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The Quality of Mercy

By Andreas Gruber

"Rabbit hunt" (The Quality of Mercy) FDb.cz - visit the world of film The story of this film is based on actual events of the so-called "rabbit hunt" in the Mhlviertel. January 1945, concentration camp Mauthausen In barrack 20, 500 officers of the Red Army are facing certain death. The prisoners of war were carried to Mauthausen because they refused to fight along with the German Wehrmacht. Wake up! Let's go! Barrack 20 shall be cleared in one month. - Beware! Goose march! Let's go! Quiet! - Comrades, to get out of this hell... It does not mean anything good. Who knows, maybe that's finally the end of the war. What's going on, are you ready to go? - Yes, yes, I'm coming. Volkssturm roll call. This time you can't duck out. Until now others have put their necks on the line for you. You can go ahead, I'll find the way myself. Mitzi (Maria) is still asleep? What is going on? - Reported shooting. Has the war ended? They were shooting like crazy! Tonight, 500 felons have escaped from camp Mauthausen. They were heading north, thus also in this direction. All available men of the Volkssturm (people's militia), Wehrmacht on vacation, fire brigade, police and HJ (Hitler Youth) have to participate in the search operation. Don't take prisoners under any circumstances. The criminals have to be executed on the spot. Arm yourself ... commander of the Ortsgruppe? - Yes, Sir! You'll be responsible for the division of the patrol groups. Men, do not take prisoners! They have to go away! With prisoners you won't do me a favor at all! Bravo! Very good! You're a cop, you have to protect us from those criminals. - Give me a break! Adam, you're going with them. I want to have someone reliable there. They haven't done me any wrong, those "felons". - Take care that you don't make a slip of the tongue. I cannot carry a rifle I have sciatica. You go with them. You know what you have to do ... - Well, let's go for it! No one of us will hear or see anything let alone catching anyone. Are we clear? Fredl, why aren't you helping us? Why are you standing around like that. Come on already! I am no use to you, I don't see a thing. - You can't rely on that one as well. I guess I have to find you a group with some tougher guys. We'll take care of that. - When will we start finally? One bottle of Schnaps for each one you catch. - And finally got to you. Now it's finally your turn. - I'm totally trigger-happy already. This is not about fun. We will hunt them like rabbits. What are you doing with the potatoes? - When somebody passes by ... Stay at home, today is not a good time for going out. As long as our boys are at war, I'll go to the church every day. Does the little one also have to see this already ... What are you doing? Go away from there. This is pointless ... We won't survive this. You'll pay for that. But I'm no prisoner from the KZ ... I belong to you guys ... Father, it's so terrible. Fredl, be merciful! - I don't see anything anyway ... Do not go out today. And don't let anyone in. - And if somebody needs our help? We have nothing to do with this in any way. Shoot the bolt, the door stays closed. And if somebody still wants something, tell them the father is at the saw mill. Lock the door properly.

Is anyone thirsty? - Yeah, always ... - Have some cider ... I'm such a filthy swine ... Someone's running over there! What do we do with him now? - Shoot them on the spot, they said. Are you really in such a hurry with this? Don't shoot. Please ... please. You shoot him, if you think you're such a tough guy. We will take him to the SS, they'll do the job. You two, bring him down. Go! In (inaudible), the fight about Germany. It demands the greatest sacrifice from the soldiers and population in history so far. But the enemy has to deal with our infantry in all key aspects. Under the most difficult conditions, thousands of people have to leave their homes and belongings behind to escape the Mongol invasion while heading west. Treks with refugees are riding through cities of eastern Germany along with groups of Soviet prisoners ... It's hopeless. It doesn't matter how they will kill us. They'll beat us to death, strangle us, gas us, or kill us on the battle field. It's just propaganda. We know ourselves that it'll end soon. Don't be afraid, we won't harm you. We're on the same side. We're from the same country. You must help us. Hide us well. There is no safe place ... I love you. If we say, he escaped from us ...? Nobody will miss him. Thank you. Wait a second, he'll need shoes as well. Who do we have here? Why isn't he dead already? Come! In the neck. You have no idea ... I won't do this anymore! I won't attend this hunt anymore. Never more. - You will go! Or do you want them to send you to the front line? Let them do with me what they want, I won't go there anymore! Do you know how they call it? "Rabbit hunt"! She hurt me! Let's go. Now is a good moment to escape. Let's run! Don't give up. They went this way. - Up there, an open field. We have to get out of the village. I'm going this way. Andreij, come with us. Andreij! Andreij! It was Andreij. Come on, let's go. Stand up. Leave me here. Leave me lying here. As long as we are alive, as long as we still stand on our knees we must run. We must go, do you understand? What beautiful houses those Nazis and fascists have... We should knock on one of those houses door. Otherwise we won't survive, we need help. Help or death. My heart tells me... That house. If something happens, if they catch you, give me a sign. Shout to me, so I'll be able to run away. Yes. Are you finally ready father? We'll be late again ... I, Ukrainian. Translator Linz, go to Ukraine again. I know who you are. Do not worry. My goodness, you look terrible. What are they doing with you people? Please, food. - Come. Not fascist? - You don't have to be afraid. I have 5 of my boys fighting in the war myself. I want them all to return back home. You also have a mother that wants you to return home. Please, mother. Please, help. You heard it? I heard something. You heard right. Is there one? - Yes. One came. Father, please don't harm him. He didn't do anything. Let him stay here. If the SS finds one of them in our house, they'll put us all up against the wall. God willing, we'll rescue him. So you even want to feed him? What's the point in asking that? If all our boys were at home, they'd also need something. It's not possible. It's not possible! - Father. At

least one or two days until the hunt ends. Do what you want. You always do what you want anyway, but then you take the whole responsibility. For all of us. Don't be afraid, I won't harm you. You can stay. Sit down. Eat. Where is your comrade? I do not know. Was taking a walk in the woods. Tell me, where your friend is. Maybe sleeping in hay. One comrade. - There's one more in the hay. - You're really daring. It will turn out all right. They'll get us all. All of us! Should we rather send them away again? This is for you, and this for your comrade. Everything is okay. We are safe. I brought soup. Everything's fine. Later. Nikolai is tired. Are you ready? Then let's go. We still have a lot of work to do. Now they even come up to us. They have to be killed immediately. Bunch of felons. - I don't have any work to do and I also won't join you anymore. And now get out. Berghammer, wait! Fredl will be ready in a minute. Fredl, you have to go. I'm begging you. I'm tired. I only want to sleep. You'll go now! This is not just about you anymore. You don't have to join in anyway. Just act as if. What are doing? Volkssturm. Comrades dead. Fredl is not. Nothing seems to be going on today. Yesterday I caught two. Poser. Hey Fredl, you already got one so far? Have you already met one? They haven't done anything wrong. When they take something, it's only some food, or clothes. There! Stay here. Stay put! Let them escape for gods sake. I got one. You are mad. You don't know what you're doing. Anything else? Do you have a piece of cloth by any chance? Adolf needs some new pants. Unfortunately I don't for the time being. A sacrifice for the war. Not until after the victory. Victory? - Yeah, yeah! We're already close to victory. Why don't you fight on the front line then? You know ... I have a feeble heart. They're such cowards! Mommy, what are they doing? - They hunt rabbits. Go out. Come on. - What are you doing with them? If you are too much of a coward ... - Who gives you the right to do that? Do not take prisoners, they said. Go! That's enough! - Get lost! Down! What are you doing? I brought some food. Good morning. - Good morning. Why the concentration camp? Why the camp? They captured us in the war. In the camp they told us that we are supposed to fight for the German army. I said no. I won't betray my country. That's how we came to this camp. Keep on walking calmly. You go to church? - Good morning. What's going on up there? It's over, that was it for us. What do we do now, father? - Be quiet. The dishes are still there on the hayloft. If they find those dishes ... Nani, you have to run back. Tell Mitzi she should hide well. And bring the dishes down from there. Now come on, run. Hey little girl, is still somebody living in there? The lord grants us freedom, and we provide the evidence for what humans are capable of doing. For better or for worse. Isn't it the ability to feel compassion for our neighbor, that makes us human? Is it only cowardice, that does not allow mercy? I don't recognize many of our parish anymore. Amen. I believe in god, the almighty creator of heaven and earth Hanni, what's so interesting to see there? Come on, you have to carry it off well. You don't even treat

cattle like that. Did you see anyone? - There was nobody here. Get a move on, we should be done with this when mom comes back. Search! Tell him he must go. The Volkssturm will be here soon. They'll come now and shoot you. It's better not to stay here anymore. I need something to write. I want a cigarette. He wants something to write and a cigarette. - He has to hurry up, then he'll have a chance. Faster. Please go. It's also dangerous for us. They ask you to go. Have no fear. Give it to my mother when you'll be back home. Have they stolen other things beside food too? Clothing and shoes. What was it exactly? - One of my jackets. In which direction was he heading? We haven't seen anybody. - And the foot prints up to here? Why aren't you on duty? - I'm on duty, I put the thieveries on record. You should rather help us catch criminals. There he is, move! Stand up! Undress! Take his clothes. Please, hide me. Sadly I can't help you. It's not possible. I've had enough. I'm freezing. You have no idea how it was in Russia. Feel free to go ahead. I'll need a while. Let him go. He hasn't done you any wrong. Eat or being eaten. That's how nature works. But they are humans. - So what? He would have shot us too. Now we are the stronger ones. Come on, look at him. Don't you feel any mercy at all? We all have to kick the bucket. At some time or another. And you shall decide that? Nothing has happened. That's bad. Very good, another one. I want you to get it done. Come on, keep the boy out of this. I cannot do it and I won't do it. Come back here immediately. Heads are sitting loosely. He's too much of a coward. What has he done to you? What a wimp you are ... Arrest this man. Take him to the Gestapo in Linz. What do you accuse him of? - Arrest this man. Swine! He surely will return. When it gets dark they can't still be searching, can they ... I suspected that this goes wrong. See, he is here finally. Hello there. You don't have to be frightened because of me. Don't we already know each other for long enough? Since you returned from the military hospital you have changed completely. To somebody to be scared of. Not somebody to love anymore. The reason why I came here in the first place ... Fredl got arrested by the SS. - But why? What did he do? - He thought he doesn't have to participate anymore. What do we do now? I have to go to the Gestapo in Linz. First thing tomorrow morning. And what about those two? Once again, no one must escape, beat them to death wherever you find them. Stab them, strangle them, hang them or shoot them if you like. But don't bring them to me alive. Everything will be searched once more. Every farmhouse, every barn. They're always in pairs or in threes. They hide everywhere. Therefore every henhouse, every basement and every attic has to be checked once more. I want to catch them all. No one must survive. Come on. I found someone from Gestapo in Linz who is responsible for your case. Shut up and don't show up anywhere. Otherwise we both will be in for it ... Thank you. - Get out finally. But stay here. - We have to go, it's too dangerous for you. That doesn't make any sense. Fredl won't come back because of this. Thank you. Hello, is anybody there? How come you're here?

Why not? - They want to go. Thank you. That's out of the question. You'll stay here. Fredl can not stay here, it's way too dangerous. He has to hide somewhere else. At least for one night. I gotta pee ... Hey, what's going on ...? Stop! Wait! Best regards, he shall hide you until all of this is over. Take care of yourself. The SS is coming! Please come inside. Do you want something to eat? Please, sit. Mom, I think they are thirsty. Are you hungry too? Do you want to eat something? Help yourself. So much food, you shouldn't have! Enjoy your meal! I'm glad of that! Enjoy your meal. I think I'm going to take a look around the house. - Come on, be more relaxed. Sure, you also get something. Good dog. Don't you already got nearly all of them by now? A few are still missing. The battle of Vienna is in full swing. In the north of Vienna, the Soviets managed to occupy Klosterneuburg and the south of Mdling. Go and hide, quickly. Someone is here. Why did you come back? It's too dangerous for him to hide me, he didn't dare to risk it. - I should have known. As soon as you need something from him ... Good Lord, we already worried about who'd be on our doorstep ... Always hard at work Mr. Lehmberger. - Yeah yeah, a man must not let his hair down. Especially not now. Show me your ID! I have no ID. I lost it. Beautiful day. Nice day. Beautiful day. How do you say 'girl' in Russian? What? Girl? Mitzi = Mdchen. Devushka. It's about time that you come. I've always wanted to see how you do that. Greetings Mitzi. Always hard at work. And you have time to take a walk? Who do you have there? I keep someone, so I'll have one after the war. Who do you want? What kind of stupid question is that? A husband of course. Why don't you look at me anymore? Because I only have one hand left? Don't be silly! Greetings neighbor. - Greetings Berghammer. Tell me, who is this guy that Mitzi is seeing lately? Who do you mean? Oh, that one. The father brought him from the sawmill. For assistance. You don't say? Is there something going on between those two? How did you get the idea? She acts like it. She does? Yesterday mother was listening illegally to the radio again. The front line is already in Lower Austria. Good day! - What's up? Are you the only one here? And how about the local troop commander? He had to bring some stuff to somewhere else. I want to report somebody. - Yeah? Those things are still under my jurisdiction. There still is one of them at the Karner's, I think he's still left from the "Rabbit hunt". A camp inmate. I'll take care of it. Anything else? Chronicle Move. And now out of here, men! Quickly! The war is over! The war is over! You're delighted, huh? I'm just glad it's finally over. Seven shot, even in the pub they talked about it... Let's go. I want to stay with you. Forever if you want. You have to return home, Mikhail. To your mother. Please take a seat. Come here. Just come here. Come closer together, here you go. Perfect. We're ready. Keep smiling please. You're supposed to smile nowadays when taking pictures, that's modern. But that's undignified. What stupid nonsense. In America everybody is smiling when they take pictures. We won't smile. It is known that 9 out of the 500 escaped inmates survived

the "Mhlviertler Hasenjagd" (rabbit hunt of the Mhlviertel) Mikhail and Nikolai returned to their homeland and still live in the former Soviet Union to this day. Z E N S A L O P E N O M English translation: christoph Russian translation: Muumimojo (Inaudible) the verdict of the people's court for the trial against the former mayor of Allerseelen, Josef Haberl. Josef Haberl will be given the benefit of the doubt. The serious accusation that Haberl had given the Volkssturm the explicit order to execute all escaped camp inmates immediately, couldn't be proven sufficiently. Although the court isn't convinced about his innocence, especially because of his fanatic Nazi attitude, it has to find him not guilty because of the many contradictory testimonies. You may go.