**A Russian Christmas Night**

**Script for a contemporary Christmas movie**

**Scene 1: The Kremlin, December 23, morning**

The large study is dimly lit by a fire burning in the fireplace. Putin sits in a deep armchair, his face half in shadow. Irina, his muse, stands before him, her appearance subtly changed: she seems both worldly and otherworldly, a light glow surrounds her.

**Putin:** (gloomy, staring at the fire) These are hard times, Irina. Friends become enemies. The people call for strength, and the world wants my downfall. I am a lonely warrior in a field full of traitors.

**Irina:** (calm, but determined) Vladimir Vladimirovich, you are not lonely because others betray you. You are lonely because you avoid the truth.

**Putin:** (looking at her sharply) Truth? What do you mean?

**Irina:** I am not just your confidant. I am a messenger, sent by the Creator himself. A Christmas angel, if you will.

**Putin:** (laughing, but tense) An angel? It's almost Christmas, Irina. Has the Christmas spirit caught you?

**Irina:** (her tone changes, more serious) Do you think I would tolerate your mockery, Vladimir? I do not come with stories. I bring a message. God sees you. He sees what you have done. He sees what you continue to do. And He weeps.

**Putin:** (standing up, disturbed) What kind of game is this? Have my enemies bribed you to unsettle me?

**Irina:** (looking him straight in the eye, her eyes glistening) This is no game, Vladimir. You are a Christian, or at least you call yourself one. You have the icons, you have your cross blessed, you have spoken "Christ is risen" thousands of times. But your actions...

**Putin:** (interrupting her sharply) My actions? My actions have saved Russia! We are surrounded by enemies. The West wants to destroy us. I defend our people, our traditions, our soul!

**Irina:** (emphatically) Is that what you tell yourself? That the mass graves in Bucha, the destruction of Mariupol, the tens of thousands of civilians who died in their homes, are a defense of the Russian soul?

**Putin:** (silence, then reluctantly) Sacrifices are necessary. War is war. They are tragedies, yes, but the goal is greater. I cannot concern myself with a few thousand North Koreans, let alone Ukrainians. We have a mission, Irina. A mission to save the Slavic world from the West, from decadence.

**Irina:** (her voice becomes icy) The Creator has not given you a mandate to kill in His name. God has not given you permission to orphan children, to destroy innocents. Every house you have destroyed, every mother you have made cry, every soul you have separated from its body... they cry out to heaven.

**Putin:** (sweating, almost whispering) And what do you want me to do? Bow to my enemies? Deliver Russia to their mercy?

**Irina:** (with compassion, possibly feigned) No, Vladimir. I do not ask you to bow to people, but to God. There is always a way back. Even now. But that path begins with remorse.

**Putin:** (rubbing his temples, as if he has a headache) You do not understand. The world is complex. Power, geopolitics, interests, Trump, ... it is not a matter of good or evil.

**Irina:** (softening) You are mistaken. The world is complex, yes. But good and evil are simple. You have chosen the path of evil, out of fear, out of pride, out of revenge. That is not power, that is weakness.

**Putin:** (whispering, almost fragile) And if I admit I was wrong? What will be left of me then?

**Irina:** (approaching him, placing a hand on his shoulder) A human. Not a god, not a myth, but a human. Perhaps the world will hate you, although that hatred cannot be greater than it already is. Perhaps your power will disappear. But your soul will be free, and the Creator will accept you.

**Putin:** (silent, eyes full of doubt) And if I do not listen?

**Irina:** (stricter) Then you will meet your judgment, Vladimir. And believe me, it will not be mild.

**Putin:** (returns to his chair, suddenly looking much older) Give me time, Irina. Let me think.

**Irina:** (softly waving her hand and beginning to withdraw) God is in a hurry. Time is scarce and not for sale, Vladimir. Use it wisely.

She slowly disappears from the light of the fireplace, leaving Putin alone, caught between pride and guilt, power and grace.

**Scene 2: The Kremlin, December 23, afternoon**

The same room, but the fire in the fireplace now seems to give hardly any warmth. Putin sits again in the large chair, his face aged, gray. The air is heavy, as if an invisible burden is pressing down on him. Suddenly, Irina reappears. Her appearance is different: more radiant, but also more ominous, with a sharpness in her gaze that was previously hidden.

**Irina:** (immediately, without introduction) Vladimir Vladimirovich, are you a hero?

**Putin:** (surprised, but defensive) A hero? I have protected Russia. I have served my people in times of chaos and threat.

**Irina:** (looking down on him) Protected? Or have you led it to ruin? Hundreds of thousands of young people have left or, worse, perished. Thousands of Russia's best people are imprisoned. Ask yourself honestly: are you a hero? Or are you a frightened man cloaked in the illusion of power?

**Putin:** (emphatically) I am not afraid. I am a leader. A man who accepts his fate.

**Irina:** (her voice cuts through the silence) Not afraid? I see your fear. Fear of failure. Fear of death. But above all: fear of what comes after death. How do you accept fate?

**Putin:** (leaning back, as if wanting to escape) What comes after death is a mystery. No one knows what awaits.

**Irina:** (looking at him intently) Dante knew. In The Divine Comedy, he describes Hell. A place where the souls of sinners suffer, eternally, without hope. It is not a myth, Vladimir. It is a warning. Ask yourself: where do you fit in that story?

**Putin:** (his voice breaks a little) I did what was necessary. I had no choice.

**Irina:** (emphatically) No choice? You always had a choice. But let's make it simpler. You have children, right?

**Putin:** (cautiously) Yes. Two daughters. Maria and Katerina.

**Irina:** (her voice becomes softer, but more penetrating) What do they think of what you have done? What would they say about their father, who brought destruction and set the world on fire?

**Putin:** (refusing to look at her) They cannot understand. They do not see what I see... I see them little.

**Irina:** (fiercely) Or is it that you do not want to know what they see? Perhaps their judgment would be harsher, more painful, than that of your enemies.

**Putin:** (looking up, angry) Enough! Why are you here? To condemn me?

**Irina:** (coolly) No. That is not my task. I am a liaison. God has decided that it is time to judge you. A Celestial trial will take place today.

**Putin:** (bewildered) A trial? Who will judge me?

**Irina:** (with solemnity) A jury of twelve of the most distinguished and morally upright souls from the past 3,000 years.

**Putin:** (ironically laughing, but tense) Oh, and who are these exalted spirits?

**Irina:** (a glint in her eyes) Listen carefully.

* **Socrates**, who sought the truth, even when it cost him his life.
* **Marcus Aurelius**, the philosopher-emperor who ruled with wisdom and self-control, something foreign to you.
* **Hypatia of Alexandria**, a martyr for knowledge and justice.
* **Thomas Aquinas**, whose intellect and faith made him a light for humanity.
* **Leonardo da Vinci**, a man of boundless curiosity and creative power.
* **Baruch Spinoza**, patriarch of the Enlightenment.
* **Nelson Mandela**, who fought for justice and equality.
* **Leo Tolstoy**, who put the gospel into action.
* **Albert Einstein**, a spirit of genius and humility.
* **Mahatma Gandhi**, preacher of humility and apostle of nonviolence.
* **Simone Weil**, a thinker of deep moral insight, which Europe now longs for.
* **Martin Luther King Jr.**, the voice of hope and justice in a world of injustice.

**Putin:** (silent, eyes wide with fear) And... can I object? Can I propose my own people?

**Irina:** (sarcastically smiling) Who do you propose, Vladimir?

**Putin:** (with grim determination) Patriarch Kirill. Xi Jinping. Donald Trump.

**Irina:** (coldly laughing) They are not residents of paradise and will most likely not become so. This is not a political conference. It is a Celestial trial.

**Putin:** (almost whispering) And when will this take place?

**Irina:** (looking at an invisible clock) Tonight. There is urgency, Vladimir. Christmas is a feast of peace. And Heaven wants it to be celebrated that way.

**Putin:** (panicking) And what should I do? How can I defend myself?

**Irina:** (taking distance, her voice echoing) That is up to you. It is a hybrid session, you can participate online. But know this: no lie will stand, no excuse will be sufficient.

She disappears again, and Putin is left in a room that now feels like a vestibule of judgment. His hands tremble, and he closes his eyes, as if he can escape the inevitable.

**Scene 3: The Celestial Court, December 23, evening**

An immense, timeless space, filled with an ethereal light. The twelve jurors sit in a semicircle, shrouded in an aura that reflects their essence.

Putin is present via a video connection. He appears smaller than ever, with shoulders heavy with guilt and fear. The angel Irina sits next to him, stern and unyielding, but not fully in view.

**Socrates:** (in a calm, philosophical tone) Vladimir Vladimirovich, the unexamined life is not worth living. Have you ever truly considered the consequences of your actions? The lives you have extinguished?

**Putin:** (stammering) I... I have always acted in the interest of my people. My choices were necessary.

**Marcus Aurelius:** (softly, but with authority) Look within, Vladimir. You rule a nation, but can you rule yourself? A man who cannot control himself is a slave to his passions. Your pride, your fear – they have made you a tyrant.

**Hypatia:** (calm, but penetrating) And by what right do you deny others their knowledge, their freedom? The destruction you have caused is an assault on humanity itself. No politico-philosophical construct can justify this.

**Thomas Aquinas:** (solemnly) God gave you power as a test, not as a right. But instead of love and justice, you have spread hatred and chaos. Where is your compassion, as a Christian?

**Leonardo da Vinci:** (with a melancholic smile) A true ruler builds. But you have only destroyed. Do you think the beauty of a city like Mariupol is worth less than your own ambitions? What is a life without beauty and harmony?

**Spinoza:** (strictly) Freedom is the breath of humanity. You have taken that breath away from thousands, millions. Unfreedom takes many forms, Vladimir, and your wars are chains.

**Mandela:** Where is the truth in your words? Where is the light in your actions? You lead the largest country in the world and have turned it into a gas station. When will you show leadership? You are a bungler, a kleptomaniac.

**Leo Tolstoy:** (with deep sadness) You call yourself a son of Russia, but you have torn the heart of Mother Russia. Where is your love for the people you claim to protect? Lovelessness has become your trademark.

**Albert Einstein:** (calmly, but sharply) Power without conscience leads to destruction and self-destruction. This man unfortunately has the power to ignite a flame that can consume the entire world. And therefore, ladies and gentlemen, our judgment must be prudent and cautious.

**Mahatma Gandhi:** (with a calm intensity) An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind. Yet I wonder: has this man learned from his mistakes? Or will he, like many before him, continue down the same path?

**Simone Weil:** (mysteriously, almost whispering) Where there are no roots, there is chaos. Vladimir, you have uprooted your people, but also yourself. Without an inner anchor, you cannot change. Can you ever find roots again?

**Martin Luther King Jr.:** (powerfully) The arc of the universe can bend towards justice, but it does not happen by itself. Vladimir, can you choose justice? Or will you cling to the chains of injustice?

**Putin:** (small, but with a hint of defiance) And what happens if you condemn me? Do you think I will just bow? What have you achieved if I have nothing left to lose?

**Einstein:** (looking around at the others) And that is the point, my friends. This is a man who has a nuclear button under his thumb. If our judgment is too harsh, if we break him completely, he can drag the whole world down with him in his revenge.

**Gandhi:** (nodding slowly) Einstein speaks the truth. Nonviolence is not only about avoiding physical harm, but also about minimizing risks.

**Tolstoy:** (emphatically) Love is the answer. Even for someone like him. He must be given a chance to save his soul, otherwise he remains only an instrument of destruction.

**Socrates:** (thoughtfully) So we offer him a choice: repentance or eternal condemnation. The choice for truth is the only real chance for redemption.

**Irina:** (sternly, but justly) The judgment is clear. Vladimir Vladimirovich, you are given a chance. Return to your people. Restore the peace you have destroyed. The world is watching, and so is God.

**Putin:** (whispering) And if I fail?

**Martin Luther King Jr.:** (with a steady gaze) Then the judgment will be harsher than you can now comprehend. But you have the power to do otherwise.

The twelve jurors disappear one by one, their presence fading like a dream. Putin is left with Irina, who looks at him sternly.

**Irina:** (softly) You have been given the chance so many hoped for. Use it. Or burn in the flames you have ignited yourself.

Putin nods, his face full of fear and doubt. But in his eyes flickers something new: a spark of hope. Or is it survival instinct?

**Scene 4: The Kremlin, December 24, morning**

Putin’s study is suffocated by tension. The candles flicker, as if struggling to illuminate the scene.

Putin sits at his desk, leaning forward, his hands folded as if in prayer. Irina stands opposite him, her eyes still radiant, but her face stern.

**Irina:** (calmly, but firmly) The verdict is clear, Vladimir. The war must end immediately. You must withdraw your troops. Ukraine must be free to determine its own future, including NATO membership. And you must bring justice to the innocents you have wronged.

**Putin:** (bitterly laughing) You ask the impossible. This would mean the end of Russia as we know it.

**Irina:** (calmly) Yes, Vladimir, but there is nothing lost in that. Russia now is an abscess that needs to be removed. Your capitulation would mean the beginning of a new Russia, a Russia not built on fear and violence.

**Putin:** (waving his hand as if to dismiss her) Ukraine in NATO? That is a humiliation!

A dagger in the heart of our security!

**Irina:** (sternly) A dagger in the heart of your pride, Vladimir. Not your security or that of your country. The real threat to Russia comes not from outside but from within. From you.

**Putin:** (almost shouting) And what would be left of me? Do you think I can do this and survive? The generals, the oligarchs... they would throw me out of a window or shoot me out of the sky, like others before me.

**Irina:** (with icy calm) Yes, by your hand. You said it yourself: sacrifices are necessary.

You are not afraid of the judgment of your generals. You are afraid of your own powerlessness. You need the war.

**Putin:** (angry, almost pleading) You do not understand! Russia respects only strength. If I give in, everything collapses.

**Irina:** (with a hint of pity) And how strong are you now, Vladimir? Look around you. Your palace is a prison. Your power a chain. You spend your days in solitude. What have you truly gained?

**Putin:** (staring at the fire, weary) What do you ask of me? To give up everything? To surrender to my enemies?

**Irina:** (quietly, but insistently) I ask you to do the right thing. Free the citizens you have imprisoned for condemning your war. Find the Ukrainians you have kidnapped and bring them home. Show the world that even you can change.

**Putin:** (his voice breaking) And then? What will be left of me? What will be left of Russia?

**Irina:** (softly) What will be left if you do nothing? Only more blood, more destruction, more hatred. Eventually, you will fall. But without redemption. Think of Pol Pot, Mao, Hitler, Milosevic... They wanted to live grandly and dramatically. They succeeded for a while, but they ended up in the trash bin of history.

**Putin:** (almost whispering, fearful) They will kill me. I will end up like all the others.

**Irina:** (sternly, but not without compassion) Fear is a bad advisor, Vladimir. But it is not too late. You can still leave a legacy other than that of blood and ruins.

**Putin:** (slamming his fist on the desk) And if I cannot? If I do not dare?

**Irina:** (standing upright, her voice measured) Then I will have to report this to the court. And its judgment will be harsh, clear, and final.

**Putin:** (stiffened) And that judgment... what will it be?

**Irina:** (coolly) I do not know. But I do know that you can no longer hide behind lies and fear.

The room seems to shrink as Putin sinks into his chair, surrounded by an almost palpable fear. Irina turns and walks to the door, her presence still majestic and threatening.

**Irina:** (without looking back) You have little time, Vladimir. Use it wisely.

She disappears into the hallway. Putin is left trembling and broken, as the fire slowly dies out. The walls close in on his shadow, witnesses to a man who cannot save himself from his own doom.

**Scene 5: The Celestial Court, December 24, afternoon**

The timeless space is once again filled with light, but there is a heavier atmosphere. The twelve jurors have taken their places, their auras shining brighter, as if the gravity of the situation emphasizes their presence. Irina stands in the middle, radiant but with a shadow of fatigue.

**Irina:** (with a solemn voice) Honorable jury, I report on my visit to Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin.

She pauses for a moment, her gaze resting on each member of the jury.

**Irina:** He has refused to comply with the terms of the verdict. Fear is his driving force, fear of losing power, fear of becoming a victim of the system he has built. His heart is suffocated by pride and despair.

**Socrates:** (after a moment of silence) The unexamined life is not worth living, I once said. Even in the knowledge of his shortcomings, this man has chosen self-deception over truth. What remains for us but the inevitable?

**Marcus Aurelius:** (thoughtfully) His fear is human, we cannot deny that. But an emperor who cannot serve his people without bringing destruction must leave his throne. He has refused to bow to justice.

**Tolstoy:** (with deep sadness) Love could have saved him, but he has chosen to harden his heart. A man who knows no love can be neither a leader nor claim forgiveness.

**Simone Weil:** (whispering, with an otherworldly sharpness) Putin is a tree with poisonous fruits. It is time to cut it down before it poisons the ground further.

**Einstein:** (cautiously) I previously warned of the consequences of a hard line. His power over the nuclear arsenal makes him dangerous. But perhaps that danger is precisely why this decision can no longer be postponed.

**Gandhi:** (calmly, but resolutely) Non-violence sometimes requires hard choices. If his presence in the world only causes suffering, then his departure may be the only path to peace.

**Mandela:** (powerfully) He has been given opportunities to change. We have offered him a way out, a choice. And he has decided to cling to his chains. It is time to confront him with the consequences.

**Martin Luther King Jr.:** (with a fiery gaze) The arc of the moral universe bends towards justice, but only if we dare to take justice into our own hands. This is not revenge, but justice for the oppressed.

**Socrates:** (rising from his chair, his voice clear and certain) The decision seems clear to me. Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin deserves death. Not by bloodshed, but by the calmness of the poison cup – a fitting end for a man who cannot deny his own toxic legacy.

**Irina:** (looking up, surprised) Poison, Socrates?

**Socrates:** (with a faint smile) Yes, as I once consumed. Not out of hatred, but out of necessity. The world must not see his fall as martyrdom. Let it happen in silence, in the shadow, like his own crimes.

**Hypatia:** (with a slight nod) And which poison?

**Irina:** (with an icy tone) The poison he himself served to Navalny. It’s become a Russian tradition.

**Einstein:** (with some hesitation) The plan is clear: P = Nc2 so to say. I hope this judgment leads the world to recovery, not chaos.

**Irina:** (bowing slightly) I will carry out the verdict. Discreetly, as you deem necessary.

The jurors nod in agreement, one by one, as their auras slowly fade. The room becomes quieter, and Irina remains alone in the light, aware of the heavy task that awaits her, her face a mask of icy calm.

**Final Scene: December 24, evening**

The room is silent, with only the soft rustling of the wind through the closed windows. Putin sits, broken and powerless, at the overly large white table, a bizarre metaphor for his impotence. His eyes are dull, his body heavy with fatigue and doubt. It seems as if he can no longer count the days, even the hours.

Irina is present again, but different. She is no longer an abstract figure, but a sensory temptation, an image of ravishing beauty, an elusive Venus inviting him, like Tannhäuser once did, into her domain. Her eyes are full of compassion and her smile breathes a calm determination. She steps slowly towards him, her movements smooth like those of a predator that already smells its prey.

**Irina:** (with a soft, seductive voice) You have suffered so much, Vladimir. What is left of the man who once ruled a great empire? What remains besides fear, besides pain?

**Putin:** (panting, his voice weak) Everything... everything is... lost. My country... my people... everything. No one will respect me anymore. No one will... understand me anymore.

**Irina:** (softly, like a reassuring whisper) But I understand you. You have always served, always tormented by the burdens of power. You deserve comfort, solace. Let me help you, Vladimir.

She leans forward, her scent fills the room, sensual and familiar. Putin cannot resist the temptation. He looks at her, his lips trembling with desire and despair.

**Putin:** (paralyzed by his own need) Give me something... something to forget. Give me something to ease the pain... Let's postpone the problem with that court over Christmas.

**Irina:** (with a smile that promises nothing but everything at the same time) Whatever you want, Vladimir. Close the world out tonight. You deserve rest.

She takes the ready champagne bottle and opens it with a graceful movement. The sound of the cork popping sounds like the disintegration of a world. Irina pours a glass, her eyes remaining on Putin as she slides the glass towards him.

**Irina:** (softly) Drink, Vladimir. Let everything go.

Putin takes the glass, his hands trembling slightly as he brings the sparkling liquid to his lips. The first sip slides down like a balm, softening the edges of his cramped mind. It seems to bring a moment of relief.

**Putin:** (sighing) One more... one more glass.

Irina pours another glass, and then another. Each glass he drinks makes Putin lighter, more estranged from reality, as if he is slowly losing his grip on everything that once defined and gave him stature.

Putin becomes sleepy, his eyelids grow heavy. His body relaxes, his gaze becomes hazier. He takes a final sip of the third glass. It is then that the truth, the final truth, presents itself. The poison does its inevitable but necessary work. The world outside closes in.

**Irina:** (mildly, almost tenderly) You have lost everything, Vladimir. But perhaps this is the only way to forgive it...

She looks at the phial of Novichok, which she has placed on the table.

A tiny dot on a bizarrely large surface. And yet - so powerful. Concentrated inevitability.

Putin groans for a moment, softly, his face a mixture of relief and fear, and falls forward onto the table, heavy and motionless like a sack of potatoes.

The clock of a nearby cathedral strikes twelve. Irina looks at Putin one last time, her eyes unmoved. She turns and walks out of the room. Putin's breathing stops. The various churches around the Kremlin now make themselves heard. The air becomes thick with the moment, the final sigh, which imperceptibly wedges itself between the clock's chimes.

Christmas night as the final resting point for a man who embraced his death without knowing it.

Music fills the room like an epilogue, soft and melancholic. The sounds of Arvo Pärt's Christmas Lullaby carry through the space like an extended sigh of the universe itself. Not a requiem but a lullaby. New life.

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