

THE DEATH OF RASPUTIN

Written by

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Based on the play by Erin Reinelt

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FADE IN:

EXT. VERRAZZANO-NARROWS BRIDGE - BROOKLYN - NIGHT

RASPUTIN, late 30s, the pockets of his trench coat stuffed with second-hand books, hangs over the side of the bridge connecting Brooklyn with Staten Island, eyes wide and wild.

He guzzles a bottle of cheap vodka and SHOUTS at the sky.

RASPUTIN

God! God! Why have you forsaken me?

Rasputin leans forwards, staring into the water. Closes his eyes. Takes one boot off the railing and hovers it.

Losing his nerve, he leans back. The vodka bottle slips from his fingers into the roiling water with a SPLASH. His boot finds unsteady footing.

CRACK! Rain pours down upon him. Rasputin clings to the slick metal railing. His boots slip. He plunges towards the depths of Gravesend Bay.

EXT. GRAVESEND BAY - BROOKLYN - NIGHT

Rasputin's body THRASHES underwater, his mouth open in a SILENT scream. The books weighing down his pockets float upwards: THE BIBLE, THE ZOHAR, THE NAG HAMMADI TEXTS. He struggles to unbutton his trench coat and free himself.

Rasputin fights not to breathe as he pops open the last button. His shoulders break free of the heavy leather coat. He kicks away from it as it sinks below.

He fights his way upwards. Through his thin white t-shirt, a tattoo of Jesus on a Russian Orthodox cross covers his chest.

The water clears above him. Rasputin weakly swims towards life, light, salvation. Losing strength, he helplessly sucks in water. Rasputin CHOKES, his eyes glazing over.

His body sinks, arms wide as if to embrace the afterlife, a mirror of the crucifix.

INT. RASPUTIN'S NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE - NIGHT

Galaxies amidst galaxies. Rasputin's naked body floats in a sea of trembling pixels of dark matter, pulsating pyrotechnic waves of cosmic electromagnetism, hypnotic and radiant.

Rasputin lifts his multidimensional hand, electrified with colorful energies, watching as the particles spin and dance.

SOUND OF O.S. GASPING pierces the magnetic beauty.

The universe short-circuits, zapping in and out of darkness. Rasputin blinks out of paradise, sucked into a void--

EXT. BEACH - CONEY ISLAND - BROOKLYN - DAY

Waves lap Rasputin's body on the shore. He CHOKES water onto the sand. Raises his hand to shield his eyes against the sun.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND - BRIGHTON BEACH - BROOKLYN - DAY

MONTAGE: The Coney Island Wonder Wheel at the top of Luna Amusement Park on the sandy boardwalk -- DRUG DEALERS in tracksuits smoke in front of Russian Restaurants -- OLD MEN play backgammon in Second Street Park -- PORNO STORE --

RASPUTIN (V.O.)

Is there no escape from Coney  
Island? Land of tracksuits and  
*pierogi*, circus freaks and  
contraband cigars, vodka,  
*matroyshka* dolls, cheap sex.

MONTAGE: CARNIES on stilts stride in front of TOURISTS eating hot dogs and churros -- The broken neon sign of ROMANOFF'S nightclub -- A toothless BABOUSKA grins as she opens her coat to show stolen watches -- A DIRTY KID shoots up in an alley --

RASPUTIN (V.O.)

Dazzling outsiders with fairground  
rides and plastic toys, tourists  
ignore the Odessa mafia's bloody  
rebellion against the imperial  
savagery of the Russian Bratva, in  
a gangland battle for this sordid  
strip of Brighton Beach.

MONTAGE: A car boot opens in an alley, revealing machine guns in Russian crates -- Latex-clad PROSTITUTES lean through car windows -- Illegal GAMBLERS bet on a PITBULL fight --

RASPUTIN (V.O.)

Lords of arms trafficking, drug  
trafficking, racketeering,  
extortion, murder, robbery,  
smuggling, gambling, prostitution,  
bribery and fraud... to name a few.

EXT. BEACH - CONEY ISLAND - BROOKLYN - DAY

A crucifix at his neck, NICHOLAS, 40s, smokes a cigar, lounging on a deck chair as if it is a throne. His chest is covered with Russian gang tattoos: epaulettes, stars, a many-domed Kremlin, a decapitated wolves's head with iron fangs.

RASPUTIN (V.O.)

Everyone who knows Nicolas from the Old Country breathes his name in a whisper. Leader of the Bratva, Nicholas is their tsar, their emperor, their king. Though his protection is total, it comes at the steepest price.

O.S. SOUND OF WOMAN SCREAMING.

Nicholas's right-hand man FELIX, 30s, with bright eyes and Felix's underling DMITRI, 20s, in knee-high SS boots, grin as Nicholas pours them shots from a bottle of expensive vodka.

They lift the glasses in a toast and CLINK!

EXT. WIRE FENCE - CONEY ISLAND - BROOKLYN - DAY

The suspended body of ODESSA GANGSTER, 20s, hangs twisted on a wire fence, limbs bent at all wrong angles, his shirt wide open, a bloody CROSS slashed deep into his chest.

RASPUTIN (V.O.)

Blood crucifix, sign of the Bratva. This is the story of absolute power in the hands of a few. For "Man will never be free until the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest."

The name tag of matted stray dog DIDEROT catches the light as the dog licks the dripping blood off Odessa Gangster's feet. He BARKS and runs away.

EXT. BEACH - CONEY ISLAND - BROOKLYN - DAY

Diderot runs to Rasputin, licking his bare feet. As Rasputin strokes his fur, the dog's coat grows sleek, the blistered skin healing under his golden glowing touch.

RASPUTIN

I am to be your priest.

Rasputin lifts his hands in the air and turns them, hypnotic eyes aglow, high on the power of life and death.

EXT. BOARDWALK - CONEY ISLAND - BROOKLYN - DAY

Rasputin staggers onto the boardwalk and strides towards a bar, swiping two pints of beer from a table as he goes, downing them one after the other. He LAUGHS hysterically.

SIRENS.

Amusement park REVELERS, TOURISTS and beach-going FAMILIES enjoying the summer heat stare as POLICE swarm Nicholas's crew on the beach.

DETECTIVE JOHNSON, a woman in her 40s, approaches Nicholas with handcuffs and a death stare.

NICHOLAS

*Privet, friend.*

Nicholas smiles, stands, raises his hands in the air.

EXT. FILTHY ALLEY - BRIGHTON BEACH - BROOKLYN - DAY

The O.S. SOUND of knuckles HITTING wet flesh in an alley where graffiti of the Kissinger quote "POWER IS THE GREAT APHRODESIAC" sprays across the wall.

Odessa Gangster MYKOLA, 20s, attacks ALEXEI, 17, curled in a ball on the ground.

ALEXEI

*Niet, Pozhaluysta! (No, Please!)*

MYKOLA

Your brother thinks he can kill my brother, and live to see his brother?

Mykola KICKS him in the kidneys with steel-toed boots. Alexei SCREAMS. Mykola SPITS in his face.

MYKOLA (CONT'D)

My brother was a warrior! You have never deserved life. Pathetic-

Homeless vet and double-amputee ANGELO, 70s, a black Falstaff, awakens from a drunken stupor in his wheelchair. He watches in horror.

ANGELO

Aw, shit...

Angelo wheels backwards and forwards uncertainly as dying Alexei GASPS for breath, blood dripping from his mouth.

MYKOLA

You should have died years ago-

Mykola KICKS Alexei in the head. The boy's skull CRACKS open. Angelo flings a blanket over his head to hide.

MYKOLA (CONT'D)

I let you bleed out in street like dog. But first, souvenir-

Mykola takes a switchblade from his pocket and lifts up the boy's eyelid. Behind him, Rasputin rounds the corner.

MYKOLA (CONT'D)

An eye for an eye, Nicholas.

Rasputin picks up a broken plank of wood with nails sticking out of the end and emits a BATTLE CRY, charging forward. Eyes wild, he swings madly at the shocked gangster.

Mykola rolls out of the way, brandishing his knife.

MYKOLA (CONT'D)

*Idi v zhopu!* (Go to hell!)

Rasputin attacks Mykola, who dodges and ducks.

RASPUTIN

I am neither man nor God! I am His Liberator and His Destroyer, weapon beyond mercy or salvation for those who stray from His path. I am Wrath. I am Vengeance! And I cannot- die!

Mykola launches his knife at Rasputin's throat. Rasputin catches it in the wood. Pulls it out.

Their eyes meet. Cast under a spell of superstitious fear, Mykola stops in his tracks. Runs away.

Rasputin drops his weapons, PANTING.

Angelo lowers his blanket and wheels towards Alexei. The boy's head gushes blood, flesh split open to the skull. Angelo tries to close the wound. Shakes his head.

ANGELO

He's dead man, he's dead...

Rasputin walks back to kneel before the boy. Strokes Alexei's soaked hair, his face, his bloody body as he MURMURS prayers. His hands shimmer with an otherworldly power.

Angelo watches in astonishment as Alexei's wounds heal. He wheels forward to poke at Alexei's skull. Underneath the sticky blood, his skin is perfect, unmarred.

GASP! Alexei draws breath, opening his eyes. Angelo wheels backwards.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

Yo! That is some straight up Jesus shit, motherfucker!

RASPUTIN

(to Alexei)

Boy? Where do you live?

Alexei faints in Rasputin's arms.

RASPUTIN (CONT'D)

Fuck.

ANGELO

Where d'you learn that? Teach me!

RASPUTIN

Do you know this boy? Do you know where he lives?

ANGELO

That's Alexei, Nicholas's wife's kid brother. Everyone knows where they live! If only to avoid that house like the fuckin' plague-

Rasputin strips his shirt to wipe blood off of Alexei's face.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

Wife's a stone cold fox but not a piece of ass you want to get caught starin' at, if you catch my drift. If you like having eyeballs- and boy do I love my eyeballs! Thank the Lord I am not blind! Praise Jesus!

RASPUTIN

Can you take me there?

As Rasputin picks up Alexei's body, Angelo clocks his Jesus tattoo. Angelo points down the alley and wheels forward.

ANGELO

Jesus don't know how to say please?  
I'll take you man, I'll take you.  
But you gotta tell me your secret!

Rasputin follows Angelo and shrugs.

RASPUTIN

I woke up like this.

ANGELO

Fuck you, Beyoncé. I saw that kid's skull close up with my very eyes! His head was split open like a melon. I poked my finger in that shit!

RASPUTIN

I don't know what to tell you. My life before last night is a void. I died. I returned. Hours I must have been underwater! Like one moment out of time, lost in the realms of the extra-dimensional shamanic voyage...

ANGELO

"Extra-dimensional shamanic voyage"-

Angelo SCOFFS as they turn onto the street.

EXT. STREET - BRIGHTON BEACH - DAY

Angelo wheels past dilapidated buildings. BALLERINA GIRLS on their way to a lesson stare at Rasputin's half-naked height, the limp body in his arms and the homeless man who leads him.

ANGELO

You a spiritualism grifter? My daddy down south did that with snakes and shit. Shakin' all over! He believed it, too. You have to, for it to work. What's your angle, reward or blackmail?

RASPUTIN

Angle? I have seen the universe from inside itself. To know death as a passing moment to the soul is to touch immortality itself.

ANGELO

You DIED for this trick? Damn. If I believed that, I might try it myself!

Rasputin looks around at the streets littered with garbage, the HOMELESS encampments in front of a strip of Russian drug stores and Ukrainian restaurants.

RASPUTIN

What I don't understand is why here... Coney fucking Island.

ZOOM! A stolen car filled with JOYRIDING TEENS races down the street, blasting RUSSIAN RAP. Rasputin looks up at the sky.

RASPUTIN (CONT'D)

Are you to be the new Jerusalem?

Angelo tugs on Rasputin's arm.

ANGELO

Hey, man, touch these legs of mine—lost for my country in 'Nam—

Rasputin places Alexei's body on a pile of trash bags. Lays hands over Angelo's amputated knees. Angelo crosses himself fervently. They stare at each other. Nothing happens.

RASPUTIN

You're a hero, not an iguana.

Angelo blinks back tears.

ANGELO

Fuck you, man. I'm no hero, I didn't choose this! I was a poet 'til a toe-popper got me. No one wants to hear me since— how can they listen when they pretend not to see? But I see everything.

(beat)

Try harder.

Rasputin hovers his hands and squeezes his eyes shut. Nothing happens. Angelo SLAPS his hands away.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

I saw you perform a damn miracle on a white boy and you can't give me one kneecap? What sort of fucked-up prophet of disappointment and racism are you?

RASPUTIN

I'm sorry. If I could help you, I would.

Rasputin gathers Alexei's body and walks away. Angelo flings an empty can of crushed beer from his wheelchair at his head.

ANGELO

Hold up, man! We're in a gang war if you hadn't noticed? I shouldn't even take you there. You're one lucky motherfucker my schedule is clear for the day. No where and no thing and no one! That's all I got.

Rasputin smiles and waits for Angelo to wheel ahead.

INT. INTEROGATION ROOM - POLICE STATION - DAY

Detective Johnson questions Nicholas in a brightly lit room, pictures of the gruesome crime scene spread on the table.

DETECTIVE JOHNSON

He has the mark of the Bratva on his chest. We know it is your Russian "Brotherhood", Nicholas-

NICHOLAS

You always say you know I am involved, yet there is never any evidence, never any witnesses- in all these years of accusations-

Detective Johnson SLAMS her fist on the table.

DETECTIVE JOHNSON

You've killed so many no one dares breathe your name! You shackle them in poverty and rule with terror!

NICHOLAS

I own a chain of drug stores and laundromats, Detective Johnson, very profitable to be sure, a from-the-bootstraps all-American success story, as you say. I am family man with family values. You have no legal grounds to keep me. Starts to feel like police harassment, no?

Detective Johnson pushes the photo of the Blood Crucifix machete-d into Odessa Gangster's chest at Nicholas.

DETECTIVE JOHNSON

One day your empire will crumble,  
Nicholas. And when it does, none of  
the Bratva will survive. What will  
happen to your family then,  
Nicholas? Your beautiful wife. Her  
sick brother. Your little daughter,  
Anastasia. What will become of them  
when the Ukrainians take their  
revenge?

NICHOLAS

Tell your band of useless clowns to  
search elsewhere. Save our people  
from this criminal scourge we  
suffer. *Spasibo.*

Nicholas shrugs on his leather jacket and stands to leave.

EXT. STREET CORNER - BRIGHTON BEACH - DAY

Angelo leads Rasputin down a beautiful street of brownstones.

ANGELO

-My poetry? I spoke in the style of  
Amiri Baraka. "All the stores will  
open if you say the magic words.  
The magic words are: Up against a  
wall motherfucker this is a stick  
up!" ...Strange to remember the  
words of others when I lost my own-

Angelo fakes a COUGHING FIT to hide himself choking up.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

What's heaven like? I imagine it as  
a drive-through strip club. Titties  
at eye-level as far as man can see!

Angelo whips out a military telescope from his pocket and  
peers through an upper window at a changing WOMAN.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

Those who think that to be a  
"voyeur" is a fetish and choice  
have never been four foot tall.

RASPUTIN

That was a perfect description of  
the afterlife.

ANGELO

Looks like I'm a better prophet  
than you are a healer! What's your  
name, brother?

Rasputin knits his brows and tries to remember.

RASPUTIN

They call me... Rasputin.

Angelo sticks out his hand. Rasputin shakes it.

ANGELO

Angelo. My momma loved the Sistine  
Chapel. She said, "Michelangelo saw  
the angels in the marble and carved  
until he set them free." But  
Michelangelo's a mouthful for a  
child- Hey! There it is.

Angelo points with the telescope at a palacial brownstone  
with flowers in antique pots on the steps.

INT. NICHOLAS AND ALEXANDRA'S KITCHEN - BRIGHTON BEACH - DAY

In her flower-filled kitchen, ALEXANDRA, mid 20s, HUMS a  
BLUES tune as she slices peaches for a cobbler. At her feet,  
her daughter ANASTASIA, 5, plays with a STUFFED PANDA that  
waves its arms when she pulls the cord in its belly.

Alexandra GASPS as she slices her thumb with the knife. She  
rips a strip of kitchen towel to staunch the blood.

ALEXANDRA

*Gav-no!*

(beat)

Don't repeat that. Bad word.

ANASTASIA

I like bad words.

BRING! BRING! The doorbell goes.

ALEXANDRA

I do, too! But you must not say  
them or your Papa will be very  
angry with me.

ANASTASIA

(laughing)

"Gav-no!"

BRING! BRING! BRRRIIIIIING!

ALEXANDRA  
Stay here, Anastasia.

Alexandra strides out of the kitchen with an easy grace.

EXT. FRONT STEPS - NICHOLAS AND ALEXANDRA'S HOME - DAY

Alexandra opens the door to see her brother's bloody body in the arms of a stranger with hypnotic eyes. She SCREAMS.

ALEXANDRA  
Alexei!! Alexei!

Alexandra pulls Alexei into her arms and crumples to the floor, SOBBING. She pulls her cell phone out and dials 911.

ALEXANDRA (CONT'D)  
(into phone)  
I need an ambulance! My brother is  
dying- he may be dead-

Rasputin takes the phone from her hand and cancels the call.

RASPUTIN  
He only needs to be washed-

Alexandra snatches back the phone.

ALEXANDRA  
He has hemophilia, you fool! If he  
doesn't get a blood transfusion-

Alexei stirs in her arms and wakes.

ALEXEI  
Alexandra... He saved me. See...

Alexei pulls up his shirt. Wipes drying blood from his ribs. Alexandra inspects the unbroken skin with astonishment.

ALEXANDRA  
Not even a bruise-

ALEXEI  
He is a holy man.

Alexandra looks up at Rasputin in confusion and fear. Angelo pipes up from the street.

ANGELO  
It's true! Craziest shit I've ever  
seen. And I've seen some CRAZY  
shit, woman.

Alexandra shakes Alexei's shoulders.

ALEXANDRA  
Who did this to you? I'll kill him!

Alexandra hugs Alexei, rocking him.

ALEXEI  
The Odessa. "An eye for an eye"...

ALEXANDRA  
The Bratva will destroy them!

ALEXEI  
The Bratva will destroy us all.

ALEXANDRA  
Thank God you are safe! Thank God.  
I don't know what I would do...

Alexei struggles to get out of her grip.

ALEXEI  
Let me go! I need to wash-

Alexandra rises and lets Alexei limp through the front door.

ALEXANDRA  
My sincerest apologies, stranger.  
And my greatest thanks.

Alexandra holds out her hand to shake. Rasputin clasps it and bows his head, staring into her eyes. An electricity runs through them.

RASPUTIN  
I am but a vessel of the Lord's  
will.

Alexandra GASPS and snatches back her hand.

Angelo WHISTLES as a black Mercedes SUV parks in front of the house. Nicholas and Felix emerge.

The deep cut on Alexandra's thumb is healed. She stares at it in astonishment. Sinks to her knees.

ALEXANDRA  
Your Holiness. I am forever in your  
debt.

Alexandra kisses Rasputin's feet. He lifts her up. They stare at each other as Nicholas walks up the steps behind them.

RASPUTIN

My name is Rasputin. Make no mistake, I am not a holy man-

Felix leans against the railing and lifts his wife-beater to show Rasputin the knife hilt sheathed on his hip. Nicholas draws Alexandra away, clasping her wrist tightly.

NICHOLAS

(to Rasputin)

Why do you touch my wife?

ALEXANDRA

He saved Alexei- the Odessa beat him- nearly to death! Rasputin healed him. He is a holy man!

Alexandra stifles a SOB as Nicholas clutches her shoulders, shaking her roughly.

NICHOLAS

If Alexei were beaten he would be dead! Stupid woman- what deception is this? What does he want? What have you told him?

ALEXANDRA

Nothing! He has asked for nothing!

RASPUTIN

I ask for nothing. I want for nothing. I am but a vessel.

Rasputin bows and takes a step down the stairs. Felix takes out his knife and holds it against Rasputin's back.

FELIX

Some might say this is a Ukrainian trick for access- for retribution-

STREET

Felix lifts the knife to Rasputin's throat and backs him down the steps to the street. Alexandra grows hysterical as Nicholas restrains her.

ALEXANDRA

I tell you, he is a holy man!

Rasputin leans back and ducks beneath Felix as he kicks the man's legs from underneath him and twists Felix's arm behind his back. The knife CLATTERS to the floor.

RASPUTIN

No need for violence, brother-

Felix regains his footing and SMASHES Rasputin's bare foot with the heel his steel-toed boots. Rasputin GRIMACES and lets go of Felix's arm.

Felix strips off his wife-beater to reveal his Russian prison tattoos: epaulettes on his shoulders, stars on his chest, a bear's skull, a kremlin with many domes.

FELIX

You understand the meaning of this?

Rasputin nods.

FELIX (CONT'D)

Then you know you could not lie to a more dangerous man-

Felix SPITS on the floor, then PUMMELS Rasputin in the chest. Rasputin takes it, showing no pain. Felix pauses for breathe. PUNCHES again.

Rasputin HEADBUTTS Felix's nose with his forehead. Felix YELPS and clutches his face.

Felix lifts his bloody face at Nicholas, his broken nose askew. Rasputin grasps Felix's head by the hair and passes his hand over his face.

The bleeding stops. The nose aligns. Nicholas GASPS. Felix cowers on the floor in shock and terror. Angelo CLAPS.

ANGELO

He's a one trick pony Jesus, but it's a damn good trick.

RASPUTIN

Alexandra. Nicholas. Until we meet again.

Rasputin bows and strides off. Angelo wheels behind him.

ANGELO

Wait for me, brother! You'll want to keep me close. This place will eat you alive if you're not careful! But the lady bartenders let me drink for free- I have an irresistible quality-

Rasputin follows Angelo, turning back to stare at Alexandra.

STEPS

Alexandra rips her eyes away from Rasputin as Nicholas turns Felix's face in his hands.

NICHOLAS  
A holy man indeed...

FELIX  
A trickster! A devil!

Felix SPITS on the floor.

NICHOLAS  
I have not survived so long by  
questioning the will of God. With  
these strange powers at our behest,  
the Bratva will be unstoppable.  
(to Alexandra )  
Alexandra. Find this Rasputin and  
invite him to Sunday mass.

ALEXANDRA  
I think it best if you speak to him  
alone, Nicholas.

NICHOLAS  
You question my orders?

ALEXANDRA  
He... frightens me...

Nicholas nods.

NICHOLAS  
I will take him one of your finest  
honey cakes and a crate of Madeira.  
(to Felix)  
We must make Rasputin quite at  
home, Felix.

FELIX  
When have I questioned your wisdom,  
Nicholas?

Felix bows and stalks off, his bright eyes flashing.

INT. BARSTOOLS - DIVE BAR - CONEY ISLAND - NIGHT

At the bar, wearing Angelo's shirt, Rasputin rips a steak apart, sucking jus off his fingers while staring hypnotically at HAGGARD BARMAID, 40s. Angelo drinks next to him.

ANGELO

Alexandra, Alexandra! *Quelle* smoke-show. Ever tell you I picked up French in Saigon? Almost worth risking my life to see that dime in the light. So, what's your deal? You gotta bargain with God, magic powers for your dick in a cage?

Rasputin GULPS down his large wine and TAPS the empty glass at Haggard Barmaid for a refill.

RASPUTIN

Never! Is anything closer to God than the throb, the rush, the cascade of lust? I am captive to women, I worship them, one and all.

Rasputin clasps Haggard Barmaid's free hand and kisses it. She rolls her eyes, but smiles as she fills his glass.

ANGELO

Uh-huh. The ladies dig that "transparent lie" shit?

Behind them, the bar fills with STRANGE CHARACTERS including THREE ROMANY GUITAR PLAYERS, 30s. Haggard Barmaid takes their orders as Rasputin kisses the hand of a TIPSY WOMAN, 30s.

RASPUTIN

Only by diving into our shadows can we emerge in the light. Separation is the dream we are here to awaken from. Come, beauty. Wake with me?

Angelo rolls his eyes as Topsy Woman sits on Rasputin's lap.

ANGELO

I guess they do.

TIPSY WOMAN

What are you, some kinda preacher?

Rasputin pulls her close and whispers in her ear.

RASPUTIN

The way to be close to God is to atone for sinful actions. My body can purify your soul-

Topsy Woman sniffs at his clothes and pulls away playfully.

TIPSY WOMAN

You smell like a brewery.

ANGELO

Hey bitch, that's my shirt! I'll have you know I wash my clothes every other day at the YMCA- I am one clean motherfucker-

Tipsy Woman ignores Angelo. Rasputin tilts her chin up.

RASPUTIN

The whisperings of galaxies are rising in a roar! You are a paradox, excruciating and exquisite-

ANGELO

She's no paradox, she's a THOT with a drink problem I've seen workin' this joint every night for twenty dollars or a beer-

Tipsy Woman SMACKS Angelo in the back of the head.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

Hey-! You dare hit a veteran?!

Rasputin bites Tipsy Woman's earlobe. He sticks his dirty fingers in her mouth. She sucks them clean. She pulls him behind her towards the bar toilet.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

Motherfucker.

Angelo polishes off his beer, TAPPING at Haggard Barmaid.

HAGGARD BARMAID

Angelo, I let you drink for free because my father died in service and I like to think someone might have done the same for him. But if you EVER tap your glass at me again, I will kick your sorry ass on the street myself.

ANGELO

He tapped! He tapped!

Angelo points at the toilet where Rasputin disappeared.

INT. TOILET - DIVE BAR - NIGHT

Rasputin and Tipsy Woman kiss madly against the wall of a graffitied stall. He rips open her top, biting from her neck down to her breasts, ravenous.

Her hand works to open the zip of his jeans. She looks down. GASPS in shock. Rasputin grins shamelessly.

INT. BARSTOOLS - DIVE BAR - NIGHT

Rasputin and Topsy Woman return. Rasputin kisses her, then twirls her into the lap of DRUNKEN MAN, 40s. They LAUGH. Rasputin sits next to Angelo.

RASPUTIN

(to Haggard Barmaid)

Everything that is vital to the human race derives from women. The creative energy of the universe weak men think they must crush to harness! You are the distillation of celestial opulence made flesh. I would see your powers flourish!

ANGELO

Lord of the Fuckboys proselytizing again? Cut him off!

HAGGARD BARMAID

(to Rasputin)

I don't know what it is about you, but you've drawn a crowd. Drinks are on the house.

Rasputin JUMPS over the bar and grabs a bottle of wine. He POURS it into Angelo's mouth, then his own, before spinning into the center of the room.

ANGELO

Rasputin, I'm going to regret being friends with you, I can tell.

RASPUTIN

Go on, drink, God will forgive you! I love wine. I never speak so beautifully of God as when I am drunk-

The Romany Guitar Players strike up a RUSSIAN GYPSY TUNE like Dorogoi Dlinnoyu by Mikhail Shufutinsky.

RASPUTIN (CONT'D)

Nor dance so well!

Rasputin KNOCKS bottles off a table top and leaps upon it to Cossack-dance in a contagious ecstasy of abandon. The crowded bar joins in, CLAPPING their hands and STAMPING their feet.

INT. MERCEDES SUV/EXT. DIVE BAR - CONEY ISLAND - NIGHT

Felix and Dmitri smoke out the window of the idled car, watching Rasputin's dancing silhouette through the windows. Dmitri racks up a line of coke on the dashboard.

FELIX

Is a very dangerous man, Dmitri, who has this power of magnetism. Our people are desperate and Rasputin takes himself for their messiah.

DMITRI

Nicholas says we can harness his power for the Bratva. The Odessa are shit scared of our new madman recruit.

Dmitri SNORTS the line.

FELIX

Nicholas is the rare warrior who has known only glory. I am not so fortunate. Every spoke of the wheel has impaled me, Dmitri. I will not lose again, not with our victory at hand!

THUMP! THUMP! They ignore a noise from the trunk.

DMITRI

This sounds like treason, Felix.

THUMP! THUMP! THUMP! Felix and Dmitri continue to ignore it.

FELIX

Our oath is to the Bratva, not to Nicholas. Find out all you can about this Rasputin. Tell only me.

THUMP! THUMP! THUMP! Dmitri throws his butt out the window.

DMITRI

I gave him ketamine to kill elephants, I swear!

FELIX

He is robust, but all men break.

Felix turns on the radio and drives off, HIP HOP BLARING.

INT. ODESSA SAFEHOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A commanding dining room with fifteen chairs, of which five are filled with the remaining Odessa Gangsters; above the empty chairs are portraits of their fallen brothers-in-arms.

BORYSLAV, 40s, at the head of the table is their de-facto leader; VASYL, 30s, his right-hand man; KUZMA, 20s, IGOR, 20s, and OLEK, 18, young, furious, bent on revenge.

KUZMA

The Bratva are destabilized. We must strike now, with force!

OLEK

We have suffered long enough! We are our own people, our own language, our own business; why should we line the pockets of Russian scum who behave as if they are our imperial rulers, who give nothing in return? The Odessa are a Republic, we are the future of Brighton Beach!

Vasyl looks up at the portraits above empty chairs.

VASYL

Mykola is missing; our safehouse may be compromised. Our numbers are not strong enough to mount an attack; they will annihilate us.

IGOR

If we die, we die! For our brothers, our country, our people!

VASYL

It is best to reach a truce. For the safety of our people.

Boryslav pours himself a coffee and stirs it thoughtfully.

BORYSLAV

The pact never to touch women or children has been broken. Nicholas will show no mercy.

Olek stands up and passionately SLAMS his hands on the table.

OLEK

Then WE must show no mercy! Are we to do nothing while our men are strung up and gored?

IGOR

We must cut off the wolf's head at  
the neck! Like Nicholas's tattoo.  
Let the beast become his destiny!

Igor SPITS on the floor as Kuzma and Olek SHOUT in agreement.

BORYSLAV

His banner of Ivan the Terrible is  
hubris indeed. But before we act,  
we must move. We shift from place  
to place, week to week; only one of  
us aware of the next location.  
Nicholas's great strength is also  
his weakness. His "pillar of the  
community" performance renders him  
inflexible. Stationary.

Vasyl nods and pours himself a coffee.

VASYL

We rage like fire and disappear  
like smoke. To topple an empire,  
one must only take the king.

BORYSLAV

Brothers Odessa, we put it to the  
vote. Those in favor-

Boryslav, Vasyl, and reluctant Kuzma raise their hands.

BORYSLAV (CONT'D)

Those against?

Olek and Igor raise their own.

BORYSLAV (CONT'D)

We will wait until vengeance is  
assured, not act on every suicidal  
impulse. The perfect moment will  
present itself, and we will teach  
Nicholas true terror.

Olek and Igor nod reluctantly, fists clenching on the table.

INT. FLORAL SHOP - ALEXANDRA'S DREAMSCAPE - NIGHT

In a hazy dream, Alexandra chooses exotic flowers from  
bunches in an opulent florist shop. Rasputin watches her from  
behind a palm frond. Alexandra moves away from him.

Rasputin follows Alexandra through the store, stroking her hands, running his fingers through her hair, as she takes more flower cuttings and pretends not to feel his touch.

Alexandra shudders as Rasputin kisses her neck, moving downwards and lifting her dress to put his hands between her thighs. She MOANS in ecstasy, covering her eyes.

His hands pull her own away from her face. She cringes as she sees his filthy nails, embedded with flowerbed dirt, worms and beetles crawling up from under his sleeves towards her.

She pulls away. He clasps her closer, forcing her to look in his hypnotic eyes.

RASPUTIN

Alexandra, look at me.

Alexandra stares into Rasputin's gaze. The flowers in her arms wither. She GASPS in confusion, dropping the bouquet, watching the putrid flowers rot on the floor.

RASPUTIN (CONT'D)

Look at me, Alexandra.

ALEXANDRA

No- No-!

Alexandra weakly pushes him away but he clasps her in a feverish embrace. She closes her eyes and shudders as they passionately kiss. Rasputin's hands ravish her all over.

Rasputin's fingers and arms turn into RED SERPENTS, slithering over her skin, entwining themselves around her arms, neck, down her chest. Alexandra's eyes flip open.

She SCREAMS in horror, desperately swiping at the serpents clinging like vines around her body.

INT. ALEXANDRA AND NICHOLAS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In Alexandra and Nicholas's bedroom, fitted with antiques and baroque textiles, Alexandra tosses and turns in the empty bed, her brow slick and cheeks feverish.

Alexandra wakes up with a SCREAM. She turns her head guiltily for Nicholas. His side of the bed is empty.

ALEXANDRA

Nicholas? ...Husband?

She gets out of bed and throws on a robe, shaking. Stares at a portrait of Nicholas and their family on the wall.

INT. NICHOLAS'S TORTURE CHAMBER - NIGHT

In a cement cellar in an unknown location, Nicholas cleans his torture utensils. He flicks a male nipple attached to a Breast Ripper into a trash can by his feet.

SCREAMING.

Tortured and bloody Mykola hangs inside the open sarcophagus of a modern Iron Maiden, the short spikes on its open door blue with a pulsating electrical current.

NICHOLAS

Despite what you may think, I do not enjoy diabolical barbarity. Though as with every thing I turn my hand, I like to think I imbue it with artistic flair.

Mykola MOANS. Nicholas approaches him.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Tell me the location of your warehouse, of your safehouse, and I will gift you a swift end.

Mykola struggles to speak. Nicholas leans in closer. Mykola SPITS in his face, a bloody tooth following the spittle. Nicholas wipes the streak away.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

This Iron Maiden was made in my own design. The spikes are fitted with electricity. One hundred volts will pierce you, deep enough to puncture organs and flay the skin, but not so deep it will not take days to die. If you remain stubborn, I will fill it up with water to the chin and listen to you spit out every last morsel of information on the Odessa you have ever heard, as you are boiled alive.

Mykola WEEPS.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Thank God in his mercy that your brother did not live to see you betray him thus. And forgive him in your turn, for having betrayed you.

MYKOLA

*Boh prosty mene!* (God forgive me).

NICHOLAS

There, there. *Ochen'khoroshiy*.  
(Very good). Let it out.

Nicholas leans in close to Mykola's mouth.

INT. NICHOLAS AND ALEXANDRA'S KITCHEN - HOME - NIGHT

Alexandra bakes layers of a honey cake, adding secret herbs into the pan of boiling honey and water on the stove.

ALEXANDRA

(sing-song in subtitled  
Russian)

Rasputin, Rasputin go away-  
Rasputin, Rasputin you are not  
welcome here- We thank you for your  
magic and show you the door-

Alexandra sprinkles more mysterious spices in the honey.  
Anastasia appears at the door behind her, rubbing her eyes  
and holding her stuffed panda.

ANASTASIA

Mama?

ALEXANDRA

I'm sorry *malyshka*, did I wake you?

Anastasia nods.

ANASTASIA

Is this a cake for me?

ALEXANDRA

*Niet*. You mustn't touch this cake.  
Did you know, your *babushka* taught  
your mama magic? This cake is a  
Russian spell for a guest who has  
outstayed his welcome. *Dosvidaniya!*

Alexandra shakes a ladle in the air. Anastasia GIGGLES.

ANASTASIA

Can I learn magic?

ALEXANDRA

Of course! I will teach you  
everything I know, *malyshka*.

Alexandra picks Anastasia up in her arms and kisses her nose.

INT. KITCHEN WINDOW/ EXT. GARDEN - ALEXANDRA'S HOME - DAY

In front of her kitchen window, Alexandra cuts a RED PEONY from a vase and places it in the center of the beautiful cake. She places it in a box and ties it with a ribbon.

Alexandra watches Alexei play tag with Anastasia outside in her garden. Nicholas comes behind her and wraps his arms around her waist, kissing her head.

ALEXANDRA

One would say Alexei had never been sick a day in his life. I feel I can breathe for the first time!

NICHOLAS

God blesses our family.

ALEXANDRA

It is wonderful. Yet, it troubles me. The doctor said his blood is that of a normal boy- he can't believe it himself!

(beat)

What price will we pay for this good fortune?

Nicholas spins Alexandra around, pressing her against him, kissing her neck, their hands entwined.

NICHOLAS

Do not question our high standing in the Lord's eyes, wife.

ALEXANDRA

Where were you last night, husband?

NICHOLAS

You know I have business certain nights, Alexandra.

ALEXANDRA

I know, but I worry. I woke... I couldn't sleep.

Nicholas lifts their clasped hands, so she sees their rings.

NICHOLAS

I will always protect what is mine with my life. But with this man's strange powers, I finally have assurance of my own protection!

Alexandra kisses his hand at the ring.

ALEXANDRA

I-I think we should receive this blessing gratefully and- let Rasputin be! It is not the role of a holy man to be involved in...

NICHOLAS

In what?

Nicholas clasps Alexandra's wrists tightly, his mood moving from playful to severe in an instant.

ALEXANDRA

(whispers)

A war.

NICHOLAS

What do you know of war or holy men, my sweet?

ALEXANDRA

I have a terrible fear! Fear like I have never known-

Anastasia and Alexei run back into the house. Nicholas scoops up his daughter and places her in Alexandra's arms.

NICHOLAS

This is your kingdom, Alexandra. Guard it, tend it, keep it well. Think of nothing else. For nothing else concerns you.

Nicholas wipes flour off his wife's cheek, pressing hard. She shivers at the implicit threat underneath the tender gesture.

EXT. RASPUTIN'S HOTEL ROOM DOOR - SHITTY HOTEL - DAY

Nicholas KNOCKS on the door of a grimy hotel room, cake box in his arms and crate of wine at his feet. Rasputin opens the door, hungover and bleary-eyed. Nicholas is taken aback.

NICHOLAS

Rasputin. My wife made this honey cake in your honor. The crate of Madeira is from my cellar, the very finest. The doctors call Alexei's healing a "Spontaneous Remission" but they are not men of God, as are you and I.

Rasputin opens the crate of wine and POPS open a bottle.

RASPUTIN

Madeira! I love Madeira. Are you a man of God, Nicholas?

TWO DISHEVELED WOMEN, 30s, creep out of Rasputin's room, GIGGLING as they adjust their clothes, tiny and askew. Rasputin kisses them deeply in parting. Nicholas COUGHS.

NICHOLAS

My family attends mass every Sunday at the Saint Nicholas Russian Orthodox Cathedral in Manhattan, where I confess.

(beat)

Rasputin, I would be honored if you would consider joining the Bratva as our holy man, our healer...

Nicholas clasps his shoulder. Rasputin shakes his head "no".

RASPUTIN

Between men, God sees no boundary. I adore honey cake. Thank you.

NICHOLAS

Take your time to think. There are many gifts I could bestow upon you that even God cannot. A finer residence, perhaps? But I shall not press you. Until we meet again-

Nicholas bows as Rasputin picks up the cake and kicks the crate of wine into the room behind him.

INT. RASPUTIN'S HOTEL ROOM - SHITTY HOTEL - DAY

Rasputin guzzles wine and pours Angelo a glass. Angelo puts a piece of cake onto a plate with a knife and fork. Rasputin digs into the cake with his bare hands.

ANGELO

(laughing to himself)

Hootch, nymphos and *gateau* on tap! Maybe I will try this "die-to-rise-again" racket-

RASPUTIN

I wouldn't, if I were you.

ANGELO

You don't believe in me? You don't believe I could rise again?

RASPUTIN

Once you taste the afterlife, you won't want to return.

ANGELO

Shit, man, you know me too well.

RASPUTIN

Delicious... Alexandra... I must thank her-

Rasputin goes back for another handful, covered in icing. Angelo angrily points at Rasputin, waving his spoon.

ANGELO

Rasputin, I got one rule for our friendship and that is: you stay away from her nuclear pussy, or we ALL get Hiroshima'd, bitch!

Rasputin licks his chops.

RASPUTIN

I don't intend to devour her-

ANGELO

I've seen you, with your crazy fornication eyes and frankly confusing sexual charisma- eating like a heathen- your momma didn't teach you how to use a fuckin' fork? My point is. We got a good thing going here, Rasputin. Whether you're a scam or the second coming, for the first time in MY LIFE, I gotta good thing going. Don't fuck it up.

RASPUTIN

No need to be so sensitive.

ANGELO

I have PTSD, motherfucker! I'm sensitive as shit! Now, what miracles do we spin today? You gonna walk on water for me?

Rasputin raises the wine bottle in the air.

RASPUTIN

Drink and whore and drink some more! It would be against God to contain myself. Only thus sated do I preach the Word!

ANGELO  
My kinda Jesus, brother.

Angelo grins as he takes another mouthful of cake.

INT. DIVE BAR - BRIGHTON BEACH - DAY

Absinthe-green lit, spinning faces of MISFITS, BARFLIES, TOURISTS and Tippy Woman in the bar. Rasputin waves a pamphlet of "THE TREATISE ON RESSURECTION", drinking and preaching. Angelo wheels next to him, shaking a donation hat.

RASPUTIN  
"The world is an illusion! You yourself are not flesh but were given flesh when you entered this world." When we reclaim our own Godhood, we can die and resurrect in life! For "When the divine light flows down into your darkness, and the divine fullness pours into your deficiency, then you will realize that you are already resurrected!"

CLINK! CLINK! Tourists throw spare change into Angelo's hat. Rasputin jumps onto a bar stool to preach from on high.

RASPUTIN (CONT'D)  
In the pagan Eleusinien Mysteries, initiates drank the hallucinogenic brew that transformed Plato and Marcus Aurelius. An inscription at the site reads: "Death is for mortals no longer an evil but a blessing"!

Angelo pipes up, pointing at Misfits, Barflies, Tourists.

ANGELO  
We choose life because living hell is better than oblivion. Until it isn't! Those are the choices I've been given. Endure hell, or follow the call of the void!

Rasputin leans down to tilt Tippy Woman's chin in his hands.

RASPUTIN  
Was the ejection from Eden a metaphor for the spiraling isolation of our wandering Godless Id, stripped of the psychedelic mysteries of our heritage?  
(MORE)

## RASPUTIN (CONT'D)

We hungry ghosts of the wretched  
mundane ache for some kind of  
transcendence. Instead, we have no  
choice but to take the steel bit in  
our mouths, yoked in eternal  
serfdom to our feudal overlords!

## ANGELO

Fuck the overlords!

Angelo throws his cap in the air, raining CLINKING coins.

## RASPUTIN

God is pure exaltation. Rapture! We  
CAN reclaim the Garden of Eden!

Rasputin spins Topsy Woman in the air and embraces her as  
Misfits, Barflies and Tourists WHISTLE and APPLAUD.

INT. ODESSA WAREHOUSE SECURITY ROOM - DAY

A poster of Machiavelli quote "ALL ARMED PROPHETS HAVE BEEN  
VICTORIOUS, AND ALL UNARMED PROPHETS HAVE BEEN DESTROYED"  
hangs above the desk of ODESSA SECURITY GUARD.

He reads a comic book and eats a Ukrainian pastry, listening  
to FRENCH POP, half-ignoring the security screens.

SECURITY SCREENS: warehouse surrounded by an empty parking  
lot fenced in by brick and a large metal gate, exterior  
abandoned streets and an underground garage.

Odessa Security Guard's phone RINGS. He answers.

## ODESSA SECURITY GUARD

*Pryvit, krasune.* (Hello, beautiful)

## WIFE'S VOICE

(Ukrainian with Subtitles)

Hello my love. I'm about to watch  
the Pushkin Puppet Theatre with  
little Sasha. We missed your voice.  
Are you home in time for dinner  
tonight?

## ODESSA SECURITY GUARD

(Ukrainian with subtitles)

Yes, beautiful. I am home at six.  
Tell Sacha to be a good boy.

SECURITY SCREENS: A shadowy figure moves along the edge of  
the brick wall towards the gate.

EXT. ODESSA WAREHOUSE GATE - DAY

Dmitri, all in black wearing a gas mask, his leather gloves holding a canister with a biohazard warning on it, presses an ENTRY CODE to the gate.

It BEEPS open. He slips inside.

EXT. ODESSA WAREHOUSE SECURITY ROOM - DAY

Dmitri stuffs the bottom of the security door with rags and pumps poisonous gas in the room through a rubber pipe. Looks at his watch. Gets out his phone. TEXT TO FELIX: "3 minutes".

INT. ODESSA WAREHOUSE SECURITY ROOM - DAY

Odessa Security Guard rubs his nose and temples. Pops an aspirin on the table. GLUGS water. He gets out a packet of cigarettes from his pocket. Searches the table for a lighter.

EXT. ODESSA WAREHOUSE SECURITY ROOM - DAY

Odessa Security Guard opens the door with his cigarette pack to see Dmitri lying on the ground with the gas canister.

He grabs the gun at his hip.

ODESSA SECURITY GUARD  
*Svoloch!* (Bastard!)

Dmitri KICKS the security guard's feet out from under him and they wrestle for control of the gun. Odessa Security Guard WHACKS Dmitri in the temple and races inside.

INT. ODESSA WAREHOUSE SECURITY ROOM - DAY

Odessa Security Guard reaches for a red panic button. Dmitri TACKLES him to the ground. They scuffle for control. Security Guard grabs an IRON CHAIN on the floor.

As he tries to string the chain around Dmitri's neck, Dmitri bends the man's hand all the way backwards. He SCREAMS.

SECURITY SCREENS: A WHITE VAN drives through the gates into the compound.

Dmitri BANGS Odessa Security Guard's head against the floor and stuffs the gas canister tube into his mouth, covering the man's nose with his other hand as he writhes beneath him.

EXT. PUSHKIN PUPPET THEATRE - BOARDWALK - DAY

In a crowd of RUSSIAN LOCALS, Alexandra and Anastasia, holding her panda, sit in front of the children's theatre set of the Alexander Pushkin poem "RUSLAN AND LUDMILA".

An OLD UKRAINIAN WOMAN sits next to them. She smiles at Anastasia and pinches her cheek. Anastasia pulls the string of her panda doll. Its arms wave hello.

PUPPET SET: a tree by the sea, on which a cat walks back and forth on a gold chain. To the right, a castle banquet hall.

PUPPET NARRATOR introduces the story to the children. Behind the set, Rasputin drinking on the street, clocks Alexandra in the crowd and watches her intently.

PUPPET NARRATOR

Greetings, ladies and gentlemen!  
The warmest welcome to Alexander Pushkin's puppet theatre, where we tell the fairytale of the abduction of the lovesick Princess Ludmila by the evil wizard Chernomor and the quest of her betrothed, the warrior Ruslan, to rescue her.

Anastasia pulls on Alexandra's hand and whispers in her ear.

ANASTASIA

What is "lovesick"?

ALEXANDRA

Sometimes love cannot be, Anastasia. It is too painful, or there are other forces in the way.

ANASTASIA

Like wizards?

ALEXANDRA

Da. But it is silly to be a lovesick girl. Much better to be a strong queen. Or a strong king, like your Papa.

Behind them on the boardwalk lurks BRATVA ONE, 20s, watching Nicholas's family.

INT. ODESSA WAREHOUSE BROTHEL - DAY

A filthy warehouse brothel with one dirty window, the door guarded by ODESSA GUARD ONE, 20s, and ODESSA GUARD TWO, 20s.

JOHN ONE, 30s, and JOHN TWO, 30s, sit with half-dressed very young sex workers SVETLANA, NATASHA and EKATERINA on their laps, fondling them.

DOORWAY

BANG! The door lock blows off. It SMACKS open to reveal Felix disguised in a balaclava, his leather gloved hands holding a sawn-off shotgun.

BANG! BANG! Felix shoots the shocked Odessa Guard One in the gut. He falls to the floor.

SCREAMING of the fleeing girls, their Johns scrambling for cover behind dirty couches. Odessa Guard Two dives behind table and aims at Felix.

Felix grabs Svetlana and clutches her to his breast. They have a long moment of eye contact, his bright eyes mad with adrenaline. Felix flips her around and uses her as a shield.

BANG! BANG! BANG! Odessa Guard Two shoots.

Felix drops and rolls away, leaving Svetlana limply on the floor, COUGHING up blood and clutching her bleeding chest. Felix scrambles back behind the front door and hides.

Odessa Guard Two grabs the other women and hustles them to the back door as dying Odessa Guard One reaches for his gun and aims at Felix.

BANG! Felix shoots him in the center of the forehead.

EXT. PUSHKIN PUPPET THEATRE - BOARDWALK - DAY

Over the set, PUPPET NARRATOR walks PUPPET CAT back and forth over the tree branch.

PUPPET NARRATOR

In this magical place where  
folklore comes alive, a learned cat  
walks back and forth on a gold  
chain! I have been to these magical  
places, and this cat has told me  
these stories.

PUPPET SET: A doll of LUDMILA sits next to warrior RUSLAN, her father PRINCE VLADIMIR, and Ruslan's RIVALS.

PUPPET NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The tale begins with a feast given by Prince Vladimir to celebrate the marriage of his daughter Ludmila to the brave knight Ruslan. Among the guests are Ruslan's warrior rivals.

PUPPET SET: the background lifts to reveal a bedchamber.

PUPPET NARRATOR (CONT'D)

But on their wedding night, a strange presence fills the room!

PUPPET SET: Smoke, thunder and lightning background revealed.

PUPPET NARRATOR (CONT'D)

BOOM! CRACK! Thunder and lightning! Ruslan's bride has mysteriously vanished. Prince Vladimir promises the princess's hand to whomever is able to return her safely!

PUPPET SET: Ruslan and his Rivals ride on horses across the landscape, the warriors all set out in different directions.

Rasputin walks around the side of the puppet theatre and buys a ticket, his obsessive eyes never leaving Alexandra.

INT. ODESSA WAREHOUSE BROTHEL - DAY

Odessa Guard Two cowers on the floor, one hand blown off and his gun scattered across the room. The girls hold each other on the couch. Felix levels his gun at his head.

BANG! Felix blasts the man's head off, the walls sprayed with blood and brains. The girls SCREAM as the Johns kneel on the floor, heads down, hands up, pissing themselves with fear.

JOHN ONE

Don't shoot! We're innocent!

JOHN TWO

We're not even Ukrainian! We're from Boston!

FELIX

I know you wanted only good time, brothers. Is real shame you are not frequenting our establishment.

Felix strokes the blood-spattered chintzy wallpaper with one leather-gloved hand.

FELIX (CONT'D)

We have best wallpaper. Best sheets, best furniture. Best girls. Best protection. You get what you pay for, eh? But we have policy-

BANG! Felix shoots John One dead.

FELIX (CONT'D)

No witnesses.

John Two grabs a chair and runs at Felix, SCREAMING.

BANG! The chair CLATTERS to the floor as John Two is blown through the chest into a CRYING Natasha's arms. Felix steps over Svetlana's limp body to look out the window.

FELIX (CONT'D)

Where is fucking Dmitri?

His leather glove swipes the dirty windowsill.

FELIX (CONT'D)

Animals.

He wipes the dust off of his finger with disgust.

EXT. ALEXANDER PUSHKIN PUPPET THEATRE - BOARDWALK - DAY

PUPPET SET: an OLD MAN in a cave. Ruslan sits next to him.

PUPPET NARRATOR

An Old Man in a cave tells Ruslan that the wizard Chernomor has stolen Ludmila, but her honor will still be intact. For all his sorcery, the great mage is powerless before the ravages of time!

PUPPET SET: Old Man comically mimes Chernomor's impotence.

Rasputin takes an empty seat next to Alexandra and Anastasia. He leans in very close to her ear and whispers.

RASPUTIN

Alexandra. The cake was divine.

ALEXANDRA

My husband and I are very grateful.

Alexandra turns red and leans far away.

INT. ODESSA WAREHOUSE BROTHEL - DAY

The window SHATTERS, whipped open with an iron chain. Dmitri in his gas mask strides through the broken glass. He wraps the iron chain around Ekaterina's neck.

DMITRI  
(to Ekaterina)  
Where is the safe? Eh? Tell me!

Dmitri tightens the chain. Ekaterina SCREAMS.

EKATERINA  
*Niet! Niet! Ne delay mne bol'no!*  
(No! No! Don't hurt me!)

Felix rolls his eyes and KICKS Svetlana to see if she is alive. She does not react.

FELIX  
Always with the dramatic entrance.

Natasha crawls on her knees to Felix's feet, hands in supplication, kissing his boots.

NATASHA  
Please, don't kill us. Please- I see nothing, I say nothing-

FELIX  
You are not witness.

Felix leans down and drags her upwards, inspecting her face.

FELIX (CONT'D)  
You are property.

Felix rams the fingers of his blood-soaked leather gloves in her mouth to widen it and inspect her teeth.

FELIX (CONT'D)  
Where are the other girls?

Natasha WEEPS as she nods her head towards a door.

EXT. PUSHKIN PUPPET THEATRE - BOARDWALK - DAY

Bored with the show, Anastasia pulls at Rasputin's sleeve.

ANASTASIA  
Are you a wizard?

RASPUTIN

Some say so.

ANASTASIA

Are you an "abductor"?

ALEXANDRA

Shhht! We are being very rude.

Rasputin stares at Alexandra.

RASPUTIN

Only of those who seek freedom.

Alexandra turns her head behind her to see Bratva One standing in front of the food truck, hand reaching for a gun at his hip. She shakes her head "No."

PUPPET SET: Ludmila is in a lavish chamber a garden, spied upon by the hunchback dwarf, wizard CHERNOMOR.

PUPPET NARRATOR

Ludmila finds herself in a lavish bedchamber, but she is empty without Ruslan. Sadly admiring her garden, our princess is startled by a hunchback dwarf!

PUPPET SET: Ludmila savagely beats hunchback dwarf Chernomor, who trips on his beard as he flees.

PUPPET NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Ludmila beats him savagely! The dwarf trips on his long beard. It is the impotent wizard Chernomor! As he flees her disgust, his magic hat falls to her feet.

PUPPET SET: Ludmila puts on the wizard's hat and disappears, then reappears in her garden.

PUPPET NARRATOR (CONT'D)

But while his sorcerer's cap gives Ludmila powers of invisibility to escape, those same powers lull her into a dream-like trance from which she may never awaken...

PUPPET SET: Ludmila falls asleep under the tree with the hat on, the black Cat on a chain watching her slumber.

INT. WHITE VAN/EXT. WAREHOUSE UNDERGROUND GARAGE - DAY

Felix shoves a line of TEN SEX WORKERS, arms bound with tights, pillowcases over their heads, into a white van. Dmitri follows behind, wheeling a safe in a warehouse cart.

EXT. PUSHKIN PUPPET THEATRE - BOARDWALK - DAY

PUPPET SET: Ruslan watches the Old Man casts spells. Old Man acts out feats of war and magic to win the heart of NAINA. Naina explodes and turns into a DRAGON.

PUPPET NARRATOR

In the cave, the Old Man tells Ruslan that in his youth he fell in love with a maiden Naina. He became a warrior to win her, but Naina spurned his love. And so the Old Man learnt the art of magic! He cast a spell to win Naina's heart, only to find that now, she was an old crone. When the Old Man rejected Naina, she turned into a vengeful dragon. Now he has helped Ruslan, Naina will hate him, too...

ALEXANDRA

What kind of tale is this for young girls! So absurd-

Alexandra stands and pulls Anastasia away from the show, Rasputin rising with them.

BOARDWALK

Rasputin walks with them onto the boardwalk, followed a few steps behind by Bratva One.

RASPUTIN

It is true. A man who cannot see the earthy value of a crone is no man at all-

Alexandra stops, appalled.

ALEXANDRA

You're an animal!

RASPUTIN

Which is it, am I an animal, or a holy man?

ANASTASIA

He's a wizard!

Anastasia lifts her arms up. Rasputin throws her in the air.

RASPUTIN

I am not a wizard. But your mother is a princess, cast under a wicked spell to stay fast asleep-

Alexandra snatches Anastasia out of his arms and carries her.

RASPUTIN (CONT'D)

Open your eyes, Princess! Or your kingdom will crumble beneath you-

ALEXANDRA

Rasputin, I thank you for what you have done for my family. And I beg you. Stay away from my family!

RASPUTIN

As you wish, princess.

Rasputin bows. Alexandra walks away, followed by Bratva One.

INT. BRATVA SAFEHOUSE - THRONE ROOM - DAY

A luxurious room with antique furniture. Nicholas's family portraits line the wall. A throne-like chair faces a fire. Nicholas takes the pillowcase off of Ekaterina's head.

NICHOLAS

Very good. Dmitri, go to the cellar and blow the safe. Not the expensive explosives. *Da?*

Dmitri bows and strides out of the room.

FELIX

We tried the safehouse first. It was empty. They are on the move.

NICHOLAS

Then they know they are weak, and our victory is at hand. Felix, help me to help our girls understand where their new loyalties lie.

Felix grins and takes out a burning-hot fire-poker brand in the shape of a decapitated wolves's head out of the fire.

Ekaterina SCREAMS and THRASHES as Nicholas pushes and holds her to the ground, yanking up her hair, as Felix brands her between the shoulder blades.

INT. ODESSA WAREHOUSE BROTHEL - NIGHT

Svetlana, lying still on the floor, GASPS. Her eyes fling open as she clutches her chest. In shock, she examines the bullet hole going above her heart cleanly out her shoulder.

She staggers to her feet and out through the blown open door.

EXT. ODESSA WAREHOUSE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Svetlana's naked bloody feet cross the deserted parking lot.

INT. RUSSIAN RESTAURANT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Bratva One and BRATVA TWO, 20s, intimidate RESTAURANT OWNER, 60s, who holds an envelope of cash to his chest. Bratva One cleans the dirt from beneath his nails with a switchblade.

RESTAURANT OWNER

-Paid the Bratva! You kept Brighton Beach secure, business buzzing, for this I thank you. But why should I now pay? The streets run with blood. We live in chaos! Nicholas has lost control. The Odessa take more territory and you Bratva are not here to protect us! Even the tourists notice. Bad for business. And this "Rasputin"-

Bratva One stops cleaning his nails and looks up, interested.

BRATVA ONE

Rasputin?

RESTAURANT OWNER

Rumors abound that Nicholas is involved in a kind of sorcery! Perhaps the Odessa are a safer bet-

Bratva Two SLAMS Restaurant Owner's head against the counter. He SCREAMS. Again. Again. Until his ears bleed. The envelope falls to the floor, cash spilling out, sprayed with blood.

RESTAURANT OWNER (CONT'D)

Please! Stop! Forgive me!

Bratva Two picks a butcher's knife up, holding it above Restaurant Owner's shaking hand.

BRATVA TWO  
 Ever make borscht with bleeding  
 stub of hand?

RESTAURANT OWNER  
 I will never speak again!

Bratva One stuffs the blood-spattered cash back into the envelope and puts it in his jacket pocket.

BRATVA ONE  
 We pass on your concerns.

Bratva One nods at Bratva Two to let Restaurant Owner go.

INT. FREAK BAR - CONEY ISLAND - NIGHT

Romany Guitar Players PLAY a song like The Pogues's "Turkish Song of the Damned" for Rasputin, Angelo, Misfits, Tourists and Locals, 18-50, SINGING along in circus-themed Freak Bar.

ALL  
 "I come old friend from Hell  
 tonight/  
 Across the rotting sea/  
 Nor the nails of the cross/  
 Nor the blood of Christ/  
 Can bring you help this eve/  
 The dead have come to claim a debt  
 from thee/  
 They stand outside your door/  
 Four score and three/  
 Did you keep a watch for the dead  
 man's wind/  
 Did you see the woman with the comb  
 in her hand/  
 Wailing away on the wall on the  
 strand/  
 As you danced to the Turkish song  
 of the damned!"

Rasputin clears a space in the center and dances the Russian Cossack as the crowd CLAP their hands and STOMP their feet and SLAM the tables in rhythm.

DOORWAY

Svetlana leans on the doorframe, clutching her chest.

SVETLANA  
*Pomoshch'. Puzhalsta!*  
 (Help. Please!)

MUSIC STOPS.

Behind the bar, BARTENDER calls the police from her cell.

BARTENDER  
 We need an ambulance immediately!  
 At Freak Bar- maybe police-

Svetlana staggers to the bar.

SVETLANA  
 No police. *Spasibo-*

She faints on the ground. Rasputin kneels next to her. He hovers his hand over her chest, MUMBLING prayers. Beneath the blood, her bullet wound closes up. The crowd WHISPERS.

MISFIT ONE  
 It's a miracle!

MISFIT TWO  
 The rumors are true-

Everyone gathers around Rasputin in awe.

ROMANY GUITAR PLAYER                      ROMANY GUITAR PLAYER TWO  
 God has come to Coney Island!      The devil gives such powers!

Angelo wheels himself to the bar and wets a towel with water. He hands it to Rasputin, who wipes the blood from Svetlana's chest, the dirt and grime from her feet.

ANGELO  
 You know what was the beginning of  
 the end for Jesus? Celebrity. I got  
 some BAD premonitions- Can't you  
 find a dark corner for this shit?

As the PARAMEDICS arrive, Rasputin stands and walks away, lifting his hands. The Paramedics place a breathing machine on Svetlana and put her on a stretcher, carrying her away.

Everyone CHEERS! The Romany Guitar Players resume PLAYING song like "TURKISH SONG OF THE DAMNED".

Misfits, Tourists and Locals pick up Rasputin and place him on a chair, lifting him in the air in celebration.

ALL  
 "Wailing away on the wall on the  
 strand/  
 As you danced to the Turkish song  
 of the damned!"

Rasputin grins as they spin him in the air, basking in glory.

EXT. FREAK BAR - CONEY ISLAND - DAY

Boryslav walks hurriedly past the bar towards the boardwalk, wearing many layers and a hat pulled low over his head in the summer sun.

EXT. BEACH - CONEY ISLAND - BROOKLYN - DAY

Boryslav snakes through FAMILIES under umbrellas and PARTYING TEENS to a blanket with BORYSLAV'S FATHER, 70s, sitting next to a chess board.

Boryslav sits next to him and pulls a pack of UKRAINIAN CIGARETTES from out of his pocket.

BORYSLAV'S FATHER

Boryslav! You came. I didn't think you would- I thought you might-

BORYSLAV

No, Papa. I am well. But always on the move. I can't stay long.

They both light a cigarette as Boryslav looks at the chess board, already half in play.

BORYSLAV (CONT'D)

Where were we...

Behind him on the boardwalk, Dmitri sits on a bench, smoking, eating an ice cream, watching.

EXT. BOARDWALK - CONEY ISLAND - DAY

Dmitri's licks the last of his ice cream and throws the cone behind him. He follows Boryslav's path past the amusement park towards the futuristic public toilets jutting out like cabins on a pier.

INT. PUBLIC TOILETS - CONEY ISLAND - DAY

Dmitri follows Boryslav into the toilets. Leans against the wall. Smiles sinisterly.

DMITRI

(in subtitled Russian)

Have we met before?

Boryslav jumps out of his skin and throws a desperate punch. Dmitri captures his fist in his hand and breaks his arm bending it over the sink. Boryslav YELLS.

They wrestle above the sink, Boryslav SLAMMING Dmitri's head into the mirror above the basin with his good arm.

The mirror SHATTERS.

Dmitri grasps a shard in his blood soaked hands and SHANKS the older man in the neck. Blood SPURTS as Boryslav GURGLES.

The door opens.

SCREAM. A Partying Teen makes eye contact with Dmitri, who grins baring blood-streaked teeth. The door SLAMS shut.

Boryslav pulls the shard out of his neck and falls to his knees. Blood SPRAYS all over the walls. The man collapses.

DMITRI (CONT'D)

What a mess we have here.

Dmitri KICKS Boryslav's head in with his steel-toed boots, then drags him into a bathroom stall.

DIMITRI

Nicholas does not like to do  
business out in the open. This is  
all your fault!

BATHROOM STALL

Dmitri takes Boryslav's hat and puts it on his head. He rifles through the dead man's coat pockets. Pulls out a folded sheet of paper and the pack of cigarettes.

DMITRI

I just wanted ice cream, you know?

He lights one as he inspects the paper.

It is a RIKERS: HAVE YOU SEEN THIS MAN poster with the mugshot of a beardless Rasputin. Rasputin's real name: KIRILL VOLKOV, armed robber, Rikers escapee, suspected of suffering from grandiose schizophrenia, may be armed and dangerous.

Dmitri LAUGHS in disbelief.

DMITRI (CONT'D)

The universe provides!

Dmitri makes the Orthodox cross sign over Boryslav's body.

EXT. BEACH - CONEY ISLAND - BROOKLYN - DAY

Dmitri grins a bloody grin at BORYSLAV'S FATHER and doffs his dead son's cap. The elderly man SOBS, knocking over the chess board, the pawns rolling off the blanket into the sand.

INT. FRONT ROW - MASTER THEATRE - BRIGHTON BEACH - NIGHT

Nicholas and Alexandra, dressed in finery, hold hands as they watch RUSSIAN BALLERINAS perform "THE AWAKENING OF FLORA" in the Master Theatre concert hall in exit seats.

STAGE

BALLET MONTAGE: In a grotto at night, NYMPHS sleep guarded by Moon goddess SELENE. Among the nymphs is FLORA. With the approach of dawn, Selene hides in the clouds. BOREUS, God of the North Wind, storms over the grotto. He awakens Flora, forcing her to seek refuge in the foliage.

FRONT ROW

Felix, out of breathe and not dressed for the occasion, sits in the seat behind Nicholas. Alexandra hands Felix a program.

ALEXANDRA

The story of how a nymph became  
Flora, Goddess of Flowers.

NICHOLAS

Did the meeting run smoothly?

SHHHT! An AUDIENCE MEMBER shushes them.

FELIX

Da. But we have grave news- of...  
Property that ended in wrong hands.

NICHOLAS

(to Alexandra)  
One moment.

Nicholas and Felix step out into the aisle.

INT. HALLWAY - MASTER THEATRE - BRIGHTON BEACH - NIGHT

Nicholas and Felix confer in subtitled Russian.

FELIX

-Held under police guard at Coney Island Hospital. She knows nothing- all she has seen is a masked man.

NICHOLAS

Nevertheless. We must take care of her. We have someone on the inside?

FELIX

Not on this squad. Anti-corruption has gotten very tight. But we have persuaded one of the nurses-

INT. NURSE'S HOME - CONEY ISLAND - NIGHT

The MUFFLED SCREAMS of NURSE, 50, tied to a chair in her bedroom, with a sock in her mouth and a gun to her head. On the bed, an open suitcase of cash and a bottle of Cyanide.

INT. HALLWAY - MASTER THEATRE - BRIGHTON BEACH - NIGHT

Felix paces back and forth in a rage as Nicholas watches him, chilly but composed.

FELIX

She has no one. No man, no children. She agreed is time for early retirement in South America.

NICHOLAS

Good. When is it happening?

FELIX

Tonight.  
(beat)  
They say Rasputin healed her.

NICHOLAS

The nurse?

Felix loses his shit, kicking the wall.

FELIX

The girl! Whole crowds saw him work his sorcery in Freak Bar! His influence grows too strong-

NICHOLAS

What influence is that? To drink, dance and fuck? He is no threat. He is barely a monk-

FELIX

I tell you, Nicholas, the power he holds over people is a threat to us all, if not today, then tomorrow! You forget that *everything* we have is based upon their fear! What if we lose it? What if something stronger moves them? Our power only exists where theirs ends-

Nicholas raises his hand in finality.

NICHOLAS

Rasputin may still be persuaded to work for the Bratva. I will hear no more of this. No harm will come to him, unless he harms my family or my men. That is an order.

FELIX

Our men, Nicholas. Our men.

Felix storms off. Nicholas returns to the performance.

INT. FRONT ROW - MASTER THEATRE - BRIGHTON BEACH - NIGHT

Nicholas rejoins Alexandra and they watch the stage. She feels a gaze upon her. She turns to see Rasputin, staring.

BALLET MONTAGE: Tableaux from "The Awakening Of Flora" are performed. The Sun God HELIOS appears. Smitten with the beauty of Flora, Helios kisses her. At his call, her husband ZEPHYRUS flies to his beloved Flora's embrace. The nymphs rejoice over the reunited lovers' happiness. Rousing finale.

The CROWD stand to their feet, CLAPPING.

INT. BACKSTAGE - MASTER THEATRE - BRIGHTON BEACH - NIGHT

Rasputin sits in a chair in front of mirrors strewn with flowers. PRIMA BALLERINA presents him with her extravagant bouquet. Rasputin buries his nose in the petals suggestively.

FIVE ADORING BALLERINAS at his feet GIGGLE as he strokes their hands and WHISPERS inaudible flirtations in their ears.

DOORWAY

Nicholas RAPS on the door, Alexandra behind him. Her face burns with jealousy as she eyes the women caressing Rasputin.

NICHOLAS

Rasputin. We came to congratulate  
the Prima Ballerina, but I see you  
have found her first.

Rasputin gets to his feet and bows in greeting. As Nicholas  
kisses Prima Ballerina's hand, Rasputin fixes Alexandra with  
his magnetic stare. She turns on her heel and walks away.

EXT. MASTER THEATRE - BRIGHTON BEACH - NIGHT

Alexandra strides ahead of Nicholas to their car.

ALEXANDRA

I want you to stay away from that  
*rastochitel'*. He is a pig!

NICHOLAS

Which is he, a pig or holy man?

Nicholas opens the door for her. Alexandra gets in and SLAMS  
it behind her.

INT. BALLERINA DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

MONTAGE: A wild, balletic orgy to DISCO-POP records.  
Feathers, costumes and lacy underwear fly as Rasputin and the  
girls dress up, pour vodka into each others mouths, take  
lines of cocaine and kiss in playful and ecstatic abandon.

Standing naked on a couch, Rasputin holds his bottle of wine  
to the sky as Prima Ballerina goes down on him.

RASPUTIN

I am but a simple man with an  
enormous...

LONG PAUSE. LAUGHTER.

RASPUTIN (CONT'D)

-Heart, who loves Russia, God and  
ballet!

The other Ballerinas pull him off the couch onto the floor  
strewn with cushions, where they all ravish each other.

INT. HOSPITAL BED - CONEY ISLAND HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Svetlana lies hooked up to a drip on a bed. Nurse decants a  
sachet of white powder into a glass of water. STIRS.

Svetlana's eyes flutter open. She licks her dry lips. Reaches for the glass. Nurse almost lets her take it. Pulls back.

Svetlana shies away suspiciously. Nurse stifles a SOB.

NURSE

You look so young. What's your name, sweetheart?

SVETLANA

S-svetlana.

NURSE

Tell them- tell the doctors I was never going to do it. I know the Bratva. They never intended to let me live-

Svetlana shakes her head in confusion as Nurse lifts the cup to her own lips.

INT. NURSE'S HOME - CONEY ISLAND - NIGHT

In her darkened bedroom, Dmitri waits in Nurse's armchair, putting a silencer on his gun.

INT. HOSPITAL BED - CONEY ISLAND HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Svetlana reaches for the water again. Nurse shakes her head.

NURSE

You must live, Svetlana. Live and help our people-

Nurse knocks back the water. Sits. Waits. Nurse SPASMS in her chair, foaming at the mouth. Svetlana SCREAMS.

BAM! Armed GUARDS open the hospital door.

INT. NURSE'S HOME - CONEY ISLAND - NIGHT

Dmitri looks at his watch. Stands, suspicious. Twitches the Nurse's bedroom curtain open to see the street below.

WINDOW

Dmitri spies PLAINCLOTHES OFFICERS getting out of a car. He opens the window and clambers onto the fire escape, climbing up towards the roof.

ROOF

Dmitri peeks over the side of the roof to see the building surrounded by SWAT teams. He spies an open window in a neighboring building. He runs backwards, then forwards to make a strategic leap--

STRANGER WINDOW

Dmitri CRASHES into the living room where shirtless Kuzma watches T.V.

KUZMA

*Khuy na ne!* (No fucking way!)

Dmitri spies his Ukrainian gang tattoos. Pulls his gun--

DMITRI

Of all the fucking windows!

SILENCE. Dmitri's gun jams. Dmitri SMACKS Kuzma's head with the grip and makes a run for it.

On the floor, Kuzma scrabbles for a shotgun under the couch while making a call on his cell phone.

KUZMA

(in subtitled Ukrainian)

Igor, Olek! Now is our time. For our fallen brothers! For Ukraine!

Kuzma grins as he loads the shotgun, running after Dmitri.

EXT. STREETS - CONEY ISLAND - BROOKLYN - NIGHT

POUNDING of Dmitri's black knee-high SS boots as he races over cars and through the streets of Coney Island, chased by Kuzma, Igor and Olek.

Rounding a corner, Dmitri JUMPS in a giant trash receptacle. The Odessa run past him. Dmitri sneaks out.

KUZMA

*Katsap! Nazad!* (Back there!)

BANG! BANG! BANG! They shoot up the empty trash can. Dmitri runs for his life.

EXT. LUNA AMUSEMENT PARK - CONEY ISLAND - NIGHT

Dmitri races towards the fence surrounding the famous amusement park. He leaps on the wire fence, hanging suspended in the air for a moment in a crucifix position. Climbs up.

INT. MAGICIAN STAGE - LUNA PARK - CONEY ISLAND - NIGHT

In the empty Magician's stage, Angelo and Romany Guitar Player One and Two inspect props. A COFFIN to be sawed open; a SAW; a cage full of DEAD DOVES; a man-sized FISH TANK.

Angelo rubs his chin as he looks backwards and forwards.

ANGELO

-Just make sure you get me out  
after five minutes. No, four.

(beat)

Three minutes thirty seconds. Help  
me into that box-

Angelo climbs out of his wheelchair towards the wood coffin.

EXT. FISH TANK - LUNA AMUSEMENT PARK - CONEY ISLAND - NIGHT

The Romany Guitar Players lower the coffin with Angelo's body into the fish tank water. Angelo pipes up from inside.

ANGELO (O.S.)

Whatever I say, however I plead,  
ignore me. That'll be the fear!

The Romany Guitar Players look at each other and shrug. DUNK!  
The wooden box plunges in the water.

INT. COFFIN/EXT. FISH TANK - LUNA AMUSEMENT PARK - NIGHT

Water streams through the coffin through the trick opening where the saw would go. Angelo panics.

ANGELO

Let me out! I take it back!

The box floods. Angelo HAMMERS the coffin lid with his fists.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, LET ME OUT!!

The coffin jerks upwards as Angelo GASPS for air.

EXT. FISH TANK - LUNA AMUSEMENT PARK - CONEY ISLAND - NIGHT

A sopping Angelo clutches his friends to his chest, weeping with gratitude.

ANGELO

I'm alive! Praise Jesus. It is  
enough to be me! Angelo has all the  
power he needs-

O.S. BANG! BANG!

Angelo and the guitar players look up in alarm. Angelo raises a finger to his lips. He gestures to them to follow as he army crawls to the edge of the stage. They peek out.

EXT. LYNNE'S TRAPEZE - AMUSEMENT PARK - CONEY ISLAND - NIGHT

Hiding under the controls of the flying Trapeze, Dmitri turns on the swings to distract Kuzma, Igor and Olek.

CARNIVAL MUSIC.

Dmitri makes a run for it towards the Raceway Dodgem Cars.

BANG! BANG! Igor shoots at the swings. Olek gets in one, using the height to spy on the park. He spots Dmitri.

OLEK

(in subtitled Ukrainian)  
Over there! By the cars!

Kuzma and Igor run towards the Dodgems.

RACEWAY DODGEM CARS

Dmitri crawls across the Dodgem space from car to car, trying to fix his jammed gun.

The Odessa, guns raised and loaded, track him in the dark.

Dmitri climbs under a car, holding his breathe as Kuzma's boots walk past his line of vision. He EXHALES as the boots move further and further away.

Dmitri creeps out and army crawls in the opposite direction.

BANG!

A CLOWN MASK above Dmitri's head is shot through the eye and tumbles in front of his head. Spooked, Dmitri stands up and dashes towards the Thunderbolt.

## THUNDERBOLT DROP ROLLERCOASTER

Cornered at the bottom, Dmitri desperately clammers up the tall rollercoaster, Kuzma and Olek following.

KUZMA (O.S.)  
ARE YOU READY TO DIE, DIMITRI?!

BANG! BANG! Dmitri SCREAMS as his knee is shot through. His hand moves down to touch it. Raising his bloody hand back up to the metal roller coaster, he tries to lift himself up.

Dmitri's hand slips. He plunges in the air, grabbing Olek by the collar, taking him down with him.

IGOR (O.S.)  
OLEKKK!!

They twist in the air, Dmitri maneuvering himself above--

Olek's neck lands with a sickening CRACK. Dmitri lies facing the boy's bulging tongue and eyeballs. Rolls off him. Dmitri grabs Olek's gun and hobbles into the dark.

## CYCLONE ROLLERCOASTER

Dmitri, dragging his bleeding leg behind him, hides under the lattices of the cyclone rollercoaster. He closes his eyes, crosses himself and mumbles PRAYERS.

SMACK! A pistol whips the back of Dmitri's skull. Kuzma and Igor pick him up by the neck.

IGOR  
Tonight you will regret having ever  
been born, *Katsap*.

Dmitri's black boots desperately kick out under him as his face goes red, GASPING for breath.

KUZMA  
Make your peace with God. All that  
is left for you now is Boryslav's  
revenge and the pits of hell.

They drag him towards the Magician stage.

## INT. MAGIGIAN STAGE - AMUSEMENT PARK - CONEY ISLAND - NIGHT

Kuzma and Igor saw off SCREAMING Dmitri's legs over his knee-high boots with the dull blade of the saw.

DMITRI  
 (in subtitled Russian)  
 God forgive me! God forgive us all!

Kuzma and Igor dump Dmitri's still breathing body into the water tank to drown, his fists limply THUMPING against the glass, water turning pink.

Dmitri sinks to the bottom, eyes and mouth gaping. Angelo and the guitar players watch with horror from their hiding place.

EXT. LUNA AMUSEMENT PARK - CONEY ISLAND - NIGHT

Romany Guitar Players RUN, pushing Angelo's wheelchair in front of them, as they high-tail it out of sight.

ROMANY GUITAR PLAYER ONE	ROMANY GUITAR PLAYER TWO
What do we do?!	Go to the police?

ANGELO  
 Are you insane?! I've lost enough  
 for this country! If I've learned  
 one thing, it's to stay OUT of  
 cracker murder. We take this to the  
 grave. Or we're in our graves!

The guitar players shrug as they pull back the clipped edge of a fence and push Angelo out of the amusement park.

EXT. NICHOLAS AND ALEXANDRA'S HOME - BRIGHTON BEACH - DAY

Alexei in his school uniform opens the door. YELLS as he sees Dmitri's sawn-off SS boots waiting on the welcome mat.

ALEXEI  
 Oh my God!! Dmitri!

Alexandra runs out. Claps her hand to her mouth. Nicholas comes up behind her. She buries her head in his arms. Her husband looks up and down the street.

NICHOLAS  
 Alexei, go to school. Alexandra,  
 bring me a trash bag.

Alexandra looks at Nicholas with dawning horror, as if seeing him for the first time.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)  
 Alexandra, this house must not  
 become a crime scene.  
 (MORE)

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

First, trash bag. Then, take yourself shopping with Anastasia.

ALEXEI

But the neighbors! They will see-

NICHOLAS

We own this street. Bring the bag!

Alexandra grabs Alexei and refuses to let him go.

ALEXANDRA

Alexei will not be safe! Anastasia will not be safe! I am taking them away- away from this putrid place-!

Alexei STAMPS his feet in protest.

ALEXEI

I do not want to run away with my tail between my legs like a dog!

NICHOLAS

(to Alexandra)

There is no safer place for Alexei than at school and for you at home. We have a pact with the Odessa. Family is sacred.

(to Alexei)

Go to school, Alexei.

Alexei nods and runs down the steps away from them.

ALEXANDRA

They broke that pact when they beat Alexei nearly to death!

NICHOLAS

Our retaliation was swift. Order is being restored.

Alexandra points to Dmitri's boots on the welcome mat.

ALEXANDRA

You call this order, Nicholas?!

Nicholas lifts Alexandra by the collar of her dress and pushes her against the door.

NICHOLAS

I will do what I have always done. Protect our family, no matter the cost! Bring me a trash bag. Then, go and buy yourself a nice dress.

Nicholas sets Alexandra down. Smooths out her collar.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

There is a club opening tonight.  
Music, dancing. We will enjoy it,  
and buy vodka shots for everyone.  
Remember, everything is as before.

ALEXANDRA

Nothing is as before.

Alexandra walks inside. Nicholas crosses himself and kneels before Dmitri's boots, MURMURING Orthodox prayers.

Alexandra returns with her daughter in pajamas her arms, covering Anastasia's eyes with her hands. Alexandra shoves a trash bag in Nicholas's face.

ALEXANDRA (CONT'D)

For your "brother".

Alexandra walks away with contempt.

INT. DMITRI'S BEDROOM - DAY

Felix WEEPS as he goes through Dmitri's affairs: clothes, books, religious iconography, making piles on the bed. He finds a hunting knife and straps it to his chest.

Under the bed, he finds an extra pair of Dmitri's SS boots. Tries them on. Throws his own steel-toed boots on the pile.

MEOW! A hungry PERSIAN CAT emerges from the other room and bats its head around Felix's legs. He scratches his head.

Felix opens the drawers of a dresser. Underneath a pile of men's white underwear is a locked box. Felix gets a switchblade from his pocket and jimmies it open.

His eyebrows raise as he reads the RIKERS flyer of Rasputin. Felix smiles and kisses the paper. Puts it in his pocket.

FELIX

Dmitri, I will always remember you  
as the friend who never failed me.

Felix picks up the cat, slinging him under one arm. He takes a gasoline container from behind the door and covers the bed with the liquid. Lights a match.

WHOOSH! The bed goes up in flames.

Felix watches the icons and books burn.

EXT. STREET CORNER - CONEY ISLAND - NIGHT

Rasputin drinks and preaches on a wooden crate, holding Book Five of "CORPUS HERMETICUM". Angelo sits next to him with a hat collecting donations from the curious CROWD.

RASPUTIN

-We are all God. Our bodies are but a vessel for the divine. The flesh IS the holy grail! We have been ripped from our own sacred knowing as masters of reality, lords of this world. We immerse ourselves in the consumption and collection of people and possessions, spinning out in cosmic bereavement, trying to drown out the noise of this existential despair...

Angelo shakes the collection hat in front of a LISTENER.

ANGELO

Toss a coin, brother! Make them Benjamins rain. It's just a piece of paper. That's all it is! It's just an agreement of value. Tell me, do I hold value to you? Tell me, does he hold value to you?

Angelo points at Rasputin and rises in his wheelchair, impassioned. Alexandra joins on the outskirts and watches, Bratva One close behind her and her daughter.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

How can a man be said to have a right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, when our society does not equate him with any inherent value beyond his potential for exploitation?!

CLINK! CLINK! Coin donations.

Rasputin leafs through the Corpus Hermeticum. He notices Alexandra and preaches directly to her.

RASPUTIN

"Think that for you too, nothing is impossible. Deem that you too are immortal and that you too are able to grasp all things in your thought...

(MORE)

## RASPUTIN (CONT'D)

Find your home in the haunts of every living creature, make yourself higher than all heights and lower than all depths! Bring together in yourself all opposites of quality, think that you are everywhere at once, on land, at sea, in heaven. Think that you are not yet begotten, that you are in the womb, that you are young, that you are old, that you have died, that you are in the world beyond the grave! Grasp in your thought all this at once, all times and places, all substances and qualities and magnitudes together; then you can apprehend God.

(beat)

But if you shut up your soul in your body and abase yourself and say 'I know nothing, I can do nothing, I am afraid of earth and sea, I cannot mount to Heaven, I know not what I was, nor what I shall be', then what have you to do with God?"

Alexandra takes a piece of paper and slips it in a folded twenty dollar bill. She throws it in the hat, then pulls Anastasia's hand and leads her away. Bratva One follows.

Angelo clocks this and rolls his eyes.

## ANGELO

(to Topsy Woman)

Rasputin, Rasputin! They crazy for the priapic priest and his mystical member. What about Angelo? My love may not be divine, but it is true!

Topsy Woman LAUGHS and sits on his lap to kiss him.

## INT. RUSSIAN FASHION STORE - DAY

Alexandra walks in hurriedly with her eyes cast down, Anastasia in her arms. She speaks to SALESWOMAN, looking through the window with fear at waiting Bratva One.

## ALEXANDRA

Excuse me- that man is following me! I am afraid- do you have a back door I could use?

SALESWOMAN

Of course! Little duck, poor thing,  
we women must stick together, *da?*

ALEXANDRA

*Spasibo.*

Alexandra follows Saleswoman through the back.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND BACK ALLEY - DAY

Alexandra HUFFS and PUFFS, running through an alley with Anastasia in her arms.

EXT. BLACK SEA BOOKSTORE UNDER NYC SUBWAY TRACKS - DAY

Under NYC train tracks, Alexandra catches her breath and browses books, Anastasia at her side.

Rasputin watches from across the street. Crosses. They speak under their breath, pretending to read.

RASPUTIN

No need to be so cloak and dagger,  
Alexandra. I stand a conquered  
outlaw before you, with your  
husband's wine in my hotel room-

ALEXANDRA

I need your help, Rasputin, not  
your comfort. You must convince  
Nicholas to end this war!

RASPUTIN

War? I thought Nicholas is a family  
man, successful owner of Russian  
drug store and laundromat chains.

Alexandra CLASPS his arm pleadingly.

ALEXANDRA

Don't make me beg you! This goes  
beyond you or I- this terrorism has  
landed on my doorstep. Poor Dmitri.  
They will stop at nothing until the  
last man is dead!

RASPUTIN

Why do you think Nicholas will  
listen to me?

ALEXANDRA

You are the only man I have seen  
him respect as- not an equal, but  
with another sort of power.

RASPUTIN

Nicholas is only interested in  
subverting my power into another  
kind of weapon.

ALEXANDRA

So you will not even try? The  
streets run with blood, and our  
holy man washes his hands of us!

Alexandra throws her book on the ground and puts her head in  
her hands. Rasputin clasps her wrists and takes her in his  
arms, stroking her hair.

RASPUTIN

Have you ever considered,  
Alexandra, that only you possess  
the power to end this war?

Alexandra looks up in confusion.

ALEXANDRA

Power? I have no power!

RASPUTIN

Terrorism was always at your door.  
You lifted your pretty head high to  
walk blindly past. The sheets you  
sleep upon, every morsel you eat,  
every stitch you wear- all are  
drenched in the blood of your  
countrymen. But you are a free  
woman, free to choose another path-

ALEXANDRA

You are no help! You leave me no  
choice but to flee my own home-

Alexandra takes Anastasia's hand and walks away.

UNDERPASS

Rasputin follows her down the graffiti-covered underpass.

RASPUTIN

Who frightens you more, Alexandra?  
The Odessa? Or your husband?

Alexandra stops, shaking. Rasputin cradles her face.

ALEXANDRA

All of them. I am so afraid. All of the time.

RASPUTIN

King or pauper, priest or prole, one inevitable day we all lose everything we love. Either piece by piece or in one devastating blow, all of humanity is united in this loss. And we are all afraid.

Rasputin leans down, his lips nearly brushing her own.

RASPUTIN (CONT'D)

But nothing is ever lost. Remember that. Nothing is ever lost.

ALEXANDRA

So you will not help me, then.

Their lips are a hairsbreadth away from a kiss. Alexandra pulls away and SLAPS his face.

ALEXANDRA (CONT'D)

You are as useless a philosopher as you are a pacifist.

Alexandra picks up Anastasia and walks away.

RASPUTIN

(shouting after her)

Will I see you at the club tonight, Alexandra? I hear everyone who is anyone is attending! Will you wear your husband's favorite dress? Why does the party seem different now? It was ever thus!

Rasputin dances away down the other end of the alley.

INT. SAUNA - RUSSIAN BANYA - DAY

Nicholas and Felix lie in the wooden *banya*, necking from a bottle of expensive vodka and speaking in subtitled Russian as their backs are whipped with birch barks.

NICHOLAS

-Tell them that the deaths of Boryslav and Dmitri have been too public, too brutal.

(MORE)

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

We have all gone too far. We propose a truce for the good of the community, and I offer myself unarmed as collateral. We do not need to find their safehouse, if they invite us to it.

FELIX

We thank them with fireworks. A grand and final gesture.

NICHOLAS

To celebrate a new era of unity, in which the Bratva reigns without hint of rebellion.

Nicholas drinks from the bottle and passes it to Felix. Felix drinks and grimaces as the wooden sticks WHACK him.

INT. ALEXANDRA AND NICHOLAS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In a cocktail dress at her dressing table mirror, Alexandra puts on makeup. Behind her, Nicholas in a suit approaches with a jewelry box in his hands.

NICHOLAS

For my queen.

Nicholas opens the box to reveal a string of pearls and emeralds. Alexandra stares at them.

ALEXANDRA

You think I care for trinkets  
bought at the price of your soul?  
You might as well present me with a  
string of bones!

Alexandra SMACKS the box out of his hands. The necklace scatters on the floor. Alexandra falls to her knees.

ALEXANDRA (CONT'D)

I beg you, husband. Come to a truce  
with the Odessa. If not for my  
sake, then for your daughter's.

Nicholas picks the necklace up and ropes it around her neck, lifting Alexandra to her full height.

NICHOLAS

Remember your life before me,  
Alexandra?

(MORE)

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

A skinny little lounge singer,  
barely able to feed herself and her  
brother with those sordid little  
escapades with those big, bad men  
who used you, who lied to you, who  
discarded you.

Alexandra GASPS as he tightens the chain.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

You think I did not know you were  
one step above a whore? I saved  
you, I took you and Alexei in. I  
protected you, I gave you a home, a  
daughter, a purpose. A respectable  
life. A good life.

Alexandra WEEPS as he loosens the chain to fasten the clasp.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Tonight you will wear a big smile  
under those big sad eyes and twirl  
in your pretty dress. We will show  
the people that we are strong, that  
we are united, that we are  
fearless. And everything is well.

ALEXANDRA

Do you care nothing for what is  
good? For what is right?

NICHOLAS

There is no right, no wrong, no  
good, no evil. There is only power,  
and those who do not have it.

Nicholas bows ironically and walks to the door. Pauses.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

You would do well to remember that.

Alexandra picks up the perfumes on her table and SMASHES them  
against the wall. Stares at her bleak, glamorous reflection.  
Takes her hair brush and throws it, SHATTERING the mirror.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB RASPUTIN - NIGHT

The flickering old Neon sign declaring "ROMANOFF'S" comes  
down, replaced by a new one: "RASPUTIN'S" in bright lights.  
Watching RUSSIAN CLUBGOERS, 21- 75, CHEER and APPLAUD.

CLUB OWNER, 50s, clasps Rasputin's shoulders in his hands.

CLUB OWNER

In honor of Little Odessa's own  
mystic! A sign of greater things to  
come. A new dawn, a new age!

Rasputin raises his hands in the air, drinking a bottle of  
champagne, savoring his power and their love.

INT. NIGHTCLUB RASPUTIN - NIGHT

The clubgoers dance in a tacky-sexy club with mirrored walls,  
fog machines and disco balls creating a hallucinogenic  
funhouse-mirror effect.

Nicholas raises his glass in a toast. Club Owner motions to  
the DJ, 60, to CUT the music. The club falls SILENT.

NICHOLAS

To the prosperity and health of the  
good people of Little Odessa and  
the Motherland!

(to Club Owner)

Shots of your finest vodka for all.  
*Za zda-ró-vye!* (To your health).

The crowd CHEER as the music STARTS again. Nicholas takes  
Alexandra's hand and they dance cheek to cheek, Alexandra's  
mega-watt grin almost convincing.

When the song ends, Alexandra frees herself and runs to a  
window. GULPS down air. Grabs the arm of a passing WAITER.

ALEXANDRA

(to Waiter)

Is there somewhere quiet I could go  
to cool down? I feel faint-

WAITER

Come, follow me-

Behind her, Nicholas speaks to Club Owner and does not notice  
her leave. Rasputin watches the exchange and follows.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHTCLUB RASPUTIN - NIGHT

A small cellar window looks onto the grates of the street.  
Extra mirrors line the walls of the basement.

Alexandra sits on a bench in front of a piece of furniture  
covered by a sheet. She pulls it off to reveal a grand piano.

DINK! DINK! DINK! She plays a few keys. Rasputin watches her.

RASPUTIN  
Do you play?

ALEXANDRA  
I used to.

RASPUTIN  
Do you sing?

ALEXANDRA  
I don't know if I'll ever sing  
again.

Rasputin sits next to her. Strokes her arm. She shivers.

ALEXANDRA (CONT'D)  
Don't touch me!

RASPUTIN  
Alexandra, look at me.

She looks up.

RASPUTIN (CONT'D)  
We do not need to touch. We do not  
need to speak. I am in the spark  
within you where the universe  
lives, as are you within me. And  
there is only ever one of us.

Rasputin and Alexandra stare at each other, not touching.

RASPUTIN (CONT'D)  
Sing me your favorite song.

Alexandra plays a BLUES SONG like Eddie Holman's "FOUR  
WALLS", never breaking eye contact.

ALEXANDRA  
(singing)  
"Four walls, they surround me/  
Loneliness has found me/  
I'm waiting for you to return/  
Open the door/  
Walk right on in/  
Darling lets start/  
All over again..."

Alexandra stops, her throat thick with tears. Rasputin tilts  
her head to look into his hypnotic gaze.

RASPUTIN  
We will never have this night  
again.

(MORE)

## RASPUTIN (CONT'D)

If we fail to drink and dance and  
devour each other, our paradise  
will be lost to eternity.

## ALEXANDRA

I'm already lost to eternity.

Alexandra embraces him passionately.

INT. NIGHTCLUB RASPUTIN - CONEY ISLAND - NIGHT

Nicholas clasps Felix's shoulder.

## NICHOLAS

I think Alexandra may have left  
without me. We had a disagreement.  
Find her.

Felix nods and strides away.

EXT. BACK ENTRANCE - ALLEY - NIGHTCLUB RASPUTIN - NIGHT

Felix walks out the back entrance into an alley behind the  
club. He walks down it towards the street.

O.S. SOUNDS OF ECSTASY.

Felix pauses and leans down to peer through the dirty window  
of the cellar. He watches Rasputin and Alexandra's reflected  
mirror images have passionate sex on top of the grand piano.

Felix stands up again. Walks down the alley, WHISTLING.

EXT. BACK ENTRANCE - NIGHTCLUB RASPUTIN - NIGHT

Alexandra and Rasputin LAUGH as they run out the back door,  
Rasputin's coat covering Alexandra's face and head.

INT. RASPUTIN'S HOTEL ROOM - SHITTY HOTEL - NIGHT

Rasputin strokes Alexandra's hair as she lies against his  
chest. The authors on his beside table: RAM DAS, TERENCE  
MCKENNA, ALAN WATTS, HERMAN HESSE.

## RASPUTIN

This world is designed to raze our  
clinging to pleasure, to want, to  
hurt, to fear. And as long as an  
island of vulnerability or longing  
remains, we are tortured with it.

They embrace.

RASPUTIN (CONT'D)  
 You are my vulnerability,  
 Alexandra. You are my longing.

ALEXANDRA  
 If Nicholas finds out, he will kill  
 us both.

Rasputin's eyes unfocus as he speaks in a distant voice.

RASPUTIN  
 "When the bell tolls three times,  
 it will announce that I have been  
 killed. If I am killed by the  
 common man, you and Nicholas and  
 your children will rule Little  
 Odessa for generations to come; if  
 I am killed by one of Nicholas's  
 men, you and your family will be  
 killed by the people."

Alexandra blanches in horror.

BANG! The door swings open and Angelo wheels in.

ANGELO  
 Whoa! Whoa whoa whoa! What the fuck  
 did I say about Angel of Death  
 pussy?! It's my birthday tomorrow  
 and the only present Angelo gonna  
 find is my best friend strung up on  
 a fence, hacked to pieces with a  
 machete!

Angelo grabs a wine bottle and GLUGS. Rasputin sits up.

RASPUTIN  
 You didn't tell me it's your  
 birthday.

ANGELO  
 Because it is always, without fail,  
 a distressing fiasco!

Alexandra pulls the sheets around her.

ALEXANDRA  
 I should go.

RASPUTIN  
 Stay.

ANGELO

Yes! Go, bitch! Go!

Alexandra slips on her dress and picks her shoes off the floor. Rasputin gets out of bed and follows her to the door.

DOORWAY

Alexandra holds his face in her hands.

ALEXANDRA

If we only have this night...

RASPUTIN

Nothing is ever lost.

They kiss madly in the doorway, unwilling to let go.

EXT. SAINT NICHOLAS RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL - NYC - DAY

DING! DONG! The beautiful copper and gold onion domes of the imposing red brick Orthodox Cathedral in Manhattan RING in a call to service. Rasputin strides towards the church.

INT. SAINT NICHOLAS RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL - NYC - DAY

A CHOIR fills the air with GREGORIAN CHANTING as heady as the plumes of rising incense. Candlelight illuminates painted frescos and extravagant gold-framed icons of saints.

A sand basin holds up candles. Nicholas's hand lights one, drawing a cross in the sand before placing the candle in the middle. He kisses an icon. Rasputin joins him in prayer.

RASPUTIN

Religion is the cosmic mystery  
cloaked in human bondage. Lost in  
darkness, you engulf everything you  
hold dear. If you value your life,  
if you value your family, there can  
be no more bloodshed.

NICHOLAS

Everything I do is for my family,  
Rasputin. To bring peace,  
stability, prosperity. Did  
Bonaparte not say it is those who  
resist conquerors who create war? I  
am a controller of chaos. Both my  
enemies, and my own.

An ORTHODOX PRIEST in white robes swings an incense burner down the red carpet of the aisle. Nicholas bows his head.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

And what do you know of my life?  
You have strange powers, I grant  
you, but are they divine? Or  
demonic. Do you even know yourself?

RASPUTIN

I know that those who lust for  
power are consumed by it. Why are  
you gambling everything, when you  
have everything? Come to a truce.

NICHOLAS

Concede, with the iron taste of  
victory on my tongue? To live  
without glory *is* to die! I do not  
expect a false monk to understand.  
Perhaps if you had true ties, to  
your woman, your children, your  
people, your church, you would.

Nicholas crosses himself.

RASPUTIN

If you met Christ today, you would  
crucify him.

NICHOLAS

Perhaps it is time for you to leave  
Little Odessa, Rasputin. No harm  
may come to holy men- but it is  
clear to me, you are not a holy man  
at all.

Nicholas strides out of the church to sonorous Gregorian  
CHANTING. Rasputin stares up at a crucified statue of Jesus.

INT. BASEMENT - NICHOLAS'S WAREHOUSE - DAY

Machine guns and machetes line the wall of a room filled with  
weapons and boxes of grenades. Nicholas and Felix rig the  
sides of an large antique treasure chest with explosives.

NICHOLAS

For Dmitri. And for peace.

FELIX

For peace, brother.

Nicholas and Felix hug each other.

INT. KITCHEN - ALEXANDRA AND NICHOLAS'S HOME - DAY

Alexandra kneads dough, exhausted, watching Anastasia outside in the garden playing with her panda. A plate of cakes fresh from the oven cool next to her.

Felix enters SILENTLY. Alexandra jumps.

ALEXANDRA  
Felix! You startled me.

FELIX  
Baking, Alexandra?

ALEXANDRA  
It is the Brighton Jubilee soon. I am running the cake stand for the Russian Women's Institute.

FELIX  
Nicholas wants you to find Rasputin and send him to my home, tonight.

Alexandra stops kneading.

ALEXANDRA  
Why does Nicholas ask me to go?

FELIX  
He feels you have a connection-

ALEXANDRA  
There is no connection!

FELIX  
For saving your brother, of course. We all hear tales of Rasputin's godless debauchery, but Nicholas would never dream his wife could be involved in such... muck.

ALEXANDRA  
Yes, of course. Nicholas is reconsidering, perhaps-?

FELIX  
Rasputin spoke to him at the Cathedral. Nicholas was moved by his appeal. He wants to meet on neutral ground. Tell Rasputin to arrive after midnight.

(beat)  
You know his haunts, don't you?

Alexandra continues to knead her dough.

ALEXANDRA

Everyone does. They speak of nothing else, but the exploits of Rasputin! The rest is too...

Felix walks close and tips her chin up.

FELIX

Frightening?

Alexandra nods.

FELIX (CONT'D)

Yes. You should be afraid.

(beat)

I will leave you to your bread and cakes. May I?

Felix takes the whole platter and leaves.

INT. DIVE BAR - CONEY ISLAND - NIGHT

Balloons hang from the ceiling. A ramp has been constructed over a pool table, STRIPPERS and BALLERINAS in skimpy bikinis surrounding it. A banner reads: "HAPPY BIRTHDAY ANGELO".

Rasputin wheels Angelo into the bar, a bandana over his eyes.

ANGELO

-Telling you man, I HATE surprises, you think kidnapping and blinding a disabled vet with PTSD is a-

Balloons POP! Angelo YELLS! Rasputin whips off his bandana.

EVERYONE

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Angelo LAUGHS as Rasputin wheels him back and forth on the ramp through the parade of CHEERING half-naked women.

ANGELO

As I live and breathe! Heaven!  
Heaven is a drive-through strip-club!

The Romany Guitar Players strike up a TUNE as everyone drinks and dances with abandon, linking arms and doing the cha-cha.

Alexandra slinks into the bar, keeping a low profile, her face covered by a headscarf. She grabs Rasputin's arm.

ALEXANDRA

My husband wishes to speak to you!  
Tonight.

RASPUTIN

I am rejoicing! Come, rejoice with  
me-

Rasputin tries to clasp her in his arms. She pushes him away.

ALEXANDRA

Please! For me. Nicholas is  
reconsidering. Meet him at Felix's  
home, after midnight. Here-

Alexandra hands Rasputin a piece of paper with an address.

ALEXANDRA (CONT'D)

I must go-

Rasputin holds her close. Dances from side to side.

RASPUTIN

Stay and dance a little while.

ALEXANDRA

I cannot.

RASPUTIN

Why do I feel this is the last time  
we will ever see one another?

Rasputin cradles her face.

ALEXANDRA

I am taking Anastasia and Alexei  
away from here. I do not know when  
it will be safe to return. Or if-

Rasputin and Alexandra passionately kiss goodbye.

INT. STUDY - FELIX'S BEACHFRONT BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

A crucifix hangs above the liquor table. Felix pours a bottle  
of Madeira into a decanter, adding a portion of cyanide.

CLINK! CLINK!

He mixes it with a cocktail spoon. Felix adds the cyanide to  
powdered sugar and sprinkles it over the plate of Alexandra's  
Russian cakes.

BRING! BRING! The doorbell goes.

MEOW! The cat jumps up on the table and sniffs the cakes. Felix watches curiously. He sprinkles a portion of the cyanide/sugar mixture on his hand. The cat licks it.

BRING! BRING! Felix looks at his watch. Two fifteen a.m.

The cat makes horrible NOISES as it dies.

BRINGGG! BRINGGGG!

FELIX  
(shouting)  
Patience!

BRRRIIIIIINGGG!

Felix checks the cat's heart. Dead. He opens an ornate jewelry chest and places it inside.

INT. NICHOLAS AND ALEXANDRA'S HOME - BRIGHTON BEACH - NIGHT

Sitting in a chair in their dark bedroom, Nicholas watches Alexandra take a packed suitcase from under the bed.

NICHOLAS  
Going somewhere, my love?

Alexandra jumps and SCREAMS.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)  
Why do you hurt me, wife, at the very moment I need you most? This is an important time for the Bratva and for our family.

ALEXANDRA  
Your loyalty is quite clear. You have chosen the Bratva over our family!

Nicholas grabs her face and shoves her on the bed. He pushes up her skirt, ripping off her underwear as Alexandra thrashes and struggles beneath him.

NICHOLAS  
I think it is you who have been disloyal-

ALEXANDRA  
ALEXEI! ALEXEII!

Nicholas covers her mouth with his hands.

NICHOLAS

If you ever wish to see your  
daughter again, you will do. As.  
You. Are. Told.

Nicholas forces his mouth on Alexandra's as she WEEPS.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

We need some time to reconnect  
romantically... Don't you think,  
wife?

Alexandra SOBS, nodding, as Nicholas takes her roughly.

INT. STUDY - FELIX'S BEACHFRONT BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

A JAZZ song like Chet Baker's "MY FUNNY VALENTINE" plays on  
Felix's record player as Rasputin pours himself more wine  
from the poisoned jug and stuffs his mouth with cyanide cake.

RASPUTIN

Delicious!

FELIX

Alexandra baked them. I have always  
thought her too weak for the wife  
of a king, but she is a wonderful  
cook.

RASPUTIN

I recognize her spices.

FELIX

I'm sure you do.

Felix watches Rasputin eat and drink with a smile. Rasputin  
offers him the plate. Felix shakes his head.

FELIX (CONT'D)

I am on form of Ketogenic diet. I  
take only vodka, steak and caviar.

RASPUTIN

Pity! Where is Nicholas?

FELIX

He is coming.

Rasputin finishes off his wine and refills it to the brim.  
Felix glances at his watch, then at Rasputin, in amazement.

FELIX (CONT'D)  
 Are you feeling quite well? You  
 look a little flushed.

RASPUTIN  
 I have the constitution of an ox!

FELIX  
 Indeed.

RASPUTIN  
 But this music lowers me. Something  
 more upbeat?

Felix stands and selects a different record for the player.  
 Peeks inside the chest containing the dead cat. Still dead.  
 Felix knits his brow as he watches Rasputin gorge himself.

FELIX  
 Excuse me one moment- I will call  
 Nicholas.

Felix bows and walks towards the stairs.

INT. LIVING ROOM - FELIX'S BEACHFRONT BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Felix puts on leather gloves. Opens a box and gets out an  
 antique pistol. He crosses himself with it.

INT. ALEXANDRA AND NICHOLAS'S KITCHEN - HOME - NIGHT

Alexandra, dead-eyed, makes two teas, crushing up sleeping  
 pills and dropping a huge dose of powder in the flowered cup.

INT. STUDY - FELIX'S BEACHFRONT BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Rasputin dances drunk around the study to experimental JAZZ.  
 He opens the antique box and spots the cat. He does not  
 realize it is dead. He slings it on his shoulder, strokes it.

MEOW! The cat revives and squirms on Rasputin's shoulder.

As Felix's SS boots STOMP down the stairs, the cat HISSES and  
 SHREIKS as it dashes past him.

FELIX  
 What sorcery is this?!

Felix looks from the cat to Rasputin and back in shock. He  
 lifts his shaking arm and levels the gun at Rasputin's chest.

FELIX (CONT'D)

Time to look at the crucifix and  
say a prayer, Rasputin.

BANG! Rasputin clutches his chest and falls to his knees.

FELIX (CONT'D)

Necromancer! You think you're a  
holy man? You're a black magic  
charlatan, a schizophrenic con  
artist, a grandiose seducer!

Felix takes the RIKERS: HAVE YOU SEEN THIS MAN missing face  
poster found in Dmitri's house from his pocket and throws it  
in Rasputin's face. Rasputin's drunk eyes fail to focus on  
his real name: KIRILL VOLKOV.

FELIX (CONT'D)

I found this in Dmitri's affairs,  
Rasputin. Or should I say, "Kirill  
Volkov". Whatever happened to you,  
you're nothing but a criminal. And  
you will die like one.

BANG! Felix shoots him again. Rasputin falls to the floor.

INT. ALEXANDRA AND NICHOLAS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alexandra hands Nicholas the man's cup without the powder.

ALEXANDRA

Please forgive me husband. I have  
not been a good wife to you. Tea?

Nicholas eyes her suspiciously. Takes her flowered mug.

NICHOLAS

Thank you, wife.

He blows on the hot tea. Alexandra watches him sip it.

INT. CLOSET - FELIX'S BEACHFRONT BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Felix takes a rolled up shower curtain, bucket, mop and  
bleach from his hall closet.

INT. STUDY - FELIX'S BEACHFRONT BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Felix lays out the plastic next to Rasputin's immobile body.  
Suddenly, Rasputin leaps up to his full height, eyes wild. He  
attacks Felix in a fury of PUMMELLING fists.

RASPUTIN

It is a baptism of blood you seek?  
I will give it to you!

Felix YELLS. Rasputin's hands reach for his throat.

RASPUTIN (CONT'D)

Small men know no power but murder  
to transcend-

CHOKING, Felix pulls desperately at Rasputin's hands. His leather gloves move up, attempting to gouge Rasputin's eyes.

RASPUTIN (CONT'D)

Weak men think that annihilation is  
God. That God annihilates!

Rasputin's thumbs press into the hollow of Felix's throat.

RASPUTIN (CONT'D)

And so, Felix, I am to be your God.  
Your fearsome and final judgement!

Felix knees Rasputin in the gut where he was shot. Rasputin releases his neck. Felix rolls to the side and grabs a fire poker. He WHACKS Rasputin on the head with it.

Rasputin collapses. Felix runs up the stairs, COUGHING.

Rasputin, bloody and unhinged, drags himself up the stairway after him--

ENTRANCEWAY

Rasputin's bloody handprints mark the hall wall towards the front door, which hangs ajar. In the distance, Rasputin stumbles across the road to the boardwalk and the beach.

INT. ALEXANDRA AND NICHOLAS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alexandra softly prods Nicholas's face. Out cold. Her hands shake violently as she takes Nicholas's iPhone from his jean pocket and presses his thumb against the button to unlock it.

She scrolls through his files hurriedly: invoices in code, secret floor plans, a map to the underground safehouse...

She WEEPS with fear as she sends herself the information.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

In the moonlight, Rasputin falls into the sand and tide. Felix, holding a Kalashnikov in the air, charges behind him.

Rasputin spreads his arms like a cross as he prepares to dive in the water-

BANG! BANG!

Felix shoots Rasputin. He collapses in the dark ocean. Felix STOMPS towards him, lifting Rasputin's head, eye to eye. Shakes him.

FELIX

You are no God. You bleed, you choke, you drown!

Felix submerges Rasputin's THRASHING head in the water. Rasputin's eyes stare out at him.

FELIX (CONT'D)

Don't look at me! I will see those demon lights go out. And you. Will. Die!

Rasputin's hands clutch at Felix's arms.

EXT. UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Rasputin's drowning head GASPS underwater, CHOKING.

RASPUTIN (V.O.)

Drowning in muddy waters amongst the decaying flesh of fish... the end is like the beginning. Strange magic of oblivion! My liberation is at hand...

(beat)

Alexandra.

Rasputin's struggle ends, his face peaceful as in sleep. In the distance, the SOUND OF CHURCH BELLS ring in three A.M.

INT. ALEXANDRA AND NICHOLAS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alexandra looks up, unsettled, as she hears the DING! DONG! DING! DONG! of distant church bells. Beside her, Nicholas MOANS and stirs.

Panicking, Alexandra deletes email evidence of her tampering and hides his phone back in his jean pocket.

EXT. BEACH - CONEY ISLAND - BROOKLYN - NIGHT

Felix PANTS as Rasputin's body stills beneath his hands.

FELIX

Who is your God now, Rasputin?

Felix flips Rasputin to face him and drags him down the beach towards the Luna Amusement Park.

FELIX (CONT'D)

Your final indignation will be to suffer an amputation, the mark of the Odessa. Neither judgement nor retribution will fall upon my head!

Felix takes the hunting knife from his knee-high boots and rips down Rasputin's trousers.

EXT. BEACH - CONEY ISLAND - BROOKLYN - DAY

Seagulls SQUACK and pluck at Rasputin's eyes, his white corpse half-submerged in the water, arms akimbo, Jesus tattoo visible through the transparent white of his shirt.

A CHILD runs towards the shore with a pail. Sees the body. He SCREAMS. And SCREAMS.

EXT. BOARDWALK - CONEY ISLAND - DAY

A billboard above the boardwalk is emblazoned with the John Webster quote: "WHETHER WE FALL BY AMBITION, BLOOD OR LUST, LIKE DIAMONDS WE ARE CUT WITH OUR OWN DUST."

ANGELO (V.O.)

Thank you for joining me here today to remember Rasputin. I'll do my best not to cry or swear...

MOURNING MONTAGE: Detective Johnson closes Rasputin's eyes as the beach is cordoned off as a crime scene; Policeman tells a crying Svetlana in the police station; Barflies, Misfits and Tourists hold each other; Romany Guitar Players tell Angelo in Rasputin's room. He smashes the furniture up and cries.

ANGELO (V.O.)

Though Lord knows Rasputin would encourage both crying and swearing. Some may remember him as a wandering mystic, seductive in his vitality.

(MORE)

ANGELO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Others knew him as a zany  
dipsomaniac, the rhapsodic barfly  
in this very bar! Still more will  
remember him as an earthy whore-

MOURNING MONTAGE: Nicholas locks a sobbing Alexandra in her closet to prevent her from leaving. She falls asleep crying on a pile of her fur coats. Outside of the Dive Bar, flowers festoon the street from the mourning RUSSIAN COMMUNITY.

INT. DIVE BAR - CONEY ISLAND - DAY

Angelo, all in black, wheels back and forth on the elevated ramp in the bar, preaching a eulogy to the mourning crowd of Barflies, Misfits, and the Russian Community.

ANGELO

But always, we will remember him as our dear friend. A simple man, a compassionate man, Rasputin never met a fork he liked. Some may say his crudeness, his *gaucherie* was an affectation. I saw him eat in private often enough to know that his table manners were simply revolting.

The community LAUGH fondly and hold each other.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

And yet, what charm! I am not ashamed to admit that I was jealous at times of his wildness, of his charisma. Rasputin knew how to cast a spell on people. But it was not an external bewitchment that moved us, it was an internal remembering. Rasputin stirred memories of our own lost quests. He captured our forgotten passions, in a call to adventure! How Rasputin beguiled us, was with the sense of our own possibility.

(beat)

So. Here's to Rasputin. And here's to you-

Angelo raises his glass as the community raise theirs also, crying as they toast.

EXT. NEW ODESSA SAFEHOUSE - DAY

Vasyl and ODESSA GUARD THREE, 20, pat down Nicholas and Bratva One and Two outside the Odessa safehouse, the treasure trunk at their feet.

Vasyl opens it: money, guns and jewels, including the pearl necklace Nicholas gave to Alexandra, wink up at him.

NICHOLAS

A peace offering. May our truce be mutually prosperous and usher in a new era of abundance.

Vasyl nods at Nicholas's guards.

VASYL

They must wait outside. There has been too much bloodshed, Nicholas. You want a truce? You must show you trust us enough to talk man to man, in the heart of our own safehouse.

Nicholas nods at Bratva One and Two to wait.

INT. DIVE BAR - CONEY ISLAND - DAY

Angelo's eulogy turns into a passionate call to arms. He rises in his wheelchair, the crowd on tenterhooks.

ANGELO

Mark my words, they will say Rasputin's power of bedazzlement and influence was "dangerous"- but what was his message? His only message was to free ourselves. To step into our own Godhood! Not to cower and suffer and pray for a respite to the violence and chaos that plagues this community. To be granted peace only through our own conquest! Because that is what Nicholas offers us. Not peace. Not freedom! Not individual liberty, opportunity, value and power. Nicholas offers us nothing but a steel-toed boot on the neck of every man, woman and child!

Angelo shakes his fist in the air as the crowd ROARS, spoiling for a fight.

INT. APARTMENT DOOR - BUILDING - CONEY ISLAND - DAY

Felix and his guards BRATVA THREE and BRATVA FOUR wait in balaclavas outside the same apartment Dmitri swung into.

Felix places an explosive device on the lock. Runs back. Presses a button.

BOOM! The door explodes.

PRE-LAP: (ANGELO V-O over SILENT Felix/Odessa showdown, ending in Old Ukrainian Woman's bedroom.)

ANGELO (V.O.)

We do not need messiahs or gangsters, priests or kings when we take ownership over our own destinies! We can unshackle ourselves from bondage. If the world does not see our value, we must make them. In the only terms they understand! If the world will not grant us liberty, we must take it. In the only way they understand! If the world will not grant us justice, we must deliver upon them our own judgement, in the only manner they will understand...

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - BUILDING - CONEY ISLAND - DAY

A shocked Kuzma scrambles for his gun as the same Old Ukrainian Woman who admired Anastasia at the puppet show hides behind a couch, SCREAMING.

Felix rips the end of a grenade out with his teeth and throws it into the room.

BOOM!

Kuzma's limbs paint the walls.

KITCHEN

Bratva Three and Bratva Four run into the kitchen, where Igor hides behind the fridge with a shotgun.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Igor shoots wildly, killing Bratva Four.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Bratva Three shoots a microwave off the top of the fridge. It topples onto Igor's head. He strides forwards and stuffs his gun into a stunned Igor's mouth.

BANG!

Igor's brains splatter the walls.

BEDROOM

Felix runs into the bedroom with his gun, where Old Ukrainian Woman has crawled under the bed, *WEEPING* hysterically. He kneels and holds his gun to her temple.

FELIX

I let you live, to tell what  
remains of your people that the  
Bratva control Little Odessa. The  
war is over. We have won!

A grenade rolls unnoticed from his pocket, under the bed.

FELIX (CONT'D)

Do you hear me? Do you understand?

OLD UKRAINIAN WOMAN

*Da! Da!*

She eyes the grenade.

INT. NEW ODESSA SAFEHOUSE - DAY

ODESSA GUARD THREE and ODESSA GUARD FOUR, the treasure chest held between them, lead Nicholas to a room where Vasyl sits at the top of a long wooden table.

They lay the treasure chest at his feet. Vasyl opens it, lifting fine jewelry in the air and letting it tumble out of his fingers.

VASYL

You call yourself the Russian  
Brotherhood, but it is you,  
Nicholas, who holds all the power.

Vasyl gestures to his empty table.

VASYL (CONT'D)

This table seated fifteen of our  
Odessa. Only a handful remain.

NICHOLAS

The Odessa are as proud and ferocious a brotherhood as the Bratva. It is because I have the utmost respect for you that I hope this savage war may end.

VASYL

Little Odessa is as full of strong Ukrainians as it is Russians. You think they will stand by in silence after their fathers and brothers have been destroyed?

NICHOLAS

If you tell them, Vasyl, it is what Boryslav and your fallen countrymen would have wanted, yes I do.

Vasyl stands to his full height, Odessa Guard Three and Four standing at attention behind him.

VASYL

You could lay one thousand chests of guns and gold at my feet. I would kill my own men and myself before I would agree to a truce with you! Say your prayers, Nicholas. For it will take you weeks to die.

(to Odessa Guard Three)

Take him to the cellar.

Odessa Guard Three lunges. Nicholas dives under the table.

TABLE

Nicholas gets a Chinese throwing knife from the heel of his boot and throws it into Odessa Guard Three's eye.

Odessa Guard Three SCREAMS and rolls on the floor as Nicholas makes a run for it through the door.

PRE-LAP: (ANGELO V-O over the silent Odessa/Bratva showdown, ending after the Odessa safehouse explosion.)

ANGELO (V.O.)

I call upon you to rise UP in Final Judgement, on OUR Day of Reckoning, for the suffering, the weak, the powerless, the ignored. This is not only a call to arms. It is a call to your own Godhood!

(MORE)

## ANGELO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

We do not accept the self-annihilation of false prophets. We do not accept subjugation from self-declared kings! We will not eat the opium of propaganda and platitudes that tell us that it is our honor to be born here, to suffer, to die, without hope, without opportunity, without value, without power! For that is all Nicholas's so-called "protection" offers us. The acceptance of our own powerlessness at the very moment we must SEIZE our power!

## HALLWAY FLOOR

Odessa Guard Four TACKLES Nicholas to the ground. They wrestle for control, a knife inches from Nicholas's throat, then his mouth, then his eye--

## FRONT DOOR

Bratva One and Two burst through the door, opening the seams of their jackets to reveal Chinese throwing stars.

The throwing stars WHISTLE through the air towards Odessa Guard Four, who gets a face-full from throat to skull. Nicholas pushes the corpse shooting blood off of him.

Bratva Two sees an emergency fire AXE on the wall. He PUNCHES the glass to free it. He tomahawks Vasyl in the stomach.

Vasyl ROARS as he opens a closet and arms himself with a machine gun, running at them with the axe still in his belly--

Nicholas races through the front door, the Bratva SLAMMING it behind them--

BANGBANGBANGBANGBANG!

Bullets WHISTLE through the door above their ducked heads.

## STREET

Nicholas and his guards RACE down the street. Nicholas gets what looks like a Zippo out of his pocket. Flips it open. Presses a switch.

KABOOM!

The Odessa Safehouse EXPLODES behind Nicholas in silhouette.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONEY ISLAND - DAY

Felix and his men RACE out of the building before the entire thing EXPLODES in a controlled demolition. Felix watches from across the street. He calls Nicholas.

FELIX

It is done, brother.

NICHOLAS (O.S.)

(through phone)

It is done.

Felix smiles at the wreckage.

EXT. ALEXANDRA AND NICHOLAS'S HOME - NIGHT

Old Ukrainian Woman stands across the street from Nicholas and Alexandra's brownstone, holding the grenade in one hand and a stuffed toy panda with a stomach pull in the other.

She opens the toy and places the grenade inside. Adds a little bow. Places it on the welcome mat.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - ALEXANDRA AND NICHOLAS'S HOME - DAY

Alexei leads Anastasia out the door to go to school. She spots the panda present. Drops her old one on the floor.

Alexei walks down a step ahead of her.

ALEXEI

Come on, Anastasia! We're late for school.

Anastasia picks up the toy panda. Places her finger in the stomach loop.

INT. ALEXANDRA AND NICHOLAS'S BEDROOM - DAY

Alexandra and Nicholas argue in their bedroom.

KABOOM! An explosion reverberates through the house. Alexandra and Nicholas stare at each other in terror.

They race for the door.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - ALEXANDRA AND NICHOLAS'S HOME - DAY

Alexandra SCREAMS hysterically as they take in the rubble and wreckage that has murdered their daughter and her brother.

ALEXANDRA  
YOU DID THIS! YOU DID THIS! YOU  
KILLED THEM! YOU KILLED OUR BABY!  
YOU KILLED OUR BABY!

Alexandra BEATS a silently crying Nicholas over and over on the chest before crumpling on the floor, WEEPING. Nicholas picks her up like a child and carries her inside.

INT. ALEXANDRA AND NICHOLAS'S BEDROOM - DAY

Alexandra lies in darkness on the bed, catatonic. Nicholas opens the door.

NICHOLAS  
Alexandra, words cannot...

LONG SILENCE.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)  
I am grieving, too.

ALEXANDRA  
Get out. Get out!

Nicholas closes the door.

INT. SAINT NICHOLAS RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL - NYC - DAY

FUNERAL MONTAGE: A lavish funeral in the beautiful church, Alexei and Anastasia's portraits watching the MOURNERS. Burial in the Russian Orthodox cemetery. As Nicholas begins his eulogy, Alexandra runs away and jumps in a taxi.

INT. BASEMENT - ALEXANDRA AND NICHOLAS'S HOME - DAY

Alexandra looks at a stolen document saved on her phone as she presses the code to a panic room in her basement. The door swings open to reveal an emergency cache of passports, cash, guns, ammo, machetes and explosives.

She lifts a bazooka and smiles humorlessly, before stuffing all of it into a suitcase and duffle bag.

INT. DIVE BAR - CONEY ISLAND - DAY

Alexandra in mourning clothes walks like a reanimated corpse into the bar, dragging the suitcase and duffle behind her. She finds Angelo drinking. Sits next to him.

ALEXANDRA

I am going to kill Nicholas and  
destroy the Bratva. Will you help  
me?

(to Barmaid)

A double whiskey on the rocks.

Angelo looks into the bottom of his beer, remembering.

ANGELO

There are things in life you don't  
want to know you can do, Alexandra.  
And there isn't any going back.

Barmaid sets her whiskey down. Alexandra tosses it back, unzipping the duffle bag to reveal her bounty of weapons.

ALEXANDRA

Teach me.

Angelo spies the Bazooka and grins.

INT. ALEXANDRA AND NICHOLAS'S KITCHEN - HOME - DAY

Nicholas watches uncertainly as Alexandra bakes cakes.

ALEXANDRA

It is the Brighton Jubilee  
tomorrow.

NICHOLAS

...You plan to attend?

ALEXANDRA

I am the leader of the Russian  
Women's Institute. I am in charge  
of the cake stand.

NICHOLAS

No one expects you to-

ALEXANDRA

We will go, husband. We will show  
the people that we are strong. That  
we are united. That everything is  
well. You will put on your finest  
suit and reassure the people.

(MORE)

ALEXANDRA (CONT'D)

Because they are very scared, and they look to us for leadership.

Nicholas kisses Alexandra's forehead.

NICHOLAS

What have I done to deserve you?

ALEXANDRA

God blesses you, husband.

Alexandra smiles as she takes a large knife to CHOP spices.

EXT. RUSSIAN FETE - BRIGHTON BEACH - DAY

Stalls selling Russian food, drink, souvenirs and dolls line the streets, a bevy of Russian flags flying above them.

The Romany Guitar Players PLAY a Russian Gypsy tune. Angelo sits next to them, a large blanket over his wheelchair, collection hat at his feet.

Alexandra in mourning dress mans a cake stall. She watches Nicholas and Felix, both in fine suits, smiling and walking down the fete greeting the Russian Community. She opens her phone and sends an email.

INT. POLICE STATION - CONEY ISLAND - DAY

Detective Johnson opens an anonymous email with a MAP of the Bratva safehouse where the money, guns and girls are held.

EXT. RUSSIAN FETE - BRIGHTON BEACH - DAY

As Nicholas and Felix walk past Angelo, he whips off his blanket and raises the Bazooka, a machete at his hip.

FELIX

*Ty che, blyad?* (What the fuck?)

ANGELO

"And I will repay you for the years eaten by locusts!"

Nicholas and Felix's hands automatically go to their hips, but for the first time, they are unarmed.

Angelo aims the weapon back and forth between their heads, quoting Joel 2:25.

ANGELO (CONT'D)

"The swarming locust, the young locust, the destroying locust, and the devouring locust- My great army that I sent against you!"

Felix makes a run for it, but Old Ukrainian Woman behind a stall raises her son's shotgun and aims it at his chest.

Nicholas looks around, finding that he is surrounded by his own community, pulling his stolen weapons upon him. Nicholas stares at his wife in disbelief.

NICHOLAS

...Alexandra?

ALEXANDRA

Yes, husband.

Alexandra pulls out an AK-47 from under her cake stand and aims it at his heart.

INT. BRATVA SAFEHOUSE - DAY

Detective Johnson and SWAT TEAM break down the door to the Bratva safehouse. Bratva One and Two storm out, guns blazing.

BANGBANGBANGBANGBANG!!

Bratva One and Two are shot dead by SWAT officers.

Detective Johnson runs to rescue Natasha, Ekaterina and the rest of the GIRLS.

BANG! BANG! Bratva Three shoots Detective Johnson in the chest.

Natasha, Ekaterina and the Girls SCREAM and leap upon him, wresting the gun from his grasp and ripping apart his flesh, his body, his face, like a pack of ravenous hyenas.

Detective Johnson COUGHS as she comes to. She INHALES as she sits up, adjusting her bullet-proof vest. She watches the women rip Bratva Three limb from limb.

Detective Johnson steps out, closing the door behind her.

EXT. RUSSIAN FETE - BRIGHTON BEACH - DAY

Angelo wheels himself closer to Felix, backing him into a stand of Matroyshka dolls. They tumble to the floor, their many layers cracking open and rolling on the ground.

BOOM! Angelo shoots Felix's left leg off. Felix SCREAMS.

ANGELO  
Was it worth it?

BOOM! The right. Felix crumples to the floor in agony.

ANGELO (CONT'D)  
The death of Rasputin?

Felix SPITS on the floor.

FELIX  
I would do it all again-

BOOM! Angelo blows away his left elbow. Felix SCREAMS.

ANGELO  
You know no regret because you know  
no humanity- you are unfit to rule-

BOOM! Angelo blasts off Felix's right arm at the socket. It scatters across the floor, to land near Nicholas's feet.

Felix SCREAMS as Angelo impales his stomach with the machete.

ANGELO (CONT'D)  
"I saw the angel in the marble and  
carved until I set him free-!"

Angelo carves the blood crucifix deep through Felix's chest.

#### UNDER THE RUSSIAN FLAGS

Alexandra corners Nicholas under a tumultuous flurry of Russian flags blurring together in a gust of wind. Nicholas stumbles backwards, hands raised placatingly.

NICHOLAS  
Alexandra! Wife. I know you better  
than any man has ever known you!  
You aren't capable of this. Stop.  
For our daughter, I will forgive  
you- things can be even, between us-

Alexandra levels the assault rifle at his forehead, then his throat, then his chest, and back again.

ALEXANDRA  
Thank you for teaching me about  
power, Nicholas. Without you, I  
would never have understood that it  
isn't something that is given.

BANG! Alexandra shoots him through the heart.

ALEXANDRA (CONT'D)  
It is something you have to take.

Alexandra steps closer.

BANGBANGBANGBANGBANG!

She shoots and shoots, Nicholas's chest dancing in the air, splattering her pale face with blood, until the automatic rifle runs out of bullets.

ALEXANDRA (CONT'D)  
Now we are even. One day I may  
learn to forgive you, husband.

Alexandra wipes her prints off the gun and places it in one of Felix's blown-off, scattered hands.

SIRENS.

The Russian Community arrange the bodies and weapons so it looks as if Felix and Nicholas killed each other. Detective Johnson arrives. Old Ukrainian Woman steps forward.

OLD UKRAINIAN WOMAN  
Oh, Detective! What a travesty  
today! Brighton Beach is beset by  
hardship. Our dear leader Nicholas,  
family man and pillar of community,  
a by-the-bootstraps American  
success story of drug stores and  
laundromats, was murdered by his  
own right hand man.

Detective Johnson looks from Nicholas's brutalized chest to Felix's massacred body with a twisted smile.

OLD UKRAINIAN WOMAN (CONT'D)  
There was another Bratva who killed  
Felix in revenge, but he ran far,  
far away and drowned in the sea.  
What tragedy! At least it is over  
now for us all- the war-

Detective Johnson clasps Old Ukrainian Woman's shoulder.

DETECTIVE JOHNSON  
Yes. The war is over now.

Another POLICE VAN arrives with Svetlana, lead by OFFICER. She walks towards the corpses. She lifts up Nicholas's eyelids. Shakes her head 'no'.

She approaches Felix's corpse, his bright eyes staring open at the sky. She shudders.

SVETLANA

(in subtitled Russian)

Him! It is him. I still see his eyes in my dreams...

Svetlana breaks down. Officer covers her with a blanket. POLICEMEN swarm the crime scene and cordon it off with tape.

Alexandra walks to Angelo and wheels him towards the beach.

BOARDWALK BENCH

Alexandra stops next to a bench, where she sits. They watch the tide lapping in and out. Angelo gets out a packet of cigarettes. Lights one. COUGHS.

Alexandra looks at him like, 'Do you smoke?' Angelo shrugs like, 'No.' Alexandra shrugs and takes a cigarette, too. Lights it. COUGHS.

ANGELO

What now?

ALEXANDRA

We have inherited a living death.  
We do what people have always done.  
We move forward. We rebuild. We...  
resurrect.

ANGELO

Nothing will ever be the same.

ALEXANDRA

Good.

Alexandra takes Angelo's hand. The same RED PEONY Alexandra placed on Rasputin's honey cake blows in the breeze along the beach to settle in the sand at her feet.

She picks the flower up and smells it. Smiles.

ALEXANDRA (CONT'D)

Nothing is ever lost.

Dirty, bloody, world-weary, Alexandra and Angelo look ahead and watch the sun set over Coney Island.

FIN.