

Tell Me a Beautiful Lie

a musical play by
Chris Guin

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CAST LIST

KATYA - young barmaid, early 20's, major singing

ROMAN - Revolutionary student and soldier, 20's, major singing

OLEKSANDER - White Guard sailor, early 20's, major singing

MIKHAYLO - stevedore, older, minor singing

DMITRI - stevedore, older, minor singing

LADY IN GRAY - exiled aristocrat, older, non-singing

OKSANA - Katya's aunt, older, non-singing

ANDREI - Katya's uncle, older, non-singing

RED GUARD OFFICER - non-singing

**VARIOUS RED GUARD SOLDIERS, WHITE GUARD SOLDIERS, CITIZENS
OF SEVASTOPOL, TAVERN PATRONS**

ACT I

SCENE 1

(Over the harsh hiss and static of an old radio, the tinny and practiced voice of a radio announcer is heard)

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Sevastopol, 1920 - the Russian Civil War has raged for three years. The socialist Red Army, led by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, now controls almost the entire former Russian Empire. Only a few remnants of the White Guard remain, fortified in the Crimean Peninsula, to await the inevitable.

(The announcement dissolves into static, briefly obscuring a litany of noises - air raid sirens, explosions, gunfire - before resolving into the tinkling of a music box)

SCENE 2

(A street scene in Sevastopol, early 1920, a miserably gray dusk. A few White Guard soldiers patrol. Most of the people we see are waiting, slouched, in a bread line. Electric street lights begin to spark on. There are ocean sounds - waves, gulls, foghorns and bells. An older woman with a disapproving frown, OKSANA IVANOVNA SVETLIKOVA, enters carrying a basket. She is shortly followed by her niece, KATYA (KATERINA FILIPOVNA SVETLIKOVA), a sad young girl in her early twenties, staggering under far too many baskets.

OKSANA

Stop dawdling, Katya, and pay attention. Curfew's coming and the line for beef is already around the block.

KATYA

Yes, auntie. May I carry that one for you?

OKSANA

No, no, I've got it. I'm old but I'm not decrepit. Besides, you'll only drop it.

(A number of baskets fall from KATYA'S arms. SHE scrambles to pick them up)

OKSANA

Saints in heaven, infuriating child! I oughtn't have suggested it! Here, I'll carry those. If I hadn't such a soft heart I'd pack you off to the cannery straight away, like our neighbor's daughter - ten rubles a day we'd be getting and you might learn to live in the present.

KATYA

I think they gave us a little more flour than usual. Perhaps a ship from England came in.

OKSANA

No, that's less than usual. You let those horrible officials swindle you again. You let everyone walk over you. Now here's the ration card for beef, go and stand in line for it. You look at the scales and make sure they give you exactly what's written, or we won't survive the week. Ah, here it is. What in heaven's name are you standing about for? Infuriating child!

KATYA

Yes, auntie. I'm sorry, auntie.

(OKSANA exits, leaving KATYA alone to take in the hunched-over line of citizens awaiting their rations of beef. An urchin grabs a woman's portion of meat and flees. The White Guards pursue. Offstage, there is a gunshot. The woman, more concerned over the loss of her food, begins to beg from the people still in line. KATYA observes all this)

KATYA

CITY FULL OF DARK DESPAIR,
IN MANY WAYS... UNPLEASANT.
NOT ONE HOPE, NO WISTFUL PRAY'R,
ONLY THOUGHTS OF LIVING THROUGH THE PRESENT.

THAT'S THE WAY IT'S ALWAYS BEEN,
AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT I'M TOLD.
MAN FROM BIRTH IS STEEPED IN SIN-
WHY SHOULD THAT BE CHANGED BY GROWING OLD?

BUT I'VE READ IT COULD BE PERFECT!
I THINK...
I HOPE...
I KNOW!

Just imagine!

WHEN THE RED MORNING DAWNS
HOW ENTRANCING IT WILL BE!
WHEN THE RED MORNING DAWNS
WHAT A DANCING WE'LL SEE,
OH, WHAT WE'LL SEE!

(The scene begins to change in her imagination,
as worn and battle-weary RED ARMY SOLDIERS enter
and heroically rout the WHITE GUARDSMEN, who
flee. As KATYA queues up in the bread line, the
RED GUARDSMEN liberate the bread rations and
distribute them freely to the townsmen)

KATYA

WHAT IF YOU KNEW
THAT MEN SO KIND AND CLEVER
WERE TO RESCUE YOU
AND CHANGE THE WORLD FOREVER?

I CAN SEE THEM, SO HARD AND BATTLE-TORN,
AS THEY FIGHT THOSE WHO WOULD ENSLAVE US ALL,
AND AS THEY RIDE IN, SO TIRED AND SADDLE-WORN,
STALWART SOLDIERS STANDING TALL!

WHAT IF THE POOR
HAD EV'RYTHING THEY NEEDED?
NO ONE LOCKED THE DOOR
OR LEFT THEIR CRIES UNHEEDED?

I CAN SEE THEM, THEIR EYES SO FULL OF TEARS
AS THOSE WHO FREED THEM SEE THEY RECEIVE THEIR DUE,
THE YOUNG AND AGED, FEELING THE PULL OF YEARS,
BEGIN TO DANCE THE WHOLE NIGHT THROUGH

(The ration line begins to transform into a
colorful traditional dance)

KATYA

WHEN THE RED MORNING DAWNS,
WHAT A WOND'ROUS JOYOUS CAUSE!
WHEN THE RED MORNING DAWNS
TO THUND'ROUS APPLAUSE,
TO SUCH APPLAUSE!

(The dance builds. The RED ARMY SOLDIERS join in the dance with the CITIZENS, with KATYA at the center)

KATYA

OH I'VE READ IT COULD BE PERFECT!
I THINK...
I HOPE...
I KNOW!

(The world slowly dissolves into its dreary, real state - the RED GUARDSMEN vanish and the WHITE GUARDSMEN return)

KATYA

WHEN THE RED MORNING DAWNS
HOW ENTRANCING IT WILL BE...
WHEN THE RED MORNING DAWNS
WHAT A DANCING WE'LL SEE,
OH, WHAT WE'LL SEE...

(And KATYA receives her ration, giving it to the very grateful WOMAN whose portion had been stolen. The WOMAN runs off. A bell rings, and the GUARDS and CITIZENS begin to leave, as KATYA muses to herself quietly)

KATYA

OH I'VE READ IT COULD BE PERFECT!
I THINK...
I HOPE...
I HOPE...

(KATYA walks guiltily to the telegraph office, outside of which sits the TELEGRAPH OFFICER, a bespectacled middle-aged man, furiously smoking)

KATYA

Good evening, Nikolai Nikoleivich, how are you?

TELEGRAPH OFFICER

(not even looking up at her)
How am I, she wants to know. Excepting bouts of insomnia and having my telegraph boys driven like slaves by White Guardsmen, I'm faring wonderfully. And no, by the way, nothing came for you today.

KATYA

Oh. I'm sorry to have bothered you.

TELEGRAPH OFFICER

Sorry to have bothered me, she says. Yet she'll come back tomorrow, mark my words, as certain as that wire over our heads will bring in nothing but terror and misery.

KATYA

I ONLY THOUGHT I OUGHT TO TRY AGAIN.

TELEGRAPH OFFICER

How long has it been now, Katerina Filipovna? Two years? Three? You should give up all this foolish hoping. The rest of the city already has.

KATYA

I ONLY THOUGHT THAT HE MIGHT TRY AGAIN...

TELEGRAPH OFFICER

He might try again, she says. Have you considered he's dead, Katerina Filipovna? Dead or moved on? Mind you, I have no inclination to injure your feelings but someone ought to tell the truth to you for once!

KATYA

IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE
HE'S STILL AROUND!
YOU KNOW THE TELEGRAPH
LINES MIGHT BE DOWN...

TELEGRAPH OFFICER

Might be down, she says. You're right, that's certain, lines are down, yes. But not all of them, or why would my boys be in there night and day keying dispatches for the Whites? Did you think of that? I wouldn't get your hopes up, Katerina Filipovna, not if I were you.

KATYA

I ONLY THOUGHT IT WOULDN'T HURT TO TRY.

TELEGRAPH OFFICER

Go home, Katerina Filipovna. It's getting late. Take care of yourself.

(HE exits, leaving Katya alone)

KATYA

IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE.
IT MIGHT BE TRUE.
IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE
OR WHAT ELSE WOULD I DO?

I mean...

AS FAR AS I KNOW
HE'S THERE FAR AWAY
IN WAR-TORN UKRAINE, WHERE HE'S FIGHTING.
BUT NOT THAT WAR-TORN
SO HE'LL BE OKAY
AND THINKING OF ME AS HE'S WRITING!

IN HIS PACK, THERE MIGHT BE
A GREAT STACK OF LETTERS FOR ME!
AND SOMEHOW I KNOW THAT HE'S WAITING,
WAITING FOR ME...

(In what will become a recurring staging, a portion of the stage is split off to show us ROMAN, in some other part of the world. As we see him first, he appears to be sprawled on his back, unconscious and pale. His location, however, is dark and unclear.)

KATYA

I CAN FEEL THAT HE'S NEAR, THAT HE'S WITH ME,
LIKE HE'S HERE! LIKE HE'S REAL, FEEL HIS BREATH ON MY
SHOULDER!

NO MORE TEARS! I CAN FIND
BETTER YEARS THERE IN MY MIND!

AS FAR AS I KNOW, HE'LL FINISH HIS TASK
AND THEN WRITE TO ME HE'S RETURNING!
AND THEN HE'LL BE HERE! WHAT MORE COULD I ASK
WHEN FOUR LONESOME YEARS I'VE BEEN BURNING?

NEVER FEAR, NEVER DOUBT,
WHEN IT'S CLEAR LOVE WILL WIN OUT!
AND SOMEHOW HE'LL KNOW I'VE BEEN WAITING...
WAITING SO LONG!
SO LONG!
SO LONG!
SO LONG...

(KATYA gradually fades into the darkness, leaving ROMAN. Sounds and lights come up over him, and it is revealed he is in a rickety boxcar. At last, HE moves, huddling into his greatcoat for warmth, but is awakened by a RED SOLDIER)

RED SOLDIER

Comrade... comrade Roman, we must leave at once! Quickly!

(ROMAN starts awake and soon they have leapt off the boxcar into the snow-covered night)

SCENE 3

(Svetlikov's Tavern has not yet filled with customers for the night. It is a darkened, cramped place. ANDREI MALINEVICH SVELITKOV, Katya's uncle and the owner of the tavern, is frowning over a newspaper when he hears OKSANA, outside, muttering and cursing. Quickly, he begins cleaning things. OKSANA enters, carrying the things she has just acquired.)

OKSANA

Oh, I've got such a backache! Andrei, is the samovar hot? I need tea, for God's sake!

ANDREI

(dutifully pouring a cup)
Good evening to you, too. Where's Katya?

OKSANA

Your niece? Heaven knows.

ANDREI

It's already dark out and it will be curfew soon. She can't be allowed—

OKSANA

Don't tell me any of this, Andrei, I went back for her where I left her and she'd vanished in the meantime. Insolent creature. She's probably at the telegraph office again, getting caught in the rain.

ANDREI

Hm.

OKSANA

You know where I found her that night she almost broke curfew? All alone, dancing to herself up and down Primorskii Boulevard! That girl has no head on her shoulders.

ANDREI

Hm.

OKSANA

Dreaming of her precious revolutionary day in and day out. I didn't mind as much when he was here, you know. Any student of literature must have some means to afford that sort of idleness. But it's well past time she looked for a respectable man.

(Two regular tavern patrons and dock workers, MIKHAYLO and DMITRI, burst in.)

MIKHAYLO

And what do you mean by respectable?

OKSANA

Not a stevedore, if that's what you mean.

MIKHAYLO

(affecting indignation)

My good woman, you have offended my decency!

OKSANA

(laughing disdainfully)

Ha! As if you had any, sweating all day for next-to-nothing.

DMITRI

Offended your pride, you half-wit.

MIKHAYLO

(as he takes a seat with DMITRI)

Madame, ours is an honorable profession, I assure you, a very difficult one requiring great skill, and great quantities of vodka.

OKSANA

Ah, well then, if you're feeling so honorable today, perhaps you will pay your tab.

MIKHAYLO

(a beat, muttering to himself)
Not that honorable...

ANDREI

(bringing a tray of vodka glasses to their table)
Oksana, please not with the customers...

OKSANA

(She stops, reluctantly, at his tone)
Until they pay they're not customers, they're freeloaders,
and I'll say what I like to them. Really, Andrei, you're
far too agreeable. You let everyone walk over you. Why
can't you just do as I tell you?

MIKHAYLO

God bless you, Andrei. You were always one of the good
ones.

(MIKHAYLO and DMITRI take seats, as ANDREI serves
them)

ANDREI

Your usual...

OKSANA

As I was saying, Andrei, what Katya really needs is to
settle.

DMITRI

Settle down?

OKSANA

No, settle for less. After all, it worked well enough for
me.

(ANDREI groans)

OKSANA

What the girl needs is to find an ordinary, reliable sort
of man, of a traditional ethic, and decently patriotic I
should think. Not like the worthless hoodlums we have for
young men today. He shouldn't be too handsome, of course.
That makes girls run away with themselves, that's plain to
see. Someone ordinary, someone decent, someone... boring!

(The door opens and OLEKSANDER PERESHENKO, an awkward, young White Guard sailor, enters, removing his rain-soaked hat)

OLEKSANDER

I beg your pardon, my name is Oleksander Pereshenko Turchin. Does a Katerina Filipovna live here by chance?

OKSANA

Katya?

OLEKSANDER

Yes, I was told that she had moved here since... well I haven't seen her since I was a boy. Is she here? I'd like to get acquainted with her again.

(The MEN start to laugh. OLEKSANDER is confused)

OKSANA

Ah! Wonderful! Absolutely perfect! Katya's not presently home, Mr. Turchin, but if you'll take a seat and maybe something warm to drink, I'm certain she'll be here directly.

(OLEKSANDER is flummoxed as OKSANA nearly shoves him into a chair)

OKSANA

Andrei, I shall be in the kitchen. See that our guest is comfortable.

(SHE exits, leaving OLEKSANDER to fiddle with his hat awkwardly. MIKHAYLO and DMITRI ever so subtly move to sit down across from him. HE stares at them for a moment)

MIKHAYLO

Look at him, Dmitri, he's got that naïve look about him.

DMITRI

As well he should, for him to be here asking for Katya.

OLEKSANDER

Please don't speak about me like I'm not here. I can hear you, you know.

MIKHAYLO

So you can, my good friend, so you can. My name is
Mikhaylo Denisovich, stevedore and scholar.

(DMITRI nearly spews his vodka back into his
glass)

MIKHAYLO

And that's Dmitri.

DMITRI

Scholar of what?

MIKHAYLO

Of life, my friend, and of women. And you, Mr. Oleksander...
what was it again?

OLEKSANDER

Oleksander Pereshenko Turchin.

MIKHAYLO

As yes, you, my friend, have chosen a very fine target, and
very difficult. I've known many in my time and she is the
most difficult, it's true.

OLEKSANDER

Katerina Filipovna and I were childhood friends.

(An awkward moment passes)

Is she married? She isn't married, is she?

MIKHAYLO

Worse, my good friend.

DMITRI

Much much worse.

OLEKSANDER

I don't understand.

(As MIKHAYLO continues, his words are reenacted in the
darkened corner of the tavern by images of KATYA and ROMAN.
Other customers enter gradually and are served by ANDREI)

MIKHAYLO

That dear, dear girl. You have much to learn, my friend.
You see that darkened corner over there? You'll find
yourself cursing it before too long...

(a musical flourish)

Imagine a young girl, orphaned and without a friend in the world, thinking that nobody will ever notice her...

(a musical flourish)

Well, perhaps not in the way that she wishes to be noticed...

(a musical flourish)

Surrounded by cruel men and cruel circumstances, she waits, until...

EACH EV'NING HE WOULD ARRIVE, AND WHEN SHE CAUGHT HIS LOOK

HER HEART WOULD FLUTTER MORE THAN SHE COULD TELL
A BOLSHEVIST, A MYSTERY, WRITING HARD IN HIS BOOK,
WITH PIERCING EYES, CRYSTAL EYES, BLUE AS HELL.

KATYA, KATYA,

COME, TAKE A CHANCE, WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?

KATYA, KATYA

THESE ARE THE MOMENTS THAT DREAMS ARE MADE OF.

WHAT IF YOU CASUALLY SMILED, JUST A WORD HERE OR THERE,

WHAT IF YOU KNEW THAT IT'S ALL THAT IT TOOK?

AND WHAT IF HE RETURNED THE SMILE? OR WHAT IF HE TOUCHED YOUR HAIR?

AND WHAT IF HE SHOWED YOU WHAT'S IN HIS BOOK?

MIKHAYLO AND DMITRI

KATYA, KATYA,

HE WAS YOUR FIRST, EVEN NOW YOUR ONLY

KATYA, KATYA

NOW YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIVE LIFE SO LONELY

MIKHAYLO

Nice harmony.

DMITRI

Thanks.

THEN ONE DAY HE LEFT FOR WAR.

MIKHAYLO

IF YOU'D KEEP YOUR PRIDE,
YOU'LL RUN QUICKLY OUT THAT DOOR!

DMITRI

SHE WON'T GIVE UP!

MIKHAYLO

YOU WON'T LIVE UP TO HIM!

MIKHAYLO AND DMITRI

WE KNOW! WE'VE TRIED!

OLEKSANDER

She is still in love with her Red Army... poet?

MIKHAYLO

Yes, so I'd make good your escape now, my friend! Dmitri and I've been trying for four years.

DMITRI

(mumbling to himself)

I just drink here...

OLEKSANDER

I can't leave without at least saying hello to her...

DMITRI

In that case, you're doomed.

MIKHAYLO

Ah, here's our little friend now! Excuse us.

(KATYA enters, frazzled, carrying a bouquet of flowers which she proceeds to deposit on each table as she nonchalantly serves drinks and fixes up the dreary tavern to be as pleasant as possible. OLEKSANDER tries to catch her, but is stopped by MIKHAYLO, DMITRI, and the other PATRONS)

MIKHAYLO/DMITRI/CHORUS

KATYA, YOU MOVE SO FAST!
LOOK SHARP, ALREADY PASSED!
OUR FUN IS IN THE GAME!
THOUGH YOU EVADE AND SHIRK,
PLEASE KNOW IT DOESN'T WORK,
WE PLAY ON JUST THE SAME!

KATYA, KATYA,
DANCE FOR ME ONE OF THE OLD STYLE DANCES!
KATYA, KATYA,
IT'S IMPOLITE TO RESIST ADVANCES!

KATYA, I LOVE TO SEE,
YOU SHOW YOUR POUT TO ME,
SURELY YOU UNDERSTAND
KATYA, YOU'RE IN YOUR PRIME!
COME NOW, IT IS A CRIME
THAT I CAN'T HAVE YOUR HAND!

KATYA, KATYA,
ALL THAT I WANT IS TO SEE YOU DANCING!
KATYA, KATYA
ALL THAT I WANT IS TO SEE YOU DANCE FOR ME!

KATYA, KATYA,
ALL THAT I WANT IS TO SEE YOU DANCING,
KATYA, KATYA,
ALL THAT I WANT IS TO SEE YOU DANCE FOR—

(KATYA disappears into the kitchen. OLEKSANDER sneaks past and follows her out. The CHORUS eyes each other awkwardly, and then finishes the song anyway.)

MIKHAYLO/DMITRI/CHORUS

ME!

SCENE 4

(KATYA worriedly peels potatoes in the kitchen of Svetlikov's Tavern, stewing in her own misery)

KATYA

I ONLY THOUGHT IT WOULDN'T BE LIKE THIS
I ONLY THOUGHT IT WOULDN'T END LIKE THIS

(OLEKSANDER cautiously peeks his head in, still nervously playing with his hat)

OLEKSANDER

Katerina Filipovna?

KATYA

Yes? Can I help you, sir?

OLEKSANDER

I know it's been a long time... Oleksander Pereshenko
Turchin.

(HE bows and kisses her hand, taking KATYA aback)

KATYA

Forgive me, sir. I'm afraid I don't remember the name.

OLEKSANDER

You don't remember?

OLEKSANDER?

PERESHENKO?

YOU REMEMBER ME, THE BOY ACROSS THE STREET?

KATYA

I'M SORRY, SIR, IT DOESN'T RING A BELL.

OLEKSANDER

I was certain you'd remember...

OLEKSANDER?

PERESHENKO?

YOU REMEMBER WE WERE ONLY NINE YEARS OLD,
WHEN MY FAMILY
MOVED AWAY TO ODESSA?

YOU HAD SAID YOU'D

BE A PRINCESS

IN A PALACE LOOKING OUT ACROSS THE SEA

I REMEMBER YOU.

YOU REMEMBER ME?

KATYA

SORRY.

OLEKSANDER

WE WENT TO PLAY OUT ON THE BEACH ALL DAY
UP IN THE HILLS, KHERSONESUS WAY,
THE ONLY HAPPY TIMES I HAVE WERE ALL WITH YOU
DON'T YOU REMEMBER ME?
DON'T YOU REMEMBER ME...

KATYA

I'm sorry, Mr. Turchin, I just...

(a beat)

Wait a moment.

OLEKSANDER?

PERESHENKO?

YOU'RE THE ALTAR BOY WHO ATE THE BLESSED BREAD

OLEKSANDER

Oh no!

KATYA

WHEN YOU THOUGHT THAT
NO ONE WOULD BE WATCHING!
YOU HAD SAID YOU'D
JOIN THE CLERGY
I REMEMBER YOU, I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE HERE!
AND NOW LOOK AT YOU...
ALL DRESSED UP LIKE A SAILOR!
(realizing something, she turns away coldly)
A SAILOR OF THE WHITE GUARD BLACK SEA FLEET!

OLEKSANDER

What's the matter? Did I say something to offend you?

KATYA

No, Oleksander, it's only that I really need to be left alone now. I'm sorry.

OLEKSANDER

You don't approve of my joining the Russian Army?

KATYA

(after a difficult pause)
It's not the real Russian Army.

OLEKSANDER

Not the real Russian Army? I've fought Turks and I've fought Germans and I come home to this! Whoever fights for God, family, and country, that is the real Russian Army. The White Army is the only Russian Army.

(realizing something, sulkily)
What on earth am I doing arguing with you? I apologize, Katerina Filipovna. I'll leave you alone now. I had no business being here.

(HE makes his way to the door, but before he can leave, KATYA stops him)

KATYA

No, Oleksander, don't leave all at once. It's only that I've had such a long, hard day. Maybe later?

OLEKSANDER

Of course. Later. Good night, Katerina Filipovna.

(HE leaves)

KATYA

(chopping the potatoes much harder than she should)

Oh, why in heaven's name did I do that? Why couldn't I have just let him go? But no, I have to be so pleasant and agreeable and nice...

OKSANA

(emerging from her hiding place)

And a good thing, too! You nearly let that fine catch get away from you! For shame, Katya! Oh, my poor old back...

KATYA

Auntie, you were listening in on us!

OKSANA

I had to make sure you didn't do anything foolish. You probably offended him.

KATYA

He's a White Guardsman, auntie. He could use some offense every now and then.

OKSANA

And what's that supposed to mean? Who made you judge and jury of the world? An army is an army, and we've had practically every army on earth here at one point or another, drinking in this tavern, even.

KATYA

This is different, auntie. The White Army has been holding us back from real and good change. They fight against progress and justice. Wouldn't it be my luck the Crimea will be the last place to know any progress... What I wouldn't give for them all just to go away!

OKSANA

So your lover can return to you, I know. I was young once, too, Katya. But I grew up. And I recognized the reality of things. You'll have to grow up, too. Katya? The beef, where is it? Where did you put it?

KATYA

(frightened and ashamed)
The beef?

OKSANA

Yes, the beef. The beef I'm certain you acquired from the seller all of a few hours ago. Where did you put it?

KATYA

Auntie, I gave our ration away.

OKSANA

You did what?

KATYA

She had hers stolen and they wouldn't give it to her and I only thought...

OKSANA

Devil's child!

(reaches out to strike her, restrains herself)
I ought to beat you senseless! And how are we to live? Are we to live on vodka and wine? You'll starve your own family and for what? Do you think food will come to the Crimea by the boatload?

(backing away from her, feeling guilt)
Oh, Katya! Your poor mother, rest her soul, what she would have done! You've made me into a villain for wanting food for my family, you wretched, hateful girl!

KATYA

I only wanted to do good...

OKSANA

Oh Katya. Our country has enough saints. You want to do good, do good for those who care for you and feed you. Now get up off the floor. Wash your face and help me with our customers. If you want to do good, do as you're told for once. And Andrei won't lay a hand on you for it, and we'll go without meat again next week, mark my words.

KATYA

Yes, ma'am. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to. I'm sorry!

OKSANA

Oh, Katya. I fear you'll be alone forever. You need someone to love you, is all, Lord knows I'm not enough.

Maybe someday you'll have it. Now wash your face and come help me!

(OKSANA exits. KATYA rises and follows her aunt, stricken with self-loathing)

SCENE 5

(An office formerly occupied by a nobleman in Kharkov, morning, several weeks later. The office is contained entirely within the space of the stage occupied by Roman's train in the first scene. The remainder of the stage is darkened. ROMAN, in the uniform of an officer of the All-Ukrainian Cheka, is seated behind a desk, his face scarred and pale, grimly writing in a ledger. A knock sounds)

ROMAN

Yes?

NATALYA

Comrade Roman, may I have a word with you?

ROMAN

Come in.

(A woman enters, dressed in soldier's garb, her hair cut short. Her weary and hesitating demeanor suggests a former hardness, now nearly worn through. SHE stands at the door awkwardly)

ROMAN

What do you need, Natalya? Comrade?

NATALYA

You look so thin! Much thinner than I remember you... I don't know how you ever managed to survive in that horrible prison camp.

ROMAN

The German or the Polish one?

NATALYA

I didn't know who else to come to. You always made me feel so assured. It seems like everything's falling apart around us, doesn't it? The Poles are advancing to Kiev,

Baron Wrangel grows stronger by the day in the Crimea... in your own hometown.

ROMAN

You want to know how I survived, is it? How I didn't become discouraged?

NATALYA

Yes.

ROMAN

By not being weak-willed.

NATALYA

Oh.

(Perceiving this as a rebuff, SHE turns away from him. On the other side of the stage, the lights come up on a sitting room over Svetlikov's Tavern as KATYA enters, holding a tattered book and a tea set, which she sets on a table. A door to the stairs is visible. Her AUNT'S VOICE rings out from offstage)

OKSANA (v.o.)

Katya?

KATYA

Yes, auntie?

OKSANA (v.o.)

What are you reading up there?

KATYA

The Lives of the Saints.

OKSANA (v.o.)

Which saint?

KATYA

(hastily flipping to a page)
St. Catherine!

OKSANA (v.o.)

All right, Katya. Carry on.

(Mischievously, KATYA opens the back of the book and pours out an impressive pile of letters and telegrams, which she proceeds to devour longingly. On the other side of the stage, NATALYA works up the courage to ask again)

KATYA

"Dearest Katya..."

NATALYA

You remember when we distributed tracts together, to the steel workers? And you would teach me, reading to me from Lenin and Engels and Tolstoy? I need you to teach me again.

ROMAN

Very well. But I have only a moment.

(NATALYA sits at the desk beside ROMAN, a little too closely. His words to her are at first too soft to be heard, becoming audible from time to time as KATYA reads through her telegrams)

KATYA

WHEN I'M FEELING
LIKE I'M ON THE FENCE
OR I'M REELING
'CAUSE THE WORLD'S SO TENSE
AND NOTHING MAKES SENSE...

ROMAN

... no cause for fear when one is on the side of history.

KATYA

THEN I HEAR YOU
SAY THE TRUTH IS CLEAR.
THROUGH MY FEAR, YOU
MAKE A LIGHT APPEAR
LIKE YOU WERE HERE
LIKE WHEN YOU WERE HERE...

ROMAN

Across the continent, revolution is spreading, in many towns already at hand.

KATYA

AND A CERTAINTY COMES!

AND IT THRILLS ME!
THEN I KNOW!

ROMAN

That knowledge helped me keep hope.

KATYA

WHEN A CERTAINTY COMES,
IT INSTILLS ME
WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THE WORLD CAN TURN OUT RIGHT!
THAT THE FUTURE'S BRIGHT...
WHEN A CERTAINTY COMES.

ROMAN

That knowledge helped me escape. The workers across the world are on the verge of changing things for the better. What remains to be done must be overcome by sheer will. Which is why you must not allow yourself to be discouraged. To be weak.

OKSANA

Katya? Oleksander Pereshenko Turchin to see you!

KATYA

I'm not ready to see—

OKSANA

He'll be up in just a moment!

KATYA

Oh. That's nice, I guess.

(beginning to replace the telegrams into the book)

THOUGH YOU TOLD ME
TO HAVE FAITH IN YOU

NATALYA

I don't feel weak. Not anymore. Thank you.

KATYA

WHEN YOU HOLD ME
I BELIEVE IT'S TRUE...
KNOW THAT IT'S TRUE.
IT HAS TO BE TRUE!

(SHE kisses the last telegram as she returns it to the book. A moment later, NATALYA kisses

ROMAN on the mouth. He doesn't appear to react.
NATALYA draws back. OLEKSANDER appears at the
door, not yet knocking, steeling himself)

KATYA

WHEN A CERTAINTY COMES
IT SUSTAINS YOU,
THEN YOU KNOW!
WHEN A CERTAINTY COMES,
THOUGH IT PAINS YOU
YOU CAN'T THINK ABOUT IT, YOU
CAN JUST OBEY!
TAKES YOUR BREATH AWAY...
WHEN A CERTAINTY COMES!

OLEKSANDER

COULD SHE SEE THE TRUTH
IF I NUDGE HER
MAKE HER DOUBT
AND MAKE HER SEE THERE'S TWO
SIDES TO EV'RYTHING
AND MAYBE SHE COULD LOVE ME
SOMEDAY...
NOT A CERTAINTY YET!

KATYA

I'LL REMEMBER!

(SHE hides the book away as OLEKSANDER knocks)

NATALYA

I'm sorry...

ROMAN

If that is the comfort you want, seek it elsewhere.

NATALYA

This is about the girl in Sevastopol, isn't it?

(OLEKSANDER knocks again)

OLEKSANDER

Katerina Filipovna? Are you there?

ROMAN

It is.

NATALYA

I can't believe it. Roman Sych, vaunted servant of the
workers, proud exponent of societal progress, is beholden
to backwards notions of fidelity.

ROMAN

I will love exactly whom I choose to love. Not anyone
else.

(a beat as he looks her over)

And certainly not you.

NATALYA

My apologies, Comrade Roman. I suppose I'm beyond your abilities to help.

(SHE leaves)

ROMAN

And she'll be waiting for me, when we come to Sevastopol to proclaim the completion of the work we began. She'll be waiting..

(HE begins to return to his ledger, but is clearly agitated, and throughout the remainder of the scene, repeatedly rips pages from the ledger, crumples them, and throws them to the floor. OLEKSANDER knocks yet again)

KATYA

Oh... Come in!

(KATYA appears flustered and irritated until OLEKSANDER enters, carrying a bouquet of flowers, at which point her face instinctively and instantly slips into a polite smile)

KATYA

Mr. Turchin, how do you do?

OLEKSANDER

(presenting the flowers)
Here, Katerina Filipovna, these are for you.

KATYA

White peonies?

OLEKSANDER

I found them on the hillside this morning.

KATYA

(putting them in water)
These are my favorite!

OLEKSANDER

I remember.

KATYA

They're so lovely, too! I'll put them out on the balcony. Sevastopol can be such a gloomy city sometimes, it's nice to bring in some color, isn't it?

OLEKSANDER

Certainly.

KATYA

You have to find the beauty where it is, after all.

OLEKSANDER

(appearing to honestly consider this)

Huh!

KATYA

Well, thank you, Mr. Turchin. Would you like some tea?

OLEKSANDER

Yes, thank you.

KATYA

(an awkward silence passes)

Forgive me, I've never been a terribly good conversationalist.

OLEKSANDER

Well, then, let me try. So, what is it you don't like about the White Russian Army?

(KATYA is so taken aback by this that she nearly chokes on her tea. OLEKSANDER stands to assist her but she motions for him to sit and regains her composure)

KATYA

Isn't there something less confrontational we could talk about?

OLEKSANDER

I want to be honest with you, Katerina Filipovna. I want to renew my acquaintance with you, but I don't want you thinking of me as a villain.

KATYA

A villain! Certainly not a villain!

OLEKSANDER

As what, then?

KATYA

(a little too patronizingly)
Misguided, perhaps. Misinformed!

OLEKSANDER

Huh! I think I'd rather have been thought a villain! So please, tell me, Katerina Filipovna, why love the Red Army?

KATYA

It seems a rather personal question!

OLEKSANDER

Personal? Perhaps I'm too used to being around only sailors all the time. It's only that, knowing you, and the kind of person you are, I figure you must have a good reason for believing what you do. I don't want to argue, but I don't want to pretend either, Katerina Filipovna. So please, tell me.

KATYA

Well, all right, I suppose. I think, because I believe they want what I want. They want a better world, the world to be as it should be.

OLEKSANDER

And the Whites don't?

KATYA

Well, do they? It seems to me they only want to protect their wealth and power, at any cost! I can't believe I'm discussing politics with you..

OLEKSANDER

Not every White Guard wants to protect his wealth, Katerina Filipovna. Some of us want to protect our country and our faith.

KATYA

Country and faith. Protecting such things has led to a lot of awful violence, hasn't it?

OLEKSANDER

And if the last three years are any evidence, fighting against them has led to even more. You have this beautiful

ideal, but if you're willing to go to any lengths to achieve it, by the end, how much of your ideal will remain?

KATYA

Any lengths?

OLEKSANDER

Surely you know what I mean! Dissolving the constituent assembly, executing their enemies without trial, plundering the countryside for food, all sort of brutalities beyond belief!

KATYA

But, Oleksander, you're only believing the lies that your officers tell you. None of that is true. While your White Guard commander is right now oppressing this very city, arresting anyone who advocates for justice!

OLEKSANDER

You're right, Katerina Filipovna. The White Army is not innocent.

KATYA

Then why fight for them? Why not fight for what's good?

OLEKSANDER

It's not always a question of perfect good and evil. In war, it never is. It never will be. It's always muddled and confused - I chose my side because I love my country, and I don't like what I see happening to it. I want it to be free - free from dictators and tsars alike. And it's not easy to say, always, who is good and who is bad, but that doesn't mean I don't fight for what I believe in. We do the best we can, Katerina Filipovna. It's all we have.

KATYA

But... but Oleksander, sometimes it is a question of good and evil, right and wrong. And all this talk of muddled and confused is just making room for what's evil. Isn't it?

OLEKSANDER

Oh no! It's those who are so certain of their moral superiority that do so much evil - horrible things I've heard.

KATYA

Lies that you have heard. It's all propoganda, Oleksander.

OLEKSANDER

Lies?

KATYA

(as though she is trying to convince herself)
Oleksander, I know bad things have happened, but it's a war, isn't it? Once the war is over, we can start building things the way they should be - an equal, good society.

OLEKSANDER

Katerina Filipovna - right now there are exiles streaming in from every part of Russia. What part of the good society do you suppose they're fleeing?

KATYA

Oh, goodness, now you're yelling at me. I knew this would happen.

OLEKSANDER

I'm yelling?

KATYA

Yes! Well, you're speaking very crossly! Now I'm going to have a sour stomach all night long and you'll think you've proven me wrong just because I don't have the words to answer you.

OLEKSANDER

It's not that like that at all!

KATYA

Can we stop arguing please?

OLEKSANDER

I'm sorry, Katerina Filipovna, I didn't mean to upset you. It's just that, for someone so kind and reasonable as you to believe what you believe and support whom you support... I can't understand it.

KATYA

And here I am thinking the same things about you.

(Thunder rumbles in the distance. Outside, it begins to rain)

OLEKSANDER

I'm sorry. I'm sorry, that isn't how I wanted things to go. I'll take my leave.

KATYA

Oh! Already? And in the rain?

OLEKSANDER

I'm a sailor. I've handled worse.

KATYA

Well, good day, then, Oleksander Pereshenko. Thank you for the flowers!

OLEKSANDER

Thank you for the tea. You're a very intelligent girl, Katerina Filipovna. This man you're waiting for, wherever he is, is very lucky.

(HE turns to leave, but before he reaches the door, KATYA stops him)

KATYA

Good-bye Oleksander.

(HE exits, and suddenly KATYA'S agitation hits a new high, simultaneously with ROMAN'S, who throws his paperwork off the desk with a violent sweep of his arms. HE rummages through the drawers of his desk until he finds pen and paper, and runs to the window, as KATYA retrieves the telegrams from her book, fumbling frantically through the papers, before finally taking them to the window and staring longingly through)

KATYA

I ONLY THOUGHT THE TRUTH WAS PLAIN AS DAY!
I ONLY THOUGHT, NOW BLACK AND WHITE IS GRAY!
RED AND WHITE IS GRAY!
EVERYTHING IS GRAY..

ROMAN, PLEASE, I NEED YOUR CALMNESS,
NEED YOUR BOLD ASSURANCE, NEED YOUR
COMFORT, TELL ME WHAT YOU TOLD ME,
WRITE TO ME AS YOU ONCE WROTE ME,
HOLD ME AS YOU USED TO HOLD ME,
PLEASE! I WANT TO ENDURE,
I WANT TO BE SURE!

ROMAN

Dearest Katya,

Although I know this letter may never cross enemy lines to you, I pray that you remember, when the storm comes, that you have a hope, to remember what I wrote for you all those years ago. What I promised you.

COLD WIND IS BLOWING,
MAYBE WE COULD RIDE IT...
FAR TEMPEST GROWING,
SOMETHING NEW INSIDE IT!

DO YOU FEEL THE RAIN SOAKED MORNING,
SOMETHING COMING WITH NO WARNING?
PURE AND SIMPLE AND TRUE
A BOLT FROM THE BLUE

THUNDER IS SOUNDING,
QUIET NOW AND LISTEN!
RAIN FALLING, POUNDING,
SEE THE PAVEMENT GLISTEN!

JUSTICE FLOWING FROM THE SKIES ON
T'WARDS A BEAUTIFUL HORIZON!
SOON, AS SURE AS THE TIDE,
WITH ME ALONGSIDE!

I'LL BE
YOUR HARBOR FROM THE STORM,
IN A WORLD FULL OF DARK AND FEAR!
I'LL KEEP YOU SAFE AND WARM!
WHEN THE SKY STARTS TO FALL, I'LL BE NEAR.

THOUGH HAIL MAY FALL, I'LL
ALWAYS STAY BESIDE YOU
THROUGH WIND AND SQUALL, I'LL
KEEP YOU SAFE AND HIDE YOU

THOUGH THE DARKNESS FLASH WITH LIGHTNING
I CAN SEE A FUTURE BRIGHT'NING!
I WILL SHOW YOU THE WAY,
WE'LL MAKE IT SOME DAY!

I'LL BE
YOUR HARBOR FROM THE STORM,

FROM THOSE TIMES WHEN YOUR HOPE SEEMS GONE.
THOUGH HURRICANES MAY FORM
ALL YOUR FEARS FADE AWAY IN THE DAWN.

(The lights fade on ROMAN'S side of the stage,
leaving KATYA to return the letter to its hiding
place. But not before removing and taking one
last peek, mouthing along to ROMAN'S words)

ROMAN (v.o.)

YOUR HARBOR FROM THE STORM,
IN A WORLD FULL OF DARK AND FEAR.
I'LL KEEP YOU SAFE AND WARM.
WHEN THE SKY STARTS TO FALL, I'LL BE NEAR.

(SHE replaces the letter)

OKSANA (v.o.)

Katya? Katya!

KATYA

Oh gracious! Coming, auntie!

(SHE exits)

SCENE 6

(Svetlikov's Tavern, an evening a week or so
later, is already bustling with customers -
although the customers are now a different set,
exiles from Russia, dressed in the shabby
remnants of former finery. DMITRI sits alone and
drinks vodka, as ANDREI tends the bar. KATYA and
OKSANA enter, talking, as OKSANA loads KATYA'S
tray with drinks)

OKSANA

Whatever happened to that nice sailor boy, Katya? It feels
like ages ago that we saw him last.

KATYA

It was only a week ago, auntie. I probably frightened him
off.

OKSANA

Yes, you and your opinions. You should stop having those.
They're very unattractive.

KATYA

Yes, auntie, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to... unattract...

OKSANA

Of course you didn't, child.

KATYA

And, besides, he was the one trying to argue with me, and tell me how to think, wasn't he? If anyone was acting ungrateful or offensive...

OKSANA

For telling you how to think? What could possibly be wrong with that? Now, take this round to the stevedores' table and be quick about it.

(KATYA turns away to begin serving drinks to the customers, which she does with her usual oblivious skill. As she arrives at DMITRI'S table, MIKHAYLO bursts in quickly)

MIKHAYLO

Ah-ha! She's coming back! And still as mad as a hatter!

DMITRI

Oh no! Hide me, quick!

KATYA

What's all the fuss about?

DMITRI

It's horrible!

MIKHAYLO

That's right, you were in bed with fever the other day, when she came in!

KATYA

When who came in?

DMITRI

(white as a sheet)

The lady in gray!

KATYA

The lady in what?

DMITRI

Some noblewoman from Petrograd who lost everything in the revolution! She's gone raving mad!

MIKHAYLO

She has immersed herself in a dream-world of her own devising. You, my young friend, are standing in the grand Hôtel Majestueux! And we are all princes and courtesans and counts! Except Dmitri there... He's the bellboy.

(DMITRI clasps his hands to his face in agonized embarrassment)

KATYA

I see. And no one has tried to tell her the truth?

MIKHAYLO

How cruel a suggestion!

DMITRI

You only say that because she gave you a watch.

MIKHAYLO

A very nice watch!

KATYA

Well, perhaps I'll tell her. Such delicate things will require a gentler touch, I should think.

DMITRI

Oh, Katya, would you?

MIKHAYLO

Shush, here she comes now!

(The LADY IN GRAY is quite a sight as she bursts through the tavern doors, arrayed in tattered finery. She gesticulates grandly and grotesquely)

LADY IN GRAY

Ah, simply lovely... Bellboy? Bellboy!

(DMITRI sinks in his chair)

MIKHAYLO

He's right here, madame.

(HE tilts Dmitri's chair until his friend falls out of it onto his feet. HE looks longingly at Katya, whispering loudly)

DMITRI

Tell her!

(MIKHAYLO waves him on, and with great reluctance, HE lifts up the bags)

LADY IN GRAY

Thank you kindly, boy. And here's for your troubles.

(SHE deposits a wad of rubles into his hand. HE turns back to KATYA)

DMITRI

Don't tell her!

(HE promptly scurries off with the bags)

KATYA

How very peculiar!

(MIKHAYLO offers a courtly arm to the LADY IN GRAY, and together they make their way grandly into the tavern, greeting and kissing the various "princesses" and "counts")

MIKHAYLO

LIFE IS A DREAM
IF YOU WANT IT TO BE.
THINK WHAT YOU SEE
WHEN YOU'RE LOOKING ASKANCE!
LIFE IS ROMANCE
SHOULD YOU BE SO INCLINED.
SO LEAVE TEARS BEHIND
AND COME JOIN IN OUR DANCE!

A WALTZ TAKEN 'ROUND A BROKEN-DOWN HOVEL
TURNS INTO A BALL RIGHT OUT OF A NOVEL
WHEN LIFE IS A DREAM
AS YOU WANT IT TO BE!
YES, LIFE IS A DREAM
IF YOU WANT IT TO BE!

KATYA

Auntie, where did you get that ring?

OKSANA

It's a gift from her royal highness over there. Apparently it was once worn by the great aunt of the Tsarina herself!

KATYA

So you too, then? You're going to allow her to live in a fantasy world?

OKSANA

Well, why not? She's not hurting anyone, is she?

KATYA

And all this talk about wanting me to wake up from my dream world... when my dream is at least actually coming!

OKSANA

(on her way to continue serving drinks)

Oh, it's all delusions when you get to the bottom of it. You simply pick the one you like best. And hers is nicer.

KATYA

Auntie!

LADY IN GRAY

Oh, so lovely to see you on this fine evening! Why, indeed, it is! How kind of you to notice!

KATYA

IS THIS HOW I LOOK
TO THE PEOPLE AROUND ME?
IS THIS HOW THEY FEEL
WHEN THEY SEE ME DANCE AND TWIRL?

YOU'D THINK I'D SUSPECT,
BUT IT SEEMS TO ASTOUND ME!
IS THIS WHY THE WORLD
TREATS ME LIKE A LITTLE GIRL?

Well, almost the whole world..

LADY IN GRAY

Listen, the band is starting up a waltz! Will no one dance?

KATYA

Band? What band?

ANDREI

(extending an exaggerated courtly arm to Oksana)
May I have the pleasure of this dance, my illustrious
countess?

OKSANA

Why certainly, kind sir!

(THEY dance about the tavern in half-jest, but
clearly enjoying the experience. Other tavern
patrons play along. KATYA, watching, becomes
increasingly agitated)

MIKHAYLO

LIFE IS A SIGH
IN A FAIRY-TALE LAND,
SO JUST WAVE YOUR HAND,
AND THE PAIN IS CONTROLLED!

LEAD CAN BE GOLD
WHEN YOU'RE CLOSING YOUR EYES,
AND NOBODY DIES
IN THE STORIES NOT TOLD!

COME HIDE FROM THE WORLD
THROUGH SIMPLE PRETENDING.
MAKE FOR YOURSELF YOUR
OWN HAPPY ENDING!
YES, LIFE IS A DREAM
IF YOU WANT IT TO BE!
LIFE IS A DREAM
IF YOU WANT IT TO BE...

KATYA

(variously)
Someone ought to tell her! This can't go on forever! I'm
going to tell her! I will!

(The dance climaxes and suddenly falls away,
leaving KATYA alone, face to face with the LADY
IN GRAY, who notices her - all eyes are on KATYA
now)

LADY IN GRAY

Yes? What is it?

(KATYA looks her in the eyes and hesitates)

KATYA

Well, I was just admiring your dress.

LADY IN GRAY

You like it? I had it made to match one I saw at a ball at the Hungarian Embassy.

KATYA

It's very lovely.

(At this, the tavern seems to relax a bit, and return to their drinking)

LADY IN GRAY

You've been so very kind here, to those of us who've fallen upon hard times. I want to repay that kindness.

KATYA

Oh, it's no trouble at all! My uncle says we refuse no one here. Everyone deserves kindness.

LADY IN GRAY

Even so, as a favor to me, please accept this.

(SHE fastens a necklace around KATYA'S neck)

KATYA

Thank you... that's very gracious of you!

LADY IN GRAY

(admiring the necklace)

Yes, just as it should be! Just as it should be... now where did I...

(SHE wanders off, as if confused about something. KATYA allows her to go)

MIKHAYLO

(in passing, to KATYA, as he exits)

That was a tremendous act of mercy, my good friend! Indeed, an act of love!

KATYA

(to herself)

Mercy?

LOVE? WAS THAT LOVE?
OR AM I JUST A COWARD?
IS LOVE TELLING LIES
TO A QUICK-BELIEVING EAR?

BUT STILL THERE ARE THOSE
WHO AREN'T SO DISEMPOWERED...

Like I am...

THEY TELL ONE THE TRUTH
Or at least their truth...
EVEN WHEN IT HURTS TO HEAR...

(Behind them, OLEKSANDER has entered, nervously,
scanning the room for KATYA. HE approaches her)

OLEKSANDER

Katerina Filipovna? I wanted to apologize to you. I
didn't want the last thing we ever did together to be an
argument.

KATYA

Oh, Oleksander! I didn't know you had come in! And
please, call me Katya. You make me sound like an old
woman.

OLEKSANDER

Oh, all right, Katya...

KATYA

And don't apologize. I'm not offended. Well, I was, but
I'm not now. You believe what you believe very strongly,
and wanting to convince someone else doesn't have to be an
act of anger or pride. It could be an act of love. I
don't pretend to agree with you, but I feel like I
understand now. What you tried to do, I mean.

OLEKSANDER

I think you've thought about this a lot more than I have.

KATYA

I hear that's unattractive.

OLEKSANDER

You hear very incorrectly. Katya, would you come with me tomorrow morning to the market? We could walk the promenade at the harbor together.

KATYA

Well, I-it's just that, Oleksander...

OLEKSANDER

Ah, think nothing of it, then, Katya.

KATYA

Oh, no, don't run off all at once. I'll be happy to go with you. To the market, I mean.

OLEKSANDER

(genuinely surprised)

Really?

KATYA

Yes.

OLEKSANDER

(staggered, backing away towards the door)

That's wonderful! I'll see you tomorrow then!

KATYA

Until then, Oleksander.

(HE leaves, excitedly, and we hear his joyous whoop of happiness from off stage. KATYA smiles in spite of herself)

OKSANA

Oh, Katya! How good of you to accept his invitation! I'm so proud of you, finally giving in to society's expectations!

KATYA

(with great sarcasm)

Yes... life is a dream, isn't it?

SCENE 7

(A bustling street market the next morning. Merchants hawk their wares to ladies with baskets, including a merchant with a cart full of

vibrantly colored flowers. On the other side of the stage, ROMAN can be seen at his office, nervously cradling his head in his hand while working furiously in his ledger. At the market, KATYA and OLEKSANDER enter together)

OLEKSANDER

It's been so long since I've been here. Everything seems smaller, doesn't it? Oh, look, I remember that old church! I used to pray there as a boy.

KATYA

You were quite the pious child, weren't you?

OLEKSANDER

And quite the pious sailor now. Sometime I'd like to return there. You could come with me, and... oh, that is, I mean, unless you wouldn't want to.

KATYA

I'm not an atheist, Oleksander. I may not be as reverent as my family wants, but... Of course I'll pray with you.

OLEKSANDER

I'd like that a lot!

(KATYA turns around briefly, looking for something. OLEKSANDER takes the opportunity to purchase a bouquet from the flower cart)

KATYA

I think auntie wanted me to find a razor blade for Uncle Andrei, if we could, since they've taken up all the metal for—

OLEKSANDER

(presenting the flowers)
For my beautiful princess!

KATYA

Oh, they're lovely! And don't you ever call me that again!

OLEKSANDER

Princess? I'm sorry, I guess I was thinking back to our childhood here again. No more playing pretend.

KATYA

Yes. I think... I think I'm tired of playing pretend. I've been tired of it for a long time.

OLEKSANDER

But now there's no need, is there? You find the beauty where it is. In the here and now. You told me that yourself.

KATYA

Did I?

OLEKSANDER

SEEING WHAT YOU SEE -
THOUGH IT SEEMS TO HIDE
THERE'S A JOY INSIDE,
SIMPLE, TRUE, AND FREE!
AND I THINK YOU KNOW
'CAUSE YOU TOLD ME SO.
IT'S THERE TO FIND - GOD'S GRACE ABOUNDING!

SURE, THINGS CAN GET YOU BLUE.
SURE, LIFE IS TOUGH.
BUT WHEN YOU'RE DANCING, YOU
CAN'T LIVE ENOUGH!

LET YOUR SPIRIT GO SOARING WILD!
BREATHLESS LAUGH OF A RUNNING CHILD!
LAUGH UNTIL I'M ON THE FLOOR,
DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M LAUGHING FOR -
WELL, I'VE FOUND THAT GRACE ABOUNDING.

(HE offers KATYA his hand. SHE takes it, and together they run off. ROMAN is joined by a RED GUARDSMAN and a PRISONER - a haggard man, beaten and bloodied, but still raw with anger)

RED GUARDSMAN

Comrade Sych, we found him, hiding in the cellar of a church. We believe him to be the instigator of the strike at the arms factory.

ROMAN

Orders from Dzerzhinsky?

RED GUARDSMAN

None, comrade. It's left to your discretion.

ROMAN

(he looks up from his papers and meets the man in
the eye)
You have a family?

PRISONER

Yes, and they starve for want of one day to go out into the
country to forage for f-

ROMAN

Enough. Take him to the other room. If he will confess
his sins and reveal who his White Guard commanders are,
then he is to go free. Otherwise, round up his family.

RED GUARDSMAN

Yes, comrade.

(As the PRISONER is led off, he turns and spits
contempt at his captor)

PRISONER

You promised us!

(THEY are gone)

ROMAN

You think I don't care? Maybe I don't. Or maybe I know
we're fighting a war to the death with enemies who will
stop at nothing - enemies at the gates of Kiev - enemies
within. There are things we can't afford. We can't.

THIS WORLD IS LIKE AN OPEN GRAVE THAT
YOU DIG UNTIL YOU'RE DEAD,
YOUR WHOLE LIFE LONG,
YOUR EV'RY HOUR...

TO WIN THE POW'R TO DO THE GOOD YOU
DO THE WRONG INSTEAD.
TO RIGHT THAT WRONG,
YOU NEED THE POWER!

BUT I KNOW
IF WE WILL RUN THROUGH THE NIGHT,
NEVER TIRE,
WE CAN BREAK THROUGH TO THE LIGHT
SO I WILL KEEP UP THE FIGHT
FOR HER...

(Overlapping, KATYA and OLEKSANDER reappear in the marketplace, dancing together. As she did in Scene 1, she transforms the scene into a festive dance - but this time, OLEKSANDER participates with her)

KATYA

LIVING LIFE ALL NEW,
SEE THE WORLD TRANSFORMED,
LET YOUR SOUL BE WARMED!

OLEKSANDER

BEING WITH A GIRL LIKE YOU...

KATYA

WHEN YOUR SPIRIT MOVES,
EVERY MOMENT PROVES
THAT EACH DAY BRINGS THAT GRACE ABOUNDING!

ROMAN

FOR HER...

KATYA

TIME WAS I THOUGHT THAT I
COULD NEVER COPE.
BUT THEN I FOUND OUT WHY
I HAVE A HOPE!

OLEKSANDER

Heaven?

KATYA

Heaven now!

WHY BE SIGHING FOR HEAVEN'S CHEER
WHEN THERE'S HAPPINESS WAITING HERE?
LIFT YOUR EYES, THROW DOWN YOUR CHAINS!
SEE THE SUN SHINE WHEN IT RAINS!
THEN YOU'LL SEE GOD'S GRACE ABOUNDING!

ROMAN

THIS WORLD IS FULL OF SO MUCH WASTE AND WRONG
AND WHO UNDERSTANDS THAT YOU DO WHAT YOU DO TO STAY
STRONG, STAY STRONG?

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| KATYA/OLEKSANDER | ROMAN |
|-------------------------|--------------|

| | |
|--|---|
| LIVING LIFE ALL NEW SEE THE WORLD TRANSFORMED LET YOUR SOUL BE WARMED TO BE WITH SOMEONE LIKE YOU WHEN YOUR SPIRIT MOVES EV'RY MOMENT PROVES THAT EACH DAYS BRINGS THAT GRACE ABOUNDING | BUT I KNOW IF WE WILL RUN THROUGH THE NIGHT NEVER TIRE WE CAN BREAK THROUGH TO THE LIGHT SO I WILL KEEP UP THE FIGHT FOR HER |
|--|---|

ROMAN

FOR I, I'LL CHANGE THE WORLD FOR HER!

OLEKSANDER

I ALWAYS LOVED YOUR GENTLE SMILE,
SINCE THE AGE OF THREE!
LITTLE KNOWING ALL THE WHILE
IT MIGHT COME TO BE
YOU WOULD SMILE AT ME...

(The music stops, and a sort of awkward moment passes. KATYA turns uncomfortably away, clearly both moved and embarrassed. OLEKSANDER, not content to let it finish this way, rouses the dance yet again)

OLEKSANDER

COME ON, PEOPLE, GET ON YOUR FEET!
THERE'S NO SITTING THROUGH LIFE THIS SWEET!

| | |
|---|---|
| KATYA/OLEKSANDER BEAUTY, JOY REPLETE! FULL TO OVERFLOW! LIFE THAT FEELS COMPLETE! KNOWING WHAT I KNOW.. THAT GRACE ABOUNDING! | ROMAN I'LL CHANGE THE WORLD, THE WORLD! THIS AWFUL, DARKENED WORLD! UNJUST, OPPRESSIVE WORLD! I'LL CHANGE THE WORLD.. FOR HER... |
|---|---|

(The music comes to an end, and OLEKSANDER bows graciously to KATYA and kisses her hand, turning to leave. As he does, KATYA looks back at him, wondering. Their portion of the stage goes dark as the PRISONER is returned to ROMAN'S office)

ROMAN

The confession?

PRISONER

I will sign nothing. I'm innocent. I've done nothing.

(ROMAN hesitates, breathing furiously, before drawing his pistol and pressing it into the base of the man's skull)

ROMAN

I didn't ask.

(The scene is plunged into darkness)

END OF ACT I

ACT II

SCENE 1

(The sitting room above Svetlikov's Tavern. A fire roars in the fireplace. KATYA enters, carrying a small, but ornate, icon of St. Catherine, which she affixes over the fireplace, and saying a brief prayer, crosses herself before it. As SHE turns to go, she notices the *Lives of the Saints* book poking out of the bookshelf, and considering for a moment, goes to it and allows the old letters to fall into her hands)

KATYA

I know what you'd say. "Katya, you're far too clever to be praying to some saint, much too discerning to fall prey to ignorant superstitions." Oh, Roman. I never doubted like you did. Not really. I suppose I only pretended with you so you wouldn't be angry with me.

(SHE sits and goes through the letters again, but finds herself surprised that she feels nothing looking at them. With a flood of mixed feelings, she sets the book aside)

KATYA

It was a gift from Oleksander... from my Sasha. I know you'd be mad, if you're even still alive. And I know what you'd say, too, with me praying now - religion is all just a beautiful lie we tell ourselves to make ourselves feel better. But, I wonder.

ROMAN, WHAT IF THAT'S ALL?
I WONDER, ROMAN, WHAT IF THEY'RE ALL LIES?
I WAS DUE FOR A FALL
I GUESS I'D NEVER BEEN ONE YOU'D CALL WISE.
IF IT'S PLEASANT I'LL HEAR IT
IF IT'S WARM I'LL DRAW NEAR IT
I WOULD COME IF YOU'D CALL

GO ON, TELL ME A BEAUTIFUL LIE
LIKE SOME DAY YOU WILL COME FIND ME, WON'T YOU?
IT NEED HAVE NOT BEEN OUR FINAL GOODBYE
IF YOU WOULD ONLY REMIND ME, WON'T YOU?
WON'T YOU?

ROMAN, IT'S BEEN SO LONG
IS THERE A TIME WHEN I CAN START LIVING?
ROMAN, I'M NOT THAT STRONG
I'D UNDERSTAND IF YOU WEREN'T FORGIVING.
FOUR YEARS WAITING AND YEARNING
PRETENDING YOU'D BE RETURNING.
WHAT IF I HAVE BEEN WRONG?

GO ON, TELL ME A BEAUTIFUL LIE
OF MEN OR HEAVEN ABOVE ME, WON'T YOU?
EV'RY SYLLABLE ONLY A SIGH...
OH TELL ME THAT YOU STILL LOVE ME, DON'T YOU?

Don't you...?

OH I'VE TRIED
HOW I'VE TRIED
ALL THOSE YEARS
HOLDING INSIDE
I CAN'T LIVE LIKE THIS, I JUST CAN'T ANYMORE
SINCE YOU GOT IN THAT TRAIN AND THAT HORRIBLE WAR
OH I'VE PRAYED AND I'VE CRIED, EVERY NIGHT SINCE
YOU'VE GONE
I'M SICK OF EXPECTING THAT GLORIOUS DAWN
YOU KNOW I'VE GOT TO MOVE ON!

DON'T YOU TELL ME A BEAUTIFUL LIE.
YOU KNOW I'LL ONLY BELIEVE YOU, DON'T YOU?
SOMETIMES FAIRY TALES WITHER AND DIE
AND SO YOU KNOW I MUST LEAVE YOU, DON'T YOU?
DON'T YOU?

ROMAN, IT WAS A LIE.
JUST A BEAUTIFUL LIE.
ROMAN, THIS IS GOOD-BYE.

(Taking the letters from the back of the book,
SHE tosses them into the fire. However, before
she turns to leave, she finds one envelope still
in the back of the book. Rather than adding it
to the fire, she encloses back in the book, and
returns it carefully to the shelf.)

SCENE 2

(Svetlikov's Tavern, an unseasonably cold
afternoon in November. The tavern is mostly

empty, except for MIKHAYLO and DMITRI and a few others. OKSANA bustles about. KATYA and OLEKSANDER enter from the street, staggering under baskets of vegetables)

OKSANA

Oh good, you're back!

KATYA

Sasha, the cucumbers!

(OLEKSANDER dutifully steadies one of Katya's baskets with a hand as best he can)

KATYA

No, no, not that one. Here, if I can— there, now, I think you've managed it.

(With a huge sigh of relief THEY release the baskets onto the bar. KATYA gently removes a hair from OLEKSANDER'S shoulder)

OLEKSANDER

What was that?

KATYA

I only want you looking presentable, that's all.

(SHE leans in for a quick kiss, when OKSANA rears up from behind the bar, grinning from ear to ear at them. OLEKSANDER and KATYA observe her and quickly back away from each other)

KATYA

I'll be in the kitchen.

OLEKSANDER

I'll wait for you here.

(HE slumps into a chair across from MIKHAYLO and DMITRI, exhausted, eyeing OKSANA wearily as she bustles cheerfully about)

OKSANA

Oh, Sasha, my wonderful Sashenka, how pleasant it's been with Katya happy at last! It feels like it's been ages since she's smiled at all. If it weren't so cold outside,

that's the only thing. Yes. If it weren't for me she'd probably still be moping around that telegraph office.

OLEKSANDER

Weren't for you?

OKSANA

Of course, my dear. Someone had to apply the necessary pressure, you wouldn't have stood a chance otherwise. I'm certain Katya will agree after I go over tonight's list of things she needs to improve upon.

(OLEKSANDER turns grumpily away, grabs MIKHAYLO'S vodka and downs it, to his compatriot's chagrin)

OKSANA

What? What is it? Sasha, dear, is something the matter?

OLEKSANDER

(steeling himself, bravely)

I UNDERSTAND
YOU'VE HAD A HAND
OR TWO
OR THREE...

IN HELPING HER,
WELL, AS IT WERE,
TO BE
WITH ME.

I MUST ADMIT
YOU SEEM A BIT
LIKE A SECOND MOTHER,

BUT, I SORT OF FEEL
THAT I DON'T REAL-
LY WANT ANOTHER...

OKSANA

What are you saying, Oleksander Pereshenko?

OLEKSANDER

I'M SAYING BACK OFF... A LITTLE
I'M SAYING DON'T YELL... SO MUCH... IN HER FACE
I'M SAYING STAND DOWN... A LITTLE
I'M SAYING PLEASE SHOW HER SOME GRACE!
I APPRECIATE WHAT

YOU DID FOR ME BUT
COULD YOU PLEASE GIVE HER SOME SPACE?

(OLEKSANDER braces himself)

OKSANA

Well! Really!

(to Mikhaylo and others)

Did you see what he just said to me? In full view of
everyone?

MIKHAYLO

I'M SURE MY FRIEND
DID NOT INTEND
TO CAUSE
OFFENSE!

DMITRI

HE WOULD, IF WISE,
APOLOGIZE.

MIKHAYLO

IT WOULD
BE SENSE.

IT'D BE NO SIN
IF HE HAD BEEN
OH, MUCH LESS...

DMITRI

VEHEMENT?

MIKHAYLO

But...

IT'S NOT TOO FAR
TO SAY WE ARE
IN FULL AGREEMENT...

OKSANA

What's going on here?

(The other PATRONS crowd behind OLEKSANDER,
pressing him forward with far too much
confidence, greatly alarming the sailor)

PATRONS

HE'S SAYING BACK OFF!

OLEKSANDER

A LITTLE!

PATRONS

HE'S SAYING DON'T YELL...

OLEKSANDER

SO MUCH!

PATRONS

... IN HER FACE!

HE'S SAYING STAND DOWN!

OLEKSANDER

A LITTLE!

PATRONS

HE'S SAYING PLEASE SHOW THEM SOME GRACE!

OLEKSANDER

I APPRECIATE WHAT

YOU DID FOR ME!

PATRONS

BUT

COULD YOU PLEASE GIVE US SOME SPACE!

(OKSANA glares, boiling over with rage)

OKSANA

Out! Get out! The lot of you! Out of my tavern! That's right, all of you!

(Immediately, the entire tavern empties)

OKSANA

(yelling out the door after them)

And if you think you can come crawling to Andrei for vodka, I'll be locking him away in the cellar, do you hear? Filthy vagabonds, the lot of you!

(KATYA emerges from the kitchen, looking guilty about something, carrying a covered basket)

KATYA

Auntie, what's all the fuss?

OKSANA

The nerve! Unbelievable! Incredible! I simply can't believe it! Some people!

KATYA

What happened? Where's my Sasha?

OKSANA

And he seemed so pleasant and agreeable, too! After all this time! Can you believe it? He told me not to yell at you! As if that weren't my God-given right as your caregiver! Really, the indignity! I have to go lie down. Don't allow any of them back in!

(SHE exits through the kitchen door)

KATYA

(with a strange sadness)

He must really love me.

(distracted, anxious, she sits and cradles her head)

HE LOVES ME SO
HE'S ALWAYS LETTING ME KNOW
IN LITTLE WAYS
HIS LOVE IS TRUE
BUT NOW I FEEL SO UNSURE WHAT TO DO...

AND EV'RY DAY THAT PASSES I FEEL MORE AT PEACE
AND SHOULD I BE SURPRISED THAT EASY DAYS WOULD CEASE?

ONLY YESTERDAY
LIFE WAS EASY, I THOUGHT I KNEW THE WAY
ONLY YESTERDAY
LIFE WAS SIMPLE, NOT TODAY.

I THOUGHT I'D TAKE, FOR OLD TIMES' SAKE, A HARMLESS
PEEK.
WHO'D SUSPECT THAT KATYA WOULD STILL NOW BE WEAK?

AS FAR AS I KNEW
I'D SETTLED FOR NICE
AND GIVEN UP ONE HAPPY ENDING
AS FAR AS I KNEW
I WOULDN'T THINK TWICE

AND LEAVE MY OLD SCARS TO THEIR MENDING

COULD I'VE KNOWN
COULD I'VE GUESSED,
WHEN GOD'S SHOWN
HOW I'VE BEEN BLESSED,
THAT I WOULD FIND THERE FOR ME, WAITING,
WAITING FOR ME...

(SHE reveals a new telegram for her, still sealed
in an envelope)

IT COULD TELL ME HE'S DEAD OR MISSING
LOST SOMEWHERE ON THE FRONT
I DID YESTERDAY, NOW I DON'T KNOW
WHAT I WANT

IF I OPEN UP THIS MESSAGE WILL THERE BE A COST?
COULD I SOMEHOW GAIN BACK ALL THAT I HAD LOST?

COULD THAT CERTAINTY COME?
COULD IT THRILL ME
AS IT DID?
COULD THAT CERTAINTY COME?
COULD IT FILL ME?

ALL I KNOW IS THAT WHAT THIS SAYS MUST SOMEHOW MAKE MY
LIFE CHANGE.
ONLY YESTERDAY LIFE WAS FRIENDLY, NOW IT'S STRANGE.

IT COULD BE A MISTAKE, JUST AN INNOCENT MISHAP.

NO ONE HAS TO KNOW I SIMPLY HAVE TO LOOK
NO ONE HAS TO KNOW WHAT SINFUL ACTIONS I TOOK...

ONLY OPEN IT.

(SHE tears open the envelope and reads it)

ROMAN (v.o.)

"KATYA, MY DEAREST,
MAY THIS LETTER REACH YOU
SAFE AND PROTECTED
WHERE I SOON WILL MEET YOU

YOU MUST KNOW THAT AS I'M WRITING
I'M ABOARD THE SIMFEROPOL

RAILWAY FOR THE FRONT BY EV'NING,
SOON, MY LOVE, WE'LL BE TOGETHER
I WILL SEEK YOU AT THE TAVERN
HIDE YOURSELF UNTIL I FIND YOU
DANGER COMES WITH REVOLUTION
BUT I PROMISE TO PROTECT YOU

TO BE

YOUR HARBOR FROM THE STORM,

FOREVER YOURS,
ROMAN"

(MIKHAYLO enters, shivering and pale, looking extremely perturbed. At his entrance, KATYA reflexively hides the telegram)

MIKHAYLO

Oh, Katya, is Andrei home? I must speak with him urgently!

KATYA

I don't believe he's here. What's the matter?

MIKHAYLO

There has been, madam, a breach in the defenses.

KATYA

A breach? What on earth are you talking about?

MIKHAYLO

The Red Army has entered the Crimea, and an evacuation has been ordered.

KATYA

But how? That's impossible, Oleksander said the defenses were impregnable!

MIKHAYLO

(sneaking vodka from the bar as he speaks)

They've crossed over on the frozen waters of the Sivash. A divine miracle, or the work of demons, if you like. I knew it was unseasonably cold.. Tell Andrei, if you see him, that Dmitri and I have been ordered to the docks to load the White Army aboard all available ships for Constantinople. They're urging civilians to leave the cities. I thought I should alert you.

KATYA

Oh... thank you, Mikhaylo... I shall let him know immediately.

MIKHAYLO

And here's to you, beautiful, gentle girl. May we meet again, in better times.

(HE downs the last of his glass and exits. After a moment, OLEKSANDER bursts in, shivering and flushed. HE tries to hang his coat on the rack as he speaks)

OLEKSANDER

IT'S COLD, SO VERY COLD!
I CAN'T REMEMBER A NOVEMBER QUITE AS COLD - WHOOPS!
(dropping his hat)
WERE YOU TOLD THAT WRANGEL'S GIVEN US THE ORDER TO
EVACUATE?
CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?
WE SHOULD LEAVE BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!
WAIT!
IS SHE HERE, I MEAN YOUR AUNTIE DEAR?
GREAT!

KATYA, KATYA!
DON'T SIT AROUND WHEN YOU MUST START PACKING!

(HE rushes through the door to Katya's room, but comes back, perturbed when he realizes KATYA has not followed)

OLEKSANDER

LET'S GO, WE HAVE TO GO!
YOU SHOULD BE PACKING BUT YOU'RE SLACKING,
MOVING SLOW! OH!
DID YOU KNOW I HAVE THE PAPERS YOU'LL BE NEEDING WHEN
YOU BOARD THE SHIP!
IT WILL BE CROWDED AND DON'T DOUBT IT IS A LONG TRIP-
CRUISE!
I'LL HELP PACK!
WHAT CLOTHING DO YOU LACK?
SHOES?

(HE disappears into Katya's bedroom. SHE watches, in a daze, as HE keeps running back and forth from her to the bedroom)

OLEKSANDER

KATYA, DON'T JUST SIT THERE!

(SHE stands)

OLEKSANDER

MUSTN'T QUIT THERE!
DON'T JUST STAND HERE!

(SHE sits)

OLEKSANDER

GIVE ME A HAND HERE!

(KATYA continues to watch as OLEKSANDER
disappears into the bedroom and a flurry of
clothes comes flying into the tavern)

OLEKSANDER

ONE MORE!

JUST ONE THING MORE!

PERHAPS A SKIRT, EMBROIDERED SHIRT? A KERCHIEF OR—
WHOOPS! DIFFERENT DRAW'R!

(emerging from the room with a hastily assembled
suitcase, stuffing clothes into it)

FOR IF WE'RE LATE YOU MIGHT BE KILLED OR VIOLATED, YOU
KNOW WHAT I MEAN!

WE HAVE TO REACH CONSTANTINOPLE, HAVE TO LEAVE THE
SCENE!

(plopping the suitcase in front of her)

THERE!

NOW WE'RE DONE, AT LAST IT'S TIME TO RUN!

COME ON!

COME ON!

(seeing her not budge)

OR... DON'T?

Katya, there's no time! Quickly, now! Where have your
aunt and uncle gone to? Surely they've heard!

KATYA

I don't know, Oleksander. I've only just found out myself.

OLEKSANDER

Well, we can't stay in Sevastopol, that one thing's certain! They'd have me up against a wall before I could even cry out. What's the matter?

KATYA

My life is here, Oleksander.

OLEKSANDER

It won't be for long. They'll kill you. Your aunt and uncle will have to come as well. You've harbored White Guardsmen here, you're all in danger.

KATYA

(beginning to cry)

Oh, Sasha, I'm sorry... I'm so sorry..

OLEKSANDER

Oh no, Katya, we'll come back to Sevastopol some day, when it's free again. All may be lost now, but not forever.

KATYA

Oh! You don't understand. I can't leave, Sasha, I can't leave.

OLEKSANDER

What do you mean? You'll die if you stay here!

(SHE maintains a teary-eyed silence, refusing to look at him)

OLEKSANDER

Katya?

KATYA

I'm sorry, I... I can't leave, Sasha. You'll have to go without me.

OLEKSANDER

Can you not tell me why?

KATYA

I'd be ashamed to.

(HE stands, staggered, and paces)

OLEKSANDER

Katya, what do you want me to say? Have I done something wrong? Please tell me. Please, Katya. Katya, we don't have time, I have to be at the ship-

KATYA

Please... please go.

OLEKSANDER

What?

KATYA

Please go. I have to know that you'll be safe..

OLEKSANDER

Katya.

(A long moment passes. SHE refuses to look at him. Infuriated and hurt, he runs out of the tavern and slams the door behind him. The door reopens a bit and his hand appears, grabbing his hat and coat from the rack, and the door closes again)

KATYA

Oh God, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry... please, forgive me..

(SHE runs to her bedroom, crying)

SCENE 3

(Dusk, immediately following, the naval docks. The panicked citizens of Sevastopol are crowding onto a catwalk leading to a White Guard ship, carrying what little of their possessions they are allowed. In the distance, faintly now, we hear sounds of horrors - machine gun fire, explosions, motors, cries. OLEKSANDER is doing his duty, loading supplies and people onto the catwalk, lost completely in his own thoughts, oblivious to the chaos around him in the evacuation)

OLEKSANDER

WELL ISN'T IT PERFECT?
ISN'T IT BEAUTIFUL?
I THOUGHT IF I KEPT PERSISTING
I WOULD WIN IN THE END

BUT I WASN'T PERFECT.
SURE, MAYBE, DUTIFUL
BUT NOW MY STOMACH'S TWISTING
AND I'M NOT EVEN HER FRIEND!

I SHOULDN'T WONDER AT A DAY
WHEN I SHOULD BLUNDER IT AWAY!
IF IT'S HER FAULT, THEN IT'S OVER!
BUT IF IT'S MY FAULT, I CAN SAY:
"WHATEVER IT IS, I'M SORRY"
AND MAYBE IT WILL BE OKAY.

DID I CALL HER FAT?
OR JUST IMPLY IT AND NOT ATONE?
LITTLE THINGS LIKE THAT
CAN TURN TO BIG THINGS WHEN LEFT ALONE!
I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN...

DID I WIN TOO MUCH
WHEN WE WOULD ARGUE, AS IS MY WONT?
BEING RIGHT AND SUCH
IN HER PERCEPTION CAN BE A TAUNT!
ONE SHOULDN'T FLAUNT!

WHATEVER IT IS, I'M SORRY!
WHATEVER IT IS, I WOULD LIKE YOU TO SHARE
I WON'T DO IT NEXT TIME, SORRY.
IF THERE'S NOT A NEXT TIME, WELL, THAT SEEMS UNFAIR.

DID I SMOTHER HER,
OR KEEP MY DISTANCE? IT'S HARD TO TELL!
EV'RYTHING'S A BLUR.
IT'S FAR TOO SUDDEN TO SAY FAREWELL,
TO BE IN HELL...

WHATEVER IT IS, I'M SORRY!
WHATEVER I DID, I WON'T DO IT AGAIN!
I WON'T DO IT NEXT TIME, SORRY!
IF THERE IS A NEXT TIME, WELL, THERE'S NEVER BEEN.

I KNOW SHE LOVES ME DEEP INSIDE,
THERE MUST BE SOMETHING I'VE NOT TRIED!
IT'S JUST A MOMENTARY SLIDE!
I KNOW SHE LOVES ME!
I KNOW SHE LOVED ME...
DIDN'T SHE?

WHITE GUARD OFFICER

Ensign, what are you doing? Get aboard!

OLEKSANDER

Aye, sir.

I WISH I COULD BE
THAT PERFECT PERSON YOU'D WANT TO LOVE.
BUT SOMEONE WHO'S NOT ME
WILL GET YOUR HEART AND I GOT THE SHOVE...
OH...

THOUGH I MAY BE DONE IN SEVASTOPOL
THERE MAY STILL BE LIFE IN CONSTANTINOPLE.
MAYBE THERE I'LL BE HAPPY LIKE I'VE NEVER BEEN!
BUT UNTIL I GET THERE I'LL SURVIVE...
ON A BOAT FULL OF MEN!
AGAIN!

SO LONG!
SO LONG!
SO LONG...

(A foghorn rings out as HE turns to board the
ship himself)

SCENE 4

(Svetlikov's Tavern, one evening several days
later. OKSANA is compulsively cleaning while
KATYA sits nervously. The noises from earlier
are louder now, more prominent, and harsher. An
eerie silence hangs over the tavern otherwise)

OKSANA

(whispering to herself)

Holy Mother of God and all the saints, please pray to
Christ that Andrei returns safely.. please..

(The door opens and ANDREI enters, grim-faced.
OKSANA runs to him and embraces him)

OKSANA

Andrei! Oh thank God you've come back!

(HE draws away from her and sits, deeply shocked
by something he's seen)

OKSANA

What is it? What's the matter?

ANDREI

It's like nothing I've ever seen... I can't imagine why. I simply can't imagine...

KATYA

What is it, Uncle Andrei?

ANDREI

They've been *hanged*.

OKSANA

What? Who?

ANDREI

All of them. Up and down Namorsky Prospect, Primorskii Boulevard. I've never seen... I can't imagine why.

KATYA

Who, Uncle Andrei?

ANDREI

Officers in full uniform. And young men, hung naked. And at the docks... the stevedores.

(A moment as this is taken in)

KATYA

Surely... surely they made it to safety!

ANDREI

Of course! Surely! I don't see why they wouldn't have, after all. They're good men. I can't imagine why...

OKSANA

Oh, we should have been on that ship with Oleksander Pereshenko. We should have left when we had the chance...

KATYA

He'll come, auntie. He'll be here. He said he was coming for me, and then we'll be safe.

ANDREI

We're not safe.

(There is a horrible knock at the door. For several moments, no one even moves. The knock returns)

KATYA

I'll answer it.

(SHE goes to the door and opens, revealing a bespectacled Red Guard OFFICER and some ENLISTED MEN. They burst into the tavern)

OFFICER

Andrei Malinovich Svetlikov!

OKSANA

What is the meaning of this? How dare you enter—

ANDREI

Oksana, please.

(standing, looking as brave as he can)

What can I do for you, gentlemen?

OFFICER

You may complete these documents, by order of the Crimean Soviet and the Cheka. This city must be raised to the revolutionary level of the rest of the country. It is required of all citizens.

(HE motions to his MEN, who exit into the kitchen)

OKSANA

Where are they going?

OFFICER

Your cellar is now the property of the people. You would be wise to learn your place in the new way of things.

ANDREI

I'll complete these at once. We've nothing to hide.

OFFICER

You had better pray you don't. The counterrevolutionary elements are to be purged from the city. I pray, for your sake, you showed them no kindnesses.

(ANDREI sits and begins dutifully to fill out the documents. Behind him, the SOLDIERS exit with crates of wine and vodka)

OFFICER

We shall be back momentarily to collect the documents.

(HE exits)

OKSANA

(observing Andrei's answers)

Andrei, what are you doing? Don't you dare be honest! We'll be hung!

ANDREI

(in a weird state of shock)

We have nothing to hide.

OKSANA

You old fool, we served exiles here! Our own niece had a White Guardsman for a paramour!

ANDREI

Surely they'd not be so irrational.

KATYA

He's coming... I know he's coming...

(There is another knock. Again, no one answers. The knock repeats)

KATYA

I'm going to answer it.

OKSANA

Katya, no!

(SHE runs to the door and throws it open, revealing ROMAN, dressed as an officer of the Cheka)

KATYA

Oh God. Roman.

(SHE clings to him as HE steps into the tavern. They remain locked in wordless embrace for several moments)

KATYA

I always knew you'd return to me. I knew it! Oh, Roman, I knew it...

ROMAN

Are the curtains drawn?

(to OKSANA)

Close them at once. And shut off the electricity.

(HE pulls away from her)

You are all in a great deal of danger.

KATYA

But you can protect us? Roman, can't you?

ROMAN

Listen to me, you'll need to hide. For several days most likely, perhaps longer. Does this building have an attic or a loft?

KATYA

There is a loft, yes. Roman, why would they harm us? All the things you told me about, they're coming true now, aren't they?

ROMAN

The city is being raised to the revolutionary level of the rest of the country. Counterrevolutionary elements, enemies of the people, are being purged. Comrade Lenin has declared his intentions to liquidate the entire Crimean bourgeoisie.

KATYA

Roman, why are you talking like this?

ROMAN

You have to listen to me. Hide yourselves at once. I'll invent a story to explain your absences. If anyone comes to the door asking for assistance, do not open it. Under no circumstances whatever are you to open the door. If you are seen helping an enemy of the people you will be hung immediately. Are you listening to me, Katya?

KATYA

Yes, Roman...

ROMAN

I have business elsewhere, but I'll return for you.
Quickly.

(HE turns to leave, but KATYA stops him)

KATYA

Roman! Roman, I've been waiting four years...

ROMAN

You'll have to wait only a little longer.

(HE leaves)

ANDREI

A trip to the loft, then, I believe is in order... here, Oksana, I'll assist you up the stairs. Katya, please, if you'd kindly retrieve the revolver under the bar...

(As ANDREI and OKSANA exit, KATYA goes to the bar and retrieves her uncle's revolver and a box of bullets. For a moment, she regards the gun in her hand, as the electricity is shut off, plunging the tavern into darkness. Someone screams outside, frightening her. Awkwardly, frantically, she loads bullets into the revolver. Overwhelmed by curiosity, she goes to the curtains and peeks out)

KATYA

WHAT IS THIS, WHAT DO I HEAR?
SWEET LORD WHAT HAVE THEY DONE?
WHO ARE THEY, WHY DO THEY LAUGH?
GOD, THEY'RE HANGING MEN...
AND HAVING FUN...

(SHE turns from the window, reeling, as though about to vomit. There is a knock at the door)

LADY IN GRAY (v.o.)

Help me! Oh, God, please, help me! They'll kill me!

KATYA

(a hoarse whisper)

I know that voice... He said not to open that door...

LADY IN GRAY (v.o.)

Please, someone... won't someone help me?

KATYA

I don't care!

(SHE steels herself and throws open the door, revealing the LADY IN GRAY, beaten, her dress torn and hair disheveled. KATYA helps her inside quickly and shuts the door behind her, locking it tight)

LADY IN GRAY

Oh thank you, thank you... Mother of God, thank you...

KATYA

Hush! Someone's coming!

(KATYA helps HER to her feet and together they stand against the wall. There is another pounding at the door, but this time, it is clear the intention is to break the door in. KATYA and the LADY IN GRAY maintain a deathly silence as the jamb finally gives, and the RED OFFICER enters, brandishing a rifle. HE doesn't see them for several tense moments, until KATYA levels her pistol at his chest. The OFFICER notices the motion and quickly covers the space between them, slapping the gun out of her hand. The LADY cries out as the OFFICER grabs awkwardly at KATYA with his free arm - SHE wriggles free quickly. The OFFICER begins fumbling with his rifle when a gunshot rings out and HE collapses dead. OLEKSANDER is revealed at the kitchen door, his shirt stained with dried blood, holding a smoking pistol)

KATYA

Oh, Oleksander, no!

(SHE runs into HIS embrace, mumbling confused protests underneath HIS reassurances)

OLEKSANDER

I COULDN'T LEAVE YOU HERE!
COULDN'T LEAVE ALONE
HAVING NEVER KNOWN
I HAD TO HAVE YOU NEAR
IS IT SENSELESS, YES!
BUT I MUST CONFESS

KATYA

It's senseless, Oleksander,
what were you thinking?
Oleksander, they'll find you,
they'll find you and kill
you, haven't you seen,
Oleksander? No, no, you're

THAT I LOVE YOU...
I STILL LOVE YOU...

supposed to be safe, safe on
the ship, that was my only
comfort, Oleksander! He'll
find you! Oh, God, he'll
find you...

OLEKSANDER

(suddenly realizing what she's saying)
He'll find me? Who'll find me? Katya?

KATYA

(to the Lady in Gray)
Quickly! To the loft upstairs! You'll find my aunt and
uncle—

(OLEKSANDER catches HER as the LADY IN GRAY makes
good her escape)

OLEKSANDER

Katya! What are you talking about?

KATYA

Oleksander, you shouldn't be here! You shouldn't be here...

OLEKSANDER

You're right, I shouldn't, I don't care. Katya, I couldn't
let it end like that, Red Army or not...

KATYA

Oleksander, he'll find you... you have to go! You can't be
here!

OLEKSANDER

Go where? Who'll find me?

(ROMAN appears at the door, still swinging open
into the street)

ROMAN

I will.

KATYA

Oh, Roman...

(SHE falls to her knees and repeats "I'm sorry"
in a kind of catatonia of fear and remorse, as
OLEKSANDER aims his weapon at ROMAN'S heart)

ROMAN

WHO IS THIS SAILOR WITH MY KATYA?
THIS WHITE GUARD... SAILOR...

OLEKSANDER

Roman... I think I'm starting to understand.

ROMAN

I'm not.

ROMAN

FOR WHAT FOUL
REASON MIGHT YOU BE
HERE?
TO HAVE HER?
TO RAPE HER?
JUST LIKE YOU'VE
RAPED THE RUSSIAN
PEOPLE
YOU'LL RAPE THEM
NO LONGER

GO ON AND SHOOT IF
YOU DARE!

I'D LIKE TO SEE...

OLEKSANDER

TO THINK THAT I'D
FALLEN IN LOVE WITH
SOMEONE WHO'D FALLEN
IN LOVE WITH
A MADMAN

AND WAS IT A LIE
FROM THE START?
I CAN'T FEEL A THING
IN MY HEART...

DON'T THINK THAT I
WON'T!

KATYA

I'M SORRY...
I'M SORRY...
I'M SORRY...
(etc)

(ROMAN, now close enough to the waffling
OLEKSANDER, lunges and removes the gun from his
arm. KATYA cries out. THEY fight. OLEKSANDER
is knocked behind the bar, where ROMAN quickly
assumes the upper hand. HE drags OLEKSANDER to
the center of the tavern, beaten and unconscious)

KATYA

Oh, Roman... no, Roman, please...

(ROMAN looks to Katya, and then to Oleksander,
confused and wounded)

ROMAN

I saved you. I saved you from this White Guard devil.

KATYA

No, Roman, you don't understand, please don't! Please don't hurt him!

ROMAN

I'm taking him outside... to finish it. Stay here, you'll be safe here. Saboteurs and tsarist elements are everywhere in this city...

KATYA

Roman, please...

(HE ignores her and drags OLEKSANDER out into the street, leaving KATYA alone)

SCENE 5

(Midnight, the city of the hanged. Corpses swing from streetlights and telegraph poles. Posters proclaiming "Death to the Traitors!" are plastered over everything. The city is surreal, ghostly, with no sign of life. Only ROMAN, muttering to himself, as he drags OLEKSANDER onto the street)

ROMAN

I saved her. Ungrateful girl, I saved her. If she'd only gone to the loft as I instructed, she'd... I saved her.

(HE stops, confused)

But why then?

(OLEKSANDER groans)

ROMAN

Awake then, are you, you filth? Good. I want you to see what your deeds have wrought. Did you think you'd survive in Sevastopol? Did you? Did you think you could take her from me?

(HE lifts up the sailor's head forcibly and turns it to the swinging bodies)

ROMAN

This... this is what you and your despicable class have done. I want you to see, I want you to see everything. The glorious dawn is coming, and this is the cleansing that must take place. Yes, you wretch.

ONCE EV'RY RUBLE LINED YOUR WALLET.
NO LONGER,
NO LONGER.
JUSTICE IS COMING, YOU CAN STALL IT
NO LONGER,
NO LONGER.
OPEN YOUR EYES, SEE A WORLD WHERE YOU BELONG
NO LONGER.

SCUM, SABOTEURS,
NO LONGER
AGENTS PROVOCATEURS
NO LONGER
DISAPPEAR IN THE RISING OF THE SUN
THAT BEAUTIFUL GLORIOUS SUN

ONCE MEN WERE CHAINED IN GOLDEN SHACKLES
NO LONGER,
NO LONGER.
ONCE YOU COULD STEAL THEIR BREAD LIKE JACKALS.
NO LONGER,
NO LONGER.
OPEN YOUR EYES, SEE A WORLD WHERE YOU WERE STRONG.
NO LONGER.

FOUR YEARS SITTING WAITING FOR HER,
IN BOXCARS STARVING AND COLD,
TO WIN THE WORLD I BELIEVE
AND I COME HOME TO BE TOLD..

DON'T HURT HIM PLEASE
DON'T HURT HIM PLEASE

YOU THOUGHT YOU'D GET TO HAVE MY KATYA.
NO LONGER,
NO LONGER.
OPEN YOUR EYES, SEE A WORLD WHERE YOU'LL DO WRONG
NO LONGER.

(HE readies his pistol and aims it at
Oleksander's head)

KATYA

Roman, no... Roman, please...

(KATYA appears, a strange serenity and strength about her that we haven't seen previously. ROMAN sees her, and is clearly torn. HE finally scowls and points the gun again at the sailor's head. KATYA reveals her uncle's pistol, and aims it steadily at Roman's heart)

KATYA

Let him go, Roman.

(A few tense moments pass, ROMAN unyielding. Suddenly, a gunshot rings out, and ROMAN collapses dead. KATYA runs to OLEKSANDER and helps him to his feet, leading him back to the tavern)

SCENE 6

(The loft of Svetlikov's Tavern, morning. KATYA is nursing OLEKSANDER back to health, as OKSANA, ANDREI, and the LADY IN GRAY huddle for warmth in the corner. A single, tiny window overlooks the street)

OLEKSANDER

Katya... Katya, what happened?

KATYA

Hush, Sasha. Nothing happened. Everything's fine. Just fine... Only rest now.

(HE returns to sleep)

KATYA

I DON'T UNDERSTAND
WHY LOVE TURNS TO HURT TURNS TO NAUSEA
WHY COMPASSION TURNS TO ANGER TURNS TO HATE
WHY DAY TURNS TO DUSK TURNS TO NIGHT TURNS TO NIGHT
TURNS TO NIGHT

I WONDER, I WONDER

I DON'T UNDERSTAND
WHY DAYS TURN TO YEARS TURN TO AGES
WHY IDEALS TURN TO HARDNESS TURN TO BLOOD
WHY DAY TURNS TO DUSK TURNS TO NIGHT TURNS TO NIGHT
ALWAYS NIGHT

I WONDER, I WONDER

I WILL MAKE THAT DAY COME FOR YOU
ONLY YOU
IF IT'S ALL I CAN DO THEN IT'S GOOD ENOUGH
THEN IT'S GOOD ENOUGH

(she kisses Oleksander gently and turns to the
icon of St. Catherine)

GOD, I WISH THERE'S A WAY
TO MAKE ALL THE PAIN TURN TO BETTER
TO MAKE DESPAIR TURN HOPEFUL TURN TO JOY
TO MAKE ALL THE WRONG TURN TO RIGHT TURN TO RIGHT TURN
TO RIGHT

I WONDER

WHAT IF THERE'S NOT A WAY
TO MAKE ALL THE TEARS TURN TO LAUGHTER
TO MAKE ALL OF OUR NIGHTMARES TURN TO DREAMS
TO MAKE ALL THE NIGHT TURN TO DAWN TURN TO DAY TURN TO
DAY

I WONDER, I WONDER

I WILL MAKE THE DAY COME FOR YOU
JUST FOR YOU
WHAT IF ALL I CAN DO ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH?
ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH?

I WILL MAKE THE SUN RISE FOR YOU
ONLY YOU
IF IT'S ALL I CAN DO THEN IT'S GOOD ENOUGH
THEN IT'S GOOD ENOUGH

HOLY GOD, YOUR KINGDOM COME!
HOLY GOD, YOUR KINGDOM COME!
HOLY GOD, YOUR KINGDOM COME!
HOLY MOTHER OF GOD, AND ALL THE SAINTS!

I WONDER, I WONDER

GOD, YOU GAVE YOUR LIFE UP FOR ME
JUST FOR ME
IT WAS ALL YOU COULD GIVE, WAS IT GOOD ENOUGH?

WAS IT GOOD ENOUGH?

I WILL GIVE MYSELF ALL FOR THEM
JUST FOR THEM
FOR IT'S ALL THAT I HAVE, AND THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH.
YES, IT'S GOOD ENOUGH.

(SHE rises and walks to the window with her
uncle's pistol. Our last image as the curtain
falls is of KATYA, at last strong)

END.