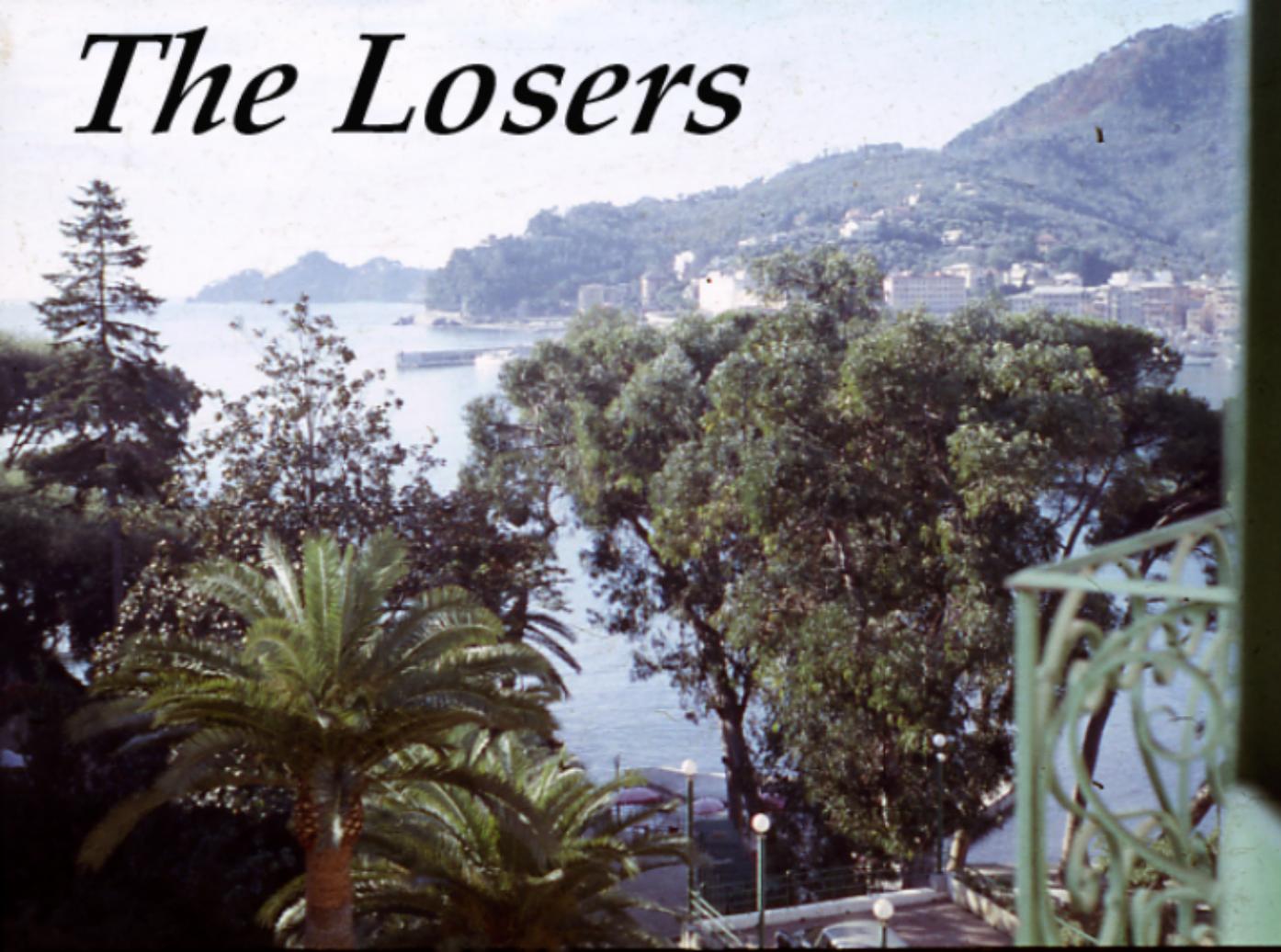


The Losers



The Losers

drama by Christian Lanciai (2009)

Dramatis personae:

Lily Boole
Sidney Reilly
Mansfield Cumming
Sasha Grammatikov
Bonch-Bruyevich
his secretary
Chubersky
General Judenich
Fanny Kaplan
General Major Roman Nikolai Fyodorovich von Ungern-Sternberg
Boris Savinkov
Boris Suvorin
Maria Spiridonova
Felix Dzherzhinsky
Winston Churchill
Caryll Houselander
Alexander Kerensky
A maid with Lily Boole, alias Ethel Voynich
guards

The action is in Europe and Russia 1895-1925
with an afterglow in New York after 1930.

The drama is exclusively constructed on real persons and events.

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Act I scene 1.

A hotel room in Santa Margherita with a view over the sea and the village.

Lily (gets out of bed from her lover and goes to the window and balcony, pulls aside the curtains so the light enters and the wonderful view becomes visible.) This is paradise with you, Sid, the largest and most voluptuous of all lovers and my most enigmatic one, here at the Emerald Coast in Italy with the best view east of Portofino! You must never leave me, Sid, for I intend never to leave or let you go.

Sid You cannot rule over my destiny.

Lily You do and decide about it.

Sid Can I? Can I blame or rule over who was my father? Can I rule over the fraud of my life that was not my own but my so called parents'? I have never had any identity, Lilian, and may never get one, because my father was not my father and my mother cheated on him, or my father cheated on her, I can never find out which.

Lily You are a child of fate and man of destiny, which makes you so irresistible. I'm certainly not the first person who has fallen for you and will certainly not be the last, but you have given me your soul, and I retain it. You're mine, Sidney, and I shall watch over you as long as you live as your guardian angel. No one should be able to touch you, for you are under my protection. You must be immune to all life's accidents, and no one can hurt you, whatever you undertake, I know that from my love which is without limits. You're mine, Sidney, whoever you love, and it must always be me you love through all the others.

Sid You are a singular good friend, Lilian, who understands me and gives me more than just love, entertainment and pastime. How I loathe humanity that just irritate me with their stupidity and shallowness! They are so childish laughing at nonsense any time, they are so naïve that they are framed any time, they are so ignorant that they do not even see life's fundamental certainties, while you are one of the few that stand out by talking to my heart and show you have a sympathetic soul, for which I thank you from the bottom of my heart. But you cannot keep me, for no one can keep me. I must always go on and get lost.

Lily I know. You are a spy with a lot of chaff to keep burning. You have too many interests to give yourself entirely to me. You are too universal to be able to share your life with one woman. But no matter how elusive you are, I will keep you. I shall write a novel about you and our wonderful relationship, which should be read to the end of time, for no one will know you as I do. I had exclusive right to experience you as a young and pristine idealist, and that experience I intend to use in a novel that should level up with the most ardent love passions of the Brontë sisters. I love you, Sidney. Let me love you.

Sid (embraces her in bed again) You're like an elder sister to me, and your love could well be the springboard and foundation for my future life. You promise me continuous success in your angelic protection. It's an insurance that I have to use, especially as I believe in it. I cannot do without such a gift from a good fairy.

Lily It shall follow you as long as you live. That I warrant as long as I live.

Sid You will survive me.

Lily Although I'm so much older?

Sid Something tells me so.

Lily Then I will the more insistently and faithfully protect you. You can always count on me.

Sid I shall never forget that, whatever happens.

Lily Come on, Sid, enter me once again and stay there.

Sid I want to stay there forever.

Lily You do. I carry you forever in my soul.
Sid Carry me with care, lest I fall.
Lily You never fall as long as I love you and you love me.
Sid No matter what risks I take? Whatever I do?
Lily Whatever you do, I remain in you and you in me.
Sid I need no better life insurance, as I take it for eternal.
Lily You take it right.

(They love.)

Lily (when they pause after a while) Tell me about your father, Sid.

Sid My greatest love and my biggest disappointment. I loved him as long as I did not know he was my father. My mother sent me to Vienna to study, and I stayed with him as a friend of the family without suspecting that he was my father. He had been working in all European major cities and knew the world on his five fingers. I learned everything from him and worshiped him. When I went home to my mother at Odessa she was dying, and then I discovered that he, the doctor in Vienna, whom I had learned to worship, was my real father.

Lily Should not then your reaction have been the opposite to disappointment?

Sid He had deceived me all my life. He had allowed me to grow up under a false name and false pretences. He was a Jew. The one I had regarded as my real father was a Polish aristocrat and catholic with connections at the court of the Czar. He had been deceived by my mother, who let herself be seduced by a Jewish vagabond and adventurer of a doctor, actually a con man and maybe a quack, a lousy charlatan, and I was just a young cuckoo. That I could never forgive him or my mother. From that day I was an outcast and homeless in the world without anything to stand on except myself. My sister was no longer my sister, my name was not my own, instead I was called something as awkward as Sigmund Rosenblum, I just wanted to vanish, I was nineteen years and wrote to my closest of kin, that they could look for my body under the ice of the harbour of Odessa. I changed clothes and looks and enlisted on a cargo ship to South America. The rest you know. I have never since had any contact with neither my foster family nor my true false father.

Lily But how did you get to England?

Sid It was a British expedition that I followed up the Amazon three years later which were so inexperienced and awkward that I had to save their lives. For that they were so abundantly grateful, especially the expedition leader, a certain major Fothergill, that they arranged for me a British passport and brought me home to England.

Lily Did they know your identity?

Sid Of course. To them I was Sidney Reilly, a Jewish bastard from Odessa, called Siggie, who in England became Sidney. So I had offers from the Secret Service to go on missions to Russia, since I knew both Russian, Ukrainian, German, Yiddish and anything. French, English and Italian were easily added. So here I am, on the threshold of becoming a British spy in Russia. Instead I took leave and went on holiday here in Italy with you.

Lily You could make any career. Have you no ambitions?
Sid In Vienna I was member of a society for enlightenment, a political movement to the left and rather radical and revolutionary. I know there must be a revolution in Russia. A regime like the Czar's is doomed. Twenty years hence it will be gone. How it will happen will be interesting to see, and I would gladly participate.
Lily Do you feel Russia as your home country?
Sid I was born there, and if it's not my home country, it's at least the country of my destiny. I will never be rid of it but will always be pulled back into it.
Lily But you are a British citizen.
Sid Yes.
Lily Under the name of Sidney Reilly, born in Connemara according to the passport.
Sid I can get other passports if necessary.
Lily Always let me know your new identity, if you change it.
Sid I will keep you informed if possible.
Lily And wherever you go, Sid, on your missions, do always come back. There is only one thing I could never forgive you, and that would be if you one day no longer came back.
Sid As long as I live, Lily, I will always come back. That much I can promise you. And if perchance I would turn in too soon and unwillingly without being able to give notice, I promise at least to haunt you.
Lily Then I am satisfied, Sid. The world is yours. Take care of it, manipulate it in the right direction, so that it doesn't derail totally.
Sid I will do my best. My missions are determined by England, though, and not by myself.
Lily I am sure you will be sent where you'll be best needed.
Sid Then it probably will be Russia.
Lily I think so too.
Sid Don't you think it's time to start thinking about dinner?
Lily Yes, Sid, with plenty of good wine and the best possible Italian food.
(They start preparing.)

Scene 2. London.

Mansfield Cumming Sidney Reilly, a cigarette?
Sid I don't smoke, but since you offer... *(accepts one. Cumming lights it.)*
Cumming We can't tell you how pleased we are with you. You have succeeded in everything so far. The more important it is for you not to fail now.
Sid What is it about?
Cumming Russia.
Sid Good.
Cumming That's where you always wanted to go back, wasn't it?
Sid Whatever you may say about my origin, that's my motherland.

Cumming Most people believe you are Irish.

Sid Let them believe it.

Cumming What made you assume an Irish identity?

Sid The best lady I ever knew was Irish.

Cumming So it came natural?

Sid I had to be something. I couldn't well be Sigmund Rosenblum.

Cumming Who was really your father?

Sid Don't talk about him. No one taught me more than he, there was no one I adored more than he, and then he was just a Jewish adventurer and quack who seduced my mother and made me a Jewish bastard, while all my school time I had to learn to repeat "God bless the Czar and damn the Jews!", and then I was myself one of those I had to damn all my life. My mother's deceived husband was a devout Polish catholic who gave me an exemplary education by his brother, who was abbé. The Irish connection gave me something of a new identity that would have to do.

Cumming It will do, all right. It's valid. You can never change name any more. As Sidney Reilly you have the highest marks and merits among all our international agents.

Sid What is the problem in Russia this time?

Cumming The war. Russia is wavering. We can't do without Russia in the war against the Axis. We could trust the democratic government under Alexander Kerensky, he managed to keep Russia in the war, but the bolsheviks made trouble and supported anarchy and disintegration. The Russian army was short of everything, food, clothes, ammunition and weapons, more and more deserted, and the Bolsheviks acquired more and more space. For his safety to protect him, Kerensky sent the Czar and his family to Siberia, where they still are. We fear what the bolsheviks will do to them. The eastern front is collapsing, and the Germans have entered Ukraine. We must keep Russia in the war. We can't manage only one front against them, in spite of your brilliant moves behind their lines. No single enemy has caused the Germans so much terror as you. I sent Bruce Lockhart to Moscow on the single mission to keep Russia in the war at any cost. He hasn't failed, he is still at it, but Trotsky has made peace with the Germans in Brest-Litovsk, and now he is war minister. There is still hope. He would have revenge on the Germans. Still Russia could be kicked into new grips with Germany. They moved their capital from Petersburg to Moscow, and that's where Lockhart is. Your mission is to get Russia back into the war with Germany or to bring the new government down. Those loyal to the Czar have started a civil war, so there is a better alternative than the communist dictatorship.

Sid I am looking forward to it. I was hoping for something like that. Unfortunately I don't think we could get Lenin and Trotsky to resume the war. It was the Germans who sent Lenin from Switzerland in a sealed car to Petersburg solely to give him the opportunity to bring the democratic government down. All he and Trotsky want is revenge on the entire former establishment and ruling class.

Their dictatorship will become worse than the Czar's. They are no idealists, only ruthless opportunists and destructive demolishers of society, mad for power.

Cumming I know you have a keen insight in the matter. That's why it's a pleasure for us to be able to send a man like you there. Remember. Lockhart has diplomatic immunity. It must not be compromised.

Sid So I shall act alone?

Cumming On principle, yes. You have your own network. I think your most useful collaborator would be Boris Savinkov. Sasha Grammatikov is still at large in Petersburg. Have as little as possible to do with Bruce Lockhart. The less he knows about your activity, the better. Act completely independently, and keep our diplomats absolutely ignorant in the face of the Russian government.

Sid When may I leave?

Cumming As soon as possible. You had better prepare at once.

Scene 3. Petersburg.

Grammatikov Welcome to hell on earth, comrade Reilly. Nowadays we are all each other's comrades by command of the authorities, even if you hate each other and plan to murder each other, which they all do. You will find everything unchanged here in Petrograd except for the worse, which we already got used to. Don't worry about the littering horse cadavers everywhere and all the new starving beggars. Famine is part of the new order, introduced and established by the bolsheviks so that ordinary people will not stand up complaining and demonstrating, as they did under the Czar. More are dying every day, and no one bothers any more to remove them. Nevsky Prospekt hasn't been cleaned up for weeks. You will get used to it.

Sid How is the civil war going?

Grammatikov I don't know. We are not kept informed. All information about the bolsheviks' trouble with the opposition and the armed resistance is suppressed and not let through. We know vaguely that the whites are making progress in Siberia and Ukraine and maybe also in the north, but the bolsheviks regard it as their main priority to keep people in the dark about it. Unilateralism is established. No alternative is accepted to the very limited and censored truth of the new authorities. Why did you come back at all? Russia is a lost country, and from here it can only sink further down into the grave in constantly more traumatic spasms of dying. Do you think you could do anything about it?

Sid That's why I am here.

Grammatikov Were you not arrested and interrogated when you landed in Murmansk?

Sid Yes, but I still have friends everywhere. I have no political ties but operate completely on my own, and therefore I can't be suspected of anything.

Grammatikov But Petrograd is now fallen behind in backwater. You can't do anything here any more. Petrograd is a dying city. If you want something done, you have to go to Moscow.

Sid That's where I am going. How is it with Savinkov?

Grammatikov He is your man. He could never forgive Kerensky for compromising with the bolsheviks. He was war minister under Kerensky, and now Trotsky holds that office, and the first thing he did was to surrender to the Germans. The truth is he could do nothing else. It will be discussed forever if Germany or Russia started the war. No one should have done it, both did, and none of them did it willingly. It just happened that way. They will pay for it, and especially Russia. We can never recover from this fall of history, Reilly.

Sid Yes, if the bolsheviks are removed.

Grammatikov Who will do it? You? Alone?

Sid If necessary.

Grammatikov Do it, Reilly, and good luck. Go to Moscow, but come back alive. Russia and the world need you.

Sid That's why I am here. *(They drink together.)*

Scene 4. Moscow.

Bonch-Bruyevich Who is he, this mysterious foreigner who speaks so fluent Russian?

Secretary He says he is commissioned by the British government to negotiate directly with Lenin.

Bruyevich But he can't meet Lenin personally. He must understand that.

Secretary But he insists.

Bruyevich Let me examine him. The risk is he is a maniac.

Secretary Do you dare to meet him?

Bruyevich If he is mad, which he probably is, he is harmless. Let him in. But also secretly send for the British consul. What's his name again?

Secretary Bruce Lockhart.

Bruyevich Exactly. I want to see him. After the maniac.

Secretary It will be arranged. *(retires. Outside:)* Comrade Bronch-Bruyevich will receive you now.

Sid (outside) Who is he?

Secretary Lenin's best friend.

Sid It will have to do. *(is let in)*

(offers his hand to Bruyevich) A pleasure meeting you, comrade.

Bruyevich (accepts it rather indifferently) Who are you?

Sid Sidney Reilly in His Majesty's service of the English government, sent here on commission directly by Lloyd George as a direct contact link between the British and the Russian government.

Bruyevich What do you want?

Sid To meet Lenin.

Bruyevich Why?

Sid As I said: to establish a direct communication line between Moscow and London.

Bruyevich By you?

Sid To begin with.

Bruyevich Why?

Sid Isn't it always good to have good communications? Aren't we allies? Didn't we fight together against Germany?

Bruyevich Not any more.

Sid Yes, and that's the problem. That's why I am here. Lloyd George wishes to know directly from Lenin what his political plans are.

Bruyevich Depending on relevance we will inform the British embassy and Bruce Lockhart.

Sid London is not satisfied with Lockhart's reports.

Bruyevich What is wrong with them?

Sid Insufficient. Unclear. Partial. Everything.

Bruyevich What exactly wishes London to know?

Sid If there is any chance of Russia's resuming the war on the right side.

Bruyevich The answer is regrettably and unhappily no.

Sid Explain the regrettably and unhappily.

Bruyevich We did not wish to make peace with the Germans but were forced to it by the circumstances. The Germans were in Ukraine and threatened Petrograd. Trotsky, our war minister, desires nothing more than to resume the war, since we were forced to a humiliating peace. But war is out of the question. We have too much problems at home.

Sid What problems?

Bruyevich Look around. You are not naïve, are you? People are starving, and we have enemies everywhere in our midst. Russia is engaged in a civil war, and that civil war is exceptionally critical, since there is no front and we never know where we have our enemy.

Sid In the north. In the south. In the east. Everywhere except abroad. Maybe even in the west.

Bruyevich Then you are informed. Was it anything else?

Sid I beg to come back.

Bruyevich You must understand that I must have you investigated by the British embassy.

Sid Of course. I have nothing to hide.

Bruyevich (*rising, offering his hand*) Goodbye then, Mr Englishman.

Sid (*accepts it*) Irishman.

Bruyevich It's the same. Goodbye. (*Reilly leaves.*)

An inscrutable original, perhaps a spy. (*lifts the phone*) Is the English consul there? Show him in.

(The secretary shows Bruce Lockhart in.)

I just had a countryman of yours in here for a visit, a certain *(reads from a card)* Sidney Reilly, born in Connemara in Ireland. Do you know who it is?

Lockhart Very well. He is well credited. I have known him for many years.

Bruyevich Can Englishmen then trust Irishmen today?

Lockhart I am a Scotsman.

Bruyevich And you mean that changes the matter?

Lockhart We are all Brits. I know no more loyal Englishman than Sidney Reilly.

Bruyevich What is he doing here?

Lockhart I haven't the slightest idea.

Bruyevich Still you have known him for many years.

Lockhart Since he came here he must have mentioned his mission himself.

Bruyevich He wanted to meet Lenin personally by order of Lloyd George to know our political intentions.

Lockhart That sounds perfectly reasonable.

Bruyevich He said that London regards your reports as insufficient.

Lockhart They are being censored. We are an established diplomatic embassy and must apply extreme caution and discretion especially in our reports.

Bruyevich While this Reilly is free to act on his own?

Lockhart If Lloyd George sent him here to obtain more specific information preferably directly from Lenin, then I can understand his dissatisfaction with the restrictions of our embassy.

Bruyevich Very well, Bruce Lockhart. I just wanted to have his story confirmed. Apparently he is honest and harmless. You may go.

Lockhart You can trust him as well as I can.

Bruyevich Good. We will leave him alone. Goodbye, Bruce Lockart. *(He leaves.)*

Still it felt as if he looked my whole being through when I met him. I would prefer not to have anything to do with this Sidney Reilly.

Scene 5.

Lockhart What are your intentions? Bruyevich asked me questions about you.

Sid What did you say? Surely you know nothing about me?

Lockhart That's what I told him. I don't want to know anything either.

Sid You know me and need to know nothing.

Lockhart But you took a considerable risk by going directly into the Kremlin and ask for a personal interview with Lenin. You put yourself and the whole legation at peril.

Sid It shall not be repeated.

Lockhart Now they know who you are and that you are here, and they will have you watched, constantly.

Sid I will change my name.

Lockhart Do you think that will help?

Sid I will be around here as little as possible. I will vanish completely and get a new passport under the name of Constantine, who will have nothing to do with your legation.

Lockhart If I know you right you will get more passports and identities. Is it Grammatikov in Petrograd you forges your passports?

Sid Better still. Orlov. You need not worry.

Lockhart You don't mean Orlovsky himself in the Tcheka?

Sid Of course. I will be one person in Petrograd and another here. If things will grow unpleasant for anyone of them he becomes the other and disappears. An old trick with agents, a practical change of clothes which was already practised by the Elizabethan agents, especially those in the theatre. It's just like suiting your clothes to the weather and circumstances, but for an agent it's about identities.

Lockhart Like our and the Czar's friend Orlov and the Tcheka agent Orlovsky.

Sid He is the best passport police in Russia.

Lockhart And what will be your name in Petrograd?

Sid You might as well know, if you have to contact me there. Massimo, Mr Massimo, a well known Turkish merchant from the far east.

Lockhart Yes, you have actually been there. But isn't that name somewhat transparent?

Sid A name as good as any name. Why is it transparent?

Lockhart It's the surname of your wife.

Sid Do you think the Russians care? We are legally married, and her name is Reilly.

Lockhart Are you? The traffic accident of your former wife was never more than official. And Nadine's husband was in the Czar's government.

Sid You don't have to inform me about my own life. I know what I am doing.

Lockhart Do you? Do you know that Russia is the world's most dangerous death trap? We all risk to get stuck here and perish. Did you know about that when you got back?

Sid That's why I am here.

Lockhart To contribute to the chaos and the universal self-destruction?

Sid No, to turn it in the opposite direction.

Lockhart How?

Sid You'll see. You had better not knowing anything about it.

Lockhart All I know about your mission here is that my reports to London were not satisfactory.

Sid They wanted Russia back into the war at any price. Like you, I knew it was impossible, which they couldn't accept. I promised to make an effort. If it wouldn't work, I would get free hands to do whatever to overthrow the Bolshevik government.

Lockhart Keep me out of it.

Sid Of course. You know nothing.

Lockhart And your address in Petrograd, if something turned up?

Sid 10, Torgovaya Ulitsa.

Lockhart (*makes a note of it*) Wasn't that the place of your former fiancée Yelena Mikhailovna?

Sid She is still living there.

Lockhart And here in Moscow you live with Dagmara Grammatikova. What do your wives think about that?

Sid Where else would I live if not with those I love?

Lockhart And who will assist you in overthrowing the Russian government? The whites are still far away, Kolchak in Siberia, Berzin in Archangelsk, Denikin in Ukraine, while Lenin, Trotsky and Dzherzhinsky all three are here.

Sid Savinkov.

Lockhart Only Savinkov?

Sid He was Kerensky's war minister.

Lockhart And he regretted that he didn't shoot Kerensky before he let out Lenin.

Sid Someone else can shoot Lenin.

Lockhart Only at a very short distance in that case. Well, you have Savinkov and Grammatikov. They have their cliques. Who else?

Sid The Czar is still alive.

Lockhart Yes, he is still alive with his whole family, but how long? If the whites reach Yekaterinburg the Bolsheviks will hardly let them get him.

Sid As long as he lives, there is hope for Russia.

Lockhart And afterwards?

Sid Hope never dies even if the Czar dies.

Lockhart You are so absolutely cocksure of your program, as if you knew that you couldn't fail.

Sid That's what I know. It's only a question of time and to strike in the right moment.

Lockhart You can trust me, since I know nothing. But such an extensive operation must include such a great number of people that it will be impossible to avoid traitors.

Sid It's just to drive on as long as the engine works.

Lockhart You close your eyes to possible reckonings.

Sid The reckonings will be for the bolsheviks, since they are the criminals of this country.

Lockhart Good luck, Sid. That's all the help I can give you. None of us here will learn anything about your activity. But I will keep myself informed about what happens to the gentlemen Constantine and Massimo if they happen to cause some startling manoeuvres.

Sid Keep yourself informed, so that I don't have to.

Lockhart Good luck, Sid. (*Sid leaves.*)

He actually thinks he could get away with a new revolution on top of the other. But he actually succeeded in everything he did so far, so why not?

Act II scene 1.

Sid Thanks for coming, all of you. You would hardly have come if you hadn't been aware of how the storm is gathering. The resistance against the dictatorship is constantly growing with the threats of the civil war, which are turning the Bolsheviks constantly more desperate. Therefore we must organize and keep well organized.

Grammatikov I thought we were here to constitute a shadow government.

Sid We are, Sasha. I hope you will be minister of the interior.

Grammatikov Thanks for the honour, but I hope you keep me off the military.

Sid That's for Judenich to take care of as our future war minister and chief commander.

Grammatikov Is he for resuming the war?

Sid Our prime concern is to overthrow the bolsheviks. Then we shall see.

Chubersky How did you expect that to happen?

Sid An attempt is being planned against Lenin. His assassination will be our signal to take over. Your part as minister of communications will be vital, when it comes to take over control of telecommunications, roads and railroads to immediately establish contact with the whites in Siberia, Ukraine, Estonia and in the north.

Grammatikov Is any Bolshevik aware of our meetings and how far our plans have reached?

Chubersky That's for me to answer. They know nothing but presume the more. So far our security is total and will remain so until anything goes wrong or someone betrays us. That's what we should avoid.

Grammatikov And what about Lockhart and the British embassy?

Sid The former consul general knows nothing and wants to know nothing and will know nothing until the coup is a fact and has carried success. I am reporting directly to London.

Grammatikov May I ask who the suicide candidate is who is willing to take on the responsibility of murdering Lenin?

Sid A woman overwhelmingly motivated.

Chubersky Can we trust a woman?

Sid Do you have any better suggestion? All she needs is to succeed. That accounts for any murderer. A woman actually has greater chances of success, since she will arouse less suspicion.

Grammatikov It's not Dora Kaplan, is it?

Chubersky Could it be anyone else?

Sid No.

Chubersky She is not reliable.

Sid There is no one in the world with stronger motives to murder Lenin.

Grammatikov Here comes Judenich. (*enter Judenich*)

Sid Welcome, general.

Judenich Thank you. How far have you come?

Sid Our shadow government is practically complete.

Grammatikov (*rising and presenting himself*) Sasha Grammatikov, minister of the interior.

Chubersky (*does the same*) Chubersky, minister of communications, old business associate with comrade Reilly.

Judenich Then our plans are right on schedule. Nothing can go wrong. There are democrats and whites everywhere waiting for their day. All we need is just to eliminate Trotsky, Lenin and Dzherzhinsky.

Grammatikov Lenin is being dealt with. Trotsky is a clown. Dzherzhinsky remains the greatest danger.

Chubersky And a Polack at that.

Sid We have still much to plan. Do you think you could take Petrograd with your Estonian army, general?

Judenich Yes, but not alone. Moscow and the Bolshevik government must fall at the same time.

Chubersky How far has Kolchak advanced in Siberia?

Sid He is approaching Yekaterinburg.

Chubersky How soon could he have released the Czar?

Sid I would guess within a month.

Judenich That is realistic enough. As soon as the Czar is released we could start moving into action.

Sid Let's get started with the rest of our plans. Coffee, anyone?

(They start planning at the table while coffee is served.)

Kaplan (*entering suddenly*) You can't succeed with your counterrevolution unless you eliminate the whole cabinet.

Sid Dora Kaplan! Welcome! You were the only one missing.

Grammatikov Who let that woman in? Miss Kaplan, we are no murderers like the bolsheviks. It's our very program to replace their mass murder terror with human democracy.

Kaplan They are all traitors and terrorists. You'll never get rid of them unless you use their own means to dispose of them.

Chubersky We are grateful for your intention to dispose of Lenin, but we think it will do to remove the head to put the dragon out of business.

Kaplan How do you know? Who told you that I would kill Lenin?

Grammatikov You boasted of it yourself and in public. No one believed you, but we believe you. We only beg of you to really do it and not start arguing with him about it.

Kaplan Don't try to help me. I will do it alone. Keep away. But I warn you. The troika has three horses, and Lenin is only one of them. Trotsky and Dzherzhinsky are as psychopathological murderers as he, and there are many others.

Chubersky We are grateful for your volunteering as a psychopathological murderer against them. But why not take them on all three, while you are so eager at it anyway?

Kaplan Something could go wrong. For instance, I could get arrested for the murder.

Sid Still you want to sacrifice yourself. Why?

Kaplan I have nothing to lose. Siberia took my life away. The former dictatorship gave me eleven years in Siberia. I was one of those who were exposed to the nagaika naked. Kerensky and the February revolution liberated me. Now we have a new dictatorship which is worse than the old one and establishes itself by betraying Russia in peace with the Germans. Germany is the leading rogue state of the world, and if Russia bows to them the game is over for Russia. Wasn't it the Germans who sent Lenin to Petrograd just to strike Russia out of the war? He has betrayed Russia and humanity, and if he is allowed to go on, the crimes of the bolsheviks against humanity will only multiply. We can still put an end to it before it's too late. But you must take on Trotsky and Dzherzhinsky if I take care of Lenin.

Judenich I accept taking on Trotsky.

Grammatikov Then Dzherzhinsky will fall on me. If we are lucky we could convert him. He is after all a Pole.

Chubersky May I ask how you intended to dispose of Lenin?

Kaplan I will shoot him.

Chubersky Can you hold a gun?

Kaplan Any child nowadays can do it.

Chubersky Without shaking your hand?

Kaplan A well motivated hand will not shake.

Chubersky Can you aim?

Kaplan If one shot would fail, there are five more. I will not stop until he is dead.

Chubersky Then we can only wish you good luck.

Grammatikov Are you sure we may not be of any assistance of any kind?

Kaplan Mind your own business, and I will attend to mine. Do your job, and I will do mine. Fix your counterrevolution, and I will fix Lenin.

Sid As I said, gentlemen, she has all the motivation that is needed.

Grammatikov I am afraid we have to trust her.

Sid What makes you doubtful?

Grammatikov The fact that she is a Jewess.

Sid Why?

Grammatikov Jews have a penchant for the world's most towering ambitions and to fall the first victims to them.

Kaplan Sasha, save your compliments until afterwards, when you will have Lenin's head on a plate. If I fail I will need no compliments.

Chubersky You mustn't fail.

Kaplan Don't you think I know?

Grammatikov Most Bolsheviks in the government are Jews, and they are all of the same hysterical calibre as she. We send a Jew against Jews.

Sid But Lenin is not, and he is leading them.

Kaplan You don't send me. I do it myself. If I fail you could comfortably deny all knowledge of me. I have never been here.

Judenich Such an honourable initiative on such excellent premises could hardly fail. That's my strategic conclusion of Dora Kaplan's plan.

Kaplan The name is Fanya Kaplan.

Chubersky If only you succeed, Fanya, we could not fail.

Kaplan That's what I mean. That's why I will succeed.

Sid Shall we resume the rest of our planning?

Grammatikov Thanks for dropping in, Fanya Kaplan.

Kaplan It was just informative. (*leaves*)

Judenich Dictatorships have nothing to gain by sending women to prison camps.

Chubersky And flogging them naked.

Grammatikov The Czardom is overthrown, and she will overthrow the next one.

Sid Let's return to our planning, gentlemen. More coffee?
(*Another guest arrives.*)

Judenich Gentlemen, we have a visitor.

Chubersky Do you know him?

Judenich All too well. He is Baltic. He is the last one I would welcome into our circle.

Grammatikov He looks formidable. Who is it?

Judenich It's the notorious Roman Nicolai Fyodorovich von Ungern-Sternberg, major general and outlawed.

Ungern Don't let me disturb you, gentlemen. I heard that something was on. General Judenich, you are bound to fail.

Judenich Baron von Ungern-Sternberg, we have no need here of any prophet of calamity. We just got rid of a female maniac. You are not welcome as her replacement.

Ungern I am not in the habit of replacing women. On the contrary, I assume them.

Judenich In that case Fanya Kaplan was fortunate to get away in time.

Ungern Fanya Kaplan? That heroic Jewess who intends to murder Lenin?

Judenich The very girl.

Ungern Pity I missed her. Unfortunately she can't succeed. She talks too much. Neither will you succeed in toppling the government. You are bound to get betrayed, since your conspiracy can't be kept secret.

Judenich You can't have any interest in betraying us.

Ungern No, I definitely haven't. If I thought that you could succeed, I would gladly offer you my services, but I am on my way to Siberia. The whites have no chance there either. We could only succeed outside Russia, for instance in Mongolia.

Sid (to the others) I have met that man before.

Ungern That is correct. Sidney Reilly from Ireland, wasn't it? In reality a Jewish bastard from Odessa. We met in China and had some interesting talks about eventual possibilities there. Unfortunately China is as lost as Russia. But if you start from

Mongolia for an operating basis you could expand from there and create an alternative great power that could render both Russia and China useless.

Sid I see that you still consider yourself a reincarnation of Djenghis Khan.

Ungern No, Mr Reilly, alias Rosenblum, I *know* it. And I intend to restore my old empire, which was the greatest ever.

Judenich With the same exaggerated brutality and violence that made you impossible in the army?

Ungern I always conquered and can never lose. Who could conquer without violence?

Judenich You would be more useful if you joined Kolchak in Siberia and cleaned the place from all bolsheviks.

Ungern I will do that on my way. The bolsheviks are a tribe of parasite reptiles that will infect the whole world with their social mental disease if you don't extirpate the vermin at once.

Grammatikov We don't need you, baron Sternberg. I suggest that you get lost in Siberia at once. You were only a burden to the army in the war and would make an even worse burden to us.

Ungern I feel sorry for you, my dear losers. You will all perish. You can't strike hard enough. You don't realize that the bolsheviks are just the greatest evil ever seen, which only can be fought by an even greater evil. If you try something nobly democratic against them they will just execute you at once and let your corpses disappear without a trace in eternal silence. You are too soft.

Savinkov (entering) I see that you have an unwanted guest.

Grammatikov Boris Savinkov! At last! We have been waiting for you!

Ungern Kerensky's worthless war minister. You should have liquidated the bolsheviks at home instead of losing the war against the Germans. If you had treated the bolsheviks as they deserved, we would have won the war.

Savinkov Too late now, major general. The war is unfortunately over for Russia, which I regret. If you want to fight you will have to leave Russia. We intend to overthrow the bolsheviks by a democratic coup which will render your gangster methods redundant. Your gangster methods therefore are not welcome.

Ungern Naïve blue-eyed suicide candidates, I deplore you. Let me know when you are compelled to beg me of help when I have made Mongolia into a new and better super power. (*prepares to leave*)

Judenich He was deeply scarred in the war and has been completely mad all since.

Sid If he is mad, it is not without some method.

Ungern A word with you, Mr shadow president, before I vanish.

Sid What do you want?

Ungern Forget Russia. It is destroying itself, like the demons in Dostoievsky's novel, like the mad hoard of swine rushing in panic to perdition. The future is beyond the frontiers of Russia, of which nothing is left but a rotting mass grave. Come with me to Mongolia, and we shall start from the beginning, create a new

nation and a new world for free spirits to roam and expand in. If you remain in Russia you will only go under like all the others.

Sid I will consider your offer, Baron Ungern-Sternberg, but I will first finish my job here. I owe it to my motherland Russia to at least give her a chance.

Ungern It's your funeral. Let's meet again on the endless steppes of freedom in a Mongolia without limits.

(enter Suvorin)

Sid Suvorin! You are late! And you look upset! Is it bad news?

Suvorin They are too much in a hurry. I tried to hold them back, but they insist on starting the revolution before we are ready.

Grammatikov Whom are you talking about, Boris?

Suvorin The left social revolutionaries, of course! They don't want to wait for us but will strike at once, and Dzherzhinsky is on to them.

Savinkov Were they not having a great congress in the Bolshoy theatre?

Suvorin Yes, and the TTcheka is surrounding the building!

Chubersky Then we must warn them.

Savinkov Too late.

Sid Bruce Lockhart was going there. I warned him. He must have warned everyone he could.

Savinkov If the left social revolutionaries are lost, we have lost our right wing.

Chubersky Who is leading them?

Suvorin That mad Maria Spiridonova, who publicly made herself known as an aggressive anti-leninist.

Savinkov Most indiscreet.

Suvorin Who is careful in these days?

Chubersky Isn't she a friend of Dora Kaplan's, who is determined to assassinate Lenin?

Suvorin They match each other well. Both have been raped by Cossacks and commissars and capos unto irrecognizability. Maria Spiridonova also used to throw bombs at the worst commandants of the Czar.

Sid Can we save them?

Suvorin The mad ladies?

Sid No, the left social revolutionaries.

Suvorin I am afraid our friend Felix is already taking care of them.

Sid Then we will have to operate alone. We still have the Czechs left and Kolchak in Siberia and our general Judenich. When Kolchak reaches Kazan we have to be ready to take over Moscow.

Judenich My Czechs are the most loyal soldiers in the world.

Sid And then we'll hope that Fanya Kaplan's attempt on Lenin will be successful. That will be our signal to strike at once. If only that flash blows up the powder magazine, it's just for us to enter and take charge.

Savinkov And if she fails?

Sid She is fanatical and mad enough not to fail.

Act III scene 1. The Bolshoy theatre.
Maria Spiridonova appearing on stage alone.

Maria We are writing a chapter of world history today, comrades, as we now at last make way for the true revolution against all counter revolutions, to forever sweep away all oppressors in whatever disguise they may appear, for today we have succeeded with yet another assassination against a tyrant, seducer, bully, demagogue and gangster in political dress. The German ambassador Count von Mirbach has successfully been murdered by our own comrade Blumkin! This is our second Sarajevo, which must force the Germans to restart the war against us, which only could lead to the fall of the bolshevik regime! Lenin and Trotsky have all the way just been crawling lackeys to the Germans! In the name of their false revolution they have established a more inhuman and brutal tyranny than ever the Czars attempted! They want to bereave all people of their rights to their own lives, own integrity, own right of possession and own creed. They already started with the farmers, whom they rob of all lands and force into beggary or into a new serfdom in the industrial ghettos of urbanisation, where they are reduced to ciphers if even that! The society of enforced industrialization as Lenin and Trotsky wish to implement it will reduce all people to slave-working ants with no rights to their own lives! Lenin has deceived the people to get the power! He has made peace with the Germans so that they would smuggle him to Petrograd! He intends to systematically extirpate all democratic opposition!

Felix (rising among the audience) The game is over, you poor hysterical terrorist! The entire theatre is surrounded by policemen of the Tcheka. No member of your congress will get away. Blumkin has already been arrested, and your leader Alexandrovich is already executed. You have no chance against the revolution. We have given Russia peace to be maintained, and it will last. You are already dead, Maria Spiridonova.

Maria Felix Dzherzhinsky, the first traitor of the revolution, it's you who turned the party of the Bolsheviks into a terrorist movement of murderers and gangsters! Why did you do it? To further the interests of Poland and lead all Russia to hell! You are a Polack and no Russian and have seized power of the Tcheka police only to throw the revolution into the eternal vicious circle of the cruelty and vendetta of self-destruction!

Felix She is hysterical! Arrest her and bring her to the Kremlin! (*Felix approaches the stage to meet her and the policemen, who have appeared behind the stage to arrest her.*)

Maria By such monsters as you, Lenin and Trotsky, the revolution, which started as a democratic movement, has been aborted into a more inhuman terror than what was practised by Peter the Great and Ivan the Terrible!

Felix You will be treated with comparative leniency, Maria Spiridonova. We will only interrogate you and find out all you know about the plots and plans for the assassination of comrade Lenin.

Maria I know nothing!

Felix Of course, but you can't imagine what miracles some treatment in the Kremlin and Lyubyanka could work to open up your mind and reveal all the knowledge you now don't remember. Away with her! (*Maria is taken out under fierce resistance and protests.*)

(*to the audience*) Go home, good people! The counterrevolution has been quenched in its cradle. All your leaders have been imprisoned and will be dealt with. If you don't want to end up in prison camps you will be wise in just going straight home as if nothing has happened and to forget that the left socialists ever existed. It's we, the bolsheviks, the true communists, who have all the power in Russia, and all resistance will be effectively and methodically crushed. Forget your political engagement and leave it to us. We have the power now to never let it go.

(*During his talk more and more red guards have threateningly turned up from behind armed with machine guns which they aim at the audience. Curtain.*)

Scene 2. The interrogation of Fanny Kaplan.

1 Miss Kaplan, you must understand that you made yourself guilty of an attempted murder.

Fanny No, just the legal execution of a mass murderer. In the lack of laws against such when they are established, I took the law in my own hands.

1 Why then didn't you carry through the murder?

Fanny Don't you think I tried? I fired three shots, and at least two struck home! Perhaps it served him right to be forced into painful invalidity for the rest of his life.

1 But why did you warn him, if your earnest intention was to execute him?

Fanny I wanted to give him the right to defend himself. You allowed him mass murders at large without trial and without question, although he committed uncountable brutal murders. I wanted to give him the chance of a trial and see if he could defend his actions at all.

1 What did he answer?

Fanny He called me crazy, said that I was a dangerous maniac, that they should take cover and called for help, like a frightened coward.

1 And then you fired?

Fanny Yes.

1 Do you regret that he survived?

Fanny Of course. But at least he was permanently damaged. I know that one shot hit him in the shoulder. Did I manage to hit the spine? Will he be paralysed? Will he be in pain for the rest of his life?

1 Fortunately he will recover.

Fanny Tell me as it is. It will take years.

1 Fortunately your attempt failed, and that's the main thing.

Fanny What will his condition of survival be? Like a vegetable? Like a mummy that constantly will need drugs to keep artificially alive?

Felix I will take over the interrogation, comrade Sverdlov.

Fanny Felix Dzherzhinsky himself, the main destroyer of Russia!

Felix Miss Kaplan, you know that you will be shot for this. But you have a chance of a milder sentence, if you tell us who commissioned you to do what you have done.

Fanny I acted on my own.

Felix On your own personal initiative? No party behind? No one was initiated in your plans?

Fanny Lenin has annihilated Russia and turned it into a terrorist state, and his main accomplice is you, who now systematically execute all opposition, from the Czar and his innocent family of only ladies and patients to the large masses of kulaks and farmers. I decided to give him what he deserved since no one else did.

Felix And you want us to believe that no one else was involved?

Fanny I had reasons enough. I was always abused. I have been nine years in Siberia. I followed and honoured Lenin until he overthrew the democratic government. Now he has made Russia a regime of murderers. It's a greater honour to be one of its victims than to have any share in the regime.

Felix What was your business with the Left Socialist Revolutionaries?

Fanny Nothing, but their government was more legal than yours.

Felix What were your dealings with other contra revolutionary cliques and persons like the generals Kolchak and Judenich, the British embassy and a certain Sidney Reilly, whom we know is present in the country, either in Moscow or Petrograd?

Fanny Nothing.

Felix So you deny everything except your crime.

Fanny It was no crime. It was a heroic effort at a universally charitable deed. It was a necessary surgical incision to remove a malignant political cancer, which operation unfortunately was not successful.

Felix Then we can't help you, Fanny Kaplan. You will be executed.

Fanny More than half of the people are against you. You will have a terrible trouble executing them all.

Felix We will go on with our operations as long as necessary. Take her out!
(*Fanny rises and is taken care of by guards taking her away.*)

Felix She is right. It will be a terrible trouble. – Bring in the next prisoner.
(*A guard makes a sign, another guard goes out, and two other guards bring in Bruce Lockhart.*)

Lockhart Has diplomatic immunity no meaning any more for your new political system?

Felix You are only here for questioning. If you cooperate and don't withhold anything you will be released at once.

Lockhart What do you want to know?

Felix Everything you know about the great conspiracy against the government, especially concerning Fanny Kaplan and Sidney Reilly.

Lockhart The only thing anyone knows about Fanny Kaplan is that she acted entirely on her own. You must have learned that from others also.

Felix And your countryman Sidney Reilly?

Lockhart He has nothing to do with our British mission.

Felix That was not my question. My question was what you know about him and the conspiracy against the government in which he appears to play a central role.

Lockhart Nothing.

Felix Where is he today?

Lockhart Only he himself knows.

Felix Don't bluff. You conceal what you know.

Lockhart No one knows anything about him. You forced him underground from the start. He probably lives under false names and identities, and I don't know them. You can't blame me for your being unable to reach him when I can't reach him myself.

Felix He is a notorious spy. What was his mission here? Why was he here? Why did he come to Russia when he knew that all he could find here was mortal danger?

Lockhart Because he is actually Russian. He comes from Odessa.

Felix Mr Lockhart, I know that you know everything about him that we want to know. You can hide what you know at your own risk, but your conspiracy is well known by now and is getting rounded up. You should know that we have no second thoughts about going at any lengths. We don't give a damn about your diplomatic immunity, since it is only a mask to your subversive espionage activities. We must be ruthless, since the state is in danger.

Lockhart I have observed that you are just as desperate as France during their revolutionary reign of terror. Don't you see that you could have the whole world turned against you?

Felix Don't be ridiculous. Do you want to make us laugh? It's enough that we have Kolchak in Siberia, Judenich in Yaroslavl, Berzin with his Lettonians and your ridiculous British invasion force in Archangelsk against us for us to be enough motivated to take on the whole world on our horns and methodically eliminate all resistance concentrating on the enemy within, where all evil starts.

Lockhart I have noticed that you both here and in Petrograd have launched summary proceedings with executions of more than a hundred people a day.

Felix We have only started.

Lockhart And you think you can overcome all resistance against your evil in that way? On the contrary, by accelerating your cruelty and evil you will only embitter the resistance and harden it. Nothing has more decisively turned the whole world against you as your abominable execution of the Czar's entire family, where most of them were innocent women.

Felix Who cares? It was only a demonstration and a warning. Call it terror if you want. The main thing is that it is efficient. If it's not efficient enough, it's only for us to increase the pressure.

Lockhart Can you make your abominable terror pressure even worse than it already is?

Felix You forget that our government has all the power. It is very easy for us to strangle the access to cereals and victuals for the entire population. If terror and cruelty is not enough, the next step would be to starve the people to silence.

Lockhart (benumbed) Your premeditated inhumanity thereby exceeds Napoleon's and can only be compared with the methods of Turks, Asians and Mongols.

Felix I release you, Bruce Lockhart, so that you can warn Sidney Reilly and his friends and inform your conspirators that we will not hesitate to go at any length.

Lockhart Is it worth it? Is any power worth the sacrifice of all humanity?

Felix We'll see. We regard it mostly as an experiment.

Lockhart You will never catch Sidney Reilly. He will always mock you, and the conspirators you are so afraid of will always remain no matter how many you execute. Wasn't it Leo Tolstoy who said, that "the worm may eat the cabbage, but the worm will die before the cabbage"?

Felix Goodbye, Bruce Lockhart. We will meet again. This was just a foretaste of what is expecting you. *(to the guards)* Take him out.

(The guards bring out Bruce Lockhart.)

Next time we shall keep him.

Scene 3.

Savinkov We must have been betrayed. There is no other explanation.

Suvorin But who could have betrayed us? There is no one in our camp that we could not fully trust.

Savinkov There is only one possibility – the French. They have been headstrong and taken risks from the beginning and never listened to us. The French embassy is still there, but the British is closed down, and Bruce Lockhart is now confined in isolation.

Grammatikov We will probably know more when Reilly comes.

Chubersky Here he is. *(enter Sid somewhat harrowed but in good form)*

Grammatikov Thank goodness that you are still at large! How do you manage? All Russia is on the hunt for you.

Sid I am sorry, my friends, but the game is over. Our adversaries play with too unjust methods for honesty to have any chance left. We must all go underground and should actually leave the country, until further notice.

Grammatikov How will you get out? It's far from Moscow to the nearest border.

Suvorin Petrograd is the only possibility. There is a traffic line to Finland and Sweden.

Savinkov Unless you want to risk your life to reach Denikin's lines in Ukraine or Kolchak's in Siberia.

Grammatikov Are you giving up, Sid? Don't you think they could succeed?

Sid They could succeed as long as the Czar's family was alive. Kolchak reached Yekaterinburg too late. By the inhuman massacre on the entire imperial family with doctors and nurses, the Bolsheviks have shown who they really are. Unfortunately they are capable of any inhuman exaggerations in the direction of purest evil. They have established evil as a system, and we have only seen the beginning. I had time to meet with Bruce Lockhart before he was arrested the second time. He told me, that Felix Dzherzhinsky had taken him for a ride in his Rolls-Royce just to show him all the massacres that were still going on or concluded of so called suspected oppositionals. There were corpses everywhere and often in heaps. They produce corpses faster than they can get rid of them, and still the situation in Moscow is negligible compared to what is going on in Petrograd, where people intentionally are subject to starvation by withheld deliveries of food and cereals just to quench the opposition. This has triggered open cannibalism, which the bolsheviks passively encourage and force the people in desperation to resort to by denying them food. To get any food at all you have to stand in line for days. Naturally party members are exempt from such unpleasantness. Russia has exterminated the old ruling class of sound economy, stability, liberalism and good taste and culture to replace it with a new dominating class of inhumanly cruel and barbaric hooligans and cynical gangsters who only think of themselves and have forgotten all about human dignity.

Chubersky Is there any hope for Bruce Lockhart?

Sid Only if he is exchanged for other imprisoned bolsheviks at the Russian embassy in London. He has been confined in isolation and will probably remain there as long as he is still in Russia or at all alive. I wanted to offer to take his place, but I was dissuaded. In that case both he and I would probably have been shot. Fanny Kaplan was immediately shot after some summary interrogations. None of us could expect any better treatment, if we are caught.

Savinsky Who betrayed us? Was it the French?

Sid Probably the French journalist René Marchand, the correspondent of Figaro in Moscow. The French were too eager and talkative and did not realize the importance of discretion in connection with the overthrow of the bolsheviks.

Chubersky Why did the attempt at Lenin fail?

Sid Fanny Kaplan wanted to bandy words with him before she shot him. That saved his life, but her three shots will invalidate him for life.

Savinkov Women always miss the point by talking too much.

Sid I regret, gentlemen, that we have to give up, but we have to take cover against the red terror. Their continuous excesses in overstepping all marks of human decency by gross violence make it impossible to keep up with them. Instead of fair play, it's now only about surviving. Each one must manage on his own. That's my last order of the day.

Savinkov We can return when the terror has exhausted itself and Lenin is dead.

Sid If things will not get even worse by then. So far the bolsheviks have consistently gone from bad to worse, but they excel themselves all the time.

Grammatikov Do you think Denikin, Judenich and Kolchak stand any chance?

Sid Hardly Judenich. Denikin has foundered on the problem that the Cossacks will fight for him only if he gives them independence. Possibly Kolchak in Siberia. He is the youngest and best and has done the most and reached the furthest, but he can never forgive himself that he didn't reach Yekaterinburg in time to avert the massacre on the Czar's family. All his victories he regards as worthless compared to that defeat.

Suvorin Good luck, Sid. You will always make it, and we will always follow you.

Sid Let's maintain contact abroad, and one day, I promise you, we shall succeed in saving Russia from this new barbarity of inhumanity.

Savinkov It will be an easy task for the world, since the Bolsheviks regard it as their holy mission to spread their dictatorship across the world.

Grammatikov Suddenly the times have grown so dark that it is difficult to believe in better times.

Chubersky Still we were not farther than this (*indicates a minimal space between his thumb and index*) from succeeding. It would have worked, if that Frenchman hadn't talked too much.

Savinkov We will try again. It's not worse than that.

Sid Yes, that's how simple it is. Good luck, comrades.

Grammatikov And better luck next time.

(The group is dissolved.)

PAUSE

Act IV scene 1. A pub in London. Universal armistice celebrations.

Bruce The war is over, everyone is celebrating and partaking in universal hysterics of joy, but you don't look happy, Sid.

Sid I shouldn't be here.

Bruce But you are here.

Sid I have an unfinished chapter in Russia.

Bruce Don't go back, Sid.

Sid What can stop me?

Bruce Common sense should stop you.

Sid You don't have to, Bruce, since you are in the service and have your orders. You have other things to do. I have nothing else to do.

Bruce What can you do? The new power in Russia is absolute, and all opposition is systematically and categorically extirpated. The worst evil the world

has ever seen is overgrowing the country and strangling it. You can't live there any more as a human being. The monsters have taken over who only allow other monsters to live.

Sid That's why we have to overturn that monster state and eliminate it before it grows worse infecting and spreading all over the world. The longer the Bolshevik dictatorship is allowed to go on, the worse it will grow and the darker and more inhuman its terror.

Bruce What can you do?

Sid There are still oppositional networks spread all over Russia. Savinkov is in constant touch with them, and Grammatikov wants me back. I am needed there, Bruce. We were a hair's breadth from succeeding in overthrowing the bolsheviks in summer, and we would have succeeded, if that blasted French reporter hadn't betrayed us.

Bruce René Marchand. He boasted of it when he came home to France. He is the leader of the fifth column there and the communist party.

Sid He didn't know what he was doing. All these naïve communist idealists are facing a terrible awakening in the form of trials and executions. Every dictatorship means only death and destruction to the people and the nation. I can't understand how anyone could fail to realize this and how they could fall for the death trap of communism.

Bruce And you are ready to walk into that trap yourself.

Sid What do you mean?

Bruce How do you know that Savinkov and that Russian trust trying to get you back aren't *agents provocateurs* staging a foul play to get hold of you?

Sid We can't let the opposition in Russia down, Bruce, not as long as it's still there. It has a right to live, while the dictatorship has no right to exist. No terror has, and it is only about terror.

Bruce But it is clever and will use any means. I think time has better possibilities to cure it than new risky attempts from within.

Sid So you are ready to let it be and passively allow its terror to go on with your arms folded and not do anything about it? Still you have seen its terror with your own eyes. You have seen the unburied results of their open massacres. You have seen the starving masses fighting over human meat in Petrograd. You have seen the extreme misery of the people that their masters intentionally cause to starve to death. And you will let them go on?

Bruce I am worried about you, Sid. Don Quixote had greater success than what you can have in Russia.

Sid I feel responsibility, Bruce. I watch how the new terror dictatorship is growing fast and getting more firmly established and erupting into a new inhuman society where all individual initiative and human value is quenched and violated and trampled down and reduced to nothing to slowly but surely be extirpated, where all freedom of expression and of the press disappears and is eliminated while robots take over the society without a heart and without a thought of anything else

than to keep control of the egoistic power for their own interest. I can't agree to such a society or world where it is allowed to exist. I must react with all possible means. Even a personal protest with a martyr's death is better than nothing.

Bruce I can't help you, Sid. We did well and were successful and worked miracles as long as there was a war, but now peace begins, and people only want to forget all about wars. You should try as well.

Sid I can't forget Russia. There is a war there against all humanity and human values. I must defend the victims of humanity.

Bruce Let's have another round. Be my guest. Try to celebrate the peace, at least seemingly, at least today.

Sid Okey, Bruce, if I may pay for the next round.

Bruce That's the spirit. *(makes a sign, they get new glasses. Sid catches sight of someone.)* You look like seeing a ghost.

Sid It's worse than that. She is alive.

Bruce Your wife?

(Lily has seen them and joins them.)

Lily You have grown older, Sid.

Sid I can't say that about you. *(rising)* This is Ethel Voynich, Bruce, formerly known as Lily Boole, my first love, who turned me Irish.

Bruce (rising) The famous authoress?

Lily Fame only lasted for a book. I hope you'll forgive me, Sid.

Sid For what?

Lily For writing a book about you.

Sid It was not about me. It was not even about our love. You left everything important out.

Lily All books do.

Bruce (has felt the situation) I think you two have much to talk about. We can continue another day. *(with a warning finer)* Don't go to Russia, Sid. *(leaves)*

Lily (alone with Sid, gradually sitting down again) Do you really intend to go back?

Sid I must.

Lily Why?

Sid Unfinished business.

Lily You can't save the old Russia, Sid. The Czar's family is exterminated.

Sid But I can avert the monster state that is formed instead.

Lily The whole world order is lost, Sid. All that remains for the good to be done is for them to survive although it all goes to hell.

Sid It's not possible if it goes to hell.

Lily Can you stop it?

Sid It's worth a try.

Lily All good Russians have left Russia. No one is left, and the few that remained have been liquidated or been sorted out to the eternal night of forgetfulness in the prison camps.

Sid I am not alone who want to return to do something about it.

Lily Who else?
Sid Boris Savinkov for one.
Lily He is an unreliable drug addict living on injections.
Sid He hasn't given up anyway.
Lily (takes his hand) Come back, Sid. Come back to the world. Come back to reality. Come back to love. Come back to me.
Sid Aren't you married any more?
Lily My marriage became just one of many episodes. He is in Poland now very busy about organizing their new state together with Pilsudski.
Sid Paderewski is also there keeping busy.
Lily Yes, they work together. But it's a new and hard world, Sid, where new dictatorships are exploding like in a greenhouse. They are still just plants, but they will break all glass houses. We have nothing to do with such a world any more.
Sid Isn't the Russian dictatorship more than enough? What more do you expect?
Lily There are extreme left and right movements everywhere, in Germany, Italy, Hungary, Spain, everywhere in eastern Europe, it's only northwest Europe and France that aren't in danger, but even France is susceptible.
Sid Most of the Russian emigrants are there and the few Armenians that survived the Turkish genocide.
Lily Yes, they are all there.
Sid Do you know them?
Lily Many of them.
Sid I would gladly get closer acquainted with them. Can you open doors to me?
Lily I plan to move to New York. There you can act with some freedom, and no war has left ruins and open wounds behind, and even democracy is safe there.
Sid Isn't it in England?
Lily Next war will be worse, Sid, especially for England.
Sid You were always unpleasantly prophetic.
Lily Unfortunately it comes natural to me. You just know it.
Sid Come with me to Paris.
Lily I would love to, Sid.
Sid You must meet Savinkov.
Lily In that case I see it as a mission. My mission will be to persuade both of you not to return to Russia.
Sid The risk is that you will accomplish the contrary. We can't forget it.
Lily That I can well understand, but memories are only lovely as memories. Reality ruins them.
Sid Come, Lily.
Lily To where?
Sid My place.

(He gets up, and she follows him out.)

Scene 2. Paris.

Savinkov Well, Mr Churchill, how do you defend all your failures?

Sid You are talking to the war minister of Britain, Boris.

Savinkov I don't care about all his failures at home. It's the British failed operations to save Russia that gives me the right to turn him against the wall in the capacity of Kerensky's war minister.

Churchill He has a right to charge me, Sidney. We did fail by insufficient forces. If I had been in charge the forces would have been more massive and on several fronts, not just that awkward phoney effort in Archangelsk. All I can say is that we do what we can. We were hoping for breakthroughs from the south by Denikin, but he has the same problems as Judenich and Kolchak. Why is the resistance against the bolsheviks so hopelessly divided and disorganized? You all seem interested only in quarrelling between yourselves. What are you doing yourself, war minister, to save your home country?

Savinkov The problem, former naval minister, is that we are in the same boat. I obeyed orders under a certain captain Kerensky who took the wrong course and trusted the fires of the wreckers in the stormy night. His innocence made him believe that the bolsheviks were human. They took us all by surprise by not being so. Like all sharpened evil they are also armed with a diabolical intelligence and shrewd power of calculation which proved difficult to outwit. Kolchak is the only one of our trusted generals who could vie with the communists in cruelty. He controls all Siberia, which still is just a vast desolation and wilderness, while the bolsheviks hold all major cities in European Russia in a implacable iron grip of terror, against which even Kolchak is powerless, like a pygmy against gorillas. His title of regent is completely empty and worthless after the liquidation of the Czar's family. It's that void, the total collapse of the central power, the heart of Russia since 300 years, the loss of its innermost nuclear family, which creates such an astronomically empty black hole, that all armies against the Bolsheviks in the north, east, south and west stand powerless. We thought that help from abroad would help the matter, but it only proved the more insufficient.

Churchill I am afraid that we can't do anything more. As I see it, the only hope of Russia is you, war minister Savinkov, and your friend Reilly here.

Sid Kolchak will not give up, and neither will we. Tell him about your plan, Boris.

Savinkov The opposition in Russia is till there. It just needs to be organized. That's what we are working on. We have contacts. Many of them are managed from New York, which is why I have to go there to cultivate them. Unfortunately England has made herself impossible in the eyes of the Bolsheviks by the failed invasion in Archangelsk, but the Americans are in contact with the bolsheviks. There is an opening and a possibility. The most influential emigrants are also in America led by Grand Duke Alexander Mikhailovich, the Czar's cousin. Here in Paris they just get bogged down in nostalgia, decadence and the bottomless sorrow in self pity.

Churchill What can you do from America?

Savinkov A resurrection of Russia must be executed drastically by a determined death blow directly at the heart of its cancer, the very politbureau of the communist party. On that point I and Sidney Reilly are agreed. We must aim directly at the top, shoot off the head of the captain and dismantle the entire leadership.

Churchill They say Lenin is ill and out of order. Do you mean Trotsky and Dzherzhinsky? A dragon has many heads.

Savinkov We are working on a bloodless coup.

Churchill And how the deuce do you intend to accomplish that?

Savinkov It's still only being planned, but if the Russian opposition is ready to support us, we can still raise the shipwreck and turn it right on course.

Churchill Is he realistic, Sidney?

Sid I hope so and would like to think so. We'll see in America.

Churchill Then I can only wish you the best of luck. Downing Street will of course back you up the whole way, colleague Savinkov. Through Reilly here we stand in constant contact. You only have to wish for what you need, and we can deliver on short notice.

Savinkov We are sincerely grateful for that, dear colleague. England has always been Russia's best friend.

Sid How is it Kerensky used to say? It's only a question of time how long the bolsheviks can stand for their absurd lies. We only have to wait for their unavoidably ignominious collapse.

Savinkov But we have no patience to wait. If the fruit is rotten the only thing to do is to throw it away, isn't it?

Churchill Another whisky, gentlemen?

(They accept another round.)

Scene 3. London.

Caryll Don't go to Russia, Sid.

Sid Not you as well.

Caryll I have seen how you will end there.

Sid The problem with your visions, Caryll, is that they are never concrete. They can be made to signify anything, just like the prophecies of Nostradamus.

Caryll I know what I know, Sid, and I don't want to lose you. Humanity can't afford your loss.

Sid Do you attach some messianic significance to my case?

Caryll Your knowledge of humanity and especially of Russia is an invaluable asset and responsibility. You could better use that responsibility outside Russia.

Sid If I don't return to Russia I will fail that responsibility.

Caryll On the contrary, it will be taken away from you by force.

Sid Have you seen it?

Caryll You don't have to see it to understand it's obvious. You know how they do in Russia. They are specialists on making people disappear without a trace. They don't just murder, but they obliterate all traces of all corpses.

Sid I can't stay indifferent to the destiny of Russia and remain outside in detachment. Savinkov is also going back.

Caryll In a fit of self-destructive fanaticism.

Sid He wouldn't go if he didn't know how he could make everything turn.

Caryll You neither know what you are dealing with or what you are doing. You are people and human as such, but the creatures who have seized power in Russia are not people and not human but insidious instruments of the most dreadful evil the world has ever seen – over-qualified calculating evil.

Sid Which must be dealt with. If we don't it might take 70 years until it has exhausted itself. I can't stand by and let Russia perish, Caryll. It is and remains my only mother country.

Caryll You destroy yourself.

Sid Not as long as I live.

Caryll You risk the world and your responsibility on an unknown and risky card.

Sid I have nothing to lose.

Caryll But we who know you and love you don't want to lose you.

Sid You sound like all my discarded wives.

Caryll How many did you actually have?

Sid Only two legal ones, both were unfortunate mistakes, and I am still married to both of them.

Caryll Margaret was here in London and staged scenes and demanded you back from the foreign office.

Sid I know. I had to pay her ten thousand pounds and threaten her with additional measures to get her back to Brussels.

Caryll Who was first, she or Nadine?

Sid Margaret was first. I tried to separate, but she didn't want to. We had to arrange an ambulance accident in Romania to get a faked death certificate for her, so that I could marry Nadine.

Caryll Wasn't she married already?

Sid Yes. We had to persuade the husband to separate, but it worked.

Caryll Was it the world war that separated you?

Sid She was forced to emigrate. I was forced to return to Russia. If we had succeeded she could have returned. When I now revisited her in New York we hadn't seen each other for two and a half years. It was not a happy reunion. Of course we had both deceived each other.

Caryll With how many others have you deceived your wives?

Sid Don't ask me. All and no one. They are attracted to me because I could never hurt a woman, and I have no children. When the Bolsheviks arrested everyone they thought had had anything to do with me, they got eight women on their hands

who all claimed to be married to me. I am afraid most of them were executed, although they were perfectly innocent.

Caryll And that country you are willing to give a chance?

Sid I want to give the people a chance to get rid of the party, and it is my duty to do so, if not for other reasons, for my mother and the cause of my mother country.

Caryll You have never told me your real name.

Sid I never will. It's the only way for me to protect my eventual relatives.

Caryll But your mother and sister are dead.

Sid But not the name. Let it live on in peace.

Caryll Let yourself live on in peace. Let Russia live in peace. Leave Russia in peace.

Sid (furious) To ever leave such a party in peace is to make yourself an accomplice to the worst crimes in the history of humanity!

Caryll And you would rather join the victims than live.

Sid If there is any human obligation transcending all others, it is to be solidary with all the victims of humanity.

Caryll Like Jesus and Napoleon.

Sid And Churchill.

Caryll Do you trust him?

Sid I trust a friend until he betrays me. No friend has so far betrayed me, and I will never betray or let down anyone of them, least of all Savinkov.

Caryll Your fate is your fate, and I am grateful for at least having had some share in it.

Sid Come, Caryll. Let me conceal myself and disappear in your long rich red mass of hair and sink deep in your love with all the heaviest plentiful tears of my bitterness, in a vain attempt to rediscover any love in this constantly more loveless world.

Caryll My hair is my only richness and symbol of the eternal love I will always keep for you. I am yours forever, Sid.

Sid That's all I ask of you – to have someone to love all the way into eternity, in case my love in this life would be suddenly interrupted.

Caryll I am yours, Sid, and I will never belong to anyone else.

Sid Come then, my friend, and let's be and act together. *(They join in bed.)*

Scene 4. Office of the Secret Service.

Cumming Do you imagine that I think this is funny?

Sid I only ask you: Is it fair?

Cumming Rhetorical question and leading as well. Of course not.

Sid Then I have the right to demand an explanation to the refusal of my request.

Cumming You are without comparison the best agent we have.

Sid So what is then the problem?

Cumming The problem is that you are too damn good. You have made yourself so famous that your portrait is seen all over Russia as the enemy number one of their society. You can no longer conceal yourself under fake identities. And then we have your private life.

Sid What about my private life?

Cumming You have two living wives. You are a bigamist, even if you have one in New York and the other in Brussels. When your wife from Brussels showed up here and demanded your presence she took us by surprise since we only knew about your other wife in America.

Sid That's why you had me investigated.

Cumming When it appeared that you denied both marriages while there were no end to other wives peeping out from the wardrobe there was nothing else to do but to close the investigation, but your case has given rise to mistrust and suspicion. There are those who have reasons to believe you are a double agent.

Sid Do you believe them?

Cumming Never in my life, since I know that's not the case. But the question marks around your person and private life makes it impossible for me to have you assigned full time in the secret service. I hope you will understand.

Sid You direct me back to my destiny, which I was hoping for a chance to avoid. Once homeless always homeless.

Cumming You will never be out of means. You are free and can accept and decline missions as you want.

Sid In other words, you give me free hands to concentrate on Russia.

Cumming The most difficult charge of all. I don't recommend it.

Sid Have you seen Paul Duke's latest reports?

Cumming It was thanks to you that we dared to send him to Russia, and he was lucky to get back alive.

Sid You must understand that I have no choice but to return there. And since you bereave me of any possibility of other tasks, that's all that remains for me to do.

Cumming I am sorry, Sid, but the decision was not my own. And I have to advise against Russia. Let the storm of the fury blow over first.

Sid They execute anyone in the open street just for some suspicion or for being informed against. They rape women under age and children and claim legal right to such crimes by *carte blanche* as members of the party. They shut in people in mass cells without access to hygienics where they are left to perish in illness and starvation if they are not lucky enough to be collected for execution. Officers and captains, engineers and academicians are tortured to death and murdered as slowly as possible. You read about the ship's officers who were tied down to planks and then shoved into furnaces bit by bit with their heads last. And such a society, which exceeds all the terrors of the French revolution and the Spanish inquisition, you ask me as a boy from Odessa to stand still and allow them their licence for genocide and the destruction of a civilization?

Cumming It's your choice, Sid.

Sid You admit that I have no choice.

Cumming Savinkov is a drug addict, Sid. You cannot put much trust in him.

Sid He is still a man and wants to cure the absolute evil with something good, and he has possibilities and resources.

Cumming We will back you up whatever you do, Sid, but we must keep unaccountable.

Sid That's all right. Put the responsibility on me and Savinkov. If we perish you will be free from that responsibility as well.

Cumming That's all, Sid. (*Sid rises abruptly and leaves.*)

That was my life's most difficult interview. We have to leave our best agent completely without protection against the vilest wolves in the world.

Act V scene 1. Prague, Chapeau Rouge.

Sid Tell Bruce about your plans, Boris. He is sure to be impressed.

Savinkov I don't think he will be more impressed than you.

Bruce What are his plans?

Sid He intends to give himself up to the bolsheviks claiming to be repentant, so that they forgive him and bring him back to grace, so that he then can take over the Trust in Moscow and then over all Russia.

Bruce Is he completely mad?

Sid That was exactly my reaction also.

Bruce Is it true, Boris Savinkov?

Savinkov You are too incredulous. You don't believe in me. But the fact is that that's the only plan that could work.

Bruce You are not more stupid, Boris Savinkov, than that you must understand, that if you return to Russia as yourself and give yourself up to the bolsheviks, the first thing they will do is to shoot you.

Sid That's what he thinks they are too kindhearted to be able to do.

Bruce Explain yourself, Boris. Tell me you are joking. Or have the drugs got the better of you and taken control of both your life and your senses?

Savinkov They will not shoot me at once. I will be arrested, and I will be sent to trial, and I will probably be sentenced to death, but when I then declare my repentance and that I wish to become a good bolshevik I will be pardoned. That will give me all civil rights as a Soviet citizen, and I can start acting independently and undisturbedly concentrate on the Trust and how it will gradually take over the power.

Bruce And you think such a wild and fantastic plan could work?

Savinkov It's our only and last possibility. We can't do anything more for Russia from the outside. We must get in and start acting there. Sid and I are the only ones who are still qualified to manage anything against the bolsheviks, but outside Russia we are without any practical possibilities. Even our economical resources are

exhausted. The Czechs support us here in Prague, but even they don't want to give us any more money without definite results. We can only achieve results inside Russia.

Bruce Are you in on this, Sid?

Sid I am not convinced. The plan is ingenious but unreliable. There is no guarantee, no insurance, it's plain gambling, and anything could go wrong from the beginning, and we can't even be sure of the Trust and its possibilities.

Bruce What is this 'Trust' all about actually?

Sid I thought you knew from the Intelligence. They have tried to investigate it the entire year, but haven't reached any clearance whether it is reliable or not. You know more, Boris.

Savinkov It's the secret organization in Russia of the opposition with branches among all emigrant circles abroad, mainly eastern Europe, France and America. Everything is ready. They only wait for Sid and me to come back to Russia to start leading them.

Bruce The fact that we have no clearance about their reliability is testimony enough of its unreliability. How do we know that it's not just a trap to allure you back to Russia just to get you caught?

Sid That's what we don't know. And that risk Boris is willing to take.

Savinkov We have no choice, Bruce Lockhart. It's our last chance. This is a possibility, an opening and the only one we have left to gamble on. If we lose we have at least ventured the last possibility. And we really have nothing more to lose.

Bruce Says an exhausted drug addict who no longer has any life of his own to believe in.

Savinkov I am not just an exhausted drug addict, Bruce Lockhart. That's the communist propaganda fooling you. That I need morphia sometimes is because of a physical defect and suffering which I have been carrying around since the war. Has a human being no right to alleviate his pains when they grow too unbearable? You forget that I was war minister during the war and was forced to confront the horrors of the Russian revolution at such a close distance that I was worse traumatized for life than any invalid, and it's not just the nerves. I saw everything going to hell, and I was responsible for the situation, but I had a certain Alexander Kerensky over me as prime minister, who didn't allow me to act as we should have done from the beginning not to let the Bolshevik terror loose, which is nothing else than the monstrous offspring of a world war catastrophe and the fall of the world's greatest empire into barbarity, anarchy, cannibalism and all the horrors of the apocalypse. I need medicines to be able to survive what actually no human being in Petrograd was able to survive when it happened, and morphia alleviates the suffering. Would you deny me that right?

Bruce Let's forget about all private problems like your medication and Sid's private life. Whatever happened to your third wife by the way, Sid? Didn't you marry her? Were you finally happily divorced from Nadine? Does your new wife also still not know that your first wife Margaret is still not separated? Well, never

mind all the trivialities. This is about politics. What makes you believe, Boris Savinkov, that your absolutely fantastical and crazy plan could have any chance of a success?

Savinkov Still you lived in Russia and experienced the country from the inside. You should know it. Did you learn so little that you can't grasp that only the incredible is credible in Russia? They are desperate. The bolsheviks have made themselves intolerable by their inhumanity and terror. People are tired of the absence of food, the cannibalism, the terror, the massacres, the fear and the want of decency and comfort. They want back the old order by any means in any form. We have an astronomical vacuum to fill up, and only we can do it, me and Sid. I have told him, that he could wait and see what happens to me. If my plans succeed he could join me. Then we could launch the development that everyone is wishing for.

Bruce Except those in power in the Kremlin, like Lenin, Trotsky and Dzherzhinsky with other murderers of the people and criminals against humanity. Sid is wanted all over Russia dead or alive as the enemy number one of the Soviet Union, and you are number two.

Savinkov They will soften if we embrace the bolshevik principle of infallibility and become repentant party members.

Bruce And you suggest they would accept that bluff?

Savinkov They already accepted the greatest deceit in the world.

Bruce The only ones to be fooled, Boris Savinkov, is the western world. They will regard you as a backslider and traitor of the cause of all emigrants and political refugees. The whole world will be shocked by your surrendering to the bolsheviks.

Savinkov Let them believe the worst, as long as I save Russia.

Bruce And you, Sid, seriously think it could work?

Sid I tried to dissuade Boris for half a year, but nothing can hold him off from risking his last life for the riskiest venture of his life.

Bruce And if it works out as he suggests and he not only survives but is pardoned, will you then follow?

Sid Yes, in that case nothing can keep me from joining him. If he can do it, I can, and I owe it to him to back him up with all I have got. He is the only man who can save Russia.

Savinkov With your help, Sid.

Sid Yes, none of us can do it alone, but together we could accomplish any world history miracles.

Bruce You are hopeless fantasists both of you. I presume it's because you are both Russians. I am sorry, gentlemen, but as the practical realist I am I must retain the gravest concerns for your enterprise.

Sid You don't have to take any part in it. The secret service didn't want to keep me employed anyway, so I might as well sacrifice my last resources on what seems to be the most impossible mission in the world, which though also remains the most vital.

Savinkov The responsibility is ours, Bruce Lockhart. Leave it to us.

Bruce Even if I can't believe in it, I wish you goods luck, gentlemen. What about a glass of slivovich?

Savinkov I will be delighted. We must drink to our success and to the redemption of Russia.

Sid We could never have enough of that.

(Bruce orders three glasses, and they carry on.)

Scene 2. Lyubyanka, Savinkov in the cell.

Savinkov Are they really serious? Will they really execute me, or is it just a play for the galleries? They can't be serious. I was still their war minister in their former government. I made considerable contributions and sacrifices for my country, and I willingly turned myself over to them. No, they can't afford to waste such a propaganda opportunity. That's how it must be. They condemned me to death just to pardon me and then to use me for their propaganda internationally. That was our very scheme from the beginning. That's why I agreed to return to Russia. If only I am set free I could start working.

(The door is opened, and Felix Dzherzhinsky shows up. Savinkov rises immediately.)

You? What are you doing here?

Felix You could guess, couldn't you? You are not stupid, Boris Savinkov. Don't tell me you didn't expect my visit.

Savinkov I expected anyone but you. Have you come to confirm my death sentence or to question me? One last interview before execution maybe?

Felix You are just putting on an act as usual. I am here to set you free.

Savinkov Free?

Felix Yes, Boris Savinkov. You are pardoned. You are rewarded for your positive will to cooperate. The party embraces you and takes you to her heart. Your death sentence has been commuted to ten years in prison, and while they were pardoning you anyway they decided to go the whole way. The condition is of course that you become member of the party. Don't tell me that you expected anything else.

Savinkov Free? Completely free?

Felix Yes, as free as you can be in the Soviet Union. You must remain at the Lyubyanka though. This used to be the foremost luxury hotel in Moscow. The hotel rooms are still in order. You can regard it as your home from now on.

Savinkov And why then have I been pardoned? Am I no longer regarded as a traitor, although I worked against your party?

Felix My friend, you have proved your will to cooperate. The party needs you. Like the catholic church always welcomes a repentant sinner, the party has only open arms to show those who by their own will confess to their wrongs. You have now become one of us. You are far too important a man for the party to do without you. We need you for our face abroad. The whole world and above all our escaped emigrants will show the greatest interest in reading about how you could return as a

free man to the new Russia. You can tell the world how it is here nowadays. We keep no one imprisoned for more than three years, you can testify yourself about how humanly you have been treated with your pardon as the crown of it, although you made yourself guilty of at least five years' active and armed high treason. No one is more welcome than a prodigal son.

Savinkov And it's not just a show for the galleries, a propaganda trick for the look of it, a way to use me to make your soviet state generally acknowledged? Am I then actually free and may communicate with whoever?

Felix Under reasonable surveillance of course. As I said, you can't leave Lyubyanka.

Savinkov So I am still a prisoner. For life?

Felix You are our most privileged prisoner. We will give you the possibility to correspond with the outside world, under surveillance, of course.

Savinkov Does that mean censure?

Felix You can write whatever you wish to anyone, but we would of course like to have a word in the correspondence.

Savinkov I don't understand what you mean. Am I free or not?

Felix This is the motherland of freedom. You are completely free within the frame of our regulations. You must understand that we can't let such an important person loose without any fences.

Savinkov I understand. You pardon me and release me from the prison sentence to have me as a dummy to show the outside world. You wish to make of me a puppet. Do you think it will work?

Felix I am just saying as it is. Enjoy your freedom, Boris Savinkov, in your reclaimed promised homeland, the only paradise on earth. *(leaves and locks the door behind.)*

Savinkov They are just pulling my legs. They want me to appear to the outside world as a converted bolshevik. What will Reilly and Churchill say about this? Without doubt I will be a front page story, and all the communists and fifth columnists in the world will rejoice. They will never let me free. I will never be able to contact the others. Felix Dzherzhinsky is not stupid. I just sincerely hope Sidney Reilly will not be as stupid as to march into the same trap.

I have only myself to blame. I took a chance, I was promised a reward, I got the reward but lost the game. *(looking desillusioned out through a window with bars.)*

Scene 3. Prague. Like scene 1.

Lockhart I must say that I am surprised, Winston, at your sudden visit here.

Churchill I wouldn't have come if there hadn't been a reason.

Sid I can guess the reason. Winston has read the paper.

Lockhart And therefore you wanted to see us?

Churchill I must know what you think about this. Is everything just a Potemkin curtain, or could there be any truth in it?

Sid Of course it's all sheer deception from the side of the bolsheviks. They want to bluff the world.

Churchill But the fact is that Savinkov went to Moscow, was put to trial, was condemned to death, had his sentence reduced to ten years, and then suddenly is released completely for having 'regretted his criminal past and become a good Bolshevik'. What do you think, Bruce?

Lockhart Of course I can't believe anything any bolshevik says. They only live on their lies to such a degree that they end up believing them themselves and become so fanatical that they establish their own imagined reality as a dogma.

Sid I agree with Bruce.

Churchill But the bolsheviks are celebrating political triumphs. More and more nations are ready to acknowledge them as a legal government, especially if one like Savinkov now is part of it.

Sid He is only a prisoner. Wait until he gets the opportunity to give his own version.

Bruce He appears to be working on his autobiography.

Sid If we ever hear anything more from him that isn't adjusted by the authorities at whose mercy he is, it will probably be something very different from bolshevik propaganda.

Churchill But even in emigrant circles he is regarded and denounced as a defector and traitor. In Paris everyone seems to regard him as lost as having become one of them, and he hasn't denied it. On the contrary. The letters received from him confirm it. Unfortunately we must regard the matter politically.

Sid And those letters have not been manipulated? Are they in his own handwriting? Is the entire western world so inept at seeing through obvious bolshevik forgeries? The usurpers of the Kremlin are in for professionally bluffing the world, and the world falls for it.

Bruce I am afraid that Sid is right, Winston. The press and politicians of the world are so naïve and superficial that they accept the sly calculations and evil manipulations of the Kremlin.

Churchill You seem to agree. That's what I wanted to know. Unfortunately I can't influence or convince the press and politicians that Savinkov's public fall is a sheer manipulation.

Sid I see a friend coming in. (*Grammatikov has entered.*) Welcome, Sasha.

Grammatikov I knew that I would find you here.

Bruce This, Winston, is an old friend from happier days in Saint Petersburg, when we used to meet freely at the finest pubs and restaurants, like Kuba, and who like Sid was one of the first real flying pioneers in Russia, Sasha Grammatikov, nominated as the public prosecutor when the revolution put an end to a better world.

Grammatikov We all still live on the memories of that world, except one of us.

Sid Do you have any news, Sasha?

Bruce Has anything occurred?

Grammatikov I learned it from a defected agent from Moscow. Boris Savinkov is no longer with us.

Bruce Have they shot him?

Grammatikov No, he jumped himself out of a window in Lyubyanka. It was a demonstrative suicide.

Sid Typical of him. It was his only possibility of an escape from his prison.

Churchill I am sorry. Then we never had his own version of what happened to him.

Sid It is as clear as sunshine. They took care of Boris with open arms to use him for propaganda purposes, which they did to a maximum, until he had enough of being their prisoner and protested in the only way that was possible for him.

Bruce We have lost our most important link in the struggle against the bolsheviks. What will you do now, Sid?

Sid The responsibility is now entirely mine. I still have no choice. I must do like Boris, but I don't intend to give myself over, and I don't intend to commit suicide.

Bruce It could be your last journey, Sid.

Sid Don't you think I am aware of it? But they are all there and waiting for me, all the intimidated millions living in constant terror and danger of their lives under the bolshevik terror regime. I can't let them down. Boris ended up in a situation that the bolsheviks managed to make him appear as their traitor, and his suicide proves that he never betrayed them. He has done what he could. Now it's for us to do the rest.

Churchill It will be you, Sid. Can you take such a responsibility?

Sid I am the only one who can.

Scene 4. Lyubyanka, Moscow.

A better interrogation office. Dzherzhinsky sitting relaxed in an armchair smoking, when Reilly is brought in under escort.

Felix Welcome to Lyubyanka and home to Russia, Sidney Reilly. Imagine that we meet at last. I had almost given up hope that I would ever see you alive.

Sid I have nothing to tell you.

Felix No, of course you haven't. You are ashamed that you got caught. You curse yourself for having let yourself get fooled into the trap. You can never forgive yourself the short while you still have left of your life, since we really have no other use of you than as dead once and for all.

Sid Make the process short then.

Felix I really wouldn't like to miss the opportunity of a discussion with my greatest adversary, the former number one enemy of the Soviet Union. Imagine that we at last caught up with you. But it took many years, and what strains and efforts haven't we put down to tempt you and Savinkov back home again to the safe mother country! I understood though that your employers in London always had their

doubts about the Trust. What made you trust it at last? Did you really have no misgivings?

Sid I know that the majority of the Russian people are still against your undemocratic party. The credibility of the Trust was natural, since there must be an organization of the discontent. There always is once the discontent is there.

Felix It's just that we took complete control of the discontent. It isn't heard any more. Denikin and Judenich have given up and left the country, and Kolchak is executed in Irkutsk, betrayed by his own. There is no armed resistance left. There are only the throttled cries of emaciated martyrs in the prison camps, which all fade out into silence, like yours, the last Russian voice of rebellion, will be quieted and remain quiet forever. No one will ever even know what happened to you. We have developed the art of letting individuals disappear without a trace to an absolute immaculate perfection. You may actually choose yourself. How would you like to disappear? You will of course be shot at once. It's the most rational way, but we have many interesting alternatives. One more refined method is the Russian psychiatry. You will be admitted to a mental hospital where you are generously supplied with drugs to make you painlessly forget who you are or ever was. The brain will be transformed into a hen's brain so invalidated that you won't even be able to cackle. You will be an ideal example of a living zombie, a professional and ultimate parcel for the trust of caretakers, which it could amuse medical authorities to keep alive up to the age of ninety just because you once were what you were, like a living stuffed mummy stuck in the prison of your own incapacitated body. What do you think about such a fascinating prospect for the future? It's almost tempting to keep you as a museum item on a mental hospital just because you were what you were.

Sid You are an intelligent man, Felix Dzherzhinsky. Don't you see the absurdity of the Soviet Union yourself? Such an artificial dictatorship has no survival potency and at length no justification of existence. Your ideology consists only of lies that must disintegrate in their own rottenness. It's only a question of time.

Felix You forget that we ultimately hold the power. Now power has that strange characteristic, that whoever once gets hold of it never voluntarily parts with it. You are a gambler yourself. You know what it is all about. You go on playing as long as you keep winning. You won throughout the world war, until your first attempt at a coup here seven years ago brought your life's first defeat, because a mad woman wanted to talk with Lenin before shooting him. If she had shot without questions your seizure of power would probably have succeeded, for Lenin was the man behind whose back everyone crouched, for without him all the others who had the worst crimes of Russia to hide would ruthlessly start quarrelling and firing at each other. He was maimed for life, but we managed to keep him artificially alive till a year ago, when we had a competent replacement. You know perhaps that he is called Stalin. He doesn't care this much (*snaps his fingers*) for the lives of millions. He has seen massacres and learned to carry them through without problems all his life. He is hardened against all human feelings. There is your new Soviet Union. It's hardened of steel, and it will not easily rot, since even its lies are forged with steel.

Sid But you are a Polack. What's your interest in serving the world's most monstrous state? Is it a kind of urge to by all means make it as inhuman as possible just because Russia always was Poland's worst enemy?

Felix Not a bad shot, Sidney Reilly. Just because I am a Polack I am completely indifferent to the fates of the masses of the Russian people. They are hundreds of millions and can be sacrificed at any number. If Stalin will put a state order into system that lives on sacrificing as many as possible, it does not become me one bit. Poland has made itself free and independent from Russia, Pilsudski and Paderewski have settled that sovereignty with honour, and Poland will probably never again be governed by Russia. That gives me pleasure as a Polack while I don't care a damn if Stalin with his commissars and his prison camp industry transform the Russian people to a desert of nameless cemeteries with graves without names and an even greater number of anonymous corpses, of which you will have the honour of becoming one, as the foolish Russian you are, Sigmund Rosenblum, who like so many other sentimental Russian emigrants still fell for the temptation to return to the Russian hell to die faster than it would have been anywhere else. It's almost a pity to take your life. But what do you have to live for? You are lost.

But you are right. I am a Polack, and as a Polack I have a better sense for what you call fair play and chivalry than the Russians have. I must admit, that after having associated with you for seven years as an inaccessible super enemy, I have acquired a certain respect for you. I am prepared to offer you a deal, as between gentlemen.

Sid If you have learned to know me by my life you must understand that death to me is a nonentity and the last thing I fear.

Felix Of course. And I shall reveal to you exactly how your death will look like. You should have returned across the Finnish border on September 28th. On that day a corpse will be discovered by the border belonging to someone who tried to escape, and the body shall be identified as yours, and it will vanish without a trace in a nameless grave on unknown location. That will be your official destiny, but your real destiny will be something between the two of us, if you will accept my deal.

Sid I was always open to suggestions.

Felix It would be a pity to lose such an interesting adversary after having associated with him on an almost daily basis for seven years. All damage to the Soviet Union from abroad we have been able to trace to your manoeuvres, and then I think first of how our American loans failed, how we never acquired the respect of the United States and their acknowledgement of our government, and how you succeeded in bringing the first British labour government down by the sly Zinoviev forgery in time for the latest parliamentary elections. If the labour government had been allowed to continue, we could have gained England for a friend. That coup is almost the only thing I can't respect you for – it was beneath your dignity. What do the British say about your share in that foul play?

Sid They never knew it was me.

Felix I can imagine so. But apart from that, you always kept operating on the basis of fair play, and that's what I respect you for. And for that matter I am willing

to give you a chance. Above all I am curious about how you would avail yourself of it. I know that you are irreconcilably hostile forever to the Soviet state, and no matter how solidly invincible it is today you still maintain that it is doomed to fall. I would like to see how you one day will organise its downfall, if you ever will, if you get the chance. And only in order to satisfy that curiosity I would like to give you that chance.

Sid I am listening.

Felix Your death is decided and settled and can't be altered. The condition for my allowing you to go on living is the following. You must respect your own death. You must never again give any of your friends abroad any hint that you are alive. You may only stay alive if you live in consequence of your own death.

Sid A typically Russian offer, with no limits to its impossible and fantastic paradox. As what would I then live on? As one of your brainwashed zombies at a mental hospital?

Felix You may choose yourself. You have been in China before. You could easily disappear there as a Mongol or monk in Tibet and even become active in India, which will break loose from the British Empire – it will be the first corner stone to break out, and then nothing will be able to stop the disintegration of that empire, while the Soviet Union will remain just to irritate you. Wouldn't that be an interesting development to follow? But the condition is, as I said, that give your word of honour – you must respect and live in consequence of the death of Sidney Reilly. If you violate that condition nothing can save you from an instant death. What do you say about such a deal?

Sid It's definitely a challenge. And you make me that offer just out of political interest and sportsmanship, to see how I would under such circumstances continue to undermine the doomed Soviet state and see if I would succeed in the course of time?

Felix Yes. Exactly. You see, I am a Polack.

Sid Then you must also understand that such a challenge to such an agent and gambler as me must be irresistible.

Felix I took that for granted. So you accept my terms?

Sid Without question.

Felix Then the matter is settled. You will be shot as an escapee at the Finnish border, the body will be recovered and brought to what is now Leningrad, and an official communication will be broadcast to all news agencies in the world. That's the last thing anyone will ever hear about you. You continue your life on your own terms but under any other identity except your own. Can I trust your word of honour? *(offers his hand)*

Sid (accepts it) The father that I thought was my own until I learned about myself as a half-Jewish Austrian bastard was a good catholic. He was the only father I could ever love and respect as such, although he wasn't. I trust your word of honour as a Polack, and you can trust mine.

Felix Very well. Then we are agreed and understand each other. Forget yourself and consider yourself dead from September 28th. Any wishes concerning the destination of your new identity?

Sid Tibet and India sound interesting.

Felix That would be the safest. I shall arrange your safe transport to Mongolia. From there you'll manage on your own.

Sid I had a friend once who saw his only possible future there.

Felix I know. Baron Roman Nicolai Fyodorovich von Ungern-Sternberg. He was the only enemy the bolsheviks had any real reason to fear. He was rough with Mongolia and practically conquered it all in the name of Russia, wherefore we could easily take it over as soon as we managed to get him out of the way. Mongolia therefore is sovietic today. In there it will be easy for you to disappear. Then I look forward to continued and permanent enmity and combat as long as we both live?

Sid Without doubt.

Felix But I promise you, that no matter how hard you try and mobilize whatever worldly forces, neither we nor you will see the end of the Soviet Union. If it will collapse it will be long after we are both really dead.

Sid It will collapse, for sure.

Felix Not as long as I live.

Sid I will live to see the end of it, and I will not die until it has collapsed.

Felix Is it the Buddhist talking?

Sid No, Pan Felix Dzherzhinsky, it is the eternal Russian.

Felix Good luck, poor miserable eternal Russian. (*shakes his hand a last time, presses a button, and the same guards that brought him in enter to take him out again.*)

Epilogue.

Some years later, a modest apartment in New York.

Lily No, Alex, I don't think it would have worked anyway.

Alex I am sure it would. All we needed was some more time. It was the bolsheviks who ruined it all. They were hard on foul play, while our weakness, as Boris Savinkov said, was to insist on honesty.

Lily Do you really think it would have been possible for Russia to win the war and avoid the humiliating surrender to Germany?

Alex What happened afterwards confirms it. Germany did lose. At length the Axis had no chance. But the bolsheviks betrayed us and Russia, made a dirty deal with the Germans, who sent Lenin in a sealed carriage to Petrograd only to make him undermine our frail democracy, and bought the people with populist lies about peace and bread. Instead of peace and bread we got famine and civil war, a famine that was intentionally conditioned by the Bolsheviks just to break the spirit of the

people and silence all opposition. But more than starvation was needed to kill the opposition, which the red terror then realized and started implementing.

Maid You have a visitor, Mrs Ethel.

Lily Can't you see that I am already busy with a visitor?

Maid This one suggested that you would be interested in seeing him. He says that he has greetings to you from a friend in Santa Margherita.

Lily (perturbed) Could it be possible? (*collecting herself*) Alex, if my worst suspicions are justified, this could be a person you also would have something to discuss with.

Alex By all means.

(Lily gives a sign to the maid who goes to bring in the visitor.)

Enter Sid, prudent and somewhat aged but not much.)

Lily (completely at ease) It has been many years, Sid. Caryll Houselander had seen in her lucid dreams that you were still alive. We dared not believe her.

Sid Lily, as beautiful and unchanged as ever. (*approaches and kisses her hand*) I see that you have a guest, and not just any guest.

Alex (rising) We know each other, even if we never met this close before.

Sid It's an honour for me, prime minister.

Alex Believe me, when I say that the honour is even greater for me.

Sid But sit down, by all means. Let's not interrupt the discussion. Of course you are talking about Russia.

Lily (sitting again) What happened, Sid?

Sid (sitting down, relaxing) Of course you are entitled to an explanation. I will try to make a long story short. Savinkov went there. He returned to Russia and gave himself to the bolsheviks, who immediately sentenced him to death, but as agreed before he left the sentence was commuted to ten years in prison on condition that he became an obedient bolshevik. He did so to the outward appearance, and to the whole world he appeared a traitor. He had counted on a bolshevik disguise to be able to contact and be of service to the Trust. What he didn't expect was that he was confined in Lyubyanka as a prisoner under constant surveillance. He got no chance to contact anyone, even less to organize anything. Felix Dzherzhinsky dared not allow him any freedom. He endured and tried to submit for six months, but his situation only grew more hopeless all the time. Finally he jumped out from a window in an efficient suicide.

Lily And still you went there also.

Sid I was the only one left, Lily, who at all could do anything. The Trust was a fact, and they needed me. I took no chances. Those I had consulted with in Paris, Berlin and Finland were perfectly honest people, and my smuggling into Russia went without problems. I wasn't to remain for long and were only to make a brief visit in Moscow before it was time to return across the border back to Finland, but the Tcheka had their spies in the Trust. Finally I reached an agreement with Felix himself that I would work as a spy for him. My death had already been proclaimed by Izvestiya that I had been shot by the border to Finland, while I was for months in negotiations in Moscow. Finally my real death would be arranged so that I would be

shot in a forest outside Moscow, and an already finished corpse was prepared to look like me and be presented as “evidence for all times” that I was truly dead, while in reality I was sent to Mongolia. Nine months later Felix was dead, and I could safely walk my own ways. I had been in China before.

Alex How did he die? Was it a natural death, or was he murdered like all the others?

Sid We shall never know, but none of them died a natural death. Felix was only 48 and Lenin 53, the last years completely incapacitated by the bullet that Fanny Kaplan planted in his neck. It couldn't be removed until after four years, and when the operation finally succeeded there were complications by strokes. He had three within half a year, and the last one paralysed him completely. His last year he was no more than a helpless dummy kept alive by artificial means, like a living mummy. Trotsky was forced into exile where he lives in constant fear of Stalin's agents, who will surely hunt him to death. Of that he is certain. Stalin will hunt all Lenin's old comrades to death, and they all know it. No one will get away.

Lily We were sitting here talking about Russia's possibilities to win the war when you arrived. Do you think it was possible?

Sid Absolutely. If Russia hadn't withdrawn from the war I would never have been sent there. It was the bolsheviks who dragged Russia out of the war as a loser. Half a year later Germany capitulated. By America's entering the war the Axis had no chance any more, which even the bolsheviks should have realized. But they would at any price drive Russia into disaster without end and without return.

Alex What do you think of the future? Do you think we have a chance of a return?

Sid My dear friend and colleague, I think we should consider ourselves lucky who got out and alive. I have nothing more to do with the mundane world. I regard it as lost, and it's only genuine democrats like Churchill and Roosevelt who can save it. Even America has fallen by its own doing in the financial crash. There are higher laws than those of egoistic power and greed that rule the world. There is something called destiny which no man can govern, while the politician regards it as his main issue to do so. If he cooperates and subjects himself to the laws of destiny he could manage well, but if he violates the self-evident truths of destiny, which all did who started wars and obtained power by violence, destiny must strike back and ruin his life, which will be the more ruined for the responsibility over others that he usurped, since the others never will be able to forgive him for his crimes. Lenin and Stalin, Trotsky and Dzherzhinsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev, they will all go down the drain to hell by their participation in the bolshevik revolution violations against your democratic government and in that reign of terror this led them into like in a blind alley without bottom or end for only horrors.

Lily What will you do now, Sid? What are you doing in America? Aren't you afraid to meet one of your former wives here?

Sid You who have known me so long, Lily, should know by now that there has never been anything that I was afraid of. I have been away many years, and no one recognizes me. I have completely changed my way of life and now live almost

like a hermit. And I have not forgotten or broken my deal with Felix Dzherzhinsky. He made me promise never again to use my name but only live on by the condition that I was dead. Since then I have been a number of other characters. My name now is Solomon Hersch. Does it sound familiar?

Lily The name of your foster father.

Sid You remember.

Lily How could I ever forget.

Sid You were the only one I ever dared to give my fullest confidence, Lily.

Lily It is as if we never left Santa Margherita.

Sid It's true, Lily. We have entered the zone of timelessness, where time and dimensions and mundanities no longer matter. You are also there, the last democratically elected prime minister of Russia and eternal as such, until the Soviet Union is finished.

Alex Do you think we will experience the end of it?

Sid It doesn't matter. It will end.

Lily Have you turned Buddhist again? It almost sounds like it.

Sid All religions are part of the truth, but I must admit that I experience Buddhism as the only religion of enlightenment. If you grasp the vanity of mundane illusions and are wise enough to detach yourself therefrom to instead accept the self-evidence of the eternal spiritual life, which all life is part of, then you are practically a Buddhist and enlightened. Christianity in all its different churches unfortunately suffers from dross in the forms of superstition, blind faith and a heavy burden of ceremonials, and islam like jewry are one-sided with the risk of fanaticism.

Lily Are you still in contact with Churchill?

Sid No, but I follow what he is up to and keep him informed of what could be useful to him by Bruce Lockhart.

Lily So Bruce knows that you are alive.

Sid Of course. Now you also know except Caryll, who obviously got to know it by herself. But don't tell Margaret, Nadine or Pepita.

Lily Of course not. They have other men to think about. It's only I and Caryll who always remained faithful.

Sid You are right, Lily. It is as if we never had left Santa Margherita.

Lily Already then I told you that we never would.

Alex You have much to catch up with, my friends, since you have seen too little of each other during so many years. We could continue our discussion later, Lily.

Lily You are always welcome here, Alex.

(Kerensky leaves.)

Sid It's strange how little he has changed and aged.

Lily You too, Sid.

Sid I feel much older though than when we last saw each other.

Lily You should be only 57. I am more than 60.

Sid You are the youngest of us all, Lily.

Lily No, Sid, we both belong to that tough tribe that are hopelessly far too old in their souls from the beginning.

Sid Is that why we age so poorly?

Lily We were much older in Santa Margherita than we are now. It's the problem of timelessness. The relativity of the soul bends the personality awry, so that nothing fits at length and everything turns into the contrary of what nature and logics command.

Sid One advantage is though that we never let go and never give up, even if the whole world does so.

Lily That's why it's only we who can save the world, who are aware of when it goes wrong and therefore can adjust it.

Sid If it goes wrong so completely as it did now by the Wall Street crash, the world war and the Russian revolution, it's only to let the drivers take the responsibility and drive themselves to death by their own incompetence and ignorance. Our knowledge will remain anyway, and it's the true knowledge that ultimately guides the world and not the mistakes of fools.

Lily You mean God?

Sid There is no need of any god. Destiny is quite enough. No one can fool destiny, but all can learn from its constantly developing knowledge. That's all we actually have to hold on to. It's the highest universal law of nature, that everything comes back to you, why it only pays to do what is right.

Lily You tried to do what was right, but it went wrong anyway.

Sid I learned that there is a higher responsibility than power, which in its concrete form is impossible not to abuse. The responsibility of the awareness of duty is higher than all dictatorial supremacy and absolutism in the world, and therefore even a conscious and responsible prayer is of greater importance and consequence than any demonstration of power.

Lily Come, Sid. Let's return to Santa Margherita.

Sid Yes, let's start over from the beginning. We still have an unfinished job there.

(Lily takes his hand and takes him out on the balcony. We are not allowed to see the view she is showing him.)

The End.

*Gothenburg 25.7.2009,
translated August 2018.*

Comment

There are a number of obscurities in the matter of Sidney Reilly, alias Sigmund Georgievich Rosenblum, born March 24th in Odessa 1873 or 1874, executed by firing squad by the bolsheviks in a forest outside Moscow on November 5th 1925. A photograph of the body lying on his back in a morgue has been presented, but such a photograph could easily be manufactured and manipulated, and the rumours that he survived his last disappearance have been persistent and impossible to refute. What is beyond any doubt in his life is the following:

That he definitely is the prototype for Ethel Voynich's character Arthur Burton in the novel "The Gadfly", where the details about Arthur Burton's exile and ordeals in South America correspond exactly with Sidney Reilly's. There is no reason to doubt their romantic activities in Italy.

His first wife was Margaret Thomas, a twenty-year-old red-haired beauty married to a much older but rich priest from Wales, who he met as tourists in Saint Petersburg 1897. The priest died the following year in March, whereupon Sidney and Margaret married in August. She persisted in refusing a divorce although the marriage was without issue. Her fortunes after her first husband's demise were never accessible to Sidney.

The second wife Nadine Massimo was married to an assistant of the Russian naval minister. They met in 1911, and although the husband was not difficult to persuade to a divorce, Nadine did not become Mrs Reilly until 1916, one of the reasons being the war. They married in the Greek cathedral in New York in the orthodox ceremony. Also that marriage was without issue.

The third wife was Pepita Bobadilla, an actress he met in Berlin 1922. She was the widow after the playwright Charles Haddon-Chambers, and they married on May 18th 1923. Like Nadine, Pepita had no knowledge of the existence of Margaret. Margaret remained the only one of his wives who he tried to divorce. The failure was probably the reason why he never tried it again with any of the others.

His most famous relationships though were those with Ethel Voynich (Lily Boole) and Caryll Houselander, a Christian mystic who appears to have been the one who loved Reilly the most. Their relationship lasted 1920-23, and afterwards she became a very prominent Christian author in the catholic edifying literature. Reilly appears to have been brought up by his foster father (Grigori Hersch) to be a catholic, then turned Buddhist during the years in China, then embraced the Russian-orthodox Christianity, but was also very much interested in Judaism. He had deep insights in all four directions, and his religious view seems to have been more philosophically spiritual than fanatically religious.

Reilly's best friend was assumedly Mansfield Cumming, his boss in the secret service until his death in 1923. His close contacts with Lloyd George and Winston Churchill are well documented. In Russia his best friends were the lawyer Sasha Grammatikov, who never really could make out Reilly, and Kerensky's war minister

Boris Savinkov, greatly admired by Churchill. The main source of our knowledge of Reilly comes from his friend and colleague through many years Bruce Lockhart, Churchill's chief of security and espionage in the second world war, who tells about him already in "Memoirs of a British Agent" (1932) although very sparsely by necessity, while it was his son Robin Bruce Lockhart who wrote "The Ace of Spies" about Reilly in 1967, which was the basis for the TV series in 1983 with Sam Neill in the title role in a competent dramatization by Troy Kennedy Martin. Later Andrew Cook has written new books on the subject. Both Robin Bruce Lockhart and Andrew Cook claim particulars with absolute certainty that never can be proved.

The Russian authorities proclaimed Reilly's death already on September 28th 1925 outside what was then Leningrad (*Izvestiya*) while the "official execution" would have taken place in a forest outside Moscow on November 5th 1925. It is obvious that these two official statements contradict each other. Other Russian sources claim with certainty that he still lived in 1926 and was at large in 1927. Felix Dzherzhinsky, who most likely "saved" the bolshevik revolution by his severe but efficient measures in summer 1918 and created the Tcheka, later GPU, later NKVD and KGB, died suddenly under obscure circumstances on July 20th 1926 only 48 years old, nine months after Reilly's "official execution". Lenin, damaged for life by Fanny Kaplan on August 30th (Dzherzhinsky's birthday) 1918 by a bullet in his neck that couldn't be removed until four years later, which operation then resulted in three strokes that paralysed him, was gradually reduced to a living corpse until his final death 1924 at 53. Trotsky was driven in exile by Stalin and was murdered 60 years old in Mexico by one of Stalin's agents. In brief, the bolshevik revolution made them all total losers, while Alexander Kerensky, the last democratically elected prime minister of Russia in 70 years, lived until 1970 and became 89 years old.

In our play we have concentrated on the crucial turnings in Reilly's life and therefore unfortunately been obliged to jump most of it, above all his long successful career as a phenomenally brilliant spy all the way until his first adversity in 1918.

Gothenburg, July 25th 2009