



Sample Pages from The Bear

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COMMEDIA CHEKHOV

THE ANNIVERSARY
THE PROPOSAL
THE BEAR

THREE SHORT COMEDIES ADAPTED BY
Lindsay Price
FROM THE ORIGINALS BY
Anton Chekhov



Commedia Chekhov

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Characters

The Anniversary

Andrey Andreyevitch Shipuchin: Chairman of the Norvik Joint Stock Bank.

Tatiana Alexeyevna: His wife.

Yelena Nicolaevna Khirin: The bank's bookkeeper.

Nastasya Fyodorovna Merchutkina: A persistent woman.

Deputation of Shareholders of the Bank: Extremely satisfied with the bank.

The Proposal

Svetlana Milailovna Chubukov: A landowning widow.

Natalya Stepanovna: Her daughter.

Ivan Vassilevitch Lomov: A nervous neighbour of Chubukov.

The Bear

Elena Ivanovna Popova: A landowning widow.

Grigory Stepanovitch Smirnov: A landowner.

Ludmilla: Popova's housekeeper.

Casting

It is the expectation of the author that this group of characters can and should be played by a diverse group of actors. Do not assume the characters are white or cisgendered. Cast the actor who connects to the character's intention. Period. Don't get bogged down in gender as presented in the source material. A wide variety of actors played all the roles in the original workshop and it worked just fine.

Sets

See the set description at the beginning of each play.

Costumes

It is the intention of the author that these plays are not necessarily set in the 19th century nor should they match the original source material. Costumes should be chosen to best reflect the characters and their personalities. The characters are physical and exaggerated, so use this as a foundation.

There are characters who mention specific costume pieces – Elena Ivanovna in *The Bear* is in mourning and wearing all-black, Natalya in *The Proposal* talks about wearing an apron and Ivan Vassilevitch is dressed as if going to a New Year’s Eve party. A list of mentioned costume pieces is in the Appendix.

Name Pronunciations

See the Pronunciation guide in the Appendix.

Accents

It is neither required nor suggested that anyone speak with a Russian accent.

Timing

If doing all three plays, put your intermission after *The Proposal*.

Introduction

Why is this play called *Commedia Chekhov*?

This collection adapts three one-act plays by Anton Chekhov, a late 19th-century Russian playwright known for his realistic comedies and dramas, and blends them with the highly physical acting style of *Commedia dell'Arte*. These two styles might seem at odds with each other. Chekhov often explored themes of failed ideas, the breakdown of aristocratic society, class structure, and loss. In contrast, *Commedia dell'Arte* features exaggerated physical comedy, such as a Zanni character comically eating their shoe out of hunger.

As a writing challenge, I wanted to explore both worlds and discover how they fit together. Surprisingly, there is a lot of overlap. Where do they align? Can Chekhov be played through the lens of *Commedia*? It has been a great experience, and I hope you feel the same!

Do you need to have an extended knowledge of *Commedia* to stage these plays? No. Does it help? Sure!

Commedia dell'Arte is an improvised comedic theatre form that flourished in Italy in the 1500s. The exact origins of *Commedia dell'Arte* are hard to pin down, with little documentation prior to the 16th century. The term “*Commedia dell'Arte*” itself wasn’t commonly used until the 18th century. It is generally acknowledged that the form solidified in Italy in the 1550s and reached its peak in the 1650s. Despite its opaque history, the elements that define *Commedia* are clear: improvised performances based on scenarios, where actors work from a basic outline and make up their lines.

- **Stock Characters** – Character types in *Commedia dell'Arte* are divided into masters (vecchi), servants (zanni), and lovers. The characters remain consistent, with only the situations changing. They have the same attitude, appearance, drive, and physical actions throughout. Although the stories are improvised, the characters behave the same way in any situation.
- **Limited Themes** – Love, money, and food form the basis of almost every scenario in *Commedia dell'Arte*. These themes are closely tied to the characters’ needs and drives.
- **Use of Mask** – The mask defines the characters in *Commedia dell'Arte*. Each character is associated with a specific mask.
- **Use of Lazzi** – Lazzi are short comedic physical bits within the story, serving as moments that connect the character to the theme. Every *Commedia* actor had well-rehearsed lazzi for their character. For example, Arlecchino, a servant character, is always hungry. Lazzi for this character often revolved around food, or eating something not normally seen as food, such as a fly.
- **Use of Mime, Acrobatics, and Music** – All of these elements were used to enhance story and character.

The interaction between characters in Commedia dell'Arte often centers on battles for status and control. The character types—masters, servants, and lovers—provide ample opportunity for such conflicts. Some characters have status, some don't, and some will do whatever it takes to get it.

Characters in Commedia work in extremes: they are not just hungry, they are so hungry they'll eat anything; they don't just like money, they are obsessed with it. Their decisions can swing from an energy level of 1 to 100 and back again in a moment.

Commedia is an improvised form. Does that mean we can improvise dialogue in these plays?

These plays are not Commedia scripts in that they are not improvised scenarios. They are adaptations. The purpose of an adaptation is to take a work and make it suitable for a new purpose. In this case, the new purpose is a hybrid of two distinct forms. For me, the Commedia aspect of these plays lies in the characters and their portrayal: the characters are fixed, each has a specific need, there are status battles, and there are numerous opportunities for physical action!

Use these scripts as an opportunity to explore the character aspects of Commedia and character physicalization with your students.

The Stage Directions

I encourage and strongly suggest that you and your students read the stage directions. Normally, I'm a strong advocate for writers ensuring that everything they want presented on stage is in the text. If it's in the text, then it's integral to the character and the story. However, rules are meant to be broken, and in this case, the stage directions will provide your students with inspiration on how to physicalize the characters within a Commedia context.

For example, there are a number of lazzi in the script, entirely written in the stage directions. The physicality of the characters is an important element and might not always be apparent in the text alone. Can and should your students find their own interpretations? Absolutely! But the stage directions will give you a good starting point.

THE BEAR

Characters

Elena Ivanovna Popova: A landowning widow.

Grigory Stepanovitch Smirnov: A landowner.

Ludmilla*: Popova's housekeeper.

* In the original, Ludmilla is Luka and is a male footman.

Setting

A formal living room in Popova's house. There is a couch for Popova to dramatically pose on. A couple of chairs. A small table where Ludmilla polishes silverware. Several small tables for Ludmilla to put water glasses on. The furniture should be solid enough that Smirnov can leap on and off.

Note

In this play, each character embodies a classic Commedia want: food, money, or love. While not following traditional lines exactly, the characters still resonate with these desires. Popova loves her dead husband and wants him to feel guilty about it. As a master character, she wields power and status. She controls Ludmilla and has power over Smirnov when she says she can't pay him. She is not stupid, but her extreme narrow focus hampers her intelligence, and her need clouds everything else in her life.

Smirnov is a classic Commedia stock character. He's an Il Capitano, alternating between presenting as brave and powerful and being scared by something as small as a teeny tiny spider. He feels powerful but loses status constantly throughout the play.

Ludmilla is a servant type, doing whatever she can to satisfy her urgent hunger. She does not represent a single specific character type but has characteristics of several: the common sense of Columbina and the mischievousness of Arlecchino.

Each character should have a specific and vivid physicalization connected to their need. There is nothing internal about these characters; everything is external. They know what they want, they say what they want, but many obstacles prevent them from getting what they want.

Music plays.

POPOVA is dressed in black. She is flung across on a sofa in an exaggerated inauthentic pose of mourning. She has one arm flung across her forehead and the other arm wrapped around an oversized framed photograph of her dead husband. LUDMILLA is standing at a table with a cloth, polishing cutlery with vigor.

LUDMILLA's nose goes in the air. She wiggles her nose. She gives a sniff. She sniffs herself. It's not her. She sniffs the cutlery. It's not the cutlery. She takes a deep, deep, sniff into the air. It's FOOD. She does a little dance at the glory of what she's sniffing. Suddenly she hears something. She listens left. She listens right. She listens up. She listens down and realizes what it is. It's her stomach growling. She grabs her stomach. She is HUNGRY.

She looks at POPOVA. She looks at the door. Can she get out the door without POPOVA noticing? Can she feed her stomach? She takes in another deep, deep sniff which carries her around the space in a wide circle. She is led all the way by her nose. She pauses at the door. Looks at POPOVA, looks off. Does a quick sniff and dances at the glory of what she is sniffing. In the middle of her dance, she trips and stumbles into a chair. POPOVA groans without moving. Music dims.

POPOVA: Where are you going?

LUDMILLA: (*whirling around*) Nowhere! Upstairs! Downstairs! The parlour! The pantry! The kitchen! We're out of spoons! Forks! Knives! Everything! We're out of everything!

POPOVA: Just polish what's here.

LUDMILLA: (*looking desperately off*) If I could go to the kitchen for one second...

POPOVA: Stay with me!

LUDMILLA: (*sighing*) Of course.

Music rises in volume. LUDMILLA makes a face and goes back to polishing. POPOVA goes silent. LUDMILLA's nose goes up in the air again and she is drawn by the smell of food. She is so HUNGRY. All

she wants is some food. Her hands are facing toward her polishing but her head and nose is twisted toward the exit. She looks to POPOVA then to the exit. She looks to POPOVA then to the exit. She slowly puts down the cloth and the spoon. She sneaks slowly and exaggeratedly toward the exit. She measures each step, not wanting anything to go wrong this time.

Suddenly, her stomach growls. It is so loud! She grabs her stomach. She puts a finger to her lips in a “Shhh!” gesture. Her stomach growls again. She grabs a pillow from a chair. She grabs another pillow. And a third. She now is juggling three pillows, jamming them into her stomach to muffle the sound of her stomach growling. But it’s too much and LUDMILLA speaks out loud. Music fades.

LUDMILLA: (to stomach) Shhhhh! Quiet will you?

POPOVA: (sitting up) What are you doing?

LUDMILLA: Nothing! Polishing! Plumping the pillows! They’re sooooo flat. They really need it. (she thumps one of the pillows she’s holding)

POPOVA: (lying back down) Oh. All right. It is nice to have fluffy pillows. (sighing) If only I could enjoy them.

LUDMILLA: Madam. I was wondering. My stomach is telling me it’s lunch time. Very reliable, my stomach. It’s good at lunch time and anticipating tornados. Perhaps I could go down to the kitchen and get you something?

POPOVA: No.

LUDMILLA: A bite of bread? A chunk of cheese? A portion of potatoes? A basting of beets? A parcel of pasta? A soupçon of soup? A smattering of salad? A ration of rice? A wedge of watermelon? A quota of quiche? A fragment of frittata? A whole chicken? A side of beef? A duck wrapped in back bacon and stuffed into a turkey? I’ll get you anything you want!

POPOVA: I’m not hungry.

LUDMILLA: But maybe I could bring some food, and the smell might change your mind?

POPOVA: I’ll never be hungry again!

POPOVA flings her arm over her face in exaggerated despair. LUDMILLA gives a full-body move of

frustration; silent jumping, for example. She smashes two of the pillows against each other and then flings them away. She holds the last pillow over her face for a silent scream. She sniffs the air again. This time, she is determined.

She looks at POPOVA, and then exaggeratedly takes a step toward the door. She coughs and freezes. She looks at POPOVA, who doesn't move. She takes a step and then sneezes. She looks at POPOVA, who doesn't move. She takes two more steps. She freezes. She knows she's going to cough and sneeze at the same time. She tries to do it silently, but she can't. It is an explosive moment and she throws herself all over the stage. POPOVA sits up and stares at her. Finally LUDMILLA stops. There is a pause and then...

LUDMILLA: Allergies.

POPOVA throws herself back down. LUDMILLA, resigned, goes back to polishing, which she does furiously. She turns to the audience.

LUDMILLA: *(to the audience)* Look at her. Look! It isn't right. She does this all day, every day. Every day I polish. Every day she lies on the couch hugging that picture. *(groaning)* I am so hungry. I'm so hungry I could eat plain brown bread without butter and call it a feast. I'm so hungry I could eat my shoes. *(looking under the couch)* I'm so hungry I could eat that spider. Oh look how fat it is. I wonder what a spider tastes like. That is one fat, meaty, juicy arachnid. *(as if sneaking up on the spider)* How hard could it be to catch? I could grab it easily and shove it in my mouth and crunch down on those eight legs in one fell – *(gives a shake)* What am I saying? *(She looks at POPOVA and makes a decision. To POPOVA.)* This isn't right, madam.

POPOVA groans.

LUDMILLA: You're destroying yourself. *(looking at the cutlery)* Perfect. *(to POPOVA)* Not that you're eating anything of substance. I really think a nice meal would do you good. Some steamed salmon? Stroganoff? A tomato and onion sandwich? What's the point in polishing the silverware if you don't eat? *(holds her stomach)* Ohhhhh, just talking about food makes me weak at the knees. Light in the head. Giddy in the gallbladder. You know what? You know what? *(trying to psych herself up to defy her boss)* You know what? You know what? You know what? You know what? You know what! Madam. I. Am. Hungry. It's lunch time. My stomach

knows it. We haven't had a tornado here in years. It's time to eat. Some of us are not in a state of grief. Some of us are human beings with needs. Stomach needs. I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm (*and out with it!*) going to run to the kitchen. That's what I'm going to do. (*fast*) I won't be long; less than five minutes. Super fast, super fast. I'll grab and go. I'll dine and dash. I'll be there and back in the wink of an eye. You won't even know I'm gone!

POPOVA gives a long pitiful groan and moves to another exaggerated pose, facing away from LUDMILLA.

POPOVA: Ludmilla, how could you leave me in my moment of grief?

LUDMILLA gives another overall movement of frustration. She stomps over to the couch and stands over POPOVA, hands on hips.

LUDMILLA: Everyone else is living their best lives. Everyone! The maid and the cook are having a fabulous day off. And you know what they're doing on their day off? Picking fruit. That's what they want to do on their day off: pick fruit. They're ecstatic about it. If they can enjoy themselves doing something as stupid as that, surely you, as well off as you are, can find something, anything, to bring a smile to your face.

POPOVA groans, hugging the photograph tighter.

LUDMILLA: Enough of this.

LUDMILLA tries to grab the photograph away from her. This results in a tug-of-war.

POPOVA: (*while trying to keep the photograph, same time as LUDMILLA below*) No, no, no, no, no, no, no!

LUDMILLA: (*while trying to get the photograph, same time as POPOVA, above*) Let. Go! Let. Go! Let. Go!

On the last word, LUDMILLA wins the tug-of-war and gets the photo. The momentum causes LUDMILLA to stumble backward. POPOVA, on losing the photo, throws herself face down on the sofa.

LUDMILLA, once she gains her ground, runs around the room holding the photo over her head in victory.

LUDMILLA: Ah ha! Ah ha! Ah... ha... (*frowning and looking at POPOVA*)
Oh bother.

POPOVA: (*mumbling still face down on the couch*) I will never go out.

LUDMILLA: (*didn't understand POPOVA*) What?

POPOVA: (*still face down on the couch*) I will never go out.

LUDMILLA: You know I can't hear you when you're face down on the couch.

POPOVA: Ugh! (*Dramatically sits up with much resistance and reluctance. Poses with great drama.*) I will never go out!

LUDMILLA: Why?

POPOVA: Why? Why? You ask why? You ask why I will never go out? You ask that? Why?

LUDMILLA: Yes.

POPOVA: Why should I? (*changes the pose*) My life is at an end. (*pointing at the photograph*) My husband is gone. He is no more. My love is in his grave and I (*dramatically flinging her arms to the walls*) I have buried myself between four walls. We are both dead. (*falls back on the couch as if in a coffin*)

LUDMILLA: (*exasperated to self*) For the love of – I'm never going to eat again. (*putting the photo off to the side*) Madam. Nicolai Mihailovitch is dead. Certainly. May his soul rest in peace. You have mourned, as you should. You have been the epitome of mourning. You stopped the clocks. Covered the mirrors. Made a broach from his hair. Which, if I may say, is a little creepy, but I support your choices. You have kept the windows open. In the dead of winter. (*realizing what she just said*) The middle of winter. It's snowing in the dining room. But it's been seven months...

POPOVA: Queen Victoria mourned for 40 years.

LUDMILLA: Which is overkill. Uhhh. Overdone. Excessive? It's been a long time.

POPOVA: I haven't even done the amount of time required for deep mourning, which is a year and a day, and then there's full mourning after that, half mourning, half-half mourning, almost out of mourning, and finally non-mourning.

LUDMILLA: Well, if you're going to go down that road, shouldn't you be wearing crepe?

POPOVA: (*this is a sore point*) I'm emotionally wearing crepe. Emotionally. I'm wearing crepe on the inside. Crepe is so stiff and

if you get it wet it molds which gives me hives and you know they dye the fabric using tar, which is toxic, and I'm not interested in have a rash and lung cancer, and if you wear it as a veil it actually triggers asthma, so now I have a rash and lung cancer and I can't breathe! Is that what you want? You want me to have a rash and lung cancer and asthma in my time of grief?

LUDMILLA: I want to know if you really expect me to polish the silverware when you never eat with it.

POPOVA: Yes!

LUDMILLA: Fine. (*moves back to polishing the cutlery*) I'll do it. But I won't like it. (*there is a moment of silence*) You could go out. That's all I'm saying. You could leave the house. There's that regiment staying at Riblov. The officers... (*makes an approving noise but there's no response from POPOVA*) Every Friday there's a ball with music and dancing and (*music begins to play and LUDMILLA dances, pretending to be at a ball*) Why, yes. I would like this dance! Thank you so much for asking. I am a wealthy widow who hasn't seen the light of day for seven months. Can you do the Watusi? How fresh! I've always been attracted to men who can participate in at least seven to ten different dances, depending on the social situation. Oh, you Billy Bounce as well! I am particularly good at the Jazz square. (*Music fades. LUDMILLA is overcome with an overpowering smell from the kitchen. She takes a huge sniff.*) Roast chicken... I am particularly good at eating roast chicken... (*LUDMILLA throws down the cloth and the cutlery and stomps over to POPOVA*) You're not going to stay young forever, you know. Beauty doesn't last. Especially if you're going to go through deep mourning, full mourning, half mourning, almost out of mourning, before you get to non-mourning.

POPOVA: You forgot half-half mourning.

LUDMILLA: By the time you're over this, you'll be too old and not a single officer will look at you. There! I said it!

POPOVA sits up and (safely) grabs LUDMILLA.

POPOVA: Never talk to me about men again! (*pushes LUDMILLA away*)

LUDMILLA: (*stumbling away*) Ok, ok, fine.

POPOVA: (*standing and moving dramatically about the room*) When Nicolai Mihailovitch died, life lost all meaning. I vowed to wear mourning, emotional crepe, emotional crepe, to the end of my days. Let his ghost see how much I love him. (*calling out*) Hey you!

You see? You see what I'm doing? You see how much I'm taking this seriously? Huh? Huh?

LUDMILLA: He's dead. I don't think he sees anything.

POPOVA: (*dramatic pose, to LUDMILLA*) I know, that you know, that I know, that he was cruel to me. Unfair. Even unfaithful.

LUDMILLA: So we're mourning him because...?

POPOVA: (*change pose*) I will be true until death. I will show him what it means to love. I will really, really, really, really, really, really, really. Really. REA-LLY show him. (*calling out*) You hear me? You hear what I'm doing?

LUDMILLA: Couldn't you demonstrate your love and faithfulness by walking in the garden? Or visiting the neighbours? OR eating a plate of salted herring? Maybe I could eat a plate of salted herring in support?

POPOVA does an exaggerated wail and run around the room landing back at the couch for a final dramatic fling.

LUDMILLA: Got it. No herring.

A bell rings offstage. LUDMILLA and POPOVA react.

POPOVA: What is that?

LUDMILLA: The doorbell. And that only means one thing –

POPOVA: No!

LUDMILLA: Yes! (*with glee*) Visitors!

POPOVA: No!

LUDMILLA: Yes! This is exactly what you need!

LUDMILLA goes to exit, and POPOVA grabs LUDMILLA, dragging her back into the room.

POPOVA: No! No! No! Don't go out there!

LUDMILLA: I have to!

The bell rings again.

POPOVA: No!

LUDMILLA: I have to answer the door. Otherwise they'll keep ringing.

POPOVA: If we don't answer, maybe they'll go away.

The bell rings and rings and rings.

LUDMILLA: I have to go.

POPOVA: No you don't!

LUDMILLA: It's part of my job.

POPOVA: I forbid you to answer the door. If you answer the door, I'll officially reprimand you. I'll officially fire you. I'll fire you twice! I'll write a nasty mean letter to all the houses in the district so you'll never work in this town again!

The bell rings again.

POPOVA: Who is it? Who's there? Who's bothering me? Who?

LUDMILLA: I don't know, I'm in here.

POPOVA: Go find out.

LUDMILLA: And risk a nasty mean letter? No, thank you.

POPOVA: Please!

LUDMILLA: No, thank you.

The bell rings again.

POPOVA: I beg you.

LUDMILLA: No, thank you.

POPOVA: Find out who won't leave me alone and tell them to go away.

LUDMILLA: No, thank you.

POPOVA: What do you want? I'll give you anything.

LUDMILLA: Chicken. A whole roast chicken for myself. And borscht. And salted herring. And bread. Multiple loaves of bread. And –

POPOVA: Are you eating for seven? Go!

LUDMILLA: Fine.

POPOVA: (*pulling LUDMILLA*) Tell them that due to the death of my husband I will not see anyone. No one! (*pushing LUDMILLA and pulling her right back*) Wait! Emphatically tell them I am in mourning and I will unequivocally not see anyone. (*pushing LUDMILLA and pulling her right back*) Stress the seriousness of this.

I am not and I will not see them. I am not, without a shadow of a doubt, accepting visitors. *(beat)* What are you waiting for? Go! *(pushing LUDMILLA)*

LUDMILLA: Right away. *(aside to the audience)* This is perfect. She'll be distracted by whoever is at the door, who I will welcome with open arms, whoops, and I'll get to eat all that chicken! *(exits)*

POPOVA: *(grabbing the photograph)* You will see, Nicolas. I will show you how I can love and forgive. Doesn't that make you ashamed? Huh? I'm a good and virtuous one, you cretin. I'm the good person. I will be true to the grave and doesn't that fill you with a boat load of remorse? Huh? You bad deceitful child!

*POPOVA throws the photograph on the couch.
LUDMILLA enters, pouring it on a little thick.*

LUDMILLA: Madam, I'm soooooo sorry but I couldn't stop him! He would not listen!

POPOVA: But you told him I am not, without a shadow of a doubt, accepting visitors.

LUDMILLA: I did, oh I did. *(posing, a little thick)* But oh! *(new pose)* He pushed past me, citing some pressing affair. I'm soooooo sorry.

POPOVA: Nothing as pressing as death! I will not see him.

LUDMILLA: And I tried to close the door in his face. He pushed right past me! *(aside to audience)* Maybe I opened the door really wide and told him to come on in. Maybe I didn't. You weren't there. There's no proof. *(now to POPOVA)* He's in the dining room now. Ohhhhhhhhhhhhh.

POPOVA reacts poorly to that news with exaggerated and dramatic movement.

POPOVA: The dining room? He's in the dining room? Now? He's there now?

LUDMILLA: *(posing)* He won't leave! Whatever shall I do! He won't leave until you see him. *(with exaggerated and dramatic movement)* Ohhhhhhhhhhh.

POPOVA: Quiet! *(pauses before speaking)* Very well. Ask him in.

LUDMILLA turns, giving a little fist bump in the air as she exits. POPOVA paces.

POPOVA: How people annoy me. All I want is to do my deep mourning, full mourning, half mourning, half-half mourning, almost out of mourning, and non-mourning in peace!

SMIRNOV strides in with LUDMILLA following.

LUDMILLA: (*overdoing it*) Ohhhhhhhhhh. She doesn't want to see anyone!

SMIRNOV: (*at the same time, to LUDMILLA on entering*) Shut up, shut up! Stop talking!

SMIRNOV sees POPOVA and stops walking, causing LUDMILLA to bump into them.

LUDMILLA: Ow!

SMIRNOV: (*to LUDMILLA*) Get away from me!

LUDMILLA: Don't have to tell me twice. (*aside to the audience*) There's a chicken leg with my name on it. (*exits*)

SMIRNOV poses. Boldly. Proudly. With a sense of power. He is reminiscent of Commedia's Il Capitano.

SMIRNOV: Madam. May I please have the honour to present myself. (*pose*) I am Grigory Stepanovitch Smirnov of the Ufa Smirnovs. I am a spectacular landowner. Meadows and forests as well as plots of farmland. (*new pose*) Farmland bulging with sugar beets and potatoes. I am a decorated former lieutenant of artillery – (*beat*) guns, madam. (*pose*) Big guns. I was placed in charge of multiple platoons and many men. Sometimes this meant building a bridge. I was fine with that. You do what has to be done. (*pose*) But sometimes being second or third in command, I would lead into combat. I would lead into battle. I would lead with strength and determination. I rode a horse. I am a man.

POPOVA: Is that it?

SMIRNOV: It is.

POPOVA: And why are you here?

SMIRNOV: I am compelled to disturb you on a most pressing affair. (*he holds out his hand*)

POPOVA: (*folds her arms across her chest, decidedly not taking his hand*) What do you want?

SMIRNOV: (*recovering from the snub, and choosing another proud pose*) Your late husband, with whom I had the honour of being

acquainted, neglected to pay the capital he owed me before he died.

POPOVA: What?

SMIRNOV: He borrowed money. One thousand, two hundred rubles, to be precise. I have to pay the interest on my own mortgage tomorrow and so I've come to ask you, madam, to make good on your husband's debt. (*poses*)

POPOVA: (*dramatic*) Oh! Oh! Oh! My husband!

She throws herself face down on the couch. There is a pause. SMIRNOV continues his proud pose. He begins to look around, expecting POPOVA to move. She does not. He's posing for no one. Suddenly he spies a movement under the couch. He looks a little closer and breathes in horror.

SMIRNOV: (*starts quiet and gets louder*) Spider. Spider! SPIDER!

He shrieks, once, twice, three times and leaps onto the couch, causing POPOVA to react violently and fall on the floor. LUDMILLA runs in with a tea towel around her neck and eating a chicken leg. She sees the action, turns around, and runs out. SMIRNOV gets down off the couch and resumes his strong powerful pose. He does not assist POPOVA.

SMIRNOV: (*trying to regain composure*) I've come to ask you, madam, to make good on your husband's debt.

POPOVA: (*getting up*) If Nicolai Mihailovitch owed you money, I will certainly pay it.

SMIRNOV: (*bowing*) Thank you, madam.

POPOVA: But not today.

SMIRNOV: (*whipping back up*) What's that?

POPOVA: I haven't any spare cash on hand. I can pay you the day after tomorrow. (*posing dramatically*) Also, if you can't clearly see, I'm in mourning. (*groans and sits dramatically on the couch*)

SMIRNOV: Didn't he die seven months ago?

POPOVA: (*leaping off the couch*) That's right! And I'll have you know I haven't even done the amount of time required for deep mourning.

SMIRNOV: If you're in deep mourning, shouldn't you be wearing crepe?

POPOVA: I'm emotionally wearing crepe. Emotionally. I'm wearing crepe on the inside and it means I simply can't think about money because (*hands on hips*) my mind is filled with grief!

SMIRNOV: (*hands on hips*) And my mind is filled with the knowledge that if I don't pay the interest due tomorrow they'll take my estate!

POPOVA: (*moving forward to SMIRNOV*) I told you, I'll take care of it the day after tomorrow.

SMIRNOV: (*moving forward to POPOVA*) I don't want the money the day after tomorrow. I want it today.

POPOVA: I can't pay you today.

SMIRNOV: I can't wait.

POPOVA: I can't pay you.

SMIRNOV: You have to.

POPOVA: I can't.

SMIRNOV: You must.

POPOVA: I can't.

SMIRNOV: You must.

POPOVA: I can't.

SMIRNOV: You must.

POPOVA: I can't.

SMIRNOV: You must, you must, you must! You must! You, you, you, must, must, must!

POPOVA: No.

SMIRNOV: (*turning away and posing dramatically*) Are you actually saying you can't pay me today?

POPOVA: That's what I'm saying.

SMIRNOV: Are you actually saying, with the words that are coming out of your mouth, that there will be no payment that transfers from your hands to my wallet?

POPOVA: That's exactly what I'm saying.

SMIRNOV: Is that your last word? Absolutely your last?

POPOVA: Yes. (*sitting*) How many times do I have to say it?

SMIRNOV: Huh. Thank you. I'll make a note. (*SMIRNOV paces, clenching and unclenching his fists as he talks to the audience. POPOVA watches.*) And everyone tells me to keep calm! Ha! I need that money!

POPOVA: Who are you talking to?

SMIRNOV: I called on every single one of my debtors yesterday and not one paid up! And here I am, far from home, and I'm received by (*imitating*) "my mind is full of grief."

POPOVA: I can hear you, you know.

SMIRNOV: (*not paying attention to her in the slightest*) Keep calm? Ha ha ha! (*His laugh turns into a shriek as he sees the spider. He tries to turn it into a cough, then back into a laugh, and then he poses.*) Pay me!

POPOVA: The day after tomorrow.

SMIRNOV: What the devil have I to do with the day after tomorrow. I need the money today!

POPOVA: (*leaping up, exaggerated and dramatic*) Scandalous! I will not listen to such language. I will hear no more! (*exits dramatically, hands over her ears*) La, la, la, la, la! (*the sound one makes when they don't want to hear anything*)

SMIRNOV: What does any of this have to do with me? Should I go to my creditor and say, "Sorry, her husband died and her mind is filled with grief." (*calling out*) You shall not play about with me! (*dramatically throwing himself on to a seat*) I will sit here until she pays.

SMIRNOV shrieks and leaps up because the spider is now close by. SMIRNOV leaps onto the chair. LUDMILLA looks in, a sandwich in both hands.

LUDMILLA: (*with a full mouth*) Are you calling for something?

SMIRNOV: What?

LUDMILLA: (*swallows*) Are you calling for something?

SMIRNOV: (*from on top of the chair*) Get me a drink!

LUDMILLA: (*more to self*) A "please" would be nice. (*exits*)

SMIRNOV: *(still on top of the chair)* She can't think about money. What a thing to say. I am sweating in anger. There is so much anger sweat!

LUDMILLA enters with a glass of water, in one hand, eating a sandwich with the other. She puts the water down near SMIRNOV.

LUDMILLA: Are you going to stay up there?

SMIRNOV: Get out!

LUDMILLA: If you were a little less shouty you'd probably get what you want.

SMIRNOV: Get out!

LUDMILLA: *(to audience, referring to POPOVA)* I need to get her back in here. My bowl of borscht will go brisk. Or cold. You know what I mean. *(exit)*

SMIRNOV: *(climbing down)* Huh! I'm going to sit here... *(looks around for the spider before sitting)* till I get my money! *(dramatically collapsing into the chair)* My head is aching. Huh! *(calling out)* Hey!

LUDMILLA: *(entering, full mouth)* You rang?

SMIRNOV: What?

LUDMILLA: *(swallowing first)* What do you want?

SMIRNOV: A glass of vodka! Immediately!

LUDMILLA: *(to the audience)* There goes my borscht. *(exits)*

SMIRNOV: *(inspects himself)* Look at me. Dust all over, boots dirty, unwashed, unkempt... *(sighing)* I'm a sight. No wonder she reacted the way she did. *(leaping up and posing)* No! This is not my fault. I am not here as a visitor but as someone who is collecting what is due to them. There are no rules of dress for that. *(he sits, then leaps back up to search for the spider)*

LUDMILLA: *(entering with a drink in one hand, a sandwich in the other)* What are you doing?

SMIRNOV: That is none of your concern. *(sitting)*

LUDMILLA: Afraid of spiders, huh. Don't look under the couch. *(exits hurriedly)*

SMIRNOV shrieks and jumps. He paces about the room, clenching and unclenching his fists.

SMIRNOV: Ooooooh I could grind the whole world to dust!

LUDMILLA slightly enters with POPOVA.

LUDMILLA: (*pouring it on a little thick*) He keeps jumping on the furniture! I don't know what to doooooooooooooooooooooo. You need to talk to him.

POPOVA: Fine, fine, fine!

She strides in. LUDMILLA gives a little fist bump to the air and runs off. SMIRNOV scrambles to stand in a masculine and prideful stance.

POPOVA: Sir. In my great grief, all this shouting is giving me a headache. And can you please stop jumping on my furniture?

SMIRNOV: Pay me and I'll go.

POPOVA: (*losing her grief, hands on hips*) Read my lips. Day.

SMIRNOV: Day.

POPOVA: After.

SMIRNOV: After. No! I told you: Money today!

POPOVA: You don't know how to behave, you rude, ill-bred man. (*posing*) My husband would not put up with this.

SMIRNOV: He's dead!

POPOVA: How dare you! I am in mourning!

SMIRNOV: No crepe. No mourning.

POPOVA: Emotionally! I'm wearing it emotionally! You don't know how to behave in front of a woman.

SMIRNOV: I don't know how to behave before women? (*poses, puffed up with pride*) Madam. I know women. I am aware of women. Women are in my sphere of awareness. In my time, over the vast number of my dating years, I have seen more women than you have seen sparrows! There's a woman! There's a woman! Everywhere a woman! There! There! There!

POPOVA: (*not impressed*) Is that right?

SMIRNOV: Women all over the place! I have fought duels over women! Three of them. Twenty paces and turn – ha ha! I have had twelve women throw themselves at my feet, bam! Not one. Not two. Twelve! And I have refused every one of them. Bah! Nine times I have thrown myself at the feet of women – please! And they have refused me. But never mind that! Let me tell you what I have learned about women.

POPOVA: I can't wait.

SMIRNOV: Crocodiles. The bunch of you! Snap, snap, snap! Liars to the marrow of your bones.

POPOVA: Insane! (*throws herself into a chair*)

SMIRNOV: (*posing*) Men are out there in the world, suffering, making sacrifices, and every woman on the planet plays with her hair and her scarf and her tinkling laugh (*imitates the laugh*), just to catch that man in her teeth. I have never, never, never (*takes a breath*), never, never, never, never, never, never, (*takes a breath*), never, never, never, never, never. Never. Never. I have never met a woman who is sincere, faithful and constant. Not one! (*flings himself into a chair, lifts his feet looking for the spider, sees none, and poses as he sits*)

POPOVA: I see. (*calmly*) Please allow me to clarify, so we're clear. In love, men suffer.

SMIRNOV: Terribly.

POPOVA: (*calmly*) Men make sacrifices.

SMIRNOV: Every day.

POPOVA: (*calmly*) Men are faithful and...?

SMIRNOV: Constant. And sincere.

POPOVA: Right. Thank you. Men, according to you, are sincere, faithful and constant in love. Do I have that right?

SMIRNOV: Exactly.

POPOVA: (*losing it, leaping up*) Are you completely off your rocker? Men are faithful and constant! Ha! (*reigning it in*) Let me tell you something. Let me tell you of all the men I knew and know, the best was my late husband. (*poses dramatically*) I love him with all my being. With all my heart. I gave him my youth, my happiness, my life, my fortune and what then? (*looking at SMIRNOV*) What then? Come on! Say it!

SMIRNOV: Um, what then?

POPOVA: (*turning away dramatic pose*) Deceit! Deception at every step! After he died I found a whole drawer full of letters from his girlfriends. So many girlfriends! There a girlfriend! There a girlfriend! There, there, there! He betrayed me, wasted my money, and made fun of my feelings. And after that, after all that – what then? (*looking at SMIRNOV*) What then? Come on, play along!

SMIRNOV: What then?

POPOVA: (*posing dramatically*) I loved him. I was true to him. And now that he's dead, I am true to his memory. I will mourn forever. I have shut myself in and I will wear these clothes –

SMIRNOV: (*leaping up*) But not crepe! Ha!

POPOVA: Do you want me to have a toxic asthma attack? Do you?

SMIRNOV: Ha!

POPOVA: Do you want me to get lung cancer?

SMIRNOV: I know your game. It's all pretend! All of it!

POPOVA: (*striding to the "door"*) How dare you say that to me! (*pointing off*) Get out!

SMIRNOV: Pay me my money!

POPOVA: Stop shouting at me!

SMIRNOV: You stop shouting at me!

POPOVA: I'm not going to give you any money.

SMIRNOV: You will.

POPOVA: I won't.

SMIRNOV: Will!

POPOVA: Won't!

SMIRNOV: Will, will, will, won't!

POPOVA: Won't, won't, won't... Won't, won't, won't... (*realizes what's happening, almost breaking character*) Huh! Who's playing games now?

SMIRNOV: (*with a shrug*) It was worth a shot.

POPOVA: (*back at it*) Just for that, I'm not going to pay you, out of spite.

SMIRNOV: Very well. (*sits*)

POPOVA: How dare you sit when I haven't asked you to.

SMIRNOV: (*calmly*) And yet, here I am.

POPOVA: You're just going to sit there.

SMIRNOV: (*calmly*) Yes I am.

POPOVA: You are.

SMIRNOV: Yep. Lots of sitting happening right here. I'm sitting aaaaaalllllllll over the place.

POPOVA: Very well.

POPOVA walks slowly over to a table and picks up a bell. Rings it once. Turns to stare at SMIRNOV. The two stare at each other as LUDMILLA enters slowly, holding a bag of chips.

LUDMILLA: (*to audience*) Look at this. Look! I thought this would end up in a neighbourly conversation, maybe a dinner, maybe, maybe a smidge of chaos. Just a smidgen for some small entertainment in my humdrum life. But this? Stubborn fools. Someone's going to burst a blood vessel. (*to others*) So... how are things going?

POPOVA: Ludmilla! (*pointing to the door*) Show this gentleman out!

LUDMILLA: I'm kind of on a lunch break? There's an open container of sour cream on the kitchen counter and I was just about to add onion soup mix because everyone knows that sour cream is great but if you add onion soup mix it takes everything to a –

POPOVA: Ludmilla!

LUDMILLA: All right. (*puts down chips and walks tentatively over to SMIRNOV*) Ok... so...(getting closer) Sir, if you wouldn't mind... (getting closer) Would you mind...

POPOVA: Are you going to take all day?

LUDMILLA: Don't rush me! (*in front of the chair, speaking fast*) Sir, would you mind vacating the premises?

SMIRNOV: (*jumping up*) Who do you think you're talking to!

LUDMILLA stumbles back with an exaggerated response and clutches at their heart from the ferocity of the response. LUDMILLA is now going to be extremely dramatic as they fake a heart attack.

LUDMILLA: Ack! (*staggering forward*) Ock! (*staggering back*) Eek!

SMIRNOV: Oh good grief. (*sitting*)

POPOVA: Look what you've done! (*running to the exit*)

LUDMILLA: Ah... ah... I can't breathe! I can't...! (*staggering in a circle one way and then the other*)

POPOVA: (*dramatically calling out*) Dasha! (*calling out*) Dasha!

LUDMILLA: (*staggering dramatically*) She's... gone... to pick... fruit!

SMIRNOV: Don't you think you're exaggerating just a little?

LUDMILLA: Madam, is that you? I can't see! It's all spots. I can't breathe, I...can't...

LUDMILLA falls to the ground in an exaggerated and dramatic manner. Flops there a couple of times. Sits up, gasps, flails, then flops to the ground again. Repeat this as many times as you can stand. Decide if LUDMILLA will end with a big dramatic moment or a small flail, perhaps with one hand.

POPOVA: (*to SMIRNOV*) You! Get out.

SMIRNOV: I won't.

POPOVA: Don't you think you've done enough? You boor.

SMIRNOV: Is that the worst you can do?

LUDMILLA: Um... someone's on the floor here...?

POPOVA: You, you, coarse... bear!

SMIRNOV: (*jumping up, as if truly offended*) Now that's too far! What right do you have to insult me?

POPOVA: So what if I am insulting you? So what!

LUDMILLA: (*from the floor*) Water...?

SMIRNOV: I will not be insulted by anybody!

POPOVA: Do you think I am afraid of you because of your yelly yellyness? Ooooooh!

SMIRNOV: How dare you call me a bear. It's madness!

POPOVA: (*overtop of SMIRNOV above*) Bear! Bear! Bear!

LUDMILLA: (*from the floor*) Water...? Anyone?

SMIRNOV: You will pay for your insults!

POPOVA: Bear! Bear! Bear!

SMIRNOV: With pistols!

LUDMILLA: (*from the floor*) Water...what?

POPOVA: With pistols? (*Beat. Suddenly calm.*) Very well.

LUDMILLA: (*sitting up*) Did you say pistols?

SMIRNOV: (*calm*) Good.

LUDMILLA: (*getting up*) No. Not good.

POPOVA: My husband had some.

LUDMILLA: Hang on.

SMIRNOV: Fine.

POPOVA: I'll be right back. (*starts to exit*)

LUDMILLA: (*stopping her*) The school won't allow it!

SMIRNOV: What?

LUDMILLA: The school won't allow it.

POPOVA: What school?

SMIRNOV: There's no school.

LUDMILLA: I know. Technically, there is though. It's a thing... (*gesturing vaguely to the audience*) out there.

SMIRNOV and POPOVA turn to stare at the audience.

SMIRNOV & POPOVA: (*as if seeing for the first time*) Ohhhhh...

LUDMILLA: Yeah.

SMIRNOV: Surely, they won't interfere.

LUDMILLA: You'd be surprised.

SMIRNOV: That's going to make this kind of tough. We're supposed to duel.

POPOVA: I'm supposed to say "I can't wait to shoot you in the skull."

SMIRNOV: (*wincing*) Ouch. Harsh.

POPOVA: Yeah. (*shrugging*) It's going to come out in the moment.

SMIRNOV: (*to LUDMILLA*) If we can't use pistols what do we do?

LUDMILLA: I suggest rubber chickens.

POPOVA: Really? You do?

SMIRNOV: Will it have the same, (*posing*) gravitas?

LUDMILLA: Absolutely. You'll say the same lines, you'll have to replace pistol for chicken of course, but it should work.

SMIRNOV: And the school will approve?

LUDMILLA: It can't hurt. There's two rubber chickens in the pantry.

SMIRNOV: Why are there two rubber chickens in the pantry?

LUDMILLA: I am a woman of many depths. Ok?

SMIRNOV & POPOVA: Ok.

LUDMILLA: I'm going to get back on the floor. Start glaring at each other.

LUDMILLA lies on the floor. POPOVA and SMIRNOV square off.

SMIRNOV: You will pay for your insults! With chickens!

POPOVA: With chickens? (*to LUDMILLA*) Is this really going to work?

SMIRNOV: I'm not sure it's got good gravitas.

LUDMILLA: (*from the floor*) Keep going!

POPOVA: Ok. (*back in it*) With chickens? Very well.

SMIRNOV: Good.

POPOVA: My husband had some.

SMIRNOV: Fine.

POPOVA: I'll be right back. (*she starts to leave, then turns back*) What pleasure it will give me to whack a chicken across your skull!
(*exits*)

SMIRNOV: Ha! Devil take you! (*flings himself into a chair and calling out*) I am not a little boy, you know! I am not a sentimental puppy.

LUDMILLA: (*sitting up*) Just so we're clear. You come in here, yell at her, refuse to leave, and now you want to whack her with a chicken.

SMIRNOV: She wants to whack me too! It's the principle of the thing! I have to whack back!

LUDMILLA: (*getting up*) You could just leave...

SMIRNOV: Huh! She accepted my challenge! It's the first time I've ever seen that... (*gives a sigh*) She is something else.

LUDMILLA: (*realizing what is happening*) Oh no. Don't say it!

SMIRNOV: That is what I want in a partner. That is true love.

LUDMILLA: You said it.

SMIRNOV: Fire! Gunpowder! A rocket! Not a sour-faced jelly bag. I'm even sorry I have to whack her with a chicken. (*SMIRNOV gives a loving sigh, which turns into a shriek and a jump*) Why do you have so many spiders in your house!

LUDMILLA: If I kill them, will you go away?

SMIRNOV: I can't!

LUDMILLA: Then it's together town for you and the spiders!

SMIRNOV: You're so cruel!

LUDMILLA: Please go away. Please, please, please, please! I beg of you.

SMIRNOV: I can't. I love her! (*LUDMILLA groans*) Not only that, I like her! I'm almost ready to let the debt go; that's how much I like her.

POPOVA enters with the rubber chickens.

POPOVA: (*a little puzzled*) Here are the... chickens. (*shrugs*) Ok. But, before we fight you must show me how to (*holding the chicken*) use it?

LUDMILLA: This is going to end badly. I'm going to... yeah. (*exits*)

SMIRNOV: *(the expert, examining the rubber chickens)* You see, there are several sorts of chickens. There are Mortimer chickens, specially made for duels. These are Smith & Wesson chickens, triple action, with extractors. *(tries to "aim" with the rubber chicken and it flops to the side)* These are excellent. *(gets behind POPOVA and puts her hands on the chicken)* You must hold it like this. *(aside)* What an inspiration! Her eyes!

POPOVA: Like this?

SMIRNOV: Yes. Take aim... put your head back a little. The main thing is to keep your cool and aim steadily. Good. Now. All you have to do is whack me in the chest.

POPOVA: Thank you. Well. It's inconvenient to duel in a room. Let's go into the garden. *(turns to exit)*

SMIRNOV: All right. But I warn you, I'm going to wave the chicken.

POPOVA: *(wheeling back around)* What?

SMIRNOV: I'm going to wave.

POPOVA: That's the last straw! Why? Why won't you whack?

SMIRNOV: Never you mind why! *(waving the chicken)* It's my choice and I choose to wave!

POPOVA: If I whack, you have to whack back! None of this waving nonsense!

SMIRNOV: You'll get no whacking from me.

POPOVA: You don't get out of this so easily! *(starts to drag SMIRNOV toward the door, who resists with every fibre of his body, grabbing on to furniture etc.)* Come with me! I mean it! Ah! I won't have any peace until there's a welt on your forehead! I hate your forehead! Stop resisting!

SMIRNOV: I won't!

POPOVA: Are you afraid?

SMIRNOV: Yes! I am afraid!

POPOVA: Liar! Why won't you fight?

SMIRNOV: Because! Because. Because... I... like you.

POPOVA: *(Gives a short laugh. And then a longer laugh. And then a longer laugh still.)* He likes me? He likes me! After alllllllllll this he dares to

Name Pronunciation Guide

This page is just a guide when it comes to pronunciation. It is neither required nor suggested that any one speaks with a Russian accent. Use your character's voice, and say the pronunciation with confidence within that voice.

Decide if your character says names correctly, incorrectly the same way all the time, or incorrectly and differently each time. How your character respects another character should be directly connected to how you say their name.

The CAPS indicate a slight emphasis. Slide the syllables together. And speak with confidence.

The Anniversary

Andrey Andreyevitch Shipuchin: AHN-dreh an-DREY-e-vihch shee-POO-chin

Tatiana Alexeyevna: ta-ti-AH-nah a-lex-ee-EV-nuh

Yelena Nicolaevna Khirin: ye-LEN-a ni-col-a-EV-nuh KEE-rin

Nastasya Fyodorovna Merchutkina: nah-TASH-ye-a fee-or-dor-OV-nuh merchut-KEE-nah

The Proposal

Svetlana Milailovna Chubukov: suvet-LA-nuh mill-ail-OV-nuh CHEW-bu-koff

Natalya Stepanovna: nah-TAL-ya ste-pan-NEH-vah (yes that's neh rather than no)

Ivan Vassilevitch Lomov: E-van vas-SIL-e-vihch LOH-mof

The Bear

Elena Ivanovna Popova: e-LEN-a e-van-OHV-na pop-OH-va

Grigory Stepanovitch Smirnov: GREE-gor-ee ste-pan-OH-vihch SMEER-nof

Ludmilla: lud-MEE-la

The Anniversary - Technical Requirements

Mentioned Costume Pieces

Andrey Andreyevitch Shipuchin: while nothing specific is mentioned, Shipuchin does believe in being fashionable. This should be reflected in their costume.

Tatiana Alexeyevna: Tatiana is dressed in travel attire. Shipuchin mentions that she's not dressed for the Bank's anniversary dinner. Her outfit must have sleeves.

Yelena Nicolaevna Khirin: A worn jacket. Shipuchin mentions that she looks untidy.

Nastasya Fyodorovna Merchutkina: She pulls a doctor's certificate either out of her costume or from a purse.

Props

- Papers, pencil, eraser, calculator, bookkeeping ledger, a folder with a written report (Khirin)
- Achievement plaque (Shipuchin)
- A piece of paper, a written petition (Merchutkina)
- Money/Wallet (Shipuchin)
- A piece of paper, a doctor's certificate (Merchutkina)

Necessary Set Pieces

The goal is that the location looks lush and deliberately luxurious. Velvet, statues, flowers, carpet, pictures

Two desks that are each dressed to reflect the personality and job status of Khirin (the bookkeeper) and Shipuchin (Chairman of the Bank)

The Proposal - Technical Requirements

Mentioned Costume Pieces

Natalya Stepanovna: Wears an apron.

Ivan Vassilevitch Lomov: Formal dress, described as an New Year's Eve outfit, or a party outfit; handkerchief.

Props

- Book (Chubukov)
- Water jug and glasses

Necessary Set Pieces

A good chair that clearly looks better than the others in the room.

All the furniture should be solid enough so that the characters can leap up and off of it.

The Bear - Technical Requirements

Mentioned Costume Pieces

Elena Ivanovna Popova: Dressed in black to represent mourning. But not crepe.

Props

- Silverware, polishing cloth, polish (Ludmilla)
- Couch pillows (Ludmilla)
- A large framed photo of Elena's dead husband (Popova, Ludmilla)
- Tea towel (Ludmilla)
- A chicken leg (Ludmilla)
- Bowl of soup (Ludmilla)
- Sandwich (Ludmilla)
- Glass of water x2 (Ludmilla)
- Glass of "vodka" (Ludmilla)
- Small bell (Popova)
- Bag of chips (Ludmilla)
- Two rubber chickens (Smirnov, Popova)

Necessary Set Pieces

A small table with silverware and polishing accessories.

There should be side tables for Ludmilla to put glasses on.

The furniture should be solid enough so that Smirnov can leap up and off of it.



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