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LEVIATHAN
(feature film treatment)

MOSCOW
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LEVIATHAN

1. EXT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. MAGIC HOUR.

Pre-dawn twilight. Overcast weather. A bay, rocky knolls, a bridge, a coastal village across the water.

On this side of the bay, a house stands apart at the foot of a hill, by the bridge. On one side of the house is a garage, on the other a boat trailer with a motorboat on it. Behind the house are an outbuilding and a greenhouse. The area of around 3,000 square meters is surrounded by a neat, low fence. A beat-up sports utility vehicle is parked beside the house.

The light comes on in one of the windows.

A little while later, NIKOLAI (40–42 years old) walks out of the house, approaches the car, gets behind the wheel, and starts the engine. The beams from the car's headlights cut through the shifting fog.

The SUV idles for a while, billowing exhaust fumes, then pulls away.

2. EXT. BRIDGE, VILLAGE STREETS, ROCKY HILLS, CITY STREETS. MAGIC HOUR.

The car crosses the bridge, enters the village, passes through it quickly, and heads through the cliffs. A small seaside town soon appears beyond the cliffs.

3. EXT. RAILROAD STATION. MAGIC HOUR.

The railroad station is deserted. Nikolai's car is parked not far from the rails. NIKOLAI is smoking inside the car with a window rolled down.

The train arrives. NIKOLAI steps out of the car, flicking the cigarette butt away with a snap of his fingers.

DMITRI (40–42 years old) climbs down from the railroad carriage and steps onto the platform. A briefcase hangs by a strap from his shoulder.

He pulls a travel case on wheels in one hand. Three other passengers exit another carriage further down the platform.

NIKOLAI and DMITRI shake hands silently.

4. EXT. CITY STREETS. DAY.

Dawn. Nikolai's SUV drives through the town's deserted streets.

They pass through the town center: a square, a Lenin statue, a gray, Soviet-era municipal building (with a dismal Russian tricolor hanging from the main entrance awning)...

5. EXT. HOTEL. DAY.

The car pulls up outside a hotel. DMITRI and NIKOLAI step out of the car, retrieve DMITRI'S luggage from the trunk, head toward the entrance, and disappear through the doors.

6. INT. HOTEL. DMITRI'S ROOM. DAY.

While DMITRI showers, NIKOLAI sits yawning on a chair and flips through the TV channels, barely pausing at each one. DMITRI'S half-open suitcase lies on the bed, its contents spread out next to it.

DMITRI returns from the bathroom, naked from the waist up, with a towel wrapped around his hips. A faded blue tattoo of three parachutes on his shoulder bears the inscription 'Russian Airborne Troops.' Perfectly unembarrassed by NIKOLAI'S presence, DMITRI tosses aside the towel, pulls on his underpants and trousers, puts on a shirt...

With a heavy sigh, NIKOLAI turns off the television and tosses the remote control onto the table.

NIKOLAI

I'm stepping out for a smoke. I'm passing out. Don't be too long.

DMITRI

Okay, okay.

NIKOLAI leaves.

7. EXT. THE EDGE OF TOWN. DAY.

Nikolai's car pulls out of the town.

8. INT. NIKOLAI'S SUV. DAY.

NIKOLAI smokes a cigarette, exhaling the smoke and tapping the ash through the open window.

DMITRI places the briefcase on his lap, pulls out a thin, red plastic loose-leaf binder, opens it to reveal 50 or so letter-sized sheets of paper, and begins to read them.

(WHAT DO THE DOCUMENTS LOOK LIKE?)

NIKOLAI

Huh, they're up early today!

DMITRI looks up from the papers: further down the road, a traffic cop is motioning with his baton for NIKOLAI to pull over.

9. EXT. TRAFFIC POLICE CHECKPOINT. DAY.

PASHA, a police sergeant, approaches the car.

NIKOLAI

What's the matter? Can't sleep?

PASHA

Your documents. Please.

NIKOLAI

So Mr. Cop, what the hell are you doing up so early?

PASHA offers NIKOLAI his hand. NIKOLAI shakes it. PASHA nods a hello to DMITRI. DMITRI nods back and returns to his papers.

PASHA

Look, Nick, Stepanych is coming to see you today. There's something going on with his valves.

NIKOLAI

Pasha, how much longer is this going to last? What am I, the local charity?

PASHA

Come on, he'll buy you a drink.

NIKOLAI

What the fuck do I need that for? I can get plenty of vodka without him!

PASHA beckons NIKOLAI with his finger, then sticks his head nearly all the way through the window of the SUV.

PASHA

When we go the day after tomorrow, he's promised to take care of everything: the petrol, the glade, and the ammo.

NIKOLAI

Am I supposed to die of happiness or something?

PASHA

Nick...

NIKOLAI

Pasha!

They stare at each other for a few moments.

PASHA

It will only take a second, Nick.

PASHA glances at DMITRI, buried in his papers.

NIKOLAI

No, Pasha. Tomorrow. Can't do it today. Tell him to come tomorrow. You tell him that.

PASHA

Sure, I'll tell him, but...

NIKOLAI

Okay then. Say hi to the wife.

PASHA looks away, displeased.

NIKOLAI and DMITRI drive on.

10. INT. NIKOLAI'S SUV. DAY.

NIKOLAI

I've had it up to here with his Chevy, that old crate! He should've junked it long ago, but no: he wants to keep fixing it! So let him get under it himself and tinker all he wants!

DMITRI looks up from his papers and looks inquiringly at NIKOLAI.

NIKOLAI

Goddamned Stepanych! Fucking cop, lieutenant colonel, probably five years already he's been raking it in from his racket! Could be driving a G-Wagon or something by now!

DMITRI

Maybe he's an honest cop.

NIKOLAI

Yeah, honest and generous!

11. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY.

LILIA (33–36 years old) stands over a kitchen stove, making blini. There is already a stack of them on a plate next to the stove.

ROMAN (13–15 years old) enters. It is obvious that he has just woken up. Standing next to LILIA, he stretches his hand out toward the plate of blini.

ROMAN

Aren't they back yet?

LILIA

(slapping his hand)
No. And where's your 'good morning'?

ROMAN
I don't know.

LILIA
Why don't you look for it?

ROMAN
(going to the table, picking his nose)
Where?

Lilia turns to face him.

LILIA
It's not in there, that's for sure. You'll break your finger. Did you wash up? Don't be a monkey!

She turns back to the stove, hooks the pancake onto the spatula, removes it from the frying pan, and adds it to the stack on the plate.

ROMAN
(quietly)
You're the monkey.

LILIA
(turning back to ROMAN)
What?

ROMAN
Nothing.

LILIA
Wait a minute!

ROMAN
Fuck off.

LILIA
What did you say?!

ROMAN
You heard me!

The sound of an approaching car can be heard outside the house. ROMAN leaps toward the window.

ROMAN
They're here!

He runs from the kitchen, down the hallway, and toward the front door; he opens it, and bursts out of the house to meet NIKOLAI and DMITRI.

12. INT/EXT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY.

LILIA watches from the window as ROMAN pumps DMITRI'S hand cheerfully. The latter is smiling and saying something to ROMAN. NIKOLAI reaches out to ruffle his son's hair, but ROMAN ducks out of the way. The three of them head to the house.

13. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY.

NIKOLAI, DMITRI, ROMAN, and LILIA sit around the table, eating blini with sour cream and jam and drinking tea.

ROMAN

Uncle Mit, tell them to take me with them.

LILIA

You're going to school. You've got a test today. And it's time to get ready.

ROMAN

That's a lie! I don't have any test!

NIKOLAI

Hey, you can't talk to your mother like that!

ROMAN

She's no mother of mine!

NIKOLAI smacks his son upside the head. ROMAN turns red. His eyes immediately fill with resentful tears. He jumps up and runs out of the kitchen. A door slams at the other end of the house. LILIA shakes her head.

NIKOLAI

(to DMITRI)

He's at that difficult age.

DMITRI

Still, you shouldn't hit him.

NIKOLAI

I did it out of love.

LILIA

I'm not driving him to school today. He's been rude all morning, telling me to fuck off.

NIKOLAI

I can't take him either. I've got a friend visiting on business from Moscow.

LILIA

(rising from the table and clearing the plates)
I can see that. He's your son, you decide who he's going to grow up to be: a man or an ape.

NIKOLAI sighs.

NIKOLAI
Does he really have a test?

LILIA
Yes.

DMITRI
Nick, take him to school. I'll come with you if you like.

LILIA
(carrying the dishes to the sink)
He'll like that.

NIKOLAI hesitates, then rises and leaves the kitchen.

NIKOLAI'S VOICE
(from deep inside the house)
Hey, soldier of fortune! Are you ready?

Left alone, LILIA and DMITRI remain silent for a long time. She washes the dishes, while he finishes his tea.

Eventually, she returns to the table to clear the remaining dishes. DMITRI looks up at her.

DMITRI
How are you?

LILIA
Fine. Looking for a place to live. I keep telling him, let's find something in the district, away from here, from all these... But he won't talk about it. Maybe you could talk to him?

DMITRI
I'll try.

ROMAN and NIKOLAI'S approaching voices can be heard from the within the house.

ROMAN
Come on, dad! Give it back! It's my lucky hat!

NIKOLAI'S VOICE
You'd say no to your own father? I'll give it back, I'll give it back, just quit whining.

LILIA takes the dishes to the sink.

NIKOLAI and ROMAN enter: NIKOLAI is wearing a baseball cap with a Nike logo on the front; ROMAN is wearing his school backpack.

NIKOLAI

Here,
(handing ROMAN the car keys)
go start the car. You can drive.

ROMAN

All by myself?

He takes the key from NIKOLAI.

NIKOLAI

Yeah, right. Uncle Mit and I are coming too.

ROMAN

But I can drive?

NIKOLAI

Yeah, yeah.

NIKOLAI takes off the baseball cap and jams it onto ROMAN'S head.

DMITRI rises from the table.

ROMAN

Great!

NIKOLAI responds to the latter gesture with a light kick. ROMAN wheels around and suddenly rains a series of surprisingly technical blows on his father's torso with his arms and legs. NIKOLAI'S face twists in shock, but he manages to block every hit, then flicks ROMAN in the forehead. ROMAN tries to block his father's hit, but misses. He wheels around and runs out of the kitchen into the street.

NIKOLAI

Taught him myself.

LILIA

A few more years, and you won't be able to fight him off.

NIKOLAI

Yeah right.

Outside the house, ROMAN can be heard starting the car.

LILIA

Make sure he doesn't speed too much.

NIKOLAI approaches her and kisses her on the lips.

DMITRI glances at his wristwatch.

DMITRI
Shall we go?

NIKOLAI looks LILIA right in the eyes.

NIKOLAI
I love you.

LILIA
I know.

14. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY.

Left alone, LILIA finishes washing the dishes and straightens up around the kitchen.

15. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. BEDROOM. DAY.

Next, she goes to the bedroom (a double bed, bedside tables, a vanity, a television set, a linen closet). There, she takes off her house clothes (undressing to her underwear) and puts on a striking ensemble that is just shy of evening wear.

Sitting at the vanity, she gathers her hair at the top of her head, puts on a touch of eyeliner and a subtle shade of lipstick.

A car is heard pulling up outside. LILIA listens. The doorbell rings.

16. EXT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. DAY.

LILIA goes to the front door and opens it. A stocky man – STEPANYCH – (55–60 years old) in a tracksuit stands outside the door.

STEPANYCH.
Hi.

LILIA
Good morning.

STEPANYCH
Is Nick around?

LILIA
He's not here. He took Roman to school, should be back soon. Come on in, Stepanych.

LILIA underlines her invitation with a gesture of her hand and steps aside to let him in.

STEPANYCH
No, I'm fine. I'll wait out here.

He nods at a bench by the fence.

STEPANYCH
We must have just missed each other. I'll have a smoke.

He produces a crumpled pack of cigarettes from a trouser pocket, walks over to the bench, and sits down.

LILIA shrugs and closes the door from inside.

After a bit, STEPANYCH puts the cigarettes back in his pocket, clasps his hands on his stomach, and sits, looking around at Nikolai's house, at the shed, at his white Chevy... After a while, he begins to sing quietly:

STEPANYCH

Moments, moments, moments...

17. INT./EXT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. DAY.

LILIA watches him from the house, concealed behind the tulle curtain at the kitchen window (she is watering the flowers).

STEPANYCH stops looking around and stares at the ground by his feet. Hanging his head, he scratches at the ground with his toe, either covering something up or clearing something off.

From her spot, LILIA cannot see what he is looking at.

Suddenly, STEPANYCH looks up and turns toward the door. He rises slightly, then gets to his feet.

LILIA can see Nikolai's car moving toward the house.

18. EXT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. DAY.

STEPANYCH gets up from the bench and walks toward NIKOLAI and DMITRI as they climb out of the SUV.

STEPANYCH

Hey Nick!

NIKOLAI

Hey yourself. What, again?

NIKOLAI nods at the Chevy.

STEPANYCH shrugs, as if admitting his guilt.

NIKOLAI

Didn't Pasha tell you I was busy today?

STEPANYCH

No. What's up?

NIKOLAI

A friend of mine visiting from Moscow. We have a meeting at twelve noon. Have to go soon. And we still have to talk things over. I'm sure you understand.

STEPANYCH offers his hand to DMITRI.

STEPANYCH

Ivan Stepanych.

DMITRI

Dmitry.

NIKOLAI

Come back tomorrow, Stepanych. Early, around this time.

STEPANYCH

Tomorrow?

NIKOLAI

I promise. We'll pull together, all of us, and fix this up like pros!

STEPANYCH

Okay, Nick.

STEPANYCH turns around and heads toward his Chevy, climbs behind the wheel, starts the car, and steps on the gas.

NIKOLAI

He's mad.

DMITRI

Interesting guy.

NIKOLAI

Yeah, buried three wives. He's a fucking tyrant. A difficult man to live with.

19. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY.

NIKOLAI, DMITRI and LILIA sit at the table in the kitchen. On the table in front of DMITRI is the same red binder of documents which he was reading in the car with NIKOLAI as they left the hotel to come home and have blini for breakfast.

DMITRI

(placing his hands on the binder)

Now then, my good friends, I have found corroborating information. In the last two months, I dug up a thing or two on your monster.

NIKOLAI

Did you squeeze his Fabergé?

DMITRI nods.

DMITRI

And they're pretty hefty.

NIKOLAI

They don't look it.

LILIA

So what now? What do we get out of this?

DMITRI

I don't think things will be going in our favor today.

NIKOLAI

(cutting in)

We're not dead yet!

DMITRI

And we need to make him think for a bit about what will cost him more: to come to an understanding with us, or to deal with the publicity...

NIKOLAI

What do you mean?

LILIA

Nick, let him finish.

NIKOLAI

Come on, I want to know what he dug up! You can't pin the bastard down!

DMITRI

We don't need to pin him down. We'll just gently, carefully squeeze him by his Fabergé.

NIKOLAI

I'm not a big believer in the gentle approach. You've got to use a fist, a fucking sledgehammer!

He smashes his fist down on the table. LILIA flinches.

DMITRI

No, Nick, you've got to draw them out with sugar. Facts. That's what we'll use.

NIKOLAI

Come on, let me read it.

DMITRI

Not yet. Later.

NIKOLAI

What?

DMITRI

Nick, you're a hotheaded, emotional guy. I'm sorry, but you know yourself that you blow up over every little thing. You're unpredictable.

NIKOLAI

Come on. I'm a reasonable man. I have to know. Or what, you think I'm just going to get up and tell them everything, like an idiot?

DMITRI

Nick, do you trust me?

NIKOLAI

Of course.

DMITRI

Then you'll read it later.

NIKOLAI snorts, shakes his head, and looks at LILIA. She shrugs.

NIKOLAI

Okay. Later then, although you're toying with me, rookie. I don't like that.

DMITRI

Nick, it's been twenty years since I was a rookie in the battalion.

NIKOLAI

And? Then why did you even tell me about these papers? Take them out, wave them in our faces?

DMITRI

Okay, boss. Go ahead and read them, then.

20. EXT. CITY STREETS. DAY.

Nikolai's SUV enters the town.

21. INT. NIKOLAI'S SUV. DAY.

DMITRI sits in the passenger seat, staring through the window at the shabby houses lining the dilapidated road.

NIKOLAI is concentrating on driving.

LILIA sits in the backseat, staring at the display of her cell phone. She presses buttons, lifts the cell phone to her ear, listens, then, obviously unable to get through, hangs up.

NIKOLAI

Sure, I knew that he was ex-KGB and a criminal! Everyone knows him around here. In the nineties he was the local heavy's minion – up to his elbows in blood. That's obvious

enough. All our leaders are like that. But when you see it all in detail! So why isn't he in jail, if all of this is true, if he really did all those things?

DMITRI

Who's going to put him in jail? He's untouchable. Somebody up there must have his back. (he points a finger toward the sky)
But that won't last. You've got one state of affairs today, a different one tomorrow... I told you: Fabergé – it's easy to steer: stimulus – reaction. It's simple. Why complicate things? So your Ivan Ilyich will keep sitting by the trough until he either dies or gets eaten by someone just like him.

NIKOLAI

Or until the people go for their pitchforks.

DMITRI

No one left to brandish the pitchforks.

LILIA

(into the phone)

Hello, Angela, are you coming or what? So what if he's sleeping, come without him... I see. I know, you've got no one... I remember. Listen, you think maybe I've got my mind on things other than meat? Okay, bye.

NIKOLAI looks at LILIA in the rearview mirror.

NIKOLAI

So, what's up? Not coming?

LILIA

No.

NIKOLAI

Nice friends you've got.

LILIA

What about your friends?

NIKOLAI

(nods in DMITRI'S direction)

Mine's right there.

LILIA

Pasha just got back from his shift. He's sleeping. And she's got no one to watch the kid.

NIKOLAI

Last time they had an excuse too.

LILIA

Fine, Nick, you're right: my friends are shit and yours are gold.

DMITRI

Friends, please, let's calm down. Nick, get a hold of yourself.

NIKOLAI

I'd have to take my hands off the wheel for that.

DMITRI

(to LILIA)

Lil.

LILIA

I'm not saying a word.

22. EXT. SQUARE IN THE CENTER OF TOWN. DAY.

NIKOLAI parks the car in the square near the Lenin monument (on one side of the square is the Mayor's office, on the other side, the city courthouse).

Stepping out of the car, all three go in the direction of the courthouse.

23. INT. COURTHOUSE. DAY.

NIKOLAI and DMITRI stand behind a table two steps away from an empty defendants' cage.

A man in a business suit (50–55 years old), the Municipal Administration representative ALYOKHIN, stands behind the table across from them.

A drowsy young woman, the court stenographer, sits behind a separate table with a desktop computer to the left of the judge.

LILIA stands between the first and second of the four rows of chairs in the gallery.

A grave, middle-aged woman in a black robe stands facing the courtroom, reading the court's ruling:

TARASOVA

“Resolution of the Pribrezhny Municipal Administration No. 1295, regarding the confiscation from Nikolai Nikolaevich Sergeyev of a plot of land, located at the following address: 6 Ribachye Street, Zagorye District, Pribrezhny; 0.27 hectares, survey number 28:136:254:2001, situated on the plot are the following buildings and constructions: a residential property, a garage for vehicle maintenance and repair, an outbuilding, a greenhouse. Mr. Sergeyev petitioned the Zagorye District Court to repeal the aforementioned Decree.

The Zagorye District Court ruled to deny Mr. Sergeyev's petition.

Mr. Sergeyev disagreed with the Court's Ruling and petitioned the Pribrezhny Municipal Court to appeal the Ruling of the Zagorye District Court.

During the court proceedings, Mr. Sergeyev insisted that the Court Ruling be repealed.

The officer of the Municipal Administration countered statements in the appeal and requested that the Ruling of the Zagorye District Court be upheld.

The appellant states that the initial Court Ruling violated material and procedural rules, and disagrees with the conclusion that seizure of the land parcel, along with the buildings and constructions located within it, for federal needs, is effected on a lawful basis. The appellant considers the law to have been grossly violated: the Administration did not comply with the deadline for notifying Mr. Sergeyev of the purchase of his property, and violated the procedure for determining the purchase price of the land parcel and property located within it. In addition, the appellant contends that in the process of determining the purchase price, the Court did not take into account the independent property valuation report which was submitted, on the basis of which the value of the seized property significantly exceeds the purchase price determined by the Administration.

The appellant also states in his complaint that in issuing the Decree, the Administration grossly violated civil law on obtaining the owner's agreement to the purchase of the property. Mr. Sergeyev was not notified of the upcoming seizure a year in advance (article 279, item 3, of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation), as a result of which the appellant incurred a number of expenses related to improvements to his property.

In addition, in determining the purchase price, the Administration did not take into account the appellant's loss of revenue from the business conducted on the land parcel belonging to him, as well as his liabilities to third parties (article 281 of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation).

The Court has determined that pursuant to Decree No. 1295 of the Pribrezhny Municipal Administration, the land parcel, along with the buildings and constructions located within it, was seized from Mr. Sergeyev with the intent of building a municipal communications center. The Decree also defines the purchase price of the land parcel and buildings and constructions located within it as 639,540.27 rubles (six hundred thirty-nine thousand, five hundred forty rubles and twenty-seven kopeks).

The purchase price was determined on the basis of the valuation.

At the request of Mr. Sergeyev, Alliance LLC also conducted an assessment of the market value of liabilities for damages and loss of agricultural production related to seizure of the land parcel with an area of 0.27 hectares for federal needs. The report states that the market value of the aforementioned liabilities constitutes 3,500,000 rubles (three million, five hundred thousand rubles).

The Court finds the property valuation submitted by Mr. Sergeyev to be suspect, as it includes the value of constructions which have not been registered as required by law. Specifically, the automotive workshop, the maintenance building, and the hothouse were built on the land parcel without proper authorization. Pursuant to article 222 of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation, unauthorized constructions are not defined as legal property and are subject to demolition. Therefore, unauthorized structures (the shed, the maintenance building, the hothouse) which have been constructed by Mr. Sergeyev on his land parcel are not subject to consideration in the determination of the purchase price. In addition, the appraisal submitted by Mr. Sergeyev contains an estimate of liabilities related to business activities conducted by the latter to provide automotive services. However, the Civil Code currently in effect does not provide for damages for "loss of business". The purchase price may include losses incurred by Mr. Sergeyev in connection with premature termination of his liabilities to third parties. However, the appraisal submitted by Mr. Sergeyev contains no such evaluation. Due to said circumstances, the Court rejects the appraisal submitted by Mr. Sergeyev. The Court upholds the purchase price of 639,540.27 rubles (six hundred and thirty-nine thousand five hundred and forty rubles, twenty-seven kopecks) as determined on the basis of the appraisal conducted by the Administration.

The Court also rejects the appellant's statement that the Administration violated the purchase procedure (with regard to timely notification, etc.). The court documents contain letters from the Administration to Mr. Sergeyev containing information about the purchase. In addition, the Zagorye District Court heard testimony from Administration officials stating that Mr. Sergeyev was notified of the seizure of the land parcel and buildings and constructions located within it in accordance with the procedure established by law. The Court also finds Mr. Sergeyev's statements to the effect that he had not received these notifications to be suspect, as his claims are refuted by case evidence.

Having examined Mr. Sergeyev's statements contained in the appeal, the original Court Ruling, and case documentation, the Panel of Judges of the Pribrezhny Municipal Court of the Russian Federation has concluded that the appellant failed to prove grounds for repeal or

change of the original Court Ruling, as defined in article 330 of the Civil Procedural Code of the Russian Federation.

Based on the above, and in accordance with articles 320–335 of the Civil Procedural Code of the Russian Federation, the Court has ruled:

That Nikolai Nikolaevich Sergeyev’s petition to repeal the Ruling of the Zagorye District Court is denied.

That the Ruling of the Zagorye District Court is upheld without changes, and Mr. Sergeyev’s appeal is denied.

The present Ruling comes into full force and effect as of the day of its publication.

24. EXT. SQUARE IN THE CENTER OF TOWN. DAY.

Standing by the edge of the Courthouse, NIKOLAI and LILIA smoke cigarettes. DMITRI emerges from the courthouse and approaches them.

The three of them walk towards NIKOLAI’S car.

24. INT. THE MONASTERY RESTAURANT. DAY.

The Refectory: the monastery’s restaurant. A spacious hall with an icon in the corner. The interior is stained wood: the tables, benches, chairs, walls, floor, ceiling, window panes, tiles – everything looks grounded, simple, solid. The tables are covered in white tablecloths; airy, off-white curtains hang on the windows.

Two people, the only diners in the restaurant, sit at the table: a priest in a simple black robe and VADIM SERGEYICH, who is wearing an expensive suit, white shirt and tie, and a United Russia pin on the lapel of his jacket; they are eating ‘Monastery style’: a half carafe of vodka, a stuffed suckling pig surrounded with sliced vegetables...

PRIEST

Come on Vadim, every time you come here, you start on about your election. There’s still a year to go.

VADIM SERGEYICH

Lock the stable door before the horse has bolted.

PRIEST

You think about worldly things, sure, but don’t forget about the Kingdom of Heaven either.

VADIM SERGEYICH

But I...

PRIEST

I know, I know, you are very generous. Even today, you didn’t come all this way to the district center for nothing. I’m telling you again, you don’t need to worry. All power comes from God. As long as God wishes it so, you don’t need to worry.

VADIM SERGEYICH

Does he wish it so?

The priest frowns.

VADIM SERGEYICH
Who knows better than you, Father?

VADIM SERGEYICH takes the carafe and refills the priest's glass, then his own.

PRIEST
He does, he does. Have a pickle.

They clink glasses and knock back the vodka (the priest just takes a small sip).

Just then, a stooped OLD WOMAN in a headscarf appears in the doorway, leaning on a cane. Having found the priest with her weakened eyes, she lunges toward him and prostrates herself at his feet, clutching his robe.

OLD WOMAN
Reverend Father, Your Eminence, I beg your blessing!

PRIEST
(looking around helplessly)
For God's sake, who let her in here?

26. COUNTRYSIDE. HIGHWAY. MAGIC HOUR.

Evening. A black Lexus SUV with its headlights on roars down the highway.

27. INT. INSIDE THE LEXUS. MAGIC HOUR.

Beetroot-red, bleary-eyed VADIM SERGEYICH sits in the back seat of the limo, his jacket unbuttoned. The front passenger seat is occupied by LESHA, a bodyguard with a shaved head (35–40 years old). The driver, VASYA, is another hulking guy (25–30 years old).

VADIM SERGEYICH, who had been nodding off in the back, is woken by his cell phone ringing. He fishes it out of his jacket pocket, looks at the display, accepts the call, and lifts the phone to his ear.

VADIM SERGEYICH
Hello... Yes. Thank God, finally. Now, let's get Tyagunov and his cops involved... Well, what else are we waiting for? Let's level that idiot's fucking place already. Lost all this time because of him... How is that your fault? You don't need to justify yourself... Okay, that's it, bye.

He puts away the cell phone, thinks for a bit in gloomy silence, then turns to his bodyguard.

VADIM SERGEYICH
Lesh, get me the thing from the glove compartment...

LESHA reaches into the glove compartment, produces a stainless steel flask with the Russian coat of arms on its side and hands it to VADIM SERGEYICH, causing its contents to gurgle. VADIM SERGEYICH unscrews the cap.

VADIM SERGEYICH

(taking a gulp)

Listen, Vasya, let's go pay this fucking idiot a visit. The one at the bottom of the mountain.

VASYA

Over the bridge?

VADIM SERGEYICH

Uh-huh.

VADIM SERGEYICH takes another drink from the flask.

VASYA

Because we've got all sorts of people under mountains.

VADIM SERGEYICH

D'you learn to be funny from my wife or something?

VASYA

I'm sorry, Vadim Sergeyich, just wanted to have a laugh.

VADIM SERGEYICH

You watch it, or I'll put you on the ride back.

28. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. MAGIC HOUR/NIGHT.

NIKOLAI, DMITRI and LILIA sit around the kitchen table, which is set with a nearly empty vodka bottle, shot glasses, and snacks. NIKOLAI, visibly drunk, sits leaning against the table, dressed in a light blue, sleeveless sailor's shirt. His bare shoulder is marked with a tattoo identical to DMITRI'S: three faded blue parachutes with the words "Russian Airborne Troops."

NIKOLAI

Municipal communications center, my ass! Who's supposed to communicate with who over here? The bastard is obviously trying to clear the spot for himself, build himself a palace.

LILIA

Nick, calm down already! Same thing over and over.

NIKOLAI

With these hands right here...!

All of a sudden, he gets up from the table and begins pacing the room.

LILIA

Here we go.

NIKOLAI, as he walks, turns on the light, then goes to a large, old black and white photograph, hanging in a frame on the wall. He removes it, and brings it back to the kitchen. Bringing it to the table, he moves the glasses and food to the side and sets

the photograph on the table before DMITRI. The photograph shows a panoramic shot of NIKOLAI'S house. The house looks different: there is no garage or greenhouse...the bridge has not been built across the street, there is a fishing boat on the river, and in the distance the tower of a church.

NIKOLAI

Look at that! My grandfather lived in this house! And my Dad, too!

LILIA

He's seen that already.

NIKOLAI'S face darkens.

NIKOLAI

Stay out of it!

LILIA

Don't yell at me!

DMITRI

Nick, calm down.

NIKOLAI

She started it...

NIKOLAI waves a hand dismissively, picks up the bottle, and splits the last of the vodka between himself and DMITRI.

NIKOLAI

Here, Mit. To your health, bro. Thank you, you did everything you could. And your Fabergé...

DMITRI

They're his Fabergé, not mine.

NIKOLAI

I'm just saying, I don't see how you plan to put your theory into practice. Either way, they'll level this shit, we'll take their 639,000 rubles and 27 kopeks and buy some hovel by Angela's, and I'll go work on the force, like Pasha...

LILIA

Jesus.

NIKOLAI takes a drink.

So does DMITRI.

DMITRI

I barely recognize you anymore. The Nick I remember wasn't afraid of obstacles. Quite the opposite.

NIKOLAI

Things were different in the army, Mit. You know that. Plus it was years ago. Lost some of my fighting spirit along the way. What do you want? What are you, a psychologist?

DMITRI

I'm not a psychologist, I just think you could try to look at the situation differently.

NIKOLAI

How?

DMITRI

Think of it as a challenge. Start over.

NIKOLAI

Easy for you to say. Tomorrow you'll go back to your cushy Moscow life, what do you care? And we're...

DMITRI

So come with me. I mean, pack your things and come. Rent a studio for around thirty thousand a month.

LILIA

Oh yeah. sure.

DMITRI

I'll help you find a job. With hands like yours, you'll be fine. We'll find a job for Lilia, too.

(looks at her)

A salesclerk, or working the cash register, for a start. Much better than cleaning fish at the factory here .

NIKOLAI

What about Roman?

DMITRI

What about Roman? Roman will go to school.

NIKOLAI

Who's going to enroll him? He's barely pulling C's.

DMITRI

They're required to enroll him. Nothing they can do.

NIKOLAI gets up and goes to the fridge, opens the freezer compartment and produces another bottle of vodka.

LILIA

(to NIKOLAI)

Slow down.

ROMAN'S VOICE (OFF CAMERA)
I'm not barely pulling C's. I'm almost getting B's.

NIKOLAI
Are you eavesdropping?

ROMAN'S VOICE (OFF CAMERA)
I'm not eavesdropping. I went to the bathroom.

NIKOLAI returns to the table.

NIKOLAI
Come over here, come join us.
(to LILIA)
Mom, pour the boy some tea or something, I don't know.

ROMAN enters the kitchen with a sullen look, and approaches the table.

NIKOLAI
Pull up a chair, sit down.

ROMAN pulls up a chair and sits down.

LILIA has risen from the table: she fills the tea kettle with water, puts it on the stove, and remains at the counter with her back to the men. Then she turns around, folding her arms across her chest, and watches them.

NIKOLAI
(opening the bottle)
What do you say, kiddo, should we move to Moscow?

ROMAN
Let's do it.

NIKOLAI
Wouldn't you miss this beautiful place? The sea?

ROMAN
Nah. Why would I miss it? When I grow up, I'm going to leave anyway.

NIKOLAI places the bottle on the table.

NIKOLAI
When did you decide this?

ROMAN
Long time ago. When Mother died.

NIKOLAI
You were only four.

ROMAN

So? I remember everything.

NIKOLAI retrieves the bottle and fills the shot glasses: DMITRI'S, LILIA'S, and his own.

LILIA
No more for me, Nick, I'm done.

ROMAN
Give me some!

NIKOLAI
I'll give you something else.

DMITRI
(picking up his glass)
Good job, Roman. Keep the old people on their toes.
They've gotten so boring.

NIKOLAI
We're not boring. Tell him, Lilia.

NIKOLAI picks up the shot glass and hands it to LILIA.

LILIA
I told you, I'm done.

She goes to the table, picks up the photograph, and takes it with her into the room.

NIKOLAI
(clinking glasses with DMITRI)
Okay.

They drink.

28A. INT. ROOM IN NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. MAGIC HOUR/NIGHT.

LILIA hangs the photograph back in its place.
Through the window, a car with lit headlights can be seen approaching.
LILIA looks out of the window.

NIKOLAI'S VOICE (OFF CAMERA)
Who the heck is out there?

29. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

VADIM SERGEYICH, accompanied by the bodyguard and the driver (both powerful men, a head taller than their boss), climb out of the Lexus parked right by the gate.

NIKOLAI, DMITRI, LILIA and ROMAN walk out of the house.

NIKOLAI
Hello. Who are you?

VADIM SERGEYICH

You should know what your leaders look like, Nikolai.

VADIM SERGEYICH stops half a dozen feet from NIKOLAI. Behind VADIM SERGEYICH, the driver and bodyguard appear.

NIKOLAI

So what do you want, leader?

VADIM SERGEYICH

(spreading his arms wide)

All of this!

NIKOLAI

Come and get it. Will it fit into your hearse?

NIKOLAI nods at the black outline of the Lexus parked by the fence.

VADIM SERGEYICH grins drunkenly, and sticks out his bottom lip.

NIKOLAI

Still riding around in that thing?

VADIM SERGEYICH

You people don't want to do things the friendly way, that's why you're drowning in shit. Have you packed?

DMITRI

Actually, you have no right to be here. The court ruling hasn't taken effect yet. You are not the authorities, you don't have a warrant or any other documents that would allow you...

VADIM SERGEYICH

Who are you?

DMITRI

Dmitri Seleznev, Moscow Bar Association, Nikolai's attorney in the case against your company.

VADIM SERGEYICH

Yeah, I heard something about that. So what, Nick, you don't defend yourself anymore?

DMITRI

Nick, ignore him.

NIKOLAI

I'm going to answer you right now, you bastard.

VADIM SERGEYICH

Okay, okay, enough, I'm terrified! Fine, fine. I just wanted to have a drink with you, clear the air.

He reaches a hand toward the bodyguard. The bodyguard puts the flask in his hand. VADIM SERGEYICH twists off the cap, takes a sip.

VADIM SERGEYICH

(to NIKOLAI)

Want some? No? I'm not offering any to the lawyer. I don't like you people. I just wanted to say something about the future.

DMITRI

(turning round)

Lilia, call the cops.

LILIA and ROMAN stand on the stoop.

VADIM SERGEYICH

What's your name, kid?

DMITRI

Listen, what are you doing this for? You're not so drunk that you can't understand...

VADIM SERGEYICH

Shut that lawyer's trap of yours.

(to NIKOLAI)

Listen here, Nick. Remember this: you've never had any rights, and you'll never have any rights.

NIKOLAI turns around and walks toward the house.

VADIM SERGEYICH

Where are you going?

NIKOLAI walks up the steps and disappears through the door. LILIA and ROMAN watch him.

DMITRI

(to VADIM SERGEYICH)

You should leave. You have entered private property without permission. The owners don't want you here. No need to make things worse.

VADIM SERGEYICH

What? I'm the owner around here!

DMITRI

Okay. Why don't we talk tomorrow? Actually, I wanted to ask you for a meeting anyway. Ivan Alexandrovich has told me a lot about you.

VADIM SERGEYICH

(after a pause)

And who exactly is Ivan Alexandrovich?

DMITRI

Kostrov. From the Cabinet.

VADIM SERGEYICH cranes his neck and stares vaguely at the hazy sky.

DMITRI

Just because we can't see them, doesn't mean they're not there.

The Mayor sighs heavily.

VADIM SERGEYICH

I'm tired.

DMITRI

So what about tomorrow?

VADIM SERGEYICH

Between three and five. Office hours for constituent issues.

He wheels about, swaying precariously (the bodyguard helps him), and walks slowly back to his car.

DMITRI waits until the car is gone, then returns to the house.

30. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

DMITRI enters the kitchen to see LILIA standing (with her back towards DMITRI) opposite a sobered-up NIKOLAI sitting on a chair by the table, a hunting rifle on his lap. LILIA slowly sits down at the table.

DMITRI

(going up to the table and sitting down)

What's that, Nick? Going hunting?

NIKOLAI

See, Mit, I told you he wanted this stuff for himself.

DMITRI

First thing tomorrow morning, we'll go to the cops and the Public Prosecutor, file crime reports: persecution, abuse of authority... We'll clip his wings yet, Nick.

NIKOLAI

Let's have a drink.

DMITRI

Okay. Just put the gun back where you got it from.

NIKOLAI

Mit?

DMITRI

Yes, Nick.

NIKOLAI

I'm not going to Moscow. I'm staying here.

31. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. ROMAN'S ROOM. DAY.

In the morning, DMITRI sits at the desk in Roman's room staring at a computer screen, rereading a crime statement. The computer is ancient: a large, square, non-flat screen monitor displaying the text; a metal box with a loudly humming fan under the desk. An equally ancient printer, dingy and decrepit, stands on the window sill.

DMITRI

(quietly and quickly)

On September 7, 2012, before the court ruling came into effect and before it was enforced, Vadim Sergeyich Shelevyat, who currently holds the post of Mayor of the town of Pribrezhny, came to see me. Accompanied by two men, he demanded that I vacate the land and the residence. The actions of V. Shelevyat caused considerable harm to me and my family.

I believe that V. Shelevyat does not have the authority to execute a court ruling which has not yet come into effect, and that his actions constitute a criminal act as defined by article 330 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation. On the basis of the above, and guided by articles 285, 330 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, and article 141 of the Criminal Procedural Code of the Russian Federation, I demand an inquiry into the actions described in the present statement, and pending proof, **I demand that a criminal case be filed.**

Having read it, DMITRI presses 'print', rises from his chair and goes over to the printer on the window sill. Outside the window, LILIA and ROMAN, wearing his school backpack on his shoulders, climb into Nikolai's SUV: LILIA gets behind the wheel, and ROMAN takes the front passenger seat.

32

33

34 INT. NIKOLAI'S GARAGE. DAY.

The doors of the nearby shed are open wide. Inside is a typical automotive workshop with a full set of necessary tools and equipment.

Hungover and gloomy, NIKOLAI is poking around the engine of Stepanych's white Chevy.

STEPANYCH sits on an old, Soviet-era fake leather car seat by the doors inside the shed, and works on a crossword.

STEPANYCH

Here's another one Nick, d'you hear?

NIKOLAI

(from under the hood)

Yeah?

STEPANYCH

Darwin's term for directional and irreversible historical development of life. One, two, three... Nine letters.

NIKOLAI

A protracted dive from the cunt to the grave.

STEPANYCH

You paratroopers. Aren't you ashamed of using words like that?

NIKOLAI

Shameful is as shameful does.

STEPANYCH

Okay, I get that.

(he counts the squares on the crossword with his pen)

E-vo-lu-tion. It fits!

(he writes in the word)

DMITRI enters the garage.

DMITRI

(to STEPANYCH)

Morning.

STEPANYCH

Morning.

They shake hands.

DMITRI

(to NIKOLAI)

How much longer do you need?

NIKOLAI comes out from underneath the hood, wiping his hands on a rag.

NIKOLAI

Another half hour or so.

DMITRI

Okay, because I've typed everything up and printed it out already, you just have to sign it. And we have to go.

NIKOLAI nods.

STEPANYCH puts the crossword away, gets up, and comes over to the others, coughing.

STEPANYCH

Dmitri, I don't know if Nikolai mentioned this to you, but tomorrow is my birthday. I'd like to invite you to join our party. A little campfire, some shashlik, some vodka, we'll do some shooting...On me, Nick.

DMITRI

Go shooting – you mean, like, a hunt?

NIKOLAI

No, Dmitri, what kind of hunt would we be going on? The girls and children are coming too.

STEPANYCH

We just do a little target practice, just for fun.

DMITRI

Is it far?

STEPANYCH

Probably about three hours' drive. We get there in the morning, spend the day and night, get a good sleep, and leave the next day.

DMITRI

I'd love to...

STEPANYCH

Great!

35. INT. POLICE STATION. DAY.

NIKOLAI, LILIA and DMITRI stand by a barred window inside the precinct. DMITRI holds a briefcase.

On the other side of the window, a Lieutenant in a police cap reads the statement typed up by DMITRI and signed by NIKOLAI. A rotary telephone stands on the desk next to the Lieutenant. A cell phone lies next to it. The Lieutenant finishes the statement, removes his hat, places it on the desk next to the cell phone, and looks up at DMITRI.

LIEUTENANT

Are you the victim?

DMITRI

No. He is. I'm his lawyer.

The Lieutenant hesitates, then gets up, takes the statement and the cell phone, and disappears into the depths of the precinct, but then he returns and picks up his cell phone from the desk.

DMITRI
Went to report to his boss.

They are quiet for a moment.

DMITRI
Something tells me he won't take our statement.

NIKOLAI
Can he do that?

DMITRI
Sure. Although he's required to by law.

NIKOLAI
So what next?

DMITRI
The Public Prosecutor's Office. Then to court. We'll make a complaint about this lieutenant, too. The important thing is to gather the facts. Even when we're being refused.

LILIA
Are you planning to pick a fight with the whole town?

NIKOLAI
Not 'you', 'us'.

He embraces LILIA with one arm.

LILIA
(freeing herself)
No, don't drag me into this.

NIKOLAI
Say again?

LILIA
I still want to stay alive.

NIKOLAI
You think I don't?

LILIA
I don't know. Everything's bad enough, and you're determined to set the whole town against us.

NIKOLAI

What do you mean the whole town? You think these jerks represent the whole town?

LILIA

Don't act like you don't understand me.

NIKOLAI

So what, that's it? Give up?

DMITRI

(looking at his watch)

Where did our lieutenant disappear to?

NIKOLAI

(leaning over the opening in the barred window)

Lieutenant!

DMITRI

Nick, what are you doing?

NIKOLAI

What? Where the hell is he?

Three cops enter the building.

At the same time, the Lieutenant finally returns from the depths of the precinct.

LIEUTENANT

What's all the noise about?

DMITRI

There's no noise. On the contrary, we are waiting quietly for you to accept our statement.

LIEUTENANT

I'm not talking to you.

(to NIKOLAI)

Are you being disorderly out here?

NIKOLAI

I'm not being disorderly.

The Lieutenant nods to the cops and jerks his head toward NIKOLAI. They approach him.

COP

(taking NIKOLAI by the elbow)

Come with us, sir.

NIKOLAI

(breaking free)

What for?

LIEUTENANT

Right, resisting an officer of the law. Arrest him!

The cops immediately twist NIKOLAI'S arms behind his back and bend him over until his head nearly touches the floor.

NIKOLAI

What are you doing?

DMITRI

Stop this immediately! This is police brutality! Illegal arrest!
This is a criminal matter, lieutenant!

LILIA, completely lost and scared, presses her back to the wall, as if trying to sink into it.

36. INT. PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE. DAY.

A SECRETARY sits at her desk, looking at DMITRI, who is looming over her from the other side of the desk, with LILIA standing behind him.

SECRETARY

I told you, the Public Prosecutor isn't here, and I'm not authorized. I can't accept your statements.

DMITRI

And there isn't a single living creature in the office besides you?

SECRETARY

No one authorized.

DMITRI

Everyone's gone fishing? That doesn't seem strange to you?

SECRETARY

No. We only have two of them: the Public Prosecutor is out sick, and the detective is out conducting an investigation. Send it by mail. Or go to court.

DMITRI

All right, I understand. We demand a refusal in writing.

SECRETARY

I've told you, I don't have the authority.

37. EXT. PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE. DAY.

Outside the Public Prosecutor's Office, LILIA and DMITRI, still holding his briefcase, walk toward the SUV parked a little way away from the building.

DMITRI

They'll always find a reason: they're out, they're at lunch. I had this one case, three months the judge refused to accept my statement. If they want to, they can turn this into a never-ending story. So if the courthouse doesn't work out, then the post office. At least we'll be able to keep bugging them later, demanding a response. Then I'll try to get in to see the Mayor.

Reaching the car, they climb inside: LILIA sits behind the wheel, DMITRI sits in the passenger seat next to her.

38. INT. CAR. DAY.

LILIA starts the engine.

LILIA

(after a pause)

Maybe we should call Angela? We have Stepanych after all. He's a Colonel, a cop.

She slowly pulls out of the parking lot.

DMITRI

He's just a traffic cop. Although they're all about the same, out here. Good idea. Okay, call her. Maybe he'll get Nick released. In any case, it can't hurt.

LILIA retrieves her cell phone from her pocket, punches in the number, lifts it to her ear, and waits.

LILIA

Why is it that when I need them, I can never get through?

DMITRI

Let's split up. I'll go to the court, you go see your friend.

LILIA

If she's even home.

DMITRI

I'll be in touch.

39. EXT. SQUARE IN THE CENTER OF TOWN. COURTHOUSE. DAY.

Getting out of the car outside the courthouse (the SUV immediately drives away), DMITRI goes in, briefcase in hand.

40. INT. COURTHOUSE. DAY.

Barely a step from the door, a BAILIFF bars DMITRI'S way.

DMITRI
I'm here to see the judge.

BAILIFF
No one's here.

DMITRI
No one at all? No secretary, no assistant?

The BAILIFF nods.

DMITRI
And when are they coming back? No idea?

BAILIFF
How would I know?

41. EXT. SQUARE IN THE CENTER OF TOWN. COURTHOUSE. DAY.

Coming out onto the street, DMITRI stands with his back to the courthouse door and looks at the City Hall which is located on the other side of the square (among the machines parked out front is the Mayor's Lexus).

DMITRI crosses the square.

Coming up to the City Administration building, DMITRI sees the Mayor's driver and bodyguard (VASYA): the driver is smoking, standing next to the Lexus; the bodyguard is seated inside the car with his elbow out the window. They also see DMITRI.

41A. INT. CITY HALL. DAY.

DMITRI walks confidently up to the building (a GUARD is seated behind a desk inside).

DMITRI
(pointing to his watch)
I've got an appointment with Vadim Sergeyich.

The GUARD nods, and lets him pass him without comment.

42. INT. NIKOLAI'S SUV. DAY.

Inside the car, LILIA tries the cell phone again: still no luck.

42A. EXT. CITY STREETS. DAY.

The SUV drives for a short while through the city, and after a couple of turns, pulls up outside a three-story (?) tenement building (a typical Khrushchev-era block).

43. EXT. ANGELA'S HOUSE. DAY.

Getting out of the car, LILIA goes into the house.

44. INT. ANGELA'S HOUSE. STAIRWAY. DAY.

LILIA takes the stairs to the second floor and rings the doorbell. She waits for a long time. Finally, footsteps are heard from the other side of the door.

ANGELA'S VOICE

Who is it?

LILIA

Angela, it's me, Lilia.

ANGELA opens the door.

ANGELA

Come in.

45. INT. ANGELA'S APARTMENT (CORRIDOR, KITCHEN). DAY.

LILIA

Why aren't you picking up the phone? I've been calling you all morning.

ANGELA

Really? It's probably Vitya, the little rascal, playing with my phone again! Put on some slippers. I'll put the kettle on.

She goes into the kitchen.

LILIA takes off her shoes, slides her feet into a pair of slippers, and follows ANGELA. A boy of about five, wielding a toy machine gun (VITYA), runs out of the room and bars her way.

VITYA

Hands up!

ANGELA

(pouring water into the kettle)

Don't you want to say hi to Auntie Lilia?

VITYA

Hi!

And he opens fire at his guest.

ANGELA

That's better. Better than 'Hands up'... They're all the same.

LILIA

Why did you get me, Vitya?

VITYA

Because you're pretty.

VITYA immediately runs off into the other room.

ANGELA

What did he say?

LILIA

He said I'm pretty.

ANGELA

Ha! And that's why he shot you? They're all the same. Men!

46. INT. CITY HALL. RECEPTION. DAY.

DMITRI sits on a chair in the Mayor's reception area. The briefcase is on his lap; his hands are folded on top of it.

The Mayor's secretary (YULIYA, 25–30) types something on her computer, throwing frequent glances at DMITRI. DMITRI is oblivious to the attention: he is intently focused on his own thoughts.

YULIA

Would you like some tea or coffee?

DMITRI

No, thank you.

Just then, the door opens, and the Mayor emerges, accompanying a YOUNG MAN dressed in a good suit and with an expensive cell phone in his hand. The YOUNG MAN and VADIM SERGEYICH exchange handshakes. The YOUNG MAN glances briefly at DMITRI, nods to the secretary, and walks quickly out of the reception area. The Mayor stands in the doorway of his office and stares at DMITRI. DMITRI stands up.

DMITRI

Good afternoon.

VADIM SERGEYICH

Do you think so? Well, come on in, let's talk.

(to the secretary)

Yulia, make us some tea with lemon. And an aspirin for me.

YULIYA

Yes, Vadim Sergeyich.

Allowing DMITRI to go first, the Mayor enters his office and closes the door behind him.

A sign by the door leading to the Mayor's office reads:

HEAD OF PRIBREZHNY MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION
Vadim Sergeyevich Shelevyat

47. INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE. DAY.

VADIM SERGEYICH sits in his comfortable chair at the head of a T-shaped table (at the head of which, on the wall behind his back, hangs a portrait of Putin).

VADIM SERGEYICH

I've heard all about your little adventures today. Take a seat, take a seat.... what's your name again?

DMITRI sits down in the chair nearest the Mayor.

DMITRI

Dmitri Mikhailovich.

VADIM SERGEYICH

Right, right. Well, you've got me by the balls, haven't you?

DMITRI

You asked for it.

The Mayor chuckles.

DMITRI

But that's nothing, Vadim Sergeyich, compared to this.

DMITRI produces the red loose-leaf binder from his briefcase, rises slightly in his chair and places the binder on the table before the Mayor.

DMITRI

Here, take a look. None of this will come as a shock to you. But you know, sometimes it's good to take account of the past.

VADIM SERGEYICH

You have a strange way of starting a conversation.

DMITRI

How come?

VADIM SERGEYICH

I thought we were going to start out by talking about the fate of your friend Nikolai.

DMITRI

You mean our court case against you, or something else?

VADIM SERGEYICH

Something else.

DMITRI

You're talking about the illegal arrest? Article 301 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation? You got the news pretty quickly! I'm happy you want to help us get justice and punish those responsible for this act of police brutality.

VADIM SERGEYICH

Yes, I could help you out.... But...

DMITRI

But you don't see what's in it for you? Why don't you look in the binder, and it will all become clear. Don't be fooled by the fact that the binder's so thin. What's inside is actually pretty heavy. I'd say that releasing Nikolai is only the beginning.

VADIM SERGEYICH

Here's what I think we'll do. We'll let your Nikolai out of jail, and you, Dmitri, will pack your things (he nods at the binder) and go quietly back home.

DMITRI

Back to Moscow?

VADIM SERGEYICH

Back to Moscow, of course.

DMITRI

I'm afraid, Vadim Sergeyich, that Ivan Alexndrovich will not understand me if I do that. He'll say, 'Dmitri, why didn't you use all the cards you had up your sleeve to get justice done?'

The Mayor loosens his tie and unbuttons the top of his shirt.

VADIM SERGEYICH

You and Ivan know each other pretty well?

DMITRI

Kostrov? Is that who we're talking about? Sure. We're very close. He's a lawyer, I'm a lawyer. Moscow, Vadim Sergeyich, is a large but close-knit city. Six degrees of separation between everyone. So if you really want to, with the right friends you can get to anyone.

VADIM SERGEYICH pulls the binder towards him.

VADIM SERGEYICH

And say I refuse to read it, then what?

DMITRI

Don't read it. Trust my word: the facts are pretty damning. Of course you know them all. You did, let's just say, create them. Horrible. How do you sleep at night? Listen, here's what I think: we need to come to an agreement. Otherwise...well, I don't even know what might happen. But, of course, all within the bounds of the law. But think of this, in the newspapers, on the Internet...maybe they'll even show it on TV, on the true crime shows.

VADIM SERGEYICH sighs deeply.

VADIM SERGEYICH
You young people are so careless.

DMITRI
You're not so old yourself. Although looks like it might be time for retirement. Don't you think?

The secretary scratches at the door, then immediately opens it and enters, carrying a serving tray.

VADIM SERGEYICH
All right, Yulia, all right!. Not now!

Taken aback, YULIA stands in the doorway for a few seconds, then retreats, closing the door behind her.

VADIM SERGEYICH slowly opens the binder.

VADIM SERGEYICH
Fine. We'll take a look at this material you're making such a fuss about.

DMITRI
It's a fascinating read. A horror movie, starring you.

48. INT. ANGELA'S APARTMENT. KITCHEN. DAY.

ANGELA sits at the table in the kitchen, talking on her cell phone. LILIA sits across from her.

ANGELA
Pasha, why don't you ever pick up the phone? ...He was writing a report. Probably sleeping on duty, you bullshitter! ... Fine, fine, I don't need your excuses. I need to talk to you about something. Our Nick got banged up by the cops; we have to help the man. ... What do I mean, banged up? How do you always bang people up? Twisted his arms and threw him in the monkey house! ... What for, what for... For nothing! Last night, that bastard mayor got drunk and went to make trouble, walks into their house and says, 'Pack your things!' Right, the court convened again yesterday. They're knocking it all down ... Well, because you slept all day! Huh? They wrote a complaint this morning, went to the precinct to file it, and they banged him up right there, over nothing. ... Lilia is right here. ... Shit, Pasha, I don't know, why do you think I'm calling you?! To fill you in on the news? Yeah! Come on, call Stepanych, tell him to grab his things and go to the precinct, get Nick out! ... for Christ's sake? Nick's been fixing your old piles of junk for how many years now? Slaving for nothing. Well, it's time to pay him back now! ... What? Good idea. Why don't

you go there? Go on, and call me back right away, me and Lilia are sitting here biting our fingernails... You hear me? And pick up the phone, don't scare me like that! ... Okay, love you too. Bye.

ANGELA places the cell phone on the table before her.

ANGELA

Well, there it is.

LILIA

Thanks, Angela.

ANGELA

Don't mention it. They'll get him out, don't worry. They must have gotten Gena Kruglov out five times by now, that I can remember. And he always gets arrested for real things: punching somebody in the eye, stealing something – not like your Nick.

VITYA bursts into the kitchen with a toy car in one hand.

VITYA

Mom, I'm hungry!

ANGELA

Why don't you go play outside? It's too early. Lunch is still cooking.

VITYA

Can I?

ANGELA

Can you what?

VITYA

Go play outside?

ANGELA

Just stay near the doorway. You run nine blocks away again, I'll kill you. Got it?

VITYA nods, runs out of the kitchen, and heads down the hall toward the front door.

ANGELA

(yelling after him)

Take off your slippers and put on your sandals!

VITYA'S VOICE

Fine.

ANGELA

(to LILIA)

He goes out in his slippers, little freak. Well, shall we go and look at the apartment? It's open.

LILIA

Yeah, let's go.

They rise from the table and go down the hallway toward the front door.

49. INT. ANGELA'S APARTMENT BLOCK. STAIRCASE. DAY.

Out on the landing, they go into a neighboring apartment.

50. INT. ANGELA'S APARTMENT BLOCK. EMPTY APARTMENT. DAY.

LILIA and ANGELA enter a completely empty two-bedroom apartment – no furniture, nothing – dirty and full of dust.

ANGELA

Of course, you'll have to fix it up.

LILIA

I can't see us having enough money to fix it up.

ANGELA

Don't worry, honey! We'll pull together, all of us, and fix this place up like pros! Of course we can't do any fancy European stuff, just fix it up, but with heart!

LILIA looks at the beat-up walls, the dirty linoleum that swells up in places, and the ceiling covered in a multitude of cracks.

51

52 INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE. DAY.

VADIM SERGEYICH sits with his elbows on the table, reading the contents of the binder and gritting his teeth. His face is beetroot-red, as if the binder's color has infected it.

VADIM SERGEYICH

So?

DMITRI

That depends on you.

VADIM SERGEYICH

I understand. So what do you want?

DMITRI

You are the second person today who has addressed me informally. The other one was also a man of power.

VADIM SERGEYICH

Quit dancing around the issue. Tell me what you want.

DMITRI

I want Nikolai to keep his property.

VADIM SERGEYICH

That's not possible.

DMITRI

I thought everything was possible for you in this town.

VADIM SERGEYICH

Well guess what: that's not the case.

DMITRI

Three and a half million rubles? That's not possible for you?
I doubt that.

VADIM SERGEYICH

Ah, that's what you mean. That's possible.

DMITRI

And, of course, let Nikolai go.

VADIM SERGEYICH

Deal. Give me your number. I'll call you in a couple of days,
we'll meet and discuss the details. You're staying here? Not
leaving yet?

DMITRI

I'm staying. What's to discuss? The only reason for us to
meet is so you can hand over the money.

VADIM SERGEYICH

(slowly)

Have you been baptized?

DMITRI

Sorry? What does that have to do with anything?

VADIM SERGEYICH

I'm just curious.

DMITRI

I'm a lawyer. I believe in facts.

VADIM SERGEYICH

Fine. We have an agreement.

DMITRI produces a business card from his briefcase, rises, and places the card on
the table before the Mayor.

DMITRI

All the best.

He wheels around, heads toward the door, and walks out of the office, leaving the door open wide.

VADIM SERGEYICH leans back in his chair, looking tired, and closes his eyes.

The secretary peeks into the office.

YULIYA

Vadim Sergeyich, is everything all right?

The Mayor opens his eyes and looks at her.

VADIM SERGEYICH

Get me an aspirin, and tell Tarasova, Goryunova, and Tkachuk to come here immediately. Find them! And close the door.

He hesitates, then reaches for his cell phone on the table. He presses buttons, looking at the display, then lifts the phone to his ear and waits.

53. EXT. THE CITY HALL. DAY.

DMITRI paces leisurely back and forth outside the municipal building. He notices NIKOLAI'S SUV moving in his direction, and runs toward it. The SUV stops. DMITRI gets in the car.

53A INT. POST OFFICE. DAY.

Seated behind the table at the post office, DMITRI fills out a form (in two copies) – the contents of a registered letter – the envelope lies nearby on the table, on the envelope is a signature (in DMITRI'S handwriting): *Prosecutor of the City of Pribrezhny, T.P. Goryunova, 18 Morskaya Street*, on the list DMITRI writes: *Report of a Crime. To the Prosecutor of the City of Pribrezhny.*

Having filled in the form, he gets up and goes to the window, behind which a female postal worker is seated. She takes the envelope from him, checks the contents, puts one copy into the envelope, and returns the other copy to DMITRI. Then she stamps the envelope with special tape and a postal seal.

DMITRI

How much do I owe you?

54. INT. NIKOLAI'S SUV. DAY.

DMITRI gets into the car and closes the door.

DMITRI

I'm starving. And I have to go and change my clothes, take a shower. Let's go to the hotel. We can eat there.

LILIA hits the gas, the car responds.

LILIA
You really think they'll give us three million?

DMITRI
Three and a half. Well, we'll see. He knows he's in the shit.
That's a good sign.

55. INT. HOTEL. RESTAURANT. DAY.

LILIA and DMITRI sit at a table in the hotel restaurant, which looks more like a cafeteria. Aside from them, the place is empty. The table is set with the usual things: napkins, toothpicks, salt and pepper shakers. A hotel key with the number 27 on the label attached to the key ring lies next to DMITRI, on his side of the table. His briefcase stands on an empty chair.

DMITRI
(looking at the menu)
I don't even remember what I had last time I was here, but I did eat something.

LILIA
I remember. Borscht, dumplings and beer.

She doesn't look at the menu but just sits with her hands folded in her lap under the table.

DMITRI
Right.

He lifts his eyes from the menu to look at LILIA.
She is looking at him as well.
His gaze lingers, then he lowers his eyes back to the menu.

A WAITRESS approaches them.

WAITRESS
What are you having?

DMITRI
(closing the menu and placing it on the table before him)
We'll have two servings of borscht, two servings of dumplings, one fruit punch, and one beer.
(to LILIA)
Or would you like a beer as well?

LILIA
No. I'll have the punch.

WAITRESS
Anything else?

DMITRI

No. And please don't rush. I have to go up to my room for about ten minutes. Okay? I don't want it to get cold.

WAITRESS

Okay.

She takes their menus and heads to the kitchen.

DMITRI

Okay. You stay here, I'll be right back.

LILIA nods.

DMITRI retrieves the key from the table, rises, and walks away.

56 INT. HOTEL. DMITRI'S ROOM. DAY.

DMITRI enters the room and uses the key to lock the door from the inside, leaving it in the keyhole.

He places the briefcase on a chair, undresses quickly as he walks through the room, tossing his clothes with no regard to where they land, and disappears into the shower.

57 INT. HOTEL. RESTAURANT. DAY.

LILIA sits alone at the table in the restaurant, still in the same position as before, and stares blankly at a fly crawling around on the table.

The fly takes off. LILIA stands up and walks resolutely in the same direction DMITRI left earlier.

58 INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT. DAY.

She takes the stairs to the second floor, walks down the hallway, and stops outside the door numbered 27.

She stands facing it for a while, then turns around and walks, head down, back to where she came from.

She stops again, stands still for a moment, then turns around, returns to the door, and knocks.

59 INT. HOTEL. DMITRI'S ROOM. DAY.

DMITRI wraps a towel around his hips as he walks to the door.

DMITRI

Who is it?

LILIA'S VOICE (OFF CAMERA)

It's me.

DMITRI closes his eyes and leans his forehead against the doorframe. He hesitates, then turns the key in the keyhole and opens the door.

LILIA
(staring at DMITRI defiantly)
Can I come in?

DMITRI steps aside.

DMITRI
Come on in.

LILIA enters the room, closes the door, and turns the key twice.

For a few endless moments, they stand by the door, so close they're nearly touching: LILIA with her head down, DMITRI staring at the top of her head.

Eventually, he reaches out and caresses her hair, barely touching it. She immediately hugs him, pressing her entire body to his.

60. INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT. DAY.

Back in the restaurant, two steaming plates of borscht and two servings of dumplings are going cold on the table, forgotten, along with a dejected glass of fruit punch and a beer whose head is thinning by the second.

60A. INT. HOTEL. DMITRI'S HOTEL ROOM. DAY.

LILIA, half dressed, smokes a cigarette, sitting on the floor near the bed on the crumpled blanket. DMITRI, asleep with his mouth open, is lying on his back on the bed, half-covered by the blankets.

LILIA'S cell phone rings. She pulls her clothes towards her, lying as they are in a heap near the bed, and finds her phone.

DMITRI wakes up, sits up, rubs his face.

LILIA
(looking at the display of her cell phone)
It's Nick.

She accepts the call, pushes a button and puts the phone to her ear.

61. EXT. POLICE STATION. DAY.

Coming out of the police station, NIKOLAI is talking on his mobile phone.

NIKOLAI
Where are you? ... Sure, I'm languishing here in jail and you're partying it up at the restaurant! But what else do I expect from you? All right, not over the phone. Let's meet up right now, and I'll tell you everything. I'll head in your direction. ...No, on Lenin Street. Okay. See you.

NIKOLAI puts his cell phone away and walks through the town.

62. INT. STORE. DAY.

NIKOLAI enters a dilapidated store on the corner of a tenement building, and buys a bottle of beer.

63. EXT. CITY STREETS. DAY.

He steps out of the store, uses his lighter to pop the cap off the bottle, and drinks greedily, downing half the bottle in one gulp. Then he lights a cigarette and walks slowly through the town, taking occasional sips of beer and leaving a trail of cigarette smoke.

64. INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE. MAGIC HOUR.

Evening. A meeting in the Mayor's office. Judge TARASOVA, Public Prosecutor GORYUNOVA, and Chief of Police, Colonel TKACHUK, are present at the meeting; GORYUNOVA and TKACHUK are dressed in their uniforms. They sit on chairs arranged around the T-shaped table. The Mayor's expression is darker than a thundercloud. He paces the office, his hands clasped behind his back.

VADIM SERGEYICH

They're digging! From the top, from the bottom, from every direction, people keep telling me, 'Everything will be okay, Vadim Sergeyich, the scenery is peaceful, the sea is calm, don't worry!' But I do fucking worry! I can sense it with my ass, a storm brewing somewhere nearby! When have you seen such a thing? Huh? You squash some flea, some little ant, and he stinks up the entire house! How is it that he's got a lawyer coming from Moscow to defend him? Huh? And if that wasn't bad enough, he shoves compromising documents in my face! Drops big names!

TARASOVA

He's bluffing. It's all for show.

VADIM SERGEYICH

Yeah? And who's paying his bills? This Nikolai character? Or maybe the lawyer came all the way from Moscow to pick up some pro bono work? And where did he get all the detailed info?

GORYUNOVA

At least tell us what kind of information he's got.

TKACHUK

Yeah. Where did he get it from?

VADIM SERGEYICH

You don't need to know.

GORYUNOVA

Are you saying they have something on you that we don't know about?

TKACHUK

On the other hand, ignorance is bliss.

TARASOVA

The Colonel is right.

VADIM SERGEYICH

We've got elections next year. Without me, where will you be? You'll have nothing: no houses, no money, no trips abroad. They'll take it all. We'll all go down the river together.

GORYUNOVA

You've gotten paranoid. You need to drink less.

VADIM SERGEYICH

You idiot! Your head will be the first on the chopping block!

GORYUNOVA

Right, right on the chopping block. And don't yell at me. I'm not your wife for you to yell at.

TARASOVA

So, let's look at the issue constructively.

GORYUNOVA

Yes.

VADIM SERGEYICH

First off, we have to get to this attorney fellow. Why don't each of you use your channels, or I don't know, dig something up for me together, about who he is and who he's fronting for. He kept shoving Kostrov in my face.

GORYUNOVA

The Council Chairman?

VADIM SERGEYICH

Yes, honey, that's the problem. Come on, guys, let's get moving on this. And I'll go upstairs first thing tomorrow morning, talk it over with them. They already promised me today that they'll lean on them vertically.

65. INT. DILAPIDATED CHURCH. MAGIC HOUR.

Dusk. A dilapidated brick church. A campfire burns inside. A bunch of teenagers sit around the fire, sipping beer and passing around a joint. One of the kids is ROMAN. Just as the joint gets to him, his cell rings in his pocket. He curses, passes the joint to the next kid, stands up, and walks a few steps away, fishing the phone out of his pocket.

ROMAN

Okay, Dad, It's not late yet.... Oh, I forgot! Okay, I'm coming, I'm coming. ... I'm not far! I'll be right there.

He returns to the fire to say goodbye to his friends.

ROMAN

Okay, guys, that's it, I'm heading off.

TEENAGER

What, mommy's calling?

ROMAN

No. We're going shooting tomorrow. Gotta get up at 5am.

TEENAGER

Lucky you.

ROMAN

No duh. Okay, bye.

ROMAN waves a hand and disappears through a hole in the church wall.

66

67. EXT. VILLAGE STREETS. BAY. MAGIC HOUR.

ROMAN walks through the town for a long time, past crooked, abandoned houses, along the shore, past rotten boat carcasses... The tide is in; the bay is swelling.

68. EXT. BRIDGE. MAGIC HOUR.

ROMAN crosses the bridge. When he reaches the middle, he stops and stares out at the bay. Then he crosses the other half of the bridge and approaches the house.

69. EXT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. MAGIC HOUR.

As he passes the SUV parked by the house, ROMAN kicks the car's front wheel. steps onto the porch and enters the house.

70. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. MAGIC HOUR.

In the kitchen, NIKOLAI has covered the table with newspaper, taken apart his hunting rifle, and is cleaning it. The parts are carefully laid out on the table.

ROMAN enters. He immediately clambers up to stand on a chair, leans over the table, and reaches for the polished bolt that lies nearest to him.

NIKOLAI

Hey, hey! You'll tip the table over! Put the bolt back, it's not a toy.

ROMAN

(in no hurry to part with the bolt)

Where is everyone?

NIKOLAI

Your mother's asleep, and Mit is reading on the can.

ROMAN laughs quietly. NIKOLAI grins too.

NIKOLAI

So, sonny-boy, you like Mit?

ROMAN

Uh-huh. He's a nice guy.

NIKOLAI

That nice guy did a really great thing today.

ROMAN

What did he do?

NIKOLAI

The Mayor gave in.

ROMAN

How?

NIKOLAI

Just like that, son. Took him by the Fabergé, and the bull started dancing the prisiadka.

ROMAN

I don't get it.

NIKOLAI

You'll get it when you're older.

He sniffs in ROMAN'S direction.

NIKOLAI

You reek of campfire! Hanging out at the church again?

ROMAN

Yeah?

NIKOLAI

That place is trouble.

ROMAN

What kind of trouble?

NIKOLAI

Some kind or other.

NIKOLAI finishes cleaning the rifle parts and begins to put the gun back together.

ROMAN puts the bolt back on the table, climbs down off the chair, walks toward the fridge, and opens it.

NIKOLAI

Are you going to eat before bed?

ROMAN

A bit.

NIKOLAI

Come over here.

ROMAN

Why?

ROMAN approaches his father hesitantly.

NIKOLAI

Did you have beer?

ROMAN

The guys had some.

NIKOLAI

Uh-huh, and you just smelled it?

ROMAN

I just, you know, had a couple of sips...

NIKOLAI

Relax, it's okay. So you had some beer. Beer is okay. Just stay away from vodka. It's too early for you yet.

ROMAN

I don't drink anyway.

NIKOLAI

Go, make yourself a sandwich, and go to sleep.

ROMAN returns to the fridge, fishes out some sausage and butter...

DMITRI enters the kitchen.

DMITRI

Hey Roman!

ROMAN

Hi!

NIKOLAI

(winking at ROMAN)

What's the matter, Mit, did you swallow a drag line?

DMITRI

Found an interesting book in the bathroom.

NIKOLAI

Ah, couldn't put it down?

DMITRI

Yeah.

NIKOLAI

Okay then, happens to the best of us. I was just telling Roman about the time our entire company spent half the night looking for you, had to sound the alarm. And you were just asleep on the can.

ROMAN giggles.

NIKOLAI smiles.

DMITRI

What is with your sense of humor?

NIKOLAI

Yeah, that's how shit our northern humor is.

ROMAN bursts out laughing, squatting down by the fridge and holding his stomach.

NIKOLAI is laughing quietly as well.

DMITRI

(smiling)

I don't get you people.

NIKOLAI

(laughing)

Nah, bro, it's all good.

His eyes fill with tears. He brushes them away with the back of his hand.

DMITRI

No, seriously, what's so funny?

ROMAN

(in fits)

You're killing me!

He crawls out of the kitchen on all fours, his sandwich forgotten.

NIKOLAI
(laughing with ROMAN)
Son, come back!

DMITRI
You guys are idiots!

NIKOLAI grows suddenly serious.

NIKOLAI
Well, that's it. Stop your laughing, you idiots!

In the hallway, ROMAN is choking with laughter, his head pressed to the floor.

NIKOLAI
(completely seriously)
That's enough, Roman. Stop it. Uncle Mit already thinks we've lost our marbles. Come over here. I've got to talk to you.

ROMAN shuffles back into the kitchen, hair ruffled, tears and snot streaming down his face, and plops his butt on a chair.

NIKOLAI
(returning to his gun assembly)
What do you say, should we move to Moscow?

ROMAN
You already asked me yesterday.

NIKOLAI
Right, so I did. And what did you say?

ROMAN
Let's do it.

NIKOLAI looks at DMITRI and shrugs.

NIKOLAI
Sure, let's do it, why not?

He places the assembled rifle on the table before him.

DMITRI
Hold on, will you? Let's see what happens tomorrow.

NIKOLAI
I don't know. I have a feeling tomorrow things will turn out for the better. Right, son?

ROMAN shrugs.

ROMAN

Are you coming with us tomorrow, Uncle Mit?

DMITRI

Of course.

ROMAN

Are you a good shot?

NIKOLAI

Son, our Mit was the best shot in our battalion back in the day.

ROMAN

You mean, better than you?

NIKOLAI

Well, no. I was the best in the regiment. He's got a lot of shitting to do before he can get to my level.

He and ROMAN begin to laugh again.

DMITRI

You should be ashamed of yourselves. Screw you, I'm going to bed.

He waves a dismissive hand at them, gets up, and walks out of the kitchen.

NIKOLAI immediately stops laughing. ROMAN continues to giggle spasmodically.

NIKOLAI

Okay, son, enough fun for one day. Make your sandwich and go to bed.

ROMAN

I don't want the sandwich now.

He stretches and yawns. He rises from the chair and shuffles out of the kitchen into the hallway.

NIKOLAI

(pursuing him)

Brush your teeth.

ROMAN

Uh-huh.

For a long time, NIKOLAI sits alone in the kitchen, staring at the rifle on the table.

71. COUNTRYSIDE. COASTAL ROCKY ROAD. DAY.

Early morning. A convoy of three cars speeds down a highway: Nikolai's SUV, Stepanych's white Chevy, and a police jeep.

72. INT. POLICE JEEP. DAY.

PASHA is behind the wheel of the police jeep, dressed in gray police camouflage garb without any insignia. ANGELA dozes in the passenger seat next to him. She nods off periodically, only to jerk awake for a little while. Their son VITYA is sleeping curled up in the back seat.

73. INT. STEPANYCH'S CAR. DAY.

STEPANYCH is all alone behind the wheel of the white Chevy, dressed in the same camouflage gear as PASHA. On the dashboard, a picture of a naked girl is stuck up under the images of saints (the Virgin Mary, Christ, and Nicholas the Wonderworker).

74. INT. NIKOLAI'S SUV. DAY.

LILIA and ROMAN are asleep side by side in the back seat. NIKOLAI is behind the wheel, with DMITRI next to him in the passenger seat. Both are silent.

After some time NIKOLAI decelerates and turns down a dirt road.

75. COUNTRYSIDE. HIGHWAY. DAY.

The cars pull off down the dirt road one by one.

76. COUNTRYSIDE. DIRT ROAD. DAY.

The cars slowly proceed down the dirt road.

77. COUNTRYSIDE. DIRT ROAD. DAY.

The cars drive into the forest.

78.

79. COUNTRYSIDE. FOREST GLADE NEAR A LAKE. DAY.

The cars arrive at a picturesque forest glade and stop.

The drivers and passengers climb out and stretch, joints cracking.

VITYA and ROMAN immediately run toward the water.

ANGELA

(yelling after them)

Hey, no running dives! Look at the little freaks go.

NIKOLAI, opening the rear lift-gate of the SUV, pulls out a large canvas bag with a tent and metal pegs to secure it. He sets it all down on the ground next to the car.

LILIA takes sets of plastic tableware out of the SUV.

PASHA takes camping furniture, including folding aluminum chairs and a table, out of the police jeep.

ANGELA carries the chairs to the shore of the lake. It is clear that this area has been used before. There is a fire pit, a couple of logs... ANGELA sets out the chairs.

DMITRI (with his hands in his pockets) is standing nearby at the water's edge. He is looking out over the lake.

LILIA comes over to the fire pit and places the packages of tableware on the chairs that ANGELA has set up. The friends head back to the cars.

STEPANYCH takes his rifle, which looks identical to NIKOLAI'S, out of the Chevy, and heads toward DMITRI.

VITYA'S VOICE (OFF CAMERA)

Mom, can I have a drink?

ANGELA'S VOICE

Get something from the car!

STEPANYCH

(approaching DMITRI)

Here, Dmitri, take my rifle.

He offers him the rifle.

DMITRI

(taking the rifle)

Thank you.

STEPANYCH

I believe every man should have a gun of his own. So what're you going to shoot with?

(LILIA and ANGELA are setting up a table and another set of chairs by the fire pit in the background).

NIKOLAI pulls a bag filled with empty bottles from the trunk of his car.

NIKOLAI

(shouting after STEPANYCH, who is heading towards the Chevy)

What are you going to use for your own pea shooter?

STEPANYCH

Just wait and see!

From his police jeep, PASHA produces a battle-scarred homemade barbecue grill with skewers piled inside. He sets it on the ground, then produces a large pot of marinated kebabs and places it next to the grill.

NIKOLAI pulls a case out of the trunk of his car. He unzips it and pulls out a rifle. .

From the Chevy, STEPANYCH removes a heavy, medium-sized, tightly fastened black sports bag, and walks some distance away from the car. He places the bag on the ground, bends down on one knee next to it, unzips it, and produces a Kalashnikov automatic rifle without a clip and with a folded butt. The clip is next out of the bag.

NIKOLAI

Wow, Stepanych! You look like you're ready for war!

STEPANYCH

(inserting the clip)

Well, Nick,

(laying down the butt)

might as well do it properly. It's my birthday, after all!

NIKOLAI

What, no grenade launcher?

STEPANYCH

I could get one, if we had a target.

NIKOLAI, shaking his head in deliberately exaggerated surprise, slings his rifle over his shoulder, picks up the bag of empty bottles and heads toward the edge of the forest (where a small wooden structure resembling a tollgate is visible: a scoreboard blackened by time and weather lies on top of two cut tree trunks (1.5 m tall).

PASHA gets an ancient-looking single-barrel hunting rifle from his police jeep, and slings it over his shoulder. He then takes a pot of meat and heads for the fire pit. He places the pot on the camp table.

(In the background, LILIA, ANGELA, ROMAN and VITYA are gathered around DMITRI, listening (some smiling, others with open mouths) to him tell a funny story. PASHA approaches him).

79A. COUNTRYSIDE. FOREST GLADE NEAR A LAKE. DAY.

STEPANYCH, with a gun slung across his back, an unopened bottle of vodka in one hand and two glass tumblers in the other, approaches NIKOLAI who is arranging bottles on the "tollgate" (on the ground underneath the "tollgate" is broken glass, which NIKOLAI crushes underfoot).

STEPANYCH

Well, Nick, we need to start with...

NIKOLAI

No duh.

(turning toward the shore)

Mit! Pasha! Come over here!

DMITRI and PASHA amble over. ROMAN and VITYA follow in tow. PASHA stops and says something to ROMAN. ROMAN, obviously offended, turns away sharply and hurries off quickly along the coast in the direction of the forest. VITYA follows after him somewhat more slowly.

LILIA and ANGELA whisper about something as they stand on the shore.

NIKOLAI, STEPANYCH, DMITRI and PASHA drink vodka in a circle, just like a team before a match. STEPANYCH (with his perfect eye) pours a little bit more than half a glass for each.

He places the empty bottle on the “tollgate” next to the other bottles.

79B. COUNTRYSIDE. FOREST GLADE NEAR A LAKE. DAY.

The men arrange their targets – empty bottles – and take up position about 10 meters away: NIKOLAI and DMITRI holding rifles, PASHA with his single-barreled, and STEPANYCH with the Kalashnikov.

LILIA, ROMAN, ANGELA and VITYA stand behind them (LILIA is holding a bottle of vodka and a glass).

NIKOLAI

Here’s the deal. Whoever hits the target gets seven drops; whoever misses gets twenty-seven. I’ll go first.

He raises the rifle, aims, and fires. Boom! One of the bottles explodes.

ROMAN

Seven drops!

LILIA opens the bottle, pours an inch of vodka into a glass, and hands it to NIKOLAI.

NIKOLAI

To Stepanych!

(raising the glass)

Your good health!

STEPANYCH

Thanks Nick. Don’t you get sick either.

NIKOLAI empties the glass and chuckles as the vodka goes down.

PASHA is next to fire. Boom! He misses.

VITYA leaps joyfully into the air.

ANGELA

What are you so happy about, idiot? Your daddy missed.

NIKOLAI

Right. Twenty-seven drops!

LILIA pours half a glass and hands it to PASHA.

PASHA

Long life, Stepanych.

PASHA empties the glass in one gulp, not batting an eyelid.

ANGELA

He missed on purpose! So he can get shitfaced faster!
Here, have a pickle, eagle-eye.
(she hands him a pickle)
And aim better next time.

PASHA nods and lows, crunching the pickle.

NIKOLAI

Well, Mit, show us what you're made of! He's our
valedictorian, in both war and politics!

DMITRI raises the rifle and fires quickly, barely taking the time to aim. One of the
bottles explodes.

VITYA

Hurray!

ROMAN

Seven drops!

LILIA pours out an inch of vodka and hands the glass to DMITRI. He raises the glass
and nods to STEPANYCH.

DMITRI

Pleasure to meet you. Happy birthday.

STEPANYCH

(smiling)

Me too. Very pleased to meet you.

DMITRI empties the glass.

STEPANYCH

(cocking the gun)

My turn!

NIKOLAI

Just don't, you know...

The rest of the sentence is drowned out by a burst of machine gun fire.

LILIA, ANGELA, VITYA, and ROMAN put their hands over their ears.

STEPANYCH shoots from the hip. When he's done, not a single bottle remains.

NIKOLAI

What the hell, are you insane, Stepanych? Why the fuck did
you fire on automatic? What are we supposed to shoot at
now, your cap?

LILIA

Calm down, Nick. Not in front of the children.

NIKOLAI

They can't hear: they've probably gone deaf, like the rest of us!

VITYA

I haven't gone deaf.

STEPANYCH

Take it easy, Nick. After all, it's my birthday.

NIKOLAI

So what, no more target practice? Pack away the guns?

STEPANYCH

Slow down, I brought something better for targets than your bottles.

(winks at PASHA)

Come on, Pasha, bring them out.

PASHA slings his gun over his shoulder and walks back to his jeep, opens the trunk, and produces a flat rectangular object that had been lying at the bottom. It is about 20 by 40 inches and is wrapped in a dirty rag. He returns to the group with the object.

NIKOLAI

What's that?

STEPANYCH

You'll see.

He unwraps the rectangle and places three portraits in cheap frames on the ground: Lenin, Brezhnev, and Gorbachev.

NIKOLAI laughs.

NIKOLAI

Nice one, Stepanych! But take it off automatic anyway.

STEPANYCH

Fine, I will, I will.

NIKOLAI

Got anything more current, by any chance?

STEPANYCH

In my position, I can find you anyone. But it's not the right time for the current ones. Their time will come. The historical gap, shall we say, isn't long enough. Hang them on the board over there.

NIKOLAI

Fine. How do we hang them up?

PASHA

Let's nail them right to the trees.

NIKOLAI

You got nails? Hey! I think I've got some screws in the car!

NIKOLAI heads for his car.

ANGELA

What do you think, Lilia, shall we get started on the meat in the meantime?

LILIA

Okay.

They head off toward the fire pit.

DMITRI

I'll put up the grill.

He turns and walks toward the cars.

PASHA

Do you need any help?

DMITRI

I think I'll manage.

LILIA and ANGELA sit down on the chairs by the pot of meat. LILIA puts the unfinished bottle of vodka and a glass on the table.

STEPANYCH and PASHA stand over the portraits of the Soviet leaders with guns slung over their shoulders.

STEPANYCH

Yeltsin should be there too, but I thought he'd be too unimportant for this group.

PASHA

So? Why didn't we bring any nails?

STEPANYCH

Yeah, I didn't think about nails.

PASHA looks back at DMITRI, who is setting up the grill close to the fire pit (DMITRI'S rifle is propped up against the police jeep).

Cursing under his breath, NIKOLAI digs through the trunk, pulling out all sorts of car mechanic's tools. He finds everything but the screws. His rifle stands leaning against the car.

Tired of hunching over, NIKOLAI steps back from the trunk, straightens up, puts his hand against his back, and looks back at LILIA and ANGELA, who are busy preparing kebabs. They are placing the meat on skewers.

NIKOLAI

Eh girls! Can't take my eyes off you! Look at that practiced, precise work! Right, guys?

He laughs.

STEPANYCH and PASHA join in.

DMITRI grins as well, going along with them.

STEPANYCH and PASHA approach the fire pit. PASHA takes the bottle of vodka and glass from the table.

79C. COUNTRYSIDE. FOREST GLADE NEAR A LAKE. DAY.

LILIA places a finished skewer on top of the pot, stands up, and walks toward the lake. She squats and washes her hands in the water, then gets up and walks left along the bank.

NIKOLAI

Lilia, where are you going?

LILIA

Where do you think, Nick?

NIKOLAI

Ah, I see! Careful not to catch cold: it's not exactly May!

NIKOLAI laughs.

STEPANYCH and PASHA join in.

LILIA is hiding in the forest.

DMITRI finishes setting up the grill.

DMITRI

Well, that seems like everything. Do we have any firewood?

NIKOLAI

A whole forest full of it. Just look at it all.

He gets an axe from the trunk of his car and hands it to DMITRI. DMITRI approaches, takes the axe, and heads into the woods, in the opposite direction, of course, from the one LILIA took. NIKOLAI sticks his head back into the trunk of the car.

PASHA and STEPANYCH finish off the remainder of the vodka.

PASHA

Angela, where's your son?

ANGELA

Where's yours?

(she looks around)

I don't know. He and Roman are just combing the woods!

PASHA

Wait till he breaks his neck, then you'll know.

ANGELA

Nothing's going to happen to him! Let him play, get in touch with nature. There're no animals around here.

STEPANYCH

Man is the most dangerous animal in the forest.

ANGELA

(selecting another empty skewer)

There's not a soul in sight.

STEPANYCH

Well we're here.

ANGELA

You're a soul, are you?

STEPANYCH

Hey, Pasha, you go show your wife who's boss.

PASHA

Well, it's too late for that.

ANGELA

Hey, I am standing right here, you know?

NIKOLAI

(rummaging in the trunk)

Fuck, where did those screws go!

VITYA bursts out of the woods, his eyes wide with terror. He runs toward ANGELA.

VITYA

Mama!

ANGELA

What's the matter, Vitya? What happened?

VITYA

That other guy is choking Auntie Lilia! ROMAN saw them and started crying!

PASHA, STEPANYCH, and NIKOLAI, of course, hear this. NIKOLAI immediately pops out of the trunk.

ANGELA

What are you talking about, son? What other guy?

VITYA

The handsome one from Moscow!

He stretches an arm slightly back and to the side, without looking in that direction himself, showing where this is happening.

STEPANYCH and PASHA look at NIKOLAI. He looks at ANGELA. She stares stupidly at VITYA.

Finally, NIKOLAI slams the trunk shut, retrieves his rifle, and heads in the direction VITYA has pointed out.

The others are silent.

ANGELA is the first to come to her senses.

ANGELA

Well, police, what are you waiting for? For bedlam to break out?

STEPANYCH and PASHA exchange glances and hurry after NIKOLAI.

VITYA

Mom, what's bedlam?

ANGELA

(staring anxiously after the men)

Bedlam, honey, is when people go crazy.

VITYA

What do you mean?

ANGELA

You'll understand when you're older.

VITYA

I want to understand now.

ANGELA

I'm telling you, you're not big enough. Let's go put the rifle out of harm's way.

She walks toward the jeep against which DIMITRI had leaned his rifle. VITYA runs after her.

VITYA
Mom, who's harm?

ANGELA
Jesus, you could drive a corpse to suicide! Harm is what you did when you set the cat on fire, remember?

VITYA
Uh-huh. Who set the cat on fire this time?

ANGELA
Nobody.

VITYA
Then why's harm back again?

ANGELA closes her eyes, then stops and looks at her son.

ANGELA
Who did you inherit this asshole attitude from?

Realizing that his mother is angry, VITYA hunches his shoulders up around his ears and takes a step back.

ANGELA picks up the rifle and looks toward the forest. Indistinct, aggressive yelling can be heard from the woods: though the voices are clearly human, the sounds they are making are entirely animal.

ANGELA and VITYA look in the direction of the noise.

STEPANYCH'S voice rises above the rest, breaking into a falsetto on the last syllable.

STEPANYCH
That is enough!

There follows a short burst of machine gun fire.

ANGELA
(crossing herself)
Good Lord!

80. INT. BISHOP'S OFFICE. DAY.

The BISHOP (dressed in simple garb, bareheaded, and wearing an expensive watch) and VADIM SERGEYICH (in a suit and tie) are sitting in comfortable soft leather chairs in the tea break corner of the office. The sofa, coffee table, tea service on it – everything is expensive, antique and large. The same is true of the desk in the corner, and a chair, over which hangs a large group photo with the Council of Bishops in the reception hall of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Bookcases full of books line the

walls, and icons hang on the walls ... The desk contains a large Macintosh computer, paperweights inlaid with gold, as well as an expensive fountain pen...

BISHOP

You've been too anxious, Vadim, worrying over nothing, and worrying others. Like you don't know we're all in God's hands, it's His will.

VADIM SERGEYICH

Of course I know, Father. I know.

BISHOP

So what's the problem? Your faith has weakened? Do you take communion? Go to confession?

VADIM SERGEYICH

Of course I can't always make it; I get so busy. But I try.

BISHOP

Who's your confessor?

VADIM SERGEYICH

Our local priest, Father, like you advised.

BISHOP

Father Alexei?

VADIM SERGEYICH

That's the one.

BISHOP

He's a good priest.

VADIM SERGEYICH

Yeah, I think so.

The BISHOP stops (VADIM SERGEYICH does too).

BISHOP

Pull yourself together, Vadim. And don't worry, you're doing the right thing. People say doing good things is easy and fun, but never forget: the enemy is always on the move, always working against you.

VADIM SERGEYICH

That's what I'm saying. This is just perfect. Not even about myself. Well, you know the story...

BISHOP

(interrupting)

Don't say anything to me, Vadim. This isn't the confessional. Go tell Father Alexei about it. You and I, of course, are coworkers. We're in the same business, but you've got your front, and I've got mine.

VADIM SERGEYICH

I keep forgetting. But... it disturbs me.

BISHOP

I told you a couple of days ago, and I'll tell you again: all power comes from God. Where there's power, there's strength. If you hold power within your circle of influence, then you have to solve local issues yourself, instead of looking for help. Otherwise the enemy will think you're weak. Honestly, I have to talk to you like to a child. I don't recognize you anymore. Everything okay with the wife?

VADIM SERGEYICH shrugs.

VADIM SERGEYICH

I think so.

BISHOP

How are the kids?

VADIM SERGEYICH

Good.

BISHOP

Maybe you're sick?

VADIM SERGEYICH

No, I'm fine.

BISHOP

Okay, Vadim.

The clergyman offers him his hand, palm down. VADIM SERGEYICH takes it carefully in both of his, bows down, and kisses it. The BISHOP crosses the top of his head with his free hand.

BISHOP

May God be with you.

81. COUNTRYSIDE. HIGHWAY. MAGIC HOUR.

Evening. Nikolai's SUV speeds down the highway, its headlights slicing through the twilight.

82. INT. NIKOLAI'S SUV. MAGIC HOUR.

LILIA is driving. Her hair is in disarray; her cheekbone is bruised.

DMITRI sits in the front passenger seat. His face is a mess: his eye and nose are swollen, blood oozes from his lip and eyebrow. Grimacing in pain, he constantly dabs at the blood with his handkerchief. His knuckles are also bloodied. When he moves his jaw, you can tell that it hurts.

LILIA
You need to go to hospital.

DMITRI
No, it's okay.

LILIA
Why not?

DMITRI
Because.

For a long while, they ride in silence.

LILIA
So what now?

DMITRI
I don't know. I'll get back to the hotel and go to bed.

83. INT. HOTEL. DMITRI'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Back at the hotel, LILIA soaks a towel in cold water in the sink, wrings it out carefully, and takes it into the room, where DMITRI lies on his back on the bed, his eyes closed. She sits on the edge of the bed and places the towel on his head. He opens his eyes and looks at her.

LILIA
(slowly)
It's all my fault.

He takes her by the hand.

DMITRI
It's *all* nobody's fault. Everybody is guilty of something. It's *all* everyone's fault. But even if we confess, the law says confession is not proof of guilt. You're innocent until proven otherwise. But who's going to prove anything? And to whom?

LILIA
Do you believe in God?

DMITRI
What's all this talk of God? I'm a lawyer. I believe in facts.

They are silent for a while.

LILIA

(beginning as if her mind is made up)

Mit... I'm ... I'm serious.

DMITRI

(stopping her)

Please, no confessions.

LILIA

Because there's no proof?

DMITRI

And there won't be any.

Tears fill her eyes. He lets go of her hand, caresses her cheek.

DMITRI

Will you come with me?

LILIA

(whispering through the tears)

I don't get you.

DMITRI

I don't get myself.

84. EXT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

The white Chevy and the police cruiser are parked outside NIKOLAI'S house.

STEPANYCH walks out of the house, gets behind the wheel of the Chevy, and turns the key – the engine doesn't start. STEPANYCH tries again and again...

NIKOLAI and PASHA walk out of the house and approach the Chevy. NIKOLAI has a black eye and a swollen lip. His knuckles are bloody. He is noticeably drunk (and so is PASHA).

NIKOLAI

(to STEPANYCH)

You're going to have to push it. Or leave it here, I'll take a look tomorrow.

STEPANYCH

No, let's push it.

NIKOLAI

Come on, Pasha, let's push.

They push the Chevy toward the bridge. Once on the bridge, the engine finally starts.

85. EXT. BRIDGE. NIGHT.

NIKOLAI and PASHA wave to STEPANYCH, then light up their cigarettes and walk over to the railing. They smoke in silence, leaning over the side, spitting into the water from time to time.

86. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

They return to the house, where the visibly drunk ANGELA sits at the kitchen table, propping up her head on her hand. NIKOLAI and PASHA join her at the table. It's set with vodka and snacks.

NIKOLAI fills three glasses.

ANGELA sighs heavily and lifts her glass.

ANGELA

You know what? I'd love to run away with somebody too.

She drinks.

NIKOLAI and PASHA laugh and clink their glasses.

PASHA

Silly women!

ANGELA

(grimacing from the vodka and fishing a marinated mushroom right out of the jar with her fork)

Why?

PASHA

You can't run away from yourself!

PASHA takes a drink, and NIKOLAI follows suit.

ANGELA

Maybe not, but I can run away from you!

ANGELA snaps her fingers.

PASHA

And where would you go? To whore around in Moscow?

ANGELA

Why whore around?

PASHA

Because you're...

ANGELA stands up and slaps PASHA hard across the face.

PASHA

Look at you!

PASHA shakes his head.

NIKOLAI
Would you like me to add something?

He is no longer laughing: the drink has sobered him up and turned him serious.

PASHA
Fine, whatever. Can't even make a joke.

ANGELA
(dreamily)
No, I would immediately head off for America! To Los Angeles!

PASHA
Uh-huh, why not straight to the moon?

ANGELA
LA's not far enough for you?

NIKOLAI
(to ANGELA, nodding toward the hallway)
Are they sleeping?

ANGELA
Out cold.

NIKOLAI shakes his head and looks down at his bloodied hands.

NIKOLAI
Roman seems so down.

ANGELA
Nick, don't you think it's obvious why?

NIKOLAI
Fine, I'll talk to him tomorrow.

ANGELA
Just lay off the drink. Don't traumatize him even more.

NIKOLAI
I won't.

A car pulls up outside, shining its headlights into the window. The headlights are quickly extinguished, and the engine dies.

ANGELA and PASHA crane their necks to look out the window.

NIKOLAI

(without shifting position, still staring at his hands)
She's back.

ANGELA
Well, thank God.

PASHA
Maybe she just came to get her things?

ANGELA
(twirling a finger at her temple)
Idiot. Why don't you go get Vitya? Can you drive?

PASHA
Come on, woman. I'm a traffic cop!

With a glance at NIKOLAI, he gets up, walks out of the kitchen, and disappears into the house.

A few seconds later, LILIA enters.

She stops in the doorway for a moment, then approaches the table, half-fills Nikolai's glass with vodka, and empties it in three large gulps. Next, she sits on Pasha's chair, slides the jar of mushrooms closer, picks up a fork, and begins to eat.

PASHA enters with a sleeping VITYA in his arms.

ANGELA
(getting up)
Okay, we're off. You two, uh...

She is unsure of what to say. She and PASHA can be heard leaving the house.

The police jeep doors slam shut; the engine starts, revs up, and the car pulls away.

NIKOLAI continues to stare at his hands.

LILIA pours another half a glass and drinks it, then goes back to working on the mushrooms.

LILIA
Do you love me, Nick?

NIKOLAI raises his head and looks at her.

LILIA
I want a baby.

87. INT. HOTEL. DMITRI'S ROOM. DAY.

Morning. DMITRI stands before the hotel bathroom mirror, staring at his reflection. The swelling has gone down considerably; his face is back to its regular shape. If it weren't

for the black eye and split eyebrow, his puffy lips and nose could be taken as a sign of a cold or bad hangover.

Out in the hotel room, his cell phone rings and buzzes on the table next to the television.

DMITRI walks out of the bathroom and picks up the phone.

DMITRI

Hello... Yes, it's me. Good afternoon, Vadim. Well... let's meet then. I am at the hotel. Well... in half an hour by the main entrance.

88. EXT. HOTEL. DAY.

DMITRI, wearing a pair of sunglasses, steps out of the hotel lobby and stops on the top step of the main entrance, looking around.

After a while, the Mayor's black Lexus flies at breakneck speed up to the entrance and skids to a stop. The back door opens to reveal VADIM SERGEYICH deep in the back seat of the car and his massive bodyguard LESHA in the front seat.

DMITRI waits a second, then walks leisurely down the stairs and approaches the car.

VADIM SERGEYICH

Get in, what are you waiting for? I don't bite.

But DMITRI is in no hurry.

VADIM SERGEYICH

(smiling)

Well! You look pretty tough!

DMITRI

If I don't get back in two hours...

VADIM SERGEYICH

You will, you will, don't worry.

DMITRI hesitates, looks around, then finally climbs into the Lexus and slams the door behind him.

The car speeds off.

89. INT. INSIDE THE LEXUS. DAY.

VADIM SERGEYICH

Did you get drunk last night, or something? Your face is all puffed up.

DMITRI

Where are we going?

VADIM SERGEYICH

It's not far. You'll like it. We'll sit down, talk things over.

DMITRI

What things?

VADIM SERGEYICH

What do you mean, what things? You want money; I want guarantees.

DMITRI

Guarantees of what?

VADIM SERGEYICH

See, we're already talking. Man to man, huh?

90. EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY. DAY.

As they pull out of town, a black Toyota SUV with heavily tinted windows appears behind the Lexus.

91. COUNTRYSIDE. HIGHWAY. DAY.

The two-car convoy speeds down the highway.

92. COUNTRYSIDE. LAKE SHORE. DAY.

Pretty soon, they turn off the road to the lake, stopping close to the water's edge .
(At some distance there is a motor boat pulled up onto the shore. A MAN is sitting in it smoking a cigarette held in his fist. He does not react to the vehicles that have driven up).

93. INT/COUNTRYSIDE. INSIDE THE LEXUS/LAKE SHORE. DAY.

VADIM SERGEYICH opens the door on his side and steps out of the car as soon as it stops. His bodyguard LESHA does the same.

DMITRI

(looking around, not saying a word)

This is it, is it?

The DRIVER is silent.

94. COUNTRYSIDE. LAKE SHORE. DAY.

Four guys in track suits jump out of the Toyota. One of them walks quickly toward DMITRI'S side of the Lexus, opens the door, grabs DMITRI by his clothes, and tries to drag him out of the car. DMITRI fights back, trying to wedge his hands and feet against the doorframe. The others join the man struggling with DMITRI: one circles the car, opens the opposite door of the Lexus, hops inside, and begins to shove DMITRI with his hands and feet, kicking him in the back .

Finally, they manage to drag DMITRI out of the car. (In the scramble, DMITRY'S sunglasses fly off his face). They drag him away from the car, kicking him a bit, tie his hands behind his back, and push him onto his knees, then step back a little.

All this time, VADIM SERGEYICH stands to the side with his hands in his pockets .

After a pause, he approaches DMITRI.

VADIM SERGEYICH
Well, how do you feel?

DMITRI swallows hard, looking up at him with his head lowered.

VADIM SERGEYICH
(looking at the guys in track suits)
Why did you go for his face? Although...
(turning back to DMITRI)
No point crying over spilled milk. Isn't that right, Dmitri?

DMITRI doesn't respond.

VADIM SERGEYICH
(to his bodyguard)
Lesha.

LESHA approaches, carrying a gun by the barrel. Without looking, VADIM SERGEYICH stretches out his hand, and LESHA places the gun into his palm.

VADIM SERGEYICH
So, very close to Kostrov, are you?

DMITRI doesn't respond.

VADIM SERGEYICH
You know what I was thinking? Even if you are, what do I care? Where am I, and where's Kostrov? I don't care who you're very close to. I'll put you to rest (nodding towards the lake) where no one will find you. My own cops will be looking for you. And they'll never find you. Why so quiet? Got nothing to say? No last words? No message for your daughter? Anything? No?

DMITRI lowers his head.

DMITRI
(in a raspy voice)
Enough.

VADIM SERGEYICH
What?

DMITRI

Enough.

VADIM SERGEYICH

Well, we've got to honor your last wish.

VADIM SERGEYICH cocks the gun, points it at DMITRI, and fires off a few shots (he misses on purpose; the bullets fly past his ear; they hit the water, creating a fountain of spray).

DMITRI hunches his shoulders, his entire body jerking with each shot. He cries quietly, not raising his head.

VADIM SERGEYICH stands over him a little while longer, then hands the gun back to LESHA, walks to the car, climbs into the back seat, and slams the door closed.

LESHA also returns to the car.

The other men get back into the Toyota.

The cars turn around and drive away.

DMITRI tumbles over onto his side and lies, trembling, on the ground. Gradually, he calms down, staring at a bug which is crawling busily through the grass two feet from his face.

The man in the boat leisurely finishes smoking his cigarette, extinguishes it on the edge of the boat, quietly gets up, steps out of the boat onto the ground, rests his hands on the nose of the vessel and pushes it into the water. He manages to climb into the boat, just barely avoiding getting his legs wet. He goes to the stern, starts the motor, sits down, turns the boat and sails off in an arc away from the shore.

94A. INT./COUNTRYSIDE. LEXUS CABIN/HIGHWAY. DAY.

VADIM SERGEYICH is talking on his cell phone (the Toyota with the guys in track suits is driving behind the Mayor's car).

VADIM SERGEYICH

"... Yes, yes, we have tourist attractions, some recreation areas, and major construction projects there... Well, of course, we're almost ready to have housing projects. ... I am preparing to do it without needing to split it up at all. This area must be. ... A private-municipal partnership... This is a good option, that's all I have to say. Right here in the heart of the city, it will be on the coast. ... I am very happy, because all of this constitutes a certain brand, your brand, let's say. Right now people believe in brands, our deputies have high expectations for them. It is very important that desire is sustained over several years. The desire to see, to implement this project ... I'll send someone over to you today ... No, no, today ... Okay, agreed.

He hangs up. But the cell phone immediately rings again.

VADIM SERGEYICH

Hello. ... Well ... What do you mean by crystal clear? ...
That's your problem. I already told you: frame him at any
cost. Get to work.

95. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

The first signs of light are visible through the window.

LILIA wakes before dawn (NIKOLAI is sleeping on his side, with his back to her). She gets up and goes to the bathroom.

95A. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

After washing and dressing, LILIA, on her way out, stands before the mirror in the living room, finishes putting on her makeup (she powders the bruise on her cheek). When she is done, she picks up her purse (a large women's handbag) and leaves the house.

96. EXT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. MAGIC HOUR.

After leaving the house LILIA, her purse slung across her shoulder, heads toward the bridge.

97. EXT. BRIDGE. MAGIC HOUR.

LILIA crosses the bridge.

98. EXT. BUS STOP. MAGIC HOUR.

LILIA waits for a bus.

99. INT. INSIDE THE BUS. MAGIC HOUR.

Sitting by the window, LILIA rides on the bus for a while (It is a PAZ with several passengers on board; are all women).

It begins to get light.

99A. EXT. ROAD THROUGH A GULLEY. MAGIC HOUR.

Dawn is breaking. The bus descends along the road to the gulley, heading toward the shore. In the distance can be seen homely two-story houses, and beyond them the bay, dock, and little boats... On the other side of the shore is the red building of the fish-processing plant.

100. EXT. FISH-PROCESSING PLANT. ENTRANCE GATE. MAGIC HOUR.

Dawn is breaking. The bus stops by the entrance gate of a small fish-processing plant. Along with the other women, LILIA exits the bus.

A police jeep, with PASHA behind the wheel, pulls up at the entrance. ANGELA climbs out, looking barely awake.

Together, LILIA and ANGELA enter the factory.

101. INT. FISH-PROCESSING PLANT. SHOP FLOOR. DAY.

Dressed in white coats and wearing plastic caps on their heads, their faces covered in gauze masks (breathing masks?) and their hands encased in rubber gloves, LILIA and

ANGELA cut open fish, disembowel them, toss the guts into containers, and place the gutted fish onto the conveyor belt which carries them away. They work quickly, with well-practiced, mechanical movements.

102. EXT. FISH-PROCESSING PLANT. SHOP FLOOR. DAY.

Later, LILIA and ANGELA smoke cigarettes, standing next to a trash can outside the entrance, no longer wearing their masks and gloves but still dressed in coats and caps.

ANGELA

Well, girlfriend, how are things? You don't tell me anything, don't want to share...

LILIA flicks ash into the trash can.

LILIA

Don't feel like it.

ANGELA

How come? So much has happened...

LILIA doesn't reply.

ANGELA

I get it.

For a while, they smoke in silence.

ANGELA

What's up with Nick? First, he kept saying, "I'll kill them both." Then he gets a few drinks in, and I see he's resigned himself.

LILIA

He loves me.

ANGELA

What about the other one? Didn't he ask you to move to Moscow?

LILIA

He did.

ANGELA

And what did you say?

LILIA shrugs again and puts her cigarette out against the edge of the trash can.

103. INT. SLEEPING CAR. CORRIDOR. DAY.

DMITRI stands by the window of a moving train car, holding on to the handrail with both hands. His wrists still bear traces of a rope. He has a black eye, and his nose and mouth are slightly swollen.

Behind him is the open door of a train compartment. The compartment is empty save for DMITRI'S suitcase on the floor and his briefcase on the table.

A Small girl walks down the train car, holding a large doll.

Staring out of the window, DMITRI doesn't notice her.

The GIRL stops at his side and tugs on his pant leg. DMITRI turns around and looks at her.

DMITRI
What's the matter, sweetheart?

GIRL
Trains are traps.

DMITRI
Really?

She nods.

GIRL
And people, too.

With this, she heads further down the train car.

DMITRI stares after her.

She stops by the open door of another compartment at the end of the car, looks back at DMITRI, and waves at him. He raises his hand in response. The GIRL disappears inside the compartment. A woman's head with long hair immediately pops out of the compartment. She stares at DMITRI for a split second and then retreats.

104. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. DAY.

Morning. NIKOLAI, LILIA, and ROMAN are packing their things into boxes and bundles, getting ready to move.

ROMAN acts as if LILIA isn't there (he is ignoring her).

NIKOLAI, on the contrary, pays her more attention than ever: he seems to be looking at her through new eyes, constantly touching her, as if by accident. She responds in kind.

105. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM/CELLAR. DAY.

In the wood-paneled cellar, LILIA packs cans and jars filled with pickles and jams into boxes.

106. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY.

NIKOLAI carries the boxes upstairs and stacks them on top of each other.

107. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM/CELLAR. DAY.

The next time he returns to the cellar, he embraces LILIA and presses her to the wall, and they merge in a single burst of passion.

108. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. ROMAN'S ROOM. DAY.

Back in his room, ROMAN is packing his clothes into a box.

109. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY.

ROMAN comes out of his room and heads down the stairs into the living room. He freezes on the stairs when he sees that NIKOLAI and LILIA are making love in the cellar. In the cellar, they are reaching a climax: some jars fall down and roll around... ROMAN stands, breathless, afraid to take a step forward or back. Finally, he does take a step back. The floor creaks loudly under his foot, and the cellar grows suddenly quiet. ROMAN flies down the stairs in a whirlwind and jumps over the cellar hatch. He runs to the front door, opens it wide and sprints out into the street.

110. EXT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. DAY.

Having literally flown out of the house, ROMAN runs up the mountain (in the opposite direction to the bridge).

111.

112. COUNTRYSIDE. SEASHORE. DAY.

ROMAN runs along the sand by the sea (the skeleton of a whale is visible in the distance). When he reaches the skeleton, he stops and breathes heavily. He rests his hands on his knees and stands hunched over, breathless. Then he sits down on the beach and remains sitting for a while with his head down and his hands on his knees.

113.

114.

115. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. MAGIC HOUR.

Evening. NIKOLAI and LILIA sit at the kitchen table, drinking tea. NIKOLAI is finishing a conversation on his cell phone.

NIKOLAI

... Okay, then it's a deal. Come pick it up. Just don't wait too long. ... Okay, I'm waiting.

NIKOLAI hangs up and places the cell phone on the table.

NIKOLAI

He'll come pick up the boat tomorrow. And the guys will come get the tools.

(sighs heavily and shakes his head)

I'm practically giving it away.

LILIA doesn't reply. NIKOLAI clenches his fists.

NIKOLAI

If the bastard builds himself a palace on our land, I'll fucking burn it down!

The front door opens. ROMAN enters and walks through the living room upstairs to his room, not stopping or looking at NIKOLAI or LILIA.

NIKOLAI'S VOICE (OFF CAMERA)
Hey pilgrim! Take your phone next time!

116. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. ROMAN'S ROOM. MAGIC HOUR.

ROMAN heads straight to his room. There, he turns on the light, sits at his desk, turns on the computer, and waits for it to boot up.

LILIA appears in the doorway.

ROMAN can see her reflection in the window.

An hourglass icon revolves on the computer screen. ROMAN puts his hand on the mouse.

LILIA
Roman.

He pretends not to hear her.

LILIA
Roman, listen.

He turns around in his chair and stares at her maliciously, not blinking.

ROMAN
What do you want? I hate you. You ruined everything. It's all because of you.

His eyes fill with tears.

NIKOLAI appears behind LILIA.

NIKOLAI
What's going on?

ROMAN
(screaming)
I don't want to live with the two of you! I'm sick of you!

NIKOLAI steps into the room.

ROMAN leaps off his chair.

ROMAN
Stay away from me!

NIKOLAI

Son, what's the matter? Calm down.

NIKOLAI approaches him and forcibly pulls him into a hug. ROMAN clutches at his father, sinks his face into NIKOLAI'S chest, and dissolves in muffled weeping.

ROMAN

Get her out of here! Kick her out!

LILIA hesitates, then turns around and walks away.

NIKOLAI holds his son tight, caressing his head.

NIKOLAI

It's going to be okay, son. It's going to be okay.

117. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

The small hours of the morning. NIKOLAI and LILIA lie in bed. He is asleep; she is awake, lying on her back and staring straight ahead in the dark.

She slips out of bed, pulls on her robe, slides her feet into her slippers, and heads into the shower.

117A.INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. MAGIC HOUR.

Once she has washed up and gotten dressed to go, LILIA, on her way out, with a bag over her shoulder, stands in the bathroom doorway staring at NIKOLAI, peacefully asleep under the covers.

118. EXT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. MAGIC HOUR

LILIA exits the house. This time, instead of crossing the bridge, she turns in the opposite direction and heads down a path that loops around the mountain which looms over the house.

119. COUNTRYSIDE. PATH TO THE MOUNTAIN. MAGIC HOUR.

LILIA walks down a path along the shore.

120. COUNTRYSIDE. PLATEAU. MAGIC HOUR.

LILIA reaches a plateau. She walks along the edge of the cliff for a long while. It begins to get light out.

120A. COUNTRYSIDE. PLATEAU. MAGIC HOUR.

Dawn is breaking. She stands on the high rocky bank, staring at the bay, watching the whales play clumsily in the water. The wind toys with her hair. Tears run down her face.

A navigation tower appears in the distance (a wooden structure of poles and planks; the upper part is painted red).

121. EXT. VILLAGE. DAY.

Morning. Nikolai's SUV drives through the village.

122. INT. CABIN OF NIKOLAI'S SUV. DAY.

ROMAN is behind the wheel.

NIKOLAI sits in the front passenger seat, with Roman's school backpack on the floor at his feet.

NIKOLAI
Slow down, slow down.

ROMAN slows down.

123. COUNTRYSIDE. STONE PILES. DAY.

Nikolai's SUV drives down the road between piles of stones.

124. EXT. CITY STREETS. DAY.

Nikolai's SUV enters the town.

125. EXT. SCHOOL. DAY.

ROMAN pulls up outside his school, turns the engine off, and climbs out of the car. NIKOLAI follows.

They stand in front of the car and conduct an exchange: ROMAN gives his father the car keys, and NIKOLAI hands over his son's backpack.

NIKOLAI
Roman.

ROMAN
Huh?

NIKOLAI
Forgive her. She is a good woman.

ROMAN
Have you forgiven her?

NIKOLAI
(after a pause)
I am trying to.

NIKOLAI pats his son on the head. ROMAN tries to dodge him, but fails. He pushes his father's hand away and runs into the school.

126. EXT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. DAY.

The doors of the workshop near NIKOLAI'S house are wide open.

A passenger car connected to a trailer with a boat is parked on the other side of the house. NIKOLAI counts the money in the presence of the BUYER. He nods to let the BUYER know everything is okay, and shakes the BUYER'S hand. The BUYER climbs into his car and drives away.

For a long while, NIKOLAI stares at his departing boat, then turns around, walks toward the workshop, and closes the doors. It is noticeable that there is less equipment and fewer tools in the workshop than before.

127. EXT. FISH-PROCESSING PLANT. ENTRANCE GATE. MAGIC HOUR.

Evening. Nikolai's SUV is parked near the entrance gate.

NIKOLAI is smoking behind the wheel, blowing smoke through the open window.

People pour out of the entrance gate; some climb into their cars parked in the lot outside the entrance gate, others head for the bus stop.

ANGELA approaches Nikolai's car.

ANGELA

Hey Nick.

NIKOLAI

Hey. Where's Lilia?

ANGELA

She wasn't in today.

NIKOLAI

Yeah, right.

ANGELA

I'm serious.

NIKOLAI smiles, not believing ANGELA.

ANGELA

No, really. I kept calling her, and it keeps saying her phone is not in service. She's not at home?

NIKOLAI retrieves his cell phone from the dashboard, punches in the number, lifts it to his ear, and waits.

After a while, he hangs up.

ANGELA

Anything?

NIKOLAI

Out of range.

A bus pulls up to the bus stop.

ANGELA

Okay, I've got to run. Hubs is on duty tonight, can't come pick me up.

NIKOLAI

(nodding, looking completely lost)

Okay, sure.

ANGELA

Or you could give me a lift.

NIKOLAI

Huh? Oh, yeah, sure, get in.

ANGELA circles the SUV and climbs into the front passenger seat.

127A. COUNTRYSIDE. ROAD THROUGH A GULLEY. MAGIC HOUR.

NIKOLAI'S SUV drives up from the shore and travels down the road through the gully. Behind it in the background are the bay, the pier... On the other shore the fish-processing plant stands against a backdrop of mountains.

128. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

NIKOLAI stands in the kitchen smoking. He takes a big puff on his cigarette and looks into the nothingness in front of him .

On the table there is an ashtray with a mound of crumpled cigarette butts.

NIKOLAI periodically picks up his cell phone from its spot on the table before him, and dials LILIA (her name appears on the display).

Amidst the total silence, a robotic voice is heard from the phone: "The number you are calling is switched off or is out of network range."

129. EXT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. DAY.

With a day's worth of stubble on his face, NIKOLAI stands in front of his house, holding his cell phone. He stares at the display, presses buttons, and finds the name 'DMITRI' in the contacts list. After some hesitation, he presses the call button and lifts the phone to his ear.

After a short time a robotic voice announces: "The number you are calling is switched off or is out of network range."

NIKOLAI snorts miserably and hangs up.

130. INT. ANGELA'S APARTMENT. KITCHEN. MAGIC HOUR.

Late evening. NIKOLAI sits at the kitchen table in ANGELA and PASHA'S apartment. He is plastered. ANGELA and PASHA are there too, also drunk. PASHA has a lead on ANGELA. The table is set with vodka and snacks.

NIKOLAI

She ran off to him.. To him! I wasn't suspicious at all.

(looks from ANGELA to PASHA and back)

But what else could've happened to her?

ANGELA

It could be anything. You know how many people go missing?

NIKOLAI thinks for a few seconds, then shakes his head.

NIKOLAI
I don't believe in "anything".

ANGELA
What about the cops?

PASHA
So what about them?

ANGELA gives him a disgusted look, then turns inquiringly to NIKOLAI.

He shrugs.

NIKOLAI
You have to wait three days.

PASHA
What a load of shit!

ANGELA
As the wife of a government official, I'm telling you that you can contact them right away.

NIKOLAI
What am I supposed to do, tell them, "My woman ran off to Moscow with her fucking boyfriend? Please bring her back: here's his name, address, and phone number..."

ANGELA sees that he has a point. For a while, she sits in silence, frowning thoughtfully. Suddenly, she gets an idea.

ANGELA
You want **me** to call him?

NIKOLAI grimaces.

NIKOLAI
I already tried. Many times.

ANGELA
And?

NIKOLAI
"The number you are calling is switched off or is out of network range."

ANGELA frowns thoughtfully again.

ANGELA

Okay, but we have to do something.

NIKOLAI nods, takes the bottle from the table, and pours everyone half a glass of vodka.

NIKOLAI

And I wouldn't be surprised if he took my fucking money and left with it. And she joined him later.

PASHA

(staring at Nick with a wild expression on his face)

Nick, do you want me to find the pair of them? I am a cop, after all!

NIKOLAI

You do that, Pasha. You do that.

131. EXT. VILLAGE STREET. DAY.

NIKOLAI staggers through the village, a vodka bottle jammed in his pocket.

132. EXT. DILAPIDATED CHURCH. DAY. MAGIC HOUR.

Late evening. NIKOLAI slowly walks past the dilapidated brick church. A campfire burns inside. Someone is strumming an out-of-tune guitar. NIKOLAI stops, stares at the church for a while, then turns and walks in its direction.

133. INT. DILAPIDATED CHURCH. MAGIC HOUR.

A handful of teenagers sit around the campfire inside the church, drinking beer and smoking. One of them keeps playing the same three cowboy chords on the out-of-tune guitar, quietly singing a melancholy folk song about unrequited love.

NIKOLAI sits in an empty window frame a short distance away.

The teenagers notice him, but are not particularly bothered by his presence.

NIKOLAI takes a gulp of vodka straight out of the bottle and lights a cigarette.

NIKOLAI

(asking unexpectedly loudly)

Hey boys, where's Roman?

TEENAGER

He went home.

NIKOLAI

When?

TEENAGER

About twenty minutes ago.

NIKOLAI gives them a drunken nod and continues to smoke.

He looks at the walls of the church and sees the remains of a fresco depicting the “Beheading of John the Baptist”.

134. INT. NIKOLAI’S HOUSE. BEDROOM. DAY.

Morning. NIKOLAI is asleep face down on top of the bed covers, still wearing his clothes. A long ring of the doorbell, followed by insistent knocking at the front door, wakes him up.

NIKOLAI
(crying out, not looking up)
Roman! Open the door!

He gets no reaction. The house is silent.

The ringing and knocking continues.

NIKOLAI pulls himself up with great effort, his face and clothes equally rumpled, walks from the bedroom, down the hallway, toward the front door and opens it.

135. EXT. NIKOLAI’S HOUSE. DAY.

It is PASHA, wearing his uniform.

PASHA
We found her.

135. A EXT. NIKOLAI’S HOUSE. DAY.

PASHA’S police jeep sets off down the road from the house to the bridge, crossing over it. Once across the bridge it turns right and drives along the shore to where another police car is parked. There are some people assembled nearby.

136. EXT. BAY. DAY.

The tide is low; the water has receded from the shore.

LILIA lies on a sand bank, seaweed twisted in her hair. Her skin has turned white, and is beginning to peel in places.

Sinking ankle-deep into the sand, NIKOLAI rushes to her side and falls to his knees next to her, rocked by silent sobs.

Two police officers follow him, quietly cursing the need to trudge through dirt.

POLICE OFFICER
Step away from her, you hear? Don’t touch her! Got to wait for forensics.

But NIKOLAI doesn’t hear them.

NIKOLAI
(whispering, lifting his twisted face to the sky)
Why? Why? What for?

Teenagers hang around on the shore, along with a handful of old women who can’t stop crossing themselves and a few mangy dogs.

PASHA throws rocks at the dogs, trying to chase them away. The dogs keep running off, only to return.

137. COUNTRYSIDE. PLATEAU. DAY.

It is gusty. NIKOLAI stands atop the high rocky bank, in almost the same spot where LILIA stood earlier. An opened vodka bottle juts from his pocket. He stares at the whales. There is a navigational tower in the distance.

A man with a backpack, dressed in a weatherproof jacket, jeans, and worn camping boots, walks up the path toward him.

NIKOLAI retrieves the bottle from his pocket, unscrews the cap, and takes a sip.

138. INT. VILLAGE STORE. DAY.

NIKOLAI enters the shabby village store.

A PRIEST (55–60) in a threadbare robe stands by the counter, buying 20 loaves of white bread.

The SALES CLERK, dressed in a robe, stacks the loaves on the counter one after the other.

The PRIEST puts them into a canvas sack.

NIKOLAI waits, glancing at the PRIEST without much interest.

The SALES CLERK finishes with the loaves and looks at NIKOLAI.

SALES CLERK

You want anything, Nick?

NIKOLAI

Vodka, what else?

He pulls crumpled bills out of his pocket and tosses them onto the counter.

Give me two.

The SALES CLERK retrieves the money, smooths it out, and places it in the pocket of her robe, then puts two bottles of vodka on the counter next to the bread.

NIKOLAI takes the bottles and walks out of the store.

139. EXT. VILLAGE STORE. DAY.

On the street (by the store entrance) NIKOLAI stops, opens the vodka, takes a swig, grimaces, breathing into his sleeve, puts the bottle in his pocket, lights a cigarette and looks at the sky, blowing the smoke in that direction.

The PRIEST exits the store with a bag, carrying it in his hands in front of him. He puts the bag on the ground and ties the string at the top of it.

PRIEST

Hey Nick!

NIKOLAI

(snorting and shaking his head)

Hello there, Father Vasily.

He looks briefly at the PRIEST, and then he pulls out the bottle again and takes another swig.

NIKOLAI

And so, where's your God of Mercy?

The PRIEST lifts his head from the bag, looks at NIKOLAI, and straightens.

PRIEST

My God is with me. But I don't know where yours is. Who do you pray to? I never see you in church. You don't fast, receive communion or go to confession...

NIKOLAI

You mean to say that if I had lit your candles and bowed in prayer, everything would have turned out differently for me? Maybe I should start now before it's too late? Maybe my wife will rise from the dead? Maybe I'll get my home back? Or is it too late?

PRIEST

I don't know. God moves in mysterious ways.

NIKOLAI

(laughing)

You don't know? And you tell me to go to church. Don't you know anything at all?

The PRIEST lowers his eyes and continues to tie the string on his sack.

NIKOLAI

(offering him the bottle)

D'you want some?

The PRIEST shakes his head.

NIKOLAI nods and takes a drink.

PRIEST

(calmly)

Can you pull in the Leviathan with a fishhook or throw a rope on its tongue?

NIKOLAI

(grimacing from the vodka)

What?

PRIEST

Will he keep begging you for mercy? Will he speak to you with gentle words? Nothing on earth is his equal. He looks down on all that are haughty. He is king over all that are proud.

NIKOLAI

You made that up, didn't you? I am talking to you like a normal person, and here you are giving me all this crap. What's this all about?

PRIEST

(straightening up again)

Ever hear of a man named Job?

NIKOLAI

Nah. What of him?

PRIEST

He was like you, asking questions about the meaning of life. Thinking, 'Why am I being punished? What's going on? It's not like I was a big sinner: on the contrary...' Drove himself so crazy, his skin turned all scabby. His wife tried to knock some sense into him; his friends kept telling him not to provoke God's wrath. But he couldn't let it go: kept kicking up the dust, pulling out his hair. In the end, God took pity on him and appeared to him in the guise of a hurricane, and explained it to him clearly.

NIKOLAI

And?

PRIEST

Job resigned himself to his fate. Lived a hundred and forty years, got to see four generations of grandkids, and died from old age when he'd had enough.

NIKOLAI

Is that a fairy tale?

PRIEST

No, it's from the Bible.

He slings the sack across his back .

NIKOLAI

Come on, let me help you.

PRIEST

My own labors are not a burden.

NIKOLAI

Come on!

140. EXT. CHURCH OF THE TRANSFIGURATION. DAY.

A drab two-story house with an intricate cupola and a cross on the roof next to the chimney. A carefully handwritten sign that reads 'The Church of Transfiguration' hangs on the wall next to the wide open entrance.

NIKOLAI, with the sack on his back, and the PRIEST stop on the threshold of the church. NIKOLAI gives the sack to the PRIEST, they shake hands, and NIKOLAI leaves.

A NUN walks out onto the steps from the church. The PRIEST unties the bag and pulls out a loaf of bread.

The NUN carries the bag inside the church.

141. EXT. CHURCH OF THE TRANSFIGURATION. REAR COURTYARD. DAY.

The PRIEST walks around the church in the direction of a barn with an adjoining paddock. In the paddock, a rather large pig is busily moving around.

The PRIEST feeds some bread to the pig and pats him knowingly on the back, though with no particular feelings of attachment.

141A.INT. KITCHEN IN ANGELA'S APARTMENT. MAGIC HOUR.

Late evening. ANGELA and PASHA are sitting at the kitchen table. He is greedily eating borsht (in one hand he holds a spoon and in the other hand bread; a plate of bread sits on the table). She shakes her head sadly.

ANGELA

The horror of it all.... Do you really think she killed herself?

PASHA

The forensics will tell.

They are silent for a while. PASHA eats and ANGELA looks down at the floor. Alarmed by some thought, she lifts her head and looks at PASHA. Feeling her gaze, he stops chewing and swallowing. He looks at her questioningly.

PASHA

What is it?

ANGELA

I just remembered something.

PASHA

Yeah?

ANGELA

Nick threatened to kill her, remember?

It takes a while for this to sink in, then PASHA dismisses her with his hand.

PASHA
Come now, what are you talking about?

He returns to his borsht.

ANGELA
But he did threaten her?

PASHA
He did.

ANGELA
And he is capable of it, after all.

PASHA shrugs and continues to eat his borsht.

ANGELA
Yes, he is, I'm telling you.

She looks at her husband, absorbed in her own thoughts.
PASHA stuffs a piece of bread into his mouth and reaches for another.

ANGELA
Stop stuffing your face!

She grabs his plate and removes it to the other end of the table.

PASHA
What the fuck are you doing?

ANGELA
Do you hear what I'm saying?

PASHA
Yes, I do. But what can we do about it?

ANGELA
What can we do? Who's the cop here? You tell me what's to be done!

142. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. MAGIC HOUR.

Evening. NIKOLAI sits at his kitchen table, staring into the distance. An open bottle of vodka and a glass stand before him.

ROMAN enters.

ROMAN

Dad?

NIKOLAI
Hmm? What do you want, son?

ROMAN
Enough with the drinking, eh?

NIKOLAI
That's it, I'm done, starting tomorrow. You trust me?

ROMAN doesn't answer.

NIKOLAI
Sit down, let's talk.

ROMAN
Forget it. I'd rather go out for a walk.

ROMAN walks down the hallway. The front door slams.

NIKOLAI
Go on, go for a walk.

NIKOLAI pours himself a glass and drinks.

143. EXT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. DAY.

Early morning. An old, foreign car pulls up outside Nikolai's house. Three plainclothes police step out, walk toward the house and up the steps, and ring the doorbell. They wait.

A sleepy ROMAN opens the door.

POLICE OFFICER 1
Is your father home?

ROMAN
He's asleep.

They push the boy aside and all three enter the house.

144. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY.

ROMAN
Hey, who are you? What do you want? Dad!
There are some guys who barged in here!!

POLICE OFFICER 2
Hey! Not so loud...

He holds ROMAN firmly by the shoulder, not letting him go. They remain in the kitchen. POLICE OFFICERS 1 and 3 walk into the living room.

144A.INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY.

NIKOLAI, in his coat, lies on the couch (clearly, he was not able to make it to the bedroom last night). Hearing the cries of his son, he opens his eyes and sits up on the couch, looking around senselessly and, being half-asleep and hungover, not understanding anything. He is unkempt.

POLICE OFFICERS 1 and 3 enter the living room.

NIKOLAI gets up to greet them.

He is instantly seized and pressed face down on the sofa. They twist his hands behind his back and handcuff his wrists.

POLICE OFFICER 3 forcefully detains NIKOLAI on the sofa.

POLICE OFFICER 1

(quickly showing NIKOLAI his police ID)

Police, homicide unit. Why did you ignore the summons?

NIKOLAI

What summons? I didn't get no summons. What are you doing?

POLICE OFFICER 1

Here it is.

He pulls out and shows NIKOLAI a summons, and then hides it back in his pocket.

145. INT/EXT. KITCHEN/AT NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. DAY.

POLICE OFFICERS 1 and 3 lead NIKOLAI through the kitchen to the exit (they bend him over, holding his handcuffs behind him).

POLICE OFFICER 2 detains ROMAN.

They lead NIKOLAI out.

POLICE OFFICER 2

(to ROMAN)

Sit down.

With his eyes, he indicates the chair by the table.

ROMAN sits.

POLICE OFFICER 2

Right, stay there.

Leaving ROMAN in the kitchen, he leaves the house.

ROMAN slowly stands up from his chair and looks out of the window. He sees POLICE OFFICER 3 put NIKOLAI into the backseat of the foreign car and sit down

beside him; POLICE OFFICER 2 sits down in the back seat on the other side of NIKOLAI. POLICE OFFICER 1 gets into the driver's seat and starts the engine. The car begins to reverse.

ROMAN gets up and runs out of the house into the street.

146. EXT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. DAY.

ROMAN runs after the car down the road leading to the bridge. The car speeds up, getting farther away.

147. INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICE. DAY.

A DETECTIVE sits at a table in a small office. A case file lies on the table before him.

NIKOLAI sits across from him, hands cuffed behind his back.

POLICE OFFICER No. 1 perches on the "half-ass" windowsill and smokes a cigarette. There is an ashtray in front of him on the windowsill.

DETECTIVE

Let me tell you, Nikolai, things look very bad for you. We have every reason to believe that you killed your wife and tried to fake a drowning.

NIKOLAI

(in disbelief)

What? What are you talking about?

He turns to POLICE OFFICER 1, as if looking for support.

The officer stares at him without emotion.

The DETECTIVE opens the folder.

DETECTIVE

We identified signs of violence on the body. Your wife was murdered first, then pushed into the water. She died from a blow to the head, a blunt object to the back of the head, to be precise. Not long before that, she had intercourse. We are examining whether this was a rape. We will take your sperm for analysis, and something tells me it will be a match. Next, we have testimony from Angela Polivanova and her husband, Pavel Polivanov, to the effect that a few days prior to the murder, while at a picnic, you had a fight with your wife and her lover in front of witnesses, after you caught them having sex in the woods. You beat up the lover, one Dmitri, whose identity is currently being established, then hit your wife, and were afterwards heard on numerous occasions threatening to kill them both. This testimony was confirmed by Lieutenant Colonel Ivan Stepanych Degtiaryev of the traffic police, who was also present during the aforementioned events. In addition, the suspected murder weapon, a hammer whose shape

visually matches that of the victim's head wound, was found in the outbuilding on your property. It has been sent for analysis. Would you like to comment on all this information?

NIKOLAI sits in stunned silence.

DETECTIVE

I would advise you, man to man, to write a full confession. We have more than enough evidence to convict you. A confession will help at sentencing. Item 1 of Article 105 guarantees you up to 15 years, unless of course the court finds aggravating circumstances, in which case you could be looking at 20 years. I doubt you'll get life, but it is a possibility.

NIKOLAI is silent.

DETECTIVE

Fine. In any case, we're holding you for 48 hours as a murder suspect, and I'll petition the court for a full arrest warrant, since you are a flight risk and might impede the investigation. I am sure the court will meet me halfway. Oh yeah, the Constitution allows you to have an attorney. If you don't have an attorney, the court will appoint one for you. I'll just sign the order, and you'll be taken to a temporary holding facility. Do you understand?

NIKOLAI

No. I don't understand any of it.

DETECTIVE

We'll, you'll certainly have time to think about it.

148. INT/EXT. INSIDE A FOREIGN CAR/CITY STREETS. MAGIC HOUR.

Dusk. The used foreign car that took NIKOLAI from his house after his arrest is cruising through the streets of the city.

NIKOLAI (his hands cuffed in front of him) sits in the front passenger seat.

POLICE OFFICER 1 is behind the wheel.

149. EXT. WASTELAND. BUS STOP. MAGIC HOUR.

A God-forsaken empty open space. On the side of the road by the rickety, rusty bus stop sits a small kiosk on wheels. It is lit from the inside by a dim lamp. It sells water, beer, chewing gum, chocolate, cigarettes ...

The foreign car stops by the kiosk.

149A.INT. INSIDE THE FOREIGN CAR. MAGIC HOUR.

POLICE OFFICER

(switches off the engine and removes the key from the ignition)

I need to get a pack of smokes.

He steps out of the car and heads toward the kiosk.

For a long time, NIKOLAI sits in the car alone. He looks around: there is nowhere to run. His breathing and heart rate, spiked by the adrenaline flooding his system and by thoughts of escape, slowly return to normal. He lowers his head.

150. EXT. WASTELAND. BUS STOP. MAGIC HOUR.

The POLICE OFFICER returns to the car, having bought his cigarettes and some water.

They get back on the road.

151. EXT. PRISON GATES. MAGIC HOUR.

The car approaches iron gates, beyond which is the prison surrounded by a concrete fence topped with barbed wire. POLICE OFFICER 1 gives several long, insistent blasts of the horn. Finally, a PRISON ENSIGN steps out of the entrance and approaches the car.

The POLICE OFFICER silently hands him some papers (probably a detention order). The PRISON ENSIGN takes them and goes back inside.

152. INT/EXT. INSIDE THE FOREIGN CAR/PRISON GATES. MAGIC HOUR.

NIKOLAI
(to Police officer 1)

Listen.

POLICE OFFICER 1

Yeah?

NIKOLAI
My son's all alone. We've got no relatives.

POLICE OFFICER 1
Don't worry. He'll be fine. The state will take care of him.

153. EXT. PRISON GATES. MAGIC HOUR.

The gates open, and the foreign car pulls inside the prison. The gates slide closed.

154. EXT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. DAY.

A bulldozer, excavator, and site hut stand near Nikolai's house. The area is deserted.

A police jeep crosses the bridge.

It approaches the house and stops. ANGELA and PASHA climb out of the car and walk up to the door. ANGELA rings the doorbell. They wait for a while and listen.

ANGELA
(knocking on the door)
Roman, it's Auntie Angela and Uncle Pasha! Open the door!

ROMAN takes a while to answer.

VOICE OF ROMAN
You're alone? Honest?

PASHA
Yes, honest, honest.

ROMAN hesitates, then opens the door. He has lost weight. His hair is a mess; his eyes are hollow.

155. INT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY.

All three sit around the kitchen table. ROMAN sits with his head down. On the rare occasions when he looks up, he stares sullenly.

ANGELA
How are you doing?

ROMAN
Fine.

ANGELA
Why didn't you call me when they took your dad?

ROMAN
I don't have your phone number.

ANGELA
How long have you been alone here?

ROMAN shrugs.

ROMAN
I don't know. About five days, probably.

ANGELA
Roman, your dad's lawyer called me. Here's what he says. Your father was arrested. They're accusing him of killing Lilia. They'll keep him in jail until the trial. Then right from there, they'll send him to the prison camp. Because they have proof.

ROMAN
It's not true.

ANGELA
It is true. Why would I lie?

ROMAN
Why didn't he call me? He's supposed to get a phone call.

ANGELA

I don't know. Listen, the lawyer told me, if you don't have anyone to take care of you, they'll put you in an orphanage.

ROMAN

I can take care of myself.

ANGELA

The law says until you turn 18, you have to stay in an orphanage or with a guardian. Pasha and I talked it over and decided, if you don't mind, we could be your guardians. There's no one else who could take you.

ROMAN

Is it because of the money?

ANGELA

What money?

ROMAN

Well, you'll probably get money for it, right?

ANGELA

I don't know, Roman. I haven't checked yet. I'll check it if you agree. I guess the government would probably help out. But that's not why we want to do it.

ROMAN

Then why?

ANGELA

I don't know, you're like family. I was friends with your mother. You probably don't remember, you were very young when she died. I went to school with your mom and dad. And Lilia, too, though she was two years younger.

ROMAN hangs his head until it nearly touches the table, and begins to weep quietly.

ANGELA

Roman...

ANGELA rises and walks over to him, reaches out, and caresses his head. Suddenly, he presses himself to her, burying his face in her stomach. She hugs him back. Tears spring to her eyes.

PASHA

(swallowing hard)

I'll go have a smoke.

156. EXT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. DAY

PASHA walks out of the house onto the porch and lights a cigarette. He breaks down: tears stream down his face; he snuffles, rubs a hand across his eyes, turns his face to the sky, and blinks the tears from his eyes, inhaling a lungful of smoke.

157. EXT. NIKOLAI'S HOUSE. DAY.

The excavator breaks up Nikolai's house with its bucket.

The bulldozer shoves the remnants of his workshop and outbuilding to the edge of the lot.

There is a high-sided cargo truck (without a top and two low sides to the rear and sides) on the road not far from the house. Excavation workers (wearing work clothes) load into it things taken from Nikolai's house: the refrigerator, sofa, armchairs... Some of the things stand beside the truck, others have already been loaded

(in the background the excavator and bulldozer continue their destructive work).

158. INT. COURTROOM. DAY.

Courtroom

Judge TARASOVA, in her robe, stands at the table, which looms slightly over the rest of the room, and reads the sentencing order.

NIKOLAI, gaunt and completely lost, stands in the defendants' cage with his head down.

Others in the room include the attorney LUKYANOV, Public Prosecutor GORYUNOVA, the court stenographer, and two police officers next to the defendants' cage.

TARASOVA

In the name of the Russian Federation, the Pribrezhny Municipal Court has ruled as follows: The Panel of Judges of the Pribrezhny Municipal Criminal Court of the Russian Federation, consisting of presiding Judge Tarasova and Judges Gandikap and Amosova, have examined the petition filed by Nikolai Nikolaevich Sergeyev to appeal the Ruling of the Zagorye District Court on case No. 06-18, and in the presence of N. Sergeyev, attorney Lunkov, and Public Prosecutor Goryunova, the Court has determined that: **The Zagorye District Court ruled to convict Nikolai Sergeyev, citizen of the Russian Federation, with no previous convictions, in accordance with [Item 1 of Article 105](#) of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, and to sentence him to 15 years in a maximum-security penitentiary. The ruling also addressed evidence in the case. Nikolai Sergeyev was convicted of the premeditated murder of another person (his wife, Lilia Petrovna Sergeyeva). The crime was committed in Zagorye District. Details of the circumstances of the crime are contained in the ruling. During proceedings, Nikolai Sergeyev refused to confess to the crime.**

Nikolai Sergeyev's appeal requests that the ruling be repealed or the sentence be reduced. The appellant claims that his guilt in the case was not sufficiently proven.

The Court has examined the evidence in the case, heard statements from both parties, and considers the Ruling of the Zagorye District Court to be lawful and well-founded, and not subject to repeal or change in accordance with the following:

Contrary to the appeal, the original court correctly established the facts of the case. The decision to convict Nikolai Sergeyev of the crime, as well as to apply [Item 1 of Article 105](#) of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, was correct. **The Court's ruling was well-founded.**

Nikolai Sergeyev's guilt in the case of murder of his wife was established by the Court on the basis of testimony from Angela Ivanovna Polivanova, Pavel Sergeyevich Polivanov, and Ivan Stepanovich Degtiaryev, recorded in the course of preliminary investigations and examined by the Court, to the effect that following an altercation, Nikolai Sergeyev had threatened to murder his wife. During the trial, the witnesses confirmed their testimony in full. In addition, the defendant's guilt was confirmed by forensic evidence and an expert conclusion regarding the localization, character, and severity of bodily harm caused to the victim, the cause and time of death, and other evidence examined in the course of the trial and analyzed in the ruling.

All circumstances pertaining to the case were thoroughly examined and analyzed by the Court, and evidence in the case was given due consideration.

The defendant's version of the events of the case was considered by the Court and was reasonably rejected.

Based on the above, and in accordance with articles 372–389 of the Criminal Procedural Code of the Russian Federation, the Court has ruled:

That Nikolai Sergeyev's petition to repeal or change the Ruling of the Zagorye District Court is denied.

That the Ruling of the Zagorye District Court is upheld without changes, and Nikolai Sergeyev's appeal is denied.

The present ruling comes into full force and effect as of the day of its publication.

159. INT. RESTAURANT. DAY.

VADIM SERGEYICH is eating dumplings in a restaurant.

His cell phone, which lies on the table not far from the plate, rings.

VADIM SERGEYICH wipes his mouth with a napkin, retrieves the phone, looks at the display, accepts the call, and lifts the phone to his ear.

VADIM SERGEYICH

Hello... Yes.

(listening, nodding)

Fifteen. Well, thank God. He'll know who he shouldn't mess with now. Okay then.

He hangs up, places the phone back on the table, and gestures to a waiter.

VADIM SERGEYICH

A shot of vodka, please.

160. INT. NEWLY BUILT CHURCH. DAY.

The church, with white, yet-to-be-painted walls, is packed with people. The crowd includes VADIM SERGEYICH with his wife and son (6–9 years old), Judge TARASOVA, Public Prosecutor GORYUNOVA, Chief of Police TKACHUK in full regalia, and other officials (some from the region, others from higher up, including the Governor, members of the legislative council...), all with their families in tow. VADIM SERGEYICH'S bodyguard and driver are also here, along with ordinary people, mostly old women, and priests and nuns in festive dress...

The BISHOP, dressed in a white headdress and frock covered in gold embroidery, stands with his back to the new altar and speaks solemnly, in a slightly sing-song voice. To the right and left, 8–9 feet away, stand two servants).

BISHOP

My compatriots, my fellow countrymen! Our precious Russian leaders! Our nation's lawmakers and executives, gathered here today, in this place, for this great occasion! In fact, we probably don't even realize yet what is happening. And what is happening is that we are giving the Russian people back their soul.

To the Blessed Saint, Great Prince Alexander Nevsky, belong the marvelous words: "God lies not in strength, but in truth." And he was right: not with strength, but with love; not with cunning, but with the Lord's wisdom; not with anger and hatred, but with valour did our faith and our Motherland triumph again and again. But the most important thing we must remember today is that we must never betray the Orthodox faith, and we must always tell the truth. Truth is God's bequest. Truth reflects reality without distortion. But only he who possesses Verity can possess the truth. And Verity is Christ himself. This is why, when the Apostle Paul said, 'I no longer live, but Christ lives in me,' he meant that when a man lets Christ into his soul—in other words, begins to think like Christ, begins to see like Christ, begins to feel and, finally, to act as the Lord commanded – only then does this man possess the truth. And that means he can look at events and see their true meaning, and tell good from evil. And this is the real meaning of truth. Today, we need truth more than ever. We must testify to the truth! And when people destroy crosses, break icons, defile the Crucifix, and blaspheme by calling demonic rites a prayer, when people

try to convince you that they do this out of the best intentions, they are trying to dress up lies as the truth. How can a person destroy the foundations of faith, the foundations of morality, and talk about preaching freedom? Freedom is the knowledge of Truth! This is what the Holy Scripture teaches us. Know the Truth, and the Truth shall set you free. Only a man who knows the Truth, who lives by the Truth, who defends the Truth – only that man is truly free! My beloved brothers and sisters in Christ! The modern world keeps changing its reference points, keeps trading true values for false ones. But our reference points remain unchanged: we know our path leads to Christ. We know that the Church will teach and protect us. But the Church consists of you and me! God is on our side! Truth is on our side! The Lord's love is on our side! And we shall vanquish our enemies with prayer! We shall consider our enemies as spiritual cripples, and we will pray for their quick recovery. And in defending our faith, we will not use their methods, but just as Christ shed light on the truth and unmasked the lies with one word, so will we, made wiser by the Church, made wiser by the Word of God and by saintly prayer, defend the Orthodox faith!

May the Lord bless our national leaders, represented by the President and the Prime Minister! May the Lord bless our local leaders, represented by the Governor, the Mayor, and the Legislative Council! May the Lord bless the working men and women! We beg the Lord for peace and happiness for our children; we beg the Lord for the youth and bright future for all generations living throughout this earth! Amen!

VADIM SERGEYICH'S son stares at the large icon in the iconostasis depicting the Icon of Christ of Edessa (?).

VADIM SERGEYICH

(bending over the boy)

That's the Lord, son. He sees everything.

He gently strokes his son's head. His son continues to look up at the icon.

An invisible choir begins to sing a joyous hymn. The bells start ringing (the sound begins to carry and grow in volume. The sound of the large bell is the holy messenger). Deeply moved, cheerful people congratulate each other joyfully as they file toward the exit.

161. EXT. NEWLY BUILT CHURCH. DAY.

A bay, rocky knolls, a bridge, a coastal village across the water.

On this side of the bay, the spot under the cliff and by the bridge where Nikolai's house used to stand is now occupied by a brand new church with brightly shining

cupolas. It is clear that construction has literally just been completed: construction materials, equipment, and the construction workers' trailer are still there...

Expensive cars, mostly black SUVs, are parked in a small lot by the church.

People dressed in expensive business suits, including the Mayor and other officials, climb into their cars.

Nuns pile into one of the black SUVs.

The cars pull away one by one.

The big church bells ring, drowning out smaller bells and slowly expanding to fill the entire soundtrack.

THE END