

City of Brides

Written by

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Based on the controversial 1951 performance of Sergei Prokofiev's
Fifth Symphony in Cold War Utah.

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INT. MARIA'S HOME STUDIO, BOUNTIFUL, UTAH - EVENING

Thirty-nine-year-old Maria Cherkassky Grantham is seen preparing personal remarks she will deliver from the apron of the Salt Lake City Symphony stage tonight, immediately prior to its controversial November 1951 performance of Sergei Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony.

Writing in Russian, deep in thought, she stares outside at the tall, silent pines of the Wasatch Mountain Range.

Soon, setting pen to paper, Maria composes the following:

MARIA2

(in voiceover)

Good evening, my name is Maria Cherkassky Grantham. I am the Second Chair Violinist with the Salt Lake City Symphony. Since I am the only member of the orchestra from Russia, I have been asked to briefly acquaint you with tonight's composer, and my hometown of Ivanovo, where he wrote his Fifth Symphony...

INT. TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY - NIGHT

The year is 1918. Young Russian pianist Sergei Prokofiev, escaping the violence of Revolutionary Moscow, avoids heading West and instead travels East by train for a 17-day trek to Vladivostok.

A trail of white steam rises high into the air beneath a full moon, as a dimly-lit passenger train blazes its way through the Siberian night.

EXT. WOODED GROVE IN IVANOVO, RUSSIA - MORNING

A little girl toting a violin case is walking along a wooded pathway. She soon enters a small clearing and spots the home of her new string teacher. Greeted at the door by a middle-aged woman in a housedress and headscarf, she obediently enters her home.

MARINA

Come in, come in. You can set your things down in my studio.

Marina leads the little girl to her spacious studio located in the back of her house. Maria hangs her coat up and sets her violin on a table in the studio.

There now.
 (exhaling)
 Take a seat.

MARIA
 Thank you.

MARINA
 Tell me your name and age.

Clasping her hands in her lap.

MARIA
 My name is Maria Febronia
 Cherkassky and I am seven.

MARINA
 Oh, a Cherkassky!
 (impressed)
 Before we begin...

MARIA
 My parents are both descendants of
 the original Cherkassky Muslim
 Princes from the Caucasus!

MARINA
 The North Caucasus, if I know my
 Ivanovo history!

MARIA
 (shyly)
 Oh, yes. The North Caucasus. My
 mother says that Ivanovo was a gift
 to the Cherkasskys many years ago
 by the Tsar, who married a
 beautiful princess named Maria
 Cherkasskaya...

MARINA
 ...From the North Caucasus!

Shaking her head.

Yes, I know. It's a pleasure to
 meet you, Maria Cherkassky. My name
 is Marina Buriskova. I have lived
 in Ivanovo my entire life. Like
 you, I began playing violin at age
 seven. Then, advanced studies at
 the Moscow Imperial Conservatory
 when I was fifteen.

(MORE)

MARINA (CONT'D)

After graduation I was compelled to return to Ivanovo to take care of my father, and have been teaching violin lessons here for the last twenty years.

MARIA

So, you never married?

Looking at the floor.

MARINA

Maria, this is Ivanovo! Eligible men are a scarcity, and the ones that have long been available are to be avoided at all costs!

(widening her eyes)

I wanted a husband, and still do!

Now staring directly at Maria.

But, circumstances being what they are, Ivanovo offers me little promise. Someday you'll see...

MARIA

Yes, Miss Buriskova.

MARINA

Well, enough of my personal history. Stand up! Turn around... Go ahead!

Maria stands and turns around.

Now, place your hands at your sides.

MARIA

My sides...alright.

Marina observes the length of her prospective student's arms.

MARINA

Uh-hmm. Come over to me, dear, and show me your wrists. First the right.

Maria holds out her wrist.

Let me turn it. Good, good! Now, the left.

Gently rotating it.

(MORE)

MARINA (CONT'D)

There, you have good arms and wrists! That's very important. I don't accept every student that comes through my door! Now then, let's see this violin of yours. Where did you get it?

Marina and Maria both rise and go over to the table. Maria opens the violin case.

My, that's a fine looking instrument. So well preserved!

MARIA

(smiling broadly)

My mother gave it to me. She said it's been passed through many generations of Cherkasskys.

MARINA

(under her breath)

Twelve to fifteen generations, at least.

Closely studying the instrument.

But, the proof is in the sound, not its looks! Do you mind if I play it for you?

MARIA

Oh, please do!

Marina gently removes the violin from its purple velvet-lined case, and inspects the bow. Now rosining the horsehair, she proceeds to tune the four strings, adjusting each peg accordingly.

MARINA

Let's see how this sounds. Ready?

Maria nods her head, while Marina proceeds to play a brisk cadenza from a concerto she has performed many times.

Now concluding her run.

My, that's a very fine violin you have there, Maria! Guard it, and don't let anyone else play it except you. Understand?

MARIA

Yes, Miss Buriskova!

MARINA

Nonsense.

(raising her chin)

You are to call me Marina!

Marina attempts to place the violin back into its case.

MARIA

Uh...do you want to hear me play?

I've practiced at home.

MARINA

I'm sure you have.

(laughing)

Oh, no, we have much to discuss first. We will do that over the next few lessons.

Looking over at the clock.

Our time is up.

MARIA

(somewhat dejected)

Yes, Miss, I mean, Marina.

MARINA

Until then, I want you to practice your elbow to wrist movement, without your violin and bow. Here is a card I want you to take home with you, illustrating both right hand and left hand rotation.

Now demonstrating.

Right hand, palm facing the floor, and left hand, palm facing up. See? Practice with this card three or four times a day and come back next week to show me your progress. Elbow to wrist, both hands, remember?

MARIA

I will, Marina.

Putting on her coat.

MARINA

Uh, there's something sweet for you in the kitchen. Help yourself, dear...

MARIA

Thank you.

After stepping into the kitchen to enjoy some cake, young Maria leave's her teacher's house through the front door.

INT. CHERKASSKY FAMILY DINNER TABLE - LATER

Later, at the Cherkassky dinner table, Maria's mother, Tatyana, quizzes her about today's violin lesson.

TATYANA

How did your first lesson go today, Maria? Did you play for Miss Buriskova?

MARIA

No, we just talked today.

TATYANA

About what?

MARIA

Oh, her experience as a musician and, hmm, the length of my arms!

DIMITRI

Your arms?

MARIA

And my wrists...

TATYANA

That's a curious way to begin violin lessons!

Turning to her husband.

MARIA

She said the length of your arms and the shape of your wrists are vital for a violin player, and that inspecting them in person is part of deciding whether to take you as a student.

DIMITRI

She must know what she's talking about. Miss Buriskova did graduate from the Imperial Conservatory!

A large blast is heard in the distance.

MARIA

(surprised)

Did you hear that?

DIMITRI

I did.

Holding out his hand to quiet everyone. A minute soon passes.

MARIA

I don't hear it anymore...

DIMITRI

Hmm, I'll have to inquire about it in the village tomorrow.

TATYANA

What did she think of your violin? It's a Cherkassky heirloom, you know.

MARIA

Yes, I know. Marina, uh, I mean Miss Buriskova, was very taken by it. She even played it!

TATYANA

And how does she play?

MARIA

Beautifully. Oh, Mama, she is so great! I hope I can play as well as her someday.

DIMITRI

Did she assign you any music to play before your next lesson?

MARIA

No. She said there is much to talk about before that. But, she did instruct me to practice my hand movements.

TATYANA

Hand movements?

MARIA

Yes, Mama. There's pronation with the right hand and supination with the left.

Exhibiting the required movements.

Palm down with the right hand and palm up with the left...

TATYANA

For heaven's sake, why? I've never heard of such a thing!

DIMITRI

Tatyana!

MARIA

The right hand holds the bow at The Frog. See?

Assuming the position.

The left hand operates the fingerboard. Like this.

Rotating her hand over the imaginary fingerboard.

I am to practice these hand movements four times a day.
(proudly)

Addressing Tatyana.

DIMITRI

The Frog! I like that!

YEVGENY

(laughing)
Froggy!

TATYANA

Sounds wonderful, Maria!

Getting up from the table.

You can practice those movements by helping me clear away the dishes.

MARIA

Yes, Mama. And, Miss Buriskova told me never to let anyone else play my violin.

TATYANA

Our violin! All of us here at this table.

MARIA

Yes, Mama. Our violin...
(sheepishly)

TATYANA

You're a smart student, Maria.

MARIA

I am, and I mean to become an accomplished violinist!

INT. MARIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

That night, lying in bed in the shadowy room, Maria pulls her hands out from under the covers and practices her wrist movements, rotating them individually, back and forth, over and over, exactly as memorized. Tired at last, she closes her eyes and drifts to sleep.

EXT. CHERKASSKY PROPERTY APIARIES - AFTERNOON

Maria's father, Dimitri, is tending his beehives, located in a back lot of his property. Attired in a beekeeper's hat and gloves, he carefully inspects each apiary.

Maria enters this back lot, blithely passes through a field of tall flowers, and approaches her father.

MARIA

Papa, what is that loud booming noise? Is it thunder?
(perplexed)

DIMITRI

I brought you out an extra hat and gloves, there, on the worktable. Put them on! You should never come near the apiaries without them. You'll get stung!

MARIA

Yes, Papa.

Putting them on.

DIMITRI

Good girl. Now, what did you ask me?

MARIA

That noise in the distance. Is it thunder?

Pointing in the direction of the noise.

DIMITRI

No, child, it's either the Bolshevik Reds or the Imperial Whites.

Maria tilts her head.

MARIA

I don't understand Papa. The Reds
and...what?

DIMITRI

There's a war going on in our
Country between the Reds, called
the Bolsheviks, or Soviets, and the
Whites, called the Imperials, who
remain loyal to the Tsar's Family,
whatever's left of it.

Another loud boom sounds in the distance.
If the Reds succeed in defeating
the Whites...

Looking about his property.
our home and the entire Cherkassky
Estate could be taken over by the
Reds, since this land was given to
our family over three centuries ago
by the Tsar himself. Ivan the
Terrible, no less! Local historians
are well aware of the Cherkassky
connection to Ivanovo, and while
the imperial document gifting this
land to us was lost, there's no
telling what the Bolsheviks will
fabricate.

MARIA

But, how could they take our home?
Our farm? Where would we raise our
bees?

(suddenly panicked)

DIMITRI

Lord knows, but we'd have to leave
before they enter Ivanovo and seize
everything we hold dear. Yourself
included, Maria! Your very name
gives you away. Ivan the Terrible
wasn't just any Tsar, he was so
ruthless and cruel that his reign
still strikes fear in the hearts of
ordinary Russians, even to this
day.

MARIA

But, Papa, to leave Ivanovo would be to leave my friends, Anya and Polina, and Marina, I mean, Miss Buriskova!

DIMITRI

I know, my child. I'm sorry, but that would be the sad result.

Another explosion is heard, only this one is closer.
Not to worry, we have family in Krakow.

Moving away from his hives, Dimitri removes his hat and gloves. Maria, soon seated at the worktable, does the same.

MARIA

Where is Krakow?

Peering at the ground.

DIMITRI

Krakow is in Poland, Maria. It's a different country.

MARIA

Are there Cherkasskys in Poland?

DIMITRI

Yes, there are!

Dimitri sits down next to his daughter, casting his arms about her, as another volley of thuds sound in the north.

INT. MARINA'S VIOLIN STUDIO - AFTERNOON

Three years later, Maria is playing Tchaikovsky's Valse Sentimentale for Marina Buriskova in her studio. Today, Marina has hired a local pianist to accompany Maria. Forty measures remain until the end of this waltz, as the camera closely focuses on Maria until the final stroke.

MARINA

Very good, Maria.

Politely clapping with a broad smile.

MARIA

Do you really think so?

Wiping off her chin and chinrest with a cloth before setting her violin back in its case.

MARINA

(pausing)

Thank you Andrei. That will be all!

Andrei bows and departs the house.

MARIA

He's wonderful. Where did you get him?

MARINA

Andrei is a student of Miroslav Gelinsky, here in Ivanovo. And, uh, let's just say Miro owed me a favor...

MARIA

Well, thank you all the same. It was thrilling to be accompanied!

MARINA

Not at all.

Pausing to look at her budding student.

You deserve it. You played the Tchaikovsky well, Maria. You still have some pitfalls to overcome, mind you, but we'll discuss them during your next lesson. I took good notes.

Giving her trademark glance.

MARIA

(downcast)

Can you share some of them with me now?

MARINA

No... Nothing terribly serious. You run along now. Go on, have some fun with your friends! And don't forget to grab your treat on the way out.

MARIA

Thank you. Your treats are always so tasty!

Packing up her violin before curtsying.

Good day, Marina.

Marina bites her lower lip, suppressing her approval.

MARINA

Good day to you, Maria...

Maria exits the house by way of the kitchen.

EXT. WOODED GROVE IN IVANOVO - LATER

Maria and her two friends, Anya and Polina Staryygorod, are taking their usual walk through a wooded grove, adjacent to the old Cherkassky Estate.

ANYA

There's your violin teacher's house.

Pointing to the nestled house.

MARIA

Yes, Marina lives there.

POLINA

(laughing)

Wait a minute, you call her by her first name?

MARIA

She insists on it!

ANYA

How long have you been taking lessons with Miss Buriskova?

MARIA

Hmm, almost three years, why?

ANYA

Nothing. All I know is that she's an excellent teacher and very selective!

(somewhat cross)

MARIA

Oh, she is...

(embarrassed)

Right now I'm working on Valse Sentimentale by Tchaikovsky. I played it earlier today. Marina even provided me with an accompanist!

ANYA

I met with her once. She said that
my arms weren't long enough...
(sternly)

POLINA

She never married?
(curiously)

Maria suddenly stops.

MARIA

No! She said Ivanovo is not an
ideal place to find a husband, and
that the only reason she returned
here after attending the Imperial
Conservatory in Moscow, was to take
care of her father. He's dead now.

POLINA

I see...

MARIA

Oh, she said she still wants to
marry, mind you, but she won't
settle for anyone unless he's a man
of means and character.
(her voice thickening)
And, she strictly warned me that
men who are available for a long
time must be avoided at all costs!

ANYA

(musing out loud)
In Russia, they say that you must
be married by thirty.

They begin to walk again.

POLINA

Just how old is Madam Buriskova?

MARIA

About thirty-eight, I think.

POLINA

Well, that won't happen to me!

Coiffing her curly hair.

MARIA

Of course not, you're beautiful!
(sarcastically)

POLINA

Do you really think so?

ANYA

Oh, Polina, please!

Laughing, the trio comes to the end of their stroll and return to their respective homes.

EXT. CHERKASSKY HOME AND NEIGHBORHOOD - MORNING

In August 1923, White Army forces reluctantly retreat north to Archangel, to board troopships anchored in the Baltic. They soon leave Russia to the mercy of the Red Army.

Maria and her family soon pack up their belongings to travel 1900 kilometers by train, over the Russian Border to Krakow, Poland. Tearful goodbyes are shed with Maria's friends Anya and Polina, and her beloved violin teacher, Marina.

EXT. KHARINKA BRIDGE OUTSIDE IVANOVO - THE NEXT DAY

The next day, Anya drops a message off in the Cherkassky's post box, asking Maria to meet her, in private, at the Kharinka Bridge.

MARIA

I got here as soon as I received your message.

(out of breath)

What is it, and why the secrecy?

ANYA

I wanted to tell you something before you left.

(excited)

I'm in love! There, I said it! My God, that feels good...

(exhaling)

And, I don't want Polina to find out. She's so beautiful that I'm afraid she'll steal him away. And, Polina and Nikolai are the same age.

MARIA

Nikolai Tupolev?

Anya parses her lips and nods.

ANYA

Um-hmm...
(giggling)

MARIA

And, does he love you?

Looking directly at her.

ANYA

Oh, yes, he does...! He's the one
who pursued me! I couldn't believe
it.
(flushed)

MARIA

I see...

ANYA

He's going to be an aviator, Maria.
Can you believe it? His uncle
designs airplanes in Kimry.

Now peering over the stone bridge into the water below.

Oh, don't you just love this
bridge?
(dreamily)

MARIA

Yes. So beautiful...

ANYA

Can you see me in my bridal gown
someday, standing right here on
this spot? I shall make the dress
myself, of course!
(nodding firmly)

MARIA

I'm sure you will. You're so
talented, Anya. A seamstress
extraordinaire!

Cheerfully raising her skinny arms into the air.

ANYA

Oh Maria, I'm going to miss you!

Embracing Maria firmly.

MARIA

Me too. More than you'll ever
know...

ANYA

My arms will never be too short to
hug you!
(laughing)

MARIA

I will always love you, Anya. Never
forget that!

The two stand silently, side by side, at the apex of this
stone bridge spanning the Kharinka River.

INT. INSIDE A PASSENGER TRAIN ENTERING POLAND - NIGHT

After crossing safely into Poland, Maria presses her head
against a passenger train window, sadly repeating to herself,
over and over, the names Anya and Polina. In the Baggage Car
towards the rear of the train, a stack of six brood frames
containing Dmitri's premature bees, ride along with the
family to Krakow. On the side of each frame, stenciled in
large black letters, is the name:

□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□

Cherkassky Farms

INT. NEW CHERKASSKY HOME OUTSIDE KRAKOW - MORNING

Now settled in Krakow after a long and difficult journey,
Maria, desiring to practice her violin, opens up her case.
There, sticking out of a velvet pocket, she finds a letter
from Marina Buriskova. Maria immediately opens the envelope.

MARINA

(in a voiceover)

Dearest Maria -
By now, you have probably settled
in Krakow and are ready to resume
violin practice. In my estimation,
you should easily be admitted to
the Krakow Conservatory of Music in
a few years' time. Until then, I
want you to contact a protege of a
colleague of mine. His name is
Artur Walawski. He lives in Krakow.
A few years older than you, he
would be an excellent teacher to
study with until you are ready to
attend the Conservatory.

(MORE)

MARINA (CONT'D)

Young Artur has already earned many achievements, not least of which is playing for the Brno National Theatre, as a teenager, no less! I am including his address below, and urge you to contact him as soon as you are able, so as not to let your violin skills diminish.

Wishing you every success in your future endeavors, and hope to hear from you soon.

Always yours,
Marina

32 Królewska Street
Krakow, Poland 14

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF IVANOVO - MORNING

Leaders of the Ivanovo Soviet are seen going door to door in search of eligible women to work in the local spinning mills, to help replenish military uniforms and tents depleted during World War 1 and the Russian Revolution. They soon appear at the Staryygorod's front door, pounding vigorously.

COMRADE FEOKTISTOV

Open this door!

MRS. STARYYGOROD

What is it? What do you want?

Peering out at the small group of men.

COMRADE FEOKTISTOV

I am Comrade Feoktistov of the Ivanovo Soviet. I understand that you have two daughters here, ages twelve and ten.

MRS. STARYYGOROD

Yes... Why, everyone in town knows that! Their school-

COMRADE FEOKTISTOV

Yes, Yes! Central planners in Moscow are demanding that spinning mills in Ivanovo increase the production of material for military uniforms and tents.

MRS. STARYYGOROD

But, what does that have to do with my daughters?

COMRADE FEOKTISTOV
 Why, workers, of course! Female
 workers...

Looking down at the stout woman.
 Their names, please!

MRS. STARYYGOROD
 But, they are still in school, and
 my oldest, Anya, is not even in her
 teens yet.
 (frowning)

COMRADE FEOKTISTOV
 Anya and...?

Forcefully removing a pencil from behind his ear.

MRS. STARYYGOROD
 (threatened)
 Polina. Polina Sraryygorod...
 (tearfully)

COMRADE FEOKTISTOV
 Thank you...! I'm very sorry.
 Orders of the State, you know. They
 both start at Mill No. 12 on
 Saturday at 6am sharp.

Looking stern and recording the girls names on his clipboard.
 The mill is located just over the
 Kharinka Bridge, on the left. Can't
 miss it!

MRS. STARYYGOROD
 But the children's school... Their
 studies!

COMRADE FEOKTISTOV
 The mills provide tutoring for
 young workers. Long live the
 Revolution!

Comrade Feoktistov leaves the doorstep, as Mrs. Staryygorod
 watches him approach her neighbor's house.

INT. YOUNG PEOPLE'S MUSIC ACADEMY, CENTRAL KRAKOW - AFTERNOON

Two violin professors from the Krakow Conservatory of Music
 are standing in the hallway outside a large practice room at
 the local Young People's Music Academy. They are closely
 listening to an amazingly gifted violinist named Maria
 Cherkassky.

LECH

She's a student of young Artur Walawski, you say? Isn't Walawski a protégé of yours?

JOZEF

Yes. He's been giving her lessons for the better part of three years and is very excited about her! Artur says she is advanced beyond her years...

Maria stops playing a complex Kreutzer etude and begins to play Flight of the Bumblebee. While she plays, the camera vertically pans a nearly-mature Maria.

LECH

Shh! What is she playing now?

Josef is taken aback by his colleague's lack of knowledge regarding foreign music.

JOSEF

Why, Flight of the Bumblebee by the Russian composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov.

LECH

(defensively)

I'm aware of it! But, never heard it played.

JOZEF

It's incidental music for an opera he wrote around 1900...

LECH

That's some very tight bowing, Lech!

JOSEF

She's very good. I can see why Artur insisted that we both come over to hear her! She's auditioning for us next week, you know...

LECH

(surprised)

You don't say...! How old is she and where is she from?

JOSEF

Maria is going to be fifteen in a few days, and she is from Ivanovo, Russia. Her family emigrated to Poland a few years ago after the Soviets seized control.

LECH

Ivanovo? Never heard of it!
(arrogantly)

JOSEF

It's, uh, northeast of Moscow, heavily involved in textiles, and employs so many women from the countryside that they outnumber men three to one.

LECH

Hmm, amazing...

JOSEF

So many women, in fact, that Ivanovo is known internationally as the City of Brides.

LECH

City of Brides? Sounds more like an opera!

(chuckling)

How do you know so much about this City of Brides?

JOSEF

I correspond with Maria's first violin teacher, Marina Buriskova. I first met her at a music theory lecture given years ago at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory. Fresh out of Moscow's Imperial Academy, she was very accomplished and beautiful! Lech, I tell you, she was something out of a dream...

LECH

I can only imagine. Russian women can be very beautiful!

(whimsical)

JOZEF

Indeed.

Leaning against the wall and exhaling.

Marina sat in the row just in front of me. She asked such poignant questions. I was impressed, I can tell you.

Lech changes the subject.

LECH

Who gave the lecture?

JOSEF

Why, pianist Anton Rubinstein himself, who had recently returned to take up the reins of the Imperial Conservatory.

LECH

Yes, I'm very familiar with him. I saw a recital he gave in Vienna years ago. Phenomenal talent.

JOZEF

Anyways...we struck up a conversation and low and behold Marina invited me to a recital she was giving that night at the Mariinsky Theatre.

(reminiscing)

She was glorious, and in a gown of floral Chintz the likes of which I have never seen...

Lech suddenly interrupts his colleague's reverie.

LECH

Maria is done and is packing up! I would prefer she not see us. Quick, let's get out of here!

The two discretely leave the building, as Maria briskly exits by another door.

JOZEF

There she is walking across the square!

LECH

She looks much older than fifteen, Jozef. I guess we'll find out next week when she auditions before our admissions panel.

JOZEF
 (mumbling)
 Well, she already has my vote.

LECH
 Mine, too!
 (more loudly)
 But, let's see what Edvard has to say.

JOZEF
 Getting back to Marina...

LECH
 Yes.
 (interested)

JOZEF
 We had an intimate dinner after her performance. I fell in love that very night, and wanted very much to pursue her. But, she had family commitments back in Ivanovo and had to leave Saint Petersburg that next day. Something about her father...

LECH
 (abruptly)
 Let me guess! That ship sailed.

JOZEF
 Sadly, yes. Oh, we correspond from time to time, but I'm married to Krystyna. Happily, I might add.
 (with certainty)
 As for Marina, she remains alone in Ivanovo where she teaches violin.

LECH
 Too bad. And she never married?

JOSEF
 No. Available men of suitable means are a premium in Ivanovo, as Marina's prone to say!

Lech
 And her father?

JOZEF
 Long since passed...

LECH
 (curious)
 How old is Marina now?

JOSEF
 About your age, forty-one.

LECH
 I wonder if she has kept up with
 her violin skills?

JOSEF
 I'm told from colleagues that she's
 never lost her virtuosity.

LECH
 And it seems the apple doesn't fall
 far from the tree!

JOZEF
 Yes, young Maria will be most
 formattable at the Conservatory.

LECH
 That, she will, and we'll be
 fortunate to have her!
 (smiling)

Jozef and Lech walk back to work, crossing the busy street
 corners of Krakow.

I/E. KRAKOW CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC - MORNING

Maria recites the contents of her latest letter to Marina, as
 she drops the envelope into a mailbox just outside the
 conservatory's Teatr Stary Building. She now climbs its steps
 and passes through a large pair of wooden doors, determined
 to claim the largest rehearsal room available for her first
 practice session as a Krakow Conservatory student.

MARIA2
 (in voiceover)
 Krakow
 September 9, 1926
 Dearest Marina,
 Today I'll walk through the front
 doors of the Krakow Conservatory as
 a newly admitted student, exactly
 as you predicted.
 (MORE)

MARIA2 (CONT'D)

My three audition judges consisted of violin professors, Jozef Kameritzki and Lech Bobulewski, as well as Edvard Penske, professor of piano and composition. I played the Chopin Nocturne that you suggested in your last letter.

Frederic Chopin's Nocturne No. 20 in C Sharp minor for Violin and Piano plays in the background.

Then, performed my much rehearsed 'Flight of the Bumblebee', which came off quite well. Finally, I was presented with an etude to sight-read, surprisingly composed by Artur, which I have played many times. What do you make of that?

Musing to herself.

As soon as I finished, all three judges raised their hand to approve my admission, and here I am, a conservatory student at age fifteen, just like you!

(sentimentally)

Always know that I am profoundly grateful for all you have taught me, and hope this letter finds you well pleased with my admission. I will write to you once classes begin in earnest. Until then, I remain

Your devoted student,
Maria

Finding an appropriate practice room on the third floor overlooking Szczepanski Square, Maria proceeds to rosin her bow to begin her inaugural practice session inside the walls of the Krakow Conservatory of Music.

INT. KRAKOW CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC/MILL NO. 12, IVANOVO -
CONTINUOUS

A montage comparing Maria's illustrious tenure at the Krakow Conservatory of Music, with her performances, awards, and graduation diploma, with the dreary, filthy, and perilous conditions endured by Anya and Polina at the No. 12 Textile Mill in Ivanovo.

INT. KRAKOW SYMPHONY CONCERT HALL - EVENING

Maria makes her professional debut in May 1929 with the Krakow Symphony Orchestra. Sitting in the third row is Maria's violin teacher, Artur Walawski, who is now a first-year professor at the Conservatory.

In the dressing room, moments before her cue, Maria recalls sage advice given to her by Artur over the past five years.

ARTUR

(voiceover)

Remember, Maria, that the first stroke of your bow says everything about you as a virtuoso.

Maria makes final adjustments to her dress in front of a large mirror.

I have taught you everything I know. The only thing left to teach you about is your mental approach to the spot on stage next to the conductor. Indeed, the manner in which you walk out the stage door and cross in front of the orchestra is crucial.

A knock on Maria's dressing room door signals that she has five minutes left until the concertmaster comes back on stage.

MARIA2

Thank you. I'm ready!

ARTUR

(voiceover)

Do you remember me telling you about a phrase I overheard years ago in Saint Petersburg by a young ballet performer, who was about my age?

Waiting for an answer.
See the music-

MARIA2

(voiceover)

hear the dance. Yes, yes! I remember.

ARTUR

(voiceover)

Cherish that thought!

(MORE)

ARTUR (CONT'D)

Finally Maria, remember that the violin is the closest instrument to the human voice. That's what attracts people to its sound, and those who play it well. So, sing your voice through the instrument, and let it soar to the very rafters of the concert hall.

Maria makes one last adjustment in the mirror.

MARIA2

I will.

ARTUR

(voiceover)

Good luck, Maria!

Maria makes her way down a hallway to the stage door, which is soon opened for her. She now awaits her introduction.

Maestro Zbigniew Gorzynski now speaks on top of the conductor's podium.

CONDUCTOR ZBIGNIEW GORZYNSKI

Each year, the Krakow Conservatory of Music selects exceptional graduates to perform with our orchestra. Tonight, I am pleased to introduce violinist Maria Cherkassky, who will play Dvorak's Romance in F minor. Would you please join me in welcoming Miss Maria Cherkassky!

Conductor Gorzynski applauds with the audience, while string players in the orchestra softly tap their bows on the music stands.

Maria sweeps across the apron of the stage in a stunning Chintz floral dress made by Anya Staryygorod, that was recently shipped to Krakow especially for the concert. Now, standing to the left of Conductor Gorzynski, she discretely tunes her violin with the concertmaster, then turns around and begins her performance.

Romance in F minor, Opus 11, by Antonin Dvorak

Receiving thunderous applause at the end of the piece, Maria swoons almost to the floor in an elegant curtsy. At the appropriate time, she offers her hand to the conductor as well as the concertmaster, curtsies once more, and departs the stage. After two callbacks, Maria places her violin under her chin and plays an encore.

Sonata for Solo Violin in B Flat by Artur Walawski

Following continuous applause, she curtsies once again, flashes a smile in Arthur's direction, and exits through the stage door, followed by the Conductor.

INT. ARTUR WALAWSKI'S OFFICE, KRAKOW CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC - MORNING

A few days later, back at the Conservatory, Maria meets with Artur in his office. There, they discuss Maria's future plans.

Artur stands up from his desk as Maria enters.

ARTUR

Can I get you anything? Tea, coffee?

MARIA2

No. Nothing for me, thank you.

Studying the collection of Artur's concert posters, framed and matted on the walls.

ARTUR

So, let's discuss your plans. Do you want to tour? I can arrange an agent to represent you.

MARIA2

Well, I am only eighteen. And...traveling by myself would be unsafe, don't you think?

ARTUR

(pondering)
Perhaps, but then again...

MARIA2

Besides, you're probably aware of the recent stock market crash that's all over the newspapers! No, I would like to teach!

ARTUR

(threatened)
Where? Here!

MARIA2

Heaven's no! I want to teach beginners. Young people.

(MORE)

MARIA2 (CONT'D)
Starting with the fundamentals,
right out of the gate!

ARTUR
Really?

MARIA2
Yes! Marina has done well for
herself teaching violin, has she
not?

ARTUR
Well, I...

MARIA2
It would be most rewarding!

Artur's secretary appears at the door.

ARTUR
Yes? Do you have something for me?

Secretary
Letters.

Walking into the office and handing them to Artur.
Pardon me, Maria.

MARIA2
Not at all...

SECRETARY
My, that was a lovely dress you
performed in the other night! And
you looked so beautiful in it.

MARIA2
Why, thank you. My best friend back
in Ivanovo made it for me.

Artur signals his secretary to leave.

SECRETARY
All the same, you were wonderful!
Ta-tah.

She departs.

MARIA2
So, what do you think? Young
children, say, seven to eight years
old?
(grinning)

ARTUR

(relenting)

I'll make arrangements over at the Young People's Music Academy. I'm affiliated there, you know.

MARIA2

Yes, I know! Oh, thank you. You've made me very happy!

ARTUR

I can provide you the space for free, but you'll have to collect the lesson fees on your own. Understand?

MARIA2

Yes. Uh, what do you think my rate should be? My father and mother will be so excited to have another income in the family. Yevgeny is eating so much these days!

Arthur leans back in his chair, surmising.

ARTUR

Well...you are a professional violinist!

Both laugh.

I would say at least one Zloty, if not two.

MARIA2

Do you really think so?

ARTUR

I do. Consider it done! You can begin immediately, on one condition.

MARIA2

Name it.

Standing up.

ARTUR

That you return to the stage. And soon!

MARIA2

I promise, Artur! Thank you.

They both shake hands across the desktop.

INT. YOUNG PEOPLE'S MUSIC ACADEMY REHEARSAL ROOM - AFTERNOON

That next week, Maria is eagerly waiting in a rehearsal room for her first student at the Young People's Music Academy. A young girl soon appears in the doorway.

MARIA2
Come in, come in!

The little girl enters the room toting a violin case.
Set your violin on the table over
there, remove your coat, and come
sit down with me.

The girl politely complies, then comes over and sits across from Maria.

Now, what is your name and how old
are you?

YULIA
My name is Yulia Kandibow and I'm
seven.

MARIA2
Well, my name is Maria Cherkassky,
and I am eighteen. I just graduated
from the Conservatory.

YULIA
That's young for a conservatory
graduate.

MARIA2
Yes, I know...

Now stand up and turn around.

Yulia stands up and turns around.
Alright, now turn and face me with
your hands at your side.

Maria closely inspects Yulia's frame.
Hmm. Now, come over here and show
me your wrists. First, the right.
Good...

As the minutes pass, Yulia repeatedly checks on her violin,
next to which sits a plate of homemade sweets and a jar of
honey.

Oh, Yulia, you won't be playing
your violin today. We have much to
discuss...

INT. MAHEN THEATRE, BRNO, CZECHOSLOVAKIA - EVENING

Nine years later, Artur finally convinces Maria to leave Krakow and take an open violin position in Czechoslovakia at the Brno National Theatre. This company regularly performs opera, ballet, and dramatic productions. Artur, who is on good terms with the Theater's Music Director, believes this to be the perfect place for Maria to cut her teeth in the world of performing arts.

The screen reads as follows, while Maria is spotted playing in the orchestra pit:

Premiere of Sergei Prokofiev's Ballet Romeo and Juliet, Opus 64, December 30, 1938, Brno National Theatre, Brno, Czechoslovakia. Suite No. 2, The Montagues and the Capulets. Maria Cherkassky, First Chair, Second Violin Section. Prevented by authorities from leaving the USSR, its composer, Sergei Prokofiev, is unable to attend the premier.

INT. SPINNING MILL NO. 12, IVANOVO - MORNING

While operating Machine No. 51, Polina tragically loses her right arm below the elbow after a mechanical jam causes a looming shuttle to fly out of its box at over 320 kilometers per hour. She is immediately rushed to the Infirmary, where a surgeon administers chloroform and properly closes the end of her torn limb. Unable to work, Polina will draw a meager State pension for the remainder of her life. In the midst of these events, Anya recites her recent letter to Maria.

ANYA

February 13, 1939

Maria,

I write to tell you that Polina suffered a terrible accident at our mill. A looming shuttle shattered and broke free from her machine, taking off her right arm at the elbow. Workers rushed her to the infirmary carrying her arm, but it was too damaged to repair. I have taken Polina into my small walk-up apartment, since she now has no income! Any payment she is due to receive will take months to arrive. Polina is in a great deal of pain, as you can imagine.

As for me, my wedding plans with Nikolai are on hold indefinitely.

(MORE)

ANYA (CONT'D)

Fortunately, he is able to save money for us from his air transport business, while continuing to live at home with his family. I tell you, Maria, that I am crestfallen by these events. Hopefully, more promising days lie ahead for Nikki and me. I remain confident of this, as I have no other choice. Until then, please keep me in your thoughts as much as you are in mine. I miss you and hope you are well.

Your friend,
Anya

INT. MARIA'S APARTMENT, BRNO - AFTERNOON

Turning the key to the front door of her Kozi Street apartment building in Brno, Maria stops to check her mailbox, only to find another letter from Marina, this one surprisingly postmarked Moscow. Maria quickly scales the stairs to her upper flat while closely inspecting both sides of the envelope. Once inside, she promptly removes her coat, sets down her violin case, and sits at the kitchen table.

MARINA

(in voiceover)

Dearest Maria,
I was thrilled to receive your latest letter. How exciting to hear about the premier of Romeo and Juliet! Your first exposure to a real live gala event! The excitement with which you described the score was very rewarding for me as a teacher.
Speaking of music, I am back in Moscow for my 40th class reunion! Can you believe it? I've caught up with so many friends and colleagues,

Marina is seen joining hands across the table in a Moscow restaurant with a well dressed, middle-aged man. Deep in conversation, he orders another pair of after dinner drinks from the waiter. After giving the waiter his order, she is heard to laugh vivaciously. Marina soon enters a cab outside the restaurant, along with her intimate friend. The Zil pulls onto Gorky Street and disappears into the night.

and purchased some new music,
including Suite for Violin and Piano;

(MORE)

MARINA (CONT'D)

an arrangement of Four Preludes for Violin and Piano; and an advanced manuscript I just received through a colleague here, of Three Pieces for Solo Violin, all composed by Dmitri Shostakovich, who, tragically, has come under severe scrutiny by the authorities. I'm told by friends that he and his family live their lives in a great deal of fear.

By the way, I saw poor Polina pass by my house in Ivanovo a few weeks ago. She remains very beautiful, even without her arm. I'm told that her sister Anya often works double shifts to keep up with the added expenses of caring for her. Though, I'll tell you, Maria, it hasn't stopped Polina from dressing in the latest fashion!

Well, keep up the good work. I love and miss you. Have to run and get this to a mailbox.

Yours truly,
Marina

EXT. GREATER CZECHOSLOVAKIA - CONTINUOUS

One month later, Germany takes control of Czechoslovakia. As Nazi tanks roll into Prague, Maria packs her bags for London, leaving Brno in a Tatra sedan driven by twenty-nine-year old Production Assistant Jakub Beran. Jakub has been hired by the Music Director of the Brno National Theatre to take Maria to Trieste, Italy. Their 650-kilometer route takes them to Hungary, skirting southwest along the Austrian border to Yugoslavia. From there, they head west to the Port of Trieste on the Adriatic Sea, where Maria boards the passenger ship Arandora Star to Southampton, England.

EXT. ABOARD THE DECK OF THE PASSENGER SHIP ARANDORA STAR - AFTERNOON

Strolling the deck, while Maria leans against the starboard rail gazing at the cliffs of Gibraltar, forty-seven-year old Peter Tallis discreetly approaches her.

PETER
Impressive, isn't it?

Maria turns to acknowledge the bystander.

MARIA

I'm told there are many monkeys
that inhabit this mount.

PETER

You're Russian, yet you speak very
good English.

MARIA2

Why, thank you. I took three years
of English at my conservatory.

Studying the gentleman closely.
And you are?

PETER

Peter Tallis. I reside in London,
Chelsea to be exact. And you?

MARIA2

Oh, forgive me.

Receiving his hand.
Maria Cherkassky, from Ivanovo.

PETER

I'm not familiar with...

MARIA2

It's about 325 kilometers northeast
of Moscow.

PETER

I see. Nasty things going on there!

MARIA2

Indeed! My family and I fled Russia
shortly after the Bolsheviks
assumed absolute control.

PETER

That must have been terrifying.

MARIA2

It was! My father told me, if the
White Army retreats, and they did,
we had to flee Russia immediately.

PETER

And where did you go?

MARIA2

Why, Krakow! I, uh, left my best friends and violin teacher back there...

PETER

And they're still in Ivanovo?

MARIA2

Yes. My two friends, they're sisters, were forced by the local Soviet to leave school to work in the mills.

PETER

Steel mills?

MARIA2

Heavens, no! Woolen mills, textiles. Ivanovo is known all over Russia as the Manchester of the East!

PETER

I see. Were your friends very young when they were sent to work in the mills?

MARIA2

Yes, sadly... You see, in Ivanovo, women outnumber men three to one.

PETER

Because the mills attract so many female workers?

MARIA2

Precisely! And to think that could have been me.

Turning her head away.

Anyways, my family remains in Krakow, and I am fleeing Czechoslovakia for England.

PETER

Let me guess. The Germans?

Maria turns her head back to Peter, and silently nods.
Are you coming from Prague?

MARIA2

No, further south. Brno...

PETER
Brno? Why Brno?

MARIA2
My violin professor from the Krakow Conservatory convinced me to take an orchestra job with the Brno National Theatre. He has a connection with its music director. I have been playing there for over a year. Now this!

Maria concentrates on the marble-gray Atlantic.

PETER
I read somewhere that Sergei Prokofiev's new ballet Romeo and Juliet premiered last year in Brno.

MARIA2
Yes! I was fortunate to be in the orchestra at the time.

PETER
Amazing!
(impressed)
You know, Prokofiev recorded one of his piano concertos with the London Symphony Orchestra a few years back at Abbey Road Studios. Shortly after that, he returned to Soviet-Russia with his family. I've often wondered why...? I heard you playing in the aft deck compartment the other day. I hope you don't mind!

MARIA2
Not at all. The captain actually gave me permission to use that venue, since my stateroom is so small. I need my space when I play!

PETER
I'll say! You are simply wonderful! Such technique and sound. Who was your teacher in Krakow?

MARIA2
Artur Walawski, but my original teacher was Marina Buriskova in Ivanovo. I started with her when I was seven and abruptly had to leave five years later.

(MORE)

MARIA2 (CONT'D)

She studied at the Imperial Conservatory in Moscow. Her technique, her sound, is absolutely breathtaking. Sheer virtuosity!

PETER

Well, it certainly rubbed off on you! You're great! How do you plan to make a living in London?

MARIA2

Well, I enjoy giving lessons to children, especially beginners. Lay down the basics. Start them off right, you know?

Peter reaches into the pocket of his suit jacket.

PETER

Nonsense. You should be playing with the London Symphony Orchestra. Here,

Handing Maria his business card.

take my card, and, once you're settled, give it to Maestro Henry Wood at Queen's Hall on Langham Place in Westminster. Better yet, call on him once you arrive in London. After hearing you, I'm sure he'll be able to find you suitable accommodations.

Maria looks over the card.

MARIA2

But, how do you know Henry Wood? I don't...

PETER

My family are descendants of Thomas Tallis. He was an English composer during the late 1500s. A contemporary British composer named Ralph Vaughn-Williams wrote a piece for orchestra about a decade ago entitled 'Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis', which was first performed by the London Symphony Orchestra and later recorded by them. At the time, I worked closely with composer Vaughn-Williams and Henry Wood on the Program Notes.

MARIA2

I am unfamiliar with this Vaughn-Williams composer... Not to mention, Henry Wood!

PETER

But, I am!

(smiling broadly)

You'll be doing yourself a big favor, Miss! Get a professional job, a place to live, money in your pocket. Besides, you may find the man of your dreams among the London Symphony Orchestra's many eligible bachelors. Unlike...

MARIA2

Ivanovo.

(nodding)

Yes, I know. You can be very convincing, Mr. Tallis.

Darting her blue eyes his way.

PETER

Then it's done! I'll send Henry a Telegram tonight.

Now looking at his pocket watch.

Sorry, I have an invitation to tea at four o'clock.

MARIA2

Thank you. I think you've restored my faith about living in London.

PETER

(half laughing)

Ironic, isn't it?

MARIA2

What's ironic?

PETER

Well, meaning no disrespect, but you're from the City of Brides traveling aboard the Arandora Star!

MARIA2

(puzzled)

So?

PETER

You're obviously unaware of the
nickname of this ship?
(pausing to grin)
The Wedding Cake!

MARIA2

(softly laughing)
Heavens, why?

PETER

Her colors from the bottom up! A
white hull wrapped in a scarlet
ribbon. Like a wedding cake...

MARIA2

Hmm.
(fascinated)

Peter gives Maria a tip of his hat, while she acknowledges his generosity by performing a brief curtsy.

INT. ADMIRALTY BUILDING, WHITEHALL, LONDON - MORNING

Two years later, U.S. Navy Captain Andrew Grantham arrives at Whitehall for a meeting with Rear Admiral David Tappan, head of the Royal Navy's Naval Intelligence Division (NID). A recent graduate of the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, Captain Grantham, just days ago, completed additional training on the roof of the Navy Building in Washington, conducted by a covert group known as the On-the-Roof-Gang. Officers who passed through this specialized and heavily sensitive program, contributed almost exclusively to the 10th Fleet's victory at Midway, prompting Royal Navy officials to call upon the Americans to lend them two such training recipients to assist British intelligence efforts at Bletchley Park, outside London.

Captain Grantham, wearing his uniform, enters Whitehall, displays his credentials, and is admitted into the building. He then takes an elevator to the third floor, where he walks to Room 319, headquarters for the Naval Intelligence Division. Showing his credentials once again, he is briskly escorted into Rear Admiral David Tappan's suite. A Royal Navy Lieutenant salutes Captain Grantham, as he is ushered into Tappan's office.

TAPPAN

Captain Grantham.

Rising to salute.

ANDREW

Admiral.

Returning the salutation.

TAPPAN

Please, sit down Captain.

Andrew proceeds to sit, while his eyes lock in on Admiral Tappan.

I'm very glad to see you. We lobbied hard to get you and your classmate, Lieutenant Robell, here. Of course Washington was hesitant to give you two up, but our Admiralty obviously pushed the right buttons, as they say.

Grantham remains composed.

We briefed Lieutenant Robell the other day, and swore him in as a Royal Navy Officer.

ANDREW

(perplexed)

Sir?

TAPPAN

Oh, it's standard operating procedure, and it's been cleared with your American superiors. From now on, until the end of the war, at least, you are an officer in the Royal Navy. On paper, you will be assigned to the Battleship HMS Anson. In actuality, your undercover assignment is to work as a cryptologist at Bletchley Park, northwest of here.

ANDREW

Yes, sir. Understood, sir.

TAPPAN

You'll be given a full briefing of the Bletchley operations this afternoon by my staff. Tomorrow, you will report to your duty station in plain business clothes. And, Grantham...

ANDREW

Yes, sir.

TAPPAN

A Royal Navy sailor will come to your apartment tonight to gather your American Navy uniforms. You won't be needing them again, at least until the end of the war.

ANDREW

Right, sir.

TAPPAN

They will be swapped out with Royal Navy uniforms over the next few days. Additionally, you are to travel an alternate route to Bletchley Park every day in the auto we'll be providing you with this afternoon, so as not to draw attention to yourself.

Tappan leans back in his leather desk chair.
Oh, and there's one other thing...

ANDREW

Sir?

TAPPAN

I see from your file here that you are an accomplished Clarinetist, graduating from the Peabody Institute in Baltimore, before attending Annapolis. We want to place you in the London Symphony Orchestra as a Second Clarinetist, to serve as further cover for your work here in England. With professional pay, of course. Satisfactory?

ANDREW

Why, yes. Ah, yes, sir.
(thoroughly surprised)

TAPPAN

Good. Once you're settled, you are to report to Maestro Henry Wood over at Queen's Hall on Langham Place in Westminster. He already knows who you are, and he's been cleared by Scotland Yard. I'm told their concert season begins in September.

As Tappan stands up, Captain Grantham follows suit.

Good luck, Captain. You have a very impressive dossier. Robust, to say the least! Your briefing on Operation Ultra begins at 1:30 in the Map Room, next door. Welcome aboard!

Saluting.

ANDREW

Thank you, sir.

Returning same. Captain Grantham turns and exits the suite.

EXT. MAIN BUILDING, BLETCHLEY PARK, MILTON KEYNES,
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE - MORNING

After a 55-minute drive from London to Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, Andrew is seen entering the main building at Bletchley Park in a business suit, carrying an umbrella, a newspaper, and a briefcase.

INT. QUEEN'S HALL, LANGHAM PLACE, LONDON - AFTERNOON

Twenty-minutes prior to his first rehearsal as a member of the London Symphony Orchestra, Andrew, seated in the woodwind section, is quick to notice an attractive woman across the stage, opening a violin case to begin her warmup exercises. Highly unusual, even in American orchestras, he mistakenly attributes the hiring of this lone female to a shortage of male violinists in war-torn London.

After another rehearsal the following week, Andrew passes Maria offstage, only to overhear an animated discussion she is having with a male counterpart. From her accent, Andrew concludes that Maria is Russian! Unable to safely approach her until she is thoroughly vetted by Naval Intelligence, Andrew continues to admire Maria from afar.

INT. REAR ADMIRAL TAPPAN'S OFFICE, WHITEHALL - AFTERNOON

Andrew is seen closing the door to Rear Admiral Tappan's office to discuss a personal matter. He is greeted with a wide grin.

INT. OFFICES OF THE NAVAL INTELLIGENCE DIVISION, WHITEHALL -
MORNING

Three weeks later, Andrew is summoned to Whitehall. There, he meets with a Naval Intelligence Division Investigator to discuss his findings regarding Maria. No sooner does the Investigator pull his report from a manila envelope marked Classified, a curious Rear Admiral Tappan quietly slips into the room, seating himself at the table. Andrew and Naval Intelligence Investigator Marcum immediately stand and salute.

TAPPAN

You can dispense with the formalities, be seated. Proceed, Lieutenant Marcum.

MARCUM

(clearing his throat)
Yes, sir. Maria Febronia Cherkassky was born...

TAPPAN

Just a minute! I want you to know that Lieutenant Marcum has found nothing suspicious in Maria Cherkassky's background, so you can dispense with any security concerns and see her socially!

ANDREW

Thank you, sir. That's very good news!
(exhaling)

TAPPAN

Indeed, the pleasure is all mine. It's Lieutenant Marcum you should thank. He's done a very thorough investigation, safe to say. Sorry, I wanted to hear his report before sitting down with you. In truth, I wouldn't miss seeing the expression on your face for anything in the world! That's the only reason for my being here.

Studying his watch.

ANDREW

Yes, sir.

TAPPAN

Proceed, Marcum...!

MARCUM

Yes, sir... Maria Febronia Cherkassky was born on July 8, 1911, to parents Dimitri and Tatyana (nee Romanova) Cherkassky in Ivanovo, situated 325-kilometers Northeast of Moscow, in the center of the Ivanovo Oblast. Oh,

Looking around.

an Oblast is a sort of Russian administrative division.

TAPPAN

Go on, Marcum!

MARCUM

Based on sound historical research, the land consisting of the Village of Ivanovo and the surrounding countryside, was given to a family of Cherkassky Muslim princes by Tsar Ivan the Fourth aka Ivan the Terrible in 1561, after his marriage to Maria Cherkasskaya, a Princess from the North Caucasus. Maria's father, as well as her mother, are descendants of a line of these Cherkassky princes. In time, the modern-day Cherkasskys had a son and named him Yevgeny. He and Maria grew up in a house of modest means, her family deriving its income from a commercial beekeeping operation, selling honey.

Since the time of Imperial Russia, Ivanovo has specialized in textiles. During the early 20th Century, the town had about 40 spinning factories, employing mainly female workers. Thus, the ratio of men to women in Ivanovo became unbalanced, currently reaching two-thirds of women to one-third of men. Aware of the problem that such a disparity could cause, Soviet officials established some machine-building factories to attract men, but that was not enough.

(MORE)

MARCUM (CONT'D)

In fact, so many rural women had flocked to Ivanovo seeking work, that in time it came to be known as the City of Brides, since it was believed to be the ideal place for men to find a bride among its many female workers.

Turning the page, Marcum looks over at his Admiral.

TAPPAN

Move on, Marcum!

MARCUM

Yes, sir... Musically gifted, she began violin lessons at age 7, under local violinist Marina Buriskova, with whom she maintains a close relationship, corresponding regularly by mail.

In November 1923, when the Bolsheviks seized absolute control in Russia, after the White Army's retreat via Archangel to the West, Maria and her family, fearful of Bolshevik reprisals against anyone named Cherkassky, particularly Maria, having the very same name as Tsar Ivan's second wife, fled Ivanovo by train and emigrated to Krakow, Poland.

There, Maria stayed in contact, by mail, with her friends Anya and Polina Staryygorod, her former neighbors from up the road in Ivanovo. Shortly after Maria's departure, Polina and Anya Staryygorod, 12 and 10-years-old respectively, were forced by the Local Soviet to leave school to work in the woolen mills. Mill Number 12, to be exact.

At her violin teacher's request, Maria soon resumed her musical studies with a talented Krakow teenager named Artur Walawski. She studied with him until, at 15, she was admitted into the Krakow Conservatory of Music, located in the Teatr Stary building. While there, she continued to learn under Walawski, who had recently been hired by the Conservatory.

(MORE)

MARCUM (CONT'D)

Graduating with honors three years later, she stayed on with Walawski, who was also affiliated with the Young People's Music Academy in Central Krakow. There, she gained valuable experience giving violin lessons to its many students, a skill that still serves her well, financially.

TAPPAN

Hold up Marcum. Captain Grantham, do you have any questions? Or, are you in need of a break?

ANDREW

No...sir.

Shaking his head.

TAPPAN

Proceed, Marcum.

MARCUM

In June 1938, Professor Walawski eventually convinced Maria to take an open violin position in Czechoslovakia with the Brno National Theatre Orchestra, where Walawski played violin as a teen. This company regularly performs opera, ballet, and dramatic productions. Walawski, who is on good terms with the Theater's Music Director, believed this to be a good place for Maria to begin her career in the world of the performing arts.

About this time, Maria reportedly received a letter from Anya, informing her that Polina lost her arm at the elbow in a woolen mill accident. As a result, Polina, unable to work, moved in with Anya, forcing Anya to postpone her wedding indefinitely. Tragic.

(mumbling to himself)

Gaining valuable experience in both operatic and ballet orchestral performance in Brno, Maria remained in close contact with her former violin teacher, Marina Buriskova, in Ivanovo.

(MORE)

MARCUM (CONT'D)

Off the record, Captain, I need to inform you that Soviet authorities were watching Marina Buriskova for some time after gaining total control of the country in 1923. Surveillance of her took place in Ivanovo as well as Moscow. Desperately trying to find Maria, as well as her family, I'm sure by opening Buriskova's mail they soon came to the conclusion that Maria and her family had fled Russia entirely. Giving up, they moved on to other royalty, so to speak. For the purposes of my investigation, however, the Soviets very interest in Maria's whereabouts, in and of itself, confirms her pedigree, and that of her family. Back to my report.

Finding his place in the report.

Not long after taking up her post in Brno, Maria plays for the premier of Sergei Prokofiev's ballet Romeo and Juliet, at the Brno National Theater in December 1938. Prevented by officials from leaving the Soviet Union, Prokofiev was unable to attend the premiere. Three months later, Nazi Germany invades Czechoslovakia. Maria flees the country, leaving her family behind in Krakow, only to catch the luxury liner Arandora Star in Trieste, bound for Southampton. While on board, she meets a middle-aged British Citizen named Peter Tallis, of Chelsea, who introduces her to Henry Wood, conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO), who, I'm told by Scotland Yard, was so taken with her audition, occurring just months before the war, that he arranged, through wealthy orchestra patrons, for her residence at Claridge's in the Mayfair neighborhood of London.

Maria walks through the lobby of the Claridge's Hotel carrying a bag of groceries she purchased at a nearby corner market. Walking into an open elevator car, the operator takes her to the fifth floor.

(MORE)

MARCUM (CONT'D)

Maria currently serves as First Chair in the Second Violin Section of the LSO. She also gives lessons to young violin students in her Claridge's apartment building on Brook and Davies Street. She remains single, keeping mostly to herself, with a few close friends among the orchestra members and their wives, with whom she occasionally socializes. By the way, that violin she plays has been passed down through almost four centuries of Cherkasskys. That's all, sirs.

TAPPAN

I've heard through my sources over at Queen's Hall, that Maria would be Concertmaster, were it not for the old boys network there. Henry Wood would really be going out on a limb if he ever tried appointing her to that post.

MARCUM

I would have to agree, if you don't mind me saying so, sir.

TAPPAN

Not at all. Fine job, Lieutenant. Really fine job.

ANDREW

Yes, thank you Marcum.

Tappan now directs his attention to Andrew.

TAPPAN

Marcum, did you happen to find out what Maria's favorite flower is?

MARCUM

Well...
(startled)

ANDREW

Pardon me, Admiral, but I hope to find out the answer to that question very soon. May I have a copy of your report, Lieutenant?

TAPPAN

You certainly may not! But, you are welcome to look at it anytime you want. That said, you are never to tell Maria about the existence of this dossier.

Pausing, while musing to himself out loud.
And to think you have a real princess on your hands, Captain!

ANDREW

It certainly seems that way, sir.
(fixated)

Marcum nods in agreement, putting the Classified envelope back into his courier's pouch before locking it. Admiral Tappan rises, as do Andrew and Marcum. They now salute each other and depart the room together.

INT. PAVILION THEATRE, BOURNEMOUTH, DORSET - AFTERNOON

It's Intermission during a remote concert given by the London Symphony Orchestra at the Pavilion Theatre in Bournemouth, Dorset, in late 1942. Andrew is seen taping a note to Maria's music stand while members of the orchestra are gathered outside the theatre around a coffee and doughnut canteen provided by the local Red Shield. Andrew's note reads as follows.

ANDREW

(voiceover)
Have dinner with me!
Andrew,
Second Clarinetist,
Black Hair, Brown Eyes, and Young.
Smile, if you accept my offer.

Maria eventually sits down in her chair on stage, readying herself for the second half of the program, only to see a note affixed to her music stand. Skimming it over, she sits frozen for a moment, then leans back, biting her lower lip. Over the next few minutes, until Conductor Wood comes back on stage, Maria goes through a series of hidden emotions. The orchestra's Principal Oboist soon plays a concert A, prompting Maria to adjust her Tuning Pegs and cast a lovely, decisive smile at Andrew.

INT. RAF BUS TRAVELING FROM BOURNEMOUTH TO LONDON - LATER

After the concert, Andrew boards one of the buses, provided by the RAF, for its 150-kilometer return to London.

Entering the side door, he proceeds to walk down the narrow isle, past occupied rows, before finally finding an empty seat. Bending low, he addresses the passenger sitting next to the window.

ANDREW

Is this seat taken?

MARIA2

Actually, it's available. Please, sit down.

INT. PAVILION THEATRE, BOURNEMOUTH, DORSET - MOMENTS LATER

Peter Tallis, while on holiday in Bournemouth with his wife, Griselda, noticed an advertisement the previous day announcing a concert to be given by the London Symphony Orchestra. Stopping to attend this event before returning home to Chelsea, Peter and Griselda Tallis attempt to greet Maria after the program. While searching for her backstage, Maria is already on board an RAF bus headed for London. Peter soon approaches the theatre's Head Usher to inquire about the LSO's return itinerary.

PETER

Excuse me, but do you happen to know if the LSO is returning directly home to London?

HEAD USHER

I can't say I know the answer to that question, sir, but I'll certainly find out.

The Head Usher returns after a short time.
Sir!

Peter turns around.

PETER

Yes?

HEAD USHER

Sir, I've spoken directly to our in-house Travel Manager. He informs me that the RAF busses carrying the LSO will be stopping in Basingstoke for dinner. Its three largest taverns are already preparing for their arrival.

Peter looks at his watch, takes Griselda by the arm, and departs the theater for the parking lot.

INT. RAF BUS TRAVELING FROM BOURNEMOUTH TO LONDON - EVENING

Andrew has finally settled into his seat.

ANDREW

I appreciate you agreeing to a dinner date.

MARIA2

It's my pleasure... You're Canadian?

ANDREW

Why no, I'm American. I'm on loan to the British Government doing consulting work in the communications field. I'm Andrew, by the way.

MARIA2

Yes, I gathered that from your note. Let's see, uh, black hair, brown eyes, and young...

ANDREW

(embarrassed)

It was bold of me, I know.

Maria smiles, as she turns her attention away from the window towards her seat-mate.

MARIA2

What's your last name?

ANDREW

Grantham, Andrew Grantham. From Boston, Massachusetts. And yours?

MARIA2

Cherkassky, Maria, from Ivanovo, Russia.

They formally shake hands, but Andrew asks no further questions of Maria, since he has already learned most everything there is to know about her.

I hear Boston is a quaint city, steeped in American history.

ANDREW

Why, yes, it is.

MARIA2

Is your office in London?

ANDREW

I wish! No, it's, uh, a little over an hour by car from London.

MARIA2

I see.

(exhaling)

Oh, it must be so nice to have a car.

(sighing)

You can escape busy London and go anywhere you want, war permitting, that is.

ANDREW

It is nice...

Maria turns once more to look out the window at the English countryside.

MARIA2

That's why I was so looking forward to this trip! The English countryside is so beautiful. I've been wanting to drive into The Cotswolds.

ANDREW

Forgive me, I only arrived here three months ago. The Cotswolds?

MARIA2

Yes. The Cotswolds is a popular tourist region approximately two hours west of London. I'm told it's beautiful. It's a place that's inspired writers and artists for centuries!

Andrew studies Maria, as she surveys the rolling fields. At once, he forgets all about the Royal Navy, Bletchley Park, Admiral Tappan, and the London Symphony Orchestra, concentrating only on the beautiful woman seated at his side. Maria now leans against the window and makes herself more comfortable.

ANDREW

Well, these are the South Downs. The western most edge, anyway, and they have a beauty all their own. Would you agree?

MARIA2

This seat is far more comfortable than the buses assigned to us during our previous remote trips.

Turning again to Andrew.

They had hard, wooden seats. Imagine sitting on them all the way to Swansea and back!

ANDREW

Uncomfortable?

MARIA2

Heavens, yes! At least these are upholstered.

Running her hand across the top of the seat, behind Andrew's neck. Within minutes, Andrew notices that the bus is slowing down.

ANDREW

We're coming up on Basingstoke for an hourlong rest stop. I understand from the bus driver that it's a market town with a few taverns. Not unlike The Cotswolds...

MARIA2

Hmm.

ANDREW

It'll be coming up on our left. I'm told the taverns are already preparing for our arrival. I'm starved!

MARIA2

You should've had a doughnut and coffee earlier, instead of lurking about my music stand.
(amusingly)

ANDREW

We're here! The bus is turning... Hey, I know, let's have our dinner date now!

MARIA2

Now? Here?

ANDREW

Yes, we can dispense with all the formalities! I mean, we are appropriately dressed, aren't we? Come on, let's get a table together...

MARIA2

Alright.

(uncertain)

But, I get to determine if the meal qualifies as an actual dinner. I have my standards, you know...

They look at each other and laugh, as they slide out of their seat to exit the bus, hustling to get a table. Soon opening the tavern door for Maria, Andrew walks in behind her and approaches the Proprietor.

PROPRIETOR

Welcome to the Austen Inn.

ANDREW

Good evening, a table for two. Ah, a booth, if you have one.

PROPRIETOR

This way sir, mam.

He nods to Maria, who is elegantly dressed in her formal black concert gown.

MARIA2

Why, thank you.

Now, both seated in a cozy booth, a barmaid approaches them.

BARMAID

My, don't you two look nice! It isn't every day that we serve members of the London Symphony Orchestra. We're honored. What will you have, mam?

Maria looks perplexed.

ANDREW

Oh, the lady will have a Sherry.

MARIA2

No. I'll have what he's having.

ANDREW

Are you sure?

Maria nods.

Ok, two Mackeson Stouts.

BARMAID

Excellent choice! I'll be back with your drinks.

The barmaid soon arrives with the drink order. Maria closely observes the contents of the glass.

MARIA2

My, this looks milky!

Andrew waits for Maria to taste her drink. After she does, a foamy white mustache appears on her lip. Maria quickly grabs for her napkin, but decides instead to simply lick it off, while laughing.

ANDREW

How does it taste?

MARIA2

(astonished)

Great, I love it! Aren't you going to drink yours?

ANDREW

Well, I usually wait until the stout settles down a bit.

MARIA2

The what?

ANDREW

When the pint is drawn by a bartender, it takes the stout a while to settle down in the glass. See?

Pointing to the side of the glass.

MARIA2

Well, it better settle down soon, here come our menus!

Andrew takes a pull from his pint, licks his upper lip, and smiles Maria's way. He now looks up at the barmaid.

ANDREW

Great! Let's eat...

After dinner, the barmaid delivers two more Mackeson Stouts to the booth.

BARMAID

Courtesy of the gentleman seated
across the room.

Maria and Andrew turn their heads in that direction. The gentleman discretely raises his wine glass to acknowledge them. Maria takes a closer look at this mysterious fan.

MARIA2

Why, it's Peter!

ANDREW

Who?

Nodding to the barmaid.

Thank you, mam.

MARIA2

Peter Tallis, the man I met onboard
my passenger ship to London.

Andrew appears puzzled.

Peter, the Impresario who
introduced me to Henry Wood! Look,
he's having dinner with him.

Andrew redirects his attention to their table, noticing Maestro Wood. Peter now rises from his table and approaches their booth.

PETER

Why, Maria...! How are you?

Maria stands up out of the booth and greets Peter, who kisses her hand.

MARIA2

I'm fine. Funny meeting you here!
Do you frequent this place often?
(smiling)

PETER

Not actually...
(embarrassed)

Andrew stands up.

MARIA2

Oh, I'm sorry. Peter, this is
Andrew Grantham, our Second
Clarinetist in the Orchestra.

PETER

Yes. I saw you perform today. Fine job. My wife and I enjoyed the concert immensely.

Giving her a waive.

Hi dear!

(sheepishly)

Andrew and Peter now shake hands.

ANDREW

Pleasure to meet you, Peter.

PETER

(somewhat uncomfortable)

Maybe I should explain. Can we all sit down?

MARIA2

Please do...

They now sit together in the booth.

PETER

Well, I'm on holiday in Bournemouth with my wife, Griselda. Anyways, I noticed an advertisement yesterday announcing your concert, so she and I decided to attend it before returning to Chelsea. We looked for you backstage, but you were already aboard the bus in the parking lot.

MARIA2

I see...

Maria raises her eyebrows and looks across the table at Andrew.

But, how were you able to find me here?

(inquisitively)

PETER

Just after you left, I inquired with the Head Usher at the theatre. He informed me that the LSO busses were stopping in Basingstoke, and that certain taverns there were preparing for your arrival.

MARIA2

And you just so happened to stumble
into the Austen Inn?
(sarcastically)

Wiping the corners of her mouth with a napkin.

PETER

Well, to be truthful, I, uh,
searched two other establishments
before finding you here...

MARIA2

With Henry Wood, no less.

PETER

Yes!

(groaning)

Hey, let me make it up to you!
Dinner's on me! Please, it would
make me very happy. It sounds all
very creepy, me following you this
way, but I've heard that you rarely
socialize, and...

MARIA2

So, you've been spying on me!
(amusingly)
Honestly, Peter, aren't you a
married man?

PETER

Indeed I am!

MARIA2

(mercifully)

Well, I appreciate you introducing
me to Henry Wood. And, my
accommodations at Claridge's, I'll
have you know, are simply fabulous!

Patting Peter's hand.

PETER

You're most welcome. I'm a big fan,
and I know real talent when I hear
it! Now, about me picking up that
tab?

Maria studies the expression on her partner's face.

MARIA2

I think my date has that covered.

PETER

Ah! Well, in that case, enjoy your drinks!

MARIA2

Thank you, Peter.

Peter returns to his table, almost running over the Barmaid. Andrew and Maria now hear the buses warming up in an adjacent parking lot. They immediately get up to use the lavatory. Maria returns and puts on her coat, drawing admiring smiles from the bar patrons, while Andrew, removing two souvenir matchbooks, pays the bartender for the dinner. He then places a generous tip on the table, drawing a smile from the barmaid. Exiting the tavern, he and Maria scurry back to their bus.

Ah, that was good!

ANDREW

Yes, it was!

Now stopping in the rain.

So, you are classifying our dinner tonight as an official date?

MARIA2

(smiling)

A first date, yes...

Maria and Andrew soon return to the same bus seats, riding back to London through the English countryside, in a warm, quiet, dimly-lit bus.

EXT. THE COTSWOLDS, GLOUCESTERSHIRE - MORNING

Six months later, after numerous dates, Andrew picks up Maria at Claridge's for a two-hour drive to The Cotswolds. Andrew places their overnight bags securely into the boot. Arriving in the height of Spring, they climb Cleeve Hill together to view the vast, lush fields of Gloucestershire. Later that evening, they register at an ordinary inn, ascend its narrow staircase, unlock the door to their room, and close it behind them.

INT. WHITEHALL, REAR ADMIRAL TAPPAN'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

With the Symphony's season over, Andrew now works nonstop at Bletchley Park, often sleeping overnight, taking his pick of the many cots available upstairs. Checking his mail slot early one morning, he reads through a Royal Navy dispatch from Rear Admiral David Tappan, summoning him to Whitehall.

Arriving there on-the-double, Andrew appears in Admiral Tappan's suite.

SECRETARY

He's waiting for you. Go on in, Captain.

TAPPAN

Come in, Captain Grantham.

Receiving Andrew's salute and returning same.
I have a new assignment for you.
Sit down.

They both seat themselves.

ANDREW

Thank you, sir.

TAPPAN

There are some rather fast moving developments going on at RAF Medmenham in the area of high definition aerial surveillance, specifically with regard to the enemy's design, production, and testing of what's known as the V-1 Rocket. Anyways, the head of our Central Interpretation Unit has requested your transfer to work closely with personnel involved in analyzing aerial reconnaissance photographs. Given your expertise as a Cryptologist, particularly your ability to decipher highly-complex communications, not to mention your unique talent of discounting misleading or outright diversionary signals, your addition at Medmenham, they believe, through stellar signal intelligence work, may help better pinpoint V-1 Rocket placements, sending Operation Ultra on an entirely new trajectory! No pun intended.

(gloomily)

ANDREW

None taken, sir.

TAPPAN

By the way, there's a young female Auxiliary Officer, just about your age, known as Abbey, who heads up the department you'll be working in. She believes she's on to something regarding experimental launch activities taking place near the German town of Peenemunde, in northeast Pomerania on the Baltic Coast. You'll be working very closely with her. I, uh, hope that doesn't complicate your relationship with Maria.

(winking)

ANDREW

I believe my relationship with Maria is very sound, Admiral. Nautically speaking, I have no intention of tying my line to anyone else!

(grinning)

TAPPAN

It's done, then. Not that you have a choice in the matter. By choice, I mean your orders, man!

(laughing)

Drive back to Bletchley, gather your things, and report to Medmenham Airfield first thing in the morning. They're expecting you. Good luck!

Both stand and salute each other.

ANDREW

I'll do my best, Admiral.

TAPPAN

That's all I ask.

Andrew immediately returns to Bletchley Park, gathers his effects, bids his colleagues farewell, and returns to London.

EXT. GROSVENOR SQUARE, MAYFAIR, LONDON - MORNING

Walking out of Claridge's, Maria soon enters nearby Grosvenor Square and sits down on one of its many park benches. Opening her purse, she proceeds to pull out two envelopes containing what appears to be letters from Ivanovo and Krakow.

More concerned about her family's wellbeing, Maria opens up the envelope postmarked Krakow.

TATYANA

(voiceover)

Dearest Maria,
 Events here have taken a turn for the worse. Not only is the Soviet Army making its way closer towards Krakow, Nazi officials have just announced the conscription of all able bodied males between the ages of sixteen and fifty. This would include Yevgeni. I can't imagine what the Nazis would do, let alone the Soviets, were they to discover his identity, and ours! Needless to say, your father and I are at our wits end. Taking measures into our own hands as much as we're able, we have packed travel bags in the event we have to quickly flee the area. Where we would go, I simply cannot fathom. Father thinks it best to head south through Hungary, along the Austrian border to Yugoslavia. From there, most likely to Turkey, of all places. Should this occur, I will write you once we are out of harm's way. Pray for our safety, Maria, and God be with you.
 Dosvedanya,
 Mama

Maria casts her eyes high above the tall trees lining the park. Placing both letters into her purse, she proceeds to walk alone with her thoughts. Maria soon leaves the park, travels up Brook Street, and heads towards Claridge's. She stops momentarily under its marquee, nods her head decisively, and walks through the entranceway, assisted by a doorman.

INT. SAVOY GRILL, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON - LATER

Andrew and Maria are seated at a window table inside the Savoy Grill. A noticeably flustered Maria is seen speaking to Andrew behind the glass, sharing concerns about her vulnerable family. The couple suddenly stand up and exit the establishment.

INT. MARIA'S BEDROOM, CLARIDGE'S HOTEL, LONDON - MOMENTS
LATER

Alone in her bedroom, momentarily forgetting about the Cherkassky family's plight, Maria reaches for her bag and pulls out today's mail. She looks over the letter postmarked Ivanovo and easily recognizes Marina's seal on the back. As she opens the correspondence, a piece of what appears to be silk, falls out onto her nightgown. She analyzes the material, rubbing it between her thumb and forefinger, and proceeds to read the letter.

MARINA

(in voiceover)

Dearest Maria,
I am married! An apology is in order for my not writing you sooner. At the time of my last letter, while in Moscow, I was being followed. No sooner had I placed the envelope into the postbox, I noticed someone suspicious out of the corner of my eye. After leaving Moscow, I noticed similar figures from time to time here in Ivanovo. Then, suddenly, they disappeared. Still not wanting to draw attention to myself, or you, I am just now mustering the courage to write to you! Forgive me. I saved all your letters since then, and have never forgotten you.

Maria gently bites her lower lip.

My wedding was understandably small. Georgi and I were married in the Church of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Spartaka Street. I must tell you, it was a wonderful day. The Sun shined so, so brightly on us! Enclosed you will find a patch I cut out of my wedding dress, specially made by Anya Sraryygorod. She is so talented and helpful.

I met Georgi at the Imperial Conservatory. He is Bulgarian, and a very accomplished pianist! He attended our recent conservatory reunion and agreed, then and there, to move to Ivanovo, where he serves as my protector and husband.

(MORE)

MARINA (CONT'D)

He works in the local school
teaching music and occasionally
accompanies my students. I love him
dearly, and have loved him since
the time I was a young student in
Moscow. I hope this letter doesn't
fall into the wrong hands! Keep
safe in London and please give my
regards to your gentleman friend.
Yours truly,
Marina

Maria, tired at last, places the letter on the nightstand.
She firmly holds onto Marina's silk patch and drifts off to
sleep.

EXT. SUNBURY-ON-THAMES, MIDDLESEX, SURREY - DAY

Maria and Andrew are in a Double Skiff on the Thames River,
just downstream from Sunbury. Andrew soon kneels to a seated
Maria, pulls out an engagement ring that he previously hid in
the gunnel, and proposes to Maria Febronia Cherkassky. As the
boat drifts by, its transom is exposed, revealing its faded
name:

Lady of Shalott

INT. MARIA'S APARTMENT, CLARIDGE'S, LONDON - DUSK

Within a week, Andrew is in Maria's apartment seated directly
across from her in the sitting room. He leans forward and
speaks.

ANDREW

Maria, I have something very
important to tell you.

MARIA2

(pensive)
What is it, Andrew?

ANDREW

We're going somewhere tonight.

MARIA2

We are? Where?

ANDREW

I can't tell you that! It's a...
gathering with some of my
customers. You mustn't ask anymore
questions. Do you understand?

MARIA2

Okay.

ANDREW

We're going on a trip.

MARIA2

Right.

ANDREW

On a plane...

INT. RAF LOCKHEED HUDSON TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT - NIGHT

After taking off from a secret RAF Special Duties Service airfield near Tempsford, Bedfordshire, a twin-engine Lockheed Hudson III transport plane leaves English airspace, flying high over the Channel. Andrew, Maria, and operatives from the Naval Intelligence Division; Special Operations Executive; and the Polish Home Army, along with two pilots, form the members of this night-time mission. Each member of the crew has been thoroughly briefed on Maria's background, as well as that of her family's. Maria, still in shock over her participation in this fast-moving operation, not knowing its purpose, quietly sits in her seat to the roar of the engines outside.

ANDREW

(teasing)

You're free to speak, you know.

MARIA2

What are we doing? Where exactly are we, and where are we going?

Andrew holds his finger up to his lips.

ANDREW

What I told you before still stands. Absolutely no questions, at least for now, anyways.

(informatively)

We're going to decrease our altitude very soon to evade any enemy fire.

MARIA2

Enemy what...?

ANDREW

Don't worry, after D-Day, much of the French coast was cleared of German anti-aircraft guns. This is only precautionary.

MARIA2

Oh, as long as it's only precautionary.
(sarcastically)

ANDREW

Seriously, this particular aircraft is known as Old Boomerang. Want to know why?

MARIA2

Why?
(inquiring)

ANDREW

Because it always returns home, safely intact, even after sustaining damage. Trust me, this aircraft recently came over to the Tempsford Squadron from the King's Flight. King George VI, himself!

Andrew places his hand onto Maria's and gently gives it a reassuring squeeze. They now ride silently over the next hour. Later on, Andrew shines a flashlight on his wristwatch, a signal to the co-pilot to get out of his chair and enter the fuselage.

Maria?

MARIA2

Yes...?

ANDREW

You are now free to ask any questions regarding this mission, within reason. Alright, the co-pilot is taking a break. Go on up to his seat and ask the pilot where we're going. He's in command of the plane, so it's customary for passengers on these missions to be personally briefed by him. Go on! Don't worry, he knows you're coming up there. His name is Josef.

Still unsure, Maria eventually unbuckles her harness, gives Andrew a smile, and slowly makes her way up to the cockpit.

Once arriving there, Josef taps his co-pilot's seat, inviting Maria to sit down.

JOZEF

Please sit down, Maria.

Maria sits down in the co-pilots seat and casts her eyes on the dimly-lit instrument panel. She now turns to Josef.

MARIA2

Say something else!

JOSEF

We're on an overnight rescue mission.

MARIA2

You're Polish!

JOSEF

Why, yes I am. For the purposes of this operation, you can call me Josef.

Darting his blue eyes at Maria.

We are flying to Poland to rescue your family.

MARIA2

What!

(stunned)

When? When...!

JOSEF

If everything goes well, we are picking them up tonight and taking them back with us to England.

MARIA2

But how will they know? Someone has to tell them!

(panicked)

JOZEF

Not to worry, Maria. Calm yourself. Members of the Polish Resistance already made contact with them two days ago, and are transporting your family to a landing area north of Krakow tonight. They will meet us when we land. Don't worry, they're in safe hands...

Maria turns her head around, only to find a smiling Andrew. She mouths some words to him and faces forward again, suddenly overjoyed. Josef soon takes up the intercom device to address the crew.

Coming up on two hours into the flight, people. Steady as she goes.

The co-pilot now returns.

MARIA2

How many hours do we have before we land?

JOSEF

A little over two hours...

MARIA2

And our speed?

JOSEF

About 250 miles per hour. These are 1200 horsepower engines!

MARIA2

I'll be getting back now, if you're done with me. Thank you, Commander.

JOSEF

Please, for the purposes of this mission, it's Josef...

Maria stands up and returns to the back of the plane, allowing the co-pilot to retake his seat.

INT. RAF LOCKHEED HUDSON TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT - LATER

Crossing into Polish airspace, Josef, with the assistance of his co-pilot navigator, now look for landmarks identified through aerial photographs taken by high-altitude RAF Mosquito aircraft just days before. Soon, while over south-central Poland, they locate the Pradnik River glimmering in the dark. Following the river north, they see its distinctive bulge outside the small town of Ojcow. Circling above the pre-arranged landing site, Josef looks for a morse signal from operatives on the ground. Now seeing flashes matching the designated codeword, Josef returns the code from the cockpit, visible on a red light located on the bottom of the aircraft. Almost immediately lights appear on a vacant field in the shape of an L, marking the improvised landing strip.

JOZEF

Alright everybody, fasten your harnesses, this could be a bumpy landing.

The plane makes its touchdown, traveling 250-yards to the final light, before turning around to meet the passengers gathered at the head of the landing strip.

INT. RAF LOCKHEED HUDSON TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT - MOMENTS LATER

During its three-minute stop to load passengers and luggage, members of the Lockheed Hudson crew are seen pleading with Dimitri to leave behind the three bee frames he insists on bringing aboard. Maria is soon summoned to intercede. She leaves the plane, only to find her father seated on the wet grass.

MARIA2

Papa! What's going on?

With his head down, Dimitri proceeds to shout over the roaring twin engines.

DIMITRI

My bees! They won't let me take my bees!

Josef now slides his side pilot's window open.

JOSEF

Come on! We have to go. Get in the plane.

MARIA2

Some crew members have told my father that he can't bring his bees aboard!

JOSEF

They're right. I ordered them to say that. We cannot have bees on board!

Maria approaches the front of the plane.

MARIA2

The Polish fighters who transported my family up here said my father could bring three frames with him.

JOSEF

I don't care! Taking bees onboard would seriously endanger this flight! Bees are simply out of the question. Come on, this is Nazi occupied territory! Let's get out of here! Now...!

Andrew finally appears at the passenger door.

ANDREW

Maria, we have to go! We're already two minutes past departure. Time is essential to our mission!

MARIA2

But father's frames don't contain bees, they're brood frames, containing only eggs, larvae, and pupae, encased in wax!

ANDREW

(resolutely)

If your father doesn't come aboard immediately, Josef is ordering the plane to leave without him! Polish Resistance will transport him back to Krakow.

Realizing the danger the current situation poses, Maria walks over to the small group of Resistance Fighters to have a word. She soon hurries over to her father, bending low to speak to him.

MARIA2

Father, England has abundant fields of Lavender, Bluebell, Primrose, and Hyacinth. I know. I've seen it for myself! The Resistance Fighters just assured me that they will find a proper home for your honeybees.

DIMITRI

Bluebell, Lavender...

MARIA2

Yes, Papa, yes...

Dmitri's brood frames soon become the responsibility of the Polish Resistance. In the moonlight, on the side of each frame, appears the name:

□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□

Within hours, the Lockheed Hudson III crosses over the English Channel, as the Cliffs of Dover vaguely come into view. Now safely over the coastline, the plane veers northwest for a time, then touches down in the early morning light on Tempsford's triangular set of runways, ending the Mission with the entire Cherkassky family aboard.

INT. PRIME MINISTER'S RESIDENCE, 10 DOWNING STREET, LONDON - MORNING

After V-E Day, Andrew, Abbey, and eleven members of the Central Interpretation Unit (CIU) Medmenham, are decorated at a secret ceremony inside Prime Minister Winston Churchill's study. Making the medal presentation is nineteen-year-old Princess Elizabeth of York, who waits in an anteroom, while the recipients' secret commendations are read.

CHURCHILL

...Flight Officer Millner's overall direction of the CIU, helped make Crossbow a major success against V-1 and V-2 Rocket attacks in England. The Kingdom is indebted to you, mam.

Moving on to the next recipient.

On to Royal Navy Captain Andrew Grantham. I saw you back in March playing with the London Symphony Orchestra. Fine concert, man!

Laughter erupts throughout the study.

Captain Grantham came over to the CIU last August from Bletchley Park. A talented Cryptologist, he soon became an asset to photo reconnaissance operations at RAF Medmenham. There, with the approval of Field Officer Millner, he worked with a linguist specializing in the German language. Captain Grantham was particularly interested in the German word 'start', which he was picking up many, many times in highly-encrypted signals intelligence. While the English word 'start' carries with it many synonyms, apparently the German word for 'start' contains a few more. This proved to be a game-changer in Crossbow's ability to find launch sights being assembled on the Continent.

(MORE)

CHURCHILL (CONT'D)

Of its many German meanings, such as, set off, opening, takeoff, starting line, and power up, Captain Grantham, with the help of his linguist, was most interested in its more plausible meaning of 'launch'. Even I didn't catch that one!

Looking over his bifocals, resulting in great laughter.

You're in good company, Captain!

(jovially)

By the end of January of this year, all ninety-six German launch sites were identified by Allied Intelligence, and soon destroyed, due in large measure to Captain Grantham's work.

Peering over the top of his text.

Sir, our Nation is indebted to you for your service. Congratulations.

Fine job. I'm sure Vice-Admiral Tappan is very proud.

Churchill turns and nods his balding head toward Vice-Admiral David Tappan.

Our next recipient this morning, is British Special Operations Executive Analyst Niles...

INT. PRIME MINISTER'S RESIDENCE, 10 DOWNING STREET, LONDON -
MOMENTS LATER

Young Princess Elizabeth enters the room and begins to hang individual medals on the recipients. Coming over first to Field Officer Millner, the Princess removes the Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) medal from a velvet pillow, and hangs it on Abbey's chest. After which, Abbey bows her head, as instructed by Buckingham Palace's protocol staff. Captain Grantham, is now approached by Princess Elizabeth, where he receives the Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE). He soon bows his head to this future Queen of England.

EXT. OUTSIDE SAINT MARY MAGDALENE CHURCH, SANDRINGHAM,
NORFOLK - DAY

In early June 1945, Andrew and Maria are married at Saint Mary Magdalene Church in Sandringham, Norfolk, where Maria wears a wedding dress made specially for her by Anya Staryygorod. Outside the church, Royal Navy officers raise their inverted swords to form the traditional Arch of Swords.

EXT. SNETTISHAM BEACH, SANDRINGHAM, NORFOLK - EVENING

After a midday lunch, raised glasses, and cake, Andrew and Maria bid farewell to their Royal Navy guests. Still dressed in their formal wedding attire, they soon drive to nearby Snettisham Beach, exit Andrew's car, remove their shoes and stockings, and run along the sandy shore, exchanging vivacious laughter in the mist-filled, dwindling light.

EXT. CHERKASSKY FAMILY FARM, CHELMSFORD, ESSEX - MORNING

One week later, Maria and Andrew visit the Cherkassky Family Farm in Chelmsford, Essex, just prior to boarding a passenger ship to Boston. While at the farm, Maria walks with Dmitri to his back lot, where his apiaries are to be placed. They soon sit down on a nearby bench.

DIMITRI

What do you think of my layout?
Yevgeni is building five apiaries
in the basement. He has been most
helpful setting up our business
here in Essex.

MARIA2

Very ambitious, Papa!

Placing her arm around his broad shoulders.
By the way, the Resistance Fighter
I spoke with before you finally
boarded the plane, the one who
promised to find a safe home for
your bees, well, he's a beekeeper!

DIMITRI

So, my bees are in safe hands after
all. That's wonderful!

MARIA2

It gets better, Papa. This man
placed your brood frames into one
of his empty apiaries.

These brood frames appear on screen, bearing black-stenciled letters reading:

□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□

DIMITRI

I see. But, Maria...

Maria places a forefinger to her lips.

MARIA2

Once these frames fully matured and your bees populated his apiary, he prepared a Bee Package and Airmailed it to the General Offices of the London Symphony Orchestra. Papa, this package...

Looking steadfastly into Dmitri's eyes.

This package arrived only yesterday. I brought it out with us today.

DIMITRI

Where is it?

MARIA2

I placed it in your shed. You've got a few more days before you'll need to place the bees into an apiary. And the Queen Cage, as well!

DIMITRI

How can I ever thank you, Maria?

MARIA2

Oh, Papa... The people you really need to thank are Andrew, his... business associates. And, of course, the Polish Resistance!

Dmitri nods his head, then stands up and heads over to the shed, where Maria follows him. Removing the latch pin, Dmitri opens the door, taking note of the box on his shelf. He now turns to Maria, takes her face into his weather-beaten hands, and kisses her on both cheeks.

DIMITRI

(emotional)

Where is your husband?

MARIA2

Come, Papa, he's still in the house
with Mama...

Dmitri closes the shed, sets the pin back in the door latch, and briskly makes his way to the house. Maria, pausing to reflect, soon follows behind him.

EXT. ABOARD THE DECK OF THE RMS FRANCONIA - EVENING

With the joint assistance of the American Embassy in London, Vice-Admiral David Tappan's Naval Intelligence Division, and the Department of the Navy in Washington, Andrew and Maria board the RMS Franconia in Liverpool on the evening of July 17, 1945, to travel to Boston. Upon their arrival on August 1, Maria is processed into the United States by U.S. Customs, where immigration papers, including a visa, are handed to her by an attaché from the local U.S. Consulate's Office.

INT. ODEON MUSIC HALL, MASSACHUSETTS AVE, BOSTON - MORNING

Two weeks later, while in downtown Boston, Andrew pins two announcements to a Odeon Music Hall cork-board, advertising private clarinet and violin lessons. After affixing his and Maria's flyers to the board, he browses other handbills, reading one that is of particular interest to him.

Andrew now walks down the hall and enters the central offices of the Boston Symphonia Orchestra. He is greeted by a receptionist.

RECEPTIONIST

May I help you?

ANDREW

You may. My name is Andrew
Grantham. I'm here for the open
Principal Clarinet position. Is the
Orchestra Manager available?

RECEPTIONIST

One moment... George. George!

GEORGE

Yes, Marilyn!

RECEPTIONIST

There's someone out here inquiring
about the clarinet position.

GEORGE
I'll be right out.

A middle-aged man soon comes out of his office and makes his way to the Reception Desk.

RECEPTIONIST
George, this is Andrew Grantham,
here about the open clarinet spot.

George and Andrew shake hands and exchange greetings.

GEORGE
Let's go back to my office. Thank
you, Marilyn, and hold my calls.

Motioning for Andrew to follow him, they walk down the hallway, passing formal portraits of past conductors, hung in chronological order on the wall. They soon pass by Maestro Kouznetsov's office.

Come in. Sit down. I'm George
Tolly, Orchestra Manager for the
BSO.

ANDREW
It's a pleasure.

GEORGE
After graduating from Harvard in
1915, I went to Washington to work
for Congressman Clement Dullas.
Three years later, I joined the
Orchestra, holding many positions,
until becoming its Manager in 1935.
I was also instrumental in the
creation of Tanglewood, the BSO's
Summer Home in Lenox,
Massachusetts... So, you play
clarinet?

Expecting something rather bland.

ANDREW
Yes. I took private lessons for
three years after graduating from
Exeter. I then entered the Peabody
Institute, and received my Master's
Degree in Musical Performance in
1937. From there, I attended
Annapolis Naval Academy and
graduated in the Class of '41.

(MORE)

ANDREW (CONT'D)

After one year of specialized training in Cryptology, I was placed on special assignment with the Royal Navy in London.

George appears stunned.

While in London, I auditioned for the LSO. Earning the position of Second Chair, I served under Henry Wood for two years, until his death. Then, under the tutelage of various interim conductors during the 1944-45 season, before coming home to Boston after V-E day. With three years of Active Duty under my belt, I have six months in the Naval Reserve to serve out, before separating altogether in January next year.

GEORGE

Poor Henry! Did you perform at any of the Proms concerts during your time in England?

ANDREW

Yes, sir, I did. When the war permitted, that is!

GEORGE

Do you plan on staying in the Boston area after separating from the military?

ANDREW

Yes, as long as my wife can find professional work here.

GEORGE

She's a musician, as well?

ANDREW

She is. Violinist...

GEORGE

And what is her pedigree, if you don't mind me asking?

ANDREW

I certainly don't. Her name is Maria Cherkassky, now Grantham. She was born in Ivanovo, Russia.

(MORE)

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Maria started her violin lessons at age seven with a local teacher, who graduated from the Imperial Conservatory in Moscow. Leaving Russia altogether towards the end of the Revolution, Maria and her family fled to Krakow. There, she began studying with International Violinist Artur Walawski, until entering the Krakow Conservatory of Music at age fifteen.

GEORGE

I've often heard of Walawski's European concert tours...

Prompting Andrew to continue.

ANDREW

After graduation she was selected to perform with the Krakow Symphony. Foregoing a professional career at such a young age, she stayed on with Walawski, giving lessons at his Young People's Music Academy in Central Krakow.

GEORGE

Is there more? I'm interested. Go on.

Motioning with his hand.

Wait a minute! Do you know what she played with the Krakow Symphony?

ANDREW

Yes, sir. She won't let me forget it!

Both men enjoy a good laugh.
Dvorak's Romance.

GEORGE

Beautiful!
(taken)

ANDREW

(leaning in)
Anyway, encouraged by Walawski to join a symphony orchestra, he finds an open seat for her, through its Music Director, with the Brno National Theatre in Czechoslovakia.

(MORE)

ANDREW (CONT'D)

This company performs opera,
ballet, and dramatic productions...

GEORGE

Wasn't Brno the site of the world
premiere of Prokofiev's ballet
Romeo and Juliet?

ANDREW

It was! Maria played it in late
1938.

GEORGE

Fascinating! You know, Prokofiev
was prevented from attending this
premiere, and had to remain in
Russia.

ANDREW

That's right! Anyways, Maria
maintains she was very content in
Brno, but Nazi Germany invaded
Czechoslovakia the following year,
causing her to once again flee for
her life. She made her way to
Trieste, Italy, by car, with the
help of a production assistant,
pressed into service by Brno's
Music Director. They made it
safely, and she soon boarded a
passenger ship to Southampton.
While on board, she was heard
practicing on the ship by a London
impresario on good terms with Henry
Wood. With Maria's permission, this
gentleman, sent a telegram from the
ship to Maestro Wood, describing
Maria's dynamic sound.

GEORGE

Any idea who this impresario was?

ANDREW

All I know is his name is Peter
Tallis. So, she arrived in London,
goes immediately to Queen's Hall in
Westminster, as directed by this
impresario, where she auditioned
for Maestro Wood on the spot.

(MORE)

ANDREW (CONT'D)

He was so taken with her sound,
that he hired her to lead his
Second Violin Section, and enlisted
a female patron of the LSO to
pledge a substantial sum of money
to set Maria up in a luxury
apartment at Claridge's, in nearby
Mayfair. She soon attended her
first rehearsal as the orchestra's
only female member.

Stopping to recall more for the overly-excited Orchestra
Manger.

I joined the LSO two years later.
Eventually, we began to date, and
I, uh, well, proposed to her late
last year in Sunbury-on-Thames. We
married six weeks ago, after V-E
Day, in Sandringham, Norfolk.

GEORGE

Congratulations...

ANDREW

Thank you. After a brief honeymoon,
we boarded a passenger liner out of
Liverpool, and arrived in Boston
two weeks ago to the day.

GEORGE

And now you're here...

ANDREW

Because I saw your advertisement
for Principal Clarinetist, while
pinning up flyers on the message
board down the hallway, offering
Maria and my services as a private
violin and clarinet teacher...
While I, myself, have never given
lessons. Maria is very experienced
in this field, garnering large
fees.

GEORGE

So, Henry hired your wife?
(envisaging)

ANDREW

Well, I didn't know her at the
time... But, yes, he did!

GEORGE

He was impressed enough to hire her to play in an all-male symphony orchestra. In stuffy London, no less?

ANDREW

(grinning)

Yes, he was reportedly very impressed with her virtuosity.

GEORGE

(pondering)

Well, I'm afraid that can't happen here, in parochial Boston, much as I'd love to hear her!

ANDREW

Right, sir.

GEORGE

(exhaling)

Let me speak with Maestro Kouznetsov, and we'll set up an audition date for you. I'm sure he'll check Over the Pond with his LSO contacts, to vet your credentials.

Looking closely at Andrew.

I'll have you know, that this is a highly coveted Chair, with all the makings of a hotly contested audition schedule. Nationally, that is!

Now standing, as Andrew takes the cue.

ANDREW

As it should be!

GEORGE

Thank you, Mr. Grantham.

They shake hands across George's large desk.

Leave your telephone number and address with my receptionist. It's been a pleasure speaking with you!

George shows Andrew out of his office, and accompanies him to the Reception Desk. He bids Andrew goodbye, walks down the hallway, enters Maestro Kouznetsov's office, and closes the door behind him.

EXT. TANGLEWOOD MUSIC FESTIVAL, LENOX, MASSACHUSETTS -
EVENING

One week later, Andrew is playing for the Boston Symphonia Orchestra as its Principal Clarinetist. He is featured with other woodwind members that evening in Mozart's Serenade in B-flat for Wind Instruments, Kochel Listing 361.

INT. ODEON MUSIC HALL, MASSACHUSETTS AVE, BOSTON - AFTERNOON

A few weeks into rehearsals for the 1945-1946 season, the BSO begins to work in earnest in preparation for the American premiere of Symphony No. 5 in B-flat Major, Opus 100, by Sergei Prokofiev.

Black and White photos of Maria directing violin rehearsals with the men of the BSO, are shown across the screen. Though not a member of the all-male orchestra, she has been hired by Maestro Kouznetsov to help them navigate their way through the harrowing passages of Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony. Performance of this work is scheduled for November 10, 1945. Maria is noticeably pregnant during these practice sessions.

INT. ANYA'S UPSTAIRS APARTMENT, IVANOVO, RUSSIA - EVENING

Two years later, Anya writes yet another letter to Maria. This one frantic.

ANYA

(voiceover)

January 31, 1948

Dearest Maria,

A Thousand FORGIVE MEs for not replying to your earlier letters. I have been trapped in the middle of a swirling turbulence. Polina, guilt ridden for denying me my wedding with Nikki, had become more and more sullen over the past six months. Last week, the unthinkable occurred! Polina had bolted from our apartment in the early morning hours, walked shoeless for half a mile in the snow, and plunged feetfirst into the icy Uvod River off a stone wall.

Hearing her cries for help, she was pulled out alive by two Angels of Mercy, who were passing by.

(MORE)

ANYA (CONT'D)

Hospitalized, Polina was released to my care days later, after which, we, as sisters, decided to part our ways.

The good news is that Nikki and I can finally marry. He has saved up enough money to buy us a beautiful house on Gromoboya Street, near the Church of the Presentation, where you, me, and Polina were baptized, mladshaya sestra! Can you believe it? We are so happy! We wed in June.

As for Polina, she is seeing a mechanic from the Mill. I have desperately tried to end this relationship, but she is determined to marry him. I feel so guilty for parting with Polina, but I would never trust her under my roof with Nikki in the house. She is still in love with him! She told me so during an argument we had one night. I could never be completely sure about Polina's faithfulness to me, as a sister. She's so sneaky and conniving!

Anyways, Lev, the mechanic, is not the man for her, Maria. He is much older, crude, and slovenly. Were she to marry him, and she will, I would be in fear for her safety every day. But alas, I can do nothing!!!

I am completing my wedding dress as I write this letter, and promise to write to you soon.

Your friend forever,
Anya

P.S. My dress is in the style of white chemise chintz.

INT. MARIA'S ROWHOUSE, BEACON HILL, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS -
AFTERNOON

Days later, Maria replies to Anya, while her boys are napping.

MARIA2

March 15, 1948

Anya,

I received your letter, and I must tell you, I cried for hours.

(MORE)

MARIA2 (CONT'D)

Tears of sadness for Polina, tears of joy for you! As you know, I live in Boston with Andrew and our boys, in a neighborhood called Beacon Hill. There, we rent quarters in a cozy Victorian rowhouse, complete with outdoor sconces. Many musicians from the Orchestra live close by with their wives and families. From here, we can see Boston Common. There is also a wonderful public garden nearby. I place our baby, Yevgeni, in his stroller, and walk with Dmitri in the Spring, Summer, and Fall, but must be very careful, since the streets in our neighborhood are very steep!

Our row house has ample room for a studio! I have twenty students now, and I'm making lots of much needed cash. My students range in age from seven to twenty-two. I love teaching. You know me, I'm very selective on who I take as a student. Much like Marina! Ha ha! Andrew, who has students of his own, remains with the Boston Symphonia Orchestra, and enjoys playing its many concerts, particularly during the Holidays and during the orchestra's Summer Season in Tanglewood, located in the western part of the state. Andrew's conductor Grigoriy Kouznetsov, who is Russian, has been kind enough to allow us to live in a small cottage on his Tanglewood estate, where we live for nine weeks every year. Anya, it is so beautiful there, with woods, the likes you've never seen before. And, I teach young students there, for handsome sums of money. Many of them are the children of wealthy families who vacation in the area and attend the orchestra's many summer concerts. Andrew watches the boys by day, and I get to do what I love most, TEACH. Then he's either off to rehearsal or playing a concert at night. Not bad, for a girl from Ivanovo!

(MORE)

MARIA2 (CONT'D)

I must run, tell Nikki I said
hello, and Polina, if you see her.
Please write me. It will soon be
June! And, it's been said, that A
June Bride is a Bride Forever!
Your friend,
Maria

Maria rises from her writing desk and looks out the window at a blustery Beacon Hill. Then, gently opens the boys' bedroom door, finding them still asleep.

INT. ODEON MUSIC HALL, MASSACHUSETTS AVE, BOSTON - AFTERNOON

With the afternoon rehearsal concluded, Andrew packs up his belongings and heads to the Odeon Music Hall's front doors. As usual, he stops to study the announcement board. He now removes a pencil from behind his ear and jots down pertinent information contained in a flyer that suddenly appeals to him.

INT. GRANTHAM FAMILY ROWHOUSE, BEACON HILL, BOSTON - EVENING

Three weeks later, Andrew enters the front door of his rowhouse, just as a young violin student is leaving. Maria soon comes out of her studio, followed by the boys. Andrew sits down in his living room chair and waits for Maria to join him.

MARIA2

My lesson with Abigail ended just
in time.

Placing her hands in her lap while waiting for a reply, Andrew remains silent.

What is it, Andrew?

ANDREW

Maria, we need to talk...

INT. V. SCHIRMER MUSIC STORE, CHICAGO - MORNING

International Conductor Aleksander Grenada enters the V. Schirmer Music Store on Wabash Avenue in Chicago. He is greeted by a store clerk behind the counter.

ALEKSANDER

Hello, my name is Aleksander
Grenada. I ordered music and I'm
here to pick it up.

CLERK

Ah, Maestro Grenada, it's a pleasure to meet you!

The clerk comes out from behind the counter to shake hands with Aleksander.

Your package is in the back. I'll get it for you right away!

The clerk walks down the aisle of the long, narrow store, to the backroom. He soon returns with a box marked Aleksander Grenada.

Here you go. Will you be in Chicago long? Can I interest you in other scores, perhaps?

ALEKSANDER

My wife and I leave for Salt Lake City by train tomorrow morning. We're only in town for a few days, visiting friends.

CLERK

Well, it's a pleasure doing business with you, sir. It isn't every day that we have an internationally renowned conductor, such as yourself, come through our door! Here's my card, if you need to order anything in the future. I'm afraid you won't find a music store like this one until you get to San Francisco or Portland.

ALEKSANDER

Thank you.

Studying the card.

CLERK

Are you planning on conducting Prokofiev's Fifth anytime soon?

Patting the box.

ALEKSANDER

I don't know. But I aim to find out. Goodbye!

Aleksander walks out of the store, box in hand, and proceeds to place it on the backseat of his borrowed car before pulling out into traffic and driving up a busy Wabash Avenue.

I/E. APPROACHING SALT LAKE CITY AND BOLDER - CONTINUOUS

The day after boarding a Chicago & North Western passenger train to Salt Lake City with his wife, Amélie, Aleksander intensely studies the score he picked up earlier in the week, while passing through some of the most exhilarating and awe-inspiring landscapes he has ever witnessed.

The Granthams are also traveling West. They are driving to Boulder, where Andrew will join the faculty at the University of Colorado, as their Principal Reed Instructor. Hired only weeks ago, he is excited to begin his new career in music education.

Meanwhile, five hundred miles away, the Grenadas are pulling into Salt Lake City. There, they catch a cab to bring them to their lodgings, previously arranged for by Salt Lake Symphony Manager Michael Sturges.

INT. SUTTER'S CAFE, DOWNTOWN SALT LAKE CITY - THE NEXT DAY

Salt Lake Symphony Manager Michael Sturges and Concertmaster John Bellingham host Aleksander and Amelie Granada at a private business luncheon given in Downtown Salt Lake City.

ALEKSANDER

This is a lovely cafe. It's so kind of you to host us! I must say, our accommodations are wonderful.

AMELIE

Yes, just perfect. And the flowers...!

ALEKSANDER

Michael, you really outdid yourself!

Michael waives off his new conductor.

MICHAEL

We're happy to have you!

ALEKSANDER

Tell me, where did you go to college?

MICHAEL

Concordia, in Minnesota.

ALEKSANDER

Ah! Really? What did you study there?

MICHAEL
Composition.
(frowning)

ALEKSANDER
Nonsense, that's most suitable to
your job. How about you, John?

A waiter approaches with the menus.

LOUIS
Your menus. I'll give you a few
minutes.

MICHAEL
Thank you, Louis.

JOHN
I graduated from Oberlin.

ALEKSANDER
Great...! Amelie graduated from the
Paris Conservatory, where she
majored in voice.

Amelie smiles, touching a napkin to her mouth.

AMELIE
(pridefully)
Yes...

Louis returns to take their orders. He proceeds to go around
the table, starting with Amelie.

ALEKSANDER
What brought you out to Salt Lake
City, John?

JOHN
My father owns a mining company in
Park City, about thirty minutes
from here.

ALEKSANDER
I see...

JOHN
He insisted that I do so for my own
good! I keep the company books
there. Honestly, I know he's proud
of my musical accomplishments, but,
deep down, he believes that all
artists starve!

AMELIE
 (laughing)
 Oh, my...

ALEKSANDER
 Well, if it's any comfort, John, my
 father wanted me to be a surgeon!

With the ice finally broken, Aleksander begins to quiz the pair.

Michael, how many musicians do we
 currently have?

MICHAEL
 Presently, fifty-five.

The salads arrive and are placed in front of each diner.

ALEKSANDER
 Thank you... And the caliber of
 their musicianship?

MICHAEL
 Well...

JOHN
 I've got this one, Michael! Some of
 them are excellent musicians, but
 others...well, let's just say they
 fail to meet the mark. Don't get me
 wrong, they thoroughly enjoy what
 they're doing. But, as full members
 of a symphony orchestra...?

Tilting his head.

They may as well play at home,
 behind closed doors!

MICHAEL
 Come now, John... Really?

JOHN
 You don't have to play with them!
 Out of tune, off beat...

MICHAEL
 Shh! There may be important
 symphony patrons in here.

JOHN
 (quietly)
 It can be very taxing, I'll have
 you know! Musically speaking.

The entrees arrive, breaking the discourse. The table soon digs into its lunches as the minutes pass.

ALEKSANDER

And the repertoire?

MICHAEL

Repertoire? Well, they play a smattering of classical, to be sure. But, mostly popular music, show tunes, Souza marches, that sort of thing... Oh, they've been working on Beethoven's Eroica for the past few months!

Aleksander looks at John, who drops his head in mock disappointment.

ALEKSANDER

I had no idea...

Looking directly at Michael.

MICHAEL

Uh, it's getting better and things will improve once we reorganize and, uh, rebrand ourself. With your expertise, who knows what we can do...

AMELIE

Well, if you don't mind me saying, my husband's maxim has always been to bring top-shelf, well-executed music to audiences wherever he conducts.

JOHN

Even here, in Salt Lake City? Come on, you've got to admit...

MICHAEL

That's quite enough, John!

AMELIE

Yes. Even here in Salt Lake City! This is as good a place as any. Why not?

Aleksander reconsiders the possibilities.

ALEKSANDER

She's right. Why, she's exactly right!

Thumping the table.

I've always wanted to build an orchestra of real musicians from the ground up. Brick by brick, from scratch!

(rallying)

I'm a perfectionist, committed to excellence, and I have come out here to ultimately transform the Salt Lake Symphony into a major American orchestra.

Michael and John soon become mesmerized.

On the train coming out here, I passed through some of the most exhilarating and awe inspiring landscapes I have ever seen! There is something about the American West. I, I can't put my finger on it exactly, but there's something about this place.

(resolved)

We can, and we WILL, bring beautiful music to this Valley. I'm sure of it!

Louis approaches the table once again.

LOUIS

Can I interest you in dessert?
Coffee perhaps?

ALEKSANDER

(smiling)

Amelie and I will have some coffee, two sugars and cream, please. How about you two?

Both decline.

What I've told you is exactly what I will tell our musicians this afternoon. Michael?

MICHAEL

(nodding)

Agreed. John?

John signals his approval.

AMELIE

Well, I'm glad we had this luncheon!

Aleksander pauses to sip his coffee.

ALEKSANDER

Michael, when you introduce me to the musicians this afternoon, be sure to give them my background. I know you're familiar with it, but...

JOHN

Well, I'm certainly not!

ALEKSANDER

But, jot this down.

Michael opens up his leather planner and retrieves his fountain pen.

After graduating from the Prague Conservatory of Music, I was a student of Bruno Walter during his tenure as director of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra. I was 26 at the time. After three years of studying with him, I went on to become the conductor of the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra; the Liverpool Symphonia; the National Opera of Argentina; and most recently, the Baltimore Philharmonic. I have also conducted periodically at La Scala in Milan and the Salzburg Festival in Austria.

John looks at Michael, then back to Aleksander.

In addition, while here in the United States, I arranged music for ballet choreographer George Balanchine in New York. By the way, this coffee is wonderful!

AMELIE

Yes, indeed...

MICHAEL

It's from Seattle.

JOHN

I had no idea...

Michael settles the check with Louis and soon follows the Granadas out of the cafe, leaving an inspired John Bellingham behind.

INT. GRANTHAM FAMILY HOME STUDIO, BOULDER - AFTERNOON

A few months later, Maria, waiting for her next student to arrive, plays a dramatically sweeping run on her violin, paralyzing the young boy in the hallway leading to her studio. The camera shows him through the window after he finally musters enough courage to enter the room. Maria soon bends down to speak to him, as the small boy proceeds to take two steps back, show her his arms, and whorl around as instructed.

INT. UC-BOULDER COLLEGE OF MUSIC AND THE SALT LAKE TABERNACLE REHEARSAL ROOM - AFTERNOON

Andrew dismisses his Music Theory class and returns to the faculty building. On the way back to his office, he checks his department mail slot for messages. Quickly flipping through the yellow slips of paper, he stops and studies one of them closely.

Date/Time: 04/19/49 1:35pm

To: Andrew G.

From: Aleksander Grenada, Salt Lake Symphony

Subject: Bruno Walter Referral

Tel No.: EM-57373

Note: Pl call Conductor Grenada at your earliest convenience. Thank you.

Andrew enters his office, sits down behind the desk, and reclines in a wooden clerk's chair. Ten minutes later, he lifts the telephone receiver from its cradle, and speaks.

ANDREW

Operator, get me Salt Lake City,
number E M-5 7 3 7 3. Thank you.

OPERATOR

I'll connect you. Please hang up,
and I'll call you back.

Andrew's phone soon rings.

ALEKSANDER

Hello?

ANDREW

Uh, I'm looking for Maestro
Grenada...

ALEKSANDER

Speaking!

ANDREW

This is Andrew Grantham, returning your call from earlier this afternoon. Did I catch you at a bad time?

Aleksander is standing at a wall phone in the back of a rehearsal room, located in the basement of the Salt Lake Tabernacle. This practice space consists of three black risers in the shape of a semicircle, enough to accommodate a small to mid-size orchestra. Chairs and music stands are equally arranged on these risers, with ample areas along the top row for percussion and string basses. It's around 2:30pm.

ALEKSANDER

No. Not at all! I have twenty minutes to myself before rehearsal... Anyway, I'm in the market for a Principal Clarinetist. So, I called my teacher, Bruno Walter, earlier this week.

Andrew looks over the message slip again. When I asked him who he'd recommend for the open position, he gave me your name.

ANDREW

Me?

ALEKSANDER

Yes! Do you remember Walter appearing as a Guest Conductor with the BSO a few years ago?

ANDREW

I do. He was wonderful!

Looking at the clock.

ALEKSANDER

Well, he was very taken with your performance in the Brahms Second, particularly in the Third Movement. He said, if it wasn't for you, the entire woodwind section would have driven off the cliff!

ANDREW

(embarrassed)

Well...I don't know about that!

(MORE)

ANDREW (CONT'D)

The BSO is a premier symphony orchestra.

ALEKSANDER

All the more reason for him to point out that deficiency!

ANDREW

I'm not agreeing with him, but I understand his, um, keen observation...

ALEKSANDER

I believe that's precisely why Walter suggested you, along with your gifted playing, of course! I need someone in my woodwind section to, how do I say this, right the ship.

ANDREW

(smiling)

Well, I have to tell you that I'm very busy teaching classes and giving private lessons. And, with a wife and two small children at home...

ALEKSANDER

I can appreciate the fact that you lead a busy life, Andrew. Really, I do.

Waiting for a reply. Musicians are now heard warming up in the background. First a trumpet, followed by two violins, a flute, then, timpani.

Andrew...are you there?

ANDREW

(dazed)

Yes, I'm listening!

ALEKSANDER

Sorry about the noise, we have a rehearsal at three.

ANDREW

And I have a woodwind ensemble to direct. I'd like to accommodate you, but...

ALEKSANDER

Just come, sit in for one rehearsal, and see where it goes.

ANDREW

I'd love to.

Andrew pauses, as other musicians begin to warm up.

I miss orchestral performance...

(musing)

But, duty calls, domestically speaking. Not to mention the wear and tear an eight hour commute each way would impose on family tranquility!

ALEKSANDER

You let me handle that part, Andrew! Besides, I have an idea that could shorten your commute time considerably.

Looking at the clock.

Like I said, just come, one time, before dismissing my offer. You know I'll find somebody else!

ANDREW

You're making this invitation hard to turn down, Maestro. I'll tell you what, let me talk to Maria first.

ALEKSANDER

Agreed! Talk it over as a couple, and I'll give you a call next week. Thank you for your time, Andrew.

ANDREW

You're most welcome, Maestro.

ALEKSANDER

Please, call me Alek. Goodbye!

Andrew hangs up the phone and hurries off to ensemble practice.

EXT. GRANTHAM FAMILY HOME, BOULDER - LATER

Soon after Andrew pulls into the driveway, he enters his house, only to find a young girl babysitting the boys. Through the back window he spots Maria in the yard, tending her bees. Leaving the house, he approaches her. Seeing him, she removes her protective hat, veil and gloves, wipes her brow, and walks over to him. During their discussion, Maria throws her equipment on the ground and places both hands on her hips.

INT. LOCKHEED HUDSON MARK IV FLIGHT TO SALT LAKE CITY - DAY

Andrew is aboard a Lockheed Hudson Mark IV, embarking on a ninety-minute trip to Salt Lake City. Two volunteer members of the Civil Air Patrol operate the restored World War Two aircraft, courtesy of the Salt Lake Symphony. A clarinet case is safely stowed in the cargo net above.

INT. SALT LAKE TABERNACLE REHEARSAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As promised, members of the newly incorporated Salt Lake City Symphony, as well as new musicians from the community and surrounding states, audition for Music Director Aleksander Grenada. These are blind auditions, wherein instrumentalists play behind a large black screen so as not to reveal their identity or gender. Auditions take the better part of six weeks, with Andrew serving as the final auditionee.

A 72-member symphony orchestra is soon seated, along with a surprising result: Close to half of its musicians are women!

INT. SALT LAKE TABERNACLE SANCTUARY - MORNING

The next day, Andrew helps Maria negotiate the steep stairs of the Lockheed Hudson. Upon arriving in Salt Lake City and departing the aircraft, she gives the pilot an affectionate waive. He slides his window back, returning the gesture. The Granthams soon arrive by cab at the Salt Lake Tabernacle, where Andrew asks Maria to wait upstairs, while he goes into the basement to speak with Maestro Grenada. Reaching his office, Andrew knocks on the door and is admitted in, closing the door behind him.

ANDREW

Sorry to interrupt you, Alek, but I have one more entry. A violinist from Colorado.

ALEKSANDER

Really?

Looking up from his paperwork.

Tell him to wait upstairs in the Sanctuary.

ANDREW

Thank you. You won't regret this...

ALEKSANDER

Oh, Andrew...!

ANDREW

Yes?

ALEKSANDER

I forgot that the rehearsal room is having a scheduled cleaning in a few minutes. Have Michael bring the blind upstairs and tell him to set it up in the Sanctuary. I'll make a call to one of the Elders. It shouldn't be a problem.

ANDREW

Very well. I'll be sure to keep the person hidden. Thank you for doing this, Alek!

ALEKSANDER

Doing what?
(smiling)

Aleksander returns to his paperwork. After gaining permission from an Elder, he makes his way upstairs and enters the Sanctuary. The blind is set up exactly as ordered. Now seated, Aleksander gives Michael the signal to proceed.

MICHAEL

Audition Number 100, playing a cadenza from Dvorak's Romance.

Maria, securely behind the blind, with plenty of room to move about, begins to play. Halfway through the audition, Aleksander stands up. The cadenza now comes to an end, and a very still Maria waits.

ALEKSANDER

Michael, remove the blind!

Wildly gesturing with his hands.

MICHAEL

But...

ALEKSANDER

You heard what I said, remove it!

The blind is removed, as ordered.
Who are you? What is your name?

MARIA2

My name is Maria
Cherkassky...Grantham.

ALEKSANDER
 Grantham? Why, you're Andrew's
 wife...!

MARIA2
 I am.
 (confidently)

Andrew comes out into the Sanctuary and discretely collects
 Maria's violin and bow.

ALEKSANDER
 Come, Maria, sit down here so we
 can talk.

Never taking his eye off Andrew. Maria now walks over to the
 front pew and sits next to Aleksander.
 Where are you from, and where did
 you learn to play like that? You're
 wonderful.

MARIA2
 I was born in Ivanovo, Russia, and
 began violin lessons with Marina
 Buriskova when I was seven. She
 graduated from the Imperial
 Conservatory in Moscow...

INT. SALT LAKE TABERNACLE SANCTUARY - CONTINUOUS

Over the course of the next few years, out-takes of concerts
 given by the Salt Lake City Symphony appear on screen, along
 with a series of Lockheed Hudson flights. During this time,
 Maria is appointed to the position of Principal 2nd Violin, a
 highly coveted and important chair within the orchestra. As
 part of her duties, she leads the Second Violin Section,
 using verbal commands during rehearsals; bowing instructions
 sent down by the Concertmaster; and subtle gyrations in both
 rehearsal and performance settings. All perfectly suited to
 Maria's orchestral acumen.

INT. GRANTHAM FAMILY HOME, BOULDER - EVENING

With the 1950-1951 concert season finally over, Andrew and
 Maria, tired of the endless flights, discuss their finances
 and the feasibility of Andrew leaving his post at UC-Boulder
 and settling the family in Utah. They are seated at the
 kitchen table, now littered with papers and bills.

MARIA2
 So, you're saying it makes better
 sense to move to Salt Lake City?

ANDREW

That's my take! With the salaries we're both drawing from the Symphony, along with new students we could most certainly pick up in Salt Lake City, we would easily exceed our current income here in Boulder. Not to mention eliminating our exorbitant babysitting costs.

MARIA2

About the lessons...I already have seven students there! In fact, a few more parents approached me after the concert last week! Besides, I wouldn't be surprised if a handful of my older students make the weekly trip to Salt Lake City, just to continue studying with me.

ANDREW

Me too, and I'd have no problem finding new students with all the popularity the orchestra is currently enjoying. I heard that season ticket sales could double this Fall!

Maria considers this possibility carefully.

MARIA2

A move now would be timely, since Dmitri begins school in September.

ANDREW

I hadn't even considered that!

Earning a stern look from Maria, who quickly relents. Andrew stands up.

I'm going to make a drink! I think better when I have a drink in my hand. Can I fix you one too?

MARIA2

Uh, sure...
(giddy)

Andrew makes them both a Tom Collins and sits down again, pleased with the idea of moving. Breaking the silence, Maria shrugs her shoulders, as she sips on the tart, bubbly drink.

I have no ties here, except for my bees, which I can raise practically anywhere!

ANDREW

I have my University colleagues...
but, truth be told, I have more
friends in the Symphony.

Taking another drink from his glass.

MARIA2

I, uh, don't think we have anything
more to discuss, Andrew!

ANDREW

(pondering)
Nor do I.

They take another sip, set down their glasses, and slowly
join hands across the table.

EXT. UTAH STATE LINE - AFTERNOON

Pulling a covered trailer behind their Ford Station Wagon,
Andrew, Maria, Dmitri, and Yevgeni, cross over the Utah State
Line. From there, they travel to Bountiful, about twelve
miles north of Salt Lake City, where they settle in the
scenic Wasatch Mountain Range. Known for its unique climate
and rich, fertile soil, Bountiful is recognized as an
exceptional place for gardening and, as fate would have it,
beekeeping.

INT. GRANTHAM FAMILY HOME STUDIO, BOUNTIFUL, UTAH - AFTERNOON

A school bus-driver releases his clutch, passing slowly up
the street to the next stop. Now fully pulled away, five year-
old Dmitri looks both ways, crosses the road, and enters his
house. Dropping his knapsack inside the door, he rushes down
the hallway, enters his mother's studio, gets down on his
knees, and quietly slides under the piano next to his
brother. Lying still on the carpet, they patiently wait to be
exposed, once again, to the most exhilarating music.

Today, Maria has hired a young pianist to accompany Jamie,
one of her more advanced students. Jamie plays his piece to
an exciting conclusion, after which, Maria cautiously
applauds.

MARIA2

Well done! I'm so proud of you.
(smiling)

JAMIE

Do you really think so? I kind of
got...

Maria lifts her hand to quiet Jamie.

MARIA2

Thank you, Roberta. You may go now.

Roberta leaves the room. Maria waits momentarily, then turns to address her student.

JAMIE

I want to thank you, Maria, it's a pleasure playing with an accompanist. But,

Looking at the floor.

honestly, how do you think I played?

MARIA2

Honestly? You played very well! We'll have time to discuss some of your deficits next week. There aren't very many.

JAMIE

I would prefer to hear them now!
(sullenly)

MARIA2

But, why ruin a good thing!
(laughing)
Next week! I promise! I wrote everything down on my pad.

Holding her writing pad up above her head.

See, less than one page! Go on now, Jamie. Go have fun with your friends!

Jamie grudgingly packs up his things, bids farewell to Maria, and stoops under the piano to waive goodbye to her two boys.

Don't forget the Pryaniki I made for you. It's on the kitchen table.

JAMIE

(now gratified)
Don't worry, I won't! Thank you, Maria...

Maria now bends down and peeks under the piano.

MARIA2

Come on boys, Papa should be home soon!

EXT. GRANTHAM HOME, BOUNTIFUL, UTAH - MOMENTS LATER

Maria wanders out to the mailbox. There, she finds a letter from Anya. Opening it on her way back to the house, Andrew now pulls into the driveway and exits the car. They stand together while Maria reads. A lock of hair soon falls out of the envelope at Andrew's feet. He picks it up, examining it closely.

ANDREW

What is this?

While rubbing the tuft of hair between his fingers, Maria bolts into the house, enters their bedroom, closes the door behind her, and falls across the bed, sobbing uncontrollably. Andrew, knowing something terrible has happened, remains in the living room, sitting quietly with the boys until dusk. He soon sets the lock of hair on the end-table.

Hours later, after Andrew has fed the boys and put them to bed, Maria enters the kitchen and collapses in his arms.

MARIA2

Polina was murdered three weeks ago
by her husband, in a drunken rage.

Andrew pulls out a chair for her, then sits down at the table, suddenly aware of whose hair he was holding only hours ago. Shaking her head in tears, she softly mutters in Russian.

Mladshaya sestra, mladshaya sestra.
Oh, mladshaya sestra.

Now casting her sorrowful eyes on Andrew.
Little sister.

INT. SALT LAKE TABERNACLE SANCTUARY - CONTINUOUS

Determined more than ever by events in Ivanovo, Maria makes her move by steadily climbing her way up the chain of violinists to Second Chair, directly next to Concertmaster John Bellingham.

INT. SALT LAKE TABERNACLE REHEARSAL ROOM OFFICE - MORNING

Aleksander finds the business card from V. Schirmer Music, located in his center desk drawer, and calls the store.

CLERK

Hello, Schirmer Music. Can I help
you?

ALEKSANDER

This is Aleksander Grenada.

CLERK

Maestro! How can I help you? I trust you made it out to Salt Lake City safely.

ALEKSANDER

Yes, we did! Do you happen to have the BSO's recording of Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony?

CLERK

Why, yes, we do. About a half dozen of them.

ALEKSANDER

Great! I only need one, but, possibly more later...

CLERK

I see.

One week later, the album arrives at the Grenada home C-O-D. Opening up the LP, Aleksander immediately plays it on his phonograph. Within minutes he retrieves his score and sets it on a music stand in front of him. Later on, he breaks out his baton to work out the adroit conducting motions for this work. On the reverse side of the album, members of the orchestra are listed, including Andrew Grantham, Principle Clarinet. At the very bottom, under the heading of Special Thanks, appears the name Maria Cherkassky Grantham.

INT. SALT LAKE TABERNACLE SANCTUARY - AFTERNOON

Finishing up a movement from a symphony they will perform next week, Aleksander calls for a fifteen-minute break.

ALEKSANDER

Alright, let's take a break.

Musicians immediately stand and secure their instruments.

(with intensity)

Make sure you're back by 3:15! I have something important to run by you. Andrew, may I see you for a minute?

ANDREW

Sure!

After setting the clarinet on his chair, they meet in a far corner of the Tabernacle. Moments later, while sitting in his rehearsal chair, Aleksander addresses the members of the orchestra.

ALEKSANDER

We've come a long way! From barely being able to get through the first movement of Beethoven's Eroica, to playing top drawer material.

Now pausing for effect.

I believe that we are perfectly positioned for greater achievements. This is the purpose of my addressing you today.

Aleksander now stands.

It's time for us to embark on the difficult and complex Fifth Symphony of Sergei Prokofiev, to not only make it the centerpiece of our 1951-1952 season, but to place this orchestra alongside the finest in the United States.

A murmur is heard among the orchestra members.

Among our ranks, we have an accomplished Principal Clarinetist and an equally skilled Second Chair Violinist, who each played a pivotal role during the American premiere of Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony with the Boston Symphonia Orchestra, only a few short years ago.

Unaware of this fact, the orchestra becomes more and more excited. Aleksander now signals for Michael to wheel in a cart from the wings.

Michael is distributing the music parts for the Fifth, that I purchased in Chicago, while on route here three years ago! Since then, I've kept them under lock and key, still in their original sleeves, not knowing if we'd ever be able to play them.

With glasses removed, he concludes his address.

I determined late last week, that we are indeed situated to do precisely that!

(MORE)

ALEKSANDER (CONT'D)

I became even more convinced,
moments ago, after speaking with
Andrew.

Looking over at Andrew.

Therefore, with your consent, I
will schedule Prokofiev's Fifth
Symphony for this coming November.

Aleksander waits for a response. Soon, the Violin, Viola, Cello, and Bass sections, begin tapping on music stands with their bows. Other sections soon join them in applause, along with some of the administrative staff. A rollicking ovation then erupts from the brass players, while Maria, knowing what the orchestra is up against, tightly purses her lips.

INT. MUSICIAN'S HOMES IN GREATER SALT LAKE CITY - CONTINUOUS

Upon agreeing to perform Symphony No. 5, Aleksander orders duplicate LPs and loans them out to members of the orchestra. Soon, the musicians are listening to the album in their living rooms, while closely following their parts. Eventually, Violins, Violas, Cellos, Basses, Woodwinds, Brass, and Percussion, where practical, are playing along with the record in their Salt Lake City homes.

INT. SALT LAKE TABERNACLE SANCTUARY - CONTINUOUS

During initial rehearsals, Aleksander concentrates on the Fourth and final Movement, painstakingly working out the difficult passages with detailed precision, while thoroughly enjoying Andrew's clarinet solos, which permeate the movement. Like in Boston, Maria is tasked with working with key members of the violin section, to navigate their way through the challenging platitudes of this work. Subsequent rehearsals tackle the easygoing, but soon turbulent First Movement. By late October, rehearsals for the Fifth Symphony are nearly complete.

John Bellingham, with his musical dreams now realized, can finally, at last, hold his head high as Concertmaster of the Salt Lake City Symphony. Soon, Aleksander brings his orchestra to surrounding communities as far away as Ogden and Provo, to showcase the piece. But, in Cold War Utah, it receives less than enthusiastic responses.

With the work now solidly performed, including three dress rehearsals, the Salt Lake City Symphony's inaugural performance of Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony is set.

EXT. GRANTHAM FAMILY PROPERTY - MORNING

With one week to go before the November performance, Maria receives a letter from Marina, which she reads while sitting on a stone bench adjacent to her apiaries, within the lush, mature gardens of the Grantham property.

Spare brood frames leaning against a nearby shed now appear on screen. On the side of each frame, stenciled in large black letters, is the label:

□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□□

Cherkassky Farms

MARINA

(in a voiceover)

October 17, 1951

Dearest Maria,

I received your latest letter informing me of your upcoming performance. Prokofiev. Very impressive! You probably know that he wrote his Fifth Symphony in the Summer of '44, while living at the Soviet Composer's Retreat on the ancestral grounds of the Cherkassky Estate. I'm told that Sergei Sergeyeovich wrote it in one month! I'm glad your audience will get to hear this genius composition, I certainly won't. Party Officials here have banned it, along with much of Prokofiev's music. Shostakovich's, as well. Those illiterate swine! They wouldn't know the difference between a Polonaise and a Polka. I'd go on, but I must be careful.

I notice Prokofiev walking by my house every day on the same path you used to walk, malen'kiy. Composers at the Retreat teasingly refer to it as Prokofiev's Grove, for his love of this wooded area. Anya walks this same path too, but much later in the day. I'm told she also stands alone on the Kharinka Bridge almost every night! Even in Winter. Something is very wrong with her, Maria. She left her house and moved back into her old apartment. Heaven knows why!

(MORE)

MARINA (CONT'D)

Leaving a husband and two small children behind - it's a scandal! Giorgi read that it's not unusual for the adult sibling of a murder victim to eventually abandon their own family. I've enclosed Polina's obituary, which appeared in the local newspaper.

As for Lev, that monstrous womanizer, he stood trial and was sentenced to death. I'm told by friends, that he wept so bitterly on sentencing day, that old Judge Petrov relented and ordered him to serve a life sentence in a Siberian labor camp somewhere in the northern region of Kolyma. A fate worse than death, to be sure! He can howl all he wants now, nobody will hear him. Thank God he and Polina never had children!

As for Anya, I fear for her. What a tragedy!

I must run. Please know, that I couldn't be more happy here with Giorgi. Give your husband my best, and hug the little ones for me.

Udachi, Maria.

Yours truly,

Marina

P.S. I understand through friends, that Artur Walawski has been made Artistic Director of the Krakow Conservatory of Music. Your alma mater! I'll know more later.

INT. SALT LAKE TABERNACLE BASEMENT - DAY

On the eve of the November 10, 1951, performance of Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony, Maestro Grenada, while seated in his office, is about to receive an anonymous death threat over the telephone by a disgruntled Utah citizen. It's a little after 2:00pm when the phone rings.

ALEKSANDER

Hello?

ANONYMOUS CALLER

Is this Maestro Grenada?

ALEKSANDER

Yes...

ANONYMOUS CALLER
 Perform that Communist's music
 tomorrow night, and you won't live
 to tell about it!

ALEKSANDER
 (furiously)
 Who is this?

Standing up.

ANONYMOUS CALLER
 Never mind who it is! You begin
 that symphony and you'll never
 finish it! Got me?

ALEKSANDER
 Look, whoever you are...

The caller abruptly hangs up. After careful consideration, this threat is shared with the Salt Lake City Police Department, Orchestra Manager Michael Sturges, and a handful of orchestra principals.

INT. SALT LAKE TABERNACLE SANCTUARY - MOMENTS LATER

Since Maria is the only orchestra member from Russia, Aleksander secretly confides in her to share this urgent matter.

ALEKSANDER
 Maria, I have a secret to tell you.
 I've already informed the Salt Lake
 City Police Department, Michael
 Sturges, and a handful of orchestra
 principals, Andrew included. You
 mustn't tell anyone else.

FADE OUT.

Aleksander finishes telling Maria about the threatening phone call.

MARIA2
 This is too terrible!

Maria shakes her head in disgust.
 How can this happen in the United
 States? Isn't America supposed to
 be a place -

ALEKSANDER

I know, I know! Such a beautiful piece, all set to perform. It's shameful.

MARIA2

(enraged)

This is something the Cheka would do!

ALEKSANDER

The who?

MARIA2

The Russian Secret Police, the Cheka! Please, I'm not feeling well, I must sit down...

Aleksander finds a chair. Maria sits down, trying very hard to find a way out of this morass.

Alek, could you please get me some water. I'm sorry...!

ALEKSANDER

Nonsense, it's my pleasure! I'll be right back.

Aleksander soon returns with the water. Offering it to Maria, she takes a few sips.

MARIA2

Thank you, Maestro. Ah, that's much better!

The two sit quietly behind the curtain for what seems like a long time. Breaking the silence, Maria shares certain events in her life with Aleksander. Pointing her chair towards him, she begins.

You must understand, that my family and I had to escape for our lives during the Russian Revolution. Everything we left behind was confiscated by the Red Army! You see, Ivanovo was given to my Cherkassky Muslim ancestors by Tsar Ivan the Fourth, Ivan the Terrible, in 1561, after his marriage to Maria Cherkasskaya, a Princess from the North Caucuses. My own father and mother are descendants of these Cherkassky princes. Yevgeni, my younger brother, and I grew up in a house of modest means.

(MORE)

MARIA2 (CONT'D)

Our family's income was derived from a commercial beekeeping operation, selling honey.

Recollecting her ordeal.

Anyway, in November of 1923, after forces loyal to the Tsar retreated to the West, the Bolsheviks seized absolute control of Russia. My family, fearful of Bolshevik reprisals, particularly against me for having the very same name as Tsar Ivan's second wife, fled Russia by train and emigrated to Krakow. There, I stayed in contact by mail with my friends Anya and Polina Staryygorod. Just weeks after my family left Ivanovo, they were taken out of school by the local Soviet and forced to work in the mills!

Biting her lower lip.

As for my first violin teacher, Soviet authorities watched her closely for many years. This surveillance activity took place in Ivanovo as well as Moscow. Desperately trying to find me and members of my family, I'm sure by opening my teacher's mail they soon came to the conclusion that we had fled Russia altogether. Giving up, they moved on to other Russian Aristocracy.

Pausing momentarily.

The Soviets' keen interest in my whereabouts, in and of itself, confirms my pedigree, and that of my family!
By the way, I'll have you know, that the violin I play has been passed down through four centuries of Cherkasskys. What's more, historians are well aware of the Cherkassky connection to Ivanovo, and, while the Imperial document gifting this land to us was lost, there's no telling what the Bolsheviks would fabricate if they ever got their hands on us.

Raising her blue eyes off the floor.

You see, my very name gives me away. Ivan the Terrible wasn't just any Tsar, he was so ruthless and cruel that his reign still strikes fear in the hearts of ordinary Russians to this very day...

ALEKSANDER

I had no idea!
(in disbelief)

With her senses now stirred, Maria stands up from her chair and slowly turns to Aleksander.

MARIA2

I believe there may be a way out of this situation...

ALEKSANDER

Go on!

MARIA2

(assuredly)
Since I am familiar with Prokofiev through correspondence with my friends and violin teacher back in Ivanovo, where he actually wrote his Fifth Symphony, it might help mitigate the threat

Now pausing and speaking very slowly.
if I were to briefly address the audience before tomorrow evening's performance...

ALEKSANDER

That's a wonderful idea! Yes, that's it!

Now standing and pacing the floor.
You can tell Prokofiev's story in, in your own words, using your own experiences!

Maria holds out her hand, as Aleksander's excitement builds.
That just may do the trick, that is, if the threat is truly real! In any event, this is most reassuring.

Now setting his eyes on Maria.
But, given this threat, are you, nevertheless, willing to stand on stage tomorrow night and share this...intimate testimonial?

MARIA2

Why...yes. Yes I am! And, I promise
to be brief.

Both laugh, reluctantly.

ALEKSANDER

So, we're agreed?

MARIA2

(nodding)

I'll put something together this
afternoon, Maestro.

Maria curtsies, as Andrew passes by.

ANDREW

There you are! I've been looking
all over for you. Is everything
alright?

MARIA2

It is now...

Smiling at her conductor.

Come on Andrew, let's go home. I
have work to do.

Maria gathers her purse, and the couple walk out of the
Tabernacle, hand-in-hand, into the Autumn light.

INT. GRANTHAM FAMILY HOME STUDIO, BOUNTIFUL - AFTERNOON

Back home in Bountiful, Maria diligently works on tomorrow
night's address. As she does, she recalls strolling along the
infinite columns of tall, slender birch trees, in an area now
known as Prokofiev's Grove.

INT. SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CONCERT HALL - EVENING

Standing on the apron of the Salt Lake Tabernacle stage,
Maria concludes her remarks, given just prior to the Salt
Lake City Symphony's inaugural performance of Sergei
Prokofiev's Fifth Symphony. Key moments in Prokofiev's life
are now shown in the film, including his fall from grace with
Soviet authorities for his Avant-guard, elitist compositions,
including the very piece that the citizens of Salt Lake City
will hear tonight.

While informative, the audience is swept away when Maria describes, in broken English, her beloved hometown of Ivanovo, the City of Brides, and the faraway childhood she was tearfully forced to flee so many years ago. Even Conductor Grenada is visibly moved, as he himself is unaware of the city's alluring, yet tragically devastating epithet.

MARIA2

Good evening. My name is Maria Cherkassky Grantham. I am the Second Chair Violinist with the Salt Lake City Symphony. Since I am the only member of the orchestra from Russia, I have been asked to briefly acquaint you with tonight's composer, and my hometown of Ivanovo, where he wrote his Fifth Symphony.

Sergei Prokofiev is a sixty-year-old Russian composer. He didn't always live in Russia. Shortly after the revolution began, he fled Moscow, traveling east by train on the Trans-Siberian Railway for Vladivostok, before emigrating to the United States. Here, he walked our streets, rode our trains, and enjoyed our lifestyle. He has never been a member of the Communist Party, and is nonaligned, politically. Prokofiev, along with fellow composer Dimitri Shostakovich, has recently endured harsh criticism from Russian cultural authorities for his formalist bourgeois tendencies. He is now forced to produce simpler, more appealing music for the masses. What's more, much of Prokofiev's music is now banned in Russia.

In addition to this humiliating censure, Prokofiev's estranged wife was arrested for espionage and is serving a 20-year sentence in a Siberian labor camp.

As previously noted, Prokofiev wrote the symphony you are about to hear in my hometown of Ivanovo, 325 kilometers northeast of Moscow, at the USSR Composers' Retreat.

(MORE)

MARIA2 (CONT'D)

There, he endeavored to compose a hymn glorifying the grandeur of the human spirit, celebrating its strength, generosity, and purity of heart, alive in a free and happy World.

Maria pauses momentarily.

Now, if you'll permit me, a few words about my hometown. The Village of Ivanovo and the surrounding countryside, was given to a family of Cherkassky Muslim princes by Tsar Ivan the Fourth, Ivan the Terrible, in 1561, after his marriage to my namesake, Maria Cherkasskaya, a Princess from the North Caucasus. Since the time of Imperial Russia, Ivanovo has specialized in textiles. During the early 20th Century, the town had about 40 spinning factories, attracting mostly female workers. As a result, the ratio of men to women in Ivanovo became unbalanced, at one point, reaching as much as two-thirds of women to one-third of men. Aware of the problem that such a disparity could cause, Soviet officials established some machine-building factories to attract men, but, sadly, this was not enough. In fact, so many rural women had flocked to Ivanovo seeking work, that in time it came to be known as the City of Brides, since it was believed to be the ideal place for men to find a bride among its many female workers.

A courageous Maria now concludes this extraordinary account.

Yet, for all the allure this moniker holds, there is a tragic side to the City of Brides, scrawled across the sad and lonely headstones of countless, innocent women and girls.

(MORE)

MARIA2 (CONT'D)

My first violin teacher, Marina Buriskova, always said that eligible men in Ivanovo are a premium, and the ones who remain available after a long period of time, are to be avoided at all costs! She insisted that Ivanovo offers women little promise. And, that someday, I would learn the truth of it, if I wasn't careful. She often told me that she would never settle for anyone, unless he was a man of means and character.

Many couples in the audience turn to look at each other.

The only reason she returned to Ivanovo, after graduating from the Moscow Imperial Conservatory, was to care for her father, who is now deceased. She endured many, many years of spinsterhood.

It is said, in Russia, that you must be married by thirty. Well, I married when I was almost thirty-four, and I am very happy! So is my newly married violin teacher, Marina, and her husband, Giorgi, from Bulgaria.

As the Russian Poet, Alexander Pushkin, once wrote:

The less we show our love to a woman,
Or please her less, and neglect our duty,
The more we trap and ruin her surely
In the flattering toils of philandry.

The Tabernacle audience is at once changed, and any animosity, save from one perhaps, shared among the Salt Lake City faithful, is suddenly quelled and ready for this evening's performance.

Finally, enjoy this illustrious piece, and hold on to your seats!
Thank you.

Applause is heard throughout the concert hall as the house lights begin to dim.

EXT. KHARINKA BRIDGE OUTSIDE IVANOVO - SAME TIME

That evening, Moscow-Standard-Time, a guilt-ridden Anya, still haunted by Polina's violent death, sits on the edge of a stone bridge high over the Kharinka River, just before dawn. She quickly drops feetfirst into its icy depths, never to surface, leaving behind a husband and two small children.

INT. SALT LAKE TABERNACLE CONCERT HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Sergei Prokofiev Symphony No. 5, Opus 100, Final Movement

Her words work! The entire Fifth Symphony is performed perfectly, without any disruption, much to Maestro Grenada's relief. After the Fifth Symphony's triumphal ending, the audience immediately leaps to its feet, giving the orchestra an enthusiastic standing ovation. After his initial bow, a beaming Aleksander Grenada turns around, pointing his baton at various soloists, inviting them to rise, followed by each section in reverse order of prominence within this illustrious piece. Once the entire orchestra is standing, Aleksander turns and shakes the hand of not only his Concertmaster, but, in unprecedented fashion, his Second Chair Violinist, as well.

EPILOGUE

Sergei Sergeyeovich Prokofiev died of a stroke on March 5, 1953, on the very same day and hour as Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin.

Not a flower was to be had at Prokofiev's sparsely attended funeral. The Great Leader's black-crape coffin received every flower that Moscow could render.

Maria's parents, Dmitri and Tatyana, died in the early 1960s, leaving the family business to their son, Yevgeni, who continued to sell Cherkassky Farms Honey, with his wife, all over England.

After 30 seasons with the Salt Lake City Symphony, Maria and Andrew retired in 1979, to spend their time in Bountiful.

Andrew died in 1984, and is laid to rest in a hillside cemetery just east of Bountiful, where Maria faithfully tends his grave with fresh flowers from her lush, pollinated gardens.

For her part, Maria, now alone in an empty house, walks daily among the tall, silent pines of the Wasatch Mountain Range, when not tending to her bees.

Her only wish is to somehow return to Ivanovo one day, in a free and open Russia, to visit the last resting place of her friends, Anya and Polina Staryygorod, and retrace her footsteps through Prokofiev's Grove.

Granted this wish, Maria returned to Ivanovo after the fall of the Soviet Union, as Honorary Chairwoman of the City of Brides Day Parade on May 28, 1992. There, she reunited with her violin teacher Marina Buriskova, and her husband.

In 2016, some 68 years after its inception, the Salt Lake City Symphony appointed Madeline Arden to be its first female Concertmaster.

THE END