

RUSSIAN DOLL

Episode 205

"Exquisite Corpse"

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1 **EXT. BUDAPEST - KELETI STATION - EARLY MORNING (3/28/44)** 1

CLOSE ON: 6622 emblazoned on the Hungarian locomotive as the train doors are pulled open by a CONDUCTOR.

PUSH IN on NADIA, looking out the window on high alert.

1A **INT. BUDAPEST - LOCOMOTIVE - SAME MOMENT (3/28/44)** 1A

Now a pro at this time travel thing, Nadia takes a look at herself in the train mirror.

NADIA/YOUNG VERA
Hello, genetics.

Yup, she's now YOUNG VERA, aged 30. But there's something else: she wears a BLACK HAT with netting that covers her face. Her clothes are black and dignified. Evidently, Young Vera is in mourning. She checks herself out in the reflection and notices a WEDDING RING on her hand. A widow. She sighs, annoyed by the way death is constantly on her tail.

NADIA/YOUNG VERA (CONT'D)
Looks like someone missed the
honeymoon.

As she moves to the exit, she checks her pockets to see what she's working with and is thrilled to discover the RECEIPT she found in 203. In 2022, the receipt was old and torn. Now, it is new, crisp and whole. She can make out numbers that before were missing. This is a win. She looks at the date then out at the busy platform--

NADIA/YOUNG VERA (CONT'D)
1944, I've been looking for you,
you little cocktease.

RUSSIAN DOLL

Nadia/Young Vera steps from the train and enters the fray.

1B **EXT. BUDAPEST - KELETI STATION - CONTINUOUS (3/28/44)** 1B

EVERYDAY HUNGARIANS go about their business along with GENDARMES, HUNGARIAN SOLDIERS and a few SS with GERMAN SHEPHERDS. Failing Hungary is occupied by the Germans, but in Central Budapest everything seems to be business-as-usual.

Nadia/Young Vera approaches a passing HUNGARIAN SOLDIER.

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

*Excuse me. I'm looking for Captain
Marton Halasz?/Elnézést! Halász
Mártont keresem?*

HUNGARIAN SOLDIER

*(barely engaging)
Probably dead./Valószínűleg
meghalt.*

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

*(re: receipt)
I happen to know that he's alive in
1944./Nem, ebben az évben még él.*

The Hungarian Soldier begins walking away.

NADIA/YOUNG VERA (CONT'D)

*Help me find him, and I'll tell you
the future. Not your personal
future. More geopolitical history
with embarrassing holes in all the
usual places./Ha segítesz, elmondom
a jövődet. Nem a tiéd. A
geopolitikait, kínos foltokkal a
szokott helyeken.*

The Hungarian Soldier looks at her, suspicious.

HUNGARIAN SOLDIER

What's your name?/Hogy hívnak?

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

*Vera Peschauer, and I'm looking for
Marton--/Peschauer Vera, és Halász...*

WIDOW (O.S.)

*Erzebet! We're late!/Erzsébet! El
fogunk késni!*

An arm swoops around Nadia/Young Vera's arm and pulls. She turns to see a young WIDOW (20s). The Widow gives Nadia/Young Vera a pointed look, *play along*.

WIDOW (CONT'D)

*(to soldier)
Sorry. She's crazy. She keeps
looking for her dead husband./Nézze
el neki. Teljesen megőrült.
Mindenütt a halott férjét keresi.*

*(then, to Nadia/Vera)
He died at Voronezh, remember,
Erzebet?*

(MORE)

WIDOW (CONT'D)

*Your husband died?/Elesett
Voronyezsnél. Emlékszel, Erzsébet?
A férjed meghalt...?*

1C INT. BUDAPEST - KELETI STATION LOBBY - CONTINUOUS (3/28/44) 1C

The Widow yanks Nadia/Young Vera into the Keleti lobby.
Nadia/Young Vera looks at the various uniforms passing by.

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

*Nazis, Hungarians, Hungarian Nazis.
I wish I was selling Venn Diagrams.
I'd make a mint./Nácik, magyarok,
magyar nácik. Venn diagramokat
kellene árulnom. Jól fizetne.*

The Widow hushes her, pulls her into a more private hallway--

1D INT. BUDAPEST - KELETI LOBBY HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS (3/28/44) 1D

WIDOW

(sternly)

*What was that about? If you're not
careful, you're going to wind up on
the next train./Mégis mit művelsz?
Ha nem vigyázol, könnyen a
következő vonaton találhatod magad.*

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

(impressed)

*Bossy widow. Strong choice./Óvatos
özvegy. Jó választás.*

(then)

*We're not really widows, right?/De
nem igazán, ugye?*

WIDOW

*Don't give anyone your name. You're
not Vera anymore. You're
Erzebet./Ne áruld a neved senkinek.
Most nem Vera vagy. A neved
Erzsébet.*

She hands Nadia/Young Vera a CRUCIFIX PENDANT NECKLACE.

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

*And we're evidently hunting
vampires. Got it./És vámpírokra
vadászunk. Megvan.*

(then, showing receipt)

*Listen, I want what they took from
my family.*

(MORE)

NADIA/YOUNG VERA (CONT'D)

I've got a name and a number./Vissza akarom kapni, amit elvettek a családomtól. Van egy nevem és számom.

WIDOW

Vera. Don't. Keep your head down. You want to wind up like your mother?/Vera. Ne! Tartsd leszegve a fejed. Vagy úgy akarsz végezni, mint az anyád?

(then, blurting)

Sorry. What do I know? Maybe they're all fine. Maybe you'll get a letter./Ne haragudj. Semmit sem tudok. Lehet, hogy mind jól vannak. Talán majd írnak.

Nadia/Young Vera registers this.

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

They're already gone?/Már elmentek?

The Widow gives her a hard stare.

WIDOW

If you're going to crack up, stay away from me./Ha most összeomlasz, tartsd magad távol tőlem!

The Widow quickly walks away, out of sight. Nadia/Young Vera takes a moment, gets her bearings. Then, she steps back into commuter traffic. She feigns grief and exits the station.

2 **EXT. BUDAPEST - PESCHAUER BUILDING - MORNING (3/28/44)** 2

WIDE on Nadia/Young Vera as she makes her way from the station to the family apartment building. The exterior is markedly more grand in 1944 than it was when Nadia and Maxine visited it in 2022. Nadia/Young Vera scans the handwritten family names by the door, finds "Peschauer" and enters.

3 **INT. BUDAPEST - PESCHAUER BUILDING - STAIRS - CONT (3/28/44)** 3

Nadia/Young Vera climbs the SPIRAL STAIRCASE. As she reaches the landing, she sees a SIGN bearing the Peschauer family name next to an open apartment door.

She looks in to see the looted abandoned space. Dust outlines where framed paintings used to be, some left over PAPERS and ITEMS deemed worthless.

She spins back out to the stairwell when, to her surprise, she sees a VEILED WOMAN (30), face obscured by netting, beckoning down from the landing above her. The image has a Strange Loop/Escher quality. Unable to resist this mystery, Nadia/Young Vera heads up to her.

4

INT. BUDAPEST - ABANDONED APARTMENT - DAY (3/28/44)

4

Nadia/Young Vera enters the apartment and the Veiled Woman silently shuts the door behind them--

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

*Hey, do I know you--/Te, ismerlek
téged?*

The Veiled Woman puts a finger to her lips, shushing her, and crosses to a HEAVY DOUBLE-SIDED MIRROR leaning against the wall and begins sliding the mirror on the floor--

VEILED WOMAN

(whispered)

*Are you just gonna stand there like
a princess? Give me a hand./Mit
állsz ott, mint egy hercegnő?
Gyere, segíts!*

Intrigued, Nadia/Young Vera begins pushing, too. A sliver of something hidden behind it. The mirror gives way revealing--

5

INT. BUDAPEST - SECRET ROOM - CONTINUOUS (3/28/44)

5

--a small SECRET ROOM.

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

Holy. Shit.

The women duck into a cramped hiding space lit only by GAS LAMPS. They move the mirror back in place. The space is stuffed with BOOKS, MAPS, and a RADIO. There's barely an inch of floor space to spare and no window. The Woman throws her mourning veil aside, holds out a FLASK.

VEILED WOMAN

(whispering)

For strength./Kis szíverősítő.

Nadia/Young Vera smiles as she recognizes YOUNG DELIA.

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

*Pálinka. Delia. You never change.
Not even backwards. You speak
English yet?/Pálinka. Delia.*

(MORE)

NADIA/YOUNG VERA (CONT'D)
Nem változol. Visszafelé sem.
You speak English yet?

YOUNG DELIA
 I know, I know. Practice for new
 life. Keep our minds alive.

Nadia/Young Vera notices a pair of MEN'S SHOES by some BOOKS.

YOUNG DELIA (CONT'D)
 He'll be back. Vera, Mórís will
 never get as hard for you as he
 does for Max Planck.

A SUDDEN LOUD SERIES OF KNOCKS at the door from the
 stairwell. They look at each other, tense. After the danger
 seems to have passed--

YOUNG DELIA (CONT'D)
 (by rote)
 Another day in the abyss. There's
 no escape.

She passes the booze to Nadia, they drink off the fear.

NADIA/YOUNG VERA
 Right. A black hole.

Young Delia raises an eyebrow. We see Young Vera and Young
 Delia side by side, philosophizing to stay alive. Then--

YOUNG DELIA
 Our graves?

NADIA/YOUNG VERA
 A spacetime region so dense it
 creates a vortex that drags
 everything around it into a spiral
 of darkness. Time stops.

Nadia/Young Vera realizes this is science beyond her time.
 Delia reacts, astonished, stifles a laugh.

YOUNG DELIA
 A black hole. Yes, maybe that's
 where we are.
 (then)
 So, when will they find us, these
 fucking animals. *Szörnyek*. In the
 future, the past or always?

NADIA/YOUNG VERA
(swigging)
Delia, do you know where the gold
train is?

YOUNG DELIA
What train?

Nadia/Young Vera holds out the receipt--

YOUNG DELIA (CONT'D)
This is warehouse not train.
Everything Nazis stole is in
warehouse. Everything. I know
nothing of train.

NADIA/YOUNG VERA
Because the Russians aren't close
enough yet.

YOUNG DELIA
Kurva anyját. We should learn
Russian next.

NADIA/YOUNG VERA
Easy on the Russian. I shouldn't
even know Hungarian. Look,
everything in that warehouse will
get put on a train and moved west
once the Russians arrive. I'm here
to intercept that shit before the
train gets here.

YOUNG DELIA
(hopeful)
The Russians will save Budapest.

NADIA/YOUNG VERA
That's true, but it's not the
pretty picture you think it'll be.
(then)
Where exactly is this warehouse?

Off Young Delia's smirking face--

MATCH CUT TO:

ANGLE ON: DELIA, sitting, smirking. INSIDE THE R32 CAR,
Nadia/Vera looks around, exhales, spots a LARGE TOTE in
Delia's lap... They smile at each other, sharing a secret,
"mission accomplished."

Nadia/Vera stands in the R32 car, staring at her reflection, confirms she's now VERA in '68, wearing a BLACK DRESS WITH A TEAR AT THE COLLAR. Evidently, she's in mourning. From the look of the COMMUTERS and ADS on the subway walls, it appears the train has taken her to late 1960s New York.

DELIA (O.S.)

Vera, sit down. You're doing the right thing.

She turns back to Delia, rips through the tote, sees some WRAPPED CANDLESTICKS, looks like the cat who ate the canary.

NADIA/VERA

I already did the right thing. I'm too hyped to sit right now. I'll tell you what, I think I just changed what happened, which should change Vera, which will change Nora, which will change me. It goes all the way down like turtles.

(off Delia's look)

Don't worry about it.

She gives Delia a hug.

DELIA

(mid-hug, whispers)

You don't have to explain yourself. No one would blame you.

Nadia/Vera releases Delia, looks through the window. The subway slows to a stop on the 6 train line.

SFX. The train screeching to a stop.

10

EXT. BUDAPEST - WAREHOUSE DISTRICT - DAY (3/28/44)

10

TWO MIDDLE-AGED MEN carrying a SETTEE walk past warehouses. Behind them walk their well-dressed WIVES.

MISTER G

*Should we go to Cafe
Gerbaud?/Beülünk a Gerbaud-ba?*

MADAME G

*Gerbaud? They're always packed!/A
Gerbaud-ba? Mire ott kiszolgálnak!*

MISTER G

*So what? We're not in a rush./Na
és? Nem sietünk sehova.*

They approach Nadia/Young Vera walking in the other direction. Middle-Aged Man gives her a kind nod, *I'm sorry for your loss*. Mister G throws her side eye.

MISTER G (CONT'D)

(to his friend)

You know they're dressing like widows now. You can't tell who's a widow and who's a Jew rat./Tudtad, hogy újabban özvegynek öltöznek? Képtelenség megállapítani, hogy ki az igazi özvegy, és ki a zsidó patkány.

(then)

So, Cafe Gerbaud then./Na, irány a Gerbaud!

As the Couples pass, the Young Wife falls behind. She quietly hands A PACK OF CIGARETTES to Nadia/Young Vera.

YOUNG WIFE

(whispering)

Good luck./Sok szerencsét!

Nadia/Young Vera continues and spots an ARMED GUARD outside a warehouse. *A clue that there is something valuable here?* She sneaks to a far door and reaches for the handle--

VOICE (O.S.)

What are you looking for?/Keres valamit?

She turns around to see a second armed WAREHOUSE GUARD--

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

(thinking fast)

Sorry, I'm lost. Is this... Cafe Gerbaud?/Bocsánat, eltévedtem. Ez a Cafe Gerbaud?

The Warehouse Guard looks at her quizzically, then points in the direction she approached from. Nadia/Young Vera nods, rightfully scared of this guy, and takes a step to walk away.

WAREHOUSE GUARD

You're wearing that to Gerbaud?/Ebben mész a Gerbaud-ba?

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

What?/Mi?

WAREHOUSE GUARD

You're a pretty girl. You want to wear something special?

(MORE)

WAREHOUSE GUARD (CONT'D)

You don't have to be a widow every single night, right?/Csinos lány vagy. Miért nem veszel fel valami különlegeset? Nem muszáj ám minden este özvegynek lenni...

He opens the door to the warehouse.

WAREHOUSE GUARD (CONT'D)

Jewelry, fur, hats./Ékszer, szőrme, kalapok.

Nadia/Young Vera hesitates.

WAREHOUSE GUARD (CONT'D)

All from the Jews./Mind a zsidóktól.

Standing in the doorway, her jaw drops as she gets her first glimpse of the space. She tries to play it off, flirts back--

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

I guess it's never too early for Christmas shopping./Szerintem sosincs korán a karácsonyi vásárláshoz.

20

INT. BUDAPEST - WAREHOUSE - DAY (3/28/44)

20

A sweeping flea market of stolen goods. POTS AND PANS piled in one area, FURNITURE stacked in another. A table of CLOCKS and a wall of UPRIGHT PIANOS. CUSTOMERS, some in UNIFORM, browse the looted offerings. This isn't just crates stacked in a storage space, this is a shopping experience.

In a GILDED MIRROR we see Young Vera pass through the crowded market. She looks for numbers on the tables, to match the one on her receipt. Nothing. She passes a table stacked with FINE CHINA. TWO FEMALE CUSTOMERS peruse it together.

WAREHOUSE LADY

Get an extra place setting. You never know./Vigyél el még egy készletet. Sose lehet tudni.

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

(to Customers)

Excuse me, have you seen any numbers on this stuff?/Elnézést, látott számokat ezeken?

The Customers shake their heads.

WAREHOUSE CUSTOMER 2

Sorry?/Tessék?

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

There should be parcel numbers. They told the families they'd keep all their things together./Csomag számnak kell lenni. Azt mondták, minden egyben lesz.

The Customers turn to her with new scrutiny.

WAREHOUSE LADY

Why does it matter to you?/Mit számít az magának?

Nadia/Young Vera covers, feigning interest in a TEA SET.

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

I just want to make sure I'm getting a full set./Hogy biztosan tudjam, teljes készletet kapok.

They nod. She moves on, passing a table of CUCKOO CLOCKS. One of the CUCKOOS pops out, "Cuckoo." Startled, she cuckoos back. She walks by the pianos. A CUSTOMER tries one out, playing Liszt. A GROUP surrounds the pianist, impressed. Past the pianos, she spots a back door. *Maybe this is it.*

7 **INT. NYC - LENOX HILL STATION - MEZZANINE - DAY (3/28/68)** 7

Delia pulls Nadia/Vera through the bustling foot traffic of LATE-60S COMMUTERS in the busy Lenox Hill mezzanine.

DELIA

Hold your bag tight.

She locks arms with the excited Nadia/Vera as they walk.

PRE-LAP: SOUNDTRACK: Pink Floyd's "The Thin Ice."

21 **INT. BUDAPEST - WAREHOUSE - BACK ROOM - CONT (3/28/44)** 21

Nadia/Young Vera enters the back room full of confiscated CRATES yet to be unloaded. She serpentine her way to a WOODEN CRATE with a LONG NUMBER on it. She checks it against the numbers on her receipt. No match. Keeping herself quiet and hidden, she moves on to the next crate. No match. This will be a long, difficult task. She scans the crates, finds a pattern--

NADIA/YOUNG VERA
 God these motherfuckers were
 organized. Fucking meth heads.

TIME CUT:

The labyrinthine warehouse. CORKSCREW DOWN TO FIND: In the massive heap of crates, *Nadia/Young Vera has found one with her family's number on it. She CROWBARS it open.*

She quickly loads a BAG with what she can of her family's LOOTED ITEMS. A GOLD WATCH, AN OPAL BROOCH, CANDLESTICKS, AN ENGAGEMENT RING. A SHADOW passes by the doorway. Nadia/Young Vera freezes, the bag in hand, doesn't make a sound.

11 **INT. NYC - R32 SUBWAY CAR - NIGHT (3/29/22)**

11

An exhausted Nadia stares in the subway window. We see she's now in her own body. She looks defeated.

A MOTHER and CHILD play a game of EXQUISITE CORPSE, passing the drawing back and forth as they add to it with COLORED CRAYONS. A good relationship. It drops. Nadia hands it back--

NADIA
 Exquisite Corpse.

MOTHER
 Yes!

She leans in to the Child across from her.

NADIA
 You're making a monster.

17 **EXT. BUDAPEST - SEWER TUNNEL - DAY (3/28/44)**

17

Nadia/Young Vera swings the crowbar into the concrete sewer wall. She stands in the muck, a small pile of broken concrete and a LARGE FLASHLIGHT at her feet. She pulls a GOLD WATCH from the BAG and pushes it into a hole in the sewer wall. We spot other JEWELRY already in the hole.

Nadia/Young Vera places the concrete pieces back in and covers the hole, hiding the jewelry. With the crowbar, she etches an 'x' into the wall. She pulls a piece of PAPER from her pocket and begins to draw a MAP.

9 **INT. NYC - LENOX APPRAISALS - DAY (3/29/68)** 9

The PLEXI GLASS slides open and a CASHIER takes the WRAPPED GOODS from Delia.

DELIA

This is the security for her.

Nadia/Vera and Delia sit opposite the Cashier as he pulls AN ENVELOPE out of the goods. He presses a button and speaks into a microphone.

CASHIER

You left something in here.

He passes it to Nadia/Vera through the sliding panel. Nadia/Vera opens it and pulls out the same hand-drawn map from the sewer. Nadia/Vera stares at it for a moment, transfixed by it, a glint in her eye.

DELIA

(to Cashier)

Where's the map to what they really stole, those motherfucking pieces of shit.

12E **EXT. NYC - SUBWAY TUNNEL - NIGHT (3/29/22)** 12E

TRAIN POV: The camera barrels through a dark tunnel.

PRE-LAP: SOUNDTRACK: Penderecki's *"The Dream of Jacob"* fuses with the low, rumbling cacophony of a SPEEDING TRAIN--

13 **EXT. BLACK VOID - NIGHT (1945)** 13

FALLING ASH drifts into the blackness. In the distance, a frail Young Vera, head shaved, steps over a TRAIN TRACK as she passes through this ash-covered landscape.

14 **OMITTED** 1415 **EXT. NYC - SUBWAY TUNNEL - NIGHT (3/29/22)** 15

TRAIN POV: The camera barrels through a dark tunnel.

19 **INT. NYC - LENOX APPRAISALS - AFTERNOON (3/28/68)** 19

Behind the plexi, the Cashier is joined by an APPRAISER who pulls JEWELRY from the bag.

He inspects the gold watch from the sewer with his LOUPE. He consults a NOTEBOOK, then plugs numbers into a CALCULATOR. Nadia/Vera's eyes widen as she looks at the watch. Further proof that her plan worked! She smiles, self satisfied.

NADIA/VERA

Unbelievable, right? I got it home.

The Cashier yawns. Eyes on fire, she presses the button.

NADIA/VERA (CONT'D)

Sir, with the yawning, please. Show a little respect for the butterfly effect.

CASHIER

Bars? Coins?

DELIA

Krugerrands.

She puts two and two together, turns to Delia, heart racing. Nadia/Vera begins to freak out.

NADIA/VERA

(to Delia)

Wait, what did you just say?

(to Cashier)

No. I don't want the Krugerrands.

(to Delia)

The fucking Krugerrands ruin everything.

(to Cashier)

I didn't do all this for the family just to end up with the *same*.

Fucking. Krugerrands!

DELIA

Vera! We discussed this. It's the most stable currency. Remember the *pengő*.

The Cashier stares at them and presses his button.

CASHIER

Is there a problem? Do I need to get security.

DELIA

It's okay. It's just - this means a lot to her.

Delia does her best to explain to the Cashier.

DELIA (CONT'D)
 (to Cashier)
 In the war, she lost everything.
 After the war, we came here. One
 day, she got a map from a stranger.

Nadia/Vera looks impatient, exasperated, *speed it up and get me out of here.* Delia continues--

DELIA (CONT'D)
 A priest. Sent in the mail. Went
 back to Budapest. Terrible dump
 now. The Soviets, ugh. In the wall
 of a sewer was her father's watch,
 these earrings, the opal brooch--
 (to Nadia/Vera)
 Whose was the opal brooch?

NADIA/VERA
 You think I have a fucking clue?

DELIA
 How do such things happen?
 Sometimes God looks out for us. But
 what good is jewelry for us now? So
 we exchange for gold. Krugerrands.

The Cashier presses his button.

CASHIER
 I can only hear when you press the
 button.

NADIA/VERA
 Don't worry, you didn't miss much.

18 **EXT. BUDAPEST - SEWER TUNNEL - LATER (3/28/44)** 18

Young Vera, covered in mud, rounds a corner in the sewer tunnel holding the now empty bag and flashlight. We switch back to seeing Nadia/Young Vera as she walks through a sewer tunnel towards the exit.

16 **INT. NYC - R32 SUBWAY CAR - NIGHT (3/29/22)** 16

CLOSE ON Nadia, still watching the Mother and Daughter playing Exquisite Corpse. They unfold their paper to reveal the entire crayon "monster": *crazy red hair, large pregnant belly, a black dress and veil, cigarette and also genuine monster features.* It is eerily close to a combination of Nadia, Nora and Vera. The Mother and Daughter laugh at their creation. Nadia looks at it curiously.

NADIA

You think redheads are monsters?

We hear a DOG BARK. Nadia looks over and sees a SKINHEAD WANNABE and his GERMAN SHEPHERD entering the car from the side door. She eyes it warily. *What's with all the dogs?*

NADIA (CONT'D)

I become a more emphatically confirmed cat person every time I take this train.

The Skinhead tosses HUNKS OF MEAT down and the Dog devours them. It feels confrontational, ominous. She watches, uneasy.

SKINHEAD

(eyeing Nadia, to his dog)
Let's get out of this kike car.

The Skinhead yanks his dog, pushing past her into the next car. Nadia follows him with her eyes, stands. *What was that all about?*

NADIA

Did you hear that?

The Mother looks at her.

MOTHER

Just let it go.

She can't. Nadia crosses to follow him into the next car.

8

INT. BUDAPEST - SAINT ANNE CHURCH - MORNING (3/29/44)

8

Nadia/Young Vera sleeps in a pew. She wakes up, spots an OLDER PRIEST at the altar.

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

Excuse me. Aquila non capit muscas./Elnézést. Aquila non capit muscas.

Blank stares. Subtitle: *"The eagle doesn't catch flies."*

NADIA/YOUNG VERA (CONT'D)

Latin?

OLDER PRIEST

Welcome. I hope we can be a comfort in your time of grief./Üdvöz légy. Remélem vigaszra lel nálunk e gyásszal terhelt időben.

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

And when you think about it, is there any other time?/Miért, van másik idő?

(then)

Hey, is Father Laszlo Kiss here?/Itt van Kiss László atya?

The Older Priest nods.

OLDER PRIEST

Right behind you./Éppen maga mögött.

She spins to discover FATHER LASZLO, entering from the back. Before he can get a word in--

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

Great. The man of the hour, in the flesh. So, my research shows that you are a very decent person with an impressive lifeline, who has a soft spot for Jews, a.k.a. "kugel fever."/Remek. A nap embere. Szerintem maga rendes, hosszú az élete, kedveli a zsidókat, azaz „kugel fever.”

FATHER LASZLO

I'm sorry. Who are you?/Elnézést, maga kicsoda?

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

I don't think you want to peel that onion. Call me Vera./Ne akard a hagymát hámozni. A nevem Vera.

FATHER LASZLO

Your dress--/A ruhája...

YOUNG VERA

Don't worry about it./Nem gond.

As Lazlo listens, the Older Priest looks at Nadia/Young Vera, now in a less charitable way. He turns to Laszlo, giving him a loaded look. Laszlo notices, nervous.

FATHER LASZLO

You are welcome to pray in our house of worship./Isten házába mindenkit befogadunk, aki imádkozni érkezik.

Laszlo gives Nadia/Young Vera a subtle look. She gets it.

NADIA/YOUNG VERA
 (for Older Priest to hear)
 I'm "tolerated." People say
 "welcome," when they mean
 "tolerated." Thanks for your
 time./"Elviselnek." Azt mondják,
 „befogadnak”, de azt gondolják,
 „elviselnek.” Jól van.

The Older Priest, satisfied, nods and walks away. She focuses on Father Laszlo, pulls out the hand-drawn map.

NADIA/YOUNG VERA (CONT'D)
 I need you to mail this map to Vera
 Peschauer Vulvokov, in New York
 City--/Küldje ezt a térképet Vera
 Peschauer Vulvokovnak, New York...

FATHER LASZLO
 I thought you were Vera./Azt
 hittem, maga Vera.

NADIA/YOUNG VERA
 --after the war./...a háború után.

FATHER LASZLO
 After the war?/A háború után?

Laszlo looks up, spots the Older Priest looking at him. In the Older Priest's POV, we see a confident Young Vera, her mourning dress caked in mud.

Nadia/Young Vera thinks fast, suddenly suspicious. She squints, doubles down.

NADIA/YOUNG VERA
 Look, I saw rocks on your grave,
 and anyone who's seen Schindler's
 List knows that means you're a
 mensch. Then again, is it
 Spielberg's best film? No. That's
 the first episode of Columbo. So,
 who can say?/Vannak kövek a sírján,
 és aki látta a Schindler Listáját
 tudja, azt jelenti, „mensch.” De ez
 a legjobb Spielberg film? Nem. Az a
 Columbo. Ki tudja?

FATHER LASZLO
 You saw my grave?/Látta a síromat?

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

Yeah. You believe me? Before you answer, remember you believe in transubstantiation./Igen. Hisz nekem? Mielőtt válaszol, maga hisz a...transubstantiation.

Father Laszlo takes a moment, then nods.

FATHER LASZLO

I believe you. Do you believe me?/Hiszek magának. Maga hisz nekem?

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

I do, but do you believe me?/Igen, de maga hisz nekem?

NADIA/YOUNG VERA (CONT'D)

Credo.

FATHER LASZLO

Credo.

She goes to hand him the map.

FATHER LASZLO (CONT'D)

Not here. I'll meet you at Keleti Station, under the clock, at twenty hundred?/Ne itt. Találkozzunk a Keletiben az óra alatt, húsz nulla nullakor.

She takes his belief in her story as a sign that he's kosher.

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

Twenty hundred, under the clock./Húsz nulla nulla. Az óra alatt.

FATHER LASZLO

*Yes./Igen.
(then)
Was I old?/Öreg voltam?*

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

When you died? Super old. Oh, and married./Mikor meghalt? Vén. Ó, és házas.

Father Laszlo's eyes widen. She winks. *Is she for real?*
Nadia/Young Vera walks away.

PRE-LAP: SOUNDTRACK: "Paradise" by The Ronettes.

22

INT. NYC - LENOX APPRAISALS - DAY (3/28/68)

22

Nadia/Vera watches the Appraiser count out ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY KRUGERRANDS.

CASHIER (O.S.)
So 150 coins at 35.50 an ounce--

The Cashier finishes calculating.

CASHIER (CONT'D)
--comes to five thousand two
hundred and fifty dollars.

Nadia/Vera is hit with a second wave of defeat at all she's done and the futility of it. Delia notices.

NADIA/VERA
That's it?

The Cashier slides opens the panel and pushes out the coins.

APPRAISER
This is the best exchange rate
anywhere.

DELIA
I know, Vera. Nothing will ever be
enough.

As Delia speaks she takes a LEATHER BAG out of the tote, folds the tote to line the leather bag. She wraps the coins in some HANDKERCHIEFS as she continues--

DELIA (CONT'D)
(shaking her head)
This is good thing. Now, if those
szörnyek -- these monsters -- ever
come back, we have exit strategy --
kilépési stratégia. You never know
what can happen. Better to keep
your money out of bank. Harry is
gone. You need to have liquid.
That's what it means, this money. A
way out.

NADIA/VERA
(with a snort)
A way out. That's hilarious.

23

OMITTED

23

12

E/I. BUDAPEST - KELETI STATION/R32 CAR - NIGHT (3/29/44) 12

CLOSE ON PLATFORM CLOCK: it reads ten after eight. CRANE DOWN to find Nadia/Young Vera waiting under the clock, holding the envelope, looking around impatiently for Father Laszlo. Once again, there are EVERYDAY HUNGARIANS, SOLDIERS, GENDARMES.

She checks the clock again, frowns. *Where's Father Laszlo? Is this a set up?* She spots SS GUARDS with GERMAN SHEPHERDS patrolling the station. *Is that one looking at her?* It's stressful to be exposed and standing still, a sitting duck.

She spots the train she arrived in pull into the station. She double checks -- the number reads: 6622. Her way back. *Fuck this.* She beelines for the train.

As she makes her way across the crowded platform, she is jostled and drops the envelope, it falls to the ground and gets lost in the jumble. She gets down on her knees to find it. PEOPLE step around her. A NOSY WOMAN several feet away retrieves the envelope and reads the address, trying to help.

NOSY WOMAN

*Vera Peschauer? Mail for Vera
Peschauer?/Peschauer Vera?
Peschauer Vera levele? Vera
Peschauer?*

Nadia/Young Vera freezes. The SS Guard takes notice of the commotion. Nadia tenses, then catches a glimpse of Father Laszlo, under the clock. He spots her and gestures kindly.

NOSY WOMAN (CONT'D)

Vera Peschauer?

Nadia/Young Vera goes for it. She runs over to the Zaftig Woman and grabs the envelope. She ducks the other way, and runs back toward Father Laszlo, bumping into a GENDARME--

GENDARME

Why are you running?/Miért rohan?

As she runs past the Gendarme, he blows his WHISTLE. A German Shepherd barks wildly, adding to the chaos.

Nadia/Young Vera looks around frantically and makes a quick decision. She reaches Father Laszlo, and thrusts the envelope into his hands.

NADIA/YOUNG VERA

*Mail it after the war. Please, this
will change everything for my
family./A háború után adja fel.
Kérem, ez segít a családomnak.*

She spots a CONDUCTOR opening the train door.

FATHER LASZLO
*Where are you going? It's not
 safe.../Hová megy? Nem biztonságos..*

Nadia/Young Vera jumps on the train just as the doors close.

12A **E/I. BUDAPEST - KELETI PLATFORM/LOCOMOTIVE - NIGHT (3/29/40A)**

Nadia/Young Vera quickly sits on the wooden train bench and tries to look inconspicuous. She checks to be sure the Gendarme didn't follow her. She looks out the window, spots Father Laszlo. He's opening the envelope.

Father Laszlo pulls a small sheet of paper from the envelope: the familiar hand-drawn map. He looks up at the locomotive and makes eye contact with Young Vera just as the train pulls out of the station.

Nadia/Young Vera exhales a sigh of relief as she watches Keleti Station recede into the background. The train speeds into the tunnel.

CLOSE ON Nadia as flashes of light then darkness play across her face. We switch between seeing Nadia and Young Vera. Then, between Nadia and Vera in '68 on the R32 and back again to the locomotive.

12B-12D **OMITTED**

12B-12D

24 **INT. NYC - LENOX APPRAISALS - DAY (3/28/68)**

24

Nadia/Vera stands from the desk and heads over to the exit. Delia follows carrying the BAG OF KRUGERRANDS. As the glass door closes we see Nadia become Vera. They exit.

25-26 **OMITTED**

25-26

27 **INT. NYC - VERA'S APT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING (3/28/68)**

27

Nadia/Vera enters the dark apartment, once again, bumping into the RECORD PLAYER. Hungarian music plays... déjà vu.

Nadia/Vera takes a breath, kneels down and slides the leather bag of Krugerrands underneath the CHAISE, where it belongs.

It's the exact spot from which Chez stole it in 201.

CHILD NORA (O.C.)

Mom!

Still kneeling, Nadia/Vera turns to see CHILD NORA (10) standing in the doorway, wearing a TUTU and PIPE CLEANER TENTACLES and looking excited.

CHILD NORA (CONT'D)

I taught myself the choreography.

Child Nora begins dancing like a bug, a spider. She dances over to her mom. Nadia/Vera, still on her knees, takes in her predicament, resigned. She tries to rise to the occasion--

NADIA/VERA

Come here, sweetheart. Before we get into all that, Mommy wants to tell you a little story that's not gonna mean anything to you. So it turns out I was wrong about time. It's a closed loop. I thought I could go back and change things for us but I can't change anything. I can only do what was always done.

CHILD NORA

Okay.

Child Nora laughs as Nadia/Vera goes into bedtime story mode.

NADIA/VERA

Fifteen years from now, you'll get the idea to steal this gold. I'll lose it. In trying to right that wrong, I'll only end up bringing you the same gold that you'll decide to steal, fifteen years later.

CHILD NORA

It's the dance of the tarantula!

Child Nora thinks it's a game, dances away. Nadia/Vera sits, pours herself a drink of PÁLINKA. She watches her dance.

NADIA/VERA

Something the physicists and armchair philosophers got right: time's got a real fuckin' sick sense of humor, mom.

CHILD NORA

Watch me!

The Hungarian music continues. A focused Child Nora continues, swept up in her choreography.

CHILD NORA (CONT'D)
C'mon, mommy. Dance with me! We
have to keep stomping our feet so
the tarantula poison doesn't go to
our hearts.

Nadia/Vera gets up and dances with her mother/daughter.

28-29 **OMITTED** 28-29

30 **INT. NYC - R32 SUBWAY CAR - NIGHT (3/29/22)** 30

Nadia makes her way to the door between cars, tailing the Skinhead and Dog. The Exquisite Corpse Mother and Child watch her go, the Child fidgets, wanting to follow Nadia.

MOTHER
No baby, we can't walk between
cars. It's dangerous.

Nadia glances back. The Mother has wrapped her arm protectively around her Child. Nadia opens the door.

SFX. The raw noise of a subway barreling down the tracks.

31 **INT. NYC - R32 SUBWAY CAR - CONTINUOUS (1982 & 2022)** 31

Nadia/Nora enters the next car, investigative. 80S-ERA PASSENGERS and ADS. But no Skinhead in sight. Strange.

Nadia/Nora spots Delia, YOUNG RUTH and Vera.

VERA
Nora! Sit down! Be careful.

VERA'S POV: A heavily pregnant Nora walking through the car, looking at her queerly. She pushes past into the next car.

YOUNG RUTH
Nora? Are you feeling okay?

32 **INT. NYC - R32 SUBWAY CAR - MOMENTS LATER (1968 & 1982)** 32

A PASSENGER POV shows us that in entering this car, Nadia has quantum-leapt into Middle-Aged Vera. It's populated by late 1960S-ERA NEW YORKERS. Nadia/Vera moves into the NEXT CAR.

33 **INT. NYC/BUDAPEST - R32/LOCOMOTIVE- CONTINUOUS (1944 & 1968)** 3

In this car, 1944 HUNGARIAN PASSENGERS. A PASSENGER POV shows Young Vera striding quickly through the Hungarian train car, keeping an eye on an SS GUARD as she moves into the NEXT CAR--

34 **INT. NYC - R32 SUBWAY CAR - MOMENTS LATER (3/29/22)** 34

Nadia finds herself back in the 2022 car -- looking straight at the Exquisite Corpse Mother and Child.

NADIA

Hang on. I already passed you.
You're supposed to be back there.

She glances back, putting the pieces together.

NADIA (CONT'D)

Is this train a fucking circle?

She pushes forward, into the NEXT CAR, double-checking--

35 **INT. NYC - R32 SUBWAY CAR - NIGHT (3/29/82 & 3/29/22)** 35

As Nadia re-enters the 1982 CAR, again quantum-leaping into pregnant Nora's body, *she doubles over in pain*. Vera, Delia and Young Ruth jump up to help.

YOUNG RUTH

Hang in there. I'm here.

NADIA/NORA

(struggling)

Yeah, the fucked up part is so am
I.

PASSENGER POV: Nora, clutching a pole, hand over her massive belly, breathing hard as all the women surround her.

SUBWAY ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Now arriving... Astor Place.

36 **EXT. BUDAPEST - KELETI STATION - DAY (3/29/44)** 36

Exactly as it was in the first scene, we PUSH IN on Young Vera, looking out the window on high alert.

CLOSE ON: 6622 emblazoned on the Hungarian locomotive as the train doors are pulled shut by the conductor.

END OF EPISODE.