



# THE HUNTSMAN AND THE HOUND

A Russian crime fable  
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**INT. OLD MANSION / DEN FIREPLACE - NIGHT**

A fire is lit in the fireplace. We pull back to reveal the silhouette of A MAN crouched down in front of it.

**INT. OLD MANSION / NOOK - NIGHT - A BIT LATER**

We see several taxidermy animals on display in a wall unit. The man walks up and inspects the various creatures, we still can't see his face.

**INT. OLD MANSION / LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - LATER**

The silhouette of the man smoking a cigarette can be seen just outside some French doors. Nearby there's a large display case with a taxidermy beaver inside.

**INT. OLD MANSION / DINING ROOM - NIGHT - A BIT LATER**

The man sits at the head of the dining room table with his head down. He lifts his head and we finally meet ALEKSANDR, 30s, long beard and hair. He wears a glove on his left hand and a gloomy expression on his face as he stares at a pistol on the table in front of him. He looks around the room and takes in the taxidermy heads and pelts on the surrounding walls. He reacts to the sound of a gate squeaking outside the house.

**EXT. OLD MANSION - NIGHT - SAME TIME**

The front gate is shut by a LARGE MAN. He removes his gun from its holster and climbs the many stairs that wind up the side of the castle-like mansion. He moves in and out of the shadows, an ominous figure in the dark.

**INT. OLD MANSION / FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER**

The mysterious man enters the house cautiously and climbs the few remaining stairs that sit beneath a massive gothic chandelier that hangs from the tower-like section of the house. The man enters the dining room.

**INT. OLD MANSION / DINING ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS**

The man takes in the room, his attention is drawn to the head of a dog mounted on the wall. Aleksandr steps out of the shadows and puts his pistol to the back of the man's head.



As he does, he sees a familiar tattoo on the stranger's neck. He uses his gun to nudge the stranger's collar out of the way to reveal a skull within an eight-point star.

ALEKSANDR

Viktor?

The man raises his hands and slowly turns around to reveal VIKTOR, 40s, a bear of a man with short hair. Aleksandr lowers his weapon.

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)

Shit! What the hell are you doing here? You're lucky I didn't kill you, hiding in the shadows like a fucking rat.

ALEKSANDR (IN RUSSIAN)

Kill me? I had you, my friend.

Viktor chuckles as he holsters his weapon and gives Aleksandr a hug.

ALEKSANDR (CONT'D IN RUSSIAN)

You've grown a bit gray.

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)

Gray hair in beard, devil in ribs. Where's the girl?

ALEKSANDR (IN RUSSIAN)

I was told she'd be here by midnight. I've been waiting for hours, it's bullshit...

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)

Where's your sense of adventure?

ALEKSANDR (IN RUSSIAN)

Adventures get you killed.

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)

I've had many, and I'm still breathing.

ALEKSANDR (IN RUSSIAN)

Drink?

Viktor thinks about it, then shrugs at him: "Yup."

**INT. OLD MANSION / DEN FIREPLACE - NIGHT - A BIT LATER**

Bourbon is poured into Viktor's empty glass as he sits near the fireplace. Aleksandr takes the bottle back to the mantle above the burning logs and fills a second glass. He puts the bottle down and takes a drink as he stands next to the fire, staring at the flames.

ALEKSANDR (IN RUSSIAN)

Where the fuck is she?

Aleksandr sets his drink down and removes the glove from his left hand. He is missing both his ring and little finger just below the middle knuckle. Viktor takes notice of the missing appendages.

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)

You never told me how you lost those fingers.

Aleksandr looks back at him.

ALEKSANDR (IN RUSSIAN)

Boris told me a story...

**INT. RUSTIC LOUNGE - SEVERAL YEARS AGO**

Aleksandr screams in pain as he cradles his bloody hand. A knife is stuck in the table in front of him, along with his two missing fingers. BORIS, 40s, a well-built giant of a man, stands nearby.

BORIS (IN RUSSIAN)

I know it hurts, but you will never forget that story. Scars are lessons. They work better than any journal or keepsake. They are forever. A man with many scars is very wise, remember that.

He tosses Aleksandr a rag for his bleeding hand. Boris shows him a tattoo of the Russian god "Veles" on his arm.

BORIS (IN RUSSIAN)

Oath-breakers get punished.

We transition from the wolf-headed god tattoo back to...



**INT. OLD MANSION / DEN FIREPLACE - NIGHT**

The taxidermy head of a wolf on the fireplace mantle. Aleksandr is still standing near the fire, he puts his glove back on and crouches to tend to the burning logs with a fire iron. Viktor takes a drink in his chair.

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)

Veles? Crazy fucker thought he was one of the old gods. He always taught lessons with pain, it's unnecessary. Words can achieve the same effect and inspire stronger allegiance. What was the story?

ALEKSANDR (IN RUSSIAN)

The huntsman and the hound ever heard it?

Viktor looks at him: "No."

ALEKSANDR (CONT'D IN RUSSIAN)

One day, a huntsman went into the forest near his home with his hound and never returned. When the townspeople went searching for him they found the hound waiting patiently for him alone in the middle of the woods. They tried to take the dog back with them, but he would not leave. No matter what they tried, the hound refused to move, waiting patiently for his master to return.

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)

Loyalty. This story is about the hound's loyalty for his master.

ALEKSANDR (IN RUSSIAN)

It's about accountability. The hound felt responsible for losing his master, and so he could not return home without him. If the huntsman did not come out of the woods, then neither could the hound. He spent the long cold nights howling at the moon, hoping his master would hear his calls and find his way back to the path. He never did, and the hound died alone in the woods.

Aleksandr takes a seat in the empty chair next to Viktor.

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)  
 That's a grim tale... I shouldn't be surprised though, coming from Boris. I'm sure his mother told him that when he was small, which is why he grew up to be such a fucking psychopath. Children's fairy tales cause more harm than good. If I ever have kids, I won't be telling them stories about dogs dying in the woods. The world is dark enough.

ALEKSANDR (IN RUSSIAN)  
 I have to admit the story stuck with me.

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)  
 Losing an appendage can have that affect. Most people have excuses, countless reasons they fail. There's freedom in being able to say you fucked up. Then you either make it right, or go down fighting.

Viktor takes another drink.

VIKTOR (CONT'D IN RUSSIAN)  
 But you're wrong about that story. It's a cautionary tale of codependence. The dog wasn't able to fend for himself and survive without his master, so he died. The lesson is, don't be that fucking dog.

ALEKSANDR (IN RUSSIAN)  
 I disagree.

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)  
 Because you're the dog.

ALEKSANDR (IN RUSSIAN)  
 And you're the huntsman, is that it?

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)  
 That's right. I come and go as I please. Some lead, and some follow.

ALEKSANDR (IN RUSSIAN)  
 You're here following orders.  
 Sneaking around in the dark  
 waiting to kill a woman you don't  
 even know.

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)  
 I don't need to know her...

Viktor finishes his drink and gets up.

ALEKSANDR (IN RUSSIAN)  
 Where are you going?

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)  
 I'm tired of sitting here waiting,  
 I need to move around.

Viktor walks away and Aleksandr gets up to follow him. As the two men exit the den, we travel up through the ceiling to the second floor to reveal...

**INT. OLD MANSION / BATHROOM - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER**

KATE, 30s, long dark hair, piercing brown eyes, and caramel skin, stands silently with a gun in her hand. She's calm, collected, and focused as she hears the two men coming upstairs. We then move through the closed bathroom door to...

**INT. OLD MANSION / BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS**

Viktor enters the bedroom. He notices a lit up display case near the bed. Pale yellow light emits from each shelf of the case. He approaches it and inspects the various bones, surgical tools, and animals in glass jars on display. Aleksandr enters the room behind him.

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)  
 What a fucked up display to keep  
 near the bed...

Aleksandr walks over to the display of death, picks up a jar with a chameleon inside, and looks at it.

ALEKSANDR (IN RUSSIAN)  
 What if we just leave?

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)  
 Are you scared?

ALEKSANDR (IN RUSSIAN)

No, but if she isn't here by now,  
she probably isn't coming.

He puts the chameleon jar back in its proper place.

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)

We stay until the job is finished.

Aleksandr takes a deck of cards from his pocket.

ALEKSANDR

Durak?

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)

You keep cards on you?

ALEKSANDR (IN RUSSIAN)

They're my lucky deck.

Viktor smiles at him.

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)

I hope so. You don't want to lose  
another finger.

As the two men walk away from the display case, we travel  
back through the closed bathroom door to...

**INT. OLD MANSION / BATHROOM - NIGHT - SAME TIME**

Kate loosens her grip on her pistol as she hears the two  
men leave on the other side of the door. We see an  
elaborate tattoo sleeve on her arm of a fox and a rabbit.  
Each represented in life and death, with the words "Think  
Sharp" underneath. We transition from the dead fox to...

**INT. OLD MANSION / NOOK - DAY - EARLIER**

The taxidermy head of a fox on a small display stand. The  
front door can be heard opening nearby and light spills  
onto the adjacent wall.

**INT. OLD MANSION / FRONT ENTRANCE - DAY - SAME TIME**

Kate enters the house and looks at the large chandelier  
above. We follow her into the next room as someone else  
comes in the door behind her, just out of site.



**INT. OLD MANSION / DEN - DAY - CONTINUOUS**

She takes in the very odd items on display and interesting gothic architecture of the house.

KATE

This is it? I thought it would be something more... discreet.

Her companion enters the room after her, but we still can't see who it is.

KATE (CONT'D)

It's almost insulting how conspicuous this is.

The man walks over to her and embraces her from behind, we now see it's Aleksandr.

ALEKSANDR

Conspicuous is good, it makes the snake show its head.

KATE

I guess we'll find out. I'd rather have a straight fight.

ALEKSANDR

Trust me.

KATE

I do.

She kisses him softly as he holds her. We move to a stained glass window of an angelic figure holding a child nearby. This transitions to...

**INT. OLD MANSION / DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

A tattoo of a similar angelic figure on Aleksandr's arm that reads: "Save and Protect" in Russian. The two men are now seated at the dining room table playing cards. Aleksandr stares at the tattoo on his forearm as Viktor puts down his last cards in the game.

VIKTOR

Durak!

Aleksandr looks at the cards on the table, disappointed.

ALEKSANDR (IN RUSSIAN)

You've improved at this game since we last played.



VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)

I think you just got worse.

Aleksandr takes a coin from his pocket.

ALEKSANDR (IN RUSSIAN)

Let's make it interesting. If I win, we leave. And if you win, we stay here until she gets home.

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)

If she's still breathing by morning, I'll have to pay for it in flesh with Ivan. You know how this works.

ALEKSANDR (IN RUSSIAN)

So don't lose...

Viktor thinks it over for a moment, then pulls his pistol and aims it at Aleksandr.

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)

I heard you went soft, but I didn't believe it... I guess it's true.

ALEKSANDR (IN RUSSIAN)

You're going to shoot me while I sit here having a drink? I can't let you do that.

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)

And how do you propose to stop me?

ALEKSANDR (IN RUSSIAN)

With words, not violence.

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)

So you put on a demonstration of peace and hope that I don't execute you? Not much of a plan.

ALEKSANDR (IN RUSSIAN)

And yet, here I sit unharmed. I'd say it's working.

Viktor lowers his weapon.

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)

What the fuck is this?

Aleksandr flips the coin toward him, and he catches it. Viktor inspects the vintage Austrian schilling.

VIKTOR (CONT'D)

Vienna...

We transition from the Austrian coat of arms on the old coin to...

**INT. OLD BUILDING IN VIENNA - DAY - SEVERAL YEARS AGO**

A tattoo of the Russian coat of arms on Boris' chest as he stands over a small table in a beautiful room with brick walls and elegant chandeliers. His face is bloody and beaten. He looks down at the items on the table. A revolver, and the knife he used to take Aleksandr's fingers. He ponders what to choose, then takes the blade. Boris walks away from the table and approaches his recent combatant. It's Viktor, who's also beat up in a heap on the floor. Boris stands over him with the large blade.

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)

Wait...

BORIS (IN RUSSIAN)

Wait for what? You fought well. Better than anyone else, you actually almost had me. Be proud of that as you travel to the next place.

Boris is shot in the back three times. He drops to the floor to reveal Aleksandr standing behind him with a gun in his hand. Viktor looks at him, relieved.

We scale the terrain of Boris' lifeless tattoo covered body. We pass the bullet wounds in his back and stop on a spider at the base of his neck. It has a cross on its abdomen, this transitions to...

**INT. BAR IN VIENNA - NIGHT**

A cross hanging on a wall in an old bar illuminated with candles, lanterns, and incandescent bulbs. A waitress walks by leading us to Aleksandr and Viktor, who's still beaten and bloody from his battle with Boris. They are having drinks and playing Durak.

Viktor tosses the old coin to Aleksandr. As he looks at it we transition from the coin in his hand to...

**INT. OLD MANSION / DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

The schilling in Viktor's hand as he sits across from Aleksandr at the table.

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)  
You clever bastard. You've always got an angle to play.

ALEKSANDR (IN RUSSIAN)  
So what's it going to be? Death or life?

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)  
If I win, she dies.

Aleksandr nods in agreement and finishes his drink.

A series of shots: The cards are shuffled. The hands are dealt. They play the game...

Aleksandr puts down his last card.

ALEKSANDR  
Durak!

Viktor gets up from the table in disgust.

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)  
You're a fucking shark...

ALEKSANDR (IN RUSSIAN)  
It's a game of chance, and fair is fair, my friend. Let's go.

We follow Aleksandr as he gets up and walks away.

BANG! A gunshot rings through the entire house and Aleksandr turns to see Viktor standing behind him with his gun aimed at him. Viktor's eyes go dead and he drops to the floor to reveal Kate standing behind him with a gun in her hand.

Aleksandr looks back at her, shocked. She looks down at Viktor's lifeless body and we see a tattoo of a grim reaper on his forearm that reads: "I'm Here, and I'm Waiting" in Russian.

**THE END**

