because the photographic paper is fiber-based, the Xs are well defined white gouges.

The grandmother WEEPS, a low-pitched, bottomless wail.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

ELSA GOLDSTEIN (8), a pretty American girl, sets the dining table. Her MOTHER (30s), about to put dinner on the table, scoots Elsa out the kitchen.

MOTHER

Elsa. Go get your grandmama,  
sweetheart. Dinner's ready.

ELSA

OK, mom.  
(calling out)  
Boleti!

MOTHER

Did I say shout at your  
grandmother? Did I? Did you hear me  
say that...?

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

The grandmother pulls herself up from the desk - a sudden, frantic movement that causes pain to shoot through her side. She places a hand over the old gunshot wound.

Tears stream down her face.

She picks up the photograph, looks at it for a beat, then lets it slip from her fingers.

She opens a desk drawer, reaches inside, and pulls out a small caliber HANDGUN.

INT. STAIRCASE - DAY

Elsa appears at the bottom of the stairs. She stops at the first step, looks up, her eyes following the banister to the hallway - which leads to her grandmother's room beyond.

In no hurry, she starts climbing.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

The grandmother holds the gun to her head.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Elsa walks down the hallway, reaches the door of her grandmother's bedroom, puts her hand on the doorknob, and then there's a muffled sounding POP! A second after, a heavy THUD.

ELSA  
Grandmama...?

She turns the doorknob.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

The door opens, Elsa enters the room, the grandmother's note blows off the desk, and Elsa SCREAMS.

The note flutters to the floor and lands face up, the word the grandmother wrote legible: "Survivor!"

FADE TO WHITE:

EXT. CERN LABRATORY, SWITZERLAND - DAY (2021)

Elsa (43) enters the CERN (European Council for Nuclear Research) MAIN BUILDING with a crowd of SCIENTISTS and EMPLOYEES.

She's dressed for the lab: Black crew neck sheath dress - sleeveless, knee-length, a little baggy - black skinny-pants, athletic running shoes with nonskid soles.

Carrying a briefcase, a white lab coat slung over an arm.

She's physically fit, toned, muscular arms, and even though the dress is baggy, her form is lean and mean. But her face has a soft natural beauty to it and it comes across as almost lamb-like.

She sets the briefcase down, slips into the lab coat.

INT. CHECKPOINT - DAY

Elsa enters a security checkpoint, depositing her briefcase on a conveyer belt X-ray machine, and steps into a body scanner. She gives the SECURITY PERSONNEL a friendly wave and smile. They smile back.

ALAIN (30s), French, stands behind her. His lab coat and ID badge are stamped with a logo: THE BELL PROJECT.

His eyes move all over Elsa - ravenous.

After she exits the body scanner, she stands in line to receive her briefcase and, while she waits, MASSAGES HER EARLOBE with THUMB and FOREFINGER.

Alain watches her do this. Afterwards, he shuts his eyes and sighs, dropping his shoulders, all very obvious.

ALAIN  
(in ecstasy)  
Merde.

He steps into the body scanner - clearly impatient with the process - then steps out and moves to Elsa's side. He whispers in her ear.

ALAIN (CONT'D)  
I love it when you do that.

She turns and looks him directly in the eyes. The beauty and intensity of the look causes him to drop a handful of papers.

ALAIN (CONT'D)

Oh, Elsa. What you do to me.

Alain gathers the papers. Elsa kneels down and helps him pick them up. She pats his hand in the process, a tender gesture, causing a big, cheesy grin to break out on his face.

Elsa LAUGHS.

ELSA

Oh, Alain. What you do to me.

She backs away, pointing to her watch, grabs her briefcase, waves goodbye, places her CERN ID around her neck and rushes to a bank of elevators.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Crowded elevator. CERN emblem on every button. Going down.

Everyone wears lab coats or doctor smocks. Elsa is shorter than most of them.

KAMILLA ADLER (60), German, stands behind Elsa, watching her. She is tall, hair cropped, thin as a reed, the Bell Project LOGO stamped to her lab coat and ID badge.

Elsa takes a breath and closes her eyes.

INT. BEDROOM/DOOR - DAY (1986) - FLASHBACK

Elsa snaps her eyes open wide - the horrified eyes of Elsa at age 8, her 59 year old grandmother MIRRORED on the IRIS of each eye.

Her grandmother's body lies on the floor.

Elsa is SCREAMING.

INT. ELEVATOR/HALLWAY - DAY

Back to present:

Elsa reacts to the SOUND of her scream, an obvious flinch. Her eyes flash open. She rubs them, quickly wipes away any tears, then reaches into a pocket and pulls out her GRANDMOTHER'S BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPH.

The elevator doors open and everyone files out into a cold, brightly lit hallway.

The doors close. Elevator goes down.

KAMILLA  
No better...?

Elsa shakes her head.

KAMILLA (CONT'D)  
May I?

Elsa nods and gives Kamilla the photograph. She studies it and then taps the upper right hand corner.

KAMILLA (CONT'D)  
August 1, 1938?

ELSA  
Yes. I even know what time they took the photo. 2:30 in the afternoon.

KAMILLA  
Hm... How did she... I'm sorry, what was her name?

ELSA  
Sarah.

KAMILLA  
Sarah. Matriarch of the Jewish people. How did she die?

ELSA  
She survived. The Holocaust.

KAMILLA  
Ah... Well. Now that we've had a breakthrough, survival will be the least of your worries.

Elsa's eyes lock-on to Kamilla's - a flash of anger, but she conceals it with a smile.

ELSA  
Is that so?

KAMILLA  
Hm, yes, that's right. A breakthrough.  
(joking)  
We can't go back and make Albert Einstein comb his hair, for example - the past is, in fact, immutable. Everyone knows that.

(MORE)

KAMILLA (CONT'D)

But perhaps we could educate him about personal grooming habits, encourage him to... buy a hairbrush... for his birthday?

Kamilla runs a finger along Elsa's jaw.

KAMILLA (CONT'D)

It's all so promising.

ELSA

Yes. It is. I'm so happy for you and the team.

The elevator doors open to another cold, brightly lit hallway.

KAMILLA

Alas, it is time for you to go.

Kamilla puts her hand on an illuminated palm-reader. It lights up, scanning her fingerprints.

Elsa exits, stepping into the hallway - busy place, SCIENTISTS coming and going, everyone in a hurry. She turns and faces the elevator.

ELSA

Thank you, Kamilla, for caring enough to -

The doors close.

Elsa swivels around, pulls out her SMARTPHONE, tapping as she walks - unhurried.

Occasional SCIENTISTS and CERN STAFF acknowledge her as they pass by, but she never makes direct eye contact with any of them. She waves with a detached smile, head down, always working her phone.

She passes a door marked "Security & Surveillance - Restricted" before entering a SINGLE OCCUPANT RESTROOM.

INT. RESTROOM - DAY

Elsa locks the door.

She crosses to the mirror and places her smartphone on it. The phone sticks to the glass like a magnet.



She taps the screen and the user window changes to a Sonogram image of the wall's interior: Cement blocks, wiring, video cables, phone and internet lines in ghostly black and white.

Elsa makes some adjustments, fine tuning the image, then slides the phone across the mirror until it locates what she's looking for. The phone informs her with a faint BEEP!

A message displays on the screen: "Feed located."

She opens her briefcase, inserts a wireless earplug, presses the concealed PTT (Push-To-Talk) button on her throat microphone.

ELSA  
Exodus Eagle? Copy?

A dry male voice in her earplug responds.

VOICE 1 (V.O.)  
19:14 Vulture. Copy.

She pulls her dress up, drops her skinny pants below the knee, revealing her upper thigh and a razor thin, flexible LAPTOP with keyboard and screen wrapped around her leg.

The laptop is the same color as her skin and is so thin it's almost invisible. She tugs at it and the laptop pulls off with a sticky SOUND. She winces when she does it.

She puts the laptop on the sink counter, spreading it out like pastry dough. It instantly comes to life and the screen lights up and displays: "Linked to video."

A downloading icon appears and loads in seconds.

Now the screen displays: "Encrypted files, CERN, Bell Project, 6420618896, Dr. Kamilla Adler, project manager, password please."

Elsa taps the laptop keys: "bletchleypark6231912."

The screen displays: "Invalid login. Access denied. Please try again. You have thirty seconds before account lockout."

A STOPWATCH appears on the screen, counting down. The hands of the watch COUNTDOWN BACKWARD.

ELSA  
Damn you, Kamilla.  
(pressing the PTT)  
No go.

She glances at the stopwatch - tick, tick, tick - tries again, typing: "September11939."

The screen displays: "Invalid login. Access denied. Please try again."

ELSA (CONT'D)  
 (pressing the PTT)  
 We got funkspiel.

Types again: "degenerateart737."

The screen displays: "Invalid login. Access denied. Please try again."

The stopwatch is ABOUT TO TIME OUT.

Elsa holds a beat, thinking fast, then:

ELSA (CONT'D)  
 (pressing the PTT)  
 What was Albert Einstein's  
 birthday?

VOICE 1 (V.O.)  
 What?

ELSA  
 Einstein's birthday!

VOICE 1 (V.O.)  
 Wait a moment.

ELSA  
 Now!

VOICE 1 (V.O.)  
 3/14/1879.

Elsa types: "hairbrush3141879."

The screen displays: "Authorized."

The CERN logo appears, followed by the Bell Project logo.

ELSA  
 (pressing the PTT)  
 I'm in.

Two location windows appear on the screen: Live-feed of Kamilla Adler on her PC, seen from the PC's camera, and a security camera in Kamilla's office, focused on her desk.

Kamilla types and talks with excitement on a smartphone, but her voice is inaudible.

A sudden KNOCK on the bathroom door.

Elsa reacts.

INT. HALLWAY/RESTROOM DOOR - DAY

A WOMAN in a lab coat stands impatiently by the door.

WOMAN (IN FRENCH)  
Hello? Hello!

INT. RESTROOM - DAY

ELSA (IN FRENCH)  
Sorry! Occupied!

The woman BANGS on the door.

WOMAN (V.O., IN FRENCH)  
I need to use the toilet, please.

ELSA (IN FRENCH)  
Won't be a minute!

INT. HALLWAY/BATHROOM DOOR - DAY

WOMAN (IN FRENCH)  
You've been longer than a minute.

ELSA (V.O., IN FRENCH)  
I ate a peanut butter and banana sandwich and it's upset my...

The woman GROANS.

WOMAN (IN FRENCH)  
Nutella! Nutella!

She walks away.

WOMAN (IN FRENCH) (CONT'D)  
Disgusting American.

INT. RESTROOM - DAY

A beat as Elsa listens and waits, making sure the woman has gone, then she goes back to the laptop and expertly maneuvers into Kamilla's computer files.

As she swipes through the files, she MASSAGES AN EARLOBE with THUMB and FOREFINGER.

Swipe, swipe, swipe - until the screen displays:

-- "Bell Project Files."

She taps the file icon, it opens and the first file appears.

-- Black and white PHOTOS of Himmler, Goering, Hess, Goebbels, Hitler.

Swipe.

Another file:

-- IMAGES of the Ark of the Covenant, the Holy Grail, the Spear of Destiny.

Swipe.

Another file:

-- "THE NAZI BELL," written in English.

She taps the file, it opens, showing a black and white PHOTO of the Bell.

It's a massive STEEL GATEWAY that looks exactly like a DOOR FRAME - it does not contain a door. Heavy, tall, imperial, designed by German architect and Nazi Albert Speer, no doubt.

Instead of the German Cross, the Nazi Swastika has been painted on the thick side jambs.

Swipe.

-- A PHOTO of HIMMLER standing near the Bell cradling a cute PUG.

Swipe.

-- An out of focus black and white PHOTO of RUSSIAN SOLDIERS sitting on top of the Bell's head jamb, the horizontal top-piece, celebrating by firing their weapons skyward.

In the photo, the Bell is chained to an eight-wheeled, low-bed trailer, placed where a tank would be - it's that big - hauled by a half-track tank recovery vehicle in blown apart Berlin.

Swipe, swipe, swipe and then she stops. Another file:

-- "BREAKTHROUGH," written in English.

She holds a beat, then taps the file, it opens, and a VIDEO FEED connects.

She types: "Synchronous live feed," hits "enter" and the video file plays, filmed on a handheld digital camera:

-- VIDEO of the Bell wired up to a bank of super computers and CERN power systems in a lab the size of a warehouse.

The Bell is battered and rusted, but still an intimidating structure, painted with faded SOVIET UNION EMBLEMS.

Kamilla Adler stands by the Bell with her back to the camera, looking into the opening.

There is a darkened room within the BELL'S DOORWAY, filled with MEN wearing WORLD WAR II UNIFORMS: NAZIS, GERMAN OFFICERS, SOLDIERS, and a GUARD with a leashed DOBERMAN PINSCHER.

An occasional SILVER WAVE appears to move across the doorway and then fades away like a ripple on a pond.

Kamilla turns and faces the camera.

KAMILLA

Temporal date: 2021. Spatial date:  
1938. And go... go around. Go, go!

The handheld video camera starts to go around the Bell, CIRCLING IT.

As it passes "behind" the massive structure, looking through the doorway, everything around it that exists IN THE PRESENT - super computers, the lab, etc. - is clearly seen, including Kamilla looking directly through the doorway at the camera.

But from this perspective the dark room filled with Nazis in 1938 within the doorway can also be seen.

This creates TWO CONFLICTING IMAGES in one space, a DOUBLE EXPOSURE within the doorway of Kamilla and the lab in 2021 and the room filled with Nazis in 1938.

The double image is flat, lacking depth, and the perspective from within the door is looking "forward" through the doorway into the CERN lab - two images, two times, two perspectives, in one space, a visually complex image.

The video camera continues to circle the Bell, moving from the "back" perspective and returning to the "front" where Kamilla is standing, looking in.

When the camera finishes going around the Bell, the doorway perspective has depth again. There is no double exposure. It looks normal. It could simply be another room on the other side of a doorway.

A NAZI walks toward the opening, stepping out of the darkness: HEINRICH HIMMLER (38). He stops at the gateway, cradling the PUG seen in the old black and white photo moments ago.

A PHOTOGRAPHER walks to him, Himmler poses, and the photographer snaps a picture.

HIMMLER (IN GERMAN, ON VIDEO)  
Blitz! His name is Blitz! He is my  
favorite pet, quite loyal, you see!

The pug snuffles and cuddles.

Himmler puts the pug down.

The soldier with the Doberman Pinscher stands guard behind Himmler. The dog GROWLS at the pug, showing its teeth.

HIMMLER (IN GERMAN, ON VIDEO) (CONT'D)  
Call to him, Kamilla! Come, come,  
call!

Elsa is riveted by the video.

ELSA  
(pressing the PTT)  
Hoooleee... Are you seeing this?

VOICE 1 (V.O.)  
Yes. We are.

-- VIDEO: Kamilla calls the pug.

KAMILLA (IN GERMAN, ON VIDEO)  
Blitz! Come to me, Blitz!

The pug runs to the Bell's doorway.

The Doberman goes berserk, BARKING AND SNARLING, tugging at its leash. The soldier barley controls the animal.

A silver wave appears in the Bell's doorway as the pug passes through.

Kamilla kneels down and the pug jumps into her arms.

HIMMLER (IN GERMAN, ON VIDEO)  
 Good dog! So brave! We shall test  
 my theory, yes?

KAMILLA (IN GERMAN, ON VIDEO)  
 Yes. Ready.

Kamilla release the pug.

HIMMLER (IN GERMAN, ON VIDEO)  
 Attention, Blitz! Here! To me!

At the command, the pug runs to the Bell, but the Doberman frees itself from the soldier, intending to attack the pug.

The dogs reach the doorway at the EXACT SAME TIME.

The Doberman bites down on the pug's neck as an array of silver waves appear WITHIN THE DOOR FRAME. For a millisecond, the HEADS of the dogs BLEND TOGETHER.

A BURST OF WHITE LIGHT, ATOMS AND SILVER WAVES blows both animals from the Bell - the pug back into the CERN lab and the Doberman back into the darkened room with Himmler.

The pug scrambles to its feet, BARKING AND SNARLING just like the Doberman.

On the other side of the doorway, the Doberman is docile - like the pug.

ELSA  
 What the hell... just happened?

-- VIDEO: The pug charges back to the Bell, intending to attack the bewildered, whimpering Doberman.

When it's halfway in and halfway out of the doorway, the pug lets out a surprised yip!

Its eyes pop out of its head and then its body explodes into a bloody spray of meat and guts that's instantly reduced to colorful atoms spreading out like fireworks. Then they vanish.

Afterward, there is no evidence that Blitz ever existed.

Everyone on both sides of the doorway CHEERS, including Himmler, even though he is noticeably sickened by witnessing the gore.

ELSA (CONT'D)  
(pressing the PTT)  
It's not weapons technology.

VOICE 1 (V.O.)  
No. The Bell dilates time.

-- VIDEO: Kamilla gives Himmler the "Heil Hitler" salute. Himmler returns the salute with less enthusiasm, and then she shows the handheld camera a BOOK titled "WORLD WAR II: AN EXHAUSTIVE HISTORY."

Immediately, a commanding FEMALE VOICE responds in Elsa's earplug.

VOICE 2 (V.O..)  
Overlord WRR: Bible. Moses. Alpha.

ELSA  
Go-code: Solidarite.

VOICE 2 (V.O.)  
Acquire the target and destroy it,  
by all necessary measures - do it  
now, Elsa! Now!

The video feed is interrupted. The laptop screen goes black.

IN. HALLWAY - DAY

Empty.

An ALARM sounds.

Lab doors open and anxious MEN AND WOMEN in lab coats pour out.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Elsa's laptop screen flashes: "Critical Systems Error! Breach Detected," the word "Breach" in red letters.

She's pulling off the lab coat and dress - underneath, a black cartridge belt and a sleeveless, collarless tactical shirt.



She opens the briefcase, tears out the interlining and pulls out HI-TECH WEAPONS/AMMUNITION resistant to modern security software: 3D printed plastic HANDGUNS, AMMO, CARTRIDGES, KNIFE.

The handguns and knife are in pieces. She quickly puts them together, packs her belt with cartridges, places the two loaded handguns on either hip, sheaths the knife.

She abandons the laptop and smartphone, unlocks the bathroom door and exits into a hallway of men and women scurrying to emergency exits.

INT. HALLWAY/ELEVATOR - DAY

Elsa cocks a handgun as she pushes through the crowd, exposed and unconcerned, moving toward the elevator, against the flow. She sees Alain in the elevator.

ELSA

Alain!

His palm is on the elevator's scanner, the doors closing.

Elsa raises the handgun.

ELSA (CONT'D)

Wait! Stop!

She sprints forward and throws herself into the elevator. The doors close. She holds the gun on Alain, then looks at the hand scanner, nods her head.

ALAIN

I... I cannot do that, Elsa. No.

Elsa throws an explosive jab, a straight blow delivered to Alain's jaw. It turns his head, sharp and hard, knocking him unconscious.

She cradles his head as she lays him on the floor, taps his hand affectionately, then places his palm on the scanner.

The elevator starts going down.

She checks her weapons, reloads, the constant, rhythmic ALARM muffled by the elevator so that it sounds like a HEARTBEAT.