

MIDNIGHT BLUES

Written by

Iannis Aliferis

Copyright (c) 2023 This screenplay may not be used or reproduced for any purpose including educational purposes without the expressed written permission of the author.

FADE IN:

EXT. BUS STOP - NIGHT

A bus comes to a stop on the top of a hill and its side doors flip open. A man, ANDREAS, early 40s, wearing, old and worn-out clothing, steps out onto the sidewalk.

Andreas breathes in the night air as the bus takes off, leaving him alone in the street.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Andreas is walking lazily along the sidewalk - trees, houses, and big yards make up the current neighborhood - and occasionally stopping to admire the bright full moon in the sky.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT (LATER)

Andreas is now in a poorer neighborhood, the houses are smaller and the area is less attractive than the one he was in before.

Soon he notices some COMMOTION up ahead that puts him in a state of alert and he instinctively crosses the street to the other side. As he continues on, he notices what the racket entails: Two YOUTHS are pushing around and YELLING at a HOMELESS MAN.

Andreas stops and takes in the scene.

YOUTH A
Fuck's wrong with ya?

YOUTH B
Told ya not to talk to us, bum.

Youth A shoves Homeless Man toward Youth B.

YOUTH A
Fucking reeks.

Youth B pushes Homeless Man hard and he falls to the ground and SMACKS his head, letting out a CRY.

ANDREAS (O.C.)
Hey!

The two Youths turn their attention across the street at Andreas.

YOUTH A
Fuck you want?

Youth B kicks the Homeless man in the ribcage.

Andreas' face turns pale, his hands start to quiver.

YOUTH B
Want some of this, asshole?

YOUTH A
Scram, bitch!

Youth A starts kicking the Homeless man as well and Andreas turns away from them and to his chagrin, starts walking hurriedly away.

Behind him echo the sounds of the KICKING of a body and the GROANS of suffering.

EXT. BUSY STREET/DINER - NIGHT (LATER)

Andreas, walking at a normal pace now, is in a more populated part of town. He comes upon a diner which he enters.

INT. DINER - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The joint is full of film posters from independent and foreign films. An old wooden clock on the wall displays the time as being 23:14 PM. It's not a busy time and only a few customers are present. A waitress, LINDA, mid-40s, nonchalantly scrolls on her phone while waiting by the coffee maker for a new set of brew.

As Andreas walks to the counter, she notices him and a look of recognition comes to her eyes.

LINDA
Well, look what the cat dragged in.

Andreas plants himself on one of the stools and smiles wide at Linda who's now pouring coffee into a cup.

ANDREAS
Linda. What's cooking?

LINDA
Was beginning to think that you passed out and drooling was the last image I'd ever have of you.

ANDREAS
Been - busy.

Linda walks out of the bar, hot cup in hand, and passes by Andreas.

LINDA
Busy, right, that's a good one.

ANDREAS
Not like this place is near me.

Linda offers the cup to a customer and returns to her station behind the counter.

LINDA
Was just a booze-infused screw,
Andreas, no need to get weird about
it.

ANDREAS
I'm not - what're you talking -
it's - whatever. How about coffee?

LINDA
Got coin tonight?

ANDREAS
Why so rude?

LINDA
Cause it's you.

Andreas reaches into a pocket and produces a shabby wallet. He opens it and locates one single note and lifts it out.

ANDREAS
Got five bucks.

LINDA
Woohoo.

Andreas plants it triumphantly on the counter.

ANDREAS
Enough for coffee and pie.

LINDA
On what planet?

Andreas goes all puppy-eyed.

ANDREAS
Oh, come on.

Linda sighs.

LINDA
No cream and only one refill.

ANDREAS
I'll take it.

LINDA
Coming right up.

THUNDER is heard outside and from the far horizon.

INT. DINER - NIGHT (LATER)

The rhythmic, somewhat hypnotic downpour of rain outside ECHOES through the diner's space as Andreas scoops the last piece of apple pie and eats it with relish, then chases it with some coffee.

He looks to the bar and sees Linda scrolling on her phone. She 'feels' his stare and looks at him.

ANDREAS
Refill?

LINDA
Already had one.

ANDREAS
Please?

Linda picks up the coffee pot in anger and rushes over. She fills up Andreas' cup.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)
Thank you.

LINDA
Absolutely last time, OK?

Andreas nods and takes out a notepad from one of his jacket pockets.

LINDA (CONT'D)
Inspired?

ANDREAS
And despite your warm and friendly disposition.

LINDA
What can I say, you bring out the
worse in me.

ANDREAS
Cow.

LINDA
Ass.

They smile at each other and Linda moves away and leans on the opposite side of the bar, her attention once more taken over by her phone. Andreas meanwhile starts writing in his notepad.

The clock on the wall says it's 23:23 PM.

INT. DINER - NIGHT (LATER)

Andreas is in the process of writing feverishly.

He comes to a stop and stretches out his back.

Linda stops next to him, a plate of leftovers in her right hand.

LINDA
What's it about?

ANDREAS
The decay and degradation of modern
civilization.

LINDA
Sounds heartwarming.

Andreas shrugs.

ANDREAS
It is what it is.

The diner's door opens and in walks a woman in her mid-30s. This is KATERINA. She is wearing an elegant dress, a diamond necklace, earrings, and bracelets, and she is drenched from being in the rain. She seems aloof and slightly apprehensive.

Right then, the wall clock strikes midnight and Andreas looks at it, then turns his attention forward again just as Katerina edges nearer.

He notices that her eyes are a deep shade of blue.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)
(Whispers)
Midnight blues.

Katerina smiles at Linda and Andreas and sits at the nearest stool to them.

Linda addresses her:

LINDA
You'll catch your death, love.

KATERINA
Oh, don't mind a little rain.

Andreas is looking at her dumbfounded. Linda notices and punches his shoulder.

ANDREAS
Hey.

LINDA
You're making her uncomfortable.

ANDREAS
I'm not.

He turns towards Katerina.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)
Was I making you uncomfortable?

KATERINA
Oh no, it's fine.

ANDREAS
(To Linda)
See.

LINDA
She's just being nice, you moron.

Linda places the plate on the counter.

LINDA (CONT'D)
Have something that will help. Give me a sec, love.

She quickly heads to the storage room.

KATERINA
(Yells out)
I don't need...

Linda has now closed the door behind her.

ANDREAS

Once she gets something in her head
there's no stopping that woman.

Katerina looks at Andreas, smiles politely and nods her head.
Their eyes lock for a second, and Katerina looks quickly
away.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)

So, what...

Linda comes storming out of the storage room holding on to a
towel and a t-shirt, which she hands to Katerina.

LINDA

Here - sorry what was your name?

KATERINA

Katerina.

LINDA

Katerina? Beautiful. I'm Linda and
that brute there is Andreas.

Linda points to the ladies' room.

LINDA (CONT'D)

You can freshen up in there.
Anything warm to drink?

KATERINA

Coffee, I guess.

LINDA

How'd you have it?

KATERINA

Warm and sweet.

Andreas smiles upon hearing that while Linda nods OK.

KATERINA (CONT'D)

Thank you so much.

Katerina gets up and walks towards the ladies' room.

Linda starts making a fresh brew of coffee while Andreas gets
a flash of inspiration and starts frantically scribbling in
his notepad.

INT. DINER - NIGHT (A FEW MINUTES LATER)

Katerina exits the ladies room and approaches the counter. Her hair is freshly wet, her make-up is gone and she's wearing a tee-shirt over her evening dress. Andreas puts the pen down and his heart skips a beat as he lays eyes upon her. He can't help but stare once again.

Katerina sits on the stool next to him and smiles shyly.

Linda brings over a cup of coffee for her.

LINDA
Here you go, Katerina.

KATERINA
Thank you.

A customer enters the joint and sits at a free table.

LINDA
Oh, and if this a-hole bothers you,
just let me know.

ANDREAS
What the hell? I ain't that bad.

Katerina smiles and nods and Linda makes for the new customer.

Katerina looks curiously around the place and sips her coffee.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)
So, what do you like to do, then?

KATERINA
Oh - to sing, I guess, but - mostly
- I dream.

Andreas is taken aback by that.

ANDREAS
Same. The dreaming, I mean, not the
singing.

Their eyes meet but Katerina looks quickly away.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)
You're shy?

KATERINA
(While still looking away)
No, I just hardly know you.

ANDREAS

But we've so much in common.

Katerina turns to him - curiosity overtaking her uneasiness.

KATERINA

How do you figure that?

ANDREAS

The dreaming, for starters, we're obviously both night owls, and you happen to love cherry pie with fresh cream.

KATERINA

I do?

ANDREAS

Everyone does.

KATERINA

Never had one.

ANDREAS

What?

KATERINA

Never had cherry pie with fresh cream.

ANDREAS

That's the single worst thing I've ever heard.

KATERINA

Sorry.

ANDREAS

Don't be, it musn't have been your fault. You just weren't well informed.

Linda makes her way behind the counter holding on to a tray and Andreas turns to her.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)

Let's rectify this insanity right now. I'll get you...

Indignation appears on Andreas' face.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)

Son of a bitch.

Linda shakes her head knowingly.

KATERINA
What's wrong?

ANDREAS
No - nothing.

He looks at Linda who stares back daggers.

LINDA
No credit!

ANDREAS
Please.

KATERINA
It's OK, I can -

The diner's door opens and four people rush inside. They are all dressed in suits. Three are men - VADIM, VASILIS, and MYKOLA, who's the youngest - and the last one is an Asian woman, JASMINE.

The men stay by the door but Jasmine walks up to Katerina, the two women seemingly knowing each other.

JASMINE
Katerina.

KATERINA
Jasmine.

Jasmine hands her an expensive smartphone.

JASMINE
Left this behind.

KATERINA
How did you find me?

JASMINE
Have our ways.

ANDREAS
What's this, what's going on?

Jasmine turns to Andreas and gives him a harsh look.

JASMINE
None of your concern, sir.

ANDREAS
Like hell it-

Katerina puts her hand over Andreas'.

KATERINA
Andreas, please, it's OK.

Katerina stands.

KATERINA (CONT'D)
Have to go.

ANDREAS
No, you don't.

KATERINA
I really do.

JASMINE
She does.

ANDREAS
What about the pie?

Jasmine looks on befuddled.

Katerina smiles.

KATERINA
Next time.

ANDREAS
When's next time?

Katerina turns to Jasmine and they both start walking away.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)
When's next...

As Katerina reaches Mykola, she stops and affectionately touches the side of his face.

MYKOLA
Sorry, sis.

KATERINA
It's fine.

Andreas runs up close to them and the men get in front of Katerina defensively. Katerina smiles at him.

KATERINA (CONT'D)
Come hear me sing.

She opens the door and walks outside and the men and Jasmine follow her out.

INT. DINER/EXT. FRONT OF - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Andreas rushes to the front of the diner and looks anxiously out a side window.

He watches as Katerina, Jasmine, and the men get into a long, shiny car and as it then speeds away.

INT. DINER - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Andreas is flabbergasted as he walks back to his stool. He droops on it and sighs.

LINDA
Don't you go falling for her,
Andreas. That girl's trouble, it'll
only end in tears.

ANDREAS
Some things just can't be helped.

Suddenly reinvigorated, he stands.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)
I'll be seeing ya, Linda.

LINDA
You're off?

ANDREAS
Gotta get me a - job.

LINDA
Seriously?

As Andreas reaches the door.

ANDREAS
Gotta have her cherry pie.

He exits.

LINDA
Yep, tears it is.

INT. ANDREAS' APARTMENT - DAY

Andreas is lying on top of a mattress that's located on the floor of a small, semi-inclusive unit. There's a tiny space that serves as a kitchenette, a wardrobe hanger, and boxes of storage. Books galore are positioned all about the room and display clear spacial dominance.

Posters decorate the walls, one of a Paris street in the 30s, one of the Sahara and one of the world map.

*The bathroom and toilet facilities are shared and are to be found outside in the hallway area.

Andreas is lying on the mattress and staring up at the ceiling with evident melancholy.

He wills himself into action, picks up a landline phone that's on the floor next to an empty pizza box and two books on Zen Buddhism, and dials a number.

INT. EMMANUEL'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A black man in his mid-30s, EMMANUEL, is reading a news article on his tablet and stirring a spoon through his bowl of porridge with honey and berries. A glass of freshly squeezed orange juice is on the ready as well.

His phone RINGS - the notification appearing on the tablet too - and he answers.

INTERCUT ANDREAS' APARTMENT/EMMANUEL'S APARTMENT

	EMMANUEL
Yes?	
	ANDREAS
It's me.	
	EMMANUEL
Me who?	
	ANDREAS
You know.	
	EMMANUEL
Do I?	
	ANDREAS
Every goddamn time you gotta do this.	
	EMMANUEL
Get - a - cellphone!	
	ANDREAS
Never.	
	EMMANUEL
What'd you want?	

ANDREAS
Job you mentioned, still free?

EMMANUEL
Um - think so.

ANDREAS
I want it.

EMMANUEL
Huh?

ANDREAS
Want to interview for it.

EMMANUEL
Wow.

ANDREAS
What?

EMMANUEL
Nothing. Just guess Satan's
ballsack must be frozen solid.

INT. MANSION - BEDROOM - DAY

A huge room, beautifully and classically decorated. A large bed takes up most of the real estate and Katerina is on it, sound asleep.

She wakes up dazed and confused, her eyes raw and bloodshot as if she had cried herself to sleep.

She YAWNS then stretches her body out and rushes off the bed and into an adjacent toilet to urinate.

INT. MANSION - ADJACENT TOILET - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

She washes her hands at the sink and then looks at herself in the mirror. She stares until tears fill up her eyes.

INT. ANDREAS' APARTMENT - DAY

Andreas - in his boxers and socks - is looking frantically through his clothes hanger rack but can't seem to locate what he is looking for.

He moves over to a large box, opens it, and starts searching through that instead, tossing jumpers and winter clothes all over the floor in the process.

He finally finds 'it' and pulls it out of the box: it is a suit jacket, old and worn-out but to Andreas, it is nothing sort of his personal Shangri-la.

He puts it on and soon discovers a hole on the lower left side - right on a pocket - by working a finger through it.

ANDREAS
Son of a bitch.

INT. MANSION - BEDROOM - DAY

Katerina - in her fancy, elegant nightgown - is inside her walk-in closet and lazily browsing through an endless arrangement of clothing - a fact that contributes to making her eventual choice unnecessarily difficult.

INT. ANDREAS' APARTMENT - DAY

Andreas is sitting on his bed and is trying to remain patient in his attempt to sew up the hole in his jacket.

He pricks himself.

EXT. ANDREAS' APARTMENT - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

ANDREAS (O.S.)
Son of a bitch!

INT. NIORUN NOCTURNAL - NIGHT

Katerina is on a stage inside a classically decorated bar lounge and is SINGING a slow blues number with her eyes closed. She is lost in the moment, nothing else existing for her. Her voice is deep, velvety, and dreamlike and the audience is captivated by it and by her presence on the stage.

The song comes to an end and the crowd erupts with a round of APPLAUSE. Katerina opens her eyes and the magic spell is broken, she is in a place full of people and they are all staring at her, enthralled and showering her with praise, yet she seems like the loneliest person in the world.

INT. OFFICE - SOCIAL MEDIA LEVEL - DAY

Andreas - suit jacket on, shirt and tie, and with not quite matching trousers - is walking apprehensively through an office area accompanied by floor manager BOB.

The space is full of cut-off desk-unit cubicles each located next to each other that feature mostly young people whose faces are glued to a screen.

Andreas' brow is now wet as he has started to perspire.

Cold, faint led-light emanates from some light fixtures on the ceiling adding to a sense of mundaneness and austerity.

BOB

This is the social media research and marketing department where you'll potentially be stationed. We are a friendly lot and encourage initiative and the contribution of ideas, regardless of entry-level.

ANDREAS

Oh, right, great.

Andreas notices that some of the staff members are giving him the 'What's the old man doing here?' type of look.

Bob and Andreas move into an adjacent kitchen area.

BOB

And this is where the magic happens.

ANDREAS

Pardon me?

Bob walks over to a shiny Espresso machine and pats it tenderly.

BOB

We've just received the brand new Myspresso 100 Plus, you know same as the one Jeffrey Dean Morgan advertises.

Bob looks at Andreas expectantly.

ANDREAS

Oh, yeah, wow, that's amazing.

BOB

Sure is.

BOB (CONT'D)

This here beauty will be a big part of your everyday responsibilities.

Andreas nods Yes.

BOB (CONT'D)

Right, let me just check if the room's available now. I'll have Maria call you over.

Bob walks off and Andreas looks around the counter and then turns and faces the long room with all the cubicles. He is perspiring even more now.

INT. OFFICE - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY (LATER)

A young woman, MARIA, ushers Andreas into a small, sterile-looking room with a large table that has bottles of water and tablets on it. Maria pulls out a chair for him and Andreas sits down.

ANDREAS

Thank you so much.

Maria whispers to Andreas:

MARIA

Drink some water.

She leaves. At the other side of the table, sitting alongside Bob are a stern-looking WOMAN in her fifties and a bored-looking young MAN.

Andreas takes one of the bottles and starts gulping down water.

EXT. FRONT OF PARK - DAY

Andreas, bread in his hand, is feeding some pigeons near the entrance of a park.

Emmanuel approaches him but stays silent.

Andreas throws another piece of bread to the birds.

ANDREAS

That bad, eh?

EMMANUEL

They said you were the worst candidate they've ever encountered.

ANDREAS

Really?

EMMANUEL

Yeah.

ANDREAS

Well, they were the worse interviewers ever. Asking me stupid shit like what my worse qualities are. I mean, what the hell is that?

EMMANUEL

A standard question.

ANDREAS

It is?

Emmanuel nods yes.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)

Well, fuck it. Thanks anyway.

EMMANUEL

They also said they have never seen a man sweat so much. They were quite taken by it.

ANDREAS

Yeah, well - they were a bunch of a-holes.

EMMANUEL

Here, give.

Emmanuel takes a piece of bread and starts feeding the birds as well.

EMMANUEL (CONT'D)

Sold any stories recently?

ANDREAS

Nah, not for a while. Market's changed.

EMMANUEL

I'd offer you some dough but you still haven't paid me back from last time.

ANDREAS

Thanks, and sorry. Anyway, some shitty thing will turn up, always does.

EMMANUEL

What am I missing, Andreas what's happened?

Andreas thinks for a bit.

ANDREAS
Cherry pie.

EMMANUEL
Cherry pie?

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

A bowl of cherries on a table.

A man walks by.

The man is Mykola, making his way to the back of the restaurant, to a table that is situated at a further distance from other tables. A man, KONSTANTIN - mid-forties, hardened facial features but groomed impeccably, with deep thoughtful eyes and in good physical shape - is sitting there having his breakfast.

Four different newspapers are on the table, next to a plate of poached eggs, a glass of fresh orange juice, and a cup of espresso. Three men in suits are sitting at two of the nearest tables, obviously acting as BODYGUARDS.

As Mykola stands in front of the table, Konstantin carefully wipes his chin on a tablecloth.

MYKOLA
You asked for me, sir?

KONSTANTIN
I did. I have a question for you?

MYKOLA
Oh. OK.

KONSTANTIN
Are you ready to step up?

MYKOLA
Yes, I am.

KONSTANTIN
Good man. You're now in charge of today's job.

Mykola's visibly taken back.

MYKOLA
Thank you for your trust in me.

KONSTANTIN
Don't make me regret it.

MYKOLA

I won't.

INT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

Andreas approaches the glass counter of the shop. Behind it is an overweight woman, BINA, in her forties with an affinity for tattoos.

Andreas reluctantly takes out a watch from his pocket and places it on the counter.

ANDREAS

How much?

BINA

Not much.

Andreas sighs.

EXT. SMALL BRIDGE - DAY

On a street at a tiny bridge on the outskirts of town, where the industrial side starts, a car seems to have broken down - steam rising from the engine - and blocking the bridge's pathway. Jasmine - in a skimpy mini-skirt and tight top - is hopelessly trying to figure out the problem.

EXT. SMALL BRIDGE/INT. MINI-VAN - DAY

A mini-van with the words *Veggelis Veggies* and drawings of vegetables appears and slows down upon seeing the woman. Inside are PAVLOS - the driver - and MANOLIS - sitting shotgun - who exchange an intrigued yet cautious look between them upon spotting Jasmine waving at them.

Pavlos places his hand on a pistol that is resting in the front of his trousers.

Jasmine - in one really quick movement - reaches behind the low of her back and produces a small gun which she quickly FIRES at Pavlos hitting him in the neck.

Blood starts spraying all over the side window and on the steering wheel and Manolis starts to panic and tries to reach for a weapon but as he grabs for his pistol he fumbles and drops it.

Mykola appears from the left side of the bridge where the railing is and jumps onto the bridge, his pistol drawn.

In a flash, he is on the passenger side window just as Jasmine FIRES another round narrowly missing Manolis' head and further increasing his panic.

Mykola points his weapon at the glass window and at Manolis and he sees it and puts his hands up.

Another round from Jasmine PIERCES through his open palm, making Manolis HOWLER in pain.

MYKOLA
(At Jasmine)
Stop fucking shooting already!

Jasmine lowers her hands, a look of apology on her face.

Mykola opens the passenger side door and aims right at a shaking Manolis who's holding his bleeding hand.

MANOLIS
Pl... Please don't kill me, please
don't, wife's pregnant - please.

MYKOLA
Shut the hell up!

Jasmine comes over to Mykola's side.

JASMINE
What's the holdup?

A third person appears, Vadim, and he is standing guard behind the van.

Manolis starts pleading in Greek:

MANOLIS
Panagia mou voitha, sas parakalo
sas-

MYKOLA
Shut up!

MANOLIS
Pl - please don't kill me.

MYKOLA
No one's going to k-

BANG.

Manolis has been shot at the side of the head and has slid onto fellow dead Pavlos.

MYKOLA (CONT'D)
Hell you do that for?

JASMINE
You wanted him to go for his gun?

MYKOLA
We could have questioned him.

JASMINE
You're wasting time on bullshit.

Mykola gets up close to her.

MYKOLA
I'm in charge, you're supposed to
follow my lead.

Jasmine smiles, there's a hint of naughtiness to it.

JASMINE
Oh, sorry - boss - daddy.

They stare at each other, then Mykola turns swiftly away.

EXT. BRIDGE/INT. VAN - DAY (LATER)

Mykola, Jasmine, and Vadim have turned the inside of the van upside down in their search for a specific product but all they seemed to have found are eggplants, zucchinis, and potatoes.

MYKOLA
Not fucking here.

JASMINE
What the fuck kind of intel were we
given?

SIRENS are heard in the distance.

VADIM
Let's split.

They quickly exit the van.

Droplets of blood fall from the opened door of the driver's seat to the concrete ground.

INT. BLOOD CENTRE - MEDICAL ROOM - DAY

Blood fills up a syringe.

A NURSE swipes Andreas arm with an alcohol-laced cotton bud. Andreas looks pale, like someone who has seen a ghost.

NURSE
See, nothing to it.

ANDREAS
Yeah, right.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Andreas is at his usual seat by the counter and is feverishly writing away in his notepad.

Linda comes over and fills up his cup with fresh coffee.

She watches as he is lost in the writing and smiles at the sight.

INT. DINER - NIGHT (LATER)

The joint is nearly empty now.

Linda is reading a magazine.

Andreas is still writing.

He finally puts the pen down; he is all dazed and spaced out.

Suddenly, he regains focus and looks at the clock on the wall.

The clock displays the time: 1:15 AM.

Andreas and Linda's eyes meet:

ANDREAS
Guess she's not coming tonight,
either.

LINDA
Guess not.

INT. MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Katerina is lying fully clothed in bed and is reading a book.

There is a KNOCK on the door.

KATERINA
Yes?

KONSTANTIN (O.S.)

May I come in?

Katerina puts the book aside and sits at the edge of the mattress.

KATERINA

Yes.

Konstantin enters the room holding on to a small box. He sits next to her but doesn't speak. They stay in silence next to each other - until:

KONSTANTIN

You mustn't run off like that, it isn't safe.

KATERINA

So you keep saying.

KONSTANTIN

There are - people, competitors that would like to see harm befall me and they can use you for that end.

Katerina stays silent.

KONSTANTIN (CONT'D)

I would be - devastated if something was to happen to you. I'd be lost and hopeless.

Katerina lowers her head.

KATERINA

Sorry.

KONSTANTIN

I know I've been neglecting you lately, I wanted to make up for it.

He passes the small box to her and she reluctantly takes it.

She opens it and a diamond bracelet appears.

She betrays no emotion upon seeing it. It is what she was expecting.

KONSTANTIN (CONT'D)

May I?

Katerina nods Yes so Konstantin takes it in his hands and places it on Katerina's right wrist.

KONSTANTIN (CONT'D)
I thought it'd be a good match for
your necklace.

KATERINA
It's beautiful.

Konstantin kisses her on the side of the face.

There's a KNOCK on the opened door, this one coming from
Vasilis who's standing outside.

VASILIS
Sorry, boss, you wanted to know
when they'll be here.

KONSTANTIN
Thanks, Vasili.

Vasilis nods and leaves.

Konstantin rises from the bed.

KONSTANTIN (CONT'D)
Have something to attend to. Dinner
later?

KATERINA
I told you not to put Mykola in
dangerous situations.

KONSTANTIN
Your brother's quite capable, you
know this.

KATERINA
I've begged you.

KONSTANTIN
I never pushed him into this life,
he chose it.

Konstantin sighs.

KONSTANTIN (CONT'D)
I have to go.

INT. MANSION - OFFICE - NIGHT

Mykola, Jasmine, and Vadim are anxiously standing and waiting
in front of a desk in a large room that serves as
Konstantin's office.

Sitting at a chair near them is a man in his mid-50s, MIKHAIL, who is keeping his right-hand busy playing with a set of Turkish beads. The room is elegantly decorated and there are shelves of books all around on each of the walls and yet many other books are on top of the main desk and the other smaller tables.

The door opens and Konstantin rushes inside and sits at the chair behind the desk.

KONSTANTIN
(Addressing Mykola)
What happened?

Mykola and Jasmine look at each other.

KONSTANTIN (CONT'D)
Why're you looking at her for?

MYKOLA
The job itself went smoothly.

JASMINE
Really, there were no actual
hiccups. Only-

Konstantin turns sharply to her.

KONSTANTIN
Did I ask you a question?

JASMINE
Sorry.

He turns back to Mykola.

KONSTANTIN
Tell me.

MYKOLA
The merchandise was not present.
Either the intel was off or they
were tipped off somehow.

KONSTANTIN
Intel was good.

MIKHAIL
Rat in our barn?

They all turn to look at Mikhail.

KONSTANTIN
It's a possibility.

MIKHAIL

On it. Perhaps we press pause on our hostilities with the Greeks.

KONSTANTIN

No, we continue as is.

MIKHAIL

Shouldn't we at least discuss this?

KONSTANTIN

Nothing to discuss. If we pull back now it will seem as if we are weak. We proceed as is. Is that clear, Mikhail?

MIKHAIL

Of course.

INT. ANDREAS' APARTMENT - NIGHT

Andreas is awake on his mattress and staring at the ceiling. Florescent blue covers his face and half the wall from the light of the billboard across the street.

He gets up, walks to the window, and lights a cigarette. He smokes and looks out to the night.

INT. MYKOLA APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mykola and Jasmine burst into the room lips locked and in a passionate embrace. Mykola, truly fired up and eager, starts to undress her and himself; single-minded, and committed to this one specific goal.

JASMINE

Hey.

MYKOLA

(While taking off her
panties)

What?

JASMINE

What have I told you?

He pulls his trousers and boxers down both at once.

MYKOLA

What?

She places both hands straight out on his chest in a blockade.

JASMINE
Slow - the fuck - down.

MYKOLA
Oh, sorry.

She smiles and touches the side of his face tenderly.

JASMINE
It's OK, you'll learn.

She kisses his mouth and follows on till she reaches his earlobe which she bites lightly.

JASMINE (CONT'D)
I'm a good teacher.

She then whispers to him:

JASMINE (CONT'D)
Breathe deep. Slow and steady. Want
your lips on my nipples. For a very
long time.

She pulls the front of her bra down, he takes a deep breath in, then proceeds to her bust.

Her hands close into fists as she lets out a long MOAN.

INT. GALLERY - DAY

Teary blues eyes.

They belong to a woman in a photo displayed in a gallery hall.

Another set of blue eyes, these belong to Katerina who is looking at said photo.

The woman on the photo is surrounded by destruction and chaos - buildings in rubble, fire, death, etc.

Katerina moves on to another photo: Various teenagers on their phones and tablets but they are inside a giant metal bar jail.

Katerina walks further on passing by Vadim and Vasilis who are there as her security personnel.

INT. ANDREAS APARTMENT - DAY

Andreas is sitting on his mattress with an old thick laptop open on his lap.

He clicks on an e-mail.

On the laptop screen, we see that he has received a polite rejection letter for his writing. The reason stated is that the material sent is not what they are looking for at the moment.

Andreas tosses the laptop aside and puts on a vinyl record. As the MUSIC starts, he picks up a cigarette and a lighter, walks to the window, and lights up. He smokes while looking at the world outside.

Suddenly the image of Katerina (as she was in the diner) enters his mind.

KATERINA (V.O.)
Come hear me sing.

Andreas tosses the cigarette away and starts to slowly dance.

Ecstatic LAUGHTER comes to him as well.

The dancing and laughing reach a pitch level.

He drops exhausted to the ground, a look of divine revelation on his face.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Andreas is walking through a quiet park. Up in the sky, the moon is round, large, and shiny.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT (LATER)

Andreas emerges from the park to a busier part of town. He is now walking past restaurants, shops, and bars.

EXT. VENUE - NIGHT (LATER)

He exits a joint and evidently disappointed resumes his walk.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

He stops outside a crowded bar and approaches a BOUNCER. They start a verbal exchange, Andreas clearly asking him for information. From his facial expression, it is evident that Andreas does not receive the answer he was looking for. He moves on.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Andreas walks up to the counter and is greeted by Linda who has a warm cup of coffee for him.

LINDA
Nothing eh?

ANDREAS
Nope.

Linda offers him the cup.

LINDA
Here, on the house.

ANDREAS
Thanks, Linda.

Andreas takes out his notebook and a pen.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)
Hell with it.

He starts to write.

INT. CAFE - DAY

A chess set in the middle of a competitive game.

A white knight piece is moved into position taking out a black horse piece.

MYKOLA (O.S.)
Checkmate.

Mykola and Mikhail are sitting opposite each other playing a game of chess. Cups of coffee are evident on their table. The joint is busy with customers.

MIKHAIL
How are you this good this young?

Mykola shrugs his shoulders.

MIKHAIL (CONT'D)
Damn new generation.

Mykola smiles politely.

MYKOLA
One more?

MIKHAIL
Nah, fuck it.

Mykola starts to put pack up the chessboard while Mikhail takes a good gulp of coffee from his cup. He wipes his lips and looks at Mykola.

MIKHAIL (CONT'D)
Let me ask you something.

Mykola looks at him, the tone of Mikhail seeming suddenly somewhat serious.

MIKHAIL (CONT'D)
Between us, of course.

MYKOLA
OK.

MIKHAIL
What'd you think of the decision to take on the Greeks?

Mykola hesitates. He sips his coffee.

MYKOLA
Between us, I feel it was - unwise.

MIKHAIL
Why?

Mykola looks at the chessboard.

MYKOLA
They own this town. They can out-move and outmaneuver us. But perhaps the boss knows something that we don't.

MIKHAIL
Perhaps.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

Andreas is walking the streets again.

He stops outside a venue called Niorun Nocturnal, sighs, and walks inside.

INT. NIORUN NOCTURNAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Andreas walks along a hallway with red carpeted walls. He reaches a staircase and walks down and then he hears it: An angelic voice SINGING about dreams.

INT. NIORUN NOCTURNAL - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The stairs bring him to the main room. There are tables and a bar and a stage, and on that stage, his Katerina, lost in the moment, one with the song she's performing.

Andreas looks on totally transfixed.

The song comes to an end and the crowd, Andreas included, erupts into CLAPPING and CHEERING.

Katerina still has her eyes closed, she opens them and a tear rolls down her left eye.

She quickly leaves the stage. Andreas is on the move, heading in her direction.

INT. NIORUN NOCTURNAL - BACKSTAGE HALL - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Andreas reaches a hallway full of rooms just in time to see Katerina enter one and close the door behind her.

He walks to it and KNOCKS on the door.

Katerina opens and is surprised to see Andreas standing there.

ANDREAS

Found you.

KATERINA

Andreas?

ANDREAS

Yeah.

KATERINA

What're you doing here?

ANDREAS

Looking for you. You don't understand what I've been through the past few nights, I've been looking every-

KATERINA

You must go.

ANDREAS

What?

KATERINA

How did you get past Vadim?

ANDREAS

Who?

KATERINA

Go, they don't allow anyone back here.

ANDREAS

I'm sure it'll be fine. You can just-

KATERINA

No! You don't understand.

Andreas' demeanor changes, a melancholy falling over him.

ANDREAS

I thought - you'd be happy to see me.

Katerina grabs his arms.

KATERINA

I am, fool, but - you don't get it, these are dangerous people. You're not safe.

ANDREAS

I think you're exxagerating, everything's -

KATERINA

I'm engaged!

Andreas looks like he's been punched in the chest.

ANDREAS

Do you love him?

Katerina wasn't expecting the question. She lowers her head.

KATERINA
I - doesn't matter. He's a
dangerous man.

ANDREAS
I'll take that as a no.

VADIM (O.S.)
Hey!

Vadim is at the other end of the hallway and looking upset.

KATERINA
Oh no.

VADIM
Why're you talking to her?

He starts to run towards them.

Andreas ignores this development and turns back to Katerina.

ANDREAS
Come with me.

KATERINA
What?

ANDREAS
Let's run awa-

Andreas is pulled by Vadim who forcefully pins him to the wall.

VADIM
Not supposed to be back here, not
supposed to talk to her.

Katerina puts her hand on Vadim's shoulder.

KATERINA
No, please, it's OK, I know him.

VADIM
No unauthorized visitors.

ANDREAS
What kinda Nazi bullshit is this?

KATERINA
Andreas, please.

Andreas tries to break free but Vadim's grip is too strong.

VADIM
Not supposed to be here.

ANDREAS
So you said. Was just chatting.

VADIM
Not supposed to chat.

Katerina turns Vadim's face to her, her eyes pleading.

KATERINA
Vadim, please, let him go, he'll
leave, it's OK. You're doing a
great job, you're a wonderful
protector.

Vadim's demeanor softens.

He looks at Andreas.

VADIM
I let go, you walk out and never
come back?

Andreas hesitates.

ANDREAS
No.

Katerina rolls her eyes.

EXT. NIORUN NOCTURNAL - NIGHT (A FEW MINUTES LATER)

Vadim and Vasilis throw Andreas to the curb.

They both take turns kicking him in the ribs.

VADIM
Don't come back.

They return inside the club.

Andreas takes in a deep breath and grimaces.

ANDREAS
Son of a bitch.

He forces himself to get to his feet and pain shoots into his left rib section.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)

Shake it off.

He composes himself, dusts his clothes off, and with newfound determination, heads to the back of the joint.

EXT. NIORUN NOCTURNAL - BACK ALLEY - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Andreas has climbed over a fence to its other side but as he makes his way down, he loses his grip and crashes down letting out a CRY.

Undeterred - and with the manic energy reserved for those that have become unhinged or ones that have become the recipients of the arrows of eros - he gets back to his feet, picks up a small rock, and throws it to the first window he sees.

A Korean woman with purple colored hair, HEE-JIN opens the window and pops her head out.

HEE-JIN

Who're you?

ANDREAS

Andreas.

HEE-JIN

Hello, Andreas. I'm Hee-Jin.

ANDREAS

Hi Hee-Jin, love your hair.

Hee-Jin pats her hair and blushes.

HEE-JIN

Oh, aren't you sweet?

Katerina pops her head out the window.

KATERINA

Andreas?

ANDREAS

Yup.

KATERINA

Are you crazy?

ANDREAS

Probably.

KATERINA
You'll get yourself killed.

ANDREAS
Come with me.

Hee-Jin places her hands over her mouth.

HEE-JIN
Oooooohhhhhh.

Katerina places her hand on Hee-Jin's shoulder.

KATERINA
Give us a minute.

Hee-Jin nods yes and moves away from the window.

Katerina turns to address Andreas.

KATERINA (CONT'D)
I - can't leave.

ANDREAS
Sure you can. You can do anything
you want.

He walks until he is completely under the window.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)
Look, I have no money, no
prospects, no goals but I swear to
all that's good and holy that if
you come with me, I'll show you the
world and all its wonders.

Katerina is lost for words.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)
I'll wait out front for you.

KATERINA
I - how can I? I'm always watched.

Hee-Jin puts her head out the window again.

HEE-JIN
I can help with that.

Andreas nods in gratitude.

Then to Katerina:

ANDREAS
Be free with me.

EXT. NIORUN NOCTURNAL - NIGHT (LATER)

MINI MONTAGE

Andreas is pacing anxiously outside the building.

He is standing by a wall and smoking a cigarette, his right foot is twitching in the spot.

A worried Andreas stands outside the club, the bouncer - engrossed with a game on his phone - is ignoring him.

MINI MONTAGE ENDS

EXT. NIORUN NOCTURNAL - NIGHT (LATER)

Andreas sighs and turns to leave when he smells something in the air.

He turns back towards the building.

The bouncer smells it too.

BOUNCER
What the hell?

The bouncer walks into the joint as smoke now becomes visible, coming from within. PEOPLE start to run out out.

Katerina is hidden among a crowd. She joins a surprised Andreas who gives her a 'what the hell happened?' look.

KATERINA
She started a damn fire!

ANDREAS
It worked. Let's go.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

They're walking fast away from the club and cross over to the other side of the street.

Katerina stops.

ANDREAS
What is it?

KATERINA
They'll find me, they always do.

Andreas contemplates this. He then looks at Katerina and notices her large necklace and points at it.

ANDREAS
How long have you had that?

KATERINA
About a year.

He reaches out.

ANDREAS
May I?

Katerina nods Yes and he takes it off her.

He looks around and sees a HOMELESS WOMAN holding on to a dog and goes to her.

KATERINA
Wait.

Andreas looks back at Katerina.

ANDREAS
Take it as a symbolic act.

Katerina hesitates, then takes the necklace from him, and gives it to the Homeless Woman.

HOMELESS WOMAN
For me?

KATERINA
Yes.

HOMELESS WOMAN
Wow, so pretty.

Andreas grabs Katerina's hand.

ANDREAS
Let's go.

She nods yes.

And they are off again into the night.

INT. MANSION - OFFICE - NIGHT

Mykola, his energy low and wistful, is seen addressing Konstantin. Vadim and Vasilis are standing apprehensively behind Mykola, with the boss seemingly getting more and more agitated with each word coming out of Mykola's mouth.

Konstantin starts shouting at the three men and they nod their heads and exit the room.

Konstantin picks up items from his desk and slams them on the floor in rage.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

Katerina and Andreas are walking along a sidewalk and eating tacos.

Andreas stops outside a building with a sign that states: World's Oldest Animation Museum.

KATERINA

We can end this now, before it gets too-

ANDREAS

(Excitedly but while chewing)

Oh, we're here!

Katerina eats the last of her taco and so does Andreas.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)

Good, wasn't it?

KATERINA

Very much so. Oh, wait...

ANDREAS

What?

She reaches out with her hand to his face and uses her fingers to wipe some sauce off the side of Andreas' mouth.

KATERINA

You had something.

She licks her fingers.

Andreas stares in silence, captivated once more.

Katerina starts to feel a bit self-conscious and turns to face the building.

KATERINA (CONT'D)
So, we're here?

Andreas snaps out of it.

ANDREAS
Yup, yeah, this is it. Shall we
enter?

Katerina nods Yes.

INT. ANIMATION MUSEUM - RECEPTION - NIGHT

The walls are fully decorated with various cartoon characters, both famous and not so much so, from all corners of the world.

A man in his forties, JAMES, is reading a *manga* comic book as Andreas approaches.

He doesn't look up from the comic book.

ANDREAS
Do you want to meet her?

JAMES
Boring.

James hands him an electronic key.

JAMES (CONT'D)
This'll get you full access.

ANDREAS
Nice.

JAMES
An hour sharp.

ANDREAS
Yes.

JAMES
After this, we're even.

ANDREAS
Yes.

JAMES
Don't break anything.

ANDREAS
No.

Andreas turns.

JAMES
Don't steal anything.

ANDREAS
Fuck you.

JAMES
Fuck you, too.

INT. ANIMATION MUSEUM - NIGHT (MONTAGE SEQUENCE)

Katerina and Andreas are strolling through a room that has its walls decorated with sequences from various *Mafalda* comic strips over the years.

Andreas' and Katerina's facial expressions are agape and a little flustered as they have found themselves in a room that is full of printouts, posters, and large strips of pornographic animation from the 30s and 40s. There is also a large monitor that is playing a risqué video of the mentioned time period.

Katerina and Andreas are sitting on a bench surrounded by animation art and Andreas produces a large chocolate bar from his pocket and proceeds to unwrap it. He breaks it in half and offers Katerina the larger piece. She smiles, takes the smaller piece, and bites into it with relish.

Andreas and Katerina are carefully flicking through an old comic book whose pages are protected by cellophane when Andreas seems to make a funny comment and they both burst out in laughter.

MONTAGE ENDS

INT. ANDREAS PLACE - NIGHT

Andreas and Katerina enter into his tiny apartment.

ANDREAS
Sorry, been meaning to clean the place up.

KATERINA
It's fine.

Andreas starts to pick things off the floor.

KATERINA (CONT'D)
You don't have to do that.

Andreas tries to pile some books up but they end up crashing down.

ANDREAS
Son of a bitch!

Katerina goes to him and puts her hand on his shoulder.

KATERINA
Honestly, I find your place really charming.

ANDREAS
Honestly?

She nods Yes.

They stare into each other's eyes.

Andreas inches forward, perhaps to kiss but Katerina smiles, turns away and looks around.

KATERINA
I see you like to read - and eat pizza.

ANDREAS
Hell, sometimes I do both at the same time.

They both CHUCKLE.

KATERINA
Would you like to end the evening by reading together?

ANDREAS
Yes, I would.

INT. ANDREAS PLACE - NIGHT (LATER)

Andreas finishes placing new sheets on his mattress.

ANDREAS
There, all nice and clean.

KATERINA
But what about you?

Andreas takes out a sleeping bag from one of the boxes.

He places it on the floor.

KATERINA (CONT'D)

No.

ANDREAS

I'll be fine. Be like camping but
without the bugs - well...

He looks apprehensively around.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)

Yeah, quite like camping.

Katerina sits on the mattress unsure.

Andreas notices her uneasiness.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)

Excuse me, have to make something.

Katerina looks at him perplexed.

Andreas starts looking through his possessions.

He takes a couple of nails and a large thick book and
proceeds to station one nail on one side and the other on the
opposite side of the wall - all the while Katerina is looking
on wide-eyed.

He then takes a sheet and attaches it to each nail thus
creating a privacy barrier for them.

Katerina smiles sweetly at this act.

Andreas pops his head through to her side.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)

Do you need anything, glass of
water, toothpaste?

KATERINA

I'm fine, thank you.

ANDREAS

The jon's outside.

KATERINA

What's outside?

ANDREAS

Toilet.

KATERINA

Oh, right, yes, I know, I'm OK,
don't worry.

He nods and pops his head back to his side, takes off his shirt and trousers and lies on the sleeping bag.

Katerina takes off her dress and gets under the sheet.

Andreas stares at the light and sighs.

He claps his hands twice.

ANDREAS
Lights off.

He claps again.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)
Damn system's broken.

Katerina GIGGLES.

Andreas gets up and switches off the light.

He lies back down.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)
Good night, Katerina.

KATERINA
Good night, Andreas.

Soon, electric blue phosphorescence envelops the room.

INT. DINER - NIGHT (DREAM SEQUENCE)

Andreas - dressed in a fine suit - is sitting on his usual stool in the diner and is smoking a cigarette.

Linda - dressed in a short dress and stockings - walks up to him. She takes the cigarette from his mouth to hers and inhales deeply, then drops it on the floor and stomps it out.

They start kissing passionately.

Linda reaches under her skirt and proceeds to work her panties off. She then unzips Andreas' trousers and mounts him.

They start to have sex, GRUNTING and MOANING as the pace and tone accelerate.

Linda leans close to his ear and says:

LINDA
It will only end up in tears.

Andreas then turns his head to the right and sees lots of people - including Katerina - standing there staring at him and Linda.

DREAM SEQUENCE ENDS

INT. ANDREAS PLACE - DAY

Andreas wakes up on the floor on top of his sleeping bag. He GROANS and rubs his eyes. He looks down and notices that there's a bulge evident under his boxer shorts.

KATERINA (O.C.)
Are you up?

Andreas puts his hands over his boxers in embarrassment.

ANDREAS
I - I guess.

KATERINA (O.C.)
You guess?

ANDREAS
Yeah.

KATERINA (O.C.)
You decent?

ANDREAS
Never been that.

Katerina pops her around the separation wall-sheet and Andreas quickly turns to his side, away from her.

She smiles shyly.

KATERINA
You feeling, OK?

ANDREAS
Sure.

KATERINA
You seem all - tensed up.

ANDREAS
Nothing a shower won't cure.

Katerina smells under her armpits.

KATERINA
Oooooffffff - could use one myself.

Andreas looks her way, eyes wide.

KATERINA (CONT'D)
But you go first, I need to stretch
out.

She pops back to her side.

ANDREAS
Sure. And then I'll grab us some
coffee.

INT. ANDREAS APARTMENT - SHOWER UNIT - DAY (LATER)

Andreas is washing himself under cold water and is shivering
away.

EXT. STREET - DAY (LATER)

Andreas walks down the street.

INT. BURGER JOINT - DAY (LATER)

Andreas is standing by the front door entrance and is
waiting. A young man dressed in the shop's uniform, NENAD,
comes over holding two coffees. He has a strong foreign
accent. He gives the coffees to Andreas.

NENAD
Here.

ANDREAS
Thanks.

NENAD
Now I owe you just one more.

ANDREAS
Right. Oh, how bout brown sugar
satchels?

NENAD
Oh, yes.

Nenad takes some satchels out of his pocket and hands them to
Andreas.

NENAD (CONT'D)
Have an essay this weekend.

ANDREAS
Hmm, might be busy.

NENAD
Let me know by Friday.

Andreas nods and exits.

INT. ANDREAS APARTMENT - DAY (LATER)

Andreas enters the apartment and sees Katerina, hair wet from a shower, towel wrapped around her body, reading one of his books.

KATERINA
Hey.

ANDREAS
I - I got coffee.

KATERINA
Great. I'll go change.

Katerina ventures to her side of the room and starts to change.

Andreas goes to the window and lights a cigarette.

INT. ANDREAS APARTMENT - DAY (LATER)

Katerina, now wearing her dress and high-heels, is sipping coffee while Andreas is busy making some ham and cheese sandwiches.

KATERINA
So, what's the plan today?

Andreas sprays mustard on a sandwich.

ANDREAS
Hiking.

KATERINA
Hiking?

ANDREAS
I know a place.

KATERINA
Sounds - adventurous.

Andreas wraps the finished sandwiches in a cellophane and places them in a backpack.

He starts filling up a large glass bottle with water.

ANDREAS
Done much hiking before?

KATERINA
Not really.

Andreas takes the bottle and a large blanket and places them in the backpack - which he then zips up.

He looks over at Katerina and notices her smile, then her dress, and lastly her heels.

ANDREAS
Need to get you proper attire first.

Katerina claps her hands.

KATERINA
Oh, new clothes, how exciting.

Andreas picks up his coffee cup, raises it to Katerina, drinks what was left, then smiles.

INT. NIORUN NOCTURNAL - SECURITY ROOM - DAY

The face of Andreas paused on a monitor.

*(It is from the night that he went into the club to speak to Katerina).

KONSTANTIN (O.S.)
That's the son of the bitch that's kidnapped her?

Konstantin is in a room full of monitors and surveillance equipment. With him are Mikhail, Mykola, and Vadim.

VADIM
We're not sure it was a ki...

Konstantin gives Vadim a deadly look.

KONSTANTIN
How did he know about the necklace being bugged?

Mykola shrugs his shoulders.

KONSTANTIN (CONT'D)
I want him found, I want him on his
knees in front of me.

INT. ATHLETICS SHOP - DAY

Andreas is on his knee on the floor of the shop and is tying the shoelaces of a hiking shoe he's just helped Katerina put on.

He looks up to her - she's now wearing a no-label T-shirt and sweatpants - expectably.

ANDREAS
How's that feel?

KATERINA
Good.

ANDREAS
Best move around in it first.

INT. ATHLETICS SHOP - DAY (LATER)

A young woman, the CASHIER, rings up the price.

CASHIER
That's 89.99 Please.

Andreas hands her what looks like a voucher. She checks it over but offers it back.

CASHIER (CONT'D)
Sorry sir, can't accept that here.

ANDREAS
Why not?

CASHIER
We stopped excepting those last
year.

ANDREAS
Bullshit.

The Cashier gives him a look and works hard to contain herself.

CASHIER
88.99 Please.

Andreas sighs and takes out his wallet.

KATERINA
I've got some money.

ANDREAS
No, no, it's fine, it's fine.

Andreas takes out all the notes from his wallet and hands them over.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)
Here.

He receives some change in return.

EXT. UP HILL TRAIL - DAY (MONTAGE)

Andreas and Katerina start walking up a rocky terrain.

The sun is now high in the sky and they have built up a sweat.

They stop and take a breather. Andreas takes two bottles of water out and they proceed to rehydrate themselves.

They continue walking. A younger couple nearby walks past them on the way up.

They are sitting on a rock and are having sandwiches and enjoying the view.

They walk some more.

MONTAGE ENDS.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TOP - SUNSET

Katerina and Andreas have now reached the top and the view is breathtaking. They sit down on a dirt path just in time to see the sun go down.

They turn and look at each other and this time they keep eye contact going - warmth and desire emanates from both of them.

They lean in close, lips inches away from each other, and - a man walks by breaking the spell and they both resume watching as the sun proceeds to its resting place.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TOP - NIGHT

Stars start to decorate the dark sky.

Katerina is resting her head on Andreas' shoulder, a blanket envelopes the both of them.

No words are passed between them - they are not necessary.

The moon appears in the sky, large and round.

Katerina raises her head from Andreas' shoulder and looks right at him. He feels her gaze and turns to her.

Nothing can break the strength of the magnetic pull this time and they kiss, and it is long and it is deep.

INT. ANDREAS APARTMENT - NIGHT

Andreas follows Katerina into his place and puts the backpack down.

Katerina turns to him and they stand there looking at each other.

She turns back, walks to the hanging divider sheet and proceeds to take it down.

He rushes over to her and they start to passionately kiss.

They make their way to the mattress and make love.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Konstantin is sitting at his usual table by the end of the restaurant and is sipping his espresso. Guards are all around. Sitting at a chair near him is Mikhail and standing in front of them are Jasmine, Mykola, Vadim, and Vasilis.

MIKHAIL

Second warehouse of ours they have hit this month.

KONSTANTIN

So we burn all of theirs!

MIKHAIL

We need to tighten our defenses first.

KONSTANTIN

We can do both.

MIKHAIL

We can't underestimate the Greeks.

KONSTANTIN

No one is. They started this war,
Mikhail, so it's up to us now to
finish it.

Turns to Vadim:

KONSTANTIN (CONT'D)

Recruit more men. Increase the
salary. Make sure the rest of the
properties are secured.

VADIM

Yes, Mr. Konstantin.

Konstantin finishes his coffee.

KONSTANTIN

What about the man who has
Katerina?

JASMINE

Seems to be a ghost. No social
security, no bank accounts, no
social media presence.

Konstantin sighs.

KONSTANTIN

Keep at it.

JASMINE

Of course.

Konstantin turns to address Mykola:

KONSTANTIN

You have anything?

INT. MYKOLA'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Mykola's relaxing under the deluge of warm water when a
RINGING tone is heard.

Mykola hastily exits the shower and grabs for his cell phone
that is on the sink counter.

He clicks answer.

KATERINA (O.S.)

Mykola?

FLASHBACK ends.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Back at the restaurant, Mykola answers Konstantin:

MYKOLA
No, nothing.

INT. ANDREAS APARTMENT - SHOWER UNIT - DAY

Katerina and Andreas are in a small shower together and are washing themselves.

ANDREAS
Do my back?

Katerina nods and Andreas turns around - slowly and carefully due to the lack of space.

Katerina's eyes widen upon seeing his back and she hesitates.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

KATERINA
So hairy.

Katerina starts scrubbing his back with soap.

ANDREAS
Ah, sorry, like a damn bear, aren't I?

She finishes applying the soap.

KATERINA
Don't mind at all.

She hugs his back.

KATERINA (CONT'D)
In fact, I've loved bears ever since I was little.

ANDREAS
Let me do you.

KATERINA
OK.

She lets go of the hug and turns around.

KATERINA (CONT'D)
I'm not hairy, am I?

ANDREAS
Thankfully not.

She CHORTLES.

He rubs soap all over her back and then kisses her nape.

He pauses.

Then kisses the right side of her neck and she bites on the inside of her lips.

Pause.

He kisses the left side of her neck and she closes one of her hands tight.

Pause.

Katerina quickly turns around and they embrace and start kissing - passion having become inflamed again between them.

Katerina moves back in an effort to find space, and then wraps her legs around Andreas, letting out a long, soft moan in the process.

All soaped up, they are in the midst of energetic sex when there is a hard KNOCK on the door.

MAN (O.S.)
Hurry the fuck up, already!

Katerina and Andreas pause in embrace and look warily at each other.

There is another loud KNOCK.

ANDREAS
Perhaps - we - should rinse.

Katerina nods Yes.

They disengage and in quick movements start rinsing the soap off their bodies.

INT. MANSION - OFFICE - NIGHT

A sombre-looking Konstantin is aggressively playing the VIOLIN by the fireplace.

EXT. TAVERN - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

*While the violin music is playing.

A few MEN and WOMEN are standing outside a Greek tavern conversing and joking with each other.

EXT. TAVERN / INT. CAR - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

A black car speeds past the road in front of the tavern, driven by Mykola as Vadim and Vasilis in the back, FIRE their guns out the side window.

Two men and one woman get hit while everyone darts for safety.

Some manage to FIRE back at the car, hitting the trunk and the taillights as it races off to safety.

EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON

A hot dog VENDOR hands Andreas a couple of stuffed, mustard-dripping hot dogs.

HOT DOG VENDOR

Enjoy.

ANDREAS

Thank you.

Andreas looks around for Katerina - she's not where she was a few minutes ago.

He locates her across the street and in front of a jewelry shop.

EXT. JEWELRY SHOP - AFTERNOON (CONTINUOUS)

As Andreas approaches, he notices that Katerina is staring fondly at a diamond necklace, one that has a very hefty price tag.

Katerina notices Andreas' arrival, turns to him, and smiles warmly.

He hands her the dog.

ANDREAS

One hot dog, all the trimmings, for the madam.

KATERINA
Thank you so much.

Katerina stares at the dog, unsure.

KATERINA (CONT'D)
Looks - messy.

ANDREAS
Just gotta dive in. Don't worry, my
pockets are full of tissue.

Katerina does so and takes a big bite.

KATERINA
Hmm, good.

Her chin is now covered in sauce and Andreas can't help but smile.

KATERINA (CONT'D)
I'm covered in mustard, aren't I?

Andreas nods Yes. He takes out some tissues and wipes her chin, then kisses it.

ANDREAS
Come, let's go see the duckies.

INT. ANDREAS APARTMENT - DAWN

The alarm RINGS loudly and intrusively at 06:30.

Andreas wakes up with a jump and quickly turns it off. Next to him Katerina stirs lightly and mutters something unintelligible but remains asleep.

Andreas sits up, groans in protest, and stretches out his arms. He locates his boxers, puts them on, and rushes out the door to the communal toilet.

INT. ANDREAS APARTMENT - DAWN (LATER)

A fully dressed Andreas grabs a beanie hat and a thick jacket, kisses Katerina lightly on the forehead, and exits.

EXT. MEAT PACKING PLANT/VAN - DAY

Andreas - jacket, beanie, and a full apron on - is inside an open fridge van and is handed a large piece of meat which he then carries inside the van and hangs on a hook.

EXT. DINER/PARKING LOT/CAR - NIGHT

Andreas, Katerina, and Linda are standing by a parked car.

Linda, reluctantly, hands a set of car keys to Andreas.

LINDA
Don't make me regret it.

ANDREAS
It'll be fine.

LINDA
Let Katerina drive.

ANDREAS
I want to drive.

LINDA
You don't have a license.

KATERINA
I can drive.

ANDREAS
I want to drive!

LINDA
What are you, five?

ANDREAS
You're f... I've - look, it'll be
OK.

Andreas turns and opens the side passenger door for Katerina.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)
Come or we'll miss the start.

Andreas heads for the driver's seat and Katerina and Linda exchange an amused smile.

Andreas and Katerina enter the car.

LINDA
You get in trouble; I claim it was
stolen.

Andreas waves a hand at her in dismissal and starts the engine.

EXT. DRIVE-IN THEATRE/ INT. CAR - NIGHT

A display poster of the 1942 film *Casablanca* adorns the side of the entrance to the open theatre.

Up on the outdoor screen, Rick is about to inform Major Strasser that his nationality is that of a drunkard.

Meanwhile, in Linda's car, Andreas and Katerina are making out like a pair of rowdy teenagers.

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

Linda's car is stationed in the parking lot.

ANDREAS (O.S.)
The moment's upon us. Are you
excited?

INT. DINER - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

A thick, juicy, colorful slice of cherry pie is placed on the table.

Katerina looks at the pie in wonderment, then looks towards Andreas.

KATERINA
More than you can imagine.

Linda is standing by the table and biting a nail with anticipation. Andreas is sitting in front of Katerina looking on with much expectation, there's even a small crowd of customers gathered near that are also looking on too.

Katerina cuts a chunk of pie with her fork, scoops it, and brings it to her mouth.

Everyone holds their breath.

She chews and swallows.

She smiles wide.

KATERINA (CONT'D)
It's divine.

Everyone breaks out in CHEERS.

INT. ANDREAS APARTMENT - NIGHT

Katerina and Andreas are in bed together having just made love and are holding each other.

KATERINA
Andreas?

ANDREAS
Hmm?

KATERINA
What made you want to live off the grid?

ANDREAS
Just - wanted to feel free.

KATERINA
And, do you feel free?

ANDREAS
Sometimes.

KATERINA
Must be something.

ANDREAS
You don't - you've never felt it?

KATERINA
No - maybe - not sure.

BEAT.

ANDREAS
There's this big bus terminal at the end of Erebus Street. Why don't we go there in the morning and hop on the first bus to anywhere? Let's roam the whole country and see all its wonders.

Katerina's composure shifts and she turns from Andreas.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)
What?

KATERINA
Told you, don't want to leave my brother behind.

ANDREAS
He's a grown-ass man, he'll be fine.

KATERINA
No!

Andreas sighs.

ANDREAS
Can't we talk about this like -

KATERINA
No!

ANDREAS
Goddamn, it.

Tears appear in Katerina's eyes.

Andreas sits up, takes a cigarette from the nightstand and lights it.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)
I mean - come on - you keep talking about the danger - us together like this - but when I present a solution you - you - ah screw it.

Katerina is fully crying now.

Andreas realizes she's crying and looks back at her concerned. He puts out the cigarette and goes to her.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)
Hey - hey don't cry.

KATERINA
Sorry.

ANDREAS
No, no, I'm sorry. I'm just a no-good son of a bitch sometimes, that's all.

Katerina wipes her tears away.

KATERINA
No, you're nice.

ANDREAS
No, I'm a bum, I'm a hairy baboon.

Katerina giggles.

KATERINA

You're not a baboon - just hairy.

Andreas lets out a GIGGLE which props her to do the same.

She turns to him and they kiss.

ANDREAS

I'm sorry.

KATERINA

Me too.

ANDREAS

Why don't we meet with your brother?

KATERINA

You want to?

ANDREAS

Of course, I do.

KATERINA

OK, I'll set it up.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

Katerina and Andreas are at a nature expanse away from the city, at a place full of bushes, brambles, and canes - and they are picking blackberries.

Some they eat and others they place into a paper bag.

Katerina's movements are very energetic and she's lightly perspiring. Her fingers and lips are blood-red from the juice of the berries.

Suddenly she turns and looks at Andreas, who notices and looks back at her. She stares at him tenderly.

ANDREAS

What?

KATERINA

Nothing.

FOOTSTEPS are heard coming up the hillside.

Soon Mykola emerges holding on to a bag and an enthusiastic Katerina runs up and hugs her brother.

EXT. HILLSIDE/TREE - DAY (LATER)

Andreas, Katerina, and Mykola are sitting under a tree and are having some food and sharing a bottle of wine.

MYKOLA

I can't help but worry, sis. The threat is real. We're - at war.

KATERINA

You worry? What about me? You're my little brother and you're right in the thick of it - day in, day out.

MYKOLA

I'm not a child anymore.

KATERINA

Oh, I forgot, you're a big shot n-

ANDREAS

But surely, Katerina distancing herself from it all does more good than harm.

Birds fly high up looking down at the three of them and all the glorious nature.

MYKOLA (O.C.)

While she's in the same city there's always danger about.

And in a thick bush, hidden and watching is Jasmine.

INT. MANSION - OFFICE - NIGHT

Konstantin is behind his desk, a glass of whiskey in hand as Mykola, Vasilis, and Vadim enter the room. Vadim is holding a laptop which he places on the desk for his boss to view. On the screen seems to be a photo of Andreas as well as some written information.

VADIM

We got him.

Konstantin downs the last of his drink.

KONSTANTIN

That's him?

VADIM

Yes. Only thing we could find on him with an address on it.

(MORE)

VADIM (CONT'D)

A court order issued out for
disorderly conduct - for urinating
in the street.

KONSTANTIN

Good. Go bring Katerina back to
where she belongs.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - MIDNIGHT

Andreas and Katerina are in a booth of a small, Chinese
buffet-style restaurant and are having a meal.

ANDREAS

Trust me, you wouldn't want to read
it.

KATERINA

Why?

ANDREAS

It's -- brutish, bestial.

KATERINA

Meaning?

ANDREAS

I don't say nice things.

KATERINA

About what?

ANDREAS

Anything and everything. People,
men, women, the world. Society and
the suckles it enforces on us.
About being willing captives of a
system of greed and inequality.
It's full of vulgarity and rawness
and lewdness. You wouldn't like it.

KATERINA

You're making assumptions about me.

ANDREAS

I didn't mean-

KATERINA

You're an - asshole.

Andreas eyes widen, he's never seen her curse before.

He smiles.

ANDREAS

That's a given, honey.

Katerina carefully wipes her mouth with a napkin, then looks at Andreas, her eyes suddenly both docile and concupiscent.

KATERINA

Besides, I can be quite - lewd,
when I want to be.

BEAT.

ANDREAS

We - should go.

Katerina nods her head Yes.

EXT. CHINESE RESTAURANT/STREET - NIGHT (A FEW MOMENTS LATER)

Andreas and Katerina have exited the restaurant and they are on the sidewalk kissing passionately.

There are only a few people around.

Like a flash, a black van storms by and stops beside them, startling them. Four Mediterranean-looking MEN step out aggressively.

Andreas places Katerina behind him protectively.

MAN 1

Katerina Kovalenko?

ANDREAS

No.

MAN 2

You need to come with us now.

Andreas turns to Katerina.

ANDREAS

Run!

He turns and jumps on the men as Katerina reluctantly takes off down the street with two of the men after her.

Man 1 punches Andreas to the ground and he and Man 2 start kicking him while he's down.

MAN 2

Stay put, asshole!

They too, join the chase.

Katerina is running down an empty sidewalk but the two men catch up with her and as they attempt to apprehend her, she trips and falls to the ground.

They pick her up but she tries to fight them off and she gets slapped hard for her efforts. Man 1 and 2 approach as well and Katerina can't help but get disheartened.

A car rushes to the scene and mounts the sidewalk. Mykela, Jasmine, Vadim, and Vasilis come out and manage to fight the four men off.

Mykela checks up on his sister who seems in shock.

MYKOLA
You OK, sis?

She doesn't reply.

MYKOLA (CONT'D)
Sis!

She snaps out of it and looks at him with concern.

KATERINA
Andreas.

Andreas though is on his feet, in clear pain, and is approaching Katerina and the others. He is bleeding from a cut on the edge of his left eyebrow.

Katerina rushes to him and they embrace.

Andreas GRUNTS from the pain.

KATERINA (CONT'D)
Sorry.

ANDREAS
It's OK.

KATERINA
Oh God, you're bleeding.

ANDREAS
It's nothing.

SIRENS are heard in the distance.

MYKOLA
Katerina, come we have to go.

Mykola and the others head for the car. Katerina though stays in place next to Andreas.

MYKOLA (CONT'D)
Come, big sis, you'll be safe.

ANDREAS
He's right. You have to go.

KATERINA
I don't want to leave you.

ANDREAS
It'll be all right. Go with them.
We'll talk soon.

KATERINA
We can drop you at a hospital.

ANDREAS
I'm fine, I'm good, go!

Katerina kisses him on the side of his face, then gets in the car with Mykola.

She waves at Andreas and then the car speeds away.

Andreas sighs and grimaces in pain.

He puts a cigarette in his mouth, lights it, and walks off.

INT. ANDREAS APARTMENT - NIGHT

Andreas is lying on his mattress and is nursing a beer; his head is wrapped with an old rug. His face keeps changing from florescent blue to normal, from the advertizing sign across the street. He looks deep in thought and frustration is slowly setting in.

INT. MANSION - KATERINA BEDROOM - NIGHT

Katerina is lying in her big bed but is wide awake.

There is a KNOCK on the door.

KATERINA
Yes.

The door opens and Konstantin leans his body into the room.

KONSTANTIN
Are you doing well?

KATERINA
Thank you, yes.

KONSTANTIN
I'm sorry that happened to you.

KATERINA
It's OK.

BEAT.

KONSTANTIN
If you need anything, know that I
am here for you.

Katerina's somewhat mystified, she wasn't expecting this
reaction from him.

KATERINA
OK.

Konstantin nods to her and closes the door.

INT. MYKOLA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mykola is sitting in an armchair, in the dark.

His cell vibrates from a call and the screen illuminates,
light illustrating his silhouette and a few of his features.

He doesn't answer the phone and once again gets bathed in
darkness.

Soon the doorbell RINGS.

INT. HALLWAY/MYKOLA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Jasmine is anxiously waiting outside the front door.

It opens into darkness, the light entering the space from the
hallway revealing Mykola just enough.

JASMINE
Hell are you doing?

MYKOLA
Nothing.

JASMINE
Why are you in the dark?

He doesn't answer but keeps walking back to his spot.

INT. MYKOLA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Jasmine enters the apartment agitated.

JASMINE
Been fucking calling ya!

MYKOLA
Oh, didn't notice.

Jasmine clicks at a switch, illuminating some of the space.

MYKOLA (CONT'D)
What's going on?

Mykola makes it to the armchair and sits back down.

MYKOLA (CONT'D)
Nothing.

JASMINE
So much nothing means something.

He shrugs his shoulders.

JASMINE (CONT'D)
You seem - off.

MYKOLA
Tired.

JASMINE
Bet I can - reenergize ya.

She starts unbuttoning her shirt.

MYKOLA
I do want you to bare yourself to me.

She looks at him funny as she undoes the last button.

JASMINE
What'd you think I'm doing, silly?

MYKOLA
I mean - in another way.

She takes her shirt off and stands there in her bra and skirt.

JASMINE
Sounds kinky.

MYKOLA

Time to confide, to confess.

She can't help but show some apprehension, even though she tries hard not to.

She walks over to him and gets to her knees in front of him - her hands on his knees.

JASMINE

What, my dark sexual fantasies?

Then, she notices, that there is a pistol in his right hand, one equipped with a silencer.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

What're you doing with that?

Mykola's other hand is holding his cell and he raises it and shows Jasmine a photo of her with a Mediterranean person.

MYKOLA

That's Mr. Alamanos, isn't it?
Second in command in Stavros'
outfit.

Jasmine goes for his pistol but can't take it off Mykola so she punches him. Mykola uses his feet and pushes her off him, then stands and points the weapon at her.

MYKOLA (CONT'D)

You could have gotten my sister
killed.

JASMINE

That was never going to happen.
They'd - have taken good care of
her - just used her for leverage,
that's all.

BEAT.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

Mykola, honey, you have to believe
me. We'd just have gotten
Konstantin out of the way, I swear.
That's the goal anyway, isn't it?

Mykola seems to be contemplating her words.

She inches forward, her face turning seductive once more.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

Put the stupid gun down, and place
any disgruntled feelings and all
the frustration against me into
fucking my goddamn brains out.

She inches closer still.

In a flash, Mykola places the pistol on her temple and pulls
the trigger.

The impact of the bullet propels her backward in the air and
she lands dead on the floor - blood and brain matter
splattered onto the carpet.

INT. ANDREAS APARTMENT - DAY

There are a number of empty bottles scattered on the floor
next to Andreas' bed.

He is SNORING away and drooling. Dried blood is visible on
his head.

There is a KNOCK.

Andreas stirs and GROANS in annoyance, eyes still closed.

Another KNOCK.

Andreas opens his eyes and a shot of physical and emotional
pain hits him and he GROANS.

ANDREAS

Somebody fucking shoot me.

KNOCK.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)

Hold your horses, will ya?

He forces himself up and heads to the door and opens it.
Konstantin is standing there, immaculate suit on, an
expensive watch on his wrist.

The two men stare at each other.

KONSTANTIN

Good morning.

ANDREAS

Is it?

Konstantin smiles.

KONSTANTIN
Know who I am?

Andreas stares at him.

ANDREAS
I think I can guess.

KONSTANTIN
We should talk.

ANDREAS
Why the fuck not?

Andreas opens the door wider, inviting Konstantin in.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)
Make yourself at home, gotta empty
the ol' bladder.

Andreas heads off to the communal toilet while Konstantin walks into the apartment.

Konstantin enters the space and notices the mess, the empty food cartons, the empty beer bottles but most of all he notices the plethora of books.

He picks one up in recognition, it is a book he greatly admires. He places it back down.

Andreas enters, heads to the small fridge, and opens it.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)
Beer?

KONSTANTIN
No, thank you.

The fridge is empty.

ANDREAS
Shit, have drunk it all anyway.

Andreas turns around and the two men stare at each other. Andreas proceeds to sit on the edge of the mattress and Konstantin sits on a box nearby.

KONSTANTIN
This place doesn't belong to you,
does it?

ANDREAS
What does that matter?

KONSTANTIN
Just an observation.

ANDREAS
Say what you gotta say and leave.

KONSTANTIN
Andreas, I try and restrain from
passing judgment. Each man is free
to live as they please. I believe
that. And I can see that you are an
eccentric and a non-conformist
individual.

Andreas finds a cigarette and a lighter.

ANDREAS
Mind if I smoke?

KONSTANTIN
Go ahead.

Andreas lights and inhales.

ANDREAS
You came here to praise me?

KONSTANTIN
I came here to reason with you.

ANDREAS
Reason what?

KONSTANTIN
Katerina is safer with me.

Andreas SNIGGERS.

ANDREAS
It's your lifestyle that has placed
her in harm's way to begin with.

Konstantin is triggered, yet he suppresses his anger. He
sighs instead.

KONSTANTIN
Be that as it may, you have to
agree that, at present, she is
safer with me.

Andreas thinks about it.

ANDREAS
Yeah.

Andreas puts the cigarette out, raises and walks to the window.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)
Unless we leave.

Konstantin stands as well.

KONSTANTIN
Andreas, you are used to a way of life that suits your means, your personal expression - yet not everyone is made to live that way.

ANDREAS
Is that right?

KONSTANTIN
It is. Katerina is accustomed to a certain standard - hell, she deserves the highest standard. Don't you think it's selfish to deny her that?

Andreas turns from the window agitated, yet he does not have a retort for him.

Konstantin walks to the door.

KONSTANTIN (CONT'D)
If you really care about her, and I believe you do, you will consider my words.

He opens the door.

KONSTANTIN (CONT'D)
One last thing. Please do not mistake this peaceful and reserved visitation as a sign of weakness. Our next meeting might have a brutish and barbarous quality about it.

He exits and Andreas looks back out the window evidently troubled.

EXT. MANSION - BACK GARDEN - NIGHT

Katerina is having a stroll through the garden.

Occasionally, she stops to tend to a flower and plant.

At various points in this outdoor space, Guards with weapons are seen acting as security personnel.

Mykola appears and approaches her, his steps heavy and purposeful.

MYKOLA
What're you doing?

Katerina is taken aback by the vehement tone of his voice.

KATERINA
Just having a nightly stroll.

He stands right in front of her.

MYKOLA
You know what I mean.

As Katerina stares at him, her surprise turns to worry.

KATERINA
What happened?

MYKOLA
What'd you mean?

KATERINA
I can see it in your eyes. You're in anguish.

MYKOLA
No, I'm fine - there was something - but I dealt with it. Don't change the subject, you always do that.

KATERINA
What is it you want to say to me?

MYKOLA
Why are you still here? You're miserable, everyone can see that.

KATERINA
I - it's not so simple. I can't just get up and leave, it's-

MYKOLA
Why not?

KATERINA
Because...

MYKOLA
Because of me?

BEAT

KATERINA
You're my little brother.

Mykola smiles tenderly at her.

MYKOLA
I'm a grown man now. I'll be all right. You have always taken care of me and I'll be forever grateful but now you have to take care of yourself and do what would make you truly happy.

KATERINA
I - I don't know if I can.

MYKOLA
I'm here for you, OK, anything you need. Let me be big brother now.

Katerina smiles at him and they hug.

EXT. MEAT PACKING PLANT - DAY

Andreas approaches the building and finds a large burly man - STANLEY - standing by the door.

STANLEY
Look who decided to show.

ANDREAS
What? Been sick, Stanley.

STANLEY
Take a walk.

ANDREAS
You serious?

STANLEY
Dead serious. Take your worthless ass and beat it!

ANDREAS
Fine, fuck you!

Andreas starts walking away.

INT. MANSION - KATERINA BEDROOM - DAY

Katerina is in bed awake and deep in thought.

Suddenly she gets up, rushes to her dressing table, finds paper, and a pen and starts to frantically write.

INT. ANDREAS APARTMENT - NIGHT

Andreas stumbles into his place holding on to a half-empty bottle of wine and hits the floor. Light coming from the hallway via the open front door illuminates the area around andreas enough to reveal an envelope lying there near to him.

Andreas crawls towards it in curiosity. He tears the envelope open, takes out a letter, and begins to read it.

KATERINA (V.O.)

Dearest Andreas, I pray this letter finds you well - no, more than that, healthy, happy, joyous, blissful. Nothing else can suffice. This time away from you has been difficult, torturous but the memory of our time together has sustained me, has nourished my soul. That is how large your impact has been on me, I feel I have awakened from a slumber, revived, renewed, resurrected. But reminiscence can only go so far... and I feel that there's now so much further to go. There's an open highway out there waiting for us. You wisely asked me once to see all the wonders out there with you, but I was too scared to accept, now it's my turn to ask - to beg of you - three days from now, at midnight - to catch the first bus to anywhere with me. Yours, Katerina.

There is a postal address at the bottom of the page.

Andreas stares at the letter dumbstruck.

He then lets out a long CRY of catharsis, followed by ROARS of euphoria.

He stands and starts downing the bottle, most of the liquid though runs down his mouth and chin, showering his clothes.

He grabs a pencil and a block of paper and falls onto his mattress.

He begins to write.

EXT. BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

Katerina opens a postbox and takes out an envelope. She quickly and excitedly rips it open, takes out a page, and unfolds it. It is simply one huge word inside: YES.

Tears of happiness fill her eyes.

EXT. ANDREAS APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

A jovial Andreas leaves his apartment, whistling happy tunes to himself.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT (LATER)

Andreas' demeanor is excitable but calm and his steps are purposeful.

Up in the sky, the moon shines bright.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT (LATER)

Andreas continues his journey.

He passes by a shop and suddenly stops in front of the display window as something from the corner of his eye perks his interest.

He turns his whole body towards the display and stares. His convivial demeanor starts to change into a more dejected one.

The display inside the shop's window shows an arrangement of different jewelry with its centerpiece being a breathtaking diamond necklace.

KONSTANTIN (V.O.)

Katerina is accustomed to a certain standard - hell, she deserves the highest standard.

Andreas snaps out of his stupor and continues on his way - his head hanging low.

EXT. BUS TERMINAL - NIGHT

Katerina, small suitcase in hand, is pacing up and down at one of the terminals. There are a few people around, some travel personnel and drivers.

Katerina soon sits on a bench, her left foot twitching away anxiously.

Watching her from afar, hidden behind a vehicle is Andreas, his face a picture of distress and indecision.

Andreas is deep in troubling thought.

Katerina looks at her watch.

Andreas steps forward toward her direction but soon pauses.

He turns around and walks away from the bus terminal.

EXT. BUS TERMINAL - NIGHT (LATER)

Katerina is sitting alone on the bench and looks around in worry.

EXT. BUS TERMINAL - NIGHT (LATER)

Katerina is sitting alone on the bench looking miserable.

EXT. BUS TERMINAL - NIGHT (LATER)

Katerina is sitting alone on the bench looking sorrowful and shivering from the cold of the night.

EXT. BUS TERMINAL - DAWN

Katerina is sitting alone on the bench looking ghostly as the first rays of light appear on the horizon.

INT. ANDREAS APARTMENT - DAWN

Andreas is sitting by the window and is drinking from a bottle wrapped in a paper bag.

He finishes the bottle and throws it hard toward the wall.

He lets out an agonizing HOWL.

There is a loud KNOCK on the wall from the other side.

NEIGHBOR (O.C.)
Shut the fuck up, asshole.

Andreas slaps his own head repeatedly and lets out GROVELING sounds.

More KNOCKING.

NEIGHBOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Cut that shit or I'll come over and
fuck you up!

Andreas looks towards the wall in contemplation.

INT. BUILDING HALLWAY - DAWN (CONTINUOUS)

Andreas rushes out of his apartment and starts BANGING on the neighbor's door.

The door suddenly swings open and an enraged - tall and intimidating-looking man - the NEIGHBOR, appears.

Andreas looks almost calmly at him.

ANDREAS
Fuck you, Jack.

The neighbor punches Andreas hard in the gut and he folds up. A few more punches send him to the hallway floor.

NEIGHBOR
Warned you, didn't I?

The Neighbor goes over him and punches him three more times.

NEIGHBOR (CONT'D)
Don't fuck with me, ya freak!

The neighbor stands and walks away.

NEIGHBOR (CONT'D)
Next time it'll be worse.

He slams his door shut.

Andreas is on the floor, face all bloodied, RASPING softly but looking surprisingly more at ease.

INT. BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

Andreas finally manages to get up and make his way to his apartment.

INT. MANSION - KATERINA BEDROOM - DAY

Katerina is face first on her bed, her face buried into her pillow, and is crying away.

INT. ANDREAS APARTMENT - DAY

Andreas is lying on his mattress looking all bruised up and is nursing a bottle of wine.

INT. MANSION - OUTSIDE KATERINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Konstantin KNOCKS softly on her door.

No reply.

KONSTANTIN

Katerina?

Nothing.

He sighs and walks away.

EXT. BUILDING - DAY

Vadim and Mykola are standing and waiting by a car. They are alert to their surroundings and cautious.

INT. BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

Katerina opens the postbox and finds a single envelope inside.

She opens it and reads the letter within:

ANDREAS (V.O.)

I'm sorry, kat! I'm just a good-for-nothing son of a bitch. Truth is you will be much better without me. You deserve the very best in life and that is something that a bum like me could never give you. Please take care and keep well. Andreas.

Katerina crumbles up the letter and throws it away.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Andreas - serious and focused - barrels along a set of bricks and delivers them to a co-worker who applies mortar to them.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - AFTERNOON

Andreas, sweaty and dirty, carries a sack of gravel up a staircase.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - LATE AFTERNOON

An exhausted Andreas bums a cigarette from a co-worker, lights it, and inhales deeply.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Konstantin, Katerina, and Mykola are sitting together at a table and having an evening meal in silence. Vasilis and some other Personnel are nearby and are standing guard.

Katerina seems deep in thought.

KONSTANTIN (O.C.)
How's the steak, darling?

No response.

KONSTANTIN (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Katerina!

Katerina comes out of her stupor.

KATERINA
Hmm, oh it's fine, thanks.

She takes a bite.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Andreas is sitting on a stool by the bar and is drinking a glass of beer. Next to him drinking a beer as well is Emmanuel.

EMMANUEL
You're an idiot.

ANDREAS
Yep.

EMMANUEL
She was the best thing that ever
happened to you.

ANDREAS
I know.

EMMANUEL
You know shit.

ANDREAS
Yep.

Emmanuel finishes his beer and gestures to the barman.

EMMANUEL
I've thought this through now. This
is what you do. Go to her, get on
your knees, and beg her to forgive
your stupid and sorry ass.

Andreas sighs.

ANDREAS
She's better off without me.

EMMANUEL
Probably.

The barman brings over another bottle as Andreas takes a swig
from his own.

EMMANUEL (CONT'D)
But what if she isn't?

Andreas turns and looks at him with skepticism and with a
brand new sense of dilemma.

INT. MANSION - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Katerina - a portrait of melancholy - is soaking in a soap
bubble-filled bathtub. She lights a cigarette and inhales but
gets into a coughing fit.

She crashes the cigarette into an ashtray and then proceeds
to sink her head underneath the bubbles and the water.

She stays under for a few good seconds and then raises her
head out and takes in a deep breath.

INT. ANDREAS APARTMENT - COMMUNAL SHOWER - NIGHT

Andreas is naked under the shower and is letting the water fall on him as he stands there deep in contemplation.

INT. MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Katerina is lying on her bed half dazed.

There's a KNOCK at the door.

KATERINA

Enter.

Konstantin comes into the room holding on to a small gift box and sits by the edge of the bed.

Katerina sees the gift and reluctantly joins him.

KATERINA (CONT'D)

Konstantin, really, you shouldn't.

KONSTANTIN

Oh, I think you're really going to like this one.

He offers it to her and she takes it in her hands but hesitates.

KONSTANTIN (CONT'D)

Go ahead.

She slowly opens it and stares inside in slight disbelief.

She tries to say something but no words come.

KONSTANTIN (CONT'D)

You don't like it?

Katerina wells up. She lifts up a red rose from the box.

KATERINA

It's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen.

KONSTANTIN

It is?

She turns to him and nods Yes repeatedly.

They hug tight, and then start to slowly caress each other.

Slowly, steadily, their mouths find each other. The first kiss is soft but this is soon followed but longer and deeper ones.

With a sense of urgency and a need for a mutual release, they undress each other and start having sex.

Katerina strokes Konstantin's hair and closes her eyes, tears now pouring out of her.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

An agitated Andreas is sitting at his usual stool by the counter and is trying to write in his notebook.

He keeps writing something, then violently crossing it out.

He finally picks up the notebook and tosses it across the space.

LINDA (O.C.)

Hey!

Andreas looks towards the voice and sees Linda looking at him in anger - the notebook on the floor, a few inches away from her.

LINDA (CONT'D)

That nearly hit me, you know!

ANDREAS

Sorry.

LINDA

Screw your sorry.

She scoops down and picks it up.

She brings it over for him.

ANDREAS

Keep it.

LINDA

Hell would I do with it?

ANDREAS

In case you run out of toilet paper, all it's good for.

Linda sighs and places the notebook on the counter.

LINDA
Fuck sake, Andreas, I warned you,
didn't I?

ANDREAS
Did you?

LINDA
Oh yeah, forgot, you never listen
to me.

ANDREAS
One of my countless faults.

LINDA
Self-pity never used to be one of
them.

Andreas stands up.

ANDREAS
Sorry, Linda.

LINDA
You're leaving?

ANDREAS
Think my current disposition is
better suited to the backdrop of a
bar.

Linda grabs his arm.

She hesitates.

Then:

LINDA
Got a bottle of whiskey at mine.

They look at each other.

INT. LINDA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Andreas and Linda are in bed and engaged in spirited sex.

INT. LINDA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Andreas and Linda are now sweaty and flushed as they are
lying in bed next to each other.

Andreas tilts to the side and picks up a packet of cigarettes from the bedside table. He puts two in his mouth, lights them, and hands one to Linda.

They lie in silence smoking away.

A slight sense of regret comes over Linda while a slight sense of guilt envelopes Andreas.

INT. NIORUN NOCTURNAL - NIGHT

Katerina is singing a SONG to an audience, and as always the case, she is beyond herself and in complete surrender to the moment.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

Andreas is walking down an empty street holding on to a paper-bag with a whiskey bottle inside.

HOMELESS WOMAN (O.S.)
Spare some change?

Andreas stops right by the person who just spoke and notices that it is the Homeless Woman from earlier in the story - the one that they had handed the necklace to.

Andreas starts looking for some coins.

ANDREAS
Hey, I know you, we gave you that fine necklace not long ago, didn't you get a good amount for that?

Andreas can't find any change, he looks at his bottle, hesitates, and finally hands it over.

Homeless Woman takes it and smiles at him.

She then searches through her belongings and takes out the necklace.

HOMELESS WOMAN
You mean this one?

Andreas is shocked to see it.

ANDREAS
What the...?

HOMELESS WOMAN

Some men came for it but I wouldn't let them have it. I clawed and bit and punched at them. Then the one in charge let me keep it. Tell you what mister, this thing is pure luck, changed my life, never parting with it.

Andreas studies the Homeless Woman, on the surface it does not seem that her life has changed in any fundamental way, yet her eyes seem different, they seem livelier.

ANDREAS

That's great to hear, I'm happy for you.

HOMELESS WOMAN

Make sure you thank that lady that owned it for me, won't ya?

Andreas smiles.

ANDREAS

I will.

Andreas walks off.

INT. ANDREAS APARTMENT - NIGHT

Andreas bursts into his place, switches on the light, and starts searching for something.

He soon finds a block of pages and a pencil, sits on the floor and starts writing in an exhilarating manner.

INT. ANDREAS APARTMENT - NIGHT

Andreas has now page after page of writing spread out around him and continues ceaselessly the act of scribing.

INT. BUILDING ENTRANCE - DAY

Katerina opens her postbox and is surprised to find it chock-full of letters, so much so in fact that they fall to her feet in excess.

She starts to open them and read.

The letters are full of confessions of remorse, regret, revelation, undying love, and obsession:

I have found religion, me, the worthless bum that reviled that institution, yet now find myself on my knees praying to all the deities for your safekeeping and for the chance to gaze upon your glorious eyes once more.

This ignorant fool cannot live without you and I'm too much of a coward to off myself like I should.

It was fear and shame and all my ugly qualities that made me flee, it was the bottle that kept me numb, yet your anamnesis persisted, unyielding, undying, and all that was left was forced evolution.

The echo of your voice haunts my every moment.

I'd rather a minute in your company than a lifetime as a king.

I'm begging for absolution, I'm begging for a second chance even though I sure as hell don't deserve it.

The bus to freedom is waiting, calling out, screaming for us to join it, I can't get it out of my head.

INT. MANSION - OFFICE - NIGHT

Konstantin is listening to CLASSICAL MUSIC on a vinyl player.

There is a knock on the door.

KONSTANTIN

Enter.

Vadim walks in and starts to talk to him although all that is heard is the MUSIC.

INT. MANSION - KATERINA BEDROOM - NIGHT

Konstantin is tearing the room apart.

Finally, in a bag under the bed, he finds what he was looking for. The letters Andreas has written to Katerina.

INT. CAR/STREET - NIGHT

NOT MOVING

Mykola is in the driving seat and Katerina sitting alone in the back seat.

The door suddenly opens and Andreas comes in.

They stare at each other.

Mykola takes out a pack of cigarettes and a lighter, opens his door, and steps out.

Andreas and Katerina continue looking at each other.

Finally, they embrace and start kissing.

EXT. BUS TERMINAL/INT. CAR - NIGHT

The car comes to a stop by the bus terminal and Mykola, Katerina and Andreas walk out.

EXT. BUS TERMINAL - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

There are only a handful of people present. Mykola, Andreas, and Katerina stop by a bus. The clock display strikes midnight.

Suddenly a car rushes into the terminal and stops next to them. Konstantin, Vadim, Vasilis and Mikhail step out.

Konstantin looks right at Mykola in anger.

KONSTANTIN

So much for loyalty.

KATERINA

Please, Konstantin, he had nothing to do with this, I forced him to help.

KONSTANTIN

Right, right.

KATERINA

I'm the only one you should be angry at.

Konstantin looks right at Katerina.

KONSTANTIN

Didn't I give you everything?

Katerina lowers her head.

KATERINA

It was not enough.

Andreas steps in front of Katerina.

KONSTANTIN
And this bum is enough?

Katerina looks at Andreas.

KATERINA
He's -- everything.

ANDREAS
Just let us go, please, you won't
ever see us again.

Konstantin takes out a gun and points it right at Andreas.

KONSTANTIN
Are you ordering me now, you
lowlife, good for nothing worm?

ANDREAS
No, just pleading with you.

KONSTANTIN
Do you remember the last thing I
told you?

KATERINA
Konstantin - please.

KONSTANTIN
I should never have shown you such
mercy to begin with.

KATERINA
Please, just let us go.

Konstantin looks at Katerina.

KONSTANTIN
Can't do that.

Then turns to Andreas.

KONSTANTIN (CONT'D)
Should have kept away.

ANDREAS
I tried.

BEAT

Konstantin pulls the trigger but Katerina gets in front of
Andreas and the bullet hits her instead.

Everyone stares in disbelief and Konstantin is mortified.

Andreas holds on to a bleeding Katerina.

Mykola takes out his gun and executes Konstantin, Vadim pulls his pistol and targets Mykola but at the same time Mikhail and Vasilis take out their weapons and they aim them at Vadim instead.

MIKHAIL
 (to Vadim)
 I'm the boss now. Lower your pistol
 Vadim and join us.

Vadim thinks about it but soon lowers his gun and puts it away.

Andreas places Katerina to the ground.

ANDREAS
 Oh God, please. Quick, call an
 ambulance!

Mykola takes out his phone and dials a number.

Katerina smiles at Andreas.

KATERINA
 It's - OK.

ANDREAS
 Shh, try not to talk, love.

KATERINA
 H - have - to.

ANDREAS
 No, no, it's OK.

KATERINA
 I'm happy, Andreas. You - helped -
 me feel it.

ANDREAS
 Feel what?

KATERINA
 Freedom.

Katerina passes away.

ANDREAS
 Kat?

Tears fill Andreas' eyes.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)
Please, God, no.

Mykola comes over to him.

MYKOLA
Get on the bus, Andreas.

ANDREAS
No.

MYKOLA
Do it!

ANDREAS
Not leaving her.

MYKOLA
She's gone now. Listen to me, if you don't get on the bus and leave this town for good, I'll be forced to kill you, and I know she wouldn't want that. So get on the fucking bus right now and leave!

Andreas turns and looks at him, shaking with anger and grief.

He controls himself and finally nods Yes.

He turns back to Katerina and kisses her temple.

He gets on the bus that is full of people looking scared and anxious at what has transpired.

Mykola, in turn, heads to the driver's door and points his pistol at the DRIVER.

MYKOLA (CONT'D)
Start the bus and get out of here and go about your business as normal. Do you understand?

The Driver nods Yes, closes the doors, and starts the bus.

The bus leaves the terminal and heads into the highway.

INT. BUS - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

MOVING

Andreas, head hang low, passes through the lane of seats with different people staring at him with unease.

He finds an empty seat and sits down on it.

INT/EXT. BUS - NIGHT (LATER)

MOVING

The moon is up high in the sky as the bus travels steadily down a highway.

The people on the bus have quietened down and lost interest in Andreas and are back to being preoccupied with their own issues and concerns. Many are sleeping, some are watching a clip on their phone, some playing a game on it and a select few are reading a book.

Andreas is quietly crying in his seat by himself.

INT/EXT. BUS - DAY

MOVING

As the sun has come up to the sky, Andreas has fallen asleep due to exhaustion.

INT/EXT. BUS/STOPOVER - DAY

NOT MOVING

The bus is largely empty now as most travelers have gone to wash up and have some food at the restaurants and shop facilities of the stopover. Andreas though is still in his seat and still asleep.

THUNDER is heard coming from the horizon.

INT. PUBLIC TOILETS - DAY

Andreas is urinating in a urinal.

Andreas washes his hands and then splashes his face with water.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Andreas is sitting by the window eating an egg sandwich and having a coffee and watching the rain fall outside.

INT/EXT. BUS - DAY

MOVING

A solemn-looking Andreas is back to his seat on the bus as it makes its way once more into a highway.

EXT. BUS STOP - NIGHT

The bus comes to a stop and some people, Andreas included, get off and stretch out.

INT. STREETS - NIGHT

Andreas seems to be in a poor neighborhood and he starts walking towards lights and buildings that are ahead.

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

Andreas comes upon a diner and finds a homeless person, FELIX, next to the front door.

FELIX
Spare a dollar, please?

Andreas takes his wallet out and sees that all he's got is a five-dollar note.

ANDREAS
How bout we share coffee and a
slice of pie?

Andreas offers his hand to the man to help him up.

HOMELESS PERSON C
What kinda pie?

ANDREAS
Cherry?

Felix smiles and gives him his arm.

FELIX
Love me some cherry pie.

Andreas helps him to his feet.

ANDREAS
Don't we all. I'm Andreas.

FELIX

Felix.

Andreas puts his arm around Felix and they walk through the diner's door.

ANDREAS

Know what, Felix, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

THE END