

9696 culver blvd # 301 | culver city, ca 90232 | t: 310.558.2424 | f: 310.558.2425

DEVILS AT PLAY

Written by

James DiLapo

Copyright 2012

Alex Lerner
Kaplan/Perrone Entertainment
(310) 285-0116

Verve
(310) 558-2424

EXT. WINTER FIELD - DAWN

A blinding snow falls across an endless frozen horizon. White as far as the eye can see. There is a hard wind, and against it, a strange sound of rustling metal.

Through the snowstorm emerges the outline of a wooden pole. A fence post. Hanging off it are thick lengths of barbed wire, dancing in the wind.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN (V.O.)
(Russian accent)
Lieutenant. *Wake up*.

INT. LUBYANKA HEADQUARTERS - STEPAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

A man opens his bloodshot eyes, waking out of sleep. He is laying face-down on a desk in a small office.

This is STEPAN - middle aged, disheveled, and exhausted. He wears a wrinkled and stained shirt. Staring down at him from above is a thin CAPTAIN in a blue and green police uniform.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
What, you been sleeping down here?

Stepan sits up and rubs his face, struggling to focus.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN (CONT'D)
You missed the staff meeting.
That's a report.

STEPAN
...I...what time is it?

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
Ten past midnight. The trucks are
waiting. Time to work.

Stepan says nothing. He closes his eyes, takes a breath, then rises. A leather jacket hangs off his chair. He slips it on.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN (CONT'D)
I have to report you, for the
meeting.

STEPAN
Comrade Captain.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
Hey, I don't make the rules. Go on,
they're waiting. Also, look.

The Captain opens a bag by his feet and hands Stepan a shoebox. Stepan takes the box with a confused look. He opens it up and stares at what is inside.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN (CONT'D)
I, uh, my daughter's. She dropped and broke it.

STEPAN
What? Are you serious?

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
I heard you grew up fixing these things, so-

STEPAN
When am I supposed to do this?

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
When you get home.

STEPAN
(Angry, motioning to his desk)
Like I sleep enough as it is?

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
C'mon, do it for me, Comrade. Maybe I don't file your absence sheet. Both know you could use that.

Stepan stares at the box, thinking, then takes it with a sigh. Without a word he heads for the door.

INT. LUBYANKA HEADQUARTERS - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Stepan moves down a florescent lit hallway, the box under one arm. Uniformed OFFICERS are everywhere despite the late hour.

Text appears on screen:

Moscow, September 1937.

Stepan flashes a laminated identification card to a GUARD. A POLICE COURIER catches up to him, waving a letter and a clipboard.

NKVD COURIER
Comrade Lieutenant! Comrade, dispatch from Administration Directorate.

Stepan signs the clipboard and takes the letter. He opens and reads it as he steps through a door into a stairwell.

INT. LUBYANKA - STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

A cement stairwell. The walls are rigged with anti-suicide nets. Stepan descends the stairs, reading intently.

Two prison WARDERS pass him, struggling to carry a body bag up the stairs. Someone is moving inside it. Stepan doesn't bother to look.

When Stepan reaches the bottom floor he suddenly crushes the letter angrily. He stuffs it in his pocket, quickly glancing left and right to make sure he's alone.

He takes out a flask and drinks.

Stepan pockets the flask, rubs his eyes, then pushes open a door to reveal a blaring packed garage.

INT. LUBYANKA - MOTOR POOL - CONTINUOUS

The massive bright garage is filled with OFFICERS and roaring trucks. The trucks have all been disguised with delicious pictures of bread and vegetables on their sides. Two STAFF SERGEANTS are washing blood out of one with a hose.

Stepan moves through the garage to the far end of the line of trucks. Waiting for him there are his small team - two young STAFF SERGEANTS in uniform and a near-teenaged DRIVER.

STEPAN
Who's got Our Brand?

A sergeant hands him a cigarette. Stepan lights it, the shoe box still tucked under an arm. He smokes in silence for a moment, then draws a crumpled map from his coat pocket.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
...we, uh, we have fourteen suspects to arrest tonight across Tverskoy District, most near Garden Ring.

STAFF SERGEANT BALDY
Tverskoy? Why isn't Butyrka-

STEPAN
Because their cells are full, even more than ours. Now there's been another operations change from the Commissariat.
(MORE)

STEPAN (CONT'D)
From now on we *do not* conduct procedural searches for evidence and we don't file arrest reports unless there is an incident, which we don't have time for tonight, so no book burners, no suicide attempts, no runners. Understood?

STAFF SERGEANT BALDY
You ever seen anyone actually run?

STEPAN
No. Now-

MAJOR MISHIN (O.S.)
Lieutenant! Cabbage Boy!

Stepan turns to see a huge, hairy old officer lumbering towards him. This is MAJOR MISHIN, nicknamed "Old Bear." He walks with a heavy limp.

Stepan's team snaps to attention, but not Stepan. He approaches Mishin with a grin and hugs him.

STEPAN
Old Bear, who opened your cage?

MAJOR MISHIN
Your mother. Hey, I got you a gift. Junior Lieutenant!

A young man approaches. He is handsome, clean shaven, and in a perfectly fitting uniform. This is ILYCH.

MAJOR MISHIN (CONT'D)
Lieutenant Lebedev, meet Comrade Junior Lieutenant Ilych Aleksandrovich Sidorov. Straight from Dzerzhinsky Academy, top marks. He's your new protégé. You're going to train him.

ILYCH
(Saluting, grinning)
From Burevestnik to Dynamo, eh?

Stepan takes a step back. He looks at Mishin, bewildered.

STEPAN
...train? No, Mishin I-

MAJOR MISHIN
Stepan.

STEPAN
I can't train someone. Not now. Don't do this to me, please.

Ilych shifts uncomfortably. Mishin forces a smile.

MAJOR MISHIN
Lieutenant. Can we talk? Alone?

Stepan nods. He hands the map to Ilych.

STEPAN
Prep the team. Baldy, Pepper, in the Raven. Us in the Pobeda alone.

STAFF SERGEANT BALDY
Lieutenant, *I'm in the truck?*

STEPAN
No arguing. This in the backseat.

Stepan hands the shoebox to Ilych. Ilych salutes Mishin and leads the sergeants off to the truck.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Is this about that staff meeting? The Captain already gave me shit.

MAJOR MISHIN
No. Listen. You need to stop writing letters.

Stepan shifts, surprised. Mishin looks around, ensuring they are alone.

STEPAN
...how did you-

MAJOR MISHIN
Nothing comes through here without me knowing. *Cabbage, what were you thinking?* You know how this looks?

STEPAN
I'm not allowed to write?

MAJOR MISHIN
No one is getting a transfer, not now. Stop asking Directorate, you hear me?

Stepan says nothing. Mishin steps closer and whispers.

MAJOR MISHIN (CONT'D)
Chekists spend their whole career trying to get assigned to Moscow, and you want out? What, you don't like serving the people?

STEPAN
Of course I do.

MAJOR MISHIN
Then do it. No more letters.

Mishin turns to go. Stepan grabs his arm, whispering.

STEPAN
Mishin. Wait.

MAJOR MISHIN
I don't want to hear this.

STEPAN
Look, I'm tired, alright? The quotas, *and now this kid?* Don't-

Mishin glances around to make sure no one is around, then suddenly grabs Stepan and slams him against a truck, whispering hard and angrily.

MAJOR MISHIN
I said I don't want to hear this. I get twenty-five years 'cause you want to be a shirker? *Stop it.* You have a duty, damn it, and don't think I don't smell that on you!

Mishin shoves him. Stepan stares down at the ground. Mishin takes a breath and calms down. A beat. His voice softens.

MAJOR MISHIN (CONT'D)
...Cabbage...it won't go on forever. Not like this.

In the distance the huge garage door begins to open, revealing a stormy night. Engines start revving.

Stepan grinds his cigarette against a truck and fits the snub in his pant's pocket. His voice becomes a calm whisper.

STEPAN
...you shouldn't have given me that fucking kid.

With that he leaves. Mishin watches as Stepan heads down the length of the garage and climbs into a sedan with Ilych.

A staff sergeant at the entrance gives a signal. The trucks and sedans begin to drive like a fleet into the storm.

EXT. STREETS OF MOSCOW - LATER THAT NIGHT

A hard raining night. Soaked wood and steel. Drenched posters of glorious Stalin. It feels like a city drowning.

The headlights of Stepan's sedan cut through the night. The truck follows closely behind.

INT. STEPAN'S SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

Stepan drives, Ilych riding beside him. Rain falls hard on the window shield. Awkward silence. Finally Ilych speaks.

ILYCH
...Comrade Lieutenant, I-

STEPAN
Tomorrow night's shift, don't show up wearing that. What we have to do goes quicker if we're not in uniform. And call me Comrade Stepan, or Stepan Sergeivich, not Comrade Lieutenant, especially not around the suspects. Understood?

Ilych nods.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
They get you an apartment yet?

ILYCH
My wife found us one.

STEPAN
You don't have a ring.

ILYCH
We're not bourgeois.

Stepan stops talking. A beat. He pulls the car over to a curb and turns off the engine. Ilych stares out the glass at a tall, worn apartment complex.

ILYCH (CONT'D)
This is it?

Stepan nods. The truck pulls up to the curb in front of them.

STEPAN
Take off your uniform.

Ilych blinks, confused. Stepan gives him a hard stare.

ILYCH
All I got is the undershirt.

Stepan sighs and slips off his leather jacket. He hands it to Ilych to wear. Squirming in the seat, Ilych takes off his uniform and puts on the jacket.

STEPAN
Wish you weren't wearing the boots.
Just stand behind me and-

Stepan freezes. Through the windshield he can see his two sergeants as they slide open the back of the truck. Both men have PPD-40 submachine guns strapped across their backs.

Stepan curses under his breath and gets out of the car.

EXT. MOSCOW STREET CORNER- CONTINUOUS

Stepan hurries through the rain. He quickly climbs up into the back of the truck and angrily points at the submachine guns. Ilych scrambles up after him.

STEPAN
Hey! What the hell are those?

STAFF SERGEANT BALDY
Junior Lieutenant's orders.

STEPAN
What?

ILYCH
You said prep the team.

STEPAN
You think we're playing Reds and Whites? This some game?

ILYCH
Comrade, field operations-

STEPAN
I don't care what you think they taught you in that three year school, this isn't the Young Pioneers, damn it!

ILYCH
(Offended)
No, it's State Security, and armed deterrence is required procedure for Article 58 offenders! It's the-

STEPAN
(To the staff sergeants)
Stay dry in the truck, door closed.
Junior Lieutenant, your sidearm.

Stepan holds out a hand. Ilych glares. Stepan doesn't budge. A beat. Ilych sighs and draws a TK automatic pistol.

ILYCH
You want my underwear next?

Stepan takes the pistol and with one smooth motion disassembles it into two pieces. He pockets the grip and hands the barrel back to Ilych. The young man is bewildered.

STEPAN
...you'll get it back after recess.

The sergeants laugh. Stepan hops out of the truck and heads for the apartment. Ilych curses under his breath and follows.

CUT TO: MONTAGE

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

FAMILIES across the building lay in their beds, fast asleep. These are poor people. Husbands, wives, and children share the same room, many in the same bed. Some sleep on the floor.

The rusting sound of an old elevator groans to life. People everywhere awaken immediately. They listen to the rising machine, their eyes wide open.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Stepan and Ilych ride the grinding elevator. Stepan leans against a wall, eyes closed, smoking a cigarette snub.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Stepan opens the elevator door and the two men step into a dark, deserted hallway. Silence. Complete silence. Stepan lets it sink in, then starts down the hall. His steps echo.

INT. DMITRY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A young husband and wife lay in bed, listening as the sound of Stepan and Ilych's footsteps echo down a hall outside.

The husband is Dmitry- he's rail thin with a short beard. His plain wife YULIYA holds onto him, terrified. A golden locket hangs off her neck.

The steps come closer and closer. Then they stop. There is a knock on the front door. Yuliya begins to cry softly.

INT. COMMUNAL APARTMENT KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The knocking continues. Dmitry steps into a small kitchen. This is a communal apartment. HUSBANDS and WIVES from other bedrooms enter the kitchen. They look at each other, scared.

A trembling husband in his pajamas opens the door a crack. Stepan is waiting in the hallway, Ilych standing behind him.

STEPAN
(Polite, controlled)
Good evening. I'm Comrade Stepan Sergeievich of the Peoples Commissariat for Internal Affairs. I'm sorry to wake you at this hour-

The husband holds up a hand and shakes his head.

HUSBAND
No, I no speak.

He starts to quickly talk in Ukrainian to the others.

STEPAN
Ukrainians. I don't have time to-

Ilych suddenly starts speaking Ukrainian, translating what Stepan said. Stepan stares, surprised. He takes out a list.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Tell them we need...Citizen Dmitry Nikolayevich Ivanov. Ivanov.

Dmitry closes his eyes, shuddering. Yuliya covers her face. The husband opens the door and points out Dmitry.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Dmitry? Dmitry Nikolayevich?

DMITRY
(Trying to be brave)
Yes, I, I'm Dmitry. I, I'm Russian, I speak Russian.

STEPAN
Good. I was hoping you'd come with me to the precinct, there's a case we are working on I think you could help us with. Won't take long.

Dmitry takes a step back. He struggles to focus. The other families watch silently.

DMITRY
...uh...Yuliya, Yuliya could you get my...my rain coat please?

She retreats into the bedroom and returns with an old ragged raincoat and boots. Crying, she dresses Dmitry. Ilych shifts uncomfortably. Stepan looks down at his nails, unconcerned.

Yuliya suddenly rushes back into the bedroom and returns with a sleepy little girl, SASHA, guiding her by the hand. Dmitry leans down beside the girl and touches her face. His fingertips are stained a dark color. Stepan notices.

DMITRY (CONT'D)
(Swallowing hard)
...your father loves you. He loves you very much.

Stepan walks over to Dmitry's room and stares inside. The dark floor is covered in books, newspapers, and dolls. The newspaper has a picture of a football coach on the cover.

Stepan coughs, indicating it's time to go. Dmitry gets up and squeezes his wife's hand. She slips the locket off her neck and hands it to him.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Stepan, Ilych, and Dmitry ride the descending elevator. For a long moment no one speaks. Dmitry slips the locket on.

STEPAN
(To Ilych)
They didn't tell me you're Ukrainian.

ILYCH
I'm not. I learned some, Polish, a little Turkish, at the academy.
(MORE)

ILYCH (CONT'D)
You know, that three year school you didn’t go to.

Ilych grins. The elevator touches the ground with a lurch.

EXT. MOSCOW STREET CORNER - MOMENTS LATER

The three step into the rain. As they approach the truck, its back slides open, revealing the sergeants and their machine guns.

Dmitry freezes. His eyes go wide at the sight of weapons.

Suddenly he starts to run. Ilych chases after him. The sergeants scramble to cock their weapons. Stepan blocks their fire.

STEPAN
NO! Block the alley! Go!

EXT. MOSCOW ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Dmitry races through the rain, sobbing. Ilych is close on his heels, but he suddenly slips and crashes into a garbage can.

Stepan bolts into the alley. He runs like a man possessed, snarling as he chases his prey. He runs down Dmitry, tackling him beneath a soaked poster of a smiling steel worker.

Stepan starts to beat the crying man senseless. He roars and grips Dmitry by the hair, striking his face again and again. Something has snapped in Stepan. It’s brutal.

Finally he lets go. Dmitry curls up, bleeding. Stepan paces. Ilych stumbles over. He stares at them, unsure what to do. Stepan keeps pacing. Suddenly he turns on Ilych and screams.

STEPAN
(Raging)
THAT’S WHY I DON’T BRING FUCKING GUNS! THEY GET SCARED!

The truck pulls up. Stepan charges at Ilych. He grabs him by the shoulder and rips his flask out of the leather jacket.

STEPAN (CONT’D)
Resisting arrest reports. Incident reports. Cross files. Never finish tonight now.

Dmitry crawls up to his knees, his face covered in blood.

DMITRY
(Sobbing, appealing to everyone)
...please, I didn't-

Stepan kicks Dmitry in the face, sending him crashing over. He pulls the rain coat off Dmitry as the sergeants approach.

STEPAN
Give me that. Give it! You're under arrest for treason, you're gonna freeze in the camps, you fuck!

Stepan snaps the locket off Dmitry's throat. Dmitry lets out a cry. He clutches Stepan's leg desperately.

DMITRY
No! Please! Give! *Please!*

Stepan lifts a fist to strike him. Dmitry flinches, crying.

Stepan freezes. His hand shakes as he stares down at the sobbing, bleeding man. Suddenly he drops the locket.

Stepan steps away, shaking. He reaches for his cigarette stub, but his hands drop it in a puddle. He closes his eyes.

STEPAN
...get him in the raven. We got thirteen more.

The two staff sergeants grab Dmitry. He barely snatches up the locket as they drag him into the back of the truck.

Stepan picks up Dmitry's coat, unscrews his flask, and storms off into the alley. The truck rumbles to life and drives off. Ilych is left standing alone and stunned in the rain.

CUT TO: MONTAGE

INT. MOSCOW APARTMENTS - LATER THAT NIGHT

We see Stepan and Ilych making more arrests. Riding more elevators. Knocking on more doors. Each time Stepan looks worse. The alcohol and sleep exhaustion are taking a toll.

EXT. MOSCOW - DAWN

Dawn rises over Moscow. The storm has turned into a soft drizzle. A happy morning radio announcer can be heard.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
...to Great Stalin! Beautiful Stalin! Genius Architect of the Revolution, Great Genius of History-

INT. STEPAN'S SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

The sedan is parked on Dzerzhinsky Square. The broadcast is coming from the car's radio. Rain falls softly on the glass.

Stepan is asleep in the driver's seat, back in his leather coat. Ilych, in uniform, reads a report he's been writing.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (ON RADIO)
-we praise him with all our love! For all the love he has given us! Thank you Comrade Stalin! We love-

Stepan suddenly pulls the keys out, silencing the radio. A long pause. He doesn't look at Ilych.

STEPAN
I'm sorry. Last night. That wasn't me.

ILYCH
...we didn't finish our arrest list. Is that bad?

STEPAN
I'll talk to Old Bear tonight. He'll smooth it out.

Silence. Ilych looks him over.

ILYCH
You two are close, right? You and the Major?

Stepan says nothing. Ilych studies him, thinking.

ILYCH (CONT'D)
Let me guess. The Civil War. You two served together. Is that where he got that limp?

STEPAN
That was a long time ago.

Ilych looks out the glass. A beat.

ILYCH
...my father, he lost a leg at Simbrisk, well, Ulyanovsky. The Czechs with that armored train. I was three. When I got older, I used to have to carry him. Hated that. No elevator, all those stairs. You know how the blocks were then.

STEPAN
No, wasn't raised in an apartment.

ILYCH
Where'd you grow up?

STEPAN
A farm.

Ilych stares at the city. He laughs. Stepan shifts, annoyed.

ILYCH
Nothing, Comrade. It's just, things have changed. We've changed. Look at all we've become.

Stepan quietly studies the young man's face. He reaches into his coat and hands Ilych the pistol barrel.

STEPAN
...get some rest. We're back in eight hours.

Stepan reaches into the back seat and grabs Dmitry's coat and the shoebox. He then climbs out, slamming the door.

INT. MOSCOW SUBWAY TRAIN - LATER THAT MORNING

Standing, Stepan rides a clean, crowded train filled with COMMUTERS. He holds Dmitry's coat and the shoebox. No one talks on the train. No one makes eye contact.

EXT. MOSCOW STREET - LATER THAT MORNING

Stepan walks down a cobble street, approaching a worn down apartment building. This is an old neighborhood. A horse drawn buggy passes by.

INT. STEPAN'S APARTMENT - LATER

A small, cluttered apartment. Lonely and silent. The window has a view of Moscow River, industrial barges sailing down it. Stepan enters, puts down the shoebox, and heads for a cabinet. He pours himself a stiff drink.

Stepan stares at the shoebox, thinking. Little holes are pricked across the top of the box. Air holes. He opens it up.

Inside the box is a baby rabbit. One of its forelegs is matted with blood. The baby animal is clearly in pain.

Stepan stares down at the creature. Something shifts in his face. He steps over to the kitchen and grabs a thick knife.

CUT TO: LATER

Stepan sits in a chair, running the knife over a small block of wood. He's shaving off sticks.

CUT TO: LATER

Stepan sits at the table, the rabbit laying atop Dmitry's coat. Stepan has sticks in one hand and wire in the other.

He is fitting the sticks against the rabbit's leg, making a tiny splint. The animal squeaks in pain.

STEPAN
(Soothing)
Sshh. Sshh.

Stepan takes a wet cloth and dabs at the bloody wound.

CUT TO: LATER

It's afternoon. Stepan sits in the chair, the rabbit wrapped in a bundle of Dmitry's coat. He's using an eye dropper to feed it milk. Silence. Suddenly, slowly, he begins to speak.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
(Like talking to a child)
...you know I, I grew up in a village, a village by the river, with friends like you. My family grew cabbage. Raised rabbits. Lots of your friends. A good home.

He feeds the animal another drop of milk.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
...and then the Czar's men came. They wanted our food to feed the army. My father resisted. They burned the farm. Everything, burned everything...that was the day I ran away from home. To join the Revolution. I was seventeen. Never been home since.

Stepan stares out at the river. His eyes are sagging, exhausted. Warm rain falls on the glass. Finally he whispers.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
...can I tell you a secret, little one? We're not home. None of us are home.

INT. LUBYANKA - MOTOR POOL - AFTERNOON

The motor pool is empty and quiet. Most of the lights are off. "Old Bear" Major Mishin enters from a stairwell, reading a sheet. He doesn't see the others until it is too late.

A TEAM of sergeants slip out of the darkness. One of them strikes Mishin from behind with a truncheon. The others quickly gag him, blindfold him, and drag him to a body bag.

INT. LUBYANKA - EXECUTION CELLAR - LATER

The blindfold is ripped off Mishin. He's now naked and scared in a cellar room, a plastic tarp stretched across the floor. The sergeants descend on him with truncheons.

They beat him mercilessly, breaking bones and bashing in his face. Blood spills across the plastic tarp. He's still gagged.

Leaning against a wall, smoking and watching, are two young officers - VOLKOV and NAZYUTA. Volkov is blond with a slick, sharp smile. Nazyuta is a woman with piercing eyes.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
...too late to sell him to the circus? As a dancing bear?

Nazyuta laughs and calls out to the sergeants.

LIEUTENANT NAZYUTA
Alright, that's enough! Volkov, give him his nine grams already.

Volkov hands her his cigarette and steps towards Mishin's body, drawing a TT30 automatic pistol from his holster.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
Hold him up.

The sergeants pull Mishin up to his knees. Volkov puts the barrel to his bleeding head.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV (CONT'D)
Look at me. Look at me.

Mishin stares, battered and bloody. Volkov grins. He fires.

INT. MOSCOW SUBWAY - EVENING

Stepan rides the packed subway, rubbing his tired eyes.

INT. LUBYANKA - STAFF OFFICE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Stepan enters a CROWDED office, flashing his identification. Telegraphs and typewriters chatter away. The walls are lined with portraits of smiling Stalin. Stepan grabs a clerk.

STEPAN
I need Old Bear. You seen him?

NKVD CLERK
I look like a footslogger?

The clerk leaves. Stepan heads over to a coffee pot and pours himself a cup.

A newspaper sits on the coffee table, with a football coach on the cover. The same newspaper from Dmitry's apartment. Stepan stares at it. Captain Tyruin catches up with him.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
Comrade. On time for once.

STEPAN
Captain. Where's the Major?

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
Dunno. Maybe sick?

Stepan glances around. Dozens of officers are crowded about, waiting on something. Volkov and Nazyuta are among them.

STEPAN
What's with all the case officers?

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
Someone called a full department meet. No idea who. So, where is it?

Stepan blinks, not understanding for a moment.

STEPAN
Oh, well I don't think the leg is broken but I got her in a splint. I'll hold onto her until I'm sure.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
Watch out, the thing loves to chew. It'll eat your whole damn place if-

Stepan spots Ilych across the office, in a cheap suit. Volkov and Nazyuta are approaching the young man. Stepan immediately tightens. He leaves Tyruin, hurrying over to Ilych.

STEPAN
Ilych. *Ilych*. Come with me, we have-

He puts a hand on Ilych's shoulder, but Volkov calls out from behind. He's grinning wolfishly.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
Comrade! Lieutenant Lebedev!

Stepan freezes. Slowly he turns around and salutes.

STEPAN
...Senior Lieutenant. I'm looking for Old Bear. You seen him?

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
Me? No, but my investigation docket is a little thin today. Someone didn't finish his list last night.

LIEUTENANT NAZYUTA
We heard about your runner. *How quaint.* No one runs anymore.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
Well this one thought he could. You like hurting my quotas, Lieutenant?

STEPAN
If I wanted to hurt you, it wouldn't be your quotas.

The two men stare each other down. Volkov gives a cold smile.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
Careful. This the new kid? I'm Senior Lieutenant Volkov, case officer. I interrogate the accused Stepan brings in, when he does.

LIEUTENANT NAZYUTA
Senior Lieutenant Nazyuta, Religious Affairs.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
She hunts unlicensed priests, nuns. I'm wondering, kid, did you know Comrade Bottle here actually use to be a case officer? One of us?

Ilych looks at Stepan, surprised. Stepan takes a deep breath.

LIEUTENANT NAZYUTA
That's right. He was good. Then he changed. Stopped bringing in confessions, started picking up Moscow Specials. Soviet Champagne. Cognac with Kvas.

STEPAN
Can I go now?

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
Hell, if you're done slowing me down you could go back to the army. We're shooting so many officers now you'd make General in a week.

Stepan bites his lip, trying to stay calm. The coffee cup is shaking in his hand, his grip tightening. Volkov notices.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV (CONT'D)
(Leaning in closer)
...would you like that, *Chapayev*? Play soldier again? Put back on your medal? What'd you get that for in the first place, *distilling?*

The coffee cup handle shatters. Suddenly Stepan has Volkov by the collar, slamming him into the wall.

Before anything else can happen the office door bursts open. In charges a troop of BODYGUARDS and PARTY OFFICIALS.

COMMUNIST PARTY HERALD
Attention! Attention! It is now my honor to present General Commissar of State Security...*Nikolai Yezhov!*

The name rings out like a bell. Every person in the office immediately snaps to fierce attention. Footsteps echo down the hallway as Stalin's right-hand man enters.

YEZHOV is not what you would expect. He is a sniveling worm of a man, nearly a dwarf in size and dressed like a general. He stares out at the officers with wild, gleeful eyes. When he opens his mouth a crazed squeaky voice emerges.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV
Comrades. Stalin brings his greetings.

CUT TO: LATER

The officers stand in ordered rows, at attention. Yezhov paces back and forth before them, giving a speech. His voice starts calm but gradually grows into a crazed, raving scream.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV (CONT'D)
...I stand before a hall of heroes. You are the defenders of Communism. You are needed now more than ever.

Stepan opens and closes his eyes, struggling to stay alert.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV (CONT'D)
Yes, Comrades, these are grave times. On all sides our nation is surrounded by enemies, and at home traitors plot to destroy this- the only free nation on Earth! *Traitors*. How I hate their names. Saboteurs. Wreckers. Trotskyites. Bukharinites. Bundist Jews. Bourgeois sympathizers. Tsarist Revivalists. Counter-Revolutionary Zinovievits. Old Believers. Imperialists. Ex-Mensheviks. Deviationists. Kulaks! Schutzbundlers! Shirkers! German spies! Polish spies! Japanese spies! *Clergymen! Capitalists! Fascists! Intellectuals! Ukrainians! Esperantists! A horde!* A vile horde only we can stop! It is our duty to find the traitor, *to destroy the traitor, to shoot him like a dog* - LIKE A MAD DOG EVEN WHEN HE LURKS AMONG OUR RANKS!

Yezhov pauses to calm down, wiping spittle from his lips.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV (CONT'D)
...some of you may be wondering where your commanding officer Major Mishin is. He is dead.

Stepan suddenly perks up, his back stiffening.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV (CONT'D)
Mishin was a traitor. For years he has been in secret communication with the Great Betrayer Trostky, planning nothing less than to poison the lips of our very own magnificent Comrade Stalin. Unthinkable! A monstrous crime, a crime against humanity, and for it he was given just punishment. *He died screaming on the cellar floor!*

Stepan is breathing hard, struggling to stay calm. He glances about and spots Volkov and Nazyuta smiling among the crowd.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV (CONT'D)
Let this be a lesson! There is nowhere traitors do not hide! Nowhere! We must hunt the wicked! But also, we must reward the good. You beautiful young Chekist case officers are our future, and as of now, there is an opening in your command which needs replacing.

Yezhov gives a big, crazed smile.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV (CONT'D)
To prove who deserves it I have devised a competition of sorts. *A game.* Whichever case officer can get one hundred criminal confessions and arrests first will be promoted to the rank of Major and given their choice of assignment anywhere in Russia, with Stalin's gratitude.

The case officers look at each other, excited.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV (CONT'D)
The opportunity of a lifetime, and only the most zealous among you will earn it. Prove your worth. Take no pause from your duty. Hunt the traitor! Defend the Party! You are State Security!
(MORE)

COMMISSAR YEZHOV (CONT'D)
Sword of the Proletariate! Now unsheathe yourself and get to work.

Satisfied, Yezhov nods to one of his assistants.

COMMUNIST PARTY HERALD
Comrade Commissar Yezhov would now like to end this meeting with *"Defenders of the People, Unite!"*
One! Two! Three! Four!

The office immediately begins to roar out a marching song. Everyone knows the lyrics. As they belt out the song Yezhov paces among their ranks, smiling like a child.

THE WHOLE OFFICE
THE PEOPLE CRY FOR HELP OUT LOUD,
TO HER ENEMIES WE'LL BRING THE FIGHT!

COMMISSAR YEZHOV
Yes! Sing! Sing!

THE WHOLE OFFICE
THE NKVD'S STRONG AND PROUD!
DEFENDERS OF THE PEOPLE, UNITE!

Among the crowd Stepan roars the lyrics. His voice is strong and proud, but there is no joy in his eyes.

CUT TO: MONTAGE

EXT. MOSCOW APARTMENTS - LATER THAT NIGHT

As the song continues we see Stepan and Ilych on another whirlwind night of arrests. They drag a sobbing mother away from her daughter. They pull an old man into the truck. They kick down an apartment door.

THE WHOLE OFFICE (V.O.)
THE ENEMY CRAWLS EVERYWHERE, BUT WE
CHARGE WITH OUR SWORDS IN HAND!
WE ARE FIERCE, WE ARE PREPARED
TO HUNT THE MONSTERS FROM OUR LAND!
DEFENDERS OF THE PEOPLE, UNITE!

EXT. MOSCOW - DAWN

Another dawn rises over Moscow. The night's work is done.

INT. STEPAN'S SEDAN - DAWN

Stepan and Ilych sit in the sedan, parked outside the garage. Stepan has his eyes closed. Ilych stares out the window.

STEPAN
...he's lucky.

Ilych looks at him, confused. Stepan doesn't open his eyes.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Whoever wins this competition. The case officer. Get promoted. Pick a post anywhere. Very lucky.

ILYCH
...what...what was it like? Being a case officer?

Stepan doesn't answer. He appears asleep. Finally he speaks.

STEPAN
That what you want? The uniform, the raise?

ILYCH
I want to serve the people. I want to catch traitors, like the Old Bear. Did you have any idea he-

STEPAN
Of course not.

Ilych stares at Stepan, thinking.

ILYCH
You're own friend. You never knew.

Stepan doesn't reply. He opens the door and steps out. He stops. A beat.

STEPAN
Your father. What happened to him?

ILYCH
He got weak.

Stepan studies him for a silent moment, then leaves.

INT. MOSCOW SUBWAY - LATER THAT MORNING

Stepan rides the crowded subway, barely awake.

EXT. MOSCOW STREET - LATER THAT MORNING

Stepan walks down a cobble street, his eyes to the ground. A troop of CHILDREN marches beside him, wearing red armbands and waving a Soviet flag as they head to school.

INT. STEPAN'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT MORNING

Exhausted, Stepan staggers into his apartment. The baby rabbit is on his table, resting in a bed made out of Dmitry's coat and a milk box.

Stepan pets the rabbit, stares at the river, then stumbles to his bed. He crashes down, his eyes shutting.

Silence. Stillness. Stepan starts to drift into sleep. As he does, a sound fills his ears. The sound of wind and snow.

EXT. WINTER FIELD - DREAM

Stepan's bed is suddenly in a field of wind and snow. White as far as the eye can see. He sits up and sees a barbed wire fence, dancing in the wind.

Shivering SOLDIERS step around the bed, approaching the fence. Stepan's attention turns to a young handsome MAN among them. The young man is scared and freezing. He clutches his rifle nervously as something approaches.

Through the storm a great brown shape appears, coming closer.

INT. STEPAN'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT MORNING

The dream is suddenly gone. Stepan is sitting up in bed, sweating and alone.

He leans back down and shuts his eyes. Then a sound comes to his ears. A nibbling sound. The sound of little teeth chewing paper. Stepan's eyes open again. Something isn't right.

He sits up. Slowly, Stepan gets out of bed and approaches the table. The rabbit has been chewing on a sleeve of Dmitry's coat. Stepan gingerly lifts her out of the box and feels along the seams of the clothing. Something is in there.

Stepan rushes over to the kitchen and grabs a knife. He takes the blade and starts to cut open the jacket, carefully peeling apart the fabric. As he opens a seam he finds a sheet of paper, sewn within the very fabric of the coat.

Stepan pulls out the paper and starts cutting faster. He tears opens sleeves and pockets, peeling apart the stitches. More pages begin to fall out. The coat is filled with paper.

CUT TO: LATER

Stepan sits on the floor, the pages laid out in front of him. The writing is in a foreign language. Not Russian. We can't understand what it means, but it is clear the pages are covered in rows of lists and numbers. Stepan's eyes widen.

CUT TO: LATER

It is evening now, the sun dipping away in the distance. Stepan is standing at his window, the paper in hand. He's staring at the river down bellow. His hand shakes.

He suddenly grabs his leather jacket off a chair, stuffs a page inside it, and rushes for the door.

INT. LUBYANKA - STAFF ENTRANCE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Stepan heads through a guarded staff entrance, flashing his identification. Ilych is waiting for him up ahead.

ILYCH
...evening, Comrade. I have tonight's list, and-

Stepan pulls him aside, into a corridor. Stepan glances around, draws a page of the list, and shows it to him.

STEPAN
What language is this? This is Polish, right? What does it say?

Ilych scans the list, confused.

ILYCH
What? I, uh, it's a list of something. Boxes of soap. Units, deliveries. What is this?

Stepan thinks. Suddenly he grabs the list back, stuffs it in his jacket, and rushes away. Bewildered, Ilych follows.

INT. LUBYANKA - COMMISSAR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Stepan and Ilych enter a massive, luxurious private office. It's filled with OFFICIALS and CASE OFFICERS. Drinks and food are out. Music plays from a gramophone. It's a party.

Stepan tries to work his way in, but a guard stops him. Stepan scans the swarm. He spots who he is looking for.

Standing at the center of the crowd, smiling wildly, is Commissar Yezhov. Captain Tyruin and Lieutenant Volkov are treating him like a prince. The Captain rattles his glass with a spoon.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
...that the Commissar has a plane to catch, but first I want to say it's been an honor to stand in his presence. To Comrade Yezhov! Defender of the Proletariate!

The place erupts in applause. Yezhov heads for the door, smiling and nodding. Stepan tries to push closer. Guards hold him back as the crowd roars and cheers.

STEPAN
Commissar! Commissar, a word!

Yezhov can't hear him. Stepan sweats. Yezhov's almost gone.

Suddenly Stepan shoves past the guards, fighting through the crowd. He grabs Yezhov by the elbow and yanks him backwards. People gasp. Yezhov squeals with fear as he topples over.

Bodyguards draw guns. Someone pistol-whips Stepan. As he falls guards leap on him, stripping off his leather jacket as they search him. They start dragging Stepan towards the exit.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Comrade Commissar! Wait! Please!

The guards almost have Stepan out the door when Yezhov screams. The whole place goes silent and still.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV
HALT! Who touched me?! *Show me!*

The guards let go of Stepan. Every eye is now on him. The crowd slowly parts, allowing Stepan to approach Yezhov. Stepan stumbles forward, holding his head. Yezhov gets up.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV (CONT'D)
This is my assaulter? *Who sent you?*

Stepan gets down on a knee, talking quickly.

STEPAN
Comrade, I am Lieutenant Stepan Sergeievich Lebedev.
(MORE)

STEPAN (CONT'D)
I've come to personally request you let me join the case officer's competition.

A mummer goes through the crowd. Yezhov tilts his head.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV
Attacking me would get you that?

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
Don't listen to this drunk. He was best friends with that dead bear.

STEPAN
(Quickly)
Commissar, it's true I knew the traitor Mishin, but I engaged in no treason nor knew of his crimes. I denounce him with all my heart.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV
Ignorance is no shield, Lieutenant. I send worms to the cellars every day for your crime of omission, and they aren't the ones who attack me.

STEPAN
Then allow me to regain my honor by entering this competition.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV
And why should I do that?

STEPAN
Because I'll win.

Yezhov snorts a laugh. He grins to the crowd.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV
A real Stakhanovite, eh? Should I put him on the Canal?

People laugh. Stepan stays calm.

STEPAN
...Comrade Commissar, if you give me this chance not only will I win, but I will double the results. I will get you two hundred arrests and confessions.

The grin leaves Yezhov's face. He stares at Stepan, stunned.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV
...do not toy with me, Lieutenant. I have no stomach for liars.

STEPAN
I will win. All I ask in return is you allow me access to a group of suspects I arrested two days ago.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
Bullshit. Those accused are mine.

STEPAN
Commissar, there is a threat and I can stop it. I will get you two hundred traitors, with evidence.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV
How?

STEPAN
I can't say.

Volkov laughs. Yezhov doesn't look happy.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV
You won't tell *me?*

STEPAN
Comrade, you said yourself there is nowhere traitors do not hide. What I know could save lives and I can't risk saying it where-

COMMISSAR YEZHOV
Sergeants.

The guards approach. Stepan gets down on both knees, talking fast and desperate.

STEPAN
Comrade Commissar, look at me! Think this through. I came into this room willing to put my life in danger just to meet you. I'm ready to lay down and die for the Revolution! There are enemies! I-

COMMISSAR YEZHOV
Stand up, Lieutenant!

The guards pull him to his feet. Yezhov stares, thinking.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV (CONT'D)
...Comrade Stalin believes in only one thing. The power of human will...I look at, and I am curious to learn how far that power goes. Sergeants, give him back his coat. You are promoted to the rank of Senior Lieutenant case officer. Welcome to the competition.

Dead silence. Then Captain Tyruin nervously lets out a cheer. The crowd erupts in awkward applause. Smiling, Yezhov nods and beckons Stepan closer. He whispers in his ear.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV (CONT'D)
...make me regret this and you won't enjoy the next time I have you on your knees.

With that Yezhov leaves, flanked by his bodyguards and staff. The room keeps cheering. Stepan takes a quick breath. A champagne flute sits on a stand nearby. He snatches it up, drinks, then leaves. Ilych, stunned beyond words, follows.

INT. LUBYANKA - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Stepan leans against a wall, rubbing the back of his bruised head. OFFICERS watch him. Ilych slides up close and whispers.

ILYCH
Care to explain *what just happened?*

Stepan looks at the others, then motions for Ilych to follow.

EXT. LUBYANKA - ROOFTOP - SUNSET

A deep sunset hangs over Moscow from Lubyanka's large rooftop. SNIPERS patrol the edges, but beyond them the city stretches out endlessly, almost peacefully.

Stepan and Ilych climb onto the roof from a stairwell. They walk to the center, far from the earshot of the patrols.

STEPAN
...the suspect who resisted arrest, I found this in his coat.

Stepan glances over his shoulder, then hands Ilych the page. He reads it, not understanding.

ILYCH
"250 boxes of soap for K.V.
191 boxes of soap for S.A. 805
boxes of soap for L.S."

STEPAN
Dozens of pages. Just like that,
sewn into the fabric. Each with
numbers, initials, in Polish.

ILYCH
In his coat? He had a foreign list
sewn in his coat?

STEPAN
Ilych, think. When we arrested the
suspect he told his wife to get him
his rain coat. *His rain coat.*
Everyone who gets picked up knows
they are going to some frozen labor
camp, so if you were being arrested
why would you pick your rain coat?
Why not your winter coat?

Ilych stares at him, unsure. Stepan points to the page.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Because he didn't want this in his
apartment if we searched for
evidence. No one cares what a
suspect wears. The clothes are
stolen or lost - *he wanted that*. He
was using us to get rid of this.

Ilych takes a step back, his eyes widening.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
He had *pages* of these soap lists in
his coat. Hundreds of initials.
Whose names? *And boxes of soap*?

ILYCH
Has to be a code word. Maybe the
soap is a delivery of something.
Explosives or, or radio codes.

STEPAN
Could be anything, but he was under
arrest for suspicion of treason and
he didn't want us to have it. This
is big, Ilych. Very big. Two
hundred and six initials. If I can
crack this, I'll beat everyone.
I'll win.

Ilych swallows and nods. He thinks, studying Stepan.

ILYCH
...and you're showing me this. Why?

Stepan doesn't answer. Ilych studies him. A beat.

ILYCH (CONT'D)
When did you find this list? Last night? This morning? You could have called the department's translators. But you didn't. You waited for me.

Stepan says nothing. Ilych thinks it through.

ILYCH (CONT'D)
You didn't tell the Commissar about this list. That means you're keeping it a secret. Why?

STEPAN
Those case officers you met yesterday, they rule this place. What do you think happens if they find out I have a lead like this?

ILYCH
So you want someone to translate this list you can trust. Someone who will keep your secret, and-

Stepan laughs. He takes the list back from Ilych.

STEPAN
Trust? Ilych, stop. I know what you are. Why you're here.

Ilych blinks. Stepan leans in, suddenly aggressive.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
You think I didn't know? I'm an idiot? They send a top mark Komonsol boy to learn from some old drunk like me? You think I believe that for a second?

ILYCH
C-Comrade, I don't-

STEPAN
You're not here for training. You're already trained. You're my replacement.
(MORE)

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Any day now you were suppose to push me out, and then what? I'm sent to work the cellars? You were going to throw me over, so don't ever talk about trust! *I know what you are!*

Stepan paces away, breathing hard and rubbing his bruised head. Ilych swallows. A beat.

ILYCH
...fine. It's true. But you didn't bring me up here for nothing. The Old Bear is dead. I'm all you have left. You know what I want.

Silence. Finally Stepan steps close, holding the page.

STEPAN
You translate this, you help me with the case, you tell *no one* about the list, and when I win, I will leave and you can take my spot here as a case officer. Deal?

Ilych nods. Both men take a deep breath.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Smart little prick, give you that.

ILYCH
So, Comrade, where do we begin?

STEPAN
The suspect. We start with him. Get his files, translate this, then go to the mess hall and get a lemon and cheese grater.

ILYCH
Excuse me?

STEPAN
I got a headache.

ILYCH
You got pistol-whipped. *Lemons?* What kind of backwards place is that a folk cure for headaches?

STEPAN
The kind of place where we string up smart ass children. Get to work.

Stepan heads for the exit. A beat. Ilych calls after him.

ILYCH
You meant what you said to Yezhov? Being ready to lay down and die?

STEPAN
I'm not dead yet.

Stepan leaves. Ilych laughs softly. He stares out at the city and its setting sun.

INT. LUBYANKA - PRISON CELL - LATER THAT NIGHT

Dmitry slowly opens his swollen eyes. He's been sleeping standing up, trapped among a suffocating swarm of PRISONERS.

ILYCH (V.O.)
Dmitry Nikolayevich Ivanov. Age 25, I think.

STEPAN (V.O.)
You think?

INT. LUBYANKA - MOTOR POOL - ONE DAY EARLIER

The trucks are lined up in the motor pool, WARDERS and GUARD DOGS waiting. SERGEANTS slide open the truck back doors, their insides are filled to the brim with terrified PEOPLE.

ILYCH (V.O.)
He's got almost no papers. His parents are listed as migrant workers, so that's a wash. I got no files on him 'til he applies for communal housing at 22.

Warders start shouting. Dogs bark. Prisoners spill from trucks. Dmitry's among them, covered in bruises from Stepan's beating. He clutches his broken locket, the chain gone.

INT. LUBYANKA - PRISONER PROCESSING CENTER - LATER

Prisoners are being photographed. Strip searched. Fingerprinted. Dmitry is among the line, the locket in his dark, stained fingers.

STEPAN (V.O.)
So he's a ghost?

ILYCH (V.O.)
A ghost with no birth certificate. No Party card, nothing. Like he shows up out of nowhere.

A warder passes by. Thinking fast, Dmitry pops the locket in his mouth. He swallows it with a painful shudder.

INT. LUBYANKA - PRISON CELL - LATER

A warder opens a prison cell door, guiding Dmitry in. Dmitry's bruised eyes go wide when he sees the cell.

The cell is a small converted storage closet. Twenty male prisoners are crammed inside. No room to sit. The warder shoves Dmitry in and closes the door.

The squirming mass of prisoners push and force Dmitry towards a corner with a slop bucket. Dmitry immediately starts to vomit into the bucket. Prisoners laugh. Lights blare above.

Dmitry coughs, closes his eyes, and reaches into the bucket. He pulls out his locket, wiping vomit and feces off it.

INT. LUBYANKA - HALLWAY - LATER THAT NIGHT

Stepan and Ilych move down a hallway, Ilych reading a file. Stepan is rubbing bits of lemon on his temples.

STEPAN
So this ghost, why was he arrested?

ILYCH
Uh, someone reported him as an enemy of the people. That's it.

STEPAN
That can't be it.

ILYCH
It was an anonymous report, like the witness was scared.

An OFFICER catches up to them.

NKVD OFFICER
Senior Lieutenant Volkov's looking for you. Never seen him so angry.

STEPAN
Don't tell him where I am, and book me a room please, one hour. Thanks.

Stepan hands him the lemons. The officer leaves, confused.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
So we got a mysterious suspect with no papers, a coat full of Polish secrets, and a hidden witness.

ILYCH
Yeah. And he's a runner. You think he's a spy? For the Polish?

STEPAN
You know a lot of spies with families? It's possible, but most of the Polish nationals have been rounded up already. He's not one, you can tell by his accent.

ILYCH
So he's Russian. Then what?

STEPAN
I don't know. We need answers. Book us a cell, under your name.

ILYCH
What? You just booked one.

STEPAN
And when that officer rats me out to Volkov he's gonna be there, looking at an empty room. Dmitry is our suspect. Lets keep it that way.

INT. LUBYANKA - PRISON CELL - LATER THAT NIGHT

The cell door opens with a lurch. A warder leans in.

NKVD WARDER
D.I. Accused D.I.

DMITRY
I, I'm Dmitry Ivanov. Is-

The prisoners start shifting and moving. Dmitry squirms towards the entrance. As he does an old man suddenly grabs Dmitry's wrist and whispers in his ear.

OLD PRISONER
They want you to confess a crime, and name accomplices. They won't stop until you do. God bless you.

Other prisoners murmer in agreement.

INT. LUBYANKA - STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

The warder leads Dmitry up a stairwell, jangling his keys. They arrive at a thick door, guarded by TWO SERGEANTS.

NKVD WARDER
Accused D.I. for interrogation.

The sergeants open the door, revealing the long dark hall of the interrogation wing. Muffled sounds seep out. Screams.

Dmitry steps back. The warder gently pushes him forward.

INT. LUBYANKA - INTEROGATION WING - MOMENTS LATER

The warder leads Dmitry down the hall, passing the doors of interrogation cells. Screams can be heard through the thick doors. Dmitry begins to shake.

2ND NKVD WARDER (O.S.)
Incoming accused!

The warder makes Dmitry face a wall, blocking his view. A team of WARDERS emerge from a cell, carrying a sobbing, bleeding WOMAN down the hall. Once she’s gone Nazyuta emerges from the cell, calmly wiping her bloody hands with a rag.

LIEUTENANT NAZYUTA
...room’s all yours.

The warder guides Dmitry towards the cell.

INT. LUBYANKA - INTERROGATION CELL - MOMENTS LATER

Dmitry sits alone at a table in a small windowless room. Screaming can still be heard faintly through the walls. His hands are trembling.

A little bell sits in front of Dmitry. An empty chair is across the table. Dmitry glances at the wall beside him. A smear of dried blood runs down it. He stares at it.

INT. LUBYANKA - INTERROGATION STAFF ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Stepan and Ilych stand in a hall before a thick door. Stepan is unlocking it with a key. He’s got a file in his hands.

STEPAN
This is the interrogation wing back entrance. No one will see us here.

ILYCH
You used to work in here, right?

Stepan doesn't reply. The door opens. Screams fill the hall.

Stepan closes his eyes, listening to the sounds. He takes a breath, then starts walking down the hall. He gets about five steps in before he notices Ilych isn't following him.

Stepan turns around. Ilych is still in the entrance. He's frozen, not moving, listening as a woman cries behind a door.

Ilych's eyes flicker towards him. He doesn't move. A beat.

STEPAN
Junior Lieutenant. You wanted into the forest. Sooner or later you meet the wolves.

A beat. Ilych follows him. They start towards a cell door.

ILYCH
What are, what are you going to do?

Stepan looks at him, but doesn't answer.

INT. LUBYANKA - INTERROGATION CELL - MOMENTS LATER

Dmitry is still staring at the bloodstain on the wall. The door opens behind him. He flinches.

In enters Stepan and Ilych. Stepan is focused on the folder in his hands. Dmitry tries to stand up but Stepan lifts a hand casually.

STEPAN
No.

Dmitry sits back down. Stepan takes a seat across the table. Ilych leans against the wall, his arms crossed.

Stepan reads. Finally looks up at Dmitry's bruises.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
...are you okay?

Dmitry twitches, surprised. He says nothing. Stepan looks about the room. He stares at the bloodstain on the wall.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
...I'm sorry, by the way. About the alley. That's wasn't me.

DMITRY
Why am I here?

STEPAN
This is procedure.

DMITRY
Why am I in prison? Why was I arrested?

STEPAN
Why do you think you were arrested?

Dmitry says nothing. Stepan shrugs and draws his flask, offering it to Dmitry.

DMITRY
No, thank you. Have I been charged with a crime?

STEPAN
Not any 58s, but you tried running, which doesn't work in your favor. You a Party member, Dmitry?

DMITRY
No. But, but I love Stalin. And I only ran because I was scared. I didn't, I shouldn't have-

STEPAN
Where are you from?

DMITRY
I'm not going to give you names.

Stepan pauses, surprised.

DMITRY (CONT'D)
I, I haven't done anything. I'm not saying I have, but I won't give you-

STEPAN
Did I ask for names? Do I care?

Dmitry blinks. Stepan closes the folder.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Look. I'll be honest with you. I don't know what you're here for.
(MORE)

STEPAN (CONT'D)
I'm a doorman, bring them in, bring them out. Far as I can tell, they don't have anything on you. So they're gonna put you back out.

DMITRY
...out? Like back home?

STEPAN
Where are you from, Dmitry Nikolayevich?

DMITRY
I was born near Bodaybo, Irkutsk.

STEPAN
That far east?

DMITRY
Spent the first ten years of my life in the back of a wagon. You mean I'll be released, free to go?

STEPAN
Could be. Why a wagon?

DMITRY
(Not enjoying this)
My family, we moved wherever the work was. Harvest, farms. Before the collectives. I was a kid.

STEPAN
I've never been on a farm. What's it like? Bodaybo, you were growing grain, wheat, that stuff?

DMITRY
Yeah, wheat. Can we talk about why I'm here?

STEPAN
I told you I don't know why you're here. Mistakes happen. They don't find anything they'll release you. Just paperwork for me either way.

DMITRY
My...forgive me, with all due respect officer, the night you came for me, you beat me. Told me to freeze to death in the camps, now you're, you're saying-

STEPAN
(Angry)
You ran, and I told you that wasn't me. Dmitry, I know you're scared but use your head. Look at me. Look around you. If they really suspected you of something then you wouldn't be sitting here with the doorman, would you? You hear that?

Stepan motions to the walls and their screams.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Are they doing that to you? No. Because you have nothing to give them. You're innocent, right? You did something stupid in an alley, that's it. So relax. Answer questions, then you'll go home.

A beat. Dmitry nods. Stepan opens his folder again.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
You live with foreigners. Why?

DMITRY
Why? It's, uh, it's where the housing committee put me. I didn't have a choice.

STEPAN
You know a lot of foreigners? Ukrainians, Poles, Georgians?

DMITRY
I don't know, I just speak Russian. They're all the same to me.

STEPAN
In your apartment I saw a lot of books. Your wife's?

DMITRY
Mine.

STEPAN
You read all that? Why?

DMITRY
Why? I'm a poet.

Stepan blinks. He laughs, suprised, and looks at Ilych.

STEPAN
...you hear that? Farm boy Gorky? Who even taught you to read?

DMITRY
I did. I, uh, I started to pick it up. Left the farm. Met my wife.

STEPAN
And you get paid to write?

DMITRY
Not much. I mail them from home. I make do but it's tough. Wish I had a real job, to be honest.

Stepan freezes, his smile tightening. He looks Dmitry over, then down at the file.

STEPAN
...alright, Dmitry Nikolayevich, I think we've taken up enough of your time. We're done here.

Stepan gets up. Dmitry is astonished. Ilych shifts, confused.

ILYCH
Uh, Senior Lieutenant?

STEPAN
C'mon Junior. Let's go.

Dmitry starts to stand up.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
No, you wait here. They'll bring someone. C'mon, Ilych.

DMITRY
Am I, I'm going home?

Stepan smiles and heads to the door. He knocks twice. It opens. Ilych stands frozen in the corner, bewildered.

Ilych suddenly says a sentence to Dmitry in Polish. Dmitry flinches. Ilych leaves.

INT. LUBYANKA - INTERROGATION WING - MOMENTS LATER

Stepan and Ilych step out into the hallway. Stepan looks around at the cells, listening to the screams.

STEPAN
...wheat in Bodaybo.

ILYCH
Stepan, what the hell?

A warder heads for Dmitry's door. Stepan stops him.

STEPAN
What are you doing? Captain Tyruin has the cell on reserve. Evidence sweep. No one goes in, understood?

NKVD WARDER
Evidence sweep? What's that?

STEPAN
I'm sorry, you a case officer? Do I have to explain my job to you, or can you do as your told? *No one in.*

The Warder nods, embarrassed. Stepan leaves, Ilych following.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Wheat in Bodaybo.

ILYCH
Stepan, look at me. Why didn't you ask him about the list? Or the coat? Why aren't we-

STEPAN
He made a mistake. I let him feel safe and he walked right into it.

ILYCH
What?

Captain Tyruin pops out of a hallway.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
Comrade, there you are! Do you have-

STEPAN
Sorry Captain, that rabbit's my good luck charm. You're never getting her back now.

Before the Captain can protest, Stepan heads down a stairwell.

INT. LUBYANKA - INTERROGATION CELL - MOMENTS LATER

Dmitry sits at the empty table, the screams still around him. He glances at the closed door, and carefully reaches into his sock. He pulls out the golden locket.

He rubs his dark fingers over the locket, again and again.

INT. LUBYANKA - STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Stepan and Ilych stand on an empty stairwell. Stepan takes out the soap list. He glances around to make sure they're alone.

STEPAN
The suspect, he said he works at home. Doesn't have a real job.

Ilych nods.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
When we were at his apartment, he had a Friday edition of Truth in his bedroom. I saw it. Mikhail Tovarosky was on the cover.

ILYCH
Truth, the newspaper Truth?

STEPAN
Yes. Ilych, it was *Thursday* night. That paper hadn't come out yet. I saw it next day in the office, and you know we get everything first.

ILYCH
Wait...he had a copy of a newspaper the night before it came out, how?

STEPAN
How do you think?

Ilych thinks. Immediately he gets it.

ILYCH
He works there. He's got ink stains on his hands, he probably works the presses. He takes next day's paper home with him after work.

Stepan nods. He holds up the list.

STEPAN
Feel this. Touch it. It's wax paper. Carbon copies are restricted from the public, only a few places you can find them. Here. Accounting departments. *Newspaper offices.*

ILYCH
You think he got this from Truth. That's why he lied about his job.

STEPAN
Requisition a search team, quietly.

ILYCH
Where are we going?

STEPAN
Where do you think? He's hiding something at that newspaper office. We need to find it.

ILYCH
So let's just get him to confess it.

STEPAN
Not yet. Get the team.

ILYCH
No, we have him! Why not make him-

STEPAN
Do what I say. Get the team.

Stepan starts down the stairs. Ilych sighs. A beat.

ILYCH
...Stepan, wait. Dmitry speaks Polish. He lied about that, too.

Stepan stares, waiting for an explanation.

ILYCH (CONT'D)
I, uh, I told him I fucked his mother in the ass. In Polish. He blinked.

A beat. Stepan laughs. He leaves. On a balcony above them, Lieutenant Nazyuta watches, silent and unseen.

INT. LUBYANKA - EMPTY INTERROGATION ROOM - LATER

Lieutenant Volkov stands in an empty interrogation room. His uniform is stained in dried blood. He's not happy.

Lieutenant Nazyuta enters and leans against a wall. Volkov says nothing. He's twitching with anger. She grins.

LIEUTENANT NAZYUTA
...smarter than you thought, isn't he? Want to know where he is?

INT. LUBYANKA - MOTOR POOL - LATER

The massive garage doors open. A truck and a sedan are preparing to leave.

Volkov enters the motor pool, moving with fast, hard steps. He moves to the garage entrance, blocking their path. The truck tries swerving to the right. Volkov moves right, blocking it still. The engine roars.

The DRIVER honks. Volkov doesn't budge. He's seething.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
STEPAN! STEPAN SERGEIVICH!

The truck keeps rumbling. A beat. Finally Stepan and Ilych emerge from the sedan behind the truck. They head for Volkov. He shouts over the truck's engine.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV (CONT'D)
You hiding from me, huh?

STEPAN
You need to step aside, Comrade.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
I want them back. All of them.

STEPAN
Volkov, I don't have time to-

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
Those suspects are mine, damn it!

Stepan gives a signal to the truck. Its engine stops.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV (CONT'D)
You think you can just steal from me? Those suspects you got from the Commissar, *they're mine.* I want them back, all of them.

STEPAN
You want to get out of my way.

Volkov thinks. He turns to Ilych.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
What's Stepan hiding? What is it? You think I won't find out?

STEPAN
Volkov-

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
Shut up! You've been slowing me down for years, now you want to compete? *With me?* I will fucking bury you, you hear me peasant?

STEPAN
Volkov, either you step aside, or I'm going to get in that truck and run you over. Last chance.

They stare each other down. A beat. Volkov grins.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
...you know, I've changed my mind. Keep the suspects. I forgot you need new friends.

Stepan stares him down, cold and hard. A beat. Still smiling, Volkov moves aside. Stepan and Ilych head for their car.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV (CONT'D)
I got fifty three, by the way. Already.

They freeze. Volkov casually picks blood on his nails.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV (CONT'D)
A brigadier at Trekhgorka, he denounced his entire pressing crew as Trotskyites. So I got a two night head start, fifty three arrests already, and I'm not a farmhand drunk. Still think you can win?

Stepan says nothing. He climbs into the sedan with Ilych, slamming the door. The truck engines start again. Volkov watches as the truck rumbles past him into the night.

INT. STEPAN'S SEDAN - LATER THAT NIGHT

Stepan drives, the truck following. He's clearly restless. He draws his flask and takes a sip. Ilych shifts in his seat.

ILYCH
...fifty three, how is that even-

STEPAN
How do you think?

ILYCH
Well, why aren't we doing that?

Stepan stares, lighting himself a cigarette.

ILYCH (CONT'D)
I'm serious. Dmitry is a traitor, we know that. So why are we out here when we could be...getting the truth from him? Faster.

STEPAN
You think that's truth? Think its fast? What do you even know about-

ILYCH
I know Volkov's got fifty three-

STEPAN
I don't give a shit what Volkov has. We're going to beat him, and we're going to do it by getting the whole story. Evidence, names, when we bring down Dmitry, we are going to have it all. That's how we win.

Ilych stares out the window again. A beat. He laughs.

ILYCH
You're different, aren't you? Different than all of us. When they assigned me to replace you, I thought you were soft. Weak, like my father. But you're not. So what happened to you? How did you go from a case office to a-

STEPAN
Ilych, what makes you think I want to have this conversation? What makes you think I even like talking to you at all?
(MORE)

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Let’s be clear, you’re only here because I need something from you, that’s it, and the next time you compare me to your father I’ll put your head through that window. Understood?

Ilych goes silent. Stepan pulls up to a curb outside a large warehouse. The truck pulls up beside him.

Stepan shuts off the engine. He leans forward and closes his eyes. A beat.

STEPAN (CONT’D)
...you don’t want to make friends. Trust me.

Stepan climbs out. Ilych follows, angrily.

EXT. MOSCOW STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Four STAFF SERGEANTS climb out of the truck, following Stepan and Ilych up the steps towards the warehouse door.

STEPAN
No guns, watch the doors.

Stepan pushes open the doors, flooding the night with light.

INT. TRUTH PRINTING FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The newspaper warehouse is bright, loud, and teeming with WORKERS despite the late hour. Massive industrial printing presses are spewing out endless pages of newspaper with Stalin’s face on the cover.

Stepan and his team move through the press floor, passing the terrified workers. Stepan motions for the sergeants to wait here, then steps into a back office with Ilych.

INT. TRUTH STAFF OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The exhausted OFFICE STAFF are gathered around tables, in the midst of their work. They freeze as Stepan and Ilych enter.

PAPER EDITOR
Excuse me? Hey! Who are-

Stepan flashes his identification card.

STEPAN
Senior Lieutenant Lebedev, NKVD.
Everyone, come here.

PAPER EDITOR
(Growing scared)
State Security? I, uh, what are you doing here, Comrade?

ILYCH
What do you think?

PAPER EDITOR
No, there, uh, *with respect*, there aren't anymore traitors here. Your people already came through and rounded up all of Bukharin's-

Stepan isn't listening. He takes a police mugshot of Dmitry out of his pocket and flashes it to the workers.

STEPAN
Dmitry Nikolayevich Ivanov. I need access to whatever machinery he's touched plus his possessions.

WRITER
Dmitry Nikolayevich? The young man? Comrade he's a copy-editor, I throw him some roubles for poems!

ILYCH
But he works here, right?

WRITER
Yeah, he's got a desk in the back but he doesn't touch the presses. We'd never let him on the printing floor, I swear it!

ILYCH
Not what his fingers say.

Stepan spots a coffee pot brewing. He picks up a coffee mug.

STEPAN
His desk. Show me.

INT. TRUTH STAFF OFFICE - BACK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Stepan and Ilych enter an empty back room full of desks and typewriters. The nervous staff follows them in. Stepan's drinking coffee. A writer points out a desk.

WRITER
There, that one’s his.

Stepan tries to open the desk drawer. It’s locked. Ilych pushes him aside and with a quick flick draws a switch blade. He starts to pry open the drawer lock with the blade.

STEPAN
(The blade)
Where’d that come from?

ILYCH
What do you care?

Ilych pops open the lock and rummages through the drawer. Pencils. Scraps of paper. A photograph of Dmitry’s wife and daughter. A small sealed bottle of wine.

STEPAN
The paper.

ILYCH
Blank.

STAFF EDITOR
See? Nothing here. Now if you Comrades would please excuse-

STEPAN
(To Ilych)
Shut the presses down.

PAPER EDITOR
Wait, wait, what?

Ilych leaves. Stepan lifts his photo of Dmitry to the crowd.

STEPAN
This man has had access to the printing floor, I know it! If none of you want to cooperate-

PAPER EDITOR
You can’t stop the presses, we have morning edition in four hours! Ma Hushan’s on the run towards India! Republicans are holding Asturias seven to one! Comrade!

In the back of the crowd Stepan spots a JANITOR shifting nervously, gripping his broom. Stepan closes in on him.

STEPAN
Look at me. What do you know?

WRITER
He’s an immigrant. He’s just scared you’re going to check his papers!

Stepan gives the writer a look that quiets him. He turns back to the janitor, he’s a short swarthy man, missing a hand.

STEPAN
You the janitor? What’s your name?

The janitor starts to nervously speak in a foreign language. Stepan grits his teeth. He turns to the editor. He shrugs.

PAPER EDITOR
He’s, uh, from Azerbaijan, I think.

Ilych returns with the sergeants. Stepan turns to him.

STEPAN
Azeri, you speak it?

ILYCH
What? No, I speak *some* Turkish, it’s similar.

STEPAN
Will he understand? Show him the photo. Ask him what he knows.

Ilych takes the photograph, approaches the janitor, and starts to speak carefully in Turkish. The janitor replies, shifting nervously from foot to foot as he babbles.

ILYCH
He, uh, I think he says he, he knows Dmitry, and he’s sorry.

STEPAN
For what?

Ilych asks. The janitor answers. Ilych struggles to keep up.

ILYCH
He, he use to...let Dmitry on the floor, I think, the printing floor. With keys. After everyone leaves.

PAPER EDITOR
What? Comrades, I denounce this foreigner as a saboteur! Shoot him!

STEPAN
All of you, shut up! Ilych find us someplace private. No one leaves.

INT. TRUTH OFFICE - BACK HALLWAY - LATER

Stepan and Ilych pace before the janitor. He is sitting on the floor, crying and babbling to himself in Azeri. The walls are lined with posters of triumphant soldiers and workers.

ILYCH
He, uh, *slow down,* he says he, I think he's trying to say he didn't know Dmitry was...bad. Bad man. He, uh, he says Dmitry paid him. Paid him to let him in after hours. And he says he's sorry and he says he has two boys, little boys, and he-

STEPAN
What's his name?

ILYCH
Habil.

Stepan speaks to Habil, Ilych translating.

STEPAN
Habil, I need you to think very carefully. Tell me everything about Dmitry, understand? Everything. Do you want to go to the truck? Truck?

HABIL
No! No truck!

STEPAN
Tell me what you know.

Habil starts quickly speaking again. Ilych translate.

ILYCH
He says he, uh, hold on, *slow down*. He's saying, he's saying Dmitry would come, in his raincoat, Dmitry would pay him, then shut the doors, and, uh, he wouldn't see. This guy wouldn't see.

STEPAN
Great. He mention soap? Soap boxes, what do you know about soap?

Habil stares, not understanding.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Soap! Soap boxes! *Tell me!*

HABIL
(Confused, scared)
I no have soap! Please! No soap!

Habil starts crying and talking quickly in Azeri.

ILYCH
He’s going on about his kids. I don’t think he knows anything.

Stepan steps away, rubbing the bruise on his head.

STEPAN
...what the hell was Dmitry doing here? What was he hiding?

ILYCH
The staff, maybe one of them caught on? Maybe that’s the witness who reported him?

STEPAN
None of them knew. You saw their faces.

The staff sergeants enter the hall.

NKVD STAFF SERGEANT
Comrade Lieutenant, we’ve been through the whole floor. Nothing. Place is clean.

Stepan sighs. The sergeant points at Habil.

NKVD STAFF SERGEANT (CONT’D)
He’s a criminal, right? What are we going to do to him?

Stepan stares at Habil. The crying man looks up at him. He says something.

ILYCH
He says he didn’t know. He didn’t know.

Stepan keeps staring. His expression hardens.

INT. TRUTH PRINTING FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

The building’s STAFF watch silently as Stepan drags Habil towards the exit. He’s babbling and crying in Azeri. He has a handcuff locked around his amputated wrist.

Ilych and the sergeants follow.

EXT. MOSCOW STREET - MOMENTS LATER

The sergeants throw Habil in the back of the truck and lock it. Stepan lights a cigarette and turns to the sergeants.

STEPAN
Give me the keys. I'm driving, you're taking the sedan back.

NKVD STAFF SERGEANT
Comrade, we have to take the accused to processing and-

STEPAN
I'm taking him in. This is my catch, you're not selling it to the highest bidder.

The sergeants say nothing. Habil can still be heard crying.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Keys, now. There a sidearm in the glove?

A sergeant nods. He switches keys with Stepan. The sergeants get in the sedan and drive off. Stepan and Ilych climb in the truck.

INT. RAVEN TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

Stepan drives. Classical music is playing on the radio. He shuts it off. A beat. They can hear Habil crying from behind.

Stepan says nothing. A long pause. Suddenly he pulls the truck into a deserted street and turns off the engine. He stares down at his hands. A beat.

STEPAN
You remember what I said yesterday, about how I can't trust you?

Ilych nods.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
I need you to forget that now.

Stepan reaches into the glove compartment and draws a TT-30 automatic pistol. He climbs out. Ilych follows.

EXT. MOSCOW STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Stepan pulls Habil out of the truck, throwing him on his knees onto the curb. Habil is crying, terrified.

Stepan puts the pistol to Habil's head. He cocks it.

ILYCH
Whoa, wait-

STEPAN
I want you to tell this man that he broke Article 58 of Soviet Criminal Code. Tell him that if he ever shows up to work again, he will be reported, and I will have to shoot him. Tell him to nod if he understands.

Ilych stares at Stepan, surprised. Stepan doesn't budge. A beat. Ilych translates. Habil nods, nervously.

Stepan switches the safety back on the pistol and puts it away. He takes out a set of keys, unlocks the handcuffs, and pulls Habil back up to his feet. They stare at each other.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
...ask him how he lost his hand.

Ilych translates. Habil doesn't talk. Stepan draws his flask.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Was it the war? You fight for us? Get a medal?

HABIL
I, no, no more medal. Lost it.

Stepan studies him. A beat. He offers him the flask. Habil grins and draws his own flask, shaking it.

Stepan shakes his head, laughing softly. He motions for Habil to go, then heads back to front of the truck. Ilych follows.

ILYCH
...if anyone *ever* finds out about-

STEPAN
About what?

Ilych gets the hint. Stepan looks at Habil and shrugs.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
...he didn't know.

Stepan opens the truck door. Habil talks, grinning and waving his flask. Stepan looks to Ilych for an explanation.

ILYCH
Uh, I don't know. He's...I think he's saying you're a man. Like him. Not like Dmitry. "Dmitry would never drink with me. What kind of man doesn't drink?"

Stepan freezes. He stares at Habil, thinking hard.

INT. TRUTH STAFF OFFICE - BACK ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Stepan and Ilych slip into the back office. Stepan glances around to make sure no one is coming, then grabs Dmitry's small bottle out of the desk. He lifts it up, inspecting it.

The glass is thick and dark. He shakes it. No sound.

ILYCH
Stepan, what are you-

Stepan suddenly smashes the bottle against the desk. Ilych flinches as glass shatters everywhere, but no liquid. Out of the bottle falls a small bundle wrapped in cloth.

The two men stare at the bundle, amazed.

STEPAN
...we don't search bottles. Never sealed bottles. He's smart.

Stepan draws a handkerchief from a back pocket. Covering his fingers, he reaches down and opens the bundle of cloth. Inside is a worn Soviet passport.

Stepan opens it. There's no photograph within. It's been cut.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Damian Zajac. Polish, Soviet citizen. Age fifty six.

ILYCH
No face. *He cut the photo out?*

Stepan flips through the passport. The pages have been stamped hundreds of times, a wild mess of stamps.

STEPAN
...regional stamps. Someone's used this passport to travel all across the Soviet Union. Hundreds of places. Cities, towns.

ILYCH
No face. Stepan, *no face.* Printing presses. Dmitry, he could have been printing forged copies of the passport. He gives them to the cell, they put their own faces in. That's why he's here?

The two men stare at each other.

INT. TRUTH PRINTING FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Ilych is talking into a rotary phone attached to the wall, reading off the passport. Stepan paces, thinking.

ILYCH
...immediate seizure for anyone traveling under that name. GUPVO, yes, all stations. No. Polish.

STEPAN
And get us a full file search on Zajac. Who he is, where, check the apartment on the passport.

Stepan spots a stack of next morning's newspapers on the floor. He takes one and flips through before turning to a STAFF WRITER who is smoking and leaning nearby.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
...half this newspaper is obituaries, you realize that?

STAFF WRITER
Glavlit censored our cover story. Have to fill the pages with something, Comrade.

Ilych lowers the receiver, talking to Stepan.

ILYCH
They got news on Volkov. You're not going to believe this.

Stepan stares. Ilych doesn't speak. Stepan moves closer.

STEPAN
What, he find Dmitry? *What?*

ILYCH
Dispatch is saying he just cracked some clerk from Gastronom 1. Gave up nineteen speculators. Puts him up to 72 confessions. He's gonna win tomorrow if he keeps this up.

Stepan's hands tighten around the newspaper.

INT. LUBYANKA - INTERROGATION CELL - LATER THAT NIGHT

Dmitry is laying face down on the table in the interrogation room, sleeping. There are still screams. Beneath the table his fingers hold the locket tightly.

The door begins to open with a loud screech. He immediately bolt awakes, slipping the locket in his sock.

Stepan and Ilych enter. Stepan heads for the empty chair.

DMITRY
...I, they never came for me, I...

Stepan sits down. He stares at Dmitry for a long moment.

DMITRY (CONT'D)
...is there any news on my release?

STEPAN
(Not friendly)
They don't grow wheat in Bodaybo. No black soil. Lift up your palms, show them to me.

Dmitry blinks, groggy.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Lift up your palms.

Dmitry slowly lifts up his hands.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
No calluses. You don't have any calluses and you don't know anything about field work. You've been lying to me, Dmitry Nikolayevich.

DMITRY
It, *I was ten*, it was-

STEPAN
Keep your hands up.

Dmitry keeps his hands up. A beat.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
You're like everyone else here. You think I'm weak. I'm not weak, but I'm running out of time. So here's where we are:

Stepan reaches into his coat and drawers a folded newspaper from Truth. He slides it across the table to Dmitry.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Mostly obituaries. Open it and see.

Dmitry folds it open. The passport is sitting inside. Dmitry takes a quick, frightened breath.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
...this is what's going to happen now. You are going to give me everything. You're going to give me the names off the list, you're going to tell me what boxes of soap really are, and you're going to explain why you were printing passports for the people on the list. This is not an option.

Dmitry's face shifts and twitches. A long silence. Finally he reaches for the passport.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Keep your hands up.

Dmitry puts his hands back up.

DMITRY
The list?

STEPAN
I have the soap list. Give me the names.

DMITRY
What, what names? What list?

Stepan doesn't answer. A beat.

DMITRY (CONT'D)
I don't, I don't know what you're talking about. *Soap?* Is-

STEPAN
This is how you want to try me?

DMITRY
I'm not trying anything, I just, why would I have a list of soap? I don't understand.

STEPAN
Are you working for the Polish? Is that why you speak their language?

DMITRY
What? No, I, I don't speak-

ILYCH (POLISH, SUBTITLED)
You smuggling agents? Planning an attack? Who's paying you?

DMITRY
I don't, I don't understand what he's saying.

Stepan and Ilych simply stare at him.

DMITRY (CONT'D)
Please! I, I'm telling the truth!

STEPAN
(Annoyed)
Besides about where you work. Or who you are. Or where you're from.

DMITRY
I'm from Bodaybo!

STEPAN
Dmitry, I spent seventeen years on a farm, never once saw a field hand turn himself into Pushkin. *You taught yourself to read?* I didn't learn to read 'til I was twenty-one and out of the army. *You came to Moscow?* Bullshit. Listen to your accent. You grew up here.

DMITRY
No, please-

STEPAN
Everything you have told me about yourself is a lie, your whole identity is a lie, you hid the list, you hid your job, you hid the passports, you-

DMITRY
I don't, the passport, I found it!

Dmitry reaches for the passport. Stepan screams.

STEPAN
KEEP YOUR HANDS UP!

Dmitry's hands bolt back up. Stepan breathes, calming down.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
...I'm out of time, Dmitry. Who are you working for? What's the soap? Who is your contact? Where is Damian Zajac?

DMITRY
He, he, I, I don't know who he is. Please, I, I know it looks bad but the passport's not mine. I found it! I found it at Three Train Station, I was going to report it, but then I got scared so I, I hid it. That's why I didn't tell you about my job at Truth. I'm sorry, I know I should have, but I thought if you saw the passport, it would look bad, so I, I hid it.

STEPAN
In a locked drawer in the building you bribe an immigrant to unlock for you in secret.

Dmitry freezes. Stepan draws the soap list from pocket.

DMITRY
Habil, you...

STEPAN
Habil is dead. They want to give you nine grams of lead next but I told them you'd cooperate.

Dmitry's face goes cold and still.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
What do boxes of soap mean? Whose names are initialed on the list? How are you connected to the Poles?

Stepan slides it across the table. Dmitry stares at the list. He doesn't speak. A long beat.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Dmitry, look at me. If you cooperate, I'll do what I can for you. You have my word. You want to see your family again?

Dmitry swallows hard. He closes his eyes.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
...Dmitry.

DMITRY
I don't know what you're talking about. I can't help you. I'm sorry.

The two men stare at each other. There's a long pause.

STEPAN
(Calm, quiet)
...Ilych, leave the room.

Ilych heads to the door and knocks twice. Once he's gone Stepan reaches for his flask.

Stepan drinks, listening to the screaming through the walls.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
...you tired? I'm tired.

They hear a high pitched cry. Stepan tilts his head.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
I know that one. That scream. It's the crown.

Dmitry doesn't speak, hands still raised. Stepan drinks.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
(Very calm)
In the room to your right, there is a case officer, Senior Lieutenant Nazyuta. She's trying to get a priest to confess to derailing a train or something.
(MORE)

STEPAN (CONT'D)
What she does is, she uses this crown, this metal crown with screws attached to the inside. She fits it over your head and then she tightens the screws until they drill into your skull. When that doesn't work, she likes to take this hot branding iron and drive it up your anal cavity. Your colon, it actually starts to melt. She's creative like that.

A beat. He drinks, staring at the wall and listening to screams.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
I...hate torture. I hate that torture has become the tool we use. Getting a suspect to confess with it is like cheating, and I know that every suspect I tortured into a confession probably was innocent. But now, for the first time, I know I have a guilty man sitting before me. A conspirator. A liar. And his confession is the only way I will ever get out of here.

A beat. He looks Dmitry in the eye.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
So what am I going to do, Dmitry? Am I going to go down that path again? I'm not an animal, but this place, it wants to make me into one. I'm struggling. I'm struggling to stay a man.

Dmitry doesn't answer. The door opens, Ilych leans in.

ILYCH
Senior Lieutenant, you need to come with me. Now.

Stepan stares at Ilych curiously, then gets up, staggering a bit. Stepan slides the soap list across the table to Dmitry.

STEPAN
The names. Give them to me.

ILYCH
Now, Stepan.

He picks up the passport and newspaper and heads for the door. Suddenly Dmitry speaks, staring down.

DMITRY
(Ashamed)
I, uh...I have diarrhea. When I can't sleep well. They don't give me anything to clean myself with. If there is anything you can get me, a rag or...I just don't want to be like that when you return.

Stepan stops. A beat. He laughs and tosses the newspaper at Dmitry's head.

STEPAN
Wipe your ass with Truth.

With that Stepan and Ilych leave, the door slamming. Once they are gone Dmitry slowly lowers his hands.

INT. LUBYANKA - INTERROGATION WING - MOMENTS LATER

Ilych frantically pulls Stepan into the hall.

ILYCH
Stepan, look. *Look.*

Stepan looks. STAFF SERGEANTS are blocking the hallway's exits. Every door and stairwell has a pair of sergeants.

ILYCH (CONT'D)
Something's not right. What are they all doing here?

STEPAN
...he knows.

Stepan thinks. A beat. Suddenly he rushes over to a supply closet. Stepan pulls out a body bag, hands it to Ilych, and races back into the interrogation cell.

INT. LUBYANKA - INTERROGATION CELL - CONTINUOUS

Dmitry turns around just in time to see Stepan descend on him. Without a word Stepan grabs Dmitry by the collar and starts viscously beat his face with his fist.

Ilych watches, horrified. Stepan hits Dmitry about six times and lets go. Dmitry crashes to the floor, unconscious and bleeding. Stepan grips his own fist in pain, then turns to Ilych and points at the bag.

STEPAN
Help me. Now.

Stepan and Ilych pull open the body bag and fit Dmitry in. Stepan smears the blood around Dmitry's face and zips it up.

INT. LUBYANKA - INTERROGATION WING - MOMENTS LATER

Volkov marches down the hall. A sergeant points to a cell.

INT. LUBYANKA - INTERROGATION CELL - MOMENTS LATER

Volkov enters the interrogation cell. Stepan and Ilych are waiting for him, silent. Stepan rubs his bruised hand.

Volkov looks at the blood on Stepan's hands, then heads over to the body bag. He zips it open and stares at Dmitry's motionless, bloody face.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
...who's he?

STEPAN
You want to ask him?

Volkov zips the bag up. He studies Stepan coldly. A beat.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
...you got something you want to-

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
I know what you found at that newspaper office.

Stepan twitches. Volkov grins.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV (CONT'D)
Thought you could hide it? Everyone knows you have some secret you've-

STEPAN
I don't-

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
Don't even try. Four sergeants saw it. Saw you arrest a one handed man. Except, records don't have you bringing anyone in. Suspicious, isn't it? You slip him in under a different name? Put him in the mass cells? That amputee, he's your secret suspect, isn't he?

STEPAN
Volkov, you don't know what you're-

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
Here's what I know. An hour ago I put a call in to Blokhin's boys. Pulled some strings. They did some cell cleaning with OSO. Every one handed man we have in custody was just shot. There were twelve.

Stepan says nothing. Volkov smiles and turns to go. At the doorway he stops and addresses Ilych.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV (CONT'D)
Hey kid, one more thing. Do you know why the farmhand here is going to lose?

Stepan and Ilych say nothing. Volkov smiles.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV (CONT'D)
Stepan, he's good at what he does. Taught me to follow clues. Chase leads. Then one day I figured something out he never did. We're not detectives. Not anymore. We're assembly line operators. This place, it's just a factory. If you ever want to learn how it works, you come find me, okay?

Volkov leaves. Silence. Both men let out a sigh. Stepan leans against the table, draws his flask, and looks at his hand.

STEPAN
...I think I broke my fist.

INT. LUBYANKA - INTERROGATION WING HALLWAY - LATER

Ilych peers out into the hall. It is deserted. He and Stepan drag the body bag out. Ilych whispers.

ILYCH
...where can we hide him?

STEPAN
Old Bear's room. It's empty now. We can bolt it from the outside.

ILYCH
You want to put him in a traitor's office?

STEPAN
You think anyone will look? We can slip him in after the night shift, maybe around five in the-

ILYCH
Stepan, it's seven in the morning.

Stepan stops. He looks at the windowless walls around him.

INT. LUBYANKA - MAJOR'S OFFICE - LATER THAT MORNING

Dmitry opens his eyes with a moan. Morning sunlight is splashed across his face.

He sits up, confused, and finds himself in a large, entirely empty office overlooking Moscow. His face and nose are covered in dried blood. He's handcuffed.

Dmitry stumbles to his feet. He touches the windows. They're bolted with anti-suicide braces. He stumbles over to the door. It's locked.

INT. LUBYANKA - STAFF OFFICE - LATER THAT MORNING

Stepan and Ilych lean against a desk, staring at the sun through a window. Both are drinking coffee. Stepan smokes a cigarette. His bruised wrist is wrapped in gauss.

ILYCH
...I missed breakfast. My wife is probably wondering where I am.

STEPAN
Only three kinds of people work till morning - us, thieves and prostitutes. They get better pay.

ILYCH
Until we catch them.

Stepan shakes his head. A beat. He motions around the office.

STEPAN
You know what this place was, before the Revolution?

ILYCH
Insurance agency...I'm not sure which frightens people more.

Stepan grins. The smile slowly fades as he smokes and thinks.

STEPAN
...why won't he just confess?

Ilych has no answer. A young OFFICER hurries towards them, carrying a folder.

NKVD OFFICER
Senior Lieutenant, good morning. Two things. First, I've finished the file search you asked on that passport, Damian Zajac. Polish, but a Party Member.

Stepan glances around, ensuring they're out of anyone else's earshot.

ILYCH
How many Poles are Party Members?

STEPAN
Too many. What else?

NKVD OFFICER
Well, he's dead. Suicide in '34. Drank himself to death, in Omsk.

Stepan and Ilych look at each other. Stepan takes the file.

STEPAN
...if he died in Siberia how did his passport get back here?

NKVD OFFICER
Don't know. Did a full listing off the places it was used to travel to, though, it's big.

The officer hands Stepan a long list. Stepan scans it.

STEPAN
...Savala. Savala fields village? The village, this passport was used to go to the village there?

NKVD OFFICER
I guess. In Tambov, right? Never heard of the place. You know it?

STEPAN
What's the score now?

NKVD OFFICER
Uh, Volkov's in the lead with 82. Nazyuta's second with 73.
(MORE)

NKVD OFFICER (CONT'D)
Both are resting. But, another thing, a woman's here for you.

Stepan blinks.

STEPAN
...a what?

NKVD OFFICER
A woman. Across Dzerzhinsky at the Information Center. Showed up asking for you. Says it's important.

STEPAN
A woman?

ILYCH
(To the officer, joking)
You will excuse the Senior Lieutenant, Comrade, it's been a long time since he was laid.

Stepan ignores this and heads for the exit. He bumps into Captain Tyruin.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
Senior Lieutenant! There you are!

STEPAN
Not now, Comrade Captain.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
No, stop! I denounce you as a thief, damn it, that rabbit's my Masha's! You can't just steal the rabbits from vanguards of the proletarian-

Stepan grabs the Captain by the collar. The office freezes.

STEPAN
...I met your daughter. She's a little terror. She didn't drop that rabbit on accident, now did she?

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
You're drunk.

Stepan draws his wallet and pulls out a bill.

STEPAN
Here. Go buy her a nice pet rock.

Stepan drops the money to the floor and walks away. A group of CLERKS across the office laugh. Ilych whispers, trailing.

ILYCH
So you're going crazy now, too.

Stepan doesn't answer.

INT. INFORMATION CENTER - LOBBY - LATER THAT MORNING

Stepan and Ilych enter the large, loud information center. Bright sunlight pours through big windows around them.

The building is set up like a bank lobby, long snaking lines of WOMEN and CHILDREN wait for their chance to argue with CLERKS behind barred stations. Armed GUARDS patrol the sides.

Stepan and Ilych push towards the front of the line. A frantic woman is arguing with the clerk.

WOMAN
You don't know? You do know! It's been three weeks, where did you take him? Where's my husband?

Stepan gently pushes the woman aside. The clerk scowls.

INFORMATION CENTER CLERK
Hey, no! There's a line, there's request files, you can't just-

Stepan flashes his identification.

STEPAN
Show me the woman.

INT. INFORMATION CENTER - BACK OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

A thick middle aged woman, IRINA, sits in a chair, fidgeting nervously. A SERGEANT ushers Stepan and Ilych into the room, then leaves. She stands up, clearly nervous.

IRINA
Comrades. Good morning. I, my names Irina Andreevna Popov and, uh...

Stepan holds up a hand, stopping her. He studies the woman.

STEPAN
...I know you. You were at Dmitry Nikolayevich's apartment. The night we arrested him.

IRINA
Yes, I live there. With my husband. And my son, we're Dmitry's neighbors, Russian, and I know I shouldn't be here, but I need help.

Stepan stares, waiting.

IRINA (CONT'D)
...it wasn't, wasn't supposed to happen like that. They said it wouldn't happen in front of the children and, and the number they gave me, I call it but no one answers, and, *the compensation,* I, please, I did my duty, I need your-

Something clicks in Stepans' mind. He leans close to her.

STEPAN
What are you saying? Are you saying what I think?

Irina fidgets nervously.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
...you're the informer, aren't you? You reported Dmitry.

IRINA
I, my husband doesn't know, please-

STEPAN
What do you know, what did you see?

IRINA
He, uh, he, he-

Irina starts to have a panic attack. Stepan touches her.

STEPAN
Breathe. You're safe, okay? Just tell me what you know. Why did you report Dmitry?

IRINA
He...he, Dmitry Nikolayevich always acted suspiciously. He would come home late. Him and his wife were always reading books. *He even had foreign books.*

Stepan blinks. A beat.

STEPAN
...you reported him for books?

Irina doesn't answer. She fidgets with her hair nervously.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Irina, answer me! Why did you report him?

IRINA
(Terrified)
He, I, he, he, we, my husband's cold, it's getting colder in the apartment and his lungs are so bad. We can't afford gas for the furnace and they, they said they were compensating people who, who reported traitors, they were handing out money, so I, so I, I mean, *all those book*s, so young with those books, it had to mean something but, but I haven't gotten the money yet. For doing my duty. Can you get me the money? Please?

Stepan takes a step back. A beat. Irina takes a breath.

IRINA (CONT'D)
You...you're not married, are you? I'm sorry. You wouldn't understand.

Stepan says nothing. A beat. He turns around and storms off.

INT. INFORMATION CENTER - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Stepan pushes through the noisy lobby, Ilych trailing. He passes a table where a clerk is working at a typewriter.

Stepan suddenly lashes out, grabbing the typewriter and slamming it into a wall. Everyone in the center immediately goes silent. They watch as Stepan barges towards the exit.

EXT. DZERZHINSKY SQUARE - MOMENTS LATER

Stepan emerges onto a bright street, stumbling. A passing car nearly runs him over, its horn blaring. Stepan flinches.

STEPAN
Fucking shit.

Ilych catches up to him and takes him aside.

ILYCH
Hey, hey enough.

STEPAN
We’re going back to Dmitry.

ILYCH
You sure that’s a good idea?

STEPAN
It doesn’t mean anything. What she said. He’s still a traitor. C’mon.

Stepan reaches for his flask, Ilych takes the flask.

ILYCH
You need to calm down. Rest.

STEPAN
I’m fine.

ILYCH
Fine? You grabbed the Captain, you just threw a typewriter, you’re stumbling, that’s fine?

STEPAN
I can’t lose this, okay? You know what happens if I lose? To both of us? He has to give us the names. We’re going back. He has to.

Stepan paces. A beat.

ILYCH
...and if he doesn’t? What happens if he goes silent again?

For a moment Stepan doesn’t answer. Finally he stops pacing. He rubs his eyes and comes to a decision.

STEPAN
...I don’t know, I...you’re right. We need a break. I have to rest. Clear my head.

ILYCH
I’ll get someone to drive you home.

STEPAN
No, no, we don’t have time for that...my office, you come wake me there in two hours.
(MORE)

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Talk to your wife on the phone or something, I just, two hours...

Stepan rub his eyes again, slipping. He starts to leave.

ILYCH
Stepan, wait. You asked before, about a village. Savala. Is that-

STEPAN
No. Two hours.

Stepan leaves. Ilych watches him go.

INT. LUBYANKA - STEPAN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Stepan's head comes down on the desk in his small, dark office. His eyes close, drifting quickly to sleep.

Dark silence. Peace. Suddenly, a strange sound begins to fill the room. The sound of hard wind, and with it rustling metal.

Snow begins to fall from the ceiling. Suddenly we are no longer in Stepan's office. We are in a dream.

EXT. WINTER FIELD - DREAM

A blinding snow falls across an endless horizon. White as far as the eye can see. A barbed wire fence twists in the wind.

Shivering soldiers approach the fence. A young handsome man is among them. He is scared and freezing. He clutches his rifle nervously as something approaches through the storm.

A great brown shape begins to emerge from the snow. It is a herd. A herd of PEASANTS. Women, children, and old men huddled together, singing hymns. Sheep DOGS and SOLDIERS herd them towards the fence.

INT. LUBYANKA - STEPAN'S OFFICE - LATER

Stepan's bloodshot eyes open. His desk covered in snow.

He sits up, frightened. A second later the snow disappears, leaving him shivering and alone in the dark.

Stepan stares down at the empty desk. He rubs his face. He breathes slowly, his eyes closing. A long, deep silence.

STEPAN
...no more.

INT. LUBYANKA - LOCKER ROOM - LATER

A deserted, large locker room. Stepan opens his locker. Inside are a few half full bottles. A vintage Nagant M185 revolver. Hanging from a hook is a dusty uniform.

Stepan turns to a mirror and stares at himself. A beat. He strips off his leather jacket.

INT. LUBYANKA - STAFF OFFICE - LATER THAT DAY

OFFICERS move and work through the busy staff office. Ilych sits on the corner of desk, talking into a phone.

ILYCH
No I'm fine, just my eyes...me too.

A door opens. Officers and clerks look up, surprised, as something enters. Ilych doesn't notice.

ILYCH (CONT'D)
No, just coffee...did you feel it?

A hand touches Ilych's shoulder. He turns to see Stepan, dressed from head to toe in his blue and green NKVD uniform. It fits him perfectly. The revolver hangs in a holster.

STEPAN
...Comrade, I need you to get these items from the requisition office.

He hands Ilych a list. Ilych reads it, the phone slipping from his hand. Stepan looks over the young man's suit.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Your uniform, it's at home?

ILYCH
Yeah. Why, is the suit okay?

STEPAN
You might get blood on it.

Ilych stares up at him, surprised. Stepan nods.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
...its time. We're finishing this.

INT. LUBYANKA - MAJOR'S OFFICE - MIDDAY

Light passes through the Major's empty office. Dmitry is huddled in a corner, with his locket. He's still handcuffed.

Locks shift at the door. Dmitry hides the locket in his sock as Stepan, Ilych, and a WARDER enter.

Stepan carries a bag and a wooden chair. Ilych has a plastic tarp and curtains. The warder brings a ladder.

DMITRY
...what is, what-

STEPAN
(Calm, cold)
Turn around. Close your eyes.

Dmitry stands, turns to face the wall, and closes his eyes. The team gets to work. Ilych lays the plastic tarp across the floor while Stepan helps the warder put up the curtains, blocking the windows entirely. Dmitry shakes.

Stepan then takes the ladder, puts it in the middle of the room, and climbs it. The warder reaches into the bag and hands Stepan a meat hook. Stepan hangs it from a chandelier hook in the ceiling.

With this done, Stepan opens the bag and draws a bottle of vodka. He sits down in the chair, across the room from Dmitry, and drinks. A beat. When he speaks, he is very calm.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
...turn around. Open your eyes.

Dmitry turns around to see the changed room. He moans and faints. The warder rushes over to hold him up.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Ilych. Smelling salts.

Ilych opens the bag and hands Stepan a bag of smelling salts. Stepan gets up, walks over, and shoves a wad under Dmitry's nose, snapping him back to consciousness.

Stepan leans in close to Dmitry.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Dmitry, look at me. This is it. This is your last chance. You will confess. One way or the other.

DMITRY
No, no-

STEPAN
Who gave you the dead man's passport? Whose names are on your list?

DMITRY
No, not, it’s not, I’m not, I can’t give you what you want. I can’t.

Stepan stares at him. A beat.

STEPAN
Take his clothes off.

Dmitry struggles as the warder starts to rip off his clothes. Ilych holds out Dmitry’s arms while Stepan climbs the ladder.

DMITRY
No, wait!

STEPAN
One, two, three.

The three men hoist Dmitry up, locking his handcuffs into the meat hook. Dmitry is now hanging helpless and naked in the air, his toes barely touching one of the chairs.

Dmitry struggles to breathe, frightened, taking in quick gasps of air. Stepan picks up the bottle and swigs vodka.

STEPAN (CONT’D)
...Dmitry Nikolayevich, under Article 58 of the Criminal Code, I’m accusing you of counter-revolutionary activity. You will admit your crimes or you will-

DMITRY
No, no, you don’t want to do this. You can’t, please! Please listen! Listen! I know, I know you don’t want to do this. Let me down. You want to let me down. You’re scared, right? I know you’re scared.

Stepan stares at him for a long moment. The two men lock eyes. Silence.

Suddenly Stepan screams, knocking over the chair. In a burst of rage, he snaps one of the wooden legs off and charges at Dmitry, swinging it like a club.

Dmitry screams in pain as Stepan beats him. Ilych’s eyes go wide. Stepan keeps hitting Dmitry’s naked body with hard, brutal blows.

STEPAN
Give me names! Give me the names!

The wooden leg snaps. Stepan starts using his good fist and boots. Ilych rushes forward, pulling him off Dmitry.

Stepan paces back and forth, breathing hard. Dmitry hangs, coughing in pain as blood drips off him. Stepan takes the vodka, swigs hard, then searches in the sack.

He pulls out a long, thick iron chain and hands it to Ilych.

Ilych fingers fumble around the chain. He's shaking. He looks at Dmitry's bloody body, then back at Stepan. His mouth quivers. A beat. He shakes his head.

Stepan angrily snatches back the chain. He paces, drinks, then approaches Dmitry's back. The man's half-conscious.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Confess, accused. Give me names.

Dmitry mumbles something, his mouth full of blood.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
What was that?

DMITRY
(Choking on blood)
...go fuck yourself, Comrade.

Stepan swings the chain at his back. Dmitry screams.

CUT TO: LATER

Dmitry hangs, barely conscious, the skin on his back torn to bloody shreds. The tarp is covered in blood. Ilych stands in corner on the room, very pale. The warder is gone.

Stepan sits in another corner, drinking. The bloody chain rests at his feet.

STEPAN
...I'm out of time, accused. Give me what I want. This can get worse.

Dmitry coughs blood, barely awake. He talks to himself.

DMITRY
...Yuliya...Sasha...Yuliya...

Stepan gets up and pours vodka down Dmitry's bloody back. The pain brings him back into focus.

STEPAN
The names. Accused. Give me the-

Dmitry begins to laugh softly. His laughs grow louder, delirious and hysterical. Finally he starts to softly and fluently speak in Polish. He grins as he whispers.

Stepan turns to Ilych. Ilych swallows hard, then translates.

ILYCH
(Translating)
...I, uh, I just figured it out. It's a playground. This place is a playground. You're playing make believe. All you people do is play.

Dmitry laughs again, softly, then continues to speak. Ilych translates, struggling with words.

ILYCH (CONT'D)
(Translating)
...you dress up in these outfits, these stupid outfits, and you drag people in here and you *pretend*. But you and I *know*, don't we? We know there really is an enemy of the people in this room. A traitor. And he likes to play.

Blood comes down Dmitry's lips as he grins. Stepan's face is hard and cold. He draws a pack of matches.

STEPAN
...there's a reason I used to order 100 proof grain. It's flammable.

Stepan strikes a match and tosses it on Dmitry's back. His skin erupts in flames. Dmitry screams and writhes in agony. His feet kick the chair out from under him.

Ilych rushes out of the room. Stepan watches the flames burn. Without the chair for support the meat hook snaps from the ceiling, dropping his flaming body to the floor.

Ilych quickly returns with a blanket. He smothers it over Dmitry's back, killing the flame. He then grabs Stepan.

ILYCH
Damn it, Stepan, you're going to kill him! *You lost your mind?*

Stepan shoves him away angrily.

CUT TO: LATER

Time passes. A STAFF DOCTOR now stands over Dmitry's unconscious body, helping Ilych apply bandages to the burns. Stepan is drinking in the corner. He has no more anger.

STEPAN
...is he going to die?

NKVD STAFF DOCTOR
Hard to say. Might if you keep this up. I recommend a stop for the day. Let the accused rest.

STEPAN
No. Thank you doctor. Ilych, leave. I'll find you if I need you.

Ilych gives Stepan a worried look. Stepan doesn't budge. Ilych gets up and follows the doctor out of the room.

For a moment, Stepan simply stares at his prisoner. Then his sagging eyes shift away, noticing something small and shiny in the pile of Dmitry's clothing. It's his locket.

Stepan picks the locket up and snaps it open. A worn photo of Dmitry's wife and little daughter sits inside.

Stepan studies the photo for a long moment. Finally he closes the locket, slips it in a pocket, and finishes his bottle.

With a clumsy hand, he draws the pack of smelling salts and steps over to Dmitry. He presses the salts to his nose.

Dmitry awakens with a coarse moan. Stepan sits beside him.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
(Gentle)
Sshh. Give me the names, Dmitry. Please, just give me the names. This is why I can't stay here anymore. I hate this. But if you don't confess, I am going to have to do something I don't want to do. Please don't make me do it. Just give me names.

Dmitry says nothing, his stare is distant and dull. A beat. Stepan gets up and stumbles out the office.

INT. LUBYANKA - INTERROGATION WING - LATER

Staggering slightly, Stepan makes his way down the interrogation wing hallway. He comes to a cell door, blocked by two WARDERS.

STEPAN
Let me in.

The warders look at each other.

NKVD WARDER
Senior Lieutenant Nazyuta's in session, she-

STEPAN
Let. Me. In.

The two men give each other a look, then step aside. Stepan opens the door.

INT. LUBYANKA - NAZYUTA'S CELL - CONTINUOUS

Stepan enters the cell and immediately freezes. Nazyuta is sitting in a chair, completely naked. A TK automatic pistol rests on her lap. In a corner of the room an OLD MAN cowers hunched over, weeping and crossing himself.

Nazyuta gives Stepan a casual glance.

LIEUTENANT NAZYUTA
...yes, Comrade?

Stepan looks at the old man, then back at her. She shrugs.

LIEUTENANT NAZYUTA (CONT'D)
Orthodox Priest. Never seen a naked woman. Can I help you?

STEPAN
I...I want it back.

LIEUTENANT NAZYUTA
What back?

STEPAN
You know what.

She tilts her head, feigning ignorance.

LIEUTENANT NAZYUTA
Comrade, I'm not sure what you-

STEPAN
Don't. *Don't.* It was mine, I built it, you stole it when I was demoted. I want it back.

A beat. She nods at a bag in a corner. Stepan stumbles over to it and searches. He pulls out a thick round object covered in a burlap sack. He takes it and heads for the door.

LIEUTENANT NAZYUTA
I know you think I'm your enemy.

STEPAN
I don't have time for this.

LIEUTENANT NAZYUTA
If I *was* your enemy, I suppose I would have told Volkov about Dmitry Nikolayevich. Or his soap list. Or Truth. Instead the Senior Lieutenant has been chasing amputees around, hasn't he?

Stepan freezes. She looks his uniform up and down.

LIEUTENANT NAZYUTA (CONT'D)
...believe it or not, some of us don't want a man like that to win. We keep our options open. It's good to have you back, Comrade.

Stepan stares at her, then the priest, then leaves.

INT. LUBYANKA - MAJOR'S OFFICE - LATER

Stepan enters Major's office, flanked by two WARDERS and carrying the item. Dmitry is still laying on the floor.

Stepan pulls the burlap off, revealing an iron crown. Screws run along its inside. Dmitry starts to cry when he sees it.

CUT TO: LATER

Time has passed. The room has changed. The bloody tarp is gone. The curtains are gone. A table is now in the room. Dmitry sits at it, dressed and shivering, a pen in hand. He's writing a list of names.

His naked back is raw and bleeding. His forehead is ringed by small wounds. The bloody crown sits on the floor nearby. Stepan and Ilych stand above him, watching him work.

Dmitry drops his pen. He slips out of the chair, about to pass out. Stepan and Ilych grab him as he falls.

STEPAN
Ilych, the salts.

Dmitry waves them away with his hand. He picks up the pen and finishes writing. Ilych takes the paper from him and reads.

ILYCH
"I Dmitry Nikolayevich Ivanov confess to being a member of a counter-revolutionary cell intent on the destruction of the Soviet Union. I joined the cell when I was nineteen, out of hatred for collectivization. I had two assignments in the cell, 1- to safe guard and memorize a list of members true names and 2- to produce fake passports for them. In both aspects we were aided by the Polish government, who have plotted the destruction of the Soviet Union, and trained us in Polish to help hide our plans. I have provided here the names of all 206 members. The boxes of soap besides their initials represent crates each member was to gather over the following year in order to hide weaponry and explosives."

Stepan takes the sheets of names and looks it over.

STEPAN
Two hundred and six names. You remember them all?

DMITRY
I remember. It was my duty.

Stepan and Ilych give each other a look. Stepan folds the list and puts it in his pocket. Dmitry swallows hard.

DMITRY (CONT'D)
...what...what happens now?

STEPAN
You'll be tried by an OSO special tribunal. We have them in house.

DMITRY
I want to call my wife.

STEPAN
That's not possible.

DMITRY
I've given you everything.

STEPAN
You’re not mine anymore. You belong to extrajudicial now.

Stepan heads for the door.

DMITRY
...so we’re done?

Stepan nods.

DMITRY (CONT’D)
And...I’ll never see you again?

A beat. Stepan shakes his head.

STEPAN
Don’t worry, Dmitry. No one here’s ever going to see me again.

INT. LUBYANKA - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Stepan heads down a sunlit hall, staggering slightly. He looks at his hands. They’re still caked in blood.

Stepan stops. He leans his head against a wall and closes his eyes. He simply stands there for a long moment, breathing.

INT. LUBYANKA - CAPTAIN’S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Captain Tyruin sits at a desk in his affluent office, going over a report with Lieutenant Volkov.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
It’s countersigned with the dispatch, I just need warrants and-

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
Senior Lieutenant Lebedev.

Volkov turns around. Stepan is standing in the doorway. Volkov looks over his uniform.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
That’s cute. He’s dressed like what he wants to be when he grows up.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
(To Stepan)
This is a closed meeting, you have to wait out-

Stepan ignores this. He steps inside, closes the door, and draws Dmitry's papers from his pocket.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN (CONT'D)
...Stepan? Is everything alright?

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
Depends, how many hands do you have?

Volkov grins. Stepan calmly approaches the desk.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV (CONT'D)
Hey, I'm wondering, you think one-handed men have a problem fucking? They're missing a grip? Or-

STEPAN
(Calm, not bragging)
Comrade Captain, I have the names and arrest sheets here for two hundred and six counter-revolutionary traitors, as confessed by an accused. I need-

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
You have what?

STEPAN
-signatories and directorate approval from the department head, which I assume is you since the Major's death.

Stepan puts Dmitry's pages on the table. Dead silence.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
...Stepan. *Two hundred and six?* I-

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
No. This is, no.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
Did you say two hundred and-

Volkov stands up angrily. He snatches the paper.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
No! It's not real! He made it up, he, he just made up names!

STEPAN
I needed new friends, right?

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
Shut up! *He didn't win this,* Captain, it's a fake! The list's a fake, he knew I'm up to 98 so he-

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
Senior Lieutenant.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
This cocksucker cheated! It's not real! He's lying, he-

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
Senior Lieutenant Volkov, step outside! That's an order!

A beat. Volkov throws the paper to the floor and storms out. Stepan sits down in his chair as Tyruin picks up the pages.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN (CONT'D)
...you got this from interrogation?

Stepan nods. The Captain picks up his phone and dials.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN (CONT'D)
(Into the phone)
Records and registry. I'm coming.

He hangs up.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN (CONT'D)
He could be right, you know. We have to run a file search, determine if the names are real.

STEPAN
And if they are? Do I win?

The Captain lets out a little laugh. He turns to go.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
Wait here, don't go anywhere near Volkov. You want a drink?

Stepan shakes his head. Tyruin reaches the door, then stops.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN (CONT'D)
Look, this doesn't mean we don't still have to talk about the-

STEPAN
Get out of here.

Tyruin leaves, closing the door.

Silence. Calm. Stepan looks down at the blood on his hands, then shifts in the seat and closes his eyes. He sleeps.

CUT TO: LATER

The sunlight has turned a deep color. It's afternoon now. The Captain shakes Stepan, waking him.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
Senior Lieutenant. Wake up.

Stepan opens his bloodshot eyes. Tyruin stands before him, offering the receiver to a phone. Stepan takes it.

STEPAN
...yes?

Commissar Yezhov's voice comes on the phone.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV (ON PHONE)
Comrade Stepan, this is the Commissar. I have someone here with me who wishes to speak to you.

A pause. There's the sound of a phone passing hands. A new nasally VOICE speaks, thick with a Georgian accent.

STALIN (ON PHONE)
...do you know who I am?

Stepan sits up in the chair.

STEPAN
Yes, Comrade.

STALIN (ON PHONE)
On behalf of the Soviet people and myself I would like to congratulate you and thank you for your service.

STEPAN
Thank you, Comrade.

The voice hangs up. Stepan hands the phone by to Tyruin. The two men stare at each other.

INT. LUBYANKA - LOCKER ROOM - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Stepan stands before a mirror in the locker room, washing the blood from his hands. He studies his tired reflection.

He turns off the sink and keeps looking at himself. Slowly, something grows across his face. A small, subtle grin.

INT. LUBYANKA - HALLWAY - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Now dressed in his street clothes, Stepan emerges from the locker room. He stops immediately.

The hallway is crowded, packed to capacity with OFFICERS and SERGEANTS. They're all staring at him.

No one speaks. Suddenly someone begins to clap. Another joins in, and then the entire hallway erupts in roaring cheers.

Smiling, Stepan moves through the crowd. People are hugging him and slapping him on the back. Ilych slides close.

ILYCH
(Shouting over crowd)
Is it true? You really talk to Stalin on the phone?

Stepan laughs and turns to leave. Ilych stops him.

ILYCH (CONT'D)
Dispatch just announced you won, they're gonna give you the Order of Lenin tomorrow. Where you going?

Stepan doesn't answer. He pushes through the cheering crowd towards an exit. Someone begins to sing. Others join in.

OFFICERS
THE ENEMY CRAWLS EVERYWHERE, BUT WE CHARGE WITH OUR SWORDS IN HAND!
WE ARE FIERCE, WE ARE PREPARED TO HUNT THE MONSTERS FROM OUR LAND!

INT. LUBYANKA - MAJOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Dmitry lays on the floor, half-alive, his bloody burned back covered in bandages. He can hear singing through the walls.

Dmitry stares off into the distance with lost, vacant eyes. Then, softly, he laughs.

EXT. MOSCOW - SUNSET

The sun dips over Moscow. Silence. Peace. A phone rings.

INT. STEPAN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Stepan's asleep, a phone ringing on his bedside table. He moans and slowly answers it.

STEPAN
...Stepan Sergeievich.

ILYCH (ON PHONE)
Stepan, I've called three times!

The baby rabbit rests in a shoebox matted with newspaper on the bedside table. Stepan strokes her, his eyes closed.

STEPAN
Ilych? How'd you get my number?

ILYCH (ON PHONE)
Listen to me. We got a problem, a huge problem. The people on Dmitry's list, they're dead. All of them are dead!

Stepan eyes snap open.

STEPAN
...what, what are you saying, dead? Are they shooting them?

ILYCH (ON PHONE)
No! They're already dead! Dead before we get there! Arrest teams are knocking on doors but there's no one to arrest. They're all dead.

Stepan sits up, fear growing on his expression.

STEPAN
Ilych that's not, not possible. The Captain checked registry, they're alive!

ILYCH (ON PHONE)
All the people Dmitry gave us, they all died within the last forty eight hours. Too soon for registry files to catch up. They died two days ago! How is that even possible?

Stepan thinks hard. He looks at the rabbit's shoebox and the torn scraps of paper inside. He takes in a deep breath.

ILYCH (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
...Stepan? You there?

STEPAN
Where are you?

ILYCH (ON PHONE)
Staff office.

STEPAN
Is there a morning edition around? Look for Truth.

ILYCH (ON PHONE)
What? Alright, hold on...there's one here, yesterdays paper, why?

STEPAN
Open to the back. Look at the obituaries. Look at the names.

A pause. Silence on the line. Stepan's fingers start to fidget nervously. His breath quickens. Finally Ilych speaks.

ILYCH (ON PHONE)
...it's them. It's the names. These are the names he used.

Stepan's hand tightens into a fist. He closes his eyes.

ILYCH (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
...Stepan, I don't understand.

STEPAN
(Rising anger)
I gave him a copy of that paper at the interrogation. He memorized the obituaries and picked names that matched initials. *He tricked us.*

ILYCH
No, he, he, couldn't have, right?

Stepan stands up, breathing hard and angry.

STEPAN
Get me a car, I'm coming back.

ILYCH (ON PHONE)
Stepan.

STEPAN
And get a room, I want him in a room when I arrive and ready, we-

ILYCH (ON PHONE)
Stepan, listen! You can't interrogate him.
(MORE)

ILYCH (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
His trial is over, it took five minutes, they did it before they sent the teams. He's been transferred to sentencing.

STEPAN
Then get him off the train!

ILYCH (ON PHONE)
They're not sending him to the camps! The Commissar got angry when he found out about the fake list. He called and ordered Dmitry shot.

Stepan stops. His expression drops.

ILYCH (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
...hey? You there?

STEPAN
Shot, shot when?

ILYCH (ON PHONE)
In twenty minutes.

STEPAN
Stop it. You have to stop it.

ILYCH (ON PHONE)
I can't stop it. It's under Blokhin's Administrative Executive.

STEPAN
You have to stop the execution, Ilych! The man's still hiding the truth, we need him alive, damn it!

ILYCH (ON PHONE)
It's Commissar's orders, I can't!

STEPAN
THEN FUCKING STALL THEM! NOW!

Stepan throws the receiver and snatches up his clothes.

EXT. MOSCOW STREET - SUNSET

Now dressed, Stepan rushes out onto a crowded street. Cars swerve to avoid hitting him, horns blaring.

A car breaks, stopping right in front of him. Stepan storms towards the driver's side, flashing his identification.

INT. LUBYANKA - STAIRWELL - LATER THAT EVENING

TWO WARDERS carry Dmitry down a set of stairs. He's only half awake and delirious from his burns.

EXT. DZERZHINSKY SQUARE - LATER THAT EVENING

Stepan drives the car up to a corner outside Lubyanka. He climbs out and races towards the building's entrance.

INT. LUBYANKA - EXECUTION CELLAR HALLWAY - LATER THAT EVENING

A DOCTOR, a female CLEANER, and a EXECUTIONER stand at the end of a dark hall, waiting. The executioner calmly smokes.

The warders enter, carrying Dmitry. The executioner drops his cigarette, grinds it out, and opens the door to a room.

INT. LUBYANKA - STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Stepan rushes down stairs, shoving past a confused CLERK.

INT. LUBYANKA - EXECUTION CELLAR - MOMENTS LATER

Dmitry is sitting on his knees on a plastic tarp, the two warders helping hold him up. The executioner steps up behind him, drawing a T-T 30 automatic pistol.

Drool is coming down Dmitry's mouth. He's barely conscious.

The executioner calmly puts the barrel to the back of Dmitry's neck. Dmitry takes a frightened breath. Silence. His lips quiver, trembling. He silently whispers a name.

The executioner fires. Dmitry drops to the floor. The doctor steps in with a clipboard and inspects the body.

NKVD DOCTOR
He needs another.

The doctor steps aside. The executioner fires again. The doctor checks the body then signs a clipboard.

INT. LUBYANKA - EXECUTION CELLAR HALLWAY - LATER

Ilych paces nervously in the hallway beside the cleaner. Stepan comes rushing down the stairs.

Ilych puts a hand on him, blocking his path. Stepan tries to push past but Ilych stops him. They look in each others eyes.

Ilych shakes his head. Stepan backs off, breathing hard.

The door to a cell opens. Out steps the executioner and doctor. The executioner shoves Stepan's shoulder as he silently heads towards the stairs. Stepan stares at the cell.

Out step the two warders, carrying Dmitry's half-naked corpse off into another room. Stepan kneels down, exhaling slowly.

The cleaner enters the cell with her supplies, closing the door. Stepan doesn't speak. He doesn't move. A long beat.

ILYCH
...the Commissar's on his way back. Are we going to be okay?

Stepan doesn't answer. A long beat.

STEPAN
...the competition?

ILYCH
They, uh...I'm sorry. They took the victory from you.

Silence. Finally Stepan shakes his head. He suddenly marches towards the stairs. Ilych follows.

INT. LUBYANKA - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Stepan moves quickly down a hall, Ilych trailing him.

ILYCH
Stepan? Stepan, where are you-

STEPAN
There's not a lot of time, Ilych. You're going to have to do exactly what I say. Now-

CAPTAIN TYRUIN (O.S.)
Comrade Lieutenant!

The Captain appears behind them, angry. Stepan turns around.

STEPAN
I'm a Senior Lieutenant, Captain.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
Not anymore you're not. I'm supposed to keep you here until the Commissar arrives tonight.

STEPAN
That's not an option. I have to go.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
Go? Where the hell do you think-

STEPAN
The case. There's still more work-

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
The case is over, Stepan!

STEPAN
It's not over. The accused lied to us, we still don't know the names on that list, I have to find-

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
You have to keep your peasant ass here, damn it! You have any idea how much damage you've already done to my career? I'm not getting some Siberia transfer just because you-

Stepan leans in close to the Captain, glaring.

STEPAN
...look at me. Look me in the eye, Captain. Your career is the last thing we have to worry about now. When the Commissar gets here he is going to kill me, and then kill Ilych, then he's going to kill you for letting this happen. It's going to be Old Bear all over again.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
Mishin was a traitor.

STEPAN
No he wasn't.

The Captain looks at Ilych, nervously. Stepan leans closer.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
Lieutenant, I didn't hear you say-

STEPAN
(Whisper)
Captain, we need to be honest. The lieutenants. The competition. You know what's really going on here.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
Stop.

STEPAN
(Even softer)
They're clearing us out. Everyone who fought in the Revolution, everyone who was here before Stalin and Yezhov, they're destroying all of us one by one. This isn't a competition. *It's a purge.*

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
You just made yourself a dead man.

STEPAN
I'm the only one? Why weren't you promoted to Major? You were next in line, but Yezhov makes up this game instead? So where's that put you?

The Captain shifts uncomfortably. He looks around.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
I have a wife. A little girl.

STEPAN
I have to prove the list is real, I have to find the real traitors before Yezhov arrives. It's the only way to save us. You going to stop me?

A beat. The Captain swallows, then points at Ilych.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
You heard nothing, understand?

Stepan turns around and keeps walking. Ilych follows.

INT. LUBYANKA - LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Stepan opens his locker, reaches onto the shelf, and takes something. He slips it in a jacket pocket. Ilych watches.

STEPAN
I need you to wait here. If Yezhov returns before I do, you need to stall him, show him the evidence. You're in this along with me.

ILYCH
You think I don't know that? My Raisa's pregnant.

STEPAN
We're going to be fine.

ILYCH
Those things you said to the Captain-

STEPAN
We're going to be fine. Just buy me time.

ILYCH
For what? Where are you going?

Stepan shakes his head and heads to leave. Ilych stops him.

ILYCH (CONT'D)
Stepan...good luck, Comrade.

INT. CAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Stepan drives through dark rain, breathing heavy. He pulls up to an apartment building. Dmitry's building.

Stepan closes his eyes, sighs, then opens the door.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Stepan rides the groaning elevator. He reaches into his coat and draws the item he took from his locker. It's his Nagant M185 revolver. He also has a fistful of bullets.

He snaps open the cylinder and starts loading the gun.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Stepan moves down the hall with fast, hard steps, pistol in hand. He comes to a door kicks it down with one brutal blow.

INT. COMMUNAL APARTMENT KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Stepan charges into the apartment, pistol raised. Husbands and wives poke their heads out of bedrooms. Women scream.

Stepan kicks open the door to Dmitry's room. Yuliya is in bed, in her pajamas, holding her daughter. The child starts crying. Yuliya grabs her protectively.

YULIYA
No! Please, don't-

Stepan takes Yuliya by the arm, dragging her away from the girl and into the kitchen. Other wives keep screaming.

STEPAN
SHUT UP! ALL OF YOU!

People struggle to calm down. They put their hands up. Stepan paces, seething. Suddenly he turns to the other families, shows his identification, and motions to the door.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Get out of here. Go.

The families rush for the hall. As they head out Stepan spots Irina, the informer, carrying her son. Stepan glares at her.

Once they are gone, Stepan turns back to Yuliya. Her daughter has stepped into the kitchen, clutching her mother's leg.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
(More calm)
...put your daughter back in bed,
then come out here immediately.

YULIYA
What are you going to do?

Stepan doesn't answer. A beat.

YULIYA (CONT'D)
Please, where's Dmitry? What has-

STEPAN
This city, it's a city of liars. Of secrets. Your husband had secrets, and he had lies, and he's almost ruined me with them. Not this time.

Yuliya shifts, frightened. Stepan motions to the little girl.

Trembling, Yuliya guides her daughter back into the darkness of the bedroom. He hears Yuliya whisper soft words to her. Finally she emerges, shaking, and closes the broken door.

YULIYA
...she hasn't done anything wrong.

STEPAN
I'm not here for her.

YULIYA
I haven't either. Please, I don't-

STEPAN
I'm going to ask questions now. You're going to give me answers. If you lie to me, like your husband did, I will execute you right here. Do you believe I'm capable of that?

She nods. Stepan motions to the kitchen table. She sits.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
...alright. The list. How did he get it? What was your husband planning and whose names are on it?

YULIYA
What list?

STEPAN
I have to repeat myself?

YULIYA
What list? Please, I-

He draws a copy of the soap list and slams it down, pacing.

STEPAN
This list! The soap list!

YULIYA
I, I've never seen this before! I don't know what it is.

STEPAN
What are the Polish planning? Why was it in his coat?

YULIYA
What? Whose coat?

STEPAN
Dmitry's coat! The one he made you give him. He has this hidden in his-

YULIYA
That, no, it can't-

STEPAN
Stop it. You can't trick me, not this time. Whose names are here?

YULIYA
I don't know this list! I don't know these people. I don't even know what language this is! I-

STEPAN
You expect me to believe Dmitry kept you in the dark? About the list, about the passport, about-

YULIYA
(Frightened)
The passport. *Damian*, he...

Stepan stops pacing.

STEPAN
Damian. Damian Zajac. The Pole, the dead Pole. How did you know him?

Yulyia twitches. No answer. Stepan takes a breath then suddenly grabs her hair, pressing the pistol to her head. She screams with fear.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
ANSWER ME, DAMN IT! WHO WAS HE?

YULIYA
(Sobbing)
No! Please!

STEPAN
I WILL KILL YOU! I WILL SHOOT YOU IN THE HEAD! WHO WAS HE? WHO WAS HE? WHO WAS-

YULIYA
(Crying hard)
Dmitry's father! He was Dmitry's father!

Stepan freezes, surprised. She keeps sobbing. Slowly he lowers the pistol. Then he sees the daughter, Masha, standing silently in the bedroom doorway. They stare at each other.

INT. LUBYANKA - HALLWAY - LATER THAT NIGHT

Commissar Yezhov marches down a hall, flanked by BODYGUARDS.

INT. LUBYANKA - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Yezhov charges into the Captain's office. Ilych and the Captain are waiting. They snap to immediate attention.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
Comrade Commissar, good evening. I-

COMMISSAR YEZHOV
(Raging)
SILENCE! Worm!

Yezhov's men pour into the room, forming a rigid line.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV (CONT'D)
Damn you, Captain, damn you all, I knew this department was filled with Yagoda's snakes, I SHOULD HAVE KILLED YOU ALL! *WITH FIRE!*

Yezhov spots a bottle behind the Captain's desk. He rushes over and grabs it, ripping off the cap. The Captain flinches.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV (CONT'D)
Do you know what I've done? Because of you and this department of fucking monkey traitors? *Do you?*

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
Comrade Commissar, I-

COMMISSAR YEZHOV
I TOLD HIM!

Yezhov swigs from the bottle then rants, his mouth dripping.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV (CONT'D)
(Almost crying)
...*I told him*. I told our beautiful Comrade Stalin that we had a Lieutenant with *two hundred traitors* on a list. Now what do I do? Crawl back and beg forgiveness? NO! I WILL BRING HIM A CORPSE!
(MORE)

COMMISSAR YEZHOV (CONT'D)
A HUNDRED CORPSES! That fucking Trotskyite Lieutenant attacked me, he lied to me, *he shamed me*, I WILL FLAY HIS SKIN- who are you?!

Yezhov hiccups and points at Ilych. The young man stammers.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
Comrade, this is Junior Lieutenant Sidorov, partner to Lieutenant Lebedev and-

COMMISSAR YEZHOV
SHOOT HIM!

The guards charge forward and grab Ilych. They drag him towards the door.

ILYCH
Wait! Commissar, please!

COMMISSAR YEZHOV
(Raging)
Who sent you? *Beria? Who gave you that fake list?*

The guards get Ilych to the door, but he keeps struggling against them.

ILYCH
Please! Listen! The names we were given on the list were false, but the list is real! The soap list, the code word boxes of soap, it-

Yezhov's face suddenly goes pale. He shouts at the guards.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV
Stop!

The guards stop, still holding Ilych. Yezhov approaches him.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV (CONT'D)
...what did you say? *Boxes of what?*

ILYCH
I, uh, soap, Comrade. The Polish list we found is coded with the words "boxes of soap". There's a translated copy in my suit.

The Commissar opens Ilych's coat and snatches out the list. He reads it quickly, his eyes widening.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV
...an arrested man had this? A copy of this list? *In Polish?*

ILYCH
That and a passport from a-

COMMISSAR YEZHOV
The passport is irrelevant. Where did he get this?

Ilych looks at the Captain, confused.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
...Comrade Commissar, with respect, do you know something we don't?

Yezhov thinks. Suddenly he turns to his staff.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV
Leave. Now.

Yezhov's men march out. Yezhov leans against the Captain's desk, his eyes on the list. He turns to Ilych and Tyruin.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV (CONT'D)
...close the door, get me another drink. We have much to discuss.

INT. LUBYANKA - HALLWAY - LATER THAT NIGHT

Commissar Yezhov exits the Captain's office. OFFICERS snap to attention as he scuttles down the hall.

Ilych and Captain Tyruin emerge from the office soon after. They stare at each other. Ilych adjusts his suit.

ILYCH
...I'm going to need a team.

INT. COMMUNAL APARTMENT KITCHEN - LATER THAT NIGHT

Yuliya's no longer crying. She's calm and quiet. She sits at the table, now holding Masha and rocking her to sleep. Stepan stands nearby, the gun still in his hand.

YULIYA
(Quietly, calm)
...Dmitry's father, Damian, he was a writer. A thinker. He was born in Poland, but he wandered the world, even after he had a son.

STEPAN
Why?

YULIYA
Damian told me once that back then, he was looking for something, something to believe in. He found it. In Zurich, he met a man, a Russian exile. He taught Damian to believe. Believe in a better world.

STEPAN
Who was the Russian?

YULIYA
Lenin.

Stepan eyes widen. Yuliya rocks her child and continues.

YULIYA (CONT'D)
It's true. They became friends, and when Lenin returned to Russia, Damian followed. He even brought his son, to a revolution. Dmitry was four. Spoke no Russian, knew nothing. He was terrified. We met, we both lived in the same building. We protected each other. Cared for each other. I taught him Russian.

STEPAN
Stick to Damian. What happened?

YULIYA
He became a revolutionary. Gave speeches, tried to rally the Russian Poles. He supported the Bolsheviks, even after they attacked Vilna. Damian thought it was the beginning of a new world. No more racism. No more oppression. That's what he wanted to believe.

Stepan says nothing. A beat. She continues.

YULIYA (CONT'D)
We heard rumors. They were rounding up Poles. Putting them on lists. When Lenin died, and Stalin came, it got worse. Kirov. The end of NEP. Damian saw it coming. People started disappearing in the night, the Mensheviks, the originals, everyone who built the country.
(MORE)

YULIYA (CONT'D)
Stalin, he was getting rid of them all. Like he didn't want revolutionaries anymore.

Stepan twitches. A beat.

STEPAN
...what happened to Damian?

YULIYA
He changed. Started drinking. Stopped talking. He had been on committees. Given speeches. He knew it was just a matter of time before they came for him. Hell, they were going through the phone book, rounding up anyone with a Polish name.

STEPAN
So he ran.

YULIYA
He disappeared. Left Dmitry behind. The boy was fifteen, no money, alone, I was all he had left. We took care of each other. Never saw his father again. Even after Masha was born.

Stepan stares at the girl.

YULIYA (CONT'D)
...for years we didn't know what happened to Damian. Then finally a letter came in the mail. It said Damian had drunk himself to death halfway across the country. He left no note, nothing, but before the old man died he had put his rain-coat in the mail with his passport, sent them both back to Dmitry. I guess it was his way of saying goodbye.

STEPAN
With a list of traitors.

YULIYA
If that list really was in the coat-

STEPAN
It was.

YULIYA
If it was, I never knew about it. Neither did Dmitry.

STEPAN
Yes he did. He knew what it was. He picked the coat, the night I arrested him. He took it with him like he was trying to get rid of-

Yuliya laughs suddenly, a small bitter laugh.

YULIYA
You want to know why he picked that damn coat? What I think?

Stepan waits for her answer. A beat.

YULIYA (CONT'D)
That coat was the only thing he had left of his father's, that and the passport. He could never bring himself to get rid of either. I think my husband picked that coat because he felt that if he was wearing it, if he had it with him, he'd be a little closer to his father, when you killed him.

Stepan says nothing. Yuliya stares up at him, calmly. The little girl is asleep in her arms. A beat.

YULIYA (CONT'D)
...Dmitry, he is dead, isn't he?

Stepan says nothing. She looks down, calm and still. Silence. She closes her eyes. Stepan shakes his head.

STEPAN
...no, you're lying, all of it. Dmitry's records, none of it says he's a Pole, nothing on Damian.

YULIYA
Damian was a wanted man, it was dangerous to be his son. Dangerous to be Polish. So Dmitry changed our name. He paid two migrant workers to give us their identity cards. We became new people. That's all.

STEPAN
That's not all. Dmitry was guilty of something. He was hiding the passport at work for a reason, he-

YULIYA
He kept it at work so it wouldn't be here if he was ever arrested.

STEPAN
No, he had it there because of the presses, he had the photo cut out.

YULIYA
He cut it out so no one would recognize the family resemblance.

STEPAN
Don't lie to me! He was guilty, he was sneaking onto the printing floor at night, I know he was, he-

YULIYA
What, those nights? Those nights when he went back to the office?

Stepan stares, waiting. She motions around the small room.

YULIYA (CONT'D)
You see a typewriter here anywhere? Do you? He was going back there to work on a novel. A story about a young man who's abandoned by his father. That's it.

A beat. Stepan rubs his temple. He shakes his head.

STEPAN
...this isn't, no, it's not-

YULIYA
(Calm)
There wasn't any conspiracy. If that list is real he had nothing to do with it. Dmitry wasn't a traitor. And he wasn't a criminal. All he was, the only thing, was the son of a dead man. And you killed him for it.

Silence. Stepan says nothing. He takes a step back, accidentally knocking over a chair. He twitches, frightened, then with fumbling fingers picks it back up and sits down.

Stepan breathes hard. He still says nothing. He just stares at her. Yuliya rocks her sleeping child back and forth.

YULIYA (CONT'D)
...so what now? What do you do?

Stepan remains silent. Suddenly a sound fills the room. The groaning sound of a rising elevator. It comes to a halt.

Stepan gets up, concerned. He slips the pistol into his coat pocket. Footsteps echo down the hall outside.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Stepan creeps into the hallway. He waits. Footsteps sound from around a corner. They grow louder and louder until Ilych appears. They stare at each other. A beat.

STEPAN
What are you doing here?

ILYCH
What are you doing here?

Neither of them answer. Ilych stares at the broken door.

ILYCH (CONT'D)
...you came here? You came here to get answers?

STEPAN
I told you to stay for the Commissar.

ILYCH
I did. He sent me.

A beat. Stepan processes this.

STEPAN
The Commissar sent you here? What's happened?

ILYCH
You, uh, you're not going to believe it. You won't.

STEPAN
What?

ILYCH
It's over. The case is over. We're off the hook.

Stepan blinks, confused. Ilych grins. He looks around, then steps closer and whispers.

ILYCH (CONT'D)
He knew. The Commissar knew. Boxes of soap, he knows what they are.

STEPAN
What are they?

ILYCH
You don't want to know.

STEPAN
What are they?

Ilych puts a fingers to his own lips, quieting Stepan.

ILYCH
(Whisper)
You're missing the point. It doesn't matter anymore. The case is over, and the Commissar, he wants to *reward us* for finding this list. All we have to do is destroy it. The case, the copies, our files, every lead, every piece of evidence, he wants every record of this soap list gone. Once that's done, we're free.

STEPAN
...free.

ILYCH
Can you believe it? I thought we we're done for, *Stepan, it's over.*

STEPAN
(Stunned)
I don't, I don't believe.

ILYCH
Your copy of the list, give it.

Stepan takes it out and hands it to him. As he does the young man suddenly grabs him, pulling him into a laughing hug.

ILYCH (CONT'D)
...Comrade, it's over. You're going to get your transfer, I'm going to get promoted.

STEPAN
(In shock)
I...the list, there's another copy in the glove compartment, I think, the, the Pobeda.

ILYCH
Yeah, I got it already. All that's left is the reference in the judiciary stack, and the woman.

STEPAN
What woman?

ILYCH
The wife. Dmitry's wife. We got to bring her in.

Stepan takes a step back, confused.

STEPAN
...what do you mean?

ILYCH
What do you think? Yezhov's orders.

A beat. Stepan turns and heads down the hall to a little window. He stares out at the raining street bellow.

A truck's parked on the curb. TWO SERGEANTS huddle in the rain beside it, with PPD-40 submachine guns on their backs.

STEPAN
...you brought a team?

ILYCH
Why do you think I'm here? I came for the woman.

STEPAN
But she, she's not a part of the case. She doesn't know anything.

ILYCH
Yezhov's orders. She's the wife, she's connected, he wants it all, evidence, suspects-

STEPAN
(Strong, hard)
She's not a suspect.

The tone takes Ilych by surprise. A beat.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
...we got it wrong. Dmitry. The case. We got it all wrong.

ILYCH
We got many things wrong. This is our chance to make it right.

A beat. Stepan shifts nervously.

ILYCH (CONT'D)
What?

STEPAN
...we don't have to take the woman, right? We can leave her.

ILYCH
No, we can't. We have orders.

STEPAN
Ilych it's not, we can't! It's not, it's not right.

A beat. Ilych blinks. His voice grows angry.

ILYCH
...not what? After the things I watched you do. *The things you made me a part of.*

STEPAN
Ilych-

ILYCH
You brought me into this, you realize that, right? I had my own plans, but you made me buy into your bullshit, and look where that led us!

STEPAN
That's not my-

ILYCH
You put me in danger. My wife in danger. You almost brought down the whole damn department, *for what?* Volkov was right about us.

STEPAN
No, we, we thought we had a case! We were following leads, the list-

Ilych lets out a cold laugh. Stepan stops.

ILYCH
...you want to know what it is?
What that list really is?

Stepan says nothing. Ilych steps closer, whispering.

ILYCH (CONT'D)
Boxes of soap is an old code word
from our own department telegraphs.
That's how Yezhov knew what it
meant. We made that list. Not
Damian, he just found it, and
rewrote it in Polish.

STEPAN
...what does it mean?

Ilych doesn't answer. Stepan closes in, angry.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Ilych, what are the boxes of soap?

ILYCH
(Angry whisper)
They're corpses. A box of soap is a
dead body.

Silence. Stepan's face twists. He stares at Ilych, waiting.

ILYCH (CONT'D)
Those initials on the list? They
aren't people's names. They're
towns. Cities. Villages, the first
and last letter of each. They all
line up perfectly with the places
Damian went with that passport.

Stepan steps back. He closes his eyes, pain running over his expression. He rubs his face and closes his eyes.

STEPAN
...*Savala*. Savala village.

Stepan closes his eyes. A wind blow through the hall.

ILYCH
You get it now, don't you? Damian
didn't have a list of traitors. He
had mass graves, where we executed
traitors during the Civil War.

Snow begins to fall from the ceiling. The hallway begins to fade around Stepan, the walls melding into a dream.

EXT. WINTER FIELD - DREAM

Stepan now stands in the frozen field, his eyes still closed. YOUNG SOLDIERS all around him drag PEASANT WOMEN towards the barbed wire fence. The women scream but the world is silent.

Stepan says nothing, his eyes still shut. The peasant women are being silently lined up against the barb wire. Soldiers are forming a firing line before them, loading rifles. Ilych's voice enters the dream.

ILYCH (V.O.)
Now you understand? The list, the woman, they all have to go.

The soldiers aim their rifles. A young, freezing OFFICER steps forward.

ILYCH (V.O.)
We have to get rid of this.

The officer gives a silent order to his men to fire. Stepan opens his eyes. The dream suddenly disappears.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Stepan is standing back in the hallway, opening his eyes. He sighs, nods, and puts his hands in his pockets.

ILYCH
We're taking the woman. I'm sorry, Comrade...sooner or later, you meet the wolves.

STEPAN
(Calm)
...you're right. You do.

A gunshot suddenly goes off. Ilych's shoulder erupts in blood as Stepan opens fire from within his jacket pocket.

Ilych crashes backwards. Stepan pulls the smoking gun out and walks over to the window. He looks down at the street. The sergeants are racing inside, loading their submachine guns.

Ilych lets out a moan of pain. Stepan calmly walks back over to him and searches his suit. He pulls out Ilych's knife and tosses it away, then takes back the soap list. Finally he draws Ilych's TK pistol. Stepan now has a gun in both hands.

ILYCH
(In agony)
...what the hell?

STEPAN
How many men, just the two sergeants? And the driver?

ILYCH
You shot me!

Stepan puts a gun to his head. His voice is calm.

STEPAN
How many men did you bring? Just the team?

Ilych nods, grimacing in pain. Yuliya leans into the hall, frightened. She gasps when she sees Ilych bleeding on the floor. Stepan turns to her.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Get dressed, grab a coat, get your daughter. I'm getting you out of here.

She says nothing, staring at Ilych. Stepan shouts.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Look at me! There are men here for you. I think I can get you out, but we have to go. Now.

ILYCH
Don't, he'll get your kid killed!

Stepan presses a pistol against Ilych's wound. Ilych moans.

STEPAN
Yuliya, there's no time. Decide. Are you leaving with them, or me?

A beat. Yuliya nods then heads back into the apartment. Footsteps are charging up a nearby stairwell.

ILYCH
Can't run. They'll come after you.

STEPAN
Yes. They will.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The stairwell door bursts open as the two sergeants enter the hall, weapons raised.

NKVD STAFF SERGEANT
Lieutenant! Junior Lieutenant!

They head quickly down the hall and turn a corner. They find Ilych bleeding on the floor where Stepan left him.

ILYCH
Behind you!

The sergeants turn around just in time to see Stepan emerge from a side corridor, both pistols raised.

The hall fills with gunfire. All three men start shooting at the same time. The walls are sprayed with bullets and blood.

Within a matter of seconds it is over. Both sergeants hit the floor dead. Stepan crashes down onto a knee, dropping his pistols. He has a gunshot wound in his stomach.

He holds his wound, grimacing in pain. Yuliya slowly emerges from the corridor Stepan appeared from, carrying her child protectively. She stares at the carnage wordlessly.

Stepan takes a pistol and struggles to his feet. He locks eyes with Ilych, who is still bleeding on the floor.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Stepan rides the elevator with Yuliya, who is still carrying her daughter. Stepan presses a hand to his wound and looks.

There’s no blood on his hand. It’s snow. He is bleeding snow.

YULIYA
...why are you doing this?

Stepan doesn’t answer. The elevator reaches the bottom.

EXT. MOSCOW STREET CORNER - MOMENTS LATER

Stepan limps out into the rain, Yuliya following behind him. The DRIVER is climbing out the truck, nervous and confused.

NKVD DRIVER
...Comrade? Where’s Lieutenant Sidorov?

Stepan draws his pistol, aiming it at the driver.

CUT TO: LATER

The driver is now standing in the back of the truck where the prisoners are usually kept, both his hands up. Stepan slides shut the back door and locks it. He tosses the key in a gutter then heads for his car.

INT. LUBYANKA - CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Commissar Yezhov slams a phone down, in a rage. Captain Tyruin, and Lieutenants Volkov and Nazyuta stand before him.

Silence. A beat. Finally Yezhov begins to speak, frighteningly calm.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV
...I want every district on alert. I want dispatch and deployment operating at maximum capacity. He has an hour head start. The capture of the traitor Stepan Sergeievich is now our highest priority. Whoever brings him to me alive will be awarded the rank of Major. Use every tool. Look everywhere. Begin.

INT. LUBYANKA - ARMORY - LATER THAT NIGHT

SERGEANTS pull rifles off a weapon rack.

INT. LUBYANKA - TELEGRAPH ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Female WORKERS are hard at work at a massive telegraph board, pulling cables and talking fast. A male OFFICER paces nearby, with a photograph of Stepan.

INT. LUBYANKA - MOTOR POOL - LATER THAT NIGHT

The garage doors open, revealing the raining night. Trucks and sedans are racing into the storm.

INT. LUBYANKA - MEDICAL OFFICE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Two NURSES hold down Ilych as he screams in pain. A DOCTOR is operating on his wound.

INT. CAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Stepan drives through the night, Yuliya sitting beside him, her daughter in the back seat. His stomach is still bleeding. He grimaces in pain.

A police car whips by with a blaring siren. Once the cruiser is far away Stepan begins to speak.

STEPAN
...I think I have a way to get you out of the city tonight, but it's dangerous. You're a wanted woman now. You can't go for the border. You have to avoid cities, towns, anything near an NKVD post.

YULIYA
They're everywhere. There's nowhere to go.

STEPAN
Yes there is. There's a village, by a river. It's where I grew up. If my family is still there, they'll protect you.

YULIYA
You're joking.

Stepan shakes his head.

YULIYA (CONT'D)
I'm not taking my daughter to some random farm. I won't let her-

STEPAN
No one in the department knows where I'm from. I'm just another peasant to them, from one of a thousand possible villages. They'll never find the right one. The people there will protect your girl. It's a good home.

YULIYA
Dmitry was a good home.

Stepan doen't reply. Finally he reaches into his coat and draws the soap list.

STEPAN
Dmitry's father...Damian, when he left Moscow, he didn't just disappear. He went looking. For the truth about...me. People like me. That's why they want you now.

He offers her the list.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
Hold onto this. When you're old, have your daughter hold onto it. Damian, Dmitry, they would want you to have it. And for you to be safe.

She stares at the paper for a moment, then takes it.

YULIYA
...you still haven't said why you're doing this.

Stepan doesn't answer. He parks the car outside an apartment, and closes his eyes, wincing in pain.

STEPAN
...wait here.

Stepan opens the door, smearing blood across the handle. He looks at his hands, then turns to Yuliya, strangely calm.

STEPAN (CONT'D)
...I'm not cold. I'm not.

She says nothing. He climbs out of the car.

INT. STEPAN'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Stepan stumbles into his apartment, bleeding. He peels off his jacket, grabbing a roll of gauze from the bathroom.

CUT TO: LATER

With his stomach wound now bandaged, Stepan moves with quick purpose. He opens a map of the city, folding it to a certain page as he searches for something. Stepan taps a spot.

He drops the map, then grabs a bag and darts through his kitchen, stuffing bread, vegetables, and milk into the bag. He bends over in pain, struggling to breathe.

Stepan opens a drawer, reaches inside, and takes out Dmitry's golden locket. He drops it in the bag, then zips it up.

His eyes turn to the baby rabbit, sleeping in the open shoe box. He stares at it.

The phone suddenly rings. Stepan's eyes dart to the phone. He doesn't answer. It keeps ringing. Then it stops.

CUT TO: LATER

The apartment's front door is knocked down as a team of SERGEANTS pour inside, weapons raised. Lieutenant Volkov leads them. They do a quick sweep of the apartment. Stepan is gone. No sign of him.

Volkov's eyes turn to the floor. He spots the small puddles of blood. He paces through the apartment, following the blood. He stops. He leans down.

The discarded map is still sitting beneath the table. Volkov picks it up, his face growing into a sharp grin.

INT. LUBYANKA - STAFF OFFICE - LATER THAT NIGHT

The staff office has been turned into a war room. Maps of the city are everywhere. OFFICERS are working overtime.

The Commissar is looking over a list with Captain Tyruin.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
...because we don't have the manpower for an entire city lock. We can't seal every way out, too many, we have to find the right one, the one he's going to use, and hit it with everything we-

LIEUTENANT NAZYUTA (O.S.)
Commissar!

They look up. Nazyuta is across the office, on a phone.

LIEUTENANT NAZYUTA (CONT'D)
It's Volkov.

CUT TO: LATER

Captain Tyruin and Commissar Yezhov both have a receiver to their ears, listening to Volkov on the line.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV (ON PHONE)
He was hurt, in a rush, left a lot behind. Clothes, money, there's a shoe box with holes in it.

CAPTAIN TYRUIN
Bastard stole my rabbit!

INT. STEPAN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Volkov is on the phone, holding the map. He's grinning.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
But listen, he had a map here of Moscow central, and there's a fingerprint, a bloody fingerprint on the map, over an industrial rail yard. Molokov Yards.

INT. LUBYANKA - STAFF OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Yezhov, the phone to an ear, snaps a finger at an officer.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV
Molokov Yards! Security check, now.

He hangs up the phone, turns around, and spots Ilych standing in the office doorway. Ilych is pale, his right shoulder and arm are wrapped in a sling.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV (CONT'D)
Well. The young live.

Ilych says nothing.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV (CONT'D)
Hurts, doesn't it? Being betrayed.

Ilych nods.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV (CONT'D)
Learn from this. Not every man is a true man. Some are cowards. Some are weak. It's hard to tell which.

An officer shouts, his ear to a phone.

NKVD OFFICER
Molokov Train Yard, seven minutes ago the report line got a call. A witness reported a man in the train yard, limping, with a woman and a young girl. There's a freight that leaves Molokov in ten minutes.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV
(Growing energy)
Stop the train. Alert everyone, get the dogs, dispatch, I want the girl, I want the mother, I want that drunken Yagoda worm brought WRITHING AND SCREAMING TO ME! *NOW!*

Officers start running for the stairs. Clerks begin frantically dialing calls. Yezhov turns back to Ilych.

COMMISSAR YEZHOV (CONT'D)
...are you committed? Prove it.

Ilych turns to go, but stops and turns around.

ILYCH
What will you do? When we get him?

COMMISSAR YEZHOV
(Calm, slow)
What will I do to the traitor? I will get a chisel and a hammer and make him my sculpture. Stepan Sergeivich will be art for the people when I am done.

A beat. Ilych turns and heads for the stairs.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL TRAIN YARD ENTRANCE - LATER THAT NIGHT

A large dark train yard on the outskirts of Moscow. Silent and calm. An empty phone booth sits nearby. Rain falls softly.

A fleet of NKVD trucks and cars pull quietly into the yard, their lights off. OFFICERS and SERGEANTS emerge from vehicles, carrying submachine guns and pistols.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL TRAIN YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Volkov, Nazyuta, and Ilych creep through the train yard, pistols drawn. SERGEANTS with submachine guns follow them.

Ilych spots something on the ground. He stops the team. A spot of blood is on the gravel. There is a trail of it leading towards a cattle car compartment on a freight train.

Volkov nods. He gives a signal to the sergeants. They converge silently on the train, weapons raised. Two sergeants grab the freight door, ready to slide it open.

Silence. Volkov gives a nod. The sergeants slide the door open with a screech of metal. The Lieutenants charge inside.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
NKVD! FREEZE!

INT. FREIGHT TRAIN CAR - CONTINUOUS

The interior of the cattle car is dark and silent. It is empty, except for Stepan. He is sitting with his back against a wall, drinking calmly from his flask. His stomach is bleeding hard through his leather jacket.

Volkov, Nazyuta, and Ilych climb inside, pistols raised. They look around, confused.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
...where's the woman?

Stepan says nothing. He grins.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV (CONT'D)
Where's the woman?

Stepan doesn't answer. Volkov calls to the sergeants.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV (CONT'D)
Search the train. Bring her and the kid here.

STEPAN
You're not going to find them.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
You sure?

STEPAN
You're not going to find them, because they're not here.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
They're here. We got a call.

STEPAN
(Amused)
You got a call? You mean, from that phone booth outside?

Nazyuta lowers her pistol.

LIEUTENANT NAZYUTA
...shit.

EXT. MOSCOW RIVER - EARLIER THAT NIGHT

Stepan, Yuliya and her daughter climb down a ladder built along the side of a bridge. An industrial barge is flowing down the river beneath them, passing beneath the bridge.

Stepan hands Yuliya the bag full of food and supplies. Then he carefully draws the baby rabbit from his coat and hands it to the little girl. The barge passes under the bridge.

Stepan nods at Yuliya. She takes her daughter and jumps onto the barge, landing atop a pile of cotton.

They land safely. Yuliya pulls her daughter close, then looks up at Stepan. He watches her drift away, holding his stomach.

INT. FREIGHT TRAIN CAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

The three Lieutenants stand before Stepan.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
...no, bullshit. She's here! There were leads at his place, the map, I-

STEPAN
A lead? You followed a lead? We're not detectives, you know.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
Shut up! Where is she?

Stepan grins and drinks, blood running down his lips. Volkov lowers his gun. Ilych's hand shakes.

ILYCH
Why'd you do it, Stepan? Tell me.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
We're wasting time. Take him. The Commissar will get him to speak.

STEPAN
I'm not going to the Commissar.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
You don't have a damn choice!

STEPAN
Volkov, you're not listening. I'm not going to the Commissar.

With his free hand Stepan starts to slowly reach under his leg. Volkov and Nazyuta put their guns back up.

ILYCH
Stepan, *no*. It doesn't have to end this way.

STEPAN
A lot of things didn't have to end this way.

Stepan locks eyes with Ilych. A beat. Stepan nods. They hear the safety come off a pistol.

ILYCH
Stepan, no!

Stepan draws his gun, aiming at Volkov. Before he can squeeze the trigger Ilych fires, shooting Stepan in the chest.

Stepan drops the gun, dead. Silence. A beat.

Ilych's hands are shaking. Nazyuta lowers her weapon. Volkov drops his own and paces away in anger.

LIEUTENANT VOLKOV
...*shit!* Fucking peasant!

He climbs out of the train. Nazyuta sighs and follows him. Only Ilych is left. His hands tremble. Slowly he lowers his weapon and steps towards the corpse. He leans down, getting close to the dead man's face.

A soft wind begins to blow. Snow begins to fall. Stepan opens his eyes. Suddenly the train is gone.

EXT. WINTER FIELD - DREAM

Stepan and Ilych now are in the frozen field. There are no more soldiers. No more peasants. The fence is gone. The storm is gone. It is silent, white, and peaceful.

Still in the position he died, Stepan stares silently into Ilych's eyes. Slowly he reaches out a bloody hand, grasping onto Ilych's shoulder and using it climb to his feet.

Both men stand up. Stepan gives Ilych one last look, then turns and starts to limp away towards the sunrise.

The wind and snow begin to envelop Stepan as he drifts into the distance. Ilych is left alone in the field, his back turned to us, watching as the older man fades away.

THE END