

BABA YAGA  
by  
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FADE IN

EXT. WOODS - EVENING

SUPER: VAKYUST, RUSSIA. A LONG TIME AGO.

VLADIMIR BOSHEKOV (8), a thin, frightened young boy with a shock of blond hair, walks through the trees nervously glancing over his shoulder.

MOONLIGHT plays on him through the net of leaves and branches overhead. He hears a NOISE and stops dead.

VLAD

Im...Imya?

An OWL hoots loudly from close by. The loud SNAPPING of a branch startles the boy. He starts to walk fast.

VLAD

Imya? Is that you?

A mocking, whispering VOICE is heard from the dark.

VOICE

Is that you

The boy starts to walk quicker and quicker, then starts to run.

VLAD

Sister! Where are you?

Again the menacing voice is heard in echo

VOICE

Where are you

The boy is running as fast as he can now. The branches whip at him. Moonlit SHADOWS start to move about as if something is criss-crossing the woods around him.

VLAD

I... I'm not afraid. Hear me? Vladimir Boshekov is not afraid.

He runs a bit farther and stops. He sees LIGHT through the trees and the shadowy shape of a small BUILDING.

The voice whispers again, louder.

VOICE

Not afraid... You should be.

The boy starts to run toward the light as

A HAND darts out from the shadows and grabs him, pulling him back into the darkness.

A frightened HOWL from the boy melts into an owl's hooting.

EXT. SMITHY - NIGHT

The building Vlad saw has light spilling from the window and open doors. The SOUND of hammer on iron rings out a few times, then stops.

A FIGURE appears at the doorway to the building. It is a large, powerfully built man with a really bad hair cut and a huge hammer in one hand, he is IVOR PETROSHENKO (30's), the blacksmith.

He looks out into the woods as a large OWL glides silently from the top of a tree and lands on something in the field.

PETROSHENKO

Bah!

He turns and heads back into the smithy out of view.

A second later he peeks back around the doorway out into the night, then draws the DOORS closed.

INT. SMITHY - LATER THAT EVENING

Petroshenko is hard at work as PIOTR FETNIK (30's) enters from a side door and rushes to him.

Fetnik is of a much slighter build, and he looks intelligent. It appears as though he has dressed in a hurry.

FETNIK

Ivor! Ivor Petroshenko, have you heard?

The smith keeps working and does not adopt his guest's urgency.

PETROSHENKO

Hear what, Piotr Fetnik? Did you finally win your seat on the Council today?

FETNIK

I lost by three votes to the well-digger. Again.

PETROSHENKO

I'm sorry, my friend, maybe next time, eh? What then?

FETNIK

The Baron's son has been abducted. It's her again.

Fetnik leans on the work table next to the forge, then pulls his hand back quickly.

FETNIK

Aaah! Blast this shop, Ivor Petroschenko. The Devil himself would burn his hand in here.

PETROSHENKO

If the Devil were in my smithy, Fetnik, I would smash him with my hammer.

FETNIK

Why does that not surprise me?

Fetnik watches the blacksmith for a moment, then realizes a response is not coming.

FETNIK

The Baron is gathering the village to search. We must help.

PETROSHENKO

His son is of no concern to me. The spoiled young beast.

FETNIK

That spoiled beast is the third to disappear in as many months. They had all been playing in the woods near her shack. We know...

Petroschenko stops pounding and picks up the iron with tongs and dips it into a bucket of water. A hissing jet of steam shoots forth.

PETROSHENKO

Let the wealthy Baron buy his way out of this problem, Piotr. I have work to finish.

FETNIK

You'll not help?

PETROSHENKO

If the boy has gotten himself lost and into trouble with a wolf, first: I pity the wolf; and second: he deserves it. He is not my child.

Fetnik backs up and turns slowly to leave.

FETNIK

I pray you never have a child in that predicament, Ivor.

He stops and stares up at a hideous IRON MASK with jagged teeth and chains hanging from it on the wall behind the bellows.

FETNIK

Perhaps if you put aside your anger at the Baron for not giving you his daughter's hand, you would have children some day. And you would understand.

Fetnik starts to walk away slowly.

Ivor shoves the piece he was working on back into the coals of the forge and starts to work the bellows, then stops.

PETROSHENKO

His daughter? At last...yes. Wait, Fetnik.

He turns abruptly and whacks his forehead with a loud, hollow "thunk" into some large chunk of metal hanging from a beam. He doesn't even notice.

PETROSHENKO

I'll help. Where is his daughter?

Fetnik stares at his friend and the wild look in his eye. He starts to chuckle.

FETNIK

"Son," Ivor, "son."

PETROSHENKO

Right.

Petroshenko and Fetnik hurry out into the night.

EXT. VILLAGE OF VAKYUST - NIGHT

An angry mob of 20-30 villagers with torches, pitchforks, ropes, etc. congregates behind Petroshenko and Fetnik, who stand before a seated figure.

GRIGOR BOSHEKOV (70's), the aged leader of the village sits in an ornate wooden sedan chair. One hand twitches and trembles.

FETNIK

We are certain now, Lord; Stanislaus' dogs have brought back pieces of clothing. She no longer just steals our livestock to satisfy her hunger.

PETROSHENKO

I'll put an end to the evil hag, Grigor Boshekov, and I'll bring back your son before the next dawn is upon me.

Grigor Boshekov glances up at his daughter, IMYA (18). She is very smart and pretty. She stands by her father's side, trying to steady his palsied his hand in hers.

BOSHEKOV

You go by yourself, blacksmith? You're indeed a brave man. I'll send these foolish villagers home then, yes?

Petroshenko thinks nervously, he turns and eyes the villagers.

PETROSHENKO

What I mean, Grigor Boshekov, is that I'll lead them, just as I know you would, had time not so ravaged you.

Boshekov shifts uneasily in his seat. He makes a face and his words come out through clenched teeth.

BOSHEKOV

Bring my son back here in one piece, blacksmith. And whatever you do...

His voice returns to normal, tired

BOSHEKOV

...make sure she is dead. If not, I'll have your head.

PETROSHENKO

Yes, Grigor Boshekov.

BOSHEKOV

And to make sure the odds are a little more even, Petroshenko, I send with you Huishka, my loyal friend and sorcerer.

HUISHKA, a robed figure enters from the side. He is a tall, thin, dark-skinned man who speaks in a cold, detached manner.

HUISHKA

You send me with a blacksmith who is little smarter than a squirrel and a small army of loud, angry villagers, Grigor? She will hear us from three miles away.

BOSHEKOV

(whispering)

The blacksmith is strong, but not bright, Huishka.

Boshekov and Huishka eye Petrosenko.

Petrosenko swats at a FLY buzzing about his head. The fly lites on his forehead.

Petrosenko swings up his HAMMER hand and whacks the fly with the hammer.

He goes cross-eyed a moment, then shakes it off.

BOSHEKOV

He will need your help. I beg of you, it is my only son.

HUISHKA

(a beat)

I will go with him, but I will not answer to him.

BOSHEKOV

Thank you.

He turns toward Petrosenko

Now go, blacksmith, brave comrades, be stout of heart.

PETROSHENKO

We have the Saucer to help us. We will be victorious.

HUISHKA

Sorcerer.

He draws close to Petrosenko

HUISHKA

And if I live not through the night, I'll return someday, and I'll find you, and I'll make you feel what the iron you pound feels in the forge.

Petroshenko flinches, then shakes it off, turning and heading toward the woods.

PETROSHENKO

To the Hag.

The villagers get into proper angry mob form and head after the blacksmith.

Imya turns to her father.

IMYA

What if he doesn't return, father?

BOSHEKOV

I care not about the blacksmith, my daughter, I only want your brother back.

(nervously)

Besides, if he does not return, you . . . will not be obliged... to marry him.

IMYA

Father, how could you? I can not live with that man, he... he is so... dumb.

The old man waves dismissively.

BOSHEKOV

It was either that or have to lead the village myself. And as much as I wish I could, my dear, he is right.

He holds up his trembling hand and looks at it with disgust.

BOSHEKOV

I'm too old and frail. Petroshenko is strong, the people feel safe behind him. Huishka will see to it that the witch doesn't harm Vladimir.

They look to the mob, which disappears into the woods.

EXT. THE WOODS - NIGHT

The villagers tramp through woods. They have six dogs, held by chains, who bark as a man struggles to restrain them.

EXT. BABA YAGA'S SHACK - NIGHT

Light emanates from the open windows, small pleas of "help" and "mercy" are heard from inside. There is a loud crash, a whimper, and muffled cackling.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

The blacksmith turns to Huishka.

PETROSHENKO  
Are you ready?

HUISHKA  
Yes.

PETROSHENKO  
Hey, there...

He motions to a man with dogs straining on leashes

PETROSHENKO  
...Stanislaus, let them go.

STANISLAUS (40's), a short, heavy man, lets the dogs smell a rag. They bark wildly as he unchains them, and they head off at a tear into the woods.

Petroshenko turns toward the mob and raises his hand.

PETROSHENKO  
Remember, free the Baron's son first,  
then we can deal with Baba Yaga. She is  
ours.

HUISHKA  
It is not done until it is done.

PETROSHENKO  
Are you scared, wealthy man's lackey Are  
you afraid of real work? Well I'm not.

HUISHKA  
You should be, blacksmith.

Petroshenko looks at Huishka for a moment, then glances back at the mob.

PETROSHENKO  
Bah. Onward!

The mob presses on.

EXT. BABA YAGA'S SHACK - NIGHT

Pots and glass crash and break inside. Wicked cackling and cursing is heard.

INT. SHACK - NIGHT

It is a small, dirty, one room dwelling. A large fireplace on the opposite wall from the front door has a fire going in it. A large iron CAULDRON, with ornately carved animal's legs, boils madly.

An old rickety LOOM takes up another wall, with spools of thread and yarn stacked around it. A large iron CAGE hangs from the ceiling in one corner.

BABA YAGA, an old, shaggy woman with bony legs chases Vladimir Boshekov around the tables and piles of standard evil witch things.

She stops, winded, and bends over, hands on her knees, with labored breathing.

BABA YAGA

You're just prolonging the inevitable,  
boy. You can't... outrun me...forever.

Her stomach rumbles loudly.

BABA YAGA

I hope.

A large, skinny, white FERRET watches from the top of a bookcase. A bony DOG sits by the fire listening, its ears prick up and it bays.

Baba Yaga gives a limping chase for a moment more, then stops and turns her one good eye to the dog.

BABA YAGA

What is it, Sooka?

Then the mob's dogs' barking is heard in the distance, getting closer.

BABA YAGA

Eh? Wolves? No, Sooka, you have cousins  
coming.

Vladimir crouches behind a barrel in the corner, beneath the hissing ferret, he is breathing hard and has cuts and scratches on his face and arms.

Baba Yaga turns, trying to find him with her good eye.

BABA YAGA

Where are you, boy? Come, let an old  
woman eat her last meal, won't you? Boy!