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Anastasia

A Play in Three Acts

Guy Bolton and
Marcelle Maurette

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION

**SAMUEL
FRENCH**
FOUNDED 1830

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CHARACTERS

(in the order of their appearance)

BORIS CHERNOV, an ex-banker

PIOTR PETROVSKY, an artist

COUNSELLOR DRIVINITZ

IRINA, the housekeeper

PRINCE BOUNINE

SERGEI, the manservant

ANNA BROUN

A CHARWOMAN

A SLEIGH DRIVER

DR MICHAEL SYRENSKY

THE DOWAGER EMPRESS OF RUSSIA

BARONESS LIVENBAUM, her lady-in-waiting

PRINCE PAUL

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

The action of the play passes in a Reception Room in Prince Bounine's mansion on the outskirts of Berlin

ACT I A winter evening, 1932

ACT II An afternoon, four weeks later

ACT III An evening, two weeks later

ANASTASIA

Produced at the St James's Theatre, on 5th August 1953, with
the following cast of characters:
(*in the order of their first appearance*)

PIOTR PETROVSKY	<i>Laurence Payne</i>
BORIS CHERNOV	<i>Peter Illing</i>
PRINCE BOUNINE	<i>Anthony Ireland</i>
ANNA BROUN	<i>Mary Kerridge</i>
A SLEIGH DRIVER	<i>Geoffrey Tyrrell</i>
A CHARWOMAN	<i>Susan Richards</i>
FELIX OBLENSKY	<i>Michael Godfrey</i>
THE DOWAGER EMPRESS OF RUSSIA	<i>Helen Haye</i>
HER LADY-IN-WAITING	<i>Ruth Goddard</i>
PRINCE PAUL	<i>Ralph Michael</i>
ANTONIA	<i>Verena Kimmins</i>
SERGEI	<i>Michael Malnick</i>

The play directed by JOHN COUNSELL

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I A basement room in Berlin

ACT II A hall in a mansion on the outskirts of
 Berlin. One month later

ACT III The same as Act II. Three weeks later

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Anastasia was produced as a television play in July of 1953, when it achieved a great success, subsequently winning an award as the best television play of the year.

It was produced on the stage by the Laurence Olivier Co., at the St James's Theatre, where it received a warm welcome from the press and ran throughout the year and continued in an extensive tour. At the same time the rights were acquired for production in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Holland and Scandinavia, as well as the United States and Canada.

Certain changes have been made in the play as presented at the St James's. It has been placed in a single setting instead of the two sets used in its initial English production. This is not done solely for purposes of ceremony but to add versimilitude to the conspiracy which is the background of the story.

There are, further, two changes in the cast. COUNSELLOR DRIVINITZ, who was merely referred to in the previous version now appears, imparting to the opening scene much greater dramatic force.

The refugee Russian doctor, MICHAEL SYRENSKY, is substituted for the RUSSIAN WORKMAN, substituting a relationship of sincerity and genuine attachment for one that was vague and fictitious.

Should it be found impractical to provide the Court uniforms for use in Act III, the men can wear evening clothes (white ties and tail coats) instead, with suitable sashes, orders and medals.

GUY BOLTON

ACT I

SCENE—*A reception room in Prince Bounine's mansion on the outskirts of Berlin. A winter evening, 1932.*

The room, which shows signs of decayed grandeur, is used as an office. There are double doors L leading to another reception room and thence to the entrance hall. There are french windows up R with a view of trees in a small park and a misty suggestion of buildings beyond. The fireplace is down R. There are steps LC of the back wall leading up through an arch to a small landing which runs off up L. The furnishings suggest what it is, a furnished house, rented by Bounine where he lives in an untidy attempt at Russian luxury. A rectangular table, with upright chairs R and L of it, stands C. There is a small writing-table R with a typewriter on it. A desk chair stands above the writing-table. There is an armchair LC. A console table stands above the doors L and there is a cabinet up C. Drab curtains cover the windows. At night, the room is lit by an electric pendant C and an angle-poise lamp on the writing-table. Prominently displayed on the back wall R of the steps is a large poster lettered in Russian, with a life-size figure of a girl dressed in a Byzantine robe and with a crown on her head. The facial features of the picture have been omitted.

(See the Ground Plan at the end of the Play)

When the CURTAIN rises, the window curtains are closed and the lights are lit. There are bright areas of light C and RC. Other parts of the room are in slight shadow. BORIS CHERNOV is seated at the writing-table, typing. He was formerly a banker and has a dignified bearing. He is suspicious, pessimistic and harsh. After a few moments he stops typing, looks towards the door L and listens. PIOTR PETROVSKY enters L. He is an artist with a highly nervous disposition, and is easily thrown off his balance. He is, in point of fact, a drug addict.

PETROVSKY *(crossing to LC)* His man tells me the Prince isn't at home.

CHERNOV *(rising and turning)* No, I've been waiting half an hour. I've been drawing up a summary of our accounts. It's not a pleasant picture. The Prince has been horribly extravagant.

PETROVSKY. Yes, why did we have to rent this big house?

CHERNOV *(crossing down C)* The house is nothing—it's what goes on in it—the women, the champagne suppers.

PETROVSKY. He's so Russian.

CHERNOV. I'm a Russian, too, but I live in one room in a cheap hotel.

PETROVSKY. Of course, this is our headquarters, our office—a good address has value.

CHERNOV. It won't help us much in our present emergency.

PETROVSKY (*moving down c*) Emergency? What do you mean?

CHERNOV. We're in trouble, that's why the Prince asked us to meet him here tonight.

PETROVSKY. What sort of trouble?

CHERNOV (*moving down R*) I don't know the details—(*he turns*) he naturally couldn't tell me much on the phone—but, I take it, two or three of our subscribers have got together and compared notes.

PETROVSKY (*upset*) Is that what he told you?

CHERNOV (*nodding*) I suppose we should have expected something of the kind. It's over four months since we sent out our first circular.

PETROVSKY (*moving LC*) Is it really as long as that?

CHERNOV (*crossing and sitting R of the table c*) And while we've been keeping up our appeals and taking in their money, we've made no serious effort to find the lady who is the essential element in our enterprise.

PETROVSKY (*crossing to L of the table c*) That isn't true. I've made enquiries all over Berlin. I've seen a dozen or more Anna Brouns. That's one of the troubles: the name is such a common one.

CHERNOV. Do you think there ever was an Anna Broun who told those hospital nuns that she was the Tsar's daughter?

PETROVSKY (*doubtfully*) You think His Excellency lied to us?

CHERNOV. "His Excellency"! You say it with reverence in spite of all we know about him. You're a snob, Petrovsky.

PETROVSKY (*ponderingly*) But his story didn't seem the sort of thing a man would make up. Taking those people out to that hospital in Spandau in his taxi. And one of the nuns asked him . . .

CHERNOV (*interrupting; bitterly*) Oh yes, he was driving a taxi then. Now he sports a car and chauffeur. No doubt some of our subscribers have seen him lording about in it.

PETROVSKY (*pursuing his own thoughts*) And the moment was so propitious. This Anna Broun, whose likeness to the Princess he described as extraordinary, appeared just when the rumours of Anastasia's escape were flying about the Russian colony.

CHERNOV. The timing of her appearance was, as you say, excellent. Her disappearance, after no-one but the Prince had seen her, was not quite so fortunate.

PETROVSKY. What made her run away, I wonder? (*He moves down LC*) He said she seemed most anxious to enlist his help in finding her family.

CHERNOV. When she vanished we should have called the thing off. We still had enough money then.

PETROVSKY. Why did we ever go into it? You especially. I'm a crazy fellow, an artist, a dreamer, but you're a hard-headed banker—or were in the old days.

CHERNOV (*rising*) I was in desperate need of some money.

PETROVSKY. Oh, so that story was true?

CHERNOV. What story?

PETROVSKY. The Prince told me. He said you'd been caught helping yourself from the cash-drawer of that restaurant where you worked.

CHERNOV (*with a step down c; angrily*) That's a lie!

PETROVSKY. Don't be offended. I didn't . . .

CHERNOV (*interrupting*) What about you? That business you were in?

PETROVSKY. Oh, make no mistake, I'm not posing as your moral superior. (*He moves up LC*) We're two rats who have been turned out of our nice, comfortable granary, and have to snatch our crusts as best we may.

CHERNOV (*glancing L*) Listen, there's the front door. He's here. (*He crosses to RC and looks at his watch*)

(PETROVSKY turns towards the doors L)

He said nine, it's nearly eleven.

DRIVINITZ (*off L*) Not here? (*He pauses*) The others? What others? Where are they?

CHERNOV (*sharply*) It's Drivinitz.

(COUNSELLOR DRIVINITZ enters L. *He is a Russian of severe and distinguished bearing, aged about fifty. He is followed on by IRINA, the housekeeper. She is middle-aged, grim but of superior class, and wears rather slatternly attire*)

DRIVINITZ (*as he enters*) You're quite sure Prince Bounine is not here?

IRINA (*in the doorway*) No, sir.

(IRINA looks uncertainly at Drivinitz, then hurriedly exits L)

DRIVINITZ. So you are the other two who are in this game, are you?

CHERNOV. Game?

DRIVINITZ (*looking around*) And this is your headquarters, your office and counting house. (*He turns sharply to Chernov*) Which one are you?

CHERNOV. My name is Chernov, Counsellor.

DRIVINITZ. Oh, you know me, do you?

CHERNOV. By sight, Counsellor.

DRIVINITZ (*crossing to LC*) And it's true, is it? Bounine is not here?

CHERNOV. No, but we're expecting him at any moment.

DRIVINITZ. I was expecting him also—for several hours. My guess is he has taken to his heels.

PETROVSKY (*moving down L*) Run away, you mean?

DRIVINITZ (*turning and looking at Petrovsky*) You're the third one, are you? Yes, I mean run away.

CHERNOV. Why should he?

DRIVINITZ (*sitting in the armchair LC*) I suppose the oldest and most famous hoax in the world is known by the name of "The Spanish Prisoner".

PETROVSKY (*wrinkling his brow*) Spanish prisoner?

DRIVINITZ. Letters are sent—dozens of them—presumably written by a man in prison. He appeals for money—money that will enable him to regain his freedom and take from its hiding place a vast buried treasure which he promises to share with his benefactor.

PETROVSKY (*crossing and standing above the table C*) Yes, everyone has heard of that, but what . . . ?

DRIVINITZ (*interrupting; sharply*) Your letters stating that you have found the Princess Anastasia and that she is ready to share her father's fortune in exchange for some present financial help, follows the pattern closely.

CHERNOV (*moistening his lips*) It is true that we did make some appeals on behalf of the Princess . . .

DRIVINITZ. *Some* appeals? Hundreds. "The Spanish Prisoner" has been outdone. It wasn't until recently, when a small committee of us advertised for the names of your investors and the amounts subscribed, that we discovered how successful you had been.

CHERNOV. Our expenses have been very heavy.

PETROVSKY. Her Highness was in hiding in Bucharest. We had great difficulties . . .

DRIVINITZ (*with a raise of the eyebrows*) Bucharest? Really?

PETROVSKY. Papers had to be obtained—officials bribed.

CHERNOV. And the medical expenses, doctors, nurses, private ambulances.

DRIVINITZ. Oh, yes, that was all enumerated in your appeals. "The Spanish Prisoner" was in gaol—the Princess Anastasia in a coma.

CHERNOV. A coma? Yes, for a time, quite definitely. Is it any wonder after all she had gone through.

PETROVSKY. The wounds suffered at the hands of Yourovski's execution squad—the hardships endured in those months of journeying from Siberia.

DRIVINITZ. Yes, all this was fully dealt with in your last prospectus—if I may call it so. That was no doubt written to quiet your subscribers' patience.

PETROVSKY. Her Highness's recovery is a painfully slow process.

DRIVINITZ. So it seems.

CHERNOV. And, in the meanwhile, her doctors have insisted on isolation, rest, absolute quiet.

DRIVINITZ. We wish to see her doctors.

CHERNOV. Surely Prince Bounine has told you? Her Highness is in a private sanatorium in Switzerland.

DRIVINITZ. I, for one, am ready to make the journey immediately.

CHERNOV (*after a short pause*) I see—yes. Well, we must set about arranging matters.

DRIVINITZ. As for what Prince Bounine has told us—he has told us nothing. I ran into him at the *Adlon* where he was giving an expensive luncheon party. I asked him to meet me at five o'clock at the *Russian Club*. He promised to do so.

PETROVSKY. And he sent no message?

DRIVINITZ. Nothing. He seems to have left you—*gentlemen*—with a rather difficult rearguard action on your hands.

CHERNOV. You are jumping to conclusions, Counsellor, without giving us a chance to . . .

DRIVINITZ (*interrupting*) You will have your chance. (*He rises*) We—that is the committee I have formed—will give you one week to produce this lady. (*He pauses*) After that we go to the police.

PETROVSKY. One week?

DRIVINITZ. And when I say, “We will go the police”, let me warn you we have already taken certain steps. You will not find it easy to leave Berlin. Unfortunately, in the case of Prince Bounine we may not have acted promptly enough. Still, I don't believe he will get very far. (*He turns towards the doors L*) I suggest that you busy yourselves scraping together what monies you have left. Even a limited degree of reparation will count in your favour.

(PRINCE BOUNINE enters L. *He is a handsome man. He is elegantly attired and wears an overcoat with an astrakan collar and a hat to match*)

BOUNINE (*to Drivinitz*) Good evening, honoured sir. This is an unexpected pleasure.

DRIVINITZ (*surprised*) So! You are here?

BOUNINE (*crossing to C*) I am sorry I was not able to get to the club at the hour you suggested. I had forgotten at the time we spoke that today was the Feast of St Alexander Nevsky. My position demanded I should be present at the commemorative ceremony held by our good ambassador—though alas, *not* in the Russian Embassy. (*He removes his hat and coat and puts them over the back of the desk chair*)

DRIVINITZ. I have just been telling your two associates . . .

BOUNINE (*ignoring the interruption*) I suppose, not being a member of the court, you were never present at that most sacred of Muscovite functions? In the days that we are fond of describing as “the good old” we of the elect would all have been lined up behind the royal family at the Water Gate of the Winter Palace

while His Imperial Majesty spooned up a glass of water and the Arch Patriarch blessed the Neva—a ceremony punctuated by sneezes. So like the Russians to decree the sixth of January for a prolonged function with bare heads.

(CHERNOV moves up R, where he is joined by PETROVSKY)

DRIVINITZ (*with cold irony*) Very interesting, Prince Bounine, but the point is . . .

BOUNINE (*overlapping*) The scene today was slightly pathetic, a resurrection of uniformed crooks with the Tsar's portrait looking down on them. That old hulk Lissenko on his frostbitten stumps, Verensky and Martoff, two grey-haired lieutenants who should have been generals by this time. And the women in their court dresses, most of them as faded as their wearers.

DRIVINITZ (*again trying to speak*) I don't know if you realize Prince Bounine . . .

BOUNINE (*laughing through the interruption*) And would you believe it, some idiot—Princess Bukarin I think it was—had a bottle alleged to be water of the Neva smuggled out of Russia. They poured it into a big crystal goblet and passed it round for everyone to sip. Damned insanitary, I call it. I wouldn't have put my lips to it on a bet.

DRIVINITZ. And why, may I ask, did you not send me word that you were not keeping our appointment?

BOUNINE. I had not realized it was a matter of concern . . .

DRIVINITZ. I . . .

BOUNINE (*quickly*) Oh, don't worry, I do now. After this Neva nonsense I had a talk with Count Lansdorf, the old chap who used to be Witte's assistant at the Foreign Office . . .

DRIVINITZ. And he told you?

BOUNINE. Yes, he was most explicit. He demanded visual proof that the Princess Anastasia really exists, and is in our care.

DRIVINITZ. And what was your answer?

BOUNINE. I told him that his suspicions were insulting and that, if he were a younger man, I should demand satisfaction.

DRIVINITZ. You know of the time limit we have set you?

BOUNINE (*with a dismissing gesture*) The old chap made quite a scene, insisting that we had exploited the patriotism of our exiled comrades, traded on their sacred loyalties . . .

DRIVINITZ. True.

BOUNINE (*moving close to Drivinitz*) To which I replied, "Rubbish, my dear Count. It's the money your investors are after—(*he taps Drivinitz on the chest*) the share our letter promised of the Tsar's millions."

DRIVINITZ (*turning angrily away*) How dare you! If the Princess Anastasia really existed she could command not only our money but our lives. She would be a rallying point, a figure of inspiration and hope.

BOUNINE. So you have also made up your mind that the princess is a myth? Very well, you shall see—you shall all see.

DRIVINITZ. We shall be at your disposal a week from today.

(DRIVINITZ turns and exits L. BOUNINE makes a gesture to PETROVSKY, who crosses and follows Drivinitz off)

CHERNOV (moving down RC and dabbing his brow with his handkerchief) One week!

BOUNINE (turning to Chernov) Makes you sweat, does it? It's easy to see you've never been shot at, Chernov. It's only at such a time that the air has the same taste it had at our birth. Well, we're at one of those moments now, so take a deep breath.

(PETROVSKY enters L and crosses to LC)

CHERNOV (facing up to the situation; blankly) Conspiracy to defraud—what is the penalty? How long?

BOUNINE. Wait! Perhaps we're not beaten yet.

CHERNOV. Not beaten? A week in which to produce a resurrect Princess?

BOUNINE. What would you say to a miracle? It seems the appropriate moment for one.

PETROVSKY. What do you mean?

(PETROVSKY and CHERNOV stare at Bounine in silence for a few moments)

BOUNINE. I've found her, gentlemen—at the eleventh hour. I've found her.

CHERNOV. Found her? Found who?

PETROVSKY. Not Anna Broun?

BOUNINE. Of course. The same Anna Broun on whose claim to being the Tsar's daughter all this business is based.

PETROVSKY. Where did you find her? (He makes a gesture that includes the poster)

BOUNINE. I was sure I had caught a glimpse of her the other day when I was driving through the Riemstrasse. The woman turned into a side street and, before I had a chance to tell Sergei to follow, she had disappeared. Tonight, under the spur of this threat, I went back there. I made enquiries, promised a reward to anyone who would help me find her, and ran her down at last—where do you think? (He pauses) On one of the bridges that cross the Landwehr canal. I had a notion she might be thinking of throwing herself into it.

PETROVSKY. Why?

BOUNINE. Ill, out of work, half-starved.

CHERNOV. And what is your opinion now that you have seen her again? Of her claim I mean?

BOUNINE. Precisely what it was before. She is no more the Tsar's daughter than I am one of the murdered dukes.

CHERNOV. If she's as unconvincing as that what makes you think Drivinitz and his friend will accept her?

BOUNINE. When they see her she'll be very different from the way she appears now.

PETROVSKY. We've only one week, remember.

BOUNINE. Don't worry about that first meeting. I'll handle that. And, believe me, there is more to work on than you'll at first realize. It was not for nothing that those hospital nuns had faith in her story.

CHERNOV. Has she anything to back it up with? Any papers or family heirlooms?

BOUNINE. Nothing. And she's not backing it up.

PETROVSKY. What do you mean?

BOUNINE. She said that the story was a lot of nonsense. That she isn't the Tsar's daughter.

PETROVSKY. But, good God, if she denies it herself, what hope . . .

BOUNINE (*interrupting*) She'll come back to it. She's a bit touched. (*He taps his forehead*) Her story today is that she doesn't know who she is, and I dare say that's true.

CHERNOV. An amnesiac?

BOUNINE. That certainly, and a prey at times to all sorts of bizarre fancies. One thing remains the same: she longs to find her family.

CHERNOV. And who are her family?

BOUNINE. That, too, she doesn't know. But don't worry, in her vague state she's all the more ready to receive impressions. I'll make her play our little charade.

PETROVSKY. And if she can't do it?

BOUNINE. If she makes a mess of it we can still point a finger at her. She is the guilty one. We are only her poor innocent dupes whom she deceived with her lies.

CHERNOV (*thoughtfully rubbing his chin*) Yes, that way she might save us from a charge of fraud.

PETROVSKY. And this time are we to be permitted to see the lady?

BOUNINE. Of course, after a certain little business matter is arranged.

CHERNOV. Business matter?

BOUNINE. I want half of the money we have in hand turned over to me.

PETROVSKY. What? You must think we're crazy.

CHERNOV. You've already drawn far more than either of us.

BOUNINE. Listen, Chernov: I found this valuable article, found it not once, but twice. Furthermore, my birth and social position—if you'll forgive my mentioning them—qualify me to deal with the Drivinitzes, the Court circle and the Romanov family.

PETROVSKY. Before I agree to doubling your share of the money, I'll see this woman you've found.

BOUNINE. So you are laying down the law to me, are you, my young drug-dreamer? Drugs! That gives me an idea. If worst comes to worst, I might say the story on which this swindle is based is one of *your* narcotic fancies. I was deceived by you and your—*(he indicates Chernov)* ex-convict friend.

CHERNOV. How dare you!

BOUNINE *(moving up R of the table)* You served a term for technical forgery. I have a newspaper clipping about it—lovingly preserved.

CHERNOV. Blackmail.

BOUNINE. I think you'd better agree, Piotr. The police are on the look out for heroin pedlars. *(He turns his back on them and critically surveys the poster on the wall up RC)*

PETROVSKY. You're playing a dangerous game, Bounine. We, too, could tell a story—*(he takes a pistol from his pocket)* the story of a man faced with a desperate situation who put a bullet through his head.

BOUNINE *(turning)* Ah, so—a pistol? A Nagan model, very rare. One might guess that you had, in your time, killed an officer. However, you can put aside your toy. You see, I have given my lawyer a letter . . . *(He moves to R of Chernov)* Oh yes, I have a lawyer, and, in case of my death, he will break the seal and learn that I have had dealings with two—gentlemen—whom I did not altogether trust. *(He moves up R, turns his back to Petrovsky and again surveys the poster. With a change of tone)* The figure on this poster is exactly life size, I think you said, Piotr? *(He appears to be measuring the height of the figure against himself)*

(CHERNOV cross to Petrovsky and whispers to him. PETROVSKY replaces the pistol in his pocket)

PETROVSKY. Very well, we accept.

BOUNINE *(turning)* Good! Once again we are comrades—if that term doesn't grate too unpleasantly on your White Russian ears. *(He makes a gesture towards the steps up LC)* And now, what do you say—shall we have her in?

PETROVSKY *(astonished)* You don't mean to say she's *here*?

BOUNINE. In the servants' hall with Sergei standing guard. I told my woman to get her some food. She seemed quite badly in need of it. *(He crosses to the steps and calls)* Sergei, bring the lady in here. *(He turns)* Let me caution you, don't speak to her in Russian. She says she doesn't understand it.

CHERNOV *(moving down L)* What? But that makes it impossible.

BOUNINE. It's a lie. She has a definite Slavic accent. Don't worry, I'll break her down.

PETROVSKY *(crossing to RC)* I remember hearing tales of your cigarette ends. But Berlin isn't Russia.

BOUNINE (*moving and standing above the armchair LC*) If I should fail, we'll have to picture it as some Freudian quirk—a defensive reaction born of her long, under-cover journey.

CHERNOV. Pretty fishy.

(*ANNA and SERGEI enter at the top of the steps. ANNA is dressed in worn and shabby clothes, but something not quite, or not completely, of the peasant order. She wears a rough cloth coat. Her hands are bare. Her lips are pallid, her hair drawn into a simple knot. She seems to have at the moment, no pretension to beauty. She stops at the top of the steps, looking down into the room. SERGEI, who wears an improvised chauffeur's uniform, derived from something military, gives her a slight push*)

SERGEI. Go on down.

BOUNINE. Yes, come down, Fraulein, I want you to meet my friends.

(*ANNA hesitates for a moment, then half stumbles down the steps. She stands behind the chair L of the table, and grips the back for support*)

Take a seat. (*He waves a dismissing gesture at Sergei*)

(*SERGEI exits at the top of the steps. ANNA sits on the chair L of the table*)

(*He crosses to the cabinet up c*) A glass of vodka?

ANNA (*humbly*) Thank you.

BOUNINE (*pouring some vodka into a glass*) These are the gentlemen I spoke of. I am putting you in their hands. They are going to examine you.

ANNA. Examine? They are doctors?

BOUNINE (*with a laugh*) No, you don't have to undress. (*He stands above the table c and hands the drink to Anna*) Just allow them to look at you.

ANNA (*apathetically*) Oh, is that all? (*She takes a drink then places the glass on the table and looks at the packet of cigarettes on it*) May I smoke?

BOUNINE (*pushing the packet towards her*) Help yourself.

(*ANNA takes a cigarette from the packet*)

(*He crosses and sits in the armchair LC*) When you and I talked just now I promised you employment.

(*PETROVSKÝ takes a box of matches from his pocket, crosses to R of Anna and lights her cigarette. CHERNOV crosses to L of Anna. Both stare down at her*)

My associates wish to determine how well you fit our requirements.

CHERNOV. To begin with, the eyes . . .

PETROVSKY (*interrupting*) The eyes are right. Possibly the only feature that is.

CHERNOV. Where did you see the eyes of the—other?

PETROVSKY. It was at Notre Dame de Kazan in nineteen-fifteen when we had been driven back by Hindenberg. She came into the church to pray with her mother and they each placed a candle before the big ikon. I saw two little candles reflected in her eyes.

CHERNOV. Blue eyes?

PETROVSKY. Blue-grey, with the two candle-flames like a pair of golden dots. And just now when I held the match for this one's cigarette—there was the same thing exactly. Very few eyes will pick up a reflection like that. I'm an artist. I know what I'm talking about.

CHERNOV (*considering*) What about the mouth?

PETROVSKY. All wrong, a drawn, taut mouth. *Hers* smiled easily. Even at that solemn moment she smiled. Her teeth were beautifully even, white and shiny. I was so close I could smell the scent she was wearing.

CHERNOV. I hope it was nicer than this one's.

BOUNINE (*with a laugh*) If that's all that's troubling you we can easily perfume her. And let me suggest that a mouth that smiled readily might not smile much after what she would have gone through.

CHERNOV. What about the height? She looks too tall to me.

BOUNINE. The last time I held *her* stirrup at Tsarskoie, when she was reviewing our regiment, I noted that the top of her dolman was on the level of my eye.

CHERNOV (*to Anna*) Stand up.

ANNA. What did you say?

CHERNOV. I said, "stand up".

(ANNA *slowly rises, coughs and continues to smoke. CHERNOV and PETROVSKY move about, scrutinizing her from different angles*)

PETROVSKY. Of course she's twelve years older than the other was—when she died.

BOUNINE. And I must remind you again that those twelve years would not have been what the first nineteen were.

CHERNOV (*to Anna; pointing R*) Go over there. I want to see how you walk.

(ANNA *slouches to R*)

(*He laughs scornfully*) They were taught to walk carrying a book on their heads—another thing we will have to tell our subscribers she has somehow forgotten.

(ANNA *stands by the fireplace. CHERNOV crosses to L of Bounine*)

PETROVSKY (*crossing to R of Bounine*) Where is this resemblance that so impressed you? I don't see it. I don't see it at all.

CHERNOV. After all those awed descriptions we gave them—the Tsar's noble bearing, her mother's matchless complexion. And now we're to show them—this?

PETROVSKY. The eyes are right and nothing more. And I may even have been fooling myself over them.

CHERNOV. The thing is preposterous.

BOUNINE. I should like to see your sweetheart of twenty years ago. Are you sure you might not pass her in the street without recognizing her?

CHERNOV. It's not the same thing. These subscribers of ours will not be hurrying by, their minds on other matters. They will be keyed up, expectant, critical, suspicious.

BOUNINE. And how have they seen the original? A white-clad figure in a rapidly moving carriage. Or one of a family group in the flowered stand at Krasnoie. And then, in the war period, with the linen headdress and grey skirt—oh, yes, they saw quite a lot of her—in the newspapers.

CHERNOV. What of the royal servants? There are still a few of them about.

BOUNINE. They'll see her through their tears, good faithful souls that they are.

CHERNOV. And the family?

BOUNINE. More serious, certainly. But it isn't as if there were a mother or a father to be dealt with. Or a brother and sisters. True, there is quite a wealth of uncles, aunts and cousins, despite the Bolsheviks and their execution squads. But they will refer secretly to their photographs, and, as she will resemble those photographs . . .

(ANNA leans her right shoulder against the mantelpiece and stares at the floor, oblivious to the discussion)

CHERNOV. This woman?

BOUNINE. Yes, I am sure by the time we are finished she'll be like, *very* like. Oh, it won't be the gay, pink-cheeked girl who danced in the Hall of Columns at the last ball ever held there. But, let us say, she'll be as like as a dead body is to a living person.

PETROVSKY. If we could present her to them lying in her coffin, it would be easier. No questions, no answers, no mistakes.

BOUNINE. A tempting idea, but you're forgetting the money.

CHERNOV. You surely don't believe you'll be able to convince the bankers?

BOUNINE *(with a shrug)* Well, there's a chance. If we could get the family to accept her, the bankers would find it difficult to question their endorsement.

CHERNOV. I admit you knew the original better than we did. I have studied the photographs in those albums we bought from the Grand Duke's lady friend, and I can't see . . .

BOUNINE. Get them out. They're here, aren't they?

CHERNOV. I don't need to. I know them by heart. In the early ones she wore her hair down—there's one of her and her sister Olga dancing on the deck of a yacht.

(PETROVSKY crosses to the cabinet up c, takes two large but shabby looking albums from the cupboard and places them on the table c)

In the more recent ones she appears heavier than her sisters with stronger cheekbones, more Russian-looking.

PETROVSKY (*dreamily*) Yes, and then, at least for some of us, there is the final one. The one photographed by our imaginations.

CHERNOV. What are you talking about?

PETROVSKY. She is standing up, the head and the hands she had raised to shield it, pierced with bullets.

(ANNA, in the shadow, raises her head)

BOUNINE. Look at her hands.

PETROVSKY (*startled*) What did you say?

BOUNINE (*nodding towards Anna*) I said, "Look at her hands".

PETROVSKY. You don't mean . . . ?

BOUNINE (*spacing it impressively*) I told you there was a special feature—something rather surprising. (*He pauses*) And that isn't quite all.

(PETROVSKY crosses to the desk and turns the lamp so that the light falls on Anna)

CHERNOV (*to Anna*) Come here! (*He crosses to c*)

(ANNA does not move)

(*He crosses to her*) I said, "Come here". (*He catches hold of Anna's arms with a rough jerk, brings her stumbling forward to RC*)

(PETROVSKY catches Anna by the other arm, and assists Chernov to bring her into the light)

PETROVSKY (*R of Anna*) Open your hands.

BOUNINE. You'll find they are long and well formed, with a scar in the middle—the hands of a crucified being.

(ANNA opens her hands. PETROVSKY and CHERNOV examine them)

PETROVSKY (*in a hoarse whisper*) Yes, it's true.

BOUNINE. Look at her head, gentlemen, the left temple, a long narrow depression, the path of a bullet. Of course, it *may* be something more prosaic; a childhood accident, a rather bad one that caused a fracture.

(PETROVSKY and CHERNOV pull Anna into the light of the desk lamp, push her head down and hold it there as they examine the scar)

CHERNOV. What is this scar? Is it from a bullet? Tell us.

ANNA. I don't remember. (*She frees herself*)

CHERNOV (*catching her arm*) You don't remember how you got a wound like that? Of course, you do. You're lying.

ANNA. There are many things I have forgotten.

(*CHERNOV releases ANNA, who moves up RC and eyes the poster with a rather strange fascination. During the ensuing speeches, she closely examines the poster, placing a hand on it, following the empty face up to the crown*)

PETROVSKY (*standing below the desk*) The dreadful thing is this time limit of a single week.

BOUNINE (*rising*) That may not be as bad as it sounds. At the first interview she will be in bed with a nurse and doctor in attendance.

CHERNOV (*moving below the table c*) Doctor?

BOUNINE. Oh, yes. I know a man who can be safely trusted. He'll tell them she is not to be pilloried with questions.

CHERNOV. And after that?

BOUNINE. Before the presentation to the bulk of the shareholders, I shall demand two months for convalescence with medical attention. That cough of hers will help us. We'll say she's consumptive.

PETROVSKY. We'll have to see she doesn't lose it.

BOUNINE (*with a little laugh*) Plenty of cigarettes will take care of that.

(*ANNA, standing in front of and close to the poster, slowly turns*)

PETROVSKY. Look, she fits the figure exactly. I drew it from the record kept by the dressmaker.

BOUNINE. She's certainly the right height. That crown might be resting on her head.

(*ANNA's face becomes suddenly convulsed. She seems to be trying vainly to free her body and arms from invisible clutches. She seems, in fact, as if nailed to the wall under her gilt crown*)

ANNA (*with a cry*) Let me go!

CHERNOV (*moving above the table*) What's the matter with you? Are you an epileptic?

BOUNINE (*crossing and standing below the table; commandingly*) Come here. There's nothing holding you.

(*ANNA, as if with difficulty, frees herself and lurches forward. She recovers her balance, turns, then backs slowly down RC, staring at the poster*)

You know who it is?

(*ANNA does not reply*)

It is yourself—Princess.

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