

**THE LAST STATION**

Written by

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Based on the novel by

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All happy families are the same. Each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.

Leo Tolstoy- Anna Karenina

**1 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. DAY. 1**

High angle of the steam train travelling through a wide river valley. The stack belching smoke against the Russian sky.

**2 INT. SECOND CLASS CARRIAGE. COUNTRY SIDE. DAY. 2**

Leo Tolstoy (80), sits writing on his lapboard. He is quite simply the greatest living writer in the world. His devotion to pacifism, his rejection of the trappings of Orthodoxy in favor of a simple Christian lifestyle convince many to regard him as a living saint. With him are his much younger wife, the COUNTESS SOFYA, favorite daughter SASHA, and his personal physician DUSHAN MAKOVITSKY. Sasha and Dushan write in their diaries. Sofya looks from one to the next a little impatient. The train begins to slow.

**SOFYA**

Why are we slowing down?

No one responds. Slower. Slower.

**SOFYA**

We're stopping. Why are we stopping?

**SASHA**

I don't know, mother. No idea.

Tolstoy look up from his work, asks a passing conductor.

**SOFYA**

Excuse me, why has the train  
stopped?

**CONDUCTOR**

It's the crowd, ma'm, the people.  
They're blocking the track.

In the distance we can here voices.

**VOICES (O.S.)**

Long live Tolstoy! Long live the  
old warrior!

**SOFYA**

But if they block the track, the  
train can't go...YOU HAVE TO MAKE  
**THEM MOVE.**

2.

The conductor shrugs, walks away. She goes to the window to investigate. A crowd of a hundred peasants, students surround the engine, block the track. They carry a huge cloth banner honoring Tolstoy. We can hear voices chanting "Tolstoy. Tolstoy. Tolstoy", voices crying "You are the truth." "You are the hope of the Russian people."

**SOFYA**

Oh, they won't move. We are  
gonna die here. Leo, Leo, go and  
say something to them. It's the  
only way we are gonna get out of  
here.

The chanting grows in intensity. Tolstoy gets to his feet, walks to the window, shows himself to the crowd. A great shout goes up. Tolstoy lifts his hand for silence. Gradually, it comes.

**TOLSTOY**

I have seen your banner. And I've  
heard what you say. You think I'm  
the hope of Russia, do you? Well,  
that's not true. You are the hope  
of Russia. The hope of all the

world. You say, you want a new way to live? Well, you are not gonna find it making a fuss over me. So, I suggest that you get on with your work and let a poor old man get on with his.

The cries begin. "Clear the tracks. Let them pass. Let them go." Tolstoy closes the door and waves to the crowd as the train pulls away.

**3 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. DAY.**

**3**

On the chanting crowd now as the train pulls away. We focus on a handsome young man, a little stiff maybe, a little intellectual. This is VALENTIN FEDOROVITCH BULGAKOV. He can't contain his enthusiasm. Over the noise of the train.

**VALENTIN**

Do you know who that is? That is the greatest man in the world.

The train pulls away into the distance.

**TITLE OVER BLACK: SPRING 1910**

**4 EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. DAWN.**

**4**

The ancestral home of the Tolstoy family in the first budding of spring.

**3.**

Muzhiks (peasants) gather wood, carry water to the house. A cart arrives loaded down with mail bags.

**5 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. SOFYA'S BEDROOM. DAY.**

**5**

A handsome room, walls covered with generations of family photographs. Religious icons are given pride of place, a testament, not to piety, but to an ingrained social conservatism, a certain position in the world.

Countess Sofya mumbles her morning prayers before a makeshift altar. Wiping away tears, she leaves the room.

**5A INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. ENTRY/STAIR. DAY.**

**5A**

Sofya walks down the stairs and through the entry passed an old servant asleep in a chair. She continues to the basement.

**6 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. TOLSTOY'S BEDROOM/STUDY. DAY.**

**6**

Tolstoy has moved himself out of the refined upper floors into a simple vaulted room he uses as both bedroom and study. The walls are bare except for a portrait of his daughter. The furniture is simple, some of it hand made: a small bed against the wall, a little writing desk in one corner stacked with books, littered with papers, more mail, opened and unopened. Pairs of rude homemade shoes line a work bench.

Tolstoy sleeps in his bed. Though it's late March and still cold, the window is open. Sofya closes it. She stands very still, watching Tolstoy sleep. Sitting on the bed, she gently touches his hand, whispers.

**SOFYA**

Darling.

She lies next to him, something girlish, hopeful in her face, as if waiting for him to wake up and adore her, but he sleeps on. She carefully takes his arm, positions it under her neck, and rolling toward him, wraps it around her. The image of love's intimacy, of wedded bliss.

His hand slips off her shoulder, once, twice. She moves awkwardly to replace it. He moves a little toward her. She kisses his neck, his cheek. We don't know if he's awake, but even this shadow of intimacy penetrates her soul.

**7 OMITTED**

**7**

**4.**

**8 INT. MOSCOW. STUDY. DAY.**

**8**

A handsome study in the Moscow townhouse of VLADIMIR GRIGOREVICH CHERTKOV, Tolstoy's most articulate and dedicated disciple. He's interviewing Tolstoy's newly appointed secretary, VALENTIN BULGAKOV, the young man we met near the train, who, at the mention of sex, blushes a little.

**CHERTKOV**

But sex... You are twenty three.  
Not an easy age for abstinence,  
is it?

**VALENTIN**

Tolstoy does not approve of  
sexual relations. I know this.

**CHERTKOV**

He despises them, in fact...

Chertkov reaches for a small tin of moustache wax.

**CHERTKOV**

I don't want to belabor the  
point, but I arranged for a  
manservant last year who  
proceeded to ruin two housemaids  
just like that. He was very  
upset.

**VALENTIN**

This would not be a problem. I'm  
celibate. I'm also a strict  
vegetarian.

Chertkov nods his approval, begins to worry his moustache.

**CHERTKOV**

Yes, I've heard many good things  
about you. I've even read what  
you've written. So has he.

Valentin's face flushes with pride. Chertkov steals a  
glance at his reflection in the glass bookcase. One side of  
his moustache droops a little. He tugs awkwardly at it.

**CHERTKOV**

My dear boy, if you were to  
become Tolstoy's private  
secretary, you would be given a  
great gift. You'll be with him  
every day, eat together, walk in  
the forest by his side.

It's difficult to contain himself.

Believe me, since becoming a Tolstoyan, I have become so eager to learn, so committed to discussing ideas, improving my very soul.

**CHERTKOV**

(smiling)

Well, we have a lot to do if we are to get his work to the people.

**VALENTIN**

We?

They both laugh.

**CHERTKOV**

Yes, we. If we can encourage the spread of passive resistance...just think of it Valentin thousands of ordinary Russians casting off centuries of spiritual and political oppression-

**VALENTIN**

In the name of truth and freedom.

**CHERTKOV**

Truth and freedom, yes but still, my boy, there are so many enemies-

**VALENTIN**

Enemies?

Chertkov walks to the window, signals Valentin to follow him. He points to

TWO MEN IN PLAINCLOTHES standing in the street below.

**CHERTKOV**

The Czar's police...You'll be followed when you leave here...and the church will stop at nothing to bring him back into the fold. His children can't be trusted... only Sasha... and then of course there is the Countess...

(beat)

Well, one doesn't like to come

between married people whatever the circumstances, but her dogged attachment to private property, her public criticism of our movement...

**(MORE)**

6.

CHERTKOV (cont'd)

(beat)

The point is, he needs a man of your intellectual gifts around him. Someone who can help him with the new work. Someone who understands his goals.

Chertkov returns to the desk.

**CHERTKOV**

And although they've allowed me to return to Russia, I can't see him. They keep me under house arrest... They might as well keep me in a cage.

Clearly upset, Chertkov pauses to get control of himself. He picks up a package, hands it to Valentin.

**CHERTKOV**

So, I need you to put these letters directly into his hands. One can't be sure what gets through to him.

Valentin looks at him, quizzical.

**CHERTKOV**

Sofya Andreyevna does not respect his privacy.

**VALENTIN**

She wouldn't open his private correspondence...

Chertkov raises an eyebrow. An ominous silence.

**CHERTKOV**

I have another task for you, my dear.

**VALENTIN**

Please.

**CHERTKOV**

You'll keep a diary for me.

He hands Valentin a notebook.

**CHERTKOV**

I need to know everything that goes on at Yasnaya Polyana. Let me know who visits the house, any talk of the copyright to his work, any contact with the church, what letters come and go.

(beat)

Anything Sofya Andreyevna says.

7.

**VALENTIN**

Anything?

**CHERTKOV**

She's very, very dangerous.

9     **EXT. MOSCOW. DOORWAY/STREET. EVENING.**

9

Chertkov kisses Valentin delicately on both cheeks and ushers him into the dying light.

**CHERTKOV**

Godspeed, my boy.

Valentin makes his way to the droshky that awaits him.

**CHERTKOV**

And remember what I said.

He turns back to the dark figure in the doorway.

**CHERTKOV**

Write everything down! Go!

10     **EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. GROUNDS. MORNING.**

10

SOFYA. Black and white film of her being handed the newspapers at the step. She looks up at the camera, irritated by its presence.

CUTTING OUT TO COLOR we see a cinematographer on the lawn cranking away at his camera. She goes into the house.

11 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. TOLSTOY'S BEDROOM/STUDY. MORNING.

11

Where Tolstoy, awake and dressed, sits on his bed, pen in hand, writing in his diary. Dushan sits next to him, taking his pulse.

**TOLSTOY**

Nothing's working... Hand me my other boot, my friend, will you?

**DUSHAN**

Let me finish.

**TOLSTOY**

It doesn't matter. If my heart had stopped beating, I'd still go riding today.

**DUSHAN**

Your pulse is my responsibility...

**(MORE)**

8.

DUSHAN (cont'd)

and if you must ride, I insist you wear a coat. Even the sun is cold today.

He puts Tolstoy's arm down and hands him his riding boot. Sofya comes ranting into the room carrying several Russian and international dailies.

**SOFYA**

This is impossible! It really is! These people are parasites! Look...

(reading)

"Countess Tolstoy has become estranged from her husband. They barely speak."

She throws the paper on the floor.

**SOFYA**

You know who spreads all this rubbish....

She opens another paper, a French daily.

**SOFYA**

C'est la meme en France. They gossip about us in Paris... "They do not share a similar view of either religion or politics." Incroyable!

**TOLSTOY**

(smiling)

Peut-etre. You think that's inaccurate?

**SOFYA**

I think it's none of the world's business.

She looks at Dushan who is transcribing every word into his diary. He does it with all the master's conversations.

**SOFYA**

What are you doing? Don't do that.

**TOLSTOY**

(smiling)

Dushan Petrovich, you're scribbling again?

Tolstoy moves with energy and purpose toward the door.

**SOFYA**

Darling, where are you going?

9.

**TOLSTOY**

Riding with Sasha. Don't expect us for lunch.

Something strikes him. He walks to his desk, picks up his pen and quickly writes a sentence on a scrap of paper.

**SOFYA**

Leovochka, why do you insist on dressing like that.

**TOLSTOY**

What do you mean?

**SOFYA**

Like the man who looks after the sheep.

**TOLSTOY**

It's not meant to offend you.

**SOFYA**

But it does offend me, because it offends reason. You're a Count, for God's sake.

He puts his pen down, goes to her, kisses her gently on the forehead and leaves the room.

**SOFYA**

Oh darling, I have something else to say.

**TOLSTOY (O.S.)**

I doubt it not, my dear.

**DUSHAN**

He's forgotten his coat.

He runs after him, tripping over the long fur garment.

**DUSHAN (O.S.)**

Count Tolstoy, you've forgotten your coat.

Meanwhile Sofya notices a photographic portrait of Chertkov on the wall. She takes it down and tosses it in the corner.

**12 EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. GROUNDS. DAY.**

**12**

As Tolstoy appears on the porch, we hear the WHIR of cameras. A crowd of photographers, film cameramen, journalists, and disciples try to catch a glimpse of the master. Dushan steps in front of him.

**10.**

**DUSHAN**

Let him walk. Let him walk.

**JOURNALIST**

Count Tolstoy, you're no doubt  
distressed by the Czar's  
treatment of your secretary  
Nikolai Gusev ?

**TOLSTOY**

These people are bandits.

**DUSHAN**

I said, let him walk.

**TOLSTOY**

They come into my house and  
arrest a man whose only crime is  
to express a view of life saner  
than that which prevails.

**JOURNALIST**

So Gusev is innocent?

**TOLSTOY**

(nods)

Of course, I'm the guilty one. I  
reject the Orthodox church. I  
condemn the established order and  
I make no secret of it.

A young peasant shouts from the crowd.

**PEASANT**

God bless you, Tolstoy. Thank  
you.

**DUSHAN**

Let him walk. Let him walk.  
(to Tolstoy)  
But you don't banish these people  
very much to your credit...I wish  
I had your largeness of spirit.

A photographer's flash goes off. An old Muzhik touches  
Tolstoy's sleeve, as if expecting a miracle.

Sasha, her father's soulmate, leads two horses toward them,  
her mount and her father's black gelding, Delire.

**SASHA**

Papa.

**TOLSTOY**



**SERGEYENKO**

Yes, but we will pay for it.

Sergeyenko, Chertkov's joyless secretary, and Valentin stand on a second storey porch looking out across the central lawn where a number of young Tolstoyans tend the garden, work to put up a chicken coop.

**12.**

**SERGEYENKO**

The meeting room is behind us.  
This is the tool shed. The  
dormitory ahead.

He points out a larger building across the way.

**17 INT. TELYATINKI. SLEEPING AREA. NIGHT.**

**17**

They enter the building.

**SERGEYENKO**

Telyatinki is a place of freedom.  
Nothing is forbidden here.

Except everything.

**SERGEYENKO**

Each man is alone with his  
conscience and his God.

(beat)

The kitchen is below. You'll be  
expected to assist with meals at  
least twice a week ...and to give  
a hand in the garden. We're all  
equals here, you know...as  
Tolstoy teaches us.

They start up the stairs.

**INT. SLEEPING PORCH. TELYATINKI. DAY**

**SERGEYENKO**

You are expected at Yasnaya

Polyana in the morning, first thing.

**VALENTIN**

I look forward to it.

**SERGEYENKO**

Yes... you're lucky...We're all envious.

13.

18 INT. TELYATINKI. VALENTIN'S ROOM: NIGHT

18

Small, sparse, perfect for the novice ascetic. Valentin nods his approval.

**SERGEYENKO**

Vladimir Grigorevich is anxious that you begin your reports as soon as possible. You have the notebook he gave you?

**VALENTIN**

Of course.

**SERGEYENKO**

You understand we must keep the existence of the diary a secret.

Valentin smiles.

**SERGEYENKO**

What is it?

**VALENTIN**

Just that...secrecy doesn't seem to me the essence of Tolstoy's thought.

**SERGEYENKO**

But you'll admit, you're no expert.

**VALENTIN**

Yes, I...I'll see you in the morning.

**SERGEYENKO**

If we're spared.

Sergeyenko leaves Valentin to his bare, little room.

**19 EXT. TELYATINKI COMPOUND. MORNING. 19**

The sun rising. Already, disciples are at work the gardens.

**20 INT. TELYATINKI. VALENTIN'S ROOM. MORNING. 20**

Valentin sleeps in his tiny room. A knock on the door.

**VALENTIN**

Come in.

A lovely girl at his door. She's tall, twenties, high cheek bones, short blonde hair. This is MASHA.

**14.**

**MASHA**

I've brought you a glass of tea.

**VALENTIN**

That's very kind of you.

**MASHA**

It's your first day. Enjoy it.

She sits on the bed. He's a little taken aback, not used to this degree of familiarity. It makes no impression on Masha.

**MASHA**

You met Sergeyenko?

**VALENTIN**

Last night.

**MASHA**

Ad what do you think?

**VALENTIN**

He seems very sincere.

Masha hands him his tea.

**VALENTIN**

Thank you. Why are you laughing?

**MASHA**

Say that again.

**VALENTIN**

I said he seems very... Why?

**MASHA**

Is that what you think?

**VALENTIN**

I just arrived...What's your name?

**MASHA**

Masha. But you should still say what you think. Not just about him. We all should.

**VALENTIN**

Thank you for the tea.

Their eyes meet, hold. Valentin's discomfort increases.

**MASHA**

Tomorrow you can make your own.

She walks to the door, turns to see him still watching her.

15.

**MASHA**

He's a sorry old tight-assed stick in the mud...but yes, he's sincere.

21    **EXT. ROAD TO YASNAYA POLYANA.    DAY.**    21

A modest horse drawn cart. Valentin sits beside the driver, contemplates the birch trees that line the road, the long shadows they cast. Above, crows make lazy circles in the sky.

22    **OMITTED**    22

23    **INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. ENTRY WAY/STAIRS. DAY.**    23

Valentin stands in the entry way, waiting.    He looks lost.

**VALENTIN**

Hello...hello...

**VOICE (O.S.)**

You're the new secretary.

He looks up to see Sasha examining him from the landing above.

**SASHA**

Papa's out. You can wait in the library. Ivan will show you up.

She disappears. He hears a door close. He notices a surly house servant, IVAN, who, inexplicably, leads a goat through the house. He points upstairs and walks away.

**24 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. LIBRARY. DAY.**

**24**

Alone now among Tolstoy's books, Valentin makes his way slowly to a writing table, the holy of holies, on which War and Peace and Anna Karenina were written. He runs his hand along the old wood top. Emboldened by a backward glance, he sits in Tolstoy's chair. Before him are stacks of letters, pens and pencils, a pot of India ink. There's a notebook lying open. He leans forward to read it. A noise in the hall stops him.

Tolstoy enters from the dining room, red cheeked, beard dripping wet, the energy of a man ten years younger than he is. Valentin stands.

**TOLSTOY**

I'm glad you're here. So glad.

**16.**

He tromps across the room, kisses the boy enthusiastically on both cheeks. Valentin is overcome by the great man's warmth.

**VALENTIN**

I'm... I'm... Here is-

Valentin interrupts himself with a sneeze.

**TOLSTOY**

God bless you.

**VALENTIN**

I'm sorry. Sometimes I...

Valentin pulls out a letter of introduction. Tolstoy takes it out and puts it down without a glance.

**TOLSTOY**

Vladimir Grigorevich has already written about you at length. I need your help badly. The manifesto against the government is hard work. They commit their idiotic abuses faster than I can catalogue them...and the new book...

**VALENTIN**

He told me about it...It's very exciting.

Tolstoy nods.

**TOLSTOY**

I've become convinced that all the world's religions have a single organizing principle. Can you guess what it is? Love! Love! Simple... Now, I want to talk about you. How are you? How was your journey? Come, sit down.

Tolstoy sits on the old sofa. Valentin follows suit.

**TOLSTOY**

You know, I was born on this sofa...

Valentin gets right back up. Tolstoy laughs, pats the sofa.

**TOLSTOY**

Sit. Sit.

Valentin sits down.

17.

**TOLSTOY**

Myself, my brother, my children, at least five or six of them, right here.

(beat)

Now, I've read your essays. How`s

your work progressing?

Valentin looks into the great man's kind old face. He tries to speak but he's overcome with emotion and begins to weep.

**TOLSTOY**

My boy, what is it?

(beat)

I upset you in some way. Was it the sofa? It's only a sofa.

Valentin shakes his head, smiling through his tears.

**VALENTIN**

I'm very happy. You are very kind. I'm no one and you are... you are Leo Tolstoy and you ask me about my work.

Tolstoy takes Valentin's hand, sits him back on sofa.

**TOLSTOY**

You rest for a moment and I'll fetch you a glass of tea. Rest, because there's work for both of us together.

He smiles and goes, leaving Valentin to contemplate his fortune.

25	OMITTED	25
26	OMITTED	26
27	OMITTED	27
28	EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. GROUNDS. DAY.	28

Sofya, Sasha, Valentin, ANDREY, Tolstoy's son, and Tolstoy all clustered around a table taking tea. Dushan stands near the group fiddling with a gramophone that sits on a small table.

**SOFYA**

These people have nothing.

**DUSHAN**

It really is the most  
extraordinary thing.

Absolutely ignoring him.

**SOFYA**

It's not for lack of land that  
the muzhiks live in poverty.  
They have no will power and they  
drink too much.

**TOLSTOY**

I'm not suggesting they be given  
land. Private property is the  
root of the problem... We should  
be giving ours away.

**ANDREY**

Give it to whom?

**SOFYA**

It's all ridiculous. You think  
that poverty makes the peasants  
somehow morally superior.

**TOLSTOY**

I believe that wealth corrupts us  
all, yes I do.

A pause. Valentin fills the silence.

**VALENTIN**

It's a keystone of the movement.

**SOFYA**

Oh, I know all about the  
movement.

A pause. Valentin notices that people from the front lawn  
have moved up to watch all this. Life in the fishbowl, the  
Tolstoys seem neither to notice nor care.

**TOLSTOY**

If the peasants had money, they  
wouldn't surround themselves, as  
we do, with footmen costing ten  
rubles a month.

**SOFYA**

No, they'd spend it on drink and

whores.

**TOLSTOY**

Valentin Fedorovich, do you think fifty years from now, people will eat while grown men walk around and wait on them hand and foot?

19.

Valentin doesn't know what to say. A giggle from Dushan.

**DUSHAN**

Oh, that's good...that's good.

Dushan, having sat at table, tries surreptitiously to get down Tolstoy's words in the diary he holds below the table. Sofya flushes with anger.

**VALENTIN**

I think...(sneeze)

**SOFYA**

Stop scribbling!  
(points to her husband)  
You all think he's Christ, don't you? He thinks he's Christ.

There is an awkward pause.

**DUSHAN**

(flustered)  
I'm not...I don't believe Leo Nikolayevich is Christ. Christ is Christ but...

**SOFYA**

But what?

**DUSHAN**

I believe he's one of the prophets. God speaks through him. I recognize the cadence in his voice.

**SOFYA**

This is unbearable. No wonder I feel lonely. I'm surrounded by morrons.

**SASHA**

Mama, you're being ridiculous.

**SOFYA**

Am I? I sit here and listen to this talk of love and God and equality, knowing full well that Count Generosity here is fully prepared to give away everything we have.

**TOLSTOY**

(exhausted)

You keep going on like that...Why do you think we should profit from the work I'm doing which is only meant for the sake of the people.

20.

She turns to see Dushan scribbling again.

**SOFYA**

**STOP IT! STOP WRITING NOW!**

Valentin glances at Sasha, uncomfortable at these outbursts. A long pause. Dushan tries to relieve the tension.

**DUSHAN**

In defense of my gift, let me demonstrate. It's quite remarkable, really.

He gets up, places a record on the gramophone, needle on the record. What comes forth is not music, but Tolstoy's voice.

It is a recording of a recent speech against capital punishment. His voice booms, tinny and distorted. Dushan walks to the machine, stares at it in awe. Valentin is completely caught up in the technology.

**VALENTIN**

It's your voice. It's wonderful.

They all listen for a moment, look to Tolstoy for a response.

**TOLSTOY**

It's tiresome. Another

remarkable invention will  
supercede it.

Valentin blushes and looks at the table. Dushan tries to  
hide his disappointment.

**TOLSTOY**

Please excuse me.

Tolstoy rises, leaves the table, walks out onto the lawn.  
Dushan gets up quickly, bumping the table as he goes. Tea  
spills. Valentin moves to wipe it up, sneezes, a barrage of  
irritable blessings.

**DUSHAN**

Leo Nikolayevich is something of  
a Luddite, I fear.

Sofya crosses to the machine, removes the record from the  
gramophone, replaces it with another Dushan has brought.

Suddenly, the air is filled with the final duet from  
Mozart's Il Nozze di Figaro. She returns to her place.  
There is a long moment where all take in the sublimity of  
it. Tolstoy walks slowly back to the table. He stands  
completely still. Tears fill his eyes and roll down his  
cheeks.

21.

**TOLSTOY**

Oh, that's better. That's nice.  
Very nice indeed.

Sofya crosses to her husband, wipes the tears off his face.  
Valentin watches as they embrace.

**VALENTIN (O.S.)**

Do your parents often speak to  
each other so...bluntly?

29 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. LIBRARY. EVENING.

29

Across from Tolstoy's writing desk is Sasha's world, a  
makeshift office lined with more bookcases where she does  
her work, sending cables, editing manuscripts, answering  
endless stacks of mail. Valentin sits near her, learning  
the ropes.

**SASHA**

My mother doesn't understand my father's goals, not since his work as a novelist became secondary. His commitment to the spiritual life offends her. They've fought about it for years.

**VALENTIN**

I'm sure she means well.

Sasha just looks at him.

**VALENTIN**

Your father is the greatest writer in the world.

**SASHA**

Quite.

A pause.

**VALENTIN**

I mean to say, I feel privileged to be here. It's an... honor.

Valentin feels himself slip further into mundanity. Sasha goes back to her letter. Valentin SNEEZES.

**SASHA**

God Bless You.

They read together for a moment. He sneezes again.

**SASHA**

(irritated)  
God bless you.

22.

**VALENTIN**

I'm sorry. Sometimes I sneeze when I'm nervous.

She regards him like an animal in the zoo. Ivan appears at the door.

**SASHA**

What is it?

**IVAN**

It's a note, for him.

He nods toward Valentin.

**SASHA**

Well, give it to him then.

Valentin reads the note.

**VALENTIN**

It's from your mother. She wants to see me.

As Valentin goes,

**SASHA**

She is looking for allies. Pay attention. This is war.

30 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. SITTING ROOM. NIGHT.

30

Sofya is settled on a divan in a small room off the dining room. Valentin sits beside her holding a glass of tea.

**SOFYA**

I see a fine young man before me. Clear eyes. Nice features, rather handsome in a peculiar way.

**VALENTIN**

Thank you, Countess...

**SOFYA**

Call me Sofya Andreyevna. We don't stand on formality here, as you may have observed.

(beat)

Many young men ruin their looks by loose living. You're a real Tolstoyan, I can tell!

**VALENTIN**

I admire your husband immensely.

**SOFYA**

That's excellent. He likes that.

23.

**VALENTIN**

His ideas are beautiful...social justice...the idea...Don't you think?

Sofya drains her tea cup, signals for more.

**SOFYA**

He's very grateful for the help you've been giving him. He told me so himself. I think it surprises him that a young man would be so diligent. When he was your age, he was whoring in the Caucasus.

Valentin's eyes are wide. She nods.

**SOFYA**

He wrote it all down. He even gave me a copy, so I could read all the details...

**VALENTIN**

Thank you.

**SOFYA**

You've read War and Peace?

**VALENTIN**

Many times... twice.

Sofya smiles at his honesty.

**SOFYA**

When he was writing it, long before Chertkov created that monstrosity at Telyatinki, before all this "new religion" and revolutionary nonsense...

(beat)

What do you think of Chertkov, by the way?

**VALENTIN**

He's given me an extraordinary opportunity.

**SOFYA**

But you see what a fool he is, a self-serving puritanical idiot. I have to say, it's been extremely pleasant since they've locked him

in his house.

Sofya smiles. Valentin is nonplussed by her directness.

24.

**SOFYA**

When my husband was writing it, in the mid-sixties, he'd bring me pages to re-copy everyday. I was the only one who could read his handwriting. I could read his intentions, too. Afternoons, we'd drink tea and discuss changes. "Natasha wouldn't say that to Prince Andrey," or "Pierre's too simple here. He's not stupid."

She smiles at the memory.

**SOFYA**

But I don't count anymore.

Silence. She sips her tea. She glances out the door to see Sasha hovering nearby. Listening? Sasha walks away.

**SOFYA**

You must help me, Valentin Fedorovich. I want only what is best for my husband and my family. I could tolerate the situation if it only concerned me. What I can not do is sit back while they steal my children's inheritance. Do you know I was the only person. I could understand his intention.

**VALENTIN**

I don't believe anyone wants to do that.

Sofya gives him a condescending smile. She produces a package from the table beside her, hands it to him.

**SOFYA**

I have a little gift for you

He opens it, extracts a small leather bound book. He stares at it.

**SOFYA**

It's a diary.  
(beat)  
Everyone should always keep a  
diary.

**VALENTIN**

It's a very popular activity  
around your husband.

**SOFYA**

You're teasing me, but I trust  
you'll write the truth.

25.

**VALENTIN**

That may not be so easy.

**SOFYA**

Nonsense. You've been listening  
to your friends at Telyatinki...  
(beat)  
Write what you see. That's always  
the place to begin.  
(slowly)  
What. You. See.

Valentin fingers the package, stifles a sneeze.

**SOFYA**

More tea?

31 **EXT. TELYATINKI COMPOUND. DAY**

31

Valentin rides into the compound. A number of the disciples  
are outside working. There is the ringing of metal on  
wood. He looks for the source. As the way clears a little,  
he sees Masha chopping away with an axe. He stops his horse  
to watch her.

**MASHA**

You're finished for the day?

**VALENTIN**

He didn't need me this afternoon.

He gets down off his horse. Masha continues to chop. He  
picks up an axe, holds it awkwardly.

**VALENTIN**

Leo Nikolayevich disapproves of women doing physical labor.

(beat)

Don't you find that reactionary?

**MASHA**

No, I find it sweet. I find you reactionary.

She laughs. Valentin picks up a log, sets it on end and begins to chop. He doesn't do it well. Masha smiles at his struggle.

**MASHA**

He admires you, I believe.

What's she saying?

**MASHA**

Sergeyenko told me. He's miserable about it.

26.

**VALENTIN**

Tolstoy's kind to everyone.

The log is stuck to the blade of his axe. He's really struggling now.

**MASHA**

What do you talk about when you're with him?

(beat)

Why are you blushing?

**VALENTIN**

We talk about me.

**MASHA**

Really.

**VALENTIN**

He wants to know everything about me, my parents, my relations with women, my experience of god -

He looks up to see Masha smiling at him.

**MASHA**

And what relations are these?

Valentin blushes, goes back to trying to chopping. Almost immediately the log becomes stuck to the blade of the axe. He bangs it, bangs it trying to free it. He glances up to see her still looking at him. He pounds again and again.

She stops, reaches for his axe, touching him as she does. She lifts the big axe, log and all, above her head, bringing it down hard. The log splits. She hands the axe to him.

**MASHA**

I had a lover before I came here... headmaster of a school where I taught. He was married - happily married. It was difficult. We could make love only at school.

This is somehow more than Valentin had bargained for.

**VALENTIN**

At school?

**MASHA**

In the gymnasium, after the girls had gone. There were straw mats on the floor.

**VALENTIN**

I see...

27.

He looks away to hide his confusion.

**MASHA**

Have I upset you?

He looks at her.

**VALENTIN**

No...I appreciate your frankness

**MASHA**

But you disapprove of me. I see it in your eyes.

**VALENTIN**

I don't. Not at all...I think

sexual activity...how men and women combine their physical parts is completely neutral.

**MASHA**

Listen to you. You're a prig. Just like Sergeyenko. Why else would they have hired you?

**VALENTIN**

That's not fair

**MASHA**

I don't care if it's fair. It's true...neutral...my God...

**VALENTIN**

I'm going.

He puts down the axe.

**MASHA**

Do as you like.

She goes back to chopping. We track in front of him as he walks toward the house. The chopping stops.

**MASHA**

Valentin Fedorovich.

He stops, relieved and turns to face her.

**MASHA**

You forgot your horse.

**VALENTIN**

Yes. You know, I think that I... never mind.

He hesitates for a moment, then starts toward her. Her back is to him. She begins to chop again. The color rises in his face as he tries to salvage a little dignity.

**28.**

He grabs the reins and starts again toward the buildings, trips in a ditch, almost falls flat. Red faced, he rights himself. The chopping behind him remains constant. Sergeyenko watches him from the porch.

32 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. LIBRARY. DAY 32

CLOSE on the CABLE MACHINE. A message coming through.

32A INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. ENTRY WAY/STAIR. DAY. 32A

Sofya walks into the house with another stack of mail.  
Sasha comes piling down the stairs.

**SASHA**

Where's papa?

Without waiting for the answer, Sasha races past her and out the door

33 OMITTED 33

34 EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. ZASYEKA WOODS. DAY 34

Valentin and Tolstoy walk together in the woods. .

**TOLSTOY**

I couldn't write. I was  
distracted I think...I had a  
dream last night, about a Tartar  
girl I knew in the war.

**VALENTIN**

A girl who died?

**TOLSTOY**

No, no...A girl I had sexual  
intercourse with... Sometimes we  
did it twice a day.

Valentin sneezes.

**TOLSTOY**

God bless...I've never forgotten  
our time together, the position  
of our bodies, the taste of  
her...

**VALENTIN**

You shouldn't torture yourself.  
It was a long time ago.

Tolstoy laughs out loud.

**TOLSTOY**

Torture? You are a virgin,  
aren't you.

**VALENTIN**

I try to...you know, to...

**TOLSTOY**

To be what, a good Tolstoyan?

Tolstoy smiles.

**TOLSTOY**

You see, I myself am not a very  
good Tolstoyan. You should think  
twice about asking my advice  
about anything... Torture...  
(he laughs)

**VALENTIN**

Are you alright?

**TOLSTOY**

Kalya, her name was...She's an  
old woman now, white hair, old  
body like me. She'd hardly  
remember my name, I suspect. She  
may even be dead. (beat) Do you  
think that meant something?

**VALENTIN**

What do you mean?

**TOLSTOY**

I mean that little romance. Was  
there some meaning to it?

**VALENTIN**

It's interesting. I think you  
would say..I mean, I've read  
where you say that the physical  
body isn't real. That it's all an  
illusion.

**TOLSTOY**

I say lots of things. What do you  
say? What do you think?

**VALENTIN**

I...I don't know.

Leo Nikoleyevich smiles.

**TOLSTOY**

I don't know, either.

He inhales deeply.

30.

**TOLSTOY**

Smell that...

**VALENTIN**

Lilac?

He looks up as he hears Sasha off screen. "Papa. Papa."

**TOLSTOY**

Precisely. It's lilac. The  
smell's stronger when the sun  
goes down.

He presses Valentin's hand.

**SASHA**

Papa!

**TOLSTOY**

I've enjoyed myself, my boy.  
(shouting for Sasha)

**WE'RE HERE.**

As he starts in the direction of her voice. Sasha appears  
in the clearing, telegram in hand.

**SASHA**

He's free. He's free...He's  
coming back

Smash cut to

35 **EXT. RAILWAY. COUNTRYSIDE. DAY**

35

A train roars past camera, shaking the world.

36 **OMITTED**

36

Chertkov climbs down from his droshky. Suddenly, Tolstoy is there. Valentin watches them embrace.

**TOLSTOY**

My dear, dear man.

Tears run down his old cheeks. They embrace again.

**SOFYA (O.S.)**

He'll try again to convince your father to change his will.

31.

Andrey and Sofya stand together at the window, watching the joyful reunion.

**SOFYA**

To give the copyright as "a gift to humanity"...the reptile.

**ANDREY**

Papa's not in his right mind. He can't defend himself against these thieves.

(beat)

My tooth is killing me.

**SOFYA**

You're a fine son, darling. None of this make believe chastity and made up religion. I wish all my children had turned out like you.

Andrey's finger in his mouth, massages the offending molar.

**ANDREY**

A man'th resposnibility ith to hith family.

From her POV, we see the two men walk away together arm in arm, talking animatedly.

**SOFYA**

Chertkov's notions of virtuous behavior are calculated to

destroy me.

**ANDREY**

To dethstroy uth all.

**SOFYA**

There is nothing more pathetic  
than impoverished aristocrats.

She walks out of the room.

**39 EXT. GROUNDS. YASNAYA POLYANA. DAY.**

**39**

And into the drive to greet Chertkov. He moves immediately  
to her, offers her his hand and an unctuous smile.

**SOFYA**

Vladimir Grigorevich, what a  
surprise.

**CHERTKOV**

Sofya Andreyevna, I'm happy to  
see you.

**32.**

Valentin watches her match him smile for smile.

\*

**SOFYA**

And I'm happy to make you  
happy...always.

**40 OMITTED**

**40**

**41 EXT. ROAD TO TELYATINKI. DAY**

**41**

Valentin and Chertkov sit together in the droshky, an  
awkward silence.

**CHERTKOV**

I'm glad to have a moment alone  
with you, Valentin. How do you  
think you're getting on?

**VALENTIN**

(a little nervous)

I hope my work is pleasing to Leo Nikolayevich.

**CHERTKOV**

Yes. He seems satisfied and that's good. The reports I've received from you however... There seems to be some confusion.

**VALENTIN**

What do you mean?

**CHERTKOV**

You send me never ending commentary on Tolstoy's writing. That's all very interesting but not very useful. I need to know what goes on with Sofya Andreyevna. You must see by now she's committed to undermining her husband's best intentions.

**VALENTIN**

It's not quite so obvious to me.

**CHERTKOV**

Because she is duplicitous. You are very bright. Too bright to let her into you.

Chertkov fixes the boy with his intense gaze.

**CHERTKOV**

You value our work?

33.

**VALENTIN**

I do.

**CHERTKOV**

The ideals we share?

**VALENTIN**

That's why I'm here.

**CHERTKOV**

Good, of course it is. (beat) Do you think the Countess suspects something?

**VALENTIN**

Well, I think the Countess is very suspicious by nature.

**CHERTKOV**

How so?

**VALENTIN**

I don't think she likes you very much.

**CHERTKOV**

What does she say?

**VALENTIN**

It's a tone I've picked up.

**CHERTKOV**

We simply want to distribute Tolstoy's work to the widest audience possible. She just has no understanding what it is we are trying to do. There's nothing in it for any of us but a real chance to increase the world's happiness.

He takes Valentin's hand.

**CHERTKOV**

I can only be of limited help to the master if I don't know what's going on. Any effort she makes to shore up control of the copyright, I must know. The survival of our movement depends on it. Remember who your friends are. What you've come here to do.

Chertkov turns away to watch the countryside. Valentin stares straight ahead, his nose twitches slightly.

42 OMITTED

42

34.

43 OMITTED

43

44 OMITTED

44

45 OMITTED 45

46 OMITTED 46

47 INT. TELYATINKI. VALENTIN'S ROOM. NIGHT. 47

Valentin, in bed, writes in his diary. Closing his eyes, he begins to drift off when there is a noise outside his door.

**VALENTIN**

Hello... Hello?

After a moment, it opens a crack.

**VALENTIN**

Masha?

She is there. She puts two fingers to her lips and walks toward him. She carries a candle which reveals her short hair, her lovely eyes.

**VALENTIN**

Masha.

She says nothing, simply crawls into bed, positions her knees on either side of him. She leans forward and kisses him.

**VALENTIN**

Masha.

**MASHA**

Sssh.

She begins to move against him. Their faces touch. She doesn't kiss him, but he can feel her breath. She sits up.

**MASHA**

Move the book.

**VALENTIN**

What?

**MASHA**

Your book.

It's true. Valentin still clutches the diary to his chest. He puts it aside. Masha, then, pulls her nightdress over

head, exposing her small breasts, her flat stomach.

35.

She reaches under the sheets, curls her fingers around him. He flinches at the pleasure of it.

**MASHA**

Is it alright?

He can't speak. Only nod. He bites his lip as she slips him into her and begins to rock. The pleasure is too much, and he comes too quickly. She falls forward on him, begins to laugh.

**VALENTIN**

What...what is it?

**MASHA**

You really are a virgin.

Valentin tenses a little.

**MASHA**

I'm playing. It's fine. It's wonderful...

(beat)

Hold me.

He does, as if he'll never release her.

**48 EXT. TELYATINKI COMPOUND. MORNING.**

**48**

Activity in the compound. Chairs on the lawn, a banner being erected, a long table being set. Preparations being made.

**49 INT. TELYATINKI. VALENTIN'S ROOM. MORNING.**

**49**

Light spills into Valentin's room. He lies with his arms around naked Masha.

**VALENTIN**

Wake up, wake up.

**MASHA**

I am awake.

**VALENTIN**

I want to ask you something..Say  
it again.

**MASHA**

It was wonderful.

They both giggle.

**VALENTIN**

Why did you come to a place like  
this?

36.

**MASHA**

What do you mean?

**VALENTIN**

You don't follow any of the  
rules.

Masha smiles.

**MASHA**

You mean, why does someone who  
doesn't follow the rules come to  
a place like this?

**MASHA**

..it's not about rules. Not for  
Tolstoy anyway...

A knock at the door startles them.

**SERGEYENKO (O.S.)**

Valentin Fedorovich.

Valentin is suddenly in a panic.

**VALENTIN**

What is it?

**49A INT. TELYATINKI. CORRIDOR. DAY.**

**49A**

Sergeyenko hovers outside the bedroom door.

**SERGEYENKO**

Open the door.

**VALENTIN (O.S.)**

At the moment, I'm indisposed.

**SERGEYENKO**

Yes, well...Leo Nikolayevich is here. He wants to see you.

**49B INT. TELYATINKI. VALENTIN'S ROOM. DAY.**

**49B**

Valentin blanches.

**VALENTIN**

Tell him... I'll be down at once.

**SERGEYENKO (O.S.)**

Yes..and tell Maria Filipovna we could use another hand in the kitchen.

They look at each other.

**37.**

**VALENTIN**

If I see her I will...

**SERGEYENKO (O.S.)**

If you see her...yes. And if you're going to behave like rabbits, you should go live in the woods.

Valentin is up, immediately.

**VALENTIN**

Let me go out first...give me five minutes...

Masha just looks at him.

**50 EXT. TELYATINKI COMPOUND. DAY.**

**50**

A Tolstoyan photo op. A delegation of orphans have come to pay their respects to Tolstoy. He sits in a chair beside Chertkov beneath a large banner : "Leo Tolstoy, Friend of the People.". Behind him, the disciples lay out a vegetarian feast on a plank table. Photographers and a cinematographer are strategically positioned to record the event.

Each child gives Tolstoy a flower. Chertkov, in turn, hands each child a photograph of the Count giving money to the poor.

Valentin enters, flushed and blushing. He pauses beside Dushan who records the scene in his diary, tears in his eyes.

**DUSHAN**

Look at the love in him, like  
Jesus..suffering the  
children...all that...

Tolstoy greets a little boy affectionately, rubs his knuckles over the boy's shaved head. A little girl approaches, takes a photograph. He bends forward to kiss her head but she pulls away.

**TOLSTOY**

An old man is a very ugly thing.

Tolstoy sees Valentin, lights up.

**TOLSTOY**

My dear boy. Come and kiss me.

Valentin, beet red, goes to him. He is warmly embraced.

**38.**

**TOLSTOY**

Now, who is this? Maria  
Filipovna.

Masha comes to stand beside him. She glances at Valentin but he won't make eye contact with her.

**TOLSTOY**

You're both looking so well. Life  
here at Telyatinki obviously  
agrees with you.

Valentin sneezes mightily, moves a little away.

**TOLSTOY**

God bless you, boy. What are you  
nervous about, now? Sit down. Sit  
down.

Valentin takes the chair beside him.

**TOLSTOY**

Dear Masha, Valentin tells me you're the great treasure of Telyatinki. He claims you're a very gifted teacher.

Sergeyenko lifts an eyebrow "Indeed.". Valentin is in agony.

**MASHA**

We're happy to have you with us.

Tolstoy notices a mosquito on Valentin's cheek. He takes the bug between his big fingers, squeezes until it pops. Chertkov watches in horror, whispers loudly.

**CHERTKOV**

What are you doing?

**TOLSTOY**

What do you mean?

He motions to the photographers.

**CHERTKOV**

You've killed a living thing.

Chertkov hears a laugh behind him. It is Masha who has over heard the whole thing.

**CHERTKOV**

Do you have something to say?

**MASHA**

It's absurd. That's all.

Chertkov is taken aback. Valentin stares at her.

39.

**VALENTIN**

What are you saying?

**MASHA**

I'm sorry but- It's a mosquito.

**TOLSTOY**

Forgive him. He can't help it. He's a better Tolstoyan than I am.

She can't help laughing again. Valentin sees the color rise in Chertkov's face.

**CHERTKOV**

It's not the message we want to send.

Sasha suddenly appears. She holds a cable in her hand.

**SASHA**

From my mother "Nerves dreadful. Stop. Insomnia. Stop. Pulse 100. Stop. Please come home.

**51 INT. TELYATINKI. CHERTKOV'S STUDY. DAY.**

**51**

Chertkov is there. Tolstoy, Valentin and Sasha.

**SASHA**

Don't give in to her, Papa. It'll never end...I swear to God, that woman has an instinct for knowing when you're just about to enjoy yourself

A knock on the door. Valentin opens it. It's Dushan with another cable. Tolstoy gestures for him to read it aloud.

**DUSHAN**

From Sofya Andreyevna. "I beg you. Stop. Unwell. Stop. Hurry back."

**SASHA**

Who taught her to use that damned machine?

Valentin starts to sneeze, stifles it, starts again, stifles, starts, explodes. Guilty.

**CHERTKOV**

Perhaps Sasha's right. Encouraging this may not be the best thing.

**40.**

**SASHA**

It's a trick, Papa. She'll drain you. You'll be miserable.

Tolstoy looks from one to the other, gets up from his chair.

**SASHA**

Then, let me go with you.

**TOLSTOY**

No, my dear, I'll go alone.

52    **OMITTED**

52

53    **INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. SOFYA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.**

53

Close on Sofya lying in bed. She looks ravishing in the candle light. In the background, Tolstoy arrives in the bedroom door.

**TOLSTOY**

Sofya.

A sly smile on her lips, the tension gone from her face, she seems twenty years younger.

**TOLSTOY**

Sofya, are you ill?

She rolls toward him making it clear she's quite naked under the sheets. This is no sick bed.

**SOFYA**

I'm fine...now that you're home.

**TOLSTOY**

It's no good, you know, all this. You frightened everyone.

**SOFYA**

Did I really? I don't believe it. Not you. I'm your little bird. You know the sounds I make.

**TOLSTOY**

That was some sort of love call?

**SOFYA**

It brought you back to me.

She reaches out her hand to him.

**SOFYA**

Come out of the dark... where I  
can see you.

He takes a step toward her, then stops.

**TOLSTOY**

Why? Why? Why, do you do it? We  
live in the country and you  
insist on making it an opera  
house. What's wrong with a little  
peace now and then?

Sofya laughs.

**SOFYA**

Look at me. This is who I am.  
This is what you married. We're  
older, maybe we're old, but I'm  
still your little chicken  
(beat)  
You're still my big cock.

She smiles at him.

**SOFYA**

Let me make you crow.

A pause, then a huge laugh comes up from the very center of  
him. He twists his neck, thrusts his head upward, crows  
like a rooster.

He virtually runs to her, embraces her, kisses her. She is  
a giddy girl in his arms. He breaks the embrace and begins  
strutting around the room.

**SOFYA**

Let me make you sing.

He takes her in his arms, again, begins to kiss her neck.

**SOFYA**

Do you love me?

**TOLSTOY**

I do.

**SOFIA**

I want you to love me.

He stops kissing her, looks her in the eye. Then, another loud crow. Laughing, they fall into each other again.

**53A EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. GROUNDS. NIGHT.**

**53A**

And we hear their laughter over the dark old house.

**42.**

**54 EXT. TELYATINKI. PORCH. NIGHT.**

**54**

Valentin sits by himself on the porch, writes in his diary. Down below, some of the disciples listen to peasants play music around a bonfire. A voice from the darkness.

**MASHA**

I'm not supposed to do this either.

He locates the speaker by the glow of her lit cigarette.

**VALENTIN**

Masha. You are not supposed to smoke at Telyatinki.

**MASHA**

You wouldn't look at me.

**VALENTIN**

It was difficult in front of the others.

**MASHA**

But it wasn't difficult in your bed... When it was only you and me in front of God.

**VALENTIN**

I'm not sure I was conscious of God.

Masha emerges from the shadows, but keeps her distance.

**MASHA**

So, I made you forget God?

**VALENTIN**

No...

**MASHA**

Yes, only for a moment. You forgot your rules and remembered love.

**VALENTIN**

You make it sound very simple.

**MASHA**

It is simple. What we did is what men and women do, have done, will continue doing. What could be more simple? We touched each other-- stayed close together. Something passed between us. Something real. That is a betrayal of what? Of nothing.

**(MORE)**

43.

MASHA (cont'd)

But you're afraid... All your ideas. What are you afraid of?

**VALENTIN**

I'm afraid I've hurt you, haven't I?

**MASHA**

No. I feel a little sad, but it is not for me. It's for you.

She disappears into the house. Valentin looks after her.

55    **INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. SOFYA'S BEDROOM. MORNING.**    55

The Countess wakes to find her bed empty.

56    **EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. BACK TERRACE. DAY.**    56

She comes through the dining room to find Tolstoy on the back terrace. Wrapped in a blanket, he writes in his diary, a cup of tea in front of him.

**SOFYA**

Good morning, my darling? Do you mind if I join you?

Without looking up

**TOLSTOY**

Of course, my dear.

He continues to write. She watches him for a long moment. She opens her diary and begins to write as well.

**SOFYA**

It's quite insane, my darling.  
Everyone is making fun of you.

He looks up.

**TOLSTOY**

What are you talking about?

She continues to write.

**SOFYA**

Even the muzhiks. I heard them  
laughing in the barn.

**TOLSTOY**

About what?

Sofya looks at him knowingly.

44.

**TOLSTOY**

Laughing about what?

**SOFYA**

I don't want to ruin last night.

She sips her tea, goes back to her writing. A pause. He follows suit. After a moment...

**SOFYA**

Laughing about the fact that  
you've developed a senile crush  
on a fat middle aged flatterer.  
Your passion for Chertkov has  
become a standing joke.

**TOLSTOY**

I have a great affection for  
Vladimir Grigorivich. Let them  
laugh if they find it amusing.

**SOFYA**

But it's not amusing, darling.  
It's sick. It's not normal. You  
hang on his every word.

**TOLSTOY**

We have a great deal in common.

**SOFYA**

You have nothing in common. You  
are a genius. He's a sycophant  
and a pervert.

**TOLSTOY**

Because he understands what I'm  
trying to do? Because he tries  
to help me accomplish it?

**SOFYA**

He is using you. You just can't  
seem to see it.

**TOLSTOY**

This is absolute nonsense.

**SOFYA**

That bold, obese, idiotic man.  
You treat him...

He turns to her...his face red with anger and frustration.

**TOLSTOY**

It's impossible for you not to  
distract me. Let me alone... for  
God's sake. You're like a spoiled  
child.

45.

He rises, spits on the ground, goes into the house. Sofya  
follows.

57 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. DINING ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

57

Catching him up.

**SOFYA**

Do you love me, Lyovochka?

**TOLSTOY**

Of course, I do.

**SOFYA**

Then why would you betray me?

**TOLSTOY**

Why do you say that?

**SOFYA**

Because of the will?

**57A INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. ENTRY WAY/STAIRS/LANDING. DAY**

**57A**

Tolstoy, taken aback, says nothing.

**SOFYA**

The new will.

**TOLSTOY**

There's no new will.

She stares at him in silence.

**TOLSTOY**

There is no new will.

**SOFYA**

Does Chertkov have it?

**TOLSTOY**

There's no new will.

He walks up the stairs. She follows.

**SOFYA**

But that's why he's come back.  
You talk about it, you and your  
boyfriend. You plan for it. You  
have no heart for the people who  
really love you. You'd rather be  
seduced by charlatans and deluded  
by flatterers, all in the name of  
love....You can't even love your  
own children. You can't even  
love me.

**46.**

**SOFYA**

Tell me where it is?

**TOLSTOY**

There is no new will.

**58 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. LIBRARY. CONTINUOUS.**

**58**

He goes to his desk, tries to ignore her.

**SOFYA**

Then, promise me there never will  
be.

A moment's hesitation.

**TOLSTOY**

I've told you the truth. Now, let  
me work. Please, will you?

He walks to his desk.

**59 OMITTED**

**59**

**60 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. LIBRARY. CONTINUOUS. DAY.**

**60**

Tolstoy looks up from his work. Sofya stands in the  
doorway.

**SOFYA**

Tomorrow, I'll go to the Station  
and lie down on the track.  
Tolstoy's wife becomes Anna  
Karenina herself! See how the  
papers will like that!

As he goes, we hear.

**TOLSTOY (O.S.)**

This is unbearable. You don't  
want a husband. You want a Greek  
chorus.

Sofya is taken aback by his response. She walks out of the  
room.

**61 EXT. ROAD TO TELYATINKI. DAY**

**61**

Four peasants pull a water cart down a rough country road.

We pan off to see Sofya in her droshky, resplendent in a white dress.

47.

62 INT. TELYATINKI. CHERTKOV'S STUDY. DAY.

62

CHERTKOV and SERGEYENKO look through a crack in the interior window.

THEIR POV - the Countess on the sofa drinking a glass of tea.

Valentin enters from the meeting room.

**VALENTIN**

She's here to question you about the new will.

Chertkov nervous, tugs at his moustache.

**CHERTKOV**

How does she know it even exists?

**VALENTIN**

She claims Leo Nikolayevich told her she could examine the draft.

**CHERTKOV**

He is obviously not thinking clearly. And now we have to put up with her petty grasping.

**VALENTIN**

It doesn't seem petty to me.

**CHERTKOV**

I beg your pardon?

**VALENTIN**

He's her life. The work, in her mind, is theirs...together.

**CHERTKOV**

And you're her advocate? You've been taken in by her celebrity. I worried about this.

**VALENTIN**

I'm talking about their history --  
- simply that.

**CHERTKOV**

We should see her. Act as if nothing has happened.

**VALENTIN**

Nothing has happened.

63 INT. TELYATINKI. MEETING ROOM. DAY.

63

The men enter the meeting room.

48.

**CHERTKOV**

Sofya Andreyevna, at last, you honour us with your visit.

Valentin watches her match him smile for smile.

**SOFYA**

And I'm happy to make you happy...always.

She looks at him curiously.

**CHERTKOV**

What is it?

**SOFYA**

Your moustache is...

Drooping, one side of it anyway.

**CHERTKOV**

(nodding)

It's a problem of the wax.

Sofya takes them in.

**SOFYA**

Let me get to the point. Vladimir Grigorivich, I don't wish to be your enemy. I'm delighted that my husband has a friend who understands and shares his ideals. All I want is what's reasonable - an opportunity to evaluate the new will. If you agree, I'm sure we can be

friends.

**CHERTKOV**

You're very kind. Sofya  
Andreyevna. But I can't help you.  
Not without specific instructions  
from your husband.

**SOFYA**

(to Bulgakov)

Leo Nikolayevich has agreed,  
hasn't he Val-

**CHERTKOV**

No witness you produce will  
change my position. But I'll  
certainly talk to Leo  
Nikolayevich at the first  
opportunity.

Sofya is livid.

49.

**SOFYA**

Very well.

**CHERTKOV**

I want us to be friends, too,  
Sofya. Leo Nikolayevich is the  
most valuable thing in the world,  
for both of us. We should  
endeavor to set things right  
between us. Give him peace. Let  
him work.

**SOFYA**

Yes.

(beat)

Valentin Fedorovich...are you  
coming back to the house with me?

Valentin glances between them, searching for middle ground.

**VALENTIN**

I'll escort the Countess home and  
be back in time for supper.

Sergeyenko sneers.

**SERGEYENKO**

Masha will be overjoyed.

Valentin's nose twitches. He looks at the floor.

**SOFYA (O.S.)**

Have you been keeping something  
from me? How delightful.

**64 EXT. ROAD TO TELYATINKI. DAY.**

**64**

They are back in the droshky, the return trip to Yasnaya  
Polyana. Valentin doesn't respond.

**SOFYA**

We've become close friends, I  
think. Tell me everything, dear  
boy. I love a romance.

**VALENTIN**

It's nothing, really.

**SOFYA**

A young woman in your life is  
nothing?

**VALENTIN**

Masha is a friend.

**SOFYA**

A lover?

**50.**

**VALENTIN**

A good friend.

**SOFYA**

That sounds serious enough.

Valentin looks away.

**SOFYA**

I don't mean to annoy you.

**VALENTIN**

I'm not annoyed.

**SOFYA**

You forget that I'm an  
experienced reader. I can read

your face, every letter. It's  
beautifully clear.

(beat)

Do you love her?

Valentin looks at Sofya, tears in his eyes.

**VALENTIN**

Maybe I do.

**SOFYA**

Not something they'd understand,  
these so called disciples of my  
husband. They've never understood  
a word he's written.

(beat)

What do any of them know about  
love?

65    **EXT. TELYATINKI COMPOUND. DAY.**

65

Masha carries two water buckets suspended from a pole  
across her shoulders. Arriving at a stream, she takes each  
bucket and fills it. It's hot work. Pausing a moment, she  
kneels to splash water on her face.

Another P.O.V. - someone watches her from the trees.

As Masha wets a cloth, puts it around her neck. Suddenly  
someone grabs her from behind. She screams, wrestle her  
way free. She turns to see Valentin, flushed, smiling,  
excited. He steps toward her, kicks over one of the  
buckets.

**VALENTIN**

Sorry, sorry, I'll... I didn't  
mean to scare you...Are you  
alright.

51.

**MASHA**

Fine...fine...Why did you...?

**VALENTIN**

I came back as soon as I could.  
It was a strange day. Leo  
Nikolayevich,...I love to listen  
to him. I love nothing more...

He moves closer to her.

**VALENTIN**

But today I could hardly  
concentrate.

He's very close to her, now.

**VALENTIN**

All I could think of was you.

Masha shakes her head, moves away from him. Begins to  
gather the pole, to refill the spilled bucket. Stops her,  
turns her to him.

**VALENTIN**

What's wrong?

**MASHA**

I think I've confused you. I've  
confused us both.

**VALENTIN**

No. No. You didn't confuse me..I  
was stupid. I was afraid, but I'm  
not afraid anymore.

Valentin wants to fight through the awkwardness. He tries  
to kiss her. She won't have it. She pulls away.

**VALENTIN**

I love you, Masha!

**MASHA**

Maybe you could help me a little.

In silence, he gets the filled buckets balanced on the  
pole. Without another word, Masha starts toward the  
buildings. He doesn't know what to do. He's losing her. He  
shouts.

**VALENTIN**

Masha...

She turns

52.

**VALENTIN**

Before the other night...I'd  
committed the act of copulation

many times in my heart.

He has her attention now, as well as that of a number of the disciples who look up from their work in the yard.

**MASHA**

Yes...

**VALENTIN**

I think about you all the time.  
In my heart I've committed the act  
of copulation many times. I just  
want to say...It was never like  
it was with you.

Masha bursts out laughing.

**MASHA**

I'll wait for you, then.

As Valentin goes to catch her up, he sees Sergeyenko watching from outside the unfinished chicken coop.

66 OMITTED

66

67 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. SOFYA'S BEDROOM. MORNING.

67

Sofya wakes up. She looks relaxed, then she sniffs, sniffs again. Out of bed, she grabs a dressing gown. Opening her door, she spots Ivan in the hall.

**SOFYA**

Ivan, who's wearing that awful  
perfume?

Ivan a gesture indicating an elaborate moustache. She steps into the hall in time to see Tolstoy, Chertkov, Valentin and Sasha disappear into the library, ducks back into her room to avoid being seen

68 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. HALLWAY. DAY

68

Sofya approaches the door, listens. She can make out only a few words. "Mama cannot find out", Chertkov shushing her, whispers. We push in on Sofya's anxious face.

Chertkov, Sasha, Dushan, Valentin and Tolstoy sit in a little clump by his desk. Tolstoy his head in his hands, looks at the floor.

**CHERTKOV**

I hate to say it but the Countess has become more and more dangerous.

**TOLSTOY**

Not dangerous... She's concerned for the welfare of the family.

**CHERTKOV**

(to Tolstoy)

And we're concerned for the welfare of mankind.

(to Bulgakov)

Take this down.

Valentin records the conversation in his diary.

**TOLSTOY**

It's a terrible thing you ask. I can't do it.

Sofya, still in her dressing gown, climbs out her bedroom window onto a narrow ledge that runs along the second floor.

Sofya stand on the window ledge high above the ground. She begins to move toward the library balcony.

**CHERTKOV**

You've been more than reasonable. She already controls the income from your property.

**SASHA**

Listen to him, papa. He has our best interests at heart.



**TOLSTOY (O.S.)**

But she won't. She'll never understand.

HER P.O.V. a crowd of gawkers gather on the lawn below her. One man sets up photographic equipment. She waves him away turns back to the window.

75    **OMITTED**    75

76    **OMITTED**    76

55.

77    **INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. LIBRARY. DAY.**    77

Chertkov pushes his point.

**CHERTKOV**

She's unstable...I wonder if she isn't ill.

**DUSHAN**

It's sadly more than possible.

**SASHA**

I know it's hard for you, papa. But we must be realistic.

We pan to the french doors to see Sofya furious face as she listens to the betrayal.

**CHERTKOV (O.S.)**

Do you really think she's fit to control the final disposition of the will?

We pan back to the conspirators. Before Tolstoy can respond, Sofya charges into the room. As she does, she steps on the hem of her long dressing gown and ends up sprawled on the floor. The conspirators just stare at her.

**SOFYA**

How dare you?

**SASHA**

What are you doing?

**SOFYA**

You're all plotting against me.  
In my own house, too. I bear you  
thirteen children. How can you  
betray me like this?

(beat)

Someone help me up.

No one moves. Tolstoy slumps in his chair.

**SOFYA**

Give everything you've got to  
him, your fat little catamite.  
"What will it be, my dearest  
dear, my Vladimir Grigorivich? My  
wife's heart on a platter? Her  
kidneys? With salt? But of  
course, my dear Chertkov,  
whatever pleases you. The china.  
The estate. Permanent copyright  
on everything I've ever written?  
Anything for you, my love."

56.

Her eye falls on Dushan, who very unfortunately, has chosen  
to take this down in his diary.

**SOFYA**

Give me that. Give it to me, you  
little weasel.

She grabs the offending volume. The struggle begins.

**DUSHAN**

Please, Countess Sofya-

**SASHA**

Mama, please...

She rips the book away and after brandishing it above her  
head, throws it through the open doors with a guttural,  
rumbling growl. She turns on her tormentors.

**SOFYA**

Now...

**TOLSTOY**

(mumbles)

Can I not...Can I not have...

His face is red, his body rigid with anger.

**SASHA**

You'll kill him, Mama. That's what you want, isn't it? You want him to die!"

She helps him up, takes him to his bedroom. Valentin follows.

She looks at Chertkov.

**SOFYA**

You! Don't think you deceive me for one little moment! I know exactly what you're doing. I want to see the will. It's my right, in the name of god.

**CHERTKOV**

What are you afraid of?

**SOFYA**

You. I'm afraid of you.

Chertkov looks at her with undisguised disgust.

**CHERTKOV**

The press is bloodthirsty. Had I wished, I could've demolished you and your family. You make it easy.

57.

**SOFYA**

Tell them anything you like. Go ahead. Ruin us.

**CHERTKOV**

I have too much respect for Leo Nikolayevich. You're lucky.

**SOFYA**

Why can't my husband see you for what you are?

Chertkov's face is red. He starts to speak, stops. He walks to the door, then very deliberately.

**CHERTKOV**

If I had a wife like you, I would  
have blown my brains out long  
ago.

(beat)  
Or gone to America.

He leaves the room. Sofya sinks back to the floor, a flower  
wilting. She begins to weep. An Aria from Madame Butterfly  
comes over

**78 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. DINING ROOM. NIGHT.**

**78**

From a record on the gramophone. The table is set for ten,  
although no one is at dinner but Sofya Andreyevna and  
Valentin. He is visibly uncomfortable. An awkward silence.

**VALENTIN**

I hope you're feeling better.

**SOFYA**

Do you like the opera?

**VALENTIN**

I took singing lessons for years.  
I thought about a career in  
music. The only thing I lacked,  
in the end, was talent.

(beat)  
I'm sorry about everything.

She smiles.

**SOFYA**

This aria is very beautiful.. It  
is about a woman who is abandoned  
by the man who loves  
her...Everyone is very moved by  
that...in the opera.

A long pause. The clink of soup spoons. Tolstoy enters.  
He doesn't sit.

**58.**

**TOLSTOY**

Our life together has become  
intolerable.

Stifling a sneeze, Valentin gets up to leave, tries to flee  
the inappropriateness of all this.

**SOFYA**

Sit down, Valentin.

**VALENTIN**

Really, I'm expected at  
Telyatinki.

She waves it off.

**SOFYA**

No, no, no. Enjoy your dinner.  
We've had a disagreement. No more  
than any other married couple.

**TOLSTOY**

I didn't come for more  
recrimination. Despite good cause  
for alienation between us, I have  
never stopped loving you.

**SOFYA**

Of course...

**TOLSTOY**

God knows you don't make it easy.

**SOFYA**

Why should it be easy? I'm the  
work of your life. You're the  
work of mine. Its what love is.

Aside to Valentin.

**SOFYA**

Everything with him is hysterics

**VALENTIN**

I should go.

**TOLSTOY**

Sit down.

(beat)

So, this is what love is. Does  
that surprise you, boy?

They both look at him

**VALENTIN**

I thought it might be quieter,  
but-

He sneezes violently.

**TOLSTOY/SOFYA**

God bless you

Tolstoy turns to Sofya.

**TOLSTOY**

He's right, though. If we cannot live a decent, quiet life, if I cannot work, if I cannot find some peace, I shall simply go away.

**SOFYA**

Go? Where?

**TOLSTOY**

Not to Chertkov, but I shall go.

**SOFYA**

Go where?

**TOLSTOY**

Dushan says you're killing me.

Sofya rises up in cold rage.

**SOFYA**

Then go! Go! Anywhere you please!

She smashes a plate on the table to punctuate it and another and another.

**SOFYA**

I hate you. I hate what you've become.

She picks up another plate, lets it fall. Now, she acts as if she's choking or gasping for breath.

**VALENTIN**

Countess...Are you alright?

She fights with her collar, rips open the front of her dress.

**TOLSTOY**

(shouts)

**DUSHAN!!!**

**SOFYA**

You'll destroy me.

Dushan runs into the room. Sofya continues to tear at her clothes, stops, begins to pant, then falls to the floor in a faint.

60.

**VALENTIN**

Is she alright?

Tolstoy tries to answer, but is overcome by a coughing fit. Dushan starts toward him but Tolstoy waves him in the direction of Sofya. He kneels beside her.

**DUSHAN**

Sofya! Open your eyes.

**SOFYA**

My back. My back... I'm hurting.

**DUSHAN**

You're lying on a fork. Sit up and you'll improve markedly...Valentin, help to get her upstairs, would you?

Valentin helps Sofya to her feet. Dushan gets up himself and walks to Tolstoy.

**DUSHAN**

She's alright. I'm more concerned for you... We should all go to bed before something else happens.

79 **OMITTED**

79

80 **EXT. TELYATINKI COMPOUND. NIGHT.**

80

Valentin sits at the bonfire, with other disciples. After a while he walks towards the house.

81 **INT. TELYATINKI. KITCHEN. NIGHT.**

81

It's late. The house is quiet. Valentin walks into the kitchen to see Masha washing the dishes. Exhausted, he sits, stares at the floor.

**VALENTIN**

It was terrible there today...  
between them. They loved each  
other so much, but you see what  
it becomes.

She stays at the sink, says nothing.

**VALENTIN**

Masha, what's the matter?

She speaks without turning to him.

61.

**MASHA**

I'm going back to Moscow.

**VALENTIN**

What?

He gets up, goes to her.

**MASHA**

Chertkov spoke with me this  
afternoon. He says I could be  
more useful there...which  
means...

Valentin shakes his head. His lip trembles.

**VALENTIN**

This is him punishing us,  
punishing me for befriending  
Sofya Andreyevna. For not...  
This is Chertkov.

**MASHA**

We've both disappointed him.

**VALENTIN**

I don't care. You can't go away.  
I'll talk to him. I'll make him  
change his mind. I'm going to  
make you stay.

**MASHA**

No, I want to go.

**VALENTIN**

What?

**MASHA**

I'm leaving the movement.

**VALENTIN**

You can't leave Tolstoy.

**MASHA**

I am not. Look, when I read his Confession, it moved me, Valya. He was searching for freedom. Freedom from anger. Freedom from attachment. Freedom from all the superstition and nonsense of the church. It moved me so much. I thought that's what it would be about. Isn't that what it's about? Freedom and love? But they mix it all up.

Masha reaches out and puts her arms around him. Her head falls against his shoulder.

62.

**MASHA**

Come with me. Please.

Bulgakov doesn't know what to say. The silence gets more awkward as it gets longer. Slowly, she disengages herself from him, looks him in the eye. She nods.

**MASHA**

I'm going to my room.

As she starts away.

**VALENTIN**

Don't leave me, Masha...  
I need you.

She turns back for a moment.

**MASHA**

I know you do...I know.

Then she's gone.

Sofya in her bed. A team of doctors hover over her. One of them peers into her eyes with a sextant-like instrument.

We move into the hall to find DR. ROSSOLIMO, an expert in mental illness, conferring in the hall with Tolstoy and Dushan.

**ROSSOLIMO**

I believe the Countess suffers from a mental degeneracy, paranoic and hysterical, chiefly the former.

**DUSHAN**

Yes.

The doctor walks back into the bedroom. Tolstoy red in the face, walks away down the hall. Dushan catches him.

**TOLSTOY**

Why did you bring him here?

**DUSHAN**

He's an old friend, you know, from Rome.

**TOLSTOY**

And astoundingly stupid in the way of all scientists.

Dushan is wounded by his uncharacteristic lack of generosity.

63.

**TOLSTOY**

I'm sorry, my friend, but this is all very upsetting to me.

**DUSHAN**

Yes.

Tolstoy sits on a small staircase at the end of the hall. Bulgakov is already there on the step above him.

**TOLSTOY**

Take them downstairs. Thank them

for me. Offer them a drink.

**DUSHAN**

You'll be alright?

**TOLSTOY**

Valentin Fedorovich will stay  
with me, won't you, boy

Valentin nods. Dushan goes to collect the doctors.

MOMENTS LATER-Tolstoy goes to Sofya's bed. He takes her  
hand. She looks at him with all the love of a new bride.  
Tears come to his eyes. He kisses her hand.

**SOFYA**

Ya...your...your...I can't  
remember now...Yo, what did I  
say? What did you mean?

**TOLSTOY**

You rest now.

Valentin watches from the doorway as Tolstoy leaves the  
bedside and walks out.

**83 EXT. ZASYEKA WOODS. DAY.**

**83**

It is an autumn afternoon. Valentin and Tolstoy pick their  
way through the thick undergrowth.

As they come into a clearing. Valentin is surprised to see  
a portable table and several chairs set up like lawyers  
office in the middle of the wood. Sergeyenko fiddles with a  
piece of paper on the desk. Chertkov comes toward them.

Tolstoy stops his horse. He turns to Valentin with tears in  
his eyes.

**TOLSTOY**

You see, I no longer feel I have  
a choice in the matter. She  
isn't...

He rides forward toward the approaching Chertkov.

**64.**

**CHERTKOV**

Good afternoon, Leo Nikolayevich.

**TOLSTOY**

Is it?

They help Tolstoy dismount. They lead him to a nearby stump and place the writing board before him. Sergeyenko hands a document to Chertkov who lays it on the board.

**CHERTKOV**

This will insure that the complete works will live in the public domain.

**SERGEYENKO**

Monumentous.

**CHERTKOV**

Your work is the birthright of the Russian people. Now, they possess it forever.

Tolstoy looks up at them.

**CHERTKOV**

Yes?

**TOLSTOY**

I need a pen.

**CHERTKOV**

Of course.

Chertkov looks at Sergeyenko who swallows hard. No pen.

**SERGEYENKO**

I...uh...

**CHERTKOV**

What?

Sergeyenko moves close to Chertkov, close enough to whisper.

**CHERTKOV**

You're a secretary. How can you not have a pen?

Sergeyenko points at Valentin.

**SERGEYENKO**

He's a secretary, too. Ask him.

**CHERTKOV**

Valentin Fedorovich, do you have  
a pen?

65.

Valentin hesitates for a moment, looks at Tolstoy, seated  
on the stump, staring into the middle distance.

**VALENTIN**

I do.

Valentin fetches it from his satchel.

Pen in hand, Tolstoy hovers over the document. A long  
moment.

**CHERTKOV**

Are you alright?

**TOLSTOY**

I feel like a conspirator.

Sergeyenko laughs. Chertkov glares at him. It's beyond  
awkward. Valentin looks to the sky, sees the crows  
circling again.

Without further hesitation, Tolstoy picks up the pen and  
signs the document. Then he moves away from the group.  
Valentin watches him.

84    **EXT. ZASYEKA WOODS. DAY.**

84

Valentin and Tolstoy water their horses at a stream.  
Tolstoy seems weary.

**VALENTIN**

Maybe we should get back. It'll  
be dark soon. May I ask you  
something that has nothing to do  
with work?

**TOLSTOY**

Of course, my dear.

**VALENTIN**

Do you love your wife?

**TOLSTOY**

" Your youth and your desire for

happiness reminds me cruelly of my age and the impossibility of happiness for me." When I was courting Sofya, she was so young and pure, it seemed impossible that I'd ever have her. I didn't want to tell her how I felt and I wanted to tell her nothing else. So I wrote down a string of letters and asked her if she could decipher them. She looked completely confused, thinking it was a game or...

66.

Tolstoy looks into the middle distance, remembering his love.

**TOLSTOY**

I gave her one clue. The first two Y's, I said, stand for "your youth" and then the most miraculous thing happened. She simply spoke the phrase, my phrase...

Tolstoy looks at Valentin as if the boy might offer some explanation of the miraculous.

**TOLSTOY**

...as if she had read my mind. In that moment, we both knew we would always be together. For those first years, we were incredibly happy, terrifyingly happy.

His old eyes are wet.

**TOLSTOY**

And now this.

Tolstoy reaches into his boot, extracts his SECRET DIARY. He takes a pen from his shirt, begins to write. Valentin is amazed. HE HAD A PEN ALL THE TIME.

85 INT. TELYATINKI. MEETING ROOM. NIGHT.

85

Valentin exhausted, sits at the long table. Chertkov

appears at his office door.

**CHERTKOV**

Thank you again, Valentin  
Fedorovich, for your forethought.

**VALENTIN**

I'm a secretary, after all.

Chertkov let's it go.

**CHERTKOV**

You know I had thought for a time  
to suggest that Leo Nikolayevich  
look for someone else. But...he  
said no. He said "He reminds me  
of myself when I was young."

He goes. After a moment, Valentin gets up and goes to the  
study door.

**VALENTIN**

I'm leaving Telyatinki.

67.

**CHERTKOV**

Really.

**VALENTIN**

I am going to Moscow.

**CHERTKOV**

She is leading you around the  
nose.

**VALENTIN**

Look, you say the movement's  
about love-

**CHERTKOV**

Yes... The love he tells us to  
practice, the love of the  
Gospels. Why do I have to explain  
this? Perfect love. Eternal love.  
The love that binds mankind  
together.

**VALENTIN**

But I've never met mankind, only  
men and women, imperfect men,

imperfect women.

**CHERTKOV**

Leo Nikolayevich also teaches us  
love can not be weakminded.  
Go. You won't be missed ...a  
naive sentimentalist

Valentin looks at him for a long moment, then bursts out  
laughing, walks away

**CHERTKOV**

Why are you laughing? You think  
I'm ridiculous.

**VALENTIN**

I'm laughing because I didn't  
sneeze.

86 OMITTED 86

87 OMITTED 87

88 OMITTED 88

68.

89 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. TOLSTOY STUDY/BEDROOM. DAY. 89

Tolstoy has fallen asleep at his desk, his SECRET DIARY  
open before him. Sofya enters without knocking. He bolts up  
groggily, tries to hide the little book. Sofya, meanwhile,  
holds up the letter in her hand.

**SOFYA**

Lyovochka? Prozeveskeny wants to  
purchase the rights to your work  
after your death.

**TOLSTOY**

Then I shall try and die as soon  
as is convenient.

**SOFYA**

Don't be silly. They've offered  
one million rubles.

Silence.

**SOFYA**

How can you not be pleased?

**TOLSTOY**

I don't write for publishers. I write for people.

He gets up from his desk.

**SOFYA**

Where are you going?

**TOLSTOY**

Valentin's in the library. He's asked to speak to me.

**SOFYA**

Splendid...while your wretched family is left to starve.

**TOLSTOY**

I don't see anyone starving in this house. On the contrary, our privilege revolts me.

He goes. She calls after him.

**SOFYA**

But you're always first to the trough...always have been.

Sofya sinks into his chair. On the desk is the photograph of herself and Tolstoy that we saw her hang on the wall in the early part of the film. She looks at the wall. There in it's place is the offending photograph of CHERTKOV that she had removed earlier.

69.

She can fix that. But as she picks up the photo of her and her husband, she notices A SMALL VOLUME, THE SECRET DIARY, lying under it. She begins to read.

90 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. LIBRARY. DAY.

90

Valentin waits on the sofa. Tolstoy walks in, goes to him.

**TOLSTOY**

What is it, dear boy? You look

unhappy. What do you want to say?

But before Valentin can respond A GUNSHOT RINGS OUT.

91 OMITTED

91

92 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. TOLSTOY BEDROOM/STUDY. DAY.

92

Sofya sits in a chair, firing shot after shot at the photograph of Chertkov. Tolstoy and Valentin enter.

**TOLSTOY**

Sofya, what are you doing?

She turns toward him, waves the gun in his direction. Valentin ducks against the wall.

**SOFYA**

How could you do this to me?

**TOLSTOY**

You're not well.

**SOFYA**

You hurt me again and again. You take little pieces of me until I become nothing. I don't know who I am anymore.

(beat)

I read your diary. I know what you've done.

**TOLSTOY**

You behave like this, I have no choice. Now give me the gun.

**SOFYA**

No! Give me the gun!

**TOLSTOY**

Give it to me, please.

70.

Sofya throws the gun at her husband. She runs out of the room. We see the shattered photograph of Chertkov.

After a moment, Tolstoy into his chair. Valentin watches him in silence.

**TOLSTOY**

I'd like you to stay here tonight.

**VALENTIN**

Yes, of course.

With that, the old man gets up and leaves the room, leaving Valentin in the wreckage of his world.

**93 EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. GROUNDS. NIGHT. 93**

The wind blows the trees around the old house. We see a lighted lamp move up the stairs.

**94 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. LIBRARY. NIGHT. 94**

Valentin in his makeshift bed.

**SASHA (O.S.)**

Valentin. Valentin.

He is immediately awake. Sasha, lamp in hand, crouches beside him.

**SASHA**

Get up. He's leaving.

**VALENTIN**

What?

**SASHA**

He's leaving.

**95 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. TOLSTOY'S BEDROOM/STUDY. NIGHT. 95**

Bags are being prepared. Sasha is packing clothes.

**TOLSTOY**

Essentials only. Nothing that isn't absolutely necessary.

Valentin struggles to close a case full of books and papers.

**TOLSTOY**

Please...we must hurry.

71.

**VALENTIN**

Where will you go?

No one responds. Dushan comes to Tolstoy, sits down and begins the ritual taking of the pulse. Meanwhile, Sasha wraps a heavy fur coat around his shoulders. She smiles at him.

**SASHA**

Absolutely essential.

**DUSHAN**

A lantern, I think. It's very dark tonight.

(beat)

And the apparatus for giving an enema.

96    **EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. GROUNDS. NIGHT.**

96

The horses are hitched to the droshky, the bags are up on the back.

**SASHA**

Everything's ready.

Dushan climbs into the carriage. Tolstoy turns abruptly and walks back toward the house.

**SASHA**

Papa...?

**DUSHAN**

He's changed his mind. He's going back to the house.

They watch as Tolstoy kneels on the wet grass, bending low to rub his hands against the earth. After a moment, Valentin goes to him, kneels next to him.

**VALENTIN**

Do you want to go back?

**TOLSTOY**

When I was a boy, my brother Nikolai once brought me to a place when I was a boy. He told me he'd found a green stick with some words on it... the secret to happiness for all men everywhere. He hid it in the ground. I looked for it very often. I've looked for it all these years. I really believed I would find it here...but I never did.

72.

Tolstoy looks at him.

**TOLSTOY**

I never did...but this life is behind me now.

He kisses the ground of his beloved home, gets up and they walk back to the droshky.

**TOLSTOY**

Help me up, will you?

As they go, he hands Valentin an envelope.

**TOLSTOY**

Give this to Sofya.

**VALENTIN**

I will.

They reach the carriage. Sasha embraces him, kisses him over and over.

**SASHA**

Be well. Be well.

**TOLSTOY**

Don't cry. I'll send for you when I can.

They help him up onto the droshky and the carriage starts slowly away from the old house.

97 **EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. GROUNDS. MORNING**

97

Out in front of the house, an old peasant woman pulls the

feathers off a chicken. Over her impassive face, we hear deep, heavy sobs.

98 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. SITTING ROOM. DAY.

98

Sofya is in a rage. Sasha sits nearby.

**SASHA**

I'm simply telling you what happened. He's gone. I have no idea where. Nobody does.

**SOFYA**

You're a liar.  
(beat)  
Liar!

Sasha won't rise to the bait.

Valentin comes into the room.

73.

**SOFYA**

So, he's gone.  
(to Bulgakov)  
For good.

**VALENTIN**

I think so, yes.

There is a pause. Sofya suddenly smiles, becomes solicitous.

**SOFY**

Darling Sasha, where is your father? I know you know. Please, please. Don't play games with me. Now it's not the moment.

**SASHA**

Honestly, I have no idea.

**SOFYA**

**DON'T PLAY GAMES WITH ME.**

**VALENTIN**

I have this for you.

It is a letter. She grabs it, as if it is something that

might feed a terrible hunger at the center of her. Moving into a corner, she tears it open and begins to read.

They both watch Sofya's passion. Her face quivers, the muscles in her neck stand out. Her shoulders begin to shake.

Crumbling the paper in her hand, she twists her head and screams. Then, gathering up her dress, she runs out the door.

Sasha move immediately to the window. From her P.O.V., we see Sofya streaking across the lawn.

They look at each other

**SASHA**

The pond!

They run out.

**99 EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. GROUNDS. DAY.**

**99**

Sofya sprints away from the house and into the trees. A couple of servants join the chase, Ivan and VANYA, a fat manservant. Valentin, head of the group, sees Sofya move out of the birches. She's heading straight to the pond.

**74.**

Sasha suddenly steams past him.

**SASHA**

Mama, Mama! Stop. Not this.  
Hurry! Hurry!

**VALENTIN**

Countess!

**100 EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. POND. DAY**

**100**

Sofya has reached the bathhouse. Peasant women watch her as they do their wash. She glances back her pursuers, races on.

Tiring now, she goes to her knees. She crawls along the jetty toward the water. At the edge of the jetty, she

falls on her back then turns over, most ungracefully, and rolls off sideways into the pond.

HIGH ANGLE. Sofya sinks into the black water. The sound of her rescuers fades away and is replaced by Tolstoy's voice, reading the farewell note she still clutches in her hand.

**TOLSTOY (V.O.)**

My position in the house has become intolerable. What I'm doing now is what people have commonly done - leave their worldly life behind to spend their last days in peace and solitude.

SLOW MOTION She floats, strangely relaxed, beneath the water.

**TOLSTOY (V.O.)**

I beg you to forgive me for everything I've done to you, just as I forgive you with all my soul for everything you've done to me.

The silence is suddenly ripped apart by the rescuers. Sasha and Valentin jumping into the pond. Sasha, barely able to swim herself, thrashes in the water.

**VALENTIN**

Sasha, go back to the jetty. Here, let me help you.

He offers his arm, using it to push her to safety.

**SASHA**

No! She's drowning. Help her!

75.

**VALENTIN**

I will. I will. Stay here.

With that, he pushes away from the dock and makes a sharp plunge under the water.

Sasha watches, waits...and after a long moment Valentin surfaces pulling Sofya with him.

On the dock, the servants and Sasha help him to get her heavy body , water soaked dress, back onto the bank.

She looks terrible. Her tongue lolling out, water drizzling from her open mouth. Sasha is overcome.

**SASHA**

She's dead. My mother. She's dead.

Ivan takes action. He rolls her on to her stomach, works to expel water from her lungs. This goes on for an agonizing length of time. Valentin looks to the sky... dull and gray.

Then a sound, coughing sputtering. She is alive. Sasha, Valentin, and the servants help up.

**SASHA**

Let me take you to the house, mother.

**SOFYA**

Let me die. Please. Why would you rob me of that?

**SASHA**

Let's go to the house.

Sofya is suddenly clear, almost calm.

**SOFYA**

Ivan, go to the station. Find out which train the master took.

Ivan looks at Sasha for approval.

**SASHA**

I see no harm in it. Let's get her to bed.

Valentin nods. Ivan appears beside him.

**IVAN**

Life returns to torture her for awhile.

He laughs out loud, then walks away.

76.

Sasha walks into dining room. Valentin pours them tea.

**SASHA**

She's exhausted herself. She's slept for nearly four hours.

**VALENTIN**

I'm glad she can sleep. The pain subsides a little.

**SASHA**

The noise subsides a little.

They smile at each other.

**SASHA**

Well, a little.

Ivan comes down the stairs. He stops in the doorway.

**SASHA**

Come in.

**IVAN**

A message, miss.

**SASHA**

For me?

**IVAN**

No, for your father. From the Countess, miss.

**SASHA**

She's allowed to send a note to my father. I just don't know where to tell her to send it.

**IVAN**

She's addressed it to train number 9. That's the train the master took. The station master told me...

**SASHA**

Why are you giving it to me? She is allowed to send my father a note!

Ivan steps forward and hands her the note to inspect. Sasha can't help but laugh.

**SASHA**

She never gives up.  
(reading the note)  
"Dearest papa. Return at once."  
**(MORE)**

77.

SASHA (cont'd)

Sasha." She signed it with my  
name.

**VALENTIN**

Ingenious.

**SASHA**

Obvious.

She pockets the note. Ivan continues to stand there. Sasha  
looks at him.

**SASHA**

Yes?

**IVAN**

He gave me this as well...the  
stationmaster. A note for you.

Sasha opens it, reads. She looks up, flushed with  
excitement.

**SASHA**

He's with my aunt. At the  
Shamardino.

Sasha runs out of the room.

102 **EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. GROUNDS. DAY**

102

Sasha, on horse back, rides up and by the camera and away  
down the alley of trees that lead away from the house.

**SOFYA (O.S.)**

They've all gone

103 **INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. LIBRARY. DAY.**

103

Sitting at his desk, Valentin looks up to see Sofya  
standing in the doorway. She looks exhausted.

**VALENTIN**

I'm here.

She walks to his desk.

**SOFYA**

You're writing to your girl.  
That's lovely.

Sofya touches his shoulder with real affection, then walks across the room to her husband's desk.

**VALENTIN**

I don't know if she's my girl.

78.

**SOFYA**

But you believe you'll see her again.

**VALENTIN**

I very much hope so.

**SOFYA**

Yes. Refuse to believe in the end of love. Do all you can to prevent it...

Sofya picks up a photograph of the two of them, examines it.

**SOFYA**

I know you know where he is, Valentin.

Valentin hesitates. She walks back to him.

**SOFYA**

I won't ask you to betray his trust...but I need you to go to him. I do. I have to see him. I have to talk to him. I won't make a scene. Promise him that. I must see him.

104 OMITTED 104

105 OMITTED 105

106 OMITTED 106

107 OMITTED 107

108 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. DAWN 108

Clouds of steam against the white sky. A great black train travels through the bleak world

109 INT. THIRD CLASS CARRIAGE. DAY. 109

Tolstoy rests on the hard bench of the third class carriage he always insists on. He writes on his lapboard. We pan to an adjacent bench to find VALENTIN, now with them. He and Sasha have a map spread out in front of them.

79.

**SASHA**

He's right, you know, to go. She will be right behind us.

**VALENTIN**

I've told you she has promised she wouldn't make any problems. But besides, where are we going?

Tolstoy has overheard them.

**TOLSTOY**

We don't need a plan, my dears, we'll simply go

Dushan appears with several newspapers. As he hands them the papers, he reads the HEADLINES.

**DUSHAN**

**TOLSTOY ABANDONS HOME!  
WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN...SAGE OF  
YASNAYA POLYANA TAKES FLIGHT!**

Tolstoy looks up from the papers, smiles.

**TOLSTOY**

I guess our little secret is out.

110    **OMITTED**    110

111    **INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. SITTING ROOM. DAY**    111

Sofya sits surrounded by the papers. Andrey appears.

**ANDREY**

There's a reporter outside from  
the Russian World.

**SOFYA**

Tell him we've received an  
apologetic letter from your  
father..very embarrassed. We  
expect him back any day...

**ANDREY**

But that's a lie, right?

**SOFYA**

Yes, that's a lie.

112    **EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. DAY**    112

The huge iron wheels grind on.

80.

113    **INT. THIRD CLASS TRAIN CARRIAGE. DAY**    113

Tolstoy sleeps. People still crowd around him.

**VALENTIN**

Please move back. Please let him  
breath. Please give him some  
room.

**SASHA**

(to Valentin)  
He can't breath. Valentin,  
please.

(to Dushan)

The smoke is too much.

**DUSHAN**

I know. Stay back.

Tolstoy stirs.

**TOLSTOY**

Where are we?

**DUSHAN**

It's alright. Everything's fine.

He reaches out to touch Tolstoy's forehead. He goes pale.

**TOLSTOY**

Where are we?

**DUSHAN**

Let me take your temperature.

The old man lifts his shirt, takes the thermometer under his arm. Dushan reaches for his wrist. Valentin and Sasha look at each other, wait for the vital signs. He takes the thermometer from Tolstoy, reads it.

He's clearly shaken.

**TOLSTOY**

Good old Dushan, ...you needn't worry. Remember, you are my doctor, not my angel. Whatever happens, it's not your fault... I'm feeling much better now. I just need to sleep.

**DUSHAN**

Good, good. Yes.

He drifts off again, Dushan stares at the thermometer. His eyes fill with tears.

81.

**DUSHAN**

He will be fine.

114 EXT. ASTAPOVO. PLATFORM. DAY

114

The train pulls into a small, dusty station, ASTAPOVO.

Valentin and Dushan support, help him off the train. Sasha looks at the sad, empty platform.

**SASHA**

We've come to the end of the world.

**115 EXT. ASTAPOVO. PLATFORM. DAY.**

**115**

Dushan and Tolstoy sit on a bench on the platform. Sasha and Valentin appear.

**VALENTIN**

The stationmaster says we may have his house for as long as we need it. There are no inns nearby, so we're lucky.

**TOLSTOY**

Very lucky.

**DUSHAN**

Yes.

They help Tolstoy up. A little bearded man, the station master, waits to escort them.

**SASHA**

You'll be comfortable here, papa. The rest of us...we'll find cots or sleep in the station.

**TOLSTOY**

And then we'll be on our way.

**116 OMITTED**

**116**

**117 OMITTED**

**117**

**118 INT. ASTAPOVO. TELEGRAPH OFFICE. NIGHT.**

**118**

Valentin approaches the operator.

**VALENTIN**

Hello, hello? Could you send a cable for me?

119 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. LIBRARY. NIGHT

119

A message comes over the cable machine.

**VALENTIN (O.S.)**

Tolstoy ill at Astapovo.  
Temperature high. Send it to  
Sofya Andreyevna, Yasnaya  
Polyana.

120 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. SITTING ROOM. NIGHT.

120

Sofya paces. Andrey lolls on the couch reading the paper.

**SOFYA**

We must leave at once.

**ANDREY**

We'll make inquiries in the  
morning, mother.

**SOFYA**

We'll rent a train.

**ANDREY**

That'll cost a fortune.

**SOFYA**

Don't say irrelevant things,  
Andrey. It's unbecoming.  
Contact someone. I'll go and  
pack.

**ANDREY**

Rent a train? God!

121 EXT. ASTAPOVO. PLATFORM. DAY.

121

Press and various hangers on have begun to arrive at  
Astapovo. Outside the station master's house, Dushan gives  
an update, temperature, pulse.

Valentin emerges from the telegraph office, telegrams and  
cables in his hands. A long passenger train pulls in from  
the north. There's general commotion at the new arrival.  
"The Countess." "Is it the Countess?"... More press, a  
cinematographer lugging his gear and CHERTKOV. He spots  
Valentin. There is no greeting, no embrace.

**CHERTKOV**

Bulgakov! Where is he? Take me  
to him.

As they make their way across the tracks, Chertkov can barely contain his glee.

83.

**CHERTKOV**

He left...astonishing...He  
actually, finally left.

**VALENTIN**

He wasn't well enough to travel.  
It's very cold.

Chertkov doesn't hear, He's basking in his victory.

**CHERTKOV**

It's a triumph for the movement.

122 INT. ASTAPOVO. STATIONMASTER'S HOUSE. DAY.

122

Valentin leads Chertkov through the door. Chertkov stops short, whispers

**CHERTKOV**

He looks so small.

Now, Tolstoy sees him, wakes up, smiles.

**SASHA**

Papa.

**TOLSTOY**

It's (hic) you.

The men embrace. Tears roll down the both men's cheeks. Tolstoy continues to hiccup throughout.

**CHERTKOV**

My dear friend, waht is all of  
this?

**TOLSTOY**

I needed (hic) to see you. Thank  
you. We have so much (hic) to  
do. (hic) I'm sorry. Damn hic

ups.  
(beat)  
Have you seen Sofya?

**CHERTKOV**

I've made a point not to.

**TOLSTOY**

I don't know when (hic) she'll come. But she'll come (hic). I know it.

**CHERTKOV**

And we'll be ready.

**VALENTIN**

Ready for what?

**84.**

Chertkov doesn't respond.

**DUSHAN**

I'm sorry, but it's time for your enema.

**TOLSTOY**

Don't apologize, my friend. Your enemas (hic) have become the news of the world.

(smiles)

Now, all of you, help turn me over.

**123 INT. ASTAPOVO. STATIONMASTER'S HOUSE. NIGHT. 123**

Everyone is asleep. Valentin keeps a vigil at Tolstoy's bedside. His rest is fitful, his breathing ragged. Valentin stands and walks out.

**124 INT. ASTAPOVO. TELEGRAPH OFFICE. NIGHT. 124**

Valentin approaches the little window.

**VALENTIN**

I'd like to send another cable.

The man nods, readies his pencil.

**VALENTIN**

At Astapovo. Stop. Tolstoy Ill.  
Stop. Heart breaking. Stop.  
Please Come.... That's it.

The man looks to him for an address.

**VALENTIN**

It goes to Masha...to Maria  
Filipovna Melinov, Moscow. Thank  
you.

**125 EXT. ASTAPOVO. PLATFORM. DAY.**

**125**

The media circus is in town. There are snack bars and huts,  
an army camp with typewriters instead of guns. Several news  
cameras are set up near the stationmaster's house. Tents  
have been erected as make shift shelters and offices.  
Reporters struggle to get into the telegraph office. Word  
goes around something big is happening.

At the platform, we see the highly polished private train  
pull in. The Countess has arrived.

**85.**

SOFYA APPEARS in her handsome traveling clothes. An  
unctuous little orthodox priest follows her out of the  
train.

**ORTHODOX PRIEST**

If the Count should have a change  
of heart...if in the last moment  
he chooses to confess, mother  
church is there to embrace him  
with open arms.

She nods.

**SOFYA**

I'll see what I can do, father.

She moves with purpose across the tracks and through the  
throng Reporters pelt her with questions.

**126 INT. ASTAPOVO. STATIONMASTER'S HOUSE. DAY.**

**126**

Chertkov, Sasha and Valentin watch through the window.

**SASHA**

She's coming this way.

Chertkov starts to put on his coat.

**CHERTKOV**

Not before she stops to tell them  
lies, catalogue my atrocities.

**VALENTIN**

Let me speak to her.

He heads toward the door.

**127 EXT. ASTAPOVO. PLATFORM. DAY**

**127**

Sofya has reached the edge of the platform where DUSHAN gives his medical update, temperature and pulse, to the press. She pulls Dushan aside. Reporters surround them.

**SOFYA**

I want to see my husband.

**DUSHAN**

Yes I'll...uhm...

**SOFYA**

I want to see him. Now!

Dushan is terrified. Valentin arrives at the platform.

**VALENTIN**

Countess!

**86.**

**SOFYA**

Valentin...Will you help me? I  
have to see him. Please.

**VALENTIN**

Of course. But I'm not certain if  
it's the best time, Countess.

She starts toward the building.

**SOFYA**

It is. It's the right time for  
me.

**VALENTIN**

Sofya Andreyevna...  
(to the crowd) Stay back, stay  
back.

128    **EXT. ASTAPOVO. STATIONMASTER'S HOUSE. DAY**

128

As Valentin arrives outside the door, he see Sofya physically recoil. She is confronted by Chertkov and Sasha blocking the door.

**SOFYA**

I want to see my husband.

Members of the press, crowd `round trying to listen.

**SASHA**

He's too weak now, mother.

**SOFYA**

But he's not too weak to see you.  
Not too weak to see that...

She gestures in Chertkov's direction. The passion attracts more onlookers.

**CHERTKOV**

Do you really want to do this  
here?

She does her best to ignore him.

**SOFYA**

I am the leper outside the gate,  
while he sleeps with the devil  
himself.

**SASHA**

Vladimir Gregorovich is here  
because father asked him to be  
here.

87.

This stops Sofya for a moment. She looks to Valentin.

**SOFYA**

Is that true?

Valentin nods. She tries another tack.

**SOFYA**

Have you told him I nearly  
drowned in the pond?

**SASHA**

We didn't have to. It was in all  
the papers.

Valentin is very aware of the publicness of it all.

**VALENTIN**

Let me take you back.

But she plows on.

**SOFYA**

What did he say?

**SASHA**

That if you killed yourself, he'd  
be upset.

**SOFYA**

He'd be upset?

**SASHA**

Horribly upset...but he could not  
have acted other than he did.

Sofya begins to sob.

**SOFYA**

I want to see him.

(beat)

He's not your husband. He's my  
husband.

**SASHA**

You're unbearable.

Sasha goes back toward the door.

**SOFYA**

And you are a stone-hearted bitch  
of a daughter.

Sasha disappears back inside. Sofya screams after her.

**SOFYA**

I lost five children. Why  
couldn't one of them have been  
you?

Chertkov watches, makes little attempt to conceal his  
pleasure.

**CHERTKOV**

Are you finished?

A pause. Sofya is suddenly aware of the crowd around her.

**SOFYA**

Valentin, will you take me back?

Valentin nods.

**VALENTIN**

Yes, of course.

Sofya takes his arm, starts back across the platform.  
Shaken, she tries her best to maintain her dignity as she  
walks through the crowd. She leans against Valentin,  
whispers.

**SOFYA**

I've behaved badly, haven't I?

**VALENTIN**

No, Countess, Don't worry. Not at  
all.

Around her, journalists ask questions, photographers call  
out "Turn to us, Countess." "Show us your eyes."

129 **OMITTED**

129

130 **INT. ASTAPOVO. PRIVATE TRAIN. DAWN.**

130

Valentin, in his wrinkled suit, is asleep in a chair. He  
wakes to see Sofya stretched out on the sofa. He watches  
her. She doesn't stir. After a moment, he goes out.

131 EXT. ASTAPOVO. PLATFORM. DAY  
131

Valentin emerges from the telegraph office. He walks along the platform, a stack of letter and telegrams in his hands. A few reporters type their early morning dispatches.

132 OMITTED  
132

133 OMITTED  
133

89.

134 INT. ASTAPOVO. STATIONMASTER'S HOUSE. DAY. 134

Valentin comes into the room, acknowledges Chertkov who sits at his makeshift desk going through letters and cables. He goes to the bedside, stops next to Dushan. Silence, interrupted only by Tolstoy's incessant hiccups. Valentin notices Dushan is on the verge of tears.

**VALENTIN**

What is it? Dushan, what's wrong?

**DUSHAN**

Listen to him. I'm supposed to be a doctor, for God's sake.

Weak, feverish, Tolstoy sits up in bed. Sasha moves to help him.

**TOLSTOY**

Sofya!

**DUSHAN**

What is it? What is it?

Valentin goes to Tolstoy. He's in a kind of panic. Chertkov comes into the room.

**TOLSTOY**

She's come, hasn't she? She's here.

He points to the corner. But it is nothing, a gray shape thrown by a coat rack.

**CHERTKOV**

You're imagining things.

**DUSHAN**

It's true, Leo Nikolayevich.

**TOLSTOY**

Sasha...where's your mother?

Tolstoy's eyes fill with tears. Valentin looks to Sasha.  
She looks from him to Chertkov.

**CHERTKOV**

She's at home.

**TOLSTOY**

If she wanted to see me I  
couldn't refuse her.

(beat)

Is she going to come here?

All eyes are on Sasha.

90.

**SASHA**

I don't think so...I don't know,  
Papa. There's no way to...

**TOLSTOY**

To what?

Will she waiver? A long, agonizing beat.

**SASHA**

She's at home. I'm sure of it.

Valentin looks at the floor.

**TOLSTOY**

At home.

**SASHA**

Yes, Papa.

Tolstoy nods, pats Sasha's hand.

**TOLSTOY**

Very beautiful isn't it?

**SASHA**

Our home?

**TOLSTOY**

Yes.

He leans back against the pillow and drifts again. Sasha gets up and goes outside. After a moment, Valentin follows.

**135 EXT. ASTAPOVO. STATION MASTER'S HOUSE. DAY**

**135**

Valentin sees her leaning against the wall. She's in pain.

**SASHA**

He said to me once..."you're like your mother. You're so full of anger."

She turns to him.

**SASHA**

I know it's terrible...but who will protect him? I don't want him to die.

Valentin touches her face, goes back inside and into

**91.**

**136 INT. ASTAPOVO. STATION MASTER'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY. 136**

Where Chertkov has made a makeshift office. He pores through the cables, letters and telegrams that litter the station master's dining table. He holds one up for Valentin.

**CHERTKOV**

Kind thoughts from George Bernard Shaw.

Valentin walks to the table.

**VALENTIN**

You lied to him.

**CHERTKOV**

Keep your voice down.

**VALENTIN**

He wants to see her. You heard him say it.

**CHERTKOV**

What exactly do you think she will bring him?

**VALENTIN**

I don't know, they've been married for 48 years.

**CHERTKOV**

I'll tell you what she'll bring...Vanity, fuss and noise.

**VALENTIN**

She promised me-

**CHERTKOV**

What? Promised you what? You've seen her at close quarters, boy. You think she's capable of restraining herself?

**VALENTIN**

They have a whole life together. Why do you have to deny that?

**CHERTKOV**

You're a victim of her romantic nonsense. You seem to forget she wants to destroy everything we do. She travels with that unctious little priest.

**VALENTIN**

Keep the priest away-

92.

**CHERTKOV**

These people are vultures. They send in at the last moment and welcome him back to the church. That's their fantasy.

(beat)

A death bed recantation. Do you have any idea the damage it would do? Everything he's dreamed of, everything we've worked for will

be gone. A simple noble death is what we want. It is what he wants.

**VALENTIN**

No, you want an icon. You want to take photographs and give out postcards..You want people to kneel in front of an image you've created. But he doesn't wanted that. He never wanted that, and it will give him no peace.

(beat)

He wants to see her...let her come.

They see Sasha looking from the door. She turns and closes it.

**CHERTKOV**

I will do everything in my power to prevent that.

**VALENTIN**

Oh, God. You exhaust me.

**CHERTKOV**

I used to think you were just naive, Valentin, maybe a little stupid. I see now you're more dangerous than she is.

He turns back at the door.

**VALENTIN**

Tell me one thing. That image you want to create, just looks like you, doesn't it?

Valentin leaves the room.

137 **EXT. ASTAPOVO. PLATFORM. NIGHT.**

137

The circus sleeps. Valentin sits on a bench outside the station master's house. The tents erected by the press glow like lanterns in the field.

Some people lie on the hard platform. He looks across the tracks at Sofya's private car. A single light burns in the window

**138 INT. ASTAPOVO. PRIVATE TRAIN CARRIAGE. NIGHT. 138**

Sofya keeps her solitary vigil. The priest has fallen asleep sitting up. She finishes her prayers, gets up, looks across at the lonely cottage. She can make out Valentin's figure on the platform.

**139 EXT. ASTAPOVO. PLATFORM. NIGHT 139**

Dushan appears in the doorway. Solemn, he gestures for him to come inside. Valentin stands.

**140 INT. ASTAPOVO. PRIVATE TRAIN CARRIAGE. NIGHT. 140**

Sofya watches the two figures disappear inside.

**141 INT. ASTAPOVO. STATIONMASTER'S HOUSE. NIGHT. 141**

Valentin sees Chertkov standing near the bed. Dushan returns to the chair next to Tolstoy. His cheeks are damp, his breathing irregular.

**SASHA**

It can't be right. His fever is down.

**DUSHAN**

His pulse, you see...

Dushan begins to cry. Suddenly, Tolstoy becomes lucid.

**TOLSTOY**

Sofya...my dear Sofya. So much has (hic) fallen to her.

Everyone moves nearer the bed. Tolstoy looks at Valentin.

**TOLSTOY**

Who's going to look after her?

(beat)

Someone needs to look after her.

There is a long pause. Sasha looks at Valentin.

**SASHA**

Shall I call her?

**TOLSTOY**

This is it(hic). The end.

94.

He seems to smile.

**SASHA**

Do you want to see her, papa?

**TOLSTOY**

Sasha, Sasha..  
It's(hic)nothing...Nothing.

He falls onto his pillow, asleep.

**CHERTKOV**

It's almost over.

Sasha looks at him, shakes her head.

**SASHA**

I can't do this anymore.

**CHERTKOV**

He won't know who she is anyway.

142 INT. ASTAPOVO. TRAIN CARRIAGE. NIGHT.

142

Everyone sleeps but Sofya. There is a knock on the door.  
Sofya opens it. It is Sasha. A pause.

**SOFYA**

Has he asked for me?

**SASHA**

I want you to come. Take a coat.  
It's cold.

143 EXT. ASTAPOVO. STATIONMASTER'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

143

Sofya and Sasha walk to the door. The reporter calls out

**REPORTER**

Countess...Countess...Do you have  
any information? Countess...Is he

dying? Is he dead?

Sasha takes her mother's hand.

**144 INT. ASTAPOVO. STATIONMASTER'S HOUSE. NIGHT.**

**144**

She steps into the room. For a moment, she seems overwhelmed at the sight of him. She looks at Valentin, who nods at her as if to say go on. Sofya walks past Chertkov without acknowledging him. Dushan lets go his hold of Tolstoy's wrist and gets out of the chair, out of her way. She approaches her sleeping, husband, the love of her life, her cross, her everything.

**95.**

**SOFYA**

Lyovochka!

There is no response. She throws her arms around him.

**SOFYA**

Please forgive me, my darling!

**SASHA**

Mother...

**SOFYA**

I'm a fool.. I'm a selfish woman.  
But I love you. Please believe  
me. Please understand me. Please  
forgive me for all my weakness  
and badness. Please! Please! Love  
me!

**SASHA**

Mother!

Sasha takes her hand, whispers.

**SASHA**

Control yourself.

**SOFYA**

Was I shouting?

**SASHA**

You have to control yourself.

Sofya looks around and sits back. Strangely, she does control herself. She becomes very still. She takes her husband's hand, begins quietly to speak to him.

**SOFYA**

You don't speak, but I hear you.

She carries on two sides of an impossible conversation.

**SOFYA**

"Do you love me, Lyovochka."

(beat)

"Never stopped, my little bird."

(beat)

"And you will never stop"

(beat)

"Never."

(beat)

"Nor ever leave me again."

(beat)

"Never, ever again."

(beat)

"Good...good... let's go home"

96.

She sits very still holding her husband's hand. Then, it seems she feels the slightest of movements, the slightest squeeze of her hand. She looks down to see Tolstoy open his eyes. He looks at her for a moment, the hint of a smile, then closes his eyes again.

Valentin sees it, glances at Sasha. Then, he begins to fight for breath.

**DUSHAN**

First cessation.

A general sense of panic at the proximity of death. Tolstoy fights for a last breath.

**DUSHAN**

Second cessation.

Sofya whispers quietly to her dying husband.

**SOFYA**

Please forgive me if I cry a little now.

Tolstoy continues to struggle, then silence, silence.

Sasha starts to sob. Sofya reaches out to her daughter.  
Sasha comes to her mother who holds her.

She feels someone next to her. She looks up. It's  
Chertkov.

**CHERTKOV**

I am sorry, Sofya Andreyevna.

The most unlikely thing, she pats his hand.

**SOFYA**

It's alright. What happens from  
now on... it will never really  
matter. Not really. Everything's  
finished.

Chertkov sits beside them. She turns to Dushan.

**SOFYA**

Dushan, could you tell them your  
great friend is gone?

**DUSHAN**

Yes.

He nods, walk out into the dawn light to tell the world Leo  
Tolstoy is dead.

97.

**145 EXT. ASTAPOVO. PLATFORM. DAY**  
**145**

A sizeable crowd has assembled, the usual reporters,  
photographers, cinematographers, but students, too, and  
soldiers, factory workers, housewives.

Dushan faces the crowd. Quiet. Quiet.

**DUSHAN**

At ten minutes after six in the  
morning, a great soul passed from  
our world. Leo Nikoleyevich  
Tolstoy is dead.

As Dushan finishes his tribute, a single voice begins to  
sing the old Russian hymn, Eternal Memory. Gradually, more  
and more of the crowd picks it up. Valentin begins to sing.  
His eyes run over the crowd of mourners. Then, something

stops the flow of his gaze. His eyes fill with tears.

**VALENTIN**

Masha...

Masha. She walks slowly toward him out of the crowd. He goes to her, takes her in a long embrace.

**VALENTIN**

Masha...Masha...I'm so sorry he's gone. He's gone.

**MASHA**

Yes. Yes. I know, but I came for you, Valya. I came for you, too.

**VALENTIN**

I love you. I do. I love you.

**MASHA**

Then, hold me. Hold me. Hold me.

The song, the voices swell around them. They hold each other like they will never let go.

**146 EXT. ASTAPOVO. PLATFORM. DAY.**

**146**

A black draped funeral train waits in the station. Many mourners are congregated on the platform. Chertkov comes out of the little house, followed by Andrey, Valentin and Dushan carrying Tolstoy's coffin to the train.

Sofya appears with Sasha, who escorts her through the crowd. The Orthodox priest approaches .

**98.**

**ORTHODOX PRIEST**

As a daughter of the church, I'm sure you wouldn't object to my saying a few words at the funeral.

Sofya stares at him for a long moment.

**SOFYA**

My husband needs no justification. Besides, it's been enough talking as it is. Thank

you, father.

She climbs onto the train.

**147 INT. ASTAPOVO. PRIVATE CARRIAGE. DAY.**

**147**

Sofya settles into the comfort of the private car. She sits next to Sasha. Andrey and Dushan are near her. There's a noise from outside.

**VOICE (O.S.)**

Countess...Countess.

She looks out. Below the train window, Valentin and Masha stand hand in hand. She gets up and opens the window.

**148 EXT. ASTAPOVO. PLATFORM. DAY.**

**148**

**VALENTIN**

Excuse me, Countess. This may not be the time, but-

Sofya smiles

**SOFYA**

Valentin... and who's this...

**VALENTIN**

Masha...this is Masha.

Sofya nods.

**SOFYA**

This is your girl. Good. Good. Is there anything I can do for you?

**VALENTIN**

No, no. Not at all. I just wanted to say good bye.

**SOFYA**

Yes...Good bye, good bye. God bless you.

**99.**

**VALENTIN**

God bless you, too.

Sofya sits back down with Sasha. They hold hands.

**SOFYA**

Well, I'm ready to go now.  
(to Andrey)  
Why aren't we moving? Can't  
someone make it move?

But at that moment, the train begins to move.

**SOFYA**

Oh!

Sofya looks out the window, sees the people lined up along the rail, mourn her loss. As she looks away, we see the people reflected in the glass, some of them kneel, some of them remove their hats.

Valentin watches the train pull away. He holds Masha to him.

As the train moves slowly through the corridor of mourners, some of them fall in and walk behind it. The camera travels up and up as the train travels north taking Sofya and her husband back to Yasnaya Polyana.