

RUSSIAN DOLL

Episode 103
"A Warm Body"

Written by
Allison Silverman

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Paper Kite Productions
9015 Rosewood Ave
West Hollywood, CA 90048

1 INT. MAXINE'S LOFT - LIVING ROOM - DAY - (LOOP I) 1 *

8AM. Monday. NADIA is asleep on a sofa, curled up under an expensive men's wool coat. The sun is out, illuminating the mess left over from the party. She pulls the coat up over her eyes, then stops. Nadia frowns. She runs her hands over the coat, investigating, then sits upright. She inspects the coat, it's not hers. She groans and tosses it to the floor, muttering. *

NADIA

Get off. *

She orients herself. She heads to... *

2 INT. MAXINE'S LOFT - BATHROOM - DAY - (LOOP I) 2 *

She checks out the bathroom in the light of day. As she investigates it, she goes from wary to more confident. *

NADIA

It's a bathroom. Toilet. Sink. Bathroom. Not a portal. Just a creepy, weird, upsetting bathroom. It's fine. I'm fine. This is fine. *

She looks in the mirror, trying to further convince herself of her sanity. She runs her hand through her hair. She feels something stuck in her hair. It is the wire cage from a champagne cork, and it is really entangled. She tries to unwind it, then tries to unwind it the other way. It is only getting worse. She grimaces, then makes a decision, and tucks the wire cage back in. *

3 INT. MAXINE'S LOFT - ENTRANCE - DAY - (LOOP I) 3 *

As Nadia puts on her coat, she stuffs her hand into the pocket of a different coat and pulls out an unopened pack of cigarettes. She smiles. Score. She makes the motion of calling back to the bedroom. *

NADIA

(sotto, quickly)

Can I get you anything, Maxine? I can carry a lot with my six tiny roach legs. No? Okay, bye. *

She grabs a key from under a grotesque art piece and exits.

4 INT. MAXINE'S LOFT - STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER - (LOOP I) 4 *

Nadia stands at the top of the stairs where she's died several times. Her hand clutches the bannister. *

NADIA
(psyching herself "up")
One, two... not gonna happen. *

She sighs and heads back to Maxine's door. *

NADIA (CONT'D)
Jesus, I spend more time on the
fire escape than Tony and Maria.

5 EXT. MAXINE'S LOFT - DAY - (LOOP I) 5 *

8:45AM. Nadia returns to the building, drinking from a carton of orange juice and carrying a bodega bag. She glances, uninterested, at the Hebrew inscription above the door, then stops in her tracks. What was that exactly? She backs up to take another look. ANGLE ON: The mysterious inscription. **Talmud Torah Beth Shalom.** *

Nadia takes it in, getting a big idea. *

NADIA
Oh, fuck. It's the building. *

She pulls out her phone and takes a photo of the inscription. As she looks up, a severe-looking OLD WOMAN dragging a handcart exits the door and brushes past Nadia. Nadia jumps.

NADIA (CONT'D)
Watch it!

The old woman turns and glares at Nadia. Uncomfortable, Nadia turns away. Getting an idea, she turns back to face the old woman.

NADIA (CONT'D)
Hey, is this building--

The old woman is nowhere to be seen. Nadia shudders.

NADIA (CONT'D)
Fuck.

Unnerved, she looks back at the inscription.

6 INT. MAXINE'S LOFT - LIVING ROOM - DAY - (LOOP I) 6 *

Nadia enters through the window via the fire escape to find Maxine sitting, depressed, at the kitchen table with a cup of coffee. She is in a kimono. An unopened newspaper sits on the table. A YOUNG MAN is passed out in the background. Nadia pulls a sandwich out of her bag. *

NADIA *

What exactly is the deal with this building? I mean, I know it was a yeshiva, but like, what went down? *

(Maxine sighs) *

What'd I miss? *

LIZZY *

(explaining) *

Maxine's spiraling about what someone did to her chicken. *

ANGLE ON: The chicken from the previous night's party sitting on the kitchen counter. It is a desecrated revolting carcass. Someone has stuck an American flag toothpick into it. Maxine puts her head in her hands. *

MAXINE *

It's so trenchant. *

Lizzy pulls a carton from the refrigerator. *

LIZZY *

I'm eating your last egg. *

NADIA *

Hey, there's an inscription over the door here that I can't read so I find it very creepy. Do you know what it says? *

Nadia takes out her phone with the picture of the inscription. She tries to hand it to Maxine, who pushes it away. She gives it to Lizzy instead. *

LIZZY *

Don't you know? You're Jew-ish-y. *

NADIA *

Not by choice! I mean, my grandparents were Russian holocaust survivors. And then my mom, well, basically all the kids of holocaust survivors got deep into primal scream. I'm nothing. *

(MORE)

NADIA (CONT'D)

Religion is like listening to
someone's racist sexist grandpa.
Only instead of excusing yourself
to get a lemon bar, we're all like
"Racist sexist grandpa is right!
Let's go to war!"

(then)

I'd go Buddhist but their retreats
are silent. I can't condone that.

*

Nadia's phone DINGS. Lizzy looks at it and reads the alert.

LIZZY

You have a code review at 11:30.

(reading a text)

And John needs his blanket back?

*

*

Nadia grabs the phone and grimaces.

*

NADIA

I used his coat as a blanket.

(off Lizzy look)

He put his coat over me when I was
asleep. You don't do that. He
hasn't seen me in six months. Who
says I don't have bed bugs?

*

*

*

*

MAXINE

I think it's sweet.

*

NADIA

So is cyanide. Allegedly.

*

Something shatters off-screen. Nadia jumps. Lizzy glances
back at the pantry, then goes back to making her breakfast.

*

*

LIZZY

A plate fell off the shelf.

NADIA

Yeah, right when I said...

(testing)

'Cyanide.'

*

*

Nadia looks around, will another plate fall? No.

NADIA (CONT'D)

(re: phone photo)

So you don't know what this is?

She, once again, flashes the photo of the inscription at
Lizzy, who shakes her head "no."

LIZZY

Maxine? You've lived here for like
ten years.

*

Maxine stares at the chicken with the American flag.

*

MAXINE

I'm sorry. I'm done. This country
is just too heartbreaking.

*

*

NADIA

Max, come back. We need you.

*

Lizzy brings her breakfast to the table, pushing away
Maxine's newspaper. Nadia gets an idea.

*

*

NADIA (CONT'D)

Hold on, there's something in here.

She grabs the newspaper and flips through it, eventually
finding an article that moved Maxine in a previous loop.

*

*

NADIA (CONT'D)

Dolores Huerta! 87 years old.
Civil rights. Farmworkers. Chavez.
What else? Um --

*

*

(skimming article)

"when," "key," "also," I'm really
not good at skimming articles.

(back on track)

She's a hero. And in her darkest
times, she never turned down a
friend in need.

*

She hands the article to Maxine, who begins reading, moved.

*

NADIA (CONT'D)

Maxine, can you help me by telling
me what this inscription says?

*

MAXINE

It's the name of the congregation
that used to own the building. I
think it's Beth Shalom.

*

*

Nadia grins in triumph as Maxine, transfixed by the article,
gets up and walks to her bedroom, still reading.

*

MAXINE (CONT'D)

Eleven children. I don't even have
one children.

*

*

Lizzy picks up the messy chicken carcass, moving it to the
garbage. Nadia heads to the door.

*

LIZZY

Why were you on the fire escape?

NADIA

(covering badly)

What? I wasn't.

Lizzy gives her a look. Nadia takes in the guilt. She pulls out the pack of cigarettes she swiped earlier, and puts it on the table.

NADIA (CONT'D)

These fell out of your pocket.

Lizzy looks at Nadia, annoyed, then turns her back on her. Nadia quietly heads to the fire escape.

7 INT. BETH SHALOM SYNAGOGUE - FRONT OFFICE - DAY - (LOOP I) 7

Later. Nadia, in a fresh but still grungy outfit, ambles in and looks around. A figure is cloaked in steam. Behind the front desk is SHIFRA, (30s), steaming a man's suit. She wears a wig and conservative clothing. Nadia plasters on a polite smile. Shifra looks her up and down.

NADIA

Shabbat Shalom.

SHIFRA

Not shabbat.

NADIA

I'm Nadia.

Shifra stares at her, not giving anything. Nadia nods.

NADIA (CONT'D)

I apologize if I'm a little out of breath. I just ran here from--

She pulls a mango from her bag and puts it on Shifra's desk.

NADIA (CONT'D)

--the mango store. Are you interested in a mango? It was on the way. Sort of. What was your name?

SHIFRA

Shifra.

Shifra takes the mango, as Nadia nods. Friends?

NADIA

Hi, Shifra. I would like to talk to
someone about your old property.
That synagogue on 8th and B. It's a
bunch of lofts now.

*
*
*
*

SHIFRA

That's before my time. The rabbi
might know.

*
*

NADIA

Perfect.

SHIFRA

But he's getting ready to go to
Great Neck. Kind of a big deal.

*

NADIA

Great Neck's great! It's my
favorite of all the Necks. Here's
the thing: it's gotta be today. I
mean, I think I only have the day
the rabbi goes to Great Neck.

*
*
*

SHIFRA

But he's going to Great Neck.

*

NADIA

I can be really fast. I promise.
(auctioneer)
Who'll give me a hundred dollars?
One hundred dollar bid, now two,
now two, will ya give me two? Two
hundred dollar bid, now three,
now three, will ya give me three?
Two hundred, two and a half, two-
fifty, how about two-fifty? Fifty?
I got it! How about two sixty?
Sixty? Do I hear two sixty?

*
*
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*
*

Throughout this speech, Shifra reacts, trying to stop Nadia
with a variety of "okays," "I get it," "I'm not bidding two
sixty!" and finally shouts to "Stop! Stop!" Nadia stops,
impressed with herself.

*
*

SHIFRA

He's not going to see you. He
doesn't have time.

*
*

(Nadia starts to protest)

Look, I understand you think being
a sexual woman means you have
access to any man you want, but I'm
not going to send you in.

*
*
*
*

NADIA

Oh. Actually, I'm married.

SHIFRA

(calling her bluff)

All right, well, then the rabbi
will talk to your husband.

Shifra picks up the phone and dials.

NADIA

Perfect. I was going to suggest
that anyway.

SHIFRA

(in phone)

Hi. I'd like to order a car,
please. To Long Island. 1:45?

Frustrated, Nadia checks her watch. 12PM. Not a lot of time.

8 INT. BETH SHALOM SYNAGOGUE - LIBRARY - DAY - (LOOP I) 8 *

Nadia places a call, grimacing as she does it.

INTERCUT WITH:

9 EXT. REAL ESTATE OFFICE - DAY - (LOOP I) 9 *

JOHN walks down the street, carrying a bag of fast food.
Unlike in 102, this time he is wearing a trench coat, because
Nadia slept with his. His phone rings. He answers.

JOHN

Hey, Nads, did you have fun last
night? I did.

NADIA

I don't have your coat.

JOHN

Fine. Keep the coat. But you should
know that today I had to wear a
trench coat to work and a beautiful
brunette hired me to trail her
husband.

NADIA

As long as you're not exposing
yourself at bus stations. Listen,
can you get away from work?

JOHN

I'm going into a client meeting in ten minutes.

*

NADIA

I need you to come downtown. Right now. I'll explain when you get here. It's important.

*

*

*

*

JOHN

Nadia, I can't. I'm busy.

*

*

NADIA

Doing what, selling a precious New York landmark to some Russian billionaire who needs a dorm room for their parrot?

*

*

*

JOHN

That's not entirely fair.

NADIA

So you admit it's a little fair.

John sighs, beaten.

JOHN

(assuming the worst)
Which precinct, sixth or ninth?

NADIA

I'm at the Beth Shalom synagogue.

*

JOHN

(only half-joking)
This better not be a hate crime.

NADIA

Well, you'll have to come down and see. I'm capable of anything.

*

She hangs up. John grabs a few fries from the bag and smiles.

*

10 EXT. BETH SHALOM SYNAGOGUE - DAY - (LOOP I)

10

*

Later. John arrives. Nadia, checking her watch, pulls him out and drags him to the synagogue entrance.

*

NADIA

Shalom! Shalom! Let's move!

*

John resists, looking her in the eye.

JOHN

Nadia, this is a place of worship.
I need you to know that means
something to me. I grew up very
Catholic.

*

NADIA

Yes. But you fuck like a Jew.
(off his look)
That's not a bad thing!

*

*

*

She opens the door and pushes John through it.

11 INT. BETH SHALOM SYNAGOGUE - FRONT OFFICE - CONTINUOUS(I) 11

*

Nadia and John enter. Shifra is eating the mango. She puts
it below her desk, guiltily.

NADIA

Shifra, this is my husband John.

*

John shoots Nadia a look, then does his best to cover.

*

JOHN

Hello. Beautiful place you've got
here. The original details. Pre-war
molding. You know, you can't find
buildings like this anymore.

*

*

*

*

*

SHIFRA

I know a ton of buildings like
this.

*

*

*

Shifra doesn't budge. Nadia takes her aside.

*

NADIA

Between us, I'm thirty-six. No
kids. Lot of fibroids--
(revealing wire cage)
--and I've got this stuck in my
hair. I got you a man. You can't
help out a little bit?

*

*

*

SHIFRA

(beaten down)
Whatever.

Shifra sticks her head into the Rabbi's office. Nadia pulls
out some pieces of paper and shoves them into John's hands.

*

*

NADIA

Just ask a few of these questions.

*

*

Shifra turns back around and opens the door to the Rabbi's office. She gives John a nod. Inside... *

ANGLE ON: A RABBI (60s/70s) with a long beard at a computer, surrounded by bookcases. John looks nervously at Shifra. *

JOHN
Just so you know, I'm not Jewish.
But, I am circumcised.

Behind John's back, Nadia makes a "kinda" gesture to Shifra. John walks in and, as Nadia tries to catch a peek, he shuts the door. *

12 INT. BETH SHALOM SYNAGOGUE - RABBI'S OFFICE - DAY - (I) 12 *

The rabbi is on his computer, "rehearsing" some words on the screen. John takes a seat, uncomfortable. The rabbi finishes, and turns to John. *

RABBI
I'm giving a speech tonight and I'm opening it with the allegories of Abraham and Isaac in the work of Bob Dylan. *

JOHN
So do you keep it to the songs Dylan wrote when he was Jewish or-- *

RABBI
He IS Jewish.
(then)
Who are you? *

JOHN
I'm John Gutierrez. Ludson Rails Real Estate. I have some questions about the old synagogue on 8th and B. It's now a residential building. *

John looks down at the questions Nadia handed him. ANGLE ON: Words like "haunted" and "conception of hell". John frowns.

RABBI
Ah. Yes. I went to school there over sixty years ago. We all thought there'd be a nuclear war so we practiced hiding under our desks for protection! Can you imagine? *

JOHN

(trying to relate)

Oh, I slept under my desk for a month. It will protect you from a wife you've been cheating on.

*

Uncomfortable, John coughs and looks down again. ANGLE ON: More words like "cursed" and "come back to life." What the fuck is going on with Nadia?

JOHN (CONT'D)

So, why was the building sold?

RABBI

John, are you a parent?

*

JOHN

I am. I have a daughter. Nine.

*

RABBI

Would you send your daughter to a school next to Needle Park?

JOHN

Well, her mother won't let me make those decisions, so... It's hard to keep things from you, rabbi. You're like Sister Roberta with a beard. More of a beard.

*

*

*

*

RABBI

What's on the paper that's so terrible?

John takes a deep breath and reads quickly from the paper.

*

JOHN

Is there any history of hauntings in the building? Supernatural events? The dead coming back to life? A portal to another dimension, things of that nature?

*

Stunned, the rabbi is silent.

*

RABBI

You said you're in real estate?

*

JOHN

I'm asking these questions for this woman out there, Nadia. Who is not my wife. In fact, she's the reason my wife kicked me out and wishes I would die.

*

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*

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*

*

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

My daughter thinks I'm an asshole.
And it's been 18 years since my
last confession.

*
*
*

This is going somewhere neither of them expected.

*

13

INT. BETH SHALOM SYNAGOGUE - FRONT OFFICE - SAME TIME

13

*

Nadia sits on a sofa watching Shifra open letters with a letter opener that could easily kill someone. She looks away, then notices a power cord dangerously stretched across the floor. Now nervously checking out the room for her possible deaths, she grabs a bottle of synagogue wine and quietly takes a swig. It's awful. She gets an idea.

*

NADIA

So, Shifra, are you going to quit
or what?

SHIFRA

Excuse me?

NADIA

I've been watching you. Your
heart's not in this place. I mean,
do you even know the prayers?

*
*

SHIFRA

Yes, I know the prayers.

NADIA

Oh, yeah? What's the prayer for
wine? Wait, too easy. What's the
prayer for protecting someone in
danger? Do you know that one?

*
*
*

SHIFRA

I know the prayers.

*

NADIA

Like if someone could die?

Shifra nods.

NADIA (CONT'D)

How's it go?

14

INT. BETH SHALOM SYNAGOGUE - RABBI'S OFFICE - DAY - (I)

14

*

John has pulled his chair closer to the rabbi's desk. He has the questions from Nadia in his hand.

JOHN

I blew up my marriage. Because it was over. But I really thought I wanted to be with Nadia who turned around and said that was too much pressure. Which hurt. But I think I pushed too hard. I sell buildings, you know, sometimes I push too hard. Misjudge how ready people are make a commitment.

*
*
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*

RABBI

I sold buttons as a child.

*

JOHN

You get it.

(then)

Maybe I felt like I needed to end up with Nadia so my divorce wouldn't feel like the gigantic failure it most certainly is.

*
*
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*

RABBI

You know, mysticism teaches that there is wisdom inaccessible to the intellect. You can only reach it through surrender. Being nothing. Maybe what you want from Nadia is a way to avoid the abyss, when, really, embracing the abyss is the only way forward.

*
*
*
*
*

John takes in this uncomfortable thought. Beat.

*

JOHN

(shakes it off)

No. That's not my deal.

*
*

RABBI

(smiles)

It was so nice meeting you.

John arranges his jacket, stands up, and plasters on a smile.

JOHN

Hey! You too! This has been great! You know, this neighborhood is exploding. And I have seen some beautiful conversions of religious establishments into condominiums.

*

He pulls out a business card and hands it to the rabbi.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'd hate for you to miss out.

The rabbi looks at the card skeptically.

15 INT. BETH SHALOM SYNAGOGUE - FRONT OFFICE - SAME TIME 15 *

Shifra is solemnly reciting a Hebrew prayer for protection.
Nadia sits rapt, listening to every word.

SHIFRA

...umismali Gavri'el umil'fanei
Uri'el umayacharei Refa'el ve'al
roshi Shechinat El.

NADIA

What does it mean?

SHIFRA

Angels are all around you. *

Nadia nods, visibly moved. Her eyes are wet. She takes a
swig of the terrible synagogue wine. *

SHIFRA (CONT'D)

You can't drink that.

NADIA

Correct. It is undrinkable. Thanks
for the prayer. I'm sure it won't
help but it's not your fault. *

Shifra's face suddenly goes deadly serious. *

SHIFRA

You think I don't know that you're
judging my life. I support a
family. What do you do? *

Nadia, caught off-guard by this, feels awful. Devoid of a
pithy remark. John enters from the rabbi's office, clearly
anxious to leave the synagogue. The rabbi is behind him. *

RABBI

Shifra? *

The menace leaves Shifra's face and she turns back to him to
attend to his departure. *

JOHN

Let's go, Nadia. I think we've
officially worn out our etc. Etc. *

16 EXT. BETH SHALOM SYNAGOGUE - DAY - (LOOP I)

16 *

Nadia looks for John. She spots him across an intersection. She follows, taking a deep breath and then crossing.

NADIA
(to herself)
Don't die, don't die, don't die.
Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Successfully across, she yells ahead.

NADIA (CONT'D)
John! John, stop! John, you know
I'm going to catch you.

John stops, begrudgingly. Nadia catches up.

NADIA (CONT'D)
What did the rabbi say?

JOHN
What the fuck is going on with you?
What were those questions? Are you
having some sort of a mental issue?

NADIA
That depends. Are you going to ask
me who the president is? Because I
know, but it freaks me out. *

JOHN
Dead people coming back to life?
(quietly)
Did you kill somebody? *

NADIA
What? I can't believe you would
ask me that. If I killed somebody,
I would play it cool! Go to
Mexico. Start a band. *

JOHN
What is going on?

NADIA
What did the rabbi say?

JOHN
No! No, Nadia! What is going on?

NADIA
John. New deal! You want to come
back to my apartment?

John throws up his hands.

JOHN

You are so transparent! I work every day with guys trying to pull a fast one on me, Nadia. I get paid to see through this stuff!

SMASH CUT TO:

17 INT. NADIA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - (LOOP I) 17 *

Nadia and John sit in bed with a lot of take-out food, books, magazines, and a laptop. John, now relaxed, is trying to get the wire cage out of Nadia's hair. Nadia is on the phone. *

NADIA

(on phone)

I'm really sorry. I didn't want to get the whole office sick. I've been throwing up all day.

(remembering)

Oh, you know what might've gotten me sick? Bob. Bob makes me sick.

As she hangs up, John successfully gets the wire cage out of her hair. He holds it up triumphantly.

JOHN

I did it.

NADIA

Thank you! Now, can you turn it into a bistro chair?

JOHN

Of course. In college, I was a waiter. And very high. *

He twists the wires. Nadia checks the time. 5:30PM. *

NADIA

Wow. Five-thirty. I've never lasted this long.

(notices John's confusion)

Don't worry about it.

JOHN

Let me back up my truck of double entendres. Hold on.

John makes a sound like a truck backing up. Nadia laughs and shoves him. He tickles her. It's sweet, intimate but then...

NADIA

What did the rabbi say?

John gives her a look, and takes a deep breath.

JOHN

Nothing. They sold the building
because no one wanted to be there.
No haunting. No portals.

*

*

NADIA

What else?

JOHN

He started talking about mysticism.
About wisdom you gain through
surrender.

Nadia nods, taking this in.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Why do you need to know? Why is it
so important? Are you okay?

*

*

NADIA

(deflecting)

I miss you.

JOHN

I miss you. Too.
(then, suspicious)
What do you miss?

NADIA

I don't have specifics.

JOHN

Nadia, I know you think you aren't
in love with me anymore but I still
love you. And I don't think there's
another partner out there who would
take off work to nurse you through
your latest spiritual breakdown.
What we have... might be the best
either of us can do.

*

*

He holds the completed champagne cork wire bistro chair out to her. She doesn't take it. Instead, she gets up and heads to the closet.

NADIA

John, thank you so much. I feel so
much better. This was really nice.
But I gotta get going.

JOHN

Nadia, this is *your* apartment.

NADIA

You are in real estate.

JOHN

Don't run away. I want to have a serious conversation about getting back together.

Nadia winces, then gets an idea.

NADIA

You convinced me. Let's talk. Just let me take a shower first. In the most dangerous room in the house.

18 INT. NADIA'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - LATER - (LOOP I) 18 *

The bathroom is full of steam. From the shower, Nadia, in a shower cap, tosses a bar of soap onto the wet tiles and moves it around with her foot. She takes a deep breath and steps out of the shower onto the wet tile floor. She does not slip. She sighs, annoyed. *

NADIA

Are you kidding me? *

19 INT. NADIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - (LOOP I) 19 *

John is dressed. Nadia is in her coat, searching her bag.

JOHN

So, we're not getting back together. I think I can safely infer that from the lack of eye contact.

NADIA

I cannot discuss this until I find my gloves. Where did my gloves go?

JOHN

Take my gloves.

NADIA

They should be here! *

JOHN

Just take my gloves. Take mine! *

This is not what Nadia wants to hear.

NADIA

No! John! John, we are not getting back together. Especially not when your argument is "let's settle" so we're not alone.

(pause)

Because recently I have been more alone than I knew was possible. And yeah it is scary, but I can't just fix it with a warm body.

John is stunned, sad. She looks at him, ashamed, then sees her crumpled list of questions for the rabbi on the table. What does it all matter, anyway?

NADIA (CONT'D)

You know what? Sure. Why not? I want to be with you, John, for the rest of my life. If it makes you happy, we're together. I'm in.

She kisses him and smiles, like he was a child. It's a step too far. John looks at her, calm and grave.

JOHN

Can I give you some advice? Stop obsessing about what buildings are doing to you and start thinking about what you do in the world. You do things. But only things that are for you. You're selfish and you're a user, Nadia.

Nadia tries to recover.

NADIA

I promise that's just how you feel right now.

JOHN

I always feel this way about you.

Nadia takes this in. It hurts. He grabs his coat and leaves the apartment first.

20

EXT. TOMPKINS SQUARE PARK - HORSE'S SPOT - NIGHT - (I) 20

*

Late night. 9PM. Drunk, Nadia stumbles down the street wearing less than she should on a frigid night. She has no hat. Her hands are bare and she holds a liquor bottle. She takes a swig and looks around.

*

NADIA
Oatmeal? Oatmeal?

*
*

A group of twenty-something PARTY GUYS breeze past her, setting her off-balance.

*

NADIA (CONT'D)
Pardon me.

PARTY GUY
Go home, lady!

She raises her bottle in response, then sees a flier on a lamppost that reads "Man with a Van." (ALT: Stan with a Van, Dan with a Van). She pulls it off and examines it.

*
*

NADIA
God, rapists are advertising now?

From behind Nadia, a voice pipes up.

HORSE (O.S.)
What is on your head?

Nadia turns around and sees HORSE. Some personal items are on the ground behind him. She puts her hand up to her hair.

*
*

HORSE (CONT'D)
Is that a wig or a hat?

Nadia looks at Horse, her gaze settling on his bare feet.

NADIA
Where happened to your shoes?

HORSE
Someone stole them at the shelter last night, so I am not going back there. Not ever. I do not sleep among thieves.

*
*

Nadia starts to cry.

NADIA
They stole your shoes. What is happening in America? You want to know what America's like? It's just a chicken corpse.

Horse puts a hand on her shoulder, comforting.

HORSE
Shh. Can I tell you something?

*

NADIA

I would not if I were you. I'm not
a person to tell secrets to. I'm
not a good person.

Horse starts laughing. Nadia finds herself laughing, too. He
stops and looks at her, serious. *

HORSE

I want to cut your hair. *

NADIA

Yes. *

Still upset, Nadia watches as Horse takes a pair of scissors
out of his bag. He sits her down. Nadia is stiff; drunk but
aware of the danger. She takes another drink. *

NADIA (CONT'D)

You're going to kill me.

HORSE

I'm not.

NADIA

That's okay. You can change your
mind.

She hands him the bottle and he drinks. Bundled people walk
by them, looking at them, many purposefully not looking at
them. *

TIME-JUMP TO

21 EXT. TOMPKINS SQUARE PARK - HORSE'S SPOT - NIGHT - (I) 21 *

11PM. Nadia is now very relaxed. A lot of her hair is on the
ground around them. Horse gently touches her head. Nadia,
still drunk, enjoys it. Her hair looks okay. Not great, but
okay. It is significantly shorter. Horse picks up a handful
of hair. *

HORSE

(re: handful of hair)

This is the dead part of you. This
is who you were day after day after
day after day. It's gone.

He drops her hair like snow, then runs his hands through her
shorter hair.

HORSE (CONT'D)

This is new you. *

Horse loses his balance, grabs her and falls over, passed out. She pats him, then takes another drink. *

NADIA

I will never understand in a million years why you're being nice to me and why people visit Pompeii. *

She lays her head on Horse. Lights out.

22 INT. MAXINE'S LOFT - BATHROOM - NIGHT - (LOOP J) 22 *

9PM. Sunday. Nadia resets at the sink.

NADIA

Motherfucker! I froze to death? Jesus, that's dark!

She notices with sadness that her hair is now long again. A question crosses her mind.

NADIA (CONT'D)

Fuck. Fuck?

A loud knock pounds the door. It flies open. Party guests spill into the bathroom, as music fills the space.

23 INT. MAXINE'S LOFT - NIGHT - (LOOP J) 23 *

Nadia, on a mission, pushes her way through the guests, barely acknowledging their happy birthday wishes.

24 INT. MAXINE'S LOFT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS - (LOOP J) 24 *

Nadia passes the kitchen. Maxine spots her. *

MAXINE *

Sweet birthday baby!
(offers her a joint)
It's laced with cocaine like the Israelis do it.

Nadia has no time for this.

NADIA

I've got to go.

MAXINE *

Nads. What the fuck? *

NADIA

I'm sorry. It's important. *

MAXINE *

What's important?

NADIA

It won't be important to you.

MAXINE *

Um, I have a lot of interests and I find all kinds of things impor--

NADIA

(cutting her off)

I think a guy who gave me a haircut may have died tomorrow. And I don't know how tomorrow deaths work when it's yesterday again. Is he in yesterday? Or does he not exist? I don't know how deaths work for other people. It's fundamental stuff, Maxine. I have to know! *

Nadia continues on her way to the door. Maxine stares blankly at her as she goes, stunned. Then, she recovers. *

MAXINE *

Okay! That sounds important! *

Nadia exits the loft, then immediately comes back and heads to the fire escape, cursing at herself in frustration.

25 EXT. TOMPKINS SQUARE PARK - HORSE'S SPOT - NIGHT - (J) 25 *

Nadia is walking to the location where she met Horse.

NADIA

Horse! Horse!

Her phone rings. It's John. Nadia winces, still stung from John's words at her apartment. She answers.

NADIA (CONT'D)

Hi.

She continues on her way.

INTERCUT WITH:

26 INT. MAXINE'S LOFT - NIGHT - (LOOP J) 26 *

John, with no memory of their earlier conversation, makes his way through the party guests, looking for Nadia.

JOHN

Nadia? It's good to hear your voice. Maxine invited me to your party. Are you here? *

NADIA

I'm not.

John stops looking and sighs.

JOHN

Jesus, Nadia. You're why everybody came. *

Nadia arrives at the "Man with a Van" (ALT: "Stan with a Van," "Dan with a Van") flyer on the lamppost. She looks around. *

NADIA

I know, but I'm trying to find this guy I met the other night.

JOHN

You're what? *

NADIA

Ask Maxine. *

Nadia spots Horse's personal items. She smiles. Mystery solved. *

NADIA (CONT'D)

I found him. I mean, I found his stuff, so he's around. He is. *

(a little proud) *

Hey, John, I finally figured something out about how the world works. *

JOHN

Well, you should, you're 36 years old. You're coming back, right? I want to see you. *

Nadia smiles at this version of John -- one who hasn't revealed his dark thoughts about her. *

NADIA

I want to see you, too. *

She turns away from Horse's spot and starts to walk away. *

JOHN *

Well, hurry up, it's cold out there
and it's only getting colder. This
whole week is brutal. *

Nadia turns a corner and looks at bundled-up passersby. One
of them, we discover later, is ALAN. She frowns, sad to
remember the future. She stops in her tracks. *

NADIA *

Actually, I'm not coming back. I
think I have to find this guy
because he's in trouble. *

JOHN *

You just said he's fine. *

NADIA *

But tomorrow he isn't. *

JOHN *

Are you okay? I'll come get you. *

NADIA *

No, don't come. John, you should go
home with somebody. Go home with
someone actually you like. *

JOHN *

What does that mean? *

NADIA *

It means there's a hot Indian woman
in a purple shirt who's about to
have a fight with her boyfriend.
Get in there. *

Nadia hangs up. John takes a moment to look around the party.
He spots a beautiful INDIAN WOMAN rolling her eyes at the guy
she's with. What the fuck? *

27

EXT. TOMPKINS SQUARE PARK- HORSE'S SPOT - NIGHT - (LOOP J) 27 *

Nadia looks through Horse's things, hoping to find a clue.
Nothing seems to have any information. She picks up his
blanket and sees lettering near the hem: Downtown Manhattan
Rescue Mission. Her eyes light up. She drops the blanket and
heads down the street.

28 EXT. MUNICIPAL BUILDING - NIGHT - (LOOP J) 28 *

Lower Manhattan. Establishing shot of a nondescript, city-affiliated building. The Rescue Mission shelter is inside.

29 INT. MUNICIPAL BUILDING - ELEVATOR BANK - NIGHT - (LOOP J) 29 *

10PM. Nadia exits an elevator bank and heads to a door. *

30 INT. SHELTER - NIGHT - (LOOP J) 30 *

Nadia enters the homeless shelter. There are rows of cots with blankets and a few cafeteria-style tables and chairs. Some HOMELESS PEOPLE mill about, getting set up for the night. A few shelter WORKERS are there as well.

Nadia looks around the room. Spotting someone she thinks might be Horse, she heads over to a man sitting on a cot with his back to her. It is Horse. Nadia sighs, relieved. He gives her a derisive look.

HORSE

You need something?

NADIA

I wanted to tell you to stay out of the cold.

HORSE

Get a fucking haircut. *

Horse begins taking off his shoes. Nadia stares at them, remembering what Horse told her about his stolen shoes. Horse places the shoes on the floor, then lies on the cot, closing his eyes.

Nadia finds a folding chair by a wall and plops down on it, her eyes locked on the floor by Horse's cot. Horse opens his eyes again and sees her. *

HORSE (CONT'D)

Who are you?

NADIA

Just someone guarding your shoes.

HORSE

I don't need a busted angel.

Nadia pulls her coat over herself. She struggles with it a bit. It's too small to do much good. *

HORSE (CONT'D)

That's a shit coat to use as a
blanket.

NADIA

I know.

Remembering the feeling of being under John's coat, she pulls out her phone and begins a text to him, "I miss you". She pauses, considers sending, then completes the text so it reads "I miss your coat." She sends the text. A SHELTER WORKER turns off the lights. Nadia puts her phone down and watches Horse's shoes.

31 OMITTED 31 *

32 OMITTED 32 *

33 INT. SHELTER - NIGHT - (LOOP J) 33 *

10:30PM. Nadia still sits in the chair. She watches Horse's shoes, but struggles to keep her eyes open. This is hard. She closes her eyes for a few seconds. When she reopens them, she looks over at Horse's shoes and sees a SKETCHY GUY trying to swipe them. Her heart racing, she stands up to confront him.

NADIA

(loud whisper)

Hey!

The would-be thief sees her and backs away. Several PEOPLE rustle under their blankets, but no one wakes. Nadia sits down and continues to guard the shoes.

33A INT. SHELTER - NIGHT - (LOOP J) 33A *

10:45PM. Horse wakes up. He puts his hand down to check his shoes. They're there. He makes eye contact with Nadia and holds it. His eyes are questioning. Is he remembering something? Nadia looks back, a little hopeful. Horse shakes it off and goes back to sleep. Nadia goes back to her neutral position, guarding the shoes.

34 INT. MAXINE'S LOFT - DAY - (LOOP J) 34 *

8AM. John wakes up on the couch in the same place Nadia slept. He is under his own coat.

- 35 INT. MAXINE'S LOFT - BATHROOM - (LOOP J) 35 *
- John walks into the bathroom. He looks in the same mirror
Nadia looks in at her reset. He is a mess. He puts water on
his hands and combs them through his hair. Still a mess. *
- JOHN *
- Forgive me, Father... *
- He steps over several party STRAGGLERS, passes the pile-on,
and leaves. *
- 36 INT. SHELTER - DAY - (LOOP J) 36 *
- 9AM. As a weary Nadia continues to watch Horse's shoes, Horse
wakes up. He puts on his shoes, never noticing Nadia, and
gets up from the cot. Nadia relaxes, her job successfully
done. She stands and nearly falls from exhaustion. *
- Nadia's phone DINGS. She looks down at the screen and sees
"11:30 MTG. - CODE REVIEW". She scoffs at it and heads for
the exit. *
- 37 INT. MUNICIPAL BUILDING - ELEVATOR BANK - DAY - (LOOP J) 37 *
- Nadia gets into the elevator on the basement floor and
presses the button for G. Inside... *
- 38 INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS - (LOOP J) 38 *
- She closes her eyes for a moment, on the verge of sleep.
When she opens them again, the doors to the ground level have
already opened. A crowd of PEOPLE heading to work enter the
elevator. Nadia begins to push her way out. *
- NADIA
- Excuse me. Excuse me. Eh, forget
it. Whatever.
- Nadia falls back against the back wall. She'll just ride the
elevator up and come back down. The doors close. People in
their business suits look at her. She makes eye contact with
one, a little aggressively.
- Suddenly, the elevator drops a few inches, lurching to a
stop. The passengers look at each other, nervous. Nadia takes
a deep breath, beginning to suspect this might be her next
demise. Then, the elevator drops four feet.

Several passengers scream. They all look nervous now. Nadia takes a look around, noticing how individuals deal with the possibility of the end. A few people take out their phones and start frantically dialing and texting. A man begins mouthing a prayer. A woman starts pressing elevator buttons madly. Another one braces against the wall. A man tries to pry open the doors. This is tense. A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN takes charge.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN

Everyone lie on your backs!

As passengers follow her directions, Nadia notices one man, ALAN (30s), different with a strange energy. He looks decidedly casual about the whole thing. That's odd. She give him a quizzical look.

NADIA

Didn't you get the news? We're about to die.

ALAN

It doesn't matter. I die all the time.

Nadia's eyes widen. She gives Alan a smile.

NADIA

Me, too.

We cut to black and hear screams as the elevator drops again, the unlucky passengers plunging to their deaths.

SOUNDTRACK: *"Out of the Blue"* by Roxy Music.