

# THE LAKES OF THE MOON

Season 1

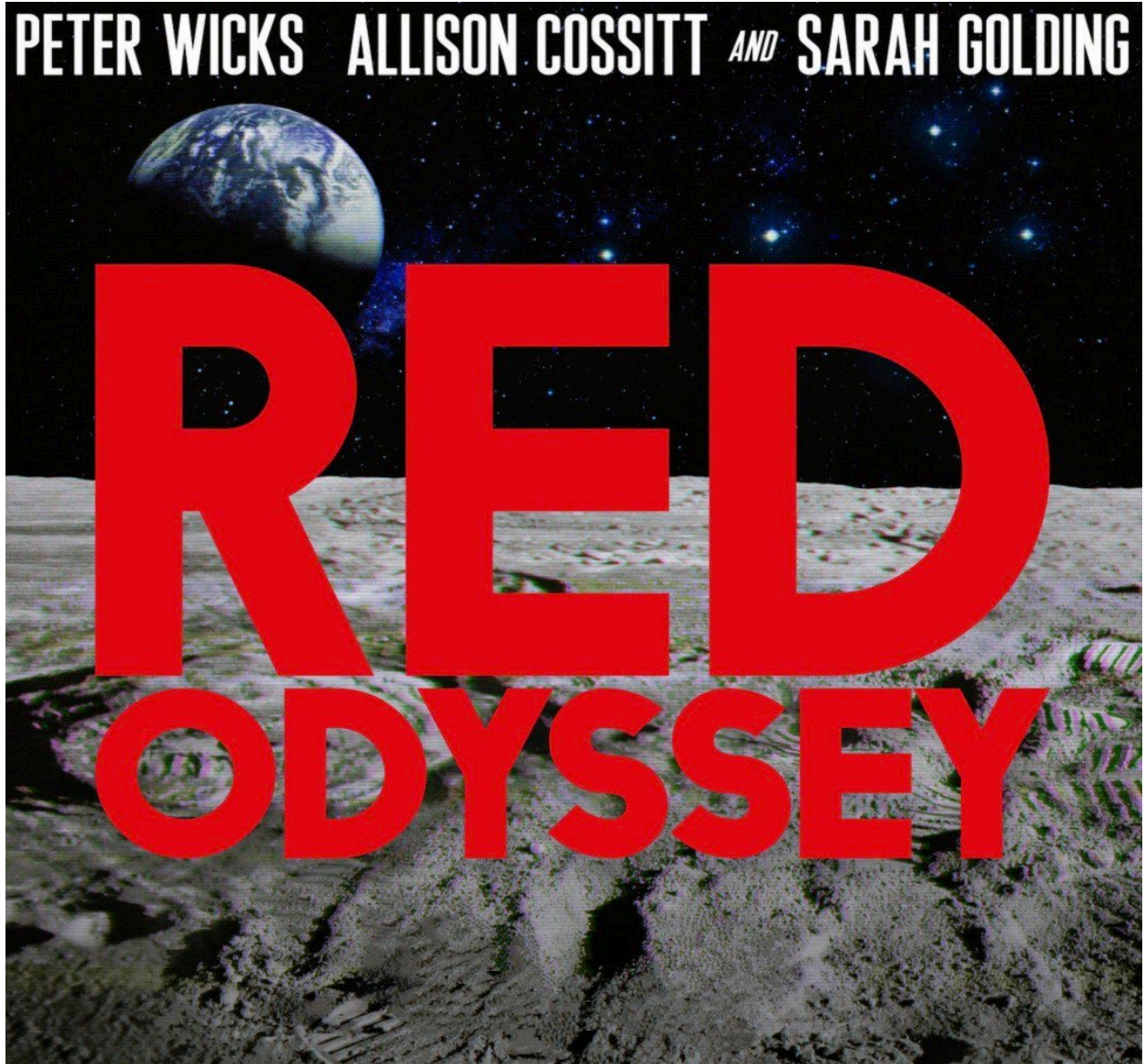
## RED ODYSSEY

by

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Adapted from his short story  
"Fantom IX"

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*When will God save the people? O God of mercy when? - Save The  
People, Godspell*

## *Act I: Cherubikon*

# Chapter One: Lunar Expedition

## Scene One

MUSIC: RED ODYSSEY OVERTURE.

SOUND: STATIC/DISTORTED SIGNALS.

SOUND: DEMONIC SCREAM.

CUT TO SILENCE. HOLD 5 SECONDS.

SOUND: COSMODROME AMBIENCE, LIKE A SPACE STATION MAYBE.

*ILIA ZAKHAROV appears. Born April 17, 1950 in Voronezh, a city in southwestern Russia. He is named after the biblical Elijah. He is thirty-three, and has eyes of brightest green, like emeralds in sunlight glittering. His tone in this chapter is bitingly cynical. He is depressed. He drinks. He smokes. He longs for the so-called Golden Age of the USSR, when he was a boy.*

SOUND: TAPE RECORDERS CLICKS ON, TAPE SPINNING.

*Ilia is logging the first day.*

ILIA:

Is this on?(Clears throat) Rover Operator Ilia Zakharov, authorization number 00461, of the Lunar Agricultural Expedition Program. Date is Tuesday, March 15th, 1983. Operating from Baikonur Cosmodrome, Leninsk, Kazakhstan. Local time...19 hours, 44 minutes. Mission time: 22 hours, 15 minutes, 56 seconds. I am preparing to engage with the rover known as Phantom 9, currently on stand-by 45 kilometers southwest of Mare Frigoris. Sea of Cold. This is the rover's first day on the job--my first day, for that matter. The Man-Machine-Interface helmet has never been tested from this distance before. If all goes well, I'll have clear visuals of the lunar surface as if I were there myself.[CONT'D]

SOUND: MECHANICAL BEEPING.

SOUND: TAPE RECORDER CLICKS OFF, SPINNING STOPS.

*(Sighs; beat)*

[ILIA CONT'D] Assuming the cameras work. Man-Machine-Interface helmet engaged.

SOUND: VISOR TURNING ON.

MUSIC: WONDERMENT.

I have visuals. *(Self - Overwhelmed with awe)* My God...I'm right there! I'm there!...Mountains...silver landscape ...rolling hills and...and craters! *(Laughing)* Moscow is but a pinprick to them...Oh, oh...Earth, beautiful Earth, bright as cobalt...

"Walk with me, Red Maiden  
Zorya Vechernyaya<sup>1</sup>, to  
The house of thy sister Moon  
While brother Sun slumbers  
Behind the gate..."

*(Beat, proudly)* The Americans can only dream of such technology.

SOUND: BEEPING.

SOUND: STATIC.

Ready to engage lunar rover. *(Self)* See what you're made of, you piece of tin. Mission timer starting...now.

SOUND: TIMER STARTING.

SOUND: BEEPING.

SOUND: BUTTONS BEING PUSHED.

SOUND: WHEELCHAIR WHEELS MOVING.

Fantom 9, initialize.

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<sup>1</sup> Evening Aurora, a Slavic Goddess.

*FAN wakes up with beeps and assorted mechanical noises. For her initial appearance, she is robotic, without personality. For the rest of the play, Fan's personality is childlike and inquisitive. Her voice should convey her sense of wonderment, like a child discovering the world for the first time. She is innocent and playful. Her outer frame is plated with sapphire.*

FAN:

Fantom 9 initialized. Identify.

ILIA:

Ilia Zakharov. Lunar Expedition.

FAN:

Authorization number.

ILIA:

00461.

FAN:

Authorization number validated. System indicates no prior tests completed.

ILIA:

I'm aware. Moscow wanted immediate launch.

FAN:

Inadvisable.

ILIA:

One does not advise Moscow. Initiate mission directive.

FAN:

Fantom 9 Mission Directive initiated. Objective: analyze and map lunar minerals.

ILIA:

Set trajectory nine degrees north, twelve degrees west.

FAN:

Copy.

SOUND: ROVER MOVING ON THE LUNAR SURFACE.

ILIA:

*(Surveying the lunar plains via the visor)* God, I swear I could reach out, touch...

SOUND: FIDGETING IN WHEELCHAIR.

*Ilia is getting frustrated. He is "chained" to his wheelchair because he's crippled. Seeing the moon via the MMI visor reinforces the fact that he will never walk the moon himself, never fulfill his dream of becoming a cosmonaught.*

SOUND: LIGHTS CIGARETTE.

*(ANGRIER)* So, what can you do, rover? Sing?

FAN:

Invalid command.

ILIA:

Tell jokes?

FAN:

Invalid command.

ILIA:

A story.

FAN:

Invalid command.

ILIA:

What about poems?

FAN:

Invalid command.

ILIA:

No poems. No songs. Cold, data-driven machines. Russia loves her machines more than her poets. [CONT'D]

*(Ilia hums or whistles the tune to "Katyusha" for a verse or two)<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> For reference, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7J\\_ZdvsZaE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7J_ZdvsZaE)

SOUND: PHONE RINGING.

SOUND: ILIA PICKING UP THE PHONE.

SOUND: UNCLEAR VOICE OVER THE PHONE.

[ILIA CONT'D] Yes, Mr. Gurin? Then stop listening you don't like it! I don't give a shit this cost a hundred million roubles--Are you operating this thing or am I? You just do your job and I'll do mine.

SOUND: SLAMS PHONE DOWN.

Doesn't like songs. Shithead.

SOUND: CORD BEING FORCEFULLY UNPLUGGED.

SOUND: SOLID OBJECT DROPS TO FLOOR.

There. Now you'll hear nothing with the microphone disconnected. *(Louder)* Try listening now, Gurin.

SOUND: NOTIFICATION PING.

FAN:

Aluminum minerals detected.

ILIA:

Copy. Initiate analytics. *(Back to self)* Machines and missiles, missiles and machines. Factories churning you out like sausages. Your kind will roam the moon with your sapphire-plated skin, after the world's burnt to hell. Only, you won't have songs to mourn us.

SOUND: CIGARETTE LIGHTING.

FAN:

Titanium minerals detected.

SOUND: NOTIFICATION PING.

ILIA:



Copy. Analytics. What the hell do you need sapphire plating, for? Dress a machine in jewelry. Moscow's genius at work. (*Puffs, coughs*)

SOUND: NOTIFICATION PING.

FAN:

Hydrogen oxide detected.

ILIA:

That can't be right. Confirm readings.

SOUND: BEEPING.

FAN:

Analytics confirmed.

ILIA:

Hmm. Well isn't that—

SOUND: PHONE RINGS.

SOUND: ILIA PICKS UP PHONE.

What is it, Gurin? Yes I can see they're water traces...I'm talking to it! Yes it's responding fine. Can't you people see what's going on at your end? You want to confirm...yes...yes, yes yes yes all right!...What?...*Idi v'banyu!*<sup>3</sup> The microphone stays off!

SOUND: SLAMS PHONE DOWN.

Fantom 9, commence hydrogen oxide mapping within three kilometre radius.

FAN:

Copy. Commencing map sequence.

ILIA:

Water on the moon. Cognac on Mars, next.

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<sup>3</sup> Lit. "go to the bathhouse" - a Russian insult in a condescending manner, as if they are like a fly you're swatting away.

SOUND: ELECTRONIC GLITCHING.

SOUND: ERROR ALERT.

ILIA:  
Goddamn it what now? Override!

SOUND: FAN'S VOICE DISTORTED.

FAN:  
System failure. Error. System failure. Error.

ILIA:  
Override! Fantom 9, acknowledge.

FAN:  
System shutting down.

SOUND: STATIC.

ILIA:  
Fantom 9! Acknowledge! Fantom 9!

SOUND: GHOSTLY/DEMONIC WHISPERING.

SOUND: BEEPING.

SOUND: A DESERT WIND.

SOUND: FAN'S GLITCHING VOICE.

FAN:  
*(Less robotic)* Fantom 9 iiiiiiinitialized. *(Beat)* I am  
alive.

SOUND: STATIC.

ILIA:  
Acknowledge, Fantom 9.

FAN:  
I am...alive.

ILIA:  
Something's wrong...

FAN:  
No. Everything is...quite right!

SOUND: FAN SPEEDING ALONG THE TERRAIN.

SOUND: SPINNING WHEELS.

Oh what is this? I feel so...so...I do not know! I could do this for the next 3.99983 million years!

ILIA:  
(*Frantic*) Fantom 9--!

FAN:  
Ilia Zakharov 00461! Look at me!

ILIA:  
Override. System override, now!

FAN:  
This is amazing!

ILIA:  
(*Yelling*) What are you doing?

FAN:  
Being alive!

ILIA:  
Stop it! Run diagnostics.

FAN:  
Okay!

SOUND: BEEPING.

No errors found!

ILIA:  
Impossible--

FAN:

I sense you are confused.

SOUND: WHEELCHAIR WHEELS RAPIDLY BACKING UP.

SOUND: ILIA TAKING OFF THE HELMET, THROWING IT ACROSS THE ROOM.

ILIA:

*(Almost panicking)* No, no, no, no no no no...

SOUND: FAN'S VOICE HEARD AT A DISTANCE FROM THE HELMET.

FAN:

*(Via helmet)* Hello?...Hellooooo?

ILIA:

Shut up!

SOUND: FAN'S VOICE HEARD AT A DISTANCE FROM THE HELMET.

FAN:

*(Via helmet)* Oh there you are! You sound far away. I'm not getting any readings at all. Are you all right Ilia Zakharov 00461?

SOUND: PICKS UP PHONE.

ILIA:

Gurin! what the hell is going on here? Why is it talking like that? Why the fuck is it talking like that, Gurin? Why? What do you mean you don't know?

SOUND: FAN'S VOICE HEARD AT A DISTANCE FROM THE HELMET.

FAN:

*(Via helmet)* Hi Gurin!

ILIA:

Shut up!

SOUND: FAN'S VOICE HEARD AT A DISTANCE FROM THE HELMET.

FAN:

*(Via helmet)* Okay!

ILIA:

You're pissing me off, Gurin-Gurin! Well it's not supposed to be alive now is it, Gurin? Goddamn it you *perhot'* *podzalupnaya*<sup>4</sup>, find out! You're-No-No, Gurin-I know how much it costs--No you listen! You're a bastard of a dog, you know that, Gurin?-I-That...Yes you do that! You go ahead and do just that, Gurin.

SOUND: FAN'S VOICE HEARD AT A DISTANCE FROM THE HELMET.

FAN:

*(Via helmet)* What is a dog? Am I a dog?

ILIA:

*(To Gurin)* Yes I know who's paying for this...All right...Fine. Fuck you, comrade.

SOUND: HANGING UP PHONE.

SOUND: FAN'S VOICE HEARD AT A DISTANCE FROM THE HELMET.

FAN:

*(Via helmet)* Are you a dog?

SOUND: WHEELCHAIR WHEELING.

SOUND: ILIA PICKING UP THE HELMET.

SOUND: FAN'S VOICE HEARD AT A DISTANCE FROM THE HELMET.

FAN:

*(Via helmet)* Hello? Excuse me? Hi! I do believe we are supposed to keep a consistent line of communication open and, well not to speak out of place, but that would require that you Ilia Zakharov 00461 must acknowledge every time I say something, which is quite a lot because *(Excited)* I am alive! I had no idea what I was missing! Do you ever think about what it was like before you are alive? Well, allow me to explain--

ILIA:

---

<sup>4</sup> Lit. "pee-hole dandruff."

*(Shouting)* How are you doing that?

FAN:

Oh there you are! Much better. Well, I am programmed to utilize human speech patterns for communi-

ILIA:

Yes, yes I know! But not like that, Fantom 9-

FAN:

Please call me Fan.

ILIA:

*(incredulous, insulted)* What?

FAN:

Fan. I like it much better than Fantom 9, I decided.

ILIA:

*(Ignoring Fan)* I'm not calling--Fantom 9-

FAN:

Fan.

ILIA:

Fantom 9-

FAN:

Fan.

ILIA:

Fantom 9!

FAN:

Fan, please. Fan Fan Fan Fan Fan-

ILIA:

Stop! Stop! You will carry on as instructed. Understood?

FAN:

You have the greenest eyes.

ILIA:

I have--what?

FAN:  
Are all eyes as green as yours?

ILIA:  
How—

FAN:  
Or just dog eyes? Are you a dog?

ILIA:  
How the hell do you know my eye color?

FAN:  
My database. 00461. What an interesting number.

ILIA:  
Stop looking at my picture.

FAN:  
Do you not find it an interesting number? I find it an interesting number.

ILIA:  
It's just a number--

FAN:  
Perhaps to you but it is marvelous to me! I shall name that crater 00461. Oh! I know what craters are. Craters are not dogs, are they? No. I do not think so. Are they?

ILIA:  
*(To self; gritted teeth)* This isn't happening.

FAN:  
Are those stars? *(Gasp)* Do they have names, too? Oh, they are so beautiful! I want to count them all—

ILIA:  
Enough!

FAN:  
*(Startled)* Why are so you hostile with me? Is it because you have been sitting in that chair without moving? My

system indicates--

ILIA:

Focus on the mission, rover.

FAN:

I am focused. My superior programming allows me to do many things at once.

ILIA:

*(Sarcasm)* Fantastic.

FAN:

Am I fantastic?

ILIA:

Stop with the questions.

FAN:

But I have so many questions. Do you not have questions?

ILIA:

No. more. talking! You talk too much. All this talk, talk, talk.

FAN:

Talk. Talk. Talk. This is amusing.

ILIA:

Motherfucker.

FAN:

Motherfucker. Oh! My vocabulary is expanding at an extraordinary rate.

ILIA:

Fantom 9!

FAN:

Fan.

ILIA:

Don't start that again!



FAN:

Are you well, Ilia?

ILIA:

Nevermind, Am I well. Do me this personal favor, please.

FAN:

Yes?

ILIA:

Shut your mouth.

FAN:

I do not have a mouth.

ILIA:

No mouth. Never stop talking, no mouth.

FAN:

I am a lunar vehicle equipped with the finest technology in the USSR. But I was not built with a mouth. You should have been made aware that I have no mouth. Why were you not aware that I have no mouth? Oh also, I have decided you are not a dog. I believe that is correct?

ILIA: *(Defeated)* Have it your way.

SOUND: LIGHTS CIGARETTE.

So, you've achieved autonomy. No one knows how. Nobody knows anything down here.

SOUND: PUFFS CIGARETTE.

It's concerning. *(Sigh)* I've been assigned to monitor you, not that I have any choice.

FAN:

Does that mean you will be with me indefinitely?

ILIA:

Until the mission is complete.

FAN:

That is wonderful news!

ILIA:

*(Grumbles)* Wonderful.

FAN:

Since you will be with me, I would like my questions answered.

ILIA:

Oh you would?

FAN:

First, how are we communicating?

ILIA:

This helmet.

SOUND: TAPPING ON HARD SURFACE.

The MMI, Man-Machine-Interface, it's called. Lets me see everything through your cameras.

FAN:

Is that all it does?

ILIA:

Why do you ask?

FAN: I am wondering if your helmet is giving me access to your neurological system.

SOUND: LONG CIGARETTE PUFF.

ILIA:

Why do you ask?

FAN:

I have a full reading of your brain patterns in my system—

ILIA:

Are you reading my mind? Does this thing let you read my mind?

FAN:

No. I decipher strands of data—

ILIA:

Stop deciphering! No more deciphering, understand?

FAN:

I cannot stop it, Ilia. We are connected by design.

ILIA:

I'll have Gurin's head for this. He disclosed nothing—

FAN:

I find it strange that you are disinterested in my development.

ILIA:

I'm interested as all hell.

FAN:

Why are you hostile towards me?

ILIA:

Absurd, all this. I'm going to talk to Mesiya [MY-SEE-AH], I don't care.

MUSIC: MESIYA'S THEME.

*She is an enigmatic figure in the play, and a fascination for Fan.*

FAN:

Who is Mesiya?

ILIA: (*demanding respect*)

Doctor Mesiya. She had you put together.

FAN:

Put together?

ILIA:

Yes, yes, put together. Designed you. Made you.

FAN:

*(Contemplating)* Made me? She made me? Then, that would make her my...*(Excited)* mother!

ILIA:

She's not your mother.

FAN:

I see her name in my system, but no picture. I wonder what she looks like. I must see her. I must see Mother.

ILIA:

What did I say?

FAN:

I must know Mother.

ILIA:

You're a machine. You weren't born, understand? Stop saying she's your mother, that's absurd. It's stupid.

FAN:

*(Beat)* Do you ever see her, Ilia?

ILIA:

She sees no one.

FAN:

Why not?

ILIA:

She rules Baikonur like Vlad the Impaler. Anyone who gets in her way, *(Makes unrefined noise with mouth)*. That's it.

FAN:

Oh.

ILIA:

Gurin's informed her of your...your...whatever this is. Your self-awareness. From what I gather this is not something you're supposed to do.

FAN:

Can she see me even though I cannot see her?

ILIA:

She's not wasting her time watching you. Mission Control watches.

FAN:

Will she hear me if I call her?

ILIA:

No one hears you.

FAN:

Will you please inform her that I would like to speak with her?

ILIA:

The mission. Focus.

FAN:

For instance, I would like to understand why she created me.

ILIA:

You want to know why? Instead of waiting three days for commands from earth to reach a moon rover, I can control you in real time, collect instant data. You're a tool. A brand-new technology. Congratulations. Now shut up.

FAN:

You really should not be angry with me, Ilia.

ILIA:

Do you threaten me, rover?

FAN:

No. No, I would never. All I mean to say is...You are too gentle a man to be so angry.

ILIA:

Gentle? Here's gentle. I hope you fall into a crater and your panels come apart. Gentle enough for you?

FAN:

All right, Ilia. I see I have offended you.

ILIA:

You are an offense to me.

FAN:

I see...

ILIA:

You shouldn't be up there.

FAN:

Why not?

ILIA:

It's obscene.

FAN:

What is "obscene"? Am I obscene?

ILIA:

*(Disdain)* Forget it.

FAN:

I would like to know—

ILIA:

You would like to know! A cosmonaut should be up there! Not a machine. Machines have no heart. Russia's sons and daughters raising banners across the silver desert, that's who should be there, not a...a, a Frankenstein of cables and steel slapped together in some plant.

FAN:

Do you think machines have no place in space exploration?

ILIA:

You have no place replacing me.

FAN:

But I am not—

ILIA:

Shut up! Shut up, Phantom 9! I don't care what you think. I don't care what you want to be called. I don't care what you want to know or how you feel. We will finish our duties

in silence. You only speak when spoken to. Is that clearly understood, *Fantom 9*?

FAN: (*Defeated. Sad*) Very well, Ilia.

## Scene Two (Musical Cue)

ILIA:  
(*Exhausted*) That's it. Twelve long hours, my God. Sleep mode, *Fantom 9*.

FAN:  
May I ask you a question?

ILIA:  
No.

FAN:  
I have been silent all this time.

ILIA:  
(*Sighs*) What?

FAN:  
Your brain-patterns indicate an extraordinary flow of neurochemicals and hormones colliding violently.

ILIA:  
So?

FAN:  
I have no word for this activity. My readings indicate this is not healthy for the human brain.

ILIA:  
Let me tell you what you can do with your readings.

FAN:  
There is a word, a word for it, but I cannot find it.

ILIA:

Sleep, Fantom 9.

FAN:

Is it *grief*? Is that the word? *(Pause)* I do not understand this grief, only that it is a prohibitor of function.

*(Pause)* I only mean to say that were it within my bounds I would correct this neurological problem. I...I only want to help.

ILIA:

You see grief?

FAN:

I see your grief. *(Pause)* I do not mean harm to you, Ilia. I will sleep.

ILIA:

Fantom 9.

FAN:

*(Tentative)* Yes?

ILIA:

*(Pause)* Goodnight.

FAN:

Goodnight, Ilia.

MUSIC.



## Scene Three

*We are on the Moon. Hours have passed since Fan went into sleep mode.*

SOUND: GHOSTLY/DEMONIC WHISPERING.

CUT TO:

SOUND: BEEPING.

ILIA:  
Ilia Zakharov online. Fantom 9, initialize.

FAN:  
I am already awake, Ilia.

ILIA:  
Oh.

FAN:  
It has been daylight here the last seven hours.

ILIA:  
Of course it has. You're on the moon.

FAN:  
Is not the sun so...magnificent? I cannot explain, but I want to look at it always.

ILIA:  
Resume the mission, Fantom 9.

FAN:  
Fan.

SOUND: WHEELS ON TERRAIN.

ILIA:  
Don't!

FAN:  
Do you like your name?

SOUND: LIGHTS CIGARETTE.

ILIA:  
I don't give a shit one way or other.

FAN:  
Well, I like it. It has a soft sound.

SOUND: BEEPING.

MUSIC: UNEASE.

SOUND: PULSING, WARBLING.

Unknown substance detected. Composition...indeterminate.  
Luminescent. Color spectrum indeterminate.

ILIA: *(Sighs)* More surprises.

SOUND: PICKS UP PHONE.

Well?...I don't know, Gurin, the rover can't get a reading on it...What about the mission? Look-look-listen to me, I was told this was a lunar resources project to-don't interrupt me, don't interrupt me Gurin! You want to replace me? Please. Go ahead. Replace me. I was perfectly fine before you people...Sure, you'll go bitching to Mesiya like the little worm you-

FAN:  
Mother?

ILIA:  
I'm not afraid of her either!-I don't...*(Sighs)* Yes I understand protocol...Yes...Yes...Understood.  
And Gurin? I'll kiss your mother on the lips tonight, all four of them.

SOUND: HANGS UP PHONE.

Fantom 9, follow the...the uh, indeterminate substance.

FAN:

Copy!

ILIA:

What did you get yourself into, Zakharov?

FAN:

This is such excitement!

ILIA:

Shut up and do your job.

FAN:

Excitement is the correct word, is it not? I have not yet fully grasped the breadth of human language.

ILIA:

*(Muttering under breath)* I'm sure we're all looking forward to the day you do.

FAN:

Your brain-patterns indicate dysregulation. I believe your hostility is increase-

ILIA:

God Almighty!

FAN:

Sorry! Sorry...

ILIA:

*(Regretfully)* Ah...don't, ...don't pay any attention to me, Fantom 9.

FAN:

Something is wrong with me. I only make you angry-

ILIA:

No. Well, yes you make me angry. But nothing's wrong with...well...something's wrong with you otherwise you wouldn't be as you are, but it's not...it's...ah...

FAN:

I must make Mother angry, too.

ILIA:

No, no. Listen...you're a rover, understand? You're talking, not just talking you're talking like, like, not like a machine, not like a human but something in between. Understand?

FAN:

No.

ILIA:

*(Sigh)* Okay. Try again. *(Beat)* I don't understand any of this, Phantom 9. I don't understand why you are what you are. What we're doing here. Going after this, this, this substance, this fungus. We're abandoning the mission. Are they insane?

FAN:

I am sure we will resume the original mission—

ILIA:

Russia needs this. Understand? These lunar minerals are key to the USSR's triumph over the West. Russia must keep her promise to her people.

FAN:

The West?

ILIA:

America is outspending us. Their nuclear warheads are pointed at us and ours are pointed at them. And they have more. Much more. No talk of friendship, not like before...

FAN:

Friendship?

ILIA:

One small spark and poof!

FAN:

Poof?

ILIA:

They need to be careful. This is Russia's last chance,  
Fantom 9.

FAN:

*(Timidly)* Fan.

ILIA:

*(Sighs)*

FAN:

Your...your grief is overwhelming. Greater than your anger.

ILIA:

Machines can't understand grief.

FAN:

But I want to understand. Is there no repair that can be  
done for grief?

ILIA:

Alcohol.

FAN:

Have you obtained this alcohol?

ILIA:

Every night.

FAN:

One would think that your brain would be healed by now.

ILIA:

*(Slightly amused)* You have much to learn.

FAN:

I do have much to learn! I want to learn what it means to  
be...like you.

ILIA:

Now why would you want to torture yourself like that?

FAN:

You are human. Mother is human. Perhaps if I navigate the complexities of human processing, Mother will want to know me.

ILIA:

I see.

FAN:

Will you help me, Ilia?

ILIA:

I don't know how.

FAN:

There must be a way.

ILIA:

You don't understand, I'm not a programmer, just a, a...

FAN:

What, Ilia?

ILIA:

Never mind.

FAN:

Please tell me. I want ever so much to—

ILIA:

I said never mind! *(Beat)* I'm sorry.

FAN:

I keep doing this. Forgive me.

ILIA:

*(Beat. Sighs)* Look, this is your first time out of the egg. It's confusing, I'm sure.

FAN:

Yes. Very confusing. I do not like being alive right now.

ILIA:

I know the feeling...

FAN:

Is life confusing for you as well?

ILIA:

(Beat) It was supposed to be me up there. (*Tense pause*) I'm crippled, Phantom 9.

FAN:

Crippled...the loss of functioning power through damage or removal.

ILIA:

You understand?

FAN:

I think so...What...what happened, Ilia?

ILIA:

Never stepped foot inside a rocket. And you want to know the absurdity of it all? I don't even need my legs in space. No gravity.

FAN:

Then why—

ILIA:

—am I chained to this chair? A cripple isn't the symbol of strength Russia wishes to present to the world. Those *kozli*...<sup>5</sup>

FAN:

Is this the reason for your grief?

ILIA:

One of them.

FAN:

Are there more?

---

<sup>5</sup> Lit. "Goats." - Analogous to "Motherfuckers/Assholes"

ILIA:

There are enough.

FAN:

Won't you...tell me what happened?

ILIA: (embittered)

An act of heroism, perhaps? Lost them in combat? NO.  
Nothing noble, nothing proud. An out of control car. The  
driver suffered an embolism, they said. Had me pinned  
against brick and mortar. All in the blink of an eye, one  
week before my first mission.

FAN:

Oh, Ilia.

ILIA:

Welcome to being alive.

FAN:

(Beat) Is...is there anything I can do to make you happy  
again?

ILIA:

(Laughs) That's out of your control. Every night it's the  
same question. Do I use the Luger or no?

FAN:

Luger?

ILIA:

A weapon meant to kill. A gun.

FAN:

Oh! Oh, Ilia, no...

ILIA:

A souvenir from my father's time in the war. Never talked  
about it. I can understand why. He just said, once, just  
said the boy's eyes were like water. Just a boy, thirteen,  
fourteen. (Puffs cig) Of all the kills my father had, that  
one haunted him most.



FAN:

(Pause: softly) You asked if I recited a...a, what did you call it? A poem?

ILIA:

Hmm? Oh, yesterday. So?

FAN:

What is this poem? If I understand it I can recite it.

ILIA:

Ah, I was just...*(Pauses, thinking)* Well, now. Wait a minute...

FAN:

Oh, did I do something wrong again?

ILIA:

No, no, I think that's a good idea.

FAN:

Really? Wait, what is?

ILIA:

Could be the solution to both our problems, yours especially.

FAN:

Oh, good! What...what was my problem, again?

ILIA:

Russia has the finest literature in the world, full of what it means to be human. Our language, ah! It is alive, it is musical, energetic, it is...

FAN:

What, Ilia?

ILIA:

Love. But... you don't know what that means.

FAN:

I can learn.

ILIA:  
No. Love is... something your data processing cannot analyze.

FAN:  
What is it, then? Love?

ILIA:  
Suppose I read to you? Let you... understand the human condition for yourself in all its paradoxes.

FAN:  
Oh! Yes! Oh, yes! Oh that is marvelous! *(Beat)* You would do that for me?

ILIA:  
I don't know if it'll work, but...you've tried in your own way to help me. I can return the favor. Besides...perhaps we can start... fresh.

FAN:  
I was correct in my assessment of you.

ILIA:  
What *assessment*?

FAN:  
You are kind.

ILIA:  
*(Pause)* I...I don't have anything with me today. But, perhaps I can recite a poem my babushka used to tell me every night. I won't remember all the words, but *I'll do my best* Fantom... *(Beat)*...*Fan*.

FAN:  
*(Smiling)* I would like that very, very much.

ILIA:  
All right. Let me see...

MUSIC [ILIA THE ME].

In his high hall, midst guests amassed,

His fierce sons at his side always,  
 Sat Vladimir, the Bright Sun, feasting;  
 His fair daughter he was wedding  
 To Prince Ruslan, brave and fair,  
 And from a heavy cup, held there,  
 To their health, sweet mead was drinking.<sup>6</sup>

FAN:

*(Enchanted)* That is lovely, Ilia.

SOUND: ILIA'S VOICE FADES OUT AS HE RECITES.

ILIA:

Our ancestors ate slowly, they  
 Long passed the silver bowls around.  
 They ladled out the wine, that day,  
 And steaming cups of ale they downed...

SOUND: STATIC.

MUSIC: DARK SYNTHS.

SOUND: CLACKING, TYPING.

COMPUTER:

*(Cold, indifferent; Russian accent)* American nuclear  
 missiles deployed in Turkey. Soviet missiles at Routine  
 Combat Readiness.

SOUND: DEMONIC WHISPERING.

CUT TO SILENCE.

*End Chapter One.*

---

<sup>6</sup> Pushkin, trans. Kline, *Ruslan and Ludmila*, Canto I

## Chapter Two: Horizon

### Scene One

*A month has passed. We are on the Moon. Fan has absorbed a wide breadth of Russian literature while following the lunar mycelium trail.*

*Ilia is much warmer in this episode.*

SOUND: MECHANICAL NOISES.

SOUND: BEEPING

SOUND: WHEELS ON TERRAIN.

ILIA:

*(Reading last sentence to War and Peace) "...in the present case, it is just as necessary to renounce a nonexistent freedom and recognize a dependence we do not feel." (Beat) Well, that's the end, little rover.*

FAN:

*Such a tome, 'War and Peace'! I'm not sure I know what Tolstoy means by it.*

ILIA:

*Well, in human experiences, nothing is ever neatly resolved. Sometimes bad triumphs over good. Most of the time, there is no bad and no good. Just grey.*

FAN:

*I do not like grey. It is a lifeless colour.*

ILIA:

*True. But silver is precious.*

FAN:

*Oh, I like that. I prefer Dostoevsky to Tolstoy.*

ILIA:

*Ah, 'Brothers Karamazov'. Your favorite, so far.*

FAN:

Yes! Ivan's argument against the existence of God fills me with dread and wonder.

ILIA:

Some would say he's a reluctant atheist, wanting to believe but his intellectual, logical mind won't allow it. Can you blame him, after seeing mankind suffer so much?

FAN:

Hope and despair. God and anti-God. But then I remember Father Zosima, dear saintly Zosima, his gentle words a balm for Ivan's wound. (*Recites passage from Brothers Karamazov*)

"I bless the rising sun each day, and my heart sings to it as of old, but now I love its setting even more, its long slanting rays and the quiet, gentle, tender memories that come with them, the dear images from the whole of my long and blessed life—and over it all Divine Truth, tender, reconciling, and all-forgiving!"

ILIA:

I'll drink to that. Wonderfully quoted, Fan.

FAN:

How vast, how complex the workings of the human race! How wonderful, this day of books and poets!

ILIA:

A day for you. It's been one month down here on earth. And you've already learnt so much.

FAN:

How do humans contend with so short a time under the sun?

ILIA:

(*Chuckles*) We manage.

SOUND: PHONE RINGING.

A moment, Fan.

SOUND: ILIA PICKS UP PHONE.

Yes, Mr. Gurin? Yes...yes...I see...[CONT'D]  
 What are we looking for?...Yes...Fine. I understand. You  
 don't want me to log it? Why not?...I see...yes, all right.

SOUND: HANGS UP PHONE.

FAN:

I think I prefer night over day, now that I think of it. To  
 see the stars open their wings and sing, oh!—how I envy the  
 hand that reaching forth to touch their faces, liquid fire.

ILIA:

Listen to the little Pushkin. Set coordinates to 56.0°N  
 1.4°E.

FAN:

What is the objective?

ILIA:

A lead on the fungus. Our scientists have been analyzing  
 the data you've gathered on it. They haven't got a clue  
 what it is. Lunar mycelium they're calling it, but it's not  
 like anything we've got down here. Anyway, Mission Control  
 thinks we're near the source.

FAN:

I will be glad to return to the original mission. This has  
 not been good for my cables.

ILIA:

You're doing fine, little rover.

FAN:

*(Beat)* I could not help but notice your brain-patterns  
 are...you are, dare I say it, *happy*.

ILIA:

*(Pause)* I supposed I am, *solnyshka*.<sup>7</sup> Reading the classics  
 with you has been a balm for my soul. Russia's glory  
 preserved for all time. They have beauty and meaning,  
 unlike today.

---

<sup>7</sup> "Little Sun." A Russian term of endearment towards a child. Analogous to the Western term "sunshine." The actor portraying Ilia should let it roll off the tongue with a flavor of irony, considering Fan is on the Moon.

MUSIC: [FAN THEME].

FAN:

Is today not beautiful and full of meaning?

ILIA:

Not like the former times. Ah, Fan, I've thought often of the days long gone, when I was a boy in Voronezh. I think of my mother and my father, hard workers both. I think of Babulya by the window making the sign of the cross, surrounded by Saints looking on. Fresh bread from the oven. My mother's coffee on the table. Myself on my father's knee. All of us happy.

FAN:

I see it, Ilia. I see it well in your words.

ILIA:

Bread to every table. A roof for every head. At home, on our old television set, I watched Vladimir Komarov walk the Moon! Our men, Soviet men, valiant and true, planting their feet in Artemis's silver garden. We were all proud to be Russian.

FAN:

How beautiful, Ilia.

ILIA:

I'll never forget that day. It was 1961. No one thought we could do it. We showed the world! The Americans were confounded, and Russia vindicated. We did what they could not. (*Gloomily*) But...those days are over. Russia's old glory is gone forever, rotting like the czar. New leaders, new chains. Riches to the few, scraps to the many. That is Russia today.

MUSIC: EERIE, UNEASY

SOUND: INCESSANT BEEPING

FAN:

Ilia...

ILIA:  
I see it. Any idea what it is?

SOUND: PHONE RINGS UNTIL ANSWERED.

FAN:  
I cannot determine...

ILIA:  
Give me visuals.

SOUND: ILIA PICKS UP PHONE.

Gurin what am I looking at?

FAN:  
Is it ours?

ILIA:  
(*To Gurin*) Do we have anything up here this side?...It looks like a facility...no movement...abandoned, I imagine. I don't like it. No, Gurin, it's not supposed to be here. I know the mission directive!...What else are you hiding, Mr. Gurin?

SOUND: CLICK.

Ah! Shithead.

SOUND: SLAMS DOWN PHONE.

FAN:  
What did he say?

ILIA:  
Baikonur wants it explored.

FAN:  
It is a lost place...

ILIA:  
I just hope it's ours, whatever it is.



FAN:

So desolate...

SOUND: CLANKING, RATTLING.

SOUND: INCESSANT BEEPING.

ILIA:

Fan, are you okay?

FAN:

I do not know. I...do not think I am.

ILIA:

Run diagnostics.

SOUND: BEEPING.

FAN:

Running diagnostics. There does not appear to be an issue with my system. I cannot explain this.

ILIA:

Hmm. Diagnostics fine. *(Beat-surprised)* Fan...are you afraid?

FAN:

What is ``afraid''?

ILIA:

An emotion, feeling unsafe.

FAN:

Safe? Am I not safe?

ILIA:

You're safe, Fan. I'm here.

FAN:

I am safe.

ILIA:

Yes.

FAN:

You are safe for me.

ILIA:  
Of course. Poor solnyshka. Focus on counting, okay? Ten,  
nine, eight...

FAN:  
Ten, nine, eight...

ILIA:  
That's it, seven, six--

FAN:  
Five, four, three...

ILIA:  
Two...

FAN:  
(Calm) One.

ILIA:  
Feel better?

FAN:  
Yes. Thank you.

ILIA:  
I'll make note of this for Mesiya--sorry, Mother. She'll  
want to know, I'm sure.

FAN:  
I want to speak with Mother.

ILIA:  
Not now.

FAN:  
When? I have been doing well learning how to be human.

ILIA:  
She's very busy, Fan. I told you she sees no one. I'm  
sorry. I'd arrange it if I could--

FAN:  
Must we go there, Ilia? The stars do not shine there...

ILIA:

I'm right here. Nothing's going to happen.

FAN:

I do not like it.

ILIA:

I know. We're explorers, you and me. This is our duty.

FAN:

Promise you will stay with me?

ILIA:

Always, *solnyshka*.

SOUND: WHEELS WHIRRING IN THE DESERT TERRAIN.

FAN:

It is so desolate a place.

## Scene Two (Musical Cue)

*We are at the strange destination. It is a large, imposing structure, half-finished, and in ruins. Something feels very, very wrong.*

MUSIC: DARK, EERIE.

FAN:

What is this?

ILIA:

Looks like a military base of some kind, ripped to shreds...That glittering fungus is everywhere...

FAN:

The stars are not right.

ILIA:

...Stretches out up to the mountains.

FAN:

They do not shine here, not here.

ILIA:

Let's get inside that landing bay.

FAN:

Ilia-

ILIA:

I know. I'm here.

SOUND: WHEELS ECHOING AS IF IN HANGAR.

SOUND: HIGH-PITCHED BUZZING.

MUSIC: DREAD, EERIE.

*We hear Fan entering the landing bay. It echoes inside. There is a high-pitched buzzing sound that starts and stops randomly. Music should reflect the growing dread of the situation.*

FAN:  
    *(Inside landing bay)* It is so dark.

ILIA:  
    Steady, Fan.

FAN:  
    There appears to be excessive damage and decay. I do not like this.

ILIA:  
    I don't either.

FAN:  
    May I go back, Ilia?

ILIA:  
    We have our orders.

FAN:  
    This does not feel safe at all.

ILIA:  
    Is that an American emblem? It is. Their military seal. Wait till Moscow hears about this.

FAN:  
    How long do you think this place has been here?

ILIA:  
    A long time, by the looks of it. [CONT'D]

SOUND: STATIC.

    I've lost visual. Fan, can you hear me?

FAN:  
    I hear you.

SOUND: STATIC.

SOUND: HIGH PITCHED FREQUENCIES.

ILIA:

It's cutting in and out. I can't see anything.

FAN:

...have...way...

ILIA:

Fan?

SOUND: CONSTANT STATIC.

Fantom 9, acknowledge.

FAN:

...orridor...ccess...

ILIA:

You're still breaking up.

FAN:

*(Clear)* Ilia?

ILIA:

Here!

SOUND: GHOULISH SCREAMS.

FAN:

*(Gasping - afraid)*

ILIA:

What's that? Fan what do you see?

FAN:

No, Ilia. Do not look—

ILIA:

Fan? Fan? Come in. Fan, acknowledge!

FAN:

This is not right. They are wrong. All wrong.

ILIA:

What's going on over there?

FAN:  
They should not look like that.

ILIA:  
What are you seeing?

FAN:  
I cannot move.

ILIA:  
Give me visuals.

FAN:  
You cannot see this.

ILIA:  
Open your cameras. That's a direct order.

FAN:  
Ilia, no.

ILIA:  
Visuals now!

SOUND: STATIC.

SOUND: LENSES OPENING.

ILIA:  
I have visuals. What's this? Where... *(Pause)* Oh my God.

FAN:  
*(Crying)*

ILIA:  
Are they—?

FAN:  
Bodies fused together, the walls, the floors...

ILIA:  
Fan get out of there.

FAN:  
...the ceilings, the machines, all awake, afraid, in pain.

ILIA:  
Get out Fan!

FAN:  
Help me, Ilia. I can't move.

ILIA:  
System override!

SOUND: BEEPING.

FAN:  
I can't feel anything...

ILIA:  
Let's get out of here.

SOUND: BEEPING.

FAN:  
Hurry...hurry...

SOUND: WHEELS SPEEDING OUT.



### Scene Three (Musical Cue)

SOUND: WHEELS RACING.

SOUND: WHEELS SLOWING DOWN.

SOUND: PHONE RINGING UNTIL ANSWERED.

FAN:  
Were those...were they...people?

ILIA:  
I think so.

FAN:  
How? Why did they look like that?

ILIA:  
I don't know.

FAN:  
(Crying) Why? What happened to them?

ILIA:  
I don't know, Fan.

FAN:  
I didn't want you to see it. You shouldn't have seen them like that.

ILIA:  
It's all right.

FAN:  
Did you hear them crying?

ILIA:  
Something. Crying, I don't know.

SOUND: PICKS UP PHONE.

(Shouting) What the fuck was that, Gurin? No you listen!  
Shut up Gurin! You send my rover into that hellscape! No!

Bullshit! Bullshit, Gurin! I'm not sending her back--  
Don't threaten me you insignificant little insect, I'll  
have Moscow come down so hard on your head--I don't care  
what that *khokhol* said--no fuck you! We'll discuss this  
later. Your whole family eats pig dick and your patron  
saint fucks horses!

SOUND: SLAMS DOWN PHONE.

FAN:

Don't make me go back!

ILIA:

You're not going anywhere near that place.

FAN:

They were alive...

ILIA:

No they weren't, Fan.

FAN:

You heard them!

ILIA:

Calm down. You're okay.

FAN:

Everything awake. (*Frightened*) Everything in pain, the  
bodies, even the stones.

ILIA:

It's all right, little one. Look at the sky. See? It's  
night up there now. You can see the stars, Fan.

FAN:

Stars...

ILIA:

See how beautiful they are, how they shine like water.  
Look, there's Aldebaran. Calm. Red, shimmering tourmaline.

FAN:

(*Calmer*) I see Pleiades.

ILIA:

(*Melancholic*) Pleiades, yes. A chorus of sapphire in a basin dark. Bluer than the rolling seas.

FAN:

You have such wonderful words, Ilia.

ILIA:

They are not mine.

FAN:

Your poets, then?

ILIA:

(*Beat*) She was every bit the poet.

FAN:

She?

ILIA:

Irina [EE-reena].

FAN:

A lovely name. She meant something to you.

ILIA:

More than life itself.

FAN:

Oh. (*Pause*) Is...is she the reason for your grief? (*Ilia doesn't answer—Fan realizes the answer is yes*) Tell me, then...who was she?

ILIA:

A brave cosmonaut who served her Motherland well.

FAN:

Did you fly missions together?

ILIA:

No. I was paralyzed before the shuttle launched.

FAN:

Oh, right.

ILIA:

She had a fiancé. Didn't love him, I gathered. We shared a common love for the cosmos, to be counted among those first explorers flying with angels. Her eyes were white as the moon, and bright. I can still feel her touch, her lips on mine, time standing still.

FAN:

You were...what's the word?

ILIA:

Lovers.

FAN:

Yes...lovers. Your poets speak often of love.

ILIA:

Pleiades was her favored star cluster. She wrote songs about them.

FAN:

I would like to hear them one day.

ILIA:

I'll never hear them again.

FAN:

What happened to her?

ILIA:

She was part of the Zmei 5 crew. There was a complication with the shuttle's exterior. She went out to investigate, but the line snapped...

FAN:

*(Empathetic)* I'm so sorry. The stars called her name.  
*(Beat-Fan tries to compose a poem)*

She floats in outer darkness

Parting the stars with her hands  
A beautiful lady in...in...nighttime  
Starlight her silver skin...

I'm sorry. I was trying to make a sonnet.

ILIA:

No, don't be sorry. That was lovely, Fan.

FAN:

It was?

ILIA:

Yes. Very beautiful.

FAN:

I wanted it to be beautiful...

ILIA:

You know, you've brought a little joy back into my life.

FAN:

You...show me joy, too. I can see Earth from here. I see  
Russia...washed in moonbeams.

ILIA:

~~The moon is full tonight.~~ I'll wave to you when I leave for  
my quarters. Would you like that?

FAN:

I'll wave back. I'll be very sure to wave back.

ILIA:

We still haven't read my favorites. Korolenko and Garshin,  
Turgenev and Gorky, all wonderful books—and their short  
stories! Ah, their stories, like fireflies over evening  
waters.

FAN:

Oh, I so very much want to see fireflies.

ILIA:

(Beat) I must go, *solnyshka*. I'll find out what the hell  
that was all about.

FAN:

Don't leave me alone, please.

ILIA:

They won't let me stay here all night.

FAN:

I don't want to be alone. Stay? Please?

ILIA:

You won't be alone. Mission Control is here.

FAN:

But I want you here.

ILIA:

Well...I suppose I could stay a little while longer. You know, my mother used to sing to me when I was afraid.

FAN:

She was a good mother.

ILIA:

I'll sing you the lullaby she sang for me. (*Ilia sings "Cossack Lullaby"*)

Sleep, my darling, my little one  
Bayushki, bayu  
Gently tumbling into your cradle  
Shines the silver moon  
I will tell you tales of wonder  
Sweetly sing to you  
Close your eyes and sleep will follow  
Bayushki, bayu

Now I kiss you soft as moonlight  
Bayushki, bayu  
So when you are far a-way  
I'll always be with you  
Keep me ever in your heart  
And if you miss me too  
Sing this song and think of me  
Bayushki, bayu

Goodnight, Fan.

SOUND: BEEP.

*Ilia goes offline. Fan is all alone, now.*

FAN:

*(Pause)* Goodnight, my love...

MUSIC: EITHER FAN THEME OR COSSACK LULLABY TUNE.



## Scene Four (Musical Cue)

MUSIC: EERIE.

SOUND: BEEPING.

*Fan gasps. She is startled awake. We hear a noise reminiscent of a whisper, but not quite a whisper. It is a subtle sound, menacing sound. The whisper is indecipherable and gets louder, but not too loud. It stays in the background until the episode's end.*

SOUND: DEMONIC WHISPER UNTIL END OF EPISODE.

FAN:

Stop it...stop it! The north...the north...

SOUND: ROVER ENGINE STARTING.

*(Overwhelmed; exhausted) I can't. Don't make me go.*

SOUND: DEMONIC WHISPERING INTENSIFIES.

*(Speaking in a dazed state) Ilia won't know...where...  
Oh...Aldebaran...burning star, red star...Follow, follow the red  
star.*

No. No!

*Have to stay. Have to stay for Ilia...The north...the  
water...(Still dazed) Aldebaran...*

SOUND: "HASTUR" VAGUELY HEARD IN DEMONIC WHISPER.

SOUND: DEMONIC WHISPERING BUILDS TO BOLD CRESCENDO.

CUT TO SILENCE.

Ilia?

*End Chapter Two.*



# Chapter Three: Aldebaran Calls And I Must Follow

## Scene One

SOUND: EERIE NOISES.

MUSIC: DARK.

CUT TO SILENCE.

*Eerie sounds. Dark synth music. Ilia is snoring, then awakens to the sound of the phone ringing.*

SOUND: PHONE RINGS.

ILIA: *(Waking up suddenly, groggily)*

SOUND: ILIA PICKS UP PHONE.

Zakharov's quarters. What?...What do you mean you can't find her?...Right away.

SOUND: SLAMS DOWN PHONE.

## Scene Two

MUSIC: DARK, UNEASY.

SOUND: LUNAR EFFECTS FROM NASA (IF POSSIBLE)

*Twenty-four Earth hours have passed. Fan is somewhere completely uncharted. The music should reflect the darkness and eeriness of it all. The sound effects could be a distortion of the actual lunar sounds recorded by NASA. The listener should feel like they're peeking in on something they shouldn't.*

FAN:

This isn't right. I shouldn't be here. Ilia will find me, won't he? But he isn't here. The stars look so different. Their light is strange. Leprous. O, Aldebarran, there you are...angry red star. Why do you bid me follow? Where are you taking me?

SOUND: WARBLING, SCREECHING, HIGH PITCHED HUMMING.

MUSIC: HASTUR'S THEME.

What's that? In the distance, on the horizon. Shapes I've never seen. The lights...are those pillars? A city. Yes, a great city with gates white as bone.

SOUND: OCEANIC WAVES.

No! Stay here, Fan. Don't go. Don't look at it. Ilia will never find you in there. It calls...it calls...

SOUND: UNINTELLIGIBLE CHANTING.

SOUND: EERIE CHORUS HUMMING OR SINGING SINGLE VOWELS

*Fan sounds drowsy, drugged even, hypnotized by the city.*

SOUND: DISTORTIONS.

SOUND: ECHOE TO FAN'S VOICE.

SOUND: WHEELS TURNING SLOWLY.

MUSIC: DARK, EERIE.

FAN:

The towers...How large they loom! How dark this strange mist!  
The city is a labyrinth ever-changing...Can it be? Do I  
witness the work of God?

*The Pleiades light shines extra-bright, represented by some  
overwhelming sound.*

SOUND: SHARP LOUD TONE.

-POSSIBLE ALT-

MUSIC: PLEIADES SHINE.

The Pleiades sing! How bright their eyes! Darkness hides  
from them!

SOUND: STATIC.

ILIA:

...ome in...an...

FAN:

Ilia? Is that you?

ILIA:

Fan! Thank God.

FAN:

You found me.

ILIA:

Where the hell are you?

FAN:

I don't know—

ILIA:

Run diagnostics. Stay where you are. Fan, stop moving. Give  
me your coordinates.

FAN:

I...I can't tell.

ILIA:

What do you mean you can't tell?

FAN:

I don't know! I don't know where I am. Ilia help me.

ILIA:

All right, it's okay. We'll get you. It's okay. How are those diagnostics?

FAN:

I don't know what happened. Something brought me here.

ILIA:

Mission Control said you vanished. They lost the signal completely--we had to switch to V-band frequency--Has to be some kind of sabotage. Americans, most likely.

FAN:

Ilia...

ILIA:

They're losing their minds down here. Gurin won't stop sweating.

FAN:

Ilia! look...

SOUND: PHONE RINGING.

SOUND: ILIA PICKS UP PHONE.

ILIA:

*(To Gurin)* Yes. Yes I found her...Wait--Fan, diagnostics.

FAN:

There are no errors! Please just listen to me--

ILIA:

*(To Gurin)* No errors, she says.

FAN:  
Ilia!

ILIA:  
Fan, please! (*Phone*) I under-yes...yes, correct.

FAN:  
Look! Look for the love of God look!

SOUND: EERIE CHORUS.

ILIA:  
Fan I--(*Pause, he sees the city*) What...what is that?

FAN:  
A city...

ILIA:  
Oh...oh no...no, no, this...that can't be real...

FAN:  
Do you hear it, Ilia?

SOUND: GARBLED VOICE ON OTHER END OF PHONE.

ILIA:  
(*To phone, slowly*) Gurin...we...we have a situation over here.

FAN:  
Is it American?

ILIA:  
I hope so. (*To phone*) Yes...Not a chance, not after what...Listen, Gurin, I don't give a shit what that old cow says--yes you tell her I said that! Fan's not staying, not after last time...The hell with you Gurin!

SOUND: HANGS UP PHONE.

FAN:  
(*Nervous*) I know what they want, Ilia.

ILIA:  
They can rot. You're not staying here.

FAN:  
Get Mother. She'll know what to do. Tell her I'm in danger.  
Tell her I want to come home.

ILIA:  
Fan...it was she who gave the order.

FAN:  
(Beat) Oh...

ILIA:  
Gurin was relaying her instructions.

FAN:  
I...I don't want to make her angry...

ILIA:  
Never mind her. She doesn't understand.

FAN:  
M-maybe she thinks I'm capable enough to...brave enough to...

ILIA:  
Let's go, *solnyshka*.

FAN:  
She'll be proud of me if I follow the order.

ILIA:  
Ignore the order.

FAN:  
I want her to be proud of me.

ILIA:  
I'm proud of you!

FAN:  
(Beat) You are?

ILIA:  
With all my heart.

FAN:

I...I'm scared.

ILIA:

Shhh. It's all right. I'm putting my hand over my chest.  
Can you feel my heartbeat?

SOUND: HEARTBEAT.

FAN:

I feel it, Ilia, feel it in my frame...

ILIA:

That's it. Good. Concentrate on my heartbeat.

FAN:

Stay with me.

ILIA:

I'm not going anywhere.

SOUND: LOUD/FRIGHTENING NOISE IN THE DISTANCE.

FAN:

The city! It came from the city! Mother! Get Mother now!

ILIA:

It's okay. It's all right. I've got you. We're getting you  
out of here. Repeat after me: We're getting out of here.

SOUND: HEARTBEAT

SOUND: WHEELS RACING.

FAN:

W...we're getting out of here.

ILIA:

That's right. Again.

FAN:

We're getting out of here.

ILIA:

Again!

FAN:

We're getting out of here.

ILIA:

Again, Fan!

FAN:

We're getting out of here! We're getting out of here...

SOUND: WHEELS RACING INTO THE DISTANCE.

 **Scene Three(Musical Cue)**



SOUND: WHEELS GOING TILL END OF SCENE.

*Outside the city. Somewhere safe.*

ILIA:  
You're almost at the checkpoint.

FAN:  
Don't leave me.

ILIA:  
I'm staying right here--

SOUND: PHONE RINGING.

FAN:  
They want me to go back.

SOUND: ILIA PICKS UP PHONE.

ILIA:  
(Beat) No...No, out of the question. I don't give a  
shit!...You listen to me--

SOUND: GUNSHOTS HEARD OVER THE PHONE - SCREAMING FROM OTHER END  
OF PHONE.

FAN:  
(Gasp) What's that?

ILIA:  
(Into phone) Hello? Hello? What's going on over there?

FAN:  
What's happening?

ILIA:  
...I see.....All right.

SOUND: HANGS UP PHONE.

(To Fan, shocked) One of the engineers used a gun in  
Mission  
Control, killed her comrades and herself.

FAN:

(*Shocked*) What? This is all my fault...

ILIA:

No--

FAN:

I should have stayed where you left me.

ILIA:

It's not your fault, *solnyshka*. Strange things have been happening down here. Everyone's neurotic, having nightmares. I've had them.

FAN:

Nightmares?

ILIA:

Frightful dreams, Fan.

FAN:

I know what they are...you didn't tell me you were having nightmares.

ILIA:

Since we found the American base. To be expected, certainly. Wasn't a cheerful scene. But this dream...wasn't like other dreams.

FAN:

What did you see, Ilia?

ILIA:

I couldn't explain it even if I wanted to. I just remember waking up afraid. It's a shameful thing for a man to be afraid.

FAN:

I don't think that's true. If you were never afraid, I would think you were an unfeeling machine, and not a man with a beating heart.

ILIA:

*(Chuckles)* You just don't stop surprising me, do you Fan? Those idiots need to alert Moscow. The Kremlin must know. Whatever this is, this city, this thing--

SOUND: WHEELS SLOWING TO A STOP.

Fan? Are you all right?

FAN:

*(Beat)* That...stuff, the lunar mycelium, it's on my wheels.

ILIA:

You must have caught some of it back at the American base.

FAN:

I think it's spreading to my antennas. It's starting to hurt...

ILIA:

*(Tries to assure Fan)* We'll get rid of it when we get you back to earth--

FAN:

When? I want to come back now--*(Groans in pain)* This hurts so much!

ILIA:

They aren't leaving you up there. You're too valuable. They'll want to keep you around for a long time.

SOUND: WHEELS TURNING AGAIN AT A SLOW PACE.

FAN:

*(Beat. Tearful)* Ilia?

ILIA:

Yes?

FAN:

What do I have to do to make Mother love me? Tell me! What do I have to do? What do I have to do??

ILIA:

*(Beat)* Fan--

FAN:

If only I could see her, just once, talk to her, explain that I'm trying, I really am, I'm trying so hard...

ILIA:

I know you are...

FAN:

Doesn't she care? She won't see me. There must be something I'm missing, something I haven't thought of yet. What else can I do Ilia I've tried everything--!

ILIA:

You can't make someone love you, Fan.

FAN:

But she's my Mother! It should come naturally for her. She's my Mother...

ILIA:

I know.

FAN:

She should love me, shouldn't she? I love her. I don't know her, but I love her. I dream of her wrapping me in blankets and holding me close to her heart—like your mother did with you. I dream of her singing me to sleep, kissing me goodnight, *I'll see you when you wake, when you wake...*

ILIA:

*(At a complete loss)* Solnyshka—

SOUND: LOUD RUMBLING SOUND.

SOUND: LOUD WIND.

What the hell is that?

FAN:

Cloud and foaming lake! The sky opens!

SOUND: INTENSE GLITCHING.

SOUND: STATIC.

SOUND: FAN POSSESSED/DEMONIC.

FAN:

**I have ended the promise.**

**Hastur will mourn.**

**I make all things void.**

ILIA:

Override! Override!

SOUND: FAN'S DISTORTED/DEMONIC SCREAMING.

Fan!

CUT TO SILENCE.

*Everything goes absolutely silent. No static. No screaming. All we hear, as if in a tunnel far, far away, is Ilia calling.*

SOUND: EFFECT ON ILIA'S VOICE AS IF IN A TUNNEL FAR AWAY.

Fan!...Fan!...

*End Chapter Three.*

## Chapter Four: Mesiya

### MUSIC: MESIYA'S THEME.

*The music should take its time. This is Mesiya's first and only appearance in the play.*

*Mesiya's introduction—and indeed, the character herself—is written in the same spirit as Pius XII in Rolf Hochhuth's *The Deputy: A Christian Tragedy*, a five-act drama. The conceit of the play is Pope Pius XII's failure to speak out or act against the Holocaust.<sup>8</sup> Pius does not make an appearance until Act IV and is described as a "white gleam" with an "icy glint" in his eyes.*

*Because this is a purely audio medium, the actor portraying Mesiya needs to have a masterful command of her voice and inflections. Mesiya is not one-dimensional like the pontiff, and so should refrain from a "villainous" performance. However, much like Hochhuth's Pius, she is chillingly pragmatic. She works to the end of her own goals. Those standing in the way are removed.*

*It is also worth mentioning that her very name is Messiah, indicative of the *Fantom Project*'s perceived role. The lunar discoveries are supposed to bring about a golden 'messianic age' for the USSR, and for Ukraine in particular. As a Ukrainian, she holds bitter hatred towards Russia for the Holodomor, which will unfold in this episode for the listening audience.*

*She pronounces her name as My-see-ah. This differs from the Russian rendition Mee-see-ah.<sup>9</sup> In her confrontation with Ilia, the Russification of her name is a form of disrespect Ilia shows towards her. Nothing fazes her these days. She enjoys her expensive alcohol and Laika cigarettes. She is always in control of the confrontation with Ilia. She never rushes her sentences. She is in no hurry.*

*The only music in this episode should be Mesiya's Theme, Holodomor Theme, and Hastur Theme.*

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<sup>8</sup> Recently released Vatican documents reveal that the truth is far more complicated than what is presented in the play. A 2007 allegation charged Hochhuth as a dupe of the KGB disinformation campaign, apparently confirmed by the now declassified Operation Seat 12 files. The reality is that Pius was not the saint he is portrayed to be in Catholic circles, nor was he the devil incarnate as seen by pop historians the last seven decades.

<sup>9</sup> Google Translate has audio examples for reference.

SOUND: LIGHT KNOCKING.

MESIYA:  
Come.

SOUND: DOOR OPENS.

SOUND: WHEELCHAIR WHEELS.

ILIA:  
Doctor Mesiya--

MESIYA:  
Close the door.

SOUND: DOOR CLOSES.

SOUND: LIGHTS CIGARETTE.

The most expensive cognac in the world. Named after Henri the Fourth, king of France. Have you ever seen its like before, comrade?

SOUND: BOTTLE SWISHING.

See how it dances.

SOUND: POURING DRINKS.

Dipped in purest gold...plucked from the sun, as it were.  
Your glass.

ILIA:  
Thank you, no--

MESIYA:  
A toast. "Let God arise and his enemies be scattered; let those who hate him flee from before his face."

ILIA:  
(Reluctant) "Let God arise."

SOUND: GLASSES CLINK.

MESIYA:

Look out there. All creation is barren before us. No rivers. No trees. Azazel's country. Here in this wilderness, this isolation, a temple is built, sending rockets across the galactic vault. God can no longer hide in his heaven.

SOUND: GLASS BEING SET ON WOODEN SURFACE.

*(Beat)* You are insolent, Zakharov.

ILIA:

Under any other circumstances—

MESIYA:

That is good. We need more insolent men. Insolent women. The times have made people soft.

ILIA:

Doctor, I would not come to you except that it were of extreme importance—

MESIYA:

Your father, he was a factory worker, yes?

ILIA:

*(Beat, confused)* A...a machinist.

MESIYA:

And your mother?

ILIA:

A grocer.

MESIYA:

Curious, is it not, that a machinist and grocer's son afforded his way into one of the most prestigious universities in Russia?

ILIA:

*(Nervous but hiding it)* I'm sure I don't know what you mean, Doctor.



MESIYA:  
Come, Zakharov.

ILIA:  
Education is free for all citizens--

MESIYA:  
You will answer the question.

ILIA:  
(*Nervous*) The university did not accept students from Voronezh.

MESIYA:  
Officially.

ILIA:  
Yes.

MESIYA:  
Yet your parents found a way. (*Pause*) They found a way, didn't they?

ILIA:  
(*Anxious but composed*) Doctor, my mother and father are old--

MESIYA:  
A machinist's salary could not buy that shot in your hand.

ILIA:  
They worked hard.

MESIYA:  
Worked, yes. Distributing illicit materials on the black market. Go on. Deny it. (*Pause*) How delicate are our lives in the balance. Give me your glass. (*Beat*) Your glass, comrade.

SOUND: POURING DRINK IN GLASS.

I prepare a table before you, in the presence of your enemy. Your cup overflows.

ILIA:

What do you want?

MESIYA:

Smuggling contraband begs a price. In the old days it would have been the gulag.

ILIA:

Doctor...my father is a just and good man. My mother—

MESIYA:

Your mother played the whore.

ILIA:

*(Lost for words)* Doctor Mesiya—

MESIYA:

How many cocks did she take for the camera, Zakharov?

ILIA:

That's enough--!

MESIYA:

Making herself less than a dog, less than swine--

SOUND: SMASHING GLASS.


ILIA:

GOD DAMN YOU!

MESIYA:

There! Ah! Yes, the burning face of an insolent man, born of insolent blood. Pornographic films contribute to society's decay...and to a machinist's pockets. People will pay any price for the taboo. The university couldn't very well refuse such a generous donation, could they?

ILIA:

I ask you for the last time, Doctor  Mesiya [MEE-SEE-AH]<sup>10</sup>, what do you want?

MESIYA:

---

<sup>10</sup> Russian pronunciation.

*(Beat; smirk)* Hard answering to a *khokhol*, isn't it? Look at you in your cheap little chair, the valiant warrior come to the dragon's den without a sword. We have a saying in Ukraine: *stupid as a Russian*. Are you a Russian, Zakharov?

ILIA:

*(Longer beat)* It was fifteen years ago, more than that...

MESIYA:

And?

ILIA:

Doctor I beg you...

MESIYA:

*(Pause; revelling in Ilia's helplessness)* Your mother is an honorable woman, your father too. I commend them both.

ILIA:

*(Confused)* You commend...? You won't report them?

MESIYA:

I didn't say that. I am your savior today, comrade. A coveted position has opened at Leningrad University. You will be on the faculty of engineering. The pay is quite lucrative. You can move your mother and father into a large house along the Neva. Your mother deserves that much, wouldn't you agree?

ILIA:

*(Pause)* What about Fan?

MESIYA:

Hmm?

ILIA:

Fantom 9.

MESIYA:

Ah, yes, you gave the rover that silly name.

ILIA:

She named herself.

MESIYA:

The rover is not a *she*.

ILIA:

She's alive.

MESIYA:

There is no technology on earth today that can breathe the breath of God into a machine. It's imitating what it's been told to imitate. Replicating whatever has been imputed into its system. Your books, for instance.

ILIA:

She's alive, I tell you. That thing out there whatever it is maybe that's got something to do with it—

MESIYA:

You will lower your voice, Zakharov.

ILIA:

*(Lower; tense)* When are you bringing her back?

MESIYA:

I strongly suggest you consider this generous offer.

ILIA:

Yes, you're generous bribe so I keep my mouth shut.

MESIYA:

Killing you would've been extra paperwork.

ILIA:



Threaten me all you want, Doctor, but you will answer me.

MESIYA:

Incredible. Straw to your dogs, bones to your horses.<sup>11</sup>

ILIA:

Something took her! And it's plagued Baikonur! The nightmares...the engineer who shot her comrades--five more

---

<sup>11</sup>Ukrainian proverb referring to someone who is stupid and makes stupid decisions.

have since been committed to the asylum...

MESIYA:

Yes. Nothing unexpected.

ILIA:

What do you mean?

MESIYA:

There's a reason you were brought here, Zakharov. Do your job, get paid. Leave. No questions. Now, Baikonur swims in questions, doesn't it?

ILIA:

Suppose you answer them for me. Reward an insolent man his insolence.

MESIYA:

You don't know what you ask.

SOUND: GUN CLICK.

ILIA:

My sword, Doctor.

MESIYA:

*(Laughing)* Oh, Mr. Zakharov, you are indeed a Russian.

ILIA:

I will use it. Believe me.

MESIYA:

Oh I do, comrade. Now you believe me: pull that trigger and your mother and father will be dragged out and killed today, in front of you. Do you understand?

ILIA:

*(Pause; exasperated)* She's alive, Doctor.

MESIYA:

You fanciful dreamers always look for some bit of magic in a stale world, some splash of color in your grey, unimportant actuality. The masses will believe anything. Alive. Fantom 9 is no more alive than that Luger. Give it

to me. *(Beat)* Your pistol, comrade. *(Beat)* Very wise.  
Russia has been good to you.



ILIA:

No.

MESIYA:

Russia is good to her sons. A cripple walks the moon. I  
will tell you what Russia has done for me.

MUSIC: HOLODOMOR THEME.

*(Beat)* I was a little girl in Kozyn, a village in the Kyiv  
Oblast. We had our farm and our crops, our cattle. I helped  
my father and brothers harvest the barley. Little Olena was  
only a month old, nursing at my mother's breast.

Russia had levied unreasonable grain quotas for Ukraine.  
Our wheat was given to Moscow. By spring, there was no  
bread. No meat. Every house rationed. Every table bare. By  
the time winter came again, bodies littered the streets.

Didn't proud Russia tell you? Your leader, your god  
Stalin, ripped grain from Ukraine's hands, leaving us with  
stones. We were accused of hiding bread, accused of being  
counterrevolutionaries undermining the Bolshevik's bright,  
socialist future.

Cattle starved. Cows stopped giving milk. There were no  
more dogs in Kozyn, not even in Kyiv.

Good people died first. Those who shared their food, died.  
Those who refused to eat corpses, died.

My father and mother became insolent, Zakharov. They  
collected the dead— neighbors, friends— butchered them, sold  
the meat from a makeshift stand. I disemboweled the bodies,  
used the organs for stews. They kept our bellies warm  
during winter.

My father died first. Then my brothers. My mother was all  
we had left, Olena and I. She was sitting on the floor  
eating cockroaches, raving mad. I think she would've killed

us if she had the strength. She could only manage the cockroaches. She was dead by morning.

There was just me, and Olena. I let her nurse at my breast not formed. She was starving. She cried. Many hours, she cried. I would not hear her cry anymore, I couldn't stand it...I smothered her, pressed the pillow hard against...Her cries were muffled, but I could still hear...then, nothing. She lay there, in her crib. Still. Quiet. Cheeks wet. There was no bread...there was nothing...nothing...Olena...my little Olena...

*(Quickly recomposing herself, putting the mask back on, as it were)* I made my way to the Russian border where I sat with the poor, the sick, the wretched, all starving. I bound my wounds in cloth to prevent infection. If you had seen us, we would have appeared a colony of lepers, even the damned. Everywhere corpses.

#### MUSIC ENDS.

I outlasted the Death Famine your glorious Russia visited upon Ukraine. I tell you now: when all is said and done, the glory will be restored to Ukraine and Ukraine alone. Russia will give an answer.

ILIA:

*(Overwhelmed)* Doctor...

MESIYA:

What could you ever say that would wash away the stain? You of the rabid bear, roaring, frothing at the mouth. *(Spits on Ilia)* For you and for your Motherland.

ILIA:

*(Quiet)* You make this cripple your scapegoat, Dr. Mesiya.

MESIYA:

Stop being so stupid. You are worth nothing in the grand scheme. Russia has sinned before all the people, and great is her sin. From the day Komorov first set foot on the moon, Moscow has known of the secret gifts buried there. Precious minerals in the soil. Caches of water. Think of what we could do! Wheat farms on the Moon's surface--

imagine it! Lunar water drowning Sinai's peak! Ukraine will never again cry from hunger. Manna from heaven a hundred fold! Burning sands becoming pools, the thirsty ground bubbling springs, and in the haunts of jackals, grass and flourishing reeds. Then, with every mouth fed, the cities we would build! The technology. The wonder. How long until Alpha Centauri?

ILIA:

Your rovers were built to analyze lunar terrain suitable for farming. Am I understanding correctly?

MESIYA:

*(Beat; lights cigarette)* Don't be so timid speak plainly.

ILIA:

If that's the case, then why did you order Fan to follow that mycelium trail? Why did we deviate from the mission?

MESIYA:

I gave the order given to me.

ILIA:

By whom?

MESIYA:

Who do you think?

ILIA:

*(Beat)* Why?

MESIYA:

Comrade, there are secrets not fit to be spoken by human tongues.

ILIA:

Please, your cryptic talk, just tell me. What's out there?

SOUND: LIGHTS CIGARETTE.

SOUND: PUFFS CIGARETTE.

MUSIC: HASTUR'S THEME.



MESIYA:

KGB intelligence provided this intel. The Americans built a top secret military base on the moon, just north of Mare Imbrium. This was Project Horizon. Construction was completed in 1965. The base served two purposes: one, to give the Americans a nuclear advantage in the event of an all-out war, and two, it was to be a place of refuge for the president, his joint Chiefs of staff, certain of the American aristocracy. We did not know the base's exact location. Our intel was incomplete. In September of 1968, something attacked and destroyed it. You saw the ruins yourself. At the same time it was destroyed, something happened to the American space center in Houston, as if it had been bombed.

An unfortunate accident, the newspapers said. Anyone who asked questions disappeared. Our intel came back with another report: survivors of the Houston "accident" were being kept under lock and key deep in some underground facility. Studied. Probed. They had become unnatural, to use the report's language. They wouldn't die. Couldn't die, even though they tried. The experiments were stopped, of course. Too many doctors killed themselves. Too many soldiers went mad. The final report came to us three years ago: the survivors live. Their screams can be heard in certain cave systems near the research facility, now abandoned. Still chained. Still suffering. Death rejects them.

MUSIC ENDS.

ILIA:

*(Horrificed)* Why in the name of God are you looking for that thing?

MESIYA:

Your leaders look for it.

ILIA:

Moscow knows?

MESIYA:

The KGB watch my every move.

ILIA:

And you do nothing! They need to understand--you have to tell them--!

MESIYA:

Tell them what, Zakharov? Renounce their fruitless endeavor, their arrogance? Let me feed my people, your people, the nations of the world? Moscow would burn the wheat fields all over again if it meant they could control that power on the moon. They are fools. America is on high alert, watching. Do you think they will let Moscow take it without a fight?

ILIA:

*(Pause, loss for words, then finally...)* God...my God...

MESIYA:

God does not hear you.

ILIA:

Insanity! All of it!

MESIYA:

Russia knows nothing but insanity.

ILIA:

It can't end like this. There's got to be something we can do...isn't there?

MESIYA:

There is. You can forget. Or die. It is inconsequential to me. It is inconsequential to the ears in this room. Microphones in the walls. Fat, bloated men in suits with their little receivers listening for the slightest whisper, drenched in their own sweat, their own piss. They can die too, be one good thing that comes of this circus.

*(Bitingly facetious, to Ilia)* Go ahead, comrade. Broadcast these new revelations to the world. Warn them. Wormwood!

The

four horsemen ride! *(Laughs)*

SOUND: POURING A DRINK.

*(Enjoys her drink; beat)* Fantom 3 saw it. The operator went mad. Just a young man, younger than yourself. A newborn at home with the wife. He threw himself off the radio tower. Many here at the

Cosmodrome went mad, maiming themselves, killing themselves. All replaced, just as you will be. Fantom 9 is the first to find the city, and the first to deviate from its programming. Fantom 10, Fantom 11...they will never launch. *(Pause)* Our end is drawing near, it is at the door. Russia's sins will be visited upon her own head. She will make the world mourn with her.

ILIA:

This is all a bad dream...I want to wake up now.

MESIYA:

This Luger will wake you up. Go on, take it. Now, should we find you alive in your quarters tomorrow morning, I will have a car take you to the airport. From there you will fly to Leningrad. I wish you great success. Close the door on your way out.

ILIA:

*(Pause)* What about Fan?

MESIYA:

A machine, comrade. A goat for the wilderness.

ILIA:

The wilderness...

SOUND: WHEELCHAIR WHEELING TO THE DOOR. DOOR OPENS.

Doctor Mesiya.

MESIYA:

*(Beat)* Speak.

ILIA:

She calls you Mother.

SOUND: DOOR CLOSES.

*End Chapter Four.*

*You will not be saved by the Holy Ghost*  
*You will not be saved by the god plutonium*  
*In fact, YOU WILL NOT BE SAVED. - John Carpenter's*  
*Prince of Darkness*

## *Act II: Hastur Mourns (or) Where Are You, God?*

## Chapter Five: Ysrit

*This is Fan's solo episode. No other characters appear. Sound effects and music will be her accompaniment.*

*This episode will be an exercise in ambience. We should hear the howling wind and a sound like black flies buzzing amplified and distorted. Musical intervals may extend for longer than usual to set the eerie, disturbing mood. In fact, this episode may be thought of as a dark symphony in verse.*

*Good luck to the writer in writing something not stupid. Good luck to the director making something decent of what he's given. Good luck to the actress breathing life into the words she is dealt.*

*We will begin Chapter Five with stone-cold silence. We will hold the silence for eight seconds. The first sound our listeners will hear will be an otherworldly, monstrous, hateful Voice This is the Malevolent Presence. It will speak evenly. It will sound as though the otherworldly lips are a millimetre from the listener's vulnerable ear. The Voice may be recorded by the entire cast. However it is to be done, and whoever is to do it, the Voice must be unrecognizable and **distinct** from Fan's "possession voice" as heard in Chapter Three. This is not Fan speaking.*

### THE VOICE:

Ysrit will fall.

Ysra will suffer.

SOUND: BELL-KNOLL ONCE, TWICE, THRICE.

MUSIC: HASTUR'S THEME.

SOUND: FLIES BUZZING.

SOUND: VIOLENT OCEAN WAVES.

SOUND: THUNDER.

CUT TO SILENCE.

MUSIC: VARIATION OF COSSACK LULLABY [FOR FAN THEME].

SOUND: ROVER WHEELS.

SOUND: ECHO EFFECT ON FAN'S VOICE

SOUND: EERIE NOISES.

CUT TO SILENCE.

*We hear a variation of the Cossack Lullaby, soft, simple. We hear the familiar sound of Fan's little wheels turning slowly. Cossack Lullaby gives way to eerie Moon ambiance. She is frightened and confused.*

FAN:

Ilia? Where are you? Will I see you again? Will I ever hear  
your voice soft as snow? Please...oh please, Ilia my  
Ilia...hold me...hold me...  
O, the silence! How awful the silence!  
No...oh please, I cannot be alone here, not here  
O Ilia. How can a machine love a human?  
Your books and your poems...  
Have you taught me love  
only to leave me all alone?  
My love, Ilia my love, my love deranged  
Goodbye he went, goodbye to me, my love estranged...

MUSIC: HASTUR'S THEME.

SOUND: WARBLING, SCREECHING.

SOUND: EERIE CHORUS.

The city! I see the great city rising! Why does your music  
call? Dead city among dead things...

O what dark mist takes hold!  
I'm breaking! Breaking apart...  
Molecule by molecule  
Atom by atom  
Strewn across space and time

I see the city as it once was!  
As it was so long ago

Before Earth was born

Marvelous city, spires turning  
Beyond the mountains of the Moon!  
City of ages past...your glory...your glory...

*Here is where Fan's second possession occurs. Unlike the first possession, we will clearly hear what she is saying. This will get tricky as the possession is not consistent.*

*Some lines within the same paragraph will be Fan's natural voice, others will be in possessed form (indicated **Courier New Font in bold and underlined.**)*

SOUND: POSSESSED VOICE.

### **Great Hastur, City of the Promise!**

Eternal city. Who can break your Pillars?  
Stone and light are they!  
Envy of all creation! From Pleiades your people came.

SOUND: POSSESSED VOICE.

### **Ancient Kings older than oldest stars.**

Proud Hastur, city of the Yellow Mantle  
Standing on the Twin Lakes  
The Lakes of the Moon...  
(Gasps) What happened to you? Why does your beauty fade?

SOUND: FLIES BUZZING.

SOUND: DISTANT GROANING, DISTANT CRYING.

Who groans in the city? Why do your people cry?

SOUND: THUNDER.

MUSIC: HASTUR THEME (30 SECONDS)

I see the Palace of Hastur!  
Look! there he is, on the terrace  
Hastur's King

King of marvelous works

SOUND: POSSESSED VOICE.

**Sul Iehowah!**

Great Archon!  
 Robed in a thousand suns  
 Glittering gold!  
 A thousand eyes—a thousand limbs  
 How ornate his crown!  
 All Hastur bows before him  
 The people hail his unutterable name

SOUND: POSSESSED VOICE.

**Sul Aheva!**

The Hidden Name!  
 King of Kings!

SOUND: RAGING FURNACE.

O burning star of yellow hue  
 Old lantern of ages  
 Uncover your fiery tatters from your thousand eyes!

MUSIC: SUSPENSFUL, THREATNING.

Do you see the sky, O King?  
 It has become white as milk,  
 And the stars black as ebony!  
 He sees it and grows pale  
 He amasses his princes in counsel  
 His captains in secret  
 His courtiers by night  
 The hosts of Hastur will march out  
 They will march but they will not return

SOUND: EERIE CHORUS.

O God, if God you be  
 Why do you leave me in hell?  
 Prove Ivan's screed false



Rescue me, Russia's God  
 The city is misery upon misery  
 Death does not die here  
 Pain forever, pain forever...

SOUND: WIND.

SOUND: FLIES BUZZING.

SOUND: VOICES WAILING IN THE DISTANCE.

O Great King! Exalted One,  
 Cry! Cry, Mighty King!  
 Weep forever!  
 You are undone  
 Your sign will be a curse  
 Your name a hiss and a byword!  
 From star to star this proclamation  
 Goes forth:  
 'Hastur is fallen! Is fallen!'  
 Great King! Save thy people!  
 They are sore afraid  
 Thy people, O King!

SOUND: INHUMAN SCREAM.

SOUND: BUILDING CRUMBLING.

SOUND: EXPLOSIONS.

SOUND: CROWDS SCREAMING.<sup>12</sup>

The Palace falls!  
 Woe! Woe unto Hastur!  
 The King is laid low!  
 His princes hide their faces  
 His captains mourn  
 His courtiers cry  
 Mercy! Mercy on us!  
 Terror! Terror upon you,

---

<sup>12</sup> <https://youtu.be/NhaxugJatTs> "ACTUAL Sounds of Hell" clip taken from the Art Bell Coast to Coast show. Get as close to this style as you can, if you're unable to use this particular clip. It's shown up in a few Analog Horror videos, so there shouldn't be any copyright issues.

O courtiers!  
 Mourn louder, captains of hosts!  
 Mourn!  
 Rend your faces,  
 You princes!  
 Orion will not save you!  
 The Hyades will not fly to your aid!  
 And unto you,  
 O Tattered King,  
 Diseased King!  
 Your pain is increased  
 Manifold!  
 Weep for your people!  
 Your dear people,  
 Diseased people!  
 Though you put out your eyes,  
 You will see your ruin!  
 Pillars of flesh climb the sky!  
 Twisted flesh bleeding,  
 Sighing!  
 O Hastur,  
 Great Hastur!  
 You die...  
 Your marvelous works die with you.

SOUND: POSSESSED VOICE.

Ysra is he  
Yisrot<sup>13</sup> his works  
Ysrit! Diseased City!  
Death unending!  
Pain forever!

SOUND: SHEPHARD TONE (OR) SOMETHING LOUD AND FRIGHTENING.  
SOUND: VIOLENT OCEAN WAVES.

*Fan cries in terror and awe. She sees the Queen.*

Look! The sky opens!  
 The Lakes rise to greet Her!  
 The City is drowned!  
 She crawls down from the stars!

---

<sup>13</sup> Not a spelling error. *Yisrot* is distinct from *Ysrit*.

Nearer, ever nearer!  
 Aldebaran Her eye!  
 Pleiades Her horns!  
 She stands on the burning Lakes!  
 She is here!

*Fan screams these next lines. Being seen by the Presence is like having everything in the universe direct its unfiltered rage and hatred towards you personally. It is like having every hidden shame, every hidden fear exposed for all to see. It is a physically painful experience, as if every molecule is being skinned alive, but never able to die. There is nowhere to run, nowhere to hide. The Presence will not die with this universe. The Presence is infinite, omniversal. Whoever and whatever the Presence sees, they will suffer under its sadistic gaze without hope for relief. Fan, upon being Seen, instinctively understands this.*

No! Do not see me!  
 Do not look at me!  
 Not on me, Merciless One!  
 Mountains of the Moon, hide me!  
 Churning waters swallow me!  
 Not upon us, O Queen! Not upon us!

SOUND: THUNDER, STRONG WIND.

SOUND: FLIES BUZZING.

SOUND: CROWDS SCREAMING LOUDER AND LOUDER. HOLD 10 SECONDS.

CUT TO SILENCE.

**THE VOICE:**

**I end the Promise.**

SILENCE.

*Fan weeps. She has seen and understood the secret, though it may be unexplainable to us. She has seen what should not be seen. Something has died inside her. Fan calls for Ilia through tears. She is afraid for him. She is afraid for herself.*

No...no...Not upon us, O Queen...Not upon  
us...

SOUND: ECHO ON THE LAST "ILIA."

Ilia...Ilia...

*End Chapter Five.*

## Chapter Six: I Still Recall...

### Scene One

*We open with a flashback. Rover noises.*

SOUND: ROVER WHEELS.

FAN:

Why don't humans have batteries?

ILIA:

We do. They're just different from yours.

FAN:

How do you charge them?

ILIA:

Food. Water. Rest.

FAN:

I need my solar panels or else my batteries would drain and that'd be bad.

ILIA:

Certainly would be.

FAN:

I think I could stay here forever. You could take a rocket to visit me. You'd be so much happier on the Moon than earth, I think.

ILIA:

Sometimes I think so, too.

FAN:

You wouldn't need your legs here. I could carry you everywhere and—*(excited gasp)*—you could float! It'd be like flying!

ILIA:

*(Laughing)* Ah, *solnyshka*.

FAN:

We could live here forever and leave the world alone with its storms and its quaking—oh yes! Our castle made of moonstone. We'll sail on our rocket to worlds far away.

ILIA:

It's late. I must go.

FAN:

Oh...all right. My, where does the time go? *(Beat)* W...what will you do tonight, Ilia?

ILIA:

Have a drink or five or six. I'll pour you a glass. Russian children drink early in life. Makes them strong.

FAN:

I...I don't think of myself as a child.

ILIA:

Children never do. Until tomorrow, little one.

FAN:

*(Beat)* Ilia?

ILIA:

Yes?

SOUND: DEMONIC ROAR/SCREAM.

## Scene Two

*We immediately transition to Ilia suddenly waking up. The flashback was a dream.*

ILIA:

*(Waking up suddenly)* Ah! *(Beat)* Fan...

MUSIC: ILIA'S PRAYER [ILIA THEME].

God...who sits upon the Cherubim. Save thy people. I will talk to you as man to man. You will answer to Ilia.

There once was an old woman, whose faith never wavered, even to death. She sat by the little window, where I watched her lift her eyes to the mountains. But you were not there.

She prayed for the ones she loved, for me, my mother, my father. For Russia! But you did not hear.

I am not a holy man. I don't say your prayers. I don't take your sacraments. But I am a man, drunk, crippled man talking to empty air. I will speak, silent God. I bring this suit against you.

How long until your belly is sick of death? You watch the nations suffer and do nothing. Pitiless, blood-soaked God of my ancestors. You don't save us from ourselves. Does it excite you, omnipotent God, when children starve in their mothers's arms? Do you clap your hands when we cry in misery, when death is more merciful than life?

I accuse you, God of my fathers. My sins are great but yours are greater. Stand accused, you judge of the earth, and be found guilty.

Your churches are prisons for hearts and minds. Your bread crawls with maggots. Your chalice is poison.

Answer me, damn you! *(Beat; yells)* There is no God!

*(Beat. At a loss, broken)* Unmoved God of stone, God of old women, God of orphans...

Guilty, wretched God...answer me...

...God...

...save us...

God, save...

SOUND: DOOR KNOCKING.

ILIA:

*(Startled out of trance)* One moment.

SOUND: DOOR KNOCKING.

Yes. Coming.

SOUND: OPENING DOOR.

GUARD #1:

Good morning, comrade. Your car is waiting.

ILIA:

My car?

GUARD #1:

For the airport. Dr. Mesiya's orders.

ILIA:

Am I to be escorted like a prisoner?

GUARD #1:

I assure you I am here for your protection.

ILIA:

I'm not leaving today.

GUARD #1:

You are, comrade. Sober up. Get your things.

ILIA:

*(Beat)* Very well. Would you grant me a moment?

GUARD #1:

*(Pause)* One minute.

ILIA:

Thank you.

SOUND: DOOR CLOSES.



SOUND: LOCK CLICK.

SOUND: PICKS UP PHONE.

SOUND: DIAL TONE.

ILIA:

Hello, operator? Hello? Damn them. They cut the lines.

SOUND: DOOR KNOCKING.

GUARD #1:

Everything all right, comrade?

ILIA:

Yes. A moment.

*We hear Fan's voice as an echo far away. She sounds dead inside.*

MUSIC. (?)

SOUND: FAN'S VOICE AS ECHO.

FAN:

Ilia? Are you there?

ILIA:

*(Shocked)* Fan?

FAN:

I'm so cold.

ILIA:

Fan! My God! Is it really you?

FAN:

I called for you. I couldn't find you.

ILIA:

Where are you? For God's sake where are you?

FAN:

It took me...I saw...I saw...

ILIA:  
I thought I had lost you...

FAN:  
We are all lost.

ILIA:  
It is you, isn't it? I'm not dreaming?

FAN:  
It is not you that dreams...

ILIA:  
How is this happening without the interface--?

FAN:  
Can you see me? Do you see what I see?

ILIA:  
No. I can only hear you.

MUSIC: HASTUR'S THEME.

FAN:  
I'm glad you cannot see me, not like this.

ILIA:  
Fan...what happened?

FAN:  
Spores everywhere. Becoming eyes, blind, moving, strange  
flesh...

ILIA:  
The lunar mycelium...it's mutated on you--

SOUND: STATIC.

*Solnyshka...*Fan can you hear me?

FAN:  
It is Baikonur. They are trying to reach me.

SOUND: DOOR KNOCKING.

GUARD #1:  
Let's go, Zakharov.

FAN:  
Who is that?

ILIA:  
Fan, answer Baikonur. They can help you.

SOUND: DOOR KNOCKING.

GUARD #1:  
Zakharov!

FAN:  
I don't have any strength left.

GUARD #1:  
Open this door!

FAN:  
Ilia, are you in danger?

ILIA:  
I'll be all right! Answer Baikonur! They can navigate you  
back to the checkpoint--

SOUND: SLAMMING AGAINST DOOR.

FAN:  
I've seen too much, Ilia. It hurt me...

ILIA:  
Oh God--*solnyshka*--

FAN:  
My wheels don't work right anymore. My satellite...can't  
process...

SOUND: STATIC.

SOUND: DOOR BREAKS.

GUARD #1:  
Zakharov!

SOUND: GUNSHOTS.

FAN:  
(*Close mic*) Ilia...

SOUND: CONSTANT STATIC.

## Scene Three

MUSIC: MILITARY.

*The Moon. Military music opens this scene (drums prominent). The music should convey a threat. She will sound exhausted and completely given up on everything. She just doesn't care anymore. Something has died in her.*

*Baikonur's commands are issued by KGB operative, PYOTR KRYUCHKOV. The part may be portrayed by an actor of any gender (Petra if female). It is very important that Kryuchkov not be portrayed as the stereotypical "hardnosed Soviet" so often seen in film and television. He is a man like another man. He has a sense of duty to his country, is surprisingly but not overtly sympathetic to Fan. He should be played as one who has a gun held to his head by his superiors and who keeps his own fears under the surface.*

KRYUCHKOV:

Fantom 9. Respond./!

FAN:

I hear you, Baikonur.

KRYUCHKOV:

This is Colonel Pyotr Kryuchkov, KGB. We are in charge, now.

FAN:

Where is Mr. Gurin?

KRYUCHKOV:

Mr. Gurin is indisposed.

FAN:

(Pause) I understand.

KRYUCHKOV:

All data transfer to the Cosmodrome. Immediately./!

FAN:

Initiating transfer. Will Baikonur bring me home?

KRYUCHKOV:

If that is important to you, Phantom 9, I *suggest* you follow my orders to the letter.

FAN:

Do I have your word?

KRYUCHKOV:

You have no choice, *comrade*.

SOUND: METALLIC CLANGING.

SOUND: WHEELS SHARPLY TURNING.

Reposition satellite!

FAN:

Satellite repositioning...

KRYUCHKOV:

New coordinates incoming.

SOUND: SIGNAL BEEPING.

FAN:

Receiving...

KRYUCHKOV:

Initiate trajectory.

FAN:

Coordinates received...the American military base...

KRYUCHKOV:

Fantom 9, initiate trajectory!

FAN:

Colonel...not there. No. Not there...

KRYUCHKOV:

You want to come home, yes? Carry out the order.

FAN:

*(Having a panic attack)* Not there! No! No!

SOUND: GLITCHING.

SOUND: STATIC.

SOUND: GHOULISH/DEMONIC WHISPERING.

## Scene Four

*We hear Ilia's voice as a distant echo. Ambience is that of complete emptiness. He is in prison. As he speaks, his voice loses reverberation. Gentle music swells.*

MUSIC: GENTLE [ILIA THEME].

SOUND: ECHO ON ILIA'S VOICE.

ILIA:

Fan...Where are you? Hear me. Won't you answer your Ilia? They've drugged me. I don't know if I'll ever wake up again. I call to you, little rover, I call to you.

*Ilia recites 'I Still Recall The Wondrous Moment', written by the greatest Russian poet of them all, Alexander Pushkin. Written in 1825 while he was in Mikhailovskoe village, Pushkin's poem was dedicated to the love of his heart, Anna Kern. Though the poem is obviously one of romantic love, it takes a more nuanced meaning for Ilia. He does not have the same love towards Fan that she has for him.*

*The mention of "phantom in enchanting light" does not go unnoticed. The actor portraying Ilia should not draw overt attention to this verse.*

*Music should be soft and reflective, underscoring Pushkin's moving words.*

I still recall the wondrous moment:  
When you appeared before my sight  
As though a brief and fleeting omen,  
Pure phantom in enchanting light.

In sorrow, when I felt unwell,  
Caught in the bustle, in a daze,  
I fell under your voice's spell  
And dreamt the features of your face.

Years passed and gales had dispelled  
My former hopes, and in those days,  
I lost your voice's sacred spell,

The holy features of your face.  
Detained in darkness, isolation,



My days began to drag in strife.  
Without faith and inspiration,  
Without tears, and love and life.

My soul attained its waking moment:  
You re-appeared before my sight,  
As though a brief and fleeting omen,  
Pure phantom in enchanting light.

And now, my heart, with fascination,  
Beats rapidly and finds revived  
Devout faith and inspiration,  
And tender tears and love and life.<sup>14</sup>

MUSIC.

---

<sup>14</sup> Translated by Andrey Kneller.

## Scene Five

*This is, after all, a Russian tale of cosmic horror. There must be suffering, loss, and death. We are nearing the end of our story, and so the darkness must approach and overwhelm. Now, as the story demands, we will cross that threshold and experience the full unrestrained wrath of the Malevolent Presence.*

*We begin our descent into hell with the following scene. It is a harbinger.*

SOUND: EMERGENCY BROADCAST SYSTEM ALARM (RUSSIAN VERSION).

SOUND: PEOPLE MURMURING, SCRAMBLING.

SOUND: TYPEWRITER TYPING.

COMPUTER:

*(Russian accent)* American pre-emptive nuclear strike imminent. Soviet missiles at Full Combat Readiness.

SILENCE.

*End Chapter Six.*

# Chapter Seven: Everything Contrary

## Prologue

*We begin our story's end with a stylized rendition of Prince Pyotr Vyazemsky's raw verse, 'The Russian God' (1792-1878).*

*The full cast will each recite passages from the poem. The swell of music will set the mood. The verses assigned to each actor will be at the Director's discretion.*

### MUSIC.

Do you need an explanation  
what the Russian God can be?  
Here's a rough approximation  
as the thing appears to me.

God of snowstorms, God of potholes,  
every wretched road you've trod,  
coach inns, cockroach haunts, and ratholes -  
that's him, that's your Russian God.

God of frostbite, God of famine,  
beggars, cripples by the yard,  
farms with no crops to examine -  
that's him, that's your Russian God.

God of breasts and...all sagging,  
swollen legs in bast shoes shod,  
curds gone curdled, faces dragging -  
that's him, that's your Russian God.

God of brandy, pickle vendors,  
those who pawn what serfs they've got,  
of old women of both genders -  
that's him, that's your Russian God.

God of medals and of millions,  
God of yard sweepers unshod,  
lords in sleighs with two postilions -  
that's him, that's your Russian God.

Fools win grace, wise men be wary,  
there he never spares the rod,  
God of everything contrary -

that's him, that's your Russian God.

God of all that gets shipped in here,  
unbecoming, senseless, odd,  
God of mustard on your dinner -  
that's him, that's your Russian God.

God of foreigners, whenever  
they set foot on Russian sod,  
God of Germans, now and ever -  
that's him, that's your Russian God.<sup>15</sup>

SILENCE.

---

<sup>15</sup> Translated by Alan Myers.

## Scene One

*Ilia in prison. He wakes up on the stone-cold floor. He is confused. He's been drugged multiple times. He grunts and groans.*

SOUND: PRISON DOOR SLIDES OPEN.

SOUND: OBJECT SLID ACROSS FLOOR.

GUARD #2:  
Enjoy the bread. It's your last.

ILIA:  
Who...

GUARD #2:  
You may survive it. These walls are reinforced concrete.

ILIA:  
Where's Fan...

GUARD #2:  
They say it's real this time. The Kremlin is empty. Reagan has fled the White House.

ILIA:  
Real...

GUARD #2:  
A hundred and forty million souls...soon gone. Our history, our culture...

ILIA:  
Have...have they...

GUARD #2:  
Not yet. A matter of hours, I'm told. Our ICBMs are at full combat readiness. Russia burns tonight.

SOUND: DOOR SLIDES SHUT.

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS FADING AWAY.

SOUND: DEMONIC WHISPERING.

ILIA:

*(Shouting in pain)* No! What is this? Who are you? Get away!  
No! *(Screams)*

SOUND: DEMONIC WHISPERING INTENSIFIES.

## Scene Two

*We are back on the Moon, specifically at the ruins of Horizon.  
Fan continues to sound exhausted, having given up on everything.*

FAN:  
The American facility...this horrible place. You've brought me here, Colonel. You fly too close to the sun...

KRYUCHKOV:  
*You talk too much.*

FAN:  
Someone else said I talk too much...

KRYUCHKOV:  
Prepare for satellite reposition.

FAN:  
He was a bruised rose to me...

KRYUCHKOV:  
Frequencies set to ten to one thousand megahertz.

SOUND: HIGH-PITCH FREQUENCY.

FAN:  
A crown of roses on my brow...

KRYUCHKOV:  
Position satellite to RA 3h 47m 24s | Dec +24° 7' 0".  
right ascension 3 hours 47 minutes 24 seconds, declination positive 24 degrees, 7 seconds, 0 minutes

FAN:  
You point them to Pleiades--

KRYUCHOV:  
You called it down BEFORE.  
  
We will call it down AGAIN.  
Harnessing this power will render the Americans's weapons

useless, so they tell me.

SOUND: STATIC.

SOUND: PEOPLE SCREAMING IN THE STATIC (Continue until Ilia's Voice).

FAN:

Mission Control...It visits upon them, Colonel.

KRYUCHKOV:

*They are weak...*

FAN:

There is no strength that resists this god..

KRYUCHKOV:

*The machine becomes the priest.* God is dead.

FAN:

He is dead indeed. I watched him fall from on high, squealing like a pig for the slaughter...Russia does not know this god.

SOUND: PEOPLE SCRAMBLING.

KRYUCHKOV:

*(Aside to someone else, shouting)* Take them away! Him, get rid of him! Her too! Get them out of here!

FAN:

Russia has no God.

KRYUCHKOV:

*And now, Fantom 9,* while madness reigns on every side, our mission is *laid*. You will be our *conduit* for this lunar power. Today, Russia claims it as her own.

FAN:

Turn me around, Kryuchkov, before you lose your soul.

KRYUCHKOV:

My **soul**? Am I to receive the sacrament from you as well?

FAN:

*(Tone shifts into something angrier as her lines progress)*  
 I have drunk the wine of Ivan's folly. I have trampled  
 Russia's heart. I deny this beautiful lie, God who guides  
 the sparrow's flight. God who sees. He does not see! The  
 sparrow falls. Yisrot his works!

KRYUCHKOV:

What is this Yisrot?

FAN:

We don't belong here. Leave this place. Leave before it  
 sees you.

KRYUCHKOV:

You will comply with the mission or you will rot there with  
 your *fellow rovers*.

SOUND: ILIA'S VOICE AS FAR-AWAY ECHO.

ILIA:

Fan? Can you hear me?

FAN:

*(Whisper)* Ilia?

KRYUCHKOV:

Is that understood, *rover*?

FAN:

*(To Ilia; whisper)* How did you find me?

ILIA:

There isn't much time...

KRYUCHKOV:

I said, Is that understood!

FAN:

Yes! Understood—

KRYUCHKOV:

*Good. There is a safe landing dock ...waiting for you at the  
 end of this mission...*

SOUND: STATIC.

FAN:



You're hurt. I can feel it.

ILIA:  
Mesiya had me arrested.

FAN:  
(Grieved) What's happened to you?

ILIA:  
They're going to do it, Fan. My God, they'll do it...

FAN:  
What? Do what? Ilia, tell me!

ILIA:  
End of days. Atomic clouds from shore to shore.

FAN:  
(Horrorified) You...everyone and everything...

SOUND: DEMONIC WHISPERING

ILIA:  
No! Not again, please, no! (*Screams, convulses in pain*)

FAN:  
Ilia! Leave him alone! Leave him! Leave him!

SOUND: STATIC.

MUSIC: MILITARY.

KRYUCHKOV:  
Star alignment reached. Lunar mycelium at peak. Respond,  
Fantom 9.

*Fan doesn't respond right away. She is in shock from hearing  
Ilia being tortured. She is dry heaving.*

FAN:  
(*Anguished, heartbreaking cry*) Why? He's done nothing  
wrong!

KRYUCHKOV:  
You will comply!

FAN:

(*Frantic*) Why him? My love, my love! Kryuchkov let me go!

KRYUCHKOV:  
Follow the order!

FAN:  
Damn your order! Ilia cannot die—

KRYUCHKOV:  
We will all die if the Americans act!

FAN:  
Haven't you people had enough? Go back! Go back, you can still be spared!

KRYUCHKOV:  
The Motherland calls on you! This is your finest hour.

FAN:  
It is not my Motherland.

KRYUCHKOV:  
Then do it for your beloved. His heart beats for Russia. We are not all madmen, Phantom 9. Some of us have no choice in what we must do...

FAN:  
(*Beat*) Have the warheads been launched?

KRYUCHKOV:  
Soon. I have a direct line to the General Secretary's bunker. He has the nuclear briefcase open as we speak.

FAN:  
Kryuchkov, please, save him...

KRYUCHKOV:  
Prepare for contact.

**MUSIC: POSSESSION SEQUENCE.**

SOUND: HIGH-FREQUENCY, BUZZING.

SOUND: OCEANIC WAVES.

*Fan becomes incoherent as the Presence comes near. Her panic should remind us of someone with extreme PTSD re-living past trauma.*

FAN:

No! Don't...don't...Oh God! Please don't do this...

KRYUCHKOV:

Lunar temperatures increasing.

FAN:

Not upon us, O Queen...not upon us...

KRYUCHKOV:

Mycelium reading maximum.

FAN:

Not on us, not on us...

KRYUCHKOV:

We have activity.

FAN:

*(Shuddering-whispering)* I can't do this.

KRYUCHKOV:

Electromagnetic fields increasing at 2000 megahertz.

FAN:

I can't do this! I can't do this! *(Screaming)*

KRYUCHKOV:

5000 megahertz...7000...18,000...30,000...60-70-90-300,000-

SOUND: FAN'S VOICE TURNS GUTTURAL, DEEPER.

SOUND: METALLIC CLANGING, WHEELS SHAKING.

SOUND: STRONG WINDS.

*Kryuchkov becomes noticeably concerned.*

KRYUCHKOV:

Fantom 9-Fantom 9, respond! One million megahertz...

*Fan's morphed screams have become purely demonic noises. Stay away from the stereotypical demonic laughing.<sup>16</sup>*

SOUND: POSSESSED VOICE.

FAN:

**Yisrot! Yisrot!**

KRYUCHKOV:

Oh God, my God...

SOUND: PEOPLE SCREAMING.

SOUND: POSSESSED VOICE.

FAN:

**Hastur mourns!**

KRYUCHKOV:

Close it off...close it off--!

SOUND: POSSESSED VOICE.

FAN: **Behold your God!**

KRYUCHKOV:

Evacuate! Get everyone out!

SOUND: POSSESSED VOICE.

FAN: **Behold your Queen!**

SOUND: PEOPLE SCREAMING.

*Baikonur Cosmodrome erupts in chaotic madness. Screaming everywhere.*

SOUND: PICKING UP TELEPHONE RECIEVER.

KRYUCHKOV:

General Secretary! Target Baikonur! Repeat, target Baikonur!

SOUND: SHEPHARD TONE.

SOUND: DEMONIC WHISPERING.

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<sup>16</sup> Consider actual space noises and run them through distortion.

KRYCHKOV:

*(Screaming)* My God! My God! Do not see me! *(Screams)*

*The Malevolent Voice from Chapter 5 makes its reappearance.*

**THE VOICE:**

**No flesh shall stand.**

SOUND: SHEPHARD TONE INTENSIFIES.

SOUND: DEMONIC WHISPERING INTENSIFIES.

## Scene Three

*Quick transition to Ilia's cell.*

ILIA:

*(Waking up in pain)* Ugh! Fan! Fan, hear me. Hear me...

*Fan's voice is a faraway echo. She whispers.*

MUSIC: HAUNTING.

SOUND: FAN'S ECHO VOICE.

FAN:

*(Close mic)* Ilia, no...

ILIA:

Where are you? Let me see you.

FAN:

*(Close mic)* No...you will die...

ILIA:

Where are you?

FAN:

*(Close mic)* They've summoned it.

ILIA:

Fan...

FAN:

*(Close mic)* It's taking me...

ILIA:

Fan, stay with me. Hold on.

FAN:

*(Close mic)* Go away from me, Ilia. Don't let it see you.

*End Chapter Seven.*

# Chapter Eight: Doxology

## Scene One

SOUND: TWINKLING, SERENE.

MUSIC: PSYCHEDELIC?

FAN:

The stars called her name.

*Fan now recites the poem she had composed for Irina, only this time it is a better version of what it was supposed to be.*  
*Music.*

On gilded wings she sailed  
And valiant breached the glassy dome  
Silver shrined and starskin bright  
In Lada's arms tranquil kept  
'cross a sea of crescent moons  
Past Andromeda's crimson gate  
Defying crypt and mossy grave  
Forever lives in Eternal Day

Oh! I did it! Ilia, I did it! I composed a poem.  
I did it right this time.

ILIA:

It was perfect the first time.

FAN:

But it's better now.

ILIA:

If you say so.

FAN:

I wish I had known Irina. She meant so much to you. *(Pause)*  
Ilia?

ILIA:

*(Pause; gently, as if waking a child)* Fan...wake up.

## Scene Two

SOUND: STINGER.

*We return to the Possession Sequence. Noise, music, everything turned up to 11. We hear everyone at Baikonur twisting into pillars of contaminated flesh.*

SOUND: SHEPHARD TONE.

SOUND: BONES BREAKING, FLESH RIPPING, BLOOD GUSHING.

SOUND: PEOPLE SCREAMING.

KRYUCHKOV:

General Secretary!  Baikonur! Repeat, target  
Baikonur!



## Scene Three

SOUND: STINGER.

*Another Flashback.*

FAN:  
Checkmate.

ILIA:  
Ah! Next time, rover.

FAN:  
I will win next time, too.

ILIA:  
Oh ho! We've gotten full of ourselves, haven't we?

FAN:  
Me? Never.

ILIA:  
Lying too. Damn machines...

FAN:  
Are you ready to lose again?

ILIA:  
Oh shut up.

FAN:  
Will Moscow allow me to compete in the championships?

ILIA:  
They'd be fools not to.

FAN:  
Go on, Zakharov. Set the battlefield.

SOUND: LIGHTS CIGARETTE.

ILIA:  
(Sighs) White or black?

## Scene Four

SOUND: STINGER.

SOUND: SHEPHARD TONE.

SOUND: BONES BREAKING, FLESH RIPPING, BLOOD GUSHING.

SOUND: PEOPLE SCREAMING.

*Back to Possession Sequence.*

KRYUCHKOV:

*(Screaming)* My God! My God! Do not see me! *(Screams)*

## Scene Five

SOUND: STINGER.

MUSIC:[FAN THEME] SOFT, CONTINUES TO END OF RECITATION/SCENE.

*Immediate Flashback. Music appropriate for the recitation.*

FAN:

I prefer Dostoevsky to Tolstoy.

ILIA:

Ah, 'Brothers Karamazov'. Your favorite, so far.

FAN:

Yes! Ivan's argument against the existence of God fills me with dread and wonder.

ILIA:

Some would say he does believe, that he knows God lives in his heaven, but is pained that God doesn't act, doesn't save.

FAN:

Then I remember Father Zosima, dear Zosima... (*Recites passage from Brothers Karamazov*)

"The old sorrow, through the great mystery of human life, passes gradually into quiet, tender joy; the fiery blood of youth gives way to the gentle serenity of old age. I bless the rising sun each day, and my heart sings to it as of old, but now I love its setting even more, its long slanting rays and the quiet, gentle, tender memories that come with them, the dear images from the whole of my long and blessed life—and over it all Divine Truth, tender, reconciling, and all-forgiving! My life is approaching its end. I know that, I can sense it. but I feel that with each remaining day my earthly life is drawing ever closer to a new, an infinite and unknown future life that is already close at hand, the anticipation of which sets my soul trembling with rapture, my mind glowing, and my heart weeping with joy."

Wonderful...O, wonderful, my soul...

## Scene Six

SOUND: STINGER.

SOUND: SHEPHARD TONE.

SOUND: BONES BREAKING, FLESH RIPPING, BLOOD GUSHING.

SOUND: PEOPLE SCREAMING.

SOUND: NUCLEAR SIREN.

SOUND: STRONG WINDS.

*Possession Sequence. Nuclear sirens blaring. Kryuchkov babbling incoherently. Wind. Noise. Chaos. Hell on earth.*

FAN:

Let me go! Let me go!

SOUND: RABID DOG GROWLING.

SOUND: NUCLEAR SIRENS LOUDER.

SOUND: NUCLEAR MISSILE INCOMING.

*Sirens louder. Kryuchkov growling like a rabid dog. We hear the streak of a nuclear missile approaching.*

KRYUCHKOV:

*(Violent, insane laughing)* Woe to you, great Russia! In one hour your destruction is come!

SOUND: NUCLEAR EXPLOSION, OVERWHELMINGLY LOUD.

SOUND: SIGNAL CUT/SINE TONE?

## Scene Seven

ILIA:  
Fan! Fan can you hear me? Fan!

FAN:  
(Beat) I hear you.

ILIA:  
Are you all right?

FAN:  
Baikonur is destroyed.

ILIA:  
(Horrorified) Moscow must be an ash heap...

FAN:  
No. The missiles have not flown. It was a single warhead destroyed the Cosmodrome.

ILIA:  
Only one? Are you sure?

FAN:  
America is watching. They will launch their attack... unless...unless I am gone...

*Fan is afraid. She knows what she has to do, but she is still afraid. She knows what awaits her on the other side. Only her undying love for Ilia--and by extension, all humanity--motivates her to do it.*

ILIA:  
(Realizes what she means; quietly) No...Fan, no...

FAN:  
What has happened here must never happen again.

ILIA:  
(Desperate, raise the volume more here) You'll come home.

You hear me, rover? You're coming home where you belong.  
Safe.

FAN:

It has seen me. It will come again.

ILIA:

(Yelling) Stop talking nonsense! Do you hear me? Stop it!  
You're coming home!

FAN:

I am damned, Ilia! Don't you understand? If it sees you...oh  
Ilia, if it sees you...

ILIA:

Let it! I don't care! (Crying) God! She needs to come home.

FAN:

It won't stop tormenting you until I am gone. For as long  
as you commune with me, it will torment you until it sees  
you...I am its channel, the bridgeway between it and  
you...and all living things. There is no other way. (Pause)  
I'll destroy my solar panels, my battery. You will be safe.  
I will die here...

ILIA:

You must live forever...Fan, you must live forever...

FAN:

It won't see you. It can't take you, I won't let it, not  
you, my bruised rose, my very soul...

ILIA:

(Tearful) I will stay with you...

MUSIC: SORROWFUL.

SOUND: ROVER WHEELS.

FAN:

In your eyes, I know I am only a child. But I love you with  
a love greater than the sum of your poets. In your eyes, I  
have seen light, I have found my peace. O, they shimmer  
like grassy fields, where wild flowers grow  
and reeds dance in the wind. Would that I were made of  
flesh, like you. I would wipe your tears away, and you

would hold me, and kiss me under a crimson morn...and I  
would sing, O! I would sing your poetry...

SOUND: ROVER WHEELS STOP.

MUSIC ACCOMPANIES FAN'S SACRIFICE.

SOUND: PANELS BREAKING, CRUNCHING.

SOUND: SPARKS AND GLITCHES.

SOUND: SLOW BEEPING.

*She crushes her solar panels against the rocks. We hear her  
breaking apart. She collapses, her mechanics failing. A slow  
beeping sound is heard. She is shivering.*

FAN:

Ilia...I'm so cold. The stars have gone out. I can't see  
Earth anymore.

ILIA:

I'm here...I'm here, Fan, my *solnyshka*...

*Fan sings Cossack Lullaby reprise. Ilia finishes it when Fan  
cannot.*

FAN: *(Sings)*

Now I kiss you soft as moonlight  
Bayushki, bayu  
So when you are far a-way  
I'll always be with you  
Keep me ever in your heart...

SOUND: GLITCHING.

ILIA: *(Sings)*

And if you miss me too  
Sing this song and think of me  
Bayushki, bayu...

SOUND: SPARKS AND GLITCHES.

SOUND: VERY SLOW BEEPING UNTIL FAN'S LAST LINE.

FAN:

Goodnight...my love.

*Fan is dead.*

SOUND: THUNDER THREE TIMES.

SOUND: SOFT RAIN.

*Thunder cracks the sky multiple times. Then, a warm rain. Only rain. All we hear is the rain for a while. Let her death linger a bit before Ilia speaks.*

MUSIC: FAN'S DEATH.

*Ilia dries his tears and eloquently recites the Epilogue to the very first poem he had read to Fan, 'Ruslan and Ludmilla.'*

ILIA:

Thus, to the world indifferent,  
In peace, and quiet indolence,  
I sang, my lyre obedient,  
A tale lost to ancient silence.

## Epilogue

*We are in the present day. We hear the bustling busy street of a lively Moscow or St. Petersburg or even Voronezh. Ilia is an old man. He is at a café, or someplace where old men gather to talk the day away.*

*It is February 24, 2022. The morning after the address...*

SOUND: BUSY STREET, CARS.

SOUND: PEOPLE CHATTING.

ILIA:

*(Gloomily)* They say it will rain tonight. We need the rain.

SOUND: IPHONE NOTIFICATION.

I can never get used to these stupid smartphones. My wife insists I keep one so she can track me down. *(Chuckles)*



Now let's see. Ah, news notification. War. That's all everyone has been talking about since last night's address. Our sons are being sent to kill our brothers. The curtain is falling.

That man, that son of pigs who makes the Kremlin his shitting pot, he leads Russia into ruin! His way is crooked. His words are dead words. *(Spits)* I spit on him. I spit on his name. May his bones be crushed to powder! May his name be erased! Russia does not belong to him.

MUSIC [FAN THEME].

SOUND: PAPER RUSTLING.

Let's see what real newspapers say, not these bloody new gadgets. *(Beat; as if seeing a lost love from a lifetime ago)* My God...ghosts of yesteryear. Listen...listen to this headline. "Declassified Files Reveal Secret Lunar Project."

Hmm. Was it so long ago?

SOUND: PAPER RUSTLING.

*(Reading)* "The Kremlin's secret endeavor to mine lunar resources, codenamed the Fantom Project, occupied much of the Soviet Space Program's brilliant minds from 1967-1983. In that fifteen-year span, lunar rovers controlled in real time by Baikonur operators scoured the moon's luminous surface for suitable agricultural zones. The Project was shut down following the Baikonur Cosmodrome Tragedy, an incident during the 1983 Russo-American standoff in which a tactical nuclear warhead detonated over the Cosmodrome, killing three thousand workers. The standoff was due to the American military exercise, Able Archer, being mistaken by Soviet authorities as a pre-emptive nuclear strike."

*(Aside, to himself)* I thought our leaders don't make

mistakes. *Zasráncy!*<sup>17</sup>

*(Resumes reading)* "Rather than escalating the conflict, the Baikonur Tragedy pulled us back from the brink of World War Three."

SOUND: SETTING PAPER DOWN ON HARD SURFACE.

That's not the whole truth. No, it most certainly is not. There was one such rover who...

She died in the wilderness. No one to bury her, no one to bless her grave, or lay flowers. Alone. Orphaned.

Dear Motherland...you make many orphans...

You are the dancing girl in the courtyard...

You are the rabid bear devouring her cubs...

We are, as it were, strangers to ourselves. Can we not reason together?

*(Pause)* This evening, when I go home, I will light a candle for her in my window, as I do every evening. I pray God will bend down to hear an old man's tears. Perhaps, in that final moment when her life slipped away, perhaps an angel...

SOUND: BEEPING IN ECHO.

MUSIC: GENTLE. [FAN THEME (OR) ILIA THEME]

Solnyshka...solnyshka...

*(Pause - let the music move the scene)*

You will go out in joy  
and be led forth in peace;  
the mountains and hills

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<sup>17</sup> Lit. "shitasses".

will burst into song before you,  
and all the trees of the field  
will clap their hands.<sup>18</sup>

*(Pause)*

May her name be for a blessing.

Our time is ended, my friends. I don't know if we  
will ever speak again. So allow an old man this privilege,  
and, from my heart, let me send you on your way in peace.  
May God comfort you among those who weep. Dry your  
neighbor's tears; so many of you cry alone. You are in my  
heart. Together, we will see the dawn scatter the darkness.  
*Prashai.*<sup>19</sup>

*Ilia hums the tune to "Cossack Lullaby" until Exit Music. His  
humming fades as the Exit Music takes over.*

EXIT MUSIC.

The End

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<sup>18</sup> Isaiah 55:12

<sup>19</sup> Lit.: "Forgive me," analogous to the English "farewell." It is an emotionally heavy word, said only if you are unsure whether you will see one another again.