

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

"Plague"

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Story

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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT - ELEGANT BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Catherine's world -- the dinner table still cluttered with fine crystal and silver, the end of a small elegant dinner party -- old friends catching up: "DR. PETER" HARRINGTON, the host and his wife, GEORGIA, both silver haired 60's; their daughter SUSAN with her fiance ROB (both Catherine's age) and finally CATHERINE at the opposite end of the table. "Doctor Peter" seems to genuinely relish the story he relates to Rob.

DOCTOR PETER

...Of course the first time I saw Cathy, she was upside down, screaming at the top of her lungs, and I might add, not wearing a stitch...

Catherine laughs with the rest.

GEORGIA

I think you'd better add that you were the delivering physician, Peter!

SUSAN

(laughs)

And Cathy and I go back to -- what?
(turns to Catherine)
...the first day of kindergarten?

CATHERINE

(nods)

Susan cried all morning and I threw up at lunch... It was awful!

They laugh again but as a CLOCK begins to CHIME THE HOUR, Catherine looks off...

ROB

After the wedding you've got to come out to California and see us, Cathy...

He follows her look off to:

AN ELEGANT CLOCK

The chimes ending -- it's ELEVEN O'CLOCK

AS BEFORE - CATHERINE

Catherine stares at the clock in worried disbelief, then realizing she interrupted...

CATHERINE

I'm sorry, Rob... It's been such a lovely evening I didn't realize how late it was...

There are cries of protest and Susan is dismayed.

SUSAN

You're not leaving...?! Cathy, we've hardly have a chance to talk about anything!

Catherine glances off at the clock again as she gets to her feet -- telegraphing a subtle excitement -- both men politely rising in response.

CATHERINE

I have a very tough day at the office tomorrow. I'll call you, Susan...honest! It was great, finally meeting you, Rob... Dinner was lovely, Georgia...

"Doctor Peter" moves to show her out but she shakes her head and with genuine affection:

CATHERINE

...after all these years I think I can find my way out, Doctor Peter...

EXT - ELEGANT BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Catherine, already out the front door, hurries down the steps as "Doctor Peter" follows her out.

DOCTOR PETER

Everything all right, Cathy...?

Catherine whirls back to him.

DOCTOR PETER

...it's just that we hardly ever see you anymore...

CATHERINE

I guess I have been too busy lately...with work and...

She trails off uneasily -- for a moment almost wanting to tell him -- then deciding not to.

CATHERINE

It won't be so long this time, I
promise. Good night, Doctor
Peter.

REACTION - DOCTOR PETER

He smiles, but looks off after her curiously for a beat
before disappearing inside.

EXT - ESTABLISHING - BROOKLYN BRIDGE - NIGHT

A low angle, shooting up, the bridge above stretching to the
lights of Brooklyn on the other side.

EXT - UNDER PARAPET OF BRIDGE - NIGHT

Nothing but dark shadows, then added to the hum of traffic
from the bridge high above is the SOUND OF CATHERINE'S
FOOTSTEPS, running. VINCENT steps worriedly out of the
shadows to meet her.

VINCENT

Catherine... I was concerned...

CATHERINE

I'm sorry, Vincent... They were
all old friends I hadn't seen in
over a year -- and the time went
by so fast.. .

She trails off, troubled, realizing it's her world, one he'll
never share. We HEAR AN OUTBOARD MOTOR BOAT rapidly
APPROACHING on the river.

CATHERINE

It's -- it's just hard to be two
places sometimes...

RUSSIAN IN BOAT VOICE

(in RUSSIAN)

There! Over there!

Both Catherine and Vincent turn toward the river in alarm,
Vincent pulling Catherine into the shadows with him as:

POV - A SMALL OUTBOARD ZODIAC (or motorboat)

the motor abruptly cut to an idle, the boat drifting toward shore,
MERCHANT SEAMAN on board searching the water with powerful
FLASHLIGHTS, the beam turned for a moment to sweep the shore.

RUSSIAN IN BOAT (CONT'D)
(in RUSSIAN)
Nothing... Keep looking.

The motor roars to full power and the boat moves on down the river.

AS BEFORE - VINCENT & CATHERINE

They step back out of the shadows, watching the boat move away.

CATHERINE
For a moment I was afraid to think
what they might be looking for...

Vincent's eyes sweep the dark water.

VINCENT
Not us, but definitely something...
(spotting something)
Or someone!

IN THE WATER - DIMITRI

A half drowned merchant seaman makes a feeble attempt to swim, then completely exhausted, gives up and slowly sinks. Out of nowhere, Vincent's hand pulls him back up to the surface.

ON SHORE - CATHERINE

helps Vincent pull the half alive seaman on shore -- face down.

CATHERINE
Is he...?

The Seaman coughs, moaning a little as he begins to revive. Catherine and Vincent exchange a fast look, this is no time to introduce him to Vincent.

CATHERINE
Please... I'll get someone to
help...

Vincent backs into shadows and Catherine turns to the Seaman.

CATHERINE
Just rest, I'll find a
policeman...

The Seaman abruptly flops over, looking up in at her fearfully, trying to catch his breath. He is early to mid -20's, boyishly handsome; something about him suggesting both a rakish sense of humor and innocent sincerity; but at this moment he's close to panic and he speaks only fair English with a thick Russian accent.

DIMITRI

No! No police... Please?!

He struggles to his feet, frantically trying to communicate.

DIMITRI

I, Dimitri Vashinsky from Soviet
Union...

He glances off at the river nervously.

DIMITRI

Police, they put me back on ship...
You understand, yes?!

CATHERINE

(nods, then...)

No. I don't...

We hear the SOUND of the OUTBOARD MOTOR returning and he whirls to watch with increasing anxiety:

DIMITRI

(increasingly desperate)

Is from my ship!

POV - ZODIAC

Much closer but still moving up river.

AS BEFORE - CATHERINE & DIMITRI

She turns to him, unable to miss the terror on his face as he waits to see if the boat will pass without seeing them.

POV (CONT'D) - ZODIAC

We think it is going to go by when the Russian in the boat abruptly turns the powerful flashlight toward shore and spots them.

RUSSIAN IN BOAT

(in RUSSIAN)

Over there! Under the bridge.

The boat turns abruptly, heading right at:

AS BEFORE - DIMITRI & CATHERINE

The powerful flashlights trained on him, Dimitri backs up in fear.

VINCENT'S VOICE

Quickly!

Dimitri whirls, really frightened as he sees:

VINCENT

steps out of the shadows.

VINCENT
There is nothing to fear.
(in RUSSIAN)
Come!

ON BOAT

as the motor is cut, the boat still going fast as it closes on the shore, the men inside already out and running as it grounds. The Russian leader frantically races to the dark shadows under the bridge, finding it empty.

ON RUSSIAN LEADER

turning back toward his men in frustration, walking in front of a METAL GRATED STORM DRAIN.

RUSSIAN IN BOAT
(in RUSSIAN)
Keep searching! They are here
somewhere!

He turns back, playing the flashlight into the darkness, again walking past the storm drain, never once considering it.

INT - OLD STORAGE TUNNEL - NIGHT

An upper brick tunnel, perhaps part of the basement of a moving and storage company, somehow built over or forgotten, the approaching lantern eerily lighting up the relics of decades past ... a TIFFANY WINDOW, an ICE WAGON and HARNESS, a CRYSTAL CHANDELIER, ANTIQUE FURNITURE, STEAMER TRUNKS -- an incongruous collection of artifacts from the turn of the century.

Then we see Catherine holding the lantern high, Vincent right behind, helping a desperately weary Dimitri who anxiously glances around.

DIMITRI
Is still America, yes?

Catherine turns back with the lantern, illuminating Vincent and an awe and wonder-struck Dimitri.

VINCENT
Yes...

INT - HOSPITAL CHAMBER

Father hands Catherine forceps, gauze already locked in the jaws, then picking up some antiseptic turns to Dimitri, already stripped to the waist. Father cleans a cut on his arm, then starts to bandage it.

FATHER

(beat, curiously)
...just what was it you were looking
for in the East River...?

DIMITRI

(in RUSSIAN)
Love...
(explaining in English)
Love...

Father shoots him a curious glance.

DIMITRI

...is not for politics...

Dimitri pulls out a waterproof plastic packet from inside his shirt, opening it, pulling out a letter and a photograph that he hands to father.

DIMITRI

I show you... Is for Anna!

Father takes the photograph curiously.

INSERT - ANNA'S PHOTOGRAPH

A very pretty dark haired girl in her early 20's [We'll see her again, for real next time].

BACK TO SCENE

Father hands it to Catherine, Vincent looking at it as well.

FATHER

She's very beautiful...

Dimitri beams proudly.

CATHERINE

She's here, in America?

DIMITRI

(nods)
One year... We were -- how you say
-- to marry...

(frowns)
I apply to immigrate also but... Is
nyet!

[MORE]

DIMITRI (CONT'D)

(beat)

Then Anna send me letter... She say she has no more hope I come to America...

(beat, proudly)

But I come...!

(turns away to hide...)

Is possible I never see my country again, but...

(turns back, blinking tears)

...maybe you understand loving, so much, someone...?

All three of them do, Father turns away blinking hard with memories of Margaret and Catherine clearly has tears in her eyes.

CATHERINE

...there must be a way to find her...

DIMITRI

(hopefully)

Is possible you help me...?

CATHERINE

Yes...

FATHER

After a day or two of rest, and when I'm sure this isn't infected...

Dimitri frowns and looks worried.

DIMITRI

But is important -- in letter, she say she marries...

VINCENT

She has married someone else?

ON DIMITRI

shakes his head, then with an edge of desperation.

DIMITRI

But she is thinking...soon...
Yes.

INT/EXT - TUNNEL - PARK GATE - NIGHT

Vincent glances at Catherine as they stop at the gate but she is deeply preoccupied.

VINCENT

You have said nothing for a very long way...

CATHERINE

I was wondering what it would be like to have to leave one's country...

VINCENT

Very difficult, I think... No matter which country -- it is still home...

CATHERINE

(long beat, then...)

...he must love her very much.

(beat)

I hope I can find her, Vincent..

INT - TUNNEL - DAY LATER

Father carries his DOCTOR'S BAG, stopping for a moment as he hears childish screams, then lots of laughter and giggles. Puzzled, he strides to the doorway to find:

INT - GUEST CHAMBER

Dimitri is still in bed, the center of attention of a CLUTTER OF KIDS -- including ERIC, age 10, all big eyes and glasses -- who are all over the bed. ELLIE, Eric's big sister, a precocious 13 -- too old to romp on the bed -- stands watching Dimitri with something more than fascination

DIMITRI

...was big, big shark -- what you say -- liking to eat me up.

Dimitri does a good shark imitation -- all teeth and growling. A couple of the kids shriek; then spotting Father, and knowing his bark is worse than his bite, create a mass exodus...except for Ellie. Father glances at her, finding it a bit strange that she stays, then ignores her.

DIMITRI

But I ask them to come... Is not permitted?

FATHER

...hardly my idea of bedrest but...

Father puts the doctor's bag on the bed and goes to examine the bandage on Dimitri's arm, not noticing that Ellie comes around behind him to watch.

FATHER

Let's take a look...

He removes the bandage, then turns to the doctor's bag, a little surprised to find Ellie right behind him.

ELLIE

Can I help?

FATHER

Help...?

(beat)

I suppose there's no reason why not...

Still puzzled by her behavior, he hands her a roll of adhesive tape and turns to re-dress Dimitri's arm. Dimitri smiles at Ellie; then a beat later is entirely caught up in Father's conversation.

FATHER

You play chess by any chance?

DIMITRI

You think because I am Russian -- yes?

(laughs dangerously)

And you?

FATHER

Oh, I play a little...

Father holds out his hand for the tape but Ellie doesn't notice. He turns to find out why.

ON ELLIE

eyes riveted on Dimitri and, we suddenly realize, totally lost in her first real love... Then abruptly aware that they are both looking at her; looks stricken, and forgetting the tape in her hands, runs from the chamber. Puzzled, Father looks off after her a beat...

FATHER

...one minute she wants to help and the next..

(turning back)

I happen to have a chess board in my chamber... When you're feeling up to it, of course...

INT - DA'S OFFICE - CATHERINE'S DESK - NIGHT

After-hours, the office empty except for CATHERINE who pours over the files from a court case, looking up as:

JOE MAXWELL'S VOICE

I know what you're up to, Cathy...

Joe Maxwell, on his way out after a long day himself, stops to kid her.

JOE MAXWELL

...work late a few nights, win a couple of cases and you end up with my job -- right?

RITA ESCOBAR, Latina, Catherine's age, the newest attorney in the office, charges up, then awkwardly:

RITA ESCOBAR

Uh, hi, Mr. Maxwell...

JOE MAXWELL

And I see, you've talked the newest attorney in the office into joining the plot...

(to Rita)

Well, it won't work, Miss Escobar... Good night.

Rita stares off after him, puzzled. Catherine laughs.

CATHERINE

Good night, Joe.

(back to Rita)

Did you find anything, Rita?

RITA ESCOBAR

Well, first I tried Social Services and Hospitals like you said... Nothing... I even checked traffic tickets...

CATHERINE

And schools...?

RITA ESCOBAR

How'd you know?!

Catherine breaks into a surprised grin.

CATHERINE

You found her?!

RITA ESCOBAR

(a pleased grin herself)

Anna Makovah enrolled in an adult English class at Abraham Lincoln High School at the beginning of the school year!

CATHERINE
Her address...?

RITA ESCOBAR
(frowns)
...wasn't listed for some reason.

Catherine frowns worriedly then pleased with herself at the possibility that:

CATHERINE
...but if she's still taking the
class...

INT - FATHERS CHAMBER

Father and Dimitri play chess and probably have been for hours, both studying the game on the board with intensity.

DIMITRI
Is democracy -- glasnost here,
yes...?

FATHER
If you mean, an open, free
society, yes...

Dimitri grins happily, then with mock concern.

DIMITRI
Is not problem... I do something...
you not liking...?

FATHER
Well... As long as it harms no
one...
(beat, curiously)
For instance...?

DIMITRI
(woefully)
Is Checkmate again.

Dimitri makes the move.

FATHER
(sputtering)
What...? How...? But...?

Then Father gets the joke and they both laugh.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - GUEST CHAMBER - (later)

Candlelight adds to the magic. Children, including ERIC, in bed-clothes, sprawl all over Dimitri's bed -- ELLIE standing behind them, watches Dimitri doe-eyed.

DIMITRI'S VOICE

We look everyplace, search whole ship! Remember is middle of ocean! But is no peoples on ship.. .

ERIC

Where'd they all go?

ON DIMITRI

He shrugs and throws up his hands.

IN DOORWAY -- VINCENT

watching Dimitri with an amused look on his face, then turning as he notices:

DIMITRI'S VOICE

Is plates on table, cooking in kitchen, even is radio playing...

POV - ELLIE

Watching Dimitri, very obviously in love.

DIMITRI'S VOICE

Ah! Is very strange, yes?!

AS BEFORE - VINCENT

Smiling in response, then turning as MOUSE RUNS UP, hands him the note and goes off. Whatever the note says, Vincent seems pleased and hurries off himself.

DIMITRI'S VOICE

Is -- how you say...
(quavering ghost voice)
Wooo^{ooo} oooo...

BACK TO SCENE

ERIC looks dubious.

ERIC

The people were ghosts?

DIMITRI

No! Whole ship was ghost!
Woooo^{ooooo} oooo...

Eric shudders.

INT - FATHER'S CHAMBER

Father sits at the chess board, still trying to figure the game out, not even looking up as Vincent comes in.

FATHER
I suppose he has the children
spellbound with another one of his
absolutely preposterous stories...

VINCENT
Ghost ships this time...
(beat)
They will miss him...

Father looks up abruptly, knowing it means:

FATHER
You've heard from Catherine...

VINCENT
She thinks Anna is taking a night
class at a high school in Brooklyn...

FATHER
(disappointed)
He'll be leaving soon then...

Father turns back to the board, clearly upset at the prospect.

VINCENT
(understanding)
I too will miss him.

BACK TO SCENE - GUEST CHAMBER

Dimitri lowers his voice dramatically, the children glued to every word.

DIMITRI
I prove it was ghost ship! I see ship
with my eyes but...

He is abruptly doubled up with a stomach cramp.

ON ELLIE

instantly concerned.

DIMITRI'S VOICE
... in radar room is nothing...

AS BEFORE

It is clear that Dimitri is in too much pain to go on.

DIMITRI
Tomorrow...I finish story...

Eric groans with the rest of the children but Ellie starts to hurry them from the room, keeping a very worried eye on Dimitri.

ELLIE
It's way past your bedtimes
anyway... Especially yours,
Eric. Come on...

INT - TUNNEL OUTSIDE GUEST CHAMBER

Ellie pushes a reluctant Eric out, her real concern clearly back inside the chamber.

ERIC
How come you get to tell me what to
do all the time...?

ELLIE
Because I'm your sister, that's
why. Now go!

Eric makes a face at her but goes off and she turns back worriedly to:

BACK TO SCENE - GUEST CHAMBER

Dimitri is still clutching his stomach as Ellie steps back in.

ELLIE
I'll get Father.

She turns to go but Dimitri forces himself to straighten up, sounding almost normal.

DIMITRI
No... Please... Is nothing...

She turns back, eyes full of love, wanting to believe. Dimitri only sees compassion.

DIMITRI
You are very -- how you say it --
beautiful...?

She takes a step toward him, staring into his eyes, glowing, lost in her innocent love.

DIMITRI

Yes... Beautiful child, with even
more beautiful heart...

She is shattered, her lip quivers. It is not the way she wanted him to see her. Then she bursts into tears and runs from the chamber.

ON DIMITRI

His forehead beading with sweat, not understanding.

DIMITRI

But I only mean...

He clutches his stomach again, Ellie forgotten in his pain, then it seems to ease and he straightens up, still leaning against the wall, weak, feverish, and, we suspect, more ill than he is willing to reveal.

FADE OUT

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT - FATHERS CHAMBER

Father, Vincent and Dimitri say goodbye next to the chess board -- a game in progress abandoned. They have found Dimitri new clothes and a small bag and he looks like any other blue collar American. He glances at the chess board.

DIMITRI

We leave game unfinished...

FATHER

Which means you'll have to come back to finish it sometime...

Dimitri nods, understanding, then seems to have a moment of pain again, and he turns away so they won't notice.

FATHER

Something wrong?

DIMITRI

(covering)

Is Russian to be like baby to say goodbye...

Father sounds gruffer and more abrupt than he means to.

FATHER

Yes... Well... Vincent... will take you to the gate and I've written some directions... The rooming house is owned by a friend -- as soon as Catherine finds Anna she'll contact you there...

Father suddenly doesn't trust his voice and just hands Dimitri the folded piece of paper. Dimitri throws his arms around Father, the two men hugging for a beat before Dimitri pulls away and gestures to the board.

DIMITRI

Don't forget... Is your move...
(in RUSSIAN)
Goodbye, dear friend.

Dimitri turns and hurries from the chamber. Vincent hesitates a beat, watching Father, then goes off after Dimitri.

ON FATHER

He turns to the chess board, slowly realizing the move, brightening for just a moment as he makes it.

FATHER

Check!

But having captured the piece in his hand, Father sits down heavily, the small victory lost because:

REVERSE - THE CHAIR

on the opposite side of the board is empty.

INT - OLD STORAGE TUNNEL - TRACKING

We GO WITH Dimitri and Vincent as they walk through the abandoned artifacts toward the surface. Vincent a step ahead, does not notice that Dimitri seems to have periodic twinges of reoccurring pain.

DIMITRI

Is difficult...leaving part of heart behind...you understand?

VINCENT

Yes... You leave with a part of mine as well.

DIMITRI

Is you, Vincent...understanding best of all... Why I must come for Anna, yes?

VINCENT

Yes... One moves toward love or away from it.

DIMITRI

(nods and smiles)

Is small part of you Russian, I think...

INT/EXT - TUNNEL GATE - DAY

Vincent steps up to the gate and unlocks it, daylight visible at the end of the tunnel past it.

VINCENT

We will miss you, Dimitri...

He turns back, abruptly alarmed.

VINCENT

What is it?!

A FEW STEPS BEHIND - DIMITRI

his face beaded with sweat, clutching his stomach, obviously in pain.

DIMITRI

Is nothing ...

He makes it to the gate, but suddenly wracked with chills, has to grab it to keep from falling, taking one last longing look at:

POV - THE DAYLIGHT

daylight streaming from the entrance. So close -- so far away.

CLOSE - DIMITRI

His face covered with fever sweat, the chills hitting him again -- painfully clear he can not go on.

DIMITRI

(hollowly)

Is nothing...

INT - HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - NIGHT

A male TEACHER erases the sentence: "I pare a pair of pears." from the blackboard.

TEACHER

Hasn't been to class in over a month. I don't know why...

ON CATHERINE

Now worried.

CATHERINE

Do you know where she lives?

The teacher walks to the desk and an open brief case, starting to put away his papers.

TEACHER

I have her address when she enrolled... But if she's moved...
(shakes his head)

CATHERINE
(beat, hopefully)
Maybe someone at the old address
will know where...

He takes out a list from the brief case and copies down
Anna's address on a scrap of paper.

TEACHER
Worth a try...but I wouldn't count on
getting a lot of answers, especially
from the newer Russians -- not all that
surprising when you consider where
they came from...

He hands her the address.

TEACHER
I mean, for all they know you're KGB.

INT - HOSPITAL CHAMBER

Dimitri lays on a WW II cot, in a pool of light created by a lamp
and candles, the rest of the large chamber empty and dancing with
shadows. He looks weak and ill but smiles as Vincent walks up.

DIMITRI
Is, Vincent, my friend...

VINCENT
How are you feeling?

DIMITRI
Sometimes not so good...but...
(shrugs)
Is big country America...?

VINCENT
Yes...

DIMITRI
Maybe sometime we go -- how you say
-- to looking at everything, yes?

Vincent hesitates, then wounded at the thought, shakes his head
sadly.

VINCENT
It will never be possible for
me...

Dimitri looks at Vincent a long beat, hurting for him; then, seeing no self pity at all, gets a mischievous glint in his eye...

VINCENT

In my country is same...

(a wry smile)

But there...is not possible for everyone...

(beat)

Is Russian story about man and bear on train. Police come -- look at documents -- is something wrong -- man is arrested but bear is not. The man say but is bear and you let stay on train!? Bear say, you think is big problems for you? I have been on stupid train for five years!

Dimitri looks up and laughs because:

ON VINCENT

In his own way, laughing too; but knowing it was also meant to take some of the sting out of the reality.

INT - FATHERS LAB

Father prepares the glass slides for the microscope, glancing up as Vincent comes in.

VINCENT

Do you know what he has yet?

FATHER

(shakes his head)

But whatever it is I suspect he's had it for several days already...

Father focuses the microscope on the slide and whatever he sees makes his blood run cold.

FATHER

(icy, fearful)

Dear God...

Vincent instantly knows there's something very wrong.

VINCENT

It's something serious...?

FATHER
 At least, a serious suspicion...
 (beat)
 ...yes.

EXT - BRIGHTON BEACH APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Catherine gets out of her car, stopping for a moment to look across the street.

The apartment building is an older multi-story brick building with a fire escape on the front. SOUNDS of MOTHER RUSSIA drift out from inside.

INT - BRIGHTON BEACH APARTMENT BUILDING

Catherine looks up the stairway, then turns to a first floor apartment door and knocks, the door is finally opened by an older RUSSIAN WOMAN who peers out at her suspiciously.

CATHERINE
 Maybe you could help me... I'm
 looking for someone who used to
 live here... Anna Makovah.

ON RUSSIAN WOMAN

A beat then:

RUSSIAN WOMAN
 You are from police...?

CATHERINE
 No... I'm...

RUSSIAN WOMAN
 (in RUSSIAN)
 I know nothing...

She closes the door in Catherine's face.

CLIMBING THE STAIRS - ON CATHERINE

as she stops on the third floor landing, looking around, then shrugging, goes to the first door, APARTMENT 3A, and knocks.

ON RUSSIAN MAN

as the door opens. He's late 40's and suspicious.

CATHERINE
 I -- my name is Catherine Chandler --
 please, don't shut the door...

The Russian Man was about to do just that but hesitates now.

CATHERINE

I'm trying to find someone who used
to live here. Do you speak English?

RUSSIAN MAN

A little...

Catherine smiles in relief, then glances past him at:

PAST THE RUSSIAN MAN - A RUSSIAN WOMAN

In her 40's .. more than likely a seamstress; a measuring tape
around her neck, pins stuck in an apron, scissors in the pocket
-- steps into the room in the BG and watches her suspiciously.

AS BEFORE - CATHERINE

CATHERINE

...her name was Anna Makovah -- I was
hoping you'd know where she moved...

ON RUSSIAN MAN

He doesn't even blink at the name, only shakes his head.

CATHERINE

But she lived in this building,
someone must have known her.

The man again shrugs and opens his hands -- who knows.
Catherine realizes she is striking out fast.

CATHERINE

Look, I realize I'm asking a lot of
questions but...

(beat, one more try)

Maybe you could ask some of the other
tenants...?

Catherine takes out one of her business cards.

CATHERINE

If anyone remembers her would you
call me at that number -- please...?

The Russian Man takes the card.

CATHERINE

And if anyone does know where she is
-- ask them tell her that Dimitri
Vashinsky is looking for her...?

Again all she gets is a blank stare in response.

CATHERINE

(giving up)
Thank you anyway...

Catherine goes off, not noticing that the second she's gone, the Russian Woman's hand flies to her mouth in alarm as she rushes off into the other room, the Russian Man already turning to look after her worriedly as he shuts the door.

EXT - BRIGHTON BEACH APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Catherine steps out of the building into the sunlight, frustrated, hesitating a beat before crossing the street to her car, then unlocks it, turning for one last look at the building, something on the fire escape above catching her eye.

Just a quick cut. It's ANNA; but from this distance, just a GIRL IN A STILL UNFINISHED WEDDING DRESS standing on the third floor fire escape watching her.

Catherine turns back to the car, then questioning what she just saw, turns back for a second look.

Another quick cut, the fire escape empty now... Anna gone.

Catherine stares up at the fire escape for a long beat, questioning that she saw anything, then climbing into the car, again looks up at the fire escape before driving off.

INT - VINCENT'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

It's late, Vincent still up, reading a book in the lantern light.

ELLIE'S VOICE

Vincent, please...

He puts down the book, something in her voice alarming him.

VINCENT

Ellie...?

ON ELLIE

holding the lantern so the light is on Vincent as he hurries to her.

ELLIE

Father's not in his chamber and two
of the children are sick...

Vincent takes the lantern from her.

VINCENT

Come...

INT - TUNNELS - NIGHT

Vincent holds up the lantern, lighting the way as they hurry
through the tunnels.

VINCENT

When did it start?

ELLIE

An hour ago...
(a small moan)

Ellie stops, holding her own stomach. Vincent turns back to her,
Ellie abruptly pretending to all right...

VINCENT

You too...?

ELLIE

No... Not me, I'm fine.

Vincent hesitates, then they turn into another dark tunnel, the
light disappearing with them.

INT - HOSPITAL CHAMBER - (later)

Vincent hurries into the chamber with the lantern, stopping,
puzzled as he sees:

VINCENT

Father...?

ACROSS THE LARGE CHAMBER - FATHER

sits by a WW II cot, holding Dimitri's hand.

AS BEFORE - VINCENT

Vincent seems puzzled at the lack of response.

VINCENT

Two of the children are quite
ill...

FATHER

Yes...

Vincent finds the response puzzling.

VINCENT
They need your attention.

FATHER
Yes, I know...

Finding Father's behavior very strange, Vincent moves across the chamber toward him.

VINCENT
Dimitri... Is he worse?

Father pries Dimitri's fingers from his own, then lays Dimitri's hand on his unbreathing chest. Vincent stares down at Dimitri, shaking his head in stunned disbelief.

VINCENT
(finally)
But when...?

FATHER
A few minutes ago...
(distantly)
...and I fear, just the beginning.

VINCENT
(beat, then fearfully)
The children are sick from the same thing that killed Dimitri...

FATHER
Yes...
(beat)
...we desperately need vaccine and medical supplies, Vincent...

VINCENT
Tell me...

FATHER
Cholera...
(beat)
Untreated, it can kill sixty percent...
(beat)
Here... God help us all.

FADE OUT

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT - FATHER'S CHAMBER

We move across the tense, worried faces that crowd Father's chamber, many unknown, but dotted among them the familiar faces of MARY, MOUSE, JAMIE, KIPPER, and ERIC & ELLIE, all listening with great concern to Father. Only Vincent is missing. These are clearly frightened people but there is also a strength and resolve on their faces.

FATHER

...anyone showing any of those symptoms must be taken to the hospital chamber immediately -- time is very important.

MARY

Have we all been exposed?

FATHER

I think we have to assume that... But I've requested vaccine that should protect most of us...

A WORRIED MAN pushes through toward Father.

WORRIED MAN

But you said yourself we need an almost impossible amount of medical supplies...

FATHER

Our friends above have never let us down before...

WORRIED MAN

That's true...

(beat)

You'll be needing help getting the supplies through the tunnels -- count me in.

Several others nod and add "Me too".

MARY

I have some experience with vaccinations, Father.

Father nods his gratitude.

JAMIE

I'd like to help, Father?

FATHER

All right -- tell Pascal to send a message on the pipes .. everyone must assemble here to be vaccinated...

She nods, then hurries off to tell Pascal.

KIPPER

And me...?

MOUSE

Me too...

Father hesitates, it's not like Mouse to volunteer, then...

FATHER

We'll need all of you!

(back to the room)

I know you're frightened. Some of you already have loved ones who are ill. I won't minimize the seriousness of the disease, but I assure you that those who are sick will...

ERIC'S VOICE

(fearful, interrupting)

Are they gonna die?

ON ERIC & ELLIE - FEATURE ERIC

They hold hands tightly but it's hard to tell which one of them is more afraid of being separated. Ellie is feverish, sweat beads on her forehead.

ELLIE

(chiding)

Shhhhh! Father's talking...

INCLUDE FATHER

Father turns to Eric, also noticing Ellie's condition with increasing concern, his explanation to Eric, setting up what is about to happen. Ellie understanding long before Eric catches on.

FATHER

It's all right, Ellie...

(beat)

Eric... Some of us are going to get sick -- some of us already are... And they have to be taken to the hospital and put in quarantine.

ERIC
What's quarantine?

Father reaches out to put his hand on Ellie's forehead.

FATHER
It's to keep sick people from
infecting...
(abrupt concern)
How long have you had the fever,
Ellie...?

Ellie shakes her head, denying it.

ELLIE
No... I'm not sick!

FATHER
(pleading)
Ellie, you know you are...

Ellie pulls away, shaking her head in denial, Eric desperately hanging onto her hand. Mary now moves toward the children -- also knowing what is going to happen.

FATHER
...and so will Eric be if you
don't come now.

Eric begins to catch on.

ERIC
(fearfully)
Ellie?!

Ellie makes the bravest decision of her life.

ERIC
Ellie, where we gonna go?!

ELLIE
Just me, Eric... It's going to be
okay... It's just until I get well.

He hangs onto her desperately.

ERIC
No!

Ellie pulls her hand away from him, Mary moving to put her arm around Eric, both to comfort and hold him back.

ELLIE

You've got to stay here, Eric...
(beat, trying desperately
to sound as if she does)
I mean it!

Father takes her hand.

FATHER

We'll take very good care of her,
Eric... I promise...

They start off.

ON ERIC & MARY

She wraps her arms tightly around him but he's betrayed and angry.

ERIC

No... You won't come back!
(frantic, accusing)
You won't! You won't!

He tears himself from Mary's arms and runs after Ellie.

MARY

Eric! Come back!

Mary goes off after him.

INT - TUNNEL OUTSIDE FATHER'S CHAMBER

Father and Ellie have already disappeared but Eric stands in the empty tunnel, his angry voice echoing after them.

ERIC

You promised! You said you'd never
leave me again! Ever!

Mary comes up behind him, carefully stopping a few feet away.

MARY

She doesn't want you to get sick,
Eric...

ERIC

I don't care!

MARY

Ellie does... She loves you very very
much, Eric... The same way you love
her...

ERIC

I don't! I don't!
(just the opposite but)
I hate her!

EXT - CITY STREET INTERSECTION - DAY

BENNY rides his 10 speed, ducking through slowing traffic as the light ahead turns red. He brakes the bike hard, waiting until PEDESTRIANS start across before suddenly riding hard toward them, CATHERINE one of those crossing. Spotting the bike coming right at them, several pedestrians recoil and scramble in fear; but somehow, Benny rides right through them, ducking into the cross traffic, leaving angry pedestrians shaking their fists after him and CATHERINE WITH A NOTE IN HER HAND.

INT - HOSPITAL CHAMBER

Ellie lays on the WW II cot. Father takes her pulse, then tenderly brushes the damp hair from her beaded forehead.

FATHER

Remember, lots of water...
I'll be back...

She manages a wan smile.

ON FATHER

increasingly worried as he turns to look at the chamber -- now beginning to look like a WW II war surplus warehouse with several rows of cots, a dozen or so already occupied, Vincent giving someone a drink of water, then coming to meet Father

FATHER

Have our friends above been notified
that they're not to come below under
any circumstances...?

VINCENT

Yes...

FATHER

(beat, trying to sound
optimistic)
Well, if the vaccine arrives
soon there may not be too many
more.

But Father doesn't sound convincing, even to himself.

FATHER

The truth, Vincent, is...
(beat) ...

I don't know.

(beat)

In fact it may strike us all down
before it's finished.

INT - BASEMENT PARKING GARAGE - THE ELEVATOR OPENS

Catherine steps out, looking around.

POV - EMPTY PARKING AREA

The floor is eerie, empty, not a car!

AS BEFORE - CATHERINE

She worriedly pulls the note Benny handed her from her pocket and glances at it. Obviously it's the right place but... She walks off into the empty parking area, looking around, her footsteps echoing... then hearing a vehicle approaching, steps back apprehensively behind a support pillar, just in case it isn't the person she's supposed to meet.

AN ALMOST SINISTER DARK VAN

screeches down the ramp and onto the empty floor, going past Catherine before screeching to a stop. The driver obviously not seeing her behind the pillar.

ON CATHERINE

stepping from behind the pillar, watching the van a beat, the driver still unseen. She takes a few steps toward the van, then stops warily.

There's no response from the van at all.

She takes another few steps. Still no response. She takes a deep breath and walks toward it, almost getting to the side when she HEARS THE VAN DOOR OPEN on the opposite side.

She freezes.

SHOOTING UNDER THE VAN - A MAN'S FEET

step out of the van, stand there a moment, then walk toward the back on the opposite side of the van.

ON CATHERINE

forcing herself to move the same direction, toward the back of the van.

ON VAN CORNER - THEN "DR. PETER" HARRINGTON

steps around the corner and spotting her, woofs in fright and clutches his heart.

CATHERINE

Doctor Peter!

DOCTOR PETER

Cathy! What -- what on earth are you doing here?!

(beat)

You... ?

CATHERINE

(nods)

The message only said to meet someone...

I didn't know it would be you either...

DOCTOR PETER

We'll talk... there isn't time now...

"Doctor Peter" opens the back door of the van revealing an INTERIOR LOADED WITH SMALL CARDBOARD CASES; unaware, as he explains, that Catherine looks increasingly mystified...

DOCTOR PETER

Obviously getting everything in one place would have attracted too much attention... I brought what I could -- I'll get the rest as soon as I can...

CATHERINE

But... What is all this?

DOCTOR PETER

IV's, antibiotics, vaccine...

CATHERINE

I -- I don't understand...

He turns to her curiously; then seeing the stricken look on her face, realizes she doesn't know.

DOCTOR PETER

Cathy... I just assumed... You don't know do you?

CATHERINE

(very fearful)

No... .

DOCTOR PETER

There' s a Cholera epidemic below, everything quarantined!

She shakes her head, in a fog, not wanting to believe it, barely listening to him...

DOCTOR PETER

I know you had a cholera shot before you went to Africa but it's been too long... Just deliver the supplies and whatever you do, do not come in contact with anyone!

He hands her the van keys

DOCTOR PETER

Go... They need it now, Cathy!

INT - OLD FREIGHT ELEVATOR/DESERTED WAREHOUSE

The elevator moves up, suddenly stopping. MOUSE frantically tries to find the problem by 'hot wiring' what was once the control panel creating more arcs and sparks than anything else. Vincent peers over his shoulder worriedly.

VINCENT

Can you fix it?

MOUSE

Was working -- work again.

Mouse hits the right wire, the elevator jumps. He tries it again, this time the elevator rises, stopping at the freight door, Vincent throwing it open to REVEAL: CATHERINE WAITING, the VAN NOW PARKED IN A DESERTED WAREHOUSE behind her. She starts toward him but he steps back.

VINCENT

You mustn't come any closer
Catherine!

Catherine

I have to, Vincent... Besides I
know I can help...

She moves toward him determinedly. He shakes his head, about to forbid it but she reaches out and lovingly touches his lips with the tips of her fingers to silence him... Realizing she will come no matter what, he tears himself away and hurries to the back of the van and PULLS TO OPEN THE DOORS:

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

INT - TUNNEL OUTSIDE HOSPITAL CHAMBER

FATHER THROWS OPEN THE DOORS, finding Vincent with a case of IV's...

FATHER

Thank God...!

...and to his dismay, Catherine.

FATHER

Catherine! Do you have any idea of
the risk...?

CATHERINE

Yes...

Father is moved, grateful, close to tears.

FATHER

You continue to amaze me, dear
Catherine...

Father turns inside.

FATHER

Come...

INT - HOSPITAL CHAMBER

Catherine steps into the chamber, frozen in horror at her first
sight of:

POV - THE HOSPITAL CHAMBER

Epic epidemic -- deep shadows created by candle and lantern light
-- only a few empty cots left and row after row of desperately
ill people, the chamber filled with soft moans and cries, and the
ECHO of FRANTIC MESSAGES being sent ON THE PIPES.

ELLIE'S VOICE

Water...

ON CATHERINE & FATHER

Realizing Catherine is overwhelmed, Father turns back to her.

FATHER

There was no way to prepare you...

(beat)

...and, I'm afraid, something else
you're not prepared for...

(beat)

Dimitri...died, Catherine... He may
have already been ill when he came...
But with my rusty diagnostic skills
and...

Catherine shuts her eyes -- one shock too many -- then opens them,
fighting tears.

CATHERINE
He brought the Cholera...

FATHER
Yes, but unknowingly...

Catherine fights tears a beat longer, then pulls herself together.

CATHERINE
...tell me what to do.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - FATHER'S CHAMBER

A long line of people [we saw most of them in the meeting here with Father] moves slowly toward:

ON FATHER AND MARY

Mary hands Father a loaded hypodermic. He turns to the next in line.

KIPPER tries to look brave but winces as Father injects him (O.C.), then moves on, Father motioning to the next in line.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - HOSPITAL CHAMBER

Tight on Ellie -- worse -- pale and very frail, dehydrated, her now desperately big eyes silently pleading. The PIPE MESSAGES continue.

CATHERINE'S VOICE
Would you like more water?

Ellie can only blink and nod faintly.

ON CATHERINE

bending down to give Ellie the water, her heart breaking as she lifts Ellie's head so she can sip from a paper cup.

CATHERINE
A little more... That's it...

ON CATHERINE & ELLIE

ELLIE
(very faint)
...Eric?

CATHERINE

He's not here so he hasn't gotten sick.
He must be all right.

There is a tiny smile from Ellie. Catherine picks up a wet cloth and begins to gently mop Ellie's face.

CATHERINE

(singing softly)

Sleep my pretty one, rest now my pretty
one...[or some such thing]

ON - VINCENT

moving down a row of cots, then hearing Catherine sing, stops a moment to look off at her -- never has he loved her more -- then crosses to the chamber doors turning back to look at her once more.

CATHERINE'S VOICE

Close your eyes, the day is nearly
done.
Rest your head, tomorrow will
surely come...

Vincent goes out.

INT - TUNNEL OUTSIDE HOSPITAL CHAMBER

The GROUP WAITING outside for news of loved ones, freezes apprehensively, abruptly silent, every head turning to:

ON VINCENT

VINCENT

I'm afraid there's been little
change...

Vincent's eyes go to:

ON ERIC

Still half hidden in the tunnel, looking both guilty and very fearful, then stepping out.

ERIC

I gotta see Ellie...

VINCENT

I 'm sorry, Eric...

ERIC

But I gotta tell her something!

VINCENT

Is it something I can tell her?

Eric opens his mouth several times, obviously he does have something he desperately wants to say; but then shakes his head, very close to tears, refusing to share it.

Vincent hesitates a beat, then disappears back inside.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - OLD FREIGHT ELEVATOR/TUNNEL

The freight doors open, revealing MOUSE inside with another load of supplies. He grabs the first carton, handing it to the WORRIED MAN, then grabbing a second, hands it to KIPPER, the two boys exchanging a wan smile of satisfaction before Kipper goes off and Mouse turns for the next case, handing it to JAMIE.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - HOSPITAL CHAMBER

Some hours later, candles now burning low.

ON FATHER & CATHERINE

Both exhausted, but moving down a line of cots, Catherine professionally handing Father a new IV bottle, Father changing it, then moving to the next cot, bending down with a smile and a word of comfort. There is a sharp cry and Catherine whirls, trying to find it...

FATHER

It's Ellie... Perhaps you better see what she needs...

Catherine nods and goes off.

CLOSE - ELLIE

crying out again, more in fright than pain, and she seems very ill now...

RUSHING UP - CATHERINE

She frantically drops to her knees over the child.

CATHERINE

What is it, Ellie?!

Ellie slowly seems to recognize Catherine but her voice comes from far far away.

ELLIE
Catherine...? Catherine...

Ellie even manages a tiny smile.

CATHERINE
What is it...?

For a moment there's a radiance about her.

ELLIE
He -- he said... I was...
beautiful...

Ellie's life slips away, the smile freezing on her face.
Catherine at first refuses to believe it.

CATHERINE
No... No...
(calling off frantically)
Father?!

Catherine desperately pulls the child tightly to her as if simply holding her will bring her back, then in cry of grief, suddenly looks up as:

CATHERINE
She can't be! She can't!

ANGLE UP ON FATHER

Looking down at Ellie in stunned disbelief for only an instant, then a man possessed.

FATHER
Move... Move!

He drops over the child, heels of his hands over her heart, but before his first thrust of closed heart massage we begin to MOVE INTO HIS FACE which tells us long before he stops that he has already lost...and then he finally does stop.

REACTION - CATHERINE

as Vincent rushes up beside her, as horrified as she is at what he sees.

CLOSE - FATHER

We can tell from his grief stricken face that something has broken inside of him as well.

FATHER
Dear God... I've let her die...

FADE OUT:

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT - HOSPITAL CHAMBER - (later)

The chamber is brighter now, and we sense that the worst of the crisis is over. Catherine moves through the rows of cots, stopping to check an IV, give an encouraging word or a drink of water, finally stopping at a cot, smiling down at the WOMAN on the cot.

CATHERINE

You're better...

The WOMAN nods and smiles, then reaching out, squeezes Catherine's hand gratefully.

CATHERINE

...Father says the worst is over.

She turns, losing her smile as she sees:

POV - FATHER

stopping to replace an IV, then just standing there as if he's forgotten where he is or why.

ON VINCENT

watching Father, then going to him.

VINCENT

You can not go on like this...

(beat)

You must get some rest...

Father seems not to hear Vincent -- disconsolate -- but does turn as Mary calls to him.

MARY'S VOICE

Father...?

ON MARY

just inside the chamber door, coming to them.

MARY

It's Eric... He's still out there... He won't leave... He says he must talk to Ellie...

Father turns away, unable to face her. Mary turns to Vincent, the look on his face telling her as well.

MARY
No... Not Ellie...

Her eyes well with tears and it takes her a long beat before she can say anything.

MARY
Some -- someone has to tell
him...

Father's face is torn with grief.

FATHER
I can't... I know it's my place
but I can't...
(beat)
I'll be in my chamber...

He hurries toward the chamber door.

INT - TUNNEL OUTSIDE HOSPITAL CHAMBER

Eric turns like a shot, his eyes pleading for news.

ON FATHER

frozen for a long beat, just staring back at Eric, then unable to face the questioning eyes, hurries off into the tunnel.

ON ERIC

Looking off after Father a long beat then turning back to the door as:

ON VINCENT

as he steps out.

AS BEFORE - ON ERIC

His eyes search Vincent's face as Vincent walks to him.

VINCENT
Eric...

Eric just blinks.

VINCENT
Eric... Ellie won't be coming
back...

It's enough and somehow Eric not only knows why -- he's suddenly violent with fear and grief, attacking Vincent with hammering fists, his voice a screech.

ERIC
Liar! Liar! Liar! Liar!

Eric runs off into the tunnel screaming, Vincent hesitating, then hurrying after him.

INT - TUNNEL

Vincent hurries through the tunnel, meeting up with JAMIE.

VINCENT
(urgently)
Have you seen Eric...?

JAMIE
No... What's wrong, Vincent...

VINCENT
(hesitates)
Ellie died, Jamie...

JAMIE
Oh, my god...
(beat)
And he knows...

Vincent just nods.

JAMIE
I'll get everyone... We'll start
searching...

INT - FATHER'S CHAMBER

Vincent hurries in.

VINCENT
Father...!?

Finding the room empty he turns and hurries out.

INT - CHAMBER OF THE WINDS

Vincent fights through the wind, finally finding:

ON FATHER

standing so that the shrieking wind tears at him, then seeing Vincent.

FATHER
(anguished cry)
I failed her, Vincent...
(beat)
How I could I let a beautiful
child like that die...?

VINCENT
But you did everything
you could.

FATHER
And none of it mattered!

VINCENT
Isn't there any forgiveness in you for
being human...?

Father just looks at Vincent, unsure, the wind tearing at him.

FATHER
She was the last family he had in
this world!

VINCENT
No... He has us...
(beat)
But he's lost in his grief and fear
and when he needs us most, I can't
find him...

FATHER
He's gone?

Vincent nods...

FATHER
Dear God...

Father now concerned, fights his way though the wind to
Vincent.

FATHER
Did you try the old storage tunnel?

Vincent shakes his head.

FATHER
Ellie once told me she and Eric had
secret place with furniture, just
like a real house... It's the only
place...

VINCENT
I'll go see...

Vincent starts to turn but Father stops him.

FATHER

No... I'll go...

INT - OLD STORAGE TUNNEL

Father winds his way through the old artifacts, then finds it: Eric and Ellie have obviously tried to make a room using an old carpet, an old sofa, two chairs and a huge old wardrobe cabinet, candle or lantern light coming from inside, a sneakered foot visible in the slightly ajar door.

FATHER

It's -- it's Father, Eric...

INSIDE THE WARDROBE

Eric looks up from the ruled school tablet he's been writing on in his lap but won't answer.

FATHER'S VOICE

May I come in?

ON FATHER

He doesn't violate the 'room'; instead sits on a an old chest on the perimeter.

FATHER

(self-absorbed guilt)

Eric, you have to understand -- all of this is my fault...

There's no response, just a SCRATCHING SOUND from inside the wardrobe. Father leans over, trying to see inside.

POV - THROUGH THE PARTIALLY OPEN DOOR - THE TABLET

Eric's hand holding a pencil, scribbling something on it.

FATHER'S VOICE

You're writing something...?

The hand stops scribbling.

ERIC'S VOICE

(finally)

A letter...

(beat)

... to Ellie...

AS BEFORE - FATHER

Father seems mystified.

FATHER

I don't think I understand...

ERIC'S VOICE

It's... to say I'm sorry.

(beat)

Because I said I hated her and it
wasn't true...

Soft sobs now come from inside the wardrobe and suddenly Father realizes that the child's pain is far greater than his own self-absorbed recrimination.

FATHER

Just -- just say that... She'll
understand...

ERIC'S VOICE

She won't be made at me...?

FATHER

No...

ERIC'S VOICE

But how am I going to send it to
her...?

The question puzzles Father for only a moment.

FATHER

I think I know a way...

(beat)

I'd like to write her a letter too,
Eric...

(beat)

Maybe you'd loan me a piece of
paper...?

ON WARDROBE

The door slowly opens...but we:

CUT TO:

INT - HOSPITAL CHAMBER

Catherine helps a man sit up, people obviously improving.

ERIC'S VOICE

Would you like to send a letter to
Ellie?

Catherine turns curiously to find Eric holding out a sheet of tablet paper. She turns to exchange a curious look with Vincent as he walks up, then turns back to Eric, still mystified but taking the sheet of paper.

CATHERINE

All right.

VINCENT

I'd like to send her a letter too --
if that's all right...

Eric tears another sheet from the tablet and hands it to Vincent, turning and starting out.

ERIC

(matter of fact)

You'll have to bring them with you to
the sky chamber.

Catherine and Vincent, blank tablet pages in their hands, look off after him curiously.

INT/EXT - NEW MATTE[?] - THE SKY CHAMBER - NIGHT

[NOTE: It can be any chamber, even an existing matte but it needs a very high ceiling and although not necessarily visible in the Master; it must have, at least in a cut, a SIX-FOOT PATCH OF STARS IN THE ROOF -- be it through a ventilation grate -- or whatever.]

Vincent and Catherine step into the chamber, a little surprised to find:

FATHER & ERIC

stand in the middle of the chamber, a SMALL BONFIRE flickering at their feet, smoke curling up toward the high ceiling. Behind them, Kipper, Mary, Jamie, Mouse, THE CHILDREN we saw romping on Dimitri's bed [and?]; all with folded sheets of paper in their hands. Eric runs to Catherine and taking her by the hand leads her and Vincent to the group around the fire.

ERIC

Okay, we're all here...

Father pokes at the fire and it flares up just a little.

FATHER

We're ready then...

ON FATHER, CATHERINE & VINCENT - FEATURE ERIC

Eric stares at the folded letter in his hand a long beat, then squats down and slowly pushes it into the flames, watching it catch fire, sending up a curl of smoke that he watches, following it with his eyes to the ceiling.

ERIC
(calling up)
I wanted you to read my letter first,
Ellie... So'd you know I'm sorry...

ANGLE UP - A SIX FOOT PATCH OF STARS

in the ceiling high above, just a wisp of smoke drifting up through the opening and into the night.

ERIC'S VOICE
...and that I miss you... An' that
I really do love you.

and "love you - love you - love you" echos in a whisper through the chamber.

BACK TO SCENE

They all move forward now, Father, Catherine, Vincent, then the others, starting to put their letters into the fire...

INSERT - THE LETTERS

As they're dropped or pushed into the flames, catching on fire, smoke curling up...and just before one letter is consumed, it curls open in the heat and we see the words: "I love you." and then it's gone.

ON ERIC

Head craned back, the patch of stars high above.

ERIC
Ellie, you better get Dimitri 'cause
he's got letters coming too!

INT - FATHERS CHAMBER - (later)

Catherine is reluctantly leaving, Father and Vincent as reluctant to say goodbye. A SUBWAY TRAIN rattles by overhead. Catherine glances up at the ceiling, the world above suddenly a reality again, then:

CATHERINE
If there's anything you need...

FATHER
Yes... Words to thank you.

CATHERINE
They're not necessary...

FATHER

Still you risked your life...

Catherine looks at Vincent with a wan smile.

CATHERINE

...hardly my reason for coming.

(beat, back to Father)

It was a beautiful thing you did for
Eric... For all of us... Thank
you...

FATHER

(sadly)

I shall miss them... Dear Ellie...

(beat)

Poor Dimitri...

He looks down at the chess board -- the game will now never be completed -- and chokes, unable to go on.

VINCENT

...so close to his dream of finding
Anna...and yet so far...

CATHERINE

(quietly)

I made him a promise...

(beat, sadly)

...and it will not be finished
until I keep it...

EXT - BRIGHTON BEACH APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Catherine crosses the street toward the building, then hearing the SOUND of a single VIOLIN -- the music Russian but happy -- stops to look up at:

POV - FIRE ESCAPE

Empty as it was the last time, but a curtain blowing in the open window, the music coming from inside.

INT - BRIGHTON BEACH APARTMENT BUILDING

Catherine climbs the stairs, the violin music getting louder as she reaches the third floor landing, turning like a magnet to Apartment 3A, walking to it, the music coming from inside. Catherine listens for a beat -- the music happy, making her smile for a moment -- then knocks.

THE RUSSIAN MAN

opens the door. He's wearing a Russian suit; and seeing who it is, freezes in alarm, as does the rest of the small FAMILY WEDDING PARTY INSIDE.

ON CATHERINE

Taking it all in -- almost in snapshots -- time almost suspended.

POV - VIOLIN PLAYER, SEAMSTRESS & RABBI

The Rabbi and Seamstress look at her curiously. The violin player, bow suspended in mid-air, and not knowing who she is, nods.

CLOSER - ON CATHERINE

Her eyes going to:

POV - ANNA & THE GROOM

Both of them frozen in the middle of their first married dance. Anna, beautiful in the wedding gown, her eyes pleading -- the GROOM, Russian, mid-20's, stiff in a suit, simply wondering who she is.

TIGHT - ON CATHERINE

It takes Catherine a long time, then her eyes drop for just an instant and we know she's made up her mind.

CATHERINE

I... I'm sorry to have bothered
you...

She turns and disappears from the doorway.

GOING DOWN THE STAIRS - CATHERINE

turns back just once:

POV - ANNA

now in the still open doorway, desperate questions written all over her face. Then she too makes a decision...and shuts the door.

ON CATHERINE

Still looking back, then turning TO CAM. She hesitates just a beat before GOING OFF down the stairs, the VIOLIN MUSIC coming from the closed door again...slowly, then picking up and soaring happily.

EXT - CATHERINE'S BALCONY - SUNSET

Catherine looks out over the city.

CATHERINE

Even if Dimitri hadn't died, I think he
would have found Anna too late...

She turns to Vincent.

VINCENT

Perhaps he knew that...even when he
first received her letter...

CATHERINE

Then why did he come?

VINCENT

He loved her... He had no other
choice...

CATHERINE

But if he already knew...

Vincent looks at her lovingly.

VINCENT

One either moves toward love or away
from it, Catherine... There is no
other direction...

She lovingly looks in his eyes a long beat, then moves toward
him as he moves toward her -- into each others arms.

FADE OUT

END