



## Shadows of the Neva

Полина Васильева

ADOWS  
THE NEVA



In 1959, Nadezhda and her mother arrive in the grand, rain-washed streets of Leningrad to start a new life in a crowded communal apartment. Despite her immense talent, Nadezhda faces a crushing rejection from the theater where she dreamed of working as a stage designer, leaving her future uncertain.



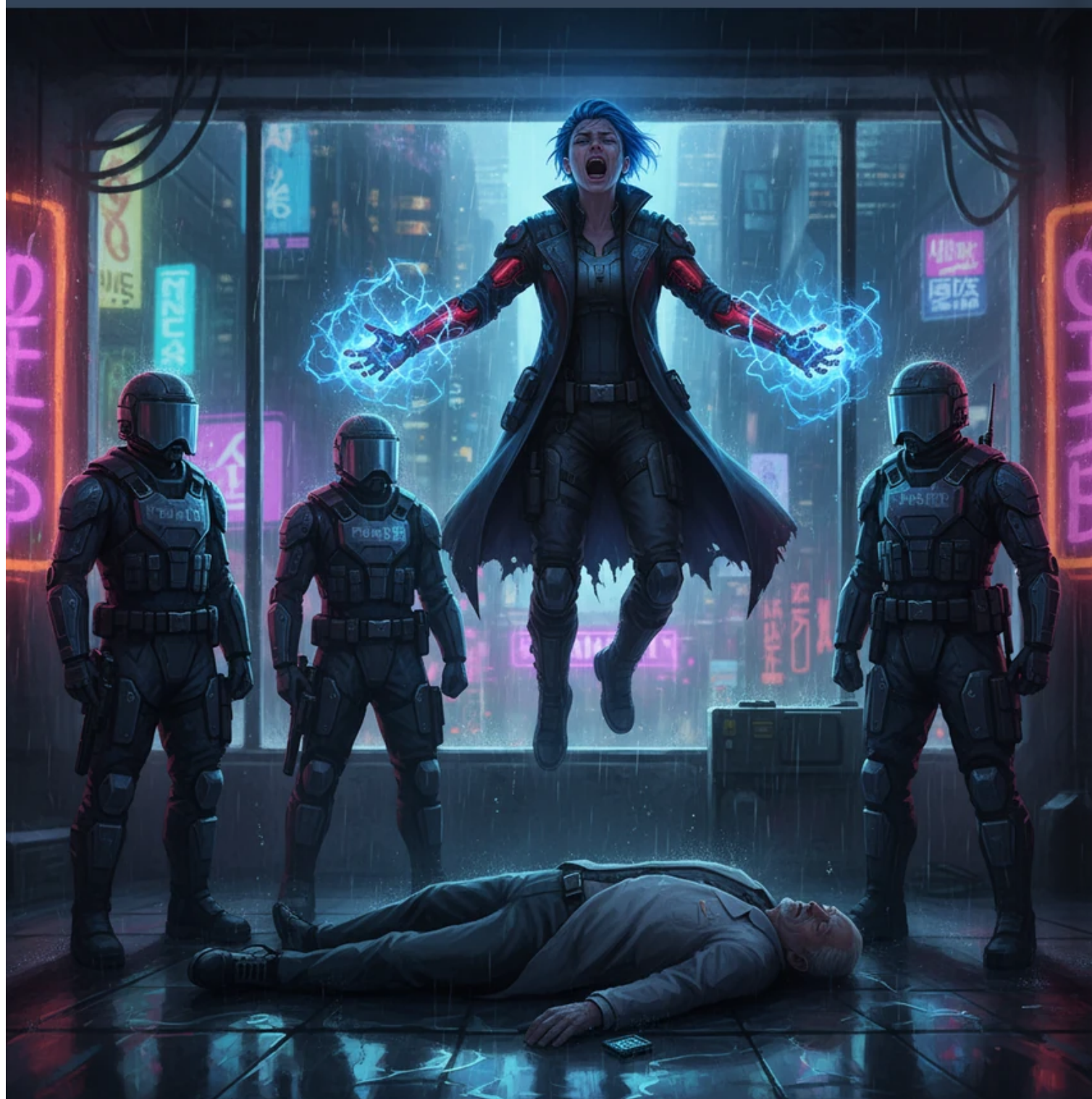
Everything changes when Nadezhda meets the vibrant actress Liza, who introduces her to the sophisticated world of the House of Models. Her sister Vera, a poised but weary mannequin, looks over Nadezhda's sketches with a skeptical eye before realizing the girl possesses a rare and genuine gift for design.



At a lively gathering of the city's young elite, Nadezhda meets Alexey, a charismatic playwright who is immediately drawn to her quiet grace. When one of Liza's jealous friends mocks Nadezhda's simplicity, she flees into the night, only for Alexey to catch up to her under the glow of a streetlamp to offer his heart.



As they work together at the House of Models, Vera opens up to Nadezhda about her painful childhood during the Siege of Leningrad and her strained relationship with her father. She reveals how she sacrificed her own dreams of acting to become a model, a path her father deeply disdains despite her success.



Tragedy strikes when Vera's father is suddenly arrested, leaving Liza and their stepmother in a state of panicked despair. To save him, Vera agrees to a loveless marriage with the influential Sergey Shevtsov, trading her own freedom for her father's release from prison.



Vera begins a cold, formal life in Sergey's house, slowly winning over his distant ten-year-old son, Vadik, while Nadezhda marries Alexey. However, Nadezhda soon finds herself trapped in a difficult household, struggling under the constant criticism of her stern mother-in-law, Flora, who refuses to accept her.



Tensions rise at the House of Models when a new director, Anna, arrives and someone maliciously hides broken glass in Vera's runway shoes. During a long night at the studio, Nadezhda discovers a secret past between Sergey and Anna that threatens the fragile peace of Vera's strategic marriage.



The web of relationships grows more dangerous as Vera enters a risky liaison with Anna's husband, Oleg, while Nadezhda suffers a violent outburst from Alexey. Seeking refuge with Anna, Nadezhda realizes that everyone she knows is hiding a secret, and the truth of their lives is far more complex than it appears on the surface.



The ultimate betrayal is revealed when Nadezhda discovers that Alexey has been having an affair with her supposed friend, Liza. Heartbroken and disillusioned, Nadezhda turns to Vera, who is horrified by her sister's cruelty and decides to confront her family in a final, explosive showdown.



After an argument where her father chooses Liza over her yet again, Vera returns home broken and exhausted. Sergey finds her in the darkness and offers a surprising moment of genuine comfort, finally revealing the deeper reasons behind his protection and the possibility of a real future together.