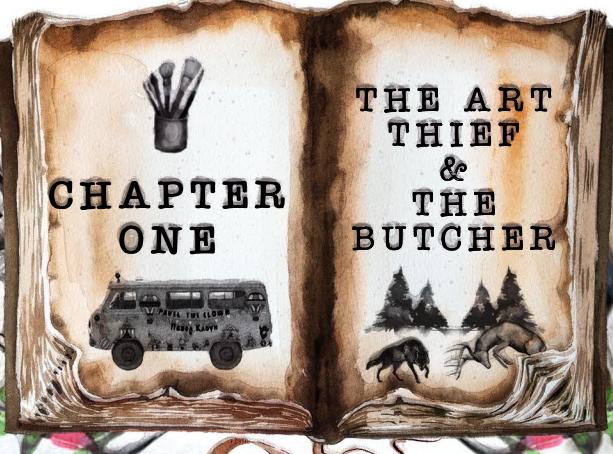




THE BUTCHER'S DAUGHTER



CHAPTER
ONE

THE ART
THIEF
&
THE
BUTCHER

a dark comedy
crime fable, by
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...TEASER...

INT. CLOWN VAN - DAY

PAVEL, 30s, with a scruffy beard, gets into his vehicle.

He hears a NOISE behind him and turns to see TOMMY, a baboon, staring at him from the back of the van.

PAVEL (IN RUSSIAN)
What the fuck!

GEOFF (O.S. IN RUSSIAN)
Good day...

Pavel turns away from the primate and is knocked out by a PUNCH to the face from GEOFF, 30s, bearded with long hair.

He shakes off his hand, feeling the pain of the hit.

Geoff moves Pavel between the front seats and gets in.

There's a KNOCK on the passenger side window. Geoff looks over at FRANK, early 50s, tall and muscular, with a shaved head. He's wearing a black and white mime costume.

Geoff unlocks the door and the big man joins him in the van.

A series of shots:

Pavel is undressed and tied up.

Geoff gets dressed in the clown clothing.

The rearview mirror is adjusted as Geoff applies harlequin makeup to his face.

Frank puts earplugs and a blindfold on Pavel.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - A BIT LATER

The clown-mobile drives through the quiet neighborhood.

INT. CLOWN VAN - CONTINUOUS (MOVING)

Geoff rehearses as he drives the van.

GEOFF (IN RUSSIAN)
Hello! My name is Pavel. I'm here
to bring cheer to the children!

Frank applies white makeup to his face to complete his mime costume. He looks at his reflection with disappointment.

FRANK
After today, we never speak of this
again...

GEOFF

Oh, come on. You look great man.

The large mime adjusts a cartoon-like boutonnieres on his costume and it squirts water on the windshield.

EXT. VASILIEV MANOR - DAY

An elegant mansion. The SOUNDS OF A PARTY can be heard inside.

The clown van pulls up to the curb and parks near the impressive estate.

INT. CLOWN VAN - CONTINUOUS

Geoff checks his phone, then places it in the center console.

He looks at poor Pavel tied up in the back, and Tommy. The primate is happily eating a green apple.

GEOFF

Is it cool to leave him alone with
Tommy?

Frank looks back at the baboon.

FRANK

Yeah, why wouldn't it be?

GEOFF

He's a monkey...

FRANK

He's a baboon, read a book. Think
she'll show?

Geoff takes a deep breath.

GEOFF

I hope so...

FRANK

You ready for this, brother?

He answers him with an affirmative nod and opens the door.

EXT. VASILIEV MANOR - MOMENTS LATER

Geoff and Frank approach the house with balloons and a couple large bags.

They are joined by BECKY, late 20s, with long black hair. She's also in a clown costume. Geoff looks at her, relieved.

GEOFF
You had me worried.

BECKY
I'm always fashionably late.
Figured you'd know that by now...

He hands her some of his balloons.

INT. VASILIEV MANOR/FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

The doorbell RINGS. The sound of Children LAUGHING echoes through the giant house.

ANYA, 70s, the family housekeeper, opens the door to reveal Geoff, Becky, and Frank.

GEOFF (IN RUSSIAN)
Hello. My name is Pavel! I'm-

ANYA (IN RUSSIAN)
-Right this way...

The three of them follow her into the mansion, and the door shuts behind them.

INT. VASILIEV MANOR/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Frank sets up a small stage with wooden puppets as Becky creates balloon arrangements.

A few kids approach, mesmerized by the giant mime. He notices and grins, then motions as if he's pulling on an imaginary rope.

INT. VASILIEV MANOR/KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

SARAH, 30s, slight build with long hair, enters carrying several boxes.

She carefully places them near a display of cupcakes and a giant birthday cake.

Geoff sits nearby at the kitchen table. He's sketching a clown with a painting being carried away by balloons on a piece of paper.

Sarah walks over and looks at his drawing.

SARAH
A cautionary tale...

Geoff looks up and smiles at her.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Do you speak English?

He puts on a Russian accent.

GEOFF
I do.

SARAH
Seems like the entire world is bilingual except for Americans.

Geoff nods in agreement as she admires his sketch.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Your artwork is good, you should do that for a living, clowns are terrifying...

GEOFF
Most kids are fine with them, they're more frightening for adults. Perhaps a reminder that our youth is behind us.

SARAH
That's a decent analysis. But it's much simpler than all that...
They're scary.

He laughs as he gets up and walks over to admire the beautiful spread of baked goods.

GEOFF
I wish I was a little kid right now.

Sarah offers him a cupcake with a smile.

SARAH
It'll be our secret.

GEOFF
The happiness of the children is compensation enough.

SARAH

Hey, a job is a job. But you shouldn't say you work for the happiness of children, it sounds creepy. Especially when you're dressed like that.

Geoff looks at his outfit.

GEOFF

Damn, you're right...

SARAH

That's ok I won't hold it against you... So why clowning?

GEOFF

It's performance art. An opportunity to tell stories and expand the minds of the next generation of-

MRS. VASILIEV (IN RUSSIAN)

-Shit...

MRS. VASILIEV, late 50s, the homeowner, stands at the kitchen entrance, exhausted. She tries to scrape play-doh off one of her fancy shoes without spilling her martini.

MRS. VASILIEV (IN RUSSIAN) (CONT'D)

We're ready for you, Pavel.

GEOFF (IN RUSSIAN)

I'll be right there.

Mrs. Vasiliev exits as Becky walks by and observes Geoff and Sarah as they chat.

SARAH

Good luck. You should try a cupcake later, I made them myself. Not to brag, but they're amazing.

She hands him a small box, and he puts it in his bag.

GEOFF

Thanks, you staying for the party?

SARAH

No, I rarely make it a habit to mix work and pleasure. These kids are going to be insane once they consume all this sugar.

Geoff gives Sarah his sketch with a grin.

INT. CLOWN VAN - DAY

Pavel is trying to break free. The scruffy Russian has shaken the blindfold off his head.

Geoff's phone lights up with a call. The Russian squints to get a better look at it. The Call ID says: "RUSSELL CANDIDO"

INT. VASILIEV MANOR/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Geoff, Becky, and Frank take their places in front of the kids and their parents. The small stage with puppets is right behind them.

GEOFF (IN RUSSIAN)
Who's ready for a puppet show!?

The kids and parents CHEER as Geoff makes his way behind the stage, crouches down, and FLIPS a switch.

MUSIC PLAYS and the puppets come to life performing on their own from mechanical arms hidden beneath them.

Frank and Becky begin a routine in concert with the wooden marionettes.

Meanwhile, Geoff sneaks away out of sight behind the stage.

INT. VASILIEV MANOR/STUDY - MOMENTS LATER

Geoff creeps toward a beautiful oil painting that hangs next to a giant antique bookcase.

TATYANA (O.S. IN RUSSIAN)
I see you...

He tenses up as he brings his hands away from the elegantly framed artwork.

...END TEASER...

...ACT ONE...

EXT. ART GALLERY/PARKING LOT - MORNING - 2 DAYS AGO

An ancient vehicle pulls into the parking area of the gallery.

The building stands out with striking contemporary architecture amongst the ocean of corporate buildings that loom over and around it.

INT. GEOFF'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Geoff sits behind the wheel and looks at his watch: 9:57

He reaches into his backpack, pulls out a sketchbook, and starts flipping through the pages fondly, looking at his work.

After a moment, he puts the book away, clips a name tag to his black polo shirt, and exits the vehicle.

INT. ART GALLERY/SHOW ROOM - DAY

Geoff stares at the painting we saw earlier in the Vasiliev house as it hangs on display in the gallery. It has a plaque beneath it: "The Drums of War" Boris Konstantinov (1834)

Mrs. Vasiliev joins him in admiring the piece. She speaks with a strong Russian accent.

MRS. VASILIEV
It's beautiful...

GEOFF
Sure is.

Mrs. Vasiliev steps forward to admire it closer.

MRS. VASILIEV
This is the Battle of Ostrołęka,
right?

GEOFF
That's right. You're well informed
on your Russian conflicts.

She looks at him suspiciously.

MRS. VASILIEV
You're not going to push a sale?

GEOFF

I have a no intervention policy...

MRS. VASILIEV

...Like on safari?

GEOFF

What?

MRS. VASILIEV

On safari in Africa, they tell you no matter what, you cannot disrupt the natural order of things. A wounded baby gazelle could try to jump in your jeep but you cannot save it from its fate...

Geoff takes in her grim explanation.

GEOFF

I see your point... I just can't stand how most people walk into galleries and are told why something is a masterpiece. The art should speak for itself.

MRS. VASILIEV

I'll take it. You deliver, yes?

GEOFF

Uh, yeah.

MRS. VASILIEV

Can you bring it by tomorrow? I have a party the day after and want this on the wall before then.

Geoff takes the "AVAILABLE" sign off the wall beneath the painting and flips it to the other side, which reads: "SOLD"

GEOFF

Sure. Let's go take care of the financials.

She nods and follows Geoff as he walks toward an office.

EXT. HUMMINGBIRD CREEK ASSISTED LIVING - NIGHT

A herculean structure stands tall in the star speckled night sky. A sign reads: **Hummingbird Creek**

A comfortable home for loved ones



INT. HUMMINGBIRD CREEK/HEALTH OFFICE - NIGHT

Geoff sits with NURSE SANTOS, 30s.

GEOFF

I thought she was improving...

NURSE SANTOS

Her cognitive skills have been on a course of steady improvement, but her body is in decline. We'll know the full extent of where she's at next week when we take her to the hospital.

GEOFF

She's going to a hospital now?

NURSE SANTOS

It's just a precaution. We take all our residents off site for most health care needs... And just a heads up, if things progress negatively, it's going to be expensive.

GEOFF

Won't her insurance cover it?

NURSE SANTOS

Unfortunately, the treatment she needs is outside of her medical coverage.

Geoff sinks into his chair in despair.

NURSE SANTOS (CONT'D)

I'm not trying to overwhelm you. I just want to be clear on the path forward. Are you free to join us? Your mother will most likely need a translator.

GEOFF

Yeah, I'll be there.

NURSE SANTOS

Good, then we'll see you next week.

He nods warily as he struggles to keep his emotions in check.

INT. HUMMINGBIRD CREEK/MILA'S APARTMENT - LATER

Geoff sits with his mother MILA, a frail woman in her 70s with short dark hair and pale skin.

He notices her unfinished glass of water on the end table.

GEOFF (IN RUSSIAN)
You need to finish that, mom.

She looks at it and scowls.

MILA (IN RUSSIAN)
I drink when I'm thirsty... And it makes me cold.

GEOFF (IN RUSSIAN)
I know, but do it for me, please.

He brings it to her, and she reluctantly takes a sip.

MILA (IN RUSSIAN)
...How's the art business? You making enough money?

Geoff puts the glass back on the end table and looks at her.

INT. FANCY HOUSE - DAY - A FEW WEEKS AGO

Geoff is putting the last touches on an oil painting of a very regal-looking doberman pinscher seated near a fireplace.

INT. HUMMINGBIRD CREEK/MILA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

We're back with Geoff and Mila in her apartment.

GEOFF (IN RUSSIAN)
It's good.

MILA (IN RUSSIAN)
Just good? What about that girlfriend of yours?

GEOFF (IN RUSSIAN)
Good...

INT. BECKY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - A FEW DAYS AGO

Geoff is working on a beautiful oil painting. It depicts a lush forest with an enormous cell tower in the middle of it, disturbing the animals.

Becky enters the room and looks at his latest piece of art.

BECKY

So... What is this exactly?

GEOFF

It's called the uninvited guest.

BECKY

I don't get it...

He looks at her wounded, and she laughs.

BECKY (CONT'D)

Sorry, I'll keep my opinions to myself.

INT. HUMMINGBIRD CREEK/MILA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mila takes ahold of Geoff's hand softly.

MILA (IN RUSSIAN)

Don't settle for less.

He thinks about her words. She's not wrong.

GEOFF (IN RUSSIAN)

...I came here to check on you.

MILA (IN RUSSIAN)

I'm great, never been better.

GEOFF (IN RUSSIAN)

Well, you won't be if you don't stay hydrated.

MILA (IN RUSSIAN)

Don't worry about me, I can take care of myself.

GEOFF (IN RUSSIAN)

We're going to get through this together. It will be fine.

MILA (IN RUSSIAN)

I don't like hospitals...

GEOFF (IN RUSSIAN)

I know, which is why I'm coming with you.

MILA (IN RUSSIAN)
And who is going to pay for it?

GEOFF (IN RUSSIAN)
I am, don't worry about it.

MILA (IN RUSSIAN)
You don't have that kind of money.

GEOFF (IN RUSSIAN)
I'm working on it... Same time next
week?

MILA (IN RUSSIAN)
Of course.

Geoff leans in and kisses her on the forehead.

GEOFF (IN RUSSIAN)
I love you, now drink your water!

MILA (IN RUSSIAN)
I love you, too.

She smiles at him as he gets up and exits her room.

INT. ART GALLERY/OFFICE - THE NEXT MORNING

Geoff enters the office of his boss CLARENCE, 50s, overweight with glasses. He's seated at his neatly organized desk. He addresses his employee without looking at him.

CLARENCE
What's up?

GEOFF
I'd like to hand deliver the
Konstantinov painting myself, sir.

CLARENCE
We have a delivery guy for that. I
need you on the floor.

GEOFF
I know, it's just the buyer
specifically requested that I come
by with it today. It was part of
the sales pitch.

Clarence finally looks up at Geoff.

CLARENCE
Fine, do it on your lunch...

EXT. VASILIEV MANOR - DAY

Geoff approaches the front door with *The Drums of War* painting. It's been packed and wrapped for delivery.

Before he can ring the bell, Anya opens the door.

ANYA (IN RUSSIAN)
How can I help you?

GEOFF
I'm looking for Mrs. Vasiliev?

Anya narrows her eyes at him as Mrs. Vasiliev steps in front of her and joins Geoff outside the door.

MRS. VASILIEV (IN RUSSIAN)
It's fine, Anya.

GEOFF
Good afternoon, I wanted to bring your painting over here myself.

He hands it to her.

MRS. VASILIEV
Thank you, this will look lovely for tomorrow.

GEOFF
You want me to help hang it for you? It's complimentary.

She looks at him and shrugs.

INT. VASILIEV MANOR/STUDY - LATER

Geoff makes one last adjustment to the painting and looks back at Mrs. Vasiliev.

GEOFF
Does that look straight?

MRS. VASILIEV
Yes, that will do.

He steps away from the painting and gathers his things.

GEOFF
So what's happening tomorrow?

MRS. VASILIEV
It's my daughter's sixth birthday
party.

GEOFF
How nice! Are you doing anything
special?

MRS. VASILIEV
I spent a fortune on sweets, and we
will have a clown performing.

GEOFF
Well, tell her happy birthday for
me.

She smiles and nods as Geoff picks up his bag of tools.

EXT. FRANK'S HOUSE - DAY

The ultimate Zen oasis tucked into the hills. It has both indoor and outdoor structures that look as if they were flown over from a monastery in the Far East...

Geoff pulls up in his shit-kicker car and disrupts the tranquillity.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Geoff paces excitedly as Frank sits comfortably on his couch.

FRANK
No...

GEOFF
I really need your help with this
man. It's for my mom's treatment.

FRANK
You going to jail isn't going to
make her feel any better.

GEOFF
That's assuming we get caught,
which we won't.

FRANK
We? I think *you* is the word you
meant to say.

GEOFF
I have a plan that's foolproof.

Frank sighs as he takes a swig of a protein shake.

FRANK

Alright, fuck it... Let's hear it.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE/OFFICE - EVENING

A series of shots:

Frank sits at his computer scanning various clown websites while Geoff looks over his shoulder.

Geoff calls numbers for various performers and crosses names off the list as he goes.

He's only got a couple more left as he dials the next one:
PAVEL THE CLOWN

GEOFF

Hi, is this Pavel?

He responds with a thick Russian accent and broken English.

PAVEL (ON THE PHONE)

Yes, what you need?

GEOFF

I was wondering if you were free
for a last-minute party tomorrow?

PAVEL (ON THE PHONE)

I'm sorry, I already booked.

GEOFF

Is it for the Vasiliev family?

PAVEL (ON THE PHONE)

...How you know that?

GEOFF

I'm taking over the party planning
and wanted to make sure I had a
backup. I wasn't sure who was
performing, but now I know, thank
you! Is the address on your website
correct for payment?

PAVEL (ON THE PHONE)

Yes, that's my place.

GEOFF

Great, we'll see you tomorrow!

He hangs up before the clown can respond and looks at Frank with a smile.

FRANK

If we're doing this, we'll need
some help...

INT. BECKY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Geoff looks at a printout of *The Drums of War* as he paints a replica version. Becky watches in the distance.

BECKY

What if they notice it's different?

GEOFF

She won't, she's a tourist.

BECKY

A tourist?

He stops painting and looks back at her.

GEOFF

She wants to visit and take in the sites, but she'll never be a native.

Becky looks at him, confused.

GEOFF (CONT'D)

An art poser...

BECKY

You know this from meeting her once?

He returns to painting.

GEOFF

I met her twice, and yeah, I do.

BECKY

And if we get caught, I'm not on the hook?

GEOFF

Yup, you and Frank are just part of my clown troupe and had no idea I was a thief.

BECKY

So how much money do you think you'll get for this little robbery?

GEOFF

Well, the original sold for 1.1 million, so I should be able to get at least half that on the underground market.

BECKY

You can make a replica of something worth a million dollars! How are you not doing this for a living?

GEOFF

Because I'm trying to make it with my original works-

BECKY

-Yeah, but you're not, so shouldn't you go where the money is?

He holds back his response and continues painting.

INT. VASILIEV MANOR/STUDY - THE NEXT DAY

We pick up where we left off in the teaser as Geoff cautiously makes his way to *The Drums of War* painting.

TATYANA (O.S. IN RUSSIAN)

I see you...

He tenses up as he looks back at TATYANA, 6, the birthday girl. She holds a creepy doll with one eye and has frosting all over her face from one of Sarah's cupcakes.

TATYANA (IN RUSSIAN) (CONT'D)

You're a bad guy...

GEOFF (IN RUSSIAN)

Why can't I be a good guy?

TATYANA (IN RUSSIAN)

Because I'm the hero.

She points her finger at him like a pistol and makes a GUN-SHOT NOISE. Geoff stumbles back and she laughs.

MRS. VASILIEV (O.S. IN RUSSIAN)

Tatyana? Where are you?

The little girl looks to the hallway nearby.

INT. VASILIEV MANOR/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Frank and Becky are still performing for the kids. They notice Mrs. Vasiliev walking toward the study.

Frank quickly POPS a few balloons, frightening some of the kids and causing a scene of tears and SCREAMING.

Mrs. Vasiliev marches back toward the chaos in a huff.

INT. VASILIEV MANOR/STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Tatyana runs off to see what all the fuss is about.

Geoff returns to the painting. This time, he notices a tiny alarm on the back of it.

He looks in his clown bag and removes a small leather satchel. He opens it to reveal an array of tools.

Geoff takes a blade and carefully begins cutting the painting loose right where the edges meet the frame.

INT. VASILIEV MANOR/FOYER - CONTINUOUS

The parents and kids watch Becky and the puppets in the living room while Mrs. Vasiliev has a stern word with Frank.

MRS. VASILIEV (IN RUSSIAN)
Is making children cry part of your
usual routine?

Frank looks back at her, lost.

MRS. VASILIEV (IN RUSSIAN) (CONT'D)
I want some answers now!

He mimes like he's crying. Her eyes narrow with anger.

INT. VASILIEV MANOR/STUDY - MOMENTS LATER

Geoff finishes cutting the painting free and carefully places it inside his clown bag.

He removes his replica from the bag and looks back at the empty frame on the wall. He scans the room and notices a stapler.

He walks toward the small office accessory but stops when he hears a couple of party guests approaching the room.

He quickly hides behind a curtain just as the TWO GUESTS, women, 40s, enter the decadent study.

PARTY GUEST 1 (IN RUSSIAN)
Yet another room to show off their wealth...

Her companion notices the frame with the missing painting.

PARTY GUEST 2 (IN RUSSIAN)
What's that about?

Geoff holds his breath in anticipation behind the curtains as the women approach his robbery in progress.

Becky enters the room behind them.

BECKY
Hello, ladies! I need a couple of volunteers...

The two women look back at Becky and shrug. They join her and return to the party.

Geoff carefully exits his hiding place and grabs the stapler off the desk.

INT. VASILIEV MANOR/FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Frank makes cryptic mime gestures toward Mrs. Vasiliev.

MRS. VASILIEV (IN RUSSIAN)
Where is Pavel!

She turns to leave. He panics and squeezes the flower on his shirt, which shoots water all over the back of her dress. She turns around, filled with rage.

INT. CLOWN VAN - EVENING (MOVING)

Frank, now with a black eye, sits shotgun. Geoff drives the van while inspecting his bruised right hand.

FRANK
It's safe to say they won't be hiring Pavel the clown again.

GEOFF
I fucked up my hand on his face.

FRANK

Don't talk to me about job-related injuries right now.

GEOFF

Let's talk about this later. You're angry now, but you'll see things clearer in the morning.

Frank looks at him with his squinty injured eye.

GEOFF (CONT'D)

Poor choice of words, sorry...
There's a small box in my bag. Can you grab it for me?

Frank looks through the clown bag and finds the small box Sarah gave him. He opens it and finds a cupcake with a note:

Make time for the sweet things in life.

He shows it to Geoff.

GEOFF (CONT'D)

The baker at the party gave me that. She was cool, man...

FRANK

You were flirting while we robbed a kid's birthday party?

GEOFF

No, and we didn't rob the kids.
What took place tonight was a civic duty.

FRANK

You always make shitty behavior sound poetic... So why were you trying to score with the baker? Are things rocky with Becky?

GEOFF

Kinda, she's so wrapped up in her play that it's like I don't exist...

FRANK

So be up front with her and talk it out, brother.

Geoff notices a sun bleached air freshener hanging from the rearview mirror with an illustration of Frank, about 20 years ago, in flashy wrestler attire. It reads: "The Big Dirty"

GEOFF
Do you miss it?

FRANK
On nights like tonight, yeah...

EXT. PAVEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The clown van pulls up and parks in the driveway.

INT. CLOWN VAN - CONTINUOUS

Frank makes his way to the back and grabs Pavel.

He takes the earplugs out of his ears, unties him, and picks the blindfold up off the floor.

FRANK
Can we trust you won't talk about
what went on here tonight?

The frightened Russian looks at Frank, then to "The Big Dirty" air freshener behind him.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Hey, you hearing me?

Pavel confidently shakes his head yes.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Good, you wouldn't want Tommy to
get mad. Baboons are twice as
strong as humans and have teeth
longer than a leopard.

The Russian looks at Tommy, petrified...

...END OF ACT ONE...

...ACT TWO...

EXT. BAKERY - NIGHT

A quaint bakery with a rustic sign that reads:

BAKERY

ANTHONY, 60s, well dressed with a dapper appearance, approaches the door to the establishment and KNOCKS. He holds a folder in his hand.

After a moment, Sarah answers. She doesn't look pleased...

SARAH

What do you want now?

ANTHONY

It was my intention to call-

SARAH

-But you did something self serving instead. Yeah, I know the drill at this point...

ANTHONY

...I wanted to give you this. It's my latest manuscript.

He offers her the folder, and she doesn't take it.

SARAH

I'm good, thanks.

ANTHONY

I was hoping to hear your take on it. You've always had a brilliant eye for structure and-

SARAH

-Do you realize how crazy this is? You just show up out of nowhere and expect feedback on a book?

ANTHONY

Can't argue with that, but let me make it up to you. How about dinner tomorrow night?

She looks at him; he means it... Her icy demeanor melts.

SARAH

Fine. One dinner. But this doesn't mean that everything is back to normal... What time and where?

He has a thought.

ANTHONY

Actually, it will have to be the night after next. I forgot I have a work thing-

SARAH

-Forget it!

She SLAMS the door in his face.

ANTHONY

Sweetheart, please! I promise we can do it on Wednesday night! You have my word!

Silence from the other side of the door.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Sarah, please...

Nothing... He gives it another moment, then walks away.

INT. THE CANDIDO RESIDENCE - NIGHT

The doorbell CHIMES. RUSSELL, 30s, bookish, answers. Geoff pops out of the shadows and scares him.

RUSSELL

Whoa! You're lucky Vicky didn't answer. She has a deep-rooted hatred of clowns and circus folk.

GEOFF

Circus folk?

VICKY, 30s, perfectly put together and pregnant, enters and screams when she spots Geoff in his smudged clown makeup.

RUSSELL

What did I say?

VICKY

What the hell are you doing? Ugh, clowns are gross...

Geoff laughs as he enters the house. Vicky stops him.

VICKY (CONT'D)

You know better.

She nods to a basket near the door that reads: "Phones"
Geoff puts his phone in the container.

EXT. THE CANDIDO RESIDENCE/BACKYARD - NIGHT

Geoff, Russell, and Vicky sit around a fire pit. The guys drink craft beer, Vicky has coconut water.

VICKY

Should I even ask why you came home
wearing makeup?

GEOFF

I was part of a live action
performance art piece at the 4th
street gallery.

VICKY

I don't know what to say to that...

RUSSELL

(to Geoff)

How you like the brew?

GEOFF

I love it!

Vicky picks up a can which features Geoff's artwork. It depicts a hound standing over a dead fox with flowers surrounding them. It reads: "Fresh Catch IPA"

VICKY

It's a bit violent don't you think?
That poor little fox...

GEOFF

Hey, it's called fresh catch. I just followed the parameters of the title... And don't worry, no animals were harmed in the creation of that artwork.

VICKY

So why not a fish on a hook?

GEOFF

It's been done, and are you implying that a dead fish is less sad than a dead fox?

VICKY

Yes I am, because it is.

RUSSELL

In any case, I'll be taking these to the distributor with the others and should be talking deal points by next week.

GEOFF

That's great man. How's the new record coming along?

Russell takes a swig of his beer.

RUSSELL

Slowly...

VICKY

He's paralyzed and afraid of success.

RUSSELL

What?

VICKY

I'm just being honest sweetheart. My therapist says I shouldn't encourage behavior that impedes our goals.

RUSSELL

I'd love to move on to another topic...

VICKY

(to Geoff)

How are things going with Betsy?

GEOFF

Her name is Becky, and it's been challenging... I did, however, meet someone new at the thing tonight. She's a baker.

VICKY

That's great! Did you get her number?

GEOFF

No. I'm still dating Becky and I was dressed like a clown.

RUSSELL

Maybe she's into clowns.

GEOFF
They terrify her; she told me.

VICKY
I like her already. I'll be back.
This kid pushes on my bladder and I
have to pee every 5 minutes now.

RUSSELL
Too much information, hun...

She gets up and waddles back to the house.

The guys drink their beer while they wait a moment until the coast is clear.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)
So what were you really doing
tonight?

GEOFF
...The art thing I told you.

RUSSELL
I can tell when you're lying.

GEOFF
...My mom isn't doing great, and
her treatments gonna cost a lot...

RUSSELL
I don't know what to say man, I'm
sorry...

GEOFF
Yeah... So I saw an opportunity to
swap out a valuable painting with a
replica... Just to pay for mom's
treatment.

RUSSELL
You stole a painting from your
work?!

GEOFF
I wouldn't call it stealing, more
like artistic re-appropriation. And
I didn't do it at work-

RUSSELL
-You can not do this, if you get
caught-

GEOFF

-It's done. And because of that, I met the baker tonight. We really hit it off. She gave me a cupcake.

RUSSELL

She gave you a cupcake? What are you, six?

GEOFF

She gave it to me because she wanted me to see her again.

RUSSELL

Or, she was just being nice and trying to get a future customer by giving samples of her goods.

GEOFF

I'm thinking I could go to her work and meet her again. I had a Russian accent, and I was in clown makeup, so she doesn't know what I look like or who I really am.

RUSSELL

Two qualities that are sure to help your love life move forward. And would you tell her about your new life of crime on your first date?

GEOFF

This was a onetime deal. And it was for a good cause.

Vicky re-joins them with an angry expression on her face.

VICKY

You stole a painting?!

She looks at Russell.

VICKY (CONT'D)

And you knew about this?

RUSSELL

He just told me!

VICKY

(to Geoff)

You better not have your stolen goods in my house.

GEOFF

I don't. I wouldn't do that.

She sits down and takes a breath.

VICKY

(to Geoff)

We love having you here, but I
won't have a criminal in my home. I
know it's a bummer, but I want you
out of here tonight.

RUSSELL

That's a bit harsh-

Vicky shoots him a look that says: "Don't you dare."

VICKY

I'm sorry but we can't be
accessories to your illegal
activities.

GEOFF

It's ok, I understand...

VICKY

I'm going to bed.

She heads back inside as Geoff inspects his bruised hand.

RUSSELL

What happened to your hand?

GEOFF

I punched a clown...

The two of them take a swig of beer.

EXT. EVELYN'S ESTATE - NIGHT

A massive pink mansion stands alone amongst the beautiful gardens and looming palm trees.

A classic black challenger in mint condition pulls up.

Anthony exits and walks around the side of the house and down a long, narrow staircase.

He stops at a heavy wooden door with a small window that light seeps through.

He knocks, and a few moments later, the window darkens and the door is opened.

INT. EVELYN'S ESTATE/DUEL CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

The large door is opened by TAITO, 30s, a big muscular man with dreadlocks and tribal tattoos. He smiles at Anthony.

TAITO
Long time no see.

ANTHONY
I'm back, indefinitely...

Anthony lifts his sleeve to reveal a tattoo:



We see Taito has the same marking. This is the symbol for the international crime syndicate known as "*The Monarchy*."

Taito steps aside to let Anthony in.

The two men walk through the dark chamber. The air is musty and smells of gunpowder.

They walk past a laboratory where ERIK, 30s, covered with tattoos, and sporting a mohawk, works diligently with an array of chemicals and glassware.

They continue on past another room where BYRON, 40s, with shaggy hair and a beard, carefully works on assembling an explosive device.

Next, they pass a medical room where WENDY, 20s, with tattoos and short hair, tends to a wounded comrade.

They move on to the next room where KRISTJAN, 40s, a man as tall as a tree with blonde hair and a giant blonde beard, beats a man with a club.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
It's nice to see the work
continues...

TAITO
Of course, we wouldn't have it any
other way.

They round a corner down another hallway and pass a room covered in taxidermy, antlers, and rare tusks. FARAJI, 40s, with a chinstrap beard, cleans a massive hunting rifle and nods at Anthony as he passes.

They stop at the next room where GABRIELLA, 30s, with long dark hair, sorts stacks of money in every currency imaginable at a desk. Behind her is a large vault.

She rises from her seat and approaches Anthony. She speaks with a Chilean accent.

GABRIELLA

I heard you were back in town. Need any per diem while you're here?

ANTHONY

I'm straight, but thank you for asking.

She smiles at him and returns to her work as the two men move on to their next stop.

They arrive at an armory that houses anything and everything that inflicts pain, from bowie knives to machine guns. OMAR, 40s, with short hair and a big bushy beard, greets them.

OMAR

Can I get you anything? Some ammunition perhaps?

ANTHONY

Hmmmm... I could use a couple cases for the birds.

OMAR

Glad to hear they're still flying.

Omar heads to a shelf and removes two boxes of bullets for a desert eagle.

Anthony removes his billfold from his suit jacket, but Omar stops him.

OMAR (CONT'D)

Please... It's on the house.

Anthony accepts the ammo and gives him a nod of appreciation as he and Taito continue on.

They finally arrive in a large open chamber with grand archways and a large guillotine. Anthony stops to admire the instrument of death.

ANTHONY

A recent addition for the oath breakers?

Taito grins.

TAITO

That was my idea... A little fear goes a long way.

A BUZZING sound is heard. The two men follow the noise to a tattoo station where HANNA, 30s, covered with tattoos and piercings, works on a tattoo. The man in her chair is KLAUS, 30s, with short blonde hair.

Hanna stops her work and addresses Anthony. She speaks with a French accent.

HANNA

Do you have an appointment?

ANTHONY

You already know the answer to that question, my dear.

HANNA

Magnus will take you up.

Anthony turns to see MAGNUS, 40s, another enormous specimen of a man with a beard and a short mohawk.

INT. EVELYN'S ESTATE/DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Magnus leads Anthony into a decadent room decorated with lavish candlesticks and fine art.

EVELYN, an elegant older woman dressed to the nines, sits at the table having a drink from a lavish cup.

Anthony takes a seat across from her as Magnus brings him a tumbler and a bottle of fine whiskey. He speaks with an Australian accent.

MAGNUS

The usual?

ANTHONY

That would be wonderful, thank you.

The big man pours him a drink, leaves the bottle, and exits the room. Evelyn looks at him with a smirk on her face.

EVELYN

Shall we begin?

Anthony nods as he takes a sip of his whiskey.

EXT. BECKY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Geoff knocks on the door. Moments later, Becky answers.

BECKY

Maybe call first?

GEOFF

Sorry, I need a place to stay
tonight. Can I crash here?

BECKY

That's not a good idea...

GEOFF

What? Why?

BECKY

I saw you flirting with that little
baker chick.

GEOFF

I wasn't flirting. I-

BECKY

-I'm tired. We can talk about this
later.

GEOFF

But I'm here now-

She shuts the door in his face.

INT. VASILIEV MANOR/STUDY - NIGHT

A glass is filled with expensive booze. MR. VASILIEV, late 50s, in a shirt and tie, puts the bottle down and takes a much needed drink. He scans the room and stops at *The Drums of War* replica. His eyes narrow and he gets up to inspect it.

MR. VASILIEV

Olga!

After a moment, Mrs. Vasiliev enters the room.

MRS. VASILIEV (IN RUSSIAN)

What's wrong?

He motions to the painting on the wall.

MR. VASILIEV (IN RUSSIAN)

Tell me you didn't buy it like
that...

She notices the staples and is filled with rage.

...END OF ACT TWO...

... ACT THREE...

INT. EVELYN'S ESTATE/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Evelyn and Anthony are still seated at the table. She notices he's lost in his thoughts, looking at his phone. We see he's checking his past text messages from Sarah.

EVELYN

Are you feeling alright? I would prefer to have you involved, but you have no obligation to take part in this.

He snaps out of his fog and puts his phone away.

ANTHONY

Of course, just pondering the details. Will the Brit and the Irishman be joining me?

She smiles at him.

EXT. MEDITERRANEAN MANSION - NIGHT - A FEW MONTHS AGO

We see a beautiful mansion on top of a hill. The entire property is illuminated with the orange glow of lamps that outline the large home and the many pathways around it.

The sound of a man SCREAMING can be heard.

EXT. MEDITERRANEAN MANSION/PUTTING GREEN - CONTINUOUS

A few bodies of security personnel are scattered near several of the cups of a fancy private putting green.

The last guard alive is being held to the ground near the final cup by DESMOND, 40s, with a big red beard and a flat cap. He speaks with a Belfast accent.

DESMOND

I'm gonna need ya to quit yer hollerin' so my associate can ask ya some questions without needin' to shout.

A golf ball rolls toward the man and into the cup in front of his face.

We see LIONEL, 40s, well dressed, with tattoos on his hands and neck holding the golf club.

He approaches the restrained man and kneels down next to him. Lionel speaks with a London accent.

LIONEL

Never did like golf, but I'm not half bad at it. My specialty is hurting people, and if you don't give us the information we need, I'll kill ya slow with this silly golf stick...

The man looks at him, terrified, as Desmond chuckles.

INT. EVELYN'S ESTATE/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

We're back with Evelyn and Anthony in the gorgeous room.

EVELYN

They were enthusiastic about the prospect of working with you again.

ANTHONY

Good. Then it's settled. You can consider me back under contract. But on a job to job basis.

EVELYN

I understand. We can re-visit this subject after you've had a chance to re-acclimatize to your old environment.

He takes a sip of his drink.

ANTHONY

Agreed.

EVELYN

Let's meet again in a few days to discuss the current business and our path forward for future endeavors.

ANTHONY

That will suffice.

INT. ANTHONY'S CAR - NIGHT

Anthony returns to his classic car and gets in.

He reaches under his seat and removes a hand carved wooden box with ornate markings carved into it.

He opens it to reveal two desert eagle hand guns. One is silver, the other is black. Both weapons have "The Butcher" engraved on the handle.

INT. GEOFF'S CAR - NIGHT

Geoff sits in his car drawing in his sketchbook as he talks on speaker phone.

GEOFF

I have something I need your help with. Something proper...

INT. AIRSTREAM TRAILER PARK - SAME TIME

LUDWIG, 50s, scruffy, with long messy hair, sits up in his bed and smiles.

LUDWIG

Proper? As in something that would turn a few high priced heads?

GEOFF (ON THE PHONE)

Yes, it's part of the classical canvas variety.

LUDWIG

Say no more. Let's rendezvous tomorrow to discuss the particulars.

INT. GEOFF'S CAR - SAME TIME

Geoff is fine tuning a drawing of a seagull hovering over an endless ocean.

GEOFF

Sounds good to me. Should I bring-

LUDWIG (ON THE PHONE)

-Mums the word! A few ill-advised phrases could be the end of us...

GEOFF

What time?

INT. AIRSTREAM TRAILER PARK - SAME TIME

Ludwig is now pouring himself a glass of milk as he holds his phone with his head to his shoulder.

LUDWIG

The feedings begin at first light.
Shall we say 10?

GEOFF (ON THE PHONE)

10 is perfect. I'll see you then.

LUDWIG

I'll be waiting my bearded
companion. In the meantime, I'll
check in with some prospects.

He hangs up and drinks his glass of milk in one big gulp.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Frank opens a couple beers and brings them to SPENCER, 50s,
lean, and TIMOTHY, late 40s, well built with salt and pepper
scruff on his face.

TIMOTHY

Thanks, buddy.

SPENCER

Cheers.

Tim looks at Frank's black eye.

TIMOTHY

You gonna enlighten us on how you
got that shiner?

FRANK

That's a story for another time,
boys. Let's get back to the show.

Frank picks up his bottle and the three men clink their
drinks and take a swig.

Tim picks up a remote, points it at the television and
presses play. A VHS player groans as it starts up again.
They're watching an old wrestling match from 15 years ago.

Timothy is on the tape as his wrestling alter ego "*The Burglar*." He's dressed in a black and gray striped shirt with a knit mask over his head and black stretchy pants. He climbs the corner turnbuckle and leaps onto his opponent.

SPENCER

You never could stick the landing
on those.

TIMOTHY
Fuck off, that's perfect form.

Frank laughs as they watch The Burglar battle with "The Blacksmith," Spencer's old wrestling persona, dressed in a brown shirt, leather welding apron, gray pants, and a mask that covers the top half of his head.

FRANK
You guys are both holding back.

TIMOTHY
Holding back? I nearly broke a rib during this match.

SPENCER
Which means you were doing it all wrong.

Frank's wrestling character joins the video tape melee and we see him as "The Big Dirty." Shirtless with a yellow and black mask, black pants, and combat boots.

FRANK
Time to take some notes...

The three men are interrupted by the RINGING of a soothing door bell.

SPENCER
You expecting company?

EXT. FRANK'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Frank opens the front door to reveal Geoff standing there with several suitcases and a foldable canvas stand.

FRANK
I wish I could say I didn't see this coming.

GEOFF
I just need a few nights to figure out my next move.

FRANK
It's fine brother, you're always-

Geoff quickly pushes past him with some of his belongings.

FRANK (CONT'D)
-welcome here...

The big man grabs the few remaining items, brings them inside, and shuts the door.

EXT. RUSSIAN OIL FIELDS - MORNING

VIKTOR, an intimidating and large man in his 40s, watches over an oil operation with a stern look on his face.

His phone RINGS in his pocket and he answers it.

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)

Hello.

MR. VASILIEV (IN RUSSIAN ON THE PHONE)

We have a situation that requires a response from the family.

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN)

The whole family?

INT. VASILIEV MANOR/MASTER BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Mr. Vasiliev takes a seat on his bed.

MR. VASILIEV (IN RUSSIAN)

Head stateside with my children and your brother. Your father and uncle can remain, for now.

VIKTOR (IN RUSSIAN ON THE PHONE)

Understood. We'll fly out today.

MR. VASILIEV (IN RUSSIAN)

Good. We'll discuss more once you're here.

Mr. Vasiliev hangs up and removes his shirt.

Beneath his fancy attire, we see he is covered in Russian criminal tattoos. On his chest is the Vasiliev family crest:



EXT. ANIMAL SANCTUARY - THE NEXT MORNING

A golf cart drives along a dirt road past beautiful scenic hills and animal enclosures.

EXT. ANIMAL SANCTUARY/BEAR ENCLOSURE - DAY

Ludwig feeds DOUGLASS, a giant grizzly bear. He is interrupted by Geoff as he arrives in the golf cart.

LUDWIG

A pleasant morning to you, sir!

He sets down his feeding pole and approaches Geoff.

GEOFF

Good morning, how'd you do?

Ludwig reaches into his pocket, pulls out a piece of paper, and hands it to Geoff. It reads: *3399 Arroyo canyon*

LUDWIG

Be there at noon today. His name is Anthony... So what's the origin of this new found acquisition?

GEOFF

An original Boris Konstantinov.

LUDWIG

Are you certain?

GEOFF

Yup, it's remarkable.

LUDWIG

Which Konstantinov piece is it?

GEOFF

The drums of war...

Ludwig looks to the sky with glee.

LUDWIG

That's one of his last known works. It was supposedly done after he had already gone as mad as a hatter. His insanity pieces are worth double! This is a wonderful attainment, my friend! Bravo!

GEOFF

Thanks, I'll be back to give you
your cut after I meet with the
buyer.

He gives Geoff a bear hug.

LUDWIG

Well done, I'll see you soon.

INT. BAKERY/KITCHEN - MORNING

Sarah is working on a batch of cupcakes. She's listening to music through ear buds and is in a peaceful trance as she prepares the baked treats.

Moments later, ALEXIS, 20s, one of her employees, enters the large baking area and approaches her.

ALEXIS

Whatcha doing tonight?

Sarah doesn't hear her.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

Hello? Sarah?

She notices her and takes out her headphones.

SARAH

Sorry, what's up?

ALEXIS

Just gauging your agenda for this
evening?

SARAH

I'll be here late. I have a lot to
finish for the pickups tomorrow and
if the packaging isn't perfect,
then-

ALEXIS

-I know, but with both of us
working, like, all day, we should
totally have it covered.

SARAH

Right...

ALEXIS

Come on, one night out won't kill
you.

SARAH

I just don't see myself feeling up
to it. I really appreciate the
offer, but not this time.

Alexis acknowledges her and heads over to one of the large fridges nearby. Sarah can feel her disappointment...

SARAH (CONT'D)

...It's not that I don't want to
hang out, I just know my mind would
be somewhere else.

ALEXIS

Yup, here...

SARAH

You say that like it's a bad thing.
I've built a successful business,
you should be happy for me.

Alexis gives her a sarcastic round of APPLAUSE, and Sarah throws an unfinished cupcake at her. She catches it and they smile at each other.

EXT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE - DAY

Anthony opens the front door of his beautiful home to find Geoff standing there with a duffle bag over his shoulder.

GEOFF

Hey, I'm Geoff, Ludwig's friend.

The dapper gentlemen presents his hand and Geoff shakes it.

ANTHONY

Anthony, come on in.

Geoff follows him inside and the door shuts behind them.

INT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Geoff sits on the couch. He takes in the exquisite home and the many priceless paintings that adorn the walls.

Anthony fixes himself an alcoholic beverage at the bar nearby.

They are joined by CATHERINE, late 20s, with short hair. She has the monarchy tattoo on her neck.

ANTHONY

This is my associate Catherine.
She's what you might call an expert
in the arts.

Geoff waves at her.

GEOFF

Nice to meet you.

CATHERINE

Likewise, may I see what you've
brought?

GEOFF

Of course.

He picks up his bag and unzips it.

ANTHONY

(to Geoff)

Drink?

GEOFF

No thanks, it's a bit early for me.

ANTHONY

You let the hands on the clock
dictate what you want?

GEOFF

No, I... I guess I was making
excuses. I'm not much of a
drinker...

ANTHONY

Say what you mean. We need to be
straight with each other if we're
going to do business.

Geoff acknowledges his comment as he carefully removes the painting from the large bag and sets it on the coffee table.

CATHERINE

Exquisite... And you can guarantee
the authenticity?

GEOFF

Yes.

She looks at it closely.

CATHERINE
If it's a fake, we won't settle
this with words...

GEOFF
It's the real deal.

Anthony comes over with his beverage and joins them in admiring the painting. He looks at Catherine.

ANTHONY
Konstantinov?

CATHERINE
Yes, and it appears to be authentic. Market price on this is around one million.

ANTHONY
Good, then that will be all, my dear. I'll be in touch.

She smiles and heads for the door. Anthony looks at Geoff.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
I'll take the painting off your hands. We can discuss the financials, but first, what's your take on the art in this room?

GEOFF
You've got extraordinary taste.

ANTHONY
Don't give me a general compliment, be specific.

GEOFF
Well, you have several paintings from the 19th century, arguably one of the best time periods for artists ever... Your selections have conviction.

ANTHONY
Care to elaborate?

GEOFF
Take that Von Crouch piece, for example.

Most people would say there are better artists from his time and maybe that's true, but I would argue that no other artist of his generation sacrificed what he did to paint about what he felt the world needed to see.

ANTHONY

...Are you an artist yourself, or just a lover of art history?

GEOFF

Both, sir.

ANTHONY

May I see some of your work?

GEOFF

Sure, I have a sketchbook in the car. I could go grab it?

ANTHONY

That would be wonderful.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - MOMENTS LATER

We follow Geoff as he walks to his car.

We continue past his vehicle down the street where Catherine's car is parked. She sits motionless inside.

As we move closer to her window, we see she is dead...

A knife protrudes from her chest. It holds a blood-soaked piece of parchment paper that has something written on it. It reads:



...END OF ACT THREE...

...ACT FOUR...

INT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Geoff and Anthony sit on the couch and look through his sketchbook.

GEOFF

This is an idea for a painting I want to do called self destruct.

He shows Anthony a sketch depicting a horse with blinders walking toward a pack of ravenous looking hyenas.

ANTHONY

Well done... I'm an artist myself. I write children's literature, tales of adventure. I might have some commission work for you. Cover artwork for my next release.

Geoff smiles warmly at him.

GEOFF

Maybe I will have that drink.

ANTHONY

There's a good man.

Anthony gets up and walks back to the bar.

GEOFF

So what's the title of your book?

ANTHONY

There's more than one. The manuscripts are under the table, have a look.

Geoff spots them neatly stacked under the coffee table and picks one up. The cover reads:

THE REINDEER & THE WOLVES OF WINTER

He opens the book...

EXT. FOREST IN THE SNOW - EVENING (ANIMATION)

...An abstract watercolor world takes shape from the pages of the story. A lone REINDEER BULL with massive antlers moves quietly through the enchanted tree-filled landscape of white and gray.

Snow falls lightly as the beast keeps his eyes and ears open.

We race through the trees and falling snow to reveal...

EXT. FOREST IN THE SNOW/CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

...A PACK OF WOLVES are gathered together on the hunt for a meal. Their eyes dark with intent as they sniff the cold air for the scent of prey.

The leader of the pack catches the smell of the large reindeer and his eyes narrow. We move back through the trees to...

EXT. FOREST IN THE SNOW - CONTINUOUS

...The bull spots the wolves lying in wait and continues forward.

In a flash of color, the woods and bull morph from the watercolor fable to...

EXT. ICELANDIC COUNTRYSIDE - EVENING

...Anthony, a few years younger, walks alone amongst the scenic backdrop.

He carries his silver desert eagle as he wades through the thick snow in the wilderness.

He sees a cabin in the distance as the sun is setting over the picturesque landscape.

INT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Anthony returns to Geoff and hands him his drink.

ANTHONY

Have you ever traveled to Iceland?

GEOFF

No, but I hear it's beautiful.

Geoff continues to peruse the pages...

EXT. ICELAND CABIN - NIGHT

...The northern lights are in full effect in the night sky.

A handful of mercenaries patrol the cabin.

Two of the heathens notice Anthony and advance toward him. They are swiftly dispatched with perfectly placed HEAD SHOTS from his enormous weapon.

In a flash, Anthony and the two fallen enemies change to...

EXT. FOREST IN THE SNOW/CLEARING - NIGHT (ANIMATION)

...The bull stands over two dead wolves with blood dripping from his antlers.

Another wolf approaches and leaps at the reindeer as the watercolor world changes back to...

EXT. ICELAND CABIN - NIGHT

...Anthony catches a charging mercenary with a hard PUNCH to the jaw.

The man tries to counter but Anthony evades it, takes a hold of his arm, and BREAKS IT as the man SCREAMS.

The last two mercenaries join the fray with their pistols at the ready.

Anthony uses the one armed man as a shield.

They FIRE, killing their comrade, and Anthony delivers another HEAD SHOT.

Just one man left... He shoves the lifeless body at him and knocks him over.

INT. ICELAND CABIN - NIGHT

We move closer to a giant man that is bound with chains that are shackled to the floor.

He lifts his head and we see its Kristjan, the giant that was beating a man with a club at Evelyn's estate earlier.

He pulls at the chains and the wooden floor beneath him CREAKS.

The bear of a man leans forward with all his might and RIPS his restraints from the ground.

We move past the splintered pieces of wood which become...

EXT. FOREST IN THE SNOW/CLEARING - NIGHT (ANIMATION)

...Broken tree branches in the snow are stepped on by the large and powerful bull.

He drives the last wolf into the snow with his antlers until the beast disappears beneath the thick sheet of powder, which takes us to...

EXT. ICELAND CABIN - NIGHT

...Snow shoveling onto the last mercenary as he lays badly beaten but still breathing in a hole in the ground.

Anthony watches as Kristjan continues to bury him beneath the cosmic green of the Icelandic night sky.

INT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

We're back in the living room with Anthony and Geoff.

ANTHONY

It's quite a lovely place. You
should visit sometime.

Geoff notices the name on the manuscript:

J.B. Hunter

GEOFF

You're J.B. Hunter?

ANTHONY

In the flesh.

GEOFF

I've actually heard of you!

ANTHONY

So can I count on you for the job?

GEOFF

Absolutely. I'm in.

Geoff takes a drink. It's stronger than he expected.

ANTHONY

So why are you selling masterpieces
through men like Ludwig when you
could create your own?

GEOFF

Just trying to pay the bills...

ANTHONY

Don't get lost in that pursuit.
Make sure your original works don't
get buried by what others hire you
for... Except me, of course. You
will need to make time for my work.

Geoff laughs as Anthony's phone BUZZES in his pocket.

He removes it to see a text from Lionel. It reads: "We're all set for tonight, heading to your place now."

Anthony puts his phone away, finishes his drink, and gets up.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

I need to prepare for another
meeting. You finish your drink and
I'll see you next week. Good?

GEOFF

But we didn't discuss the sale or
what you want for your book-

ANTHONY

-It's the man that holds the
paintbrush that guides the work.
I'll have the money for you next
week. You keep the painting until
then.

GEOFF

Alright.

ANTHONY

Some of my previously released
books are on the shelf there. Take
a few so you know what I've done
before.

Anthony exits the room down a nearby hallway.

Geoff stands up with his drink and approaches the book shelf as he tries to muscle through finishing it.

He grabs a couple more J.B. Hunter books and continues looking around the room.

He inspects the paintings on the wall, then stumbles across a picture of Anthony with someone.

He looks at it closely and nearly drops his beverage when he realizes it's Sarah, the baker he met at the birthday party.

Geoff puts the picture down and finishes his drink. He then careful re-packs "The Drums of War" in his duffle bag.

EXT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE - DAY

Geoff comes back outside with the large bag, the books, and the collection of Anthony's manuscripts under his arm.

He opens his car and loads them inside. He's about to get in when he realizes he forgot something...

GEOFF

Shit...

Geoff locks his car again and heads back to the house.

INT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Geoff enters the living room and calls out to Anthony.

GEOFF

Sorry for the back and forth I left
my sketchbook.

He waits for an answer but doesn't get one. He continues over to the coffee table and picks up his sketchbook.

The picture of Sarah catches his eye again and he can't help but look at it one more time.

He's startled by a NOISE from down the hall.

GEOFF (CONT'D)

Anthony?

No response... He sets his sketch book down again.

INT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Geoff approaches the closed bedroom door and KNOCKS.

GEOFF

You all right in there?

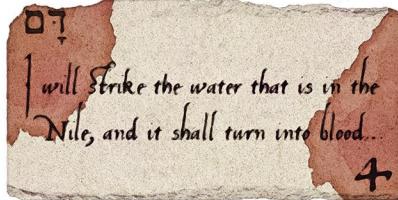
Still nothing...

INT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE/MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

He opens the door to discover Anthony seated in a chair in the distance.

GEOFF
You good?

He approaches, and as he gets closer, he notices a knife in his chest with a blood-soaked piece of parchment paper. It reads:



Geoff's face goes pale as he looks around to see if the killer is still present. Luckily, he's all alone...

INT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Geoff heads toward his sketchbook, then looks at the priceless paintings on the walls and has a thought.

A series of shots:

Geoff grabs a couple of gigantic suit bags out of a closet. The Von Crouch is carefully taken off the wall. A suit bag is ZIPPED up with the Von Crouch inside. Geoff takes another priceless painting off the wall. And another... Then bags them both.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Geoff briskly walks toward his car with the painting filled suit bags in his arms.

He carefully sets them down, unlocks his back door, and puts them inside.

He then re-locks the car and heads back toward Anthony's house.

INT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Geoff hears a distant VIBRATION as he enters the room. He follows the sound down the hallway.

INT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE/MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

He traces the VIBRATIONS to Anthony's phone on the nightstand next to him. It stops, then displays: "Missed Call From Sarah."

He looks at it for a moment, turns to leave, and it TREMORS again. This time the display reads: "New Voicemail."

He grabs a sock from a drawer and picks up the phone. It's locked. He scans Anthony's face to open it and hear the message.

SARAH (ON THE PHONE)
Hey dad, it's me... So I thought about it and decided that if you really can commit to dinner tomorrow night, I'll give it another try. Don't make me regret this... Let me know, bye.

Geoff carefully puts the phone back.

He notices a gun in a holster under Anthony's jacket and pulls it out with the sock over his hand. It's the silver desert eagle.

The doorbell RINGS and Geoff nearly shits himself.

INT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Geoff runs into the room holding the gun.

As he grabs his sketchbook, the front door opens. He drops it, spilling documents and drawings everywhere.

He tries to gather it all but ends up abandoning it as he escapes down the hall, leaving a trail of papers behind him.

Seconds later, Lionel and Desmond enter the living room.

LIONEL
Oi Anthony!

Desmond notices the sketchbook on the floor and Geoff's empty glass on the coffee table.

DESMOND
It's a bit untidy, eh?

Lionel looks at the mess and then notices the white spaces on the walls where the paintings used to hang.

INT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Geoff is carefully trying to open a window to escape.

It won't budge. He notices it's locked at the top and can't quite reach the latch.

INT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE/MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lionel and Desmond enter and discover Anthony in the chair.

LIONEL

You having a laugh, mate?

Lionel gets closer and discovers the knife... Desmond joins him as they look at their fallen friend.

DESMOND

He's dead...

LIONEL

Yes, I'd say that's rather obvious.
Don't touch anything, I'll ring the
cleaners, but let's have a look
around first.

INT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The Brit and the Irishman investigate the room.

Desmond picks up a brightly colored "*Pavel the Clown*" flyer near Geoff's sketch book. The text is in both English and Russian. It reads:



DESMOND

What in the name of christ is this
supposed to mean? Who the fuck is
Pavel the clown?

Lionel looks at the flyer.

LIONEL

Maybe the Russians did this. Those
crazy chaps, Alexei and Vlad?

DESMOND

They've been dead for months. This is someone new. Or, so experienced, they know how to appear green as the fucking grass.

Lionel picks up another drawing from the book.

It shows a giant bear in an open field surrounded by butterflies with its eyes closed. The sketch is titled: "Contemplation."

INT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE/SPARE ROOM - DAY

Geoff is now trying another window. He opens it, but not without making a NOISE.

He panics, removes the screen, and jumps out the window just as Lionel and Desmond walk by.

EXT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Geoff crawls out of the bushes with the butcher gun and sprints toward his car.

INT. ANTHONY'S HOUSE/SPARE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Desmond and Lionel look out the open window and spot Geoff clumsily getting in his car with the gun in his sock covered hand in the distance.

LIONEL

The bastard was still here...

DESMOND

Was that a fuckin' sock on his hand?

He starts the vehicle and SCREECHES away from the curb.

LIONEL

We should probably leave this bit out when we recount the day's events to Evelyn.

DESMOND

Agreed. It doesn't exactly paint us in the best light.

Lionel angrily SLAMS the open window shut.

INT. CLASSIC CAR - MOMENTS LATER

ATTICUS, 40s, clean cut, in a black suit and fedora, watches as Geoff's car accelerates down the road.

He reaches under his seat and removes a well-worn leather-bound book. He looks at it fondly for a moment before he opens it.

The man flips through the worn and torn pages that contain illustrations of various animals.

He stops on a page with a drawing of an owl that has *Catherine* written on it. He writes *Extinct* beneath the drawing of the bird.

Atticus then turns the page to a drawing of a bear that has *Anthony* written on it. He adds *Extinct* to the page below the beast.

