

***MY LISE***

by

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Based on the book

Odette - World War Two's Darling Spy

by

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*(All dialogue in italics is spoken in French)*

**BASED ON A TRUE STORY**

FADE IN:

**EXT. THE SCHWEDTSEE, GERMANY, JULY, 1944 - DAY**

A picturesque lake - its shores dotted with summer cottages shaded beneath the leaves of lush trees.

Over this piece of heaven, a golden sun rises. Its hazy rays shimmer through dust particles that float on summer air.

A breeze flutters the dust. Carries a dark gray fragment of ash to its final resting place on the glassy lake.

PLUNK! A stone breaks the water's surface - drowns the ash.

**EXT. SUMMER COTTAGE ON THE SCHWEDTSEE - DAY**

A LITTLE GERMAN GIRL, 6, scoops another smooth stone from a small pile on the bank. Giggles as she casts it in the lake.

Nearby, her SISTERS, 9 and 10, play in the manicured yard.

NAZI SOLDIER (O.S.)

(German)

Keep moving! You there, faster!

The Girls stop. The OLDEST motions to her siblings.

OLDEST SISTER

(German)

They are coming!

The Little Girl scoops a handful of stones. Runs to join her Sisters at a break in the hedgerow behind their cottage.

**EXT. PATH BEHIND THE HEDGEROW - CONTINUOUS**

The three Girls' faces peer out at the path from the break in the hedgerow.

Watch as NAZI SOLDIERS monitor a mute line of RAGGED WOMEN and GIRLS who shuffle like hollow specters.

Face after face reflects the misery of mistreatment - sunken eyes and frail bodies. For most, the effort to put one foot in front of the other is nothing short of heroic.

Filled with Reich pride, The LEAD NAZI winks at the Little German Girls as he passes. All three of the children giggle.

Further back in line an OLD UKRAINIAN WOMAN stumbles - falls.

A NAZI SOLDIER stops - his boot tips dig against her side.

NAZI SOLDIER

(German)

Get up!

The Old Woman struggles to rise, but can't.

SMACK! The Soldier smashes her to the ground with his rifle.

He raises his gun again - the Old Woman holds up an arm to fend off the blow.

LISÉ (O.S.)

Nein.

The Soldier stops. Sneers as emaciated LISÉ, 32, limps from the line in her shabby skirt and heavy men's shoes.

Thin and weak, hair past her shoulders, Lisé aids the Ukrainian Woman to her feet.

The Old Woman looks at Lisé's once lovely face - nods thanks into her sunken brown eyes.

NAZI SOLDIER

(German)

Move!

Supporting each other, Lisé and the Old Woman move on.

Suddenly a barrage of pebbles pelts the Old Woman. The Nazi Soldier smiles at the Little German Girls - thinks it's cute.

Lisé eyes the hedgerow. Glares at the Girls.

LISÉ

*Shame on you!*

Mortified, the Little Girl casts her eyes to the ground as her Older Sisters scatter.

**EXT. RAVENSBRÜCK CONCENTRATION CAMP - DAY**

Almost last in line, Lisé and the Old Ukrainian round a stand of trees at lake's end. Raise their eyes in trepidation.

Ahead is a twenty foot wall centered by black iron gates. German words over the gates claim ARBEIT MACHT FREI (WORK SETS YOU FREE). Above them, a machine gun post looms.

The Lead Nazi raises his arm.

LEAD NAZI

Halt.

The Women stop. Watch in petrified silence as the iron gates open and a line of RAVENSBRUCK PRISONERS in striped sack cloth file out. Heads shaved, eyes dead, these walking skeletons are all women.

Somewhere behind the Prisoners, a leather bullwhip cracks.

Lisé's eyes follow the sound.

The whip belongs to an Aufseherinnen - an SS WARDRESS. In full Nazi regalia, she guards the rear of the Prisoner line. Her other hand grips the leash of an Alsatian Shepherd.

SS WARDRESS

(German)

Sing, ladies!

The mouths of the walking dead open and an eerie tune rises. The song is absurd - an upbeat German marching song.

Lisé stares at the passing faces. Humans reduced to skin and bones. Nothing in life could prepare the eyes for this.

As the last Prisoner passes, the Lead Nazi snaps a salute toward the gate.

LEAD NAZI

Heil, Hitler!

Just inside the gate, a chiseled blonde, KOMMANDANT FRITZ SUHREN, 36, salutes in return.

SUHREN

Sieg Heil!

Suhren wears the green and silver uniform of the SS Penal Section. On his peaked cap, a miniature death's head gleams.

Putrid smoke snarls from a chimney on the far side of the camp as the Kommandant eyes his new prisoners.

SUHREN (CONT'D)

(German)

Where is Frau Churchill?

The Nazi Soldier nearest Lisé pulls her from the line.

NAZI SOLDIER  
(German)  
She is here.

**EXT. RAVENSBRÜCK MAIN GATE - CONTINUOUS**

The Soldier shoves Lisé in front of the Kommandant.

Suhren appraises her like a side of beef, then nods to FRAU MARGARET MEWES, 35, one of the cruelest Aufseherrinnen.

Mewes steps forward - punches Lisé in the temple.

Lisé crumbles, semi-conscious, to the ground. Eyes half open, she tries to focus as the Kommandant stares down at her.

SUHREN  
(German)  
That is for carrying the name of  
Winston Churchill.

He signals the Lead Nazi - then motions to the line of Ragged Women and Girls.

SUHREN (CONT'D)  
(German)  
Take this filth to the washroom.

The Lead Nazi salutes - shouts at his charges.

LEAD NAZI  
(German)  
Move!!

As the Ragged Females pass by, the Kommandant rolls Lisé over with his spit polished boot.

SUHREN  
(German to Frau Mewes)  
This one to your bunker.

He kicks Lisé in the stomach and all goes black.

**EXT. ROCKY COAST OF SOUTHERN FRANCE, 1942 - NIGHT**

A small dingy slams against the rocky coast of France.

On shore, Frenchman MARSAC, 31, grabs the bow - steadies the craft as Lisé, her beautiful face framed by short wavy hair, hands him her leather suitcase.

Dressed in trousers and long coat, she scrambles from the boat - turns to JAN, the boatman in the dingy.

LISÉ

*Please see they get my letters!*

JAN

*I promise.*

LISÉ

*Thank you.*

JAN

*Long live the Resistance!*

Laboring up the rocks behind sturdy Marsac, Lisé looks back at the sea. The dingy has all but disappeared.

On a tree-covered knoll above the limestone bank, Lisé raises her face to the star-filled sky.

Breathing deep, she kneels. Pulls a handful of mossy grass. Crushing it in her palm, she holds it to her nose. Inhales the scent and memory of her native country.

MARSAC

*(in a whisper)*

*Come. We've little time. I trust you've brought something besides trousers.*

**EXT. MARSEILLE TRAIN STATION, 1942 - DAY**

Lisé and Marsac wait side-by-side on the platform as a train chugs to a stop.

Her trousers have been replaced by a gray flannel skirt, stockings and low heeled shoes. Suitcase at her side, a handbag hangs from her shoulder.

The train doors open and droves of impoverished REFUGEES disembark. VICHY POLICE stop them at random to check papers.

Near Lisé, a VICHY POLICEMAN detains a FEMALE REFUGEE. His short cape makes him appear shorter than he is.

VICHY POLICEMAN

*Your papers--*

The nervous Refugee digs in her bag. Eyes on the ground, she shakes as she gives her papers over.

The Policeman studies them - suddenly blows his whistle.

The Refugee panics, tries to run. Another Policeman grabs her. She resists and he smashes her knee with his gun butt.

At this, Marsac puts his arm around Lisé - pulls her close.

MARSAC

*Use what they taught you in training. Look them in the eye. They admire the bravado.*

Brushing a stray lock of hair from her face, he acts as though he's known her forever.

MARSAC (CONT'D)

*Stick to your cover no matter what.*

Marsac escorts Lisé past the Police as they haul the Refugee away. Lisé can't help but look.

MARSAC (CONT'D)

*Don't stare.*

Lisé turns back.

MARSAC (CONT'D)

*Wash up on the way to Cannes. Then straight to the Villa Augusta. Your man will meet you there.*

At a passenger door, Marsac hands Lisé her suitcase. Kisses her on each cheek.

MARSAC (CONT'D)

*God's speed.*

**INT. TRAIN CAR, MARSEILLE, 1942 - DAY**

Lisé lugs her suitcase onto the train. Locating a seat, she lifts the heavy suitcase toward the overhead rack.

HANDSOME MAN (O.S.)

*Here now, let me help.*

A HANDSOME MAN in a tailored suit eases the case from Lisé. Slides it onto the rack.

LISÉ

*Thank you.*

HANDSOME MAN

*May I take your coat?*

Hands on her collar, he helps Lisé out of her wrap.

She gives a sweet smile as he helps her into her seat - lays her coat across her lap.

A lonesome whistle announces the train's departure as the Man takes a seat across the aisle.

As he sits, Lisé tenses - sees what she missed before - a German Luger at his waist.

Lisé berates herself for being less than vigil. Nerves jangled, she spins the simple wedding band on her left hand. Can feel the Handsome Man's eyes on her.

HANDSOME MAN (CONT'D)

*Cigarette?*

Watching her like a lustful hawk, he extends his silver cigarette case across the aisle. The cover is emblazoned with the Gestapo symbol - an eagle poised over a swastika.

LISÉ

*No, thank you. I don't smoke.*

The Man takes one for himself. His eyes hold hers as he flips open a lighter - draws life into his cigarette.

HANDSOME MAN

*I am Johan. You are...?*

CLICK. Lisé blinks as the lighter snaps closed.

LISÉ

*Lisé.*

HANDSOME MAN / JOHAN

*Pleasure to meet you... It's Madame  
- correct?*

Lisé glances at her ring.

LISÉ

*Yes.*

JOHAN

*Where are you off to?*

LISÉ

*Visiting a cousin in Cannes.*

JOHAN

*What part?*

Suddenly the SICKLY FRENCH WOMAN across from Johan is wracked by a cough.

Lisé is grateful for the diversion.

LISÉ  
*Are you all right?*

The Woman nods as she wipes her mouth with a hankie. The cloth is spattered with blood.

Lisé moves to help, but the woman waves her away.

Alarmed, Johan rises. Moves to another seat.

Relieved at his departure, Lisé settles in her seat and looks outside. The Woman coughs as Marseille flashes by Lisé's window.

**INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT, UNDERGROUND BUNKER, 1944 - DAY**

In pitch black, Lisé moans. Coughs as she comes to.

LISÉ  
*Hello?...*

Only silence -- Lisé breathes harder. Scared, she concentrates to slow her breath...

LISÉ (CONT'D)  
*Anyone?... Please...*

Nothing.

Lisé grapples in the dark to learn the limits of her cell. Scared, she sings a childhood song to find comfort.

LISÉ (CONT'D)  
*Alouette, gentille Alouette,  
Alouette, je te plumerai.  
Je te plumerai la tête.*

The voices of THREE LITTLE GIRLS join in.

THREE LITTLE GIRLS (O.S.)  
*Je te plumerai la tête.*

LISÉ  
*Et la tête.*

THREE LITTLE GIRLS (O.S.)  
*Alouette. O-o-o-oh...*

**INT. CONVENT, ENGLAND, 1942 - DAY**

A blur of colors - reds, blues and oranges.

LISÉ (O.S.)  
*Alouette, gentille Alouette,  
 Alouette, je te plumerai.*

From far away, hear Lisé cough.

MARIANNE (O.S.)  
 (English)  
 More, Mummy. More.

The blur of movement slows as Lisé's weary voice continues.

LISÉ (O.S.)  
*Alouette, gentille Alouette,  
 Alouette, je te plumerai.*

The blur becomes printed fabric - the gingham of 5 year-old MARIANNE's dress as her pirouette comes to a stop.

A well-manicured female hand reaches for the turned hem of Marianne's dress and straightens it.

LISÉ (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 (English)  
 Oh my darlings--

Two grim girls, FRANCOISE, 9, and LILY, 7, stand on either side of Marianne. All three wear grosgrain hair ribbons.

Lisé wears a FANY uniform. Her face is tight - like she's squelching tears.

LISÉ (CONT'D)  
 You must be good for the sisters.  
 Do your lessons. Please and thank  
 you. Promise?

COLONEL MAURICE BUCKMASTER, 43, and a compassionate NUN watch mother and daughters from the doorway.

Marianne and Lily nod. Francoise is stoic.

LILY  
 Cross your heart you will write?

Lisé crosses her heart and takes Lily in her arms. Marianne joins in the hug.

LISÉ

Oh, sweetheart, of course. And I'll be back before you can say Oliver Twist.

Francoise challenges Lisé.

FRANCOISE

Oliver Twist.

Lisé gives her eldest a stern look. *This is already difficult enough!*

LISÉ

I want you to be a good big sister.

Francoise holds her head high. Trying to act strong, she unties her hair ribbon. Hands it to Lisé.

FRANCOISE

So you won't forget us.

Lisé fights tears as she takes it.

Lily and Marianne hurry to untie their ribbons as well.

Taking them, Lisé gathers her girls in her arms.

LISÉ

I could never forget you. Not in a million years.

Buckmaster gives Lisé a nod. Uses her real name in front of the children.

BUCKMASTER

Odette - it's time to go.

The Nun places her hands on Francoise's and Lily's shoulders. Pulls them gently from their mother. Marianne clings to Lisé.

MARIANNE

Mummy!

On the verge of breaking, Lisé looses Marianne's arms from around her neck - holds her daughter's tiny hands in her own.

LISÉ

You must listen to the Sisters.

Francoise takes Marianne's hand.

LISÉ (CONT'D)  
Remember, I love you more than all  
the stars.

Lisé turns away. Her heart is breaking.

MARIANNE  
Mummy, don't go!

Somewhere far away footsteps grow louder - closer - stop.

Lisé doesn't look back. Tears come as her reverie goes dark.

OVER BLACK:

LISÉ (O.S.)  
*Alouette, gentille Alouette*  
*Alouette, je te plu--*

FRAU MEWES (O.S.)  
(German)  
Halt the singing!

**INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT, UNDERGROUND BUNKER, 1944 - DAY**

With a scrape, a small slit of stark, floor-height light cuts the black. Finds Lisé's pale cheek and dim brown eye prone against a concrete floor.

She blinks as a metal bowl of filmy soup is shoved through the slit in the door. SLAM! The slit closes.

**INT. TRAIN CAR, 1942 - DAY**

WHOO WHOOOO! Lisé bolts awake as the train whistle blares arrival in Cannes. Peering out the window, she dons her coat.

Across the aisle, another cough wracks the Sickly Woman.

Concerned, Lisé pulls a clean hankie from her coat - extends it to the Woman across the aisle.

Out of nowhere, Johan grabs it. Yanks Lisé from her seat.

JOHAN  
*Don't touch her!*

Lisé can feel his breath on her neck as he grabs her suitcase from the rack and ushers her off the train.

**EXT. CANNES TRAIN STATION, 1942 - DAY**

On the platform, Johan breathes deep. Hands Lisé her case.

JOHAN

*Goodbye, Madame. Be careful. You  
must watch yourself.*

Lisé watches Johan board - this time to a different car. When he's out of sight, she heads toward the station.

The platform is crowded with Vichy Police, SS Officers, Wealthy Tourists and Refugees. Lisé keeps a wary eye on an SS MASTER and his Alsatian. Circles wide to avoid the huge dog.

Suddenly, the SS Master blocks her way.

SS MASTER

*Papers.*

Lisé forces herself to look directly at him, then retrieves photo identification from her bag. On "accident", she drops her ration card - uses the ruse to step back from the dog.

The SS Man picks up the card. Scrutinizes Lisé's papers.

SS MASTER

*Name?*

LISÉ

*Lisé Metayer.*

SS MASTER

*Occupation?*

LISÉ

*I am a seamstress.*

The SS Man eyes her well worn fingers and plain nails. Notes the simple wedding band and JAGGED SCAR on her left hand.

SS MASTER

*And your family?*

The Alsatian growls, then barks. Jars Lisé.

LISÉ

*My husband is dead... I have no  
children.*

The SS Master returns her ration card and papers.