

FADE IN:

EXT. SIBERIAN FOREST -- DUSK

Snow fills the eye, deep and impossibly white. Glimpses of dark fir or gray birch appear but all else is white. And...

A silence that seems to go on forever... is broken by footsteps.

A MAN treads carefully. Though dressed in a heavy coat, he moves gracefully. Steps carefully measured. This is LUCAS.

BOY (V.O.)

There was a time when all men knew
gods walked among them. This was a
time before the great cities,
before ships, before the flood...
It was a time of ice.

Lucas stops at a lump in the snow. He kneels.

BOY (V.O.) (cont'd)

And the gods of the snow-locked
world were mighty, beautiful and
cruel.

The lump is a BOY, 15. His eyes wide and filled with snow, his throat a ragged mess. Skin frost white. He's frozen.

BOY (V.O.) (cont'd)

But men have short lives. The ice
receded. The endless snows were
forgotten. And the gods of dark
and ice became myth...

Lucas stands and treads methodically through the forest.

BOY (V.O.) (cont'd)

...but they were *not* gone.

BEGIN CREDITS:

As Russian Orthodox religious ICONS TELL US A STORY. Angels with gold halos and white wings worship God. God presents a naked human man and woman to the host. Most praise God but some don't. Sly-eyed angels whisper to one another. Then...

A sword. A battle. Angels fight angels. Some have golden halos and some have none. The rebellious angels, overcome, are cast from Heaven. And fall to a dark earth.

As snow falls over the icons we...

END CREDITS.

EXT. SIBERIAN VILLAGE -- EVENING

Lucas emerges from a cluster of trees and comes to the edge of a ridge. Finally we see his face: slender with piercing eyes. He casts a discerning gaze over the township below.

It could be a town from any century. Occasional lights wink weakly from within the wooden buildings and the dimming sky.

ANGLE - IN THE VILLAGE

Snow covers barrels, crates and canvas-covered wagons on the cobbled streets. A rusty automobile crouches under a patina of ice. Most windows are shuttered. Behind those that are not hang orthodox crosses and icons of saints.

ON LUCAS

A razor thin smile crosses his face, then is gone. He passes chests and altars that have been moved outside and dumped in the snow. On them, painted panels show the angels battling in Heaven (as we've just seen). Lucas stops and looks up to a large, carved wooden cross. He's reached...

THE CHURCH

Lucas goes to the door and presses against it. Locked. He knocks. Silence. Then...

UNLATCHING from within, the door opens a crack to reveal:

 YOUNG MAN
 (wary, subtitled Russian)
 Who are -- ?

Lucas shoves. He is clearly stronger than he appears and, despite the young man's efforts, in a moment Lucas is inside.

INT. ORTHODOX CHURCH -- NIGHT

A blazing candelabra reveals the church is full. The entire village must be here - furnishings dumped outside to make room for the people. All stare at Lucas with fear. His expression is hard to read... but seems contemptuous.

 LUCAS
 (subtitled Russian)
 Who will talk to me?

His voice echoes and falls silent. Some villagers exchange nervous glances. Others close their eyes and rock as they pray. Finally, from behind them, an old man emerges...

THE LOCAL PRIEST

Lucas watches as the Priest walks up to him and looks him in the eye. The Priest's back is straight but his voice shakes:

OLD PRIEST
(subtitled Russian)
You have come for him?

Lucas looks around at the staring villagers. He nods once.

LUCAS
Where is he?

OLD PRIEST
I will take you.

EXT. SIBERIAN FOREST -- NIGHT

The old priest walks ahead of Lucas, holding an oil lantern that makes shadows dance behind the trees. The men's feet sink deep into the fresh snow. The priest's steps CRUNCH, but Lucas's make no sound. The old man steals a look behind, but doesn't meet Lucas's eyes. The lantern shakes in his hand.

OLD PRIEST (cont'd)
It is a sad time when a soldier of
the Church has to resort to...

He casts a fearful but bitter look at Lucas.

OLD PRIEST (cont'd)
...such measures to save his flock.

Lucas sees the priest finger a rosary bead necklace on which hangs a crucifix.

LUCAS
Put it away.

OLD PRIEST
The devil abhors the symbols of our
Lord.

LUCAS
It's noisy. The devil will choke
you with it.

Beat. The priest reluctantly tucks the crucifix away as he walks. Suddenly, he senses Lucas is no longer with him, and turns around. Lucas has stopped. Eyes probing ahead.

The priest sees what Lucas sees: another pair of footsteps.

LUCAS (cont'd)
How far?

OLD PRIEST
Three chains beyond the trees.

LUCAS
Go back to your sheep, old man.

Lucas follows the footprints, unbuttoning his coat, smiling.

LUCAS (cont'd)
And tell them they are right to
fear the devil.

The priest backs up...then hurries off the way he came.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT

In a clearing. Soft orange light spills from its window.

AN UNKNOWN POV: THROUGH THE WINDOW

On a table are two entwined figures. A MAN and WOMAN. She struggles violently, pushing him. Is she being raped? Or murdered? Then her arms pull the man, drawing him closer. His head in her neck and breasts. They are making love.

INT. FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT

The Man stops as chilly air blows his hair. The Woman looks, confused, as he rises and turns.

ANGLE - ON THE OPEN DOOR

Lucas stands there. The Man's eyes lock on him, widening.

WOMAN
Miskai...?

MAN
Ssh. Ssh-ssh...

He puts himself in front of her, eyes never leaving Lucas.
Lucas walks toward him with deliberate, unhurried steps.

MAN (cont'd)
Leave... or I'll kill you.

LUCAS
You'll have to.

The Man's eyes weigh Lucas, fear suddenly registering.

MAN
Which are you? Kulasch? Bezahlen?

Lucas doesn't break his stride.

MAN (cont'd)
(nodding, understanding)
Lucas...

WOMAN
Is it because of the boy? That was
my fault! I'm still learning... !

Lucas shakes his head at her, eyes drilling into the Man.

LUCAS
It's always a surprise. Like we
would never catch you.

The Man pushes the Woman behind him and takes a step forward.
His every movement is graceful.

LUCAS (cont'd)
Yet we always do.

Suddenly, the Man bares his teeth at Lucas. Teeth that grow
before our eyes. Long, sharp and pointed. This is no man...

... HE'S A VAMPIRE!

Fast as lightning, the Vampire's left hand strikes out like a
snake in the air... where Lucas's neck was a second earlier.

Lucas ducks and sidesteps. The creature's other hand drives
down, missing Lucas's skull. His hands -- long, slender and
strong -- stab at Lucas, who dodges and parries the blows.

The creature rolls and darts out the door.

The Woman lunges at Lucas, sending them both tumbling out...

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Lucas shoves the woman off, throwing her against a wood pile. But this gives the Vampire a chance to snag Lucas's coat, trapping him. With its other hand, it snatches a huge axe from the chopping block and drives it down.

Lucas kicks out, dropping the creature...
The axe head misses his own by a whisker...

The Vampire recovers, slashing backwards with the axe. Lucas throws himself away. And the axe is thrown at him. Lucas ducks and the axe narrowly misses him.

MAN/VAMPIRE
(to the Woman)
Go! GO!!

She rises and reluctantly runs back into the house as...
Lucas gets to his feet.

MAN/VAMPIRE (cont'd)
(hisses)
You don't understand.

Lucas reaches into his coat and pulls out a dagger. It's shiny but dull. The blade is made of old, polished wood.

LUCAS
I understand perfectly.

The Vampire looks from the dagger to Lucas, and dashes away.

EXT. SIBERIAN FOREST -- CONTINUOUS

The Vampire sprints between trees, gracefully. Lucas chases, also moving as fast and easy. They race between trunks and fallen branches. The Vampire crests a ridge and disappears.

Lucas runs after, following the footsteps that end suddenly. He looks at them... and then instinctively jumps aside.

SMASH!! A sharp branch crashes into the tree beside Lucas! The frozen wood shatters like an icicle. Lucas rolls and drives up with his legs into the Vampire...

The creature hits at Lucas, who dodges. Hits again, a bit more weakly. Lucas dodges again. Another strike, clumsily aimed. Lucas merely steps back and watches.

The Vampire falls to one knee and looks only to see...

The wooden dagger is in his chest, driven deep to the hilt!

He pulls it out and a stream of dark blood empties. Steam rises from the blade. On the blade, blood sizzles like acid. The Vampire collapses into the snow. Breathing raggedly.

MAN/VAMPIRE

It's wrong... you will see...

His breath stops. Lucas goes to retrieve his dagger when...

BANG!! A shotgun blast just misses Lucas!

The Woman stands at the edge of the clearing with the old weapon. She sees Lucas crouched over her dead lover.

Lucas looks at her. There is no fear in his eyes. Nor in hers. She suddenly puts the gun under her chin and... BANG!

INT. CATHEDRAL -- EVENING

TARA, perhaps thirty, strikingly attractive, kneels in prayer at a pew in the back of the church.

MONSIGNOR ENRIGHT

A dignified priest in his forties conducts mass.

Members of the congregation make their way to the altar for communion, but Tara remains seated. She lowers her head onto her clasped hands, then looks up to the carved image of Christ beyond the altar. She is fighting some inner battle.

Enright notices that Tara remains alone. Suddenly, she rises, kneels and crosses herself, and exits.

Enright watches her leave, concerned, then continues mass.

INT. TARA'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

A match flares. Lighting the wick of two red candles. The candlelight reveals packing boxes lining the walls. Outside through tall windows, rain and stormy wind over the city.

TARA

blows out the match. She wears an elegant dress. She stands on an odd triangular rug - the candelabrum is at one corner, a crystal goblet of wine at another, a folded white cloth at the third. She adjusts the arcane objects with care.

Translucent curtains suddenly close across the windows. Tara spins. Then, in the shadows behind her appears...

ZOFIA

A tall woman with long, dark hair and fine, pale features.

Beautiful... and dangerous. She slides her gaze from Tara across the makeshift altar.

TARA

Well?

Zofia smiles, easing out of the shadows to Tara's side. She speaks with an accent that defies placement:

ZOFIA

Perfect. Beautiful.

Zofia gently moves a strand of hair from Tara's face. Tara cranes her neck to encourage Zofia's hands to continue their path down her neck... back... and waist. The women stare deeply into each other's eyes; nervous but excited.

ZOFIA (cont'd)

Are you sure?

Tara smiles lovingly.

TARA

More than anything.

Their lips brush. The kiss deepens.

ANGLE - ON THE RUG

Tara and Zofia kneel, kissing. Tara reaches slyly behind her to the cloth at the rug corner and unfolds it to reveal...

A DAGGER

Tara slyly takes it and bring it between them. The women lock eyes. Zofia smiles, picks up the dagger and draws it to her chin, nicking the skin. Blood wells. Tara reaches for the goblet and lets the blood fall into the wine. She drinks.

Tara puts the goblet down, leans forward and covers Zofia's mouth with hers. Only a trickle of wine escapes their joined lips.

Zofia slips Tara's shoulder straps off allowing Tara's dress to fall to the floor. Tara's excited breaths come faster.

Zofia's BITES SLOWLY -- deep into Tara's jugular.

Tara arches, in pain and pleasure.

Tara's eyes roll back, and Zofia drinks. Zofia is a vampire!

EXT. TARA'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Lightning flashes, and Tara's cries are muted by the rain.

EXT. CITY. BANK -- MORNING

The HUBBUB of rush hour traffic on the gray city streets.

INT. CITY. BANK -- MORNING

Tara, in an expensive business suit, hurries across the foyer: face pale and drawn. She passes a sculpture of an angel with wings spread wide and hands held skyward.

ANGLE - MAIN DESK

Tara is met by a middle-aged BANKER.

TARA

I'm Tara Stancliffe. I called
before about closing my account?

BANKER

Ah, yes, Ms. Stancliffe. We'll
miss your business.

The Banker gestures for her to follow him. Tara looks ill. She stares up at the angel before her... and collapses.

INT. HOSPITAL TRIAGE -- DAY

Tara, unconscious, is wheeled past the bustling admissions area and into...

A CUBICLE

A DOCTOR gives her a general check up. He lifts her eyelids and shines a light in her eyes. As a NURSE fixes an IV drip into her arm, Tara stirs and wakes.

NURSE

It's okay honey. You're all right
now. Just relax.

The nurse sinks a syringe into Tara's arm. She presses a phial into the rear of the needle and it fills with blood.

TARA
...Don't, please...

Tara's eyes roll back as she passes out again.

INT. HOSPITAL WARD -- LATER

Tara lies unconscious as balding DR. DOUCAS checks her chart.

DR DOUCAS
How far away are those bloods?

NURSE
They're sending them through now.

Doucass walks over and checks the new data appearing on the computer screen. He reads carefully, and frowns.

DOUCAS'S POV: ON THE SCREEN

Analyses of Tara's blood, headed at the top with her name, 'Stancliffe, Tara'. Columns are headed with various blood variables: CBC, Total T3, HDL, etc... but under each is the word 'unknown'. The bottom right of the screen - an internet icon flashes a bright red, like a pernicious heartbeat.

INT. CHURCH CORRIDOR -- EVENING

A YOUNG PRIEST sprints down, clutching a printout. He reaches a closed door and KNOCKS urgently.

Monsignor Enright opens it, clearly roused from his sleep.

ENRIGHT
What on earth is it?

He hands him the printout. Enright reads it, concerned.

INT. CITY HALL. BALL ROOM -- SAME

Dozens of the city's elite are dressed finely and carry themselves with measured poise. Among them...

THE MAYOR