

A dark, atmospheric photograph of a forest at dusk or dawn. Sunlight filters through the trees in the background, creating a warm, golden glow. In the center, a deer stands facing the viewer, its eyes glowing with a bright red light. The foreground is dark and shadowed, with tree trunks and branches visible.

IN THE *shadows*
OF THE *trees*

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ENGLISH

A dark, atmospheric photograph of a forest at night. Several vertical laser beams, two green and two red, cut through the darkness. A large, semi-transparent circular inset in the center shows a different scene: a battlefield with smoke, debris, and the silhouettes of soldiers. The text is overlaid on this circular inset.

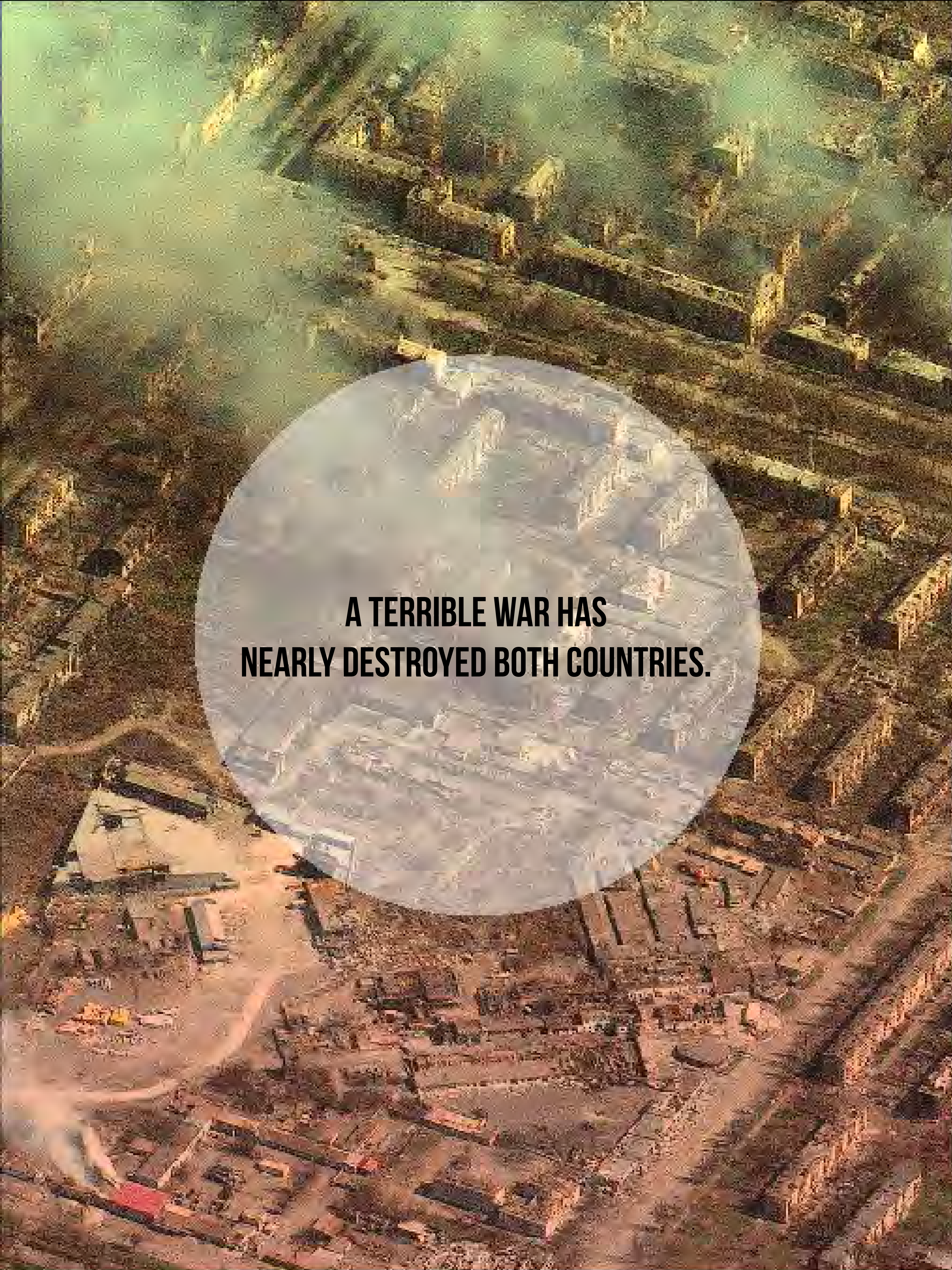
**THIS STORY TAKES PLACE IN THE
NO MAN'S LAND BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES.**



**ONE COUNTRY IS RULED BY
AN INSIDIOUS DICTATORSHIP.**



**THE OTHER COUNTRY IS SAID TO BE
A HAVEN OF FREEDOM AND RICHES.**

An aerial photograph of a city that has been almost completely destroyed. The landscape is a mix of dark, charred earth and the skeletal remains of buildings. A large, semi-transparent circular inset in the center of the image shows a satellite view of the same city, revealing its original grid-like street pattern and dense urban layout. The contrast between the current state and the satellite image highlights the scale of the destruction.

**A TERRIBLE WAR HAS
NEARLY DESTROYED BOTH COUNTRIES.**

A dark, gloomy forest with tall, thin trees and a circular overlay containing text.

**A GLOOMY FOREST ON THE BORDER
SEPARATES THE ENEMIES.**

**THIS FOREST IS LITTERED
WITH DEVIOUS AND DEADLY TRAPS.**



**ONLY FEW MAKE IT ACROSS THE BORDER
INTO THE PROMISED LAND.**



**IN A SMALL HUT THE REFUGEES ARE
WELCOMED TO FREEDOM. THEY MADE IT.**

BUT WHAT THEY DON'T KNOW:



THE HUT IS A TRAP.

HERE WE TELL OUR STORY.





IN THE SHADOWS OF THE TREES

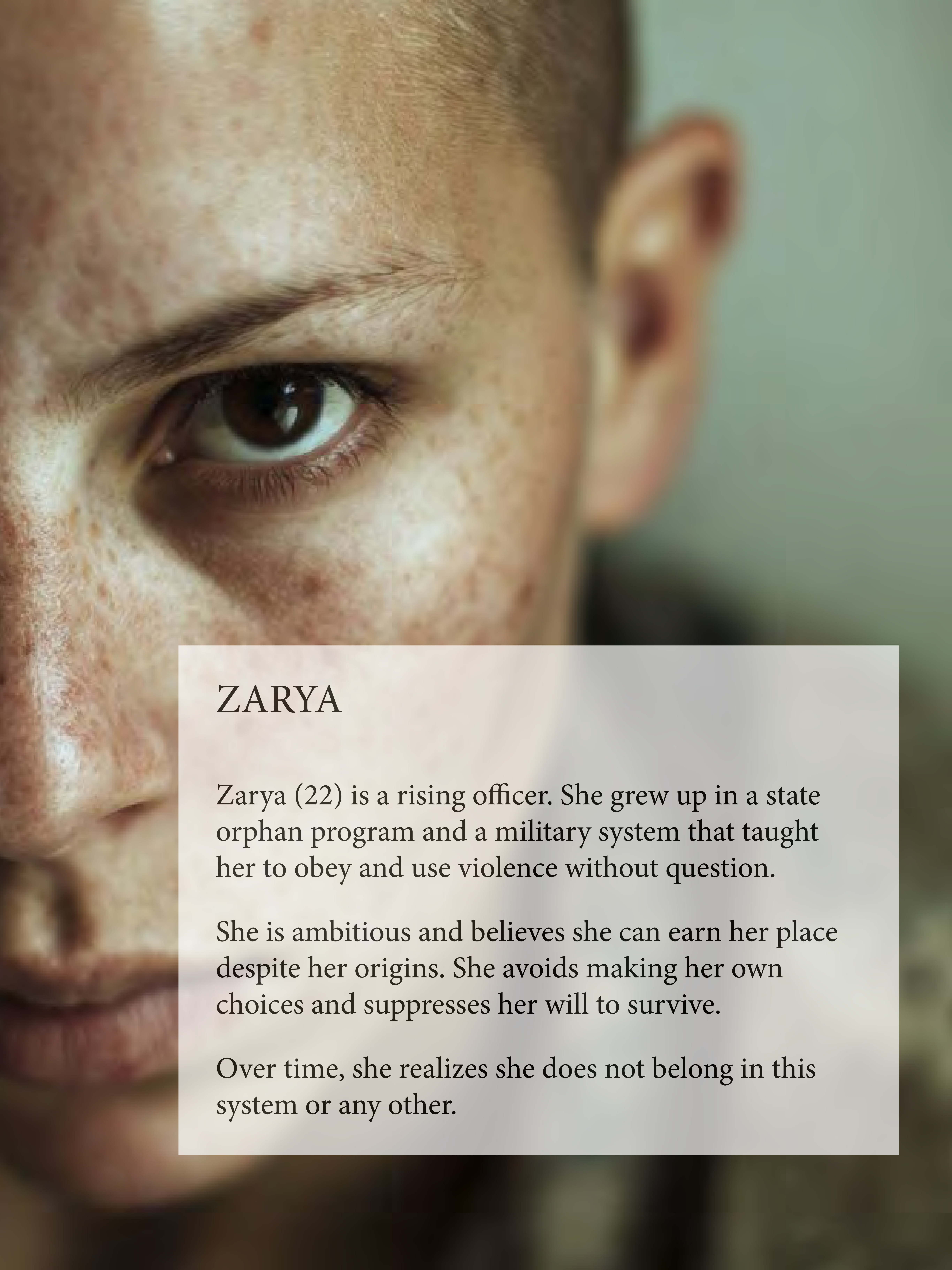
Zarya (22), a zealous young officer belonging to the lower class of orphans. She is sent to a remote outpost on the border, where soldiers have mysteriously vanished, having allegedly fled into enemy territory.

She is to pose as an assistant to **Rodina (67)**, the experienced keeper of the station, an isolated hut deep within the perilous border forest. Zarya must help lure refugees into believing they have safely crossed the deadly frontier. Once deceived, the refugees are interrogated and arrested.

Information about the neighboring country is sparse. The refugees are easy to convince.

Zarya discovers that Rodina is part of a drug operation. But Rodina, suspicious that Zarya has been sent to replace her, begins a quiet but dangerous game of cat and mouse.

Tensions escalate when a young couple arrives during a violent storm: Laszlo and Milena. Rodina believes these are important dissidents. Laszlo resists her methods, so the old woman resorts to increasingly ruthless tactics to extract information. Zarya's world begins to unravel when she realizes Milena is a product of the orphanages like herself.

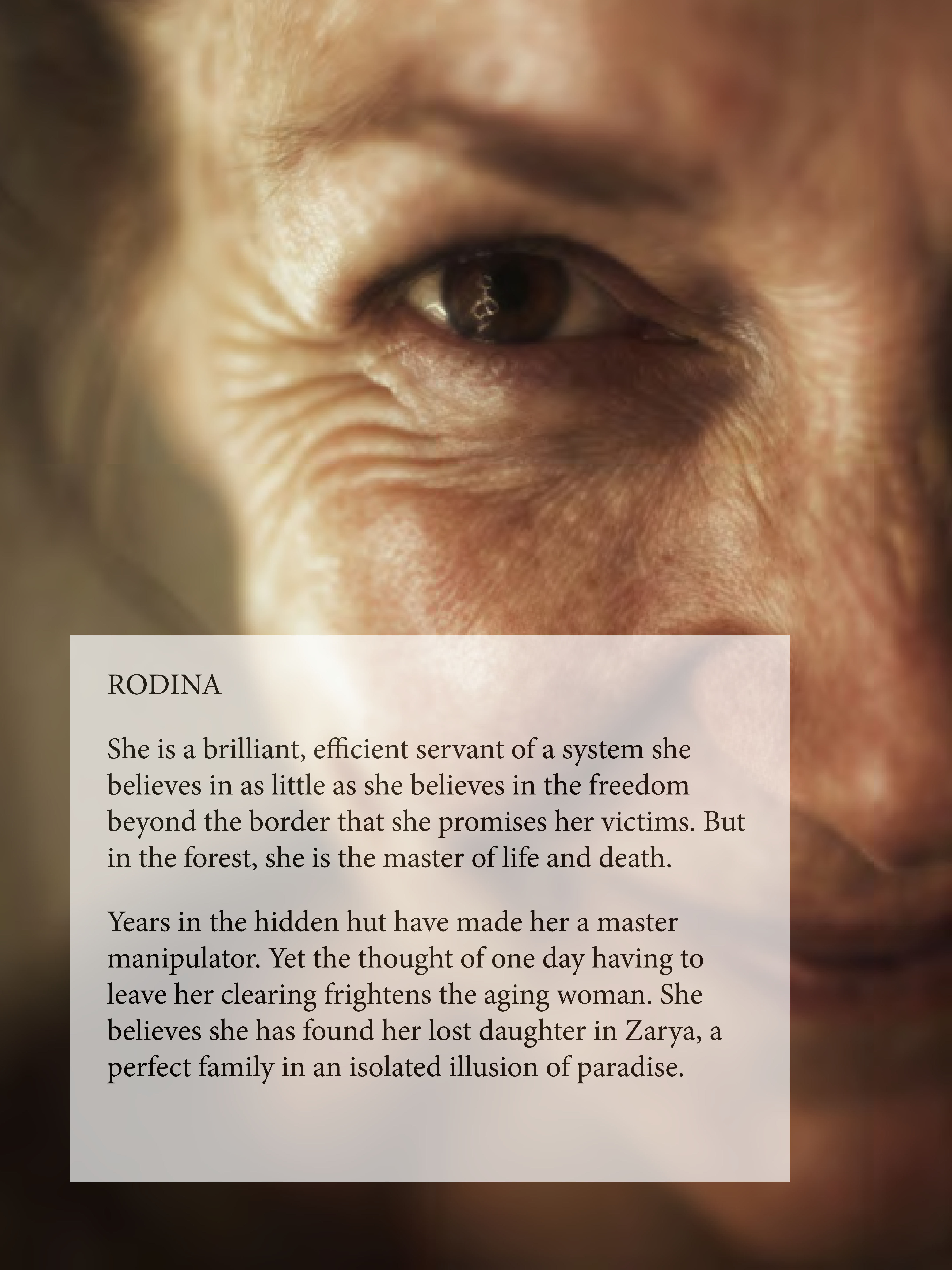
A close-up, high-resolution photograph of a young woman's face. She has light skin with numerous freckles, particularly around her eyes and on her nose. Her eyes are a light, piercing blue, and she has a serious, almost stoic expression. Her hair is short and blonde. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting. The lighting is natural, highlighting the texture of her skin and the intensity of her gaze.

ZARYA

Zarya (22) is a rising officer. She grew up in a state orphan program and a military system that taught her to obey and use violence without question.

She is ambitious and believes she can earn her place despite her origins. She avoids making her own choices and suppresses her will to survive.

Over time, she realizes she does not belong in this system or any other.



RODINA

She is a brilliant, efficient servant of a system she believes in as little as she believes in the freedom beyond the border that she promises her victims. But in the forest, she is the master of life and death.

Years in the hidden hut have made her a master manipulator. Yet the thought of one day having to leave her clearing frightens the aging woman. She believes she has found her lost daughter in Zarya, a perfect family in an isolated illusion of paradise.



LASZLO & MILENA

The two refugees have somehow made it through the forest alive. Laszlo radiates strength - and he has somehow got hold of a map of the forest. But he remains tight-lipped, posing a challenge for Rodina's interrogation skills.

His companion, Milena has stepped into a trap and is dying from poisoning. But she is not as fragile as she appears, and she carries another secret.

THE FOREST

After the brutal war, the border zone was abandoned. The automated war machines, left behind at the end of the fighting were left to their own devices.

With their priorities focused elsewhere, both countries conveniently forgot about this place – which, after all these years, is still teeming with frightening creatures made of silicone and steel, ready to kill.





WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT NOGAY

Nogay, the dictatorship in which Zarya grew up, shows many characteristics of a totalitarian state that is slowly decaying from within.

These include a crumbling government apparatus with rival factions fighting for power, a dysfunctional bureaucracy, corruption, and a militarized society that sees enemies everywhere.

And a secret police that penetrates every life.

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT NABUKHAI

Nothing.

ABOUT THE FILM

In the Shadows of the Trees is a dark fairytale about surviving in a post-truth world that none of the characters fully understands. The dystopian world is not real, but eerily recognizable, just a small step beyond our own reality.

Each character clings to their version of the truth. As they navigate the blurred lines between truth and fiction, they lose control over their fate.

Zarya starts out believing in the regime's narrative. Refugees hold on to their ideal of "the other side". Rodina feeds these fantasies—but even her island in the forest is nothing but a carefully constructed lie.

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A TRUE STORY

These huts really existed in the Bavarian Forest between Communist Czechoslovakia and Western Germany. They were used to trap and interrogate refugees.

When we originally developed the script, our intent was to create a film that would transcend its historical context. But despite being intrigued by the story, few could imagine a war between neighboring countries in modern Europe.

The current war has shown that the ghosts of the past still haunt us. And even after the fighting ends, we might be left with a situation eerily close to the premise of this film.



PRODUCTION OPPORTUNITIES

The majority of the film takes place in a single location—the hut and the surrounding woods—allowing for an efficient and streamlined production.

We plan to shoot during the warmer months, with late summer or early autumn as the ideal window for principal photography.

In light of the current global landscape and its potential resonance, we aim to attract international talent for both cast and crew.

AUDIENCE OPPORTUNITIES

The conflict and its aftermath will remain relevant for a long time. Since our story unfolds long after the fighting, its themes will continue to resonate.

Its universal setting enables broad international distribution, appealing to both politically engaged viewers and younger dystopian audiences.

By avoiding specific references, it remains accessible in sensitive markets.



FILM DATA

In the Shadows of the Trees

Length: ca 90 minutes

Language: Englisch

Genre: NearFuture, Drama

keywords: *near future, thriller, political, war, electronic warfare, chamber play*



A misty forest scene with a wooden cabin and a car. Sunlight filters through the trees, creating a soft, ethereal atmosphere. The cabin has a corrugated metal roof and is partially obscured by the mist. A car is parked in front of the cabin. The foreground is filled with lush green plants and moss.

CONTACTS

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