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by

Michael Cornetto

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

NIKOLA TESLA (86) in his roomy night shirt, tilts his thick glasses up under his big eyebrows. He checks the lock on the door. Satisfied, he turns...

...Three-sixty degrees to check the lock. He nods again.

But is it really locked? One more check and it's locked.

BEDROOM

Tesla lies in bed. He holds an intricate engineering diagram that shows something which looks like a trident.

On the bed next to him, in a cage, a white pigeon stirs.

A noise off screen. Tesla looks up calmly and smiles.

INT. WAREHOUSE - THE NEXT DAY

On a table lies a copy of the Washington Post, the headline: TESLA DEAD, a picture of Tesla clearly visible below it.

Suited G-MEN flit about the crates and boxes filled with books, papers, and weird-looking gadgets. The G-Men make ticks on clipboards as more boxes are carried in.

One of the G-Men, AGENT JONES stands next to GENERAL WHITE. In White's hand is an engineering diagram that shows something which looks like a trident. They examine it.

WHITE

Three.

JONES

Sorry.

WHITE

On the day I met him he was sweaty; an aide said Tesla had to go around the block three times before he'd come inside.

JONES

Very odd.

WHITE

Not nearly as odd as that meeting.

INT. MEETING ROOM - FLASHBACK - THREE DAYS EARLIER

A group of skeptical BUREAUCRATS, many in uniform, sit around an oval table. Skeptical, General White sits directly across from Tesla. Tesla wipes sweat from his brow.

WHITE

A Death Ray?!

TESLA

A particle beam to be exact. The press chooses to call it a Death Ray and as you know, gentlemen, the press is free to do as it...

BUREAUCRAT #1

You decided to tell the press because...

TESLA

I've every right to publicize my discoveries.

BUREAUCRAT #2

So you can sell your weapon to the highest bidder? You disgust me, sir!

It's obvious that to Tesla the feeling's mutual.

WHITE

We know you've had similar meetings with England -- and Russia.

Murmurs from the Bureaucrats.

WHITE

Did you hope to jack up your price?

Tesla slams his hands on the table.

TESLA

I'm not trying to get rich! I won't be here much longer and I'd like to ensure a liveable future by protecting our allies from our common enemy. Britain is being ruthlessly bombed, a series of particle beams could easily provide them with a coastal barrier impenetrable by aircraft.

INT. WAREHOUSE

Jones frowns at the diagram.

JONES
Impenetrable... but how?

WHITE
He said it would melt motors.

Jones stares at White incredulously.

JONES
So did the Brits take him up on his offer?

WHITE
They politely declined.

JONES
They laughed him off.

WHITE
Not to his face, I'm sure.

JONES
And the Russians?

INT. MEETING ROOM - FLASHBACK

Tesla leans forward and smiles.

TESLA
We are still in talks. But they are quite interested.

Outrage from certain members of the table.

INT. WAREHOUSE

Jones shrugs.

JONES
It wouldn't be a good thing if they did take him up on it, so let's hope we caught it in time.

Jones gives White a knowing nod. White looks around.

WHITE
Have we found the prototypes yet?

JONES
You think he actually built it?

WHITE
We know he's tried, at least three times. You know that incident at Tunguska, Sibera?

Jones looks at White with confusion.

WHITE
Big explosion out in the middle of nowhere -- all the trees knocked down for miles.

INSERT: Still shots of the destruction.

JONES
That was Tesla? I thought it was a meteor.

WHITE
Russian cover story. But there's no crater, no extraterrestrial debris. Intelligence tells us that Tesla was there the night before.

JONES
With that kind of power...

WHITE
And in the wrong hands...

INT. APARTMENT

The stirring pigeon, MILLICENT, catches Tesla's attention. He opens the cage and removes it. He pets its head.

TESLA
There, there, Millicent. It's only Sava.
(he looks up)
Is the machine ready?

SAVA humbly stands at the foot of the bed next to an odd looking machine with three silver spheres on top.

SAVA
I believe so, Uncle. But are you certain you really want to do this?

TESLA
It's my only option.

Tesla kisses the pigeon three times on the beak. Then he offers the pigeon to Sava, tears fill his eye.

TESLA

Please take care of Millicent. I've loved her as a man loves a woman, and she's loved me...

Sava takes the pigeon. Tesla wipes his eyes on his sleeve.

TELSA

Throw the switch.

Sava does. The machine whirs to life. Arcs of electric flow between the silver spheres.

TESLA

Let the future tell the truth, and evaluate each one according to his work and accomplishments.

The machine glows brightly. Sava covers his eyes.

TESLA

The present is theirs; the future, for which I have really worked, is mine.

A ray of light reaches out from the machine and envelopes Tesla. He lurches back, flat against the bed, holding his chest in pain. His body glows so brightly that all there's left is fierce glow.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

A G-MAN breaks down the door and two other G-men rush in with their guns drawn. They scatter about the apartment, searching.

BEDROOM

There is no sign of Sava or the machine. Tesla lies on the bed in disarray, his hand clutches his chest. A G-man lifts it and feels for a pulse.

A noise catches the G-man's attention. He looks up as Jones enters.

G-MAN

He's dead, sir.

INT. WAREHOUSE

Jones has a phone receiver to his ear. He grins happily as he nods.

White seems perplexed as he examines an engineering diagram of a machine topped by three spheres.

Jones interrupts White.

JONES
They found the prototypes for the
Death Ray...

White seems overjoyed.

JONES
Both of them.

White looks haunted.

THE END