

The Imperial Waltz

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Gabrielle Burton
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FADE IN

An ornate gold enameled design fills the screen. MAIN CREDITS begin over the image.

A highly romantic waltz plays: "The Imperial Waltz." It's like a spirited, sweeping Strauss waltz, but there's also something dark and Russian about it.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

The ornate gold enameled design turns out to be a Faberge egg on a dressing room table.

We're in a large, shadowed bedroom with dark red walls. It's stuffed with antique things--a canopied bed, velvet drapes, a leather trunk, a profusion of Russian objects--religious icons, gold candlesticks, an ornate silver tray stamped with the imperial double eagle, a Russian doll, etc.

The waltz gradually intensifies until it soars.

We see an old woman's hands, well-kempt, with elaborate rings, resting on the dressing table. The table has an excess of sumptuous old fashioned clutter--silver monogrammed vanity set, elaborate combs, bottles, etc.

MORE CREDITS as the hands open a cut glass perfume bottle, dab each wrist with the crystal dipper.

A wrinkled hand splays. Another ring with a huge amber stone, almost garish, is slipped on the middle finger.

Bracelets are clasped on both arms beneath frilly lace cuffs. A cameo brooch is fastened at the neck. Touching the brooch, the woman speaks British English with a slight Russian accent.

ANNA

You gave this to me, remember?

A MAN'S VOICE answers from the dimness. We glimpse a shadowy shape in a chair, a sleeve cuff with officer's stripes.

MALE O.S.

I wish I could have given you the world.

ANNA

Oh you did, Gregory, you did.

ANNA, 86, leans close to the antique mirror that's in need of silvering.

FLASHBACK: INT. PALACE - NIGHT ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA - 1916
BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

A YOUNG GIRL, 15, catches her reflection in one of the scores of gilt mirrors lining the great ballroom. She wears a beautiful MAUVE SILK DRESS and is flushed with excitement.

Also reflected are immense gold and crystal chandeliers. Hundreds of guests in tails, white dress uniforms with gold braid, sparkling medals, velvets, magnificent jewels. A full orchestra in formal wear plays. Everything is Tsarist excess, conspicuous dazzling extravagance.

In the mirror, A YOUNG COUNTESS, also 15, smiles at the young girl in complicity. They turn to A HANDSOME OFFICER in his 20's.

The orchestra segues into "The Imperial Waltz." All eyes turn to the Tsar who reaches his hand out to the Tsaritsa, and they begin the waltz, soon joined by other nobles.

The young officer reaches out his hand to the young girl in the mauve dress. Without hesitation she takes it and they waltz away to the soaring music--the same music that opened the movie but much bigger, fuller, richer, extravagantly romantic.

As the music rises to a climax, the young beautiful couple turn and turn and turn, the feeling is almost vertigo. They waltz by the Tsar and Tsaritsa, and don't even see the Tsaritsa look at the young girl's mauve dress with approval. Their eyes are locked on each other.

The girl's DAZZLED EYES looking up at the officer become Anna's eyes looking into the mirror.

RETURN TO PRESENT

MALE VOICE O.S.

What are you going to do?

She assesses herself and smooths back her perfect white hair.

MALE VOICE O.S.

(repeats in exact same tone)

What are you going to do?

She rises regally and looks toward the figure in the dimness.

ANNA

I am going to do what I do every day at four o'clock.

From the back, we watch her cross the room. At the doorway, she lifts the needle off the record playing on the Victrola; the waltz stops. She opens the bedroom door and steps into light and silence.

INT. STAIRWAY - DAY - SAN FRANCISCO, MARCH, 1987

Outside Anna's room, the big renovated house is airy, au courant, even hip, but everything seems stilled and discrete. Modern paintings. Black and white photographs on white walls. A small bronze of two men embracing.

From the back, we follow Anna down the staircase, one hand on the carved bannister. Her posture is perfect, her steps slow and measured as if she descends into a great hall.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

The door swings open and Anna enters the big modern kitchen. For the first time we see her fully from the front in the light. She's extraordinary in her formal, old fashioned dress. She's a museum piece.

She puts the teakettle on. She opens a cupboard and takes out a Sevre china teacup and saucer.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

The living room is large and yellow and cheerful. The one discordant note is a hospital bed by the great bay window.

Anna sits in a wing chair near the empty bed that's stripped of bedding. She stirs her tea, puts her repousse spoon on the Sevre saucer.

DAVID O.S.

Do you remember the night we met?

Anna looks without surprise at the bed, NO LONGER EMPTY, NOW LAVISHLY MADE UP with fine linens, down comforter, etc., and at ITS OCCUPANT, DAVID, 61, propped up on pillows. David's handsome face is very thin, almost ethereal looking, as if stripped down to pure beauty.

An ornate lacquered tray on his lap is beautifully set with repousse silver, Sevre china service, Baccarat crystal--a goblet with crushed ice, a liqueur glass with amber liquid.

ANNA

Of course I remember.

David's lover TEDDY, 40, good looking, nattily dressed, sits nearby.

TEDDY

We all know that story by heart.

DAVID

Indulge us, Teddy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Teddy, looking less than thrilled, waves: Be my guest.

David fingers his repousse spoon and smiles.

INT. CHATEAU DINING ROOM - NIGHT - OUTSIDE PARIS, 1946

A spirited dinner party is in progress. Elaborate candelabra, china, repousse silver, crystal, flowers, etc. The guests are an eclectic mix: minor royalty, intellectuals, an ambassador, a film star, etc. Clothes range from dressy 40's fashions to formal wear.

Anna, 45, elegant and beautiful, sits next to David, 20, a beautiful angelic youth in an American army private's uniform. He's dazzled by his surroundings. He hesitates before his array of silverware.

ANNA

(whispers)

Start on the outside and work your way in.

David picks up a repousse spoon, gives Anna an absolutely beatific smile, and whispers back.

DAVID

No one could be more on the outside than I.

Their HOST, a middle aged man with a dissipated face, passes, puts his hand on David's shoulder in a proprietary way.

DISSIPATED HOST

(with an edge)

Don't monopolize our young liberator, Anna.

ANNA

I wouldn't dream of offending you. Who else has soap and chocolates these days?

She slowly, sensuously, bites into a chocolate, her eyes on her host--both flirtation and dare--until he laughs and moves on.

ANNA CONT'D

Be careful of him. He likes to hurt people.

DAVID

I can't believe I'm here. I never dreamed there was a world like this.

ANNA

You remind me of myself a long time ago.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Laughing, she whispers in his ear.

ANNA CONT'D
We're kindred, Davide.

RETURN TO PRESENT

A MAN IN COVERALLS, **BAY AREA MEDICAL RENTAL** printed on his pocket, clears his throat again.

MAN IN COVERALLS
Pardon me, Ma'am.

Anna looks without interest as the man in coveralls wheels THE EMPTY HOSPITAL BED out of the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The house is a shell, the paintings and most furniture gone. One of the few objects left is the small bronze of the two men.

Anna sits perfectly calm in the same wing chair as movers carry out furniture around her and Teddy. Teddy, intense, is thinner, doesn't look well.

TEDDY
Let me say this again slowly. This house now belongs to the insurance company who paid all David's medical expenses. They don't want houseguests.

For a moment, Anna looks disconcerted, then her face sets in determination.

ANNA
All right then. I'll come with you.

TEDDY
(laughs)
Over my dead body.

They stare at each other in a standoff.

ANNA
Goodbye then.

Teddy throws his hands up in the air. He picks up the bronze, and leaves.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Anna sits in the same chair, now the only furniture left in the living room. She reads Dostoyevsky's Crime and Punishment in Russian.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The doorbell RINGS O.S. She ignores it.

The front door OPENS O.S. Anna turns a page.

EXT. HALLWAY - SAME

A REAL ESTATE AGENT and a FEMALE CLIENT enter the hallway.

AGENT
You're going to love this house. And
it's available immediately.

The client exclaims over the mahogany wainscoting.

AGENT CONT'D
Don't you love these French doors?

She opens the French doors to the living room and startles.

AGENT CONT'D
Oh my goodness, you frightened me.

Anna looks at the two women impassively, marks her place in her book. The agent and the client exchange glances.

AGENT
I'm Nancy Kernan.

ANNA
How do you do?

AGENT
And this is Mrs. Baird.

ANNA
How do you do?

Anna looks at the women pleasantly.

AGENT
I'm with Kernan Real Estate.
(Beat)
We're showing the house?
(Beat)
How did you get in here?

ANNA
I live here.

DISSOLVE TO:

Anna in different clothes sits perfectly composed in the same chair. TWO MEN IN EXPENSIVE BUSINESS SUITS stand somewhat awkwardly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FIRST MAN
Are you related to the deceased?

ANNA
Yes.

First man looks nervously at the second man.

SECOND MAN
I wonder what kind of claim you're planning to make against the estate.

ANNA
I plan to make no claim.

SECOND MAN
(relieved)
Would you be willing to sign a paper to that effect?

ANNA
I never sign papers without my lawyer.

SECOND MAN
I'd like to speak to your attorney as soon as possible.

ANNA
He's dead.

FIRST MAN
(nervous laughter)
All kidding aside, I have no alternative but to inform you that you must leave this house. If indeed you have resided here, you have no legal right to remain. You have to move out by, let's say, noon tomorrow.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

The hands of a bell tower clock are at twelve, the bell strikes twelve times.

INT. HOUSE - SAME

We hear the last of the chimes from outside. A young earnest SOCIAL WORKER kneels at Anna's chair.

SOCIAL WORKER
I'm really sorry, Anna, it's Anna, right? They're trying to avoid publicity, but if necessary, they will remove you bodily. I can take you to Social Services...
(when Anna doesn't respond)
Don't you have any place to go?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

For the first time, Anna looks distressed.

INT. UNIVERSITY, PSYCHOLOGY DEPT. OFFICE - DAY - BUFFALO, N.Y.

CU on an attractive woman, IRINA, 47, in disbelief. She's on the phone in her small, very neat office. Half American, half Russian, born in Paris, Irina is very American, has no foreign accent.

She listens a moment more, distress growing.

IRINA
Please. Don't do anything until I call
you back.

Irina hangs up the phone, and sits completely still, as if her world has just fallen apart.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS, RUNNING PATH - DAY

In running clothes, Irina, pouring sweat, runs flat out.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - DAY

A world map dominates the room. A poster of Harrison Ford in "Raiders Of The Lost Ark." A poster of a mountain climber hanging off the face of a mountain. A globe and numerous National Geographics. A teddy bear on the bed and a University at Buffalo pennant over the bed.

TATI, 11, puts a red pin in the wall map. An only child, she's mature for her years, but not in a sexual way.

Her friend, JODY FISCHER, 10, lies on the floor and struggles to do a backbend. Jody's bright and peppy, but Tati's definitely the boss in this duo.

TATI
Top secret. Cross your heart and hope to
die. My dad's in Tasmania now.

JODY
I thought he was there last time.

Jody crashes onto the floor, starts again.

TATI
No, he was in Tierra del Fuego.
(she points to it)
He's doing all the T's in honor of me.
Turkey. Thailand. Tahiti--
(she points to each)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JODY

You're so lucky. My Poppa never goes
anyplace except his office.

TATI

I think your poppa's great.
(she goes back to Tasmania)
Tasmania's an island in--

JODY

What did your mom say about camp?

Tati dramatically sighs herself backwards into a perfect
backbend, flips herself up into a handstand, and walks on her
hands. She punctuates each movement with a complaint.

TATI

She said I would hate it. She said at
night you lie there and listen to all the
kids crying. She said if I bring it up
again, she will flip.

Simultaneously, Tati FLIPS back onto her feet, and helps Jody
get unstuck from the backbend she's finally achieved.

JODY

You wanta go out and practice cartwheels?

TATI

Maybe later. I want to sort my new
stamps.

JODY

Pleasssee.

TATI

Okay.

They run out.

INT. UNIVERSITY, PSYCHOLOGY DEPT. HALLWAY - DAY

Hair damp from a shower, back in business clothes, composed,
Irina closes her office door behind her. A sign on the door
says: **I. Pavlov, Associate Professor, Psychology**. Irina
scoops a fistful of notes from a message bin, tears off the
filled sign up sheet for appointments, puts them in her
briefcase.

A door across the hall says, **H. Abrams, Assistant
Professor, Psychology**.

INT. UNIVERSITY, HOWIE'S OFFICE - SAME

An office smaller than Irina's and terminally messy. HOWIE,
early 30's, is cute, rumped to the brink of slobbiness. He

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

lounges in a chair, an open box of powdered sugar donuts on his lap, but he looks at Irina with surprise.

HOWIE

I never knew your mother was alive.

Irina gathers fast food wrappers off his desk and throws them in the wastebasket.

IRINA

I haven't seen her in ten, twelve years.

HOWIE

(takes a bite of donut)
Long time between visits.

IRINA

She didn't even call me herself. Some social worker called.

HOWIE

I thought I knew your whole life history.
(offers her the donut box)
Is she ill?

IRINA

She's never been sick a day in her life.
(unearths a soft drink can)
How can you live like this?

HOWIE

I have a cleaning professor come in once a week. Are you telling me she hasn't seen Tati since she was a baby?

IRINA

She's never seen Tati. I don't want to go into that now. It's complicated.

She drops paperclips into a tray, looks up.

IRINA CONT'D

I can hear what you're thinking.
(beat)
What are you thinking?

HOWIE

(serious)
I'm thinking it would be good for Tati to meet her grandmother.

IRINA

I knew that's what you were thinking.

Howie brushes powdered sugar off his pants.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HOWIE

In fact, this might be a great opportunity--

IRINA

I have no desire to dig up old graves.

Howie holds his hands up in supplication.

HOWIE

(Austrian accent)

What am I but a simple Viennese doctor?

EXT. BUFFALO YWCA - DAY

Irina draws up to the YWCA in an immaculately maintained seven year old Volvo. Tati, in gym clothes, waves goodbye to some GIRLS and runs to the car.

INT. MOVING CAR - DAY

Irina, both hands on the steering wheel, looks very serious. Tati looks excited and confused.

TATI

What do you mean I have a grandmother who's alive?

IRINA

Well, she's not a regular grandmother. She wasn't a regular mother. Just like you don't have a regular father--

TATI

But this grandmother is real. Why didn't you tell me?

IRINA

I meant to. I should have--

They pull up to a large, two story duplex 1920's house with porches on each story.

INT. IRINA'S AND TATI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Irina and Tati enter the second floor apartment, which has high ceilings, and has been modernized. It's furnished in a spare--almost austere--way. Aesthetically pleasing, and comfortable, but no unnecessary objects or clutter.

They take off their shoes and put them on a rack near the door.

TATI

You told me she was dead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA
I never said that.

TATI
You let me think she was dead.
(Beat)
You told me there were no pictures, they
had all been lost in the moving.

IRINA
That was true about the pictures. I
swear, Tati, I was going to tell you.
But as the time passed, it got harder and
harder. If you'd ever asked me straight
out--

TATI
I thought it made you sad to talk about it.

IRINA
I'm sorry--

TATI
Hasn't she ever wanted to see me?

IRINA
She doesn't know about you.

TATI
You never told her about me?

Tati looks crushed, then scowls. She hangs her cap on a hook
in the neat closet, and shuts the door with a bang.

IRINA
I intended to, I was trying to, but we
had a fight. I decided to wait until you
were born.

They walk past the dining room table at one end of the living
room into the kitchen and begin what is obviously a regular
routine. Irina gets food out of the refrigerator. Tati
takes plates, silver, napkins and sets the kitchen table
roughly.

IRINA CONT'D
We've done so well together, just the two
of us, I didn't want her spoiling
everything--

She goes to Tati and takes her hand.

IRINA CONT'D
I'm sorry, Tati. I should have told you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TATI

And her.
(she pulls her hand away)

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tati sits on the highly polished wooden floor in her pajamas as her mother on the sofa brushes and braids her hair.

TATI

You must want to see her sometimes.

IRINA

I used to want to see her. I always thought each time it would be different. But each time we'd fight more than the time before. She's a very difficult woman--

TATI

I can't wait to meet her.

IRINA

Wait a minute, I haven't decided--

TATI

(jumps up)
You won't let me go to camp. You can't keep me from seeing my own grandmother.

Knowing she's won, she starts dancing around the room. Irina looks caught.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO HOUSE - DAWN

The sun is just rising. A sign outside the house says SOLD.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM, SAN FRANCISCO HOUSE - SAME

A huge trunk is filled to the brim, but the room appears unchanged--as stuffed full of objects as before.

Anna, dressed for travel, carefully places a phonograph record into a padded box and puts it in her satchel. She tries to cram the ornate silver tray stamped with the imperial double eagle into the trunk. TWO BURLY MEN shake their heads.

BURLY MAN

Sorry, Ma'am.

They close the trunk, lift it with difficulty and start out.

Anna picks up a lighted candle, blows on the flame to make smoke, and waves smoke generally around the room, as if doing a ritual purification or blessing. She blows the candle out, and picks up the satchel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

At the doorway, she turns, looks around the room one last time, then carefully closes the door.

INT. STAIRWAY - SAME

Struggling down the staircase with the trunk, one man stumbles. Anna lets out a little cry, her hand flies to her mouth. He regains his hold and she, her composure.

ANNA

Pay more attention. That's all I have left.

The two men exchange a look. We hear THE ROAR OF A JET PLANE.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

A line of stressed people wait to check in. At the airline counter, Anna glares at THREE EXASPERATED AIRLINE EMPLOYEES: There is no way they are going to accept the trunk. Nearby, the two men with the trunk and the social worker confer.

We hear A TRAIN WHISTLE.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Anna removes her hat, places it next to her, speaks to the young officer in white uniform and gold braid sitting across from her. It's the officer we saw dancing with the young girl in the mauve dress at the Winter Palace ball.

ANNA

Buff-a-low.

OFFICER

(smiles)

It can't be as bad as Siberia.

ANNA

They say it's as cold.

(clasps her hands on lap)

This is my last move, Gregory. I'm too tired. Too old.

OFFICER

Not you, Anna. You'll never be old.

Anna idly runs her thumb over the age spots on her hand, speaks as if to herself.

ANNA

Too old for battle.

She stares out the window at the passing landscape--a suburban scene--her distressed face reflected in the glass.

FLASHBACK EXT. TRAIN - DAY - 1917

Everything is chaos--shouts, screams, gunshots, smoke--as hundreds try to board the already jammed moving train. As the train picks up speed, people fall off or are shoved off.

The train window reflects young frightened Anna looking out.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - DAY

Cheerful energetic American pop music blasts from a portable radio. Tati, her face splattered with paint specks, vigorously rolls a big beige X on the last wall and fills it in in bold strokes. Irina carefully paints woodwork white.

IRINA

I sent a first class plane ticket so she'd be comfortable and then she decides to take the train. You can see how eager she is to see me. In my six years at boarding school, she came four times. When I graduated from Radcliffe, she was on a yacht in Biarritz. When I got my Ph.D., she was taking the waters in Baden Baden. I can't believe I let you talk me into this.

TATI

We want everything to look nice.

IRINA

She won't appreciate all the trouble we're going to.

TATI

You said yourself she can't sleep on the sofa. You bought all those fancy groceries--

IRINA

That's just polite. She is just coming for a visit, do you understand? A short visit. I'm looking into homes for her.

She paints in determined silence.

IRINA CONT'D

She is going to get a big surprise when she discovers that Amtrak is not the Orient Express.

TATI

Don't worry, Mom. If she doesn't shape up, we'll shortsheet her bed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA
(laughs)
Right. Put salt in the sugar bowl.

TATI
Pepper in her tea.

Both speak simultaneously: a familiar ritual.

IRINA & TATI
You and I, pard, against the world.

INT. TRAIN, BUFFALO STATION - DAY

The train pulls into the station and comes to a stop. Anna surreptitiously looks through the window, suddenly startles as she spots IRINA, 12, IN A EUROPEAN SCHOOL UNIFORM PULLING ON HER. Anna grasps the armrest to steady herself.

When she looks again, it's Irina scanning the train, her face and body tight. Next to her a young girl in overalls pulls on her in excitement.

EXT. TRAIN - DAY

Anna dismounts the train.

Tati sees Anna as a great presence, powerful, mysterious, scary: a cross between Queen Victoria and Merlin.

IRINA
Mother!

Irina moves toward Anna. Without smiling, Anna offers her cheek for a European kiss.

ANNA
Would you be so good as to see about my trunk?

IRINA
Your trunk?

Disconcerted, Irina moves toward the conductor. Anna stares at Tati who stares at her. Tati finally breaks the silence.

TATI
Hello, Grandmother.

INT. MOVING CAR - A LITTLE LATER

Irina drives in silence. Anna, ramrod straight in the front passenger seat, looks in the rearview mirror, sees Tati looking at her; she avoids eye contact and stares out the front window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA

Are you certain my trunk is safe?

IRINA

I told you I paid two men fifty dollars to deliver it. They said they'd carry it like a baby.

Irina drives past a strip mall. Down semi deserted streets with boarded up windows. Anna stares incredulously at a MAN WITH A BIG BEER BELLY sauntering along in striped Buffalo Bill warm up pants.

ANNA

How could you possibly like this place?

IRINA

I like it very much. It's solid and down to earth.

ANNA

Why was I not informed I had a granddaughter?

Tati makes a nod: Good question.

IRINA

(takes a deep breath)
Mother, you're here, I'm here. Let's make the best of it.

TATI

(gestures to herself, mouths)
I'm here too.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

From the doorway Anna surveys the small bedroom, simply but nicely furnished in muted shades of white and beige.

Anna gestures to Tati to put her satchel down, removes her hat ceremoniously.

Tati moves to the window, draws back the curtain.

TATI

You can see the park from here, Grandmother.

ANNA

It has been a long time since my surroundings were of concern to me. I shall call you if I need anything.

Irina and Tati look at each other like dismissed children. Tati closes the door very quietly and looks at her mother with big eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TATI

Well, we finally got your office painted.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Through a keyhole that constantly adjusts to give more bits and pieces, we see:

A glimpse of Anna's back as she sits on the edge of the white coverlet. She wears a peach silk and lace dressing gown.

She takes a gold chain from around her neck and bends to her trunk.

She carries an elaborately framed photograph to her dresser. Kisses her fingertips and touches the photograph.

Moves the photograph in minute increments until satisfied with its placement near a gold egg.

IRINA O.S.

(hisses)

Tati.

Tati, on her knees, peers through the keyhole of Anna's room. Irina furiously motions for her to come away.

IRINA CONT'D

(horrified)

You can't spy on her. Well, you can't spy on anybody, but especially not her. She's very private.

(Beat)

What did you see?

TATI

A beautiful egg.

IRINA

An egg?

(thinking)

Oh, the golden egg. I was never allowed to touch it. It's just an old paste egg. You get them along the banks of the Seine. The way she carries on, you'd think it was a real Faberge.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

At the dining room table, Irina works on her laptop computer, and Tati puts her new stamps into her album. Periodically, she shows her mother a stamp.

TATI

Here's a Tasmanian stamp I got last week.

CONTINUED:

Irina looks thoughtfully at Tati.

IRINA
Maybe you should start thinking about
getting a new hobby.

TATI
I love my stamps.

IRINA
Jody asked me which one of the T
countries your dad was in now.

Tati busies herself with her stamps.

IRINA CONT'D
I used to make up stories too. I
pretended my father was a Russian
nobleman. Very handsome in a white
uniform. But at a certain point, you
just have to accept reality--

Suddenly the sound of music comes from inside Anna's room--
the same soaring waltz that opened the movie. Irina winces.

She gets up and knocks on Anna's door.

IRINA
Are you up, Mother? Would you like
something to eat? I prepared a light
meal--

The music is turned up louder, drowning Irina out.

IRINA CONT'D
(to Tati)
I guess she's not hungry.

Tati giggles. Irina gathers up her things.

IRINA CONT'D
There's no way I can work with that
music. I'll get up early tomorrow.

TATI
I think it's kind of pretty.

IRINA
I've heard it before.

INT. IRINA'S ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

"The Imperial Waltz," muted, comes through the door. Irina,
still dressed, sits on her bed, deep in thought.

FLASHBACK: INT. PARIS APARTMENT - DAY

Late 1940's. The same record plays. Irina, around 9 years old, at a table copies in a notebook. Her pencil stops; she looks up worriedly at her mother, who sits in a chair, completely withdrawn.

The record comes to an end, the needle slurring on the groove. Irina gets up, lifts the needle off.

IRINA

I'm glad he left. He wasn't nice to you.

Anna's eyes well up.

IRINA CONT'D

Don't worry, Mother. We'll be fine.

(she starts to embrace Anna)

It's always better when it's just the two of us.

Anna merely gestures for her to play the record again. Irina starts the record, returns to the table, and determinedly resumes copying.

INT. TATI'S ROOM - SAME

"The Imperial Waltz," muted, comes through the door. At her desk, Tati, in her pajamas, writes a letter. She looks very happy.

INSERT: The letter.

TATI V.O.

Dear Dad, I have a grandmother!

INT. ANNA'S ROOM - SAME

The old-fashioned Victrola is set up on a table, the record playing. The egg, photograph, and other items are arranged on the dresser top. Anna in a dressing gown lies on top of her bedspread. Gregory, the officer we saw at the ball and on the train, sits in a chair near her, but now he's in his early 30's and dressed in 1920's elegant European clothes.

ANNA

I have a granddaughter.

Gregory nods.

ANNA CONT'D

She didn't even tell me.

GREGORY

That wasn't right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Anna's lips thin in agreement.

ANNA
I should never have come.

GREGORY
(after a moment)
After all this time, are you still angry?

ANNA
It's not for me to reconcile with her.

Anna folds her arms across her midriff, closes her eyes.
Gregory sighs.

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - DAY

Irina and Tati set boiled eggs, cheese, bread, and tea on the
kitchen table.

Anna's skirts RUSTLE and both Irina and Tati turn around
instantly. Anna, impeccably dressed, fills the doorway. She
seems bigger than life.

TATI
Good morning, Grandmother.

Anna nods to Tati.

IRINA
Good morning, Mother. I hope you slept
well.

ANNA
Only the young and innocent sleep well.

Anna makes her way to the table. Tati pulls out a chair.

TATI
Sit here, Grandmother.

When Anna is seated, Irina and Tati sit down. Irina passes
the bread to her mother.

ANNA
I would prefer black bread.

IRINA
This three seed bread is very delicious.
They make it right around the corner.
It's all natural ingredients--

Anna continues to look at the bread as if it's a slightly
contemptible foreign object.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA

I would like black bread for my midday meal.

IRINA

I thought only peasants ate black bread.

She sets the plate of bread on the table. Tati breaks the heavy silence.

TATI

Mom can't shop during the day. She teaches classes in the morning and writes in the afternoon. She's been voted Best Teacher by the students five years in a row!

Irina looks at her mother: If praise comes, she's ready for it. But none comes. She puts her notes in her briefcase.

IRINA

I'll be home at 6. Tati'll be gone till about 12:30. She goes to the YWCA every morning from 9 to 12. Our neighbor downstairs, Donna Fischer, drives her. I'm afraid it's going to be a boring visit for you, Mother. I can't take any time off now.

ANNA

I'm quite able to amuse myself.

IRINA

My office number is by the phone. I may be in the lab, but if it's an emergency, someone will get a message to me.

(looks at Tati)

I'll call you this afternoon, Tati.

She picks up a piece of bread and walks out eating it.

INT. UNIVERSITY HALL - DAY

The sign on a classroom door says DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY 223. A STUDENT races down the hall, quietly opens the door and slips in.

INT. LECTURE HALL - SAME

At the front of the dimmed hall, a movie is in progress. On the screen, a group of monkeys play vigorously and mischievously with each other.

IRINA O.S.

See how the normal monkeys play together, groom each other, have a lot of physical contact.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Every seat in the large circular lecture hall is filled. The late student stands with others near the wall. Irina, wearing a portable microphone, strides through the aisles, passionate and dynamic. The 300 STUDENTS are totally into the lecture.

IRINA O.S.

Here are two more monkeys separated from their mothers at an early age.

On the screen, two monkeys, encapsulated from the larger playing group and from each other, exhibit schizophrenic behavior: they bite their limbs, rock back and forth.

A FEMALE STUDENT raises her arm.

FEMALE STUDENT

My mother died when I was born and I don't have those problems.

A COUPLE OF SNICKERS stop when Irina answers.

IRINA

Good point. We extrapolate to human behavior from these studies, but remember, children are incredibly resilient. They can survive a great deal of deprivation and still grow into healthy loving adults.

Irina points to A MALE STUDENT in one of the back rows.

MALE STUDENT

Harlow and all the others. They never talk about fathers. It really bugs me. What are fathers--just drones?

IRINA

Are you a father?

(when student nods Yes)

Then I'm sure you know how important fathers are. You have to remember that Harlow did his studies 50 years ago. He's really testing the absence of a stable caretaker. It could be fathers too--especially today.

The student looks satisfied. Hands wave.

IRINA

We're out of time. Save your questions and we'll start with them Wednesday. Read the chapter on attachment.

JACK CALLIHAN, an older student, late 40's, early 50's, casually dressed but distinguished looking, approaches Irina as she gathers her papers and starts out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JACK
Professor, may I see you a moment?

IRINA
Sorry, I'm in a terrific rush. Come to my office hours or make an appointment.

As she walks quickly down the hall, Howie catches up.

HOWIE
I went to the computer center and got the new print outs. The data looks great.

IRINA
You go ahead and start. I'll be back in a bit.

HOWIE
Now that you've got a built-in babysitter, want to--

IRINA
Nope.

HOWIE
I've got a great friend--

IRINA
Your last great friend hated kids.

HOWIE
That shocked me, I hardly knew him--

IRINA
Your great friend before that was clinically certifiable.

HOWIE
Your standards are much too high.

They laugh.

INT. APARTMENT - SAME

Propped on the phone is a paper with Irina's office number in very large numbers.

ANNA
There's nothing wrong with my eyesight.

She glances around the sparsely furnished living room with disinterest, then opens the door of Irina's bedroom

She looks at the double bed, neatly made up. A journal, "Child Development," and a book, Theories of Attachment Formation, are on the bedside table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She slides open the closet door. The closet is perfectly organized. All the hangers face the same way. Sweaters are folded in color gradations.

The top dresser drawer is filled with luscious silk lingerie. Anna fingers it.

In Tati's room, Anna glances briefly at the posters, map, globe, etc. On the bedside table, there's a PHOTOGRAPH OF A MAN IN A MIRROR FRAME. She closely examines it.

She opens the drawer of Tati's desk. A bundle of blank envelopes is tied with a grosgrain ribbon. She unties the ribbon, opens the first envelope, and takes out the letter.

ANNA

(reads)

My friend Jody calls her Dad "Poppa." Do you like that better than Dad? How about Pop? Daddy? It would be funny if you wanted me to call you FATHER. I like Dad best...

Anna replaces the letter and reties the bundle, slides it back into the drawer.

INT. BAKERY - SAME

Irina, a little harried, looks at her watch while a clerk takes a loaf of dark bread from the bakery case.

IRINA

(shakes her head)

No. Russian black bread. You know, it's thick and dense--

CLERK

You might try Kaufmann's.

IRINA

They suggested you.

INT. APARTMENT - SAME

On the living room sofa, Tati eats a peanut butter sandwich. She has a National Geographic on her lap, but openly watches Anna make several trips back and forth from her room.

Anna ignores Tati as she sets up a small folding table in a corner. She spreads an elaborately embroidered cloth on the table.

Tati moves over closer to Anna, sits on the floor. Anna continues to work, but suddenly addresses Tati.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA

Tati is the name of a monkey I was in the circus with. What is your proper name?

TATI

(giggles)

Tatiana.

ANNA

Tatiana.

She puts just a tiny emphasis on the last two syllables, ana, and has a fleeting smile, as if thinking: Named after me, eh.

Anna places different sized religious icons of the Virgin Mary and of the saints on the table.

ANNA

(indicates one icon)

This one was given me by a holy man. When he wore a certain hat, it made him invisible. Anyone with him too. I was often invisible in his company.

Tati is agog as Anna continues to set up the table with prayer books, a cross, and the Holy Gospels. In front of the icons, Anna puts several votive candles.

ANNA CONT'D

Traditionally you use a lampada. A long burning oil lamp. But I grew fond of candles when I was in a Rumanian convent.

TATI

I don't think Mom is going to like this.

ANNA

It won't be the first thing she didn't like.

She lights a candle with a foot long wooden match and hands the match to Tati to light the other candles.

ANNA CONT'D

Where's your father?

TATI

(hesitates a moment)

Traveling.

ANNA

When will he return?

TATI

Not for a long time. He's on an expedition. He's an archeologist.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNA

Mmm.

(Beat)

I find it unbelievable you never knew about me.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Anna and Tati sit in separate chairs reading.

Irina enters and immediately spots the candles burning in front of the icons.

IRINA

What is that?

ANNA

You know very well what it is.

Irina takes a deep breath.

IRINA

Tati, please fix the salad.

TATI

You forgot to take off your shoes, Mom.

Irina glares at Tati, removes her shoes and very deliberately sets them on the rack.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Just off the open kitchen, the dining room table is set for three places.

IRINA

Why did you set the dining room table?

TATI

Grandmother said it'd be nicer.

Anna sits down at the head of the table.

TATI CONT'D

That's Mom's place, Grandmother.

Anna stays put.

IRINA

It's fine.

She puts a variety of frozen food into the microwave, punches buttons. Tati opens a bag of prewashed mixed salad. Pours bottled salad dressing on the salad and tosses it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA CONT'D

You're welcome to have the icons in your room, Mother. I just don't want them in the living room.

ANNA

Have you become a communist?

IRINA

Oh, for crying out loud--

The microwave beeps and Irina dishes up the food.

She and Tati sit at the table. Irina passes a dish to Anna. Anna sets it down without taking any.

IRINA CONT'D

Please, Mother.

ANNA

That is not even real food.

IRINA

Of course it's real food. I don't have time to simmer all day soups, you know--

ANNA

After this, I shall cook the evening meal.

IRINA

You don't have to do that.

ANNA

I do if I don't want to starve.

IRINA

(starts to bristle, then laughs)
Believe me, my identity is not tied up in my cooking. I'm perfectly happy to be replaced.

INT. IRINA'S OFFICE - DAY

Several brochures for retirement homes are on Irina's desk. Irina, on the phone, holds one brochure.

IRINA

Tomorrow at 12:15 then.

INT. APARTMENT - SAME

Tati enters, Jody and her mother, DONNA FISCHER, with her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TATI

(calls)

Grandmother. I'm home. I've brought the Fischers up to meet you. Grandmother?

Anna comes out from the kitchen.

ANNA

You needn't shout, Tatiana. There's nothing wrong with my hearing. I had to remove my apron.

TATI

(formally with pride)

Mrs. Fischer, Jody, this is my Grandmother. She was born in Russia in the time of the Tsar.

(turns to Anna)

Grandmother, this is Mrs. Fischer and Jody Fischer.

ANNA

(with a slight bow)

How do you do?

Both Mrs. Fischer and Jody stand up straight: They're clearly bowled over by Anna.

MRS. FISCHER

How do you do?

(she looks at Jody who's tongue-tied)

Jody?

JODY

How do you do?

ANNA

Please sit down. May I offer you tea?

MRS. FISCHER

Oh, we can't stay. We just wanted to welcome you. I'm right downstairs so if you need anything, just send Tati down. Bye, Tati.

Tati walks them to the door and opens it.

JODY

(stage whisper to Tati)

Was I supposed to curtsy?

TATI

You were fine.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Beef bones simmer on the stove. A huge mound of dark bread dough is on the table near bunches of fresh beets, carrots, and cabbage. Anna reties her apron and begins to knead the dough while Tati, hands in her pockets, watches.

Anna kneads in silence, then looks crossly at Tati.

ANNA

Don't just stand there poking holes in your pockets. Make yourself useful.

Tati washes her hands and tentatively kneads the dough.

ANNA

Not like that. Like this.

(she corrects Tati's kneading)

It's not a little bird. You're not going to hurt it.

Tati kneads much more vigorously and Anna nods approval.

TATI

Were you really in a circus?

ANNA

For a while in Prague.

FLASH A PICTURE OF ANNA IN A CIRCUS AS TATI IMAGINES HER: She wears a costume of a hundred colors and juggles flaming torches. TATI THE MONKEY, in a matching costume, is next to her.

ANNA CONT'D

I was a bareback rider.

FLASH PICTURE OF ANNA RIDING BAREBACK AS TATI IMAGINES HER: She wears an ostrich headdress and a sequined costume. TATI, THE MONKEY, holds on for dear life.

TATI CONT'D

And you were in a convent in Romania?

ANNA

I said so, didn't I?

She gives Tati fresh beets to slice, while she chops cabbage.

TATI

You were a nun?

ANNA

I never said that. I was hiding there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TATI
From whom?

ANNA
After the Revolution, you had to hide
from everyone.

TATI
What revolution?

ANNA
(stops chopping)
Hasn't your mother taught you your
history?

TATI
(defensive)
My mother's taught me a million things.

Anna's lips thin.

The phone rings. Tati wipes her hands on her baggy shorts
and runs out to answer it.

INT. PSYCHOLOGY DEPT. LABORATORY - SAME

Irina hangs up the phone. Howie waits expectantly.

IRINA
They're baking bread. It's really neat.

HOWIE
See?

They leave the lab together, walk down the hall, occasionally
nod to passing students.

HOWIE CONT'D
One of your students stopped by to make
an appointment. Older guy. Good
looking.

IRINA
Howie, quit trying to fix me up.

HOWIE
I'll stop trying to fix you up if you'll
go out with me.

IRINA
You know I can't date you. You were my
student.

HOWIE
Doesn't that ever expire?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA
When you're a full professor and I'm
emeritus.

HOWIE
Geez, I don't even have tenure yet.

Irina stops outside Howie's office and looks serious.

IRINA
You're my best friend, but have you ever
thought that I might not be your type?

HOWIE
(a little wary)
What do you mean by that?

IRINA
(touches his arm, very
nurturant)
You just should think about it sometime.

HOWIE
We were talking about you.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Irina enters and sees that the mini-shrine is gone. She says
nothing, but her relief is visible.

INT. APARTMENT DINING ROOM - SAME

Anna, Irina, and Tati eat hunks of black bread and steaming
bowls of borscht topped with sour cream. The table is set
with the good china which Irina notes but doesn't comment on.

IRINA
Howie sends his love.

TATI
Tell him to hurry up and get the book
done so we can go out.

IRINA
He's way ahead of me.
(to her mother)
Howard is my colleague at the University.
We're writing a textbook together.

ANNA
Mmm.

IRINA
The book will mean a promotion and a
considerable salary raise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The only sound is the spooning of soup.

IRINA CONT'D

This is delicious. I can't remember the last time I had borscht. How was the Y, Tati?

TATI

Sort of boring. We made lanyards.

She holds out the red and white lanyard around her neck.

IRINA

I thought you liked to make lanyards.

TATI

About a million years ago.

(beat)

Grandmother says Tati's a monkey's name.

IRINA

Nonsense.

TATI

She knew a monkey in a circus named Tati.

IRINA

Really. Did you and your grandmother have an interesting afternoon?

TATI

She told me all about the convent. Miracles and angels and the devil--

IRINA

(interrupts Tati)

Will you pass the bread, please?

(after a beat to Anna)

I don't want you filling Tati's head with superstition and nonsense.

Tati folds her hands and looks around with contentment.

TATI

We look like a real family.

Anna's little smile is smug. Irina's smile is a grimace.

EXT. REGENCY MANOR NURSING HOME - DAY

A rather grim looking brick building. Irina passes a cement sign in front: REGENCY MANOR.

INT. REGENCY MANOR NURSING HOME - DAY

Irina walks with A HEALTH CARE WORKER down a corridor lined with PATIENTS in wheel chairs, who are in varying stages of Alzheimers. One moans, another whimpers.

An OLD WOMAN puts her hand on Irina's arm. Irina smiles at her and starts to move on, but the old woman tightens her grip. Irina tries to remove her hand and leave, but the old woman won't let go.

HEALTH CARE WORKER

Now, now, Mrs. Kowalski. Be a good girl, will you?

(to Irina)

She doesn't mean any harm. She does that to everybody.

Irina tries to disguise her distress as the health care worker gently disengages the woman's iron grip on Irina's arm.

FLASH FLASHBACK: EXT. PRIVATE SWISS SCHOOL - DAY - 1952

TWELVE YEAR OLD IRINA in a school uniform clings to an ELEGANTLY CLAD ANNA, who's trying to get into a waiting car.

From inside the car, we see a MAN speak impatiently.

A distressed Anna gently pries Irina's hands off her. Irina is led away by A TEACHER.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM - DAY

Holding the needle up to the light, Anna jabs the thread at the hole again without success.

ANNA

Tatiana. Come in here.

Anna's door is slightly ajar and she doesn't raise her voice. Tati appears instantly; she's obviously been right outside.

ANNA CONT'D

Thread this with your young eyes.
(hands Tati the needle and thread)

It's a good thing I don't have to sew jewels in my skirts now.

Tati threads it in a wink, and Anna starts sewing a small tear in the antique lace of a dressing gown. Tati openly looks around.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TATI
Your room looks very nice, Grandmother.

She makes her way to the dresser, eyeing the Faberge egg, perfume bottles, vanity set, and a framed photograph.

TATI CONT'D
May I touch your things?

ANNA
If you put them back the way they are.

Tati picks up the hand mirror with the elaborate silver handle, looks into it and screws up her face.

TATI
Tati. The greatest circus monkey of all.
She lays the mirror down carefully, but face up.

ANNA
(sharply)
Never leave a mirror face up. Spirits escape.

TATI
Spirits? Like ghosts?

ANNA
All the people who have ever looked in it, plus anybody else who can slip past them.

Tati quickly turns the mirror over.

TATI
Is my spirit in there now?

ANNA
Yes, but it can't come out till after you're dead.

Tati considers this absolutely amazing information.

ANNA CONT'D
It won't come out at all unless it's restless.

Carefully Tati picks up the egg.

TATI
This is very beautiful. What is it?

ANNA
A gold and enamel egg. The jeweler Faberge made them for royalty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TATI
Real gold?

ANNA
(nods)
Bring it here.

Anna flips an unseen hinge and the egg opens to reveal a picture of the Tsar and his family. Anna points to each person, her tone one of formal presentation.

ANNA CONT'D
Nicholas II, Tsar of Russia. Alexandra
Fedorovna, Tsaritsa of Russia. Alexis,
the Tsarevich. Olga, Tatiana, Marie,
Anastastia, the Grand Duchesses.

TATI
(almost whispering)
Where ever did you get it?

ANNA
I've had it forever.

TATI
Was it a gift?

ANNA
I have been given many gifts. I can't
remember them all.

She closes the egg and hands it back. Tati replaces it reverently on its stand.

Tati studies the old photo in an elaborate frame. (It's Gregory, in his 30's, in civilian clothes.)

TATI
Was this your husband?

As Tati moves to Anna with the photo, the small bedroom TURNS PINKISH, IS A LITTLE LARGER. THE SHRINE with the embroidered cloth IS MORE ORNATE AND EXOTIC with additional icons and candles of different lengths.

ANNA
My first lover.

TATI
He looks like a movie star.

ANNA
Yes.

Anna takes the tiny gold key off the chain around her neck and unlocks the leather trunk--ITS BRASS FIXTURES NOW GLEAM.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

The trunk is filled to the brim with clothes and objects. Anna plucks an old photo album off the top that is stuffed full with loose photographs. Photos spill down back into the trunk or onto the floor.

Tati sits on a little stool next to Anna who sifts through the jumble of photos.

TATI
We should put them in order.

ANNA
Whatever for? Oh, here's one.

She hands Tati another photo of Gregory.

TATI
Why didn't you marry?

ANNA
He was already married.

Tati makes a little disapproving scowl. She picks up several photos off the floor, points to one of Anna with another man.

TATI
Who's this?

ANNA
A lover.

Tati points to another photo.

ANNA CONT'D
A lover.

TATI
A different one?

ANNA
Are you blind? Of course.

Tati starts to point to another.

ANNA CONT'D
They're all my lovers.

Tati's quiet a moment, absorbing this information.

TATI
Why did you have so many?

Anna scowls.

FLASHBACK - INT. RUSSIAN TEA ROOM - DAY - 1976

In a restaurant with elaborate Russian decor, Irina, furious, leans across the table to Anna and spits out the words softly and precisely.

IRINA

There's a word for what you were.

RETURN TO PRESENT

Anna stares somewhat blankly at Tati.

TATI

I asked if you had a favorite?

ANNA

The first one.

Tati goes back to the first photo and studies it.

TATI

What's his name, your favorite?

ANNA

Gregory.

TATI

Is he my grandfather?

ANNA

Heavens, no. Your grandfather was a hundred years later. Go away. I'm tired.

Anna closes her eyes.

FLASHBACK - OPERA - NIGHT

In an opera box, A MAN IN FORMAL CLOTHES, SERGE, looks furiously at Gregory. Anna next to Gregory looks concerned.

SERGE

There's a word for what she is.

RETURN TO PRESENT

Behind Anna's distressed face, Tati tiptoes out and quietly shuts the door.

INT. UNIVERSITY WEIGHT ROOM - DAY

Some FACULTY, mostly STUDENTS, many machines, mirrors, bodies straining and preening. Irina, in black lycra pants and an oversize t shirt, strides swiftly on a treadmill. Howie on the treadmill to her right walks at a much slower pace. TWO STUDENTS on weight machines check Irina out with approval.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA

You cannot imagine the Russian capacity for mysticism. She used to ring a silver bell to ward off evil spirits. It had to be pure silver.

HOWIE

How was the home?

IRINA

The seventh circle of Hell. I'm not exaggerating. I could never put her there.

Howie peers at the gauge on Irina's treadmill. He increases his speed a tiny fraction.

HOWIE

What are you going to do?

IRINA

Keep going down the list. They can't all be as bad as that one.

(increases her incline)

You know that older student who kept coming by when I was gone? He was just trying to get permission to audit. Isn't that funny? He's a Family Court judge and he feels he needs some formal courses in Psychology.

HOWIE

Is he married?

IRINA

How would I know if he's married?

(Beat)

Actually, he's a widower. Two grown children.

HOWIE

Sounds perfect. A rock of reliability.

IRINA

(a little wary)

What do you mean by that?

HOWIE

(huffing a little)

Have you ever noticed how much you value reliability? You should think about that sometime.

IRINA

Well everybody wants someone who's reliable, anyway, we weren't talking about me--oh, my goodness, there he is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Jack Callihan, trim and virile in shorts and t shirt, comes into the gym. He spots Irina, heads directly over.

JACK
(big smile)
Professor.

IRINA
(flustered smile)
Judge.

Jack gets on the treadmill to Irina's left, starts jogging easily. She is intensely aware of his presence, but pretends not to be.

Jack gradually increases his speed. Irina surreptitiously glances at Jack's mph, increases her speed. Jack increases his speed. Howie takes all this in.

HOWIE
(to himself)
Don't pay any attention to me, sports
titans. I'll catch up with you later.

He opens a Power bar and takes a bite. Jack and Irina are jogging in full stride side by side.

INT. TATI'S BEDROOM - A LITTLE LATER

On her bed, Tati, her arms folded behind her head, daydreams.

The photo in the frame becomes a rapid series of the men in Anna's photos, then it's GREGORY smiling at her. She reaches for the photo and accidentally knocks it over. The glass cracks. When she turns it over, it's the original photo.

INT. ANNA'S BEDROOM - SAME

Anna opens her eyes. Gregory, wearing the clothes he wears in the photo, sits in the chair, watching her.

ANNA
You should have awakened me.

GREGORY
I like to watch you sleep. Besides, I'm
in no hurry.

They look at each other a long moment, exchanging the slight smile of people long intimate with each other.

ANNA
I told my granddaughter you were my
favorite.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GREGORY

I adored you.

ANNA

She asked me, What revolution? I wouldn't even know where to begin.

GREGORY

Begin the night you escaped.

ANNA

I never told a living soul that story, except for you.

GREGORY

You should tell your granddaughter that story. She should know how brave you were.

ANNA

I was brave, wasn't I? Irina with all her rude remarks about peasants and black bread has no idea how brave I was.

FLASHBACK INT. MANSION, ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA - NIGHT - 1917

The sound of GUNSHOTS quite close outside. Inside the great mansion all is panic, chaos, confusion. People frantically rip sheets off beds and bundle up icons, grab up and pack beautiful clothes, jewels, treasures.

More GUNSHOTS, closer. Sounds of an approaching mob.

The OLD COUNT tries to console the OLD COUNTESS who sobs in a chair.

The girl we saw at the ball, YOUNG ANNA, now 16, speaks quietly to the young Countess, SASHA, 16, we also saw.

YOUNG ANNA

Sasha, you must take your mother and father and leave. I'll catch up.

Sasha leads her parents out of the room.

ANNA V.O.

The old Countess was delicate and given to fainting spells. I was strong and could carry her dresses and jewels along with my things. We thought we'd be safe at their country dacha.

Young Anna by herself hurriedly packs silk dresses, jewelry. At the last moment, she slips the silver bell and the Faberge egg in her pockets, and runs with suitcases and bundles.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TRAIN

A frenzied crowd struggles to board a moving train. Young Anna clinging to the side manages to pull herself inside.

This is the same scene we saw earlier, except now on the inside of the train all is chaos: the aisles are jammed, people sit on other people, shouts and screams come from outside.

A horrified Anna looks out the window at the people being shoved off the moving train.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. UNIVERSITY LAB OFFICE - DAY

Irina, on a phone, looks concerned.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM - SAME

O.S. a phone RINGS, but Tati, mesmerized, listens to Anna. Gregory leans forward on his chair, also listening intently, but Tati doesn't appear to see him.

FLASHBACK EXT. RUSSIAN COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

A small cart filled with straw winds down a crowded road of refugees. It's stopped by Bolsheviks.

BOLSHEVIK

What's under the straw, Old Father?

Hidden under the straw, Anna holds her breath.

OLD MAN O.S.

(panicky)

A few potatoes.

BOLSHEVIK O.S.

Let's see how fresh your potatoes are.

He plunges his sword into the straw. When he draws it out, it's blood-stained.

BOLSHEVIK

Too fresh, Old Father.

He thrusts his sword so powerfully into the old man that the force topples the old man back onto the straw. The soldier rides on.

Moments later, young Anna, stained with others' blood, slowly emerges from the straw. Next to her is a dead body.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She runs into the darkness.

INT./EXT. ANNA'S ROOM - NIGHT

We pull back from the darkness to see Anna sitting alone by the window in her darkening room. The curtain is pulled back onto the edge of the shrine. Outside in the distance are elm trees and shadows.

Anna looks out the window at A GROVE OF BIRCH TREES.

FLASHBACK EXT. DACHA - DAY

Between the birch trees, young Anna sees the dacha, runs toward it.

INT. DACHA - SAME

Inside, the dacha is absolutely still, plundered, blood-stained. The old countess sits in a chair, her face a mask of surprise, her dress blood-soaked. The old count's body lies crumpled on the floor.

Horrified, young Anna moves almost ghostlike through the room, looking at one body, then the next. Suddenly her hand flies to her mouth and she makes little whimpery moans.

ANNA

Oh. Oh.

Sasha's dress is ripped, her skirt up, her throat slit. Anna falls to her knees, pulls Sasha's skirt down, buries her head on Sasha's chest and sobs.

ANNA CONT'D

Sasha. Sasha.

Suddenly there's BANGING on the door. The frightened girl jumps up and darts under the table. The banging continues.

INT. APARTMENT - SAME

Irina stands outside Anna's door and knocks again.

IRINA

Mother?

She knocks louder. Still no sound from inside.

INT. KITCHEN - A LITTLE LATER

Irina and Tati make peanut butter sandwiches.

IRINA

Why didn't you answer the phone this afternoon? I was worried.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TATI

Mom. We're fine. You don't have to call every two minutes. I'm almost twelve years old. I'll call you if there's a problem.

IRINA

Yes, Ma'am.

(beat)

Why didn't she cook today?

(when Tati shrugs)

I knew it was too good to be true. What did you do all afternoon?

Tati slathers peanut butter a half inch thick on her bread.

TATI

I looked at her things. She has all these treasures in her trunk. And she told stories. Her life is like a book--

IRINA

She never told me any stories.

(beat)

What kind of stories?

TATI

She should tell them to you. She tells stories better than anyone I ever heard in my whole life.

IRINA

Really. In my opinion, some of her stories are better left untold.

TATI

I thought you didn't know any of her stories.

IRINA

I know more than I want to. I don't want you cooped up inside all day long. Go outdoors and play.

TATI

She says it's too hot to go out.

IRINA

I'm talking about you.

A faint RINGING sound O.S.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Outside the open windows, the trees rustle, cicadas hum, and windchimes on the porch make a lovely RINGING sound.

FLASHBACK INT. DACHA - NIGHT

Young Anna, huddled under the table, surrounded by bodies, RINGS a little silver bell as if her life depended on it.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM - SAME

Anna still sits in her chair by the window, her body rigid, her face frozen in fear.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment is dark and silent, except for the tinkling of the windchimes.

Anna, still fully dressed, walks quietly as a wraith through the living room to the porch, where she stands looking at the windchimes.

She opens Irina's door, stands in the doorway until Irina's sleeping form moves slightly, then she closes the door.

In the bed, Irina's eyes suddenly snap open, she sits up, listens a moment, then lies back down.

In Tati's room, Anna leans her head down to hear Tati's even breathing. Constellations of stars glow on the ceiling.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Irina drinks coffee and scans her class notes. Tati eats cereal and milk. Anna enters. She's carefully dressed, but looks tired.

TATI

Good morning, Grandmother.

Anna nods to Tati and sits at the table. Irina puts down her class notes.

IRINA

Mother, we need to talk about your future plans.

As if Irina hasn't spoken, Anna picks up a piece of black bread.

ANNA

Le beurre, s'il vous plait.

Irina automatically hands her the butter.

ANNA CONT'D

Merci.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Anna slathers butter on the bread.

TATI
That's French, right?

ANNA
Don't you speak French? What languages
do you speak?

TATI
English and Pig Latin.

Anna looks at Irina for an explanation.

ANNA
You're fluent in Russian, French, and
English.

IRINA
They don't start teaching foreign
languages here until junior high.

ANNA
Foreign?

IRINA
It's not as important here. Europeans
need to speak many languages. Americans
don't.

ANNA
Children should learn languages at their
mother's breast. When you were her age--

Irina jumps up, speaks in Russian (subtitled in English for
audience.)

IRINA
(in Russian)
When I was her age, I could say "Please
come and get me, Mother" in numerous
languages.

Tati has never seen her mother lose her temper like this.

Irina walks out of the kitchen. Anna turns stonefaced to
Tati.

ANNA
I will teach you languages. We will
commence now. Je m'appelle Anna. My
name is Anna. Je suis ta grandmere. I
am your grandmother--

The front door SLAMS.

INT. ELDERCARE HOME - DAY

Irina walks down a brightly painted hall with A SOCIAL WORKER who wears a pretty dress. There are pictures on the wall and no distraught patients in sight.

SOCIAL WORKER

Oh, I know what you mean, Professor.
Some of those places are a scandal. Our
memory impaired unit is state of the art.

IRINA

There's nothing wrong with her memory.

SOCIAL WORKER

That's wonderful. We provide a variety
of interesting activities, billiards, TV
and stereo room, even a cafe. We have
parties at the drop of a hat. Two of our
clients used to be professional
entertainers...

They enter a large room strung with crepe paper. A MAN, MARTY, 70's, in a bowler hat and a red and white striped jacket, plays the piano. A WOMAN, JUNE, 70's, dressed in sequins, sings.

JUNE

...Happy Birthday, dear Fred-die,
Happy Birthday to youuuuuuuuuuuuu.

FREDDIE, the Birthday Boy, appears with it and happy. Most of the old people at card tables or in wheel chairs sing along enthusiastically.

SOCIAL WORKER

I'm sure your mother would be very happy
here.

IRINA

When can she move in?

SOCIAL WORKER

We have a year waiting list.

IRINA

A year? That's too long.

SOCIAL WORKER

So you don't want me to put your name on
the list?

IRINA

No, no, put it on.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Tchaikovsky's "Marche Slav" plays in the background. At the table, Tati copies in her workbook and recites to Anna.

TATI
Je suis, tu es, il est--

ANNA
Je suis.

TATI
Je suis.

ANNA
Bon. Continuez.

TATI
I'm tired, Grandmother.

ANNA
En Francais, s'il vous plait.

TATI
(petulant)
Je suis tired of French. Je suis. I don't want to do this every afternoon. Sometimes I want to go out and play.

ANNA
You'll get sunburned and ruin your skin. It's important that you take good care of your skin.

Tati groans and puts her head down.

Anna goes into her room and returns with the silver handled mirror.

ANNA
(taps Tati to sit up)
That's enough.

Anna's tap isn't gentle and her tone is non negotiable. Tati immediately sits up.

ANNA CONT'D
Look in the mirror. Don't look at the monkey either. Do you see that you will be a beautiful woman when you grow up?

Tati looks bemused at herself in the mirror.

ANNA CONT'D
Listen to me, Tatiana. This is important. A beautiful woman who knows
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA CONT'D (cont'd)
 her wares can go far in life. But only
 so far. A beautiful educated woman who
 knows her wares can do anything! I am
 your grandmother and I know what I am
 talking about.

(Beat)
 Now. Encore. Je suis, tu es, il est...

TATI
 (bursts out)
 I don't want to study French all day long
 and I don't like the way my Mom is when
 she's around you.

Tati goes into her room and closes her door.

INT. TATI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tati's in bed. Irina kisses her goodnight, and switches off
 the overhead light on her way out. On the ceiling,
 constellations glow.

TATI
 Mom?

IRINA
 Yes, darling.

TATI
 Please let me go to camp.

The light immediately switches on and Irina turns on a dime.

IRINA
 What's going on?

EXT. ANNA'S ROOM - SAME

At Anna's door, Irina stands eyeball to eyeball with Anna.

IRINA
 (controlled fury)
 It is her summer vacation. She is just a
 child.

ANNA
 When you were her age you--

IRINA
 I hated that school in Switzerland.
 Those were the unhappiest years of my
 life. That is exactly why Tati is not in
 boarding school. I do not want her
 studying when other children are on
 holiday. Do you understand?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA
I'm not an imbecile.

Anna steps back and starts to close her door.

IRINA
You have to move, you understand that,
don't you? We both know we can't live
together.

Anna closes the door.

INT. TATI'S BEDROOM - SAME

Stars glow on the ceiling. Without turning on the light,
Irina leans down, whispers.

IRINA
Mission accomplished.

TATI
What'd she say?

IRINA
Not a whole lot, but she got the message.
(she tucks Tati in)
It's just a few more weeks at most.
Okay, pard?

TATI
Okay, pard.
(Irina starts out)
Momma? Will she be mad at me?

IRINA
I wouldn't worry about that.

After Irina leaves, Tati lies in bed with her eyes open.
Suddenly she turns over and puts the photo in the mirror
frame face down,

INT. ANNA'S ROOM - SAME

Anna sits in her room, her arms folded across her chest. The
candles cast shadows of icons on the wall.

ANNA
Now they're both mad at me.

Gregory, in the chair across from her, wrinkles up his face:
That's not so good.

Gradually Anna unfolds her arms and wrings her hands in her
lap: her posture changing from defiance to distress.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA
(almost panicky)
Where will I go?

Gregory doesn't answer.

ANNA CONT'D
(now panicky)
Gregory?

GREGORY
Perhaps a little compromise is in order.

Anna's posture changes back to defiance.

ANNA
Irina is so ungrateful. After all I did for her. It's intolerable, that's what it is. And I'll tell you something else. No man has been in this house for a long time. There are no clothes, not even a razor. There is not even the tiniest whiff of a man.

Gregory looks at her, raises an eyebrow.

GREGORY
What is that to you?

Anna sniffs in disdain.

INT. PSYCHOLOGY DEPT. - DAY

Jack Callihan leaving Irina's office nods to Howie in his office across the hall.

Howie looks down the hall to make sure Callihan is gone, then makes a beeline over to Irina's office. He sniffs.

HOWIE
Nice manly aftershave. Let's see. You have office hours Tuesdays and Thursdays. Today's Friday. Is the Judge having trouble with his assignments?

IRINA
Cut it out. Jack handles a lot of child abuse cases and he wants to know the research on children's testimony. At what age can children distinguish fact from fantasy? How reliable is memory? I'm pulling some references for him.

HOWIE
So it's Jack now, is it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA
You're such a kid.

HOWIE
Low blow.
(he whips a box of open
Crackerjack out of his jacket)
Want to see my prize?
(he sits down and pops
Crackerjack in his mouth)
How's Tati doing with her long lost
grandmother?

IRINA
The bloom is off the rose.

EXT./ INT. TATI'S ROOM - DAY

Tati writing at her desk suddenly realizes Anna stands in the open doorway. Behind Anna in the hallway, Gregory motions her to go on. Anna enters.

ANNA
Am I interrupting?

TATI
(covers letter with hand)
I'm just writing a letter.

Anna looks around the room as if she's never seen it before.

ANNA
To your father?

When Tati doesn't answer, Anna picks up the photo in the mirror frame.

ANNA CONT'D
Is this your father?

Tati nods, then averts her eyes.

ANNA CONT'D
Do you have other photographs of him?

TATI
(without looking up)
They were all lost when we moved.

ANNA
Mmm. You don't look anything like him.
(casually sets the photo down)
Would you like to go on a picnic?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TATI
I love picnics.

She sticks the letter in the drawer and jumps up.

EXT. URBAN AREA - DAY

Tati's backpack is filled with picnic things. Anna, out of her element, holds Tati's arm. They walk in an urban neighborhood with PEOPLE working in their yards, and cars whizzing by. Tati, completely self confident, turns a corner.

TATI
This is a shortcut.

A jogger jogs around Anna, startling her.

ANNA
Fool joggers.

TATI
Mom's done two marathons. I'm on the middle school track team. I'm a sprinter. Mom's a long distance runner.

ANNA
Are you sure you know the way?

TATI
Yes. Are you getting tired?

ANNA
Of course not. I walked across a whole country once.

(Beat)
Another time, I walked across a frozen sea. I'm a long distance walker.

TATI
Neat.

TWO GIRLS, KELLY and BRANDIE, at a bus stop, hail Tati.

GIRLS
Hi, Tati. We're going to the mall.

Anna takes in the girls, their almost tarty makeup, dangling earrings, midriff t shirts and tight jeans. They're quite a contrast to Tati in her baggy overalls.

TATI
Hi, Kelly, Brandie. This is my grandmother. She grew up in the Russian royal court with the Tsar.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The girls are fakely polite, almost openly rude. They snicker as Tati and Anna start to walk away.

BRANDI

And her father's the king of England.

ANNA

(turns around)

The King of England has been dead a long time. He gave me this shawl.

The sunlight hits the gold threads shot through Anna's shawl. In Anna's scornful, ferocious presence, the shawl shimmering like gold, the girls are cowed and awed. Anna turns and processes down the street.

TATI

Wow! You really showed them!

ANNA

Who were those girls?

TATI

They're just stupid, boring girls from my class. All they think about is mascara and boys.

ANNA

Mmm.

EXT. PARK - DAY

FROM A DISTANCE, the scene of Anna and Tati having a leisurely picnic on a golden summer day is idyllic, like an Impressionist painting.

CLOSE UP, we see sun sparkling off the white linen tablecloth, the rich browns of the old fashioned wicker picnic basket...

A man's hand reaches into the lacquered wicker basket, it's Gregory's. He takes out a crisp linen napkin and spreads it on young Anna's lap.

GREGORY

Serviette.

YOUNG ANNA

Serviette.

GREGORY

Framboises.

He puts a raspberry on young Anna's tongue and we watch her savor it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA

She takes after me a bit.

Mr. Fischer regards Anna with surprise.

INT. UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE - DAY

A secretary smiles at Irina, pushes the intercom.

SECRETARY

Dr. Watson. Dr. Pavlov wonders if you
have a minute.

Almost immediately, SAM WATSON, a big bear of a man, sheer
animal magnetism and energy, opens his office door.

SAM WATSON

Irina. What a pleasure! Come in, come
in.

He shuts his office door behind them and gives Irina a big
hug. She doesn't resist but pulls away first.

SAM WATSON CONT'D

You look terrific. How are you? How's
Tati?

IRINA

We're both about the same, except more
so. She's growing like crazy, my class
size has doubled, and I'm finally
finishing my book.

SAM WATSON

Let's celebrate. We'll drive to Toronto,
have a fantastic dinner, champagne, spend
the weekend in bed-- God, I've missed
you. When my secretary said your name--

IRINA

I stopped by to see if you could do me a
favor, Sam.

SAM WATSON

Sure, anything, but remind me again why
we broke up.

IRINA

(laughs charmingly)
Let's not go over that again.

SAM WATSON

(serious)
I know I traveled a lot. But I always
came back, didn't I?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA
 (lightly, almost coquettish,
 but definitely holding him
 off)
 There would have come a time when you
 didn't--

Sam shakes his head in genuine puzzlement.

SAM WATSON
 You know, Irina, sometime in every
 relationship, you have to just close your
 eyes and jump--

IRINA
 (serious)
 Can you help me, Sam? I see you're on
 the board of Eldercare Home.

CUT TO:

At the door, Irina hugs Sam.

SAM WATSON
 I'm a miracle worker, Irina, but you're
 going to have to give me a few weeks for
 this one.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

When Irina comes in from work, Tati silently signals for her
 to come to her room. Irina strides in ready for battle, but
 Tati's beaming.

TATI
 Whatever you said to her, Mom, she's a
 changed person. We had the best time, we
 went on a picnic, and she has this shawl
 the King of England gave her, and French
 is really going to be fun--

IRINA
 Really. Well, that's wonderful, honey.
 As long as we're going to be together a
 little longer, it might as well be
 pleasant.

DISSOLVE TO:

Irina sits at one end of the dining room table preparing her
 lecture. Tati, Anna, and Gregory sit around the table. Tati
 holds up a picture to Irina.

TATI
 We're organizing all of Grandmother's
 photographs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA
That's a good idea.

ANNA
It's an impossible idea. I only agreed to get her to stop pestering me.

Tati holds a map of Eastern Europe, her finger tracing a direct route for Anna. Gregory leans forward and Tati tilts the map so he can see.

TATI
Why didn't you fly from St. Petersburg to Paris?

ANNA
(exasperated)
There were no planes then. There weren't even trains for civilians unless you could bribe someone. You couldn't travel in a direct line. There was a lot of backing and forthing.
(she traces a route)
Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Hungary, Austria, Switzerland, Paris.

TATI
That's the way we'll start then.

ANNA
Do you think I was snapping photographs? She's just like you, Irina. Always wanting everything in order. You can't put everything in order.

IRINA
Was I like that?

ANNA
Always tidying up.
(to Tati)
I always said they gave me the wrong baby at the hospital.

Irina lowers her head to hide her hurt.

INT. IRINA'S OFFICE - DAY

Irina and Jack Callihan are in mid-conversation.

JACK
Some of these kids that end up in my court started running away when they were nine years old. No one has a clue what's going on in their heads.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Irina leans a bit forward.

IRINA

I could have been one of your runaways. One time in boarding school, I told a classmate's father that I'd missed the train to Paris and my mother would be awfully disappointed. Two big lies and he never doubted me for a second. He gave me a ride to our apartment, but my mother wasn't there. Some man was there, he seemed to be living there. He didn't know who I was. He said, Well, if today's your 13th birthday, come give me a birthday kiss.

(Jack shakes his head in sympathy)

I ran out and hitch-hiked back to school. Three rides, seven hours in the dark. A truck driver kept yelling at me, Don't you know how dangerous this is? I ought to take you to the authorities. When I saw the school gates, I burst into tears. Relief, despair--

(she stops, embarrassed)

Why am I telling you this story?

JACK

Maybe you never had a chance to tell it to anybody before.

Irina looks at him a long moment.

IRINA

You must be quite a judge.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM - SAME

ANNA

After the Revolution, the country was in chaos. You never knew who was in power. There was no food. People ate the dead.

Tati is rapt.

FLASHBACK TO RUSSIA: BITTER WINTER - DAY - 1918

A panorama of misery and terrible conditions.

ANNA V.O.

Everybody I knew was dead. I just wanted to stay alive. You couldn't trust anyone. You did what you had to do.

A series of scenes set in increasingly grim conditions: Anna is between 17 & 20 and her appearance becomes progressively more threadbare and desperate.

INT. & EXT. - DAY & NIGHT - 1918-1921

ANNA V.O.
 You constantly had to hide. I was lucky.
 I had things to barter.

INT. JEWELRY STORE - DAY

A MAN holds aside a black curtain and shows Anna into the back room of his jewelry store.

Anna lays a ring on a table. Its stone is as big as a robin's egg.

EXT. RIVER - MOONLESS NIGHT

On the riverbank, a torch flares up, held by A BOATMAN. Anna unpacks a blue velvet fringed shawl from her bundle.

The BOATMAN points a grimy hand to a mauve silk dress still in the bundle.

Anna shakes her head.

The boatman takes the blue shawl and waves Anna into his boat.

The torch extinguishes and in the darkness, you hear only the sound of OARS DIPPING THROUGH WATER.

EXT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

WATER DRIPS from a pipe. Anna cups her hands underneath and washes her face, sponges and smooths her dress as best she can. Walking with perfect posture, she approaches a group of ROUGH SOLDIERS.

ANNA
 Take me to your sergeant.

Amid winks and rude remarks, the soldiers direct her to his rustic room.

INT. RUSTIC ROOM - SAME

Anna offers the SERGEANT a pewter cup from her bundle.

He laughs, grabs her nearly slack bundle: only a nun's habit and the mauve dress are left. He crosses himself when he sees the nun's habit, and moves on to the mauve dress.

SERGEANT
 My wife would fancy that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA
(shakes her head)
Not for sale.

SERGEANT
(lasciviously)
What is for sale?

ANNA
Give me supper first, then I'll show you.

Anna eats ravenously while the sergeant drinks and belches and hurries her. Finally she rises.

ANNA CONT'D
First put the money on the table.

SERGEANT
Don't put on airs with me, Miss High and Mighty. We had a revolution, did you hear?

The sergeant throws Anna on the bed; she fights with all her might.

ANNA V.O.
I was very strong and threw him on the floor.

He staggers to her satchel, pulls the mauve silk dress out.

ANNA V.O.
He opened my satchel and put his dirty hands all over my silk dress.

ROUGH SOLDIER
(he feels the material)
What's this?
(he starts to rip the dress)

INT. ANNA'S ROOM - SAME

Anna's room is LARGER, ROSIER, AND HAS MORE THINGS. Tati sits on the floor in front of Anna's chair while Anna brushes Tati's hair.

ANNA
I crept up behind him and shoved him. He was so drunk he toppled over. I grabbed my satchel and ran out.

TATI
(big eyed)
Did he come after you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA
I never stopped running and I never
looked back.

TATI
Whew. You were lucky.

ANNA
Sometimes you were lucky. Sometimes you
weren't.

She closes her eyes.

INT. RUSTIC ROOM - FLASHBACK

The sergeant throws Anna on the bed, pulls up her skirts, she
fights with all her might.

He pins her down, mounts her. During his rooting and
grunting, we stay on Anna's face: a mask of hatred.

He climbs off Anna, staggers to her satchel, pulls the mauve
dress out.

ROUGH SOLDIER
(he feels the material)
What's this?
(he starts to rip the dress)

Anna smashes a lead candlestick over his head. He falls on
his knees, stunned, then collapses on the floor. Anna grabs
his wallet and her satchel and is out the door, running.

We see the soldier dead on the floor, blood dripping.

The blood dripping horizontally on the wooden floor fades to
the stripes in the American flag.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY - JULY

An American flag completely fills the screen.

TATI O.S.
(sings at top of lungs)
I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy,
Yankee Doodle do or die...

Tati, dressed in red, white, and blue, waves a flag.

TATI CONT'D
(sings)
A real live niece of my Uncle Sam,
Born on the 4th of July...

She marches past Irina and Anna and puts the flag and a box
of sparklers with a pile of things: blankets, cooler, etc.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TATI
Flag and sparklers, Mom.

IRINA
Popcorn coming up, pard.

Irina, smiling, puts popcorn into the microwave, while Tati fills the cooler with drinks: They're a team. Anna frowns.

ANNA
Idolizing a flag that way. It's like the Nazi Youth. You should forbid it. Americans are hopelessly naive.

IRINA
Tati is three fourths American.

ANNA
She is one fourth Russian. One drop of Russian blood, you are Russian.

IRINA
Now who's being chauvinistic?
(Beat)
Better bring a sweater. It may get cool later on.

ANNA
I'm not going. I hate fireworks. They remind me of war and killing and senseless deaths.

IRINA
Oh, that's too bad.

But she doesn't look like it's too bad at all.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

A wonderful fireworks display. OOOOHS and AHHHS from the CROWD of people lounging on the ground.

On their backs on a blanket, Irina and Tati, their arms entwined, look up in delight.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Irina inches along in the post fireworks traffic. Tati, her head resting on the door frame, gazes up at the sky.

TATI
I've decided what I want for my birthday.
I want to completely redecorate my room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA
But you love your room.

TATI
Yeah, but it's a kid's room. I'm going
to be twelve years old.

IRINA
Well, we'll talk about it later.

TATI
That means No.

Irina laughs. She looks over at Tati with deep pleasure.

IRINA
I've really missed spending time alone
with you.

TATI
Next to my birthday, the 4th of July's my
favorite holiday.
(inhales deeply)
It smells a little like Gregory.

IRINA
Like what?

TATI
Nothing.

IRINA
I thought you said Gregory.

Tati doesn't say anything.

In the distance we hear a series of rapid BANGS, firecrackers
being set off.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM - SAME

Loud popping sounds carry through the night air. Anna turns
up the volume on her record player until the music is
blaring. The popping sounds are closer and louder. Anna
claps her hands to her ears and closes her eyes. Everything
becomes silent.

FLASHBACK: OPEN CLEARING - DAY

In a clearing, Serge, the man we saw earlier in the opera
flashback, and Gregory turn around, raise their dueling
pistols: BANG.

The gun in Gregory's hand falls. Gunpowder hangs in the air.
Gregory's body falls in slow motion. Anna, face anguished,
mouth open in a silent scream, runs toward Gregory.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The silence is shattered by a SHRIEKING TRAIN WHISTLE.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY - PARIS, 1921

ANNA V.O.

I never planned to go to Paris. It took me three years. I just ended up there.

A brilliant sunny day. A train pulls into the station.

Anna, 20, in a nun's habit, exits the train with her satchel.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

Anna, still in nun's habit, walks into the hotel.

INT. HOTEL - SAME

Anna walks down corridors, nods to a MAID who bows a curtsy, sneaks into an empty room, puts out the DO NOT DISTURB (French) sign, locks the door.

She bathes and fixes her hair.

She turns the mauve dress inside out, pulls threads, and removes a necklace, earrings, and other jewelry skillfully sewn in the lining.

INT. HOTEL - SAME

Anna in the mauve dress and jewelry descends the front staircase in the same regal way we saw in second scene at David's house. All heads turn.

She sweeps into the hotel dining room.

Across the room, A GENTLEMAN, elegantly dressed in the latest Paris fashion, dines with a GROUP OF PEOPLE. It's Gregory. He can't believe his eyes. He can't take his eyes off her. As he strides to her, all the other diners FADE TO SEPIA: they're the only two people in the room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Old sepia postcards, theatre programs, and photographs roughly sorted in piles cover the table. Tati sits with Anna and Gregory. The doorbell RINGS OS. Tati jumps up.

Tati opens the door to Jody and Mrs. Fischer. She steps outside and closes the door behind her.

INT. APT. HALLWAY - SAME

TATI

Mom and I have decided that I should stop going to the Y and spend the time with my grandmother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jody looks very disappointed.

MRS FISCHER
I know Jody will miss you, but I'd do the same thing. Your grandmother is a marvelous woman.

She pats Tati approvingly.

INT. APT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Tati sits back down in front of an album open to a page with some writing at the top. Tati carefully finishes printing:
PARIS, 1921.

ANNA
Where was I?

TATI
It was Gregory in the restaurant.

Gregory holds up three fingers to Tati.

GREGORY
She ate trois strawberry shortcakes.

Tati giggles. Gregory winks at her. She winks back.

RETURN TO FLASHBACK INT. PARIS HOTEL RESTAURANT - DAY

ANNA V.O.
I still have a good appetite.

At a table laden with strawberry shortcakes with luscious red berries and mounds of cream, Anna and Gregory laugh.

MONTAGE: A series of scenes of Anna and Gregory in love. In each scene, Anna's in a more fashionable dress and jewels to tell passage of time and her evolution. It's the 1920's in Paris: modern art, modern music, everything is exploding.

EXT. - PARIS GALLERY - DAY

A big sign outside an art gallery proclaims: CHAGALL EXHIBITION. Many FASHIONABLE PEOPLE enter.

Anna in a beautiful dress and jewels is on Gregory's arm. They're laughing and kissing. A WELL DRESSED COUPLE looks at them, scandalized. It's Serge and his wife.

EXT. THEATRE - NIGHT - DECEMBER, 1922

Sign in front of the Theatre de l'Atelier says: JEAN COCTEAU'S "ANTIGONE." MUSIC BY ARTHUR HONEGGER. COSTUMES BY COCO CHANEL. SCENERY BY PABLO PICASSO.

INT. THEATRE - SAME

Anna and Gregory are in a rowdy audience. He hands her a small velvet box. It's the cameo brooch on a gold chain we saw in the opening scene.

ANNA
It's beautiful.

Gregory puts it around her neck and clasps it. He caresses her bare shoulders.

GREGORY
I wish I could give you the world.

A few aisles away, Serge watches, silent and seething.

INT. LA COUPOLE IN MONTPARNASSE - NIGHT

Avant-garde hangout. Black musicians. Anna and Gregory charleston. They both turn around, Gregory reaches out his hand to catch hers, and STOP MOTION--everything is BLACK.

Gregory's hand is caught by A WOMAN IN WHITE. TWO CHILDREN IN WHITE, a boy, 8, a girl, 6, dance between Anna and Gregory.

Gregory's wife and children link hands and circle him, pulling him away. He looks back at Anna once, and then he's gone and Anna's outstretched hand holds empty air.

RETURN TO PRESENT

Anna and Tati sit at the table alone. Anna sighs.

ANNA
Of course we couldn't stay away from each other.

(Beat)
Not a year later he was killed.

TATI
How?

ANNA
In a duel.

TATI
Over you?

Anna doesn't answer. She holds a yellowed program for The Paris Opera and stares through it.

INT. THE PARIS OPERA - EVENING

In a loge, Serge, in formal clothes, holds binoculars to his eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Through the binoculars we see Gregory and Anna in another loge. Anna laughs, holds up the theatre program, and whispers some intimacy to Gregory behind it.

INT. GREGORY AND ANNA'S BOX

The velvet curtains are wrenched apart and Serge storms into the box.

SERGE

I will not allow you to publicly insult my sister like this!

GREGORY

Serge! How good of you to come see us finally.

SERGE

Leave here at once.

GREGORY

Sit down now, Serge, you're making a scene.

(turns to Anna)

Anna, this is my hotheaded brother-in-law, who's usually quite pleasant--

SERGE

I...I will not stand for this.

Anna puts her hand on Gregory's arm.

ANNA

Perhaps I should go.

GREGORY

Absolutely not.

SERGE

I call you out.

GREGORY

Don't be ridiculous. This is the 20th century.

Serge stands there, fuming and impotent, as Gregory turns back toward Anna.

GREGORY CONT'D

I'm sorry, Anna.

Anna makes a small gracious wave as if it's nothing.

SERGE

She may act like royalty, but there's a word for what she is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gregory turns, suddenly in anger.

GREGORY
Those words will cost you.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

A gray dawn, light mist. Absolute STILLNESS. Five male figures, starkly distinct, in a clearing. Anna obscured by the black trees. Everything and everyone is in shades of black and gray. The only spot of color is a jaunty yellow tie Gregory wears with his dove grey suit.

Except for that tiny bit of yellow, the whole scene is solemn, stately, ceremonious. People move as if choreographed, each playing a noble dignified role.

Gregory and Serge stand back to back, their SECONDS next to them. An OFFICIAL in black raises his arm. They each pace ten paces. Turn. Raise their pistols.

BACK TO APARTMENT PRESENT DAY

Anna still stares at the program in her hand. Tati takes the program from her and pastes it on the page.

TATI
It was over you, wasn't it? I'm sure of it. How romantic!

ANNA
(sharply)
No. It was not romantic.
(a long sigh)
Did you ever notice he always has the smell of gunpowder about him?

TATI
(nods and sniffs)
You can still smell him a little bit.

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tati HUMS "The Imperial Waltz" as she washes dishes, Irina dries dishes in silence, Anna puts leftover food into Tupperware containers.

IRINA
Want me to braid your hair tonight?

TATI
Nope.

IRINA
You're wearing your hair loose all the time lately. It looks nice, but I like it better in braids.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TATI
Grandmere said this is more suitable for
a young lady.

IRINA
(testy)
You can wear your hair any way you want.

TATI
I like it this way.

Tati begins humming again.

IRINA
Please stop humming that song.

TATI
It's my very favorite song in the whole
world. It's called "The Imperial Waltz,"
but it's really "Anna and Gregory's
Waltz!"

Anna smiles. Irina speaks with effort.

IRINA
I know what it is. It's a pretty song,
but I don't want to hear it morning,
noon, and night.

Tati rolls her eyes.

IRINA CONT'D
Guess what? Howie wants to take you to
Delaware Park Sunday.

TATI
Yeaaaa. We haven't been out together
this whole summer.

IRINA
Oh, I'm can't go, darling, I have to
finish my chapter. I'm way behind Howie.

Tati looks disappointed, suddenly brightens.

TATI
Grandmere, you'll love it. There's a
lake and ice cream and a rose garden--

IRINA
I'm sure your grandmother will enjoy a
day of peace and quiet.

ANNA
I would like to meet this Howie you write
books with.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

IRINA

I think Howie was hoping to have some private time with Tati.

TATI

(dries her hands)
And swans. Les cignes, Grandmere--
(Irina winces)
Just like at that park you and Gregory used to go all the time.

IRINA

Your grandmother will see the park some other time.

DISSOLVE TO:

Irina on the bedroom extension phone.

IRINA CONT'D

Howie, I want you to take Tati to Delaware Park Sunday.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Tati races into Howie's arms. He gives her a big bear hug.

HOWIE

I've missed you, kiddo.

He looks past Tati and Irina in surprise.

Anna wears an extraordinary cream colored dress and hat. Rather than look foolish, she looks magnificent: a painting come alive. (Mme. Monet at Bois de Boulogne)

IRINA

My mother has decided she would like to see the park today.

Anna holds out her hand for Howie to kiss it. He rises to the occasion.

HOWIE

I've always wanted to do that.

ANNA

One would think you had done it your whole life.

EXT. DELAWARE PARK - DAY

As Anna, Howie, and Tati holding Howie's hand, move through the Rose Garden, people compliment Anna on the beauty of her dress and hat. Although Howie's dressed in jeans, he stands straight and tall as if he's in wear appropriate to Anna's. She smiles and nods, accepting all the attention as her due.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

At the lake, Howie gives Tati money to run ahead and rent the rowboats. He offers Anna his arm and they stroll.

INT. APARTMENT - SAME

At the table, Irina looks at Anna's door, partially ajar.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM - SAME

Irina, looking guilty, enters Anna's room. The room is almost the same as it was in the beginning--beige, white, and plain with just a few of Anna's items.

At the dresser, Irina barely glances at the photograph of Gregory which appears yellowed and old-fashioned. The golden egg appears ordinary: Irina picks it up with childish satisfaction, then almost drops it. Sucking air between her teeth, she quickly puts it down. She picks up a gold chain with a small key. She eyes the trunk.

TATI V.O.

She has all these treasures in her trunk.

Irina kneels at Anna's old battered trunk with dull brass hinges and turns the key. She lifts the lid slowly...

Suddenly, a whirl of moths FLY OUT into her face. It's disgusting and spooky.

The trunk is empty except for an old Russian fur hat. When Irina picks it up, it crumbles in her hands. Irina looks terribly distressed.

EXT. DELAWARE LAKE - DAY

Howie and Anna drift along in their rowboat.

ANNA

On the banks of the Volga, there is a house where they hid the paintings in the root cellar during the Revolution. They have never been found. I could take you in a boat down the Volga to the exact spot.

Howie is enchanted.

Anna trails her fingers in the water, looks over at two swans and a nearby row boat, where a woman also trails her fingers in the water. It's YOUNG ANNA and GREGORY, very much in love, drifting along with the swans at Bois de Boulogne.

TATI AND GREGORY SITTING SIDE BY SIDE, sharing the oars, row their boat quickly and triumphantly past Howie and Anna.

EXT. DELAWARE PARK - DAY

Anna, Tati, and Howie get to the front of the line at the ice cream stand.

HOWIE

Whatever you want. You won the boatrace.

TATI

You guys didn't even try. Okay, I'll have a triple decker. Bottom scoop chocolate, middle scoop banana, top scoop bubblegum brittle.

HOWIE

That sounds good. But I'm getting into shape. Your mother has agreed to be my personal trainer.

(he sucks in his stomach)

Anna, what would you like?

ANNA

Black raspberry. In a dish, please.

HOWIE

I'll have that too.

Howie starts to tuck a napkin at Tati's neck, stops and hands it to her.

HOWIE

I guess you're getting a little old for a bib.

They grin at each other.

TATI

You're the best, Howie. I'm going to go feed les cignes. That's French for swans.

Tati runs off. Anna and Howie sit at a table.

Anna

Are you Tati's father?

Howie nearly chokes on his ice cream.

HOWIE

No, I'm afraid not.

Anna regards him steadily.

HOWIE CONT'D

I adore Tati, but I'm not really the father type.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA

(matter of fact)
I've known gay men who are excellent fathers.

Howie goes completely still. He looks at her, his face a mask: It's the first time anyone has ever said out loud that he's gay, even himself.

HOWIE

How do you know so much about men?

ANNA

If there's one thing I know, it's men. I have a Ph.D. in men.

INT. IRINA'S OFFICE - DAY

Irina paces, but Howie sits straight up in the chair and he's not snacking.

IRINA

You loved her?

HOWIE

We're going down the Volga together. She's going to give me caviar and sturgeon and reindeer tongue--

IRINA

She's bewitching Tati. I'm really concerned.

HOWIE

Well, don't do anything about it till I get back from my Volga trip.

IRINA

I hate it when people romanticize Tsarist Russia. It wasn't all dancing Cossacks and caviar and vodka.

She picks up a book off her uncluttered desk and puts it back in its exact place on the wall bookshelf full of books.

IRINA CONT'D

You really didn't see any change in Tati?

HOWIE

Yes. She's growing up. Right before our eyes. If you had a time lapse camera, you could actually capture it.

IRINA

Don't you think I know that? It's scary how fast she's growing up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWIE

Come on, Irina. Every other parent in America is concerned about drugs and malls and premature sex. You're worried because your daughter has a rich, absolutely marvelous relationship with her grandmother who is probably the most perceptive person I've ever met.

IRINA

It's not fair. She wasn't a mother to me and now she's stealing my daughter. She's even bewitched you.

HOWIE

(very serious)

This isn't between you and me. A sophomore in Psych 101 could see that. It isn't between you and Tati either. But it's going to be between you and Tati if you don't get some perspective.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Anna, Tati, and Gregory are at the table pasting photographs in an album. Irina enters with a basket full of clean laundry, which she dumps out on the sofa. She shakes out a sheet with a snap and Anna glances over.

ANNA

I don't understand why you don't have a servant.

IRINA

No one has servants anymore. They have cleaning people and I can't afford one. Aren't you finished with those pictures yet?

TATI

(without looking up)

We're on our third album, Mom. We're going to need a lot more albums.

Tati and Anna, their heads close together, are almost encapsulated from her. Irina's expression is a mixture of longing and fear. She finishes folding the sheet and starts another.

ANNA

Here's a picture of the Tsar in Siberia. The Tsar had absolute power given him by God. Do you understand what that means?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TATI
Divine Right of Kings.

ANNA
Yes. But even more so for Tsars.

IRINA
Do you have any pictures of me?

ANNA
You hated to have your picture taken.
You always made a big scene.
(to Tati)
Your mother quite often embarrassed me.

Tati wags her finger at her mother. Gregory, Anna, and Tati laugh.

ANNA CONT'D
(returns to the photo)
No one knew better than the Tsar what was good for the peasants, because he was their father. Batiushka, they called him. Batiushka.

TATI
Batiushka.

IRINA
(folding laundry furiously)
The Tsar was not a wonderful father to the people. He was a tyrant, the people suffered greatly--

ANNA
How would you know?

IRINA
Because in between making big scenes and embarrassing you, I spent six summers in Switzerland studying Russian history so if you came to visit we'd have something to talk about. Because I was a Russian history major in college and did a great deal of research--

ANNA
(cuts her off)
The peasants had senseless dreams. It was the Tsar's duty to take care of them firmly and unflinchingly--

IRINA
There was a reason they called the Tsar Bloody Nicholas.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNA

I was there.

TATI

Grandmother says history depends on who's telling the story.

Irina stuffs all the laundry, folded and unfolded, back into the basket, picks it up.

IRINA

Tati, it's past your bedtime.

TATI

Since when do I have a bedtime?

IRINA

March.

TATI

Mommm. I'm not a baby.

IRINA

Go to your room this instant.

Eyes blazing, Tati goes to her room, and slams the door.

ANNA

(to Irina)

Do you have any pictures of me?

EXT. UNIVERSITY WALKING PATH - DAY

Irina and Jack Callihan walk on the campus walking path which winds through a forested area, a pretty stream running along the side. An occasional jogger passes them or a bicyclist rings her bell.

IRINA

And she tells Tati all this distorted history. Some of her stories about her past are outright lies. Tati thinks she has treasures in her trunk and her trunk is emp-- Then Tati stopped going to the Y to spend all day with her--I know that sounds good, but I didn't even know until my neighbor mentioned it. I haven't even confronted Tati about that--

(stops abruptly)

I don't know why I'm burdening you with all this. I didn't know who else to call.

JACK

I'm really glad you called me. I was just waiting to finish your class until I called you--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA

Jack, you've raised kids. You work with kids every day. Am I overreacting?

JACK

I can see you're really worried. But I'm not quite getting what you're worried about.

IRINA

I feel better just talking about it to a disinterested party.

JACK

That's the last thing I am.

His gaze disconcerts her and she looks at her watch.

IRINA

I had no idea it was so late. I've got to get back. Thanks so much, Jack. I really appreciate it.

She races down the path, while Jack stands there with a puzzled look on his face.

INT. IRINA'S OFFICE - A LITTLE LATER

The ringing phone starts going into the machine when a harried Irina opens her door.

SAM WATSON O.S.

Hi, Irina, Sam Watson, your devoted--

IRINA

(grabs the phone)

Sam. What did you find out?

(as she listens, her face relaxes)

I cannot tell you how grateful I am.

(beat, then she smiles)

No, Sam, I'm not that grateful.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM - DAY

The Victrola plays a different, deeper Russian melody. Many candles burn in front of the icons. Tati, wearing a Russian fur hat, takes a wooden Russian doll from the open trunk. On the floor, she opens the set of stacked Russian dolls, sets them out in order of size, largest to smallest.

TATI

(to biggest doll)

This is you, Grandmother.

(to next size)

This is Mom.

(and so on)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TATI (cont'd)
This is me. This is my daughter. And
this teeny weeny one is my granddaughter.

Tati separates out the dolls representing Anna and Irina and asks the Anna doll matter of factly.

TATI
Why did you send Mom away?

Anna is taken aback. She gathers herself.

ANNA
I sent her to the finest school in Europe.

TATI
She hated it. She was miserable.

ANNA
She was a child. I knew what was best for her.

TATI
She missed you terribly.

ANNA
(almost yelling)
Don't you think I missed her? All I ever wanted was for her to have a better life than I had.

TATI
I just don't get why you two are so mad at each other.

ANNA
Don't be tiresome, Tatiana. Just play with the dolls.

Tati precisely restacks the dolls and sets them on the trunk with a little bang. She looks straight at Anna.

TATI
I'm not a little baby who plays with dolls. You're just like my mother. Why is it when you ask grownups a simple question, they will never tell you the answer?

She takes off the fur hat and leaves the room.

ANNA
(mutters in her chair)
No. You are just like your mother. Always pestering me, pestering me. Isn't that so, Gregory?
(when Gregory doesn't appear)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNA (cont'd)
Gregory? Gregory?

Anna looks around her empty room. Her whole demeanor changes from annoyance to utter loneliness.

EXT. TATI'S ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Anna knocks on Tati's door.

TATI O.S.
Come in.

INT. TATI'S ROOM - SAME

At her desk, Tati doesn't look up from her stamps. Behind her on her bed, Gregory is propped up against her headboard, his legs crossed at the ankles. Anna ignores him.

ANNA
(to Tati)
The reason people don't answer simple questions is because they don't want to hear the answers.

Anna picks up the photo in the mirror frame, looks at it.

ANNA CONT'D
It's like you and your father.

Anna and Tati's eyes lock a moment, then Anna casually puts the picture down.

ANNA CONT'D
You should get that glass replaced. It's bad luck.

She takes a silver bell out of her pocket and hands it to Tati. Gregory nods in approval.

ANNA CONT'D
If you are ever troubled by evil spirits, ring this.

Tati stares at the exquisite bell.

GREGORY
(to Tati)
Merci.

TATI
Merci, Grandmere.

INT. TATI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tati, holding the silver bell in her hands, listens to her mother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA

I found a beautiful home for your grandmother. We're really lucky, you usually have to wait a year to get in, but Sam Watson--you remember Sam, he asked about you--he's getting her in in six weeks.

TATI

I don't want her to go.

IRINA

It's not very far. You can ride your bike over to visit--

TATI

You just want to get back at her for sending you away.

IRINA

Tati, how can you say such a thing?

TATI

I don't want her ever to leave. We're a real family now. Grandmother and Gregory--

IRINA

What are you talking about?

TATI

You know who Gregory is. Grandmother's first lover, her favorite. You can always tell when he's coming. He has that little gunpowder smell from the duel.

INT. HOWIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Irina and Howie talk intensely in Howie's office. The door is closed. Howie sits behind his desk and Irina sits in a chair. It resembles a therapy session.

IRINA

This is way beyond imaginary friends. She's too old for imaginary friends anyway. She says she talks with these people, they're there in the room. She thinks she actually sees them. Smells them! She imagines all these things in the trunk--

HOWIE

Tati has a wonderful imagination. I predict she'll be a writer when she grows up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA
She said when they finish French, they
start Russian.

HOWIE
That's terrific.

IRINA
Don't you understand? My mother is never
planning to leave!

HOWIE
(sternly)
Irina. A real grandmother is much
healthier for Tati than a pretend
archeologist spy father.

Irina looks as if she's been slapped.

IRINA
I should never have confided in you.

She gets up, and leaves his office.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM - DAY

Tati, sifting through Anna's jewelry box, holds up a pair of
earrings to her ears.

TATI
I wish I had pierced ears.

Anna pulls Tati's lobe for a closer look.

ANNA
Why aren't your ears pierced?

TATI
Mom says it's self mutilation and
barbaric.

ANNA
Nonsense. Your mother's ears were
pierced when she was a infant.

TATI
She said she had no choice.

ANNA
I suppose you have a choice.

TATI
(rolls her eyes)
Probably when I'm 50.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA
Do you want your ears pierced?

TATI
Kind of. Well, yes. Yes, I do.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

A potato, a darning needle threaded with thick white linen thread, a bowl with several icecubes, cotton balls, a Vodka bottle are on the table. Anna scrubs her hands, pours a little Vodka into a dish, then swabs Tati's earlobes with it. She makes a little mark on each ear with pen.

TATI
Will it hurt?

ANNA
Beauty knows no pain.

TATI
That sounds like a bubblegum fact.

Anna rubs Tati's earlobe with an icecube.

TATI CONT'D
That burns a little.

ANNA
I'm freezing it so the needle won't hurt much.

Anna holds the lobe between two icecubes.

ANNA CONT'D
I've seen men have their legs cut off with no anesthetic except a glass of whiskey.

She presses the potato behind Tati's ear, and swiftly puts the needle and thread through the front into the potato.

TATI
(flinches)
Ow.

ANNA
Don't move.

She removes the potato, draws the needle through, and swiftly ties a knot. She cuts the thread, leaving a little circle of thread in Tati's earlobe.

She swabs a dot of blood with the Vodka soaked cotton ball, and holds up the hand mirror.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA

There.

Tati's face in the mirror slowly breaks into a big grin.

DISSOLVE TO:

Tati with a loop of thread in each earlobe. The table is cleaned up except for the bottle of Vodka and two silver filigree shot-size glasses. Anna pours a splash in Tati's, fills her own up to the top.

They raise their glasses in the air.

ANNA

To all the glories and pains of
womanhood!

They drink. Anna gives Tati another splash, tops her own.

EXT./INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

As Irina gets out of her car, she can hear "The Imperial Waltz" playing top volume. She takes the stairs two at a time.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Tati and Gregory waltz around the living room.

Irina opens the door.

IRINA

What's going on?

Tati pays no attention to her. She twirls around the living room, her arms up as if she waltzes with a partner. The music blares as Tati twirls and twirls, her face looking up in rapture. Irina looks at Tati in shock and sees

FLASHBACK - PARIS APARTMENT - DAY

Irina, 11, in her schoolgirl uniform, waltzes around the Paris apartment with Gregory in his white uniform. Irina is in a state of rapture.

RETURN TO PRESENT

IRINA

Stop it. Stop it.
(when Tati doesn't respond)
STOP IT!

Irina walks into Anna's open room, where Anna lies on the bed. The needle makes a terrible SCRATCH as Irina stops the record. She's about to break it when Anna grabs her arm, stopping her. Irina charges out of the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tati seems dazed. Irina shakes her.

IRINA
Gregory is dead, do you understand? He's
dead!

Tati starts crying and Irina begins to soothe her.

IRINA CONT'D
What's that in your ear?

Tati pulls away and moves to Anna in her doorway, who holds
the record in her hands.

TATI
Grandmother pierced my ears. I asked her
to.

Both Tati and Irina stare defiantly at Irina.

IRINA
You what?

Irina lifts Tati's hair on both sides in disbelief. She
looks like she's going to implode with anger.

IRINA CONT'D
Get out of my sight, both of you. No,
Tati, you stay here.

She stares daggers at Anna.

ANNA
Are you going to send me to my room?

IRINA
I'm going to send you a lot further than
your room.

Irina grabs Tati by the arm and propels her out the door.

INT. WALDEN GALLERIA JEWELRY STORE - NIGHT

A NURSE at a table looks at Tati's earlobes.

NURSE
I thought I'd seen it all.

IRINA
My mother did it. She's from the old
country. We went to the Emergency Room
and they said her ears looked okay but we
could check here if we wanted.

The nurse moves the thread through the hole, swabs with
alcohol.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NURSE

They're fine. Just move the thread frequently to keep the hole open and swab with alcohol to prevent infection.

TATI

That's exactly what my grandmother said to do.

INT./EXT. MOVING CAR - LATER

Irina and Tati draw up to the house.

IRINA

(calm, therapeutic)
You don't understand, Tati. Gregory died sixty years ago. Your grandmother was a young woman. She could have had a life. She threw away all her chances for real love to maintain a charade.

TATI

You don't understand. He fought a duel over her. Even Howie knows it was a great love. It's lasted 70 years in her heart.

IRINA

That great love deprived me of a real father.

TATI

You didn't even have a great love and I don't have a real father. And now you want to take away my grandmother, who's a princess.

Irina, stung to the core by Tati's remark, strikes back.

IRINA

She is not a princess and never has been. Her whole life she put on royal airs. I was never going to tell you this, Tati, but I traced all those people. She was only a servant--

TATI

You're lying!
(opens the car door)
If you make her leave, I will never forgive you.

She slams the car door.

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

Anna is at the table, a cup of untouched tea in front of her. Irina walks past her.

ANNA
(almost sadly)
You can't stop time, Irina.

IRINA
(whirls around)
You certainly tried to stop it. I couldn't tell your friends my true age, you dressed me in those childish clothes--

ANNA
Tatiana wanted her ears pierced.

IRINA
(stops on a dime)
Wanted. Since when does wanted have to do with anything? I wanted to stay with you and you sent me away.

ANNA
I gave you an education. You mingled with the best people. Do you know what it cost?

IRINA
I know the schools were expensive--

ANNA
I'm talking about the cost to me--
(she jabs her chest)
to keep you in those schools!

Irina sits down, leans across the table and almost whispers.

IRINA
Why didn't you ever come to see me?

ANNA
(sighs)
You'd beg me to visit, and I'd come, and you'd be angry the whole time. My visits just upset you, and they certainly weren't pleasant for me.

IRINA
Oh, now it's my fault. Tell the truth for once. An eleven year old girl wasn't convenient for you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA

You weren't convenient for me. Your staying in Paris would have been a dead end for both of us. You were beginning to mature. Why do you think I dressed you like a child? You would have ended up having a life like mine. There's a word for that kind of life, as you well know.

Anna and Irina stare steely-eyed at each other.

FLASHBACK: INT. RUSSIAN TEA ROOM - DAY - 1976

In the restaurant with elaborate Russian decor, Irina and Anna sit at a table for early tea. There are a FEW OTHER DINERS in the restaurant, but no one directly next to them. Anna heartily eats biscuits and jam, Irina drinks tea.

IRINA

I've something important to tell you.

ANNA

You're getting married!

Anna looks delighted and spreads jam thickly on another biscuit as she waits for the details.

IRINA

Mother, I'm 36. Prince Gregory is not going to come. I'm not getting married. That's what I want to tell you--

ANNA

I don't understand it. You're so pretty and you'd be even prettier if you fixed yourself up a little. You're smart as a whip, maybe you let your smartness show too much--

IRINA

I'm going to have a baby--

ANNA

Oh don't do that.

IRINA

Why not?

ANNA

You have no idea how a baby complicates your life. It's sheer lunacy to do it without a husband.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA
But you had me.

ANNA
(waves her hand)
That was a mistake.

Anna's mouth keeps moving, but Irina holds her hands protectively over her stomach, her face all pinched as if she's been slapped, and she's only hearing Anna intermittently.

ANNA CONT'D
Oh, I didn't mean that. I meant you were unplanned. I was nearly 40 years old. I never expected to be a mother. I had been pregnant before, you know. Having you was the craziest thing I ever did. I never regretted it, but it's too hard to do alone--

This is what Irina hears.

ANNA CONT'D
The craziest thing I ever did. Regretted it. Too hard to do alone-- Irina, Irina? Are you listening to me?

Irina stares at her mother coldly and furiously.

IRINA
What gives you the right to criticize everything I do? All you ever did in your life was develop friendships with men in important places.

Irina leans across the table and spits out the words softly and precisely.

IRINA CONT'D
It may have been high class, Mother, but there's a word for what you were.

Anna looks as if she's been slapped. Then a veil drops and she stares at Irina coldly.

RETURN TO PRESENT

Anna has exactly the same expression on her face now. Irina stares back at her mother--the two are mirror images of each other.

Eyeball to eyeball silence. Finally Irina breaks it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA

I know I said an ugly thing. But remember, you started it.

ANNA

The proof of the pudding is, Your life has been easier than mine.

IRINA

That's it? That's all you're going to say?

ANNA

What could I say that would change the past? I have never understood what you've wanted from me.

IRINA

I wanted to be with you. You're my mother!

ANNA

What did I know about being a mother?

(beat)

Besides, I'm with you now and it doesn't please you at all.

IRINA

Are you ever going to say you're sorry?

ANNA

(scornfully)

You're so American.

(she holds both hands palm up)

Put sorry in this hand, and a pile of cow dung in that hand, and see which one fills up faster.

Her eyes filled with tears, Irina leaves the room.

INT. IRINA'S BEDROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Irina cries in her bed.

We go through the wall into Anna's room.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM - SAME

Anna, fully dressed, sits in the chair and stares straight ahead. Her face is unfathomable. The room is dark except for the candles and the flickering shadows they cast.

INT. TATI'S BEDROOM - SAME

The silver bell gleams on Tati's nightstand. Tati tosses in her bed, having a nightmare.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bathed in red, she sits bolt upright in bed. The eyes of the man in the mirror frame are red beams of light boring through her. He is livid.

MAN IN PHOTO

I want out! Do you hear me? Let me out!

Tati jumps out of bed, throws the photo in a drawer, knocks the bell over onto the floor, doesn't even notice, is already running for her life.

INT. IRINA'S ROOM - SAME

Tati, sobbing, gets into bed.

TATI

I dreamt this man with terrible red eyes killed you and he was going to kill me--

Irina holds her and gradually calms her down.

Tati lies back in bed, Irina's arm around her.

TATI

Momma?

IRINA

Yes?

TATI

Did you lie to me about my father too?

IRINA

(stricken)

Oh, no, Tati. I shouldn't have misled you about your grandmother. But I told you the truth about your father--

TATI

I was hoping I had a real father.

IRINA

Oh, Tati, I'm so terribly sorry--

Tati turns over and closes her eyes. Irina's face is tortured: What have I done?

INT. IRINA'S OFFICE - DAY

The door is closed. Irina looks up at Howie, her eyes filled with tears.

IRINA

I've made a terrible muddle of things.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Howie puts his arms around her. She leans into his arms and cries.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM - SAME

Tati, wearing Anna's gold threaded shawl, stands by the record player while "The Imperial Waltz" plays softly.

Anna sits in a chair, almost withdrawn.

Suddenly the needle catches in the scratch. Tati lifts the needle over the scratch and the music continues.

TATI

At least it still plays.

Anna waves for her to turn it off.

But Tati starts it over again and pulls the shawl tightly around her.

TATI

If Gregory were my father, he would teach me to waltz. And I would waltz--

ANNA

Turn it off.

TATI

And I would waltz so beautifully the King of England would give me a shawl spun of pure gold.

ANNA

I bought that shawl in a flea market.

TATI

(shaken)

Well, that doesn't matter. I don't care about that. It's still the most beautiful shawl in the world.

But she takes the shawl off and puts it on the back of a chair. It has lost its luster, looks quite ordinary.

TATI CONT'D

Mom said you weren't a princess. Why would she say such a thing?

Anna looks at Tati a long moment, then motions to her to sit down.

ANNA

I want to tell you a story, Tatiana. Once in the time of the Tsar, there was to be a great ball.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And suddenly Gregory's there. Tati beams at him.

GREGORY

(beams back)

We were accustomed to grand parties, but this was special because it was a masked ball.

ANNA

I'd forgotten it was a masked ball.

GREGORY

There were two beautiful young ladies and I knew what dresses and masks they would be wearing--

INT. MANSION - DAY

We see Sasha and young Anna, both around 15, in front of a vanity table. The silver bell that Anna gave Tati sits on top of the vanity. Anna brushes and fixes Sasha's hair while the latter squirms.

ANNA V.O.

They were not sisters, but were as fond of each other as if they were. One was a young countess, who of course was going to the ball. The other was her maidservant, who had been with her since they were babies. Some said she was the love child of the count.

We see THE OLD COUNT look at young Anna with approval and affection. It's an ambiguous look: paternal or simply benevolent head of the household?

ANNA V.O. CONT'D

She may have been just a foundling left on the steps of the great house. She herself didn't know, and all the people who know for certain are long dead.

YOUNG ANNA

Stop squirming, Sasha. I'll never get the curls right.

SASHA

I don't care a fig about my curls. I'm sick of balls. I'll be so happy when Lent comes.

YOUNG ANNA

How can anyone ever be sick of balls?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SASHA

I'll have to dance with old men who slobber on me and my corset is already too tight and I'll be too tired to toboggan tomorrow--

YOUNG ANNA

(laughs)

You silly. You always have a wonderful time. I'd give anything to go just once.

SASHA

Well, why shouldn't you? Yes. Why shouldn't you?

She begins pulling dresses out of a wardrobe.

SASHA CONT'D

Not this. Not this. Maybe. This!

She holds up a beautiful mauve silk dress.

SASHA CONT'D

(laughs)

The Tsaritsa will be mad with envy.

INT. PALACE - NIGHT

The masked ball. We see the same scene that was in the mirror in the opening scene--Tsarist excess, dazzling extravagance. Lush, romantic--but now everyone present wears a mask.

We see young Anna resplendent in the mauve dress. We see Sasha smile at her in complicity. We see the Tsar and Tsaritsa, Gregory holding out his hand: their vertigo waltz.

We see all the excess through her dazzled eyes. The music stops, the mask fades as we go in on her DAZZLED EYES.

RETURN TO PRESENT

Tati's eyes are DAZZLED and we see that she and her grandmother have exactly the same color eyes.

TATI

Oh, Grandmother.

Tati hugs Anna.

ANNA

It was the most wonderful night in the world.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TATI
And the maidservant and the officer lived
happily ever after.

ANNA
For a while, but not ever after.

She turns off the record which is just spinning around.

TATI
(sobering)
What happened to Sasha?

ANNA
She was killed. They were all killed.
Except for the young maidservant.
(Beat)
That was me, Tatiana.

TATI
I knew that was you. The maidservant
always turns out to be the true princess
in a fairy tale--

Anna draws herself up regally and speaks with great dignity.

ANNA
If I'm a princess, it's due to Sasha and
Gregory.

Gregory stands up and bows formally to Anna. Anna
acknowledges him formally. Tati is affected deeply as she
takes in the powerful scene. It's very regal but in a
realistic way: This is the authentic thing.

INT. TATI'S ROOM - DAY

Tati stands still, looking thoughtfully at her movie poster
of Harrison Ford. The colors are too bright, artificial; the
image appears almost cartoon-like.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

A formal scene around the unset dining table.

IRINA
I want to apologize for losing my temper.

Anna nods. Tati nods.

The three sit in quiet for a moment.

ANNA
Perhaps Tatiana and I should have asked
you about piercing her ears.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tati nods again.

IRINA
 (smiles wryly)
 It's probably good you didn't. You know
 what I would have said.
 (she gets up)
 Maybe we should see about making some
 dinner.

Tati and Anna get up and the three swing into action, moving
 rhythmically as if they've done this hundreds of times.

IRINA CONT'D
 I've been thinking about your birthday,
 Tati, and redecorating your room. We can
 go to the store and pick some paint--

TATI
 Mom. I would like to do it by myself.
 Grandmother will help me.

IRINA
 I guess it'd be okay.

TATI
 Thank you, Mom.

EXT. PAINT STORE - DAY

Irina sits in her car outside the paint store, working on her
 laptop computer. Tati, carrying paint, and Anna come out of
 the store.

INT. TATI'S BEDROOM - DAY

Tati stands in front of the Harrison Ford poster.

TATI
 I think I'm ready.

Tati's eyes well up as she takes down the poster. She hands
 it to Anna who rolls it up and secures it with a rubber band.

ANNA
 All my life I've had to leave things
 behind. After a while, you get used to it.

DISSOLVE TO:

Faded places on the wall where the map and posters had been.
 The pennant and rolled up posters in a box. All the National
 Geographics in another box.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA

Now the photograph.

Tati removes the photograph from the mirror frame. Anna lights a candle and hands it to Tati. She lights another one for herself off Tati's candle.

ANNA CONT'D

Blow gently on it and make some smoke.

(Tati blows)

Wave the smoke toward the things you're giving up.

Anna demonstrates, then Tati imitates her.

Solemnly, Tati hands Anna the photograph, takes the bundle of letters from the drawer and waves smoke toward them.

TATI

(whispering)

Is it like they go up in smoke?

ANNA

Something like that. Candles consume themselves. It's a kind of sacrifice.

Ooops.

She drops the photograph on the floor which has suddenly ignited from her candle.

Tati picks the photo up by the corner and puts it in the metal wastebasket where it burns up.

ANNA

Who was that man?

TATI

At school we wrote our autobiographies and some kids had photos... I stole it.

ANNA

You can steal a lot of things, Tatiana, but you can't steal a father.

Tati's eyes well up again.

DISSOLVE TO:

Tati and Anna putting scraps of torn letters in the trash.

DISSOLVE TO:

Anna and Tati sitting on Tati's bed. Anna holds Tati's hands.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNA
Who is your father?

Tati leans close to her and whispers.

CU on Anna's shocked face.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Anna, her hand on her heart, sits across from Gregory. His hands are on her knees.

ANNA
I thought nothing in this world could ever shock me again.

GREGORY
(concerned)
What is it, Anna?

ANNA
I found out who Tatiana's father is. I've never heard of such a thing. I can't even say it aloud.

GREGORY
Whisper it in my ear.

She leans forward and whispers. Gregory's eyes widen.

GREGORY CONT'D
Sperm in a baster?

ANNA
That's what she said. She said, My father is sperm in a baster. Tatiana's father is artificial insemination.
(her expression tightens)
Irina did this as a rebuke to me.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Irina sits alone in the living room, correcting papers. Tati and Anna come out from Tati's room.

TATI
You're going to love my room, Mom.
Goodnight.

She hugs Irina and goes back into her room. Anna heads toward her room.

IRINA
You're welcome to sit out here with me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Anna proceeds on into her room. Irina makes a face: Well, I tried.

Anna's door opens. She comes back, carrying something, sits down across from Irina, and begins to sew.

IRINA
What are you making?

Anna holds up a beautiful mauve dress.

ANNA
I'm cutting down this old dress of mine for Tatiana's birthday dress.

A mixture of emotions race over Irina's face--a flash of jealousy or resentment, quickly replaced by a smile.

IRINA
She'll love it.

Anna sews in silence for a while.

ANNA
Do you ever go out?

IRINA
I go out every day.

ANNA
I mean with men?

IRINA
(stiffens)
I have a daughter and a demanding job. I hardly have time to turn around as it is.

ANNA
Tatiana is growing up. It is not good for her to see you living a monastic life--

IRINA
(bristles again)
Don't tell me what's good for Tati. Everything I do, I do for Tati. I think a monastic life is a whole lot better for her--

She bites her tongue and Anna finishes the sentence for her.

ANNA
Then the kind of life I led.

The two women sit in silence for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

IRINA
 (quietly)
 Why didn't you ever settle down? Was it
 that no one ever measured up to the
 romance of Gregory?
 (when Anna doesn't answer)
 I can understand that a little. He was
 such a romantic figure. I mean, a man
 fights a duel over you--

Anna puts down the dress and looks directly at Irina.

ANNA
 I killed Gregory.

IRINA
 What are you talking about?

EXT. CLEARING - DAWN

The exact same stately scene we saw before: the five male
 figures, one obscured female figure, everything black and
 gray except for Gregory's yellow tie. Absolute STILLNESS.

Gregory and Serge stand back to back, their seconds next to
 them. An official in black raises his arm. They each pace
 ten paces. Turn. Raise their pistols.

BANG.

Instantly everything breaks into CHAOS AND COLOR. DOZENS of
 people run around, shout, lean over Gregory, who's sprawled
 grotesquely on the ground, vivid red blood spreading into his
 yellow tie.

The scene gets more and more chaotic and grotesque until it's
 clear we've left actual happenings and are going into Anna's
 tortured nightmares.

Serge appears from the darkness and screams at Anna.

SERGE
 He died for nothing. You have no name.
 No name, no name--

GREGORY'S WIDOW IN
 BLACK
 (in a round with Serge)
 Why didn't you stop it? Why didn't you
 stop it?

Two children in black, a boy and a girl, circle Anna.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHILDREN

(singsong)
You killed our father, you killed our
father...

RETURN TO PRESENT

Anna's face is anguished.

ANNA

Gregory was smiling. It was like a play.
I never dreamed... It was all my fault.

Irina takes her hand.

IRINA

Oh no, Mother, it wasn't your fault.

ANNA

Yes. I should have stopped it.

IRINA

You couldn't have stopped it. Gregory
was a product of his time, just like we
all are. He fought the duel because
that's what men of his class did.

ANNA

(looks at Irina sharply)
Is that true?

IRINA

You could no more have stopped the duel
than you could have stopped the
Revolution.

Anna looks enormously relieved as if she has just been given
forgiveness and absolution.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

CU on Irina in the doorway. She holds a birthday cake with
lit candles.

VOICES O.S.

(singing)
Happy Birthday to you...

Irina looks at Anna, visualizes her in the eldercare home.

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK: INT. ELDERCARE HOME - DAY

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VOICES
(singing)
Happy Birthday to you...

Next to Freddie, the beaming birthday boy, a sad, withdrawn Anna has a party hat askew on her head. Suddenly she smiles, and starts to sing. The voices change again, and we pull back to see Tati's birthday party in full progress.

Irina puts the birthday cake with 13 candles (one to grow on) in front of Tati, who's surrounded by presents. She's wearing the beautiful mauve dress, remade exactly right for a girl on the cusp of adolescence.

Howie in a sport coat, the two mall girls, Brandi and Kelly, Jody and her parents, Donna and Joel Fischer, Anna and Gregory all sing.

VOICES
(singing)
...Happy birthday, dear Tatiana,
Happy Birthday to you.

IRINA
Make a wish.

TATI
(blurts out)
I wish we're always as happy as we are tonight.

ANNA
Don't tell, it won't come true.

HOWIE
Sure it will, Annushka. This is America.
(he aims his camera)
Irina, Anna, get on each side of Tati.
Closer now...

Irina and Anna bookend Tati. Tati blows out all the candles: Howie snaps the photo: everybody claps and cheers.

TATI
(bursting with excitement)
And now, The Great Unveiling! Mom,
you're going to be so surprised!

She blindfolds Irina and Howie, leads them across the room. Opens the door to her room.

TATI
Take off your blindfolds. TaDa!

Anna smiles with pride. Gregory chuckles. Irina is shocked.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The room is mauve. The walls, the curtains, the throw rug, everything is mauve. Tati has even painted her headboard and desk mauve. A candle burns in front of a small religious icon.

We see the room from Irina's POV: Tati in her mauve dress seems to disappear.

 HOWIE
It's absolutely magical, Tati.

 JOEL FISCHER
It's wonderful.

Irina looks again and the room seems unusual but benign.

 TATI
It's exactly like the Tsaritsa
Alexandra's!

 ANNA
Exactly.

 BRANDI
Who?

 KELLY
(shoots Brandi a disdainful
look)
The Empress of Russia. Cool, Tati.

 IRINA
Well, you certainly did surprise me.

INT. UNIVERSITY GYM - DAY

As Irina enters the gym, Jack Callihan is just leaving.

 JACK
(nods pleasantly)
Professor.

Irina breaks into a big smile, but he has already passed by. She looks terribly disappointed.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Irina, Tati, Anna, and Howie in pressed khakis, dress shirt, and tie, are in mid-dinner. The good china. Candles. Six or seven platters and bowls of hearty food are on the table. Beef brisket, potatoes, gravy, cabbage...

 IRINA
(to Howie)
I didn't know you owned a tie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWIE
I own three ties. Anna and Tati and I spent the afternoon at the mall. You're my personal trainer and they're my personal shoppers. Are you going with us to Niagara Falls Sunday?

Irina starts to shake her head, then reconsiders.

IRINA
Well, Yes, I will. Everybody else takes days off, why not me?

HOWIE
Why don't you invite Judge Jack to come along?

Irina frowns at Howie.

ANNA
Who's Judge Jack?

IRINA
Howie's being silly. His name is John Aloysius Callihan, Jack for short. He's a judge, a student I met at school.

HOWIE
(winks at Tati)
Teacher's pet.

IRINA
He's a widower. It'd probably be kind to ask him.

ANNA
Yes.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM - DAY

Anna's room is SPACIOUS, DEEP RED, AND FILLED WITH ANTIQUE THINGS. She opens an old book with tattered covers and takes out a photo. She stares at the photo of herself arm in arm with a handsome American World War II officer.

TATI
Who's that?

ANNA
Even if you don't have a real father, you have a real grandfather.

She hands Tati the picture and Tati looks at it almost reverently.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TATI
Mother looks like him.

Anna nods.

TATI CONT'D
What was his name?

ANNA
James Fitzgerald. Everyone called him Fitz. He was a colonel stationed in Paris. Big. Tanned. Very American. Next to him European men looked frail and unhealthy. I was mad for him. He was always optimistic. Hopelessly naive, really. He was going to take the baby and me to Washington, DC. To a horse farm in Virginia.

TATI
Why didn't you go?

ANNA
He was killed. He never saw your mother. He never even knew he had a daughter.

TATI
Mom and I are alike in that.

ANNA
Mmm.
(beat)
A horsefarm in Virginia. Could you see me on a horse? Wearing jodhpurs? It was nothing but a wartime fantasy. He swept me up into it.

TATI
Can I have the picture?

Anna hands it to Tati.

ANNA
Put it in your mirror frame. It was taken on our wedding day.

INT. IRINA'S OFFICE - DAY

A knock on the doorframe of Irina's open office. She looks up.

JACK
I was so happy you called. I thought you weren't interested.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

From behind his back he produces a glorious bouquet of sunflowers. Irina's hand flies to her mouth in delight.

JACK
They're from my garden.

INT. PSYCHOLOGY OFFICE KITCHENETTE - SAME

A microwave, small fridge, coffee machine, etc. Irina opens a cupboard and finds a large glass vase. She fills it with water while Jack strips bottom leaves off the stalks. He hands her flowers which she arranges.

IRINA
I didn't figure you for a gardener.

JACK
My wife loved to garden. She could make anything grow. When she got sick, I took over the watering, then I got into the weeding.

(look goes faraway)
That last winter I'd spread out all the catalogues on the bed and we planned the next year's garden.

(Beat)
The next Spring I put that garden in. I was crazy with grief, I don't even remember it. My mother said it was so beautiful people constantly stopped to admire it. She said the reason it was so beautiful was because I'd watered it with my tears. She's very Irish, my mother, you'll love her. Here's the funny thing. By the end of that summer, I found I had become a gardener. It's like a gift Maureen gave me.

Irina looks at him, looks at the mass of sunflowers.

IRINA
That's a lovely story.

JACK
You're the first person I ever told it to.

IRINA
Thank you for the story and for the sunflowers, Jack. They're my favorite flower. They always make me happy.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A mass of sunflowers on the coffee table completely perks up the living room. Anna sits alone on the sofa and stares at the sunflowers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suddenly they change into a glorious field full of sunflowers, Anna, 44, whirling ecstatically with Irina, 5. All around, CIVILIANS and SOLDIERS are cheering. It's V.J. Day: World War II is over. (August 15, 1945)

EXT. NIAGARA FALLS - DAY

The sunflowers change into bright yellow rain slickers and hats which Irina, Tati, Anna, Howie, and Jack are putting on. There's much jocularly as they board the Maid of the Mist at Niagara Falls.

Jack's attentive to Anna and Tati but he's especially attentive to Irina, which doesn't escape Anna's notice. Tati stands next to him at the head of the boat, sizing him up.

TATI

Do you travel a lot?

JACK

I did when I was young. And my late wife and I traveled quite a bit with our kids. But right now, I'm kind of a homebody. What about you?

TATI

There are lots of places I want to go.

(beat)

Right now I'm kind of a homebody too.

The boat moves closer and closer to the Horseshoe Falls, until all you can see is mist and everyone is soaked by the spray.

EXT. NIAGARA FALLS - A LITTLE LATER

The five stroll along next to the falls: Howie has Tati on his left arm, Anna on his right; dawdling behind are Irina and Jack. Anna subtly glances back, sees how Jack looks at Irina, looks to her left, where Gregory now has her other arm.

ANNA

That's how you looked at me.

GREGORY

He's besotted, lucky chap.

Howie nudges Anna, winks.

ANNA

(to Howie)

It's a rare man who asks nothing except to love you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

 HOWIE
I hope I find one.

INT. CAR - A LITTLE LATER

Howie's driving. Anna's in the front seat. Irina, Jack, and Tati in back.

 TATI
Is Callihan an Irish name?

 JACK
Is a leprechaun green?

 TATI
 (giggles)
I'm one fourth Irish on my grandfather's side.

A puzzled look flits across Irina's face.

 JACK
 (to Tati)
One drop of Irish blood, you're Irish.
Can you jig?

 TATI
Maybe.

 JACK
I'll give you a lesson if you want.

Irina looks at Jack and Tati laughing.

 JACK CONT'D
I haven't had so much fun in ages. Let's all go out to dinner. Someplace fancy. My treat.

 IRINA
Great.

 ANNA
Thank you, but I'm much too tired.

 TATI
Oh please, Grandmother, it'll be so much fun.

Anna shoots Tati a sharp look.

 TATI CONT'D
Thank you, but I'll stay with Grandmother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWIE
(snaps his fingers)
Doggone. I'm busy.

IRINA
(shrugs)
Looks like we'll take a raincheck.

JACK
Not on your life.

INT. IRINA'S BEDROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Clothes are strewn all over the bed and floor. Irina is obviously having difficulty deciding what to wear. She zips up a dress, looks at herself in the mirror, and slumps.

IRINA
I look like Bo Peep.

A knock on Irina's door. She straightens up.

IRINA CONT'D
Come in.

Anna enters, carrying things, looks at Irina, shakes her head.

ANNA
You still aren't ready.

IRINA
I've decided not to go. I'm tired and I have a lot of work to do, and Tati needs--

Anna gives her a laser beam look.

IRINA CONT'D
It's stupid to start something that isn't going to go anyplace. Why put myself through that?

Anna goes to her closet, rifles the hangers, finally pulls out a dress she's pleased with.

ANNA
That man is immensely attractive. You are going to go and you're going to wear this dress. I am your mother and I know what I'm talking about.

Irina puts on the white seersucker dress with a scoop neck and short sleeves: very crisp, pretty, and feminine.

Anna powders Irina's shoulders and back, regards her, then pulls the sleeves off her shoulders so that Irina has considerable décolletage showing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA

Russian women of the Imperial Court were known throughout Europe for their decolletage.

IRINA

(pulls the dress up)
Bully for the aristocracy.

With her crystal perfume stopper, Anna dabs perfume on Irina's neck and wrist pulse spots.

IRINA

What if he's allergic?

ANNA

He won't be.

Irina surveys herself in the mirror with satisfaction, meets Anna's eyes in the mirror.

IRINA CONT'D

Thank you, Mother.

ANNA

I'm glad I could be of use.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

An elegant restaurant. Candlelight, a beautiful meal, a fine wine. There's a lot of chemistry between Irina and Jack.

JACK

Your eyes are exactly like your mother's.

IRINA

No, they're not.

JACK

It's a compliment, Irina.

Irina flushes. As he continues to look at her, she drops her fork; it makes a little clatter, and she giggles.

The tables in the restaurant are quite close together and the MAN and WOMAN at the next table are talking loudly. Irina and Jack peek over.

The man holds the butter plate out.

WOMAN AT NEXT

TABLE

You know I don't eat butter on my roll.
28 years we've been married and I have
never eaten butter on my roll.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Irina and Jack grin at each other.

MAN AT NEXT TABLE
(reading menu)
They have escargots.

WOMAN AT NEXT
TABLE
You know I hate escargots. I hated
escargots in France, I hated escargots in
Spain, I have always hated escargots.
(she catches Irina's eye)
This is how they drive you mad.

Irina and Jack start laughing and can't stop.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Jack and Irina run down the street, laughing. They enter a
nightclub.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Jack and Irina drink champagne. A FLOWER SELLER stops at
their table.

IRINA
Oh no thanks.

Jack buys all the flowers, gives the bouquet to Irina, plucks
one out and gives it to the Flower Seller.

FLOWER SELLER
Don't let this one get away, honey.

Irina is flustered, overwhelmed, and tremendously pleased.

The band plays a foxtrot.

JACK
(holds out his hand)
Come on.

IRINA
I haven't danced in years.

JACK
Neither have I. And I've missed it.

They foxtrot wonderfully. The foxtrot segues into a waltz.
They waltz wonderfully.

IRINA
Where did you learn to dance so well?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK

From Mrs. Gerard's dancing class, but don't ever tell a soul. I'd be ruined. And you?

IRINA

My Uncle Maxie taught me. He wasn't an uncle exactly. One of my stepfathers. Well, not exactly a stepfather--

JACK

A friend of the family.

They laugh and whirl away.

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

A diner with steamy windows. Through the window we see Jack and Irina at the counter with huge plates of food in front of them.

INT. DINER - SAME

IRINA

I hated being an only child and I always thought I'd have a houseful of kids. One morning I woke up and I was 35, and there was still no one promising on the scene. So I went to a donor bank and nine months later Tati was born.

JACK

I gave my sperm once to a bank. Where did you go?

IRINA

The University Center.

JACK

No! Oh my goodness, Irina.
(they stare at each other)
Wait a minute. It wasn't University, I think it was Marine Midland, or was it Buffalo Savings Bank?

IRINA

Very funny.

JACK

And now you're 47. Besides all the students who are in love with you, is there anyone promising on the scene?

Irina blushes. Her hand flies to her flushed cheeks, she gives an embarrassed laugh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA
I'm uncomfortable with this...

JACK
Because I find you an an immensely
attractive woman? Well, you're just
going to have to get comfortable with it.

Across the table, he takes her hands, leans toward her, she
leans toward him, he pulls her across; half standing, they
kiss in midair.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Irina comes home laughing and flushed and a little tipsy.
Trying to be super-quiet, she makes a lot of noise.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM - SAME

Anna, fully dressed, sits in the chair, and listens to Irina
giggling. She smiles very slightly, and in the candlelight
her face is beautiful. She sighs.

ANNA
Oh, to be 47 again!

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Irina, a little dreamy, comes into the kitchen, nods to Anna
and Tati.

IRINA
(to Anna)
You remember Uncle Maxie?

ANNA
Of course. Whatever made you think of
him?
(to Tati)
A terrible bore. Always getting in the
most tedious political arguments.

IRINA
But he was around a long time.

ANNA
I would have sent him packing months
earlier, but he could dance like Astaire.
(to Tati)
I wanted your mother to learn to waltz
properly. Come, Tatiana, it's time for
Russian.

INT. IRINA'S OFFICE - DAY

Irina puts a vase with two dozen roses on her desk. She pushes the blinking message machine.

JACK O.S.
I had a wonderful time last night. Call me.

The second message plays.

JACK O.S.
I know you believe in delay of gratification, but this is ridiculous. I've waited an hour.

The third message plays.

JACK O.S.
I hated escargots in Cheektowaga. I hated escargots in Tonawanda...

Jack is still talking as Irina, smiling, dials his number.

JACK O.S.
(on message machine)
Not calling me back, this is how you drive me mad--

IRINA
Hi. Did you call?

Her face softens into a wonderful smile at whatever he's saying.

EXT. TATI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Irina, all dressed up, knocks on the closed door.

TATI O.S.
Who is it?

IRINA
Mom. I'm going out for a while. May I come in and say Goodnight?

INT./EXT. TATI'S ROOM - SAME

Tati is juggling three juggling balls. She's pretty good, though still inconsistent.

TATI
Next to my dress and my room, this was my favorite present. Howie always gets me the best presents.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She drops the balls and starts again. Irina leaves the door open and sits on the chair.

IRINA CONT'D

(she looks around)

I'm sorry I wasn't more enthusiastic about your room. Funny it seemed so claustrophobic before. I have to say, Tati, even if the Tsaritsa had a mauve room, this is definitely unique.

TATI

(very pleased)

Thank you.

IRINA

I told the home that your grandmother wouldn't be coming.

TATI

I thought you did that a long time ago. Are you going out with Jack?

IRINA

(nods)

Do you like him?

TATI

He's okay. He's not one of those grownups who talk down to you. And he's kinda cute--for an older guy.

Irina laughs and picks up the photo in the mirror frame with a new glass.

IRINA

Who's this?

A shadow falls in the open doorway--Anna--but neither Irina nor Tati notice.

Tati puts down the balls, incredulous.

TATI

It's your mother and father. On their wedding day.

IRINA

She told you that?

Irina looks at the picture and her eyes well up.

IRINA CONT'D

I never saw a picture of my father.

(beat)

I never knew she married him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Anna moves away from Tati's door toward the living room.

IRINA CONT'D

Tati, will you let me take this tomorrow
and make a copy of it?

INT. IRINA'S ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

She puts the photo in the mirror frame on her dresser top,
touches it lingeringly with her fingers.

INT. TATI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Anna sits on the side of Tati's bed reading to her from an
old book with tattered covers. Tati is falling asleep.

ANNA

(reads quietly)

And Misery Bad Luck, buried at the bottom
of the sea, never came between them again.

Anna closes the book. On the front cover is an illustration
of a tiny old woman, and a hand-lettered title: GORE
ZLOSCHASTNOYEH.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Irina drinks her coffee standing up.

IRINA

Howie and I are almost done, Tati. This
week for sure. I can't tell you what a
relief it is.

TATI

That textbook rode on your back a long
time. It was your Gore Zloschastnoyeh.

IRINA

What?

TATI

Misery Bad Luck. Grandmother read it to
me last night. She said it was one of
your favorites.

IRINA

(amazed)

Gore Zloschastnoyeh. When I was a little
girl, some place we lived, a little tiny
place, there was a painted screen between
her bed and mine. On her side was a
Russian forest scene and on mine was Gore
Zloschastnoyeh.

(Beat)

She said it was one of my favorites?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Irina and Anna sit on the sofa, the old book open between them. Irina turns the hand-illustrated pages.

IRINA

Misery Bad Luck.

(she reads)

"Watch out for her. She's a wretched old woman, a very little one, an inch high, all wrinkled, all gray, all in dirty rags, fretful and whining. Simply pitiful. She jumps on your back and clings with all her might."

(she laughs)

I'd completely forgotten Gore Zloschastnoyeh. And my screen. Where was that place?

ANNA

It was a little garret in Paris. Do you remember Davide?

IRINA

Davide.

FLASHBACK - INT. PARIS APARTMENT - DAY - 1947

A garret. A painted screen separates a cotsize bed from a double bed. An illustration of Gore Zloschastnoyeh faces the cot.

In the cot, Young David, 21, very pale, opens his eyes and looks up at younger Anna, 46, who leans over him.

ANNA

You silly silly boy. I warned you about him. He's not worth killing yourself over. He's a lecher and a fraud. He's not even a gentleman. He's very snobbish.

David laughs weakly in spite of himself.

In the doorway, a SEVEN YEAR OLD GIRL makes a little sound and Anna turns around.

ANNA CONT'D

You can come in now, Irina. Davide is feeling better.

RETURN TO PRESENT

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA
 (big smile)
 I remember Davide. He taught me English slang and I taught him French slang. I was going to marry him when I grew up.

ANNA
 If you live long enough, everything comes around. I took him in and then he took me in.

(Beat)
 In case you were wondering where I've been living the last ten years.

Irina looks ashamed.

ANNA CONT'D
 He just died.

IRINA
 I'm sorry.

ANNA
 I'm sorry too.

And even though they're talking about David, they're perhaps also apologizing to each other.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM - NIGHT

The candles have burnt down low. A breeze moves the sheer curtain. The candle wicks waver and make wisps of smoke.

Anna sleeps peacefully in the chair.

The candle flame becomes a gentle sun shining over a field of sunflowers. The sun's rays continue to deepen the yellow of the sunflowers--a glorious sight.

The curtain blows gently against the candle.

The sunflowers become very gold, a molten gold, as if the sun is too harsh and burning them.

A flame licks delicately up the sheer curtain.

INT. IRINA'S BEDROOM

The smoke alarm blares. Irina jumps out of bed.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Tati, carrying the fire extinguisher, rushes to Anna's room.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM - SAME

Anna is beating the curtain with her hands. On the chair, the metallic threads in the gold shawl, again bright and beautiful, snap and crackle as they burn.

Tati rushes in and begins spraying the curtains, the wall.

IRINA
The record!

The record is curling, melting. Irina starts to pick it up with her fingers--

ANNA
(pulls her away)
Let it go, you'll burn yourself!

INT. IRINA'S ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Anna sits on Irina's bed between Irina and Tati. Irina bandages Anna's right hand very tenderly. Tati holds Anna's other hand.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM - DAY

The altar with the candles is gone. One wall is blackened with soot. The Victrola is closed. Gregory enters through the blackened wall. Anna, her right hand bandaged, sits in a chair. She looks up at him.

ANNA
I've made a terrible muddle of my life.

Gregory gives her the most beneficent smile: loving, forgiving, totally empathic.

GREGORY
We all do, Anna.

ANNA
I'm so tired, Gregory. I just want to be with you.

He holds out his hand.

INT. DINER - DAY

Jack and Irina sit in a booth talking. The WAITRESS refills their empty coffee cups.

IRINA
When I thought she was seriously hurt, I,
I--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK

(nods)

A lot of stuff didn't matter anymore.

Across the table, Irina takes Jack's hands.

INT. ANNA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Tati threads the little gold key back on the chain.

TATI

Will you help me shop for back to school clothes?

ANNA

Your mother will help you.

Tati carefully slips the key over Anna's neck, being careful not to touch her bandaged hand.

ANNA

After I die, the key will be yours. Everything in my trunk will belong to you. You may do with it whatever you wish.

TATI

I don't want you ever to die.

ANNA

Don't be silly. Everybody dies. I've lived a long time. I'm ready to die.

Tati's really distressed. She lays her head in Anna's lap. Anna puts her unbandaged hand on Tati's hair in a rare gesture of affection.

ANNA CONT'D

Now don't cry when I die.

(tears roll down Tati's cheeks)

Well, you can cry a little while. But know when to stop.

(she strokes Tati's hair)

It has made me very happy to know my granddaughter. Your mother did a good job raising you. You remember to tell her that. Tell her she did a better job than I did.

(she continues stroking)

Tatiana. My little monkey, Tati.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE DRESSING ROOM - DAY

The dressing room is filled with clothes. Tati in a matching sweater and skirt pirouettes before the three way mirror.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IRINA
 You look very grown up.
 (Tati beams)
 You want them?

Tati flings her arms around her mother.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY - SEPTEMBER

A mass of chrysanthemums in fall colors are next to Anna on the sofa. She listens to Russian music on the Victrola that's now in the living room. On the shelf beneath it are a dozen photo albums.

The door opens and Tati in her new skirt and sweater rushes in with Jody and Kelly.

TATI
 Grandmother, I'm home.

She kisses Anna.

ANNA
 Hello, Jody. Hello, Kelly.

DISSOLVE TO:

Girls around the table eating cookies and milk, laughing, talking excitedly.

JODY
 Who've you got for math?

TATI
 Ms. Reichert. You'll get her next year. She's just wonderful. And Grandmother, I've got the greatest home room--

KELLY
 There's the cutest boy sitting right next to her--
 (to Anna)
 He's in love with Tati--

ANNA
 And why not?

EXT. APARTMENT - DAY

A golden September day. Leaves tumbling and swirling. We pull back from the view: it's Anna inside the apartment looking out the window.

ANNA'S POV: Sounds of girls playing rise up. Anna watches Irina, Tati, and her friends play in the leaves. Irina catches Tati's hands and they whirl around. It's perfect fall: the poignancy and beauty of everything dying.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Anna stays alone by the window, looking at Irina and Tati and the girls outside.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM - NIGHT

We hear violin music, gradually discover a violinist playing. Anna is propped up in bed on pillows, eyes open, smiling. Sasha, the young Countess, leans down and gives Anna a kiss.

ANNA
Oh Sasha, my love.

David and Teddy are there.

ANNA
My beautiful Davide.

The room is gradually filling with people. Anna turns around and her bandaged hand flies to her mouth as she spots A ROGUISHLY HANDSOME MAN.

ANNA CONT'D
Oh my goodness, how could I have forgotten you?

Now a string quartet plays in the corner of the expanded room. Uncle Maxie moves in front of the rogue and holds out his hand to Anna.

MAX
Let's have a dance for auld lang syne.

Anna laughs, rises from the bed, takes Max's hand. Her bandage is gone.

ANNA
Oh, Maxie. Life. What a business

A dark haired American colonel cuts in..

ANNA CONT'D
Fitz. Oh, my sweet Fitz. We have a daughter, Irina. She has your good looks and my temper. You would be so proud of her. We have a granddaughter, Tatiana.

She and Irina's father turn once, a waiter passes with a tray of champagne, and behind him Gregory in his original officer's uniform is there. The screen goes BLACK. Then a man's hand reaches out.

GREGORY
I believe this is our waltz.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Anna takes Gregory's hand and they waltz. A full orchestra plays. She's old and he's young, gazing at her with the face of love. For a long time, they dance on black, just the two of them.

The light opens; the room expands more, and Fitz begins to waltz with Sasha. David and Teddy waltz. Maxie and the old Countess waltz. Anna and Gregory turn and far away, Anna sees Irina, Tati, Jack, and Howie, all smiling, in a small boat rowing down the Volga. Howie stands and tips his straw hat to her. As others start waltzing, the room deepens and more dancing couples appear in the distance. This continues until Anna's white nightgown changes to the mauve silk dress and we're looking at the original ball at the Winter Palace. All waltz further and further away, receding into the distance, leaching the color of the room with them.

Anna's room is small and white and utterly quiet.

As the camera pulls back, it passes the end of Anna's rumpled bed: The outlines hold the possibility of a body, though we don't actually see it.

INT. IRINA'S ROOM - DAY

Tati and Irina, their faces grave, sit on the bed in the room that is not so neat-as-a-pin.

TATI

She would have wanted a religious ceremony.

IRINA

(nods)

I think you're right. I'll see what I can do.

From her dresser, she fetches a small black velvet jewelry box. On the dresser top is a copy of the picture of her parents in a different frame. Irina sits back down.

IRINA CONT'D

She gave me these on my 12th birthday. I want you to have them.

Tati opens the box. It's a pair of pierced garnet earrings.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Mournful Russian music plays. A grieving group around a fresh grave site. Irina in black holds hands with Tati in her mauve dress and her garnet earrings. Howie in suit and tie. Jack, Mr. and Mrs. Fischer, and Jody.

The RUSSIAN ORTHODOX PRIEST swings the incense censer. He intones a prayer in Russian.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUSSIAN PRIEST
(prays in Russian)

TATI & IRINA
(give the response in Russian)

INT. ANNA'S ROOM - DAY - THREE DAYS LATER

Irina enters Anna's room. It's almost as if Anna had never been there. The room is beige and white as before, except for the battered trunk in the corner. The bed is pristine and made up. Irina touches the pillow where her mother lay. The only thing on the dressertop is the little gold key in front of the photo of Anna, Tati, and Irina taken at the birthday party. Irina touches the photograph.

IRINA
(in French)
Maman.

She breaks down and sobs.

TATI O.S.
Momma?

Tati enters and goes directly to the dresser.

IRINA
Where did that photograph come from?

TATI
She asked Howie for it.
(she picks up the key)

IRINA
Don't open the trunk, Tati.

TATI
It's mine. Grandmother gave it to me.

IRINA
Her things were very old. Old things
don't last. Don't--

Tati puts the key in the lock. Irina braces herself to comfort Tati.

Tati opens the trunk. Irina can't believe her eyes. It's filled to the brim with wonderful things, some we've already seen--the old book, Gore Zloschastnoyeh, photo albums, etc.--and many new things. Tati picks up a beautiful fur hat off the top and sits next to her mother on the bed.

TATI
This was Grandmother's Russian fur hat.
She let me wear it whenever I wanted.
You put it on, Momma.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TATI (cont'd)

(beat)

She said whenever she looked at me she
also saw you.

Tati puts the hat on Irina, then deliberates over what to
take from the trunk. She chooses the Faberge egg, and sits
on the bed next to her mother.

TATI CONT'D

I'll begin the night she escaped. Sasha
and her mother, the old Countess, had
gone ahead. Grandmother was strong and
could carry their clothes and jewels. At
the last moment, she slipped the egg into
her pocket...

Irina sees the room get a pink glow which gradually deepens.
The brass fixtures on the trunk gleam. Glorious Russian
music starts to play and we go in close on the Faberge egg in
Tati's hand until it fills the screen.

FINAL CREDITS play over Faberge egg design.

FADE OUT