

Generally, the official attitude is shared in our country.
Translated literally, one would say, "The new man is the
the new." Instead, one believes, "The new man is the new."
That tends to make one think of the new man as a new man.
However, they are not. They are not. They are not. They are not.
The new man is the new man. The new man is the new man.
The new man is the new man. The new man is the new man.

OSWALD IN MINSK

by

Norman Mailer

These observations about the official attitude are offered in
the name of differentiating between those people of intelligent
background; namely, the new man. The new man is the new man.
The new man is the new man. The new man is the new man.
After all, their intelligence is the new man. The new man is the new man.
The new man is the new man. The new man is the new man.
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At any rate, the new man is the new man. The new man is the new man.
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A note on the style of this work

Generally, the definite article is absent in Russian. Translated literally, one would not say, "The man came into the room." Instead, one declares: "Man came into room." That tends to make one aware of man and room both. They have immanence. They are there. Indeed, in English, to obtain something of the same effect, one must move into the present tense. "The man comes into the room."

A decision was made therefore to dispense with the definite article wherever one could, and sometimes, indeed, when one couldn't. A literary transaction was undertaken. In return for awkwardness of phrase, my pages would feel more situated in Moscow and Minsk.

Such abstentions from the definite article also offer a means of differentiation between Soviet people of different backgrounds; needless to say, the better-educated and the more elegant are granted a greater number of definite articles. After all, their aristocratic forbears preferred French to Russian. It could even be argued that abstention from the definite article is egalitarian. Beggar seems much closer to impinging on us than the beggar (whom we can keep at arm's length).

At any rate, let me wish you good reading and quick accomodation to liberty taken with King's English.

BOOK ONE

Out of oatmeal and dandelion greens, kasha and cabbage, we can try to make a literary dish. Of a most special kind. Concerning star-crossed lovers. Let us call it Oswald in Minsk, Oswald in Minsk with Marina. When you interview witnesses about events which are now thirty years old, these witnesses have memories as well-polished as pebbles that lie in that shallow trough between sand and sea. One deals no longer with facts and their sharp edges, but with legend in all its rounded shape. Here and there, jagged stones are left, shards or artifacts of print, documents, transcripts of government commissions or private conversations recorded by security organs: these other modes of reality are strewn through our legend like debris thrown up on the strand.

Mythic forms present, however, one virtue. A legend bears its own relation to time, and may even be not unlike those sounds of the sea issuing from a spiralled shell--that meditative resonance of our ongoing universe humming in our ear, as traces of those eons of echo left behind while we plunge on.

PROLOGUE

Prologue - 1. The Village

When Valya was three years old she fell on a hot stove and burned her face and eye till for a whole year, all that time from three to four. What happened at her childhood was not easy because her mother died when Valya was four and her father was left with seven children. Her big sister, sixteen years, was only twelve.

They carried her mother about fifteen kilometers away from where they lived and her father said to them, "Now look at me and remember her." To put them all around her coffin and said, "Try to remember your mother," and when they were, all seven children, happy and in tears. Valya's mother had an appearance like a small, round, old woman, and her all these children called her mother. Her mother had died when she was delivering her eighth baby. There had been an infection of blood.

She died at about fifty kilometers from where they lived, and when they walked to the site of her last, the mother wanted to call her husband, Yuri, and tell him that she wished to see a girl again. To the day in her walking, all that time she was waiting for him to come, but he never came.

Prologue -- 1 -- Volchuk

When Valya was three years old she fell on a hot stove and burnt her face and was ill for a whole year, all that year from three to four. What remained of her childhood was not easy because her mother also died when Valya was four and her father was left with seven children. Her big sister, oldest one, was only twelve.

They buried her mother about fifteen kilometers away from where they lived and her father said to them, "Now look at her and remember her." He put them all around her coffin and said, "Try to remember your mother," and there they were, all seven children, dressed in black. Valya's dress had an ornament like a small cross. She remembers that, and how all these children cried because their mother had died when she was delivering her eighth baby. There had been an infection of blood.

She died at a hospital fifty kilometers from where they lived, and when her mother felt she was at her last, she asked somebody to call her husband, Guri, and tell him that she wished to say a few words. So she lay in bed waiting, all that time she was waiting for him to come, her eyes on the

door, and when she saw that door open and he was there, she was so weak she could only say, "Guri, please take care of children," and then she died. She couldn't live a moment longer. Of course, she still comes back to Valya in her dreams, but then her mother was very religious and always prayed to God.

Valya was fifth child in this family, but her oldest sister left home a couple of years later, and Valya had to take care of their house. Her family had four boys and three girls, now just two girls, and it was a good family, and they cooperated with one another, and were kind-hearted, and approximately everybody was equal. When Valya was seven, she could already bake bread in a stove where you had to use a special spade to insert your loaf of dough, and everybody was happy when she made her bread because it was very tasty. They had bread with milk and everybody liked it and everybody praised her.

Her father was a switchman and worked on Smolenskaya-Vitebsk section of Soviet rail system at a town called Dagromina. Their family had no older mama to help these children after their mother died so Valya's father, Guri, married again. And these children were not mad at him for this but loved her for she was a very nice person. They really loved her and called her "mama." She was very kind to

them even if she was not very healthy, and had been married twice already, but her only child from her second marriage died, and now this was a third marriage, and Valya's father and this new wife did not have children together.

Valya's oldest sister was only one not to like her father's new wife, and she was same one who left home for Moscow. This departure of her older sister came three years after Valya's mother died, and now this older sister is married and has a son who works at Kremlin hospital and her grandson is a doctor. It was difficult for her to live with Guri's second wife, so she went to visit her uncle in Moscow, and stayed with him, and since she was beautiful, she married quickly.

It is possible this stepmother married Valya's father so she wouldn't have to work in a collective farm, but could move to better surroundings in a house by Guri's railway station where it was not necessary for her to labor in fields. Valya never knew why he married her, because she spent a lot of time being sick, even hospitalized, but though she did not help a lot, these children needed her to feel like a family, to feel like they had a mother, and so they waited each time for her to come back. She did care for Guri's children. Sometimes when Valya's father went to Smolensk or to Vitebsk, and returned with something tasty and special, he would say to his

new wife, "You see, there are so many children and they are so young, so I can only bring back this small thing for you," and the wife said yes, but when he left, she usually divided it all, and never kept it for herself. She lived with them for thirty years before she died and they all grew up with her and Valya's father lived on beyond that, and did not pass away until he was eighty-seven years old. Even when life was not easy, they always had their father. And when her stepmother died, her father even married again.

They, however, were already all grown up by then and could feel no love, of course, for this third woman. She was not a clean person, nor neat. Valya's remaining sister was mean, and much tougher than Valya, and refused to come home when everything was so dirty, but their new stepmother liked Valya because she never opened her mouth against her.

Valya was shy, very shy. Always upset about her cheek. One side of her face remained scarred from that burn when she was three. It had been so painful. The hospital was far away from their house, and medical cures employed had been wrong. They used to put on some type of bandage that would dry out so when they took it away from her skin it left a mark. Besides, treatment was painful, very painful. Valya remembers crying through that whole year. She even heard some people say, "Maybe it would be better if she died, because if a girl has a

face like this, she does not have happiness." It made her a calm and quiet person, she feels, who kept everything unhappy inside, and never was emotional. She went through things and never screamed at anybody, but she felt unhappy inside.

Children, however, were never cruel to her in school. Valya had four brothers so it was not easy for children to insult her, but then her brothers and sisters were all healthy, and so had a special feeling for Valya. They pitied her because she'd been sick for that entire year and they saw her suffering. Her father even said, "You know, when you were a child I spent more time with you than with all my others. I was always keeping you in my hands for that whole year, you cried so much." Valya grew up believing that this scar on her cheek had taken away her beauty as a woman. She had a nice body, she had nice teeth, but because of her cheek she lost attractiveness as a woman. In fact, she considered herself to be not attractive. And yet there were always men around her. It was very strange. She didn't know why she attracted men but she did. Even when she was already married and was traveling from Archangel to Minsk to join her husband, at a time when it was difficult to buy train tickets and she was standing in line for 3 or 4 hours to get one, there was a captain standing on line behind her and they talked for three or four hours standing together. This captain said, "I don't

know if you're married or not, but if you can marry me, then we'll register, and you'll be my wife." And she thought, "He says this even though I have such a problem with my cheek!" And she was maybe twenty-three or twenty-four years old. He was very serious. But she said, "I'm going to my husband; I'm married."

Perhaps it was because people knew she could make a good home. All this time she was growing up, her interest was housekeeping. Everybody worked at growing vegetables or going out in the field but she liked to stay at home and take care of their house. She worked at making everything clean and she kept Guri's house spotless. It was a cottage with two rooms, one for seven children, and one for her father and his wife. There was no kitchen, but in her father's room there was a stove and she cooked meals there. On holidays, like New Year's, they put their decorated tree in the children's bedroom, where all kids slept on three beds.

This house belonged to Soviet state and by every railway station nearby was a small house, usually in a field near the railroad tracks, and first floor was an office, but second floor was given to the station man who lived there with his family. So now, whenever she passes a small railroad station, she feels sad. Her childhood had not been great nor easy, but somehow she likes to remember it and enjoy it, and

so this sadness is equal to a recollection of nice moments in life. She enjoys such sadness.

In high school, she studied German as a second language, but students were always told that fascism was a totalitarian regime and they were in a democracy of socialism, best system in the world. She didn't see her first German, however, until they arrived in a large group soon after the 22nd of June when war began in 1941. She remembers that the rye had begun to ripen, and Germans were already in Smolensk. They came so quickly. Everywhere, Russian troops were retreating, leaving behind many tanks, retreating. Germans kept coming. They were masters of this place. First there were planes, and then Germans showing up themselves, but first planes were coming in high and low, bombarding heavily. Bridges, railway station, burned villages. . . These planes came for a week, then tanks, and they occupied everything. Germans were masters. They brought their laws, all that, and didn't allow anyone to leave one's home and walk even several kilometers away without some special pass.

They would kill you. Right away, Russians had no freedom. Germans were hanging people on trees. Valya saw that: young partisans, several people on trees. She never saw them alive but she did see them hanging, already dead. Young people. She can see it to this day: There was an alley and

down this alley were people hanging on trees. Sometimes, one tree, two people. Maybe it was done deliberately to frighten everybody. These dead were certainly hanging in a place where people could see them. Everyone in their village went down to look. They were all in horror but they went to look, back then when she was sixteen, and Germans quickly overran all this country she knew.

Her father had been working at the railway station and when Germans came they kept him there. Just passed through and kept him working. But they were very cruel in other places, and burned many villages. All this while, her father kept his job at this railroad station. He had to earn a living; for that matter, not only her father, but many others also. People were worried that they were helping Germans, and might be punished later. Certainly her father worried; it was really so. He didn't say anything; he just lived, but everyone worried about her father being punished and they talked about it among themselves, and later they would wonder whether Stalin would do something in time to come. Her family always felt marked. Yet she was never a collaborator, never. Such a thought didn't even come into her head. She'd always lived honestly in her life. Besides, they beat her father.

Valya still remembers that day. Their family had a cow, but no fodder left. And when trains would pass, hay was

sometimes left on their station platform, swept out from boxcars. Her father would gather such remains. And one time, some Germans coming by on a train decided he looked Jewish because he had black hair and a black beard and black eyes, and was wearing a hat. Maybe there were three Germans and they pounded his face and he lost some teeth. There was always something wrong with his teeth after that.

When he managed to get back home that night, he cursed in a way Valya could not repeat. He said the strongest swear words, "Iti ikh mat." Very strong. It meant--because it was very strong, she couldn't say it. It meant doing something sexual to your mother. All his life, he remembered that beating. And he had to stay home for two weeks. He was afraid, but he went out again to pick up hay on their station platform because their cows needed it, and he always worried about being beaten again. . .but then, they were all afraid.

Later, these Germans took three men from her family, her father and two of her uncles, and while they didn't burn their railroad station (which was made of stone, not wood) they smashed every window. Valya remembers they didn't have soap at that time, so to wash clothing, they used burned wood, because it was a little bit soapy. And these Germans raped a lot of women, but not her stepmother, because she was not seductive enough, and none of her sisters nor herself because

they were children. Then they tried to burn her house, but they lit it quickly and moved on, and Valya had some water with burned wood she had been using for washing, so she poured enough of this water down to stop their fire. Neighbors screamed at her and said if Germans saw it, they'd burn other houses. It was very difficult. They were all standing in their yard, and these Germans had killed their dog, and all villages around their station were burned.

Soon after, came large general round-up. A great many people who were working for Germans were sent away to camp.

It was not that anybody had done something wrong. It was higher directive. And in that camp, her father stayed a year and a half until the end of war. Since Valya was sent away to Germany soon after he was put in camp, it was fortunate that she could even see him, before she too was sent away.

It happened in this manner: Their village was burned and their means of continuing to live were gone, no food, so they left, and went to look for their father who was in his detention camp thirty-five kilometers away from where they had lived, and her brothers had been taken to another place nearby where they lived under open sky, open to all weather. During this time while their father was in camp, they were allowed sometimes to bring him food. Because there was a lot of snow, they had killed their pigs and hid them. Then her stepmother

could boil meat and bring food for her brothers and her father. They would walk into camp with a small pack behind their shoulders, and in fact, sacrificed their own food for their brothers and their father, though their men, in turn, insisted on giving them back a portion. All the same, on their return, they would have to beg on the country roads. They were always hungry. All this while, she was fifteen and sixteen, no shoes, no dresses, nothing to hide, no pretty dresses to hide. Once she heard her father talking to her stepmother, and he said, "My daughters are growing up without anything to put on. Take my suit; maybe you can alter it and change it into a dress."

And once, in fact, when Valya was fifteen and her sister fourteen, they were walking to camp to bring her father food and were dressed in such old clothes that Germans mistook them for old ladies, and called them "natkas," which is a rude word, like "old bags." Valya still remembers that when she was fifteen, someone mistook her for an "old bag." It truly impressed her.

One day in June of 1944, with no warning, Germans came and took all young people her age and put them on a train, loaded them into a box-car, closed it, and transported them to Germany. All the girls were crying desperately. It happened around noon and they were rounded up and brought to their

railway station and put on a box-car. They told them not even to bother changing clothes; just took them in clothes they were wearing, and she learned later that her father couldn't find her when he came back from camp, and fell to his knees and wept, but there she was, in a wagon, jammed in with so many other girls, and no toilet. They had to pull up a plank, and make a hole in their floor. That was what they used. No food.

On this day she was taken away, she doesn't remember how many boxcars there were, but it was a long train, and they had been picked up from a place where they had been working with shovels, and had been put on this train. She was taken off to Germany in what she was wearing then, toward the end of war in 1944. It was a large group of people, and they had to climb up into their boxcar. There were no steps nor even that kind of plank that cows go up.

"They just pushed us in there and closed our door. These Germans didn't scream at anybody, but were very strict. They didn't beat us, but were strict. People were in there already from other places; they kept collecting people at each station."

Her train was maybe half full when she got on. "Later, after more stops, it was jammed. Nobody had anything but what they were wearing. It all happened about two in the

afternoon." That morning, she had not known. Nobody knew anything. So, they were all sitting there and crying. Many people of her age. In that boxcar, she would never forget what she saw on this train to Germany. "No painter could make that picture. Not a face with a smile. On all faces, only fear and tears, as if life had ended, horror had followed. It was dark inside. No toilet. This fear was like a cry at one end of the world. And then they had to make that hole in the floor of the train." She doesn't remember what tool they used; maybe there was already a little hole, and they widened it with their fingers, all these girls between seventeen and eighteen.

After a couple of days they came to Poland and Valya never saw a single town and doesn't remember anything about it except that she was told, yes, it was Poland. And they were in a transit camp where they were told to line up and take off their clothes and their teeth were checked like horses and every other part of their bodies, and they were given injections, all in a line nude, both men and women. It was very uncomfortable; they didn't know what was going to happen next; they were all there standing nude without really knowing what was to come. She didn't feel ashamed because everyone else was nude, but it was uncomfortable. Exposed, and vulnerable. Nobody said a word, and to this day Valya thinks

that injections given them on that day kept her from getting pregnant later.

Then they were taken back to their train and this time they were on it for a week, and were given a little food, a spoonful of soup, a bite of meat, there was room to sit down on the floor, which was better than when this train first went from Byelorussia to Poland, for on that first trip everybody had to stand. But now everyone looked as if they were being taken to be executed.

Every once in a while their train would stop and they would be given hot water with small pieces of cabbage. Even now Valya can't stop crying when she remembers. Eventually they arrived at Frankfurt-am-Main where there was a camp prepared. They lived in wooden houses and heard that Germans killed a lot of people, burned them in stoves, but all these girls she was with were young and were going to be used for work. Valya had known from first day on that Germans came how anyone was in trouble who was looking a little like a Jew. There were conversations that Germans didn't like Jews and wanted to kill them; that Jews are shrewd and don't want to work, always wanted to live at someone's expense. Valya thought that was not true because every human being is a human being.

In camp, their beds were made of wood, no blankets, no

pillows, and by preference they slept outside as long as weather was warm. A little later, they were given wooden shoes with hide inside and a jacket that bore a special signature, "Ost," so everyone would know where they had come from--East.

Every day at 7 they would walk downhill from camp to take a train to Frankfurt-am-Main where they would work all day and not return until late at night. When they would get back their only toilet was in the camp street and sometimes you had to wait in line. She was in this camp for nine months. Valya never saw anyone get shot, although a few young girls died of disease or malnutrition. But there came a day in spring of 1945 when a train didn't come to pick them up for their job and they were forced to go to work on foot. Now they could see that American planes had come over the night before in a really large bombing, and Valya saw a railroad track standing vertically in air. Everything was bombed. She was afraid to return to camp for fear of another bombing so she stayed alone in Frankfurt while a friend started back, but not too many minutes had gone by when she thought, "What am I going to do here alone?" and so she ran to catch her friend. Germans had put mines on a bridge but she crossed it and nobody said a word to her, as if it was normal to just walk in between such mines. At camp, people said they were going to be evacuated,

and everyone was afraid. Would they be put into stoves and burned? Because where would they be evacuated to?

People started to escape, and with others Valya went down a hill, which was so steep they had to roll down parts of it. They had to cross a valley after this hill, and a small forest, and houses where Germans lived, and one German who was with them hid them in a special place below ground for storage, a bin in earth, and there they lived for ten days with no light, and they stayed there till war was over.

Valya heard that it was all craziness up above all this while she was below earth. By the time she came out ten days later she didn't even know that war had ended, but this German man had saved her group, since half of her camp had been killed in a battle between Germans and Americans. When she came up, however, she saw Americans for the first time in her life. There were a lot of Negroes. She remembers that they looked nice; they were all so body-built; they looked happy and alive. War was over and they were proud they had liberated people. It was first time she had seen smiles in a year. Valya thinks that even when she dies, she'll remember this day and how it was when she came out into the light. There was a lot of sun and it was as if her life started again.

Valya remembers one American soldier who came up to her,

took his canteen, and gave her a big piece of chocolate. It was first time in her life she tasted chocolate, and there was wine in his canteen. So there she was, never drank alcohol before either, and suddenly she didn't feel well. So in midst of happiness, she had to throw up.

These Americans said to them, "Go back to your camp," but half their camp was empty, and then American officers said, "If you don't want to go back to Russia, you can stay here, we'll try to help you with jobs." But Valya felt she couldn't stay on this American side. She loved her father and missed him a lot. So those of her friends who chose like her were sent to a transit camp, called Russian Reevaluation Camp, and they were mixed in with people, an ocean of people. In Frankfurt-am-Oder, in this Russian camp, they waited. War had ended in May and now it was June, and she worked in nearby fields, separating good grass from bad for cows, then milked cows, then was put to work in a small butter factory and was promoted and even put in charge because she worked so well. Here in this butter factory, she met a man she loved, and she loved him very much, but only for two months. He was tall and very shy, a modest person, a very good person, and you could hardly say they were dating, but they would meet each night after work and kiss. He never even touched her breasts. He proposed to her and said, "When we are back in Russia, we'll

marry." And she even had a dream that she was kissing him and kissing him and couldn't stop, but when she told this dream to her girlfriends, they said, "Listen, it means you will never see him again," and it turned out to be true, because Russian army needed him, and she didn't even have a chance to say goodbye. She cried then. She loved him so much because she had never seen such tenderness in her life. He had been close to her for two months and never asked her once what happened to her face. He treated her as if something very special was about her, whereas when she met that man who would be her husband some time later, he asked her on second day they knew each other what had injured her cheek.

She married this second man but she always felt more comfortable with her first one. She never saw him again, even though they wrote letters to each other. Even when she was married to her husband she wrote letters but then she stopped because she got scared. For indeed, in spite of her face, this second man had married her, so she felt grateful. She was afraid to lose him. Therefore, she stopped writing.

The first man, Vladimir, wrote to her that he was married to a teacher and that he went to theater with her a lot and to cinema and added, "I've known you only for two months but my heart belongs to you." And even though she didn't have a sexual relationship with that man, she loved him very much;

she believed he loved her and believes that if he's still alive now, he still loves her.

After Vladimir was gone, she kept working at this small place they called a butter factory and a soldier who was assigned to a hospital nearby would come to her dairy to take food to that man who would become her future husband. Valya finally asked: "For whom do you take all this?" He said, "There is one lieutenant who is sick and I give it to him." She said, "OK, give him my best regards and tell him we want him to be healthy." She said it just to be nice to someone who was ill. But when the soldier came back, he said, "This lieutenant, he sends you best regards too" and it turned out later that her husband-to-be had been told: "You know, there's one girl who works there, she's so kind and nice, she even gave food to me." Soon enough that lieutenant was assigned to be boss of her whole butter factory, and he turned out to be tall and very strict, as strict as a German. One evening every dairy girl went to movies, but Valya--she doesn't remember why--stayed home. Perhaps she was depressed. She saw somebody walk by in a leather jacket--even now she has this leather jacket--and he looked at her and said, "Why didn't you go out?" Then he recognized her and said, "OK, let's introduce ourselves to each other," and as people of his rank usually did, he invited her to his office, and she went there

and they talked. He said, "Tell me your story." She told him everything. Then a friend of his came by who could play the piano, so this officer said to her, "Do you dance?" and since there was nobody around, he invited her, and then he said, "Thank you for your regards." It was then Valya understood that this was the sick man who in hospital to whom she had delivered all that food.

He was married. That is, he had been married in 1939 but his wife sent him only one letter in four years and then she divorced him when he was in Germany. She wanted to marry a pilot. This tall man told her his story, and then said he had never had any children with that wife. He showed her a picture. His former wife was very attractive.

This officer was fifteen-and-a-half years older than Valya, and very severe in manner, but he was nice when he danced. But then, next evening he asked her about her face and she was offended and cried all night once she was alone. She thought he lacked any sense of tact. Only later did she tell him she was upset about it, upset because she hardly knew him and he certainly didn't know her but already he was kissing her and asking her questions. Later she forgave him for his lack of tact.

He was a very intelligent person, very cultured. After they were married, she discovered he had great tact and it was

not possible not to love him, but it was a different type of love than she had had for first man, Vladimir. First love is first love. This man that she would marry was tall, slender and handsome, and not only elegant and intelligent on their first evening but remained so all their life. He always behaved in a special manner, very neat, very elegant. At the end of their life together, just a few years ago, when he got sick and had a high temperature, he was so neat that when an ambulance came for him, he said, "Valya, do you think I can go without a tie?" She did not know whether to laugh or to weep.

They stayed together through most of that following year in Germany, nine months. They met in August of 1945, and were married in May of 1946, and Ilya--for that was his name-- courted her in a proper way. He protected her and treated her with great tenderness. She never thought they would marry. He treated her very nicely as a human being, as a person, and she liked him, but he was sick often. He had gotten some kind of disease during his campaigns and she tried to help him. Once in this period he was taken to a hospital and she couldn't even find the place; it was that difficult for her to visit him. But when he came back, he said, "You know, you did so much for me when I was in trouble, that I'll always take care of you. I'd marry you if you'd agree, but I know you're so young; you're much younger--I can't propose marriage to you

because there's such a big difference, and you're a young woman. Maybe later on you'll find someone else and I'll be jealous. So I'd like to propose to you and to marry you but it's up to you to decide."

Of course, he had a very serious inflammation in one of his bones, and after that he had another illness where he ran a temperature of 40 degrees Centigrade, which is 104 Fahrenheit, and when he was in a nearby hospital, he asked Valya to bring him chicken broth. It was not possible to buy a chicken, so Valya found a Polish woman who spoke German and took her to another town to buy a chicken from which she boiled chicken broth. Then he asked her to bring tea, and he wanted his tea to be of a certain temperature because he felt more comfortable with it, so she ran because she was afraid the tea would get cold. Then there were other things she did: she repaired his clothes and was happy to do it. She wanted to do it. He said that even if she didn't want to marry him he would always take care of her and would try always to be near her. He said, "I'll always help you; I'll train you and teach you to be a typist. I'd always like you to be near me." But in fact she agreed to marry him. In fact, she expected he would propose.

It also turned out that this fine officer, Ilya, had suffered several serious war wounds. Not only had his leg

been seriously injured by machine gun bullets but he had been near some explosion that had left him with a condition called khontuzhiny. It meant he'd been close to some explosion. His brain had suffered a shock. Concussion. Khontuzhiny.

Meanwhile, their butter factory was closed, and because Ilya wished to keep Valya near him, he arranged to give her a job, and she cooked for Russian soldiers and officers.

She was so full of energy and so sweet and happy and so much on the move that Ilya began to call her volchuk, which is a special toy like a top, brightly painted, and always moving, very funny, very gay, very energetic, always moving. She, in turn, called him Illichka. When they decided to register their relationship and so be married, he went to Potsdam. She didn't even have a nice dress but he bought her a beautiful one with many embroideries and she remembers that she went by train from Berlin and she was very happy because now she knew she was going to be married for he had told his relatives.

Back in Russia, however, after they were married, they moved in with these relatives in Archangel. That was more difficult. Archangel was far up north, north past Finland. Now they were no longer together, just the two of them. Instead, she was part of a large family. Ilya never changed: never in his life did he offend her or insult her personally, and she loved him so much that when he would come home from

work she always looked at him with such admiration that his mother said, "Don't look with that much happiness or you could hurt him. Nezglaz. Don't look at him so much that evil comes." Yes, it was dangerous to let the devil know how happy you were.

All the same, thirteen years of living with his relatives was to follow. Of course, it was no surprise. Before they went to register their marriage, Ilya had said, "Valya, I want to tell you that I'll never leave my mother." So Valya was prepared to share her life with his family. She knew that his mother had a very large influence on him. Always. In addition, Ilya's first wife was a woman whom he brought back from a holiday in a health resort and his mother, Tatiana, had been very unhappy about it. In his mother's opinion, when a man goes to the Crimea on vacation, meets a woman and marries her, it's bad form: you don't know this person; you had fun for a few weeks, then you marry; such a woman is tricky--she trapped him into marriage. Ilya's mother said it was not a serious decision. Just passion, not marriage. On vacation, it's a nice time, of course, you meet somebody who's fun, then you marry without ever knowing who this person is. Tatiana was very unhappy about Ilya's first marriage and she had been right: it didn't last through a bad war.

When Ilya came back with Valya, however, Tatiana accepted

her, and so did all of Ilya's sisters, more or less. Everybody, however, was surprised. Ilya was such an attractive and educated man and he had married a woman who had a difficult problem with that burn mark on her face. Everyone said, "Couldn't he find someone who's his match?" And, of course, they talked about it. But Ilya did like young women, and Valya was young.

During this beginning it was difficult for Valya because she couldn't get used to such a type of family. She was, after all, from a village and she came into a family which was more intelligent and educated. And she was young, and didn't know what to do. She was very young. Later on, she learned everything, but at first it was difficult to do what was expected--it was a different style of life. If she and Ilya had started their lives together alone, it would have been easier for her. But now she was not in charge of her own small family but coming to a large one, and main thing is that she felt uncomfortable. So many new people around. She felt a little bit closed. Everything was different--she didn't even know how to set table exactly so, or maybe she was dressed a little differently--but she was always trying to learn and Ilya's mother did teach her a lot.

Tatiana was a very good cook and Valya was always around her and learned to cook better than Ilya's sisters. Also,

Ilya never made excuses about Valya, he said, "This is the woman I love"--and that was it. For that matter, he had brought her from Germany and if you don't love a woman, you don't bring her with you to another place.

In their first years together, Valya wanted to have children, wanted that a lot, and every month at a certain period of time she would cry, and he would always say "Don't worry." Now she thinks that he was never upset about it. At end of his life, he even said to her: "Maybe it's good we didn't have children: look around. Nowadays, children are not really good." His mother, however, wanted a grandchild. Tatiana had only had two sons and one died at the front; now Ilya was her favorite.

When they came to Archangelsk, they lived in an apartment with three rooms. Valya would never forget that first thing Tatiana said was, "I have five daughters. Now you'll be my sixth." Of course, she was surprised how young Valya was, and besides Valya couldn't have looked too good that day. En route, during all those days of travelling from Germany to Archangelsk, after all those years of eating very little, Ilya bought her everything on their train trip, indeed, so much food that she had stomach problems and stopped eating. By end of trip, when they arrived at Archangelsk, she was so thin.

When she came to live with Ilya's family, however, she

fell in love with him for a second time, fell in love with him more. Because his family cared for each other so much. One night, for example, they brought out an album of photographs, and everybody looked and Valya had to think how different it was from her family where they'd never had anything like that. They'd been so poor. His family was far better off, and so she felt embarrassed when they sat around their big table and his mother asked, "Now tell me your stories, tell me about yourself." Fortunately, before Valya began to give many details, Ilya's mother said, "You know, by the way, Ilyusha was already married for one year with a woman. It was not a very good marriage. This woman was brought up by a stepmother." Valya got upset for she, too, of course, had been brought up that way, so she touched her husband's foot under the table, and he touched back, and she understood him to mean "don't tell her." So Valya didn't mention that her mother had died. But later on, her mother-in-law asked, "Why do you always talk about your father? Why do you never tell me anything about your mother?" So she was obliged to confess that she, too, did have a stepmother.

Perhaps Valya loved him more after meeting his family because she realized he had a happy life with this family, and so if he had chosen her that meant he really loved her. It wasn't as if he just needed her. Besides, his family was so

elegant. Everything here was more cultural. They did the same things other families did, and they lived together with love like Valya's family, but they did it in a different way, more grace. So she could love him more because he changed her life to make it better.

Of course, she just didn't have much freedom. Everyone's eyes were always watching her and she remembers that one time when they were in bed together she even cried because she did not feel alone.

Ilya's sister Klava lived with them, and Klavdia had two children, Marina and Petya, and another sister Musya lived with them, and still another, Luba, and while Tatiana was, of course, closer to her own daughters than to Valya, she always treated Valya well. For example, Tatiana liked to drink tea. They usually had it in a samovar, and sometimes Valya would be sitting in their yard on a bench and if tea was ready, her mother-in-law would always say, "Valya, join me." She was like a girlfriend, and Valya could tell her many things.

The center of this household, however, was Marina, daughter of Ilya's sister, Klava. Marina was five years old and very pretty and very bright. She had large beautiful blue eyes, exceptional, blue eyes like diamonds in a child's face, and her grandmother more than admired her. You could say this grandmother Tatiana was madly in love with her. Marina was

not exactly spoiled, but she was izbalivnia, which is a softer estimate than spoiled for it means somebody who may have been loved too much. There was certainly a tendency to deal with this child more leniently than a strict but normal parent might accept. Marina was a nice child and Valya liked her, and in school Marina got only the highest marks. She was very happy, and all her family was for Marina.

There was no father around for Marina. Already there was a stepfather and this was a man named Medvedev, Alexander Medvedev. At first he treated Marina very well.

As for Marina's natural father, Valya was never sure what happened to him. It is not clear. He had disappeared in 1941 before Marina was born. Ilya never explained what really happened. He just said that Marina's missing father was a nice man and an attractive man, and Klavdia's sister, Musya, saw him once back then and said he was a very attractive man with very attractive eyes, an engineer whose name was Nikolaev. Nikolaev had known Ilya because they had worked together on building a new place where before there had only been water and marsh, but now that town exists, Severodvinsk, a place about fifty kilometers north of Archangelsk.

At that time, Ilya already had a job at Ministry of Internal Affairs, which was called MVD, and he would always be in MVD; he never left. Nikolaev and Ilya knew each other for

several years but Valya doesn't know when Marina's mother, Klavdia, fell in love.

Ilya always said Nikloaev was a good person but never discussed him further with Valya, and Klavdia never spoke about Nikolaev either, but then Klavdia did seem in love with her Medvedev, this stepfather. Valya, however, didn't like Mednedev personally; her heart was not for him. Maybe it was because he was an only son, somewhat spoiled himself, or maybe he looked down on her, because she was not beautiful.

As for Nikolaev, Valya thinks maybe they didn't tell her what was true because she was not a member of their family; maybe they didn't want to disgrace themselves. Perhaps Nikolaev had been married to some other woman, just made a baby with Klavdia and left. On the other hand, it was Stalin's period. Valya remembers how when she was a child Stalin gave everybody a slogan that went: "We have started to live better and we have more fun." There had been a man in the crowd who heard this slogan and added, "Yes, so much fun that you could cry." He was taken to prison for that. It was a terrible time. Even after Stalin died, and Khrushchev came, people had the habit of not talking and so this Prusakov family never mentioned a word about Nikolaev any time. In that period it was considered a shame, a terrible shame, to have a child who could be called illegitimate and Marina's

grandmother was all for Klavdia's baby and said, "All right, this baby is not guilty," and she, too, never said a word. In any event, Ilya always said that Nikolaev was a nice man, and that then was a time when you could be blamed for nothing at all, so it doesn't mean that he was bad. Ilya might look tough, but he was full of principles, and in his heart he was very human. Valya never knew anybody with such a good heart, but, of course, his work kept him in a system where all his life, he had to be very strict.

Despite all those years in Archangelsk with Ilya's family, it was still a good life because at least Valya and her husband had a separate room, and so could have their privacy in this room. One could make no noise, but still, if that was their most terrible thing, one could live with that even if you couldn't look forward to summer because Ilya didn't like to hunt for mushrooms all that much. Mosquitoes were terrible in Archangelsk in summer, so you couldn't even wait for summer and going out with your husband to search for mushrooms and being alone out there in the fields full of grass.

Archangelsk, in this period, was no big city and didn't have many real roads. Most were mud, or laid down wooden logs instead of roads, but it had a nice harbor and their Dvina River was deep there, so ocean-going ships could come in from

White Sea. Also, people were nice and extremely clean, and Archangelsk markets were exceptionally so. Valya just lived at home and took care of things for her mother-in-law. Neither then, nor later in life, did she go to Ilya's office. Nor did she know exactly what kind of work he did, whether he was office manager, or production manager. She knew there were people who worked in factories and camps who'd been sentenced for certain things they did, and they worked there. Ilya never worked directly with such people, he was more like a person who controlled production. He dealt with people who were managing factories. It was not that he had very highest position, but he did have a most responsible job, and she would say he was happy with it. Certainly he never discussed anything negative with her, and she didn't show interest. That was his job in Archangelsk, and that would be his job again when he and most of his family went down to Minsk.

Archangelsk was too cold for him. He had a kind of arthritis in his back and couldn't bear cold weather too well: with this rheumatism, he needed to live in a warmer climate. So, in 1951, they moved from Archangelsk to Minsk, first Ilya, then a month later she joined him. At first, they had to share a kitchen with another family and had only one room, although later they would live better. But Valya never did know exactly what kind of work he did because he was in a

special Ministry controlling some kind of production which was under both Military and Security, and in fact Ilya's office was in that same big building where KGB had its offices, a large yellow building five stories high with columns in front and large wings, a state building, classical, with small doors, Valya remembered, for such a large building.

Ilya was, of course, a member of Communist Party, but he and Valya never talked much about it, and he never asked her to join. In fact, he never said a word about it. While he was not a devoted Party member, he was responsible, and he was loyal; he paid fees regularly and did everything he had to do to be responsible. In fact, if all Communists had been like Ilya, then it'd be a different world because Ilya was very honest. Valya never met anyone more so than him.

Valya had to like Minsk. It had been destroyed completely during Great Patriotic War. Twice destroyed: once when Germans came in and once when Germans retreated back into Poland three years later. Ninety per cent of Minsk was completely destroyed. A decision was taken after the war to rebuild it, and not in a different location which might have been easier, but right over its ruins. That was in 1945. When Valya and Ilya moved to there in 1951, Minsk's town center had been rebuilt in a new style so that it didn't look at all like Minsk before when that city had numberless small

wooden houses that all leaned against one another. Now it was stately, five and six-story buildings, lots of yellow stone like Leningrad, and broad avenues, nice apartment houses that looked as if they'd been built a hundred years ago by Czarist officials. It was a clean city now in 1951, free of ruins and life was good there. Food was everywhere in Minsk shops: black caviar, red caviar, many different types of sausages and cheeses. She and Ilya didn't have a good deal of money, but enough, and they lived near the center of this clean city rebuilt well by German prisoners, and now were gone back to their country. Even Ilya's mother, who didn't want to move from Archangelsk because she had a good apartment with three rooms, and didn't pay a lot for it, was much impressed when she came to Minsk after they'd been there for a couple of months, and said, "Oh, here I feel as if I am in paradise," and at about this time, they were even able to move into two rooms and share a kitchen with another family. Then Musya came with her three children, so now there was Ilya's mother, his sister, and three children with them--seven people living in two rooms. But then Musya's husband got an apartment, so Ilya and herself no longer had to sleep on the floor but in their own bed in their own room. They went on that way for years with Ilya's mother, Valya and Ilya all living in one small apartment, sharing a kitchen with a neighbor who had

three children and worked as a prosecutor. They got along with them well, and in fact, their neighbors were upset when they left and said, "We'll never meet such nice people again." And then, believe it, even though they were sharing a kitchen and there were all those people, there had never been one problem. Even though their toilet was outside, and one had to go when it was zero and worse, but then Valya felt strong. Since childhood, she had been used to going about without shoes, yet at night when she wanted to go, Ilya always worried. He would wake up too and say, "Wear your shoes for outside." So even though she had gone barefoot in snow as a child, she would wear shoes to walk thirty meters to a toilet in their apartment house yard. Of course, her feet were always hot and Ilya would use them to keep himself warm.

Still, Valya and Ilya were relatively rich; they had a three-room apartment. So, home became like a hostel; all of his relatives, whoever was temporarily in Minsk, stayed with them.

Ilya was not a drunk, but when he drank a little, he would change. His eyes and face would become soft, and he would be very agreeable. Sometimes when Valya wanted him to agree with her on some problem, she would say, "Honey, would you like a little bit of alcohol with your lunch?" After that, when she would ask, he would agree. Otherwise, it was

sometimes difficult.

In this period between 1955 and 1960, Valya knew that all production that Ilya oversaw was done with prisoners. Her husband never said anything to her, but sometimes when officers that he worked with came over for dinner and drinks, she would hear them talking and she knew there was a plan to be fulfilled: concept was that people should work well, and deliver production according to plan. But they never discussed it between themselves as husband and wife.

Valya could keep secrets. If you told her not to say something, she wouldn't. Once Ilya was on a business trip, and telephoned her and said that one of his colleagues would come over to their apartment, and she should give him a key to his safe.

Shortly afterwards, somebody knocked at her door and a man in civil clothes entered, and asked if he could have that key. She said to herself, "Maybe someone listened to my telephone conversation." So she asked, "Can you show me your I.D.?" And after he did, she gave it to him.

Later, he told Ilya, "You have such a wife! She demanded my I.D.!" Valya didn't know what kind of secrets he had in his safe, but if Ilya told her to do something, she did it properly.

Valya's only trip to Leningrad occurred when Marina was

eleven or twelve, a few years before Klavdia died. Klavdia lived then with her husband Alexander Medvedev in one room with three children and when Valya and Ilya and Tatiana arrived, it was difficult, all eight people in one room, a huge family for so small a space. That made tensions because Alexander Medvedev, stepfather of Marina, also had a mother who did not take to Klavdia, and didn't like it for her son to be married to a woman who already had a child. This step-grandmother was a very intelligent woman but mean and fat, and like a witch. So Marina's situation was now different. Marina was no longer at center of her family.

At that time, before Klavdia died, Marina's stepfather Alexander didn't treat Marina or her mother improperly, but already difficulties were there. Klavdia had an advanced case of rheumatism and something wrong with her hand, and Ilya once told Valya: "You can see how sick she is." And Alexander's attitude toward Marina had changed once his own children with Klavdia were born. Ilya was told that Alexander now punished Marina a lot, and matters got worse after Klavdia died, especially when Marina turned seventeen and was starting to go out a lot.

Approximately a year after her mother died, Marina wrote a letter to her aunts in Minsk in which she said it was very difficult for her to continue to stay with her stepfather, and

asked if she could come to live with them.

Actually, at this time, such a situation was not too good for Valya. She had been living for years with her mother-in-law, but Tatiana had died in the last year, and been buried in Minsk, not Archangelsk or Leningrad, her real homes, because you are buried where you have your propiska, or your passport, that stamp which states where you live at present, your city and your street, so you can't be buried wherever you want, but where your propiska shows you live. So, Tatiana, no matter what her wishes, was buried in Minsk.

Now, not a year later, Valya wasn't too happy to have Marina come. She was tired of her relatives. She didn't show it, but then, in all these years, somebody in Ilya's family was always living with them. Tatiana had even died in their home. In her last ten months, Valya took care of her so closely that before she went, she said to Valya, "I survive, I live only because of you, Valya." Ilya was in effect like a father of his family and when his sister Luba lived with them she never gave over any of her salary. So, Ilya was very much devoted to his roots. Valya felt that he could give time to his wife only when they went to bed. Of course, a family is a family, and of course, said Valya, I wanted more love, more tenderness, more to say about things. There were times when I was tired but I never had fights with anybody.

Still, when Marina arrived at Minsk train station, Valya saw that she had only one suitcase and Valya pitied her, she felt sorry for her, the girl seemed so happy to have been able to move to Minsk. She was very shy, and for a little while, very obedient. Just a sweet eighteen-year-old. Marina had a nice natural color to her lips and never put on any lipstick. She was naturally very attractive even if she was afraid to smile because one of her front teeth was a little in front of the other. It would have been nice if Valya didn't feel she would have to share her life with one more relative again.

Of course, Marina didn't know a great deal about housework. If Valya asked her to do something, she would try it, but she couldn't cook. While she washed her own clothes, she hardly knew how to do that properly. Then, when Marina got a place in a hospital pharmacy for which kind of work she'd been trained in Leningrad, she was usually tired when she came back from her job, so she didn't really have house duties. She was free to go to movies, to parties, to theatre. Valya, after all, did not go out to work, so she was responsible for entire apartment. Sometimes, Marina did wash floors, and sometimes she washed dishes, and certainly when she was alone and took a plate of food, she never left dishes for Valya to take care of. And she had her job. People were needed in pharmacy work, and Marina liked it. She told Valya

and Ilya, "I'll cure you," because at that time she had access to different types of medicine, and she even had a best friend named Larissa, her neighbor, a very pretty girl, a very good girl, nice, a quiet girl, studied well, studied at the Institute, who was exceptionally attractive too. As for dates, usually Marina was critical of them, very critical. If a boy said something wrong, or bought something cheap, that was his end, goodbye! She told Valya that she stopped seeing a man she had dated in Leningrad because he bought her cheap sweets. Of course, being so critical for someone in her position, was an unusual matter. Girls like Marina with no more than a vocational education were not considered to be outstanding girls such as those who went to an Institute or to Universities, in fact girls like Marina were not usually dated for serious relationships by the best young men in the best schools. But Marina only liked people who were educated.

Valya never saw her go out with an average man. She had lots of boyfriends but they were students at an Institute or at University of Minsk, and she went to their parties with her friend Larissa, and spent all her earnings for clothes. After all, Ilya and Valya were not going to take a part of her salary for food. Sometimes if Marina wanted money for theatre or movies, she would sew her own clothes.

She was always busy concerning clothes and very

industrious. She liked to sew, she liked to make embroidery and she cut up all of Valya's old fur coats to make hats for herself.

She also read a lot, particularly Theodore Dreiser. Marina loved Dreiser, who was very popular at this period of time, but then there were hundreds of books in their apartment to read for Ilya had purchased complete sets of works by famous Russian authors, and Valya would read Chekhov and Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky, Turgenev, Pushkin, Gogol, Lermontov. Marina, however, liked Dreiser more. Writers like Chekhov she was always having to get through in school as part of her education.

So, taken in the whole, it was all right with Marina. Valya never minded that Marina did not contribute to their living because she had been so poor when she arrived that she didn't even have underwear, and her salary was small. She needed everything--shoes, stockings, clothes from her head to her feet--and Valya pitied her, for Marina had had a very difficult destiny. Marina even told Valya that she loved her. Loved her a lot. Marina said Valya was the first woman to treat her decently and give her all this freedom, and in turn, Valya loved her, pitied her and loved her.

Ilya, in his turn, was much more strict. If Marina came home late on a date, he worried. She was a young woman and he

was worried till she came back. Not everything went smoothly between them either, for Marina had a quick tongue. On the other hand, there was one young man Ilya liked for he had very good manners, a young medical student named Sasha, and Ilya even had coffee with him. Then, of course, there wasn't really all that much friction with Ilya because Marina didn't come home late all that often when he was home. She saved late nights for times when Ilya was away on a business trip and Valya was alone. Then, Marina could get in later. Marina had told Valya that in Leningrad, her stepfather, Medvedev, didn't allow her back into his apartment if she was late. So she had had to sleep near an entrance somewhere, on the staircase, for example, and Valya cried when she heard that. Maybe Marina didn't come home on time, maybe she was late, but when she heard about this staircase, Valya was terrified.

Valya always wondered why, after Klavdia died, and Alexander, her stepfather, mistreated her, why she had never asked any of her aunts or Ilya to take her then? "Why did she stay in Leningrad, and only later on ask us? Why did she never ask before?"

Yet Marina was full of envy when she finally arrived. She said, "Oh, what a paradise you two have here." Valya never understood what she meant by paradise, because there wasn't anybody to work for Valya. She did it herself, and if

it was a paradise, she was the one who had worked hard to create it.

Still, there was no real problem with Marina. Her room was always neat and there was never any difficulty with their bathroom, and, in turn, Valya would never say a word to her when she did come home late because she trusted that Marina was a nice girl. For that matter, Marina shared her secrets with Valya who then knew which boyfriend she liked, and those she was most critical of.

For such a reason, Valya pitied Sasha when Marina didn't treat him very well. Valya just couldn't see people being handled so rudely. She could still see Sasha, "Coming every time, with flowers, and being so nice to Marina. And how Marina treated him!"

Sasha was so much in love with Marina that Ilya and Valya had even started to call him "son-in-law," but one day, feeling sorry for him, Valya started talking to Sasha and told him that if you're going to marry Marina, you have to understand that she had a very difficult time in Leningrad. Sasha said, "I don't want to hear anything about that."

Marina came home about this time, overheard part of their conversation, took Valya into the kitchen to tell her how upset she was, then came out and said to Sasha, "I don't want to see you any more."

It depressed Valya, but then you could say that Marina was the master, the boss of herself. Living with her stepfather Alexander Medvedev, she had gotten used to making her own decisions and being that big boss of herself. No one could influence her, Valya decided, because Marina was accustomed to taking serious decisions by herself, without a mother, without a father. Valya knew, for example, that Marina was smoking and hiding her cigarettes. Somebody had introduced her to cigarettes in Leningrad, Femina she smoked, a Bulgarian cigarette that came in a very pretty box. They were slender and slim and very feminine. Valya learned she was smoking because a neighbor saw Marina doing it in a restaurant and told Valya. It was fortunate Uncle Ilya was away. They called it komandirovka, when he had to go to another city on business. And Valya had a toothache. So she said to Marina, "I took medicine, it doesn't help. I'm hurting. Give me one of your cigarettes." Marina was flabbergasted. She said, "I don't have any." Valya said, "Come on, don't lie to me. Go get it from your purse."

Marina said, "Did you check my things?" And Valya said, "I know you're smoking," and told her about that restaurant. Valya said, "This is for my toothache. You know, nicotine, pain-killer." So Marina did give her one, after which Valya said, "You better stop doing it. If you don't quit, I'm going

to tell Uncle Ilya."

But she wouldn't quit, Valya knew. Marina liked smoking. It was Western, adventurous. Like Italian cinema. Marina loved them so much, Fellini films.

Those movies certainly gave her ideas. Once Marina even told her that in her opinion, Ilya was not for Valya; officers were always marrying educated women. Valya still remembers; it hurt her deeply.

Valya had always been very faithful to her husband, but Marina didn't understand why. She wanted Valya to have an affair with somebody. She even urged her. Since Valya couldn't have a baby with Ilya, why didn't Valya make a baby with someone else? "Why should you suffer because of him?" And Marina said that if Valya had a man over, she, Marina, could even sit at the entrance and watch if Ilya was coming. "If you could have your affair, then you could have a baby." Of course, Ilya was sometimes very strict with Marina. And Marina didn't like that. "She was young. She didn't understand anything. Although it had to be said, she could always stand for herself." No one could offend her without being paid back. Once Valya and Marina were marinating cucumbers and needed leaves from a berry bush to flavor them, so they went to a theatre where there were many flowers outside, and one berry bush, and they started to pick leaves.

There was a woman in charge of this park who began to scold them and said, "How do you dare? Don't you know why we put bushes and flowers around? Don't you know that we want to look beautiful, that we want all of our city to enjoy it? And you come here and destroy such beauty?" But Marina said, "You know what we're going to do? Pickle cucumbers. Come visit us and you will have some cucumbers too. What are you doing, after all? We're not doing anything wrong." If it were not for Marina, maybe Valya would have been fined, but Marina could always stand by her decisions and feel that whatever she was up to was right.

One night in March of 1961, Ilya was away on a business trip and Marina went to a dance at the Palace of Trade Unions and then came back later that night and woke up Valya and whispered to her that she'd been dancing, and then she said, "Valya, get up. Show how cultured you are because I have brought home an American. I brought you an American. Make a good cup of coffee." Marina was happy and said, "I would like for you to act educated and cultural."

Of course, Valya got scared. She almost shivered in bed. If Marina had come through the door with an American ten years earlier, back in Stalin's day, they'd all be in prison. Now, in 1961, there was a big difference in feeling as between Stalin and Khrushchev, and so Valya remembers that she was not

very worried and got up and made coffee for the American, who was nice, very nice and dressed very neatly, clean and neat, and his name was Alik because as she learned later, nobody could say "Lee," it sounded like "Li," that is, Chinese, and so it was a while before she learned his full American name was Lee Harvey Oswald.

Prologue -- 2 -- Zatouk

Sasha Piskalev, seventeen years old by the summer of 1958, had wanted to become a doctor, but couldn't pass his exams at Medical Institute first time he tried. It was one serious blow. From childhood, Sasha had dreamed about living his life in medicine. He had been an ailing child, so he always loved and respected people in white gowns, and liked how they came and cured him and cured other people. Any person who could bring sick people over into a healthy state had to be very important. So, after he failed his exams in 1958, he looked for and obtained a job at Professor Bondarin laboratory, and served there as an assistant. Bondarin treated him well. Although Sasha was very young, this esteemed professor always called him by both his first name and his father's first name, Nikolai, but speaking to him as "Sanich," a nice way of addressing somebody who's young, using their patronymic by way of the short form.

hook? }
After two years, Sasha took special preparatory courses, and by 1960, succeeded in becoming a student of the evening faculty while still working days with Professor Bondarin.

Through his studies he also became friends with Professor Bondarin's nephew, Kostya Bondarin, who was two years younger, but they got along. Konstantin had finished high school while Sasha was working, and together they had passed their University exams. Kostya also had a friend named Yuri Merezzhinsky, an only son of prestigious parents, both high-ranking scientists. Sasha didn't really have much time to pal around with elite children and their easy life--he had to work, after all, and also go to the University--but they all took classes together and sometimes went out afterward.

It seems to him that Yuri Merezzhinsky, son of such esteemed professors, must have thought it was natural to become a doctor. After all, his parents were. Something similar was true for Konstantin Bondarin. But Sasha feels they didn't choose medicine because they felt a deep vocation; rather they had been pointed toward it.

About this time, taking preparatory classes in his clinic, he met Marina, and it started. She was a little older than he was, and more experienced, and he was fascinated by her. Soon enough, he was crazy about her. They went to movies, he played piano for her, and they listened to symphonic music. Tschaikovsky was their favorite at concerts. A month after they met each other, and started going out, she introduced him

to her relatives, and he was invited to meet her aunt and uncle, who had a big apartment, three rooms, near Minsk opera house, and Valya fed them tea and cakes. At that time, Sasha just admired Marina. They didn't talk about marriage, although her relatives soon began to call him zatouk, which is a nice, warm word for son-in-law, a very warm word. A good man. . . somebody you would want your daughter to be married to. It's not that they were engaged, but it was supposed that they would yet be. And Sasha worked and studied well because he had Marina in his life.

That life seemed good to him. He lived from one date to another. It made everything in his life easy, work and study both. And when he visited her home, Marina's aunt would put out sandwiches and cakes, and either watch TV with them or leave them alone, so they would have a chance to sit there and kiss. Nothing more. This aunt looked like a very simple person, but such appearances were deceiving, because she read a lot, and inside her, Sasha thought, was much more than how she looked.

While Sasha was dating Marina, Yuri and Kostya didn't date any one in particular. They went out with different girls all the time. Sasha thinks they were laughing at him

for being serious; they mocked him, sometimes, and maybe they tried to tease Marina. But he felt they were envious because he had the prettiest girl. He doesn't believe they ever teased her unpleasantly, because Marina had a strong character, and if anybody would ever express themselves in that manner to her face, she would reply, "You are not needed yourself!" Nor did he feel that they wanted to take Marina away from him. They could see he was deeply in love, and they, of course, were not in love with anybody. For that matter, he very seldom invited Marina to go out with his friends because he didn't really want to be with them. Maybe he was even a little afraid to take her around them.

When he would go out with Yuri and Kostya he would drink with them but not get drunk. For ten young guys to share a bottle of champagne is no way to get inebriated. So, as long as they were not so drunk, they would talk a little about Marina, but not in any harmful way. He certainly never did. What she told him, he would keep in his heart. It was just he liked to talk about her a little to them, to praise her, because he was so much in love.

How had he met Marina? Why, at one of these parties for Institute students, he had noticed Marina, and invited her to dance once, and then again, and asked if he could accompany her home. She was a very good dancer, and he was not, but she

could make you feel better than normal on the floor. Which was rare for him. He wasn't any sort of person who is particularly interested in such events as dances. He had learned how by himself; nobody taught him. So during their first few minutes he was somewhat awkward, but then she began to lead him, and it was as if she breathed a little more life into him. They also were comfortable together. He was a little taller than her, even when she was wearing her high heels, which, for that matter, were not too high.

He supposes he met her in the summer of 1960 when he turned nineteen. The dance had begun about seven or eight and ended somewhere around eleven. No other girl interested him. He knew some in his classes, but it was all Marina with him. They dated once a week, and would either walk around together or go to movies or to theater or to concerts. Usually, they would discuss with each other where they wanted to go next time, to which opera or theater or concert or ballet. Now, he thinks, maybe Nutcracker was their most special ballet.

They paid for everything half and half. She understood that he was a student, and she was already working. So one time, he would buy the tickets, and then she would next time. She did not allow him to pay for everything. He remembers that tickets in those days cost about a ruble or a ruble fifty, and they could have sat up in student's gallery with

cheap seats for less, but they usually chose partierre or belles-etage. They'd buy their box office seats, but it was expensive. Two rubles was an average worker's pay for an entire day.

He was wholly charmed by her, charmed by her behavior and her manners. They were different. Even her gait was different, and way she dressed. It was not rich, but with taste. It distinguished her from other girls in his Institute. Even that apartment where she lived with her aunt and uncle had high ceilings, and large rooms, and a decent foyer. He remembers he was shy when he came to her apartment, but then Aunt Valya came out and invited him into her living room, and it was easy to talk to her. She was very sociable.

When he finally proposed to Marina, she said, "Let's wait a bit." But he was ready to get married. He was working at night and as an orderly in the emergency ward and was earning about 150 rubles a month, which is more than any doctor--which is why he couldn't date Marina every night; he was working too hard, and doing it in order to be able to have a nice time with Marina, and later to be able to set up housekeeping. They could have rented an apartment somewhere. Valya said that they could live with her, but he was looking to get his own place.

Usually he would come home with Marina after a movie or a

concert and stay about 15, 20 minutes before he left. He remembers that Valya's husband, Ilya, seemed terrifying to him when first they met. He was tall, lean, he had a long nose, he was a Colonel. Yet, when he opened his mouth to talk, he was a kind person. However, in that first moment, Sasha felt small, and a little afraid. After all, he knew where the Colonel worked, and Sasha was afraid of the Organs. And this Uncle Ilya was so tall and gaunt. But perhaps he understood Sasha's fear, for when he started to talk he was easy, and did not speak in a prosecutorial tone of voice, but in a normal, human one. Sasha had a feeling that they treated Marina very well. Of course, Ilya wasn't home much, but their abode was not without his presence.

When Sasha would come by to take Marina somewhere in the evening, Valya would say, "Sasha, no later than eleven o'clock." They were just like parents. In fact, at first he thought they were her mother and father.

On the other hand, he had very little understanding of Ilya's occupation. How could a young man understand what was each kind of work in these Organs? He knew it was something scary, and Ilya was high up; there were stars on his epaulets. At first, Sasha was not only scared of Ilya, but, as a result, a little intimidated by Marina. Afterward, when he got to know Ilya better, he came to see Marina without fear. In

truth, he didn't want to know what kind of work Ilya did, specifically, whether he was a warden of prisoners, or an administrator of a factory; he didn't have any idea. He wasn't interested, and didn't particularly want to find out.

He did ask Marina once, and she said, "It's better not to know." In those days, to someone like himself, there was no large difference between KGB and MVD. Those two words were one and the same: a big, dark spot.

Sometimes Marina would try to tell him something about her past, but he would always stop her. He was not interested. Then her aunt tried to tell him, but Sasha did not consider it dignified to become engaged in such conversations. Now, he thinks Aunt Valya wanted him to know the story of Marina's past because she was afraid that if somebody else told him, it could prove more hurtful.

He does recall that one time, he came over to Marina's home after she didn't show up for a date, and Valya made tea for him, and they talked, very much aware that Marina was not there. Valya began to speak of Leningrad and Marina's conditions of life during that time, and Sasha said, "You know, I am not interested in her past. For the future, I want to have her as my wife. So, I am not interested in what is past." Then, Marina came in, and Valentina said: "I told Sasha about you." And Marina, as if she had been expecting

this, was very cool to Sasha, and said goodbye coldly. After that, it was as if she was trying to escape him. He believes she was afraid of his reaction to such news. He went to her pharmacy, he called her at home, but she kept escaping. She liked flowers a lot, and his mother had a large garden, so he kept trying to bring her flowers well into autumn, even very last flowers of early November. But she wouldn't see him. He would wait for Marina outside her pharmacy, and even went in, but she refused to have anything to do with him. Finally he caught her. She was coming home from work and he kept insisting until finally she agreed to let him walk with her. They went to a small park near Opera Theater, and she told him she had had a very difficult life, told him she was nobody, no good--"I'm not what you think I am. I'm not an angel. I'm no good for you." Then she said, "You must get out of my life."

He felt Marina wanted to humiliate herself in front of him, so he repeated, "I am not interested in your past, I am only interested in our present and in our future." Now he wonders if maybe she wanted to get rid of him, although he doesn't think she was dating anyone he knew. When she tried to tell him about Leningrad, however, she grew very emotional; she had tears in her eyes. She cried. He, however, kept saying, "You are here for me, and you will be. I don't want to know what happened to you before. You are now my life and

we're going to be happy all our lives."

They went for a walk. It was cold, a winter night and they went for a walk near the opera house, and she became quiet. Late at night they kissed each other, and she said, "I don't deserve you. I'm bad." But he told her, "I love you exactly how you are."

That was it. They were together again and could go out together again. He went home. His mother was very strict, and he had to be home by a certain time. His tram had even stopped running, and it was three kilometers from Marina's home to his own. On warmer nights, when they were closer, sometimes she would walk him to his home, and then he would come back with her to see her off, and that way they could spend an hour or two, walking back and forth.

This happiness, which began in summer of 1960, had continued for Sasha, but for its one interruption, until March of 1961, when his Medical Institute had a large students' party at Trade Union Palace. He invited Marina, of course, and Kostya Bondarin was there, and Yuri Merezhinsky, and as he recalls, Yuri brought Alik, an American. When everybody was dancing, this American, Alik, invited Marina to do the same. Sasha also danced with Marina--many men had invited Marina to dance--Sasha didn't pay any great attention to that. She was dancing, it was all. But a few days later, he felt that

Marina had become distant. When he called, her relatives said she was not in. And when he came to her hospital and went down to her pharmacy, she tried to avoid him once more. So he had to realize something was wrong again. As they say in Minsk, "There was a black cat running between us." Soon enough, he learned that he had a tragedy in his love affair. His life, and his dreams, vanished. Even now, it's painful.

He waved his hand gently, as if the residue of an old sorrow could overflow again. Even now, even after all these years. "It's okay," he said. "We stopped dating each other, and in a month or two, somebody told me, I think it was Erich Titovets told me, 'Sasha, did you hear that Marina's going to marry?'"

She was still in his heart. Whenever he had to go to her pharmacy on a medical task, he would follow her with his eyes after she passed. It wasn't that he had tears in his eyes, not quite that, but it was as if a cat was inside his soul, scratching him with its paws.

Prologue -- 3 -- White Nights

Marina remembers her grandmother as very snobby. She doesn't know from whom Tatiana came, maybe peasant stock like everyone else, but grandmother was snobby enough. It could be she had married a little bit better than her relatives. Her husband was a sea captain and she was a strong woman. Marina can picture her grandmother better than her mother. Her grandmother always smelled good to her, clean and crisp always, very Victorian, very opinionated, and here was Marina, born from a woman who wasn't married, Tatiana's own daughter Klavdia, and yet her grandmother never disowned mother or child, not at all; in fact, Marina knew she was the favorite granddaughter.

They all lived in Archangelsk. Marina wonders if it's as lovely a city as she remembers, all wooden and very small. But of course, to a child, everything looks bigger, and birch trees smell so good after a rain. When you are a child, you are closer to earth so you absorb smells of flowers and herbs, and Marina remembers playing in a park. Indeed, that's how she met her stepfather. He came and said hello, said, "I'm your father." She remembers it was just after war had ended

in 1945, and she can still recall how happy people were and how happy she was.

Yet after this war, she would have nightmares. Her city was being bombed and she had to go to a shelter; she debated who to save--mother or grandmother? She had somehow to make choices in that nightmare. And she remembers that her grandmother's household was rigid. When she was five years old, she hated to go by herself to their bathroom because God could see everything. "I was embarrassed in front of God. If I'm going to tee-tee--and God sees it--that's not proper to do, you know?

"I never was wild," said Marina. "What they think was wild was flower petals compared to what people really do."

Being an illegitimate child, she also felt protected from the outside world, as if she had some kind of guidance embedded in her and it wasn't bad. In truth, when people used profanity, she would try to close her ears. She never could bring herself to repeat it. When people cursed, it always burned her ears. Today, her worst burden of guilt, which she is still carrying, is that she did not follow a straight line.

Grandmother was religious, so she wasn't Soviet. For Marina, when she was young, everything good was with Grandmother, and everything outside--devil's work. Komsomol and the Communist Party--garbage. In Minsk, she joined

Komsomol, but only paid her dues. By character, she did not like to be at a meeting at 9 o'clock at night just because they told her to. She had no belief in their ideology.

"Grandmother used to say, 'You know, if I want to keep an icon in my house, there will be icon. Come and arrest me.'"

With her grandma, she always knew. All that is best for Marina. Her grandma would tell her fairy tales but always point out moral of her story. Grandma would teach her not to lie. Lying was worst possible thing. "Maybe that's what keeps me going. Not that I am always truthful, but I am not comfortable in lying--you can catch me like that. I betray myself very quickly."

When Marina would disobey her grandmother, she would be kept indoors for several days and her mother never dared to interfere. But when her stepfather Alexander was being mean to Marina, Grandmother said, "I am taking this child with me and you can send her belongings later." And she did take Marina to her house.

Her mother never seemed beautiful to her. Not ever. When Marina found out that her stepfather was not really her father, she did not learn it from her mother, but from a friend who had overheard Klavdia talking about it to her mother. Marina came home and confronted Klavdia with what she heard, but her mother's only answer was: "I don't want to talk

about it. Later." Marina said: "I guess we think that later on a child will understand, but I felt hurt, and I rebelled against my mother. I punished her. Willingly. I loved her but I made her to suffer deliberately. That's the sadistic part--when a kid is hurt, I guess. Anyway, I was cruel to my mother many times on purpose, testing her. How far can I push to see if she loves me? My mother said, 'When you grow up, I'll explain to you everything but now you're just too young to know,' and I thought her sloppy, even dirty."

After her mother died, Marina found some papers. Her mother had been looking for Nikolaev. It was after Stalin died and amnesty was given. So, her mother was filling out papers, looking for Marina's real father. Marina remembers that when her mother was close to dying, she still wanted to punish her. She loved her mother, but still. . . Klavdia was in a hospital and Marina would bring over cruel messages from Alexander's mother, Yevdokia. This mother-in-law didn't like Klavdia. Some messages would even say that Alexander was fooling around--which he never did. His mother, Yevdokia, had lied to Marina, and Marina didn't know--she thought Yevdokia had proof. Of course, she also knew it was going to hurt her mother. Marina would say, "Well, papa is probably seeing someone healthier." Her mother started crying. Then she

said, "Don't worry, Marina, it won't be long. We'll find out who really loved us." That's what she said. "Between love and hate," said Marina, "is a very little thin line. I didn't hate my mother; I was hurt deeply. I wanted all her love. I didn't want to share her. That's how possessive I was of my mother, let's put it that way. Yevdokia was cruel. She was evil enough to know that I would be a good messenger for her cruel words. You know how teenagers are."

After her mother's death, Marina wasn't obedient. She wouldn't live by her stepfather's rules about curfew. She felt he just wanted to have some new woman in his apartment, and Marina was in the way. That's how she felt. She doesn't know. If she came home late at night, he locked her out, made her stay on the landing. He went through such grief over her mother, however, that she doesn't think her stepfather was really a mean person. She looks at him differently today. "I'm 52; I walk in my mother's shoes. Until I found out that my stepfather is not my father, I never felt unloved by Alexander. But after my mother died, it haunted me. That remark I made to her in hospital. She was always lovey-dovey with my stepfather and in that respect I was jealous. I was so guilt-ridden I almost got run over. I was crossing streetcar tracks and it was foggy and I only remember that the streetcar stopped, screeched, its conductor cursed me; that

woke me up; I had been walking in a fog."

All that happened in Leningrad when she was sixteen, but she does not want to get far ahead of herself. Dates are her undoing, she says, she is hopeless at that, but she can say she did not move from Archangelsk to Leningrad at age of six, but to a small town in Moldavia with Alexander, Klavdia, and her younger brother and sister. All her neighbors were odd, Marina could see. Even at the age of six. It was because they didn't have fathers. Did her interviewers understand? These children's fathers were in prison, something like that. So maybe her own stepfather had been exiled to Moldavia, maybe that's why they were there. She would mention Bellemoskincanal which was built by political prisoners whose bones were buried on canal banks. Later, when they named a cigarette, Bellemore Canal, people saw it as a symbolic memento of bones buried during Stalin's period. "A great economic achievement--so many bones were buried there. Our system was such that you have to read in between lines. People knew what was happening even if they could not tell. We had solidarity with people buried there. Even now, people won't switch, even now. Bellemore Canal is not just a cigarette. When you buy it, you're saying, 'Thank you, brother. You died, I'm with you.' So Russians laugh when they smoke Bellemore Canal. They say, 'My God, everything

built in Russia is on the bones, you know?"

Sometimes she thinks then of her natural father who was a political prisoner. Or, at least, these were her family hints. And now, if he is still alive--which he wouldn't be--his age would be seventy-five right now--God knows, no way.

When they all went back to Leningrad, Marina was ten, and now she would overhear intimacies between her stepfather and her mother. That did not feel comfortable. "Maybe a reason why I'm not very comfortable with my sexuality--if I have any. I doubt that I do." When she would overhear conversation between her mother and her stepfather and hear that bedspring squeak, she would put pillows over her head. She didn't want to think of her mother as a woman, not until she had her own children, and then she could read her own mother differently. Up to then, she didn't think women were supposed to have such needs. It was innocence. When her period started, her mother had never even told her anything before. She had to run to her cousin to find out what was wrong. And she resented her mother for making love. She didn't even want to speak to her next morning. How could her mother allow that to happen when other people were present in room, even though room was dark? Marina wasn't embarrassed for herself, it was that her grandmother was sleeping in same room and Marina had to think, "What if she heard?" Since they all lived in one room, Marina

thought it was awful that her mother was doing it. She was embarrassed for her. Just like dogs; couldn't wait. It wasn't that frequent, but. . .

Later, in other years, when her mother was sick, she could overhear her stepfather's mother, Yevdokia, saying, "Why did you have to marry that woman? You could have got a healthy woman. Why do you bother to cater to her?" And all this while Marina was thinking that maybe her mother had married Alexander in order to give her a name, and then, a couple of years later, Marina found out that Alexander had not even ever adopted her. That was another blow.

So, after Leningrad, she always wanted her own apartment. She never wanted to be sleeping with her man among other people in that same room.

After her mother died, it was scary. She had no guidance, nobody to come home to. She was free like slaves are free--free, but she felt like a slave. She didn't have to respond to anybody but she didn't know how to handle freedom. Not in Leningrad.

She had a neighbor, a girlfriend who had a bad reputation, and Marina knew it. She liked her anyway. Her name was Ludmila and Ludmila had an illegitimate daughter and worked to support her. When she had her child, Ludmila's man didn't want to marry her, said he wasn't sure it was his.

Ludmila was a young girl and she'd given him all her heart, so when this man saw that Ludmila's baby daughter did look exactly like him, he now wanted to marry her but Ludmila said, "No thanks. Thanks, but no thanks. Not after I went through all that embarrassment." Everybody told Marina, "Don't talk to this girl, she's no good," but she and Ludmila would meet, not in their neighborhood but outside, and would talk, and she found out this other side about Ludmila, who said, "Yes, I work from 9 to 5, but at night I dress up and sleep with men. They are doctors and lawyers and they pay. I slice myself up for the whole world because that's how I can get what is best for my daughter, I love her that much." And Marina thought to herself, "A dedicated mother." She was 17 then and Klavdia had died in March when she was still 16, and her grandmother would die in Minsk in April a year later, and she wouldn't even know it when it happened.

There were summer nights coming. It was April, two months away from White Nights, when even at midnight it was still long twilight, and Marina came back from a two-day outing, out with other kids in outskirts of Leningrad. A telegram was there; her grandmother's funeral was taking place and Marina didn't have money to buy a plane ticket to go to Minsk for her burial. That was one stab in her heart. Everything she loved was gone with Klavdia and now gone again

with her grandmother, and she thought about Ludmila who sacrificed her reputation for sake of her daughter. Ludmila's love for her daughter might be as strong as Tatiana's love had been for her.

One time out with Ludmila, it was late and Marina's curfew was on her. Alexander would lock her out if she was not home by 11, but Ludmila said, "I met some guys who just came in from Minsk, a soccer team. They brought some fresh fruit. Let's go there and have a drink." Marina said she'd have no place to sleep because her door would be closed and one of these guys overheard it and told her, "We have a room, everything will be all right, don't worry." So she thought she would just sit up with Ludmila's soccer players and go home by morning. You cannot sleep on a landing all the time.

But as soon as she undressed and lay down in a bedroom by herself, her door opened and a guy came in, strictly naked, and jumped on her. She fought with him, even if he was soccer player, and finally she jumped out of bed and stood by an open window. It was moonlight out there and she was standing, trembling by fourth floor window, and she said, "One step closer and I jump." At that moment she really thought she would jump through the double doors of this window rather than submit herself to that man. And maybe she screamed because other soccer players walked in and dragged him out. She was

shaking badly but they said, "Don't worry, nothing's going to happen."

That was one encounter she faced in Leningrad when she was 17.

Now that her mother was dead, it was her stepfather's apartment completely, and he and Yevdokia kept her under rules. At a certain time they went to bed and locked their outside door. A key was not given to her. Occasionally, if she was only 5 or 10 minutes late, somebody would open this door for her, but an hour late--well, she didn't want a scene and listen to all their crap. Maybe she slept on that landing ten times. She had to hope no cleaning lady would see her; it would be embarrassing for her family that they were treating her like that. It was funny. They were putting her outside and she wanted to spare them embarrassment. On such nights, she would just sit on the stairs; she wouldn't sleep. Or she would go to stay with Ludmila.

7 | It was a lazy summer until one time Ludmila's mother put her right. Ludmila's mother was brusque, maybe brutal, but she did Marina a favor. This mother ran a pawn shop and sometimes, since she was not working, Marina would spend a day with her, and young and maybe she would make a date with them, and go out to a restaurant and get a meal, and then come back to Ludmila's

house and sleep with Ludmila in her bed. This went on---she doesn't know, a month? Two weeks? Two months? Whatever. One day, Ludmila's mother took Marina into her kitchen and said, "My husband died during the war and I was left with two children. I had to work to support them. I don't mind giving you shelter for a little while; I know you have hardship at home. But to continue this way, to eat at my home and take advantage of me--you find your work, you're welcome here, but not for free-loading. Thanks but no thanks." Marina turned red; it was true. She apologized--and she never stayed there again.

It was a dose of strong medicine but this woman really did her a favor. It happened after Marina had been thrown out of pharmacy school. Little by little, she could no longer function on her own. She wasn't attending classes. Plus, she felt sick. She supposed it was a vitamin deficiency, lack of nutrition or something. She had shingles, she still has those scars. It was like big boils all over her head and body. She had to go to a clinic and this clinic was called "Place for curing of contagious and venereal diseases" and she would wait in line for her medicine and hear everyone going "Shhhsh, shhhsh, shhhsh!"---everyone whispering "So young!" and Marina realized they thought she had VD. Actually, she had to take lamp treatments and glucose and vitamin shots. She was

terribly undernourished. And she never had VD at all, of course not, but doubly painful that people thought so.

Next year, when she was back in school and working, she stayed with a family named Tarussin and he, Oleg Tarussin, was an exceptionally gentle young person. She thinks she would have made a good wife to Oleg Tarussin, except that she liked his parents more than she liked him. She did like him, and very much, she even loved him too, but not in a way that you could feel crazy about the fellow. But his parents loved her. She was that daughter they never had. For first time since her mother's death, she felt loved again.

Over a year before, there had been a boy she actually fell in love with. It was during that year between 16 and 17 when she visited in Minsk. His name was Vladimir Kruglov. It was summer and all windows were open in Valya's apartment. Marina could hear someone playing his guitar, Vladimir Kruglov. He would ask her to go to movies, or walk with her, and Valya said that Vladimir was going to Leningrad University and was lonesome in Minsk. But he was older than her. Still, all this time he was singing and playing his guitar, she thought he was serenading her. She fell in love. Her grandmother would ask her if she had been out with Volodya Kruglov and Marina would lie and say no because she felt ashamed that she'd been out. Tatiana would say, "Don't tell

me lies. Your hair smells like cigarette smoke."

One night she and Vladimir got a ticket for a very late movie, and when they came out, it was pouring rain, streetcars had stopped running, and they waited for all this rain to stop, it didn't, so they started walking, soaking wet. Vladimir said, "I have a friend who lives near here where we can spend the night," so they came to his apartment and dried up with towels and sat together and that was first time she was kissed. First time in her life. She started crying. She was only 16 and Vladimir Kruglov said, "What is this trouble?" and she said, "Volodya, I've never been kissed before." He said, "If I had known that, I never would have done it. Who could know that your reaction would be such?" But she was in love so she stayed there for a little while although she was afraid what her grandmother would think. It was very late. Maybe 2 or 3 in the morning when they made it back to Valya and Ilya's apartment, and she said, "I cannot ring their doorbell. What could I say to my grandmother?" Vladimir lived above so they went to his apartment and his aunt opened the door and said, "Just spend the night here. I'll explain." But Marina couldn't sleep; she was scared to death, and early next morning, like 5 o'clock, she went for a walk and a little later she told herself she would never wash her face again because it was her first kiss and she had to keep it forever.

After summer, when she went back to Leningrad, Volodya returned as well to his university and invited Marina for a dance at students' dorm, on Saturday. He told her which room to go to. Maybe he didn't expect her at a certain hour, but when she walked in, there he was with a girl and they were giggling. And Marina thought, "They probably have an intimate relationship." She felt very awkward.

But at his dance, Volodya introduced her to a friend who paid her a little attention and took her home. They started dating. He was tall and good-looking and a guy she liked, but every day he pushed a little bit further and that scared her. She backed away from him.

At home, things were not so fine. She was still studying at pharmacy school but little by little her stepfather began to isolate her. At table, they began to give her scraps. Then they must have decided they were not going to feed her at all. She had a little money from her grandmother, a small pension divided between her younger brother, her younger sister, and herself, but in order to have more income, Marina had to receive good grades at pharmacy school. Her stipend went up or down with her grades. Now, stipend was meagre. She didn't know how to manage. If she was hungry and bought dinner for herself two or three days in a row, her money was gone. She would go to movies, money was gone. She was having

to find ways to make out. A lot started to happen after such a bad winter in Leningrad. A fine spring followed and a wild summer. She still remembers one night when her boyfriend Eddie--not a fellow this time but a man twice her age--got off a boat with her and it was early morning. People were still cleaning city streets; sun was shining; everything sparkled. She and Eddie were both in a good mood because White Nights had been beautiful and their boat had gone out to Gulf of Finland. Music had been playing all night on this boat, and you could dance and maybe smooch a little.

As they passed the market, Eddie said, "I want to buy you flowers," and he picked up a whole big bunch, and they went skipping through wet puddles. Their city was so cheerful. But all of a sudden, she saw her stepfather walking toward her, and she had to run into nearest entry of an apartment house.

She told Eddie that if her papa had seen her, what would he think? He would not know it was almost innocent. With Eddie it was play and caressing, petting, never all of it. But she was so ashamed of what her stepfather would think. He would probably believe she was some kind of streetwalker. All those flowers and out with a man so early that morning.

So she tried to go home and sleep till 12 o'clock but Alexander came in and said, "Still in bed? Get up!" Then, he

said, "Get out of here!" And called her a whore. Then she was sure he had seen her. He said, "I do not want you in this apartment. Get out of my life." And she said, "No, you cannot throw me out." And he said, "You have relatives in Minsk. Just go." Marina said, "I don't want to leave. If you try, I'm going to complain to city militia that you are cruel and rude and it's against my will." He said, "OK, go to militia and I'll tell you who your real father was."

At that moment, he stopped himself and went out the door. That was it. She never did learn her real father's name.

All this while, she kept seeing Eddie who worked for a film studio in Leningrad, Eddie who was Georgian and dark and had a mustache. She liked him. She did not see him every day and in between she had other boyfriends. But there was nothing going on. She was very choosy.

Of course, she also had rough dates who would take her out for dinner, but at the end, she would avoid them--so far she had avoided them. She just felt lucky to have a meal. Even excited. It was like balancing a meal against trouble. You eat first, then you hold them off afterward--that's a hard way to earn a meal. She was trying to avoid some situation where she would have to pay for her meal. But she was so hungry, and she was still a virgin. She was looking for a relationship, not just a meal. And she was still thinking of

a white prince, a red carpet and flowers. It didn't happen. Somebody was always a roughneck.

Eddie's last name was Dzhuganlian and he was Armenian but very nice. She went over to his apartment one day to leave him a note, but when she asked for him, some person said, "Is that the man with a little boy?" He was married and living in Leningrad with his wife. And she didn't know what he did to excuse himself all night--maybe he told his wife he was shooting a movie all night long. And during this summer, he had probably sent his wife out to a dacha and owned summer for himself. So he was playing, and she wrote him an angry letter.

After that, she certainly felt too lazy to work and stayed with Ludmila who took her out on a double date one night with a client of Ludmila's, an Afghanistani, who tricked Marina to come up to his hotel room. He said he was going right out again, would she come up just for a minute and a bite to eat while he changed clothes. Then, he raped her. That is not strictly true, but he took her by force, and that was how she lost her virginity--although she did not bleed. She never bled with anyone, so maybe she never had anything to bleed with. Afterward he said, "I didn't know you were a virgin. I want my money back." That was how she found out he had paid Ludmila in advance. After this Afghanistani had put

her out of his room, Ludmila said, "Well, what do you expect? Do you think you can live with my mother and me forever, and eat, and do nothing for it?"

She felt she was a fallen woman. Yet that summer she also met some nice boys who invited her on picnics and they spent time in woods outside Leningrad, a big group with musicians and a fire. They would sing through White Nights. Some of these musicians would hire prostitutes maybe, but she stayed with nice naive kids. One night, there was even a wild orgy at one end of this picnic, but she just sat and talked with nice kids, and when morning came, everyone went for a swim--just a little kissing, that's all. She spent an entire weekend like that, Saturday and Sunday, and when she came home she found a telegram: her grandmother had died. She didn't have money to buy a ticket, and she had not been writing to her grandmother because she felt so guilty about how she was living, and had been receiving money from her grandmother's pension and still didn't write to thank her, so she couldn't face her grandmother. She had failed her. It was horrible. She felt like a prostitute because she had been taking meals from men on dates even if she wasn't sleeping with them. Now, out of stupidity, she had lost her virginity to that Afghanistani, and she didn't have a job, she didn't want to have a job--she wanted a good time. It was not what she

wanted her grandmother to see. She wasn't worthy of her love. Now, that grandmother was gone. She couldn't even go to her funeral. She looked at herself in a mirror and asked, "What has become of me?"

She decided that she must put herself together. But then Ludmila's mother gave her that brusque conversation. She wasn't bringing anything in. So she found a job in a school cafeteria. She would pick up from tables and sweep floors after recess was over. One day, three or four boys came running in who hadn't yet eaten, and she was still sweeping that floor. They looked at her--younger than her, just kids, but they wore good uniforms, spoiled kids from elite parents--and they said, "What a pretty girl. And she has a broom in her hand." That howled through her mind. Here she was taking orders from dumb persons, and these boys were making fun of her. She wasn't made to sweep floors. So, she switched to work in another school and the principal there, a Mr. Nieman, came along, and liked her and got her work in a pharmacy and entrance to a school for pharmacists at night. She couldn't believe how much had happened to her, all in one summer.

For the next winter she lived quietly in the Tarussin home until she graduated from pharmacy school. Then, she decided to go to Minsk.

Part I -- Moscow

Chapter 1 -- King's Part I -- Moscow

From Oswald's diary:

October 18, 1933 Arrive from Helsinki by train; am met by Intourist Representative and in car to Hotel Berlin. Register as student on a five-day Leningrad ticket. Met by Intourist guide Nina Shishkova. (I explain to her I wish to apply for Russian citizenship.)

1937 was an exciting year for Nina. After much preparation, Moscow opened a festival to establish human relations between foreigners and Russians in Moscow. It was the greatest event for changing things. Nina was twenty then, a student at Moscow Institute of Foreign Languages, and she met a number of new people and spoke to foreigners, and taught English to children.

In 1937, freedom was very great. There were as many young foreigners and young Russians all together. So much

Part I -- Moscow

Chapter 1 -- King's English

From Oswald's diary:

October 16, 1959 Arrive from Helsinki by train; am met by Intourist Representative and in car to Hotel Berlin. Register as student on a five-day Luxe tourist ticket. Meet my Intourist guide Rimma Shirakova. [I explain to her I wish to apply for Russian citizenship.]

1957 was an exciting year for Rimma. After much preparation, Moscow opened a festival to establish human relations between foreigners and Russians in Moscow. It was the greatest event for changing things. Rimma was twenty then, a student at Moscow Institute of Foreign Languages, and she met a number of new people and spoke to foreigners, and taught English to children.

In 1957, freedom was very great. There were so many young foreigners and young Russians all together. So much

connection. Afterward, were troubles. Some people, Russians and foreigners, decided they wanted to get married but it wasn't allowed. Still they did. Then, came troubles. There was a case where one Russian was reprimanded because he was an officer; his woman even died of a heart attack because of pressure brought on him, certainly so.

So, in 1959, Intourist was started, and it was them, nobody but them, could arrange visas. Intourist went into such work and took on many guides, which is how Rimma approached into it.

First of all, new employees took courses not connected so much with how you should behave, but more on what new material had to be acquired so as to become good guides. For example, Rimma passed examinations on how to show the Kremlin Treasury. That was in June of 1959, and those who passed such examinations were offered a job in July; most of them were fellow students from Foreign Languages Institute.

In September, most of these people, to use King's English, were sacked, (less tourist activity after summer). Those, however, who showed excellent retention of facts necessary to guides were accepted for permanent work. Rimma was kept because she got all excellent marks and so was qualified for difficult jobs.

In those days, administration of Intourist was in Hotel

Metropole on its corner facing Bolshoi Theatre, and nearby was another big office for Intourist in Savoy Hotel soon to be renamed Berlin Hotel, now called Savoy again. Also nearby, was Central Administration for Intourist in old National Hotel.

Come autumn and winter of 1959, there were certainly not many tourists, but in general, through 1959, there had been a good number of Americans, and a big business exhibition in August. Rimma had worked with seventeen "boys." That was how they introduced themselves: "boys." They were governors from seventeen southern states of America, seventeen big boys, all of them with cameras. And Russian people in those days obtained a picture of Americans as being never without their cameras.

Rimma was slender then, not like now, and had blond hair and was good looking. Besides English, Rimma spoke Arabic, and one time she worked with one high delegation from United Arab Republic, and they were pleased with her, all those ministers, very high level, all of them, and kept telling her how she was very good.

At end of this United Arab Republic tour, she took them one evening to the Bolshoi Theatre for Bolshoi Ballet and this evening ended at 11, high time to go home for Rimma. For Arabs too! But suddenly they began asking where they could go

next. She was very much shocked. "What do you mean?" she told them. "Evening is over. You go to bed." But they began saying maybe there were some restaurants, (some late restaurants with women). So she began to reprimand them: "How bad of you. You have shown me pictures of your wives, your children, you have such wonderful wives, and now you want to go somewhere with women--shame on you!" They might be high ministers from Arab countries--still, she scolded them and said, "I can't understand you. We have nothing like this. What do you think of my country and of me?"

Next day, next morning, none of them spoke to her. Didn't say good morning to her. Her boss began to scold. "How could you dare? Do you know what kind of people you deal with?" What could she say? Was it in her character to say yes to such matters? She was young and she was blonde and she could have been very good-looking but she had a small growth like an eraser tip of a pencil on one side of her nose, what you call in English--a wen!--and you could see by it how stubborn she was.

Now, as part of her regular work each morning she would report to Central Administration where guides would be given a list of tourists coming to Moscow. They distributed these names at 9 o'clock and Intourist girls would go to each Bureau of Service at each hotel where tourists were staying. One day

in October, 1959, October 15, Rimma was given name and length of his tour, five days, of a man she was now assigned to take around in Moscow. When she met him, however, she was surprised. He had not only arrived by deluxe class--but was taking his whole tour deluxe. Only rich people travel by such a class. The most wealthy! Certainly not too many individuals come alone deluxe to Moscow for five days. She was expecting quite another kind of fellow, maybe equal to her governors of seventeen southern states who also came deluxe--no, governors were not even deluxe, but first class. Deluxe was two rooms to yourself, a suite. So she was expecting a middle-aged man, impressive. As they say in King's English, a dandy.

When she went to the assigned section of Hotel Berlin lobby to meet him, there was only a young boy, slender, not very tall, taller than Rimma but of medium height in a dark blue autumn overcoat of inexpensive material, a three-quarter coat, and military boots with thick soles. Ordinary boots. Rimma was surprised. From her point of view, someone travelling deluxe shouldn't look like this, certainly not! And this boy was pale, very pale. She would say he looked gloomy and nervous, yes, nervous, very nervous, he wasn't calm.

She introduced herself and preview of program. Intourist

had group plans for people on excursions, but here was only Rimma and this boy deluxe who was to have everything private. So she offered him a sightseeing tour. He spoke quietly, nicely, but at first between them was almost a closed door. He didn't seem to know a single word in Russian, so Rimma spoke to him in English, about tickets to this or that theatre if he wants, went down a list of what to tour with him, but she saw that he did not show interest. No interest in excursions. This first morning they went in a Volvo car with a driver on a sightseeing tour around Moscow, made stops. Last place on tour was Red Square, but initiative for all of one hour and a half had been all on Rimma's side. He did not interrupt any of her tour stories and he asked no questions. Such an odd deluxe tourist.

Then their morning tour was over and he returned to Berlin hotel and had his midday meal alone. Rimma just said she'd see him a little later. After her noonday dinner, she was planning to take him to see Kremlin Treasury that afternoon. There was something about him. . . something. . . but he was nice. He was polite and getting more and more natural.

Rimma was an only child, a native Muscovite, proud of it. She was born in Moscow and her mother was born there in 1904, even her grandfather, so on. So maybe she looked forward to

taking him around her city. Maybe to Tetrakov Museum next day and she could begin describing paintings there. But on afternoon of this first day he began speaking about himself. And they did not go on an excursion to Kremlin Treasury, although they were supposed to. He wanted to talk.

Naturally, she didn't go to his suite: she would never do such. It wasn't allowed. So, they went out. Weather was warm, and they sat on a bench outside Bolshoi Theatre, and he repeated, "If you don't mind, I don't want to go on a tour." Now this was not against their rules; it was allowed; but it wasn't considered very good.

Anyway, he began talking, said a few words about himself, that he was from Texas, served in Marines, and that was why he had decided to go and see this country, Russia. He had read, he told Rimma, that people in the Soviet Union lived good, useful, and very peaceful lives.

Now, in those days, and even now, Rimma was a great patriot, a very great one, she would say, so she was quite sure she agreed with him. She told him certainly ours is best country, and you could come and you were right to come. She also had a feeling he was trying to get closer to her, someone he could exchange information with. Not serious information, just talk about life. She was very enthusiastic that he liked her country and it was an unusual conversation

for her; she just never expected him to start speaking like this.

He started talking about how war was very bad because innocent people got killed and as he talked he became more friendly and she understood that he wanted to tell her many things from his point of view.

Then he said that his real idea was that he didn't want to return to United States of America. There was no sense in his going back. He had already settled in his mind that he was going to stay here. He gave his reasons. To her, they sounded like good reasons; she shared his opinions. He said that his mother had remarried and had another husband, practically another family, so his mother was not interested in him. Nobody was interested in him there and in his life there, nor had anybody been interested when he had served in Japan and Far East. And he had seen so much suffering, so many deaths, for which he blamed United States of America. His country fomented unjust wars in which he did not want to take part. He gave her this impression he had actually been in combat fighting for his country, definitely gave her this impression, and he was sympathetic and believable to her. She felt pity for him. She thought he was quite right. It was certainly very strange that there was an American like this, but she was sure he was quite right. So she told him she

shared his opinion, that there should not be unjust wars, people shouldn't die, certainly it was very difficult--unnatural--to kill people. He said again he didn't want to return and wanted to stay here. This was a proper country from his political point of view.

Rimma was surprised. Certainly. She was even shocked. It was not a very simple situation even for someone more experienced in Intourist than herself. Not routine at all. It had never happened before. Nobody in training had ever spoken about anything like this; nobody had ever imagined it might happen. So she helped him to write a letter to the Supreme Soviet and she had it delivered. Nobody asked her to; it was her young wish to help him. But later, when she spoke to her boss at Hotel Metropole, a woman, and told this story, her boss was not happy. Her chief said, "What have you done? He came as a tourist. Let him be a tourist."

Rimma was a little upset because she felt her chief was taking easiest way. That was bureaucracy. For sure. But Rimma knew her people. In general, most people were slow. They didn't want to be energetic. They would say, "My job is not a wolf, it won't run away into that forest so why should I hurry?" That was prevailing attitude. But then Rimma was also sure that her chief would get in touch with someone above her, and they would know what to do.

I explain to Rimma I wish to apply for Soviet citizenship. She is flabbergasted, but agrees to help. She checks with her boss, main office Intourist, then helps me address a letter to Supreme Soviet asking for citizenship.

Chapter 2 -- The Idiot

7 | The boss of OVIR--Passport and Visa Office--was named Alexander. Decades later, he would say to Oswald interviewers, "I can tell you very honestly that everybody at that time who was working for Intourist was under observation and control of KGB. If they asked 'What is your impression of so and so?' concerning someone we were taking around, it was not possible to say, 'I don't care to speak about it.' Even if you liked a tourist, you had to give your professional opinion. When KGB would call, the officer, to identify himself, would give you his first name and patronymic, but not his family name. He might say 'This is Gennady Petrovich. We want to know about so and so.'"

Alexander of course understood KGB's position. At that time they were taught that majority of foreigners are spies. So, you had to understand requirements of his position. But as far as Alexander can tell, not of a single person on whom he reported, did he tell something wrong. He told exactly how he accepted and reacted to each person. He reported verbally.

He was a Party member, but he could also confess now that he had been afraid to become one, although he recognized that

it was necessary to do so. He had been afraid because of his father. If Alexander applied, he thought he would have to write that his father had been a Czarist officer in World War One. While his father never joined any White Army after the Bolshevik Revolution, and did move with his family back to that countryside where he was born and helped to organize a collective farm there, later, in Nineteen-Thirty, he was arrested. Although he was subsequently released, it was still frightening to Alexander, so in his fourth year at Foreign Language Institute when one of his officers said, "You have to become a Party member," Alexander spoke to his father who told him: "When you were born in 1925 I was a peasant. Put me down as a peasant, therefore, not an officer." All the same, Alexander felt he was walking on the edge of a knife. It was just a few years after Stalin period. But his father was right. He was accepted, and entered a post graduate course at Moscow University in Faculty of Philology. Having money troubles when he finished, he read how Intourist was receiving its first group of foreign tourists so he applied early and became their thirteenth interpreter. Now, in October, 1959, he was director at USA/Canada department and had about thirty people under him.

Having worked in Intourist for four years, Alexander had acquired some experience concerning people from other

countries who wanted to apply for Soviet citizenship. Ninety-nine per cent of them were disturbed. In some way. He remembered a call from militia in Red Square who told him, "There's a an American lady distributing leaflets here in front of Lenin's tomb," and he said, "OK, bring her to my office and also her leaflets." Printed in Russian was "Dear Soviet Citizens: Help me to receive Soviet citizenship."

Alexander told her, "You have to apply to Soviet Embassy in Washington for something like this," and she said, "I did, and they said, 'Go to Russia, and Intourist will help you.'" So Alexander told her that Intourist was responsible only to tourists who were acting as tourists. These others he considered a little bit mentally disturbed, and they were always told to go back and apply again to Embassy of the Soviet Union in their own country. When they still insisted on getting it done in Russia, his only answer was, "Go to Praesidium of Supreme Congress of Soviet Union," which Praesidium happened to be at an adjoining building, and so they would go there, someone would receive them, and say, "Go back to Intourist." At Russian Embassy in Washington they kept saying, "Go to Moscow and see Intourist; buy a tourist trip. They will help you."

Alexander tried to bring this to the attention of his higher boss who was Chairman of State Committee of Intourist,

but his boss would say, "Alexander, you take care of it."

Of course, Alexander would often hear of such cases in advance from KGB. First knowledge of such cases almost always came from Security. But he had still never met anyone from KGB; it was always a voice on the phone. If it wasn't Gennady Petrovich, it was someone who would get on and say, "I don't know you, but you do know Gennady Petrovich and he recommended I call and speak to you. . ." Then they would proceed. He just listened, and tried to be helpful.

First time that Alexander came across Lee Harvey Oswald's name was when he received a call. An American named Lee Oswald was trying to receive Soviet citizenship. When Alexander heard his name was Lee, he thought, "Chinese, maybe an American who's Chinese by birth." But then he thought, "Oswald, that's not Chinese, not Oswald." So he wasn't too surprised when this young person who came in accompanied by two pretty young ladies from Intourist named Rimma and Rosa. He seemed an average young American.

He was very cute, he was smiling, a person who tried to be very appealing, and he was, yes, very appealing. Smiling. He came in wearing a short black parka and no hat and a knitted turtleneck sweater, and he was wearing a silver chain with his name on it, and a ring with a stone. He was an unusual case, and Alexander was afraid to speak to him for too

long, just talked to him a little and told him nicely to go away. He certainly wasn't in a mood to call somebody higher-up and ask them to help, because they would only say, "Why?"

Years later for instance, when President of McDonald's hamburgers came for first time to Moscow, he told Alexander he'd like to introduce his McDonald's chain to all of Soviet Union and Alexander made a call to City Council's catering department, and they said, "What? What you are doing? You want to leave your job? Why are you introducing this?" That was why in cases like this, Alexander was reluctant to call anybody or make introductions.

He did ask Oswald how he received his name Lee, and the young man replied, "Maybe it's my grandparents. Maybe it's Irish." But then, thinking there might be Spanish in this name Oswald like Osvaldo, Alexander said "Habla espanol?" and Oswald said "No, no, no, no, no." He said he wanted to stay in Soviet Union because he was very sympathetic to his country; he had read Lenin, Stalin, newspapers, magazines, etc. Alexander thought his knowledge was surface; he had read some books but still, nothing deep. When Alexander asked, "Did you apply to our embassy in your country?" he said, "Yes, and they recommended that I come here from Washington." Alexander replied, "You know, we're not able to do anything. You must go to Praesidium in next building over there," but as

he expected, Praesidium told him to go back to Intourist to prolong his five-day visa so his request could be studied. At that time, however, it was difficult to do; everything had to be worked out in advance through a travel agency. Intourist wouldn't sell to you on the spot. Alexander knew many cases where persons wanted to prolong their stay but how could they buy new vouchers for food, entertainment, theatre, ballet, visits, trips? You couldn't connect last-minute with whatever appropriate bureau to get vouchers, not at that time, no. Besides, Alexander knew that if a high official was interested in this tourist staying on in Soviet Union, he would do what was necessary for him. So, if Lee Oswald had been sent back to him, that meant nobody is interested.

Still, it was most unusual and Oswald was very cute, very untypical, very appealing, yes, smiling, charming, very quiet, --yes, yes, yes, cute, cute like a teenager. And he had no hat, nothing, very poor dress. Alexander and his two Intourist girls agreed: let's buy him a hat. They thought he was not going to be accepted so let's at least somebody take care of him and get him a hat. We must be responsible. Better not to have any trouble, better even to buy a hat for him--although, personally Alexander was interested that this person leave the country.

When Gennady called from KGB, he didn't ask what

Alexander thought of Oswald. No, no, no. Alexander took it for granted that KGB knew more about Oswald than Alexander did, and that it was not his business. He never put questions to such persons, and they didn't put many questions to him.

Alexander also thought Oswald was like an actor in some way because he was a little different with each person, yes. Very pale fellow, but well-shaved. Like a mama's child, used to his mother doing for him everything.

Next morning, he asked Rimma, "Do you think I'll be allowed to stay?" and Rimma told him she didn't know, "As for me," she said, "I'll do everything I can to help you." She felt much closer to him now. He had become to her as a relative. It wasn't romantic on her side, although she felt there might be something there his way because he certainly seemed sure she would do only good for him. He was sweet and natural, and maybe when she was young she was coquetteish. A little bit. She couldn't say she liked him very much: he wasn't her type. Maybe it was small amount romantic but also she was like sister to him, you see, because he was in such a difficult position in his life, he needed someone. And who was there to rely on but herself?

He also seemed nervous again this morning. It wasn't easy for him to speak. He was disappointed greatly when she had no news to give him about conversation yesterday with her chief. Maybe Mr. DeLuxe had expected fifty Russian girls to come forward dancing, like a movie. Then, whole government to follow. But Rimma said: "I will do everything I can to persuade them so they give you permission to stay." Certainly they did not kiss each other but they were very friendly, very friendly, and she was upset also, and uneasy. She thought response would be quicker. That there'd be more interest. But nothing on this second day.

Next morning was Sunday, third day of visit, his birthday. She gave him a gift she bought for him. Dostoyevsky's Idiot. And they visited Lenin's tomb in Red Square. No special reaction from him. He was waiting for news, but Sunday had no news. Ditto Monday. Absence of news. For her, reports to file.

After he told her of his desire to stay in Soviet Union, she reported every day to proper people. It was very important, you see, for his fate--for his fate, not for hers. Usually she would report at end of day. She was surprised they did not seem to pay much serious attention to this case.

Today, thinking of herself as a source of information concerning Oswald, she thinks she was not good enough--but

then, what value could a girl bring, so young, who has never had such experience before? At least, she was sincere. But it's difficult to say what they thought. She was a good source of information, she thinks, and she worked well, but could not work better at such an age because of her lack of experience.

Sunday and Monday he was saying: maybe he could tell them some kind of secret things. He had served in his armed forces and he had something to tell. Rimma went to her boss and reported that Oswald was now prepared to say things that would be of interest. He knew about airplanes; he mentioned something about devices. He said he'd like to meet some authorities. Her boss said, "Oh, go and have another tour," and Rimma had a feeling that maybe people from Internal Security had come around to take a look at him, not to talk to him, but to keep a little watch on him.

On Tuesday night, however, they told her that he wouldn't be allowed to stay; he would be refused. She could not give him such bad news then. She waited until next morning, last day of his visa.

He was shocked. Very depressed, very tense. She tried to calm him, but it was as if he was dead. He spent a whole morning with her. So depressed. She talked him into a trip for afternoon.

After taking her big meal at lunchtime, she waited for him downstairs and was surprised he wasn't there; usually he was punctual--very exact on time. Nine sharp for sure was always nine sharp, ditto for two P.M.: now, this afternoon, they had car and driver waiting. It was very difficult with cars; you had to reserve carefully in advance. So, by 2:30 she was so worried that she went upstairs herself without permission: very strange.

A floor lady was upstairs by their hotel elevator and Rimma said to this dezhurnaya, "Have you seen Lee Oswald leave his room?" She said, "No, he's inside; I don't have his key."

Rimma said, "Come with me." They began knocking. Nobody answered. His door was locked from inside and so this floor lady couldn't put her extra key in. They called a locksmith from their hotel crew and someone from Internal Security, but hotel locksmith had difficulty opening Lee's door, and finally pushed it open with such a bang that he fell into Lee's room. They saw nobody. Rimma saw nothing in his living room. Then those two men went on ahead of her into Oswald's bathroom. Rimma doesn't know where they found him, whether in his tub or on his bathroom floor; she couldn't see it from where she was, and she did not want to. Then they came out and said, "Get an ambulance." Rimma went down to call and soon after police told her that he had cut his wrists. They said "cut his

wrists" so she didn't know if it was one or two. "Old Italian method," they said. Rimma was scared, certainly, but also glad. She thought that from a moral point of view, how good it was that she had come in time. When they brought him out on a stretcher she saw that he was dressed but she had had some earlier impression that he had had no clothes on. Maybe someone took care of that for him. His clothes were dry. He was lying unconscious on this stretcher and she sat next to him in the ambulance. Up front was a man driving, and another fellow who had helped carry his stretcher. She was alone with him in back and he looked so weak and thin. His cheeks were hollow; his face was bluish, like a person about to die. If he did, there might be a bad situation for her country, a scandal between United States and Russia. Tourists come here, and now this one's dead, so other tourists might be afraid to visit. What with distrust between two great nations, Americans might think that Soviet officials had tortured him.

Their trip took a while because they had been assigned to Botkin Hospital, which for Rimma was one of best in Moscow, although not near to Hotel Berlin, but very good doctors, with a special department for diplomats, also for foreigners. When they got there, however, they were taken to a locked-door facility for Russians. Mental ward.

At reception, they put him on a stretcher with wheels,

and injected him. When he opened his eyes, he couldn't understand at first where he was but then she began speaking to him, and said, "Everything is all right. We are in hospital. Don't worry." And she patted his hair. She was very gentle. He looked at her but did not smile. Since they had already taken him to surgery and stitched everything, there was a bandage on his left arm near his wrist. Right arm nothing. Just left wrist. She stayed with him from four in the afternoon when they arrived till night, maybe ten o'clock. He asked her not to go, and so she stayed. For six hours.

He had been put in a room with Russians, and Rimma told them he was a good American, but she did not mention that he had tried suicide. She merely said she was from Intourist, and he was American, and ill--no further details. She told him to be calm. He asked if she would come and she said she would tomorrow morning. Certainly.

Oct. 21 Evening 6:00 Receive word I must leave country at 8:00 PM tonight as visa expires. I am shocked! My dreams! I retire to my room. I have \$100 left. I have waited for two years to be accepted. My fondest dreams are shattered because of a petty official; because of bad planning. I planned too much!

7:00 PM I decide to end it. Soak wrist in cold water to numb the pain. Then slash my left wrist into bathtub of hot water. I think when Rimma comes at 8 to find me dead it will be a great shock. Somewhere a violin plays as I watch my life whirl away. I think to myself, "how easy to die, and a sweet death to violins." About 8:00 Rimma finds me unconscious (bathtub water a rich red color). She screams (I remember that) and runs for help. Ambulance comes, am taken to hospital where five stitches are put in my wrist. Poor Rimma stays at my side, an interpreter, (my Russian is still very bad) far into the night. I tell her, "go home." My mood is bad, but she stays. She is my "friend." She has a strong will. Only at this moment I notice she is pretty.

The Moscow doctor didn't want her name used, but she had been on duty at the hospital when Oswald arrived at four P.M., October 21. Now, she is almost seventy, but unlike most Russians of her generation, looks younger than her age. One would take her for fifty-five, and well-preserved, a short heavy woman with a broad face, rather handsome, although her skin has the scars of an old acne. Not exactly brusque in her manner, stolid and sure of herself. She asks that her name not be used since she does not want publicity, but she does remember that day well.

It was never a serious wound, she says. Not much more than a scratch. His cut was on the lower part of his left arm and he was up walking around very soon. Not one day did he stay in bed, not one day.

At Botkin, this walk from reception to locked door ward, was long. If sick, you would have had to use a wheelchair. But he walked through. When she came to examine him, he was lively, talked to other people in his ward, was only able to communicate in very bad Russian, but was very communicative.

Once examined, they would never have let him stay if he had been a Russian. In and out the same day for such a case. His cut was hardly more than a scratch; it never reached his vein.

As for one's psychiatric examination, you ask your patient about his family background and other history. Then you go to his reason he wanted to commit suicide. You try to see what kind of mood he's in. In his mind, is there still something dark? Or is he coming back to life? People either feel grateful for having been saved, or are annoyed. Important to distinguish. With him, you didn't really have to ask such questions because it was not really an attempt. Clearly, he wanted to demonstrate something. Wanted to stay. He even said, "I am afraid to go back." But never said why.

She nods at another psychiatrist's report at reception. It is written by a Doctor Mikhaileavna, and states that patient regrets his attempt and now wants to go home. But that was reception. A couple of hours later, he doesn't want to go back. It is not uncommon to have such shifting in

reactions after arrival.

Another document states: "He does not have any hallucination and responds to all questions logically and very sensibly. Has a very definite desire to stay in the Soviet Union. No psychosomatic disturbances and is not dangerous."

Reception reported that the cut was three centimeters, not quite an inch and a quarter long. Surgery stated it was five centimeters and took four stitches. Agreement in any case that his cut is not deep.

He had not asked Rimma to bring back anything from his room, but she did look there anyway next day, and saw that he had a sweater of a dark green color, and two shirts, no more. Maybe he washed one each night. But he always combed his hair and shined his one pair of shoes.

She also brought over the book she had bought for his birthday, Idiot. Maybe she had made a forecast for this Lee. He had a name which didn't sound Russian at all. Very Asian, Li. So now he called himself Alik--her suggestion.

He was in that same ward where she had left him, sitting up, quite all right. His roommates told her, "Everything is OK, don't worry. We took care of Alik; he's a good guy." And

again she spent a whole day with him and did not go to her office--everything would be taken care of without her.

She was pleased; Alik was happy to see her. He even blushed. She thought Soviet authorities would change their opinion and do something. Because they should. They would not allow him to die.

At Botkin hospital they asked her to fill out many papers. She had done others yesterday, now, more papers. Once again she stayed all day. When doctors visited, she translated. He was certainly feeling better. He started to talk about how he could stay in her country now. She thought he was feeling a mixture of shame plus uncertainty along with happiness, but still he began smiling. Of course, he was on tranquilizers, keep him calm.

Alexander received Oswald news from Berlin Hotel. His reaction was terrible, very terrible. Strong. If this young man is not able to return back, Alexander thought, maybe someone is following him back there in the States, etc., etc. That was what Alexander thought although Oswald had not said that, but he did give such an impression. That he was afraid to go back.

Rimma wasn't worried about work, of course. They would understand she was at the hospital, certainly. She was sure that her work and her behavior were up to best mark, and everyone would later tell her how good she was, although, for fact, later, nobody said anything.

Next day when she came to his mental ward and they asked who it was, she said svayiy, which means "your people" or "family," and that struck her as funny. What kind of family was this, all cuckoo, and now she had become one with cuckoo people. She explained to Alik that she didn't think he was crazy, he was even normal, but he had committed an attempt, so they had to examine him. And for that matter, she thought to herself some psychiatrists might be from KGB. She did not exclude that thought.

Chapter 3 -- Rosa and Rimma

Oct. 22 I am alone with Rimma amongst the mentally ill. She encourages me and scolds me. She says she will get me transferred to another section . . . (not for insane) where food is good.

Oct. 23 Transferred to ordinary ward. (Airy, good food.) But nurses are suspicious of me. (They know.)

Oct. 24 Afternoon. I am visited by Rosa Agafonova of the hotel tourist office who asks about my health. Very beautiful, excellent English, very merry and kind. She makes me very glad to be alive.

Rosa, at 28, was not only very pretty but had the position of Senior Interpreter at Hotel Berlin's bureau of Intourist. So she did not often go out with groups or individuals. She was there to oversee visas, passports, train tickets, theatre tickets, excursions, escorts, and special occasions. Her visit to Oswald was in this category. While her staff at Hotel Berlin Intourist were careful not to talk about this American who tried to commit suicide, still, a