

"STIRRING"

FADE IN:

OUT OF FOCUS ON:

Green circle surround by silver.

SUPER: Opening titles

PULL INTO FOCUS, PULL BACK TO REVEAL: a small light on a mechanical panel. The light glows green and a WHIRRING NOISE growls from the belly of the machine.

Pull back further. A robotic tank-like machine, with lights and mechanical arms. The machine rolls over the uneven terrain, grinding gears as it tracks forward. TILT UP, following robot TO REVEAL:

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Just after sundown. A blue glow still fills the bottom of the horizon. It is a bombed out town, snowed and iced over. Though the buildings look run down and condemned, they are all occupied.

The tank-like robot, which is about 9 inches long, moves forward, with a semi-elaborate "head" turning back and forth, a bright green light shining from it.

Also traveling down the street in the same direction are several other similar robots, each with lights and scanners of their own.

Walking amongst the small robots are armed military guards, wearing distinguished hats and long warm decorated coats. Each carries a metallic rifle-sized gun as they CRUNCH through the snow.

Snow lightly falls. Except for the guard's FOOTSTEPS and the robot's WHIRRING, the city lays silent.

Suddenly, the light on the robots all turn red as they emit a CHIRP. Three robots swarm in on the nearest house.

A tank-like robot crawls up the walls next to a window on the front of the house. An arm extends and cuts a large circle in the glass, then disappears into the house through the hole. A spider-like robot crawls the outside of the house to the roof and drops down the chimney, where smoke slowly creeps out into the winter air. A wheeled robot flattens itself and slips in under the door.

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CONTINUED:

Guards slowly sneak up and take formation around the house. Using hand signals, each moves into position effortlessly and silently, save their footsteps through the snow.

Inside the house, there is a yell, then a crash. Soon, lights strobe in the house. The guards tense up and aim for the door. Something is clamoring near.

Suddenly the door busts open, a VILLAGER (42) runs from the house, screaming. On his back is the spider-like robot. It is wrapped around his head and shoulders, its free arms striking him, sharp blue electric bolts and sparks coming from the tips, shocking the Villager.

Guards grab the villager. One guard grabs the robot, removing it from him, and pressing a button, the red light returns to green and the robot becomes docile.

A commander, ALEXSEI (44) watches from near the door as they haul off the villager, barking commands. When everything looks under control, he stops to light a cigarette.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Behind Alexsei, inside the house, a THUD. Another guard, Sergei steps into the doorway, looking. They look at each other.

Alexsei steps into the house, heading for the noises. Shadowed on the wall is a head and arm struggling to rise. As Alexsei steps into the back room, he sees that a lamp has fallen over on the floor, and the shadow is created by one of the robots - sparking, smoking, and convulsing on the bedroom floor.

He motions for a CLEAN-UP TEAM to come in. They bring in a hovering bin and start dumping the villager's personal items into the bin. Sergei reaches and picks up the malfunctioning robot.

INT. FACTORY - DAY

The malfunctioning robot is tossed onto the workbench of JOSEF (38) who is eating his lunch. He looks up to see the guard, LEV (30) who threw it there. Lev glares at him, then turns and leaves. Josef pushes his lunch to the side and begins to examine the malfunctioning robot, which is now burnt and lifeless.

INT. FACTORY - BASEMENT CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

A guard, PUDOVKIN (35), patrols the hallway, heading away from a door at the end of the hallway. Josef walks past him, avoiding eye contact, and enters the door.

INT. FACTORY - BASEMENT STOREROOM - CONTINUOUS

Josef shuts the door, reaches in his jacket and pulls out his lunch. He grabs the half-eaten sandwich and takes it with him over to some large metal file drawers.

He pulls out the first two which are deep, the third is shorter, and comes all the way out, spilling spare parts all over the floor. Josef sighs, sets his sandwich on top of the drawers and bends down to try to clean them up.

EXT. FACTORY - MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

Josef and his COWORKERS leave for the day, single-file. A new shift of workers enters through another door, single-file. All of the workers are dressed the same, and the GUARDS stand out from them.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DUSK

Josef waits in line to pick up a food package at a corner distribution kiosk. Workers use blue tickets, elite use red tickets.

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - EVENING

Josef eats dinner with his family, his wife, Katya and son, Zechariah. Katya sets food on the table as Josef and Zechariah eat.

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - BATHROOM - LATER

Josef bathes Zechariah silently.

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - SON'S BEDROOM - LATER

Josef tucks Zechariah in and kisses him goodnight.

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - LATER

Josef is buttoning up his pajama shirt. Katya is already asleep. Josef turns, notices this, and slips into bed. They sleep in two separate twin beds.

INT. SECURITY ROOM - NIGHT

The bedroom can be seen on a black and white monitor. Josef turns out the lamp in the room and it grows dark. Other monitors show the other rooms of the house, then other rooms in other houses.

A sentry, VERTOV (35) operates a console that controls the large panel of multiple monitors. A senior officer, DOVZHENKO (50), stands nearby reading a document.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Josef walks down Main Street. Other WORKERS head to their place of work. Alexsei, stands watching everyone pass. Josef glances at him. Alexsei is staring him down.

Josef crosses the street. Alexsei begins to follow him. Josef ducks into an alley, then stops. Alexsei comes and joins him.

ALEXSEI

Good morning, Josef.

JOSEF

Hello, Alexsei.

ALEXSEI

Is it finished?

Josef reaches into his pocket and pulls out a small remote, as they both look back and forth nervously. As a surveillance robot crawls by, Josef pushes a button on the remote. The green light turns blue, and the robot comes to the remote. Using a small joystick on the remote, he controls the robot.

ALEXSEI (CONT' D)

And this will work with any machine?

JOSEF

Whichever one is closest, and within range of the remote.

Josef hands the remote to Alexsei.

ALEXSEI

And I have complete control?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOSEF

Yes, until the network detects that it has gone offline.

ALEXSEI

How long is that?

JOSEF

Three minutes?

Alexsei plays with the remote, and the robot fumbles in circles.

ALEXSEI

I'll have to practice.

INT. FACTORY - BASEMENT STOREROOM - DAY

Josef searches through some boxes for parts, not having much luck. He stops to study a screw, to see if it fits the bolt he has, when he hears a CLICKING SOUND.

He turns to see the source of it - a mouse, perched on the metal cabinets, eating the remains of his sandwich from days before.

Josef reaches for a broom, and sneaks up on the mouse as it eats. He screams, startling it, and it darts to the ground heading for some shelves. He swats the ground with the broom.

The mouse runs underneath the shelves, and Josef goes after it with the broom handle, his head near the floor, as he chases after it.

Suddenly, the mouse disappears. Josef looks. The mouse's SQUEAKING gets further and further away. He takes the broom handle and knocks it along the baseboard under the shelves until it reaches a spot where there is no baseboard, and the broom slides up under the shelf.

MOMENTS LATER

Josef pulls back the shelves. The broom handle is half in a hole that appears to be eaten away plaster. About three feet of baseboard are missing, and there is smooth plaster instead. The hole is in the bottom right corner.

He kneels down and starts to pick at it. It begins to chip off a little, and he widens the hole. On his hands and knees, he peers into the hole.

INT. FACTORY - TOY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Josef chips away a large chunk of a now larger hole, using a sharp piece of metal and a mallet. He bends down and looks in. He finds it is just big enough for him to squeeze through.

Lit only by one window at street level, ambient sunlight pours into the small room in large shafts through the dusty, damp air. In the room are several shelves, containing many boxes. There are also many boxes on the hard floor. Everything in the room is covered in a thick layer of dust.

Josef goes through a box. It is full of dossiers with pictures of children stapled to them. He finds a picture of the front of his factory, looking new. There is a sign, but the text is unintelligible. On the steps of the building are MANY CHILDREN of all ages, and a few hardened HEADMISTRESSES. Other pictures show children sleeping in large rooms together, watched by the headmistresses.

He puts the pictures back, and continues to look around the room. At the opposite end is a large wooden trunk.

Josef opens the trunk. Inside are many colorful toys. Josef goes through them one by one - trucks, soldiers, dolls, cars, horses, etc. He wonders at their color and unusual size. Some make noise. He finds a small colorful elephant, wonders at it in the light, and pockets it.

EXT. FACTORY - MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

Josef leaves with other workers. They are watched by an officer, PYRIEV (45). Suddenly, robots chirp and turn red, and head for the line of workers leaving. Josef tenses up. Pyriev, seeing the robots, hurriedly moves toward the line.

PYRIEV

Halt!

As he nears, Josef begins to sweat. Suddenly, Pyriev shoves Josef out of the way as the robots converge on the WORKER behind him. Pyriev grabs the worker and hauls him away. Josef catches his breath.

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The family eats dinner. Josef watches his son eating, and smiles. Zechariah looks at Josef. Josef winks at Zechariah, and pats his shirt pocket. Zechariah cocks his head at Josef.

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CONTINUED:

Josef looks up, and eyes the camera. Katya taps her spoon twice on her plate to get his attention.

KATYA

Josef.

Josef mimics her by tapping his spoon on his plate.

JOSEF

(mocking)

Katya.

Katya stares at him for a moment, then return to eating.

KATYA

Eat your food.

Josef looks at her, then to his son who is watching him. He taps on his plate again.

JOSEF

Zechariah.

Zechariah startles.

JOSEF (CONT' D)

"Eat your food."

Zechariah giggles, and returns to eating, as does his father. Katya looks to Josef sternly, who shrugs. The family continues eating in silence.

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - BATHROOM - LATER

Josef undresses Zechariah as the bathtub fills with water. Josef looks at his pocket. Once Zechariah is down to his underwear, Josef reaches into the tub to get a washcloth, when his glasses fog up. He looks back at the water. He reaches down and turns up the hot water.

INT. SECURITY ROOM #1 - CONTINUOUS

On a screen, an overhead view of Josef's bathroom steams up, and eventually becomes completely blurred.

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Josef checks the camera to see if it is completely steamed. He kneels on the floor with his son and reveals the toy. Zechariah's eyes light up and he reaches for the toy, taking it carefully from his father.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Immediately, he begins to play with it. Josef watches in amazement as his son plays with the toy, making noises. Josef reminds him to be quiet.

Katya knocks on the door.

KATYA (O. S.)
What's taking so long in there?

Josef reaches over and turns off the water.

JOSEF
Waiting on the water to cool off.

He takes the toy back from Zechariah, winking. He puts it in the cabinet under the sink, and holds his finger to his lips. Zechariah awkwardly winks back.

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - ZECHARIAH'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Josef gets his son ready for school. Katya is briefly in and out doing chores. She speaks to Josef, but does not look at him.

KATYA
He's going to be late.

Katya leaves the room. Josef helps Zechariah with his coat. Zechariah smiles.

ZECHARIAH
I can't wait until bathtime.

Josef smiles back. He quickly kisses Zechariah on the forehead as he rises.

JOSEF
Neither can I.

Zechariah giggles as Josef takes his hand and leads him out.

INT. FACTORY - DAY

Josef works on a robot at his workbench. GRIGORI (50), Josef's supervisor, walks by with a clipboard.

GRIGORI
Josef, we need more hinge bolts for the A27.

JOSEF
Yes, sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Josef rises and heads downstairs. Grigori moves on.

INT. FACTORY - BASEMENT STOREROOM - DAY

Josef enters, shuts the door, slips behind the shelf and into the hole.

INT. FACTORY - TOY ROOM - DAY

Josef searches the toys, selects another one.

EXT. FACTORY - MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

Josef sweats as he hustles out of line and on his way home. Pyriev watches him.

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The family eats dinner. Josef winks at Zechariah and gives him a peek at the toy. Zechariah's eyes widen. Katya sees and eyes them sternly. They look at her and return to eating.

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Steam fogs the camera. Zechariah plays with both toys, Josef assembles another remote.

INT. FACTORY - DAY

Josef eats his lunch at his work station. Grigori approaches PETROV (35), the worker next to Josef.

GRIGORI

Petrov, we need more rubber stoppers for C83.

PETROV

Yes, sir.

Josef sits up.

JOSEF

I can go.

Grigori looks at him.

GRIGORI

Yeah, okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Grigori goes back to his clipboard and Josef heads for the stairs once again, passing Pudovkin, who is leaning up against the wall by the doorway to the stairs, eating an apple.

Grigori looks at Josef's station and sees his lunch. He turns to Pudovkin and looks at him. Without saying a word, Pudovkin heads for the stairs.

INT. FACTORY - BASEMENT CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Josef ducks around a corner. Pudovkin takes a bite of the apple, realizing halfway through that it's very loud. He slowly bites off the piece, and sets the apple down somewhere nearby.

He continues through the corridor, rounding the corner just in time to see the door to the store room close shut. He leans up against the corner and waits.

INT. FACTORY - TOY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Josef is looking through toys. He rises to hold one up to the light, but ends up backing into a box. It drops and hits the floor. It is full of small trinkets and broken toys, which spill everywhere, making a lot of noise.

CORRIDOR

Pudovkin hears the box drop. Slowly he walks toward the door of storage room.

STOREROOM

Josef crawls out of the hole, quietly pushes the shelves back in place, and runs to the metal cabinets, slowly pulling out the short drawer, and gently scattering the pieces across the floor.

CORRIDOR

Pudovkin arrives at the basement storeroom door. He puts his ear to the door and listens for a second, and then opens it to reveal:

BASEMENT

Josef sweeping parts back into the drawer. He looks up to the guard and shakes his head, chuckling.

JOSEF
I always do that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Annoyed, Pudovkin turns and leaves.

EXT. FACTORY - MAIN ENTRANCE - DAY

Josef exits the factory, breaking out of line as soon as he is able, and walks briskly toward home, his hands buried in his pockets away from the cold, winter wind.

He passes a surveillance robot, which beeps and lights up red, headed for him. Pyriev, who is standing around talking with Sergei and Lev and a couple of other guards, takes notices and begins to head that way.

Almost immediately, he points his pocket at the robot, which lights up blue momentarily and stops. Pyriev stops and looks at Joseph. Without missing a step, Josef shrugs and continues on his way.

Pyriev stares at the robot. It is perfectly still as he nears it. He is about to touch it, when suddenly it whirs back to life, does a 180, and heads for Lev. The light turns red and it begins chirping.

All the other guards look at Lev. Lev shrugs. The guards move in.

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - DINING ROOM - LATER

Josef enters the house. Zechariah runs to him and hugs his legs.

JOSEF
Well, hello there.

Josef kneels down to his level. Zechariah touches his shirt pocket, feels the toy, and giggles. He reaches in and takes it, and runs off with it.

JOSEF (CONT'D)
Zechariah, no!

Josef chases after him, grabbing him sternly by the arm and ripping it out of his hands.

INT. SECURITY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vertov sees the commotion out of the corner of his eye and rolls his chair closer to their screen to watch it.

DINING ROOM

JOSEF

Zechariah, no! You can't do that.
People will see.

Zechariah pouts.

KATYA

Zechariah, sit.

Zechariah runs back to the dinner table. Katya sets Josef's food down on the table.

KATYA (CONT' D)

You should have been home 30 minutes ago.

Josef takes off his coat and hat and hangs them up.

JOSEF

Yes, I know. They were doing a patrol of sector 12. I had to go around.

Josef sits down, and begins eating. Katya stares at him for a moment more, then returns to serving food.

KATYA

Is that what our life will become?

JOSEF

What?

KATYA

It's as if we are not watched by every measure. You want we should be afraid to walk outside as well?

Josef studies her face.

JOSEF

I'm sorry...

KATYA

You want we should also be afraid to live in our own home?

Katya sits down to eat. Although their argument grows heated, their movements remain stilted and focused on eating dinner, even if forced.

JOSEF

You refuse to come in there. You have not seen his face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATYA

What should I see? His happiness locked up in a wash closet? Is that happiness to you? Is that freedom?

SECURITY ROOM

Vertov, focused on the audio from another house, occasionally checks Josef's. The dinner scene on the monitor appears as a normal dinner.

DINING ROOM

The family continues to eat.

JOSEF

I'm just trying to give him a little bit of hope.

KATYA

Hope for what, Josef?

Josef stops eating and looks at Katya.

KATYA (CONT' D)

You are stirring up emotions inside of him that he will never be able to use out there.

JOSEF

Maybe he can... he might change things.

Zechariah watches his parents like a ping-pong match.

KATYA

Change things? Are you listening to yourself? You risk our family's safety for the pursuit of your hopeful ignorance.

JOSEF

Is it ignorance to wish for more?

KATYA

If it's unattainable, yes!

JOSEF

It is not unattainable!

Josef slams down his spoon into his bowl. Zechariah jumps.

SECURITY ROOM

Vertov sees Josef's outburst. Turns on the audio. Only the sound of the wobbling bowl.

DINING ROOM

The bowl wobbles on the table and comes to a halt. Josef reaches for the spoon slowly as he and Katya stare at each other.

JOSEF
(quietly)
I'm sorry.

SECURITY ROOM

Vertov watches and listens.

KATYA (O. C.)
It's all right.

DINING ROOM

Katya stares at Josef.

KATYA
Are you finished?

JOSEF
I suppose so.

Katya rises.

KATYA
Bathtime, Zechariah.

Josef gets up.

KATYA (CONT'D)
Josef, clear the table, please.

Josef starts to protest, but stops.

JOSEF
Yes, mother.

Katya takes Zechariah's hand and leads him to the bathroom.

ZECHARIAH
I want papa, mama.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATYA

Not tonight.

She rushes Zechariah to the bath and shuts the door. Josef clears the table.

SECURITY ROOM

Vertov watches and listens for a while. He then turns off the sound and goes back to monitoring other houses.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Josef walks on his way to work. He spots Alexsei, and heads for the alley. Alexsei follows.

ALEXSEI

What is it, Josef?

JOSEF

I've found the most incredible thing.

ALEXSEI

What?

JOSEF

In the basement of the factory, there is a room. It must have been closed off for a hundred years or more. Did you know that many children lived there years ago?

ALEXSEI

What did you find, Josef?

Looking back and forth to make sure they are alone, Josef pulls out one of the small toys from his coat pocket, and shows it to Alexsei.

ALEXSEI (CONT' D)

Put it away!

JOSEF

What is it?

ALEXSEI

I don't know! Whatever it is, it's contraband, and you'll be caught! You've gone crazy!

Josef takes offense.

JOSEF

Crazy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEXSEI

If the other guards don't catch you with it, the machines surely will.

Josef pulls the remote out of his pocket.

JOSEF

Crazy, perhaps, but not ignorant.

Alexsei shoves the remote back deep into Josef's pocket, and pushes him back against the wall.

JOSEF (CONT' D)

I've taken several of them home to my son. You should see his face, Alexsei. I've never seen such happiness in a child.

ALEXSEI

You'll be caught!

JOSEF

The steam from his bath fogs up the camera. We have a few minutes of playtime at night, if mother allows...

ALEXSEI

You are becoming bold for such a little man. Stealing this contraband from the factory is insane, and I cannot protect you from it!

JOSEF

So my stealing parts for your private controls is acceptable, but my stealing something that brings hope and life to the eyes of my son is insanity?

ALEXSEI

Yes, Josef! In this world, yes. I wish it were not so, but hope and life are not valued here.

JOSEF

All the more reason we should fight harder for them.

Josef turns and briskly walks out of the alley back onto the main street.

INT. FACTORY - TOY ROOM - DAY

Josef digs through the toy box. He is starting to lose his fascination with most of the toys.

He finds another box deep in the toy box. He pulls it out and opens it. It is full of books.

He begins to look through the books. The first shows a boy and girl traveling up a hill to a well. The text is unreadable. Josef turns the page to see the boy and girl falling down the hill.

Fascinated, Josef looks through the next book. It is about a girl in a red coat who encounters a wolf in the woods. The wolf eats her grandmother. Josef reacts.

Josef digs through and pulls out a book with a fat man in a red suit on the front. He opens it and sees pictures of the man giving toys to children. Josef's eyes light up.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DUSK

Josef is almost running home. He sees Alexsei, and heads for the alley. Reluctantly, Alexsei looks around, and follows.

Josef is brimming with excitement.

ALEXSEI

What is it?

JOSEF

I found a book with pictures.

ALEXSEI

This is getting out of hand, Josef.

Alexsei turns to leave, but Josef grabs him

JOSEF

It is about a man who gives toys to his children.

Alexsei stops and looks at Josef.

JOSEF (CONT' D)

My desires are not insane. They are hopes of things that once were.

Alexsei turns away again and walks back toward the street.

JOSEF (CONT' D)

Faith in what can be.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEXSEI
Giving contraband to your child will
change only one household-- by making it
fatherless.

Josef swallows.

ALEXSEI (CONT' D)
You are my friend, Josef, but I cannot be
a part of this.

Alexsei turns and leaves.

INT. JOSEF' S HOME - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Steam rises from the bath. Katya folds a towel and hangs it
on the rack. She turns to see Zechariah playing with a toy.
She scolds him and takes it from him, tossing it under the
sink, where there are about 20 other toys.

INT. JOSEF' S HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Josef sits on his bed as Katya enters and changes into her
pajamas.

JOSEF
I found a book.

KATYA
And what good will a book do you.

JOSEF
There are pictures.

Katya doesn't respond.

JOSEF (CONT' D)
It is about a man who gives toys to his
children.

KATYA
Stop dreaming, Josef.

Katya climbs into bed.

KATYA (CONT' D)
Little good can come from this. No more
talk about it in this house.

She turns off the light and goes to sleep. Josef soon
follows suit.

EXT. JOSEF' S HOME - DAY

Josef walks out the front door with Zechariah, talking to him. Katya comes out behind them with recyclables.

After Josef and Zechariah leave, Alexsei comes by the house. Katya looks up.

KATYA

Hello.

ALEXSEI

Hello, Katya. I've come to see if Josef is making life difficult for you at home.

KATYA

Very much so. I worry about him, Alexsei. He is blinded by these crazy notions.

ALEXSEI

Yes. I agree.

Katya looks around.

KATYA

Has he mentioned the book.

ALEXSEI

Yes. I fear he won't let it go.

KATYA

Indulge him just long enough for him to get it out of his system. He'll get bored with it soon.

ALEXSEI

You think he will become bored with something he is so passionate about?

KATYA

It wouldn't be the first time.

Alexsei smiles at her warmly.

ALEXSEI

I'll have a talk with him.

INT. FACTORY - DAY

Josef is working on a robot. Sergei and Pudovkin come in followed by Alexsei. Grigori is behind them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEXSEI
We're here for a security check.

Alexsei points at Josef, Petrov, and TOMAS (28).

ALEXSEI (CONT' D)
You, you, and you. Come with us.

Sergei and Pudovkin grab the three and drag them into the hallway.

INT. FACTORY - HALLWAY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Alexsei pulls Josef to him and shoves the other two workers to each of the guards.

ALEXSEI
(to Petrov)
You, take him around the top floor.
(to Tomas)
You take him around the ground floor.
We'll take the basement.

Tomas and Petrov lead the guards away. Alexsei gives Josef a shove.

ALEXSEI (CONT' D)
Downstairs. Go.

INT. FACTORY - BASEMENT - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Still in sight of the cameras, Alexsei shoves Josef into the storeroom.

INT. FACTORY - BASEMENT STOREROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Alexsei pushes Josef into the center of the room, and gets right in his face.

ALEXSEI
Show me the book.

Josef gives him a puzzled look.

INT. FACTORY - TOY ROOM - DAY

Alexsei is sitting on a box reading the book. Josef sits on the floor and listens, wide-eyed.

ALEXSEI
(reading)
*"He sprang to his sleigh, to his team
gave a whistle,*
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEXSEI (CONT' D)

*And away they all flew like the down of a
thistle.*

*But I heard him exclaim, 'ere he drove
out of sight,
'Happy Christmas to all, and to all a
good night!'"*

Alexsei closes the book. Josef stares at him.

JOSEF

What does that mean?

ALEXSEI

What does what mean?

JOSEF

"Happy Christmas."

Alexsei looks back in the book.

ALEXSEI

I believe it is the name of the
tradition. I seem to remember from my
schooling as a boy that it occurred early
in winter, just before the new year. But
it was abolished along with all of the
other festivals and celebrations long
ago.

JOSEF

And this "Saint Nicholas?" He is not the
father of the family?

ALEXSEI

No, the tradition was that this "Saint
Nicholas" would deliver toys to all of
the good children.

JOSEF

All the children?

ALEXSEI

Yes. Well, according to the tradition.
It was a fairy tale invented to get
children to behave. The children waited
for it to come around once a year--

JOSEF

Once a year?

ALEXSEI

Yes, it was a yearly tradition.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOSEF

How do you know about this?

ALEXSEI

We studied the banned traditions in the Academy, why they led to our downfall.

JOSEF

Tell me more about it.

ALEXSEI

Here.

Alexsei rips the page out of the book with Santa on it.

ALEXSEI (CONT' D)

There's everything you need to know.

Alexsei gets up to leave.

JOSEF

You'll help with this?

ALEXSEI

Oh, no, no, no.

JOSEF

Why not?

ALEXSEI

Josef, you're playing with fire.

JOSEF

I want to do this for the children!

ALEXSEI

You don't know what you're saying, Josef. There's a reason these festivals and traditions were done away with. You will move the people to anger and revolt. And this festival in particular comes from a religious tradition about the birth of a child who was to save his people. If you start rekindling these fairy tales, the government will rip you apart, and I cannot stop them.

Alexsei turns to leave, as he is trying to crawl through the hole, Josef drops a toy in his pocket. Alexsei makes it through, and turns to look at Josef.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ALEXSEI (CONT' D)
 Promise me you'll think about dropping
 this whole thing.

JOSEF
 Promise me you'll think about helping.

Alexsei sighs.

ALEXSEI
 Fine. Deal.

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The family eats dinner silently.

ZECHARIAH
 Mama, can papa bathe me tonight?

KATYA
 No.

Zechariah pouts.

ZECHARIAH
 Then let me do it alone. I don't want
 you in there.

Katya stares at Josef.

KATYA
 Fine. Papa can do it.

Zechariah beams at Josef. Josef winks at him, then notices
 Katya's disapproval.

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - BATHROOM - LATER

Steam fogs the camera. Zechariah sits in the floor in his
 pajamas surrounded by toys, playing with them. Josef is
 still dressed, sitting in the water-filled tub.

EXT. ALEXSEI'S HOME - NIGHT

Alexsei comes down the road. As he makes the turn onto his
 short sidewalk to the front door, the dogs at the house next
 door bark loudly at him.

ALEXSEI
 Shut up!

INT. ALEXSEI'S HOME - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alexsei enters. The dining room is considerably nicer than Josef's, although still somewhat meager. The food on the table is better, and Alexsei's wife and son are dressed better.

Alexsei's son sits at the dinner table working on homework in a book with words. Alexsei's wife brings dinner to the table. Alexsei looks out the window to the front yard as he takes off his gloves.

ALEXSEI'S WIFE

How was your day?

ALEXSEI

Long.

Alexsei looks at his son, who is engulfed in his studies.

ALEXSEI (CONT'D)

How are your marks?

ALEXSEI'S SON

Good.

ALEXSEI'S WIFE

His teacher says he's in the top percentile of his class.

Alexsei becomes interested in something on the front lawn - a dog from next door, sniffing around.

ALEXSEI

Wonderful.

ALEXSEI'S WIFE

Next week he'll be tested for physical fitness, and if he does well there, he'll be in consideration for the officer's academy.

Alexsei reaches into his pocket and pulls out the remote that Josef built for him.

ALEXSEI

Mhmm.

ALEXSEI'S WIFE

Our little one is following in his father's footsteps.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Alexsei operates the remote and a robot crawls over to the dog, who is now beginning to squat on the lawn, and shocks it on its hind quarters. The dog YIPS and runs off.

ALEXSEI

AHA!

Alexsei's wife stops and looks at him. He notices.

ALEXSEI'S WIFE

What?

ALEXSEI

Oh, I mean, that's wonderful. Wonderful.
Good job, son.

ALEXSEI'S SON

(not looking up)

Thank you, papa.

ALEXSEI

What is for dinner, mother?

Alexsei takes off his hat and sticks it in his pocket. He turns toward the coat rack by the front door.

ALEXSEI'S WIFE

Tonight it is meatloaf stew and cabbage.
And fresh beets!

Alexsei feels something in his pocket. His back to the government camera, he pulls it out slowly. He looks down to see a toy horse in his hand, beautifully colored with polka dots.

ALEXSEI'S WIFE (CONT'D)

Does that sound all right?

ALEXSEI

(distracted)

Yes, delicious.

Alexsei looks back at his son. He takes the toy and slips it into his pants pocket.

ALEXSEI (CONT'D)

Son.

Alexsei's son looks up.

ALEXSEI'S SON

Yes, papa?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALEXSEI
Hurry and finish your supper. Tonight
you bathe before bedtime.

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - BATHROOM - NIGHT

In the steamy bathroom, Josef, now in his pajamas, shows Zechariah the book and tells him the story.

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Josef and Katya are preparing for bed.

KATYA
You've made me the enemy.

JOSEF
What?

KATYA
He doesn't have enough to fear? The
cameras? The machines? The guard? Now
he must fear his own mother?

JOSEF
Katya, you must understand that these
toys give him hope.

KATYA
Why should he have hope? It's
groundless!

JOSEF
It's not!

KATYA
I had hope once, Josef. I had hope that
as a mother I could raise a son who would
one day make a good worker and father.
But now you've turned him against me. I
have no purpose now.

JOSEF
That's not true--

KATYA
You and he work together. Me? I am left
standing alone with dirty dishes and
wrinkled clothing.

Josef stares at her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOSEF

I love you.

KATYA

Stop it! Sentiments like love died out with the traditions of centuries ago. All we have now is purpose, and you've taken mine away.

Katya gets into bed. She stares at the wall for a while. Josef stares at her.

KATYA (CONT' D)

You do so much for him. I just wish you would do something for all of us.

Katya reaches up and turns out her light, faced away from Josef's bed. Josef stares at her for a while and lies back in bed, turning his light off.

After a moment, he gets up. The sound of METALLIC SCREECHING as he pushes his bed up next to hers. Katya jolts at the sound and rolls over in the dark to look and see what he is doing.

When the beds are together, Josef crawls up on it and snuggles up behind her, grabbing her from behind.

KATYA (CONT' D)

What are you doing?

JOSEF

Something for us.

Josef kisses her. It is stilled, until Katya melts and kisses him back.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - DINING ROOM - MORNING

Josef hurries Zechariah out the door.

JOSEF

Let's go. We're running late.

ZECHARIAH

What was it, papa?

JOSEF

Probably just the house settling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Katya smiles at him. Josef turns around from the front door to kiss her goodbye.

KATYA

I've learned something since last night.

JOSEF

Oh?

KATYA

Yes. A single act can breathe much hope into a person. And that hope changes their world, whether it changes anyone else or not.

JOSEF

I see... no, I don't see.

KATYA

One week before the new year, Saint Nicholas should pay our village a visit.

Josef smiles broadly and hugs her, then kisses her. She smiles back at him. Josef turns to Zechariah, and slings his pack over his shoulder.

JOSEF

"Ho ho ho."

Zechariah giggles, and they exit together.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Josef hurries to work with a spring in his step. Alexsei accosts Josef and pushes him into the alley.

ALEXSEI

I gave my son the toy at bathtime.

Josef stares.

JOSEF

And...?

ALEXSEI

What do you want me to do?

INT. FACTORY - BATHROOM - DAY

Petrov is at the urinal. Josef comes up to the urinal beside him and begins using it. Josef slightly leans toward him and whispers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOSEF

I need you to help me with something.

Petrov slowly turns his head and stares at Josef.

INT. FACTORY - TOY ROOM - LATER

Josef shows Petrov the toy and the book. Petrov is reluctant, constantly checking the entrance, nervous. Josef tears a page out of the book, folds it and stuffs it into Petrov's front shirt pocket along with the toy.

He also gives Petrov the remote, which seems to set him at ease.

INT. WORKER'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Steam fogs up the camera. A YOUNG BOY is taking off his outer garments. His father, Petrov, watches the steam, as he pulls the toy from his pocket and looks at it.

INT. FACTORY - DAY

Petrov comes to Josef and stares at him. Josef looks up from his work. Petrov nods. Josef smiles and stands and shakes his hand. Petrov tries to slip him the page from the book and the toy, but Josef refuses them, looking around. He whispers into the Petrov's ear and points to YAKOV (32), another worker.

INT. FACTORY - TOY ROOM - LATER

Petrov gives Yakov the page, along with the toy and the remote.

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Josef works on several more remotes while Zechariah plays with several toys in the tub.

INT. FACTORY - DAY

Yakov and Josef nod as they pass each other.

INT. FACTORY - BASEMENT CORRIDOR - DAY

Yakov leads IVAN (34) into the storeroom.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Ivan discreetly passes the page to FILIPP in an alley.

INT. FACTORY - DAY

VARFOLOMEI brings Josef a robot. Josef takes it from him.

VARFOLOMEI

I thought you might want to take a look
at this.

Underneath the robot, Varfolomei holds some spare parts,
which Josef takes from him and transfers to his coat pocket.

JOSEF

I'll get right on it.

INT. TOY ROOM - DAY

SYMON (28), wearing a jumpsuit with similar markings to the
guards' uniforms, shows Josef some wires coming from a pipe.

SYMON

...and this blue one is for the cameras.

JOSEF

Are you sure?

SYMON

Josef, please. I do this all day long.

INT. FACTORY - BATHROOM - DAY

Tomas is in one stall, MATVEI (31), in the next.

MATVEI

Friend, a little help, please.

Tomas passes him a roll of toilet paper under the stall wall.
Matvei tilts it, and spare parts fall into his hand from
inside the roll. He sets the roll on the floor, and drops
the parts into his pants pocket.

MATVEI (CONT' D)

Thanks.

TOMAS

No problem.

INT. FACTORY - DAY

Workers eat their lunches. MLADEN whispers to FADDEI. Under
the table, he slips him the page and the toy. Faddei passes
it onto ISAAK (32) who pockets it.

INT. SECURITY ROOM - DAY

Vertov watches the monitors. Suddenly, they all go blank. Vertov looks puzzled, looks to his board.

TOY ROOM

Symon takes his freshly cut wire and patches it into a portable screen with an attached keypad.

SECURITY ROOM

Vertov spins his chair around.

VERTOV
Eh... Dovzhenko?

Dovzhenko looks up from some paperwork just after all the screens come back on.

DOVZHENKO
What is it, Vertov?

Vertov turns and points toward the screens, but stops when he sees them working.

VERTOV
Eh... nevermi nd.

TOY ROOM

Symon flips on his monitor. It is of an empty dining room.

SYMON
It worked.

JOSEF
Where is that?

SYMON
How should I know? I have a camera number here, but there's thousands of cameras across the village. I don't have them memorized.

JOSEF
How will we find all the children?

SYMON
That requires breaking into the computer system, and for that you would have to be crazy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Josef stares at Symon. Symon sighs.

 SYMON (CONT' D)
I'll get on it.

Josef hugs him and then leaves him to his work.

 JOSEF
I must get back before I'm missed.

Josef stops and turns.

 JOSEF (CONT' D)
Will you not be missed?

 SYMON
 (without looking at him)
Not if I hurry and complete my assigned
work early in the day.

Symon stops to search for something in his tool belt.

 SYMON (CONT' D)
You know, Josef, for the first time, I'm
actually motivated to do my work.

Josef smiles.

 JOSEF
You're welcome.

Symon goes back to pulling wires.

 SYMON
I'll send you the bill.

EXT. FACTORY - DAY

Josef, Varfolomei, Yakov, Ivan, Filipp, Petrov, Tomas, Matvei, Maden, Faddei, and Isaak leave the factory. Once through the exit line, they fan out on their ways home.

EXT. VILLAGE STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Several of the men on their various ways home. As robots approach, they use the remotes from their pockets. The robots, stop, convulse, spark and smoke, then fall over.

Isaak approaches Lev, and pulls out the page.

EXT. TOY ROOM - DAY

Symon has a small makeshift computer station set up made up of small units all wired together. On the screens are dossiers of children, shots of their bedrooms, and an overhead digital map of the village. They all cycle simultaneously.

Symon solders a circuit board, then removes a chip from a machine and places it on the circuit board. He tosses it into a pile of completed circuit boards. He grabs a new chip, places it in the machine, grabs a new circuit board from a stack of blank boards, and begins soldering again.

INT. FACTORY - DAY

Guards bring in the broken robots to the workbenches of the twelve.

INT. FACTORY - LATER - SERIES

Each worker removes a circuit board from the robot, and slides one of Symon's circuit boards into its place.

INT. GOVERNOR'S HOUSE - GOVERNOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Small hands write in an unreadable language on paper. They are the hands of ANYA KAZIMIR (6). She works diligently.

She sits in the large office of GOVERNOR ERAN KAZIMIR (42), who sits at his large desk signing documents. Behind the desk hangs the giant seal of the government.

The doors to his office bust open, and Lev enters with Isaak, followed by Sergei and Alexsei.

KAZIMIR

What is this?

LEV

This man wishes to speak to you.

Lev tosses the page on Kazimir's desk. Kazimir unfolds the paper and looks at it. Then he looks to Isaak. Isaak is sweaty and nervous.

KAZIMIR

(still looking at Isaak)
Anya, go to your bedroom

ANYA

I am writing you a story, papa.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAZIMIR

Anya.

Anya immediately sets her things down and leaves, sulking. Kazimir notices. He calls after her.

KAZIMIR (CONT' D)

I will read it tomorrow, child.

Anya doesn't even turn to look.

ANYA

(to herself)

Always tomorrow. Never today.

Anya shuts the door behind her. Kazimir looks at the door. After a moment, Lev clears his throat.

KAZIMIR

State your name and your business.

ISAAK

Jude Isaak, sir. I have some knowledge of an underground operation.

KAZIMIR

Some knowledge? Are you a part of it?

ISAAK

No sir.

KAZIMIR

What is this knowledge you have, then?

Isaak swallows.

ISAAK

Red ticket.

KAZIMIR

I'm sorry?

ISAAK

I want my family to be upgraded to red ticket meals. Or I tell you nothing.

KAZIMIR

You think you can walk in here and blackmail the highest office in this village?

ISAAK

I think it fair, sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KAZIMIR

Fair? Do you see the seal on the wall behind me?

ISAAK

Yes, sir.

KAZIMIR

I decide what is fair. What is the information you have?

ISAAK

Well, sir, I don't know much now, but if you agree, I could find out. I have earned their trust.

Kazimir stares at him.

KAZIMIR

Whose trust?

Isaak doesn't answer.

KAZIMIR (CONT'D)

(to Lev)

He's lying. Take him to a cell and convince him to tell the truth.

ISAAK

But I don't know anything yet! Please you must believe me!

Lev shoves him toward Sergei, who drags him out of the room, despite his protests. The doors shut behind them silencing Isaak.

LEV

Do you think he would invent this whole story for red ticket meals?

KAZIMIR

Doubtful.

LEV

And if he really doesn't know anything?

KAZIMIR

He knows something.

Kazimir looks at Lev.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

KAZIMIR (CONT' D)

There's a reason you get red ticket meals. Find out the rest yourself.

LEV

Yes, sir.

Lev snaps a salute and leaves.

KAZIMIR

(to Alexsei)

This happened in your sector?

ALEXSEI

Apparently so, sir. This is the first I've heard of it.

KAZIMIR

Tighten security. Search every house in your sector at random. I want these people found and brought to justice. If they succeed, you'll be held responsible.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Alexsei and Josef are in the alley.

ALEXSEI

Josef, I have no choice.

JOSEF

Everyone will be shattered.

ALEXSEI

He's holding me responsible, Josef.

JOSEF

You are responsible, Alexsei.

ALEXSEI

It will mean my family's position, Josef

JOSEF

What about the families whose hopes you will be destroying?

ALEXSEI

Josef, it could mean my life!

Alexsei is almost in tears, catching his breath. Josef looks into his tired eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOSEF

What about quality of life of all of us?
Why concern yourself with life if it's
not worth living?

Alexsei stares long at Josef.

JOSEF (CONT' D)

We have come this far. We will make it,
but not if you back out on us, Alexsei.
I know it seems like a petty rebellion,
but this could be the first step to a new
life for our children. And don't tell me
that your highest hopes for your son lie
in red ticket meals.

Alexsei sighs, thinking.

JOSEF (CONT' D)

I'm not asking you to help us. Only to
keep them away from us.

ALEXSEI

I will do what I am able.

INT. FACTORY - BASEMENT STOREROOM - DAY

Josef going through spare parts. The boxes are almost full.
He takes a few of several different kinds.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Alexsei with a map speaks to Sergei, Pudovkin, and Pyriev,
pointing them in different directions.

INT. CELL - DAY

Lev hovers over Isaak, who lies beaten and bleeding on the
floor.

LEV

Give me the names!

ISAAK

We both know you're going to kill me
either way. Upgrade my family or I tell
you nothing.

Lev grunts in anger and drags Isaak across the floor by his
collar.

INT. FACTORY - DAY

Tomas has a broken robot in front of him, working on its wheels as Grigori passes behind him. As soon as Grigori has passed, Tomas pulls a smaller part from his sleeve and works on it.

INT. SECURITY ROOM - DAY

Alexsei and Dovzhenko go over a checklist as Vertov operates the control board. On a screen, Pudovkin and Sergei searching a house.

INT. VILLAGE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Pudovkin and Sergei search the house, but come up with nothing.

INT. TOY ROOM - DAY

Symon watches Pudovkin and Sergei on his screen, and crosses off a house on a printed map as he chuckles.

INT. GOVERNOR'S HOUSE - GOVERNOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Lev enters. Kazimir looks up. Lev drops Isaak's dirty ID tag on his desk. Kazimir looks to Lev, who shakes his head, turns, and leaves.

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Steam fogs up the camera as Zechariah sits in the bath and Josef grabs handfuls of toys and puts them in his pockets.

INT. FACTORY - DAY

Josef shows Yakov how to put together a small mechanical leg. Yakov nods.

INT. GOVERNOR'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Kazimir steps up to Anya's doorway. She lies fast asleep in her bed. Kazimir, looking tired himself, watches her sleep.

Sergei comes up to Kazimir, who reluctantly gives him his attention. Sergei says something to him, and they leave together.

INT. TOY ROOM - DAY

Faddei and Yakov search through spare parts. The boxes are about half empty. Matvei shows Mladen how to assemble the mechanical leg.

INT. TOY ROOM - DAY

Josef works on a remote. Filipp sits next to him working on something small and mechanical. Between them, on a shelf behind them, the mouse appears, SQUEAKING.

Josef looks up, sees him, reaches into his pocket and pulls out some bread crumbs and sets them on the shelf. The mouse takes a large one and scurries off. Josef goes back to his work.

Filipp looks up to the shelf.

FILIPP
What was that?

JOSEF
(not looking up)
It was just Andrew.

FILIPP
Oh.

Filipp goes back to his work, blinks, and looks back at Josef, puzzled.

INT. FACTORY - BASEMENT STOREROOM - DAY

Ivan goes through parts, the boxes are nearly empty.

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - BATHROOM - NIGHT

In the steamy bathroom, Zechariah bathes, as Josef puts a newer looking different remote under the sink.

INT. FACTORY - DAY

Series of shots. Each of the remaining eleven place something in the belly of a robot, and shut the compartment door, smiling.

INT. TOY ROOM - DAY

Josef climbs through the hole. Symon watches his monitor.

JOSEF
How are things?

SYMON
They've been to almost every house.
Alexsei has kept them away so far, but at
some point...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOSEF
Where are they headed now?

SYMON
Avenue 10.

JOSEF
That's my street.

Symon punches numbers into his system. Josef looks over Symon's shoulder at an overhead view of Katya sitting at the dinner table. We see her look toward the door.

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Knocking on the door. Guards call from outside. Katya looks nervous.

EXT. JOSEF'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Pudovkin and Sergei stand outside, waiting. Pudovkin beats on the door again.

PUDOVKIN
I say, in there! Open the door!

They look at each other, listen again. Pudovkin nods. They both shoulder ram the door and it busts open.

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

No one in the dining room. Pudovkin and Sergei enter. Pudovkin unshoulders his rifle. Using hand signals, he points Sergei to the bedroom. Pudovkin heads for the bathroom.

He slowly creeps up on the bathroom door. A hissing noise from inside. He grabs the handle...

... and throws the door open!

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Katya screams covering herself. She is down to her underwear, and yells at Pudovkin to get out.

PUDOVKIN
I'm sorry! I'm sorry!

He pulls the door shut.

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Sergei enters from the bedroom

SERGEI
There's nothing here.

PUDOVKIN
Fine, let's get out of here.

INT. TOY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The screen shows Katya wrapping her clothes around herself. Josef holds his hands over Symon's eyes.

SYMON
Can I look yet?

INT. SUPERVISOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Josef enters. Grigori sits behind his desk.

JOSEF
You wished to see me, sir?

GRIGORI
Yes, Josef. You say we're out of several part numbers?

JOSEF
Well, at least inventory is running low, sir.

GRIGORI
They have been depleted more quickly than normal, have they not?

JOSEF
Well, sir, we have been working hard.

Grigori looks through papers in a folder on his desk.

GRIGORI
Perhaps. My supervisor has informed me that productivity is at an all-time high.

JOSEF
That's good news, sir.

GRIGORI
It's an oddity.

Grigori closes the folder and looks at Josef.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRIGORI (CONT' D)

What's the reason for it?

JOSEF

Merely working for the common good of the people, sir.

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - SON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Josef is preparing Zechariah's bath. He checks the steam, and goes under the sink gathering the parts for his remote. Zechariah appears bored, playing with the hem of his shirt.

ZECHARIAH

Papa, will you tell me the story again?

JOSEF

Not tonight, son. Papa has to go somewhere.

ZECHARIAH

At night? Papa, you can't leave at night.

JOSEF

Well, tonight I am

Josef sits in the floor, assembling his remote.

ZECHARIAH

Can I go with you?

JOSEF

Absolutely not. It is not safe for children.

ZECHARIAH

Is it safe for papas?

JOSEF

Not really.

ZECHARIAH

Please tell me the story again before you go, papa.

JOSEF

Get in the bath, son. There is not much steam left.

ZECHARIAH

What if you don't come back, papa?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Josef considers this. He puts down the remote and fetches the book.

JOSEF

Sit down.

Zechariah smiles and sits on Josef's knee. Josef opens the book.

JOSEF (CONT' D)

Twas the night before Christmas...

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Katya puts away the dishes from dinner.

JOSEF (V. O.)

...and all through the house...

INT. TOY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Symon conducts the action of all of the helpers moving boxes and handing out remotes. There is constant fluid movement from one place to another.

JOSEF (V. O.)

...not a creature was stirring...

Reveal Andrew, the mouse, asleep on a shelf amidst the activity.

JOSEF (V. O.) (CONT' D)

...not even a mouse...

EXT. FACTORY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Workers sneak out a back door. Symon passes around hand-drawn maps with red lines drawn on them, spanning out from the center. Each map is different. Symon gives them all a walkie-talkie type device, and they set out on their way.

JOSEF (V. O.)

...the stockings were hung by the chimney with care in hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there...

INT. HOUSES - NIGHT

Series of children asleep.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOSEF (V. O.)
 ...the children were nestled all snug in
 their beds, while visions of sugar plums
 danced in their heads...

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Katya opens the door and sticks her head in.

JOSEF
 ...and Mama in her 'kerchief, and I in my
 cap, had just settled our brains for a
 long winter's nap--

KATYA
 Josef.

JOSEF
 Yes?

KATYA
 Alexsei is here.

JOSEF
 Ah.

Josef closes the book.

ZECHARIAH
 Papa?

JOSEF
 Yes, son?

ZECHARIAH
 Who is Saint Nicholas?

Josef opens the book again - a picture of Santa standing by
 the fireplace.

JOSEF
 This is him. He's the one who gives the
 toys to the children.

ZECHARIAH
 Like you, papa?

JOSEF
 Yes.

Josef flips toward the end of the book.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOSEF (CONT' D)

See here you are, one of the children,
and --

Josef pulls the ripped out page from his shirt pocket and unfolds it, sticking it back into the book. The picture shows Santa handing toys to the children.

JOSEF (CONT' D)

And here's me giving the toys to the children.

ZECHARIAH

Who's the other man?

JOSEF

What other man?

Zechariah pushes the ripped page out of the way to reveal the father on the left page.

ZECHARIAH

That man.

JOSEF

Oh, well that's the father.

ZECHARIAH

The Papa?

JOSEF

Yes, the papa.

ZECHARIAH

Aren't you the papa?

JOSEF

Well... yes...

Josef looks at the book. With the ripped out page, it looks like the father is giving the toys to the children.

JOSEF (CONT' D)

...but...

Josef looks to Zechariah.

JOSEF (CONT' D)

You're right, Zechariah. Tonight, like every night. I am the papa.

He kisses Zechariah on the forehead. He winks at him. Zechariah looks at him, puzzled.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOSEF (CONT' D)

Put your shoes on.

Zechariah beams.

EXT. JOSEF'S HOME - NIGHT

Josef exits the house with Zechariah in his arms. Alexsei waits on him with a large truck.

JOSEF

What is this?

Symon hops down out of the cab, leaving the engine running.

SYMON

Well, we figured Saint Nicholas needs a sleigh.

ALEXSEI

It will get you around faster. Most of the guard will be on foot.

JOSEF

The consequences of this--

ALEXSEI

Are my concern. Are you taking him?

JOSEF

Yes.

ALEXSEI

You will both be caught. I think he should stay.

JOSEF

This is his gift as much as mine. I want him with me.

ALEXSEI

Go. You haven't much time.

Symon walks him to the cab as Alexsei helps Zechariah into the cab.

SYMON

Here is a route that I have planned for you. It will give you the range to activate most of the remotes. I have sent the others out on foot to fill in the gaps.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SYMON (CONT' D)

The network will begin going offline in three minutes, so you better get going. And stick to the route!

Josef stares at the controls.

SYMON (CONT' D)

Do you know how to drive this thing?

JOSEF

I'll figure it out.

The vehicle lurches forward and heads down the road.

SYMON

All right, I'm headed back to the computers.

ALEXSEI

All right.

Static squawks over Alexsei's radio.

DOVZHENKO (O. S.)

Come in, Sector 12.

ALEXSEI

Go for Sector 12.

DOVZHENKO (O. S.)

There was a heavy transport moments ago. We believe it might be in your sector.

Zechariah leans his head out the window and waves back at Alexsei. Alexsei smiles and waves back.

ALEXSEI

Everything is quiet here now, but I will report to you if I see it.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) JOSEF AND ZECHARIAH RIDING THROUGH TOWN, ACTIVATING ROBOTS WITH THE REMOTE

B) THE OTHERS ON FOOT DOING THE SAME

C) ROBOTS CLIMBING HOUSE WALLS, GOING DOWN THE CHIMNEYS

D) ROBOTS COMING DOWN THE HALLWAYS

E) ROBOTS ENTERING THE BEDROOMS

INT. TOY ROOM - NIGHT

Symon runs a program, and operates the computers.

INT. SECURITY ROOM - NIGHT

Vertov watching the monitors as they begin to go off one by one. Frantically he toggles switches and pounds the board. Dovzhenko comes over to see.

SERIES OF SHOTS

H) THE ROBOTS CLIMBING UP ONTO THE NIGHTSTANDS, OPENING THEIR BAYS AND DELIVERING THE TOYS. THE ROBOTS EMT THEIR CHARACTERISTIC CHIRP AS THEY LEAVE. THE CHILDREN WAKE UP AND SEE THE TOYS, LOOKING AROUND.

I) LEV ON THE STREET WITH THE OTHER GUARDS DIRECTING THEM, TALKING OVER HIS RADIO.

J) GOVERNMENT TRUCKS MOVING OUT, GUARDS RUNNING THROUGH THE STREETS.

INT. GOVERNOR'S HOUSE - GOVERNOR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sergei wakes Kazimir. He gets out of bed puts on his robe and heads out with Sergei.

INT. SECURITY ROOM - NIGHT

Almost all of the monitors are black. Of those that aren't, some show children sleeping. Others show children awake, playing with their new toy. Vertov is frantic. Dovzhenko fumes. Kazimir stares at the monitors.

KAZIMIR

What is going on?

EXT. THE VILLAGE - NIGHT

Overhead shot. Blue lights moving everywhere. Josef's sleigh moves through the streets as the government follows, blocks away, just missing him around every corner.

INT. TOY ROOM - NIGHT

Symon watches the monitors, eating a snack, laughing. He takes a handful of snack, eats some, gives some to Andrew (the mouse), who sits on his shoulder.

EXT. GOVERNOR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Josef and Zechariah arrive at the Governor's house.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOSEF

Well, son. That's it. We best head back.

ZECHARIAH

What about that house?

JOSEF

That is the house of the governor. It's because of him we cannot breathe. He watches us night and day. He has made us prisoners in our own homes. Nothing could penetrate that fortress of indifference and selfishness.

ZECHARIAH

Does the governor have any children?

Josef thinks, looks to Zechariah.

JOSEF

Well, yes, I believe he has a little girl.

ZECHARIAH

All the children, papa.

Josef looks at his son and smiles.

JOSEF

Yes, Zechariah. All the children.

Josef thinks.

JOSEF (CONT'D)

But I don't have a toy for her.

Zechariah pulls the little colorful elephant from his pocket.

ZECHARIAH

She can have mine, papa.

EXT. GOVERNOR'S HOUSE - LATER

Josef pries off a robot from the front of the sleigh, and places the toy inside. Using his remote, they near the fence as he guides the robot to the house.

Behind them, the sound of soldiers and vehicles. The robot disappears into the house through a window.

INT. GOVERNOR' S HOUSE - ANYA' S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Anya sleeps as the robot moves into her bedroom and climbs the nightstand. The arm reaches into the bay and sets the toy on the nightstand.

Suddenly, the robot goes limp and falls to the ground with a clang. Anya awakes, and sees the toy.

EXT. GOVERNOR' S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Guards drag Josef to the front walk. Behind him, other guards hold Zechariah, who is crying and screaming for Josef. Josef struggles, but he is too weak.

Kazimir comes out the front doors in his night clothes, Sergei behind him.

KAZIMIR

What is this?

LEV

We caught him, sir. Finally.

He holds out the book and the remote for Kazimir.

LEV (CONT' D)

This was all he had on him.

PYRIEV

This is what they've been distributing, sir.

Pyriev hands Kazimir a few of the toys. Kazimir looks at them, then at Josef.

KAZIMIR

What is all of this?

Anya comes outside with the toy. She has bedhair and is dress in a pretty white nightgown. Kazimir sees her.

KAZIMIR (CONT' D)

Anya! What are you doing.

Kazimir kneels down to look her in the eye and look at the toy. He snatches it away from her.

KAZIMIR (CONT' D)

Where did you get this?

ANYA

I found it by my bed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Anya sees her father with the other toys, and the remote.

JOSEF

Your father gave it to you.

Kazimir whips his head around toward Josef in anger and surprise. The daughter leans in and kisses her father's cheek. Kazimir, surprised, looks back at her.

DAUGHTER

Thank you, daddy.

She hugs him

KAZIMIR

Go back inside, dear.

The daughter goes back inside the house. The guards hold Josef. Zechariah is being held back by other guards. The governor rises and looks at Josef.

KAZIMIR (CONT' D)

Why do you tell my daughter this? This is a lie.

JOSEF

If you release us, it won't be.

He studies him for a while, then looks to Zechariah who is crying, staring at his father, squirming to get free. He looks over the remote.

KAZIMIR

Did you build this?

JOSEF

Yes, sir.

KAZIMIR

How?

JOSEF

Spare time... spare parts.

KAZIMIR

There's no such thing as spare time. Only wasted time.

He looks it over some more.

KAZIMIR (CONT' D)

Still, production has been up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOSEF

Yes, sir.

KAZIMIR

Why?

JOSEF

Because for the first time, we were working for something we believed in.

Kazimir raises his eyebrow at Josef. Josef swallows. Kazimir goes back to the book, thumbing through it, reading.

KAZIMIR

(to Josef)

This happens only once a year?

Surprised, Josef can hardly process the question.

JOSEF

Oh, yes, sir.

The governor nods as he reads, still gruff and ominous. He looks Josef sternly in the eyes, then to Zechariah.

KAZIMIR

I suppose I must do what's in the best interest of... productivity.

Kazimir looks back to Josef. He slaps the book shut and walks over to Josef and sticks it back in Josef's pocket.

KAZIMIR (CONT'D)

Once a year. Not a day more.

Kazimir turns and walks back toward the house. He speaks to the guards over his shoulder just before disappearing into the dark front entrance of the house.

GOVERNOR

Let them go.

The guards are confused. Alexsei smiles and breathes a smile of relief.

ALEXSEI

You heard him

The guards let go of Zechariah and Josef. Zechariah bolts running with a huge smile toward his father. Josef kneels and catches his son as they embrace in a hug. They hold each other, smiling.

INT. JOSEF'S HOME - DINING ROOM - DUSK

Katya (now pregnant) is putting dinner on the table. Warm light from candles and the fireplace fills the room. Zechariah sits in Josef's lap. Behind them is a small tree decorated with makeshift items that look like Christmas ornaments.

PULL BACK to reveal looking through the window as Katya joins them.

PULL BACK farther to reveal the cold dark blue city. A solitary soldier paces the street slowly.

Farther still, to reveal blinking lights (from the robots) on Josef's roof and on bushes in his front yard.

Farther back to finally reveal the rest of the village, dark and blue except for the warm glows of the living room windows of all the houses, and the blinking lights around them.

FADE OUT.