An original screenplay by

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Title card: JOB BY DISTRIBUTION

(Russian: работа по распределению) was a Soviet practice of obligatory job placement for college graduates. After graduation a person would be "distributed" by a committee to a particular position anywhere within the Soviet Union and had an obligation to work there, typically for two years. During that time the employee had the special status of "young specialist, could not be fired, and might get some special benefits such as housing. After their placement term’s expiration the employee could continue to work there or leave for another job. The practice guaranteed jobs to new graduates but was generally disliked because of the unpredictable, arbitrary and sometimes personal nature of committee decisions and was abandoned by the mid-nineties. Currently though, in certain places in the FSU, the practice is used as a method of repaying the costs of university education for less than superior students.

FADE IN:

1. INT: A DARKENED BEDROOM. PREDAWN.

As we roll credits, we see the figures of a couple, a black man, ADAM, and MARGARITA, who is white, lying together in bed, tangled up in the sheets and with the light of the TV illuminating them. The sound of TV static lightly fills the room. We slowly travel up, from the foot of the bed over the leg of the girl, seeing several tattoos on the way up. As we pass their torsos, she snuggles up to her friend, making herself a touch more comfortable. And as we get to their faces, eyes closed, nose to nose, there is a peaceful pause before the television suddenly gets a signal and the Belarusian emblem comes sharply into focus and with it, the crashing first chord of the Belarusian national anthem.

Мы, беларусы – мірныя людзі,
Сэрцам адданыя роднай зямлі,
Шчыра сябруем, сілы гартуем
Мы ў працавітай, вольнай сям'і.

We, Belarusians, are peaceful people,
Wholeheartedly devoted to our Motherland.
We are faithful friends, growing up and
Living in a hardworking and independent family.
Слаўся, зямлі нашай светлае імя,
Слаўся, народаў братэрскі саюз! 
Наша любімая маці-Радзіма,
Вечна жывы і квітній, Беларусь!

Glory to the blessed name of our land,
Glory to the brotherly union of the people!
Our dearly beloved Motherland,
May you live long and prosper,
Belarus!

The music startles both of them awake and their eyes open and they see each other. The man’s face smiles peacefully and happily at the girl. She looks at him with an unreadable poker face. He sees this and, after a thought, his expression changes to an expectant, hoping, questioning look. She continues to simply look at him, receiving his information, understanding his desires, but not reacting in any way. After a second, he realizes he is beat, and with a sigh of resignation, the face falls into despair. When she sees this, she quickly turns and gets out of bed; his eyes watching her body walk away.

**Title Card: Spring 2010**

Cue up music. It is a tango. Ástor Piazzolla, Adiós nonino

Cut to:

2. INT: UNIVERSITY DANCE THEATRE.
EVA is dancing a tango with A RATHER ATTRACTIVE YOUNG MAN. He is laughing at something as he turns and dips her, she is smiling wildly.

Cut to:

3. INT: A LECTURE HALL AT A UNIVERSITY.
FARES is taking notes and listening attentively to a lecturer who is talking about political science. Most of the others in the room are obviously elsewhere or asleep.

Cut to:

4. INT: UNIVERSITY INTERNAT
We see KOLIA sitting on his bed tossing cards into a hat which is on a chair across the room. Strangely, he never misses.
5. EXT. UNIVERSITY COFFEE SHOP
We see ALEX coming down the street and turning into a coffee shop.

The music abruptly stops as we...

Cut to:

6. INT: ON STAGE AT A UNIVERSITY THEATRE
MAX is on stage during a performance of Chekov’s The Seagull, he is dressed as Constantine Treplieff and is looking adoringly at his Nina, emoting wildly about the theatre. This is the final scene.

NINA
I am a sea-gull — no — no, that is not what I meant to say. Do you remember how you shot a seagull once? A man chanced to pass that way and destroyed it out of idleness. That is an idea for a short story, but it is not what I meant to say. [She passes her hand across her forehead] What was I saying? Oh, yes, the stage.

The music of the tango restarts and joins in with the dialogue from the stage play as we...

Cut to:

7. EXT: MINSK. A BUSY BRIGHT MORNING.
The stage play continues in VO, but we cut to a picture of MARGARITA exiting a building in Minsk. She has one large bag in one hand and another pack slung over her shoulder. She checks the traffic and begins walking down the street and we follow her as she starts to get smaller.

NINA (CONTINUES IN VO)
I have changed now. Now I am a real actress. I act with joy, with exaltation, I am intoxicated by it, and feel that I am superb. I have been walking and walking, and
thinking and thinking, ever since I have been here, and I feel the strength of my spirit growing in me every day...

Cut to:

8. INT. UNIVERSITY COFFEE SHOP
Here we see ALEX waiting in line for a coffee. She is dressed in an army coat and a knit hat. Several other scruffy looking people are arguing about politics over coffee just in the background. She gets her coffee and goes to join the politicos

NINA (CONTINUES IN VO)
I know now, I understand at last, Constantine, that for us, whether we write or act, it is not the honour and glory of which I have dreamt that is important, it is the strength to endure. One must know how to bear one’s cross, and one must have faith. I believe, and so do not suffer so much, and when I think of my calling I do not fear life.

The Music again abruptly stops as we...

Cut to:

9. INT. UNIVERSITY THEATRE
We are back on the stage for MAX’s line now.

TREPLIEFF/MAX.
[Sadly]
You have found your way, you know where you are going, but I am still groping in a chaos of phantoms and dreams, not knowing whom and what end I am serving by it all. I do not believe in anything, and I do not know what my calling is.

NINA.
[Listening]
Hush! I must go. Good-bye. When I have become a famous actress you must come and see me. Will you promise to come? But now —
[She takes his hand]
—it is late. I can hardly stand. I am fainting. I am hungry.

TREPLIEFF/MAX
Stay, and let me bring you some supper.

NINA.
No, no — and don’t come out, I can find the way alone.

She embraces Treplieff impetuously and runs out onto the terrace.

TREPLIEFF/MAX
[After a pause]
It would be a pity if she were seen in the garden. My mother would be distressed.

He stands and tears up his manuscript and throws it under the table, then unlocks the door on the right and goes out.

10. INT. UNIVERSITY THEATRE. BACKSTAGE
We follow MAX off stage to where he is greeted by GLEB, a friend smoking a joint in the wings. We hear the dialogue and see the actions on stage in _the background_ as he and Max get into the old argument.

-IN BACK GROUND

DORN
[Trying to force open the door on the left]

Odd! This door seems to be locked.

[He comes in and puts the chair back in its former place]

This is like a hurdle race.

Arkadina and Paulina come in, followed by Jacob carrying some bottles; then come Masha, Shamraeff, and Trigorin.

ARKADINA
Put the claret and the beer here, on the table, so that we can drink while we are playing. Sit down, friends.
PAULINA
And bring the tea at once.

She lights the candles and takes her seat at the card-table. Shamraeff leads Trigorin to the cupboard.

SHAMRAEFF.
Here is the stuffed sea-gull I was telling you about.

[He takes the sea-gull out of the cupboard]

You told me to have it done.

TRIGORIN.
[looking at the bird]
I don’t remember a thing about it, not a thing.

-IN FOREGROUND

MAX grabs the joint and takes a huge toke. In the background, we see DORN breaking into the now empty room at last.

GLEB
You know you are stupid

MAX
Why stupid?

GLEB
Your father would do anything to help you out. You are rich. Why do you put yourself through this?

MAX
You can’t understand it if you have never been there.

GLEB
Yea, well, I’d suck his cock for the money any time.

MAX
You just like sucking cock…
GLEB
(taking a huge hit)
Without argument...

MAX
Quiet a second...

MAX picks up a hammer and slams it down onto a block of wood.

CUT TO:

11. INT. UNIVERSITY THEATRE. ON STAGE
In reaction to the “gunshot”, everyone on stage jumps.

ARKADINA
What was that?

DORN
Nothing at all; probably one of my medicine bottles has blown up. Don’t worry.

DORN goes out through the door and joins MAX and GLEB. As the play continues, we can see DORN grabbing the joint and takes a quick hit. MAX points to the stage. It is his line. DORN yells back towards the stage, his voice a little rough from the smoke:

DORN
It is as I thought, a flask of ether has exploded.

He smiles at MAX and GLEB and heads back onto the stage, singing as he enters.

DORN
“Spellbound once more I stand before thee.”

CUT TO:

12. INT. UNIVERSITY. DESIGN FACULTY OFFICE
New music starts as KOLIA opens the door of his design teacher.

KOLIA
This is about otrobotka, yes?

They Shake hands
13. INT. UNIVERSITY POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT
FARES, enters the office of his PS teacher.

Cut to:

14. INT. UNIVERSITY PRIMARY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
EVA takes a seat with her counselor.

Cut to:

15. INT. UNIVERSITY FASHION DESIGN DEPARTMENT
A lady is there alone. The chair next to her is empty. She looks at the clock.

Cut to:

16. INT. COFFEE SHOP. DAY
ALEX is now fully into it with her friends.

ALEX
We are talking about a 30% decline in the value of the ruble because to get the loan from the fucking world bank required the Belarusian state to admit the truth!

Everyone nods knowingly...

ALEX
This led to a depletion of our inventory of sunflower oil and consequently to the cost of sunflower oil going from 2 thousand rubles, one dollar, to 6 thousand rubles, three dollars, almost over night. And it is climbing. This is a sign of the times. This is not the end of this argument, but just a beginning.

And her friends agree with this.

Cut to:

17. INT. UNIVERSITY TOURISM AND CULTURE DEPARTMENT
MARGARITA is with her counselor, who is rubbing his eyes.
18. INT. UNIVERSITY POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT
FARES is now rubbing eyes. He is sitting with his advisor.

FARES
I just don’t understand…

19. INT. UNIVERSITY GRAPHIC DESIGN DEPARTMENT
KOLIA has his feet up on the director’s desk. The director is reading from a piece of paper wearing a pair of half reading glasses.

TEACHER
I have got four choices for you—Ivanovo, Baranovichi, Krichev or something in Gomel.

KOLIA
Nothing in Minsk?

The guy only smiles.

20. INT. UNIVERSITY PRIMARY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
EVA is smiling and open, listening to her teacher.

TEACHER
There is a position open which will be perfect for you…

21. INT. UNIVERSITY POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT
FARES is stunned

TEACHER
The position there will be perfect for you…
22. INT. UNIVERSITY DRAMA DEPARTMENT
MAX seems to be thinking of something else...

TEACHER
There is a position open which will be perfect for you...

23. INT. COFFEE SHOP. DAY
ALEX’ cell phone rings. She pulls it out and sees the name of her advisor. She makes a face.

24. INT. UNIVERSITY GRAPHIC DESIGN DEPARTMENT
KOLIA stands up from his chair and offers his hand.

KOLIA
Ok, forget about it. I have an uncle who found me work in a printing company. I will stay with him. Is that OK?

TEACHER
This is a real job?

KOLIA
Of course.

TEACHER
Very good. What is the name of the company and where is it?

KOLIA
Pina Print. And the town is Pinsk.

25. INT. UNIVERSITY TOURISM AND CULTURE DEPARTMENT

MARGARITA’S COUNCILOR
Pinsk.
26. INT. UNIVERSITY DRAMA DEPARTMENT

    DRAMA TEACHER
    Pinsk.

    Cut to:

27. INT. COFFEE SHOP. DAY

    We see ALEX’ cell phone which reads: PINSK

    Cut to:

28. INT. UNIVERSITY POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

    FARES
    But why Pinsk?

    The teacher stands and walks to the window.

    TEACHER
    Obviously, Fares, everybody wants
    Minsk. But do you know how many
    people vie for what few jobs there
    really are?

    Cut to:

29. INT. UNIVERSITY TOURISM AND CULTURE DEPARTMENT

    TEACHER
    What is there not to understand?
    Generally speaking, hospitality
    people are usually less...

    MARGARITA
    Less what?

    Cut to:
30. INT. UNIVERSITY DRAMA DEPARTMENT

   DRAMA TEACHER
   ...are usually more dependable, more stable. It’s not that you don’t have talent...

   Cut to:

31. INT. UNIVERSITY POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

   PS TEACHER
   You have talent.

   FARES
   I am first in my class. Is this because I am from Afganistan?

   Cut to:

32. INT. UNIVERSITY TOURISM AND CULTURE DEPARTMENT

   MARGARITA’S COUNCILOR
   Frankly, it’s your lifestyle...

   Cut to:

33. INT. COFFEE SHOP. DAY
ALEX is smoking a cigarette and looking out the window. Her friends are heatedly arguing in the background.

   Cut to:

34. INT. UNIVERSITY GRAPHIC DESIGN DEPARTMENT

   TEACHER
   Kolia, Pinsk is not a very big town.

   KOLIA
   Don’t worry about it. I am ok.

He stands. And starts to walk out but then stops and comes back to the teacher and puts his hands in his pockets.

   TEACHER
   Something else?

   KOLIA smiles

   Cut to:
35. INT. UNIVERSITY POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT
The PS teacher is leading FARES to the door.

TEACHER
Don’t be foolish. The color of your skin has nothing todo with this. It is just a matter of politics and numbers, nothing more.

He opens the door and we see a rather startlingly attractive, if vacuous blond waiting at the door.

TEACHER
(Grabbing Fares’ hand)
You call me if you need anything.

FARES
(despondent)
Thank you

The girl enters and the door closes. Through the door though, we can hear the conversation.

GIRL
(expectantly)
Minsk?

TEACHER
(happily)
Yes, Minsk.

There is a squeal followed by a silence. Fares thinks to open the door, but then we hear a low moan from the teacher and he decides against it. What’s the point?

TEACHER
Oh my god, oh my god!

Cut to:

36. INT. UNIVERSITY GRAPHIC DESIGN DEPARTMENT

KOLIA
Well, I think there is a matter of $25.

TEACHER
(frowns and sighs)
Of course. Of course, of course, of course....
He goes into his pockets and pulls out some American money. And with a half smile, gives it over to KOLIA, who also smiling, takes it and holds it up to the light.

TEACHER
Don’t worry, it’s real. If you look closely you can see Lukashenko’s face.

KOLIA
You are a very good player.

TEACHER
Thank you. How you got those kings two hands in a row was just luck.

KOLIA
Maybe...

He puts the money in his pocket. The teacher just points a finger at KOLIA, who smiles and leaves.

Title Card: Summer August 2010 Pinsk

Montage:

Cue up music as we see a brief montage of our heroes getting ready for their journey at their parent’s homes.

- Alex’ mother is packing her bag for her as ALEX looks out the window. We see that the walls of her room are covered with designs for women’s and men’s clothing and there are many fashion photos, cut from magazines.
- EVA is alone on the terrace of her parent’s apartment, practicing yoga as the traffic speeds along below her.
- MAX is climbing out the window of what is basically a crash pad, an old couch, a TV, torn rug, no drapes on the windows and full ashtrays and empty bottles and cans everywhere; in the corridor, the owner is banging his fist on the door, screaming that the police will be called if the door is not opened.
- FARES is seriously packing his suitcase, everything in it as well as the apartment is perfectly maintained; his mother and father watch him lovingly from the doorway.
- KOLIA has got his duffel bag put together and stops at the door to shake his father’s hand before heading out the door to his black BMW and driving off.
• MARGARITA is exiting a small village house, kissing her grandmother at the door and going through the gate and out onto the dirt road which leads to the bus stop.

As the music continues, we see our heroes traveling by various methods of transport and eventually, arriving in Pinsk, having a look around and checking into the Internat on Sovietskaya.

37. INT. RECEPTION AREA SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. DIRECTOR’S OFFICE
FARES is the first to arrive and like an unhappy soldier he marches straight to the office of the supervisor, knocks on the door and sticks his head in.

FARES
Can I come in?

DIRECTOR
Please.

She looks at him a little suspiciously

DIRECTOR
Sit down.

FARES
Thank you.

And he sits.

DIRECTOR
(With a somewhat strained smile)
How can I help you?

FARES
I am here on “otrobotka” I was told that I would be living here.

She was afraid of that. We can see that she is trying to think of an exit and failing, reluctantly opens her book.

Cut to:

38. INT. STREET OUTSIDE SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT
Here we see MAX coming to the entrance. He looks like he hasn’t slept in several weeks. He is carrying a bottle of beer which he swills to the bottom and tosses the bottle in the general direction of a garbage box. He misses and the sound of the breaking bottle is heard...
39. INT. RECEPTION AREA SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
...in the office of the director, who stands and marches out towards the door.

Cut to:

40. INT. RECEPTION AREA SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT
The DIRECTOR walks past MAX, having a serious glance as she passes him, and goes out the door onto the street.

Cut to:

41. EXT. STREET OUTSIDE SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT
She sees the broken glass next to the garbage and suspiciously looks left and right trying to find the perpetrator. Not seeing anybody, she ducks back inside.

Cut to:

42. INT. RECEPTION AREA SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT
THE DIRECTOR looks straight at MAX.

DIRECTOR
Did you throw that bottle?

MAX
What bottle?

She comes closer to him and starts sniffing near his mouth.

DIRECTOR
The beer bottle.

MAX
No.

Her eyes narrow suspiciously...

CUT to:

43. EXT: KOLIA’S UNCLE’S HOUSE. DAY
We see KOLIA’S BMW pulls up in front of a small house and he gets out of the car and stretches. The front door opens and there stands a middle aged man with a pot belly wearing a dirty t-shirt. This is KOLIA’S UNCLE and he doesn’t look all that happy.

KOLIA
(from the car)
Hello, uncle. How good to see you!

KOLIA starts walking towards HIS UNCLE who, when he gets there, shakes his hand.

UNCLE
All right Kolia, you are welcome to be here but you need to understand the rules. C’mon in and let’s talk.

KOLIA makes a face

Cut to:

44. EXT. STREET OUTSIDE SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT
A taxi pulls up to the curb and ALEX steps out of the passenger door and has a look at the building. The cab driver puts her bags on the street and as she is reaching for her wallet, a second cab pulls up behind the first.

45. INT. RECEPTION AREA SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
MAX and FARES are both sitting in chairs, FARES listening intently and MAX eyeing somewhat lasciviously the director’s legs. She notices this and re-crosses them and shifts them out of view.

DIRECTOR
You two will both be sharing number 304. It is on the third floor on the right side. The men’s shower and toilet are on the second floor. The third floor is only for women.

FARES seriously nods his agreement. MAX simply smiles at something that only he has heard.

Cut to:

INT. KOLIA’S UNCLE’S HOUSE, KITCHEN
KOLIA and his uncle sit at the table and drinking coffee.
UNCLE
First of all, there is not going to be any poker or gambling of any kind in my house. Your mother and father have already told me that gambling is the great problem to you and you will not continue this sickness here. Secondly, you must be home by ten o’clock every night. There will be no alcohol in my house. There will be no narcotics of any kind in my house. There will be no women allowed in this house. Do I make myself clear?

KOLIA simply nods at this solemnly as we...

Cut to:

46. INT. KOLIA’S BMW.
KOLIA has his cell phone on his shoulder and is holding the wheel with one hand and writing with the other.

47. INT. UNIVERSITY GRAPHIC DESIGN DEPARTMENT
KOLIA’S ADVISOR is reading from a printed list.

TEACHER
The address is Ulitsa Sovietskaya 25. I’ll call ahead for you. You can stay there till you find something better.

Cut to:

48. INT. KOLIA’S BMW.
KOLIA sighs in resignation.

KOLIA
Ok. Thanks...

And hangs up the phone.

Cut to:

49. INT. RECEPTION AREA SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
Here we see EVA and ALEX sitting together in the director’s chairs. ALEX seems angry at her situation, but EVA seems very happy to be there.
DIRECTOR
You two will share number 305. It is on the third floor. The lady’s bathroom and shower are on the third floor and the men’s is on the second. You have a common kitchen on your floor and we do laundry in the basement.

EVA
Thank you very much. I am sure it will be wonderful.

ALEX slowly turns her head and stares at the girl sitting next to her in amazement.

Cut to:

50. EXT. STREET OUTSIDE SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT
Yet another taxi pulls up and out pops Margarita. Right behind her is KOLIA’S BMW which, showing off, screeches a stop. Margarita gives the car an approving once over and as she is looking, out comes KOLIA, now in a pair of rather hot sunglasses. Margarita raises an eyebrow and KOLIA gives the winningest smile this side of Tom Cruise.

Cut to:

51. INT. RECEPTION AREA AT THE INTERNET.
KOLIA, carrying Margarita’s bags as well as his own, arrives at the Director’s office.

KOLIA
This is Margarita and my name is Kolia. We are otrabotka here in Pinsk and, we could use a room.

The director now raises an eyebrow. Margarita just looks at him and can’t stop herself from laughing.

Cut to:

52. INT. THIRD FLOOR CORRIDOR OF THE INTERNAT
The bags have been dropped and MARGARITA and KOLIA are now madly going at each other, lips locked, hands exploring, hips already grinding...

MARGARITA
Wait...

KOLIA
Why?
MARGARITA
Not here...

KOLIA
Why?

This makes her laugh again. She quickly looks around and sees her door.

MARGARITA
Here’s my room, come on...

But when they open the door, they see only a depressed ALEX, smoking a cigarette and looking out the window and a cheerful EVA, quickly trying different decorating ideas. They both look at the flushed pair.

KOLIA
Just a minute.

He quickly pulls MARGARITA back into the corridor and over to his own room. But of course, there is basically the same picture there; MAX has his feet up on the table and is drinking a beer while FARES is trying to put his things away perfectly...

KOLIA
Fuck!

He looks at Margarita. This is getting to be a problem.

KOLIA
(hopefully)
The woman’s bathroom is on the third floor?

She makes a face. And then an idea:

MARGARITA
(To MAX and FARES)
Did you guys know that there are two women in the next room who are in desperate need of some help moving furniture right now?

The two men just look at each other for a second and then back at the situation. Ok, they get it.

FARES
Left or right.
KOLIA
(pointing)
This way...

And with a shrug, THEY START OUT OF THE ROOM. FARES though stops and grabs KOLIA’S arm.

FARES
Don’t use my bed. It’s the one on the right.

KOLIA notices FARES’ grip is really strong, so he just nods his agreement and they walk past KOLIA and MARGARITA, who, head into the now abandoned room and lock the door behind them. MAX stops to listen at the door but FARES waves him on. MAX smiles and joins FARES.

MAX
Why was my bed OK?

FARES ignores him and he knocks on the door.

EVA
Come in!

FARES opens the door and he and MAX have a look at the two girls. Not exactly knowing what to say, they both smile. EVA smiles back and ALEX just rolls her eyes.

FARES
They said next door that you two might need some help getting set up.

They all look at each other for a second, nobody moving or saying anything and then, against the wall between their two rooms, a rhythmic knocking begins, accompanied by some light moans and sighs. All four look to the wall then back at each other.

ALEX
Yea, I guess that’s a good idea.

EVA
I’ll make some tea.

Fade to:

53. INT. THIRD FLOOR KITCHEN OF THE INTERNAT. MORNING
Five of the six are sitting around a breakfast table at the internat But only EVA, who is making sure everybody has
something to eat and enough coffee and tea, seems to have any energy and no one is talking. A moment passes so that we can feel the lack of comfort from all and then KOLIA enters. He is wearing earphones and listening to some music. He casually shakes hands with the men and kisses Margarita on the head. She sneers contemptuously at him in response.

    KOLIA
    (casually)
    Nothing for me, thanks. Got to run.

And he is off leaving the rest at the table in their silence.

 FADE TO BLACK

**Title card: First day of work**

54. INT. BOYS ROOM, SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. MORNING
Cue up music as we see our heroes preparing to head off for their first day of work. FARES is putting on his suit. It must fit exactly perfectly, his hair must be exactly combed right and he examines himself absolutely. We see that he pays attention to every detail. MAX on the other hand is sitting in a chair, his feet up and is simply watching FARES dress.

Cut to:

55. INT. GIRLS ROOM, SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. MORNING
EVA, in a mid-length skirt and print blouse admires herself in the mirror as ALEX, in grey slacks, sweater and pea coat adds a red scarf to her ensemble and then double checks her portfolio containing her sketches. Into the scene comes MARGARITA who seems to have miraculously changed into a perfectly coifed Barbie doll, complete with a white long sleeved sweater to cover her arm tattoos and black stockings under a black skirt to cover those on her legs. She adds in a pair of blue earrings as a finishing touch and smiles at the others who, amused at the transition, both give her a thumbs up.

Cut to:

56. EXT. STEPS OF PINSK GORISPOLKOM. MORNING
Fares walks up the steps of the GORISPOLKOM and we see his poker face at this moment.

Cut to:
57. **EXT. PINSK DRAMATIC THEATRE. MORNING**

MAX stops to admire the exterior of the small theatre. He notices several people smoking around the rear exit and he heads over to them.

Cut to:

58. **EXT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. MORNING**

MARGARITA is walking down the path leading to the front doors. She has a look at several small statues which are in the grass along her path as she passes.

Cut to:

59. **INT. CORRIDOR, PINSK GORANOM. MORNING**

EVA smilingly wades through a sea of prospective teachers all trying to get jobs with the various schools. She is reading the headings on the doors, looking for a specific office.

Cut to:

60. **INT. PINA PRINT. DIRECTOR’S OFFICE. MORNING**

KOLIA is leaning over the director’s desk pointing out some nuance in his work which is portrayed on the monitor. The director is smiling and nodding. Obviously, he is impressed with the work.

Cut to:

61. **INT. PIERVAMEISKA CLOTHING FACTORY. MORNING**

We see great machines making material and lots of individual machines, with kerciefed women sewing clothes. Mostly, the women are older. The floor manager, a woman with a very angry face is leading ALEX up a flight of stairs and to a door, which she opens without knocking. After looking inside, she comes to the rail and shouts down to someone on the floor.

   **FLOOR MANAGER**
   
   Sveta! Where is Boris Valentinovich?

The worker points to the bookkeeper’s office which is on the top floor. The FLOOR MANAGER motions for ALEX to wait for a moment and leaves her there outside the office while she heads off in another direction. ALEX takes in
the scene of the factory floor, the sound of the machines and the familiar conversations between the workers.

62. INT. PINSK DRAMATIC THEATRE. DRESSING ROOM. MORNING
MAX is sharing a joint with two of the actors. The THEATRE DIRECTOR, IVAN IVANOVICH enters and the joint is quickly hidden. IVANOVICH offers his hand to MAX and MAX is invited to follow him. MAX is a little worried at this moment but his new friends offer a small gesture that all will be ok.

63. INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. RECEPTION AREA. MORNING
MARGARITA offers her hand to a lady sitting at the reception desk of the hotel.

MARGARITA
I am the new assistant to the director of tourism.

RECEPTION CLERK
Of course. Please come with me.

The clerk leads the way to a second floor office. She opens the door.

64. INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. MARGARITA’S OFFICE. MORNING
The office is a dark, wood paneled cubicle with two unoccupied desks and a window overlooking the path with the statues.

RECEPTION CLERK
Anna Terentinovna will be here in just a moment. Make yourself at home.

MARGARITA
Thank you

The RECEPTION CLERK exits leaving MARGARITA alone in the office. MARGARITA starts to have a look around. There are a few pictures on the walls; important visitors, a family with several children. There are several diplomas and awards for excellence. She looks at her desk which is small and empty but for an old school monitor. She clicks on the computer which was already on and she tries to open the internet. But for some reason, she cannot connect. She follows the cable and finds a working modem. It is a strange moment. She is puzzling over this when the door opens and in steps ANNA TERENTINOVNA, a tall, fiercely focused, perfectly composed dragon warrior.
TERENTINOVNA
You can’t turn that on because I control the internet. There are no personal documents and no games on that computer and nobody sits on the internet during working hours, ever. Understand?

MARGARITA
Yes, Anna Tarentinovna

TERENTINOVNA
Good.

She hangs up her coat and sits at her desk and arranges papers so that they are symmetrical.

TERENTINOVNA (cont.)
We begin work at 9am and the door to the office will be locked at 5:30. You must have all daily tasks finish by that time.

MARGARITA
So, if I am not finished, I have to sleep here?

TERENTINOVNA
No. If you are not finished...

She picks up the phone and balances the receiver between her shoulder and ear.

TERENTINOVNA (cont.)
...I find another assistant.

MARGARITA frowns. She was afraid of that.

Cut to:

65. INT. PINSK GORISPOLKOM. CORRIDOR. MORNING
FARES shakes hands with ANTON STEPANOVICH and he is really respectful. STEPANOVICH and FARES walk through the corridors of the GORISPOLKOM.

Cut to:

66. INT. PINSK GORISPOLKOM. FARES’ OFFICE. MORNING
We are in the office and the door opens. STEPANOVICH and FARES come in but they don’t sit down.
FARES
I understand and I don’t think that we will have any problems.

STEPANOVICH
I am sure everything will be good.

He shakes his hand again.

STEPANOVICH (cont.)
If you have any questions you can come to talk to me any time.

FARES
Thank you.

STEPANOVICH
Also, Fares, I want you to feel at home. Pinsk is a good town, a nice town and it is full of good people. I am sure that you will come in time to feel very comfortable here.

FARES
Thank you, I appreciate that.

STEPANOVICH
Very good! Anyway, your boss will be here in a few minutes. Why don’t you make yourself comfortable and we will get started presently.

FARES
Thank you.

STEPANOVICH exits and FARES crosses to the window and looks out at the summer landscape of Pinsk. His window faces the river and FARES sits down at the desk, puts both hands on it and closes his eyes. This is going to be important and difficult.

Cut to:
67. INT. A PINSK BUS

EVA is riding out to her first school assignment. We see through the windows that we are outside the city limits and traveling through the Belarusian countryside.

Cut to:

68. INT. PINA PRINT OFFICES.

KOLIA is already hard at work creating an image for some furniture company. He is sliding different shapes and texts onto the basic photo of a cabinet trying to find a pleasing effect. In the next cubicle is an impossibly gorgeous girl who sneaks a glance at the new guy. He catches it and smiles back winningly.

Cut to:

69. INT. PINSK DRAMATIC THEATRE. MORNING

MAX is wandering back stage and checking out the empty theatre.

Cut to:

70. INT. ALEX’ OFFICE, PIERVAMAISKAYA CLOTHING FACTORY

ALEX is looking through some sketches of clothing designs which will be employed in the coming year with BORIS VALENTINOVICH. VALENTINOVICH, 30, dressed in jeans and a jacket, has a very fast manner, and is obviously and unashamedly gay.

VALENTINOVICH

And finally, these are the sweaters planned for fall. Theoretically, they are collegiate but I think better, they are paraplegic.

ALEX laughs. She likes him. He pauses, straightens up and looks at her for a second.

VALENTINOVICH

I know that you will only be here for a short time. Maybe a month or two at best because you won’t like it here.

ALEX

Why not?
VALENTINOVICH
Because we don’t make money and therefore, really, it is hopeless.

She feels his meaning and her face tightens. She wants to speak, but is undecided if she should or not. He sees this.

VALENTINOVICH (cont.)
You have some thoughts?

ALEX
Why should it be so hopeless?
Maybe some new ideas would help.

VALENTINOVICH smiles at this.

VALENTINOVICH
My dear. There are no new ideas. We only sew clothes for old women.

ALEX
Then why do you work here?

VALENTINOVICH
It’s a job. I do my work well and I get paid well, and so this is enough.

She sighs.

ALEX
Or maybe you just identify with old women?

He narrows his eyes at her and hisses like a cat.

Cut to:

71. INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. MARGARITA’S OFFICE
MARGARITA is busy copying figures from several sheets of paper onto a computer spreadsheet. ANNA TERENTINOVNA is using highlighter to mark several points on other paper documents. MARGARITA glances at the clock but is caught looking by TERENTINOVNA. MARGARITA smiles, sighs and heads back to her typing.

Cut to:

72. INT. VILLAGE SCHOOL. MID MORNING
EVA is leading a group of about 15 children through the motions of a dance. The boys are each holding a stick, which are
supposed to be canes, and the girls are waving pieces of cloth. EVA does the dance in front of them, and though all are completely out of step, the children are trying their best to follow her and she is happy for their trying. At the door is NADIA NIKOLAIVNA, watching EVA’s progress. She seems pleased.

Cut to:

73. EXT. OUTSIDE PINSK DRAMATIC THEATRE. DAY
MAX is walking across the street with SERGEI, one of the actors he smoked with earlier. They cross the street and head into the small park there.

Cut to:

74. INT. ZOLOTOI KOLOS. DAY
MAX and SERGEI are munching hot dogs.

SERGEI
(Mid-bite)
If you want, there might be some extra work at the restaurant. The money is ok and we work out our hours amongst ourselves. As long as they are covered, they don’t care who works and the food is good.

MAX nods approvingly at this idea.

Cut to:

75. EXT. VILLAGE SCHOOL. MID-AFTERNOON
NADIA NIKOLAIVNA and EVA are walking together to NIKOLAIVNA’s car

Cut to:

76. INT. NIKOLAIVNA’S CAR
We are heading back to Pinsk again through the villages which EVA watches through the window.

NIKOLAIVNA
I think you will really like him.
I know I am only saying this because I am his mother. And really, I know the money they pay is small, but you are helping me.

EVA shows her a smile. She is happy to help.
Cut to:

77. EXT. LENIN STREET GAMBLING MACHINE PARLOR. KOLIA gets out of his car and has a look around. After a second he heads into the building.

Cut to:

78. INT. LENIN STREET GAMBLING MACHINE PARLOR. We see the poker and slot machines. There is a small bar with a rather bored looking girl in a short black skirt, tight black sweater and black "Cleopatra" cut hair style, stirring something with her swizzle straw. KOLIA smiles at her and starts looking around for someone who might know something. After a second, A MANAGER approaches.

MANAGER
We got poker and black jack. We got straight slots. We got a bar. And we got Ira. Say Hi Ira.

IRA
Hi.

KOLIA nods at her.

KOLIA
I am looking for a poker game. Something interesting. I was thinking you might be able to help me.

This does not make the manager happy. THE MANAGER sneaks a peek at IRA who simply raises an eyebrow. This also irritates him.

MANAGER
Let’s try again. We got poker and black jack. We got straight slots. We got a bar. And we got Ira. If you are not interested in something we have, go check out the internet.

KOLIA
Ok. I am sorry. You didn’t understand me.
He goes into his pocket and pulls out a fifty dollar bill and lays it in the manager’s breast pocket. The manager just watches him do it and then checks out what is now in his pocket. Then he looks at Ira who now sports a small, but rather wild smile.

KOLIA
Like I said, I am looking for a poker game. Something interesting. I was thinking you might be able to help me.

The guy looks at KOLIA and then takes a telephone from another pocket.

MANAGER
(to KOLIA)
Have a seat. You drink?

KOLIA
Only during the holidays.

KOLIA smiles and sits down next to IRA who now has a rather friendly smile on her face. The manager smirks at the picture and exits.

KOLIA
(To Ira)
Now, where were we?

Cut to:

79. EXT. NIKOLAIVNA’S APARTMENT, ALONG THE PINA RIVER. EARLY EVENING
NIKOLAIVNA and EVA exit her car and start heading into the building.

Cut to:

80. INT. NIKOLAIVNA’S APARTMENT. EARLY EVENING.
As NIKOLAIVNA and EVA enter the apartment, we see that it is a typical house of a loving family with children. There are toys strewn all over the living room, the TV is playing some cartoon and in the middle of the floor sits NIKOLAIVNA’s husband VLADIMIR, and VADIK, her son, who is dressed in blue print pajamas. Immediately we notice VADIK’s bald head and that he has deep, dark circles under his eyes. The boy looks up at EVA and smiles. We see Eva’s reaction
and that, though she outwardly has her usual bright smile, her eyes show the shock of pain the picture gives her. The boy stands up, a little too slowly, and walks over to give his mother a hug and then, slightly hiding behind her leg, he looks at EVA.

NIKOLAIVNA
VADIK, this is EVA, the girl I told you about. She is going to come and stay with you sometimes when mommy and daddy are working.

EVA
(kneeling down to her level)
Hello Vadik.

The boy is shy and won’t speak.

NIKOLAIVNA
C’mon Vadik. Aunt Eva said hello. What must you say?

VADIK
(Quietly)
Hello.

The sound of his voice sends a new wave of emotion though EVA. She smiles. It is about all she can do.

NIKOLAIVNA
(Quietly, to her husband)
Did he get his medicine at four?

VLADIMIR
(stands)
Of course.

They both look at EVA.

EVA
(to VADIK)
I see you have soldiers. I hope there is not a terrible war. I would be so frightened.

The boy looks to his father and mother and then over to the toys.
VADIK
It’s ok. They don’t really die.
It’s just pretend.

The mother hides her face from the boy on her husband’s shoulder.

EVA
(Holding back with all her strength)
Can I play too?

VLADIMIR
Go on VADIK. Show Aunt EVA your plans for the offensive.

VADIK
(With great drama)
Okay...

And he walks back into the battle taking place across the living room with EVA right beside him.

Cut to:

81. INT. LENIN STREET GAMBLING MACHINE PARLOR.
KOLIA is now sitting at the bar with his forehead against Ira’s. They obviously have found their intimate conversation. The door opens and the MANAGER steps in.

MANAGER
Ok, big shot. You wanna play cards?

KOLIA
(Looking at IRA)
Why not?

IRA smiles at this.

MANAGER
Ok, let’s go.

KOLIA stands, kisses IRA on the head one time, puts his sunglasses on and heads out the door.

Cut to:
82. EXT. LENIN STREET GAMBLING MACHINE PARLOR. There is a black Audi R8 parked there with the passenger door open.

KOLIA (Nodding)
I like this car.

The driver of the car just smiles at him and waves his thumb in the direction of the passenger seat. KOLIA breaks into one of his better smiles and happily slides inside.

Title card: October 2010 Fall (the first paycheck party)

83. INT. PINSKAYA SHLACHTA RESTAURANT. MANAGER’S OFFICE. EARLY EVENING
MAX gets his pay from the manager of the restaurant. He opens the envelope and has a look inside.

INSERT: We see the envelope has three 100,000 ruble notes in it.

MAX
This is about $140?

MANAGER
About that…

MAX nods at this, smiles at the manager and exits the office.

Cut to:

84. INT. PINSKAYA SHLACHTA RESTAURANT. EARLY EVENING
He grabs his coat from a stand and stops at the bar to tell the girl there that her money is ready. She smiles and heads off for the manager’s office. The moment she is gone, MAX grabs two bottles of vodka from the shelf, hides them in his coat and heads for the exit.

Cut to:
85. EXT. PINSK EARLY EVENING
We follow MAX out of the restaurant and down the street. It is a pleasant evening and the trees are all changing colors.

As he is walking near a shop he sees A DOG rummaging in a trash bin looking for a meal. He stares at the dog, a white pit bull with pinkish eyes for a moment. He goes over to THE DOG and looks at its eyes.

MAX
(to the dog)
Are you hungry?

THE DOG looks up at MAX, licking its lips and wagging its tail. MAX decides to buy him a meal. He takes off his belt and ties it around the dog’s neck and whistles lightly and starts walking towards the nearest market.

Cut to:

86. INT. PINSK MEAT STORE
MAX is buying some sausages. The dog is climbing the glass cases trying to get at what is inside. The clerk looks mildly concerned.

Cut to:

87. EXT. PARK AT KIROVA SQUARE. EARLY EVENING.
MAX has put some sausages down for the dog and takes a long drink out of one of the bottles of vodka.

MAX
You know, I understand your situation. You and I are just the same. Sure we could have all of the comfort that we want, but we would be kissing somebody’s ass to get it. Am I right?

THE DOG looks up at him and shows that he wants something. MAX thinks for a moment and then pours some vodka into the plastic that the sausages had been wrapped in. The dog sniffs at it for a second and then starts lapping it up. MAX looks impressed.

Cut to:
88. EXT. SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. EVENING.
Neither MAX nor THE DOG are walking very straight as they round the corner heading for their hostel. MAX is singing a song but stops when he notices the light in the director’s office. He sternly shushes the dog, who licks MAX’ face and then belches. MAX then picks up the dog in his arms, slowly opens the door and peeks around the corner to see if the coast is clear.

Cut to:

89. INT. SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. DIRECTOR’S OFFICE. EVENING.
We see THE DIRECTOR sitting at her desk and painting her nails while the news from the national channel is playing on her TV.

Back to:

90. INT. SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. RECEPTION AREA. EVENING.
MAX quietly heads to the elevator, and clicks the button for the third floor.

Cut to:

91. EXT. SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. THIRD FLOOR CORRIDOR. EVENING.
The doors to the elevator open to reveal a party is in progress. There are lots of people mingling and most of the doors to the rooms are open. MAX smiles at this happenstance.

Cut to:

92. INT. SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. MEN’S ROOM. EVENING.
As MAX comes to the door, KOLIA is dealing cards for a poker game at the table. There are several people playing including FARES and MARGARITA, who is dressed in a white muscle shirt which shows off her impressive array of tattoos.

    KOLIA
    MAX! Who is your friend?

    MAX
    This is IVAN. He is looking for a new job.

EVA comes out of nowhere to smother the dog with love.

    EVA
    Oh you are the most beautiful boy.
    Yes you are. Yes you are.

    FARES
    Is it necessary that we have white dog hair everywhere?
MAX
I’ll take care of everything.

FARES
MAX, you can’t even take care of yourself.

Several people moan and grown from that remark.

MARGARITA
And you are always so perfect.

FARES
Why? Why am I wrong?

KOLIA
(smiling)
You’re not wrong. You’re right.

EVA
Oh, let me get my camera. I want to take a picture.

She runs out of shot and FARES follows her with his eyes, but they land on a rather angry ALEX.

ALEX
I don’t like you

FARES
But I like you.

ALEX
I don’t like you because you are a politician who always only lies to the people.

FARES
When do I lie?

ALEX
You don’t lie but you want to lie. You want to lie all the time.

This confuses FARES who looks around for support, but there isn’t any coming. MAX puts IVAN on the bed and lies down next to the drunken animal to watch the show.
FARES
(gathering his wits)
I don’t understand this. You don’t like me because of what I want to do?

ALEX
Yes and I think you know what I mean.

FARES
Ok...

He looks to KOLIA for support, but he just shrugs.

ALEX
Why are you so stupid?

FARES doesn’t like this at all.

FARES
ALEX, what do you want from me?

ALEX
You work right in the heart of the GIP. You know everybody there and are privy to all of the real information about what happens here in Pinsk. But you don’t use that power to do anything real or good. You just sit there like their little dog, agreeing to whatever they want you to agree to and kissing their fat asses for them.

This brings a silence to the party. And everybody looks at FARES.

FARES
(Shrugging)
Well, that’s what we do there...

Everybody laughs at this. ALEX just rolls her eyes and heads off. EVA re-enters now with a video camera.

EVA
My mom and dad sent it to me as a present.
And she starts shooting MAX and THE DOG, lying in bed together. ALEX returns with a glass of juice and a small notebook. She takes a drink and puts the glass in front of FARES, and then whispers sexily in his ear:

ALEX
You could be a real artist, Fares. I saw your notebook.

She waves the notebook in the air and FARES tries to grab it back.

FARES
Hey! Give me that. Why were you in my room?

ALEX
I saw your pictures. You have real talent and you are wasting your time with the government. They’ll never do anything for you.

He finally grabs her and takes the book away from her, but as soon as he does, MARGARITA takes it away from him.

MARGARITA
Let me see that.

And she starts turning the pages and looking at the sketches.

ALEX
You need to do something you can be proud of and being agreeable is not anything to be proud of.

FARES is angry but calm.

KOLIA
C’mon and sit down and play some more...

MARGARITA
(admiring a sketch)
These are very good.

FARES
(brightening)
You think so?

MARGARITA
Why not?
As they are looking at the book, a young man (ZHENNA) with a PRETTY GIRL comes into the room. His eyes immediately lock onto MARGARITA and she picks up on his stare. The girl also notices this and pulls at his arm to get his attention back. KOLIA stands on his chair holding a glass in one hand and a bottle of vodka in the other.

KOLIA
Ok, if we are not going to play cards, I suggest we drink!

Everybody cheers.

Cut to:

93. INT. SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. COMMUNAL KITCHEN. EVENING.
It is some time later and ALEX and MARGARITA are mashing some potatoes. Actually, ALEX is drinking a beer while standing next to MARGARITA who is mashing the potatoes.

ALEX
(angsting)
I just don’t understand why it all has to go the way it does. Simply nobody cares what they do or about the quality of the clothes. Nobody believes that what they are doing means anything at any level.

MARGARITA
You think your job is worse than mine?

ALEX
(not listening)
And I just sit there, day after day reworking the same tired idea, the same tired materials and the same tired colors.

She pauses to drink some of the beer. She is already a little drunk.

ALEX (cont.)
I like VALENTINOVICH though. He is very nice and he is very smart.

MARGARITA
He is your boss?
ALEX
Yes, but he is really very nice.
Really, really nice.

At this minute, ZHENNA comes into the room and is a little shocked to see MARGARITA, who stops mashing and looks right into his eyes. EVEN drunk ALEX can see that there is a connection here. But at that moment, FARES pushes his way into the kitchen. He has also been drinking but we can see he has something on his mind, and that KOLIA is right behind him. He grabs ALEX delicately by the shoulders and squares her up so that she is facing him.

FARES
Ok, let’s talk about pride. So my religion is Islam and I’m proud of this religion. But I can say that I'm not really a religious person. I mean that I’m not fanatic because there are a lot of people who live just for their religions. For example my father and I are Muslims. But I am not against other religions. I like to learn something new about them because this is really interesting.

And he is done and simply turns and exits the room. ALEX, a little stunned, just stares at FARES as he walks away. KOLIA comes up to her and kisses her on the head and then follows FARES back to the other room.

MARGARITA turns and has a look for ZHENNA, but he has already left.

ALEX
What was that?

MARGARITA
(gathering her wits)
Maybe he is not so hopeless.

ALEX simply nods.

Cut to:
94. INT. SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. MEN’S ROOM. EVENING.
A bit later and EVA is using her camera and shooting a movie of MAX, on all fours, growling at and teasing IVAN. The dog jumps on MAX who pretends to get bowled over and the two roll across the floor, knocking down two beer drinking guests.

Cut to:

A bit later and we see KOLIA winning a hand of cards and pulling in some money. The people he is playing with are stunned by the hand. How was it possible? KOLIA just smiles.

Cut to:

A bit later and MARGARITA comes out of the bathroom to find ZHENNA talking to a girl. His face is really close to hers and she is smiling. MARGARITA only smirks at this and seeing her reaction makes ZHENNA smile a bit.

Cut to:

A bit later and the entire group, led by KOLIA is loudly toasting with Vodka shots.

KOLIA
To Pinsk!

ALL
To Pinsk!

ONE VOICE
To your mother’s asshole!

Everyone laughs and then drinks. MAX, before dinking his own, puts a shot down for THE DOG who laps it up quickly. Then we see that ALEX is seriously considering whether or not to drink the glass that she has in her hand. She looks around to see who might be watching and then sharply exhales and begins to bring the shot to her lips. However, as lip and glass make contact, there is a moment which tells us she is rethinking things and also, that the shift in balance brought about by the raising of her hand is sending her on a backwards course. However, and unfortunately, she doesn’t have at the moment the force of will to decline the fall and simply goes over backward.

Cut to:

We cue up the music for another Tango. And KOLIA is leading a steamy faced EVA through some steps. As they dance, we see that ALEX is lying passed out on a couch. Somehow though, despite the fall, she managed to save the glass of vodka and IVAN is
alternatingly licking her face and finishing the drink. MAX is sitting in a chair with his feet up and simply watching amused.

And then we focus on FARES and MARGARITA, who are sitting on the couch. Margarita lifts off her muscle shirt, revealing a black bra and a lot of tattoos. FARES begins examining MARGARITA’s tattoos very closely with his eyes and one finger, tracing the lines of the various pictures.

MARGARITA
Do you like them?

FARES
Yes. Very much. Why did you make them?

MARGARITA
In my childhood I studied painting in art school. And I had some friends there who liked to draw on each other’s bodies.

FARES smiles at this.

MARGARITA (cont.)
We all went to the black sea on holiday one time. We were all naked on the beach and there was a body-art competition. I painted two of my friends and I won. And that was it.

He stops on a picture of a smiling blond, half hidden by the left cup of her bra.

FARES
Who is this?

She pulls the cup aside so he can see the whole picture. The tango gives way to a different song and KOLIA leads EVA over to see what is happening with MARGARITA and FARES.

MARGARITA
That’s Marylyn Monroe. This tattoo meant a lot to me because it was done after my mother died. My mom really liked Marilyn Monroe.
FARES
Who is Marylyn Monroe?

KOLIA
You don’t know who Marilynn Monroe is?

FARES
(Disturbed to be bothered)
No. Why should I?

KOLIA
(smiling)
She was only the greatest film star Hollywood every produced.

MARGARITA smiles at this.

MARGARITA
Many people loved my mom. At her wake people told me that even though my mom was sometimes confused and often had no clue what she was doing, she always only had love in her heart for everybody and therefore they loved her very much...

EVA suddenly pushes FARES aside and starts tracing the lines of the tattoos herself. And then she lightly outlines Marilyn’s face with her middle finger and after one circle, allows her thumb to travel into the bra cup to caress MARGARITA’s nipple. EVA looks up into MARGARITA’S eyes. MARGARITA likes this and smiles at EVA. The men like it too.

MAX
(from across the room)
ВОТ, ЭТО ДА!
That works!

EVA looks around the room and smiles that she has brought some happiness to the festivities. KOLIA though decides to move on the moment.

KOLIA
If I may make a suggestion; I think what this party really needs... is female underwear wrestling!
Pretty much all of the men cheer at this suggestion. MARGARITA and EVA look at each other.

EVA
Do you want to?

MARGARITA
Maybe...

She thinks a moment.

MARGARITA
Should we?

ZHENNA
I think you should.

MARGARITA narrows her eyes at him. And then thinks...

MARGARITA
Ok... We’ll do it. But only on one condition. (A beat as she looks into EVA’S eyes) We want to see two boys wrestle in their underwear first.

Several of the men groan.

ZHENNA
That’s not fair.

MARGARITA
Yes and you are first.

ZHENNA
Ok. It is not a problem.

He looks about the room while taking off his shirt.

ZHENNA
Ok. Who is in? Max?

MAX simply shows him his finger.

ZHENNA
C’mon. Where’re your eggs?

MAX
In my pants and that is where they are going to stay!
Seeing ZHENNA isolated like this makes MARGARITA smile.

EVA
No. We want Fares!

FARES’ eyes go wide.

MARGARITA
(her eyes traveling back and forth between the two men)
Absolutely, we want Fares.

MAX
Go ahead Fares. Do it for the good of the group!

FARES doesn’t like this.

FARES
I don’t understand this at all...

EVA
C’mon Fares. Don’t be shy.

MARGARITA
Yea, Fares. You have a beautiful body...

KOLIA
Yea, Fares. You have a beautiful body...

FARES
(to Kolia)
Shut up!

First EVA and then MARGARITA start touching FARES all over. MARGARITA peers at ZHENNA to see his reaction. He notices this and smirks at her. Slowly, EVA and MARGARITA begin picking at fares’ shirt, slowly trying to coax him out of it.

EVA
C’mon Fares, don’t be afraid...

He is disgusted by the moment, but he does let them pull his shirt off. However, as his well built chest is revealed, we see that he has a thick scar several centimeters long on the left side of his chest. This stops everybody.
MARGARITA
Whoa... Fares, have you had heart surgery?

EVA runs a finger over the scar...

FARES
No.

EVA
Where did you get that scar?

The fun is over and Fares has had enough. He grabs his shirt and puts it on while heading out. Several people watch him go and see that he is leaving the hostel. EVA though is right there with him and goes to his closet and grabs a jacket and runs out after him. Standing right behind MARGARITA at the door is ZHENNA.

ZHENNA
Does this mean I don’t get to see you naked tonight?

MARGARITA gives him a look. Who is this guy?

Cut to:

EXT. PINSK, PINA RIVER PROMENADE, EARLY FALL, NIGHT

EVA has caught up to FARES and the two are walking along the river. They are not talking just slowly walking. As they get to the park they stop and stand at the rail, just watching the water flow by.

FARES
So, I got this scar when I was a high school student in Brest. Once, I was walking home, it was dark outside and this was in winter. I heard a woman scream and I thought that she wanted help. There were four guys and they had her on the ground and I told them to back off. They told me to leave quickly but I told them to let the girl go. We fought and basically I
won, one of them, I think I broke his arm.

FARES looks at EVA’S reaction to this but all her attention is only on FARES’ pain.

FARES
Anyway, I won the fight but when I went to help the girl up, one jerk put a knife in my chest.

EVA
Oh my god!

FARES
Yea.

EVA
What did you do?

FARES
Nothing.

EVA
What is nothing?

FARES
The guy just looked at me with the knife sticking out of my chest. He didn’t want to kill me, maybe. I guess he just did it in the moment. I was just looking at him. I didn’t feel any pain. He just got up and ran away.

EVA
And what did you do?

FARES
I went home. My mom was crazy when she saw this but my dad was calm. He drove me to the hospital. The
doctor said that just leaving the knife there was the smartest thing I could have done. He said that if I had pulled it out, I might have bled to death.

EVA doesn’t say anything. FARES shrugs once or twice.

FARES (cont.)
And that’s all.

EVA is silent for another moment. FARES can’t think of what more to say so he just stands there. And then suddenly, EVA grabs FARES in the strongest hug she is capable of. She is holding him with all of her strength trying to take the pain from him however she can. FARES doesn’t know what to do with this situation and she doesn’t seem to be letting go. So after a minute, he covers her also with his arms, lightly holding her but his eyes continue to look elsewhere.

Cut to:

95. INT. SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. MEN’S ROOM. EVENING.
Later, back at the party ZHENNA and MARGARITA are having a moment on the couch. He is leaning over her, his fingers twirling her hair and his body language is obviously sexual. She is smiling at him, her eyes dreamy and moist.

MARGARITA
I found work at a restaurant and one day a nice man came in looked at me as if I was very attractive.

ZHENNA
That was it? He just looked at you.

MARGARITA
Yea. And it was a bit like you are looking at me right now.

She smiles at him.

ZHENNA
Really?

This is interesting.
MARGARITA
Yes, and when he asked me if I wanted to meet after work, I didn’t know why I should say no.

She shifts on the couch, placing a hand on his thigh.

MARGARITA (cont.)
And before then, I have never been with a black man...

What? This is a shock. ZHENNA doesn’t know what to say. MARGARITA hand starts moving further up Zhenna’s leg.

MARGARITA (cont.)
(innocently)
And you know, I had never seen a black man before. You know, naked.

She pauses for effect and coquettishly looks into his eyes.

MARGARITA (cont.)
Well, I had seen pictures of course on the internet. But I mean... (her eyes go wide at the memory) when you actually hold something like that in your hand. When you actually can feel his heart pounding through that great thing...

She puts her hand on Zhenna’s crotch. His eyes close. But she suddenly makes a face her mouth screwing up to one side. And suddenly, she pulls her hand away and stands up. His eyes open, searching for an answer. ZHENNA is in shock.

ZHENNA
What happened?

MARGARITA
Well, after a love like that, you simply don’t want tiny, lying white guys any more.

ZHENNA
What?!

She rolls her eyes and gestures back towards the door.
MARGARTA
Oh, ask your girlfriend what it means.

And she moves to the side to reveal the PRETTY BLOND from earlier, standing in the doorway, fuming.

ZHENNA
Fuck!

He quickly stands, zipping his fly.

ZHENNA
Ola! No, you don’t understand!

And with that OLA turns and exits without a word. ZHENNA goes after her, pausing briefly to show MARGARITA he is angry with her. But to this, she just shrugs. This makes him even madder, but he has no time to play this game more today and he is off.

ZHENNA
Ola! Wait, wait, wait! I am with you. Don’t go away.

And now alone, the party obviously over, MARGARITA sighs and begins cleaning up the room.

Fade TO black.

TITLE CARD: November 2010 Winter

96. INT. SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. WOMEN’S ROOM. EVENING.
A buzzing sound. We focus in on a tattoo gun drawing on scarred flesh. Pull back to reveal MARGARITA drawing a tattoo on FARES’ chest. MAX approaches, leans over and closely looks at the tattoo process.

MAX
What does it mean?

MARGARITA
It is the Japanese symbol for truth.

MAX
Aha…why do you like that so much?

FARES
I don’t know. It’s important. I think, maybe, its mystical. Any way, I like it.
MAX
Me too. Can I do anything?

MARGARITA
Anything that can be drawn on paper.

MAX
I want a tattoo also.

He lifts up his shirt.

MAX (cont.)
Under my ribs. I want something here.

MARGARITA
What would you like there?

MAX
Can we write in any language?

MARGARITA
Of course, if you can show me the text. We can make it work

MAX
Okay! Give me a moment?

MAX goes to the computer terminal and sits down and goes onto the internet. He types in the phrase: Hebrew language. And something shows up and he types in the translation Truth Forever. And the computer shows:

אמות לנצח

He prints a copy of this then brings it back to MARGARITA.

MAX
Can you do this? Here, below my ribs.

MARGARITA
Of course. If you want.

MAX
Good.

MARGARITA
What is it?
MAX
It says “Emes Layolom”. It’s Hebrew for “Truth Forever”

FARES
Are You Jewish?

MAX
Why not?

FARES smiles at MAX. MAX starts to leave but then stops.

MAX (cont.)
(to MARGARITA)
Oh, and can you also make one for Ivan?

Everything stops and MARGARITA and FARES stare at him for a moment.

CUT TO:

97. EXT. LENIN SQUARE. PROTEST. DAY.
We are at a rally in Pinsk protesting the upcoming presidential elections. There are only about 30 or 40 people gathered and truthfully, this protest does not generate so much energy. Most of the people listening are just standing around and talking to each other and the speakers are generally not very fiery when they are speaking. ALEX is standing near the back and watching disgustedly. A tall guy with a beard (ALIK) is standing next to her. Both fairly disappointed at the lack of emotion.

ALIK
I hate our politics almost as much as I hate the government

ALEX
Me too. This is hopeless.

ALIK
I think the real problem is that we never say anything except that we hate the government. We never have any fresh ideas or strong people who have a clear plan of what to do. We think that just because we are opposition, this only means that we should oppose.
ALIK looks up at the statue of Lenin, forever marching over the square. ALEX looks at ALIK. He is beautiful.

CUT TO:

98. INT. POLICE STATION. 3RD FLOOR OFFICE.
KOLIA is at a big poker table on the third floor of the Pinsk Police station with four police officers, one advocate and the man KOLIA met at the casino earlier. As the cards are being passed around, we see in the background several officers in the corridor and occasionally, someone comes in to take a file. Around the table are KOLIA, four Cops; MENTOWSKI, GARDICHOK, POLOZHARA and IVANCHUK, a fifth, LEVOTSKI, is the advocate and the last is SHEF, Kolia’s contact with the hot car. As we focus in on the game, a hand is being taken by KOLIA and several cops throw down their cards in disgust.

MENTOWSKI
Fuck! How is this possible?

KOLIA
Everything is possible.

MENTOWSKI
You are not cheating. I can see that.

KOLIA just smiles.

SHEF
They don’t make glasses thick enough for what you can’t see.

Everybody laughs.

KOLIA
Remember, you don’t play the cards, you play the man.

LEVOTSKI
You play the cards and you play the man.

MENTOWSKI
It is still a lot of shit. I can’t see how you do it but I am going to get you.

GARDICHOK
We say that all the time here.
Everybody laughs again.

MENTOWSKI
Still, I am going to figure out this game of yours and when I do, I am gonna kick your ass.

He gets up from the table.

MENTOWSKI
I gotta piss.

And he exits and they start to deal another hand.

KOLIA
(a little worried)
Did I do something wrong?

POLOZHARA
It’s nothing. He just doesn’t like to lose.

IVANCHUK
Yea, just let him win a few hands and he’ll be ok.

Everyone laughs.

LEVOTSKI
I think they call that corruption.

Again laughs.

LEVOTSKI
Hey, be careful which words you use around here.

And more laughs. At this moment the door opens and LARISSA, a very pretty lady in a short black skirt and dark stockings enters. All give calm hellos except KOLIA, who allows his eyes to linger a bit over her form. She notices this.

LARISSA
Where is Vova?

POLOZHARA
He went to the toilet.

LARISSA
What are you doing here Shef?

SHEF
I brought a long my friend Kolia to play a few hands.
LARISSA
(eyeing him with interest)
Oh, I know you. You know Katya Poletenyok.

KOLIA
Not so well.

LARISSA
That’s not what she said.

Again everybody laughs a bit.

POLOZHARA
Kolia hasn’t been here for very long but he already has a reputation.

LARISSA
You should call her.

KOLIA
Of course.

MENTOWSKI re-enters here and sees LARISSA. This makes him even madder.

MENTOWSKI
What are you doing here?

LARISSA
I came to get some money.

IVANCHUK
You see, Vova? We keep telling you you don’t pay her enough.

Again laughs. MENTOWSKI though is not in the mood.

MENTOWSKI
(To IVANCHUK, sternly)
You shut up and mind your own business.

Some ooh’s and ah’s.

SHEF
C’mon Vova, give the girl some money.
MENTOWSKI sits at his place and starts counting his money. LARISSA follows him over and stands over his shoulder, keeping up the chatter.

LARISSA
You told me to pay for the garage and the car and the insurance. I did all that but there wasn’t enough for everything so I had to use my own money.

MENTOWSKI
And what? Your money is my money.

LARISSA
Yes, but I don’t have enough for my hair and we have to go to my family this weekend.

MENTOWSKI
And what?

LARISSA
And what? And what? And what? Vova, you said you would give me the money back two days ago.

MENTOWSKI
Larissa, for god’s sake, why are you bothering me here? We are playing cards.

IVANCHUK
Vova, give the girl some money to get her hair done.

ALL
C’mon Vova, give the girl some money.

MENTOWSKI
(loudly banging his fist on the table)
Enough!

There is another uncomfortable moment. Apparently, Mentowski has a lot of these.
KOLIA
(going into his pile of money)
Look, how much do you need?

Everything stops abruptly and all look at KOLIA seriously. SHEF lightly shakes his head. This was a mistake. MENTOWSKI angrily counts out some money on the table and then goes into his pocket and takes out a rather large wad of bills. MENTOWSKI looks hard again at KOLIA, showing him that money is not a problem here. Nobody is looking at MENTOWSKI now but KOLIA.

MENTOWSKI
(To Larissa, smilingly)
Here. You are always beautiful. Everyone knows that. (He hands her some money and offer's his face.) Here, gimme a kiss.

LARISSA smilingly plants a long sexy kiss on MENTOWSKI and there are a few ooh's and ah's at this as well.

MENTOWSKI
(Patting her on the ass)
Ok, you are good now. So, go on with your deal and let me kill this poker player who has all of our money.

She gives him a smiling and agreeable look until he turns his head to look for the reaction from his friends and then, for a split second, she allows her eyes to have a quick glance toward KOLIA, who catches it and lets a small smile come to his lips.

MENTOWSKI (cont.)
(smiling at his friends)
Like we said: we play the hand and the man, right Kolia?

KOLIA gives a winning smile as the young girl heads off with her money in hand.

KOLIA
(while shuffling the next hand)
Absolutely. And in fact, I want to say that you are a very lucky man.

MENTOWSKI
Why? Because I have such a sexy bed warmer?
KOLIA
No. Because if you didn’t give her that money, I would have gone home with that too.

A moment while everyone tries to decide if this was a challenge or not. But KOLIA just gives one of his winning smiles, and all slowly start to laugh at the joke. Even MENTOWSKI... sort of.

99. INT. ALIK’S APARTMENT. EVENING.
ALEX and ALIK are in bed. He is smoking a cigarette and talking.

ALIK
I was not political in University. And I had a good friend, Vitalli. His father was very well connected with the state. They were very rich. We had an apartment together in Minsk. His father paid for everything. We were studying business and the idea was that we would go in with his father after school.

He pauses. Telling the story is difficult. ALEX rubs his chest.

ALIK
One day, his father came to us and invited us to make a proposal for a factory. The work could be paid for by some German group from Hanover who were looking for something. He said I could offer any place I wanted in Belarus. The factory would have many jobs and great possibilities for the place where they put it. I of course thought of Pinsk. I went to my family and we got help from some local politicos finding the land and getting the information for taxes and rights and such. My parents paid a lot of money for the help. I worked night and day on this project thinking that there was going to be something special.

ALEX
What happened?
ALIK
What happened? Well, we presented our ideas to Vitalli’s father and he looked at mine and said he was disappointed at the work. The quality of the work was bad, you understand?

ALEX nods.

ALIK (cont.)
But after this Vitalli started to become distant. He didn’t want to be friends any more. And after a few weeks, he asked me even to leave the apartment. I didn’t have money to live in Minsk without him. So I went to his father to ask what had happened and was told that he was disappointed that I would steal his son’s ideas.

ALEX
What? You stole the idea.

ALIK
No. This is what he said. The truth is that I had some talent and Vitalik didn’t. He was jealous. And then, to finish things, they went to the directors of the university and I was asked to leave. My family complained and told them how much work we had all done, but nobody wanted to speak to them either. We were all disgraced. And that’s all.

ALEX is shaking with rage. Her eyes are wet and red, but she will not let herself cry.

CUT TO:

100. INT. VADIK’S HOUSE. DAY
EVA and the boy are having a moment. Eva is sitting on the floor with the small boy. We see that the boy’s head is very bald and his skin is very, very white. He moves very slowly and carefully, much more slowly and carefully than a healthy boy – obviously this boy is very sick. They are playing with toy cars, animals and solders.
VADIK
These are the army of the red king. He is a good king but he is jealous of the blue king. The blue king has a very beautiful kingdom with beautiful forrests and lakes and houses. The red king also has a beautiful kingdom but he is jealous and thinks that blue is better and so he is making this war. But the red king does not want the blue king in his kingdom. He does not want his people to be slaves for the red king because they are good people and they are very kind and are good to each other. And they have ice cream and parties and they dance at their celebrations and the queen of the blue is the most beautiful lady in all the world and therefore he will fight to the death to defend her.

EVA is listening to him carefully and smiling, sneaking glances at his head, at his skin and at the size of his body. As she is playing with him, she pictures him in her imagination:

DISSOLVE TO:

MANTAGE: we see the following pictures from EVA’S imagination

- laying on a beach, running into the water and swimming

And then she sees him in a different fantasy:

- running with friends and playing football– his full head of beautiful hair flying

- And then she sees herself sitting on a bench in a park, watching for the boy who is playing near some trees

DISSOLVE TO:

101. INT. VADIK’S HOUSE. DAY
And then she is back in the room again. Her head slightly to the side and she is watching this sick boy playing with his toys on the living room floor. The boy stops talking and looks up at her and smiles. We can see that the pain of this moment is almost too much to bear for her.
**TITLE CARD: 19 December 2010. Elections**

102. INT. BUS TO MINSK.
We see ALIK and ALEX sitting on a bus together. ALIK is talking heatedly on his mobile phone while ALEX is looking pensively out the window.

    ALIK
    I understand. Of course we will be there. (listening) I know. It’s a forgone conclusion. (listening) Of course we will. Of course. (listening) Of course.

CUT TO:

103. INT. VOTING CENTER. PINSK.
FARES is sitting at a table assisting people in their registration and pointing out where they should go to cast their vote. Sitting nearby are several people not doing anything but looking glum. They are wearing special tags identifying them as official observers.

CUT TO:

104. INT. PINSKAYA SHLACHTA RESTAURANT
MAX is wiping plates in the kitchen. From where he is standing, he has a view of the main floor. As he watches, there are a lot of people coming into the restaurant and, by how they are dressed and their manner, we can see that they are all of one particular elite group. There is an air of smarmy self satisfaction about them. They are the winners and there is nothing that can be done to change this situation.

    MAX
    What is this?

SERGEI comes to the door and has a look.

    SERGEI
    This is about the elections. They are making a party.

    MAX
    Aha...

MAX watches quietly as the guests begin to fill in.
105. INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. RECEPTION DESK.
MARGARITA is doing some paperwork at the main reception desk. Enter TERENTINOVNA with a sheaf of papers.

TERENTINOVNA
You will have to work late tonight. I am sorry but Dianna will not be here to host the restaurant tonight and there is going to be a celebratory party.

MARGARITA
This is for the elections?

TERENTINOVNA
Of course.

MARGARITA
So there is a possibility of a party?

TERENTINOVNA
Only smiles at her. It was a funny joke.

TERENTINOVNA
Just be there and dressed well.

And she exits. MARGARITA sighs.

CUT TO:

106. INT. VOTING CENTER. PINSK.
FARES is now working with several women in counting the paper ballots. The box is dumped out on the table and the individual pieces of paper are being counted. One of the observers stands nearby with a pad of paper and a pen in his hand. The others though are standing disinterestedly over by a window.

CUT TO:

107. EXT. MINSK CENTRAL STATION.
As ALIK and ALEX and the rest of the passengers exit the bus, they are immediately met by a group of police and their bags searched. ALIK is pulled to the side for a special search. ALEX starts to follow him and he tries to signal for her not to follow, but a cop sees the gesture and lightly grabs her arm
and takes her along. They pause next to a police van with an open door. Two young people are already seated in the van.

FIRST COP
May I see your documents, please.

ALEX
Of course.

ALEX and ALIK hand over their passports to the cop, who begins to flip through the pages.

FIRST COP
What is the purpose of your visit?

ALIK
We are here for my grandfather’s birthday.

FIRST COP
(To ALEX)
You are together?

ALEX
Yes.

FIRST COP
What is your grandfather’s name?

ALIK
Penko Ghenadi Alexandrovich

FIRST COP
Address?

ALIK
Ulitsa Kozlova, 34/15

The cop nods over to another, who has a notebook open and he quickly enters the information. There is an uncomfortable moment while the information is being checked. But after a second, the cop with the notebook nods. The first cop decides to have another look at the two passports, slowly turning through the pages. We see that there are several Polish stamps.

FIRST COP
What is your business in Poland?

ALIK
Shopping. I have friends there. Some business.
FIRST COP
What business?

ALIK
I help with transport. I work with several sellars at the market in Pinsk.

The cop continues to stare at the pages of the book. After a second he looks over to the cop with the notebook who just shrugs his shoulders. The cop looks directly at ALIK.

FIRST COP
Do you have any plans to participate in any protests or actions regarding the elections today?

ALIK
(Poker faced)
That’s really none of my business.

The first cop again glances towards the other with the notebook who lightly shakes his head one time. The first cop decides to take some more time. He again looks through the pages of the book. Finally, he gives the books back to ALEX and ALIK.

FIRST COP
(With a sarcastic smirk)
Thank you for your time. Enjoy your party.

ALIK
Thank you.

ALIK puts his arm around Alex’ shoulder and leads her away from the police van.

CUT TO:

108. INT. PINSKAYA SHLACHTA RESTAURANT. PRIVATE PARTY ROOM
There is a big TV screen which is showing the current election situation, showing the poling results in the overwhelmingly one sided affair. The people sitting at the tables are in a partying mood and are laughing and really enjoying themselves. MAX and several others bring several plates of food to the table and take away dirty dishes and empty glasses. One man, sitting at the head of the table, stands and calls for attention in order to propose a toast.
TOAST MAKER
My friends, this is an auspicious day. On a day like this, what is made clear is that we are genuinely strong in our efforts. And what we have now, what we have built over the last years is real. They thought we were dogs waiting to be taken by the Europeans. But our people said no.

MAX is fixated on the speech.

TOAST MAKER (cont.)
And then they said we were only the dogs of the Russians and that we were nothing without their gifts. But our people said no. And today, again, these results prove that we are really strong in what we do and that regardless of our position, economically or our image, we go on. And most importantly, is that WE go on. WE!

They all loudly agree and drink. There is much agreement individually after the toast. One of the waitresses touches MAX’s shoulder for him to come with her.

CUT TO:

109. INT. PINSKAYA SHLACHTA RESTAURANT. KITCHEN.
The waitress shows MAX several bottles of wine which have been reserved for the dinner.

WAITRESS
Open these and bring them out to the table. They go with the main coarse. (She points a finger at him) And don’t drink any of it. The bottles have to be full!

MAX
Ok.

She frowns, hands MAX the cork screw and exits. And he opens the first bottle, looks around and has a drink.

CUT TO:
INT. SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. GIRL’S ROOM.
MARGARITA is dressed in a very elegant long sleeved, red oriental coat and matching skirt. Her hair is done up oriental style with two chopsticks. She looks good.

CUT TO:

INT. MINSK CAFÉ.
ALIK and ALEX are sitting with a small group of young people angrily talking about the elections. The results are playing on the TV. One of them glances towards the wall clock. They are waiting.

CUT TO:

INT. PINSKAYA SHLACHTA RESTAURANT. KITCHEN.
Max has opened and sampled eight bottles of wine. We can see that there is at least a few centimeters taken from each. He goes around the corner and has another brief look at the group seated in the party room. We see the toaster is broadly dancing with one of the ladies there. He lets his hand slip down to her bottom for a squeeze, but she grabs it and laughingly, pulls it back up. This makes MAX frown and he heads back to his task. He looks again at the bottles, thinks a moment and then unzips his fly. He takes a bottle and, holding it just below our view, begins to refill the bottle. We focus on his face. He has a look of concentration and seems to be artistically and carefully contemplating the nuances of his task.

CUT TO:

INT. MINSK CAFÉ. EARLY EVENING.
ALIK, ALEX and their group begin standing and gathering their things. It is time.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. EVENING.
MARGARITA is coming to work and passing the statues. She stops for a moment and looks around. Something is strange. She can’t see what this might be, but it is something.

CUT TO:

EXT. VICTORY SQUARE MINSK
ALIK, ALEX and their group come around a corner and get a glimpse at the thousands of people milling around the square. It is like a battlefield forming with battalions of blue cops gathered along the edges and blocking off all of the entrances. Those gathered inside the square are listening to a speaker who
is yelling into a bull horn. There are occasional cheers of agreement amongst the group. Our people head down towards the crowd to join them.

CUT TO:

116. INT. PINSKAYA SHLACHTA RESTAURANT. PRIVATE PARTY ROOM. MAX is leaning against the door frame watching the partyers enjoy their meal. There is a satisfied smile on his face as the speech maker smirkingly clinks glasses with the lady with whom he was dancing and then has a nice drink. SERGEI approaches.

SERGEI
What are you smiling about?

MAX
Acts of patriotism.

SERGEI doesn’t understand. He looks at the guests and then back to MAX, shrugs and goes off to do something.

CUT TO:

117. INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. RESTAURANT. MARGARITA in her red oriental outfit is acting as hostess for the big elections party. There are lots of well dressed higher ups sitting at the tables and there are several televisions playing the elections results. She is greeting people at the door and directing them towards their reserved tables.

CUT TO:

118. INT. VOTING CENTER. PINSK. FARES is counting the very last of the votes and passing it over to the official counter. It is not a dramatic moment. The results were not going to be closely decided.

FARES
That’s it.

A lady who has obviously been overseeing the operation approaches the elections monitors and shows two open hands to them, like a blackjack dealer showing that the last cards have been dealt.

OVERSEER
Ladies, gentlemen. Are there any questions? Comentary?
MONITOR
No. Everything is good. Fine.

2ND MONITOR
We will call.

She smiles smugly as they take their coats and hats and head for the door.

CUT TO:

119. EXT. VICTORY SQUARE, MINSK. EARLY EVENING.
ALEX and ALIK are entering the square through a steel gate guarded by cops. They are asked for their passports and searched for weapons, before they are sent through.

CUT TO:

120. INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. RESTAURANT.
A tall, rather well dressed black man comes to the door of the restaurant. Several people turn to stare for a moment. He is the only black man in the room, after all. MARGARITA notices him and is stunned. This is ADAM, the same man we saw in the opening scene.

ADAM
(Smiling)
Hello Margo.

CUT TO:

121. EXT. VICTORY SQUARE. EVENING.
ALEX and ALIK are amongst the crowd listening to a speaker. The crowd is animated and serious. We can see on ALEX’s face that she really believes in what she is doing.

CUT TO:

122. INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. RECEPTION DESK.
MARGARITA has pulled ADAM away from the restaurant for a private talk.

MARGARITA
What are you doing here?

ADAM
You said you were coming to Pinsk.
I have come to see you.
MARGARITA
You can’t stay here.

ADAM
I don’t know why not. I just want to see you.

MARGARITA
I’m not going to let you and you have to go. I don’t understand why you are here. Our time is over and that’s all.

ADAM
Margarita, please, why can’t you understand what we had was special. It isn’t every day people have a relationship like ours.

Margarita puts her hands on her head as if she has got a headache. However...

CUT TO:

123. EXT. HOTEL PRIPYAT.
At this moment we see ZHENNA approaching the steps leading to the front door, holding a bouquet of flowers. But...

CUT TO:

124. INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. RECEPTION DESK.
MARGARITA sees ZHENNA coming to the doors. We see a close-up of MARGARITA’S FACE: What is he doing here? Acting quickly, MARGARITA reaches for ADAM’s hand, pulls him close to her and kisses him passionately. ZHENNA, entering sees this. We get a close up on his reaction and then via his perspective, the kiss taking place and, MARGARITA’S HAND finding its way down to the man’s crotch. And there is visible shock at seeing MARGARITA kiss this tall black man.

We go back to MARGARITA’S PERSPECTIVE as ADAM begins kissing her neck and rubbing her breasts. But she is looking right at ZHENNA, showing him the ecstasy she is in.

ZHENNA nods slightly, trying to hide his anger. This is exactly who she is, he thinks. And as her head turns and she opens her mouth to receive his tongue, ZHENNA tosses the flowers into a waste basket and exits the building. We close in on MARGARITA’S EYES which are now closed tightly. Is she in ecstasy or agony?
125. EXT. VOTING CENTER. PINSK.
There is nothing particularly happening as FARES exits the polling center. It is cold and snow is beginning to fall. He looks at his watch, pulls his coat a bit closer over his ears for warmth, looks left and right, shrugs slightly, and starts down the steps. His work day is over.

126. EXT. VICTORY SQUARE, MINSK. EVENING.
Snow is falling as the final results of the elections are being announced. We close in on ALEX and ALIK in the crowd listening to the announcement.

    ANOUNCER (O.S.)
    And with a final total of 82.3 percent of the vote...

A great roar goes up from the crowd. We get a close up of ALEX who breaks down crying at that moment. It was all foretold, but still, in the moment the reality still stings. Next to her, ALIK is screaming with his fist raised. The crowd begins chanting Freedom! Freedom! Freedom! as great red and white flags wave all over the square.

127. INT. PINSKAYA SHLACHTA RESTAURANT. PRIVATE PARTY ROOM.
The party erupts into cheers over the results.

128. INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. RESTAURANT.
The party erupts into cheers over the results. TERENTINOVNA is seated at one of the tables and is looking around. She is looking for MARGARITA. She stands and goes over and grabs the arm of a waiter.

    TERENTINOVNA
    Where is MARGARITA? It is time for the champaigne.

    WAITER
    (Motioning with his thumb)
    I think she went to talk to someone over at the desk.
TERENTINOVNA does not understand this mistake and starts towards the front desk.

CUT TO:

129. INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. BACK ROOM/CLOSET
MARGARITA, eyes closed, mouth open and leaning over a small table has her red oriental skirt up around her waist and is being seriously fucked by ADAM, who is grunting with each thrust.

CUT TO:

130. INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. RECEPTION DESK.
TERENTINOVNA enters but the desk is abandoned. Where is MARGARITA? She looks towards the back room and pauses.

CUT TO:

131. INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. BACK ROOM/CLOSET
MARGARITAS eyes are now open. She motions for ADAM to stop for a moment. She senses something.

CUT TO:

132. INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. RECEPTION DESK.
TERENTINOVNA takes a step towards the door but then stops and looks back over her shoulder towards their office on the second floor. a thought comes over her.

TERENTINOVNA
That’s where MARGARITA is. She is on the internet!

And she starts towards the stairs.

CUT TO:

133. INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. BACK ROOM/CLOSET
MARGARITA is listening intently for something. She knows something is wrong.

ADAM
What is it?

MARGARITA
You’d better finish quickly.
134. INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. MARGARITA’S OFFICE.
TERENTINOVNA opens the door to the office. It is empty. Where is MARGARITA?

CUT TO:

135. INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. BACK ROOM/CLOSET
MARGARITA and ADAM are composing themselves.

MARGARITA
So this is it. You need to go away. You can’t stay here.

ADAM
(He is confused)
I don’t understand you. What was that? We just...

MARGARITA
(Icy cold)
I will make this simple for you. Our time is over and really, don’t make me do anything to hurt you.

Despair registers on ADAM’S FACE. Apparently, he understands that when MARGARITA says “No” it means no.

CUT TO:

136. INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. RESTAURANT.
TERENTINOVNA, livid with anger returns to the restaurant only to see MARGARITA helping deliver bottles of champaign to the tables. Behind TERENTINOVNA, we see ADAM heading out the door. TERENTINOVNA turns a moment too late to see him go. She returns her attention to MARGARITA, who is smilingly pouring a glass of for one of the guests as if nothing at all has happened. MARGARITA looks up, sees TERENTINOVNA watching her, smiles, and goes back to pouring.

CUT TO:

137. EXT. PINSKAYA SHLACHTA RESTAURANT. REAR ENTRANCE
MAX is taking a break and smoking a cigarette. SERGEI sticks his head out the door.

SERGEI
Hey, let’s go. They need some more wine.

MAX smirks and flicks his cigarette away.
SAFE FADE TO:

138. EXT. VICTORY SQUARE, MINSK. EVENING.

We hear the chanting. We have an overhead shot of the crowd, and then we are right in the middle of the fight. There is a line of cops trying to push back a crowd of protesters. ALIK is in the front row and punching, or trying to punch one of the cops. Another protester is spitting in their faces and screaming obscenities. One of the cops tries grabbing ALIK’S hair, but the mass of people is too great. Trying to hold her ground in the push is ALEX, but she is simply overwhelmed by the crowd. Everyone is screaming violently. She is trying to stay with ALIK, holding on to the edge of his coat. But she loses her grip as the crowd shifts and she falls to the ground and is surrounded by the legs of the protesters and cops and she is getting stepped on. We see her face and understand that she is really scared at this moment. She looks up trying to find ALIK but there are too many people. And then, out of nowhere, a police boot connects with the side of her head and her face goes blank as a phalanx of cops starts to push the crowd back.

We go to slow motion and only abstract sounds. Screams from above her and flashing lights. A glimpse of a flag, the earth seems to be moving. She looks at her hand and sees another hand is trying to pull her free of the crown by her sleeve. ALEX looks to see who it is, but there is a light shining right behind, obscuring the face. It is like she is in a small tunnel and the only light is coming from behind this person.

The sound comes back up to reveal that we are still right in the middle of the fight. ALEX is not quite all there but she begins to understand that someone is helping her and she starts to crawl through the forest of legs in the direction that the samaritan is pulling her.

Once free of the crowd, glancing back over her shoulder she manages to spot ALIK. He is still right at the front of the line. He has got his hand hooked under the base of a
policeman’s helmet and is trying to pull it off his head. He hasn’t even noticed that ALEX has fallen. Everyone in the front line is venting and shouting at the cops who continue to push them back.

ALEX finally free of the crowd, sits, still and stunned. She feels her head where the boot had kicked her and sees that there is some blood. She looks back towards the mêlée just in time to see three cops start to take ALIK to the ground, beating him with batons. As his face is pressed flat on the concrete, knees fall on his back, a boot kicks his face and his hands are cuffed behind his back. We see ALEX is watching, dazed and alone in the snow as ALIK is dragged away in the opposite direction towards a waiting police van.

SLOW FADE TO:

139. INT. IRA’S APARTMENT. EVENING.

We are watching TV. “The Intricacies of the Russian Hunt” (Особенности Национальной Охоты) is on and at this moment, thinking he was a bear trying to get into the banya, Kousmich has just hit the General with a piece of firewood and the naked men are now rushing him to the lake to try and revive him. Pull back to reveal KOLIA is lying in bed and watching. IRA, the girl from the gambling house, loosely wearing only a print halat, is seen in the kitchen preparing something to eat. From KOLIA’S PERSPECTIVE, we see on the TV, that the general is revived and delivers the line: You are joking. (Ты даёшь!).

The broadcast of the movie gives way to an official report about the election. KOLIA stretches and groans slightly. IRA enters holding a big bowl of mashed potatoes with two spoons sticking out and sits down on the bed next to him, snuggling close.

IRA
Where is the movie?

KOLIA
They just announced the results of the elections.
IRA
Really? Who won?

KOLIA smiles lightly. There is no point in answering.

FADE TO BLACK

**Title Card: New Years 2011**

140. EXT. PINSK DRAMATIC THEATRE. MORNING.
We see EVA and MARGARITA exiting a car with little VADIK. With them are NIKOLAIVNA and VLADIMIR. The girls are each holding one of VADIK’s hands and they begin slowly walking to the theatre.

141. INT. PINSK DRAMATIC THEATRE. ENTRANCE CORRIDOR. MORNING.
Inside the theatre, there are many children being prepared by their parents and changing into costumes for the show. VADIK is being set up as a pirate, complete with bandana, eye patch, a hook for his hand and even a plastic parrot is affixed to his shoulder. We see that some of the other children and parents notice his bald head and pale complexion. It is an uncomfortable moment for everyone but VADIK. MAX comes up behind him and lifts VADIK up, smiling into his face.

MAX (in pirate lingo)
So. Ye be a pirate now, be ya?

VADIK smiles. He likes MAX.

MAX (cont.)
Well, we’ll see what sort of pirate ye be. But when the army comes a’lookin for us, ye’ll be by my side, won’t yer?

VADIK
Of course. We fight to the end!

MAX
Arr, that we do me lad! That we do!
MAX smiles at the others and puts the boy down.

MAX
I’ll come and find you when there’s business to do, ok?

VADIK
OK, I’m ready...

MAX winks at the others, and quickly exits.

CUT TO:

142. INT. PINSK DRAMATIC THEATRE. PERFORMANCE. MORNING.
We are inside the theatre and watching DED MOROZ (Santa Clause) being accosted by pirates and his bag of gifts being stolen from him. We see this from VADIK’S PERSPECTIVE from the audience. MAX enters the scene from the rear, taking the unoccupied seat next to VADIK. A spotlight shines on the two.

MAX
(broadly, for the audience)
Arr, me lad! Did yer see how we took all them presents for ourselves? Arr, we be the best of pirates, don’t we lad? Yar with me, arr, don’t yar?

All the children shout “no!” MAX stands to shout back at them.

MAX
Arr, but ye likes preasents, don’t ya?

CHILDREN
YES!

MAX
Then you’s gotta just takes what yar wants then, right?

CHILDREN
NO!

Enter from the opposite side of the theater SNEGUROCHKA, DED MOROZ’ beautiful helper.
SNEGUROCHKA
No, the children are right. What is important is not that only we get presents. Presents are for everyone.

SNEGUROCHKA looks over to where VADIK and MAX are.

SNEGUROCHKA
Isn’t that right, Vadik?

And with this VADIK stands, and raises his sword and cries:

VADIK
Presants are for everyone!

And all of the children start cheering as VADIK and MAX go up on the stage and start battling with their swords with the other pirates. In a moment they have won and deliver DED MOROZ’ bag of presents back to him. And with this, DED MOROZ and SNEGUROCHKA light the Yolka (New Years tree),

DED MOROZ and SNEGUROCHKA
HAPPY NEW YEAR!

CHILDREN
HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The place goes crazy. MAX hoists VADIK up onto his shoulder and they both wave their swords in salute to the cheering crowd.

CUT TO:

143. INT. PINSK DRAMATIC THEATRE. MAIN HALL. MORNING. The children are moving as a mob towards DED MOROZ. MARGARITA, NIKOLAIVNA and VLADIMIR hang in the background. EVA is filming VADIK as he makes his way towards DED MOROZ and SNEGUROCHKA to get a present. MARGARITA is thinking really hard about something and NIKOLAIVNA notices this.

NIKOLAIVNA
This is all so beautiful, don’t you think?

MARGARITA
Yes, but I just don’t believe in this.
NIKOLAI

(smiling)

Why?

MARGARITA

Because it is New Years and they always find a way to hurt us on New Years.

NIKOLAI

laughs. Everyone knows this.

NIKOLAI

You have been so good to VADIK. Really he is so happy today.

MARGARITA

We are happy to do it. He’s a wonderful boy.

A small pause.

NIKOLAI

EVA is really so good with him. 

(she sees something) Oh my…

At that moment, we focus on the parrot on the boy’s shoulder, which has become interesting to one of the children. The child tries to grab for it and, unintentionally, he pulls off VADIK’S BANDANA. Once off, all the children can see that he is bald underneath and there is a tense moment and many of the children simply stare. MAX though, picks up the bandana and after blowing on one spot and using his thumb to clean off an imaginary speck of dirt, he starts to use it to polish the boy’s head like a bowling ball. VADIK starts to laugh and so do all of the children. It’s all ok.

CUT TO:

144. INT. ZOLOTOI KOLOS. MORNING

Everybody is at the café for hotdogs and pastries after the show. EVA is filming the decorations and MAX, VADIK and VLADIMIR are playing rock, scissors, paper. We focus on MARGARITA and NIKOLAI

NIKOLAI

So tell me Margo. You are such a beautiful young lady. Why don’t you have a regular boyfriend?
MARGARITA
Oh, I work too much. I simply do not have time.

NIKOLAIVNA
Oh, that is nonsense. There must be someone who you like.

MARGARITA smiles. She wants to brush off the question but it sticks with her. She laughs at being caught and NIKOLAIVNA smiles knowingly.

NIKOLAIVNA
Aha. I see that there is somebody in there.

MARGARITA nods. But then drifts into a deep thought. There is somebody she likes but it is making her think really hard.

NIKOLAIVNA
Don’t worry. When it is real, you will know it.

MARGARITA nods again. A small laugh. There is a lot of pain in there along with whoever it is.

CUT TO:

145. INT. PINSK GORISPOLKOM. FARES’ OFFICE. MIDDAY
FARES is at his desk working on some document as the door opens and KOLIA enters smiling his usual winning smile.

FARES
What are you doing here?

KOLIA
I have come to invite you to play some cards.

FARES
(Turns his attention back to his work)
I can’t. I’m busy.

KOLIA
(smiles)
I think you have time for this game.

CUT TO:
146. INT. PINSK GORISPOLKOM. CORRIDOR. MIDDAY. They are walking together down a corridor but FARES is obviously more than a little nervous.

FARES
Look, I don’t have enough money for this...

KOLIA
Yes, you do. Here.

KOLIA goes into his pocket and pulls out two $50 bills and gives them to FARES. FARES’ eyes go wide.

FARES
What are you giving me this for? This is too much money.

KOLIA
Every game costs some money. It is all relative...

They have arrived at their door. FARES reads the name on the door. He is shocked.

FARES
You have got to be joking.

CUT TO:

147. INT. PINSK GORISPOLKOM. STEPANOVICH'S OFFICE. MIDDAY. Using the long meeting desk as a poker table, several local government big shots are playing cards. At the table along with KOLIA and FARES are STEPANOVICH and BORISOVICH and two others. At the moment we join them, KOLIA is, of course, pulling in a hand.

STEPANOVICH
KOLIA, you are simply the luckiest man I have ever met.

KOLIA
Maybe...

FARES looks very glum.

BORISOVICH
But our FARES...

Everyone laughs a little.
FARES
I can’t believe I have already lost sixty dollars.

STEPANOVICH
If you don’t know the swamp, don’t go on the road.

More chuckles.

KOLIA
FARES is ok. He’s a good man.

All mumble their agreement. It is now KOLIA’S deal. There is a brief pause. STEPANOVICH nods to BORISOVICH who understands the meaning. He then taps FARES on the shoulder. FARES does not understand what he wants but BORISOVICH stands, and motions for him to follow. FARES looks to KOLIA for an answer but KOLIA just shrugs and nods that he should go. BORISOVICH leads him out the door.

CUT TO:

148. INT. PINSK PIERVAMEISKA CLOTHING FACTORY. ALEX’S OFFICE. ALEX is in her office at the factory. BORIS VALENTINOVICH is leaning over his desk coloring in a sketch of a model and ALEX is searching for something over the internet. The door opens and the director, STEPAN MICHAELOVICH comes in. Both ALEX and VALENTINOVICH stand up.

VALENTINOVICH AND ALEX
Hello, STEPAN MICHAELOVICH

MICHAELOVICH
Hello, hello.

He is looking around the office, inspecting things looking at designs. He Stops and inspects one particular folder.

VALENTINOVICH
Those are the new designs for our new young women’s collection.

MICHAELOVICH
Mmmm mmmm

He is looking them over closely, but his face shows that there is something wrong, something about them that he doesn’t like. VALENTINOVICH and ALEX look at each other. Something is wrong.
MICHAELOVICH
These are her work, yes?

ALEX
Not only me. We, BORIS VALENTINOVICh and I, we did them together.

VALENTINOVICh
No, we did some of the work together, but they are Sasha’s work really. They are her colors and lines. I just helped with the cost assessments and fabric choices.

MICHAELOVICH
Mmmm mmmm

He is not buying into this. Something is really wrong and ALEX is starting to get nervous. She looks to VALENTINOVICh for help but he only shrugs, he doesn’t understand.

VALENTINOVICh
They are very good, don’t you think?

MICHAELOVICH
For who?

This is a strange question. ALEX starts to answer but VALENTINOVICh stops her with a gesture. Definitely, something is not right. They both wait for the director’s next statement.

CUT TO:

149. INT. PINSK GORISPOLKOM. CORRIDOR. MIDDAY.
FARES and STEPANOVICh start to walk slowly down the corridor together.

FARES
How can I help you?

STEPANOVICh
Well, we have a small problem and we think that you are exactly the man to take care of it.

FARES
Anything I can do to help.
STEPANOVICH
Good!

CUT TO:

150. INT. PINSK PIERVAMEISKA CLOTHING FACTORY. ALEX’S OFFICE. After a moment, MICHAEOLOVICH tosses the designs down with disdain.

MICHAEOLOVICH
How much time did you spend on this project?

He is only talking to VALENTINOVICH. He is not even looking at ALEX whose mind is racing a mile a minute. VALENTINOVICH is also somewhat shocked.

VALENTINOVICH
I don’t understand…

MICHAEOLOVICH
What don’t you understand? How much time did you spend on this project? How many hours? How many days? How many minutes of our money did you use to create these drawings?

The two are dumbstruck. VALENTINOVICH has never heard anything like this. He again looks at ALEX and we can see a thought creeping into her head. She already understands. The anger is already coming.

ALEX
Is there something about the designs that you don’t like?

MICHAEOLOVICH
Yes. There is something I do not like.

Again there is silence.

CUT TO:

151. INT. PINSK GORISPOLKOM. CORRIDOR. MIDDAY. Their conversation continues…
The problem concerns a friend of yours who was at the protest at Lenin Square before the elections.

Fares nodes his head but doesn’t say anything.

STEPANOVICH (cont.)
We understand that she lives with her friends next door to you at the internat.

There is a short pause

STEPANOVICH (cont.)
And her name is ALEX. This is true?

Fares nods but doesn’t say anything.

CUT TO:

152. INT. PINSK PIERVAMEISKA CLOTHING FACTORY. ALEX’S OFFICE.
The conversation continues...

MICHAELOVICH
(to Alex)
What exactly is your job here?

ALEX
I am...

VALENTINOVICH
She is my assistant.

MICHAELOVICH
You are a designer’s assistant? Is this right?

ALEX nods.

MICHAELOVICH (cont.)
And in fact, you are not even really a permanent worker, isn’t that also correct?

ALEX nods.
VALENTINOVICH
Really, she is very good. She is very talented...

MICHAELOVICH
She is a talented assistant, is this what you are getting at? She assists you in your job well?

Focus on Alex. This is not going to be good.

CUT TO:

153. INT. PINSK GORISPOLKOM. CORRIDOR. MIDDAY.
The conversation continues...

STEPANOVICH
Well, what we need for you to do – is to speak to her and maybe offer a word to the wise that acting up in Pinsk is generally not wanted from people who come from other cities.

FARES is silent for a moment, and then the director continues.

STEPANOVICH (cont.)
Maybe in the other cities people can do whatever they want but this doesn’t go in Pinsk.

Fares again just nods and his face is very stern. He doesn’t want to show any emotions.

STEPANOVICH (cont.)
Do you understand me?

FARES
Yes.

FARES slowly nods his head. Probably he wants to say something more, but he doesn’t.

CUT TO:

154. INT. PINSK PIERVAMEISKA CLOTHING FACTORY. ALEX’S OFFICE.
The conversation continues...
ALEX
Is there some problem, Stepan
MICHAELOVICH? Is there something
that should be changed?

MICHAELOVICH
Perhaps. But perhaps we should
better think of exactly what we
are supposed to be doing here and
why we are here in the first
place. Specifically, if you are
going to be practicing things
which are not your business,
perhaps we need someone else who
can… go along with the program
which we have.

She knows exactly what this means. And she is burning hot.
VALENTINOVICH signals for her not to go on but she can’t help
herself.

ALEX
(a little hysterical)
I made those designs to help this
company. You don’t make money
because our people do not buy the
clothes because they’re not cheap
but also no good. I just thought
something more modern and which
has more perspective might work.
And we can make these clothes with
materials we already have and
therefore they are also cost
effective.

VALENTINOVICH
Sasha…

ALEX
No. I know what you are doing. But
I also know what I am doing. And I
know I have to be here but even if
I didn’t choose this place, I am
doing everything I can to help.

MICHAELOVICH
Young girl, I think you have a
problem understanding what help is
and what is hinder.
Happiness Page 89 of 172

There is a pause. Whatever is going to be has obviously already been decided.

CUT TO:

155. INT. PINSK GORISPOLKOM. CORRIDOR. MIDDAY.
The conversation continues...

    STEPANOVIČ
    It’s important that we all understand these things, Fares, including such things as who are real friends are. Maybe it would be a good idea if you made it clear to this girl that your own future here might also depend on the actions of your friends.

    Fares looks very hard at him

    FARES
    (quietly)
    Does it?

    The director smiles

    STEPANOVIČ
    Here, it always has and it always will.

156. INT. PINSK PIERVAMEISKA CLOTHING FACTORY. ALEX’S OFFICE.
The conversation continues...

    MICHAЕLOVIČ
    This is a state company. We do not work for ourselves. We work for our country. We are not here for you. You are here for us and... if it is possible to say this perfectly clearly... I think you should decide if you are with us, or not, once and for all.

And with that, he pushes the designs into the waste basket, turns and leaves the office without another word. VALENTINOVIČ is stunned. ALEX is standing there, fists clenched, literally boiling with rage.

FADE TO:
157. INT. SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. KITCHEN. LATE EVENING.
On the TV in the corner, we see the president of the republic
making his speech to the nation. The group has made the room
look partyish for the celebration, but nobody is in a
particularly good mood. MARGARITA, EVA and ALEX are sitting at
the table. MAX AND FARES are watching the TV. There are only a
few other people in the room, all the rest having gone home to
be with their families. Focus on MARGARITA who is particularly
glum.

MARGARITA
It’s true. They do always get us
on New Years...

MAX
(Yells to MARGARITA)
Quiet! I can’t hear the man speak.

ALEX’s phone rings. She looks and sees it is her mama calling.

ALEX
(answering)
Hello Mama.

We stay on ALEX as the conversation transpires, hearing the
words of her mother reasonably clearly.

ALEX’S MOTHER (O.S.)
(hysterically)
Sasha, for god’s sake, what is
going on out there?

ALEX
I don’t understand?

ALEX’S MOTHER (O.S.)
They came to your father today and
started asking all kinds of
questions about you. Who you were,
where you were. What you were
doing. They started to ask all
about what sorts of people you
were in involved with and why you
were in Minsk and fighting with
the police out there.

ALEX
Why are they talking to you?
ALEX’S MOTHER (O.S.)
Sasha, why are you so stupid.  
Don’t you understand anything? 
They are pressuring your father. 
They told him that he should worry about his pension and advised him that we needed to talk to you about what you were doing. Sasha, we can’t lose our pensions. We will starve without them.

ALEX
They wouldn’t do that?

ALEX’S MOTHER (O.S.)
Sasha, please! Try and listen. you just can’t do this. Please Sasha, try and understand. You just need to do your job and not to bother people too much. You can’t play these games here. Sasha please wake up! Sasha please, you must understand... this is our lives...

ALEX is no longer listening. We can still hear her mother talking, but with the phone still in her hand, ALEX gets up and slowly walks away from the table. Everyone but MAX watches her go and we follow her out and when she has gone, the only sound left in the room is the voice of the president congratulating everyone for the New Year. Then, the TV screen shows an image of a clock with both hands pointing straight up. And we hear only the sound of the bells chiming. By the time the 12th chime is heard, we have faded to black.

DISSOLVE TO:

Title card: April 10, 2011. Spring

158. MONTAGE: PINSK. MORNING

- The river is flowing and the trees are starting to take on leaves. Generally, the town is beginning to turn green and new.
- We see FARES walking to work at the GORISPOLKOM. He smiles at some girls looking pretty in their short spring dresses.
- KOLIA is dropping MARGARITA off at the hotel and then heading off to his own work.
- EVA is at her school presiding over a small sport Olympiad for the kindergarteners.
• And MAX is walking along the river with IVAN. He stops to smile at two female sportsmen running by side by side. They don’t notice him.

• We then see KOLIA at his desk at the advertising company
• MARGARITA going over papers at her office desk,
• MAX talking to some actors at the rear entrance to the Dramatic Theatre and
• FARES meeting and shaking hands with a group of suits at the entrance of the government building. But then we...

CUT TO:

159. EXT: MINSK PRISON. MORNING
ALEX is heading through the prison security check, being searched by the guards and her bag gone through. She is very glum.

CUT TO:

160. INT. MINSK PRISON.
ALEX is led through the corridors and into a room with several tables and chairs. She is told to sit down and she waits there.

CUT TO:

161. INT. SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. GIRL’S ROOM.
EVA is sitting at the computer and is editing a film. We don’t see exactly what she is doing, but whatever it is, it makes her smile.

CUT TO:

162. INT. PINA PRINT. KOLIA’S CUBICLE.
KOLIA is on the phone with someone. His feet are up on the desk. He checks his watch and then looks over his shoulder at something.

CUT TO:

163. INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. RESTAURANT.
MARGARITA is leaning on the stand bar bored. There are only a few people in the room and apparently she has nothing at all to do.

CUT TO:

164. INT. PINSK GORISPOLKOM. FARES’ OFFICE.
FARES is diligently working on some documents. He stops and glances at the clock and then goes back to work.
CUT TO:

165. INT. MINSK PRISON. MEETING ROOM

ALIK is led into the room by an officer. He doesn’t look particularly well cared for. He smiles when he sees ALEX but truthfully, it is not the most enthusiastic smile in the world and ALEX does see this. The guard motions for him to sit and he does. The guard though, does not leave the room and ALEX doesn’t like this.

ALEX
Does he have to stand there?

ALIK
There is nothing I can do. We are not married and I am here for political reasons.

ALEX
So I can’t even kiss you?

It is a worrisome moment, but after glancing at the guard, ALIK leans over the table and kisses ALEX on the lips. It is a short kiss and has nothing of the emotion necessary to put away the fears. The guard does not react, but after a second, ALIK sits back down again.

ALIK
I know this is ridiculous. I am so sorry to be putting you through this.

ALEX
Don’t worry. I understand.

ALIK
The lawyer says that there is a communication on going with the court and some of the guys say that we have gotten some great press internationally. Maybe this will really be something.

ALEX
Or it will have only wasted your time.
ALIK
That’s negativism. That’s not going to help...

She doesn’t want to cry, but we can see it on her face.

FADE TO:

166. EXT: KAROMBAL BILLIARD HOUSE. PINSK
KOLIA and FARES arrive and head in through the entrance.

CUT TO:

167. INT. KAROMBAL BILLIARDS.
FARES and KOLIA are in the middle of a game which, obviously, KOLIA is winning. This is giving FARES some stress, which KOLIA seems to be enjoying somewhat.

FARES
I simply cannot understand this game. You think you understand where the ball is going, but you can never find the center of the pocket.

KOLIA
You have to be one with the ball.

FARES
Fuck you!

KOLIA smiles

CUT TO:

168. EXT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. MORNING
We see ZHENNA arriving with SVETA, a rather well dressed blond wearing a light jacket.

CUT TO:

169. INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. RESTAURANT.
We see ZHENNA and SVETA, his girl coming into the hotel from behind MARGARITA, who is studying something on the stand bar. The two stand behind MARGARITA, not disturbing her but ZHENNA is enjoying that she does not know he is there. Finally, he clears his throat and she springs to attention. At first her expression is open
and greeting, but then she sees that it is ZHENNA, and a look of happiness comes over her face. This is a face she has been waiting to see. But then she realizes that he is with someone and that this is meant for her eyes especially.

ZHENNA
Can we have a table today?

There is a short pause while all of this information goes into MARGARITA’S head, and then, finding some hint of mock professionalism, she gives them a mildly snide smile…

MARGARITA
Of course, right this way.

She leads them to a table and a waiter comes and pulls out a chair for the lady. But before they sit, ZHENNA motions that he wishes to help SVETA out of her jacket. She makes a small turn, offering her shoulders and lets her arms go slack. ZHENNA steals a glance at MARGARITA as he slowly slides the jacket over her shoulders, pausing to put a small kiss on the bare skin, and then fully removes the coat, revealing two long, white arms whose flesh, obviously, has never been scared or tattooed. ZHENNA smiles at MARGARITA as he hands her the coat. If it is possible, her smile at this moment is even snider than the last one.

CUT TO:

170. INT. SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. GIRL’S ROOM.
EVA, her head tilted to one side, is looking at a single frame of film. The shot is a picture of VADIK, smiling happily in his blue pajamas. Something about this picture is interesting to her.

CUT TO:

171. INT. KAROMBAL BILLIARDS.
The boys are drinking beers and pausing in between games. We can see that the ball rack on the wall shows an eight ball to zero win. However, we also see that at the next table there are two very nice looking girls trying not very seriously to play some billiards. They are sneaking glances at the boys and giggling.

KOLIA
I think they want to meet us.

FARES
Really? Why do you think so?
FARES looks at the girls. One of them smiles at him sweetly.

KOLIA (cont.)
You see what I mean?

FARES turns away and has a drink of his beer. Then he starts gathering the balls and setting them up on the table.

FARES
C’mon. Let’s play.

KOLIA smiles and picks up his cue.

KOLIA
Ok, but I am just going to kill you again.

We get a shot of the girls. They don’t quite understand what happened but after a glance at each other, go back to their game.

CUT TO:

172. INT: MINSK PRISON. MEETING ROOM
Both ALIK and ALEX are quiet now. Neither is talking nor looking at the other. ALIK looks up at her wanting to say something but he can’t exactly find the words and again bows his head in resignation.

ALEX
Ok. Exactly. What do you want me to do?

ALIK
I don’t know.

ALEX
Do you want me to wait for you or not?

There is another short pause. He has already said what he wanted to say. Or at least he thought he had said it.

ALIK
I do and I don’t. I do because I care about you but I don’t because it just isn’t fare to you.
ALEX
I would if you wanted me to.

ALIK
I know you would but that’s just not the point.

ALEX
Why isn’t it the point? Why isn’t it exactly the point?

ALIK
Look! I just don’t know how long they will keep me. Look at what happened to Dashekvich, to Lobau, Sannikov, Seviarynets, Bandarenka, Dzmitryieu. Aliaksandr Bialiatski is in here, do you understand? Kastusiou was arrested. Mikhalevich was arrested. Niakliayeu was arrested. Even Statkevich was taken... again. My god, Lebedko is even here...

ALEX
No, they just let him go...

ALIK
Really... I hadn’t heard.

There is a pause. ALEX is saying nothing. She already knows all of this.

ALIK (cont.)
Remember Kazoulin? How many years was he held? And even with his wife dying from cancer...

There is another long pause. And then finally...

ALEX
I have to go.

She stands and starts to pull her things off the table. He starts to go to her but the guard takes a step and puts out his hand. This stops him. She sees the gesture and looks flatly at the cop who slowly shakes his head, no.

ALIK
Alex, I...
ALEX
I understand...

And with that, she heads out the door.

FADE TO:

173. INT. SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. GROUP ROOM.
Everybody but ALEX is gathering in the group room of the internat for the premier of EVA’s first film effort. Generally, the mood is not overly happy, except for EVA. KOLIA, FARES and MAX are all on the couch with their feet on the coffee table while MARGARITA is helping EVA get everything ready for the big show.

FARES
(looking at his phone)
What day is today?

KOLIA
It’s Sunday.

FARES
No, not the day, the date.

MAX
It is Monday, April 11, 2011 at 5:45 in the evening.

FARES
Thank you.

KOLIA
Do you have problem with your phone?

FARES
(angrily)
No!

KOLIA
I told you I could help you get a better phone...

FARES
I am not interested in stolen phones...
KOLIA
Who said anything about stolen? I simply offered...

FARES
I am not interested in contraband phones, watches, jewelry or cars...

MAX
Why not?

FARES
Shut up!

Max laughs. EVA enters holding a tray of food.

MAX
No pop corn? Why no pop corn?

EVA
They didn’t have any.

KOLIA
Is it that they didn’t have pop corn, or you just didn’t think to ask for any?

EVA
I didn’t even think about it...

MAX
But how can we watch a film without pop corn?

FARES
Just eat what they give you and be happy.

MARGARITA
(entering with more food)
You shouldn’t complain generally.

KOLIA
Ok. So where is this masterpiece of a film?

EVA
Just a minute.
It seems as though everything is ready. EVA checks one last time to see that all is in order and then, with MARGARITA wedging herself onto the couch between KOLIA and FARES, EVA brings her notebook to the table and sets it down and opens the lid.

EVA (cont.)
Ok. First of all, I would like to thank everybody for coming and watching my film. I am not a professional, but I hope you will all like what I have made here.

Her phone rings. She looks to see who it is.

EVA (cont.)
(to the group)
It’s Alex. Just a second…
(answering)
Hello?

CUT TO:

174. INT. OKTYABRSKAYA MINSK METRO STATION
Eva is waiting for a train on the platform and calling. We see the name of the station on a sign in the background. There are a lot of people in the station and it is a pretty noisy place to be.

ALEX
Hi EVA. How are you?

CUT TO:

175. INT. SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. GROUP ROOM.
EVA is happy to take the phone call.

EVA
Oh ALEX, how are you? Where are you right now?

CUT TO:

176. INT. OKTYABRSKAYA MINSK METRO STATION
ALEX
I am in the metro waiting for my train.
177. INT. SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. GROUP ROOM.

EVA
I can’t believe you remembered to call. I’m so sorry, I really wanted you to be here too.

CUT TO:

178. INT. OKTYABRSKAYA MINSK METRO STATION
Alex sits down on a bench which has a duffle bag which someone has left sitting under it.

ALEX
No, I am sorry. They just make their schedual and if you want to see someone, you can only go at certain hours. Have you shown the film?

EVA
(over the phone)
We are just going to get started right now. How did it go today.

CUT TO:

179. INT. SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. GROUP ROOM.

ALEX
(over the phone)
Not good. ALIK looks terrible and they don’t let him do anything without a guard watching the whole time. Really, it is all so heartbreaking.

EVA
Oh, I am so sorry. When are you coming home?

CUT TO:

180. INT. OKTYABRSKAYA MINSK METRO STATION
We see that a train is arriving. ALEX stands.
ALEX
I am going over to the bus station right now. I don’t know. I don’t want to stay in Minsk right now. I just want to be with my friends.

EVA
(over the phone and melting)
Oh, ALEX, we all love you so much. I am so sorry for everything.

ALEX
It’s nobody’s fault.

She starts to walk towards the train.

CUT TO:

181. INT. SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. GROUP ROOM.

EVA
Oh! I almost forgot. We are moving!

ALEX
(over the phone)
Why are we moving?

EVA
Kolia found us a house.

Shot on KOLIA. He is proud.

EVA (cont.)
He says it is big and beautiful and there is enough space for all of us and it is right near the center for everybody’s work.

ALEX
(over the phone)
But yours.

182. INT. MINSK METRO TRAIN
ALEX is inside the train and standing near the door. There are lots of people on the train as it is rush hour. She is holding onto an overhead rail as the train begins to move. She is smiling at EVA’s rambling.
EVA
(over the phone)
Yes. But mine. But that doesn’t matter because we all get to be together. And we get our own home. And we get to be all together. Isn’t that exciting?

And there is a horrific, deafening boom and several of the windows of the car shatter. The whole train shakes, sending people crashing to the floor screaming. The lights go out on the train and we are left in blackness, hearing only the screams of the people caught inside.

CUT TO:

183. INT. SOVIETSKAYA INTERNAT. GROUP ROOM.
We are back on EVA who has not noticed that the conversation has stopped.

EVA
And there is a big yard and a place to make shashliks...

She pauses for a moment to listen but there is silence on her phone. She looks and sees that the call has ended. This is surprising but not unusual. She smiles and heads back to the computer.

EVA (cont.)
Anyway...

MARGARITA
What happened?

EVA
We lost the signal. She got onto a train. Anyway...

She gives a big smile to settle everyone down.

EVA (cont.)
...Without any more waisting time, here...

(she turns on the computer)
...is my film.

The film starts and EVA runs over to turn out the lights. We hear a nice traditional tango starting as the film begins. The film itself is a montage of disconnected clips and abstract
moments which, oddly go together in some strange way. Basically, we see...

- A boy watching the water break in front of the Brigantine Bar
- A man and his daughter are riding bicycles along the river
- MAX is putting stage makeup on his face.
- Men are fishing, casting with their long poles in front of the hotel
- A crowd of children are jumping from the dock at the beach
- KOLIA and FARES posing shirtless in front of the mirror like bodybuilders
- MARGARITA dressing in her oriental outfit
- A group of EVA’s children dancing a tango together.
- MAX and VADIK fighting with the pirates on New Years
- ALEX and ALIK shouting at the Pinsk protest
- KOLIA smiling at the camera. He is playing cards and is the only one left at the table wearing any clothes.
- An old man and woman are drinking some wine together.
- Couples walking along the river.
- MARGARITA, and all of her tattoos, naked just out of the shower, looking at herself in the mirror.
- KOLIA playing cards with some old men and he turns, shows his cards to the camera and smiles. He’s won again.
- ALEX seriously drawing sketches of women and dresses
- Small children eating ice cream and throwing stones into the river.
- An angry teacher scolding her children (and in the middle, stopping to wink at the camera)
- Two old ladies feeding bread to birds.
- Margarita lighting a cigarette and inhaling deeply and blowing the smoke out her nose and smiling...
- Some old men playing dominoes in the park. They are drinking beer and a young woman with dark hair is leaning against one old man.
• Max and Ivan are walking through the trees and Ivan starts chasing birds
• And finally, only ALEX’s face. She is walking through the park, the camera looking up at her, and she is smiling at us as she walks. There is no talking, only her bright smile as the music fades and the film ends...

FADE TO:

An image of a television report of the subway bombing.

COMMENTATOR

Belarusian authorities on Tuesday detained several suspects in connection with the deadly bomb attack on a metro station and said they were seeking at least two others, one a young man they said was of non-Slavic appearance. Police said they were looking for as many as four men believed to be behind the Monday evening bombing in Minsk of the Oktiabrskaya station, which killed 12 people and injured 204. "Several people" have already been detained as possible suspects, but none of them have confessed, Vice Prosecutor General Andrei Shved told reporters during a tour of the bomb scene.

The bomb was reportedly packed with metal bearings, nails and pieces of steel reinforcing rod. It was concealed beneath a bench and detonated when more than 300 people were in the metro station.
The explosion, which was caught on metro station video cameras, had a force equivalent to five to seven kilograms of TNT, officials said. Drawings of two people suspected of involvement in the bombing were in the hands of police. One drawing released to the media showed a man in his mid- to late-20s wearing a knitted cap.

**Title card: June 2011**

184. EXT. PINSK DRAMATIC THEATRE. DAY

MAX is leaving the theatre. We follow him as he walks down the street. As he passes the Taverna restaurant, he notices something and stops. Sitting by himself near the garbage is a rather fat homeless man with a beard. He is staring intently at a book, which he is turning over in his hands. MAX walks up to him.

MAX

You didn’t do it.

The bum looks up at him.

BUM

What did you say?

MAX

I said that you didn’t do it. It is not your fault.

BUM

What is not my fault?

MAX

Whatever it was.

BUM

Whatever what was?

MAX

Whatever you did.

BUM

What did I do?
MAX
That’s the point. You didn’t do it.

BUM
Didn’t do what?

MAX
Whatever it was that put you here.

BUM
Put me where?

MAX
Here. Right here in this place.

BUM
Nothing put me here.

MAX
Then why are you here?

BUM
Why am I where?

MAX
Here. Here in this place. Next to this restaurant... sitting with the garbage.

BUM
Ah... here.

MAX
Yes. Whatever it was, it was not your fault.

The BUM thinks for a second.

BUM
How do you know it was not my fault?

MAX
Ok, I don’t actually know it was not your fault. It might have actually been exactly your fault and if that is true, then just consider that I am trying to be nice about it.
BUM
Ok. That’s reasonable. Thank you for the understanding then.

The bum nods and there is a pause.

MAX
How would you like a proper meal?

BUM
What do you mean by proper?

MAX
Shashlique… beer… some salad…

BUM
I don’t eat pork…

MAX
I don’t think that will kill the deal… And a bath.

The BUM thinks about this for a moment.

BUM
Is the bath really necessary?

MAX makes a point of sniffing the air. There is an odor.

MAX
Yes. It is necessary.

The BUM thinks about this for a second, has a look at MAX, thinks a second more and then starts to stand up.

BUM
Ok.

MAX helps him up and they start off for the house.

FADE TO:

EXT. NEW HOUSE. BACK YARD. EARLY EVENING.

Everybody is out in the back yard of the new house on a beautiful Saturday. There are about 20 people hanging around, and several young faces from the internat are there enjoying the summer weather. Being guests, we see MENTOWSKI and LARRISSA are with IVANCHUK and his wife. NIKOLAI VNA, VLADIMIR and VADIK, who is happily
playing with IVAN, are there. Even VALENTINOVICh is there, playing ping pong with ALEX as ALEX’S MOTHER is there for a visit as is FARES’ FATHER. SHEF and a very hot blond are there and as we are watching, STPANOVICh and BORISOVICh, Fares’ bosses arrive with two other casually dressed suits, SNOPKOv and KHARKOVETS. KOLIA is batting around volleyball with ZHENNA while SVETA, in a sheer white summer dress and IRA in black slacks and white sleeveless top stand nearby looking bored. FARES is generally playing chef, turning and basting the shish kabobs and the girls are being good hostesses.

FOCUS ON:

ALEX is sitting with her mom and VALENTINOVICh.

VALENTINOVICh
No, she is generally well liked there. And we all know that she is a very talented designer…

FOCUS ON:

FARES’ FATHER and BORISOVICh are speaking.

BORISOVICh
We all think that Fares has a very bright future with us.

FOCUS ON:

MENTOWSKI is working on huge shish kebab sword with rapturous delight. LARISSA however is not eating much and is looking around for something and ignoring her fully preoccupied partner.

FOCUS ON:

KOLIA, with IRA on his arm, is being introduced to the two suits from Minsk by SHEF.

SHEF
Gentlemen, this is KOLIA, the man I was telling you about. KOLIA, this is Nikolai SNOPKOv and this is Andre KHARKOVETS…

They all shake hands.
KOLIA
I didn’t know the ministry sent people down to Pinsk generally.

SNOPKOV
We are not here on business.

KHARKOVETS
This is strictly a pleasure trip.

They smile at IRA, who appreciates the compliment…

FOCUS ON:

EVA is chasing after VADIK, who is running through and around chairs and trees. IVAN is running with them and barking wildly.

FOCUS ON:

ZHENNA and SVETA are having an awkward moment about a shish kabab.

SVETA
(angrily)
I don’t want to eat that. It is too greasy.

ZHENNA
SVETA, for god’s sake, why can’t you just relax for one minute already?

SVETA
(not listening)
My god it is hot. I can’t breath here.

FOCUS ON:

MARGARITA and EVA are carrying food. MARGARITA is sneaking glances at ZHENNA and EVA is very aware of this.

MARGARITA
(looking angry)
I can’t believe Zhennna brought that bitch here…

We get a shot on ZHENNA feeding his girlfriend with his fingers. We do see that he is sneaking glances at MARGARITA.

EVA
Why does it bother you?
MARGARITA
Because she is so stupid.

EVA
(knowingly)
And he could do much better than that...

This makes MARGARITA frown.

FOCUS ON:

A now much cleaner and better dressed BUM and MAX are sitting on a couple of chairs. The BUM is working on a big plate of food and MAX is enjoying a beer. The BUM pauses mid-chew to appreciate a point of the conversation...

BUM
But I don’t understand this. If your family has money, and they want to help you, why would you reject that?

MAX
I just like to do things myself, that’s all.

BUM
(gesturing with his fork)
No, that’s not what it is...

FOCUS ON:

ZHENNA and SVETA are sitting alone. SVETA is obviously bored and ZHENNA is beginning to show signs discontent.

SVETA
(angrily)
Do we have to stay here?

ZHENNA
They are my friends.

SVETA
You like that MARGARITA bitch.

ZHENNA
I don’t know what you mean.

He sneaks a glance over at MARGARITA, who feels it and turns to look over at him. He doesn’t smile and neither does she.
SVETA
She is very comman isn’t she?

ZHENNA looks at her with disbelief.

FOCUS ON:

FARES is sitting with his father, STEPANOVICH and BORISOVICH are enjoying their shish kebabs but FARES’ FATHER is only having some salad.

FARES’ FATHER
...Our religion forbids us to eat pork and we obey this law. But some people don’t obey it. For example, fifty two Afghans came to Belarus in 1989 but only eleven of us stayed here. I am the only one of eleven Afghans who does not eat pork. I also observe fasting one time a year. Some people lose their religion with time because they live in another country.

STEPANOVICH
Do you find that Belarus is tollerant of different cultures?

FARES’ FATHER
Of course not. If not for prejudice, my FARES would be in Minsk.

This directness stops everybody. FARES’ FATHER is happy to have had an effect, so he smiles...

FOCUS ON:

SVETA calls MARGARITA over to where they are sitting.

SVETA
(mock kindness)
Oh Margo, thank you so much for inviting us.

MARGARITA
(also with mock kindness)
No, we are just happy that you could come.

SVETA
And I like what you have done with this old house. I think that it is a real talent to make something nice out of cheap things.

MARGARITA
(with a deliriously large smile.)
Oh, that is so nice for you to say!

MARGARITA shoots a quick glance towards ZHENNA: are you kidding me? ZHENNA’s eyes fall to the ground.

MARGARITA (cont.)
(Looking around)
Would you both excuse me for just a moment?

SVETA
Of course.

And the moment she is gone.

SVETA
(to ZHENNA)
Really, what do you see in her?

ZHENNA wants to kill himself.

FOCUS ON:

MAX and the BUM are still into their talk.

BUM
This is not about any great spirit of independence. You are just too lazy to deal with the social pressures that come with being fully integrated. There is competition, distrust, corruption and back-stabbing. But there are also great satisfactions that come with this. Most people here can never even dream of what you are turning down and would sell their children to be able to play even a little.

MAX
Maybe so...
MARGARITA comes over and whispers something in MAX’s ear. He gets up to go with her....

MAX
Excuse me for a minute...

We follow MAX and MARGARITA into the house and into the kitchen. MARGARITA opens the fridge and pulls out a bottle of wine. She hands it to MAX and then gives him a cork screw and stares straight into his eyes. He stares back for a moment, and then nods seriously. He looks out the window at ZHENNA and SVETA, sighs, and marches off towards the toilet with the bottle in hand.

FOCUS ON:

ALEX is sitting with her mother and VALENTINOVICH.

ALEX
It is difficult. Truthfully it is so difficult. I want to believe that this career is real and that what I do at my work every day means something. I believe that beauty is important, I believe that how you dress is how you feel. I believe that what I do is important. But there is something every day at that factory, something that pushes you down. It seems to be teaching you not look up, not to believe, not to want to do anything but simply to go though your day. We are not working for anything or towards anything. And nobody believes even that we will exist in time. But nobody tries to do something to change, to make a better future. Nobody wants to give an idea or has an idea. And when you try to say something when you try to show them something, and you say “This is new this might be good this might be an answer”, they just look at you and they know that you are the fool. they know it is not that they think that you are a fool or they want to you to be a fool. It is that they know. It’s like wisdom to them, like knowledge - its all so heart breaking.
ALEX’ MOTHER
Sasha...

ALEX
Yes mama...

ALEX’S MOTHER
Please don’t do anything else to lose your job just now. Please...

ALEX
What’s happening?

ALEX’S MOTHER
They decided that there needed to be an accounting within the company. They found that I was one of five bookkeepers working in one office. And because they were told to, it is possible, as a way to cut money, my job will be dismissed.

ALEX
What will you do?

ALEX’S MOTHER
What will we do? We’ll live.

FOCUS ON:

ZHENNA is staring off into the distance while SVETA is picking at her dress, trying to make it sit correctly. Their attention though shifts to MAX who is walking towards them with a bottle of wine in one hand and two glasses in the other.

MAX
(like a good waiter)
MARGARITA suggested that I bring this over to you.

SVETA
(melting)
Oh my god, that is so nice of her!

MAX smiles sympathetically.

CUT TO:
185. INT. NEW HOUSE. DINING ROOM. EVENING.

The party is still going on at the house and a poker game has started at the dining room table. SHEF, STPANOVIČ and BORISOVIČ are at the table along with SNOPKOV and KHARKOVETS and KOLJA. There is a lot of money on the table. Most all of it is in dollars and some is in euros. Some of the men are smoking rather expensive cigars. KOLJA is drinking cola. SNOPKOV watches KOLJA smilingly as he pulls in a rather large pot.

SNOPKOV
How do you keep your money?

KOLJA
Me?

SHEF
Under the matress, of course.

Some laughs.

SNOPKOV
No, I am serious. Do you keep your money in foreign currency, or in rubles?

KOLJA looks at SHEF who shrugs, he can answer the question.

KOLJA
I keep my regular pay in Belarus Bank. Some extra I keep in an American account.

KHARKOVETS
Our “Pinchan” here is not an amature. KOLJA, perhaps you should move your money to a Swiss bank. I can personally recommend it.

KOLJA
Maybe. And if my luck tonight continues, I might need to open a second account… or just buy your bank.

This gets some laughs…
SNOPKOV
Yes, but seriously, if you keep your money in Rubles, you might want to start using them.

The government people look down in this moment, but the information pricks SHEF’s interest as well as KOLIA’S. There is a moment’s pause while everyone’s mind starts to turn.

SHEF
I thought we already had a 30% depreciation to satisfy the World Bank?

KHARKOVETS
Nobody knows. But the truth is that we simply made the deal we had to make. So, we will make the next jumps in steps. Like all of our...

KHARKOVETS pauses to look into the eyes of his Minsk friends.

KHARKOVETS(cont.)
...deals with foreign countries...

KOLIA
Like Russian, for example...

There is a solemn nod.

BORISOVICH
(interrupting)
You said jumps? As in many?

Both of the ministers nod.

SHEF
How much?

SNOPKOV
50% immediately. And another 50% in October.

BORISOVICH
Tvaiyu mat...
(oh fuck)

KOLIA
Maybe I can simply transfer the money to my American account.
KHARKOVETS
(shaking his head)
We can’t allow a panic. Everything will be under control. But no money will leave the country. They are going to shut the banks for dollars. You won’t be able to change any currency legally...

KOLIA
How about through a credit card or Western Union?

SNOPKOV
No bank will allow you to move a kopek. What is here, remains here.

KOLIA
And what about the west?

Everybody smiles and relaxes at the same time....

KOLIA (cont.)
What happened?

There is general laughter.

KOLIA (cont.)
What?

SHEF
They are laughing because they didn’t think you would ever do anything wrong...

KOLIA smiles. He understands.

KHARKOVETS
We just don’t officially tell them and officially, they just don’t know...

SNOPKOV
Or care...

KOLIA
Officially...

All of the big shots nod at this.

KOLIA (cont.)
So the best plan is to just use it?
KHARKOVETS
Our best plan would be to buy something nice on credit.

SNOPKOV
Ah, but make sure that the company offering the credit is foreign...

KHARKOVETS
That would be the best decision...

KOLIA thinks for a second and then takes out his phone. We hear the answer on the other side...

YURI
(over the phone)
Hello?

KOLIA
(speaking as though he is very drunk)
Yuri! Hello.

YURI
(over the phone)
Hello? Kolia? What’s the matter. Have you been drinking...

KOLIA
Yuri! I have so much money. I can’t believe what I just did...

YURI
(over the phone)
Money? What money?

CUT TO:

186. INT. KOLIA’S BMW. NIGHT.
MAX is driving and KOLIA is in the passenger seat and the BUM is in the back. KOLIA opens a bottle of vodka and pours out some into his hands. He then rubs the vodka all over his face and hair. He then pours a large mouthful for himself and, while rolling down the window, gargles and then spits it out the window.

KOLIA
God! That is nasty...
MAX takes the bottle, has himself a long drink and then passes it back to the BUM.

MAX
(smiling at KOLIA)
You need a good relationship with vodka before she trusts you...

BUM
(Grimacing but thoughtful after his own gulp)
...but she is a nasty whore all the same...

CUT TO:

187. INT. YURI’S HOUSE. KITCHEN TABLE. NIGHT.
YURI is a small, thin and rather despicable rodent of man. He is about 40 years of age and his house is not very well cared for. His mother is fat and constantly angry and is hovering near the conversation. KOLIA is playing drunk and MAX is holding a duffle bag and is staring impetuously at an outrageously gaudy purple and gold combination table-lamp-clock. THE BUM is standing behind KOLIA, hands folded across his chest, playing his bodyguard.

YURI
Let me understand this... You want to make a deal regarding the rent?

KOLIA
(seemingly very drunk)
It is very simple. We need the house until August 2012. This is when our otrabotka is finished, ok?

YURI
Ok...

KOLIA
(pointing to the bag)
...and I just got all this money?

YURI
Where did you get it?
BUM
(aggressively)
That is not your business.

YURI is intimidated.

YURI
Ok...

KOLIA
But I don’t know when or if I will ever have luck like this again, so I thought I would do something practical with the money.

MAX
Something practical, do you understand?

YURI nods his head. He understands.

KOLIA
So... we need the house for... thirteen more months...

YURI
Fourteen.

KOLIA
Right! Fourteen more months. So here is my deal. I want to offer you...uh... Ten! Ten months of rent, in advance. The whole ten months of money, right here and right now and you let us have the place till August...

YURI looks at his mother who shakes her head no.]

YURI
Why should I take four months less money? What is in this for me?

KOLIA
(with mock indignation)
Well, you get all the money right now.

YURI looks at his mother again. The mother glances at the bag and YURI understands this.

YURI
How much money do you have there?
The BUM takes a step forward but MAX puts out his hand.

KOLIA
(he looks like he wants to cry)
C’mon YURI, we never get these sort of chances...

There is a pause. They all just look at each other.

KOLIA
(showing he is broken)
Ok, 11 months and you pay the utilities...

YURI
(screams)
The utilities!

KOLIA waves his hand for him to be calm.

KOLIA
(calming him)
Ok, ok, ok... I am sorry. No utilities.

YURI looks at his mother. This young man is crazy, obviously. KOLIA thinks and then looks at MAX who shrugs.

KOLIA
(humbly)
Ok... Eleven months.

YURI
Thirteen.

YURI is firm. He looks at his mom who nods. It is a good deal.

KOLIA
(disgusted)
Ok... eleven months and one hundred thousand.

YURI
Thirteen.

They are not going to budge another inch.

KOLIA
Twelve?
YURI
Thirteen.

MAX
(quickly pointing at the
gold and purple
monstrosity)
Thirteen and that lamp.

This stops everybody.

CUT TO:

188. INT. KOLIA’S BMW. NIGHT.
KOLIA is driving and MAX is smiling and looking out the window.
In the back seat, the BUM is snoozing while next to him, sits
that amazing lamp.

KOLIA
Did we really needed that lamp?

MAX
Of course...

FADE TO:

189. EXT. PINSK. SUMMER. LATE MORNING
EVA, MARGARITA and ALEX are walking together outside. We follow
them down the street. We see that they are at ease and talking with each
other. They are passing the post office, and, as they get to Kirova
square the see a crowd of people yelling out in front of the bank.
There are several guards in front of the doors and the people are screaming
and shouting. A bank director is trying to shout over the noise but the
crowd is not listening to them.

BANK MANAGER
There is nothing to fear. The bank
will only be closed for a few days.
Do not worry, none of you will lose
any of the money you have with us, we
assure you...

CROWD PERSON #1
At what rate?
CROWD PERSON #2
At what percentage?

CROWD PERSON #3
Why can’t we buy dollars?

BANK MANAGER
I repeat. There is nothing to fear. The bank will only be closed for a few days. Do not worry, none of you will lose any...

A grandmother at the back of the crowd turns towards us, her hands covering her eyes, she is crying hysterically...

GRANDMOTHER

FADE TO BLACK:

Title Card: October 20, another 30% Fall

FADE IN:

190. INT. GORISPOLKOM. FARES’ OFFICE
FARES is at his desk working. His door opens and somebody tosses an envelope on his desk. He stops what he is doing and opens the envelope and has a look inside. We can see from his expression that he feels as if he has just had all of his blood sucked out of him.

FARES
Go fuck yourself!

CUT TO:

191. INT, HOTEL PRIPYAT. MARGARITA’S OFFICE.
TERENTINOVNA tosses an envelope onto MARGARITA’S desk.

TERENTINOVNA
Pay day!

MARGARITA
How much?
TERENTINOVNA
Same as last month.

MARGARITA
(to herself)
Go fuck yourself!
(to TERENTINOVNA)
Who can live on this?

TERENTINOVNA
Smile girl! This is hospitality!

MARGARITA
(under her breath)
Go fuck yourself!

CUT TO:

192. INT. PINSK DRAMATIC THEATRE. DRESSING ROOM.
MAX and SERGEI both have envelopes and are grinning at each other and wiping their asses with them.

CUT TO:

193. INT. PINSK VILLAGE SCHOOL
EVA has also gotten her check.

EVA
Go fuck yourself!

CUT TO:

194. INT. PENA PRINT. KOLIA’S OFFICE
KOLIA is at his desk and he calls to the good looking BRUNETTE who we saw in the opening scene.

KOLIA
Hey. You wanna see something?

She leans across the desk with alluring interest.

BRUNETTE
What do you want to show me?

KOLIA
I am going to buy a house.

BRUNETTE
A house?
KOLIA
Shhhh. Quiet. Just watch.

He dials the telephone

KOLIA
Yuri! Hello! This is Kolia.

We hear that Yuri is quite angry

KOLIA (cont.)
Yuri. Don’t yell at me. (Yuri continues yelling) Please, I am at work right now. It doesn’t look good. (more yelling) Yuri, why are you bringing this up? Who knew? Who knew? (more yelling) Yuri, you can’t blame me for the entire economic crisis. What happened has happened. (more yelling) How was what I did bad? I just won some money in a game and I offered to give you some… (more yelling) ok, fine. Fine, ok, basically here is the problem. (Yuri stops yelling for a moment and asks about the problem) We have got a problem with the pipes. The toilet is backing up and the water is backing up. I think that the pipes need to be replaced. (Yuri is angry and tells him just to call for help) I understand that I should call but unfortunately, the responsibly goes to you. You are the owner of the house. (more yelling) Yes, you are the owner of the house. We are only renters. (Yuri become a bit more reasonable…) Ok…no problem. You call and find out. (Yuri finishes) All right. I’ll wait. We’ll talk.

KOLIA closes the phone. The girl looks at KOLIA.

BRUNETTE
You are a dark hearted bastard.

KOLIA
Maybe…

CUT TO:
195. INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. MARGARITA’S OFFICE
MARGARITA is at the hotel in her office and she is working intently. Her door opens and ZHENNA is standing there. She looks at him with her poker face and he smiles at her.

ZHENNA
Hi.

MARGARITA doesn’t say anything, but she continues simply to look at him.

ZHENNA
I thought I would come by to say hello to you.

MARGARITA
(sarcastically)
Why would you do that?

ZHENNA
I don’t know, I just thought that maybe there was something between us and I thought I wanted to talk to you.

MARGARITA
 stil with a poker face
Why would you think that a time to speak to me was when I was working?

This is disturbing. Perhaps he is generally making a mistake. Or perhaps she is just being difficult with him.

ZHENNA
Anyway, I thought we could have coffee together?

MARGARITA
(icy cold)
I’m at work and I’m working. This is my job. You are not here for any business; you are here for something that happens after work. Do you understand the difference between “work” and “after work”?

ZHENNA
So you are open to something after work?
MARGARITA
I didn’t say that. I said that you should not be here.

Again this is disturbing.

ZHENNA
Ok. If it is ok with you, I just want to get this completely straight. Do you mean generally that I should not be here? Or, are we speaking about just this particular moment.

She glares at him but he is unperturbed.

ZHENNA (cont.)
...Because you know there is a difference between the two points.

He smiles.

MARGARITA
I didn’t say that. I said that you should not be here.

At that moment TERENTINOVA passes by the open door. She pauses to have a look at ZHENNA. And her nose shows that there is a bad odor about him and she continues on.

MARGARITA
Obviously, generally you should not be here. You don’t work at this hotel. I work at this hotel and this is work.

ZHENNA
Well, maybe I’m beginning to understand.

MARGARITA
Really? Perhaps to should completely understand. You should not be here.

ZHENNA
Exactly, I will not be here.

MARGARITA
Thank you!

ZHENNA
No!! Thank you!
And he angrily leaves.

CUT TO:

196. INTERIOR. PINSK CLOTHING FACTORY
ALEX is at her computer and VALENTINOVICH is working at his drafting table. The door opens and Stepan MICHAELOVICH, the director, steps in. The workers immediately stand up.

ALEX AND VALENTINOVICH
Hello, Stepan MICHAELOVICH

MICHAELOVICH
So, this is out little militant, eh?

This remark angers ALEX more than a little and she looks down. But the director is in a good mood.

MICHAELOVICH (cont.)
No, no, no. don’t be so angry so quickly. I come on other business. I want to tell you that the directors liked your ideas for the fall line.

This catches ALEX’S interest and her head pops up.

MICHAELOVICH (cont.)
We had a long conversation about several ideas and we talked with VALENTINOVICH as well.

VALENTINOVICH nods at this that it is true.

MICHAELOVICH (cont.)
We were actually quite surprised at the quality of the work. We think you have a good eye and generally, we like your ideas. Especially in how we can save money in material costs and make use of things that we have in the wearhouse. This was a very clever idea in how to make use of them.

ALEX doesn’t say anything.
MICHAELOVICH (cont.)
In any respect some stamps still need to be gone through but basically it looks like we are going to make a run on some of those women’s skirts and blouses you recommended. And I want to add that we are all looking forward to a much higher rate of success and anyway, this is all I wanted to say and you both can go back to what you are doing.

He nods and exits the room. ALEX looks at VALENTINOVICH, who smiles and after a moment’s hesitation, ALEX screams and jumps into VALENTINOVICH’s arms. This is actually something wonderful.

CUT TO:

197. EXT. PINSK HOSPITAL. DAY
We see EVA heading into the 12 story Pinsk hospital and she has a bag of cookies in her hand.

CUT TO:

198. INT. PINSK HOSPITAL.

EVA is with VADIK who is receiving an IV dose of some drug or other. His mother, NIKOLAIVNA is there, smiling appreciatively and VADIK himself is playing with a small puppy which his parents have brought. There are some toy soldiers lying on the table next to him.

EVA
Hello VADIK

VADIK
Hello EVA, you came to see me!

EVA
Of course. How could I not? How are you feeling?

VADIK
Oh, I don’t like it here. I thought that they would have ice cream here, but they never do. All they do is keep poking needles into me and checking my temperature. I don’t like it here. I want to go home.
EVA
I understand. I wouldn’t like it here either.

VADIJK
Did you bring me some ice cream?

EVA
No, but next time I will if the doctors say it is ok. I did bring you some cookies, though.

VADIJK
The cookies that you make?

EVA
Of course.

VADIJK
Oh Yea!!!

He dives in and has one.

VADIJK
Here mommy. Have one.

He gives her a cookie. NIKOLAIVNA pulls EVA over to the side. We see now that her eyes are red and that she has been crying.

EVA
How is he?

NIKOLAIVNA
They say that the disease has progressed. And they are beginning to think that the chemotherapy might not help him.

EVA
But he seems to be in such a good mood.

NIKOLAIVNA
But it comes and goes. Sometimes he is good and sometimes he is very bad.

EVA
I understand.

And at this moment, EVA looks at VADIJK but instead of only looking at the boy, she focuses on the soldiers on his chest.
(CGI help here) we see into VADIK’s imagination and the soldiers are having an argument.

OFFICER
I told you there wouldn’t be ice cream.

SERGEANT
They never said that we would get ice cream. They only said that we would come here and that things wouldn’t be so bad.

RIFLEMAN
I don’t know why both of you even expected ice cream. We never have ice cream in a place like this. This place is for sick people.

OFFICER
Don’t say that. You are not supposed to know that.

SERGEANT
He’s right. Keep those thoughts to yourself. And, in the meantime, let’s make a plan how to get some ice cream.

RIFLEMAN
Yea... Maybe we can get Eva to help us?

OFFICER
Yea... maybe we can.

EVA is touched by this thought and it seems very strange to her. And as she is thinking we...

CUT TO:

199. EXT. PINSK KAROMBAL BILLIARDS HALL
KOLIA and FARES are heading down Lenin Street. KOLIA has his own billiard cue in his hand, FARES is of course not so professional.

CUT TO:

200. INT. PINSK KAROMBAL BILLIARDS HALL
FARES is racking up for a game of Russian Billiards and KOLIA is chalking his cue.
201. INT. PINSKSKAYA SHLACHTA RESTAURANT.
We are at the door and we see MAX, dressed in a nice suit and with him are an older man (his father), a young woman who is perhaps 30 years of age, (his father’s girlfriend) and she certainly looks like some kind of a model. And there is a young girl of about 20 years old (MAX’s ex girlfriend) and we could probably say that she is quite pretty in an obviously clever sort of way. MAX though does not look happy. He looks around and catches the eye of his compatriot who nods and the hostess comes to him and offers to seat his group at a special reserved table. And they all head for that table.

CUT TO:

202. INT. PINSK TOWN BUS
EVA is riding on the bus and looking out the window. And as she is watching she begins to fantasize. Her headphones are on and we hear that she is listening to a tango and, that the music she is listening to leads to a brief dance number by the people along the streets. They pair up and very elegantly tango until the moment the music ends. The dance ends and the people go back on their individual journeys.

CUT TO:

203. INT. PINSK KAROMBAL BILLIARDS HALL
KOLIA’S rack is already up 7-1 and he is lining up what will probably be the winning shot when his phone rings, He answers.

KOLIA
Yuri. Hello. Yuri, I am sorry, I didn’t know it was going to cost that much. Really Yuri, it is not my fault.

He puts his hand over the receiver. And, speaking to FARES

KOLIA (cont.)
It’s Yuri, our home owner. He apparently has some problems with his finances.

Fares nods. KOLIA returns to the phone call.
KOLIA (cont.)
Listen Yuri, about this. It is difficult to say what you are supposed to do. I am sorry about that situation. I, again, I am really sorry about the money, but really, somebody has got to pay for the plumbing and frankly, the house is your responsibility. (he listens) Well, I am sorry you can’t afford it Yuri. But it is just not our problem. It is just the way things are. I mean, we are having a crisis. (he listens) I know. I heard about that. I saw that the prices were going up again. The blame for that is on the World Bank and no one else... (he listens) What? You want me to what?

KOLIA looks up and winks at FARES.

KOLIA (cont.)
I don’t know Yuri. That is a really big step.

CUT TO:

204. INT. PINSKSKAYA SHLACHTA RESTAURANT.
MAX and HIS FATHER are seated at the table and the pretty young girl is looking at MAX intently. MAX’s FATHER is holding fort and is in midsentence.

MAX’ FATHER
...so MAX, I think what I am trying to tell you is that we are all simply hoping that you will come home. There is certainly a lot of work to do in and around the company and surely we can find for you something which you would like to do. And really, I am only thinking about your interests and it isn’t like you are going to be lonely. (he gestures to the girl who smiles and blusjes a little) There are a lot of people who are interested in being with you.

MAX looks over at the young girl who smiles at him. MAX nods his head. His father continues...
MAX’ FATHER
Really, it is just difficult for me to understand where the problem is. Where exactly is the hold on you from such a place?

MAX remains silent and the girl reaches over and puts her hand on top of his

GIRLFRIEND
Really MAX, I would be so happy if you came home. I really miss you.

MAX looks at her.

MAX
I don’t remember that this was exactly what you said to me the last time. I thought that you said that I was...

She interrupts him

GIRLFRIEND
Oh that was then. And this is now. Really MAX, we could try again. We could make things work together.

And she smiles at MAX’s father who nods. MAX is looking right at her. She smiles at him and he smiles and nods his head again.

MAX’S FATHER
I think we should order some wine.

This gets max’s attention.

MAX
You know. Let me get this one.

He stands.

MAX(cont.)
I… Have some special inside knowledge about this wine business. And I would like to take care of this one myself.

The father and the girl nod. And MAX heads over to the kitchen. We see that he has a nice smile on his face.

CUT TO:

205. INT. PINSK KAROMBAL BILLIARDS HALL
FARES is holding his stick while KOLIA is in a run of three or four balls. He is making all of his shots.
FARES
So you knew about the plumbing when you took the house.

KOLIA
Well, not when I took it. But it is important to check out what you have.

FARES
Ok, so you knew the reasons why we were having plumbing problems and you specifically had us wait until the 20th of October to do anything about it.

KOLIA
That’s right.

FARES
We had to wait all this time because you knew that this was date of the crisis?

KOLIA
Well, I knew that this was the planned date of the price rise, if that is what you mean. They knew we were going to drop another 30%. But Yuri didn’t know that.

FARES
So you knew about this a long time ago.

KOLIA
Well, Yea. Of course.

FARES
Why didn’t you tell me about that?

KOLIA
Did you want me to tell you about that?

FARES thinks about this really hard. It is a difficult question to answer. But at this moment something catches KOLIA’S eye and he looks over FARES’ shoulder and smiles.

KOLIA
Hey, FARES...
FARES

Yea?

KOLIA

Would you like it if I told you things when they come up, if, of course, there is some benefit in it for you?

FARES

I don’t know. I’d have to think about it.

KOLIA

Look. What if I told you that something has just come up right now and that there is a great possibility that we are going to have great evening tonight. Would you be interested in hearing about that?

FARES is a little concerned.

FARES

Ok, exactly what are we talking about?

KOLIA

Well, mmmmmm... I would say, in your case, an attractive blond, about 21 years old, with a rather interesting body and I believe, if I am not mistaken, she likes body builders.

FARES starts looking very worried.

FARES

Ok, exactly what are you talking about?

KOLIA

Well, what I am talking about exactly is what is going on over your right shoulder.

FARES turns to look and from his perspective, we see two girls, one is YULIA, a blond of about 21 years old, and who does in fact have a very interesting body and is smiling rather openly. And with her, also with a vastly wild and knowing smile is, unmistakably LARISSA, MENTOWSKI the cop’s girlfriend.
CUT TO:

206. INT. KITCHEN PINSKAYA SHLACHTA RESTAURANT. EVENING
MAX has got the wine bottle in his hand and a few centimeters
has already been disposed of but, he stops and thinks a little
bit. He looks out the door and can see his father and the two
women talking quietly between themselves. He looks at the wine,
thinking very hard about things. But then he places the wine on
the table and heads out the back door. There is a small empty
coffee can which is used for an ash tray and with shaking hands,
he pulls out a cigarette and tries to light it. And then,
squatting down, he takes a long drag off of the cigarette and
puts his hands over his head. And we can definitely see that he
is shaking with great emotion and even crying a little. Times
like these apparently are the most difficult moments in
anybody’s life.

FADE TO:

207. INT. PINSK HOUSE. LATE NIGHT.
We focus in on KOLIA’S room as he is vigorously slamming away
at a moaning and ecstatic LARRISSA, who is clawing his back and
crying out his name...

LARRISSA
KOLIA... KOLIA... YES... OH YES... KOLIA...

We then pan through the wall of the scene into FARES’ room.
FARES’ girl, YULIA is naked and sitting on top of the sheets
cross legged. She is playing with maybe a paper clip with her
fingers. FARES is half under the sheets, bare chested and
staring intently forward.

YULIA
Is it something I said? Or something
I have done?

FARES doesn’t really say anything.

YULIA
I mean, you are a really beautiful
man. I really like being with you. I
liked everything you did. (A PAUSE)
Maybe I can do something for you. You
wouldn’t have to do anything. You
could just lie back and rest. It
would be ok.

FARES continues to look straight ahead.

YULIA
Are you angry at me?
FARES still doesn’t react or say anything. The girl stops. We can hear the love making going on in the next room. She looks back towards FARES. She doesn’t really know what to do.

YULIA
You don’t mind if I turn on the TV, do you?

Fares nods his head.

FARES
It’s ok.

She turns on the TV and with the sound of the aggressive sex going on in the next room; we get a picture of the news announcer saying:

TV ANNOUNCER
The Belarus Ruble received a depreciation of 20%, once again, bringing the overall depreciation to 52%. Central banks of Belarus have closed all additional money market and traded currency transactions in hopes that the Belarusian ruble will find a stable market exchange rate. Officially, the exchange rate, which soared from 3000 to 5000 rubles to the dollar on MAY 24th, might go as high as 8000 to 10,000 rubles in the near future has not been set. But officials believe the currency should stabilize within 20% of the planned goal.

Additionally, the Belarusian government today passed three laws concerning mass events in the Republic of Belarus, into the Criminal Code and the Code on Administrative Offences. These new statutes relate to the mass protests which occurred in October during this year’s presidential elections in which several opposition candidates were arrested and jailed for inspiring riots and public unrest.

FADE TO BLACK:
208. INT. ALEX’S FAMILY HOME. EVENING. The table is set beautifully for a small family get together. ALEX and her family, including her grandmother and grandfather are there. The old folks are watching the TV and Alex is helping her mom to bring things to the table. When the last dish has been placed, ALEX’S MOTHER turns and states her situation.

ALEX’ MOTHER
So, I have been fired from my job.

ALEX
What? Why?

ALEX’ MOTHER
Officially, the reason was that the company does not make enough money to support my position. The reason the company does not make the money is that they are not competitive with the products they sell against products made in Turkey, in China and in other places. This leaves no market for Belarusian products and consequently no money coming in.

ALEX
What are you going to do?

ALEX’ MOTHER
Oh, I am not completely without money. I was offered early retirement. It is about 80% of the money I had. Unfortunately, though it was originally about 80 dollars a month, but with the current crisis, it only amounts to about $40. So, this, with what your father has—maybe it will be enough for us. But Sasha please…

ALEX
I understand mama. I understand…

FADE TO:
INT. PINSKAYA SHLACHTA RESTAURANT. EVENING
The restaurant is in condition to celebrate the New Years. There are several private parties, entertainment. There is a singer. It is about 10:00 and an obviously special group of suits and big shots come into the restaurant. MAX is working and one of the party, a really loud and boisterous fellow with a BALD HEAD seems to be calling the most attention to himself. Max is fixated on him. He is just an interesting fellow to him at this moment.

CUT TO:

HOTEL PRIPYAT. RESTAURANT. EVENING.
MARGARITA is dressed very nicely and is helping to hostess the hotel’s New Year’s party. We do see though that also at this party are FARES, KOLIA, EVA as well as SVETA and ZHENNA, as well as a few other faces we have met, and all are sitting at one big table. It is an elegant affair and music is playing. SVETA is again in her sleeveless dress, looking wonderful but we can also see that ZHENNA has almost completely lost interest in her by this time.

CUT TO:

PINSKAYA SHLACHTA RESTAURANT
The GROUP OF SUITS are sitting down and are obviously all rather loud talkers. The BALD HEAD calls for a waiter to order and MAX comes and stands at attention waiting. But the rich man seems more intent on driving MAX crazy than he does in making his order.

BALD HEAD
Well, let me ask you about this. If we have ordered the steak, does it come with salad and soup? And what kind of salad comes and can we change this to something else? Does it have to be the salad mentioned here or can it be something else?

MAX
Of course we can change it to whatever you want...

BALD HEAD
Ok, where are the salads on this menue. Where can we find exactly what we want?
MAX
Well, maybe if you told me exactly what you want I could tell you what we have…

BALD HEAD
Ok, I was thinking maybe something with Walnuts and fruit. Something maybe a little sweet or maybe something a little spicy… really, and not much mayonese. Mayonese will not be so helpful for this sort of thing, don’t you agree…

MAX
Of course.

Max begins to get flustered and stares up at the ceiling.

CUT TO:

212. HOTEL PRIPYAT. RESTAURANT. EVENING
It is now about 11:00 in the evening and someone has turned on the television so all can watch Medvedev give his congratulatory New Years speech from Russia.

ONE PARTIER
Just watch. Next year we will be listening to Putin once again.

SECOND PARTIER
What makes you think we are not listening to him right now?

Several people nod about this.

CUT TO:

213. INT. PINSKAYA SHLACHTA
MAX is obviously lost interest in working with that group and BALD HEAD is now demanding to sample several different bottles of wine without actually having ordered any of them.

MAX
Did you want me to bring these bottles for you?
BALD HEAD
I don’t understand why you don’t understand. How do we know if the wine is good or not if we don’t try it first.

MAX
Well, you can order a bottle and I can bring it to you and if there is something wrong with it, we can take it back without problems. But I am not sure that I can simply open bottles for tasting without actually buying them.

BALD HEAD
Are you suggesting that we have a problem with money?

MAX
I am not suggesting anything except that I will bring you all of the wine you would like. But I don’t understand why the bottles must be opened before they are ordered.

BALD HEAD
Do you know who I am?

MAX does not answer and simply blinks a few times. We can see on his face that there are several answers that come to mind at this moment. But after a few sarcastic come backs have been dismissed, a small smile comes to MAX’s face and, we can see that he has found his answer.

MAX
I am sorry. I will get to work on the order right away.

MAX bows lightly and heads off towards the kitchen.

BALD HEAD
(to his friends)
Really, there is simply no such thing as class in this town.

MAX has overheard this. But in any case, he has already got his own plan in mind as to what to do about it.

CUT TO:
INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. RESTAURANT. EVENING.

KOLIA is dancing with SVETA and she is obviously enjoying his light touch as they make their way around the floor. FARES, and ZHENNA are sitting at the table. ZHENNA is staring rather blatantly at MARGARITA, who is doing her best to ignore him. FARES notices this and asks...

FARES
Why don’t you just go and talk to her?

ZHENNA
Talk to who?

FARES
Talk to MARGARITA. You obviously like her. Why don’t you try talking warmly to her.

ZHENNA
And how do you talk warmly to MARGARITA? She never speaks warmly to anybody.

FARES
I don’t know that this is true. She has always been pretty straight to me. She has always been helpful. I don’t know. Maybe it is how you approach her.

ZHENNA
I have tried talking to her directly and I have never been successful. And frankly, I don’t even know if I want to try any more. And anyway, why should I think that she could even possibly be worth it?

FARES
I don’t know. Maybe because she is intelligent, clever, beautiful, interesting, independent, sexy...

ZHENNA
Shut up FARES!

FARES
I am just trying to be helpful.
At that moment, EVA comes to the table and sticks out her hand towards FARES. FARES looks at her uncomprehendingly for a moment.

EVA
Come on, FARES. Let’s dance!

FARES
ME?!?! I don’t dance. I am not any good at it.

EVA
FARES, the guys in the band just agreed to play a tango for me for the next dance and I want to dance that tango with you. So you are going to be my partner for this dance.

FARES
EVA, I don’t know how to tango and I am not a good dancer and I don’t like doing this.

Frustrated, she grabs his hand with both of hers and literally jerks him away from the table. I guess FARES is not going to sit this one out after all.

CUT TO:

215. PINSKAYA SHLACHTA. KITCHEN.
With the party going on outside, MAX is preparing a selection of wines for sampling. He has got five bottles open and is at the moment draining a few centimeters off of each of them. As he is hitting the fifth bottle, VASYA, another waiter sees him and stops.

VASYA
MAX, that is not a good idea. Don’t play with these guys. They are really big shots and there is a lot of money at that table. I know they are pains in the ass, but really you have got to play this one straight.

MAX just smiles

MAX
I know what I am doing.
VASYA
Ok MAX. But seriously, you are going to get all of us in trouble because of this.

MAX nods and just after VASYA leaves, he sighs and reaches down to open his fly. After all, the wine needs to be prepared properly for the tasting.

CUT TO:

216. HOTEL PRIPYAT. RESTAURANT. EVENING. DANCE FLOOR
EVA and FARES are in the midst of a rather beautiful tango. EVA is whispering in his ear what he needs to do...

EVA
Now, two steps to the left. Just feel the music. Just go with it. Now, get ready. You are going to throw me to the left for a dip.

And he does and, surprisingly, it is a rather beautiful thing. And as he pulls her back up, he looks and sees that her eyes are sparkingly and looking directly into his and there is a moment when we can see that this is a wonderful feeling for him.

FARES
You know. This really isn’t so bad.

And she smiles and throws her head back for a laugh. That might have been the funniest thing he could have said.

CUT TO:

217. PINSKAYA HLACHTA
Several plates of food are being readied to be taken out to the party. MAX is smiling at VASYA indicating that there has been some more handiwork of his on these dishes as well. VASYA is not impressed and tries to pass by but MAX stops him by grabbing his arm.

MAX
Help me carry this stuff out to the big shots.

VASYA
Why should I work for you? I don’t owe you any favors.
MAX
Come on. Just help me get through this. There are a lot of dishes and I am the only one standing here.

VASYA
This is your problem, not mine. And besides, what have you ever done for me?

MAX looks at him and smiles a bit.

MAX
Ok. I have got something which might help this situation out.

CUT TO:

218. EXT. PINSKAYA SHLACHTA SMOKING AREA.
MAX produces a joint from his pocket and the two light up while admiring the beautiful New Years moon overlooking the YOLKA on Lenin Square.

CUT TO:

219. INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. RESTAURANT
We are now looking at the President of the Republic of Belarus congratulating people as we head towards the midnight hour. He is at the end of the speech and there is a picture of a clock showing that there is only a minuet or so till 12:00. Champaign is being poured into everybody’s glasses for the toast. The count down comes...

EVERYBODY
5…4…3…2…1… HAPPY New Year!

The band plays and confetti falls

CUT TO:

220. INT. PINSKAYA SHLACHTA
Here there is also a big shout going up and balloons are being punched around.

CUT TO:

221. INT. ALEX’S HOME
ALEX and her immediate family are all hugging each other.
222. INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. RESTAURANT
MARGARITA and KOLIA grab each other for a kiss. And, not entirely happily, ZHENNA kisses SVETA. But really, neither of them care about this. And in this one particular moment, FARES notices that he is with EVA and that it is NEW YEARS. And when he sees her open, expectant face and dewy eyes, he really cannot help himself from leaning over and giving her the most gorgeous HAPPY NEW YEARS kiss in the world.

CUT TO:

223. INT. PINSKAYA SHLACHTA
The party goes are getting dressed and are leaving to head out for Lenin Square to dance around the Yolka (the Christmas/New Years tree). The RESTAURANT MANAGER comes up to shake the hand of the VIP group. At this moment MAX is busy cleaning up but he notices that the BALD HEADED VIP who had been a problem to him is now pointing directly at him and also at his friend VASYA. The MANAGER sharply looks at them with a rather angry expression on his face. We get a C.U. on MAX’s face and he probably understands that there are probably big problems on the way.

CUT TO:

224. INT. PINSKAYA SHLACHTA. KITCHEN
The manager has pulled both of the waiters aside and is leaning towards them and sniffing both of them carefully.

MANAGER
What have you been smoking?

MAX
Nothing.

VASYA
I don’t smoke.

MANAGER
Both of you smell distinctly like marijuana. Have you been smoking marijuana while working in my restaurant?

MAX
Marijuana?

VASYA
I generally don’t smoke.
MANAGER
Very well. (pause) That man who just left here is a very wealthy man in this town. He owns several properties. And he is also part owner of this restaurant. And he told me that both of you were rather rude and unprofessional in your services tonight. And he advised me that I should check you out for drug use which he thought was rather obviously part of your problems.

THE MANAGER pauses to let these words sink in.

MANAGER (cont.)
There is going to be needed a drug test from you guys. Some time in the next few days I will understand how this is done and I will send you wherever I need to send you to get this testing done.

MAX
Drug testing?

VASYA
Why do you need to test us for drugs?

MANAGER
Because...

And he turns and walks away. Both MAX and VASYA look at each other and then together...

MAX AND VASYA
FUUUUUUCK!

CUT TO:

225. EXT. LENIN SQUARE. AFTER NEW YEARS CELEBRATION
We follow the group of wealthy people from the restaurant as they spill out onto the square. Hundreds and hundreds of people are there greeting the New Years. The children are sliding down the slope behind the statue of Lenin on sleds and dishes. People are milling around and talking with each other. It is a very festive, beautiful time. There is music playing from the roof of the Dom Cultura.

And in one particular moment, we focus in on ZHENNA and SVETA. Apparently and finally, they are sick of the entire thing and
SVETA literally slaps his face and walks away from him. But instead of following he simply watches her go. And as she is finally gone from sight, ZHENNA wanders over to where KOLIA, FARES and EVA are standing. EVA has her hands around FARES’ waist and is leaning her head on his shoulder. FARES just shrugs and smiles at ZHENNA and, with nothing particularly left to say in this moment, he just puts his hands into his pockets and wanders away.

FARES
(calling after ZHENNA)
I’ll tell MARGARITA that you wished her a happy New Year.

KOLIA
She will be back at the restaurant for several more hours if you are looking for her.

He doesn’t even bother to look back or answer.

And here MAX enters the scene, also with his hands in his pockets and a glum expression on his face.

MAX
It is true. They do always get us on New Years.

Nobody particularly notices anything wrong with MAX so they all just smile.

MAX (cont.)
Hey KOLIA. Why don’t you have a date tonight?

KOLIA
These things happen sometimes.

MAX
Yea, these things happen.

FARES
What’s with you?

MAX
(philosophically)
I had a bad day at work.

There is a pause.
MAX (cont.)
Happy New Years you guys.

THE GROUP
Happy New Years.

And MAX turns and walks away leaving KOLIA and FARES and EVA alone at the square. And as the watch MAX walk away, FARES looks at EVA and sees that EVA is still smiling happily up at him. And, really unable to help himself, he leans over and kisses her sweetly and slowly and tenderly. KOLIA is watching and he smiles at this.

KOLIA
I think you two ought to get a room.

FARES looks at him and then back to EVA who simply smiles even wider.

FARES
You know, I think you may be right.

And with that, the both of them smile at KOLIA who offers a small wave.

KOLIA
Happy New Years you guys.

And they turn and with his arm over her shoulder, the two head off towards home. And this leaves KOLIA alone and staring up at the Yolka. He is not unhappy. It is not a terrible moment. It is not a bad life in general. Except for the fact that from off screen comes a particular voice.

MENTOWSKI
Hello KOLIA. Happy New Year.

KOLIA looks and sees MENTOWSKI and IBANCO and three other cops all standing in a little group and looking at him. They have their arms folded over their chests.

KOLIA
Ahh, MENTOWSKI. Happy New Year to you too. What brings you fellows out on a night like this?

MENTOWSKI
Ohhhh, we came to play a little game. We heard you were interested in playing with us. So, let’s play.
KOLIA gets this rather quickly and though calm, his eyes start to look around for a potential exit.

KOLIA
OK. How are we going to play this game?

MENTOWSKI
Well, these things are never really understood fully at the beginning. They always develop over time. Most probably, we should just play this one by ear.

And with that, MENTOWSKI strokes his ear sensuously...

MENTOWSKI
You...uh... hear what I am saying?

There really aren’t any words necessary and KOLIA simply turns and starts running for the sledding hill.

Cut to:

226. EXT. LENIN SQUARE HILL
And MENTOWSKI and the boys are after him like a shot. KOLIA jumps the wall and skids down the ice hill along with the sledders. He hits the frozen walkway path without falling and sprints down towards the bridge. MENTOWSKI and his boys don’t do so well on the slope and slip and fall, splashing together like macaroni.

Cut to:

227. EXT. LENIN SQUARE BRIDGE
KOLIA is already heading under the bridge though we can see MENTOWSKI coming into frame behind him.

Cut to:

228. EXT. LENIN STREET BUILDINGS. BACKYARDS.
KOLIA heads through the yards of the houses behind Lenin Street. He find a pile of bricks and uses them to jump up on the roofs doing some pretty good parkour moves to get over walls and such but the cops keep coming.

Cut to:

229. EXT. LENIN STREET
KOLIA crosses Lenin Street where there are a lot of people and across the street to the entrance of PINSKAYA SHLACHTA.
230. EXT. PINSKAYA SHLACHTA
It seems like everybody in town is there waiting to get in for some after hours food and there is A BOUNCER there blocking the door. KOLIA tries to run past him but is stopped at the door. THE COPS are coming around the corner so KOLIA goes into his pocket and pulls out a $50 bill and hands it to the bouncer who smiles and sends him through.

Cut to:

231. INT. PINSKAYA SHLACHTA
Inside, KOLIA straightens his coat and, feeling pretty smart starts to mill around as if he actually plans to stay a while. But then he sees the cops showing their badges to the doorman, they are coming in.

Cut to:

232. INT. PINSKAYA SHLACHTA KITCHEN
KOLIA runs though the kitchen and out the back door.

Cut to:

233. EXT. PINSKAYA SHLACHTA. SMOKING AREA
Coming through the door, he jumps over the rail and down to the ground and starts running just as the cops come out the door above him.

Cut to:

234. EXT. PINSK STREETS
They pass by the “Druzba” church and into DETSKI PARK.

Cut to:

235. EXT. PINSK DETSKI PARK ENTRANCE
KOLIA glances back and sees THE COPS just seconds behind him and right on his tail. He turns and goes into the park. We then cut to the cops, who are just a minute late but run straight into the park.

Cut to:

236. EXT. PINSK DETSKI PARK
The park is very dark and we are with the cops as they search for their man. But he is nowhere to be seen. Maybe they have
lost him. But then MENTOWSKI sees a set of tracks in the snow leading up into one the castles. THE COP’S EYES follow the tracks up the stairs to the top and sure enough, there is KOLIA standing at the top and smiling down. THE COPS start up the steps after him but KOLIA jumps from the castle, landing on the other side of a brick wall and runs across the street towards the Pobeda Theatre.

Cut to:

237. INT. POBEDA THEATRE
KOLIA comes through the doors and through a disco party going on in the lobby and heads up the stairs to CAFÉ CAO CACAO.

Cut to:

238. INT. CAFÉ CAO CACAO
A swank party is in progress. KOLIA glances back down the stairs and sees through the window that MENTOWSKI and the COPS are on the way. This is probably the end of the road. He looks around trying to find an exit.

Cut to:

239. INT. POBEDA THEATRE
MENTOWSKI and the COPS are in and headed straight for the stairs to the café.

Cut to:

240. INT. CAFÉ CAO CACAO
KOLIA starts making his way though the crowd but suddenly hears his name called. KOLIA looks. It is SHEF, STPANOVICH and BORISOVICH. MENTOWSKI and his boys come through the door, and there is KOLIA, glass of champaign already in his hand, standing there with the big shots.

KOLIA smiles at the cop. He is connected.

Cut to:

241. INT. PINSK HOUSE. LATE EVENING.
KOLIA, his evening’s excitement over enters his house tired but at ease. He throws his coat over a chair and grabs a bite of something from the refrigerator. He heads down the corridor stopping at one room and looking inside. Here he sees FARES and EVA asleep in each others arms. This makes KOLIA smile. He starts down the hall again and again pauses at a door to look inside. He sees MAX in bed with his arm slung over a sleeping IVAN. MAX has his shirt off and, as he is lying on his right side, we can clearly see their identical “EMES LAYOLOM” tattoos printed just below their ribs.
KOLIA continues down the hall to his own room, sits on the couch and turns on the TV. On the TV, it is the normal Russian entertainment program with all of the usual Russian stars pretending to have an entertainment party for all of the TV watchers...

Fade to black:

Title card: Spring 2012

242. INT. PINSK CLOTHING FACTORY.
ALEX and VALENTINOVICH are in their office and getting ready. VALENTINOVICH is primping ALEX who is looking quite nice in a black jacket and collared blouse.

VALENTINOVICH
I bet you never believed that you would receive anything from the state.

ALEX
I didn’t really expect anything to come from anybody to tell the truth.

VALENTINOVICH
Well, this is not because they like you particularly. It is because of the quality of your work. And that they think you will make them money which is probably the most important thing.

ALEX
So they are not just trying to tell me that they are not so bad?

VALENTINOVICH
No, they don’t need to do that. They think they generally like what you are doing, fashion wise.

ALEX smiles at this.

CUT TO:

243. INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. MARGARITA’S OFFICE.
MARGARITA is at work but she is not particularly concentrating at all. TERENTINOVNA notices this.

TERENTINOVNA
Is something wrong Margo?
MARGARITA turns and looks at her boss and, after thinking a moment, she answers.

MARGARITA
I don’t know. I think it is just the spring weather.

TERENTINOVNA
Well, everybody is like that in the springtime.

MARGARITA looks at her and her contented smile.

TERENTINOVNA
Well, almost everybody.

And she smiles at her own joke.

CUT TO:

244. EXT. PINSK MEDICAL DISPENSARY
With IVAN on his leash, MAX steps off a bus and walks up to the big DISPENSARY BUILDING. The front door seems to be closed and there is a sign saying “entrance around the back”. We follow him around the corner to the rear door. There is nobody around and when MAX tries the rear door, it is also locked. He pulls at it somewhat frustratingly until he notices the sign explaining the working hours. He looks at his watch, understands that they should be working, but they are not. This is indeed a very frustrating situation.

MAX unhooks the dog from his leash and walks back around to the front of the building. He looks out at the street for a second, watching the cars go by, until his eyes come to rest upon the KROKUS FLOWER SHOP, just across the street. The weather is still a little cold and there is still some ice on the ground and as MAX watches, a young and rather attractive girl pops out of the shop holding an ice breaker and a bucket of salt and begins to hack away at the ice on the ground in front of her shop. MAX is a little fixated on this and after taking another glance at the closed dispensary, he whistles for IVAN to come with him and heads out across the street towards the plant shop.

CUT TO:

245. INT. PINSK GORISPOLKOM. FARES’ OFFICE
FARES is at work reading and signing some documents in front of him when his mobile phone rings.
FARES
Hello.

We get a picture of a mouth talking into a mobile phone.

VOICE
You are friends with KOLIA, the poker player, aren’t you?

FARES
Yes. Who is this?

VOICE
My name is Andre. I am a friend of SHEF and I work over at the electric service main office on Gaydaenko. The GORISPOLKOM recommended that he would be interesting for a card game. We have some people from Minsk coming in. There should be a lot of money there. Someone in your office said that you knew his number.

FARES
I understand. I’ll pass on the message to KOLIA.

VOICE
Good. The game will start at about 9:00 this evening over on the third floor at the main office. Do you know where it is?

FARES
Yes, I do. Like I said, I will pass it on.

VOICE
Thank you.

And FARES closes the phone. And without thinking anything, goes back to work.

CUT TO:

246. INT. PINSK CLOTHING FACTORY. MAIN FLOOR.
The bosses and all of the employees of the plant have gathered for an awards ceremony. There are several people waiting on a small improvised stage to be pointed out. Among them on stage is ALEX. The boss is speaking.
MICHAELOVICH
...And our greatest thanks this month
goes to our newest and youngest
designer who was responsible for the
current line that has already
received orders in excess of 400%
more than any other single order in
the last 10 years.

ALEX smiles and the whole floor erupts into applause for her.
VALENTINOVICH looks at her and ALEX is literally filled with
emotion in this moment

CUT TO:

247. INT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. MARGARITA’S OFFICE.
MARGARITA has basically had enough of trying to fight her mood.
She turns off her computer and stands.

MARGARITA
(TO TERENTINOVNA)
I am sorry. I have to go out for a
walk.

TERENTINOVNA just smirks at her but doesn’t respond. MARGARITA
grabs her bag, and heads out of the hotel.

CUT TO:

248. EXT. PINA RIVER.
We are across the street from the hotel and ZHENNA is there by
himself, staring out at the river. He doesn’t seem to be
particularly happy. But for some reason, he turns and notices
MARGARITA exiting the hotel. He doesn't take his eyes off of
her.

We shift to her perspective as she heads down the path towards
the river. We see her face and can see that she is thinking of
something very deeply.

Back from ZHENNA’S, he sees her approaching the street but his
attention turns to the left and we see along the roadway, a car
is coming very quickly towards the crosswalk. MARGARITA is
approaching and does not seem to be paying attention. Again,
the car and we can see that the two are going to end up at the
same place at the same time and that this car is definitely
going too fast to think about stopping. ZHENNA takes a step
forward, thinks to say something but doesn’t. MARGARITA is
right now at the crosswalk but she hasn’t even paused. He
screams!
ZHENNA
MARGARITA!

She looks up shocked as the car barrels by her, much, much, much too fast for the roadway. She sees the car go and looks up at ZHENNA who has just saved her life. ZHENNA trots across the street, puts his hand on her shoulder and looks very caringly into her eyes.

ZHENNA
Are you ok?

MARGARITA looks up at him and probably for the first time, has no intentions of doing anything to hurt him and simply puts her arms around his neck and pulls him to herself. As they hug we pull back on the picture of the two of them holding each other on the street in front of the hotel.

CUT TO:

249. EXT. KROKUS FLOWER SHOP. DAY.
MAX is helping PAULINA, the KROKUS GIRL chip some ice away from the doorway. IVAN is running around wildly, barking and chasing birds.

PAULINA
Your dog is really cool. And what does he like? Maybe, we can trap him with some bait?

MAX looks at the dog and thinks about this.

PAULINA (cont.)
Maybe, he would like some sausage meat. Or maybe some flowers.

She smiles at her own joke.

MAX likes her smile but blushes when the real answer comes into his head.

PAULINA (cont.)
What is it?

MAX
oyy no... briefly, sausage meat is always welcome. But of course, flowers aren’t necessary for him... But he does like something to drink when he takes a rest.
MAX smiles at his humor, holding back the punch line.

PAULINA
I have some vodka in the store...

That gets him. He will probably have to marry this one.

CUT TO:

250. EXT. PINA RIVER DAY
MARGARITA AND ZHENNA are walking along the river together

MARGARITA
Actually, I have never really thought of myself as being with anybody. I am too independent. Maybe it is feminism but I never really thought of myself as being a part of any man. I never keep any real attachments to boys.

ZHENNA nods listening. MARGARITA looks at him and he at her. And really, there isn’t really anything to say and they kiss.

CUT TO:

251. EXT. KROKUS FLOWER SHOP. DAY
MAX is now sitting with PAULINA who is feeding IVAN some meat. There is a bottle open and a small bowl.

MAX
Have you ever thought that maybe this life of ours is not all there is? Or maybe there is something more? I think there must be something more to life than just doing your job and waiting for your pension.

PAULINA looks at him.

PAULINA
Mmmm, only every day of my life since I was 12 years old.

MAX Smiles. He is sold. And then his phone rings. It is an SMS from someone who is described as ASSHOLE. We can read the text.

DON’T FORGET YOUR DRUG TEST APPOINTMENT TODAY.

MAX looks up at the sky and then closes the phone and puts it in his pocket.
PAULINA
What was that?

MAX
That was my ex boss.

PAULINA
Oh?

MAX
It’s ok. It was nothing as important as this moment.

She likes that and smiles.

FADE TO:

252. INT. PINSK HOUSE. EVENING.
EVA is putting the finishing touches on a new film. We see over her shoulder that it is a series of shots as in the last film played over Tango music. But this time though the pictures are similar, and though the people in the pictures are engaged in different actions, it seems as though the people in the movie are dancing a tango together. It is odd how it goes together but she likes it very much. And as the music ends, she clicks SAVE on the computer, stands up, pushes herself away from the desk and looks around to see if anyone is home to show this to. She exits her room, heads down the hall, knocks once and opens the door to MARGARITA’S ROOM, only to find her in bed, making love with ZHENNA. Eva smiles

EVA
Excuse me.

MARGARITA shows her that she is happy and waves her away and EVA closes the door.

CUT TO:

253. EXT. PINSK HOUSE.
We see KOLIA arriving home in his BMW. He parks and gets out of his car. He clicks his security device which chirps that the car is locked and heads inside.

CUT TO:

254. INT. PINSK HOUSE. EVENING.
ALEX is on the phone and talking animatedly with her mother.

ALEX
So I got a diploma of achievement and, and really, this is so crazy, they have invited me to stay on as permanent designer. I will still be working with VALENTINOVICH but I get twice the money and can give my ideas at meetings directly.

We hear ALEX’S dialogue continue in V.O. as we…

CUT TO:

255. EXT. PINK HOUSE. EARLY EVENING.
We see a car drive up next to KOLIA’S BMW and a man gets out holding a switchblade. He sticks the knife into the two street side tires of the car, both of which go flat. He gets back into the car and drives away.

CUT TO:

256. INT. PINSK HOUSE. EVENING.
EVA is in her room and putting on mascara. FARES is lying back on the bed watching her get ready.

EVA
I wish you could come with me. Poor VADIK is not doing so well.

FARES
Normally I would but we are invited to this game and I guess we have to call this politics. I never really know how these things work but I guess it is just something I have to do.

EVA turns and looks at him.

EVA
You know… you are the most beautiful man I have ever met in my life.

FARES does not know what to say about this so he just smiles.

EVA packs up her things and heads out the door. FARES stands up and follows.

CUT TO:
257. INT. PINSK HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. EVENING.
As FARES and EVA get to the living room, the door opens and in comes MAX, IVAN and PAULINA. They all look at the new face. MAX smiles a sort of red faced smile.

MAX
Hi. This is PAULINA. (pause) she is...
(another pause) uh... with me.

To this PAULINA just smiles and everyone laughs a little. With open arms, KOLIA goes over and gives her a big hug. MAX clears his throat rather loudly as KOLIA continues his hug and everyone thinks this is pretty funny.

CUT TO:

258. EXT. PINSK HOUSE. EARLY EVENING.
A taxi pulls up and EVA gets into it and waves as KOLIA and FARES exit the house. The taxi exits and KOLIA chirps his doors open. But as he opens the car door, he sees that he has two flat tires. He looks around trying to understand what has happened or who has done it.

KOLIA
Fuck this!

FARES
Maybe we should call another taxi.

KOLIA
No. The weather is beautiful. Let’s just walk. It is not very far.

And the boys start walking towards their game.

CUT TO:

259. INT. TAXI CAB.
EVA opens up her notebook and turns on a moment from her film to make sure all is ok. The moment though is a still of FARES without his shirt, showing off his tattoo which blends in with the scar on his chest. She likes this picture. She closes the notebook. Everything is ok.

CUT TO:
260. EXT. PINSK. TRAIN STATION. EARLY EVENING.
FARES and KOLIA are heading towards the train station and start up the bridge that leads over the tracks. We then get a close-up on the same car that we saw in the tire cutting earlier. The car stops and two doors open and two men get out and start following FARES and KOLIA to the bridge.

CUT TO:

261. EXT. PINSK HOSPITAL. EARLY EVENING.
An optimistic EVA shows up at the hospital and goes inside.

CUT TO:

262. INT. PINSK HOSPITAL. EARLY EVENING.
Her elevator opens and she heads out onto the ward only to find VLADIMIR and NIKOLAIIVNA standing outside VADIK’S room in full agony. EVA understands that something is wrong.

EVA
What’s happening?

NIKOLAIIVNA is too hysterical to speak. EVA looks through the window and sees several doctors hovering around VADIK who has a tube being inserted down into his lungs. The doctors have to hold him because he is bouncing up and down on the bed.

VLADIMIR
There is an infection in his lungs. They are filled with fluid. They think it is pneumonia.

EVA
He can’t breathe...

VLADIMIR shakes his head no.

CUT TO:

263. EXT. PINSK. TRAIN STATION. RAILWAY BRIDGE. EARLY EVENING.
At the top of the stairs, FARES and KOLIA start heading over the bridge, but as they get to the middle, they notice MENTOWSKI and another cop standing at the other side. They look back the other way and see the two cops from the car blocking the other side. This is not going to be good.

CUT TO:
264. INT. PINSK HOSPITAL. EARLY EVENING.
EVA is fixated on what is happening in the room. Through the window, she can see that the doctors are now desperately trying to get some air into VADIK. The boy’s eyes are rolled up into his head. But strangely, the doctors seem to be dancing. At first, EVA doesn’t understand what is happening, but then she presses her ear against the door and can hear that there is tango music playing.

The music comes to full volume as we...

CUT TO:

265. EXT. PINSK. TRAIN STATION. RAILWAY BRIDGE. EARLY EVENING.
MENTOWSKI and THE COPS have come closer and KOLIA and FARES are caught dead center with nowhere to go.

KOLIA
MENTOWSKI, what exactly is your problem.

MENTOWSKI
It is not exactly my problem KOLIA. It is everybody’s problem with you. I think we are all a little tired of how free you think you are.

FARES
You won’t hear the end of this MENTOWSKI. You are not free to do this. You are accountable.

MENTOWSKI
This is not your game FARES. You can go home if you want to right now. This is exactly between me and KOLIA.

FARES
And what did he do to you besides take your money because you are a terrible poker player.

MENTOWSKI
No, I didn’t care about the money. But I never agreed that my girlfriend was part of the pot. That is where I draw the line.

KOLIA looks like he wants to say something but FARES waves him off.
FARES
(to KOLIA)
What in the hell were you thinking?

KOLIA
(to FARES)
She’s a free woman. She can do what she wants.

FARES
Yea, but where was she your girlfriend?

MENTOWSKI takes off his jacket. He’s actually a pretty muscular guy.

FARES
(to KOLIA)
Why don’t you just apologize to him?

KOLIA looks at FARES as if he is crazy. But then he thinks for a moment. Why not?

KOLIA
Ok MENTOWSKI. Would you... uh... consider taking my apology for what happened?

This makes MENTOWSKI smile. He nods, looks down for a second and then goes into his pocket and pulls out a switchblade knife.

MENTOWSKI
Well yea... an apology... how about... an apology and a souvenir?

CUT TO:

266. INT. PINSK HOSPITAL. EARLY EVENING.
The doctors are now elegantly dancing around the boy who stands up on the bed and, without anyone seeming to notice, jumps down to the floor. The doctors continue to pay attention to the place he would have been on the bed. The boy comes to the small window in the door and puts his face up to it and smiles, giving a small wave at Eva. She waves back.

VADIK
It’s ok Eva. It’s ok.

EVA touches fingers with the boy through the glass. And though she is crying wildly, the smile remains on her face...

CUT TO:
267. EXT. PINSK. TRAIN STATION. RAILWAY BRIDGE. EARLY EVENING. MENTOWSKI is waving his knife at KOLIA, who is dodging each thrust. The other cops are all getting an angle on FARES but at this moment, it is only a two man fight. When they have position, two of the cops grab FARES’ arms and he starts to struggle.

KOLIA
It’s four on two MENTOWSKI, how is this a fair fight?

MENTOWSKI
KOLIA, you are just not from Pinsk…

The cop then takes a wild swipe, the blade barely missing, and then brings it back the other way stabbing at KOLIA, the knife catching a little of KOLIA’S shirt and getting stuck for a second. KOLIA grabs the big cop and wrestles him to the ground. The cops holding FARES see MENTOWSKI fall and this is all FARES needs and he throws a wicket left-right elbow combination, sending one cop down and stunning the other who gets a jumping knee kick to the face which sends him down as well. FARES can fight! But there are three cops and the third lands three quick jabs to the side of his head and FARES has to take a knee.

CUT TO:

268. INT. PINSK HOSPITAL. EARLY EVENING. EVA is in a daze. She understands that she is hallucinating here but the reality is almost too much to bear and she wanders over to a window and looks out over the gray landscape of Pinsk. She looks back and sees a nurse talking sadly to the boy’s parents. It is some shocking news but all EVA can do is turn and look back out the window.

CUT TO:

269. EXT. PINSK. TRAIN STATION. RAILWAY BRIDGE. EARLY EVENING. KOLIA and MENTOWSKI are wrestling for the knife. A second cop is punching KOLIA in the head from behind and FARES is circling with the last two cops. One attempts a kick which FARES catches cleanly in his arms. He bends and twists and executes a sweep kick which, along with a sickening crack from his ankle, drops the cop on the back of his head. The second cop tries to get at FARES by jumping over his fallen friend but stumbles forward and catches a knee which straightens him up. FARES takes aim and adds a nasty head but which shatters the cops nose bloodily. These two are out.

The cop who is beating on KOLIA’S head gets a clean boot to the face and FARES grabs MENTOWSKI’s shirt and starts to pull him
off of KOLIA. But unfortunately, the last cop comes back fast and, at the same moment that MENTOWSKI puts a side kick on him, the cop throws him and the force of the two men send FARES back into the guard rail which, as with so many public structures in this country, has not been looked after or re-enforced with any seriousness and it gives way. There is a second where FARES tries desperately to grab for something. KOLIA reaches out for him. The cops watch, amazed at what is happening. FARES’ eyes tell us that he understands everything...

CUT TO:

270. INT. PINSK HOSPITAL. EARLY EVENING.
EVA looks up. She feels something strongly from the universe. She whispers FARES’ name.

CUT TO:

271. EXT. PINSK. TRAIN STATION. RAILWAY BRIDGE. EARLY EVENING.
FARES begins his fall down to the railway tracks in slow motion. KOLIA screams his name, also in slow motion. And FARES is falling. And then his body meets the ground.

CUT TO:

272. INT. PINSK HOSPITAL. EARLY EVENING.
EVA now can hear that VADIK’s heart monitor has gone flat. She looks and sees NIKOLAIVNA scream! VLADIMIR grabs her and then EVA’S legs go out from under her and she falls to the floor.

AND we pull back to see her lying on the floor of the hospital and...

FADE TO:

273. EXT. PINSK. TRAIN STATION. RAILWAY BRIDGE. EARLY EVENING.
The same over head shot as at the hospital showing KOLIA lying on the bridge and looking down at his friend, the cops running and limping off and FARES’ lifeless body lying on the railroad tracks below.

FADE TO BLACK:

274. EXT. PINSK. TRAIN STATION. PLATFORM. RAINY DAY.
FARES’ MOTHER AND FATHER are standing under an umbrella as several workers carry the casket out of the train station to the open railway car. In the foreground are EVA and KOLIA. FARES’ FATHER turns for only a moment to look at the two and then, without nodding or saying anything, slowly leads his wife onto the train home.
275. PINSK CEMETERY. RAINY DAY.
VADIK’S tiny coffin is being lowered into the ground. There are
many people, family and friends. Everybody throws a handful of
dirt into the hole, but MAX takes a shovel from a worker and
helps to fill it in.

KOLIA turns and starts walking away. Everyone notices this, but
only MARGARITA follows and as she goes, ZHENNA heads after her.
As KOLIA gets to a road, we see that he is going to get into a
black Audi R8. He opens the door and then stops and looks at
MARGARITA, who is just standing in the rain and looking at him.
KOLIA reaches into his pocket and pulls out a set of house keys.
He looks at them for a moment and then tosses them to MARGARITA.

MARGARITA
Where are you going?

KOLIA
I don’t know. (a pause) It doesn’t
really matter, does it?

MARGARITA
I guess not.

KOLIA
(after another pause)
You guys keep the house. It’s paid
for already.

MARGARITA
Thanks. (and after one more short
pause.) That’s a nice car. Where did
you get it?

KOLIA
I won it in a card game.

And he smiles, gets into the car, starts the engine and drives
away.

FADE TO BLACK.
**TITLE CARD: AUGUST 2012. THE END**

276. **EXT. MINSK PRISON. DAY.**
ALEX is waiting outside the prison in a green print skirt and black top with several pieces of ornamental jewelry. After a moment, the doors to the prison open and two guards lead ALIK to the final gate and open the door for him. He gives a small smile to ALEX who lowers her head in a shy way, but smiles back and offers her hand to him. He comes and takes it they begin walking.

FADE TO:

277. **EXT. PINSK HOUSE. DAY.**
MARGARITA finds three official looking letters in the mail box.

CUT TO:

278. **INT. PINSK HOUSE. DAY.**
MARGARITA gives one of the letters to ALEX, who is sitting on a couch with ALIK and the other to MAX who is playing on the floor with IVAN. MARGARITA opens her envelope and reads what is written.

MARGARITA seems happy.

MARGARITA
My otrobotka is finished. My university debt has been paid for.

ALEX
Mine too.

MARGARITA
I guess we are free.

They both look at MAX

MAX
It says I owe them 16 million rubles.

MAX makes a face.

CUT TO:

279. **EXT. HOTEL PRIPYAT. DAY.**
MAX, PAULINA and IVAN are standing on the walkway admiring the statues. After a second, MARGARITA comes out of the hotel to join them.
MAX
Well, I guess this is good-bye.

MARGARITA
I will miss you.

MAX
Me too. Have you heard anything from EVA?

MARGARITA
No. She doesn’t answer any calls.

MAX nods at this.

MAX
So you are staying here?

MARGARITA
ALEX and ALIK are staying too.

MAX
I like ZHENNA.

This makes MARGARITA smile.

MAX (cont.)
I read that they are going to extend the work placement laws. Now they are going to require five years from graduates.

They look at each other for a moment and then both have a laugh at this.

MARGARITA
So, have you decided where you guys are going?

MAX
We thought we would try something different. PAULINA has a friend in Europe.

MARGARITA
Where in Europe?

MAX smiles mischievously.
MAX
Near Amsterdam. We thought we would
try some... agriculture.

Margarita looks at him lovingly and with tears building in her
eyes, hugs him and then Paulina deeply. And then after a second
she kneels down to get a good face lick from Ivan.

MARGARITA
No, I didn’t forget you.

And with that, MARGARITA stands and they have a last look at
each other. MAX takes PAULINA and heads down the path and into
their small yellow LADA car. MARGARITA watches them go. There
is a little chill in the air and MARGARITA crosses her arms as
she has a quick look around and then turns and heads back
towards the hotel.

And here we rise up high over the
scene watching MAX’s car head down
the road, MARGARITA enter the
hotel and the landscape of the
town of Pinsk expanding below us.

BLACKOUT.

TITLE CARD: HAPPINESS

As credits roll, we can see EVA’s second happiness film playing
off to the side. Truthfully though, it is a dance number with
all of the characters from all of the scenes of the film doing
their best to tango like they mean it.

The end

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