

NARRATOR: You're listening to a podplay of the classic novel We The Living by author Ayn Rand.

The year: Nineteen-twenty-four. The setting: Petrograd, Russia in the aftermath of the revolution--and the establishment of the Soviet State.

VOICE-1: PROLETARIANS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

NARRATOR: Kira stared at the words on the walls of the train station.

VOICE-2: LONG LIVE THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT! WHO IS NOT WITH US--IS AGAINST US!

NARRATOR: A whirlpool of khaki and red drags Kira along-soldiers coats, red kerchiefs, unshaved faces, screams swallowed in a roar of shuffling boots.

VOICE-1: BEWARE OF CHOLERA. DO NOT DRINK RAW WATER.

NARRATOR: A stray dog with ribs like a sketon ambles along as armed soldiers drag a peasant woman through the crowd.

PEASANT WOMAN: Comrades! I didn't! Brothers, where are you taking me? Dear Comrades, so help me God, I didn't! (Howls loudly and longly.)

NARRATOR: A woman on her knees attempts to gather a spilled sack of grain--now mixed with sunflower-seed shells and cigarette butts.

MAN IN STATION-1: What is that smell?

MAN IN STATION-2: Carbolic acid, citizen--disinfects!

KIRA'S MOTHER (piercing): Kira!! Where are you? Whew! Where are your parcels? (Brief pause) Your parcels?

KIRA: I forgot.

KIRA'S MOTHER: Well, go get them!

NARRATOR: Kira returned to the box car where her father and sister were struggling with the luggage. Kira's mother appeared just in time to fight off the raggedy porters attempting to seize their luggage without being asked.

KIRA'S MOTHER: No! We'll get it ourselves, thank you!

VOICE-2: LICE SPREAD DISEASE CITIZENS! UNITE ON THE ANTI-TYPHUS FRONT!

NARRATOR: Swept along through the exit doors, Kira and her family were deposited--like flotsam from a shipwreck--upon the frozen ground of Petrograd.

VOICE-1: WE ARE THE BIILDERS OF A NEW LIFE, COMRADES!

NARRATOR: In the four years since they'd last seen it, Petrograd was much changed. The revolution--and the nationalizing that came with it--had closed virtually every store but one.

VOICE-2 (self-important): FOOD CO-OPERATIVE.

NARRATOR: A long line of waterlogged shoes and frozen hands stretched 'round the corner.

KIRA'S FATHER (uncertain): Well, we're back.

KIRA (sincere): Isn't it wonderful!

LYDIA (sarcastic): Mud--as ever.

KIRA'S MOTHER: We'll have to take a cab. Such an expense!

STREET BARKER-1: Citizen's Gazette! Get your Citizen's Gazette!

STREET BARKER-2: Saccharine, citizens! Genuine saccharine!

KIRA'S MOTHER: I hope my sister will be glad to see us.

LYDIA: I wonder what they've been doing lately.

KIRA'S MOTHER: I wonder what's left--if anything--of their fortune. I doubt if they have more than we do.

KIRA'S FATHER: And if they have, what difference does it make now, my dear?

KIRA'S MOTHER: None--I hope.

NARRATOR: The cab stopped in front of the bilding where they had once called on their aunt and uncle in their luxurious apartment. But now the glass entry was boarded up and the mirror over the lobby fireplace was cracked. They carried their bundles up the stairs and stopped at a ripped padded door.

LYDIA: I wonder if they still have their magnificent butler.

(SFX: Doorbell. Footsteps. Key. Door opening to chain.)

74 KIRA'S MOTHER (hesitantly): Sister, is that you?

75 KIRA'S AUNT: Lord in Heaven!

76 (SFX: Door thrown open wide.)

77 KIRA'S AUNT: (weakly) Sister, darling! Is that you?

78 KIRA'S MOTHER: Sister!

79 NARRATOR: Kira's Aunt had always been the beauty of the
80 family--the spoiled baby. But now she looked older than
81 her older sister.

82 (SFX: Interior door crashes open.)

83 NARRATOR: Out fly Kira's cousins Irina and Acia--young
84 girls of eighteen and eight. They are followed by Kira's
85 Uncle Vasili--his black hair now white--the once
86 powerful body that had trapped game in Siberia--and made
87 it rich as a furrier--now stooped.

88 UNCLE VASILI (weakly): Is that my little friend, Kira?

89 KIRA: (warmly): Yes.

90 UNCLE VASILI (Summoning strength): Sorry Victor isn't
91 home. He's at the Institute. The boy works so hard.

92 KIRA'S AUNT: Come in, come in!

93 NARRATOR: The changes to the dining room were stark. The
94 spoon Kira was handed was now tin--and the crystal and
95 vases were gone. Rusty nails on the walls showed where
96 paintings had hung.

97 KIRA'S AUNT: These are hard times, hard times. We get
98 only two ration cards--two cards for the whole family--
99 Victor's student card from the Institute and Irina's
100 from the Academy of Arts. (Brief pause) I am not
101 employed, so I get no card, and Vasili...

102 NARRATOR: She looked furtively at her husband, who
103 stared at his plate.

104 KIRA'S AUNT: These are hard times, hard--

105 UNCLE VASILLI (impatient): Yes, yes...

106 KIRA'S AUNT: You remember Lili who never wore any
107 jewelry except pearls? Well, she's dead. Died a couple
108 of years ago. They had nothing to eat for days, and her
109 husband was walking the streets and he saw a horse that
110 had fallen and died of hunger, and there was a mob

fighting for the body. They tore it to pieces, and he got some. He brought it home and they cooked it, and ate it, and--well, the horse hadn't died of hunger after all. Him the doctors saved, but Lili she died... They lost everything in nineteen-eighteen, of course...His sugar business was nationalized the same day as our...

UNCLE VASILI: Fur store--yes.

ACIA: More millet!

KIRA'S AUNT (instructing): Please!

IRINA (changing the subject excitedly): Did you eat fresh fruit in the Crimea?

KIRA (indifferently): Yes. Some.

IRINA: I've been dreaming, yearning and dying for grapes. Aren't they wonderful?

KIRA: I never notice what I eat.

KIRA'S AUNT: Of course, Lili's husband is working now. He's a clerk in a Soviet office. Some people are taking employment.

NARRATOR: She looks openly at her husband, but he doesn't respond.

KIRA'S MOTHER (can't wait to ask): How is our old house?

KIRA'S AUNT: Yours? Don't even dream of it. A sign painter lives there now. A real proletarian. God knows where you'll find an apartment. People are crowded like dogs.

KIRA'S FATHER: Have you heard what...about the factory...what happened to my factory?

UNCLE VASILI: Closed. They couldn't run it. Closed--like everything else.

KIRA'S AUNT (coughing): What are you going to do, Sister? Are the girls going to school? How are you going to get ration cards?

KIRA'S MOTHER: But--we thought--with the New Economic Policy, you have private stores now.

KIRA'S AUNT: Sure, they allow some private stores, but where will you get the money to buy there? They charge you ten times what the co-ops do. I haven't been in a

private store yet. We can't afford it. No one can. We can't even afford the theater. My son took me once. But Vasili--he won't set foot inside a theater.

KIRA: Why not?

UNCLE VASILI: When your country is in agony, you don't seek frivolous recreations.

IRINA (bursts out): Lydia, are you in love yet?

LYDIA (haughtily): I don't answer indecent questions.

KIRA'S AUNT: I tell you, Sister... (coughs, chokes, then goes on) the best thing to do--is for your husband to take a job.

KIRA'S MOTHER: A Soviet job?

KIRA'S AUNT: All jobs are Soviet jobs now.

NARRATOR: Uncle Vasili drops his spoon and throws a dark glance at his wife.

KIRA'S AUNT (timidly): I know you don't approve, Vasili and... well, you never will...But I was just thinking they get bread cards, and lard, and sugar, Soviet employees do--sometimes.

UNCLE VASILI: The day I take Soviet employment, you'll be a widow, woman.

KIRA'S AUNT: I'm not saying anything...only...

UNCLE VASILI: Stop worrying. We'll get along. We have so far. There are still plenty of things to sell.

NARRATOR: Kira glanced at the nails on the walls, then at her aunt's hands, which artists had once painted but were now purple, swollen and cracked.

UNCLE VASILI: All this is temporary. You all lose faith so easily. That's why we are where we are. No faith, no will. (Brief pause) You think all this can go on? You think Russia is dead? You think Europe is blind? The day will come--soon--the day will come when these bloody assassins, these foul scoundrels, these Communist scum...

(SFX: Doorbell rings. Hand throws open dining room door.)

NARRATOR: Cousin Victor looked like a tenor in an Italian opera--broad shoulders, black eyes and unruly black hair. His eyes stopped at Kira.

VICTOR (in a clear, strong voice): It's little Kira, isn't it?

KIRA: It was.

VICTOR: Well, what a surprise--Aunt, younger than ever--and my charming cousin Lydia--Sorry to be so late--Meeting at the Institute--I'm a member of the Students' Council--Sorry Father--Father doesn't approve of elections--of any sort.

UNCLE VASILI (proud of his son--warmly): Sometimes...
Sometimes...

KIRA'S MOTHER: What are you studying, Victor?

VICTOR: Institute of Technology. Electrical engineer. Great future in electricity, you know. Russia's future... Father doesn't think so, of course...What are your plans, Uncle?

KIRA'S FATHER (solemnly, proudly): I'll open a store. (Brief pause) We managed to save a little, in the south...

KIRA'S AUNT: You'd better spend it quickly. At the rate money is going down--why, bread was sixty thousand rubles a pound last week--and now it's seventy-five thousand!

VICTOR: New enterprises, Uncle, have a great future in this new age.

UNCLE VASILI: Until the government squashes them.

VICTOR: Nothing to fear, Father. The days of confiscations are past. The Soviet government has a most progressive policy outlined.

UNCLE VASILI (under his breath): Outlined in blood...

IRINA (hurriedly to change the subject): Victor, they're wearing the funniest things in the south. Did you notice Kira's wooden sandals?

VICTOR (charmingly): I did.

LYDIA (pointedly to Kira): Don't you think it's time--at your age--that you wore longer skirts?

VICTOR (with finality): Nonsense, my darling cousin--
short skirts are the height of feminine elegance these
days.

NARRATOR: That night, before retiring, the family
gathered in the drawing room. Kira's aunt painfully
counted out three logs--and a fire was lit in the
fireplace.

KIRA'S AUNT: Well, here you are back in Petrograd!

KIRA'S MOTHER (unsure): Yes, here we are.

KIRA'S AUNT: What are your plans for the girls? Quite a
young lady, Lydia. Still beau-free? (sighs) Men are so
strange, nowadays. They don't think of marriage.

IRINA: Are you going to study, Lydia?

LYDIA: I have no such intention. Too much education is
unfeminine.

IRINA: How about you, Kira?

VICTOR: It's funny to think that little Kira is college
age, isn't it? (Brief pause) First of all, Kira, you'll
have to get a labor book--the new passport, you know.
You're over sixteen. And then...

KIRA'S AUNT: A profession is so useful nowadays. Why
don't you send Kira to a medical school? A lady doctor
gets such nice rations!

KIRA'S MOTHER (laughing): Kira a doctor? Why, the
selfish little thing just loathes physical injury. She
wouldn't help a wounded chicken.

VICTOR: My opinion is--

(SFX: Phone rings next room. Footsteps out/in.)

IRINA: For you, Victor. It's your girlfriend.

(SFX: Footsteps out.)

VICTOR (in a low voice): I know I promised but...I have
an exam tomorrow at the Institute. I have to study every
minute... Of course not, no one else... You know I do,
darling...

(SFX: Phone hung up. Footsteps return.)

VICTOR: My opinion, my charming little cousin, is that the most promising career for a woman is offered not by a school, but by employment in a Soviet office.

UNCLE VASILI: Son, you don't really mean that.

VICTOR: One has to be practical nowadays. A student's ration doesn't provide much for a whole family--as you should know, Father.

KIRA'S AUNT (filling them in): Employees get lard and sugar.

VICTOR: They are using a great many typists. A typewriter's keys are the steppingstones to any high office.

KIRA'S AUNT: And you get shoes, and free tramway tickets!

UNCLE VASILI: You can't make a donkey out of a racing steed.

IRINA: Kira, you don't seem interested in this subject.

KIRA: I am. I just think the discussion is pointless. I'm going to the Institute of Technology.

KIRA'S AUNT: Kira!

KIRA'S MOTHER: With a daughter like this even her own mother isn't let in on the secret!

LYDIA: When did you decide that?

KIRA: About eight years ago.

KIRA'S AUNT: But Kira! What will you do?

KIRA: I'll be an engineer.

VICTOR: I don't believe engineering is a profession for women.

KIRA'S FATHER (timidly): Kira, you've never liked the Communists and here you select such a modern favorite profession of theirs--a woman engineer?

VICTOR: Will you build for the Red State?

KIRA: I'm going to build because I want to build.

LYDIA: But that will mean dirt, and iron, and rust, and blowtorches, and filthy, sweaty men--

291 KIRA: That's why I like it.

292 KIRA'S MOTHER: That's not a cultured profession for a
293 woman.

294 KIRA: It's the only profession where I don't have to
295 learn any lies. Steel is steel. Most of the other
296 sciences are somebody's guess--somebody's wish--and many
297 people's lies.

298 VICTOR: Your attitude is slightly anti-social, Kira. You
299 select a profession merely because you want it, without
300 considering that, as a woman, you would be much more
301 useful to society in a more...feminine capacity. We all
302 have our duty to society to consider.

303 KIRA: Exactly whom do we owe this duty?

304 VICTOR: To society.

305 KIRA: And what is society?

306 VICTOR: If I may say it, Kira, that is a childish
307 question.

308 KIRA: No, really, I don't understand. To whom is it that
309 I owe a duty? To your neighbor next door? Or to the
310 militiaman on the corner? Or to the clerk in the co-op?
311 Or to the old man I saw in line, third from the door,
312 with an old basket and a woman's hat?

313 VICTOR: Society, Kira, as a whole.

314 KIRA: If you write a whole line of zeroes, it's still--
315 nothing.

316 UNCLE VASILII: Child, what are you doing in Soviet
317 Russia?

318 KIRA: That's what I'm wondering, too.

319 UNCLE VASILII: Let her go--to the Institute! Let her go!

320 KIRA'S MOTHER: We'll have to--you can't argue with her.

321 LYDIA (resentful): She always gets her way.

322 VICTOR: I fear for your future, Kira. You won't get far
323 with those ideas of yours.

324 KIRA: That depends--on what direction I want to go.

325 NARRATOR: The official sat at his desk in khakis and
326 glasses. Pictures of Lenin and Marx flanked his head.

LABOR OFFICIAL: Argounova, Kira. Height: Medium. Eyes: Gray. Hair: Brown. Place and Date of Birth: Petrograd, April 11, nineteen-oh-four. That makes you... eighteen--yes, eighteen. You're lucky, comrade. You have many years to give to the cause.

(SFX: Blows nose hard.)

LABOR OFFICIAL: Family position?

KIRA'S MOTHER: I wash my hands of Kira's future. Sometimes I think she's a born old maid and sometimes a born...yes, bad woman. Remember when we were walking down that ugly street and she pointed to that wall with a window like a dungeon?

KIRA: Beautuful!

LYDIA: What's beautuful about that?

KIRA: Because it's so strange...and promising...as if something could happen there...

LYDIA: Happen to whom?

KIRA: To me.

LABOR OFFICIAL (annoyed): Family Position, Comrade?

KIRA: Oh...Single.

(SFX: Blows nose hard again.)

LABOR OFFICIAL: You comrade women have an advantage over us men. You can take care of the young generation, the future of our republic. There are so many dirty, hungry children that need the loving hands of our women.

NARRATOR: When Kira was in grade school, she almost always ate lunch in a corner alone. One day a bully banished a little freckled girl--and Kira didn't object when the girl sat down at her table.

FEMALE BULLY (12 yrs old): Do you know what you're doing, Keeera?

KIRA (12 yrs old): Eating mush? (Brief pause) Care to join me?

FEMALE BULLY (12 yrs old): Do you know what this girl has done?

KIRA (12 yrs old): Not in the slightest.

FEMALE BULLY (12 yrs old): Then why are you doing this for her?

KIRA (12 yrs old): I am not doing this for her, I am doing this against you.

LABOR OFFICIAL: So, you're not a Union member, citizen? Too bad, too bad. The trade unions are the steel girders of our great state building, as said by...well, one of our great leaders said. (Comic pause) What's a citizen, eh? Only a brick and of no use unless cemented to other bricks just like it. Toil, comrade, toil, is the highest aim we can have. Who does not toil, shall not eat...

KIRA: Yes, comrade.

LABOR OFFICIAL: Here's your Labor Book, Citizen. You are now a member of the greatest republic ever established in the history of the world. May the brotherhood of workers and peasants be your number one goal, as it is the goal of all Red citizens.

NARRATOR: On the first page--in red--were the words:

VOICE-1: PROLETARIANS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

NARRATOR: Underneath was signed:

KIRA (unenthusiastically): Kira Argounova.

NARRATOR: It wasn't easy lugging packages up eight flights of stairs that smelled of cats and felt cold through the thin soles of her boots--but Kira did it--for her family had found an apartment.

This miracle was made possible by a handshake between Kira's father and the House Manager--one after which her father's hand remained empty but the Manager's did not.

HOUSE MGR-1: A bath? Don't be foolish, citizen, don't be foolish.

NARRATOR: They needed furniture, so Kira's mother paid a visit to their old mansion on the Boulevard.

SLOVENLY SIGN PAINTER (enjoying lording over the former lord): Sure, you can have your old junk back. It's in the coach house. Take it. We know it's tough for you... bourgeois citizens.

NARRATOR: So a carriage was hired to move two beds, a table and chairs, a large chest and Lydia's grand piano to the new place.

KIRA'S MOTHER: It'll be very cozy--with just a little work and artistic judgment.

KIRA'S FATHER (sighs):

NARRATOR: Throwing an old shawl over her shoulders and blowing hard to make the damp logs burn, Kira's mother cooked millet for breakfast. Kira's father shuffled 2 miles to the textile store he had opened.

KIRA'S FATHER: Best kerchiefs in town, citizen...as good as foreign goods...

FEMALE CUSTOMER: Will you take lard, instead of money?

KIRA'S FATHER: Certainly, citizen, certainly...

FEMALE CUSTOMER: For half a pound?

KIRA'S FATHER: You can have two kerchiefs and a yard of calico for good measure.

NARRATOR: An old, knitted scarf around her throat and a basket over her arm, Lydia stood in line at the food co-op.

LYDIA: But I don't need soap, citizen.

CLERK: Soap's all we've got today, citizen. Next!

LYDIA (hastily): All right, all right, I'll take it!

NARRATOR: After washing the breakfast dishes, Kira's mother put on her glasses and began sorting lentils from the gravel that came with them.

KIRA'S MOTHER: No, no, no, yes, no, no...

NARRATOR: She then washed her husband's shirt in a tub of cold water and chopped acorns for coffee.

Kira, who'd been admitted to the Institute of Technology as she said she would, walked there each morning, whistling--her hands in the pockets of an old black coat buttoned tightly under her chin.

At night, after a dinner of lentils and millet, Kira brought her books to the dining table, where the family's one oil wick resided and where Kira sat engrossed in circles, cubes and triangles, as if she

were reading a thrilling romance. Next to her, Lydia knitted.

LYDIA: Oh, that Soviet light! I can hardly see my needles!

KIRA: It's not very good, is it? Funny. I never noticed it before.

NARRATOR: One night Kira's mother found the millet too mildewed to cook and so they had no dinner.

LYDIA: Soviet Provisions!

KIRA: That's right--we didn't have any dinner tonight, did we?

LYDIA: Where's your mind? Do you ever notice anything?

KIRA'S MOTHER: A woman engineer! Such a profession for a daughter of mine!... Is that a way for a young girl to live? Not a single beau to visit her... Tough as a shoe sole. No romance. No delicacy. No finer feelings. A daughter of mine!

NARRATOR: In the small room Kira and Lydia shared, there was only one bed--so Kira slept on a mattress on the floor. Tucked under a thin blanket--her coat thrown on top--Kira could see the gold spire of the Admiralty of Petrograd, the city where so much was possible.

Meanwhile, Victor had taken a sudden interest in the family of his cousins.

VICTOR: A man of culture has to be, above all, a man attuned to his century... A light--no, Uncle?

NARRATOR: Victor smiled at Kira's mother and Lydia--but always managed to sit next to Kira. One evening...

VICTOR: Terribly sorry I'm late. Students' Council. I realize this is an indecent hour to visit, but I promised Kira a ride around the city and--

KIRA'S MOTHER: It's perfectly all right, Victor dear. Come in and have some tea. (Long pause--in a whisper) I hear--I hear on good authority that this New Economic Policy is only the beginning. Next, they're going to return houses to former owners. You know our house on the Boulevard... The clerk in the co-op told me about it. He has a cousin in the Party.

474 VICTOR: Highly probable...highly probable...

475 KIRA'S FATHER: I don't know... Do you know what I heard
476 at the store today? They've discovered another anti-
477 Soviet conspiracy. Today they arrested old Admiral
478 Kovalensky, the one blinded in the war, and they shot
479 him without a trial.

480 VICTOR: Nothing but rumors. People like to exaggerate.

481 KIRA'S MOTHER: Well, it's becoming easier to get food.
482 We got the nicest lentils today.

483 LYDIA: I got two pounds of millet.

484 KIRA'S FATHER: And I got a pound of lard.

485 NARRATOR: When Kira and Victor rise to go, Kira's mother
486 walks them to the door.

487 KIRA'S MOTHER: You'll take care of my child, won't you,
488 Victor dear? Do be careful. Streets are so unsafe these
489 days.

490 NARRATOR: The cab rattled through silent streets.

491 VICTOR: A modern man of culture, you see, must preserve
492 an objective viewpoint which, no matter what his
493 personal convictions, enables him to see our time as a
494 tremendous historical drama, a moment of gigantic
495 importance to humanity.

496 KIRA: Nonsense. It's an old and ugly fact that the
497 masses exist and make their existence felt. This is a
498 time when they make it felt with particular ugliness--
499 that's all.

500 VICTOR: That is an unscientific viewpoint, Kira.

501 NARRATOR: Later, on a park bench, Victor put his arm
502 around Kira's shoulders. When she moved away, he moved
503 even closer.

504 VICTOR (whispering/sighing): I had to see you alone.
505 I've known romances, yes--women have been kind to me--
506 but I've always been unhappy and lonely--searching for
507 my ideal. You I can understand--you I could... I
508 could...

509 KIRA: Don't say it.

510 VICTOR: Why not?

KIRA: Because I don't like that word. And now that you know it, I want to go home.

VICTOR: No, not yet.

NARRATOR: He grabbed her wrist, but the kiss intended for her lips landed on her cheek. She wriggled free and sent him reeling.

KIRA (quietly): Good night, Victor.

VICTOR: Wait! It's too dangerous--for a girl--at this hour.

KIRA: I'm not afraid.

(SFX: Footsteps follow.)

KIRA: If you don't leave, I'm going to tell that militiaman you're a stranger who's annoying me.

VICTOR: I'll tell him you're lying.

KIRA: Then we'll both spend the night in jail.

NARRATOR: Kira approached the militiaman.

KIRA: Excuse me, comrade, can you please tell me which way is the Palace?

NARRATOR: Kira watches Victor turn and hurry away.

It was past midnight when Kira turned suddenly into a street that seemed alive in the heart of a dead city. Yellow squares of light shown on the bare sidewalk. Kira stopped. A gramophone was playing. She saw ruby-red lips on powdered faces--a woman taking the arm of a man and disappearing through a door. Kira then understood where she was. With a jerk, she started away hurriedly when...

(SFX: Two bodies bump into each other.)

KIRA: Oh, I'm sorry!

NARRATOR: The man she bumped was tall and his collar was raised. But when he looked at her--from under his cap--his contemptuous mouth quickly twisted into a smile.

LEO: Good evening.

KIRA: Good evening.

NARRATOR: He stepped closer, narrowing his eyes.

LEO: Lonely?

546 KIRA (simply): Terribly--and for such a long time.

547 LEO: Well, come on.

548 KIRA: Yes.

549 NARRATOR: He took her arm and she followed him.

550 LEO: I must warn you not to ask questions.

551 KIRA: I have none to ask.

552 LEO: Why are you looking at me like that? (Brief pause)
553 I'm afraid I'm not a very cheerful companion tonight.

554 KIRA: Can I help you?

555 LEO: What's the price--I haven't much.

556 NARRATOR: Kira looked at him and understood.

557 KIRA: It won't be much.

558 LEO: Where can we go?

559 KIRA: I passed a garden around the corner. Let's go
560 there.

561 LEO: Any militia around?

562 KIRA: No.

563 NARRATOR: They sat on the steps of an abandoned
564 residence.

565 KIRA: Take off your cap.

566 LEO: What for?

567 KIRA: I want to look at you. (Pause) Do you always go
568 around with your coat shoulder torn?

569 LEO: It's all I have left. (Pause) Do you always stare
570 as if your eyes would burst?

571 KIRA: Sometimes.

572 LEO: Well, the less you see the better off you are.
573 Unless you have a strong stomach.

574 KIRA: I have.

575 LEO: And strong legs?

576 NARRATOR: Lightly, with two straight fingers, he lifted
577 her skirt. She did not pull it down.

578 KIRA: And strong legs.

579 LEO: Well, if you have strong legs, then--run.

580 KIRA: From you?

581 LEO: From everybody. But forget it. Pull down your

582 skirt. Aren't you cold?

583 KIRA: No.

584 NARRATOR: She pulled down her skirt anway.

585 LEO: Have you anything to drink at your place?

586 KIRA (after a pause): Yes.

587 LEO: I warn you--I'm going to drink like a sponge

588 tonight.

589 KIRA: Why tonight?

590 LEO: It's my habit.

591 KIRA: No, it's not.

592 LEO: How do you know?

593 KIRA: It just isn't.

594 LEO: What else do you know about me?

595 KIRA: I know you're very tired.

596 LEO: I am--I've walked all night.

597 KIRA: Why?

598 LEO: I thought I told you not to ask questions.

599 NARRATOR: His fingers closed tightly around the

600 stockings on her knee.

601 LEO: I want to drink. I want a woman like you to take me

602 down as far as you can drag me.

603 NARRATOR: Lifting his hand from her knee, he looked at

604 her a little closer.

605 LEO: How long have you been in this business?

606 KIRA: Not very long.

607 LEO: I thought so.

608 KIRA: I tried my best.

609 LEO: Your best?

610 KIRA: To act experienced.

611 LEO: You little fool...what led you into...this?

612 KIRA: A man.

613 LEO: Was he worth it?

614 KIRA: I think so--yes!

615 LEO: What an appetite! (He laughs and laughs then...)
616 Take off your hat!

617 NARRATOR: He ran his fingers through her hair and jerked
618 back her head so that it hurt her.

619 LEO: Did you love that man--the one that led you into
620 this?

621 KIRA: I don't know. (pause) Did you ever...?

622 LEO: They say I don't love anyone but myself--and not
623 much at that.

624 KIRA: Who said that?

625 LEO: A person that didn't like me. There are many that
626 don't.

627 KIRA: That's good.

628 LEO: I've never met someone who said it was good.

629 KIRA: Now you have.

630 LEO: Who is that?

631 KIRA: Yourself.

632 LEO: You don't know me. I'm nothing like what you think.
633 I could be a Soviet clerk who sells soap and smiles at
634 the customers.

635 KIRA: You're so unhappy.

636 LEO: Who asked you? I don't give a damn what I think of
637 you and less what you think of me. I'm just like any
638 other man you've had in your bed.

639 KIRA: But you would like to think that there haven't
640 been any other men--in my bed.

641 LEO: You aren't a whore, are you?

642 KIRA: No.

LEO: Who are you, then?

KIRA: I'm a respectable little girl who studies at the Institute of Technology. Whose parents would throw her out of the house if they knew she had talked to a strange man on the street.

LEO (whistles then): Why'd you do it?

KIRA: I wanted to know you.

LEO: Why?

KIRA: I liked your face.

LEO: You little fool... I might of...

KIRA: I knew you wouldn't.

LEO (laughs):

KIRA: What's so funny?

LEO: This is the first time I've ever tried to...buy it.

KIRA: Why tonight?

LEO: I'm going away. At dawn.

KIRA: When are you coming back?

LEO: Never--I hope.

KIRA: Who are you?

LEO: Even if I trust you, I can't tell you that.

KIRA: I'll give you my address.

LEO: Don't. I can't enter anyone's house.

KIRA: Can I come to yours?

LEO: I have none.

KIRA: Oh. Well...

LEO (impulsively): Let's meet here again--in a month. If I'm still alive--if I can still enter the city--I'll be waiting for you.

KIRA: I'll come.

LEO: November tenth. But in daylight--three o'clock. Here.

KIRA: Yes.

675 LEO: Now it's time for you to go.

676 (SFX: whistle--then cab pulls up.)

677 KIRA: What's your name?

678 LEO: Leo. And yours?

679 KIRA: Kira.

680 (SFX: Sound of paper bills being peeled out.)

681 LEO: Tell him where you want to go.

682 KIRA: Goodbye, Leo--for a month!

683 LEO: If I'm still alive... (chuckles mordantly)

684 (SFX: Carriage pulls away and disappears.)

685 NARRATOR: Back at home...

686 KIRA'S MOTHER: What's the matter with you, Kira? You
687 don't care if you eat or not. You don't care if you're
688 cold. You don't hear when people talk to you. What's the
689 matter?

690 NARRATOR: As Kira walked home from the Institute, she
691 stared at every tall man, to see if it was him. She
692 didn't expect to find him--didn't want to find him. But
693 she found it hard to think of anything else.

694 KIRA'S MOTHER: Did you get the bread?

695 KIRA: What bread?

696 KIRA'S MOTHER: What bread? The Institute bread! This is
697 the day you get it! Don't tell me you've forgotten!

698 KIRA: I've forgotten.

699 KIRA'S MOTHER: Oh, my Lord in Heaven! (Pause as she sits
700 down heavily) What's the matter with you, Kira? She gets
701 rations that aren't enough to feed a cat and she forgets
702 them!

703 LYDIA (to her father): No bread. Her highness forgot it.

704 KIRA'S FATHER: I'm going to bed. You don't feel so
705 hungry when you're asleep.

706 KIRA'S MOTHER: There's not even any millet left. The
707 water pipes broke. There's no water in the house.

708 KIRA: I'm not hungry.

709 KIRA'S MOTHER: You're the only one in this family with a
710 bread card--but, Lord, you don't seem to think anything
711 of it!

712 KIRA: I'm sorry, Mother. I'll get it tomorrow.

713 KIRA'S MOTHER: Your father didn't sell a single thing
714 today in that store of his.

715 (SFX: Needles clicking. Doorbell rings. Footsteps. Door opened.
716 Heavy footsteps followed by light ones.)

717 HOUSE MGR-1 (clears throat): With regards to this water
718 pipes business, citizens, the committee has voted to
719 assess the tenants in proportion to their social
720 standing. Here's the bill.

721 (SFX: Hands over paper bill.)

722 HOUSE MGR-1: Have the money in my office no later than
723 ten o'clock tomorrow morning. Good night...citizens.

724 KIRA'S MOTHER (slaps face with hands and sighs):

725 KIRA'S FATHER: What's the matter, dear? How much is it?

726 KIRA'S MOTHER: Oh, it's... (deciding to lie) ...it's not
727 very much. Go to sleep. I'll tell you tomorrow.

728 NARRATOR: Without a handkerchief, Kira's mother wiped
729 her eyes with a corner of her shawl and shuffled off to
730 bed.

731 Bent over her textbook, Kira could think of but four
732 words:

733 LEO: If I'm still alive...

734 NARRATOR: Later, as Kira stood in line at the Students
735 Co-op to get bread, a young woman next to Kira gave her
736 a confidential grin.

737 SONIA: Going to the meeting this afternoon, comrade?

738 NARRATOR: She pointed to a large poster calling all
739 students to an election meeting of the Students'
740 Council.

741 KIRA: Uh-uh.

742 SONIA: Ah, but you must, comrade. Tremendously
743 important. You have to vote, you know.

744 KIRA: I've never voted in my life.

SONIA: Your first year?

KIRA: Uh-huh.

SONIA (very quickly): Isn't it wonderful? (Pause as Kira looks uncertain) To start your education at a glorious time like this, when science is free and opportunity open to all. I understand, it's all new to you and must seem very strange. But don't be afraid, comrade. I'm an old-timer here, I'll help you.

KIRA: I appreciate the offer but...

SONIA: What's your name?

KIRA: Kira...

SONIA: Mine's Sonia. Comrade Sonia. We're going to be great friends; I can feel it. There's nothing I enjoy more than helping smart young students like you.

KIRA: I don't remember saying anything particularly smart.

SONIA (laughs then): Ah, but I know women. We, the new women who are ambitious to have a useful career, to take our place beside the men in the productive toil of the world--instead of the old kitchen drudgery--we must stick together. There is no sight I like better than a new woman student. Comrade Sonia will always be your friend. Comrade Sonia is everybody's friend.

KIRA (ambiguously): Thank you. What is it you want me to do?

SONIA: Well, to begin with, Comrade, you must go to the meeting. We're electing our Students' Council and it's going to be a tough battle. There is a strong anti-proletarian element among our older students. Young students like you must support the candidates of our Communist Cell, who stand on guard over your interests.

KIRA: Are you one of those candidates, Comrade Sonia?

SONIA: See? I told you, you were smart. Yes, I've been on the council for two years. Hard work. But what can I do? The comrade students seem to want me, and I have to do my duty. Just come with me and I'll tell you who to vote for.

KIRA: And after that?

SONIA: Well, all Red students join some kind of social activity. You don't want to be suspected of bourgeois tendencies, you know. So I organize a Marxist Circle. Just a little group of young students--and I'm the chairman--to learn the proper proletarian ideology, which we'll all need to serve the Proletarian State, since that's what we're all studying for, isn't it?

KIRA: I'm here because I want to learn a work I like--and only because I like it.

SONIA (ominously): Well...as you wish.

KIRA (after a pause): I think I will go to the meeting. And I think I will vote.

NARRATOR: Later, in a lecture hall at the Institute...

PAVEL (warmly): Comrades! The doors of science are now open to us! Science is now in our own calloused hands. We have outgrown that old bourgeois prejudice about the objective impartiality of science. Science is not impartial. Science is a weapon of the class struggle. We're not here to further our petty personal ambitions. We've outgrown the slobbering egoism of the bourgeois who whine endlessly for a personal career. Our sole purpose in entering the Red Institute of Technology is to train ourselves into efficient fighters in the vanguard of Proletarian Culture and Construction!

(SFX: Dutiful but unenthusiastic applause.)

PAVEL (a bit hurt): Word is now given to Comrade Sonia...

SONIA: Hearty proletarian greetings to all, comrades! And--particularly--to our comrade women! There's no sight I like better than a new woman student, a woman emanipated from the old slavery of dishes and diapers. So here I am--Comrade Sonia--ready to serve you all!

(SFX: More enthusiastic applause.)

SONIA: You've heard Comrade Pavel speak. I'm here to tell you that he's an old fighter in the Communist ranks, a Party member since before the revolution, a soldier of the Red Army. Let us all vote for a good proletarian, a Red soldier, a hero of Melitopol, Comrade Pavel!

(SFX: Footsteps climb to stage. Then a 2nd set.)

SONIA: And Comrade Victor, too! Vote for Comrade Victor!

VICTOR: Thank you, Comrade Sonia! Thank you!

(SFX: crowd rises; "Communist Internationale" plays.)

KIRA: This is the first beautiful thing I've noticed about the revolution.

FEMALE STUDENT (whispers): Be careful--someone might hear you!

KIRA: When this is all over--when all traces of their "republic" are disinfected from history--what a glorious funeral march this will make!

NARRATOR: A hand grasped Kira's wrist and wheeled her around.

ANDREI (intense but amused): What are you talking about--you little fool...?

NARRATOR: Kira and Andrei stare hard at each other.

KIRA: How much are you paid for snooping around?

NARRATOR: She tried to free her wrist, but he held it.

ANDREI: Do you know the place for little girls like you?

KIRA: Yes--where men like you wouldn't be let in through the back door.

ANDREI: You must be new here. I'd advise you to be careful.

KIRA: Our stairs are slippy and there's eight floors to climb, so...be careful when you come to arrest me.

ANDREI: Are you exceedingly brave? Or just stupid?

KIRA: I'll let you find that out.

(SFX: Footsteps away.)

FEMALE STUDENT: Comrade, what have you done? That's Comrade Andrei!

NARRATOR: Later, at Kira's aunt's house...

(SFX: Doorbell. Key is turned. Door opened.)

KIRA'S AUNT & KIRA (cough loudly from the smoke):

KIRA'S AUNT: Come in, Kira darling--don't be afraid--it's not a fire. It's the stove...that Soviet wood...so

damp you could... No--don't take off your coat it's too
cold... We have the windows open.

KIRA: Is Irina at home?

KIRA'S AUNT: She certainly is. If you can find her.

IRINA (shivering): Here I am.

KIRA'S AUNT: Acia, say how-do-you-do to Cousin Kira.

(pause) Do you hear me, Acia? I said say how-do-you-do.

ACIA (8 years old; muttering): How do you do.

KIRA: Why aren't you at school today, Acia?

KIRA'S AUNT: Closed. For two weeks. No wood.

(SFX: Interior Door Bangs Open. Footsteps.)

VICTOR (coldly): Oh, how do you do, Kira? (Brief pause)
Mother, when is this smoke going to stop? How can one be
expected to study in this infernal atmosphere? If I
don't pass the examinations, there'll be no bread cards
for this family!

(SFX: Footsteps. Doorbangs. Sketching Sound.)

KIRA: You draw well, Irina.

IRINA: Thanks.

ACIA (8 yrs): That's meee!

KIRA (affectionately): But you have huge ears--and
you're riding a snail!

ACIA (8 yrs) (giggles):

KIRA'S AUNT: Would you like some soup, Kira?

NARRATOR: Kira knew her aunt had but one bowl of soup
left--saved for Uncle Vasili.

KIRA: No thank you, Antie--I've had my dinner.

(SFX: Front Door opens. Footsteps.)

UNCLE VASILII: I got a good price for the chandelier!

KIRA'S AUNT: Wonderful!

UNCLE VASILII (happy to see her): Helloo, Kira.

KIRA'S AUNT: Soup, Vasili. Sit!

(SFX: Sits down.)

UNCLE VASILI: Look at Irina! Not bad, eh, Kira? (Brief pause) Yes, we still have something left. We still have something left. (Brief pause) Have you read the papers today, Kira?

KIRA: Yes, Uncle Vasili. What is it?

UNCLE VASILI: The news--from abroad. Of course, they wouldn't print it. But you have to know how to read between the lines. Mark my word. Europe is doing things. And it won't be long...it won't be long before...

KIRA'S AUNT (coughs nervously):

UNCLE VASILI: ...and when it happens--when it happens--I'm all set to start again. It won't be hard. Of course, they've taken all the furniture away, but...(conspiratorially in a whisper) I've watched it. I know where they've taken it. I know where it is.

KIRA (generously encouraging him): You do?

UNCLE VASILI: I've seen the display cases in a government shoe store; and the chairs--in a fatory restaurant; and the chandelier--the chandelier's in the new Tobacco Trust office. I haven't been wasting time. I'm ready. As soon as...as soon as things change--I'll know where to find it all and I'll open the old store again.

KIRA: That's wonderful, Uncle. I'm glad they haven't destroyed your furniture--or burned it.

UNCLE VASILI: It's still as good as new. Though I did see a long scarch on one of the cases, it's a shame, but it can be fixed. And--here's the funniest thing...(chuckles slyly, as if he had outwitted his enemies) the sign boards--do you remember my sign boards, gilded glass with black letters? Well, they're hanging over a food co-op. On one side it says Food Co-op but on the other it still says: Vasili Dunaev. Furs. (Brief pause) Of course, my wife doesn't be- lieve any more. She doesn't think we'll get it all back. But how about it, Kira? Do you think you'll live your whole life under a Red boot?

KIRA: No, it can't last forever.

UNCLE VASILI: Of corse, it can't! (He rises suddenly). Come 'ere, Kira, I'll show you something.

930 KIRA'S AUNT: Vasili, finish your soup.

931 UNCLE VASILI: Never mind the soup. Come to my office,
932 Kira.

933 NARRATOR: No furniture was left in Vasili's office but a
934 desk and a chair. Unlocking a drawer, he took out a
935 bundle wrapped in an old handkerchief. Unwrapping it and
936 smiling proudly, Vasili displayed for Kira large piles
937 of crisp bills from the Czar's days--containing a
938 fortune of many thosands.

939 KIRA: But Uncle, they're...they're worthless. You're not
940 allowed to use them...or even to keep them anymore.
941 It's...dangerous.

942 UNCLE VASILI: Sure, they're worthless--now. But just
943 wait and see. Wait till things change. You'll see!

944 KIRA: But where did you get them?

945 UNCLE VASILI: I bought them. Secretly, of course. It's
946 dangerous, but you can get them. It cost me a lot, too.
947 I'll tell you why I bought so many. You see...just
948 before it happened...you know, before they nationalized
949 the store...I owed one large bill--for my new plate-
950 glass windows--got them from abroad, from Sweden, no one
951 in town had any like that. Well, when they took the
952 store, they kicked their boots through the glass--but it
953 doesn't matter, I still owe the firm for it. There's no
954 way I can pay now--you can't send money abroad--but I'm
955 waiting. I can't pay it in that worthless Soviet paper
956 trash...why, abroad they wouldn't use it in the toilet.
957 And you can't get gold--but these--these will be as good
958 as gold. And I'll pay my debt. I've checked up. The old
959 man of the glass firm has died, but his son is alive.
960 He's in Berlin now. I'll pay him. I don't like to be in
961 debt. I've never owed a ruble to any man in my life.
962 (pause) A good idea, wasn't it, eh, Kira?

963 KIRA: Yes, Uncle, a very good idea.

964 (SFX: Doorbell. Girl's laughter.)

965 UNCLE VASILI (sullenly): Here she is again--Vava.

966 KIRA: What's the matter, Uncle? You don't like her?

967 UNCLE VASILI: Oh, she's all right, I suppose. Just a
968 scatter-brained little female. Not a girl like yo,
969 Kira. Come on, I suppose you'll have to meet her.

NARRATOR: In the middle of the dining room sporting glistening black curls and wearing an expensive dress and a diamond bracelet is Vava.

VAVA: Good evening! Good evening, everyone! (Brief pause) And this is--I know--Kira! I'm so glad to meet you, at last, Kira! (Brief pause) Oh, I almost forgot, I've brought something to show you all...Something marvelous. Something you've never seen before...From (whispers) abroad. (Pause) Face powder. French. Real French. It's smuggled. One of Father's patients gave it to him--in partial payment.

IRINA: I've heard that abroad they use not only powder, but--imagine--lipstick!

VAVA: The same women who got me this promised me a lipstick, next time.

IRINA: Vava! You won't dare!

VAVA (very pleased): Oh...I don't know. Maybe a tiny bit...just once in a while...

KIRA'S AUNT: No decent woman paints her lips.

IRINA: But they say they do--and it's perfectly all right--abroad.

KIRA'S AUNT (wistfully): Abroad... Such a place does exist somewhere, doesn't it?

NARRATOR: As Kira walked to the Institute, she heard steps behind her that made her turn.

ANDREI: Good morning.

KIRA: Good morning.

NARRATOR: She watched him in his leather jacket walk on. Across from the Institute, he suddenly stopped and turned. The sidewalk had sloped abruptly at a dangerous angle, and he quickly offered his arm just in time to help her.

KIRA: Whoa! Thank you.

ANDREI: I thought you might need help. But then, I suppose you weren't afraid.

KIRA: What do you mean--I was very afraid--this time.

NARRATOR: Touching the visor of his cap, he hurried away.

Kira spotted a boy she knew.

KIRA: Who was that?

MALE STUDENT: Be careful of that. (Whispers) KGB.

KIRA: Oh, is he?

MALE STUDENT: Is he?

(SFX: Long whistle.)

NARRATOR: Whipped into mud by horses' hoofs, Petrograd's first snow looked like pale coffee with thin, melting slivers of sugar.

Kira turned a corner--then stopped, afraid to look--then she looked.

It was him on the steps of the abandoned house--hands in his pockets and collar raised.

LEO: Helloo, Kira.

KIRA: Helloo, Leo.

NARRATOR: When she pulled off a mitten; he took her hand in his cold, strong fingers.

LEO: I didn't think you'd come. I know I had no intention of coming.

KIRA: But you're here.

LEO: I woke up this morning and I knew I'd be here--against my better judgment, I admit.

KIRA: Are you living in Petrograd?

LEO: No. I haven't been here since the night I met you. We've often gone without food because I couldn't drive to the city. But I've returned to meet a girl on a street corner.

KIRA: Who went without food because you couldn't drive to the city?

NARRATOR: His smile told her he understood the question.

LEO: Let's sit.

(SFX: 2 sit concrete. Shoes knock against each other--snow falls.)

1041 LEO: So, you want to know with whom I'm living? See? My
1042 coat is mended.

1043 KIRA: I see.

1044 LEO: A woman did that. A very nice woman who likes me
1045 very much.

1046 KIRA: She sews well.

1047 LEO: Yes. But her eyesight isn't so good anymore. And
1048 her hair's gray. She's my old nurse and she has a shack
1049 in the country. Anything else you want to ask?

1050 KIRA (smiles): No.

1051 LEO: There are a few things you don't know about me.

1052 KIRA: I don't have to know.

1053 LEO: That's another thing: I don't like women who make
1054 it obvious how much they like me.

1055 KIRA: Why? Do you think I want you to like me?

1056 LEO: Why are you here?

1057 KIRA: Because I like you. I don't care what you think of
1058 women who like you--nor how many you've had.

1059 LEO: Well...what's a child like you doing at the
1060 Institute of Technology...

1061 NARRATOR: She told him about her future--about the steel
1062 skeletons she was going to build, about the glass
1063 skyscraper and the aluminum bridge...

1064 LEO: Is it worthwhile?

1065 KIRA: What?

1066 LEO: Effort. Creation. Your glass skyscraper. It might
1067 have been worthwhile a hundred years ago. It may be
1068 worthwhile again--a hundred years from now, though I
1069 doubt it. But if I had to pick--of all the centuries to
1070 be born in, this would be the last. In fact, if I
1071 weren't so curious, I'd pick never being born at all.

1072 KIRA: You must want something.

1073 LEO: I don't know. What's worth it? What do you expect
1074 from the world for your glass skyscraper?

1075 KIRA: I don't know. Perhaps--admiration.

LEO: I'm too conceited to want admiration. But let's say you do--who can give it to you? It's a curse, you know, to be able to look higher than you're allowed to reach. One's safer looking down these days.

KIRA: One can always fight.

LEO: Fight what? Whip your soul to a white heat to fight lice? No, that's not good construction, comrade engineer. The equilibrium's all wrong.

KIRA: You don't believe that.

LEO: I don't want to believe anything. Who suffers in this world? Those who lack something? No. Those who have something they should lack. If only one could come down to the level of those who never want it, never miss it.

KIRA: You'll never do it, Leo.

LEO: It's funny. I found you because I thought you'd do it for me. Now I'm afraid you'll be the one who'll keep me from it. I don't know whether to thank you or run from you.

(SFX: Footsteps of militiaman passing by.)

NARRATOR: As the darkness rose, their voices fell, for a militiaman was on guard, passing up and down, up and down the quiet street.

LEO: I have to go, Kira.

KIRA: Now?

LEO: I've a train to catch.

KIRA: So, you're going again.

LEO: Yes.

KIRA: Is it to be another month, then?

LEO: December 10th. On these steps.

KIRA: If you're still alive...

LEO: No, I'll be alive.

NARRATOR: Taking her hand, he tore off her mitten, raised her hand slowly to his lips and kissed her palm. Then he quickly turned and walked away.

(SFX: Footsteps away.)

NARRATOR: Kira stood motionless, her hand outstretched, until a little white flake fluttered onto her palm, onto the unseen treasure she did not want to spill.

(SFX: Footsteps.)

NARRATOR: When business at her father's store was good, he gave Kira money for carfare; when business was bad, she had to walk to school. But she walked every day and used the money to buy a briefcase, which she was looking for at the flea market when...

UNCLE VASILII: Kira! Am I glad to see you!

KIRA: What's this?

UNCLE VASILII: Oh, just an old clock. I bought it for your aunt on her birthday. She saw it in a museum and wanted it. It took an order from the imperial palace to get it sold out of the museum...It doesn't run any more. We'll get along fine without it. (pause) I feel so sorry for all these people here, selling the last of their possessions. For me, it's different. What's a few knick-knacks more or less? There'll be plenty of time to buy new ones. I have something you can't sell and that can't be nationalized--my children. Victor--why he's the brightest boy I've ever seen. Sure, we disagree but that's because he's young, he doesn't understand. But mark my word: Victor will be a great man someday.

KIRA: And Irina will be a famous artist.

UNCLE VASILII: That's right! And did you read the papers this morning? Just watch England. Within the next month or two--

NARRATOR: A fat customer in a sealskin hat stopped and pointed with a stubby finger to the clock.

FAT CUSTOMER: Give you fifty million for it, citizen.

UNCLE VASILII: Fifty, eh--hmm...that's not even ten loaves of bread.

KIRA (her voice sharp): Why, citizen, fifty million? I've just offered this citizen sixty million for the clock and he wouldn't sell. I was going to offer...

FAT CUSTOMER: Seventy-five million--that's my final offer.

(SFX: Sound of counting bills.)

1150 UNCLE VASILII: Why, child--where did you learn that?

1151 KIRA: One can learn anything--in an emergency.

1152 NARRATOR: Later, Kira's listening to a lecture at the
1153 Institute when Andrei enters by mistake. Recognizing
1154 her, he goes to sit on the steps at Kira's feet.

1155 INSTRUCTOR: ...as was Hadrian's Wall, built on a much
1156 smaller scale by the Romans, but with a similar goal in
1157 mind.

1158 (SFX: Bell rings.)

1159 INSTRUCTOR: Now, remember, comrades--your papers on the
1160 engineering of the Great Wall are due Thursday. You're
1161 excused!

1162 (SFX: Students quickly exit.)

1163 ANDREI (walking): How are you today?

1164 KIRA (walking): Surprised.

1165 ANDREI: By what?

1166 KIRA: Since when do conscientious Communists waste time
1167 listening to lectures they don't need?

1168 ANDREI: Conscientious Communists are curious. They don't
1169 mind listening to investigate what they...don't
1170 understand.

1171 KIRA: I've heard they have many ways of satisfying their
1172 curiosity.

1173 ANDREI: Yes, but they don't always want to use them.
1174 Sometimes they want to find out for...themselves.

1175 KIRA: Themselves? Or for the Party?

1176 ANDREI: Both.

1177 SONIA: Well, well, well, Comrade Argounova! What a
1178 surprise! Aren't you ashamed? Walking with Comrade
1179 Andrei, the reddest Communist we've got?

1180 KIRA: Afraid I'll corrupt him, Comrade Sonia?

1181 SONIA: Corrupt him? Not a chance--not a chance. Well,
1182 bye-bye. Have to run. Have three meetings--and promised
1183 to attend them all!

1184 ANDREI: Are you going home, Comrade Argounova?

1185 KIRA: Yes, comrade.

1186 ANDREI: Would you mind being seen with a very red
1187 Communist?

1188 KIRA: Not at all--if your reputation won't be tarnished
1189 by being seen with me.

1190 (SFX: Two sets of Footsteps.)

1191 KIRA: I thought Communists never did anything but what
1192 they had to do.

1193 ANDREI: I must be a very poor Communist because I've
1194 always done only what I wanted to.

1195 KIRA: What about your revolutionary duty?

1196 ANDREI: If you know a thing is right, you want to do it.
1197 If it's right and you don't want to do it--you're not a
1198 man.

1199 KIRA: Haven't you ever wanted a thing only because you
1200 wanted it?

1201 ANDREI: That's always been my reason. I've never wanted
1202 things unless they could help my cause. And it is my
1203 cause.

1204 KIRA: To deny yourself for the sake of millions?

1205 ANDREI: To bring millions up to where I want them--for
1206 my sake.

1207 KIRA: And when you think you're right, you do it at any
1208 price?

1209 ANDREI: You admire our ideals, but loathe our methods--
1210 is that it?

1211 KIRA: No, I loathe your ideals.

1212 ANDREI: Why?

1213 KIRA: For one reason, mainly--no matter how much your
1214 Party promises--no matter what paradise it plans to
1215 bring mankind--there's one thing that will ensure this
1216 paradise turns into the most unspeakable hell: the claim
1217 that man must live for the state.

1218 ANDREI: What higher purpose is there?

1219 KIRA: Don't you know? Don't you know that there are
1220 things--in the best of us--which no outside hand should

1221 touch? Don't you know that we live only for ourselves--
1222 the best of us do--those who are worthy of it? Don't you
1223 know that there is something in us that must not be
1224 touched by any state, any collective, any number of
1225 millions?

1226 ANDREI: No.

1227 KIRA (playfully): Comrade, how much you have to learn!

1228 NARRATOR: He looked at her with a smile.

1229 ANDREI: Don't you know...that you can't sacrifice
1230 millions for the sake of the few?

1231 KIRA: When those few are the best? Deny the best its
1232 right to the top--and you have no best left. What are
1233 your masses but millions of dull, shriveled souls that
1234 have no thoughts, no dreams, no will of their own, who
1235 eat and sleep and chew the words stamped into their
1236 brains by others? And for these you would sacrifice the
1237 few who know life, who are life? I loathe your ideals
1238 because there's no worse injustice than giving to the
1239 undeserved. Because men are not equal in ability--and
1240 one can't treat them as if they were. (Chuckles) And
1241 because I loathe most of them.

1242 ANDREI (vocal smile): So do I.

1243 KIRA: But then...

1244 ANDREI: I just don't permit myself the luxury. I try to
1245 make them worth something--bring them up to my level.
1246 You'd make a great little fighter, you know--on our
1247 side.

1248 KIRA: I think you know I could never be that.

1249 ANDREI: Yes. But why don't you fight against us, then?

1250 KIRA: I don't want to fight for the people, and I don't
1251 want to fight against the people. I want to be left
1252 alone--to live.

1253 ANDREI: Isn't that a strange request?

1254 KIRA: Is it? What is the state but a servant and
1255 convenience for a large number of people, just like the
1256 electric or the plumbing system. Wouldn't it be
1257 ridiculous to claim that men must live for their
1258 plumbing, not the plumbing for the men?

1259 ANDREI: But if your pipes leaked or got clogged,
1260 wouldn't it also be ridiculous not to try to mend them?

1261 KIRA: I wish you luck, Comrade. I hope when you find
1262 those pipes running red with your own blood--you'll
1263 still think they were worth mending.

1264 ANDREI: I'm not afraid of that. I'm more afraid of what
1265 times like ours will do to a woman like you.

1266 NARRATOR: Kira's lips form a bitter-sweet smile.

1267 KIRA: Look! Rigoletto! Do you like the opera, Comrade
1268 Andrei?

1269 ANDREI: I've never been to one. But I do get plenty of
1270 free tickets. Do you go often?

1271 KIRA: Last time was six years ago. The "bourgeois" can
1272 no longer afford it, nowadays.

1273 ANDREI (mock-formally): Would you accompany me to the
1274 opera, Comrade Argounova?

1275 KIRA: Hasn't your Communist Cell a secret bureau of
1276 information on all students?

1277 ANDREI: Why?

1278 KIRA: You could find out from them my name is Kira.

1279 NARRATOR: Andrei smiled.

1280 Kira's father kept his savings sewn in his undershirt.
1281 When he needed money, he cut the seam.

1282 KIRA'S FATHER (sigh):

1283 NARRATOR: This time, he cut the seam for the last time.
1284 The tax on private traders had to be paid, even though
1285 it meant closing his shop.

1286 KIRA'S FATHER: I will not become a Soviet employee if we
1287 all starve!

1288 KIRA'S MOTHER: Something has to be done!

1289 NARRATOR: Unexpected help appeared in the person of the
1290 former Argounov factory bookkeeper.

1291 NEBBISHY BOOKKEEPER: Tsk, tsk, tsk, Mr. Argounov, sir.
1292 This is no life for you. Now, if we get together...if
1293 you just invest a little, I'll do all the work...

1294 NARRATOR: So they formed a partnership. Kira's father
1295 would manufacture soap--the bookkeeper would sell it.

1296 NEBBISHY BOOKKEEPER: Simple as an omelet. I'll get you
1297 the greatest little soap recipe. The public hasn't had
1298 any for so long they'll tear it out of your hands. I
1299 know a place where we can get spoiled pork fat. No good
1300 for eating--but just right for soap.

1301 NARRATOR: Kira's father spent his last money to buy pork
1302 fat--melting it in a big brass tub on the kitchen stove,
1303 bent over the fumes, blinking and stirring.

1304 Kira sat reading a textbook. The odor raked her throat,
1305 but she paid no attention.

1306 The soap came out in in dirty brown squares and Kira's
1307 father stamped an anchor on each square with a brass
1308 button from his yachting jacket.

1309 However, a pound of soap cost more to make than it did
1310 on the market.

1311 NEBBISHY BOOKKEEPER: That's better! They'll think more
1312 of it if they have to pay more. It's quality soap. Not
1313 the old Soviet junk.

1314 NARRATOR: He had a tray with straps to wear over his
1315 shoulders and he departed for the market.

1316 (SFX: Whistling merrily.)

1317 NARRATOR: Back at the Institute...

1318 SONIA: ...Comrade Pavel's revolutionary record is
1319 unsurpassed. Why he was the hero of Melitopol...

1320 MALE STUDENT: The hero of Melitopol? Ever heard of
1321 Comrade Andrei?

1322 SONIA: Hmph.

1323 KIRA: What kind of man is Comrade Andre?

1324 SONIA (testy): A perfect revolutionary, I suppose. But
1325 it's not my idea of a good proletarian if a man doesn't
1326 unbend and be a little sociable with his fellow comrades
1327 once in a while...And if you have any intentions in a
1328 bedroom direction--well, don't bother. He's the kind
1329 that sleeps with red flags. Take it from one who knows.

1330 NARRATOR: Andrei again came to Kira's lecture.

1331 ANDREI: I've got tickets for tomorrow night. Rigoletto.

1332 KIRA: Oh--wonderful!

1333 ANDREI: Shall I call for you? Seven-thirty?

1334 KIRA: Yes. Sit down. I'll make room for you.

1335 ANDREI: Can't. I have to go.

1336 NARRATOR: Making his way to the door, he turned once to
1337 glance at Kira's smiling face.

1338 Later, at the Argounov apartment...

1339 KIRA: Mother, I have to have a dress. I'm going to the
1340 opera.

1341 KIRA'S MOTHER: To the...opera!

1342 NARRATOR: She dropped the onion she was peeling and
1343 Lydia her embroidery.

1344 LYDIA (gasps): Who is he?

1345 KIRA: A boy...At the Institute...

1346 LYDIA: Good-looking?

1347 KIRA: In a way. (Brief pause) By the way, be careful
1348 when he comes. He's a Communist.

1349 KIRA'S MOTHER: A Comm--

1350 NARRATOR: She dropped the saltshaker into the pot of
1351 millet.

1352 LYDIA: You're not being friendly with a Communist? After
1353 shouting how much you hate them?

1354 KIRA: I happen to like him.

1355 LYDIA: You have no pride. Bringing a Communist into the
1356 house. I, for one, shan't speak to him.

1357 KIRA'S MOTHER (sighing then): Kira, you always seem to
1358 make things harder.

1359 NARRATOR: There was millet for dinner. It was mildewed
1360 but no one said a word. It had to be eaten; there was
1361 nothing else.

1362 (SFX: Doorbell rings.)

1363 NARRATOR: Curious despite her convictions, Lydia hurried
1364 to answer the door.

1365 ANDREI: May I see Kira, please?

1366 LYDIA (icily): Yes, indeed.

1367 KIRA'S FATHER: Good evening.

1368 ANDREI: Sir.

1369 KIRA'S MOTHER: I'm so glad, Comrade, that my daughter is
1370 going to hear a real proletarian opera in one of our
1371 great Red theaters!

1372 ANDREI (cringing the slightest bit): Indeed.

1373 NARRATOR: During intermission, they ran into Sonia on
1374 the arm of Pavel in the theater lobby.

1375 SONIA: So, you've gone quite proletarian, haven't you,
1376 Kira? Or is it Comrade Andrei who's gone bourgeois?

1377 PAVEL: Very unkind of you, Sonia. I compliment Comrade
1378 Argounova on her wise choice.

1379 KIRA: How do you know my name?

1380 PAVEL: We know a lot, Comrade Argounova--we know a lot.

1381 SONIA (laughs ungenerously):

1382 NARRATOR: On the way home...

1383 KIRA: Did you like the opera?

1384 ANDREI: Not really. It was all rather silly. And
1385 useless.

1386 KIRA: Can't you enjoy things that are useless--simply
1387 because they're beautiful?

1388 ANDREI: No. But I did enjoy it.

1389 KIRA: The music?

1390 ANDREI: No. The way you listened to it.

1391 NARRATOR: One day, after a lecture...

1392 (SFX: Wolf whistle.)

1393 KIRA: Leo...how could you?

1394 LEO: I had to see you.

1395 NARRATOR: Just then, Pavel rushes past them. Stopping
1396 short, he throws a quick glance back at Kira then
1397 hurries away.

1398 KIRA: Let's get away from here.

1399 (SFX: Whistle. Cab pulls up and they get in.)

1400 KIRA: Leo...how could you?

1401 LEO: I had no other way of finding you.

1402 KIRA: And so, you...?

1403 LEO: Waited at the gate--for three hours. I'd almost
1404 given up.

1405 KIRA: You came...again...from the country?

1406 LEO: Yes. Just to see you.

1407 NARRATOR: They got out at the Admiralty and walked along
1408 the parapet wall.

1409 KIRA: I... I was thinking about you...today.

1410 LEO (after a pause): Me too. But I didn't want to. I
1411 fought it. (pause) You know what I wanted to...?

1412 NARRATOR: His face was very close to hers. The kiss that
1413 came was like an open wound and her arms closed tightly
1414 around his body.

1415 LEO (whispering): Kira, I love you...

1416 KIRA (whispering hungrily): I love you, too Leo...I love
1417 you...

1418 NARRATOR: She didn't know what she was saying--all she
1419 knew is that his lips were on hers.

1420 LEO: I'll come tomorrow, yes?

1421 KIRA: It's too dangerous. I'm afraid someone saw you.
1422 There are spies at the Institute. Wait a week.

1423 LEO: That long?

1424 KIRA: Yes. But not here. Our old place. At night. Nine
1425 o'clock.

1426 LEO: It'll be hard to wait.

1427 KIRA (kissing him): Leo...Leo...

1428 NARRATOR: That night, on her mattress, Kira lay
1429 motionless and thought of him.

1430 Later, in front of a picture of Lenin, Comrade Pavel sat
1431 smoking a cigarette.

PAVEL: Undobubtedly, Comrade Argounova, you wish to remain a student at the Institute of Technology?

KIRA (with subtle mockery): Undobubtedly.

PAVEL: Who was that man?

KIRA: I wasn't interested enough to ask him.

PAVEL: Well, I'm sure we both know his name. All I want is his address.

KIRA: Let me see...he asked me the way to the Admiralty. You might look there.

PAVEL (angered): I'll remind you, Comrade, that the gentlemen of your faction have always accused us proletarian students of belonging to a secret police organization. And, of course, that might be true...

KIRA: Well then--who was that man?

(SFX: Fist hits table.)

PAVEL: This is no joke, citizen.

KIRA: Well, then what is it?

PAVEL: You've lived in Soviet Russia long enough to know how serious it is to protect counterrevolutionaries.

(SFX: Door opens w/o a knock.)

NARRATOR: Andrei enters--his face displays no emotion. But Pavel's does--he raises his cigarette to his lips too quickly.

ANDREI (calmly): Good morning, Kira.

KIRA: Good morning, Andrei.

PAVEL (after a pause): Comrade Argounova, I do not doubt your political trustworthiness. I'm sure that the simple question of an address will not be hard for you to answer.

KIRA: I told you, I don't know him. I've never seen him before. How would I know his address?

PAVEL (softly, confidently): Comrade Argounova, I want you to understand that this man is wanted by the State. If you can help us to find him, it will be very valuable to you and to me--to all of us.

KIRA: And if I can't help you--what am I to do?

1468 ANDREI: You're to go home, Kira.

1469 (SFX: Cigarette drops.)

1470 ANDREI: Unless you have lectures to attend. (Brief
1471 pause) If we need you again--I'll send for you.

1472 NARRATOR: Kira rises, turns and leaves the room.

1473 PAVEL (clears his throat): Andrei, old pal, I hope you
1474 don't think that I... because she is a friend of
1475 yours...

1476 ANDREI: Of course not.

1477 PAVEL: I'd never question or criticize your actions. Not
1478 even if I thought it was not good discipline to cancel a
1479 fellow Communist's order before an outsider.

1480 ANDREI: What discipline permitted you to call her for
1481 questioning?

1482 PAVEL: Sorry, pal. My mistake. I was only trying to help
1483 you.

1484 ANDREI: I have not asked for help.

1485 PAVEL: I saw him at the Institute yesterday. We've been
1486 searching for him for almost two months.

1487 ANDREI: Why didn't you report it to me?

1488 PAVEL: I wasn't certain if it was the man, you see.

1489 ANDREI: And your help in the matter would have been--no
1490 doubt--valuable to you.

1491 PAVEL: Why, old pal, you're not accusing me of personal
1492 motives, are you? Maybe I did overstep my authority, but
1493 I was only thiinking of helping a fellow proletarian in
1494 his duty. You know that nothing can stop me in
1495 fulfilling my duty, not even...sentimental attachments.

1496 ANDREI: A breach of Party discipline is a breach of
1497 Party discipline, no matter who commits it.

1498 PAVEL: That's what I've always said.

1499 ANDREI: It is never advisable to be overzealous in one's
1500 duty.

1501 PAVEL: Certainly. It's as bad as being lax.

1502 ANDREI: In future--any political questioning in this
1503 unit is to be done by me.

PAVEL: As you wish.

ANDREI: And if you ever feel that I cannot perform that task--you may report it to the Party and ask for my dismissal.

PAVEL: Andrei, I--

ANDREI: Understood?

PAVEL: Yes.

(SFX: Sounds of the Battle of Melitopol.)

NARRATOR: A few years before, the Ukrainian city of Melitopol hung by a thread between the White Army and the Red. That thread broke one spring night.

COMMANDER: It's your death, Comrade--ten to one.

ANDREI: It doesn't matter, Comrade Commander.

COMMANDER: Are you sure you can do it?

ANDREI: They're ripe, Comrade Commander. They need but one kick.

COMMANDER: The Proletariat thanks you, Comrade.

NARRATOR: Those in the other trenches then saw Andrei climb over the top and walk arms raised to a spot a few steps from their trenches.

ANDREI: Brothers--I have no weapons. I'm not here to shoot. I just want to say a few words to you. If you don't want to hear them--shoot me.

NARRATOR: An officer raised a gun, but another stopped him.

ANDREI: Brothers--why are you fighting us? Because we want you to have bread and give you land to grow it? Because we want to open a door from your pigsty into a state where you'll be men, as you were born to be? Brothers, it's your lives that we're fighting for--against your guns! When our red flag--ours and yours--rises...

(SFX: Gunshot.)

NARRATOR: Andrei whirled and fell to the ground.

(SFX: More Gunshots.)

NARRATOR: Suddenly, a White officer's body was hurled out of the trench and a White soldier waved his arms to the Red soldiers.

WHITE SOLDIER: Comrades!

(SFX: Soldiers yell "Hurrah, Hurrah!")

PAVEL: Comrades! Let me greet in you the awakening of class consciousness! Down with the damn bourgeois exploiters! Loot the looters, comrades! Who does not toil, shall not eat! Proletarians of the world, unite! As Comrade Marx has said, if we, the working class...

(SFX: Sounds of another battlefield.)

NARRATOR: Andrei recovered from his wound in a few months. But it was at another battle--a battle he didn't like to talk about--that he was wounded more gravely.

It was cold and he had blood on his thigh and on his right temple when Andrei opened his eyes. Under his feet, what was left of a White Soldier moved towards him--a canteen on its hip. Andrei grabbed it and drank greedily.

(SFX: Drinking from canteen.)

WOUNDED SOLDIER: Give me a drink, brother.

NARRATOR: Andrei held the man's head and forced the canteen between his lips. Then Andrei rose and started walking. He had walked a fair amount when he heard a sound behind him. The White Soldier was leaning on a piece of wood and following him.

WOUNDED SOLDIER: May I follow you, brother? I'm not very...steady to find my own direction.

ANDREI: You and I aren't going the same way, buddy. When we find men--it'll be the end for either you or me.

WOUNDED SOLDIER: I'll take a chance.

ANDREI: Ok.

NARRATOR: So they walked. Andre sweating beads of red--the other man rattling deep inside his chest.

ANDREI: As long as one can walk---

WOUNDED SOLDIER: --we'll walk.

NARRATOR: Then, the man fell. Andrei stopped.

1576 WOUNDED SOLDIER: Go on.

1577 NARRATOR: Andrei threw the man's arm over his shoulder
1578 and, staggering a little, went on.

1579 WOUNDED SOLDIER: You're a fool.

1580 ANDREI: One doesn't leave a good soldier, no matter what
1581 color he's wearing.

1582 WOUNDED SOLDIER: If it's my comrades we come upon--I'll
1583 see they go easy on you.

1584 ANDREI: I'll see that you get to a prison hospital and a
1585 good bed--if it's mine.

1586 NARRATOR: Then Andrei saw the red flag on the pole--it
1587 was his.

1588 WOUNDED SOLDIER: Leave me here.

1589 ANDREI: We don't do that to fellow soldiers.

1590 WOUNDED SOLDIER: If you have pity, leave me here.

1591 NARRATOR: Andrei brushed the man's sticky hair from his
1592 forehead and saw for the first time a face he had only
1593 seen in photographs--that of the infamous Captain
1594 Karsavin.

1595 WOUNDED SOLDIER: I'm sure to die here.

1596 ANDREI: One doesn't take chances with an enemy like
1597 you...Captain.

1598 WOUNDED SOLDIER (understanding): No.

1599 NARRATOR: His face chalk white, Captain Karsavin propped
1600 himself up on one arm.

1601 WOUNDED SOLDIER: When I was young, I always wanted to
1602 see a sunrise. But Mother never let me go out early--she
1603 was afraid I'd catch a cold. (Feeble laugh) Will you
1604 lend me your gun, friend?

1605 NARRATOR: Andrei stared for a long time into the
1606 Captain's eyes. Then he handed the Captain his gun.

1607 Andrei straightened his shoulders and walked on. When he
1608 heard the shot, he did not turn but kept walking--
1609 steadily, his head held high, towards the red flag--
1610 little red drops following his footsteps on the ground--
1611 now on one side of the road only.

NARRATOR: At the Argounov apartment...

SACCHARINE MAN: Two kinds--the crystals in glass tubes and the tablets in paper boxes. I furnish the materials. You--pack. Remember, eighty-seven tablets is all you have to put into a box labeled One Hundred. Great future in saccharine!

KIRA'S MOTHER: Sorry about your studies, Kira, but you'll just have to help. You have to eat, you know.

KIRA'S AUNT: Can I help?

KIRA'S MOTHER: No, no, sister. The powder'll make you cough...74, 75, 76...

KIRA'S AUNT: Is that stuff poisonous?

KIRA'S MOTHER: No, just sweet. The dessert of the revolution!

KIRA'S AUNT: Vasili sold the drawing room table...Fifty million rubles and four pounds of lard. I made an omelet with the egg powder we got at the co-op. They can't tell me they made that powder out of fresh eggs.

KIRA'S MOTHER: 16, 17, 18...they say their Economic Program is a failure, sister...19, 20...they're going to return houses to owners before long.

KIRA'S AUNT: Did you hear about Boris? He was in a hurry, and he tried to jump into a crowded tramway at full speed. Both legs cut off. (sighs) I've been crying so much lately...and for no reason at all.

LYDIA: They've even taken the gold icons from the churches--to feed their famine somewhere...64, 65...We'll all be punished by God, for sure.

KIRA'S AUNT: Irina lost her ration card. She gets nothing the rest of the month.

LYDIA (coldly): I'm not surprised.

ACIA: You don't like her because she drew you as a mackerel!

KIRA'S MOTHER & AUNT (laugh):

KIRA'S MOTHER: What's that on your handerchief, sister?

KIRA'S AUNT: Oh, nothing, it's a dirty one... (Brief pause) I can't sleep anymore. My nightgown is always so

hot and sticky. I'm so worried about Victor. He's bringing the strangest fellows into the house. They don't remove their caps and leave ashes all over the carpet. I think they're Communists. Vasili hasn't said a word--and that frightens me--because I know what he thinks...Communists in the house!

LYDIA: You're not the only one.

NARRATOR: Lydia glances sharply at Kira.

KIRA'S AUNT (violent coughing fit):

KIRA'S MOTHER: You better do something about that, sister.

KIRA'S AUNT: Oh, it's nothing. Just the cold weather. Doctors are fools and don't know what they're talking about. (coughing) Did you hear about Nina? Imagine! Not even a Soviet registration wedding. And her father, God rest his soul, was a bishop...Just sleeping together like cats.

LYDIA (clears her throat in embarrassment):

KIRA'S MOTHER: It's a disgrace. This new love freedom will ruin the country. But thank God, nothing like this will ever happen to us. There still are some families with some standards left.

(SFX: Doorbell rings.)

LYDIA (rising): It's Father.

NARRATOR: Lydia opened the door, but it was Andrei.

LYDIA: Oh!

ANDREI: May I see Kira?

LYDIA: Well, I can't stop you.

KIRA'S MOTHER: Ah!... Well, what a surprise!

NARRATOR: Kira's mother's handheld a half-filled Saccharine box, the tablets rolling out.

KIRA'S MOTHER: May I present? Comrade Andrei, my sister Comrade Duneava.

ANDREI: Charmed. (brief pause) May I speak to you, Kira?

KIRA: Excuse us. This way, Andrei.

1684 KIRA'S AUNT: To her room? Why young people today behave
1685 almost like Communists.

1686 NARRATOR: Kira's mother drops the box and Lydia kicks
1687 her aunt's ankle. Andrei follows Kira to her room.

1688 KIRA: We have no light--just the streetlamp outside. Sit
1689 here, on Lydia's bed.

1690 (SFX: Sitting down on bed.)

1691 ANDREI: It's about this morning. About Pavel.

1692 KIRA: Yes?

1693 ANDREI: I wanted to tell you that you don't have to
1694 worry. He had no authority to question you. No one can
1695 issue an order to question you--but me. The order won't
1696 be issued.

1697 KIRA: Thank you, Andrei.

1698 ANDREI: I know what you think of us--you're honest. But
1699 you're not interested in politics--you're not an active
1700 enemy--I trust you.

1701 KIRA: I don't know his address, Andrei.

1702 ANDREI: I'm not asking who you know. Just don't let them
1703 drag you into anything.

1704 KIRA: Andrei, do you know who that man is?

1705 ANDREI: Do you mind if we don't discuss it, Kira?

1706 KIRA: No. But will you allow me one question?

1707 ANDREI: Yes. What is it?

1708 KIRA: Why are you doing this for me?

1709 ANDREI: Because I trust you and I think we're friends.
1710 Though don't ask me why we are, because I don't know
1711 that myself.

1712 KIRA: Do you believe in God, Andrei?

1713 ANDREI: No.

1714 KIRA: Neither do I. But that's a favorite question of
1715 mine. An upside-down question.

1716 ANDREI: What do you mean?

1717 KIRA: If I asked people whether they believed in life,
1718 they'd never understand. So I ask them if they believe

1719 in God. And if they say they do--then, I know they don't
1720 believe in life.

1721 ANDREI: You're a strange girl.

1722 KIRA: You see--you and I--we believe in life. But you
1723 want to fight for it, to kill for it, even die for it. I
1724 only want to live it.

1725 NARRATOR: On the other side of the door, Lydia began to
1726 play the piano as a rest from counting saccharine.

1727 ANDREI: You know, that's beautiful. That music.

1728 KIRA: I thought you didn't care for music.

1729 ANDREI: I never have. But, somehow, I like this--now--
1730 here...

1731 NARRATOR: They sat in the darkness and listened. When
1732 the music ended, they returned to the dining room, where
1733 Lydia sat at the piano.

1734 ANDREI: That was beautiful. Would you play it again?

1735 LYDIA (rising brusquely): I'm sorry--I'm tired.

1736 KIRA'S AUNT (loudly): I've always said young people
1737 today do not follow sufficiently the example of the
1738 Communists.

1739 NARRATOR: Kira accompanied Andrei to the door.

1740 ANDREI: I don't think I should call on you, Kira--it
1741 makes your family uncomfortable. (Brief pause) It's all
1742 right, I understand. Will I see you at the Institute?"

1743 KIRA: Yes. Thank you, Andrei. Good night.

1744 NARRATOR: Leo stood alone on the steps of the empty
1745 mansion. When Kira approached, their eyes met in a
1746 glance that was more than a kiss. His arms crushed her
1747 violently, as if he wanted to grind their coats to
1748 shreds against each other.

1749 LEO (disturbing quality in voice): Kira...Kira, I'm
1750 going away. (Brief pause) I'm going away tonight.
1751 Forever. To Germany.

1752 KIRA (eyes wide but not frightened): Leo...

1753 LEO: I'm a fugitive, Kira. A counter revolutionary. I
1754 have to leave Russia before they find me. I've just

1755 received the money--from my aunt in Berlin. That's what
1756 I've been waiting for. They smuggled it to me.

1757 KIRA: You leave tonight?

1758 LEO: A smugglers' boat. They smuggle out desperate
1759 souls, like me. If I'm not caught--I land in Germany. If
1760 I'm caught--well...

1761 KIRA: I'm going with you, Leo.

1762 LEO: You know it's your life at stake if we don't reach
1763 Germany, and perhaps also if we do?

1764 KIRA: Yes.

1765 LEO: The boat leaves in an hour. It's far. No time to
1766 get any luggage.

1767 KIRA: I'm ready.

1768 LEO: You can't tell anyone. You can't telephone any
1769 farewells.

1770 KIRA: I don't have to.

1771 LEO: All right--come on!

1772 NARRATOR: They took a cab to a remote address on an
1773 unpaved street. Leo paid the driver and they started to
1774 walk.

1775 LEO: I couldn't ask you to do this. But I knew you'd
1776 come. (pause) We have two miles to walk to the sea. Are
1777 you cold?

1778 KIRA: Uh-uh.

1779 NARRATOR: Soon, they were in an open field, snow to
1780 their ankles, walking towards darkness. When the snow
1781 ended, they heard a slapping sound from somewhere far
1782 below.

1783 LEO: Shhh.

1784 NARRATOR: He led her down a narrow path. She didn't
1785 notice the husky figure until the ray of a flashlight
1786 shone in their faces, and she saw a black beard and a
1787 hand holding a gun.

1788 LEO: It's Leo.

1789 NARRATOR: Leo slipped a wad of bills to the man.

1790 LEO: Another fare. She's with me.

1791 CAPTAIN W BLACK BEARD: There are no cabins left.

1792 LEO: That's fine. Mine's enough.

1793 NARRATOR: Their cabin was only a bed and a narrow strip
1794 of space between cracked, unpainted walls.

1795 LEO: Take off your coat.

1796 NARRATOR: She obeyed. It was the first time they had
1797 seen each other without overcoats. They sat on the bed.

1798 LEO: My aunt in Berlin hates me. But she loved my
1799 father. My father...is dead. (Pause) If it weren't for
1800 you, I'd have taken a boat three days ago. But I
1801 couldn't go away without seeing you. So I waited for
1802 this one. The other boat disappeared. Shipwrecked or
1803 caught--who knows. They didn't reach Germany. So you've
1804 saved my life.

1805 NARRATOR: Leo stood up, opened the porthole and blew out
1806 the light.

1807 LEO (with emotion--triumphantly): Do you know what we're
1808 leaving?

1809 NARRATOR: Sitting, he closed his hands around her face.
1810 Forcing her lips apart with his, he then released her--
1811 rising quickly to close the porthole and light a
1812 lantern. She stood slowly, obediently--looking up at
1813 him.

1814 LEO: Take off your clothes.

1815 NARRATOR: She said nothing but obeyed.

1816 Taking in her nakedness, he then tore her off the ground
1817 and onto the bed with the weight of his hand between her
1818 shoulder blades.

1819 She felt his legs like a warm liquid against hers. As
1820 her hair hung over the edge of the bed, her lips parted
1821 in a snarl.

1822 When Kira woke, Leo's head was resting on one breast; a
1823 red sailor was looking at the other.

1824 RED SAILOR: Sorry to disturb you, citizens.

1825 KIRA (still half-asleep): Please go away. This is our
1826 first...

RED SAILOR: Well, you couldn't have selected a worse time, citizen.

LEO: Get out and let us dress.

NARRATOR: The sailor closed the door.

LEO: It's all right, Kira. Don't be afraid.

NARRATOR: When they were dressed, Leo flung open the door.

LEO: I'll sign any confessions you want--as long as you let her go.

NARRATOR: Kira opened her mouth, but Leo's hand closed it brutally.

LEO: She had nothing to do with it. I kidnapped her. I'll stand trial for it, if you like.

KIRA: He's lying!

RED SAILOR: Shut up, both of you!

(SFX: A woman howled in another cabin.)

NARRATOR: Two sailors held the arms of the black-bearded captain while a barrel-chested man in a leather jacket watched.

TIMO (booming voice): Which one is he? On the list?

CAPTAIN W BLACK BEARD: Leo.

TIMO: Who's the girl?

CAPTAIN W BLACK BEARD: Don't know. She's not on the list. She came at the last minute--with him.

RED SAILOR: Seventeen counter-revolutionary rats that tried to sneak out of the country, Comrade Timo.

TIMO: Thought you could get away from Comrade Timo of the Red Fleet, eh? (To crew) Keep your eyes and your guns ready, men. Any funny business--shoot their guts out. (pause) The girl's all right. He kidnapped her.

NARRATOR: Timo glanced at Leo with understanding.

KIRA: But I'm telling you...

TIMO: Make your little whore keep quiet!

NARRATOR: As Leo and Kira sat on a coil of ropes, Timo sidled up next to them.

1862 TIMO (whispering): When we land--there'll be a truck
1863 waiting. The boys will be busy. They'll have their backs
1864 turned. When they do--you, lassie, go--and keep going.

1865 KIRA: No. I'll stay with him.

1866 LEO: Kira!

1867 TIMO: Don't be a damned fool. You can't help him.

1868 KIRA: You won't get any confessions from him for my
1869 sake.

1870 TIMO (chuckles): He has no confessions to make. (Serious
1871 again) Anyway, I don't want children mixed in with
1872 something they don't understand a damn thing about. See
1873 that she's gone when we reach the truck.

1874 NARRATOR: Kira stared at the kindly dark eyes that
1875 leaned even closer to her.

1876 TIMO (in a whisper): It's easier to get out one, than
1877 two. I'll be at headquarters around four. Come and ask
1878 for Comrade Timo. Maybe I'll have news for you.

1879 NARRATOR: Timo walked away quickly and slapped the Red
1880 Sailor in the jaw for leaving the prisoners alone.

1881 LEO (in a whisper): Do you want to make it harder for
1882 me? You'll go. You'll also stay away from headquarters.

1883 NARRATOR: When houses could be seen close to the mast,
1884 he kissed her hard.

1885 LEO: What's your last name?

1886 KIRA: Argounova. And yours?

1887 LEO: Kovalensky.

1888 NARRATOR: Back at her family's apartment...

1889 KIRA: At Irina's. We talked and didn't notice the time
1890 and it was too late to come home.

1891 KIRA'S MOTHER: And why this homecoming at seven in the
1892 morning? I suppose you awakened your aunt--your poor
1893 aunt with her cough...

1894 KIRA: I couldn't sleep. Auntie didn't hear me.

1895 NARRATOR: Kira sat down. There were so many hours to
1896 wait until four o'clock.

At headquarters, after passing many a person frightened of the very walls of the place, Kira found Comrade Timo sitting in an office. When he saw her, he grinned.

TIMO: It's just as I thought. They have nothing on him. Had they got him two months ago--it would've been the firing squad and no questions asked. But now well--we'll see.

KIRA: What has he done?

TIMO: Him? Nothing. It's his father. Heard of Professor Gorsky? Well, the old fool wasn't in on it--how could he, being blind? --but he hid Gorsky in his house. And he paid for it.

KIRA: Who was Leo's father?

TIMO: The Admiral, of course!

KIRA: The one who--

TIMO: --was blinded in the war--and shot, yeah.

KIRA: Oh!

TIMO: I wouldn't have done it--not him. But I'm not the one who had the say.

KIRA: But if Leo had nothing to do with it, why...

TIMO: At the time--they'd have shot anyone connected with it. Now--they've cooled off. It's past. He's lucky that way...Don't stare like a little fool. If you'd worked here, you'd know what difference time can make. That's the way we work. What damn fool thinks that a revolution is all perfumed with cologne?

KIRA: Then--you can let him...

TIMO: I'll try. But there's the business of trying to leave the country illegally. But even that--I think I can... Anyway, we don't fight children. Especially fool children who find time for love right on a spewing volcano.

KIRA: You're very kind.

TIMO: Who's kind? Timo of the Red Fleet? You remember the October days of nineteen-seventeen? Don't shudder like a cat. Timo was a Bolshevik before a lot of these new punks had time to dry the milk behind their ears!

1934 KIRA: Can I see him?

1935 TIMO: Not a chance.

1936 KIRA: But then...

1937 TIMO: You go home and stay there, you hear? (Brief
1938 pause) And when you get him back, keep your claws on
1939 him. If you haven't any--grow some. He's not an easy
1940 bloke. And don't try to leave the country. You're in
1941 Soviet Russia and in Soviet Russia you'll stay. I
1942 believe you've got the claws for him. Watch him.

1943 NARRATOR: Kira walks to the door then turns back.

1944 KIRA: Why are you doing this?

1945 TIMO: I've gone to war in the Baltic Fleet. The Admiral
1946 was blinded in service to the Baltic Fleet. He was not
1947 the worst commander we had... Get out of here!

1948 LYDIA: You'd think we had mice in the house the way she
1949 twists on her mattress all night long. I can't sleep.

1950 KIRA'S MOTHER: I believe you're a student, Kira? Or am I
1951 mistaken? You haven't been at the Institute for three
1952 days. Victor said so. Would you condescend to inform us
1953 what kind of foolishness has come over you?

1954 (SFX: Snoring.)

1955 KIRA'S FATHER (awakening from a long bout of snoring
1956 with a start): What? What?

1957 KIRA'S MOTHER: Look at those circles under her eyes. No
1958 respectable girl looks like that.

1959 LYDIA: I knew it! She's put too many saccharine crystals
1960 into that tube again!

1961 NARRATOR: On the evening of the fourth day, the doorbell
1962 rang. Lydia went to answer it.

1963 (SFX: Footsteps. Door Open.)

1964 LEO: Is Kira home? (Pause as Kira runs up--then calmly)
1965 Good evening, Kira.

1966 KIRA (overjoyed and relieved): Good evening, Leo.

1967 NARRATOR: Lydia just stared.

1968 LEO: Get your coat, Kira, and come on.

1969 KIRA: Yes, Leo.

(SFX: Footsteps away.)

LYDIA (coughs flirtatiously):

NARRATOR: Leo looked at her. His glance brought a warm, wistful smile to Lydia's lips.

LYDIA: Where do you come from?

LEO (hardboiled): From jail.

NARRATOR: Leo took Kira's arm, and they were gone.

KIRA'S MOTHER: Well, of all the unmannered...!

(SFX: Door closing.)

LEO: Yes, it's my home. I got it back. They had it sealed since my father's arrest.

KIRA: When did you...

LEO: This afternoon. Went to the Institute to get your address--then home to make a fire. It was like a grave--hadn't been heated for two months. It'll be warm for us now.

NARRATOR: Throwing his coat in a corner, Leo slowly unbuttoned Kira's coat and then her dress. She stood very still and let him undress her.

LEO: Oh, Kira, it was torture. Waiting. Three days--and three nights.

NARRATOR: He carried her to the bed. The purple glow from the fire quivered over her body. He did not undress. He did not turn out the light.

(SFX: Brief Musical transition.)

NARRATOR: Kira looked up at the ceiling.

KIRA: I think it's already tomorrow.

LEO (waking): Good morning, Kira.

KIRA: My family won't like it--they'll throw me out.

LEO: You're staying here.

KIRA: I'll go then to say good-bye.

LEO: Why go back at all?

KIRA: I must tell them something.

LEO: Well, go. But don't take long. I want you here.

2004 KIRA'S MOTHER: Well? (Brief pause) You won't tell us
2005 again you were at Irina's.

2006 KIRA: No.

2007 KIRA'S MOTHER: I don't know how far your foolishness can
2008 go. Do you realize that people might think that...?

2009 KIRA: I've slept with him. I have.

2010 LYDIA (cries out):

2011 KIRA'S MOTHER: You'll leave my house. And you'll never
2012 come back.

2013 KIRA: All right.

2014 KIRA'S MOTHER: How could you? A daughter of mine! How
2015 can you stand there and stare at us? Have you no concept
2016 of the shame, the disgrace...

2017 KIRA: I won't talk about that.

2018 KIRA'S MOTHER: Did you not stop to think...20 years old
2019 and a man from jail...For centuries they've taught us--
2020 the Church--that no sin is lower! You hear about these
2021 things--you hear about them--but, my God, my own
2022 daughter, my own--

2023 KIRA: May I take my things--or do you want to keep them?

2024 KIRA'S MOTHER: I don't want a single thing of yours left
2025 here! I don't want your breath in this room! I don't
2026 want your name mentioned in this house!

2027 LYDIA (sobbing hysterically): Tell her to go, Mother! I
2028 can't stand it! Such women should not be allowed to
2029 live!

2030 (SFX: Door opens. Closes. Footsteps.)

2031 NARRATOR: Leo took the bundle Kira had wrapped in an old
2032 bed sheet.

2033 LEO: There are three rooms. You can rearrange things any
2034 way you want. I have some hot tea for you--here.

2035 NARRATOR: Kira held her hands against the hot teapot and
2036 rubbed them against her cheeks.

2037 KIRA: I'll have to sweep the floor and clean the windows
2038 and... (Pause--then she cries rapturously) Oh, Leo! Leo!

2039 NARRATOR: He held her--then his eyes looked at her for a
2040 long time.

2041 LEO: Kira, think what we have against us.

2042 NARRATOR: Kira bent her head to his shoulder then looked
2043 out the window softly at the snow.

2044 KIRA: We'll fight it, Leo. Toegether. All of it. The
2045 country. The century. The millions. We can stand it. We
2046 can do it.

2047 LEO (without hope): We'll try.

2048 (SFX: The sound of marching feet grows louder and louder.)

2049 NARRATOR: Kira had always known that she was alive; she
2050 had just never given much thought to the necessity of
2051 keeping alive. Suddenly that mere fact had turned into a
2052 problem requiring many hours of effort--almost all of
2053 which she had previously taken for granted.

2054 KIRA: Ouch! Damn, damn, damn!

2055 LEO: What's wrong?

2056 KIRA: Nothing I just...nothing.

2057 NARRATOR: Kira soon found that she could endure the
2058 struggle as long as it never touched her life with Leo--
2059 if that were kept intact. So she kept secret her battle
2060 with the kerosene stove that cooked millet and dried
2061 damp logs and fed the hunger of millions of Soviet
2062 citizens--including them--with its brassy entrails.

2063 KIRA: When I cook--you're not to see me. When you see
2064 me--you're not to know I've been cooking.

2065 LEO: Okay... (Pause) Going to the Institute today?

2066 KIRA: Yes.

2067 LEO: Need change?

2068 KIRA: A little.

2069 LEO: Back for dinner?

2070 KIRA: Yes.

2071 LEO: I'll be home from university at six.

2072 NARRATOR: Kira ran to the Institute, sliding along
2073 frozen sidewalks and jumping on tramways at full speed.

2074 TRAM CONDUCTOR: You ought to be fined, citizen. You'll
2075 get your legs cut off some day.

2076 (SFX: Door opens. Footsteps. Door closed.)

2077 LEO: I'm home.

2078 KIRA: I'm busy.

2079 LEO: I got a job. Translating novels with the State
2080 Publishing House. From English, German and French.

2081 KIRA (emerging from the kitchen): You did?

2082 LEO: They're lousy--always a poor honest worker is sent
2083 to jail for stealing a loaf of bread to feed his
2084 starving mother. Then his pretty young wife is raped by
2085 the Factory Owner and commits suicide. Then the poor
2086 worker is fired from the factory and has to beg with his
2087 children on the streets. Then he's run over by the
2088 Factory Owner's chauffeur.

2089 KIRA: Awful!

2090 LEO: But I can work from home. And the pays not bad.
2091 Better before all the deductions, I'm sure--to this Red
2092 fund or that one.

2093 NARRATOR: While Leo worked, Kira moved soundless about
2094 the room--or sat silently over her drafts and charts and
2095 blueprints--and never interrupted him--though sometimes
2096 they were interrupted.

2097 HOUSE MGR-2: Need your house share, citizens. Someone
2098 swiped them electric bulbs again. And the roof is
2099 leaking. And the cellar steps are broken. And there's
2100 the House's subscription to the Red Air Fleet...

2101 LEO: Here.

2102 (SFX: Sound of paper bills passing.)

2103 NARRATOR: For two weeks Kira had paid no visits. Then
2104 she called on Irina.

2105 IRINA: Kira! I'm so glad to see you! I thought you
2106 didn't want to see us anymore.

2107 KIRA: Of course not. How are you, Uncle?

2108 NARRATOR: Uncle Vasili turned and left the room. Irina's
2109 cheeks flushed dark red, Kira's aunt twisted her

handkerchief and little Acai stared at Kira from behind a chair.

KIRA'S AUNT: Such weather we've having--eh, Kira?

KIRA: Yes, it's snowing.

NARRATOR: Victor shuffled in in his slippers and a bathrobe over his pajamas.

VICTOR (bold, mocking): Kira! What a pleasant surprise! (As if the two of them shared a secret) We didn't expect you. But then, so many unexpected things happen these days. (pause) So it isn't Comrade Andrei, after all? Don't look surprised--one hears things at the Institute. Comrade Andrei is such a useful friend to have. Such an influential position. Handy, in case you have any friends--in jail.

IRINA: Victor, you look and talk like a swine. Go wash your face.

VICTOR: When I take my orders from you, dear sister, you may tell the news to the papers.

KIRA'S AUNT (sighing helplessly): Children, children...

KIRA: I must go. I just dropped in on my way to the Institute.

IRINA: Oh, Kira! Please don't go.

KIRA: I must. I've a lecture to attend.

IRINA: Oh, hell! They're all afraid to ask but I'll ask it: what's his name?

KIRA: Leo. Kovalensky.

KIRA'S AUNT (gasps): Not the son of...

KIRA: Yes.

NARRATOR: Kira turns and exits.

(SFX: Footsteps. Door opens. Closes.)

NARRATOR: Vasili returned but said nothing.

IRINA: Father, what has Kira...

UNCLE VASILI: Irina, the subject's closed.

KIRA'S AUNT: Oh, the world's all upside down.

2144 NARRATOR: Victor looked at his father with a glance of
2145 understanding, but Vasili turned away. He then quickly
2146 busied himself scrubbing shirts in a brass pan.

2147 VICTOR: What's the matter, Father?

2148 UNCLE VASILI: You know it.

2149 VICTOR: I haven't the slightest idea.

2150 UNCLE VASILI: Did you see that girl?

2151 VICTOR: Kira? Yes. Why?

2152 UNCLE VASILI: I thought I could trust her like my own
2153 soul. But it got her. The revolution got her. And--
2154 you're next.

2155 VICTOR: Me, Father...

2156 UNCLE VASILI: Yes, you... I've been watching. Your
2157 friends for the last few weeks have been...You came from
2158 a party this morning.

2159 VICTOR: Surely you don't object to a little party?

2160 UNCLE VASILI (bitter): With a Communist or two?

2161 VICTOR: A little vodka with them can't hurt me. But it
2162 can help me--a lot.

2163 UNCLE VASILI: There are things one does not compromise
2164 on.

2165 VICTOR: You wouldn't want me to sit down and fold my
2166 hands and surrender--because they hold the power, would
2167 you? Diplomacy--that's the best philosophy for today.
2168 You can't object to that, can you? You know me. It can't
2169 touch me. It won't get me. I'm too much of a gentleman.

2170 UNCLE VASILI: I know it, son. I trust you. I suppose--
2171 well, you know best. But these are strange days. And
2172 you--well, the girls and you are all I have left.

2173 NARRATOR: The first visitor from Kira's old world to her
2174 new home was Irina.

2175 KIRA: Don't you like him?

2176 IRINA: Yes, but then, I expected to. And I hope you like
2177 me, because I'm the only one of your in-laws that you'll
2178 see--for a long time. But they'll all question me about
2179 you, you can be sure.

2180 NARRATOR: Irina had picked up a book from the table and
2181 was sketching on the back of its cover. When she
2182 finished, she threw the book to Kira.

2183 KIRA: Irina!

2184 IRINA: You can show it to him.

2185 KIRA: But he's naked.

2186 IRINA: That's the state that fits you best. And don't
2187 tell me I've flattered you. Clothes hide nothing from an
2188 artist.

2189 LEO (chuckling): This sketch belongs on one of the books
2190 I translate.

2191 IRINA: Tell them to add to my ration card for it. (Brief
2192 pause) Walk me to the door, Kira.

2193 (SFX: Footsteps. Door open.)

2194 IRINA: Are you...happy?

2195 KIRA (sincerely): I'm happy, Andrei.

2196 ANDREI: I've missed you, Kira.

2197 KIRA: I've missed you, too...I've been busy.

2198 ANDREI: I didn't want to call on you. I thought you'd
2199 prefer it if I didn't call at your house.

2200 KIRA: Yes. I would prefer it if you never called on my
2201 there.

2202 ANDREI: I promise I won't. If you promise you'll be more
2203 regular about your lectures. I like to see you once in a
2204 while--and hear you say you're happy. I like to hear
2205 that.

2206 KIRA: Andrei, have you ever been happy?

2207 ANDREI: I've never been unhappy.

2208 KIRA: Is that enough?

2209 ANDREI: Well, I always know what I want. And when you
2210 know what you want--you go towards it. Sometimes very
2211 fast, and sometimes only inch by inch. I suppose I feel
2212 happier when I go fast. But I've forgotten the
2213 difference a long time ago, because it really doesn't
2214 matter, as long as you move.

2215 KIRA: And if you want something you can't move towards?

2216 ANDREI: I never have.

2217 KIRA: You haven't even asked me, Andrei, why I'm happy.

2218 ANDREI: Does it make a difference--as long as you are?

2219 NARRATOR: He held her two hands in his five strong
2220 fingers.

2221 (SFX: Clerk hands bread loaf. Footsteps away.)

2222 NARRATOR: Kira had just received a loaf of bread after
2223 waiting in line for three hours when she heard a
2224 familiar voice.

2225 IRINA: Kira?

2226 KIRA: What are you doing here?

2227 IRINA: I just left your house. I waited for you for an
2228 hour--I'd given up hope.

2229 KIRA: Well, come on back.

2230 IRINA: No, maybe it's better if I tell you here. I...
2231 well, I came to tell you something. And... well, maybe
2232 Leo won't like it, and he's home, and...

2233 KIRA: What is it?

2234 IRINA: Kira, how's...how're your finances?

2235 KIRA: Splendid. Why do you ask?

2236 IRINA: It's just...well, if I'm too presumptuous, tell
2237 me to shut up...You see...I've never mentioned them
2238 before...but it's your family.

2239 KIRA: What about them?

2240 IRINA: They're desperate, Kira. Desperate. I know your
2241 mom would kill me if she knew I told you, but...You see,
2242 the saccharine man got arrested as a speculator. He got
2243 six years. And your folks...well, what is there left to
2244 do? You know. Last week Father brought them a pound of
2245 millet. If we could only...But you know how things are
2246 with us. Mother's so sick. And nothing left to sell but
2247 the wallpaper. I don't think they have a thing in the
2248 house, your folks. I thought maybe you...that you would
2249 like to know.

2250 KIRA: Here, take this bread. We don't need it. I'll buy
2251 some from a store. Tell them--anything. But don't tell
2252 them it's from me.

2253 NARRATOR: The following day, Kira's mother rang the
2254 doorbell at Leo's.

2255 (SFX: Door open. Close.)

2256 LEO: I believe it's my...mother-in-law?

2257 KIRA'S MOTHER: That's what I would like it to be.

2258 KIRA (warmly): Helloo, Mother.

2259 NARRATOR: As mother and daughter embrace there are
2260 tears.

2261 KIRA'S MOTHER: Kira, my dear!... My dear!... God forgive
2262 me!... These are hard days... These are very hard
2263 days...Everything's gone to pieces...What difference
2264 does it all make? If we can just forget, and pull the
2265 pieces together, why...(pause) About that bread--we
2266 didn't use it all. I hid it. Maybe you need some
2267 yourself. We only took a small slice--your father was so
2268 hungry...

2269 KIRA: Irina talks too much. We don't need the bread,
2270 Mother. Please--keep it.

2271 KIRA'S MOTHER: You must come and see us. Both of you.
2272 Let by-gones be by-gones. Of course, I don't see why you
2273 two don't get...Oh, well, it's your business. Things
2274 aren't what they were ten years ago...You must visit us,
2275 Leo--I may call you Leo, may I not?

2276 (SFX: Ambience private food store.)

2277 NARRATOR: The price of a loaf of bread in the private
2278 store made Kira and Leo hesitate.

2279 KIRA: That's too much. Let's go to the railroad station.

2280 LEO: Al'right.

2281 NARRATOR: When they arrived, a man in a ragged coat and
2282 dirty boots stepped down from the train and was
2283 immediately seized by soldiers.

2284 KARP (cockney accent): Wai', Comrades, wai'--yer wrong.
2285 I'm noffing bu' a poor beasan', brothas. Neva 'eard o'
2286 speculatin'. I'm a responsible ci'izen, too. If ya le'
2287 me go, I'll tell ya somethin'.

2288 SOLDIER: What can you tell, you son of a bitch?

KARP: See vat woman vere? She's a specula'er--I know.
I'll tell ya wher' she's 'idin' food. I seen 'er.

NARRATOR: Strong hands seized the woman.

RAGGED WOMAN (cockney): I's fer me grandbaby...Pleas',
le' me go, comrades...me grandbaby--'e's got va
scurvy...'as to ea'...Please, comrades...va
scurvy...Pleas'...

NARRATOR: The soldiers dragged her away and the ragged
man watched her go. When he saw Kira looking at him, he
winked and pointed with his head to the exit. When he
departed, Leo and Kira followed him--to a dark alley
where he glanced around then opened his coat.

KARP: 'Ere ya 'r', ci'izens--'ere ya 'r'! Bread, 'am,
anythin' ya like. No troubl'. We knows our bu'ness!

(SFX: sound of Kerosene stove heating up.)

VAVA (over the telephone): Just a little party, Kira
darling. Saturday night. Ten o'clock...And you'll bring
Leo? I'm simply dying to meet him...Oh, just fifteen or
twenty people...And here's something a little difficult:
I'm inviting Lydia, and... could you bring a boy for
her? I have just so many boys on my list, and they're
all in couples, and--well...

KIRA: Do you care if he's a Communist?

VAVA: A Communist? How thrilling! Is he good-looking?...
Certainly, bring him... We're going to dance... And have
refreshments. And, oh, yes... I'm asking every guest to
bring one log of wood. To heat the drawing room...You
don't mind?... See you Saturday night!

NARRATOR: Kira had decided to invite Andrei. After all,
Leo knew all about him and she thought the deception had
gone far enough.

LEO (derisively): How's your Communist boyfriend?

LEO (disdainfully): Where will you go with your
Communist boyfriend after the opera?

NARRATOR: But Andrei knew nothing about Leo--strangely
no gossip had reached him. He had kept his promise and
never called on her. They spoke of mankind, ballet,
tramways, atheism--anything but Soviet Russia, a subject
that, in silent agreement, they never broached.

2328 One day in the library at the Institute...

2329 KIRA: Andrei, would a bourgeois party frighten you?

2330 ANDREI: Not if you were there to protect me. (Brief
2331 pause) Is that an invitation?

2332 KIRA: Yes, Saturday night Lydia & I are going. And two
2333 men. You're one of them.

2334 ANDREI: Fine--if Lydia's not too afraid of me.

2335 KIRA: The other man is Leo Kovalensky.

2336 ANDREI: Oh.

2337 KIRA: I didn't know his address--then.

2338 ANDREI: And I didn't ask you.

2339 KIRA: Call for us at nine-thirty. You remember the
2340 address?

2341 ANDREI: Yes, of course.

2342 VAVA: Kira! Lydia! Darlings! How are you? You brought
2343 logs, how wonderful! I've heard so much about you, Leo,
2344 that I'm really frightened. And Andrei--so you're a
2345 Communist? How charming! I've always said that
2346 Communists were just like other people.

2347 VICTOR: This way, ladies and gents...bring your logs to
2348 the fire. You'll be warm in an instant...Ah! my charming
2349 cousins! Delighted, Comrade Andrei, delighted! That
2350 project for the electrification of Soviet Russia is the
2351 most stupendous undertaking in the history of mankind.
2352 When we consider the amount of electrical power per
2353 citizen to be found in our natural resources...

2354 NARRATOR: As she flitted about the room, Vava's eyes
2355 gave her man Victor adoring glances.

2356 FEMALE PARTYGOER-1: I heard from friend in Berlin that
2357 they have cafés that are open all night--all night--they
2358 call them cabarets. And in a famous, very naughty
2359 cabaret a famous dancer danced with sixteen girls with
2360 nothing on. I mean, positively nothing.

2361 FEMALE PARTYGOER-2: They say abroad there are no
2362 provision cards, or co-ops--you just go into a store and
2363 buy bread or potatoes or--even sugar. Me, I don't
2364 believe it but...

FEMALE PARTYGOER-1: They say you can even buy clothes without a trade-union order...

MALE PARTYGOER-1: We had a reduction of staff last month, but they didn't touch me. I'm teaching a class of illiterates--free--an hour every evening--as club duty. They know I'm a conscientious citizen.

MALE PARTYGOER-2: I have an excellent job in the archives. Bread almost every week. Only I'm afraid there's a woman after my job--a Communist's mistress...

FEMALE PARTYGOER-1: Did you hear about poor ol' Mitya? He tried to jump off a moving tramway, and he fell under. But he was lucky: just one hand cut off.

FEMALE PARTYGOER-2: Poor ol' Vera had her stove explode on her. And she's blind. And her face--you'd think she'd been in the war.

LYDIA: The trouble these days is that there's no spiritual enlightenment. People have forgotten the simple faith.

VICTOR: My career is my duty to society. I have selected engineering as the profession most needed by our great republic.

LEO: I'm studying philosophy because the proletariat doesn't need it at all.

(SFX: Silence.)

ANDREI: Some philosophers may need the proletariat.

LEO: Maybe. But I'll escape abroad and sell my services to the biggest millionaire--and have an affair with his wife.

VICTOR: You will succeed in that, without a doubt.

VAVA: Don't you think we better dance? Before it gets too cold? Lydia?

NARRATIVE: As Lydia takes her place at the piano, Leo takes Kira in his arms.

(SFX: John Gray Music.)

LEO: Abroad--we would dance--like this--but with champagne--and fancy gowns--and bare arms...(chuckles)

NARRATOR: After getting a dance lesson from Vava, Andrei approaches Kira. Leo--smiling coldly--walks away.

KIRA: Vava's a good teacher but hold me tighter. Yes, that's right...

NARRATOR: At two a.m., Vava's mother stuck her pale face through the door and asked if they'd like some refreshments.

VAVA'S FATHER: Please take one of everything. Don't be afraid. There's enough. We've counted. And we have six bottles of rare old wine. A gift from one of my patients. Good old stuff. Real prewar stuff. Bet you kids never tasted anything like it.

ANDREI: To your health, Kira.

LEO (sarcastically caustic): And since you're toasted by my class better, I'll drink to our charming hostess, Vava.

KIRA & ANDREI: Vava!

ANDREI: They have a balcony, don't they? (Whispers to Kira) Let's go out.

NARRATOR: It was cold on the balcony and the street below was silent.

KIRA: Andrei, I'm angry at you.

ANDREI: Why?

KIRA: This is the second time you haven't noticed my best dress.

ANDREI: It's beautiful.

NARRATOR: The door behind them squeaked and out stepped Leo, a cigarette dangling from his mouth.

LEO: Has Kira become state property, too?

ANDREI: Sometimes I think it would be better for her if she had.

LEO: Well, until the Party passes the proper resolution, she's not.

NARRATOR: Returning to the party, Leo drew Kira down on a mattress before the fire. Andrei stood by the balcony door, smoking.

When guests were leaving, Andrei took Kira aside.

ANDREI: Do you see him often?

NARRATOR: By his question, she knew he hadn't learned the truth--by his tone, that she would refuse to answer.

(SFX: Sounds of summer.)

NARRATOR: Since Petrograd--in summer--was a furnace, whenever they could, Kira and Leo would escape for the day to the country.

KIRA: Hey, Leo, look at the fish! Let's go in! (Laughs joyously)

NARRATOR: When they returned to the stifling city, they were met with four new red letters:

VOICE-1: USSR!

VOICE-2: THE KERNEL FOR THE FUTURE GROWTH OF A WORLD STATE.

NARRATOR: Demonstrations marched through the hot, dusty streets--red kerchiefs mopping sweating foreheads...

VOICE-2: OUR POWER IS IN WELDING OF THE COLLECTIVE!

NARRATOR: A column of children, drums beating, marched boldly into the sunset...

Once, Kira and Leo attempted to spend the night in the country.

COUNTRY LANDLADY: Certainly, citizens. But first you must get a certificate from your House Manager, and a permit from your militia department, and then you must bring me your labor books, and I must register them with our Soviet here, and our militia department, to get a permit for you as transient guests, and there's a tax to pay--and then you can have the room.

NARRATOR: They stayed in the city.

Kira's mother had made a bold decision--she'd taken a job.

KIRA'S MOTHER (too shrilly and fast): The masses, you see, must be educated--they must be educated--and there is a sacred calling--a sacred calling, mind you--in serving one's less enlightened brothers.

LYDIA: It's the spiritual life that matters-- don't you think, Leo? (giggles)

NARRATOR: For Kira and Leo, the new year was begun by the House Manager.

HOUSE MGR-2: It's like this, Citizen Kovalensky. (Shifting from foot to foot) It's Domicile Norm see. There's a law about as how it's illegal for two citizens to have three rooms, on account of overcrowding conditions. Headquarters sent me a tenant with an order for a room, and he's a good proletarian, and I got to give him one of your rooms. He can take the dining room and you can keep the other two. This ain't the time when people could live in seven rooms like they used to.

MEEK ELDERLY MAN: I won't be in the way, Citizens. I won't be in the way at all. It's just only as regards the bathroom. If you'll let me take a bath once a month--I'll be most grateful. As to the other necessities, there's a privy in the back yard, if you'll excuse the mention. I won't mind. I don't like to annoy a lady.

NARRATOR: They moved their furniture out of the dining room into their remaining quarters and nailed the connecting door. When Kira cooked, she asked Leo to remain in the bedroom.

KIRA: Self-preservation--for both of us.

NARRATOR: When Kira saw Andrei the first day of the new semester, his face looked worn from having spent the summer on a party mission to the Volga.

ANDREI: I knew I'd be glad to see you again. But I had no idea how glad.

KIRA: You've had a hard summer, haven't you?

ANDREI: Your letters kept me cheerful.

KIRA: What have they done to you, Andrei?

ANDREI (pause then): Well, I guess everybody knows it. The villages--they're not with us. They have a red flag over the local Soviet and a knife behind their backs. They bow, and they nod, and they snicker in their beards. They stick pictures of Lenin over the barns where they hide their grain from us. You've read in the papers about the Clubhouse they burned and the

2512 Communists they burned in it--alive. I was there the
2513 next day.

2514 KIRA: Andrei! I hope you got them!

2515 ANDREI: You realize you're saying that about men who
2516 fight Communism?

2517 KIRA: But... they could have done it to you.

2518 NARRATOR: On the walls of his office, Leo's boss had
2519 pictures of Marx, Trotsky and Lenin--twice! He looked at
2520 his manicured nails and then at Leo.

2521 FUSSY BOSS: I feel certain, Comrade Kovalensky, that you
2522 will welcome this opportunity to do your duty, as we all
2523 do.

2524 LEO: What do you want me to do?

2525 FUSSY BOSS (very quickly): We are organizing a free
2526 night school for those less enlightened. With your
2527 knowledge of foreign languages, I had a class of German
2528 in mind, twice a week--and a class of English, once a
2529 week. Of course, you are not to expect any financial
2530 remuneration--your services are to be donated, inasmuch
2531 as this is not a government undertaking but our strictly
2532 voluntary gift to the State.

2533 LEO: I haven't been buying gifts for anyone, neither for
2534 my friends--nor otherwise. I can't afford them.

2535 FUSSY BOSS: Comrade, did it not occure to you to consider
2536 what we think of men who merely work for their pay and
2537 take no part in social activity in their spare time?

2538 LEO: Did it not occur to you that I have a life to live--
2539 -in my spare time?

2540 NARRATOR: Leo's boss looked at the pictures on his wall.

2541 FUSSY BOSS: The Soviet State recognizes no life but that
2542 of a social class.

2543 LEO: I don't think I wish to discuss the subject.

2544 FUSSY BOSS: In other words, you refuse to do your share?

2545 LEO: That's right.

2546 FUSSY BOSS: Very well. It's not compulsory. I was merely
2547 thinking of your own good. In view of certain events in
2548 your past, I thought you'd be only too glad to...But

2549 never mind. The Comrade above me been quite unpleasant
2550 about a man of your social past on our pay roll. And
2551 when he hears about this...

2552 LEO: Tell him to come to me. I'll give him a free lesson
2553 on the subject.

2554 NARRATOR: Leo came home earlier than usual.

2555 LEO: That's it--I'm out.

2556 KIRA: You mean the job?

2557 LEO: Yes. Fired. Told me I had a bourgeois attitude. I'm
2558 not socially minded.

2559 KIRA: Well, it's...it's all right.

2560 LEO: Of course it's all right. Think I care about their
2561 damn job? This affects me no more than a change in
2562 weather.

2563 KIRA: Of course. Now take off your coat and wash your
2564 hands, and we'll have dinner.

2565 LEO: What's that?

2566 KIRA: Beet soup. You like it.

2567 LEO: When did I say that? (Brief pause) I'm not hungry.
2568 I'm going to the bedroom to study. Don't disturb me.

2569 NARRATOR: Kira slowly and deliberately stirred the soup.
2570 When she carried a bowl of it to the table, both the
2571 plate and the bowl were shaking.

2572 KIRA: No, you don't, Kira. No, you don't.

2573 NARRATOR: When he'd stood in line for an hour, Leo
2574 smoked a cigarette. When he'd stood for two hours, his
2575 legs began to feel numb. When he'd stood for three
2576 hours, he had to lean against a wall.

2577 EDITOR-1: I don't see how we can use you, citizen. Of
2578 course, our publication is strictly artistic but--
2579 Proletarian Art, mind you. Strictly class viewpoint. You
2580 don't belong to the Party--nor is your social standing
2581 suitable. I have ten experienced reporters--Party
2582 members--on my waiting list.

2583 NARRATOR: In the co-op, Kira had come to a decision.

2584 KIRA: I don't have to fry in lard, I can use sunflower-
2585 seed oil. It's cheaper and has no smell.

2586 EDITOR-2: No. No opening, citizen. With proletarians
2587 starving, you, a bourgeois, ask for a job? It'll do you
2588 good to learn how it feels on your own hide.

2589 LEO: Excuse me, I was wondering if I could see the
2590 editor.

2591 SECRETARY: Oh, there's been a misunderstanding.
2592 Interview hours are from nine to eleven, Thursday
2593 only...

2594 LEO: But I've been here for an hour and a half.

2595 SECRETARY: How did I know what you were sitting here
2596 for? Nobody asked you to sit.

2597 NARRATOR: When he came home at night, Leo was silent.
2598 Kira served dinner and they ate. But he said nothing. He
2599 didn't look into the eyes across the table nor at the
2600 lips that smiled gently.

2601 CLERK: Any experience, citizen?

2602 LEO: No.

2603 CLERK: Party member?

2604 LEO: No.

2605 CLERK: Sorry. Next...

2606 NARRATOR: A job had been promised Leo for Monday. But
2607 when Leo arrived, the man avoided his eyes.

2608 OFFICE MGR: So sorry, citizen. You see, the big boss's
2609 cousin came from Moscow and she's unemployed, and...

2610 (SFX: Sounds of the Institute.)

2611 ANDREI: You've been coming to the Institute less
2612 frequently.

2613 KIRA: Have I?

2614 ANDREI: And you have dark circles under your eyes. Is
2615 anything the matter?

2616 KIRA: No...

2617 ANDREI: You sure there's nothing I can do to help?

2618 KIRA: No, Andrei, thank you.

2619 NARRATOR: When Leo sat down for dinner, Kira's smile was
2620 forced.

2621 KIRA: There's no real dinner tonight. Just this bread.
2622 They ran out of millet before my turn. But I got the
2623 bread. I've fried some onions in sunflower-seed oil.
2624 They're very good on the bread.

2625 LEO: Where's your portion?

2626 KIRA: I've eaten mine already. Before you came.

2627 LEO: How much did you get this week?

2628 KIRA: They gave us a whole pound, can you imagine?
2629 Instead of the usual half. Nice, isn't it?

2630 LEO (skeptical): Yes. Only I'm not hungry. I'm going to
2631 bed.

2632 SERVILE MAN (servile laugh --whispers confidentially): I
2633 see you're looking at the red kerchief in my pocket,
2634 citizen, hee-hee. I'll let you in on a secret: it's no
2635 kerchief at all. See? Just a little silk rag. At first
2636 glance they think it's a Party badge, hee-hee. Then they
2637 see it ain't, but still, there's the psychological
2638 effect, hee-hee. Helps--if they have an opening for a
2639 job... Your turn, citizen. Lord, it's dark already. How
2640 time flies in lines, citizen. Hee-hee.

2641 NARRATOR: At the University food co-op...

2642 BREAD CLERK: Funny, isn't it--the way some citizens
2643 neglect their lectures, but you're sure to find them in
2644 line for food rations.

2645 LEO (trying to make his voice pleading): Comrade clerk,
2646 would you mind if I tear next week's coupon off, too?
2647 I'll keep it and present it to you for my bread next
2648 week. You see, there's someone at home and I want to
2649 tell her that I got a two weeks' ration and ate my half
2650 on the way home, so that she'll eat all of this piece...

2651 BREAD CLERK: (skeptical): Hmmm.

2652 LEO: Thank you, comrade, thank you!

2653 NARRATOR: An office manager led Leo down a narrow
2654 corridor into an empty office.

2655 CORRUPT MGR: More privacy here, citizen. It's like this:
2656 a job's a rare thing, nowadays. A very rare thing. Now,
2657 a comrade that's got a responsible position and has jobs
2658 to hand out, well--you get the picture. Things are

2659 expensive--one's got to live. A fellow that gets a job
2660 has something to be grateful for, eh?

2661 LEO: But I'm nearly broke.

2662 CORRUPT MGR (lashes out): Well, what do you want here,
2663 you bum? Expect us proletarians to give jobs to every
2664 stray bourgeois?

2665 NASALLY ADMIN: English, German and French? Very
2666 valuable, citizen. We do need foreign language teachers.
2667 Are you a Union member?

2668 LEO: No.

2669 NASALLY ADMIN: Not any Trade Union?

2670 LEO: No.

2671 NASALLY ADMIN: Sorry, citizen, we employ only Union
2672 members.

2673 UNION CLERK: So you want to join the Teacher's Union?
2674 Very well. Where are you working?

2675 LEO: I'm not working.

2676 UNION CLERK: Well, you can't join the Union if you're
2677 not working.

2678 LEO: But I can't get a job unless I'm a Union member.

2679 KIRA (to a clerk): Half a pound of linseed oil, please.
2680 The one that's not too rancid, if you can... No, I can't
2681 take sunflower-seed oil anymore, it's too expensive.

2682 LEO: Kira, what are you doing up?

2683 KIRA (whispering): Leo, it's after three...

2684 LEO: I know--I have to study.

2685 KIRA: Leo, you'll wear yourself out.

2686 LEO: And if I do? That'll be the end of it.

2687 NARRATOR: He got up and gathered the trembling Kira in
2688 his arms.

2689 KIRA: Do you mean it?

2690 LEO: Of course not... One kiss...if you go back to
2691 bed... Even your lips are cold...

2692 KIRA: Are you coming?

LEO: Just a few more pages. Go to sleep. Don't worry.

HOUSE MGR-2: Laws is laws, citizens. The rent's raised on account of neither of you being a Soviet employee. That puts you in the category of persons living off an income...

LEO: But we don't have an income.

KIRA: We will though.

HOUSE MGR-2: See? Laws is laws, citizens, laws is laws.

NARRATOR: One day a nearby building collapsed. Coming home from work, its inhabitants saw their possessions exposed to passersby. Leo worked two days clearing bricks--bending and rising, bending and rising--until his cold fingers bled.

Kira worked four long evenings lettering cardboard inscriptions:

VOICE-2: WORKERS STARVE IN TENEMENTS OF CAPITALIST EXPLOITERS.

NARRATOR: For three nights, Leo shoveled snow, icicles forming on the old scarf wound tightly around his neck.

Kira gave French lessons to the brats of a citizen with no obvious means of support--her voice hoarse, her head swimming, her eyes avoiding the buffet where meat pies sparkled with brown, buttered crusts.

At home, they never asked each other what they had done. They just lit a fire and sat silently over their books.

Victor's visit was unexpected.

VICTOR: Just passing by and thought I'd drop in... It's a charming place you have here. Irina's been telling me about it...She's fine...Mother's not so well. The doctor said there's nothing he can do if we don't send her south. But who can afford such a trip these days?... Been busy at the Institute. Re-elected to Students' Council...Yes, it's a lovely place you have here. Two huge rooms like these. No trouble with the Domicile Bureau, eh? We had two tenants forced upon us last week. Irina has to share her room with Acia, and they fight like dogs...But what can you do? People have to have a roof over their heads...Yes, Petrograd is an overcrowded city, it certainly is...

2732 NARRATOR: Not a day later, she came in, a red bandana on
2733 her head.

2734 MARISHA: Where's this drawing room?

2735 KIRA: What do you mean, citizen?

2736 NARRATOR: The girl opened the first door she saw, which
2737 led to the old man's room. Closing it quickly, she
2738 opened the door to the drawing room and walked in.

2739 MARISHA: This is it. You can get your things and your
2740 other garbage out. I have my own. (Brief pause) Oh, yes.
2741 Here.

2742 NARRATOR: She handed Kira a crumpled scrap of paper with
2743 an official stamp--giving "Citizen Marisha" the right to
2744 occupy the room known as "drawing room".

2745 KIRA: Listen, you. Get out of here now. You won't get
2746 this room.

2747 MARISHA: And who's going to stop me? You?

2748 NARRATOR: Kira grabbed the wad of money she'd just been
2749 paid for French lessons and banged on the House
2750 Manager's door.

2751 HOUSE MGR-2: A stamped order, eh? That's funny they
2752 didn't notify me. I'll put the citizen in her proper
2753 place.

2754 KIRA: You know it's against the law. Citizen Kovalensky
2755 and I are not married. We're entitled to separate rooms.

2756 HOUSE MGR-2: You sure are.

2757 NARRATOR: Without looking, Kira thrust the entire wad of
2758 bills into the House Manager's hand.

2759 KIRA: Comrade, I'm not in the habit of begging for help,
2760 but please, oh please, get her out. It would...it would
2761 simply mean the end for us.

2762 NARRATOR: The House Manager slipped the bills furtively
2763 into his pocket.

2764 HOUSE MGR: Don't you worry, Citizen. We'll fix the lady.
2765 We'll throw her out on her behind in the gutter where
2766 she belongs!

2767 NARRATOR: Slamming on his hat, he followed Kira
2768 downstairs.

HOUSE MGR-2: Look here, citizen, what's all this about?

NARRATOR: Marisha had already piled her things on a table in the middle of the room.

MARISHA: How do you do, Comrade House Manager? We might as well get acquainted.

NARRATOR: She took a little wallet from her pocket and displayed for him her Communist Youth membership card.

HOUSE MGR-2: Oh...Oh...

KIRA: What is it?

HOUSE MGR-2: What do you want, citizen? You have two rooms, and you want a toiling girl to be thrown out on the street? The time is past for bourgeois privileges, citizen. People like you had better watch their step!

KIRA: Tell me--how did you happen to get an order for this particular room? Who told you about it?

MARISHA (coily): One has friends...

NARRATOR: As the bathroom had to be reached through Kira and Leo's bedroom, Marisha kept shuffling in and ot in an unfastened bathrobe.

KIRA: When you must go through, I wish you'd knock.

MARISHA: What for? It's not your bathroom.

NARRATOR: Though she disliked Kira, Marisha liked Leo.

MARISHA: Citizen Leee-o, can you help me with this damn French history? What century did they burn Martin Luther in? Or was that Germany? Did they burn him?

NARRATOR: Other times, she came in with a cup in her hand.

MARISHA: Citizens, can I borrow some lard? Didn't know I was all ot of it...Only linseed oil, eh? How can you eat that stinking stuff? Ok, well... gimme half a cup.

NARRATOR: Each morning, Leo had to pass through Marisha's room to get outside.

MARISHA: Damn, I never made it to bed. It's this paper I have to read at the Marxist Circle on Electricity. Leee-o, who the hell is Edison?

NARRATOR: One day, passing through Marisha's room, Kira stopped short. She saw Victor sitting on the sofa holding Marisha's hand.

KIRA: Victor! Were you coming to see me or...?

VICTOR: Kira, I don't want you to think that I...

NARRATOR: But Kira was already running ot of the room and down the front stairs.

When she told Leo, he threatened to break every bone in Victor's body.

KIRA: No, Leo, if you do that, his father will know. It will break him and he's so unhappy as it is. What's the use? We won't get the room back.

NARRATOR: One day, at the Institute co-op...

SONIA: Pavel, look!

PAVEL: Why Comrade Kira? We don't see you very often at the Institute these days.

KIRA: I've been busy.

PAVEL: We don't see you with Comrade Andrei anymore. You two haven't quarreled, have you?

KIRA: Why would that interest you?

PAVEL: Oh, it's of no particular interest to me personally.

SONIA (sternly): Comrade Andrei is a valuable Party worker. Naturally, we are concerned, that his friendship with a woman of your social origin might hurt his Party standing.

PAVEL (with sudden eagerness): Nonsense, Sonia. Andrei's Party standing is too high to be hurt by what appears a lovely friendship.

KIRA: But his Party standing does worry you--because it's so high, isn't that right?

PAVEL: Comrade Andrei is a very good friend of mine...

KIRA: But are you a very good friend of his?

NARRATOR: Marisha came in when Kira was alone.

MARISHA (has been crying--sullenly): Citizen Kira, what do you use to keep from having children?

NARRATOR: Kira looks startled.

MARISHA (wailing): I'm in trouble. It's that damn louse Rilenko. Said I'd be bourgeois if I didn't let him...Said he'd be careful. What am I gonna do? What am I gonna do?

NARRATOR: Kira met Vava one day on the street and walked her home.

VAVA: Won't you come in--just for a second? I have something to show you. Something--from abroad.

NARRATOR: In her room, which smelt of perfume and clean linen, Vava opened a parcel containing a pair of silk stockings.

KIRA (gasps): Oh...

VAVA: A lady--father's patient--her husband's in the business--they smuggled it from Riga. Aren't they lovely?

KIRA: Very.

VAVA: Kira, how's Victor?

KIRA: He's fine.

VAVA (trying to hide her pain): I know, he's so busy...he's such an active person... I'm so happy about these stockings. I'll wear them when...when...(covering) I just threw out my last silk pair this morning.

KIRA: You...threw them out?

VAVA: Yes. I think they're still in the waste basket.

KIRA: Vava...could I have them?

VAVA: But they have a tear.

KIRA: It's just for a joke.

NARRATOR: That evening, when Leo came in, Kira was wearing the carefully mended stockings with her only dress.

LEO (brusquely): Anything to eat?

KIRA: Yes. Sit down. Everything's ready.

(SFX: Chair pulled and sit.)

KIRA: Leo, look.

2875 LEO: What?

2876 KIRA: My stockings.

2877 LEO: Where did you get them?

2878 KIRA: Vava gave them to me. They were torn.

2879 LEO: I wouldn't wear other people's discards.

2880 (SFX: Footsteps away.)

2881 MARISHA (moaning loudly):

2882 NARRATOR: Marisha had had an abortion.

2883 KIRA: Marisha, there's blood all over the bathroom--are
2884 you okay?

2885 MARISHA: Leave me alone. Clean it yourself if you're so
2886 damn bourgeois about it.

2887 (SFX: Body rises. Footsteps. Door open.)

2888 MARISHA: Kira, you won't tell your cousin on me, will
2889 you? He doesn't know about...my trouble. He's--a
2890 gentleman.

2891 NARRATOR: Leo came home at dawn after having worked all
2892 night. He was covered in oil and mud and blood.

2893 LEO (weakly): Kira, do I have any clean underwear?

2894 NARRATOR: Kira took his hand and raised it to her lips.
2895 Swaying a little, he threw back his head.

2896 LEO (coughs):

2897 NARRATOR: Leo was late from university and Kira was
2898 keeping his dinner warm on the stove.

2899 (SFX: Telephone rings. Footsteps. Receiver PU.)

2900 ACIA (panicky, gulping tears): Is that you, Kira?...
2901 It's Acia...Kira, please come over right away...I'm
2902 scared...There's something wrong...I think it's
2903 Mother...There's no one home but Father--and he won't
2904 call, and he won't speak, and I'm scared...There's
2905 nothing to eat...Please, Kira, I'm so scared...Please
2906 come over. Please!

2907 NARRATOR: On the way over, with all the money she had,
2908 Kira bought a bottle of milk and two pounds of bread.

2909 KIRA: Acia! What happened? Where's Irina? Where's
2910 Victor?

2911 ACIA: Victor's not home and Irina's gone for the doctor.
2912 I'm scared, Kira, I'm scared.

2913 NARRATOR: Vasili sat by his wife's bed. Her breath was a
2914 hiss and there was a dark stain on the pillowcase.

2915 UNCLE VASILI (indifferently): Milk...would you mind
2916 heating it? It might help...

2917 NARRATOR: Kira's aunt swallowed the hot milk twice then
2918 pushed it away.

2919 UNCLE VASILI: Hemorrhage...The only doctor who might
2920 come has no phone. Irina's gone for him. I have no
2921 money. The hospital won't send anyone--we're not Trade
2922 Union members.

2923 KIRA'S AUNT (whining softly): I'm all right...I'm all
2924 right...Vasili just wants to frighten me...I know I'm
2925 all right...I want to live...I'll live...Who said I
2926 won't live? (Coughing ominously--then howling)

2927 UNCLE VASILI: Ice, Kira--is there any ice?

2928 AUNT: Help me! Help me! Help me!

2929 NARRATOR: With a rusty blade in the kitchen, Kira broke
2930 off some ice frozen over the sink. Running back, water
2931 and blood dripped from her hands.

2932 AUNT: Kira! I want to live! I want to live!

2933 NARRATOR: Something black gurgled out of her mouth and
2934 her arm fell over the edge of the bed. Vasili buried his
2935 face in her hip. Behind a chair, Asia crouched on the
2936 floor.

2937 UNCLE VASILI (sobs):

2938 ACIA (whines softly):

2939 NARRATOR: When Kira came home, Leo was sitting by the
2940 kerosene stove, heating her dinner.

2941 LEO (coughing):

2942 NARRATOR: In a dark corner of a restaurant at a small
2943 table...

2944 ANDREI: I almost broke my word. I was going to call on
2945 you. I was worried. I still am. You look so...pale. Is
2946 there anything wrong, Kira?

2947 KIRA: Some...trouble...at home.

2948 ANDREI: I had tickets for the ballet--Swan Lake. I
2949 waited for you, but you missed all your lectures.

2950 KIRA: I'm sorry. Was it beautiful?

2951 ANDREI: I didn't go.

2952 KIRA: Andrei, I think Comrade Pavel is trying to make
2953 trouble for you in the Party.

2954 ANDREI: Probably. I don't like him. While the Party
2955 fights speculators, he patronizes them. He's known for
2956 buying a foreign sweaters from smugglers.

2957 KIRA: Andrei, why doesn't your Party believe in the
2958 right to live?

2959 ANDREI: Do you mean--Pavel or yourself?

2960 KIRA: Me.

2961 ANDREI: In our fight, Kira, there's no neutrality.

2962 KIRA: You may claim the right to kill, as all fighters
2963 do. But no one before you has ever thought of forbidding
2964 life to the living.

2965 ANDREI: When one can stand any suffering, one can stand
2966 to see others suffer. This is martial law. There is a
2967 new sun rising, Kira, such as the world has never seen.
2968 We are its first rays. Every pain, every cry of ours
2969 will be carried down the centuries; every little spark
2970 will grow into an enormous beam that will wipe out
2971 decades of future sorrow.

2972 NARRATOR: The waiter brought tea and pastry. Kira dug in
2973 with an involuntary hurry.

2974 (SFX: Fork is dropped.)

2975 ANDREI (gasping): Kira! Why didn't you tell me?

2976 KIRA: I don't know what you're talking about.

2977 ANDREI: Waiter! A bowl of hot soup right away. Then--
2978 dinner--everything you have. Hurry! ...Kira, I didn't
2979 know...I didn't know it was that bad.

2980 KIRA: I tried to find work...

2981 ANDREI: Why didn't you tell me?

2982 KIRA: I know you don't believe in using Party influence
2983 to help friends.

2984 ANDREI (frightened): Oh, but this...Kira...this!

2985 NARRATOR: He jumped up and strode to a telephone.

2986 ANDREI: Comrade Voronov. Urgent...Comrade
2987 Andrei...Conference? Interrupt it!... Comrade
2988 Voronov?...Yes, I need you to make a job for a citizen.
2989 Comrade Argounova...Tomorrow...Yes...I don't care. Make
2990 one...Yes...Tomorrow morning...Yes...Thank you, comrade.
2991 Good-bye.

2992 NARRATOR: Andrei came back to the table smiling.

2993 ANDREI: You go to work tomorrow. In the office of the
2994 House of the Peasant. It's not much of a job, but it's
2995 one I could get for you right away--and it won't be
2996 hard. Be there at nine. Ask for Comrade Voronov. He'll
2997 know who you are. And--here.

2998 NARRATOR: He pressed a wad of bills into her hand.

2999 KIRA: Andrei! I can't!

3000 ANDREI: Well, maybe you can't--for yourself. But you
3001 can--for someone else. Isn't there someone at home who
3002 needs it?

3003 NARRATOR: Kira took the money.

3004 The next morning, she was running for the tram on her
3005 way to work.

3006 TRAM CONDUCTOR: You--insane citizen! That's how so many
3007 get killed!

3008 NARRATOR: The "House of the Peasant" occupied someone's
3009 former mansion. There were posters and signs everywhere.

3010 VOICE-2: PROLETARIANS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

3011 VOICE-1: WHO DOES NOT TOIL, SHALL NOT EAT!

3012 VOICE-2: LONG LIVE THE REIGN OF WORKERS AND
3013 POOR PEASANTS!

3014 NARRATOR: In the office, there was a manager and three
3015 workers--Nina, Tina and Kira.

3016 FEMALE OFFICE MGR (on the telephone-- sternly and
3017 quickly): Yes, yes, comrade, it's all arranged. At one
3018 o'clock the comrade peasants go to the Museum of the
3019 Revolution. Then at three o'clock the comrade peasants
3020 go to our Marxist Club where we have arranged a special
3021 lecture. At five o'clock the comrade peasants are
3022 expected at the Pioneers Club where there will be a
3023 display of physical drills by the dear little tots. At
3024 seven o'clock the comrade peasants go to the opera--we
3025 have reserved two boxes--where they will hear Aida. (In
3026 a military command) Comrade Argounova! Do you have the
3027 requisition for the special lecturer?

3028 KIRA: No, Comrade Manager.

3029 FEMALE OFFICE MGR: Comrade Nina! Have you typed that
3030 requisition?

3031 NINA (not sharp): But you didn't tell me to type any
3032 requisitions, Comrade Manager.

3033 FEMALE OFFICE MGR: Then perhaps it was you, Tina. I
3034 wrote it myself and put it on one of your desks.

3035 TINA (not sharp): Oh, that's what that was for. Well, I
3036 saw it, but I didn't know I was to type it, Comrade
3037 Manager. And my typewriter ribbon is torn.

3038 FEMALE OFFICE MGR: Comrade Argounova, do you have the
3039 approved requisition for a new typewriter ribbon for
3040 Comrade Nina's typewriter?

3041 KIRA: No, Comrade Manager.

3042 FEMALE OFFICE MGR: Where is it?

3043 KIRA: In Comrade Voronov's office.

3044 FEMALE OFFICE MGR: What is it doing there?

3045 KIRA: The Comrade hasn't signed it yet.

3046 FEMALE OFFICE MGR: Have the others signed?

3047 KIRA: Yes, Comrade.

3048 FEMALE OFFICE MGR: Some do not seem to realize the
3049 tremendous importance of the work we're doing!

3050 NARRATOR: Nina and Tina stare at the Office Manager in
3051 shock--after all, Comrade Voronov got both of them the
3052 job.

FEMALE OFFICE MGR (immediately hastening to correct herself): I meant you, Comrade Argounova. You do not show sufficient interest in your work nor any proletarian consciousness. It's up to you to see to it that this requisition is signed!

NARRATOR: Every morning, on her way to work, Kira stopped in the lobby and looked at The Wall.

VOICE-1: COMRADE NADIA IS WEARING SILK STOCKINGS. TIME TO BE REMINDED THAT SUCH FLAUNTING OF LUXURY IS UN-PROLETARIAN, COMRADE NADIA.

VOICE-2: A CERTAIN COMRADE WHOM MANY WILL RECOGNIZE, NEGLECTS TO TURN OFF THE LIGHT WHEN LEAVING THE RESTROOM. ELECTRICITY COSTS THE SOVIET STATE MONEY, COMRADE.

VOICE-1: WE HEAR THAT COMRADE KIRA IS LACKING IN SOCIAL SPIRIT. THE TIME IS PAST, COMRADE KIRA, FOR ARROGANT BOURGEOIS ATTITUDES.

NARRATOR: Kira stood very still and heard her heartbeat. No one could save those branded as "anti-social" --not even Andrei.

LEO (coughing):

NARRATOR: Kira felt cold.

TINA (whispering breathlessly): You should've seen Ivashka's face. So Elena she says: 'Sure, he lives with me. Come on back to my room, darling.' And do you think that louse Ivashka refused?

NINA: Course he didn't refuse. Come now!

NARRATOR: Kira rose and strode casually over to the space between Nina and Tina's desks.

KIRA (with forced enthusiasm): Funny thing happened last night. My boyfriend--he quarreled with me because...because he had seen me coming home with another man...and he...he bawled me out terribly...and I told him it was an old-fashioned bourgeois attitude of propriatorship, but he...well...he quarreled with me...

NINA (unmoved): Uh-huh.

TINA (continuing): Yeah...well, at the flea market, I seen 'em sellin' lipstick, the new Soviet lipstick of the Cosmetic Trust. Cheap, too. Only they say it's

dangerous to use it. It's made from horse fat and the horses died of glaaanders.

LEO (coughing and coughing):

NARRATOR: Later, at the Institute...

SONIA: Ah, Comrade Kira. Not so active in your studies anymore, are you? And as to your social activity--why, you're the most individualistic student we've got.

KIRA: Me...

SONIA: None of my business, I know, Comrade. I was just thinking of things one hears nowadays about what the Party may do to students who are not social-minded.

KIRA: I'm working, you see, and I'm very active in our Marxist Club.

SONIA: Are you now? We know you bourgeois. All you're active for is to keep your measly jobs. You're not fooling anyone.

(SFX: Knock on interior door.)

KIRA: Citizen Marisha, have you taken my stove cleaner again?

(SFX: Door flung open.)

KIRA: Citizen Marisha, have you taken my stove cleaner?

MARISHA: Aw, hell. Stingy, aren't you? Here.

KIRA: How many times do I have to ask you, Citizen, not to touch my things in my absence?

MARISHA: What are you gonna do about it? Report me?

(SFX: Door slammed.)

LEO: Oh, you're home.

KIRA: Yes. Where have you been?

LEO: What business is it of yours? (Coughs then) Same thing since eight this morning. No opening. No job. No work.

KIRA: It's all right, Leo. You don't have to worry.

LEO: I don't, do I? (Slight pause) You're enjoying it, aren't you, seeing me live off you? You're only too glad

to remind me I don't have to worry while you're working
yourself into a scarecrow for me?

KIRA: Leo!

LEO: I don't want to see you work! I don't want to see
you cook! I don't...Oh, Kira!

NARRATOR: He grabbed her and buried his face in her
neck.

They had millet, potatoes, and onions fried in linseed
oil. She was so hungry her arms were limp. But she
couldn't touch the millet. One more spoonful of the
bitter stuff and she knew she might retch. Putting the
dishes in cold water, she pulled on her felt boots.

KIRA (resigned): I have to go out. "Social activity."

NARRATOR: He didn't answer and didn't look at her as she
left.

KIRA: Comrades of the Marxist Club, Leninism is Marxism
adapted to Russian reality. Karl Marx, the great founder
of Communism, believed that Socialism was a logical
outcome of Capitalism in a country of highly developed
Industrialism and with a proletariat attuned to a high
degree of class-consciousness. But our great leader,
Comrade Lenin, proved that...

NARRATOR: Kira had copied her thesis word for word from
the ABCs of Communism, which everyone knew.

FEMALE OFFICE MGR: Comments, comrades?

NINA: I think it was a very nice thesis, and very
valuable and instructive.

TINA: Yes, because it was very nice and clear and
explained a valuable new theory.

YOUNG MAN: Comrade Kira, you speak of the fact that
Comrade Lenin allowed a place for the peasant beside the
industrial worker, but you should specify that it is a
poor peasant, not just any kind of a peasant, because it
is well known that there are rich peasants in the
villages, who are hostile to Leninism.

NARRATOR: Kira knew she had to defend her thesis to show
her activity. She also knew the young man had to argue
to show his.

KIRA: When I mentioned the peasant in Comrade Lenin's theory, I meant the poor peasant, as no other has a place in Communism.

FEMALE OFFICE MGR: The thesis shall be corrected to read: poor peasant. Any other comments, comrades? (Brief pause) Then we shall thank Comrade Argounova for her valuable work and declare this meeting closed.

(SFX: Gavel, Clatter of chairs, Rush for exit.)

NARRATOR: As Kira departed, she thought:

KIRA (whispering to herself): Well, its war, isn't it? It's only decided if you give up. The harder it is, the happier you should be that you can stand it. You're a good soldier, Kira Argounova.

NARRATOR: That night in bed when Leo put his arms around her, Kira knew she couldn't refuse any longer.

LEO: Oh, yes, yes, Kira. Tonight. Please!

NARRATOR: But her body cried for nothing but sleep, endless sleep.

LEO: What's the matter, Kira?

KIRA: Nothing.

NARRATOR: He was kissing her body, but she was thinking of her thesis, of Tina and Nina, of the probable reduction of staff--and suddenly she felt revulsion for his hungry lips. But if she could just stay awake a little bit longer, a little bit longer...

At first there were whispers...

FEMALE STUDENT-1: Have you heard about the Purge?

MALE STUDENT-2: Have you heard about the Purge?

FEMALE STUDENT-3: Have you heard about the Purge?

NARRATOR: Then, at the Institute, in huge red letters:

VOICE-2: THE **PURGE**! ALL STUDENTS ARE TO PROMPTLY FILL-OUT A QUESTIONNAIRE, HAVE THEIR HOUSE MANAGER CERTIFY TO THE TRUTH OF THE ANSWERS, AND RETURN THEM TO THE PURGING COMMITTEE. ALL SCHOOLS IN THE USSR ARE TO BE PURGED OF SOCIALLY UNDESIRABLE PERSONS. THOSE FOUND SOCIALLY UNDESIRABLE SHALL BE EXPELLED AND NEVER ADMITTED TO ANY COLLEGE AGAIN.

NARRATOR: The newspapers roared like trumpets!

VOICE-1: PROLETARIAN SCHOOLS ARE FOR THE PROLETARIAT!

VOICE-2: WE SHALL NOT EDUCATE OUR CLASS ENEMIES!

NARRATOR: Kira received her questionnaire at the Institute--Leo's, at the University. They sat dejectedly at the dinner table, filling out their answers.

LEO (simply/quickly): Who were your parents?

KIRA (simply/quickly): What was your father's occupation prior to nineteen-seventeen?

LEO (simply/quickly): What is your father's occupation now?

KIRA (simply/quickly): What is your mother's occupation?

LEO (simply/quickly): Are you a Trade Union member?

KIRA (simply/quickly): Are you a member of the Communist Party?

NARRATOR: Giving false answers was futile--as all answers would be investigated by the Purge Committee and giving a false answer could mean...

STUDENT-1 (makes cutting sound with tongue and teeth):

STUDENT-2: Yeah, but what about your parents?

STUDENT-1: My parents were a peasant woman and two workers!

NARRATOR: Head held high, Kira stood before the Purge Committee of the Institute. At the table, among those she didn't know, sat three persons she did: Sonia, Pavel, and Andrei.

PAVEL: So, citizen, your father was a factory owner?

KIRA: Yes.

PAVEL: And your mother? Did she work before the revolution?

KIRA: No.

PAVEL: Were servants employed in the home?

KIRA: Yes.

SONIA: And you never joined a Trade Union, citizen? Didn't find it desirable?

3236 KIRA: I've never had the opportunity.

3237 ANDREI (his voice hard): But you've always been in
3238 strict sympathy with the Soviet Government, citizen,
3239 haven't you?

3240 NARRATOR: When she saw her name on the Institute Wall,
3241 Kira closed her eyes and turned. When she opened them,
3242 she saw Andrei standing in a nook near the window.

3243 KIRA: It's all right. I knew you couldn't help.

3244 ANDREI (in a low voice): I'd give you my place--if I
3245 could.

3246 KIRA: Everybody always told me that bridges can't be
3247 built of aluminum anway. (Brief pause) This doesn't
3248 mean we won't see each other anymore, does it?

3249 ANDREI: No, it doesn't--not if...

3250 KIRA: Well, then give me your phone number
3251 because...well...

3252 (SFX: Pencil writing on paper.)

3253 KIRA: Isn't it funny--I've never even had your phone
3254 number. Maybe we'll be better friends now.

3255 NARRATOR: When Kira came home, Leo was sprawled across
3256 the bed.

3257 LEO (laughter that turns to coughing): Thrown ot, eh?
3258 Me too. Congratulations, hearty proletarian--
3259 congratulations!

3260 KIRA: You've been drinking!

3261 LEO (bitterly): Course I've been drinking. To celebrate.
3262 All of us thrown out did. We raised our glasses to the
3263 Dictatorship of the Proletariat!... Don't you stare at
3264 me like that...It's a custom to drink at weddings and
3265 funerals. We've never had a wedding, but we might have
3266 a...we might have a...

3267 NARRATOR: One day, Kira ran into Uncle Vasili on the
3268 street. It took an effort not to let her face show the
3269 change in his.

3270 UNCLE VASILII: So glad to see you, Kira--so glad. Why
3271 don't you come over anymore? Perhaps you don't want to
3272 come, eh?

NARRATOR: She called that night after putting Leo to bed with a fever. At a table without a tablecloth, under a lamp without a shade, sat Vasili, Irina and Acia.

IRINA: 'Allo.

UNCLE VASILI: Would you like some tea, Kira? Only we have no saccharine left.

KIRA: No thank you, Uncle, I've just had dinner.

IRINA (hurt for her): Well, why don't you say it? Expelled?

KIRA: Yes.

IRINA: And Leo?

KIRA: Leo, too.

IRINA: Well, why don't you ask? Sure, I'm out. What did you expect? Daughter of the wealthy Court Furrier!

KIRA: And Victor?

IRINA: No, Victor is not expelled.

UNCLE VASILI: No...

KIRA: I'm glad. Victor's such a talented young man, Uncle, I'm glad they've spared his future.

UNCLE VASILI (bitterly): Yes...

IRINA: Have you seen the new production of La Traviata? Oh, you must see it!

UNCLE VASILI: Yes, classics are still the best. In our day they had culture, and moral values, and...and integrity...

IRINA: In the last act, in the last act...Oh hell, you'll hear it sooner or later: Victor has joined the party!

KIRA: He...what?

IRINA: The Communist Party. A red star, a party ticket, a bread card, his hand in all the blood spilled, in all the blood to come!

KIRA: But...how could he get admitted?

IRINA: Seems he had it planned for a long time. He's been making friends--carefully and purposefully. He's

3308 been a candidate for months--we just never knew it.
3309 Then--he got admitted. Oh, they accepted him all right--
3310 with the kind of sponsors he had selected, it didn't
3311 matter that his father did sell furs to the Czar!

3312 KIRA: I see.

3313 IRINA: Oh, my brother Victor is brilliant. When he wants
3314 to climb--he knows the steppingstones.

3315 KIRA: Yes. Is he...is he still here?

3316 IRINA: Yes. The swine's still here.

3317 UNCLE VASILII: Irina, he's your brother.

3318 (SFX: Interior door opens. Footsteps.)

3319 KIRA: Victor, I hear you're a good Communist now.

3320 VICTOR: I've had the great honor of joining the Party
3321 and I'll have it understood that the Party is not to be
3322 referred to lightly.

3323 KIRA: I see.

3324 NARRATOR: Irina walked Kira to the door.

3325 IRINA (in a whisper): At first, I thought Father would
3326 throw him out. But...with Mother gone...and you know how
3327 he's always been crazy about Victor...well, he thinks
3328 he'll try to be broad-minded, but I think it will break
3329 him...For God's sake, Kira, come more often. He likes
3330 you.

3331 NARRATOR: When Kira came home, he found Leo holding a
3332 bottle.

3333 KIRA: Where did you get it?

3334 LEO: Borrowed it. Borrowed it from our dear neighbor
3335 Comrade Marisha. (coughing) She always has plenty.

3336 KIRA: Why did you? You were running a fever.

3337 LEO: Why shouldn't I? (coughing) Who in this damn world
3338 can tell me why I shouldn't?

3339 (SFX: Takes swig from bottle.)

3340 NARRATOR: Though there were times his eyes were clear,
3341 and he waited for Kira to come home so he could take her
3342 in his arms, Leo was too often pale and aloof.

3343 LEO (coughs--choking):

NARRATOR: He took cough medicine, which didn't help--and refused to see a doctor.

KIRA: Do you mind that I see Andrei?

LEO: Not at all--if he's your friend. Only--would you mind--not bringing him here. I'm not sure I can be polite...to one of them.

NARRATOR: So Kira didn't bring Andrei to the house but met him often that summer--in a park or garden. Once, he invited her to spend Sunday in the country, where they swam and laughed, and Andrei tipped the waiter twice the price of their dinner.

ANDREI: Why not? Might as well make the fellow happy. I make more money than I can spend on myself anyway.

NARRATOR: In the train, on the way home...

ANDREI: Kira, when will I see you again?

KIRA: I'll call you.

ANDREI: No. I want to know now.

KIRA: In a few days.

ANDREI: No. I want a definite day.

KIRA: Well, then, Wednesday night--ok?

ANDREI: All right.

NARRATOR: When Kira came home, she found Leo covered in dust asleep in a chair. She helped him undress and wash his face.

LEO (coughing):

NARRATOR: The next two evenings they fought and fought. In the end, Leo promised to see a doctor.

Meanwhile, when Victor phoned Vava for the third time in a row saying he'd been detained on urgent business, Vava, who had heard the rumors, hatched a plan. Dressing her best, she headed to Kira's.

NEIGHBOR: Citizen Kira? This way, comrade. You have to pass through Citizen Marisha's room.

VAVA: I know.

NARRATOR: Vava jerked open the door without knocking. Marisha and Victor stood bent over a playing gramophone.

VAVA (to Marisha as proudly as she could, in a shaking voice, swallowing tears): I beg your pardon, citizen, I'm just calling on Citizen Kira.

NARRATOR: Suspecting nothing, Marisha pointed to Kira's door with her thumb. Head held high, Vava walked across the room. Marisha couldn't understand why Victor left in such a hurry.

Meanwhile, Kira waited to meet Andrei at the Summer Garden. Nervous she hadn't heard from Leo about what the doctor had said, she would say she couldn't stay. But, when Andrei didn't show after an hour, Kira headed home. Passing through Marisha's room, she was greeted to the sight of Vava and Leo kissing.

VAVA (silence then): You think it's terrible, don't you? Well, I think so, too! It's terrible, it's vile! Only I don't care! I don't care anymore! I'm rotten? And I'm not the only one! Only I don't care! I don't care! (Bursts into hysterical sobs)

(SFX: Running footsteps. Door slam.)

LEO: You might as well get used to it. You can't have me. You won't have me. Not for long.

KIRA: Leo, what did the doctor say?

LEO: Plenty.

KIRA: What is it you have?

LEO: Nothing. Not a thing.

KIRA: Leo!

LEO: Not a thing--yet. But I'm going to have it. Just a few weeks longer.

KIRA: What, Leo?

LEO: Nothing much. Just--tuberculosis.

DOCTOR: Incipient tuberculosis, we call it. It can still be stopped. In a few weeks, it'll be too late.

KIRA: In a few weeks...?

DOCTOR: Tuberculosis is a serious disease, citizen. In Soviet Russia--it is a fatal disease. I strongly advise that you prevent it.

KIRA: What does he need?

DOCTOR: Plenty of Rest, Sunshine, Fresh Air, Food, Human Food. He needs a Sanatorium for the coming winter. One more winter in Petrograd and...

NARRATOR: Hearing the answer in her eyes and seeing the patches on her shoes...

DOCTOR: If that young man is dear to you, send him south. If you have a human possibility--or an inhuman one--send him south.

NARRATOR: At the first hospital Kira visited...

HOSPITAL OFFICIAL-1: A place in a sanatorium in the Crimea and he's not a Party or Trade Union member or state employee? You're joking, citizen.

NARRATOR: At the second hospital...

HOSPITAL OFFICIAL-2: We have hundreds on our waiting list, citizen. Trade Union members. Advanced cases...No, we cannot even register him.

NARRATOR: At the third hospital...

HOSPITAL OFFICIAL-3: No!

NARRATOR: There were long lines in dim corridors that smelt of carbolic acid and soiled linen.

HOSPITAL SECRETARY-1: Sorry, citizen. Next, please.

HOSPITAL SECRETARY-2: I tell you he's gone, it's after office hours, we gotta close, you can't sit here all night.

KIRA: But don't you see, he's going to die...

HOSPITAL SECRETARY-3: But he's not a registered worker.

KIRA: Victor, I'm begging you. Please.

VICTOR: My dear cousin, I want you to realize that my Party membership is a sacred trust--I cannot use it for purposes of personal advantage.

NARRATOR: For several days after the missed date with Andrei, Kira called on Lydia with the same question.

KIRA: Has Andrei been here? Are there any letters for me?

LYDIA: No.

NARRATOR: The second day...

LYDIA (giggles then): What is this, a romance? I'll tell Leo. And with Leo so handsome...

NARRATOR: One evening at her uncle's...

KIRA: Victor, do you see Comrade Andrei at the Institute?

VICTOR: Sure, I see him every day.

NARRATOR: Kira was bewildered. In the country, he had seemed happier than ever. She decided to give him a chance to explain.

KIRA (on the telephone): Comrade Andrei please.

ANDREI'S LANDLADY: 'Oo's calling him?

KIRA: Kira Arg---

ANDREI'S LANDLADY: 'E ain't home.

(SFX: Telephone Receiver slammed.)

NARRATOR: Kira resolved to forget Andrei.

Meanwhile, it'd become clear that the door to the State sanatoriums was locked to Leo. There were private sanatoriums in the South--but those cost money.

KIRA: Comrade Voronov, sir, could you see fit to advance me six months on my salary in light of the fact that my fiancée is--?

COMRADE VORONOV: My dear, how can you be certain that you will be working here another month--let alone six?

NARRATOR: She knew Leo would resent it, but she wrote to his aunt in Berlin.

KIRA: I am writing because I love him so much--to you, because I think you must love him a little.

NARRATOR: No answer came.

She heard there was private money to be lent at high interest.

LOANSHARK: Business? Speculation?

KIRA: Yes.

LOANSHARK: 25 percent per month.

KIRA: Fine.

3487 LOANSHARK: What security shall you put up--furs,
3488 diamonds?

3489 KIRA: I don't have any of those.

3490 LOANSHARK: Next!

3491 NARRATOR: She thought again of Andrei.

3492 ANDREI: I make more money than I can spend on myself.

3493 NARRATOR: She would go the Institute and see him. But
3494 when she smiled at him in the hallway, he abruptly
3495 ducked into a room and shut the door.

3496 When she came home, Leo had a crumpled note in his
3497 hands.

3498 LEO: So you're meddling in my affairs now? Who asked you
3499 to write to my aunt?

3500 KIRA: What does she say?

3501 LEO (reading): "There is no reason you should expect any
3502 help from us--especially since you are living with a
3503 brazen harlot who has the impudence to write to
3504 respectable people."

3505 NARRATOR: One day, a delegation of the Women's Worker's
3506 Club visited the "House of the Peasant".

3507 SONIA: Well, well! A loyal citizen like Comrade Kira in
3508 the Red 'House of the Peasant'!

3509 OFFICE MGR (concerned): What's the matter, comrade?

3510 SONIA: Oh, that's a good joke--a good joke!

3511 NARRATOR: When a reduction in staff came, Kira knew what
3512 to expect. She spent the last of her salary on eggs for
3513 Leo, which he wouldn't touch.

3514 She made one last attempt to get money. When the man
3515 stepped out of his fancy car, his fur coat glistened.

3516 KIRA: (firm and clear): Please, Sir! I'd like to speak
3517 to you. I need money. I know it isn't being done like
3518 this. But it's important. It's to save a life.

3519 RICH MAN (appraisingly): Hmmm. How much do you need?

3520 NARRATOR: She told him.

3521 RICH MAN: For one night? Why your sisters don't make
3522 that in an entire career!

NARRATOR: She made one last plea to the State--to a Commissar, who thru some miracle she'd wheedled an appointment with.

KIRA: So you see, Comrade Commissar, I love him. And you can take him and--

COMMISSAR: One hundred thousand workers died in revolution, Comrade. Why--in the USSR--can't one aristocrat die?

(SFX: Knock on exterior door.)

NARRATOR: It was her last chance and she had to take it.

ANDREI: Come in.

(SFX: Door opens/closes.)

ANDREI: Good evening, Kira.

KIRA: Good evening, Andrei.

ANDREI: It's cold tonight, isn't it?

KIRA: It's cold.

ANDREI: You look tired.

KIRA: I am tired.

ANDREI: How's your job?

KIRA: It isn't.

ANDREI: Oh, I'm sorry. I'll get you another.

KIRA: How is your job?

ANDREI: I've been working hard. Searches, arrests...

KIRA: Do you like it?

ANDREI: When it's necessary. (Pause) How is your family?

KIRA: Fine, thank you.

ANDREI: I see your cousin, Victor, often, at the Institute. Do you like him?

KIRA: No.

ANDREI: I voted against him. To join the party.

KIRA: I'm glad. He's the kind of Party man I despise.

ANDREI: What kind of Party man don't you despise?

KIRA: Andrei, what have I done?

ANDREI: Nothing.

KIRA: I came because...because...

ANDREI: I didn't want you to come. But if you want to hear it--you'll hear it. I never wanted to see you again. Because...because...I love you, Kira. (Pause) Don't say it. I know every word. You liked me, and trusted me, because we were friends. It was beautiful and rare--you have every right to despise me. (Brief pause) When you came in, I thought 'Send her away.' But I knew if you went away, I'd run after you. (Brief pause) You see why I couldn't face you. To talk and laugh with you--and to think only of when your hand would touch mine, of the little mark on your throat, your skirt blowing in the wind--the line of your breast in your open shirt...

KIRA: Andrei...don't...

ANDREI: I tried to stay away from you, to break it. You don't know what it's done to me. There was one search--a woman. We arrested her. She was in her nightgown, at my feet, crying for mercy. I thought of you, on the floor, crying for pity as I have been crying to you for so long. I'd take you--and I wouldn't care if it were the floor, and if men stood watching. Afterward, perhaps I'd shoot you, then shoot myself--but I wouldn't care--because afterward I could carry you wherever I wanted--and have you. I laughed at the woman on her knees, and I kicked her. That's right--kicked her...You shouldn't have come here, Kira. I'm not your friend. I don't care if I hurt you. All you are to me is this: I want you. And I'd give everything I have--everything I could ever have--for something you can't give me!

KIRA: What did you say, Andrei?

ANDREI: I said everything I have for...for...

KIRA: Andrei...I'd better go...I'd better go now.

ANDREI: Or is it something you...can...?

NARRATOR: Kira was thinking of Leo and her body rose slowly against the wall she was pressed against, to her full height so that her throat was level with Andrei's mouth.

KIRA: I can! I love you. (Brief pause) For a long time...but I didn't know you, too...

NARRATOR: She felt his hands and his mouth and how strong his arms were--hoping it would be quick.
Finally, Kira sat up, crossing her arms over her breasts.

KIRA: I have to go.

ANDREI: I want you here. Till morning.

KIRA: There's my family.

ANDREI: Kira, will you marry me? (Brief pause) Why does that frighten you?

KIRA: I can't, Andrei.

ANDREI: I love you.

KIRA: You're Communist--you know my family. They've suffered so much already. If I married you--it would be too much. Or if they found out--about this. But we can spare them--can't we? What difference does it make to us?

ANDREI: It makes a difference to me.

KIRA: Andrei?

ANDREI: Yes.

KIRA: You'll do anything I want?

ANDREI: Yes.

KIRA: I want only one thing: secrecy. Complete secrecy. You promise?

ANDREI: Yes.

KIRA: You're not the kind my family would approve of. But I'm not the kind your Party would approve of. So it's better if no one--not a soul anywhere--knows this, but you and I.

ANDREI: I promise--no one but you and I.

NARRATOR: She lay still for a long time until he was asleep. Then she slipped out of bed, dressed hurriedly and tip-toed away.

At home, she was lucky--Leo was asleep and so wouldn't know what time she'd come home.

Soon, Leo's bag was packed, his ticket was bought, and he was leaving for the south--for a private sanitorium in Yalta.

KIRA: You see, when I wrote to your aunt in Berlin, I also wrote to my uncle in Budapest. You've never heard him mentioned because... well...there's a family quarrel behind it--and he left Russia before the war, and my father forbade us ever to mention his name. But he always liked me, so I wrote him, and that's what he sent, and he said he'd help me as long as I need it. But please don't ever mention it to my family, because Father would--you understand.

NARRATOR: To Andrei, all she had to do was mention her starving family and he gave her his whole monthly salary.

Leo was not so easy to convince...

KIRA: Your money or my money or anyone's money--does it really matter? You want to live. I want you to live. You love me. Don't you love me enough to live for me? I know it'll be hard. Six months. All winter. I'll miss you. But we can do it...Leo, I love you. I love you. I love you. So much is still possible!

NARRATOR: She won. His train would leave at eight-fifteen. And at nine, she would meet Andrei.

LEO: Please, let's not have any nonsense when the train starts. No waving, or running after the train, or anything like that.

KIRA: No, Leo. (Frightened--realizing it for the first time) Leo...at nine o'clock tonight...you won't be here anymore.

LEO: No. I won't.

NARRATOR: He seized her roughly and held her lips in a long, choking kiss.

(SFX: Train whistle wails shrilly.)

NARRATOR: Then, as the train began moving, he leapt to the steps of the car and disappeared inside.

Kira stood on the platform and immediately understood it was a train, and that Leo was on the train, and that the train was leaving her. And something beyond terror-- something that was not a human feeling--seized her. She ran after the train and grasped an iron handle. She was jerked forward then dragged along the wooden platform until a husky soldier with a red star grabbed her by the shoulders and tore her off the handle.

TRAIN SOLDIER: What do you think you're doing, citizen?

KIRA: I don't know...I don't know...

(MUSICAL INTERMISSION)

(SFX: High-heeled footsteps. Purse opened. Cigarette case opened.)

NARRATOR: Petrograd is now Leningrad. In front of a giant poster of the recently deceased leader with the short beard and narrow Asian eyes, Kira swung a cigarette into her mouth. Taking out a foreign lighter engraved with her initials...

(SFX: Sound of lighter. Cigarette inhale. Purse closed.)

NARRATOR: ...she glanced down at a sparkling watch on a narrow gold band, then set off with silk clad legs in the direction of an old palace bearing a new inscription:

VOICE-1: DISTRICT CLUB OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY.

NARRATOR: As she made her way down a deserted walk, pigeons fluttered onto branches of giant oaks. In the depths of a neglected garden stood a small two-storied structure. Though the first-floor windows were broken ot, the second-floor windows remained. Pushing in the heavy door, Kira climbed up to the top of the narrow set of stairs.

(SFX: Door knock. Door opens.)

ANDREI (pleasantly surprised): Oh! I didn't exect you 'til tonight.

KIRA (laughs): I know. But you won't throw me ot, will you?

NARRATOR: She entered with familiarity and threw things on a chair. She alone knew why Andrei had had to economize--why he had given up his room and moved into this abandoned guest house, which the Club had let him use free.

KIRA: Actually, I came now to tell you that I can't come tonight.

ANDREI: You can't?

KIRA: No. I can't. Now don't look tragic. Here, I brought you something to cheer you up.

NARRATOR: She took out a small snow globe from her pocket and held it in her palm.

KIRA: It's of New York--in America. See?

3716 ANDREI: Very cute...Why can't you come tonight?

3717 KIRA: Some business I have to attend. Do you mind?

3718 ANDREI: Not if it's inconvenient for you. Can you stay
3719 now?

3720 KIRA (teasing): For a little while, I guess.

3721 NARRATOR: She tore off her coat and threw it on the bed.

3722 ANDREI: Oh, Kira!

3723 KIRA: It's your fault. You insisted on a new dress.

3724 NARRATOR: The dress was very red and very short.

3725 KIRA: Well? You don't like it?

3726 ANDREI: Kira, you're...the dress is...I've never seen a
3727 woman's dress like that.

3728 KIRA: What do you know about women's dresses?

3729 ANDREI: I looked through a whole magazine of Paris
3730 fashions at the Censorship Bureau yesterday.

3731 KIRA: You looking through a fashion magazine?

3732 ANDREI: I was thinking of you. I wanted to know what
3733 women liked.

3734 KIRA: And what did you learn?

3735 ANDREI: Things I'd like you to have. You know--funny
3736 little hats. Bathing suits. And jewelry. Diamonds.

3737 KIRA: You didn't tell that to your comrades at the
3738 Censorship Bureau, did you?

3739 ANDREI: No. I didn't.

3740 NARRATOR: His fingers touched the red dress. Then his
3741 lips sank suddenly into the hollow of her neck.

3742 ANDREI: I'm glad you came now, instead of tonight. There
3743 were still so many hours to wait...I've never seen you
3744 like this...I tried to read, but I couldn't...Will you
3745 wear this dress next time? Why do you look so...so much
3746 more grownup in a childish dress like this? ...Kira,
3747 I've missed you terribly... Even when I'm working I...

3748 KIRA: Andrei, you shouldn't think of me when you're
3749 working.

3750 ANDREI: Sometimes, it's only thoughts of you that get me
3751 through my work.

3752 KIRA: Andrei!

3753 ANDREI (smiling again): Why don't you want me to think
3754 of you? Remember, last time you were here, you told me
3755 about that book you read with a hero called Andrei and
3756 you said you thought of me? Well, I bought the book. I
3757 know it isn't much, Kira, but...well...you don't say
3758 things like that very often.

3759 KIRA (mocking, irresistible): I think of you so seldom
3760 I've forgotten your name. I had to find it in a book.

3761 ANDREI: Kira, would it cost so very much to install a
3762 telephone in your house?

3763 KIRA: But they...we...have no electrical in the
3764 apartment. It's not possible.

3765 ANDREI: Sometimes, it's so hard to wait, just wait.

3766 KIRA: Don't I come here as often as you wish?

3767 ANDREI: It isn't that. Sometimes I just want to look at
3768 you...the same day you've been here...sometimes even a
3769 minute after you've left. It's that feeling you're gone,
3770 and I have no way of finding you, as if you'd left the
3771 city. Sometimes, I look at all the people in the
3772 streets--and I have a feeling that you're lost among
3773 them somewhere--and I can't get to you, I can't see you
3774 over all those heads.

3775 KIRA (implacably): Andrei, you promised--never to call
3776 at my house.

3777 ANDREI: Yes but...wouldn't you allow me to telephone, if
3778 we could arrange it?

3779 KIRA: No. My parents might guess. And... oh, Andrei, we
3780 have to be careful. It isn't so hard, is it, that one
3781 condition, just to be careful--for my sake?

3782 ANDREI (giving in): No.

3783 KIRA: I'll come often. And I'll still come even when
3784 you're tired of me.

3785 ANDREI: Why do you say that?

3786 KIRA: You'll be tired of me, someday, won't you?

3787 ANDREI: You don't think that, do you?

3788 KIRA: Of course not...I love you. You know that. But I

3789 don't want you to feel...to feel that you're tied to

3790 me...that...

3791 ANDREI: Kira, why don't you want me to feel tied to you?

3792 KIRA: This is why I don't want you to say anything.

3793 NARRATOR: She bent and closed his mouth with a kiss.

3794 ANDREI: I have something for you. It was for tonight.

3795 But...

3796 (SFX: Drawer opened/closed.)

3797 KIRA: Oh, Andrei, you shouldn't. With all you've done

3798 for me and...

3799 ANDREI: I've done nothing for you. It's always been for

3800 your family. I had to fight to get you to buy this

3801 dress.

3802 KIRA: And the stockings, and the lighter, and... Oh,

3803 Andrei, I'm so grateful to you, but...

3804 ANDREI: Open it.

3805 NARRATOR: It was a small, flat bottle of French perfume.

3806 KIRA (gasps): Oh, Andrei!

3807 NARRATOR: She extends to him the bottle.

3808 KIRA: I want you to give me the first drop--yourself.

3809 NARRATOR: She drew him over to her side of the bed.

3810 KIRA: Where will you put it? (More provocatively) Where

3811 else? (Even more) Where else? (Much more) Where else?

3812 NARRATOR: In Leo's family's former drawing room, Marisha

3813 stood over a kerosene stove stirring a kettle of soup.

3814 MARISHA (memorizing aloud): The relationships of social

3815 classes can be studied on the basis of the distribution

3816 of the economic means of production at any given...

3817 KIRA (interrupting loudly): How's the Marxist theory,

3818 Marisha?

3819 NARRATOR: Tearing off her hat, Kira shakes her hair.

3820 KIRA: Do you have a cigarette? Smoked my last on the way

3821 home.

MARISHA: In the drawer. Light one for me, too, will you?

KIRA: Nice weather outside. Real summer weather. Busy?

(SFX: Lighter. Cigarette inhale. Another.)

MARISHA: Thanks. The soup's for Victor.

KIRA: I wish you luck.

MARISHA: Thanks. And how's everything with you? Heard from the boyfriend lately?

KIRA: Yes, I received a telegram.

MARISHA: When's he coming back?

KIRA (after a long pause--uncertain): Tonight.

NARRATOR: Leo's train was late and wouldn't arrive until the next morning. So she found herself in the neighborhood of her uncle's house.

(SFX: Doorbell.)

IRINA: Kira! Of all people! What a surprise! Come in. Take off your coat. I have something--someone--to show you. How do you like my new dress?

KIRA (laughing):

NARRATOR: When she took off her coat, Kira was wearing the same dress--black and white stripes.

IRINA: Oh, hell! When did you get it?

KIRA: About a week ago.

IRINA: I thought that if I got the stripes, I wouldn't see so many of them around, but the first time I wore it, I met three ladies in the same dress, within fifteen minutes...Oh, what's the use? ...Oh, well, come on!

NARRATOR: Vasili rose smiling and Victor bowed gracefully. A husky, blond young man also jumped up and stood stiffly.

IRINA: Kira, may I present Sasha? Sasha--my cousin, Kira.

NARRATOR: Sasha's hand was big and his handshake too strong. He grinned shyly.

IRINA: Sasha, this is a treat for you. A rare guest. The hermit of Petrograd.

3857 VICTOR (correcting her): Of Leningrad.

3858 IRINA (insisting): Of Petrograd. How are you, Kira? I
3859 hate to admit how glad I am to see you.

3860 SASHA: Delighted to meet you. I've heard so much about
3861 you.

3862 VICTOR: Without a doubt, Kira is the most talked about
3863 woman in the city--even in Party circles.

3864 NARRATOR: Kira glanced at him sharply; but he smiled
3865 pleasantly.

3866 VICTOR: Glamamorous women have always been an irresistible
3867 theme for admiring whispers. Charm refutes the Marxist
3868 theory: it knows no class distinctions.

3869 IRINA: Shut up. I don't know what you're talking about,
3870 but I'm sure it's something rotten.

3871 KIRA: Not at all. Victor is very complimentary --even
3872 though he does exagerate.

3873 NARRATOR: Sasha moved a chair for Kira and grinned
3874 helplessly.

3875 IRINA: Sasha's studying history--that is, he was. He's
3876 been thrown out--for trying to think in a country of
3877 free thought.

3878 VICTOR: I will have you understand, Irina, that I won't
3879 tolerate such remarks in my presence. I expect the Party
3880 to be respected.

3881 IRINA (snapping): Oh, stop acting! The Party Collective
3882 won't hear you.

3883 NARRATOR: Kira noticed Sasha's long, silent glance at
3884 Victor.

3885 KIRA (kindly): I'm sorry about university, Sasha.

3886 SASHA (drawling): I don't mind. It, really, was not
3887 essential. There are some outward circumstances which
3888 one can control. There are some values it can never
3889 reach--or subjugate.

3890 VICTOR: You will discover, Kira, that you and Sasha have
3891 much in common. You are both inclined to disregard the
3892 rudiments of caution.

3893 UNCLE VASILII: Victor, will you...

3894 VICTOR: Father, I have a right to expect, as long as I'm
3895 feeding this family, that my views...

3896 ACIA: You're feeding who?

3897 NARRATOR: Acia had appeared from the next room, socks
3898 around her ankles--in one hand a torn magazine, in the
3899 other a pair of scissors.

3900 ACIA: I wish someone'd feed someone. I'm still hungry
3901 and Irina wouldn't give me a second helping of soup.

3902 VICTOR: Father, I expect something be done about this
3903 child. She's growing up like a bum. If she were to join
3904 a children's organization, such as the Pioneers...

3905 UNCLE VASILII (firmly, quietly): Victor, we won't discuss
3906 that again.

3907 ACIA: Who wants to be a stinking Pioneer?

3908 IRINA: Acia, you go back to your room, or I'll put you
3909 to bed.

3910 ACIA: You and who else?

3911 (SFX: Door slam.)

3912 VICTOR: Really, if I'm able to study as I do--and work
3913 besides--and provide for this household, I don't see why
3914 Irina can't take proper care of one brat. (Long pause)
3915 Sorry, Kira, to desert such a rare guest, but I have a
3916 dinner engagement.

3917 IRINA: See that the hostess doesn't borrow any
3918 silverware from Kira's room.

3919 (SFX: Footsteps. Door Open/Close.)

3920 KIRA: What are you making, Uncle Vasili?

3921 UNCLE VASILII: A frame--for one of Irina's pictures.
3922 They're good pictures. It's a shame to let them get
3923 crumpled and ruined in a drawer.

3924 KIRA: That's beautiful, Uncle. I didn't know you could
3925 do that.

3926 UNCLE VASILII: Oh, I used to be good at it...in the old
3927 days, when I was a young man, in Siberia.

3928 IRINA: Would you like some tea, Kira. I'll fix it. Sasha
3929 will help me light the stove. (Brief pause) Come on! I

3930 don't know why I ask him to help, he's the most
3931 helpless, useless, awkward thing born.

3932 NARRATOR: Irina's eyes couldn't be happier. She took his
3933 arm and wheeled him out of the room.

3934 UNCLE VASILI: Poor doomed little fool.

3935 KIRA: You think Victor suspects?

3936 UNCLE VASILI: I think so.

3937 NARRATOR: Sasha returns carrying a plate.

3938 IRINA: Here are some cookies I made. See how you like
3939 them--for an artist's cooking.

3940 KIRA: How's the art, Irina?

3941 IRINA: The job, you mean? Oh, I still have it. But I've
3942 been reprimanded twice on "The Wall". They said my
3943 peasant women looked like dancers and my workers were
3944 too graceful.

3945 UNCLE VASILI: And now there's a competition.

3946 IRINA: An inter-club competition. Who'll make the best
3947 and reddest posters. Have to work two hours extra every
3948 day--free--for the glory of the Club.

3949 SASHA (drawls): Under the Soviets, there is no
3950 exploitation.

3951 UNCLE VASILI: And the wages. She spent the whole of her
3952 last month's salary on shoes for Acia.

3953 IRINA: She couldn't go barefooted.

3954 KIRA (cannot keep it to herself any longer): Leo's
3955 coming back tomorrow.

3956 IRINA: Oh! You never told us. I'm so glad! And he's
3957 quite well?

3958 KIRA: Yes. He was to return tonight, but the train is
3959 late.

3960 UNCLE VASILI: How is his aunt in Berlin? Still helping
3961 you? I have the greatest admiration for that lady, even
3962 though I've never seen her. Anyone who's safe, away,
3963 free and can still understand us, buried alive in this
3964 Soviet graveyard, must be a wonderful person. She's
3965 saved Leo's life.

KIRA: When you see Leo, Uncle, will you remember never to mention it? His aunt's help, I mean. You remember I explained how sensitive he is about being obligated to her-- and so we'll all be careful not to remind him of it, yes?

UNCLE VASILII: Certainly child. Don't worry...I just think it's hard for us to understand what we used to call ethics. We're all turning into beasts in a beastly struggle. But we'll be saved. We'll be saved before it gets us all.

SASHA (under his breath): We don't have long to wait.

NARRATOR: Soon both Kira and Sasha had risen to go and were together on the street.

SASHA: Irina isn't happy.

KIRA: No one is.

SASHA: We're living in difficult times. But things will change. Things are changing. There still are people to whom freedom is more than a word on posters.

KIRA: These people--you think they have a chance?

SASHA: You think the Russian worker is a beast that licks its chain while his mind is being battered out of him? You think he's fooled by this very noisy gang of tyrants? You know what he reads? You know the books hidden in the factories? The papers that pass secretly through many hands? The people are awakening, Kira...

KIRA: Sasha, aren't you playing a very dangerous game? Is it worth the chance you're taking?

NARRATOR: He towered over her--his blond hair sticking out from under his cap--his mouth grinning slowly.

SASHA: You mustn't worry, Kira. And Irina mustn't worry. I'm not in danger. They won't get me. They won't have the time.

NARRATOR: In the morning--after phoning the station and being told the train wasn't expected until early afternoon-- Kira went to work. She'd insisted upon working--and Andrei had found a job for her as a tour guide at the Museum of the Revolution.

KIRA (evenly, mechanically): ...and this photograph, comrades, was taken just before his execution. He was

hanged for the assassination of a tyrant, one of the Czar's henchmen. Such was the glorious end of...

NARRATOR: Kira knew that her hand would rise at a given word and point at the right picture; she knew at which word her audience would laugh and at which word it would grunt with proper indignation. She knew her listeners wished her to hurry, and the Museum wished the lecture to be long and detailed.

KIRA: ...and this, comrades, is the genuine carriage in which Alexander II was riding on the day of his assassination. This shattered portion here...

NARRATOR: Kira was thinking about Leo's train. As soon as the tour was over, she rushed on home.

MARISHA: No, sorry--not yet.

NARRATOR: But an hour later, the door was thrown open without a knock.

LEO: Allo, Kira.

NARRATOR: She didn't kiss him but instead put her hands on his shoulders and moved down his arms, the cloth of his coat, to his hand, which she kissed with a sobbing mouth.

LEO: Stop it, you hear me?...My dearest, my dearest...

KIRA: Take off your coat...your coat...

LEO: Stop it.

NARRATOR: He looked at her, eyes half-closed, and his glance was insulting in its open understanding of his power.

LEO: Was it really hard for you--this winter?

KIRA: Some. But we don't have to talk about that--it's past. Do you cough anymore?

LEO: No.

KIRA (overjoyed): And you're well? Completely well? Free to live again?

LEO: I am well. As to living again...

KIRA: But isn't the worst of it over? Now we can begin...

LEO: Begin what? I have nothing to bring back but a healthy body.

KIRA: What else could I want?

LEO: Nothing--from a gigolo.

KIRA: Leo!

LEO: Am I not one?

KIRA: Leo, don't you love me?

LEO: I love you too much. It would all be so simple if I didn't. But to see you dragging yourself through this hell they call life and not help you, but to let you carry me instead...Did you really think I'd bless this health you gave back to me? I hate it because I love you.

KIRA: Would you rather hate me, too?

LEO: I would. I'm trying to hold on to what you think I am--even though I can't hold on much longer. That's all I have to offer, Kira.

KIRA: There's only one thing that matters--that whatever life does to us, it doesn't break us.

LEO (tenderly): Kira, I wish you weren't what you are.

KIRA: We won't talk about it again, eh? I'll get up and powder my nose, and you'll take off your coat, and have a bath, and I'll fix you some lunch... But first let me sit with you, for just a few moments, just sit...don't move... (Extremely warmly) ...Leo...

NARRATOR: Three days later...

(SFX: Doorbell. Footsteps. Door half-open to chain.)

TONIA: Does Leo live here?

NARRATOR: Diamond rings sparkled on fat, white fingers.

KIRA: Why...yes.

TONIA (with firmness): I wish to see him.

KIRA (calls--away from mic): It's for you!

(SFX: Footsteps. Door chain unfastened. Door opened.)

TONIA: Leo! So delightful to see you again! Remember my threat to find you. (Playfully) I intend to be a nuisance!

LEO: Kira, this is Tonia--Tonia, Kira.

NARRATOR: She extended her arm as if she expected Kira to kiss it.

LEO: Tonia and I were neighbors in the sanatorium.

TONIA: He was a perfectly ungracious neighbor. (Laughs huskily) He wouldn't wait for me--and I wanted so much to leave on the same train. I had a perfectly terrible time trying to get Leo's apartment number out of the House Manager. House managers are such an unavoidable nuisance these days, and we gentle folk must bear them with a sense of humor.

LEO: When did you return, Tonia?

TONIA: Yesterday. Oh, what a trip! (sighs) These Soviet trains! Really, I believe I lost everything I accomplished in the sanatorium. I was taking a rest cure for my nerves. What sensitive person isn't a nervous wreck these days, eh? But the Crimea! That place saved my life.

LEO: It was beautiful.

TONIA: Really, though, it lost all its charm after you left, Leo. He was the most charming patient in that dull sanatorium, and everybody admired him so--oh, purely platonically, purely platonically. (Pause) Leo was so kind to help me with my French. It is such a relief, in these drab days, to stumble upon a person like Leo. You must forgive me for intruding but it's simply too much to expect to give up a beautiful friendship in this revolting city where real people are so rare!

LEO: I'm glad you took the trouble to find me.

TONIA: Tsk, these people here! We meet, we talk, we shake hands. What does it mean? Nothing.

LEO: One could forget one's troubles in some engrossing activity--if that were permitted these days.

TONIA: How true! Of course, a woman of culture is organically incapable of remaining inactive. I have a

tremendous program outlined for myself this winter. I'm going to study ancient Egypt.

KIRA: What?

TONIA: Ancient Egypt, my dear. I want to capture its spirit in its entirety. There is a profound significance in these far-away cultures, which we moderns do not fully appreciate. Did I tell you I'm studying political economy?

LEO: No.

TONIA: I find it surprisingly thrilling. Leo, have you read the latest volume of verse by Valentina?

LEO: No, I haven't.

TONIA: Thoroughly delightful. Such depth of emotion, and yet--completely modern! There is a verse about--how does it go--

LEO: I must admit I don't read modern poets.

TONIA: I'll bring it to you. I'm sure Kira here will enjoy it, too.

KIRA: Thank you but I never read poetry.

TONIA: How unfortunate! I'm sure you care for music.

KIRA: Fox-trots.

TONIA (condescendingly): Really? Why music is an essential item on my winter's program. I've made my Karpy promise me a box for every concert at the State Philharmonic. Poor Karpy! He's really an artist at heart, if one knows how to approach him, but I'm afraid that his unfortunate upbringing has not trained him for an appreciation for the symphony. I shall, likely, have to be alone in my box. Oh--here's a happy thought!--you may share it with me, Leo...And Kira, of course.

LEO: Thank you, Tonia, but I'm afraid we won't have much time for that, this winter.

TONIA: Nonsense! Karpy can't refuse me anything. He hated to see me leave for the Crimea. He missed me so much--you wouldn't believe how glad he was to see me back.

LEO (hastily): I'm glad the Crimea helped your health.

4149 TONIA (insinuating): That divine moonlight! I wondered
4150 why you were so indifferent to its magic spell. But I
4151 can understand the reason--now. (Pause) Oh, how late it
4152 is! It's been so delightful I haven't noticed the time.
4153 I must hurry home. Karpy is sure to be getting
4154 melancholy without me, the poor child.

4155 (SFX: Purse opened. Lipstick applied.)

4156 TONIA: Such a necessity, foreign lipstick is. I notice
4157 you use very little, Kira dear. You wouldn't want to
4158 neglect your appearance--not when one has such valuable
4159 property to guard. (pause) Au revoir, mes amis. I shall
4160 see you soon.

4161 (SFX: Footsteps. Door open/close.)

4162 KIRA: I can't believe you would spend time with such
4163 a... such a...

4164 LEO: I don't criticize your friends. You could have at
4165 least been civil.

4166 KIRA: What do you mean?

4167 LEO: You could've said more than a couple of words.

4168 KIRA: She didn't come to hear me talk.

4169 LEO: We were in the same sanatorium, and it happened to
4170 have foreign books, which is a rare treat when you have
4171 to spend your days reading Soviet trash. That's how we
4172 met. What's wrong with that?

4173 KIRA: Don't you see what she's after?

4174 LEO: Of course, I do. Are you really afraid she'll get
4175 it?

4176 KIRA: Pfft.

4177 LEO: Then why can't I speak to her? She's a harmless
4178 fool who's trying to amount to something. And she really
4179 does have connections.

4180 KIRA: To associate with that kind of person...

4181 LEO: She's no worse than the Red trash one has to
4182 associate with these days. At least, she's not Red.

4183 KIRA: Do what you want.

4184 LEO: Forget it. She won't come again.

KIRA: Don't you see--a woman like that shouldn't dare look at you.

LEO: Let her look. It won't hurt me.

NARRATOR: Later that evening...

LEO: ...so write to your uncle in Budapest at once--
thank him and tell him not to send any more money. I'm
well. We'll make it on our own. I've written down the
exact sum of everything you sent me. We'll have to start
repaying him--I hope he's patient...

KIRA: Yes, Leo.

LEO: Where did you get that watch?

KIRA: It was a present. From Andrei.

LEO: So you're accepting presents from Communists now,
eh?

KIRA: Tsk! It was my birthday, and I couldn't hurt his
feelings.

LEO: Of course not...Ok, that's your business.
Personally, I wouldn't feel comfortable wearing
something paid for with Red money.

NARRATOR: Kira spent most of her days leading tours.

KIRA: ...and it is the duty of every conscientious
citizen to be acquainted with the history of our
revolutionary movement in order to become a trained,
enlightened fighter in the ranks of the World
Revolution.

NARRATOR: In the evenings...

KIRA: I have to go out tonight. I've promised Irina...

NARRATOR: Or...

KIRA: I really must go out tonight. It's a meeting of
Tour Guides.

NARRATOR: But Leo wanted her to stay home and so she
did. But she knew she had to see Andrei.

LEO: Can I go with you? I haven't seen your family since
I got back, and I owe them a visit.

KIRA (calmly): Not this time, Leo. Mother is...she's so
changed...I know you won't get along with her.

LEO: Do you have to go tonight? I've been without you for such a long time.

KIRA: I promised them I'd come tonight. I'll be back soon.

(SFX: Doorbell. Door Open/Close. Footsteps.)

KIRA'S MOTHER: Well, I'm glad they're home. If I thought they were visiting others and neglecting their old parents...

NARRATOR: She was trailed by Lydia and Kira's father.

KIRA'S MOTHER: Leo, my dear child! I'm so glad to see you! Welcome back to Leningrad.

KIRA'S FATHER (timidly): I'm glad you're well, my boy.

KIRA: Why did you come? I was just leaving for your house, as I promised.

KIRA'S MOTHER: As you...

KIRA (interrupting): Well, since you're here, take off your coats.

KIRA'S MOTHER: I'm so pleased you're well again, Leo. I feel as if you were my son. You are my son. Everything else is just bourgeois prejudices.

LYDIA (hopelessly): Mother...

LEO: Thank you for coming. My only excuse for neglecting to call is...

KIRA'S MOTHER: ...Kira. Do you know we haven't seen her more than three times while you were away?

LYDIA: I have a letter for you, Kira.

KIRA (jerking slightly): A letter?

LYDIA: Yes, it came today.

LEO: Don't you want to open it?

KIRA: Nothing important--I'll read it later.

KIRA'S MOTHER: Well, Leo? What are your plans for the winter? This is such an interesting year ahead of us. So many opportunities, particularly for the young.

LEO: So many...what?

KIRA'S MOTHER: Why opportunities! Such a wide-open field! Not like in the dying cities of Europe where people slave all their lives for measly wages and a pitiful little existence. Here--each of us has an opportunity to be a useful member of a stupendous whole. Here--one's doesn't just satisfy one's petty hunger, one contributes to the gigantic building of humanity's future.

KIRA: Mother, who wrote all that down for you?

KIRA'S MOTHER: Really, Kira--that's not only impertinent to your mother, but it's also a bad influence on Leo's future.

LEO: I wouldn't worry about my future.

KIRA'S MOTHER: Of course, Leo is smart enough to know to discard the prejudices your father and I once possessed. We must admit--the Soviet Government is the only progressive government in the world. It utilizes all its human resources. Even an old person like me, who has been useless all her life, can find an opportunity for creative toil.

LEO: I didn't know you were working...

KIRA'S MOTHER: Yes, I'm teaching in a Labor School--sewing and fancy needlework. Why a practical subject like sewing is much more important to our little citizens than the dead, useless things, like Latin, which were taught in the old bourgeois days. And our methods! We're centuries ahead of Europe. For instance, take the complex, machine-aided...

LYDIA (wearily): Mother, Leo may not be interested.

LEO: I'm glad you're enjoying your work.

KIRA: And getting your rations.

LEO: And what are you doing these days?

KIRA'S FATHER: Oh, I'm working! (As if defending himself against a dangerous accusation) Yes, I'm working. I'm a Soviet employee. I am.

KIRA'S MOTHER: I get better ration cards because I'm in a preferred class of teachers. Did you know I've been elected assistant secretary of the Teachers' Council? I even gave a speech on the methodology of modern

education at an inter-club meeting where Lydia played our red theme song so beautifully.

LYDIA: I'm working, too. Musical director and accompanist in a Workers' Club. A pound of bread a week and carfare and sometimes a little money--after the "Party" contributions.

KIRA'S MOTHER: Lydia's not pliable.

LYDIA: I play the Red theme, the Red funeral march--basically anything and everything "Red".

(SFX: John Grey song is heard on gramophone from next room.)

KIRA: I like that song.

LYDIA: That awful, vulgar thing? It's so overplayed--I'm sick of it.

KIRA: Even if it is overplayed...It has such a nice rhythm...clicking...like rivets into steel...

LYDIA: Still thinking of your engineering?

KIRA: Sometimes...

KIRA'S MOTHER: I can't understand what's wrong with you. You have a perfectly good job, easy and well-paid, and you mope over some childish idea. Tour guides are considered no less important than engineers, these days. It is quite an honorable and responsible position and contributes a great deal to social construction--isn't it more fascinating to build with living minds and ideologies than with bricks and steel?

KIRA'S FATHER: What's the use, Kira?

NARRATOR: Kira got up and made for the kitchen, where she lit a cigarette.

KIRA'S FATHER: What are your plans for the winter, eh, Leo?

LEO: I have none.

KIRA'S MOTHER: You take my nephew Victor. There's a smart, young man. He's graduating from the Institute this fall and he has an excellent job already. Supporting his whole family. He has his eyes open to modern reality, that boy. He'll go far...

KIRA'S FATHER: But Vasili...?

KIRA'S MOTHER: Vasili's never been practical.

(SFX: Footsteps.)

KIRA'S FATHER: Why what a pretty red dress you have on, Kira.

KIRA: Thank you, Father.

KIRA'S FATHER: You don't look so well, child. Are you tired?

KIRA: I'm fine.

KIRA'S MOTHER: ...and, you know, it's only the best teachers who are praised on "The Wall". Our students are quite severe and...

NARRATOR: Late at night, when the guests had gone, Kira took the letter into the bathroom and opened it.

ANDREI: Dearest Kira...Please forgive me for writing. Won't you telephone me? Andrei.

NARRATOR: The next evening, Kira told Leo she'd be dismissed if she didn't attend a guides' meeting. Putting on her red dress, she kissed Leo goodbye.

(SFX: Last steps up marble stairs. Door open.)

KIRA (laughing): I know, I know, I know...Don't say it...Forgive me first, and then I'll explain.

ANDREI: (whispers happily): You're forgiven. You don't have to explain. But do you know that it's been two weeks since...?

KIRA: Andrei, let's go out. Take me to the European Roof Garden.

ANDREI: Now?

KIRA: Yes, now.

NARRATOR: She didn't want to notice the look in his eyes, and he didn't want to refuse the look in hers. In a dark corner of the roof garden, they sat holding glasses. He casually slipped a roll of bills into her hand.

ANDREI: Here. It's been two weeks. You probably need it.

KIRA: No, Andrei... Thank you... But I don't need it. And... I don't think I'll need it again...

4367 ANDREI: But...

4368 KIRA: You see, I get so many tours to lead, and Mother--
4369 she got more classes at school, and we all have clothes
4370 and everything we need, so...

4371 ANDREI: But, Kira, I want you to...

4372 KIRA: Please, Andrei! Let's not argue. Not about this...
4373 Please...Keep it...If...if I need it, I'll tell you.

4374 ANDREI: Promise?

4375 KIRA: Promise. (Pause) I shouldn't ask you to bring me
4376 here. It's not a place for you. But I like it. It's only
4377 a caricature and a poor one at that, but still, it's a
4378 reminder of what Europe is.

4379 ANDREI: Kira, that Leo Kovalensky--is he in love with
4380 you or something?

4381 KIRA: Why do you ask that?

4382 ANDREI: I saw your cousin Victor at a club meeting, and
4383 he told me Leo Kovalensky was back, and he smiled as if
4384 the news should mean something to me. I didn't even know
4385 Kovalensky had been away.

4386 KIRA: Yes, he's back. He's been somewhere in the Crimea,
4387 for his health, I think. I don't know whether he's in
4388 love with me, but Victor was in love with me once, and
4389 he's never forgiven me for that.

4390 ANDREI: I don't like that man.

4391 KIRA: Victor?

4392 ANDREI: Kovalensky, too. I hope you don't see him often.
4393 I don't trust that type of man.

4394 KIRA: Oh, I see him occasionally.

4395 ANDREI (satisfied): You know, the first time I brought
4396 you here, I was ashamed to enter. I thought it was no
4397 place for a Party man. But now I like it.

4398 KIRA: Why?

4399 ANDREI: Because I like to sit in a place for no reason
4400 than to look at you across the table. Because I live a
4401 life where every hour has to have a purpose...But when I
4402 sit here...when I sit here...

KIRA: Andrei, I feel as if I were taking you away from your life, from everything that has been your life.

ANDREI: But don't you want that?

KIRA: It doesn't frighten you?

ANDREI: No... I joined the Party because I knew it was right. I love you because I know I'm right. In a way, you and my work are the same. Things are really very simple.

KIRA: Not always, Andrei. I don't belong in your world.

ANDREI: That's not what you've taught me.

KIRA (whispers helplessly): What have I taught you?

(Pause) Andrei, when you told me you loved me, for the first time, you were hungry. I wanted to satisfy that hunger.

ANDREI: And that's all?

KIRA: That's all.

ANDREI (laughs quietly): You don't know what you're saying, Kira. Women like you don't love only like that.

KIRA: Let's have a drink, Andrei.

ANDREI: You want a drink?

KIRA: Yes. Now.

NARRATOR: When the drinks arrived, he watched the glow of the glass at her lips.

ANDREI: A toast. To my life!

KIRA: Your life?

ANDREI: My only one.

KIRA: Andrei, what if you lose it?

ANDREI (impossible): I can't lose it.

KIRA: But so many things can happen. I don't want to hold your life in my hands.

ANDREI: But you do.

KIRA: Andrei...what if something should...happen to me?

ANDREI: Why think about it?

KIRA: It's possible.

ANDREI: Just because I may face a death sentence someday doesn't mean I have to prepare for it?

NARRATOR: Andrei dropped Kira at her parent's house and took a tram home. There, behind the door of her room, she heard a strange voice.

KARP (cockney): An' va store, Leo me lad, wull 'ave i' in va bes' neighbor'ood. I 'ave me eyes on a vacan' store--jus' wha' we need. One winda, narra room--no' meny squar' me'ers to pay fer--an' I slipped a couple of tenna's ta va 'Ouse Managa, see, an' 'e'll le' us 'ave a big ol' basement frown in--jus' what we need. I can take ya vere tomorra, you'll be pleased, laddy--quite pleased.

(SFX: Door Opens/Closes.)

TONIA (not exactly warmly): Oh, good evening, my dear.

LEO: You said you'd be back early.

KIRA: I got away as soon as I could.

LEO: Kira, may I present Karp Mozov. Karp, Kira.

NARRATOR: Kira was staring at the man who'd sold them food at the train station. But his station was now much improved.

KIRA: Haven't we met Citizen Karp before?

LEO: I don't think so.

KARP: Neva 'ad va bleasha, Miss Keera, never 'ad va bleasha. (Brief pause) Now, Leo, me lad, abou' va store. Va 'Ouse Managa couldn't be be'er. A few mor' tenna's an' sum vodka once in a while--wit' careful 'andlin', 'e won't cos' much. An' we'll orda new signs--Lea Kovalenski. Food Pro-ducts.

KIRA (with the violence of a slap): What are you talking about?

KARP (in conciliating drawl): I's a lit'le bu'iness deal we's discussin', Keera, dea'.

TONIA: I promised you Karpy would do a great deal for Leo.

LEO (firmly): I'll explain later.

KARP: You understan', Leo me lad, va advantage o' ve arrangement. A privat' tra'er is no easy ti'le ta bear vese days. Consi'er va rent on vese livin' quar'ers. Vat alone could swalla all yer profit. Now if we say yer va sole owna--well, va rent won' be s' much since ya jus' 'ave vis one room 'ere to pay fer. Now me, fer instance, we 'ave free rooms, Tonia an' me, so if they bran' me a privat' tra'er--Good Lord Almigh'y!--va rent on vat 'ould wreck va whol' bu'iness.

LEO: I'll carry it. I don't mind if I'm called private trader or Mephistopheles.

KARP (chuckles too loudly): Vat's it--vat's va spiri'! Now ya won' regret i', ya won' regret i'! Va profi'--Lord blessus! --va profi'll make what-vey-call "bourgeoisee" look like begga's. We'll sweep in va rubles, easy as pickin' 'em off da street. A year o' two an' we's 'r' own mastas. A few 'undreds slipped where necess'ry an' we can fly abroad--to Pariee, or Mon'e Carlo, 'r' any of vem foreign places vat are bleasan' an' artistic. Eh, me scrumptious? Me 'oney bun?

TONIA (affectionately modest): Not here, Karpy dear, not here.

LEO: But that friend of yours--the Communist--that's the danger point in this whole scheme. Are you sure of him?

KARP: Leo, laddy, ya don' fink I'm a 'elpless babe makin' me firs' steps in bu'iness, do ya? I'm as sure o' 'im as o' va eternal salvation ofar souls, vat's 'ow sure I am. 'E's a smar' a young man as ya could eva 'ope to fin'. Quick an' reasonable. No' one of vem windbags 'at like to 'ear vemselves talk. Course, 'e's va one 'oo takes va big chance. One of us common folk might wiggle ou' wit' a tenna in Siberia, but fer one of vem Par'y men--it's bang-bang an' no time ta say bye.

TONIA: I've met the young man. He's smart and thoroughly dependable. You can have absolute faith in Karpy's business judgement.

KARP (In a whisper): 'E's got one o' vem engineerin' positions wit' va trains--'e's got pull in all die-rections see. All 'e 'as ta do is make sure a food shipment 'ere an' vere is damaged a bi'--dropp'd accident-ly, 'r somethin' like vat--an' see ta i' i's pr'nounced w'rthl'ss. Vats all. Va rest is simple. Va

shipment goes quietly ta va basemen' of 'r little store. Nothin' suspicious--jus' supplies see. We wai' a couple weeks an' break up va load an' ven ship i' to 'r customers--privat' deale's all over Russia, a whol' net of 'em--I 'ave all ve addresses. An' vat's all. Who 'as ta know? If anyone comes snoopin' roun' va store--well, we'll 'ave sum punk clerk vere an' 'e'll sell 'em 'alf a poun' of but'er if vey ask fer i', and vat's all we's doin' for all vey know--retail trade--open and legi'!

TONIA: And if anything should go wrong, that young Communist...

KARP (whispers): Yes, 'e 'as connections in va KGB. A bowerful friend an' protect'r. I'd be scared ta mention 'is name.

KIRA: Who?

KARP (smilingly chuckles):

LEO: We'll be safe from that quarter if we have enough money.

KARP: Why, Leo me laddy, we'll 'ave so much money yull be rollin' tenna's into cigarettes. Now, we'll spli' i' free ways, you understan'--me, you an' va Communis'. We'll 'ave to slip a lit'le to 'is friends a' va trains--an' va 'Ouse Managa--an' we'll pay yer rent 'ere. But ya 'ave to rememba--yer va sole owna--it's yer store, in yer name. I 'ave my position wit' va Food Trust to fink about. If va store were in my name, vey'd kick me ou'. An' ya can see 'ow useful my job will be ta us.

LEO: You don't have to worry--I'm not afraid.

KARP: Ven it's set'led. Why, lad, a monf from now ya won't believe ya ever lived like vis. Yull put some flesh on vese sunken cheeks o' yers an' some pret'y clothes an' a diamond bracelet 'r two on Miss Keera 'ere an' ven maybe a mo'or car an'...

(SFX: Kira rises--her chair clattering against the wall.)

KIRA: Leo, are you insane? Have you lost your mind?

LEO: Just when did you decide you could talk to me like that?

KIRA: If this a new way of committing suicide, there are much simpler ones!

4554 TONIA (cooly): Really, Kira, you are unnecessarily
4555 tragic about it.

4556 KARP: Now, now, Miss Keera, si' down an' calm yerself
4557 an' le's talk i' ova quietly--vere's noffing to be
4558 exci'ed abou'.

4559 KIRA: Don't you see what they're doing? You're nothing
4560 but a living screen for them--they're investing money,
4561 you're investing your life.

4562 LEO: I'm glad to find some use for it.

4563 KIRA: Leo, listen to me--think it over: you know how
4564 hard life is these days--you don't wanna make it harder,
4565 do you? It's difficult enough to keep out from under the
4566 wheels of the government machine as it is. You want to
4567 invite it to grind you? You know it's the firing squad
4568 for anyone caught in a criminal speculation.

4569 TONIA: I believe Leo has made it clear he does not
4570 require advice.

4571 KARP: Miss Keera, why use s'ch strong names fer a simpl'
4572 bu'ness proposition which is, well, nearly legal an'--

4573 LEO: You keep quiet! (Brief pause) Listen, Kira, I know
4574 this is as rotten and crooked a deal as could be made.
4575 And I know I'm taking a chance with my life. And I still
4576 want to do it. Understand?

4577 KIRA: Even if I begged you not to?

4578 LEO: Nothing you can say will change things--it's a low,
4579 disgraceful business. But who forced me into it? You
4580 think I'll spend the rest of my life crawling, begging
4581 for a job, starving, dying slowly? I've been back two
4582 weeks--have I found work? The promise of work? They
4583 shoot speculators, eh? Why don't they give us a chance
4584 at something else? You don't want me to risk my life.
4585 What is my life? I have no career, no future--I couldn't
4586 do what Victor is doing were I boiled in oil for
4587 punishment! I'm not risking much when I risk my life.

4588 KARP (sighs admiringly): Leo, laddy, 'ow youse can talk!

4589 LEO (short): You two go now. I'll see you tomorrow and
4590 we'll look at the store.

4591 TONIA: I'm surprised at you, Leo. You do not seem
4592 grateful about appreciating such a unique opportunity.

LEO: You need me, and I need you. It's a business deal.
That's all.

KARP: Shoowa, Shoowa, vat's what i' is--an' we 'preciate
yer 'elp, Leo, laddy. I's all right, Tonia, come along
now, me puffed-up lit'le 'en. (Violently under his
breath) Come!

(SFX: Footsteps. Door opens/closes.)

LEO: I won't talk about it, Kira.

KIRA (in a whisper): There's only one thing--and I
couldn't say it in front of them. You said you had
nothing left in life. What about me?

LEO: Why do you think I'm doing this--you think I'm
going to live off you the rest of my life? Stand by and
watch you dragging tours and swallowing soot over the
stove. That fool Tonia doesn't have to lead tours. She
doesn't have to scrub floors. Well, you won't have to,
either. You little fool--you don't know what life can
be. You've never seen it. Well, you're going to see it.
And I'm going to see it before they finish me. If I knew
for certain it was the firing squad in six months, I'd
still do it!

KIRA: Leo, if I begged you--if I told you I'd bless
every hour of every tour, every floor I'd have to scrub,
every parade I'd have to march in, and every Club, and
every red flag--if only you wouldn't do this--would you
still do it?

LEO: Yes.

(SFX: Kitchen door swings. Footsteps. Drink pour.)

NARRATOR: In a dark corner of the Roof Garden sit Karp
and Pavel.

KARP: I's all se'tled. I've go' him.

PAVEL: Who?

KARP: Kovalenski's va name. Young. 'Asn' a brass kopek
in va worl' an' doesn' giv' a damn. Desp'rate. Ready fer
anythin'.

PAVEL: Dependable?

KARP: Foroughly.

PAVEL: Easy to handle?

4631 KARP: Like a chil'.

4632 PAVEL: Will keep his mouth shut?

4633 KARP: Like a tomb. (pause) Besides, 'e's got a social
4634 pas'. Father execu'ed for coun'er-revolution. In case we
4635 eva need...someone ta blame.

4636 PAVEL (scheming cooly): Yeees...Now listen. I want my
4637 share in advance--on every load. No delays. I won't ask
4638 twice.

4639 KARP: O' cours'. Yull ge' it, yull--

4640 PAVEL: And another thing: I want caution. Understand?
4641 Caution. From now on, you don't know me, see? If we meet
4642 by chance--we're strangers. The fat woman delivers the
4643 money to me in that whorehouse, as agreed.

4644 KARP: Shoowa, Shoowa --I rememba ev'rythin'.

4645 PAVEL: Tell this Kovalensky to keep away from me. I
4646 don't want to meet him.

4647 KARP: Ya don't 'ave ta--no.

4648 PAVEL: Got the store?

4649 KARP: Rentin' it taday.

4650 PAVEL: All right. Now sit still. I go first. You sit
4651 here twenty minutes. Understand?

4652 KARP: Shoowa. Va Lord blessus.

4653 PAVEL: Keep it to yourself. Good day.

4654 NARRATOR: A secretary sat working at her desk in the
4655 office of the train terminal.

4656 PAVEL: What's doing?

4657 SECRETARY: There are citizens outside, Comrade Pavel,
4658 waiting to see you.

4659 PAVEL: What about?

4660 SECRETARY: Mostly jobs, Comrade Pavel.

4661 PAVEL: Can't see anyone today. Got to hurry to the Club.
4662 Have you typed my report?

4663 SECRETARY: Yes, Comrade Pavel. "Trains: The Blood
4664 vessels of the Proletarian State." Here it is.

4665 PAVEL: Fine.

4666 SECRETARY: Those citizens out there, Comrade Pavel,
4667 they've been waiting for three hours.

4668 PAVEL: Tell them to go to hell. They can come tomorrow.
4669 If anything important comes up, call me at the Club. And
4670 by the way, I'll be in late tomorrow.

4671 SECRETARY: Yes, Comrade Pavel.

4672 NARRATOR: Pavel and Victor walk home together from the
4673 Communist Club.

4674 PAVEL (cheerful): Think I'll throw a party tonight,
4675 Victor. Haven't had any fun for three weeks. Feel like
4676 dissipating? What do you say?

4677 VICTOR: Swell.

4678 PAVEL: I know a fellow that can get vodka--the real
4679 stuff.

4680 VICTOR: I don't know, Pavel.

4681 PAVEL: Let's celebrate, eh? Haven't we earned it?

4682 VICTOR: Sure but...

4683 PAVEL: The vodka will be on me--you had nothing to d
4684 with it.

4685 VICTOR: Ok.

4686 PAVEL: Who'll we call? Let's see Grishka and Maxim with
4687 their girls.

4688 VICTOR: And Marisha.

4689 PAVEL: Of course, your Marisha. And Valka--there's a
4690 girl!--she'll bring half a dozen fellas along.

4691 VICTOR: Perfect.

4692 PAVEL: Say, Victor, you think I should invite Comrade
4693 Sonia?

4694 VICTOR: Sure--why not?

4695 PAVEL: That cow's after me. Has been for over a year.
4696 I'll be damned if I... But I have no appetite, you see.

4697 VICTOR: Well, you've got to be careful. If you hurt her
4698 feelings, with Comrade Sonia's position...

PAVEL: I know. Hell! Two unions and five woman's clubs--
wrapped around her little finger. (Brief pause) Oh, all
right, I'll call her.

NARRATOR: In Pavel's room, the curtains have been pulled
and an orange scarf has been draped over the lamp.
Guests are drunk and strewn over the furniture and on
the floor.

PAVEL (staggering across the room--muttering in an
offended, insistent voice) A drink...Who wants a drink?
... Doesn't anyone want a drink?...

MALE PARTYGOER (calling): Hey, Pavel, your bottle's
empty...

PAVEL (after throwing bottle under bed): So you think I
haven't any more? Think I'm a piker, do you? ...A measly
piker who can't afford enough vodka?...Well, I'll show
you...

(SFX: Fumbling in a box.)

PAVEL: I can't afford it, can I? (giggling, he smashes
bottle against a book case)

MALE PARTYGOER: Christ, Pavel!

FEMALE PARTYGOER: My stockings...my stockings!

MALE PARTYGOER: Never mind, sweetheart. Take 'em off.

PAVEL (giggles triumphantly): So I can't afford it, can
I?...Comrade Pavel can afford anything now!...Anything
on this God-damn earth!...He can buy you all--guts and
souls!

FEMALE PARTYGOER: Say, Sonia, why did you have Dashka
fired from the office? She needed the job--and honest...

SONIA (a bit tipsy): I do not discuss business outside
of the office. Besides, my actions are always motivated
by the good of the collective.

FEMALE PARTYGOER: Oh, sure, I don't doubt that but,
listen, Sonia--

SONIA: Come here, Pavel. You'd better sit down. Here.
Let me make you comfortable.

PAVEL: You're a pal, Sonia--you're a real pal. Now you
wouldn't holler at me if I made a little noise, would
you?

4737 SONIA: Of course not.

4738 PAVEL: You don't think that I can't afford a little
4739 vodka--like some skunks here think--do you, Sonia?

4740 SONIA: Of course not, Pavel. Some people just don't know
4741 how to appreciate you.

4742 PAVEL: That's it. I'm not appreciated. I'm a great man.
4743 But they don't know it. No one knows it...I'm going to
4744 be a very powerful man. I'm going to make foreign
4745 capitalists look like mice. That's right: mice. I'm
4746 going to give orders to Comrade Lenin himself.

4747 MALE PARTYGOER: But Comrade Lenin is dead.

4748 PAVEL: So he is...Oh, what's the use? ...I've got to
4749 have a drink, Sonia. I feel very sad. Comrade Lenin's
4750 dead.

4751 SONIA: That's very nice of you--but you'd better not
4752 have another drink right now.

4753 MARISHA (whispering): You're a gentleman, Victor, a
4754 gentleman...Me: I'm only a gutter brat. Mother used to
4755 work as a cook in a big house with horses and carriages
4756 and I used to peel vegetables in the kitchen. And they
4757 had a son--so elegant he was, and...he had such pretty
4758 uniforms and spoke all sorts of foreign languages--he
4759 looked just like you. And I didn't even dare look at
4760 him. And now I have a gentleman of my own--isn't that
4761 funny? Marisha, the vegetable peeler!

4762 VICTOR (drowsily): Oh, shut up and come here!

4763 FEMALE PARTYGOER: When are you two going to get
4764 registered at the marriage office?

4765 MARISHA: We'll be registered. We're engaged.

4766 PAVEL: You're a rare woman, Sonia. You understand me.

4767 SONIA: I always said you were the most brilliant young
4768 man in our collective.

4769 PAVEL: But no one appreciates me.

4770 SONIA: I do.

4771 PAVEL: You're a pal, a real pal. A fellow needs a
4772 woman...A smart, understanding, strong and hefty woman--
4773 who cares for those skinny scarecrows? ...I like a woman
4774 like you, Sonia. They think Pavel's just gonna eat out

4775 of slop pails all his life... Well, I'll show 'em!
4776 Pavel'll show 'em whose got the whip...I've got a
4777 secret...a great secret, Sonia...I can't tell you...But
4778 I've always liked you, Sonia...I've always needed a
4779 woman like you, Sonia, soft and comfortable...

4780 (SFX: Tall bookcase is pulled down with a thundering crash.)

4781 NARRATOR: Wiping his nose with the back of his hand, the
4782 young clerk wrapped a pound of butter in a newspaper.

4783 YOUNG CLERK: Best butter in town, citizen--very best in
4784 town.

4785 YOUNG FEMALE CUSTOMER: What's the name of this store
4786 again?

4787 YOUNG CLERK: Leo Kovalensky Food Products, ma'am.

4788 (SFX: Coins dropped on counter. Door opens/closes.)

4789 LEO: Ma'am.

4790 YOUNG FEMALE CUSTOMER (giggles in approval at his
4791 attentions):

4792 (SFX: Footsteps. Doors opens/closes. Footsteps.)

4793 YOUNG CLERK: Good day, Leo, sir.

4794 LEO: I told you: don't say my name. Any cash in the
4795 register?

4796 YOUNG CLERK: Yes, sir, business was good today, sir.

4797 LEO: Let me have it.

4798 YOUNG CLERK: But Comrade Karp said last time you--

4799 LEO: I said let me have it.

4800 YOUNG CLERK: Yes, sir.

4801 LEO: Did that shipment arrive last night?

4802 YOUNG CLERK: Yes.

4803 LEO: Now shut up.

4804 YOUNG CLERK: Yes, sir.

4805 LEO: I won't be in again today. Keep the store open till
4806 the usual hour.

4807 YOUNG CLERK: Yes, sir. Good day, sir.

4808 (SFX: Footsteps. Door open/close.)

NARRATOR: At the flea market, Leo stopped at a little booth selling old vases, clocks and candlesticks.

LEO: I want something for a gift. A wedding gift.

OLD MALE SHOPKEEPER: Yes, indeed. For your bride, sir?

LEO: No--for a friend.

OLD MALE SHOPKEEPER: How about this marble clock, sir?

LEO: I want something better.

OLD MALE SHOPKEEPER: Yes, indeed, sir--something beautiful for a beloved friend.

LEO: No. For someone I hate. (Brief pause) What's that?

OLD MALE SHOPKEEPER: Ah, that, sir! (whispering) Genuine Sevres, sir. A royal object, sir--a truly royal object.

LEO: I'll take it.

NARRATOR: The clerk swallowed and fumbled at his tie--for Leo hadn't even asked the price.

FEMALE TOUR GUIDE: We, Proletarian tour guides, are a part of the great peace-time army of educators, imbued with the practical methodology of...

NARRATOR: In the ninth row, Kira tried to listen, if only to drown out the voices in her head.

ANDREI: Why do I see you so seldom?

LEO: What are these visits of yours? You said you were at Irina's yesterday, but you weren't? Where were you?

KIRA: Yes, a splendid speech, Comrade. Our cultural duty to the proletariat is our primary goal.

NARRATOR: At home, a maid hurried from the hissing stove to take Kira's coat.

KIRA: Leo hasn't returned yet, has he?

MAID: No ma'am.

NARRATOR: The maid quickly helped Kira out of her tattered old clothes into new ones from the wardrobe. Kira had to keep her job as a Soviet employee--and wearing her old clothes outside the house protected that job.

(SFX: Door open/close. Footsteps.)

LEO: Isn't dinner ready yet? How many times have I told you I don't want that thing smoking when I come home?

MAID: It's ready, sir.

KIRA: Have you bought the present?

LEO: Here. Don't unwrap it--it's fragile. Let's eat--we'll be late.

NARRATOR: After dinner, the maid washed the dishes and left. Kira sat lining her lips with a French lipstick.

LEO: You're not wearing that dress, are you?

KIRA: Yes--why?

LEO: No. Put on the black velvet one.

KIRA: I don't feel like dressing up--not for Victor's wedding. I wouldn't go at all, if it weren't for Uncle Vasili.

LEO: Well, since we're going, I want you to look your best.

KIRA: Leo, is it wise? He's going to have many of his Party friends there. Why show them we have money?

LEO: Why not? Let them see we have money. I'm not going to act like trash for the benefit of trash.

KIRA: All right, Leo. (Brief pause) I want to see what you bought for them.

LEO: Just a vase. You can see it if you like.

(SFX: Newspaper unwrapped from vase.)

KIRA: Leo! This cost a fortune!

LEO: Of course. It's Sevres.

KIRA: We can't give them this--it's too dangerous.

LEO: Nonsense.

KIRA: Leo, you're playing with fire--why bring such a present for all the Communists to see?

LEO: That's exactly why.

KIRA: But they know a regular private trader couldn't afford gifts like this.

LEO: Oh, stop being foolish!

4878 KIRA: Take it back.

4879 LEO: I won't.

4880 KIRA: Then I'm not going to the party.

4881 LEO: Kira...

4882 KIRA: I'm serious.

4883 LEO: Okay.

4884 (SFX: Vase flung to floor bursting into splinters.)

4885 KIRA (dully): Leo, all that money...

4886 LEO: Will you never forget that word. Must you think
4887 about it all the time?

4888 KIRA: You promised to save. We'll need it. Things may
4889 not last as they are.

4890 LEO: We have plenty of time to start saving.

4891 KIRA: Don't you know what they mean, all those hundreds
4892 there on the floor? It's your life you're gambling--for
4893 every one of those rubles.

4894 LEO: Of course, I know. But saving? Saving is for those
4895 with a future. Me--I've trembled over money long enough.
4896 If I want to throw it away, I will--while I can!

4897 NARRATOR: In the Duneav dining room, the wedding guests
4898 shuffled in.

4899 KIRA'S AUNT: I'm so happy, so happy, my dear boy!

4900 VICTOR (grinning fixedly): Thank you, Auntie.

4901 KIRA'S MOTHER: I'm so happy, so happy, Vasili. You have
4902 a son to be proud of.

4903 UNCLE VASILII (distractedly): What? Oh, yes, yes...

4904 KIRA (formally/loudly): Good evening, Andrei. I'm so
4905 glad to see you.

4906 NARRATOR: His eyes told her silently he understood and
4907 would be cautious--while his hand shook hers with a
4908 impersonal smile.

4909 LEO: So you're a friend of Victor's, too?

4910 ANDREI: Like you.

4911 KIRA: Congratulations, Victor. And Marisha, you look so
4912 beautiful!

4913 NARRATOR: When Leo was busy with Lydia at the other end
4914 of the room, Kira--as if by chance--again approached
4915 Andrei.

4916 ANDREI: Victor's always inviting me. This is the first
4917 time I've accepted. I knew you'd be here. It's been
4918 three weeks, Kira.

4919 KIRA: I know. I'm sorry, Andrei. But I couldn't. I'll
4920 explain later.

4921 ANDREI: What a lovely dress. New?

4922 KIRA: Yes...a present from Mother.

4923 ANDREI: Do you always go to parties with him?

4924 KIRA: You mean Leo?

4925 ANDREI: Who else.

4926 KIRA (icily firm): I hope you don't presume to dictate
4927 who I can be friends with.

4928 ANDREI (startled): Kira! (Suddenly apologetic) I'm
4929 sorry. Of course not. It's just--I've always disliked
4930 him, is all.

4931 KIRA (conspiratorially intimate whisper with a smile):
4932 Don't worry.

4933 NARRATOR: With just two words, Kira left Andrei thrilled
4934 and catching his breath as she approached Vasili sitting
4935 in a corner.

4936 UNCLE VASILI: ...I wouldn't mind so much if he loved
4937 her. But he doesn't...Kira, you know, when he was a
4938 little boy with such big black eyes, I used to look at
4939 my customers, those ladies that were like paintings, and
4940 I wondered which one of them was the mother of the
4941 beauty who one day would be my daughter, too. Have you
4942 met Marisha's parents, Kira?

4943 KIRA'S MOTHER: So glad you're successful, Leo. I've
4944 always said a brilliant young man like you would have no
4945 trouble at all. That dress of Kira's is magnificent. I'm
4946 so happy to see what good care you take of my little
4947 girl.

NARRATOR: Victor sat on the arm of a chair occupied by a comely red head. They were laughing softly.

MARISHA: Victor, I am so happy. It's finally our day.

VICTOR (impatiently): Yes, yes. We can't neglect our guests, Marisha. Look, Comrade Sonia is alone--please go and talk to her.

NARRATOR: Marisha obeyed.

SONIA: Indeed, I cannot say I congratulate you on your choice, Comrade. A true proletarian does not marry outside of her class.

MARISHA: But Comrade Sonia, Victor is a Party member.

SONIA: I've always said that the rules of Party admission were not sufficiently strict.

NARRATOR: Marisha wandered dejectedly through the crowd of guests. Then she saw Vasili alone by the buffet, lining up bottles and glasses.

MARISHA: I know you don't like me, sir. But, you see, I love him so much.

UNCLE VASILI (expressionless): That's very nice, child.

VICTOR: Thank you, Pavel. Of course, I'm very proud of my wife's family and their revolutionary record. Her father, you know, was exiled to Siberia, under the Czar.

SONIA: Comrade Victor is a very smart man.

PAVEL (protesting): Victor's one of our best workers.

SONIA: I said--Comrade Victor's smart. I'm sure he has nothing in common with bourgeois gentleman like Kovalensky over there.

PAVEL: Say, Victor, that Kovalensky's name--it's Leo, isn't it?

VICTOR: Yes. He's a dear friend of my cousins. Why?

PAVEL: Oh, nothing. Nothing at all.

NARRATOR: Leo approached Kira and Andrei.

LEO: Am I intruding?

KIRA: Not at all.

LEO: Foreign cigarette, Comrade Andrei?

4983 ANDREI: No thanks.

4984 (SFX: Match lit. Cigarette inhale.)

4985 LEO: Sociology being the favorite science of your Party,
4986 don't you find this wedding to be of particular
4987 interest?

4988 ANDREI: How so?

4989 LEO: An opportunity to observe the immutability of human
4990 nature. A marriage for reasons of state is one of the
4991 oldest customs of mankind.

4992 ANDREI: One must always remember the social class to
4993 which one's intended belongs.

4994 KIRA: Oh, nonsense! They're in love.

4995 LEO: Love isn't a part of the philosophy of the
4996 Comrade's Party. Is it?

4997 ANDREI: I'm sure that's a question that's of no interest
4998 to you.

4999 LEO: No? That's what I'm trying to figure out. You see,
5000 my theory is that members of your Party tend to place
5001 their sexual desires above their own class.

5002 ANDREI: If they do, they're not always unsuccessful.

5003 KIRA: Marisha looks happy. Why resent it?

5004 LEO: I resent the presumption of "friends" ---

5005 ANDREI: --who don't know the limits of a friend's
5006 rights--yes?

5007 VICTOR: My dear friends! Let us all join in a toast to a
5008 man who has devoted his life to the Proletarian cause. A
5009 man who rose bravely against the Czar and who sacrificed
5010 his best years in the cold wasteland of Siberia. My
5011 beloved father-in-law, Comrades!

5012 MARISA'S FATHER: Listen here, you young whelps. I spent
5013 four years in Siberia. I spent them because I saw the
5014 people starved and ragged and crushed under a boot, and
5015 I fought for freedom. I still see the people starved and
5016 ragged and crushed under a boot. Only now the boot is
5017 red. I didn't go to Siberia to fight for a crazed,
5018 power-drunk, bloodthirsty gang that strangles the people
5019 as they've never been strangled before! Go ahead and
5020 drink all you want, drink till you drown the last bit o'

5021 conscience in your fool brains, drink to anything you
5022 wish. But when you drink to the Soviets, don't drink to
5023 me!

5024 ANDREI (laughed loudly breaking the silence):

5025 PAVEL: Comrades, there are traitors even in the
5026 Proletariat! Let us drink to those who are loyal!

5027 SONIA: Yes! Here, here!

5028 NARRATOR: Vasili approached Marisha's father.

5029 UNCLE VASILI: Let us drink to our children's happiness,
5030 even though you don't think they will be happy, and I
5031 don't, either!

5032 (SFX: Toast clink.)

5033 VICTOR: Marisha, you damn fool! Why didn't you tell me
5034 about him?

5035 MARISHA: I was scared. I knew you wouldn't like it,
5036 darling...Oh, darling, you shouldn't have...

5037 VICTOR: Shut up!

5038 NARRATOR: As Victor stormed off, Lydia staggered over to
5039 where Marisha sat at the piano.

5040 LYDIA: It's beautiful...beautiful...

5041 MARISHA: What is?

5042 LYDIA: Love. You are few--the chosen few.

5043 MARISHA: Huh.

5044 LYDIA: There are so few beautiful feelings left in the
5045 world. I'm going to play something beautiful for
5046 you...something beautiful and sad...

5047 ANDREI: Let's go, Kira. Let me take you home.

5048 KIRA: I can't, Andrei, I--

5049 ANDREI: I know. You came with him. But I don't think
5050 he's in a condition to take you home.

5051 NARRATOR: Leo's head was leaning back against an
5052 armchair and his arm was around the pretty red head's
5053 shoulders.

5054 (SFX: Footsteps. Two sets.)

5055 KIRA: Leo, we had better go home.

5056 LEO: Leave me alone. Get out of here.

5057 ANDREI: You'd better be careful of what you say.

5058 LEO: And you'd better keep away from her. And stop
5059 sending her gifts and watches and such. I resent it.

5060 ANDREI: What right have you to resent it?

5061 LEO: What right? I'll tell you what right. I'll--

5062 KIRA (firmly): Leo, people are looking at you. Now what
5063 is it you wanted to say?

5064 LEO: Nothing.

5065 ANDREI: If you weren't drunk...

5066 LEO: Then what? But maybe you're drunk too... (turning
5067 combative) because you're making a fool of yourself over
5068 a woman you have no right to--.

5069 ANDREI: Listen to me, you!

5070 KIRA: You better listen, Leo. Andrei finds this the
5071 proper time to tell you something.

5072 LEO: What is it, Comrade KGB?

5073 ANDREI: Nothing. Come on, Kira, I'll take you home.

5074 KIRA: Yes.

5075 LEO: You're not taking her anywhere! You---

5076 IRINA: Yes, he is! Go! (Back to Leo) Are you insane?
5077 What were you trying to do? Yell for all of them to hear
5078 that she's your mistress?

5079 LEO (sighs and laughs indifferently): All right. Let her
5080 go with anyone she pleases. If she thinks I'm jealous,
5081 she's mistaken.

5082 (SFX: Sound of a horse carriage on cobblestones.)

5083 ANDREI: Kira, that man is no friend of yours. You
5084 shouldn't be seen with him. (Pause) Are you too tired to
5085 stop by my house.

5086 KIRA (indifferently): No. I'm not. Let's stop.

5087 NARRATOR: When Kira came home, Leo was on the bed, fully
5088 dressed and half-asleep.

5089 LEO: Where have you been?

KIRA: Driving around.

LEO: I thought you had gone. Forever.

KIRA: Hmph.

LEO: You should leave me, Kira...I wish you could leave me...But you won't...You won't leave me, Kira...will you?

KIRA: No. Will you leave that business of yours?

LEO: No, it's too late. But before they get me...I still have you, Kira...Kira...Kira...I still have you....

KIRA (presses his face to her breast): Yes...Yes...

NARRATOR: Later, at a Party Meeting...

PAVEL: A grave new danger, Comrades, has been growing among us. We've all heard the accusations. Communism has failed, retreating before a new form of private profiteering which now rules our country. They claim we're holding power for the sake of power and have forgotten our ideals. Well, it's true that we've had to abandon Militant Communism, which brought us to the brink of starvation. And it's true we've had to make concessions to private traders. But what of it? A retreat is not a defeat. A compromise is not a surrender. But that fallacy did not defeat us--if it did take one of our our leaders--Leon Trotsky. And so his followers had to be purged--and this is why these purges will continue. We must follow, with absolute discipline, the Party program--and not the doubts and opinions of the few who still think of themselves as individuals. We don't need those who take a selfish pride in their own convictions. We need those who are not afraid of compromise. The new Communist is made of rubber not of iron! Too much of idealism is like too much of a good wine: one's liable to lose one's head. Let this be a warning to any individualists who remain in the Party: no past record will save them from the axe of the next Party purge. They are traitors and they will be kicked out, no matter who they are or what they've been!

(SFX: Thunderous applause.)

VICTOR: Congratulations, pal. I heard you've been elected VP of the Train Workers Union.

PAVEL (modestly): Yes.

5130 VICTOR: You are an example for all of us to follow. No
5131 worries about Party purges for you.

5132 PAVEL: I've always striven to keep my Party loyalty
5133 above suspicion.

5134 VICTOR: Pavel, I was wondering...You know I received my
5135 diploma from the Institute a few weeks ago...Well, the
5136 job I'm presently holding is quite unsatisfactory for a
5137 full-fledged engineer and...

5138 PAVEL: Look, I know the position in my section you seek.
5139 And I'd do anything in my power to help a friend, but...
5140 (lowering his voice) Just between you and me, there's a
5141 grave obstacle in your way. (Voice dropping to a
5142 whisper) Your Party record is magnificent, but you know
5143 how it is, there are always those inclined to suspicion,
5144 and... Well, frankly, your social past...your father and
5145 family, you know...But don't give up hope--don't give up
5146 hope! I'll do everything I can for you.

5147 NARRATOR: On his way out of the lecture hall, Andrei is
5148 stopped.

5149 SONIA (loudly so others can hear): Well, Comrade Andrei-
5150 -what did you think of the speech?

5151 ANDREI (neutral): It was...explicit.

5152 SONIA: Don't you agree with the speaker.

5153 ANDREI: I prefer not to discuss it.

5154 SONIA: You don't have to. I--we--know what you think.
5155 What I'd like to know is: why do think you're entitled
5156 to your own thoughts? Against those of the majority of
5157 your Collective? Is the majority's will insufficient for
5158 you? Is Comrade Andrei becoming an individualist?

5159 ANDREI: I'm very sorry, Comrade Sonia, but I'm in a
5160 hurry.

5161 SONIA: It's all right with me, Comrade. But a little
5162 advice, from a friend: that speech made it plain what
5163 awaits those who think themselves smarter than the
5164 party.

5165 NARRATOR: Victor came home and flung his coat on a
5166 chair.

5167 VICTOR (snapping): Dinner ready?

5168 MARISHA (apologizing): Not quite, darling. Irina's been
5169 busy and I have this thesis to write for tomorrow...

5170 VICTOR: She's in her room with that man again, isn't
5171 she?

5172 MARISHA: Well, yes...

5173 VICTOR: Did you make the bed in our room like I told
5174 you? What have you been doing all day?

5175 MARISHA: I... I've been at the Lenin Library Meeting,
5176 and then The Wall Editorial Board and then there's the
5177 thesis on Electrification I have to read tomorrow at the
5178 Club and I don't know a thing about it and I've had to
5179 read so much and...

5180 VICTOR: Well, go and see if you can heat something. I
5181 expect to be fed when I come home.

5182 MARISHA: Yes, dear.

5183 VICTOR: Father, why don't you get a job?

5184 UNCLE VASILII: What's the matter, Victor?

5185 VICTOR: Nothing. It's just rather foolish to be
5186 registered as an unemployed bourgeois and be constantly
5187 under suspicion.

5188 UNCLE VASILII: Victor, we haven't discussed our political
5189 views in a long time. But if you need to hear it--I will
5190 not work for your government so long as I live.

5191 VICTOR: But surely, Father, you're not hoping still
5192 that...

5193 UNCLE VASILII: What I am hoping is not to be discussed
5194 with a Party man. And if you're tired of the expense...

5195 VICTOR: Of course, it isn't that.

5196 (SFX: INT Door opens/closes. Footsteps.)

5197 SASHA: Good night, Mr. Duneav.

5198 UNCLE VASILII: Good night, Sasha.

5199 (SFX: Footsteps. EXT Door opens/closes.)

5200 VICTOR: Irina, I want to speak to you.

5201 IRINA: What is it?

5202 VICTOR: I want to speak to you--alone.

5203 IRINA: Anything you have to say, Father may hear it.

5204 VICTOR: All right. It's about that man.

5205 IRINA: Yes?

5206 VICTOR: I hope you realize the situation.

5207 IRINA: What at situation?

5208 VICTOR: Do you know what kind of man you are carrying on

5209 with?

5210 IRINA: I'm not carrying on with him. We're engaged.

5211 VICTOR (with an effort to control himself): Irina,

5212 that's...that's...impossible.

5213 IRINA: Is it? Just exactly why?

5214 VICTOR (mouth twitching): Listen--don't make any useless

5215 denials. I know who your Sasha is. He's up to his neck

5216 in counter-revolutionary plots. It's none of my

5217 business--I'm keeping my mouth shut. But it won't be

5218 long before others in the Party discover it. Do you

5219 expect me to stand by and watch my sister marry a

5220 counter-revolutionary? What do you think that'll do to

5221 my Party standing?

5222 IRINA: What that'll do to your Party standing concerns

5223 me less than what the cat leaves on the back stairs.

5224 UNCLE VASILI: Irina!

5225 VICTOR (roaring): You tell her! It's hard enough to get

5226 anywhere with the millstone of this family tied around

5227 my neck! You can roll straight down to hell, if you all

5228 enjoy it so nobly, but I'll be damned if you're going to

5229 drag me along!

5230 UNCLE VASILI: Victor, there's nothing you or I can do

5231 about it. Your sister loves him. She has a right to her

5232 own happiness. God knows she's had little enough of it

5233 these last few years.

5234 IRINA: If you're so afraid for your damn Party hide, I'm

5235 making enough for myself. I could starve on my own on

5236 what one of your Red clubs considers a living salary!

5237 I'd have gone long ago, if it weren't for Father and

5238 Acia!

5239 UNCLE VASILI: You won't do that, will you?

VICTOR: In other words, you refuse to give up that young fool?

IRINA: I also refuse to discuss it with you.

VICTOR: All right. Don't say I didn't warn you.

UNCLE VASILII: Victor! You're not going to harm Sasha, are you?

IRINA: Don't worry, he won't. It would be too compromising for his Party standing!

NARRATOR: When Kira happened to bump into Vava on the street, Kira almost didn't recognize her.

VAVA (timid, muttering): How are you, Kira?

KIRA: Vava, I haven't seen you for such a long time. How are you?

VAVA: I'm...I'm married, Kira.

KIRA: No... Congratulations...When?

VAVA: Two weeks ago. We didn't have a big wedding, so it was just the family. And, plus, it was a church wedding and Kolya didn't want it known at the office where he works.

KIRA: Kolya?

VAVA: Yes, Kolya Grachova, you probably don't remember him, you met him at my party...He works at the Tobacco Trust, and it's not a very big job, but they say he'll get a raise...He's a very nice boy...he...he loves me very much...Why shouldn't I have married him?

KIRA: Who said you shouldn't have?

VAVA: What was there to wait for? What does one do with oneself, these days, if one isn't...if one isn't a...? What I like about you, Kira, is that you're the first person who didn't say you hoped I'd be happy.

KIRA: But I do hope it!

VAVA (unconvincingly): Well, I'm happy! (even less so) I'm perfectly happy! (Pause--in a whisper) Kira, do you think he's happy?

KIRA: Victor's not a person who cares about being happy.

VAVA: I wouldn't mind if she were pretty. But I saw her. Oh, well, it doesn't concern me. Anyway, I'd like you to come over and visit us, you and Leo. Only...only we haven't found a place to live yet. I moved into his room because well, father didn't approve, you see and Kolya's room--it's a former storage closet in a big apartment so... But when we find a room, I'll invite you to come over and... Well, I have to run...Good-bye, Kira.

KIRA: Good-bye, Vava.

NARRATOR: Sonia rang the bell at Pavel's building.

PAVEL'S LANDLADY: Comrade Pavel? He's not in.

SONIA: I'll wait.

PAVEL'S LANDLADY (suspiciously chewing her lips): Don't see how you can wait, citizen--we got no reception room.

SONIA: I'll wait in Comrade Pavel's room.

PAVEL'S LANDLADY: But citizen...

SONIA: I said I'll wait in Comrade Pavel's room.

(SFX: Footsteps down hallway. Door opened.)

PAVEL: Sonia, my dear! (Laughs loudly) It's you! My dear, I'm so sorry. I was busy and had given orders...but had I known...

SONIA (dismissing subject): It's quite all right. I only have half an hour as I'm on my way to the Club to open a Lenin's Nook. I have something important to tell you.

PAVEL: Here, sit.

SONIA: Pavel, we're going to have a baby.

PAVEL: A...?

SONIA: A baby, that's right.

PAVEL: What the...!

SONIA: It's been three months, I know.

PAVEL: Why didn't you tell me sooner?

SONIA: I wasn't sure.

PAVEL: But hell! You'll have to...

SONIA: It's too late to do anything now.

5309 PAVEL: Why the devil didn't you...

5310 SONIA: I said it was too late.

5311 PAVEL: Are you sure it's mine?

5312 SONIA: Pavel, you're insulting me.

5313 PAVEL: What the hell are we going to do?

5314 SONIA: We're going to be married, Pavel.

5315 PAVEL: You've gone crazy. (pause) You're crazy, you know
5316 that!

5317 SONIA: But you'll have to do it.

5318 PAVEL: I will, will I? You get out of here, you...

5319 SONIA: Pavel, you shouldn't say anything you may regret.

5320 PAVEL: Listen...we're not living in a bourgeois country.
5321 There's no such thing as a betrayed virgin...and, well--
5322 if you want to go to court--try and collect for its
5323 support--and the devil take you--but there's no law to
5324 make me marry you! Marry! Hell! You'd think we lived in
5325 England or something!

5326 SONIA: Sit down, Pavel. And don't misunderstand me. My
5327 attitude on the subject is not old fashioned in the
5328 least. I'm not concerned about morals or public disgrace
5329 or any such nonsense. It is merely a matter of duty.

5330 PAVEL: Duty?

5331 SONIA: To a future citizen of our republic.

5332 PAVEL (laughs then): Cut that out! You're not addressing
5333 a Club meeting.

5334 SONIA: So loyalty to our pinciples is not part of your
5335 priate life?

5336 PAVEL: Now, Sonia, listen to me. Yours are fine
5337 sentiments and I appreciate them, but...

5338 SONIA: The future of our republic is in the coming
5339 generation. Our child shall have the advantage of a
5340 Party mother--and father--to guide its steps.

5341 PAVEL: But there are day-nurseries--you know, one big
5342 happy family, the spirit of the collective...

5343 SONIA: State nurseries will be a great future
5344 accomplishment but for now they are imperfect. Our child
5345 shall be brought up...

5346 PAVEL: Our child? How do you know?

5347 SONIA: Are you suggesting that...

5348 PAVEL: No, no, I... but...Hell, I was drunk. You should
5349 have known better.

5350 SONIA: Then you regret it?

5351 PAVEL: No, no, of course not. It's just: (whining) I
5352 can't get married right now. Really, I'd like nothing
5353 better, and I'd be proud to marry you, but look here,
5354 I've got a career to think about. I've made a fine
5355 beginning and...and it's my duty to the Party to train
5356 and perfect myself and... and... rise...rise...

5357 SONIA: I could help you, Pavel. (Then slowly) Or...

5358 PAVEL (moaning helplessly): But Sonia...

5359 NARRATOR: Later at the Train Workers Union...

5360 MALE COMRADE: Congratulations, Comrade Pavel, I hear
5361 you're going to marry Comrade Sonia!

5362 NARRATOR: Later, at Party Headquarters...

5363 PARTY SECRETARY: Well, Comrade Pavel, you're all set to
5364 go far in the world--with such a wife!

5365 NARRATOR: Later at the Marxist Club...

5366 SENIOR OFFICIAL: Come and see me anytime, Comrade Pavel.
5367 I'm always in, to your wife's husband.

5368 PAVEL: Karp, Pavel here--I need a larger share. That's
5369 right. In advance!

5370 NARRATOR: Three days later, Pavel and Sonia were
5371 married--and that evening she moved into his room.

5372 SONIA: Oh, darling, we must think of a good
5373 revolutionary name for our child.

5374 PAVEL (less than thrilled): Yes...

5375 NARRATOR: A hand knocked hard on Andrei's door.

5376 ANDREI: Who's there?

5377 TIMO: It's me, Timo.

5378 (SFX: Footsteps. Door open.)
5379 TIMO: Mind if I butt in?
5380 ANDREI: Come in, come in!
5381 (SFX: Door close.)
5382 ANDREI: I thought you'd forgotten your old friends.
5383 TIMO: No... but some of 'em are only too damn glad to
5384 forget me...I don't mean you, Andrei. Not you.
5385 ANDREI: Sit down. Aren't you cold?
5386 TIMO: Me? Na, I'm never cold. And if I was, it would do
5387 me no good 'cause this here is all I've got...Sure, all
5388 right, I'll sit down. Ya want me to 'cause you think I'm
5389 drunk.
5390 ANDREI: No, but...
5391 TIMO: Well, I am drunk. But not very much. Jus' a
5392 little.
5393 ANDREI: Where have you been? I haven't seen you for
5394 months.
5395 TIMO: I was kicked out of the KGB, you know that.
5396 ANDREI: I heard.
5397 TIMO: Not reliable. Not revolutionary enough. Timo of
5398 the Red Baltfleet.
5399 ANDREI: I'm sorry.
5400 TIMO: Who's asking for sympathy! (Brief pause) Hmph.
5401 You've got a funny place here. Hell of a place for a
5402 Communist to live in.
5403 ANDREI: I don't mind. I could move but rooms are so hard
5404 to come by these days.
5405 TIMO: Sure. It's hard for ol' Andrei. It wouldn't be
5406 hard for ol' Pavel though, would it? It wouldn't be hard
5407 for any bastard that uses a Party card as a butcher
5408 knife. It wouldn't be hard to throw some poor devil out
5409 on the ice of the Neva River.
5410 ANDREI: Now you're talking nonsense. Would you like
5411 something to eat?
5412 TIMO: No. Hell, no... What--you think I'm starving?

5413 ANDREI: No, I didn't--

5414 TIMO: Well, don't. I got plenty. I just came 'round
5415 because--well, I thought little ol' Andrei needed
5416 someone to look after 'im. Needed it badly. Will need it
5417 badly.

5418 ANDREI: What are you talking about?

5419 TIMO: Just talking. Can't I talk? Are you like the rest
5420 of 'em? Want everybody to talk--talk, talk, talk--
5421 without the right to say anything?

5422 ANDREI: Here, put that pillow under your neck and take
5423 it easy. Rest. You're not feeling well.

5424 TIMO: Who, me? Never felt better in me life. Feel Free.
5425 And Finished. No worries. No worries of any kind.

5426 ANDREI: Timo, why don't you come here more? We used to
5427 be friends. We could help each other.

5428 TIMO (grinning somberly): I can't help you, kid. I could
5429 help you if only you'd take me by the scruff of me neck
5430 and kick me out and everything that goes with me--and go
5431 and bow very low and lick a very big boot. But you
5432 won't. And that's why I hate you, Andrei. And why I wish
5433 you were my son. The son I'll never have. The only sons
5434 Timo has are strewn all over the whorehouses of this
5435 lousy country. (Brief pause) What are you doing here,
5436 Andrei?

5437 ANDREI: Studying. I have three years left at the
5438 Institute.

5439 TIMO: Think you'll need it?

5440 ANDREI: Need what?

5441 TIMO: The learnin'.

5442 ANDREI: Why wouldn't I?

5443 TIMO: Did I tell you they kicked me out of the KGB? Oh,
5444 yeah, I told you. But they haven't kicked me out of the
5445 Party. Not yet. But they will. The next purge--I go.

5446 ANDREI: Not necessarily. You can still...

5447 TIMO: C'mon, Andrei. You know it. And who do you
5448 think'll go next?

5449 ANDREI: Who?

TIMO: You.

ANDREI (quietly): Maybe.

TIMO: Gimme a drink!

ANDREI: No, you've had too much.

TIMO: Have I? Have I not a reason to drink? Eh? (Brief pause) If I tell ya, you'll say I don't drink enough, you poor little pup in the rain, that's what you'll say! (Pause) Once, we made a revolution. We said we were tired o' hunger, of sweat, of lice. So we cut throats, and broke skulls to wash a clean road for freedom. Now look. Look, Comrade, Party member since nineteen-fifteen! Do you see where men live? What they eat? Ever seen a woman falling on the street, vomiting blood, dyin' o' hunger? I have. Seen the black limos speeding at night? Seen who's in 'em? A nice little comrade we have in the Party--a smart young man with a brilliant future. Pavel. Ever seen him open his wallet to pay for a whore's champagne? Ever wonder where he gets the money? Ever go to the European roof garden? If you had, you'd see the respectable Citizen Karp getting indigestion on caviar. Who's that? Just assistant manager of the State Food Trust. Look at our Party. Members with ink still wet on their tickets reaping the harvest from the soil our blood fertilized. But we're not red enough for 'em. We didn't lose our conscience when the Czar lost his throne. Cuz we remind 'em that they've lost the battle, strangled the revolution, sold out the people--that there's nothing left now but power, brute power. They don't want us, Andrei. Not me and not you. You don't see it. And I'm glad you don't see it. I only hope I'm not there on the day you do!

(SFX: Footsteps.)

ANDREI: Where are you going?

TIMO: Anywhere but here.

ANDREI: Wait! You think I don't see it? But screaming about it won't help. And drinking yourself to death won't help either. But one can still fight.

TIMO: You fight. I'm going to have a drink.

ANDREI: Timo, why don't you stay here for a while?

TIMO: No. I don't want to see you, Andrei. I don't want to see that damn face of yours. You see, I'm an old battleship, ready for the scrap heap, with all its guts rusted and rotted. I don't mind that. I'd give the last of these rotted guts to help the only man I know left in the world--and that's you. I don't mind that. What I mind is that I know that I could take my guts out and give 'em to you--and it still wouldn't save you!

NARRATOR: Kira stood looking at a building under construction when a hand touched her shoulder.

MILITIA-MAN: You've been standing here for half an hour, citizen. What do you want?

KIRA: Nothing.

MILITIA-MAN: Well, then, on your way, citizen.

KIRA: I was just looking.

MILITIA-MAN: You have no business looking.

NARRATOR: Kira turned and walked away. Against her skin, sewn to her skirt, a little pocket was growing thicker and thicker, by the week, with money she managed to save from Leo's reckless spending.

KIRA: Someday--abroad...someday...

NARRATOR: There'd been a political exam at the Tour Center and Kira could recite the latest about the strike in England and about schools for illiterates in Turkestan but couldn't name how much coal was produced by the mines.

MALE EXAMINER (sternly): Don't you read the newspapers, comrade?

KIRA: Yes, comrade.

MALE EXAMINER: Well, I would suggest you read them more thoroughly. We don't need limited specialists who know nothing outside their narrow professions. Our modern educators must be politically enlightened and show an active interest in all the details of our Soviet Reality...Next!

NARRATOR: But by the time Kira reached her house, the thought she might lose her job was forgotten and her only thoughts were of Leo. Would she find him reading a foreign book, barely answering, refusing to eat and

chuckling coldly? Or drunk, staggering across the room, laughing, tearing up money when she spoke of what he had spent. Or discussing art with Tonia, yawning, talking as if he did not hear his own words? Or one of the rare occasions he smiled at her--his eyes young and clear--and pressed money into her hand?

LEO: Hide it from me...For the escape. Abroad...We'll do it...someday...if you can keep me from thinking...until then...If you can only keep from thinking...

NARRATOR: Once in a while, when Leo was busy at the sore, Irina came to visit.

IRINA: Kira, I...I'm afraid...It's only sometimes, but...I'm so afraid...What's going to happen to us? It's not the question itself, but the fact you can't ask it. You watch people, and you know they feel the same, but you can't question 'em about it, cuz if you did, they couldn't explain it, either...We're all trying so hard not to think--beyond the next day, the next hour... I think they're doing it deliberately. That's why we have to work so hard. And why, after we've worked and stood in a few lines, we have social activities to attend, so we don't have time to think. I almost got fired from the Club last week cuz I was as ked about the new oil wells, and I didn't know a thing about them. Why should I know about oil wells if I earn my millet drawing rotten posters? Sure, I need the kerosene for the stove. But does it mean that in order to have kerosene in order to cook millet, I have to know the name of every stinking worker in every stinking well where the kerosene comes from? (Brief pause) And there's nothing we can do about it. If we try, it's worse. Look at Sasha...Oh, Kira! I'm so afraid! ...He... Well, I don't have to lie to you. You know what he's doing. It's a secret organization and they think they can overthrow the government. Set the people free. And you and I know that any one of those great people would be only too glad to betray them all to the KGB for an extra pound of linseed oil. They have secret meetings and print things and hand them out in the factories. Sasha says we can't expect help from abroad, it's up to us to fight for our own freedom...Oh, what can I do? I'd like to stop him, but I have no right to. But I know they'll get 'im. Remember the hundreds, thousands of students they sent to Siberia last spring? You'll never hear from any of them again. Well, he'll go

to Siberia for sure. And what's the use? Kira! What's the use?

NARRATOR: On his way home, Sasha turned casually down the dark corner of his street.

YOUNG GIRL (whispers): Psst! Don't go home! Don't go home, Sasha!

SASHA (whispers): What's the matter?

YOUNG GIRL (whispers): Mother said to tell you--there are strange men--they've thrown your books all over your room...

SASHA (whispers): Thanks, kid.

NARRATOR: Having caught sight of a black limo in front of his house, Sasha hurried into a restaurant and telephoned. A strange man's voice answered gruffly. His friend had been arrested. He took a tram to the house of another friend. Another black limo. He hurried to another address. This time a vase in the window told him it wasn't safe. He took another tram. When he got out, he saw a man in a derby hat strolling casually. When he turned a corner and walked two blocks, the man in the derby was studying a shop window. He walked faster. He stopped short and looked back. The man in the derby was tying his shoes. He ran. And ran. Then he turned sharply--at the door of a house he knew well--and closed the door swiftly behind him. He waited. Thru the glass pane, he saw the man in the derby pass by--heard his steps crunching away...stopping... hesitating...coming back. Then the derby swam past again. Sasha swung up the stairs and knocked at Irina's door.

SASHA (whispers): Shhh...Is Victor home?

IRINA (whispers): No.

SASHA (whispers): Is his wife?

IRINA (whispers): She's asleep.

SASHA (whispers): Can I come in? They're after me.

NARRATOR: She pulled him in and closed the door slowly--the door touching the jamb without a sound.

Kira's mother, meanwhile, had entered Kira's with a bundle under her arm.

5610 KIRA'S MOTHER: My Lord, what a smell in this room!

5611 KIRA: Marisha's parents moved into Marisha's room and
5612 they're making sauerkraut.

5613 KIRA'S MOTHER: Isn't Leo home?

5614 KIRA: No, I'm expecting him.

5615 KIRA'S MOTHER: I just dropped in for a minute--before my
5616 evening classes. Just wanted to show you something, see
5617 if you like it...maybe you'll want to...buy it.

5618 KIRA: Buy it? What is it, Mother?

5619 NARRATOR: Unwrapping the bundle, Kira's mother held up
5620 an old-fashioned white lace gown.

5621 KIRA: Mother! It's your wedding gown!

5622 KIRA'S MOTHER: It's the school, you see. I got my salary
5623 yesterday and...well they deducted so much for my
5624 membership in the Proletarian Society--which I didn't
5625 even know I was a member of--that I didn't...You see,
5626 your father needs new shoes--the cobbler's refused to
5627 mend his old ones--and I was going to buy them this
5628 month...but with the Proletarian Society and...You see,
5629 you could alter it nicely--the dress, I mean--it's good
5630 material, I've only worn it...once...And I thought, if
5631 you liked it, for an evening gown, maybe, or...

5632 KIRA (almost severely): Mother! You know very well that
5633 if you need anything...

5634 KIRA'S MOTHER: I know, I know. You've been a wonderful
5635 daughter, but...with all you've given us already...I
5636 didn't feel I could ask...and I thought I'd rather...but
5637 then, if you don't like the dress...

5638 KIRA: I like it. I'll buy it, Mother.

5639 KIRA'S MOTHER: I really don't need it--and I don't mind
5640 at all.

5641 KIRA (lying): I was going to buy an evening gown anway.

5642 NARRATOR: Kira found her pocketbook, which was stuffed
5643 with crisp new bills from the night before.

5644 LEO (laughing): Go on, spend it! Plenty more coming.
5645 Just another little deal with Comrade Pavel. Brilliant
5646 Comrade Pavel. Spend it--spend it!

KIRA'S MOTHER: Why, not all that, child! It isn't worth that.

KIRA: Of course it's worth it--all that lovely lace?
...Let's not argue, Mother...Thank you so much.

NARRATOR: Kira's mother crammed the bills into her old bag with a frightened hurry.

KIRA'S MOTHER: Thank you, child.

NARRATOR: Later, after trying the dress on and spooking herself, Kira threw it into a corner of her wardrobe.

Leo came home with Tonia.

LEO: Where's the maid?

KIRA: She had to go. You're late, Leo.

LEO: That's all right. We had dinner at a restaurant--
didn't we, Tonia? (Brief pause) You haven't changed your
mind, have you, about going with us to that opening?

KIRA: I'm sorry, I can't. Guides meeting tonight. Are
you sure you want to go? This is the third nightclub
opening in two weeks.

TONIA: This is different. This is a real casino, just
like abroad. Just like Monte Carlo.

KIRA: Gambling again, are we?

LEO (laughs): Why not? We don't have to worry if we lose
a few hundreds, do we, Tonia?

TONIA: Certainly not. We just left Karpy. (Lowering her
voice) There's another shipment coming the day after
tomorrow. How that man can handle his business! I admire
him tremendously.

LEO: I'll jump into my dinner jacket. It won't take me a
second. Do you mind turning to the window for a moment?

TONIA: I do mind. But I promise not to peek, no matter
how much I'd love to. (Coquettish giggle) Poor Karpy! He
works so much. He has a meeting tonight at the Food
Trust--he's vice-secretary you know. (Brief pause) Why
he has so many meetings and things, I'd positively wilt
of loneliness if dear Leo here wasn't gallant enough to
take me out once in a while.

NARRATOR: In a gesture from a foreign film, Leo took Tonia's arm and they left through Marisha's parents' room.

MARISHA'S FATHER: And they say private traders don't make no money. (Spits and growls)

NARRATOR: Kira put on her old coat. But she was not going to the tour guides meeting.

On a box before Andrei's fireplace--Kira sat with his face buried in her knees.

ANDREI: ...and then, when you're here, it's worth all the torture, all the waiting...Then I don't have to think any more...I'm so tired...

KIRA: What's the matter, Andrei?

ANDREI (after a pause): My Party. (Brief pause) You know it--you knew it long ago. You were right. You've been right about many things--those things we've tried not to discuss.

KIRA (whispers): Andrei, do you want to discuss it--with me?

ANDREI: Don't you think I can't see it all, myself? What our great revolution of ours has come to? We shoot one speculator, and a hundred others hire taxis every evening. When they kill a Communist, we raze villages to the ground, fire machine guns into rows of peasants crazed with misery and ten of the victim's Party brothers drink champagne at the home of a man with diamond studs in his shirt. Where did he get the diamonds? Who's paying for the champagne? We don't look too closely into that.

KIRA: Andrei, did you ever think that it was your Party--who drove the men you call speculators into what they are doing--because you left them no choice?

ANDREI: I know it...We wanted to raise men to our level. But they don't rise, the men we're ruling, they're shrinking. They're shrinking to a level no human creature's ever reached before. And we're sliding slowly down into their ranks. We're crumbling, like a wall, one by one. Kira, I've never been afraid. I'm afraid, now. I'm afraid to think. Because...because I think, at times, that our ideals could have had no other result.

5723 KIRA: I wish I could help you. But of all people, I'm
5724 the one who can help you the least. You know it.

5725 ANDREI: But you are helping me, Kira. You're the only
5726 one who is.

5727 KIRA: How?

5728 ANDREI: Because, no matter what happens, I still have
5729 you. And--in you--I still know what a human being can
5730 be.

5731 KIRA: Andrei, are you sure you know me?

5732 ANDREI: Kira, the highest thing in a man is not his god-
5733 -it's his reverence. And you, Kira, are my highest
5734 reverence...

5735 NARRATOR: A voice whispered on the other side of Irina's
5736 closet door.

5737 MARISHA (whispers): It's me. Let me in.

5738 (SFX: Door unlocked cautiously.)

5739 MARISHA (whispers): Here I brought you something to eat.
5740 Both of you.

5741 IRINA (whisper screams): Marisha!

5742 MARISHA (whispers): Keep quiet! (Brief pause) Sure, I
5743 know. But don't worry. My mouth's shut. Here, take this.
5744 It's my own bread ration. No one will notice. I know why
5745 you didn't eat any breakfast this morning, but you can't
5746 keep that up.

5747 NARRATOR: Irina jerked Marisha by the arm into her room
5748 and closed the closet door.

5749 IRINA (giggling hysterically): I...you see...oh,
5750 Marisha, I didn't expect it of you...to...

5751 MARISHA: I know how it is--you love him...Well, I don't
5752 know anything really, so I don't have anything to tell
5753 if they ask. But, for God's sake, don't keep him here
5754 much longer. I'm worried about Victor.

5755 IRINA: Do you think he...suspects?

5756 VICTOR: I don't know. He's acting queer. If he knows--
5757 I'm afraid of him, Irina.

5758 IRINA: It's just till tonight--he's leaving...tonight.

MARISHA: I'll try to watch Victor for you.

IRINA (voice breaking): Marisha...I can't...I can't...

MARISHA: Hell, nothing to cry about.

IRINA: It's just...I haven't slept for two nights
and...Marisha, you're so...so...

MARISHA: Oh, that's all right. (Brief pause) Well, so
long.

NARRATOR: After listening for sounds in the house, Irina
slipped noiselessly back into the closet.

SASHA: Irina, I think I'd better go now.

IRINA: Of course not--I won't let you.

SASHA: Listen, I've been here two days. That was never
my intention. I'm sorry I gave in to you. If anything
happens--do you know what they'll do to you for this?

IRINA: If anything happens to you, I don't care what
they do to me.

SASHA: I expected it. But you...I didn't want to drag
you into it.

IRINA: Listen, nothing will happen. I have your train
ticket. And the clothes. Victor has a Party meeting
tonight. We'll sneak out safely. And, anyway, you can't
go now, in broad daylight. The street is surely being
watched.

SASHA: I wish I had let them take me without ever coming
here. Irina, I'm so sorry!

IRINA: Darling, I'm glad! (Laughs soundlessly) I really
think I've saved you. They've arrested everyone in your
group. I pumped that out of Victor. Everyone but you.

SASHA: But if...

IRINA: We're safe now. Just a few more hours to wait.
(pause) Then, when you get abroad, you will write me the
very first day, remember?

SASHA (dully): Sure.

IRINA: Then I'll manage to get out somehow. Just think
of it--abroad! We'll go to a nightclub, and you'll look
so funny in your dress clothes!

5795 SASHA (trying to smile): Yes, I will.

5796 IRINA: Then we'll see girls dancing in funny costumes,
5797 just like the ones I draw. And I can get a job designing
5798 those costumes and stage sets. No more posters for me. I
5799 won't draw another proletarian so long as I live!

5800 SASHA: Yes!

5801 IRINA: But I must warn you--I'm a very bad housekeeper.
5802 Really--impossible to live with. Your steak will be
5803 burned for dinner--oh, yes, we'll have steak very day!--
5804 and your socks won't be darned, and I won't let you
5805 complain--if you do, I'll batter the life out of you,
5806 you poor little helpless, delicate creature! (Hysterical
5807 laughter turning into bitten down tears).

5808 NARRATOR: Later, at the dining table...

5809 VICTOR: This mush is burned.

5810 IRINA: I'm sorry--I guess I didn't watch it closely and
5811 I...

5812 VICTOR: Is there anything else?

5813 IRINA: No, Victor, I'm sorry. There's nothing else.

5814 VICTOR: Funny, how the food seems to have disappeared--
5815 these last few days.

5816 MARISHA: No more than usual. Remember, I didn't get my
5817 bread ration this week.

5818 VICTOR: Why didn't you?

5819 MARISHA: I was too busy to stand in line.

5820 VICTOR: Why couldn't Irina get it?

5821 UNCLE VASILII: Victor, your sister is not feeling well.

5822 VICTOR: So I notice.

5823 ACIA: I'll eat your mush if you don't want it.

5824 IRINA: You've had enough, Acia. You need to hurry back
5825 to school.

5826 ACIA: I don't wanna go back. We've gotta decorate
5827 Lenin's Nook this afternoon and I hate gluing pictures
5828 outta magazines on the wall--I got bawled out twice cuz
5829 I get them on crooked.

5830 IRINA: Hurry now! You'll be late.

5831 VICTOR: Not going to work today, Irina?

5832 IRINA: No, I've telephoned. I don't feel well. I think I
5833 have a temperature.

5834 MARISHA: Better not to take a chance of going out in
5835 this weather--look at the snow.

5836 VICTOR: No, Irina shouldn't take any chances.

5837 IRINA: Just what do you mean?

5838 VICTOR: You really should be more careful--of your
5839 health, I mean. Why don't you call a doctor?

5840 IRINA: Oh, I'm not that bad. I'll be all right in a few
5841 days.

5842 VICTOR: Yes, I think you will.

5843 MARISHA: Where are you going today, Victor?

5844 VICTOR: Why do you have to know?

5845 MARISHA: Oh, nothing. I just thought if you weren't too
5846 busy, you might come over to my Club and say a few words
5847 about something. They've all heard about my prominent
5848 husband, and I've promised to bring you to address them--
5849 -you know, on Electrification or modern airplanes or
5850 something like that.

5851 VICTOR: Sorry, some other time. (Brief pause) I've got
5852 to see a man today. About a job.

5853 MARISHA: May I go with you?

5854 VICTOR: What's this? Checking up on me?

5855 MARISHA: No, no darling. No.

5856 VICTOR: Well, then, shut up. I'm not going to have a
5857 wife tagging me around.

5858 UNCLE VASILII: You looking for a new job, Victor?

5859 VICTOR: You think I'll settle for being a ration-card
5860 slave the rest of my life?

5861 MALE OFFICIAL: Are you sure? Are you sure?

5862 VICTOR: I'm sure.

5863 MALE OFFICIAL: Who else is responsible?

5864 VICTOR: No one. Just my sister.

5865 MALE OFFICIAL: Who else lives in your apartment,
5866 Comrade?

5867 VICTOR: My wife, my father, and my little sister--she's
5868 just a child. My father doesn't suspect a thing. My wife
5869 is a scatter-brained type who wouldn't notice anything
5870 right under her nose. And anyway, she's a member of the
5871 Komsomol.

5872 MALE OFFICIAL: I see. Thank you, Comrade.

5873 VICTOR: I'm merely doing my duty.

5874 MALE OFFICIAL: Comrade Victor, in the name of the USSR,
5875 I thank you for your courage. Few display devotion to
5876 the State that rises above personal ties to blood and
5877 family. That is the highest proof of loyalty a Party man
5878 can give. I shall see to it that your heroism does not
5879 remain unknown.

5880 (SFX: Doorbell.)

5881 NARRATOR: Irina shuddered and dropped her newspaper--and
5882 Marisha lowered her book.

5883 VICTOR: I'll open it.

5884 ACIA (under the table): Is this a picture of Lenin? I
5885 gotta cut out ten of 'em for the Nook. Is this Lenin or
5886 some general? I'll be darned if I can...

5887 (SFX: Footsteps. Door open/close. Two sets of Heavy boots.)

5888 MARISHA (scream muffled by hands):

5889 KGB MAN: Search warrant. (To soldiers) This way!

5890 (SFX: Heavy boots. Room door then closet door opened.)

5891 KGB MAN: Are you Citizen Irina?

5892 IRINA: I am.

5893 SASHA: Listen, she had nothing to do with it...It's not
5894 her fault...I threatened her.

5895 SOLDIER: No weapons.

5896 KGB MAN: With what?

5897 KGB MAN: All right--take him to the car. The girl too.
5898 And search the apartment.

5899 VASILII: Comrade--Comrade my daughter couldn't be guilty
5900 of--

KGB MAN: Out of my way, old man--unless you want the child to come too.

(SFX: Bootsteps. Door Open. Slam Shut.)

NARRATOR: Both Sasha and Irina were sentenced to ten years in Siberia. Vasili tried to see officials--spent hours in unheated waiting rooms--to no avail. When he came home, he did not speak--nor look at Victor--nor ask for Victor's help.

MARISHA (timidly): Here, Father, have some dinner. I cooked the noodle soup you like.

NARRATOR: Vasili was able to get granted Irina's last request--to marry Sasha before they were sent away.

MALE OFFICIAL: Well, old man, you got what you wanted. Only I don't see what good it will do them. Don't you know their prisons are three hundred and fifty kilometers apart.

UNCLE VASILI: No, I didn't know that.

NARRATOR: So Vasili had a new crusade.

UNCLE VASILI: Comrade Commissar, that's all I ask. It's not much, is it? Just send them to the same place. I know they've been counterrevolutionaries and you have a right to punish them. I'm not complaining. It's ten years--but that's all right. Only send them to the same place. What difference does it make to the State? They're so young. They love each other. It's ten years, but you know, and I know that they'll never come back--it's Siberia, and the cold and the hunger...

FEMALE COMMISSAR: What's that?

UNCLE VASILI: No, I didn't mean...Only suppose they get sick or something. They're not sentenced to death. While they're alive--couldn't you let them be together? It would mean so much to them--and so little to anyone else. I'm an old man, Commissar, and she's my daughter. I know Siberia. It would help me if I knew she wasn't alone--that she had a man there with her, her husband. You must forgive me--I've never asked a favor in my life. Just this one thing--send them to the same prison--and I'll bless you as long as I live.

FEMALE COMMISSAR: Neeext!

ANDREI: You know who denounced Irina, don't you?

5941 KIRA: Don't tell me--I don't want to hear his name.

5942 ANDREI: Then I won't.

5943 KIRA: I know you can't intercede for a counter-
5944 revolutionary but..couldn't you ask them to have them
5945 sent to the same place?

5946 ANDREI: I'll try.

5947 ECO BOSS: Pleading for a... relative, are you, Comrade?

5948 ANDREI (slowly): I don't understand, Comrade.

5949 ECO BOSS: I think you do. Keeping a mistress who is the
5950 daughter of a former factory owner is not the best way
5951 to strengthen your Party standing...Don't look startled,
5952 Comrade. You didn't think it was unknown to us, did you?
5953 And you working in the KGB! You surprise me.

5954 ANDREI: My personal affairs...

5955 ECO BOSS: Your what kind of affairs, Comrade?

5956 ANDREI: If you're speaking as my superior, I refuse to
5957 listen to anything about Citizen Kira except her
5958 political standing.

5959 ECO BOSS: Very well. I was speaking merely as a friend.
5960 You should be careful, Comrade. You don't have many
5961 friends left--in the Party.

5962 LEO: I'm going to see that skunk Pavel. He has a friend
5963 high up in the KGB. He'll have to do something if I tell
5964 him to.

5965 KIRA (not hopeful): I hope he will.

5966 LEO: Damn sadists! What difference does it make if the
5967 poor kids rot together in prison? We know they'll never
5968 come back alive.

5969 KIRA: Don't tell him that. Ask him nicely.

5970 LEO: Oh, I'll ask him nicely!

5971 NARRATOR: It was busy at Comrade Pavel's office.

5972 LEO: I want to see Comrade Pavel at once.

5973 SECRETARY: Comrade Pavel is extremely busy, citizen, and
5974 there are all these citizens here waiting, so please...

5975 LEO: Go and tell him it's Leo Kovalensky. He'll see me
5976 fast enough.

5977 (SFX: Footsteps. Door open.)
5978 SECRETARY: Go right in, Citizen Kovalensky.
5979 (SFX: Door close.)
5980 PAVEL (angry whisper): You damn fool! Are you insane?
5981 How dare you come here?
5982 LEO (laughing icily): You're not speaking to me, are
5983 you?
5984 PAVEL: I can't talk to you here!
5985 LEO: You don't have to. I'll do the talking. I have two
5986 friends sentenced to ten years in Siberia. They've just
5987 been married. But they're being sent to prisons hundreds
5988 of kilometers apart. I want you to see that they're sent
5989 to the same place.
5990 PAVEL: Yes, I've heard about it. A beautiful example of
5991 Party loyalty on the part of Comrade Victor.
5992 LEO: Don't you think it's slightly ludicrous, you
5993 talking Party loyalty to me?
5994 PAVEL: What are you going to do then--if I don't lift a
5995 finger?
5996 LEO: I could do a lot.
5997 PAVEL (complaisantly): Sure. I also know you won't.
5998 Because to drown me, you'd have to be the stone tied
5999 round my neck and I don't think your noble unselfishness
6000 extends that far.
6001 LEO: Look--drop the pose. We're both crooks--you know it
6002 and I know it--and we can't stand each other. But we're
6003 in the same boat--and it's not a very steady one. Don't
6004 you think it would be wiser if we helped each other as
6005 much as we could?
6006 PAVEL: Yes, I do. And your part is to keep as far away
6007 from me as you can. If you weren't so damn blinded by
6008 your arrogance, you'd know better than to ask me to
6009 intercede for any cousins of yours, which would be as
6010 good as putting on a poster my exact connection to you.
6011 LEO: You coward!
6012 PAVEL: Maybe I am--but maybe it would do you good to
6013 acquire some of the same quality. Remember: even if we

are chained together, I have more opportunities than you to break the chain.

MARISHA (hesitantly): Victor, dear, don't you think that if I saw someone and asked...You know, just to send them to the same prison...it wouldn't make any difference to anyone...and... (Squeals in pain)

VICTOR (through his teeth): Listen! You keep out of it, you understand? How would that look for me? My wife begging for counterrevolutionaries!

MARISHA: But it's only...

VICTOR: You breathe one word--just one to anyone--and you'll get a divorce notice the next morning!

(SFX: Interior door open/close. Footsteps.)

UNCLE VASILII: Victor, I want to talk to you.

MARISHA: I'll go clean up the dishes.

UNCLE VASILII: Victor, you know what I could say. But I won't say it. I won't ask questions. It's a strange time we're living in. Years ago, I felt sure of what I knew--what was right. But now I don't know. I just don't know. You're my son, Victor. I love you. I can't help it, as you can't help being what you are. I've wanted a son ever since I was younger than you are now. I never trusted men. So I wanted a man of my own, at whom I could look at proudly, directly, as I'm looking at you now. I can't say anything against you, Victor. I can't think of anything against you. I'll only ask you for one favor: you can't save your sister, I know; but ask your friends--I know you have friends who can do it--just ask them to have them sent to the same prison. Just that. It won't interfere with the sentence, and it won't compromise you. It's one last favor to her--a death-bed favor, Victor, for you know you'll never see her again. Just do that--and the book will be closed. I'll never look back. I'll never try to read some of the pages that I don't want to see. That will settle all our accounts. I'll still go on having a son, and even if it's hard, sometimes, not to think, one can do it--these days, one has to, and you'll help me. Just one favor, in exchange for...in exchange for all that's past.

VICTOR: Father, you must believe me, I'd do anything in my power, if I could...I've tried but...

6055 UNCLE VASILII: Victor, I'm not asking whether you can do
6056 it. I know you can. Just say yes or no. Only, if it's
6057 no, then it's the end for you and me. Then I have no son
6058 any more.

6059 VICTOR: But, Father, it's impossible!

6060 UNCLE VASILII: I said if it's no, I have no son any more.
6061 Think of how much I've lost these last few years. Now
6062 what is your answer?

6063 VICTOR: I can do nothing.

6064 (SFX: Pause. Slow Footsteps.)

6065 VICTOR: Where are you going?

6066 UNCLE VASILII: Acia, get your coat and hat.

6067 MARISHA: Father!

6068 UNCLE VASILII: I'll telephone in a few days...when I find
6069 a place to live. Then you can send over our things.

6070 MARISHA (voice breaking): Oh, Father, you have no job
6071 and no money and... This is your house.

6072 UNCLE VASILII: This is your husband's house now.

6073 (SFX: Footsteps (2). Door Open/Close.)

6074 KIRA: I'll send you woolen mittens. Only I warn you,
6075 I'll knit them myself, so don't be surprised if you
6076 won't be able to wear them.

6077 IRINA: No, send me a snapshot of you knitting. And I'll
6078 send you back a drawing.

6079 KIRA: I've never gotten a drawing you've promised.

6080 IRINA: You're right. Father has them all. Tell him to
6081 give you any that you want.

6082 KIRA: You promised a real portrait of Leo, remember?
6083 (Realizing what she's said) Well I guess we'll have to
6084 wait for that when you get back.

6085 IRINA: That's nice of you, Kira, only you don't have to
6086 pretend. I'm not afraid. I know it.

6087 KIRA (emotional): Irina...

6088 IRINA: C'mon! Eh? ...Eh? ...There's something I been
6089 wanting to ask you--just curiosity. What's between you
6090 and Comrade Andrei?

6091 KIRA: I've been his mistress for over a year. Leo's aunt
6092 in Berlin didn't...

6093 IRINA: That's what I thought. Well, kid, I don't know
6094 which of us needs courage more to face the future...

6095 KIRA: I'll be afraid only on a day that will never come-
6096 -the day I give up.

6097 IRINA (smile/grunts): Hmph...It's so strange. Your life
6098 begins and it's so precious and rare, like a sacred
6099 treasure. Then it's over, and it doesn't make any
6100 difference to anyone--and it isn't that they're
6101 indifferent--it's just that they don't know what it
6102 means, that treasure of mine--though there's something
6103 about it they should understand--but I don't understand
6104 it myself--something that should be understood by all of
6105 us. Only what is it, Kira? Whatu?
6106 (SFX: Door Open. Footsteps. Door Close.)

6107 ANDREI: Come in--come in! Let's get you to the
6108 fireplace. You must be frozen stiff!

6109 KIRA (shivering): Yes, I am. (rubs hands together--makes
6110 sounds of getting warm) What's this?

6111 ANDREI: Open it. Something from abroad.

6112 KIRA: A nightgown...black chiffon...where did you get
6113 this?

6114 ANDREI: From a smuggler.

6115 KIRA: You--buying from a smuggler?

6116 ANDREI: Why not?

6117 KIRA: From an illegal speculator?

6118 ANDREI: Why not? I wanted it. I knew you'd want it.
6119 (Brief pause) Well? Don't you like it?

6120 KIRA: Oh, Andrei! Do they wear things like that abroad?

6121 ANDREI: Evidently.

6122 KIRA: Black underwear...Oh, how silly and how lovely!

6123 ANDREI: Reason enough--reason enough!

6124 KIRA: Andrei, they'd throw you out of the Party if they
6125 could hear you.

6126 ANDREI: Would you like to go abroad, Kira? (Pause) I'm
6127 sorry. Did I frighten you?

6128 KIRA: What...what did you say?

6129 ANDREI: Listen! At first I thought it was insane
6130 but...it kept coming back to me...We could...You
6131 understand? Abroad...forever...

6132 KIRA: Andrei...

6133 ANDREI: It could be done. I could manage to be sent
6134 there, get an assignment, some secret mission. I'd get
6135 you a passport to go as my secretary. Once we're across
6136 the border, we'd drop our Red passports and our names--
6137 and run away so far they'd never find us.

6138 KIRA: Andrei, do you know what you're saying?

6139 ANDREI: Yes. But I don't dare think about it, when I'm
6140 alone. But when you're here I can talk about it. It
6141 would be like starting again, from the beginning. But
6142 I'd have you. The rest doesn't matter.

6143 KIRA: Andrei, you--the best your Party had to offer,
6144 you?

6145 ANDREI: Say it. I'm a traitor. Maybe I am. But maybe
6146 I've just stopped being one. Maybe I've been a traitor
6147 all these years--to something greater than what the
6148 Party ever offered. (Brief pause) I don't know. I don't
6149 care. I feel naked--naked and empty and clear. The only
6150 thing I'm certain about anymore is you. Only you. (Brief
6151 pause) What's the matter? Have I frightened you?

6152 KIRA: No, Andrei.

6153 ANDREI: Will you marry me, Kira? (Pause) Don't you see
6154 what we're doing? Why must we hide and lie? Why must I
6155 live in this agony of counting hours, days, weeks
6156 between meetings? Why have I no right to call you those
6157 times I think I'll go insane if I don't see you? Why
6158 can't I tell men like Leo Kovalensky that you're mine,
6159 that you're my...my wife?

6160 KIRA: Andrei, I can't.

6161 ANDREI: Why?

6162 KIRA: Would you do something for me--if I asked you?

6163 ANDREI: Anything.

KIRA: Don't ask why.

ANDREI: All right.

KIRA (after a pause--laughs): Let's forget it, ok? We have our own bit of Europe right here. I'm going to try on your gift. Turn around and don't look. (pause) Okay?

ANDREI: I wasn't complaining tonight you know...I'm happy...I'm happy I have nothing left but...

KIRA: Don't say it! Please, Andrei, don't say it!

NARRATOR: He didn't. But his eyes, his arms and his body cried to her without a sound.

(SFX: Telephone rings.)

NARRATOR: Kira woke in her own bed wearing her dress--Leo hadn't come home.

(SFX: Weary Footsteps.)

KIRA: 'Allo?

KARP: Is vat youse, Keera, dea'?

KIRA: Yes, who...?

KARP: I's Karp. Listen, can ya come over an' take vat...Leo 'ome? 'E really shouldn' be seen a' me 'youse so offen. Vere was a par'y an'...

KIRA: I'll be right over.

(SFX: Door opens/closes.)

KARP: Ah, Keera--'ow 'r we taday? Sorry I 'ad ta troubl' ya--come in, come in. (pause) Keera jus' 'appened ta...

KIRA: He called me.

LEO (vicious snarl): Why, you... (then shakes his head and laughs) That's a good one! So you all think I have a wet-nurse to watch me!

KARP (mock-hurt) Leo...I didn' mean ta...

LEO: Shut-up! (pause) Well, since you're here, take off your coat and have some breakfast. Tonia, see if you have another couple eggs.

KIRA: We're going home, Leo.

LEO: If you insist...

6198 KARP: Ya see, it was li' vis: I called Keera cuz I was
6199 afraid vat...well, ya weren' well, Leo, an' ya...

6200 LEO: ...were drunk.

6201 KARP: Oh, no, bu'...

6202 LEO: I was. Yesterday. But not this morning. You had no
6203 business...

6204 TONIA: It was just a little party, Kira. I suppose we
6205 did stay up a little too late, and...

6206 KARP (can't hide his anger): It wer' five o'clock when
6207 ya crawled inta bed. I know cuz ya upse' va wa'er
6208 pi'cher.

6209 TONIA: Well, Leo brought me home and I presume he
6210 must've been a little tired...

6211 KARP: A lit'le...

6212 LEO: ...drunk.

6213 KARP: Plen'y drunk, if ya ask me. (Brief pause) So drunk
6214 vat I get up vis mornin' an' find 'im sprawl'd on the
6215 davenpor' inva lobby, dress'd an' all, an' ya couldn't a
6216 waken'd 'im wit' an earthquake.

6217 LEO: Well, what of it?

6218 TONIA: It was a grand party. How Leo can spend money!
6219 Really, Leo darling, you were too reckless, though.

6220 LEO: I don't remember.

6221 TONIA: I didn't mind it when you lost so much on
6222 roulette--(letting her adoration show) and it was cute
6223 when you paid them ten rubles for every cheap glass you
6224 broke--but did you really have to give the waiters
6225 hundred-ruble tips?

6226 LEO: Let 'em see the difference between a gentleman and
6227 the Red trash of today.

6228 TONIA: But did you have to pay the orchestra fifty
6229 rubles to shut up every time they played a song you
6230 didn't like? (hurt) And did you have to choose the
6231 prettiest girl in the crowd and offer her any price she
6232 named to undress before the guests--and then stuck those
6233 hundreds down her...her...

6234 LEO: She did have a beautiful body.

6235 KIRA: Let's go, Leo.

6236 KARP: Wai' a minut'...Jus' where did ya ge' all vat
6237 money, Leo me lad?

6238 LEO: I dunno. Tonia gave it to me.

6239 KARP (growing alarm): Tonia, where did ya--

6240 TONIA: I took that package you had under the waste
6241 basket.

6242 KARP: (roaring): Tonia! Ya didn' take vat!

6243 TONIA: Of course, I took it. I'm not accustomed to being
6244 reproached about money. I took it and that's that--what
6245 are you going to do about it?

6246 KARP: My God! Oh, my Lord in 'eaven! What 'r we goin' ta
6247 do? Vat was money we owe Pavel. It was due yesterd'y.
6248 An' if I don't deliver it taday, 'e'll kill me. What am
6249 I goin' ta do? 'E won't be kept wai'in...

6250 LEO: He won't, eh? Well, he'll wait, and he'll like it.
6251 Stop whining like a puppy. He can do nothing to us, and
6252 he knows it.

6253 KARP: I'm su'prised at ya, Lea. Youse get yer fair share
6254 but fink i's 'onorable ta take...

6255 LEO: Honorable? (Laughs resonantly, gayly, insultingly)
6256 Are you using that word to me? My dear friend, I've
6257 acquired the privilege of not having to worry about that
6258 word at all. In fact, if you find something particularly
6259 dishonorable--you can be sure I'll do it. The lower--the
6260 better. (Brief pause) Come on, Kira. Where the hell's my
6261 hat?

6262 TONIA: Don't you remember? You lost it on the way home.

6263 LEO: That's right, I did. Well, I'll buy another one.
6264 Buy three of them. So long!

6265 NARRATOR: Later, when they were alone in their room...

6266 LEO: I won't have any criticism from you or anybody
6267 else. Especially you--who have no complaints to make. I
6268 haven't slept with any other woman, if that's what
6269 you're worried about and that's all you have to know.

6270 KIRA: I have no complaints and no criticism. But I wanna
6271 speak to you. Will you listen?

LEO: Sure.

KIRA: Leo, I can't blame you. I know what you're doing. I know why you're doing it. But listen: it's not too late--they haven't caught you--you still have time. Let's make a last effort--let's save all we can and apply for a foreign passport. Let's get as far away as humanly possible from this damn country!

LEO: Why bother?

KIRA: I know--you don't want to live--you don't care anymore. But even if you don't believe you'll ever care again, just postpone your final judgement on yourself--postpone it until you get there--when you're free in a human country again--then see if you still wanna live.

LEO: You little fool! You think they give foreign passports to men with my record?

KIRA: We have to try. We can't give up. We can't go on for one minute without that hope ahead of us. I won't let it get you! I won't!

LEO: Who? The KGB? How are you going to stop it?

KIRA: Not the KGB. There's something worse, much worse. It got Victor. It got Mother. It won't get you.

LEO: What do you mean, it got Victor? Are you comparing me to that bootlicking rat, that...?

KIRA: The bootlicking--that's nothing. There's something much worse that it's done to Victor--underneath, deeper, more final. It kills something. Have you ever seen plants grow without sunlight, without air? I won't let them do that to you. Not you, Leo! Not you, my highest reverence...

LEO: My highest...? Where'd you get that? Nothing is getting me. Nothing is doing anything to me.

KIRA: Leo, let's get married.

LEO: Huh?

KIRA: Let's get married.

LEO (laughs icily) What's this?

KIRA: Why not, Leo?

LEO: What for? Do we need it?

6309 KIRA: No.

6310 LEO: Then why do it?

6311 KIRA: I don't know. But I'm asking.

6312 LEO: If you're afraid of losing me--no scrap of paper,
6313 scribbled by a Red clerk, is going to hold me.

6314 KIRA: I'm not afraid of losing you. I'm afraid you will
6315 lose yourself.

6316 LEO: But a couple of rubles to a clerk and the house
6317 manager's blessing will save my soul, is that it?

6318 KIRA: Leo, I have no reasons to offer. But I'm asking.

6319 LEO: Is this an ultimatum?

6320 KIRA (with surrender and resignation) No.

6321 LEO: Then we'll forget about it.

6322 KIRA: Yes.

6323 LEO: You crazy child! You'll drive yourself into a fit
6324 with your hysterical fears. Forget about it. We'll save
6325 every ruble from now on, if that's what you want. You
6326 can put away for a trip to Monte Carlo or San Francisco
6327 or the planet Jupiter if that's what you want. And we
6328 won't talk about it again. All right?

6329 KIRA (her head on his shoulder, his name like a drug):
6330 Leo, Leo, Leo...

6331 (SFX: Telephone dialing.)

6332 PAVEL: Citizen Karp please.

6333 KARP (disguising his voice): Citizen Karp isn't at home
6334 at present.

6335 PAVEL: Hm.

6336 (SFX: Telephone Receiver hung up.)

6337 PAVEL: There's a misspelled word on the third line--
6338 re-type it. Now!

6339 (SFX: Telephone rings.)

6340 PAVEL: Pavel.

6341 SULTRY FEMALE: Pavel darling...

6342 PAVEL: Can't talk to you now.

SULTRY FEMALE: But you promised me that bracelet...

(SFX: Phone slammed down. Telephone dialing.)

PAVEL: Karp I know that's you! I want my money! Karp?
Karp?

SONIA: Really, Pavel, I've got to have a fur coat. I can't allow myself to catch a cold--you know--for the child's sake. And no rabbit fur, either. I know you can afford it. Oh, I'm not saying anything about your little activities, but...

(SFX: Spoon thrown to table. Footsteps. Door open/close.)

NARRATOR: Pavel rang three times at Karp's door before remembering he couldn't afford to be seen there. Reaching for his notebook, he wrote:

PAVEL: Karp, you bastard! If you don't come up with what's due me by tomorrow morning, you'll eat breakfast at the KGB, and you know what that means. (smiling)
Affectionately, Pavel.

NARRATOR: Pavel folded the note and slipped it under the door. A short time later, Karp tip-toed out of his bathroom to the lobby, where he picked up the note and read it--his face turning grey.

(SFX: Telephone ringing. Footsteps.)

KARP: Don' answa--don' answa!

TONIA: Must I live like a hermit!

KARP: 'Ermit! If i' weren' fer youse an' vat damn lova o' yers...

TONIA: He's not my lover--yet! If he were, do you think I'd be squatting around a sloppy old fool like you?

NARRATOR: In a dark corner of the European Roof Garden, Karp mopped his forehead with relief. He'd just spent the past two hours sitting at three different tables, smoking four different cigars and whispering into five different ears to get the money to pay Pavel.

Nearby, Timo leaned so far across the white tablecloth that he seemed to be lying on, rather than sitting at, the table.

(SFX: Glass crashes to floor.)

SNOOTY WAITER: May I help you, comrade?

6381 TIMO: Go to hell!

6382 (SFX: Another glass crashes to floor.)

6383 TIMO: I'll do as I please! I'll drink out of a bottle if
6384 I please. I'll drink out of two bottles!

6385 SNOOTY WAITER: But comrade...

6386 TIMO: Go to hell! I don't like your snout. (roaring) I
6387 don't like any of the snouts around here!

6388 (SFX: Man staggers among tables.)

6389 TIMO: Out o' my way!

6390 (SFX: Staggering man stops.)

6391 TIMO: Ah! A friend o' mine--a friend o' mine!

6392 KARP: I beg yer pardon, ci'izen?

6393 TIMO: Sit still, ol' pal. Can't run away from a friend,
6394 Comrade. We're friends, you know. Old friends. Maybe you
6395 don't remember me. Timo's the name. Of the Red
6396 Baltfleet.

6397 KARP: Oh. Oh.

6398 TIMO: Let's have a drink! Waiter! Bring us three
6399 bottles!

6400 SNOOTY WAITER: Three bottles of what, comrade?

6401 TIMO: Anything! (Brief pause) No! Wait! What's the most
6402 expensive?

6403 SNOOTY WAITER: That would be the Champagne, comrade.

6404 TIMO: Then make it champagne and quick. Three bottles
6405 and two glasses!

6406 NARRATOR: When the waiter brought the champagne, Timo
6407 grabbed the bottle poured.

6408 TIMO: Yer health, Comrade Karp!

6409 (SFX: Glasses clink in toast.)

6410 KARP (nervously ingratiating): Vis was ver' nice o' ya,
6411 comrad'. An' I 'preciat' i' ver' much. Bu' if ya don'
6412 min', I got ta be goin'...

6413 TIMO: Sit still!

6414 (SFX: Glasses re-filled.)

6415 TIMO: To the great Comrade Karp, the man who beat the
6416 revolution! (Laughs resonantly).

6417 (SFX: Glass emptied in one gulp.)

6418 KARP: Comrad'... wha' da ya mean?

6419 TIMO (laughs louder then stops abruptly--softly, with a
6420 smile) Don't look so scared, comrade. You don't have to
6421 be afraid of me. I'm nothing but a beaten wretch, beaten
6422 by you, Comrade. All I want is to tell you humbly that I
6423 know I'm beaten and hold no grudge. Hell, I admire you,
6424 Comrade. You've taken the greatest revolution the world
6425 has ever seen and patched the seat of your pants with
6426 it!

6427 KARP: Comrad', I don' know wha' youse is talkin' abou'.

6428 TIMO: Oh, yes, you do. You know more about it than I do,
6429 more than millions of young fools do, that watch from
6430 all over the world with worshipping' eyes. Tell 'em,
6431 Comrade Karp. Tell 'em!

6432 KARP: 'Onestly, comrad', I...

6433 TIMO: We made a revolution, we did--for all the
6434 downtrodden ones on the face of the earth. But you and
6435 me, we have a secret. We know the revolution was made
6436 for you, Comrade Karp, and hats off to ya!

6437 KARP: 'Oo...'oo 'r ya, comrad'?...Wha' da ya wan'?

6438 TIMO: Just to tell ya it's yours, comrade. Yours!

6439 KARP: Comrad', lemme go!

6440 TIMO: Sit, I said! Drink and listen! (brief) I don't
6441 mind that we were beaten. If we were beaten by a tall
6442 warrior in a steel helmet, a dragon spittin' fire--all
6443 right. But a big, fat, louse? To be beaten by a louse?

6444 KARP: Fer God's sake, comrad', why tell i' ta me?

6445 TIMO: Oh yeah, we killed--in the streets, in the
6446 cellars, aboard ship--all so Comrade Karp could ride in
6447 a big limo with a down pillow on the seat and drink
6448 cognac in a place like this. Take a bow, comrade--
6449 (violently) I said take a bow!

6450 KARP (higher pitch): Comrad', wha' da ya wan'? Is i'
6451 money? I'll pay, I'll...

6452 TIMO: You louse! You demented louse! Who do you think
6453 you're talking to--I'm Timo of the Red Balfleet!

6454 NARRATOR: When Karp pulled a handkerchief from his
6455 pocket to mop his forehead, a crumpled piece of paper
6456 fell out on the table. Before Karp could reach for it,
6457 Timo had grabbed his hand.

6458 TIMO: What's that, pal?

6459 KARP (nervous): Oh, vat? Vat's noffing. Noffing a' all.
6460 Jus' a scrap o' papa'.

6461 TIMO: Just a scrap of paper, eh? Well, we'll let it lie
6462 there. Let the waiter throw it away.

6463 KARP (nervous): Yes, vat's i'--we'll le' va wai'er frow
6464 i' away. (more so): We'll le' va wai'er frow i' away.

6465 TIMO: Why do ya keep looking down, comrade?

6466 KARP: Do I?

6467 TIMO: You do. Isn't it about time you were gettin' home?

6468 KARP: Oh!...well, I guess...well, i's no' so late ye'...

6469 TIMO: I thought you were in a hurry a little while ago.

6470 KARP: Well...I'm not in any particular 'urry, an'
6471 besides, such a bleasan'...

6472 TIMO: What's the matter, Comrade? Anything you don't
6473 wanna leave here?

6474 KARP: 'Oo, me? Why I'd forgotten all abou' i'. What wud
6475 I want wit' i'?

6476 TIMO: I don't know.

6477 SNOOTY WAITER: Can I bring you anything, Comrades?

6478 TIMO: Oh, I'll take that--thank you very much. (Reading)
6479 If you don't come up with what's due me by tomorrow
6480 morning, you'll eat breakfast at the KGB, and you know
6481 what that means. (Laughs uproariously.)

6482 NARRATOR: Timo rose, slipped the letter in his pocket
6483 and shuffled to the door.

6484 TIMO (chuckles repeatedly):

6485 KARP: Oh, my Lord! Oh my Lord!

NARRATOR: Karp did not send the money to Pavel. He did not go to his office at the Food Trust. He sat at home, in his room, and drank vodka.

TONIA: Here's today's paper. What the hell's the matter with you today?

KARP: Wai', wai', wai'... (more excited as he reads)
Ve body of Stepan Timo-shenko, alsa known as Timo, was foun' early vis mornin' unda a bridge, va victim of a self-inflict'd gunshot froug de mouf. No pape's, save 'is Par'y card, were foun'.

TONIA: Who's Timo?

(SFX: Telephone rings.)

KARP: I'll ge' i'.

TONIA: I thought you weren't answering.

PAVEL: Karp?

KARP: Vat youse, Pavel? Listen, I'm awful sorry bu' I 'ave de money an'...

PAVEL (hissed): Forget the money! Listen...did I leave you a note yesterday?

KARP: Yeah, I...guess I deserv'd i', I...

PAVEL: Have you destroyed it?

KARP: Why?

PAVEL: Nothing--just...Have you destroyed it?

KARP: Sure...sure. Forget abou' i'.

(SFX: Telephone Receiver hung up.)

KARP: De foo'! De damn foo'! 'E lost i'. Wander'd abou' all nigh', God knows wher', the drunken foo'--an' lost i'!

TIMO: Dear friend Andrei...I promised to say 'bye and here it is. It's not quite what I promised, but I guess you'll forgive me. I'm sick of seein' what I see and can't stand seein' it any longer. To you--as my only legacy--I'm leaving you the enclosed note. It's a lousy legacy, I know. I only hope you won't follow me--too soon...Your friend...Timo.

NARRATOR: The clerk at Leo's store wiped the linseed oil off the bottle's neck with his apron.

YOUNG CLERK: Will that be all?

ANDREI: Yes--that's all.

(SFX: Wraps bottle with newspaper.)

ANDREI: Doing good business?

YOUNG CLERK: Rotten. You're the first customer in three hours. Glad to hear a human voice. Nothing to do but sit and scare mice off.

ANDREI: Taking a loss, then.

YOUNG CLERK: Well, I don't own the joint.

ANDREI: Guess you'll lose your job soon. The boss'll have to do his own clerking.

YOUNG CLERK: My boss? (cackling laugh) Yeah, I'd like to see the elegant Citizen Kovalensky slinging herrings and linseed oil...That'll be fifty kopeks, citizen.

ANDREI: Thank you. Good night.

(SFX: Footsteps upstairs. Door knock. Door open.)

KIRA: Andrei, will you do me a favor?

ANDREI: Before I kiss you?

KIRA: No. But right after. Will you take me to the European Roof Garden tonight?

ANDREI: All right.

NARRATOR: Kira and Andrei sit in their favorite dark corner booth.

KIRA: I had a chance to go to the new ballet tonight--but I didn't--because it was revolutionary. That's why I wanted to come here.

ANDREI: Chance to go with whom?

KIRA: Oh, a friend of mine.

ANDREI: Leo Kovalensky?

KIRA: Andrei! You promised.

ANDREI: Of all your friends...

6554 KIRA: You don't like him--I know. Still, don't you think
6555 mention it too often?

6556 ANDREI: Kira, you always say you're not interested in
6557 politics...

6558 KIRA: Right...

6559 ANDREI: You've never wanted to sacrifice your life--have
6560 years taken from you--for no good reason...

6561 KIRA: What are you driving at?

6562 ANDREI: Keep away from Leo Kovalensky.

6563 KIRA: What do you mean?

6564 ANDREI: You don't wanna be known as the friend of a man
6565 who's friendly with the wrong kind of people.

6566 KIRA: What people?

6567 ANDREI: Comrade Pavel for one.

6568 KIRA: But what has Leo...

6569 ANDREI: He owns a private food store, doesn't he?

6570 KIRA: Andrei, are you being the KGB agent with me?

6571 ANDREI: I'm not questioning you. I'm just wondering how
6572 much you know about his affairs--for your own
6573 protection.

6574 KIRA: What...affairs?

6575 ANDREI: That's all I can say. I shouldn't have said even
6576 that much. But I wanted to be sure that you don't let
6577 yourself be implicated, in any way.

6578 KIRA: Implicated in what?

6579 ANDREI: Kira, I'm not a KGB agent to you.

6580 KIRA: Implicated in what?

6581 ANDREI: Kira, what is that man to you? What is he to
6582 you?

6583 KIRA: Just a friend. (Brief pause) It's late. Will you
6584 take me home?

6585 NARRATOR: After she waited to hear his steps die around
6586 the corner of her parent's hose, Kira hailed a cab.

6587 (SFX: Cab pulls up. Door Open/Close. Cab pulls away.)

6588 KIRA: The Ballet! As fast as you can!

6589 (SFX: Sound of a Ballet in progress "Dance of the Toilers".)

6590 KIRA (whispers): Leo! Come! Something's happened!

6591 LEO: What?

6592 KIRA: Outside.

6593 TONIA: Well!

6594 NARRATOR: In a corner of the empty foyer...

6595 KIRA: It's the KGB--they're after your store. They know
6596 something.

6597 LEO: What? How did you find out?

6598 KIRA: I just saw Comrade Andrei and he...

6599 LEO: You saw Comrade Andrei? I thought you were going to
6600 visit your parents.

6601 KIRA: I met him on the street.

6602 LEO: What street?

6603 KIRA: Leo, stop it! Don't you understand? We have no
6604 time to waste!

6605 LEO: What did he say?

6606 KIRA: He didn't say much. Just a few hints. He told me
6607 to stay away from you if I didn't want to be arrested.
6608 He said you had a private food store and he mentioned
6609 Comrade Pavel.

6610 LEO: So he told you to keep away from me.

6611 KIRA: Leo, don't be a...

6612 LEO: I refuse to be frightened by some jealous fool!

6613 KIRA: You don't know him, Leo! He doesn't joke about KGB
6614 matters. And he's not jealous. Why should he be?

6615 LEO: What department of the KGB is he in?

6616 KIRA: Secret service.

6617 LEO: Not the Economic Section, then?

6618 KIRA: No.

LEO: Well, come on! We'll call Karp and Pavel--and Pavel will call his friend at the Economic Section and find out what your Comrade Andrei is doing.

(SFX: Footsteps running (3)--third trails way behind.)

TONIA: Leo, I had nothing to do with the store! I only carried money to Pavel, and I knew nothing about where it came from! Leo, remember!

(SFX: Interior Door Open/Close. Footsteps.)

KIRA: Well?

LEO: Go to bed and don't dream of KGB agents.

KIRA: What did you do?

LEO: It's all done. We got rid of everything. It's on its way out of Leningrad this very minute. We had another load coming from Pavel tomorrow, but we've cancelled it. We'll be running a pure little food store--for a while. Til' Pavel can right things.

KIRA: Leo, you don't know Comrade Andrei.

LEO: No, I don't. But you seem to know him pretty well.

KIRA: Leo, they can't bribe him.

LEO: Maybe not. But they can make him shut up.

KIRA: Leo, if you're not afraid...

LEO: Of course, I'm not afraid!

KIRA: Leo, please! Listen! Leo, please! I...

LEO: Shut up!

NARRATOR: The Boss of the Economic Section of the KGB sat behind an impressive desk.

ECO BOSS: I understand you've been investigating a case under our jurisdiction.

ANDREI: I have.

ECO BOSS: Who exactly gave you the authority to do so?

ANDREI: My Party card.

ECO BOSS: Your Party card, eh? (Brief pause) And what made you begin the investigation?

ANDREI: A piece of incriminating evidence.

6653 ECO BOSS: Against a Party member?

6654 ANDREI: Yes.

6655 ECO BOSS: Why didn't you turn it over...to me?

6656 ANDREI: I wanted to have a complete case to report.

6657 ECO BOSS: Have you?

6658 ANDREI: Yes.

6659 ECO BOSS: You intend to report it to the chief of your

6660 department?

6661 ANDREI: Yes.

6662 ECO BOSS: I suggest you drop the entire matter.

6663 ANDREI: If this is an order, I'll remind you that you

6664 are not my chief. If it's simply advice, I don't need

6665 it.

6666 ECO BOSS: Discipline and loyalty are commendable traits,

6667 comrade. However, as Lenin reminded us: a Communist must

6668 be adaptable to reality. Have you considered the

6669 consequences of what you plan to expose?

6670 ANDREI: I have.

6671 ECO BOSS: You find it advisable to make public a scandal

6672 involving a Party member--at this time?

6673 ANDREI: That should have been the concern of the Party

6674 member before becoming involved.

6675 ECO BOSS: Do you know my...interest in that person?

6676 ANDREI: I do.

6677 ECO BOSS: Does that knowledge make any difference in

6678 your plans?

6679 ANDREI: No, sir.

6680 ECO BOSS: Have you ever considered that I could be of

6681 service to you?

6682 ANDREI: No, sir.

6683 ECO BOSS: Don't you think it's an idea worth

6684 considering?

6685 ANDREI: No, sir.

ECO BOSS: How long have you held your present position,
Comrade?

ANDREI: Two years and three months.

ECO BOSS: At the same salary?

ANDREI: Yes.

ECO BOSS: Wouldn't you find a promotion desirable?

ANDREI: No, sir.

ECO BOSS: You do not believe then in a spirit of
cooperation with your Party comrades?

ANDREI: Not above the spirit of the Party, no.

ECO BOSS: You are devoted to the Party.

ANDREI: Yes.

ECO BOSS: Above all things? (Brief pause) Above all
things?

ANDREI: Yes.

NARRATOR: A few days later, Andrei sat before the desk
of his Chief.

KGB CHIEF: Sit.

(SFX: Two men sit.)

CHIEF KGB: Congratulations, Comrade--you've rendered a
great service. Your timing couldn't be better--with the
present economic difficulties and the trend of public
sentiment, we must show the masses who is responsible
for their suffering--and show it in a manner that will
not be forgotten. These treacherous speculators, who
deprive our toilers of their hard-earned rations, must
be brought to justice. We shall make an example of this
case. Every newspaper, every club, every public pulpit
will be mobilized for the task. The trial of Leo
Kovalensky will be broadcast into every hamlet in the
USSR.

ANDREI: Whose trial, comrade?

CHIEF KGB: The trial of Leo Kovalensky! By the way, that
note from Comrade Pavel, which you attached to your
report on the case--was that the only copy of it in
existence?

6722 ANDREI: Yes, comrade.

6723 CHIEF KGB: Who has read it besides yourself?

6724 ANDREI: No one.

6725 CHIEF KGB (slowly): Comrade Andrei, you will forget
6726 you've ever read that note. (Pause) This is an order, do
6727 you understand? (Pause) Do you read the papers, Comrade?

6728 ANDREI: Yes, comrade.

6729 CHIEF KGB: Do you know what is going on in our villages
6730 at present?

6731 ANDREI: Yes, comrade.

6732 CHIEF KGB: The mood in our factories?

6733 ANDREI: Yes, comrade.

6734 CHIEF KGB: The precarious equilibrium of public opinion?

6735 ANDREI: Yes, comrade.

6736 CHIEF KGB: Then I don't have to explain to you why a
6737 Party member's name must be kept from any connection
6738 with this case. Do I make myself clear?

6739 ANDREI: Perfectly, comrade.

6740 CHIEF KGB: You must remember that you know nothing
6741 whatsoever about Comrade Pavel. Understand?

6742 ANDREI: Thoroughly, comrade.

6743 CHIEF KGB: Citizen Karp will resign from his position
6744 with the Food Trust--ill health, you understand. But the
6745 real culprit of the conspiracy, Citizen Kovalensky, will
6746 be arrested tonight. Does that meet with your approval,
6747 Comrade Andrei?

6748 ANDREI: My position does not allow me to approve,
6749 comrade--only to take orders.

6750 CHIEF KGB: Well said, comrade. Citizen Kovalensky is the
6751 sole legal owner of that food store--we've checked. He's
6752 an aristocrat by birth and the son of a father executed
6753 for counter-revolution. He's been arrested before--
6754 trying to leave the country. He's a living symbol of the
6755 class which our working masses know to be their
6756 bitterest enemy. Angered--justly--by lengthy privations,
6757 long hours in line, lack of necessities--our working
6758 masses will know just who to blame.

6759 ANDREI: So, a public trial on the radio?

6760 CHIEF KGB: Precisely.

6761 ANDREI: And what if Citizen Kovalensky talks too much
6762 near the microphone? What if he mentions names?

6763 CHIEF KGB: Oh, those gentlemen are easy to handle. He'll
6764 be promised life to say only what he's told. He'll be
6765 expecting a pardon when he hears his death sentence. One
6766 can make promises, you know. One doesn't always have to
6767 keep them.

6768 ANDREI: Of course, it won't be necessary to mention he
6769 was jobless and starving at the time he entered the
6770 employof those unnamed persons.

6771 CHIEF KGB: What's that, comrade?

6772 ANDREI: I said it might be important to explain how a
6773 penniless aristocrat managed to lay his hands on the
6774 very heart of our economic life.

6775 CHIEF KGB: You have a remarkable gift for platform
6776 oratory, comrade. Too remarkable. You should be careful
6777 lest it be appreciated, and you find yourself sent to a
6778 nice post--in the Turkestan, for instance--where you
6779 would have full opportunity to display it. (Pause)
6780 Right. Now at six o'clock tonight, you will search
6781 Citizen Kovalensky's apartment for any additional
6782 evidence--and you shall arrest Citizen Kovalensky.

6783 ANDREI: Yes, comrade.

6784 CHIEF KGB: That's all, Comrade Andrei.

6785 (SFX: Heels click together.)

6786 ECO BOSS (coldly): Hereafter, Comrade, you will confine
6787 your literary efforts to matters pertaining to your job.

6788 PAVEL: Sure, pal. Don't worry.

6789 ECO BOSS: I'm not the one who should worry.

6790 PAVEL: Pfft! I've worried til I'm seasick. I have only
6791 so many hairs to turn gray.

6792 ECO BOSS: But only one head under the hair.

6793 PAVEL: What do you mean? You have the letter, don't you?

6794 ECO BOSS: Not anymore.

6795 PAVEL: Where is it?

6796 ECO BOSS: In the furnace.

6797 PAVEL: Whew! Thanks, pal. (Brief pause) Well now, how
6798 does the saying go? One good turn deserves another.

6799 ECO BOSS: It's not as simple as that. For instance, your
6800 aristocratic playmate, Citizen Kovalensky, will have to
6801 stand trial.

6802 PAVEL: Pfft! Do you think that'll make me cry? I'll be
6803 only too glad to see that arrogant bum get his neck
6804 twisted.

6805 BOSS FOOD TRUST: Your health, Comrade Karp, requires a
6806 trip to a warmer climate.

6807 KARP: Yes, I undastan'--I undastan'.

6808 BOSS FOOD TRUST: It's a pleasant sanitorium in the
6809 Crimea. It will help your health a great deal. I would
6810 suggest you take full advantage of the privilege for,
6811 let us say, six months? I would advise you not to hurry
6812 back, Comrade Karp.

6813 KARP: No, I won' 'urry--I won' 'urry.

6814 BOSS FOOD TRUST: You're going to hear a great deal, from
6815 the newspapers, about the trial of a certain Citizen
6816 Kovalensky. It would be wise to let your fellow patients
6817 know that you know nothing about the case.

6818 KARP: I don' know a fing--not a fing!

6819 BOSS FOOD TRUST: And if I were you, I wouldn't try to
6820 pull any strings for Kovalensky--to save him from the
6821 firing squad.

6822 KARP: Oh, no, me? Fer 'im? Why should I, comrad'? I 'ad
6823 noffing to do wit' 'im. 'E owned vat store. 'E alone.
6824 Look up va registration. 'E can't prove I knew anythin'
6825 abou' i'. Anythin'. 'E alone. Sole owna. Lea Kovalenski-
6826 -you can look i' up.

6827 (SFX: Door opened.)

6828 MARISHA'S MOTHER (makes chocked sound in throat and
6829 clamps hand over her mouth)

6830 (SFX: 4 sets of boots enter. Followed by a 5th. Door closed.)

6831 MARISHA'S MOTHER: Lord merciful! Lord merciful!

6832 ANDREI: Keep still! Where's Citizen Kovalensky's room?
6833 (SFX: 4 boots stamp heavily.)
6834 NARRATOR: Leo was alone--in an armchair by the
6835 fireplace, reading a book.
6836 LEO: Well, comrade, I thought we would meet like this
6837 someday.
6838 ANDREI: Search warrant, Citizen Kovalensky.
6839 LEO: Go ahead. You're quite welcome.
6840 (SFX: 2 Finger snaps. Bootsteps. Bedding ripped off bed. Thrust
6841 of bayonet splitting mattress open. Drawers of desk opened,
6842 rummaged thru and closed. Notes and Letters gathered.)
6843 LEO: Sorry I can't oblige you by letting you find secret
6844 plans to blow up the Kremlin.
6845 ANDREI: Citizen Kovalensky, you are speaking to a
6846 representative of the KGB.
6847 (SFX: Cabinet door opened--dishes and glasses tinkle. Cigarette
6848 case snapped open.)
6849 LEO: Foreign cigarette?
6850 ANDREI: No, thank you.
6851 (SFX: Match lit. Cigarette inhale.)
6852 LEO: The survival of the fittest...I've always wanted to
6853 ask: the fittest--for what? What do you say, Comrade
6854 Andrei?
6855 ANDREI: I would suggest you keep silent.
6856 LEO: And when the KGB suggests it's a command, isn't it?
6857 SOLDIER KGB: What did you say?
6858 ANDREI: I've got this.
6859 (SFX: Wardrobe opened. Suits rummaged through. Another wardrobe
6860 opened. Hanging dresses rummaged thru.)
6861 LEO: What's the matter, comrade?
6862 ANDREI: Whose dresses are these?
6863 LEO (with mocking contempt suggesting obscenity): My
6864 mistresses. (pause) A disappointment, isn't it, comrade?
6865 SOLDIER: I said you can't go in there! I said you
6866 can't--

6867 (SFX: Sound of a struggle.)

6868 KIRA (like the howl of an animal): Let me in there! Let
6869 me in!!

6870 (SFX: Door opened.)

6871 ANDREI: Citizen, do you live here?

6872 KIRA: Yes.

6873 ANDREI (the slightest grunt--then a pause): Search that
6874 cabinet--and the boxes in the corner.

6875 LEO (to Kira): I'm sorry you had to see this. I hoped it
6876 would be over before you came back.

6877 ANDREI: Look through the pillows and lift that rug. That
6878 will be all.

6879 (SFX: Drawer closed evenly.)

6880 ANDREI: Citizen Kovalensky, you are under arrest.

6881 LEO: I'm sure this is the most pleasant duty you've ever
6882 performed.

6883 NARRATOR: In the mirror, Leo adjusted his tie, coat and
6884 hair with the precision of a man dressing for an
6885 important social engagement. On his way out, he stopped
6886 before Kira.

6887 LEO: Aren't you going to say goodbye, Kira?

6888 NARRATOR: He took her in his arms and kissed her for a
6889 long time.

6890 LEO: I hope you'll forget me.

6891 NARRATOR: Leo walked out and Andrei followed. A soldier
6892 closed the door behind them.

6893 (SFX: Slow footsteps upstairs. Slow knock at door.)

6894 ANDREI: Come in!

6895 (SFX: Door open/closed. Fire in fireplace.)

6896 KIRA (savagely): Well? What are you going to do about
6897 it?

6898 ANDREI: If I were you, I'd get out of here.

6899 KIRA: And if I don't?

6900 ANDREI: Get out of here. Get out, you--

KIRA: --whore? I just want to make sure you know what I am.

ANDREI: I have nothing to say to you.

KIRA: But I do. And you'll listen. So you've caught me, "comrade". And you're going to get your revenge. You came with your soldiers, gun on your hip, Comrade Andrei of the KGB and you arrested him. Now you're going to use all your great Party influence to see he goes before a firing squad. Perhaps you'll even ask for the privilege of giving the order to fire? Go ahead! Have your revenge. But this is mine. I'm not pleading for him. I have nothing to fear any more. At last, I can speak.

ANDREI: Don't you think it's meaningless?

KIRA (laughs maniacally): You fool! I'm proud of what I've done! You hear me? I don't regret it for one minute! I'm proud of it! So you think I loved you, do you? I loved you, but I was unfaithful to you, on the side, as most women are. Well, then, listen--all you were to me, you and your great love, and your kisses, and your body, all they meant was a pack of crisp, white, square, ten-ruble bills with a sickle and hammer printed in the corner! You know where those bills went? To a tuberculosis sanatorium in the Crimea. Do you know what they paid for? For the life of a man I loved long before I ever saw you--a man who possessed my body long before you so much as touched it--a man you're holding in one of your cells and you're going to shoot. Why not? It's fair enough. Shoot him. Take his life. You've paid for it.

ANDREI: Kira...I...I...I didn't know.

KIRA (laughing): So you loved me, did you? Well, look at me! I'm only a whore and you were the John. I sold myself--for money--and you paid it. In the gutter, that's where I belong--and your great love put me there. Aren't you glad to know it? You think I loved you? I thought of Leo when you held me in your arms. Every kiss, every word, every hour you got was given for him. I've never loved him as much as I loved him in your bed! ...I love him. Do you hear me? I love him. So, go ahead! Kill him. Nothing you can do to him will compare with what I've done to you.

ANDREI: I didn't know...

KIRA: No, you didn't. But go through garrets and basements where men live in your Red cities and see how many cases like this you can find. He wanted to live. He didn't need much. Only rest, and fresh air, and food. But he had no right to that, did he? Your State said so--your beloved State. Oh, I begged--I begged. Do you know what they said? (smiling) A big commissar I was lucky to even get a meeting with--you know what he said? A hundred thousand people died in the war, why couldn't one aristocrat--one aristocrat--die for the State. (Pause) But I don't hate him--no, I'm grateful. He gave me permission--to do what I did. (Pause) Well, how do you like it, Comrade Andrei of the Communist Party? How do you like your great gift?

NARRATOR: He didn't answer.

KIRA: Look at me--take a good look! I'm alive. And I know what I want. Who in this damned universe should be able to tell me what to want? Your revolution tried. Told us what it had to be. Took our every hour, minute, every nerve, every thought in the farthest corner of our souls--and told us what it had to be. You forbade life to the living. Then you stare and wonder what it's doing to us. Well, look! Look!

NARRATOR: He doesn't so much as move.

KIRA: You wonder why you've never known what I was? Well, here I am! Here's what's left after you after you reached for the heart of my life--here's what it means when you reached for my highest rever... (She stops short and gasps, as if he had slapped her--then slaps her hand to her mouth--moaning) Oh, Andrei...

ANDREI: I would have done the same--for you.

KIRA: Oh, Andrei, what I done to you?

(SFX: His footsteps approach her.)

ANDREI: You've given me back what I thought I had lost. Listen, we won't talk any more. Here. I want you to sit--sit still for a few moments.

KIRA: But Andrei...You...

ANDREI: Forget it. Forget everything. Everything will be all right. Everything will be all right.

(SFX: Gavel pounds repeatedly.)

PARTY CHAIRMAN (roaring): Comrade Andrei! I'm calling you to order!

ANDREI (insistent): I am here to make my agrarian report to my Party comrades, Comrade Chairman--and I shall make it. Yes, it is about our work in the villages, and in the cities, and among the millions, the living millions. Only there are questions. There are questions that must be answered. Why should we be afraid of questions?

PARTY CHAIRMAN: Comrade, silence!

ANDREI: Comrades! Brothers! Listen to me! Are we sure we know what we are doing? No one can tell men what they must live for. No one has that right--because there are things in men, in the best of men, which are above all states, above all collectives!

PARTY CHAIRMAN: Comrade, I--!

ANDREI: What is our goal, comrades? What are we doing? Are we feeding a starved humanity so that it may live? Or strangling its very life in order to feed it?

PARTY CHAIRMAN: Comrade, I deprive you of speech!

ANDREI: I have nothing more to say.

(SFX: Staggering footsteps. Crowd whispers. Crowd turns. Sneering whistle from back row. Door opened/closed.)

PARTY MEMBER (whispers): Let Comrade Andrei wait for the next Party purge!

(SFX: Man spitting sunflower seeds onto newspaper.)

SONIA: Are you listening to me, Pavel?

PAVEL: Sure.

(SFX: Sunflower seed cracked.)

SONIA: There are some good revolutionary names here-- instead of those foolish old saint's names. What do you think? If it's a boy, Ninel would be nice.

PAVEL: What the hell's Ninel?

SONIA: Ninel is Lenin spelled backwards.

PAVEL: Oh.

SONIA: Now, if it's a girl--and I hope it's a girl, because the new woman is coming into her own, and the future belongs to the free women of the proletariat--

well, if it's a girl, the one I like best is Octobrina, because that would be a living monument to our great October Revolution.

PAVEL (squinting): Octobrina?

SONIA: It's a very good name and very popular. You know Comrade Fimka--she had a Red christening week before last and that's what she called her brat--Octobrina. Even got a notice in the paper about it--with her wearing a brand-new dress--that's right, while I must wear old junk like this! You would choose this time to write certain literary compositions and ruin everything, you drunken fool!

PAVEL: Now we won't bring that up again, Sonia. You know I was lucky to get out of it as I did.

SONIA: Yeah, well, I hope your Kovalensky gets the firing squad and a nice, loud trial. I will see to it that our women stage a demonstration against Speculators and Aristocrats! (Brief pause) Here's another good one for a girl: Barricada.

PAVEL: I don't care as long as it's not twins.

(SFX: Loud Knock.)

PAVEL: Come in.

(SFX: Door open/close.)

ANDREI: Good evening.

PAVEL: Good evening.

SONIA: What's the big idea, Comrade Andrei?

ANDREI: I want to speak to you, Pavel.

PAVEL: Go ahead.

ANDREI: Alone.

PAVEL: I said go ahead.

ANDREI: Tell your wife to get out.

SONIA: My husband and I have no secrets.

ANDREI (without raising his voice--coldly) You get out of here and wait in the other room.

SONIA: Pavel! He...

7055 PAVEL (slowly): You'd better go, Sonia.

7056 SONIA: Huh!

7057 (SFX: Slippers flap against heels.)

7058 PAVEL: I thought you'd learned a lesson the last few
7059 days.

7060 ANDREI: I have.

7061 PAVEL: What do you want?

7062 ANDREI: You better put on your shoes. We're going on a
7063 walk.

7064 PAVEL: Is that right? Glad you let me in on your little
7065 secret. Otherwise, I might have said I have no such
7066 intention. Where are we going?

7067 ANDREI: To release Leo Kovalensky.

7068 PAVEL: What are you up to, Andrei? Gone insane, have
7069 you?

7070 ANDREI: You better listen up and keep still. I'll tell
7071 you what you have to do.

7072 PAVEL: You'll tell me what I have to do?

7073 ANDREI: And why you'll do it. You'll dress right now and
7074 go see your friend at the KGB.

7075 PAVEL: At this hour?

7076 ANDREI: Get him out of bed, if necessary. What you tell
7077 him is none of my business. All I have to know is that
7078 Leo Kovalensky is released within forty-eight hours.

7079 PAVEL: Now will you let me in on the little magic wand
7080 that will make me do it?

7081 ANDREI: It's a little paper wand. Two of them.

7082 PAVEL: Written by whom?

7083 ANDREI: You.

7084 PAVEL: Me?

7085 ANDREI: Photographed from one written by you, to be
7086 exact.

7087 PAVEL: Andrei, you God-damn rat!

7088 ANDREI: Am I?

7089 PAVEL: You'll see Leo Kovalensky all right--and it won't
7090 take you forty-eight hours. I'll see to it you get the
7091 cell next to his and then we'll find out what
7092 documents...

7093 ANDREI: Photostats, actually. Twoo. Only I don't happen
7094 to have either one of them.

7095 PAVEL: What u did you...

7096 ANDREI: They're with two friends I can trust. It would
7097 be useless to try and find out their names. You know me
7098 well enough to discard any idea of torture, if that
7099 occurs to you. Their instructions are that if anything
7100 happens to me before Leo Kovalensky is out--the
7101 photostats go to Moscow. Same if anything happens to him
7102 after he's out.

7103 PAVEL: You God damn...

7104 ANDREI: All you have to do is release Leo Kovalensky and
7105 hush up this whole case. You'll never hear of those
7106 photostats again. You'll never see them, either.

7107 PAVEL: You're lying--you've never taken any photostats.

7108 ANDREI: Maybe. Want to take a chance on that?

7109 PAVEL (after a pause): Listen, Andrei--let's talk sense.
7110 Do you know what you're asking?

7111 ANDREI: No more than you can do.

7112 PAVEL: But, Lord in Heaven, Andrei--it's such a big case
7113 and we're all set with a first-class propaganda campaign
7114 with the newspapers readying headlines and...

7115 ANDREI: Stop them.

7116 PAVEL: But how can I? What am I going to tell him?

7117 ANDREI: That's none of my business.

7118 PAVEL: But after he's already saved my...

7119 ANDREI: He may have friends in Moscow who aren't his
7120 friends.

7121 PAVEL: But...

7122 ANDREI: When Party members can't be saved, they're the
7123 ones who get it worse than private speculators, you know
7124 that.

7125 PAVEL: One of us has gone insane. Why do you want
7126 Kovalensky released?

7127 ANDREI: That's none of your business.

7128 PAVEL: And, why, if you've appointed yourself his
7129 guardian angel, did you start the whole damn case to
7130 begin with?

7131 ANDREI: You said it--I learned a lesson.

7132 PAVEL: You traitor! You said it was the only copy of the
7133 letter in existence, when you turned it in.

7134 ANDREI: I lied.

7135 PAVEL: All right--all right. Let's talk plain. Your spot
7136 in the Party isn't so good anymore. Not after that
7137 little speech you made tonight. It'll be hard on you at
7138 the next Party purge. But I guess you know that.

7139 ANDREI: I do.

7140 PAVEL: Well, then, what do you say we make a bargain?
7141 You drop this case and I'll see to it that not only do
7142 you keep your Party card, but you have any job you
7143 choose at the KGB--no questions asked. What do you say?

7144 ANDREI: What makes you think I want to stay in the
7145 Party?

7146 PAVEL: Andrei...

7147 ANDREI: You don't have to worry about me, Pavel. Just
7148 watch Leo Kovalensky. See that nothing happens to him.
7149 I'm not his guardian angel. You are.

7150 PAVEL: What is that damned aristocrat to you? (pause)
7151 It's that Kira, isn't it? You love her--and you've been
7152 sleeping with her for over a year. And... Wait! Let me
7153 finish... She's been Kovalensky's mistress that whole
7154 time.

7155 ANDREI: I know.

7156 PAVEL: You know?

7157 ANDREI: Get your coat.

7158 NARRATOR: Kira sat on the floor and folded Leo's shirts.
7159 One shirt had Leo's initials on the breast pocket. She
7160 stared at it without moving.

7161 (SFX: Door opens/closes.)

7162 LEO: 'Allo, Kira.

7163 (SFX: Body falls back into empty drawer, which slams shut w
7164 crash.)

7165 KIRA: Leo...Leo...you're...?

7166 LEO: Free--yes! Released. Kicked out.

7167 KIRA: But how could it...

7168 LEO: How do I know? I thought you knew something.

7169 KIRA (kissing his lips, neck, hands, palms): Leo, what
7170 have they done to you?

7171 LEO: They didn't torture me, if that's what you mean.
7172 They say they have a room for that, but I didn't get the
7173 privilege. I had a cell to myself and three meals a day,
7174 although the soup was rotten. I just sat there for two
7175 days thinking what last words I could say before the
7176 firing squad. (Pause) Have I any clean underwear left?

7177 KIRA: Yes...I'll get it...Only...I want to know...

7178 LEO: What is there to tell? I guess it's all over. They
7179 said to see I don't get in trouble with the KGB for a
7180 third time. (indifferently) I think your friend Andrei
7181 had something to do with my release.

7182 KIRA: Andrei...

7183 LEO: You didn't ask him to?

7184 KIRA: No. No, I didn't ask him.

7185 LEO: Hmph.

7186 KIRA: Leo, did you think of me...in there.

7187 LEO: No.

7188 KIRA: You didn't?

7189 LEO: No. What for?

7190 KIRA: Leo, do you...love me?

7191 LEO: What a question...What a question...You're getting
7192 feminine, Kira...It's not becoming...Really, it's not...

7193 KIRA: I know it's foolish. I don't know why I had to
7194 ask... You're so tired. I'll get your underwear and I'll
7195 fix dinner. You haven't had dinner, have you?

7196 LEO: Na, I don't want any. Is there anything to drink in
7197 this house?

7198 KIRA: Leo...you're not going to...not again...

7199 LEO: Leave me alone, will you? Go to your parents...or
7200 something...

7201 (SFX: Door Knock.)

7202 KIRA: Come in.

7203 (SFX: Door open/close. Footsteps.)

7204 ANDREI: Good evening, Kira.

7205 KIRA: Good evening, Andrei.

7206 ANDREI: I didn't know you were ot already.

7207 LEO: So you had reason to expect it?

7208 ANDREI: I did. But I didn't know they'd hurry. (Brief
7209 pause) Sorry to intrude--I can understand you wouldn't
7210 want visitors.

7211 KIRA: It's all right--sit down.

7212 ANDREI: There's something I have to tell you, Kira.
7213 (Brief pause) Would you mind if I took Kira ot--for a
7214 few minutes?

7215 LEO: Yes, I would mind.

7216 KIRA: Leo! (Brief pause) Come on, Andrei.

7217 ANDREI: No, it's ok. It's not a secret. I just wanted to
7218 spare you the necessity of feeling indebted to me--but
7219 perhaps it would be better if you heard it, too. (Brief
7220 pause--gently) Sit down, Kira. (pause) There's something
7221 you should know-- both of you--for your protection. I
7222 couldn't tell you earlier because I had to be sure it
7223 worked. But the man who is really behind your release is
7224 Pavel. I wanted you to know what's behind him--in case
7225 you ever need it.

7226 LEO: It's you, isn't it?

7227 KIRA: Leo, keep quiet. Please!

7228 ANDREI: It's a letter. A letter he wrote. The letter had
7229 been sent to me by someone else. Pavel has powerful
7230 friends. That saved him. But he's not very brave. That
7231 saved you. The letter was destroyed. But I told him I

7232 had photostats of it--which would be sent to higher
7233 authorities in Moscow--unless you were released. Now the
7234 case has been killed, I don't think they'll ever bother
7235 you again. But I wanted you to know, so you can hold the
7236 photostats over Pavel's head, should you ever need to.

7237 LEO: And where are the photostats actually?

7238 ANDREI: There are no photostats.

7239 LEO: Well...I suppose I should thank you. Consider me
7240 grateful. Only, I won't say I thank you from the bottom
7241 of my heart, because in the bottom of my heart I wish
7242 you had left me where I was.

7243 KIRA: Leo...

7244 ANDREI: Why?

7245 LEO: You think Lazarus was grateful to be brought back
7246 from the grave?

7247 ANDREI (sternly): Pull yourself together, man. You have
7248 so much to live for. You'll have to get a job. Better
7249 not a prominent one. You'll hate it but you'll have to
7250 stick to it.

7251 LEO: If I can.

7252 ANDREI: You have to.

7253 LEO: Do I?

7254 KIRA: Andrei, why did you tell us about Pavel's letter?

7255 ANDREI: So you'd know in case...anything happened to me.

7256 KIRA: What's going to happen to you, Andrei?

7257 ANDREI: Nothing that I know of. Except I'm going to be
7258 thrown out of the Party, I think.

7259 KIRA: Will you hate them for it...for throwing you out?

7260 ANDREI: No.

7261 KIRA: You'll forgive them?

7262 ANDREI: There's nothing to forgive. If I can't
7263 understand, who can? (pause) Well, I have to go.

7264 KIRA (after a pause): Shall we...see you again, Andrei?

7265 ANDREI: Sure--I'll be around--for a while. Good night.

LEO: Wait a minute. There's something I want to ask you.
(Brief pause--then slowly) Why did you do all this? Just
what is, Kira to you?

NARRATOR: Andrei looked at Kira, but she was leaving it
up to him.

ANDREI: Just a friend.

LEO: Huh. Good night.

(SFX: Footsteps. Door open/close. Long pause.)

KIRA (not quite a moan/not quite a cry):

(SFX: Running footsteps. Door open/close. Sound of outdoors--
snow.)

KIRA: Andrei!

ANDREI: Kira! In the snow without a coat!

KIRA: Andrei...

ANDREI: Go back!

KIRA: I...I...

ANDREI: Don't you think it's better if we don't say
anything--knowing that we both understand--that we have
that--in common?

KIRA (whispers): Yes, Andrei.

ANDREI: Don't worry about me. Go back now. You'll catch
cold.

NARRATOR: She raised her hand, and her fingers brushed
his cheek slowly, barely touching it, from his temple to
his chin, as if her finger could tell him something she
couldn't say. He took her hand and pressed it to his
lips and held it for a long time.

When he dropped her hand, she turned and walked slowly
up the stairs. She didn't look back.

(SFX: Door open/close.)

LEO (on the telephone): It's Leo, Tonia. I just got
out...I'll tell you all about it...Sure, come over...And
bring a bottle--I haven't got a drop in the house...

NARRATOR: Andrei's last actions were steady and calm. He
neatly organized his room and--so they wouldn't be
handled by others--slowly and tenderly fed all the items

Kira had touched to the fire. For a long time, he stood staring at the consuming flames. Then he sat down at the table, took a single sheet from the drawer and wrote:

ANDREI: No one is to be held responsible for my death.

(SFX: Single gunshot.)

ECO BOSS: Well, he did give us the opportunity for a lot of useful noise, after all. What a parade he will have! You making the opening speech?

PAVEL: Yeah, I'm a pallbearer, too. Me and Victor.

ECO BOSS: Don't forget his Red Army record and all that. Well, I hope this will shut them up, those damn fools who like to bring up the Kovalensky case. They won't have much to say after this celebration!

PAVEL: That? Forget about it!

VOICE-1: GLORY ETERNAL TO A FALLEN COMRADE.

FEMALE MARCHER-1: Katia, did you get the buckwheat at the co-op this week?

FEMALE MARCHER-2: No, they giving any?

FEMALE MARCHER-1: Yeah. Two pounds per card. Better get it before it's all gone.

VOICE-2: HE GAVE HIS LIFE TO THE WORKERS OF THE WORLD.

VOICE-1: THE PROLETARIAT THANKS ITS FALLEN FIGHTER.

FEMALE MARCHER-3 (hissing): Hell, they would choose a cold day like this to make us march in another one of their cursed parades!

FEMALE MARCHER-4: Stood in line for two hours yesterday, but best onions you could ever hope to see...

FEMALE MARCHER-5: How 'bout that sunflower-seed oil at the co-op?

FEMALE MARCHER-6: If they don't get shot by someone, they shoot themselves--just to make us walk...

VOICE-1: PROLETARIANS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

FEMALE MARCHER-1: God! I left soup cooking on the stove. It'll boil all over the house...

7336 FEMALE MARCHER-3: It's like this: you peel the onions,
7337 add a dash of flour--any flour you can get--and then add
7338 a dash of linseed oil and then...

7339 FEMALE MARCHER-2: What do they have to commit suicide
7340 about?

7341 VOICE-2: FORWARD INTO THE SOCIALIST FUTURE UNDER THE
7342 LEADERSHIP OF LENIN'S PARTY!

7343 FEMALE MARCHER-4: Let the millet soak for a coupla hours
7344 before cooking...

7345 FEMALE MARCHER-6: God! It's the seventh month--you can't
7346 expect me to have a figure like a matchstick, and here I
7347 have to walk like this...Yeah, it's my fifth.

7348 FEMALE MARCHER-5: Damn these demonstrations! Who the
7349 hell was he, anyway?

7350 VOICE-1: THE COMMUNIST PARTY SPARES NO VICTIMS IN ITS
7351 FIGHT FOR THE FREEDOM OF MANKIND.

7352 SONIA: Really, Comrade Kira, you--here? I should think
7353 you'd be the one person to stay away!

7354 PAVEL: Comrades! We're here to pay tribute to a fallen
7355 hero. As his closest friend, I say, proudly and
7356 gallantly: Comrade Andrei bore but one title, Communist.
7357 He came from toilers ranks and fell in service to that
7358 work, the advancement of toilers everywhere. Comrade
7359 Andrei is dead, but the work goes on. The individual may
7360 fall but the Collective lives forever. Life and victory
7361 are ours, comrades. And ours is the FUTURE!

7362 NARRATOR: Later--after everyone had gone home--a small,
7363 lonely figure stood over a granite tombstone. Tracing
7364 the name tenderly with her fingers, she wondered whether
7365 she had killed him, or the revolution had...or both.

7366 (SFX: Door open/close. Footsteps.)

7367 LEO (laughs hard--bitterly, brutally):

7368 KIRA: Leo, what's the matter?

7369 LEO (fiercely): Don't you know?

7370 KIRA: No, why?

7371 LEO: You wanna know just how much I know?

7372 KIRA: How much you know? About what, Leo?

7373 LEO: Well, I suppose this is as good as time as any--
7374 right after your lover's funeral.

7375 KIRA: My...

7376 LEO: You little bitch!

7377 KIRA: Leo...

7378 LEO: Shut up! I don't wanna hear a sound out of you! You
7379 rotten little...I wouldn't mind--if you were like the
7380 rest of us! But you, with your saintly airs and heroic
7381 speeches, trying to make me walk straight, while you
7382 were...you were rolling under the first Communist bum
7383 who took the trouble to push you!

7384 KIRA: Leo, who...

7385 LEO: Shut up! ...Answer just one question--yes or no.
7386 Were you Andrei's mistress?

7387 KIRA: Yes.

7388 LEO: All the time I was away?

7389 KIRA: Yes.

7390 LEO: And all the time since I came back?

7391 KIRA: Yes. Who told you, Leo?

7392 LEO: A dear friend of his. Of yours. Dear Comrade Pavel.
7393 Dropped in on his way back from the funeral. To
7394 congratulate me on the loss of my rival.

7395 KIRA: Leo...

7396 LEO: It was the best news I'd heard since the
7397 revolution. We shook hands and had a drink, Pavel and I.
7398 Drank to you and your lover. Because--you see--that sets
7399 me free.

7400 KIRA: Free...from what, Leo?

7401 LEO: From a little fool who was my last hold on self-
7402 respect! A little fool I was afraid to face, afraid to
7403 hurt! Really, it's funny. You and your Communist hero. I
7404 thought he had lied--making a great sacrifice by saving
7405 me for you--when he probably was just tired of you--
7406 wanted to get you off his hands, for some other whore.

7407 KIRA: Leo, we don't have to talk about him.

LEO: Still love him? I won't ask whether you ever loved me. I'd rather believe you didn't--it'd make the future easier.

KIRA: The future?

LEO: You know--get a respectable Soviet job and a ration card and keep something in my fool imagination--my soul or my honor--something that never existed--that shouldn't exist, that's the worst of all curses if it did exist! Well, I'm through with it. If it's murder--well--I don't see any blood. But I'm going to have champagne and white bread, and silk shirts and limousines, and no thoughts of any kind...

KIRA: What are you going to do?

LEO: I'm going away.

KIRA: Where?

LEO: Before being kicked to the Crimea, Karp left Tonia a nice little sum--quite nice. She's going for a rest in the mountains. She's asked me to go with her. I've accepted. Leo Kovalensky, greatest gigolo in the USSR!

KIRA: Leo...not that!

LEO: She's a fat old bitch, I know. I like it better that way. She has the money and wants me. Just a business deal.

KIRA: Leo, you...like a...

NARRATOR: She sat and looked at him. His eyes were dead, and she turned away, wishing those eyes were closed.

KIRA (whispers): If you had been killed by the KGB or sold yourself to some magnificent woman, a foreigner, young and fresh...

LEO: No, I wouldn't do that. Not yet. In a year--maybe.

KIRA: When did you tell her you'd go with her?

LEO: Three days ago.

KIRA: Before you knew about Andrei and me?

LEO: Yes.

KIRA: While you still thought I loved you.

LEO: Yes.

KIRA: And if Pavel hadn't told you, you'd still go with her?

LEO: Yes. Only then I'd have to face telling you. He spared me that. That's why I was glad to hear it. Now we can say good-bye without any unnecessary scenes.

KIRA: Leo...if you were to learn that I love you, that I've always loved you, that I've been loyal to you all these years--would you still go with her?

LEO: Yes.

KIRA: And if you learned something that...that bound you to stay and... struggle on--would you try it once more?

LEO: If I were bound to--who knows? I might do what your other lover did. That's a solution, too.

KIRA: I see.

LEO: Why do you ask? What is there to bind me?

KIRA (after a pause): Nothing, Leo.

LEO: Well, that's that. I was afraid of hysterics and a lot of noise, but it ended as it should have ended. I'm leaving in three days. I can move out, if you want me to.

KIRA: No, I'd rather go. Tonight.

LEO: Tonight?

KIRA: I'd rather. I can share Lydia's room--for a while.

LEO: I haven't much money but what there is...

KIRA: No.

LEO: But...

KIRA: Please, don't. I'll take my clothes. That's all I need.

(SFX: Suitcase opened and being packed.)

LEO: Aren't you going to say anything?

(SFX: Suitcase closed, latched and lifted.)

KIRA: I lost--against a hundred and fifty million people--I lost.

(SFX: Slow Footsteps.)

7478 LEO: Kira...you loved me once, didn't you?

7479 KIRA: When a person dies, one doesn't stop loving him...

7480 LEO: Do you mean Andrei or...me?

7481 KIRA: Does it make a difference?

7482 LEO (after a pause): May I help you carry the suitcase

7483 downstairs?

7484 KIRA: No, it's not heavy. Good-bye, Leo.

7485 NARRATOR: He took her hand and his face moved toward

7486 hers, but she shook her head.

7487 LEO: Good-bye, Kira.

7488 (SFX: Footsteps. Door Open/Close.)

7489 KIRA'S MOTHER (gasps then): But what happened...

7490 KIRA: Nothing. We're just tired of each other.

7491 KIRA'S MOTHER: My dear child! I...

7492 KIRA: Please don't worry about me, Mother. Sorry about

7493 the intrsion, Lydia, it'll only be for a few weeks.

7494 LYDIA: Why, of course! After everything you've done for

7495 us? But why just a few weeks? Where will you go after

7496 that?

7497 KIRA: Abroad.

7498 NARRATOR: The following morning, Kira filed an

7499 application for a foreign passport.

7500 KIRA'S MOTHER: It's insanity, Kira! Sheer insanity! You

7501 have no reason to show why you want to go abroad, and

7502 with your father's social past...Even if you get it,

7503 then what? No foreign country will admit a Russian and I

7504 can't blame them. And if they do admit you--what are you

7505 going to do? Have you thought of that?

7506 KIRA: No.

7507 KIRA'S MOTHER: You have no money, no profession. How are

7508 you going to live?

7509 KIRA: I don't know.

7510 KIRA'S MOTHER: Why are you doing it?

7511 KIRA: I want to get out.

KIRA'S MOTHER: But you'll be all alone, lost in a wide world, without a single...

KIRA: I want to get out.

KIRA'S MOTHER: ...friend to help you, with no aim, no future, no...

KIRA: I want to get out.

NARRATOR: When he had no meeting to attend, Kira's father pasted match box labels onto wooden frames.

KIRA'S FATHER: Look at this--it's a beauty. Which one do you like better, Kira, the yellow or the green?

KIRA (quietly): The green, I guess.

KIRA'S MOTHER: Did I tell you about the new number we're doing for the Club show? Well, we're going to have one of the pupils, a husky one, wearing a red blouse, lie down on the floor and we'll put a table on him--and we'll have a fat one in a high silk hat, sit on him and eat steak--paper-mache, you know. Lord Chamberlain crushing the British Proletariat--get it?

KIRA (amused): I see.

KIRA'S MOTHER: Kira, what year was the Paris Commune, do you know?

KIRA: Eighteen-seventy-one, Mother.

NARRATOR: By night Lydia worked--and by day she practiced Communist songs on the out of tune piano. But every once in a while, she sat down and--without stopping--played Chopin and Bach and Tchaikovsky fiercely, violently until her fingers were numb and she began to cry.

Kira led tours again and when her foreign passport was refused, she accepted it with a quiet indifference that frightened her mother.

KIRA'S MOTHER: Listen, Kira, let's talk sense. If you have any insane ideas of...of... I want you to know I won't permit it. After all, you're my daughter, I have some say in the matter. You know what it means, if you attempt...if you even dare think of leaving the country illegally.

KIRA: I haven't mentioned that.

KIRA'S MOTHER: No, but I know you. I know how your mind works...Listen, it's a hundred to one you don't get out. You'll be lucky if you're just shot at the border. It'll be worse if you're caught and brought back. And if you're lucky enough to slip out, it's a hundred to one you'll die in a blizzard in those forests around the border.

KIRA: Mother, why talk about it?

KIRA MOTHER: Listen, I'll keep you here if I have to chain you. One is allowed to be crazy just so far. What's wrong with this country? We don't have any luxuries, that's true, but you won't get any over there, either. A chambermaid--if you're lucky. This is the country for young people. Look how I've adapted, at my age, and, really, I can't say I'm unhappy. You're just a pup and you can't make decisions that'll ruin your whole life before you've even started it. You'll outgrow your foolish notions, really, you will.

KIRA: Mother, I'm not arguing, am I? So let's drop it.

NARRATOR: Kira often returned home late from her tours. There were people to see up dark stairways and behind unlighted doors. There were bills to be slipped and whispers to be heard from lips close to her ear.

OLD CRONE: Ya could save 'til you was as old as me and you'd never save enough to be smuggled out on a boat! Best chance is on foot, alone, 'cross the Latvian border. Young-ins like you 'ave done it, dressed all in white, crawlin' through the snow in the dark.

NARRATOR So she sold her watch and paid for the name of the station and the village--and a map of the place where a crossing was possible. Then she sold the fur coat Leo had given her and paid for a forged permit to travel. Her French perfume, cigarette lighter, silk stockings, new shoes and new dresses, Vava came to buy with matted hair and a swelled belly.

KIRA (gasps): Vava, what's this?

VAVA (indifferently): I'm going to have a baby.

KIRA: Congratulations!

(SFX: Hand clap.)

VAVA: Yes, I have to be careful what I eat and take a walk every day. When it's born, we're going to register it with the Pioneers.

KIRA: Oh, no, Vava!

VAVA: Why not? It has to have a chance, doesn't it? It has to go to school and University, maybe. What do you want me to do--bring it up as an outcast? ...Oh, what's the difference? Who knows anymore...?

KIRA: But Vava, your child!

VAVA: I'll have to get a job after it's born, I'll have to. Kolya's working. It'll be the child of Soviet employees. Then, later, maybe they'll admit it into Communist Youth...Kira, that black velvet dress--it's so lovely. It looks almost...foreign. I know it's too tight for me now...but afterwards maybe I'll get my figure back...they say you do...Kolya doesn't make much but Father gave me fifty rubles for my birthday and...

NARRATOR: Vava bought the dress and two others.

KIRA: I don't need them. I don't go anywhere. And I don't like to see them just hanging.

KIRA'S MOTHER: Memories...

KIRA: Yes.

NARRATOR: After everything was sold, Kira still didn't have much money. She couldn't afford a white coat but had the white bear rug she got from her uncle sewn into one. She couldn't afford a white dress but would use her mother's white wedding gown. She painted her old felt boots white with lime and bought a pair of white mittens, a white woolen scarf and a train ticket to the far away station on her map. When everything was ready, she sewed her little roll of money into the lining of the white fur coat.

One gray afternoon, when no one was home, she left the house with a small suitcase containing her white clothes and walked to the station. She hadn't said goodbye or left any note.

UNCLE VASILII: Kira?

NARRATOR: He stood under a lamp post, hunched, his collar raised, holding a tray of saccharine tubes.

7628 KIRA: Good evening, Uncle.

7629 UNCLE VASILII: Where are you going, child, with that
7630 suitcase?

7631 KIRA: How have you been, Uncle?

7632 UNCLE VASILII: Oh, I'm all right. Really, it's not as bad
7633 as it looks. Why don't you come to see us, Kira?

7634 KIRA: I...

7635 UNCLE VASILII: It's not a grand place--and there is
7636 another family in the same room, but we manage. Acia
7637 would be glad to see you. We don't have many visitors.
7638 Acia's a good child.

7639 KIRA (smiling): Yes, Uncle

7640 UNCLE VASILII: It's such a joy to watch her grow, day by
7641 day. She's getting better at school, too. I help her. I
7642 don't mind standing here all day because then I go home
7643 and there she is. Everything isn't lost. Acia's a bright
7644 child--like you.

7645 KIRA (smiling): Yes, Uncle.

7646 UNCLE VASILII: I read the papers, too, when I have time.
7647 One can wait, if one has faith--and patience...

7648 KIRA (smiling): I'll tell them...over there...where I'm
7649 going...I'll tell them everything...like an SOS.
7650 Maybe... someone...somewhere...will understand...

7651 UNCLE VASILII: Where are you going, child?

7652 KIRA: Will you sell me a tube of saccharine, Uncle?

7653 UNCLE VASILII: No, I won't sell it to you--take it,
7654 child, if you need it.

7655 KIRA (lying): I was going to buy it from someone else,
7656 you see. Don't you want me as a customer? It may bring
7657 you luck.

7658 UNCLE VASILII: All right, child.

7659 KIRA: I'll take this nice big one with the big crystals.
7660 Here you are. (Pause) Well, good-bye, dear Uncle.

7661 UNCLE VASILII (slowly with recognition): Goodbye, dear
7662 Kira.

NARRATOR: It was dark when the train stopped at Kira's station--the last. A few sleepy soldiers on the platform paid her no attention. She walked away, clutching her suitcase, following the wheel tracks in the snow.

Eventually, she knocked at a door.

(SFX: Door opens.)

VILLAGE MAN: Yeah?

KIRA: It's Kira.

NARRATOR: She slipped a bill into his hand, and he let her in.

(SFX: Door swings open and closes.)

NARRATOR: While the man and his family ate, Kira put on the white wedding gown, it's long train rustling in the straw. As a pig opened one eye, she pinned the train carefully to her waist. Winding her white scarf tightly about her hair, she put on the white fur jacket. She felt the small lump in the jacket lining over her breast, where she'd sewn the bills--the last weapon she had and hopefully would ever need.

VILLAGE MAN: Better wait an hour, till the moon sets. Clouds ain't so steady.

NARRATOR: Making room for her, the man put a steaming bowl before Kira.

KIRA: No, thank you--I'm not hungry.

VILLAGE MAN: Eat. You'll need it.

NARRATOR: Kira ate.

VILLAGE MAN: It's pretty near a whole night's walk.

VILLAGE WIFE: Pretty young. (sighs)

NARRATOR: When she was ready to go, the man opened the door for her.

(SFX: Ext Door Opened to Wind Blowing Hard.)

VILLAGE MAN: Walk as long as you can. When you see a guard--crawl.

KIRA: Thank you.

(SFX: Door closed.)

NARRATOR: Snow rose to her knees, and each step was like a fall forward. She held her skirt high, clutched in her fist. There were no lights. She knew the lights behind her had long since vanished, even though she didn't look back. She carried nothing. She had left her suitcase and old clothes with the villagers. She would need nothing but the small lump in her jacket and she touched it every so often.

KIRA: I have to walk. Everything else will be answered-- there.

NARRATOR: She'd been walking for hours--legs rising and falling deep into the snow. Gradually, she became aware of something hurting at her waist and something throbbing in her back. But she only pressed her fingers to the lump in her jacket. The rest didn't matter.

KIRA: I have to get out.

NARRATOR: She stopped short when she saw a tree, rising suddenly out of the snow. She stood crouching like an animal, listening. She heard nothing. She walked on.

She was like an ant crawling over a white table. Her legs were not hers any longer. They moved like levers--rising, falling, up and down--reverberating up to her scalp. Suddenly, there was no pain, she was light and free, she was running--an instinct was driving her, the instinct of an animal, whipping her forward in self-preservation.

KIRA: I have to get out.

NARRATOR: It was then she saw a black figure--a figure that was moving--in a straight line across the hills. She saw the legs, opening and closing--the small black spike on his shoulder against the night sky.

She fell to her stomach, her heart pounding against the snow.

Raising her head a little, she crawled slowly forward, on her stomach. She stopped and lay still, watching the black figure in the distance--then crawled again--then stopped--then crawled again.

KIRA: I have to get out.

NARRATOR: The soldier thought he had seen something moving in the snow, far away--but he was not sure.

BORDER SOLDIER: Who goes there?

NARRATOR: There was no answer, and nothing moved on the plain of the snow.

BORDER SOLDIER: You'd better come out or I'll shoot!

NARRATOR: Again, there was no answer. The soldier hesitated, scratching his neck. He peered out into the night. He would have to shoot--just to be safe.

(SFX: Rifle raised to shoulder. Gun shot.)

NARRATOR: The soldier scratched his neck again.

BORDER SOLDIER (muttered): Just a rabbit, most likely.

NARRATOR: Then he continued on his route.

She lay still for a long time, watching a red spot widening slowly under her in the snow. Then she rose slowly to her knees, took off a mitten and slipped her hand into her jacket to find the little lump of bills. She hoped the bullet had not gone through them. It hadn't. The hole was just under them. Her fingers felt something hot and sticky.

KIRA: I have to go on--I have to get out.

NARRATOR: The bullet did not hurt but felt like a sharp burn in her side--though less than in her tired legs. She stood up.

KIRA: I have to go on--I have to get out.

NARRATOR: She staggered forward--as if she were drunk. Little drops fell off the hem of her mother's wedding gown. Then the drops stopped. Kira smiled.

KIRA: I have to go on--I have to get out.

NARRATOR: She pressed her hand to the roll of bills. She could not lose that. She wasn't thinking clearly--she had to remember that.

KIRA: I have to go on--I have to get out.

NARRATOR: She suddenly opened her eyes to find herself lying in the snow. But she couldn't remember how she'd gotten there.

KIRA: I have to go on--I have to get out.

NARRATOR: It took a long time to rise but she staggered forward, wondering why it had become so hot and why the snow didn't melt when it was so hot that she could hardly breathe.

KIRA: I have to go on--I have to get out.

NARRATOR: She didn't notice the hill she was on ended--and she rolled down the white slope in a whirl of arms and legs and snow.

KIRA: I have to go on--I have to get out.

NARRATOR: It seemed like hours before she could rise--first to her knees, panting--then standing erect. She tried walking but could not make it up the other side of the gulch. So she crawled up the hill on her hands and knees, digging her face in the snow to cool her florid cheeks.

KIRA: I have to go on--I have to get out.

NARRATOR: At the top of the hill, she rose to her feet. Her mittens were gone, and when she touched the corners of her mouth a pink froth was left on her fingers. Burning up, she tore off the white scarf--and raised her face to the wind.

KIRA: I have to go on--I have to get out.

NARRATOR: The heat was stifling, and it was so damn hard to breathe. She tore off her fur jacket and went on, without looking back.

KIRA: I have to go on--I have to get out.

NARRATOR: The wedding train was torn off her waist. It dragged behind her, tangling her legs. She staggered on blindly, the wind waving her hair--from under her breast a steady stream of red trickling down slowly into long, dark patches down the train.

KIRA: I have to go on--I have to get out.

NARRATOR: It was then she saw the young man standing in front of the cabin. The man he could have been--had he been given a chance.

KIRA (softly, as a plea for help, tender, almost joyous): Leo!

NARRATOR: She had made it across the border. She had won. She was free. And she had known a love no human words can describe.

And, as the life drained from her, Kira smiled and repeated his name, as if that one sound would give her life.

KIRA (triumphant): Leo!...(weaker still but triumphant)
Leo!...(weaker still but triumphant) Leo!

THE END