

# THE LAST STATION

Based on the Novel by  
Jan Parini

Screenplay by  
Michael Hoffman

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

Leo Tolstoy- Anna Karenina

1 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. DAY. 1

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

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

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

SOFYA

Why are we slowing down?

No one responds. Slower. Slower.

SOFYA

We're stopping. Why are we stopping?

SASHA

I don't know, mother. No idea.

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

SOFYA

Excuse me, why has the train stopped?

CONDUCTOR

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

In the distance we can here voices.

VOICES (O.S.)

Long live Tolstoy! Long live the old warrior!

SOFYA

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

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

SOFYA

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

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

TOLSTOY

I have seen your banner. And I've heard what you say. You think I'm the hope of Russia, do you? Well, that's not true. You are the hope of Russia. The hope of all the world. You say, you want a new way to live? Well, you are not gonna find it making a fuss over me. So, I suggest that you get on with your work and let a poor old man get on with his.

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

3 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. DAY.

3

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

VALENTIN

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

The train pulls away into the distance.

TITLE OVER BLACK: SPRING 1910

4 EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. DAWN.

4

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SOFYA

Darling.

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

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

7 OMITTED 7

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

CHERTKOV

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

VALENTIN

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

CHERTKOV

He despises them, in fact...

Chertkov reaches for a small tin of moustache wax.

CHERTKOV

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

VALENTIN

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

Chertkov nods his approval, begins to worry his moustache.

CHERTKOV

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

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

CHERTKOV

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

It's difficult to contain himself.

VALENTIN

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

CHERTKOV

(smiling)

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

VALENTIN

We?

They both laugh.

CHERTKOV

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

VALENTIN

In the name of truth and freedom.

CHERTKOV

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

VALENTIN

Enemies?

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

TWO MEN IN PLAINCLOTHES standing in the street below.

CHERTKOV

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

(beat)

Well, one doesn't like to come between married people whatever the circumstances, but her dogged attachment to private property, her public criticism of our movement...

(MORE)

CHERTKOV (cont'd)

(beat)

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

Chertkov returns to the desk.

CHERTKOV

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

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

CHERTKOV

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

Valentin looks at him, quizzical.

CHERTKOV

Sofya Andreyevna does not respect his privacy.

VALENTIN

She wouldn't open his private correspondence...

Chertkov raises an eyebrow. An ominous silence.

CHERTKOV

I have another task for you, my dear.

VALENTIN

Please.

CHERTKOV

You'll keep a diary for me.

He hands Valentin a notebook.

CHERTKOV

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

(beat)

Anything Sofya Andreyevna says.

VALENTIN

Anything?

CHERTKOV

She's very, very dangerous.

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

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

CHERTKOV

Godspeed, my boy.

Valentin makes his way to the droshky that awaits him.

CHERTKOV

And remember what I said.

He turns back to the dark figure in the doorway.

CHERTKOV

Write everything down! Go!

10 EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. GROUNDS. MORNING. 10

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

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

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

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

TOLSTOY

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

DUSHAN

Let me finish.

TOLSTOY

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

DUSHAN

Your pulse is my responsibility...

(MORE)



DUSHAN (cont'd)  
 and if you must ride, I insist  
 you wear a coat. Even the sun is  
 cold today.

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

SOFYA  
 This is impossible! It really is!  
 These people are parasites!  
 Look...  
 (reading)  
 "Countess Tolstoy has become  
 estranged from her husband. They  
 barely speak."

She throws the paper on the floor.

SOFYA  
 You know who spreads all this  
 rubbish....

She opens another paper, a French daily.

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

TOLSTOY  
 (smiling)  
 Peut-etre. You think that's  
 inaccurate?

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

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

SOFYA  
 What are you doing? Don't do  
 that.

TOLSTOY  
 (smiling)  
 Dushan Petrovich, you're  
 scribbling again?

Tolstoy moves with energy and purpose toward the door.

SOFYA  
 Darling, where are you going?

TOLSTOY

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

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

SOFYA

Leovochka, why do you insist on dressing like that.

TOLSTOY

What do you mean?

SOFYA

Like the man who looks after the sheep.

TOLSTOY

It's not meant to offend you.

SOFYA

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

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

SOFYA

Oh darling, I have something else to say.

TOLSTOY (O.S.)

I doubt it not, my dear.

DUSHAN

He's forgotten his coat.

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

DUSHAN (O.S.)

Count Tolstoy, you've forgotten your coat.

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

12

EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. GROUNDS. DAY.

12

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

DUSHAN

Let him walk. Let him walk.

JOURNALIST

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

TOLSTOY

These people are bandits.

DUSHAN

I said, let him walk.

TOLSTOY

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

JOURNALIST

So Gusev is innocent?

TOLSTOY

(nods)

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

A young peasant shouts from the crowd.

PEASANT

God bless you, Tolstoy. Thank you.

DUSHAN

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

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

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

SASHA

Papa.

TOLSTOY

Sasha!

SASHA

Did you ride this morning?

A small crowd collects to watch father and daughter embrace, kiss.

A WIDE SHOT of the riders- cutting around we are

13 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. ENTRY/STAIR. CONTINUOUS. 13

Sofya watches her husband and daughter ride away.

14 EXT. RIVER VALLEY. DAY 14

A steam train snakes through a broad valley.

15 INT. TRAIN CARRIAGE. DAY. 15

Valentin in his buttoned up suit looks a little out of place in the overcrowded third class carriage. He writes in the diary given him by Chertkov. He glances up to see, on the bench across, a young mother taking out her breast to nurse her baby. He blushes, doesn't know where to look. An old peasant catches his eye, winks at him, laughs.

16 EXT. TELYATINKI. DUSK. 16

Seven miles from Tolstoy's estate, this is Telyatinki, a communal center created by Chertkov dedicated to the study and practice of Tolstoyism.

SERGEYENKO

Telyatinki was created by Vladimir Grigorevich as a center for the movement. Just last week we had a visitor from India. We talked to the group about the healing properties of cobra venom.

VALENTIN

Oh, goodness..It's a beautiful day.

SERGEYENKO

Yes, but we will pay for it.

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

SERGEYENKO

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

He points out a larger building across the way.

17 INT. TELYATINKI. SLEEPING AREA. NIGHT.

17

They enter the building.

SERGEYENKO

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

Except everything.

SERGEYENKO

Each man is alone with his  
conscience and his God.

(beat)

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

They start up the stairs.

INT. SLEEPING PORCH. TELYATINKI. DAY

SERGEYENKO

You are expected at Yasnaya  
Polyana in the morning, first  
thing.

VALENTIN

I look forward to it.

SERGEYENKO

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

18 INT. TELYATINKI. VALENTIN'S ROOM: NIGHT

18

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

SERGEYENKO

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

VALENTIN

Of course.

SERGEYENKO

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

Valentin smiles.

SERGEYENKO

What is it?

VALENTIN

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

SERGEYENKO

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

VALENTIN

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

SERGEYENKO

If we're spared.

Sergeyenko leaves Valentin to his bare, little room.

19 EXT. TELYATINKI COMPOUND. MORNING.

19

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

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

20

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

VALENTIN

Come in.

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

MASHA

I've brought you a glass of tea.

VALENTIN

That's very kind of you.

MASHA

It's your first day. Enjoy it.

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

MASHA

You met Sergeyenko?

VALENTIN

Last night.

MASHA

And what do you think?

VALENTIN

He seems very sincere.

Masha hands him his tea.

VALENTIN

Thank you. Why are you laughing?

MASHA

Say that again.

VALENTIN

I said he seems very... Why?

MASHA

Is that what you think?

VALENTIN

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

MASHA

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

VALENTIN

Thank you for the tea.

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

MASHA

Tomorrow you can make your own.

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

MASHA

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

21 EXT. ROAD TO YASNAYA POLYANA. DAY. 21

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

22 OMITTED 22

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

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

VALENTIN

Hello...hello...

VOICE (O.S.)

You're the new secretary.

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

SASHA

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

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

24 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. LIBRARY. DAY. 24

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

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

TOLSTOY

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



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

VALENTIN

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

Valentin interrupts himself with a sneeze.

TOLSTOY

God bless you.

VALENTIN

I'm sorry. Sometimes I...

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

TOLSTOY

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

VALENTIN

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

Tolstoy nods.

TOLSTOY

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

Tolstoy sits on the old sofa. Valentin follows suit.

TOLSTOY

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

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

TOLSTOY

Sit. Sit.

Valentin sits down.

TOLSTOY

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

(beat)

Now, I've read your essays. How's  
your work progressing?

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

TOLSTOY

My boy, what is it?

(beat)

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

Valentin shakes his head, smiling through his tears.

VALENTIN

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

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

TOLSTOY

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

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

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

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

SOFYA

These people have nothing.

DUSHAN

It really is the most extraordinary thing.

Absolutely ignoring him.

SOFYA

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

TOLSTOY

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

ANDREY

Give it to whom?

SOFYA

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

TOLSTOY

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

A pause. Valentin fills the silence.

VALENTIN

It's a keystone of the movement.

SOFYA

Oh, I know all about the movement.

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

TOLSTOY

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

SOFYA

No, they'd spend it on drink and whores.

TOLSTOY

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

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

DUSHAN

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

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

VALENTIN

I think...(sneeze)

SOFYA

Stop scribbling!

(points to her husband)

You all think he's Christ, don't you? He thinks he's Christ.

There is an awkward pause.

DUSHAN

(flustered)

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

SOFYA

But what?

DUSHAN

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

SOFYA

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

SASHA

Mama, you're being ridiculous.

SOFYA

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

TOLSTOY

(exhausted)

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

She turns to see Dushan scribbling again.

SOFYA  
STOP IT! STOP WRITING NOW!

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

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

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

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

VALENTIN  
It's your voice. It's wonderful.

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

TOLSTOY  
It's tiresome. Another remarkable invention will supercede it.

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

TOLSTOY  
Please excuse me.

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

DUSHAN  
Leo Nikolayevich is something of a Luddite, I fear.

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

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

TOLSTOY

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

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

VALENTIN (O.S.)

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

29

INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. LIBRARY. EVENING.

29

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

SASHA

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

VALENTIN

I'm sure she means well.

Sasha just looks at him.

VALENTIN

Your father is the greatest writer in the world.

SASHA

Quite.

A pause.

VALENTIN

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

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

SASHA

God Bless You.

They read together for a moment. He sneezes again.

SASHA

(irritated)  
God bless you.

VALENTIN

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

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

SASHA

What is it?

IVAN

It's a note, for him.

He nods toward Valentin.

SASHA

Well, give it to him then.

Valentin reads the note.

VALENTIN

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

As Valentin goes,

SASHA

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

30

INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. SITTING ROOM. NIGHT.

30

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

SOFYA

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

VALENTIN

Thank you, Countess...

SOFYA

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

(beat)

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

VALENTIN

I admire your husband immensely.

SOFYA

That's excellent. He likes that.

VALENTIN

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

Sofya drains her tea cup, signals for more.

SOFYA

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

Valentin's eyes are wide. She nods.

SOFYA

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

VALENTIN

Thank you.

SOFYA

You've read War and Peace?

VALENTIN

Many times... twice.

Sofya smiles at his honesty.

SOFYA

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

(beat)

What do you think of Chertkov, by the way?

VALENTIN

He's given me an extraordinary opportunity.

SOFYA

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

Sofya smiles. Valentin is nonplussed by her directness.



SOFYA

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

She smiles at the memory.

SOFYA

But I don't count anymore.

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

SOFYA

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

VALENTIN

I don't believe anyone wants to  
do that.

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

SOFYA

I have a little gift for you

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

SOFYA

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

VALENTIN

It's a very popular activity  
around your husband.

SOFYA

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

VALENTIN

That may not be so easy.

SOFYA

Nonsense. You've been listening  
to your friends at Telyatinki...

(beat)

Write what you see. That's always  
the place to begin.

(slowly)

What. You. See.

Valentin fingers the package, stifles a sneeze.

SOFYA

More tea?

31 EXT. TELYATINKI COMPOUND. DAY

31

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

MASHA

You're finished for the day?

VALENTIN

He didn't need me this afternoon.

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

VALENTIN

Leo Nikolayevich disapproves of  
women doing physical labor.

(beat)

Don't you find that reactionary?

MASHA

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

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

MASHA

He admires you, I believe.

What's she saying?

MASHA

Sergeyenko told me. He's  
miserable about it.

VALENTIN  
Tolstoy's kind to everyone.

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

MASHA  
What do you talk about when  
you're with him?  
(beat)  
Why are you blushing?

VALENTIN  
We talk about me.

MASHA  
Really.

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

He looks up to see Masha smiling at him.

MASHA  
And what relations are these?

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

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

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

This is somehow more than Valentin had bargained for.

VALENTIN  
At school?

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

VALENTIN  
I see...

He looks away to hide his confusion.

MASHA  
Have I upset you?

He looks at her.

VALENTIN  
No...I appreciate your frankness

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

VALENTIN  
I don't. Not at all...I think  
sexual activity...how men and  
women combine their physical  
parts is completely neutral.

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

VALENTIN  
That's not fair

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

VALENTIN  
I'm going.

He puts down the axe.

MASHA  
Do as you like.

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

MASHA  
Valentin Fedorovich.

He stops, relieved and turns to face her.

MASHA  
You forgot your horse.

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

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

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

32 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. LIBRARY. DAY 32

CLOSE on the CABLE MACHINE. A message coming through.

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

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

SASHA  
Where's papa?

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

33 OMITTED 33

34 EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. ZASYEKA WOODS. DAY 34

Valentin and Tolstoy walk together in the woods. .

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

VALENTIN  
A girl who died?

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

Valentin sneezes.

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

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

Tolstoy laughs out loud.

TOLSTOY

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

VALENTIN

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

TOLSTOY

To be what, a good Tolstoyan?

Tolstoy smiles.

TOLSTOY

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

VALENTIN

Are you alright?

TOLSTOY

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

VALENTIN

What do you mean?

TOLSTOY

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

VALENTIN

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

TOLSTOY

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

VALENTIN

I...I don't know.

Leo Nikoleyevich smiles.

TOLSTOY

I don't know, either.

He inhales deeply.

TOLSTOY  
Smell that...

VALENTIN  
Lilac?

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

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

He presses Valentin's hand.

SASHA  
Papa!

TOLSTOY  
I've enjoyed myself, my boy.  
(shouting for Sasha)  
WE'RE HERE.

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

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

Smash cut to

35 EXT. RAILWAY. COUNTRYSIDE. DAY 35

A train roars past camera, shaking the world.

36 OMITTED 36

37 EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. GROUNDS. DAY 37

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

TOLSTOY  
My dear, dear man.

Tears run down his old cheeks. They embrace again.

SOFYA (O.S.)  
He'll try again to convince your  
father to change his will.

38 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. ENTRY/STAIRS. DAY.

38

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

SOFYA

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

ANDREY

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

(beat)

My tooth is killing me.

SOFYA

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

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

ANDREY

A man'th responthibility ith to hith family.

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

SOFYA

Chertkov's notions of virtuous behavior are calculated to destroy me.

ANDREY

To dethstroy uth all.

SOFYA

There is nothing more pathetic than impoverished aristocrats.

She walks out of the room.

39 EXT. GROUNDS. YASNAYA POLYANA. DAY.

39

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

SOFYA

Vladimir Grigorevich, what a surprise.

CHERTKOV

Sofya Andreyevna, I'm happy to see you.



Valentin watches her match him smile for smile.

\*

SOFYA

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

40 OMITTED

40

41 EXT. ROAD TO TELYATINKI. DAY

41

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

CHERTKOV

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

VALENTIN

(a little nervous)  
I hope my work is pleasing to Leo  
Nikolayevich.

CHERTKOV

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

VALENTIN

What do you mean?

CHERTKOV

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

VALENTIN

It's not quite so obvious to me.

CHERTKOV

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

Chertkov fixes the boy with his intense gaze.

CHERTKOV

You value our work?

VALENTIN

I do.

CHERTKOV

The ideals we share?

VALENTIN

That's why I'm here.

CHERTKOV

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

VALENTIN

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

CHERTKOV

How so?

VALENTIN

I don't think she likes you very much.

CHERTKOV

What does she say?

VALENTIN

It's a tone I've picked up.

CHERTKOV

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

He takes Valentin's hand.

CHERTKOV

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

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

43	OMITTED	43
44	OMITTED	44
45	OMITTED	45
46	OMITTED	46
47	INT. TELYATINKI. VALENTIN'S ROOM. NIGHT.	47

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

VALENTIN  
Hello... Hello?

After a moment, it opens a crack.

VALENTIN  
Masha?

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

VALENTIN  
Masha.

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

VALENTIN  
Masha.

MASHA  
Ssshh.

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

MASHA  
Move the book.

VALENTIN  
What?

MASHA  
Your book.

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

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

MASHA  
Is it alright?

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

VALENTIN  
What...what is it?

MASHA  
You really are a virgin.

Valentin tenses a little.

MASHA  
I'm playing. It's fine. It's wonderful...  
(beat)  
Hold me.

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

48 EXT. TELYATINKI COMPOUND. MORNING. 48

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

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

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

VALENTIN  
Wake up, wake up.

MASHA  
I am awake.

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

MASHA  
It was wonderful.

They both giggle.

VALENTIN  
Why did you come to a place like this?

MASHA  
What do you mean?

VALENTIN  
You don't follow any of the  
rules.

Masha smiles.

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

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

A knock at the door startles them.

SERGEYENKO (O.S.)  
Valentin Fedorovich.

Valentin is suddenly in a panic.

VALENTIN  
What is it?

49A INT. TELYATINKI. CORRIDOR. DAY.

49A

Sergeyenko hovers outside the bedroom door.

SERGEYENKO  
Open the door.

VALENTIN (O.S.)  
At the moment, I'm indisposed.

SERGEYENKO  
Yes, well...Leo Nikolayevich is  
here. He want s to see you.

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

49B

Valentin blanches.

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

SERGEYENKO (O.S.)  
Yes..and tell Maria Filipovna we  
could use another hand in the  
kitchen.

They look at each other.

VALENTIN

If I see her I will...

SERGEYENKO (O.S.)

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

Valentin is up, immediately.

VALENTIN

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

Masha just looks at him.

50

EXT. TELYATINKI COMPOUND. DAY.

50

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

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

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

DUSHAN

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

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

TOLSTOY

An old man is a very ugly thing.

Tolstoy sees Valentin, lights up.

TOLSTOY

My dear boy. Come and kiss me.

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

TOLSTOY

Now, who is this? Maria  
Filipovna.

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

TOLSTOY

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

Valentin sneezes mightily, moves a little away.

TOLSTOY

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

Valentin takes the chair beside him.

TOLSTOY

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

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

MASHA

We're happy to have you with us.

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

CHERTKOV

What are you doing?

TOLSTOY

What do you mean?

He motions to the photographers.

CHERTKOV

You've killed a living thing.

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

CHERTKOV

Do you have something to say?

MASHA

It's absurd. That's all.

Chertkov is taken aback. Valentin stares at her.

VALENTIN

What are you saying?

MASHA

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

TOLSTOY

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

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

CHERTKOV

It's not the message we want to  
send.

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

SASHA

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

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

51

Chertkov is there. Tolstoy, Valentin and Sasha.

SASHA

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

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

DUSHAN

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

SASHA

Who taught her to use that damned  
machine?

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

CHERTKOV

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



SASHA

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

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

SASHA

Then, let me go with you.

TOLSTOY

No, my dear, I'll go alone.

52 OMITTED 52

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

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

TOLSTOY

Sofya.

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

TOLSTOY

Sofya, are you ill?

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

SOFYA

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

TOLSTOY

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

SOFYA

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

TOLSTOY

That was some sort of love call?

SOFYA

It brought you back to me.

She reaches out her hand to him.

SOFYA

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

He takes a step toward her, then stops.

TOLSTOY

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

Sofya laughs.

SOFYA

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

She smiles at him.

SOFYA

Let me make you crow.

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

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

SOFYA

Let me make you sing.

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

SOFYA

Do you love me?

TOLSTOY

I do.

SOFIA

I want you to love me.

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

53A EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. GROUNDS. NIGHT.

53A

And we hear their laughter over the dark old house.

54

EXT. TELYATINKI. PORCH. NIGHT.

54

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

MASHA

I'm not supposed to do this either.

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

VALENTIN

Masha. You are not supposed to smoke at Telyatinki.

MASHA

You wouldn't look at me.

VALENTIN

It was difficult in front of the others.

MASHA

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

VALENTIN

I'm not sure I was conscious of God.

Masha emerges from the shadows, but keeps her distance.

MASHA

So, I made you forget God?

VALENTIN

No...

MASHA

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

VALENTIN

You make it sound very simple.

MASHA

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

(MORE)

MASHA (cont'd)  
 But you're afraid... All your  
 ideas. What are you afraid of?

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

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

She disappears into the house. Valentin looks after her.

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

The Countess wakes to find her bed empty.

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

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

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

Without looking up

TOLSTOY  
 Of course, my dear.

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

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

He looks up.

TOLSTOY  
 What are you talking about?

She continues to write.

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

TOLSTOY  
 About what?

Sofya looks at him knowingly.

TOLSTOY  
Laughing about what?

SOFYA  
I don't want to ruin last night.

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

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

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

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

TOLSTOY  
We have a great deal in common.

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

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

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

TOLSTOY  
This is absolute nonsense.

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

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

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

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

57 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. DINING ROOM. CONTINUOUS. 57

Catching him up.

SOFYA  
Do you love me, Lyovochka?

TOLSTOY  
Of course, I do.

SOFYA  
Then why would you betray me?

TOLSTOY  
Why do you say that?

SOFYA  
Because of the will?

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

Tolstoy, taken aback, says nothing.

SOFYA  
The new will.

TOLSTOY  
There's no new will.

She stares at him in silence.

TOLSTOY  
There is no new will.

SOFYA  
Does Chertkov have it?

TOLSTOY  
There's no new will.

He walks up the stairs. She follows.

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

SOFYA  
Tell me where it is?

TOLSTOY  
There is no new will.

58 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. LIBRARY. CONTINUOUS. 58  
He goes to his desk, tries to ignore her.

SOFYA  
Then, promise me there never will  
be.

A moment's hesitation.

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

He walks to his desk.

59 OMITTED 59

60 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. LIBRARY. CONTINUOUS. DAY. 60  
Tolstoy looks up from his work. Sofya stands in the  
doorway.

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

As he goes, we hear.

TOLSTOY (O.S.)  
This is unbearable. You don't  
want a husband. You want a Greek  
chorus.

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

61 EXT. ROAD TO TELYATINKI. DAY 61

Four peasants pull a water cart down a rough country road.  
We pan off to see Sofya in her droshky, resplendent in a  
white dress.

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

62

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

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

Valentin enters from the meeting room.

VALENTIN

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

Chertkov nervous, tugs at his moustache.

CHERTKOV

How does she know it even exists?

VALENTIN

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

CHERTKOV

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

VALENTIN

It doesn't seem petty to me.

CHERTKOV

I beg your pardon?

VALENTIN

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

CHERTKOV

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

VALENTIN

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

CHERTKOV

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

VALENTIN

Nothing has happened.

63 INT. TELYATINKI. MEETING ROOM. DAY.

63

The men enter the meeting room.



CHERTKOV

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

Valentin watches her match him smile for smile.

SOFYA

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

She looks at him curiously.

CHERTKOV

What is it?

SOFYA

Your moustache is...

Drooping, one side of it anyway.

CHERTKOV

(nodding)

It's a problem of the wax.

Sofya takes them in.

SOFYA

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

CHERTKOV

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

SOFYA

(to Bulgakov)

Leo Nikolayevich has agreed,  
hasn't he Val-

CHERTKOV

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

Sofya is livid.

SOFYA

Very well.

CHERTKOV

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

SOFYA

Yes.

(beat)

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

Valentin glances between them, searching for middle ground.

VALENTIN

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

Sergeyenko sneers.

SERGEYENKO

Masha will be overjoyed.

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

SOFYA (O.S.)

Have you been keeping something from me? How delightful.

64 EXT. ROAD TO TELYATINKI. DAY.

64

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

SOFYA

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

VALENTIN

It's nothing, really.

SOFYA

A young woman in your life is nothing?

VALENTIN

Masha is a friend.

SOFYA

A lover?

VALENTIN

A good friend.

SOFYA

That sounds serious enough.

Valentin looks away.

SOFYA

I don't mean to annoy you.

VALENTIN

I'm not annoyed.

SOFYA

You forget that I'm an experienced reader. I can read your face, every letter. It's beautifully clear.

(beat)

Do you love her?

Valentin looks at Sofya, tears in his eyes.

VALENTIN

Maybe I do.

SOFYA

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

(beat)

What do any of them know about love?

65 EXT. TELYATINKI COMPOUND. DAY.

65

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

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

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

VALENTIN

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

MASHA

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

VALENTIN

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

He moves closer to her.

VALENTIN

But today I could hardly  
concentrate.

He's very close to her, now.

VALENTIN

All I could think of was you.

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

VALENTIN

What's wrong?

MASHA

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

VALENTIN

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

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

VALENTIN

I love you, Masha!

MASHA

Maybe you could help me a little.

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

VALENTIN

Masha...

She turns

VALENTIN

Before the other night...I'd  
committed the act of copulation  
many times in my heart.

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

MASHA

Yes...

VALENTIN

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

Masha bursts out laughing.

MASHA

I'll wait for you, then.

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

66 OMITTED 66

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

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

SOFYA

Ivan, who's wearing that awful  
perfume?

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

68 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. HALLWAY. DAY 68

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

69 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. LIBRARY. DAY.

69

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

CHERTKOV

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

TOLSTOY

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

CHERTKOV

(to Tolstoy)

And we're concerned for the welfare of mankind.

(to Bulgakov)

Take this down.

Valentin records the conversation in his diary.

TOLSTOY

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

70 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. SOFYA'S BEDROOM. DAY.

70

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

70A EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. GROUNDS. DAY.

70A

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

71 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. LIBRARY. DAY.

71

CHERTKOV

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

SASHA

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

Tolstoy looks at Valentin, who looks at the floor.

CHERTKOV

We're speaking only of the rights to your words, your ideas.

(MORE)

CHERTKOV (cont'd)  
 With all love and respect, the  
 Countess is too interested in  
 making a profit from your work.

72 EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. SECOND STORY BALCONY. DAY. 72

Sofya moves along the narrow ledge as if it's a perfectly normal activity.. Looking down, she sees a couple of gawkers watching her from the lawn. She shoos them away.

73 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. LIBRARY. DAY. 73

Valentin turns his head. Did he hear something?

TOLSTOY  
 She's my wife. She's part of me.  
 We've been together now, so many  
 years....

Chertkov drives the point home.

CHERTKOV  
 But you're more than a husband  
 and father. She must understand  
 that.  
 The best interests of the people  
 are one with your own. You  
 belong to them.

Valentin glances up...and is shocked to see SOFYA LOOKING  
 IN AT THE STUDY WINDOW. She disappears.

74 EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. SECOND STORY BALCONY. DAY. 74

Sofya has reached the french doors. She can hear clearly now.

TOLSTOY (O.S.)  
 But she won't. She'll never  
 understand.

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

75 OMITTED 75

76 OMITTED 76

77

INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. LIBRARY. DAY.

77

Chertkov pushes his point.

CHERTKOV

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

DUSHAN

It's sadly more than possible.

SASHA

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

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

CHERTKOV (O.S.)

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

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

SOFYA

How dare you?

SASHA

What are you doing?

SOFYA

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

(beat)

Someone help me up.

No one moves. Tolstoy slumps in his chair.

SOFYA

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



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

SOFYA

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

She grabs the offending volume. The struggle begins.

DUSHAN

Please, Countess Sofya-

SASHA

Mama, please...

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

SOFYA

Now...

TOLSTOY

(mumbles)

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

His face is red, his body rigid with anger.

SASHA

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

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

She looks at Chertkov.

SOFYA

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

CHERTKOV

What are you afraid of?

SOFYA

You. I'm afraid of you.

Chertkov looks at her with undisguised disgust.

CHERTKOV

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

SOFYA

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

CHERTKOV

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

SOFYA

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

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

CHERTKOV

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

(beat)

Or gone to America.

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

78

INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. DINING ROOM. NIGHT.

78

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

VALENTIN

I hope you're feeling better.

SOFYA

Do you like the opera?

VALENTIN

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

(beat)

I'm sorry about everything.

She smiles.

SOFYA

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

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

TOLSTOY  
Our life together has become  
intolerable.

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

SOFYA  
Sit down, Valentin.

VALENTIN  
Really, I'm expected at  
Telyatinki.

She waves it off.

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

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

SOFYA  
Of course...

TOLSTOY  
God knows you don't make it easy.

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

Aside to Valentin.

SOFYA  
Everything with him is hysterics

VALENTIN  
I should go.

TOLSTOY  
Sit down.  
(beat)  
So, this is what love is. Does  
that surprise you, boy?

They both look at him

VALENTIN  
I thought it might be quieter,  
but-

He sneezes violently.

TOLSTOY/SOFYA  
God bless you

Tolstoy turns to Sofya.

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

SOFYA  
Go? Where?

TOLSTOY  
Not to Chertkov, but I shall go.

SOFYA  
Go where?

TOLSTOY  
Dushan says you're killing me.

Sofya rises up in cold rage.

SOFYA  
Then go! Go! Anywhere you please!

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

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

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

VALENTIN  
Countess...Are you alright?

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

TOLSTOY  
(shouts)  
DUSHAN!!!

SOFYA  
You'll destroy me.

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

VALENTIN

Is she alright?

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

DUSHAN

Sofya! Open your eyes.

SOFYA

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

DUSHAN

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

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

DUSHAN

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

79 OMITTED 79

80 EXT. TELYATINKI COMPOUND. NIGHT. 80

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

81 INT. TELYATINKI. KITCHEN. NIGHT. 81

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

VALENTIN

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

She stays at the sink, says nothing.

VALENTIN

Masha, what's the matter?

She speaks without turning to him.

MASHA  
I'm going back to Moscow.

VALENTIN  
What?

He gets up, goes to her.

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

Valentin shakes his head. His lip trembles.

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

MASHA  
We've both disappointed him.

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

MASHA  
No, I want to go.

VALENTIN  
What?

MASHA  
I'm leaving the movement.

VALENTIN  
You can't leave Tolstoy.

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

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

MASHA  
Come with me. Please.

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

MASHA  
I'm going to my room.

As she starts away.

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

She turns back for a moment.

MASHA  
I know you do...I know.

Then she's gone.

82

INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. SOFYA'S BEDROOM/HALLWAY. DAY.

82

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

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

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

DUSHAN  
Yes.

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

TOLSTOY  
Why did you bring him here?

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

TOLSTOY  
And astoundingly stupid in the  
way of all scientists.

Dushan is wounded by his uncharacteristic lack of generosity.

TOLSTOY

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

DUSHAN

Yes.

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

TOLSTOY

Take them downstairs. Thank them for me. Offer them a drink.

DUSHAN

You'll be alright?

TOLSTOY

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

Valentin nods. Dushan goes to collect the doctors.

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

SOFYA

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

TOLSTOY

You rest now.

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

83

EXT. ZASYEKA WOODS. DAY.

83

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

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

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

TOLSTOY

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

He rides forward toward the approaching Chertkov.



CHERTKOV  
Good afternoon, Leo Nikolayevich.

TOLSTOY  
Is it?

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

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

SERGEYENKO  
Monumentous.

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

Tolstoy looks up at them.

CHERTKOV  
Yes?

TOLSTOY  
I need a pen.

CHERTKOV  
Of course.

Chertkov looks at Sergeyenko who swallows hard. No pen.

SERGEYENKO  
I...uh...

CHERTKOV  
What?

Sergeyenko moves close to Chertkov, close enough to whisper.

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

Sergeyenko points at Valentin.

SERGEYENKO  
He's a secretary, too. Ask him.

CHERTKOV  
Valentin Fedorovich, do you have a pen?

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

VALENTIN

I do.

Valentin fetches it from his satchel.

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

CHERTKOV

Are you alright?

TOLSTOY

I feel like a conspirator.

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

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

84

EXT. ZASYEKA WOODS. DAY.

84

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

VALENTIN

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

TOLSTOY

Of course, my dear.

VALENTIN

Do you love your wife?

TOLSTOY

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

Tolstoy looks into the middle distance, remembering his love.

TOLSTOY

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

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

TOLSTOY

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

His old eyes are wet.

TOLSTOY

And now this.

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

85 INT. TELYATINKI. MEETING ROOM. NIGHT.

85

Valentin exhausted, sits at the long table. Chertkov appears at his office door.

CHERTKOV

Thank you again, Valentin Fedorovich, for your forethought.

VALENTIN

I'm a secretary, after all.

Chertkov let's it go.

CHERTKOV

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

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

VALENTIN

I'm leaving Telyatinki.

CHERTKOV

Really.

VALENTIN

I am going to Moscow.

CHERTKOV

She is leading you around the nose.

VALENTIN

Look, you say the movement's about love-

CHERTKOV

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

VALENTIN

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

CHERTKOV

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

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

CHERTKOV

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

VALENTIN

I'm laughing because I didn't sneeze.

86 OMITTED

86

87 OMITTED

87

88 OMITTED

88

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

SOFYA

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

TOLSTOY

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

SOFYA

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

Silence.

SOFYA

How can you not be pleased?

TOLSTOY

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

He gets up from his desk.

SOFYA

Where are you going?

TOLSTOY

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

SOFYA

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

TOLSTOY

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

He goes. She calls after him.

SOFYA

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

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

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

90 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. LIBRARY. DAY. 90

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

TOLSTOY

What is it, dear boy? You look unhappy. What do you want to say?

But before Valentin can respond A GUNSHOT RINGS OUT.

91 OMITTED 91

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

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

TOLSTOY

Sofya, what are you doing?

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

SOFYA

How could you do this to me?

TOLSTOY

You're not well.

SOFYA

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

(beat)

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

TOLSTOY

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

SOFYA

No! Give me the gun!

TOLSTOY

Give it to me, please.

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

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

TOLSTOY  
I'd like you to stay here  
tonight.

VALENTIN  
Yes, of course.

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

93 EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. GROUNDS. NIGHT. 93

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

94 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. LIBRARY. NIGHT. 94

Valentin in his makeshift bed.

SASHA (O.S.)  
Valentin. Valentin.

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

SASHA  
Get up. He's leaving.

VALENTIN  
What?

SASHA  
He's leaving.

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

Bags are being prepared. Sasha is packing clothes.

TOLSTOY  
Essentials only. Nothing that  
isn't absolutely necessary.

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

TOLSTOY  
Please...we must hurry.

VALENTIN

Where will you go?

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

SASHA

Absolutely essential.

DUSHAN

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

(beat)

And the apparatus for giving an enema.

96

EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. GROUNDS. NIGHT.

96

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

SASHA

Everything's ready.

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

SASHA

Papa...?

DUSHAN

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

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

VALENTIN

Do you want to go back?

TOLSTOY

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



Tolstoy looks at him.

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

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

TOLSTOY  
Help me up, will you?

As they go, he hands Valentin an envelope.

TOLSTOY  
Give this to Sofya.

VALENTIN  
I will.

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

SASHA  
Be well. Be well.

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

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

97 EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. GROUNDS. MORNING 97

Out in front of the house, an old peasant woman pulls the feathers off a chicken. Over her impassive face, we hear deep, heavy sobs.

98 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. SITTING ROOM. DAY. 98

Sofya is in a rage. Sasha sits nearby.

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

SOFYA  
You're a liar.  
(beat)  
Liar!

Sasha won't rise to the bait.

Valentin comes into the room.

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

VALENTIN  
 I think so, yes.

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

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

SASHA  
 Honestly, I have no idea.

SOFYA  
 DON'T PLAY GAMES WITH ME.

VALENTIN  
 I have this for you.

It is a letter. She grabs it, as if it is something that might feed a terrible hunger at the center of her. Moving into a corner, she tears it open and begins to read.

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

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

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

They look at each other

SASHA  
 The pond!

They run out.

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

Sasha suddenly steams past him.

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

VALENTIN  
Countess!

100 EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. POND. DAY

100

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

Tiring now, she goes to her knees. She crawls along the jetty toward the water. At the edge of the jetty, she falls on her back then turns over, most ungracefully, and rolls off sideways into the pond.

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

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

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

TOLSTOY (V.O.)  
I beg you to forgive me for  
everything I've done to you, just  
as I forgive you with all my soul  
for everything you've done to me.

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

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

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

SASHA  
No! She's drowning. Help her!

VALENTIN

I will. I will. Stay here.

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

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

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

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

SASHA

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

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

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

SASHA

Let me take you to the house, mother.

SOFYA

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

SASHA

Let's go to the house.

Sofya is suddenly clear, almost calm.

SOFYA

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

Ivan looks at Sasha for approval.

SASHA

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

Valentin nods. Ivan appears beside him.

IVAN

Life returns to torture her for awhile.

He laughs out loud, then walks away.

101 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. DINING ROOM. DAY.

101

Sasha walks into dining room. Valentin pours them tea.

SASHA

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

VALENTIN

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

SASHA

The noise subsides a little.

They smile at each other.

SASHA

Well, a little.

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

SASHA

Come in.

IVAN

A message, miss.

SASHA

For me?

IVAN

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

SASHA

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

IVAN

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

SASHA

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

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

SASHA

She never gives up.

(reading the note)

"Dearest papa. Return at once.

(MORE)

SASHA (cont'd)  
Sasha." She signed it with my  
name.

VALENTIN  
Ingenious.

SASHA  
Obvious.

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

SASHA  
Yes?

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

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

SASHA  
He's with my aunt. At the  
Shamardino.

Sasha runs out of the room.

102 EXT. YASNAYA POLYANA. GROUNDS. DAY 102

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

SOFYA (O.S.)  
They've all gone

103 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. LIBRARY. DAY. 103

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

VALENTIN  
I'm here.

She walks to his desk.

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

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

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

SOFYA

But you believe you'll see her  
again.

VALENTIN

I very much hope so.

SOFYA

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

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

SOFYA

I know you know where he is,  
Valentin.

Valentin hesitates. She walks back to him.

SOFYA

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

103A OMITTED 103A

104 OMITTED 104

105 OMITTED 105

106 OMITTED 106

107 OMITTED 107

108 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. DAWN 108

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

109 INT. THIRD CLASS CARRIAGE. DAY. 109

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

SASHA

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

VALENTIN

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

Tolstoy has overheard them.

TOLSTOY

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

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

DUSHAN

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

Tolstoy looks up from the papers, smiles.

TOLSTOY

I guess our little secret is out.

110 OMITTED 110

111 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. SITTING ROOM. DAY 111

Sofya sits surrounded by the papers. Andrey appears.

ANDREY

There's a reporter outside from the Russian World.

SOFYA

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

ANDREY

But that's a lie, right?

SOFYA

Yes, that's a lie.

112 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. DAY 112

The huge iron wheels grind on.



113 INT. THIRD CLASS TRAIN CARRIAGE. DAY

113

Tolstoy sleeps. People still crowd around him.

VALENTIN

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

SASHA

(to Valentin)  
He can't breath. Valentin,  
please.  
(to Dushan)  
The smoke is too much.

DUSHAN

I know. Stay back.

Tolstoy stirs.

TOLSTOY

Where are we?

DUSHAN

It's alright. Everything's fine.

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

TOLSTOY

Where are we?

DUSHAN

Let me take your temperature.

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

He's clearly shaken.

TOLSTOY

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

DUSHAN

Good, good. Yes.

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

DUSHAN  
He will be fine.

114 EXT. ASTAPOVO. PLATFORM. DAY 114

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

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

SASHA  
We've come to the end of the world.

115 EXT. ASTAPOVO. PLATFORM. DAY. 115

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

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

TOLSTOY  
Very lucky.

DUSHAN  
Yes.

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

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

TOLSTOY  
And then we'll be on our way.

116 OMITTED 116

117 OMITTED 117

118 INT. ASTAPOVO. TELEGRAPH OFFICE. NIGHT. 118

Valentin approaches the operator.

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

119 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. LIBRARY. NIGHT 119

A message comes over the cable machine.

VALENTIN (O.S.)  
Tolstoy ill at Astapovo.  
Temperature high. Send it to  
Sofya Andreyevna, Yasnaya  
Polyana.

120 INT. YASNAYA POLYANA. SITTING ROOM. NIGHT. 120

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

SOFYA  
We must leave at once.

ANDREY  
We'll make inquiries in the  
morning, mother.

SOFYA  
We'll rent a train.

ANDREY  
That'll cost a fortune.

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

ANDREY  
Rent a train? God!

121 EXT. ASTAPOVO. PLATFORM. DAY. 121

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

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

CHERTKOV  
Bulgakov! Where is he? Take me  
to him.

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

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

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

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

CHERTKOV  
It's a triumph for the movement.

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

122

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

CHERTKOV  
He looks so small.

Now, Tolstoy sees him, wakes up, smiles.

SASHA  
Papa.

TOLSTOY  
It's(hic)you.

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

CHERTKOV  
My dear friend, waht is all of  
this?

TOLSTOY  
I needed (hic) to see you. Thank  
you. We have so much (hic) to  
do. (hic) I'm sorry. Damn hic  
ups.  
(beat)  
Have you seen Sofya?

CHERTKOV  
I've made a point not to.

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

CHERTKOV  
And we'll be ready.

VALENTIN  
Ready for what?

Chertkov doesn't respond.

DUSHAN

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

TOLSTOY

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

(smiles)

Now, all of you, help turn me over.

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

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

124 INT. ASTAPOVO. TELEGRAPH OFFICE. NIGHT. 124

Valentin approaches the little window.

VALENTIN

I'd like to send another cable.

The man nods, readies his pencil.

VALENTIN

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

The man looks to him for an address.

VALENTIN

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

125 EXT. ASTAPOVO. PLATFORM. DAY. 125

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

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

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

ORTHODOX PRIEST

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

She nods.

SOFYA

I'll see what I can do, father.

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

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

126

Chertkov, Sasha and Valentin watch through the window.

SASHA

She's coming this way.

Chertkov starts to put on his coat.

CHERTKOV

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

VALENTIN

Let me speak to her.

He heads toward the door.

127 EXT. ASTAPOVO. PLATFORM. DAY

127

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

SOFYA

I want to see my husband.

DUSHAN

Yes I'll...uhm...

SOFYA

I want to see him. Now!

Dushan is terrified. Valentin arrives at the platform.

VALENTIN

Countess!

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

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

She starts toward the building.

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

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

128 EXT. ASTAPOVO. STATIONMASTER'S HOUSE. DAY

128

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

SOFYA  
I want to see my husband.

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

SASHA  
He's too weak now, mother.

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

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

CHERTKOV  
Do you really want to do this  
here?

She does her best to ignore him.

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

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

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

SOFYA  
Is that true?

Valentin nods. She tries another tack.

SOFYA  
Have you told him I nearly  
drowned in the pond?

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

Valentin is very aware of the publicness of it all.

VALENTIN  
Let me take you back.

But she plows on.

SOFYA  
What did he say?

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

SOFYA  
He'd be upset?

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

Sofya begins to sob.

SOFYA  
I want to see him.  
(beat)  
He's not your husband. He's my  
husband.

SASHA  
You're unbearable.

Sasha goes back toward the door.

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

Sasha disappears back inside. Sofya screams after her.



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

Chertkov watches, makes little attempt to conceal his  
pleasure.

CHERTKOV  
Are you finished?

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

SOFYA  
Valentin, will you take me back?

Valentin nods.

VALENTIN  
Yes, of course.

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

SOFYA  
I've behaved badly, haven't I?

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

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

129	OMITTED	129
130	INT. ASTAPOVO. PRIVATE TRAIN. DAWN.	130
	Valentin, in his wrinkled suit, is asleep in a chair. He wakes to see Sofya stretched out on the sofa. He watches her. She doesn't stir. After a moment, he goes out.	
131	EXT. ASTAPOVO. PLATFORM. DAY	131
	Valentin emerges from the telegraph office. He walks along the platform, a stack of letter and telegrams in his hands. A few reporters type their early morning dispatches.	
132	OMITTED	132
133	OMITTED	133

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

134

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

VALENTIN

What is it? Dushan, what's wrong?

DUSHAN

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

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

TOLSTOY

Sofya!

DUSHAN

What is it? What is it?

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

TOLSTOY

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

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

CHERTKOV

You're imagining things.

DUSHAN

It's true, Leo Nikolayevich.

TOLSTOY

Sasha...where's your mother?

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

CHERTKOV

She's at home.

TOLSTOY

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

(beat)

Is she going to come here?

All eyes are on Sasha.

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

TOLSTOY  
To what?

Will she waiver? A long, agonizing beat.

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

Valentin looks at the floor.

TOLSTOY  
At home.

SASHA  
Yes, Papa.

Tolstoy nods, pats Sasha's hand.

TOLSTOY  
Very beautiful isn't it?

SASHA  
Our home?

TOLSTOY  
Yes.

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

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

135

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

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

She turns to him.

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

Valentin touches her face, goes back inside and into

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

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

CHERTKOV

Kind thoughts from George Bernard Shaw.

Valentin walks to the table.

VALENTIN

You lied to him.

CHERTKOV

Keep your voice down.

VALENTIN

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

CHERTKOV

What exactly do you think she will bring him?

VALENTIN

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

CHERTKOV

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

VALENTIN

She promised me-

CHERTKOV

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

VALENTIN

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

CHERTKOV

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

VALENTIN

Keep the priest away-

CHERTKOV

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

(beat)

A death bed recantation. Do you have any idea the damage it would do? Everything he's dreamed of, everything we've worked for will be gone. A simple noble death is what we want. It is what he wants.

VALENTIN

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

(beat)

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

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

CHERTKOV

I will do everything in my power to prevent that.

VALENTIN

Oh, God. You exhaust me.

CHERTKOV

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

He turns back at the door.

VALENTIN

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

Valentin leaves the room.

137

EXT. ASTAPOVO. PLATFORM. NIGHT.

137

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

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

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

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

139 EXT. ASTAPOVO. PLATFORM. NIGHT 139

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

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

Sofya watches the two figures disappear inside.

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

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

SASHA

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

DUSHAN

His pulse, you see...

Dushan begins to cry. Suddenly, Tolstoy becomes lucid.

TOLSTOY

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

Everyone moves nearer the bed. Tolstoy looks at Valentin.

TOLSTOY

Who's going to look after her?

(beat)

Someone needs to look after her.

There is a long pause. Sasha looks at Valentin.

SASHA

Shall I call her?

TOLSTOY

This is it(hic). The end.

He seems to smile.

SASHA  
Do you want to see her, papa?

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

He falls onto his pillow, asleep.

CHERTKOV  
It's almost over.

Sasha looks at him, shakes her head.

SASHA  
I can't do this anymore.

CHERTKOV  
He won't know who she is anyway.

142 INT. ASTAPOVO. TRAIN CARRIAGE. NIGHT. 142

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

SOFYA  
Has he asked for me?

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

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

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

REPORTER  
Countess...Countess...Do you have  
any information? Countess...Is he  
dying? Is he dead?

Sasha takes her mother's hand.

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

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

SOFYA  
Lyovochka!

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

SOFYA  
Please forgive me, my darling!

SASHA  
Mother...

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

SASHA  
Mother!

Sasha takes her hand, whispers.

SASHA  
Control yourself.

SOFYA  
Was I shouting?

SASHA  
You have to control yourself.

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

SOFYA  
You don't speak, but I hear you.

She carries on two sides of an impossible conversation.

SOFYA  
"Do you love me, Lyovochka."  
(beat)  
"Never stopped, my little bird."  
(beat)  
"And you will never stop"  
(beat)  
"Never."  
(beat)  
"Nor ever leave me again."  
(beat)  
"Never, ever again."  
(beat)  
"Good...good... let's go home"



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

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

DUSHAN  
First cessation.

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

DUSHAN  
Second cessation.

Sofya whispers quietly to her dying husband.

SOFYA  
Please forgive me if I cry a little now.

Tolstoy continues to struggle, then silence, silence.

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

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

CHERTKOV  
I am sorry, Sofya Andreyevna.

The most unlikely thing, she pats his hand.

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

Chertkov sits beside them. She turns to Dushan.

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

DUSHAN  
Yes.

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

145 EXT. ASTAPOVO. PLATFORM. DAY

145

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

Dushan faces the crowd. Quiet. Quiet.

DUSHAN

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

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

VALENTIN

Masha...

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

VALENTIN

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

MASHA

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

VALENTIN

I love you. I do. I love you.

MASHA

Then, hold me. Hold me. Hold me.

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

146 EXT. ASTAPOVO. PLATFORM. DAY.

146

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

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

ORTHODOX PRIEST

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

Sofya stares at him for a long moment.

SOFYA

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

She climbs onto the train.

147 INT. ASTAPOVO. PRIVATE CARRIAGE. DAY.

147

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

VOICE (O.S.)

Countess...Countess.

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

148 EXT. ASTAPOVO. PLATFORM. DAY.

148

VALENTIN

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

Sofya smiles

SOFYA

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

VALENTIN

Masha...this is Masha.

Sofya nods.

SOFYA

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

VALENTIN

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

SOFYA

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

VALENTIN  
God bless you, too.

149 INT. ASTAPOVO. PRIVATE TRAIN. DAY

149

Sofya sits back down with Sasha. They hold hands.

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

But at that moment, the train begins to move.

SOFYA  
Oh!

150 EXT. ASTAPOVO. PLATFORM. DAY.

150

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

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

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