DARKNESS AT NOON
When I read Arthur Koestler's novel *Darkness at Noon*, after my experience in the Soviet Union, I thought the book an essential statement for our time. It seemed an almost impossible play to write, but I hit upon a device very early that made it, I thought, possible to dramatize the conversations between the prisoners, to wit, the tapping messages through the stone walls by employing a code. The germinal idea! I recalled that in psychology we had learned that thought very often shapes itself in our mind with literal sentences and that the muscles of the throat really move as if we were silently speaking. With that in mind, I devised dialogue so that, as the prisoners were tapping out thoughts to each other, they uttered them. If you test this out yourself, sometime when you are thinking, you will find that unconsciously you are stating your thoughts silently and that your throat moves as if you were uttering your thoughts. When I tried it out, it did not seem outlandish at all—it worked—and with this device, I was able to convey the dialogue between the prisoners so that as they tapped the messages out they spoke them, ostensibly to themselves.

When I told this scheme to Koestler, he said it wouldn't work. He had another—that the words be projected onto the sets—a solution I felt was undramatic. A great deal of the success or failure of the play was obviously going to depend on whether this device of mine worked. Fortunately, it worked very well, as I knew it would. I acted it out myself, and felt that it was the only legitimate way in which I would preserve the sense of the actors reliving dramatic events and confronting each other through the solid walls as human beings.

The next problem in the play was, of course, the multiple scenes that took place in the mind of Rubashov. Because the play was a play about the
mind and thought, it had to move with the speed of thought within the stone walls and iron bars of a prison. And finally, when I had worked out the pattern for the production, I asked Freddie Fox to come in. He agreed with the plan. I then suggested we start constructing a model immediately. I had prepared cardboard and wood, paint and brushes, all the elements necessary to construct a model set. In my office I had a model stage with lighting which I had purchased from Jo Mielziner, the scene designer. It was a beautiful model stage. And, by cutting out some figures representing the actors in scale, we could design the scenes in scale. Freddie and I worked on it all that night. In the morning we had completed a scale model of the scene design for the play. Freddie was a beautiful artist, and he painted a beautiful and powerful series of designs. The result, I must say, delighted me when we built the sets and started to light them. It was a very pragmatic scheme, and worked beautifully for the play. And with Freddie’s sensitive lighting, the sets projected Rubashov’s fleeting emotions and thoughts perfectly.

The little set was made with a scrim for the back wall of Rubashov’s cell. The scrim is a magical theatrical device that, when properly used, can make what seems to be a solid cell wall disappear, so that we can see through it into any scene beyond it. Thus, when Rubashov lies on the cot, the wall behind him seems solid. But as his mind turns to memories of Luba, his love, the scrim is lit behind; the wall disappears and Luba appears, apparently lying in bed with him. Similarly, when the lights are thrown on the wall from the front, Luba disappears and the wall becomes solid again. And the other scenes could be set behind it to wait for their cue.

One scene designer came in with a solution that used a revolving stage. I rejected it. A revolving stage makes a great deal of noise, which must be covered by music or some sound effects. More important, it takes a minute or more to revolve, which in a play with thirty scenes can cost thirty minutes—defeating the instantaneity that I was seeking. This could be arrived at only by translating the speed of thought into the speed of light. That, I decided, would be the method to give us what was essential.

I combined the scrim with a series of drops on stage left, painted after Freddie Fox’s designs. With this scheme, it was possible to stage this play of thirty-odd scenes, reflecting the many thoughts and moods of Rubashov with the instantaneity of thought.

The special, strange character and nature of Arthur Koestler became known to me during our time in Paris. I recall particularly his drunkenness and his black gloves and his statement that he had patterned much of his life on Von Stroheim, whom he rather idolized. This quickly gave me a clue to the effectiveness of Koestler’s villains. He sympathized with his villains, and they were so effective thereby. Often one identifies a writer with his
heroes, but Koestler was rather fond of his villains and very often modeled his behavior in a most villainous way.

Working on *Darkness at Noon*, I met many times with Angelica Balabanoff, one of the original Bolsheviks, a fierce little lady, built like a cube, 81 years old, with the physical desires of a young woman, as she confided suggestively, to my terror, that she had fallen in love with me. She had been coeditor of *Avanti* with Mussolini. I was consulting her about *Darkness at Noon*, and she urged me to do a play about Mussolini. She gave me some interesting insights into the man's character when he was still a dedicated marxist and editor of the *Avanti* and she was having an affair with him. Despite his bravado, he was a coward, fearful of the dark, and he insisted on her walking him home every night.

I found Edward G. Robinson's comments in his autobiography about the role of Rubashov amusing because they are lies. I really wrote the part for Claude Rains and didn't even know Edward G. Robinson at that point. He claims I wrote the part for him, but he turned it down, and so it went to Rains. The truth is that Rains had been selected by Warner Brothers to play Alexander Hamilton in *The Patriots*, which they had purchased, but which they never made.

Rains had made a trip from his farm in Bucks County to my place in Oakland, New Jersey, to meet me; and we became warm friends. I weighed the possibility of Rains playing the lead in *Detective Story*, but he was much too short. I could have corrected that by casting everybody else much shorter, but it would aggravate the difficulty of casting the play properly. However, after *Detective Story*, I determined to find a part for Claude, and in *Darkness at Noon* I did. So, when Robinson says the part was written for him, it is, of course, a bit of nonsense designed to cover up his foolish professional pride about following Rains in the role in the road company. He also contended that he did not take the role as a way of answering the charges that he was a communist sympathizer, when in fact that was precisely why he took the role.

Claude played the role, a little terrified at coming back to the stage after such a long absence in films, but he had a wonderful quality that exudes authority, and he played the role with great sensitivity. Our friendship lasted until the play, when Claude had a double problem of hating direction and being fearful of coming back to the stage, needing direction every moment. It was a dilemma that ended in the destruction of our friendship.

*Darkness at Noon* marked a change in the way at least one critic viewed my work. John Mason Brown had been harshly critical of *Men in White*, and in *Dead End* had attributed the direction to Norman Bel Geddes, an error on which I had corrected him. I met him subsequently one day at '21.
He and a group of other critics were seated with George Jean Nathan. Nathan summoned me over, so I joined them. John Mason Brown, sitting next to me, confided that he would never give me a good review because he didn't like my choice of subjects. He said they were all so unpleasant. I tried to point out to him that many really great plays such as Lear, Macbeth, the Greek tragedies, were unpleasant in that sense and that I hoped some day to write a play that would please him. Then along came Darkness at Noon, and he wrote that Koestler was a genius and that I was ingenious. He had thought it impossible to make a play out of the Koestler book but that somehow I had achieved it. This represented a great triumph over his strong prejudice.

S.K.
Darkness at Noon was first presented by The Playwrights Company at the Alvin Theatre on January 13, 1951, with the following cast:

- **Rubashov**: Claude Rains
- **Guard**: Robert Keith, Jr.
- **402**: Philip Coolidge
- **302**: Richard Seff
- **202**: Allan Rich
- **Luba**: Kim Hunter
- **Gletkin**: Walter J. Palance
- **1st Storm Trooper**: Adams MacDonald
- **Richard**: Herbert Ratner
- **Young Girl**: Virginia Howard
- **2nd Storm Trooper**: Johnson Hayes
- **Ivanoff**: Alexander Scourby
- **Bogrov**: Norman Roland
- **Hrutsch**: Robert Crozier
- **Albert**: Daniel Polis
- **Luigi**: Will Kuluva
- **Pablo**: Henry Beckman
- **André**: Geoffrey Barr
- **Barkeeper**: Tony Ancona
- **Secretary**: Lois Nettleton
- **President**: Maurice Gosfield

Soldiers, Sailors, Judges, and Jurors
Staged by Sidney Kingsley
Setting and Lighting by Frederick Fox
Costumes by Kenn Barr

Scenes

ACT ONE  First Hearing: A prison—March 1937
ACT TWO  Second Hearing: The same—Five weeks later
ACT THREE Third Hearing: The same—Several days later

The action of the play oscillates dialectically between the Material world of a Russian prison during the harsh days of March 1937 and the Ideal realms of the spirit as manifested in Rubashov’s memories and thoughts moving freely through time and space.
Rendering of Darkness at Noon by Frederick Fox for which he received the Donaldson Award. Reprinted by permission of Margery Fox.

Sidney Kingsley and Frederick Fox working on the stage model for Darkness at Noon. Courtesy of Sidney Kingsley.
The realized design for Darkness at Noon, Rubashov at left. Courtesy of Sidney Kingsley.
March 1937.

Granite and iron! The corridor of an ancient Russian prison, buried deep underground. To the left, set into a soaring, Byzantine arch, is a thick iron portcullis. Beyond it, visible through the bars, a steep flight of stone steps curves up out of sight. To the right, a tier of cells forms an ominous column of sweating granite, towering up to vanish in the shadows above. A Guard with rifle and bayonet paces the corridor. He halts as the iron portcullis slides up to the clanging of chains, revealing an Officer and a prisoner. The prisoner, N. S. Rubashov, is a short, stocky, smooth-shaven, bespectacled man in his early fifties. His head is large beyond the proportions of his body, and characterized by an expanse of forehead. His eyes are set far apart and Mongoloid in cast. He carries himself very erect and with fierce authority. The Guard opens the door of a cell, throws a switch in the corridor, which turns on the light, and the prisoner is pushed inside. The door clangs behind him. The heavy metallic sound of bolts being closed and a key turned. The prisoner surveys his cell slowly: a solid, windowless cubicle with an iron bed and a straw mattress, nothing else. There is no day here, no night; it is a timeless dank grave for the living corpse. He reaches into his pocket automatically for cigarettes, then he remembers, turns to the Judas hole and observes the eye of the Guard staring at him.

Rubashov: Comrade guard! He turns his empty pockets inside out. They've taken away my cigarettes, too! Can you get me a cigarette?

Guard, harshly: It's late, go to bed.

Rubashov: I've been dragged out of a sickbed. I have a fever. I need some cigarettes.

Guard, mutters: Your mother! Turns out the light in the cell, leaving the prisoner lit only by the light streaming through the Judas hole. The Guard goes out.

Rubashov, rubs his inflamed cheek, shakes his head, sighs, looks about, takes off his coat, slowly, painfully; throws it on the cot, murmurs to himself: So, it's come. You're to die, Rubashov. Well, the old guard is gone! He sits on the bed; rolls up his coat for a pillow, murmuring to himself. For golden lads and girls all must as chimney sweepers come to dust. He takes off his spectacles, places them on the floor, and lies back, staring
grimly at the ceiling. Yes. The old guard is gone. He sighs again, repeats mechanically. For golden lads and girls all must... A ticking sound is heard. Three ticks, then a pause, then three more ticks. He sits up, listening... as chimney sweepers... The ticking becomes louder. He picks up his spectacles, rises, glances at the judas hole to make certain he is not being observed, places his ear to one wall, taps on it with his spectacles, listens, then tries another wall. Returning to the wall left, he listens, murmurs “Ah,” taps three times. The answering taps become louder. He repeats the series, placing his ear to the wall; the taps now come in a different series, louder, rapid, more excited. Easy! Slow... Slow. He taps slowly, deliberately. The answering taps slow down. That’s better... He counts the taps, 5-3, 2-3, 3-5, O. “Who?” The prisoner smiles and addresses himself softly to the wall. Direct enough, aren’t you, Comrade?

The lights come up in the adjoining cell, the wall dissolves, the prisoner in 402 appears. He is verminous, caked with filth, his hair matted, his old Tsarist uniform in rags, but he has somehow preserved his monocle and the tatters of an old illusion. He strokes his moustache and swaggers about as if he were still a perfumed dandy.

402, as he taps on the wall, his lips unconsciously form the words and utter them. In their communications by tapping, all the prisoners unconsciously voice the messages as they tap them through: Who are you? Pause, as Rubashov shakes his head but doesn’t answer. Taps again. Is it day or night outside?

Rubashov, glances again at the judas hole, taps: Four A.M.

402, taps: What day?

Rubashov, taps: Tuesday.

402, taps: Month?

Rubashov, taps: March...

402, taps: Year?

Rubashov, taps: 1937.

402, taps: The weather?

Rubashov, taps: Snowing.

402, to himself: Snow. Taps. Who are you?


402, straightens up with a cry: Rubashov? He bursts into wild, ugly laughter. He taps. The wolves are devouring each other! Crosses over to the opposite wall. Taps three times, and listens, his ear to the wall. The cell above lights up and the occupant rises painfully from his cot. He is a young man, thin, with a white ghostlike face, bruises and burns on it, and a split lip.
He crosses with effort to the wall, taps three times, then listens as 402 taps. New prisoner. Rubashov.

302, taps: Nicolai Rubashov?

402, laughing hoarsely as he taps: N. S. Rubashov. Ex-Commissar of the People, ex-Member of the Central Committee, ex-General of the Red Army, Bearer of the Order of the Red Banner. Pass it along.

302, crouches, stunned, cries out suddenly: Oh! Father, Father, what have I done? . . . He crosses to the opposite wall, taps three times. An answering tap is heard. The cell above lights up; 202, a peasant, with insane eyes, puts his head to the floor as 302 taps.

302, taps: N. S. Rubashov arrested. Pass it along.

202: Rubashov? Well, well! Crosses to other wall, taps. N. S. Rubashov arrested. Pass it along.

The tiers of cells darken and vanish, leaving only RUBASHOV visible, leaning against the wall, staring into space. The taps echo and reecho throughout the prison, to the whispering accompaniment: “N. S. Rubashov arrested! N. S. Rubashov arrested!” The whispers grow into the roar of a mighty throng calling out, “Rubashov! Rubashov!” RUBASHOV'S voice is heard, young and triumphant, addressing the crowd.

RUBASHOV'S VOICE: Comrades! The tumult subsides. Proletarians, soldiers, and sailors of the Revolution. The great, terrible, and joyful day has arrived! The crowd roars. RUBASHOV, listening to the past, head bowed, paces his cell slowly. Eight months ago the chariot of the blood-stained and mire-bespattered Romanov monarchy was tilted over at one blow. The oceanic roar of the crowd. The gray, stuttering Provisional Government of bourgeois democracy which followed was already dead and only waiting for the broom of History to sweep its putrid corpse into the sewer. In the name of the Revolutionary Committee, I now declare the Provisional Government overthrown. The roar swells. Power to the Soviets! Land to the peasants! Bread to the hungry! Peace to all the peoples!

The victorious shouts of “Rubashov! Rubashov!” mount to a crescendo, fade away and die, leaving only the blanketed stillness of the cell and RUBASHOV listening to his memories. Three taps from 402's wall arouse him. He responds, ear to the wall. The wall dissolves, revealing 402.

402, taps, gloating: Serves you right.

RUBASHOV, to himself: What is this? Taps. Who are you?

402, taps: None of your damned business. . . .

RUBASHOV, taps: As you like.

402, taps: Long live His Majesty, the Tsar!

RUBASHOV: So that's it. Taps. I thought you birds extinct.

402, beats out the rhythm with his shoe: Long live the Tsar!
RUBASHOV, grins sardonically, taps: Amen! Amen!
402, taps: Swine!
RUBASHOV, amused, taps out: Didn't quite understand.
402, in a frenzy, hammers out: Dirty swine . . .
RUBASHOV, taps: Not interested in your family tree.
402, fury suddenly passes, taps out slowly: Why have you been locked up?
RUBASHOV, taps: I don't know. Pause.
402, taps: Anything happened? Big? Assassination? War?
RUBASHOV, taps: No. Can you lend me tobacco?
402, taps: For you? I'd be castrated first.
RUBASHOV, taps: Good idea.

402 walks away, lies down on his cot. The lights fade out on him.
RUBASHOV, paces his cell, counting out the steps: 1-2-3-4-5- and a half . . .
He wheels back. 1-2-3-4 . . . Strange ghostly voices are dimly heard. It starts. So soon. The vague outlines of ghostly faces hover above him. The waking, walking dreams. Other ghostly faces appear in space. Yes, you sailors of Kronstadt—I shall pay. . . . And you nameless ones. The face of a little hunchback appears, smoking a pipe and smiling. And Comrade Luigi. Some plates appear dancing in space—then a big moonface of a man, juggling them, grinning. And Pablo. The luminous face of a young woman appears in space. A striking face; large, soft brown eyes; dark hair; white skin. And Luba. The voices and faces fade away. My debts will be paid—my debts will be paid.

The young woman materializes. The cell becomes the office of the Commissar of the Iron Works. Huge graphs hang on the walls. Through the window, a vista of factory chimneys and the skeletons of incompleted buildings may be seen. The young woman is bent over her notebook, taking down dictation. RUBASHOV walks up and down, dictating. In the pauses, she raises her head, and her soft, round eyes follow his wanderings through the room. There is wonder and worship in the way she looks at him. She wears a white peasant blouse, embroidered with little flowers at the high neck. Her body is generously formed and voluptuous.

RUBASHOV, dictates: “To meet the Five-Year Plan we must step up our tempo. A twelve-hour day if necessary. Tempo! Tempo!” The girl tosses her head as she writes, and her dangling earrings attract his attention. He frowns. Her head buried in her notebook, she does not observe this. “. . . The Unions will dismiss workers who come late and deprive all laggards of their food cards . . .” She quickly reaches down to scratch her ankle, and he notices she is wearing high-heeled slippers. He frowns again. “. . . In the building of a new, hitherto undreamt-of Communist state, we must be guided by one rule, dash, the end justifies the means, period. Relentlessly, exclamation point.”
The girl bobs her head, the earrings sway. He suddenly growls: Why do you wear those earrings? And those high heels? With a peasant blouse. Ridiculous! The girl looks up. What's your name?

Luba: Loshenko.

Rubashov: Loshenko?

Luba: Yes, Comrade Commissar. Luba Loshenko. Her voice is low and hoarse, but gentle.

Rubashov: And how long have you been working here?

Luba: For you, Comrade Commissar?

Rubashov, growls: Yes, for me. Of course, for me.

Luba: Three weeks.

Rubashov: Three? Really? Well, Comrade Loshenko, don't dress up like a ceremonial elephant in the office!

Luba: Yes, Comrade Commissar, I'm sorry.

Rubashov: You weren't wearing those earrings yesterday?

Luba: No, Comrade Commissar, I wasn't.

Rubashov: Then what are you getting dressed up for now? What's the occasion? This is an office. We've work to do. Ridiculous. . . . Where was I?

Luba, glances at her notebook: “The end justifies the means, period. Relentlessly, exclamation point.”

Rubashov: Mm! He picks up some papers from the desk, glances at them.

“You liberals sitting on a cloud, dangling your feet in the air . . .” He turns and looks at her; she is watching him but quickly turns back to her notebook. You—you’ve really very pretty little ears. Why do you ruin them with those survivals of barbaric culture? She plucks off the earrings. That's better. And don't look so frightened. I'm not going to eat you. What do you people in the office think I am? An ogre? I don't eat little children.

Luba, looks at him: I'm not frightened.

Rubashov: You're not?

Luba: No.

Rubashov, surprised: Humph! Good! Good! Where was I?

Luba, scans her notebook: “Sitting on a cloud, dangling your feet in the air.”

Rubashov: Ah! She looks up at him and smiles. In spite of himself, he returns her smile. Yes . . . Then soberly again. “You liberals are wrong.” He begins to pace. “And those who are wrong will pay! . . .” The image of the girl fades; the office vanishes, and he is back in his cell. Yes, Luba, I will pay. I will pay my debt to you, above all . . . Three taps are heard from 402's wall. He turns to the wall, fiercely. But not you. I owe you nothing. How many of your people have I killed? No matter. You taught us to hate. Three taps from 402. You stood over us with the knout and the hangman. Three taps from 402. Your police made us fear this world, your priests the next, you poured melted lead down our throats, you massacred us in
Moscow, you slit the bellies of our partisans in Siberia and stuffed them with grain. No! *Crossing to the wall.* You? I owe no debt to you. *Three taps from 402.* RUBASHOV places his ear to the wall, taps curtly. What do you want?

402, appears, tapping: I'm sending tobacco.

RUBASHOV, after a long pause, taps: Thanks. Sighs, murmurs to the wall.

Do I owe you a debt too? We at least acted in the name of humanity. Mm. But doesn't that double our debt? *He shakes his head,* cynically. What is this, Rubashov? A breath of religious madness? *A feverish chill shakes him.* He puts on his coat.

402, rattles his door, peers through the judas hole, calls: Guard! Guard! *The Guard is heard shuffling across the corridor.*

Guard, through the bars of the judas hole: What do you want?

402: Could you take this tobacco to cell 400?

Guard: No.

402: I'll give you a hundred rubles.

Guard: I'll give you my butt in your face.

402, walks away: For two rubles he'd cut his mother's throat.

Guard, returns to the judas hole, menacingly: What did you say?


RUBASHOV, on sudden impulse goes to the iron door of his cell, bangs on it, shouting: Guard! Guard! *The Guard is heard approaching down the corridor.*

Guard: Quiet! You're waking everyone. *His shadow appears in the judas hole.*

RUBASHOV, peremptorily commands: Tell the Commandant I must speak to him.

Guard, cackles: Oh, sure.

RUBASHOV: At once!

Guard: Who do you think you are?

RUBASHOV: Read your Party history.

Guard: I know who you are.

RUBASHOV: Then don't ask idiotic questions.

Guard: You're Number 400, in solitary, and you're probably going to be taken down in the cellar and shot. Now don't give me any more trouble or you'll get a butt in your face.

RUBASHOV: You try it and we'll see who'll be shot. *The Guard hesitates.*

RUBASHOV again hammers on the door.

Guard: You're waking everyone. Stop that or I'll report you.

RUBASHOV: Do so! Report me! At once!
GUARD: I will. He goes.

RUBASHOV continues to hammer on the cell door. The lights come up in the cell tier, bringing the other prisoners into vision. They have been listening to this exchange through the judas hole. 302 turns from the door and seats himself on his cot. Slowly, painfully, he begins to tap the signal to 402. 402 stands on his cot, responds, and listens.

302, taps: Outside?
302, taps: Send Rubashov my greetings.
402, taps: Who shall I say?
302, taps: Just say an old friend.
402, crosses to Rubashov, summons him with a tap. Rubashov rises and listens at the wall as 402 taps: 302 sends greetings.

RUBASHOV, taps: What's his name?
402, taps: Won't say. Just old friend. He was tortured last week.

RUBASHOV, taps: Why?
402, taps: Political divergencies.
RUBASHOV, taps: Your kind?
402, taps: No, your kind.
RUBASHOV, taps: How many prisoners here?
402, taps: Thousands. Come and go.
RUBASHOV, taps: Your kind?
402, taps: No. Yours. I'm extinct. Ha! Ha!

Footsteps approaching ring out in the corridor. He taps quickly. Someone's coming.

402 vanishes. Rubashov throws himself on the cot.

A huge young man in an officer's uniform enters. His shaven head, his deep-set, expressionless eyes, and his jutting, Slavic cheekbones give him the appearance of a death's-head. His stiff uniform creaks, as do his boots. The officer who arrested Rubashov and the Guard are visible in the doorway. The young man enters the cell, which becomes smaller through his presence. His name is GLETKIN.

GLETKIN, fixes Rubashov with a cold stare: Were you the one banging on the door? He looks about. This cell needs cleaning. To Rubashov. You know the regulations? He glances behind the door, turns to the Guard. He has no mop. Get him a mop! The Guard hurries off.

RUBASHOV: Are you the commandant here?
GLETKIN: No. Why were you banging on the door?
RUBASHOV: Why am I under arrest? Why have I been dragged out of a sick-bed? Why have I been brought here?
GLETKIN: If you wish to argue with me you'll have to stand up.
RUBASHOV: If you're not the commandant, I haven't the slightest desire to argue with you... or even to speak to you for that matter.

GLETKIN: Then don't bang on the door again—or the usual disciplinary measures will have to be applied. Turns to the ARRESTING OFFICER. When was the prisoner brought in?

ARRESTING OFFICER: Ten minutes ago.

GLETKIN, glances at his watch, sternly: His arrest was ordered for three A.M. sharp. What happened?

ARRESTING OFFICER: The car broke down.

GLETKIN: That's inexcusable. It's the commandant's new car, and it was in perfect condition. This looks very suspicious. He takes out a notebook and writes in it. Send the driver up to my office at once!

RUBASHOV: It's not his fault. It wasn't sabotage.

GLETKIN, writes, without glancing up: How do you know it wasn't?

RUBASHOV: Make allowances.

GLETKIN: For what?

RUBASHOV: Our roads.

GLETKIN puts away the notebook and measures RUBASHOV impersonally: What's the matter with our roads?

RUBASHOV: They're primitive cow paths.

GLETKIN: Very critical, aren't we? I suppose the roads in the bourgeois countries are better?

RUBASHOV, looks at GLETKIN, smiles cynically: Young man, have you ever been outside of our country?

GLETKIN: No. I don't have to... to know. And I don't want to hear any fairy tales.

RUBASHOV: Fairy tales? Sits up. Have you read any of my books or articles?

GLETKIN: In the Komsomol Youth I read your political-education pamphlets. In their time I found them useful.

RUBASHOV: How flattering! And did you find any fairy tales in them?

GLETKIN: That was fifteen years ago. Pause. Don't think that gives you any privileges now! The GUARD appears, flapping a dirty rag. GLETKIN takes it, throws it at RUBASHOV'S feet. When the morning bugle blows, you will clean up your cell. You know the rules. You've been in prison before?

RUBASHOV: Yes. Many of them. But this is my first experience under my own people. He rubs his inflamed jaw.

GLETKIN: Do you wish to go on sick call?

RUBASHOV: No, thanks. I know prison doctors.

GLETKIN: Then you're not really sick?

RUBASHOV: I have an abscess. It'll burst itself.

GLETKIN, without irony: Have you any more requests?
RUBASHOV: Tell your superior officer I want to talk to him and stop wasting my time!

GLETKIN: Your time has run out, Rubashov! He starts to go, pulling the door behind him.

RUBASHOV, mormurs in French: Plus un singe monte . . .

GLETKIN, reenters quickly: Speak in your own tongue! Are you so gone you can't even think any longer except in a filthy, foreign language?

RUBASHOV, sharply, with military authority: Young man, there's nothing wrong with the French language as such. Now, tell them I'm here and let's have a little Bolshevik discipline! GLETKIN stiffens, studies RUBASHOV coldly, turns and goes, slamming the iron door. The jangle of the key in the lock; his footsteps as he marches off down the corridor. Suddenly RUBASHOV bounds to the door. He shouts through the judas hole. And get me some cigarettes! Damn you! Rubs his inflamed cheek, ruefully. To himself. Now, why did you do that, Rubashov? What does this young man think of you? “Worn-out old intellectual! Self-appointed Messiah! Dares to question the party line! Ripe for liquidation . . .” There you go again, Rubashov—the old disease. Paces. 4 . . . 5. Revolutionaries shouldn't see through other people's eyes. Or should they? How can you change the world if you identify yourself with everybody? How else can you change it? Paces. 3 . . . 4. He pauses, frowning, searching his memory. What is it about this young man? Something? Paces. 3 . . . 4. Why do I recall a religious painting? A Pietà, a dead Christ in Mary's arms? Of course—Germany. The Museum, Leipzig, 1933.

Slowly the prison becomes a museum in Germany. A large painting of the Pietà materializes. An S.S. OFFICER in black uniform and swastika armband is staring at the Pietà. His face, though different from GLETKIN's in features, has the same, cold, fanatical expression. RUBASHOV, catalogue in hand, walks slowly down, studying a row of invisible paintings front; then he crosses over, studies the Pietà. The S.S. OFFICER glances at him with hard, searching eyes, then goes.

A middle-aged man with a sensitive face, sunken cheeks, enters, looks alternately at the catalogue he is holding and the paintings in space. He halts next to RUBASHOV, squinting to make out the title.

MAN, softly, reading: Christ Crowned with Thorns.

RUBASHOV, turns, front, nods: Titian.

MAN, to RUBASHOV: What page is it in your catalogue, please?

RUBASHOV, without looking at him, hands over his catalogue. MAN glances at it, looks about hurriedly, returns it, whispers hoarsely. Be very careful. They're everywhere.

RUBASHOV: I know. You're late, Comrade Richard.
RICHARD: I went a roundabout way.
RUBASHOV: Give me your report.
RICHARD: It's bad.
RUBASHOV: Give it to me.
RICHARD: Since the Reichstag fire, they've turned the tables on us. It's a massacre. All Germany is a shambles. Two weeks ago we had six hundred and twelve cells here—today there are fifty-two left. The Party is a thousand-headed mass of bleeding flesh. Two of my group jumped out of a window last night in order to avoid arrest! His lips start to tremble; his entire body is suddenly convulsed.
RUBASHOV, sharply: Control yourself! Glances about. You're one of the leaders here. If you go on this way, what can we expect of the other comrades?
RICHARD, controls himself with an effort: I'm sorry.
RUBASHOV: For a man who has written such heroic plays of the proletariat, this is surprising.
RICHARD: This is a bad moment for me. My wife, Comrade Truda, was arrested two days ago. The Storm Troopers took her and I haven't heard since.
RUBASHOV: Where were you at the time?
RICHARD: Across the street, on a roof. His voice becomes shrill as he begins to lose control again. A stutter creeps into his speech. I w-w-watched them take her away.
RUBASHOV, glances around to see if they are observed, motions Richard to the bench under the Pieta: Sit down. They both sit on the bench. We have a big job here. We have to pull the Party together. We have to stiffen its backbone. This is only a temporary phase.
RICHARD: We carry on, Comrade. We work day and night. We distribute literature in the factories and house to house.
RUBASHOV: I've seen some of these pamphlets. Who wrote them?
RICHARD: I did.
RUBASHOV: You did?
RICHARD: Yes. Why?
RUBASHOV: They're not quite satisfactory, Comrade Richard.
RICHARD: In what respect?
RUBASHOV: A bit off the line. We sense a certain sympathy with the Liberals and the Social Democrats.
RICHARD: The Storm Troopers are... The stammer again creeps into his speech. Sl...sl... slaughtering them, too, like animals in the street.
RUBASHOV: Let them! How does that affect us? In that respect the Nazis are clearing the way for us by wiping out this trash and saving us the trouble.
RICHARD: Trash?
RUBASHOV: The Liberals are our most treacherous enemies. Historically, they have always betrayed us.
RICHARD: But that's inhuman, man. You comrades back there act as if nothing had happened here. Try and understand! We're living in a j... j... jungle. All of us. We call ourselves "dead men on ho... holiday."
RUBASHOV: The party leadership here carries a great responsibility, and those who go soft now are betraying it. You're playing into the enemies' hands!
RICHARD: I... ?
RUBASHOV: Yes, Comrade Richard, you.
RICHARD: What is this? I supposed Truda betrayed the Party, too?
RUBASHOV: If you go on this way... Suddenly, urgently. Speak quietly, and don't turn your head to the door! A tall young man in the uniform of a Storm Trooper has entered the room with a girl, and they stand nearby, studying their catalogues and the pictures. The S.S. Officer whispers to the girl. She titters. RUBASHOV rises. In a low calm voice. Go on talking.
RICHARD, rises, glances at his catalogue, talking rapidly: Roger van der Weyden, the elder, 1400 to 1464. He's probably van Eyck's most famous pupil.
RUBASHOV: His figures are somewhat angular.
RICHARD: Yes, but look at the heads. There's real power there. And look at the depth of physiognomy. Again the stammer. Compare h... h... him with the other masters; you'll see his coloring is softer... and l... l... lighter. His eyes stray to the S.S. Officer in panic and hatred.
RUBASHOV: Did you stammer as a child? Sharply. Don't look over there!
RICHARD, looks away quickly: Sometimes.
RUBASHOV: Breathe slowly and deeply several times. RICHARD obeys. The Girl with the Storm Trooper giggles shrilly, and the pair move slowly toward the exit. In passing, they both turn their heads toward RICHARD and RUBASHOV. The Storm Trooper says something to the girl. She replies in a low voice. They leave, the girl's giggling audible as their footsteps recede.
RICHARD, softly, to himself: Truda used to laugh at my stutter. She had a funny little laugh.
RUBASHOV, motioning RICHARD to reseat himself: You must give me your promise to write only according to the lines laid down by the Comintern.
RICHARD, sitting: Understand one thing, Comrade: Some of my colleagues write easily. I don't. I write out of torment; I write what I believe and feel in here. I have no choice—I write what I must, because I must. Even if I'm wrong, I must write what I believe. That's how we arrive at the truth.
RUBASHOV: We have already arrived at the truth. Objective truth. And with us, Art is its weapon. I'm amazed at you, Comrade Richard. You're seeking the truth for the sake of your own ego! What kind of delusion is this? The individual is nothing! The Party is everything! And its policy as laid down by the Comintern must be like a block of polished granite. One conflicting idea is dangerous. Not one crack in its surface is to be tolerated. Nothing! Not a mustard seed must be allowed to sprout in it and split our solidarity! The "me," the "I," is a grammatical fiction. He takes out his watch, glances at it. My time is up. He puts his watch back in his pocket, rises. You know what's expected of you. Keep on the line. We will send you further instructions.

RICHARD, rises: I don't think I can do it.

RUBASHOV: Why not?

RICHARD: I don't believe in their policy.

RUBASHOV: Against our enemies, we're implacable!

RICHARD: That means . . . ?

RUBASHOV: You know what it means.

RICHARD: You'd turn me over to the Nazis?

RUBASHOV: Those who are not with us are against us.

RICHARD: Then what's the difference between us and them? Our people here are going over to them by the tens of thousands. It's an easy step. Too easy. A pause. He speaks almost inaudibly. Who can say what your Revolution once meant to me? The end of all injustice. Paradise! And my Truda now lies bleeding in some S.S. cellar. She may be dead even now. Yes. In my heart—I know she's dead.

RUBASHOV, buttons his coat: We'll have to break this off now. We'd better go separately. You leave first, I'll follow.

RICHARD: What are my instructions?

RUBASHOV: There are none. There's nothing more to be said.

RICHARD: And that's all?

RUBASHOV: Yes, that's all! Walks off into the shadows.

RICHARD, groans: Christ!

RICHARD, the Pieta, and the Museum vanish leaving RUBASHOV alone, pacing his cell. A tap from 402 brings him across to 402's wall. RUBASHOV taps three times.

402, becomes visible, tapping: I've a very important question.

RUBASHOV, taps: What?

402, taps: Promise answer?

RUBASHOV, taps: Your question?

402, taps: When did you last sleep with a woman?

RUBASHOV, groans, after a long pause, laughs sardonically: Now what would you like? Taps. Three weeks ago.
ACT ONE

402, taps: Tell me about it.
RUBASHOV: Ach! Turns away.
402, taps: Tell me! Tell me! What were her breasts like?
RUBASHOV, to the wall: I suppose I have to humor you. He taps. Snowy, fitting into champagne glasses. Murmurs to the wall. Is that your style?
402, taps: Go on. Details. Her thighs.
RUBASHOV, taps: Thighs like wild mares. To the wall. How’s that?
402: Good fellow! Taps. Go on! More!
RUBASHOV, taps: That’s all. You idiot—I’m teasing you.
402, taps: Go on, go on. Details, please.

Suddenly the joke goes stale. RUBASHOV’s face clouds as a haunting memory rises to torment him. Soft strains of distant music are heard. His hand brushes his face as if to wipe away the memory.
RUBASHOV, taps: No more.
402, taps: Go on, please. Please!
RUBASHOV, to himself: No more. No more. He lies down on his cot, throws his coat over him, brooding. The music rises.
402, taps: Please! On his knees, pleading. Please! Moans and taps. Please!
He buries his head in his cot, pleading inaudibly as the lights fade out on him.

The lights in RUBASHOV’s cell dim. The music swells to the strains of a piano recording of Beethoven’s “Appassionata.” As the lights come up, the cell dissolves and becomes LUBA LOSHENKO’s bedroom. RUBASHOV’s cot becomes part of a large double bed. At the edge of the bed, LUBA, clad only in her chemise, sits smoking, dreamily staring into space, listening to the music that is coming from a small gramophone on the table nearby.
LUBA: So tomorrow I’ll have a new boss.
RUBASHOV: Yes.
LUBA: I’ll hate him.
RUBASHOV: No. He’ll be all right. They listen in silence. He smiles, musing.
This music is dangerous.
LUBA: You’ll be gone long?
RUBASHOV: I don’t know.
LUBA: I’ll miss you terribly. She hums the melody of the music.
RUBASHOV, taking out a cigarette: Get me a match, will you, Luba?
LUBA, smiles, rises, walks to the table, picks up some matches, crosses to him, swaying to the music: I love this. It always makes me feel like crying.
She lights his cigarette.
RUBASHOV, smiling: Do you enjoy that?
LUBA: Crying? She blows out the match, laughs. Sometimes.
RUBASHOV: Our racial weakness.
LUBA: What?
RUBASHOV: Tears and mysticism
LUBA: You mean the Slavic soul?
RUBASHOV, smiling cynically: The soul? Soul?
LUBA: I believe in it.
RUBASHOV: I know you do.
LUBA: Petty bourgeois?
RUBASHOV: Yes, Luba, you are. He looks at her fondly, leans over, pulls her to him, kisses her throat. The music rises. This music is dangerous. They listen in silence awhile. She goes to the gramophone and winds it. She leans against the wall near RUBASHOV.
LUBA: When I was a little girl in the Pioneer Youth I would start crying at the most unexpected moments.
RUBASHOV: You? In the Pioneer Youth? You, Luba?
LUBA: You're surprised? I wasn't in very long. I wasn't good material. RUBASHOV smiles. I would cry suddenly for no reason at all.
RUBASHOV: But there was a reason?
LUBA: I don't know. She smokes for a moment. Yes, I do. Our primer books made little Pavelik such a hero. All of us children wanted to turn our mothers and fathers over to the G.P.U. to be shot.
RUBASHOV: Was there anything to turn them in for?
LUBA, laughs gently: No. Nothing. But I would picture myself doing it anyway and becoming a great national hero like Pavelik. Then I would burst out crying. I loved my parents very much. Of course, no one knew why I was crying. So I was expelled, and my political career ended at the age of nine! RUBASHOV smiles. LUBA hums the melody. My father loved this. He and mother used to play it over and over and over.
RUBASHOV: Where are they now?
LUBA: They died in the famine after the Revolution. My father was a doctor.
RUBASHOV: Have you any family left?
LUBA: One brother. He's a doctor, too. He's married. My sister-in-law is very nice. She's a Polish woman... an artist. LUBA picks up a small painting, crosses to RUBASHOV, kneels at his side. She painted this picture. It's their baby. A little boy. Two years old. Isn't he fat?
RUBASHOV, studies it: Yes, he is fat. He puts it aside, looks at LUBA. Why don't you get married, Luba, and have some fat babies of your own? Isn't there a young man at the office... ?
LUBA: Yes.
RUBASHOV: I thought so. And he wants to marry you?
LUBA, rests her cheek on his knee, lovingly caresses his hand: Yes, he does.
RUBASHOV: Well... ?
LUBA: No... ?
ACT ONE

RUBASHOV: Why not?
LUBA: I don't love him.
RUBASHOV: Mm, I see, I see. A pause.
LUBA, suddenly: You can do anything you wish with me.
RUBASHOV, studies her: Why did you say that? LUBA shrugs her shoulders.
You don't reproach me?
LUBA: Oh, no, no, no! Why should I? The music swells and fills the room.
RUBASHOV: This music is dangerous. When you listen to this and you realize
human beings can create such beauty, you want to pat them on the head.
That's bad. They'll only bite your hand off.
LUBA, takes his hand, and kisses it: Like this?
RUBASHOV, gently: Luba, you know, with us, there can never be anything
more.
LUBA: I don't expect anything more. Did I give you the impression I expected
anything more?
RUBASHOV: No. You've been very kind, Luba, and sweet. Pause. I may be
gone a long time. I may never see you again.
LUBA: Where are you going?
RUBASHOV, hands her the painting: Wherever the Party sends me.
LUBA, rises: I understand. I'm not asking anything. Only, wherever you go,
I'll be thinking of you. I'll be with you in my mind always!
RUBASHOV, snuffs out cigarette: But this is exactly what I don't want.
LUBA, turns toward him: You don't?
RUBASHOV: No, Luba, no!
LUBA, quietly: Oh! She crosses slowly to the gramophone.
Suddenly, the phantasmagoria of LUBA and the bedroom vanishes as the
lights are switched on in the cell. The jangle of the key in the lock. The door
flies open. A young GUARD enters.
GUARD: All right! Get up. Come with me.
RUBASHOV: Are you taking me to your commandant?
GUARD: Don't ask questions! Do as you're told.
RUBASHOV: Very well. Rises. All the posters show our young people smiling.
He puts on his overcoat. Have you ever smiled?
GUARD, humorlessly: Yes.
The GUARD grimly motions him out. They go. The light is switched off
in his cell, as the lights come up on the prison tier.
402, crosses to 302's wall and taps: They've taken him up.
302, taps: So soon?
402, taps: Pass it on.
302, taps: They've taken Rubashov up. Pass it on.
202, taps: I hope they give him a bad time.
302, taps: Oh, no! He was friend of the people.
202, taps: Yes. His eyes bulge wildly as he addresses an imaginary group about him. They're all friends of the people. Didn't they free us? Look at us. Free as birds! Everything's all right, Comrades. The land belongs to us! But the bread belongs to them. The rivers are ours! But the fish are theirs. The forests are ours, but not the wood! That's for them. Everything's for them. He crosses, taps. They've taken Rubashov up! Pass it on!
The taps echo and reecho throughout the prison: "Rubashov taken up,"

"Rubashov taken up." The lights dim and the prisoners in the honeycomb of cells vanish behind the scrim, leaving only a huge pillar of granite and iron shrouded in shadows. The lights come up on an office in the prison. A barred window reveals dawn, and snow falling, outside. The bayonet of a guard cuts back and forth across the window like a metronome. On the wall, over the desk, is a portrait of The Leader seen vaguely in shadow. The rest of the wall is empty except for faded patches where other pictures have been hung and removed. Seated at the desk, smoking a long Kremlin cigarette, is a middle-aged man in officer's uniform. He is rough, heavy-set, jowly, graying at the temples, a face once handsome now dissipated and cynical. He is grimly examining some papers, carelessly dribbling cigarette ashes over his jacket. There is a knock at the door. The officer, Ivanoff, calls out, "Come in." The guard enters with Rubashov.
Ivanoff, gruffly, to the guard: Shut the door. Exit the guard.
Ivanoff, rises, shakes his head at Rubashov, laughs, then familiarly: Kolya! Rubashov: Well... Ivanoff: Surprised?
Rubashov: Nothing surprises me any more. Ivanoff laughs, opens a drawer, takes out a box of cigarettes, limps across the room to him. Are you the commandant here?
Ivanoff, shaking his head: I'm your investigator.
Rubashov: That makes it difficult.
Ivanoff: Not at all. Not if we're intelligent... which we are. Offers him the box of cigarettes. Cigarette? Rubashov pauses.
Rubashov: Have hostilities begun yet?
Ivanoff: Why?
Rubashov: You know the etiquette.
Ivanoff: Take one! Forces the box into his hand. Put them in your pocket, keep them.
Rubashov: All right. He takes a cigarette, and puts the box in his pocket. We'll call this an unofficial prelude.
Ivanoff: Why so aggressive?
ACT ONE

RUBASHOV: Did I arrest you? Or did you people arrest me?

IVANOFF: You people? *Shakes his head, lights his own cigarette.* What's happened to you, Kolya? What a falling-off is here! *Sighs.* Ekh! Ekh!

RUBASHOV: Why have I been arrested?

IVANOFF, *gives RUBASHOV a match, genially:* Later. Sit down. Light your cigarette. Relax. *He limps to the door, closes the Judas hole, and locks it.*

RUBASHOV *sits down.* I saw you last three years ago.

RUBASHOV, *smoking his cigarette with relish:* Where?

IVANOFF: MOSCOW. *As he talks, he crosses up to the window and pulls the chain, letting down the iron shutters.* You were speaking. You'd just escaped from the German prison. They gave you a bad time, didn't they? They didn't dull your edge, though. *Crosses back to RUBASHOV.* Good speech, plenty of bite. I was proud of my old General.

RUBASHOV: Why didn't you come backstage?

IVANOFF: You were surrounded by all the big wigs.

RUBASHOV, *drily:* Mm, a fine assortment of opportunists, bureaucrats, and variegated pimps. IVANOFF grins, *shakes his head, bobbles to his desk.* RUBASHOV points to his leg. *Your leg's very good. I hadn't even noticed.*

IVANOFF, *nods, smiles, sits on the desk, tapping his leg:* Automatic joints, rustless chromium plating. I can swim, ride, drive a car, dance, make love.

You see how right you were? And how stupid I was.

RUBASHOV: You were young and emotional, that's all. Tell me, Sascha, does the amputated foot still itch?

IVANOFF, *laughs:* The big toe. In rainy weather.

RUBASHOV, *smoking:* Curious.

IVANOFF, *lowers his lids, squints at RUBASHOV, blows a smoke ring:* Not at all. Doesn't your recent amputation itch?

RUBASHOV: Mine?

IVANOFF, *calmly, blowing smoke rings:* When did you cut yourself off from the Party? How long have you been a member of the organized opposition?

RUBASHOV, *throws his cigarette away, grinds it out under his foot:* The unofficial part is over.

IVANOFF, *rises, stands over him:* Don't be so aggressive, Nicolai!

RUBASHOV, *takes off his glasses, rubs his eyes:* I'm tired, and I'm sick, and I don't care to play any games with you. Why have I been arrested?

IVANOFF, *cynically, crossing back to his desk chair:* Supposing you tell me why.

RUBASHOV, *bounds to his feet, furious:* Stop this nonsense now! Who do you think you're dealing with? What are the charges against me?
IVANOFF, shrugs his shoulders, leans back in his chair: What difference does that make?

RUBASHOV: I demand that you either read the charges—or dismiss me at once!

IVANOFF, blows a smoke ring: Let's be sensible, shall we? Legal subtleties are all right for others, but for the likes of you and myself? He taps his cigarette ash off into the tray. Why put on an act? When did you ever trouble about formal charges? At Kronstadt? He rises, confronts RUBASHOV. After all—remember—I served under you. I know you.

RUBASHOV: No man fights a war without guilt. You don't win battles with rose water and silk gloves.

IVANOFF: Not our kind of battles, no!

RUBASHOV, heatedly: A bloodless revolution is a contradiction in terms. Illegality and violence are like dynamite in the hands of a true revolutionary—weapons of the class struggle.

IVANOFF: Agreed.

RUBASHOV: But you people have used the weapons of the Revolution to strangle the Revolution! You've turned the Terror against the people. You've begun the bloodbath of the Thermidor. He controls himself, speaks quietly. And that's something quite different, my one-time friend and comrade. Sits.

IVANOFF: Damn it, Kolya, I'd hate to see you shot.

RUBASHOV, polishing his glasses, smiles sarcastically: Very touching of you. And exactly why do you people wish to shoot me?

IVANOFF, flares up: "You people!" Again. What the hell's happened to you? It used to be "we."

RUBASHOV, on his feet again: Yes, it used to be. But who is the "we" today? He points to the picture on the wall. The Boss? The Iron Man and his machine? Who is the "we"? Tell me.

IVANOFF: The people, the masses . . .

RUBASHOV: Leave the masses out. You don't understand them any more. Probably I don't either. Once we worked with them. We knew them. We made history with them. We were part of them. For one little minute we started them on what promised to be a new run of dignity for man. But that's gone! Dead! And buried. There they are. He indicates the faded patches of wallpaper. Faded patches on the wall. The old guard. Our old comrades. Where are they? Slaughtered! Your pockmarked leader has picked us off one by one till no one's left except a few broken-down men like myself, and a few careerist prostitutes like you!

IVANOFF: And when did you arrive at this morbid conclusion?

RUBASHOV: I didn't arrive at it. It was thrust on me.
IVANOFF: When? On what occasion would you say?
RUBASHOV: On the occasion when I came back from the Nazi slaughter-
house, when I looked about for my old friends, when all I could find of
them were those—Again he waves his spectacles at the telltale patches.
—faded patches on every wall in every house in the land.

IVANOFF, nods his head, murmurs reasonably: Mm, hm! I see. That's logical.
And that, of course, was when you... The telephone rings. IVANOFF picks
up the receiver, barks. I'm busy. Hangs up. When you joined the organized
opposition...

RUBASHOV, slowly, deliberately: You know as well as I do, I never joined the
organized opposition.

IVANOFF: Kolya! Please! We both grew up in the tradition.
RUBASHOV, sharply: I never joined the opposition.

IVANOFF: Why not? You mean you sat by with your arms folded? You
thought we were leading the Revolution to destruction and you did noth-
ing? Shakes his head.

RUBASHOV: Perhaps I was too old and used up.

IVANOFF, sits back again, clucks with good-natured disbelief: Ekh, ekh, ekh!
RUBASHOV, shrugging his shoulders: Believe what you will.

IVANOFF: In any event, we have all the proofs.

RUBASHOV: Proofs of what? Sabotage?

IVANOFF: That, of course.

RUBASHOV: Of course.

IVANOFF: If that were all.

RUBASHOV: There's more?


RUBASHOV: Ah! And who am I supposed to have attempted to murder?


RUBASHOV: Naturally.

IVANOFF: I told you we have proofs. Picks up a sheaf of typewritten pages
and waves them under his nose.

RUBASHOV: For instance?

IVANOFF: Confessions.

RUBASHOV: Whose?

IVANOFF: For one, the man who was to do the killing.

RUBASHOV: Congratulations. And who was it I instigated to murder whom?

IVANOFF: Indiscreet question.

RUBASHOV: May I read the confession? RUBASHOV reaches out for the pa-
ers. IVANOFF smiles, draws them out of his reach. May I be confronted
with the man? IVANOFF smiles again, shakes his head. Who the hell would
I want to murder?
IVANOFF: You've been sitting there for ten minutes telling me. He opens a drawer, drops in the sheaf of papers. The man you tried to murder is the Leader. He slams the drawer shut. Our Leader.

RUBASHOV, takes off his glasses, leans forward, speaks deliberately, between his teeth: Do you really believe this nonsense? He studies IVANOFF. Or are you only pretending to be an idiot? He suddenly laughs knowingly. You don't believe it.

IVANOFF, sits slowly, adjusting his prosthetic leg: Put yourself in my place. Our positions could very easily be reversed. Ask yourself that question—and you have the answer. IVANOFF rubs his thigh at the amputation line, stares moodily at the false leg. I was always so proud of my body. Then to wake, to find a stump in a wire cage. I can smell that hospital room. I can see it as if it were happening now: you sitting there by my bed, soothing, reasoning, scolding, and I crying because they had just amputated my leg. He turns to RUBASHOV. Remember how I begged you to lend me your pistol? Remember how you argued with me for three hours, till you persuaded me that suicide was petty bourgeois romanticism? He raises, his voice suddenly harsh. Today the positions are reversed. Now it's you who want to throw yourself into the abyss. Well, I'm not going to let you. Then we'll be quits.

RUBASHOV, putting on his glasses, studies IVANOFF for a second, with an ironic smile: You want to save me? You've a damned curious way of doing it. I am unimpressed by your bogus sentimentality. You've already tricked me into talking my head off my shoulders. Let it go at that!

IVANOFF, beams: I had to make you explode now, or you'd have exploded at the wrong time. Haven't you even noticed? Gestures about the room. No stenographer! He crosses back to his desk, opens a drawer. You're behaving like an infant. A romantic infant. Now you know what we're going to do? Extracts a dossier from the drawer.

RUBASHOV, grimly: No, what are we going to do?
IVANOFF: We are going to concoct a nice little confession.
RUBASHOV: Ah!
IVANOFF: For the public trial.
RUBASHOV, nods his head in amused comprehension: So that's it? There's to be a public trial? And I'm to make a nice little confession?
IVANOFF: Let me finish. . . .
RUBASHOV, biting out each word: That is to say, I'm to transform myself into a grinning chimpanzee in a zoo? I'm to beat my breast and spit at myself in a mirror, so the People can laugh and say, "The Old Guard—how ridiculous!" I'm to pick at my own excrement and put it in my own mouth, so the People can say, "The Old Guard—how disgusting!" No, Sascha, no! You've got the wrong man.
IVANOFF, drawling with exaggerated patience: Let me finish. The patience vanishes. He shouts at RUBASHOV. Which are we to save? Your dignity or your head? He controls his impatience, begins to talk rapidly, thinking out the plan in his own mind, as he paces to and fro. You make this confession now. You admit developing a deviation. You joined such-and-such an opposition bloc. You give us their names. (They've all been shot by now, anyway, so nothing's lost.) However, when you learned of their terrorist plans, you were shocked. You broke off with them. You see?

RUBASHOV: Yes, I see.

IVANOFF: Your case then goes to public trial. We refute the murder charge completely. Even so, you'll get twenty years. But in two, perhaps three years, a reprieve. In five years you'll be back in the ring again. And that is all that matters. He stops and nods cheerfully at RUBASHOV.

RUBASHOV: No, I'm sorry.

IVANOFF, his smile fades, he lights a fresh cigarette, speaks slowly, drily:

Then your case will be taken out of my hands. You'll be tried in secret session administratively. You know what that means?

RUBASHOV: Yes. The rubber ball in my mouth, the bullet in the back of the neck.


Yes. At once! He hangs up. Turns again to RUBASHOV. Very adroit.

RUBASHOV: Really? What have I done now?

IVANOFF: You've no idea?

RUBASHOV: I have a small notion. Nuisance tactics! Of no real importance.

You overestimate them.

GLETKIN enters, crosses above the desk, salutes stiffly. IVANOFF returns the salute.

IVANOFF: I have just received a phone call from the prosecutor's office. Your men were instructed to arrest Citizen Rubashov as quietly as possible. What the hell went wrong?

GLETKIN: I'm interrogating the arresting officers now. The prisoner refused them entrance and barricaded his door against them.
IVANOFF: So they shot off the lock?

RUBASHOV, with mock indignation: Woke up the whole neighborhood.

GLETKIN, not glancing at him: There was no alternative.

RUBASHOV, over his shoulder to GLETKIN: There were five alternatives. You need some lessons in elementary tactics.

Stung, GLETKIN turns toward RUBASHOV.

IVANOFF, quickly, commanding: Go on!

GLETKIN: Then he refused to accompany them on his feet. They were forced to pick him up and carry him out bodily, screaming like a woman.

RUBASHOV: Wrong! Roaring like a bear. A wounded bear. And they tore my pants.

GLETKIN stands there, straight as a ramrod, his eyes expressionless, in perfect control now.

IVANOFF: Your instructions were to treat him with care. You will see that the prisoner gets cigarettes and medical attention.

RUBASHOV: Not unless you furnish an outside physician. I know these prison doctors.

GLETKIN: That is against regulations.

IVANOFF, to RUBASHOV: We'll see what can be done. To GLETKIN. Wait outside. Exit GLETKIN. You'll be given every consideration. Pencil and paper, if you wish . . .

RUBASHOV: Many thanks, but it won't work. I've had my bellyful of this farce. He rises. Kindly have me taken to my cell.

IVANOFF: As you like. He picks up the phone, presses a button, and barks. Guard! He hangs up. I didn't expect you to confess at once. Take your time. You have plenty of time. Think it over. When you are ready to confess, send me a note. The men stare at each other. IVANOFF smiles. You will. I'm sure you will.

RUBASHOV: Never, Sascha. Never. That's final!

The door is opened. The GUARD enters.

IVANOFF: The next decade will decide the fate of the world in our era. Don't you want to be here to see it? RUBASHOV glances at IVANOFF, then turns and goes off with the GUARD.

As soon as RUBASHOV leaves, IVANOFF drops his monumental calm, rises and calls out irritably, "Gletkin!" As GLETKIN enters, IVANOFF speaks quickly and harshly, hobbling up and down nervously.

IVANOFF: By now all Moscow knows. Make a full report. Send the arresting officers over to Headquarters. Indicates the chair. Sit down. GLETKIN sits. Now, look here! I want it clearly understood. This is no ordinary prisoner. We can't afford any more bungling. When you handle this man you dance on eggs! The political and historical importance of these trials is enor-
mous. And N. S. Rubashov is the key figure. We must have his confession. Those are our orders. From the top.

GLETKIN: Then why not turn him over to me? I'll bring you his confession in three days.

IVANOFF: Thanks! And you'll carry N. S. Rubashov to the witness stand in pieces? Wonderful. No, your harsh methods won't work here. Not with this man. *Lights a fresh cigarette, calms down.* He'll confess. There's enough of the old Bolshevik left in him. He'll confess. You're to leave him in peace. I don't want him disturbed. He's to have paper, pencils, cigarettes, extra rations . . .

GLETKIN: Why?

IVANOFF: To accelerate the processes of thought. He has to work this out alone. *Taps his head.* In here.

GLETKIN: This approach, in my opinion, is all wrong.

IVANOFF, *looks at GLETKIN with veiled amusement:* You don't like him? You had a little trouble with him a few minutes ago, didn't you?

GLETKIN: That has nothing to do with it.

IVANOFF: Old Rubashov can still spit a sword! What'd he do? Cut you up the middle?

GLETKIN, *coldly:* His personality has nothing to do with it. I hope I'm a better Party member than that. I never allow likes or dislikes to interfere with my judgment.

IVANOFF: Very commendable.

GLETKIN: Only, since this confession is so important to the Party, I consider your method wrong. This won't get you results. I know how to handle these old-timers. They're all rotten at the core. They're all infected with the Western leprosy. If you want a confession, turn him over to me.

IVANOFF: You young people amuse me. You know everything, don't you? The Nazis captured this man, broke his leg, smashed his jaw, killed him, and brought him to life again—I don't know how many times—but they couldn't extract one admission out of him. And finally, he escaped. And you're going to break him for me in three days? *Musing.* No! If he confesses, it won't be out of cowardice. To GLETKIN. Your methods won't work with him. He's made out of a material, the more you hammer it, the tougher it gets.

GLETKIN: I don't agree. My experience with these old counter-revolutionaries proves otherwise. The human nervous system at best can only stand so much—and when they have these bourgeois flaws in them, a little pressure—in the right places—and they split like rotten logs.

IVANOFF, *laughs softly, shakes his head:* I'd hate to fall into your hands.

GLETKIN: It's my experience that every human nervous system has a break-
ing point under pain. It's only necessary to find the lever, the special pain . . .

IVANOFF, *abruptly and harshly:* That'll do!

GLETKIN, *rises stiffly:* You asked me.

IVANOFF, *pause:* Comrade Gletkin, in the early days—He goes to his desk, opens a drawer, takes out a bottle and several glasses. He fills the glasses, pushes one over to GLETKIN. —before you were born, we started the Revolution with the illusion that some day we were going to abolish prisons and substitute flower gardens. Ekh, ekh! Maybe, someday. *He tosses off his drink.*

GLETKIN: Why are you all so cynical?

IVANOFF: Cynical? *Turns and surveys him.* Please explain that remark!

GLETKIN: I'd rather not, if you don't mind.

IVANOFF: I do mind. Explain it.

GLETKIN, *picks up the glass, drains it:* I notice you older men always talk as if only the past were glorious . . . or some distant future. But we're already far ahead of any other country, here and now! As for the past, we have to crush it. The quicker, the better.

IVANOFF: I see. *He sits, shaking his head, amused.* In your eyes, then, I am the cynic?

GLETKIN: Yes. I think so. *He crosses to the table, sets down the glass,* abruptly.

IVANOFF: Well, that may be. As for Rubashov, my instructions remain. He's to have time for reflection. He's to be left alone, and he will become his own torturer.

GLETKIN: I don't agree.

IVANOFF: He'll confess. *He catches the expression in Gletkin's face, then sharply:* You're to leave him alone! That's an order.

GLETKIN: As you command. *Clicks his heels, jerks to attention, wheels about, and marches out as if on parade.* IVANOFF curls his lip in disgust, pours himself a stiff drink, sighs heavily, and drinks . . . as the scene fades out.

The lights come up on all the cells. RUBASHOV is seated on his cot, smoking, wrapped in thought. The other prisoners are passing communications down the grapevine.

202, *taps:* All the prisoners ask Rubashov not to confess. Die in silence.


402 crosses to RUBASHOV'S wall and signals. RUBASHOV raises his head, pauses, slowly rises, glances at the judas hole, then crosses to the wall, responds to the signal.

402, *taps:* Prisoners ask you not to give in. Don't let them make you go on trial.
ACT ONE

RUBASHOV, pause, then taps: How was 302 tortured?
402, taps: Steam.

RUBASHOV, grimly, puffs at his lit cigarette till it glows, blows off the ashes, presses the live coal into the back of his hand, and holds it there without flinching, staring stoically at the blue wisps of smoke that curl up from his burning flesh. Finally, he grinds out the cigarette, tosses it away.
402, taps again: You’ll die in silence? You’ll die in silence?
RUBASHOV, taps wearily: I will. Tell them. I will.
402, taps: My respects. You’re a man! He crosses, taps on 302’s wall. Rubashov will die in silence. Pass it on.
302, taps: Rubashov will die in silence. Pass it on.

The news is tapped through the prison and a murmur like a wind rises and falls: “Rubashov will die in silence... Rubashov will die in silence...”
The lights fade, and the prisoners in the tier vanish.
RUBASHOV, staring at the scorched hand, crosses to his cot, sits, nods his head, and murmurs: As chimney sweepers come to dust... to dust... to dust... The lights fade on him.

CURTAIN
ACT TWO

RUBASHOV’s cell, five weeks later.

At rise: Darkness. Bars of light from the judas hole illumine RUBASHOV’s feverish face. His eyes are closed; he is dreaming evil dreams. He breathes heavily, moaning and tossing about fitfully on his cot. Ghostly images hover over and around him; ghostly voices whisper hollowly: “Rubashov! Rubashov!” Echoes of the past—RICHARD’s voice calling: “Christ crowned with thorns!” LUBA’s voice, rich and low, “You can do anything you want with me.” The nameless ones appear and disappear, whispering, “Rubashov, Rubashov.”

RUBASHOV, dreaming, raises his head, his eyes shut, and cries out: Death is no mystery to us. There’s nothing exalted about it. It’s the logical solution to political divergencies. His head falls back again, turning from side to side, moaning.

The lights come up in the corridor. A sound of heels on a stone floor. GLETKIN enters from a door right, coming up from the execution cellar; he is followed by a young fellow officer. They move toward RUBASHOV’s cell, talking inaudibly. IVANOFF enters through the gate, glimpses them, stops short, then calls out sharply: “Gletkin!” GLETKIN halts, turns to face IVANOFF.

IVANOFF, hobbles down to GLETKIN, scrutinizing him suspiciously: What are you up to?

GLETKIN, very correct: I don’t understand you, Comrade.

IVANOFF: No, I’m sure you don’t. Have you been at my prisoner?

GLETKIN: Been at him?

IVANOFF, irritably: Laid your hands on him. You understand that, don’t you?

GLETKIN: I haven’t seen Citizen Rubashov for five weeks. However, I am informed, in the line of duty, his fever is worse. I suggest it would be advisable I bring him to the prison doctor.

IVANOFF, blows a smoke ring, then slowly, measuring his words: Keep away from him. And keep that prison doctor away from him. Sharply. My orders still stand.

GLETKIN: Very well, Comrade. They’ll be obeyed.

IVANOFF, snorts, blows smoke into his face, then turns and limps off. They watch him go. The YOUNG OFFICER turns to GLETKIN, who has taken out his notebook and is writing in it.

YOUNG OFFICER: Comrade Ivanoff’s nerves are wearing thin.

GLETKIN: I’m afraid this prisoner is proving stubborn. I told them when they brought him in that I could break him.
YOUNG OFFICER: Easily.
GLETKIN: Comrade Ivanoff wants to use psychological methods only.
YOUNG OFFICER, scornfully: These old bookworms of the Revolution!
GLETKIN: Tonight I'm using psychological methods. Closes his notebook, puts it away. I'll break this prisoner.
YOUNG OFFICER: Against orders?
GLETKIN: No. I won't so much as go near his cell. But— Glances at his watch. —inside an hour he'll be ready to confess.
YOUNG OFFICER: How?
GLETKIN, enigmatically: It'll be very interesting.
   RUBASHOV wakes, sits up with a sudden start, listening.
   The lights in the tier of cells come up.
   402 sits up abruptly, wakening suddenly, also listens, frozen. 302 and 202 also awaken suddenly and listen to the ominous stillness.
   The lights fade on GLETKIN and the YOUNG OFFICER.
   The prisoners rise, one by one, and begin to pace nervously to and fro like caged animals. Once in a while, one of them will pause, listen, and then continue to pace. RUBASHOV rises, wipes the perspiration from his face with the sleeve of his coat, listens, then crosses to 402's wall, taps, waits, and 402 responds.
   RUBASHOV, taps: Did I wake you?
   402, taps: No.
   RUBASHOV, taps: Something's happening... 402, taps: You feel it too?
   RUBASHOV, taps: What?
   402, taps: Don't know. Something. How's your fever?
   RUBASHOV, taps: Not good.
   402, taps: Try to sleep. Overhead, 302 taps signal. Wait! Crosses over to 302's segment of wall, and answers the signal.
   302, taps: Who is Bogrov?
   402, taps: Don't know. Returns, taps. Who is Bogrov?
   RUBASHOV, taps: Mischa Bogrov?
   402, taps: No first name.
   RUBASHOV, taps: I know a Mischa Bogrov. Why?
   402, taps: Name tapped through.
   RUBASHOV, taps: He arrested?
   402, taps: Don't know. Name Bogrov. That is all.
   RUBASHOV, taps: What connection?
   402, taps: Don't know.
   RUBASHOV, to himself: Curious.
   The lights fade on the other prisoners as they start to pace nervously.
RUBASHOV, alone, thinking, smiles, murmurs: Mischa. He sits on his cot, shaking his head. Mischa!

A chorus of men singing is faintly heard. It grows louder. The bronze glow of a flickering campfire. Russian soldiers and marines of the Revolution, in conglomerate uniforms, half-military, half-civilian, laden with assorted weapons, dangling stick grenades and daggers, are gathered around the fire, smoking, warming their hands, singing. GENERAL RUBASHOV, his face shining with reflected firelight, shakes his head and beats out the tune, as a big, snub-nosed, sandy-haired marine with thick shoulders and an enchanting smile sings out in a mellow, ringing voice.

BOGROV: “In the dawn’s light, faintly gleaming
Stand the ancient Kremlin walls;
And the land, no longer dreaming,
Now awakes as morning calls.
Though the winds are coldly blowing,
Streets begin to hum with noise;
And the sun with splendor glowing
Greets the land with all its joys.
We’ll shout aloud for we are proud;
Our power is invincible.
We’ll ne’er disband, we’ll always stand
Together for dear Moscow’s land.”

The marine punctuates the finish by tossing his hat in the air. The others applaud and shout: “Bravo Mischa! Bravo Mischa Bogrov!”

MISCHA, laughs, crosses to RUBASHOV, un hooks from his belt a curved, elaborately chased, silver-handled dagger: Kolya . . .

RUBASHOV: Yes, Mischa?

BOGROV, presenting the dagger to him: Here, I want you to have this. To remember me.

RUBASHOV, laughs: You may need it, yourself.

BOGROV, shakes his head, grins. There is something of the good-natured, ingenuous child in this big man: No. The Civil War is over. No more killing. Now we go home. We build a new life. He extends the gift again. Please, take it.

RUBASHOV, accepts it: All right, Mischa. Thank you. Now, I have something for you. Can you guess?

BOGROV, thinks hard, frowning, then his eyes open wide: Kolya, is it . . . Am I . . . They’re . . . ?

RUBASHOV, beaming, nods: Tomorrow you’ll be a member of the Party.

BOGROV, overcome with joy: Me? Me? Mischa Bogrov a member of the Party!

RUBASHOV: You’ve earned it. You fought well for the Revolution.
ACT TWO

BOGROV: I'm ignorant, Kolya; I'm just a stupid peasant and I don't know enough yet—but I'd die for the Revolution.

RUBASHOV: We know that. Now you must learn the meaning of it. You must go to school. You must study, Mischa.

BOGROV: I will, I will. You'll see, you'll be very proud of me. Wherever I am, every year on this day, I'll send you a letter and I'll sign it "Your Comrade, Faithful to the Grave." The soldiers call for more song, "Come on, Mischa. More!" For you, I sing this just for you, Kolya.

BOGROV, sings in a rich voice the chorus of "Red Moscow":

"We'll shout aloud for we are proud,
Our power is invincible.
We'll ne'er disband, we'll always stand
Together for dear Moscow's land."

Gradually BOGROV and the campfire and the men singing with him fade away, as do their voices, leaving RUBASHOV alone in his dank, silent, gray cell, nodding and humming the tune quietly to himself. Lights come up on 402, who is tapping on RUBASHOV's wall. RUBASHOV crosses to the wall, responds.

402, taps: What day?
RUBASHOV, taps: Lost track.
402, taps: What you doing?
RUBASHOV, taps: Dreaming.
402, taps: Sleeping?
RUBASHOV, taps: Waking.
402, taps: Bad. What dreams?
RUBASHOV, taps: My life.
402, taps: You won't confess?
RUBASHOV, taps: I told you no.
402, taps: Die in silence is best. Pause.
RUBASHOV, to himself, sardonically: Yes. Die in silence! Fade into darkness! Easily said. Die in silence! Vanish without a word! Easily said.

402, taps: Walking?
RUBASHOV, taps: Yes.

RUBASHOV, shrugs his shoulders, taps: Ha ha!
402, bursts into laughter again, taps: Ha ha! Funny, ha!
RUBASHOV, taps: Funny.
402, taps: How many women you love? Pause. How many?
RUBASHOV, taps: None.
402, taps: Why not?
RUBASHOV, taps: My work. No time.
402, taps: You and Revolution. Some love affair! Don't you fellows have sex?
RUBASHOV, taps: Oh, yes.
402, taps: What you use it for? Write in snow? Ha! Ha! He doubles up with laughter, plucking at the lean flesh on his arms and thighs. Good joke?
RUBASHOV, taps: Not good.
402, soured, taps: No sense humor. No wonder. Your women are half men!
Your women have moustaches. You killed the beauty of our women. Son of bitch, son of bitch, son of bitch!
RUBASHOV, dryly, taps: Repeating yourself.
402, taps: Confess. Never in love? Once?
A gray-haired man, HRUTSCH, materializes, sighing heavily and clutching his breast over the heart.
HRUTSCH, laughs timidly: It's nothing. My heart skips about a bit.
The cell fades away. HRUTSCH is standing at the desk in the office of the Commissariat of the Iron Works. The vista outside the window reveals the now-completed factory buildings. HRUTSCH is obviously frightened and nervous.
HRUTSCH, squeezes his speech out in short spasmodic gasps: Yes, the files are ready for you, and of course you'll want to see the charts. He turns to the darkness. LUBA LOSHENKO materializes, standing there with the charts in her hand, staring at RUBASHOV with large, luminous eyes and parted lips. She hands the charts to HRUTSCH, but her eyes never leave RUBASHOV. Ah, here we are. Now, anything you want explained, our secretary here knows them backwards. He observes them staring at each other. You remember Comrade Loshenko? Hands the charts to RUBASHOV.
RUBASHOV, leaning heavily on a cane, steps forward. He walks with a slight limp: Yes. How have you been, Comrade Loshenko?
LUBA: Very well, thank you, Comrade Rubashov. Welcome back home.
HRUTSCH: Many changes since you've been gone. The factories are completed.
RUBASHOV, depositing the charts on the desk: You haven't filled your quota. Iron is off 23 percent, steel 38 percent.
ACT TWO

HRUTSCH: Yes, yes, the sabotage is a problem. *He sighs, clutches his heart.* He laughs apologetically, indicating his heart. Every once in awhile it just starts hammering . . . I should complain—look at him. The stories you could tell, Comrade Rubashov? Those Nazis! What they did to you! And he escapes, comes home, and right to work. Wonderful spirit. Wonderful. What an example to us! *He laughs feebly, pants, holding his heart.* Of course, as for us filling the new quota, mechanically it can't be. It's physically . . .

RUBASHOV, coldly, impersonal: Those are the orders.

HRUTSCH, again the fear rises, he essays a feeble smile: Well, if those are the orders, it will just have to be done, won't it?

RUBASHOV: Yes. I'll send for you. *He dismisses him.* HRUTSCH goes quickly.

RUBASHOV turns. He looks at LUBA in silence, smiles.

LUBA: I wondered if I'd ever see you again.

RUBASHOV: It was a question whether anyone would.

LUBA: My prayers were answered. I prayed for you.

RUBASHOV: To which god?

LUBA: I did. I prayed.

RUBASHOV: The same little bourgeoise, Luba. Are you married yet?

LUBA: No.

RUBASHOV: Why not? *Luba shrugs her shoulders. Any babies?*

LUBA: No. *Luba laughs.* You've no idea of the excitement here when we read that you were alive and home. We saw a picture of you when you arrived at Moscow, and our Leader had his arm around you. I was so proud. *There is an embarrassed pause.*

RUBASHOV, glances at the charts: Hrutsch is in trouble.

LUBA: Poor man, it's not his fault.

RUBASHOV: Whose fault is it?

LUBA: No one's. The men are overworked, and . . . *She stops herself abruptly.*

RUBASHOV: Go on.

LUBA, shakes her head: That's all. Who am I to tell you?

RUBASHOV: Go on! Go on!

LUBA, a sudden outpouring: They're frightened. Last week more than forty workers were taken away by the G.P.U.

RUBASHOV: Well, we have to have discipline. Socialism isn't going to drop down on us from your nice, neat heaven.

LUBA: Yes, but the machines don't know that. The machines break down, too.

RUBASHOV: Why?

LUBA: The same reason. They're overworked.
RUBASHOV, *sighs*: Problems. *He puts the charts away, turns to her.* Tell me about yourself. Any lovers?

LUBA, *seriously*: No.


LUBA: I thought you were dead, and I didn't want to go on living. I found that out. I wouldn't want to live in a world without knowing you were somewhere in it.

RUBASHOV: Come here. *Luba goes to him. He puts his arms around her and kisses her.*

LUBA, *begins to tremble and cry*: I thought you were dead. I thought the Nazis had killed you.

RUBASHOV, *burying his face in her hair*: I'm hard to kill.

LUBA: But they hurt you so. Your poor legs—they broke them?

RUBASHOV: The pieces grow together.

LUBA: Was it awful?

RUBASHOV: I forget. *Holds her at arm's length, studies her face.* It's good to see you again, Luba.

LUBA: Do you mean that?

RUBASHOV, *impersonally*: Yes. *He turns from her, picks up the charts.* I have some dictation. Get your pad and pencil. And call in Hrutsch. I'm afraid we're going to have to get rid of that milksop. *Crossing away from her into the shadows.*

LUBA, *very quietly*: Yes, Comrade Commissar.

The memory scene fades. RUBASHOV, alone, leaning against the stone wall, sighs heavily. *Three taps are heard. He responds.*

402, *appears, taps*: Sad!

RUBASHOV, *taps*: What?

402, *taps*: You! Never in love. To die without ever being in love. Sad!

A chill seizes RUBASHOV; he groans, puts his hand to his swollen cheek, and shivers.

RUBASHOV, *taps*: Good night.

402, *taps*: What's wrong?

RUBASHOV, *taps*: My fever's back.

402, *taps*: Again? Maybe you should try the prison doctor?

RUBASHOV, *taps*: No, thanks.

402, *taps*: Don't blame you. A butcher!

They both turn from the wall, pace a few steps, and simultaneously freeze, listening, listening as if the silence itself contained some unheard and unholy sound.

RUBASHOV, *crosses to 402, taps*: What's that?
ACT TWO

402, taps: You felt it again?

RUBASHOV, taps: In the air...

402, taps: Yes... The lights fade on 402.

RUBASHOV, wipes his feverish brow with the back of his sleeve and slowly paces to and fro, to himself: What if the Leader is right? In spite of everything. In spite of the dirt and blood and lies. Suppose the Leader is right? A chill shakes him. He puts on his coat, continues to pace. Suppose the true foundations of the future are being built here? History has always been an inhumane and unscrupulous builder, mixing its mortar of lies and blood and filth. He shivers again, pulls his coat tighter. Well, what of it, Rubashov? Be logical. Haven’t you always lived under the compulsion of working things out to their final conclusions? He accelerates his pacing, counting the steps. 1...2...3...4...5... and a half; 1...2...3...4...5 and a half. He stops abruptly, as a thought strikes him. Yes. Yes.

A sound of distant laughter. Slowly, the figures of some dockworkers materialize, sitting at a small iron table in a pub on the waterfront on the Marseilles docks. They are eating bread and cheese and drinking wine, talking loudly and laughing good-naturedly. A big, stocky man wearing a sailor’s sweater and stocking cap is seated next to a little hunchback who wears a sailor’s cap and a seaman’s pea jacket. Next to the little hunchback sits a third dockworker. The big man is juggling some apples, and the others are watching and roaring with laughter. On the wall over the table is a militant poster demanding sanctions against Mussolini for his rape of Ethiopia. Benito’s caricature dominates the scene: the jutting jaw, the pop eyes, the little fez on the shaved dome.

RUBASHOV, accompanied by ALBERT, a sharp-featured, young French intellectual, with long expressive hands, which are forever gesturing, and a mincing, epicene manner, approaches the table. The little hunchback sees them and rises.

ALBERT, waving to him: Comrade Luigi, head of the Dockworkers’ Union.

This is the comrade from Moscow.

LUIGI, smiles and extends his hand: We’re honored. We’re honored. He shakes RUBASHOV’s hand vigorously. Please sit down. He motions to the big dockworker. Comrade Pablo, business manager of the union.

PABLO, shakes hands: How do you like the job we’re doing here?

RUBASHOV: You’ve the strongest dockworkers’ union in Europe.

PABLO: Nothing’ll get by us. We’ll strangle Il Duce.

LUIGI, introduces the third dockworker: Comrade André, our secretary.

ANDRÉ: Comrade. They shake hands. RUBASHOV and ALBERT sit.

PABLO: Those Italian ships out there will rot before we call off this strike.
LUIGI: Drink?
RUBASHOV: Coffee, black.
ALBERT: A double fine.
PABLO, calls, off: One coffee, black. One double fine.
VOICE, off: Coming.
PABLO, pointing off, shouts a warning to LUIGI: Luigi, look!—Here comes that cat again.
ANDRÉ: Meow! Meow!
LUIGI, jumping to his feet in panic, growls at the unseen cat: Get out!
Fr—out! He throws a spoon across the floor. The cat obviously flees.
ANDRÉ and PABLO collapse in their chairs, holding their sides, filling the café with booming laughter. LUIGI looks at them, shakes his head, laughs sheepishly.
PABLO, to RUBASHOV: Luigi don't like cats.
ANDRÉ: But they love him. They come to him like to a bowl of cream.
LUIGI: They got no reason to. The three laugh. LUIGI'S laughter becomes a racking cough. The WAITER enters and sets the drinks on the table. They are silent until he leaves.
ANDRÉ: When Luigi escaped from Italy, he lived by killing cats.
PABLO: And selling their skins.
LUIGI: I had no papers. I couldn't get a job.
RUBASHOV: You're Italian?
LUIGI: I'm a man without a country. He spits at Benito's caricature. Three years ago I escaped. Benito was after me. I got here into France. No passport. The French police arrest me. Take me at night to the Belgian border. “We catch you here again, God help you!” In Belgium the Belgian police arrest me... “No passport?” Take me to the French border. Kick me back here into France. Six times back and forth. Luigi, the human football. He grimaces. His two comrades laugh appreciatively. A man without a country. They laugh louder and slap him on the back. He laughs. Well, I can laugh now, too, thanks to Pablo. I meet him in jail. He gets me passport. Finds me this job with the union. I'm alive again, I belong.
PABLO, leans across the table confidentially to RUBASHOV: If you need any passports, I have a man will make you anything. A real artist.
RUBASHOV, nods: Thanks. I'll remember that.
ALBERT, half rises, significantly: The comrade from Moscow has a message for us.
LUIGI: For us? They all lean forward, intent.
RUBASHOV: In connection with this strike.
PABLO: Ah! The strike? Don't worry. Nothing'll get by us.
LUIGI: Sh, Pablo! To RUBASHOV. Your message?
Rubashov: As you know, our strength in the Soviet Union is the strength of
the revolutionary movement all over the world.
Pablo, *hits the table with his fist*: You can count on us!
Luigi: Sh, Pablo! To Rubashov. The strike?
Rubashov: The Italian shipyards are completing two destroyers and a
cruiser for us.
Albert: For the Motherland of the Revolution!
Rubashov: The Italian Government has informed Moscow if we want these
ships this strike must be called off at once.
Pablo: What?
André: You want us to call off this strike?
*The dockworkers look at each other, stunned, bewildered.*
Luigi: But Moscow called on the world for sanctions!
Albert: The comrade from over there has explained this is in the interest of
the defense of the Motherland of the Revolution.
Pablo, *angrily*: But the Fascists are taking on supplies to make war.
André: To kill Ethiopian workers!
Luigi: To make slaves of them.
Albert: Comrades, sentimentality gets us nowhere.
Luigi, *gesticulates with his dirty handkerchief*: But this isn’t right; we can’t
do this! It isn’t fair, it isn’t just, it isn’t . . .
Rubashov, *quickly, sharply*: It isn’t according to the rules laid down by the
Marquis of Queensberry? No, it isn’t. But revolutions aren’t won by “fair
play” morality. That’s fine in the lulls of history, but in the crises, there is
only one rule: The end justifies the means.
Luigi: No, there are principles; the whole world looks to you back there for
an example. . . . *He coughs violently into the handkerchief.*
André, *pointing at the scarlet stains on Luigi’s handkerchief*: You see?
Blood. He spits blood. Benito gave him that. And took two brothers in
exchange. If you knew . . .
Luigi: That doesn’t matter.
Pablo: This is just scabbing.
André: I vote to continue the strike.
Pablo: Strike.
Luigi: Strike. The meeting is closed. *He stands up.*
Rubashov, *rises quickly, decisively*: No, it isn’t! I’m in authority now. We
have a job to be done here and it will be done.
Albert: In spite of agents provocateurs. *Pablo reaches over, grabs Albert
by the lapels of his coat, and shakes him.*
Luigi, *rises*: No, Pablo, stop that! Stop! *Pablo releases Albert.* Luigi ad-
dresses Albert. Provocateurs? For who, in God’s name?
ALBERT, furious, his voice shrill: For the Fascists.
PABLO: Because we won't load their ships? You hear, Comrades. That's a joke—a rotten joke, isn't it?
LUIGI, softly: No, it's not a joke, Pablo; it's rotten, but it's not a joke. He looks up at the caricature of Mussolini. The joke is Benito brought me into socialism, me and my two brothers. We lived in Forli, 1911. Italy was starting a war with Tripoli. There was a big anti-war meeting, banners, posters. Benito took the platform. Benito, the humble socialist, in a dirty black suit and a bow tie. He imitates the crowd. “Bravo, Benito!” He mimics the gestures and facial expressions of Mussolini. “Fellow workers, militarism is our enemy! We hate war!” He becomes the crowd. “Bravo, Benito!” Again he is Mussolini. “We don't want iron discipline, we don't want colonial adventures! We want bread and schools and freedom.” “Bravo, Benito!” He angrily admonishes the invisible crowd. “Don't applaud me! Don't follow me. I hate fetishism. Follow my words!” Softly, nodding to himself. Benito. He leans on the table, to RUBASHOV. We followed his words; my two brothers and I. Ten years later he gives my brothers the castor-oil treatment. To some that sounds like a joke, too. You know what happens when a quart of castor oil is poured down your throat? It tears your intestines to pieces, like you put them in a butcher’s grinder, to little pieces. Two brothers I had. Not like me. Well-formed, beautiful, like Michelangelo carved them out of Carrara marble—one a David and one a Moses. I, the ugly one, I escaped. Softly, tenderly. Two brothers I had . . . and now—Fiercely.—Mother of God, I'm a Fascist! He coughs convulsively into his handkerchief. Back where I started with Benito. He spits at the caricature of Mussolini.
PABLO, fervently: I swear to God it's all true.
ANDRÉ: Luigi's not a Fascist!
ALBERT, rises, gesticulating with the long slender hands: Now, Comrades, you're thinking mechanistically. Dialectically, the fact is that, whoever does not serve the long-distance aims of the Party is an enemy of the Party, and therefore, even though he may think himself subjectively an anti-Fascist, he is in fact objectively a Fascist . . .
PABLO, ironically seizes some dishes, tosses them into the air, juggles them, catches them, then proffers them to ALBERT with an ironic bow: Here! You do it better than I.
RUBASHOV, rising: The ships are to be unloaded tomorrow.
LUIGI: Over my dead body.
PABLO: And mine.
ANDRÉ: And mine.
RUBASHOV: You can tear up your cards! Silence. The meeting is adjourned.
ACT TWO

Indicating the phone. Albert. Albert nods, crosses to the phone, picks it up.

Luigi, to the others: Come. The three men leave. Luigi coughing as he does.

Albert, at phone: André, Pablo, Luigi. Yes. Publish their pictures in tomorrow's press. Front page. Agents provocateurs. Any Party member who even talks to them will be dismissed at once.

Rubashov: Their passports!

Albert: Ah, of course. On phone. Also notify the French police their papers here are forged. Arrange for their immediate arrest and deportation. He hangs up, grins smugly. That'll do it! Now little Luigi is really a man without a country!

Rubashov, stonily: Yes. Albert laughs. Rubashov turns a withering look of revulsion on him, and then, unable to endure it, shouts at him. What the hell are you laughing at? What's so funny? Albert's laughter dies in his throat. He looks pained and puzzled. With an exclamation of disgust, Rubashov walks away.

The scene fades. Rubashov is back in his cell, pacing nervously.

Rubashov: Yes... We lived under the compulsion of working things out to their final conclusions. I thought and acted as I had to; I destroyed people I was fond of; I gave power to others I disliked... Well—History put you in that position, Rubashov. What else could you do?... But I've exhausted the credit she gave me. Was I right? Was I wrong? I don't know... The fact is, Rubashov, you no longer believe in your infallibility. That's why you're lost.

A tapping. Rubashov crosses to the wall and replies. The lights come up on 402.

402, taps: Knew something was happening.

Rubashov, taps: Explain.

402, taps: Executions.

Rubashov, to himself: Executions? Taps. Who?

402, taps: Don't know.

Rubashov, taps: What time?


Rubashov, goes to another wall of his cell, taps, receives an answering click, then he taps out the message: Executions soon. Pass it on. To himself, pacing. Perhaps this time it is you, Rubashov. Well, so long as they do it quickly. He stops, rubs his swollen cheek thoughtfully. But is that right? You can still save yourself. One word—"Confess." Fiercely. What does it matter what you say or what you sign? Isn't the important thing to go on? Isn't that all that matters?—To go on? An agonized look appears on his face, as an unbidden memory rises.
Faint strains of music. **LU**BA's voice humming the melody of the "Appassionata." The prison vanishes. We are in **LU**BA's room. It is a bright Sunday afternoon. The sun is pouring through the window, flooding the room with golden warmth. **LU**BA, kneeling, is snipping sprays of apple blossoms from a large bough spread out on a cloth laid on the floor. She is pruning the twigs preparatory to arranging them in a vase on the table. She hums happily. **RUBASHOV** enters, stands, watching her. She turns.

**LU**BA: Oh! I didn't hear you come in. She rises, goes to him, holding out the flowers as an offering.

**RUBASHOV**, **touche**s them: Beautiful! Where did you get them?

**LU**BA: I took a long walk this morning in the country. They were lying on the ground. The branch had broken off an old apple tree. **LU**BA notices that **RUBASHOV**'s face is strained and lined with fatigue. You look tired.

**RUBASHOV**: I am. I've been walking too.

**LU**BA: Not in the country?

**RUBASHOV**: No.

**LU**BA, crosses to the table, arranges the flowers in the vase: If you want to walk, you should go out to the country. Disposing of the flowers, she opens a drawer, takes out a bar of chocolate, and hands it to him. Yesterday was my lucky day.

**RUBASHOV**: Chocolate?

**LU**BA, triumphantly: Two bars. I ate one. They were the last in the store. I stood in line three hours. I had to battle for them, but I won.

**RUBASHOV**, softly, under the strain of some deep emotion: Thank you.

**LU**BA, kneels, cutting more sprays off the branch, reminiscing: We had some apple trees at home. On Sundays we'd help Father prune them. There was one huge old tree so gnarled and full of bumps. We had a special affection for that tree. Tch, the pains Father took to save it. We called it his "patient." Rises with the blooms. One spring morning he took us out to look at the "patient." It was blossom time. The other apple trees didn't have many blossoms that year—but the "patient" . . . You've never seen so many blossoms on one tree. It took our breath away. The tree was all covered with blooms like snow. Then Father said, "I'm going to lose my patient."

**RUBASHOV**: Why'd he say that?

**LU**BA: An apple tree puts out its most beautiful bloom just before it dies.

**RUBASHOV**: I didn't know that.

**LU**BA: It's true. The next year the "patient" was gone.

**RUBASHOV**: Oh!

**LU**BA: When I'm working at the factory, everything seems matter-of-fact; but whenever I go out to the country, the world suddenly becomes full of
mystery. LUBA looks at RUBASHOV. He sits slowly, a strained expression on his face. What is it? What's wrong?

RUBASHOV, shakes his head: Troubles.

LUBA: At the factory?

RUBASHOV, tastes the chocolate: There, too. All over. Upheavals. He glances at the chocolate evasively. This chocolate is made of soya beans. Tastes almost like real chocolate. He sighs, pauses. Luba . . .

LUBA: Yes?

RUBASHOV, carefully places the chocolate on the table, speaks softly, deliberately: Orders came in late yesterday, after you left. You'll have to report back to Moscow. LUBA'S hand, lifting a spray of blossoms to the vase, freezes in mid-air. You're to leave tonight.

LUBA: Tonight?

RUBASHOV, evading her glance: Those are the orders. There's a train at ten o'clock.

LUBA, trying desperately to control her mounting terror: Why am I being sent back there?

RUBASHOV: They're investigating the files and production records.

LUBA: How long will I be gone?

RUBASHOV: I don't know that, Luba.

LUBA: Why didn't you tell me last night?

RUBASHOV: I wanted to find out what it is about.

LUBA: But I've so much work at the office to clean up. So many . . .

RUBASHOV, rises: It's hurried, I know. But that's the way the Bureau does things.

LUBA: What have I done wrong?

RUBASHOV: Nothing.

LUBA: Has my work been unsatisfactory?

RUBASHOV: It's been excellent.

LUBA, the terror in her voice now: Then why am I being sent back?

RUBASHOV, patiently, soothingly: I told you, they're examining the books.

LUBA, dully wiping her wet hands on a cloth: Someone else will take on my job here?

RUBASHOV: Only while you're gone.

LUBA, turns to RUBASHOV, childishly: I don't want to go.

RUBASHOV: You have to, Luba.

LUBA, crossing to RUBASHOV, pleading: Can't you help me?

RUBASHOV: You understand, I have enemies. It would look bad for you, if I interceded.

LUBA: For me?

RUBASHOV: For both of us. As if I wanted to conceal something.
Luba, her love and her fear for him taking precedent, she studies him:
You're not in any trouble?
Rubashov: No.
Luba: You're sure?
Rubashov: Yes. There is a long pause.
Luba, very simply and directly: They're not going to arrest me?
Rubashov: Of course not.
Luba: I'm frightened. She sits, looks about helplessly, a trapped animal.
Rubashov, goes to her, places his hands soothingly on her shoulders: There's no need to be. If they should interrogate you, tell them the truth. You have nothing to fear. Just tell them the truth.
Luba, whispers: I'm frightened. Suddenly the waves of panic explode, and she cries out. I'm not going to Moscow. I just won't go.
Rubashov, quickly, trying to control the panic: Then it would look as if you had done something wrong, wouldn't it?
Luba, turns to Rubashov, hysterically: But I haven't, I haven't.
Rubashov: I know that, Luba.
Luba, her hysteria mounting, her body trembling, her voice becoming shrill:
Oh God! I want to run away. I want to hide! I want to run away.
Rubashov, grips her arms tightly: Nothing's going to happen to you. Understand? There are no charges against you. Nothing's going to happen.
Nothing, nothing! He holds her tight and kisses her. She clings to him with all her strength, wildly, passionately returning his embrace. Then she goes limp, withdraws, looks at him, smiles sadly, shakes her head.
Luba: I'm sorry. I'm stupid. She turns to gather up the flowers from the floor. I'll be all right. Kneeling. Ten o'clock?
Rubashov: Ten o'clock.
Luba: The tickets? And my travel warrant? Rubashov plucks them out of his pocket and hands them to her. She takes them quietly. She rises, and, tonelessly. I'll have to pack now.
Rubashov: Yes. I'll go.
Luba: Not yet.
Rubashov: It would be best . . . for both of us, at this time.
Luba: Yes, I suppose so. She looks at the bouquet of blossoms in her hands. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could just say "No" to them? If we could come and go as we wished, all of us?
Rubashov: But we can't, Luba. That would be anarchy. We haven't the right.
He crosses into the shadows.
Luba, almost inaudibly: No. Of course not. We haven't the right.
Luba, flowers, room, and sunlight, all fade away, leaving Rubashov alone in his dank cell, talking to himself.
ACT TWO

RUBASHOV: And have I the right to say “No”? Even now? Have I the right to leave—to walk out, to die out of mere tiredness, personal disgust, and vanity? Have I this right?

*The lights come up in the other cells. The prisoners, ears to the wall, are listening for the news. 202 has just received a message. He crosses to 302's wall.*

202, *taps*: They're reading death sentence to him now. Pass it on. *He shuttles back to the other post to listen.*

302, *crosses, taps on 402's wall*: They're reading death sentence to him now. Pass it on. *Shuttles back to listen.*

402, *taps*: They're reading death sentence now. Pass it on.

RUBASHOV, *taps*: Who is he? *But 402 has crossed back to listen to the next message. RUBASHOV crosses to the rear wall, taps.* They're reading death sentence to him now. Pass it on. *RUBASHOV crosses back to 402's wall to listen.*

202, *crosses to wall, taps to 302*: They are bringing him, screaming and hitting out. Pass it on. *202 returns to his other post, listening.*

302, *crosses, taps to 402*: They are bringing him, screaming and hitting out. Pass it on. *302 returns to his other post.*

402, *taps to RUBASHOV*: They are bringing him, screaming and hitting out. Pass it on.

RUBASHOV, *taps, urgently*: Who is he? *But 402 has gone back to the opposite wall to listen for more news. RUBASHOV shuffles over to the rear wall and taps.* They are bringing him, screaming and hitting out. Pass it on. *Then he moves back to 402's wall and taps insistently. Who is he? 402 crosses to RUBASHOV's wall, listening. RUBASHOV, very clearly. What's his name? 402, *taps*: Mischa Bogrov.*

RUBASHOV, suddenly becomes faint, wipes the sweat from his forehead and for a moment braces himself against the wall, walks slowly to the rear wall and leans heavily against it as he taps through: Mischa Bogrov, former sailor on Battleship Potemkin, Commander of the Baltic Fleet, bearer of Order of Red Banner, led to execution! Pass it on.

202, *taps*: *Now!* *He crosses to the door and starts drumming on the iron surface.*

302, *taps*: *Now!* *He crosses to the door and starts drumming on the iron surface.*

402, *taps*: *Now!* *He crosses to the door and starts drumming on the iron surface.*

RUBASHOV *taps*: *Now!* *Drags himself across the cell and starts drumming on the door's iron surface.*

*The prison becomes vibrant with the low beat of subdued drumming.*
The men in the cells who form the acoustic chain stand behind their doors like a guard of honor in the dark, create a deceptive resemblance to the muffled solemn sound of the roll of drums, carried by the wind from the distance. At the far end of the corridor, the grinding of iron doors becomes louder. A bunch of keys jangle. The iron door is shut again. The drumming rises to a steady, muffled crescendo. Sliding and squealing sounds approach quickly, a moaning and whimpering like the whimpering of a child is heard. Shadowy figures enter the field of vision. Two dimly lit figures, both in uniform, drag between them a third, whom they hold under their arms. The middle figure hangs slack and yet with doll-like stiffness in their grasp, stretched out its full length, face turned to the ground, belly arched downwards, the legs trailing after, the shoes scraping on the toes. Whitish strands of hair hang over the face, the mouth is open. As they turn the corner of the corridor and open the trapdoor to the cellar, we see that this tortured, mangled face is Bogrov’s. Gletkin now appears, whispers in his ear. Bogrov straightens up, looks about, flings off his captors for a moment, and moans out some vowels.

Bogrov: Oo . . . a . . . ah; Oo . . . a . . . ah! Then, with a mighty effort, he articulates the word and bellows out. Rubashov! Rubashov! Rubashov, pounds on his door like a madman, screaming: Mischa! Mischa!

The other prisoners accelerate their drumming. Bogrov is dragged through the cellar door; it clangs shut, and we can hear his voice as he is being dragged down to the execution cellar, growing fainter and fainter, calling “Rubashov! Rubashov!” Gradually, the drumming dies down, the other prisoners vanish, a deep terrible silence settles on the prison. Rubashov stands in the middle of his cell, clutching his stomach to prevent himself from vomiting. He staggers to his cot, collapses on it, and is enveloped by complete darkness.

There is a long silence. From somewhere above a prisoner cries out, “Arise, ye wretched of the earth!”

The electric light in Rubashov’s cell is suddenly turned on. Ivanoff is standing next to his bed with a bottle of brandy and a glass. Rubashov, his eyes glazed, is staring, unseeing, into space.

Ivanoff: You feel all right?

Rubashov: It’s hot! Open the window! He looks up at Ivanoff. Who are you?

Ivanoff: Would you like some brandy? Rubashov’s eyes follow him, dull, uncomprehending. Ivanoff pours a drink, extends it to Rubashov. Sits next to him. Drink this. Ivanoff holds the glass, feeding the drink to Rubashov.

Rubashov, finishes the drink, looks at him: You been arrested too?
ACT TWO

IVANOFF: No. I only came to visit you. He places the bottle and the glass on the floor. I think you’re ill. Are you in pain?
RUBASHOV: No.
IVANOFF: Your cheek is swollen. I think you’ve a fever.
RUBASHOV: Give me a cigarette. IVANOFF gives him a cigarette, lights it for him. RUBASHOV inhales the smoke deeply, hungrily. After a few moments of this, his eyes come into focus, his breathing becomes a little more regular, and he looks at IVANOFF, who is patiently blowing smoke rings. What time is it?
IVANOFF: Two-thirty A.M.
RUBASHOV: How long have I been here?
IVANOFF: Five weeks tomorrow.
RUBASHOV, examines IVANOFF. He is beginning to think quite clearly now:
What are you doing here?
IVANOFF: I want to talk to you. Some more brandy? Picks up the bottle.
RUBASHOV, the iron creeping into his voice: No, thank you.
IVANOFF: Lie down. Rest!
RUBASHOV, sits up, spits out: You pimp! Get out of here. You’re a pimp like all the rest of them! You disgust me—you and your filthy tricks.
IVANOFF: Tricks? Pours a drink.
RUBASHOV, raging: You drag him by my cell—Bogrov—or what you’ve left of him, and when my bowels are split open, a savior appears with a bottle of brandy. You think I can be taken in by a cheap trick like that? You think you can wheedle a confession out of me with a bottle of brandy?
IVANOFF, smiles and shows his gold teeth: You really believe that I have such a primitive mind?
RUBASHOV: Take your whorish mind the hell out of here! It stinks! It’s choking me.
IVANOFF, drinks: Very well. I’ll go if you want me to.
RUBASHOV: You cannot begin to understand how you disgust me. All of you.
IVANOFF: But first, you listen to me for one second.
RUBASHOV, shouts: I don’t want to hear any more . . .
IVANOFF, outshouts him: I’m afraid you’ll have to! Pauses, gently. Now listen logically and calmly, if you can. First, to remove any doubts, Bogrov has already been shot!

There is a long silence as RUBASHOV absorbs this news, then—

RUBASHOV, low, strangulated: Good!
IVANOFF: He was also tortured for several days.
RUBASHOV: That was obvious.
IVANOFF: It was meant to be. But not by me. Sits next to RUBASHOV, placing the bottle on the floor. I’m going to put my life in your hands, Kolya.
RUBASHOV looks at him. If you mention what I tell you, to anyone, I am done for. This filthy trick, as you call it, was arranged by my young colleague, Gletkin, against my instructions. I would never make this mistake, not out of concern for you, but because it’s bad psychology. You’ve recently been suffering humanitarian scruples? A scene with Bogrov could only intensify them. Obvious? Only a fool like Gletkin makes such mistakes. He’s been urging me to use his methods on you too!

RUBASHOV: You can torture me; it will get you no results.

IVANOFF: Won’t it? He smiles cynically, reaches for the bottle. You don’t know Gletkin. He fills the glass, studies it. He’s something new in the world—the Neanderthal Man! He came after the flood. He had no umbilical cord to the past. He was born without a navel. He doesn’t approve of us old apes in general, and of you in particular. He shakes his head at RUBASHOV. It seems the other day you showed him your behind. He didn’t like that. Ominously. He wants to lay his big hands on you.

RUBASHOV: I’m quite prepared to die.

IVANOFF: But I’m not prepared to let you die. Your martyrdom, Kolya, will consist of not being allowed to become a martyr. That’s not why you’re here. We need you, and we need you logical, because when you’ve thought the whole thing out clearly, then, but only then, will you make your confession. Am I right?

RUBASHOV: Go away, it’s no use.

IVANOFF: Do you believe that I’m telling you the truth? Pause. Do you?

RUBASHOV: Yes... I suppose so.

IVANOFF: Then why do you want me to go? He bends forward, pushing his face into RUBASHOV*s, mockingly. Because you are afraid of me, because my way of reasoning is your way and you’re afraid of the echoes in your own head.

RUBASHOV, impatiently: I’ve had enough of this reasoning. We’ve been running amok with it for thirty years. Enough.

IVANOFF: Get thee behind me, Satan. Rises, goes to the door, peers out the judas hole, turns back. In the old days temptation was carnal. It took the form of little naked women running around shaking their things in your face. Today it’s cerebral. It takes the form of naked reason pushing facts in your face. Values change. He drinks.

RUBASHOV: Why was Bogrov tortured?

IVANOFF: He was stubborn like you.

RUBASHOV: Did you hear him whimpering?

IVANOFF: No. I didn’t hear it. But I’ve heard and seen others. He wheels on RUBASHOV, stabbing an accusing finger at him. And so have you! And so have you, my General! He hobbles to RUBASHOV, face thrust forward,
accusingly. What of it? A conscience is as unsuited to a revolutionary as a double chin. Since when did N. S. Rubashov develop this bourgeois conscience? Hm? When? Pause. Shall I tell you? The day, the hour, the minute? Nine months, two weeks ago—at 3:10 A.M.—when your little secretary, Luba Loshenko, was shot! He sits next to Rubashov. You were sleeping with her, weren't you? Now she's dead. So you're making the world a metaphysical brothel for your emotions. What have the shape of Luba Loshenko's breasts or Bogrov's whimperings to do with the new world we're creating?

Rubashov: Bogrov's dead, she's dead. You can afford a little pity.

Ivanoff: I have many vices—I drink, for a time, as you know, I took drugs; but so far I've avoided the vice of pity. One drop of that and a revolutionary's lost. He fills his glass. The great temptation! To renounce violence, to make peace with ourselves ... hm? He drinks. I prefer my synthetic ecstasy in a glass. You get over it in the morning.

Rubashov, after a long silence, shakes his head, murmurs sadly: Our golden dream! Then savagely. What a stinking mess we've made of it.

Ivanoff, setting down the glass, articulates carefully: Have we? He lights a fresh cigarette. We've taken the land from the landlords. He blows a smoke ring. We've freed them from industrial exploitation. He blows another. For the first time in history a revolution is functional.

Rubashov: Functional? He jumps to his feet, furious. So functional in taking the land, in one year, we let five million farmers and their families die of starvation! Deliberately. So functional—He begins to pace up and down.—in freeing the people from industrial exploitation, we sent ten million of them to forced labor under worse conditions than galley slaves. He plucks off his spectacles nervously and waves them at Ivanoff. So functional, to settle a difference of opinion, the omnipotent Leader knows only one argument—Death!—whether it's a matter of submarines, manure, or the party line in Indochina. Death! He replaces his spectacles and glares at Ivanoff.

Ivanoff, rises, belligerently: That woman has really given you softening of the brain! What of the millions who die of starvation in China and India, of tuberculosis in rice fields, cotton plantations ... ?

Rubashov: In negatives we agree. Where has it led us?

Ivanoff: Well, where?

Rubashov: Our standard of living is lower than the most backward country in Europe. Labor conditions are harder; discipline's more inhuman. Our country is run by the police. Again he plucks off the glasses for emphasis. We've torn the living skin off our people and left them standing with bare tissues, muscles and nerves quivering.
IVANOFF: Well, and what of it? With warmth and conviction. Don't you find that wonderful? Has anything more wonderful ever happened in history? We're tearing the old skin off mankind and giving it a new one! That's not an occupation for people with weak nerves, but there was a time it filled you with enthusiasm.

RUBASHOV: I know.

IVANOFF: Look at the pamphlets put out by the antivivisectionists. When you read how some poor cur who has just had his liver cut out, whines and licks his tormentor's hand, it breaks your heart. But if we listened to these sentimentalists, we'd have no cures for typhus, cholera, diphtheria . . .

RUBASHOV: I know, I know, I know. He turns away, sits, moodily.

IVANOFF, following him, persistently: Of course you do. Better than I. And you still insist on being a martyr? He waits for an answer. Finally he throws up his hands and growls in disgust. All right. Have it your way. He picks up the bottle and glass. If you must throw yourself into the dustbin of history, I can't stop you. Go. Let Gletkin have you. You're his. He turns to the door, pauses, turns back. His voice becomes soft. Only tell me, why? Why are you so in love with death? It stinks! Why do you want to die?

RUBASHOV, hoarsely: I don't want to die. No one does.

IVANOFF: You act as if you do.

RUBASHOV: It's a fake. He clutches his throat. From here up, I'm resigned. From here down, I'm frightened.

IVANOFF: Yet I offer you your life.

RUBASHOV: On what terms?

IVANOFF: The only terms that matter. To go on being useful. He places the bottle on the floor and fumbles in his pocket.

RUBASHOV: To act the fool in public trial? No, thanks. The terms are too high.

IVANOFF, taking out an official communication, pushes it under RUBASHOV's nose: Here's a confidential report I received today. RUBASHOV takes it, glances at it. Read between the lines.

RUBASHOV, drily: I need no instructions, thank you. Studies the document.

IVANOFF: What do you see?

RUBASHOV: War! It's coming.

IVANOFF: How soon?

RUBASHOV: Depends on how we play our cards. Perhaps years, perhaps months.

IVANOFF: The last war gave us Russia, Kolya; the next gives us the world. Or does it?
RUBASHOV: It could, if...

IVANOFF: If...? Good! *He sits next to him.* There's a breach in the Party, in the whole country; the people are restless, dissatisfied; our economy is in pieces. The breach must be mended first; and you, and those who think like you, must mend it!

RUBASHOV: Hence the trials! *Hands him back the document, contemptuously.* They're better than the opera or the theatre.

IVANOFF: The goal, Kolya. It's coming. Nearer. Listen. You can hear it on the wind. And when that day comes...

RUBASHOV: The Gletkins take over.

IVANOFF: They're brutes. They don't count.

RUBASHOV, *plucking off his spectacles and glaring at IVANOFF:* Who made them brutes? We did! Their Byzantine leader worship is frightening. Their cultivated ignorance is disgusting.

IVANOFF: Would they have been any use to us any other way?

RUBASHOV: You'd trust our revolution to them?

IVANOFF: Why do you think I'm risking my neck to save you? It's your brain I want to save. When the day comes, your brain will be needed. We'll get rid of them. You'll be needed more than ever!

RUBASHOV, *studies him, replaces his spectacles, shakes his head:* If I thought that...

IVANOFF, *strongly:* Think it! Think it! *He watches RUBASHOV wrestle with the thought, then leans forward, and softly.* What other choice have you? To become a Christian martyr? For the Western democracies?

RUBASHOV, *angrily:* What are you talking about, "the Western democracies"? What have I to do with those decadent humanists—those phantoms of religion and superstition?

IVANOFF, *pressing his point, sharpening his irony:* Do you want their liberal press, that hated your guts while you were alive, to sanctify you after your death?

RUBASHOV: The liberal press? Those puking jackals of holy property? What have I to do with them? I'd rather be two feet of manure in a Russian field. *He nervously polishes the glasses with his shirt.*

IVANOFF: Nevertheless, they'll put you in a stained-glass window. Saint RUBASHOV—the martyr for the Western world! Is that what you want?

RUBASHOV looks at him, looks away, ponders, replaces the spectacles, sighs. For a long time he stands there, head bowed, wrapped in thought. *IVANOFF watches him patiently.*

RUBASHOV, *finally, wearily:* I'll think it over.

IVANOFF, *triumphantly picks up his bottle, rises, and going to the judas hole, calls:* Guard! *He turns back to RUBASHOV, beaming.* You old warhorse.
You've had an attack of nerves. The Guard opens door. But that's over now. Go to bed. Get some sleep. You'll need a clear head tomorrow when we make up your statement.

RUBASHOV, frowning: I said I'll think it over.

IVANOFF, nods, laughs: Good night, Kolya.

RUBASHOV: Good night, Sascha.

IVANOFF goes. RUBASHOV stands, thinking, thinking. In the corridor, IVANOFF sees GLETKIN, leaning against the wall, watching RUBASHOV's cell.

IVANOFF, crosses to GLETKIN, with supreme contempt: What genius inspired you tonight? Pause. He blows a smoke ring. It's all right. He'll confess. But I had to sweat blood to repair the damage you did. You are all still suffering from personal feelings. In his place you'd be even more stubborn.

GLETKIN: I have some backbone, which he hasn't.

IVANOFF: But you're an idiot! For that answer alone, you ought to be shot before he is! He blows a cloud of cigarette smoke directly into GLETKIN's face, shows his gold teeth in a grin of utter disdain, and hobbles off down the corridor.

GLETKIN stands there as if he were made of stone, the face completely without expression, then he raises his hand and waves aside the fumes of smoke with a sudden, quick gesture.

DIM-OUT AND CURTAIN
ACT THREE

RUBASHOV's cell; several days later.

At rise: RUBASHOV seated on the cot, his shoes off, his coat thrown over his shoulders, a pad of blank paper on his knee, is writing intently, completely absorbed. He pauses, chews his pencil, studies the page, writes rapidly. Alongside him is a stack of completed pages. The tensions and the fever appear to have abated. As he writes, three taps are heard from 402's wall. He ignores them. Three more taps. Then three more. He glances up, annoyed, but continues to work. The taps now flow from 402's wall rapidly and insistently in a staccato stream. With an exclamation of annoyance, RUBASHOV tears off the page he has just completed, lays it carefully on the pile next to him, rises, and, crossing to the wall, taps. The lights come up on 402.

402, taps: I tried to talk to you all day. Why didn't you answer?
RUBASHOV, taps: I've been busy.
402, taps: How?
RUBASHOV, taps: Writing.
402, taps: What?
RUBASHOV, taps: A new theory.
402, taps: What about?
RUBASHOV, smiling ironically, taps: The immaturity of the masses. The historical necessity for dictatorship.
402, taps: Repeat!
RUBASHOV, taps: Never mind.
402, taps: What's happened?
RUBASHOV, taps: I'm waiting for word. Upstairs.
402, taps: Why?
RUBASHOV, taps: I am confessing.
402, pauses, stunned by this volte-face, then angrily, taps: I'd rather hang.
RUBASHOV, cynically, taps: Each in his own way.
402, taps slowly: I thought you an exception. Have you no honor?
RUBASHOV, taps: Our ideas of honor differ.
402, taps: Honor is to live and die for your beliefs.
RUBASHOV, taps: I am living for mine.
402, taps louder and more sharply: Honor is decency.
RUBASHOV, taps slowly, calmly: What is decency?
402, very excited, taps: Something your kind will never understand.
RUBASHOV, taps: We have replaced decency by reason.
402, taps: What reason?
RUBASHOV, taps: Pure reason.
402, taps: You're pure son of bitch.
RUBASHOV, amused, chuckles and taps: Flattery does not impress me.
402, taps: I'll never talk to you again.

The scene is interrupted by a jangling sound. The door of RUBASHOV's cell is thrown open. A YOUNG OFFICER enters.
OFFICER: Put on your shoes!
RUBASHOV: Well! It's about time! Crosses to the cot, sits, and proceeds to put on his shoes, leisurely. I've been waiting on Commissar Ivanoff for several days.
OFFICER: Put on your shoes, and come with me.
RUBASHOV: You might have timed it a little more considerately. But I suppose you Neanderthal men only come out after midnight.
OFFICER: Don't talk so much. Just put on your shoes and hurry up.
RUBASHOV, looks at the OFFICER, smiles, shakes his head as he ties the laces: Brutes! He rises, the OFFICER motions him out with a jerk of the head.
RUBASHOV goes, remarking over his shoulder. But then you wouldn't be any use to us if you weren't, would you? Exit. The OFFICER frowns, follows him out. The lights in the cell dim out.

402, watching at the judas hole: Son of a bitch! He crosses up to 302's wall, taps.

The lights come up in the tier above. 302 is pacing. He stops at the sound of tapping, crosses, and listens.
402, taps: Rubashov is a filthy coward.
302, taps: You're wrong. He's brave. My father told me.
402, taps: Your father is mistaken . . .
302, taps: What's he done?
402, taps: He's saving his skin. He's confessing. They've taken him up now.
302, taps: Oh, my God! Pray for me.
402, taps: For you?
302, taps: Yes, for me. He crosses, taps on 202's wall. The lights come up on 202, who responds and listens. 302 taps. Rubashov confessing. Pass it on.
202, groans, crosses to opposite wall, taps: Rubashov confessing. Pass it on . . .

The tappings multiply and the murmur "Rubashov confessing, Rubashov confessing" echoes back and forth through the prison. The cells dim out slowly as the lights come up on IVANOFF's office. Seated at the desk, his chair wheeled around, his back to us, is a man in uniform, apparently IVANOFF. RUBASHOV enters, accompanied by the GUARD. There is a faint ironic smile on RUBASHOV's lips as he enters. The man seated at the desk swings
his chair round to face RUBASHOV. It's not IVANOFF, it's GLETKIN! He looks at RUBASHOV, story-faced. The smile on RUBASHOV's lips vanishes, he pauses in his stride, looks about quickly. Near GLETKIN a grim-lipped young woman, obviously a secretary, sits, sharpening her pencils.

GLETKIN, rises, waves the GUARD out: Shut the door! The GUARD goes, shutting the door behind him. GLETKIN turns to a heavy floor lamp nearby and switches it on. There is a humming sound, and a fierce, white light strikes RUBASHOV full in the eyes. He jerks his face away as if he'd been struck, then turns back to face GLETKIN, squinting and shielding his eyes with his hand. GLETKIN sits, picks up some official documents. We will proceed with your examination. You wish to make a full confession?

RUBASHOV, takes off his glasses and wipes his eyes: Yes. To Commissar Ivanoff. Not to you.

GLETKIN: You will make your confession to me, here and now, or this investigation is closed, and you will be sentenced at once. Those are my orders from above. RUBASHOV puts on his spectacles and tries to meet GLETKIN's gaze, but the harsh light blinds him. He removes his glasses again. You have your choice. Which is it?

RUBASHOV, avoiding the light: I am ready to make a statement.

GLETKIN: Sit there.

RUBASHOV: On one condition. He turns to GLETKIN firmly, even though he has to almost shut his eyes. Turn off that dazzle-light! Save these devices for gangsters.

GLETKIN, calmly: You're in no position to make conditions. The fact is you are charged with being the worst kind of “gangster.”

RUBASHOV, controls his anger: Exactly what are these charges? Please read them to me. Up till now this hasn't been done.

GLETKIN: Very well. Sit here! RUBASHOV sits in the chair upon which the dazzle-light has been trained. GLETKIN reads the official statement in a rapid monotone. “Enemy of the people, Nicolai Semonovitch Rubashov, you are charged with being a counterrevolutionary in the pay of hostile, foreign governments; of having, at the instigation of their agents, committed such acts of treason and wreckage as to cause vital shortages—undermining the military power of the U.S.S.R. You are also charged with having incited an accomplice to attempt the assassination of the Leader of the Party, i.e., you are charged with crimes covered by Articles 58-1A; 58-2; 58-7; 58-9; and 58-11 of the Criminal Code.” He drops the official papers and looks up. You've heard the charges? You plead guilty?

RUBASHOV, turns to face him, shielding his eyes with his hand: I plead guilty to having fallen out of step with historical necessity. I plead guilty to bourgeois sentimentality. I plead guilty to having wanted an immediate allevia-
tion of the Terror, and extension of freedom to the masses. The secretary, who is writing this in shorthand, smiles contemptuously. Rubashov glances at her. Don't be cynical, young woman To Gletkin. I now realize fully that the regime is right and I am wrong. The times demand a tightening of the dictatorship; any sentimental aberrations at the present moment in history could become suicide. In this sense can you call me a counterrevolutionary, but in this sense only. With the insane charges made in the accusation I have nothing to do. I deny them categorically.

Gletkin: Have you finished?
Rubashov: I deny that I, Rubashov, ever plotted against my country. I deny that I am in the pay of a foreign government. I deny any act of sabotage. I deny ever having taken the least part in any act of terror against the Leader of the Party. To the stenographer, quietly. Have you all that, young woman?

Gletkin: Have you finished?
Rubashov: I have finished.

Gletkin: Wipe your lips then. They're slimy with lies. Lies! Lies! Vomit! He snatches a thick dossier off the desk, and cracks Rubashov across the face with it. The statement you have just made is vomit. Enough nobility! Enough posturing! Enough strutting! What we demand of you is not high talk, but a full confession of your real crimes!

Rubashov, his hand to his face, breathing hard, biting back the indignation, fighting for control: I cannot confess to crimes I have not committed.

Gletkin, pressing a button on the desk: Oh, no, that you cannot. The guard enters, bringing in 302, whose eyes at once fix on Gletkin, and who moves and talks like a sleepwalker. There is something in his manner of the helpless child, desperately eager to be "good" and to please. Gletkin dismisses the guard with a nod, then points to a spot on the floor. Step over here. Immediately, 302 nods and shuffles over to stand correctly as designated. Gletkin crosses above the desk. To Rubashov. Do you know this person? Pause. Harshly. You will please pay attention! Do you know this person?

Rubashov, shielding his eyes from the blinding light, scrutinizes 302, then shakes his head: No.

Gletkin: You've never met him before?
Rubashov, hesitates: Mm . . . No.
Gletkin: You hesitated. Why?
RUBASHOV, *studies 302's face*: I don't place him.

GLETKIN: Your memory was once proverbial in the Party. *A long pause.* You refuse to answer?

RUBASHOV: I do not refuse to answer. I simply do not place him.

GLETKIN: Good. Sit down. *RUBASHOV sits.* GLETKIN turns to 302. Help Citizen Rubashov's memory. Where did you last meet him?

302: Citizen Rubashov instigated me to murder the Leader of the Party by poison . . .

GLETKIN, *irritably*: I didn't ask you that. I asked you where you last met him.

RUBASHOV, *smiles grimly, and mutters*: Wrong lever.

GLETKIN, *turns on him, snaps*: What?

RUBASHOV: The automatic barrel organ played the wrong tune.

GLETKIN, *ominously*: I warn you. Remember where you are. We want none of your so-called wit. Nods to 302.

302: I met Citizen Rubashov in Brussels.

GLETKIN: Can you remember the date?

302: Distinctly. It was on the 17th anniversary of the Revolution. At his apartment!

RUBASHOV, *studying 302, suddenly puts his hand to his forehead*: Yes, of course. The date is correct. I didn't recognize Joseph Kieffer. *To GLETKIN.* Congratulations!

GLETKIN: You admit you knew him then? You met him on the day and occasion aforementioned?

RUBASHOV, *his eyes glued to the terrible spectacle of 302's mangled, ghost-like mask*: I've just told you that. If you'd informed me at once that he was the son of my unfortunate friend, Professor Kieffer, I'd have identified him sooner.

GLETKIN, *turns to 302*: How did this meeting come about?

302: After the reception at the Legation my father took me up to Citizen Rubashov's apartment.

GLETKIN, *nods*: Go on.

302: He and my father hadn't seen each other for years. They talked about the early days of the Revolution.

GLETKIN: They were drinking?

302: Yes. They drank and talked. *A faraway look and a gentle smile illumine his face at the memory.* In the last few years I've never seen my father in such a good mood.

GLETKIN, *quietly*: That was three months before the discovery of your father's counterrevolutionary crimes and his execution!

302 *darts a glance at him, licks his lips, and stands there dumb.*

RUBASHOV turns to GLETKIN on a sudden impulse, but, blinded by the
light, he shuts his eyes and turns slowly away, taking off his spectacles and
wiping them on his sleeve. The secretary's pencil scratches on the paper and
stops. After a long pause 302 regains himself.

302: Yes.

GLETKIN: Proceed! Repeat their conversation. Only essentials.

302: He said . . .

GLETKIN: Rubashov?

302: Yes. Rubashov said, since the Boss sat on the Party with his broad
posterior, the air underneath was no longer breathable. He said they must
hold tight and wait the hour.

GLETKIN: What did he mean by that? “Wait the hour”?

302: The hour in which the Leader would be eliminated.

RUBASHOV smiles.

GLETKIN: These reminiscences seem to amuse you.

RUBASHOV: Two old friends get a little drunk, talk carelessly, and you make
a conspiracy.

GLETKIN: So Rubashov spoke of the hour in which the Leader of the Party
would be eliminated? How eliminated?

302: My father said someday the Party would force him to resign.

GLETKIN: And Rubashov?

302: Laughed. He said the Boss had made the Party bureaucracy his puppets.

He said the Boss could only be removed by force.

RUBASHOV: By this I meant political action.

GLETKIN: As opposed to what?

RUBASHOV: Individual terrorism.

GLETKIN: In other words, you preferred civil war?

RUBASHOV: No, mass action.

GLETKIN: Which leads to civil war. Is that the distinction on which you place
so much value?

RUBASHOV, loses patience, shouting: I cannot think straight with that
damned light in my eyes.

GLETKIN, outshouts him: I can't change the lighting in this room to suit you.

To 302, quietly: So Rubashov said they had to use violence? 302 nods.

And his wild talk, plus the alcohol he'd fed you, inflamed you?

302, after a pause: I didn't drink, but he—yes, he made a deep impression
on me.

GLETKIN: And later that evening he outlined his plan for you to murder the
Leader? 302 is silent. He blinks into the light. RUBASHOV raises his head.

A pause, during which one hears only the lamp humming. Would you like
your memory refreshed?

302, quivers as though struck by a whip: It didn't happen that evening, but
next morning.
RUBASHOV, to GLETKIN: I believe the defendant has the right to ask questions.

GLETKIN, fiercely: You have no rights here! He leans forward to make some notations, and after a brief pause, without looking up. Go ahead! Ask your questions.

RUBASHOV, rises, steps toward 302, very gently: Now, Joseph, if I remember correctly, your father received the Order of Lenin the day after the celebration of the 17th anniversary of the Revolution.

302, whispers: Yes.

RUBASHOV, gently: So that is correct. If I again remember rightly, Joseph, you were with him at the time he received it. 302 nods. And as I recall it, the Order was presented at Moscow. Right, Joseph? 302 nods. RUBASHOV pauses, turns to GLETKIN. Professor Kieffer took a midnight plane, and young Kieffer went with him. This alleged instigation to murder never took place, because at the alleged moment young Kieffer was hundreds of miles away, high in the clouds.

The secretary’s pencil comes to a sudden standstill. She turns to GLETKIN. 302, his face twisting with bewilderment and fear, also looks to GLETKIN.

GLETKIN, calmly: Have you any more questions?

RUBASHOV: That is all for the present. Sits.

GLETKIN: Now, Joseph—Rises, assumes RUBASHOV’s gentleness, even exaggerates it, crosses to 302.—did you leave with your father? Or did you, in fact, join him later after your rendezvous with Rubashov?

302, almost a sob of relief: After! I joined my father later.

GLETKIN: In time to be with him for the presentation?

302: Yes. Yes.

GLETKIN, nods, turns to RUBASHOV: Have you any more questions?

RUBASHOV: No.

GLETKIN, turns to 302: You may go.

302: Thank you . . .

GLETKIN, calls: Guard!

A uniformed GUARD enters and leads 302 out. At the door 302 turns his head once more to RUBASHOV. RUBASHOV meets 302’s imploring glance for a second, then turns away. Exit 302.

RUBASHOV, angrily: Poor devil! What have you done to him?

GLETKIN, who has walked away, the full diameter of the room, turns, bel lowing: What can be done to you! And, with incredible speed for such a huge man, he hurls himself across the room, grabs RUBASHOV by the throat, and pulls him to his feet. We have many ways of making a man tell the truth.

RUBASHOV, quickly: Very well, what do you want me to sign? GLETKIN re-
laxes his grip. If you torture me, I will sign anything you place before me. I will say anything you wish me to say at once. But tomorrow I will recant. At the public trial I'll stand up in open court and I'll cry out for all the world to hear, "They are drowning the Revolution in blood. Tyranny is afoot. She strides over our dead bodies." You've become quite pale. It would end your career, wouldn't it? You hold me by the throat, young man, but I hold you by the throat too. Remember that!

GLETKIN, slowly releasing RUBASHOV: Why do you make this so personal?
RUBASHOV: Death, even in an impersonal cause, is a personal matter. Death and promotions. Sits.
GLETKIN: I am here only to serve the Party. I am nothing. He sits at the desk, gathering up his papers. The personal element in this case has been removed along with your friend Ivanoff.
RUBASHOV, his face clouding, apprehensively: Removed?
GLETKIN: There'll be no partial confessions; there'll be no bargains. We promise you nothing.
RUBASHOV: What's happened to Ivanoff?
GLETKIN: Enemy of the people Ivanoff was executed early this morning.
RUBASHOV, after a long pause, nods to himself, murmurs: I see. Looks up at GLETKIN. Why? Was it because of me?
GLETKIN: Perhaps.
RUBASHOV: Perhaps he thought I was innocent.
GLETKIN: Then he shouldn't have conducted your investigation.
RUBASHOV, sighs heavily, murmurs: Go, Sascha. Go, in peace!
GLETKIN: He was corrupt, like so many of your old guard, and his counter-revolutionary action in your examination . . .
RUBASHOV, jumps to his feet, all his pent-up feelings exploding: Counterrevolutionary? You ignorant young ass! What the hell do you know about the Revolution or the old guard? When you were peeing in your diapers, we were working and fighting and studying and writing one thing: Revolution! Revolution! Half our lives we lived like moles—underground; we rotted away in every prison in Europe; we knew poverty, we knew persecution, we knew starvation, but every living second we dreamed and built the Revolution with our blood and our bones! And now you have the gall to sit there and—He waves his hand to the faded patches on the wall.—spit at these, the heroes of your boyhood? Are you insane? Do you really believe that we have all suddenly become venal and corrupt?
GLETKIN, leans forward, rising slowly, his face apoplectic: Quiet! You washed-out, disgusting, rotten old man! You didn't make the Revolution—the Revolution made you. You adventurers rode along, scum on the
flood of the people's uprising. But don't make any mistake! You never fooled our Leader! He used you, because he had to use whatever was at hand, but he knew you were defective. That's why our Leader has taken such pains with us. We have learned to recognize your defectiveness by the smell of you. You were needed for awhile, like the white-collar intelligentsia after the Revolution. But a new generation is at the helm now and your day is over. Understand! There'll be no bargains! You, we offer nothing! You are going to die! The only question is whether you'll die uselessly, or whether you will confess and perform a last service for the Party. But die you will, you understand?

RUBASHOV, stares at him. Something dies; something of the will, and the battle, and the spirit go out of RUBASHOV forever. He suddenly becomes a very tired, sick old man. He nods, whispers hoarsely: I understand.

GLETKIN, harshly, triumphant: Then let's have no more arrogance. He pushes a button, picks up the phone. Next witness! The lights flicker, and as RUBASHOV slowly sits the scene vanishes.

The lights come up on the tier of cells. We see 402 and the wraithlike 302. They are eating their meager supper of black bread and cabbage soup. 302, taps to 402: Is Rubashov back yet?
402, taps: No.
302, taps: How long?
402, taps: They've had him upstairs—it must be ten hours now.
302, taps: I wonder are they torturing him now.
402, taps: Why should they? He's confessed.
302, taps: They want more than that from him.
402, taps: What more is there?
302, taps: There's more. I hope he understood. I think he did. I looked into his eyes before I left. He seemed to understand. My father used to talk so well of him. Suddenly overcome, to himself. Oh, my father, my father!

402, taps: Eat your supper.

The lights fade and the prisoners vanish. The lights come up again, revealing the office. A new INTERROGATOR and SECRETARY have replaced GLETKIN and the YOUNG WOMAN. As the scene appears, the INTERROGATOR, red-eyed, perspiration-soaked, purple-faced, is standing over RUBASHOV, hammering away at him. On the verge of fainting from fatigue, white-faced as the ghosts that haunt him, RUBASHOV exerts every ounce of willpower to resist the fanatical onslaught. The SECRETARY is also washed out with fatigue, his hair in disarray, his tie loosened.

INTERROGATOR, bellowing: Is this true? Answer yes or no!
RUBASHOV: I can't . . .
INTERROGATOR: Yes or no!
RUBASHOV: Partially . . .
INTERROGATOR, harshly: Yes or no! Yes or no!
RUBASHOV, wearily: Yes. . . . Yes.
INTERROGATOR, grunts: Yes. Good. Returns to the chair at the desk, seats himself. And now we return to the Kieffer episode. Picks up the documents. You admit this conversation with Professor Kieffer? Pause. He glances up; RUBASHOV's eyes have closed; his head, fallen, rests on his chest. The INTERROGATOR shouts. You will pay attention!
RUBASHOV, opens his eyes, raises his head: What?
INTERROGATOR: Don't you feel well?
RUBASHOV: I'm all right.
INTERROGATOR, with quiet threat: Would you like me to call in the doctor?
RUBASHOV, quickly, alert again: No.
INTERROGATOR: Stand up! RUBASHOV pulls himself to his feet. Straight! Head up! Hands at your sides! At attention! RUBASHOV obeys. Perhaps that will keep you awake. You admit this conversation? Pause. Yes or no!
RUBASHOV: There were conversations.
INTERROGATOR: I didn't ask you about conversations, I ask you about this one.
RUBASHOV: In Hegel's philosophy, every yes has a no and every no has a yes. INTERROGATOR: You're not here as a philosopher, you're here as a criminal. You'd better not talk about Hegel's philosophy. It'd be better first of all for Hegel. Do you admit this conversation? Yes or no.
RUBASHOV: Yes.
The door opens, GLETKIN and his SECRETARY enter briskly. They are fresh and rested. She has changed her dress. GLETKIN carries an armful of books, with slips inserted.
INTERROGATOR: Yes. Good.
RUBASHOV: But I deny your conclusions.
GLETKIN, interrupting: That is to say you admit everything except the logical consequence of your admissions? He nods to the seated SECRETARY, who folds his notebook and rises. GLETKIN's SECRETARY occupies the chair and proceeds to make notes.
INTERROGATOR: Stop this crude lying!
RUBASHOV: I'm not lying, young man.
GLETKIN, crosses to the desk: You've been here for ten hours poisoning the air with your Jesuit tactics. What do you expect to gain by this?
RUBASHOV: Gain? Nothing.
GLETKIN, touches the INTERROGATOR, who nods, rises: Then admit your crimes and get it over with!
RUBASHOV: Admit to crimes I didn't commit? Even Danton in the French Revolution was allowed to defend himself.

INTERROGATOR, now up out of the chair: And what happened to the French Revolution?

GLETKIN, sliding into the seat, leaning across the desk, without interrupting the interrogation. The effect is of a well-oiled machine: Powdered pigtails declaiming about personal honor! All that mattered to Danton and Company was to go with a swan song. Is that what you want?

The INTERROGATOR and the male SECRETARY exit, stretching, yawning wearily.

RUBASHOV: I certainly don't want to go howling like a wolf in the night.

GLETKIN: Whether it does good or harm to the Cause, that doesn't matter?

RUBASHOV: My whole life has but a single purpose: to serve the Cause.

GLETKIN: There's only one way you can serve it now. A full confession in open court. A voluntary confession of all these crimes.

RUBASHOV, sways, leans on the desk to support himself: I've pleaded guilty to a false and harmful policy. Isn't that enough?

GLETKIN: Our country today is the bastion of the new era. Everything depends on our keeping the bastion intact, keeping the country solidly united.

RUBASHOV: How does it unite the country? How does it serve the Party that her members have to grovel in the dust? The name N. S. Rubashov is a piece of Party history. By dragging me in the mud you besmirch the Revolution. I—

GLETKIN: I, I, me, me, I! He picks up one of the books, opening it to a marked page. Do you recognize this book?

RUBASHOV, puts on his glasses. His hands are trembling. It takes him some time to focus his vision as he peers at the book: Yes.

GLETKIN: Who wrote it?

RUBASHOV: I did.

GLETKIN, reads from the page: "With us the objective result is everything. With us objective good faith is of no interest. Those who prove wrong will pay!" You said that?

RUBASHOV, his body sags again: Yes.

GLETKIN: Well, you are wrong.

The ghostlike image of RICHARD appears, pointing a finger at RUBASHOV.

RUBASHOV, staring into space, nods: Yes.

GLETKIN: And you will pay.

The phantom of RICHARD vanishes.

RUBASHOV: I am paying.
GLETKIN: With your life!

RUBASHOV: My life has been the Party. My life would be worthless unless I could go on working for it. *His knees buckle, he sways, about to collapse.*

GLETKIN: Sit down! RUBASHOV sinks to the chair. There's only one way you can serve the Party now. As an example to the masses. *He opens another book, reading from it.* “For the masses, what is right must be gilded, what is wrong must be black as pitch.” You wrote that?

RUBASHOV: Yes.

GLETKIN: Even if we let you go on living—as you say—what would you have to live for?


GLETKIN: Who?

*Luigi's phantom vanishes.*

RUBASHOV, *shakes his head:* Never mind.

GLETKIN: You admit your guilt?

RUBASHOV: In thought.

GLETKIN: In thought? *Holds up a book.* And this?

RUBASHOV: Yes. Mine too.

GLETKIN, *reads:* “The consequences of our thinking will be felt unto the seventh generation. Hence a wrong thought from us is more criminal than a wrong deed from others.” You wrote that?

RUBASHOV: Yes. I wrote it.

GLETKIN: Then, when you say you are not guilty, aren't you thinking mechanistically, Citizen Rubashov? *Albert's image appears. He is waving his hands with the ridiculously exaggerated gestures.* PABLO's image appears, juggling plates. RUBASHOV laughs softly.

GLETKIN: What are you laughing at?

*The phantoms of Pablo and Albert vanish.*

RUBASHOV, *startled, looks up:* Was I laughing?

GLETKIN: Yes.

RUBASHOV, *passes his hand over his forehead:* I wasn't conscious of it.

GLETKIN: Do you usually do things you're not conscious of?

RUBASHOV: No. Not often.

GLETKIN: These acts of sabotage, for example.

RUBASHOV: I deny them.

GLETKIN: Perhaps you committed them unconsciously.

RUBASHOV: I didn't commit them at all.

GLETKIN: These factories had great losses.

RUBASHOV: Yes.

GLETKIN: Sabotage is a weapon of the class struggle.
Rubashov: Yes. But I didn't employ it.
Glekin: You've advocated its use again and again?
Rubashov: Yes. But I didn't employ it here.
Glekin: Didn't you? Pause. He looks through the papers. The case of the woman Luba Loshenko. She was your secretary? Correct?
Rubashov: Yes.
Glekin: And you were sleeping with her. Rubashov straightens up. Correct? Silence. Shall I give you the place, dates, conversations? He waves the dossier. They're all here.
Rubashov, almost inaudible: Yes, I was sleeping with her.
Glekin: Speak up!
Rubashov, loudly: Yes. I admit the relationship.
Glekin: You admit it?
Rubashov: I said yes.
Glekin: She was tried and shot for sabotage, correct?
Rubashov, wildly: She was innocent.
Glekin: Innocent? He rises.
Rubashov: Yes.
Glekin: She had no political motives? Is that what you mean?
Rubashov: Precisely.
Glekin: Precisely. She was an ordinary young woman, infatuated—blindly, stupidly, the slave and tool of one man who, however, did have considerable political motives—you!
Rubashov: What motives?
Glekin: You hated the Revolution, and you taught her to hate us.
Rubashov, desperately: That's not true. She was innocent.
Glekin: Why didn't you say so at the time?
Rubashov: You know as well as I there wasn't anything I could do to save her.
Glekin: So you did nothing?
Rubashov: Nothing.
Glekin: You were silent.
Rubashov: I was silent.
Glekin: To save your own neck!
Rubashov: To go on working.
Glekin: Without a neck one cannot work; hence, to save your own neck. And this silence of yours was finally responsible for her execution. Correct?
Rubashov: So I was informed.
Glekin: For your further information, I was one of her interrogators.
Rubashov, raises his head: You?
GLETIKIN, thumbs through the transcript: I have here a transcript of her interrogation. I think it might interest you. Ninth day. Tenth day. Yes, here we have it. This Loshenko woman was surprising. These thin delicate ones sometimes really stand up. Listen! He reads. “Interrogator: ‘Under whose orders?’ Loshenko: ‘No one’s’…”

LUBA’s image appears in space, bowed, drenched with pain. She shakes her head slowly, moving her lips silently at first, then her trembling voice becomes barely audible, grows stronger, finally topping and supplanting GLETIKIN’S voice. GLETIKIN continues to read from the transcript.

LUBA: No one’s. I’ve told you a hundred times there were no orders.

GLETIKIN: Stop lying.

LUBA: No matter what I say, you don’t believe me. Oh, God! I’m so tired.

GLETIKIN: I want the truth.

LUBA: I’ve told you the truth, over and over and over and over. I’m so tired, I can’t…

GLETIKIN: Who gave you these instructions?

LUBA: No one.

GLETIKIN: You sabotaged without instructions?

LUBA: No, no, no. You’re twisting my words.

GLETIKIN: That’s what you said.

LUBA: I didn’t say that! I said I didn’t do these things and no one asked me to.

GLETIKIN: We’ve all the proofs.

LUBA: What are you trying to make me say?

GLETIKIN: Stop shielding Rubashov!

LUBA: I’m not shielding anyone.

GLETIKIN: You’re shielding Rubashov.

LUBA: A man like that doesn’t need shielding. A man like that…

GLETIKIN: You were sleeping with him, weren’t you?

LUBA: I loved him.

GLETIKIN: You loved him?

LUBA: Yes.

GLETIKIN: You’d do anything he asked you?

LUBA: He wouldn’t ask me to commit crimes.

GLETIKIN: Idiot! This man has used you.

LUBA: No!

GLETIKIN: He’s made a fool of you.

LUBA: No!

GLETIKIN: And now when you need him, where is he? Where is he?

LUBA: Oh, God, God, make them leave me alone!

GLETIKIN: God is dead, Luba Loshenko! God is dead.

LUBA: What do you want of me?
GLETKIN: Rubashov's making you responsible for his guilt.
LUBA: He's not.
GLETKIN: Use your head! He's refused to testify for you.
LUBA: I don't believe that.
GLETKIN: Here are the proofs! Look, look!
LUBA: I don't want to look.
GLETKIN: He was asked to testify and he's refused.
LUBA: I don't believe that. I don't believe you . . . I don't believe you . . .
RUBASHOV, staring into space, murmurs: I had no choice, Luba. Don't you see? I had no choice. I couldn't have saved you. It was only a trap to destroy my usefulness. The SECRETARY rises, leans forward to catch RUBASHOV's words and writes them down. I tried! I went everywhere—to my friends in high places. They said no, nothing will help.
GLETKIN, reads on: Save yourself! This is your last chance, Luba Loshenko! You admit these acts of sabotage.
LUBA: I can't admit them because there weren't any. There was no sabotage. There were only tired men and sick men and frightened men.
GLETKIN, slaps his hand as he reads: You stupid bitch! LUBA'S IMAGE recoils as if she'd been struck. All right! Then you'll be shot in the back of your neck!
LUBA: What are you doing to us? What are you doing to us? We're not stones, we're not machines! We're human beings. We feel, we think, we see, we dream, we're a part of God. Why have you done this to us? You say God is dead, but you've made your own god out of darkness, out of misery and lies and pain! Why? Why are you doing this to us?
RUBASHOV, stands up unsteadily, staring into space, calls out: This was not the way it was to be.
GLETKIN glances quickly at RUBASHOV who is no longer aware of his surroundings, nods to the SECRETARY. She rises and leans closer to RUBASHOV, taking down his words.
LUBA: You've made a prison . . . out of our wonderful country—a prison.
RUBASHOV: We wanted to build a new and better world.
RUBASHOV: I don't understand why, myself. Our principles were right.
LUBA: Our people are more miserable than before the Revolution.
RUBASHOV: We diagnosed the disease, but wherever we applied the healing knife . . .
LUBA: Our people are covered with sores.
RUBASHOV: Our will was pure. We should have been loved by the people . . .
LUBA: They hate you.
RUBASHOV: Why? Why are we so hated? We brought truth.
LUBA: In your mouths everything becomes a lie.
RUBASHOV: We brought living life . . .
LUBA: The trees in the forest wither.
RUBASHOV: I sang of hope.
LUBA: Your tongues stammer and bark.
RUBASHOV: Yes, yes, and every premise of unimpeachable truth has led me to this final weird and ghostly game. Why? Why?
LUBA: Kolya! Kolya, darling! Wherever you are ... She vanishes and only her voice is heard crying “Kolya! Kolya!”
RUBASHOV: Luba! Luba! What have I done? What have I done? He whispers. Guilty, guilty, guilty! Then, very simply. I'm going to faint. He slides gently and quietly out of the chair and falls to the floor.
GLETKIN, rings for his colleague, snaps his fingers at his Secretary: The ammonia! The Secretary rushes across to the table, opens a drawer, takes out a bottle of ammonia and hands it to him. GLETKIN, on one knee, slaps RUBASHOV'S face and administers the restorative. The door is thrown open and the other Interrogator enters.
GLETKIN, nods, indicating RUBASHOV'S crumpled body: We've got him. We've got the lever. The sharp fumes of the ammonia begin to revive RUBASHOV. Stand him up! The other Interrogator lifts RUBASHOV to his feet and holds him there, limp as a rag doll. GLETKIN waves the ammonia bottle under his nose until he responds, then, putting one huge hand gently on his shoulder, speaks softly, caressingly. You haven't eaten your food today, Comrade Rubashov. Would you like some hot soup?
RUBASHOV, murmurs: Sleep. I must sleep.
GLETKIN: You understand, Comrade Rubashov, what the Party expects of you.
RUBASHOV: Yes.
GLETKIN: This is the last service you can perform for the Party.
RUBASHOV: I must sleep. Sleep.
GLETKIN: Very well. To Guard. Take him back to his cell. To RUBASHOV, gently. I'll see that you are not disturbed.
RUBASHOV, like a child, eagerly: Thank you, Comrade Gletkin. The Guard takes Rubashov out.
GLETKIN, to the Interrogator: In exactly twenty minutes wake him up and bring him back here. I'll interrogate him till midnight, you take him till five A.M., and I'll take him again at five. Blinks his eyes, avoids the dazzle-light. This Loshenko thing—that's the lever. Work it around in his belly. Keep returning to it. It's simply a question of time now. The Interrogator nods, feels his aching back, and goes, yawning. GLETKIN snaps off the dazzle-light.
SECRETARY: Congratulations, Comrade Gletkin.

GLETKIN, sits down to his desk, stretches his legs, pleased: It's just a matter of constitution.

The scene fades out. The lights come up. The Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. This scene is another memory in the mind of the brooding RUBASHOV after the event has occurred. The President, bathed in a hot white light, is seated at a long, covered table, three judges to his left, three to his right. The rest are shadowy figures.

PRESIDENT: Comrade Judges, you have heard the evidence against Citizen Rubashov. Comrade Procurateur of the U.S.S.R. has summed up for the prosecution. Accused Rubashov step forward. RUBASHOV appears in the white light before the judge's bench. The Guard brings on a microphone and sets it in front of RUBASHOV. Accused Rubashov may make his last plea.

RUBASHOV, bending a little, speaking into the microphone, in a dead voice: Citizen Judges. Covered with shame, trampled in the dust, about to die—let me serve my final purpose. Let my horrible story demonstrate how the slightest deflection from the Party line must inevitably drag one down into counter-revolutionary banditry. If I ask myself today: "For what am I dying?" I am confronted by absolute nothingness. Therefore, on the threshold of my final hour, I bend my knees to my country and to my people. The political masquerade is over. We were dead long before the Public Prosecutor demanded our heads. With this my task is ended. I have paid my debts. To ask for mercy would be derision. You must hate me, and you must kill me! I have nothing more to say.

He stands with lowered head. The Guard removes the microphone.

PRESIDENT: I will announce the sentence of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court. He reads. "The Sentence. The Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. sentences N. S. Rubashov to the supreme penalty—to be shot, with the confiscation of all his personal property . . ."

His voice trails off. The lights fade. The court vanishes. Only RUBASHOV remains, sitting in his cell, wrapped in meditation, his head between his hands, his brow furrowed, his face old and gray, as if all the blood had been drained out of him. An insistent tapping. 402 comes into view, tapping three times, waiting, and gently repeating the code.

RUBASHOV, coming out of his reverie, rises feebly, crosses unsteadily to the wall, taps: Yes?

402, taps: I thought 302 behaved quite well. He went like a brave man.

RUBASHOV, taps: Yes.

402, taps: You still have about ten minutes. What are you doing?

RUBASHOV, taps: I'm thinking.

402, taps: Thinking's bad. You won't show the white feather! We know
you're a man. A man. Pause. Do you still remember "Breasts fit champagne glasses"! Ha! Ha! What a man you are! RUBASHOV listens for a sound from the corridor. 402 senses his thoughts. Don't listen. I'll tell you in time when they are coming. Pause. What would you do if you were pardoned?

RUBASHOV, *thinks, taps*: I'd study astronomy.

402, *taps*: Ha! Ha! Me too, perhaps. But they say other stars are perhaps also inhabited. That would spoil it. Pause. May I give you some advice?

RUBASHOV *taps*: Yes.

402, *taps*: But don't take it wrong. Technical suggestion of an old soldier. Empty your bladder. Is always better in such case. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Ha! Ha!


402, *taps*: Why astronomy?

RUBASHOV, *taps*: As a boy I loved to watch the stars. I wanted to solve the riddle of the universe.


RUBASHOV, *to himself*: Recently I read they have discovered the Universe is finite. Forty years pass and I read that. If the Public Prosecutor has asked, "Defendant Rubashov, what about the Infinite?," I would not have been able to answer. Perhaps there is my real guilt.

402, *taps*: It's too late to worry about guilt.

RUBASHOV, *taps*: How can I die till I find out what I'm dying for? Pause, *taps*. Sorry! Tell me, what are your prospects?

402, *taps slowly*: Eighteen years more. Not quite. Only six thousand five hundred thirty days. Pause. Think of it. Another six thousand five hundred thirty days without a woman. I envy you, really. My brain is turning to water. I have returned to the habits of my childhood. I loathe myself!

RUBASHOV, *to the wall*: Oh, you poor, poor devil! *To the entire prison, to all Russia.* All of you! My hundred and eighty million fellow prisoners, what have I done to you? What have I created? If History is all calculation, Rubashov, give me the sum of a hundred and eighty million nightmares. Quickly calculate me the pressure of a hundred and eighty million cravings. Where in your mathematics, Rubashov, is the human soul? At the very beginning you forgot what you were searching for?

Footsteps ring out in the corridor.

402, *taps*: They're coming. The footsteps grow louder. What a shame. We were having such a pleasant talk.

RUBASHOV, *taps*: You've helped me a lot. Thanks.


*The door of RUBASHOV's cell is thrown open with a clang.* GLETKIN enters.
GLETKIN: Enemy of the People Nicolai Semenovitch Rubashov, before you are executed, have you any last wish?

A long pause.

RUBASHOV: One. He tries to catch GLETKIN's eyes. If I could only make you understand where in the very beginning we failed.

GLETKIN: These are your last words. Don't waste them.

RUBASHOV, passionately: You don't build a Paradise out of concrete. My son . . .

GLETKIN, quickly, distastefully: I am not your son.

RUBASHOV, after a long pause, sadly: Yes, you are. That's the horror. He shakes his head, bitterly. The means have become the end; and darkness has come over the land.

GLETKIN: Have you any last wish?

RUBASHOV: To die.

GLETKIN motions him to walk. RUBASHOV moves slowly out of the cell; GLETKIN takes out his pistol, cocks it, and follows. The GUARD opens the gate to the cellar, a shaft of light coming up catches them. 402 begins to drum on the door. From all over the prison comes the hollow muffled drumming, which mounts higher and higher as RUBASHOV and GLETKIN descend, and the iron gate clangs behind them. The drumming reaches a climax as the CURTAIN falls slowly.