

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 make shift 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 même en France. They
gossip about us in Paris... "They
do not share a similar view of
either religion or politics."
Incroyable!

TOLSTOY
(smiling)
Peut-être. 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.

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 venum.

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

Ad what do you think?

VALENTIN

He seems very sincere.

Masha hands him his tea.

VALENTIN

Thank you. Why are you laughing?

MASHA

Say that again.

VALENTIN

I said he seems very... Why?

MASHA

Is that what you think?

VALENTIN

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

MASHA

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

VALENTIN

Thank you for the tea.

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

MASHA

Tomorrow you can make your own.

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

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.

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'st 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.

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.

VALENITN
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 wants to see you.

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

49B

Valentin blanches.

VALENTIN

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

SERGEYENKO (O.S.)

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

They look at each other.

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.

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 Grigorovich. 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?

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 has 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, paranoid 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

89

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

89

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

SOFYA

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

TOLSTOY

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

SOFYA

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

Silence.

SOFYA

How can you not be pleased?

TOLSTOY

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

He gets up from his desk.

SOFYA

Where are you going?

TOLSTOY

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

SOFYA

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

TOLSTOY

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

He goes. She calls after him.

SOFYA

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

Sofya sinks into his chair. On the desk is the photograph of herself and Tolstoy that we saw her hang on the wall in the early part of the film. She looks at the wall. There in its 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 want 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.

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 Nikoleevich 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.