

IRINA

Written by

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LOGLINE: When a teenage girl runs away from home to forge a modeling career in Paris, she discovers that her path to fulfillment is not as straightforward as she had thought.

*NOTE: The story takes place in Russia and all spoken dialogue is in Russian.*

INT. IRINA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

IRINA (16), a pretty Russian girl is lying in her bed, texting on her phone.

On the wall behind her is a sprawling collage of supermodel photos cut out from magazines with her head affixed to their bodies.

On her desk is a stack of fashion magazines and two dictionaries, English and French.

IRINA (TEXT)

U up?

She bites her fingernail, waiting for a reply.

BORIS (TEXT)

B there in 1 hr

Someone knocks on the door.

GRANDMOTHER (O.S.)

Breakfast is ready!

IRINA quickly types a message.

IRINA (TEXT)

30 min

GRANDMOTHER (O.S.)

Hurry up. I don't want us to be late for church again!

IRINA hides the phone under the duvet and sinks under.

IRINA

I don't think I can go.

GRANDMOTHER (65), a heavysset woman with short, red-tinted hair opens the door and enters IRINA'S room, holding a ROSARY.

GRANDMOTHER

What do you mean you can't go?

IRINA

I feel sick...

GRANDMOTHER approaches her and puts her hand on IRINA'S forehead.

IRINA (CONT'D)  
 My throat hurts. And I couldn't  
 sleep all night.

IRINA coughs.

GRANDMOTHER  
 I'll call the doctor...

IRINA  
 Don't! I think I just need to  
 sleep.

GRANDMOTHER  
 (sighing)  
 Fair enough. Stay home and rest.

GRANDMOTHER puts a ROSARY in IRINA'S hand.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)  
 It belonged to your mother.

The woman stands up and walks away. She stops by the door.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)  
 Do a prayer.  
 (a beat)  
 I'll be back as soon as the service  
 is over.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

IRINA walks out of her bedroom on her tip toes, the ROSARY  
 dangling from her fingers.

IRINA  
 Grandma?

No answer.

IRINA pauses by a shelf with two photographs in a frame - a  
 man and a woman in their 30s. There's also a newspaper  
 clipping: "Daughter Survives Horror Crash that Claimed Her  
 Parents."

Next to the pictures is a flower bouquet and a candle  
 burning. IRINA hangs the ROSARY over the woman's picture and  
 blows out the candle.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

IRINA brushes her teeth quickly in the shower.

INT. IRINA'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

With a towel wrapped around her body, IRINA pulls out a packed suitcase from under her bed and quickly adds a few items. She zips it up.

She reaches under her mattress and finds an envelope. Inside it is her passport, some cash, a letter from Elite Models and a ticket to Paris.

There's also a sheet on which IRINA practiced her GRANDMOTHER'S signature.

FLASHBACK:

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

IRINA is upset. She's sitting at a table opposite her GRANDMOTHER. Her cheeks are wet from tears, arms wrung at her chest. The Elite Models letter is open on the table.

GRANDMOTHER

What were you thinking? Of course I won't let you. You're not even an adult!

IRINA

Modeling starts early. I can't wait that long.

GRANDMOTHER

This is not a career for you.

IRINA

How would you know?

GRANDMOTHER reaches for IRINA'S hand. The girl is resisting.

GRANDMOTHER

An old heart knows these things.  
(a beat)  
I'm just trying to keep you safe.

IRINA

How? By imprisoning me?

GRANDMOTHER

It's for your own good.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Still wrapped in a towel, IRINA holds the signature sheet that she had set on fire over the toilet. She watches it burn and flushes.

IRINA dries her hair and does her makeup. She finishes it with a layer of bright red lipstick.

INT. IRINA'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

IRINA puts on her clothes (jeans and a sweater), and checks her phone. No new messages. IRINA types a text.

IRINA (TEXT)  
You're late!

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

IRINA is sitting at a table. GRANDMOTHER left breakfast for her - sandwich and a glass of milk. IRINA'S phone is also on the table.

Looking at the wall clock, her foot tapping on the floor, IRINA takes a bite of the sandwich.

Her phone beeps. IRINA checks it.

BORIS (TEXT)  
Almost there

IRINA throws away the rest of the sandwich and pours the milk down the sink. She quickly washes the dishes.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

IRINA wheels her suitcase and leaves it by the front door. She looks out the window. The driveway is empty.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

IRINA stands before the two pictures of adults.

IRINA  
Mother...  
(a beat)  
Father...  
You've always told me that having a  
home is the most important thing in  
life.

(MORE)

IRINA (CONT'D)

(a beat)

But I have to disagree.

(a beat)

You know what's most important?

(a beat)

Freedom.

Her phone rings. It's BORIS. IRINA looks at the phone.

BORIS (TEXT)

Here

IRINA rushes out but her leg gets caught on the carpet and she falls. BORIS honks the car horn.

EXT. IRINA'S DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

BORIS (28), scruffy man with a round shaved head waits inside his Dodge Charger, honking the horn. IRINA steps outside.

IRINA

Are you crazy? You'll alert the neighbors!

BORIS gets out of the car and approaches IRINA. He's wearing a gray sweatshirt, baggy pants and a thick gold chain.

BORIS

Who's the one being late?

BORIS puts his arms around IRINA. She pushes him away.

IRINA

You're drunk!

BORIS

Ira, Relax.

IRINA

Why are you drunk?

BORIS

Listen, I should be sleeping now. Instead I'm here, doing you a favor.

IRINA hesitates. She looks at him, biting her fingernail.

BORIS (CONT'D)

What?

IRINA

Nothing.

BORIS  
You going or what?

IRINA  
I don't know.

BORIS  
You better make up your mind. Your  
plane leaves in...  
(checks his watch)  
Two and a half hours.

IRINA looks at the house and then at BORIS. He opens up his arms in a "now what?" gesture.

IRINA goes inside her house, wheels out her suitcase and locks the door.

BORIS puts her suitcase in the trunk.

INT./EXT. BORIS'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

BORIS is driving on the main road behind a slow truck. The car radio is on, playing Russian pop hits.

IRINA checks the time on her phone.

BORIS pats her leg.

BORIS  
We'll make it on time. Promise.

BORIS hits the gas and passes the truck, barely missing an oncoming car. IRINA holds her breath and clutches her purse.

After BORIS passes the car, he slows down a bit. He takes out a pack of cigarettes and offers one to IRINA. She declines.

BORIS turns down the radio volume.

BORIS (CONT'D)  
So... you ready to be a model?

BORIS lights his cigarette. IRINA rolls down her window and leans towards the breeze.

IRINA  
What do you think?

BORIS  
Good.  
(a beat)  
(MORE)

BORIS (CONT'D)

You're gonna have to send me pictures. Professional ones. Not like the ones we took.

(a beat)

Although those were pretty hot.

BORIS puts his hand on IRINA's leg. IRINA pushes it away.  
BORIS swerves off his lane.

IRINA

Watch the road , Boris!

BORIS corrects his car, rolls down his window and spits.

They drive in silence for a beat, wind ruffling their hair.

BORIS

When you gonna tell your Grandma?

IRINA

After I get there.

BORIS

Any regrets?

IRINA

No. She has no right keeping me away from my dreams.

BORIS

I think it's less about keeping you away and more about keeping you with her.

IRINA

Whatever. I hate when people tell me what to do.

BORIS

What if she knows better than you?

IRINA

(fuming)

You serious?

BORIS throws the cigarette out the window and rolls it up.

BORIS

(shrugging)

I don't know. But I think that there's something to it. You can't always know what's best for you.

(a beat)

That's why you need protection.



IRINA  
Traitor!

BORIS  
In fact...  
(raises his finger)  
This is why I decided to come with  
you.

BORIS presses the gas, preparing to pass another car.

IRINA  
What?

BORIS  
You're going to need someone like  
me in Paris.

BORIS almost hits the oncoming car. He misses it but loses control of the wheel.

IRINA  
Boris, watch out!

BORIS'S car begins to swerve and the next oncoming car smashes them head on.

BLACKOUT.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

IRINA is sleeping. Her eyelids are swollen, face bruised and there's a large cut on her neck. Her arm and leg are in a cast. She's connected to an IV and a beeping monitor.

Next to the bed, her GRANDMOTHER is praying with a ROSARY.

The woman stands up and winds the ROSARY around IRINA'S fingers. She leaves.

FADE OUT.

INT. IRINA'S HOUSE, HALLWAY - DAY

IRINA returns from the hospital, limping. Her leg and arm are in a brace. Her GRANDMOTHER is helping her walk.

IRINA  
It's okay, I've got it.

GRANDMOTHER lets go of her.

Holding onto a wall, IRINA enters the bathroom. She shuts the door behind her.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Leaning over the sink, IRINA looks at herself in the mirror. There are scars and bruises on her neck and face. She touches them and begins to weep.

INT. IRINA'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Sobbing, IRINA begins to tear down the pictures from the wall until her nails bleed.

Her GRANDMOTHER enters the room. She pulls IRINA away from the wall and sits her on the bed.

GRANDMOTHER  
Shhh... It's alright.

IRINA and her GRANDMOTHER rock back and forth.

**TWO YEARS LATER.**

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

IRINA (18) lights a match and brings the flame towards a wick. She places the candle on the stone surface of a grave and blows out the match.

The grave belongs to BORIS BRAVKIN.

IRINA's face has completely healed. She looks more mature and peaceful; her hair is longer.

IRINA stands up and looks at the grave in silence for a beat and then begins to walk away down a grassy path.

IRINA (V.O.)  
Mother.  
(a beat)  
Father.

IRINA keeps walking. From her pocket, she takes out the ROSARY and winds it around her fingers.

IRINA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
You used to tell me that having a  
home is most important.  
(MORE)

IRINA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
(a beat)  
I still don't agree.

IRINA arrives at a double grave that belongs to MASHA and IVAN LEBEDEV.

IRINA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
What's most important is  
forgiveness. Because without it,  
there is no home.

GRANDMOTHER walks up to IRINA and places her hand on IRINA'S shoulder.

Light rain begins to fall.

GRANDMOTHER  
I have something for you.

GRANDMOTHER reaches into the pocket of her coat and hands IRINA a letter.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)  
It came today.  
(a beat)  
It's from Paris.

IRINA looks at the envelope and then at her GRANDMOTHER.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)  
Whatever you decide... you'll have  
my blessing.

IRINA'S face brightens with a smile. Her face is getting wet from the rain. As is the GRANDMOTHER'S.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)  
But this time...

GRANDMOTHER cups IRINA'S hand that holds the ROSARY and shakes it lightly.

GRANDMOTHER (CONT'D)  
...you'll have to promise me that  
you'll take it with you.

The rain starts to fall hard. GRANDMOTHER opens an umbrella.

From above, the view of the cemetery expands, while IRINA'S and GRANDMOTHER'S bodies vanish under the umbrella.

THE END.