

CATCH ALICE

Written by

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INT. CONTEMPORARY MOSCOW HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

ALICE (16) sits at a desk halfway back staring out the window. In Russian, the TEACHER drones on in the background lecturing about world history.

Most students are paying attention, though hardly entertained. Some take notes, most doodle.

Not Alice. She stares at the gray, overcast skies hanging over Moscow. She notices a cat on a nearby roof. It's orange and striped. The cat looks up, seemingly staring back at the girl.

Alice waves a finger at the cat. It flicks its tail, then tiptoes out of sight.

TEACHER (O.S)

Alice.

Alice is still absorbed by the window.

TEACHER (O.S.)

Alice.

She turns abruptly to the teacher.

TEACHER (O.S.)

Are you paying attention?

ALICE

No.

TEACHER (O.S.)

When did the Americans begin their revolution?

Alice shrugs.

TEACHER (O.S)

1776. Pay attention.

The teacher resumes the lecture.

Alice turns back to the window.

The orange cat has returned, watching Alice.

The girl stares back.

The cat suddenly leaps from the roof, several stories up.

Alice gasps.

It plummets toward the alley below and is... gone.

Alice leans closer to the window.

She must have blinked.

The school bell rings.

EXT. ALLEY NEXT TO SCHOOL

Alice runs up, backpack slung over her shoulder.

She searches the ground for the cat's body.

It's nowhere to be found.

She looks up at the roof above.

Nothing could have survived that drop.

EXT. MOSCOW HIGH SCHOOL

ALEX (17) lights up a cigaret outside the front gates of the education building. He possesses a cool, yet rugged aesthetic.

Alice runs up to him.

ALICE

Give me one.

She takes the pack of cigarets and lighter out of Alex's pocket without waiting for a response and lights up.

ALEX

Mom doesn't like you smoking.

Alice blows smoke into her brother's eyes. He waves the cloud away scowling at his blonde sister.

ALICE

She doesn't like you smoking either. How was English today?

ALEX

(in English)

Shitty.

Alice laughs.

ALICE

You won't learn anything with that attitude. And you can't just learn swear words.

ALEX

They are my favorite. I have no interest in the rest, unlike you.

He takes the cigarets back from Alice and lights another.

ALICE

Simon wants to come.

ALEX

No.

He hands the cigarets back to Alice.

ALEX

He could kill himself.

ALICE

I think he's ready. He thinks he's ready.

ALEX

He froze when we climbed the bell tower.

ALICE

That was months ago. He's been training. He's much more experienced.

ALEX

I don't trust him not to hurt himself yet.

ALICE

You need to give him a chance to earn it.

Alex puts out his cigaret. Exhales the smoke slowly.

ALEX

Fine. He's your responsibility.

Alice smiles, triumphant. Alex scowls again.

ALEX

What I do for you and your pets.

Alice has lit another cigaret.

ALICE
Simon is not my pet.

Alex grabs the pack and lighter from her and pockets them.

ALEX
He follows you around like a
puppy. You keep him around because
you think he's cute.

Alice punches him in the arm. Alex laughs and does his best to deflect the blows.

Alice flicks her cigaret away. They start walking down the sidewalk toward home.

ALICE
You should let him know he's
coming.

ALEX
Tell him yourself.

ALICE
You need to. He needs your
approval. Text him.

Alex sighs and pulls out a flip-phone. He punches out a message and snaps it shut.

ALEX
Done. Happy?

A triumphant yell erupts from down the street. Alice and Alex look toward the bus stop. SIMON (16) has his phone out, grinning. He looks up and freezes, realizing Alice and Alex are just up the street. He waves sheepishly.

Alex rolls his eyes and crosses the street. Alice returns the wave and follows her brother.

INT. SMALL LOW-RENT APARTMENT - DAY

The bolt to the front door unlocks with a THUNK. Even so, Alex has to shoulder the door open. It drags against the floor.

The siblings enter their home, which begins with a dining kitchen. They peel out of the warm coats and scarves that have been protecting them against the fall chill.

Both their phones buzz. They check them simultaneously.

ALEX

Again? She said she was cooking dinner tonight.

ALICE

It's not Mom's fault.

She turns on the electric kettle.

Alex flops down at the kitchen table.

ALEX

You cook something.

ALICE

Why me?

ALEX

I can't cook.

Alice pulls out a pot and sets it on the stove.

ALICE

You can boil water, can't you?

LATER

Dusk has fallen. Alice and Alex eat spaghetti at the kitchen table. Utensils clink against the plates.

Alex takes a swig of water. He belches and continues eating. Alice gulps her own water.

BURP

Alex looks up from his food.

Alice is staring challengingly at him.

Alex cracks and starts laughing. Alice joins in.

INT. ALICE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alice is bundled up in bed, covers pulled up to her chin. She watches the antique clock at her bedside.

9:06 PM

She can see the street light outside her window reflected on the clock face. Alice closes her eyes.

At midnight, the front door can be heard clattering open. Things being placed on the table...

Footsteps approach Alice's door.

It opens gently. Alice's MOTHER peeks in and sees her sleeping peacefully. She smiles slightly, and quietly closes the door.

3:12 AM

A hand shakes Alice. She jolts awake.

Alex holds a finger to his lips. He whispers...

ALEX

Let's go.

Alex creeps out of the room. Alice gets stealthily out of bed, already fully dressed.

EXT. MOSCOW STREETS - NIGHT

It's foggy. The yellow of the street light turns everything amber. A pair of indistinct figures hurry across the street. It's Alice and Alex.

The siblings walk down a sidewalk, periodically glancing up at the mist-shrouded buildings. An older TALL BUILDING fades in from the mist. Higher than its surroundings with a tower that ends in a spire.

Suddenly, something jumps out in front of them from an alley. Alice jumps and Alex crumples to the ground.

SIMON

Hey.

He realizes that he startled them. He looks down at Alex.

SIMON

Sorry. Are you alright?

ALICE

He frightens easily.

Alex gets up scowling.

ALEX

I wasn't scared. You just surprised me.

He brushes past Simon.

SIMON

Sorry.

ALEX
Stop apologizing.

Simon turns sheepishly to Alice. She quirks a small smile.

ALICE
You shouldn't stand around in
alleys. Someone may think you're a
pervert.

Alice walks after Alex. Simon follows her.

SIMON
Oh.

They follow Alex down an alley that runs beside the TALL BUILDING. They stop at the building's rear corner. Decorative stone work runs to the roof. Plenty of handholds.

All three are dressed in dark, durable clothing. Alice could be mistaken for another one of the guys due to the similar wardrobe and short hair cut.

Alex takes the lead, climbing with a confidence born of experience. Alice motions for Simon to go next. He hesitates a moment before following. Alice takes up the rear.

They quickly clear the neighboring building's roof, but there's still a ways to go. No one looks down, focused only on the next hand-hold.

EXT. TALL BUILDING'S ROOF

The sky has begun to lighten, the sun still nestled below the horizon. The group clambers onto the roof. Simon is a little winded.

ALEX
Are you good?

Simon only nods and tries to hide that his arms are trembling from the exertion.

ALEX
Good.

He goes to inspect the tower, planning their ascent. Alice raises her eyebrows at Simon. He gives her a thumbs up.

Alex begins the next phase of the climb. Simon and Alice follow in the same order. Progress is slow. Much more challenging.

EXT. TOWER FACE

Alex climbs onto a window sill, only inches to stand on. The next hand-hold is out of reach above him. So he jumps... and catches hold, smoothly hauling himself up.

Simon arrives at the window sill but balks.

Alex realizes he's not being followed and pauses.

ALEX
Don't hesitate.

Simon hugs the side of the tower, frozen.

Alice calls up from below.

ALICE
You can do it.

Simon takes long, controlled breaths. Looks up at his target... leaps... bullseye. He hangs from his fingertips an agonizing moment... then hauls himself up.

Alex smiles and continues on.

Simon takes a beat, then follows.

Alice repeats the stunt with ease.

Simon calls down.

SIMON
Don't make it look so easy.

ALICE
Never. Only it wasn't difficult.

SIMON
You're hurting my feelings.

ALEX (O.S.)
Hey.

Alice and Simon look up. Alex is scowling again.

ALEX
Stop hurting Simon's feelings.
He's a sensitive boy.

Alice laughs. Alex grins. Simon smiles involuntarily.

SIMON
I'm not that sensitive.

They resume climbing.

SIMON
And I'm not a boy. I'm a man.

EXT. TOWER ROOF

The sun is threatening to burst from the horizon when they finally reach the roof of the tower.

Alex pulls himself up onto the steep, fragile tiles. Without pause, he crawls over to the base of the spire.

Simon's head just popped over the ledge as Alex begins shimmying up to the spire's point.

The wind tugs at Alex. He grips the spire. The sun finally breaks cover. Dawn illuminates his thrilled face as he witnesses the sun slipping into the sky.

The sleepy Moscow skyline is silhouetted against the yellow thumbnail of the sun. Pink and orange invade the violet skies, chasing the dusk away.

Alex looks down to find Simon and Alice at the base of the spire. He digs out a GoPro from a pocket. It has a cute cartoon bunny on it. He takes a picture of the sunrise.

Alex scowls at the photo as it fails to capture the beauty of the moment. He calls down.

ALEX
Smile you two.

He leans out from the spire, striking a pose like King Kong, the camera stretched above him as far as he can reach.

BEEP

Alex, Alice, Simon and the full height they just climbed stretched far below them. One epic selfie.

Alex slides down like a fireman and hands the camera to Simon.

ALEX
Your turn.

Simon grins. He pockets the camera and confidently climbs the spire. Alice and Alex watch.

ALEX

He succeeded in not killing himself. But there's still time. There's still the climb down.

ALICE

Oh? We have to climb down? I forgot to tell him that.

SIMON (O.S.)

Guys. Smile.

They both look up to see Simon imitating Alex's pose. Only his foot slips... and he plummets to the roof... smashes onto the tiles and begins to slide...

The siblings shout, scrambling after Simon...

The GoPro shoots down the tiles and whips out into thin air... Simon follows it... feet first off the roof...

Alice snags his arm just in time... but his weight drags her over the edge...

Alex flings himself onto Alice's legs... finally, bringing everything to a halt.

Simon dangles freely. For a moment, everyone is frozen, hyperventilating.

With excruciating slowness, Alex and Alice pull Simon back onto the roof. They focus on the effort in tense silence.

Arms... torso.. finally his legs are back on the roof.

Alex drags Simon higher up onto the tiles. The boy is in shock. Alex holds onto him firmly as they lay back on the slant of the roof.

Alice recovers near the edge of the roof.

Simon shudders. Alex grips him tighter.

ALEX

Don't make falling look so easy.

A laugh escapes from Simon. Relieved, Alice and Alex chuckle.

CRACK

The tiles below Alice give way and she slips off the roof with barely a whisper.

Alex and Simon can only watch in horror.

Alice watches as the walls of the surrounding building slowly rise around her. She closes her eyes.

ALEX

Alice!

He scrambles toward the edge of the roof.

Alice plummets to the ground... but only meters from the ground she's gone... in a blink.

Alex peers from the roof at the empty street below, panicked.

ALEX

Alice!

EXT. RIVER IN MARYLAND - AUGUST 24, 1814 - DAY

Dawn. Light mist drifts across the surface of the river.

Alice blasts up through the surfaces of the water.

Gasping. Flailing. Spitting up water. Panicked.

She slips below the surface again.

The refractions of the dawn light dance above her. Alice isn't fighting the water anymore... letting herself sink.

A shadow passes over and a dark hand plunges into the water reaching for Alice. She struggles awkwardly to swim up... and grasps the searching fingers.

She's hauled to the surface.

Alice is pulled up coughing into a row boat. She lays in the bottom of the vessel gasping for air next to a net and a bucket full of fish.

JOSEPH (O.S.)

Can't you swim?

The question is in English. Alice looks up to her rescuer with surprise, JOSEPH, a black man in his 40s wearing a simple shirt and pants.

Alice shakes her head to respond to his question.

JOSEPH

What were you doing in the middle
of the river then, boy?

The question is more of a rebuke. Joseph starts rowing to shore. Alice tries to recall her English sessions.

ALICE
(in English)
I'm... a girl.

Joseph's eyes widen in surprise.

JOSEPH
Oh. Apologies miss. Why are you
dressed as a boy?

Alice is at a loss as to how to answer this comment.

Joseph stares hard at Alice, weighing her.

I will take you to the big house. You can get dry there.

Alice nods.

ALICE
Thank you.

EXT. FORESTED RIVERBANK

As they drift toward the bank, Joseph hops out into the shallows and ties up the boat. He pulls it in close to the bank and offers a hand to Alice.

She takes it, shakily stands in the boat, and hops to shore.

Joseph grabs the bucket of fish. Trudges up the bank.

ALICE
Wait.

The man turns. Alice hasn't followed along and is rooted to where she first stepped onto shore.

ALICE
Where is this... place?

She fumbles with the English unsure if she is communicating.

JOSEPH
This is the Calvert plantation.
Riversdale. Do you want to get dry
or not?

Alice nods again.

JOSEPH
Come on.

He starts off again. Alice follows.

EXT. RIVERSDALE LAWN

Joseph and Alice emerge from the trees onto a spacious lawn.

The Riversdale mansion dominates the view.

A castle of the times.

Alice takes it in while trying to keep pace with Joseph.

He leads her around back and opens a door into...

INT. RIVERSDALE KITCHEN

A spacious 1800's kitchen. Pots, pans hang from hooks. There's a wood burning stove against one wall.

A black woman (MILLY late 30s) kneads dough on the wooden island in the center of the space.

She barely glances up from her work when they enter.

Joseph drops the bucket of fish in the corner.

He looks pointedly at Alice.

JOSEPH

Wait here.

(to Milly)

Keep an eye on her.

Alice stares around at her surroundings, overwhelmed.

Once Joseph is gone, Milly wipes off her hands with the towel tucked into her skirt and pours a mug of tea from the kettle on the stove. She places it within Alice's reach.

Alice takes the mug thankful for something else to focus on.

ALICE

Drink, me?

Milly is kneading again.

She raises an eyebrow at the broken English.

MILLY

Yes. It's for you.

Alice sips at the tea. She feels the curve of the mug and the heat it radiates. Watches the steam waft off its contents.

A small moment that makes sense.

Joseph reenters the kitchen.

JOSEPH

Ms. Rosalie wants to see you. Come on.

Alice hastily puts the tea down, nods her thanks to Milly, and follows Joseph into the mansion proper.

INT. RIVERSDALE ATRIUM

Joseph leads Alice in. He gently motions her off the rug. A request she is quick to comply with.

ROSALIE STIER CULVERT sweeps in from the drawing room. She's 36, wearing a simple yet elegant dress with a full skirt, and has impeccable posture. She speaks with a light french accent.

ROSALIE

She's soaking!

She rushes over to Alice, feels the girl's forehead.

ROSALIE

Where did you find her, Joseph?

JOSEPH

The river. I was out fishing, ma'am.

ROSALIE

Well, thank you for bringing her to me.

She guides Alice out of the atrium.

ROSALIE

Let's get you dry before you catch cold.

INT. RIVERSDALE BATHINGROOM

LIDIA (EARLY 20s BLACK WOMAN) is filling the tub with warm water. Rosalie enters with Alice and promptly starts undressing the poor girl.

ROSALIE

Is that Eugenia's bath?

LIDIA

Yes, ma'am.

ROSALIE

Will you let her know that she can bathe later, Lidia? A guest needs it first.

Lidia notices the damp, boyish clothes tossed on the floor.

LIDIA

Do you need me to bring some dry clothes as well?

ROSALIE

Yes, please.

Lidia leaves.

Alice doesn't know how to react to being stripped by a stranger. Rosalie is already guiding her to the tub and helps Alice into the water.

ROSALIE

Get warm and clean. Lidia will bring fresh clothes and help you dress. You can have breakfast after.

Rosalie breezes out of the room. Alice is left in silence to soak in the tub. She retreats beneath the surface of the bath.

EXT. RIVERSDALE PORCH

Lidia leads Alice outside where Rosalie is eating with her four children. Alice is dressed in a simple blue dress and is clearly uncomfortable with the attire.

Rosalie notices Alice and whispers to her children.

ROSALIE

Our guest is here. Charles, can you show her a seat?

CHARLES (6) gets up from the table and walks over to Alice very officially and gives her a polite bow.

CHARLES

I am Charles Calvert. It is a pleasure to make your accountants, my lady.

Rosalie is tickled and hides a smile behind her hand.

Alice performs what she thinks a curtsy should look like.

ALICE
I'm Alice.

Charles takes her hand and guides Alice to a chair at the breakfast table, which he pulls out for her. She seats herself. He then returns to his now seat and resumes eating a grapefruit with a spoon.

ROSALIE
This is my daughter Eugenia, and
that is little Henry.

She gestures to EUGENIA (8) who is sitting proper drinking tea, and HENRY (4) who is rubbing buttered toast on his face. Lidia swoops in and starts wiping his face. Henry doesn't appreciate the help.

ROSALIE
As you heard, I'm Rosalie and this
is my youngest, Julia.

She holds JULIA in her lap, not even a year old.

ROSALIE
We are all very glad to meet you,
Alice.

Charles looks up from the grapefruit.

CHARLES
You forgot Marie.

Eugenia shushes him. Rosalie smiles with a hint of sadness.

ROSALIE
I didn't forget her, Charles.
Lidia?

Lidia comes over to her mistress who puts baby Julia into her arms. The slave carries the infant gently away.

Rosalie serves Alice breakfast. Pouring her some tea, placing toast, ham, and fruit on her plate. Alice stares at the meal.

Rosalie lightly touches Alice on the shoulder.

ROSALIE
Eat.

They all eat quietly together enjoying the food and beautiful weather.

ROSALIE

Where are you from, Alice?

Alice swallows her last bite.

ALICE

Russia.

ROSALIE

Oh, Russia. What do we know about Russia, Charles?

Charles brandishes a spoon like a scepter.

CHARLES

The Czars!

Alice's eyebrows shoot up. Curious.

ROSALIE

That's right. The Czars rule Russia.

Alice chokes on her tea.

ROSALIE

When did you immigrate?

Alice scrambles for a response.

ALICE

Recently.

Her host absorbs the vague answer.

ROSALIE

How has it been so far?

ALICE

Wet. Mostly.

Rosalie laughs. Henry laughs at his mother's laughing.

ROSALIE

Yes, our rivers are rather damp here in the United States. Where is your family? We can take you to them this afternoon when my husband returns.

Alice sips her tea, pensive since the mention of the U.S.

ALICE

They are in Russia.

Rosalie gasps. Eugenia claps.

EUGENIA
You're traveling alone? Like a
brave adventurer?

ROSALIE
Brave, yes. But also a little
stupid. Surely you have relatives
looking out for you here.

Alice shakes her head. Rosalie is speechless for a moment.

Henry laughs at his mother's surprised expression.

ROSALIE
Well, I am at a loss. But you are
welcome to stay at Riversdale for
the time being.

Alice smiles and nods.

Rosalie starts stacking dishes.

ROSALIE
Children, take your dishes to
Milly and get ready to study.

Rosalie gathers up Alice's dishes. Alice tries to help.

ROSALIE
Don't worry about that, Alice. I
need to teach the children for a
bit, but I'm eager to learn more
of your situation.

Eugenia and Charles march off to the kitchen each holding a stack of dishes. Henry trails behind them holding a single cup. Rosalie follows them with the rest of the utensils.

ROSALIE
Fell free to explore. We do have a
modest library if that interests
you. I recommend the window seat
there for reading.

INT. RIVERS DALE LIBRARY

Books with embossed spines fill every inch of the ornately carved bookcase. Alice stands before the imposing piece of furniture looking at all the titles. Most have long and incredibly dry names.

She grabs one at random and curls up in the window seat.

Alice examines the cover.

KINDER UND HAUSMÄRCHEN

ALICE
(in Russian)
German.

She sighs, and thumbs through the illustrated pages.

A picture catches her eye. It's of a little girl in a red cape walking through the forest. A wolf stalks the child in the shadow of the trees.

Alice flips to another page.

The wolf is devouring the child.

Alice snaps the books shut and returns it to the bookshelf.

INT. RIVERSDALE DINING ROOM

Alice peeks through the open door.

Rosalie is tutoring Eugenia and Charles in French. Eugenia reads from a book, Rosalie occasionally correcting her daughter's pronunciation.

Charles follows along looking over his sister's shoulder.

ROSALIE
(in French)
Charles, you read next.

He takes over reading albeit slower than his older sister.

INT. RIVERSDALE KITCHEN

Alice sits in the corner and watches Milly prepare food.
Finally, she stands and walks to the island.

ALICE
Can I help?

Milly is taken aback. She slides a pot of washed potatoes to Alice along with a paring knife.

Alice examines the knife then sets to work peeling potatoes.

INT. RIVERSDALE BEDROOM

Alice explores the room.

The lace covered bed.

A hairbrush and hand-mirror on the dresser.

A tiny portrait of the wall of a girl only a few years old.

ROSALIE (O.S.)
Alice?

The girl jumps and turns to find Rosalie by the door. Alice points to the painting.

ALICE
Is this Eugenia?

Rosalie steps into the room, viewing it from afar.

ROSALIE
No. That's Marie. Marie Louise.
She... died.

Alice's face falls and she turns toward Rosalie.

ALICE
I'm sorry.

Rosalie is glassy eyed. Riveted by the portrait.

ROSALIE
I had another. Two little, sweet
Maries. And I lost them both.

Her voice quivers.

Frustrated, she wipes away a tear that leaked out.

ROSALIE
I shouldn't have burdened you with
my grief. Forgive me.

She straightens and puts on a smile.

ROSALIE
Would you like to see another
painting?

INT. RIVERSDALE DRAWING ROOM

Rosalie opens the curtains letting light spill into the room.

Dozens of paintings hang from the walls.

Alice rotates, observing all the works of art.

ROSALIE
My family owns a large collection
of the works of Rubens, Anthony
van Dyck, and Titian.
Unfortunately, we haven't the
opportunity to display them much.
Packed away in crates most of the
time.

Rosalie finished with the curtains and joins Alice.

ROSALIE
Last time I aired out the
collection, I chose some of the
smaller ones to display.

Alice examines these works by master artisans. One catches her eye and she approaches the painting.

It depicts the faces of three men: old, middle-aged, and young. As well as the heads of a wolf, lion, and dog.

Rosalie walks up behind Alice's shoulder.

ROSALIE
The Allegory of Prudence by
Titian.

She translates the inscriptions on the painting. Pointing to each passage as he reads it.

ROSALIE

From the experience of the past,
the present acts prudently, lest
it spoil future actions.

Alice's gaze is drawn to the wolf's head on the left.

ROSALIE

There is debate about Titian's
intention with this piece. Some
say it reflects the passage of
time. Other's suggest it
represents the artist's regret of
past actions.

Alice nods along with Rosalie's explanation.

BANG

Alice jumps at the sound of the front door slamming open.

Rosalie brightens.

ROSALIE

George must be home early. Just in
time for lunch.

She walks quickly from the room.

INT. RIVERSDALE ATRIUM

GEORGE CULVERT (46), dressed plainly and simply, hangs his
coat on a hook in the entryway. He turns to greet Rosalie by
taking her hands and trading kisses.

ROSALIE

You're early. Is there a reason?

GEORGE

Yes. I heard rumors...

Alice steps around the corner. George sees his new house guest
for the first time.

GEORGE

Who is this?

Rosalie looks over her shoulder to see Alice.

ROSALIE

Oh! Alice, this is my husband
George Calvert.

(MORE)

ROSALIE (CONT'D)
(TO GEORGE) Joseph rescued her
from drowning in the river just
this morning.

George's eyebrows rise.

GEORGE
Oh, my. I'm glad you are well, Ms.
Alice.

Rosalie moves to Alice's side and places her hands on the
girls shoulders.

ROSALIE
And she recently emigrated *alone*
from Russia. No family to support
her whatsoever.

The husband's eyebrows shoot higher.

GEORGE
Quite incredible. We should
discuss this more over supper.

ROSALIE
Milly already has the table set.
I'll gather the children.

Rosalie exits leaving Alice and George alone.

George offers his arm to Alice.

GEORGE
Shall I guide you to the dining
room?

Alice stares at the arm, not a clue of what to do.

ALICE
I know where it is.

And she walks off without George.

His brow furrows in consternation at her rudeness.

INT. RIVERSDALE DINNING ROOM

Alice seats herself at the dining table as George enters. She
gives him a small smile.

George, brow still deeply furrowed, takes his place at the
head of the table.

There is a silent, awkward moment as the wait for Rosalie to arrive with the children. Uncomfortable glances are exchanged.

Finally, the rest of the Calverts arrive. Charles leads the way followed by Eugenia holding little Henry's hand. Rosalie brings up the rear carrying Julia.

George stands up politely as his family seats themselves.

Alice hastily emulates him.

George is thoroughly flummoxed by her behavior.

Rosalie is too distracted putting Julia in her highchair and fails to notice anything.

The meal commences. George's stony expression is at odds with the carefree attitude of the rest of his family.

GEORGE

Alice, how long have you been in our, and your new, country?

Alice takes her time chewing a bite of potato.

ALICE

A few weeks.

George isn't eating. Fork poised over his plate.

GEORGE

Ah, recent. How long was your voyage?

ALICE

Voyage?

GEORGE

Yes. Your time on the ship.

Alice wipes her mouth with a napkin.

ALICE

A month... a few months...?

George stabs a steamed carrot with his fork and takes a bite.

Rosalie is busy feeding the baby massed carrots.

Eugenia and Charles half follow the conversation with the innocence of children.

GEORGE

Russia is quite a way aways.

He skewers another steamed carrot.

GEORGE

It must have been a difficult journey. Especially with political tensions the way they are in Europe. I find it also difficult to understand why a young lady would hazard traveling to this country as we are also embroiled in war. A country whose future is in question. The British Navy bearing down on us, and even open discussion of dissolving the union in Washington.

Alice has no response.

There's an agonizing pause.

George waits expectantly.

CHARLES

The Czar. He must be bad. Is that why you left, Alice?

ALICE

We have a president now.

CHARLES

President?

Alice freezes realizing what she said so thoughtlessly.

The carrot slips off George's fork, his face placid.

Rosalie turns her attention from Julia.

ROSALIE

What did you say, Alice?

BOOM!

All the windows rattle violently in the mansion. Julia starts crying. Henry is off his chair and running to his mother.

It was a forceful sound but had a distant quality to it.

EUGENIA

Father, what was that?

GEORGE

Cannon fire.

BOOM!

Everyone flinches. Charles runs over to his father. Eugenia does the same. George hugs them both comfortingly.

ROSALIE

Why is it so close?

GEORGE

There was word that the Redcoats may attempt to take the capital. I meant to tell you earlier.

ROSALIE

Are we in danger?

GEORGE

I don't know. I didn't expect them to join so close to us.

BOOM BOOM

Distant musket fire can be heard now.

GEORGE

I recommend that everyone move to the cellars for safety. The negro men and I will keep watch.

Rosalie nods and rises from the table picking up Julia. George gives his children another squeeze and gets to his feet as well. He pushes the kids toward their mother.

Alice is still seated, gripping her napkin.

Rosalie herds her children to the door.

Lidia enters at that moment.

ROSALIE

Lidia. We are going down to the cellar. Tell all the other woman and children to join us.

LIDIA

Yes, ma'am.

GEORGE

And have the men meet me out front.

LIDIA

Yes, sir.

She holds the door open for Rosalie and the children.

ROSALIE

Alice, come with us.

Alice looks to George. His eyes hard, but he jerks his head toward the door. Alice hastily joins his wife.

INT. RIVERSDALE KITCHEN

Lidia leads Rosalie, the children, and Alice through. They find a rather frightened Milly.

The cannon fire has increased in frequency and the sound of muskets is constant in the background.

LIDIA

(to Milly)

We're going to the cellars. Tell
all the girls.

Milly nods.

EXT. REAR OF RIVERSDALE MANSION

Lidia takes them to the cellar doors rising from the ground.

Milly exits behind them and runs off to the slave housing.

BOOM

Rosalie and Alice look up in time to witness a cannonball flying through the air in the distance.

It disappears below a tree-line.

Rosalie gasps at the sight and urges her children to hurry.

Lidia throws open the cellar and ushers them all inside. Then she runs off in the same direction as Milly.

INT. RIVERDALE CELLAR

The noon light spills down the steps to the cellar. It's filled with crates, barrels, and dried produce.

The group clambers down the steps.

Rosalie hands Julia to Eugenia.

She searches around the dim cellar.

Henry clings to her skirt.

A hand touches Alice's. She looks down. It's a worried Charles. She takes his hand and gives it a squeeze.

Rosalie locates an oil Argand lamp.

ROSALIE

Drat.

There's nothing to light it with.

She thinks for a moment then turns to Alice.

ROSALIE

Alice, could you please bring a candle from the kitchen? We have nothing to light the lamp.

ALICE

Yes, I can.

She starts up the steps, but Charles is still clinging to her hand. Rosalie notices.

ROSALIE

Could you show Alice where they are, Charles?

He nods, big eyed.

ROSALIE

Go quickly then!

Hand in hand, they race up the steps.

EXT. REAR OF RIVERSDALE MANSION

They charge back above ground.

On their way to the kitchen, Alice notices a group of black women and children being led to the cellar by Lidia.

Milly carries a little boy, her son.

INT. RIVERSDALE KITCHEN

Once inside, Alice bends down to Charles' eye level.

ALICE

Okay. Can you show me the candles?

Charles runs over to some shelves and points to a box at the very top out of Alice's reach.

Alice drags over a crate of green apples.

She balances on the sides trying not to step on the produce.

She reaches for the box.

BOOM!

Charles grabs onto one of Alice's legs startling her. She tumbles to the ground dragging the box with her.

Candles scatter everywhere.

Charles tears up.

CHARLES

I'm sorry. I'm sorry, Alice.

Alice places a hand on his shoulder.

ALICE

It's okay. Help me pick them up.

They gather the candles and place them back in the box.

Alice lights one in the oven. She discovers a batch of cookies as she does and pulls them out.

A plate of cookies is already out and Alice adds the fresh ones to it.

She hands the plate to Charles. He takes it obediently.

Alice grabs the box of candles, the lit candle in her other hand and leads the way back to the cellar.

INT. RIVERSDALE CELLAR

Alice and the boy clamber down the steps. Lidia is waiting for them and closes the heavy plank doors behind them.

Darkness closes in. The single lit candle barely holding the shadows at bay with its weak yellow flame.

Alice hands the light and candle box to Rosalie.

The woman carefully lights the lamp.

Its illumination reveals half-a-dozen slaves huddled in the darkness as well as Henry sitting on a crate with Eugenia who is still holding the baby.

Rosalie lights more candles and distributes them, significantly reducing the gloom of the space.

The sounds of battle are noticeably muffled down here.

Alice gently takes the plate of cookies from Charles and hands the boy one. He receives it gratefully.

She hands the plate to Rosalie.

ALICE
For the children.

Rosalie brightens.

ROSALIE
Milly, Alice rescued your cookies.
(to Alice)
A wonderful idea, dear.

She takes the plate to Henry and Eugenia. Both take a cookie.

Rosalie hands the rest to Lidia.

She keeps two for Alice and herself.

Lidia takes the plate around to the other slaves. All their children are soon munching on the treats.

Time passes. The cookies long gone.

They sit in a tense silence, yet the cellar remains strangely comforting. An amber space separated from the battle outside.

Rosalie sits next to her older daughter while holding her youngest. Henry lies across her lap.

Charles sits with Alice leaning against her arm.

The cellar doors suddenly open flooding the steps with afternoon light. Everyone shields their eyes and wait in suspense for whoever comes down.

George descends into view followed by Joseph.

Rosalie lets out a relieved breath.

GEORGE
The battle is over.

ROSALIE

The outcome?

George sighs.

GEORGE

Our militias broke and fled. The
British march to Washington.

A dreadful silence fills the cellar.

GEORGE

Thankfully, that means we are safe
for the time being.

He offers a half-hearted smile.

GEORGE

Milly, would you prepare dinner for
my family? The rest of you may
start preparing your own evening
meal as well.

The slaves rise and begin exiting the cellar. George descends
the rest of the way and speaks quietly with his wife.

GEORGE

I'm going to take Joseph and some
of the others down to the
battlefield to help bury the dead.

Rosalie nods.

ROSALIE

It's only right.

GEORGE

I'll be back at dinnertime.

He kisses her on the forehead. Then George picks up Henry and
leads his family out of the cellar.

INT. RIVERSDALE LIBRARY

Alice watches from the window seat as George rides off on a
horse with some of his slaves following on foot.

They carry shovels.

Rosalie sits on the sofa surrounded by her children reading
out loud to them. Lidia cradles Julia, pacing the room slowly.

Alice turns from the window and begins to leave.

ROSALIE (O.S.)

Alice?

ALICE

I'm going to help in the kitchen.

This notion confuses Rosalie.

ROSALIE

You don't have to do that.

ALICE

I want to.

She leaves.

Rosalie is taken aback. She resumes reading aloud.

INT. RIVERSDALE KITCHEN

Alice chops vegetables.

Milly checks the roast in the oven.

INT. RIVERSDALE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The sun has just set.

Dinner is laid out. Everyone but George is seated. Waiting...

The sound of a door opening and closing.

Rosalie gets to her feet.

George enters.

The embrace.

He seats his wife and takes his place at the table.

George bends his head. Everyone follows suit.

They say grace.

LATER

Dinner is finished. Milly and Lidia clear the table.

Rosalie leads the children off to bed.

ROSALIE

I'll show you to the guest room,
Alice.

GEORGE

I'd like to have a word with her
first if you wouldn't mind.

ROSALIE

Of course.

She exits with the children.

George stands.

GEORGE

Please join me in my study.

INT. GEORGE CALVERT'S STUDY

The space is lit by a couple oil lamps. A heavy wooden desk dominates the center. Papers and other documents organized neatly upon it.

George indicates a chair for Alice.

He takes the seat behind the desk.

Alice sits gingerly in the chair opposite him.

George opens a drawer and brings out a pipe which he fills with tobacco and lights.

He pulls on the stem. The lamplight throws ominous shadows on the man's face. He breathes out a cloud of smoke.

Alice has her hands clasped tightly in her lap. Tense.

GEORGE

You puzzle me, Alice. A lone
emigrant from Russia during a
war...

He stares at her. Alice waits for him to go on.

GEORGE

Your social behavior is also
rather, forgive me, bizarre.

Alice swallows.

GEORGE

Now, either you were poorly
educated or...

He taps the stem of his pipe on his teeth.

GEORGE

Alice, what is today's date?

Her hands tremble in her lap.

ALICE

Uh...

GEORGE

Come now. You should know the
month at the very least. What
month is it?

ALICE

August.

She holds her breath.

George looks disappointed.

GEORGE

That wasn't hard now? If you know
the month...

He draws on his pipe again.

GEORGE

Surely you can tell me the year.

There's an agonizing pause.

ALICE

1776.

George stares at her, smoke coiling from his pipe.

He burst into laughter.

GEORGE

Dear girl, that was more than
thirty years ago!

Fear flashes over Alice's face.

He continues laughing.

GEORGE

We beat the Redcoats, they waited
a few decades, and now they are
back for their colonies!

He calms down, still chuckling.

GEORGE

Now. Why don't you tell me *when*
you are truly from.

Alice looks at her lap, hands laying there open.

She faces George.

ALICE

Two-thousand sixteen.

George lets out a satisfied sigh, still giddy.

GEORGE

My, my. Quite the trip.

ALICE

Do you think I'm crazy?

George smiles unnaturally wide.

GEORGE

I wish I did.

Alice is surprised.

GEORGE

When my Freemason brethren told me
to keep watch for travelers like
you, I thought they were insane.

His hand slips into the drawer he took his pipe from... and
keeps it there.

GEORGE

Yet, here you are. A sweet,
innocent girls from the year two-
thousand and sixteen.

His eyes harden; a fake smile remains on his lips.

GEORGE

Why don't you tell me why you are
here?

Alice relaxes a little.

ALICE
I don't know.

George slams a fist onto the desktop. Alice jumps.

GEORGE
Don't lie to me you Illuminati
bitch!

Bewildered, Alice grips the arms of her chair, ready to flee.

GEORGE
Now tell me.

ALICE
I fell. Then I was in the river. I
don't know how it happened.

George begins to withdraw his hand from the drawer.

Suddenly, there's a knock at the study door.

George composes himself. The hand stays in the drawer.

GEORGE
Enter.

Joseph steps in.

JOSEPH
The men have returned. We'll have
more graves to dig in the morning.

GEORGE
What is the latest count?

JOSEPH
Twenty-seven.

Alice eases out of her chair and slides behind it.

George shoots her a deadly look stopping her in her tracks.

GEORGE
Thank you, Joseph.

Joseph inclines his head and starts to leave.

GEORGE
One more thing. Please prepare the
carriage. I have an urgent matter
to attend to.

JOSEPH

Tonight?

George glances at Alice.

GEORGE

Unfortunately.

JOSEPH

Right away.

He exits, closing the door behind him.

Alice makes to move to the door.

George pulls a pistol from the drawer causing Alice to freeze.

GEORGE

You expect me to believe you *fell*
here by accident.

ALICE

It's the truth.

GEORGE

A lie.

He rises to his feet still training the gun at her.

Alice takes step back.

GEORGE

We are going to the lodge. My
leadership will know what to do
with you. I will not hesitate to
incapacitate you if you flee.

Once the threat has sunk in, he relaxes the gun slightly.

GEORGE

It may go better for you if you
would only be honest.

Alice bolts for the door... George whips the pistol up and
fires... the wall splinters inches from Alice's head... she
yelps and bolts out the door.

GEORGE

Shit!

He runs to a side table, grabs another pistol and knife from
the draw and dashes after Alice.

INT. RIVERSDALE DINING ROOM

Alice runs through, fighting her skirt which gets in the way.
George enters and sees Alice almost to the opposite door.
He fires again... a crystal vase explodes near Alice.
She dodges though the door.

INT. RIVERSDALE ATRIUM

Alice sprints toward the front door.
George leaps from the drawing room blocking the path.
Alice slides to halt... he slashes at her with the knife...
she manages to dodge... screams... whirls and scrambles up the
stairs...
She trips halfway up... George bears down on her... he plants
a hand on the step next to Alice... swings the knife up in the
other... and stabs down at the trapped Alice...
She swings wildly at his arm... the piercing blow is
deflected... right into George's other hand...
George shouts in pain... he stands up cradling his lacerated
hand...
Alice kicks George in the chest with both feet...
He flies into the air... seeming to hang there for a moment...
completes a full summersault... his head catches the canister
on the way down with a

CRACK

and lands on the floor below.

Motionless.

Alice lays on the stairs hyperventilating.

Blood has been speckled on her sleeve.

A dark puddle spreads from underneath George's head.

ROSALIE (O.S.)

George?

Alice's breath catches.

ROSALIE (O.S.)
What is happening down there?

She appears at the head of the stairs.

Alice faces her, eyes wide.

Rosalie takes in the scene before her and turns sheet white.

She stares at Alice. Alice stares back.

ROSALIE
What happened?

ALICE
I'm sorry.

She scrambles to her feet and rushes down the stairs.

ROSALIE
What did you do!

ALICE
I'm sorry!

The girl is on the verge of tears.

She slips in the puddle of blood on the way to the door.

Rosalie comes down the stairs as fast as she can.

ROSALIE
George. George!

Alice flings open the front door and stumbles out into the night.

Rosalie kneels in her husband's blood.

She cradles his head in her lap.

The blood seeps into her dress.

George's face is painted red.

EXT. RIVERSDALE LAWN

Alice doesn't know where she's running.

Just away, across the dark lawn.

ROSALIE (O.S.)

Joseph!

Alice whirls back toward the house at Rosalie's scream.

She can hear a door slam open in the distance.

A light catches her eye.

Lamplight from the barn.

She runs toward it.

INT. RIVERSDALE BARN

One horse is hitched to the carriage.

Alice climbs up into it... stands there a moment.

Not going to work.

She notices another horse tied up and waiting to be hitched.

It only has a guide rope.

No saddle.

She looks back at the partially prepared carriage.

Alice jumps down... unties the other horse... guides it to the carriage... climbs back up... and mounts it from there.

She drapes the dewdrop over the horses neck.

The girl grabs two fistfuls of mane and braces herself.

ALICE

Go.

Nothing.

ALICE

GO!

No response.

Finally, she kicks the horse's sides with all her might.

The horse bolts through the open barn doors.

EXT. RIVERSDALE LAWN

Joseph is sprinting for the barn.

Alice blazes past him on horseback.

JOSEPH

Stop!

She and the horse are swallowed by the night.

EXT. DIRT ROAD

The horse picks its own path.

The animal gallops wildly.

Alice clings on for dear life.

No time for concern for where she's being taken.

The night is cool and dark.

A waxing half-moon reflects little light to see by.

Alice buries her face in the horse's mane.

It slows slightly to a smoother pace.

They canter though the lonely, still countryside.

EXT. HILL OVERLOOKING WASHINGTON

Alice tumbles from the horse's back.

Exhausted.

The horse snorts.

Begins grazing.

The girl rolls onto her back.

Faces the stars.

Peace for just a moment.

To the South, an orange glow catches her eye.

She turns over and props herself up on her elbows.

Down the hill is the capital.

Washington.

In flames.

BOOM

Thunder this time.

Muffled and distant.

Alice looks to the East.

Lightning flashes.

Massive clouds are illuminated.

A hurricane rolling toward the capital from the coast.

The city burns.

The tropical storm crackles.

A lonely exhausted girl from 2016 lays on a hill between them.

END.