

STAR OF AFRICA

Written by

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Based on the story by Colin D. Heaton and the book, The Star of
Africa by Colin D. Heaton and Anne-Marie Lewis.

The true story of Germany's greatest WWII fighter pilot Han-
Joachim Marseille.

PREVIEW ONLY

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BLACK SCREEN

SUPER: Compassion and honor are the only things that separate us from the animals. - Eduard Neumann

BREATH. BREATH. BREATH.

Hard... laboured... exhausted... continues...

JAZZ music softly plays.

FADE IN:

INT. TENT - DAY

Spartan, olive drab, small book shelf filled with records, two cots, plywood furniture, sand floor. A phonograph plays.

A MAN in a Luftwaffe pilot's uniform sits with his back toward us, his head in his hands, exhausted.

MATHIAS (V.O.)
(booming, powerful)
How do I tell you about my friend?

The man is HANS-JOACHIM "JOCHEN" (20) brutally handsome, charming, with a restless intelligence. He's the ultimate role model for Germany... until he opens his mouth.

MATHIAS LETUKU (20s) his brown face weathered like a stalwart mountain, eyes bright and fiery, in a South African Army uniform pours a drink.

MATHIAS
Have a drink. Calm your nerves.

Mathias hands Jochen a glass of cognac. He downs it, wipes his mouth. Mathias looks intently into Jochen's worn face.

MATHIAS (V.O.)
To his superiors, he was a problem, disobeying orders, breaking all the rules.

MATHIAS
Another?

JOCHEN
Yes.

Mathias fills the glass, hands it to Jochen. He gulps it down, closes his eyes, swallows.

Mathias regards the plethora of medals on Jochen's chest and around his neck: Iron Cross 1st Class, Italian Medal for Bravery in Gold, German Cross in Gold, and the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves, and Swords to name but a few.

MATHIAS (V.O.)

To his nation he was a great hero.
To his enemies he was both feared
and respected... and to all he
became a legend.

Mathias worried.

MATHIAS

Better?

Jochen runs his hand through his hair, looks up at Mathias.

JOCHEN

I think so. Smoke?

MATHIAS

Of course.

Mathias pulls a pack of cigarettes out, hands him one, lights it. Jochen takes a deep drag.

JOCHEN

I don't know what I'd do without
you, Mathias.

Mathias smiles, his friend is coming back.

MATHIAS (V.O.)

To me, Hans-Joachim Marseille was
my best friend who saved my life. A
chivalrous man, treating all people
as his equal. A man living in the
wrong time and place.

MATHIAS

What happened out there, Jochen?

JOCHEN

It... it seems that time has not
yet come for me, friend. That was
the toughest adversary I've ever
had.

Jochen takes a drag.

JOCHEN (CONT'D)

His turns were fabulous.

An airplane *ENGINE* disturbs the peacefulness of the room.

JOCHEN (CONT'D)
They're back.

Jochen jumps to his feet.

EXT. TENT - DAY

Jochen looks up, squints against the blaring sun. He sees a lone plane. A Messerschmitt ME-109.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. SKY - DAY

A Messerschmitt ME-109 cuts through the air in a feat of acrobatics. We move down towards the landscape and see...

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - DAY

SUPER: BERLIN GERMANY 1938

Jochen vibrant, full of life, observes the Messerschmitt.

FELIX (O.S.)
Pay attention, Jochen!

Jochen snaps out of it. FELIX ROTHENBERG (18) olive complexion, Mediterranean-looking, feisty, sprints past Marseille.

FELIX (CONT'D)
If it's not girls, it's planes.
Come on!

Jochen and REINER POTTGEN (18) a loyal fireplug, and a consistent edge of humor to his voice, follows Felix and other JEWISH TEAMMATES. They pass and dribble the ball past OPPONENTS toward the opposing team's goal.

Felix passes the ball to the fast and nimble Jochen. He shoots and scores!

The REFEREE blows the *WHISTLE*. Game over. Jochen's teammates rush him. Hoist him in the air.

EXT. BLEACHERS - DAY

The CROWD cheers. CHARLOTTE (40s) a strong yet graceful mother and INGE (14) girl-next-door face, stand, cheer, clap.

INGE
Jochen!

Inge smiles at her mother.

INGE (CONT'D)
He did it again!

CHARLOTTE
He did.

A few rows away a group of GIRLS including HANNELIES KUPPER (18) a reserved natural beauty. She holds in her excitement for their victory, but is clearly impressed.

She looks at Jochen and then at his mother, connects the two. Charlotte smiles proudly at her son, waves to Jochen. He acknowledges her with a smile and a nod.

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - DAY

The teams line up to shake hands. Felix reaches out his hand to shake. The opposing TEAM ignores him, passes him by.

A big MEATHEAD of a boy, approaches Jochen.

MEATHEAD
Kike lover.

JOCHEN
What did you say?

Pottgen butts in, puts his hand on Jochen's shoulder, tries to break the imminent confrontation.

POTTGEN
They're just sore losers.

MEATHEAD
You, both of you... you're not real
Germans, hanging with these
mongrels.

Jochen closes his eyes, takes a deep breath. He clenches his fists, stares at Meathead with fury.

FELIX
Seille, Pottgen, don't worry about
it. Come on.

POTTGEN
Wait? Hanging with mongrels?

MEATHEAD
That's right.

Pottgen waves his finger.

POTTGEN
That's not a very nice thing to say
about your own mother.

Meathead's eyes widen, lets out a guttural yell, charges.

MEATHEAD
Ahhhhh!

Pottgen dodges the blow.

POW!

Jochen cracks Meathead in the nose with a right hook. He
staggers backwards, cups his nose, blood all over his hands.

MEATHEAD (CONT'D)
I'm going to kill you!

The confrontation escalates into an all out brawl between the
two teams. COACHES, referees, PARENTS try to break things up.

MATHIAS (V.O.)
Jochen always fought for what he
believed was right.

LATER

Both teams covered in blood, mud, welts, silently stand as a
POLICE SERGEANT (40s) in a crisp uniform, no-nonsense type
and two POLICE OFFICERS address them.

Charlotte, Inge, and parents stand on the sidelines.

POLICE SERGEANT
What is the meaning of this!

Meathead points to Felix and the other Jewish boys.

MEATHEAD
The Jews. They started it.

JOCHEN
That's bullshit and you know it.

A shouting match erupts between the two teams.

POLICE SERGEANT
Enough! Silence!

The Police Sergeant talks in private with his officers. He stares at Felix and the Jewish boys.

FELIX
Thanks for sticking up for me.

Meathead smiles at Jochen, looks at him with an evil stare.

JOCHEN
Just a bunch of assholes.

The Police Sergeant and Policemen approach Jochen's team. They whisk Felix and two Jewish boys away.

JOCHEN (CONT'D)
They didn't do anything!

Jochen balls his fists, about to start another riot.

POLICE SERGEANT
Shut it or you're coming too.

JOCHEN
This is not right.

FELIX
Seille, it's okay.

Jochen looks down. Meathead laughs. As he walks...

MEATHEAD
More Jews off the streets. Who won now?

Pottgen and Jochen ignore the comment, watch Felix being whisked away. Charlotte and Inge look on with worry as Felix and the boys are loaded into a POLICE WAGON.

EXT. MAIN STREET - BERLIN - NIGHT

The skyline riddled with various multi-level buildings illuminated by fancy street lamps. The lively streets filled with PEOPLE, some drunk, some high, some just happy to be there. LAUGHTER, CHATTER, MUSIC, thrum.

Drunk, Pottgen and Jochen stroll down the sidewalk. Take in all the bustling nightlife.

POTTGEN
You heard from him?

JOCHEN
No, hopefully he'll be home soon.

Jochen steps on a broken piece of glass. They stop, look the busted storefront. The main window mostly shattered. The top of the glass reads: BERGEMAN'S JEWELERS.

JOCHEN (CONT'D)
Things are getting worse.

POTTGEN
(sarcastic)
Yes, all the Jews are to blame for
Ambassador Vom Rath's
assassination.

JOCHEN
Absurd.

POTTGEN
I don't want to think about it.
Not tonight. Come on.

Pottgen and Jochen enter a bar.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Two WOMEN exit. Pottgen and Jochen a few steps behind. The women wave and walk off.

JOCHEN
You're a terrible closer.

POTTGEN
Maybe you're a terrible dancer.

JOCHEN
Really?

POTTGEN
You could have spoken up, you know.

Pottgen shakes his head, watches the girls leave.

POTTGEN (CONT'D)
Why didn't you close the deal since
you're such a Casanova?

CRASH!

EXT. MAIN STREET - STOREFRONTS - NIGHT

Behind them, drunk RIOTERS, SA OFFICERS destroy storefronts. A Jewish MAN pleads, tries to stop them. He's beaten unmercifully by the crowd.

The rioters hurl bricks, trash cans, and whatever else they can find through the windows.

The beaten Jewish man manages to escape, runs off. The crowd laughs. A MAN paints "JUDE" on the brick face.

Jochen and Pottgen stand a few feet behind the unruly mob. Jochen looks over toward a police car end of the block.

JOCHEN

Why are the police not doing anything?

POTTGEN

I don't know.

A SOLDIER in uniform rides a motorcycle, parks near the rioters, joins in the fray. Jochen regards the motorbike.

JOCHEN

This is not right.

He makes a beeline toward the bike.

POTTGEN

Where are you going?

Jochen hops onto the motorcycle.

POTTGEN (CONT'D)

Jochen?

Jochen REVS the bike. The soldier turns just in time to see Jochen peel off.

SOLDIER

Hey!

MATHIAS (V.O.)

He was always breaking the rules, never worrying about the consequences. Jochen's quest for adventure would not allow him to do otherwise.

The soldier chases after Jochen.

SOLDIER
Come back here!

INT./EXT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

The same Police Sergeant from the soccer game sees the soldier pumping his fist, yelling in the middle of the street. He pulls up beside the soldier.

POLICE SERGEANT
What's going on?

The soldier points toward Jochen.

SOLDIER
That guy just stole my motorcycle!

The Police Sergeant mashes on the gas pedal.

EXT./INT. MOTORCYCLE - NIGHT

Jochen cruises through the streets. More RIOTERS, SA OFFICERS, SOLDIERS destroy and burn Jewish shops.

Jochen in disbelief, accelerates. He passes between stopped cars observing the chaos.

He zips through an intersection nearly side-swiped by a truck. Cars blare their *HORNS*.

EXT./INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

The police car slows at the intersection, cars in his way.

POLICE SERGEANT
Come on! Come on! Move! Move!

He gets through.

EXT./INT. MOTORCYCLE - NIGHT

Jochen looks over his shoulder. The police car behind him. He zips between more cars, approaches a crosswalk.

A DRUNK MAN walks out in front of him. Jochen pulls the handle bars to the right, avoids hitting the drunk man. The bike wobbles. Jochen loses control. *CRASH!*

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - NIGHT

Jochen tumbles off the bike and onto the grass. He moans, rolls over. The Police Sergeant rushes to him, looms over him, yells. Jochen can't hear anything. He passes out.