

CHILDREN OF TOMORROW

CREDIT SEQUENCE:

A falcon soars over open water. PAN UP and see the STATUE OF LIBERTY, huge and close-up.

Follow the falcon, as it flies across the Hudson River toward Manhattan.

EXT. MANHATTAN - DAY

The falcon weaves between the tall buildings and soars northward over Tompkins Square Park in the East Village.

EXT. TOMPKINS SQUARE PARK - DAY

The falcon circles the park skimming the treetops. See a crowd of YOUNG PEOPLE in the grass below; they're listening to a band perform on an outdoor stage. The band is playing RUSSIAN RAP MUSIC. This is our OPENING THEME MUSIC.

EXT. BUILDING - DAY

The falcon swoops down and lands on a building across from the park. PAN DOWN, and see a banner snapping in the breeze:

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY  
STUDENT FILM THEATER

Keep PANNING DOWN and enter the building through a row of open doors.

INT. STUDENT FILM THEATER - DAY

Pass through the lobby and enter the theater, with its worn carpet and finely carved balcony. The theater is packed with FILM STUDENTS.

A COLLEGE PROFESSOR is addressing the crowd from the stage.

COLLEGE PROFESSOR  
...and now I'll get out of the way,  
so we can enjoy our film! Thank  
you!

A TITLE appears on the film screen behind him:

CHILDREN OF TOMORROW

MOVE OVER the heads in the crowd, and PULL IN closely on the film screen at the front of the theater.

HOLD on the title CHILDREN OF TOMORROW, until it FADES OUT.

Keep moving into the screen, until their film becomes our film.

END CREDIT SEQUENCE

Our two films are now one.

FADE IN:

The same falcon from our CREDIT SEQUENCE is soaring over a wooded landscape. The ground is covered with a dusting of snow.

Suddenly, an Amtrak train zooms beneath us. Sink down and PASS THROUGH the roof of the train.

INT. TRAIN CAR - AFTERNOON

We're MOVING down the isle. We stop next to a teenage girl, DASHA, sitting in a seat by herself. She's writing in a diary in Cyrillic script. Suddenly, a CONDUCTOR appears.

CONDUCTOR

Croton-Harmon, next stop! Next stop,  
Croton-Harmon!

Dasha gets his attention.

DASHA

(thick Russian accent)  
Excuse me...how far to New York?

CONDUCTOR

About an hour.

The Conductor smiles and glances down at a bandage on Dasha's forearm. She covers it with her sleeve, as he continues down the isle.

FLASHBACK - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dasha is kneeling on the floor in a dark bedroom with a Russian pistol in her mouth. Tears pour down her cheeks, as she squeezes the trigger...CLICK!!...the gun doesn't go off.

Dasha slides the gun out of her mouth and stares at it in disbelief. As she turns it over, to see if it's loaded...BOOM!!...it goes off in her hands, and a bullet grazes her forearm.

BACK TO SCENE - TRAIN REST ROOM - AFTERNOON

Dasha is washing her face in a metal sink, as the train rocks back and forth. She stares at her reflection in the small mirror and sticks out her tongue to check her throat. She dries her face with a paper towel.

FLASHBACK - SMALL AIRPORT - DAY

Dasha is walking across a barren runway, as a cold wind whips her hair and jacket. She passes a sign with Cyrillic writing:

PETROPAVLOVSK-KAMCHATSKY AEROPORTA

Dasha approaches a HANGAR, where a PILOT is filling an old Soviet plane with aviation fuel. She looks up at him, as he straddles the fuselage. They speak in Russian.

DASHA

I hear you take people to America.

The Pilot steps down off the plane and replaces the hose on a fuel truck.

PILOT

Who told you that?

As he climbs into the truck, Dasha yanks a wad of cash out of her pocket.

DASHA

Is this enough?

PILOT

I don't know what you're talking about.

The man shuts the truck door and starts the engine. As he grinds it into gear, Dasha shouts over the noise.

DASHA

Please...I'll give you anything!

The man looks at her through the open window.

PILOT

Are you a prostitute?

DASHA

No.

PILOT

Are you a cop?

DASHA

I'm seventeen years old.

Dasha's eyes well with tears, as the man rolls up the window.

DASHA (CONT'D)

Please! My parents are dead! I don't have anyone!

The man drives away, as Dasha cries.

CONTINUE FLASHBACK - INSIDE THE TRUCK (MOVING) - DAY

The man is looking at Dasha in his side mirror, as she cries in front of the hangar. He SIGHS and slows down.

BACK TO SCENE - CAFÉ CAR - AFTERNOON

Dasha opens the door between train cars and enters the CAFÉ CAR. She looks up at the menu board, as a FEMALE CONDUCTOR wipes the counter.

DASHA (CONT'D)  
Please, may I have a hot tea?

FEMALE CONDUCTOR  
One eighty-four.

Dasha looks up at the menu again.

DASHA  
Not one seventy-five?

FEMALE CONDUCTOR  
That's without tax, hon.

Dasha hands the woman a hundred dollar bill.

FEMALE CONDUCTOR (CONT'D)  
You got anything smaller?

DASHA  
Not enough??

FEMALE CONDUCTOR  
Too much, hon...too, big!

DASHA  
Two??

The woman smiles.

FEMALE CONDUCTOR  
Keep the tea, hon. It's free.

DASHA  
Three??

FEMALE CONDUCTOR  
Free...FREE. Take it. You can have it.

The woman hands Dasha the tea and waves goodbye. Dasha nods and walks off, still confused.

DASHA  
Spasiba.  
(Thank you)

FLASHBACK - RUSSIAN PLANE - NIGHT

Dasha is crouched in the seat next to the Pilot, hugging her knapsack to keep warm.

The Pilot shouts over the noise, as the plane banks over a rocky coastline. He points to a lighted airport down below. They speak in Russian.

PILOT

When I get to the end of that runway,  
you jump out!

Dasha looks down and nods.

PILOT (CONT'D)

You then run into those woods there!  
It's about five kilometers to the  
edge of that town!

Dasha looks down at a lighted suburb on the far side of the woods.

PILOT (CONT'D)

You can change your money in  
Anacortes! There's a train station  
there! Are you ready?!

DASHA

For what?

PILOT

We're landing! Undo your seat belt,  
and get down on the floor!

Dasha doesn't budge.

PILOT (CONT'D)

Get down on the floor, or they'll  
see you!

Dasha unbuckles her seat belt and climbs onto the floor of the cockpit. She closes her eyes, as the plane banks toward the runway.

CONTINUE FLASHBACK - SMALL AIRPORT, WASHINGTON STATE - NIGHT

The Russian plane lands hard and taxis toward the end of the runway. As it turns and slows, Dasha jumps out and tumbles in the wet grass. She looks up at the plane, as it taxis away.

CONTINUE FLASHBACK - WOODS - NIGHT

Dasha pushes her way through the underbrush. The forest is dark and damp, with fallen logs and thick moss. She rummages through her knapsack and pulls out the old Russian pistol. She shoves it into her waistband.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to New  
York...

BACK TO SCENE - TRAIN SEAT - NIGHT

Dasha opens her eyes, as the train pulls into an underground station. We see the words PENN STATION roll by on the tiles outside her window.

INT. PENN STATION - NIGHT

The train doors slide open, and a mass of people spill onto the platform. Dasha is jostled by the crowd, as she looks around. We follow her up an escalator.

EXT. PENN STATION - NIGHT

A falcon is perched high on the Penn Station façade. The night is cold, with steam pouring out of the manhole vents and sewers.

From the falcon's POV, we see Dasha walk out of the station and approach a cab parked next to the curb.

EXT. CURB - NIGHT

Dasha knocks on a cab window. The SIKH CABBY rolls it down.

DASHA

Excuse me...do you know where I can  
find a youth hostel?

SIKH CABBY

(thick Indian accent)  
A what?

DASHA

Youth...hostel.

SIKH CABBY

Do you want the Y?

DASHA

The way??

SIKH CABBY

The Y!

DASHA

The why??

SIKH CABBY

The YMCA! Do you want the YMCA?

Dasha pauses.

DASHA

I need YOUTH HOSTEL?

SIKH CABBY

Yes, I got it! I'll take you!

CUT TO:

EXT. PENN STATION FAÇADE - NIGHT

The falcon's POV, as Dasha climbs into the cab. INSERT UPBEAT RUSSIAN MUSIC, as the falcon flies off the ledge and soars upward between the tall buildings.

INT. YMCA ROOM - NIGHT

Dasha enters the room and flicks on the light. The room is small, but clean, with new sheets and towels.

She yanks up the blinds and stares out of the window. The Empire State Building is directly in front of her, lighting up the night sky. Dasha smiles at it. She then falls back onto the tiny bed. As soon as her head hits the pillow, it's as if the bed opens up and drops her into a summer sky.

DREAM SEQUENCE - MOUNTAIN LAKE, RUSSIA - DAY

It's a sunny day in Eastern Russia. From the air, we see a pristine lake with rippling water and a country road hugging the shoreline.

A Russian car is zooming down the road. Sink down and PASS THROUGH the roof of the car.

CONTINUE DREAM SEQUENCE - MOVING CAR - DAY

Dasha is sitting in the back seat with the windows rolled down. Her stepfather, ANDREI, is driving, and her MOTHER is sitting in the seat next to him. Dasha closes her eyes, as the sunlight dapples through the trees onto her face.

Her Mother smiles at her from the front seat. They speak in Russian.

MOTHER

Do you want to take a nap, solnishko?  
(little sun)

DASHA

I'm fine.

MOTHER

There's a pillow in the suitcase  
next to you.

DASHA

I know.

Dasha opens her eyes and smiles at her Mother. She sees Andrei lighting a cigarette with both hands, while driving.

Directly in front of them, she then notices a Mercedes flashing its lights, as they swerve into its lane.

CONTINUE DREAM SEQUENCE - CEMETERY - DAY

It's a windy day, and Dasha is standing next to a grave, while a casket is being lowered into the ground. Someone throws flowers onto the casket, followed by dirt.

She cries softly, as a PRIEST speaks in Russian. PULL BACK, and see her step-father, Andrei, standing next to her, his face scarred and disfigured. He's smoking a cigarette, and staring down at Dasha.

INT. YMCA ROOM - MORNING

Dasha opens her eyes and rolls over in bed, glancing up at the morning sky. She grabs her knapsack and pulls out a wrinkled picture of her Mother. She smooths it on the pillow next to her and strokes her Mother's face.

EXT. EAST VILLAGE - DAY

Dasha is walking out of a bagel shop, with a warm bagel in her mouth and a hot tea in her hand. She takes a bite off the bagel and heads for a park across the street.

EXT. TOMPKINS SQUARE PARK - DAY

A group of YOUNG PEOPLE are lounging on the benches in the center of the park. Several are riding skateboards and bikes, while others talk in small groups.

PAN OVER to a handsome Spanish kid leaning on a Vespa. His name is ERNESTO. He notices something in the distance, and we see what he's looking at from his POV. It's Dasha, walking through the park like a waif New York model.

ERNESTO

Ya'll be good.

Ernesto rides off, as a light-skinned black guy kicks up his skateboard. His name is DALVIN.

DALVIN

(to Ernesto)

She's too uptown for you, dude!

See Dalvin's t-shirt under his jacket. It's an image of Michael Douglas in the film WALL STREET. The slogan reads:

"Green is Good"

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Dasha searches through her knapsack, as Ernesto rides up next to her. He smiles at her, but she keeps walking.

ERNESTO

Hey, what's up? I'm Ernesto. Do you live uptown?

Dasha doesn't respond, as she continues rummaging.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)

So where you from? You're not from here, right?...can I get your phone number, or something?

DASHA

I don't have a phone.

ERNESTO

So what are you looking for in there?

DASHA

Herpes medication.

Ernesto smiles.

ERNESTO

Really? I don't care.

DASHA

That's good to know.

Dasha pulls out a wallet and walks over to a beverage cart, where she buys a bottle of water. Ernesto watches her the entire time, with a half-smile on his face.

ERNESTO

You want my number? You can call me!

No response.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)

Hey, I'm not just a pretty face, you know! I got feelings and brains...and I'm sensitive! Respect means a lot to me!

Dasha shakes her head and almost smiles.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)

Diego Rivera's at the Met!

DASHA

No, thanks.

As Dasha walks off, PAN UP into the sky. In FAST MOTION, see clouds blow in, as the day grows colder.

INSERT SLOW RUSSIAN MUSIC, with a MONTAGE OF DASHA...

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