



August 20 Lisbon, Portugal. Guenther Sinasohn (#14) as he waits to board the SS Mouzinho. PHOTO CREDIT: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Milton Koch.

## THE IRON CROSS

Written by

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Inspired by a true story

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EXT. SACHSENHAUSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP - MORNING

1

SUPERIMPOSE: "Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp - outside of Berlin - November 11th 1938"

Two days after Kristallnacht. Not a death camp or a work camp, but a concentration camp where Jews were held before they were sent to their fate. Many disheveled and confused men, each wearing a yellow star, are piled inside and outside this camp.

HARRY SINASOHN, a brooding, striking and tall Jewish man with dark hair and a strong temper is making a huge commotion.

HARRY

Who's in charge here? I'm German!  
I'm a decorated veteran! I have an  
Iron Cross! There's no way I'm  
going to submit to these  
indignities! I demand to speak with  
the officer in charge!

So as to not cause mutiny, two GUARDS take Harry to the commandant of the camp.

GUARD

Shut your mouth. If you don't stop  
this outrage we'll have to shoot  
you.

HARRY

How dare you. Who is the commandant  
of this camp?!

2

INT. COMMANDANT'S OFFICE

2

COMMANDANT, a retired German army officer - a colonel - sits behind a large desk. The two Guards stand on guard behind this belligerent prisoner.

COMMANDANT

Who do you think you are? Why are  
you carrying on like this?

Harry reaches into his pocket and smashes his Iron Cross down on the table.

HARRY

I deserved this. I risked my life  
for the fatherland. The Kaiser gave  
me this.

COMMANDANT

Where were you during the first world war?

HARRY

I was stationed in Gallipoli.

COMMANDANT

(beat)

Do you know that was my regiment?

Harry, now suddenly obedient confronted with his military authority, has deep respect for this man.

HARRY

Oh yes, I remember. You were our colonel.

A long beat.

COMMANDANT

What is your name?

HARRY

Harry Sinasohn.

COMMANDANT

(beat)

Thank you guards, that will be enough. You are dismissed.

The guards leave. Another long beat as the Commandant decides.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

What am I going to do with you?

(beat)

I really don't know what to do with you.

Another beat. Harry breaths deeply.

COMMANDANT (CONT'D)

Do you have a family?

HARRY

Yes, I have two young boys and my wife at home. I didn't know I had to leave. They grabbed me at 2am from my bed.

COMMANDANT

You must have urgent business to take care of.

HARRY

Oh yes, absolutely.

COMMANDANT

I will give you a 48 hour pass to get your affairs in order. Then you must report back here.

HARRY

OK. Thank you sir.

3 I/E. SACHSENHAUSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP 3

Stunned, Harry walks out of the camp a free man.

4 EXT. GEORGIAN HOUSE - MORNING 4

SUPERIMPOSE: 1941 Chabannes, Unoccupied France

A sign on the door "Château de Chabannes - OEuvre de secours aux enfants" The house is more like a small mansion in the middle of nowhere. Two boys GUENTHER SINASOHN (14) and HEINZ SINASOHN(15) are outside washing their hands with a water pump in the yard. They splash each other laughing. They are rowdy and wild. Heinz has glasses and is more serious and practical as the eldest brother. Guenther is more sensitive but also impulsive and theatrical. Other children are also washing their hands, collecting vegetables and eggs, etc.

Chickens run by and the brothers chase the chickens laughing. LOUISE, a nice French chaperone at the Château yells out the window.

LOUISE

Bring in our breakfast at once.  
You'll all be late!

Gunether and Heinz laugh as they collect eggs.

5 EXT. VILLAGE ROAD - LATER 5

Approximately a dozen Jewish children of all ages walk to a one room schoolhouse in the village. The bigger children hold the smaller children's hands. Everyone is a little rowdy. We hear French, English and various European accents and languages.

As they walk they receive dirty looks from the towns folk. Some non Jewish children throw stones. It is clear they are not welcomed. One house plays the radio very loud.