

BLOCK

Psychological Drama
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1. INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

MIA (26) enters the room. DAVID (28) follows behind her. He carries her bag. She is wearing a black pencil skirt suit and heels. DAVID looks at her calmly and tenderly. She smiles, but not a full smile. She takes off her shoes. Tiptoes to the table.

MIA
Oh! I forgot!

MIA rummages through her bag and pulls out a lighter. Runs on her tiptoes to the table and lights the candles. Joy on her face. DAVID takes off his shoes, removes his coat, looks in the mirror and fixes his hair.

DAVID
I'll be right back.

DAVID goes into the bathroom. MIA lets out a small squeal of happiness and sits down at the table, where roses, wine and sliced cheese are laid out. She rests her elbows on the table, clasping her hands. DAVID returns, businesslike, phlegmatic. He opens the wine in silence, looks at MIA and suddenly smiles.

MIA hands him the glasses, also in silence. He slowly pours the wine, puts the bottle down and sits down, not taking his eyes off MIA. MIA takes a piece of cheese, chews it with relish and looks at DAVID predatorily. Her gaze is confident.

DAVID
I've been waiting for this since
the first of September, that very
year...

DAVID picks up his glass and waits for MIA. MIA wipes her hands, quickly takes her glass and bares her neck, tilting her head back.

MIA
You... (surprised) David?

They clink glasses and take a sip. MIA doesn't take her eyes off DAVID. Looks at him questioningly. DAVID looks ahead. He is, as always, calm. Then he licks his lips and also puts his hands on the table. He takes MIA's hand, looks at it with wide eyes, squeezes it. MIA looks at their hands, bites her lip and throws her head back, exhaling.

MIA
Is that why... (pause) You looked
at me like that at the party?

DAVID
And you deliberately annoyed the
teacher?

MIA
(whispering)
Tell me... (pause) How long have
you been waiting for this?

DAVID looks away. Stands up and moves behind her. MIA tilts her head to the side. He places his hands on her shoulders and begins to massage them.

DAVID
(seriously and quietly)
Always.

MIA sighs. Slides her hand down his right palm, finds a ring. Removes it.

MIA
Now... (pause) It'll end up in a
pawnshop, found by some dodgy
character.

MIA stands up, steps gracefully on her toes toward the window. Opens it and throws the ring out. Watches it fall, excitedly. Then turns over her shoulder and looks at DAVID. DAVID stands with his arms crossed, looking at her from under his brows. MIA walks past him, running her hand along his shoulder, throws herself onto the bed and pulls him down with her. DAVID leans over her, looks into her eyes, squints. He kisses her, she closes her eyes.

MIA
Wait!

MIA slowly gets up, leans over to the table and blows out the candles. Silhouettes of moving bodies are visible, merging into one. Breathing is heard.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK

2. INT. COURT HALLWAY - DAY

MIA stands with her LAWYER (40). They watch the passersby.

LAWYER
So, I wanted to tell you—someone
posted bail. Asked to remain
anonymous. There's a chance we'll
avoid pre-trial detention.

MIA looks at the LAWYER in surprise and confusion. The LAWYER shrugs.

3. INT. COURTROOM - DAY

MIA sits on the bench. She clenches her hands and looks at the floor.

The LAWYER sits beside her, his head tilted toward MIA, but he looks straight ahead.

JUDGE

In accordance with the sentence, during the period of serving her punishment, Mia Pavlova is prohibited from leaving her place of permanent residence at night, from changing her place of residence without notification, and from visiting places designated by the court. She is also required to report to a specialized state body for registration.

The JUDGE (45) bangs the gavel. A tear rolls down MIA's cheek. She smiles faintly.

4. INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

MIA sits on the bed, cross-legged. She stands up, opens the wardrobe and pulls out the same skirt suit she wore with DAVID. She holds it up against herself. Smiles sadly. Puts it back and closes the wardrobe. Lies down on the bed, throws her legs up against the wall and twirls the electronic ankle monitor. Then she turns on her side and covers her face with her hands.

TITLE: ONE YEAR AGO.

5. INT. NEWSROOM - DAY

MIA sits at her desk, typing an article. BORIS GENNADYEVICH (53) approaches.

BORIS GENNADYEVICH

Catch the rat?

MIA smirks. Focuses on the screen.

MIA

Why is our paper called "At the Storm"?

BORIS GENNADYEVICH

You know, I'd put it like this...
(pause) To some, we're a threat; to others—thunder and lightning in the middle of a clear day.

MIA

Interesting wordplay.

MIA looks up from the screen. She looks at the editor with satisfaction.

MIA

Done!

BORIS GENNADYEVICH

Send it to the chief. The sooner we
publish, the better.

BORIS GENNADYEVICH places an envelope on the table. MIA looks at it enthusiastically and puts it in her bag.

6. INT. BANK - DAY

MIA deposits the money onto her credit card at the ATM. Sighs with relief. Smiles. Throws the envelope away.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK

7. INT. STAIRWELL - MORNING

MIA mops the floor. Her phone rings. She drops the mop and answers.

MIA

Yes?

OPERATOR

Pay off your debt today, if you
don't want to face civil liability.

MIA angrily hangs up and picks up the mop. Scrubs the floor. An UZBEK MAN (34) comes out of an apartment. He closes the door and stands on the landing. MIA glances back, then continues mopping. The UZBEK MAN comes down the stairs, stops, and stares at his phone. MIA starts pressing her lips together. She quickly gathers her buckets and mops and heads for the exit. The UZBEK MAN steps in front of her, blocking her way.

MIA

Let me through.

The UZBEK MAN looks at her silently and smirks.

UZBEK MAN

What do you have to offer?

MIA furiously scratches his face, throws water over him and hurls the bucket and mops at him. She runs out into the street.

8. EXT. STREET - MORNING

MIA runs down the street. She is hysterical. She calls her SUPERVISOR (42).

MIA
I'm not working for you anymore!

SUPERVISOR
You need to meet your target.

MIA is silent on the phone, breathing heavily.

SUPERVISOR
Otherwise you won't see your
salary. Those are the rules.

MIA hangs up, puts her phone in her bag and stops a taxi.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK

9. INT. NEWSROOM - DAY

MIA enters the office. It's empty. Papers are scattered around, half-drunk coffee in cups. She hears stomping behind the wall. An OMON OFFICER (25) bursts in. MIA startles and freezes.

OMON OFFICER
A search will now be conducted as
part of a criminal investigation. I
am presenting the court order.

MIA looks on silently. The OMON OFFICER takes her bag, pulls out her passport and phone, and leaves. MIA is led out of the premises.

10. INT. INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE - DAY

MIA is led through the corridors. She lowers her head. Bites her lip to hold back tears.

11. INT. INVESTIGATOR'S OFFICE - DAY

The INVESTIGATOR (56) sits opposite MIA, his hands steeped in a triangle.

MIA
BORIS GENNADYEVICH... (pause) He
gave me the assignment to write the
article about Georgy Setin. I was
supposed to write everything known
about him in certain circles. He
provided me with a source... (voice
trembling) I did the work, but I
was deceived.

INVESTIGATOR
And the information turned out to
be false.

MIA

I know that now. At the time, I
genuinely believed in its accuracy.
I was misled.

INVESTIGATOR

You published information that was
convenient for you, without
verifying it. That makes you, as a
professional, responsible for its
accuracy.

MIA looks down at the table. Nervously rubs her fingers.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK

12. INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

MIA is choosing coffee. Behind her stands DAVID in a vest and
trousers. MIA glances at him, her eyebrows slightly raised in
surprise.

MIA

Large cappuccino.

MIA swipes her card. A declined signal sounds.

BARISTA

Your card has been blocked.

MIA looks at it in confusion. Then starts rummaging through
her bag. Bus tickets and cards fall out.

DAVID

I'll pay.

MIA looks at him sadly, touches her head. DAVID pays for the
coffee.

MIA

Thank you!

MIA sits down at a table with her coffee. She takes out a
business card and watches DAVID, whom she doesn't recognize.
DAVID walks toward the exit with his coffee cup.

MIA

Wait!

MIA hurriedly gets up from the table and places the business
card in his hand. DAVID looks at the card calmly, then at
MIA. A slight smile appears on his face.

DAVID

No need.

MIA
Maybe we'll meet again?

DAVID twists the ring on his finger.

DAVID
Until we meet again.

DAVID leaves, and MIA watches him go, confused.

13. INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

MIA sits on the bed, cross-legged. A message arrives. The profile picture shows DAVID in a medical coat. The message reads: "Tonight at the Slaviyanka at nine. Let's take a walk." MIA breaks into a smile. Puts the phone face down on the bed, lowers her head. Then opens his profile again – the name is not listed. MIA studies his photo, zooms in on his face. Her eyes hold a childlike joy.

THE END