

FLIGHT

By

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freely adapted by

Steven Haworth

FLIGHT

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FLIGHT

*As always,
for Ruth,
but also for Charlie,
and Ukraine*

FLIGHT

CHARACTERS

SERAFIMA VLADIMIROVNA KORZUKHINA, a young matron, fleeing from Petersburg.

SERGEI PAVLOVICH GOLUBKOV, son of an idealist professor, fleeing from Petersburg.

AFRICANUS, Archbishop of Simferopol and Karasubazar, and alias the chemist **MAKHROV**.

PAISY, a monk.

AGED FATHER SUPERIOR

BAYEV, commander of a regiment of Buddenny Cavalry.

SOLDIER, in Buddenny Cavalry.

GRIGORY LUKYANOVICH CHARNOTA, Zaphorozhe Cossack, a cavalryman and Major General in the White Army and alias the pregnant woman **BARABANCHIKOVA**.

LYUSKA, a regimental nurse and General Charnota's mistress.

KRAPILIN, General Charnota's orderly, assassinated by his own eloquence.

DE BRISSARD, commander of a Hussar regiment of the White Army.

ROMAN VALERIANOVICH KLUDHOV, a general, member of the General Staff and Front Commander of the White Army of Southern Russia.

GOLOVAN, a Cossack Captain, Kludhov's adjutant.

COMMANDANT of the railway station.

STATIONMASTER

NIKOLAYEVNA, wife of Stationmaster.

OLKA, their four year old daughter.

PARAMON ILYICH KORZUKHIN, Serafima's husband, Vice Minister of Trade.

TIKHY, Chief of counter-intelligence.

SKUNSKY, Counter-intelligence officer.

GURIN, Counter-intelligence officer.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF of the White Armies.

MARIA KONSTANTINOVA, in a ticket booth.

FLIGHT

ARTUR ARTUROVICH, cockroach king.

OUTLANDISH MAN, a gambler on cockroach races.

TURKISH WOMAN, a doting mother.

GLAMOROUS PROSTITUTE

GREEK DON JUAN

ANTOINE GRISHENKO, Korzukhin's butler.

Monks, White staff officers, Cossacks in the convoy of Commander-in-Chief, British, French and Italian Sailors, Turkish and Italian police, Turkish and Greek street urchins, Armenian and Greek heads in windows, crowd in Constantinople.

The five principals are Serafima, Golubkov, Charnota, Kludhov, and Lyuska. The other roles require 5 male and 3 female actors (one a child).

SETTING

First Dream – Monastery, southern Russia, October, 1920.

Second Dream – Train Station, Front Headquarters, Crimea, early November 1920.

Third Dream – Interrogation Room, Counter Intelligence HQ, Crimea, 1920.

Fourth Dream – Palace, Sevastapol, Crimea, 1920.

Fifth Dream – Constantinople, the Bazaar, in the summer of 1921.

Sixth Dream – Constantinople, courtyard, dilapidated lodging, summer of 1921.

Seventh Dream - Paris in the autumn of 1921.

Eighth Dream - Constantinople in the autumn of 1921.

FLIGHT

Flight was produced by Open Fist Theatre Company in 2002 in Los Angeles, Martha Demson, Artistic Director. The production was directed, and lighting designed by Charles Otte. Set design, Bill Eigenbrodt and Meghan Rogers; projections, Robert Conner; sound design, Peter Carlstedt; costume design, Melanie Watnick; wig/hair/makeup design, Sugano; props, Ina Russell and Tisha Terrasini.

With the following cast:

Serafima – Arizona Brooks

Glubkov – Joe Zanetti

Charnota – Patrick Tuttle

Kludhov – Will Kepper

Ljuska – Tisha Terrasini

Bayev – Declan Galvin

Archbishop – Shawn Housmann

Krapilin – Shawn MacAulay

Stationmaster – Indrajit Sarkar

Nikolayavna – Jennifer Kenyon

Olka – Ananya Kepper

Parmon Ilyich Korzukhin – Dietrich Smith

Commander In Chief – Joe Hulser

De Brissard – Neil Larson

Tikhy – Peter Vance

Maria – Jennifer Kenyon

Artur Arturovich – Indrajit Sarkar

Greek Don Juan – Neil Larson

Antoine - Shawn MacAulay

Special thanks to Charles Otte, Martha Demson, Ina Russell Shumaker, Arizona Brooks, Katharine G. Shirey, and The Kaplan Brothers.

FLIGHT

FLIGHT

FIRST DREAM

Very softly, the chanting of monks from underground vaults, singing "Holy Saint Nicholas, pray to the Lord for our salvation..." Muffled cannon. Candles appear in the darkness. We see the interior of a monastery church. Black stone, candles, wooden benches, frosty gothic windows revealing a frigid dusk - bare trees swaying - sleet pelting the glass; and icons - images of saints with gold leaf crumbling. The chanting swells from below. Sound of artillery becomes thunderous, explosions nearby. The flickering candles move quickly toward the walls. Silence. The chanting begins again. A kerosene lantern is lit. Bundled figures appear. On a wooden bench, covered with a heavy black blanket lies BARABANCHIKOVA. Pacing under the window in a heavy coat is MAKHROV, old, long white beard, his head wrapped with a scarf. SERAFIMA, sits in the high chair of the Father Superior wearing a black fur coat. She is beautiful with black hair, her face a porcelain white, frozen with illness. At her feet, always attentive to her, sits GOLUBKOV, a young man, wearing black gloves and coat, spectacles, a wispy beard. He listens nervously.

GOLUBKOV. Serafima Vladimirovna. The singing, listen. They hide below, they have vaults. Catacombs. But why are they singing? (*He listens for sounds from outside.*) Do you realize it's been a month, Serafima? All these villages and cities; it only gets more bizarre. Now this church, these ... ancients! I swear I'm dreaming. Serafima - today, in the midst of all that horror - I felt nostalgia for St. Petersburg. Not even that. My study. My desk. My green shaded lamp. I love my green shaded lamp.

SERAFIMA. What are you talking about, Sergei Pavlovich?

GOLUBKOV. My green shaded lamp. I've had it forever.

FLIGHT

SERAFIMA. Sergei, it's dangerous to be homesick while a refugee.

GOLUBKOV. Of course, you're right. But if you could be in my study, on a winter night, webs of frost on the windows, the only light from my green shaded lamp on my desk. What an atmosphere. So cozy. One feels intimate with ... wrapped snugly in one's own thoughts if you know what I mean. (*Barabanchikova moans.*)

SERAFIMA. Perhaps you should have stayed in St. Petersburg, Sergei.

GOLUBKOV. Oh, my God, no. Impossible. Everything's smashed to bits. Besides, I've met you! (*She smiles.*) Yes, I know, I'm a kid, I'm a little fool but you'll see. I'll keep my word to you. I will get you to the Crimea and we'll find your husband. And I will be ecstatic! Well, not ecstatic, exactly. I mean you're so unbelievably beautiful one could die just by looking at you but still, I will have done something! I will miss you but I will know I have done a great thing, Serafima Vladimirovna.

BARABANCHIKOVA. Oh, Jesus Christ!

GOLUBKOV. Madame, are you suffering?

BARABANCHIKOVA. God, please -- !

GOLUBKOV. Is it time? Already? My God, she's going into labor!

BARABANCHIKOVA. No no no....

SERAFIMA. Dear, let us help you. We won't leave you without help. One of us will get to the village. There must be a midwife there.

GOLUBKOV. I'll go. Yes, I'm sure. (*A shell strikes nearby. A terrific explosion.*) My GOD! Having a baby in this madness. But ... no! I'll go! I'll go.

BARABANCHIKOVA. (*A high fluttery voice.*) No no don't! Please!

SERAFIMA. But why, my dear? You need help.

BARABANCHIKOVA. No. Please, just ... make him be quiet.

MAKHROV. Strange creature.

FLIGHT

BARABANCHIKOVA. Just make him shut up, I beg you.

MAKHROV. Very mysterious character this woman.

GOLUBKOV. *(To Makhrov.)* What are you saying?

MAKHROV. These are treacherous times. Who knows what's going on. A pregnant woman stretched out in a church....

(Suddenly silence, the singing stops. A monk, PAISY, appears out of nowhere, frantic.)

PAISY. Get your papers ready! Good people! They're coming! God help us! *(The refugees take out their passports. BAYEV, followed by a SOLDIER of the Budenny Red cavalry holding a lantern, rush in. They are spattered in mud and soaked and frenzied.)*

BAYEV. These god damn monks! I'm going to stand them up against a wall! Paint the black stones red! You! *(Bayev has already grabbed Paisy and slams him up against the wall, slaps him to the ground, stands him up, puts a gun to his head, slaps him to the ground again, stands him up, puts a gun to his head.)* Where's the stair to the bell tower?!

PAISY. There! Over there! Please!

BAYEV. *(To Soldier.)* Go! *(Soldier goes.)* The light in the bell tower?

PAISY. What? *(Bayev slaps Paisy down, stands him up, points the gun at his head.)* I'm sorry I don't know what you...!

BAYEV. There was a fucking light in the bell tower! You were signaling the Whites!

PAISY. No! I swear to you!

BAYEV. If he finds anything up there I'm putting a bullet in every one of your moth-eaten heads! Including Old Grey Beard! I'll splash his brains! Were you swinging lanterns?!

PAISY. NO! God forbid! *(Bayev slaps Paisy down and storms around the room.)*

BAYEV. Who are these, then? You said there was no one here but you monks.

PAISY. Refugees! They're refugees!

BAYEV. But running from who? That's the question.

FLIGHT

SERAFIMA. We were caught in the shelling in the village, comrade.

BAYEV. *(He looks at her. Pause.)* What did you call me?
(He drags her to her feet by her hair.)

SERAFIMA. *(Breathless.)* Comrade.

GOLUBKOV. What are you doing? *(Bayev points his gun at Golubkov while continuing to look at Serafima.)*

BAYEV. Black hair. *(He smells her hair.)* Pale though. Very pale. Are you ill?

SERAFIMA. I . . . it's nothing.

BAYEV. Typhus?

SERAFIMA. No. I'm sure not. It will pass. This woman . . . is going into labor. Comrade. *(Bayev releases Serafima's hair and turns his attention to Barabanchikova. He picks up her papers from on top of her blanket.)*

BAYEV. Fine place to bring a brat into the world. You're timing's not so good, is it? Where's poppa? *(Reads the passport.)*

Barabanchikova . . . married.

(Barabanchikova moans. Bayev throws down the papers.)

BAYEV. *(To Makhrov)* You. Grandpa. Papers.

MAKHROV. Yes. Here, comrade. I am a chemist from Mariupol.

BAYEV. Another chemist. We keep running into chemists at the front.

MAKHROV. I don't know what you mean. I was in the town buying produce. *(Soldier returns.)*

SOLDIER. Comrade Bayev. I found nothing in the tower. But I saw . . . *(Whispers in Bayev's ear.)*

BAYEV. Are you sure?

SOLDIER. It's a regiment. But it's dark. I can't tell . . .

BAYEV. Christ! *(He throws Makhrov's papers back at him. To the refugees:)* We'll have to do this later. Don't go anywhere! It is very dangerous out there, children. But we'll be back. To protect you from the Whites. *(A wolfish smile. He walks over to Paisy and points the gun at his head.)* So the monks aren't taking sides in the war?

FLIGHT

PAISY. No, comrade!

BAYEV. Just praying? But who do you pray for? The Black Baron? The Soviet government?

PAISY. I will pray for you, comrade!

BAYEV. *(Laughs.)* Oh. Well. Thanks. *(Bayev makes a quick getsure and Paisy falls down without being touched. Bayev starts out, followed by the Soldier.)* Aur revoir, les enfants!
(Bayev and the Soldier exit. Muffled sound of commands, then silence. Paisy crosses himself and disappears. Makhrov looks out the window.)

MAKHROV. They're gone. And the Bible says: "And he causeth them to receive a mark on their hands and on their brow." Those five-pointed stars. You see? It's very clear.

GOLUBKOV. What are they doing here in the first place?! This is supposed to be White territory! We heard this was General Krapchikov's sector!

BARABANCHIKOVA. *(High breathless voice.)* So it was.

GOLUBKOV. What happened?

BARABANCHIKOVA. I'll tell you what happened. General Krapchikov likes playing cards more than he likes being a general. In fact, General Krapchikov is not a general at all but a FUCKING SWINE! Pardon, madame!

GOLUBKOV. I don't ...

BARABANCHIKOVA. They send him a wire that says the Reds are flanking him and the moron doesn't decode the message! He can't be bothered! He'd rather play cards! He likes vint! Declared a slam in hearts! He was very proud!

MAKHROV. This really is quite a character, this woman.

GOLUBKOV. Excuse me, but you seem rather well informed. We heard that General Charnota's headquarters was here in Korchulan.

BARABANCHIKOVA. So it was.

GOLUBKOV. But where are they?

BARABANCHIKOVA. Gone! In hell! Into the dung heap!

MAKHROV. Madame, excuse me, but how do you know so much?

FLIGHT

BARABANCHIKOVA. Your Eminence, I beg your pardon, but how do you know so little?

MAKHROV. What? Your Eminence? Why do you ...?

BARABANCHIKOVA. Oh, never mind! You bore me. Everyone piss off! Let me dilate in peace!

MAKHROV. (*Nervous chuckle.*) Very mysterious creature.
(*Paisy runs in all a flutter.*)

PAISY. God only knows what is coming in our direction! Pray good people! Pray that we live through the night!

(*He disappears. The rest wait nervously. Silence. Then the sound of horses. Lights flicker in the window. Makhrov and Golubkov stand on a bench to look out.*)

SERAFIMA. (*Whispers.*) Is it a fire, Sergei?

GOLUBKOV. Torches. Troops. I think they're White, Serafima Vladimirovna. Yes, I see epaulettes!

MAKHROV. Epaulettes.

GOLUBKOV. Yes, epaulettes! Serafima, we're in the hands of the Whites again! Thank God!

BARABANCHIKOVA. As if the Reds can't pin on epaulettes, disguise themselves as Whites! Where the hell do you think you are, a salon in Petersburg?! Keep quiet until you know what's going on!

GOLUBKOV. They can do that? Just pin on epaulettes? Isn't that cheating? I mean, how do their own men know not to shoot them, I don't ...

BARABANCHIKOVA. Please shut up, I'm begging you now!
(*Sighs.*) What color trousers are they wearing? (*Church bells suddenly ring out.*) Oh, Christ, now these idiot monks!

GOLUBKOV. The trousers are red. But some are blue with red stripes.

BARABANCHIKOVA. Blue with red stripes. Are you sure?
(*The sound of a command: "First squadron, dismount!"*)

BARABANCHIKOVA. (*A suddenly very male voice.*) No. It's him?! Holy Christ! Kid, you can shout now! You can shout your fool bloody head off! (*Barabanchikova, throws off the horsehair*

FLIGHT

cloth and jumps up. It is GENERAL CHARNOTA. He wears a White Army general's uniform with a Circassian coat. He pockets a revolver he was holding and flings open the door.)

CHARNOTA. Hussars! Cossaks! Cavalry! Good to see you!
Colonel de Brissard, come in!

(LYUSKA, Charnota's mistress, runs through the door and into Charnota's arms. She has short-cropped hair, a black leather jacket, breeches and high riding boots with spurs. She kisses Charnota passionately.)

LYUSKA. Grisha! You got away! I don't believe it! Amazing!
Amazing man! *(She shouts out the door.)* Hussars! General
Charnota is here! He escaped the Reds! *(Cheers from outside.)*

LYUSKA. We were coming here to say mass for you, Grisha! I'm
not kidding! *(COLONEL DE BRISSARD and KRAPILIN,
Charnota's orderly, enter and stare at Charnota.)*

LYUSKA. Colonel de Brissard, look!

DE BRISSARD. Yes, I see.

CHARNOTA. I had death panting his cold breath in my face.
LISTEN UP! I'm in Krapchikov's headquarters. He makes me sit
down to a game of vint, the bastard. Fucking slam in hearts. Then -
all hell rains down! Machine guns ripping the walls in half. Reds
everywhere. Somehow I shoot my way out, sneak through the
alleys, make it to this house, this schoolmaster's house,
Barabanchikova. I stick a gun in his eye, "Give me your papers!"
So he does, but he's so god damn flustered he gives me the wrong
papers! Gives me his wife's papers! And there's a stamp! It's
certified! She's pregnant! I make my way here, the Reds are
everywhere, I cover myself with a cloth; I have to pretend I'm in
labor! *(Lyuska laughs.)* Then click click click, in they come.

LYUSKA. Who?

CHARNOTA. Buddeny Cavalry.

LYUSKA. Oh, shit.

CHARNOTA. The officer bends over me, reads the passport. I'm
waiting. My pistol's cocked under the blanket. Just lift the blanket
you Bolshivik bastard, I've got a red bullet just for you, they'll bury

FLIGHT

you with music. But he never lifts the cloth! (*Lyuska shrieks. Embraces him. Charnota pulls free and goes to the door.*)

CHARNOTA. Cossaks! Welcome! Your general is back! (*Cheers from outside.*) **LOUDER!** (*Louder cheers from outside. Charnota laughs, exits and Lyuska follows.*)

DE BRISSARD. Well, he always was a lucky bastard. I feel like celebrating. I feel jubilant. I feel like shooting a gun. (*Paisy suddenly appears looking relieved and cheerful.*) Oh, look, a monk. Was that you ringing the bells, Father?

PAISY. Yes, comrade! I mean, yes, my son! (*De Brissard slaps Paisy down, stands him up, points a gun at his head.*)

DE BRISSARD. Now everyone knows we're here. For miles around. Who are these then?

PAISY (*Weeping.*) Refugees! Refugees!

DE BRISSARD. (*Looks at Makhrov, points his gun at him.*) Well, I don't have to ask for your papers, you're a Red if I ever saw one. You should have pulled out with the others, comrade. (*Cocks his pistol*)

PAISY. No no, what are you doing?! That is His Eminence! That is Archbishop Africanus!

DE BRISSARD. What are you blubbering about?

PAISY. Look! (*Makhrov is throwing off his coat and scarf. He is revealed: ARCHBISHOP AFRICANUS in full regalia.*)

DE BRISSARD. Well. Your Eminence. What a surprise.

ARCHBISHOP AFRICANUS. I came to bless your army, Colonel, and was caught here when the Reds arrived. Thanks be to God the monks were able to provide me with documents!

DE BRISSARD. Yes, well, that's fine. (*He turns to Serafima.*) And who are you?

SERAFIMA. These are my false papers, this is my true passport. I am Serafima Vladimirovna Korzukhina. My husband is the Vice-Minister of Trade. I am going to meet him in the Crimea.

DE BRISSARD. An archbisop, vice-minister of trade. (*To Golubkov.*) Who are you, a duke?

FLIGHT

GOLUBKOV. No, I am certainly not a duke. My name is Sergei Golubkov. I am the son of the famous idealist philosopher Alexei Golubkov. I am an assistant professor in Petersburg but have fled to the Whites because it is impossible to work any longer in Petersburg. I met Serafima Vladimirovna on the train and have made it my sacred duty to help her find her husband in the Crimea.

DE BRISSARD. Well, this is delightful. Aren't there any Reds here? Don't I get to shoot anybody? (*The FATHER SUPERIOR appears out of nowhere and, followed by Monks holding candles, speaks to Archbishop Africanus.*)

FATHER SUPERIOR. My brothers in Christ! It is our blessing to have delivered His Holy Eminence out of the hands of the godless socialists! (*They give Africanus his mitre.*) Take back thy sacred staff, my shepherd, and lead your flock once more!

ARCHBISHOP AFRICANUS. "O God of hosts, look down from heaven and visit this vine and the vineyard which the right hand hath planteth!" (*The Monks sing.*)

DE BRISSARD. Oh, Christ. (*Serafima lies down on the stone floor. Charnota and Lyuska enter.*)

CHARNOTA. Excuse me, holy fathers, what do you think you're doing? There's no time for this. (To Africanus.) Your Eminence! The Reds will be back. They're breathing down our necks. We must get to General Kludhov's headquarters in the Crimea! (*Africanus gestures and the Monks stop singing.*) We're running away, do you understand?

ARCHBISHOP AFRICANUS. I see, I see. May the mercy of the Lord find us in our hour of need! Do you have an extra carriage? (*Africanus vanishes.*)

CHARNOTA. Krapilin! I need a map. And more light! (*Krapilin the orderly provides the map and holds up a lantern for Charnota who studies the map.*) No. We're finished.

LYUSKA. Oh, that Krapchikov!

CHARNOTA. No, wait! Here! An opening here. De Brissard! Take your regiment to Almanaika. Hopefully the Reds will follow. Then ride like hell to Baba Guy. Cross the river, I don't care if it's

FLIGHT

up to your eyes. I'll start with the Don Cossaks right after you. We'll go through the Molokan villages and reunite with you at the Arbut Spur. You have five minutes to get moving.

DE BRISSARD. Yes, general!

CHARNOTA. Is that cognac?

DE BRISSARD. Yes, General.

CHARNOTA. Good man.

(De Brissard hands over the flask. Charnota takes a swig.)

GOLUBKOV. General. Serafima Vladimirovna is ill. We are going to the Crimea. Do you have a field hospital?

CHARNOTA. A what?

GOLUBKOV. A field hospital.

CHARNOTA. You are some kind of academic or something?

GOLUBKOV. Assistant professor, yes.

CHARNOTA. Yes, we have a field hospital. And an x-ray machine. And a harem of nurses. And green-shaded lamps! Intellectuals. Christ!

LYUSKA. Grisha. We have to take them. Look at her. She's beautiful. The Reds ... you know what the Reds will do.

GOLUBKOV. Oh, my God. Serafima! We have to go! Get up!

SERAFIMA. But, Sergei, you know I think I really am quite ill. Let me rest here. The stones are cool and I feel so hot.

DE BRISSARD. Madame, how shall I put this? Krapilin. You're eloquent. Persuade the woman.

KRAPILIN. Persuade her.

DE BRISSARD. You're a bad soldier but you can talk. Do something useful.

KRAPILIN. Lady. Can you hear me?

SERAFIMA. Yes ... yes.

KRAPILIN. You can't stay here. The Reds will rape you until you're dead. Do you understand?

SERAFIMA. Yes, yes, thank you. Just let me rest here.

GOLUBKOV. My God, what is this?!

LYUSKA. Oh, it's typhus. No doubt about it.

DE BRISSARD. It's time. We're going.

FLIGHT

LYUSKA. Krapilin, pick her up. Drag her if you have to!

KRAPILIN. Yes, ma'am.

GOLUBKOV. Thank you! *(Krapilin and Golubkov lift up Serafima.)*

LYUSKA. Put her in a carriage! *(Golubkov, Krapilin, Serafima and Lyuska exit.)*

CHARNOTA. *(Polishing off the cognac, looks at his watch.)* Ah. Time to go. Aur revoir, les enfants. *(Father Superior appears from the darkness.)*

FATHER SUPERIOR. White General. Where are you going? We gave you sanctuary. Won't you defend us?

CHARNOTA. Now don't make me feel bad, Father. We can't defend ourselves, let alone you.

FATHER SUPERIOR. We saved your life, General.

CHARNOTA. Tie up the bells. Go to the catacombs. Study Marx! Good bye. *(Charnota vanishes. We hear him outside: "Mount Hussars!" The sound of hooves. Silence. The Father Superior stands frozen. Paisy appears next to him, frantic.)*

PAISY. Father Superior. The Reds are coming back. The Whites are gone. We rang the bells. We rang for the Whites, Father! What will become of us?! Will we wear the red crown of martyrdom?!

FATHER SUPERIOR. The Archbishop?

PAISY. Gone with the Whites!

FATHER SUPERIOR. He abandons his flock. Unworthy shepherd. Into the catacombs! Pray my brothers! Strike the stones with prayer! *(Father Superior and Paisy vanish. The Monks recede into darkness slowly, singing. We hear the chanting of the Monks, praying for salvation. "Holy Saint Nicholoas, entreat God for us." Their voices become increasingly jagged with hysteria. Darkness devours the monastery. The First Dream fades.)*

SECOND DREAM

The waiting room of a large railway station in the Northern Crimea slowly emerges from the darkness. Huge windows upstage.

FLIGHT

Through the windows a dark night with lamps over the railway platform outside like street lamps and shining like blue electric moons. A terrible unseasonable frost has hit the Crimea, unprecedented for early November. It has paralyzed the Sivash, Chongar, Perekop, and this station. All icebound. Through the frosty windows are twisting strange reflections, like flickering tongues of fire, of the passing trains. Portable iron stoves are glowing red and kerosene lamps are on the tables. In the depths of the room, over the exit onto the main platform, is a sign: "Operations Center". Behind a glass partition stands a green lamp, and the two horns of the station master's lantern gleam like a monster's eyes. On the wall nearby is a faded and crumbling icon of St. George. Before him is a lampada of various colors. The hall is occupied by WHITE STAFF OFFICERS, most of them in fur hats with ear flaps. Still, they shiver. Lots of field telephones that ring and flash multi-colored lights. Ordnance maps with flags and typewriters litter the tables. The staff has been headquartered here at this station for three days and nights and nobody has slept but they continue to work like automatons. But one sees both fear and hope flash across their faces whenever they turn in the direction of a certain man. He sits on a high stool: ROMAN VALERYANOVICH KLUDHOV. The man's face is white as bone, his hair is black and parted in an indestructible officer's parting. He appears younger than those around him except for his eyes, which are ancient. He wears a soldier's great coat but the belt is fastened like a sash. He has cloth epaulettes with the black zig-zag of the general's rank. There is a hard officer's cap on his head, dirty with a tarnished cockade and mittens on his hands. He has no gun or blade. There is something deeply wrong with this man. He is sick to the bone. He frowns, twitches, speaks with strange shifts in intonation. He asks questions to himself and provides his own answers. When he smiles he does not so much smile as simply bare his teeth. He is a very terrible and sick man. Near Kludhov, at a table with several phones, is his Cossak captain GOLOVAN, writing. He is efficient and utterly devoted to Kludhov.

FLIGHT

KLUDHOV. *(Dictating to Golovan.)* Comma. But Frunze does not oblige us by playing the part of an imaginary enemy at maneuvers. Stop. This is not a game of chess, and not yet our unforgettable and glorious Tsarskoye Selo! Stop. Signed General Kludhov. Full stop.

GOLOVAN. *(Hands what he has written to an Officer.)* Code and address to the Commander-in-Chief. *(Officer departs. Staff Officers are talking frantically into the telephones and strangely lit by their lights.)*

FIRST STAFF OFFICER. Yes. Budenny Cavalry ... yes ... the train ... flames.

SECOND STAFF OFFICER. Tagamash ... Tagamash ...

THIRD STAFF OFFICER. Karpov Ravine ...

FIRST STAFF OFFICER. Monks ... a slaughter ... yes, the town in flames, in flames.

GOLOVAN. *(Handing Kludhov a phone.)* Your Excellency.

KLUDHOV. *(Into telephone.)* Yes. No. Yes. I see. *(Hangs up.)* Get the Commandant.

GOLOVAN. The Commandant! *(A running echo of voices: "Commandant! Commandant!" The station COMMANDANT appears. He is exhausted, pale, wears a red cap, terrified. He faces Kludhov.)*

KLUDHOV. Well, it's a mystery. This train, this armored train, bound for Tagamash, it keeps refusing to appear. An hour now I'm waiting, it's a mystery.

COMMANDANT. The Stationmaster says the train cannot get through. He insists it's impossible.

KLUDHOV. Get the Stationmaster. *(A running echo of voices: "Stationmaster! Stationmaster!")*

KLUDHOV. *(To Commandant.)* You seem to not understand. This is how tragedy begins. A train. It's supposed to move. To transport - well, an army for example. And yet it refuses. Utter stasis. It's unnatural. The world is out of joint. Tragedy begins. *(He rings a bell. TIKHY, a menacing counter-intelligence officer, appears calmly beside Kludhov.)* Love. Everything comes from

FLIGHT

love. And nothingness comes from its absence. Nobody loves us and our tragedies begin there. Like in the theatre. Do you go to the theatre? Well, don't bother, what can it teach you now that you don't already know? *(Pause.)* Is that stove smoking? Are there fumes?

GOLOVAN. No, there are no fumes. *(The STATIONMASTER appears before Kludhov. He walks and talks though he has been dead for the past 24 hours.)*

KLUDHOV. You told him it is impossible to move the train?

STATIONMASTER. Yes, sir, Your Excellency, it is physically impossible. All the tracks are jammed up with other trains and the points frozen. They can't be moved.

KLUDHOV. Frozen, yes. Strange for this time of year.

STATIONMASTER. Indeed, Your Excellency, with all respect, no one has ever seen such a thing in early November.

KLUDHOV. Another stove is smoking. *(Suddenly furious.)* I can't stand these fumes!

GOLOVAN. Put out the stove! *(Officers immediately rush to douse the stove nearest Kludhov.)*

STATIONMASTER. Fumes, yes, fumes.

KLUDHOV. There's something odd about your attitude. You have a certain Bolshevik air about you. Do you know that about yourself? Don't be afraid. A man must have convictions. We must all feel free to express our convictions even if there is a war and dead bodies litter the ground like firewood.

STATIONMASTER. I have children, little children, Excellency, how can you imagine such things of me, Red sympathies, no no no. In the time of the Emperor ... I wept at the news of his demise ... Olya and Pavlik, tiny kids, adorable, you'll see. I haven't slept for thirty hours. Two nights. Ask God if you don't believe me! Chairman of the state Duma, Mikhail Vladimirovich Rodyzanko is a personal acquaintance of mine. Not that I like his politics his politics mind you! His politics are highly suspicious, highly suspicious, I have little children. *(Pause.)*

FLIGHT

KLUDHOV. Yes, I understand you completely. A sincere man. Without love - you must have love to fight a war! I am not loved. My good man: get the sappers. Clear the tracks. Yes? *(To Tikhy.)* If the train is not here in fifteen minutes, arrest the Commandant and hang the Stationmaster from the semaphore. Hang a sign on his neck: "Sabotage." *(A delicate waltz is heard in the distance.)*
A waltz?

STATIONMASTER. General, please, I have little children!

KLUDHOV. Excellent. They will keep you young. *(Tikhy leads off Commandant and Stationmaster.)* A waltz?

GOLOVAN. General Charnota is arriving, Your Excellency.

STATIONMASTER. *(From behind the glass partition he shouts into a telephone.)* Kristopher Fyodorovich! I beg you! Do everything you can, in the name of God! Move all the trains on tracks 3 and 4 to Tagamash. I don't care how! You'll have sappers, yes! Now Kristopher Fyodorovich, in the name of God!
(His wife, NIKOLAYEVNA, appears beside him.)

NIKOLAYEVNA. Vasya. What's going on?

STATIONMASTER. Oh, we're in trouble, Nikolayevna! Bring Olka here. Right now. Now! ARE YOU DEAF?! DO IT! NOW!

NIKOLAYEVNA. Olka? Yes, yes, alright. *(She disappears. The waltz ends. Charnota bursts through the doors and scans the room. He sees Kludhov and marches up to face him. Lyuska enters and remains by the door.)*

CHARNOTA. We're here. Shot to bits. But here. From the Chongar Defile, Your Excellency. *(Silence. He points through the door.)* What is this? What are you doing? Roman, you're a member of the General Staff, for God's sake.

KLUDHOV. Seeing you reminds me of a dream I had. There was a field of blue cornflowers. You were with me. The wind blew the pollen, this blue powder in our faces. Then the field was a million open mouths, the open mouths of children, as far as you could see, a sea of black screaming waves. I can have a dream like this and yet I possess no imagination to speak of. But somewhere it seems there is an imagination that possesses me. *(Silence.)*

FLIGHT

CHARNOTA. Yes, all right, but the thing is you must stop this, Roman.

KLUDHOV. What do you want?

CHARNOTA. *(Sighs, shrugs.)* Orders?

KLUDHOV. Go to the Karpov Ravine. Make a stand there.

CHARNOTA. Yes, sir. *(Charnota walks back to Lyuska.)*

LYUSKA. Well?

CHARNOTA. Karpov Ravine. Totally indefensible.

LYUSKA. Grisha ...

CHARNOTA. I asked for orders. I got them.

LYUSKA. I'm coming with you.

CHARNOTA. You'll be killed.

LYUSKA. Then finally I will have a reason to thank God! Come on! *(She stomps out.)*

CHARNOTA. *(Smiles.)* This woman. *(Charnota exits. There is a sudden sound of a train moving. Metal knashing and screaming. Nikolayevna bursts in with OLKA, a girl of four, wrapped in a shawl.)*

NIKOLAYEVNA. Here she is! I've got her!

STATIONMASTER. *(Into phone.)* Kristopher! You did it?! It's here?! Kristopher, God bless you! Thank you, thank you! *(Stationmaster picks up Olka and runs to Kludhov. Tikhy and Commandant are there.)*

KLUDHOV. My Bolshevik friend! Success?

STATIONMASTER. Yes, Your Excellency! The train got through, thanks be to God!

KLUDHOV. Wonderful. Why the child?

STATIONMASTER. My Olka Olechka. Brilliant child.

KLUDHOV. Brilliant, yes, I see light shooting out of her head in all directions. Does she like sweets? I have caramels. The doctor says they will help me not smoke but it doesn't work. I smoke anyway. Bad for my nerves, he says. *(Wagging his finger.)* Don't smoke, Olechka!

STATIONMASTER. *(Laughing nervously.)* No no ...

KLUDHOV. Have a sweet.

FLIGHT

STATIONMASTER. Take it, Olka!

OLKA. Merci!

STATIONMASTER. You see! A clever child.

KLUDHOV. Take them all. Here. Why doesn't she smile? That's the whole point of a child. *(Kludhov is holding out two fistfuls of caramels to Olka. She can't take them all, they fall to the floor. Stationmaster scrambles to pick them up.)*

STATIONMASTER. The General is kind! Say merci, Olka!

OLKA. Merci! *(Stationmaster bows. They disappear.)*

KLUDHOV. Hmmmmm. *(The waltz is heard again. PARMON ILYICH KORZUKHIN appears. He wears a fine fur coat, carries a briefcase, and is deeply annoyed at the cold. His eyes dart about the room. He hands Golovan his calling card. Golovan hands the card to Kludhov.)*

KLUDHOV. Speak.

KORZUKHIN. I am Parmon Ilyich Korzukhin, Vice-Minister of Trade. I have been sent by the Central Committee of Ministers to ask you three questions. I have just arrived from Sevastapol.

KLUDHOV. What is the first question, Vice-Minister Korzukhin?

KORZUKHIN. The first question is: what is the fate of the five workers arrested in Sevastapol on your command?

KLUDHOV. Ah, you arrived on the opposite platform. Captain Golovan. Be so kind as to present the prisoners to the gentleman.

GOLOVAN. Yes, Your Excellency. *(Golovan escorts Korzukhin upstage through the door onto the platform and points up. Korzukhin starts. They return.)*

KLUDHOV. Is the first question answered to your satisfaction? Excellent. Question number two!

KORZUKHIN. *(Nervously.)* The second question has direct bearing on my ministry. Some freight has been held up at this station. I must ask your assistance in getting it through to Sevastapol.

KLUDHOV. This freight must be important. What is it?

KORZUKHIN. Furs for export.

FLIGHT

KLUDHOV. Furs! For export! Which trains bear these furs, Vice-Minister?

KORZUKHIN. (*Handing him a paper.*) The details are outlined here, so please you.

KLUDHOV. Captain Golovan. Have the trains indicated here moved to a dead track, doused with kerosene, and burned.

(*Golovan takes the paper and vanishes.*) Question number three!

KORZUKHIN. Good God!

KLUDHOV. Come come, I'm a busy man.

KORZUKHIN. I ... the situation at the front?

KLUDHOV. Ah. The situation at the front. The situation. Well, what can be the situation at the front? Not as much fun as you might think. They're firing big guns that make a lot of noise. They have conspired to set smoking stoves in my headquarters to fumigate the front commander. The Commander-in-Chief kindly dispatched some Kuban Cossacks as a gift but they are barefoot and chatter excitedly about fire and angels. No restaurant, no girls, no music. We're slowly extinguished by a green boredom and sit on stools like parrots. (*Suddenly venomous.*) The situation? Go to Sevastapol, you supercilious fop, and tell your civilian swine friends to pack their bags! The Reds will be upon us tomorrow! And tell them their foreign whores will have to go without sable coats this winter! Export Furs! Christ!

KORZUKHIN. (*Backing away.*) This is outrageous. It will be my honor to report this to the Commander-in-Chief.

KLUDHOV. (*Instantly bored.*) Well, God speed.

KORZUKHIN. (*As he's ushered out by Golovan.*) When is the next train to Sevastapol? (*The sound of a train arriving.*)

STATIONMASTER. Special train from Kerman Kemalchi!

KLUDHOV. Officers! Attention! (*Everyone stands at attention. Through the door which Korzukhin has just exited appear two COSSAK GUARDS in crimson shrouds. The COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF of the White Armies enters in a tall fur hat, a long coat, Circassian sword. Archbishop Africanus enters behind him tossing blessings.*)

FLIGHT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. Good evening, gentlemen!

STAFF OFFICERS. Good evening, Excellency!

KLUDHOV. I beg your permission, Your Excellency, to make my report in private.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. Yes. Please excuse us, gentlemen. (To Africanus.) Archbishop, we must speak in private.

ARCHBISHOP. In a blessed hour! Blessings upon you!
(*Everyone leaves except the Commander and Kludhov.*)

KLUDHOV. Three hours ago the enemy took Yushun. The Reds are in the Crimea.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. The end?

KLUDHOV. The end. (*Silence.*)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. Your Eminence! (*Archbishop enters.*) Abandoned by the western powers, deceived by the Poles, our only hope at this, our blackest hour, is divine intervention!

ARCHBISHOP. (*Realizing the catastrophe.*) Aaaaaiiiieeeee!

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. Pray Holy Father!

ARCHBISHOP. (*Before the icon of St. George.*) Almighty God! Why have you forsaken us? Why punish us further, your own glorious army fighting in defense of your anointed son?! The power of the cross is with us, our faith is untrammelled, our arms are renewed with the blood of Christ...!

KLUDHOV. Excuse me, Your Eminence, but why annoy the Almighty with this? Really, let's not be pests. He's obviously abandoned us. And if not, if he's actually on our side, he's lost his touch don't you think?

ARCHBISHOP. What are you saying?!

KLUDHOV. The water of the Sivash seeped away, the bottom froze over, it's never happened before. The Bolsheviks marched across like it was a ballroom floor. What are we to think?

ARCHBISHOP. What are you saying?!

KLUDHOV. I'm saying St. George is laughing his fucking ass off!

ARCHBISHOP. BLASPHEMY!

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. I absolutely object to this ... tone, General! It's pessimism like this that has cost us the war!

FLIGHT

KLUDHOV. I'm just saying, why aggravate the Old Man more than we have already?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. I'm warning you! I told you to take a holiday. Why didn't you take that spa cure this summer as I advised you?

KLUDHOV. But then who would have fulfilled your murderous orders at Perekop? Who would have sent Charnota to certain death at the Karpov Ravine? Who would have done the hangings, the hangings, Your Excellency?! Who?!

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. What is this?!

ARCHBISHOP. Look down upon them, Lord, cleanse their hearts! "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to destruction!"

KLUDHOV. Priests. Their genius for stating the obvious never ceases to amaze me.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. Enough. This is not the time.

KLUDHOV. No. Indeed not. You must make for Sevastapol with all speed.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. Quite. (*Presents him with an envelope.*) Please open this at once.

KLUDHOV. Ah. You foresaw this. Excellent. "Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace!" A train for the Commander! Convoy! Officers!

STATIONMASTER. (*Into a phone.*) Kerman Kemalchi! A train! Give the signal! The signal! (*The Cossak Convoy and Staff Officers appear.*)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. The Commander of the Front will read my orders! May the Lord God send you all strength to endure the evil times in Russia. I must tell you now the Crimea is all we have. God bless you! (*The door bursts open and De Brissard enters, his head wrapped in bandages, he salutes the Commander.*)

DE BRISSARD. Long live the dead Tsar and you too, Your Imperial Majesty! (*sings*) "Countess for a single rendezvous, I should be glad to name to you, and only you ..."*

*From the Tchaikovsky opera *The Queen of Spades.*

FLIGHT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. Now what?

GOLOVAN. Colonel de Brissard, commander of a Hussar regiment, with head wound.

KLUDHOV. (*Muttering to himself.*) Chongar ... Chongar ... Christ.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. Put him on my train. We'll take him to Sevastapol. Come! (*Commander exits with his Convoy.*)

ARCHBISHOP. Lord! Lord! (*He throws a last blessing at the room*) Hear our prayers! (*Disappears.*)

DE BRISSARD. Pardon, Monsieur! "Countess, for a single rendezvous ..."

STAFF OFFICERS. Come on, Count. We're off to Sevastapol!

DE BRISSARD. All right, all right, pardon, pardon, on a train...? (*He vanishes.*)

KLUDHOV. Well, let's see what he has for us. (*He opens the envelope, reads. He slowly bares his teeth. To Golovan.*) Send a flyer to the Karpov Ravine. Orders are to break for Yalta. (*A murmuring of "Amen . . . thank God" is heard from the Staff Officers. Kludhov looks at them and they fall silent.*)

Also - to General Kulipov - break for Sevastapol, Festikov and the Kuban Cossaks - to Theodosia. Kalinin and the Don Cossaks - to Kurch. Charnota - to Sevastapol! Everyone to embark! Close the headquarters immediately. To Sevastapol. The Crimea is lost! (*To himself.*) Finished.

GOLOVAN. Couriers! Flyers! (*A mad flurry, as maps are rolled up, phones disappear. A train whistles, the sound of locomotives. The door bursts open and Serafima, Golubkov and Krapilin enter. Golubkov tries to restrain Serafima.*)

GOLUBKOV. Serafima Vladimirovna, think what you're doing! Stop! She's sick, she has typhus!

KRAPILIN. Typhus!

SERAFIMA. (*Screaming.*) Which one is Roman Kludhov?! (*Silence. Everyone freezes and stares at Serafima.*)

KLUDHOV. Let her in. I am Kludhov.

FLIGHT

GOLUBKOV. Don't listen! She's sick! Deranged!

KRAPILIN. Deranged!

SERAFIMA. We've been running for a month. Running, running like beggar children after you name, General. All one hears is Kludhov, Kludhov. The name echoes in our dreams. Kludhov! Our salvation! Finally - here you are at last, sitting on a stool. And outside - bags! Black bags! Hanging bags! Swinging bags! Beast! Jackal! Hyena!

GOLUBKOV. She's delirious! She has typhus!

(Kludhov rings. Tikhy and Gurin appear.)

SERAFIMA. Oh, well. They're coming, General. They're marching, they're marching here to drive you into the sea!

(The Officers murmur: "Ah, a communist!")

GOLUBKOV. No no! She is the wife of Vice-Minister Korzukhin! Please, don't pay any attention, she's mad, she's ill! She doesn't know what she's saying!

KLUDHOV. Excellent. Experience has taught me that when our people do know what they're saying they always tell lies.

GOLUBKOV. She is Korzukhina!

KLUDHOV. Stop! Wait wait wait. Korzukhina? Export furs? That scoundrel has a communist wife? There is a God. Find Korzukhin.

(Tikhy gestures to Gurin who vanishes. He approaches Serafima.)

TIKHY. *(Nicely.)* What is your name and patronymic?

SERAFIMA. Serafima . . . Serafima Vladimirovna.

(Gurin brings in a very wary Korzukhin.)

GOLUBKOV. Are you Paramon Ilyich Korzukhin?

KORZUKHIN. I am.

GOLUBKOV. Thank God! We've found you at last. We despaired that this moment might never arrive. I present your wife, Serafima Vladimirovna, from Petersburg! *(Golubkov bows and steps back. Korzukhin's eyes dart around, sensing a trap.)*

KORZUKHIN. I don't know any Serafima Vladimirovna. This woman is a stranger to me.

GOLUBKOV. What? NO!

FLIGHT

SERAFIMA. You deny me. Betrayal, of course. Filthy little rodent! *(She laughs.)*

KLUDHOV. Are you sure, Monsieur? She is very beautiful.

KORZUKHIN. This is blackmail. I am expecting no one from Petersburg, let alone a wife. Now if you'll excuse me.

KLUDHOV. Such sincerity. Well, you're a lucky man. Export Furs! RUN! *(Korzukhin vanishes.)*

GOLUBKOV. She is his wife! I can prove it to you! Interrogate us, I beg you!

KLUDHOV. Interrogate them, I beg you!

TIKHY. We'll take them to Sevastapol. *(Gurin grabs Serafima by the elbow. Officers take Golubkov.)*

GOLUBKOV. You are intelligent, educated, reasonable men! You will see!

SERAFIMA. A month on the road and only one decent man. Krapilin! The eloquent orderly. Can you not speak for us?! *(Serafima and Golubkov are dragged away. Krapilin marches up to Kludhov and plants himself in front of him.)*

KRAPILIN. Right! Yes, Your Excellency, yes, like it says in the books, you are a jackal. A jackal with a shiny face all crimson. You think you will win a war by hanging men? Why did you send us to be massacred at Perekop? One woman speaks, one woman has pity on your victims and now you sink your teeth into her! You send her off to God knows what. No one gets past you - no no no - grab the man, into the bag - hang him from a lamppost. Viper's spawn! Vulture! You feed on carrion!

TIKHY. Shall I remove him, Your Excellency?

KLUDHOV. No no, I like him. I think he makes a lot of sense about the nature of war.

TIKHY. *(Softly, to another Officer.)* Bring a board.

KLUDHOV. What's your name, soldier?

KRAPILIN. My name. My name is nothing. I'm nobody. Orderly Krapilin. But you are finished, this is the end of you! Wait there on your stool and see what happens. But no, you'll run like the rest.

FLIGHT

You'll run to Constantinople, you haven't got the guts to do anything but hang women and poor working men!

KLUDHOV. Not true, Orderly Krapilin. I marched to the Chongar Gat, with music, and was twice wounded.

KRAPILIN. Oh, Christ, no one gives a shit about your music!
(He spits on the floor. They both look at the spot near the foot of Kludhov's stool. Suddenly Krapilin recollects himself, turns white, and falls to his knees.)

KRAPILIN. Your Excellency! Forgive me, I was raving! Have mercy!

KLUDHOV. Oh, no no no, you were doing fine! But you finish badly. You're a bad soldier! On your knees? Hang him! Out of my sight! *(Two Officers instantly throw a black bag over Krapilin's head and drag him off.)*

GOLOVAN. *(Entering.)* Your Excellency's orders are carried out. The flyers have left.

KLUDHOV. To the train, then. Prepare me an escort and carriage. *(All but Kludhov disappear.)*

KLUDHOV. *(Into a phone.)* This is the Front Commander, General Kludhov. The officer in command of the armored train is to fire all along the line. Fire on Tagamash! Demolish the town as it goes. Then blow up the tracks behind and make for Sevastapol. Thank you. *(He puts down the receiver, sighs, and slumps on his stool. Sound of a train whistle.)* I'm ill I think. Yes, I'm really quite ill. *(There is a huge volley from the train. It is not so much heard as felt. The electricity goes out within the station. The frozen windows fall in. The platform is revealed - a line of blue electric moons. Beneath one of these is a hanging long black bag. Beneath it a plywood board with an inscription in charcoal: "Orderly Krapilin - a Bolshevik". On the next lamppost, another bag. Kludhov sits alone and looks at the hanged Krapilin.)*

KLUDHOV. Yes, I must be sick. But I don't know what ails me. *(Olka wanders in dazedly, lost in the chaos, she drags across the floor in heavy felt boots.)*

FLIGHT

STATIONMASTER. (*Searching through darkness and muttering, half alive*) That fool, Nikolayevna ... Olka ... where are you, darling? Olka! Where are you going, you silly goose. Come here now. (*Grabs her, picks her up*) Yes, I've got you, sweet girl. Don't ... don't look over there. (*Happy to be unnoticed, he vanishes with Olka into the darkness. Kludhov continues to look at the hanging bag.*)

KLUDHOV. (*Very softly.*) Don't look over there.
(*He continues to look. And the Second Dream comes to an end.*)

THIRD DREAM

A dull light. Autumn twilight. The counter-intelligence office in Sevastapol. One window, a writing desk, a settee. On the writing desk an electrical contraption. A pile of newspapers on a small table. A cabinet. Long and heavy curtains. The door opens and Gurin ushers in Golubkov.

GURIN. In here. (*He exits.*)

TIKHY. Please sit down, sir.

GOLUBKOV. Thank you.

TIKHY. You seem to me to be an educated man. I'm sure you understand then that it is essential to know what is true, what is false. My office provides our people with a service. The Reds, of course, say horrible things about our counter-intelligence officers. But the truth is our organization assumes a grave responsibility, one for which we often sacrifice our lives to protect our nation against the Bolshevik threat. Don't you agree?

GOLUBKOV. Oh, what that is, is yes, I mean to say is yes, that is to say ... (*He trails off. Pause.*)

TIKHY. Are you afraid of me?

GOLUBKOV. Yes!

TIKHY. But why? Have we hurt you on your way to Sevastapol?

GOLUBKOV. Oh, no I couldn't say that.

TIKHY. Were you interfered with in any way?

FLIGHT

GOLUBKOV. No no ...

TIKHY. Have I treated you with disrespect? Even now as your regard me distrustfully am I being discourteous, rude, threatening, *obstreperous* in any way? No. Yet you regard me as an enemy. Is it because I wear a uniform, sir? Because I am willing to die for my country, is that it?

GOLUBKOV. You amaze me, no no . . .

TIKHY. Well, sir, perhaps I'm being sensitive, but it seems to me, you're being just a trifle unjust. Cigarette?

GOLUBKOV. No, thank you.

TIKHY. (*Little pause.*) They're *excellent*. Turkish.

GOLUBKOV. I don't smoke.

TIKHY. Oh! I find smoking to be soothing, a ... balm, in troubled times. You don't mind if I ...

GOLUBKOV. No no, please . . .

TIKHY. Thank you, sir. (*He smokes.*)

GOLUBKOV. Please ...

TIKHY. Please?

GOLUBKOV. How is she?

TIKHY. Who?

GOLUBKOV. Serafima Vladamirovna! She was arrested with me at the station. This is all a misunderstanding! She is ill, very ill, she was deranged!

TIKHY. You seem to be in full anticipation of some calamity. What you really need is a cigarette. We will discuss her in a moment. Sir. (*Silence.*) STOP PLAYING THE ASSISTANT PROFESSOR YOU COMMUNIST BASTARD, I'M SICK OF THIS COMEDY! DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?! HOW DARE YOU SIT BEFORE ME! GET UP! ATTENTION!

GOLUBKOV. (*Jumping up.*) Oh, God!

TIKHY. I want your real name! Now!

GOLUBKOV. But that is my real name! Sergei Pavlovich Golubkov. I swear to you! (*Tikhy points a gun at Golubkov.*)

TIKHY. You don't seem to understand the situation. No one will help you here. I am your only help here, do you understand?

FLIGHT

GOLUBKOV. I understand!

TIKHY. I am your friend or your enemy, it all depends on your respect for the truth. You are an intellectual so you lead a life of devotion to the truth. Which is good, because see this? (*Turning a switch on the contraption, Tikhy holds up a needle which glows red hot.*) This needle? If you lie I will touch you with this needle! (*He turns off the needle.*)

GOLUBKOV. I haven't lied to you, I swear!

TIKHY. Don't speak. Only answer my questions. (*Tikhy puts away the gun, sits across from Golubkov and picking up a pen suddenly assumes the air of a bored bureaucrat.*) Sit. Name, patronymic and surname, please.

GOLUBKOV. Sergei Pavlovich Golubkov.

TIKHY. Residence?

GOLUBKOV. Petersburg.

TIKHY. Why did you leave Soviet Russia and come to the zone held by the Whites?

GOLUBKOV. Conditions made it impossible to work in Petersburg. I met Serafima Vladimirovna on the train and have made it my sacred duty to help her find her husband.

TIKHY. Why does she call herself, Serafima Vladimirovna?

GOLUBKOV. She is Serafima Vladimirovna!

TIKHY. Why does she claim to be the wife of Vice-Minister Korzukhin?

GOLUBKOV. She is the wife of Korzukhin!

TIKHY. He denied this in your presence at the station.

GOLUBKOV. I swear to you he's lying.

TIKHY. Why would he lie?

GOLUBKOV. I don't know. He was afraid. He sensed some danger.

TIKHY. From whom? (*Tikhy turns on the needle.*)

GOLUBKOV. What are you doing?! I'm telling you the truth!

TIKHY. Your nerves are in disarray. After all, I'm merely taking down your testimony. How long has Serafima Vladimirovna been a member of the communist party?

FLIGHT

GOLUBKOV. Oh, my God, this is impossible!

TIKHY. (*Placing a paper in front of Golubkov.*) Write down the evidence you have given. I'll dictate to make it easier. If you stop writing, I'll touch you with the needle. Understand? Now. Write. (*Tikhy speaks quickly, Golubkov writes frantically.*)

"I, Golubkov, Sergei Pavlovich, under interrogation at the counter-intelligence department of the staff of the front commander on this day of 11th November of this year of Our Lord 1920, bore witness that Serafima Vladimirovna Korzukhin, the wife of Parmon Ilyich Korzukhin" - DON'T STOP - "a member of the communist party, came from the city of Petersburg to the territory held by the Armed Forces of the South of Russia for the purpose of disseminating propaganda and establishing connection with the underground movement of Sevastapol." Signature. Excellent. (*Tikhy takes the paper and shuts off the machine.*) I thank you for your cooperation, Mister Golubkov. I'm quite satisfied of your personal innocence. Forgive me if I seemed a bit harsh earlier. You may go.

(*He rings. Gurin enters.*)

GURIN. Sir.

TIKHY. Show this man the way out and release him, he is free to go.

GURIN. This way.

(*Golubkov, shattered, goes out with Gurin, forgetting his hat.*)

TIKHY. Lieutenant Skusky! (*SKUSKY enters. Very somber.*)

What would you say this document is worth? How much would Korzukhin pay to buy his way out?

SKUSKY. (*Reads.*) Here, ten thousand rubles. In Constantinople, not so much. I'd say we need a written confession from his wife as well.

TIKHY. Find a reason to detain Korzukhin from boarding. I need half an hour.

SKUSKY. My share? (*Tikhy holds up two fingers.*) I'll send the boys now. Be quick about it. The cavalry is already preparing to embark. (*Exits. Tikhy rings. Gurin enters.*)

TIKHY. The prisoner Korzukhina. Is she conscious?

FLIGHT

GURIN. She's coming around.

TIKHY. Bring her. *(Gurin exits then returns with Serafima. She is dazed with fever. Gurin leaves.)*

TIKHY. You're ill, madame? I won't keep you. Please sit. Here. That's fine. *(Serafima sits.)* Now be so kind as to admit you came here to spread propaganda and I shall let you go.

SERAFIMA. What? Propaganda? Oh Lord, why did I ever come here! *(There is the sound of a waltz coming nearer and with the waltz the sound of hooves.)*

SERAFIMA. Why are you playing a waltz?

TIKHY. Charnota's army going down to the quay. Don't change the subject. Your accomplice Golubkov has signed a confession stating you are here to disseminate propaganda.

SERAFIMA. *(Breathing with difficulty)* Leave the room, everyone get out of here and let me rest. I want to wake from this nightmare!

TIKHY. NO! Open your eyes! Read this. *(He shows the statement to Serafima.)*

SERAFIMA. *(Reading.)* Communist ... underground. He's out of his mind! *(She suddenly grabs the document and crumples the paper, dashes to the window and breaks the glass with her elbow.)*

SERAFIMA. HEY! HELP! CHARNOTA! Help me! A crime is being committed!

TIKHY. Gurin! *(Gurin rushes in and seizes Serafima.)* Get that document from her! God damn you! *(The waltz breaks off, suddenly a head under a high fur hat appears at the window.)*

CHARNOTA. Hey. What's going on here?

(Yelling, banging in the outer hallway. Charnota enters, dressed in a felt cloak and is followed by two of his guards. Skusky runs in. Gurin lets go of Serafima.)

SERAFIMA. Charnota! Thank God! Help us. Look what they are doing! Look what they made him write! *(Charnota takes the document, reads.)*

TIKHY. I would request you vacate the office of counter-intelligence at once!

FLIGHT

CHARNOTA. Why should I? "Vacate?" Jesus. What are you doing to this woman?

TIKHY. Skusky! Call the guard!

CHARNOTA. Don't bother, I have a guard here. *(He sticks his pistol in Skusky's eye.)* What are you doing to this woman?

TIKHY. Gurin, put out the light! *(The room goes black.)*

You will regret this, General Charnota!

(The Third Dream is gone.)

FOURTH DREAM

Twilight. Salon in the palace in Sevastapol. The room is in total disarray: one of the draperies covering the high windows is torn down; a whitish square on the wall marks the spot where the large war map had been. A wooden trunk on the floor, lid open, filled with papers. There is a fire burning in the fireplace. De Brissard sits motionless before it, with a bandaged head. The Commander-In-Chief enters.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. Well, Colonel, how's the head?

DE BRISSARD. It no longer aches, Your Excellency. The doctor gave me pyro ... pyromidatron.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. Pyro ...

DE BRISSARD. Pyromidatron.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. What is that?

DE BRISSARD. I don't know. But it makes me feel good.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. It sounds like a cure for an arsonist.

(Smiles.)

DE BRISSARD. *(Pause.)* I'm not an arsonist, Your Excellency.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. No, Colonel, I ...

DE BRISSARD. I have set many fires, of course, many many fires, dozens, I have burnt entire villages, but only in the service of the Tsar!

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. Yes, that's fine ...

DE BRISSARD. I am not an arsonist, Your Excellency.

FLIGHT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. *I understand.* Let me ask you something. Do I remind you of Alexander the Great?

DE BRISSARD. Forgive me, Your Excellency, it's been a long time since I saw a portrait of his Majesty.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. Who are you talking about?

DE BRISSARD. Alexander the Great, Your Excellency.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. *(Pause.)* You know what, Colonel, you need a rest. I was glad to put you up at the palace, you have performed your duties honorably and your country is grateful. But now it's time to go, all right?

DE BRISSARD. Where am I to go, Your Excellency?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. To the boat. I'll look after you when we get aboard.

DE BRISSARD. I am your servant, sir. When victory over the Reds is finally achieved I shall be greatly honored to be among the first to present arms to Your Majesty at the Kremlin!

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. Colonel, really you need to *relax*. It's not necessary to speak with such extremity. In fact, I think it would be best if you don't speak at all unless you absolutely have to, all right? Splendid. You may go.

DE BRISSARD. Immediately, Your Excellency! *(Goes to door, sings.)* "Countess, if you'll but grant me one rendezvous..." *(Exits.)*

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. *(Speaking through the doorway from which he has come.)* Send in all the visitors like clockwork, one every three minutes. I'll see as many as I can. Second a Cossack to escort Colonel de Brissard to my quarters on the ship. And send a note to the ship doctor that pyromidatron is no cure. The man is obviously out of his mind. *(Enter Korzukhin.)*

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. What is it?

KORZUKHIN. Vice-Minister Korzukhin.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. Ah! Just the man I want to see! I was going to send for you. Korzukhin, do I resemble Alexander the Great? *(Korzukhin is at a loss.)* No, I want to know, do you see a resemblance? *(He snatches a newspaper off the mantle and thrusts it under Korzukhin's nose.)* You are the editor of this paper? You

FLIGHT

are therefore accountable for everything in it? (*Reads.*) "The Commander-in-Chief paces the platform like Alexander the Great." What are you trying to accomplish with this rubbish?! In the time of Alexander the Great were there railway platforms? No, there were not railway platforms. And do you know why? There were no trains! It goes on: "One look at his cheerful face is enough to disperse every gnawing maggot of doubt." My GOD! A maggot, sir, is not a cloud or a battalion. It cannot disperse! And I look cheerful, do I, how cheerful, *very* cheerful? Where the hell did you find the illiterate to scribble this nonsense?! How dare you print this horseshit two days before the catastrophe?! I will have you in court! In Constantinople! If your head hurts, take pyromidatron! (*A phone rings loudly in the next room and the Commander-In-Chief walks out, slamming the door.*)

KORZUKHIN. (*Left gasping.*) This is absolutely the worst day. Well, what do you expect, Parmon Ilyich, coming to one lunatic to complain of another! And Serafima's been arrested on top of everything else, no doubt she's been *shot!* (*Pause.*) Absolutely the worst day. (*Pause.*) Well, may she rest in peace. What am I supposed to do, throw my corpse on top of hers? What good would that do? This Alexander the Great character is a barbarian; he's a thug, he's worse than Kludhov! He wants me in court?! Well, Paris is not Sevastapol. To Paris then, and my curse on the whole stinking lot of you: as you are now, were in the beginning, and ever shall be. Amen! (*He makes for the door. Archbishop Africanus is entering.*)

AFRICANUS. Amen, amen indeed, Mister Korzukhin. Such goings on, eh?

KORZUKHIN. (*Escaping.*) Yes, yes, quite right quite right.

AFRICANUS. (*Seeing the trunk.*) "And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, besides women and children ... Alack! Alack! And a mixed multitude went up with them and very many cattle and both flocks and herds ..." (*Kludhov has entered stealthily.*)

FLIGHT

KLUDHOV. Still at it.

AFRICANUS. Your Excellency!

KLUDHOV. Did you send me a Bible as a present back at headquarters?

AFRICANUS. I did.

KLUDHOV. I read it on the train for lack of anything better to do. "Thou didst bow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters." Who are they talking about do you think? "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my desire shall have its fill of them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them." How's that for memory? And the Commander is telling everyone I'm insane. So, the joke's on him. What are you doing hanging around?

AFRICANUS. Hanging around?! My dear, Roman Valerianovich! I am waiting for the Commander-in-Chief ...

KLUDHOV. Do you know what your waiting will get you?

AFRICANUS. What?

KLUDHOV. The Reds.

AFRICANUS. No. Not so soon, it's not possible ...

KLUDHOV. Come. Look. (*Africanus looks out.*) Here we are loitering, quoting Holy Writ, and meanwhile, just imagine, the Reds are closing on Sevastapol, they're tightening the noose!

AFRICANUS. A glow in the sky! God help us!

KLUDHOV. You seem to grasp the situation. To the boat, Holy Father, to the boat! (*Africanus runs out, crossing himself.*) Excellent. (*The Commander-In-Chief enters.*)

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. I've been anxious to see you. Did they embark?

KLUDHOV. The cavalry had some trouble with brigands, but in the main, our forces ... got away. I traveled in splendid comfort, wrapped in a blanket, snug in a corner of the carriage, suddenly quite harmless. The overall impression, Your Excellency: Twilight in the kitchen.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. I don't follow.

FLIGHT

KLUDHOV. When I was a kid, I once went into the kitchen at dusk. There were cockroaches all over the stove. I lit a match and phut! - they all ran. The match went out and shuk shuk shuk shuk shuk, I could hear their tiny feet, rustle rustle, they all ran back. Here it is again, the darkness and rustling, shuk shuk shuk. I look around and wonder: where are we all rustling to? Like the cockroaches - into the slop bucket. Down from the stove and - plop!

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. Thank you, General, for all you have done for the Crimea. I won't keep you. I'm going to the hotel directly.

KLUDHOV. Closer to the water?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. If you don't stop this insolence I will have you arrested.

KLUDHOV. There would be a terrific scandal; I am popular.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. No. You're not sick. For a year now you've been disguising your hatred of me with this ... clownish behavior!

KLUDHOV. There's no secret. I hate you.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. Envy? Thirst for power?

KLUDHOV. No, no. I hate you because you got me into this mess. Where are the promised allied Western powers? Where is the great Russian Empire? How could you engage the Reds when you were powerless, when you knew we had to lose?! Can you imagine the hatred a man feels when he knows all his actions are pointless yet he must continue to act?! Yes, I am sick! I'm sick because of you! You have made me mad! (*Quieting down.*) Never mind, we are both passing into oblivion.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. Stay here, you will pass into oblivion soon enough.

KLUDHOV. I had the same idea. But I haven't thought it through yet.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. Don't let me detain you then.

KLUDHOV. Driving out the faithful servant? "Him, who in ceaseless battle spilled blood like water for thee?"

FLIGHT

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. (*Banging a chair on the floor.*)
Clown!

KLUDHOV. You and Alexander the Great are heroes, but why attack the furniture?

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. (*Rage at mention of Alexander.*) If you ... another word! If you ...

CONVOY OFFICER. (*Appearing out of nowhere*) Your Excellency, the Cavalry School for Simferopol is here. Everything is ready.

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. Fine, we're going! (*To Kludhov.*)
We'll meet again!

KLUDHOV. Excellent! (*Commander-In-Chief is gone. Kludhov sits by the fireplace his back to the door.*) Alone. Empty. Good. (*Suddenly he rises and opens a door, shouts through it.*) Hello? Anybody home? No, nothing. (*Sits again.*) Well, what to do. Should I stay? No, that won't solve my problem. (*Speaks to someone.*) Look, are you going to leave me alone or what? It's absurd. I can walk through you, you're nothing but a mist. Look! (*He walks, as though through something.*) There, you see? Atomized! (*He sits again, back to door. Silence. The door opens cautiously, and Golubkov enters, still hatless, but in his coat.*)

GOLUBKOV. Please, please, let me come in for a moment!

KLUDHOV. (*Without turning.*) Certainly, come in.

GOLUBKOV. I know this is impertinent in the extreme, but they promised I could see you and now everyone is gone and so I just came in!

KLUDHOV. Fine, fine. What do you want?

GOLUBKOV. I have come here, Your Excellency, to report the most heinous crimes taking place at the counter-intelligence department! Atrocious crimes committed on the order of General Kludhov! (*Kludhov turns around, Golubkov backs away.*) Aaaahh.

KLUDHOV. But I'm confused. You're not dead. You're not swinging from a lamppost are you? I don't see the problem. (*Silence.*) You seem a very pleasant young man. You make an agreeable impression. We've met, haven't we? Don't bother to deny

FLIGHT

it, I have an excellent memory. Don't be a coward, please, you have something to say, say it.

GOLUBKOV. Very well. The day before yesterday you ordered the arrest of a woman ...

KLUDHOV. Yes, you were there, it's all very clear to me. But, tell me, to whom did you intend to complain about me?

GOLUBKOV. The Commander-in-Chief.

KLUDHOV. Too late. He's gone. (*Kludhov points at the window. Through the window are distant lights glimmering, the night sky glows with distant fires.*) They're all gone. A pail of water. He is disintegrated into oblivion. There's not a soul to complain to against Roman Kludhov. (*He walks to the telephone on the desk and speaks into it.*) Anteroom? Captain Golovan. Take an escort, Captain, and go to the counter-intelligence office. There was a woman arrested ... (*To Golubkov.*) Korzukhina?

GOLUBKOV. Yes, that's right, Korzukhina!

KLUDHOV. (*Into telephone.*) Serafima Vladamirovna Korzukhina. Right. If she wasn't shot, bring her here to the palace at once. (*Hangs up.*) We'll wait.

GOLUBKOV. If she wasn't shot. If she wasn't SHOT?! Oh, my God, if you did that! If you did that! AGGGH! (*He weeps.*)

KLUDHOV. Be a man.

GOLUBKOV. Oh, you want to mock me now?! Fine! I'll be a man, I'll be a man. If she's dead ... I'll kill you!

KLUDHOV. Oh.

GOLUBKOV. I'll kill you! I WILL FUCKING KILL YOU!

KLUDHOV. I see you with new eyes.

GOLUBKOV. I will!

KLUDHOV. That might be the best solution, but no, you won't kill anyone, unfortunately. Shut up and sit down. (*Pause.*) Sit. (*Golubkov obeys. Kludhov turns away and speaks to someone.*) If you are going to be my constant companion, you should speak. Your silence is oppressive. Although I admit the voice I imagine for you is not very pleasant. Metallic and deep. An empty oil drum rolling down a hill. You could leave. Why not just leave. You

FLIGHT

seem to not understand. I am a man of great will power, I won't succumb to the first apparition. People are cured of such things. You must accept, my eloquent orderly, that you were caught on the wheel, snagged on a gear, it spun round and crushed your bones, it happens all the time, not a moment goes by but somewhere....

Why make yourself so important?!

GOLUBKOV. (*In wonder.*) Who are you talking to?

KLUDHOV. Hmm? Oh. Let's see. (*He slices the air with his hand*) To no one. To myself. So who is she, this woman, your mistress?

GOLUBKOV. Oh no no.

KLUDHOV. She's very beautiful. I remember that.

GOLUBKOV. Yes. I met her by chance. But ... yes, I love her. How . . . how will I be able to live, I can't stand myself. Why did I drag her from that monastery? Only to feed her to the beast! I'll kill myself, it's all my fault! (*He curls himself into a ball of anguish.*)

KLUDHOV. Yes, you're right about that. Why *did* you come here? And now when the machine is broken you want me to restore her to you. But I cannot. There is no Serafima to return to you. She was shot.

GOLUBKOV. Animal! You murdering animal!

KLUDHOV. Now I'm getting it from both sides. The living one, who speaks like a fool - and the silent dead one. My soul is splitting in two, that's what it is. (*Pause.*)

GOLUBKOV. You're insane. I should have seen that fate was laying a trap for us. I failed to protect Serafima and here he is her blind murderer and what can be done if his reason is gone!

KLUDHOV. What an idiot. (*Throws a revolver at Golubkov.*) Do us both a favor: be a man. (*Pause.*) Shoot. (*Pause.*) Her perforated body hangs on display, high in the air, sways in the breeze. Soon rain and sleet will come, spinning her body like a piece of bark. (*Into space.*) Stop pulling at my sleeve, perhaps he'll have the sense to shoot. (*To Golubkov.*) Go on.

GOLUBKOV. You're pitiful. It's beneath me.

FLIGHT

KLUDHOV. (*Sound of steps outside the door.*) Someone's coming. Is it him? We'll find out everything in a moment.

(*Golovan enters.*) It's him! Well? Was she shot?

GOLOVAN. No, sir.

GOLUBKOV. She's alive?! Alive?! Where! Where is she!

KLUDHOV. Quiet. (*To Golovan.*) Where is she? Why haven't you brought her?

GOLOVAN. General Charnota broke into counter-intelligence headquarters and took her away by force of arms.

GOLUBKOV. Where?! Where did he take her?!

KLUDHOV. Shut up! (*To Golovan.*) Where?

GOLOVAN. Aboard the Viking. At five the Viking left for Constantinople.

KLUDHOV. That's all. Thank you. (*To Golubkov.*) So, you see, she's alive, your Serafima.

GOLUBKOV. Yes, alive.

KLUDHOV. Captain, take the convoy and the flag and go on board the Saint. I'll be there soon.

GOLOVAN. Excuse me, sir, but --

KLUDHOV. I'm in my right mind. Don't be afraid, I'll come.

GOLOVAN. Yes, Your Excellency. (*Golovan exits.*)

KLUDHOV. So, she's off to Constantinople. That's fine.

GOLUBKOV. You must take me with you to Constantinople.

KLUDHOV. No no no.

GOLUBKOV. You must!

KLUDHOV. No, I'm afraid I find you exhausting.

GOLUBKOV. You must! Who else?

KLUDHOV. I already have one pest!

GOLUBKOV. Kludhov, please! We have to hurry!

KLUDHOV. Silence! (*Mutters into space.*) What? What do you want? Should I stay? He won't talk. Oh, he draws back, wraps himself in shadows, and looks away.

GOLUBKOV. Kludhov! You're sick! He's not real! Leave him alone, we have to hurry! The Saint will sail, we have to go!

FLIGHT

KLUDHOV. The devil ... is alive ... there is a woman....
Constantinople. (*Silence.*) All right, we're going! (*He runs out.*
Golubkov runs out after him.)

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