



REVOLUTION

**a play in three acts
by Sean O'Leary**

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Revolution

Synopsis

Revolution is a play about conviction and vulnerability.

It is 1937 in Barcelona during the Spanish Civil War. Malcolm Ridgeley is a hardboiled BBC journalist. Once an idealist, Ridgeley's experiences have persuaded him that all good causes are inevitably corrupted. His younger sister, Charlotte, and her husband, Chris Fair, have no such reservations, however. They are fervent socialists who belong to a militia defending the Spanish Republic against Franco and the Fascist forces of Italy and Germany.

Ridgeley becomes the target of Yuri Chernovsky, Soviet attache, who hopes that by subverting Ridgeley he can use the BBC to bring the Spanish government within the Soviet sphere. Using Fair's life as leverage, Chernovsky attempts to win Ridgeley over, first by persuasion and then by threats, but without success. In the process, however, he realizes that Ridgeley's cynicism is a weapon that can be turned against him and, through a carefully choreographed series of events, Chernovsky destroys everything in which Ridgeley has faith -- his relationship with Charlotte, his hope for the salvation of a young orphan girl, and, finally, his own judgment. Broken and isolated, Ridgeley must choose whether to surrender to the nihilism of Chernovsky or rise above it even in the face of uncertainty and the corruptibility of ideals.

Cast Requirements

2 F, 13 M (including doubled roles) for full production. 2F, 8M for staged readings.

Setting

Barcelona. January, 1937. About six months after the start of the Spanish Civil War.

Act I

Scene 1: A studio at the Telephone Exchange

Scene 2: The Lenin Barracks

Scene 3: The Café Moka

Scene 4: The Guardia Office

Act II

Scene 1: Ridgeley's office, three months later

Scene 2: The Fairs' flat

Scene 3: A Trench at the front

Act III

Scene 1: The Fairs' flat, five days later

Scene 2: Chernovsky's office

Scene 3: The Fairs' flat

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Characters in order of appearance

Roles that can be doubled are indicated by a number in parentheses following the name. Matching numbers can be played by the same actor. Also, the Newsreader's speeches should be prerecorded and, therefore, do not require a separate cast member.

<i>Newsreader</i>	A BBC newsreader.
<i>Malcolm Ridgeley</i>	A BBC correspondent, late twenties. Bombastic and prematurely world-weary
<i>Christopher Fair</i>	An idealistic socialist and militia volunteer, mid twenties.
<i>Jo</i>	A savvy 13-year old street urchin who survives by trading on the black market
<i>Studio Manager (5)</i>	A self-important mid-level manager.
<i>Yuri Chernovsky</i>	Soviet emissary to the Republic. Polished, calculating, opportunistic. Sixty.
<i>Sasha</i>	Chernovsky's young aide.
<i>Jaime (1)</i>	An immature 15 year-old militia volunteer.
<i>Juanito (2)</i>	Another equally immature teenage volunteer.
<i>Jim McCarthy</i>	Socialist militia volunteer of blue collar Irish Liverpool stock. mid-twenties.
<i>Martin Calderon</i>	A Spanish volunteer of humble origins but with advanced education. Twenties.
<i>Captain Kurz (3)</i>	Croatian expatriate and itinerant fighter for socialism. Late thirties.
<i>Charlotte Fair</i>	Fair's wife, Ridgeley's younger sister. Intelligent, precocious, passionate.
<i>Café Owner (4)</i>	A middle-aged saloon keeper.
<i>Pascual</i>	An illiterate peasant farmer.
<i>Captain Ruiz (4)</i>	An officious captain in the Guardia (the police).
<i>Martinez (3)</i>	One of Ruiz' men.
<i>Portillo (1)</i>	A roly-poly, less than intimidating propaganda officer.
<i>Lt. Robles (5)</i>	A young, self-righteous officer in the regular army.
<i>Robles' Man 1</i>	A regular army soldier.
<i>Robles' Man 2 (2)</i>	A regular army soldier.

The Set

Revolution requires no fixed set. It is to be produced using only props against a darkened background.

Author's Bio

Sean O'Leary is the author of five completed full-length plays, three of which are receiving Equity productions. His most recent, VALU-MART, is the 2007 winner of The University of Alabama at Birmingham's Ruby Lloyd Apsey Award for plays confronting racial and ethnic issues and was also a finalist in the National Arts Club's Playwrights First competition. BENEATH SHELTON LAUREL was commissioned by The Southern Appalachian Repertory Theatre where it played for 20 consecutive sold-out performances between 2005 and 2006 and won a National Endowment for the Arts "Access to Artistic Excellence" grant for a touring production that is now underway. Sean's earlier play, POUND, about the poet Ezra Pound, received its professional premiere in October 2004 at The Washington Stage Guild in Washington, DC and has gone on to five other productions. RAIN IN THE HOLLOWS received its professional premiere three months earlier at Tri-State Actors Theater in New Jersey and has gone on to numerous productions as well. Between them, POUND and RAIN have won or been finalists in more than a dozen national playwriting competitions. Sean's first play, WINE TO BLOOD was selected by Brandeis University for its permanent collection of works inspired by the Spanish Civil War. Sean is the 2004 winner of the West Virginia Commission on The Arts Fellowship for Drama and was recently added to The Literary Map of West Virginia. He is a member of The Dramatists Guild of America and the Playwrights Forum of Washington, DC. He lives near Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. For more information, visit www.olearyonstage.com.

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Revolution Act One

Scene 1

(Barcelona, January 1937. As the audience enters the theatre they hear popular swing music from the period. The music continues as the lights come up to reveal a radio studio and two men at a microphone. Ridgeley, in his late twenties, is dressed in suit and tie. Fair, about the same age, is dressed as a militiaman in a shabby uniform of afterthoughts. Jo, a 13 year-old street urchin is asleep in a chair propped up against the studio door to prevent interruptions.)

Fair

Come on, Collie. Join us.

Ridgeley

I don't think I could stand the smell.

Fair

No, seriously. You could sign up for the militia today and be at the front with me in a month.

(The music ends and is followed by the peals from Big Ben that signals the BBC.)

Ridgeley

Shut up, or I'll miss my cue.

Newsreader

From London, this is the BBC Overseas Service.

We turn first to events in Spain where elements of the military supported by Germany and Italy continue their insurrection against the socialist government.

(The radio newsreader continues as Fair and Ridgeley talk over his narrative which is now muted.)

Fair

God, think of it Collie! You, a BBC correspondent, could announce to the country -- the world -- that you've heard the call and you're striking a blow for justice.

Ridgeley

Be quiet. I have to listen.

Fair

You'd create a sensation. It would be covered by every newspaper in Britain. I'll bet they'd even pick it up in the U.S.

Ridgeley

The engineer can hear you. Now stop it!

Fair

Thousands might follow your lead. My God, we'd be respectable! Can you imagine?

Ridgeley

Shut up! This is it.

(Newsreader in background)

Today we look at the ideological nature of this conflict that has turned what might otherwise have been a small regional affair into a *cause celebre* for partisans from around the world, including many from this country. We have a report from Malcolm Ridgeley who is at the Lenin Barracks in Barcelona where new recruits including a number of Britons are being trained as members of militias under the umbrella of the Popular Front, which defends the Spanish government.

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Fair

Now?. . . What's the cue?

(Ridgeley gestures violently with his finger for Fair to be quiet.)

Newsreader

And now to you, Malcolm.

(As Ridgeley delivers the first lines of his report, the confused and nervous Fair mouths the words "Is this it? Are you on?" to which Ridgeley angrily nods his head.)

Ridgeley

Barcelona is in every respect a city at war. Product shortages are common and the neglect of routine maintenance has left the city with a shabby aspect. But, these are hardly grim times. Indeed a sense of common purpose and camaraderie prevails in a country that is historically the most socially stratified in Europe.

That spirit has motivated thousands from Britain and around the world to rally to the defense of the Spanish Republic, which they see as an emerging workers' paradise. I have with me one of those volunteers, Christopher Fair, a native of Huddersfield, an Oxford graduate, and until recently a journalist. He is now a militiaman in a regiment sponsored by The Party of Marxist Unification, the POUM.

Christopher, tell our audience why you put down the pen to take up the gun.

Fair

(The nerves of someone on radio for the first time.)

Well. . . we all say there are things worth fighting for.

Ridgeley

A matter of conscience then?

Fair

(Becoming obnoxiously doctrinaire.)

I suppose if what one believes in is attacked, one must become either an actor or a hypocrite.

Ridgeley

But some would claim that your cause is a mere front for a communist takeover.

Fair

(With sudden passion.)

What if it is? Look about. Oppressed peasants defending themselves against a traitorous army, supported by mercenaries and funded by landowners, and a church whose corruption is exceeded only by its wealth.

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Ridgeley

Isn't that a rather simplistic view of a complicated situation?

Fair

(Almost belligerently.)

Is it?

Ridgeley

There are charges that, under the republic, property owners have been threatened with the loss of lands and that churches have been attacked and pillaged.

Fair

You find that objectionable?

Ridgeley

Some listeners might.

Fair

Oh? But they're not bothered by slavery, poverty, and illiteracy?

Ridgeley

Which you contend would be the result of a fascist victory.

Fair

Contend? Can there be any doubt?

Ridgeley

But, if communism is the solution. . .

Fair

You prefer slavery?

Ridgeley

But, isn't that the problem? The democracies won't rise to Spain's defense for fear that they'll be assisting communist expansion?

Fair

(Sarcastically.)

Oh, no bother so long as it's Spanish peasants being tortured and killed.

Ridgeley

(Trying to save Fair.)

Mr. Fair, there are no doubt many who, while fearful of communism, are none-the-less sympathetic to the plight of the Spanish people.

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Fair

Sympathy? And where does that get you? Who do you think started this war? Get your head out of the loo, Ridgeley.

(Ridgeley grabs the microphone away and proceeds.)

Ridgeley

To risk one's life in defense of a cause, one must be passionate and Christopher Fair certainly is that. It is plain from the stiff resistance his side has mounted that theirs are deeply held convictions that will not be quickly overcome by the forces of General Franco.

This is Malcolm Ridgeley from Barcelona.

(Ridgeley angrily flips a switch turning the microphone off.)

Are you pleased with yourself? You've just alienated an entire country and made a fool of me.

Fair

You were practically a mouthpiece for the Fascists.

Ridgeley

And you insulted my listeners.

Fair

(Sarcastically.)

Oh, I've wounded middle class sensibilities.

Ridgeley

There's no surer sign of arrogance than ridiculing the very people you need to persuade.

Fair

I'm working to liberate Spanish workers.

Ridgeley

So you insult the English ones?

Fair

When they understand, they'll join us.

Ridgeley

But, in the meantime you'll call them names and spout a lot of ideological piffle.

Fair

Better than believing in nothing.

Ridgeley

Go ahead, scoff. But, you prove my point. You won't accept help on anyone else's terms. It's your most glaring sign of insecurity.

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Fair

You're a real bastard.

Ridgeley

Don't pout. It's true of most on your side -- especially your leaders. Given the choice, they'll sacrifice every last Spanish peasant before compromising their precious ideologies.

Fair

God, you're self-righteous.

Ridgeley

Pragmatic? Yes. Self-righteous? No.

Fair

That's just your pathetic self-fantasy. The hardboiled war correspondent dispensing lessons from his misbegotten life. Pity we're not in a smoke-filled pub to provide atmosphere.

Ridgeley

More like the court jester, providing comic relief from the onslaught of starry-eyed children.

Fair

And to think it was you who led me to socialism.

Ridgeley

So, let me lead you out of it. Get Charlotte and let's go home.

Fair

How did you become so cynical?

Ridgeley

People expect it in reporters.

Fair

And you'll live down to their expectations.

Ridgeley

Better than getting yourself and my little sister killed to no useful end.

Fair

Explain that to her. Besides, aren't you forgetting that there's a war to be won?

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Ridgeley

You beat Franco, you get Stalin.

Fair

The Russians are just helping.

Ridgeley

The Russians are constitutionally incapable of “just helping”.

Fair

Lord, we’re repeating ancient arguments. Just tell me, did you get her settled -- someplace safe I mean?

Ridgeley

She’s in a flat in the old convent -- an appropriate setting I thought for your rather bizarre honeymoon.

Fair

You can’t be cynical and my conscience at the same time.

Ridgeley

That’s not morality, it’s pragmatism. You shouldn’t leave a woman lying about in a country at war.

Fair

And I wouldn’t if I didn’t know that you were taking care of her.

(Smiles in jest at Ridgeley, revealing an underlying affection between them.)

Ridgeley

Assisting in her suicide is more like it.

Fair

(With real affection.)

Look Collie, I’m sorry we had to fight. But, I’m depending on you to help out with Charlotte until this thing gets resolved.

Ridgeley

Don’t thank me. I flatter myself that I’m shamelessly exploiting you to further my career.

Fair

Actually, that’s a relief. I rather thought you wanted me dead.

Ridgeley

What? Because of Charlotte? She deserves you. Besides, it gets me off the hook with Mum and Dad who now blame you for dragging her into this.

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Fair

You only care about appeasing your parents?

Ridgeley

(With a straight face.)

There is an inheritance to think about.

(After a pause to make sure he's not serious, both burst out laughing.)

Fair

All right, go ahead and further your ragged career. What do you want to know?

Ridgeley

About the Russians. . .

Fair

Oh God, Collie. You've got Fascist madmen in the heart of Europe. Cover the real story for a change.

Ridgeley

You may not like it, but it sells papers.

Fair

There are communists, anarchists, . . .

(Pointing to himself.)

Anglicans uniting against a common enemy. You're missing the big story, Collie.

Ridgeley

Communists and anarchists are juicy, but we can skip the Anglicans.

Fair

Damn You! And I suppose you informed your editor that you're a communist.

Ridgeley

A childish infatuation from which I recovered years ago.

Fair

I believed in you.

Ridgeley

Then believe this. I only arranged this commission for you because I didn't think you could be dissuaded and, more to the point, I haven't yet learned to say "no" to Charlotte.

Fair

I know the problem.

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Ridgeley

But I would have, had I known she would come as well. Things have changed Chris. Your militia's leaders have begun picking almost daily fights with Stalin. Just be ready to bail out if he decides to retaliate.

Fair

What? You arranged this commission for me and now you tell me to desert?

Ridgeley

I know it sounds crazy, but. . .

Fair

I don't believe you.

Ridgeley

Chris, in this war, your ally one day is your enemy the next.

Fair

Why do I tolerate you?

Ridgeley

You don't have a choice. Did you see the headline in yesterday's Daily Mail?

(Tosses newspaper to Fair.)

"Reds Crucify Nuns".

Fair

Honestly Collie, if this thing is being managed by Moscow, they're doing a poor job of it. We drill with blocks of wood cut in the shape of guns. The only things plentiful here are bread and political opinions.

Ridgeley

Not much of either in Russia these days. All right, I won't badger you? Just be careful. Do you know when you're going to the front?

Fair

Tomorrow. They're sending a fellow named Kurz who I pray to God is better than the officers we've had so far. I know you think you did me a favor by hooking me up with the POUM, but it's hard to see why.

Ridgeley

They're socialist and the Russians hate them, so you know they're sincere.

Fair

Anyone else they don't get along with?

Ridgeley

Well, some say the leaders are closet fascists.

Fair

What have you gotten me into?

Ridgeley

Don't worry. Just the usual intrigue. By the way, this Kurz fellow, first name isn't Josip, is it?

Fair

You've heard of him?

Ridgeley

Josip Kurz is notorious. The only question is whether he's a hero or a traitor.

(Fair shoots a confused look.)

He commanded a company during an attack at Guadalajara. His men got too far out ahead of the column and they were cut off by the Fascists. Everyone was killed -- except Kurz. He was presumed dead until he showed up a week later looking rather the worse for wear and threatening to kill another officer for failing to push the attack to link up with his company.

Fair

Was Kurz right?

Ridgeley

Who knows? Fog of war, all that. Besides, it hardly mattered since no one was much inclined to believe an officer who lost his company, spent a week behind enemy lines, and then magically reappeared. Frankly, it's amazing he wasn't shot as a spy.

Fair

Could he be a traitor?

Ridgeley

Now look who's paranoid. I doubt it. He fought the Fascists in Ethiopia before coming to Spain and has never once tried to endear himself to the Russians. He's too obvious. Spies ingratiate themselves.

Fair

So, there's your proof the Russians aren't running things.

Ridgeley

The Russians, my dear boy, work in mysterious ways. Still, my editor will be disappointed.

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Fair

So what are you going to tell him?

Ridgeley

I don't know. . .

(They hear a knock at the door.)

Voice

Comrade, your time is up.

(Jo is awakened and begins to stretch while still seated.)

Ridgeley

Damn, that'll be the manager. I told him I'd be out by one.

Fair

No bother. I have to get back to the barracks.

(Another louder knock at the door.)

Jo

(Asking Ridgeley what she should do.)

Senor?

Ridgeley

Just a moment, Jo. Before you go, Charlotte's planning a little party for tonight at the Café. I guess now it will be a sending off. Bring some friends. Around six?

Fair

Sure Collie. And, by the way, I know your heart's in the right place.

Ridgeley

I'm glad you know it.

(Pounding on the door.)

Jo, step out there and ask him. . .

(The door is forced open sending Jo, who is still in the chair, sprawling. In strides the self-important manager followed by the well-dressed Chernovsky and his aide, Sasha. The manager is obsequious to Chernovsky, but regards Sasha as a mere bodyguard.)

I beg your pardon!

(Chernovsky sees Jo and leans down to help, offering his hand. Jo's eyes light up at the sight of his gold wristwatch.)

Chernovsky

You must excuse us child. Are you hurt?

Manager

Mr. Ridgeley, this is Comrade Chernovsky, from Moscow. You will please leave

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immediately.

Jo

Your watch, comrade, is very nice. I can get you very much for it.

Ridgeley

Jo, this is not the time. . .

Chernovsky

(Lifts Jo to her feet.)

Mr. Ridgeley, of the BBC?

(Ridgeley nods affirmatively.)

I am sure the child means no harm. And I would like to compensate her for this indignity.

(To Jo.)

Now, what manner of things can you procure for me, child?

Jo

What does comrade want?

Chernovsky

At the moment I can think of nothing, but perhaps you will take this?

(Chernovsky pulls a gold cigarette case from his pocket and hands it to the stunned Jo.)

In time, I shall have needs. You may consider it a down payment.

Ridgeley

I wish you wouldn't. It only encourages. . .

(Jo looks disbelievingly at Ridgeley who realizes he can't win.)

Jo, why don't you accompany Chris back to his barracks? I'm sure you'll find a ready market there.

Chernovsky

(To Fair.)

You must excuse my manners. Amid the confusion, I failed to introduce myself. Yuri Chernovsky.

Fair

Chris Fair, POUM militia.

Chernovsky

Ah. A fellow fighter for socialism. And under whom do you serve?

Fair

Captain Kurz, Comrade.

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Ridgeley

Do you know him?

Chernovsky

Afraid not,

(To Fair.)

But I am glad to meet you, Comrade.

Fair

As well, Comrade. But you'll have to excuse me. I really should be getting back.

(Aside to Ridgeley.)

Here's your chance to get it from the horse's mouth. Ta ta.

(Chuckles. Exits.)

Ridgeley

Jo, run along with Chris. And don't forget about your shopping trip.

Jo

No, señor.

(To Chernovsky, lavishly.)

Thank you, Comrade. I will see that you get much.

Chernovsky

I am sure you will. Come see me tomorrow. Farewell.

(Fair and Jo exit together.)

Manager

Mr. Ridgeley, Comrade Chernovsky is presently occupied. . .

Chernovsky

Please. Comrade Lopez. I've been looking forward to meeting Mr. Ridgeley. Perhaps you will continue the tour with Sasha -- that is if you have a moment, Mr. Ridgeley.

(Ridgeley, pleased at his good fortune, readily nods his assent. The manager is wounded, but a firm look from Sasha tells him he ought not protest. He exits with Sasha.)

I feel like such a heel. The poor man so wants to please.

Ridgeley

He enjoys his importance.

Chernovsky

Still, it is odd. A few months ago he was a minor official resentful of his superiors.

Today he acts as they did. As though his fate will be different.

Ridgeley

Is he to be replaced?

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Chernovsky

Eventually.

Ridgeley

Is this your decision?

Chernovsky

Mine? Oh, no. Merely observing what is probable. I must be more careful. An offhand comment and before I know it my staff treats it as an order, it's reported as a change in policy, and the uproar begins.

Ridgeley

You must leave wreckage in your wake?

Chernovsky

(Vaguely threateningly.)

I hope not. Of course, I see things in your profession can become uncontrollable as well. We heard your interview with Comrade Fair from the engineer's booth.

Ridgeley

He's not always politic, but he means well.

Chernovsky

(Laughs.)

Indeed. It is regrettable that one so dedicated is so badly misled.

Ridgeley

He defends Russia rather passionately.

Chernovsky

I am sure, however his POUM leaders seem to be of a different mind. No, sir. They are a group coming to a bad end and I fear innocents such as Comrade Fair will be swallowed up as well. That is why we should talk. You may be able to save Fair and others from needless harm.

Ridgeley

Not me. I'm just a humble scribe.

Chernovsky

You underestimate yourself. But hear me out. You understand the Spanish Republic would drown were it not for the support of my government?

(Ridgeley gives a noncommittal shrug.)

Yet, the POUM leadership persists in undermining our relationship. Do you know why?

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Ridgeley

Haven't the foggiest.

Chernovsky

Let us say that one who stands between a drowning man and his savior may himself become a casualty.

Ridgeley

You're referring to the POUM?

Chernovsky

In reprisals, governments rarely distinguish neatly between leaders and followers.

Ridgeley

Followers such as Fair?

Chernovsky

You take my point.

Ridgeley

Are you telling me that the Republic is going to take forcible action against the POUM?

Chernovsky

A plausible scenario, yes?

Ridgeley

It's occurred to me, but it's rather different coming from a senior Russian diplomat.

Chernovsky

Like you, Mr. Ridgeley, I am merely a man.

Ridgeley

One with considerable power.

Chernovsky

Hardly. Whatever small influence I have is exercised entirely at the discretion of the Spanish government.

Ridgeley

Weren't you complaining just a moment ago about overreactions because of your influence?

Chernovsky

Only among functionaries, sir. Men of real power understand my impotence.

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Ridgeley

I doubt your superiors in Moscow view it that way.

Chernovsky

(Amused. Taking Ridgeley's comment as a joke.)

Very good, sir. Very good.

Ridgeley

You said that I could save men like Fair. How?

Chernovsky

Report the facts, that the interests of the Republic and the actions of the POUM are in direct opposition.

Ridgeley

In my country there's still a difference between journalism and propaganda.

Chernovsky

Call it what you will, but a fact is still a fact.

Ridgeley

Thank you, but I'll leave it to the Spanish government to determine it's own interests and to you to undermine your enemies.

Chernovsky

Mr. Ridgeley, in this matter politics are quite immaterial. The Spanish government will soon have to decide whether its best interests lie with Moscow or the POUM. The answer is obvious. The only question is how many will be sacrificed in defense of the POUM's corrupt cause.

Ridgeley

You can't imagine that anything I say will change attitudes among POUM leaders.

Chernovsky

Of course not, but under them are innocent men like Fair who labor in ignorance. You can reach them with the truth.

Ridgeley

You know, Chernovsky, you're quite good.

Chernovsky

I am too old to be patronized, Mr. Ridgeley. What you think of me is of no consequence. It is the fate of men such as Fair with which you should be concerned.

Ridgeley

One of the joys of journalism is that I get to comment on everything and be responsible

for nothing.

Chernovsky

How very tragic. Well, I have given you a very good story that I hope for the sake of Fair and his comrades you will include in your next broadcast?

(Chernovsky gathers himself to depart.)

Now, I really must get back to my host before he bores poor Sasha to tears. Happy to have met you, sir.

(Offers his hand, they shake and continue to shake through the next exchange.)

Oh, I nearly forgot. You can be assured that your membership in the Party will remain confidential.

Ridgeley

(Stung, peeved.)

A youthful indiscretion long since past. Don't read anything into it.

Chernovsky

Of course not. But, our superiors might. Better that these things are kept from them. We must talk again.

Ridgeley

(Wondering whether he is being blackmailed.)

Ambassador Chernovsky.

(They finally release hands. Chernovsky smiles beatifically and exits.)

(Blackout.)

Act I, Scene 2

(The Lenin Barracks, that evening. The only items of furniture are a half dozen roughly hewn bunks and chests. Boots are jammed under the bunks. Two fifteen year-old recruits are carelessly fooling around with an ancient pistol.)

Jaime

(Carelessly pointing the gun at Juan who is kneeling on the floor with hands behind his back.)

Talk Fascist pig. Why are Franco's ears so big?

Juanito

We use them to pull his head out of his ass.

Oh God no. Pleeeeease senor . . . er comrade. I promise to be a good boy from now on.

Jaime

Die you piece of donkey shit! Bcccch!

(Jaime pretends to fire and makes the sound of gun. Juan dies a spectacularly choreographed death with Jaime standing over him and laughing uncontrollably,

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pistol still in hand. Martin and McCarthy enter. Jaime looks up absentmindedly pointing the gun at them and they dive for cover behind the nearest bunks. The boys laugh even more hysterically.)

Martin

(Jumping forth and forcing the gun from Jaime.)

You goddamn idiot! You are to take this and turn it in to the quartermaster – Now!

(Returns the gun to Jaime.)

Get out!. Both of you!

(McCarthy has emerged slowly from behind the bunks. The boys sheepishly exit, but burst inot laughter offstage annoying Martin and McCarthy. Suddenly, there is a shot. Martin and McCarthy rush to the door and are greeted by another round of laughter from Juan and Jaime.)

McCarthy

Goddamn maricones.

Martin

Children and conscripts are about all we have left.

McCarthy

Lord, that's a devil's choice.

Martin

Sometimes I think I should have stayed at Oxford.

McCarthy

Oxford? You? But., you're a . . .

(Stops before uttering a racial slur.)

Martin

Yes, I am.

McCarthy

So, you come from money. Family must be tickled with their son, the red.

Martin

My father was a communist too.

McCarthy

And he sent you to bleedin' Oxford?

Martin

No, but Ambassador Chilton did. My father was his gardener.

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McCarthy

That pig, Chilton, is your benefactor? And here you are a communist! God, what a howler.

Martin

Chilton means well. He just shares the prejudices of his class.

McCarthy

He'd put a well-meaning bullet in your head if he knew.

Martin

He does. When he discovered my father had gone to the front, he wrote me in England and said I should talk him into coming back. When I wrote that I couldn't, he replied that, if that was the case, I'd better join him because I wouldn't be allowed back.

McCarthy

No. Your father? Is he still at the front?

Martin

No. He died at the battle of Guadalajara in August.

McCarthy

Lord mate. I'm sorry.

Martin

It's all right. He led a long life and, unlike most peasants, he died a free man.

McCarthy

It's funny. Your old man and mine. Cut from the same cloth. If we were fighting Fascists in England, he'd do the same for me. But, somehow he just can't see this as the same.

Martin

Is he angry with you?

McCarthy

Angry? He called me a traitor in his last letter. Said I should save myself to defend England. I tell him if we win here we won't have to defend England. And he says, "course we will. The only difference is the bad guys will be speaking Russian."

Martin

(Throws McCarthy a porron – a squirt bottle -- and keeps one for himself.)
Only if we're lucky. Nostrovya.

Revolution

McCarthy

Thanks mate.

(Tries to drink, but splatters the wine on himself just as Fair enters with Jo who carries her "sample case". Martin disintegrates into laughter.)

Shit!

Fair

You should learn to say it in Spanish.

McCarthy

Piss off.

Fair

Has Kurz shown up?

Martin

Not a sign.

(Jo clears her throat.)

Fair

Oh, excuse me, Jo. Comrades, I have someone I'd like you to meet.

Jo

Pardon me, comrades. You go to the front?

Fair

This is Jo, the source of all good things in Barcelona.

Jo

You'll want supplies, comrades.

(Jo opens her suitcase to reveal a treasure trove of scarce luxuries.)

Cigars, the very best. Chocolate. Coffee. Comrade is English? Marmalade.

(All are astonished.)

McCarthy

Lord. It's like Harrod's. Look at this. Child, where do you get such things?

Jo

I trade, comrade.

Martin

(Accusingly.)

Steal you mean.

Revolution

Jo

(Defensively, a little frightened.)
I find for people what they need, comrade.

Martin

You know how it works? New men shipping out trade gloves and socks for these pleasantries. Then when they come back from the front six months later threadbare and frozen, they buy them back for more than they were worth in the first place.

Jo

(Hurt, tearfully)
Comrades, I only help the soldiers.

McCarthy

Of course you do, dearest. Don't let these buggers get you down. Now what is it you want for that marmalade?

Jo

Do you have any gloves? Socks?
(Confirming Martin's accusation.)

McCarthy

Just a moment, darling. I just happen to have. . .
(He digs from his footlocker a hideously patterned pair of woven wool socks.)

Martin

You'll want those at the front. It gets below freezing almost every night.
(McCarthy tilts his footlocker to reveal five more pairs just like them.)

McCarthy

Martin, ever since I left England, I've been worried sick about ending up a corpse wearing these things. Can you imagine the embarrassment? The young'n -- What's your name dear?

Jo

Jo, comrade.

McCarthy

Jo, is doing me a favor. In fact, Jo, I'd like to get my two comrades presents. What can you offer me for a second pair of these fine, hand-woven articles of which there's not another pair to be found in the world?

Jo

(Looking hungrily at the socks. Then, rather than going to her suitcase, she reaches among the layers of her clothing and extracts three pendants attached to

Revolution

rawhide ropes. They are intricately carved wooden medallions inlaid with what appears to be glass.)
These, comrade. Good luck charms. They will protect you in battle.
(She cautiously offers one to each of the men then retreats.)

Martin

(Suspiciously.)
Where do you get them?

Jo

I make them, Comrade.

Fair

You must have a vivid imagination to go with your steady hand.

Jo

They are pretty?

Fair

Lovely, Jo. Really. I'm proud to be offered so valuable a gift. Perhaps McCarthy hasn't made a bad bargain.

McCarthy

Well, it's about time someone else around here recognized real value.
(To Jo.)
Salud, comrade

Jo

(Jo carefully takes the socks and folds them into her suitcase.)
Salud, comrades. And thank you.
(Jo smiles sweetly and proudly exits.)

Martin

You know, you've just contributed to black market profiteering.

McCarthy

Do you feel like a criminal, Fair? Well, I don't.

Fair

My brother-in-law thinks Jo is the only cause worth fighting for in Spain.

Martin

Isn't that Malcolm Ridgeley? The BBC correspondent?

Fair

He's taken Jo under his wing – taught her English – tries to get her to stop.

Revolution

McCarthy

Girl's got to live.

Fair

He's making me a star, you know. I was interviewed on radio today.

Martin

Well, that ought to mortify your parents. "My son the red" heard round the world.

Fair

That was Ridgeley's reaction.

McCarthy

Capitalist scum. I'll bet he'd tattle on his own mother for a story.

Fair

No, he's not like that. He had some interesting things to say about Kurz though.

McCarthy

Oh yeah. I'd almost forgotten about that joker.

Martin

He was my father's officer at Guadalajara.

McCarthy

When your Pa bought it?

Martin

Yes.

McCarthy

Fair, you have to hear this. Go on Martin. Tell him about your old man and Chilton.

Fair

You say your father served with Kurz?

Martin

Yes.

Fair

Do you know about the accusations?

McCarthy

Accusations? What accusations?

Revolution

Martin

Kurz used to be a PSUC captain. He and his company got caught behind enemy lines and everyone but him was killed. Some people thought he might have done it on purpose.

McCarthy

On purpose? Your old man? Was he one of them? Martin, tell Fair about your old man.

Martin

My father served under Kurz, but he was wounded before the company was lost. He saw Kurz afterward at the hospital. His letters talked about the rumors, but he believed Kurz was a hero, not a traitor.

McCarthy

Lord. A traitor. 'Course a hero will get you killed just as dead and think he's done you a favor.

Martin

My father wrote that Kurz would never carelessly sacrifice his men.

Fair

Let's hope.

Kurz

(Appearing at the door and speaking in an eastern European accent.)
Excuse me comrades. I believe I heard English being spoken here.

McCarthy

(Slightly suspiciously.)
Sounds like Russian might be your ticket. . . mate.

Kurz

Serbo-Croat actually -- if you can manage it.
(Looks around and finds no takers.)
English then. My name is Josip Kurz.

Martin

Captain, this is an honor.

Kurz

Thank you.

Fair

(Stepping forward to shake hands.)
Captain Kurz, the only man among our sorry lot to have killed a Fascist.

Revolution

Kurz

And the only one to have been beaten by them.

McCarthy

You can bleedin' say that again.

Kurz

And you are?

Fair

I'm Christopher Fair. Jim McCarthy. Martin Calderon.

Kurz

Glad to know you . . .

Martin

Comrade, my father served with you at Guadalajara. . .

McCarthy

Yeah. We hear you got all your men were killed, so you come back to get more.
(Kurz roars with laughter while the others look on uneasily.)

Fair

I think what McCarthy meant to say was. . .

Kurz

It's all right, it's all right.

(Ignoring McCarthy's comment.)

Calderon, your father was Juan, the gardener who would be a soldier?

Martin

Yes.

Kurz

A lovely man, Martin. I would have taken a hundred like him. He told me he would send his son who would be twice the soldier he was.

Martin

I will try, Captain.

Kurz

And you are the fellow who was a newspaper reporter?

Fair

Yes, but I wasn't aware my fame had reached Serbia. Did I have a cult following that I

Revolution

wasn't aware of?

Kurz

I wouldn't know. Haven't been there in years. One of the fellows in the party made me aware of you. You too McCarthy. You see, you are . . . unusual.

McCarthy

What's that supposed to mean?

Kurz

Not many Brits in the POUM militia.

Fair

My brother-in-law recommended the POUM. He knew some people.

Kurz

Yes, that would be Ridgeley. I expect he's another reason there are some who are sceptical.

McCarthy

Sceptical of our motives. Well that's rich comin' from the likes o' you.

Kurz

Comrade McCarthy, you are another sort of mystery. It seems you were expelled from the Party in England for fighting with another member. But the details are a little vague.

McCarthy

Then your sources are blind, deaf, and dumb. I told'em and they didn't want to know. The bloke wanted to bugger me, so I belted him.

Kurz

The bloke who wanted to bugger you – that would be Tony Clarke?

Fair

The head of the British Communist Party?

(Fair and Martin look at one another and dissolve in laughter.)

McCarthy

(Defensively.)

And what difference does that make?

Kurz

Perhaps I will choose my words carefully around you, comrade.

(Snickers all around except for McCarthy.)

Revolution

McCarthy

Yeah. Well there's still that little matter from your past that some of us are curious about.

Kurz

(Facetiously.)

Comrade, so maybe you become a martyr. Your Mr. Shaw says all martyrs go to heaven.
(A shrug and he leaves. Fair and Martin snicker.)

McCarthy

(Angrily rushing to the door and yelling after Kurz.)

We're atheists you ass!

Martin

Shut up, McCarthy. He doesn't have anything to prove to you. Just be glad he has a sense of humor.

McCarthy

Just because your old man was his pet don't mean a thing. He's dead too ain't he?
(Martin, enraged, charges McCarthy and the two go to the floor with Martin on top, his hands wrapped around McCarthy's neck. Fair rushes in to pull Martin off and, after a struggle, succeeds. McCarthy is left gagging on the floor as Fair holds Martin.)

You bloody bastard. . .

Fair

He's right, McCarthy. You did deserve it.

McCarthy

We're putting our asses in the ring for these Spanish. And this is the way they treat us?

Martin

Your father was right. You should go back to England where the Irish know their place.

McCarthy

(Enraged, he starts to charge.)

You bastard. I'll kill you.

(Fair again restrains McCarthy and turns toward Martin.)

Fair

You be quiet.

(And to McCarthy.)

You calm down.

Revolution

McCarthy

All right, all right. But, when Kurz gets us strung up by our knickers, don't say I didn't warn you.

Martin

Forget it.

Fair

Hard to believe, but I came here to invite both of you to a little get-together tonight.

McCarthy

God, we kissed and made up. Do we have to get married too?

Martin

Drop it, McCarthy.

Fair

Please. My wife is throwing a sending off party and we'd both appreciate it.

(To McCarthy.)

Besides, Ridgeley will be there and you can tell him what you think of him.

McCarthy

You brought your wife to Barcelona?

Fair

It's our honeymoon.

McCarthy

You're out of your goddamned mind.

Fair

Well, you can try to talk some sense into her.

McCarthy

Damn right I will. Does she know what the Fascists do to women -- especially foreigners?

Martin

Now, there's a cheery thought to brighten a new husband's day.

McCarthy

Sorry. Well, if I'm going to a party, I'd better wash my skivvies.

(McCarthy grabs a pile of clothes and exits.)

Fair

And you?

Revolution

Martin

Of course. But, you didn't tell me you were married.

Fair

The wedding only took place two months ago when I was writing for the Daily Mail. I was supposed to cover the war while she settled in Perpignan where I would file reports.

Martin

Instead you found a cause. Very romantic. I shall look forward to meeting her.

Fair

Tonight.

Martin

Tonight.

Act I, Scene 3

(The Café Moka. A large table and chairs, appropriate music. Charlotte is laying out what, for wartime, is a sumptuous feast. Ridgeley enters laden with wine for the celebration.)

Charlotte

Oh, Collie, that's wonderful. You found lots.

Ridgeley

You'll learn dear sister that amid scarcity and privation, this one thing Spain has in abundance. As though God himself had waived the laws of supply and demand.

Charlotte

Chris says that in Spain, socialism has waived the laws of supply and demand.

Ridgeley

(Sampling a bottle.)

In that case, your propagandists are missing their most persuasive selling point.

Charlotte

Not everyone can be bought so cheaply.

Ridgeley

I'll chalk that comment up to naivete.

Revolution

Charlotte

You think everyone who disagrees with you is naïve.

Ridgeley

It's the human condition. Of course, you have ideologues like your Christopher who. . .

Charlotte

Have beliefs -- convictions? When will you stop trying to obliterate hope in others?

Ridgeley

Obliterate hope? Is that what I do? Well, I can't be very good at it since you and Chris are still going through with this silly war.

Charlotte

It's really a pathetic little game you play, Collie. You dismiss all hope, all aspiration because it isn't a sure thing, it's not perfect. We have to take leaps of faith, blind faith, sometimes.

Ridgeley

I think Will Rogers said, "Even a blind hog finds an acorn once in a while". I don't think he was recommending it as a guiding principle for one's life.

Charlotte

Unless you're a blind hog.

(Charlotte pushes the end of her nose up with her finger to imitate the snout of a hog. Jo, dressed quite nicely now as a result of Chernovsky's benevolence, stumbles in under the weight of a box that contains a wedding cake. Collie rescues the cake and places it on the table. Jo sits down exhausted.)

Ridgeley

If I had any pride and the help weren't about to expire, I'd probably send this back

Charlotte

Collie, what is it?

Ridgeley

It's traditional for the bride's family to cater the reception and, since I'm the only available family, I thought a wedding cake might be in order.

(Charlotte opens the box. Jo hurriedly pulls from one of her many pockets a bride and groom statuette and places it on top of the cake.)

Charlotte

My God! It's beautiful. How did you. . .

Ridgeley

The idea was mine, but credit for its execution goes to Jo. Jo. . . Where did you get that

Revolution

dress? It's not Chernovsky's . . .

(Jo giggles coquettishly. Charlotte clears her throat.)

Uh, please say hello to my sister, Charlotte.

Jo

(To Charlotte.)

Salud, Comrade.

(To Ridgeley.)

The cigarette case. It is pretty, yes?

Ridgeley

(Very disturbed.)

Look, it's not my place to give advice, but be careful with Chernovsky. He gave it to you on credit and when he comes collecting the price is likely to be high.

(Jo, annoyed that Ridgeley failed to give her a compliment, tosses off his concern with another coquettish giggle.)

Charlotte

Oh Collie, it sounds like we could use a few more fellows like this Chernovsky. We girls must be allowed to dress up once in a while.

(Ridgeley is visibly annoyed at the endorsement of Chernovsky.)

Jo, I'm very pleased to meet you. Did you make this cake?

Jo

Salud, comrade. It is from the finest bakery in Barcelona.

(Charlotte is surprised by the formality of the greeting from one so young.)

Charlotte

What did it cost?

Ridgeley

It's better not to ask. Jo is something of a savant in these matters. Her fusion of entrepreneurial spirit and socialist ideology is difficult to categorize but remarkably effective.

Charlotte

Jo, what is my brother babbling about?

Jo

I find things that people need and trade them for things that other people need.

Ridgeley

With just a little bit off the top.

Jo

(Pulls out a little red book and reads.)

Revolution

“From each according to his ability, to each according to his need.”

Ridgeley

See?

Charlotte

Well, Jo, you are lovely and I'm happy to see there's someone here who can put him in his place. Would you stay and have dinner with us?

Jo

Oh yes. Thank you, comrade.

Charlotte

And, as for you, you're a pig but a sweet one.

(Kisses him on the cheek. Jo sets about straightening things.)

Where did you find her?

Ridgeley

Orphans in the street? There are thousands. Jo's kind of my Girl Friday.

Charlotte

You're sure she's not more than that?

Ridgeley

All right. You have your cause and I have mine. Someone should help her out – as though she needed it.

Charlotte

(Hugs Ridgeley.)

She does. I promise you Collie, she does.

Ridgeley

(Pulling away.)

Look sharp everyone. Here they are.

(Fair, Martin, and McCarthy enter with Fair in the lead. Upon seeing Charlotte, he rushes to her embrace.)

Fair

Charlotte, it seems months since I left you. Thank God you're here.

(Fair is finally interrupted by Charlotte's giggling which began the moment they embraced

and has progressively worsened. Fair pulls back somewhat hurt and embarrassed.)

Charlotte

Chris, you smell like a stable. And your beard. . . Oh God, I love you.

Revolution

(She practically jumps back into his arms and they laugh together.)
Look at you; a soldier. And those old fogies sitting back at Oxford debating how many angels can sit on the head of a pin. It's real, Chris. I'm so proud.

Fair

Perhaps you shouldn't be. Our barracks really is a stable. And I do look as though I'm returning from the front rather than on my way there. Did Collie tell you?

Charlotte

Yes.

Fair

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to bring you here only to abandon you the moment you arrive. I should have made you stay in Perpignan where it's safe.

Charlotte

You couldn't have and you know it. Besides, it's all right. This is why we came.

Fair

I suppose so.

Charlotte

You don't know?

Fair

No, that is why we came. Still, it seems so very wrong to have married you . . . under the circumstances.

Charlotte

Chris, I knew the risk as well as you.

Fair

Perhaps.

Charlotte

Perhaps? Chris, what do you mean? Has Collie been browbeating you?

Fair

Of course, but that's not the point. What I mean is, we had a cause in England and even here, now. But, at the front, with real bullets, I don't know.

Charlotte

You're afraid you'll be a coward?

Fair

I know you can bear it if I don't come back. Otherwise I wouldn't go. But, what if I

Revolution

come back a failure, a fraud who only thought he had convictions?

Charlotte

Chris, tell me about the two men who came in with you.

Fair

McCarthy and Martin?

Charlotte

Are they also afraid of being cowards?

Fair

Probably, but it doesn't matter because they'll come through. I know them.

Charlotte

Why?

Fair

Martin, his father gave his life for the cause. It's his land and people. And McCarthy believes it's his destiny to fight. If it weren't for them, I don't think I could go at all.

Charlotte

Because you think they'll take care of you?

Fair

We'll take care of each other.

Charlotte

There it is, Chris. You might abandon yourself -- maybe even me once you're there. But them? Would you abandon them?

(Fair acknowledges her point with a grateful hug.)

Don't you think you'd better introduce me?

McCarthy

Well, it's about time you two joined us.

(Fair looks quizzically at Charlotte when, for the first time, he sees the wedding cake.)

Charlotte

Just because we were married in a train station doesn't mean I don't crave a few of the traditional things.

Ridgeley

Such as having her honeymoon in a warring city that's overrun by anarchists.

Revolution

Fair

Collie, couldn't you hold the assault until after introductions?

Charlotte

(To McCarthy.)

Please, don't mind my brother. He's a shameless instigator. You are?

McCarthy

Jim McCarthy, direct from Liverpool and happy to congratulate the newlyweds.

(Shakes Charlotte's hand.)

Martin

Martin Calderon, Senora.

(Kisses Charlotte's hand.)

Charlotte

Charlotte, please. I'm glad to know you both. And I expect you've gotten to know Collie.

Fair

Just don't say anything to him that you wouldn't want to have repeated to your mother or worst enemy.

Ridgeley

In boxing they call that hitting off the break.

Martin

Charlotte, excuse me, but are my country's customs merely quaint, or are they being rude?

Charlotte

Thank you for inquiring, comrade. And no, your country's customs are not at all quaint. Perhaps you would be kind enough to tell me more about your country while the children quibble?

Martin

Delighted.

(Martin escorts Charlotte around to the back of the table where they sit together.)

McCarthy

Be careful, Fair. This isn't a catholic country anymore. You might have a divorce on your hands.

Ridgeley

Perhaps Spain is more civilized than I thought.

Revolution

Fair

Leave off, will you, Collie?

Ridgeley

I will, but I want you to come here and talk with me for a moment. Will you excuse us?
(They step to the side for privacy.)

McCarthy

That's right. You two stand in the corner while we have a good time, eh?
(McCarthy laughs and returns to the activities with the others.)

Ridgeley

Chris, I don't know quite how to put this, so I'll just say it. You shouldn't go to the front tomorrow.

Fair

Collie, what kind of silliness is this? A joke to embarrass me in front of the others?

Ridgeley

It's no joke, Chris. I'm afraid of what might happen to you there.

Fair

Collie, we've been through this. You, Charlotte, me – we knew the risks when I volunteered.

Ridgeley

No, not the risks I'm talking about.

Fair

What are you talking about?

Ridgeley

I had a conversation with Chernovsky after you left today. He as much as said that your militia's leaders are traitors who will be made to answer. There may be an out and out fight.

Fair

Between the POUM and the government? Your paranoia really has gotten the best of you. He's playing you to report things from his perspective? This is Spain, not Moscow. He doesn't make those decisions.

Ridgeley

Usually your naivete is endearing, but at the moment it's dangerous. He is not the type of man who speaks without reason. I'm begging you, Chris. Reconsider. I'll get you into another militia. . .

Revolution

Fair

Collie, this is tiresome. Really it is. Nothing is going to happen to a thousand armed militiamen defending the front. Look, I believe you're sincere, but you must step back and consider this thing rationally. Now, I'm going to ship out with my comrades and that's the end of it.

Ridgeley

Chris. . .

Fair

No, That's it. And not a word to Charlotte. I won't have her in a tizzy over your conspiracy theories.

(Fair breaks away leaving Ridgeley distraught.)

McCarthy

(McCarthy begins passing out glasses of wine.)

If you two are ready, I think it's time for a toast. Ridgeley, you're best man. How 'bout it?

(McCarthy positions Fair and Charlotte together in preparation for the toast.)

Ridgeley

(Despairing, but bucking up.)

Devious sort, aren't you? All right. . . uh. . . let's see. Charlotte and Christopher, you met because. . .

Jo

(As all this has been taking place Jo has returned with her suitcase and removed from it a camera.)

Stop, stop. Just a minute while I get ready.

Ridgeley

Jo, is that my camera?

(McCarthy elbows Ridgeley in the ribs to get him back on track.)

Jo

OK, ready.

Ridgeley

Jo, I asked if that is. . .

Charlotte

Oh, come on, Collie. We're all ready.

Ridgeley

Ah hmm. Charlotte and Christopher, it's fitting that your love should be consecrated in

Revolution

Barcelona, home of the cause that brought you together. May you find in Spain your better world and may you find in your marriage a bond that will transcend this world. To Charlotte and Christopher.

(Glasses are raised, Jo snaps the picture.)

Fair

Well said, Collie. Thank you.

(Ridgeley takes the hand that Fair has extended but can only stare back. A tearful Charlotte intercedes to hug Ridgeley.)

McCarthy

I'd say this little affair is shaping up just fine.

Martin

Perhaps then it is time to drink another toast to the cause that has brought us all together.

Charlotte

Please do.

Martin

Comrades, because Spain is a poor country, our struggle holds little for those who seek fortune. Only those who value dignity above subservience, justice above order, and the common good over personal fortune find wealth in Spain. I am grateful that we have found one another . . .

(There is a commotion offstage. Shouting in Spanish and a banging of furniture. Pascual, pursued by the owner, runs onto the set and around to the other side of the table.)

Owner

Stop him! He's a thief!

Pascual

No, Senor. I will pay you.

Owner

Pay me? You can't even afford shoes.

Pascual

Please, senor. I will pay you. I promise as I stand before God.

Owner

Do you hear? He's a traitor and a papist. You know what we do. . .

McCarthy

Here now! Both of you.

Revolution

(McCarthy puts one hand on Pascual's shoulder and motions with the other to the owner to stay put. Speaks to Pascual.)

What's your story, mate?

Pascual

Three days without food, senor. Is true. I eat now, but I pay when I get money. . .

Ridgeley

Sounds sensible to me.

Owner

The only money he'll come into is what he steals from others.

Pascual

Senor, I join the militia. I get paid.

Fair

That and a tuppence as they say.

McCarthy

A volunteer!

Ridgeley

(To owner)

Look here. What does this fellow owe you?

Owner

Two peso's.

(Ridgeley puts his arm around owner and escorts him off to pay him.)

Martin

(To Pascual)

It's all right, that fellow will take care of the bill.

Pascual

Senor. I . . . I . . .

Martin

Please, it's nothing. Where are you from?

Pascual

Alfaro, senor.

Fair

Alfaro! That can't be. It's a hundred and fifty kilometers behind Fascist lines.

Revolution

Pascual

Si, senior. I walk from Alfaro.

(General amazement bordering on disbelief all around)

Charlotte

Before you subject this poor man to the third degree, perhaps he would like something to eat.

Pascual

Si, senora.

(Charlotte places some food and drink before him and he digs in hungrily)

Martin

You say you walked?

Pascual

Si, senior. Two weeks ago, the Fascists burn my village. They say we are communists, spies.

Fair

Ridgeley, this is the fellow you should interview.

Martin

Are you a communist?

McCarthy

If he wasn't before, they've made him one now. Right mate?

(Pascual smiles confusedly, not wanting to disappoint but not understanding.)

Martin

So, you've been walking for two weeks?

Pascual

Si, senior. Through the fields. The Fascists, they patrol all the roads.

Fair

He's certainly got pluck.

McCarthy

And not much else by the looks of it.

Charlotte

Will you let the poor man alone.

(To Pascual)

Please excuse our manners. I am Charlotte Fair. This is my husband, Christopher.

Revolution

(To Martin and McCarthy)
Go on you two.

Martin

Martin Calderon.

Pascual

Pascual Garcia.

McCarthy

And Jim McCarthy. So, tell me mate, since you're a volunteer, which militia do you intend to join?

Pascual

There is more than one?

Ridgeley

I apologize, Christopher. You're not the most naive person in Spain.

McCarthy

Indeed there are.

Charlotte

Won't you let him eat?

(Gives Pascual more food. He smiles gratefully.)

McCarthy

Now, this shouldn't be a hasty decision. So, pay attention.

Fair

(To Martin)

I'll bet we wouldn't want the propaganda minister to hear this.

McCarthy

Now, you could go with the PSUC. They've got the best weapons, the best food, and the best uniforms. But, of course every one of them is required to memorize Das Kapital.

(McCarthy pulls an immense hardbound book from his pack and drops it with a thud on the table.)

Pascual

I cannot read, senior.

McCarthy

Well, that won't do. If you're an anarchist, you go with Durrutti and his crowd. Now, there's a dedicated lot. Never see a one of them so much as smile. Why they say that if an anarchist thinks he's going to be captured by the Fascists, he'll cut his own tongue out

Revolution

of his head rather than risk talking under torture.

(Pascual looks decidedly squeamish.)

Well, then finally, there's the POUM. If you're just a plain old garden variety. . .

Pascual

Garden, si. I am farmer.

McCarthy

Now pay attention. I told you not to be hasty. If you're just a plain old garden variety anti-Fascist, who'd rather fall asleep than fall in, there's the POUM. They have decrepit weapons, the food stinks, uniforms are only a rumor, and there's no bother about cutting out tongues since most of them don't know enough to give anything away.

Now, what'll it be?

Pascual

(Looking around uncertainly, he fixes on Ridgeley.)

What are you?

Fair

He's another kind of bird altogether.

Pascual

(To Fair.)

And you?

McCarthy

See his uniform?

(Pascual scans Fair's second hand version of a uniform.)

Fair, show him your gun.

(Fair pulls out an American civil war vintage revolver.)

Ridgeley

They say Napoleon surrendered it at Waterloo.

McCarthy

And, so there are no misapprehensions. This feast was made possible only because Fair here decided that to get a decent meal he'd have to bring his wife all the way from England.

Pascual

You are POUM?

(Cheers all around.)

Revolution

McCarthy

See that? Mind like a steel trap.

Martin

Would you like to join us, comrade?

Pascual

Si. . . . comrade.

(Martin steps forward to shake his hand followed by the others.)

Comrade. Comrade.

Charlotte

Wait, wait. Collie, we need a picture. Where's Jo?

Ridgeley

Jo, Jo. Bring your . . . my camera over here.

(Jo brings the camera to Ridgeley.)

Now, get over there with them. We might as well get everyone in this picture. You too, Jo

(The others arrange themselves for the group photo.)

All right all you believers in the faith, say "dialectical materialism".

(He shoots the picture. More hugs all around.)

McCarthy

Well, Pascual. We'll have to see about getting you a place. The barracks is just down the Ramblas.

(McCarthy points.)

Do you know how to get there from here?

(Pascual looks confused.)

Fair

Ridgeley, could you persuade Jo to take Pascual to the barracks? If he wants to get a bed for the night, he'll have to get there before the quartermaster turns in.

Ridgeley

Jo, do you mind? You'll have to leave now.

Jo

No, senor.

Fair

Well, Pascual. It looks like you're one of us. Do you have your things with you?

(Pascual's body language indicates that what he wears is all he has.)

All right, you go with Jo. She'll make sure you're fixed up.

(Shakes Pascual's hand.)

Revolution

McCarthy

Damn glad to have you mate.
(Shakes Pascual's hand.)

Martin

Welcome to the struggle, comrade.
(Shakes Pascual's hand.)

Charlotte

I'm so glad to have met you. Congratulations.
(She gives him a hug.)

Ridgeley

(Aside to Fair.)
You know, if Chernovsky is right, you may be sending that man to his death as well.

Fair

Shut up!

Pascual

Gracias, senora.
(Jo is tugging at Pascual to get him on his way. He waves goodbye to the others who respond. As Jo and Pascual depart, a spotlight follows them and the lights go down on the others. Suddenly Pascual stops to wipe his eyes with his shirt sleeve.)

Jo

Comrade, is something wrong?

Pascual

I come with nothing and find friends and a bed.

Jo

Yes, but only if we get there in time. Come now.
(Blackout. End of Scene 3.)

Act I, Scene 4.

(Jo and Pascual are standing in the Guardia office.)

Pascual

(Doubtfully.)
Is this the barracks?

Revolution

Jo

It's not. It's someplace better.

Pascual

I don't understand, my friends said I must hurry. . .

Jo

Comrade, you came to Barcelona to fight the Fascists?

Pascual

Yes, with my friends.

Jo

They're not your friends. You'll never see them after tonight.

Pascual

What do you mean? I must get to the barracks. . . now.

Jo

They are going to the front tomorrow morning.

Pascual

And I'll join them there.

Jo

No, comrade. The brigade is full. It will be months before they assemble another.

Pascual

But. . .

Jo

They just wanted their recruitment bonus.

(Pascual looks confused.)

Your friends. They get a bonus for recruiting men for the militia. You won't see them again.

(Pascual is distraught.)

Really. This is good. You have a full stomach and here we will see about getting you into the Guardia.

Pascual

(Evidently impressed.)

The Guardia, for the republic?

Jo

Yes, comrade. I have a friend and, when he hears how far you have come to fight the Fascists, I'm sure he will take you immediately.

Revolution

Pascual

The Guardia. Why do you do this?

Jo

Comrade, They are English. You and I are Spaniards. Please, just wait here.

(Jo motions for him to sit with her while she waits. Moments later, Ruiz enters regarding Jo with some disdain, an attitude she holds toward Ruiz.)

Ruiz

What do you want?

Jo

I have a new recruit for you, Captain.

Ruiz

(Noticing Jo's dress for the first time. Sarcastically.)

Business must be good.

(To Pascual.)

You, you want to be a policeman?

Pascual

(Looks doubtfully at Jo who encourages him. He stands.)

For the republic. Yes, sir.

Ruiz

(Without so much as a reply to Pascual, yells to the next room.)

Martinez!

(Martinez enters looking indifferent.)

A new man. Take care of him.

(Without a word Martinez takes Pascual by the arm and leads him out as he looks uncertainly at Jo who gives him a smile and a wave. Ruiz then speaks to Jo.)

Get out.

Jo

Comrade, my money.

Ruiz

I am not a clerk. Come back during business hours to get your ransom. And from now on, no more illiterate shit kickers. I don't care what the prefect says. He doesn't have train these fools. Now get out.

Jo

You better be nice, Captain. My friend, Comrade Chernovsky, will see to it. You see?

(She happily models her new dress.)

He takes care of me. If you ever need anything. . .

Revolution

Ruiz

I said, get out!

(Jo exits laughing as she goes.) (Blackout. End of Scene 4 and Act I)

Act Two

Scene 1.

(Ridgeley's office, three months later. Ridgeley is rummaging around looking for something. He's on hands and knees under his desk when Jo enters lugging a large case. Jo, is much more nicely dressed than when we first met her.)

Jo

(Not seeing Ridgeley.)

Hola, Senor Ridgeley.

Ridgeley

(From under the desk.)

Jo, Jo. Find that damned manager and tell him I want my typewriter back.

Jo

No, Senor. I have your typewriter.

(Ridgeley bangs his head as he tries to back from under the desk.)

Ridgeley

Jo. What do you mean. . .

(Stops in midsentence as he realizes it's not his typewriter, but a newer and better one.)

Jo, that's not my typewriter. I want my typewriter.

Jo

But, Senor. This one is much better. No?

Ridgeley

No. . . I mean, yes. But Jo, it's not my typewriter.

(Ridgeley begins playing.)

Jo

Wouldn't you rather have this typewriter?

Ridgeley

Jo, do you understand the concept of private property?

Jo

No, Senor. I'm a socialist.

Revolution

(Gives raised fist salute.)
See, even the shift key works?

Ridgeley

I never capitalize. What did you get for it?

Jo

For what, Senor?

Ridgeley

For my typewriter. Nobody would accept that old hunk of scrap metal for this. What did you get?

Jo

A radio.

Ridgeley

A radio. You're telling me somebody traded a dollar a dozen radio for this?

Jo

No, Senor. For the radio I got three pairs of boots.

Ridgeley

Go on.

Jo

For the boots, I got three cartons of cigarettes, two cases of wine, and a new pair of silk stockings.

Ridgeley

Un huh.

Jo

I sold the cigarettes for fifty peso's and the wine for sixty. And I bought the typewriter.

Ridgeley

Mmm. And what about the silk stockings?

(Jo pulls up her dress to show her stockinged ankles. An embarrassed Ridgeley turns away.)

Jo, I might have had a sentimental attachment to that typewriter.

Jo

Senor, you say good journalists are not sentimental.

Ridgeley

I'm not always a good journalist.

Revolution

(A pause as Ridgeley awaits Jo's reply which isn't forthcoming.)
You're supposed to say something sympathetic like, "I'm not always a good black market profiteer". But you are, aren't you?

Jo

I get for people what they need.

Ridgeley

(Sarcastically.)
"I get for people what they need." It's a mantra with you.

Jo

Senor?

Ridgeley

A religion.

Jo

I do get for people what they need.

Ridgeley

Oh, indeed you do and fie on us who haven't the wisdom to partake of your beneficence. You offer the world, the galaxy, and what do we ask for? Bric-a-brac -- a pack of cigarettes, some boots. . . a typewriter. God should smite us dead for lack of imagination. You're Biblical, Jo. That's what you are.

Jo

Are you all right, Senor?

Ridgeley

Oh, forget it.

Jo

Is what I did wrong?

Ridgeley

Jo, we're surrounded by people so certain they know right from wrong they throw themselves in front of bullets for it. Ask one of them. Just do me the favor of asking next time.

Jo

Si, Senor.

Ridgeley

(Noticing her newest new dress for the first time.)
You're dressed rather elaborately today, aren't you?

Revolution

(Jo shrugs coyly.)
Chernovsky?

(Jo shrugs again.)
Jo, I think you know that I care about you a great deal, don't you?

Jo

(Casually.)
Si, Senior.

Ridgeley

No, I mean I really. . . care.
(Jo looks and listens, but the depth of Ridgeley's feeling does not register. Aware that he hasn't succeeded in making his point and doubting that he can, Ridgeley plows ahead.)
Look, I know that Chernovsky is good to you. . .

Jo

(Enthusiastically.)
Si, Senior!

Ridgeley

But, these gifts. . . they're not. . . well, they're not. . . They don't mean anything really. . . if you see what I mean?
(Jo has no idea what he means.)

Well, you shouldn't be taken in by things, Jo. I know you have to get along and all that, but be careful around Chernovsky.
(Ridgeley gives up.)

Look, you know that I would do anything for you, don't you?

Jo

(Again casually.)
Si, Senior.

Ridgeley

And thank you. The typewriter, it's beautiful. Oh, I got something in the mail today you'll want to see.
(Ridgeley hands Jo a letter. She wrinkles her brow in earnest concentration as she tries to make out written English. Ridgeley recognizes her struggle.)

Sorry. It's from Chris . . . Chris Fair. You remember?

Jo

Yes, senior. They bought my charms.

Ridgeley

He's writing from the front. He asks how you are. Your wedding cake made quite an

Revolution

impression. He asks about Pascual.

Jo

(Uncomfortable at the mention of Pascual.)

Senor?

Ridgeley

You remember. The fellow you took to the barracks that night to volunteer. He's never shown up at the front and Chris asks if we know what happened to him.

Jo

He wouldn't go, Senor.

Ridgeley

What do you mean? He left the party that night like a lost puppy who'd found his master.

Jo

When we got to the gates of the barracks, he wouldn't go inside. He ran.

Ridgeley

Why?

Jo

(Jo shrugs.)

Maybe he was afraid.

Ridgeley

A fellow who had just walked half way across Fascist controlled Spain without money or food all of a sudden gets cold feet?

Jo

Maybe he was a spy.

Ridgeley

An even more bizarre notion. But, what an act if he was. Well, Chris will be disappointed. I'm going to write back. Is there anything you want me to say?

Jo

Si, tell comrade Fair that I can get him a kerosene torch if comrade McCarthy can get more socks.

Ridgeley

How touching. Someday, Jo, I shall do a story about you, but it's late. You'd better be on your way. Will I see you tomorrow?

Revolution

Jo

Si, senior.

Ridgeley

Good. Please close the door on your way out.

(Jo starts to exit, but on the way bumps into Chernovsky who is on his way in.)

Jo

(Endearingly to Chernovsky much to Ridgeley's consternation.)

Salud, Comrade.

Chernovsky

(Almost as endearingly to Jo)

Salud, little Comrade. Oh, let me look at you. You look lovely today.

(To Ridgeley.)

Mr. Ridgeley, please excuse my intrusion. Am I interrupting a conference?

Ridgeley

Not at all. . .

(Jo eyes Chernovsky intensely distracting Ridgeley.)

Chernovsky

Yuri.

Ridgeley

Yuri. Yes. You can go on now, Jo.

Jo

(Jo smiles at Chernovsky and shrugs.)

Adios.

(Jo exits.)

Chernovsky

I so enjoy seeing her. Does she belong to you?

Ridgeley

Jo? Only if she incorporates and sells shares. Then, I'll be the first in line. But then again, I don't expect your party would approve.

Chernovsky

The party admires resourcefulness. We merely seek to channel it properly. Besides, one can scarcely criticize a poor war orphan for doing what she must to survive.

Ridgeley

It's a hard life.

Revolution

Chernovsky

True, but she'll be the stronger for it.

Ridgeley

Small consolation for what she's lost.

Chernovsky

You think? In my travels, I've found children to be remarkably resilient.

Ridgeley

Perhaps, but what must a 13 year old imagine when all human relationships are nothing more than business transactions?

Chernovsky

You underestimate her. We overcome these things, otherwise we would have fallen victim to collective insanity thousands of years ago. Believe me, the way she leads her life is a sign of health.

Ridgeley

Oh, is that how you rationalize these little scruff-ups? It builds character?

Chernovsky

I did not start this war nor do I condone the life Jo is forced to lead, Mr. Ridgeley.

Ridgeley

Then I wish you would quit encouraging her. The cigarette case, the dresses. . .

Chernovsky

Gifts, Mr. Ridgeley. Acts of human kindness. Besides, it was you who spoke of Jo in terms of her stock market value.

Ridgeley

Don't be ridiculous. . .

(Chernovsky chuckles.)

Chernovsky

Of course not, Mr. Ridgeley. But you see how painful it is when one is misunderstood.

Ridgeley

Oh yes, at our last meeting you expressed some consternation about that. It's curious that one so articulate should have that problem.

Chernovsky

Perhaps I should be more plain spoken.

Revolution

Ridgeley

But, then you'd have so little to say.

*(Ridgeley realizes he may have pricked too hard and a tense silence follows until Chernovsky
at first fitfully and then completely falls into laughter.)*

Chernovsky

Very good, Mr. Ridgeley. None of this obsequious groveling, eh? No fear that I might stalk out.

Ridgeley

No. You've ignored my messages since we met at the radio station. Now that you're here, I don't imagine you'll leave until you've accomplished your purpose -- whatever that is.

Chernovsky

Quite, quite.

Ridgeley

So, what and for whom are you facilitating today? That is what you said you do, isn't it?

Chernovsky

Mr. Ridgeley, you are justified in your pique and I apologize for not responding sooner to your messages.

Ridgeley

Accepted, but you didn't come to apologize.

Chernovsky

Perhaps not, but what matter since our interests seem to have converged.

Ridgeley

As unlikely as that seems, I'd be fascinated to hear what you take to be my interests.

Chernovsky

Only that you seek to report the facts of this unfortunate conflict – an endeavor my government supports enthusiastically. You see, your less objective colleagues seem to think the Spanish Republic is a mere contrivance of my government. A remarkable notion, don't you think?

Ridgeley

I don't know. You seem pretty resourceful.

Chernovsky

First you scold and then you flatter, fine technique sir. But, enough politicking. The important thing is that you are a reporter who can be trusted. That is why my superiors

have instructed me to impart a piece of information to you and to you alone.

Ridgeley

Go on.

Chernovsky

First, you must assure me that the information I am about to divulge will be reported in this evening's broadcast and that you will not under any circumstances reveal the source.

Ridgeley

Your anonymity, I can warrant, but the question of whether I use your information is contingent first on its newsworthiness and second on my ability to verify it.

Chernovsky

Quite sir, quite. For, indeed my item is newsworthy and, as for verification, you shan't have to look far.

Ridgeley

All right, what have you got?

Chernovsky

It has been incontrovertibly proven that the POUM militia is collaborating with the Fascists. . .

Ridgeley

(Unimpressed.)

You tried to peddle that chestnut to me three months ago.

Chernovsky

Now sir, there is proof that cannot be ignored. They have not been obtrusive with their activities; hoarding weapons, not pressing the advantage

(Chernovsky chuckles.)

Ridgeley

Yes. More charges, but what of the proof?

Chernovsky

(Ignoring Ridgeley.)

You see, out and out revolt would be too obvious and gain too little. Far better for the Fascists that the POUM militia hold its positions for the time being and, then when the major attack comes, they collapse. Not only will the POUM positions be lost, but the integrity of the entire front will be compromised.

Ridgeley

Fairy tales, Chernovsky. I know men in that militia and they are not in the pockets of the Fascists.

Chernovsky

Of course not, they are merely soldiers doing their duty. What do they know about the intrigues in Barcelona and Madrid? They attack and fall back when instructed. They bemoan their lack of weapons, but have no idea why they are not better armed. Like good soldiers they assume the best of their leaders.

Ridgeley

Chernovsky, you can't treat me like one of your propagandists. For the last time, how do you know?

Chernovsky

You, sir.

Ridgeley

I beg your pardon.

Chernovsky

Yes, it might have escaped us all had you not asked if I knew Captain Kurz.

Ridgeley

Kurz?

Chernovsky

You remember. At the radio station, the day we met. You asked if I knew him and, I must confess, at the time, I hadn't a notion. But, men in your profession rarely make inquiries without reason, so I pursued the matter. Kurz, you see, is not a man about whom too little is known, but rather too much. The stories are legion, colorful, quite colorful . . . and almost all untrue.

His real name is Mirak Tukoc, born of a Croatian mother and a Serbian father who abandoned the family when Tukoc was a child. The predictable unpleasantness ensued leaving young Mirak quite embittered against his father's race. At the time, the atmosphere was such that a young man of Tukoc's disposition had more than the usual opportunity to indulge his resentments. And he did so with determination making him so notorious that he became an embarrassment even to his sponsors. So he was spirited from the country with the help of patrons in Berlin. We hear nothing of Tukoc for three years until he appears under his new name as a smuggler of weapons to the Ethiopians in their fight against the Fascists. Of course, his weapons malfunctioned. Since then he has re-emerged a half-dozen times, on each occasion his reputation more flamboyant and the results of his presence more disastrous. You are by now aware of his unfortunate episode in Guadalajara?

Ridgeley

Fascinating, but if your only evidence of treason is his failure to beat the Fascists, you may as well arrest your politburo and yourself while you're at it.

Chernovsky

The question is how a man whom disaster follows as night follows day should obtain command of a POUM company, holding a critical post in our defense against the Fascists.

Ridgeley

In England we'd chalk it up to resume padding, but as you come from a country that has no unemployment, I can see that thought might not occur to you.

Chernovsky

You test me and well you should.

Ridgeley

I still have no proof.

Chernovsky

Come. You suspected it yourself. Else, why bring up Kurz to me? We know Kurz' history and, more to the point, his POUM superiors knew of it as well and have admitted it.

(Chernovsky produces a paper from his coat pocket.)

Here is a deposition from Comrade Ponce, POUM Secretary, acknowledging the fact. I would suggest that you speak to the comrade directly, but regrettably that cannot be arranged prior to your next report.

Ridgeley

Conveniently indisposed is he?

Chernovsky

Mr. Ridgeley, you must appreciate the risk the comrade has assumed in coming forward.

Ridgeley

Even if your accusation is true, what does it change? The POUM, the PSUC, the anarchists, all the parties have been hurling accusations at each other for months.

Chernovsky

On this occasion the government is going to suppress the POUM.

Ridgeley

What do you mean?

Chernovsky

Even as we speak, Mr. Ridgeley, the leaders are being arrested and command of the militia is being assumed by regular army officers.

Revolution

Ridgeley

And if they resist?

Chernovsky

That is not likely.

Ridgeley

How can you be so sure? We are talking about a few thousand armed men who might take exception to being labeled Fascist stooges.

Chernovsky

Mr. Ridgeley, I've told you as much as I can without compromising those who have provided this information. As a journalist, I am sure you can appreciate the importance of keeping confidences.

Ridgeley

What is to be done with the POUM leadership?

Chernovsky

I do not know. That is for the government to decide.

You must understand, I tell you these things because inevitably those who are sympathetic to the Fascists or merely naive will characterize this as a contrivance of my government and by doing so will damage the Republic's chances of winning support. That is why the truth of this matter be reported.

Ridgeley

The truth?

Chernovsky

That the POUM is guilty. You must make sure the world knows.

Ridgeley

And if I do not report the matter as you suggest?

Chernovsky

You will damage the Republic. The press will wrongly attribute the suppression to "communist meddling", morale will erode, and the Fascists will benefit. Sad that they should profit as much from being discovered as they might from completion of their plot. But, I am sure they considered that possibility. A brilliant strategy, really. So you see why you must assure the world that the charges are true.

And do not imagine that I would object to your taking credit for this discovery. You cannot mention my name or office, but you can accurately state that your inquiries concerning Kurz led to his exposure and discovery of the plot.

Revolution

Ridgeley

At least you had been subtle until now.

Chernovsky

I think it was your countrymen who wrote that the first casualty of war is truth. But I think there is an earlier one: trust. Perhaps that explains your unease. Let me remind you that my government kept your Party membership secret even though a single word would have crippled your career and might do so now.

In short, Mr. Ridgeley, we have depended on one another for some time; my government on you for your fair and unbiased reporting and you on my government for secrecy. It would serve neither of us to damage that relationship, particularly since I only ask that you do your job.

Also, there is one other bit of unfinished business. The occasion of our introduction was your interview of Comrade Fair. Regrettably, I was not at the time aware of your family connection, else I would not have been so insensitive as to suggest that he might be in danger. Under the present trying circumstances I have given instructions that he be found and brought to me. Soon he will be safely in my hands.

Ridgeley

(Uncertainly and with dread.)

I appreciate your concern.

Chernovsky

I hope we have an understanding, sir. I look forward to your report.

Ridgeley

You've made yourself quite clear.

Chernovsky

(Sure that Ridgeley has gotten the message.)

Really, then perhaps you were wrong when you said that by speaking clearly, I'd have little to say.

Ridgeley

I often make mistakes.

Chernovsky

As do we all, sir. As do we all. Perhaps we will see one another more often?

Ridgeley

You expect our interests will continue to intersect?

Chernovsky

Revolution

You are remarkable, sir. I shall enjoy this very much.

(Chernovsky gathers his hat and coat and heads toward the door.)

Ridgeley

Goodbye.

(Chernovsky exits. Upon his departure, Ridgeley sits stunned. After a few moments, Jo sticks her head through the door. Initially Ridgeley is oblivious, so Jo enters and cautiously picks up Chernovsky's cigar and begins to puff. Ridgeley gradually becomes aware.)

Ridgeley

(Nearly screaming.)

Jo, put that thing down! I thought you left for the night.

Jo

No, senor.

Ridgeley

Look, I'm sorry. Jo, listen, I need your help. You know the things I take when I travel. You're to pack them for me immediately. Do you understand?

Jo

Where are you going?

Ridgeley

Never mind that, just do as I say.

Jo

The comrade is sending you on a mission. Is that it?

Ridgeley

Something like that.

Jo

Sounds very mysterious.

Ridgeley

I think not.

(Ridgeley has gathered his hat and coat and rushes out the door. Jo retrieves Chernovsky's cigar and reclines in Ridgeley's chair evidently pleased with this turn of events.)

(Blackout. End of Scene 1.)

Revolution

Act II, Scene 2.

(Charlotte's apartment in the former convent. Charlotte is sitting in bed reading when there is a knock at the door.)

Charlotte

Come in. It's open.

(The door is pushed open almost violently. A police captain enters followed by two officers, one of whom is Pascual who is surprised and embarrassed to find himself searching Charlotte's room. Charlotte and Pascual trade looks, but not a word. Charlotte turns the photograph from the sending off party face down on her bed stand. The Captain motions his soldiers to begin searching the room which they do in a carelessly destructive manner that suggests they are as interested in intimidation as discovery.)

Captain

Comrade, I have orders to search your rooms.

Charlotte

Whose orders? Search for what? Who are you?

(To soldier #2 who seems especially determined to make an unnecessary mess.)

Stop that.

Captain

I am Captain Ruiz. You will sit quietly and cooperate while my men perform their duties

Charlotte

And what is it you expect to find?

(#2 holds up Charlotte's sketch pad for Ruiz to see. Ruiz gestures that it should be confiscated. Charlotte is incredulous.)

Oh, please. Am I being charged with something? You are aware that I am the wife of a militiaman who is at the front fighting for the republic.

Ruiz

I expect that would account for this?

(Ruiz holds up an ancient revolver he has found.)

Charlotte

He gave it to me to use on strange men who break into my flat.

Ruiz

A wise precaution. You should have been prepared. The next time it may not be the police.

(#2 approaches the bed about to turn Charlotte out of it when the Captain casually intervenes by waving him off.)

Revolution

Charlotte

Really? I hadn't noticed anyone else running about bashing in doors unannounced.

(The soldiers have finished making a general mess and have gathered only a few papers to confiscate.)

So, what? Do you arrest me now?

Ruiz

Are you a friend of the republic?

Charlotte

Captain, you have the insolence of one who stays behind when braver men have gone to fight. Now, if you are done, get out so that I can get dressed and file a complaint.

Ruiz

I say this for your benefit. You would be wise, comrade, to avoid drawing unnecessary attention to yourself. Otherwise you will find that this has been but a small indignity.

(To his men.)

Come.

(Ruiz leads his men out the door with Pascual going last. He looks back at Charlotte and then down to express his regret. Charlotte nods grudgingly to indicate that she understands. After the police leave, Charlotte feels for the first time since arriving in Barcelona isolated and frightened. She begins to straighten her room, but then breaks down and cries.

A knock at the door. Charlotte stiffens and finds the discarded gun. She levels it with both hands pointing straight at the door. Impatient with waiting, Ridgeley barges in only to find a gun pointed directly at his nose. He shields himself with his hands and shrinks back in fear. Charlotte slowly lowers the gun still staring into mid-space.)

Ridgeley

My God, they've been here. Charlotte, are you all right?

Charlotte

You knew!

Ridgeley

No. I was afraid but -- not this soon.

Charlotte

What is it, Collie? What's happening?

Ridgeley

Charlotte, what did they do to you?

Revolution

Charlotte

Look about.

Ridgeley

That's all?

Charlotte

All? It's not enough? You wanted rape and murder?

Ridgeley

Stop it.

Charlotte

Collie, they threatened me.

Ridgeley

How? What did they say?

Charlotte

They said this is a small indignity compared to what might befall me if I draw unnecessary attention to myself, whatever that means.

Ridgeley

Did they mention Chris?

Charlotte

Is Chris in danger?

(Ridgeley shakes his head trying to interrupt.)

The Captain knew about him. Something's already happened. . .

Ridgeley

No, no. . . I don't know.

Charlotte

Collie, what's happening and what has Chris to do with it?

Ridgeley

He may not have anything to do with it. It was probably just a threat to intimidate.

Charlotte

Who is threatening Chris?

Ridgeley

Chernovsky. . .

Revolution

Charlotte

The Russian attache?

Ridgeley

Yes. He came to my office to give me what he described as a “scoop” but which from the tone sounded rather more like blackmail.

Charlotte

Oh God, Collie. Your constant carping about the Russians has finally gotten you into trouble.

Ridgeley

Rather the opposite. The bastard says he likes me.

Charlotte

He likes you, so he’s blackmailing you?

Ridgeley

He told me that the POUM is going to be suppressed. The leadership arrested.

Charlotte

Why? There’s a war on. We can’t be fighting amongst ourselves.
(Ridgeley signals impatience with the interruption.)

Ridgeley

I’m afraid you already are. He says it’s because the POUM leadership is in bed with the Fascists.

(Charlotte begins to rise in protest and Ridgeley motions for her to be patient and listen.)

I know, I know. He says they’ve been hoarding weapons and there’s a plot for the militia to collapse at an inopportune moment during a Fascist attack.

Charlotte

It can’t be true, can it? Certainly Chris. . .

Ridgeley

Of course not. According to Chernovsky it’s confined to the higher ups. The militiamen are mere dupes.

Charlotte

But do you think the leaders. . .

Ridgeley

There have been rumors, but there are always rumors. I don’t know. Either way, it’s going to happen.

Revolution

Charlotte

If the militiamen aren't involved, what has this to do with Chris and me?

Ridgeley

He may be playing you as pawns to extract something from me.

Charlotte

From you?

Ridgeley

I think he's looking for an alibi. He needs to prove the POUM deserves to be suppressed and if the BBC says so, he'll have it and, more important to Chernovsky, no blame will fall on Moscow.

Charlotte

What does he want from you?

Ridgeley

A report about treason and weapons hoarding. I'm to go on the air tonight, say the suppression is underway and cite "unnamed knowledgeable" sources as to the accuracy of the allegations against the POUM. Of course, Chernovsky insists it's true and that his only concern is for morale and support for the Republic.

Charlotte

But, why search my flat before you've even filed your report?

Ridgeley

A message, a reminder to do the right thing. But, if he's telling the truth, why resort to scare tactics?

Charlotte

Then, once you've filed your report tonight, we'll be fine.

Ridgeley

(Stunned that Charlotte is apparently willing to capitulate.)
I beg your pardon.

Charlotte

You do what he says, silly. Think, Collie. You hedge a bit. Instead of coming right out and saying that the POUM is guilty, you report that "a source in a senior position" has confirmed the accusations that have been in the air for weeks. That is what happened.

Ridgeley

It's very likely a lie and, in any case, he'll see through it.

Revolution

Charlotte

Then you explain to him that you couldn't go with the story as planned because it was too obviously a plant – that you had to modify it to get it by the boys in London.

Ridgeley

He won't buy it and, neither will the boys in London – not even your fairy tale version.

Charlotte

You have the bloody soviet attache to vouch for you.

Ridgeley

In the eyes of my editor, that makes him the biggest liar of all. But, more importantly, I'm a journalist.

Charlotte

Collie, you can't mean to flatly refuse him. Chris's life is at stake. And as you said, it might even be true.

(Ridgeley begins to pack Charlotte's things.)

Ridgeley

We're leaving. Getting out of Spain.

Charlotte

What? No. What about Chris?

Ridgeley

Charlotte, right now this is more important. . .

Charlotte

More important? What's that? Your journalistic scruples? You cynical bastard, you expect me to believe that you can't bring yourself to tell a harmless lie because of some quaint notion about journalistic ethics – as though there were such a thing? Talk about a gallows conversion.

Ridgeley

It's not a harmless lie.

Charlotte

Dear God, Collie. You said it's going to happen in any case.

Ridgeley

That's not the point. . .

Charlotte

Not the point? Then what, what pray tell is so important that you're willing to forfeit Chris' life, mine, and

Revolution

perhaps even your own? But wait. Perhaps your life isn't at risk. That's it, isn't it, Collie? You're the BBC correspondent, so they won't dare harm you. You're here to spirit little sister off for safe keeping. And as for Chris. . . What of Chris? What are your plans for him? Oh God!

(Ridgeley grabs Charlotte.)

Ridgeley

Believe what you will, we're getting out of here.

Charlotte

(Ripping away.)

Get off! Get off! You coward. You'd let him die. Did you really imagine you could make me abandon my own husband?

Ridgeley

(Resumes packing.)

It's why he came.

Charlotte

What?

Ridgeley

He knew the risks.

Charlotte

God help me, I should shoot you. I should have shot you when you came in. Chris came to defend the republic, not your pathetic pretensions to respectability.

Ridgeley

And what about you? What about his friends in the POUM? Would he die for them? Don't you see that by doing what Chernovsky asks I might condemn to death everyone who ever carried a POUM card? McCarthy, Martin, every one of them could be labeled a traitor and shot because the BBC said so. Chernovsky could kill with impunity and instead of a few purged leaders, there might be thousands.

Charlotte

That's just speculation, Collie, driven by your paranoia about the Russians. Even you said the government is behind it. There might be some in the government that don't like the POUM leaders, but a bloodbath serves no one's interest. You're just guessing, Collie – guessing with Chris' life.

Ridgeley

Charlotte, you don't know Chernovsky. He could chuckle off a holocaust as being an unfortunate accident. "Accidents happen" he'd say. "Bad Luck". But that would be a lie, because whereas most of us regret necessary evils, Chernovsky relishes them. He lives for them.

Revolution

Charlotte

Is this your epiphany – the realization that ends can be corrupted and that you can't always choose your allies? In your arrogance, do you imagine the rest of us are too naïve to see these things? Is it because of people like Chernovsky that you left the party, abandoned your convictions, and became the pathetic creature that expects me to abandon my husband and everything in which I believe?

Chris and I came to Spain because eight years ago capitalism came crashing down. And that was only a precursor to slavery and death promised by the Fascists. Collie, they tried to persuade us that greed is good and that unbridled greed is better. And how seductive it was. But, look where it's got us: a world where your aspirations are realized at the price misery for others.

Well, Chris and I believe there's a better way – a way in which I don't have to "beat the other guy" to get ahead, in which I don't have to deny the needs of others to meet my own. If we can't have it in perfect form right away, then we'll do it in increments – always overreaching only to fall back, but not so far as the time before. It has to begin somewhere and soon, otherwise we may not have another chance. That's what Chris is prepared to die for, but not this.

Ridgeley

Charlotte, come with me. I shall try to get word to Chris. I swear.

Charlotte

No, if I go into hiding, Chris won't have anywhere to turn even if he survives. Besides, you say that by doing this, you're saving thousands of innocent lives. Compared to that, I should matter not a fig – or at least no more than Chris. So, get on with you.

Ridgeley

Charlotte. . .

Charlotte

You're not going to shrink now are you, Collie? It's the first thing I've heard you passionate about in years.

(Ridgeley is momentarily frozen by his dilemma. Jo enters carrying the suitcase that Ridgeley has told her to pack.)

Jo

(To Charlotte.)

Hola, comrade.

(To Ridgeley.)

I couldn't find your shaving kit. You didn't lose it did you? You told me I could have it when you got a new one.

Revolution

Ridgeley

(Resolving to stand his ground.)
Never mind, Jo. I won't be needing it.

(Ridgeley exits. Jo and Charlotte look at each other. Blackout. End of Scene 2.)

Act II, Scene 3.

(A trench at the front. Fair and Martin are huddled under a tarp, trying unsuccessfully to stay warm while McCarthy, impatient as always, would like to pace but dares not stand upright for fear of being picked off by an enemy sniper. He compensates by making a fidgeting nuisance of himself. A somewhat too clean and chubby soldier carrying a megaphone troops by and prepares to stand atop the parapet. McCarthy eyes him with disdain. Fair pokes Martin in the ribs.)

Fair

Martin, come on. He's going to start. You have to translate for me.
(Martin looks perturbed but prepares himself.)

Portillo

(Speaking into the megaphone.)
Comrades, sons of Spain. Hear me. Don't fight against your own class! On this frigid day far from home, remember that you too are workers manipulated by capitalists whose only care is for the riches your labor provides. Don't fight for their wealth and your poverty. Look at where you are, how you are dressed, what you eat. Do you imagine your leaders will dine on the rotten sausage and cheap wine you'll choke down tonight?

Come join us among whom all are equal and all is shared. For breakfast enjoy hot buttered toast and coffee with cream -- cream as fresh as the dew.

(A cheer goes up from the Fascist lines. The propagandist turns from his post with his megaphone and begins to leave without comment to the others. Martin stops him.)

Martin

Hey, Portillo. Some day after one of your deserters finds out you're full of it, he's going to come looking for your ass?

Portillo

Hey, Calderon.
(Gives the universally offensive forearm salute and exits.)

McCarthy

If the Fascists don't shoot the bastard, I will.

Revolution

Fair

Relax, McCarthy. After two months in this rat nest, he passes for entertainment.

McCarthy

We're supposed to be fighting, not being entertained. It's embarrassing. What would my old man say?

Martin

It's more humane than bullets.

McCarthy

Talking of food to starving men ain't humane.

Fair

He's right, I've seen what he'll do for a steak.

A Fascist Voice

Eh! Senor Toothpick, what's for lunch?

McCarthy

(Jumping up to the top of the parapet and shouting in English.)
You assholes! I'll feed you your mum's knickers.

Fascist Voices from a distance

(In Spanish.)
English whore!

McCarthy

Get buggered!

(A couple of badly aimed shots are heard. McCarthy reacts by diving back into the trench causing Fair and Martin to dissolve in laughter.)

Martin

Relax, McCarthy. You'll get us all killed.

McCarthy

It's a war, remember?. People are supposed to get killed.

Fair

But not over imaginary toast.

(Kurz enters to see what's going on.)

Kurz

(To McCarthy.)
Conducting our own private war, are we?

McCarthy

Playing at war is all we're doing.

Fair

You know, Kurz, while I may not share McCarthy's temper, I believe this time he has a point. Why have we been frozen in this position for two months trading insults with the Fascists?

Kurz

And to think, once you were concerned that I would lead you recklessly to your deaths.

McCarthy

Yeah, well I didn't mean we didn't want to fight at all.

Kurz

I never imagined anything of the sort.

Fair

So, what is it? What's going on?

Kurz

Strategy, tactics, tactics, strategy. I don't know much more than you. But the active front is 500 kilometers away in Madrid and, if we lose there, we lose all.

McCarthy

Then why not force the Fascists to fight on two fronts by attacking here?

Kurz

To throw a punch, a boxer risks being hit himself. A bungled offensive and the consequent retreat might force us into the sea closing off the republic's only supply route.

Fair

We have more to lose than to gain?

Kurz

That's the argument.

McCarthy

Do you buy it?

Kurz

Like you, I must. A newspaper reader in London has greater perspective than we who live with our faces in the mud. In five minutes we could be ordered to attack and everything I just said would be nonsense.

Revolution

Martin

That doesn't bother you?

Kurz

A professor once told me that in war, nine-tenths of casualties occur in battles that in the end are irrelevant. So, do those men die in vain? Maybe. But, I know what I'm fighting for. That's enough.

McCarthy

So, is that how you rationalize Guadalajara? Fellow officer gets timid, a 100 men get killed for no reason. Just "one of those things"?

Fair

(Stepping in McCarthy's face to prevent the imminent fight.)

Don't be too quick, McCarthy. Under that logic after you get drunk tonight you can pass out in a mud puddle, drown, and still be a hero.

Martin

Comrade, I apologize. . .

McCarthy

Don't be apologizing for me. . .

Kurz

Yes, McCarthy. That is how I rationalize Guadalajara. And if you stay in this war, one day you will have to do the same. There are few untimely deaths in this world for which the cause seems commensurate. To reconcile that monstrous imbalance you either accept what I have accepted or go mad.

Now, comrades, let us for a moment act like soldiers. I trust you have too many lice, too little food, not enough wood for a decent fire, and sentries at their posts.

Fair

Ja wohl, Herr Captain.

Martin

I wouldn't be so sure. Has anyone checked on the Maricones lately?

Kurz

Jaime and Juanito are your sentries? Either they've matured or you're determined to see action at all costs.

McCarthy

I'll rouse them.

(McCarthy exits over the parapet.)

Revolution

Martin

Comrade Kurz, I'd just like to apol. . .

Kurz

There is no need. McCarthy is a good man. The traits that make him less than pleasant company in the trenches, will make him the best of us all when it is time to fight. You will be wise to stay close to him.

Fair

You might try telling him that.

Kurz

Thank you. I shall.

(Shots are heard and a scream. Martin immediately rushes over the parapet, but Fair who stops to put his boot on takes a moment longer. As he grabs his weapon and stands a random shot hits him in the shoulder. Kurz catches Fair as he falls back cradling him in his arms.)

Kurz

Medic! Medic!

(We continue to hear shots and shouting in the background.)

Come on, Fair. Are you with me?

(Fair attempts to talk, but cannot.)

Relax. Relax. It's only your shoulder. Just lie still.

(Martin returns over the parapet.)

Martin

My God! Fair.

(Fair again mouthing a response.)

Kurz

I told you Fair. Relax. He's in shock and can't talk. But, the bullet seems to have passed through cleanly. You're going to be all right.

(Fair blinks his eyes earnestly.)

Is the line secure?

Martin

Yes, comrade. Just a roving patrol.

Kurz

Where's McCarthy?

Martin

He's looking after Jaime and Juanito.

Revolution

Kurz

What do you mean, “looking after”?

(Martin looks down communicating that Jaime and Juanito are dead.)

And the others?

Martin

Only Jaime and Juanito. They fell asleep – never fired a shot.

Kurz

You knew them?

Martin

The animals shot them in the face.

Kurz

They do it to intimidate us. So, be brave lend a hand to McCarthy. Then get two replacements from down the line and return as quickly as you can.

Martin

What about Fair?

Kurz

It’s not pretty, but I think he’s all right. The bleeding’s stopped. Otherwise he’d be dead by now. Now get a move on. It looks like we’ll have to transport him to the hospital ourselves.

Martin

Yes, comrade.

(Martin exits hurriedly.)

Kurz

Did you hear that, Fair? You get a temporary vacation. Jaime and Juanito get a permanent one. Steep price for being teenagers, eh?

(Fair lets out a groan.)

Now, don’t curse that bullet. It’s proof that you are a loyal hero. God how I wish I had one. You haven’t been accused of treason. You have no idea what one bullet might have spared me. I tell you the truth, Fair. If I did not have this cause, I would have done to myself what many on our side would like to do to me even today. You treasure that bullet. It is your salvation and, God willing, I will soon get mine.

Robles

(A voice calling from offstage.)

Comrade Kurz. I am seeking Comrade Kurz.

Revolution

Kurz

Over here.

(Robles enters with two guards. In stark contrast to the militiamen, all are dressed in snappy, clean uniforms.)

Robles

You are Kurz?

Kurz

Yes.

Robles

I have come to inform you that the POUM militia has been disbanded and that your men are now under the command of Colonel Luis Gomez of the army of the Republic. You and Comrade Fair are to accompany me back to Barcelona immediately.

Kurz

Well, comrade. I'm afraid the war has interfered somewhat. If your superiors can wait a few moments, I am arranging a wounded man's transportation.

(Kurz reveals Fair's wound and Robles winces uncomfortably.)

Robles

As long as it is prompt.

Kurz

Very generous, comrade. . .

Robles

Robles.

Kurz

Robles. Yes. I'm sorry this little bit of battlefield sloppiness is interfering with your schedule. If explanations are required in Barcelona, I'll be happy to oblige.

Robles

It won't be necessary.

Kurz

That's fine. I just thought I'd offer. Oh, and since we want to observe protocol, perhaps you could explain why a member of the regular army such as yourself should order a POUM militiaman such as myself back to Barcelona. I've heard nothing of this from my leaders.

Robles

The leaders of the POUM are under arrest for treason.

Revolution

Kurz

And who is the accuser?

Robles

It is not my business. I only know that your leaders stand accused of conspiring with the Fascists.

Kurz

Conspiring with the Fascists? I suppose that would make this man's wound the result of friendly fire.

(Fair has long since passed out.)

Robles

Comrade, your words are offensive to the republic.

Kurz

Oh, come now, comrade. You must appreciate the irony. . .

Robles

We have waited long enough. My men will see to the man. Surrender your weapons and summon Fair.

(Robles pulls out his revolver and holds it on Kurz. His men step forward to disarm Kurz and pick up Fair. Martin and McCarthy enter. Robles' men turn their weapons on McCarthy and Martin. McCarthy points his rifle at Robles and Martin points his at Robles' guards creating a standoff.)

McCarthy

What the hell is going on here?

Robles

You men will not interfere. I am Lt. Robles from the army of the Republic. You are now part of that army under the command of Colonel Gomez.

McCarthy

Kurz. What's this mama's boy talking about?

Kurz

It seems our leaders stand accused of treason. The militia is being taken over. I am being arrested. . .

(To Robles.)

I am being arrested aren't I? Along with Fair. . .

McCarthy

That's bullshit, Fair's. . .

Revolution

Kurz

Dead. Yes, I was just about to explain that to the Lieutenant.

(To Robles.)

The body is just over there. He took a shot to the face, poor bastard. I expect you'll want to look.

Robles

That will not be necessary.

(To McCarthy.)

Comrade, for the good of the republic, you will lower your weapon.

McCarthy

Listen, you bleedin' fairy. Come waltzing in here after I just lost two mates fighting a war you ain't even seen and you call us traitors. Take your candy ass back to Barcelona before I blow it back there for you.

Robles

Guards. . .

McCarthy

They can't save you. I came here willing to die and whether it's now or later is all the same to me.

Robles

Comrade Kurz, you will restrain your men.

(All look on in astonishment bordering on laughter.)

Kurz

I'm afraid Comrade Robles is right.

Martin

If they take you as a suspected collaborator, they try you in secret. You may never be seen again.

Kurz

What is the alternative? No, Martin. McCarthy was right. We came to fight and, if necessary, die. If this is my way, so be it – so long as I don't take you or the others unnecessarily. It would be best if I return to Barcelona where perhaps I can resolve the matter.

(He motions to McCarthy and Martin to lower their rifles. They comply reluctantly.)

Robles

Take the prisoner.

Revolution

Kurz

First, Captain you will allow me to arrange the transportation for the wounded man.
(Robles nods his assent.)

McCarthy, you and Martin will take Guillermo to the field hospital in Albecete where you will ask for Dr. Sandoval. Is that clear?
(The nod their assent.)

Lieutenant, you can inform the new commander that these men will return in 48 hours.
(Robles nods.)

McCarthy, Martin; as Robles here will soon find out, war is a messy business and mistakes occur. Perhaps I can correct this one. But if not, I would like to thank you for your companionship and courage. Please also express my thanks to Guillermo when he is sufficiently recovered. Salud, comrades.

(Kurz carefully hands Fair who has all the while been in his arms to Martin and McCarthy. To Robles.)

Lieutenant. Shall we go?

Robles

Take the prisoner.

(The guards position themselves on either side of Kurz and escort him out. Martin and McCarthy are left stunned.)

Martin

(Referring to Fair.)

Here, let me. You'd better get your things together right now.

McCarthy

Damn me. Damn me. Damn me! I'm just letting them take him.

Martin

There's nothing to be done. Come on. Get with it.

(McCarthy starts to pack.)

McCarthy

The blighters think we're bloody Fascists.

(Suddenly there is movement and groaning from a still delirious Fair.)

Martin

Take him. I need to get my things.

(McCarthy takes Fair.)

McCarthy

My god, who else? Do you think they arrested Charlotte?

Revolution

Martin

Fair's wife? Not likely. They'd have pinched us before they'd take her.

McCarthy

What about that fellow, Ridgeley. Maybe he can help Kurz?

Martin

McCarthy, dammit. Concentrate. Grab that stretcher.

McCarthy

Where?

Martin

Behind the bench. Are you ready?

McCarthy

To leave? Where to?

Martin

To Albacete, like Kurz said. Then, if we can get Fair patched up, to Barcelona. We'll find help there.

McCarthy

Are you serious?

Martin

They're going to find out it's not Fair out there. Kurz bought us two days. Let's not waste them.

McCarthy

What if Kurz is a Fascist?

Martin

(Sarcastically.)
And Fair too? Just pick up the damn stretcher.

McCarthy

You're still an ass.

Martin

And you're a mick.

McCarthy

What silly things to be. What about Jaime and Juanito?

Revolution

Martin

(Somewhat surprised at McCarthy's concern.)
They'd understand.

McCarthy

Goddamn maricones.
(McCarthy and Martin carry Fair off. Stage darkens. The radio spotlight comes up. Chernovsky is standing next to it listening intently.)

Newsreader

And now to Malcolm Ridgeley in Barcelona.

Ridgeley's Voice

Tonight the workers' paradise that was Barcelona is no longer. Amid a swirl of accusations, the republican government has outlawed one of the political parties that has been at the forefront in defending the Spanish Republic. As I speak, leaders of the POUM are being rounded up in Barcelona, Madrid, and even at the front where the organization's militia somehow continues the fight against the Fascists. Meanwhile, there is sporadic gunfire in the streets as some of the POUM faithful try to defend themselves. The detainees which now include the POUM's entire leadership stand charged with treason based on so far unsubstantiated claims that they have been hoarding weapons and have conspired with the Fascists.

(Chernovsky winces angrily when he hears the words "unsubstantiated claims".)

The unwillingness or inability of the government to substantiate these charges, which have been the stuff of rumors for months, has triggered widespread skepticism and speculation that the action is politically motivated. Suspicion centers on the Soviet Union and its allies in the Spanish government.

(Chernovsky angrily slams his hand on the top of the radio.)

Some have argued that the failure of the west to support democracy in Spain would drive the government into the arms of the Russians. Others have argued that it was already there. Tonight the point is moot and tomorrow, for the first time since the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, tens of thousands of Spaniards and foreign volunteers will have to ask themselves where their loyalties lie.

This is Malcolm Ridgeley in Barcelona.

(A quietly enraged Chernovsky stalks off.)

(Blackout. End of Act II.)

Revolution

Act Three

Act III, Scene I.

(Charlotte's flat, five days later. Jo is sitting alone at the table making charms. Charlotte enters looking haggard and exhausted.)

Charlotte

Why, Jo? Why won't they tell me anything? Five days since they threatened Collie and they say nothing.

Jo

Comrade?

Charlotte

It's absurd. Chernovsky's office, The Guardia, the barracks, what's left of POUM headquarters. No one knows anything. It's as though he's vanished.

Jo

They would tell you if he was arrested.

Charlotte

I don't know. I've heard from others that some just disappear.
(Begins to tear up.)

Jo

(Comforting Charlotte.)
The Fascists make people disappear. We are not that way.
(Charlotte hugs her.)

Charlotte

Jo, what are you still doing here? It's late.

Jo

Senor Ridgeley said that I should stay with you.

Charlotte

But, I'm sure he understood that you have your own business to attend to.

Jo

No. He says I must be here and that, if Comrade Fair or the Guardia come, I'm to find him at once.

(Looks around wistfully, admiringly.)

Besides, I like it here.

Charlotte

How did you lose your family, Jo?

Revolution

Jo

My grandfather died.

Charlotte

Of natural causes?

Jo

He was old.

Charlotte

And your parents?

(Jo only shrugs evidently not wanting to talk about it.)

I see. Are there many children like you?

Jo

The government sends them to school.

Charlotte

Sounds like a good idea. Why aren't you there?

Jo

I have a job.

Charlotte

Oh, yes. Collie's told me you're quite an entrepreneur.

(Jo frowns not understanding the word.)

A businesswoman. Are you very wealthy?

Jo

I am a socialist.

Charlotte

Of course. How silly of me. What is that you're making?

Jo

One of my charms.

Charlotte

(Looking over Jo's shoulder.)

It's beautiful. What a. . . Do you wear it?

Jo

I don't know.

Revolution

Charlotte

Is it for you or someone else?

Jo

I sell them . . . to all the men going to the front. They need good luck.

Charlotte

(Fingering Jo's materials.)

What is this, pieces from a shattered mirror?

Jo

Unh huh. And these. I don't know the English word.

Charlotte

Coasters.

(Jo doesn't understand.)

They're for drinks. You put them underneath drinking glasses to prevent stains.

Jo

There is a factory nearby where they used to make them. But the owner was a Fascist, so when the war started. . .

(Jo draws her finger across her throat to indicate that the owner was killed.)

and the factory closed. So, now I have lots.

Charlotte

The designs are lovely. How do you embed the pieces?

Jo

(Showing Charlotte.)

If you cut the cork just so it fits the piece of glass. . .

Charlotte

I see. That's very clever. Breaking mirrors to summon good luck. You are miraculous, Jo.

Jo

Comrade Fair has one.

Charlotte

Really?

Jo

Yes. Comrade McCarthy bought it for him one day at the barracks.

Charlotte

Well, I'm afraid it hasn't brought either one of them much luck.

Revolution

Jo

It will. You'll see.

Charlotte

What's the design you're making now?

Jo

It's my best seller.

Charlotte

Jo, you know what it looks like. . .

Jo

Oh, I pose for myself in the mirror so I get it right. See?

(Jo stuffs two balled up pieces of paper down her shirt to create the appearance of large breasts, then kneels upright on the bed with hands behind her head and as alluring a look as a thirteen year old street urchin can muster. Charlotte nearly falls over laughing. So does Jo.)

Charlotte

Jo, where did you ever get such an idea?

Jo

At Comrade Gomez' barber shop. He has pictures on the wall. The men, they like them.

Charlotte

Amazing. But, how do you get the broken pieces of glass to come out just so?

Jo

I'm very careful with the hammer, but sometimes I have to use other poses like this. . .

(As Jo starts to adopt a moderately obscene pose, Charlotte's modesty overcomes her.)

Charlotte

No, no. That's all right. I think I understand.

(Jo goes back to work.)

The charm you sold to McCarthy for Chris. It wouldn't happen to be one of these would it?

(Jo looks at Charlotte smiling broadly, then quickly realizes a frown would be more appropriate.)

I suppose I can take some consolation knowing it was McCarthy who paid.

(Jo reaches into her pack and pulls out a pair of McCarthy's socks.)

Jo

He traded these.

Revolution

Charlotte

(Laughing with Jo.)
Oh God they're hideous.

Jo

He said it would be embarrassing to be killed and have to be buried in them.

Charlotte

Yes. Rather like dirty underwear I suppose. Jo, I'm afraid you may have been bested in this trade.

Jo

Oh no. When it gets cold again, men are not so proud.

Charlotte

You're right. They are silly creatures, but I'm so afraid.

Jo

News will come.

Charlotte

But, what news? And, besides it's not news I want. I want to see Chris.

(There is a knock at the door and then a loud thump as though someone has fallen. Charlotte goes to get the gun then gives Jo a nod to open the door. There lies Fair wounded, bandaged, and writhing in pain. Charlotte rushes to him and with Jo helps him onto the bed.)

Jo, go, go get Collie right away.

(Blackout. End of scene 1.)

Act III, Scene 2.

(Chernovsky's office. Chernovsky is alone in his office reading a newspaper when Sasha enters carrying a tea set.)

Chernovsky

Finally, some refreshment. Did they have the little crumb cakes, Sasha?

Sasha

No, comrade.

Revolution

Chernovsky

Oh the shortages one must endure in wartime. Oh well. Any word from Mr. Ridgeley?

Sasha

No, comrade.

Chernovsky

That is a disappointment.

Sasha

May I ask a question, comrade?

Chernovsky

Of course, Sasha.

Sasha

After your threats, do you really expect Mr. Ridgeley to contact you?

Chernovsky

Undoubtedly.

(Sasha appears doubtful but hesitant to voice his skepticism. Chernovsky notices.)

You disagree?

(Sasha appears fearful.)

No, Sasha. It is all right. I would like to hear your analysis. Please.

Sasha

(Cautiously.)

Ridgeley does not trust you. He believes you want him to lie. And he thinks you threaten to expose him as a communist and kill his brother-in-law to make him do it.

Chernovsky

He is right. Sasha, let us not be shy. We blackmailers cannot be so squeamish that we cannot call the thing by its proper name. Of course Ridgeley does not trust me. Nor should he. Why if the idiot Spaniards had not bungled Fair's arrest, I would have had the Trotskyist Kurz shot in Ridgeley's presence and had him begging for Fair's life.

Sasha

Then, why do you expect him to come to you?

Chernovsky

Because he thinks I have Comrade Fair. So, he must.

Sasha

But, where is Fair?

Chernovsky

Who knows? A thousand men go missing every day but, it is only a matter of time until I find him. Until then, we must be patient.

Sasha

But, Ridgeley did not respond to your earlier threats. Why do you expect him to do so once you have Fair?

Chernovsky

You are right. Mr. Ridgeley has proven to be a worthy opponent. When I tried persuasion, he dismissed my story and perceived my real motives. So, I blackmailed him and he was willing to risk retribution. No, Ridgeley can neither be persuaded nor bullied, but he does have a weakness and I will use it to break him.

Sasha

What will you do?

Chernovsky

Mr. Ridgeley fancies himself a pragmatist, a man whose vision is not fogged by sentiment or idealism. But, he is wrong. No pragmatist would waste his efforts on Jo, that worthless street urchin. Nor would he be so naïve as to think that merely because he is right about me, the others will believe him. So, now I shall teach Mr. Ridgeley what it is to be a true pragmatist. He will learn that there is nothing in which he can have faith or hope except for Chernovsky.

From now on, Sasha, whatever Mr. Ridgeley expects of us, we shall do precisely the opposite. We will undermine everything he believes and has told the others. First they will lose faith in him, next he will lose faith in himself, and, in the end, Mr. Ridgeley will come crawling to me for the answers. You will see.

(A buzzer sounds announcing someone in the outer office.)

Hmm. Could it be?

(Sasha goes to the door.)

Sasha

It is Captain Ruiz. . .

Chernovsky

A contemptible fellow. Seeking fresh meat for his firing squad, no doubt. Show him in.

(Sasha motions Ruiz in and exits.)

Ruiz

Comrade! I must speak to you now.

(Chernovsky flashes an unhappy look at Sasha who failed to prevent the unwelcome entry.)

Revolution

Chernovsky

Happy to see you, Captain. I appreciate a man who does not allow mere formality stand in his way. I trust you would not be so bold had you not successfully disposed of Kurz.

Ruiz

Shot this morning. But, that is not why I have come. Why have my men been removed from observing Fair's flat? The order came from this office.

Chernovsky

Quite, sir. Quite.

Ruiz

I want to know why.

Chernovsky

A man of your fine judgment. I should have thought no explanation would be necessary.

Ruiz

You try my patience, comrade.

Chernovsky

Yes sir. I have seen how impatient you can be and the results have not been salutary. Your clumsy search of Fair's flat was no doubt responsible for persuading Mr. Ridgeley that our motives were ill. And now I must try to undo the damage.

Ruiz

I was performing my duty to search all POUM residences for enemies of the people.

Chernovsky

Instead, you succeeded in making a most important one – Mr. Ridgeley.

Ruiz

Comrade, you insult me.

Chernovsky

I merely state fact. Your men were removed because I may yet be able to recover from your blunder.

Ruiz

Do not attribute to me your failure to win over Ridgeley. He sees through you as does everyone. Now he must be arrested for assisting in the escape of POUM traitors.

Chernovsky

Comrade Ruiz, our objective is to win Mr. Ridgeley over, not abuse him. He is the BBC

Revolution

correspondent. He, more than any other man, determines how the rest of the world sees Spain. It will not do to have him rotting in one of your prisons. Do you understand?

Ruiz

Yes, Comrade.

Chernovsky

Then you will do as I say and we shall have our Mr. Ridgeley.

Ruiz

But, you have left unobserved the probable destination of three POUM traitors.

Chernovsky

Not at all, sir. The flat is under minute surveillance. And when the time is right, your men will have an opportunity to redeem themselves.

Ruiz

Impossible, there is no surveillance. My men have been watching the flat night and day. They see no one but Senora Fair, Ridgeley, and the girl.

Chernovsky

Precisely.

(Chernovsky picks one of Jo's charms up from his desk.)

Do you have one of these?

Ruiz

The girl, she is your observer?

Chernovsky

Remarkable child, remarkable.

Ruiz

This is absurd. She can be bought for a pair of boots. She will offer them a deal.

Chernovsky

I think not. It is precisely because Jo can be bought that she can be trusted. She knows that no one pays better than I.

Ruiz

And how will she detain them if they arrive?

Chernovsky

She will call here. I in turn will call you so that you can send men to the flat.

Ruiz

Revolution

And if they leave before my men can arrive?

Chernovsky

I am sure that an officer of your ability will not allow another such tragedy.

(A knock at the door.)

Come.

Sasha

Mr. Ridgeley to see you, comrade.

Ruiz

What is he doing here?

Chernovsky

(Ignoring Ruiz' question.)

You will please wait in the anteroom until Mr. Ridgeley leaves. We have more to discuss.

(Chernovsky shows Ruiz the door.)

Ask Mr. Ridgeley in, Sasha.

(Ridgeley enters. Sasha shows him to a seat.)

Mr. Ridgeley, I was not aware that we had business to transact.

Ridgeley

(Angry, steeled for battle.)

We have much business to transact.

Chernovsky

Perhaps I would be more receptive had our prior arrangement been successfully completed.

Ridgeley

We had no prior arrangement.

Chernovsky

As I recall, you reported the substance of my story, but did not provide the proper context.

Ridgeley

What have you done with him, Chernovsky?

Chernovsky

I am sorry. I do not follow.

Ridgeley

I've come about Christopher Fair. And you needn't feign memory loss.

Chernovsky

Comrade Fair is well known to me. Although, his present whereabouts are something of a mystery.

Ridgeley

A mystery that you arranged.

Chernovsky

Evidently your passion for verifiable truth applies only to your profession. I am aware of Comrade Fair's plight only as a result of his wife's calls. Regrettably, I have been unable to help the poor woman.

Ridgeley

You had Fair's flat searched while I was meeting with you.

Chernovsky

An unfortunate coincidence of which I was entirely unaware at the time.

Ridgeley

My report might have been more damaging to you than it was. I've another tonight and I'll use it against you. I'll expose you and your bosses to so much light, your superiors in Moscow will get sunburns.

Chernovsky

You surprise me, sir. I thought you were preparing to accuse me of blackmail. Now I see that it is quite the reverse. But, take care. It is a delicate game.

Ridgeley

In one hour, I broadcast.

Chernovsky

First, you must know that your subject possesses that which you desire.

Ridgeley

My lead will be, "Soviet attache reveals government plot."

Chernovsky

Second, you must be certain of how your subject will respond.

Ridgeley

I will cite you by name and report that you expressed a particular interest in a British subject who has since disappeared without a trace and that, when asked about the case, the Guardia referred me to your office.

Revolution

Chernovsky

Third, you must convince the subject that you will carry out the sanction – in this case filing an unsubstantiated report.

Ridgeley

I'm a desperate man, Chernovsky.

Chernovsky

You fail on all three. We cannot do business this way. No, sir. You shall have to take another approach.

Ridgeley

Why should I? You claim to not know where Fair is.

Chernovsky

Quite true. So, we seem to be at a standoff. Except that, for you, Fair's life is of paramount importance while, for me, he is but one more potential fatality amid a thousand that will take place today.

Ridgeley

(Realizing he's been trumped.)

Chernovsky, for God's sake. As a matter of decency.

Chernovsky

(Back in command, he resumes his siege on Ridgeley.)

It is true that my office has occasionally been effective in resolving such matters. But, my hosts are not always pleased when I intervene, so I must expend a certain amount of political capital. And, in the case of Comrade Fair, who the government would like to shoot for desertion, it is quite a lot.

Ridgeley

(Capitulating.)

All right. You can be certain that my coverage will be balanced and accurate.

(Chernovsky waits for more.)

And that full and fair consideration will be given to your government's views.

Chernovsky

I think we can agree that I might have expected nothing less under any circumstances, Mr. Ridgeley. Still, there is the problem of our earlier failed arrangement. I am somewhat hesitant to commit resources without further assurance. And I see that I have a pressing matter. Perhaps we can take up the conversation after your broadcast tonight to which I will listen with great interest. Perhaps you will dine with me?

Ridgeley

What time?

Revolution

Chernovsky

Sasha will arrange it.

(Chernovsky speaks on the intercom.)

Sasha, will you arrange for Mr. Ridgeley to dine with me this evening? He is ready to leave now.

(Speaking again to Ridgeley.)

Mr. Ridgeley, you may tell Mrs. Fair that we will do what we can to effect his early return.

(Sasha shows a cowed Ridgeley out. Chernovsky knocks on the door of the room in which Ruiz has been waiting.)

Ruiz

He despised you before. Now you have humiliated him. He will betray you at the first opportunity.

Chernovsky

It is no matter.

Ruiz

I would kill you.

Chernovsky

I believe you would, sir.

(The intercom beeps.)

Yes, Sasha. What is it? . . . Put the call through.

(Chernovsky picks up the phone.)

Yes, Jo. Very good. Very good. Listen to me carefully. You are to go back to the flat immediately. They will, no doubt try to leave, but not until Ridgeley returns. He left here a few moments ago and will be there in a matter of minutes. Delay them until the Guardia arrives. I am on my way. Thank you, Jo. You will be well rewarded.

Ruiz

Fair is there?

Chernovsky

Captain, you need to get your men there. Use my phone.

Ruiz

(Speaking into Chernovsky's phone.)

Hello, hello. This is Captain Ruiz. Get me the San Marco station.

Chernovsky

Your men are to detain them until we arrive. They are to make no arrests. Nor are they

Revolution

to use violence.

Ruiz

Hello. This is Captain Ruiz. Who is this?. . . Garcia, where is the sergeant?. . . Who else is there with you?. . . Listen closely. You will have to do this yourself. There is a POUM deserter in the second floor flat of the old convent. You are to go there immediately and detain him and everyone else in the flat until I arrive.

Chernovsky

He is armed, but is wounded.

Ruiz

He is armed but wounded. . . .

Chernovsky

He is to send Jo away as soon as he arrives. But he should not indicate that she is with us.

Ruiz

The girl, Jo is there. . . . You are to allow her to leave as soon as you arrive. You are not to acknowledge that she is with us. Tell her you are allowing her to leave because she is too young to be involved with this.

Chernovsky

Good.

Ruiz

Do you understand?. . . On your way. Now.

(To Chernovsky.)

I have only one man there and he has been on the force only three months.

Chernovsky

He only has to delay long enough for us to get there. Come with me and have your men follow.

(They exit. Blackout. End of Scene 2.)

Act III, Scene 3.

(Charlotte's flat. Fair is stretched out on the bed talking to the doting Charlotte.)

Fair

I'm a little vague. The Fascists attacked and like a ninny, I didn't have my boots on. So, when the others rushed from the trench, I was doing my straps. Scarcely a moment after I finished, I stood and everything went fuzzy. A flash just in front of me and I remember

Revolution

thinking it odd that there was no sound. Only a sensation of falling backwards. At first I feared I would hit my head and then it occurred to me that it might be a more permanent fall. The last thing I remember was Kurz, who must have been holding me because his face was so near. He was saying something to which I was quite deaf probably due to shock. It seemed comical because I remember trying to tell him. After that -- nothing.

Charlotte

He got you to a doctor. That's the important thing.

Fair

Martin and McCarthy got me there. Although, I'm sure Kurz would have had he not been arrested.

Charlotte

What? Right there on the spot?

Fair

Shocking, really. According to Martin, Kurz sat there with me bleeding all over him while at the same time some starched and pressed lieutenant was practically trying to slap the manacles on him.

Charlotte

I can't believe they arrested him.

Fair

Kurz and probably a hundred other men just as worthy. Still, there have to be some just men in positions of authority and, when I'm able, I'll find them and rescue him. Collie must make inquiries immediately.

Charlotte

Chris, I appreciate how you feel, but we're in no position to advocate on anyone's behalf. It's a miracle you weren't arrested as well.

Fair

I haven't figured that one out yet. Why me?

Charlotte

You don't know the half of it. Your life was threatened.

Fair

What? Because I'm in the POUM militia? Who? Where did you hear such a thing?

Charlotte

Collie says Chernovsky, the Russian attache. . .

Revolution

Fair

Chernovsky? I know him. I saw him at the telephone exchange a few months back after my broadcast with Collie. . . . Wait, that's it. You said Collie told you this?

Charlotte

Yes. He had a . . .

Fair

Is that all?

Charlotte

They searched here.

(Fair frowns.)

The Guardia, they searched here and threatened me.

Fair

When did this happen?

Charlotte

Last Saturday.

Fair

The day I was wounded. What did they want? Did they take anything?

Charlotte

They wanted nothing of us, Chris. They did it to frighten Collie.

Fair

Is he in danger?

Charlotte

I don't know. He wanted to go into hiding – or at least put me into hiding – but I wouldn't let him. Chris, I wanted to be here for you and, now that you're back, we've got to get out.

Fair

Leave Spain?

Charlotte

Chris, it's not like it was.

Fair

What? This business with the POUM? We'll get that straightened out.

Revolution

Charlotte

Chris, you don't understand. Nothing will be straightened out. The only purpose we serve by staying is to give Chernovsky a weapon to use against Collie.

Fair

Against Collie? How is he mixed up in all this?

Charlotte

The day you were wounded – before news of the suppression leaked – Chernovsky visited Collie and told him it would happen. He told Collie to report the allegations against the POUM as fact. And to make sure Collie understood, he specifically said that you would be in danger unless Collie did so. While that was going on, they searched the apartment.

Collie says Chernovsky wants the BBC to brand the leaders as traitors so the Russians won't be blamed.

Fair

Did Collie do it? Did he report the story as Chernovsky asked?

Charlotte

No, he wouldn't, although I tried to persuade him otherwise.

Fair

But, Charlotte, why? You wanted him to go along with Chernovsky?

Charlotte

It was all speculation. Chernovsky's story might even have been true. Collie wasn't even certain that Chernovsky meant to threaten you. And the suppression was underway in any case. I just couldn't see the sense in sacrificing your life on a hunch.

Fair

(Laughing.)

So, he had to decide. The cynical bastard finally had to make a choice. . . and he decided to let me die.

(Laughing harder.)

Charlotte

Collie said that to do the story Chernovsky's way would open the door for hundreds to be arrested or shot.

(Fair is still laughing.)

You're making me feel foolish for having argued with him.

Fair

Oh God, no. Charlotte, I'm grateful and humble that you decided to stay. Is that it? When Collie refused to go along with Chernovsky, did you refuse to leave?

Revolution

Charlotte

You would have had nowhere to come back to.

(Fair embraces Charlotte.)

Fair

I love you. But, you know, he was right.

(A knock at the door. Charlotte quietly motions for Fair to stand in a secluded corner, which he does with difficulty while she gets her gun and trains it on the door.)

Charlotte

Yes, who is it?

Ridgeley

It's all right. Open the door.

(Charlotte gleefully rushes to open the door, gun still in hand.)

Ridgeley

(Seeing the gun.)

Oh God, you must stop that. We're going to have an accident.

(Sees Fair.)

Chris. . .

(Rushes to embrace him not seeing that Fair is wounded. Fair gingerly fends him off.)

Fair

It's all right, Collie. It's good to see you. How are you?

Ridgeley

Who did that to you?

Fair

I know what you're thinking, but you're wrong. It was a Fascist bullet caught fair and square.

Ridgeley

Where have you been? Do you know the whole world has been looking for you these past five days?

Fair

And I gather much of it with bad intentions.

Ridgeley

(To Charlotte.)

You've told him?

Revolution

(She nods yes.)
All of it?

Fair

Yes, even the part about you being willing to sell me down the river for . . . what was it?

Charlotte

His journalistic ego.

Fair

And after you told me the day we did the broadcast that I was of value to you only if I was alive.

Ridgeley

Things changed.

(All laugh.)
My God, I can't believe you're here. You couldn't have walked through the middle of Barcelona.

Fair

Right down the Ramblas. It seems I was wounded just about the time you were meeting with Chernovsky and Charlotte was being searched. By the time they came looking, I was on my way to the field hospital.

Ridgeley

Amazing, but now we have to think. First, we have to make sure you're not discovered and, second, we need to get some train tickets for Perpignan. Jo can handle that. Where is she?

Charlotte

She went looking for you when Chris arrived.

Ridgeley

She probably went to my office. I was meeting with Chernovsky.

Charlotte

Collie, why? I thought the idea was to avoid him.

Ridgeley

I began to worry that it had been so long since we had heard from Chris that they must have him. So, I decided to challenge Chernovsky.

Charlotte

What do you mean, challenge him?

Revolution

Ridgeley

I told him that if he didn't produce Chris, I would broadcast that Moscow was behind the suppression.

Charlotte

Collie. Are you crazy?

Ridgeley

Well, I needn't have bothered. He flatly refused to believe I would follow through and countered that, if I want his intercession on your behalf, that I should do what he wants in tonight's broadcast.

Fair

Sounds like a clever fellow.

Charlotte

But, for the first time since this dizzy affair began, we are a step ahead of because we have Chris.

Fair

It's not only me. You have McCarthy and Martin as well.

(The others are mildly taken aback.)

Well, considering what happened to Kurz, they couldn't see that going back was such a good idea.

Ridgeley

God, where is Jo when we need her?

(There is a knock at the door. Fair returns to his spot in the corner, Charlotte begins to pick up the gun, but Ridgeley rests it from her.)

Who's there?

Jo's Voice

Jo, senior.

(Ridgeley relaxes and opens the door.)

Ridgeley

Jo, thank God you're back. I have an important errand for you. You're to go to the train station and buy five tickets through to Perpignan for the 6 o'clock train. Two private compartments. After you purchase the tickets, wait for us near the shoe-shine stand. We will arrive just moments before the scheduled departure time, so don't wander off. Here's the money.

(Ridgeley gives Jo an exorbitant sum of money. Enough to make her eyes bulge.)

There's more than enough there. The rest is yours. You've earned it.

(Jo is evidently swayed, but recalls her arrangement with Chernovsky.)

Revolution

Jo

Umm . . . I'm sorry senor. But, the 6 o'clock train is not running. There is no train until midnight.

Ridgeley

Not running? Are you sure?

Jo

I . . uh. . . came from the station when I could not find you at your office.

Ridgeley

Strange, but I suppose there's nothing to be done. Perhaps we could hire a boat.

Jo

Oh, senor. The Fascist blockade is sure to catch you. You are safe here. Wait until the midnight train.

Ridgeley

Ordinarily I would say you are right, Jo. But tonight Chernovsky will be listening to my broadcast and expects me to see him for dinner afterward.

Charlotte

That's what your career as a blackmailer has got us. Still, why not go through with it? If you're with him, he certainly won't suspect anything and you should be back in plenty of time to catch the train.

Fair

Yes, but now that he's a man of principle, can Collie bring himself to doctor a broadcast for Chernovsky?

Ridgeley

This time, yes. He's not expecting complete capitulation. I merely have to demonstrate that I won't carry out my threat. Still, it won't do for you to stay here. The place isn't being watched, otherwise they would have seen Chris. But, there's no telling when they might check again.

Jo, take them to your place and then get McCarthy and Martin. Take the bags, everything. Go now.

Jo

No, senor. I can't.

Ridgeley

Why not?

Revolution

Jo

The Guardia, they watch where I live.

Ridgeley

Well, then take them some place else where they won't be seen. You know this town better than anyone.

Jo

But, señor.

Ridgeley

Jo, what in God's name is the matter?

(There is a knock at the door. Everyone looks at one another in wonderment.)

No, no. Don't answer. Chris, is there any chance that it's McCarthy and Martin?

Fair

I don't think so. They were going to hide in the old tanning factory.

(Ridgeley starts to reach for the gun, but, much to everyone's horror, Jo grabs it and runs to open the door.)

Charlotte

Jo, no!

(Jo opens the door to reveal the uniformed Pascual with his gun drawn.)

Jo

Here, here they are. I have their gun.

(Jo hands the gun to Pascual without immediately recognizing him.)

Charlotte

Pascual. Please, you know we are not traitors.

Pascual

(Almost apologetically.)

She turned you in.

(Jo bolts out the door. Pascual runs after her.)

Charlotte

What?

Ridgeley

Jo! Jo! What's happening?

(We hear a single shot. Everyone is frozen. Moments later Chernovsky walks through the doorway followed by Sasha and another aide carrying Jo's body.)

You animal!!!

(Ridgeley rushes at Chernovsky fully intent on killing him with his bare hands, but is intercepted)

Revolution

by Sasha who wrestles him to the ground. A moment later Captain Ruiz enters followed by one of his men who is holding Pascual prisoner.)

Charlotte

Jo, dear Jo. What have they done?

(She starts to approach the body, but Fair restrains her.)

Chernovsky

I am afraid you are mistaken, Mr. Ridgeley. Does this gun belong to one of you?

(Charlotte, fighting back tears nods that it is.)

It is a murder weapon and will have to be confiscated for the time being.

(To Ruiz.)

Captain, have your men take the girl and the prisoner away.

(Ruiz motions to his men who depart.)

Charlotte

Pascual, Pascual. No. Stop it!

Chernovsky

Mrs. Fair. I apologize for this unfortunate turn. I am heartsick. Really I am.

Ridgeley

(Grieving profoundly and bitterly. Still being held by Sasha.)

It's your handiwork, Chernovsky. It's all yours! She was a child, a child! You bought her, you bastard. You used her and you may as well have killed her! Damn, you. . .

Ruiz

(To Sasha.)

Silence him.

(Sasha looks to Chernovsky.)

Chernovsky

That is not necessary. Mr. Ridgeley, I appreciate that in your present distressed state of mind you may come to conclusions that you will later have to reassess. But, I assure you, this is not of my doing, for indeed, I was as fond of Jo as you are.

Ruiz

Comrade, we need to get on with this.

Chernovsky

What is that, Captain?

Ruiz

I said that we need to get on with it. Comrade Fair, you are under arrest for treason. Your wife is under arrest for aiding you in your escape.

Revolution

Chernovsky

Nonsense, Captain. These people are under my protection.

Ruiz

(Shocked.)

Comrade, these people are traitors!

Chernovsky

Had I the time, I would dispute the matter with you.

Ruiz

Comrade, you said. . .

Chernovsky

(Threateningly.)

If I were you, sir, I would not press my disadvantage. This is the second time you have blundered. I was assured there would be no violence. Instead I find a child murdered by one of your men.

Ruiz

Comrade, you will have to answer. . .

Chernovsky

(Firmly.)

As we all must, sir. Now take your prisoner and your victim away.

(Ruiz departs bitterly.)

Well, we are rid of him. An unpleasant character, I must say. Now, for the matter at hand.

(To Fair.)

I am very happy to see you again, Comrade Fair. You have been injured.

Fair

It was a Fascist bullet.

Chernovsky

I salute you, sir. And, of course, Mrs. Fair. I must apologize for not responding earlier to your inquiries, but as Mr. Ridgeley is aware, it is not my custom to engage in communications that cannot be fulfilling. That, I am happy to say, is no longer the case.

Charlotte

Did she have to die?

Chernovsky

Madame, I to am wounded. A tragic thing, really.

Revolution

Ridgeley

Enough, Chernovsky! I've stood by while you laid waste to innocent lives and to all the reasons this struggle might have been worthwhile. Now that it's all neatly wrapped up in your favor, perhaps you'll spare us any more of your homilies and just shoot us or whatever you intend to do.

Chernovsky

Shoot you? Sir, from our first encounter, I have found you a most constructive critic and have profited from your observations. However, I believe you misunderstand my intentions. . . and perhaps not for the first time.

Comrade Fair, you and your wife are free to go, but if I may be so bold, I suggest you leave Spain immediately. What our friend, Captain Ruiz, lacks in discretion he makes up for in persistence. I cannot keep him at bay indefinitely.

Ridgeley

What? They'll walk onto the street and be arrested immediately.

Chernovsky

Not at all. Sasha, bring my car around. You are to drive Comrade Fair and his wife to the French border and see that they get across safely.

(Sasha releases Ridgeley, but stays awaiting further instructions.)

(To Charlotte and Fair.)

You will be traveling under my diplomatic protection. If for any reason the car is stopped, you will allow Sasha to respond to all questions.

Ridgeley

Chris, don't believe him. There isn't a compassionate bone in his wretched body. It's a trick.

Chernovsky

A trick? To what end?

Charlotte

(To Chernovsky.)

You can't really expect us to trust you.

Chernovsky

Given what you must have been told by Mr. Ridgeley, perhaps not. On the other hand, if I wanted to arrest you, I could have had Ruiz do so. Or Sasha. . .

(He looks at Sasha who is still holding Ridgeley and is dumbstruck by the suggestion.)

You did have training in this sort of thing, did you not, Sasha?

(Sasha looks at him disbelievingly.)

Well, perhaps not. But, the point is, I have no intention of arresting you.

Revolution

Ridgeley

No one's buying it you bastard. You've worked too hard to bring us under your control. Blackmail and now murder.

Chernovsky

Mr. Ridgeley, was it not you who tried to blackmail me – even after I assured you I had no idea of Comrade Fair's whereabouts?

Ridgeley

I didn't know that at the time. But, it doesn't change. . .

Chernovsky

Oh, but it does. Isn't it possible, Mr. Ridgeley that you have misunderstood me from the first? If you recall our conversations, you must acknowledge that I have been relentlessly forthright – even offering to protect Comrade Fair against reprisals.

Ridgeley

That was no offer of protection. You were threatening him.

Chernovsky

A threat? Really, Sir, I have never expressed anything but praise for Comrade Fair and concern for his safety.

Ridgeley

Liar. You had Kurz arrested and tried to arrest Fair.

Chernovsky

Oh no, Mr. Ridgeley. By the time my men arrived at the POUM line to find Comrade Fair, Kurz had already been arrested and Comrade Fair had quite vanished. That is what was reported, was it not, Sasha?

Sasha

(Suprised to be called upon.)

Uh. . . Yes, Comrade.

Ridgeley

No, no. Don't believe him! He's trying to turn you against me, just like he turned Jo against us, and . . . and Pascual against Jo, and . . . and. . . the government against Kurz. . . and. . .

Chernovsky

Mr. Ridgeley. I gave poor Jo just a few of the things any little girl should have. And Pascual? Is this Pascual the man who shot poor Jo? I have never seen him before in my life.

(Fair and Charlotte look at Ridgeley with a trace of doubt.)

Revolution

And Comrade Kurz, a sad case. I admit I had my suspicions and I voiced them to you Mr. Ridgeley -- at the same time I asked you to report the story in such a way as to prevent reprisals, but you did not and I am afraid Comrade Kurz. . .

Fair

What of Kurz?

Chernovsky

He is dead. Shot by Ruiz' men this morning.
(Fair is crushed.)

Fair

You knew? Collie, you knew Kurz was in danger?

Ridgeley

My God! This is absurd. This is fantasy. He's twisting it. All of it! Chris? Charlotte? Don't you see what he's doing?

Chernovsky

What am I doing, Mr. Ridgeley? Are you suggesting that I engaged in all sorts of skullduggery just so I could let Comrade Fair and Charlotte – I may call you Charlotte?
(She nods.)

Just so I could let them go? What do I possibly have to gain?

Charlotte

Collie?

Ridgeley

For God's sakes, He's a Russian!

Fair

(Still suffering from the news of Kurz and Chernovsky's comment about Ridgeley not reporting the story in a way that might have prevented reprisals.)

That's enough, Collie! Enough about the Russians! As far as you're concerned all Russians are the devil incarnate. Don't you see what you've done? Because your ideology – your prejudice – blinded you, you've had Charlotte in a needless panic and Kurz – Oh God. . .

(Fair chokes up.)

Chernovsky

Don't be too hard on Mr. Ridgeley. There is very likely little that could have been done for Kurz and you and Charlotte really were in danger, although not from the source Mr. Ridgeley imagined.

Revolution

Fair

That's because he is guilty of the very thing he's been accusing me of ever since I got here.

(To the disbelieving and distraught Ridgeley.)

Maybe I had my dogma, but you had yours. You see where it's gotten us.

(Grabbing the group photo from the Café Moka party.)

Where are they now Collie? Pascual? Jo? And now Charlotte and I must leave. . .

Ridgeley

(Shaken and unsure.)

Chris, I. . .

Fair

You were so sure you had things figured out, you couldn't see the simple facts right in front of you.

Charlotte

Chris. He meant well. It was an honest mistake.

Ridgeley

(Realizing Charlotte too has been persuaded.)

My God. . . .

Chernovsky

(Sensing that he's conquered Ridgeley and wanting to seal it quickly.)

I am sorry to interrupt, but time is short.

Charlotte

Collie, I know . . .

Ridgeley

No, no. Just wire me when you are safely across the border.

Charlotte

Collie, you must come with us.

Chernovsky

(Suddenly stern.)

I'm afraid that is not possible.

Charlotte

Not possible? Why?

Ridgeley

I can't go back – not now. The people at the BBC wouldn't understand. I'm sorry.

Revolution

Fair

As though that covers it.

Charlotte

Chris!

Chernovsky

(Basking in his new role as Ridgeley's ally.)

In fairness to Mr. Ridgeley, I should say there is no guarantee his report could have changed anything. If anyone is at fault, it is I for not providing the verification he needed for his story.

Ridgeley

You'd better go now.

(Sits on the bed and covers his face with his hands.)

Chernovsky

Sasha, take them, quickly.

Fair

Comrade, I don't mean to impose, but I have two friends who are also in trouble. . .

Chernovsky

McCarthy and Calderon? Yes, when they also disappeared, conclusions were drawn. Are they nearby?

Fair

Hiding at the old tanning factory.

Chernovsky

Can you show Sasha the way?

(Fair nods.)

It may be a little cramped, but you can manage can't you, Sasha?

Sasha

Yes, Comrade.

Chernovsky

(To Sasha.)

Follow Comrade Fair's directions.

(To Fair and Charlotte.)

Now, be off with you. I am sorry we did not meet under more pleasant circumstances.

Charlotte

Thank you and goodbye.

Revolution

Fair

(Still embittered, he throws Jo's charm to Ridgeley.)

Here, you'll want some luck.

(They exit leaving Chernovsky and Ridgeley.)

Chernovsky

(Believing he has won and that Ridgeley is now his.)

Mr. Ridgeley, do not be so oppressed. He will get over it. War has a way of magnifying our errors.

(Ridgeley does not respond.)

Come, you must not be so hard on yourself.

Ridgeley

(Looks up amused. Speaking to no one in particular.)

You know, it's amazing. A few months ago I accused Fair of being a starry-eyed idealist. Look at him now.

Chernovsky

He's had his cause taken away.

Ridgeley

By me.

Chernovsky

Oh no, Mr. Ridgeley. That happened back in the trench and, if it hadn't happened there, it would have been someplace else. Good causes undermine themselves, so there is no one to blame.

Ridgeley

You think he's better off?

Chernovsky

For having the sheaths removed from his eyes? Of course. It happens to all idealists and, like childbirth, it is momentarily unpleasant, but eventually worthwhile.

Ridgeley

I've done him a favor then?

Chernovsky

I am old enough, Mr. Ridgeley to have learned that all forms of idealism, however well intentioned, invariably lead to ruin. Comrade Fair was saved before his ruin was complete. Many in this country are not so lucky.

You must pardon me, I do not mean to lecture.

Revolution

Ridgeley

No, it's all right. I've been waiting to hear this. What you're saying – they're all things that I . . . uh . . .

Chernovsky

(With unusual passion.)

. . . Believed -- tried to say to Comrade Fair that day in the radio studio.

Ridgeley

Yes.

(Pause.)

Yes, I guess so. You overheard a great deal. But, Chernovsky, there's one thing I don't understand. I'm here as a radio correspondent. I'm practically paid to be cynical, but you're here to fight for a cause, the same cause as Fair.

Chernovsky

Mr. Ridgeley, Do you remember I promised to keep your party membership a secret?

Ridgeley

Yes, why?

Chernovsky

Now, you shall know my secret. Before the revolution – our revolution – I was in the employ of the Czar.

Ridgeley

I thought all the Czar's staff was executed. How did you survive?

Chernovsky

Survive and prosper, Mr. Ridgeley. It is because ideologies come and go, but there is always room for competence and for the man who understands his priorities.

Ridgeley

So, you were a monarchist before and you're a communist now. What do you really believe in?

Chernovsky

A long life with an occasional well-made meal. That is all. To believe anything more is vanity and delusion. The arrogance of these men who presume to know the difference between good and evil – now you have seen what it produces. So, come with me, sir, and see things as they are, not as you would have them and not as you fear they might be, but only as they are.

Ridgeley

(Trying it on for size.)

A long life and a well-made meal.

Chernovsky

Come. I think it is time we had one.

Ridgeley

Which, a long life or a well-made meal?

Chernovsky

Both, Mr. Ridgeley, both.

(Chernovsky leads Ridgeley to the door, but Ridgeley stops to consider Jo's charm that Fairhad thrown at him and which he is still holding. He throws it back in the room. Chernovsky smiles and they exit. The spotlight narrows so that only the discarded charm is illuminated.)

(Blackout. End of Scene 3.)

Epilogue

(Two years later, March 1939. The spotlight comes up on the radio. As the dialog begins, the cast members filter onto the stage and settle in to listen.)

Newsreader

On March third, 1939, this is the BBC Overseas Service from London. I am happy to welcome back from Republican Spain our correspondent, Malcolm Ridgeley.

Malcolm, two years ago on this program you interviewed a young fellow from Huddersfield who had volunteered to defend the socialist government in Spain. But today the volunteers are gone and the Fascist forces of General Franco seem destined to prevail. Is Europe's most destructive civil war in a generation finally over but for the formalities?

Ridgeley

In a word, yes. But I am obliged to remember that those "formalities" are a doomed struggle being waged by people I know, who continue to die even now. It's easy to dismiss them as naive idealists. And for a time I did. But tonight as I contemplate the greater abyss into which Europe may fall, I find myself reconsidering.

Even if their politics are wrong and their reasoning childish, their willingness to sacrifice for a greater good enables them to stand against the certain evil of unvarnished self-interest. Against that, there is only this alternative: a mindset which says it is deluded vanity to presume to know the difference between good and evil and, therefore, the height of arrogance to fight for it. Rather, we should satisfy ourselves with simple wants – a long life with an occasional well-made meal a fellow named Chernovsky told me – and let history take its course doing what it will with the fools who presume to challenge it.

Revolution

I fell into that mindset until I witnessed its consequences: 500,000 souls slaughtered, whole villages destroyed from the antiseptic altitude of 10,000 feet, and a child who I loved die. Of course, through it all I've enjoyed a long life and many well-made meals. So, I should be satisfied – even proud. But only a monster could be so smug.

Tonight I am terrified – not for myself, but for us all. And the only ones I have to look to for consolation are those same naïve idealists whose cause is lost but whose fight goes on. I was wrong to call them fools, for they know the desperateness of their situation. They choose to die now so that their actions might inspire others to take up their cause at another time, in another place where prospects are not so bleak. For that I admire them and I pray we can find similar courage, for we may soon need it. And if I could be with them now, I suspect someone might say to me, “Of course I don't know if there is a utopia. But I'm certain we must act as though there can be.” Amen.

Newsreader

That was our correspondent, Malcolm Ridgeley, reflecting on his two years in Spain. Now we turn to the day's top story. German troops have crossed into Czechoslovakia.
(*Blackout.*)