

CRIMSON SNOW:

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. HOTEL EUROPE - DAY

A heavy snow falls and swirls before the grand columned façade of the Hotel Europe.

SUPER: "Hotel Europe. St. Petersburg. December 1916."

In the distance, beyond the hotel stands the colorful onion shaped domes of the Church of Spilled Blood.

SUPER: "History would be an excellent thing, if only it were true. Tolstoy."

MARIE, Mathilda-Marie Kchessinska-Prima Ballerina Assoluta of His Majesty's Imperial Ballet. World famous dancer, now enters the twilight of her professional career.

MARIE (V.O.)

Power is the ultimate high.  
Especially here, in St. Petersburg.  
A Venice inspired city of snow and  
ice. Russia's Imperial Capital is  
where our what-if story begins.

Arrives INSPECTOR RENKO of Majesty's Secret Police. Think of a buff Hercule Poirot, intense and forbidding.

SUPER: "Saturday."

INT. HOTEL EUROPE - PENTHOUSE SUITE - SAME

Blood red carpet leads Inspector Renko down a narrow door lined corridor towards a dark mahogany door.

He struts to the door and stops. Then, he BANGS! on it.

RENKO

Serge!!!

Stirs PRINCE SERGE PLATONOVICH from the other side.

MARIE (V.O)

Prince Serge Platonovich Konstantin  
is a an Officer in Her Majesty's  
Chevalier Guards. A member of the  
Russian aristocracy's elite.

SERGE (O.S.)

Go away.

INT. PENTHOUSE SUITE - SAME

Serge, a young prince, is a member of the Imperial House of Konstantin, where Russia's most legendary soldiers are born.

SERGE

Go away!!!

His words pour out into the frigid room like steam from a stopping train. Serge watches the cloud as it drifts up.

All the room's windows are wide open. The tall curtains bellow and dance with the invading wind.

SERGE (CONT'D)

Ah!

Then, he buries his cold shaggy head below his pillow.

SERGE (CONT'D)

Why is it so cold!

The door's bolt lock TURNS and POPS.

Renko enters immaculately dressed in a dark suit and long perfect fitting overcoat.

SERGE (CONT'D)

Who's there?

RENKO

It's Renko, Serge.

Renko replaces a small tool in its leather case.

MARIE (V.O)

Inspector Renko—General Konstantin's second in command of Special Branch, the Tsar's Secret Police. Renko does most of Serge's father's dirty work.

RENKO

I was growing tired of knocking,  
Your Excellency.

SERGE

Locks are useless around you.

RENKO

Afraid so. It's freezing in here.

SERGE

I'm half drunk, Renko. What is it?

RENKO  
Get up. We need to talk.

SERGE  
Later.

RENKO  
Now!

Serge buries himself deeper into the covers.

The inspector notices in the dim lit room piles of discarded bottles and some turned-over fine furniture.

RENKO (CONT'D)  
Hell of a party.

He grabs a silver bucket filled with melted ice and dumps it's contents over the half sleeping Prince. SPLASH!

Serge SCREAMS.

Renko CHUCKLES as he lights a fresh cigarette. He cups his hands around his gold lighter crested with the Imperial seal.

RENKO (CONT'D)  
Your Excellency, up.

Serge motions to Renko for a cigarette.

Renko offers him one.

Renko lights Serge's cigarette. Then, he steps back.

SERGE  
(Russian)  
Thank you.

RENKO  
You... an officer in His Majesty's  
Chevalier Guards. Who distinguished  
himself in battle. It's hard to  
believe.

Renko paces.

SERGE  
You judge me to harshly, Renko.

Serge rises from his bed. Bare-chested, he YAWNS as he SCRATCHES his shrub-like unkempt beard. His cigarette dangles from his lips.

Renko notices the countless purple bullet sized welts and scars that cover Serge's upper body and chest.

RENKO

Dear God, son. What have they done to you?

A self-conscious Serge tosses on his robe.

SERGE

Oh, these? My German souvenirs.

RENKO

You look more street beggar than a prince. You sure you're alright?

SERGE

Never better. Drink?

RENKO

You drink too much.

SERGE

I drink... to forget.

Renko goes to the windows that captures a snow covered square. One by one, he CLOSES them.

RENKO

Okay. Okay. With such a fine view, one might find it difficult to imagine that we are at war.

Renko closes the curtains and turns.

SERGE

The guilt game. You sound more and more like my father ever day.

RENKO

Quite a gathering.

Serge nods as he POURS himself a drink. Then, he offers a tall shot glass of vodka.

Renko refuses it.

RENKO (CONT'D)

What were you celebrating, Serge?

SERGE

Celebrating?  
(downs his shot)  
Ah ... life!

Renko looks again around the trashed room, then at Serge.

RENKO

Were you celebrating life, or was it more a dark celebration. Celebrating someone's death?

SERGE

What are you talking about?

RENKO

Father Rasputin is missing and feared dead.

SERGE

Her Majesty's spiritual adviser is a bigger drunk than me. And that's saying something.

RENKO

Rasputin remains many things—a liar, a mystic, a drunkard, a womanizer yet still he is the man the Empress leans on the most for advice in her tight circle of friends.

SERGE

In Her Majesty's eyes, Rasputin saved her son.

RENKO

Alexei was near death.

SERGE

The Royal physicians could do little to comfort him. So the Empress begged Rasputin to save him.

RENKO

Da, in which he did. Since Alexei's recovery, the 'good father' is incapable of doing a single wrong.

SERGE

Well, the Empress made a deal with the devil.

RENKO

These are dark days. Everything's an illusion. Everything's a dream.

RENKO (CONT'D)  
Everything's not what it seems.  
(beat)

SERGE  
Rasputin's ties to the Empress  
enrages the Russian Royal Court.

RENKO  
True. So... tell me who attended  
your party? Then, you can return to  
the ranks of the honored dead.

SERGE  
Renko, do you actually believe that  
I am somehow involved in Rasputin's  
disappearance?

RENKO  
Answer my question.

Serge combs his fingertips through his unruly hair.

SERGE  
No one of importance. The usual  
gang of poets, prostitutes, and  
other degenerates from the Caviar  
Bar.

RENKO  
(barks)  
Names! I am a man accustomed to  
having my questions answered. Now!

SERGE  
I can't even recall.

RENKO  
Regulars from the bar?

SERGE  
A friend of mine arrived yesterday  
on the Moscow train. The party was  
in his honor.

RENKO  
Is your friend, a foreigner?

SERGE  
Good God, Renko! You're paranoid.

RENKO  
Paranoia has kept me alive this  
long. Your friend?

SERGE  
Barnaby Jones. He works for the  
British Consulate.

RENKO  
Odd name.

SERGE  
He's an odd man.

RENKO  
I see. Any of your cousins present?

SERGE  
No.

RENKO  
What about young Yusupov?

SERGE  
Felix?!? No. Why?

RENKO  
Rasputin was murdered hours ago in  
his home.

SERGE  
Murdered? But you said?

RENKO  
Yes, murdered.

SERGE  
How can you be certain? Rasputin is  
most likely passed out under some  
whore's bed.

RENKO  
No, he's dead. It's a crime scene.  
I just came from Felix's palace.  
There is blood everywhere.

SERGE  
Is he in custody?

RENKO  
He's a prince. What do you think?

SERGE  
This is insane.

RENKO

I agree. The true madness is to strike at the only man the Empress thinks can save her son.

SERGE

What is the Empress going to do?

RENKO

I don't know. All I know is that Protopopov, our new Minister of the Interior, is currently en route to Tsarskoe to see the Empress personally on this matter.

SERGE

Renko, there are rumors floating around town that Protopopov is mad.

RENKO

He most definitely is, I hear, from the advanced stages of syphilis. But who else would Rasputin—I mean, Her Majesty—choose?

SERGE

Who else is involved?

RENKO

We believe Grand Duke Dmitri.

SERGE

Why? Dmitri is the Tsar's favorite. Promised to marry his own daughter, the Grand Duchess Olga.

RENKO

True. But his motorcar was seen in the area, shortly after a gendarme reported hearing gunshots coming from the Yusupov Palace.

SERGE

Renko, why are you telling me this?

RENKO

Your father wants you to leave the Capital at once.

SERGE

My father? Why didn't he bother to come himself?

RENKO  
He cares in his own way.

SERGE  
Really?

RENKO  
The past is the past. You should  
leave it there.

SERGE  
Tell him thanks for his concern.

RENKO  
Concern? This isn't a game, Serge.  
The Empress believes the removal of  
her trusted aide was just the  
beginning. And, your father thinks  
she may be right.

SERGE  
A mutinous step by forces targeted  
against her husband's teetering  
regime.

RENKO  
Every day I hear rumors of the  
efforts of the imperial family to  
replace the old regime.

SERGE  
Some say Nicholas's days are  
numbered.

RENKO  
A changing of the Tsars.

SERGE  
It's that a little last century?

RENKO  
Open your eyes, boy! The imperial  
family isn't going to allow  
Nicholas to hand the country to the  
radicals. They all have far too  
much to lose.

SERGE  
True.

RENKO  
Serge, I require two things of you.

SERGE

What?

RENKO

One, warn Felix and Dmitri to leave the city at once.

SERGE

Why?

RENKO

I don't want them to cause any more trouble.

SERGE

And two?

RENKO

Go with them.

SERGE

Where?

RENKO

South. Out of harm's way.

SERGE

Crimea?

RENKO

Da. Head to your family estate there. Take the nine o'clock Kiev train.

Renko moves toward the door.

RENKO (CONT'D)

I must somehow attempt to control this chaos before it consumes us all.

SERGE

And my Father?

RENKO

He promises to personally see you off.

SERGE

Promises? Him? He's so bad at keeping those.

RENKO

No matter. Expect him at eight.

Serge follows the inspector to the door.

RENKO (CONT'D)  
I recommend, you wear your uniform.

Serge nods.

Renko turns and hugs Serge.

SERGE  
Renko, what is today?

RENKO  
It's Saturday, Serge. The  
seventeenth of December.

SERGE  
Ah, yes. Well then...

Serge adjusts the drawstrings of his robe.

SERGE (CONT'D)  
It was good to see you, Renko.

Renko hurries down the hall.

RENKO  
You too, Your Excellency.

Serge watches him leave.

SERGE  
A changing of Tsars? Is that even  
possible?

EXT. PRIVATE TRAIN - DAY

A train speeds to the Imperial Village of Tsarskoe.

SUPER: "Tracks to Tsarskoe. Their Majesties residence."

INT. PRIVATE TRAIN - SALON CAR - SAME

ALEXANDER PROTOPOPOV watches the milky fields of snow pass by  
as he plays with the waxy points of his moustache.

MARIE (V.O.)  
Alexander Protopopov—Minister of  
the Interior. Twisted and  
opportunistic member of Rasputin's  
inner circle.

(MORE)

MARIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Former Deputy Speaker of the  
 Duma—Russia's Imperial Parliament.  
 His peers in the Imperial Senate  
 label him a traitor for a recent  
 rendezvous he had with a German  
 agent in Stockholm. After that  
 treasonous affair, his political  
 career was thought to be over.

PROTOPOPOV  
 Boring! Snow is so b-o-ring!

He digs out his pocket watch and examines it.

PROTOPOPOV (CONT'D)  
 Time. Time. Time. Tick-tock. Time.  
 Hmm. A smudge! On my watch. Gross!

Alexander uses his thumb and removes the blot of dirt.

PROTOPOPOV (CONT'D)  
 Ha! Much better. Now, a little  
 music maestro.

The Minister of the Interior HUMS Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture  
 as he swings his arms about.

PROTOPOPOV (CONT'D)  
 Dade-dada-dade da-da-da boom! boom!  
 Dade-dada-dade...

Appears the BARONESS. She's dark. She's young. She's  
 beautiful. The German royal wears all black. From her tall  
 leather riding boots, her tight tights, and velvet tunic,  
 they are black. A mink drips down from her shoulders to feet.

PROTOPOPOV (CONT'D)  
 Ah!

The Baroness struts down the aisle.

BARONESS  
 Da-da-da boom! BOOM!

Alexander looks up and smiles.

PROTOPOPOV  
 Baroness! What a treat.

BARONESS  
 Have room for me?

PROTOPOPOV  
 But of course.

BARONESS

Then scoot.

Alexander does.

She sits and pats Alexander's leg.

BARONESS (CONT'D)

You in big trouble again?

PROTOPOPOV

Me!?! No. The country... Da!

BARONESS

So you're going to do it?

PROTOPOPOV

It's already begun.

BARONESS

Rasputin?

PROTOPOPOV

Dead. Dade-dada-dade-da-da-da-BANG!  
BANG!

BARONESS

Bad boy. There's a good reason no  
one trusts the government.

PROTOPOPOV

Never waste a good crisis.

BARONESS

Crises. The war. The inflation. The  
food shortages. Turmoil.

PROTOPOPOV

I know. I know. It all so terrible.

BARONESS

If this continues, there will be  
riots in the streets.

The minister draws closer to the Baroness' red stained lips.

PROTOPOPOV

That's what I'm counting on.

EXT. ALEXANDER PALACE - LATER DAY

Protopopov's sleigh arrives from the train station.

SUPER: "Alexander Palace. Tsar Nicholas II and the Empress Alexandra's royal residence."

INT. ALEXANDER'S PALACE - MAUVE ROOM - DAY

Protopopov paces the Mauve Room. He stops before a portrait of Tsar Nicholas playing with his only son, Alexei.

PROTOPOPOV

Hi Boss. Maybe leaving your wife in charge of the day to day operations was a...

SOUND: DOOR SLAMS! OPEN.

Enters EMPRESS ALEXANDRA. She storms toward the Minister.

MARIE (V.O.)

Empress Alexandra-Tsarina of All Russia. She has ruled beside her husband for over twenty years now. Most recently, Nicholas has allowed her to handle the day-to-day operations of his government. With the Tsar's attention completely focused on the war, Alexandra feels the need for change. Any change. She leans heavily on the advice of her spiritual counselor Father Rasputin. With his help, Alexandra rearranges the Tsar's ministers more to her liking. Once a beautiful German princess, Alexandra now resembles a bitterly broken woman struggling to maintain her husband's authority. Nicholas could have chosen a better woman. Like me.

EMPRESS

Where is he!?!?

The Minister bows formally, low and slow.

PROTOPOPOV

We don't know, Your Majesty.

EMPRESS

Don't know? Weren't you in charge of his security?

PROTOPOPOV

We are using every available man.

EMPRESS

No. No. No.

Aimlessly the Alexandra wanders the room.

This can't be. Not Alexei's savior.  
No! You must find him! At once.

PROTOPOPOV

We shall double our efforts.

Alexandra stops pacing and eyeballs Alexander and points.

EMPRESS

If he is dead, so are you.

EXT. St. PETERSBURG - RIVERFRONT - DAY

The Imperial Yacht Club near the River Neva.

SUPER: "Imperial Yacht Club."

MARIE (V.O)

Here rests Petersburg's ultra exclusive society the Imperial Yacht Club. Its members prefer to simply call it 'the Club.' It is a political playground for the regime's upper echelon. It is a place where white-gloved servants beckon to every member's call. To join this private society takes more than money—for anyone can possess that. No, power is the key to it's door. Its members come from the most distinguished families in the empire. Their ancestors reshaped Russia's borders to one sixth of the globe. The empire, which is their inheritance, is vanishing before their very eyes. And so is their control. Power is a funny thing when it is only perceived. The Club's more observant members notice their white-gloved servants are not as quick to fetch a drink as they used to be. And that scares these individuals to their core. So with the scene set, we pull back the velvet curtain and venture in.

INT. IMPERIAL CLUB - DRAWING ROOM - SAME

Deep within this imposing residence is a crowded drawing room decorated for the holidays.

A group of lumpy looking MEMBERS in freshly pressed uniforms chat as they scan this morning's paper and smoke their big fat cigars. A cloud of blue smoke lingers over their heads.

MARIE (V.O.)

Here at the Club. Fat old men in fresh pressed uniforms pass their time stroking their facial hair as often as they stroke one another's egos. They sit in their cozy chairs, as they complain about many things: the Senate, the Empress, and the Tsar—though mostly the Tsar.

Serge arrives in a fine suit.

MARIE (V.O.)

The topic on everyone's lips is Rasputin's disappearance.

Serge asks a passing WAITER.

SERGE

Excuse me. Have you seen Grand Duke Dmitri today?

WAITER

Not yet, Your Excellency. He likes to lunch at The Bear.

SERGE

I see.

Serge hands him some colorful money.

SERGE (CONT'D)

(Russian)

Thank you.

The waiter accepts the money and nods his appreciation. Then, he moves on with his day.

Serge wanders deeper into the smoky room.

In a nearby chair, a pudgy faced MAJOR explains to all.

MAJOR

I have heard this all before. And,  
the beast Rasputin always  
reappears—stronger and closer to  
the throne.

GRAND DUKE ANDREI sits beside the Major and offers.

MARIE (V.O.)

Grand Duke Andrei Vladimirovich, my  
ex. His father was Tsar Alexander  
III's brother. Poor Andrei still  
loves me... Mathilda-Marie  
Kchessinska, and he knows my heart  
will always belong forever to  
Nicki.

ANDREI

But it is true. Rasputin is dead.

Serge watches on silence.

Through coils of blue smoke Andrei's brother.

VLAD appears.

MARIE (V.O)

Vlad, Grand Duke Vladimir  
Vladimirovich, the Tsar's most  
ambitious cousin. His father  
Vladimir was the younger brother of  
Tsar Alexander III, a man many  
thought as a much better choice of  
Tsar in contrast to Alexander's  
untried son. Nonetheless Alexander  
chose his own son Nicholas to  
succeed him, which was his right to  
do. However, since that day  
Vladimir has often wondered, what-  
if?

Vlad slaps Serge's back with gusto. Then, he playfully tugs  
on Serge's long bread.

VLAD

Good to see you recovering from  
your wounds, young Platonvitch.

Serge stares upwards to meet Vlad's smile.

Vlad wears his regiment's jet-black uniform with tall  
matching riding boots.

MARIE (V.O)

Broad and tall, Vlad looks like a Russian Tsar—big, bold, extremely powerful, and ruthless. Vlad is a mountain of a man. A professional soldier. Rumors say he broke an enemy soldier in half. It is only a rumor, but the sheer size of him makes you wonder if it is true.

SERGE

Vlad. Good to see the war has not taken you yet.

Vlad LAUGHS long and hard.

VLAD

No German will best me.

Vlad joins in on his brother's current conversation.

VLAD (CONT'D)

If Rasputin is truly dead, I salute them.

Serge mistakenly enters the conversation.

SERGE

Salute?

VLAD

Oh, you're still here, Platonovitch.

SERGE

Salute the assassins?

VLAD

Rasputin is...

ANDREI

Was.

VLAD

A traitor.

VLAD/ANDREI

He got what he deserved.

SERGE

The Emperor may not see it that way. Murdering the man who saved his only son.

ANDREI

Rasputin was an opportunist. A  
Court Jester, at best.

VLAD

A Jester who played the Tsar and  
His Court as fools.

SERGE

Dangerous talk.

ANDREI

Dangerous times.

VLAD

Young Konstantin. I see you no  
longer find it necessary to wear  
your Imperial uniform.

MAJOR

Or, his metal for valor.

ANDREI

Are you still recovering from your  
war wounds? You look perfectly  
healthy to me.

SERGE

Andrei, what do you know of war? Or  
the Front?

VLAD

Gentlemen. Gentlemen. We are all  
royalty here. Our fathers and  
grandfathers spilled their own  
blood for Mother Russia. We must  
act now to save her.

SERGE

Against whom?

VLAD

Enough.

SERGE

I am not here to speak politics. I  
just want to speak to Dmitri. Have  
any of you seen him?

ANDREI

Too early for him here, Serge. Try  
the Bear.

SERGE  
 (in Russian)  
 Thank you, gentlemen.

VLAD  
 Today is just talk. But we can't be  
 the only ones in Petersburg to see  
 the writing on the wall.

Serge leaves the parlor.

SERGE  
 Hmm. Renko was right. The Imperial  
 family grows bold.

INT. ALEXANDER PALACE - MAUVE ROOM - DAY

Empress Alexandra and her eldest daughter OLGA talk as they  
 share tea in the Mauve Room.

Olga is dressed in a nurse's uniform.

OLGA  
 Mother. What does this mean for  
 Dmitri and I?

EMPRESS  
 If he is involved in Rasputin's  
 death, there will be no Dmitri.  
 Understand?

OLGA  
 But I love him.

EMPRESS  
 I know you do. Let's pray they  
 scared him away.

The Empress rings a porcelain bell.

Appears an attentive SERVANT.

EMPRESS (CONT'D)  
 I need to cable His Majesty at  
 once.

SERVANT  
 Of course, Your Majesty.

OLGA  
 What news from Protopopov?

EMPRESS

Protopopov!?! Is a buffoon! Why I choose him as Minister of Interior is besides me?

OLGA

I thought Father...

EMPRESS

Enough!

Olga pops up.

OLGA

Okay. I need to go to work.

EMPRESS

Work?

OLGA

The hospital.

EMPRESS

Oh, yes. I am not myself today. I'm sorry.

OLGA

I know. I shall pray for Father Rasputin return.

Olga kisses her Mother's forehead.

EMPRESS

Thank you, child.

INT. RENKO'S MOTOR CAR - DAY

Renko's motor car snakes its way down one of Petersburg's busy side streets. He peers out his frosty window.

Grimy, layered up REFUGEES warm their hands over open bonfires. All are civilian casualties of the war.

MARIE (V.O)

Petersburg swarms with poor, powerless people. Misery dances on their drawn faces like the fiery flames. They have sacrificed much for the sake of this war: their lands, their homes, their sons, and their pride. Everything that they once cared for was now gone. They are burnt, beaten...

RENKO  
The walking dead. Hmm.

EXT. THE FIREMEN'S CLUB - DAY

Renko parks his car was in front of No.14 Fontanka. The infamous Firemen's Club, a small but profitable gambling establishment. The Inspector walks in as if he owes it.

INT. FIREMEN'S CLUB - SAME

The club is packed.

MARIE (V.O)  
Number Fourteen Fontanka. The Firemen's Club. A small but profitable gambling establishment filled with drugged and lifeless faces. They attempt to escape the atrocity of wartime Petersburg. As a variety of chemicals pulse through their bodies, men dress in tuxedos and women dress in elegant gowns gambled carelessly with their hearts and with their souls.

The Inspector walks through the crowd.

Approaches a cute CIGARETTE GIRL. She flirts.

CIGARETTE GIRL  
Renko?!? Can I interest you in anything?

RENKO  
No, Natasha. Not today.

CIGARETTE GIRL  
If you're looking for Peter? He's at the high stakes table.

RENKO  
(Russian)  
Thanks.

Renko heads to the roulette table.

CIGARETTE GIRL  
Hey Renko! Why did the richies kill Rasputin.

Renko turns.

RENKO  
We still have not found a body.

CIGARETTE GIRL  
You will.

Renko walks toward the high-stakes tables.

MARIE (V.O.)  
Peter is the heir to one of  
Russia's oldest and wealthiest  
banks. The war has been good for  
him and his family. The young  
banker plays both sides. He enters  
into secret dealings with  
anarchists, German sympathizers,  
and the secret police, plays one  
against the other and adds to his  
fortune. Of late, Peter plays in  
the deep pockets of the German  
Kaiser.

Peter notices Renko eyeing his mountain of blue chips.

PETER  
Say the word, and they are yours,  
Renko. Feeling lucky?

RENKO  
Peter, the trick is to live long  
enough to enjoy your wealth.

The Inspector laughs, embraces Peter.

RENKO (CONT'D)  
Good to see you're in one piece. I  
heard you were arrested.

PETER  
Oh, that. Just a misunderstanding.  
Me and our beloved Minister of  
Justice.

RENKO  
Makarov believes you're a traitor.

PETER  
Me?!?

RENKO  
I thought you paid everyone off?

PETER  
Makarov is Makarov. Above reproach.  
Yet, it was so nice of Grigory to  
convince the Empress to drop all  
charges.

Renko turns. He looks directly at...

The BRIT AGENT. He stands at the small stakes table.

RENKO  
Makarov hasn't given up.

Peter peers over Renko's shoulder.

PETER  
Oh, him. That's a Brit.

RENKO  
They're interested in you too?

PETER  
I'm a popular man.

RENKO  
I heard Justice Makarov wasn't too  
happy to sign your release.

PETER  
No, he wasn't.

RENKO  
Rasputin can no longer protect  
you.

PETER  
The Siberian foolishly trusted  
Protopopov. Bad bet. Let's walk.

Peter gathers up his chips.

Together, they walk toward the cashier's table.

RENKO  
Does the Kaiser get his cut?

PETER  
You know I don't like to share.

Peter draws closer to Renko's ear.

PETER (CONT'D)  
The Germans want peace.

They reach the cashier's table.

RENKO  
From whom?

Before a female CASHIER in a long flowing gown.

The cashier counts Peter's chips.

PETER  
Guess?

RENKO  
I see why Sir George has men  
following you.

The cashier counts out Peter's money.

PETER  
I need protection.

RENKO  
Rasputin had protection.

PETER  
Men. Your men.

Renko nods.

RENKO  
You shall have it.

PETER  
(in Russian)  
Thank you.

RENKO  
My men will stop by your flat.

PETER  
When?

RENKO  
Soon.

PETER  
Good. Monday, you travel to  
Helsinki. From there, you will be  
ferried across to Germany.

PETER (CONT'D)  
A boat?!? The Baltic isn't exactly  
the safest of spots.

RENKO

You worry too much, Peter. As long as you have the armistice in your procession, you will be safe.

The two find the exit...

ALLEYWAY.

PETER

Just think, Renko. Soon, the war will be over.

The two walk down the alley's center.

Behind them, a DOOR CREAKS.

Exits the Brit Agent.

Renko turns back and waves at him.

RENKO

For us, Peter. For us.

INT. THE BEAR - DAY

An upscale bistro lavishly decorated for the holidays.

MARIE (V.O.)

The Bear Bistro is no stranger to excess. In this place, the lunch crowds' egos are fed along with their appetites.

Sits a nearby table EATER #1 says to...

EATER #2 as he scoops up peas from a gold bordered plate.

EATER #1

We're heading for revolution.

EATER #2

We're heading for anarchy.

EATER #1

What's the difference?

Eater #2 ponders this as he reaches for his wine glass full of dandelion-colored wine.

EATER #2

The revolutionary means to reconstruct. The anarchist thinks only of destroying.

MARIE (V.O.)

At the other tables, discussions focused on Father Grigory's whereabouts.

TABLES of gossip montage of dialogues.

TABLE #1 WOMEN

It must have been an affair of the heart.

TABLE #2 WOMEN

No. It was a jealous husband.

TABLE #3 MAN

No. It was the gypsies that killed him. Black magic.

TABLE #4 MAN

Gypsies?!? Please, we all know the real culprits. The royal family.

TABLE #1/#2/#3

Really?!?

MARIE (V.O.)

The most imaginative and therefore the best received was that Alexandra and Rasputin were having an affair. The truth is that no one knew anything except that Rasputin was still missing, and presumed dead. Though, at a small table in back, two men sat with an informed perspective on Rasputin's current whereabouts.

Asks DMITRI, the Tsar's favorite Nephew. He wears his Imperial Horse Guards uniform.

DMITRI

What happened?

MARIE (V.O.)

Grand Duke Dmitri Pavelovich—the Tsar's favorite nephew. Rumors say to be the man Their Majesties wish their eldest daughter Olga to marry.

(MORE)

MARIE (V.O) (CONT'D)

A talented equestrian and model soldier, the Duke serves as an Officer in His Majesty's Horse Guards, the Imperial forces elite. He is a friend and confidant to Prince Felix. A true hater of Rasputin's widening influence over the Royal Family.

FELIX answers. He wears a well-cut cadet uniform of the Imperial Corps of Pages with high Pershing collar and white leather belt. His 'soldier' costume is complete.

FELIX

(yawns)

I overslept.

MARIE (V.O)

Prince Felix Yusupov, the sole heir to Russia's wealthiest family. His young, bright and extremely good-looking. The prince is considered to be Europe's most eligible bachelor before his recent marriage to Princess Irina, Sandro's daughter.

Felix plays with the stem of his flute glass.

FELIX

I had barely opened my eyes, when I was told the police were here to see me.

DMITRI

And?

FELIX

I asked him if his visit was connected with the shots fired?

Felix changes his voice to act out the police's reply.

FELIX (CONT'D)

Exactly! My objective is to ask you for a detailed account of what happened. Wasn't Rasputin among the guests?

Felix switches back to his own voice.

FELIX (CONT'D)

I replied... Rasputin in my house?!? Never.

DMITRI  
And the gunfire?

FELIX  
I told the truth, of course.

Dmitri chokes on his champagne.

DMITRI  
You did what?!?

FELIX  
I was bound by my oath, as a  
gentlemen.

DMITRI  
Felix?

FELIX  
Dmitri relax. I shared a drunk  
nobleman shot a hound of mine. The  
beast's blood leaked everywhere.

DMITRI  
Did he believe you?

FELIX  
Does it matter?

Felix reaches under the table.

FELIX (CONT'D)  
I brought you a present. It's not  
much. Though, I hope you like it.

DMITRI  
*Spasibo*, I wish I had brought  
something for you.

Felix leans across the table.

FELIX  
(whispers)  
Rasputin's head was enough.

Then, Felix hands Dmitri his gift.

Dmitri unwraps it.

DMITRI  
The compete works of Oscar Wilde.

The Duke pages through its text.

DMITRI (CONT'D)  
Your favorite author.

FELIX  
Now, all I possess is yours. Words.  
I am the fictitious creation of a  
brilliant man. But, enough about my  
problems.

Dmitri turns to the preface of the book. He reads out loud  
Felix's inscription.

DMITRI  
May I steal from The Ballad of  
Reading Goal. Each man kills the  
thing he loves. Some do it with a  
bitter look. Some with a flattering  
word. The coward does it with a  
kiss. The brave man with the sword.  
*Spasibo*, Felix. We need to warn the  
Tsar.

FELIX  
Why?

DMITRI  
A civil war threatens to tear the  
empire in two.

FELIX  
We have been down this path before,  
my dear friend. And now, more than  
ever, we teeter on the edge of  
oblivion. At least Rasputin is no  
longer a concern. He's off the  
board.

DMITRI  
Yes, but other treasonous dogs  
circle. Vlad.

FELIX  
There is no good in Vlad but he is  
no threat. Mere talk.

Felix eyes move down to his drink.

DMITRI  
Are you blind? Vlad speaks freely  
of a coup. He wants to be Tsar!

Felix grabs his glass and raises it.

FELIX

A toast. Good, conquers evil.  
Always. Long Live the Tsar.

Dmitri raises his glass.

DMITRI

Long Live the Tsar! And victory!

FELIX

Yes, victory.

SOUND: CLING!

INT. GERMAN HIGH COMMAND - DAY

KAISER WILHELM II of Germany hunches his small body over a table blanketed by an outstretched map. He braces himself up with his good arm, as he inches closer to the map.

KAISER

Hmm. Victory.

NOTE: The Kaiser is the Grandson of Queen Victoria of England and cousin to both Tsar Nicholas and King George.

MARIE (V.O.)

The Kaiser has always held an overly romantic view of war. He dreams of a Germany-dominated Europe. His armies are at war with Great Britain, France, and Russia. German casualties are appalling, matching those of Russia. Both sides realize it is difficult to take over the world when you are running out of men. His armies on the ern front have been at a stalemate for over a year now. Though, in the east, his war with Russia... he is winning. Though, he cares only about the front that counts—the west. At all costs, he needs to break the stalemate before the United States enters into the war in the spring.

KAISER

I am running out of time. Of a German led Europe. The war has lasted longer than anyone had expected. Schlieffen Plan failed.

(MORE)

KAISER (CONT'D)

Hmm. Lunch in Paris. Dinner in St. Petersburg, was over optimistic.

He looks down upon the map and his legions marked along the long Russian front.

KAISER (CONT'D)

But soon, victory will be ours. As over sixty of my best divisions will be freed from the east. For we can endure another summer like last. Jutland. Verdun. Both bloodbaths. My legions are not limitless. We just need one decisive battle.

The Kaiser SIGHS.

A heavy hand KNOCKS on his chamber's door.

KAISER (CONT'D)

Enter.

Appears GENERAL PAUL VON HINDENBURG and bows.

MARIE (V.O)

General Paul von Hindenburg, the Kaiser's new Chief of Staff.

HINDENBURG

Your Majesty. I have just received the revised Russian terms.

KAISER

And? Must I read it myself?!

HINDENBURG

They want Constantinople and the Balkan Straits.

KAISER

Expected. They can have them.

HINDENBURG

But your Majesty?!? These terms. They're far too favorable for our enemy.

KAISER

Why?

HINDENBURG

Our Armies are advancing. Their forces are retreating.

(MORE)

HINDENBURG (CONT'D)

Russia's supply-lines are in utter disarray. Come spring, the Russian Bear's exposed throat will be under our heel.

KAISER

Spring, General? No. No. No. It shall all be over by then?

Kaiser LAUGHS.

HINDENBURG

Their people are near revolution.

KAISER

Revolution? Sir, you forget. Who is financing this so-called rebellion? Me.

HINDENBURG

Your Grace, our troops shall march victorious through the streets of Paris, soon. But first, allow our armies of the east the glory deserved by us conquering a defeated Moscow. We have sacrificed too much German blood to simply abandon it!

KAISER

No, General. My Russian Cousin is a Religious fool. He wants so badly to liberate Constantinople and its Great Church. Let him have it. The city is irrelevant.

HINDENBURG

But, Your Majesty, our enemy's back is nearly broken.

KAISER

Perhaps. But General Von Hindenburg, we have wasted enough men and time over the Russians. We need those sixty divisions on the front that matters. By early spring at the latest. That means this treaty needs to be signed soon. Have our man in St. Petersburg agree to whatever terms.

HINDENBURG

Of course, Your Grace.

The general salutes and turns to leave.

KAISER

Fear not General Hindenburg. We shall deal with my dear cousin... later.

Hindenburg stops and turns.

The Kaiser's attention returns to his map.

KAISER (CONT'D)

Poor old Russia will pay dearly for Niki's Byzantine dream of Constantinople. Offering it up to him was my masterstroke. You see, I knew he could not resist it. How many of his men were butchered to reach that inconsequential Turkish stronghold?

MARIE (V.O.)

Last year, hoping to breach the outer defenses at Dardanelle, located only a hundred miles south of Constantinople, some six hundred thousand British had thrown themselves at this second front. Never establishing a secure beachhead, the invasion had failed miserably. The human cost had been too much. King George withdrew his troops in total defeat.

KAISER

Come spring. Thanks to Russia's departure from the war, Germany will march over two hundred battle tested divisions against the weakened fortifications of a war-torn ern front. You see, with a mere stroke of a pen, my dear general, victory becomes a mathematical certainty.

HINDENBURG

Victory.

KAISER

A new German era will engulf Europe. A long-lasting Reich, that would lead the world deep into the Twentieth Century, a German century.

MARIE (V.O.)

The General now realizes he had underestimated the Kaiser. It would be a revised version of the Schlieffen Plan. Settling with Russia now would free up the required divisions to end the stalemate in the . The war would be over before the Americans could even enter it. Then, when the Russian army had amassed near Constantinople, the full German Imperial Army would storm east through Poland and capture the Russian Bear off guard. As they dealt with the Turks, Moscow would be unguarded... and exposed.

HINDENBURG

Brilliant.

Kaiser eyes his trophy wall full of dead animals and antlers.

KAISER

A year from now, I shall have the head of a stuffed bear mounted on my wall.

HINDENBURG

Right beside your British Lion.

The General beams with pride as he salutes his leader.

KAISER

On your way out, General, tell Alfred I need a word. Someone must warn the Turks that the Russians are coming.

The General leaves.

The Kaiser starts to move the wooden pieces that represent his armies to the .

KAISER (CONT'D)

Ah, better. I maybe be crazy. But I am no fool.

EXT. NO. 41 NEVSKY PROSPECT - DAY

Sits off the banks of the River Fontanka a palace.

Serge CLIMBS the steps.

A gigantic Red Cross banner drapes down from its roof.

MARIE (V.O.)

Serge missed Dmitri at the Bear. So he's trying his home, a palace converted into one of Petersburg's premier health facilities.

INT. NO. 41 NEVSKY PROSPECT - MARBLE FOYER - SAME

Serge strolls under a huge chandelier that hangs like huge from the sky-colored ceiling into a...

PATIENTS' WARD.

Serge wears a fine-fitting suit. Instantly, he appears out of place to the lined beds full of...

BANDAGED PATIENTS seeking care.

The prince passes them.

The patients gaze back at him. Silently, they stare. Hatred and envy fills their eyes and body motions. For Serge is young and whole.

Olga approaches in her nurse uniform and saves him.

OLGA

Serge!

SERGE

Olga!

The two hug.

SERGE (CONT'D)

You look great... as a nurse.

OLGA

I know.

SERGE

How vain of you.

OLGA

It's not vanity if it's truth.

The Duchess twirls.

SERGE

You're teasing?

OLGA  
Da. I am. How are you?

SERGE  
Been better.

Serge looks around.

SERGE (CONT'D)  
I'm impressed by the palace's  
transformation.

OLGA  
Dmitri converted his home into a  
hospital.

SERGE  
He spared no expense.

OLGA  
I know. It could be in any premier  
medical facility in Petersburg.

SERGE  
Except for a few tiny differences.

Olga points up.

OLGA  
Like the chandeliers hanging from  
the sky-colored ceiling.

SERGE  
Exactly.

OLGA  
Dmitri financed it himself. The  
staff. The equipment. The medicine.

SERGE  
So... You still love him?

OLGA  
Terribly.

SERGE  
Good.

A DOCTOR waves Olga over.

Olga gives Serge another hug.

OLGA  
I have to go.

SERGE

I wish you and Dmitri...

OLGA

I know. Love you too, Cousin. Even that dreaded beard of yours! I half expect a pigeon to fly out of it.

Serge strolls into a new...

WARD of PATIENTS.

MARIE approaches him from the other side of the ward. She's dressed in a nurse's uniform too. As she walks over, her dark curls bounced upon her narrow shoulders.

She wipes her stained hands with a fresh towel.

MARIE

Prince Serge. It is I. Marie.

SERGE

The woman who first stole my heart.

MARIE

I know. I'm such a terrible flirt.

SERGE

Have you seen the grand duke?

MARIE

You try the Bear?

SERGE

Just missed him.

MARIE

Well, if I see him...

Another NURSE waves Marie over.

SERGE

(in Russian)

Thank you. Go.

MARIE

Great seeing you.

SERGE

Nurse Marie! You can still steal a man's heart with a gaze.

MARIE  
 Little good it does me here.  
 (in Russian)  
 Bye, Serge.

EXT. WAR MINISTRY BUILDING - DAY

Two IMPERIAL SOLDIERS stand guard to the building's entrance. Ice and snow covers their faces and uniforms.

EXT. WAR MINISTRY BUILDING - SAME

A corner office that overlooks Senate Square.

GENERAL PLATON ALEXANDROVICH KONSTANTIN sits behind his paper-strewn desk. He's smoking. He's heavily starched uniform is two sizes too big.

MARIE (V.O.)  
 The offices of the War Ministry were extraordinarily busy for a Saturday afternoon. General Konstantin's office, which houses the offices of His Majesty's Secret Police, were no exception. General Platon Alexandrovich Konstantin, Serge's father would rather be at the Front. But the Tsar selected him personally as Head of His Secret Police.

The General sets down his cigarette. Then, he passes his boney fingertips through his heavy slate gray hair.

PLATON  
 Renko, everything in order?

RENKO  
 On our side... Da.

PLATON  
 Sides? There will no longer be sides soon.

RENKO  
 True.

PLATON  
 And the banker?

The General moves some papers along his desk.

RENKO

Half the city knows about his release. Sir George has men shadowing him.

PLATON

Excellent news. It gives them someone to chase.

RENKO

He has asked for protection.

PLATON

Providing it legitimates Burmin as our messenger. More good news.

The General's attention moves down to a paper before him.

PLATON (CONT'D)

And my Son?

RENKO

He's drinking himself to death.

PLATON

That's what I have heard. Hmm...

Platon eyes Renko.

PLATON (CONT'D)

I don't know what to do. Since his Mother passed, I've lost the only means of contact with him.

RENKO

He can't come to grips with the loss of Sophia.

PLATON

One never fully recovers from the loss of a wife, a soulmate.

The General SIGHS.

RENKO

Tonight?

PLATON

Tonight. Make certain he makes his train.

RENKO

Sir, I thought we both were going to escort him to the station.

The General's eyes move from Renko to the papers on his desk.

PLATON  
I don't think it's best for him to  
see me like this.

Platon removes an envelope from his desk. Then, he hands it over to Renko and eyeballs him.

PLATON (CONT'D)  
Give him this.

Renko hesitates to grab it.

RENKO  
General. He shouldn't find out like  
this. You still have time.

GENERAL  
(sighs again)  
No. My time is up.

RENKO  
Sir, he needs you. More now than  
ever.

PLATON  
I know. I know. But so does Russia.

Renko attempts to counter this point but the General motions him with his hand to stop.

PLATON (CONT'D)  
You certain he was not involved in  
the Rasputin affair?

RENKO  
Yes. Throughout the years, I can  
tell when he's lying.

PLATON  
You know him more than I, Renko.  
Hmm. That's a hard thing for a  
father to admit. Okay. Back to the  
Rasputin. The missing  
correspondence?

RENKO  
Someone ransack his apartment this  
morning.

PLATON

Minister Protopopov appears to have freed himself from his slave master. Keep an eye on him. He most likely has the letters.

Renko nods and moves to the door.

PLATON (CONT'D)

Inspector...

Renko turns.

PLATON (CONT'D)

(hard pause)

That will be all.

RENKO

Of course, Your Grace.

Renko leaves.

The General walks to the mirror and examines his appearance.

His uniform is too large for him. His once rich head of gray hair is thinning. He moves his eyes to the certificate for bravery he had received from the Tsar during Russia's war with Japan over the Pacific.

MARIE (V.O.)

Serge's Father had always been a complicated man. Born a soldier, Platon carries on his family's tradition. He and over four hundred thousand Russian troops headed East after the Japanese sneak attack on Port Arthur. To the Tsar, the attack presented an opportunity to squash Japan. Thus, like so many others, General Konstantin, only a Colonel at the time, left for Port Arthur. He was one of the few to return. Russia's imperial dream turned into a nightmare. The Russian High Command did not take into account the new battleships the Japanese had purchased from Britain. Britain wanted to maintain her dominance in the Orient and gave Japan every weapon she desired. Konstantin emerged as a national hero. His escapades in Manchuria were legendary.

(MORE)

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

Every small child knows his tales of valor. It took three weeks, but he led his men two hundred miles at incredible odds to Port Arthur—only to learn their commanding General was dead, the Tsar's Pacific Fleet was at the bottom of the China Sea, and the city had already surrendered.

The old warrior walks to the massive fireplace.

MARIE (V.O.)

Above the mantle is a samurai sword that he had liberated from a fellow warrior some time ago. With aching hands, he reaches for his sword. The cold steel felt wonderful against his warm flesh.

Grabbing the sword, the General mutters.

PLATON

This is the way a soldier should die, in combat, not slowly from a hidden enemy, cancer.

With his sword still in his hand, he looks at the wall that captures so many moments of his life—fellow Imperial soldiers, family, and friends. Then, his eyes stop on a framed photo of a young man in uniform. It could have been him thirty years ago.

PLATON (CONT'D)

My boy. My Serge.

MARIE (V.O.)

As Platon inspects the sword's fine blade, an old friend walks in the room, Sandro. Platon had summoned Grand Duke Alexander Mikhailovich, his dead wife's Brother, here from Kiev two days ago. Nicknamed Sandro since his youth, the dark bearded Duke was a tall, lanky warrior with a poet's heart.

SANDRO

Platon-son. Reliving past glory, my friend?

PLATON  
It was anything but glorious,  
Sandro.

The General returns the sword to its sleeve.

PLATON (CONT'D)  
I am glad the war has not harmed  
you.  
(laughs)  
You still wasting your time on  
those foolish flying machines?

SANDRO  
Platon, why are you so afraid of  
the...

Konstantin turns from the fire.

This gives Alexander a better view of the gaunt figure before  
him. Sandro's smile erodes from his face.

SANDRO (CONT'D)  
Future?

PLATON  
I have my reasons.

SANDRO  
You're not looking well, my friend?

PLATON  
According to my doctors, I don't  
have much time left, Sandro.

SANDRO  
I see.

PLATON  
They say I won't see summer.

Sandro gives Platon a huge hug.

SANDRO  
Ah! Summer is so overrated.

Platon CHUCKLES.

PLATON  
*Spasibo*, Sandro. I haven't laughed  
in quite some time.

SANDRO  
Is there anything I can do?

PLATON

I will need your help with Serge.

SANDRO

Of course. Speaking of Serge. Do you remember the time he and Olga were found dancing alone in the garden...

EXT. THE WOODS - DAY

NICHOLAS ALEXANDROVICH ROMANOV, the Emperor of all Russia hikes with his son...

ALEXEI, the Heir Apparent, in the woods outside Staff Headquarters. Behind him is the picturesque village of Moghilev, a cluster of cobblestone buildings covered in a blanket of fresh new snow.

MARIE (V.O)

Alexei loves to play like every other twelve-year-old boy. Though, he is so thin and frail. He suffers from hemophilia, a blood disorder so prevalent in the reigning houses of Europe that it is known as the royal disease. Poor Nicki.

Nicholas enjoys the last drag from his cigarette.

MARIE (V.O.)

He still processes a flawlessly trimmed red beard, or perhaps it is brown... depends on the light. Though his eyes have grown remote. Even sad.

NICHOLAS

Only in Russia, would we pick a town as lovely as this to house an army.

MARIE (V.O.)

It was his army he refers to. Nicholas Alexandrovich Romanov. The Emperor of all Russia. Never asked to be the Tsar. In fact, he accepted the title of Tsar with as much enthusiasm as one reserves for an unwanted gift. For the last twenty years he has grown tired of it.

(MORE)

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

His reign to this point was pretty much summed by words like: scandal, death, defeat, riot, sneak attack, sunk, burned out, blackened, stampeded or bruised, all in an interchangeable order. His mark is less than the Renaissance-style reign he envisioned so long ago. God-like power is a heavy load to bear for any mere man, especially for my Nicki.

As Nicholas exhales an icy cloud of smoke, his deep blue eyes watch the shifting snow dance upon the nearby rooftops.

NICHOLAS

Alexei, led the way! Hmm... What a gift God gives you to see the world once again through the eyes of a twelve-year-old boy.

MARIE (V.O.)

Romanovs have reigned over Russia for three hundred years. One day, Nicholas would hand the Crown down to his son. At least, that was the plan.

The Tsar stops and removes the crumpled letter from his pocket. The letter is from Father Rasputin.

RASPUTIN (V.O.)

My Tsar. I feel I shall leave life before January First. I want to make known to the Russian people, to Papa, to the Russian Mother and to the children, to the land of Russia, what they must understand. If I am killed by common assassins, and especially by my brothers the Russian peasants, you, Tsar of Russia, have nothing to fear. Remain on your throne and govern. And you have nothing to fear for your children, they will reign for hundreds of years in Russia. But if I am murdered by boyars, by nobles, if they shed my blood, their hands will remain soiled with blood, for twenty-five years they will not wash their hands of my blood. Brothers will kill their brothers...

(MORE)

RASPUTIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
your children or relations, will  
not remain alive for more than two  
years. They will be killed by the  
Russian people. You must reflect  
and act prudently. Pray, pray, be  
strong, and think of your blessed  
family. Grigory.

Young Alexei reaches the top of the hill.

ALEXEI  
Try to catch me, Papa!

NICHOLAS  
You must be part goat, son. No  
human can climb faster than you!

MARIE (V.O.)  
The Tsarevich suffers from  
hemophilia. It stops blood cells  
from clotting naturally, a tiny  
scrape or fall could be lethal.

NICHOLAS(V.O.)  
Alexei must be saved. Is there no  
specialist in Europe who can cure  
my son? Let him name his own price.  
Let him stay forever in my palace.

MARIE (V.O.)  
But modern medicine had no cure.  
The Empress blames herself for her  
son's condition. Her German  
bloodline caused his pain. Her  
grandmother was Queen Victoria of  
England, and this disease had  
riddled the Queen's descendants.  
Since Alexei's birth, an army of  
Europe's finest physicians had  
attempted to heal him. But only  
Rasputin was able to help.

NICHOLAS  
How wonderful it is to see him run  
again. No pain. Only joy.

MARIE (V.O.)  
The Royal Physicians all said  
Alexei would never see his tenth  
birthday. That's when Rasputin  
entered their lives. His old world  
cures promised life, when modern  
science only offered death.

Nicholas final reaches his son on the summit. Beneath them, is the snow-covered village of Moghilev.

Nicholas gazes down at the town's ancient cathedral.

NICHOLAS

Alexi. One day, all this beauty and spectacle shall be yours to uphold.

ALEXEI

Papa, you shall reign over this land forever and ever.

The Tsar places his arm around his son and draws him closer.

NICHOLAS

This is Russia. In it's best and purest form. Simple. Abundant. Good.

ALEXEI

Papa. Is Rasputin as bad as everyone says?

NICHOLAS

He saved you.

ALEXI

Oh yes. I forgot.

NICHOLAS

Ah! It's glorious. Everything seems clearer when I am in the woods. Quiet. Peaceful. Whole. And nearer to God.

MARIE (V.O.)

Word of Rasputin's disappearance has yet reached Moghilev.

EXT. THE BRITISH CHANCELLERY - DAY

Off the banks of Neva, the British Embassy is an island in St. Petersburg's sea of uncertainty. Its staunch frame, reinforced with burnt brick, braces itself for the worst.

MARIE (V.O.)

Throughout the Chancery, the British knew their Russian Ally's knees were buckling.

(MORE)

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

A fierce battle was being waged to keep Mother Russia, and her fifteen million sons, in this war, at least until spring.

INT. BRITISH CHANCELLORY - AMBASSADOR'S OFFICE - SAME

SIR GEORGE BUCHANAN, British Envoy to the Russian Court. He sits behind his big desk and ponders. He stares across the room to a badly painted portrait of The Charge of the Light Brigade that hangs on the wall.

MARIE (V.O.)

Through their well-informed sources, the British were aware of secret negotiations between high-ranking members of the Tsar's cabinet and the German government. These negotiations only purpose was to find a noble way to get Russia out of the war. The British Ambassador had been instructed at the very highest level to use every available means to sever these peace talks. If Russia were out of the war, the Kaiser could send at least sixty battle-tested divisions up against the allies. The British and French troops would be forced to retreat, and the Germans would flood the French countryside like locusts. Trapped with their backs against a wall of water that was the English Channel, the British fate would be sealed. Within weeks, the war would be over. A new dark age would sweep across the civilized world. With this in mind, Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador to the Russian Imperial Court, was fully aware of his patriotic duty to keep the flames of war raging in the east, at least until spring. By then, the Americans and their fresh troops should be in the war.

Sir George plays with the waxy tip of his large white moustache.

Benjy, his second, sits across from him.

SIR GEORGE  
Benjy, I no longer trust them.

BENJY  
We are surrounded by thugs, clowns,  
and liars.

SIR GEORGE  
And murders. Lord Kitchener's death  
is proof of that. Only a handful of  
people were aware of his mission.

BENJY  
Yet... him and his ship rests at  
the bottom of the Baltic Sea.

SIR GEORGE  
Indeed. Their German-born Empress  
is blame for this affair. I'm  
certain of it.

BRUCE LOCKHART, an intelligence officer, KNOCKS on the door.

SIR GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Come in!

Bruce Lockhart enters the dark, wood-paneled room in a panic.

SIR GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Bruce, what is it?

BRUCE  
Ambassador, Father Rasputin.

BENJY  
Great.

BRUCE  
He's dead.

SIR GEORGE  
How?

BRUCE  
Murdered.

BENJY  
Jealous husband I hope.

BRUCE  
No. Members of high office.

SIR GEORGE  
Not royalty!?

Bruce hesitates.

BRUCE

A prince and a duke.

SIR GEORGE

We're in Russia, Bruce. Princes are a dime a dozen here.

BRUCE

Prince Felix Yusupov and Grand Duke Dmitri Pavlovich.

SIR GEORGE

Dear god!

BENJY

Prince Felix, heir to Russia's wealthiest families.

BRUCE

Grand Duke Dmitri, promised to the Tsar's eldest daughter. Not ideal.

SIR GEORGE

What do you make of this, Benjy?

BENJY

Sir, it could be several things. One, this information is false, and Rasputin is still alive.

BRUCE

I won't be here Sir if I believed that.

BENJY

Two. Rasputin is dead, and these men of their own accord removed what they believed to be an embarrassment to the Crown.

Sir George and Bruce nod in agreement.

BENJY (CONT'D)

Three...

SIR GEORGE

This is the first act of a power struggle and perhaps a Russian Civil War.

BENJY

Exactly.

SIR GEORGE  
Anything else?

BRUCE  
Yes. The banker Burmin met with  
Inspector Renko today.

BENJY  
Of His Majesty's Secret Police.

SIR GEORGE  
I thought Burmin was in jail.

BRUCE  
He was released earlier this week.  
By orders of...

SIR GEORGE  
Her Royal Majesty.

BENJY  
Perfect timing.

SIR GEORGE  
Watch him closely.

BRUCE  
Yes, Sir!

The Ambassador TAPS his bony fingers atop his desk.

SIR GEORGE  
Benjy. Find me, Mister Jones.

Benjy leaves.

As the door CLOSES, the Ambassador looks out his window.

Across the semi-frozen waters of the great Neva stands the  
red stone bastions of the Fortress of Peter and Paul.

SIR GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Lord have mercy on us all.

INT. GRAND DUKE'S DMITRI' PALACE - DAY

Olga walks down the hallway to the...

BALLROOM'S ENTRANCE.

She stops and peers in.

Dmitri stands near a large window.

PLAYS: CHAMBER MUSIC.

1914 SPRING  
FLASHBACK  
BEGINS:

In this space, before the war, a Spring Ball takes place.

Women in colorful gowns and men in just as vivid uniforms dance together as one. Oh, the pageantry.

SOPHIA, Serge's wife wanders up.

SOPHIA  
Have you seen Serge?

OLGA  
Sophia?!? Where have you been  
hiding?

Serge wears his Imperial Uniform. He looks dashing. He stands with Dmitri, Felix, and Sandro.

SOPHIA  
There he is. I wish to dance.

OLGA  
Lead the way.

Sophia and Olga grab Serge and Dmitri. Then, they escort them to the dance floor. Then, they bow to one another and begin to move as one.

In the midst of the first twirl...

Dmitri and Olga:

OLGA (CONT'D)  
Promise me you will come back to  
me.

DMITRI  
There is not an army large enough  
to stop me of that.

OLGA  
Let's hope.

Serge and Sophia dance and twirl too.

Olga watches on.

SOPHIA  
Hubie?

SERGE  
Da, Wifey.

SOPHIA  
Promise me you will love me  
forever.

SERGE  
I promise.

SOPHIA  
Good. Let's never stop dancing.

The other DANCERS nod and smile as the music's pitch and frequencies increases to a feverish pace.

Together, Serge and Sophia swirl faster and faster.

SERGE  
I miss you!

SOPHIA  
I know.

Olga holds Dmitri tightly. She acts as if she's afraid he might slip away.

THE CHAMBER MUSIC STOPS.

END OF 1914  
SPRING  
FLASHBACK:

Olga pauses at the Ballroom's door. The room is empty now except for one. This is when he HEARS a familiar tune again.

Dmitri HUMS cheery CHAMBER MUSIC.

Olga enters the circular ballroom. His silhouette dances like a fallen ghost along the polished parquet floors.

The Duke sees Olga.

DMITRI  
My love.

OLGA  
Dmitri...

DMITRI  
Da.

OLGA  
Mother says...

Dmitri uses his forefinger to lovely silence her.

DMITRI  
Everything I have done, I have done  
for us.

OLGA  
But...

DMITRI  
Remember, the last Spring Ball?

OLGA  
Before the War.

DMITRI  
Soon, this room shall come alive  
again. With dance and music. We  
will win this war. Soon.

OLGA  
So many that attended the last  
Spring Ball are dead now.

DMITRI  
I know. I know. We are so close to  
victory. I can feel it.

OLGA  
My dear. I fear, Russia is ready to  
explode. Hold me. Tightly.

Dmitri does. Then, he HUMS the Waltz of the Flowers.

DMITRI  
Let's dance. Forever intertwined.

Tears form in Olga's eyes as she twirls about with Dmitri.  
She HEARS the faint echo of LAUGHTER and party CHATTER.

EXT. GRAND DUKE ALEXANDER'S PALACE - NIGHT

Warm light escapes the library's tall windows.

INT. G.D. ALEXANDER'S PALACE - LIBRARY - SAME

Serge sits before the raging fire in a big backed chair.

MARIE (V.O.)  
During Sandro's life, he has  
collected as many books as friends.  
(MORE)

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

It is rumored that this wing alone houses nearly twenty thousand rare editions in every language. I believe it. Every inch of the high walls are lined with books. As a child, Serge spent a great deal of his days in a study very much like this one. The Duke is more than Uncle. He was the Prince's closest friend. Waiting for his Father's return from the empire's far-off provinces, he always seemed to find himself in this mysterious place, home to one of the finest collections of rare books in all of Russia. His adventure always began by strolling through this library of wondrous possibilities, then stopping in front of one of its crammed bookcases to grab a tale that was full of dusty dreams, penned so long ago by forgotten men now long dead. Serge loved this place. This living library was the perfect sanctuary for a lonely child who's father always seemed to be away.

The fire crackles. The flame flickers. Serge's head slowly dips, as he closes his eyes.

FLASHBACK  
BEGINS:

INT. SERGE HOME - NIGHT

Sophia appears in a white lace nightgown before the fireplace. She holds a lit candle and glows.

SOPHIA

Serge, return to bed.

Serge looks up at her and smiles.

SERGE

You are so beautiful.

SOPHIA

Come.

Serge takes her hand. He follows her and the tiny light into the surrounding darkness.

SERGE  
Sophia?

SOPHIA  
Yes.

SERGE  
Is this a dream?

Sophia stops, turns, and nods.

SOPHIA  
Serge, come back to me.

Then, she BLOWS out the candle.

SERGE  
Sophia?!?

END OF  
FLASHBACK:

Serge opens his eyes to the sight of...

LEO, one of Sandro's trusted servants.

LEO  
Your Excellency, Prince Felix has arrived. He instructed me to tell you that he would only be a moment.

SERGE  
(in Russian)  
Thank you, Leo.

LEO  
Will that will be all, Your Grace?

Serge nods as FOOTSTEPS skim across the atrium's marble floor. The large French doors swing open.

Enters Felix.

FELIX  
Serge! Are you here to see me off?

SERGE  
Why?

FELIX  
Why what?

SERGE  
Rasputin?

FELIX  
Rasputin! He played the game. He  
knew the risks.

SERGE  
Game? Felix, you destroy all that  
you are afraid of?

FELIX  
Whatever do you mean by that?!?

SERGE  
You leaving the Capital?

FELIX  
I do miss the warm Crimean sun. It  
beckons me.

SERGE  
Do you think that's far enough away  
from the Empress' reach?

FELIX  
In one swoop, I saved her and the  
monarchy.

SERGE  
A prison cell might open your  
perspective on the subject?

FELIX  
I think not. I'm the sole heir to  
one of Russia's wealthiest  
families.

SERGE  
And the Tsar?

FELIX  
The Tsar?!? He has larger concerns  
than me.

Felix walks away.

FELIX (CONT'D)  
(in Russian)  
Good bye.

SERGE  
God. Please save us.

Sandro's rusty voice rings down from the heavens.

SANDRO

The Lord wants nothing to do with  
this mess.

Sandro hides among dark mahogany shelves overcrowded with  
books.

SANDRO (CONT'D)

Charming boy, my son-in-law. I  
can't see what my daughter finds  
appealing in him. Perhaps his  
absence.

Sandro LAUGHS hard at this.

SANDRO (CONT'D)

Young Konstantin.

SERGE

Uncle Sandro!

Serge pops out of his chair and rushes up the spiral steps.

SERGE (CONT'D)

I thought you were in Kiev!

SANDRO

And miss all of this? Someone needs  
to run this lunatic asylum that we  
once called Russia.

Sandro hugs Serge. When he pulls from the embrace, he  
examines Serge.

SANDRO (CONT'D)

Killer beard. I'm thankful the war  
has returned you in one piece.

Serge looks down to his shoes.

SERGE

I did things that I'm not proud of.

SANDRO

Da. Haven't we all.

SERGE

The good has died in me.

SANDRO

Serge, we are all being tested.

SERGE

The unrest grows and grows.

SANDRO

That is why I am here. Someone needs to warn Nicki before its too late.

SERGE

Rasputin?

SANDRO

Rasputin, that poor peasant, is nothing compared with the sinister forces that confront us. The Tsar's own government wants him gone.

SERGE

Gone?

SANDRO

We're watching an unprecedented spectacle of malcontents. Revolution is coming from above, not below.

SERGE

His own government?

SANDRO

And members of his own family.

SERGE

Vlad?

Sandro nods.

SANDRO

These puppeteers are manipulating events. Food shortages in the city. While mountains of wheat rot in the countryside. Factions in the military due to poor morale caused by lies of scandal in the Court.

SERGE

What else?

SANDRO

I believe it all stems from the changing of the ministers. None that are loyal remain.

SERGE

Protopopov?

SANDRO

Protopopov is a sexual pervert. A formal liberal turned orthodox conservative by Rasputin's own black magic.

SERGE

So there is no hope?

SANDRO

There is always hope.

Sandro tugs on Serge's long beard.

SANDRO (CONT'D)

Do tell me more about this fascinating beard.

SERGE

I know. I look ridiculous.

SANDRO

Ridiculous? No. You are alive. For which, I am grateful.

Sandro walks amongst his books.

Serge follows.

SANDRO (CONT'D)

Hmm. Now Serge, have I ever told you about the time your father and I marched through the jungles on a rescue mission to Port Arthur?

INSERT IF NEEDED:

SANDRO (CONT'D)

Faith. Honor. Loyalty. Are more than mere words. That is why I am here. I need to warn the Tsar.

SERGE

About Rasputin?

SANDRO

No. His murder is but a prelude. More sinister forces entangle us. His own government is against him.

SERGE

What?

SANDRO

It is true. The unrest grows and grows. The question is why?

SERGE

Do you think some group is managing these events?

SANDRO

I believe manipulating.

SERGE

Who?

SANDRO

That is what we must find out?

SERGE

But who holds such power?

SANDRO

The only plausible answer, His Majesty's own government.

SERGE

But how?

SANDRO

We are watching an unprecedented spectacle. A revolution coming from above, not below. It all stems from the new ministers loyal to Rasputin.

SERGE

Minister Protopopov.

SANDRO

A mere pawn in this play.

SERGE

Who's left to trust?

SANDRO

The Tsar. He must find the courage to turn back this tide. Declare his people free! And create a true Constitution.

SERGE

Right now, the Tsar is being advised to close the Duma's doors.

SANDRO

If he does that, we are as good as dead.

INT. PROTOPOPOV'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Protopopov enters his apartment as party is in full effect.

INTERESTING GUESTS: MEN DRESSED LIKE WOMEN. WOMEN DRESSED LIKE MEN. TRANSGENDERS. All dance with Champagne glasses in their hands. Some wear masks. Others don't. One WOMAN stands naked with a long snake draped around her neck.

PROTOPOPOV

Sorry, I'm late!!!

The Baroness emerges from the crowd. She joins him. As she does, she offers him her full flute glass.

BARONESS

Busy day dear?

PROTOPOPOV

Work, work, work.

Protopopov accepts the Champagne and downs it.

PROTOPOPOV (CONT'D)

Ah!!!

SNAKE WOMAN

Hey, shouldn't you be looking for Rasputin?

BARONESS

(purrs)

Shouldn't you?

The Minister walks deeper into the party.

PROTOPOPOV

Oh, him? He will turn up.

Three GUESTS sexual eye Protopopov as he passes.

Protopopov waves at them and they advance.

The Baroness joins in and gropes Protopopov.

The others' limbs entangle him, as if his flesh is being swallowed alive by the people.

Protopopov winks at US.

PROTOPOPOV (CONT'D)  
Work. Work. Work. Sin knows no  
holiday.

INT. BRITISH CHANCELLERY - SIR GEORGE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The door opens to Sir George's study.

Enters BARNABY JONES. A towering young man with bright orange-colored hair with composed blue eyes.

JONES  
Sir George, I was told that you  
needed to see me.

SIR GEORGE  
Yes. Welcome, Mr. Jones, to St.  
Petersburg. Is it true, Barnaby you  
come from one of the wealthiest and  
most influential families in Wales?

JONES  
My Father, F.W. Jones, is a self-  
made man.

SIR GEORGE  
Yes. Manufacturing. So, the war has  
been good for him?

JONES  
Good?!? He's lost two sons, and me  
two Brothers.

SIR GEORGE  
I see. Dreadful business war.  
Though, I don't need to tell you  
how important Russia is in this  
fight, do I?

JONES  
No, Sir. We need to keep Germany on  
two fronts. Not one.

SIR GEORGE  
Exactly! Though, never since the  
war began. Have I felt so depressed  
about the situation here.

JONES  
I agree. The future of Anglo-  
Russian relations is in disarray.  
The Russians are losing their will  
to fight.

SIR GEORGE

The Germans have changed their tactics. They are now representing that Britain is bent on prolonging the war for her own ambitions. I am sure that you have heard all of this in Moscow. It is Great Britain that is forcing Russia to continue the war. Forbidding her to accept the favorable terms that Germany is ready to offer. It is Britain, therefore, that is responsible for their sufferings of her people. This insidious campaign is much more difficult to contract than the old lies about our inaction.

JONES

How can I be of service, Sir?

SIR GEORGE

Jones, you're an Oxford man, aren't you?

JONES

Yes, I am. I graduated right before the war. Class of Fourteen.

SIR GEORGE

Then you were in Oxford at the same time as Prince Felix?

JONES

Yes. But he graduated ahead of me.

SIR GEORGE

I see.

The Ambassador looks down at his dossier.

SIR GEORGE (CONT'D)

How about Prince Serge?

JONES

We roomed together.

SIR GEORGE

It is not only on the battlefields of Europe that the war must be fought. The final victory must also be won over the more insidious enemy within our gates.

JONES

Sir George, how does this involve Prince Serge?

SIR GEORGE

Your country requires a great service from you, young man. A great service.

INT. GRAND DUKE'S PALACE - SANDRO'S STUDY - NIGHT

Serge and Sandro sit by the fire as the clock over the mantel CHIRPS the hour.

SANDRO

Everything is swinging out of control.

SERGE

That's why I'm not leaving the city.

SANDRO

Good. We need you in this fight.

SERGE

I will do what I can.

SANDRO

Serge, have I ever told you about my American dream?

SERGE

Your lost notion of the Americanization of Russia.

SANDRO

Yes. When I was just a little older than you, I sailed with the vast Imperial Navy.

SERGE

Sadly, most of those magnificent vessels are gone.

SANDRO

They rest peacefully at the bottom of the Pacific.

SERGE

Lost in the sea battle of Tsushima.

SANDRO  
True, but that is another story.

SERGE  
A sad one.

Sandro grows quiet.

SERGE (CONT'D)  
The Americanization of Russia?

SANDRO  
Yes. I was just twenty-seven on that misty morning in Eighteen-Ninety-Three when H.I.M.S. Dmitri Donskoi dropped anchor in the Hudson River. Officially, I came to express to President Cleveland the gratitude of my Imperial Cousin, Tsar Alexander III, for the help extended by the American nation during the Russian famine. Unofficially, I wanted to get an advance taste of the future.

The Duke pops up to remove a book from his shelf. Then, he CHUCKLES as he returns to his chair.

SANDRO (CONT'D)  
The World's Fair was about to open in Chicago, and the whole country was sizzling with excitement, the visit of the Infanta Eulalie being featured as the star attraction of the fair. Kaiser Wilhelm dispatched Germany's most famous composer Von Burlow to counterbalance the 'Spanish intrigue.' The Scottish Highlanders sounded their bagpipes in Battery Place as part of an upcoming naval review in New York harbor, and the French answered with a specially picked orchestra of the 'Garde Republicaine.' There was something tremendously significant in this spectacle of all the great powers fighting for American friendship and goodwill.

(MORE)

SANDRO (CONT'D)

On a hot June night, while driving up gaily decorated Fifth Avenue toward the residence of John Jacob Astor, and looking at the endless rows of illuminated mansions, I suddenly felt the mysterious breath of a new epoch.

SERGE

Astor... the millionaire who died on the Titanic?

SANDRO

Da, the very one. But that's another tale. The founding of their Central Bank. We shall see how that turns out.

SERGE

New York?

SANDRO

Yes. The land of my dreams! It was hard to believe that only twenty-nine years earlier this very land had gone through the terrors and privations of a civil war. I thought of the Tsars. They reigned over an empire that was even richer than this new country, confronting the same problems, such as an immense population of scores of nationalities and religions, tremendous distances between the industrial centers and the agricultural hinterlands, crying necessity for extensive railroad building. American liabilities were greater than ours. Our assets, larger. Russia possesses gold. Ore. Copper. Coal. Iron. Our soil, if properly cultivated, should have been able to feed the whole world. What was the matter with us? Why did we not follow the American way of doing things? We had no business bothering with Europe and imitating the methods befitting nations forced by their poverty to live off their wits. So, right then and there, during the remaining few minutes of my ride in Eighteen-Ninety-Three.

(MORE)

SANDRO (CONT'D)

I commenced working out a plan for the Americanization of Russia.

Sandro hands Serge the book.

The Prince gives it a quick glance.

SANDRO (CONT'D)

It was intoxicating to be alive. It was a joy to repeat over and over again that the old, bloodstained nineteenth century was drawing to a close and leaving the stage clear for the irresistible efforts of coming generations.

SERGE

What happened?

SANDRO

I prepared a model for a proposed Constitutional Monarchy centered around this principle.

Sandro gets up again. He strolls over to a document encased in heavy glass.

SANDRO (CONT'D)

This document is a copy of the Loris-Melikov Constitution of Eighteen-Eighty-One. It was my noble blue print. Drafted by order of Alexander II, my Father's Brother. Ironically, it was to be signed the very next day before he was assassinated. Nicholas's Father could not find the courage to sign it after his Father's brutal death at the hands of the radicals.

SERGE

What a wasted opportunity.

SANDRO

*Da*, it was. Wasted.

SERGE

Is this the real reason your here in the Capital?

SANDRO

Nicholas has to find the courage his Father did not possess.

SERGE

Declare a people's Constitution?

SANDRO

With Rasputin's disappearance, I am certain he shall soon return from the front to console the Empress.

SERGE

Constitution? Hmm. Uncle Sandro, did you ever go back to America?

SANDRO

Da, three years ago. I was having a hard time with reporters who wanted to know what I had to say about the phenomenal changes that had occurred in New York since my last visit. I was supposed to compliment them on the new skyline, to comment upon the progress of the suffragist movement, to shed a tear or two over the passing of historical landmarks, and to wax enthusiastic about the future of the automobile. As a matter of fact, there was one startling change which seemed to have escaped the attention of native observers. The building of the Panama Canal and the stupendous development of the Pacific Coast had created a new form of American pioneering. Their industries had grown to the point where foreign outlets had become a sheer necessity. Their financiers who used to borrow money in London, Paris, and Amsterdam had suddenly found themselves in the position of creditors. The rustic republic of Jefferson was rapidly giving way to the empire of the Rockefellers.

SERGE

The American dream.

SANDRO

Da. A nation is only as strong as her dreams. Imperial Russia's dreams are nearly dead. If we do nothing to correct this the century shall be America's. By all rights, it should be ours, Serge. Pity.

INT. GRAND DUKE'S PALACE - SECOND FLOOR - SAME

Felix watches two SERVANTS carry his traveling trunk.

MARIE (V.O.)

Who is Prince Felix? Young and complicated. The prince is not yet thirty years of age and is the only surviving child of the wealthiest and most affluent family in Petersburg, the Yusupovs. Spoiled and sheltered since his youth, the prince was struggling to find his own identity. He felt insignificant and insecure. He had been forced to live in his elder brother's shadow for most of his life. His father, General Yusupov, not known for his kindness, exhausted the little love he did possess on his first son, Nicholas. The day that Nicholas died in a duel, his father's love turned to hate-directed at Felix. With the death of the perfect one, the heavy burden of the Yusupov name shifted onto Felix's shoulders like a dead weight.

Two small suitcases teeter atop the trunk.

FELIX

Allow me to help you with that.

Felix liberates both suitcases and tosses them over the second floor rail to the foyer's marble floor.

SOUND: BAM! BAM!

INT. GRAND DUKE'S PALACE - SANDRO'S STUDY - SAME

Leo appears and rushes the Duke and the Prince near the fire.

SANDRO

Leo! Have the Germans started bombing us?

LEO

Your Excellency. Prince Felix is leaving for the Nine o'clock train.

SANDRO

And the ruckus?

LEO  
His Grace thought it was wise to  
throw down his luggage from the  
second floor.

SANDRO  
I see. He has more money than  
brains. Doesn't he Leo?

A poker faced Leo stands at perfect attention.

SANDRO (CONT'D)  
(in Russian)  
Thank you, Leo.

LEO  
Your Grace.

Leo leaves.

SANDRO  
You haven't spoke of Sophia today.

SERGE  
What is there to say, Uncle? She's  
gone.

Felix enters the study.

FELIX  
Father-in-law, I must go now. To  
catch my train.

SANDRO  
You can't miss that.

Sandro CLEARS his throat.

SANDRO (CONT'D)  
Do give my regards to my daughter.

FELIX  
Of course.  
(in Russian)  
Good-bye.

SANDRO/SERGE  
(in Russian)  
Good-bye.

Felix leaves.

Sandro leans over toward Serge.

SANDRO

Go with him. Make certain he  
doesn't miss his train.

INT. HOTEL EUROPE - THE READING ROOM - NIGHT

The journalist ROBERT WILTON writes his article on the disappearance of Rasputin. He sits in the corner of the lobby of the Hotel Europe.

ROBERT

This is front-page material.

MARIE (V.O.)

It was a great murder mystery set in Petersburg. And like all good mysteries, it would have to have a few twists. His editor at The Times in London would love it, and so would his readers.

Robert checks his notebook as his world turns dark.

Barnaby Jones obstructs his light.

JONES

Good evening, Robert.

ROBERT

Barnaby. I thought you were in Moscow.

Jones sits on the corner on the table.

JONES

I still am. They just brought me up to help out with the conference.

ROBERT

I see. Anything my readers should know about?

JONES

Nope.

ROBERT

Pity. Rumor has it, the Tsar is considering the Kaiser's terms for peace.

JONES

Robert, your mind is meant for fiction.

ROBERT

I don't know, Jones. Reality around here is much stranger than fiction, more interesting.

JONES

Agreed.

Jones glances at Wilton's notes.

JONES (CONT'D)

Young princes of death? What's all this?

Robert shields his notes.

ROBERT

I'm not finished yet.

JONES

Please. Why stoke the fire?

ROBERT

Jones, a story doesn't get any hotter than this.

JONES

This is merely speculation.

ROBERT

A man of the cloth murdered by royalty.

JONES

Man of the cloth? Rasputin?

ROBERT

True. Though, the story plays better if he was good, and they were bad.

JONES

I see. Any predictions on the coming year?

ROBERT

Nothing good. The Empress is in charge. The Tsar allows this. So, I predict a revolution from within the royal family or one from the streets.

JONES

How long do we have?

ROBERT  
Two. Maybe three months, tops.

JONES  
Wow. That fast?

ROBERT  
That's how I see it.

JONES  
Hmm. Any chance you've seen Prince Serge today? He's not in his room.

ROBERT  
No. But that boy is worse off than Russia.

JONES  
He lost his wife and child.

ROBERT  
I heard. Influenza.

JONES  
Yeah.

ROBERT  
That explains things.

JONES  
His excess drinking?

ROBERT  
Yes. If you want to find Serge, Jones. Try the hotel bar.

INT. RUSSIAN STAFF HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Russian and Ally STAFF OFFICERS sit with Tsar Nicholas.

Nicholas stifles a YAWN.

MARIE (V.O.)  
A meeting of Gods and Generals rages on. Each general's ego extends the briefing. More and more. Every one of them blames another, and is worries the Tsar.

The Generals stare at their spring offensive maps.

GENERAL #1  
We just need to hold out until  
America enters the war.

GENERAL #2  
America's entry will be irrelevant  
if we can't resupply our men.

Nicholas leans back in his chair.

NICHOLAS  
Yes, we will get there. Let's  
discuss our ne Ally.

GENERAL GOURKO, a short and serious fellow with a bushy white  
moustache, reads his prepared statement.

GENERAL GOURKO  
Romania's entry into the field was  
not... ideal.

He glares at the...

ROMANIAN GENERAL across the table. Nervously, he reaches for  
his water glass. Sweat is on his brow.

GENERAL GOURKO (CONT'D)  
The Romanians ignored our plan.  
Our suggestions, were disregarded.

The Romanian general CLEARS his throat, as his face radiates  
an odd mixture of shame and hate.

GENERAL GOURKO (CONT'D)  
We are forced to recognize that the  
military value of our ally did not  
match our hopes and expectations.

The Romanian General drinks from his glass.

GENERAL GOURKO (CONT'D)  
Their feeble powers...

The Romanian tightens his grip on his water glass.

SOUND: SMASH!

ROMANIAN GENERAL  
Feeble powers!

GENERAL GOURKO  
Yes. Your army's lack of training  
and feeble powers of resistance  
have upset our calculations.

General #1 tosses the Romanian a napkin.

The Romanian shrinks back into his seat. Blood drips from his meaty palm.

NICHOLAS

Should we have someone look at that?

ROMANIAN GENERAL

Not necessary, Your Majesty. My apologies.

GENERAL #2

General Gourko speaks the truth. The Romanian Army is in utter disarray.

MARIE (V.O.)

Only three short months ago, Romania entered the war. Their task to finish off the already-beaten forces of Austria and Hungary. While their army looted the Austrians, the Romanians had forgotten about the Germans. Instead of a quick victory, the remains of the Romanian Army were barely able to return to the protection of their own borders. Without Russian counter-offensive, the Romanian Army would have been encircled and destroyed by the Germans.

The chamber's doors OPEN as the city's cathedral BELL toll sounding off the hours.

Intelligence OFFICER KRAKOVSKY appears.

GENERAL #1

Krakovsky!?! Can't you see that we are in the middle of a meeting?

The Tsar is thankful for the intrusion.

NICHOLAS

Come.

KRAKOVSKY

I apologize, Your Grace.

Krakovsky bows and hands the Sovereign a dispatch.

KRAKOVSKY (CONT'D)  
It's a cable marked most urgent,  
and from Her Majesty the Empress.

NICHOLAS  
(in Russian)  
Thank you, Krakovsky.  
(in English)  
You're dismissed.

The Tsar reads it.

EMPRESS (V.O.)  
Our Friend has disappeared.  
Yesterday Anna saw Him and he told  
her that Felix had asked Him to  
come to him at night; that a  
motorcar, a military one, came to  
take Him with two civilians, and he  
left. Last night a great scandal at  
Yusupov's house—a great gathering,  
Dmitri, etc.—all drunk. Police  
heard shots. Felix pretends that He  
never came to the house, he never  
invited Him. It was, apparently, a  
trap. I shall still trust in God's  
mercy that one has only driven Him  
away somewhere. Protopopov is doing  
all he can. I can't and won't  
believe that He was killed. God  
have mercy on us all. Felix came  
often to him lately. Come quickly  
home. Kisses. Sunny.

Nicholas turns white. His hands start to shake.

GENERAL GOURKO  
Your Grace, is everything all  
right?

Nicholas drops the dispatch to the floor.

NICHOLAS  
(whispers)  
Father Rasputin has disappeared.

The men around the table look at one another.

ROMANIAN GENERAL  
This is the first good news we have  
had in some time. No?!?

GENERAL GOURKO  
 You forget that it was he that  
 cured our Heir Apparent, General.

ROMANIAN GENERAL  
 Ah, yes. My apologies, Your Grace.

NICHOLAS  
 If he is truly dead, I fear the  
 repercussions.

Alarmed, the Generals look at one another.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)  
 Prepare my train. I am needed back  
 in the Capital.

SOUND: STEAM WHISTLE.

EXT. NICHOLAS STATION - NIGHT

Train STEAM WHISTLE.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

A CHAUFFEUR driven limo heads to Nicholas's Station.

CHAUFFEUR  
 Your train departs within the hour.

They drive along the Moika embankment.

Prince Felix peers out of his slightly frosted window.

FELIX  
 Remember when we were boys, Serge?

The car approaches stops. The railroad station entrance is  
 bloated with PEOPLE.

SERGE  
 What's the commotion?

CHAFFEAUR  
 Soldiers, Your Grace.

The Nicholas Station swarms with armed SOLDIERS checking  
 every PASSENGER boarding the train to Crimea.

A COLONEL of the military police approaches the vehicle.

COLONEL  
Prince Felix?

FELIX  
Y-e-s.

COLONEL  
By orders of Her Majesty the  
Empress, you are forbidden to leave  
the city.

FELIX  
I am sorry, but that doesn't suit  
me at all. My Wife and the warm  
Crimean sun beckons me home.

COLONEL  
Those are my orders.

Felix debates the situation.

FELIX  
Serge, what would you do?

SERGE  
Driver. Hotel Europe.

FELIX  
Drinks! Splendid idea. Bye,  
Colonel.

INT. HOTEL EUROPE - CAVIAR BAR - NIGHT

Caviar Bar is full and alive with GUESTS.

MARIE (V.O.)  
A warped wake for Father Rasputin  
is in full swing. All dressed in  
their stiff, freshly pressed  
uniforms. These regulars of the  
rear salute one another with toasts  
of God save Russia, the beast is  
slain, and the ever clever, the dog  
is dead. Exchanging smiles and  
downing drinks, this rowdy crowd's  
voices grows louder and louder. As  
the bartenders open magnum after  
magnum of Champagne. POP! POP! POP!  
A new front on the home front,  
opens up.

Felix and Serge sit in silence. Before them, rests a half  
empty bottle of vodka.

Felix grabs the bottle and POURS into their glasses.

FELIX  
One last toast and I must go.

SERGE  
Any thing but Rasputin.

FELIX  
S-e-r-g-e. You know I could not  
hurt a fly. Fine.

SERGE  
No. But could easily talk Dmitri  
to.

Felix lowers is head in a salute.

FELIX  
To Russia.

SERGE  
To Russia.

FELIX/SERGE  
(in Russian)  
Cheers!

Felix and Serge down their drinks.

FELIX/SERGE (CONT'D)  
Ahh!

FELIX  
What are you going to tell Sandro?

SERGE  
The truth.

FELIX  
I tried to leave, but...

SERGE  
I'm sure it will all get sorted out  
soon.

FELIX  
Most definitely.

Felix rises from his seat.

FELIX (CONT'D)  
Thanks for the drinks Serge.

SERGE  
 (in Russian)  
 Good night.

FELIX  
 (in Russian)  
 Good night.

Serge POURS himself another drink. In the bar's mirror, he sees his old Oxford roommate strolling in.

SERGE  
 Barnaby Jones.

FELIX  
 Where?!? Oh, my.

SERGE  
 The hellion Welshmen lives on.

FELIX  
 Barely graduated from Oxford yet  
 he's fluent in five languages.

SERGE  
 Jones was never interested in the  
 academics.

FELIX  
 He prefers the energy of the  
 streets.

SERGE  
 His true major was rugby.

Jones waves to them.

BARNABY  
 Serge! Felix!

FELIX  
 Oh, shit. He sees me. I need to  
 vanish Serge.

SERGE  
 Why?

FELIX  
 The last time I drank with Jones,  
 it took me a week to recover.

SERGE  
 I will give him your regards. You  
 better run.

Felix waves to Jones and flees.

FELIX  
Thanks Serge.

Felix disappears into the crowd.

He passes a table with Olga and Marie.

JONES  
Felix was always a coward.  
(In Russian)  
Hi, Serge. Where have you been all day?

SERGE  
Around. Jones, please take a seat.

JONES  
Great party last night. At least, what I remember of it. The last thing I recall was you dancing on a table. Then, I blacked out.

SERGE  
The sword dance?!? Brilliant. I am such a child at times.

JONES  
Nonsense. The war has stolen our youth. Half our rugby roster is gone. The Somme.

SERGE  
I know. So, what's up?

JONES  
Today. Sir George pulled me into his office.

SERGE  
Is he sending you back to Moscow already?

JONES  
No. Worse.

SERGE  
Worse?

JONES  
He told me you Russians are negotiating a separate peace.

SERGE

Really. That's news to me.

JONES

Yep. Crazy fucking days. He said, certain ministers and members of your military have created this chaos that we're currently drowning in. As we speak, your Home Minister, Protopopov, is in known communication with Berlin.

SERGE

The Tsar will never accept a treaty as long as Germans stand on Russian land. That includes Poland.

JONES

Trust me. Something rotten is going on. The Monarchy is in jeopardy.

SERGE

Who's Monarchy, mine or yours?

JONES

Does it really matter?

SERGE

If what you say is true, why doesn't Sir George share this information with His Majesty at once?

JONES

He's at the Front.

SERGE

Jones, why are you telling me all this? I haven't left this bar in months.

JONES

It's your Father that's orchestrating the deal.

SERGE

What?!? Impossible.

Jones stands up.

JONES

That's what I was told.

SERGE  
You know my Father.

JONES  
He's a patriot. I know.

SERGE  
None of this makes sense.

JONES  
Nonetheless. Could you try to  
arrange a meeting? Sir George  
thinks...

SERGE  
Jones, you know my family history.

JONES  
I know. Try. For me.  
(in Russian)  
Good-bye.

Serge nods.

Jones leaves.

Serge waves down the BARTENDER.

SERGE  
Another bottle.

NT. IMPERIAL YACHT CLUB - DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

Vlad and Andrei sit in leather chairs facing one another.

MARIE (V.O.)  
Cigar smoke lingers overhead like  
spent thoughts of what could have  
been. In 1894, when Nicholas's  
father Tsar Alexander III was on  
his deathbed, many questions had  
been asked on the right of  
secession. Most throughout the  
Court supported Alexander's  
brother, Grand Duke Vladimir,  
Vlad's father and namesake. But,  
before his death, Alexander told  
the Court that he was passing the  
Crown to his eldest son Nicholas  
instead. At the time, Nicholas was  
only twenty-six years of age, and  
appeared to all to be too weak a  
candidate to rule Russia.

(MORE)

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

Many disagreed with the Tsar's decision. But even on his deathbed, Alexander was a man to be feared. Passed over, Vladimir swore his vengeance. Jealousy quickly turned to hate after Alexander's death. Sadly, Vladimir the older was now dead. But, in his sons his hate lives on.

Vlad squeezes his massive bear-like body out of his tiny chair and approaches the mantelpiece.

VLAD

Nicki has sat in my seat long enough. We need to win this war. At all costs. A generation of young Russian boys lay butchered in fields of mud, and for what gain? Nothing! Morale is down, and poor morale can kill an army worse than any enemy's bayonets. We need a plan, and a new leader to administrate it.

ANDREI

I agree.

Andrei pulls down a fresh cigarette out from his case.

VLAD

Our fight is with the Austrians regarding the Balkan Straits and Constantinople.

ANDREI

I wish the Germans had captured Paris in 'Fourteen. The war in the would have been over before it started. How many millions have been slaughtered protecting that distant city of light?

VLAD

Four million, five? More?

ANDREI

I just returned from an inspection tour of the front. I did not like what I saw.

VLAD

The war is being run by fools.

ANDREI  
Exactly, Brother.

VLAD  
Pathetic. They are becoming experts  
at retreat.

ANDREI  
The butchery must end.

VLAD  
We Russians have two Allies in this  
world. Our Army, and our Navy.  
Since our Navy was destroyed off  
China's shores a decade ago, that  
only leaves us our Army.

ANDREI  
We sat back in 'O Four, and watched  
Nicholas and his admirals destroy  
our Pacific Fleet.

VLAD  
We must ask ourselves, Brother.  
Here and now, in the last hours of  
Sixteen, if we are going to sit  
back again and watch Nicholas and  
his generals destroy the greatest  
army in all the world?

ANDREI  
Hell no!

VLAD  
Good. For there was once a time not  
so long ago when the Empire was  
feared. So was its Emperor.

INT. HOTEL EUROPE - CAVIAR BAR - LATER

Serge's elbows rest on the bar. He refills his drink with the  
last of the second bottle. SLASH. He is noticeably drunk.

SERGE  
Ah, the fog of forgiveness returns.  
Thank you.

Marie and Olga appear in the mirror.

Serge looks up to their reflection.

OLGA  
Serge, why do you do this to  
yourself?

SERGE  
You see... I'm already dead. I  
never survived the charge across...

Serge falls off his barstool.

SERGE (CONT'D)  
I'm an imposter.

Marie and Olga catch him.

MARIE  
Let's get you to bed, Serge.

FLASHBACK  
BEGINS:

EXT. RUSSIAN FRONT - TRENCHES - DAY

Serge reads a dispatch.

SERGE  
This can not be!?!

His best friend, MICHAEL RENKO looks up.

MICHAEL  
What is it Serge?

SERGE  
Sophia & Leo are...

Michael grabs the dispatch.

PLATON (V.O)  
Son, I am heart broken to share  
this with you. But this morning,  
your dearest Sophia and Leo were  
taken from us. They have been sick  
all week...

MICHAEL  
Serge, I am so...

SERGE  
She's not dead!

Other RUSSIANS watch Serge as he springs up.

SERGE (CONT'D)  
Both of them... gone.

Serge grabs his rifle. He inspects it.

MICHAEL  
What do you think you're doing?

Serge climbs to top of the trenches.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
Serge, the Snipers!

SERGE  
(in Russian)  
Good-bye, Michael.

Michael attempts to grab Serge's leg but misses. His body slides down the mud wall.

MICHAEL  
This fucking war.

EXT. GERMAN LINES - MACHINE GUN NEST - SAME TIME

German SOLIDERS watches Serge emerge.

CORPORAL  
(in German)  
Another Crazy Ivan, Sir!

Serge works his way in a zig zag fashion through the debris, the barbed wire, and the countless DEAD of No Man's Land.

A German CAPTAIN raises his binoculars.

CAPTAIN  
(in German)  
Madness. Hold your fire! Hold your fire. I'm up for some sport.

SERGE  
Sophia!!!

CORPORAL  
(in German)  
Target practice, Sir?

SOLDIER #1  
(in German)  
Passes the time.

CAPTAIN  
(in German)  
What is he yapping about?

CORPORAL  
(in German)  
A woman.

CAPTAIN  
(in German)  
Ah, that figures. He's utterly  
deranged. Corporal...

The Captain eyes the Corporal's rifle.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)  
(in German)  
May I?

CORPORAL  
(in German)  
What's the bet?

CAPTAIN  
Two packs of smokes if I miss.

CORPORAL  
(in German)  
Deal.

CAPTAIN  
(in German)  
Cold mercy is coming.

The Captain aims the rifle at Serge and FIRES.

CORPORAL  
(in German)  
Miss.

CAPTAIN  
(in German)  
I was close. Double or nothing.

The Corporal nods.

CORPORAL  
(in German)  
Sure.

The Captain aims at Serge.

The mad Russian draws closer.

EXT. RUSSIAN LINES - SAME TIME

Serge's advance does not go unnoticed. The Russians watch in disbelief as one man charges the German line single-handedly.

MICHAEL

Poor Serge.

The Russians respond to Serge's advance.

First, with few random CRIES. When the first bullet MISSES, the line ROARS and comes ALIVE.

Russian SOLDIER #1 grabs his weapon.

SOLDIER #1

Fuck it.

Soldier #1 pops out of the trenches.

They all CHEER the second soldier on. Then, they gather their own guns and courage.

As one, the Russians spring out of their trenches.

MICHAEL

Fuck it. Charge!

EXT. GERMAN LINE - SAME TIME

The Captain FIRES off another shot and MISSES.

Serge's primal SCREAM draws closer.

CORPORAL

(in German)

That's four packs!

The Russians ROAR as they cross No Man's Land.

SOLDIER #1

(in German)

Sir. The Russians.

The Captain tosses down the Corporal's rifle. He eyes the men sitting behind the high-caliber machine gun.

CAPTAIN

(in German)

Move.

Serge continues on.

The Captain aims at the advancing Russian.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)  
(in German)  
Time to die.

The Captain squeezes off a BURST.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)  
(in German)  
Corporal, help me with the belt.

The Corporal does.

The Captain squeezes off another ROUND.

A few hit Serge but he stays on his feet.

CORPORAL  
(in German)  
We polked the Bear!

CAPTAIN  
(in German)  
Let them come.

The Captain squeezes the trigger.

SOUND: CLICK!

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)  
(in German)  
Corporal!

CORPORAL  
The belt is jammed.

CAPTAIN  
(in German)  
Open fire! Kill him.

The German nest opens FIRE.

Serge ducks into a nearby hole. He frees a hand grenade from his belt. Then, he lofts at the nest.

The Germans scatter and SCREAM as they see the hand grenade float in midair. It lands at their feet.

SOUND: EXPLOSION.

As the Germans recover, a lone Russian stands before them. His rifle aims at them.

SOUND: GUNFIRE!

The entire Russian line joins Serge and slams into the German defensive. The surviving Germans flee.

Michael finds a bullet torn Serge near the machine gun nest.

SERGE  
Sophia!?!

MICHAEL  
Serge. She's gone.

Serge WEEPS as Michael attempts to control as blood pours from the countless holes in his body.

SERGE  
Let me die.

INT. HOTEL EUROPE - PENTHOUSE SUITE - DAY

Serge stirs in his bed.

SUPER: "Sunday."

SERGE  
Let me die.

RINGS the phone by the bed.

Serge rolls over and grabs the phone.

SERGE (CONT'D)  
(in Russian)  
Hello.

PLATON (V.O.)  
Time to rise from the ashes, Son.

SERGE  
Father!

PLATON (V.O.)  
Sergei, you missed your train.

SERGE  
I...

PLATON (V.O.)  
Meet me downstairs. Twenty minutes.

Before Serge can respond, the line goes dead.

It is when Serge realizes he is not alone in the room.  
A fully clothed Marie sits in an armchair across the bed.

MARIE  
Good morning.

SERGE  
Morning.

MARIE  
How you feeling?

SERGE  
I...

Serge pops up walks to the bathroom.

SERGE (CONT'D)  
I need to shower.

The Prince scratches his beard.

SERGE (CONT'D)  
Maybe a trim too.

MARIE  
Good. Your face. I remember being  
quite fond of it.

SERGE  
Where's Olga?

MARIE  
Grand Duchesses must be home in  
their own beds by midnight.  
Ballerinas, not so much.

Serge CLOSES the bathroom door.

Marie sees a shiny piece of metal under a nearby table.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
What's this?

Marie picks it up.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
Russia's highest honor. The Cross  
of St. George.

She reads its inscription.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
For Valor.

Then she places it in her pocket.

Serge calls out from the bathroom.

SERGE (O.S.)  
Thank you for last night!

MARIE  
We all think we are immortal for a  
time. Especially when we are young.

SERGE (O.S.)  
I need to change my ways.

Marie walks to the...

BATHROOM door and OPENS it.

MARIE  
Start with that beard?

Serge stands in the SHHING SHOWER.

SERGE  
How about dinner?

MARIE  
Tonight?

SERGE  
Why not?

MARIE  
I will think about it.

The shower stops and Serge pulls back the curtain.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
Serge! I'm in here.

SERGE  
Dinner?

Marie flees until her eyes discover the purplish-blue welts  
from the scar tissue that dots his chest. She stops.

MARIE  
What happened to you?

SERGE  
My German souvenirs?

Marie hands Serge his robe.

MARIE  
You're lucky to be alive.

SERGE  
Yep. Lucky me.

MARIE  
Cover up.

SERGE  
Am I that hideous?

Marie kisses one of his wounds.

MARIE  
Quite the opposite. Now, shave.

SERGE  
I will if you have dinner with me.

MARIE  
Okay. Deal.

INT. HOTEL EUROPE - PENTHOUSE SUITE - LATER

Minutes later, a cleanly shaven Serge and a cloud of steam emerges from the bathroom. He wears his robe.

SERGE  
Better?

MARIE  
Yes, I forgot how handsome you are.

Marie joins Serge.

With a fresh towel she wipes away some shaving cream from his ear. Her face and lips draws closer to his.

SERGE  
I was growing tired of the beard.

MARIE  
You look young again.

She combs a stray hair with her finger.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
Time now to feel young.

SERGE

Marie. I...

MARIE

Relax, Serge.

SERGE

I...

MARIE

I am not here to seduce you.

SERGE

You're not?

MARIE

No. Though the thought has crossed my mind.

Marie grabs his uniform that she found in his closet.

MARIE (CONT'D)

Allow me.

SERGE

I no longer have any right to wear my uniform.

MARIE

A man who was awarded the Order of St. George wears what he wishes.

She removes his robe. Then, she throws the jacket of his uniform over him.

SERGE

I don't know.

MARIE

I shall allow you to put on your own trousers.

SERGE

I...

MARIE

Don't wear it for me. Wear it for her.

SERGE

Okay.

The two embrace.

SERGE (CONT'D)  
For my family.

MARIE  
Just one more thing.

Marie slips on his medal.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
Freshly shaven. Completely dressed.  
A new man. Back from the dead.

SERGE  
And a future. Dinner?

MARIE  
(girlish giggle)  
Dinner.

INT. HOTEL EUROPE - ELEVATOR - DAY

OPENS, the elevator doors to the lobby, as beam of white light momentarily blinds Serge.

The first floor is layered in an amber afterglow.

Serge enters. Dressed in his gray officer's uniform of Her Majesty's Chevalier Guards, he looks transformed. He starts to HUM Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture.

SERGE  
Today is a new day.

He walks pass the...

READING ROOM.

EARLY RISERS read newspapers with banner headlines: RASPUTIN MISSING AND FEARED DEAD.

Before the front desk is COLONEL ZURIN. He wears a tunic of amazing blue atop of an ocean of fiery red britches. The battle badges that line his chest are impressive. He's one of his Father's former aides.

ZURIN  
Good morning, young Konstantin.

SERGE  
Good morning, Colonel Zurin.

Zurin stands silent.

SERGE (CONT'D)  
Is there anything wrong, Colonel?

ZURIN  
No. Just thought I saw a ghost.

SERGE  
A ghost?

ZURIN  
You look so much like your Father.  
That's all.

SERGE  
Most people tell me I look like my  
Mother.

ZURIN  
Liar.

Zurin LAUGHS at this.

ZURIN (CONT'D)  
Come. He is waiting.

The Colonel turns and smartly marches through the stylish  
doors of the...

HOTEL EUROPE'S GRILLROOM.

The fashionable restaurant is deserted. The already set  
tables give off an eerie vibe.

The Colonel and Serge climb the stairs to the Europe's famed  
private dining rooms...

THE ALCOVES.

As the Colonel reaches a secluded alcove, he waves Serge  
over. Looking up, Serge discovers...

YURI and Renko guard the door.

Serge stops.

RENKO  
Lieutenant, it's not wise to keep  
your Father waiting.

Serge enters the room.

SERGE  
Renko, my Father can...

Serge walks into...

A PRIVATE DINING ROOM.

Serge finds his own eyes staring back at him.

PLATON  
Can what, Son?

SERGE  
Father?!?

PLATON  
Son.

Platon hugs his Son, long and hard.

PLATON (CONT'D)  
It's so good to see you in your  
uniform.

SERGE  
You don't look well.

Platon shares to the others.

PLATON  
May we have a moment?

Renko nods. Then, he and the Colonel quietly leave the room.  
As the door CLOSES, the dining room grows silent.

Platon lights a cigarette.

PLATON (CONT'D)  
Sergei, I'm dying. Cancer.

The General holds up his cigarette and shrugs his shoulders.

PLATON (CONT'D)  
I have known this for some time.

SERGE  
Why didn't you tell me?

PLATON  
I'm telling you now.

SERGE  
Dad?!?

PLATON  
I didn't want to add to your  
troubles.

Platon inhales and COUGHS hard.

SERGE  
Should you be smoking?

PLATON  
Ah... The damage is already done.

SERGE  
Still.

PLATON  
Son, I've had a wonderful life.  
Better than I deserved.

SERGE  
Can't the doctors do anything?

PLATON  
Besides providing me with a  
comfortable bed, no.

Platon looks hard at Serge.

PLATON (CONT'D)  
Renko told me you looked like hell.

Serge looks back to the door.

SERGE  
Thanks, Renko.

PLATON  
He could not be more wrong.

SERGE  
Why?

PLATON  
You have the look of a survivor. I  
know this look.

SERGE  
It's the uniform.

PLATON  
The uniform. Hmm. My uniform. At  
the worst of times, was the only  
thing that held me together. Wear  
yours with pride, Son.

Serge eyes his Father.

PLATON (CONT'D)

What?!?

SERGE

This is the most you have spoken to me in some time.

PLATON

The certainty of death has made me chatty.

SERGE

Don't stop.

PLATON

I won't. Ah. The time when I was young. Hurt, and looked very much like you. It doesn't seem that long ago. But it was.

SERGE

When you fought at Plevna?

PLATON

Yes. There I had my first taste of war with the Turks. Each battlefield steals a piece of you.

SERGE

I now know that for myself.

Platon nods.

PLATON

I was always less of a man when the fighting was over. I see that same look in you today. Perhaps, that's why I was always away. I never wanted your Mother or you to see what a creature I had become.

SERGE

You're not a creature. You were courageous.

PLATON

Courage is doing what your body and mind tell you not to do. Hmm. Would you me a favor?

SERGE

Anything.

PLATON  
Nyet. It must be your choice. So,  
hear me out.

SERGE  
It doesn't matter. I will do it.

PLATON  
In two days, the Tsar will sign an  
armistice to end the war.

SERGE  
Really?

PLATON  
I have arrange it. In a week, our  
guns grow silent.

SERGE  
The war will be over?

PLATON  
Da. For us.

SERGE  
So, it is true. The Tsar wants us  
out of the war?

PLATON  
The sole purpose for the Imperial  
Army is to obey His Majesty's  
orders.

SERGE  
The sole purpose?

PLATON  
I've been ordered to orchestrate a  
peace settlement with Germany. Son,  
as a soldier, I've been ordered to  
do much worse.

SERGE  
The terms?

PLATON  
We regain all territories lost.

SERGE  
Even Poland?

PLATON  
All. Per the Kaiser's courier.

Courier? SERGE

PLATON  
The Grand Duke of Hesse.

ERIE?!!? SERGE

PLATON  
Da, Ernie.

ERIE  
The Empress's own Brother is here?  
In Petersburg?

PLATON  
He's safe. At our hunting dacha.

ERIE  
That's less than thirty minutes  
from here.

PLATON  
Da. Now on to the favor.

ERIE  
Anything.

PLATON  
Tomorrow morning at dawn, I need  
you to drive out to our dacha and  
pick Ernie up.

ERIE  
Okay.

PLATON  
Colonel Zurin will tag along for  
the ride. Pick him up at the Blue  
Bridge. Then, escort him to Ernie.  
That's the favor.

ERIE  
Why me?

PLATON  
Ernie knows you. Use the old  
service road pass the Ruins.

ERIE  
Sure.

PLATON

Renko!

Enters Renko and Zurin.

RENKO

All is arranged?

PLATON

Is it?

SERGE

(in Russian)

Yes.

PLATON

Good.

SERGE

Sir George knows of the armistice.

Everyone stops.

ZURIN

The British... Our universal enemy.

PLATON

Sir George knows what we allow him to know. Right, Renko?

RENKO

Da, General.

INT. ALEXANDER PALACE - MAUVE ROOM - DAY

Protopopov stands at attention.

Enters the Empress.

EMPRESS

Minister, still no word?!?

PROTOPOPOV

Nyet, Your Majesty. We hope Father Rasputin only fled the Capital.

EMPRESS

Hope! Not good enough.

PROTOPOPOV

There has been rumors he and an oil Heiress...

EMPRESS

Rumors?!? Is this the best you can offer?

PROTOPOPOV

I have all my men looking for him. He will turn up. Eventually.

EMPRESS

Do you think they killed him?

PROTOPOPOV

Nyet. Rasputin is a survivalist.

EMPRESS

But the Royal Court are such vultures.

PROTOPOPOV

True. My agents have reported of mysterious meetings held in Moscow. These are not rumors.

EMPRESS

Is the Royal Family coiling for a strike?

PROTOPOPOV

If so, they will be dealt with. Swiftly, and without remorse.

EXT. RURAL STATION - DAY

Chaos engulfs a sleepy railroad station as the Tsar's train prepares to depart.

The Tsar walks along the narrow platform dusted with snow.

His ROYAL AIDE interrupts his thoughts.

AIDE

Rasputin's death is the last thing we need.

TSAR

What disturbs me most is young Dmitri's apparent involvement. I can't understand what he was thinking. This news will devastate his Father, and my daughter.

AIDE

If he was involved, your daughter  
Olga can never marry him.

Tsar steps aboard his train.

TSAR

We have bigger problems than  
finding Olga a suitable husband.  
The fabric of our old world is  
being torn apart.

AIDE

Your Majesty, I fear, you're right.

EXT. FINANCIAL DISTRICT - DAY

Burmin emerges from his apartment building.

As he does, Jones and Robert flank him on either side.

Startled, Peter looks up. They were not Renko's men.

JONES

Pleasant day for a drive, *Herr*  
Burmin. *Ja*.

PETER

What is this?

Peter looks at the lifeless remains of Renko's men.

JONES

They're not dead, yet.

ROBERT

It's you we want.

Robert and Jones escort Peter into a waiting car.

INT. CAR - SAME TIME

Jones and Robert force Peter inside.

In the front seat sits Sir George besides his DRIVER.

As soon as the door CLOSES...

SIR GEORGE

Drive!

PETER

Sir George! Where to?!? The Heritage? The Theatre? The Ministry of War?

SIR GEORGE

Shut-up, banker. Listen.

PETER

Who do you think you are? I am a Russian citizen, living in Peters...

Sir George eyes Jones via the rearview mirror.

Jones punches Peter as hard as he could in the stomach.

PETER (CONT'D)

Aghh!

Peter doubles over.

SIR GEORGE

I'm afraid we've overstayed our welcome here in the Capital.

PETER

You will pay for that, Ambassador.

SIR GEORGE

That's what we are here to talk about. We wish to feed your greed.

PETER

What?!?

SIR GEORGE

Name your price.

PETER

For what?

SIR GEORGE

To walk away. Stop your end of the negotiations.

PETER

Sir George, panicked? Well, a one front war with the Germans would scare me too.

SIR GEORGE

Name your price. We shall honor it.

PETER

Let me out. And I will think about.

SIR GEORGE

You work for us now.

He BANGS his cane on the floor.

The car STOPS.

SIR GEORGE (CONT'D)

Or no one.

Jones leaps out.

This allows Peter his freedom.

PETER

I appreciate the talk, Sir George.  
Thanks for ride, and offer.

SIR GEORGE

Midnight. If I don't hear from you  
by then...

Sir George looks at Jones and Robert.

SIR GEORGE (CONT'D)

You shall be considered an enemy of  
the Crown.

PETER

Hmm... A separate peace? What would  
be the odds of that?

Jones and Robert climb back into the car.

SIR GEORGE

I wouldn't bet on it.

PETER

Why?

SIR GEORGE

Bad bet.

The Brit signals his driver to leave.

The British Ambassador's car pulls out into traffic.

Peter watches it travel down the Nevsky Prospect.

INT. FACTORY - BASEMENT - DAY

Vlad stands before the steps that lead to the main floor.

Fedorov, Zurin, and Protopopov face him.

PLAYS THE RUSSIAN IMPERIAL ANTHEM.

Vlad rests his hands on Protopopov's shoulder.

PROTOPOPOV

Niki will be in Petersburg soon.

VLAD

Prince Felix accomplished his part.

PROTOPOPOV

Now, it's our turn.

Vlad removes his hand and adjusts his uniform.

VLAD

It's time.

Vlad CLIMBS the steel steps to the main...

FACTORY FLOOR.

Here, stands his REGIMENT, his Stormtroopers, in their jet black uniforms, at attention, a thousand men strong.

Ends the ANTHEM.

Appears Captain Kolzov.

KOLZOV

Atten-Hut!!

REGIMENT

Woow!!!

Vlad walks confidently to a small stage.

Behind him, an enormous Imperial Russia flag runs from the ceiling rafters to the base of the factory's floor.

NOTE: Hat tip to George C. Scott & his Patton speech.

VLAD

At ease, gentlemen. So, here it is.  
Our Time. Our Fate. Our Glory. We  
all know this war is being run by  
fools! Especially the Radicals!

Regiment BOOS!

VLAD (CONT'D)  
 Scum! Vermin! They wait. In the  
 Capital's cesspool bars and dank  
 streets, they plot and plan.  
 Wishing us, patriots to fail.

Regiment BOOS!

VLAD (CONT'D)  
 Radicals! They wish to take over  
 our lands. Take over our lives...  
 even our wives.

Regiment SCREAMS, NO!!!

VLAD (CONT'D)  
 They wait. They watch. In hopes to  
 see the end of a dynasty.

Regiment, NO!

VLAD (CONT'D)  
 The end of Three-Hundred Years of  
 Romanov rule!!! What say YOU!

Regiment, NO!

VLAD (CONT'D)  
 Okay. Hush now. Hush. I know. Us  
 Russians, know no backward step.

Regiment, CHEERS!

VLAD (CONT'D)  
 Yet, Niki and his pathetic choice  
 of Generals are now experts at  
 retreat!!! Their incomppliance  
 bleeds our Great Army dry. Listen  
 to me... Patriots! We Russians have  
 two Allies in this world. Two!!!  
 Our Army, and our Navy.

Regiment, CHEERS!

VLAD (CONT'D)  
 Niki destroyed our Navy, a decade  
 ago, as we watched in disbelief.

Regiment grows eerily silent.

VLAD (CONT'D)  
 That leaves only us, the Army!!!

Regiment, CHEERS!

Vlad holds up his hand for them to stop.

VLAD (CONT'D)

In 'O Four, we sat back and watched  
Niki and his Admirals sunk our  
Pacific Fleet.

Regiment, BOOS!

VLAD (CONT'D)

So... Friends. Countrymen. Follow,  
Russians. In the last dying hours  
of 'Sixteen, are we going to sit  
back and watch Him destroy the  
greatest land Army in the entire  
world? Are we!!!

Regiment, NO!

VLAD (CONT'D)

Da. For there was once a time not  
so long ago when Russia was feared.

Regiment, CHEERS!

VLAD (CONT'D)

So was its Tsar!!!

INT. PROTOPOPOV'S APARTMENT - DAY

Protopopov PAGES through the biography on Tsar Alexander I,  
who defeated Napoleon over a hundred years ago.

He starts to read aloud to...

The Baroness PAGES through a magazine on a nearby sofa.

PROTOPOPOV

Bonaparte and his Grand Army  
believed their war with Russia was  
over when they seized Moscow.

Appears NAPOLEAN and his GENERALS before them, like  
characters in a play. Their stage is set before the fire.

The Frenchmen celebrate with a Champagne toast.

PROTOPOPOV (V.O.)

Instead of giving in, Alexander  
knew the wisdom of sacrificing a  
city to save an entire land.

The Frenchmen halt their toasts. Look nervously about.

PROTOPOPOV (V.O.)  
Without hesitation, the Tsar  
orders his men to burn the Capital  
to the ground. The City was set  
ablaze.

IGNITES fireplace's wood into a fiery inferno.

The Frenchmen run from it.

PROTOPOPOV  
Napoleon flees. With his army in  
full retreat, legions of Cossacks  
charge his lines. Prodding them  
along.

Protopopov stands and grabs the fireplace shovel. Using it to  
he CHOPS down Frenchmen.

PROTOPOPOV (CONT'D)  
The Tsar ordered every town, every  
village burned to the ground that  
could offer Napoleon shelter.

SOUND: A DRAFT OF AIR.

PROTOPOPOV (CONT'D)  
Wooooowww. Bonaparte and his  
legions were introduced to the  
sheer power and cruelty of the  
Russian winter.

The Baroness puts down her magazine.

BARONESS  
Is story time over?

PROTOPOPOV  
Bonaparte's Grand Army was  
decimated.

A down trotted Napoleon wanders by the SCREEN.

Protopopov falls on the sofa next to the Baroness.

PROTOPOPOV (CONT'D)  
My luv... I fear I am losing the  
battle for the control of my mind.

Baroness caresses him.

BARONESS

Shh... some battles are not meant  
to be won.

Protopopov nods.

INT. MINISTRY OF WAR BUILDING - DAY

Vlad wanders the halls.

Platon appears from around the corner.

PLATON

Grand Duke Vladimir?!? What a  
surprise to see you in the city.

VLAD

General Konstantin. You don't look  
well.

PLATON

I am well enough.

VLAD

Good to hear.

PLATON

Why are you here?

VLAD

Oh, me?!? Catching up with some old  
friends.

PLATON

That's all?

VLAD

The events these days are bleak at  
best.

PLATON

So, Vlad. If you were in charge...

VLAD

What would I do differently?

PLATON

*Da.*

VLAD

Everything.

Vlad moves on.

VLAD (CONT'D)  
Good day, General!

Konstantin stands alone in the hall.

PLATON  
Good day.

INT. WAR MINISTRY - PLATON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The General and Renko are in mid-conversation.

PLATON  
Anything else?

RENKO  
The French Ambassador paid a visit to Vladimir Palace today. They're acting like a Court in waiting.

PLATON  
Well, let us make certain that it is a long wait. Hmm, sounds like the word of the armistice is hitting the streets.

RENKO  
And the British?

PLATON  
If there is one certainty in international affairs, you can always count on the French and British to preserve their own interests.

RENKO  
Sir George is getting bold. They picked up Burmin today. Roughed him up.

PLATON  
Hmm. They are desperate.

RENKO  
Da, is it wise to leave Burmin out there? We can re-arrest him.

PLATON  
Arrest. No. The banker's luck has run out. No loose strings.

RENKO  
Very well.

INT. TRAIN - SALON CAR - NIGHT

The Tsar sleeps.

DREAM SEQUENCE  
BEGINS:

ALEXANDER III, Nicholas' Father takes a seat opposite of the Tsar. He looks exactly like Vlad, a Russian Bear.

ALEXANDER III  
Wake up.

Nicholas does.

TSAR  
Father!?!

ALEXANDER III  
What have you done?

TSAR  
What do you mean?

ALEXANDER III  
I gave you a thriving Russia. A  
Navy poised to pounce in the  
Pacific.

TSAR  
The Japanese? I can explain.

ALEXANDER III  
Now, Germans are in Poland. Explain  
yourself.

TSAR  
Father never thought you would die.  
So, you never taught me...

ALEXANDER III  
The family business.

Nicki nods.

Alexander signals for his Son to draw closer.

ALEXANDER III (CONT'D)  
Here's the secret.

Nicholas leans in.

TSAR  
Da.

ALEXANDER III  
Do better.

Then, Alexander III LAUGHS hard and SLAPS his Son on his narrow shoulders.

END OF DREAM  
SEQUENCES:

The carriage rocks and the Tsar wakes up. He brightens as he sees his Son sprawled-out on the floor.

Alexei plays with his toy soldiers.

ALEXEI  
Bang! Take that, Kaiser.

TSAR  
Are we winning or losing?

ALEXEI  
Dad!?! Us Russians always win. For it is our...

TSAR  
Duty. Oh, yes, I almost forgot.

Nicholas pats his Son on the head.

TSAR (CONT'D)  
We will be home soon. You better clean up for Mother.

INT. WAR MINISTRY - NIGHT

Platon works as Colonel Zurin walks in.

ZURIN  
General Konstantin, you wished to see me?

PLATON  
Da, take a seat.

The Colonel moves to the raging fire.

ZURIN

General, do you mind if I stand by the fire? I walked here, and I feel half frozen.

PLATON

You miss the jungle?

They served together in the Russo-Japanese War.

PLATON (CONT'D)

The heat. The humidity?

ZURIN

Myet. Not even on cold days like this, sir.

PLATON

Me either.

Platon moves to join Zurin.

PLATON (CONT'D)

Us Russians, are not made for the heat.

ZURIN

Our mission to Port Arthur.

PLATON

The conditions caused more casualties than the enemy. Speaking of which. What news do you bring me on Vlad?

ZURIN

He is gathering support. More troops are aligning with him.

PLATON

Are we making a mistake by not arresting him?

ZURIN

I hope not.

Platon moves to the mantel.

PLATON

I have a gift for you.

Platon removes the samurai sword from its holder.

PLATON (CONT'D)  
 For Faith. Honor. And Loyalty.  
 This war souvenir is now yours.

ZURIN  
 I remember how you liberated it.  
 Seems like a lifetime ago.

PLATON  
 Da. A lifetime. When your meeting?

ZURIN  
 Ten. At his Palace.

PLATON  
 Okay. Call me if you learn  
 anything.

ZURIN  
 I will.

Departs Zurin.

PLATON  
 Zurin!

Turns Zurin.

ZURIN  
 Da, General?

PLATON  
 Be careful.

ZURIN  
 I shall.

INT. PROTOPOPOV'S APARTMENT - DAY

The phone RINGS. Protopopov answers it.

PROTOPOPOV  
 Da.

Speaks BORIS, one of Protopopov's aides.

BORIS (O.S)  
 Her Majesty, wishes for an  
 immediate update on Rasputin.

PROTOPOPOV  
 What more is there to say? I was  
 just there!

BORIS (O.S)  
What should I tell the palace?

PROTOPOPOV  
Tell the Officer of the Guards that no one enters without a permit from me.

BORIS (O.S.)  
The Royal family won't like that.

PROTOPOPOV  
Too bad, Boris. Traitors are everywhere. Our job is to protect the Sovereign.

BORIS (O.S.)  
What shall I tell the Empress? The update. Is she to expect you soon?

PROTOPOPOV  
Da. I shall report my new findings in the morning.

BORIS (O.S)  
But, sir. The palace insists on an immediate update.

PROTOPOPOV  
Good night, Boris. Get some rest.

Protopopov HANGS up the phone.

The Baroness appears in a sheer nightie.

BARONESS  
Who was that?

PROTOPOPOV  
No one of importance.

BARONESS  
Are you keeping something from me?

PROTOPOPOV  
Are you?

The Baroness LAUGHES.

BARONESS  
What should I tell the Kaiser?

PROTOPOPOV  
Everything is in order.

EXT. NO. 22 FONTANKA - TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

As Marie's cab approaches her destination, she looks down again at the piece of paper in her hands.

No. 22 is a huge shuttered townhouse, neglected by time.

The CABBIE has the same concerns.

CABBIE

Lady, you certain you got the right address?

MARIE

That's what I was told.

Appears Serge at that exact moment by the street. The cab stops. Then, the Prince helps Marie out.

Serge pays the driver.

SERGE

This was where I grew up. My Father closed it after my Mother's death.

MARIE

Too many memories?

SERGE

I suppose. I thought closing it was cruel.

MARIE

We all deal with loss differently.

SERGE

It is a mere shadow of what it once was. I wish you would have seen it in its prime.

Serge reveals a small crowbar.

SERGE (CONT'D)

Thankfully, I still have my key.

Serge pries off two boards.

MARIE

Should you be doing this?

SOUND: WINDOW CRASH!

SERGE

Why not? It's my home.

They enter..

INT. NO. 22 FONTANKA - TOWNHOUSE - SAME

Within its foyer brilliantly colored stained glass covers the inner doors. The room is full of rich, warm candlelight and time-dried white roses cascading down to the floor.

Marie looks to Serge.

MARIE

How?!?

SERGE

I broke in the back too.

MARIE

You're devious.

SERGE

It felt good.

Marie stops at the wall of dead flowers.

MARIE

For your Mother?

Serge nods yes.

Marie bends over and smells a dried flower.

MARIE (CONT'D)

The still hold their scent.

SERGE

She loved flowers. Especially roses.

Marie pauses, to look down at a table filled with dusty photographs. She picks up one of Serge's Mother, and a young Platon, the image of Serge.

MARIE

She was lovely.

SERGE

She was.

The Prince walks to a large piano covered by a sheet.

With flair, he removes the sheet. This generates a small dust cloud in the room.

Marie COUGHS.

Serge tosses the sheet in the corner.

SERGE (CONT'D)

Sorry.

MARIE

It's only dust.

Serge sits behind the piano.

SERGE

Do you mind?

Marie leans against the piano.

MARIE

Did your Mother teach you?

SERGE

It was this or painting. And I was never good at painting.

Serge begins to PLAYS. He is quite good.

MARIE

You play well.

Serge his hands TRAVEL up and down the keyboard.

MARIE (CONT'D)

Play me something to dance to.

SERGE

To dance to? Let's me see. Oh, yes... this.

An enchanting MELODY sneaks into the room. Haunting at first, then the BEAT gains speed.

Marie rises, and begins to dance. She moves as graceful as an angel dancing across a cloud.

As Serge PLAYS, she continues to dance as if her feet were fed by each delicious NOTE. At this moment in time, no other world exists, just music. Just dance.

She dances near him. Her fingertips touch his shoulder.

MARIE

Tonight. I feel young again.

SERGE

As do I.

INT. BURMIN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A key INSERTS itself into a LOCK. CLICK.

Inside, Renko waits in the dark.

Burmin enters with YURI and another AGENT.

Yuri turns on the light. CLICK.

PETER

Renko!?! What are you doing here?  
Change of plans?

RENKO

It's almost midnight.

PETER

You heard? Renko, you should hire  
better men.

Renko looks to his men.

RENKO

Leave us.

His agents do.

PETER

I thought we were meeting in the  
morning?

RENKO

Change of plans.

PETER

The deal isn't dead, is it?

RENKO

Nyet. Not the deal.

PETER

Oh, good. You scared me.

RENKO

Part of my nature. Grab your  
things. You are no longer safe  
here.

PETER

I know. There's a carload of Brits  
parked outside.

Peter walks to his safe and OPENS it. He stuffs money in a small briefcase.

PETER (CONT'D)  
Not looking forward to the  
crossing, yet I do wish I could see  
Sir George's smug face when he  
learns...

Renko raises his revolver.

RENKO  
Quite impossible.

Renko FIRES two shots into Peter's chest.

The force throws Peter HARD against the wall. Then, his body slowly slides down to the floor.

The agents outside BURST through the door with their firearms ready and in hand.

YURI  
Inspector?!?

They see Peter's dead body on the floor.

Renko walks over and grabs Peter's briefcase.

RENKO  
Make certain no one ever finds him.

Renko leaves Peter's apartment.

EXT. PETER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Across the street he notices three men parked car.

INT. SEDAN - SAME TIME

Jones sits with Robert and Bruce.

JONES  
Who's that?

Robert sits in the passenger sit.

ROBERT  
Renko. He's a member of the Tsar's  
Secret Police.

BRUCE

Damn, he knows we are here.

Robert pushes his hat over his face.

Jones rolls down his window.

JONES

Why is a member of His Majesty's  
Secret Police protecting a known  
German spy?

RENKO

Perhaps you have not noticed, Mr.  
Jones. This is not London.  
Petersburg is a cold place.  
Especially for tourists.

Renko nods with hat.

RENKO (CONT'D)

(in Russian)

Good day.

After Renko disappears around a corner.

BRUCE

Splendid. Renko handles all General  
Konstantin's dirty work.

ROBERT

If we see Peter Burmin again, it  
would be a bloody miracle.

INT. ALEXANDER PALACE - BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

The Empress' bedchamber. She sits before her vanity.

Alexei stands behind her.

ALEXEI

Momma. Why are you crying?

EMPRESS

Oh, dear child. I did not know you  
were home.

ALEXEI

I am.

EMPRESS

It's so late. Where's your Father?

ALEXEI  
Great, Grandpa's Church.

EMPRESS  
The Church of Spilled Blood?

Alexei nods.

ALEXEI  
He wanted to say a prayer for  
Father Rasputin.

EMPRESS  
Good.

ALEXEI  
Momma, why were you crying?

EMPRESS  
Sometimes I feel the entire royal  
family is against us.

ALEXEI  
Why?

EMPRESS  
I don't know. To them, I have  
always been German.

EXT. CHURCH OF SPILLED BLOOD - NIGHT

Marie climbs the steps into the Church.

INT. SPLIT BLOOD CHURCH - SAME

Marie walks across the pink marble floor to the Altar.

Candles are lit everywhere. Orthodox religious artifacts and  
colorful mosaics crowd the room.

Marie lights a candle then she kneels near the Altar.

MARIE  
Lord, forgive me...  
(giggles)  
For my latest sins.

Appears a cloaked Tsar Nicholas by her side.

NICHOLAS  
May I join you Marie?

Marie looks up and recognizes the Tsar.

MARIE

Niki!

Nicholas looks around.

TSAR

Where?

MARIE

I mean, Your Majesty.

TSAR

Majesty? Hmm. I am not God. Neither am I man. I'm something in between.

Nicholas kneels beside her.

TSAR (CONT'D)

Though, I would prefer the tile of... Niki.

MARIE

(whispers)

I thought you were at the Front.

TSAR

Just returned.

MARIE

Any news on Rasputin?

TSAR

None. Though, I fear he is dead. Hmm, do you remember our long walks in the woods?

MARIE

I remember a quiet afternoon spent by a running stream.

TSAR

Me too.

MARIE

You once were so fond of me.

TSAR

I still am.

Nicholas reaches for her hand.

TSAR (CONT'D)  
My Father won't...

MARIE  
Shh.

TSAR  
At my Coronation, I envisioned a better reality than this. Hmm.. do better.

MARIE  
There's still time.

TSAR  
Is there?

EXT. FIREMAN'S CLUB - CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Renko parks his car before a...

HOMELESS mass warm their souls by an open fire.

He takes Peter's briefcase from the backseat.

RENKO  
Is there room for one more?

The homeless look at one another.

Then, a WOMAN #1 offers him her spot.

WOMAN #1  
Here! The spirit of God warms me.

RENKO  
(in Russian)  
Thank you. You are kind.

BRUTE approaches.

BRUTE  
That sure is a fine automobile. Do you mind if I...

Renko shows his Secret Services badge.

The Brute backs off.

BRUTE (CONT'D)  
I don't want any trouble.

RENKO  
Neither do I.

WOMAN #2 leans across the flames.

WOMAN #2  
We did nothing wrong.

RENKO  
On the contrary. How many here have  
lost a child to this war?

Slowly, one by one, middle-aged parents hands lift up.

MAN #1 wears a an old, Army greatcoat.

MAN #1  
Masurain Lakes.

WOMAN #1  
Tannenberg.

WOMAN #2  
Influenza took one. The Brusilov  
offensive took the rest.

RENKO  
I lost my Michael. My son. In the  
battle of the Marshes.

BRUTE  
I lost my Brother there.

Renko in a show of respect, bows his head to the Brute.

RENKO  
Maybe they knew one another.

BRUTE  
Maybe.

WOMAN #1  
This war must end.

RENKO  
One day it shall. His Majesty shall  
see to it. He shares in our losses,  
and in our pain.

Refugees show looks of doubt.

WOMAN #1  
What has he lost?

RENKO  
 Much. When this war is over.

WOMAN #2  
 It will never end.

RENKO  
 His Majesty wishes you all to go  
 home and rebuild your lives.

WOMAN #1  
 Rebuild?

WOMAN #2  
 How!?! We have nothing left.

Renko undoes his jacket and shows the crowd his revolver.

BRUTE  
 We don't want trouble, Mister.

Renko places Peter's briefcase on a crate. He opens it CLICK!

The Homeless see the stacks of cash.

RENKO  
 I know. In sincere gratitude for  
 your... Faith. Honor.

BRUTE  
 Loyalty.

The homeless, for the first time smile.

RENKO  
 This is only money. It will not  
 bring back your love ones.

WOMAN #2  
 Nyet. But it would help restore our  
 homes and our lives.

RENKO  
 Da.

WOMEN #1  
 Praise him!

RENKO  
 Your Tsar is a good Tsar.

INT. MINISTRY OF INTERIOR - NIGHT

Alone, Protopopov traverses down a long dark hallway.

MARIE (V.O.)

Alexander Protopopov is pleased.  
Vlad's plan has gone far better  
than he had expected. Or at least,  
that's what he thinks.

PROTOPOPOV

I need to continue to keep the  
Empress in the dark. Until Tuesday.  
After that, the Empress will have  
greater problems on her plate.

As he walks down the ministry corridor to his office, he stops. There, he notices a small puddle of water at his feet.

PROTOPOPOV (CONT'D)

Sloppy. Tonight's cleaning crew  
needs a repri...

The water footsteps lead to his office.

PROTOPOPOV (CONT'D)

Mand... Hmm, what is this?

He slowly takes a few steps, cautiously he removes his revolver from beneath his coat.

JUMP SCARE: Then, out of nowhere, a cloaked RASPUTIN emerges from the darkness. He races across the corridor.

SOUND: SLAM!

Protopopov rushes to his office. He fumbles with the keys.

PROTOPOPOV (CONT'D)

Where are you?

Finally, he finds the correct key.

PROTOPOPOV (CONT'D)

There.

He inserts the correct key into the lock. CLICK.

INT. PROTOPOPOV'S OFFICE - SAME

Protopopov hurries in and LOCKS his door. He braces his body against the door. With his back pressed hard against it, he aims his revolver in the surrounding darkness. He points it here and there.

PROTOPOPOV (CONT'D)  
Who's there?!?

SOUND: DRAWER SLAMS!

PROTOPOPOV (CONT'D)  
I am Protopopov! I shall have your  
head!

Protopopov searches the room.

PROTOPOPOV (CONT'D)  
Baroness?

He moves to his inner office. As he closes the door, he  
switches on the light.

A cloaked Rasputin braces himself behind the desk.

RASPUTIN  
Boo!

Protopopov aims his fire arm.

RASPUTIN (CONT'D)  
Protopopov. Put the gun down. You  
can't kill what's already dead.

Rasputin removes his hood. This reveals himself.

PROTOPOPOV  
Rasputin!?! How?

Rasputin, bruised and battered with a big tangled beard and a  
large potato-shaped nose, releases a deep demonic LAUGH.

RASPUTIN  
Tsk. Tsk.

Protopopov stumbles backwards.

PROTOPOPOV  
This can't be. You're dead.

RASPUTIN  
I am very much alive. Reports on my  
demise are... exaggerated.

PROTOPOPOV  
What happened?

RASPUTIN

The nobles are too lazy to do anything right. The Neva's cold waters brought me back.

Protopopov reaches for the phone.

PROTOPOPOV

I must call the Empress. She has been grief-stricken.

RASPUTIN

That can wait.

PROTOPOPOV

Why?

RASPUTIN

Where were they the other night?

PROTOPOPOV

Who?

RASPUTIN

My Security detail, you fool.

PROTOPOPOV

My entire force has searched...

Protopopov sees Rasputin holds a bundle of hand-written letters he took from Rasputin's apartment.

PROTOPOPOV (CONT'D)

I can explain.

RASPUTIN

Why must all politicians lie?

PROTOPOPOV

Grisha, please.

Protopopov eyes his revolver by his side.

RASPUTIN

I won't if I was you.

PROTOPOPOV

What!?!?

RASPUTIN

Remember, Minister. I'm a hard man to kill.

Rasputin LAUGHS again.

INT. VLADIMIR'S PALACE - GAME ROOM - NIGHT

Game room of fur and feathers. Early morning.

At the billiard table, Vlad stands amongst other uniformed men of different regimental colors. Their attention is focused on paper spread out on the billiard table. It is a detailed map of Tsarskoe Selo that includes a layout of the Alexander Palace.

Vlad LAUGHS out as he SLAPS the back of one of his Colonels dressed in all black.

Zurin hitches over the map too.

VLAD  
Soon, we strike.

FEDOROV  
And demand the Tsar's abdication.

KOZLOV  
And if Nicholas resists?

VLAD  
He dies.

ZURIN  
Soon?

VLAD  
Tonight!

ZURIN  
Tonight?!?

KOZLOV  
Excellent news.

The others slap one another on their backs.

FEDOROV  
We will be ready, General. Zurin I will need your machine gunners to support my cannons.

ZURIN  
Of course.

Zurin touches Platon's sword that hangs from his belt.

ZURIN (CONT'D)  
What of the Empress?

VLAD

She will fall in line. Or die. It makes no difference to me.

One of the commanders fetches a crystal decanter of brandy.

Another secures some glasses. And a third distributes cigars from a box.

VLAD (CONT'D)

Our plan is flawless and in motion. So, let's celebrate.

KOZLOV

We control all but one of the garrisons.

ZURIN

The Cossacks will never turn.

VLAD

We shall see. If not, machine guns bullets and canon fire will make them irrelevant.

Vlad eyes Zurin's sword.

VLAD (CONT'D)

I admire your new sword. War souvenir?

Zurin removes it from its sleeve and inspects it.

ZURIN

Da. In remembrance of our long march on Port Arthur.

VLAD

Another sad example of Niki's mismanagement.

Zurin returns his sword to its sleeve.

VLAD (CONT'D)

So, will your men be ready for tomorrow?

ZURIN

They're looking forward to the opportunity to prove themselves.

VLAD

Good, Colonel. Your machine gunners may be vital at stopping the Cossacks.

ZURIN

At all costs, we will secure your flank, General.

VLAD

Good. It is all settled then. By Tuesday morning, you will be a General.

Vlad SLAPS Zurin hard on the back.

INT. VLADIMIR'S PALACE - STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Zurin is halfway down the stairs as he prepares to leave.

Vlad stands at the top of the steps.

VLAD

Colonel Zurin, may I have a word with you? I need your opinion on tonight's timetable.

Zurin eyes the front door. Though, he slowly turns. Then, he climbs up the steps.

ZURIN

Certainly.

Vlad enters his study.

Zurin follows.

An OFFICER joins them and LOCKS the door behind him.

VLAD

Neither am I fond of surprises. So, I need your input.

ZURIN

I am at your service.

Colonel Kozlov and another OFFICER flank Zurin as he enters.

Two other OFFICERS in black uniforms cross the room. They have their pistols drawn and pointed at Zurin.

VLAD

I'm beginning to have my doubts.

Zurin reaches for his revolver.

Vlad's men FIRE. A desk lamp explodes.

Zurin crouches and FIRES back at them as he dives behind a massive wooden desk.

Both of Vlad's men fall to the floor.

Vlad liberates a deer rifle off the wall. CLICK. He checks that it's fully loaded.

VLAD (CONT'D)  
Come out, Zurin.

Zurin unsheathes his sword.

VLAD (CONT'D)  
I have seen that sword before.

ZURIN  
Well, you're going to see it soon  
in use.

Vlad motions Kozlov to flank the desk, and rises his rifle.

Men BANG on the locked door.

VLAD  
I knew you would never betray  
Platon.

As they inch closer towards the desk, Kozlov and Vlad let out a CRY of surprise as the Zurin leaps onto the desk.

ZURIN  
You want me. Come and get me.

Shotgun BLASTS through the door from the other side.

Two SOLDIERS in black uniforms charge into the room.

They are greeted by GUNFIRE and BULLETS.

Kozlov finds shelter behind a chair. He FIRES a few poorly aimed ROUNDS at the desk.

Zurin is too quick. The Colonel jumps off the desk, FIRES his last shot at Kozlov. Then, he tosses his emptied revolver at Vlad's head.

Vlad dodges it.

Zurin makes for the door.

ZURIN (CONT'D)  
Traitors!!!

VLAD  
Don't let him get away!

As Zurin flees, he runs into more of Vlad's MEN. He levels them quickly with his samurai sword.

Kozlov continues to FIRE from the second-story. The BULLETS land close to Zurin's head.

With BULLETS bouncing off the walls, Zurin crosses the foyer with one last man left in his path. It is Andrei.

Zurin is almost free.

ZURIN  
Out of the way.

Zurin thinks about using his sword but resists.

Andrei slows Zurin down.

ANDREI  
What in the hell is going on!?!?

From the second floor, Vlad levels his deer rifle. He squeezes the trigger. CLICK. BANG.

Zurin's body SLAMS hard into Andrei.

VLAD  
That's a kill.

Vlad lowers his weapon.

Zurin lands atop of Andrei. His blood is everywhere.

Andrei stares into Zurin's eyes.

ANDREI  
Zurin, it was not supposed to be like this.

ZURIN  
Traitor.

Andrei tries and fails to push Zurin's body off.

Vlad arrives. He kicks Zurin off his Brother. Then, he grabs Zurin's sword.

VLAD  
 You're the traitor and fool,  
 Colonel. Did you honestly believe I  
 would not recognize Platon's  
 samurai sword?

Andrei checks for a pulse.

ANDREI  
 He's dead.

Men of mixed uniforms surround Zurin's body.

VLAD  
 Good.

FEDOROV  
 What do we do now?

VLAD  
 Grab his legs.

EXT. ROAD TO TSARSKOE - DAY

Serge's car slips along the snow-covered road.

SUPER: "Monday."

SERGE  
 These roads are bad enough in the  
 summertime.

Serge gets out and begins to walk down road. He sees a sea of white dusted fir trees. Above them, in the distance, is a tall thin cloud of black smoke coming from the chimney of his family's hunting dacha.

SERGE (CONT'D)  
 So much for secrecy, Ernie.

EXT. DACHA - DAY

Dacha's front door SWINGS open when Serge arrives.

There stands the Duke of Hesse, ERNIE. The German's face radiates hope and his eyes still gleam as a child.

ERNIE  
 Serge! You devil. It's been too  
 long! Look at you! You are a man.

The German hurries down the steps, and embraces Serge. As he does, he slips on some ice and lands on his back.

SERGE

Ernie!

Serge stands over him and offers him his hand.

SERGE (CONT'D)

Welcome to St. Petersburg.

EXT. NO. 41 NEVSKY PROSPECT - DAY

Through the frosty windows of Grand Duke Dmitri's palace, WE see him fast asleep in his bed.

SOUND: WIND.

INT. DMITRI'S BED CHAMBER - SAME

Dmitri continues to sleep.

SOUND: SUBTLE SNORES.

There is MOVEMENT outside his room.

DMITRI

Is someone there?

No one answers.

DMITRI (CONT'D)

Hmm. The wind.

He rolls over to go back to sleep.

APPEARS Dmitri's Father, GRAND DUKE PAUL ALEXANDROVICH.

PAUL

Get up.

A lamp ignites the room.

DIMTRI

Father!!!

PAUL

What have you done?

DMITRI

Nothing.

PAUL  
Swear to it.

Paul drags Dmitri down the hall. They pass his Mother's portrait. Then, they stop when they reach his Mother's desk.

The General digs into its drawers. He yanks out a black leather bound Bible.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Swear to it. On Mother's Bible.

Dmitri stares UP at his Mother's portrait on the wall.

DMITRI  
I...

PAUL  
Place your hand on her Bible, Son.  
I must know the truth.

Dmitri does.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Now swear. On the memory of your  
dear Mother. Swear to me, you are  
innocent.

DMITRI  
I... I am innocent.

PAUL  
On your honor?!?

DMITRI  
*Da.*

PAUL  
Good.

He embraces his Son. Tears form in the older man's eyes.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
I knew it couldn't be true. Not my  
Dmitri!

DMITRI  
You have been misinformed, Father.

PAUL  
Well then. I need to word with the  
Tsar.

EXT. ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

The woods outside York Cottage.

The sound from the HOUNDS ravaging through the wetlands lessen as the KING GEORGE lays down his shotgun against the stump of a fallen tree to rest.

He could be the identical twin to Tsar Nicholas.

STEVENS, his aide appears.

STEVENS

Your Majesty, you all right?

KING GEORGE

It's this damn hip of mine.

STEVENS

Should we return to the car?

KING GEORGE

Damn waste.

STEVENS

The hounds have caught the scent.

KING GEORGE

I can't keep up.

STEVEN

Damn, shame. Another day.

The King nods his agreement.

The two began their journey back.

KING GEORGE

Stevens, what do you make of the American note?

STEVENS

The letter from Woodrow Wilson? It received a lukewarm welcome from England.

STEVENS (CONT'D)

He's living up to his campaign promises of keeping them out of the war.

KING GEORGE

German submarines are sinking our ships full of American goods, and he does nothing. Typical academic.

STEVENS

He's no fool. He will wait until a time of his own choosing to enter this war.

KING GEORGE

Yes. When the outcome is already decided. We have invested too much in this war.

They reach a sedan parked in the clearing.

GENERAL WILCOX of the War Ministry steps out of a car.

KING GEORGE (CONT'D)

General Wilcox.

STEVENS

You're late if you were planning on the hunt.

WILCOX

Perhaps not. Your Majesty, may I have a moment of your time, alone?

The King hands Stevens his shotgun.

KING GEORGE

What is it? My leg is killing me.

Wilcox hands the King a note.

WILCOX

My men intercepted this from Berlin this morning. It was sent to the German Embassy in Istanbul.

KING GEORGE

Read it.

WILCOX

German High Command. High importance. Before the first of January, we intend to sign a separate peace agreement with Russia.

KING GEORGE

Damn it. It's true.

WILCOX

Despite this, it is our intention to stay loyal to our alliance on with the Sultan of Turkey and the Ottoman Empire. We make war together and together we shall make peace.

King George looks back up at Wilcox.

KING GEORGE

Those little double-crossers.

WILCOX

Poor Russia. I almost feel sorry for them. Almost.

KING GEORGE

That's what happens when you make a deal with the devil. Make certain the Kaiser's greed is known to my dear cousin Niki.

WILCOX

I shall. This information will be in Sir George's hands as soon as possible.

EXT. WHITE TOWER - DAY

White tower in view of the Alexander Palace.

Vlad stands atop a tall, whitewashed tower that overlooks the palace. He has a somewhat imperfect view. Fog engulfs much of the park though it spares the sight of the palace.

Kozlov, Fedorov, and Ivanov stand beside him.

VLAD

Like a present wrapped up in paper and bows.

KOZLOV

Power. The ideal gift.

At that moment, a motorcar races from the direction of the Arsenal toward the palace. The car's speed alarms the men surrounding Vlad.

FEDOROV

Who's that?!?

Vlad and the three men peer over the edge to get a better view of the driver. They use their binoculars.

EXT. ALEXANDER PALACE - DRIVEWAY - SAME

The vehicle SLAMS to a halt as a cloud of exhaust and dirt engulfs the IMPERIAL GUARDS that stand before the palace's main entrance.

Emerges Grand Duke Paul from the car like a god.

EXT. WHITE TOWER - SAME

Vlad, Kozlov, Fedorov, and Ivanov lower their binoculars.

X wears the unforgettable green uniforms of His Majesty's Preobrazhenski Guards.

FEDOROV

What's Dmitri's Father doing here?

VLAD

Poor old Paul.

KOZLOV

Noble as ever.

FEDOROV

Protecting his son's valor.

IVANOV

I hate to see the Grand Duke get all riled up. Dmitri shan't be under house arrest in the morning.

FEDOROV

Indeed!

KOZLOV

The new order needs men like him and Prince Felix.

VLAD

True. Releasing them from custody shall be one of my first official acts.

FEDOROV

Good.

Vlad's eyes look towards the Arsenal, an octagonal fortress housing the Tsar's personal collection of weaponry.

VLAD  
Ten o'clock.

IN UNISON  
Ten o'clock!

VLAD  
We mass at the Arsenal. Then, we  
move on to the palace.

FEDOROV  
General. What of reinforcements  
from the north and south?

IVANOV  
The Horse Guards are quartered just  
beyond the palace.

VLAD  
Colonel Zurin is dead. His Horse  
Guards know nothing.

FEDOROV  
True. But leaves our flanks  
exposed.

KOZLOV  
By regiments of the Horse Guards  
and...

IVANOV  
His Imperial Majesty's Personal  
Escort...

FEDOROV/KOZLOV  
The Cossacks.

IVANOV  
They shall fight us to the death.

KOZLOV  
There's no backward step in them.  
They only know...

FEDOROV  
Attack.

VLAD  
Relax!

FEDOROV  
We have no machine gunners.

IVANOV  
Thanks to Zurin.

The officers grow silent.

VLAD  
Cossacks won't be an issue. Trust  
me. I've handled the matter,  
personally.

EXT. ALEXANDER PALACE - MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

Grand Duke Paul leaps out from his motorcar like a man half  
his age. The two SOLIDERS approach.

FIRST SOLDIER  
Your Imp-

PAUL  
Out of my way!

SECOND SOLDIER  
Yes, sir!

Paul enters the palace.

The inner bodyguards patrol with rifles ready.

A HOUSE GUARD approaches.

HOUSE GUARD  
Papers, please.

PAUL  
Papers?!?

HOUSE GUARD  
Your permit from Minister  
Protopopov.

PAUL  
That swine?

HOUSE GUARD  
Those are my orders.

Paul does not stop.

HOUSE GUARD (CONT'D)  
It's for Their Majesties' security,  
General.

Paul keeps walking.

HOUSE GUARD (CONT'D)

Halt!!!

Paul removes his service pistol. The Duke aims the firearm directly at the guard's heart.

PAUL

This is the only permit I have on my person.

The other House Guards raises their rifles.

HOUSE GUARD

Lower your weapons. General, you may pass.

INT. ALEXANDER PALACE - CHAMBER - SAME

Paul enters the Empress's chamber.

The Empress' jaw drops.

EMPRESS

How did you get here?

Paul flamboyantly bows.

EMPRESS (CONT'D)

Guards!

Tsar Nicholas sits smoking in a winged back chair in the corner. He sees his Paul enter and smiles.

The Tsar stands to greet him.

PAUL

Madame, truly your servants are faithful, but a loaded revolver is like a bewitching feminine beauty. It has great powers of persuasion.

The Tsar CHAPS.

TSAR

If only my Father and your Brother were alive to see this. He would have rolled over with laughter. My dear Paul!

Nicholas hugs his Uncle.

TSAR (CONT'D)

It is good to see you.

PAUL  
Why is my Son under house arrest?

EMPRESS  
He's guilty of treason!

TSAR  
Shh, please. It appears he's  
involved in the disappearance of  
our spiritual advisor...

PAUL  
Rasputin?!? That swine.

EMPRESS  
He's a man of God!

PAUL  
He's an opportunist. He's only god  
is wealth and power.

TSAR  
Please, Paul. Have a seat.

PAUL  
I prefer to stand.

TSAR  
As you wish.

PAUL  
My boy is innocent.

TSAR  
How are you so sure?

PAUL  
He swore to it.

TSAR  
The evidence...

PAUL  
He is my son. Bounded by, Faith.  
Honor...

TSAR  
And Loyalty. I understand. We may  
be mistaken.

PAUL  
Niki?!? Please.

EMPRESS

Your hospitality to the plotting elements of the Court indicates ill of you.

PAUL

My Father!!!

Paul points to Niki.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Your Grandfather was assassinated as he fought to improve Russia.

TSAR

He was a great reformer.

PAUL

He was. It broke me and my Brother to watch him die.

TSAR

My Father never spoke of it. But I know he was haunted by it.

PAUL

He was. Please, Niki. Release my Son. I beg you. With one word from your lips he would be free.

TSAR

The investigation is not yet complete. For that reason alone, I am unable to grant your request.

Nicholas walks a stunned Paul out.

PAUL

But...?

TSAR

Dmitri will be accorded special considerations. Though, from initial reports, he appears to be involved.

PAUL

Are you certain?

TSAR

I pray to God that Dmitri will be found innocent. I truly do.

PAUL  
He's my Son.

TSAR  
I know.

Paul leaves, dumbfounded.

Nicholas closes the door, he rests his head on its frame.

The Empress begins to talk.

TSAR (CONT'D)  
Don't.

EMPRESS  
What?!?

TSAR  
Say a word.

EMPRESS  
Why?

TSAR  
I just broke a good man's heart,  
and that hurts.

INT. MINISTRY OF WAR - PLATON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Platon and Renko walk in in mid-discussion.

Before them, turns the chair behind General Platon's desk.

In it, smirks Sir George.

SIR GEORGE  
General Platon, may I have a word?

Renko moves to yank Sir George from his chair.

The General holds him back.

PLATON  
Renko, will you excuse us?

RENKO  
Of course.

Renko leaves.

Platon goes to the cigarette box on his desk and opens it.

PLATON  
Ambassador, care for one?

Sir George raises his hand. He holds a half-smoked cigarette.

SIR GEORGE  
Already liberated one.

PLATON  
I noticed. Being British, you just  
take what you want.

SIR GEORGE  
Something like that.

PLATON  
Why are you here?

SIR GEORGE  
To discuss the future of Anglo-  
Russian relations.

PLATON  
Go on.

SIR GEORGE  
The state of the home front  
depresses me. For instance,  
Minister Protopopov.

PLATON  
What of him?

SIR GEORGE  
His policies are bringing Russia to  
the verge of ruin.

PLATON  
Sir George, you give him too much  
credit.

SIR GEORGE  
No. For a fool. He's brilliant.  
As long as he remains Minister of  
the Interior there cannot be that  
collaboration between the  
government and the  
Duma. That collaboration is  
essential for victory.

PLATON  
Yours? Or ours?

SIR GEORGE  
Aren't they the same?

PLATON  
Why are you really here?

SIR GEORGE  
In the fog of war, truths look very  
much like lies.

PLATON  
What truth can I clarify?

SIR GEORGE  
Is the Tsar seeking a separate  
peace?

Platon eyeballs Sir George.

PLATON  
Not to my knowledge.

Sir George rises as he does so he smashes his cigarette into  
the General's ash tray.

SIR GEORGE  
General, if I were to see a friend  
walking through the woods on a dark  
night. Along a path which I knew  
ended in a precipice. Would it not  
be my duty, sir. To warn you of the  
abyss that lay ahead?

PLATON  
What abyss?

SIR GEORGE  
We have, sir, come to the parting  
of the ways. One path will lead you  
to victory and a glorious peace,  
the other to revolution and  
disaster. Let me implore you to  
choose wisely.

INT. ALEXANDER PALACE - OLGA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Tsar stands outside his daughter Olga's room. Her door is  
slightly ajar. He hears hear HUMMING.

He peeks in as he gently KNOCKS on the door.

TSAR  
Olga?

OLGA  
Hi, Father. We missed you.

                  TSAR  
I missed you too.

The Tsar walks around her room. On Olga's bed is a fresh nurse's uniform laid out.

                  TSAR (CONT'D)  
I'm proud of you. Aiding in the suffering of others.

                  OLGA  
We all must do what we can.

                  TSAR  
True.

The Tsar picks up an Egg and examines it.

                  TSAR (CONT'D)  
I never was much for hospitals.

                  OLGA  
Me either, Father. But that's where the wounded are.

The Tsar has trouble making eye contact with his daughter.

                  TSAR  
Indeed.

                  OLGA  
You really need to see what Dmitri has done. He converted his palace into...

The Tsar returns the Faberge Egg to the bedside table.

                  TSAR  
I know.

The Tsar eyes meet Olga's.

                  TSAR (CONT'D)  
That why this conversation is going to be so difficult.

                  OLGA  
I love him, Father!

                  TSAR  
I know you do.

OLGA  
He's the only one for me.  
Please?!?

TSAR  
Your marriage to Dmitri is no  
longer a possibility.

OLGA  
Why?!? Because of Rasputin?

TSAR  
Yes. He's involved in this madness.

OLGA  
Lies. Dmitri wouldn't harm a fly.

TSAR  
He would if he thought he was  
protecting you.

EXT. OLD SERVICE ROAD - DAY

Frost covered trees and shrubbery borders the road.

The old service road leads to the Ruins, two stone towers  
separated by a long narrow bridge.

On horseback, Serge and Ernie ride. This is when they both  
notice that they are no longer alone. NEIGH!

From both flanks, RIDERS approach. Their horses strike up the  
snow. A ghostly mist cloud escapes from the beasts' nostrils.

The riders encircle them.

Approaches the CAPTAIN of the Life Guards.

CAPTAIN  
Halt!

Serge and Ernie pull back their horse's reigns and stop.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)  
Where's Zurin?

SERGE  
Never showed up.

CAPTAIN  
What?

INT. ALEXANDER PALACE - KITCHEN - DAY

Serge grabs an apple from a bowl on the counter.

ANASTASIA appears.

ANASTASIA

Hi, Serge.

Serge turns as he takes a bite into the apple. CRUNCH!

SERGE

Anastasia!

Serge scoops her up and places her on the chopping table.

SERGE (CONT'D)

My aren't you getting big.

ANASTASIA

You know why Olga is crying?

SERGE

No.

ANASTASIA

Do you know why Momma is crying?

SERGE

I can guess why?

ANASTASIA

Father Rasputin is dead, isn't he?

SERGE

It appears that way.

Serge picks her up and sets her on the ground.

SERGE (CONT'D)

Let's check in on Olga.

ANASTASIA

Okay.

SERGE

Lead the way.

INT. PROTOPOPOV'S BEDROOM - DAY

Protopopov is in bed with the Baroness.

She is unseen and under the sheets.

PROTOPOPOV  
 Seeing him was so scary. Yes. Don't  
 stop.

A naked Baroness comes up.

BARONESS  
 You talk too much in bed.

PROTOPOPOV  
 Don't stop. Please.

Baroness returns underneath the sheets.

PROTOPOPOV (CONT'D)  
 That's it. Yes. Yes. Yes. Ah. Yes!

Rasputin's face comes up from out of the sheets.

RASPUTIN  
 You like that?

PROTOPOPOV  
 Dear god!!!

Rasputin rests next to him in bed. He lights a cigarette.

For Arsenic and Old Lace:

RASPUTIN  
 Insanity doesn't run in you...

PROTOPOPOV  
 It practically gallops!

A phone RINGS on a nearby table.

RASPUTIN  
 You better get that.

RING! RING!

PROTOPOPOV  
 Da. Protopopov here. Are you  
 positive?!? I see.

Protopopov eyes Rasputin hard as he cups his hand over the  
 phone's receiver.

PROTOPOPOV (CONT'D)  
 You're dead.

RASPUTIN

I know.

MATCH CUT:  
RASPUTIN'S ROSY  
FACE. CLEAN,  
JOYFUL TO  
BRUISED,  
BATTERED, STILL.

EXT. BLUE BRIDGE - DAY

Rasputin is truly dead.

His corpse is heavy bruised and bloody. His face screams out a tale of agony worthy of a Greek tragedy.

POLICEMEN who encircles the body look like bundled-up vultures with cigarettes dripping down from your beaks.

Stands Renko, directly below the bridge, atop the Neva's ice. He shouts to the others.

RENKO

Back away, vultures! This is a crime scene.

YURI

They are here. For souvenirs.

RENKO

Use the blankets to wrap him. We don't need anyone from the Press seeing him or his condition.

POLICE CAPTAIN

Renko, what would it hurt to have a few pictures taken?

RENKO

Take all the pictures you want, Captain. Five minutes.

They look down at the corpse.

YURI

It appears the Siberian put up quite a fight.

YURI (CONT'D)

It's a homicide.

As the police pick up and wrap the corpse, a freak WIND catches the blanket, reveals Rasputin's torso and face.

RENKO

Da. The Radicals will use this for their advantage.

YURI

Come Spring...

RENKO

They all will be out...

YURI

Marching on the streets. Thirsty for blood.

INT. ALEXANDER PALACE - OLGA'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Serge gently KNOCKS on Olga's door.

OLGA (O.S.)

Go away.

Anastasia looks up at Serge.

ANASTASIA

I told you.

SERGE

Anastasia, I will take it from here.

ANASTASIA

I will check on Momma.

SERGE

Good idea.

Serge watches Anastasia skip down the hall.

SERGE (CONT'D)

Olga. It's me, Serge.

After a moment, the door UNLOCKS.

OLGA

Come in.

As Serge enters the room, a SCREAM comes from down the hall.

OLGA (CONT'D)

Mother!

Serge and Olga rush to the Empress' Bed Chamber.

INT. ALEXANDER PALACE - HALLWAY - SAME

The Tsar is on his knees beside Anastasia.

TSAR  
Anastasia it's all right.

Serge and Olga appear.

OLGA  
Father, what's wrong?

The Tsar rises.

TSAR  
Serge.

The Tsar gives Serge a fatherly hug.

Serge bows.

SERGE  
Your Majesty.

TSAR  
Serge, you're outside my bed chamber. So, it's okay to call me Nicholas.

ANASTASIA  
Who screamed, Papa?

TSAR  
Momma.

ANASTASIA  
Why?

TSAR  
We have just learned that Father Rasputin...

OLGA  
Is dead?!? No. No. No. Dmitri?

Olga turns and runs off to her room.

TSAR  
Serge could you look after Olga.

SERGE

Of course.

TSAR

I need to look after the Empress.

ANASTASIA

Who's going to look after me?

Tsar smiles down at his daughter.

Serge takes her hand.

SERGE

I can.

TSAR

(in Russian)

Thank you.

Serge and Anastasia walk towards Olga's room.

TSAR (CONT'D)

All this is unraveling before our  
very eyes.

INT. ALEXANDER'S PALACE - BED CHAMBER - SAME

Their Majesties are on opposite sides of the room.

Empress' eyes are swollen from crying.

EMPRESS

They killed him.

TSAR

Did you love him?

EMPRESS

I did.

TSAR

Hmm.

EMPRESS

He saved our Son. Everyone thought  
Alexei would not survive the night.

TSAR

The best doctors could do nothing  
to ease his pain.

EMPRESS  
Remember what Alexei asked us?

TSAR  
Da.

EMPRESS  
What?

TSAR  
When I'm dead. Will there be no  
more pain?

EMPRESS  
That night broke me. I love  
Rasputin because he saved our son.

TSAR  
Gratitude.

EMPRESS  
For over twenty years, I've been a  
stranger. Always a German here. The  
only love and kindness I found, in  
this cold, dreary place was yours.  
Yours, and the children we created.

TSAR  
I do miss our quiet life.

EMPRESS  
The war has robbed it from us. But  
we shall steal it back. You shall  
see at dinner.

TSAR  
What does that mean?

EMPRESS  
Later.

INT. VETERANS HOSPITAL - MORGUE - DAY

NURSE SAKULINA stands before Rasputin's corpse, as it thaws.

The Siberians frozen arms aim upward.

Sakulina takes a wet cloth and sponges off his face. The  
blood is as thick as dried mud, and river debris engulfs in  
his unruly hair and beard.

NURSE  
Who do they think they are? Gods?

A DOCTOR comes in.

DOCTOR  
In Russia, they are gods.

He examines the frozen corpse.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
We are wasting our time. The body  
needs at least a day to thaw before  
the autopsy. Nurse, let's worry  
about the ones we can save.

The Doctor leaves.

Protopopov fiddles with the tips of his moustache as he  
enters the room.

NURSE  
I am sorry. No one is allowed back  
here.

PROTOPOPOV  
I know. Leave.

NURSE  
But...

PROTOPOPOV  
Leave!!!

EXT. COSSACK'S BARRACKS - DAY

A caravan of truckloads stop before the gates of the  
Cossack's barracks.

The gate GUARD stops them.

GUARD  
Halt!

A big fur-coated PIMP escapes from the lead truck.

As he does so, he CLAPS his hands.

Big, bosom PROSTITUTES roll out from the back of the truck  
carrying cases of imperial vodka.

COSSACK GUARD  
What is all this?

PIMP  
Compliments, of His Majesty.

Two PROSTITUTES fondle the Cossack guard.

The Pimp offers him his flask.

GUARD  
Raise the gate!

INT. ALEXANDER'S PALACE - SECOND FLOOR WINDOW - NIGHT

A numb Olga stares out from the second story window as a car pulls up into the drive.

Sandro pops out of it.

OLGA  
Sandro. What are you doing here?

INT. ALEXANDER PALACE - FOYER - SAME TIME

Enters Sandro.

Approaches the CAPTAIN of the Guards.

CAPTAIN  
Grand Duke Alexander. Only those with permission from Protopopov may have an audience with Their Majesties this evening.

Sandro walks pass.

SANDRO  
Save it. Tell, Niki I need a word.

CAPTAIN  
Your Grace, my orders are.

SANDRO  
Captain, I will be waiting in the billiards room.

INT. ALEXANDER PALACE - NIGHT

The dining room is too quiet as the Tsar enters.

TSAR  
Where are the children?

EMPRESS  
They've already eaten.

The Tsar notices the table is set for three.

TSAR

We haven't eaten as a family in months. I thought...

The Empress' brother appears. The Grand Duke of Hesse gives Their Majesties a low formal bow.

TSAR (CONT'D)

Ernie?!?

ERNIE

Your Majesties.

TSAR

Sunny? What in God's name is your brother doing here?

ERNIE

I am on a diplomatic mission of incredible importance.

TSAR

Of course you are. Sit.

ERNIE

The Kaiser... offers you peace.

TSAR

Why now?

EMPRESS

It is a way out. So we can return to our quiet life before the war.

TSAR

The terms?

ERNIE

All occupied land returns to Russia.

TSAR

Poland?

ERNIE

And the Balkans, are yours. The battle for Europe was never meant to concern you.

TSAR

And when does my cousin plan this armistice to take effect?

ERNIE

Christmas. New Year's. You pick the day.

TSAR

Before the Americans can enter. Peace with us, frees up a million of his men.

ERNIE

True.

EMPRESS

This will give us a reprieve. Time to deal with the traitors.

The Tsar gives his wife a long look.

TSAR

Your terms are generous. Is there anything else you need to say?

ERNIE

Peace is a possibility.

TSAR

Well then. You shall have my answer in the morning.

Ernie rises and bows as he makes his exit.

The Empress rushes to Nicholas.

EMPRESS

Dear. Isn't it glorious?!?

TSAR

Glory? Who knows of this? Protopopov?!?

EMPRESS

Nyet. General Konstantin. He arranged everything.

TSAR

Konstantin? He is a man of honor. He would never orchestrate a cowardly separate peace, unless the order came directly from...

EMPRESS

I...

TSAR  
Sunny. What have you done?

Enters the Captain of the Guard.

GUARD  
Your Majesty!

TSAR  
Come!

He whispers into the Tsar's ear.

TSAR (CONT'D)  
Ah. Splendid. The British  
Ambassador wishes an audience.  
I wonder why?

EMPRESS  
What would he want?

Nicholas eyes his wife as he tosses his napkin on the table.

TSAR  
Please, excuse me. It's going to be  
one of those nights.

EXT. ALEXANDER PALACE - NIGHT

As Platon emerges from his staff car, he notices someone moving to the far left of him, near the palace's wing.

He follows him.

Platon gains on the cloaked figure who stops to light a cigarette.

A match ignites Ernie's face.

Platon materialize from the fog.

PLATON  
Enjoying your stay?

ERNIE  
Platon!

The two embrace.

PLATON  
Have you met with the Tsar?

ERNIE  
 Yep. Not good.

PLATON  
 How so?

ERNIE  
 The separate peace was solely my  
 sister's idea.

PLATON  
 What?!? No.

ERNIE  
 He was caught off guard.

PLATON  
 No. All the documents had His  
 Majesty's signature.

ERNIE  
 Most likely forged. Trust me, I  
 just came from dinner with him. He  
 nearly fell over his chair when he  
 saw me.

PLATON  
 Your Sister has much to explain.

ERNIE  
 I know. It's horrible. But peace is  
 still possible. The Kaiser's terms  
 are genuine. I assure you. Reason  
 with Niki. End this war... tonight.

EXT. TRACKS NORTH OF ALEXANDER PALACE - NIGHT

A train plows through the new fallen snow.

A CONDUCTOR pulls a LEVER and applies the BRAKES.

The southbound train GRINDS to a halt just outside the town  
 of Tsarskoe Selo.

Aboard the iron beast are two companies of Vlad's cavalry  
 from the Preobrazhenski Regiment, His Majesty's Elite Guard.

As STEAM pours out from underneath the train, the doors of  
 three cars SWING OPEN. Men jump out. Others lower wooden  
 planks from the cars to the forest's floor. BANG.

MEN make certain the planks are secure before calling out.

MEN

All clear!

From the darkened hollows SOLDIERS on horseback THUNDER out into the night. Their mounts' frozen breath mixes with the fog and cold night air.

KOZLOV

Men, to the tower! For tonight we ride.

INT. MINISTRY OF WAR - PLATON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Yuri barges into Platon's outer office.

Platon's SECRETARY gives Yuri a dirty look.

YURI

Where's General Konstantin?

SECRETARY

Out.

YURI

Renko?

Renko emerges from his office.

RENKO

What?

YURI

The Petersburg police just found Colonel Zurin's body near the embankment.

RENKO

When?!?

YURI

Half an hour ago.

RENKO

Call the palace at once. Tell the Household Guards to be on high alert.

The commotion draws other OFFICERS.

RENKO (CONT'D)

Alert the guards! I want Smirnov's men ready to move in twenty minutes! Now!!!

Renko looks down at the secretary.

RENKO (CONT'D)  
Have you reached the palace?

SECRETARY  
I am being told, the line is being checked?

They all look to one another. Then, to Renko.

RENKO  
Contact the Pavlovski Palace. Ask for General Dubrovsky. We need his men to move.

INT. NO. 41 NEVSKY PROSPECT - PARLOR - NIGHT

Dmitri and Felix sit.

Felix rises and goes to the window.

FELIX  
Look at that fog.

DMITRI  
Good night to stay close to a fire.

Felix stares out the window.

DMITRI (CONT'D)  
Are you expecting someone?

FELIX  
Nyet. Not tonight.

Dmitri raises and stands before his Mother's portrait.

DMITRI  
I lied to my Father today.

FELIX  
Relax. I lie to mine all the time.

DMITRI  
Faith. Honor. Loyalty. Hmm, I swore on my Mother's Bible and lied. I am not worthy of this uniform.

FELIX  
Things will look better in the morning.

Dmitri rests his head on the mantel.

DMITRI  
I doubt it.

FELIX  
How's Olga?

DMITRI  
Not funny.

INT. ALEXANDER PALACE - BILLIARDS ROOM - NIGHT

Sandro and Serge play a game of pool.

SANDRO  
Clean out the dullness from your  
ears, Serge, and brace yourself.

Sandro makes a trick shot.

Serge stands with a stick in his hands and listens.

SANDRO (CONT'D)  
Thirty years ago and thousands of  
miles from St. Petersburg there is  
a heavenly place called Rio de  
Janeiro.

Ernie walks into the room.

ERNIE  
Sandro, I love Rio! You care to  
play for money.

Sandro looks up from the table.

SANDRO  
Ernie?!? What the hell are you  
doing here?

INT. ALEXANDER PALACE - HOLLOWAY - SAME

Sir George is escorted the Tsar's study by an Imperial guard.

The Imperial guard opens the door.

SIR GEORGE  
The cavalry has arrived.

INT. ALEXANDER PALACE - STUDY - SAME

Sir George meets with the Tsar.

SIR GEORGE  
Your Majesty, thank you for seeing  
at such short notice.

TSAR  
Did I have a choice?

SIR GEORGE  
There is always a choice.

TSAR  
Perhaps for some. Go on.

SIR GEORGE  
If I may...

TSAR  
Please.

SIR GEORGE  
You have but one safe course open.

TSAR  
Let me guess. Break down the  
barrier that separates me from my  
people?

SIR GEORGE  
Exactly! Regain their confidence.

TSAR  
Their confidence? I see.

SIR GEORGE  
Your Majesty, I call your attention  
to the attempts being made by the  
Germans not only to create  
dissension between the Allies, but  
to estrange you from your people.

Their agents are everywhere at  
work. Everywhere. Advising Your  
Majesty as to the choice of  
ministers. They are indirectly  
influencing the Empress through her  
entourage.

TSAR  
Tread lightly, Ambassador.

SIR GEORGE

Instead of being loved as she ought to be, Her Majesty is discredited and is accused of working in German interests.

TSAR

While addressing my wife, tread lightly. Your blood wouldn't be the first foreign blood spilled upon these marble floors.

SIR GEORGE

My apologies. There is, for example, Protopopov.

TSAR

I choose my ministers myself! I do not allow anyone to influence my choice. Anyone.

SIR GEORGE

Protopopov is bringing Russia to the verge of ruin. So long as he remains Minister of the Interior there cannot be that collaboration between the government and the Duma.

TSAR

I chose Protopopov from the very ranks of the Duma! To be agreeable to them and my people.

SIR GEORGE

But, sir, the Duma can hardly place confidence in a man who has betrayed his honor for office. Though, he's masterful at creating chaos.

TSAR

Sir George, why are you really here?

SIR GEORGE

Your Majesty, Germany's armistice based on their evacuation of Poland is a trap.

The Ambassador hands the Tsar the Zimmerman telegraph.

TSAR  
My, Sir George, my dear Cousin  
grows more...

The Tsar reads the dispatch.

TSAR (CONT'D)  
Zimmerman. Well, this appears  
genuine.

SIR GEORGE  
Your Majesty, if you want peace...

TSAR  
We must stay in the war.

SIR GEORGE  
Exactly.

Nicholas brushes his beard with the back of his hand.

SIR GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Your Majesty you must realize that  
in the event of revolution...

TSAR  
Revolution?

SIR GEORGE  
Only a small portion of the army  
can be counted on to defend the  
dynasty.

TSAR  
Thank you for your visit, Sir  
George. Please communicate with my  
dear cousin and Whitehall... Come  
spring. Us Russians will still be  
killing Germans.

INT. ALEXANDER PALACE - SAME TIME

In the anteroom, as Sandro waits in the vestibule for Niki  
besides Platon, Ernie, and Serge.

Sir George smirks as he pops out of Nicholas' study.

SANDRO  
Ernie, hide!

ERNIE  
Okay. I will stretch my legs a bit.

Ernie eyes Sir George.

ERNIE (CONT'D)  
Russia and Germany are fighting,  
because of people like him.

PLATON  
Ernie, get. Take a walk.

ERNIE  
I'm going.

Sandro holds a scroll and a tiny wrapped box under his arm.

SANDRO  
Sir George!

PLATON  
What a wonderful surprise.

SIR GEORGE  
I was just having a word with the  
Tsar. He assures me that the  
Russian Army remains firm and  
faithful. I assume that includes  
his Generals.

Platon steps closer to Sir George.

PLATON  
Your government could care less  
who's in charge, long as we keep  
fighting Germans.

SIR GEORGE  
True.

SANDRO  
Platon, we don't need an  
international incident tonight.

PLATON  
Tsar Alexander would have thrown an  
ambassador of your species out of  
Russia without even the ceremony of  
handing you back your credentials.

SIR GEORGE  
Too bad he is not here today. He  
was not one to back down, or  
retreat.

PLATON  
Retreat? Perhaps our troops should  
not stop at Berlin?

SIR GEORGE  
First, you must get there.

Appears the Tsar.

TSAR  
Gentlemen. Gentlemen. Are we not on  
the same side?

The Ambassador places on his black brim hat and bows deeply.

SIR GEORGE  
Your Majesty, good night.

TSAR  
Here, we say, *spokoynoy nochi*.

Exits Sir George.

TSAR (CONT'D)  
Platon, you have never forgiven  
them for arming the Japanese with  
the latest weapons, have you?

PLATON  
No. Never.

TSAR  
Me either.

EXT. ST. PETERSBURG STATION - SAME TIME

At Petersburg station, Renko attempts to contact the palace  
by phone.

SOLDIERS hurry about the packed platform.

RENKO  
*Da. Da.* The line is being checked.  
I will be at the Phone Exchange  
soon to check the line myself!

CLICK! The other end of the line goes dead.

RENKO (CONT'D)  
We have no communication with the  
palace!

SMIRNOV

We've to assume the palace is surrounded.

RENKO

Tell the conductor we are leaving now!

SMIRNOV

Colonel, we need a few more minutes to board all the men.

RENKO

Nyet. We are leaving now. They will need to walk.

SMIRNOV

Move! Move! Get this thing moving!

With the RELEASE of the brakes, the train CHUGS ahead.

Soldiers scramble aboard, abandoning some of their equipment. Others run to catch it.

The last one to board is Colonel Renko.

The train hurries down the tracks and quickly is consumed in a syrupy fog.

RENKO (O.S.)

I pray we are not too late.

INT. ALEXANDER PALACE - STUDY - NIGHT

Sandro enters the Tsar's private study as a giant Cossack shadows him.

Tsar walks behind his desk. This is when he notices the scroll and wrapped package.

TSAR

A little early to exchange presents.

Nicholas motions his brother-in-law to take a seat.

Sandro gives a low formal bow.

Sandro's formality surprises the Tsar.

SANDRO

Your Majesty, I prefer to stand.

TSAR

As you wish. It appears I have been  
at the front too long.

SANDRO

I too, Your Majesty.

EXT. TRACKS TO TSARSKOE - SAME TIME

Renko's train comes to a SCREECHING halt.

SOLDIERS fall upon each other.

The Colonel gets up and moves toward the engine.

RENKO

What is it?

ENGINEER

There's an unscheduled train  
blocking the tracks.

RENKO

What would happen if we just rammed  
it?

ENGINEER

Ram, it? I'm paid to avoid such  
situations.

RENKO

Every second counts.

ENGINEER

Well, technically, we could attach  
ourselves to it and push it back to  
Tsarskoe. We have sufficient power.

RENKO

Then make it so.

ENGINEER

Just one problem, Colonel. If we  
ram it and the brakes are locked,  
it would derail us. It would be  
like us trying to plow through a  
brick wall if we were riding a  
bike.

RENKO

Then we are going to have to make  
certain the brakes are no longer  
applied. Get as close as you can.

Renko returns to the coach car.

RENKO (CONT'D)  
Men, terrorists have blocked our path to Tsarskoe. They stand between our worthy sovereign and us. Show no mercy!

TROOPS  
Yes, sir! Faith, Honor.

The train SLOWS. Another train blocks their path.

RENKO  
Loyalty.

INT. ALEXANDER PALACE - STUDY - SAME

Sandro lectures the Tsar.

SANDRO  
We are going through the most dangerous moment in the history of Russia. The question is, shall Russia be a great state, free and capable of developing and growing strong, or shall she submit to the iron German fist?

TSAR  
Sandro, please.

SANDRO  
Everyone feels this, and this is the reason everyone, except for the cowards and the enemies of this country, offers up their lives and all their possessions.

The Tsar sits back.

SANDRO (CONT'D)  
And at this solemn time, when we are being tested as men, in the highest sense, as Christians, certain forces within Russia are leading you, and, consequently, Russia, to inevitable ruin. I say you and Russia, because Russia cannot exist without a Tsar, but the Tsar alone cannot govern a country like Russia.

(MORE)

SANDRO (CONT'D)

It is indispensable that the ministries and the legislative chambers work together. The existing situation, with the whole responsibility resting on you and you alone, is untenable.

The Tsar listens.

SANDRO (CONT'D)

Disaffection is spreading very fast and the gulf between you and your people is growing wider. They need assurances.

TSAR

We all need assurance, Sandro. A man is dead. You dare come here to lecture me on mortality!

SANDRO

Niki, our problem is bigger than my son-in-law's involvement in Rasputin's death. You have my permission to hang him.

TSAR

More murder?

SANDRO

Murder? Add him to the millions of young men who shall never return from the front? Uh?

TSAR

I think about those young men every waking moment. Inspecting a line one day, and the next, it is half the damn size. And me on my white charger. Polished and clean. Galant even. Their faces radiating hate, because they know they are next.

SANDRO

Admittedly, you have a difficult job, Your Grace.

TSAR

Made more difficult by my own family.

SANDRO

Now is the time. You must take the initiative and grant your people a Constitution.

TSAR

A constitution, in due time.

SANDRO

You have no time left. A dishonorable escape from the war will not save you. Too much has already been lost to just walk away.

TSAR

Opinions. Opinions. Opinions. I am always surrounded by them.

SANDRO

Please, I beg of you.

TSAR

Sandro, Tolstoy once shared with me. The land is God's. It should not and cannot belong to anyone.

SANDRO

Sounds like him.

TSAR

All people have an equal right to it and the only concern is how to distribute it. Ahh... Tolstoy wrote such wonderful hate letters.

SANDRO

There is still time.

TSAR

Destroy three hundred years of Romanov rule?

SANDRO

Destroy? No. Save. You could give the country what she wants. A ministry of confidence. If you were to do that, the Duma would become your ally, and this war would be won.

TSAR

And what then would become of me?

SANDRO  
 You would be Nicholas the  
 Liberator, the Tsar who gave  
 Russia her true freedom.

TSAR  
 Freedom? I am not so certain.

EXT. ARSENAL - SAME TIME

Vlad sits high on his mount as he sees thousands of handheld  
 torches ignite the horseback regiments.

Vlad looks down at his pocket watch. One by one, the lights  
 leading to the palace extinguish.

VLAD  
 Right, on time.

Vlad's horse paces before his men.

VLAD (CONT'D)  
 Tonight, we fight so tomorrow  
 Imperial Russia shall not die!

His regiment REMOVES their sabers from their SHEATHS.

VLAD (CONT'D)  
 Let us seize what is ours. Glory!

Vlad SPURS his heels into his horse and GALLOPS off.

INT. ALEXANDER PALACE - STUDY - SAME

Sandro lectures the Tsar.

SANDRO  
 Niki, long ago you asked me for  
 help. Do you remember?

TSAR  
 When my father died. I told you  
 that I was not ready to be a Tsar.

SANDRO  
 Over twenty years have passed since  
 that moment. This evening, you can  
 lead Russia forward or return to  
 the past. The decision is yours  
 alone. Here. I brought you two  
 Christmas presents.

The duke lays flat the constitution prepared for Alexander II before his assassination.

SANDRO (CONT'D)

Tsar Alexander was to sign this, a Constitution. A hope for Russia and all its people.

TSAR

Yes. And the good people assassinated him for it.

The Tsar eyes the document.

The duke unwraps a tiny porcelain cup of gold and blue. He holds it in his hand.

SANDRO

This reminds us of the errors of our past.

The Tsar instantly recognizes the Coronation Cup given out to the masses in Moscow before the great stampede.

TSAR

My Coronation Cup.

The duke sets the cup on the Tsar's desk.

SANDRO

Which created a great stampede.

TSAR

It was a bloody start to my Reign.

SANDRO

We must not go back.

The Tsar KNOCKS the cup off his desk with the back of his hand. It SMASHES against the wall.

SANDRO (CONT'D)

Niki, you have an inner strength, a Faith, your Father never possessed. Trust your subjects, and offer them their freedom based on the model written down here, a Constitutional Monarchy.

The Tsar stands.

TSAR

Sandro, I am the Tsar. The Autocrat! I am in full control!

Before the duke could respond, the lights flicker. Then go immediately out. TOTAL DARKNESS.

From the dark, the duke SNICKERS.

SANDRO  
You were saying, Your Majesty?

TSAR  
Do shut up.

EXT. VETERANS HOSPITAL - ROOFTOP - SAME TIME

Protopopov watches the palace aglow.

PROTOPOPOV  
Soon, it will be over.

The palace lights flicker. Then, they go out. Where the palace once was, all he sees now is darkness.

Appears Rasputin.

RASPUTIN  
Shouldn't you be...

Rasputin's hand moves in a circle as if he's cranking a box.

SOUND: SIREN!

RASPUTIN (CONT'D)  
Alerting the authorities?

PROTOPOPOV  
You're not real.

Protopopov closes his eyes.

RASPUTIN  
Just because my body lays three floors below. Doesn't mean that I no longer exist.

PROTOPOPOV  
Either way, I prefer the Baroness, if it's not a bother.

RASPUTIN  
As you wish...

Rasputin transforms into the Baroness in a fur coat.

BARONESS  
Miss me?

PROTOPOPOV  
Da!

Protopopov jumps up on the ledge and dangles a leg over.

PROTOPOPOV (CONT'D)  
Sanity is so overrated.

INT. ALEXANDER PALACE - SAME TIME

Study door flies open. BAM!

Appears CHEKHOV, the Tsar's personal bodyguard.

CHEKHOV  
Your Majesty, are you all right?

Platon, Ernie, Serge and more SOLDIERS follow.

SERVANTS carry gas lamps.

TSAR  
What has happened?

CHEKHOV  
The power has been cut and there are reports of enemy forces within the palace gates.

PLATON  
It's Vlad. Captain, have your men bar all the doors.

Platon removes a shotgun from a nearby cabinet. Then, he fills his pockets with shells.

PLATON (CONT'D)  
If they want us, they've to come and get us.

SANDRO  
We have no idea what's out there.

Platon LOADS his shotgun.

PLATON  
It's most likely a small number from the Preobrazhenski Regiment mixed with Vlad's own men. The Cossacks shall soon wipe them out.

Enters another GUARDSMAN.

GUARDSMAN  
I have sent riders to the  
Cossacks' barracks, but no one has  
yet returned.

SANDRO  
Anything else?

GUARDSMAN  
Da. Their lights are still on.

Platon looks at Serge.

PLATON  
Go.

Serge SNAPS to attention.

SERGE  
Yes, Father!

PLATON  
Faith. Honor. Loyalty!

Serge leaves.

Like a closing fist, silence chokes the room.

TSAR  
Well, then. If Vlad wants a fight,  
that's what he's going to get.

Nicholas REMOVES a revolver from his desk, then CHECKS to  
make certain it is loaded.

TSAR (CONT'D)  
Captain, get my horse!

Sandro and Platon look at one another. Perhaps there was a  
little bit of his Father in Nicholas after all.

EXT. ALEXANDER PALACE - GROUNDS - SAME TIME

Serge rides like hell to the Cossack's barracks. As he slices  
across a field...

Three RIDERS approach with sabers in hand.

Serge UN-SLEEVES his saber and SPURS his horse.

SERGE

Ah!

Serge, one by one, STRIKES down and levels Vlad's horsemen.

INT. ALEXANDER PALACE - SAME TIME

Platon, Sandro, and the Tsar stand in the study.

SANDRO

Your Grace, we respect your  
bravery, but we mustn't jeopardize  
the Regime. And you are the Regime.

The Tsar FASTENS his sword.

TSAR

Sandro. For two and a half years I  
have been forced to watch. Not  
tonight.

Another OFFICER marches into the study.

SENTRIES flank him.

OFFICER

Your Majesty, there is a great  
force north of us near the old  
Arsenal. I saw them with my own  
eyes less than five minutes ago.

PLATON

How large?

OFFICER

One, perhaps two, regiments. All on  
horseback.

SANDRO

Two thousand men?

PLATON

Dear god.

TSAR

Within the palace grounds?

SANDRO

How?

EXT. WOODS NEAR COSSACK BARRACKS - SAME TIME

A COSSACK on guard duty takes a pull from a vodka bottle.

Appears Serge.

COSSACK

Halt!

Serge dismounts his horse. His tunic is covered in blood.

SERGE

Take me to your commander at once.

INT. WOOD-FRAMED BARRACKS - NIGHT

Through a cloud of gritty smoke, circle-dancers MOVE and CLAP as gypsies SING and musicians PLAY their instruments to a feverish BEAT.

Serge enters the barracks of His Majesty's Personal Guard, The Cossacks.

Folk dancers' flamboyant kicks cease and the MUSIC and NOISE dies out as they turn to look at Serge's blood-covered tunic.

Serge snakes through the crowd.

Tall bald COSSACKS cling on to big bosom WOMEN.

SERGE

Captain, the palace is under siege.

COSSACK CAPTAIN

What do you mean? Under siege?

The Captain's SECOND appears.

SECOND

The Germans?!?

SERGE

Look.

The Captain moves to a window. He drags back the heavy curtains. Darkness is where the palace lights should be.

SERGE (CONT'D)

The Tsar is in danger.

COSSACK CAPTAIN

(to his second)

Call!!!

The Second grabs the phone's receiver.

SECOND  
The line is dead.

COSSACK CAPTAIN  
Prepare the horses!

Another SOLDIER brings him his jacket and hat.

SERGE  
Captain, General Vladimir is  
storming the palace. He may already  
have two or three regiments in the  
woods north of the palace.

COSSACK CAPTAIN  
No matter.

More Cossacks pour out of the...

BARRACKS.

COSSACK CAPTAIN (CONT'D)  
They shall not see the morning.  
Guards and Brothers! *The Great Don*  
*needs us!*

Cossack Captain climbs up on his mount.

Serge does the same.

COSSACK CAPTAIN (CONT'D)  
Tonight, we will drink glory or  
death! Annihilate, all who stand  
between us and our Tsar!!!

INT. ALEXANDER PALACE - SAME TIME

Exits the Tsar.

Follows Olga and Anastasia.

ANASTASIA  
Father!

OLGA  
Where are you going?

TSAR  
Olga, get your Brother and Sisters.  
Join Mother in the cellar.

OLGA  
Why?!?

                          TSAR  
Just do it.  
                          (in Russian)  
Please?

                          OLGA  
Okay.

Olga grabs Anastasia's hand and walks away.

                          TSAR  
Commander. You are now in charge of  
my family's safety. Guard them with  
your life.

COMMANDER #2 appears. He removes his service pistol.

                          COMMANDER  
I shall, Your Majesty.

EXT. ALEXANDER PALACE - SAME TIME

The Tsar walks out of the house through the...  
COLONNADE.

Nicholas hurries down the steps.

Erie appears buttoning up his trousers.

                          ERNIE  
Hey, I was just taking a...

                          SANDRO  
We know.

                          TSAR  
Get inside, Ernie.

Ernie removes his sidearm.

                          ERNIE  
Not my style, Niki.

                          TSAR  
As you wish.

Through the fog, the sound of a large mass MOVES.

PLATON  
They are coming.

The Tsar's entourage all mount their horses.

EXT. PALACE GROUNDS - SAME TIME

From his vantage point from a hilltop high above the palace, all looks to be in order. A line of cannons are pointed to protect their flank.

A COMMANDER offers Major Fedorov a smoke.

FEDOROV  
(in Russian)  
Thank you.

COMMANDER  
Vladimir's Regiment and the  
Preobrazhenski Guards should  
be mounted by now. In twenty  
minutes, the palace would be  
ours.

Major Fedorov smokes a cigarette to calm his nerves.

COMMANDER (CONT'D)  
Major!?!

The fog lifts.

FEDOROV  
Our battery has a splendid view of  
the field. By tomorrow, he will  
both be Generals.

Fedorov walks in front of his big guns. They all point towards the woods.

The sound of a large force CUTS through the woods.

FEDOROV (CONT'D)  
Commander?!?

COMMANDER  
Cossacks.

From the woods emerges a sick HOWL.

Fedorov's MEN stare at one another.

The dark refuge hints at nothing but the swelling NOISE of men on horseback traveling fast through the undergrowth.

Below and across the frozen marsh, another CRY comes from the woods, this one closer.

FEDOROV  
Prepare a volley. Align the  
cannons.

COMMANDER  
Yes, sir!

FEDOROV  
See to it. Our guns make short  
order of them.

The Cossacks EXPLODE through the woods at full GALLOP.

Like black ants fleeing a trampled anthill, they EMERGE from the dark woods and devour the white meadow.

COSSACKS  
To the death!!!

The cannons BOOM down the line one by one, each puffy cloud obscures the Fedorov's view a wee bit more.

FEDOROV  
Fire at will!

The artillery SAILS over the Cossacks' heads and land in the woods behind them. Timber EXPLODES, causes a glorious fire show.

The Cossacks, unaffected from the first volley, press on.

The next SALVOS are better aimed by Fedorov's men. BOOM!

This time, several Cossack horseback riders fall.

The Cossacks separate into two groups. One group rides in the direction of the palace. Another heads directly uphill towards Fedorov's battery of guns.

The Cossacks CHARGE and lower their lances.

FEDOROV (CONT'D)  
Steady, men. Steady.

Some of his men begin to turn and run.

FEDOROV (CONT'D)  
Vlad, I told you we needed those  
damn machine guns.

Fedorov's men scatter.

The Cossacks with their long sabers CHOP DOWN at them.

Fedorov runs for his horse. Turns back, sees the hilltop littered with men.

One Cossack lines-up the Major with his long lance. He rides straight toward the Major.

Fedorov feebly FIRES off one SHOT. He misses.

FEDOROV (CONT'D)  
Damn you, Zurin! Damn, ugh!

A Cossack's lance pierces through the Major's body.

EXT. GROUNDS SOUTH OF THE ARSENAL - SAME TIME

Vlad, Kozlov, and Ivanov all stop as the cannon fire CEASES.

IVANOV  
Fedorov finished them...

SOUND: Cossacks WAR CRIES.

IVANOV (CONT'D)  
Maybe not.

KOZLOV  
General, our flank is exposed.

VLAD  
Move forward!

Vlad PRODS his horse hard.

VLAD (CONT'D)  
To the palace!

EXT. THE FIELD - NIGHT

Serge had been under fire since breaking the tree line. As they pause to collect themselves, they see the lancers closing in on the heavy guns. At that moment, the field in front of them EXPLODES into a dark murky cloud.

Serge braces himself for the worst, but as he rides through the falling snow and dirt, he sees the Captain's horse.

COSSACK CAPTAIN  
Hell of a night!

The Prince tightens his reins.

SERGE

Charge!

Serge reaches the hill's crest. There, he witnesses the size and strength of Vlad's army.

SERGE (CONT'D)

Oh, my god.

Vlad's army appears invincible.

Nonetheless, the Cossack Captain wastes no time. Like a moth to a hot flame, he leads his men straight toward them.

EXT. ALEXANDER PALACE - SAME TIME

Vlad, within his Army, looks over his shoulder.

The Cossacks approach.

VLAD

Cossacks.

Ivanov and Kozlov ride beside Vlad.

IVANOV

Damn waste of wine and women.

KOZLOV

General, would you like me to lead a charge?

VLAD

Why bother? There numbers are small. We must hurry!

The palace gets closer.

Vlad notices a small squadron of men riding towards him.

Kozlov sees them too.

KOZLOV

Palace guards. Not a threat.

VLAD

Destroy them.

The fog is gone now, and the night becomes crystal clear.

EXT. ALEXANDER PALACE - SAME TIME

The Tsar and his small entourage of men charges across the field toward Vlad's position.

On horseback, Platon with a shotgun strung on his shoulder, shouts to Sandro on a horse beside him.

PLATON  
Just like old times, ay, Sandro?

Sandro smiles and rises his revolver. Then, he sees the Tsar's white charger bolts ahead of the pack.

SANDRO  
Niki! No!

Ernie, Platon, and Sandro SPUR their horses.

VLAD'S POV.

Vlad, closes in and realizes it is no ordinary guards.

The Tsar approaches.

VLAD  
Niki?!?

Vlad rushes to intercept.

IVANOV  
The Tsar's personal body guards.

THE CONVERGENCE.

The Tsar brings his horse to a halt.

The horse breath EXHALES a frozen cloud.

His Majesty's Life Guard slows and moves to protect him.

Friends and foe encircles one another.

The Tsar's bodyguard, Chekhov, urges his horse closer to the Sovereign. The giant holds his saber in his hand as he eyeballs Vlad's men.

CHEKHOV  
Traitors!

Vlad, Ivanov, and Kozlov arrive.

Sandro and Platon both reach Nicholas.

The Tsar's steed SNORTS.

Nicholas looks magnificent and looks god-like high atop his snow-colored mount.

TSAR

I say! What fool brought you out on a night like this?!?

Troops from both sides SNICKER.

TSAR (CONT'D)

Gentlemen, I am before you. What is it you wish to declare to your Tsar?

Only SILENCE greets him.

TSAR (CONT'D)

Come now. Before we all freeze to death. Ask me anything.

Vlad edges closer to the Tsar's mount.

VLAD

Abdicate. Or die!

The Cossacks arrive.

The Tsar signals them to stop.

Platon rises his shotgun to Vlad's head.

TSAR

General Konstantin, please lower your fire arm.

Platon obeys.

TSAR (CONT'D)

Don Cossacks, please lower your weapons. You too, Chekhov.

VLAD

You don't understand, Niki. You are no longer giving the orders.

TSAR

Abdicate? Men, am I no longer worthy of your trust?

IVANOV

Your Majesty. The war has turned the world upside down.

KOZLOV

Grand Duke Vladimir is a far better choice for restoring our ranks to proper order.

TSAR

Proper order. I see.

VLAD

Niki, you have two choices. Abdicate or die. Your decision. You are surrounded.

The ground SHAKES!

From the south, approaches four thousand regimental RIDERS.

They are the combined regimental forces of the Horse Guards and the Dragoons from Pavlovski Palace.

TSAR

Vlad, I'm not the one surrounded.

VLAD

Kill him!

The Tsar UNSHEATHES his sword.

TSAR

You can try!

VLAD

So be it.

Platon raises his shotgun and FIRES at Vlad. BOOM!

Kozlov SPURS his mount before Vlad. The blast decapitates him in a red cloud of blood.

Platon tosses down his empty shotgun, and grabs his saber.

WAR CRY. The Cossacks swing their sabers to reach their Tsar.

Vlad sees a headless Kozlov still in his mount.

An enormous cavalry CHARGES from the south.

IVANOV

General, I think...

VLAD

I know!

The Tsar's entourage CHARGES north to meet up with them.

Vlad and his men follow.

VLAD (CONT'D)  
Our only chance now at survival is  
kill him.

Vlad charges Platon.

Vlad's army is outnumbered. They thin and scatter.

PLATON  
It's over, Vlad! Surrender.  
You must realize it by now.

VLAD  
I have lost the first battle, but  
not the war.

PLATON  
You're finished.

Platon engages with Vlad.

VLAD  
By tomorrow, I will have another  
army under me!

PLATON  
Traitor! By tomorrow you will be  
dead!

Platon's saber FALLS upon Vlad's sword. CRASH!

Vlad's retaliates.

Blows CRASH down on Konstantin. Platon protects himself.  
Though, his lack of strength surprises him.

Sandro, from a distance, aims his pistol at Vlad as he  
attacks Platon. BANG!

Vlad, through luck or misfortune, turns just in the nick of  
time. The bullet grazes his shoulder.

Serge sees his Father from the far end of the field.

Platon holds up his saber.

PLATON (CONT'D)  
Faith! Honor! Loyalty!

Vlad SWINGS his sword down hard. SLAM! SLAM!

The Dragoons arrive.

PLATON (CONT'D)  
You're surrounded, Vlad.

Vlad sees the General is right.

Serge cuts through Vlad's men to reach his Father.

VLAD  
Enough, Platon! You've wasted  
enough of my time.

Vlad sword CRASHES down upon Platon. CHOP. CHOP. CHOP.

Vlad's sword CUTS deep into Platon, AGAIN and AGAIN.

Platon falls off his horse.

Serge sees his Father fall and GALLOPS toward him.

SERGE  
No!!!

Vlad salutes Platon with his bloody sword.

VLAD  
Platon, you fought well.  
(in Russian)  
Good-bye.

Vlad GALLOPS off.

Serge REINS in his horse.

SERGE  
Father!

Serge dismounts. He races to his Father.

Platon is dying.

PLATON  
Get him.

Sandro and Ernie arrives.

SANDRO  
Finish him, Serge. We will watch  
over your Father.

Ernie dismounts and sees to Platon.

Serge mounts his horse. He brings his saber's blade to his face, to salute his Father, then rides off.

From across the frozen meadow, Vlad's large horse moves towards the protection of the nearby woods, and the Ruins.

Nicholas arrives and sees the fallen Platon. He dismounts.

TSAR

How is he?

Ernie's blood covered tunic states the obvious.

ERNIE

He's...

The Tsar moves closer and cradles his General's bloody head. Tears fill the corners of Nicholas' eyes.

TSAR

Platon. Please forgive me. I didn't know.

SANDRO

He knew it was the Empress' doing Niki.

Sandro mounts his horse and GALLOPS toward the Ruins.

EXT. ALEXANDER PALACE - GROUNDS - SAME TIME

Vlad rides to...

The Ruins.

At full GALLOP, Vlad eludes patrols of crazed Cossacks.

VLAD

We need more men.

CRIES of pain and death fill the night.

Vlad looks down at his bloody sword Ivanov arrives.

IVANOV

General.

VLAD

Konstantin deserved a better end.

IVANOV

General, the battle is not yet over. Our men can still fight.

VLAD

I miss the fog.

The Cossacks close in on them.

IVANOV  
General, we must split up if we are  
to have any chance of surviving.

Ivanov turns his horse.

IVANOV (CONT'D)  
I will buy you some time, General.  
See you in hell!

Ivanov SPURS his horse.

IVANOV (CONT'D)  
AHHH!!!

VLAD  
Save me a seat, Ivanov!

Vlad reaches the security of the trees.

IVANOV (O.S.)  
Long live Russia! Long live Tsar  
Vla-UGH!!!

Vlad hurries down the wooded ridge. His horse STUMBLES and  
throws him. Then, his animal RUNS off.

EXT. THE RUINS - SAME TIME

Vlad grabs his revolver and sword. He walks out of the woods  
into the brightness of the moonlight.

The Ruins, an old fort made up of two stone towers connected  
by a narrow arched Bridge.

SOUND: Vlad purser SLICES through the woods.

SERGE (O.S.)  
Vlad!

VLAD  
Let's finish it. Give me your  
horse.

Serge comes into the light.

SERGE  
As far as I am concerned, we are  
both already dead.

VLAD

You want me, boy. Then come and get me.

SERGE

You killed my father.

Serge leaps down from his horse. Then, with flair, he UNSLEATHS his sword.

VLAD

Now I am going to kill you.

Vlad tests his sword.

VLAD (CONT'D)

Do what you must, Serge. I need a horse. And yours will do.

SERGE

Here she is... your freedom. Now, all you must do is get past me.

Vlad raises his sword in a salute.

VLAD

Your last chance, Serge. Join me or die.

Serge STRIKES his first blow.

SERGE

Never!!!

EXT. THE RUINS - BRIDGE - SAME TIME

Serge and Vlad battle it out.

MARIE (V.O.)

From the distance, their silhouettes dance across the silvery moon. It is a timeless struggle of pain and pride. Back and forth, they creep over the old bridge. The two men exchange blow after blow. CRASH after heavy CRASH. In the end, it appears to be a stalemate. Vlad is twice the size of Serge. Yet, the Prince is fierce, and fights for revenge of his Father.

VLAD  
You're quite a swordsman, Serge.

Serge replies with one more powerful BLOW, one that lands clean and draws blood.

SERGE  
I learned from the best.

VLAD  
Ahh.

Vlad brings his sword up one last time and salutes Serge.

VLAD (CONT'D)  
The day is yours. But I am afraid  
your horse is mine.

Serge rushes at him.

SERGE  
Not quite.

VLAD  
Quite.

Vlad raises his revolver. He pulls the hammer back and aims low. Then, he squeezes the trigger. BANG!

The bullet sends Serge flying off the bridge. He falls hard. The Prince does not scream. He is too mad to scream.

Vlad looks down from the Bridge to Serge on the ground.

VLAD (CONT'D)  
You, my boy, are worthy of the  
Konstantin name. Remember that.

Vlad runs off the Bridge to Serge's horse.

VLAD (CONT'D)  
You're a good fighter. But  
sometimes that is not enough.

Serge holds his leg in agony.

SERGE  
You can't escape, Vlad! You can  
never escape!!!

Vlad mounts.

VLAD

I'm certain our paths shall cross  
again.

Sandro emerges, like some medieval knight, from the tree  
line. He holds a long lance. He PROPS his horse to attack.

SANDRO

Ya!!!

VLAD

Sandro.

He raises his lance as he CHARGES directly at Vlad.

SANDRO

Traitor!

Vlad raises his sword in salute.

VLAD

Long live Russia!

CRASH! Sandro's lance finds its mark.

Vlad falls in one pass.

SANDRO

Whoa!

Sandro jumps off his horse to reach Serge.

SANDRO (CONT'D)

You okay?

Serge gets up.

SERGE

Let's finish this.

They return to the spot where Vlad fell.

Vlad is near death.

SANDRO

You came close, Vlad. Nicholas is  
still Tsar.

VLAD

Not for long.

Vlad SPITS blood.

VLAD (CONT'D)  
As I die, so does Imperial Russia.

SANDRO  
We will take our chances.

Vlad grows still.

EXT. ALEXANDER PALACE - NIGHT

Sandro and Serge dismount beneath the long Colonnade aglow in rich and abundant torchlight.

Serge sees the Tsar. His tunic is covered in blood.

SERGE  
Father?!?

TSAR  
He's gone, Son. He passed away in my arms five minutes ago. I'm...

SERGE  
No.

TSAR  
He was a great man.

SANDRO  
He died, as he lived... with style.

Behind them, thousands of MEN with torches search for Vladimir's remaining men. Those hidden in the woods are doomed. There would be no mercy for them tonight. BURSTS of GUNFIRE and CRIES of pain are muffled by the passing WIND.

TSAR  
Let's go in.

Ernie stands on the palace steps with the Empress.

TSAR (CONT'D)  
Ernie?!

ERNIE  
Yes, Your Majesty.

The Tsar raises his revolver to Ernie's head.

EMPRESS  
Niki!!!

TSAR  
Swear to me, on your honor...

ERNIE  
I will tell no one of this. On my  
Sister's life. I swear.

SANDRO  
That will have to do.

The Empress storms off.

TSAR  
Sandro.

As they enter the palace, the lights that line the long  
driveway come on, one by one.

ERNIE  
We have power.

SANDRO  
Yes, but for how long?

INT. ALEXANDER PALACE - STUDY - SAME TIME

Serge stands above Platon's lifeless body.

A droplet of Platon's blood falls onto the marble room.

DRIP.

MATCH CUT:  
PLATON'S FACE.

EXT. CEMETERY OF THE LADY OF KAZAN - DAY

Platon's lies in his casket.

The Cathedral looms in the background. Before them, a large  
vault that bears his family's name, KONSTANTIN.

A bandaged-up Serge peers down upon his Father's face.

SERGE  
Say hi to Mother.

Serge closes the casket's lid.

COLOR GUARDS drape the casket with the Imperial Flag.

Serge's eyes move to guests: Sandro, Marie, Jones, Sir George, and Olga.

Sandro manages to give Serge a half-hearted smile.

Appears an old Orthodox PRIEST. The clergyman concludes the service with words from the book of Isaiah.

ORTHODOX PRIEST

Though your sins are like scarlet,  
I will make them white as snow,  
though as red as crimson, I will  
make them as white as wool. Oh,  
Lord, receive this righteous  
soldier back into Your glorious  
fold. Amen.

Olga approaches him.

OLGA

It is a shame my Father could not  
be here... But Rasputin's burial is  
today.

SERGE

That makes sense.

The Prince looks out into the park-like setting filled up with snow-covered gravestones.

SERGE (CONT'D)

What of Dmitri?

OLGA

Father ordered him to Persia?

SERGE

Persia?

OLGA

Some deal he made with Mother.

SERGE

I see. What are the two of you  
going to do?

OLGA

Probably elope.

This makes Serge smile.

Olga gives Serge a hug.

OLGA (CONT'D)

I love you.

SERGE

Same. Thank you, for coming.

Olga nods and departs.

Marie arrives.

MARIE

Platon now rests beside his beloved.

SERGE

Somehow, that makes it somewhat bearable.

Marie gives him a peck on the cheek.

MARIE

Stay playing that piano, Serge.

SERGE

I shall try.

Marie leaves.

Jones comes over.

JONES

He was a good man, Serge. I will be at the hotel if you need me.

SERGE

Thanks, Jones. Save me a seat at the bar.

JONES

Done.

Jones pats Serge on the back and returns to his car.

Sandro remains.

SANDRO

Good sermon. Your Father would have liked it.

SERGE

Really? How so?

SANDRO

It was short.

Serge laughs.

SERGE

Da. I suppose so.

SANDRO

Let's get out of here.

SERGE

What's next, Sandro?

Serge walks with the aid of a cane.

SANDRO

I don't know.

In the distance, nearly shielded by headstones, is Renko, alone and mysterious as usual.

Sandro and Renko share a professional nod as they pass one another.

They walk through an area of waist-high headstones. The high stone pillars of Cathedral of the Lady of Kazan loom behind them.

Serge stops, leans on his cane.

SERGE

Ernie went home empty-handed?

SANDRO

Tuesday, the Tsar officially severed communication with the Kaiser. The British are pleased.

SERGE

And the others?

SANDRO

I think His Majesty wants this all to be swept under the rug. Felix was ordered to his country estate.

SERGE

I've heard that. But, haven't heard a word about the Palace Coup.

SANDRO

And you won't. It never happened.

SERGE

How?

SANDRO

The papers fell in. Reported that Vlad died in his sleep of an apparent heart attack.

SERGE

So his name is to be added to the honored dead?

SANDRO

Seems that way.

SERGE

Hmm. Will there be a Constitution?

SANDRO

I hope so. Nicholas sees the logic of it, but would rather wait until to declare it from a position of power. Spring, perhaps.

SERGE

Spring is a long way off.

SANDRO

I know. But he doesn't want it to appear that he's weak, or being forced into the decision.

SERGE

I see.

As the WIND picks up, Sandro throws his arm around Serge's shoulder. Then, he begins a story.

SANDRO

Serge, have I ever told you about the time your Father and I...

The wind CUTS in.

EXT. NICHOLAS STATION - DAY

Serge climbs aboard a train as it prepares to depart. As he enters his compartment.

SUPER: "Two weeks later."

Serge finds an envelope lying flat atop his seat. He fans his fingertips through his hair. He musters his courage and takes his seat. The Prince grabs the manila envelope.

Serge knows with one glance, it's from Renko.

Serge TEARS into the envelope. At that exact moment, a piece of paper frees itself and floats to the floor.

Serge picks the paper up.

RENKO (V.O)

Serge, all the beautiful words are from others. I can offer you these. FAITH, HONOR, and LOYALTY. Your father was molded by these three words. What else is there to say? He asked me to give this letter to you before you left the city. When you didn't leave, I decided to hold on to it for safekeeping. I am thankful I did. I don't know what he wrote. Regardless, never doubt the fact that he truly loved you. He did. So, take care, and live your life. And don't let the war work the good out of you. Renko.

Serge's gazes down upon his Father's handwriting.

PLATON (V.O)

You, are the legacy of the love your Mother and I shared...

Tears form at the corners of Serge's eyes as he reads.

He looks up, as the train pulls away from the station. This is when, he sees Renko.

The Inspector stands at the end of the platform, bundled up in his great coat against the cold.

Serge waves to him and mouths.

SERGE

(in Russian)

Thank you.

Renko waves back.

RENKO

(in Russian)

You're welcome.

Then, Renko is gone, replaced by the sight of weathered warehouses. A war poster covers one. It catches Serge's eye. Reminds him that he is now beginning his journey from who he was, to who he wants to be.

MARIE (V.O.)

Tolstoy once told me, history would be an excellent thing, if only it were true. Truth...

(giggles)

Tolstoy was a terrible dancer. Yet, he was a most excellent lover. Hmm. The memories. Well, farewell from St. Petersburg...

(in Russian)

Good-bye.

FADE OUT:

**THE END**

NOTE: For those who wait. Show snapshots of the real Romanovs, Sir George, Dukes, etc. After the credits.

SUPER: "What Happened Next?"

SUPER: "Sometimes—history needs a push. Lenin."

SERGE (V.O.)

Support for Nicholas's Regime faded until it reached an all-time low in late February of 1917; then His Majesty under enormous strain was forced to relent his full authority to a new Provisional Government. This government formed and supported by those loyal to the Empire sought to right the Russian ship currently adrift. They failed. Leaving the door wide open for Lenin and the Bolsheviks (financially backed by the German Kaiser) to overthrow the Provisional Government creating a bloody civil war. Those loyal to the old ways, the Whites, fought hard to oppose the forces of the new formed Soviet government, the Reds. During this power struggle, Nicholas and his family had been held against their will, in house arrest, first by the members of the Provisional Government than those of the Soviet.

(MORE)

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

In the summer of 1918, General Alexeiev, one of Tsar Nicholas's most loyal Generals, led a fraction of the White Army towards the industrial city of Yekaterinburg, a territory on the southern steppes of the Ural Mountains in Siberia held at the time by the Red Army and where the Soviet regime headed by Vladimir Lenin decided to detain Their Majesties and their five children. On the early morning of July 17, 1918, as General Alexeiev's forces big guns pulverized the Red Army protecting the city, the last Tsar of Russia had been awakened in the wee hours of the morning and informed of his fate.

NOTE: Pavel Medvedev, a soldier of the Red Army, witnessed Tsar Nicholas's murder firsthand wrote. Quoted from Robert Wilton's, The Last Days of the Romanovs. Wilton was the Times reporter Jones bumped into at the Hotel Europe when he was searching for Serge.

*I am Pavel Spiridonovich Medvedev, Thirty-One years of age, and belong to the Orthodox Church; able to read and write; born a peasant of the Sissert factory of the Yekaterinburg district...we entered the lower floor of the house. After entering the corner room, adjoining the storeroom with a sealed door, Yurovsky [Lenin's agent and the captain of the guards] ordered chairs to be brought. His assistant brought three chairs. One chair was given to the emperor, one to the empress, and a third to the heir.*

*The Empress sat by a window, near the rear column of the arch. Behind her stood three of her daughters... the heir and the emperor sat side by side, almost in the middle of the room. Dr. Botkin stood behind the heir. The maid, a tall woman, stood by the left post of the door leading to the storeroom. By her side stood one of the tsar's daughters (the fourth)... It looked as if all of them guessed their fate, but not a single sound was uttered. Eleven men walked into the room at the same time [began firing]: Yurovsky, his assistant, the two from the extraordinary commission, the Cheka, and seven Latvians.*

*I saw all the members of the tsar's family lying on the floor, with many wounds in their bodies. The blood was gushing. The doctor, the maid and the servants had also been shot... the heir was still alive, and moaning. Yurovsky walked over to him and shot him two or three more times. The heir fell still.*

## SERGE (V.O)

Such was the final moments spent of  
Tsar Nicholas II, Empress  
Alexandra, their five children and  
a few loyal servants. Eight days  
after the executions, the town of  
Yekaterinburg was captured by the  
White Army. The Others...

NOTE: Images and texts.

**Grand Duke Alexander Mikhailovich-Sandro**, authored three books on Imperial Russia before his death in the French Alps in 1933.

**Grand Duke Paul Alexandrovich**-Nicholas's uncle, shot by the Bolsheviks in a courtyard of the Fortress of Sts. Peter and Paul, January 30, 1919.

**Grand Duke Dmitri Pavelovich**-the tsar's favorite nephew. Married an American heiress from Cincinnati, Ohio. Died in 1942.

**Grand Duke Andrei Vladimirovich**-Nicholas's cousin. Married Mathilda-Marie Kchessinska (prima ballerina) in Paris in 1921. Died 1956.

**Alexander Protopopov**-Minister of the Interior. Executed by the Bolsheviks January 1, 1918.

**Sir George Buchanan**-British Envoy to Russia until 1918. After the Russian Revolution, he returned to Britain to finish his memoir, My Mission to Russia and Other Diplomatic Memories. Died 1924.

**Mathilda-Marie Kchessinska**-Prima Ballerina Assoluta of His Majesty's Imperial Ballet. She married Grand Duke Andrei in 1921. Lived in Paris as a ballet instructor until her death in 1971.

**Prince Felix Yusupov**-sole heir to Russia's wealthiest family lost everything during the Revolution. Died practically penniless in Paris 1967.

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

What happened to me, Prince Serge?  
Find out next in Champagne Haze.  
Set in Nineteen-Twenty-Seven Paris,  
it is a story of the 'Lost  
Generation' trying to find  
themselves.