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by  
(Name of First Writer)

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Revisions by  
(Names of Subsequent Writers,  
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Name (of company, if applicable)  
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EASTERN PROMISES II

(working title)

By Steven Knight

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## EXT. HARBOR MASTER'S OFFICE - CYPRUS

A small, 1960's Harbor Master's office bakes in the noon-day sun. In the near distance we see industrial docks where a single rusted cargo ship is moored. The docks are protected by a high chain link fence. Outside the office a Greek flag droops. A dog of many breeds pants in the shade. The ground, the fence and the windows of the office have a thin dusting of cement.

*Caption: Vasili cement docks, Cyprus*

Through the buzzing of flies...we hear the regular tinkle of a tiny bell...

## INT. HARBOR MASTER'S OFFICE - CYPRUS

Inside the office we find NIKOLAI, sitting with his feet up on a desk. He is spinning a small silver bell on a silver chain around his hand like worry beads. The bell tinkles as it hits his tattooed hand.

On the other side of the desk there is a Greek Cypriot HARBOR MASTER in a white and crimson uniform. He is wiry and has a thin moustache. His shirt is soaked in sweat. He looks nervous.

We follow the Harbor Master's anxious glance and find a 9mm automatic pistol on the desk. It is not pointed at the Harbor Master but we quickly sense that it is the authority in the room and it belongs to Nikolai.

Nikolai stares past the Harbor Master, across the harbor to the single cargo ship. Nikolai is waiting for something. Silence apart from the tinkling bell and the flies.

Finally the Harbor Master nervously tries to make conversation.

CLERK

This is without question the most exciting thing that has ever happened to me.

Nikolai doesn't react. Flies buzz, the bell tinkles. Then the clerk's phone rings. The Harbor Master goes for it from instinct but Nikolai picks it up. He listens for a moment then puts it down.

Suddenly...

## EXT. MALTESE DOCKS

With a crash, a huge truck loaded with sand reverses into the chain link gates between the harbor office and the cargo ship. The gates and fence are topped with barbed wire. The gates fly open. The truck reverses until the barbed wire snaps...

Beside the gate there is a guard house with two uniformed security guards inside. They race out of the guard house as the truck bursts through.

We find that the driver of the truck is Nikolai, who now has a cigarette dangling from his mouth as he reverses fast into the dock area and spins the wheel of the truck to turn it to face toward the cargo ship.

As he shifts gear, one of the security guards races up to the truck and yells...

GUARD 1

Hey!

Nikolai hears the voice. We might expect confrontation or gunfire. Instead Nikolai takes a weary breath as he slams the truck into neutral. The guard stands in the settling dust beside the truck and removes his cap. Nikolai jumps down from the cab leaving the truck door open and the engine idling. The guard closes his eyes tight and offers his face.

Nikolai whacks the guard around the face and he falls into the cement dust. As he staggers to his feet he grunts in pain and holds his jaw.

GUARD 1 (CONT'D)

Thank you.

The second guard approaches and offers his face. Nikolai steps on his cigarette before punching the guard. He falls to the floor. The first guard is bleeding heavily and taking care to make sure the blood falls onto his white shirt. He takes Nikolai's arm...

GUARD 1 (CONT'D)

It would also look better if you tie us up.

Nikolai ignores him and gets back into the cab. The engine growls as he drives at speed towards the huge cargo ship. As he drives, he tips the load of sand out so that it spills as he drives.

## INT. CARGO SHIP

In an odd rectangle of light we see Nikolai's truck approaching, framed by dusty darkness. We realize we are inside the hold of the cargo ship looking out at the bright daylight. The truck drives fast to the dock area beside the rectangular hole and skids to a halt in a cloud of dust.

## INT. WOODEN CRATE. INSIDE THE HOLD OF THE SHIP

The shot is a confusing tangle of arms, legs and heads in strips of daylight. We may not know what we are looking at and see eyes blinking, fists clenching, voices praying. Then we hear wood creaking and cracking. The front of the crate is prized off in splinters with an iron bar and suddenly daylight floods in.

We find twenty young Chinese men all crammed together inside the crate, blinking in the daylight, coughing on the cement dust which fills the shafts of sunlight.

They emerge into the dark hold of the cargo ship which is quilted with bags of cement. Some of the bags have split and the white dust is everywhere.

As the Chinese men blink in the half light they see Nikolai holding the iron bar which freed them. Beside him are a MALTESE SHIP'S CAPTAIN and two FILIPINO CREW MEMBERS. One of the Chinese men from the crate speaks hoarsely to Nikolai, coughing on the dust.

REFUGEE

This England, yes?

NIKOLAI

Yes, it's England. Run.

The refugees begin to help each other toward the light, stepping through the cement dust on the floor of the hold as if it were snow. Their legs are paralyzed or stiff but they haul each other toward their questionable freedom. Nikolai turns to the Maltese Captain with a question in his eyes.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

Also.

## EXT. CEMENT DOCKS. BESIDE THE CARGO SHIP

A black Mercedes is already parked beside Nikolai's truck. A second and third car are approaching at speed through the broken security gates.

As the first of the two cars parks beside the truck, two heavy looking Russian men emerge from the first car. The third car parks. Doors open on all the cars and Russian men dressed in light-weight suits emerge from the cars and greet each other silently.

INT. HOLD

The Maltese Captain is leading Nikolai toward a huge stack of cement sacks near to the giant door of the hold. A fork lift truck is chained in position near to the sacks.

The Maltese Captain's voice trembles a little as he gestures at a particular section of cement sacks which each have a small stencil painting of a swallow on them.

MALTESE CAPTAIN

These are the ones that must fly immediately.

There are five hundred marked sacks stacked against the wall, each two hundred pounds in weight.

Nikolai takes a small knife from his pocket and flicks open the blade. The silver bell on his wrist tinkles. He cuts a corner off the nearest sack and lets a white powder dribble into his palm. He compresses it with his tattooed thumb.

We see Nikolai's thumb-print etched in the powder, which we guess is cocaine.

EXT. DOCKS

The three smart black cars are being joined by a battered van which pulls up in a cloud of dust. It parks and four Turkish men get out of the van and greet the well dressed Russians with suspicious nods of the head.

This is a rendezvous filled with mutual fear and distrust.

At that moment Nikolai emerges from the darkness of the hold. He has a heavy sack on his shoulder as he walks the gang plank. The steel plank buckles a little under the weight.

The Russians and the Turks step close and form a semi-circle. Nikolai drops the sack onto the ground and it kicks up a cloud of dust. We see the mark of the swallow. Nikolai wipes his brow and speaks in Russian.

NIKOLAI

(The stuff is good.)

TURKISH LEADER

In English.

Nikolai lights a cigarette as he speaks tersely.

NIKOLAI

We agreed an equal division.

The Russians and the Turks glance at each other. Nikolai engages his pistol.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

You check the quality. I'll go  
kill the Captain.

Nikolai walks back into the hold of the ship with his gun held behind his back.

INT. HOLD

The Ship Captain is waiting anxiously inside. Nikolai returns with his cigarette dangling.

CAPTAIN

Hey, no smoking, you blow the  
fucking dust up.

Nikolai walks toward the Captain with purpose. The Captain gets scared...

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

You have my money?

Nikolai pulls his gun, grabs the Captain by the scruff of the neck. He puts the gun to the Captain's head. We fear the worst. But Nikolai begins to march the Captain toward the iron steps that lead up to the main deck. The two Filipino crew step aside to let Nikolai through.

EXT. DECK OF THE CARGO SHIP

Nikolai and the Captain emerge into blinding daylight onto the vast, ugly deck of the cargo ship, out of sight of the dock. The Captain is whimpering...

CAPTAIN

Please, please, please. Let me  
show you a picture of my two  
girls...

The Captain fumbles in his pockets. Nikolai reaches into the Captain's shirt pocket and produces a set of keys. He shoves the Captain against the rusted metal wall of a pump house and uses a key to unlock the door.

He shoves the Captain inside the dark, sweaty pump house and shuts the door. He locks it, drops his cigarette then aims his gun in the air and fires once.

He then marches toward the side of the ship which faces out to the far side of the harbor, unbuttoning his shirt as he walks. He reaches the guard rail and kicks off his shoes and takes off his pants.

EXT. SIDE OF THE CARGO SHIP

There is an iron staircase which runs down the vast rusty-red side of the ship. We see Nikolai hurrying down the stairs in just his shorts. As he descends towards the ocean, we begin to hear the thud of helicopters from above.

Nikolai reaches a point ten feet above the lapping waves as the shadow of a helicopter passes.

The sound of approaching helicopters is now joined by the wail of police sirens. Nikolai dives into the ocean and disappears under the waves.

We cut close to his face as he emerges from under the waves and points his chin toward the other side of the harbor. He begins to swim. The water sparkles around his face...

*Credits begin.*

We stay with Nikolai as he swims through the sparkling blue ocean. After a while he turns to swim on his back and we see the tattoos on his body and see the star on his heart. As he swims, we hear gunshots, helicopters and police sirens coming from the docks, along with the sound of people yelling.

*We infer that a trap which Nikolai set is snapping shut.*

Slowly these noises begin to fade, to be replaced by the sound of gulls and the rhythmic sound of Nikolai's breathing.

Suddenly, with a crunch, he hits a small, litter strewn beach on the other side of the harbor. He gets to his feet and walks up the beach to where a small red suitcase is waiting. He wipes sea water from his face and sits down beside the case, allowing the sun to bathe his body with warmth.

He closes his eyes...raises his head a little and then allows himself the ghost of a smile.

*Credits end. Suddenly...*

EXT. FIELD IN TULA. A RURAL PROVINCE OUTSIDE MOSCOW

A blizzard is blowing. The rolling hills are quilted in snow. Nearby horses clear the snow with their steaming snouts to graze. The landscape is frozen and beautiful like a Christmas card. Then through the blizzard we see the headlights of a smart SUV driving on a gravel road. Even though it is daylight its headlights are on and we come close to the chains on the wheels which grind into the ice.

We follow the SUV until suddenly we reveal it is heading towards a huge, ornate *Dashca* mansion house with turrets and spires. The snow has been cleared around the house but the eaves are heavy with snow and the house looks like some kind of fairytale castle.

The SUV parks. Nikolai gets out. He has a heavy Stetson cap on his head and a black briefcase in his hand. He sets off toward the front door of the house.

INT. DASHCA

Blinding snow light penetrates the gloom in shafts. We are inside the expensively furnished hallway and reception area decorated with oil paintings but with a 1950's American jukebox lit up near to the door. The door is knocked.

A doorman approaches the double doors and opens them to let in a flood of snow light. Nikolai stands as a silhouette in the doorway.

NIKOLAI

I am here to see Minister  
Krogius. He is expecting me.

The doorman doesn't move or show any recognition. Nikolai hides his irritation that he must prove himself and produces a set of papers from an inside pocket which he hands to the doorman. The doorman studies them for longer than is polite then sniffs...

DOORMAN

He is out riding with his  
children. Please...wait in the  
study.

Nikolai is a little surprised at his cool reception. The only way he shows his emotion is by kicking his snowy shoes hard against the wall before stepping inside.

## INT. DASCHA STUDY

A big log fire burns beneath an oil portrait of Vladimir Putin (this is the only time we will see Putin's face or even reference him).

There is a bowl of fruit on the table and Nikolai has been kept waiting so long he has begun to make a sketch of the fruit bowl on a scrap of paper. We glimpse the sketch and see it is good.

The clock chimes a quarter hour. Nikolai stops drawing and glances up at the clock. We sense that his long wait is beginning to make him suspicious.

Behind Nikolai there is a leaded window which looks out onto the snowy grounds. After a moment a horse carriage pulls up at the window. Without turning Nikolai responds to the sound of harness and hooves and screws up his sketch. Through the leaded window we see a middle aged man (KROGIUS) lifting his two children out of the carriage.

We hear the kids laughing and Krogius talking to them through the window...

KROGIUS

My dear girl, horses pooh when  
they run, that's what horses do.  
If we could do it, we would do  
it!

Krogius and his children laugh. Then Krogius's face looms at the window as he peers in. Nikolai doesn't turn. We just catch Krogius's sour expression.

Nikolai picks up his briefcase off the floor and places it on the desk in readiness. He turns the revolving barrels on the combination lock to unlock it. A moment later Krogius enters, still wrapped in his warm, snowy clothes. He closes the door behind him and locks it.

Krogius speaks casually as he unbuttons his sheepskin.

KROGIUS (CONT'D)

The fact that you are still alive  
means that fate has been merciful  
to you.

Once again we suspect Nikolai expected a warmer greeting but he doesn't dwell. He pushes the black briefcase across the desk for Krogius to take.

NIKOLAI

My report.

Krogius considers the briefcase but makes no move to take it.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

Ten years work.

Krogius is pulling off the leather jacket he wore beneath his overcoat and busies himself dusting snow from his buttonholes...

KROGIUS

I don't need to read a report. We all know how much you have achieved. You have chopped off six of the many heads of the Medusa.

Krogius opens a drinks cabinet and grabs a bottle of vodka. He finds two shot glasses...

KROGIUS (CONT'D)

So...we must celebrate...

Nikolai watches Krogius like a hawk as he pours two large shots and slides one across the table to Nikolai before sitting down with a thump....

KROGIUS (CONT'D)

...then we must turn our attention...to the future.

Nikolai is on guard. Krogius downs his vodka in one swallow. Nikolai glances at the untouched briefcase. Krogius speaks in a businesslike way...

KROGIUS (CONT'D)

You were promised promotion...

NIKOLAI (INTERRUPTING)

I was promised I could return home.

Krogius continues as if he didn't hear.

KROGIUS

So. I give you promotion. Drink up... *Commander*...

Nikolai stares blankly at Krogius who chuckles.

KROGIUS (CONT'D)

Please don't waste your dark looks on me. We are all tools. The hammer does not complain when you select it twice...

Nikolai begins to react but Krogius continues breezily...

KROGIUS (CONT'D)

They want you to go back.

Nikolai is turned to stone for a moment. Krogius studies him and shrugs. Nikolai finally swallows down his vodka.

NIKOLAI

I can not go back.

KROGIUS

You will go back to London.

Nikolai reacts to the name of the City as if it were a secret stab in the heart.

Krogius opens a drawer in the table beside where he is sitting. He takes out a portrait photo of a man in his late forties. (We will learn that this is TIGRAN DUBINSKY).

Nikolai stares at the photo with disbelief at first, even though his face barely flickers. He then stares up at Krogius. Krogius is apparently aware of the enormity of what he has put on the table.

KROGIUS (CONT'D)

They play games with us. To test our loyalty...

Nikolai interrupts softly.

NIKOLAI

There is nothing left of me.

Krogius's eyes harden. He pours another two vodkas.

KROGIUS

Your son lives in Moscow. I hear that he is well...

Nikolai's eyes turn murderous.

KROGIUS (CONT'D)

Let us drink to your son's...  
continued good health.

Krogius downs his second vodka. Nikolai understands the threat to his son and stares into Krogius's eyes. Krogius speaks pointedly.

KROGIUS (CONT'D)

In ten years you have made yourself the King of the underworld.

Krogius pushes the photo forward to replace the briefcase in front of Nikolai.

KROGIUS (CONT'D)

The world must believe that this  
enemy of Russia was killed by a  
King...

A pause.

KROGIUS (CONT'D)

...not by a President.

We stay with Nikolai for a few moments. Behind him,  
through the leaded window, we see the carriage horse, freed  
from its harness, being led away to freedom.

EXT. DASCHA

Nikolai walks through a blizzard toward his car without his  
briefcase. His cap is pulled down on his head. He gets  
into his SUV which is now covered in thick snow. He closes  
the door and nothing happens for a few moments. Perhaps we  
study the snow covered car for a while. Then the engine  
fires.

The windscreen wiper wipes once. We see Nikolai's face  
inside for a moment before the snow covers it up again.

As the snow falls....

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT - MID-DAY

Wild Russian music.

Violins and accordions clash and people dressed smartly in  
black, drink and dance between lavishly set tables of meat  
which have been eaten down to the bones. Sunlight pours  
into the room in shafts between drawn curtains.

We should take a while to realize that this is a funeral  
party. The men wear black ties and the women wear sable.  
However it should be apparent quickly that the men are  
gangsters, Turkish, Russian and Serbian.

We see a caption...

*Caption: London, England, next day.*

In amongst the wild music and dancing we find Kirill. He  
swings a little girl around in his arms before depositing  
her on a table with a grin.

GIRL

Uncle Kirill, are you not sad  
that your papa is dead?

KIRILL

Your Grandpa loved to dance,  
remember? He said people should  
be like the sun. Always shining  
above the clouds.

He twirls her around again then puts her down. The music continues as Kirill strides through the mourners, the proprietor of their enjoyment. It is as if he is demanding a kind of wild happiness.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

Dance with Papa's spirit! All of  
you!

The nearest mourners obey his orders. Kirill picks up a bottle of red wine and swigs from it. As he raises the bottle he spots a huddle of Russian men sitting in a corner, deep in conversation. Kirill wipes his lips and sees three Turkish men in conversation at another table. Kirill stares darkly at the looks between the tables.

One of the Russians breaks off and heads for the Turkish group with a piece of paper folded in his hands. He gives the piece of paper to the Turks and a discussion begins.

Kirill doesn't like these machinations going on all around and without him.

He kicks over a table near to the wild violinists then gets onto a chair and whistles loudly. The music stops and the dancers twirl one last time before turning, breathless.

Silence. Kirill begins to pronounce, the bottle of red wine in his hand...

KIRILL (CONT'D)

Ok, ok, ok, I have a complaint  
about the noise.

The smiles in the crowd die away. Kirill puts his finger to his lips then whispers theatrically to the violinists...

KIRILL (CONT'D)

You...are playing too quietly.  
People can hear each other speak.  
And when people speak, it leads  
to...*business*...

Kirill spits the word 'business' in the direction of the Russian men. Kirill suddenly hurls his bottle of wine against the wall just above the heads of the Russian men. The violinists (terrified) take this as a cue and shoulder their violins and begin to play furiously. Kirill gives the Russians and the Turks a murderous stare and steps off his chair.

He walks towards the kitchen.

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT. KITCHEN

Kirill enters the kitchen and the loud music fades a little. He leans against a wall and looks around. This is the kitchen where his father cooked so many meals...where he grew up terrified of his father's voice.

He lights a cigarette from the burner on the stove. In the flame we see his hand shaking.

After a moment the door swings open and a sharply dressed Russian man in his late twenties (LEON) enters, following Kirill. He comes to stand beside Kirill and lights a cigarette from the same burner. He gestures around at the kitchen.

LEON

It feels empty now he's dead.

KIRILL (DEAD PAN)

It was empty *before* he was dead,  
he was in jail.

Leon shrugs. A ten year old boy (Leon's son, YURI) races into the kitchen...

YURI

Papa! Sasha is drinking wine!

Leon grabs his son and turns him around.

LEON

Go, go. Leave us.

Yuri turns and slumps back to the party. The kitchen door closes behind him.

LEON (CONT'D)

Kirill, I understand this is not  
the time for business...but I am  
family. Blood and water and all  
that shit.

Kirill stares ahead.

LEON (CONT'D)

People want to know if he is  
coming back.

Kirill turns to Leon with weary incredulity...

KIRILL

He's fucking dead. What, you  
think he's Jesus...

Leon sighs...

LEON  
Not your *papa*, Kirill...

A pause.

LEON (CONT'D)  
*Nikolai*.

We may glimpse that this is a question Kirill has been asking himself. There is a pause as Kirill stares up at the ceiling.

LEON (CONT'D)  
Have you even heard from him?

The door swings open again and a beautiful young Turkish woman (ILKAY) wearing a sable coat walks into the kitchen and walks by Leon and Kirill toward the back door. As Leon and Kirill continue, their eyes naturally follow the girl...

LEON (CONT'D REPEATING)  
People want to know if he is  
still your Captain.

KIRILL  
'People?'

LEON  
Cousins.

KIRILL (SOFTLY)  
He is coming back.

LEON  
You know for a fact?

At the far end of the kitchen Ilkay has opened up her purse. Kirill is staring at her as he replies to Leon...

KIRILL  
They got six but Nikolai swam  
away. He's the only one who  
smelt them coming. He's hiding  
out somewhere waiting for it to  
die down...

LEON  
He told you this?

KIRILL (LYING)  
Yeah. He told me. He's coming  
back...

Leon glances at the door...

LEON

There are wolves out there.

KIRILL

Yeah, well, you forget, I'm a wolf. I'm a fucking wolf.

Leon nods...

LEON

Yeah but without *Nikolai*...

Suddenly...

KIRILL

Hey, what the *fuck* are you doing!!

They have both been watching as Ilkay has taken something out of her purse and laid it on a kitchen surface. It only now becomes apparent she is chopping a line of cocaine and is preparing to snort it. Kirill snarls...

KIRILL (CONT'D)

Hey *bitch*!! My Dad don't allow that stuff in here!!

Ilkay continues, bending down into her line as if she didn't hear. Kirill grabs a cooking pot and hammers it on a surface...

KIRILL (CONT'D)

Hey *bitch*!! Are you deaf?!

Kirill sets off toward Ilkay. Leon grabs Kirill's arm and walks with him, speaking softly...

LEON

Kirill Sssshhh, be careful...you know who that is?

Kirill yanks his arm free...

KIRILL

I don't give a fuck who it is!!  
Hey *bitch*!!

Kirill has arrived to confront Ilkay, who finally turns and straightens. She has cocaine dusted on her sable collar. She looks placid and amused and speaks in Turkish.

ILKAY

(Did you say something to me?)

Her beauty and her confidence causes Kirill to hesitate and Leon whispers quickly.

LEON

Her father is Tashkar.

Kirill hears the name and reacts with a sober blink. Leon speaks on his behalf to Ilkay in Turkish...

LEON (CONT'D)

(No, he didn't say anything).

Ilkay sniffs at Kirill's retreat then makes stately progress back toward the door leading to the party. After she has gone, Leon wipes his brow.

LEON (CONT'D)

You know I remember when she was a sweet little refugee with a plastic rose in her hair...

Kirill grabs a damp cloth and begins to feverishly wipe away the dusting of cocaine that Ilkay left on the steel surface. As he wipes....

KIRILL

Already they are fucking testing me...

He wipes some more, digging the cloth into the steel...

KIRILL (CONT'D)

They know my Dad don't allow this shit in his house so they send their kids into *my Dad's* kitchen...!

Kirill hurls the cloth in the direction Ilkay left. Leon looks at Kirill with concern.

LEON

No one sent her. She's just a bitch....

KIRILL

Tashkar is testing me...

LEON

Tashkar is in Istanbul. That girl runs around London and drives her Dad crazy.

KIRILL

You think that wasn't on purpose?

LEON

Her dad is Galtasaray so she sleeps with the goalkeeper from Fenerabache, you know? That kind of daughter.

(MORE)

LEON(cont'd)

Don't imagine things when there  
are real things that are worse.

A pause. Kirill is getting his breath. Leon studies Kirill. Kirill has the look of a hunted animal and appears to be breaking up. Leon puts a hand on his shoulder.

LEON (CONT'D)

I can tell the cousins Nikolai is  
coming back, right?

Kirill doesn't answer. Leon waits a moment then turns and walks. Kirill is left alone, his anger mounting. After a moment he straightens his black tie and heads for the door.

He kicks open the kitchen door and stands in the doorway, surveying the wild party and the dancing. Through the crowd he sees Ilkay, who is sipping champagne and shrieking with laughter at a story being told by a heavy looking Russian man.

As Ilkay draws on her cigarette, she sees Kirill staring at her through the crowd. Their eyes lock through the dancing and the wild music...

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT. UPSTAIRS STORE ROOM - SAME NIGHT

We survey the room and hear the music from the party from downstairs. Up here the music is muffled.

There are old and broken restaurant chairs stacked haphazardly. Boxes of children's toys are stacked beside spare menu folders, kitchen equipment, an ancient espresso machine and lots of nickel Samovar's.

There is a rocking horse near to the window where yellow street light enters through a rain spattered window.

Then Kirill stumbles inside...pulling Ilkay by the hand and urging her to follow. They are both drunk to hell and retrieved by cocaine. Kirill is swigging whisky as he closes the door and locks it. Ilkay immediately hitches up her dress and sits astride the rocking horse.

She turns to Kirill with a smile...

ILKAY

You know my Dad and everybody  
says you're a fag. Did you know  
that?

Kirill swigs his whisky and reacts inside, a small explosion. His eyes are dark already and we sense he is planning something. He forces a laugh then goes to her and kisses her hard. He pushes her hand down to his groin.

KIRILL

You feel something hard down there, huh? You feel it?

Ilkay giggles. Kirill reaches down to his groin....and pulls out a gun. Ilkay isn't fazed by guns.

ILKAY

So *that* was the hard thing.

KIRILL

Yeah my gun is my hard thing.

Kirill stares at her, blinks at her lack of fear.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

Your Dad sent you to test me, right?

Ilkay turns around and sits backwards on the rocking horse. She begins to rock...ignoring Kirill's question, not realizing the danger...

ILKAY

You used to ride on this?

Kirill stares into her.

ILKAY (CONT'D)

You have sisters?

She finally sees the madness in Kirill's eyes.

ILKAY (CONT'D)

*What?*

Kirill's anger sparks...

KIRILL

Your Dad sent you to test me. So this is how I pass the test.

He suddenly drags her off the rocking chair and slaps her hard. He stands over her.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

Tell your fucking Dad, in my house nobody breaks my fucking rules.

Ilkay has fallen against the broken chairs but instead of fear we see furious anger. She grabs a dinner plate and throws it at Kirill hard and it smashes near to his face.

ILKAY

You think I'm scared of a fag Christian?

She drags a two legged chair from the tangle of broken chairs and sweeps the air with it. Kirill steps back.

Ilkay swings the chair again and this time she connects with Kirill's head and he falls back against the rocking chair. It begins to rock furiously. Kirill's fury sparks again as she bares her teeth and goes to bite the hand that holds the gun.

They fall together in a tangle into the broken chairs. She bites him hard. The gun is fired.

A heart beat or two. Outside, horns hoot goodbye.

Kirill is breathing hard. He has to struggle to climb from under Ilkay's body. She lies lifeless and face down. Blood begins to flood from under her chest and toward Kirill's shoes. He steps back....and back...to avoid the flood.

He drops the gun. He stares at the body and whispers almost as a prayer...

KIRILL

*Nikolai...*

EXT. THE BOLSHOI BALLET ACADEMY. FRUNZENSKAYA STRASSE.  
MOSCOW - NIGHT

Through choked Moscow traffic we find Nikolai walking quickly between cars toward the steps of The Bolshoi Ballet Academy. It is a large hall and gymnasium where young ballet dancers are trained.

The building is lit up inside and as Nikolai approaches we hear the faint sound of music being played. It is the score of the old Russian ballet '*Spartacus*' and the music is '*Adagio of Spartacus and Phrygia*'.

Nikolai hurries up the steps and we see signs identifying the Bolshoi Academy in English and Russian with promotional posters of the ballet ensemble. Nikolai is wearing his Stetson cap and raincoat.

INT. THE BOLSHOI BALLET ACADEMY. RECEPTION AREA

Nikolai enters the auditorium and removes his cap reverently. All around there are posters of the Bolshoi. There is a receptionist in an overcoat, huddled by an electric fire who looks up sourly as Nikolai enters (her appearance contrasts the majesty of the building).

RECEPTIONIST

You are too late. The end of term show has begun.

Nikolai looks humble and contrite, a Nikolai we have never seen.

NIKOLAI

I know. I'm sorry. May I still go in?

RECEPTIONIST

No. You will disturb the students.

Nikolai has already taken out a battered wallet and flicked it open. We glimpse an FSB Identity card with a photograph of Nikolai looking ten years younger. In the photo he is even smiling.

The receptionist reacts to the badge with a flicker of fear and gestures at a set of double doors.

INT. THE BOLSHOI BALLET ACADEMY. GYMNASIUM/STAGE

We hear the *Spartacus* score at full volume as a young female ballerina, fourteen years old, is on her knees with hands raised. Then, a young male ballet dancer (ANTON), fifteen years old, emerges onto the stage and slowly walks across to the ballerina. The music takes them and they begin to dance together.

We are at an end of term performance at the Bolshoi school, put on for parents and friends of the students. A temporary gallery of seats has been erected in the gymnasium and around a hundred people have gathered to watch the young ballet students display their work.

A door opens and Nikolai enters discreetly. He has his cap in his hand and walks toward the side of the gallery where he stands in the shadows. He stares at Anton with wonder. The boy leaps into the air, almost lighter than air...

Nikolai watches and we sense total engagement with the boy. We might already infer that Anton is Nikolai's son. We study Nikolai's face for a few moments.

Then almost in spite of himself, Nikolai discreetly checks his watch....

EXT. THE CATHEDRAL OF CHRIST THE SAVIOUR. MOSCOW - NIGHT

The *Spartacus* music continues.

We cut to a shot of the huge cathedral with its vast golden dome which dominates the sky line. It is illuminated in yellow and blue light. We stay with the imposing building for a moment, then a black Mercedes pulls up at the foot of the stone steps.

As the music from the ballet sweeps, we peek through condensation on the car windows and see three men loading automatic pistols with full clips then shoving their guns into inside pockets. They get out of the car and wrap black scarves around the lower parts of their faces.

They head toward the doors of the cathedral.

INT. THE BOLSHOI BALLET ACADEMY. GYMNASIUM/STAGE

Anton is holding his Prima high above his head. We are close enough to hear the gasp of exertion.

Then near the front row of the gallery, we identify Anton's mother (GITA) from her nervous, proud reaction to Anton's movement. Gita watches anxiously as Anton executes another lift with precision.

Gita is a handsome woman in her late thirties who has lived a hard, Moscow life.

As Anton flies toward the side of the stage, Gita's eye is caught by the outline of the late arrival who is standing beside the gallery.

Gita's eyes fill with astonishment as she recognizes Nikolai. Nikolai stares straight ahead. Gita looks to be overwhelmed.

INT. THE CATHEDRAL OF CHRIST THE SAVIOUR. MOSCOW

The '*Spartacus*' music continues.

There are a handful of people inside the cathedral which is lit by huge banks of candles. The interior is modern and ornate even for an orthodox church.

*Near to the font of the cathedral there is a large reinforced glass cabinet. Inside the cabinet there is a fifteenth century religious icon. It is a beautifully realized depiction of Christ's Birth, brought by Apostolic Patriarchy Alex iy from Bethlehem.*

The icon is lit by dim light but also by lazer beams which crisscross in front of the painted panel. Beside the glass cabinet there is a uniformed and armed security guard who is asleep with his head resting on the wall next to a grotesque gargoyle-figure of death.

A second uniformed and armed security guard is standing in a rear doorway of the church, smoking a cigarette and blowing his smoke into the night.

We study the icon for a moment before a shadow falls across it and the light diminishes.

A Russian Orthodox priest walks by the cabinet and we see that he is snuffing candles as he walks around the perimeter of the church. He turns slightly as the church door opens and the three guys with black scarves around their faces enter.

The Orthodox priest snuffs another candle as he studies them.

INT. THE BOLSHOI BALLET ACADEMY. GYMNASIUM/STAGE

The music and dance are building to a climax.

Nikolai is watching from the shadows. When Anton turns toward the audience momentarily, Nikolai eases himself back just a little and we realize that he doesn't want Anton to see him. A moment later he glances across the room to where Gita is staring straight ahead.

He peers at her. We study his regrets.

INT. THE CATHEDRAL OF CHRIST THE SAVIOUR. MOSCOW - NIGHT

The music continues as the Orthodox priest approaches the three guys in black scarves who are walking quickly up the aisle. He is about to greet or challenge them but immediately the first of the heavies pulls a gun. The second of them pistol whips the priest to the ground. The sleeping security guard beside the icon opens his eyes.

INT. THE BOLSOI BALLET ACADEMY. GYMNASIUM/STAGE

Anton bounds across the stage.

Gita follows him with her eyes and then her eyes rest on Nikolai. Nikolai and Gita now look at each other for the first time. Nikolai's face almost softens as he peers at her. Gita finally looks down at her lap, fighting tears...

INT. THE CATHEDRAL OF CHRIST THE SAVIOUR. MOSCOW

Inside the cathedral, one of the uniformed policemen has pulled his gun but he is taken out by a single shot from one of the gunmen who is standing beneath a figure of Christ.

The second security officer hits an alarm button and the alarm begins to wail. Bullets ricochet around him and he takes cover beside the glowing icon to return fire. A bullet thuds into the bullet proof glass around the icon and the image of the icon is refracted.

INT. THE BOLSHOI BALLET ACADEMY. GYMNASIUM/STAGE

The dance continues, with Anton lifting the prima ballerina into the air.

The audience begin to applaud wildly at the move. Nikolai and Anton's mother both applaud, not looking at each other but sharing their joy in their son's achievement.

The applause stops and the dance goes on. We might sense the possibility of love in Gita's face as she glances at Nikolai.

INT. THE CATHEDRAL OF CHRIST THE SAVIOUR. MOSCOW

The alarms inside the church are now doubling and tripling in number and compete with the music from the ballet which is rising to a crescendo.

The second security guard trades shots with the raiders and plaster figures of Saints are shattered by the cross fire.

INT. THE BOLSHOI BALLET ACADEMY. GYMNASIUM/STAGE

We are close on Gita as she watches the dance. Then she turns to look at Nikolai...

But she sees that Nikolai has already gone.

She reacts. The door to the auditorium is still swinging closed.

INT. THE CATHEDRAL OF CHRIST THE SAVIOUR. MOSCOW

The second security guard realizes he is outgunned and makes a break for the open door where before he was smoking. He runs in a crouch, crunching on the plaster debris of the shattered Saints. He makes it to the door. Just as he dives for freedom a fourth raider suddenly appears from the darkness and pistol whips him to the floor.

As this fourth raider clears the shadows and removes the scarf from his face, we see that it is Nikolai.

Nikolai steps inside the church carrying a blue *Aeroflot* bag. One of the other raiders is using a diamond cutter to trace a line in the bullet proof glass. Another is already chiselling away at the stone wall where the glass meets the wall.

Quickly the shattered reinforced glass is removed. Nikolai's gloved hand reaches out to pull the icon from its place. Another siren begins to throb and wail. The icon is quickly wrapped in black canvas and dropped into the blue Aeroflot bag which is zipped up by the gloved hand.

The ballet music swells and concludes...

INT. THE BOLSOI BALLET ACADEMY. GYMNASIUM/STAGE

Anton and his Prima are accepting the wild applause of the audience. Gita takes a single bouquet of flowers from under her seat and throws it. Anton picks it up and gives it to his Prima.

The wild applause continues. Gita glances once toward the place where Nikolai once stood. She stops applauding and slowly sits down with her head bowed.

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT - DAY

The applause ends abruptly.

The debris of the funeral party is still strewn all around. Dishes and broken glass and half eaten food. There is a broken violin amongst the burnt out candles.

Then mice scatter as they hear a key in the lock. The front door opens. Nikolai enters carrying the blue Aeroflot bag. He looks all around and reacts to the state of the place.

He puts the bag down after locking the front door.

Then he hears a clatter from the kitchen and the sound of stumbling footsteps. He waits a moment then Kirill appears in the doorway from the kitchen. Kirill is wrecked, drunk, hung-over...but his face implodes with relief when he sees Nikolai.

Kirill stumbles over to Nikolai and gives him a huge hug, as if Nikolai were a vision of hope.

He squeezes Nikolai's face to check that he is real. Nikolai is stiff at first but then places one hand on the back of Kirill's head.

Kirill pulls back with tears in his eyes then takes a huge breath.

KIRILL

Where the fuck have you been man?

Nikolai doesn't answer. Instead he picks up a broken bottle and examines it. Kirill gestures around at the mess...

KIRILL (CONT'D)

My Dad...

Nikolai nods...he knew.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

We had this big fucking funeral  
last night.

Kirill remembers the night before like biting on a rotten tooth. He turns a chair around and sits heavily. He sweeps his hair from his face and rubs the back of his neck.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

You should've been here.

Kirill grunts at the enormity of what happened and repeats softly...

KIRILL (CONT'D)

You really should've fucking *been*  
here.

A pause. Nikolai studies Kirill.

NIKOLAI

How is business?

Kirill examines the question for a moment then begins to laugh softly to himself. Finally...he looks up with tears in his eyes.

KIRILL

Last night something happened....

A pause.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

...and I can't breath.

A pause.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

I have to remember to breath.

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT. UPSTAIRS STORE ROOM

Daylight floods the room and it is just as we left it.

We find Ilkay dead. The blood has caked dry around her. The door opens and Nikolai enters alone. He goes to the body and immediately sees a tattoo on her ankle and we see from his reaction that the tattoo means this is going to be bad news. He takes a deep breath and turns her over. It is evident he recognizes her.

NIKOLAI (SOFTLY)  
*Holy shit.*

EXT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT, OUTSIDE UPSTAIRS STORE ROOM

Kirill is waiting on the landing, wringing his hands. Nikolai emerges and walks straight past Kirill. Kirill turns...

KIRILL  
What the fuck are we going to do?

Nikolai keeps walking.

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT

Nikolai appears at the bottom of the stairs and Kirill follows him into the restaurant.

KIRILL  
Nikolai?

NIKOLAI  
Clean this place up, we open at midday.

KIRILL  
You know who that is?

Nikolai turns and stares. It is obvious he *does* know who it is. Nikolai pours himself a small vodka from the dispenser...

NIKOLAI  
Has anything else happened that I should know about?

Kirill stares...

KIRILL  
*Anything else?*

Nikolai nods. Kirill decides to enter the spirit of madness.

KIRILL (CONT'D)  
We got a bad report from the health inspectors.

NIKOLAI  
Mice?

Nikolai turns to Kirill who looks incredulous but he nods his head anyway. Nikolai downs his vodka.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

Ok, we are equal partners. You deal with the mice. I will deal with the rest.

Nikolai leaves.

EXT. GREEN LANES SHOP - DAY

A small North London everything-store has fruit and buckets and second hand furniture outside. A fat Turkish guy is stacking shelves inside through a greasy window. Nikolai approaches in the rain.

INT. GREEN LANES SHOP - DAY

The fat Turkish guy turns around as Nikolai enters. He squeezes himself behind the counter.

SHOPKEEPER

Can I help you?

Nikolai doesn't speak. The shopkeeper peers at him. Nikolai places his hand on the counter and the shopkeeper glances down at the tattoo on the back of his hand.

SHOPKEEPER (CONT'D)

My brother deals with that stuff.

NIKOLAI

We want to know where she is.

SHOPKEEPER

Where *who* is?

A regular customer enters and the shopkeeper nods a nervous greeting.

NIKOLAI

She stole something from us.

SHOPKEEPER

Who stole what from you? What are you talking about?

The regular customer leans in...

CUSTOMER

Do you sell light bulbs?

SHOPKEEPER

Yeah. Left aisle...

As the regular customer walks, Nikolai grabs the Turk's hand.

NIKOLAI

My name is Nikolai. Call Istanbul and tell Tashkar that last night his daughter stole money from us. We want to know where she is.

SHOPKEEPER

Get the fuck out of...

Nikolai suddenly twists the shop keepers arm around, making his body spin. He jerks his arm upwards fast, dislocating his shoulder in one movement. The shopkeeper yells in pain.

NIKOLAI

Tell Tashkar I called.

Nikolai turns and walks out into the rain.

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT - DAY

Kirill and an army of chefs, porters and hired cleaners are cleaning and straightening up the restaurant. Leon is sweeping up broken glass and the place is a hive of activity. Kirill sees a car pull up outside and hurries to the door.

He unlocks the door and lets Nikolai in. Kirill puts his arm around Nikolai and speaks softly as they walk through the frantic clean up....

KIRILL

So?

Nikolai walks with purpose and doesn't reply. Kirill is filled with intrigue and whispers...

KIRILL (CONT'D)

Nikolai, some Chinese guys came and took away the body like it was packaging. You arranged that, right?

Nikolai pushes open the door to the kitchen.

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT. KITCHEN

Three porters are cleaning up but, when Nikolai enters, he whistles once and they leave. As they go, Nikolai speaks to Kirill.

NIKOLAI

Did you call someone about the mice?

KIRILL  
Jesus Nikolai...*fuck* the mice...

As soon as the porters have gone Nikolai gets down to business.

NIKOLAI  
Ok, this is what happened here  
last night.

Nikolai grabs Kirill's ears and tugs them away from his head, a physical instruction for him to listen. It looks painful, almost comical.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)  
You took Tashkar's daughter  
upstairs. You thought you were  
going to fuck her. But she stole  
a suitcase. It was full of cash.  
You always kept the cash in the  
upstairs room. She stole it and  
now she has disappeared. You  
think she said she was going to  
New York.

Kirill is trying to keep up. Nikolai pulls his ears even harder and shakes Kirill's head to make him concentrate...

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)  
We are angry with Tashkar. We  
want to know where the fuck she  
is with our money...

Kirill begins to smile to show he understands but Nikolai yanks his ears so that they hurt...

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)  
Tashkar's daughter always was in  
trouble. Always shaming him.  
Everyone knows that. Now this.  
Stealing...at the funeral of a  
respected man...

Nikolai stares into Kirill's eyes. Kirill nods quickly. Nikolai lets him go.

Kirill understands Nikolai's deceit and heaves a sigh of relief. He can find no words of gratitude but instead he strokes Nikolai's arm. Nikolai suddenly shoves him against the wall...

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)  
I am keeping you alive for only  
one reason.

Nikolai lets Kirill go and walks toward the back door. Kirill takes a breath.

KIRILL

What reason?

Nikolai has gone. We see that Kirill dares to hope that the reason is love. He grabs his jacket and sets off in pursuit of Nikolai.

INT. 44 CLUB. HALF-LIT OFFICE - NIGHT

The office is in semi-darkness and is difficult to make sense of. The blinds are closed. There is a large painted number '44' on the wall. Through the walls we can hear the faint rhythmic thud of dance music.

The far wall is dominated by a bank of CCTV security monitors which are showing images of the front, rear and side entrances of a nightclub. The images are in black and white and rotate through a sequence. We glimpse people queuing at the front door of the club and the trash and empty streets at the back.

Beneath the silver light of the monitors we see two people struggling. Then we hear the sound of a man reaching orgasm.

After a moment a thick-set Serbian in his late forties stands up into shot (this is MONTY DARK). He's overweight, hairy...horribly naked. A moment later, a beautiful woman in her twenties (ZELDA) also sits up and straightens her hair. She is also naked.

The two of them are silhouetted against the security camera monitors as they begin to dress.

Monty reaches for underwear and a pair of pants he has folded over a chair. Zelda finds her underwear and a shirt and a skirt. They both begin to dress in the half light. As they get dressed, they begin to speak in matter of fact voices...

MONTY

So...what's your name?

ZELDA

Zelda.

MONTY

Where are you from?

ZELDA

Latvia.

MONTY

Everybody's from Latvia. Where you really from?

ZELDA

Irkutzk.

Monty grabs a tie and begins to tie it neatly...

MONTY

You are still lying but that's  
ok. I don't care where you're  
from.

He turns around sharply.

MONTY (CONT'D)

You dance?

She stares at him.

ZELDA

It depends on the music.

Monty nods and sits down to pull on his socks.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

So, do I have the job?

MONTY

You had the job when you walked  
through the door, the rest was  
just a handshake.

Monty goes to the blinds and opens them. To our surprise we see that the large window of his office is an internal window and looks out onto the dance floor of the nightclub. It's early and the place is just getting started, but there are already people dancing. The bar is lit up and glitter balls spin.

Monty scrapes his hair over a bald patch as he looks out at his empire...

MONTY (CONT'D)

You get ten per cent of what they  
spend. Mostly it is Arab and  
Russian. Bad breath but oil, you  
know?

He turns to her.

MONTY (CONT'D)

I will point out the men who have  
the real money. If you get them  
to spend over ten thousand you  
get a five per cent bonus. If you  
choose to go home with them you  
keep the skin money for yourself.  
I don't touch that.

He nods firmly.

MONTY (CONT'D)

At my grave no one will tell my  
mother that Monty was a pimp.

He turns back to the window to look out at the dance floor. Zelda turns and glances in the direction of the CCTV monitors as she pulls on her shoes. When she sits we see that two of the screens are showing the arrival of a black car at the back of the club.

On the screen we see Kirill and then Nikolai getting out of the car. Zelda glances up and sees their arrival. She begins to hurry. She grabs her purse.

ZELDA

I begin tomorrow, yes?

Monty nods as she walks by and toward the door. He admires her ass...and suddenly claps his hands with delight...

MONTY

You are the new Maria! The old  
Maria went to Hollywood. Monty  
gives new futures to poor people!

The sound of dance music swells as Zelda leaves then closes the door. When Monty turns to walk toward his desk, Kirill and Nikolai walk toward the entrance of the club on the CCTV screens above his head.

EXT. 44 CLUB

We find Kirill arriving at the front of a queue, waiting to enter the club. There are two huge doormen checking people out and making decisions as to who enters and who doesn't. Nikolai is standing back a little way as Kirill steps up to the doorman. Kirill has just lit a cigarette.

DOORMAN

You'll have to put the cigarette  
out.

Kirill grins and looks at his newly lit cigarette.

KIRILL

Yeah?

DOORMAN

Yeah, put it out.

KIRILL

Ok.

Kirill takes a deep drag on the cigarette so that the end is glowing red.

He then stubs the cigarette in the doorman's eye.

Suddenly Nikolai steps out of the shadows and deals with the second doorman. Kirill dispatches the burnt doorman with a single blow. The rest of the queue scatters in terror. Nikolai quickly steps through the front door of the club.

Kirill puts the velvet rope across the entrance and then slams the door closed behind him.

INT. 44 CLUB

As Kirill steps inside, he pulls a gun and engages it. The coat check girl cowers. There are a couple of customers checking in their coats and they fall back.

Meanwhile Nikolai has stepped to the side of the front door and grabbed a small fire extinguisher. He uses it to smash the glass of a fire bell. The fire alarm begins to ring instantly...

Kirill begins to yell...

KIRILL  
Fire!! Everybody out. Fire!!

Nikolai strolls into the club while Kirill walks along the wall and reaches the first fire escape door which he kicks open.

KIRILL (CONT'D)  
This way! Out!! Let's go!!

A gust of cold air sucks the people toward the fire exit and Kirill claps his hands and whistles at them as if they were cattle. He strides toward the bar and kicks open another fire escape door and shows it to the bewildered barmen who hesitate. Kirill shows them his gun and they make a dash for the darkness.

Suddenly...Monty Dark flies at Kirill with a snarl....

MONTY  
What the fuck are you doing?!  
Who the fuck are you?!

Kirill simply gestures through the fleeing crowd toward the centre of the dance floor. Nikolai is standing beneath a spinning glitter ball with his hands folded, his tattoos visible, the alarm bells ringing loud all around.

INT. 44 CLUB. CENTRAL SEATING AREA - LATER

Silence.

The club is now deserted. Nikolai is spinning his silver bell around his hand. Kirill is lighting a cigarette. Monty arrives with a tray carrying a bottle of vodka and three glasses.

His hands shake as he begins to pour three glasses.

MONTY

The arrival of men like you is evidence of success so I will choose to be flattered. Five years ago I was living in my car. Which was actually an ice-cream van.

Monty stares at Nikolai's tattoos with a look of terror as he takes his vodka. Kirill helps himself to a drink.

MONTY (CONT'D)

But you should know I don't make any money here. Not money that men like you would call money.

Nikolai drinks.

MONTY (CONT'D)

You've read about this place in the papers...but the people who come here are on TV. They have no money.

Monty makes a decision then gets to his feet and approaches Nikolai. He begins to speak very deliberately.

MONTY (CONT'D)

I am friends with Tiger Woods.

Monty gets down on one knee.

MONTY (CONT'D)

I have been on the London radio twice.

Monty takes Nikolai's hand and kisses it.

MONTY (CONT'D)

I was wounded by a mortar shell in the Golan Heights.

Monty peers into Nikolai's eyes imploringly.

MONTY (CONT'D)

That is me. Not a bad man. How much of my business do you want?

A silence. Nikolai spins his silver bell, a little amused.

NIKOLAI

I am just here to take a drink.

Monty takes a breath and gestures at the empty nightclub.

MONTY

You like to drink alone....

NIKOLAI

The music was too loud.

Kirill smiles. Monty goes to light a cigarette with a shaking hand. Finally...

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

I hear sometimes you are a broker.

Monty looks up from his flame...

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

I have something I want to sell.

EXT. LONDON PARK

Leaves fall in the autumnal gloom. Among the families and children we find Nikolai walking through the falling leaves. He looks like a man who might be at ease in the falling leaves if he didn't have the world on his back.

He arrives at a small park cafe with wrought iron chairs and tables. We find that Zelda is sitting at one of the tables, waiting for him. Nikolai sits at her table and the fact that they barely greet each other tells us that they are or have been intimate.

Zelda speaks breezily...

ZELDA

I start work at the 44 tonight.

NIKOLAI

Good.

Nikolai hands her an envelope full of cash.

ZELDA

What exactly am I listening for?

Nikolai shrugs.

NIKOLAI

You just listen.

Zelda is amused by Nikolai's taciturn response, the first person who might tease Nikolai for being so inward and unemotional. She then grunts like a gorilla and pulls a funny face...

ZELDA (IN A DEEP MACHO VOICE)

'Work it out for yourself  
Zelda?'...No I can't. I am human.

Nikolai half smiles...

NIKOLAI

I just need you to tell me what  
you hear.

ZELDA

I will hear a lot of 'uh, uh, uh  
I've got a big cock for you'.  
You want to hear all that?

Nikolai looks away. After a moment he relents and speaks softly...

NIKOLAI

Tigran Dubinsky.

Zelda's face immediately clouds. She evidently recognizes the name.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

Listen for that name.

Nikolai peers at her...almost a challenge to ask questions. She shrugs to show she has none. Finally...

ZELDA

You know Nikolai, when I heard  
you had disappeared I thought you  
had gone away for good.

He doesn't respond.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

I thought maybe you had found  
that place with a dock and a boat  
where you can fish for pike.

Nikolai still doesn't respond. Zelda's amusement looks a little more bitter.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

Why can we never mention the  
things we talked about that  
night?...

NIKOLAI (INTERRUPTING)

What night?

Zelda looks away wearily. Nikolai produces a small newspaper cutting photograph of a Chinese man in a sharp suit. (We will learn that this is HUNAN). Nikolai hands it to Zelda.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

This is Dubinsky's face in the world. He is a customer at the 44.

Zelda looks up from the photo with a defiant look...

ZELDA

Do you want me to fuck him?

Nikolai is impassive for a moment...then shrugs.

NIKOLAI

If fucking means trust, then fuck.

He gets to his feet and walks. Zelda is left with the envelope filled with money and the photograph. She watches Nikolai walk away through the falling leaves and we sense some deep longing...

EXT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Through the windows we see the place doing good business with live Russian music playing. Close to shot, Kirill arrives in his black Mercedes. As he gets out of the car, he sees the sudden flash of a camera coming through the curtains of the upstairs store room window.

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT. UPSTAIRS STORE ROOM

A space has been cleared in the room but the rocking horse is still beneath the window. Nikolai has a camera in his hand and has draped a white sheet against the wall.

Propped up against the white sheet we see the stolen icon. Beside it is the front page of that day's Times newspaper. Nikolai kneels close and takes a shot of the icon beside the newspaper. He stares at the icon and we might sense that he has some kind of emotional connection with it. There is a knock at the door and we hear Kirill from outside.

KIRILL (OOV)

Hey Nikolai, you shooting porn up here or what?

Nikolai hardly pauses before taking aim and firing off another shot...

KIRILL (CONT'D LAUGHING)  
You got a whore in there?

Nikolai glances at the icon....

EXT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT. STORE ROOM

Kirill knocks on the door a little harder, still half laughing. He whispers.

KIRILL  
Hey, I know it's the picture. At least let me see the fucking thing.

The camera light flashes under the door once more. Kirill gets mad but speaks softly...

KIRILL (CONT'D)  
Hey, come on Nikolai, I want to see it for myself.

Silence. The camera flashes again. Kirill is about to hammer on the door but holds himself in check. He gently touches the closed door.

KIRILL (CONT'D)  
Nikolai, don't forget, we're equal partners here, ok?

The camera flashes again. Kirill takes a breath, turns and walks.

EXT. COUNTRY LANE/INT. BLACK SUV

A deserted country lane in the middle of the Sussex countryside. A black SUV is driving fast down the lane. We hear lustful Serbian pop music.

Inside the SUV we are with Monty Dark, smoking a cigarette and listening to the East European hit. He seems to be nervous. He drives fast across a windswept crossroads but suddenly his Sat Nav speaks...

SAT NAV  
You have reached your destination...

Monty hits the brakes hard and skids to a halt. He turns off the music and the wind moans. He looks all around at the empty desolation. Not even a barn to mark the spot.

Monty checks a scrap of paper on which he has written some GPS co-ordinates. As he lowers his head to read, we see a red light of a lazer guided rifle playing on the back of his head. Monty is oblivious for a moment but when he sits up straight he sees the red light playing on the dashboard.

Monty reacts to the red light as if it were a confirmation that he is in the right place and also sees it as an instruction. He reaches into his inside pocket. He takes out an envelope and holds it up in the air. The red light plays on the envelope to acknowledge it.

From the glove compartment of his car, Monty takes out a house brick.

We see Monty getting out of the car with his hands raised and with the envelope in one hand and the brick in the other. As he straightens, he sees that the red light is playing on the white of his shirt. We realize the red light is a silent, disembodied enforcer.

He walks forward a few paces then carefully places the envelope down under the brick on the white line in the middle of the road (we infer he is following an instruction). He glances around for the source of the red light but the hedges and fields seem empty.

He walks back to his car with his hands still raised and gets inside. The red light plays on the dashboard for a few seconds and then is extinguished. Monty takes this a cue for him to leave. He fires his engine and slowly reverses away from where the envelope has been left.

Monty shifts gear, spins the car around and drives away.

The envelope is under the brick and the wind tugs at it. After only a moment a battered Land Rover appears from a dirt track in the nearby field. It parks directly over the envelope, with a front wheel either side.

We hear a rhythmic clicking coming from inside the Land Rover. Then the passenger door opens and a red setter dog is shooed out of the vehicle. The dog comes around to the envelope and begins to sniff it.

Satisfied, the dog sits.

Then, a Chinese guy in a dark suit gets out of the other door. We see it is HUNAN, the guy in the photo that Nikolai gave to Zelda. The rhythmic clicking sound gets louder and we see that Hunan has a *Geiger counter* in his hand. He comes to the front of the Land Rover and squats down.

He runs the Geiger counter over the envelope and it stays even.

Satisfied that it is ok, Hunan picks up the envelope and straightens. He tears it open. Inside he finds the photographs of the icon which Nikolai took.

EXT. HUGE GEORGIAN COUNTRY HOUSE. SOMEWHERE IN SURREY - DAY

We take in the majesty of the house for a moment then see Hunan's Land Rover approaching the front gate. The property is surrounded by a high wall topped with razor wire. There is an Iris recognition security monitor at the gate which Hunan pulls towards with his window open. He peers into the purple light for a moment and the security gate begins to open.

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE. FRONT ENTRANCE

As Hunan drives up the long drive, we see security cameras following his progress.

Two heavy looking ex-Israeli military security men guard the door with guns hidden. Hunan pulls up in front of the door and gets out of the Land Rover with the envelope. We might notice a sentry on guard on the roof of the nearby building.

Hunan trots past the security guards who evidently know him well and defer to him. He punches a security code into a keypad beside the front door.

INT. COUNTRY HOUSE

Hunan walks smartly down a long corridor with doorways opening out either side onto drawing rooms and dining rooms. Oil paintings decorate the walls along with tapestries. As we follow Hunan and the envelope, we see secretaries at work in some of the rooms, large log fires burning, video screens flickering.

Several staff members walk in the opposite direction and greet Hunan silently. A middle aged man greets Hunan more informally and Hunan speaks as he passes...

HUNAN

What color is his mood today?

STAFF

Dark blue. No better than that.

Hunan reacts a little wearily as he reaches a door marked 'Library'. There is another keypad beside this door and Hunan punches in a coded number.

## INT. COUNTRY HOUSE. LIBRARY

We are in a large, well stocked library on two levels. The library door opens and Hunan enters. He begins to walk down the central aisle of the library. He arrives at a large oak desk in a central area. There is a book of Russian text open on the desk and a small glass of black tea which is still steaming. A cigarette is burning in the ashtray. Hunan looks around.

HUNAN

Mr Dubinsky?

When there is no reply, Hunan registers a weary resignation and simply puts the envelope down on the desk. He speaks loudly to the apparently empty corridors.

HUNAN (CONT'D)

I have checked it. It is clean.  
It's on the desk.

Hunan turns and walks.

Once again we stay with the envelope for a moment. When the door to the library closes, we hear footsteps close by and a figure emerges from between the aisles.

This is TIGRAN DUBINSKY.

He is a little older than the man in the photo Nikolai saw, and thinner. He has some stubble and his hair is grown long. His round spectacles give him an owlish academic air but he is in good shape and he is good looking. He seems to be sleepless and a little distracted, but he approaches the envelope with a genuine appetite for what is inside.

He opens up the envelope and stares at the photograph of the icon. The sight of it seems to put a new light into his eyes. He places the photo down on the desk and smooths it.

He then quickly turns and hurries down a nearby aisle, sweeping a mobile ladder along with him. He climbs to a high shelf and grabs a large leatherbound book.

He takes the book to the desk and opens it at a page marked by a newspaper cutting. We should glimpse that the cutting is a report on the theft of the icon from the Cathedral in Moscow. The headline and text are in Russian but we may recognize the faces of the dead security guards in the photo caption.

On the open page we find a beautiful reproduction of the icon which Nikolai stole, along with dense text in Russian.

Tigran compares the icon to the textual reproduction. His emotion begins to overwhelm him and he takes a breath. He gently closes the leatherbound book.

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT. KITCHEN

A burst of flame.

In the steam and flames of the kitchen we find a service in full flow. At its heart...we find Kirill.

In these few moments we see a Kirill we have never seen before. He is dressed in smudged chefs' whites and is cooking a particular dish. He is diligent and engaged, gently giving orders and correcting the production of the dish among the flames. He tastes and seasons with discretion and finally begins to serve the dish out onto four plates with delicate fingers.

*We might sense that in his father's absence he has found something he can do for himself.*

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT

We see Nikolai at a window table with three heavy looking Russians, drinking wine and vodka. They are talking but we don't hear the conversation. Leon approaches, dressed smartly looking a little nervous.

LEON

Kirill says the dish is ready.

Nikolai nods permission for it to be brought.

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT. KITCHEN

Four starters have now been placed onto plates. Kirill is wiping the edges of the starter plates with a cloth. Two waiters approach and Kirill gives the dishes one last examination before nodding that the food can be taken.

Once the dishes are dispatched into the hands of the waiters, Kirill takes a huge swig of sparkling water from the bottle.

He sits back on the surface and looks around the kitchen. He sees chefs and porters working hard and appears to take pleasure in it. Leon's son, Yuri, appears from upstairs and walks through the kitchen with a toy aeroplane raised above his head, making engine noises.

KIRILL

Hey, Yuri, hot things in here, go back upstairs.

The boy wheels around with the plane still raised and goes back to the stairs. We might sense that Kirill has similar memories in this kitchen. He takes out a cigarette but a passing chef dares to speak up with a smile...

CHEF

Hey boss, you said no more smoking in here.

The chef passes. Kirill hesitates...

EXT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT - LATER

Kirill is lighting his cigarette outside in the street. He smokes for a few moments and we see he is nervous. Finally he glances back into the restaurant through a side window. Through the window he can see Nikolai and his associates laughing and eating the food he has prepared. The sight seems to give Kirill quiet satisfaction.

Nikolai catches Kirill's eye through the window and gives Kirill the slightest gesture of approval about the food. Kirill turns back to his cigarette but we see that he is profoundly pleased.

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT - LATER

Nikolai and his friends are the last people inside the restaurant and they are just getting to their feet to say goodbye.

Nikolai kisses the three men on the cheek as he leads them to the door. We glimpse their tattoos as the men kiss Nikolai.

The Russian men take their leave at the door and Nikolai turns to return to the now empty restaurant, turning the sign around to 'Closed'.

He goes back to the table as Kirill enters from the kitchen, still wearing his chef whites. Nikolai is pouring himself one last Vodka as Kirill approaches.

KIRILL

They liked it, right?

Nikolai shrugs and sits down into the candlelight, the dishes still on the table. He lights a cigarette from a candle. Kirill sits down too and waits anxiously for more response. Finally....

NIKOLAI

They said it was better than your father ever made.

Kirill reacts with fireworks inside but outwardly he is calm. He lights a cigarette from the same candle.

KIRILL

You know what? This could be a real place, you know?

Nikolai peers at Kirill through the candlelight. Kirill looks embarrassed, looks away...but continues...

KIRILL (CONT'D)

I mean as well as the girls and the dope. We could really do food, you know? Yeah. Why not?

Nikolai stares at Kirill. Kirill gestures at the darkened street where Nikolai's guest's cars are pulling away. Headlights sweep the scene.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

I could do that. I could cook, you know?

Nikolai studies Kirill for a few moments without expression. He then reaches for the vodka bottle and pours Kirill a drink. Kirill looks at the vodka and appears to understand what it represents. Kirill studies it for a moment as if he has been rebuked...then picks up the vodka and swallows it. Nikolai speaks softly...

NIKOLAI

My friends just told me we have a problem.

EXT. CHINA TOWN - LATER THAT NIGHT

Nikolai and Kirill walk past the window of a garishly lit slot machine arcade in China Town. It's very late and only a few haunted figures play the slots. Nikolai and Kirill enter the place and walk toward a door marked '*staff only*'. Kirill is wearing a black leather jacket over his half buttoned chef's tunic.

INT. SMALL OFFICE BEHIND THE SLOT ARCADE

A young Chinese guy with dyed blond hair (TONY) stands at the door of the small office. His Mother (MADAM LAU) is pouring tea for three. Madam Lau is in her sixties and is wearing a gold and blue silk tunic. She has deep, hard eyes.

Nikolai and Kirill are seated at a round table as their tea cups are poured.

A *living waterfall* picture glows in the half darkness. Once Madam Lau has poured her tea she takes a seat and begins to speak in *Hak Ga* dialect.

After she has spoken, Tony translates in a bored monotone.

TONY (TRANSLATING)  
She says six days ago her sons  
buried a woman in a wolf coat.

A pause. Nikolai glances at Madam Lau's hand.

NIKOLAI  
I see you are wearing her rings.

Tony translates and Madam Lau shrugs.

TONY  
She says what use are diamonds in  
heaven?

She continues and Tony translates.

TONY (CONT'D)  
We thought we were just burying a  
body for you. We didn't realize  
we were also burying a secret.  
For that the cost should have  
been higher.

Nikolai stares at Madam Lau...

TONY (CONT'D)  
She says you have to pay rent on  
secrets.

A pause.

NIKOLAI  
How much rent do you pay on a  
secret?

Madam Lau pushes a scrap of paper across the table. Nikolai reads it and reacts.

EXT. CHINA TOWN. SLOT MACHINE ARCADE

Nikolai and Kirill emerge from the slot machine place and Nikolai stops to lean against a wall to light a cigarette. He looks deeply pissed off and Kirill sees it. Kirill tries to bounce the mood away...

KIRILL  
Hey, you didn't even consult me  
in there. Why are we agreeing to  
this 'rent' shit? We're scared  
of an old lady?

Nikolai looks at Kirill with more contempt and speaks evenly.

NIKOLAI

I come back to London and you've shot a princess.

Nikolai gestures inside.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

They only found out who she was because you've been talking drunk in Chinese casinos.

Nikolai draws on his cigarette. Kirill looks down at his shoes. Inside a machine pays out a jackpot.

KIRILL

I just bring you trouble, don't I Nikolai?

Nikolai doesn't answer.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

You think you'd be better if I was gone.

Nikolai blows smoke into the Neon.

NIKOLAI

Yeah.

Nikolai walks. Kirill looks deeply hurt and then he is left alone, silhouetted against the slot machines. Kirill takes a breath...lights a cigarette...curses.

KIRILL

*Fuck.*

Nikolai disappears around the corner and Kirill yells...

KIRILL (CONT'D)

Hey, that fish I cooked was fucking perfect!

EXT. 44 CLUB. REAR EXIT - DAWN

We see a door open and Zelda emerges into the trash and empty bottles of dawn wearing a fur coat and heels.

She removes her heels as she walks and replaces them with soft shoes from the pockets of her fur coat. She stuffs the high heels into the pockets in their place.

As she presses her foot into her shoe, Nikolai emerges from a doorway. Zelda stops and smiles.

ZELDA

Is it early or late?

Nikolai shrugs...

NIKOLAI

Late.

She comes to him. He appears to deliberately avoid intimacy and stands to face her with his hands crossed.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

So?

Zelda decides to mock him. She crosses her hands and puts on a tough face, a mirror image of Nikolai.

ZELDA

So.

A pause. He angles his head as a question.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

So you get no sense out of a man  
until you've emptied his balls. I  
fucked the Chinese guy for you.

Nikolai peers down the street and they begin to walk slowly side-by-side. It seems Zelda suspects Nikolai is secretly hurt when she talks about having sex with other men and wants to goad him into a reaction.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

He bit me like he was hungry.

Nikolai doesn't react.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

You want to see the marks?

NIKOLAI

No.

Nikolai looks away. Zelda softens a little.

ZELDA

I'm cold, you want to go to  
Starbucks?

Nikolai doesn't respond. Zelda decides to tease Nikolai and touches his face.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

Sweetheart don't drink coffee.

He gently takes her hand to remove it from his face.

NIKOLAI

That stuff isn't coffee. It's American.

Zelda smiles because Nikolai doesn't like to be teased. She decides on business...

ZELDA

Hunan said they need more than a photo. They need to see the bones. Does that mean something?

Nikolai shrugs and feigns ignorance.

NIKOLAI

I run a restaurant. What do I know?

Zelda half laughs at his reticence.

ZELDA

You talk like everybody is wearing a wire. All the time. That's why you shake your head and shrug and ugh, ugh like an ape.

Her impression of Nikolai's manner almost makes him smile. She taps the side of his head.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

Your secrets are like tumors in there.

Nikolai shrugs but Zelda sees some deeper reaction and leaps on it.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

You brought me to this country to fuck people when I was just a kid. But you don't like me to fuck anymore. I can tell. So why don't you just say you don't want me to do it then I would stop. Bang.

Nikolai doesn't react.

ZELDA

I *didn't* fuck him ok?

NIKOLAI (INDIFFERENT)

Ok.

A pause. Zelda stops walking and wearily takes out a cigarette and imitates Nikolai's voice again.

ZELDA

Ok. Ok. Ugh, ugh.

She looks up at him with cigarette dangling.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

Give me a light.

Nikolai lights her cigarette.

NIKOLAI

Did he talk about Dubinsky?

ZELDA

Yeah. He says Dubinsky is depressed, bipolar, big pain all the time you know? The Russian sickness when you live away from home too long.

Nikolai shakes the match and reacts inwardly. Zelda's face flickers with contempt.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

He kept asking me who is this thief who is selling the picture. I said I didn't know. And that's the truth. I don't know.

She walks on ahead, flashing her middle finger to Nikolai casually as she goes. We stay with his face as he watches her walk.

EXT. HARLEY STREET - DAY

Nikolai is walking down Harley Street with a briefcase chained to his wrist. We see the tiny silver bell tinkling on his wrist as he walks. He walks through a small iron gate and we see the plaque of a clinic belonging to a Doctor Sherenovsky.

INT. DOCTOR SHERENOVSKY'S CLINIC. RECEPTION

A young Russian receptionist greets Nikolai with a smile as he enters. She glances at the clock and assumes he is someone here for an appointment...

RECEPTIONIST

Herr Gilda?

Nikolai shakes his head once. The receptionist sees the chain attached to the briefcase as he places it on her desk and also sees the tattoos on his hand.

She evidently understands and picks up the phone....

RECEPTIONIST (INTO PHONE)  
Doctor Sherenovsky...it is one of  
your friends from the old City.

INT. DOCTOR SHERENOVSKY'S OFFICE

The consulting room is plush and exudes expense. DOCTOR SHERENOVSKY is mid sixties, worldly, amused by life and death. He opens the door to let Nikolai in and they kiss each other on both cheeks.

DOCTOR  
Nikolai. You have come to visit  
your bullets?

The doctor closes the door then locks it.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
You know I keep all the bullets  
that pass through you people...

Nikolai puts his briefcase on the doctor's desk and opens it. Inside there is another case made from metal. It has a complex code key and Nikolai begins to feed in the combination. The doctor studies Nikolai and, for the first time, we sense his nervousness even though he chuckles...

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
I should open a museum here.  
Death would be the doorman.

Nikolai doesn't flicker as he opens the metal case. Inside we see the icon. Sherenovsky reacts with shock and steps back in trepidation.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
No, no, no...

He turns his back.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
I just patch you people up, I  
don't want to be part of your  
commerce. I don't want famous  
things in my office.

Nikolai takes an envelope of cash out of the briefcase and lays it on the desk.

NIKOLAI  
I need to use your X-ray machine.

## INT. X-RAY ROOM

Nikolai is wearing a lead vest. We see his briefcase is open beside the X-ray machine and that Nikolai has two sets of grips inside the briefcase and a bundle of thin fuse wire. The icon is placed beside the briefcase.

He is using a jewelers magnifying glass and tweezers to delicately twist and shape a tiny length of the wire. He works in bright light. Close up we see he has twisted a quarter inch length of wire into the shape of an 'I' and another into the shape of a 'V'.

He places the finished letters beside another two pieces of wire twisted into the letters 'I' and 'V'.

He uses tweezers to place the letters onto the X-ray plate so that they are side-by-side, reading 'IV IV'. He then places the icon over them. (For the moment we have no idea why he is doing this.)

He slides the tray into the X-ray machine. He picks up a control button on a wire and fires the X-ray machine....

## INT. 44 CLUB

The lights on the dance floor flash orange and blue. It is early and there are only a few people inside the club. Near to the dance floor we find Hunan sitting alone at a table, sipping ice water.

## INT. 44 CLUB. MONTY DARK'S OFFICE

The office is in half darkness and we join Monty as he approaches the blinds that look out onto the dance floor. He puts a slit in the blinds so that he can peer out. He looks nervous as he stares at Hunan sipping water. Hunan is checking his watch. Monty glances at his clock and looks impatient. Then, behind Monty, on the largest of the CCTV monitors, we see Nikolai approaching the front door of the club.

## INT. 44 CLUB. TABLE BY THE DANCE FLOOR

Hunan sees Nikolai approaching across the dance floor with a briefcase in his hand. Nikolai takes a seat opposite Hunan and opens the briefcase. He produces a large envelope and pushes it across the table to Hunan. Even though this is the first time they have met they do not speak. Hunan stares at Nikolai's face and tattoos as if searching for the truth about him. Hunan hardly takes his eyes off Nikolai as he produces a small Geiger Counter from his own briefcase and runs it over the envelope.

NIKOLAI

They are X-rays. There will be residual radiation.

Hunan has a weary expression, suggesting he knows that already. The Geiger Counter flutters only a little. Hunan is satisfied and takes the envelope. As he does...

HUNAN

Evidently you know already that Mr Dubinsky has a passion for this kind of art work.

Nikolai doesn't reply.

HUNAN (CONT'D)

But my own personal advice to him is that he should report your approach to the police.

Nikolai speaks evenly.

NIKOLAI

The price is twenty five million US dollars.

Hunan looks up sharply...then softens into a cynical smile. When Hunan begins to speak it is as if he is giving a lecture. He speaks English as a second language with a slight American accent and has a precise way of speaking. (He is full of words, a direct contrast to Nikolai, who speaks little).

HUNAN

I have told Mr Dubinsky that this could jeopardize his political reputation.

Nikolai is impassive. Hunan seems to slip into diatribe easily.

HUNAN (CONT'D)

His project is about hope. It is about offering a democratic alternative to the Russian people. He aches to return to Moscow. His exile burns him up.

Nikolai nods, mock thoughtful, mocking Hunan. Hunan becomes irritated and gestures at the envelope he has packed into his briefcase.

HUNAN (CONT'D)

As one of the only non-Russians on his staff, I do not understand Mr Dubinsky's feeling for this piece of art which you have stolen. Nor his desire to break the law to buy it.

Nikolai doesn't offer any answers.

HUNAN (CONT'D)

He tells me that it represents Mother Russia.

Nikolai still doesn't offer confirmation.

HUNAN (CONT'D)

I find it ironic that he is willing to buy a symbol of a new and more pure Russian society from a man like you who represents the *dregs* of the old society. A man who represents decay and corruption and death.

Nikolai appears not to be offended even though it may be obvious that Hunan is deliberately goading him. The two men have eyes locked...but before Hunan can continue...Monty arrives at the table.

MONTY

My friends, can I get you a free drink?

Neither man answers. Monty decides to be bold. He grabs a chair and pulls it up. He speaks in a whisper.

MONTY (CONT'D)

I need to clarify that my fee as broker is five per cent. Which is only two thirds of my usual rate for television work.

Nikolai is still staring at Hunan.

NIKOLAI

That is a matter between you and him.

Nikolai gets to his feet and turns to walk away. After only a step, Hunan calls out.

HUNAN

Hey. Gangster man.

Monty flinches visibly. Nikolai stops...freezes. Then he turns slowly.

HUNAN

Rich men need to be protected  
from ugliness and greed.

Nikolai faces Hunan calmly and crosses his hands.

HUNAN (CONT'D)

Your price is way, way too high.

Monty recoils at the way Hunan speaks to Nikolai.

HUNAN (CONT'D)

You are a mediocre man who has  
lost himself in some kind of  
fantasy. Plucking numbers from  
the air.

Nikolai stares at Hunan for a few moments. Then he steps  
back to the table and sits down. Monty swallows. Nikolai  
angles his head at Hunan and speaks softly.

NIKOLAI

You have one minute to live.

Monty panic, pushes back his chair...

MONTY

Hey, hey, hey, fuck, fuck  
fuck....

Nikolai puts his hand on Monty's arm to calm him and alters  
his intonation just a little...

NIKOLAI

Imagine...you have one minute to  
live. Just one minute.

Nikolai gestures around the room.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

Maybe you fuck a girl. Maybe you  
drink, maybe you pray.

Nikolai gestures at the briefcase which contains the  
pictures of the icon.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

But some of us...*Russians*...would  
spend that last minute...staring  
into her face.

Nikolai takes Hunan's hand and squeezes it.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

What use is money when you have  
one minute to live?

A pause.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

The price is twenty five.

Nikolai gets up and walks, disappearing into the uncertain lights of the glitter balls. As he leaves, Monty deflates...visibly relaxes...then speaks up.

MONTY

Twenty five what? Thousand?

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT

A Russian clown is entertaining a group of small children, speaking in Russian. (It is Leon's son, Yuri's, tenth birthday and the party is for him). We stay with the jollity for a moment then, on a wave of children's laughter, Kirill appears from the kitchen, clapping his hands...

KIRILL

OK your mamas and papas are out side. We have to get this place ready for service. Everybody take a party bag.

The kids all begin to head for a table where lots of plastic party bags are waiting, filled with trinkets and slices of cake. Kirill slips the clown a fifty pound note.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

I heard some of your stuff. You're funny, you know? Funnier than the bullshit on the TV. You don't use dirty words. That's good. Go help yourself to a drink.

The clown ducks into the kitchen. Kirill shoos some of the children towards the door and peers out of the restaurant window. Mothers in SUV's and fur coats are parking and coming to collect their kids. Then, over their heads, Kirill sees a long black Bentley pulling up. He looks curious for a moment...then his face freezes.

The driver of the Bentley gets out and opens the rear door. A wiry Turkish man with a thick moustache gets out and buttons his camel hair coat. Kirill evidently recognizes him and reacts.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

*Fuck.*

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT

Kirill runs through the restaurant between departing children.

KIRILL  
Nikolai!!

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT. UPSTAIRS BEDROOM/BATHROOM

A young SIBERIAN WOMAN is brushing her teeth in her underwear. We hear banging on the door of the bedroom attached to the bathroom.

KIRILL (OOV)  
Nikolai!

The woman walks out of the bathroom to the bedroom where Nikolai is in deep sleep (we assume they have just had sex). The banging continues and the Siberian girl gently wakes Nikolai.

GIRL  
Someone wants you.

As Nikolai's eyes open he hears Kirill hissing through the door...

KIRILL  
I got no choice Nikolai. I'm coming in.

The door opens and Kirill enters. The woman covers up but Kirill ignores her. He stares at Nikolai with burning eyes.

KIRILL (CONT'D)  
Nikolai, shooting's gonna start downstairs and there are fucking kids everywhere.

Before Nikolai can react, Kirill is at the window staring down. He turns back with a look of terror.

KIRILL (CONT'D)  
Tashkar is outside in a fucking Hearse.

Nikolai takes a breath, wearily scrapes his hair from his face.

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT. KITCHEN

The Russian clown is at the staff table, still in full costume and helping himself to another Vodka from a now half-empty bottle. He swigs it back as Nikolai then Kirill burst into the kitchen.

KIRILL

You should've consulted me in that meeting with the Chinese. My Dad said never do business with the fucking Chinese.

Nikolai is ignoring Kirill. He walks fast to a store cupboard at the back of the kitchen. The clown raises a toast to them as they pass.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

I can't read your face. Do you think Tashkar knows or what?

Nikolai doesn't answer but uses a key to open the store room. Inside he opens a large cash tin and takes out a heavy barrellled revolver. He then grabs two large shells and puts them into his pocket.

Kirill takes this as a cue and pulls his own gun from his inside pocket. However, Nikolai emerges from the store room and grabs Kirill and pulls his face close.

NIKOLAI

You trust me Kirill?

Nikolai has never looked so grim. He adjusts the question.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

Will you trust me Kirill?

Nikolai gently takes hold of the barrel of Kirill's gun.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

I will deal with this.

A pause. Finally Kirill lets Nikolai take his gun. He takes a breath and turns away. Nikolai puts Kirill's gun inside the store room. He locks the door then heads for the refrigerator. Before he opens the refrigerator door he turns to Kirill....

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

Get bread and salt.

Kirill hesitates then heads toward the front of the kitchen. Nikolai waits a moment then opens the door to the refrigerator.

## EXT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT

In the street the last of the children are getting into their parent's cars. When the street is clear Tashkar gestures at his four, heavy looking associates and they head for the restaurant front door.

As they near the door Nikolai opens it and there is a moment of silence. Finally Nikolai gestures for them to enter.

NIKOLAI

Come. Eat.

## INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT

Tashkar and his men step cautiously into the restaurant. Kirill is looking anxious as hell, already sitting at a table with a white table cloth where bread and salt and wine have been laid out.

The room is still decorated for a children's party and one of the Turkish men accidentally bursts a balloon by stepping on it as he enters. Everyone reacts to the bang. Nikolai gestures at Tashkar and his men to sit down.

Nikolai gestures at Kirill who offers the bread. Tashkar simply stares at Kirill and speaks in a hoarse whisper.

TASHKAR

I wanted to visit the last place  
my daughter was seen alive.

Nikolai nods.

NIKOLAI

You have our deep sympathy.

A pause.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

Because your daughter shamed you.

Tashkar stares at Nikolai and Nikolai meets his stare.

TASHKAR

No one in New York has seen her.

Kirill is pouring himself a glass of wine and babbles nervously...

KIRILL

Yeah well New York...it's a big  
fucking City. I went there once.

(MORE)

KIRILL(cont'd)

No one scared me except the cops  
on horses. I'm scared of horses.

Tashkar's murderous look is almost uncontainable as he glares Kirill into silence. Nikolai studies the look and begins to sense the news is bad. Tashkar turns back to Nikolai.

TASHKAR

So I came back to London and had  
meetings.

A pause.

TASHKAR (CONT'D)

In China town.

Kirill swallows down his wine like it is a lump of granite, looking at Nikolai over his glass. Then Tashkar reaches into his pocket...

*He pulls out three severed fingers, all wearing ornate rings. They are the rings Madam Lau was wearing, the rings that once belonged to Ilkay. The fingers belonged to Madam Lau.*

Tashkar stares only at Nikolai as he drops Madam Lau's severed fingers onto the tablecloth. Nikolai takes a breath. Kirill waits for Nikolai to speak but there is silence. Kirill senses the shift. He instinctively reaches for his pocket but remembers Nikolai disarmed him.

Kirill decides to try to bluff it out.

KIRILL

Hey, what the fuck. You gone  
into the jewelry business  
Tashkar? You selling us some  
fucking fake rings?

Nikolai and Tashkar are staring only at each other, communicating silently. Kirill is still talking.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

You think that covers what you  
owe us? We want our fucking  
money back.

Tashkar's eyes burn as he finally turns to Kirill. Kirill sees the murder in his eyes and looks to Nikolai imploringly...

KIRILL (CONT'D)

Nikolai? Tell him.

Tashkar looks back to Nikolai and speaks softly.

TASHKAR

There is only one road to peace  
Nikolai. You know that road?

A long silence. Finally Nikolai nods once. Kirill stares in horror. Nikolai's face contorts in grief for just half a second and then he pulls his heavy revolver from his inside pocket.

Nikolai gets to his feet and pulls Kirill from his chair.

KIRILL (SOFTLY)

*Nikolai?*

Nikolai puts his arm around Kirill's neck and yanks it hard once. We hear a crack. Then Nikolai puts the gun to the back of Kirill's head and fires.

We see blood and brains splatter back over Nikolai's face. The back of Kirill's head is smeared in blood and brains. Kirill is now a dead weight and Nikolai gently eases him to the floor.

Nikolai's face is twisted and he grunts in despair. Then he grabs the white tablecloth and pulls it from the table like a matador. Bread, wine and salt fly into the air, along with the severed fingers. Nikolai lets the tablecloth billow in the air then he lays it down over Kirill's body like a shroud. Blood begins to ooze through the white sheet.

There is silence. Blood dribbles down Nikolai's face. Nikolai lets his gun drop from his hand. He stares down at the white sheet. Tashkar studies him. Nikolai speaks softly.

NIKOLAI

I loved him.

A pause.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

Like a brother.

He turns to Tashkar.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

Love for love. Honor obeyed.

Tashkar stares some more...then finally nods.

TASHKAR

Peace.

A long silence.

Then...the door to the kitchen suddenly bursts open and the clown appears, drunk to hell and still in his costume. He stumbles a little as he steps toward the table and addresses Nikolai with a grin.

CLOWN

I can't get the back door open  
for a cigarette.

Nikolai wipes the blood from his face. The clown begins to lose momentum as he speaks...

CLOWN

I was told no smoking in...the  
kitchen.

The clown looks down at the blood stained shroud and the lifeless hand sticking out from under it. He looks at Nikolai then Tashkar with horror. Before he can react further or make a break for it one of Tashkar's men has pulled a gun and shot the clown dead with a single shot. He falls back against the kitchen door and it flies open.

Over the clown's fallen body we see the kitchen where Kirill briefly worked. There is silence. Tashkar and his men get to their feet and head for the door, balloons flying around them as they open the door.

Nikolai is motionless, his head bowed, as the door is closed.

EXT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Rain is falling heavily. The restaurant is doing good business downstairs. We move up the building toward the window of the store room. The light is on through curtains.

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT - UPSTAIRS STORE ROOM

Nikolai has set up a desk among the junk and broken chairs and is writing a letter in long hand. He writes feverishly though we don't see the words. We study Nikolai's face as he writes...perhaps horrified at what he just did. The writing of the letter consumes him.

He finishes the letter and puts the pen down. He folds the letter and puts it into an envelope. He sits back in his chair. He closes his eyes and we imagine what is going on inside his head as the rain drums against the window...

Suddenly...

INT. DUBINSKY'S COUNTRY HOUSE. UPSTAIRS STUDY - DAY

A Regency chair is smashed against a wall.

The study is elegantly furnished and decorated but right now the room is being smashed to pieces by a furious Tigran Dubinsky.

He sweeps cups and saucers from a table and hurls books from a small shelf above his desk. He grabs an angle-poise lamp and bends it back on itself until it snaps. His hair is tangled around his face as he kicks at the debris around his feet.

Finally, he stops to take a breath. Behind him through the window we see the misty fields of his estate. We also notice that amongst the debris are the torn pages of a Russian newspaper.

Dubinsky slumps into the chair at the desk. There is a computer and a keyboard which is dangling on its wire. A cigarette burns in an ashtray. A wood fire burns in the grate and wind moans down the chimney.

In the bright light from the window we also see a revolver on Dubinsky's desk, sitting on top of a leatherbound book of proverbs. He stares at the revolver. It is a Colt revolver of Second World War vintage.

There is a knock at the door. Dubinsky instinctively picks up the revolver but doesn't turn his head. The door opens and Hunan enters, carrying the envelope of X-rays that Nikolai gave to him.

Hunan hardly reacts when he sees the mess in the room. He takes a breath but from his reaction we infer that this rage may be a relatively regular occurrence.

Dubinsky looks a little contrite and puts the revolver down. To explain the mess, he gestures at the newspaper and speaks gently...

DUBINSKY

A good friend of mine. A  
fearless writer.

Hunan glances at the shreds of the newspaper. Dubinsky speaks softly...bitterly.

DUBINSKY (CONT'D)

They say she 'fell' from a  
balcony.

Hunan is efficient and unemotional.

HUNAN

I know.

Hunan sits down near to Dubinsky with the envelope in his lap.

HUNAN (CONT'D)

I already called the BBC and suggested you might agree to an interview for the World Service about her death.

Dubinsky has spotted the envelope in Hunan's lap. He sweeps his hair from his face. Hunan appears to try to distract Dubinsky from the envelope...

HUNAN (CONT'D)

I thought we might go tomorrow.

Dubinsky's attention is now totally directed at the envelope. He insists with a gesture and Hunan finally hands it over. Dubinsky begins to tear the envelope open...and Hunan dares to speak up.

HUNAN (CONT'D GENTLY)

Do we really have time for this distraction, Mr Dubinsky?

Dubinsky pulls the X-rays of the icon from the envelope. He is suddenly animated and opens a drawer to produce a magnifying glass. He begins to study the X-rays through the magnifying glass. Hunan watches him wearily and knows he is lost to what we now see is an obsession.

Dubinsky turns on a lamp and trains it on the X-ray. His eye is taken by the letters 'IV IV' at the bottom of the image. He studies the letters for a moment and we see a look of puzzlement. It is fleeting and Hunan is on his feet to look over Dubinsky's shoulder.

HUNAN (CONT'D)

Is it genuine?

Dubinsky is still staring at the letters in the bottom corner of the icon. He decides to hide his reaction and puts the magnifying glass down. (As yet we have no idea what these letters signify or why Dubinsky reacts the way he does).

After a moment he gets to his feet and carries the X-rays to the open fire. As he walks...

DUBINSKY

Yes. It is genuine.

He squats by the fire and begins to feed the X-rays into the flames.

DUBINSKY (CONT'D)

I am right to destroy evidence,  
yes Mr Hunan?

Hunan shrugs and nods wearily. The flickering flames begin to burn bright green on the chemicals from the X-rays. Dubinsky speaks casually...

DUBINSKY (CONT'D)

Describe this thief to me.

EXT. PARK

Pigeons scatter from a sprinkling of breadcrumbs.

Nikolai walks through them with his briefcase chained to his wrist, his silver bell jangling beside the chain. He walks with purpose and without expression and we follow him for a while, studying his face.

Zelda is waiting outside the same cafe where they met before. When Nikolai arrives she reacts and we might infer that she has heard news of what happened to Kirill. She looks at Nikolai with a mixture of horror and pity.

Nikolai is expressionless.

NIKOLAI

So?

This time Zelda is in no mood for teasing. She finds it hard to concentrate on business.

ZELDA

Hunan will offer you twenty  
million dollars. No more.

Nikolai doesn't respond. A long pause. Zelda stares. Finally she says what is on her mind...

ZELDA (CONT'D)

I heard you killed Semyon's son.  
You shot him in the head. He was  
your friend...

NIKOLAI (INTERRUPTING)

Tell them twenty two and a half.

A pause. Zelda senses no emotion behind Nikolai's face and touches his cheek with the back of her hand.

ZELDA

No one is listening to this  
Nikolai. What happened?

NIKOLAI

Tell them they have one week.

Nikolai's voice is firm. He is already on his feet.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

And tell them I want to carry out  
the exchange with Dubinsky in  
person.

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT. KITCHEN

The chefs are working hard and the service is at full tilt as Nikolai enters the kitchen. The air immediately freezes, even though everyone continues to work. There is terror on every face as Nikolai walks through the kitchen. He stops to sample some soup then walks on. Eyes follow him as if he were a monster...

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT. UPSTAIRS STORE ROOM - NIGHT

Nikolai stares out of the window, his briefcase on his desk. There is a revolver on top of the briefcase. (We might see a similarity between Nikolai and Dubinsky, who we saw staring out of his window with a gun close at hand).

The store room is now his office and his refuge.

Nikolai sits in half darkness, staring out at the street below. He is looking at a car parked opposite the entrance of the restaurant which has two men sitting inside it. Then his cellphone begins to vibrate on a hard surface. He lets the phone vibrate until it stops. He appears to be a man beyond communication.

After a moment there is a knock at the door. Nikolai doesn't respond. Finally Leon hesitantly enters.

LEON

Boss...

NIKOLAI (INTERRUPTING)

I know. There are men outside.

Nikolai gestures down at the car.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

But it's ok. They are only  
policemen.

Leon relaxes a little. He glances at Nikolai and is about leave but Nikolai speaks calmly.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

Leon.

Leon stops in the doorway.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

I am the head of the family now.

Nikolai doesn't turn.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

If you are loyal, I will treat  
you like a son.

A pause. Leon stares at the back of Nikolai's head and we glimpse a flicker of hatred. After a moment, Leon turns and leaves. We stay with Nikolai's expressionless face.

EXT. BBC BROADCASTING HOUSE - NIGHT

The curved 1920's facade has lights burning, though it is late. Outside, near to the main entrance, three black Mercedes cars are parked. Around them stand six bodyguards in dark suits.

The bodyguards scan the empty streets until a radio crackles and they stiffen in readiness. The double doors of Broadcasting House open and Hunan emerges, looking left and right. Then Dubinsky appears, flanked by two more bodyguards, as he is hurried across the pavement into one of the waiting Mercedes.

Dubinsky ducks into the car and the other bodyguards jump into the vehicles in front and behind. Hunan follows Dubinsky into the middle car and the cavalcade pulls away into the night.

INT. DUBINSKY'S CAR

Dubinsky and Hunan settle side-by-side into the back seat of the car as it pulls away. Dubinsky sighs into a bleak silence for a few moments. Hunan speaks brightly...

HUNAN

Moscow will be furious with you.

Dubinsky grunts and reaches into his inside pocket. He produces the Colt revolver we saw on his desk earlier. Hunan reacts wearily when he sees the gun...

HUNAN (CONT'D)

That relic is more likely to go  
off in your pocket than save your  
life.

Dubinsky begins to remove the six bullets from the revolving chamber.

DUBINSKY

Perhaps if Ingrid had kept a relic...

Dubinsky pockets the bullets and stares out of the window. He speaks almost to himself.

DUBINSKY (CONT'D)

But she is dead and Dubinsky lives.

A pause. Dubinsky begins to speak theatrically....

DUBINSKY (CONT'D)

Dubinsky, Dubinsky, the prince across the water. He bravely walks across the open field of mud on his vast estate...

Hunan sighs and we sense he is accustomed to these bouts of self-loathing. Dubinsky continues to address the darkened window as the night time London streets slip by.

DUBINSKY (CONT'D)

Dubinsky bravely pulls a cabbage from the dirt...

HUNAN (FIRMLY INTERRUPTING)

De Gaulle was an exile...

Dubinsky is tracing a line in the condensation on the window with his finger as he interrupts...

DUBINSKY

...And one of Dubinsky's many bodyguards drives in slow pursuit...

The line he is drawing on the window curls around itself....

DUBINSKY (CONT'D)

...in pursuit of the great Dubinsky who stops and turns and yells.

Dubinsky suddenly really does yell...

DUBINSKY (CONT'D)

'Russia! I am coming to save you!!'

A pause as Hunan flinches at the loudness of Dubinsky's voice. The driver glances in his rear-view mirror. Dubinsky speaks softly into the echo of his yell.

DUBINSKY (CONT'D)

Then...the great Dubinsky...walks  
on through the mud to pick his  
radishes.

The car pulls up at traffic lights. Dubinsky wipes away the line he has drawn in the condensation. Through the clear window he sees drinkers outside a bar, smoking and laughing. Dubinsky continues softly.

DUBINSKY (CONT'D DARKLY)

I think they will come for me  
soon. I feel it. They will make  
their move.

Hunan looks at his lap. Dubinsky turns to stare at Hunan.

DUBINSKY (CONT'D)

I want them to come. I can not  
stand this waiting for the bullet  
anymore.

Dubinsky turns back to look at the drinkers outside the bar laughing. He suddenly opens the door...

DUBINSKY (CONT'D)

I need a drink.

Dubinsky gets out of the car. Hunan reacts with horror and leaps out of the car too...

EXT. BAR/ROAD JUNCTION - NIGHT

Dubinsky's bodyguards begin to leap out of the cars in front and behind Dubinsky's car. Radios crackle as the bodyguards form a defensive line around Dubinsky who is marching toward the bar.

Drinkers react to the sight of the big guys in suits talking to their lapels and reaching for inside pockets. Hunan leaps in front of Dubinsky in a panic...

HUNAN

You have just been live on the  
radio. Your location will be  
known.

DUBINSKY

I am in the mood for a pointless  
gesture.

Hunan blocks Dubinsky's path before he can reach the crowd outside the bar who are craning their necks to see who the celebrity might be. Meanwhile the lights have changed and the cars behind Dubinsky's abandoned cavalcade begin to hoot their horns.

Dubinsky speaks flatly to Hunan.

DUBINSKY (CONT'D)

The icon is a sign that something  
is about to happen.

HUNAN

You have to get back into the  
car.

DUBINSKY

I am instructing you to say yes  
to twenty two and a half.

Hunan snaps.

HUNAN

Are you insane?

DUBINSKY

Yes. And I want a drink.

The hooting of horns gets louder. Hunan calls out over  
Dubinsky's shoulder...

HUNAN

Move the fucking cars off the  
street!

Hunan grabs one of the bodyguards.

HUNAN (CONT'D)

And you, get Mr Dubinsky a large  
vodka.

DUBINSKY

I get it myself.

Hunan physically pulls Dubinsky toward a doorway and  
shields him from the street.

HUNAN

Eddy, get him a fucking vodka.  
Just fucking do it!

There is a short struggle before Dubinsky relents. Hunan  
looks all around...

HUNAN (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ...we are wide open  
here.

Hunan has Dubinsky pushed against a wall. They are both  
breathless.

DUBINSKY

Did you hear what I said? We agree the price.

Hunan looks incredulous.

HUNAN

You want me to agree to twenty two and a half million dollars.

DUBINSKY

Yes, and no ice in my vodka.

Hunan spends a long moment staring upwards then looks down at Dubinsky. He speaks as if to a child, emphasizing the absurdity...

HUNAN

But we can *not* agree to his terms of exchange.

Hunan stares. Dubinsky doesn't respond. He looks down the street into the distance. Hunan interprets the silence as acceptance and speaks with incredulity.

HUNAN (CONT'D)

You would agree to walk into the same room as a Captain of the *Vor v Zakone*.

Dubinsky gestures around at his nervous bodyguards.

DUBINSKY

No doubt you will all be in the room to protect me.

Hunan looks away and begins to laugh softly to himself. Dubinsky begins to justify himself...

DUBINSKY (CONT'D)

I am the only person who will know if the icon he hands over is the real one. I have to be there.

Hunan is shaking his head and speaks as an accusation.

HUNAN

You want to meet him, don't you. He fascinates you.

Dubinsky glares and speaks softly.

DUBINSKY

The *Vor* are thieves with honor. I believe this thief understands symbols.

Dubinsky's vodka arrives. He swallows it down in one.

Hunan is staring at Dubinsky with a look of disbelief but finally he shrugs, turns and walks. After he has gone the look on Dubinsky's face changes. Perhaps there is a deeper reason behind the way he acts with Hunan.

Hunan reaches the car and turns.

HUNAN

Mr Dubinsky, will you please get  
back into the car?

EXT. REGENT'S PARK MOSQUE - FRIDAY - DAY

In bright sunlight we glimpse the golden dome of the mosque through trees. (It resembles the golden dome of the cathedral in Moscow). Because it is Friday there are lots of worshippers leaving the mosque and bidding each other farewell. We find a long black Bentley parked beneath a line of chestnut trees and maybe recognize Tashkar's driver who is leaning against it, smoking a cigarette.

After a moment, Tashkar appears with two of his body-guards. They are walking away from the mosque exit toward the Bentley. The driver opens the rear door in readiness.

Then a white van suddenly screeches into shot. We see a CHINESE DRIVER and also recognize Tony, with his dyed blond hair. The van has pulled up just a few yards from where Tashkar is about to climb into his car.

Tony and the Chinese driver pull out Chinese military issue automatic pistols. They lean over each other to spray Tashkar and his men with bullets. The body-guards fall first, then the driver and finally Tashkar is hit as he tries to climb the railings around the Mosque. Tashkar falls back into the street and Tony keeps firing into his head, a look of cold fury in his eyes, avenging his mother.

Finally the driver shifts gear and the white van roars away...past the entrance to London Zoo, where men dressed as Chipmunks who were handing out leaflets are now diving for cover.

EXT. CHINATOWN SLOT MACHINE ARCADE - NIGHT

The slot machine arcade is busy and filled with the sound of coins being pumped into steel trays and the throb of music from the machines.

Nikolai enters and disappears into the blinding light of the machines, carrying his briefcase.

INT. CHINATOWN SLOT MACHINE ARCADE. BACK OFFICE

Tony, his driver and two other Chinese gangsters are waiting. Nikolai is shown into the room. Two of the gangsters are leaning against a wall. Tony is sitting where Madam Lau once sat.

Nikolai stands at the back of the chair which is offered to him.

TONY

Your information was good.

Nikolai nods.

NIKOLAI

So give me yours.

Tony gestures at one of his men who produces a stack of photographs, photocopied onto plain paper. Nikolai begins to look through them.

They are photos of Hunan, taken hurriedly on cellphones. We glimpse the first two of the photos and see they are photos of Hunan at the gambling tables of a Chinese Casino. Hunan is playing Mah Jong.

TONY

He comes to the casino on Sundays.

Nikolai has stopped at the fourth photograph. He reacts. We come around to see that it is a photo of Hunan standing beside a middle aged non-Chinese man. Nikolai appears to recognize the man.

He holds the photo up to Tony as a question and Tony consults one of his men in Chinese (we assume this is the guy who took the photos). The guy answers briefly in Chinese and Tony translates.

TONY (CONT'D)

He says that guy is Russian.

Nikolai appears to know already...

TONY (CONT'D)

He works at the Russian Embassy.

Nikolai nods. He is already reacting to the implication. The Chinese guy speaks and Tony translates.

TONY (CONT'D)

He says sometimes those two buy each other drinks.

Nikolai's eyes are burning as he folds the photo and puts it into his pocket. We sense he finds huge significance in the relationship between Hunan and the Russian (we may begin to piece together the significance ourselves, or not). When Nikolai has put the photo away, Tony looks at the others and shrugs.

TONY (CONT'D)

You know Nikolai, the uncles think we should do more business with you. You're a quiet man...like a Chinese.

Nikolai turns to leave.

EXT. CHINATOWN SLOT MACHINE ARCADE

Nikolai emerges from the arcade and lights a cigarette, reflecting on what he has just found out. Nikolai is standing in the same place where he told Kirill he would be better off without him. The memory appears to affect him. He blows smoke and checks his watch.

EXT. DOCTOR SHERENOVSKY'S HARLEY STREET CLINIC - NIGHT

Nikolai approaches the railings outside the clinic then trots down the steps to the front door. At the front door he presses the buzzer. It feels late...too late for a surgery to be open.

However, after a moment, Doctor Sherenovskiy himself opens the door. He looks deeply anxious and ushers Nikolai inside quickly.

INT. DOCTOR SHERENOVSKY'S HARLEY STREET CLINIC - NIGHT

The doctor hurries down a half-lit corridor with Nikolai behind him.

SHERENOVSKY

I can't allow this to continue for many more days. It is taking up half of my daylight time. I charge by the hour. I will have to give you a bill.

Sherenovskiy has reached a locked door. He takes out two keys and unlocks the door. He pushes it open onto a half-lit room. Sherenovskiy speaks softly and half smiles.

SHERENOVSKY (CONT'D)

He's doing ok.

INT. DOCTOR SHERNOVSKY'S HARLEY STREET CLINIC. PRIVATE ROOM

Nikolai enters the room which is lit only by street lights from outside.

At first we only see a bed and bedside table and a figure lying under white sheets. Nikolai takes a seat beside the bed...then flicks on the bedside lamp.

To our total surprise....we see Kirill asleep in the bed.

He looks a little thinner and is wearing a neckbrace. He is unshaven. When the light is switched on he reacts and, after a moment, his eyes blink open. When he sees Nikolai his first reaction is to half smile...but then his memories fall into place and his eyes darken. He tries to sit up but the brace around his neck and a bolt of pain stop him.

He growls in a hoarse whisper....

KIRILL

You broke my fucking neck.

Nikolai shrugs and pulls a quarter bottle of vodka from his pocket.

NIKOLAI

To stop you from moving.

Nikolai unscrews the top on the bottle. Kirill struggles to sit upright as he hisses...

KIRILL

You put a fucking hole in my head.

Nikolai puts the vodka bottle gently to Kirill's lips. Kirill relents quickly and takes a sip. The burn makes him cough.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

What was in that fucking shell?

NIKOLAI

Pig brains.

Nikolai puts the bottle to Kirill's lips again. It is a tender gesture, like a nurse offering water, even though the liquid is vodka. This time Kirill takes a deeper sip and the burn relieves him of some pain. Nikolai speaks softly...

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

I was trying to blow some brains into your head.

At last Kirill begins to smile.

Kirill knows that Nikolai saved his life. He reaches out to touch Nikolai's hand but Nikolai reaches into his pocket. He produces an envelope which he drops onto Kirill's lap. Kirill painfully sits up and tears the envelope open.

Inside he finds a Russian passport. As Kirill opens it...

NIKOLAI

Kirill should stay dead.

On the photo page of the passport Kirill sees his own photo with the name 'Dimitri Kalkovich'. He stares at it and rubs his thumb across the photo then looks up at Nikolai with moistness in his eyes. Nikolai gestures at the passport.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D SOFTLY)

Maybe Dimitri Kalkovich will be a chef.

Kirill is overwhelmed as Nikolai continues...

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

I have friends in Berlin who own restaurants.

Kirill hides his emotion by studying the passport. Finally he looks up.

KIRILL

Berlin is a long way.

NIKOLAI

Not so far.

KIRILL

It's cold.

NIKOLAI

Not so cold when your friends come to visit you.

Kirill takes a moment.

KIRILL

Why did you do this for me?

A pause. Nikolai's face hardens.

NIKOLAI

Because I need you to do me a favor in return.

Nikolai gets to his feet.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

I told you already. I am keeping  
you alive only for one reason.

Nikolai is now deadly serious. He gestures at the passport.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

There is a job Dimitri Kalkovich  
must do before he is free.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The kitchen is working at full capacity and flames burst from beneath heavy pans and skillets. We stay with the frantic activity of the kitchen for a while...and then the rear entrance door flies open.

Suddenly six heavy looking Turkish men burst into the kitchen with clubs and axes.

The waiters react with terror as the gangsters begin to sweep through the room, beating chefs and porters with clubs and fists, hurling boiling pots from their flames and kicking over tables...

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The Trans-Siberian kitchen is working hard too. We see Leon at the staff table working on accounts. He anxiously checks his watch.

Then the rear door bursts open and a second gang of Turkish heavies fly into the kitchen with weapons drawn...

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Back in the chinese restaurant, the chefs and porters have begun to fight back with machetes and blood is being spilt. A Turkish gangster is holding the face of a chef into the flame of a stove burner and his hair and face are beginning to burn. The gangster is demanding answers...

GANGSTER

Where's Tony?

The chef's hair catches light...his flesh crackles....

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The Turkish gang are demolishing the kitchen. One of them is turning on all the gas burners and a wave of flame shoots across the room.

Two of the chefs are being badly beaten and pots and pans are being hurled all around. Unconscious porters are being thrown into the deep freeze...

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT

Two of the heavies have kicked down a store room door which is in darkness. The store room is filled with the bodies of ducks and pigs which are hanging from hooks. The heavies enter the store room, slashing and unhooking the carcasses as they go.

Finally, behind a whole pig, they find Tony.

Tony flies at them with a machete and manages to slice off an ear but the second gangster has pulled his gun and shoots Tony dead. His body falls amongst the carcasses and more bullets are pumped into his body.

The gangsters withdraw and walk back out to the kitchen. They find a scene of devastation, the battle won, the Chinese chefs and porters either wounded or gone.

The gangster who shot Tony steals a piece of cooked duck and puts it into his mouth as the gangsters make their escape.

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT. KITCHEN - LATER

It is after midnight. A tap drips.

The kitchen is still wrecked. Leon is sitting at the staff table with his wife (VERONICA) and son, Yuri. The table is filled with medication and plasters and Veronica is making a great fuss of binding Leon's wounds and applying a bandage to his head.

Nikolai enters and looks around at the devastation in the kitchen. He peers at Leon and interprets the situation quickly.

Veronica glares at Nikolai. Yuri glares up at him too.

YURI

When the battle began the General  
was away.

Nikolai is impassive and speaks to the wife and child flatly.

NIKOLAI

Go upstairs.

There is a moment of resistance from Veronica and especially from Yuri until Leon nods that they must leave.

Veronica takes Yuri's hand and hurries him towards the stairs.

Nikolai sits down opposite Leon, who looks to be badly beaten. Nikolai offers a cigarette to him and Leon takes it in his bruised lips. Nikolai lights a match and holds it close to Leon's face but too far away to light the cigarette.

*Instead he uses the lit match to study Leon's wounds with professional interest.*

Finally Leon leans forward far enough to take a light.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

So?

A pause. Leon seems nervous.

LEON

Tashkar's brother knows you helped the Chinese.

Nikolai angles his head, staring at Leon.

NIKOLAI

How would he know that?

Leon shrugs. Finally...

LEON

They said they were looking for you Nikolai.

A pause.

LEON (CONT'D)

Maybe you should go away for a while.

Nikolai gets to his feet and fetches a half drunk bottle of red wine. He pours himself a glass and sits down again. As he pours he spills a little onto the floor.

NIKOLAI

So they came to kill me?

Leon nods.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

But I wasn't here.

Nikolai takes a cloth and leans down to wipe up the spilled wine. His face is below the table for a moment and he sees that Leon has his blood-stained jacket on the floor by his feet. Nikolai straightens...

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

You took a bad beating.

Leon nods and we see he is beginning to get scared now. He wipes his brow.

LEON

Nikolai, I need to get some sleep.

Nikolai suddenly drags his chair closer and puts his face very close to Leon's. He examines the wounds. Leon flinches as Nikolai reaches out to pull one of Leon's plasters away from his face. There is a tiny cut. Nikolai gently presses the plaster back onto the skin.

NIKOLAI

The wounds made by enemies... reach the bones.

Nikolai allows his words to sink in then gets to his feet. He deliberately turns his back on Leon.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

You think I am a fool Leon?

Leon glances down under the table at his jacket.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

You think I don't know you invited them here tonight to kill me?

With Nikolai's back turned, Leon dares to reach down for his jacket.

LEON

Nikolai...I think...

Nikolai doesn't turn. We glimpse the handle of a gun in the inside pocket of Leon's jacket. Leon hesitates...takes a breath.

LEON (CONT'D)

...I think you will never be my father.

Suddenly Leon makes a grab for his gun. He has it engaged but when Nikolai turns we realize he already has a sharp boning knife in his hand. In one move he kicks the gun out of Leon's hand and swipes the knife across Leon's throat.

Breath bubbles for a moment as Leon registers the astonishment of death.

Nikolai watches him fall forward onto the table where the plasters and medication are sent spilling to the floor. Then Leon's body slides to the floor too.

Nikolai waits a moment then takes a sip of red wine. Just then he hears the creak of the door at the foot of the stairs. In a blade of light he sees the face of Leon's son, Yuri, staring at him.

Nikolai blinks. Leon's body is hidden in the shadows so Yuri can't see that his father is dead. Nikolai speaks softly...

NIKOLAI

Go to sleep.

The boy closes the door and the blade of light disappears. Nikolai is left alone in half darkness.

The music of the *Spartacus* ballet begins...

INT. THE BOLSHOI BALLET ACADEMY. GYMNASIUM/STAGE - DAY

Bright sunlight floods the gymnasium through high windows. The seating gallery has been removed and the gymnasium is just a vast expanse of bare floorboards and mirrors.

We find Anton with his personal BALLET INSTRUCTOR. Anton is being put through his paces in the empty auditorium. He flies through the air to the music which is being played on a portable stereo. His instructor applauds gently and whispers encouragement as he leaps...

Then the door to the gymnasium opens and the RECEPTIONIST enters with a letter. She walks smartly across the bare floorboards towards Anton's instructor with the letter in her hand. As she hands it to the instructor, we recognize from the envelope that it is the letter written by Nikolai in his office.

Anton's instructor abruptly turns the music off and Anton stops dancing in mid-leap. Anton turns, breathless...

EXT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The restaurant is in half darkness and is closed. After a moment Hunan pulls up outside in an SUV. He peers at the dark exterior which looks forbidding.

He gets out and approaches the entrance where a sign hangs saying 'closed'. Hunan presses the bell. A light comes on inside. The door is unlocked and unchained. Nikolai appears at the door and offers Hunan inside. (He opens the door silently, just as Semyon used to do in our first story. Nikolai is becoming Semyon).

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT

The place is in half light with chairs stacked. Nikolai leads Hunan toward a table near the kitchen. As they walk...

HUNAN

It is Saturday. Are you not open for dinner?

NIKOLAI

There has been a death in the family.

Nikolai arrives at a table with a white tablecloth. He offers Hunan a seat.

HUNAN

Can I get a drink?

NIKOLAI

No.

Hunan shrugs. Nikolai stares at Hunan as he opens his briefcase and passes Nikolai a sheet of paper.

HUNAN

You will arrive at these GPS coordinates, unarmed, at 9am. You will leave your vehicle there.

Nikolai folds the sheet of paper.

HUNAN (CONT'D)

When you arrive you will be stripped naked....

NIKOLAI

...Arrive where?

Hunan half smiles and doesn't respond.

HUNAN

There will be bodyguards in the room as well as myself when you meet Mr Dubinsky.

A pause.

HUNAN (CONT'D)

There will be guns pointed at your head at all times.

Nikolai lights a cigarette. The silver bell tinkles on his wrist.

HUNAN (CONT'D)

Do you have any questions?

Nikolai blows smoke. Hunan studies Nikolai.

HUNAN (CONT'D)

He calls you thieves with honour.

Nikolai half smiles.

NIKOLAI

Rich men are not often  
sentimental.

A pause.

HUNAN

Absurdly he believes that somehow  
you are patriots.

Nikolai studies his cigarette. Hunan gets to his feet and leaves. Nikolai watches him go with a look of deep contempt.

After the door is closed, Nikolai checks his watch.

INT. KENSINGTON MANSION BLOCK. SMART APARTMENT.

A knife spins in the air, and is caught with a flourish by Kirill.

Kirill is in the well equipped kitchen of the rented apartment, preparing an elaborate dish involving duck and various sauces. Russian music is playing loudly and he is almost dancing. Steam rises and pots bubble gently.

He takes the sharp knife and begins to slice an orange. His neck is still stiff and he reacts to pain as he scoops up the segments of orange.

Then he hears the door buzzer and reacts...

KIRILL

Fuck, fuck.

Kirill panics a little then dries his hands on a tea towel and goes through to the living room where a spirit flame burns. He turns off the loud music and speaks into the intercom.

KIRILL (CONT'D INTO INTERCOM)

Speak to me.

EXT. KENSINGTON MANSION BLOCK - NIGHT

Nikolai is standing in the doorway of the block in the wealthy Kensington side street. He speaks through tight lips...a little embarrassed.

NIKOLAI

I forgot the code. Just open the door.

INT. KENSINGTON MANSION BLOCK. SMART APARTMENT

Kirill grins then presses a button to open the door. He looks around the apartment and throws some cushions back onto their chairs. He hurries to the kitchen and opens the oven. He produces an elaborate dish from inside and places it on a surface. It looks magnificent.

He then goes to the refrigerator and takes out a bottle of expensive wine. He pulls the cork and reacts to a sharp pain in his neck which makes him laugh.

There is a knock at the door and he hurries to open it. Nikolai is standing there.

KIRILL

How can you forget the code? It's your fucking code.

They kiss each other on both cheeks as Nikolai enters. Kirill heads back for the kitchen and grabs glasses for the wine. Nikolai surveys the apartment, the table set for two. Kirill talks as he fusses over the wine.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

You're an hour early.

Kirill returns with two glasses of wine which he puts down on the table. Nikolai is still standing, still has his coat on.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

You know, this place is ok. They have old guys in weird hats who go out and get booze for you.

NIKOLAI

Porters.

KIRILL

Yeah. I haven't been outside for a week. I'm going crazy...

NIKOLAI (SUDDENLY AND ABRUPTLY)

You leave tonight.

Kirill freezes. A pause...

KIRILL  
Tonight?

Nikolai nods. Kirill takes a breath, looks around at his preparations. Nikolai pulls up his sleeve and gently unfastens the silver bell on the chain around his wrist. He holds it up and offers it to Kirill.

NIKOLAI  
You will need this.

Kirill hesitates. He takes the bell on the chain and appears to understand what he must do with it. He slips it into his pocket. He looks a little scared. The he grins and gestures at the kitchen...

KIRILL  
But we can have one last meal  
right? I cooked. It's a duck  
with all kinds of French things  
up its ass.

Nikolai is impassive.

NIKOLAI  
I have things to do.

A pause. Nikolai turns and is about to leave. Kirill grabs his arm.

KIRILL  
Hey, hey...you don't wish me  
luck?

A pause.

KIRILL (CONT'D)  
I might get fucking killed doing  
this for you.

Kirill tries to laugh.

KIRILL (CONT'D)  
I been this guy Dimitri for two  
weeks and I like it. And then  
fuck. Maybe it's Dimitri  
goodbye.

Finally Nikolai half smiles. He steps forward and hugs Kirill.

NIKOLAI  
Good luck *Dimitri*.

Kirill nods and laughs as he looks to the floor. Nikolai holds his arm for a moment then heads for the door again.

KIRILL

And we will meet in Berlin.

Nikolai doesn't reply. He leaves and closes the door. Kirill reacts and takes an anxious breath. He takes out the silver bell from his pocket and peers at it. Suddenly the enormity of whatever it is that is planned hits him.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

*Fuck.*

EXT. 44 CLUB

A line of well-heeled clubbers are waiting in line. Nikolai walks past the line and heads for the door, where the burly doormen defer to him and let him pass without a word.

INT. 44 CLUB

Zelda is sitting at the bar talking to a customer when she sees Nikolai approaching. Nikolai walks with purpose. He doesn't speak as he takes her arm and gestures towards Monty's office.

ZELDA

Nikolai, where have you been?

The guy who is with Zelda speaks up...

GUY

Hey, she's with me.

Nikolai simply looks at the guy and he shrivels away. Zelda senses danger in Nikolai's silence but goes with him.

INT. 44 CLUB. MONTY'S OFFICE

Monty is having sex with another young hopeful over the desk when the door flies open and Nikolai enters. Monty reacts with shock but no defiance. Nikolai pulls Zelda into the room. With a gesture Nikolai orders Monty out and Monty begins to hurriedly pull up his trousers. The young girl pulls down her skirt. Nikolai throws Monty's jacket at him as he passes.

After Monty and the girl have gone, Nikolai locks the office door. He turns to Zelda, who is lighting a cigarette, silhouetted against the CCTV monitors.

ZELDA

So I'm guessing you don't want to dance.

Nikolai steps up to her.

He suddenly pulls her dress apart, the buttons flying. He then pulls hard and her dress rips. He yanks the dress down her arms, revealing her underwear.

She doesn't resist but her look of contempt is her defence. Nikolai glares into her eyes as he roughly feels her breasts and her back.

NIKOLAI

You are not wearing a wire...

ZELDA

You *really* don't want to dance.

NIKOLAI

...so we can talk.

He takes her face in his hand and squeezes hard, fighting a furious anger which we, as yet, don't understand. She struggles and scratches his hand away.

ZELDA

What the fuck is wrong with you?

Nikolai reaches into his pocket and produces the photograph of Hunan with the Russian in the casino. He smooths it out on the desk and forces her to look at it. Zelda peers at it and tries to hide her reaction.

NIKOLAI

Hunan...

Nikolai stares into Zelda's eyes.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

...works for the Russian Government.

Nikolai examines her reaction. He has an ability to sense deceit. He suddenly pulls a gun and points it directly at Zelda's head. She has been around guns but she is scared. Nikolai speaks evenly.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

They embassy would not have allowed him to use a *whore* like you as a go-between...

Nikolai engages the gun.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)  
...unless you were also known to  
them.

Zelda appears to begin to understand that there is no  
hiding place. She deflates a little. The gun is still  
pointed.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D SOFTLY)  
Tell me only the truth.

Zelda hesitates. Then, after a moment, she speaks flatly.

ZELDA  
For three years...

A pause.

ZELDA (CONT'D)  
...A little more...

A pause.

ZELDA (CONT'D)  
I have been reporting to the  
Russian Embassy about your  
activities.

Nikolai reacts but keeps the gun pointed.

ZELDA (CONT'D)  
It is an informal arrangement.  
The money is good. So yes I am  
known to them.

Zelda's dress is torn open and she holds it together. She  
is shaking a little. She looks up at him.

ZELDA (CONT'D)  
And I know also that you are an  
FSB agent.

Nikolai reacts with a flicker.

ZELDA (CONT'D)  
I even know your real name.

Each revelation is a step down into despair for Nikolai.  
His composure is almost cracked. Zelda studies him.

Nikolai slowly lowers the gun. She can see the extent of  
his reaction and speaks as a statement of fact...

ZELDA (CONT'D)  
You have never been deceived  
before, have you Nikolai?

He doesn't respond. Zelda mocks herself.

ZELDA (CONT'D)  
Maybe love...blinds us.

The CCTV monitors continue to shift through their sequence behind Zelda. We hear the muffled throb of music. Zelda steps closer to Nikolai. She lets her dress fall open.

ZELDA (CONT'D)  
We are both revealed.

She dares to take another step. She reaches out to touch Nikolai.

ZELDA (CONT'D)  
And we are the same.

A pause. She stands as a mirror image to him, as she did once when she was teasing him.

ZELDA (CONT'D)  
So...

Nikolai looks to her...and they kiss. Nikolai allows himself to soften into the kiss for a moment. He turns away but she puts her hand on his face and they kiss again. She pulls his shirt open, just as he did to her. She reveals the tattoo of a star on his chest, the symbol of his status, and she puts her hand over it gently to cover it up.

ZELDA (CONT'D)  
My sweetheart.

He turns to her. Then suddenly he pushes her away and she falls against Monty's desk. He points his gun at her head and his eyes grow dark.

Everything freezes.

EXT. MOSCOW AIRPORT - DAY

We see a blizzard blowing as a jet lands on the snowy tarmac. We see a caption.

*Moscow. Next day.*

INT. MOSCOW AIRPORT. PASSPORT CONTROL

An overnight flight from London has just landed and the passengers are approaching Border Control. In the weary queue we find Kirill.

He arrives at the control desk and hands over his fake passport. He grins. The Russian Border Patrol officer runs the passport through his scanning machine. There is a moment of tension. Then the Border Officer hands Kirill his passport back. As Kirill takes it we see the silver chain with the silver bell around his wrist.

INT. MOSCOW AIRPORT. ARRIVALS - DAY

Kirill emerges into the arrivals lounge where drivers wait with cards bearing the names of arriving passengers. We see a driver in a dark suit holding a card with the name 'DIMITRI KALKOVICH'.

Kirill walks toward the guy with the card...but walks straight past him (he has forgotten for a moment that he has a new name). Kirill disappears into the crowds...then he re-appears and greets the guy with the card with a bashful smile (he has remembered).

The guy with the card hands Kirill a set of car keys and whispers in his ear. Kirill takes the keys and walks on.

INT. MOSCOW AIRPORT. CAR PARK. BLACK MERCEDES

We study the inside of the car for a moment and see a shoe box on the passenger seat. Then the locks all unlock at once.

A few seconds later Kirill gets into the car. He opens the shoe box and finds a pistol which he puts into his inside pocket. There is also an envelope which he half opens to reveal two train tickets. We might glimpse the word 'Tolstoi'.

Kirill puts the tickets and the envelope into his other pocket and fires the engine. He checks his look in the rear-view mirror then reverses away.

EXT. REMOTE SURREY CROSSROADS - DAY

A black SUV drives forward into shot at the same speed.

We are at the same desolate, rural crossroads where Monty left the envelope of photographs many days ago. The SUV pulls up abruptly. The door opens and Nikolai gets out with his briefcase in his hand. He is wearing dark glasses.

He stands beside his car for a moment and then the red light of a rifle sight plays on his face and across his dark glasses.

INT. DUBINSKY'S COUNTRY HOUSE - CORRIDOR

Nikolai is blindfolded, walking quickly down the corridor, flanked by two bodyguards. The corridor is decorated with oil paintings. Nikolai has his briefcase in his hand.

INT. DUBINSKY'S COUNTRY HOUSE. BARE ROOM

Nikolai is led, still blindfolded, into a large bare room with no furniture. The heavy drape curtains are drawn but light filters in through gaps.

Hunan is waiting by a window and there is a silk robe on the floor near his feet. He turns as Nikolai is led to the middle of the room. Nikolai puts the briefcase down.

After a moment.

HUNAN

Take off his clothes.

The two bodyguards begin to remove Nikolai's jacket and unbutton his shirt. His shirt is pulled off and his belt is unbuckled. As Nikolai is stripped we slowly reveal all the tattoos on his body. Hunan studies them, apparently fascinated.

One of the bodyguards bends and unties Nikolai's shoelaces and Nikolai steps out of his shoes. The rest of his clothes are removed and finally Nikolai is naked.

Hunan studies Nikolai's body for a while. Nikolai is expressionless behind his blindfold. Hunan picks up the silk robe and gestures at the bodyguards.

The bodyguards pick up Nikolai's clothes and they leave with them. Hunan and Nikolai are left alone. Nikolai looks like a decorated statue in a shaft of light. Now that the bodyguards are gone, Hunan looks anxious.

Hunan steps close and removes Nikolai's blindfold. He then hands Nikolai the silk robe. Nikolai reaches out and pulls it on. Hunan speaks softly and quickly.

HUNAN (CONT'D)

You will feel that one side of the robe is heavier than the other.

Nikolai registers an imbalance.

HUNAN (CONT'D)

There is a loaded 9mm automatic pistol in the lining.

A pause. Hunan waits for a reaction but there is none. Nikolai pulls the belt of his robe tight. Hunan checks the door and hisses...

HUNAN (CONT'D)

I know you are an assassin.

A pause.

HUNAN (CONT'D)

We are on the same side.

Nikolai casually reaches down and pulls out the pistol. Hunan is shocked at his lack of reaction. Nikolai engages the pistol and examines it casually. Hunan is wrong-footed.

HUNAN (CONT'D)

You knew?

Nikolai studies Hunan with contempt.

HUNAN (CONT'D)

*How did you know?*

Nikolai doesn't reply. Hunan flickers a little and looks even more anxious.

HUNAN (CONT'D)

I am just a facilitator. You should know I have never seen a man killed before...

Nikolai interrupts.

NIKOLAI

Who else will be in the room?

Hunan takes a breath and glances at the door again.

HUNAN

Two bodyguards. They are both working for Moscow too. It will be a simple execution.

Nikolai nods and puts the pistol back in its hiding place. Then he glances down at the briefcase and Hunan senses a question.

HUNAN (CONT'D)

The Minister has agreed that you will take the icon. The profit you make is all yours. Payment for serving your country.

Nikolai doesn't respond. They hear footsteps approaching.

Two bodyguards enter. They take up positions and a moment later Dubinsky steps into the room.

Nikolai and Dubinsky stare at each other. One of the bodyguards locks the door behind him. Then Dubinsky approaches. The bodyguards now have their guns drawn but Nikolai and Dubinsky only have eyes for each other.

Hunan perhaps fleetingly imagines that the two men recognize each other. Dubinsky stands a few feet away from Nikolai.

He nods a gentle greeting. Nikolai half smiles. Hunan tenses, waiting for Nikolai to do the work. Instead, Dubinsky speaks softly as he stares at Nikolai's face.

DUBINSKY

'IV, IV.'

A pause.

DUBINSKY (CONT'D)

Ivan Ivanovich.

Nikolai nods once. Dubinsky smiles.

DUBINSKY (CONT'D)

My old friend.

Hunan looks confused and is getting nervous. He gestures at Nikolai to do the work. Nikolai is still staring at Dubinsky.

NIKOLAI

Comrade.

Nikolai suddenly pulls the pistol from his robe and points it directly at Dubinsky's head. Nikolai looks calm and Dubinsky looks calm too. Hunan steps away from Dubinsky and takes a fast breath. After a long moment...

HUNAN

Please. Do it.

Nikolai waits another moment and nods at Dubinsky, a silent communication. Dubinsky nods back.

*Nikolai then turns a few degrees and shoots the first of the bodyguards dead.*

Dubinsky, meanwhile, has reached into his inside pocket and produced his Colt revolver. He shoots Hunan in the head. At the same time Nikolai shoots the second bodyguard and puts another bullet in Hunan just to be sure.

After only a few seconds, Dubinsky and Nikolai are alone in the room with three dead bodies.

Dubinsky's Colt revolver is smoking into the shafts of light. Dubinsky's hand shakes as he lays the revolver down beside the briefcase which contains the icon. Then Dubinsky looks up at Nikolai.

DUBINSKY

I thought you had died a long time ago.

Dubinsky peers at Nikolai then steps close and hugs him.

DUBINSKY (CONT'D)

You are still loyal? After all these years.

Nikolai pulls away from Dubinsky and doesn't reply. At that moment we hear fast footsteps and then the sound of the door being kicked and hammered. Finally the lock is shot away and three more bodyguards burst into the room with guns drawn.

They stop when they see Dubinsky alive but Hunan lying dead. Dubinsky raises his hand to calm them and he gestures at Nikolai.

DUBINSKY (CONT'D)

This man is a friend.

The bodyguards all stare at Nikolai.

DUBINSKY (CONT'D)

My former head of security. Many years ago.

Dubinsky peers at Nikolai with curiosity.

DUBINSKY (CONT'D)

And I think perhaps like me he is still a Socialist.

EXT. DUBINSKY'S COUNTRY HOUSE

The bodies of Hunan and the two bodyguards are slumped inside Hunan's SUV. Nikolai is pouring gasoline over their bodies and over the interior of the car. He empties the canister then drops it.

He closes the passenger door, which has a window open.

He wipes his hands with a dry cloth then takes out a box of matches. He strikes the match and, as he does, a cellphone begins to ring inside the car. It is coming from the inside pocket of Hunan's jacket.

Nikolai thinks for a moment then drops the match into the car. The car is engulfed in a ball of flames.

As Nikolai walks back toward the house away from the burning car, the phone continues to ring for a few moments. Nikolai checks his watch...

INT. DASHCA-TULA. NEAR MOSCOW

Krogius is on the telephone, waiting for a reply, in the same room that he used to brief Nikolai. He is sitting at the head of the long empty table (we might afford ourselves one more glimpse of the oil portrait of Putin). Outside we hear Krogius's children playing in the snow. Krogius listens to a phone ringing down the line then the call is cut off.

He reacts with a dark look and draws his own conclusions before replacing the phone to cut the call. He then quickly picks up the phone again and begins to dial.

INT. THE BOLSHOI BALLET ACADEMY. RECEPTION

The old, sour receptionist is at her station as Kirill walks in fast. He heads towards the double doors that lead into the academy. He pushes them but the doors are locked.

RECEPTIONIST

I will need to see your pass.

Kirill turns and grins. He approaches the desk and reaches into his pocket.

KIRILL

Sweetheart, I am in a hurry.

He pulls out his pistol and points it.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

I'm looking for a ballet dancer.

INT. THE BOLSHOI BALLET ACADEMY. GYMNASIUM.

Anton and the *corps de ballet* (exclusively female) are being put through their paces by the instructor. They are in the final stages of rehearsal but are not yet dressed in the costume of the *Spartacus* ballet.

The music pounds and we watch the beauty of the dance, with ballerina's circling Anton.

Then the double doors fly open and the receptionist enters, followed by Kirill, who has a gun drawn. He fires a shot into a far mirror and it shatters. All heads turn, the dance stops. The instructor kills the music.

Kirill identifies Anton and calls out.

KIRILL

We got to go.

INSTRUCTOR

Who the hell are you?

Kirill fires another shot and shatters another mirror. The instructor falls silent. The receptionist is whimpering.

KIRILL

Anton, come on.

Anton looks bewildered and steps between the terrified ballerinas. He stares at Kirill...and speaks with disbelief.

ANTON

The letter was real?

Kirill nods and reaches into his jacket pocket. Kirill pulls out the silver chain with the silver bell and holds it up while still pointing the gun.

KIRILL

You gave this to your Dad ten years ago. You said it was to protect him.

Kirill tosses it to Anton, who catches it and studies it.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

Now he is going to protect you.

Anton is stunned. Kirill has no time to waste on uncertainty and points the gun directly at him.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

Let's go.

INT. THE BOLSHOI BALLET ACADEMY. CORRIDOR

Kirill is hurrying Anton down the corridor towards the student's lockers.

ANTON

I have to change.

KIRILL

No. Just grab your stuff.

Anton steps up to his locker...

ANTON

Where are we going?

KIRILL

Finland.

Anton reacts with astonishment.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

What's wrong with Finland, they  
have good fish there.

ANTON

I don't have my passport.

Kirill yanks open Anton's locker and grabs his bag of clothes and belongings for him. He rummages inside it...and, to Anton's astonishment, he produces Anton's passport.

KIRILL

Your mother put it in for you.  
She's going to meet you across  
the border. Your Dad fixed  
everything.

Kirill hands Anton his bag and Anton finally looks reassured. They both begin to run.

INT. LENINGRADSKI TRAIN STATION. MOSCOW - NIGHT

The place is busy with travelers as Kirill hurries Anton toward a particular platform. Kirill is walking fast and Anton is trotting beside him. Kirill looks up at the departure board.

KIRILL

We're looking for a train called  
the '*Tolstoi*'.

Anton is still slightly dazed.

ANTON

What will we *do* in Helsinki?

Kirill keeps walking but turns to Anton and grins...

KIRILL

Me? Get laid, drink.

INT. LENINGRADSKI TRAIN STATION. TICKET BARRIER - NIGHT

A large and plush sleeper train called the '*Tolstoi*' is at the buffers and passengers are hauling their luggage aboard. Kirill and Anton arrive at the barrier where a uniformed ticket inspector is checking tickets.

Kirill hands him two tickets and the inspector studies them.

INSPECTOR  
You have passports?

Kirill hands the inspector his passport. Anton reaches into his bag and hands the inspector his passport.

The inspector looks up at Anton to check his likeness. Anton shrinks a little. The inspector hands the passports back. As he does, the inspector notices the 'Bolshoi' logo on Anton's bag. He smiles...

INSPECTOR (CONT'D)  
You are Bolshoi?

Anton smiles and nods but Kirill senses danger and urges him through the barrier.

KIRILL  
Come on, let's go.

The ticket inspector watches them go with a little curiosity.

In the bright light of the platform, we see Kirill and Anton boarding the train.

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The restaurant is closed and in half light. Car headlights sweep the scene and we hear a car door being closed. After a moment Nikolai enters. He doesn't turn on the lights but heads for the bar where he pours himself a Vodka from the dispenser. Nikolai sits down at a table and places his cellphone on the bare white tablecloth.

On the screen of the cellphone we see that the time is 19.43. We hear a train platform whistle blow.

INT. 'TOLSTOI' TRAIN - NIGHT

The interior is smart and elegant and Kirill and Anton have first class tickets. They sit at a dining table in silence as a uniformed waiter pours Kirill some wine. The lights of the suburbs of Moscow glide by.

The waiter turns to Anton.

WAITER  
Some wine?

ANTON  
I don't.

KIRILL

He does.

The waiter pours Anton some wine and Kirill grins at him. After the waiter has gone Kirill raises his glass and Anton anxiously raises his glass too.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

To freedom.

Kirill swigs the wine.

ANTON

I don't even know your name.

Kirill swigs some more.

KIRILL

Dimitri. I think I'm half Greek.

A long pause. Anton takes only a small sip of wine. He peers at Kirill.

ANTON

I hardly remember him.

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Nikolai is still sitting in the restaurant alone in his vigil. He is smoking a cigarette. There is a bottle of vodka on the table and a glass poured.

After a moment the kitchen door opens, shedding some light. Maybe to our surprise we see Zelda emerge from the kitchen (we realize Nikolai spared her life).

It is evident that Nikolai was expecting her. She takes off her fur coat and comes to sit down at the table opposite Nikolai and pours herself some vodka.

She takes a drag on Nikolai's cigarette.

ZELDA

I told the Embassy you'd arranged for your son to get a flight from Moscow airport to Dubrovnik.

Nikolai nods gently.

ZELDA (CONT'D)

They're pretty angry with you.

Nikolai peers at her.

INT. 'TOLSTOI' TRAIN. SLEEPER COMPARTMENT - MIDNIGHT

In shadows and the flash of passing lights we can just make out Kirill's sleeping face inside the small sleeper compartment. Then the train begins to brake sharply and the grind of the wheels makes Kirill's eyes flicker open.

He sits up as the train begins to slow to a halt. He looks a little hung-over but he wipes his face with his hand and gets off the bed.

He reaches into his jacket and slips his pistol under the thin mattress.

INT. 'TOLSTOI' TRAIN. CORRIDOR.

Outside we see the train platform as the train slows down. We glimpse the border crossing between Russia and Finland illuminated in bright white lights in the near distance. Garish advertisements for cheap drinks and tobacco slip by slowly. Train guards, police and Border Patrol stroll around the platform.

Kirill looks dishevelled as he comes out of his compartment and knocks the door of the sleeper compartment next to his own. He has a large envelope in his hand. After a moment, Anton opens the door, looking bleary.

Kirill slips inside Anton's compartment.

INT. 'TOLSTOI' TRAIN. ANTON'S COMPARTMENT.

The space is cramped. The train finally stops with a jerk and we hear whistles and voices from the platform. Kirill speaks in a whisper and begins to empty the envelope in his hand.

KIRILL

It's going to be ok. You and me  
are brothers.

Kirill hands Anton a fake passport. Anton glances at his own photo beside a false name and reacts with terror. Kirill speaks calmly...

KIRILL (CONT'D)

It's in case your real name is on  
a list. Just this once we use  
this. Your Dad had it made so  
it's the best.

Anton steps back, still horrified. From the envelope Kirill pulls out a leaflet advertizing a circus in Helsinki. We glimpse pictures of clowns and elephants...

KIRILL (CONT'D)

If they ask why we're going to Helsinki we say we're going to see the circus. It's your Dad's idea so it'll work.

We can hear Border Patrol officers boarding the train and knocking doors further down the corridor. Anton looks scared and whispers.

ANTON

Do you really think they might be looking for me?

Kirill shrugs, checks his watch.

KIRILL

You are Mikhail Kalkovich. No one is looking for you.

Kirill then takes a sealed envelope from the larger envelope and shoves it into Anton's inside pocket.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

When you get to Helsinki you give this to your mama. She's waiting for you.

Anton reacts but Kirill hushes him (we are finding that Kirill is good when he is in charge).

KIRILL (CONT'D)

In Finland you are going to claim asylum. All the explanations are in the envelope. Your Dad fixed everything. Now, what's your name?

Anton can hardly speak he is so afraid.

ANTON

Mikhail Kalkovich.

Kirill nods and gives him an encouraging smile. There is a knock at the door. Two Russian Border police are in the corridor.

POLICE 1

Could you step outside?

Kirill smiles and urges Anton outside. The police take their passports and begin to examine them. There is a long silence. The officer with Anton's passport looks up at him and Anton almost withers.

POLICE 1 (CONT'D)

You are the ballet dancer?

Anton freezes and looks to Kirill.

POLICE 1 (CONT'D)

The ticket inspector said there was a ballet dancer on board the train. You look like a ballet dancer.

Kirill suddenly starts to laugh.

KIRILL

What, you saying he's a fag?  
He's a gymnast.

Kirill reaches into his pocket and produces the leaflet for the Helsinki circus.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

Some day he will be a trapeze artist. Look, we're going to Helsinki to see this. He's going to be a circus guy.

As Kirill hands the leaflet to the police officer, the officer glimpses the tattoos on Kirill's wrist. The officer gently pushes Kirill's sleeve up a little to reveal the stars and symbols of the Vor. Kirill grins.

KIRILL (CONT'D)

I should've done stuff like that when I was a kid instead of being stupid, you know?

The Border Patrol officers glance at each other....then they hand the passports back. It seems they are convinced. Kirill nods firmly, keeping his composure. Anton is still frozen in terror.

POLICE 1

Enjoy the circus.

The police officers turn and step off the train. Anton is still frozen. Kirill busies himself putting the passports away. Then he speaks softly...

KIRILL

You did ok. Like your Dad.

Anton is still staring out at the platform. Kirill turns to go back into his sleeper. Anton watches as the two police officers stop on the platform and begin to speak to a guy in a brown raincoat who glances up in the direction of the train.

The guy in the brown raincoat boards the train.

INT. 'TOLSTOI' TRAIN. ANTON'S COMPARTMENT

The train is beginning to slowly move on toward a short tunnel which marks the Russian/Finnish border. Kirill is filled with delight and has his cellphone to his ear. Anton is still scared. Kirill gets a reply on his phone and hisses into it...

KIRILL

We fucking did it, Nikolai, we did it...

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT - DAWN

Nikolai is at the table and has just picked up his phone. Zelda is asleep on a bench-seat.

NIKOLAI

You are across the border?

He listens to Kirill's babbling voice for a few moments then interrupts...

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

Are you *across* the border?

INT. 'TOLSTOI' TRAIN. ANTON'S COMPARTMENT.

Kirill is fizzing as he kneels up on the cramped seat and peers out of the window...

KIRILL

We're twenty metres from the tunnel...

The train is moving slowly...

KIRILL (CONT'D)

This call might cut when we hit the tunnel. Nikolai, we fucking did it!

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT - DAWN

Zelda is just waking as Nikolai speaks in a hoarse voice.

NIKOLAI

No Kirill, the danger is now. Stay close to him.

INT. 'TOLSTOI' TRAIN. ANTON'S COMPARTMENT.

The train is just beginning to gather momentum and the tunnel that marks the border is looming. Kirill has the phone in his hand and Anton is staring at the door to the compartment. Kirill looks out of the window and speaks into the phone...

KIRILL

Ok the tunnels here, it's going  
to cut, hold the line...

The train enters the short tunnel and the compartment is in uncertain light. Suddenly there is a gunshot and the lock on the compartment door flies off in splinters. The door is then pulled open. The guy in the brown raincoat is in the corridor with his gun raised. He aims directly at Anton...

Kirill drops the phone and flies forwards. He takes the bullet meant for Anton in his chest but his momentum knocks the assassin off his feet.

Kirill lands on top of the assassin and using his brutal, animal strength he begins to choke the life out of the assassin. The assassin fires another bullet into Kirill and Kirill growls like a bear. He pulls the gun away from the assassin and shoots him once in the head.

Blood splatters up the window of the train.

The train emerges into bright daylight on the other side of the tunnel in Finland. Kirill takes a huge breath and rolls off the body of the assassin. He has two huge bullet wounds in his chest and his life is draining away fast.

He tries to speak but air escapes his lungs through his bullet wounds. He stares up at Anton for a long time and finally manages to whisper...

KIRILL (CONT'D)

Nikolai...

The train is gathering speed. It is a bright and beautiful day. Kirill dies.

Anton is staring with horror at the two bodies. He steps back and the door to the compartment slides closed. Anton almost steps on the cellphone which Kirill dropped when he leapt to save Anton's life.

In horror Anton bends down and picks up the phone. After a long moment...he speaks into it...

ANTON

Papa?

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RESTAURANT - DAWN

Nikolai is holding the phone to his ear tightly. He listens to his son's voice for a while. Finally...he tries to speak but finds he cannot. He listens for a few moments. Finally...

NIKOLAI

Soon...

He can't speak anymore and cuts the call. He looks exhausted and gently puts the phone down. Zelda is staring at him and comes close. Nikolai rests his head on his hands and stares down at the table. Zelda gently touches his face.

Morning light is just beginning to light the room. Zelda gently strokes Nikolai's arm. We stay with them for a moment.

Then the front door of the restaurant is unlocked. Leon's wife, Veronica, and Yuri enter and hesitate when they see Nikolai. Veronica is scared but angry too.

VERONICA

We have come to get my husband's things.

Nikolai doesn't respond. He stares down at the table. Zelda nods permission. Veronica and Yuri walk past Nikolai's table.

As Yuri walks he stares at Nikolai. His look is one of sheer hatred. Nikolai doesn't look up.

Yuri stops and glares at Nikolai. Veronica drags Yuri away towards the stairs. Nikolai and Zelda are left alone in the empty restaurant.

We stay with them as Zelda lights a cigarette. We may expect to fade. Nikolai is still staring down at the table.

Then we hear a clatter on the stairs and hear Veronica yell...

VERONICA (CONT'D OOV)

No Yuri!!

Zelda looks across to the kitchen door as we hear fast footsteps on the stairs.

The kitchen door flies open. Yuri appears, holding his father's pistol in both hands and aiming it directly at Nikolai.

Zelda tenses and Nikolai senses the danger. He very slowly looks up. Yuri is staring deep into Nikolai's eyes with the gun pointed directly at Nikolai's head.

Veronica appears in the kitchen door and freezes. Nikolai and Yuri's eyes are locked.

Cut to black.

THE END