

Roots

by

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OVER BLACK: A piercing electronic whirl and the patter of rain.

MAN
(O.S.)
Strange.

WOMAN
(O.S.)
What?

MAN
(O.S.)
I think we're still in the forest.

FADE IN:

1 INT. ICE MINE - NIGHT

1

A MAN'S (30s, grizzled, determined) hand glides over a WALL OF ICE, a deep frown set on his face. Beside him, a WOMAN (30s, we'll call her LILY), mining gear hugging her frame, tears streaming down her cheeks.

Suddenly, he spins to her, urgency etched on his features. He plants a kiss on her forehead—

—and the ice wall is gone, replaced by an ominous BLACK FOREST.

MAN
(intense)
Run. Now!

They bolt through the featureless trees.

2 EXT. BLACK FOREST - DAY

2

The trees WHIP past them. The leaves do not move. The earth below their feet is distorted like cracked paint.

They reach the edge of the forest, revealing:

A 19TH CENTURY TRAIN STATION.

LILY
I know this place.

He stops, looks back.

LILY (CONT'D)

My father and I used to come here.
How-?

MAN

They know everything about us. It's
not real. None of it is. We need to
go.

The woman nods. Follows him.

BEYOND THE STATION: A thunderstorm, the most violent ever.

3 INT. TRAIN STATION - MAIN FLOOR - DAY 3

Half museum-pristine, half engulfed by a FROZEN WAVE melting
into the thunderstorm above, the station is eerily desolate.

ALCOVES lead further into the building.

The man and woman run through the massive empty hall-- She
looks up at the GLASS CEILING as the STORM eclipses the sun.

They dart into...

4 INT. TRAIN STATION - ALCOVES - DAY 4

They pause, hidden in shadow, chests heaving. Lily's eyes are
drawn to the TRAIN TRACKS, anticipation and dread mingling in
her gaze.

5 INT. TRAIN STATION - TRAIN TRACKS - DAY 5

LIGHTNING flashes, DARK SILHOUETTES can be seen in the hall
for a split second.

A train is coming into the station.

6 INT. TRAIN STATION - ALCOVES - DAY 6

LILY

It's here.

She holds her by the shoulders.

MAN

Maybe we're wrong. Maybe-
(he hesitates)
If this works then... we'll die
with them. Maybe we could-

LILY
Do you still have it?

The man opens his palm revealing: A blue pinwheel. She takes it. He nods, resigned.

MAN
Go.

Footsteps echo. Lily's hesitates, then nods, bolting up the stairs as the man prepares to face their pursuer and into the shadows of the alcoves steps.. his identical copy. They stare off at each other.

The copy's demeanor changes-- he lifts his hand to his face-- blood runs from his nose.

The man does the same. They are like mirrors to each other.

7 INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY 7

She reaches the top of the stairs and a hallway with many doors. She forces herself to stop, closes her eyes. Then opens them. The hallway is gone, replaced with a single door.

She walks to it and looks as a version of herself gets out of the bed. Stretches.

The original accidentally pushes the door and it creaks open.

8 INT. BEDROOM - DAY 8

They notice each other.

HER COPY
Who are you?
(re: pinwheel)
What's that?

The original had almost forgotten it. She opens her palm and holds out the blue pinwheel.

Her copy walks closer, intrigued. Takes the toy.

HER COPY (CONT'D)
Strange.

9 INT. TRAIN STATION - ALCOVES - DAY 9

MAN/HIS COPY
What?

10 INT. BEDROOM - DAY 10

Her copy, holding the pinwheel, turns towards:

11 INT. ICE WALL - DAY 11

The man, staring at him.

MAN
What's wrong?

He walks up to her. She searches his face. Emotions and memories come running.

LILY
I think I'm losing my mind.

MAN
I know. God! I know. That's what they do. We have to end it.

She holds out the pinwheel. He takes it-- hesitates. The man takes the pinwheel-- pushes-- it moves, slowly, then with an unrestrained fury. The sound grows--a mechanical growl, nature's roar, the scream of bending reality.

LILY
(her voice a desperate whisper)
I love y--

The ice wall behind them EXPLODES.

BLACK

FADE IN:

STARS

Billions of dots. Billions of suns. Unmoving yet glimmering. Then the smallest of them BLOOMS in pale light. Then another. More and more. Terrible explosions in the darkness; out of control. Light replacing the dark.

"ROOTS"

12 EXT. SIBERIAN TUNDRA - DAY - PRESENT DAY 12

A pale blizzard falls as A WOLF makes its way through the whiteout. Off its fangs, slick drool falls onto snow. It's staring straight at... the trespasser:

SASHA (late 20s) watches from the shelter of an outcrop. Her breath clouds as she steadies the rifle, aligning the wolf in her sights.

The wolf stares at her. Sasha's finger squeezes the trigger. She hesitates; a flicker of conflict.

Sasha's finger PUSHES DOWN on the trigger, slowly.

The wolf stops, looks back at the tundra, and then turns and starts trotting away lazily. Sasha releases her finger from the trigger. She breathes in. Looks away.

Then looks back, aims, and pulls the trigger.

13

INT. BAR - SIBERIAN VILLAGE - EVENING - HOURS LATER

13

It's a grim-looking place filled with even grimmer people constantly badgered by the blizzard outside.

BAM - The dead wolf lands heavily on a table, silence ballooning around it. Sasha heads to the bar, the weight of the villagers' stares upon her.

BARMAN
(in Russian)
Holy...!

Blood from the carcass snakes its way down onto the floor. The other patrons, ROUGH LOOKING MINERS, walk over. The white wolf on the table looks almost gentle in contrast.

The barman pulls out a TIN CAN from below the bar. Slides it over. Sasha's opens it, but her count reveals a shortfall.

BARMAN (CONT'D)
(in Russian)
We didn't think you'd get it...

He hurriedly adds more bills. Disturbance ripples through the crowd as a CHILD (10) barrels forward.

CHILD
(in Russian)
Why'd she have to shoot it?!

His small hands clutch the wolf. The room stiffens. Laughter is sparse, nervous. Sasha's eyes lock with the child's.

A miner smears the boy's face with blood, and the fragile laughter breaks free. The boy's tears swell up again and he storms off.

BARMAN
Here. Everything's here.

Sasha jolts back. Takes the money. Leaves. The men clear a path for her.

14 EXT. BAR - SIBERIAN VILLAGE - EVENING - MOMENTS LATER 14

Sasha steps into the blizzard. There're outlines of buildings and streets, a few silhouettes move through the snow.

The door opens behind her yet again.

She turns- A small figure, lighting fast, runs PAST her and SMEARS her white parka with something.

SASHA
Hey-!

She turns, but can't catch it. She watches the child's figure disappear into the blizzard...

Sasha touches the red smear on her parka... **blood.**

15 EXT. TESTING SITE - NIGHT - HOURS LATER 15

A fierce blizzard engulfs a LARGE TENT that whips and roars in the wind. Sasha's truck skids to a halt nearby. She hops out, rifle slung over one shoulder, hauling two duffel bags from the back.

At the entrance, she looks towards the horizon to see a black silhouette of a TRAIN carve its way through the blizzard.

16 INT. TENT - NIGHT 16

Inside the tent is a bubble of warmth and life. A compact lab with plants under domes of glass, scientific instruments and technology strewn across work desks.

And a HEATER. She huddles nearer only to realize it's not on.

SASHA
Piece of shit.

She kicks it and it sputters back on, bathing the space in an orange hue..

SASHA (CONT'D)
Hey, Professor! They're back!

Nobody answers.

With a sigh, she ventures deeper into the lush setup, passing equipment and flickering screens, and arrives at a tunnel burrowed into the snow with a hefty mining drill stationed beside it. A whimsical blue pinwheel planted in the ice catches her eye, incongruous with her surroundings.

SASHA (CONT'D)

Professor!

Noticing a rope with a bell tied to it descending into the tunnel, Sasha gives it a firm tug.

17 INT. TUNNEL - NIGHT

17

And on the other end of the rope another BELL RINGS. But it's muffled by the busywork of the DRILL.

Henry, 60s, in half-buttoned overalls over tweed, is engrossed in his work, humming absentmindedly. His movements are precise until he snags his sleeve on a jagged spike.

HENRY

Damn it!

With a frustrated tug, his sleeve tears. Unfazed, he secures the ice core sample from the drill and admires it. He logs details in a notebook, meticulous despite the interruption.

The drill powers down unexpectedly, and silence amplifies the bell's ringing.

18 INT. TENT - NIGHT

18

Henry emerges from the tunnel, cylinders of ice held under his arms.

Sasha's pulled out the power cord.

HENRY

I'm not done!

SASHA

You're done when I say you're done.
That was the deal, professor.

He ignores her, sets down the ice on a table.

HENRY
Military mindset... no vision.
Without a history, there is no
future- Do you have any idea how
old this is?

He holds the ice up.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Decades! All recorded and kept. The
past as real as your present,
merely untouched. Pure, if you'd
like. Not ruined.

Sasha's gaze shifts from the samples to Henry, unimpressed.

SASHA
And you took 'em out.

HENRY
That's science, Sasha. It's not
always gentle. Stasis gets us
nowhere. Progress is painful, but
necessary.

A crackle interrupts from the radio. Reynolds' voice is
barely audible.

REYNOLDS
(O.S.)
Sasha, come in.

It's the radio. She tries to answer but... **static**.

HENRY
That the captain?
(re: radio)
May I..?

SASHA
Yeah. Good luck.

She hands him the radio.

SASHA (CONT'D)
Start packing up. There's a
blizzard moving in.

Sasha walks away.

HENRY
Always is..

Henry looks towards the ice tunnel.

19 EXT. TESTING SITE - NIGHT

19

Sasha emerges into a burgeoning blizzard. The immense outline of THE ANAPEL looms through the whiteout — a leviathan from a bygone Soviet era. Its headlights pierce through the thick snowfall.

A figure, barely discernible, clings to the train's cab, signaling Sasha.

20 INT. RESTAURANT CARRIAGE - NIGHT

20

Snow dusts off Sasha as she steps into the warmth. There's rockabilly music coming from the kitchen. Sasha walks past the cheap frilly tables and chairs towards the kitchen, where REEF, a mountain of a man in an apron, stirs a pot.

REEF

Yo, Sash. Back into the fold..

SASHA

(handing him a wad of cash)

Reef.

REEF

Where'd you get this? Well, damn.
Here.

REEF, amused, scoops up a taste of his concoction.

REEF (CONT'D)

Try this.

Sasha sighs and relents, tastes.

REEF (CONT'D)

Sol-yan... whatever. It's soup.

SASHA

Well, you are ambitious I'll give
you that.

Sasha turns to leave.

SASHA (CONT'D)

Oh. And Reef?

REEF

Yeah?

SASHA

(correcting)

It's solyanka,

REEF
Great.. Thanks.

Sasha smiles and walks on.

21 EXT. LOCOMOTIVE CAB - NIGHT

21

The cab feels almost like something long-haul truckers would have set up in the back of their trucks

Two men are arguing. REYNOLDS (40s) and ANATOLI (40s.)

Reynolds stands uncomfortably stiff and alert. Anatoli lounges lazily in his chair.

ANATOLI
(smirking)
Absolutely not.

REYNOLDS
You think I'm asking you a favor?

ANATOLI
We back in the army now, is that it captain? Are you ordering me?

REYNOLDS
What is the problem, Anatoli? The Russians approved it-

ANATOLI
(interjecting)
-Because it's a dead track!

Sasha enters.

REYNOLDS
(sighs)
Sasha. Can you talk sense to your comrade here?

ANATOLI	SASHA
That's rich.	(in Russian)
	What's going on?

ANATOLI (CONT'D)
(in Russian)
Nothing. The captain's being a little-

REYNOLDS
(in Russian)
You know I took lessons, right?

Anatoli fake smiles. Sasha snatches a vodka bottle from him, drinks, and grimaces.

SASHA
(in Russian)
Spill it.

ANATOLI
(gesturing to a map)
Orders to reroute.

She walks closer, starts to trace the HIGHLIGHTED PATH with her finger. Then the path DARTS RIGHT.

ANATOLI (CONT'D)
Tracks that were built by Stalin
during the Cold War. By prisoners
taken from the gulags.

She stops, stares at Anatoli.

REYNOLDS
Tell me it's bullshit, Sasha.
This 'Railway of Bones.'

SASHA
It's nothing. Abandoned camps and
stations.

ANATOLI
And graveyards.

SASHA
(ignoring)
It's not real.

ANATOLI
Real? What's *real*?

SASHA
It's just superstition.

Anatoli looks real sad in that small chair of his.

ANATOLI
It's real to me.

REYNOLDS
We have to get these eggheads back
by Christmas. We do our job and get
paid, simple as that. No reason to
get jumpy. Just keep the engine
running.

ANATOLI
(mocking)
Aye, aye captain.

A sudden flicker of lights. A beat of darkness.

SASHA
(frowning)
Anatoli?

ANATOLI
(defensively)
I've tried everything—

SASHA
(drily)
Except fixing it.

ANATOLI
Some things broke that can't be
fixed.

Reynolds's radio crackles to life. His eyes meet Sasha's.

SASHA
(shrugging)
Left it with Henry.

22 INT. TENT - NIGHT

22

NIKOLAI (50s) enters the tent. Takes off his hood and
breathes in the warmer air. Quickly heads for the plants.

NIKOLAI
How are you, hm? All well?

Checks them like a concerned parent and then, with an almost
clinical coldness, rips off dried leaves.

HIRA (early 30s) and NATE (early 30s) enter.

NATE
There's no way.

HIRA grins as she lights a joint.

HIRA
It's true.

NATE
It's not true. You can't die from
eating rabbit!

HIRA

I said 'ONLY," Nate! If you eat **only** rabbit. You'll literally eat yourself to death.

NIKOLAI

She's right. You would digest yourself. It's something to do with-

NATE

Alright, alright. If I wanted a lecture I'd pay to sleep through it back in Moscow, okay?

NIKOLAI

You could not afford my lectures, young man.

NATE

I was giving you a compliment by calling your Tarot card readings lectures, okay?

Nikolai turns to him.

NIKOLAI

What the fuck?

A tense moment between them as they stare at each other. Nate is the first to buckle.

NATE

Nothing. I'm sorry-

Nikolai breaks.

NIKOLAI

(laughing)

You should have seen your fucking face!

NATE

Great. Yeah.

He rips a healthy leaf off a plant.

NIKOLAI

Well, that's quite rude-

DING! DING! DING! A BELL RINGS from somewhere in the jungle.

HIRA

What's that? Is that-

The ground trembles.

23 EXT. TESTING SITE - NIGHT 23

Reynolds and Sasha walk back. They stumble in the aftershock. Then start running.

24 INT. TENT - NIGHT 24

It stops.

HIRA

Nikolai..

She's pointing as CRACKS in ICE run across the floor. Reynolds and Sasha enter just as the bell that had stopped for a moment now restarts.

NATE

Henry!

Sasha leading, they run THROUGH the plants and INTO the tunnel. As Reynolds and Sasha run in, CHUNKS OF ICE fall into the entrance.

Nikolai pulls the others back.

NATE (CONT'D)

What are you doing?! My grandfather is-

NIKOLAI

You add any more weight, we all go.

25 INT. TUNNEL END - NIGHT 25

Henry rings on the bell frantically whilst the drill HISSES STEAM. He looks up as a WIDE CRACK runs across the ICE CEILING, then heads DOWN.

The whole place is falling apart. Henry desperately grabs samples - the only reason he hasn't run out yet. He takes as many as he's able.

26 INT. TUNNEL - NIGHT 26

Sasha and Reynolds run down the slippery slopes. Reynolds watches as another CRACK runs down the length of the wall.

BLAM, BLAM, BLAM! As the HOOKS holding in the BELL ROPE fly away.

REYNOLDS
GRAB THE ROPE!

Sasha doesn't hear it - runs on. The rope comes free, starts SLIDING away! But Reynolds JUST manages to grab it.

27 INT. TUNNEL END - NIGHT

27

Sasha runs in and stops, awestruck. The end of the tunnel has fallen away into a HUGE CHASM.

Henry's holds onto the bell rope-- slipping-- FIBERS are flying as the rope stretches against the now sharp ice.

HENRY
SASHA! Help me up this- god!

But Sasha's doesn't move. She's frozen.

HENRY (CONT'D)
SASHA!

She jolts out of it and grabs the rope. Pulls. Henry rises. Sasha helps him up.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Christ..

They catch their breath next to the precipice.

CUT TO:

Reynolds cracks a few glow sticks and throws them into the chasm. They fall for a long time.

28 INT. TENT - NIGHT - LATER

28

Henry cradling a cup of tea. Reynolds emerges from the tunnel.

REYNOLDS
The drill's gone. And the journals,
professor. I'm sorry.

Henry smiles thinly.

HENRY

Greed, I'm afraid. We knew there could be empty pockets in the ice here.

REYNOLDS

Some pocket then. More than a thousand feet, I reckon.

Nikolai and Henry exchange a glance.

HIRA

Christ, I'm just happy that no one got hurt.

REYNOLDS

Will this set you back?

NATE

No. Look, this fucking sucks, but we saved most of the samples and we collected enough from the other sites.

Nikolai stares at Henry. Inconspicuously, Henry shakes his head.

NATE (CONT'D)

We should have a good enough reading to get an average-

NIKOLAI

I disagree.

The room quiets.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

We have some data, yes, to have an average thawing rate for the last one hundred years or so but-

NATE

That's what we came here to do-

NIKOLAI

-Why limit ourselves? To narrow and close-minded thinking?

(to Nate)

Is mission accomplished all that matters to you or would you like to be something more? Like your grandfather, maybe?

They stare at each other. Nikolai grins.

NATE HENRY
 You've had a problem with me Nate...
 from day one-

NATE (CONT'D)
 Fucking pompous prick!

HENRY
 Nate..

NIKOLAI
 A man without ambition. Must be
 genetics..

NATE HIRA
 Why don't you fuck off, huh? Okay- I say we take a
 breather for a minute or two
 and-!

NATE (CONT'D)
 (re:Nikolai)
 You're gonna need an hour for him.

HIRA
 D'you think this is helping, Nate?

Nikolai appeals to the oldest authority in the room.

NIKOLAI
 (to Henry)
 A THOUSAND FEET! Or even more, the
 good captain said. How far into the
 past is that?

Henry's seems torn.

HENRY
 Um.. thirteen, maybe fourteen
 thousand years? More, possibly.

Nate appeals to Reynolds.

NATE
 Captain, this is idiotic.

REYNOLDS
 Me and my crew, we're here to keep
 you safe. I would strongly advise
 against this.

NATE
 Thank you!

HIRA

As would I. Minor cuts and bruises are one thing, but we've been lucky there hasn't been anything worse. I'd like to keep it that way.

REYNOLDS

Thank you doctor.

Sasha's observing Henry and Nikolai. Finally, Henry nods. Nikolai smiles, victorious.

NIKOLAI

I understand completely captain. I will go alone and take full responsibility.

REYNOLDS

Out of the question. If something happens to you-

NIKOLAI

Nothing will happen-

SASHA

I'll go.

Nikolai looks at her. So does Reynolds. So do everyone.

SASHA (CONT'D)

I'll go with him.
It's safer. If something happens, one of us can get the other out.

Reynolds can't argue with that.

REYNOLDS

Alright. Sasha will come with you.

NIKOLAI

I am more than capable of doing this alone, you don't have to ask-

REYNOLDS

Wasn't asking. Telling.

Nikolai nods, throws another glance at Sasha, forces a smile.

Henry and Nikolai talk in hushed voices near the edge of the ice cliff.

Reynolds glances at them, then goes to Sasha who's donning the climbing equipment. Hands her a DUFFEL BAG. Sasha takes it.

SASHA

Thanks.

Reynolds watches her for a moment.

REYNOLDS

You know.. when there's a call for volunteers it doesn't always have to be you.

SASHA

We can't let him go alone.

REYNOLDS

He can look after himself. He's military. Or used to be.

That's news to Sasha. She looks over Reynolds' shoulder at the two men. Henry's still wants to talk, but Nikolai waves him away and walks towards the cliff. He seems irritated. Henry looks anxious.

REYNOLDS (CONT'D)

I'm not asking you to do this, Sasha. We're not at war. We're wilderness guides. You don't have to put your life on the line and you don't have to follow orders-

SASHA

Yeah. Then I'm glad you're not giving them, sir.

Sasha walks past him.

CUT TO:

30

CLIFF'S EDGE

30

Nikolai, dressed in CLIMBING EQUIPMENT, pulls on his rope. He looks at Reynolds, Sasha and Henry.

NIKOLAI

Meet you on the other side, eh Sasha?

And lowers himself down the edge.

31 INT. ICE WALL - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

31

Sasha lowers herself down the treacherous wall of ice.

Looking **up**, Sasha sees Reynolds staring down.. Looking **down**, she sees a light descending - Nikolai. He's already far from her.

Sasha clicks her headlamp on and descends. It's slow work, a slow descent...

Behind her, LARGE SHARDS of ICE jut out. The wall itself, almost mirror-like in its reflectiveness.

Sasha stops for a moment to catch her breath. Her own mirror image stares back at her. Then her light flickers. She taps on it and the light returns.. reluctantly.

Nikolai curses somewhere below her.

SASHA

Nikolai?

Silence.

NIKOLAI

I'm fine. I'm fine. Cut my leg on the damn ice.

Sasha breathes out. They continue their descent.

32 INT. TUNNEL - NIGHT

32

Finally, they reach the floor of the chasm. It's HUGE.

Blue-white ice walls capture and magnify their flashlights.

Nikolai CRACKS open a red flare and the place lights up. The red plays against the ice. There's something primal about it all and they are dwarfed by the size of it. It's *beautiful*.

NIKOLAI

(in Russian)

My god.

(in English)

They say all light is trapped in ice. Lives inside and never really goes out..

Sasha spots Nikolai's split pant leg, it's red with blood.

SASHA
You're bleeding.

NIKOLAI
It's nothing.

There's an edge to him. He puts on a veneer of charm to hide it.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)
To do science is to explore, Sasha.
At any cost. I'm not going back.
(in Russian)
Bravery, hm?

Nikolai heads towards a large opening leading deeper. Sasha watches him go, her smile disappears.

SASHA
Yeah...

In the diminishing light, this place is scary.

SASHA (CONT'D)
(to herself)
Bravery.

33 INT. ICE TUNNEL - NIGHT

33

They trek deeper into the tunnel. Dozens of smaller tunnels lead every which way.

SASHA
Didn't realize you and the professor had history..

NIKOLAI
Henry and I? Surprised you noticed.. We used to work together, long ago. He even taught me for a time. Much like your relationship with the captain, hm? You argue, yes, but there's respect and fear.

SASHA
(incredulous)
Fear? I'm not afraid of him.

NIKOLAI
No. But he is of you.

Sasha thinks on this.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)
Maybe I am too forward-

SASHA
What about you and Henry?

NIKOLAI
Yes?

SASHA
Who's afraid of whom?

NIKOLAI
Good question. A very good question.

Nikolai smiles. Then shines his headlight to the side.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)
Well, look at that.

Sasha looks to where his light is pointing. JOURNALS, half covered in ice and snow. And next to it, THE DRILL. SMASHED to pieces. Sasha runs over, checks it.

SASHA
It's wrecked.

She packs up the journals.

SASHA (CONT'D)
But I guess the professor will be happy to have these back?

She looks back only to see Nikolai staring up. Follows his gaze. The ceiling of ice looks... ENGRAVED somehow. Far from the smooth blue they saw nearer to the wall.

NIKOLAI
Interesting. Almost looks like a vascular structure. I would like to delve a bit deeper, if you don't mind?

Nikolai starts walking, following the tunnel deeper. Sasha's light flickers again and then shuts off.

SASHA
Damn it! Nikolai?

Nikolai's bright light hits her.

SASHA (CONT'D)
You're fucking bleeding. We're going back.

NIKOLAI
Oh. They can wait for a few minutes more, I'm sure. There're some flares in the bag. Go if you'd like.

SASHA
Nikolai-

Nikolai moves away, plunging the cave into darkness.

SASHA (CONT'D)
Nikolai? HEY!

Sasha fumbles around, searches through the duffel bag to find a couple of RED FLARES. She pulls the top off one and the cave fills with red light.

Nothing but dark ice.

SASHA (CONT'D)
... Fuck.

She puts the drill and the journal back into the bag and goes searching for him. There're tunnels leading everywhere. She looks up and sees the engraving heading in one direction.

She looks down and sees specks of blood. She follows the trail to another opening leading into:

34 INT. CLAUSTROPHOBIC ICE TUNNEL - NIGHT

34

Nikolai stares at the grooves in the ice. He sees the ice start to glow red, turns and-

BAM! Sasha slams him down. They stare at each other.

SASHA
What the fuck were you thinking?!

NIKOLAI
You afraid?

SASHA
What did you say?

Nikolai tries to talk, but Sasha's strangling him. She lets him go. Nikolai catches his breath.

NIKOLAI

Henry's afraid. That's what I said.
I saw you watching when we had our
talk. We were ambitious in the
past. I wanted to see if there was
anything left of him as I knew him.
There isn't. I apologize for my
little jokes. You can leave me and
find your way back. If you follow
the grooves, they'll take you back
to the wall.

Sasha hesitates for a moment. She *could* leave. She looks back
to Nikolai. Shakes her head.

SASHA

We stick together.

She helps him up.

NIKOLAI

Fine by me.

Nikolai walks and Sasha follows. The ice grows DARKER. And
the ceiling creeps CLOSER. He notices her noticing.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

Could be mixed with something.
Rock. Sediment.

The cave shrinks into a small tunnel and the fog thickens.
Nikolai moves on without fear. The DEEP VEINS carved into
the ice are everywhere, in the walls, floor and ceiling,
directing them.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

From simplicity, arbitrary
complexity can emerge. Beautiful,
isn't it?

SASHA

(to her own surprise)
It is.

They walk. Then-

Through the fog... comes music. A piano.. The sound moves
across Sasha's view, from right to left.

SASHA (CONT'D)

Did you hear that?
(to herself)
I know it. I swear I know it.

But Nikolai is a shadow disappearing into the fog.

The music restarts, revolves around her, somewhere. She searches for it. The fog's everywhere. Then, light.. A CRACKLING pulse of blue, like a small ball of thunder, moves through the fog.

The music emanates from it.

CLOSE ON: THUNDERSTORM

DISSOLVE TO:

35 EXT. BEACH - DAY - THUNDERSTORM 35

The same thunderstorm in Sasha's past.

A violent mishmash of violet and blue. But it's far in the distance, across water.

Sasha (13) stares at it. Half afraid, half curious.

She looks back. The piano tune grows stronger.

36 EXT. SASHA'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY 36

Sasha runs through the patch of woods to reach her house.

The door is open for the warm summer day. Someone is playing piano inside. Not playing, *practicing*.

She stops at the door to listen.

The pianist starts and restarts as they fail certain parts of the piece. She looks to the left. A BLUE PINWHEEL whirls with the wind.

37 INT. ICE TUNNEL - NIGHT 37

The red flare in Sasha's hands flickers out, but the PULSING BLUE BALL OF ENERGY still levitates in the fog.

LITTLE BOY

(V.O.)

Sasha?

She knows this voice, but she hasn't heard it for years.

SASHA

Luka?

She moves towards the ball of light. The light becomes smaller, transforms into a pale yellow. Then moves UP and starts towards Sasha as a shadow emerges from the fog. It's Nikolai. And the light is his headlamp.

NIKOLAI
Lost you there, Alice.

Sasha looks like she's seen a ghost. Nikolai looks around.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)
Too much Wonderland?

SASHA
I thought I heard someone.

NIKOLAI
Nothing we'd call life lives this deep in the ice.

She doesn't reply.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)
I found something..

38 INT. CLEAR ICE WALL - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

38

Nikolai stands in front of an ice wall. It's clearer and less muddied.

NIKOLAI
Here.

Nikolai shines his light onto the wall. There's SOMETHING there. Vaguely reminiscent of VINES and LEAVES. And something more - a few BRIEF ORANGE SPARKS reflect the light back.

SASHA
Those look like... leaves.

Nikolai nods and smiles.

NIKOLAI
Seems I was wrong.

Sasha stares on to see the leaves ripple as if in heavy wind.

SMASH CUT TO:

39 EXT. SASHA'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY 39

The leaves of an aspen tree tremble.

SMASH CUT TO:

40 INT. CLEAR ICE WALL - NIGHT 40

Sasha moves back, confused.

She looks again, but whatever is in the ice, hasn't moved. Nikolai traces his hands against the wall. Looks around, calculating.

NIKOLAI

Come.

41 INT. ICE CATHEDRAL - NIGHT 41

It's like stepping into the mouth of a prehistoric creature. The carvings in the walls EXPLODE over the ceilings. Grooves run everywhere.

Sasha CRACKS open another flare. Throws it... And it SLIDES across the ice floor towards a cluster of ice in the middle of the cave.

NIKOLAI

'From there we came outside and saw the stars.'

The room comes alive in red light. The ice is covered in fragile frost feathers that explode and blink in the glow of the flare like millions of small mirrors.

Fog patches move across the angled ceiling like clouds.

Sasha observes, stunned, this world all in itself. Then looks DOWN... Something is MOVING down there. It's water. Almost obsidian in its darkness.

SASHA

A lake.

It all looks alien. Nikolai walks across the lake. Sasha follows him, stares at the water down below.

NIKOLAI

It's not frozen because it's always moving. Always shifting from the heat of the core.

(reminiscing)

(MORE)

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)
I've heard it be described, but..
This what happens when you trap
something that wants to flow.
Here...

Nikolai has reached the flare.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)
Careful, it is very frail.

Sasha looks. It's A FROZEN ASPEN TREE but GLOWING ORANGE
lines run across its bark. Sasha walks around it, amazed.

SASHA
It's a quaking aspen. We had them
everywhere when I was growing up.
How can it be here?

Nikolai steps back, surprised for the first time.

NIKOLAI
An aspen?
(he looks at the tree)
Interesting.

Something catches Nikolai's attention among the leaves.

SASHA

Breaks off a small piece of pure white ice. Holds it between
her palms, blows on it to melt it and... It's a leaf.
Completely black. And so, so light and fragile that it FLOATS
in the air as Sasha lowers her hand.

NIKOLAI

Looks through the branches. Finds something. An OVAL BLACK
BUD, half encrusted in ice, PULSING with ethereal orange
light.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)
Sasha?

She walks back to him.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)
Give me your knife.

Sasha hands it over. Nikolai cuts at the ROOT of the BUD and
takes it. He wipes the snow and ice off of it.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)
Astonishing.

In his palms sits a small black bud with SPECKS OF ORANGE EMBERS.

42 EXT. THE ANAPEL - NIGHT - LATER 42

A clear, starry night interrupted by sudden clouds of flue gas. The Anapel, a great mechanical beast, starts up again.

43 INT. THE ANAPEL - ENGINE ROOM - NIGHT 43

Long, dark, claustrophobic. Pistons release, hiss and work tirelessly.

44 INT. THE ANAPEL - NIGHT - CARGO ROOM 44

Most of the carriage is taken up by the JEEP Sasha used earlier. There's also a RACK OF GUNS in the corner.

Reef and Anatoli load in crates and luggage. The blizzard's so strong now that they barely manage to close the side hatch.

REEF

Get us the hell out of here,
driver.

ANATOLI

Aye, aye.

45 INT. THE ANAPEL - LABORATORY - NIGHT 45

Computers and lab equipment fill the desks. Vials clatter with the rhythm of the starting train.

The other part of the room is behind a GLASS PARTITION - the freezer. FILLED with samples of ice for later measuring.

46 INT. THE ANAPEL - LABORATORY - BEHIND THE PARTITION - NIGHT 46

Nikolai sets the BLACK BUD down onto the table and walks out of the partition.

47 INT. THE ANAPEL - LABORATORY - NIGHT 47

Reynolds hands Sasha a mug. Nate flips through a SKETCHBOOK as he and Henry argue.

HENRY

Another expedition after Christmas,
possibly-

NATE

What's the point?
If there's another ice quake
there'll be nothing left.

REYNOLDS

We'd need more people.

HENRY

Of course, of course. Safety is
paramount. Nature guards its
secrets rather jealousy.

Nate is frustrated. He looks down at a sketch of the frozen
tree. Closes it and throws it onto the desk in defeat.

HENRY (CONT'D)

These things take time, my boy. You
cannot just.. rush it.
Perseverance, patience-

NIKOLAI

Fear.

HENRY

(correcting)

Caution.
We have a sample, Nikolai, and
that's more than enough-

NIKOLAI

We could have more.

NATE

I can't believe I'm saying it, but
I agree with Nikolai. We don't know
what will happen after Christmas!
We don't even know if the
university would give us the funds.
(a beat)

We have a sample. No local
measurements, no photos.

SASHA

Something interfered with the
electronics.

NATE

I'm not blaming you. I'm just
saying: all the more reason to head
back!

HENRY

This has been under the ice for a
thousand years; it will be for a
thousand more. Once we get this to
the university-

NIKOLAI

No. No university.
(a beat)
What we found remains between us.

Nate stares at Nikolai like he's crazy.

NATE

This needs to be shared! A
discovery like this one-

NIKOLAI

I funded this expedition,
ultimately the decision is up to
me-

HENRY

Nikolai...

NATE

What are you talking about-?
The university has the
resources to take care of
this properly!

Nikolai slams his fist onto the table.

NIKOLAI

I was there and you weren't. The
decision is mine alone.

SASHA

I was there too.

NIKOLAI

What?

SASHA

We found it together, remember?

Nikolai scoffs.

NIKOLAI

Together? You're a glorified guard
dog-

Sasha jumps up. Nate gets between them. Nikolai laughs as Reynolds moves in to mediate.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

Ah. And here's the handler.

REYNOLDS

You'd do well, doctor, not to antagonize the people charged with protecting you.

NATE

(to Sasha)

He's not worth it.

Sasha relents. Backs away.

NIKOLAI

Do you know of the albino redwood, captain?

REYNOLDS

Can't say that I do.

NIKOLAI

Grows in America. All white leaves, quite beautiful really. But it has a problem. You see, it cannot produce chlorophyll. It cannot photosynthesize.

(his eyes flick to Nate)

So, upon birth, it ties its roots to another. And sucks out all that it needs. Its life, if you can call it that, is the life of a parasite. And every. Day. It steals. And steals. And steals-

Nate punches him. Nikolai falls down.

HENRY

NATE!

REYNOLDS

Gods fucking damn it. Sasha-

Sasha pulls Nate back. Pushes him onto a bench. Nate tries to stand and Sasha pushes him back again. Harder.

She eyes him for a while.

SASHA

(curious)

You told me to back down.

NATE

Yeah, well. I was wrong.

Sasha smiles like a wolf. Then they hear laughing.

It's Nikolai. He wheezes, laughs through the blood. Reynolds helps him up.

HENRY

I think- I think you should go,
Nikolai.

NIKOLAI

Gladly.

Nikolai leaves.

48 INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

48

The laboratory door behind him slides shut. He continues down the long, hollow corridor.

Doors lead off to cabins. Under one of the doors, there's a light.. Nikolai walks past it, down the corridor.

49 INT. REYNOLDS' CABIN - NIGHT

49

Desolate, cold and practical. A Soviet-era sleeping cabin with a perpetually fogged window.

Reynolds finishes writing a letter in the dim light of the cabin.

It's cold. He sees his breath rise. Pulls the blanket closer around himself.

He drinks his whiskey from a TIN CUP. Refills it from an almost empty bottle. Drinks again. Then sets down the pen. Opens a BOX nearby. It's already FILLED with dozens of letters.

He puts the new one with the rest.

50 INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

50

The long empty corridor. Dark, quick shadows roll by the windows.

51 INT. RESTAURANT CARRIAGE - NIGHT

51

BAM! A knife flies into a taped up bullseye.

HIRA
Ho-lee-shit!

REEF
Told you.

HIRA
Where the fuck did you learn that?
Chopping onions?

REEF
I mean, you're not far off.

They laugh.

REEF (CONT'D)
When y'all are away being science-
y, it gets pretty darn boring in
basecamp.

HIRA
You'd be surprised how boring
'being science-y' can be.
Especially for a medic. Fuck if I
know why I'm even here!

REEF
To escape and have fun!

Reef flings another knife at the target. BAM! Another
bullseye!

HIRA
How. The. Fuck?

REEF
My mom and dad were knives so..

HIRA
(laughing)
You're an idiot.

REEF
So, why are you here exactly? You
know, we check everyone's
backgrounds and-

HIRA
You mean, you stalked me?

REEF

What? No. I'm just saying you
struck me as someone... better than
this.

But she's joking.

HIRA

Relax.

(then)

Do you want the honest answer or
the cute answer?

REEF

The bullseye.

Hira sighs.

HIRA

My dad was the chief surgeon in St.
Luke's Hospital in Tokyo.

REEF

Sounds like a smart dude.

HIRA

Yeah. Definitely that.

REEF

Let me guess: he wants you to
follow in his footsteps?

HIRA

Yeah, he did. And instead, I'm
here.

(then)

He died a year ago.

Reef nods, then understanding hits him.

REEF

You ran.

Hira nods.

HIRA

Literally to the ends of the earth.
(she motions around)
Hence...

REEF

That you did. Still... could be
worse, couldn't it?

HIRA
What do you mean?

REEF
(grinning)
I'm here, ain't I?

Hira facepalms.

HIRA
Oh my god, that is, like, so
inappropriate-!

Reynolds enters, takes one look at the bullseye.

REYNOLDS
You aiming to impress the girl,
Reef?

REEF
No, captain.

REYNOLDS
Good. Because I don't think
treating your equipment like you're
hunting teddy bears at a fun fair
is the way to go.
(to Hira)
What do you think?

HIRA
I don't know. It was kinda working
for me.

Reef smiles.

Reynolds chuckles, pulls the knives out.

REYNOLDS
Point is: be careful.

REEF
Yes, captain.

Reynolds puts the knives onto the counter and walks out.

Hira waits until he's gone.

HIRA
What about him? How long have you
guys been working together?

REEF

Well.. we met Anatoli on an exercise with the Ukrainians. And Sasha joined the business soon after. Getting close to a decade now, I reckon.

HIRA

I don't get it. Why did you all leave the forces for this?

REEF

You mean: why are we nannyng tourists and dried-up professors on handholdy wilderness trips?

Reef points at her with a knife.

REEF (CONT'D)

Y'all need protection, girl. Siberia's no joke. There're wolves and bears and shit. Not to mention the Russkis.

Hira laughs.

HIRA

Okay. But really?

Reef holds up his right hand. Two fingers are missing.

REEF

I didn't leave the military by choice. And you should see the scrapyard they built into my skull. Sometimes it's hard to.. go back to normal. And for us, this job is pretty close to normal. You do what's told, don't have to think.

Reef slams another knife into the bullseye.

REEF (CONT'D)

Reynolds... took me in when no-one else would.

52

INT. CARGO CARRIAGE - NIGHT

52

Reynolds stands in front of the open cargo hatch. Drinks his whiskey and watches the snow fly by.

REEF

(O.S.)

A life like this.. I figure it just
suits us. Always moving.

53 INT. RESTAURANT CARRIAGE - NIGHT

53

HIRA

Never looking back?

Reef nods.

REEF

Yeah..

They share a sympathetic smile.

54 EXT. SIBERIAN TUNDRA - NIGHT

54

The Anapel rides down the tracks and into the night.

55 INT. SASHA'S CABIN - HOURS LATER - NIGHT

55

She's asleep. And she's dreaming trouble.

DREAM:

FLASHES of BLACK LEAVES sprouting. Then ORANGE EMBERS like
STARS EXPLODING. The last image is of a WHITE WOLF.

She wakes up. Sweating, hands shaking.

She breaths in and out, slowly.

SASHA

(in Russian)

One... two...

She shakes her head and goes back to English.

SASHA (CONT'D)

One... two... three...

The last numbers are more difficult.

SASHA (CONT'D)

four.. five...

It helps. A little. She hears something in the hallway.
Footsteps?

She stands up and opens the door. It's Nate. With his hand raised.

NATE
Oh. Hey. I was. Uh.

Nate's holds out a bottle of whiskey and two glasses.

SASHA
Where'd you get that?

NATE
Your captain has a crate of them. I nearly didn't knock. Thought you'd be asleep.

SASHA
I was.

NATE
Oh.

SASHA
Just a bad dream.

NATE
Well. I've got the perfect medicine.

56 INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER
CLINK of the whiskey glasses. They drink.

56

NATE
That's smooth-

He coughs. Sasha laughs.

NATE (CONT'D)
Okay. Yeah. So I'm not a big drinker.

SASHA
We can sip it.

NATE
Yeah.

They sip it.

SASHA
Henry must be proud you followed in his footsteps.

NATE
He is, in his way.

SASHA
But?

Nate sighs.

NATE
Sometimes it feels almost like he..
resents me. The discovery you made,
what you brought back, Nikolai and
Henry they won't let me near it.

SASHA
Any idea what it is?

NATE
Well, from the perspective of an
exiled climate scientist... no.
(he chuckles)
Nikolai thinks it's biological.

SASHA
Biological? You mean... alive?

NATE
Yeah. You should've heard him talk
earlier about 'shadow biospheres.'
It's real loopy stuff.

Nate pours out two new shots. They sip it. The silence is a
little bit awkward.

SASHA
So- I- NATE (CONT'D)

They laugh. Nate motions her to continue.

SASHA (CONT'D)
That was some punch you threw.

NATE
Oh yeah? Military level?

SASHA
Top rank.

Nate rubs his painful fist.

NATE
Man, I used to get into so much
trouble for stuff like that.

SASHA
Henry raised you, didn't he?

He waves away the sympathy.

NATE
Yeah... Turned out fine. I
remember, actually- Never mind.

SASHA
What?

They laugh awkwardly.

NATE
No, I just- I just remember I was
so intimidated by him, you know? He
was amazing at everything. He'd go
out fishing and come back with a
truckload. I'd try and barely get
anything. Then one day I just asked
him. 'How? How do you do it? What's
the secret?'

He pauses.

NATE (CONT'D)
There wasn't one. He said he goes
where the warm and cold water meet
and sits there. In that green shell
of a boat, floating.

SASHA
Doing nothing..

NATE
Exactly.

Nate pushes back his shot.

NATE (CONT'D)
The things he discovered when he
was younger... they were
groundbreaking, but something
happened. Something took that
ambition away and now-

SASHA
He resents you for having it.

Nate smiles ruefully. Quickly changes the subject.

NATE

What about you? You grew up around here, right? Reef let it slip.

SASHA

Ah. Yeah.

NATE

Any siblings? A protective big brother I should know about?

Sasha tenses.

SASHA

You know...

(re: whiskey)

This is some good shit.

Sasha fills Nate's glass. Then drinks from the bottle.

NATE

Woah. Alright.

Nate drinks. Sasha immediately fills his glass up again.

NATE (CONT'D)

What got into you? Not that I'm complaining, but..

Sasha eyes him and smiles.

SASHA

Cabin fever.

Nate grins back.

NATE

I- uh

SASHA

Shut up.

Sasha grabs Nate and pushes him onto the table. They make out. Aggressively.

And behind the glass partition, A DROP OF WATER falls as the ICE encasing the BLACK SEED *melts*.

The train moves deeper and deeper into the cold Siberian landscape; the LIGHTS flicker on and off.

58 INT. SASHA'S CABIN - NEXT DAY - MORNING

58

Sasha's stares into nothing. Nate is asleep next to her in bed. They're both naked.

She gets up, grabs a cigarette from the table, a LIGHTER, opens the window next to it and lights the cig-- takes a drag.

Nate stirs. Watches Sasha for a moment.

NATE

Okay if we get room service?

Sasha grins. Starts putting on clothes.

NATE (CONT'D)

Hey. I don't exactly know what yesterday was-

SASHA

Does it need to be something?

NATE

No. Guess not.

Nate seems a little saddened by this.

NATE (CONT'D)

I feel a bit used.

SASHA

Goddamn, I had to fuck the one boy on the train.

NATE

What the fuck is that supposed to mean?

The train slows suddenly. Everything in the room RATTLES from inertia.

NATE (CONT'D)

Why are we stopping?

Sasha looks out of the window.

59 EXT. TUNNEL - MORNING

59

Anapel is heading for a blocked tunnel.

60 INT. LOCOMOTIVE CAB - MORNING 60

Anatoli is at his wits end.

ANATOLI
(in Russian)
Come on, girl!

He pulls on levers and switches.

61 EXT. TUNNEL - MORNING - MOMENTS LATER 61

The Anapel, slows and then stops, STEAMING and SHUDDERING.

62 INT. LOCOMOTIVE CAB - MORNING 62

Anatoli sighs with exhaustion. Caresses the dashboard.

ANATOLI
Good girl.

63 EXT. TUNNEL - MORNING 63

Sasha jumps out of the passenger carriage and trudges through the heavy snow. Nate follows her.

Anatoli comes out of his cab.

SASHA
What's wrong?

Anatoli motions towards the tunnel mouth.

ANATOLI
A fucking cave in.

The tunnel is blocked by a MOUND of SNOW.

SASHA
Where's the captain?

Anatoli gives her a look and shrugs: *where do you think?*

SASHA (CONT'D)
Find a flashlight for me, alright?

ANATOLI
What are you gonna do?

Sasha jumps up into a carriage. Nate just stands there and looks at the tunnel.

NATE
 (to Anatoli)
 Hey, I'm Nate-

Anatoli leaves.

NATE (CONT'D)
 Nice. Real nice.

64 INT. REYNOLDS' CABIN - MORNING - MOMENTS LATER

64

A chair that was blocking the door falls as Sasha pushes the door open. The place is a mess. Clothes thrown randomly. A couple of half-empty bottles of whiskey on the table. A phone is VIBRATING on the table.

Reynolds is asleep in the bed, half undressed.

There's also THE LETTERS. Out of the box and on the table.

Sasha grabs the bin and throws in the bottles. She hesitates with the letters. Puts them back into the box.

She opens the window to let some air in. Reynolds doesn't move. She throws the bin back to the corner of the cabin. Loudly. Reynolds stirs.

REYNOLDS
 Sash.

He gets up.

REYNOLDS (CONT'D)
 Morning.

He throws a quick glance at the table. Sees the box.

REYNOLDS (CONT'D)
 What's the.. problem?

Sasha grabs the phone. The call stops.

REYNOLDS (CONT'D)
 Leave it. It's the Russians.

SASHA
 What do they want?

REYNOLDS
 Turns out we weren't meant to take these tracks.

SASHA
But Anatoli told us-

REYNOLDS
I know. They're saying he's lying.
They're saying they never even
called him.

SASHA
I don't understand. Why would
Anatoli take us down a path he's so
afraid of?

REYNOLDS
Beats me.. But we're on it now.
They'll have to deal with it. Now..
what did you want?

65 EXT. TUNNEL - MORNING - MOMENTS LATER

65

Reynolds has climbed on top of the mountain of snow. He
shines a light through and into the tunnel. It's usable.

ANATOLI
(O.S.)
How is it?

REYNOLDS
Looks good.

He jumps back down.

REYNOLDS (CONT'D)
It's just snow. It'll take some
time, but we can clear it. Get Reef
and help him out. Sasha-

NATE
I don't mind helping.

REYNOLDS
..Noted. Sasha take Nate here and
go get a kill. Reef's been
complaining 'bout provisions-

SASHA
I can go alone.

An awkward moment.

ANATOLI
I'll get Reef.

REYNOLDS

(to Sasha)

Out of the question. My ship, my rules. Train.. You know what I mean.

NATE

Captain, it's fine. I'll stay behind-

Reynolds ignores him and just steps away.

NATE (CONT'D)

(to Sasha)

Sorry.

SASHA

Just don't slow me down.

66 INT. RESTAURANT CARRIAGE - MORNING

66

ACHOO! Hira sneezes.

HIRA

I don't get it.

Reef hands her a box of tissues.

HIRA (CONT'D)

It's like Spring. My allergies are going haywire.

REEF

Maybe you caught a cold.

HIRA

Yeah. Maybe.

Reef looks to the other end of the room where:

Nikolai and Henry are deep into a conversation, their voices hushed. Paperwork covers the desk.

More than a conversation: Nikolai SLAMS the desk in anger.

REEF

Hey!

Nikolai stands and walks out of the room. He passes Anatoli who's just walked in.

Henry's staring at Hira.

REEF (CONT'D)
Everything okay, professor?

HENRY
What? Yes-yes. Of course. All's
well. Excuse me.

Henry gives a hollow smile and follows Nikolai.

ANATOLI
Reef! Come on, it's your favorite
time of the year: manual labor-day.

Reef sighs, glances at Hira.

HIRA
I'm fine. Go-go-gadget-whatever.

Reef grins.

ANATOLI
Captain's orders.

REEF
Alright, alright.

Reef gets up.

67 EXT. FORESTS - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

67

Fat snowflakes fall so slow that time seems to have stopped.
Sasha and Nate drudge through it all, RIFLES on their backs.

NATE
You do this a lot?

SASHA
When I have to.

They walk for a bit.

NATE
Did you know that if you eat only
rabbit-

SASHA
Yeah.

Another moment. Nate stops.

SASHA (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

NATE

I just- I just don't get it. What is this?

SASHA

I'm trying to focus-

NATE

You're so cold you're not even a person. I thought after last night- I figured there was something here, that we had something in common. I'm not expecting a relationship but I thought we could be friendly. But you're.. empty.

That hits a nerve, she walks closer.

SASHA

Yeah-

NATE (CONT'D)

Look, I'm-

SASHA (CONT'D)

Sorry? Why would you be sorry? You really figured me out after a fuck, didn't you.

NATE

That's not what I meant!

SASHA

Reynolds and Reef, we're all wounded and scarred. Just waiting for someone to fix us. It's my entire being, Nate. A dark pit rotting under my skin. Just eating and eating and eating and eating away at me.

Nate backs away as Sasha walks closer.

SASHA (CONT'D)

Do you get off on this?

NATE

What the fuck's- ?

SASHA

Yeah I think you do! You think you look rosy as shit next to me but it's like staring at a fucking mirror. You just know how to cover it up.

Nate tenses up, curls his hand into a fist. Sasha spots this.

SASHA (CONT'D)
 I think deep down you're happy your
 parents died. Makes you
interesting. Get's you laid-

He hits her. She falls into the snow and spits blood.

NATE
 Sasha-

SASHA
 I'm fine.

NATE
 It's not that.

She turns to look to where Nate's looking. In the interspace
 of the trees, white shadows run--

Wolves.

68 INT. THE TUNNEL 68

Reynolds illuminates the misty tunnel with his flashlight.
 Waves to the train behind him.

69 INT. THE ANAPEL - LOCOMOTIVE CAB 69

Anatoli makes the orthodox sign of the cross. Then pushes the
 acceleration lever down. The dashboard lights FLICKER on/off.
 Anatoli doesn't catch that.

70 EXT. FOREST - DAY 70

The wolves have slowed. They dart between the trees and keep
 their distance.

NATE
 What are they doing?

SASHA
 Searching for a weakness. They
 might pass.

71 INT. HENRY'S CABIN - NIGHT 71

Henry jolts, as if waking from a dream. He's been staring
 into the dark tunnel moving past the window.

HENRY

What were you saying?

Nikolai's sat opposite to him. Henry's journals are laid out in front of them.

NIKOLAI

It's different this time.

HENRY

It's learning. As are we. It responds to aggression. It can sense it-

NIKOLAI

Continuation? We do nothing? Damn it, Henry! Don't you see that it has access to everything?

HENRY

You're afraid.

NIKOLAI

Afraid? Remember what happened last time? Do you want to lose everyone on this train? Do you want to lose Nate just as you lost Lily?

HENRY

Get out.

They stare at each other for a moment, then Nikolai leaves.

72

EXT. FOREST - DAY

72

Nate raises his weapon.

SASHA

No.

NATE

I can get one-

SASHA

No! Back away. Slowly.

NATE

What about you?

SASHA

They'll circle us if you don't move-- Right now!

Nate backs away. Sasha looks as the wolves get closer. The ALPHA steps into focus. Sasha's eyes widen, the wolf is eerily similar to the one she shot.

The Alpha perks up, instincts guiding the animal to something behind Sasha. She looks:

Nate is RUNNING.

SASHA (CONT'D)

Fuck.

Sasha loads a bullet into the rifle.

73

INT. RESTAURANT CARRIAGE

73

Chess. Reef's moving a piece, finishing a move against Hira.

HIRA

Woof.. Bad move.

REEF

Shut up.

But he doesn't let go of the piece.

REEF (CONT'D)

(doubting)

... Goddammit!

The LIGHTS in the carriage FLICKER OFF.

HIRA

Look what you did, Reef--

Hira coughs.

74

INT. TUNNEL

74

The Anapel comes to a stop-- Reynolds looks back.

75

INT. LOCOMOTIVE CAB

75

The dash console screens shut off one by one. Then the engine stops. The entire train is dead.

ANATOLI

(in Russian)

Fucking shit!!

76 EXT. FOREST - DAY

76

The wolves inch closer. One of them, an anxious young pup, lets out a growl and starts at Nate-- Sasha raises her rifle and follows the wolf-- Aims AHEAD of it and pulls the trigger.

The bullet hits the tree just in front of it-- PUNCHES out splinters and bark-- straight into the wolfs face-- it whimpers-- runs back.

Sasha looks at the Alpha that's creeped closer. It growls.

77 INT. TUNNEL

77

REYNOLDS

What did I tell you, Anatoli?

He shines his flashlight onto Anatoli near the LOCOMOTIVE DOOR.

ANATOLI

We're fine!

Anatoli opens an engine hatch.

78 INT. RESTAURANT CARRIAGE

78

Reef shines a flashlight into the darkness.

REEF

I've got meat in the freezer. If it goes off, I'll-

Hira struggles to breathe.

REEF (CONT'D)

You okay?

HIRA

Yeah- I'm-

Reef spots something in the light between them - MILLIONS of particles. He waves his hand and they move in the air.

Hira WHEEZES-- collapses.

REEF

HIRA!

He jumps up-- gently pulls her onto the floor. Realizes she's not breathing-- sudden panic overtakes him.

REEF (CONT'D)
HEY! I NEED- ANYBODY!

79 EXT. THE ANAPEL

79

They hear the scream.

ANATOLI
What was that?

REYNOLDS
Keep working.

Reynolds runs off.

80 EXT. FOREST - DAY

80

The Alpha walks closer-- bares teeth. The other wolves hang back. Sasha starts to reload the rifle-- her hands tremble too much. The bullet falls-- disappears into snow.

The Alpha is close enough to jump-- but it stops. A statue of pure aggression-- it billows plumes of breath into the air.

Sasha stares at it-- frozen-- hands still shaking. Time suspends-- seconds become a lifetime.

SASHA
(in Russian)
One... two... three...

81 INT. RESTAURANT CARRIAGE

81

Hira's TREMBLES-- gasps desperately for air. Reef is lost. Reynolds rushes in.

REEF
Cap! She can't breathe, captain! I don't-

REYNOLDS
Get the med kit from the cargo carriage.

Reef-- unable to hear, repeats:

REEF
Easy, easy..

REYNOLDS
REEF!

Reef looks up, confused-- then the training kicks in.

REEF
Yes, captain.

Reynolds turns Hira onto her side.

82 EXT. FOREST - DAY

82

SASHA
Five...

She reaches for another bullet. The Alpha growls-- head hung low-- eyes fixed on her every movement. The Alpha pulls in air through flared nostrils-- catches a scent from Sasha-- and again.

Then stops. Hides the fangs. Sasha stops, confused by the beast.

83 INT. CARGO CARRIAGE CORRIDOR

83

Reef runs through and into...

84 INT. CARGO CARRIAGE

84

Rushes towards a heavy CRATE in one end of the room. He slides the top off - inside, MEDICAL SUPPLIES and TWO TANKS, one OXYGEN and the other LIQUID NITROGEN.

85 INT. RESTAURANT CARRIAGE

85

Reef throws down the medical bag, the heavy tank on his shoulder.

Reynolds opens the bag, fishes out an EpiPen. Injects Hira.

Immediately, she finds relief. Slowly relaxes, the wheezing stops.

86 EXT. FOREST - DAY

86

The Alpha gives her a final look--- lifts its massive head and turns-- backs away. The other white shapes follow.

Sasha breathes for the first time in a while. Glances up to see Nate-- WHO AIMS HIS RIFLE.

SASHA

NO!

BANG!

The Alpha looks back-- starts into a run-- the wolves disappear into the trees.

Nate missed. Sasha closes her eyes-- relieved.

87 INT. HENRY'S CABIN - HOUR LATER - DAY

87

The lights flicker back on as the Anapel exits the tunnel. Henry takes up his pen, coughs. The desk in front of him is FULL of papers. He looks up-- towards someone.

HENRY

No. Not now. I'm working.

Something makes a sound. A rustling.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I told you-

He stops. In front of him, on the desk, sits a BLUE PAPER PINWHEEL. He takes it, looks at it.

88 INT. PASSENGER CARRIAGE - CORRIDOR - DAY

88

Henry exits his cabin, wheezing. Walks down the corridor, fights against the inertia of the slowing train, towards another cabin door-- knocks.

HENRY

Nikolai!

Tries to knock, then a heavy coughing fit takes him. The doors leading outside open. Nate and Sasha enter-- shell-shocked.

NATE

Henry!

He helps him up.

HENRY

The bugger locked himself in.

NATE

Come on, let's get you over here.

As they leave: Sasha spots the KEYCARD on the ground, takes it.

89 INT. RESTAURANT CARRIAGE - DAY

89

Nate sits Henry down.

HENRY

Thank you. Just a.. temporary weakness.

Nate looks back towards the carriage, sees Hira resting against a cabinet, breathing in oxygen. Reef and Reynolds helping her. Reynolds walks up.

REYNOLDS

Where's Sasha?

NATE

Came back with me. What happened?

REYNOLDS

Where's Nikolai?

They both look at Henry.

90 INT. PASSENGER CARRIAGE - CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

90

Reynolds knocks on the door. Nothing-- tries to open it, but it's locked. Hears a sound down the corridor, walks towards it then holds onto the wall as the train speeds up.

Sasha's opening the SERVICE HATCH DOOR that leads into the belly of the train.

SASHA

It's the only other way in. Unless you want to go through the roof.

Sasha lifts the hatch revealing a small tunnel... it's awful tight and the SPEEDING TRACKS are partially visible beneath the tunnel.

She undoes her belt-- takes off her jacket.

REYNOLDS

Stop. For Christ's sake. I'll get Reef to break down the door.

Sasha ignores him.

REYNOLDS (CONT'D)
Hira collapsed.

That stops her.

SASHA
What? When?

REYNOLDS
We're looking after her. She'll be fine. Nate told me what happened. What the fuck were you thinking?

SASHA
Cap-

REYNOLDS
Why didn't you shoot?

Sasha looks at him.

SASHA
I don't-

Reynolds keeps hammering.

REYNOLDS
You had a clear line of fire. Why didn't you shoot?

SASHA
I don't-

REYNOLDS
Why?! Tell me!

SASHA
I COULDN'T! I- I lost control. I froze.

She stares at Reynolds through tears.

SASHA (CONT'D)
I fucked up, alright?

He takes in her truth.

REYNOLDS
No. You didn't. You're not meant to be in control of every single second of your existence, Sasha. You're allowed to make mistakes. You're allowed to fuck up.
(MORE)

REYNOLDS (CONT'D)
I don't know what happened to you
that made you join up but-

SASHA
Nothing.

REYNOLDS
-you can't kill it. At some point
you have to accept it. You're not
meant to be in danger. You keep
following orders just so you
wouldn't have to think but one day
you'll have to stop and that
moment, that silence at 6 AM when
you have to look back and stare
your past in the face and do
nothing! That will be the hardest
fucking battle you'll need to win.
Save yourself for that.

Reynolds walks.

SASHA
Did you?

He stops.

SASHA (CONT'D)
Did you win?

The moment hangs.

REYNOLDS
Do you think I'd be here if I did?
Do you think any of us would be
here?
(then)
I'll wait by the door. Whatever you
decide.

Reynolds walks down the corridor and sit down in front of the
door. He stares back down towards the corner. But Sasha
doesn't appear.

91 INT. SERVICE SHAFT - DAY

91

Sasha pulls herself through the tight, dark passage. The
train tracks RATTLE nearby.

Her flashlight flickers. Sasha taps it against her palm. It
DIMS to a low ORANGE light. Particles, like grains of dust,
dance in the beam of light.

SASHA

Damn it.

She puts her hand out and PULLS her body forward; feels SOMETHING under her palm-- cold and wet-- She looks UP:

The tunnel has transformed into a SHEET OF ICE. Up and in front of her-- And there's something behind it.. or someone.

ON THE OTHER SIDE, air bubbles rise towards Sasha, a silhouette floats towards her.

SASHA'S FACE through the ice-- complete shock, horror and yet she's hypnotized. Cannot look away.

The orange light flickers off entirely and plunges the tunnel into darkness.

SASHA (CONT'D)

NO! Wait-

She fumbles with the flashlight. It flickers on again.

--and everything is as it was. She's back in the service shaft. She blinks a few more times, the shock of what just happened still imprinted onto her face.

SASHA (CONT'D)

(to herself)

I'm fine.

She wipes the tears from her eyes and continues onward.

92 INT. NIKOLAI'S CABIN - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

92

The VENT in the floor is KICKED open. Sasha pulls herself out.

And spots Nikolai.

He stands, back turned--HEADPHONES on and the cable tangling, unconnected. Looking down, Sasha spots: A KNIFE in his hand-- cutting his fingers. BLOOD drips onto the carpet.

SASHA

Nikolai?

93 INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

93

Reynolds is sat near the door. He perks up, hears Sasha in the cabin.

94 INT. NIKOLAI'S CABIN - DAY 94

Nikolai turns-- Lifts the knife. And stabs HIMSELF.
Repeatedly.

Sasha jumps into action-- grabs ahold of Nikolai's hand - he
fights back!

REYNOLDS
(O.S.)
Sasha?!

95 INT. CORRIDOR - DAY 95

Reynolds BANGS on the door.

REYNOLDS
SASHA!

96 INT. NIKOLAI'S CABIN - DAY 96

SLICE! As Sasha recoils back against the door, a GASH on her
arm.

She manages to unlock the door behind her.

SASHA
He's got a knife!

Reynolds jumps in. Goes after Nikolai.

Nikolai SLAMS him against a closet, his strength SUPERHUMAN
from the adrenaline. Reef in the doorway--

REEF
Captain-? Holy shit-

Rushes to help-- GRABS the arm that holds the knife- SMASHES
it into the glass window and breaks it. Cold AIR and SNOW
rush in-- Reynolds twists the knife from Nikolai's hands.
Nikolai crumples to the floor.

The men, spent, do the same. Sasha crawls to Nikolai.

Puts her hands on Nikolai's stomach, her own blood mixes with
his.

REEF (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

SASHA
Pressure.

The moment lasts.

- 97 INT. PASSENGER CARRIAGE - DAY - HOURS LATER 97
Reynolds stares out of the window and drinks whiskey from a tin cup.
Fat snowflakes fall serenely - The Anapel has stopped.
- 98 INT. PASSENGER CARRIAGE - CORRIDOR - DAY - BEFORE 98
Reynolds swipes Henry's card through the reader.. the doors open.
He walks into..
- 99 INT. LABORATORY - DAY - BEFORE 99
And behind the glass partition sees:
A BLACK JUNGLE filled with ORANGE STARS. The ENTIRETY of the compartment is covered with THICK BLACK LEAVES and POINTS of EMBER.
- 100 INT. PASSENGER CARRIAGE - CORRIDOR - DAY 100
Back to Reynolds, trying to make sense of all this.
Sounds in the cabin near him...
- 101 INT. NIKOLAI'S CABIN - DAY 101
Nikolai's serene face contrasting with the IV DRIP and bandages. Hira tends to him.
Out of the window:
- 102 EXT. THE ANAPEL - DAY 102
Sparkling white snow, endless and silent. White dunes in the background. A boundless tundra.
- 103 INT. RESTAURANT CARRIAGE - DAY 103
Reynolds enters...

The whole crew, minus Nikolai and Hira, are gathered in the carriage. Everyone looks.. beat.

Hira enters behind him, walks through. She looks winded, pulls off her BLOODY GLOVES.

HIRA

He's stable. As long as I can keep checking on him, he should be fine.

She sits next to Reef who offers her the oxygen mask. She waves it away.

REYNOLDS

(to Henry)

I think it's time we had a talk.

Henry nods. He's already sat alone, ready for what's coming. He smiles sadly.

HENRY

Nikolai and I used to work together. A long time ago. He was my student at the time, but really... we were equals. They didn't want to include him, but I vouched for him.

(then)

After a few months we uncovered a.. network of sorts.

NATE

Network?

HENRY

Roots. Massive in scale, spanning the length of the entire continent. The excavation was... difficult.

104 INT. NIKOLAI'S CABIN - DAY - BEFORE

104

Nate and Reynolds go over Nikolai's belongings. Journals. Books.

HENRY

(O.S.)

It would have been the discovery of a lifetime... Many lifetimes.

A photo of YOUNG HENRY AND NIKOLAI, proud scientists posing against an ice desert. Next to that, headphones and a TAPE PLAYER.

105 INT. RESTAURANT CARRIAGE - DAY

105

Henry stares at the tape player now on the table.

HENRY

We were ambitious. We should have
waited to make sure, but we
couldn't. We sent in a team.

Flood of tears come suddenly as Henry remembers.

START OF FLASHBACK:

106 EXT. ANTARCTICA - NIGHT - 1989

106

Darkness and snow. A heavy blizzard whips sideways over a frozen landscape. In the distance: lights flicker against a looming shadow..

The massive headframe of a mining tower juts out of the ice like a metal tumor. It creaks dangerously in the wind.

Below: hundreds of men stream through the camp; huge trucks, tunnel-bores and mining bulldozers grind against the thick ice, all headed towards THE OMINOUS BLACK HOLE that leads down into the permafrost.

107 EXT. ANTARCTICA - CAMP - NIGHT

107

A woman, the one from the TRAIN STATION, looks towards the mining tower and smiles.

LILY

(into a radio)

We're all set here, dad.

She holds out the blue pinwheel and lodges it into a snowbank.

It whirls into action.

LILY (CONT'D)

(into a radio)

See you when we get back.

END OF FLASHBACK.

108 INT. RESTAURANT CARRIAGE - DAY

108

Nate looks at Henry, shocked.

NATE

My mother? You sent in your own
daughter?

Henry nods, pulls away from his stare. Reynolds nods to Sasha who presses play on the tape player.

The tape spindle turns. A voice speaks, quickly but calmly.
Nate looks up, recognizing it.

LILY

(V.O.)

We're having some.. trouble with
our devices. Malfunctions..

The tape glitches and another voice cuts in momentarily.

MAN

(V.O.)

What's with you- No.

Sounds-- Banging on a door? Someone running? Lily speaks again, now desperate-- holds back panic.

LILY

Cole.. We lost Cole but- Something
extraordinary has happened.

Then the tape cuts to static. Nobody in the train moves. The spindle revolves, the tape player sits in front of them like a bomb.

Then a BLAST echoes out-- a cacophony of voices talk. Sounds of confusion, loud and frantic-- running.

Sudden quiet.

Then... a sound. Like a death rattle or a hiss that grows and grows and grows until it becomes the most HORRIFIC SCREAM and ends. The player shuts itself off into a stunned silence.

HENRY

Someone activated the emergency
charges.

SASHA

They buried themselves...

This sends a nervous shiver through the others.

NATE
You told me-

HENRY
I'm sorry, son.

NATE (CONT'D)
-that they died in a car crash. And
I believed you. You knew all this
time?

(then)
YOU KILLED YOUR OWN DAUGHTER!

There's so much anger in Nate. He WIPES the table clean. The tin cans go flying-- starts at Henry.
Reynolds steps between them.

NATE (CONT'D)
Get the hell out of my way.

No. REYNOLDS

Reynolds is like a rock. Zero emotion. Sasha and Reef stand, slowly.

NATE
Don't you get it? He lied to you
too. He lied to ALL OF US!

Hira spots Reynolds' hand on his REVOLVER.

SASHA
Nate.

She pulls him back-- Nate brushes her away. Walks out of the carriage. Reynolds watches him go, then turns back.

REYNOLDS
(to Henry)
Go on...

SASHA
(protesting)
Captain-

REYNOLDS
(colder)
Go on.

Henry gathers himself.

HENRY
I- buried myself in work. We had
just enough to write a paper. But
Nikolai took the fall. Someone had
to.

(MORE)

HENRY (CONT'D)
They destroyed him - his
reputation. He tried to end his
life.

REEF
Jesus Christ...

HENRY
He came to me two years ago. Said
he'd found another site.

HIRA
You set up this entire expedition
even when you knew what could
happen?

HENRY
I had to. For him. For my daughter.
For everything I had done. Nikolai
assured me we would do things
differently. I hoped..

He's broken. But no-one rushes to console him.

REYNOLDS
What's that thing in the lab?

HENRY
We don't know. But we know it
spreads with pollen. A single
particle is almost microscopic but
together...

HIRA
It's everywhere.

The group takes this in. Reynolds pushes on.

REYNOLDS
Do we know what it does?

Henry hesitates, doesn't respond.

REYNOLDS (CONT'D)
Then we burn it.

HENRY
(pure panic)
No. No- no. You can't!

REYNOLDS
Why not?

Henry just stares at him, as if listening to someone. Then relaxes.

HENRY

They're already a part of you, you see? Symbiosis bonds. You cannot destroy it. It would be like.. destroying yourself. We're an organism now and if you attack, you'll fight back.

He sinks into his chair, exhausted and coughing again. Hira moves to check on him.

REEF

So.. what? We do nothing?!

A solemn mood takes the carriage. Reynolds exhales, allows himself a moment of weakness.

REYNOLDS

There might be something in Nikolai's notes.. Can you take a look, Hira?

REEF

Captain, I don't think Hira's ready to-

HIRA

No. I want to help.

REYNOLDS

Anatoli?

ANATOLI

Yes, captain?

REYNOLDS

Get the Anapel moving. And report our position.

ANATOLI

What should I tell them?

REYNOLDS

Nothing.

ANATOLI

Nothing?!

REYNOLDS

We don't want anyone else on this train. We're on our way as planned.

SASHA
Captain-?

REYNOLDS
We can't stop or they will
investigate. For better or worse,
this thing is contained here with
us. Let's keep it that way.

Sasha looks out of the window, her experiences in the cave
now seeming more and more real.

109 INT. LABORATORY - DAY 109

Nate sits in front of the JUNGLE that's taken over the
laboratory. He seethes with impotent fury, inching closer to
a breaking point.

110 EXT. SIBERIAN TUNDRA - EVENING - HOURS LATER 110

The Anapel flies down the tracks.

111 INT. SASHA'S CABIN - EVENING 111

Sasha in the bed. Deep sleep. An unearthly light, from the
window perhaps, plays on her face.

A faint piano can be heard...

START OF DREAM/FLASHBACK:

112 INT. SASHA'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY 112

Young Sasha stands at the doorway. The pinwheel is gone from
the windowsill.

She watches her brother, LUKA (10) practice the piano. She
watches him with jealousy.

113 EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - DAY 113

CLOSE ON: A pair of bicycles, flying down the road.

It's Sasha and her FRIEND. They look back down the road where
her brother struggles to keep up. They laugh.

He stops, watches her go.

114 EXT. FOREST - DAY 114

Luka follows her sister through the forest.

He looks up at the treetops in wonder. They seem like a thousand miles away.

Sasha walks, enjoys the high grass kissing her feet.

115 EXT. SASHA'S CHILDHOOD HOME - NIGHT 115

Sasha and Luka sit on the porch and stare towards the forest.

LUKA
I can't see them.

SASHA
Close your eyes and count to five.

Luka does this. He looks again... nothing.

LUKA
There's nothing!

SASHA
You didn't dream hard enough!

Luka closes his eyes again.

LUKA
1...2...3...4.....5.

Looks.

Hundreds of tiny lights pulse between the trees. *Fireflies.*

116 EXT. LAKE - WINTER - DAY 116

Sasha walks to the shore of a beautiful frozen lake.

She looks back and waits for her little brother.

SMASH CUT TO:

117 INT. ICE CAVE - NIGHT 117

CLOSE ON: an alien thunderstorm - arcing electricity in fog.

END OF DREAM/FLASHBACK.

118 INT. SASHA'S CABIN - NIGHT - HOURS LATER 118

She opens her eyes. Everything in her cabin is covered with a THICK coat of pollen.

The door to her cabin is open. Someone runs down the corridor.

119 INT. PASSENGER CARRIAGE - CORRIDOR - EVENING 119

She exits her cabin.

Catches a brief glimpse of someone running towards the restaurant carriage.

She follows, passes an open door and looks in.

120 INT. CABIN - EVENING 120

It's Reef and Hira. They're tired, Nikolai's journals are open in front of them.

REEF

How could a plant bloom after thousands of years?

HIRA

It's not alive. It's not dead either.

SASHA

Hey, did you hear-?

Reef rubs his eyes. Puts his hand on Hira's.

REEF

We'll figure it out.

They don't hear her. It's like she's not even there for them. Sasha leaves them.

121 INT. RESTAURANT CARRIAGE - EVENING 121

Henry is sat behind a table, there're dozens of blue pinwheels in front of him. The carriage is still THICK with pollen.

Sasha enters.

Henry is not quite.. lucid. His focus unravels quickly, as if he's falling in and out of sleep.

SASHA
Did you.. see anyone come in?

Henry nods.

HENRY
They are.. everywhere. Here
(he taps his temple)
and below us.

Intrigued by his state, Sasha takes a seat behind the table.

SASHA
Why did you and Nikolai fight? Was
it about.. them?

Henry smiles. *Of course it was.*

HENRY
They are a reflection of us, you
see? Nikolai couldn't accept it.

SASHA
'They?'

He looks over his shoulder.

HENRY
You can come out now.

Sasha looks deeper into the carriage.

A YOUNG GIRL (11) emerges from behind one of the booths.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Come on..

She walks over and eyes Sasha cautiously. Clings to Henry's jacket.

HENRY (CONT'D)
This is.. my daughter, Lily.

Sasha retreats from her, afraid for the man. Henry's lost it.

SASHA
Henry, your daughter died. She's
not-

HENRY
Real?

Lily walks over to Henry. Shyly observes Sasha.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I have a memory of my daughter. She is gone, but that memory persists. It's real. Maybe there's more than just laws of physiology and physics. Maybe there's room for miracles?

Sasha stares at him like he's insane. Lily looks over her shoulder, back to her hiding place.

A morbid curiosity forces Sasha to walk forward.

And behind some chairs and a table, looking up at her, is LUKA-- Exactly as he was in her dreams.

Sasha gets hit by nausea-- stumbles back into the carriage-- into tables and chairs.

SASHA

No- Can't be.

Henry comes and crouches next to her.

HENRY

It's your brother, isn't it?

Sasha doesn't respond. Henry looks to Lily for confirmation, who nods.

HENRY (CONT'D)

My recommendation: look him in the eye. He's simply what comes out of our questions. Chasing itself into itself.

Henry stands, goes to Luka. Holds out his hand.

SASHA

Don't-

Luka takes it.

122 INT. PASSENGER CARRIAGE - CORRIDOR - EVENING - MOMENTS LATER 122

Sasha's sat against the wall. Her cabin door opens, Reynolds walks out. He gives her a look, closes the door behind him.

REYNOLDS

I have to admit: I am lost.

Reynolds exhales, looks at the trees fly by.

SASHA
He can't be here. It's not possible.

REYNOLDS
Why not?

Sasha stares at him, unable to begin. Reynolds pieces it together.

REYNOLDS (CONT'D)
You joined because of him.
Something happened.

Sasha nods.

START OF FLASHBACK:

123 EXT. LAKE - DAY

123

A small figure skates across the white ice of the frozen lake. Stops and looks back.

This is YOUNG SASHA, waiting for her little brother.

SASHA
(in Russian)
Keep up!
I wanna get to the cliff.

Luka speeds up to reach her. He's worse at skating than he thinks he is and is definitely trying to impress his sister. They look at the cliff that juts out of the lake. It's far.

He looks back towards the tree line. Their father is there, packing up the camping gear into the truck.

SASHA (CONT'D)
[I just went yesterday.]

LUKA
[It was colder yesterday.]

She speeds off.

LUKA (CONT'D)
[Wait!]

But she's doesn't listen-- enjoys the speed-- flies across the ice.

Finally stops-- the cliff so close. A cold wind whisks through-- she notices the silence- something is wrong. Looks back.

SASHA

Luka?

The lake is empty.

SASHA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Luka?!

He's nowhere to be seen-- Panic seeps through.

SASHA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

LUKA!

On the coast-- her father senses: something is wrong.

FATHER

SASHA!

His voice echoes across the empty ice.

SASHA

[I CAN'T FIND HIM!]

Sasha rushes back-- desperately searching for collapsed ice. Nothing-- The skates fly under her feet- right foot, left foot--

And finally, she sees it-- a large GASH in the ice. He fell through-- he's under there!

Her father run onto the ice-- grasping an axe. She skates--- stumbles. Her father slides across the ice-- reaches the spot-- raises the axe and lets it fall-- again-- again-- shards explode-- Sasha skates-- faster-- And faster-- And faster.

Her father pulls something from the water- a body-- cold-- blue. Not breathing. Sasha watches this through a flood of tears.

Her father starts CPR-- pushes on the small chest--

FATHER

[One..... two... three... four..
five..]

Breathes him air-- and again.

FATHER (CONT'D)

[one.. two... three.. four... five]

END OF FLASHBACK.

124 INT. PASSENGER CARRIAGE - CORRIDOR - EVENING

124

Sasha's in tears.

SASHA

I can't- talk to him again. See him again.

REYNOLDS

But you can't ignore him.

Sasha shakes her head.

SASHA

It's not him. I'm not his sister. Not anymore.

REYNOLDS

Then what are you? Sasha, I don't think he ever really left. The people we've lost, we carry them with us. I would give anything to have another day.

Sasha takes this in. She wants to believe this, but there's just too much fear.

Reynolds looks out, sees:

125 EXT. THE ANAPEL - EVENING

125

The Anapel has started to slow.

126 INT. PASSENGER CARRIAGE - CORRIDOR - EVENING

126

He turns back to Sasha.

SASHA

I can't lose him again.

REYNOLDS

You've been running from this your whole life. Turn around and face it.

SASHA

What am I supposed to do?

REYNOLDS
Nothing. Just talk.

Reynolds walks off. Sasha stares at her cabin door.

127 INT. LOCOMOTIVE CAB - EVENING - MOMENTS LATER 127

Reynolds enters the cab. It's empty. The screens flicker on and off.

One of the doors is open.

Reynolds walks out onto the railing.

128 EXT. THE ANAPEL - EVENING 128

The train has stopped midway into an OLD ABANDONED MILITARY STATION. There is A SMALL SHACK next to the tracks and a LARGE CONCRETE STRUCTURE built into the mountain.

It has stopped snowing. Everything is quiet and calm.

Reynolds watches as the sun sets into the white ocean of snow.

129 INT. SHACK - NIGHT 129

Reynolds enters the dilapidated shack and illuminates his surroundings with a flashlight.

The inside is completely wrecked. A bird, caught inside, beats its wings against a window.

Reynolds finds the electrical box, turns the lever.

130 EXT. ABANDONED STATION - NIGHT 130

Floodlights.. one.. two.. the third EXPLODES in sparks.

It is a bleak place, especially in the cold light.

131 INT. SHACK - NIGHT 131

Reynolds corners the bird, tries to aim its movements towards the door-- it's dazed, stares at him.

REYNOLDS
Get!

He kicks the table, the bird flies back and out of the shack.

A LOCKBOX, similar to what Reynolds had in his cabin, falls from the table. It cracks open, LETTERS spill out.

Reynolds looks-- confused at what he sees-- reaches for them-- then spots something outside the window.

132 EXT. ABANDONED STATION - NIGHT

132

Reynolds shines his light into the dark night.

He spots a path through the snow. It comes from the locomotive and heads off into the forest.

A figure stands near the trees

REYNOLDS

ANATOLI!

His call echoes out but the figure doesn't respond. Anatoli walks deeper into the forest.

Reynolds starts back towards the train and the lights flicker.

133 INT. RESTAURANT CARRIAGE - NIGHT

133

Reynolds, Hira, Reef and Nate. Reynolds has just explained to them about Sasha. The carriage is THICK with pollen.

REEF

We're losing it.

REYNOLDS

He's real. I saw him myself.

HIRA

Nikolai seems to think that at least some of this is hallucinogenic. But most of it isn't. The longer we spend in the pollen, the longer we are exposed, the faster this.. bond is formed. That's why Sasha, Henry and Nikolai were affected first.

REYNOLDS

What about Anatoli?

Hira shrugs.

HIRA

Some can still be affected faster than others. Hallucinations... visions and then.. them. *Dogmas*, that's what Nikolai calls them.

(to Reef)

They're real. Physical.

REEF

Do they always...?

Hira hesitates, then nods.

NATE

'Them?' 'They' are not Human.

They're not life.

REEF

But Sasha's brother-

NATE

A puppet. Nothing pretending to be something.

The room goes quiet for a moment.

NATE (CONT'D)

It needs to be destroyed, Reynolds. We need to kill the thing in the laboratory and destroy the dogmas. Otherwise, it can live on, infect everyone and spread. We need to defend ourselves.

REEF

And it would defend itself, right?

HIRA

Why is your first impulse to destroy it?!

Nate HITS a tin can against the desk.

NATE

BECAUSE WE KNOW!! We know what will happen. We know what happened to my parents. They killed themselves to get away from it.

(then)

This thing is a parasite. It's feeding on our past.

A stunned silence. Blood drips from Nate's hand.

HIRA
You're bleeding-

NATE
I'll take care of it myself.

Nate storms out. Reef and Hira look to Reynolds.

REYNOLDS
(under his breath)
Fuck.

134 INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT 134

Sasha pushes herself up. Walks to the door. Slides it open.

135 INT. SASHA'S CABIN - NIGHT 135

Luka is sat behind the desk, drawing. Sasha stands in the door frame. Then steps forward and sits opposite of him-- observes him and his evident humanity. Luka draws long, thin lines onto the paper.

SASHA
What are you drawing?

LUKA
A maze.

SASHA
Where does it start?

LUKA
That's the secret.
(then)
Everything is a maze if you don't
know where you are.

He smiles at her mischievously.

136 INT. NATE'S CABIN - NIGHT 136

Nate washes his hands. The blood runs into the sink.

He wraps a towel around it.

He rushes to his desk, opens HENRY's JOURNALS. Flips through and sees the tree again.

There's a KNOCK on the door. Barely audible. He stops for a moment. Ignores it.

Flips through the pages again-- Another knock-- Louder. He ignores it. The towel around his hand gets in the way-- discards it in anger-- blood specks onto the pages of the journal. Another knock on the door.

Nate slides the door open-- angry. There's nobody there.

137 INT. SASHA'S CABIN - NIGHT

137

Luke finishes another black line.

SASHA

Do you remember everything?

Luka nods. Pain ripples across her face.

SASHA (CONT'D)

Everything?

LUKA

Everything. I couldn't breathe. I died and I fell deeper and deeper. Deeper than I've ever been.

Through tears, Sasha forces herself to speak.

SASHA

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I shouldn't have ever left you on your own.

LUKA

It's okay.

SASHA

It was my fault.

LUKA

But I'm here now.

Sasha smiles a tearful smile. She wants to believe this.

LUKA (CONT'D)

Do you remember the fireflies?

SASHA

Of course. How could I forget?

LUKA

And the pine nuts for the squirrels? And the cabin by the shore?

Sasha smiles, then the nausea of the situation hits. This is sick. She stands quickly, hits the desk with his knee and stumbles away towards the bathroom.

LUKA (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

She can't even manage an answer.

138 INT. SASHA'S CABIN - BATHROOM

138

She stumbles in, runs to the toilet and vomits.

Then crumples to the floor and stares at the door as if someone could break through any minute.

But no-one does.

Sasha wipes away her tears, notices that her hands are shaking.

SASHA
One... two... three..

A sound from the other side of the door. A drawing slides in and onto the floor.

Sasha looks at it. It's Luka's. A child's drawing of a tree line and a house by the shore. She takes it.

139 INT. SASHA'S CABIN - NIGHT

139

Sasha walks out of the bathroom. Luka hasn't moved.

LUKA
I'm sorry you feel bad. Everyone's excited to meet you.

SASHA
Who?

LUKA
Everyone.

SASHA
Are they in the maze?

LUKA
No. That's silly. It's just a place. Whatever you want it to be. I'll show you tomorrow.

Sasha sits back down.

LUKA (CONT'D)
Do you want to draw? Draw home.

SASHA
I don't know if I have one.

LUKA
Homes are houses. Draw that. The floor goes first.

Luka draws a line. Sasha draws a wall.

SASHA
Like that?

LUKA
Yeah. You got it.

Sasha draws a roof to top it off.

LUKE
And you're inside.

Sasha draws herself as a stick figure.

Luka smiles at her: *job well done.*

SASHA
But where are you?

Luka taps against Sasha's stick figure..

LUKE
In here.
(then)
I can draw a boat.

Sasha leans back.

SASHA
Show me.

As he does, she just watches him. Accepting this strange reality even if just for a moment.

140 EXT. THE ANAPEL - NIGHT

140

The Anapel, lights flickering, sits in the snow.

141 EXT. TUNDRA - DAWN 141
Dawn with her rose-red fingers spreads across the snow.

142 EXT. THE ANAPEL - DAWN - MOMENTS LATER 142
Reynolds watches the orange sunrise in the tundra. Nothing but snow and mountains for miles.
Conflicting emotions...

143 INT. SASHA'S CABIN - DAWN 143
Sasha wakes with a jolt and the pollen that's gathered onto her clothes fluffs out into the sunny cabin.
Across from her bed, Luka is asleep in his.
Sasha watches his brothers face-- he's still here.

144 INT. SASHA'S CABIN - DAWN 144
Luka in Sasha's oversized winter jacket.

LUKA
I look stupid.

SASHA
It's cold outside.

LUKA
I'd rather be cold than look stupid.

SASHA
Don't say that. You wanted to show me something, didn't you?

Luka nods.

LUKA
I don't want to look stupid though.

Sasha sighs.

145 INT. PASSENGER CARRIAGE - CORRIDOR - DAWN - MOMENTS LATER 145
Sasha closes the door to her cabin. Spots Luka down the carriage, looking into Nikolai's cabin.

146 INT. NIKOLAI'S CABIN - DAY 146

Sasha stops near the door.

Nikolai is asleep in his bed.

LUKA

He'll wake up soon.

SASHA

Let's let him rest for now.

Sasha spots Nikolai's jacket on a hook in the cabin, takes it and throws it on.

SASHA (CONT'D)

Let's go.

147 EXT. THE ANAPEL - DAY - MOMENTS LATER 147

Sasha looks back up onto the trains stairs. Luka seems hesitant to follow her.

She realizes it's because of the drop. She holds out her hand and Luka takes it.

SASHA

You have to jump. Don't be afraid.

Luka jumps, Sasha catches him.

148 EXT. ABANDONED STATION - DAY 148

Luka and Sasha walk across the large square in front of the station building, two figures in snow.

149 EXT. THE ANAPEL - DAY 149

Reynolds stands, observes Sasha and Luka.

150 EXT. ABANDONED STATION - DAY 150

She looks back at Reynolds-- no-- behind him.

151 EXT. THE ANAPEL - DAY 151

Reynolds hears a sound and turns back into the train. Sees a shadow walking fast-- further into the train.

Reynolds follows...

152 INT. RESTAURANT CARRIAGE - DAY 152

Through the empty restaurant carriage. He catches a glimpse of the figure as they go into the gangway. The figure carries something heavy.

There's A BLOODY HANDPRINT against the glass. Reynolds notices this.

REYNOLDS

Hey!

He speeds up.

153 INT. PASSENGER CARRIAGE - CORRIDOR 153

Reynolds runs through-- turns the corner to see:

Nate--! He runs towards the laboratory-- his blood soaked hand struggling to hold up the TANK OF LIQUID NITROGEN on his shoulder.

REYNOLDS runs after him, but the door closes just as he reaches it.

He fishes out his card, tries it, but it doesn't work.

REYNOLDS

(loud)

NATE! OPEN UP, KID!

154 INT. LABORATORY - DAY 154

Nate hears the banging-- ignores it. The laboratory is FILLED with black leaves and vines, and behind the glass partition, A TREE. The same as the frozen one from the ice cave.

Nate stares at it, hatred takes him.

155 EXT. ABANDONED STATION - DAY 155

Luka and Sasha in front of the LARGE OPEN DOORS leading into the station.

Luka stares through them, curiously, into the darkness.

SASHA

What's wrong?

156 INT. LABORATORY - DAY 156

NATE sets down the tank of liquid nitrogen in front of the tree.

157 EXT. THE ANAPEL - DAY 157

Reynolds jumps out and onto the LADDER that leads to the top of the train.

ON TOP OF THE TRAIN

A SKYLIGHT leads down into the laboratory, but the glass is thick. Reynolds bangs the glass with the end of his revolver.

158 INT. LABORATORY - DAY 158

Nate doesn't look up, never notices Reynolds.

159 EXT. ABANDONED STATION - DAY 159

Sasha crouches down to Luka, searches his face.

SASHA

What is it?

Luka doesn't say anything, looks towards The Anapel. Sasha looks too, sees Reynolds on top of the skylight.

SASHA (CONT'D)

Stay here, okay? Don't move!

LUKA

Wait.

Sasha's torn.

SASHA

I'll be back. I promise.

Sasha runs. Luka watches her go, then turns back towards the opened doors and the darkness beyond.

160 INT. LABORATORY - DAY 160

Nate primes the tank. Holds out the nozzle.

The orange embers PULSE. The pollen swirls in front of him then RUSHES towards four fixed points.

Two STRUCTURES start to form as the pollen fixes itself into place. Vaguely humanoid.

NATE
(under his breath)
No.

He pulls the trigger-- the skylight breaks-- the room FILLS with FREEZING SMOKE.

161 EXT. THE ANAPEL - DAY 161

Sasha's halfway there-- spots Reef running next to the rain-- heading for the roof.

LUKA
SASHA!

She looks back. Luka's staring at the other end of the train-- someone falls out of it and into the snow--

Nikolai-- still bloody, bandaged and half naked. And he's closer to Luka than she is.

SASHA
LUKA! RUN!

162 EXT. THE ANAPEL - ROOF - DAY 162

Reef climbs onto the train-- peers down into the carriage..

Nothing but the COLD FOG and.. sounds of a fight!

REEF
CAPTAIN!

More fighting, things falling and crashing. A SHOT echoes out. And then, a stunned silence.

REEF (CONT'D)
Fuck.

He jumps in.

163 EXT. ABANDONED STATION - DAY 163

Luka turns and runs into the bunker. Nikolai stumbles then goes into a run-- picks up speed-- fueled by adrenaline and pain.

Determination takes over-- Sasha starts towards him. But she's far. Nikolai's already reached the doors-- disappears through.

164 INT. LABORATORY - DAY

164

The laboratory is nothing but white fog.

Reef walks through it, cautious.

Every so often, the orange embers pulse, slower and slower...

REYNOLDS
(in pain)
Ah..

Reef heads for the sound. Reynolds leans against a cabinet, beat up, bruised and in pain.

REYNOLDS (CONT'D)
Goddammit, the kid didn't stop.

Reef turns towards where he's looking. Moves there.

And finds Nate shot to death, in the SHATTERED COLD REMAINS of the tree. The fog slowly clears. Reef crouches over the body.

REYNOLDS (CONT'D)
How is he?

Reef shakes his head.

Guilt washes over Reynolds-- he rolls onto his knees, tries to stand up. Manages. He can't even look at the body.

REEF
You didn't let him do it, captain?
Why not?

Reynolds doesn't answer. Reef realizes..

REEF (CONT'D)
You met one of them... One of the
dogmas.

Reynolds nods, solemn. He limps away. A moment as Reef sits with Nate. The embers pulse once, twice more and then stop... And don't start again.

165 INT. PASSENGER CARRIAGE - CORRIDOR - DAY - MOMENTS LATER 165

Hira comes out of the laboratory. Shakes her head at Reef:
nothing she can do.

HIRA
What will we tell Henry?

REEF
Nothing. I don't think we could get
through to him anyway.

HIRA
I don't know what's happening.

She breaks.

HIRA (CONT'D)
I keep hearing my father, but- I
know that he-

Reef holds her.

REEF
It's okay. Just breathe.

Reef spots something down the corridor. BLOOD smeared across
the glass. More blood on the snow outside-- he heads for the
bunker doors.

HIRA
What's wrong.

REEF
Where's Nikolai?

HIRA
His cabin-

Reef runs down the corridor. Nikolai's cabin door is open--
the bed is empty.

Reef stares at Hira, white as a sheet, then out of the
window.

REEF
He's going after them. After Sasha.

HIRA
What? Wait!

But it's too late. Reef jumps out into the snow.

166 EXT. THE ANAPEL - DAY 166

Rushes down the path and TRAIL OF BLOOD left by Nikolai.

167 INT. THE ANAPEL - DAY 167

Hira watches Reef run-- A sound behind her makes her turn.
It's her cabin door. It slides open.

She walks up-- sees something inside-- something that brings
grief, fear and ultimately, happiness.

168 INT. HIRA'S CABIN - DAY 168

Someone turns to face Hira. A man.

169 INT. ABANDONED STATION - DAY 169

Sasha stops in a decrepit large hall. Two large rusted
carriages take up most of the space. No Nikolai, no Luka.

SASHA

LUKA?!

In the middle of the room, there's a small stairway leading
deeper down and into the building

Sasha runs down the stairs.

170 EXT. ABANDONED STATION - DAY 170

Reef reaches the doors-- runs through and into:

START OF HALLUCINATIONS/FLASHBACKS INTERMINGLED WITH REALITY:

171 INT. ABANDONED BASEMENT - MIDDLE EAST - DAY 171

A dark space with high ceilings. Pillars hold up the floor
above, the cracks in them are constantly weeping.

He moves forward-- water comes to his chest. He holds up his
RIFLE above it-- shines his flashlight out.

SOLDIER

Lieutenant!

A SOLDIER-- battered, bruised and bloody. A few more emerge
from the darkness.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)
The door frame collapsed.

REEF
Check the windows.

SOLDIER
We did.

Reef shines his light on the SMALL WINDOWS. All of them are BARRED.

REEF
Charges.

SOLDIER
Lieutenant- This whole thing could collapse on us-

REEF
Charges! That's an order!

The men move forward towards the windows to plant the charges.

172 INT. ABANDONED STATION - HALLWAY 172

Sasha descends into a long, dark and empty hallway.

173 FLASHES OF A THUNDERSTORM 173

174 INT. REYNOLDS' CABIN - DAY 174

Reynolds, tending to his wounds, sits onto his bed.

Looks up at someone. A hand touches his cheek. A woman.

REYNOLDS
I'm worried about her.

WOMAN
We know. She'll find her way.

175 EXT. THE ANAPEL - DAY 175

Henry and Lily. Henry points out the sunset on the horizon. She looks, bathed in the warm orange light. Sets something into the snow-- a blue pinwheel. They walk and the wheel turns in the wind.

176 INT. ABANDONED STATION - HALLWAY 176

Sasha flicks on her lighter-- small glow-- the walls are a dark solid shadow. She continues down the hallway.

It slants deeper... HEAVY DOORS lead off into other sections.

She continues on, reaching... A MASSIVE SPIRAL STAIRCASE.

Sees an electrical box on one of the walls. Opens it and pulls down a switch.

177 INT. ABANDONED BASEMENT - MIDDLE EAST - DAY 177

A BRIGHT EXPLOSION rattles the building. The windows are utterly destroyed.

The soldiers and Reef look, cautious. The building stands-- for now.

REEF
MOVE! EVERYONE!

Reef goes first. Lifts himself up, out of the building--

178 EXT. TOWN - MIDDLE EAST - DAY 178

Onto a sandy city street. He turns back. A LARGE CHUNK of CONCRETE falls off the building-- not going to hold for long.

SOLDIER
Lieutenant-

REEF
MOVE! MOVE NOW!

The soldiers move through the water-- heavy and slow movements. More concrete falls-- Reef looks up--

REEF (CONT'D)
COME ON!

REACHES OUT TO HELP-

179 INT. ABANDONED STATION - STAIRWAY 179

Someone cries out. One long wail of grief. Sasha, mid way down the staircase, looks up. She hesitates.. but continues downward.

180 INT. ABANDONED STATION - WALKWAY

180

She walks off the stairway and onto a balcony overlooking a half collapsed, cavernous maze of walls and rock, deep underground.

The THIN IRON POLES of the foundation stick out like a sea of dark needles. The only light she has comes from the stairway behind her.

Next to her, through the large glass wall, an overlooking office filled with old computers and rusting file cabinets.

LUKA
(O.S.)
Sasha?

It came from inside the office-- she heads there.

181 INT. ABANDONED STATION - OFFICES

181

Luka has hidden himself behind a desk. He looks up as Sasha approaches.

SASHA
Hey. It's okay. I'm- I'm here now.

Luka backs away from her.

SASHA (CONT'D)
It's okay. I'm not going to hurt
you.

She feels something in the parka pockets... fishes them out--
FLARES

She cracks one-- red light explodes. Sees Luka's expression. It's *pure fear*. And he's not looking at her-- he's looking behind her.

Sasha turns-- too late! Nikolai LUNGES at her-- CRASH! As he THROWS her into the desks-- Sasha fights back-- pushes them both out of the room and-

182 INT. ABANDONED STATION - WALKWAY

182

BANG Against the railing. It CREAKS, almost falls away. Sasha narrowly avoids tumbling down-- She pushes herself free-- SLAMS Nikolai against a glass wall-- smashes it-- Nikolai cries out in pain-- stumbles back.

Nikolai-- in the low red light of the flare-- stands on the walkway-- stares at Sasha. The doorway sits between them.

SASHA

Nikolai- What are you doing?

NIKOLAI

Destroying them.

SASHA

Why?

Nikolai stops as if he'd never considered that he would have to explain.

Sasha has moment to spot the blood soaked bandages-- the wounds in his gut-- the manic stare in his eyes. In the red light, he's more demon than man, running on nothing but pure adrenaline-- hallucinating and mad.

NIKOLAI

I've played back the tape of my friends dying in that mine every day for the last twenty years. Of them losing their minds. OVER AND OVER AND OVER AGAIN!! And now... They are here. Whispering to me. Accusing ME!

Sasha feels the walkway creak below them-- sees the rusty railing behind Nikolai.

SASHA

Nikolai, listen- if you attack them they'll fight back. What ever happened, you have to let go.

Nikolai doesn't hear her.

NIKOLAI

I realized.
That these things.. They *steal*.
They are unnatural. They live off our pain and guilt. That is all they are. If you want to be free, you have to destroy them.

Sasha glances down-- one of the poles underneath the walkway is just barely visible-- a mercury glow in the dark--

SASHA

You're wrong.

NIKOLAI
The boy... isn't real.

The light moves. They both look through the glass-- Luka's shadow against the red light of the flare.

SASHA
He's real to me. Please, Nikolai.
Stop.

Nikolai doesn't move-- Then runs! Sasha lunges at him-- takes him by surprise-- They run through the red light-- Against the railing-- it breaks away-- Nikolai FALLS--

PULLS Sasha with him-- CRASH onto the factory floor-- BLACK.

183 INT. ABANDONED STATION - FLOOR - HOURS LATER

183

Sasha comes to consciousness.

She's on top of Nikolai. He's dead outright.

But she didn't escape unharmed.

A METAL SPEAR sticks out THROUGH Nikolai and comes out of Sasha's back.

She cries from the pain. SCREAMS and pushes herself up and off Nikolai and the spear.

Falls down next to him, almost losing consciousness.

Her bloody fingers find a flare, she cracks it.

The room fills with red light.

Luka is farther, standing in front of something...

SASHA
(whispering)
Luka...

Luka turns, runs over.

LUKA
I was waiting for you to come back.
I knew you would.

Sasha touches his face, leaves blood behind.

SASHA
I'm hurt.

LUKA

I know.

He looks back, for a moment, as if hearing something.

LUKA (CONT'D)

We should go. I can't stay here.
You can't either.

SASHA

I can't move.

LUKA

You have to try.

Sasha cries. She can't.

LUKA (CONT'D)

Please try.

Sasha laughs, an absurd reaction to pain, but she just can't help it. Luka steps away.

SASHA

Wait, Luka-

She watches him go down a few steps.. A *stairway*?

She looks up... Something in the air.. Fog? No, pollen.

Like she saw in the ice cave. It's peaceful, friendly, moving without wind. Magical even.

Sasha rolls to her side, it takes everything to get her up. To get her limping. She walks over towards Luka.

The room is SPLIT by a HUGE chasm, leading below.

LUKA

It's a long way.

He holds out his hand. Sasha takes it. They walk down the natural steps.

184

INT. ICE TUNNEL

184

The rock cavern is slowly replaced by ice as they head deeper down.

185 INT. ABANDONED STATION - FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER 185

The red flare flickers.. the pollen in the air forms into a vortex, flies into the tunnel.

The red flare dies out.

186 INT. ICE TUNNEL 186

Sasha cracks open the last one. Feels the pollen rush in, it's like wind picking up. The tunnel fogs up with it.

LUKA
Not long now.

Luka speeds up, lets go of her hand.

SASHA
Wait-

Luka disappears into the fog.

Another wave of pain hits her. She leans against the ice and holds the flare out.

Walks on.. spots DARK ROOTS inside the ice next to her.

SASHA (CONT'D)
Luka? Where are we?

Walks on...

187 INT. ICE CAVE 187

She walks through the thick pollen until reaching a larger opening.

And a CLEAR ICE WALL.

She holds out the flare, trying to peer deeper in.

Sees Luka and something more-- A BLACK TREE. With the last of her strength, she SLAMS against it. But it doesn't break.

She crashes against it, slides down, turns towards the pollen behind her.

The flare flickers. But she sees something in the fog.

A CRACKLING of ELECTRICITY. A thunderstorm.

Fear of death takes her.

SASHA

Luka- I'm-

LUKA

(O.S.)

I'm here.

SASHA

I can't see. I can't see anything.

Sasha sees the flare flicker. It's going out. She searches for another but finds nothing. Only the folded drawing.

Shaking, she opens it.

The flare goes out, but the light doesn't end. Sasha looks at the drawing. The house by the shore. Everything she's lost.

And then her hair moves with the wind... She breathes in.. sea air.

She turns.

188 EXT. THEIR CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY

188

An all black tree, leaves trembling in the wind. Luka is stands near a path that leads down towards their house. He smiles.

She looks back.. at the black sea, waves falling in slow motion. A thunderstorm far on the horizon.

She looks down.. her wound is gone.

She stands, turns towards the path. Luka's smile widens.

LUKA

Come on, they should be home.

He runs off. Sasha follows.

DOWN THE PATH

To the house. Luka runs up the porch and someone opens the door as he approaches. A figure stands in the doorway. Sasha looks up at him. She smiles and tears fall.

A piano plays in the house.

She's home.

END.