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The Leningrad Symphony: A Screenplay

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The Leningrad Symphony: A Screenplay

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English from
The College of William and Mary

by

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Williamsburg, VA
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Table of Contents

<i>The Leningrad Symphony: A Screenplay</i>	1
Appendix A: Endnotes.....	79
Appendix B: Ration Chart.....	86
Appendix C: Annotated Bibliography.....	87

The Leningrad Symphony

by
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Based on the True Story of the Siege of Leningrad

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THE LENINGRAD SYMPHONY

FADE IN:

INT. GREAT HALL OF THE PHILHARMONIC - DAY

SUPER IN/OUT - Leningrad, 1941

The PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA is playing for an audience of Leningrad's CULTURAL ELITE. It's an elegant location, a beautiful concert, a posh audience.

In the orchestra is cellist NATASHA ADAMOVA (30), our heroine. She's a pretty girl and a talented musician, and she genuinely loves the music she plays. She's five months pregnant.

In the wings, KARL ELIASBERG (50s) watches enviously. Behind him, radio equipment: he's broadcasting the concert live.

The concert ends; the curtain closes.

Eliasberg hurries on stage to help Natasha with her cello.

ELIASBERG

Let me, let me.

NATASHA

Thank you.

She stands, a little awkwardly, then takes the cello back.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

My mother always told me that true musicians carried their own instruments.

ELIASBERG

Cellos are heavy.

NATASHA

I should've played the flute.

ELIASBERG

A cello in one hand and a baby in the other? You've gained some weight, my dear.

She laughs.

NATASHA

Little Ivanov. I felt him kicking during the second movement.

ELIASBERG

Did he keep good time?

NATASHA

Of course.

IVAN ADAMOV (30s) comes over, hugs her. Ivan is Natasha's husband, an academic, a sober and quiet man.

IVAN

You were wonderful.

NATASHA

Thank you.

IVAN

Do you want to go to the reception, or are you too tired?

NATASHA

No, I feel better when I play.

ELIASBERG

This baby is so lucky - still in the womb, and already hearing the most beautiful music in the world.

NATASHA

No, no. Some days Ivanov suffers through rehearsals and learns more profanity than music. We should go, Ivan. It was great seeing you, Karl.

ELIASBERG

Good bye.

Ivan and Natasha move off to the dressing rooms, leaving Eliasberg alone with his radio equipment.

NATASHA

Dimitri Shostakovich is coming to the reception.

IVAN

I wondered why you wanted to go.

NATASHA

And there's free food!

Ivan smiles, but he doesn't look thrilled at the prospect of the party.

CUT TO:

INT. RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT

An elegant crowd mixes together, talking and laughing. In the center, DIMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH, (50), charismatic and overbearing, Russia's most famous living composer.

MUSICIAN #1

Are you working on anything?

Shostakovich makes a face: he gets that all the time. They all laugh.

MUSICIAN #2

Are you staying for long?

SHOSTAKOVICH

I'm a composer and this is Leningrad.

(a toast)

The city of music!

They drink to that.

MUSICIAN #1

You must tell us if you're composing.

SHOSTAKOVICH

I'm always composing.

MUSICIAN #2

But is it good?

SHOSTAKOVICH

It's never good.

They all laugh at the absurdity of that statement.

MUSICIAN #2

If you write it, we'll play it.

SHOSTAKOVICH

I couldn't let you play it unless it was perfect. It would ruin us both.

He's still joking around, happy to be the center of attention, happy to be admired.

A little way away, Natasha and Ivan are standing in a different circle, although every so often Natasha glances at Shostakovich. Ivan sees her looking.

NATASHA

He's bigger than I'd imagined.

IVAN

Full of symphonies.

NATASHA

I don't see why he'd come to Leningrad.

IVAN

It's "the city of music."

NATASHA

But Moscow...

IVAN

You just like Moscow because you grew up there. There's no Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra.

NATASHA

There are plenty of orchestras in Moscow.

IVAN

But Leningrad is the best.

Natasha clearly disagrees.

IVAN (CONT'D)

Moscow has politics, government, dirty crowded streets. Leningrad -

NATASHA

I love Moscow.

This is the beginning of the argument. To avoid it, Ivan says:

IVAN

I'm tired.

NATASHA

You go home, I'm going to stay.

She moves toward the circle around Shostakovich.

Ivan hesitates, then leaves by himself, unhappily.

CUT TO:

INT. IVAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Ivan's office is crowded with books. He's sitting behind his desk, reading the Pravda (Russian newspaper). His colleague, PROFESSOR MOROZOV (50) enters.

PROFESSOR MOROZOV

Ivan.

IVAN

Come in, come in. I don't know why I buy the Pravda - I've read it front to back, and found no news. How are you?

Professor Morozov closes the office door.

PROFESSOR MOROZOV

The NKVD came to my office this morning.

Ivan is suddenly tense, worried.

IVAN

What did they want?

PROFESSOR MOROZOV

They asked questions about you. Are you a good teacher, are you satisfied with your position, are you a party member -

IVAN

I'm not.

PROFESSOR MOROZOV

I told them you were.

IVAN

(surprised)

Thank you.

PROFESSOR MOROZOV

It's a bad time to be an academic, Ivan. Things have been happening. Every so often, a friend disappears.¹

(MORE)

PROFESSOR MOROZOV (CONT'D)

IVAN

What are you telling me?

PROFESSOR MOROZOV

There are things you shouldn't say right now. Things you shouldn't do.

IVAN

What have I said?

PROFESSOR MOROZOV

Something. I don't know.

IVAN

I teach history, for God's sake.

PROFESSOR MOROZOV

History: what happened, what didn't happen - what shouldn't have happened. There are many things in history which Russia would rather forget.

Ivan looks disgusted.

IVAN

History is immutable. It's the only thing that is. If we don't learn from the past, we'll continue to make the same mistakes, over and over again. Pretending otherwise is unconscionable.

PROFESSOR MOROZOV

Just be careful. Think of your family.

Morozov exits.

Unsettled by the conversation, Ivan has trouble re-focusing on his work.

CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - MORNING

The DOCTOR is examining Natasha.

DOCTOR

And are you still having nausea?

NATASHA
Only in the morning.

DOCTOR
That's normal. Any other concerns?

NATASHA
(re: the baby)
I just hope he's not a
percussionist. Anything but a
percussionist.

DOCTOR
He's been kicking, then?

NATASHA
It's the strangest feeling.

DOCTOR
Are you still playing?

NATASHA
I don't know what I'd do with
myself if I didn't. I get restless.

DOCTOR
You're at five months, you need to
be resting, conserving your energy.
Pregnancy can be exhausting. It's
why they call it labor.

NATASHA
I feel fine. Really happy.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Natasha picks up the phone, dials.

NATASHA
(into phone)
I'm fine. We're all fine. How's
Papa?
(beat)
I'm glad. You tell him I have a new
solo, I want him to hear it. You
could come down for the weekend,
we'd love to have you.
(beat)(disappointed)
No, I understand. Maybe another
time.

Ivan enters.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Mama, I should go. - I'll call you
later. Bye.

She hangs up.

IVAN
Your mother?

NATASHA
She likes to hear about the baby.

Ivan touches her stomach fondly.

IVAN
Of course.

NATASHA
She wants us to move back to
Moscow.

Natasha clearly also wants to move back to Moscow.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
She could help me with the baby.

IVAN
Maybe they should move to
Leningrad.

NATASHA
All of my family is in Moscow. They
want to help -

IVAN
(interrupting)
Why do they think we need help?

NATASHA
They worry about us.

IVAN
Why? What happened?

Alarmed, he looks at her belly.

NATASHA
No, nothing. The baby's fine.
Everything's fine.

IVAN

Why do you want to move if everything's fine?

NATASHA

Ivan.

IVAN

We have jobs here, we have an apartment, we have friends. We're living in the most beautiful city in the world.

NATASHA

My mother wants to help with the baby. You know how good she is with children. If we lived closer...

IVAN

It's the middle of the term. I signed a contract. I have a responsibility to the University, and I have a responsibility to my students.

This is the end of the conversation for him, and Natasha knows it. She's furious.

She storms into the -

KITCHEN

- and slams a couple cupboards, beside herself.

Ivan exits to the -

BEDROOM

- where he goes to the bed and sits quietly. He takes off his shoes.

LIVING ROOM

Natasha fumes in the center of the room, and then goes to the cello.

She begins to play something loud and fast, trying her best to keep Ivan awake.

BEDROOM

Lying in the bed, Ivan smiles and closes his eyes: he loves the music.

LIVING ROOM

Natasha works her way through the cello piece, up the crescendo and then down into the decrescendo.

The more she plays, the calmer she gets. By the time she stops, she's not angry any more.

BEDROOM

Ivan is still awake when Natasha slips into bed with him.

IVAN

I can't sleep without you.

NATASHA

I'm sorry.

IVAN

Me too.

CUT TO:

INT. GREAT HALL OF THE PHILHARMONIC - DAY

SUPER IN/OUT - June 22, 1941

The Philharmonic is practicing, building up to a crescendo. Natasha re-adjusts the cello over her pregnant stomach.

CUT TO:

INT. LECTURE ROOM - DAY

Class is about to start, and Ivan's students are getting seated. Ivan is just about to enter the room when he is stopped by two CHEKISTS. Their conversation is only barely audible to the students.

CHEKIST #1

Professor Ivan Adamov?

IVAN

Yes?

CHEKIST #2

You need to come with us.

Ivan realizes he's in danger. He looks at his classroom, where students are starting to look at him, alerting to the situation.

He steps out of the doorway, out of their view. The students look at each other, confused.

INT. UNIVERSITY HALLWAY - DAY

Ivan is walking away, flanked by the Chekists. As he walks by Professor Morozov's office, Morozov looks up and they make grim eye contact.

Ivan and the Chekists turn a corner, and they're gone.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Natasha rides the trolley through the streets of Leningrad. It's June, and Leningrad is beautiful. She doesn't notice.

CUT TO:

INT. BAKERY - DAY

Natasha picks up a loaf of bread, brings it to the counter. She waits for the CASHIER to finish up with another CUSTOMER.

Waiting, she glances outside, where several people have started acting peculiarly: an OLD WOMAN is crying, and YOUNG BOYS are running from store to store, shouting. She can't hear what they're saying.

CASHIER

You ready?

Distracted, Natasha hadn't realized the other customer had paid.

NATASHA

Yes, sorry.

She takes out her wallet.

The other customer opens the door, exiting, and they hear what the boys are shouting:

BOY
(distant shout)
Invasion! Invasion!

Natasha and the cashier are momentarily frozen in confusion.

NATASHA
I don't -

The cashier turns on the radio.

RADIO ANNOUNCER
... At 4 am, without declaration of
war, German troops attacked our
country. The government calls upon
you, men and women citizens of the
Soviet Union, to rally even more
closely around the glorious
Bolshevik Party and our great
leader, Comrade Stalin. Our cause
is just. The enemy will be crushed.
Victory will be ours... 2

Natasha looks back outside, at the old woman who's crying.

CASHIER
It's happened, then.

NATASHA
I should get home.

She lingers, fumbling with money, but the cashier waves her
off.

CASHIER
Bread's free.

NATASHA
Thank you.

She hurries off.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - DAY

Natasha enters the apartment, runs for the phone, dials
quickly.

CUTAWAY - IVAN'S OFFICE

The phone on Ivan's desk rings. The office is empty and dark, the door still wide open. Ivan's coat is still draped over the back of his chair.

RETURN TO SCENE

Frustrated, Natasha hangs up.

Scared, she plays with the phone for a moment, and then dials again.

NATASHA

(into phone)

... Mama! I just heard. Just now, I was coming home -

(beat)

I don't know. I want to come home. I'm scared.

She starts to cry.

LATER

Natasha's hung up the phone, but she's still full of nervous energy. She paces.

Ivan doesn't come. She falls asleep waiting for him.

TIME PASSES

When she wakes up in the morning, he still isn't there.

CUT TO:

INT. GREAT HALL OF THE PHILHARMONIC - DAY

All of the musicians are packing their instruments, all talking at once. They're clearly preparing to leave.

CONDUCTOR

Quiet, everyone! We have our own compartment on the 7:30 train. I have priority evacuation tickets. Does everyone have one? Does anyone still need a ticket?

MUSICIAN #1

I need another!

CONDUCTOR

One per person. That's all we get.

MUSICIAN #1
What about my wife?

CONDUCTOR
These tickets are for the
Philharmonic only. The citizen
evacuation comes later.³

MUSICIAN #2
Where are we going?

CONDUCTOR
Moscow.

Natasha looks at the ticket she's been given, torn between staying and leaving: she plays with the ticket nervously.

CONDUCTOR (CONT'D)
We meet at the station. Don't lose
your ticket and don't forget your
instrument.

The musicians begin to disperse. Natasha's moving slower than the others.

Eliasberg enters, approaches Natasha.

ELIASBERG
You're evacuating?

NATASHA
I guess so.

ELIASBERG
Priority tickets for the
Philharmonic, I see.

NATASHA
You didn't get them?

ELIASBERG
No. The radio orchestra is staying,
it seems.

NATASHA
Is it safe to stay?

ELIASBERG
I don't know.

NATASHA
It'll be over soon, I'm sure.

ELIASBERG

Of course.

CUT TO:

EXT. LENINGRAD UNIVERSITY - DAY

Establishing shot.

INT. UNIVERSITY HALLWAY - DAY

Natasha hurries down the hallway, finds Ivan's office open, dark, abandoned.

She ruffles through his papers, looking for clues.

Professor Morozov enters.

PROFESSOR MOROZOV

He's gone.

NATASHA

What do you mean, he's gone? Where did he go?

PROFESSOR MOROZOV

Wherever they take them.

NATASHA

What?

PROFESSOR MOROZOV

They took him. For questioning.

NATASHA

(realizing)
Oh, god. When?

PROFESSOR MOROZOV

Yesterday.

Natasha is horrified.

PROFESSOR MOROZOV (CONT'D)

When they're taken, they don't come back.

NATASHA

(helplessly)
He's just a professor. Not even a very good one... Students fall asleep in his classes.

PROFESSOR MOROZOV
It doesn't matter. Friends,
colleagues, mentors. All gone.

NATASHA
Why?

PROFESSOR MOROZOV
They're too smart. They know the
system's flawed, and when they
talk, people listen to them. So
they have to be shut up.

Natasha touches Ivan's coat gently, fighting tears.

PROFESSOR MOROZOV (CONT'D)
You should take his books, if you
want them.

NATASHA
Thank you.

He nods, exits.

She takes Ivan's coat, hugs it.

CUT TO:

EXT. NKVD HEADQUARTERS - AFTERNOON

Natasha joins a small group of other WOMEN and CHILDREN who
are standing outside the gates. Among them is a BLOND BOY
(14), staring fixedly at the door.

Natasha turns to the closest woman.

NATASHA
Have you seen my husband? He's
tall, brown hair, glasses -

The door opens: a MAN exits. As soon as the door opens -

BLOND BOY
(screaming)
Mama! Mama! Mama!

He keeps screaming until the door closes, and then he returns
to staring.

Shocked, Natasha looks at the boy, and at the other women.
They all look desperate, almost wild. She backs away from
them.

As she hurries away, in the background -

BLOND BOY (CONT'D)
(screaming)
Mama! Mama! Mama!

She walks faster.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - NIGHT

Natasha is sitting at the table, holding Ivan's coat. She's listening to the radio, watching the street.

RADIO ANNOUNCER
... we must act with courage and
bravery, strength and honor, and
fearlessly discharge our sacred
duty as Soviet patriots...

She turns off the radio.

On the street below, families are lugging suitcases toward the train station.

BEDROOM - EVENING

Natasha pulls out a suitcase and begins to pack.

She packs clothes, a set of china.

LIVING ROOM

She sits with the suitcase and her cello in the middle of the room, watching the door. She sits like that for hours. Shadows move over her.

Ivan doesn't come.

She bursts into tears, crying desperately. Very, very gradually, she calms down.

Finally, still crying, takes the suitcase and cello and leaves, shutting the door behind her.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Natasha is locking the door when her next door neighbors, MRS KLENKOVA and OLGA KLENKOVA (6) pass her.

Olga looks wide-eyed at the cello and points to it.

 OLGA
Mama, look!

 MRS KLENKOVA
Hush, Olga.

They pass by, Olga looking up at Natasha in curiosity.

CUT TO:

EXT. NKVD HEADQUARTERS - DAY

The doors open and Ivan and another MAN stumble out, both in bad shape, clothes messy, a bruised cheek, a bloody lip, looking ill - they've been tortured.⁴

 BLOND BOY
Mama! Mama! Mama!

The other man stumbles into his waiting wife's grateful arms.

Ivan looks for Natasha: she's not there. He walks into the -

STREET

- Where PEOPLE everywhere are carrying luggage toward the train station.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION - CONTINUOUS

Eliasberg finds Natasha in the crowd of people waiting for the train. Her eyes are red from crying.

 ELIASBERG
I came to see you off.

Natasha tries to smile at him, but can't quite manage it.

He stands beside her for a beat.

 ELIASBERG (CONT'D)
The political prisoners usually go
to Kresty prison.⁵

She looks at him, processing this information.

ELIASBERG (CONT'D)

If you go early enough, sometimes
you can see them. Pass them food.

(beat)

But they don't last long.

The train WHISTLE blows in the distance, announcing the train's arrival. Eliasberg puts a hand on Natasha's arm in farewell, and walks away.

The train arrives.

Some SOLDIERS get off. Natasha looks at them: they're the first proof of war she's seen.

Natasha doesn't immediately get on the train. Around her, the other musicians begin to board. She plays with the ticket in her hand, deliberating: stay or go?

Close to her, Musician #1 is saying a tearful good-bye to his WIFE, who is crying and clinging to him.

The train whistle SOUNDS: last call.

Natasha is standing with her suitcase and her cello. She picks up the cello, making the decision to leave, when the baby kicks: she puts a hand on her belly.

She gives the ticket to Musician #1's wife, and walks back into the city.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Ivan enters, still looking tortured and ill.

He goes straight to the bedroom: Natasha's not there.

He checks the closet: her suitcase is gone. He checks the dressers: her clothes are gone.

He's heartbroken.

CUT TO:

EXT. KRESTY PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Natasha arrives at Kresty Prison.

She walks up to the gates, waits, trying to see in to the windows.

A WOMAN passing by sees her waiting:

WOMAN
They're gone.

Natasha turns around.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
I wouldn't wait.

The woman continues walking, leaving Natasha staring forlornly after her.

She's been standing there, looking lost, for a couple beats, when two CITIZENS pass by, handing out gas masks, saying -

CITIZEN
Be prepared.

Natasha takes the gas mask they're offering and looks down at it, scared.

They're already a distance away by the time she says:

NATASHA
Thank you.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

Ivan's asleep on the bed. Every so often, he coughs in his sleep.

Natasha enters, sees him, and all the stress and unhappiness disappears from her face. She's almost giddy with relief.

Quietly and quickly, she unpacks and replaces the suitcase in the closet.

Then she joins him in the bed, waking him.

IVAN
You're here.

She sees his injuries, touches them sympathetically.

NATASHA
I love you. Of course I'm here.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Natasha is sitting on a bench, looking longingly at the train.

CHILDREN are everywhere, saying goodbye to their mothers and fathers. People are crying.

TRAIN CONDUCTOR
Children only! Children only! Five
minutes to departure!⁶

Natasha sees Olga and her mother a little way away. Olga is bawling and clutching her mother's leg.

OLGA
(bawling)
Nooooooooooooooooo!

Her mother tries to pry her away, but to no avail.

MRS KLENKOVA
Olga, you have to go. It's okay,
it'll be okay.

Olga just clings and cries. Natasha watches sympathetically.

TRAIN CONDUCTOR
Last call for boarding! Children
only.

Everywhere, children are being separated from their parents and herding on board.

MRS KLENKOVA
Olga, it's time to go. It's time to
go now.

OLGA
Nooooo!

Olga is getting hysterical.

TRAIN CONDUCTOR
I'm sorry, we can't wait for you.
We've got a backload of trains
waiting to come in.

MRS KLENKOVA
I understand. - Olga! Olga, it's
time to say good-bye.

Olga isn't budging. The train conductor moves off, shaking his head.

Mrs Klenkova is desperately trying to pry Olga away.

The train whistle BLOWS.

The train pulls out of the station.

Mrs Klenkova kneels to hug Olga; they're both crying now.

MRS KLENKOVA (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, kotik. I'm sorry.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Ivan wakes up alone.

IVAN
Natasha?

No response.

He checks the -

LIVING ROOM

- but she's not there.

Ivan is suddenly terrified. He runs back to the -

BEDROOM

- and yanks open the closet door: Natasha's suitcase is still there.

He sits heavily on the bed, trying to calm down. He can't.

CUT TO:

INT. LECTURE ROOM - DAY

Ivan is standing before a LECTURE HALL of 30 students, in front of a map of the world. He looks a little better, but still coughs every so often. He refers to the map as he lectures.

IVAN

Five years ago, the Germans invaded the Rhineland. Two years later, they moved into the Sudetenland. Then Czechoslovakia, part of Poland. Last year, they attacked Denmark. Norway. France. Belgium. The Netherlands. Britain, bombed. Recently, Greece and Yugoslavia. Now, the Soviet Union.

He lets that sink in. His students look scared.

IVAN (CONT'D)

Holland, Belgium, Norway, Greece and Yugoslavia surrendered. Finland and France signed armistices. Other countries are still being occupied by German forces.

He looks to the class.

IVAN (CONT'D)

What does that tell you?

Silence.

IVAN (CONT'D)

Come on.

(indicating each area)

Britain. Finland. Belgium. Greece. Yugoslavia. Us.

Silence.

IVAN (CONT'D)

Their forces are stretched thin. They're fighting too many enemies, in too many places. It's a tactical nightmare, and they're tired. They've been fighting and dying for five years, and they've just begun a land war with the largest country in the world.

It's the best lecture he's ever taught; the students are hanging onto his every word.

CUT TO:

INT. GREAT HALL OF THE PHILHARMONIC - DAY

Natasha, alone in the hall. She just sits there, surrounded by empty seats.

CUT TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS - PREPARATIONS FOR GERMAN ARRIVAL

A) CITIZENS putting up posters that read: "Comrades! Stand as one in the defense of our freedom and our life."

B) Citizens digging trenches around the city borders

C) Citizens building air raid shelters.

D) Citizens felling trees across roads leading to Leningrad.⁷

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Natasha is struggling to zip herself into her dress - her pregnant belly doesn't quite fit into her clothes anymore.

She leaves the dress partially unzipped and puts on a coat to hide it.

She exits.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAKERY - LATER

Natasha is shopping, looking critically at the baked goods.

The cashier is listening to the radio in the background.

NATASHA

Are these fresh?

CASHIER

They were this morning.

She examines them closely, carefully selects two pirozhki, pays.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - LATER

Natasha is picking at her pirozhki, not really hungry.

She's listening to the radio, but the war broadcasts bore her.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

German casualties are estimated at
4.5 million. Fascist troops have
been hopelessly outmatched by the
sheer force of the Red Army.
Victory is imminent! War production
continues -

She turns off the radio, but is antsy in the silence.

She goes to the cello, starts playing.

A couple bars in, and suddenly she hears a TAPPING sound,
keeping time with her cello.

She stops. The tapping stops.

She starts playing again. The tapping begins again.

She realizes that the tapping is coming from the wall, from
the apartment next door.

Afer a moment:

MRS KLENKOVA (O.S.)

(faintly)

Olga!

The tapping stops.

Natasha smiles: she's made a friend.

The phone RINGS: she answers it.

NATASHA

Hello? - No, I turned it off, I was
sick of hearing it. - What?

She turns the radio on.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

- Fascist troops appear to be
heading for Leningrad. Citizens are
urged not to panic. The People's
Volunteers are tasked with city
fortifications.

(MORE)

RADIO ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

The German army is only days from reaching the city of Leningrad, its purported target. -

NATASHA

I thought we were winning - Earlier, they were saying... What do we do now? - No, Mama, we can't evacuate, the railroads are blocked. I wonder if the trains got out all right. - There isn't anywhere to go now, we have to stay. - I know. I'll call you tomorrow. I love you too.

She hangs up.

A beat: Natasha is frozen.

Then, in a flurry of activity, she gets all the china, all her jewelry, all their valuables, and hides them under the floorboards.

The radio is playing patriotic music.

CUT TO:

INT. LECTURE ROOM - DAY

Ivan is coughing and gathering his notes when he's approached by PETER, a student.

PETER

Professor Adamov? Could you sign this?

He hands Ivan a form.

Ivan scans it and looks up, surprised.

IVAN

You're withdrawing?

PETER

I'm enlisting tomorrow.⁸

IVAN

You're an excellent student, Peter, with a lot of potential.

PETER

Thank you, Professor.

IVAN

Are you sure you want to leave the Academy?

PETER

Right now Leningrad needs soldiers, not history students.

Ivan looks grave, but he respects that answer. He signs the form and hands it to his student.

IVAN

When you come back to my class, you'll be in our history books.

PETER

Then hopefully I'll make better grades on your exams.

IVAN

I'm sure you will. Good luck.

PETER

Thank you, Professor.

He exits.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - NIGHT

Natasha and Ivan are eating dinner.

NATASHA

Do you know what was on the last train to leave Leningrad? I heard it on the radio. - Paintings. Sculpture. The entire art collection from the Hermitage.

IVAN

The rare books collection too, I hope.

NATASHA

There are people in danger here, children in danger, and they're evacuating paintings.

IVAN

Art is the soul of a people, I heard once.

(MORE)

IVAN (CONT'D)

And they evacuated the Philharmonic Orchestra first, you remember.

NATASHA

Who cares about the people's souls when their lives are at stake?

IVAN

Who cares about people's lives when their souls are at stake?

NATASHA

That's absurd. You'd rather I die than my cello, then?

IVAN

Could you live without your cello?

NATASHA

There are other cellos.

IVAN

But if there weren't. Could you live without a cello? Without any music at all?

NATASHA

I'd survive. If I had to.

IVAN

Surviving is what animals do.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Ivan is awake and dressing.

His cough sounds worse: it wakes Natasha up.

NATASHA

Morning.

IVAN

You don't have to get up.

NATASHA

I'll walk you to work.

IVAN

You don't have to do that. You could sleep all day, if you wanted.

NATASHA
It's just a walk. I can't just do
nothing all day.

IVAN
Okay.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Natasha and Ivan get to the Academy.

Ivan kisses Natasha, goes to work.

IVAN
Try to get some rest today.

NATASHA
I will.

With Ivan gone, she stands indecisively on the street.

CUT TO:

INT. RADIO BROADCASTING ROOM - DAY

Eliasberg is at the controls; the station is playing the
recording of the Philharmonic concert.

Natasha wanders in.

ELIASBERG
Natasha!

NATASHA
Are you busy?

ELIASBERG
No, come in.

NATASHA
(re: the music recording)
Our last concert.

ELIASBERG
It's beautiful.

She listens for a moment, longing for the Philharmonic.

ELIASBERG (CONT'D)
You didn't evacuate?

NATASHA

No.

She listens for a beat.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

This is my favorite part, right here.

They both listen to it.

ELIASBERG

I knew a flautist who had to completely forget a piece before he could learn another.

NATASHA

You don't forget a piece like this.

ELIASBERG

I don't think I could.

NATASHA

You don't play, do you?

ELIASBERG

Not like you do.

He's horribly envious of her talent, tries to brush it off.

ELIASBERG (CONT'D)

You know, we could use you. In my orchestra.

NATASHA

The radio orchestra?

ELIASBERG

It's nothing like the Philharmonic, but we're all there is, now.

NATASHA

I'm supposed to be resting. Because of the baby.

ELIASBERG

Are you resting?

NATASHA

No.

ELIASBERG

We practice tomorrow at 8.

NATASHA
What are you playing?

ELIASBERG
Tchaikovsky.

NATASHA
I love Tchaikovsky.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - DAY

Natasha picks up her cello, starts practicing her new sheet music.

After a couple measures, her cello is accompanied by a tapping coming from the wall.

CUT TO:

INT. IVAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Ivan is at his desk, grading papers, when suddenly there's a commotion across the hallway. He looks up.

Professor Morozov is standing outside in the hallway, in shock.

PROFESSOR MOROZOV
Oh god. Oh god.

He looks at Ivan.

PROFESSOR MOROZOV (CONT'D)
The Germans are here.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - DAY

Natasha is listening to the radio, terrified, on the phone with her mother.

RADIO ANNOUNCER
German encirclement of Leningrad is complete, but the city has not been taken. The fascist advance has been checked at the city gates. - The Red Army maintains possession of Leningrad;
(MORE)

RADIO ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
outside the city walls, German
troops have begun to fortify.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Natasha walks to the end of the street, sees a military
blockade at the end, lots of military activity. She stares.

A young SOLDIER stands nearby, directing civilian traffic
away from the blockaded road.

SOLDIER
Move along, Comrade.

NATASHA
Is that where the Germans are? Down
that road?

SOLDIER
There are Germans down every road.

NATASHA
What?

SOLDIER
They've got the city surrounded. No
way out, now.

NATASHA
It's a siege.

SOLDIER
That's right.

NATASHA
What does that mean?

SOLDIER
Nothing good.

CUT TO:

INT. BAKERY - DAY

Natasha is grabbing items willy-nilly, and she's far from the
only one. Everyone is stocking up for the siege.

She grabs vegetables, bread, food products up at random,
growing more and more frantic, picking up on the mood of the
crowd.

She and another WOMAN both grab the same item, struggle for it. - Natasha loses.

Scared, Natasha backs away.

She pays for the food, and leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - DAY

Natasha is sitting, staring blankly into space. The bag of groceries is at her feet. The radio is playing in the background.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

(background noise)

More tanks have been requisitioned by the glorious Red Army. - Aerial bombardment is expected to commence shortly: civilian fire brigades have been formed in Leningrad. Young communists prove their bravery, helping to blockade city entrances. - Citizens are urged to be wary of potential German spies....

Ivan enters.

IVAN

Are you okay?

NATASHA

I went shopping.⁹

He peers into the grocery bag, looks confused.

IVAN

You bought caviar. You bought a lot of caviar.

NATASHA

It was all that was left.

IVAN

I like caviar.

NATASHA

When I think of sieges, I think of castles. And knights, with this huge battering ram.

(MORE)

NATASHA (CONT'D)
And they break the door down, and
loot and pillage.

IVAN
Loot and pillage?

NATASHA
That's the image that comes to
mind.

IVAN
I think we're safe from looting and
pillaging. Leningrad is the city of
three revolutions. It's a Russian
city, where Russians fight other
Russians. The Germans will never
take it.

NATASHA
You're lecturing me again.

She smiles, kisses him.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
Are you hungry? We have caviar.

She disappears into the -

KITCHEN

- to get some plates, but stops in her tracks when she hears
Ivan have a COUGHING FIT in the next room. Worried, she
freezes.

After a few beats, Ivan appears in the doorway. He sees the
way she's looking at him.

IVAN
I'm fine.

She doesn't look convinced.

CUT TO:

INT. GREAT HALL OF THE PHILHARMONIC - DAY

Eliasberg is conducting the RADIO ORCHESTRA, which is
drastically smaller than the Philharmonic, only forty-five
musicians. Natasha is on stage, playing the cello.

The seats are empty: they're playing for Eliasberg's broadcasting equipment. A RADIO TECHNICIAN, wearing headphones, is crouching by the equipment.

RADIO TECHNICIAN
And we're live in five, four,
three...

He counts in down on his fingers: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

Eliasberg raises his hands, starts conducting.

They've been playing for a couple phrases, when -

- the sound of AIRPLANES is heard overhead.

A moment later, the AIR RAID SIREN goes off.

Alarmed, the musicians stop playing.

ELIASBERG
It's the air raid siren.

He looks at the Radio Technician.

RADIO TECHNICIAN
It's a drill, probably.

They hear the airplanes again.

The musicians shift nervously.

ELIASBERG
Are we still on the air?

The radio technician checks his equipment, nods.

Eliasberg turns back to the musicians, tries to start them back up, but they aren't having it. They are looking up, vainly trying to locate the sound of the planes.

There's a distant explosion.

Then a FLAUTIST begins to play, softly. It's a solo, something low and sweet but vaguely haunting.

He plays and plays and plays, and it comforts them.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

The musicians are standing on the street outside the Great Hall. It's unnaturally quiet in the wake of the air raid siren. The sky is blood red. In the distance, large funnels of smoke are rising over the buildings.¹⁰

Natasha and the other musicians look at the smoke.

NATASHA
What's over there?

A couple musicians shake their heads.

FLAUTIST
It smells like...

The Radio Technician joins them.

RADIO TECHNICIAN
It's the Badayev Warehouses.

FLAUTIST
Sugar. It smells like sugar.

RADIO TECHNICIAN
Sugar, and flour, and milk, and wheat, and oats - all our food. Everything. Going up in flames.

MUSICIAN #3
Oh, god.

CUT TO:

INT. SMOLNY - DAY

Natasha waits in a long line. Finally, it's her turn. She goes up to the OFFICIAL.

OFFICIAL
Papers?

Natasha hands him her passport.

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)
Natasha Adamova?

NATASHA
Yes.

He ruffles through some papers, finds her name.

OFFICIAL
Of 167 Svechnoy pereulok?

NATASHA
Yes.

He makes a mark.

OFFICIAL
Husband Ivan Adamov. No children.

NATASHA
That's right.

OFFICIAL
Occupation?

NATASHA
Cellist.

OFFICIAL
What?

NATASHA
I'm a musician.

He marks that down.

Then he picks up a ration card, stamps it and hands it to Natasha.

OFFICIAL
This is your ration card, Mrs Adamova. Ration cards will not be re-issued if lost or stolen. One ration card per person per household. Daily rations will vary by governmental discretion.

CUT TO:

INT. BAKERY - DAY

There's a long line in front of the counter.

CASHIER
Next.

Natasha steps up.

CASHIER (CONT'D)
Ration card?

Natasha hands it over. The cashier stamps it.

Behind the counter, another WORKER is weighing portions. The daily ration today is 600 grams.

NATASHA

That's it?

CASHIER

Six hundred grams. Dependents get less.

NATASHA

Dependents?

CASHIER

Children.

CUT TO:

INT. RADIO BROADCASTING ROOM - DAY

Dimitri Shostakovich is giving a radio broadcast.

SHOSTAKOVICH

Notwithstanding war conditions, notwithstanding the dangers threatening Leningrad, I have been able to work quickly and to finish the first two parts of my symphony. Why do I tell you about this? I tell you so that those Leningraders who are now listening to me shall know that the life of our city is going on normally. All of us now carry our military burdens.¹¹

The radio launches into a patriotic tune, and Shostakovich exits the broadcasting room.

ELIASBERG

Dimitri Shostakovich? Karl Eliasberg. I love your work. I'm a conductor -

SHOSTAKOVICH

Not of the Philharmonic?

ELIASBERG

(deflated)

No, no. The radio orchestra.

SHOSTAKOVICH

I'm not familiar with the radio orchestra. It's a small one, is it? Too small to play a full symphony.

ELIASBERG

We do our best. - Could I buy you a drink? I'd love to ask you some questions.

SHOSTAKOVICH

My wife's expecting me home. Packing, you know.

ELIASBERG

The evacuations were over, I thought.

SHOSTAKOVICH

They're sending a plane for us. It's a public relations campaign, frankly. Makes it look like they're doing something.¹²

Throughout their conversations, Eliasberg grows more and more disillusioned with Shostakovich.

ELIASBERG

I guess people would notice if Dimitri Shostakovich died.

SHOSTAKOVICH

I'd rather stay. Can't, because of my family, of course, but Leningrad is the place to be right now. There's real heroism, here. I'm writing a symphony about it.

ELIASBERG

Are you.

SHOSTAKOVICH

The Leningrad Philharmonic will play it, of course. Right here, in the Great Hall.

ELIASBERG

Of course.

SHOSTAKOVICH

Maybe they'll play it on your radio station. - Good meeting you!

(MORE)

SHOSTAKOVICH (CONT'D)
See you when it's over, I suppose.
Shouldn't be too long.

ELIASBERG
Dasvidaniya.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - DAY

Natasha and Ivan are slathering caviar on their bread rations.

Natasha tastes it gingerly, gags.

NATASHA
Oh, god.

IVAN
It's not good caviar?

NATASHA
It's not good bread!

They start laughing helplessly.

Ivan gives half of his caviar to Natasha -

IVAN
Here.

NATASHA
No, it's yours.

IVAN
For the baby, Natasha.

She hesitates, then takes it. They're both hungry.

Suddenly, they hear the sound of AIRPLANES, closely followed by the AIR RAID SIREN.

For a moment, they don't know what to do, and then:

IVAN (CONT'D)
Come on!

They run out of the apartment -

STAIRS

- and down the stairs. Around them, other CITIZENS, including Olga and Mrs Klenkova, are pouring out of their apartments too, all of them rushing in the same direction.

At the bottom of the stairs, they crowd into:

AIR RAID SHELTER

The air raid shelter is a small, dark, bare room, with benches lining the walls. People crowd in, sitting and standing, their faces illuminated by the flickering light of two lanterns.

Ivan looks up, as if trying to see the airplanes through the cement ceiling.

Natasha looks at the scared faces of the people around her. She notices Olga staring at her and smiles at the little girl, who ducks her head shyly.

Every so often, they hear the sound of a distant explosion.

Time Passes: slowly, the people standing sit, and then lay down.¹³

Eventually, everyone is lying down, on benches, on the floor, on each other. Many are asleep; others lie quietly with their eyes open, listening for clues about what's happening outside. Ivan is asleep. Natasha is not.

One of the lanterns sputters and dies.

At long last, the sky seems quiet. Natasha looks around - another woman sits up. They seem afraid to believe the air raid is over.

WOMAN

Is it over?

CUT TO:

EXT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - MORNING

Slowly, the people leave the air raid shelter and step into the street. Unaccustomed to the light, they blink like owls.

White LEAFLETS cover the street and drift through the air around them.¹⁴ They say things like: "Put on your white dress and prepare for your funeral."

Olga reaches for one, when her mother says, sharply:

MRS KLENKOVA
Don't, Olga!

Several people turn and look at her, surprised by her tone.

Ivan is also staring down at the leaflets. He looks grim.

IVAN
They're from the Germans.

They back away from the leaflets, retreating into the apartment building.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - KITCHEN - LATER

Natasha enters, Ivan a couple steps behind her.

She sees their abandoned meal still sitting on the table. She touches the bread - it's stale and hard - and makes a face.

Without a word, Ivan sits down at the table, and starts to eat the stale bread.

Natasha opens her mouth to object, and then thinks better of it.

She sits down and eats with him.

CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

The doctor is examining Natasha, who seems extremely anxious.

DOCTOR
Have you been eating well?

NATASHA
It's been harder.

DOCTOR
How do you feel?

NATASHA
Fine.

DOCTOR
How about the baby?

NATASHA

Fine.

DOCTOR

He's still kicking?

NATASHA

Not as much, anymore.

The doctor nods, starts writing something.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

Is he okay?

DOCTOR

I'm sure he's fine. Maybe he realizes he shouldn't kick his Mama.

The doctor finishes writing and looks up.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Do you have any questions for me?

A beat.

NATASHA

(embarrassed)

I don't think I know how to be a mother.

DOCTOR

You'll learn.

NATASHA

What if I don't?

DOCTOR

You will.

The doctor hands Natasha a prescription.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

I'm prescribing you soup.

NATASHA

Soup?

DOCTOR

Vegetable soup. We have our own limited resources, so we can care for our patients. We need to keep that baby healthy.

The doctor exits.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - DAY

Natasha is hurrying to unlock the apartment; inside, the phone is ringing.

She gets the door open, runs to the phone.

NATASHA

Mama?

AUTOMATED MESSAGE

Phone services have been cut off
until the end of the war. We're
sorry for the inconvenience.¹⁵

Natasha is horrified.

She hears a tapping on the wall: it's Olga, from next door. She ignores it, turns on the radio.

She goes to the -

KITCHEN

Starts going through the cupboards, taking out all the food and putting it on the counter.

It makes a very small pile.

CUT TO:

INT. BAKERY - DAY

Natasha, in a very long line.

CASHIER

Ration card?

Natasha hands it over.

The cashier stamps it, hands her a ration. It's 300 grams, half the size it was the last time she was here.

She takes it without complaint, moves out of the line.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY - FX

As Natasha walks home from the bakery, we see time passing around her.

The season changes from summer to fall to winter - the leaves on the trees turn red, then brown, then fall to the ground. It starts to snow. The light changes from bright and warm, to blue and cold.

One of the buildings she passes changes from new to rubble, a casualty of German bombings.

Signs appear that say: "THIS SIDE OF STREET DANGEROUS DURING AIR RAID"

A trolley passes by her and then stops, forever frozen in the middle of the street.

Even her posture changes: she begins walking slower, bowing down under the weight of the siege.

CUT TO:

INT. GREAT HALL OF THE PHILHARMONIC - DAY

Only Natasha and two other musicians (a flautist and a french horn) from Eliasberg's orchestra have shown up.

Eliasberg is slumped in a seat, looking haggard.

ELIASBERG

They've decommissioned the station.

The musicians don't look surprised.

ELIASBERG (CONT'D)

There isn't enough electricity to continue running radio concerts.

They just sit there, too tired to leave.

FLAUTIST

They're not broadcasting anything?

ELIASBERG

Just a metronome, all day long. To tell the Germans we're still here.¹⁶

CUT TO:

INT. LECTURE ROOM - DAY

Ivan is standing at the front of the room, giving an oral examination to a STUDENT. They are both bundled up in large winter coats, but both still cold: we can see their breath.

The student is nervous but well-studied, and his answers sound both memorized and rehearsed.

STUDENT

...precipitated the Great October
Socialist Revolution, in Leningrad.

IVAN

Leningrad?

STUDENT

(quickly, remembering)
Petrograd.

IVAN

What was the date?

STUDENT

23 October.

Ivan waits a beat, and the student remembers to add:

STUDENT (CONT'D)

1917.

IVAN

And the revolution consisted of?

STUDENT

A Bolshevik uprising, led by
Comrade Lenin, culminating in the
storming of the Winter Palace.

Without missing a beat, as if this were still part of the examination:

IVAN

Are you hungry?

The student stands there for a surprised beat, and then:

STUDENT

Yes.

Ivan takes a small piece of bread from his desk, and gives it to the student.

IVAN

This concludes your midterm evaluation. Please send in the next student.

The student takes the bread and hurries out, surprised and pleased.

We see that Ivan has four more pieces of bread in his desk, presumably for his other students. He looks like he could use the food himself. He coughs: his illness is getting worse.

The next STUDENT enters nervously, and the next examination begins.

IVAN (CONT'D)

How did the Tsarist autocracy end?

CUT TO:

EXT. BAKERY - DAY

She's leaving the bakery when the Blond Boy runs into her, STEALS HER RATIONS, races off.¹⁷

NATASHA

NO! NO!

Natasha tries to pursue, but he's much faster.

Suddenly she stops, clutching her stomach - she's having CONTRACTIONS.

CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Natasha is sitting on the examining table, looking like she's been to hell and back. She's clearly just gotten out of labor.

The doctor enters.

DOCTOR

Do you want to see your daughter?

Natasha doesn't move - did she even hear?

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Mrs Adamova, your daughter?

Again, no response - the doctor gestures to a NURSE, who enters with the BABY. Finally, Natasha moves, looking at the baby.

The nurse tries to give Natasha the baby, but Natasha, although fixated on the baby, makes no move to take her.

NATASHA
I can't feed her.

She gestures at her breast, almost unconsciously - the doctor suddenly understands what she's saying: her milk has dried up.

A beat, and the baby starts to cry.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
She's hungry.

The doctor motions for the nurse to put down the baby (in the bedside crib) and leave, and she does.

The baby keeps crying.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
Aren't you going to feed her?

DOCTOR
There's only so much we can do. Our resources are stretched very thin. There are more orphans coming in every day.

NATASHA
You only feed the orphans?

The doctor looks at her sharply, but Natasha has closed her eyes.

DOCTOR
You just rest, now. I'll be back in an hour to check on you.

The doctor exits.

A beat, and then Natasha sits up, and gets out of bed. She changes out of the hospital gown and back into her clothes.

She leaves.

LATER

The baby is still crying. A nurse enters the room, and sees the empty bed. She understands the situation instantly.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - BABY WARD - LATER

We watch from a distance as the nurse places the baby in an empty crib, starts to feed her.

The doctor enters.

DOCTOR
Where's the mother?

NURSE
She left.

Natasha watches this exchange from a distance. Then, satisfied that the baby is being taken care of, she leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - LATER

Natasha enters, sits down on the couch, puts a hand on her stomach - and starts to cry.

She cries desperately, and by the time she stops crying, she has a new sense of purpose.

She goes to the -

BEDROOM

- and takes out her suitcase.

She starts finding the heirlooms and valuables she's hidden under the floorboards, and stuffs them into the suitcase: her china, her nicest dresses, a set of candlesticks, everything goes into the suitcase.

She picks up the suitcase and leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. HAYMARKET - LATER

People everywhere are trying to hawk their valuables for food.

Natasha is arguing with a CITIZEN over the value of her china.

NATASHA
A loaf of bread.

CITIZEN
No.

NATASHA
It's china. Heirloom.

The citizen is unimpressed.

CITIZEN
Nobody has bread.

NATASHA
What do you have?

The citizen shrugs: not much.

CITIZEN
Glue...leather...

NATASHA
I'm not trading my grandmother's -

CITIZEN
...vodka...

Natasha does a double-take, eats her words.

NATASHA
Vodka?

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Ivan is walking home. He's in bad shape, coughing, looks haggard from hunger.

A SOLDIER stops him - it's Peter, the student who enlisted.

PETER
Sir?

Ivan stops, looks blankly at him.

PETER (CONT'D)
Professor Adamov? I was in your class.

Ivan looks at him blankly.

PETER (CONT'D)
History of Bolshevik Russia. Hard
class.

IVAN
.... Peter.

PETER
That's right.

IVAN
Promising student. Excellent
essays.

PETER
I'm a good soldier, too.

Ivan just nods, almost delirious from hunger.

PETER (CONT'D)
War's not how it sounded, in class.
I didn't know. Listen, I have
something. Chocolate. They give the
troops a little extra, keeps us
going. Eat it.

He hands Ivan a bar of chocolate.

IVAN
Thank you.

Peter walks away. Ivan watches him go, stunned.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - DAY

Ivan enters, haltingly, exhausted.

He heads straight for the -

BEDROOM

- And levers himself into the bed. He lies there for a beat,
before he realizes the closet is open, and Natasha's suitcase
is gone.

For a moment, he just stares at the empty closet, processing
the information that his wife is gone.

Then, devastated, he starts to sob, his body shaking with grief. Still crying, he starts to eat the chocolate. He eats the whole bar.

LATER

Natasha enters quietly, waking Ivan up. She's sad but calm, stronger than we've ever seen her.

He blinks up at her in confusion, and then:

IVAN
I thought you left.

NATASHA
I'm here.

IVAN
(re: the chocolate)
... I ate it. I ate all of it.

NATASHA
Okay. It's okay.

IVAN
I'm so sorry! The baby!

NATASHA
I had the baby.

IVAN
... You had the baby? Where - where is it?

NATASHA
At the hospital. They're taking care of her.

She kisses him.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
I think we should celebrate.

DINING ROOM - LATER

Natasha and Ivan are taking shots of vodka. They look happy for the first time in a long time. They're also very drunk.

They're laughing, trading potential baby names.

NATASHA
Katya.

IVAN

Irena.

Natasha pours another round of shots.

NATASHA

Galina.

IVAN

That's my mother's name.

Laughing, they take the shots.

NATASHA

I'm a mother.

IVAN

Magda.

NATASHA

I'm going to be a great mother.

She's deep in thought, clearly thinking about leaving her baby in the hospital.

IVAN

I know.

NATASHA

I love her.

IVAN

Anna.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - DAY

Natasha is eating anything she can find:

Lipstick.

Wallpaper.

The sound of a metronome is coming out of the radio.

Natasha taps her foot in rhythm with the metronome.

She looks at Ivan's bookcase, looks closer -

Then she starts cutting the leather book binding off Ivan's copy of *War and Peace*.¹⁸

KITCHEN - LATER

Natasha is stirring a pot of boiling water - every so often, a fraying leather book binding floats up to the surface. Among other things, she appears to be boiling the covers of *Anna Karenina* and Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*.

DINING ROOM - LATER

Natasha and Ivan are sitting in silence, eating small servings of the leather book bindings, which have boiled down into an unappetizing brown jello paste.

Natasha is clearly upset. Ivan tries to cheer her up:

IVAN
(re: his jelly)
This is the Tolstoy?

NATASHA
And some Chekhov.

IVAN
It tastes like Tolstoy. Very satisfying.

She smiles.

NATASHA
Chekhov is good too.

IVAN
(re: her jelly)
Is that him?

He reaches over to taste her portion.

IVAN (CONT'D)
Yes, that's Chekhov.

They smile at each other, until -

NATASHA
Rations were lowered again today.

IVAN
At least we have our classic literature.

This time, Natasha doesn't smile.

NATASHA
There's nothing left to eat.

IVAN

I know.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Natasha wakes up before Ivan. She gets out of the bed, careful not to wake him.

She zips herself into a dress. We've seen this dress before - it didn't quite fit over her pregnant stomach - but now it hangs loosely over her body.

She walks slowly into the -

LIVING ROOM

- where she goes to her cello. She's too weak to support its weight, now, but she tries to play anyway.

After a couple measures, playing softly so as not to disturb Ivan, she gives up: she's too weak to play.

Struggling under the weight of the cello, she puts it away in its case.

Then, laboriously, she tugs the cello case out the door -

HALLWAY

- down the hallway...

STAIRS

- down the stairs...

AIR RAID SHELTER

- into the air raid shelter, where she hides it under a bench. She leaves it there.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAKERY - DAY

There's a long line of starving citizens outside the bakery.

The air raid SIREN goes off.

A couple people flinch, look around, but only several actually move out of line to take cover.

A plane is heard in the distance, moving toward them. One or two people break out of the line: the people behind them quickly move to fill the gap.

The plane is suddenly on top of them: it drops a BOMB in the middle of the line.

Natasha's ears are ringing, and she's knocked to the ground, confused - around her, people are crying, screaming, running.

She stumbles back upright, disoriented, and joins the rest of the citizens, re-forming the line around the bombed area.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Walking back from the bakery, Natasha sees a WOMAN pulling a bulky sheet-wrapped object on a brightly colored child's sled.

She stares at it, until she realizes there's a hand protruding from the sheet, dragging beside the sled - the woman is pulling a corpse.¹⁹

CUT TO:

INT. IVAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Ivan is hunched on the floor, in a corner, huddled in jackets, books everywhere. He's reading, but with his heavy gloves he can barely turn the pages. His coughing begins to sound like HACKING - he has reached a genuinely alarming degree of illness.

He smells something, looks up. Weakly, he walks into the -

HALLWAY

-and peeks into the neighboring office, where Professor Morozov is stirring something: soup. There is a strange look on Morozov's face.

He looks up and sees Ivan.

PROFESSOR MOROZOV

Come in.

Ivan enters -

MOROZOV'S OFFICE

-and sits down. He stares at the soup.

PROFESSOR MOROZOV

Want some?

IVAN

Please. If you can spare it.

Ivan's voice is scratchy and hoarse, from coughing.

Professor Morozov pours a bit into an empty cup, hands it to Ivan.

Ivan starts eating, quickly. His colleague just stares into his soup. After a beat, he starts crying, quietly. Ivan doesn't notice immediately.

When Ivan notices, he stops eating.

IVAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

He hesitates, then offers the soup back.

PROFESSOR MOROZOV

No, no. Take it. Please.

IVAN

I don't understand.

PROFESSOR MOROZOV

It's my dog. The meat. My wife did it, yesterday. My dog. We didn't have anything to eat, you know. Nothing, for days. They say some people are eating people. Did you hear that?²⁰

IVAN

No.

PROFESSOR MOROZOV

And everyone's a German spy. Everyone. That's what they say. We're all going to die.

IVAN

I'm sorry about your dog.

PROFESSOR MOROZOV

I've had that dog longer than I've been with my wife. It was my father's dog. That's the worst part.

An awkward beat: Ivan doesn't know what to say.

IVAN

In ancient Egypt, they used to kill the Pharaoh's dogs so they could serve him in the afterlife. It would have been a great honor.

PROFESSOR MOROZOV

When you die, you're dead. You're soup. Honor doesn't come into it.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - BABY WARD - DAY

Natasha stares through the glass window at her daughter. Her love for the baby is palpable.

The Doctor comes up behind her.

DOCTOR

You abandoned her.

NATASHA

I couldn't feed her.

The Doctor shakes her head disapprovingly.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

I'll come back for her when rations go up.

The Doctor looks skeptical.

Natasha looks back at her baby.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

Her name is Anna Adamova.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

It's snowing.

Ivan stumbles out of the Academy, and VOMITS the dog soup back up.

When he's done, he starts walking his way home. He's very weak and tired, and he walks slowly.

He stops to rest against a TROLLEY, out of use, frozen into the trolley tracks in the middle of the street.

He sits in one of the trolley seats, next to an OLD MAN.

In his lap, his hands are trembling.

IVAN

I met my wife on a trolley.
Could've been this one.

The old man looks at him.

IVAN (CONT'D)

She was carrying a cello, just as big as she was, and I offered to carry it for her. She wouldn't let me. That's what I love about her. You wouldn't expect it. She carries her own cello.

Ivan looks at the old man, for a reaction, and realizes the old man's eyes are glazed open. He's dead.

Ivan hesitates, and then closes the old man's eyes.

For a moment, Ivan just sits there.

Then he reaches through the old man's pocket and takes out his ration card.

CUT TO:

INT. BAKERY - DAY

Ivan gives the old man's ration card to the CASHIER. As soon as he gets the ration (125 grams), he hides it inside his coat and exits to the -

STREET

- walking home, coughing, he sees the BLOND BOY snatch an OLD WOMAN's rations and start running.

The Old Woman SCREAMS.

Suddenly, there's a GUNSHOT and the blond boy falls down, dead.²¹

Ivan looks around to see a SOLDIER standing nearby, gun aimed at the fallen boy.

The old woman grabs her rations back from the dead body and shuffles quickly away.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - DAY

Ivan enters, slowly, the weight of the world on him. Natasha, by the radio, looks up.

He gives her the rations.

IVAN
I'm not hungry.

He exits to the -

BEDROOM

- and crawls into bed.

After a moment, Natasha follows him, and cuddles up next to him in the bed.

IVAN
I can't sleep without you.

NATASHA
I know.

He closes his eyes.

LATER

Natasha opens her eyes and sits up. Ivan doesn't move.

She touches his shoulder affectionately - and realizes, from the temperature of his body, that he's dead.

She lies back down next to him.

She stays like that for a long time.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Natasha is lugging a child's sled carrying Ivan's sheet-wrapped body down the streets. She is putting everything she has into this trek: it's the last thing she can do for Ivan.²²

The streets around her are frozen with corpses and debris.

She arrives, finally, at the -

CEMETERY

- Where a lone GRAVEDIGGER is standing, wrapped up in layers of clothing, with a shovel. To one side, there are piles of unburied bodies.

GRAVEDIGGER
Ground's frozen.

NATASHA
I want a grave. I'll pay.

GRAVEDIGGER
Loaf of bread.

She holds out a ration card. He reaches for it, but she pulls away.

NATASHA
I want a grave.

GRAVEDIGGER
Show me it's good.

Reluctantly, she gives him the ration card. He looks at it closely, bends it.

GRAVEDIGGER (CONT'D)
(apologetically)
Ground's frozen. I can cover the body up, but I can't put him in the ground.

NATASHA
That's fine. Thank you.

She watches as the Gravedigger hauls Ivan's body into a row of body-sized lumps, and covers it with dirt.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Natasha is staring at the radio, listening to the metronome.

CUT TO:

INT. RADIO BROADCASTING ROOM - DAY

The metronome is the only sound in the room. Eliasberg is huddled in a corner, in an enormous jacket, just listening.

There is a KNOCK on the door. GENERAL ZHDANOV enters.

ZHDANOV
Karl Eliasberg?

ELIASBERG
Yes?

He struggles upright.

ZHDANOV
You're Eliasberg?

ELIASBERG
I am. You're... General Zhdanov?
You did a radio interview here
once. I remember.

ZHDANOV
I want a favor. A concert.

ELIASBERG
Impossible.

ZHDANOV
You have an orchestra.

ELIASBERG
And we used to have a radio to play
for, too.

ZHDANOV

I can get the radio back on. One concert.

He hands Eliasberg some sheet music.

ELIASBERG

...It's the Leningrad Symphony. Shostakovich. How did you get this?

He starts reading it.

ZHDANOV

We flew it in this morning.

ELIASBERG

People are starving and you fly in sheet music?

ZHDANOV

This concert is a military priority.

ELIASBERG

Fly in some musicians, then. This piece is written for at least a hundred instruments. Even if I had all my musicians, we couldn't play this. You need the Philharmonic.

ZHDANOV

How many musicians do you have?

Eliasberg stares at him, and then ruffles through some papers on the sound board. He finds the paper he is looking for and hands it to Zhdanov, who looks down at it impatiently

ZHDANOV (CONT'D)

What's this?

ELIASBERG

My orchestra.

Zhdanov looks at the sheet - it's a list of names, underlined in black and red.

ELIASBERG (CONT'D)

The names underlined in black are dead. The names in red, dying.

(beat)

I have eight musicians.²³

ZHDANOV

Find them. I'll get you more.

ELIASBERG
They won't have the strength. This
is at least an hour long -

He flips to the end of the piece.

ZHDANOV
I'll get you extra rations.

ELIASBERG
(re: the symphony)
Have you read this?

ZHDANOV
It's the siege. Invasion music.

ELIASBERG
We lose. That's what he wrote. It's
the destruction of Leningrad.

ZHDANOV
It doesn't matter.

ELIASBERG
Of course it matters!

ZHDANOV
It matters that you play. It
doesn't matter what you play.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Eliasberg knocks on Natasha's door.

No response.

ELIASBERG
Natasha? It's Karl, are you there?

There's a soft sound inside the apartment.

ELIASBERG (CONT'D)
Natasha?

No response.

ELIASBERG (CONT'D)
I'm coming in, okay?

He tries the handle: it's locked.

He pushes against the door: it gives, slightly.

He shoves against it: with a pop, the door swings open.

The apartment is dark, and silent except for the sound of the metronome.

It takes him a while to spot Natasha, curled up on the couch, under a mass of coats and blankets.

ELIASBERG (CONT'D)

Natasha?

He turns off the radio and she JERKS.

ELIASBERG (CONT'D)

Okay. Okay.

He turns it back on. After a bit, she calms down.

ELIASBERG (CONT'D)

Are you hungry?

She looks at him.

He digs in his pocket, offers her something that looks like a rock.

ELIASBERG (CONT'D)

Don't bite it.

She reaches to take it, but her hands are too cold and she hides them back under the blankets.

Gently, he places it in her mouth.

ELIASBERG (CONT'D)

Careful.

She sucks it, staring at him.

ELIASBERG (CONT'D)

Remember that first fire? The food warehouses? Well, everything burnt except for the sugar. Sugar doesn't burn, it melts. And when it cooled, it solidified into this enormous sugar mass. They've been chipping pieces of it out for a couple days now, handing it out as rations.

She just stares at him, listening.

ELIASBERG (CONT'D)
Where's Ivan?

She jerks, again.

ELIASBERG (CONT'D)
Okay. Never mind. I'm giving a
concert. A new piece, Shostakovich.
He's saying he wrote it for us.
Wanna hear your part?

He takes out the sheet music, starts to hum the cello part.

She listens.

He's been humming for a while, almost forgetting she's there,
when -

NATASHA
It's a eulogy.

He looks up, surprised.

ELIASBERG
Yes, I guess it is. In a way.

He waits for her to say something else, but she falls silent
again.

ELIASBERG (CONT'D)
I'll leave it here for you, but I'm
coming back for it tomorrow.

He hands it to her: after a beat, she pokes one of her hands
out of the blankets to take it.

He leaves, as she starts devouring the score with her eyes.

LATER

She's copying out her part of the score, writing it on the
floorboards.

LATER

When Eliasberg comes back, the entire floor is covered in the
Leningrad Symphony.

Natasha is hunched over on the floor, tapping her hand
rhythmically on the floorboards. She looks half-crazy.

ELIASBERG (CONT'D)
Natasha?

NATASHA

I know it.

ELIASBERG

I brought you some food. It's not much, but -

He hands it to her; she devours it.

ELIASBERG (CONT'D)

Can you play it?

NATASHA

Yes.

ELIASBERG

It's written for ten cellists. You're the only one I have.

NATASHA

Okay.

CUT TO:

INT. AIR RAID SHELTER - DAY

When Natasha opens the door to the air raid shelter, rats scurry away. The cello case is the worse for wear, half-eaten by rats probably, but when Natasha opens it, the cello inside is still intact.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Natasha is dragging the cello behind her, on a child's sled. It's a lot of effort, but she's determined.

CUT TO:

INT. GREAT HALL OF THE PHILHARMONIC - DAY

Natasha and twenty nine other musicians, the remnants of the Radio Orchestra, are huddled in their seats.

They're trying to play the Glazunov overture. Weak and cold, they play fumblingly and poorly - the overture is barely recognizable.²⁴

ELIASBERG

Again, from the beginning.

They look up at him in exhausted disbelief.

He raises his hands and begins to conduct, from the beginning. They struggle to keep up with him.

A Violinist FAINTS.

Eliasberg keeps conducting.

ELIASBERG (CONT'D)

With energy! Keep up!

A French Horn starts to cry.

They sound horrible.

One by one, they stop playing - after a few measures, they are all too exhausted to continue.

They sit in silence.

After a while, the silence is broken:

ELIASBERG (CONT'D)

I have a joke.

They look at him, blankly.

ELIASBERG (CONT'D)

I brought my wife a pastry.
Pirozhki, her favorite. - She said,
'I cannot eat this. It's stale.'

For a moment they just stare at him, and then they start laughing, the bemused laugh of people who have almost forgotten how.

ELIASBERG (CONT'D)

I said, 'But aren't you hungry?' -
She said, 'No.'

The musicians are laughing hysterically.

ELIASBERG (CONT'D)

And I have never liked pirozhkis. -
So, I threw it in the trash.

It seems to the musicians to be the funniest joke ever told.

CUT TO:

INT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Natasha is trying to play the cello with her gloves on, but the thick gloves make her fingers clumsy.

After fumbling a couple notes, she cuts off the fingers of her gloves.

She picks up her cello and plays a measure - it's easier with the finger-less gloves. She keeps playing.

After a bit, she hears a tapping on the wall, coming from the next apartment.

She stops playing.

The tapping stops.

She resumes playing.

The tapping resumes.

She puts down the cello, and exits to the -

HALLWAY

- where she knocks on her neighbor's door.

There is a shuffling sound in the next apartment, as if someone came to the door, and stopped.

Natasha hesitates, then she begins tapping rhythmically on the door.

After a moment, she hears someone tapping on the other side too.

They tap together for a while, and then Natasha stops. Belatedly, the other person stops too.

Natasha waits for a long beat, and then the door opens slightly. Olga peeks out.

NATASHA

Hello.

Olga just stares.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

Can I come in?

Olga disappears.

Natasha pushes the door open.

Olga is standing inside by the wall bordering Natasha's apartment.

Her mother is slumped in a rocking chair. Natasha takes a step closer, and realizes the mother is dead.²⁵

She looks at Olga.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
Come with me. Come on.

Olga just stares at her.

Natasha takes Olga's hand, pulls her toward the door. Olga resists.

NATASHA (CONT'D)
It's okay. Come on.

Olga continues to resist.

Finally, Natasha picks up the little girl and carries her out of the room -

OLGA
NO! NO! NO! NO!

HALLWAY

- down the hallway, into

ADAMOV APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

- Natasha's apartment, where she closes the door and puts Olga down.

Olga just stares at her, terrified.

Natasha digs in her coat and pulls out a tiny bit of melted-sugar candy. She offers it to Olga.

Still watching Olga, she picks up her cello and begins to play.

Staring at the cello, sucking the candy, Olga eventually calms down.

Natasha begins tapping her foot to the beat.

Olga taps her hand against the floor.

Natasha stops tapping - Olga keeps going, watching the cello.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Natasha holds Olga's hand as she walks toward the concert hall.

CUT TO:

INT. GREAT HALL OF THE PHILHARMONIC - DAY

The musicians begin to play. Sitting at Natasha's feet, Olga taps along to the music.

Bemused, Eliasberg looks at the little girl.

ELIASBERG
A percussionist, I see.

NATASHA
So it seems.

LATER

Eliasberg is ladling out small portions of very thin soup to the musicians, who eat ravenously.

He ladles a portion to Olga as well.

OLGA
(barely audible)
Spasibo.

It's the first time she's spoken. Eliasberg and Natasha look at her in surprise.

ELIASBERG
You're very welcome.

CUT TO:

INT. RADIO BROADCASTING ROOM - NIGHT

Eliasberg is talking to Zhdanov.

ELIASBERG

Our only trombone player died
yesterday.

ZHDANOV

The concert date is non-negotiable.
August ninth.

ELIASBERG

It's too soon. We've been
practicing for weeks, and they
still can't play the whole piece
through.

ZHDANOV

August 9th is the day that Hitler
has chosen to celebrate the fall of
Leningrad. So on August ninth, we
are going to have a concert. And I
am going to broadcast that concert
throughout the entire city, and I
am going to install massive
speakers on the city borders, to
make damn sure they can hear my
concert all the way from the German
trenches. And it's going to be our
musicians, playing our symphony,
right here in our city. And that is
how we are going to show them
Leningrad haven't fallen. Do you
understand?

ELIASBERG

Yes, Comrade General.

CUT TO:

INT. GREAT HALL OF THE PHILHARMONIC - DAY

SUPER IN/OUT - AUGUST 9TH, 1942

EMACIATED CITIZENS begin trickling into the hall, slowly at
first, then in masses. They're all bundled up in heavy winter
coats, moving slowly, but with purpose - the people of
Leningrad are here for their concert. The entire hall is
filled. Olga is sitting in the third row.²⁶

CUT TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS - LENINGRAD PREPARES FOR THE CONCERT

A) RADIOS ARE TURNED ON ALL OVER THE CITY

B) SPEAKERS ARE INSTALLED ON THE CITY STREETS

C) MUSICIANS PICK UP THEIR INSTRUMENTS

CUT TO:

INT. GREAT HALL OF THE PHILHARMONIC - DAY

Eliasberg leads the musicians onto the stage. Silently, they take their seats. They are all wearing formal black, with the fingers cut off their gloves.

Eliasberg raises his hands, and they begin to play.²⁷

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - BABY WARD - CONTINUOUS

A NURSE is going around, snapping plastic WRISTLETS around the babies' wrists.

CUT TO:

INT. GREAT HALL OF THE PHILHARMONIC - CONTINUOUS

The musicians play their hearts out. They sound better than ever before.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - BABY WARD - CONTINUOUS

A second NURSE is going around, writing NAMES on the babies' wristlets: 'VOLSKY'....'PUTYATIN'....'ADAMOVA'...

CUT TO:

INT. GREAT HALL OF THE PHILHARMONIC - CONTINUOUS

Eliasberg is filled with triumph. This is the single greatest moment of his life.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - BABY WARD - CONTINUOUS

Nurses pick up the babies and leave.

CUT TO:

INT. GREAT HALL OF THE PHILHARMONIC - CONTINUOUS

Playing a cello solo, Natasha is completely absorbed in the music.

The audience is rapt.²⁸

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - BABY WARD - CONTINUOUS

The baby ward is deserted. All of the cribs are empty.

LATER

Natasha is staring at the empty cribs, holding Olga's hand. She's panicking.

A nurse appears at a distance.

NATASHA

Excuse me.

She runs toward the nurse.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

Excuse me!

The nurse looks up.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

Where have the babies gone?

NURSE

They were evacuated.²⁹

NATASHA

When?

NURSE

An hour ago.

NATASHA

Where were they evacuated?

NURSE
Orphanages, hospitals. They'll be
safer there.

Natasha is struck by the word 'orphanage.'

NATASHA
My daughter's not an orphan.

The nurse is uncomfortable - clearly, the hospital babies
were all considered orphans.

NURSE
I'm sorry.

The nurse leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

SUPER IN/OUT - TWO YEARS LATER

Natasha and Olga are holding hands, standing at the train
station, with a small group of siege survivors.

A train pulls into the station - and CHILDREN start getting
off. They're all young, 6 at the oldest, all wearing
WRISTLETS labeled with their names.

Natasha starts running through the children, checking little
girls' wristlets. Olga clutches her hand, running right
behind her.

Not Adamova -

Not Adamova -

Not Adamova -

Natasha is getting increasingly frantic. She runs down to
check the next car.

Not Adamova -

Not Adamova -

Adamova -

She stares at the name on the wristlet, and then at her
DAUGHTER'S face - and then she picks the little girl up and
walks into the -

STREET - FX

As Natasha walks home from the train station with one little girl in her arms and still holding another little girl's hand, we see time passing around her.

The season changes from winter to spring to summer - the snow disappears, and the foliage returns to a healthy, blooming green. Flowers pop up. The light changes from blue and cold, to bright and warm.

One of the buildings she passes is rebuilt out of rubble.

The streets are gradually repopulated.

A bright and beautiful trolley goes by.

Beside her, the girls grow gradually older and more light-hearted. They begin to skip and scamper and play around her.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ADAMOV APARTMENT - BEDROOM

SUPER IN/OUT - 25 YEARS LATER

AN OLDER NATASHA (55) is sitting calmly and quietly on the bed, dressed in a formal white dress. She's waiting for something.

In the background, the radio is playing, faintly.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

Today marks the 25th anniversary of the Leningrad premiere of Dmitri Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony. In remembrance of that historic concert, siege survivors are gathering today at the Great Hall of the Philharmonic, where the original musicians will play for the original audience. The full concert will be broadcast starting at...

There's a KNOCK on the bedroom door and ANNA (28) sticks her head in.

ANNA

Mama? I'm ready, let's go.

Natasha stands, slowly.

They leave together.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREAT HALL OF THE PHILHARMONIC - LATER

A CROWD is gathered in front of the hall.

Anna escorts her mother to the door, where they are met affectionately by OLDER OLGA, (30).

NATASHA

Olga.

OLGA

Mama.

ANNA

I'll wait for you right here.

Olga and Natasha enter the theater.

INT. GREAT HALL OF THE PHILHARMONIC - CONTINUOUS

In stark contrast to the outside of the theater, the inside is practically empty. There are about thirty PEOPLE in the audience, randomly spaced in seats throughout the hall.

There are four MUSICIANS on the stage, looking at OLDER ELIASBERG.

Olga stops at the third row.

OLGA

This is where I sat.

Olga sits, and Natasha continues up to the stage, where Eliasberg meets her.

ELIASBERG

Natasha. You look the same.

Natasha smiles.

NATASHA

Karl.

They embrace.

She sits. Around her, the empty seats in the orchestra are occupied by the instruments of the missing (dead) musicians.

Eliasberg raises his hands -

The four musicians raise their instruments -

And they play THE LENINGRAD SYMPHONY, in honor of their dead comrades.

FADE OUT.

Appendix A: Endnotes

¹ “Not only did the purges start in Leningrad. It was in Leningrad that they were given their characteristic leitmotif of macabre paranoia... There were few Leningraders of intellectual capacity who would not have viewed the overthrow of Stalin with emotions ranging from grim satisfaction to unrestrained delight...” (Salisbury, Harrison E., The 900 Days: The Siege of Leningrad. New York: Harper & Row, 1969. 128-129).

² Molotov’s radio broadcast at noon, on June 22nd: “At 4 am, without declaration of war, German troops attacked our country. The government calls upon you, men and women citizens of the Soviet Union, to rally even more closely around the glorious Bolshevik Party and our great leader, Comrade Stalin. Our cause is just. The enemy will be crushed. Victory will be ours” (Salisbury, 119).

³ “Most of the great artistic ensembles had left Leningrad [by July]. The Philharmonic and the Pushkin Drama Theater went to Novosibirsk, the Conservatory to Tashkent, the Mariinsky Opera and Ballet to Perm, the Maly Opera to Orenburg. Two great trains...had carried off the treasures of the Hermitage and a third was being prepared” (Salisbury, 258).

⁴ “As the Red Army staggered back from the Baltic, some NKVD prisoners were released. Some escaped. Some were shot” (Salisbury, 171).

⁵ “[Kresty Prison] was a political prison during the revolutionary period of 1905-1907, and it transitioned back into a political prison from the 1920s to the 1950s” (O’Leary, James. “Kresty Prison: A Forgotten Site of Memory?” 3 Oct. 2010

<http://petersburg.blogs.wm.edu/2010/10/03/kresty-prison-a-forgotten-site-of-memory/>).

⁶ “Evacuation from Leningrad had been on-again off-again. For the most part it involved children” (Salisbury, 206).

⁷ “With occasional exceptions...it could be predicted on June 22 that Leningrad and the Leningraders would close ranks and defend their great city with the patriotism and love which had always been their strongest characteristic” (Salisbury, 129).

⁸ “More than 2,500 Leningrad University students joined the army and the Volunteers” (Salisbury, 176).

⁹ “Commercial stores—seventy-one in all—opened the day rationing started. In these stores without ration cards you could buy anything you wanted—and any amounts: sugar, butter, meat, caviar. But prices were high” (Salisbury, 205).

¹⁰ “Suddenly, from behind the roofs a white cloud started to grow; it expanded quickly and other clouds piled on this one. They were all dyed amber in the setting sun. They filled up the entire sky; then the clouds turned bronze, while from below a black stripe started moving upwards. It was so unlike smoke that for a long time I could not comprehend that it was fire. They say it was the oil tanks and Badaev warehouses burning. It was an immense spectacle of stunning beauty” (Simmons, Cynthia and Nina Perlina. Writing the Siege of Leningrad. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002. 23).

¹¹ “September 1 was the day Dmitri Shostakovich spoke on the Leningrad radio. ‘Just a few hours ago,’ he said, ‘I completed the score of the second part of my new large symphonic work.’ If he completed the third and fourth parts, he said, he would

entitle it his Seventh Symphony... 'Notwithstanding war conditions, notwithstanding the dangers threatening Leningrad,' he said, 'I have been able to work quickly and to finish the first two parts of my symphony. Why do I tell you about this? I tell you so that those Leningraders who are now listening to me shall know that the life of our city is going on normally. All of us now carry our military burdens... Soviet musicians, my many and dear colleagues, my friends,' he said. 'Remember that our art is threatened with great danger. We will defend our music. We will work with honesty and self-sacrifice that no one may destroy it'... [In early October] he and his family were evacuated to Moscow and within a few days to Kuibyshev. There he finished his symphony" (Salisbury, 283-284).

¹² "28th November, 1941: The aerial migration of Leningrad goes on. Quite a number of our writers have been flown out... you wouldn't be evacuated unless the country needed you" (Inber, Vera. Leningrad Diary. Trans. Serge M Wolff and Rachel Grieve. London: Hutchinson & Co LTD, 1971. 33-34).

¹³ "On only two days between September 12 and November 30 did the Nazis refrain from shelling Leningrad. The bombardment was continuous: in September 5,364 shells, 991 explosive bombs, 31,398 incendiaries... There were fires without number," (Salisbury, 372).

¹⁴ "Thousands of German leaflets rained down on Leningrad. Most residents feared even to pick them up lest they be seized and shot by the special 'destroyer' battalions of workers, charged with maintaining internal defense" (Salisbury, 331).

¹⁵ "16th September, 1941: It gave me a strange feeling when the phone rang, and a fresh young voice said: 'The telephone is disconnected until the end of the war.' I

tried to raise a protest, but knew in my heart it was useless. In a few minutes the phone clicked and went dead... until the end of the war. And immediately the flat, too, became dead, frozen and tense. We were cut off from everyone and everything in the city. And that is how all the telephones in Leningrad were cut off at the same time" (Inber, 19).

¹⁶ "The blockade metronome, which after the war went on exhibit in museum expositions, was then the pulse of life in the besieged city" (Simmons and Perlina, 144).

¹⁷ "Theft of food was widespread. Starving teenagers snatched rations in and around dark and crowded bread shops. Armed bands occasionally looted shops... Thieves were punished severely and swiftly. Some were shot for stealing just a half-loaf of bread, but the threat of execution did not deter desperate people" (Bidlack, Richard. Foreword. Writing the Siege of Leningrad. By Cynthia Simmons and Nina Perlina. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002. Pp xviii).

¹⁸ "In November... half the food you ate was inedible. People began to stuff their stomachs with substitutes. They tore wallpaper from the walls and scraped off the paste... Some ate the paper... Later they chewed the plaster" (Salisbury, 377).

¹⁹ "In December they began to appear—the sleds of the children, painted bright red or yellow... On the sleds were the ill, the dying, the dead" (Salisbury, 435).

²⁰ "Already dogs were becoming rare in the besieged city. You noticed those that remained. You thought about them" (Salisbury, 377).

²¹ “A grocery store director named Lokshina stole nearly 400 pounds of butter and 200 pounds of flour. She was shot. This was the fate of food criminals whenever they were uncovered” (Salisbury, 450).

²² “‘To take someone who has died to the cemetery,’ Luknitsky said, ‘is an affair so laborious that it exhausts the last vestiges of strength in the survivors, and the living, fulfilling their duty to the dead, are brought to the brink of death themselves’” (Salisbury, 436).

²³ “The Chief of Artistic Affairs... called in Karl I. Eliasberg, director of the Radio Committee orchestra... Not since early December had there been such a concert in Leningrad. Eliasberg brought with him a list of his orchestra members. Twenty-seven names were underlined in black pencil. They were dead. Most of the others were underlined in red. They were near death from dystrophy. Eight names were not underlined. They were available to play. A few days later an announcement was made on the radio that a symphony orchestra was being formed. Volunteers were asked” (Salisbury, 512).

²⁴ “Toward the end of March about thirty musicians gathered for rehearsal. These were all the able-bodied musicians in Leningrad... Eliasberg appeared on the rostrum in a starched shirt and tail coat. Underneath he wore a cotton-padded jacket. He stood firm and tall, although he had to be helped to the theater” (Salisbury, 512).

²⁵ “Little by little the houses of Leningrad filled up with the dead... You could enter almost any house and any apartment, walk through the frozen rooms and see the

dead, lying on the floor, lying on the beds, or in chairs around the stove where the fire had long since died away” (Salisbury, 444).

²⁶ “At 7 PM on August 9 the doors of the Philharmonic Hall opened. Again there were lights—some lights anyway—in the crystal chandeliers. Sunlight streamed through the great windows, repaired with plywood after the winter’s bombing. Here was everyone in Leningrad: Vsevolod Vishnevsky and Vera Inber... Lieutenant General Govorov, handsome in his uniform; Party Secretary Kuznetsov, dark, lean-faced but more at ease than during the winter months; and on the podium, Director Karl Eliasberg. Everyone was wearing his good black suit or her best silk dress, the most fashionable crowd the siege had seen. The score of the Seventh Symphony had been sent to Leningrad by plane in June, and rehearsals had gone on for more than six weeks. The glory and majesty of the symphony were played against a crescendo of Leningrad’s guns... [German] troops were listening to a broadcast of the symphony (it was carried by direct hook-up to all parts of the Soviet Union and by shortwave to Europe and North America)” (Salisbury, 539).

²⁷ “9th August, 1942: Again the Philharmonic Hall was filled to capacity, as it used to be before the war, and before things got too bad. The members of the orchestra and Eliasberg, the conductor, were obviously keyed up. I listened to the Seventh Symphony, and it seemed to me that it was all about Leningrad. The rumbling approach of German tanks—there they were” (Inber, 102).

²⁸ “Somehow the mood of Leningrad was changing. The city was preparing for its second winter of war in a new spirit. The manager of the Astoria Hotel...sang as she mounted the marble, circular staircase. ‘Why am I so happy?’ she asked... ‘I really

don't know. The city is being shelled, and I am singing. I never used to sing in the morning... I've lost everyone. All my dear ones. I thought I couldn't survive that. But now I'm ready for anything" (Salisbury, 541).

²⁹ "Evacuation of refugees from Leningrad by the ice road was halted April 12 by Kosygin. He reported to the State Defense Committee that from January 22 to April 12 he had removed from Leningrad a total of 539,400 persons, including... orphans, 12,639" (Salisbury, 512).

Appendix B: Ration Chart

Daily Bread Rations

Date	Workers in "Hot" workshops	Workers & Engineers	Office Workers	Dependents
18 July 1941	1000 grams	800 grams	600 grams	400 grams
02 Sept 1941	800	600	400	300
12 Sept 1941	700	500	300	250
1 Oct 1941	600	400	200	200
13 Nov 1941	450	300	150	150
20 Nov 1941	375	250	125	125
25 Dec 1941	500	350	200	200
24 Jan 1942	575	400	300	250
11 Feb 1942	700	500	400	300
22 Mar 1942	700	600	500	

Chart from Simmons, Cynthia and Nina Perlina. Writing the Siege of Leningrad. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002. Xlii

Appendix C: Annotated Bibliography

Bidlack, Richard. Foreward. Writing the Siege of Leningrad. By Cynthia Simmons and Nina Perlina. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002.

Richard Bidlack, a History professor at Washington and Lee University, is currently writing a book on the Siege of Leningrad. His forward in Simmons and Perlina's book expresses a strong argument for the siege of Leningrad being privileged as a female experience. According to Bidlack, during the siege, the population of Leningrad was predominantly female: most of the men had enlisted in war efforts; the remaining men died more quickly than the women; and the day-to-day struggle to survive and provide for one's family was left to the mother or the wife. Bidlack helped me understand that any screenplay about the siege should be told from a female perspective.

Inber, Vera. Leningrad Diary. Trans. Serge M Wolff and Rachel Grieve. London: Hutchinson & Co LTD, 1971.

Vera Inber's siege diary is the most famous and most cited siege diary. Inber was something of a celebrity poet in the Soviet Union, and her experience (given her celebrity status) was not as universal as I would have liked. I worried about the truthfulness of her narrative, given that it was undoubtedly censored before publication by the Soviet Union. For instance, the most negative moment in the diary comes when a woman asks for help locating her ration card, and an exhausted Inber refuses aid, only to be ashamed when her husband quietly and immediately joins the search for the ration card. This could not have been Inber's worst siege memory, but it is the worst one available in this narrative, which makes me suspicious about the accuracy of her account. Her beautiful descriptions of the siege, however, were invaluable to me. In particular, I relied heavily on her description of the Badayev warehouse bombings.

Kochina, Elena. Blockade Diary. Trans. Samuel C Ramer. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1990.

Elena Kochina's siege diary is a very dark, morbid read, describing in depressing detail the toll hunger can take on relationships. Kochina's desperate struggle for survival decimated her opinion of her husband and destroyed her marriage. Her references to her son's increasing listlessness are incredibly alarming. As a resource, this diary is a shocking expose of siege life. However, its dark tone would not translate well to film, and so I didn't utilize it except as background reading.

O'Leary, James. "Kresty Prison: A Forgotten Site of Memory?" 3 Oct. 2010 <http://petersburg.blogs.wm.edu/2010/10/03/kresty-prison-a-forgotten-site-of-memory/>

This article, written by William and Mary student James O'Leary, provides a concise and well-researched history of Kresty Prison, the site I chose for Ivan's brief imprisonment. It comes complete with evocative images and an explication of famous Russian poet Anna Akhmatova's *Requiem*, a poem based on her personal experience visiting family members at Kresty Prison. It helped me to flesh out Ivan's character arc, and was influential in my decision to have Ivan contract a fatal illness while imprisoned.

***Russia's War: Blood Upon the Snow.* Perf. Nigel Hawthorne. PBS, 1997. Film.**

This PBS documentary provides a comprehensive, in-depth look at both the military and civilian aspects of the siege. It is invaluable due to its archival footage and its coverage of the reprise concert of the Leningrad Symphony. Although it is not a thrilling example of a documentary film (it's hampered by its academic tone and static visuals), it is extremely well-researched, and an excellent source of information on the siege. It is very thorough, but also incredibly long.

Salisbury, Harrison E., The 900 Days: The Siege of Leningrad. New York: Harper & Row, 1969.

Harrison Salisbury was a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist for the New York Times, and his book is the most comprehensive and well-written resource on the civilian experience of the siege. Salisbury's career was marked by his ongoing battle against Soviet censorship, and The 900 Days has still never been published in Russia, although Salisbury spent a significant amount of time there, writing and researching. I relied on Salisbury heavily because I was confident that his uncensored narrative would yield an honest and truthful account of the siege. Everything that I read and researched from other sources, I had already learned from Salisbury. If there is any one book that could be said to faithfully and evocatively encompass the entire siege experience, it is this one. I read it cover to cover, too many times to count. At one point, famous director Sergio Leone was planning to adapt The 900 Days into a feature film, but his death permanently derailed all adaptation plans.

Simmons, Cynthia and Nina Perlina. Writing the Siege of Leningrad. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002.

Simmons and Perlina are both professors specializing in Slavic Studies: Simmons teaches at Boston College and Perlina at Indiana University. Nina Perlina is a siege survivor. Their book focuses on the female experience of the siege, and it consists entirely of the diary excerpts and the oral histories of female siege survivors. This

multi-perspective approach was incredibly valuable to my understanding of the human aspect of the siege. Since it was published in Pittsburgh, the book was able to resist Soviet censorship fairly easily.