

**Refraction**

by

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Based on chapter nine of *Speak, Memory* by Vladimir Nabokov

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"REFRACTION"

FADE IN:

INT. VOLODYA'S BEDROOM - MORNING - 1911

A single bed sits near a window with open curtains. It is winter. The sunlight streams onto the bed where a boy lies on his side, head cradled in his hand, elbow propped on pillow. This is VOLODYA (VLADIMIR) NABOKOV, 12 years old, inquisitive, neat. With his free hand he writes pages of homework with a pencil.

CLOSE SHOT - VOLODYA - THAT MOMENT

Volodya continues writing. We SEE prism refractions dancing on his bed and homework pages. He puts his pencil down, rolls to his back and puts his hands behind head.

VOLODYA'S POV - PRISM

Which hangs on the nearby window, moving slightly, bouncing light in all directions.

BACK TO SCENE

Volodya rolls back to his side and continues writing. He follows the moving light with his pencil.

INSERT - BEDSIDE LAMP

Prism refractions dance on a bedside lamp with two bronze lion heads.

INSERT - CLOCK

With more refractions.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. CAR - LATER THAT MORNING - MED. SHOT - VOLODYA

Volodya sits in the back of a polished Wolseley, which is driven by a small, pudgy CHAUFFEUR. Volodya presses his head against the window, looking out. He wears a school uniform: white collared shirt, navy slacks. Over the uniform he wears a heavy fur coat.

They continue down the streets of St. Petersburg, Russia.

2.

VOLODYA'S POV - TREES

In a nearby park. They are a brown blur above the snow-covered ground.

BACK TO SCENE

Volodya pulls himself from the window and looks out the other side of the car. He takes note of each successive building as it passes by.

VOLODYA

(to himself)

Number forty-five, Prince Oginski.

Number forty-three, Italian Embassy.

CHAUFFEUR

Must you always do that?

VOLODYA

Number forty-one, German Embassy. Thirty-nine, thirty-seven.

CHAUFFEUR

It would be proper for you to answer.

VOLODYA

(leaning forward)

I like to memorize. Besides, if we drove the Opel I wouldn't be able to recite each address. The buildings would only be a smooth blur.

CHAUFFEUR

The convertible?

VOLODYA

(smiling)

Of course, we'd get to school in no time.

CHAUFFEUR

In the middle of winter?

Volodya sinks into the seat, his hopes dashed.

The car continues up the street and Volodya looks out the

3.

window again. The Wolseley turns right and Volodya leans forward, excited.

VOLODYA'S POV - HORSE-DRAWN SLEIGH

In the extreme right lane of the street. Two black stallions pull the sleigh, which is driven by a cloaked coachman.

BACK TO SCENE

Volodya points ahead.

VOLODYA

Up ahead. Pass him. Faster, faster.

CHAUFFEUR

Not so fast that we frighten the horses.

VOLODYA

Please.

The chauffeur speeds up slightly and Volodya follows the sleigh as the car moves past. He looks out the back window until the sleigh is out of sight.

The car makes another right turn.

VOLODYA (CONT'D)

Look, the circus.

Volodya points out the window.

CHAUFFEUR

We pass it every day and only now you notice?

VOLODYA

I notice because Father says we'll go soon to see the wrestling tournament.

CHAUFFEUR

Your father is a busy man. There are more important matters than the circus.

4.

Volodya looks down and fidgets with his shirt buttons.

CHAUFFEUR (CONT'D)

Perhaps you will join him some day.

VOLODYA

Perhaps not. I find that type of work boring.

CHAUFFEUR

Work is not always amusing... like your butterflies.

VOLODYA

I suppose.

VOLODYA'S POV - SPOT OF LIGHT

Reflecting off of the chauffeur's watch. Volodya follows it, dancing across the ceiling of the Wolseley.

We HEAR the grinding sound of a pencil sharpener growing louder.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. NABOKOV HOME - ENTRY WAY - 1910

The grinding grows to full volume and we SEE a DOORMAN turning the pencil sharpener handle, sharpening pencils slowly. Pencil shavings fall to the floor. Volodya walks in the door wearing a short sleeve, button-down shirt and neat shorts. We HEAR birds chirping when he opens the door.

Volodya closes the door and walks to the shavings on the floor. He rolls them around in his hand.

DOORMAN

Ah, ah, ah. Don't spread those about.

Volodya forms the shavings into a pile and walks,  
indifferent, out of frame.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

5.

INT. NABOKOV HOME - ENTRY WAY - THAT NIGHT

The entrance hall is now filled with coats and  
overshoes. Off screen, we HEAR several men clamoring.

INT. NABOKOV HOME - SPIRAL STAIRWAY - THAT MOMENT

Volodya sits behind a door in a dark spiral stairway,  
peering through a small opening into the committee room.

VOLODYA'S POV - SHARPENED PENCILS

Sitting on the room's central table.

BACK TO SCENE

From the stairway we SEE men sitting around the table  
while one man paces around. This is Volodya's FATHER,  
strong, dignified, respected and well groomed.

FATHER

The Tsar can send his spies if it pleases  
him.

MAN #1

Keep speaking like that and he may.

Volodya shifts behind the door to watch his father. A  
sliver of light hits Volodya's face.

MAN #2

Spies? It seems that our imagination is  
getting away from us.

FATHER

He is capable and willing. Do not doubt  
his desire to make people like us  
disappear. Just last night, one was

discovered out in the garden.

(beat, pacing)

A spy... Discovered by the librarian, of  
all people.

The men share a hearty laugh. Volodya's father smiles.

FATHER (CONT'D)

He won't break us whether he uses spies  
or soldiers.

6.

MAN #1

Soldiers? Is that our destination?  
Violence?

FATHER

I will not. We will not. But, the Tsar  
may choose violent means. We cannot  
fear...

His voice fades out.

Light from the committee room gleams in Volodya's eye.  
His face is half dark, half light.

VOLODYA'S POV - HIS FATHER

Standing above the group of seated men, speaking and  
grabbing one of the pencils.

END FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

INT. TENISHEV SCHOOL - MORNING

The HEAD MASTER follows Volodya, still wearing his coat  
and carrying a bag, down the hallway and pulls him aside  
just before Volodya enters a classroom.

HEAD MASTER

Vladimir Vladimirovich.

VOLODYA

Yes, sir.

HEAD MASTER

How are you getting along?

Bewildered, Volodya looks at the man, then examines his own school uniform. He wonders what is wrong.

HEAD MASTER (CONT'D)

You have been here for several months now. I trust that you are making the most of your time here at the school.

VOLODYA

I believe so.

7.

HEAD MASTER

I saw you playing football yesterday.

Volodya peeks into the classroom, worried about being late.

VOLODYA

Yes, sir.

HEAD MASTER

You play goalkeeper, yes?

VOLODYA

Most of the time.

HEAD MASTER

I'm curious as to why a young boy might prefer standing still, waiting for a few moments of action instead of running about with the other players.

VOLODYA

(pensive)

There is something quite lovely about stopping a ball in mid flight.

HEAD MASTER

Still, it seems odd.

(beat, thinking)

Perhaps you could try playing another position.

VOLODYA

But the other children often request

me in goal.

HEAD MASTER

One's classmates are not always correct.

VOLODYA

Yes, sir.

HEAD MASTER

Admittedly, I know little about sports,  
but what position might your father play?

VOLODYA

Father does not play football.

8.

HEAD MASTER

He might take part in scoring a goal or  
two. Don't you think?

Volodya looks at the floor, moving dirt with his feet.  
The head master begins to walk away, but turns back.

HEAD MASTER (CONT'D)

Oh, one more item.

VOLODYA

Yes, sir.

HEAD MASTER

In the morning and afternoon, you might  
consider having your automobile stop two  
or three blocks away from the school.

VOLODYA

But, sir.

HEAD MASTER

There's no need for your classmates to  
see a chauffeured car every day when they  
arrive by more...

(beat)

typical means.

VOLODYA

It's cold...

HEAD MASTER

(interrupting)  
Very well. We needn't dangle our good  
fortune in front of others.

Volodya watches the head master walk away. We SEE the  
head master's reflection in the shiny floor tiles.

Gradually, we HEAR the smooth sound of a fire, popping.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. NABOKOV HOME - LIBRARY - 1906

The fire popping reaches full volume. Volodya (7 years  
old) sits in a large leather chair playing with a toy  
kaleidoscope. His father sits at a desk, writing. They

9.

are surrounded by fully-stocked book shelves and a fire  
burns in the fire place.

VOLODYA'S POV - KALEIDOSCOPE

Volodya views the kaleidoscope image. We SEE several  
colored, abstract images and HEAR the sound of his  
father's pen against the paper.

BACK TO SCENE

Sneakily, Volodya tries to get up from the chair.

FATHER  
(head down)  
No, no, Volodya. Not yet.

VOLODYA  
But, father...

FATHER  
I told you to stay there until I am  
finished. This will teach you to do what  
you are told.

VOLODYA  
May I see what you are writing?

FATHER  
(looking up)

Why would you want to do that?

Volodya fiddles with his toy, slouching in the chair.

VOLODYA

I wonder what someone could write about  
for so long. You are always writing.

FATHER

(smiling)

Am I?

VOLODYA

Yes, always.

FATHER

Come here.

10.

Volodya gets up from the chair, leaving the kaleidoscope  
behind.

VOLODYA

Is it a story you are writing?

FATHER

I'm afraid not. This is merely an  
editorial for the newspaper.

Volodya sits on his father's lap and stares at the  
papers. The fire flickers on Volodya's face. He is  
captivated.

VOLODYA

An editorial?

FATHER

Yes, full of matters that a boy your age  
will find boring, matters that your old  
father cannot leave alone.

VOLODYA

Is it because of these editorials that  
everyone talks about you?

FATHER

Who talks of me?

VOLODYA

I don't know. Mother says that people talk of you.

FATHER

Sometimes it's good for people to speak about you. It means you've got their attention. It means there's some truth to what you're saying.

Volodya sits silently for a moment. His father looks at Volodya.

VOLODYA

(suddenly)

Why write editorials if they're so boring? You should write stories instead.

11.

FATHER

A story is altogether different. It is...

(beat, looking into space)

A mystery. An incomprehensible miracle. The ability to compose a story is an instinct that few people are blessed with.

(smiles, looks at Volodya)

I am not one, so we'll leave the stories and poems to Flaubert and Pushkin.

VOLODYA'S POV - FATHER'S WRITING

On the page. The cursive is sleek and flawless, nicely slanted. Volodya follows it with his finger.

BACK TO SCENE

Volodya looks up from the paper.

VOLODYA

I must learn to write like this. You have pretty writing.

(beat)

It's much better than mine. My writing looks like rough stones.

FATHER

You are still young. Plenty of time to improve your penmanship.

He removes Volodya from his lap and places him on the floor.

FATHER (CONT'D)

Now, you've seen what I am writing and you may go. I must finish my project if people are to continue talking about me.

His father smiles, slyly.

LONG SHOT - LIBRARY

Volodya takes his toys and leaves the enormous room. Firelight dances on the books.

END FLASHBACK

12.

CUT TO:

INT. TENISHEV SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

Volodya daydreams in the quiet classroom while others apparently do their work. He sits at the back of the class. The TEACHER sits at the front of the classroom, quietly grading homework. We SEE icicles hanging outside the classroom windows.

The silence is broken when we HEAR a group of students giggling and snickering. Volodya shifts his attention in the direction of the sound. The teacher raises his head and surveys the room. The giggling stops.

Volodya continues to look around the room, searching for the source of the giggling. The classroom is quiet again.

Volodya puts his head down and resumes writing out his homework.

EXTREME CLOSE-UP - VOLODYA'S HAND

Writing on the paper. His handwriting is unimpressive. The effort is clear, the result lackluster.

LONG SHOT - CLASSROOM

Silence again. Then we SEE that a newspaper page is being passed between two male students near the front of the classroom.

MEDIUM SHOT - MALE STUDENTS

They look at the newspaper page, look at Volodya, look back at the newspaper page and begin giggling.

CLOSE SHOT - VOLODYA

Returns the boys' looks, wondering what is so amusing.

TEACHER (O.S.)  
Quiet! Back to work.

CUT TO:

13.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

All the boys move toward the field to play football. Volodya walks behind the two boys who were laughing in class. They continue speaking to one another, joking, laughing, gesturing with their hands.

VOLODYA'S POV - NEWSPAPER PAGE

Being held by one of the boys. His arm swings back and forth.

BACK TO SCENE

Volodya looks around, checking to see if he's being watched. When he's convinced it's safe, he lunges forward, snags the newspaper page from the boy and continues running. He stops running and looks back. The boys do not pursue him.

Volodya frantically searches the newspaper with darting eyes. It flaps in the wind. He stops at a section,

reads for a moment, then skips ahead and reads again. He looks up, then back at the boys.

Volodya reads the page once more then turns, charging at the boys, dropping the newspaper on his way.

Volodya tackles the boy who was holding the newspaper page and lightly punches him a couple of times. Other kids gather around.

VOLODYA

You are a traitor!

BOY

(panicking)

No, it's not mine.

The two roll around on the ground until some of the other boys pull them apart.

VOLODYA

Clearly it is. You've betrayed me.

BOY

Everyone else was laughing too.

14.

VOLODYA

I don't see what's so funny.

BOY

It pokes fun at your father... for his choice of weapons.

Some students giggle.

VOLODYA

Is it true, that it's taking place today?

BOY

I don't know. I didn't write it.

Volodya tries to lunge at the boy again, but the others hold him back.

VOLODYA

I suppose it would still be funny if it

was your father?

BOY

My father wouldn't challenge anyone to a duel, much less a silly newspaper editor.

VOLODYA

I'm sure there was good reason.

BOY

Mother says that your father needs to worry less about politics and more about his family or one day it'll come back to get him.

Volodya looks at the ground. He becomes much less aggressive, more thoughtful, worried.

VOLODYA

Father does what is right.

BOY

Then why did he not tell you of this duel himself?

Volodya thinks and the others walk away. Volodya looks back at the newspaper page sitting on the ground, the page flapping in the breeze.

15.

We HEAR the sound of swords clashing together.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - NABOKOV HOME - STUDY - DAYS EARLIER

The clashing of swords reaches full volume. Volodya's father is fencing with his coach, Loustalot. Both men wear full fencing gear. Volodya, still wearing his pajamas, peeks around the corner and watches for a moment.

There is a break in the action and Volodya's father notices his son standing nearby. He removes his fencing mask to reveal a red, sweating face. He approaches Volodya.

FATHER

(panting)  
Good morning, son.

He kisses Volodya on the forehead. We HEAR a fire crackling.

VOLODYA  
More fencing?

FATHER  
It keeps me fit. Would you like to try again?

He extends the foil toward Volodya.

VOLODYA  
I have homework to finish.

Volodya's father kisses him again and replaces his fencing mask. Volodya does not leave immediately. He watches the two men for a moment.

We SEE the two men sparring, lunging at one another. The foils crash together. Loustalot is quite vocal, barking commands and challenges at Volodya's father.

The sparring gets more spirited, the rhythm increases. Volodya turns his head to leave when... His father grunts in dissatisfaction.

16.

Volodya turns back to see that Loustalot has touched the tip of his foil to Volodya's father's heart.

The two men salute. Volodya's father removes his fencing mask and looks at the ground, disgusted and discouraged. Volodya lingers, but is uncomfortable with the sight of his father.

MEDIUM SHOT - VOLODYA

Walking out of the room. We HEAR the fire cracking.

END FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

EXT. TENISHEV SCHOOL - AFTERNOON - LONG SHOT - VOLODYA

Volodya stands outside the school, waiting. We SEE his breath as he exhales and Volodya is visibly nervous. He looks up and down the street. When nothing comes by, he walks out of frame.

EXT. MOHOVAYA STREET - THAT MOMENT

Volodya approaches a COACHMAN sitting atop a horse-drawn sleigh.

VOLODYA

Do you know the time?

COACHMAN

No.

Volodya looks up and down the street, searching for the Wolseley. He moves quickly, seemingly unable to make a decision.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)

You are lost?

VOLODYA

No, just waiting for my car.

The streets are empty. The coachman looks around.

COACHMAN

I don't see it.

17.

VOLODYA

Me either.

Volodya is starting to panic. He paces back and forth. He is unsure what to do and fights between running home and staying put.

Finally, Volodya hops in the sleigh.

VOLODYA (CONT'D)

Can you take me to number forty-seven  
in Morskaya Street?

COACHMAN

Do you have money?

VOLODYA

Yes. Go, please.

COACHMAN

I don't give free rides.

VOLODYA

(getting irritated)

Go... please, sir.

EXT. ST. PETERSBURG - MOMENTS LATER

The sleigh moves briskly through the streets. Volodya rides in the back, looking at the trees he saw earlier in the day.

The sleigh is much slower than the Wolseley and the trees are not a blur as they were before. Volodya has time to notice each lifeless branch.

VOLODYA'S POV - TREES

Moving by slowly. We SEE each brown, leafless tree go by.

We HEAR the sound of book pages being turned.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - VOLODYA'S BEDROOM - 1907

The page sounds reach full volume. Volodya (8 years old) 18.

sits in his bedroom, flipping through a zoology book.

INSERT - BUTTERFLY

Photos in the zoology book. Volodya flips the pages.

BACK TO SCENE

Volodya looks out the window as if searching for something, then turns back to his book.

Suddenly, Volodya's father comes bursting through the

door. Volodya jumps.

VOLODYA

Whoa. What is it?

FATHER

(looking around the room)

Your net!

VOLODYA

What?

FATHER

Where is your butterfly net?

Volodya points to a corner of the room. His father grabs the net and runs from the room.

Volodya goes to the window.

VOLODYA'S POV - HIS FATHER

Running down the veranda steps, then slows down and approaches a nearby bush. The sun is shining, flowers are in bloom, everything is green, colorful.

On the bush sits a butterfly. His father sneaks up on the butterfly, swings the net and... the butterfly flies away. Volodya's father pursues it, swinging the net wildly.

BACK TO SCENE

Volodya smiles at the sight of his father crazily running outside.

19.

VOLODYA'S POV - HIS FATHER

Still pursuing the butterfly when it lands, again, on the bush. His father sneaks again and, this time, snags the butterfly in the net. He gestures with the net up to Volodya in the window.

BACK TO SCENE

Volodya waves from the window and waits. His father re-

enters the room.

FATHER

Not as elegant as you, perhaps, but I  
caught it.

VOLODYA

Yes.

FATHER

Grab your book.

Volodya quickly grabs the zoology book, flipping through  
the pages. He then studies the butterfly

FATHER (CONT'D)

What is it?

VOLODYA

A Poplar Admirable.

FATHER

A Poplar Admirable.

VOLODYA

A new one for my collection.

FATHER

I saw it from the study.

Volodya and his father continue to study the butterfly.

Camera MOVES OUT to reveal the entire room.

END FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

20.

EXT. SLEIGH - DUSK

The sleigh moves through the streets of St. Petersburg.  
Volodya is still looking at the trees. The sun is going  
down.

INSERT - BRANCHES

We SEE several dormant branches, shaking in the cold wind.

INSERT - BUSHES

Also brown, with a dusting of snow. There is no life nearby.

BACK TO SCENE

Volodya leans forward in the sleigh. Light snow is starting to fall.

VOLODYA

We must go faster.

COACHMAN

My horse is quite old.

VOLODYA

Please try.

The coachman makes an exaggerated move to grab a small whip, which he keeps in his left boot. Sensing this move, the horse gallops faster and the sleigh picks up speed.

Volodya cannot keep still: his knees shake, he looks all around the city street, his arms constantly change positions.

He leans forward again.

VOLODYA (CONT'D)

Can't you go faster than this?

EXT. NABOKOV HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Volodya pays the coachman and hops out of the sleigh. He runs up the front steps and stops just in front of the

21.

door, looking at the doorknob, then at the ground. Volodya is hesitant to enter. We HEAR muffled commotion behind the door.

Gradually, this sound is replaced by a child's soft whimpering.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - VOLODYA'S BEDROOM - 1910

The whimpering grows to full volume.

PAN through the bedroom. We SEE the closed door, a desk, a small shelf of books. There are dots of blood on the floor and a razor blade nearby. The camera comes to rest on Volodya, who sits on the edge of his bed, clutching his left leg and wincing in pain. Blood drips from his leg. He is trying not to cry, but is failing.

We HEAR a knock at the door.

FATHER (O.S.)

Volodya?

VOLODYA

(gathering himself)

Yes?

FATHER (O.S.)

You will be late to school.

VOLODYA

I can't go today.

The doorknob turns and his father enters the bedroom. When he realizes, Volodya grabs the razor and throws it into a nearby trash can.

Volodya's father looks around the room, suspiciously.

FATHER

What happened?

VOLODYA

I tripped and cut myself.

22.

FATHER

Let me see.

He walks to Volodya and pries Volodya's hands off

the wound. Volodya's father studies it for a moment.

FATHER (CONT'D)

It's quite deep. Does it hurt?

VOLODYA

Yes.

FATHER

You'll need to get it stitched.

Volodya's father looks up from the wound. He looks Volodya in the eye. The two stare at each other for several moments. Finally, Volodya breaks the stare and bows his head..

FATHER (CONT'D)

(subdued)

On what did you bump it?

Silence. Volodya continues to look down.

FATHER (CONT'D)

I'll call the doctor.

He rises slowly, giving Volodya a chance to speak before he leaves. When his father gets to the door, Volodya raises his head.

VOLODYA

There is a razor blade in the trash.

FATHER

Where?

VOLODYA

(pointing)

In the trash can.

FATHER

You fell on it? What are you doing with a razor blade?

Silence.

23.

VOLODYA

I cut myself. I used the razor to cut my

leg.

Volodya puts his head down, wincing again, but not about the pain. He is preparing for his father's anger.

FATHER

There must be a good reason for doing so.

VOLODYA

I have a history recitation today. I didn't have enough time to prepare.

FATHER

You spent yesterday afternoon chasing butterflies?

VOLODYA

Yes.

FATHER

Rather than doing your work?

VOLODYA

Yes.

FATHER

It is difficult to slash one's own leg.

VOLODYA

Yes.

Volodya's father walks to the trash can and looks inside. He paces around the room, thinking.

Volodya watches his father move about, then looks back at his wound.

His father stops pacing and glares, with a look of displeasure, at Volodya. His face is wrinkled, disapproving. It seems as if he is about to shout.

He turns away from Volodya and sighs. When he looks back at Volodya he does not smile, but his face is calm. He approaches, standing over Volodya.

FATHER

(reluctant)

You will remember this because of the scar you will surely have, if nothing else.

VOLODYA

I'm sorry.

FATHER

I suppose it is easy for a boy to do such things rather than face classroom ridicule.

VOLODYA

I will have a scar?

FATHER

Yes.

VOLODYA

This will be my first.

FATHER

There will be others, good and bad.

Volodya studies the wound. His father walks back to the door, stops and turns around.

FATHER (CONT'D)

One winter night, when I was thirteen I believe, I had fallen behind in my school work as well. It was a cold night, icicles hung from the roof.

(beat)

At the time, pneumonia seemed easier to overcome than being unprepared for school. So, I removed my shirt and opened my bedroom window to let in the cold air.

(beat)

After only a few minutes, I could see my breath. I sat there, next to the window, shivering, willing the pneumonia into my lungs.

(MORE)

FATHER (CONT'D)

I thought about the convenience of  
falling ill that night.

(beat)

But I was unable to escape the following  
day. The things we avoid, Volodya,  
always find their way back.

Volodya looks at his father. We HEAR the door shut.

INSERT - PRISM

Hanging by the window.

END FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

EXT. NABOKOV HOME - DUSK

Volodya stands at the front door. The commotion inside  
grows. He touches the doorknob, turns it slowly and  
enters the house.

INT. NABOKOV HOME - ENTRYWAY - THAT MOMENT

We HEAR a woman crying. At first it sounds like the  
cries of sadness, but Volodya slowly realizes that they  
are cries of joy. Volodya's uncle walks down the nearby  
stairway, leather gloves in hand, smiling. In an act of  
satisfaction, he slaps the railing with his gloves and  
continues walking.

At the top of the stairs, Volodya's mother cries with joy  
and speaks to Volodya's father.

Volodya runs past his uncle to the top of the stairs. He  
waits there for his mother and father to finish speaking.  
His mother smiles at him and walks down the hallway.

Volodya and his father are now alone on the landing.  
Volodya looks at his father. His father smiles and then  
bows his head.

FATHER

He apologized. The man simply  
apologized. No swordplay today.

VOLODYA

You didn't tell me.

26.

FATHER  
I know. I'm sorry.

VOLODYA  
Why didn't you tell me?

CLOSE SHOT - VOLODYA

He bows his head and tries to fight it, but begins crying anyway. His father's large, steady hand comes into frame and rests on Volodya's shoulder. The hand does not move or shake.

FADE OUT.

THE END

