

EXT. MOSCOW - DAY

SUPER - MOSCOW 1902

It's a clear winter day and the sunlight gleams off the golden spires of the Kremlin. The snow sparkles as horse-drawn carriages make their way down the broad roads. People, all bundled up, bustle along the cold streets.

PRINCESS GUSAROVA hurries her whining children, ALEXANDER 5 and RYSKA 8, into a carriage. The carriage pulls away and turns down a smaller street.

As we follow the carriage through town the scene changes. The streets become more narrow. Mansions and fancy shops are replaced with wooden apartments and pubs.

The carriage pulls up to a textile factory and the princess steps out, looking at the building with dread.

INT. FACTORY - DAY

Gusarova, carrying a large basket of bread, looks at the rows of spinning mules and pulls her children closer.

She stifles her shock at the terrible conditions and begins handing out bread to the women and children working there.

NADYA, a gaunt 24 year-old, smiles gratefully as she accepts a loaf. Nadya's eyes travel over the princess's intricately embroidered petticoat.

FLASHBACK

INT. DRESSMAKER'S SHOP - DAY

Nadya, radiant and finely dressed, smiles as her sister, OLENA, models a dress similar to the princess's.

Their mother, NIKITA DOROFYEVA, scrutinizes the material and cut. The girls roll their eyes at one another.

BACK TO THE FACTORY

Nadya picks at the bread while watching the privileged family continue their slumming.

She notices a large expensive brooch on the princess's dress.

FLASHBACK

INT. JEWELRY SHOP - DAY

Olena holds up a gaudy pair of earrings for Nadya's approval. Nadya checks the price tag and shakes her head vigorously.

Olena turns to her mother and pouts a little. Madam Dorofeyeva takes out her money purse and pays for the earrings as Nadya looks on in exasperation.

BACK TO THE FACTORY

Nadya puts the bread in her apron pocket, and gets back to work.

As she picks up the end of the thread she notices her hands, dirty and cracked with jagged nails.

FLASHBACK

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

Nadya's perfectly manicured, soft white hand slips into the outstretched hand of the handsome young FILIK VITSIN.

She smiles demurely as he leads her out onto the dance floor.

BACK TO FACTORY

As Nadya continues to work the spinning mule the factory sounds become louder and louder, then slowly change to the sounds of a party.

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

The golden glow of the chandeliers bathes the room filled with men and women in elegant period garb.

MUSICIANS play a lively tune. The floor is alive with dancing.

The din of many cheery VOICES can be heard above the music.

Nadya sips champagne, as a YOUNG MAN tries to chat her up with politics, but Nadya's attention is on her sister.

She watches Olena laugh merrily at a YOUNG OFFICER'S joke. Olena barely looks at Filik as he hands her a champagne.

Filik moves closer to her and she finally turns and smiles at him.

Nadya smiles to herself.

YOUNG MAN

(o.s.)

Don't you agree, MIss Nadya?

Nadya turns to the young man and laughs nervously.

NADYA

The music is loud, I'm afraid I missed that last part.

YOUNG MAN

I was just saying that the Tsar shouldn't tolerate the worker's strikes.

Nadya scowls and opens her mouth to form a rebuttal, but is interrupted when her mother locks arms with her and urges her away.

NIKITA

I hate to take you away from your charming companion, but I simply must introduce you to someone.

Nikita smiles at the young man who reluctantly nods his consent.

Away from the young man Nikita turns to her daughter.

NIKITA

No politics, Nadya, I beg you. Princess Katya has barely spoken a word to me since your speech on the plight of the child workers.

NADYA

Well, it's abominable --

Nikita holds up her hand.

NIKITA

(emphatically)

No politics.

Nadya presses her lips together and walks away from her mother.

She looks at the opulence all around her and downs her champagne.

EXT. DANCING HALL - NIGHT

Dorofeyeva and Olena emerge chatting merrily. Nadya follows.

A street child extends some homemade candy to sell. Dorofeyeva and Olena don't even notice her.

Nadya shoots her mother and sister a look of disdain, then takes out some change and puts it in the girl's hand.

EXT. STREETS OF MOSCOW - DAY

Nadya, Olena, and Filik laugh and talk as they make their way home, ice skates thrown over their shoulders.

INT. DOROFEYEV HOME - FOYER - EVENING

Nadya, Filik, and Olena stumble in laughing merrily. They drop their ice skates near the door.

OLENA

(teasing)

-- And then dear Filik fell flat on his back!

More laughs. The servant USTENIA enters presumably to take their coats.

NADYA
Ustenia, the Count will stay to
dinner. Is mother --

Ustenia puts her hand on Nadya's and gives her a look of consternation.

NADYA
What is it, Ustenia?

USTENIA
(whispering)
Mistress Dorofeyeva is unwell. The
doctor will see you in the library.

NADYA
(no longer merry)
Forgive me Filik. I'm afraid you
will not be able to stay for dinner
this evening.

OLENA
Why Nadya, whatever has come over
you? Of course Filik can stay to
dinner.

NADYA
You will excuse Olena, but that
will not be possible today.
Ustenia, help Miss Olena with her
things.

Ustenia approaches Olena to take her coat. Olena throws her coat down.

OLENA
(on the verge of a
tantrum)
Filik will stay to dinner!

NADYA
(sternly)
Olena!

Ustenia jumps, startled by the outburst. Olena begins to pout.

FILIK
That's alright, Olena. I'll call
back tomorrow.
(nodding to Nadya)
Nadya, Thank you for the lovely
evening.

Filik takes his skates and leaves.

Olena, tears flowing freely, gives her sister a look of contempt.

Nadya is too busy getting her winter things off to notice. Still kicking her boots off, Nadya rushes down the hall.

INT. DOROFEYEV HOME - LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Nadya enters the library, she quickly crosses the room to DR. BESPALOV. The doctor takes both of Nadya's hands in his. She looks into his sad face. The old man seems unable to find words.

NADYA

Mother -- is it (taking a deep breath) serious?

The doctor hesitates, then squeezes Nadya's hands reassuringly, and directs her to a chair.

DR. BESPALOV

She has had a stroke. A very serious one.

Nadya covers her mouth to keep from sobbing out loud.

DR. BESPALOV

She is awake, but she cannot speak, but there is something on her mind.

Nadya turns to run to her mother, but the doctor grabs her wrist.

DR. BESPALOV

Miss Nadya, she is very delicate, and must not be agitated. Can you keep your composure?

Nadya is in a daze, she can only nod.

INT. DOROFEYEV HOME - DORFEYEVA'S ROOM - LATER

Nadya enters and calmly approaches her mother's bed. Her mother is awake. All of her beauty and elegance are gone, now there is only a frail old woman. She looks up at Nadya and groans, desperate to speak.

NADYA

I am here, mother.

Nikita tries even harder to speak.

NADYA

You want something. I can help you.

Nadya looks deep into her mother's eyes desperate to help her. Her mother manages to point to her writing desk.

Nadya rushes to the desk and looks over the piles of paper. She picks up a financial document.

Nadya skims the document, mumbling. Her brow furrows more and more.

NADYA
(mildly reproachful)
I knew it! We are penniless, aren't we?

A single tear trickles from her mother's eye.

NADYA
(softening)
Don't worry mother. I will write to Aunt Milla. 2,000 rubles is nothing to her. I'm sure she will send it immediately.

Nadya turns to leave the room. With her back to her mother, the concern on her face belies her.

INT. DOROFEYEV HOME-HALLWAY OUTSIDE BEDROOM-CONTINUOUS

Nadya gently closes her mother's bedroom door. She presses her back to it. As the realization of what has happened washes over her. She slumps to the floor sobbing.

INT. DOROFEYEV HOME - DRAWING ROOM - LATER

Olena sits pouting by the fireplace. Through the open door she sees Nadya enter the hallway and begin to dress to go out. She goes to the doorway.

INT. DOROFEYEV HOME - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Olena stands in the doorway as Nadya puts on her winter things.

OLENA
Well, you were abominably rude to Filik. I expect you will apologize. Though I've half a mind not to forgive you --

Olena sees Nadya has been crying and immediately changes her tone.

OLENA
Nadya, what has happened?

Nadya does not answer, but instead continues to bundle up.

OLENA
You are frightening me. Is mother alright?

NADYA

I cannot comfort you. There is no comfort to be had. Our lives will never be the same.

Nadya sees that Olena is truly frightened and she hugs her tightly.

NADYA

I must post this letter immediately. Wait for me here. Do not go up to mother's room until I return.

Olena, wide eyed with fear, nods. Nadya bustles out the front door.

INT. ALEKSANDROV MANSION - DRAWING ROOM - DAY

MILLA ALEKSANDROVA, in her mid-fifties, is "particular" about everything in her home. Her sternness, which borders on OCD at times, is written on her wrinkled face. She sits on the sofa making a list of the months expenditures with her pug in her lap.

Her daughter DATJA is as plain as they come. No one ever called her pretty, though she's not really ugly. She is rarely ever noticed one way or the other, and is used to her lot of being a wall flower. She reads a book beside her mother.

The MANSERVANT enters with the post. He stands noiselessly beside Aleksandrova for a moment before clearing his throat.

Aleksandrova is startled. She takes the post and waves the manservant away.

As she reads the letter from Nadya her expression betrays her contempt.

ALEKSANDROVA

Well, my dear Datja, I knew it would come to this. Such frivolousness.

Aleksandrova rises from her seat and drops the letter in her daughter's lap then sits at her writing desk. Datja reads it quickly.

DATJA

Can it be true, Mother? Is Aunt Nikita truly ill?

Aleksandrova only scoffs.

INT. DOROFEYEV HOME - DRAWING ROOM - DAY

Nadya sits at the writing desk going over financial documents.

Olena is sleeping by the fireplace. Ustenia enters breathlessly and hands Nadya a letter from Milla Aleksandrova. Nadya quickly yet quietly leaves the room.

INT. DOROFEYEV HOME - DORFEYEVA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nikita lies in her bed, weak as ever.

Nadya enters bearing the letter and kneels at her mother's bedside. She opens it and searches for the money. There is none.

Nadya proceeds to read the letter to herself. Nikita places her hand on her daughter's arm inquisitively.

Nadya's face becomes grim. She folds the letter very deliberately. Her mother's gaze is expectant.

NADYA

She has said nothing -- Nothing you would care to hear.

Nadya starts to get up. Her mother grips her arm with surprising strength. The old woman's gaze entreating Nadya to read the letter.

NADYA

It is unkind, Mother.

Nikita's gaze does not waver. Nadya unfolds the letter and begins reading aloud.

NADYA

"My Dear Niece, you must have taken leave of your senses to write me as you have done. I am truly sorry for my sister, but what else was to be expected? She has never lived on her income, and even a large capital must come to an end when people fail to deny themselves. I am sorry for this illness, though I daresay you have exaggerated its gravity. I cannot, by means of funds, (stifling her anger) reinforce her irresponsible behaviour. I hope this will be a lesson to her, that she may be more frugal in the future. Give my love to Nikita, if she is well enough to receive it. Write and tell me how she gets on. Your affectionate Aunt, Milla Aleksandrova."

Nadya looks for her mother's reaction. Rather than seeming upset Nikita is resigned to her fate. Her eyes close. Nadya fears her mother is dead.

NADYA

Mother?

Nikita opens her eyes and gives her daughter a weak smile. Olena and Ustenia enter.

OLENA

Ustenia said a letter had come from our Aunt. What does she say? Will she help us?

Nadya scowls fiercely. Olena understands they have been denied. She begins weeping softly as she goes to her mother's bedside.

Although Nikita is having trouble breathing, she does not fight her imminent demise.

Olena begins sobbing, but Nadya remains stone faced.

Their mother slowly fades. Her final breath comes out as a sigh. Olena goes into hysterics.

OLENA

No! No! Mother, don't do this to me!

Nadya's anger blots out immediate feelings of grief. She drags a hysterical Olena from the room as Ustenia pulls the sheet over their mother's face.

INT. DOROFEYEV HOME - DRAWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nadya drags Olena in by her arm. She goes to the fireplace. Nadya holds the letter up inches from Olena's face.

NADYA

(furiously)

You see this? This could have been mother's salvation. Aunt Milla could have sent that money without a second thought, but instead, in our mother's greatest hour of need, she writes scornfully.

Nadya throws the letter into the fire.

NADYA

From this day forward you will not mention the name Milla Aleksandrova to me ever again!

Olena stares at her sister fearfully. Nadya softens and hugs her sister.

NADYA

My little Lenka, we are alone and we are penniless, but we have each other.

Olena's expression as they hug reveals her terror at this prospect.

INT. DOROFEYEV HOME - LIBRARY - DAY

Nadya, dressed in black, sits at the desk going over financial documents.

The family's financial advisor VICTOR FAMMUS looks on.

NADYA

Still, it is not so hopeless as I imagined. (shuffling papers) All the debts have been paid?

FAMMUS

Yes, Miss Nadya. All of them.

NADYA

And Olena and I will still have 50 rubles a year?

FAMMUS

Yes. I will send you 25 rubles every May and November.

NADYA

It is not much, but if Olena and I work, we may be able to live in modest comfort.

FAMMUS

I'm afraid you will be far less comfortable than what you are accustomed.

NADYA

That is true, and we will not be able to keep the house.

Nadya looks around the room and sighs sadly.

FAMMUS

I would like to help any way I can. You and your sister may stay with us for a time.

NADYA

That is very generous of you Mr. Fammus, but I would not wish to impose.

FAMMUS

No imposition. Or, if you prefer, I own a small cottage in the north. You could stay there as long as you like.

NADYA

I doubt we would be able to find work there. Thank you for the offer, however.

FAMMUS

Miss Nadya, I hope you have no romantic notions as to a life of employment. The conditions in the factories are dismal.

NADYA

I am aware of this. I am ashamed to admit I have been ambivalent to the worker's pleas to the Tsar. And now their cause will be own.

Nadya rests her elbows on the desk, then puts her head in her hands. Fammus seems upset at seeing Nadya in distress.

Fammus goes around the desk and kneels beside her. He places a fatherly hand on Nadya's shoulder.

FAMMUS

I feel, Miss Nadya, that I must apologize for my part in your mother's illness. Had I known she would have taken the news as she did I would have come to you first.

NADYA

(facing Fammus with tears
in her eyes)

I wish you had. I've always had more of a head for business than mother. But it's no use wishing.

FAMMUS

(shaking his head in
disapproval)

I often wondered that Mr. Dorofeyev should have left her full control of everything.

NADYA

Father loved her. That is the only explanation.

FAMMUS

I'm glad you are more sensible than your mother. It was a brave thing you did paying the debts with no regard for your own comfort.

NADYA

It was the only thing to be done.

FAMMUS

You remind me of your father. I am sorry your mother was not more like him.

NADYA

Please say nothing against Mother. She cared for us as well as she could. No one could have made us happier.

Fammus presses his lips together and bows his head sadly, as Nadya wipes away a tear.

INT. DOROFEYEV HOME - DRAWING ROOM - LATER

Nadya and Olena sit on the sofa face to face. Olena is staring at her sister in disbelief.

OLENA

Penniless!

NADYA

Quite. Mr. Fammus says that --

OLENA

Fammus! (relieved) Oh Nadya, you scared me. Mr. Fammus has croaked for as long as I can remember. So we are only poor in the same comfortable way we have always been.

NADYA

Not this time.

OLENA

(condescendingly)

Poor Nadya. Why, you will fret yourself into an old woman if this goes on.

Nadya opens her mouth to set her straight, but Olena puts her finger to her sister's lips.

OLENA

I am not strong enough to be teased today. Let's put off this discussion for another week or so.

Nadya gets up and begins stoking the fire angrily.

OLENA

But you must not think I am quite useless. I felt better this morning and so I wrote a long letter to Mrs. Sharova. I gave her a complete list of mourning. Of course it pained me to do it --

Nadya grabs Olena by the shoulders.

NADYA
(urgently)
Did you post the letter?

OLENA
Nadya, you're hurting me!

NADYA
Did you?

Ustenia enters with some vittles.

OLENA
I gave it to Ustenia before she
went out this morning.

Nadya looks to Ustenia who seems almost afraid to answer.

USTENIA
It's as good as in Mrs. Sharova's
hands by now.

Nadya runs to the writing desk and scribbles a note.

INSERT - THE NOTE
"Miss Nadya Dorofeyeva begs Mrs.
Sharova not execute Olena
Dorofeyeva's order. Letter will
follow."

INT. DOROFEYEV HOME - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Nadya holds the letter with her teeth as she puts her jacket
on then leaves.

INT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - DAY

Nadya figits nervously in the line as she waits to send the
telegraph.

EXT. DOROFEYEV HOME - FRONT - NIGHT

It's beginning to snow as Nadya walks home. Filik Vitsin is
leaning against the railing. He straightens as he sees Nadya
approaching.

NADYA
Filik! What are you doing out here?
You'll catch your death.

FILIK
I've been summoning the courage to
ring the bell.

Nadya seems perplexed by this answer. She opens the door and
waves him in.

INT. DOROFEYEV HOME - DRAWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nadya goes to warm herself by the fire. Filik hangs back nervously.

NADYA

Well, my dear friend. What is this all about?

FILIK

I'm leaving tonight to return to St. Petersburg. I've wanted to call on you, but it's so soon. I hope I am not intruding.

NADYA

Not at all. I'm glad to see you.

FILIK

I was rather hoping -- that is I didn't want to leave without -- is there any chance, any chance at all, of Olena seeing me?

NADYA

Not at present, I'm afraid. She is still indisposed, but I will tell her you called to say goodbye.

FILIK

(rambling nervously)

But that is not my message. If there is no chance of seeing her, I must trust my fate to your hands. Mother and Father are awfully put out, but they'll accept it in time. They wished me to marry someone rich, but they will respect my choice. You do understand?

NADYA

No, Filik, I'm afraid I do not.

VITSIN

Is true that you and Olena are poor?

NADYA

(irritably)

Yes, it is quite true.

FILIK

Then my message is, I love Olena with my whole heart. I have money. I can give her everything she may want, if she can only find it in her heart to love me, and become my wife.

Nadya is too shocked to speak.

FILIK

You understand now? Perhaps if I can put off going away for just one day she could see me.

NADYA

I don't know, Filik. I will certainly speak to her on your behalf, but, you'll forgive me, you have always been a sort of brother to us both. I don't know that she'll be prepared for a declaration.

FILIK

You hold my fate in your hands.

NADYA

She's so young.

FILIK

You need not be put out, Nadya. You'll have plenty of suitors yourself soon.

Nadya looks away, embarrassed.

INT. DOROFEYEV HOME - OLENA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Olena is brushing her hair at the vanity. Nadya enters and sits behind her on the bed.

NADYA

My dear sister, I'm afraid the discussion concerning our financial position has been postponed long enough. You must believe me that we are completely destitute. We have but 100 rubles a year to share. I've just sent a letter to Mrs. Sharova to cancel your order.

OLENA

Nadya, you haven't a bit of heart.

Olena slams her brush down on the vanity, puts her head down on her arm, and cries.

Nadya goes to her sister and begins brushing hair.

NADYA

You need not suffer hardship though. I've just been with Filik, and he has given me a message for you. He wishes you to be his wife. He says he loves you with all his
(MORE)

NADYA (cont'd)
heart, and he would take care of
you and you would want for nothing.

Olena sits expressionless for a moment before a big grin
comes across her face.

OLENA
Ridiculous! Filik. Filik Vitsin.
I've no intention of marrying so
young, and I have never thought of
Filik that way.

NADYA
He's always been a favorite of
yours. What could be more natural
than a union between such close
friends?

OLENA
Nonsense, he's a brother to me. He
must have looked very funny,
declaring that he loved me. I wish
he had asked me for you, I would
have loved to have seen his face.

NADYA
It's all over for him then. I
wasn't certain of your feelings,
but if you can speak like that --

OLENA
How else should I speak? Tell me
how he looked.

NADYA
(indignantlly)
Very earnest, and manly, and
handsome. He's in love with you.
Have you no pity?

OLENA
Oh, Nadya, it's just too funny. He
looked manly? Nonsense, he's
nothing but a boy.

NADYA
He didn't look like a boy when he
talked about you. I feel sorry for
him, but if you don't love him
there's nothing to be done. I'm
glad for my part. I won't mind
being poor half so much if we are
together.

OLENA
You will harp on that. I suppose
Filik is well off.

NADYA

Mr. Fammus told me he has 1500 a year.

OLENA

I've no idea what that means, but it sound a great deal better than 50 rubles a year. And then I'd be a Countess, and we'd live in St. Petersburg and attend all the best parties. (reconsidering) Did he really look manly?

NADYA

(fiercely)

Yes, a thousand times too manly to be married for his money alone!

OLENA

(chagrinned)

Of course, who ever thought of such a thing.

INT. DOROFEYEV HOME - DRAWING ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Nadya and Filik sit in front of the fire. Filik stares into the flames, a pained expression on his face. Nadya studies his him compassionately.

FILIK

I might have known she was a great deal too good for me.

NADYA

Oh Filik, please don't. If you only knew how selfish she can be.

FILIK

I do. I know her, better than you imagine, but you can never see her through my eyes. I'm ashamed I thought she might deign to look at me. Thank you, Nadya for entertaining my ridiculous notions. You're most kind. He'll be a lucky man who has you for a sister.

Filik gets up to leave.

INT. DOROFEYEV HOME - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

NADYA

Good-bye, Filik. I am deeply sorry for you.

FILIK

So I am for myself.

As Nadya closes the door her expression betrays how truly sorry she is and how ashamed she is of her sister's shallowness.

Olena enters with a small travel bag and begins putting her coat on.

OLENA

Lend me 5 rubles, will you Nadya?

NADYA

I most certainly will not. That is all we have until Mr. Fammus sends us our 25 rubles in May. I will not have you throw it away on some petty whim.

OLENA

It is as much mine as yours. Give it to me!

NADYA

What, may I ask, for?

Olena hesitates a moment then produces a bulky letter and extends it to Nadya. The return address reads Milla Aleksandrova. Nadya pushes the letter away.

NADYA

You would disrespect mother's memory --

OLENA

Take care, sister, or you will grow hard hearted.

NADYA

I have every right to harden my heart against that woman.

OLENA

Aunt Milla is not to blame for mother's death. And she has written so warmly. She wants us to come live with her. We will have every comfort. Read the letter --

NADYA

I will not read the letter, and I will not give you the 5 rubles.

Olena gives Nadya a killer look and clenches the letter in her fist.

NADYA

(tenderly)

Lenka, poverty need not be a hardship if we are together. Let me

(MORE)

NADYA (cont'd)
 burn the letter, for the sake of
 all the happy times and because we
 both love mother.

Nadya tries to hug Olena, who pushes her away fiercely.

OLENA
 (angrily)
 Don't you talk down to me. You
 think yourself so noble. There is
 nothing noble about poverty. I hate
 all this talk about being poor, I
 hate horrid, dowdy, home-made
 dresses, I hate pinching and
 contriving. (measuring her words) I
 see nothing for it, Nadya, you must
 go your way and I'll go mine. I
 will go live with Aunt Milla. I
 need the 5 rubles to go to her and
 talk matters over.

NADYA
 You'll not have it! You must be
 protected from yourself. This
 conduct is not honorable.

OLENA
 (haughtily)
 Very well, I shall write to Filik
 and accept his offer of marriage.

Nadya's expression reflects her defeat. She goes to her hand bag, takes out the money, and gives it to Olena

NADYA
 You are not my sister.

The sisters lock gazes for a moment. Both seem confident in their choice. Olena raises her chin defiantly, then turns and leaves.

EXT. STREETS OF MOSCOW - DAY

The freshly fallen snow starkly contrasts the filth of busy streets. Everywhere the privileged walk briskly, blind to the signs of suffering all around them.

Olena trudges through the snow. Tears streaming. She stops and takes out the letter from Aleksandrova. She considers it for a moment, before going to a garbage bin.

Olena holds the letter over the garbage, poised to throw away her posh future. She looks to the side.

A HOMELESS MAN digs through a neighboring garbage bin. Olena watches in horror as the man takes out a wrapper and licks it clean. Next he takes a banana peel and uses his teeth to scrape out banana residue.

As the homeless man continues to dig in the garbage, Olena looks at the people walking by.

A YOUNG COUPLE, arm in arm, breeze by, chatting intimately.

A MOTHER, finely dressed, unwraps some candy as her daughter tugs at her petticoats impatiently.

Two SOLDIERS walk by talking animatedly about last night's conquests.

Olena's gaze drifts back to the homeless man, who is now picking bits of food off of some paper, all but invisible to those around him.

Olena's grip tightens around the letter and she stows it safely away in the folds of her dress. She resumes her trudging. Determination etched on her face.

INT. TRAIN TO ST. PETERSBURG - DAY

Olena has a far off look as she turns her train ticket over absentmindedly.

Her gaze rests on an OLDER SISTER teaching her LITTLE SISTER the proper technique for brushing her doll's hair.

Olena smiles sadly as the little sister mimics her older sister's movements with a look of deep concentration.

Tears begin to stream down Olena's face.

EXT. ALEKSANDROV MANSION - FRONT ENTRANCE - DAY

Olena's eyes are red from crying. She sniffles a little, then composes herself before ringing the bell.

INT. ALEKSANDROV MANSION - DRAWING ROOM - DAY

Aleksandrova and Datja are doing needlework. The manservant enters.

MANSERVANT

Miss Olena Dorofeyeva, ma'am.

Olena enters, takes her Aunt's outstretched hands and kisses her cheek. She then kisses Datja, and takes a seat.

ALEKSANDROVA

I am glad you have come, Olena. I believe our consultation will be brief. I offer you and your sister a home with me. You will receive the same advantages as Datja. In effect you will be my daughters.

DATJA

Which would make you my sisters.
How I have longed for a sister.
Please say you'll come.

Aleksandrova shoots Datja looks of disapproval.

ALEKSANDROVA

Well?

OLENA

Aunt, I must be frank, the letter
you wrote to mother before she
died, pained me greatly.

ALEKSANDROVA

I explained in my letter my reasons
for my harshness and --

OLENA

Yes, and I accept this explanation.
(dramatically) I forgive you. I
will come to live with you.

Aleksandrova is clearly taken aback, but she recovers from
her shock and does not press the issue.

ALEKSANDROVA

Then come kiss me, my daughter.

DATJA

And Nadya? Will she be my sister as
well?

OLENA

It pains me to say that Nadya will
not be your sister (swallowing her
tears) or mine.

ALEKSANDROVA

Poor girl, she has taken Nikita's
death so hard. I am sorry that this
business has come between such
sweet sisters. But I am glad you
are come.

DATJA

We are going to have such fun.
Russia is so dreary in the winter.
We must go away. You would love the
Riviera, dear Cousin. I am so glad
not to be alone any more.

Olena gives her cousin a forced smile.

EXT. MOSCOW TRAIN STATION - EVENING

Olena gets off the train. Nadya emerges from the crowd to
meet her. The sisters come face to face, there is no hug or

kiss or even a "hello".

EXT. STREETS OF MOSCOW - LATER

As the girls walk home the tension is palpable.

NADYA

The house has been rented. We must
be out by next week.

There is an awkward silence.

NADYA

Is it done then?

OLENA

I go to them next week.

Olena avoids eye contact.

OLENA

And you, Nadya, what will you do?

NADYA

Mr. Fammus offered me a room in
their house in St. Petersburg. I
will stay there for a month.

OLENA

Perhaps we can see each other then,
before I go abroad.

NADYA

(coldly)

Not likely. I will be occupied
looking for employment.

A sob escapes Olena.

NADYA

It is not too late --

OLENA

It is! I cannot live a life of
toil. I will not!

She angrily wipes her tears away.

OLENA

And yet how I hate myself for it.

Nadya looks away from her sister. Nadya's contempt is
written on her face, but she remains silent.

INT. FACTORY - DAY

SUPER - TWO YEARS LATER

Nadya glances over at the Princess as she chats with a single mother whose boys work alongside her. She goes back to her work, but the conversation reaches her ears.

GUSAROVA

(o.s.)

But the Tsar is our great guardian
he has your well being at heart.

A cynical laugh escapes Nadya and she shakes her head at the princess's naivety.

RYSKA

(o.s.)

How do you find the thread so
quickly?

Nadya looks down to see the young princess Ryska watching her intently, and smiles at her.

NADYA

Mostly practice.

RYSKA

Mama, says your minds are bred for
this work.

NADYA

Does she? And are our minds so
different?

Ryska shrugs doubtfully.

RYSKA

It seems much easier than learning
to read.

NADYA

As with anything the key to
learning is practice.

Ryska wrinkles her nose at the thought.

NADYA

How would you like to learn a song
that I used to sing to my little
sister?

RYSKA

(cautiously)

I like songs.

INT. FACTORY - LATER

Nadya's fingers continue to deftly work the thread at the spinning mule. She smiles as Ryska sings beside her.

RYSKA

(singing)

Looly, looly, loolenki. Where are
you? Where are you, little doves?
Fly on the bed. Start to coo.
Looly, looly, loo --

GUSAROVA

(o.s.)

Ryska, come along.

Gusarova waves her daughter over from the entrance. Ryska jumps up to obey her mother.

Gusarova looks at Nadya curiously.

RYSKA

Bye.

NADYA

Good-bye. I hope you'll sing the
song to your little brother.

Ryska smiles and nods before running off.

EXT. STREETS OF MOSCOW - NIGHT

Nadya hugs herself in an effort to keep warm as she trudges through the sludgy streets.

KATRINA FEDEVA trots across the street to join Nadya.

KATRINA

You're finally here! If Zaminsky gives you too many more of these sixteen hour days he may as well push you into the grave himself.

NADYA

It can't be helped. We are so far behind on this month's quota.

KATRINA

It's criminal. You must see that Father Gapon is right. The workers have rights and these rights should be defended.

NADYA

Gapon has his own agenda.

KATRINA

That factory has beaten the fight out of you. I want my old friend back.

NADYA

Then pray I find employment elsewhere, and soon.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Nadya and Katrina enter the one room living area. Nadya goes to the cast iron stove and takes a look in the pot on top.

She pokes at the hardened porridge with a spoon then shrugs and sets to lighting a fire.

Katrina goes to her home altar and lights the candle.

NADYA

Praying again for that accountant
to notice you?

KATRINA

I'm praying you'll find more
comfortable employment.

Nadya just rolls her eyes.

INT. FACTORY - DAY

Women and children file in wearily. Nadya takes her place by the spinning mule.

ZAMINSKY comes out of the office.

ZAMINSKY

The factory is still behind on its
quota.

Hushed grumbling can be heard. Nadya sighs heavily.

ZAMINSKY

Those of you who stayed till ten
yesterday may go home at six today.
The rest of you will be working
late.

The grumbling grows louder. Nadya smiles to herself.

ZAMINSKY

Dorofeyeva, in my office.

Nadya's smile disappears as her shoulders slump.

INT. FACTORY - OFFICE - DAY

As Nadya enters she finds Princess Gusarova waiting for her. Unable to gather anything from the Princess's expression, she turns to Zaminsky, who only raises his eyebrows.

GUSAROVA

It's Nadya, isn't it?

NADYA

Yes, Highness.

GUSAROVA

(smiling)

Well, I understand you taught my
Ryska a song.

Nadya is still perplexed by the whole situation.

NADYA

I did, Highness. I apologize if you
thought it improper.

GUSAROVA

You speak well for person of your
station.

Nadya opens her mouth to explain but Gusarova continues.

GUSAROVA

I am glad to find it so. I have
just about reached my wit's end
with that child, but you succeeded
in teaching her something, and
that's more than I can say for the
dozens of tutors we've employed.

NADYA

I found her to be very bright.

Gusarova swells with newfound pride.

GUSAROVA

Miss Nadya, I would like you to
come live with us as our nana.

Nadya is bursting with excitement, but tries to maintain her
composure.

NADYA

I'd be delighted.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Katrina holds a garment up to the candlelight and squints as
she continues to hem it.

Nadya packs her things into a worn out carpet bag.

NADYA

I hope you're not cross.

KATRINA

(sincerely)

Why should I be cross?

NADYA

How will you pay for the apartment
without my half of the rent?

Katrina puts down her sewing.

KATRINA

To tell the truth I've been longing
to return to my mother's house.

NADYA

But that's all the way across town.
You will never be able to continue
to work for Katya.

KATRINA

I know. Fatima offered me a place
in her dress shop. I hadn't given
her an answer because I didn't want
to leave you alone.

Nadya is overcome with emotion. She hugs Katrina tightly.

NADYA

I could not love you more if you
were my own sister.

Katrina wipes away a tear clear her throat uncomfortably.

KATRINA

There, there now. I hope you'll
come see me soon. You'll need new
dresses and I'll fix you up proper.

Nadya smiles thankfully.

EXT. ST. PETERSBURG - NEVSKY PROSPEKT - DAY

Privileged families, bundled against the January air,
promenade down the crowded boulevard, as is customary on
Sundays.

Almost as ghosts, the poor move around the street unseen.
They scavenge from the garbage. Some try their luck with the
wealthy, only to be dismissed mercilessly.

Nadya, in a plain frock, walks behind the elegantly dressed
PRINCE and PRINCESS GUSAROV. Nadya holds the hand of RYSKA,
9, and ALEXANDER, 5.

The air is frigid, but it is mild weather for January. There
are even some slushy puddles. Nadya side steps a puddle.

NADYA

Mind the puddle, Ryska.

Nadya hears a splash. She turns to see the chubby little
girl ankle deep in the puddle.

NADYA

(irritably)

Ryska! You really must pay better
attention, child. We've all managed
to avoid the puddle. (Nadya

(MORE)

NADYA (cont'd)
examines the girls shoes) Heavens!
These shoes are beyond rescuing.

Gusarova tugs at her husband's arm and looks back at Nadya.

GUSAROVA
Nana, what is the hold up?

NADYA
I'm sorry ma'am, Ryska has stepped
in a puddle. She's soaked to the
bone.

Gusarova rolls her eyes.

GUSAROVA
Take her home and get her changed.
Meet us at the church and be quick
about it.

Nadya nods and sends Alexander to his mother. Then takes
Ryska by the hand and pulls her along down the street.

After a few yards Ryska stops.

RYSKA
Nana, my feet hurt.

NADYA
Well, of course they hurt. They're
probably frozen solid by now.

Nadya begins to notice the boulevard becoming
uncharacteristically congested.

NADYA
Come, the faster we get home the
faster we can warm them up.

RYSKA
(crying)
I can't. It hurts too much.

Nadya bends over and examines the shoes. They're covered in
ice.

NADYA
All we can do is get you home,
love. We need to get out of the
streets. We should not have gone
out today.

Filik Vitsin is walking in the street and recognizes Nadya's
voice though he can only see her rear as she tries to clear
the ice from Ryska's shoes.

FILIK
Nadya?

Nadya turns to face him. She is flushed, and obviously embarrassed at her position.

NADYA

Filik, what a surprise!

Ryska is crying loudly now. Nadya becomes even more red in the face.

NADYA

I would love to stay an chat, but I must get Ryska home before her toes fall off.

Filik goes to the little girl and hoists her up.

FILIK

There we go, my dear.

Nadya smiles appreciatively. They continue on to the Gusarova home, talking as they go.

FILIK

Oh, Nadya I am so glad to see you. I have often wondered how you got on since we parted. You are looking very well, I must say. How do find a life of employment?

NADYA

I find it suits me very well. I can't bear to be idle, though I sometimes think I should like a rest from my quite spirited charges.

FILIK

Are you working as a governess then?

NADYA

I am. I have been with Princess Gusarov for almost a year now.

FILIK

You are very brave. Even the most well behaved of children can try one's patience, but then you were always so steady. One would have to be to live with Miss Olena.

Nadya cringes at the reference, but Filik does not notice.

FILIK

Have you heard from your sister? My mother mentioned that she had seen her in Rome not long after she went to live with her aunt. I understand
(MORE)

FILIK (cont'd)
 that she has been abroad ever
 since. It must be very difficult
 not to see her often, you two were
 so close.

NADYA
 Yes, we were close, but we've since
 grown apart. I have not spoken with
 her in three years.

The street is becoming more and more crowded, and Filik is getting a little winded.

FILIK
 (awkwardly)
 I'm certain when she returns to
 Russia she will pay you a visit and
 all will be forgiven. After all,
 one cannot bear a grudge against
 Olena for long.

NADYA
 I find that unlikely. She was so
 changed after --

Nadya is distracted by the arrival of the Preobrazhensky Guards.

GUARD
 By order of his Imperial Highness
 Nicolas II, you will disperse!

Nadya looks to Filik with concern. They look around them and realize they're in the middle of the demonstrators.

Filik and Nadya begin to try to push their way to a side street.

A bugle sounds. Followed by shots and screams.

Filik and Nadya huddle close to the side of a building. Filik tries to shield Ryska with his body.

Ryska is in a panic.

RYSKA
 Mother! Mother!

Ryska begins to struggle to get away from Filik.

NADYA
 Ryska! Stay put!

RYSKA
 Mother!

Ryska breaks free and runs into the crowd. Nadya goes after her. Filik tries to follow, but is separated from Nadya by

the panicked mob.

Nadya looks around desperately.

NADYA

Ryska! Ryska!

Nadya is surrounded by terrified faces. Finally she glimpses Ryska through the crowd.

Nadya makes her way to Ryska as quickly as she can through the sea of people.

As Nadya reaches Ryska a horse and buggy come dangerously close.

Ryska lets out a shrill scream. The horse rears up. The driver is trying to stop the horse but the animal resists.

Nadya gets between the horse and the terrified little girl.

Nadya takes the bridle of the horse in an effort to keep him from advancing, and trampling them both. The horse rears again and this time comes down hard on Nadya's foot.

Nadya screams in pain but does not let go of the bridle.

At that moment GRIGORY, the driver, hops down from the buggy and takes the bridle from Nadya.

By now Filik has arrived on scene. He puts Nadya's arm over his shoulder and supports her. He looks around for a safe place to take her.

GRIGORY

Here! In the carriage!

Nadya can't put any weight on her foot and winces in pain with every movement. Filik puts her into carriage then turns to the terrified Ryska.

He picks up the girl and loads her into the carriage as well.

Ryska, now out of danger, becomes angry.

RYSKA

That great brute! He almost killed me!

FILIK

(to Ryska)

Young Lady, Nadya is hurt because you did not mind.

Ryska realizes for the first time that her nana is really hurt. Tears well up in her eyes.

EXT. HOSPITAL - LATER

There is chaos outside the hospital as those wounded in the confrontation are brought in. Grigory drives the carriage up to the entrance. He hops down and opens the door.

Filik gets out then lifts Nadya out. She is faint with pain.

FILIK
(to Grigory)
Fetch us a gurney.

Grigory runs to comply.

Filik makes his way up to the hospital, Nadya in his arms and Ryska close behind.

Grigory emerges with two orderlies carrying a gurney.

Filik lays Nadya on it. The orderlies whisk her away. Ryska goes with them, holding Nadya's hand.

FILIK
(to Grigory)
Sir, without your assistance I fear we would have been killed. I will have your name as well as the name of your employer.

GRIGORY
Thank you, Sir. I'm Grigory Markovich, but I've only done what any man would've.

FILIK
Not so. Fear has gotten the better of many men today.

GRIGORY
I feel a bit responsible. The animal is a bit green. I told Master Nikolaev the animal was more suited to the country, but he wouldn't hear it. Chempion isn't malicious. The chaos was just too much for him.

FILIK
Ranik Nikolaev?

GRIGORY
Yes, Sir. You are acquainted with him?

FILIK
I am. I will mention your outstanding service to him next time we meet. In the meantime I
(MORE)

FILIK (cont'd)
suggest that animal be taken back
to the stables where he can regain
his bearings.

Grigory hurries to obey.

INT. HOSPITAL - LATER

Nadya lies on the hospital bed, only Ryska accompanies her.
SHOUTING can be heard in the hall. The voice becomes louder
and louder.

KATRINA
I am a very dear friend of hers! So
you see, there is no need to stand
on formality.

Katrina bursts in followed by a flushed, angry-looking
NURSE. Nadya smiles at her friend's lack of composure.

NADYA
It's alright, nurse. Thank you.

KATRINA
Poor, dear, heroic Nadya. How could
you have gone out today. You knew
what Gapon was planning.

NADYA
Of course. But how could I know the
guard would open fire?

KATRINA
Was it as terrible as they say?
They are saying over a thousand are
dead.

NADYA
It was all so chaotic. I've no idea
how many were killed.

KATRINA
Oh, Nadya. Does it hurt very much?
Are you crippled?

NADYA
Katrina, you are far too excitable.
I will be fine.

There is a quick tap at the door, and the doctor enters with
Filik.

DOCTOR
Well my dear, your foot has been
badly trampled. You will be at
least a month in this hospital.

NADYA

Thank you for your help, Doctor,
but I'm afraid I cannot stay here.

DOCTOR

Miss Dorofeyeva, this is not some
trifling injury which may heal on
its own. If it is not properly
tended to you may indeed be
crippled.

Tears well up in Nadya's eyes.

NADYA

I must speak frankly, sir. I am
unable to pay for the services
which I have received. I will not
incur any further expenses.

DOCTOR

I'm sure your employer will put up
something for the nana that saved
their daughter

Nadya looks down at the covers, doubt written on her face.

FILIK

Dear Nadya, you need not worry
about the expense. I am more than
happy to cover it. After all, I
feel somewhat responsible. I should
have held on to the girl better.

NADYA

(embarrassed)

I am obliged to accept your
generosity, Filik. But, please, you
must not blame yourself.

RYSKA

The blame lay with that brute what
trampled her. His owner should be
the one to cover the expenses.

FILIK

(to Ryska)

The animal behaved as any animal
would when frightened. (to Nadya) I
must return to Moscow tonight, but
I beg you to remain in the hospital
until the good doctor releases you.
After all, it would be a shame
never to dance with you again.

NADYA

I am in your debt, Filik.

Filik nods politely, then leaves. Katrina smirks at Nadya.

KATRINA

He is very handsome, and ever so gentlemanly. Is he in love with you?

Ryska rolls her eyes.

NADYA

(smiling)

Oh no, he has only ever had eyes for my sister, Olena.

KATRINA

Your sister! How is it that you have never mentioned a sister?

NADYA

She is very different from me. We have both led very different lives since we parted three years ago, but that is in the past. You are as good as any sister, dear Katrina.

Nadya smiles, but her eyes are sad.

EXT. YANOVICH MANSION - DRIVEWAY - DAY

A carriage pulls up to the palace. The DRIVER hops down and opens the carriage door. Nadya and Katrina step out. The driver begins to unload their suitcases, as the girls take in the sight of the palace.

KATRINA

(excitedly)

It was so good of Count Vitsin to invite us to spend the month here. Especially after the Princess was so cruel as to fire you. And after you saved her daughter's life too. Well, I'm sure there will be many an eligible bachelor at the party tonight. I'm glad I remade my blue chiffon. You won't even recognize it, and I made a red one for you, but you must wait to wear it until you have attracted a suitor --

NADYA

(smiling)

Katrina, sometimes you are hopelessly silly.

The girls make for the palace arm in arm.

INT. YANOVICH MANSION - BALLROOM - EVENING

Nadya makes a somewhat bashful entrance amidst the crowd of other guests. MUSICIANS are playing dancing music.

Nadya searches the room and soon makes eye contact with Filik. He approaches her, bows, and then takes her arm.

FILIK

I'm so glad to see you so well recovered. If you feel able would you honor me with the first dance?

NADYA

Certainly, Filik. I must thank you again for the help afforded me, and also for the invitation to this lovely event.

FILIK

The Yanovich's do throw grand parties, though you've attended many a grand ball in your day.

NADYA

Those days seem a lifetime away.

FILIK

And yet you are as lovely as ever.

Nadya smiles demurely. She then sees RANIK NIKOLAEV, 30, tall, robust, and rugged, across the room staring at her. She's clearly puzzled by the stranger's steady gaze. She turns away. Couples are gathering on the dance floor.

NADYA

Shall we dance then?

Filik motions toward the dance floor and they take their place.

INT. YANOVICH MANSION - BALLROOM - LATER

Nadya and Katrina sit on an ottoman. A YOUNG MAN approaches the two. Katrina's eyes light up.

YOUNG MAN

Miss Nadya, would you favor me with the next dance?

Katrina is visibly disappointed. Nadya does not notice.

NADYA

Thank you, yes.

The young man walks away.

KATRINA

Nadya, I do wish you would rest. You are only just recovered, and it would not do for you to reinjure it and have to spend the rest of our lovely vacation in bed.

NADYA

I am quite well, I assure you. It has been ages since I've attended a ball. I intend to enjoy myself, you should as well.

Katrina scowls. As Nadya scans the crowd she again catches Niko staring at her from across the room. She returns his gaze, but he does not look away. Nadya's view is then blocked by the young man coming to claim his dance.

INTERCUT

-- Nadya dancing with the young man.

-- Niko continues to watch Nadya intently.

INT. YANOVICH MANSION - DINING ROOM - LATER

Nadya and Filik sit together as SERVANTS bring out the dinner, and place it in front of the guests.

FILIK

Have you written to your sister? I understand she and your Aunt returned to St. Petersburg last week. Perhaps you can see her when you return to town.

Nadya looks up and sees that Niko is sitting directly across from her and is still staring at her.

NADYA

(frustrated)

Dear Filik, I wish you would not press me about my sister. She is not the woman you knew.

FILIK

But how can you know? You have admitted to not being in contact with her these three years.

NADYA

It precisely because of this change that we have not spoken.

Nadya again meets Niko's steady gaze. She scowls a little, but he is unfazed.

FILIK

I must say I am puzzled by this. What can have happened between such close sisters to have earned your contempt?

NADYA

Trust me, it is best if you do not know. Now you must enlighten me on one subject.

Filik leans toward her intently.

NADYA

That man sitting next to Miss Sofiia, why does he stare at me so?

FILIK

That is Ranik Nikolaev, and I should imagine he is anxious to know whether or not you harbor him any ill will. You see, it was his horse that trampled you.

NADYA

(anxiously)

Oh dear, I hope he won't worry me on the subject. I am quite well, and after all the animal was not in the least to blame.

FILIK

I'm afraid he does not see it that way. When I mentioned the subject last month he was very distraught. I had to talk him out of having the animal shot.

NADYA

No! Please tell me you were successful.

FILIK

I was, but I'm sure it would ease his mind to speak with you and make his apologies.

NADYA

But it is all so awkward. Is it really necessary?

FILIK

Would you rather not be introduced to him?

NADYA

Much rather --

FILIK

(teasing)

Very well, I shall tell him you particularly wish to be excused from making his acquaintance.

NADYA
 (exasperated)
 Introduce him if you must, but
 please give him a hint that I would
 rather not discuss the incident.

FILIK
 Wisely spoken.

Filik smiles a little at Niko, who remains somber as ever.

INT. YANOVICH MANSION - DRAWING ROOM - LATER

Nadya converses with SOFIIA By the piano. Filik and Niko
 approach.

FILIK
 Miss Nadya Dorofeyeva, may I
 introduce Ranik Nikolaev.

Nadya extends her hand. Niko takes it and bows, but his eyes
 are locked on hers. There is an awkward moment of silence.

Filik takes Sofiia's hand and they walk away. Nadya looks
 away embarrassed. Niko's eyes never leave her.

NIKOLAEV
 I understand that a certain subject
 is not to be touched on between us.

Nadya glances angrily at Filik.

NADYA
 I am fully recovered. There is no
 need to fret.

NIKO
 I am immensely relieved to hear it.
 I was tempted to do away with the
 horse. (probing) If you dislike
 seeing him about, he shall be sold.

NADYA
 Is he here? You mustn't sell him,
 not on my account. He is such a
 beautiful creature, though
 certainly a little wild.

NIKO
 I'm glad to find you so sensible.

NADYA
 You expected to find me otherwise?

NIKO
 I meant no offense. The horse is
 dear to me. He reminds me of a
 woman. That's why I bought him. She
 was a little wild too.

NADYA

You must be very brave to be so fond of wild things.

NIKO

You also remind me of her. (almost to himself) Your face is like hers.

Nadya smiles shyly. Katrina waves her over from a game table.

KATRINA

You must help me before Miss Iovanka bleeds me dry.

Nadya gives Niko an apologetic look.

NADYA

You will excuse me?

Niko bows his head politely.

NIKO

I am so pleased to have met you.

NADYA

Likewise.

Nadya is glowing as she goes to sit with her friend.

INT. YANOVICH MANSION - DRAWING ROOM - LATER

Katrina and Nadya laugh as they walk. Nadya breaks away from her friend.

NADYA

I must visit the powder room. I'll only be a moment.

Nadya rounds the corner and stops short at the sight of Filik talking with Niko, who has his back to her. Filik's face turns white at the sight of her.

NIKO

The resemblance is not striking, but I cannot escape the comparison. It is a face that haunts me. A face that gives me sense of unrest. I wish Miss Nadya had never come here.

Filik attempts too late to warn Niko of her presence.

NADYA

(outraged)

You are very polite!

Niko turns flustered and embarrassed.

NADYA

I knew from the first time I saw you I would not like you. I shall trouble you with my presence no longer.

Nadya storms off. Leaving Niko still searching for an apology.

INT. YANOVICH MANSION - POWDER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nadya opens the door, closes it behind her, then leans on it. Her face is flushed, and she's trembling with rage. She goes to the mirror and studies her face.

FADE OUT

INT. YANOVICH MANSION - GUEST ROOM - LATER

Katrina sits in front of the vanity braiding her hair. Nadya is buttoning her night gown.

KATRINA

(excitedly)

Oh, what a wonderful night this has been! My feet ache from dancing and yet I'm floating on a cloud. Did you see Dimitri Yanovich? He looked so handsome tonight with his green jacket, and I'm certain he favors me. We danced twice you know. And I saw you dance with Count Filik, though I wonder you did not dance with Mr. Nikolaev. I saw the two of you introduced. You looked very pleasing together --

NADYA

(irritably)

Katrina, I do not wish to hear any more of your nonsense tonight.

KATRINA

You are in a foul mood. Is it because the Count favored Yovanka. You said before you did not care for him.

NADYA

Trinka, I have a terrible headache, please do be quiet.

Katrina pouts, but remains silent as they both get into bed.

DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. YANOVICH MANSION - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Nadya tosses and turns in her bed and finally gets up. She lights a candle and looks at herself in the mirror.

As she evaluates her face, it begins to MORPH until it is Olena in the mirror. Nadya touches the reflection.

A hand reaches out of the mirror and caresses Nadya's face. Suddenly, both hands reach out and grab Nadya's neck.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. YANOVICH MANSION - GUEST ROOM - LATER

Nadya, laying on her side, opens her eyes. She slowly sits up in bed. She looks around the room anxiously. Finally she lays back down.

EXT. YANOVICH MANSION - STABLE YARD - DAY

YOVANKA, Sofiia, and Katrina chatter while four GROOMS bring out the horses. Nadya joins them looking tired. All are in riding clothes. Each woman is presented with a horse. Nadya mounts hers without ceremony.

YOVANKA

You are sure you are not afraid, Miss Nadya? For if you were, I wouldn't mind at all exchanging horses with you. Stately is such a gentle darling, even someone who is not accustomed to riding must feel completely at ease on her.

NADYA

I am quite comfortable as I am. Thank you.

Sofiia and Yovanka exchange knowing glances. Nadya sees this.

NADYA

Is this horse particularly vicious, or do sit him in such a manner that you conclude beforehand that I am an arrant coward?

YOVANKA

(haughtily)

Not a bit. Anyone can see you can ride, but Chempion is not quite certain, particularly for a lady. And I understand you've already had an encounter with him. Stately is a lamb, and I am half my time on horseback. I can ride anything.

NADYA

I am not afraid. I may not be as practiced as you are, but I am an intrepid horsewoman, if I do say so myself.

Yovanka smiles spitefully. Nadya spurs the horse on and quickly takes the lead.

As the horse breaks into a canter Nadya becomes a little breathless. Her hands tighten on the reins. She is not fully in control of the animal.

EXT. YANOVICH MANSION GROUNDS - GLEN - LATER

Filik, Niko, and other male guests laugh heartily as they share hunting anecdotes while packing up their guns and game.

Chempion comes bounding in with a breathless Nadya holding on for dear life. The horse runs up to Niko and nuzzles his master. Niko quickly moves to help Nadya off the horse.

NIKO

Good gracious, Miss Nadya! Chempion was not to be brought out today. He is much too fresh for a lady.

NADYA

(breathlessly)

Nonsense! We've had a lovely ride.

NIKO

You did not find him too much for you?

NADYA

Not at all. He's a beautiful creature.

Niko strokes the animal affectionately

NIKO

He is. He can be a brute though. That you kept your seat is testament to your skill as a rider.

Yovanka, Sofiia, and Katrina ride up followed by the older guests in open carriages. Filik approaches Nadya and offers his arm.

FILIK

Will you join me?

NADYA

(taking his arm)

Thank you, Filik.

Niko and Nadya lock gazes for a moment before Filik whisks her away.

EXT. YANOVICH MANSION GROUNDS - GLEN - LATER

Nadya and Filik sit on a rug under a tree eating vittles.

NADYA

What a glorious day for the end of April. Quite a spring air.

FILIK

(seriously)

Nadya, I received a letter last night from my mother. She writes that your sister will not be in town for the season, but that she will be coming back in a July.

An awkward silence follows.

FILIK

I mean to try for her hand again. It is a wonder she has never married. Perhaps she did care for me a little after all.

NADYA

My dear Filik, I see you are determined not to believe me when I say she is changed.

FILIK

That may be, but my love for her has not. I cannot forget her. I feel I can never truly be happy without her.

NADYA

I am sorry for you then. For I am certain you cannot be happy with her, but I will say nothing more on the subject. It is for you to judge.

FILIK

You are good, and you will see she cannot be so different as you believe.

Nadya bites her tongue and they sit in silence for a moment before Yovanka calls Filik over.

FILIK

Will you walk with us?

NADYA

I'm a little tired, please go without me.

FILIK

You're sure you'll be alright?

NADYA

Of course.

Filik leaves, and Nadya leans against the tree. She is partly obscured by the rugs and the tree.

Sofiia and her mother MRS. YANOVICHA are on the other side of the tree talking without knowing that Nadya is listening.

SOFIIA

Niko said she was shaking from head to toe.

YANOVICHA

But why did she ride him? She knew full well what the beast was capable of.

SOFIIA

The groom did not know he was not to be brought out. Miss Nadya did not recognize him at first, but it was Yovanka who all but dared her ride the animal. She thinks she is a favorite of Filik's.

YANOVICHA

Your sister has always been spiteful. She'd better take care it does not get Miss Nadya killed.

SOFIIA

Niko said he'd take care she did not have Chempion on the ride back.

Nadya rises and makes for the horses angrily. A groom approaches to attend her.

NADYA

I must get back to the palace directly. Fetch me the horse I came on.

GROOM

If you please, Miss, Mr. Nikolaev said that Chempion was a bit fresh and that you was to have one of the grooms horses for the ride back.

NADYA

I understand, but I wish to ride Chempion. I will explain to Mr. Nikolaev.

GROOM
 (doubtful)
 Very well, Miss, if you insist.

The groom brings the horse around, and Nadya mounts him and rides off without another word.

EXT. YANOVICH MANSION GROUNDS - PATHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Nadya, atop the horse, tries to maintain her composure but the horse begins to go faster and faster.

Nadya tries to rein him in, but to no avail.

Suddenly, a pack of stray dogs comes out of a side road and begin barking in front of the horse.

Chempion rears and tears off into the woods. Nadya holds on for dear life.

EXT. YANOVICH MANSION GROUNDS - MEADOW - CONTINUOUS

Chempion breaks out into the clearing with a terrified Nadya clinging to the reins.

The horse runs toward a low fence.

Nadya jumps off the horse to avoid being thrown and lands hard on her previously injured foot.

The horse is gone. Nadya tries to get up, but can't. She lay in the meadow crying.

EXT. YANOVICH MANSION GROUNDS - GLEN - LATER

Niko and Filik dialogue as they load the picnic things in the carriages.

FILIK
 What did you think of Miss Nadya?
 She's pretty, isn't she?

NIKO
 Beautiful. She has taken a
 prejudice against me though, and
 rightly so.

FILIK
 I had secretly hoped you might like
 her.

NIKO
 Ridiculous!

FILIK
 Ridiculous? You have already said
 you think her pretty. There can be
 no two opinions as to her wit, and
 --

The groom shyly approaches them.

GROOM

Excuse me, Sir. I know you said not give the lady Chempion for the ride back, but she insisted on him. She said she'd make it right with you.

NIKO

Impossible! You fool!

Niko pushes the groom out of the way and mounts Filik's horse who is tied up nearby. He takes off down the pathway at full speed.

EXT. YANOVICH MANSION GROUNDS - PATHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Niko pulls the horse to a stop.

He sees the ground freshly turned up, and branches broken where Chempion turned off the path and into the woods.

NIKO

God help her!

Niko steers the horse into the woods.

EXT. YANOVICH MANSION GROUNDS - MEADOW - CONTINUOUS

Niko emerges from the woods into the meadow, and immediately sees Nadya lying on the ground in a heap. She isn't moving.

He spurs the horse forward and dismounts while the animal is still moving.

But before he can attend Nadya, the stray dogs come running out of the woods barking and snarling. They chase the horse away.

Niko starts to run after the horse, but stops after only a few feet. He looks back at Nadya, then towards the horse again. He whistles, trying to call the horse. It's no use. The horse is gone.

Niko goes to Nadya. He lifts her head, and brushes her hair from her face. Her eyes flutter open. She groans.

NIKO

Where are you hurt?

NADYA

(weakly)

My foot. I cannot stand.

Niko goes to asses the injury. He takes her foot in his hands. Nadya winces as he removes her shoe.

NIKO

That brute! I should have shot him
when I had the chance. I knew he'd
throw you.

NADYA

He didn't. I jumped.

Niko glances at her in astonishment. He sees tears rolling
down Nadya's cheeks. His look softens. He moves to pick her
up.

NIKO

There now, we must get you back to
the house. Put your arm around my
neck

NADYA

I can't.

NIKO

Nonsense! You are very brave.

Niko puts his arms under Nadya. She groans in pain, but puts
her arm around him.

Niko lifts Nadya. She grips his jacket trying not to cry
out. She puts her head on his chest, tears flowing freely.
Niko begins the long walk back to the palace.

EXT. YANOVICH MANSION - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Niko, dripping with perspiration, carries a faint Nadya up
the steps. Iovanka, Sofiia, Katrina, and Filik run out to
meet them.

NIKO

She's hurt her foot again. Miss
Iovanka, fetch the doctor, if you
would.

Iovanka hurries to comply. Filik tries to relieve Niko of
his load, but Niko just pushes past him.

INT. YANOVICH MANSION - GUEST ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As Niko lays Nadya on the bed, their faces come close.

NADYA

Thank you.

NIKO

(embarrassed)

It was nothing. Rest.

Nadya follows Niko with her eyes as he leaves. Katrina and
Filik, enter just as Niko is leaving, but Nadya's gaze never
leaves her rescuer.

KATRINA

Oh, my dear brave Nadya. Why have you gone and done such a foolish thing?

FILIK

You needn't scold her. I'm sure she's aware of her folly.

Nadya has a far off look. She's not even listening to her friends.

INT. YANOVICH MANSION - DRAWING ROOM - LATER

Niko pours himself some vodka. Filik enters and does the same.

FILIK

The doctor says it's not broken, but she will be laid up for a few days at least.

NIKO

You should have let me shoot the damn horse.

FILIK

You are not to blame nor is the horse. Nadya knew the animal's nature. She's always been proud though.

NIKO

She could have been killed! I won't have that wretched animal about. That's the end of it.

FILIK

Niko, please, at least let me find a buyer for him.

NIKO

If you wish. But take care it's not to anyone I know.

INT. YANOVICH MANSION - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Nadya is propped up on the window seat looking bored. Katrina enters and sits beside her.

NADYA

Oh, Trinkka, I am so weary of this room, of this view. I will be so glad to come down to dinner tonight.

KATRINA

And I shall be glad of your company. Dimitri has already returned to Moscow. Yovanka will prattle on about Count Filik, and Sofiia is the dullest person alive.

NADYA

Is Filik still here?

KATRINA

Yes, but he is leaving this afternoon.

NADYA

Trinka, be a dear and tell him that I wish to see him before he leaves.

Katrina smirks. Then leaves to fulfill her mission.

Nadya looks out the window. She sees Chempion being tied to a chaise. Nadya frowns. There's a KNOCK at the door.

NADYA

Come in.

Niko enters. He hesitates as she pulls her dressing gown closed.

NADYA

Mr. Nikolaev --

NIKO

Please call me Niko.

Nadya blushes.

NADYA

Niko, I was expecting Filik. Have you seen him?

NIKO

He will be in momentarily. I could not leave without seeing for myself that you are indeed recovered.

NADYA

That is good of you. (glancing out the window) Will you not ride Chempion home?

NIKO

(uneasy)

He is to be sold.

NADYA

No! Please, do not sell him on my account.

NIKO
(irritated)
Why do you interfere?

NADYA
You said he was dear to you. I
could not bear it if you always
associated me with his loss.

NIKO
He is vicious! You were nearly
killed.

NADYA
Nearly killed, but not quite.
Please, I beg you.

NIKO
(moving closer)
You remind me so much of someone
else. She was --

Filik and Yovanka enter, interrupting Niko. They stop short
as they see Niko standing very close to Nadya.

Niko steps back but their eyes remain locked. An awkward
silence follows before Yovanka steps forward and forces a
smile.

YOVANKA
Well, Miss Nadya, are you looking
forward to rejoining society
tonight? You are looking quite
well.

Nadya tears her gaze away from Niko.

NADYA
Thank you, Miss Yovanka. I am happy
to be joining everyone for dinner.

FILIK
I'm afraid I shall not have the
pleasure of your company tonight.
Niko and I will be returning to
Moscow within the hour. I have some
business to attend to, but I would
like to invite you to my parent's
home in three weeks time. Will you
come?

NADYA
Thank you, Filik. I would be happy
to accept your invitation.

FILIK
Splendid! Adieu till then, Nadya.

Filik heads for the door. Niko is still in a trance, staring at Nadya.

FILIK

Niko, are you coming?

Niko snaps to. He approaches Nadya, who holds out her hand. Niko takes it, but instead of bowing kisses her hand. Nadya blushes.

NIKO

Good bye, Miss Nadya.

NADYA

Good bye.

Niko and Filik leave. Yovanka looks around the room awkwardly for a moment.

YOVANKA

You will excuse me, Miss Nadya, I must dress for dinner.

NADYA

Of course, Miss Yovanka. Thank you for coming up.

Yovanka curtsies and leaves.

Nadya, alone again, cups the hand Niko kissed. She kisses it. Then leans back and sighs, she seems confused at her reaction.

INT. CHAISE - ON THE ROAD TO MOSCOW - LATER

Niko stares out the window, deep in thought.

Filik, across from him, alternates between reading and studying Niko.

Niko finally turns to Filik. He takes a moment to search for the right words.

Filik leans forward intently.

NIKO

Filik, tell me about Miss Nadya.

FILIK

(pleased by the question)
I've known the Dorofeyev family my whole life. Nadya is as agreeable as they come, and very sensible --

NIKO

Tell me of her history. Has she any family?

FILIK

She has a sister, Olena, and an aunt, but they are estranged. After their mother died the sisters quarreled. I don't know all of the particulars, but it seems Nadya disapproved of going to live with their aunt.

NIKO

Why should she disapprove?

FILIK

You've seen how proud Nadya can be. She must have felt to ashamed to accept charity, but Olena, however, had no intention of living in poverty. And so the sisters parted ways.

NIKO

Such was Miss Nadya's resolve?

FILIK

When she sets her mind on something there is no dissuading her.

NIKO

And their mother left them with nothing?

FILIK

Mrs. Dorofeyeva, may she rest in peace, was extravagant. It was not only her undoing; it also left Olena and Nadya destitute.

NIKO

Has she no income?

FILIK

There were, I think, fifty rubles a year saved from the wreck. Nadya lives on that, and what she makes -- made as a nana.

Niko takes in the information in silence. After a moment Filik tires of waiting for a reply.

FILIK

Why so curious?

NIKO

(matter-of-factly)

I'm going to ask her to marry me.

FILIK

Congratulations! She is a good girl, and you will make her an excellent husband.

NIKO

I don't know that I shall. In any case it is very unlikely she will have me.

FILIK

(scoffing)

You can please any girl you choose.

NIKO

She is hardly any girl.
(remembering) She is so steady. I know I must be honest with her, even if it means she will reject me.

FILIK

And why would she reject you? You love her don't you?

NIKO

I -- I want to love her.

FILIK

You want to love her? Now see here, Niko, Nadya is like a sister to me. Do you love her or not?

NIKO

I admire Miss Nadya. I burn for another.

FILIK

(indignantlly)

You cynic! Do you call this right or fair?

NIKO

That is for Nadya to decide.

FILIK

For the sake of our friendship, you must take me into your confidence.

NIKO

You will think me a fool.

FILIK

That would be an improvement on my present opinion.

NIKO
Very well. Three years ago, you
remember I went to Rome for the
festival.

FLASHBACK

EXT. ROME - PIAZZA - NIGHT

Niko walks in the piazza taking in the sights and sounds of the festival. He is surrounded by masked MEN and WOMEN in colorful garb.

LOUD MUSIC can be heard along with boisterous laughing.

Niko smiles as he sees a BOY, 17, in a wolf mask come up behind a GIRL, 16, in a deer mask. The boy covers her eyes. She puts her hands on his.

The boy reveals himself then kisses her on the cheek.

As Niko watches the teenagers a MASKED WOMAN suddenly takes hold of his lapels and kisses him passionately.

She gives him a coy smile then disappears into the crowd.

Niko follows. He barely keeps up, catching fleeting glimpses of her through the throng of people.

EXT. ROME - SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

Finally, Niko follows the masked woman into an empty square with a fountain in the center.

He approaches her confidently.

She smiles coyly. There is a pregnant pause as they lock eyes.

Niko goes to take her mask off.

She grabs his hand, then wags her finger at him playfully.

Niko kisses her.

NIKO
What's your name?

She laughs out loud. Then grabs his hand and pulls him down a dark alley.

EXT. ROME - ROOFTOP - LATER

The masked woman pulls Niko to the balcony wall.

He tries to put his hands around her waist and kiss her again.

She pulls away and climbs up onto the wall.

Niko takes her hand, afraid she'll fall.

She looks out at the city, alive with music and lights.

MASKED WOMAN
(shouting)
Carpe Diem!

She laughs out loud. Her laughter is infectious, and Niko laughs a little.

She turns and suddenly jumps into Niko's arms.

He catches her and spins her around. She throws her arms up, then slips down until they're face to face again.

NIKO
Do you speak english?

She only smiles up at him. Niko sighs. The woman pulls him back toward the stairs.

INT. ROMAN HOTEL - DINING ROOM - LATER

The masked woman drags Niko behind her as she takes food from the buffet and pops it into her mouth.

She takes a glass of champagne and hands it to Niko, then takes one for herself.

She downs it and grabs another, while Niko smiles into his glass and glances around to see if anyone is looking.

Before he can finish his drink she pulls him to the dance floor.

He puts his champagne on a table and takes her in his arms.

She leans back and spins them around and around.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROME - BEACH - DAWN

Niko and the masked woman sit side by side watching the sunrise.

Bathed in golden light, Niko looks at the woman tenderly. He takes her chin and turns her face towards his.

He reaches up to remove the mask.

Just before her face is revealed --

CUT TO:

INT. CHAISE - ON THE ROAD TO MOSCOW - LATER

Niko is staring out the window as Filik stares at him mouth agape.

NIKO

Her face, Filik, it was angelic. It has haunted me for the past three years. I know now I can never be free of it. Nadya reminds me of her, and if she will have me, tortured though I am, I will consider myself lucky.

FLASHBACK

EXT. ROME - BEACH - DAWN

Niko holds the woman's mask in his hands, as she runs away from him.

INT. CHAISE - ON THE ROAD TO MOSCOW - CONTINUOUS

Filik is pensive. Niko is silent.

FILIK

And you have no clue as to her identity?

NIKO

None. I searched and searched, but failed absolutely. Every morning I awoke with the hope that I might --

FILIK

(agitated)

What was she like?

NIKO

I can't quite describe her. I try to analyze what about Miss Nadya reminds me of her, but their features are not at all alike. This woman's face was more delicate and altogether more beautiful. She was so wild. So unconcerned with the conventional.

Niko loses himself in the memory. Filik sees that this conversation is over. Both are silent for a time.

FILIK

I've found a buyer for Chempion.

NIKO

I won't be selling him. Miss Nadya begged me not to. I could not refuse her.

EXT. ST. PETERSBURG PARK - THREE WEEKS LATER

Niko and Nadya are walking as they converse. Niko is finishing up his story of the masked woman.

NIKO

I never saw her again.

NADYA

What an extraordinary tale. (pause)
But why have you shared it with me?

NIKO

I am a very honest man. I do not say that as a compliment to myself. I know no other way to be. I love this woman, I shall never love another as I love her. But I know now that she will never be mine. I am lonely and you are alone. We could be happy together.

NADYA

(trying to remain
distant)

I am not unhappy in my current situation.

NIKO

I did not mean to imply that you were. Simply that you would be happier being my wife than being alone.

NADYA

Suppose you see this other woman again once we were married.

NIKO

I have searched for her for three years without success. Can the universe be so cruel as to offer me a glimpse of her when I am in a position to be happy with you?

NADYA

It can.

NIKO

(defeated)

It can.

NADYA

(pained)

You ask me to be your wife while professing to love another. Do you not see how cruel you are to me? (searching his face) Do you love me at all?

NIKO

I love the shadow with unreasoning passion. But I do love you, Nadya. It is a quiet steady love. When I looked into her eyes I saw a tempest which excited me. When I look into yours I feel comforted. (taking her hand) To take your hand in mine gives me a sense of peace. To think of you in my home makes me happy.

Nadya looks at her hand in his. She pulls it out and turns her back to him. She seems confused. She turns back to him.

NADYA

Now, I must be honest with you. I love you. In every way that a woman can love a man. How can I live with the half-hearted love you offer me?

NIKO

(trying to convince himself)

I -- I do love you.

NADYA

Even you don't believe that.

Nadya walks away. Niko watches her leave with an expression of shame.

He stands alone amidst a sea of blissful couples.

INT. VITSIN MANSION - SITTING ROOM - EVENING

Yovanka plays the piano while keeping her eye on Filik who approaches a secluded Nadya. Nadya smiles politely as Filik sits next to her.

FILIK

I couldn't help noticing a marked distance between you and Niko.

Nadya shifts uncomfortably.

FILIK

I had thought the two of you were becoming quite close.

NADYA

Indeed? And what gave you that idea?

FILIK

You were never any good at dissembling.

Nadya blushes, then looks away angrily.

FILIK
You denied him?

NADYA
You knew he would ask me?

FILIK
I did. But I knew you wouldn't
accept him.

NADYA
Did you?

FILIK
How could you? I know you are not
romantic, but every girl wants to
be loved.

Nadya looks pained. Filik sees this and takes her hand.

FILIK
You deserve to be adored.

NADYA
I'd settle for appreciated.

Nadya glances over to where Niko stands entertaining Sofiia.

Niko playfully tugs at a lock of Sofiia's hair. She giggles
and feigns bashfulness. Niko catches Nadya's eye. She
quickly looks away.

EXT. VITSIN MANSION - GARDENS - DAY

The sun glistens on the small man made pond where Nadya
tosses bread crumbs to some ducks. Katrina moseys out in
Nadya's direction.

Katrina locks arms with Nadya and puts her head on her
friend's shoulder.

KATRINA
You are so distant since we came
here. What are you thinking?

Nadya contemplates an answer. She pats her friends hand.

NADYA
I'm thinking I'm lucky to have a
friend like you.

KATRINA
(teasing)
Liar.

NADYA
No, truly! (sadly) I'm going to
need a friend when I am an old
spinster.

KATRINA

An old spinster. You are far too pretty not to marry. I'm certain you've already received loads of offers.

NADYA

Not loads.

KATRINA

(interest piqued)

But you have received offers?

Nadya seems unwilling to continue. The two walk silently for a time. Nadya contemplates a family of ducks.

NADYA

(enviously)

Animals live in such blissful simplicity.

KATRINA

They merely survive. We live for the hope of tomorrow.

NADYA

I have no hope for tomorrow.

KATRINA

Nonsense. You are the most hopeful person I know. You've always looked to the next day with expectation.

Nadya reflects on Katrina's description of her.

NADYA

I suppose it's true. And I do still. I don't hope to fall in love. What I would wish to find is (searching for the word) togetherness.

KATRINA

Niko seems to like you.

Nadya is upset at this turn in the conversation.

KATRINA

Do you not like him?

Nadya tries desperately to find words. Katrina sees her agitation.

KATRINA

(only half surprised)

You do.

NADYA
 (trying to stay casual)
 Who wouldn't like him? He's
 handsome, intelligent, and wealthy.
 But he is far too worldly for my
 taste.

KATRINA
 Worldly?

NADYA
 Yes, worldly. I do not ask for much
 in husband, but I cannot marry a
 man who will constantly be
 measuring me against his previous
 conquests.

KATRINA
 You seem to be better acquainted
 with him than I.

NADYA
 Unfortunately so.

The girls continue walking in silence. Katrina continuously
 steals glances at her friend's expression.

Katrina opens her mouth to press Nadya for more information
 about her "acquaintance" with Niko, but reconsiders.

The sound of footsteps draws the girls attention.

Niko approaches them. Nadya's face is glowing with
 embarrassment.

Niko notices Nadya's discomfort and momentarily loses his
 train of thought.

NIKO
 (to Nadya)
 I -- um -- Countess Vitsina is
 looking for you. She's in the
 library.

Nadya makes for the house without so much as a "thank you".

Katrina and Niko's eyes meet. Katrina quickly diverts her
 gaze.

NIKO
 May I join you?

Niko offers his arm. Katrina shyly accepts it.

The two walk silently for a moment.

NIKO
 You and Miss Nadya seem to be great
 friends.

KATRINA

Oh, yes. One could not ask for a better friend.

NIKO

Are you childhood friends then?

KATRINA

If only. I could have used a friend like her. No, I met Nadya three years ago at the factory.

NIKO

The factory?

KATRINA

(chuckling at the memory)
Yes. She seemed so out of place. She never talked of her life before the factory, but I knew the look on her face. I see it on every pampered aristocrat that comes slumming. She wasn't prepared for just how bleak our existence is.

NIKO

So she was -- slumming?

Katrina looks at him curiously.

KATRINA

I had thought you and Nadya were better acquainted than that.

NIKO

I must confess I know almost nothing about her past.

KATRINA

I'm afraid you're in for shock. As I said, I know not what life she came from, but when I met her, she had begun working at the factory to pay rent on the most dismal little room I'd ever seen.

NIKO

Filik said her mother had left her destitute, but I had no idea her situation was so desperate.

KATRINA

The time she spent at the factory was very trying for her, but Nadya is not one to settle. By virtue of her own strength of will she improved her situation greatly in a very short time.

NIKO

Indeed, the strength of her resolve must be admired.

KATRINA

I have found little about my friend that is not to be admired.

NIKO

You have not found her to be proud?

KATRINA

Proud? No. If I were to have to name one flaw of Nadya's, I think I would say she is too sensible. If such a thing is possible.

NIKO

(incredulously)

How can one be too sensible?

KATRINA

She is sensible to the exclusion of all foolishness, even love.

NIKO

Love is foolish?

KATRINA

Nadya believes so.

NIKO

You are mistaken. I have found her to be a most ardent believer in love.

KATRINA

(with a knowing smile)

One usually is -- once they've tasted it.

Niko contemplates a flock of ducks taking flight from the pond, trying to hide embarrassment.

KATRINA

(becoming very serious)

Nadya has had to rely only on herself these three years. And she is as reliable as they come. Anyone wishing to win her affection will have to offer her a love as constant as she is.

Katrina searches Niko's face for a reaction. He seems pained.

NIKO

She deserves no less. You will
forgive me Miss Katrina, I must be
getting back.

Katrina curtsies politely. Niko barely nods before striding
off.

INT. VITSIN MANSION - LIBRARY - DAY

COUNTESS VITSINA is the sort of lady everyone can admire.
Her pleasing manner and sincere smile make one forget about
her social or financial status and they see only the sweet
matron. She smiles kindly as she hands Nadya a book.

COUNTESS VITSINA

There you are, my dear. I finally
found it. It had fallen behind the
davenport, but I rescued it for
you.

NADYA

(down cast)

Thank you. I wish you had not gone
to so much trouble.

COUNTESS VITSINA

Is anything the matter, love?

Nadya's brow furrows, but she seems unwilling to confide in
the dear lady. Countess Vitsina gently takes Nadya's chin in
her hand. Nadya gives her a half-hearted smile.

COUNTESS VITSINA

Always so cautious about your
feelings.

Nadya sighs heavily.

NADYA

What was it about Count Vitsin that
made you want to marry him?

The Countess raises an eyebrow at the question.

COUNTESS VITSINA

Well, things were a little
different then. I met him on the
day of our wedding.

NADYA

(surprised)

Your marriage was arranged? But you
seem so suited to each other.

COUNTESS VITSINA

(with a chuckle)

Well, thirty years of marriage have certainly helped us learn appreciate the other's good points. Though, we have had equal opportunity to discover each other's less admirable qualities as well. Such is the case in any relationship.

NADYA

But if you did not love him --

COUNTESS VITSINA

(scoffing)

Love. You mean the quickening of your heartbeat at every mention of his name?

Nadya seems ashamed of her naivety. She slumps into a chair.

COUNTESS VITSINA

Such fleeting sentiments will not stand the test of time. You have the opportunity to choose your partner. Do not fall into the trap that leaves so many of your generation in despair, my dear. Choose a man for his qualities. Disregard the butterflies in your stomach.

Countess Vitsina affectionately strokes Nadya's hair. Nadya is pensive.

The Countess makes for the door.

COUNTESS VITSINA

(over shoulder)

And value the man who will choose you for your qualities.

Nadya looks down at the book in her hand.

INSERT - THE BOOK, ANNA KARINENA

INT. FILIK MANSION - DINNING ROOM - NIGHT

COUNT FREDRIK VITSIN and Countess Vitsina sit at opposite ends of the dinner table, with Filik, Sofiia, Yovanka, and Katrina filling out the party.

Nadya and Niko have been seated across from each other. They are going to great lengths to avoid eye contact.

COUNTESS VITSINA

Filik dear, have you received a reply from Olena?

Nadya scowls and stares hard at her soup.

FILIK

I received a letter from her just this morning. It seems she will be in town in July. Her cousin is to be presented then.

YOVANKA

You mean Datja Aleksandrova? (smirking) Poor thing. She's so awkward and plain. She'll never find a husband. No matter how much money her mother has.

Glances of disapproval of Yovanka's mean comments are exchanged. Sofiia looks embarrassed for her sister.

SOFIIA

But she is so amiable --

YOVANKA

Nonsense, Sofiia. She's downright silly most of the time.

Count Vitsin clears his throat loudly.

COUNT VITSIN

I wager you'll be glad to see your sister again, eh Miss Nadya?

There is a tense silence. Filik, spoon of soup mid-air, searches Nadya's face.

Nadya quickly masks a look of pain, with ambivalence.

NADYA

It is not likely that I will see her. I have taken a job with the Zabolotny family. I start next month.

COUNTESS VITSINA

But surely, you could take a day to visit with dear Olena, couldn't you?

Nadya's frustration is beginning to show.

NADYA

That is not likely. I must work to make my way.

COUNTESS VITSINA

But a day --

FILIK

(whispering loudly)
Mother!

The Countess looks questioningly at her son. Filik wordlessly implores her silence.

Nadya's spoon loudly clangs in her bowl as she puts it down.

NADYA

Please excuse me.

Nadya makes a brusque exit. All are clearly in the dark, except Filik. He flashes a look of reproach to his baffled mother before going after Nadya.

EXT. VITSIN MANSION - GARDENS - NIGHT

Nadya emerges from the house. She looks up at the moon, then fills her lungs with crisp night air.

Filik joins her.

NADYA

The sky is so clear tonight.

Filik puts a comforting hand on Nadya's shoulder. She puts her hand over his.

A single tear trickles down Nadya's cheek.

NADYA

I miss her.

FILIK

Whatever happened between you can't be worth so much heartache. (gently squeezing her shoulder) Reconcile.

NADYA

Oh, Filik. I hold no ill will toward Olena. But the person she has become is someone I can't bear to be around.

FILIK

I wish you two would tell me what this is about.

The sound of FOOTSTEPS can heard coming their way. Niko makes a hesitant appearance.

Nadya turns away so he won't see her tears.

Filik walks to his friend. He puts a hand on Niko's chest in an effort to persuade him to leave Nadya alone.

Niko pushes past him. Filik considers his next move, then returns to the house.

Niko stands just behind Nadya. He joins her in looking up at the moon.

NIKO

The Countess meant no harm. She was very sorry to have upset you.

NADYA

I know. She's known us since we were children, my sister and I. But she doesn't know Olena as I do. No one does.

NIKO

Filik seems to think he does.

NADYA

He is the most deceived of all.

NIKO

You are very hard on her.

NADYA

Every quality you've professed to admire in me, she is devoid of.

NIKO

I am very sorry for Filik then.

NADYA

Be sorry for him if she ever accepts him.

NIKO

But he will have the woman he loves.

NADYA

(upset)

He will have nothing! It is all an illusion.

Niko takes Nadya by both her arms and looks deep in her eyes.

NIKO

Love? Is love an illusion?

Nadya searches his face for the answer. She then angrily pulls away and turns her back to him.

NADYA

The kind of love my sister offers is, the kind of love --(choking back tears) the kind of love you offer.

NIKO

(desperate)

I would offer you the whole-hearted affection you seek, if I could. She

(MORE)

NIKO (cont'd)
stole a part of my soul, that woman
did. I can't get it back. (trying
to reason with her) I could have
lied to you.

NADYA
(turning to face him)
Do you wish you had?

Niko moves nearer. Nadya seems almost afraid as she peers up into his pleading eyes.

NIKO
(emphatically)
No. I'll never lie to you.

Nadya seems to melt a little. Niko takes her chin and kisses her ever so gently.

Katrina bursts in and Nadya quickly breaks away from Niko.
Katrina stops short and looks at the floor.

NIKO
Nadya --

Nadya's eyes are brimming with tears. She runs back to the house.

Katrina looks up at Niko. Her look is apologetic, but Niko just lets out a heavy sigh and turns his back to her.

Katrina hangs her head and returns to the house.

EXT. MOSCOW PARK - DAY

The park is bursting with signs of new life. Nadya absentmindedly brushes her hand over some fresh blooms as she strolls along.

Nadya notices a young married couple picnicking under a tree.

The YOUNG HUSBAND puts a dab of frosting on his YOUNG WIFE'S nose. She giggles and wags her finger at him playfully.

Nadya turns up her nose at the couple. She continues her walk.

Nadya comes to a park bench where an OLD LADY sits feeding the pigeons. Nadya takes a seat beside her.

The bird lady wordlessly hands Nadya some crumbs. Nadya accepts graciously.

BIRD LADY
They're here every day. My dear
little friends.

NADYA

Do they come in winter?

BIRD LADY

Every day.

NADYA

And you are here every day.

BIRD LADY

I have no where else to be.

Nadya gives the pigeons the last of the crumbs. Then gets up to leave.

NADYA

Excuse me.

The bird lady continues her task, taking no note of Nadya's departure.

Nadya makes her way down the path. She stops and takes one last look at the bird lady over her shoulder.

Nadya's breathing is hectic. She seems on the verge of a panic attack. She looks around the park.

MONTAGE - MARRIED LIFE

A) At a park bench a HARRIED MOTHER tries to comfort a crying baby, unaware that beside her her HUSBAND is oogling a YOUNGER WOMAN.

B) Further down the path a FINELY DRESSED MAN chides his SUBMISSIVE WIFE for a loose thread on his jacket.

C) A QUIET COUPLE walk arm in arm, both looking away from the other with a look of silent desperation.

D) A STERN MOTHER arranges her son's tie brusquely, while the FATHER winks at him to cheer him up.

These scenes of misery seem to swirl around Nadya until tears of desperation begin to well up.

Nadya's focus is suddenly drawn to another scene.

An OLD MAN holding hands with an OLD LADY. The old man stops and picks a flower. He presents it to his companion.

The old lady gives him a smile you would expect to see on a flirting school girl.

Nadya is fascinated as the old man tucks the flower into the old lady's white hair.

As the two walk away the old lady lays her head on the old man's shoulder.

A little smile tugs at the corner of Nadya's lips. She turns and, head held high, takes a purposeful stride back the way she came.

INT. VITSIN MANSION - DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

Yovanka plays a romantic tune on the harp as Filik sits by admiring her talent.

Count and Countess Vitsin, Sofiia, Katrina, and Niko also listen intently.

Nadya sits opposite Niko. Her eyes are fixed on him.

Niko notices her penetrating gaze. He leans forward, interest piqued.

As the music intensifies so does the exchange of looks between Nadya and Niko.

EXT. VITSIN MANSION - GARDENS - NIGHT

Nadya meanders into the garden. Niko follows close behind. She caresses a rose growing up a trellis.

Niko is scandalously close as he looks over her shoulder at the flower.

Nadya suddenly becomes shy. Her breathing quickens as Niko's lips come close to her ear.

NIKO

You are changed tonight.

Nadya cannot find words. Niko brushes hair away from her neck.

Nadya is practically trembling as Niko traces the shape of her neck with his finger.

NIKO

Will you not rebuke my forwardness?

NADYA

(barely audible)

No.

Niko gently puts his lips on Nadya's neck. She closes her eyes.

NADYA

You are turning me into such a fool.

Niko turns Nadya and looks her in the eye.

NIKO

Why are you so afraid to love me?

NADYA
 (tears streaming)
 Because you cannot return my love.

Niko tenderly brushes the tears away.

NIKO
 And yet you accept my caress.

Nadya diverts her gaze. There is a pregnant silence.

NADYA
 When you touch me I can almost
 forget that you love another.

Niko winces as though the blow were physical.

NADYA
 I am a fool for loving you. Perhaps
 the sentiment will fade with time,
 as with most.

NIKO
 No, please --

Nadya puts a finger up to silence him.

NADYA
 Or -- Or perhaps it will grow. As I
 hope your love for me will grow.
 With this hope in my heart I will
 marry you.

Niko pulls Nadya close and kisses her. Finally resigned to her love for him, Nadya puts her arms around his neck pours herself into the kiss.

Nadya pauses puts her forehead to his.

NADYA
 God help me if the shadow ever
 grows to life.

NIKO
 (holding her tighter)
 Already it withers.

Niko takes a ring out of his pocket. Nadya beams as he slips it on her finger. She rests her head on his chest contentedly.

INT. VITSIN MANSION - SITTING ROOM - EVENING

Niko and Nadya stand by the mantle, hand in hand. Katrina, Iovanka, Sofiia, and Count and Countess Filik are congratulating them on their engagement.

Filik stands back sulkily.

INT. VITSIN MANSION - DINING ROOM - LATER

Nadya and Katrina are chatting. Nadya shows off the engagement ring. Filik approaches them.

FILIK

May I have a word with you, Nadya?

NADYA

Certainly, Filik.

The two step aside. Nadya notices Filik's disheveled appearance.

NADYA

Are you unwell, Filik?

He shrugs off the question.

FILIK

When will the wedding be?

NADYA

July. Olena will be in town then --

FILIK

(agitated)

I thought you had determined never to speak to her again.

NADYA

It is true that she hurt me very much by going to live with Mrs. Aleksandrova. And we fought bitterly concerning -- concerning -- well, her decisions, but we are sisters. I must invite her to my wedding. It need not follow that we remain on close terms.

FILIK

I am surprised that you are willing to wait so long to be married on her account.

NADYA

Filik! She is my sister and my only family. I thought you would be glad to see her again.

FILIK

What does Niko say?

Niko comes up behind Nadya and puts his hand on her shoulder.

NIKO

I would do anything to please my
dearest. Especially as regards her
own sister.

Filik rolls his eyes and downs his glass of vodka.

EXT. VITSIN MANSION - GARDENS - DAY

Nadya and Niko are looking at invitations.

Filik lays on a sofa, empty vodka glass in one hand, his
other arm over his face.

SERVANT#2 comes out and hands Nadya a letter. She quickly
opens it.

NADYA

Olena says she will come to the
wedding!

NIKO

That ought to cheer you up, hey
Filik?

FILIK

You can't be serious, Nadya! After
they way she behaved. You should
remain firm and not invite her.

NADYA

(in tears)

I don't understand you, Filik.

Niko puts his arm around Nadya's shoulder to comfort her,
then turns on Filik.

NIKO

(angrily)

You forget yourself, Filik.

FILIK

(sincerely)

I beg your pardon, Nadya. Will you
give me her address? I would feel
better if I could speak with her
myself.

NADYA

Of course you may have it. You need
not fret so. I'm sure you will
succeed this time.

Filik stands, falters, then stumbles towards the house.

FILIK

I shall never succeed.

Nadya looks at Niko, full of concern. He takes her hand reassuringly.

NADYA

He is so changed these past few weeks. When he first asked for Olena's hand it was clear he admired her, but now I think he must be half mad with love.

NIKO

(uneasy)

Let us hope that's all it is.

INT. FEDEV HOME - SITTING ROOM - DAY

Filik looks with disgust at the wedding gifts piled all over the room. Nadya enters and holds out both hands to him.

NADYA

(glowing)

Filik, how wonderful of you to come by.

FILIK

Good gracious, Nadya. Don't look so happy.

NADYA

And how should I look? Today I will see my sister for the first time in three years. And tomorrow I will be Nadya Nikolaeva.

FILIK

Be happy if you must then. Niko won't return from Moscow in time to go to the station. He asked that I accompany you.

NADYA

Splendid! If I know Olena she will have heaps of luggage. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Nadya and Filik make their way through the crowd toward the train.

NADYA

There she is! I see her!

They push toward her.

PAN BACK 50 FEET

Niko is trying to catch up to Nadya and Filik. He looks ahead and catches a glimpse of Olena. He freezes.

FLASHBACK

EXT. ROME-BEACH - DAWN

Niko uncovers the masked woman's face. It is Olena.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - CONTINUOUS

Niko stumbles toward the exit.

EXT. OUTSIDE TRAIN STATION - CONTINUOUS

Niko leans heavily on the railing. His breathing is labored. A hand rests on his shoulder. Startled, Niko turns, it's Filik.

FILIK

It's all up then, isn't it, my friend.

INT. FEDEV HOME - FOYER - DAY

Olena and Nadya struggle with the luggage. Katrina enters.

KATRINA

Where is Filik?

OLENA

Why he had barely said his greetings, when he excused himself saying he had an urgent matter to attend.

KATRINA

I do hope it is nothing serious.

NADYA

His manner has been a little odd of late. I should not worry if I were you.

INT. FEDEV HOME - SITTING ROOM - EVENING

Katrina is putting the finishing touches on Nadya's veil, while Nadya and Olena are cozied up by the fire.

OLENA

Now, dear sister, you must tell me what sort of man has been able to secure your affections where so many others have failed. He must be very handsome. Is he artistic? I hope, for your sake, he is a man of fortune. I don't doubt he is clever.

Nadya covers her ears, smiling and shaking her head as Olena rambles on.

OLENA

I think he must be very serious. My solemn sister would not have it any other way. Or perhaps he is not. Perhaps he has finally found dear Nadya's missing merriment.

NADYA

(feigning exasperation)
Enough! No more speculation. You will see for yourself. He and Filik will be here soon for dinner.

KATRINA

(whining)
They are late already, and we have such a lot to do.

The servant MARJA enters.

KATRINA

What is it, Marja?

MARJA

I must speak to Miss Nadya.
(glancing around nervously) In private.

Olena and Katrina look to Nadya curiously. Nadya shrugs, then follows Marja out of the room.

INT. FEDEV HOME - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Nadya and Marja enter from the sitting room.

MARJA

It's Count Filik...

NADYA

(fearing the worst)
Has something happened to him?

MARJA

He is in the library. He said he needs to speak to you alone.

NADYA

Thank you, Marja. Tell the others to go in to dinner. Say nothing of this for now.

INT. FEDEV HOME - LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Filik leans heavily on the mantelpiece, staring into the fire. Nadya enters. He does not turn.

NADYA
 Filik, what has happened? Is it
 Niko? Is he hurt?

Filik turns to her. His eyes are red, and his face haggard.
 He holds a letter in his hands.

Filik puts the letter in Nadya's hands, then puts his hand
 on her shoulder.

FILIK
 I would have spared you this if I
 could.

Filik leaves Nadya with her heart in her throat. She tears
 open the letter, and looks it over quickly. Nadya rings the
 bell. Marja appears promptly.

NADYA
 Mr. Nikolaev has fallen ill. I must
 go to him. Fetch my coat. Explain
 to the others what has happened.

EXT. STREETS OF ST. PETERSBURG - NIGHT

Nadya walks briskly. A tear glistens on her cheek. She
 brushes it away angrily.

EXT. VITSIN MANSION - ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Nadya rings the bell. Servant #2 opens the door.

NADYA
 (breathlessly)
 You will please tell Mr. Nikolaev
 that I am here to see him.

SERVANT #2
 I beg your pardon, Miss Nadya, but
 he is ill, and not receiving
 visitors.

Nadya pushes past the servant.

INT. VITSIN MANSION - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Nadya sees Filik poking his head out of the library.

FILIK
 Please, Nadya, Niko is very ill.
 The doctor says he must rest.

NADYA
 Doctor? (all the more concerned) I
 must see him!

FILIK
 Nadya, this is highly improper.
 Call again tomorrow.

Filik begins to show her the door. Nadya pulls away from him and runs for the stairs. Filik grabs her arm.

NADYA
Improper! I am to be his wife! I
will not leave until I've seen him.

FILIK
(defeated)
It's on your own head then. (he
releases her) He's in the library.

INT. VITSIN MANSION - LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Niko sits in front of the fire with his head in his hands.

Nadya rushes in. She kneels in front of him. He does not look at her.

Niko puts his hands on his knees and stares into the fire. Nadya takes one of his hands in hers.

NADYA
Are you ill, my love?

Niko grimaces, and continues to avoid eye contact.

NADYA
Filik said you sent for the doctor.

NIKO
He sent for the doctor. Filik is a
good man, but it is my mind that
suffers.

Nadya puts her hand on his cheek and tries to turn his face toward her. He pulls away, then stands up and begins pacing.

Nadya takes a seat. There is a long, tense silence.

NADYA
You have seen her. The shadow has
come to life.

NIKO
(crying)
It has come to life with a
vengeance.

NADYA
And you wish to be released from
our engagement, so that you may
marry her.

NIKO
(furious)
Marry her! I will see her at the
bottom of the river! Why -- why did
she have to come back into my life?

Niko breaks down sobbing. Nadya takes a deep breath.

NADYA
(with forced calm)
I understand. You never gave me to
understand that you could love me
better than her...

Niko kneels beside her, but still avoids eye contact.

NIKO
It would have been a lie if I had.
I am not myself when think of her.

Nadya stands. She fights to maintain composure.

NADYA
Yes, and you are an honest man,
painfully honest. You offered me so
little, where I have given all. My
every thought has been for the
future we would have together. What
future awaits me now?

Niko finally looks into her eyes, but he has nothing to say.
He wants to comfort her, but the words won't come.

Nadya is losing the fight to maintain composure. She
caresses Niko's face then kisses him tenderly.

NADYA
(whispering)
Good bye.

Nadya leaves.

Niko is torn. He starts to go after her then thinks the
better of it.

Anger and desperation bubble to the surface, and he lets out
a growl as he knocks a table and vase over.

EXT. STREETS OF ST. PETERSBURG - NIGHT

Nadya walks with her chin held high, trying to put on a
brave face, but tears are flowing freely as she makes her
way back to the Fedev's.

INT. VITSIN MANSION - LIBRARY - LATER

Niko pours himself a large glass of vodka.

Filik enters. He sees the broken vase and scowls.

FILIK
Did you tell her? Did you really
break her heart?

NIKO
She guessed it.

FILIK
She will never recover from this.
(almost afraid to ask) And does she
know who has robbed her?

NIKO
No. She must never know. (grabbing
Filik by the back of the neck)
Filik, she must never know!

FILIK
Of course, Niko.

Niko releases him. He downs his vodka and pours another.

NIKO
You wrote to her, to (the name
comes out with difficulty) to
Olena. Are you engaged?

FILIK
We are.

Niko grimaces.

FILIK
What would you have me do, Niko? I
can't just --

NIKO
Marry her! Write me when it's done.

FILIK
And Nadya?

NIKO
I've ripped my heart out today,
Filik. Be so good as to not step on
it.

INT. FEDEV HOME - FOYER - LATER

Nadya enters. Her eyes are red, but her face is pale.
Katrina rushes in, anxious to hear the news.

KATRINA
Dear Nadya, Marja told us Niko
cancelled the wedding. Have you
seen him. Is he very ill? We've all
been sick with worry.

Nadya looks at Katrina, her expression filled with pain,
then faints.

KATRINA
Marja!

Katrina rushes to Nadya's side and tries to revive her.
Marja appears.

KATRINA

Fetch the doctor. Quickly!

INT. NIKO'S APARTMENT - FOYER - EVENING

Niko enters drunk and disheveled.

INT. NIKOLAEV'S APARTMENT - SITTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Niko stumbles in, startling the landlady, Mrs. Ivanovich,
who is covering the furniture with sheets.

IVANOVICH

Dear me! You frightened me Mr.
Nikolaev. (recovering) I should
have thought you would be in your
new house with the Missus by now.
Have you forgotten something?

NIKO

No, Mrs. Ivanovich. I will not be
moving.

Mrs. Ivanovich opens her mouth to question him. He raises
his hand.

NIKO

I will continue my residence here,
and I will thank you not to trouble
me on the matter.

Mrs. Ivanovich clamps her mouth shut.

Niko plops himself down on the sofa. The room is dark and
cold. Ivanovich rubs her hands together.

IVANOVICH

Shall I light a fire then, sir?

Niko waves her away. Concern is etched on her face, but she
leaves anyway.

Niko's eyes slowly close. He sighs, his breath can be seen
in the frigid air.

INT. FEDEV HOME - BEDROOM - DAY

Nadya is in a fitful sleep. Beads of sweat stand out on her
forehead.

The door opens and Olena peeks in. Nadya does not wake.
Olena closes the door quietly.

EXT. FEDEV HOME - FRONT ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Olena stands outside the home. She looks up and down the street. Her fingers drum her clutch impatiently.

Finally her face lights up as a carriage pulls up to the house.

Filik hops out of the open carriage and holds the door open for Olena.

FILIK

Have you been waiting long,
dearest?

OLENA

Any amount of time in front of this
wretched hovel is too long.

They both board the carriage.

EXT. STREETS OF ST. PETERSBURG - CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS

Filik and Olena sit close, hand in hand.

FILIK

I have a surprise for you, my love.

OLENA

Oh Filik, you know how I loath
surprises. I hope you have not gone
and done something foolish.

FILIK

(playfully)

I am hurt, Olena. You know I live
to please you. You will see when we
arrive at the park.

OLENA

Please, Filik, I am in no mood for
suspense.

FILIK

Very well then, mother and father
returned home last night. We will
be meeting them in the park. I told
them you would be there.

OLENA

Filik! You were very imprudent. You
know what they will think.

FILIK

But we are engaged. I don't see why
we should hide it.

OLENA

You promised me. How can I flaunt my happiness in Nadya's face after what that wretched Nikolaev did to her? I will not go to the park and that is final.

FILIK

(sulkily)

Mother and father will be quite put out.

OLENA

You can make your apologies later. I must go to Gostiny Dvor. I have an important order to place.

A silence follows in which Filik is pensive.

FILIK

I am ashamed of myself for carrying on so while your sister suffers.

OLENA

Yes, poor dear Nadya. I came back for a wedding, but this feels more like a funeral.

FILIK

(leaning in for a kiss)

You came back to me.

Olena pulls away nervously.

OLENA

Oh, for heaven's sake, Filik. You know how I hate demonstrations. (carriage stops) Here we are. Wait for me, dear. I'll only be a moment.

INT. GOSTINY DVOR SHOPPING CENTER - LATER

Datja fidgets impatiently. She is visibly relieved when Olena appears. Olena pushes Datja into one of the shops. The air is secretive.

DATJA

Olena, he came again last night. He was quite insistent, and is sure to come again tonight. Please come to the house, or I shall be forced to give him your address at the Fedev's.

OLENA

Oh no Datja, whatever happens you must not do that.

Datja seems suspicious. Olena forces a laugh.

OLENA

It would not do for him to see me in such lowly accommodations. And Nadya is still quite ill. I must attend her.

DATJA

You must come tonight. Mother may become unpleasant if she thinks he's here for me.

OLENA

All right! All right! I'll come. I must go now. My friend is waiting.

The girls walk to the front of the shopping center. Datja catches a glimpse of Filik as they emerge.

DATJA

What handsome friends you have. Will you not introduce me?

OLENA

(angrily)

I most certainly will not!

Olena leaves a disappointed Datja.

EXT. STREETS OF ST. PETERSBURG - CARRIAGE - LATER

Filik tries to cozy up to Olena, but she seems distant.

OLENA

Filik, dear, I must go to my aunt's tonight. I have not seen her in nearly two weeks. She is likely to disown me if I continue to ignore her.

FILIK

And mother and father? We must tell them soon. Please, Olena, no more of this abominable secrecy.

Olena puts her hand on Filik's thigh, and puts her lips close to his ear.

OLENA

(whispering)

Just a little longer. I promise.

Filik turns and kisses her.

FILIK

Just a little longer.

INT. FEDEV HOME - BEDROOM - NEXT DAY

Olena stands in front of a dress box with Nadya's wedding dress in it. She caresses the satin fabric sadly. She takes out the veil and arranges some flowers that are out of place. She sighs heavily.

Olena hears Nadya stirring in the bed. She quickly puts the veil back and closes the box. Nadya's eyes flutter open. Olena rushes to her side.

OLENA

Oh, dear sister, I began to think
you would never rejoin us.

Nadya is pale and weak. She looks around the room slowly. Her eyes rest on the dress box. Some of the veil is peeking out. A single tear trickles down Nadya's cheek.

OLENA

There, there now, my love. No man
is worth all of this.

NADYA

I always told myself as a girl that
I would not fall victim to the
silliness of romance. That fairy
tales were not for me. (sobbing)
Oh, Lenka, I've been so foolish.

Olena takes Nadya in her arms. She strokes her hair, as Nadya continues to sob.

OLENA

You will find love, dearest. Do not
despair.

NADYA

(fiercely)
No! I will not be made a fool of
again.

OLENA

(tenderly)
You will recover from this, Nadya.
I promise.

NADYA

Will you stay with me, dear sister?

Olena turns away.

OLENA

I wish I could, but I must return
to Aunt Aleksandrova's tomorrow. I
have been gone too long already.

Nadya becomes stiff.

NADYA

(coldly)

I see. Of course. These accommodations cannot be to your liking. I am sorry you've had to suffer so.

OLENA

That's not what I meant, Nadya.

NADYA

We parted ways once. I think it was for the best. Good bye, Olena.

Olena is clearly hurt, but says nothing. She goes to the door and opens it. She does not look at Nadya.

OLENA

You are alone, Nadya. And it is your own doing.

Olena leaves without looking back.

Nadya looks at her hands folded in her lap. She sees the engagement ring. Nadya angrily pulls it off and raises her arm to throw it, but stops.

With tears rolling down her cheeks, she puts the ring in a jewelry box which also contains a photo of her mother.

INT. UNIVERSITY-CLASSROOM-DAY

ALEKSEI FEDEV reads from a letter in front of a group of students. Niko, arms crossed, and the DEAN watch from a distance.

ALEKSEI

"The moment has come for us when death would be better than the prolongation of our intolerable sufferings."

Aleksei looks up from the paper and takes a long pause for effect.

ALEKSEI

Death would be better than the prolongation of our intolerable sufferings.

He pauses again and looks around at the students. Aleksei spots Niko and shoots him a fierce scowl.

ALEKSEI

And death is what they got. Our "little father" saw to that. And now he tries to appease us with this manifesto. Do not be fooled

(MORE)

ALEKSEI (cont'd)
 comrades. He has no intention of
 giving up power.

Niko turns to the dean as Aleksei continues his speech in
 the background.

NIKO
 These fools cannot see that their
 actions will bring down the entire
 University.

DEAN
 He's right, however. The Tsar will
 never allow the Duma to enact
 legislation which threatens his
 authority.

NIKO
 But this is not the way --

DEAN
 Oh no, no. I fully agree. These
 meetings have gone on long enough.
 We must take a stand against
 radicalism. It breeds nothing but
 violence.

Niko doesn't need to be told twice. He takes a purposeful
 stride toward Aleksei. The dean makes himself scarce.

NIKO
 (speaking loudly)
 Alright all of you. I'm afraid I
 must ask you to disperse.

STUDENT#1
 Professor, I know you to be a
 strong supporter of the people's
 cause. We've always been allowed to
 meet here.

NIKO
 Not anymore. Your shortsightedness
 will put this institution at risk.

ALEKSEI
 Our great educators, so easily
 abated by a piece of paper.
 Nicholas will never honor the
 Manifesto.

NIKO
 The Manifesto is but a beginning.
 But moderation is needed to
 continue to gain ground.

STUDENT#1

But, Professor Nikolaev, moderation
has gained us nothing so far.

NIKO

Yes, but moderation --

ALEKSEI

Nikolaev?

A fire burns in Aleksei's eyes as he realizes just whom he
is dealing with.

ALEKSEI

So you are Ranik Nikolaev. And
preaching about moderation no less.

Niko's eyes narrow. He hates that he's in the dark about
where Aleksei is going.

ALEKSEI

And, I daresay, a certain lady
might have something to say about
your lack of moderation and the eve
of your wedding no less.

All eyes are on Niko.

NIKO

My private life is none of your
concern.

ALEKSEI

How can you lecture us on
moderation when you're clearly an
unfeeling cynic, who will go to any
lengths to accommodate your every
whim.

A nerve in Niko's jaw twitches.

ALEKSEI

Was she worth it, whatever whore it
was took your fancy, and dashed
that poor woman's dreams of
happiness?

Niko approaches the student and gets right up in his face.
His voice is low and menacing.

NIKO

You will not say another word about
matters you know nothing of.

ALEKSEI

Was she?

Niko pushes Aleksei up against the wall.

NIKO

Who are you?

ALEKSEI

My cousin is Katrina Fedeva.
(raising his chin defiantly) She
said you are the cruelest villain
she has ever known.

NIKO

Shut up!

ALEKSEI

(taunting)

Must've been some kind of woman, to
make you dispose of a girl as
pretty as Nadya. So pretty, in
fact, maybe I'll try my own luck
with her.

Niko slams him against the wall again.

ALEKSEI

Did you at least leave her virtue
in tact?

Niko pummels the student again and again. Aleksei cowers at
the large man's rage.

The students in the hall pull Niko back. He looks at the
young man's battered face and sullen expression.

Disgusted with himself, Niko shakes off the students and
stomps away.

INT. MEN'S CLUB - BAR - NIGHT

Niko cradles a glass of vodka. He stares blankly into his
drink.

Filik enters and silently sits beside his friend. Neither
one says anything at first.

FILIK

You've caused quite the commotion
at the university.

Niko only grunts.

FILIK

Niko, you're falling apart. You
assaulted a student! The dean is
sure to demand your resignation.

NIKO

He can have it.

FILIK
And then what will you do, drink
yourself into oblivion?

NIKO
If you'll let me.

FILIK
Olena and I are engaged.

Niko's gaze into his glass intensifies. He raises it.

NIKO
(contemptuously)
Congratulations.

Niko downs the vodka.

FILIK
I had hoped this would bring you
some peace.

NIKO
There can be no peace for me.

Niko stands, takes his coat and leaves.

INT. FEDEV HOME - BEDROOM - DAY

Nadya looks out the window at Katrina and DIMITRI YANOVICH mounting a carriage. They sit close. Katrina laughs as Dimitri whispers in her ear.

Nadya pulls the curtain closed. She glances at the open closet with the wedding dress box peeking out. She sighs sadly as she looks around the empty room.

Nadya presses her lips together and takes a deep breath. She goes to the closet and pulls out a carpet bag and begins packing her clothes.

She goes to the bedside table, opens the jewelry box, and takes out the engagement ring. She ponders it for a moment.

INT. FEDEV HOME - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

INSERT - THE RING ON THE BEDSIDE TABLE

In the background Nadya, with the packed bag and coat on, leaves the room.

INT. FEDEV HOME - SITTING ROOM - DAY

Katrina is completely absorbed in her needlework. As she deftly works the needle in and out of the material tears begin to shower her work.

Marja bustles in. She hesitates a little at the sight of Katrina's tears.

MARJA

Pardon me. Miss Olena is here asking to see Miss Nadya. Should I send her in?

Katrina only nods, sets the needlework aside, and begins wiping her tears.

Katrina takes a deep breath to compose herself. Olena enters and quickly seats herself next to Katrina.

All of Olena's haughtiness is gone. She takes Katrina's hand. Her expression pleading for Katrina's understanding.

OLENA

My dear, Katrina, you must tell me where to find Nadya. I have no where else to turn.

KATRINA

(not at all moved)

I'm afraid I cannot. She did not leave a forwarding address.

OLENA

Oh, but I'm in such a lot of trouble. I need Nadya's advice.

KATRINA

I'm sure your Aunt would be only too happy to assist you.

OLENA

It's her fault I'm in this fix!

Katrina tries to remain emotionless. She picks up her needlework, and focuses intently on it.

Olena gets up and paces the room.

OLENA

Damn her!

Katrina, surprised by the outburst, becomes immobile with her needle in the air.

Olena throws herself at Katrina's feet, and takes hold of both of her wrists.

OLENA

You are a good girl. Tell me what to do.

Katrina stares at Olena in fear.

OLENA

(sobbing)

I love him! I love Filik.

KATRINA

Of course you do. Anyone can see that. Is that what this --

OLENA

He'll kill me for sure this time. How I hoped I would be safe here, at home. I -- I have no choice but to go through with the wedding.

Katrina seems too confused to answer.

OLENA

Please, I need my sister. You must have some sort of clue as to her whereabouts.

Olena searches Katrina's face. Nothing.

Olena rises, brushes away her tears, smoothes her dress, and raises her chin. She makes for the door.

KATRINA

(barely audible)

She's not your sister.

OLENA

(turning to face Katrina)

Excuse me?

KATRINA

(gaining confidence, but not angry)

You are not Nadya's sister.

OLENA

Who do you think --

KATRINA

You abandoned her.

OLENA

She abandoned me!

KATRINA

(sneering at her fancy garb)

And you have suffered greatly since. Where were you when Nadya was working her fingers to the bone in a factory? Did you share the hovel that her factory wage barely paid for? Who nursed her back to health when she couldn't afford coal for her fire? Did you celebrate with her when she finally found a job as a governess?

(staring Olena down) No? I did. I

(MORE)

KATRINA (cont'd)
 am her sister. I have been with her
 in the hardest of times. She never
 even told me you existed.

Katrina shows no anger, only righteous indignation. Olena,
 deflated, only stares at the floor.

OLENA
 I need her.

KATRINA
 (sincerely)
 I am sorry for the trouble you're
 in, but she is in no position to
 help anyone, not even herself.

OLENA
 (resigned)
 I know what I must do. I am not
 likely to see Nadya again. If you
 find her, be a better sister to her
 than I have been.

Olena leaves.

EXT. WOODS OUTSIDE ALEKSANDROV MANSION - DAY

Niko fidgets behind a tree, glancing at the mansion every
 few minutes.

Olena and Datja emerge, on a walk to town. They pass the
 area where Niko is without seeing him. He follows them at a
 discreet distance.

EXT. STREETS OF ST. PETERSBURG - DAY

Olena and Datja walk along stopping every once in a while to
 window shop.

Niko observes at a distance.

Olena stops at one shop and points to a hat in the window.
 Datja tugs her sleeve impatiently.

Olena starts to enter the shop, but Datja pulls on her hand.
 Olena signals for Datja to go ahead without her and enters
 the shop.

Datja walks away clearly put out.

Niko enters the shop.

INT. HAT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Niko observes Olena silently for a moment, as she purchases
 the hat from the window display.

After she has finished the transaction, he approaches her. Olena looks at him questioningly at first.

Niko struggles with words. Olena's face lights up with recognition.

OLENA
(with a flirty smile)
Rome.

Niko smiles a little, pleased that she remembers him.

OLENA
What a night we had! (reminiscing)
I was wild in my youth. It's been
some time since I've had fun like
that.

NIKO
It was quite a night. I think of it
still. I saw many more a sunrise on
that beach.

OLENA
I haven't been back to Rome since
then. My Aunt prefers the Riviera.
She gave me quite a tongue lashing
for spending the whole night out.
Come to think of it, it was a
little improper. (putting her
finger to her lips as though to
silence him) If my husband knew of
it he would think it quite
scandalous.

Niko's smile fades a little at the mention of her husband,
but he recovers quickly.

NIKO
(with a knowing smile)
Indeed he would.

OLENA
(bewildered)
Are you acquainted with my husband?

NIKO OLENA
(simultaneously)
I think I may -- Here he is.

Olena pushes past him.

Niko turns bracing himself for the awkward encounter with
Filik. Instead Olena greets COUNT LONGOBARDI, 38, a large,
fierce-looking Italian.

Datja follows him in shyly.

Niko looks on completely perplexed.

The Count looks at Niko then at Olena, waiting for an introduction. Olena glances at Niko nervously.

Niko holds out his hand.

NIKO

Ranik Nikolaev, I am a friend of
Miss Olena's sister.

Olena's face turns crimson. Her expression turns to horror as she realizes her part in Nadya's tragedy. She looks away from Niko in shame.

The Count takes Niko's hand and bows stiffly. He then possessively takes Olena by the shoulders and steers her towards the exit.

LONGOBARDI

Come, Carissima, we don't want to
miss our train.

Olena looks back. Her eyes seem to beg him to rescue her from her fate.

Niko stands immobile, watching Olena get ever farther from him.

What just happened? Niko tries to recover from the encounter. He then snaps to and quickly makes for the door.

EXT. FILIK MANSION - FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Niko rings the bell, then fidgets impatiently until the servant opens the door.

NIKO

I need to speak to Master Filik
right away.

SERVANT #2

I'm sorry Mr. Nikolaev, he's not at
home.

NIKO

My business with him is urgent.
Have you any idea where he is?

SERVANT #2

No, sir. He hasn't been home all
day.

NIKO

If he does come home please send
for me right away. I'll be at the
men's club.

SERVANT #2

Very well, sir.

EXT. MEN'S CLUB - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Niko approaches the DOORMAN.

NIKO

Excuse me, is Count Filik Vitsin in the club?

DOORMAN

No, sir. But he was here earlier. He left about two hours ago. He'd had quite a bit to drink. I offered to call a cab for him, but he wouldn't hear of it. Left on foot that way. (pointing to the right)

NIKO

Damn! (contemplates next move)
Someone may send for me here. Ask them to leave a message. I'll be back later.

DOORMAN

Of course, sir.

EXT. STREETS OF ST. PETERSBURG - NIGHT

Niko briskly walks the streets in search of Filik. He puts his collar up and plunges his hands into his pockets.

Niko turns the corner and stops. He looks across the street at the Fedev home.

Niko takes a deep breath then crosses the street toward the house.

EXT. FEDEV HOME - FRONT ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Niko rings the bell. Katrina opens the door. Her face is red from crying. She glares at Niko and closes the door a little.

NIKO

Katrina, I'm looking for Filik. Is he here?

KATRINA

How dare you show your face here.

Niko is taken aback. He's never seen this side of Nadya's bubbly little friend.

NIKO

I -- I'm -- It's urgent that I speak to Filik. I haven't come to bother Nadya. Please don't tell her I'm here.

KATRINA

Nadya doesn't live here anymore.

NIKO

What? Where is she?

KATRINA

(coldly)

I don't know, and even if I did I wouldn't tell you. Do you know what you have done to her?

Niko puts his head down in shame. Katrina lays into him.

KATRINA

You -- you have made her name a lie. Do you know that her name means hope? When she rose from that sick bed she was a different person. Her eyes no longer shone. She no longer looked forward to tomorrow. It's men like you that make this world such a cruel place.

NIKO

Please, Miss Fedeva --

KATRINA

Yes, it much more appropriate you address me as Miss Fedeva. You are nothing to me, and you are certainly nothing to Nadya.

NIKO

(defeated)

I understand. I won't take up more of your time. Please, just tell me if you have seen Filik. I'm worried about him.

KATRINA

You should be. (letting up) He came here about an hour ago. He was drunk and rambling on and on about Olena. He wanted to talk to Nadya. He didn't know she had gone. (swallowing tears) He gave me this to give to her. (producing a letter) You may as well take it.

NIKO

Thank you.

Katrina starts crying. She slams the door.

Niko shoves the letter in his pocket and rushes down the stairs.

INT. MEN'S CLUB - DINING ROOM - LATER

Niko chooses an isolated table. The WAITER approaches him.

WAITER

Can I get you anything, sir?

NIKO

Borsht and vodka -- no, tea.

WAITER

Very well, sir.

Niko takes the letter out and opens it. The handwriting is feminine.

OLENA

(v.o.)

Dearest Filik, when you hold this letter in your hands I will be another man's wife.

NIKO

Lord have mercy, the man's at the bottom of the river.

OLENA

(v.o.)

I can offer no explanation other than I am a coward. I hoped I could find an escape in your love. But Count Longobardi would not be denied his bride. Please forget the worthless, the unhappy, Olena Longobardi.

Niko leans back in shock. He then quickly puts the letter back in the envelope and tucks it into his pocket.

The waiter places his order on the table. Niko takes a sip of the tea. Then gets up and heads for the door. The waiter is left unsure of what to do.

EXT. MEN'S CLUB - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Niko emerges with the energy of a renewed sense of purpose. He looks up and down the street anxiously. After a moment he turns to the doorman.

NIKO

Aren't there any cabs?

DOORMAN

You'll be lucky to find one at this hour.

Niko takes out his pocket watch and looks at it. One o'clock.

Niko begin walking briskly down the street. Niko hears WHEELS approaching. He turns and tries to hail the oncoming cab. The cab does not stop. He keeps walking.

EXT. ALEKSANDROV MANSION - FRONT ENTRANCE - LATER

Niko approaches the mansion with determination. Then he sees something move in the woods to the side of the house.

Niko cautiously approaches the dark figure.

EXT. WOODS OUTSIDE ALEKSANDROV MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Niko silently makes his way toward the dark figure. He pushes aside some branches.

Niko sees Filik leaning heavily on a tree as he drunkenly tries to load a gun.

NIKO

Filik?

Filik turns and points the gun in Niko's direction. He can't even hold the gun still.

FILIK

Who's there?

NIKO

It's just me, Niko. Put the gun down.

FILIK

(sarcastically)

Are you here to kill Longobardi too?

NIKO

They're not here. Left this afternoon.

Filik, deflated, lets the gun hang limply at his side. He slumps against the tree.

Niko joins him on the ground.

FILIK

She loved me.

NIKO

She doesn't know what love means.

FILIK

I know we could have been happy together.

NIKO

Perhaps. I for one think you're better off.

Filik puts his head back and sighs sadly.

NIKO

You'll find a pretty girl who'll
adore you. She'll give you little
ones, and the two of you will be
happy well into your golden years.
You deserve that much.

FILIK

Olena would have given me all those
things. I should have saved her.

Filik takes a long sip from a flask then hands it to Niko
who eagerly accepts it.

FILIK

So, you saw them leave?

Niko takes another swig.

FILIK

Come to try your luck?

NIKO

(ashamed)

Something like that.

FILIK

You would have done that?

NIKO

I'm not proud of the person I
became as a consequence of my love
for her.

FILIK

Became? Are you no longer that
person?

NIKO

I -- I finally feel free. I hate
that my freedom is at the expense
of your happiness, but -- Filik,
I've seen the truth. The woman I
thought I loved, she didn't exist.
You'll see that, in time.

FILIK

I don't know that I shall.

NIKO

You shall. I promise.

INT. NIKOLAEV'S APARTMENT - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Niko stares into the fire. Filik is passed out on his couch.

Niko leans forward. His mood is pensive.

QUICK FLASHES - NIKO AND NADYA

-- Niko and Nadya's faces come close as he lays her on the bed at the Yanovich Mansion.

-- Nadya beams as Niko slips the engagement ring on her finger in the garden at the Filik Mansion.

-- Nadya caresses Niko's face, then kisses him tenderly before whispering "Good bye" in the Filik's library.

BACK TO PRESENT

Niko winces at the memories. He goes to the desk and sits to write a letter.

EXT. FAMMUS HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - DAY

A MAIL CARRIER hands ANNA FAMMUS the mail as the snow swirls around him. She pulls her shawl closer as she closes the door.

INT. FAMMUS HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

Victor Fammus makes marks in his ledger and barely looks up when his wife Anna enters.

She places several letters on his desk.

ANNA FAMMUS

You've had another letter from that Nikolaev person.

Fammus gives a hearty HMMPH.

ANNA FAMMUS

You've no intention of answering him then.

Fammus looks over his glasses at his wife, and she takes the hint and leaves.

EXT. STREETS OF SMALL TOWN - DAY

Snow lightly dusts the wooden roofs of the homes in a small rural village.

In the dirt road a YOUNG MOTHER, clothes worn and in a thin coat, holds her baby closer for warmth, and quickens her step.

INT. SMALL GOODS STORE - DAY

Nadya, looking thin and careworn, carefully examines some flimsy material. She checks the price, sighs and moves to the counter to checkout.

She puts some salt and a small sack of rye flour on the counter. Nadya takes the money out. Her shoulders slump a

little as she hands it to the cashier.

Nadya takes her purchases and leaves.

EXT. STREETS OF SMALL TOWN - CONTINUOUS

Nadya clutches her bag close and makes her way through the falling snow.

EXT. COTTAGE - LATER

The tiny cottage, no bigger than the average bedroom, sits nestled in the trees. A cat scratches at the front door, eager to get in, out of the snow.

Nadya approaches the cottage, breathing heavily from the long walk from town.

Arriving at the front door, Nadya scoops up the cat and goes inside.

INT. COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Nadya enters the sparsely furnished, one-room home and plops the cat and her bag down on the simply-made table. She takes her purchases to the cupboard, and puts them away.

Nadya pulls a basket full of potatoes from the cupboard, examines them, then chooses one.

INT. COTTAGE - LATER

Nadya sits in front of her little fire, staring into the flames and stroking the cat sleeping on her lap.

Nadya closes her eyes.

QUICK FLASH

-- Niko's lips close to her ear in the garden at the Filik mansion.

Nadya winces at the memory.

INT. FAMMUS HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

Fammus is putting some money in his personal safe. His wife walks in, and gives her a scolding look.

ANNA FAMMUS

Ranik Nikolaev here to see you.

Niko makes a hasty appearance.

Fammus looks at Anna, unsure what to do. She only smirks at his discomfort.

NIKO
Mr. Fammus, I am sorry to intrude
on your privacy. I am, however,
desperate.

Fammus heaves a sigh.

NIKO
Have you not received my letters,
Sir?

Fammus walks to the desk and, trying to appear casual,
closes a book with an envelope inside.

Niko is able to glimpse Nadya's name on it.

NIKO
You have received my letters.

Fammus takes a seat and presses the tips of his fingers
together.

FAMMUS
I have.

NIKO
(pleading)
I have to know where she is.

FAMMUS
Only I have that information, and I
don't think it is in her best
interest that I share it with you.

Niko hangs his head.

FAMMUS
I'm afraid I'm terribly busy, Mr.
Nikolaev.

NIKO
I know I've wronged her. All I ask,
is the chance to make amends. If
she turns me away I will never
bother her again.

FAMMUS
I'm afraid that will not be
possible.

Niko immobile except for the heaving of his enormous
shoulders as his anger builds.

Fammus looks at him over his glasses.

Niko turns towards the door, and Fammus returns to his work.

Niko then turns and lunges at the man, lifting him out of
the chair, and pinning him against the wall.

NIKO

You have no right to keep me from
her.

Niko turns and takes the letter from inside the book.

A stunned Fammus watches him go.

INT. COTTAGE - DAY

Nadya rummages around in the cupboards. She pulls out the basket where the potatoes are kept. Two potatoes roll around in the bottom.

Nadya is disappointed. She quickly puts her jacket on and grabs her worn out bag and leaves.

EXT. COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Green can be seen peeking out of the snow as Nadya emerges from the cottage. She takes a deep breath of the early spring air.

INT. TRAIN FROM ST. PETERSBURG - DAY

Niko tears his attention away from the passing landscape and looks down at the letter in his hand with Nadya's address on it.

He puts his head back and sighs anxiously.

EXT. STREETS OF SMALL TOWN - CONTINUOUS

Nadya emerges from the goods store. As she makes her way down the dirt road she feels around in her bag and finally pulls out a piece of rye bread.

Nadya eats small pieces of the bread as she walks home.

EXT. COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Nadya wipes some crumbs from her dress as she approaches the cottage.

She stoops down and caresses an early spring bloom.

QUICK FLASH

-- Niko's body close to hers as she caresses a rose in the garden at the Filik mansion.

Nadya puts her hand to her neck.

QUICK FLASH

-- Niko's finger traces the shape of her neck in the garden at the Vitsin mansion.

A tear trickles down Nadya's cheek. She sits down in the snow.

Nadya closes her eyes and tilts her head back so the sun can warm her face.

EXT. VILLAGE TRAIN STATION - DAY

Niko's brown oxfords step down from the train. He grips his briefcase tightly, and set forth on his mission.

INT. MILL - DAY

Nadya carries a large bag of cotton onto the factory floor. She sets it down beside JASHA who's working one of the spinning wheels.

JASHA

Thanks.

Nadya just smiles. She starts to leave.

JASHA

Nadya?

Nadya tries to mask a look of dread. Jasha sees it but presses on.

JASHA

Can I walk you home?

Nadya keeps her eyes on the floor.

NADYA

Jasha, I wish you'd stop asking.

Jasha just smiles.

JASHA

But if I do that you'll never have an opportunity to say "yes".

Nadya rolls her eyes and gets back to work.

She stops short at the sound of SHRIEKS.

FEMALE VOICE

(yelling o.s.)

Fire!

Nadya looks back at Jasha who immediately takes her by the arm and starts moving her towards the door.

The flames quickly move in behind them.

EXT. MILL - DAY

As smoke pours out of all of the windows and doors. Workers are spilling out, blackened and coughing and sputtering.

Jasha comes out pulling Nadya behind him. He bends over to catch his breath and Nadya rushes to the side of a young WOMAN who can't stop coughing.

Nadya pats the woman's back and tries to soothe her. She glances up and sees Niko coming up on the burning building.

NADYA

Niko!

He can't hear her, as he stares up at the flames in horror. Then, without a second thought, he drops his briefcase and runs into the burning building.

NADYA

(horrified)

Niko!

Nadya runs toward the door screaming his name hysterically. Before she can get inside Jasha grabs her from behind and pulls her away.

NADYA

No, no! Let go of me.

She begins fighting harder and Jasha is struggling to keep his hold on her.

JASHA

Bavchel! Help me with her.

BAVCHEL a tall, gaunt man with a long black beard walks over to the struggling pair and clocks Nadya over the head, knocking her unconscious.

As she falls limp to the ground Jasha hauls off and punches Bavchel.

Bavchel is barely phased by the punch. He smirks and walks away. Jasha kneels beside Nadya.

EXT. MILL - DAY

Nadya's eyes flutter open. Jasha is immediately by her side, but she doesn't even look at him.

She frantically searches the faces all around them. She gets up.

JASHA

Nadya, wait.

He tries to take her hand but she pulls away.

She stumbles through the rubble. Her eyes searching the ash stained faces.

She comes to a row of covered bodies. Brown oxfords peek out of the bottom of one cover.

Nadya runs to it, but hesitates to pull the cover from the face. As she begins to reveal the head she sees that the hair is the wrong color and sighs with relief as she replaces the cloth.

A WORKER lays a small body next the one with the oxfords.

WORKER

If you're looking for someone you
might try the church. Some of the
injured were taken there.

Nadya immediately darts off down the street.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Nadya enters the church and is immediately overwhelmed by the sheer number of people surrounding her.

Most have burns over large areas of their bodies and sit or lie writhing in agony.

The few who are there to assist the injured are running from person to person, quickly assessing injuries, and shouting out instructions.

Nadya's breathing becomes more and more agitated as the room seems to spin.

FEMALE WORKER

(o.s.)

Nadya!

Nadya snaps to and searches for the voice. She sees a female worker struggling to subdue a BURNED WORKER with third degree burns over most of his left side.

Nadya rushes to help.

FEMALE WORKER

Hold him down.

Nadya puts her hands on the man's shoulders careful to avoid the burned areas. She uses her weight to pin him to the bed.

She is cheek to cheek with the man as the woman cleans what's left of his hand.

The man groans and writhes in pain. Nadya can only close her eyes tightly as if that will shut out the sound.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The worker washes her hands in a basin. As Nadya sits beside the now bandaged man.

Although he's sleeping, beads of sweat still stand out on the man's forehead.

Nadya looks around the room sadly. Things are under control now. Most of the victims have been taken care of and are now resting.

Nadya registers each face looking for Niko. She turns to see the worker watching her.

FEMALE WORKER

I saw Jasha, not long ago. I
believe he's searching for the dead
at the factory.

Nadya's brow furrows and she continues to search the faces of the wounded.

The worker raises her eyebrows.

FEMALE WORKER

Hmm. A secret lover.

Nadya says nothing, but a tear rolls down her cheek. The worker lowers her gaze apologetically.

FEMALE WORKER

You've been most helpful, my dear,
but I believe there's nothing more
for you to do here.

Nadya rises, but is suddenly reluctant to continue her mission. The worker puts a hand on her shoulder and gives her a reassuring smile.

EXT. MILL - DAY

Nadya wanders the destruction hugging herself against the cold. Then Nadya spots Niko's briefcase peeking out of the ashes.

She runs to it and pulls it from the ashes. She takes it and sits on a stack of cotton bags that were rescued from the factory. She tenderly traces Niko's initials on the front.

A teardrop lands on the briefcase. Nadya's body is wracked with sobs.

Behind her a figure makes its way through the haze towards her.

Niko emerges, covered in soot and ash. He stops short when he sees Nadya.

Nadya senses his presence and turns. The two lock eyes. Nadya is suddenly hesitant, and Niko begins to doubt himself, but he presses on until he's standing in front of her.

He drops to his knees and buries his face in her lap as his entire frame heaves with sobs.

Nadya remains motionless. Niko's hands grip her blouse, wordlessly pleading with her.

Nadya's expression changes from fear to tenderness. She places her hand on his head and caresses his hair. Nikolaev becomes still, and contented smile comes to Nadya.

EXT. ST. PETERSBURG PARK - DAY

It's beautiful spring day as Nadya and Niko spread a blanket on the grass and open up a picnic basket.

Nadya spots Yovanka arm-in-arm with Filik. Nadya greets them affectionately, and they stand and chat for a moment.

As Yovanka prattles on, Nadya looks over and sees Olena across the street staring at them.

Olena raises her hand to wave to her but then decides against it. Nadya gives her a sad smile.

Count Longobardi brusquely urges Olena into a carriage. From the carriage Olena looks longingly after her sister as they drive away.

As Nadya watches her go, Niko puts his hand on her back to get her attention.

He looks at her inquiringly, and she just gives him a reassuring smile.

The two sit together on the blanket and just delight in each others company.

THE END