

Moscow Antigone

Inspired by Sophocles

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## CAST LIST

\*VOICE\* Male/Female. Adult

*CHORUSES* Male/ Female\*Adult. Any age

*LORD PUTIN* Adult. Male. Middle aged or older

*ALINA* Adult. Female. Young

\*GENERAL KUTOZOV\*Adult. Male or Female

*ANTIGONE* Adult. Young female

\*ISMENE\*Adult. Young female

\*SOLDIERS ONE and TWO\*Adult. Male/Female

*HAEMON* Adult. Young man

*MESSENGERS* Adult. Male or Female

*LADY EURYDICE* Adult. Female. Middle aged or older

*TIRESIAS* Adult. Male.

*OFFICER* Adult. Male

\*MESSENGER" Adult. Male or Female

**Time:** The present.

**\*\*Setting: \*\*Moscow.Russia**

**\*\*Stage:\*\*A bare stage with several stools, a table and a good looking quality chair suitable for Lord Putin. The stage should be equipped with a large screen or a large TV set suitable for video/audio/still photographs viewing by the audience.**

**\*\*Lighting: \*\*Capable of creating different times of the day quickly with the ability to 'spot focus' 'on separate parts of the stage.**

**\*\*Sound effects\*\*Thunder**

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It is dark. The stage lights fade up. We hear a voice shouting off stage

VOICE

All cast get ready to go on-stage. Have we the film clip ready of the war in Ukraine? Test it on screen. Now.

A film screen appears at the back of the stage and we see still projected photographs from the war in Ukraine. The lights fade to black and then fade up slowly.

VOICE

As I call your names, come on-stage and get into position. Lord Putin. Chorus One - Male. Chorus Two - Female. Antigone. Ismene. Two soldiers. Alina. Lady Eurydice - there's no need for you to come on stage yet, dear. Same with you General Kutozov, Haemon, Tiresias and all others. Stay in your dressing rooms or near the stage entrances. Cast. Standby to begin the play. Action.

One of the women ANTIGONE starts walking around the stage. She is worried and agitated. The Male Chorus shouts at her.

CHORUS MALE

Goddam... Antigone. The play has barely started and you stride around, as if you own the stage. You have your part. Put your bloody arse down on that stool, keep still, and let us tell the audience the background to this story.

He turns towards the audience.

CHORUS MALE

This is Russia. This is Moscow.

CHORUS FEMALE

Look at these people on this stage. You'll get to know them soon. My male partner and I represent the people of Moscow. That's him. This beautiful young woman is Ismene. Sister to Antigone. She's a princess too, like Antigone. Thank God, Ismene, you are not like your sister here. You do follow rules, customs and you respect people. As for your sister. Antigone. I have fears for her future.

The Male Chorus walks towards two soldiers and an older, well-dressed man standing with his back to the audience.

CHORUS MALE

These are soldiers, of course. They'll follow orders like all soldiers. They drink, argue, fight, take bribes and will fuck any good looking woman in their power. Girls too, if they get the opportunity. No need to say anymore about them.

He points to the older man.

CHORUS MALE

Our ruler. Lord Putin. Antigone and Ismene are relatives to Putin. He is brother of their late mother. Nuncle Putin, they call him. Nuncle. It's an old word for Uncle. Putin thinks in the old ways too. He's powerful and has life and death over people. You see his bulging pocket. He keeps a gun in there. What else shall I say about him? He's a bully. Through and through.

Putin strides around the stage. He takes a note from his pocket, reads it and puts it back in his pocket. He turns to the audience

PUTIN

Citizens. I am your leader now. I did not want to be. It was forced upon me. Two brothers, sons of our late king and my sister are dead. Both wanted to be the ruler and they killed each other doing it. I could have loved both brothers, but one hated me. He fought to destroy this city, this nation. Thankfully he died. Now, I am the ruler of this restless country. I will tame it. There will be order and stability. No matter the cost.

Putin strides away in anger and scowls at the two sisters, Antigone and Ismene.

PUTIN

Yes. You may look at me. But, when you look remember I am your leader. You will obey me.

The two Choruses talk to each other while looking at the sisters.

CHORUS MALE

Lord Putin gave one brother a state funeral. The other brother fought against him and killed his favourite general.

## CHORUS FEMALE

What happens to this brother?

## CHORUS MALE

I heard rumours.

## CHORUS FEMALE

Rumours. There are always rumours. This is Russia. We have so many rumours, we export them to the world.

## CHORUS MALE

This one may be true. Lord Putin plans to punish the second son.

## CHORUS FEMALE

Huh. How can that be? He is dead. He'll be buried and go to meet his relatives. It is our custom.

## CHORUS MALE

I have heard there will be no burial for the second brother.

## CHORUS FEMALE

Rubbish. It will happen. It is our culture. Antigone and Ismene will mourn at the funeral. Lord Putin will follow customs. He is that type of man. He follows rules.

## CHORUS MALE

But not when he is angry. One brother is honoured in death, the other is disgraced.

## CHORUS FEMALE

Lord Putin will have to deal with Antigone. She will speak her mind

## CHORUS MALE

She is strong willed. But, she is a girl and cannot defy Lord Putin.

Suddenly Putin moves and grasps the Chorus by the neck forcing him to the ground.

## PUTIN

Stop blabbing on. You peasant people of this country will learn to treat me with more respect. You were once part of a larger Russia. If that stupid brother had not fought against me this country would be stronger. It will be like that soon. I will reclaim and rebuild our empire, like my ancestors.

Putin goes and sits in a large chair. He begins to read a document.

PUTIN

Do you know how your father and mother lived in the past?

CHORUS MALE

It was hard, Sir. They had little money and there was always a war. My father and his brothers fought in a war. I can't remember which war.

PUTIN

Of course you can't. Wars and more wars. The people of this country are blind and have been so for a long time. Enemies sneaked in and sucked away our country. Thieves stole our heritage. If I do nothing, millions of Russians who fought the Nazis will have died for nothing.

CHORUS FEMALE

My father died in that war against the Nazis. He says he fought for our freedom.

PUTIN

I am your freedom now. I know our history, I see the future. I know wars, I know who fought, who died. Do you know the names of your enemies?

CHORUS MALE

They came from the West, from the democratic nations.

CHORUS FEMALE

My father said they had much money.

PUTIN

Democracy. Democracy. It generates useless and trivial differences of opinion to provide food and better jobs for their people. Rubbish. In the last thirty years the standard of living of the democracies is shrinking. Our way of life is to become stronger.

CHORUS FEMALE

I have cousins who went to the West. Their children got university degrees, but they are now on drugs. My uncle collapsed in a street in London. He was ill and lay on the pavement. People said he was drunk and would not help him. I told this story to a journalist. His newspaper editor ignored the story to report the visit of a rich singer from America.

PUTIN

Do you know in the West that people pay to have their voices heard ?

CHORUS MALE

They call these people celebrities. Some own radio and television stations and big shops.

PUTIN

Yes. But you and I control television to bring the truth about the West. We have hardworking journalists like Alina Kabaeva.

CHORUS MALE

Alina Kabaeva!!!!

PUTIN

Alina knows the West. Knows their weak spots, their decadent views, their corruption.

He calls to a person off-stage.

PUTIN

Alina. Come.

ALINA enters the stage. She is a smart, good looking young woman who moves and talks with confidence. Putin smiles at her.

ALINA

The printers are ready and the Internet is ready as soon as you approve the text.

PUTIN

Is this the final draft?

ALINA

My team is still working on redefining a few words. We got stuck on "freedom", of course. One of our foreign workers suggested we focus just on visual associations of the word.

PUTIN

What?

ALINA

I've edited news clips from Western TV. BBC, CNN, France 24, Germany, Italy and Australia. Each video has a commentary with their announcers talking in their own language about "Freedom". The images include clips with police action at demonstrations, sometimes violent, sometimes not.

(MORE)

ALINA (CONT'D)

The word "freedom" occurs many times in their commentaries. There is no Russian announcement or comment until the end of the video. Then I insert a screen caption saying, "Western freedom is disorder. There are clips of Russians wrestling with the police and shouting.

PUTIN

Good.

ALINA

We have security men and trained actors as demonstrators. Western journalists want to get their hands on our raw material, including notes on our team discussions. Our team still has two foreigners. Both British who work for us.

PUTIN

The ex-journalists. The married couple.

ALINA

Yes. I need to get rid of them. They could become a security risk when our invasion begins.

PUTIN

How

ALINA

A car accident will do. Send their bodies home to London with a Russian military escort.

PUTIN

Agreed.

ALINA

Award them medals for their services to Russia? The British like medals. It's posterity food for the dead and stupid.

PUTIN

Ah, Alina.

ALINA

I still want to change minds by persuasion not force.

PUTIN (to Chorus)

Both are persuasion, Alina. And the army sperm bank video?

ALINA

It's ready for TV transmission.

(MORE)



ALINA (CONT'D)

Sperm banks are busy collecting samples from our soldiers when they enlist and they are told it will be kept safe until they return from the war. Each sperm is given a child's name. The child's sperm name is sent to the soldier's wives. If there are no wives, then to their families. It's a wonderful recruiter of soldiers. It defies death in the mind of young men.

PUTIN

My Alina.

ALINA

If they are killed on the battlefield, the unborn child receives his father's medal, a government grant and publicity on TV news with a photograph of the soldier.

PUTIN

Your work has a terrible beauty.

ALINA

After this. I need to rest for a few days to give my baby strength.

PUTIN

When our baby is born I will call him Peter, after Peter, the Great.

ALINA

Oh, Vladimir. It may not be a boy.

PUTIN

It will. It will. He will become a future warriors.

ALINA

We must wait.

PUTIN

But, not much longer.

ALINA

No. It is nearly due.

Alina exits. Putin turns towards the Chorus and beckons them.

PUTIN

Alina works to make our people proud. I know you all believe in family values with truth and honesty. But you must know learn that truth too is always a wayward child to be coaxed to respect leadership.

## CHORUS MALE

The laws of our nation and our Gods are important.

## PUTIN

Stability is important. Life is like a human body. It has a head, a voice, ears to hear with, arms and hands to work and legs to walk with. All parts of the body must work together for harmony. If just the heart is in control, there is chaos. When both the head and heart listen to the body, the legs take you forward.

## CHORUS MALE

At the top of the body we need a wise head to manage this unruly body and create harmony.

## PUTIN

I am that head.

## CHORUS FEMALE

Lord Putin. We recognise your leadership. We honour you and our traditions. But, what shall we tell our children?

## PUTIN

You will not tell them. I will. What did you learn as a child?

## CHORUS MALE

I studied at school.

## PUTIN

Did you learn about survival? The weak and incompetent must die or waste away. It is nature's law.

## CHORUS MALE

Yes, Lord Putin.

## PUTIN

Individual thoughts are weak and must be subservient to the state or they become a threat. The state is always your father.

Putin returns to his chair. He sits. We see Ismene and Antigone talking. The CHORUS cross the stage and greet them.

## ANTIGONE

Did he talk about our brothers?

CHORUS MALE

He told us they were both dead. He was angry with Pierre, who fought against him.

ANTIGONE

Did he talk about his burial to meet the ancestors.

CHORUS FEMALE

Lord Putin was angry.

ANTIGONE

His officers are talking. One told me he heard Nuncle Putin say Pierre will be left to the dogs and cockroaches.

CHORUS MALE

That cannot be.

CHORUS FEMALE

It cannot happen. Lord Putin believes in honour and justice.

A man in military uniform enters.  
This is GENERAL KUTOZOV. He salutes Putin, who nods to him to speak.

KUTOZOV

It's all arranged, my Lord.

PUTIN

Kutozov. How many troops have you?

KUTOZOV

Almost a hundred thousand. But many are conscripts with no war experience.

PUTIN

They are warriors. We will honour them in death.

KUTOZOV

There are a hundred thousand men ready to move.

PUTIN

You said that already, don't waste time, Kutozov. A hundred thousand men. How many days do you need to take over Ukraine?

KUTOZOV

A week, maybe a fortnight.

PUTIN

Kyiv is close to our borders. I won't wait that long. A fortnight is too long.

KUTOZOV

We have to be able to maintain our supply lines. Many soldiers are untrained.

PUTIN

You will enter the capital city within five days. No later. There will be little opposition when the authorities see the size of our army. Their leader is a television clown. He'll run away to take refuge. Probably to Hollywood.

KUTOZOV

We have heard nothing.

PUTIN

He will run. He's first on the death list.

KUTOZOV

Yes, the whole family.

PUTIN

Are the killing squads on standby.

KUTOZOV

They are already in Kyiv and waiting to enter the palace. I have two other squads ready for action. Our best men are talking about strategy.

PUTIN

Strategy. Who leads that?

KUTOZOV

General Pulov. He has a formidable intellect and understands war strategy.

PUTIN

Your friend?

KUTOZOV

From military college. He was one of the top three students. You awarded him a special medal at his graduation.

PUTIN

Dismiss him immediately. His authority and medals are to be publicly removed at a ceremony in the War Planning Room. All the generals will attend. Then take him to the central army jail.

KUTOZOV

On what grounds do I arrest him?

PUTIN

That is your job.

KUTOZOV

I have given the wrong impression. I've known General Pulov for nearly thirty years. He is a loyal soldier.

PUTIN

If you talk like that, I'll become suspicious of your loyalty too. I decide 'strategy'.

KUTOZOV

Your orders will be followed, Lord Putin.

PUTIN

Of course. Now, the use of the 'Z' symbol.

KUTOZOV

Yes. It's being painted on all vehicles. The other use of Z will be a war symbol. Returning soldiers from the conflict are awarded a silver medallion with the Z sign to commemorate our victory. Children are drawing pictures in schools using the Z symbol. It looks good on television too. Alina has been testing it.

The General points to the Projection/TV screen at the back of the stage. Different photographs appear on the screen using the Z sign.

***Note to Play Director: The photograph files are attached to the script. They are from the Ukraine War.***

KUTOZOV

The official message as we enter Ukraine is that we are there to clear the country of Nazis and restore their stability and prosperity. 'Z' is 'Za pobedy' ...for victory. It can also mean 'Zapad' ... the West .

PUTIN

And the media persuasion program?

KUTOZOV

Alina and her team have prepared programs with the terms Nazi and Fascist to be used against the enemy and foreign politicians, especially Germans and Italians. Their faces will be on Facebook, TikTok and our own TV channels.

PUTIN

People still fear the name... Nazi.

KUTOZOV

I wasn't born when that war ended, but my father talked about Nazis and the war, and after it ended, how a few renegade Nazis still kept blowing up our shops and factories. Those memories last a long time.

PUTIN

Twenty five million Russians died during that war. Maybe more. still recognise the swastika symbol as evil. Kutozov, I want several thousand Nazis identified, apprehended, tried in military courts and then executed. Fill this quota from prisons. Have Nazi flags made to shown in TV. Link them to dead Nazis. Put notices on the bodies of the Nazis. Abuse the bodies.

KUTOZOV

I will report to you personally when it is done.

PUTIN

Use propaganda.

KUTOZOV

I'll check with Alina.

PUTIN

I want positive language about our leadership and negative for the enemy. Make people think about dirt, waste, disease, destruction coming from the West. That is all, Kutozov. Go

KUTOZOV

Immediately.

PUTIN

A reminder. My personal security will be reporting about General Pulov.

The General salutes and leaves the stage. Putin beckons to the Male and Female Chorus.

PUTIN

Citizens of Moscow, know that we are going to welcome back a brother country to Mother Russia. You are too young to remember the war against Germany.

CHORUS MALE

As a child I remember playing war games. Russians always won. My grandfather said that after the war ended the government gave him a warm home and farm animals.

PUTIN

It will happen again. We have films about the evil Nazi regime. Old Russian films will soon be on TV. Make your children watch them. Then tell them what the Nazis did to Russians.

## CHORUS FEMALE

My grandfather talked about the war against the Nazis.

## CHORUS MALE

I know those stories. Our grandparents were so happy when the war ended.

## PUTIN

A better time is coming. You will see our new Z sign. It will be on walls, on television screens. Soldiers will wear armbands with Z on them. Tanks defending our country will have Z painted on their sides. Z for victory. Z for the damnation of the West. Z for the end of Zelensky.

Putin dismisses them and go to the side of the stage. He read a document. The Male Chorus sees Antigone and stands behind her.

## CHORUS MALE

This is Antigone, sister to Princess Ismene. Look at her. She has been listening to our conversation. She is a strong person. Her father was once ruler of this land. Her mother was Lady Jocasta. Her brothers.....

Putin is listening and waves his document about. He shouts angrily at the Chorus.

## PUTIN

Died. I am now the lawful leader of Russia. I ...Lord Putin. Brother of Jocasta, my sad sister who set this whole bloody story in motion.

Antigone hears this information. She turns and looks at him.

## ANTIGONE

Nuncle. My two brothers, Nikita and Pierre. When did they die?

## PUTIN

Nikita has already been buried with full military honours and awarded the Star of Russia.

## ANTIGONE

And Pierre?

## PUTIN

That traitor.

ANTIGONE

What do you mean? When is Pierre to be buried?

PUTIN

At this moment his body is in a refrigerator truck sitting near the border in captured enemy territory. He stays there. Forever, for all I care.

ANTIGONE

Nuncle. You can't leave him there. It's against our laws and customs.

PUTIN

I decide. Rulers create customs and laws. He fought against me.

ANTIGONE

The dead are to be buried with dignity. Our churches, our elders ... all honour the dead. It is tradition. The natural law.

PUTIN

Tradition!

ANTIGONE

My sister and I will wash his body for his journey and say prayers.

PUTIN

Anyone who tries to bury him will die. Anyone.

Antigone turns towards the Male Chorus.

ANTIGONE

Help me. Please?

CHORUS MALE

I am a citizen of this country. I must obey my leader.

The Female Chorus crosses the stage and holds Antigone by the hands.

CHORUS FEMALE

He is right, Antigone. We must obey the law.

CHORUS MALE

We will both die if we break the law. Lord Putin will kill us.

ANTIGONE

There are old natural laws.



## CHORUS FEMALE

Laws bow before strong rulers.

## ANTIGONE

I will bury my brother.

## CHORUS FEMALE

Antigone. Beware. Lord Putin will kill you too.

## CHORUS MALE

Antigone. Beware the anger of our leader.

## ANTIGONE

He will not. Nuncle Putin is my mother's brother. We are related by blood.

## CHORUS FEMALE

He is of your blood. But he will take your blood.

## PUTIN

Antigone, come here.

Antigone goes towards Putin.

## PUTIN

Why don't you kneel? I am your lawful ruler now.

## ANTIGONE

You are, Nuncle. But, I kneel only before my father and mother.

## PUTIN

They are dead. Your two brothers are dead too. I warn you. Pierre fought against me. He will never have a funeral. Go. Get out of here, woman.

Antigone stands and exits. Putin walks offstage.

## CHORUS FEMALE

I fear for Antigone. She is planning something. It will end badly.

## CHORUS MALE

Come, we must return home. This is a dark time in our city.

## CHORUS FEMALE

Look. The sisters. Go quickly before they see us. I am so afraid.

Ismene and Antigone re-enter the stage as the Choruses depart.

ISMENE

It's too dangerous.

ANTIGONE

We will do it together.

ISMENE

I have been praying all night for their souls

ANTIGONE

Prayers are no good. We find Pierre and bury him. Then we pray.

ISMENE

Antigone?

ANTIGONE

We do this together and quickly. Nuncle Putin will never find out.

ISMENE

He will. He has spies everywhere.

ANTIGONE

It's our duty to bury our brother.

ISMENE

You heard what Nuncle Putin said. He will kill us. I don't want to die.

ANTIGONE

Why are you so afraid of death? It is nothing. We only die once. and go to our ancestors. Pierre must go there too. He can't while he lies cold and still above the earth.

ISMENE

I can't.

ANTIGONE

You won't?

ISMENE

I want to live, to marry, to have children, to pick flowers, to sit with the blue sky above me and feel the warm sun on my face. Death is darkness, forever. I am scared of the dark. Don't you want to marry, to be a mother?

ANTIGONE

That will never happen. I will never marry. You are the beautiful one in the family. I am ugly. Look at my nose and ears.

ISMENE

How can you say that! When we are together in the street, it is you men look at.

ANTIGONE

How can you say that? All eyes turn towards you - your smiling face, your deep dark eyes. Your hair with the sun shining in it. Your soft swaying movements when you walk.

ISMENE

Oh, Antigone. Men look at you and see something real. It's only teenage boys and disgusting old men who look at me with lecherous watery eyes. In you men see a woman who will give birth to warriors. My children will be girls and soft boys. Poets and musicians.

ANTIGONE

This talk is rubbish. I have no time for men.

ISMENE

You have time for Haemon and he has time for you. I see him looking at you with adoration and excitement.

ANTIGONE

Haemon is son to Putin. He will marry a princess. He will not marry me.

ISMENE

You are a princess. How can you say that? I see him. He admires you.

ANTIGONE

No more talk of Haemon when Pierre lies dead in an army refrigerator truck.

ISMENE

Are you sure?

ANTIGONE

I bribe guards who are loyal to me. They are also my friends.

ISMENE

There. That proves what I was saying a moment ago. Men see something in you that I will never have. Even common soldiers admire you. Men love you.

ANTIGONE

Ismene. Stop talking about love. Our brother is lying dead in that damned truck. The guards don't know why he is there.

ISMENE

What else can he do but bury him?

ANTIGONE

The guards says Nuncle will never give him an honourable burial. Ismene, help me with Pierre. We will bury him. He lies in the cold with dead enemy soldiers.

ISMENE

I am so afraid.

ANTIGONE

You are a coward and will die many times.

Ismene begins crying

ANTIGONE

Come with me, Ismene, I need you. I will hold your hand. I will protect you.

ISMENE

You cannot protect me from Nuncle Putin's anger. His soldiers murder. I know. They rape women. He bombs houses and shoots old people.

ANTIGONE

Curse Nuncle Putin. Curse his soldiers and curse you, a coward. I curse you, I curse you.

ISMENE

Antigone. Antigone. Do not curse me. I love you. I loved Pierre. I am afraid of dying.

Ismene is sobbing. Antigone embraces her.

ANTIGONE

You are an innocent, Ismene. I will bury Pierre by myself. Promise me one thing.

ISMENE

I will.

ANTIGONE

When Nuncle Putin asks questions, you know nothing.

ISMENE

I will never talk.

Antigone kisses her sister and leaves the stage. As she does two soldiers enter. Ismene sees them. She covers her mouth to stop herself screaming and runs offstage.

SOLDIER ONE

She took off quickly.

SOLDIER TWO

Pity. She's the good looking one of the two. Sweet and delicate. I could eat her.

SOLDIER ONE

But, she's a princess.

SOLDIER TWO

A sweet eat.

As they walk offstage Putin re-enters. He is angry and talking on a cellphone.

PUTIN

Burn their houses. Use the women and then kill them. We don't want their bastards either. What's that? The truck. Yes. Keep him there for a few more days, then dump the body. Starve the dogs.

He ends the phone call and walks offstage. The stage lights go dark. Antigone enters with a torch. She looks around and exits. Two soldiers walk on stage.

SOLDIER ONE

I'm freezing.

SOLDIER TWO

Bloody cold night. But we have to guard this truck behind us. No-one is to come near it.

SOLDIER ONE

Look. Do you see that light?

SOLDIER TWO

What?

SOLDIER ONE

The light moved on the ground.

SOLDIER TWO

Just another guard on patrol. You're getting edgy and screwed up. You need a good fuck to get rid of it.

SOLDIER ONE

Our special orders are to keep people away from that truck.

SOLDIER TWO

Don't know why. It's only got dead bodies in it.

SOLDIER ONE

You know who's there?

SOLDIER TWO

Soldiers, my friend. Poor bloody soldiers. Enemy soldiers. They're dead. We're alive. Hurrah!!!!

SOLDIER ONE

Prince Pierre is in the truck.

SOLDIER TWO

Prince Pierre. Did he get killed too?

SOLDIER ONE

Both brothers are dead. They killed each other. Prince Nikita is already buried. Prince Pierre is in the truck ... lying there ... cool and composed.

SOLDIER TWO

So. He's cool... you smart arse. Why's he there?

SOLDIER ONE

You need a lesson in Russian politics, Lord Putin wants him to stay there. But why?

SOLDIER TWO

I've no idea.

SOLDIER ONE

Shush. What that? Listen. Look. That light again. See.

SOLDIER TWO

Let's check it.

They get their guns at the ready and go off-stage. As they exit, we see Antigone re-enter carrying a torch and a spade. She looks around and exits. As she does the soldiers return. They have not seen her.

SOLDIER ONE

Someone's been trying to open the truck. They've been fiddling with the lock.

SOLDIER TWO

You sure about that?

SOLDIER ONE

I can tell. It's been hacked at. But, it held.

SOLDIER TWO

We'll have to report this. The sergeant said no-one was to go near it. Let's go and find him.

They exit the stage. The stage lights change and we are back at the palace with Putin. With him is a young man in his twenties. This is HAEMON.

PUTIN

Thank God, you're back from the front. Why you went is beyond me. There's no need for my son to fight this war.

HAEMON

I wasn't fighting.

PUTIN

So what the hell were you doing?

HAEMON

I've been taking photographs.

PUTIN

Photographs. Damn, damn you, Haemon. I run this war and manage the news. Don't meddle in my work.

HAEMON

I'm an adult. I make my own decisions.

PUTIN

You act stupidly. Like your crazy girlfriend.

HAEMON

You mean, Antigone?

PUTIN

She wants to bury her dead brother.

HAEMON

Nikita's buried. So why hasn't Pierre been buried?

PUTIN

He was a traitor.

HAEMON

He must be buried.

PUTIN

Pierre killed two of my best generals before he died.

HAEMON

We still honour our dead.

PUTIN

I decide who will be honoured.

HAEMON

Pierre was a Prince. He must be buried with full honours.

PUTIN

He was decadent. Ukraine, he said, belongs to Ukrainians. He is wrong. It has been ours for hundreds of years. Ukraine will come back to this country, all Russia, all Europe will respect and fear me.

HAEMON

You think people will respect you for insulting the dead!!!! No. No.

PUTIN

No-one in this country will ever again name their son, Pierre. It will be a sign of disgrace and disgust.

HAEMON

Has the government voted on your decision? Have they?

PUTIN

I control. Do I need to tell you that? My security, personal guards, oligarchs and generals control this country. I pay them well - with foreign bank accounts, yachts, houses, holidays abroad, women, boys. They are loyal.

Haemon turns and begins to walk away.

PUTIN

Where are you going, Haemon?

HAEMON

To talk with what left of fair-minded people in your government about the rule of law and respect for the dead.

PUTIN

You waste their time.

HAEMON

And Antigone? What will you say to her?

PUTIN

She will never bury her brother. He is mine to dispose of. And Antigone too, if I need to get rid of her.

HAEMON

Will you dispose of me too? One day I will be the leader of this nation.



PUTIN

Not if you keep acting like a bloody fool.

Haemon is annoyed. He storms off-stage. Putin also exits. The two Choruses enter.

CHORUS FEMALE

Have you heard the rumours?

CHORUS MALE

There are so many.

CHORUS FEMALE

My son works at the palace media centre. He is frightened.

CHORUS MALE

What has he heard?

CHORUS FEMALE

It's about the dead Prince.

CHORUS MALE

Which one? There were two.

CHORUS FEMALE

Prince Pierre. His body lies in a truck. My son has to write a story that his body was burnt when the truck caught fire. He was told to write it as a breaking news story. It is to be broadcast in three days time.

CHORUS MALE

How can a breaking news story be broadcast in three days time? It must be a fake.

CHORUS FEMALE

My son says it's a direct order from Lord Putin's office. I've heard Pierre's body is to be given to starving dogs. My son was crying when he told me the story.

CHORUS MALE

Putin is offending the Gods.

CHORUS FEMALE

They will punish him.

CHORUS MALE

The Gods punish us when we disrespect them.

CHORUS FEMALE

I heard something else. You know Prince Pierre's sister?

CHORUS MALE

Which one - Ismene or Antigone?

CHORUS FEMALE

The strong willed one.

CHORUS MALE

Antigone.

CHORUS FEMALE

There is a rumour. She will bury her brother.

CHORUS MALE

Putin will kill her.

CHORUS FEMALE

He cannot. She's a Princess and related to Putin.

CHORUS MALE

Ahhh!!!!

CHORUS FEMALE

Come, I am going home now. It's getting dark.

The stage lights change to night. We are near the refrigerated truck. Two guards are on duty. They are both tired. After a few moments we hear an off-stage sound of a metal door being opened. The noise gets louder and suddenly both guards are on the alert. They rush off-stage. There is the sound of a scuffle and the guards re-enter holding a person wearing a coat with a hood. One soldier carries a pair of bolt cutters, a spade and a small bag taken from the person.

SOLDIER ONE

What the hell were you doing?

SOLDIER TWO

Answer me?

SOLDIER ONE

What were you doing by that truck?

The first soldier looks in the bag.

SOLDIER ONE

Do you know what's in that truck?

ANTIGONE

Prince Pierre.

SOLDIER TWO

Yes. Prince Pierre. And how do you know that?

The guard pulls off the hood covering the head of the person.

ANTIGONE

He is my brother.

SOLDIER TWO

What a bloody mess? You have no right to be here.

ANTIGONE

I am here to bury Pierre.

SOLDIER ONE

You will have us both shot.

SOLDIER TWO

What's the bloody matter with you?

ANTIGONE

I love my family. You have a family at home?

SOLDIER ONE

I have a wife and child.

SOLDIER TWO

Me too.

ANTIGONE

If your brother died would you bury him with respect?

SOLDIER TWO

Of course. It's our way.

SOLDIER ONE

We're not animals.

ANTIGONE

But, Putin is.

SOLDIER ONE

Hush. He is our leader.

ANTIGONE

He has no respect for tradition and ancient customs.

SOLDIER TWO

I respect custom.

ANTIGONE

Then help me. Help me bury my brother?

SOLDIER ONE

We can't do that. I have my family to look after.

SOLDIER TWO

Me too.

ANTIGONE

So you will do nothing?

SOLDIER ONE

I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you a second chance. Get lost Antigone, and never come back. If you do we'll take you to Lord Putin. Then... see what happens.

SOLDIER TWO

Go. Vanish.

SOLDIER ONE

Fuck off.

Antigone walks offstage. The lights change. We are back in the palace. A messenger enters, a young officer in military uniform.

MESSENGER

You asked me to report if anything unusual happened.

PUTIN

What is it?

MESSENGER

It's about the truck.

PUTIN

Yes, Yes. You have guards on it?

MESSENGER

Yes, my Lord.

PUTIN

And his body's still there?

MESSENGER

Yes, Lord Putin.

PUTIN

It stays there until I give further orders.

MESSENGER

My Lord.

PUTIN

Speak up man. What else do you have to say?

MESSENGER

The door of the truck has been tampered with.

PUTIN

Tampered with?

MESSENGER

It has secure locks. Someone tried to break in.

PUTIN

Did the guards arrest him?

MESSENGER

They didn't see any one. They just heard a noise.

PUTIN

Noise. I suppose they were sleeping and the noise woke them up.

MESSENGER

They are good soldiers. They went looking for the person.

PUTIN

Did they get the man?

MESSENGER

No, Lord Putin.

PUTIN

If this happens again, I want him arrested and brought to me. Now. Get out.

As the Messenger exits Putin also leaves the stage. The lights change and an old well-dressed woman enters. This is EURYDICE. She uses a stick to help her with her walking. Eurydice slowly crosses the stage, exits, re-enters and starts to walk across the stage a second time. She gives a cry and stops. The two Choruses enter and go to help her.

CHORUS FEMALE

Lady Eurydice. You must not wander alone through the city at night. It is dangerous.

CHORUS MALE

Let us take you back to the palace. Your husband, Lord Putin, will be concerned for you.

Eurydice beckons to them to leave her alone and continues walking. She stops, cries out in pain. As she exits we hear another painful cry.

CHORUS FEMALE

Those are the tears of a mother.

CHORUS MALE

She is crying for Ivan, her youngest son, killed in the war.

CHORUS FEMALE

I knew him. Ivan never wanted to fight. He was more poet than soldier. I remember him sitting near the fountain writing and reading his dancing words to young girls.

CHORUS MALE

Did you know Lord Putin tried to stop Ivan from joining the war?

CHORUS FEMALE

Ivan wanted to fight for his country.

CHORUS MALE

I don't expect he ever fired his gun. But he still died. War has no favourites.

CHORUS FEMALE

I was there when Ivan's body was returned. Lady Eurydice hugged his blood red body with its wounds and cried the whole day. Lord Putin said nothing. He just watched.

CHORUS MALE

Shush. Be quiet. He might hear. Then we'll be in trouble. She only has Haemon now. Look, Lady Eurydice is returning. Let us take her back to the palace. Come.

CHORUS MALE

Lord Putin never seems to be with her. Does he love her?

CHORUS FEMALE

She is the mother of his children.

CHORUS MALE

He has a mistress and she's pregnant.

Eurydice enters and stands quietly on the stage. She is sobbing. The two Choruses gently lead her away. The stage lights change and Haemon enters with Antigone.

HAEMON

I looked everywhere for you. I met Ismene. She seemed strange. It was so unlike her. She mumbled about you doing something, but didn't name it. Is she Ok?

ANTIGONE

Ismene is upset.

HAEMON

We all are. My father is fighting a war in Ukraine. But the people there are so like us. Many of them speak our language, we intermarry and laugh at the same silly jokes. I don't understand my father, do you?

Antigone shakes her head, but does not reply.

HAEMON

I was talking with a senior general about the war plan. He says Ukraine will soon fall. Some soldiers are taking extra flags and their military parade uniforms with them to celebrate in Kyiv. You seem so far away, Antigone.

ANTIGONE

There are rules in war when soldiers die.

HAEMON

Yes.

ANTIGONE

Haemon. The dead have rights.

HAEMON

I know. Soldiers fire bullets over their bodies. Ritual. They bury them. There are prayers and flags.

ANTIGONE

They are respected.

HAEMON

No question about it. Soldiers who are shot to hell and left in pieces on the battlefield are eventually picked up and buried.

Antigone burst into tears and shouts in a loud voice.

ANTIGONE

And so will Pierre! So will Pierre!

HAEMON

Of course. His funeral will be grand. The ancestors know he is coming. They will welcome him.

ANTIGONE

Nuncle Putin is denying Pierre a burial.

HAEMON

He can't do that.

ANTIGONE

Pierre's body is locked up in a refrigerator truck near the Ukraine border in no-mans land. Nuncle Putin said he will never be buried.

HAEMON

I'll talk with him again. Wait for me in your room. Do nothing until then. I'll make sure my father authorises the burial with full honours.

They exit the stage and the stage lights change. It is now night. We see the two soldiers guarding the refrigerated truck.

SOLDIER ONE

How much longer is our great Lord Putin going to keep us here? It's bloody cold and if I stay here I'll freeze my bollocks off. Then what will my wife say?

SOLDIER TWO

That's the way it is. We are just soldiers. Foot soldiers they call us. But, I'd like to drive an army vehicle or ride a motorbike. I thought when I joined the army for a career. I'd go upwards and become a driver. No such luck. We stand here. All bloody night. Guarding dead people.

SOLDIER ONE

So what's big man Putin going to do with the corpses in this truck?

SOLDIER TWO

There are rumours the dead soldiers will be fed to hungry dogs.

SOLDIER ONE

It's against custom. Anyway, the cooler in the truck will run out of ice soon and the bodies will smell. What will he do then?

SOLDIER TWO

No idea. But he could blow up the truck, I suppose.

SOLDIER ONE

No, that's not going to happen. The truck's useful.



SOLDIER TWO

He could still blow it up. Bit of a waste though. Dunno. Hey, listen? I hear something.

SOLDIER ONE

Someone's here. Look, there's that bloody light again.

SOLDIER TWO

Let's catch the bloody bastards.

They get their guns to the ready and exit off stage. There is shouting and a torchlight light keeps flashing. The stage lights change and we are at the palace. Haemon is talking with his father.

HAEMON

I've spoken with Antigone. She's reasonable and just wants to do the right thing by her dead brother.

PUTIN

The right thing! What do you mean? The right thing?

HAEMON

It's obvious, father. She is our royal blood. Her brother's dead. He must be buried with respect and honour.

PUTIN

I forbid it.

HAEMON

You buried the other brother. Be reasonable.

PUTIN

No.

HAEMON

Where is Pierre anyway? Antigone didn't say. Is he in the palace morgue?

PUTIN

No.

HAEMON

Then where, father?

PUTIN

In a refrigerated truck with other dead traitors.

HAEMON

He fought for what he believed in and died for it. He's still got to be buried.

PUTIN

I said, no.

HAEMON

It's again the law and .... what about poor Antigone? And Ismene. Weeping for Pierre.

PUTIN

Foolish women.

HAEMON

This is a ridiculous conversation. You want the power of life and death over everyone. But we must still respect the dead.

PUTIN

Haemon. We have never been the aggressor. This new war is a defence against Western countries stealing our lands. Pierre was an aggressor who wanted to install Western petty democracy.

There is a noise outside and two soldiers enter with Antigone in handcuffs. Her smart clothes are dirty. The guards are holding a spade and a pair of bolt cutters.

HAEMON

Oh, Antigone. Why did you not wait for my answer? I'm doing all I can to help.

ANTIGONE

It was useless, Haemon. You will fail. Nuncle Putin cares only for his own beliefs.

PUTIN

A nation with laws and stability will last.

ANTIGONE

You're wasting time trying to convince Nuncle Putin.

HAEMON

Pierre will be buried according to tradition. I insist, father.

ANTIGONE

He has made up his mind.

PUTIN (annoyed)

Stop her mouth. And yours too. Now.

A soldier clamps his hand over Antigone's mouth.

PUTIN

What happened at the truck?

SOLDIER ONE

We were on guard, my Lord.

PUTIN

Goddam, All you military men... soldiers, officers...telling the bloody obvious. You were on guard and then what? Don't just look at me. Talk!

SOLDIER TWO

Princess Antigone, here, she opened the truck door by cutting the bolts.

Putin is angry. He draws out his revolver and drags one of the guards to the floor.

PUTIN

I have no time for idiots. You were guarding the truck...then?

The first soldier lets go of Antigone and drops onto his knees.

SOLDIER ONE

Forgive me, Lord Putin. We've been there for days. We heard a noise and rushed, but it was already too late. The body was gone.

PUTIN

Gone!

Putin is angry. He shoots the guard in the head. The other guard falls to his knees. Putin shoots him too.

ANTIGONE

Nuncle. I sang him songs from our childhood and buried him deep in the forest. The soldiers caught me after I returned.

PUTIN

You think just because you are a princess and related to me, you can do as you like. You are wrong. No-one is above the law. Look.

He points to the dead soldiers.

PUTIN

You've spent too long in the West. You should never have been educated there, Antigone. Your head's full of their polluted evil. This country never had democracy and for a good reason. Democracy instils more than one belief system in children. It confuses life.

ANTIGONE

Honour the dead.

PUTIN

Do you think I am afraid to have you killed?

ANTIGONE

I am prepared for death. Do it now. My ancestors wait for me.

HAEMON

Antigone. Don't tempt him.

ANTIGONE

Nuncle. I'm ready. Call your soldiers. They won't drag me away. I walk proudly to my death.

PUTIN

Where is the body?

There is no answer from Antigone.

PUTIN

I said where is he?

Antigone does not answer. Putin pauses and grasps her by the throat.

PUTIN

I said where?

Antigone is quiet. Putin starts to choke her with his hands but Haemon stops him.

PUTIN

Antigone. Where is the traitor.

ANTIGONE

I buried him with flowers, kisses, dignity and prayer.

PUTIN

Take her away and put her in the refrigerator truck.

HAEMON

Father. I will be a guarantor for Antigone. We will go away together and you'll never see her again.

Ismene enters the stage. She has been listening outside. She goes directly to Putin and kneels before him.

ISMENE

Nuncle Putin. If you execute Antigone, you must execute me too. I helped bury Pierre. It was my idea, not hers.

PUTIN (angry)  
You children born of incest.

ANTIGONE  
Our brothers were to be kings and share the throne. The curse on our family made them fight each other. Both died. You honour one brother in death, why not the other?

ISMENE  
Nuncle. Antigone told me what she was going to do. We talked and planned it together. I found out where the truck was and I got the spade for her to help bury our Pierre.

ANTIGONE  
You lie, Ismene. You lie. You were a snivelling coward. You would not help me when I begged you. I tried and tried. Why are you doing this?

ISMENE  
Do not believe her, Nuncle. We planned and buried Pierre together.

PUTIN  
Both, traitors. I should give you to the soldiers for a week. Let them fuck you both. After seven days you may then decide which soldier might be the father of your future child.

ISMENE  
I loved Pierre. I was there with Antigone.

HAEMON  
Ismene, don't die for something you never did.

ANTIGONE  
You must live. When you have children tell them about our brothers. Ignore Nuncle Putin. No matter if an evil soldier fathers your child, it will still be an innocent, yours to love and to teach. No rapist can take that from you.

Ismene bursts into tears.

PUTIN (laughing)  
Get out of here, Ismene. I don't kill the innocent. Only the guilty.

Haemon sees the two Choruses standing at the back of the stage. He beckons to them and they escort the upset Ismene offstage.

HAEMON

Father. Spare Antigone?

PUTIN

She defied me, the legal ruler of this country. For disobedience, treason. There is a penalty. Death. Take her away.

Guards leave the stage with Antigone.

HAEMON

Spare her life, father. I understand your anger. Your sister Jocasta, was mother to Antigone. Respect our family.

PUTIN

My word will be obeyed.

HAEMON

Antigone is a good person.

PUTIN

You mock me by pleading for her life. Go and cry to your mother Eurydice, if you want pity. She cries daily for Ivan. She will cry with you.

HAEMON

The Gods will curse you, father. Like Oedipus, you are blind to your fate.

PUTIN

I am not afraid of the Gods.

HAEMON

The people will curse you.

PUTIN

The people do as I command.

HAEMON

I curse you father. I curse you for your cruelty, I curse you as the Gods cursed and tricked Jocasta. I curse you. I curse all who follow you.

PUTIN

Your curses mean nothing. Words, words, words. Like water. The sun sucks them up and they become nothing.

HAEMON

May you die alone and cold in this palace. You will never see me again.

As Haemon leaves the stage, Putin looks around and sees the Female Chorus has returned.

PUTIN

What do you want now?

CHORUS FEMALE

You drove your only son away.

PUTIN

He will return and repent.

CHORUS FEMALE

Go after him. He is going to Antigone.

PUTIN

He is too late. She will die.

CHORUS FEMALE

She of royal blood.

PUTIN

All blood is the same.

CHORUS FEMALE

Haemon loves Antigone.

PUTIN

He will never marry her. I want no children from an evil union. Get out.

The Female Chorus leaves the stage.

The Male Chorus enters carrying a small neat parcel of military clothing. He is accompanied by a military officer wearing war medals.

CHORUS FEMALE

This is from the battle front. I was asked to bring it to you.

She hands the parcel to the officer who places it on a small table next to Putin.

OFFICER

It is the uniform of General Kutozov. He is dead.

PUTIN

Dead. He was killed in action?

OFFICER

No, Lord Putin. He took his own life.

PUTIN

Suicide. General Kutozov. He was loyal. Trustworthy. You lie.

OFFICER (reading a note)  
I have his last words *I do this for family  
and for my country.*

PUTIN  
What the hell does that mean?

The Male Chorus enters. He is also  
carrying a parcel of clothes.

PUTIN  
Another one. Who's this?  
Who was it - never mind. He does not matter.  
He is dead. Long live the mother land of  
Greater Russia. And you officer, you came  
from the battle front.

OFFICER  
Yes, my Lord. I was there a few hours ago.  
I accompanied the uniforms of my dead  
comrades on the journey to Moscow.

PUTIN  
Yes, yes. But, the war. We are finally  
winning?

OFFICER  
I have details.

PUTIN  
What rubbish is that? Details. I have no  
time for trivia or details. We will win this  
war. That is what I want to hear.

OFFICER  
I cannot tell you that, my Lord.

PUTIN  
So what the bloody hell can you tell me. You  
have stars on your shoulders, don't you?

OFFICER  
My Lord Putin.

PUTIN (mocking)  
Of course, I appointed you, General.  
Without me you are nothing? Why are you  
here and not at the front fighting our  
enemies?

OFFICER  
I accompanied the bodies of my dead fellow  
Generals. It is our military code of honour.

PUTIN  
Generals. Fellow Generals. Traitors. That's  
what they are. This is the respect they get  
from me.



Putin sweeps the folded uniforms onto the floor with a swing of his arm.

PUTIN

The war. We have taken many prisoners?

OFFICER

Many thousands, My Lord.

PUTIN

Good. And they gave information about the enemy?

OFFICER

Very little. Many talked. At least we understand each other. We have a common language base.

PUTIN

So, what did you find out?

OFFICER

Few were regular soldiers? There were tailors, shop assistants, clerks, even a ballet dancer and many young men who left university studies to fight.

PUTIN

But they talked?

OFFICER

Most of them talked of home and families and kept asking questions about why we were fighting and killing children and grandparents? Some of my men were confused. Some officers found it disturbing too. The prisoners look like us, they speak our language, some have similar names to us.

PUTIN

I am regaining land lost by past incompetent leaders.

OFFICER

Our soldiers and officers were depressed at what was being said. There were desertions.

PUTIN

Desertions. That's a death sentence.

OFFICER

We recaptured some deserters and executed them. It encouraged more desertions and some officers were shot by their own men who then deserted. The desertions have spread.

PUTIN

And General Kutozov?

OFFICER

We had a special war policy meeting. General Kutozov chaired it. He was of the opinion that we could not win this war. He refused to take questions. Then he told us he was going to end his life and then left the room.

PUTIN

Did no-one try to stop him?

OFFICER

No, Lord Putin. I then chaired the meeting. The consensus was that the war is going to be lost. Some officers spoke of having relatives in Ukraine. Two officers said they has seen their close relatives from Ukraine dead on the battlefield. There was talk about using more conscripts. We have a shortage of materials and winter clothing. As the meeting ended we learned that General Kutozov had shot himself. Two other officers also killed themselves.

PUTIN

And you did not stop them?

OFFICER

These are honourable deaths. A military tradition.

PUTIN

I see. And you. Why have you not shot yourself?

OFFICER

I promised General Kutozov I would accompany his body back to Moscow and report to you. The body of General Kutozov is outside the palace. I return his uniform and medals to you personally, my Lord.

PUTIN

You have done that. Now, what?

OFFICER

I am a General in the army. I follow orders from you, Lord Putin.

PUTIN

So you will do as I say.

OFFICER

I obey orders.

PUTIN

What's your name?

OFFICER

Pulov. General Mikail Pulov.

PUTIN

Pulov. General Pulov. You were as friend of General Kutozov.

OFFICER

We were at school together and at the military academy.

PUTIN

And you trusted Kutozov?

OFFICER

Yes.

PUTIN

Did you know that when the war started, I gave him an order and he disobeyed it.

OFFICER

I am surprised. He was loyal.

PUTIN

To whom? To whom?

OFFICER

To you, Lord Putin.

PUTIN

He was disloyal to me. And the punishment for that is... what?

OFFICER

Death.

PUTIN

Yes. Death. But, I did not sentence him. He died by his own hand. He should be punished again for disobeying orders, do you agree?

OFFICER

It is too late. A man can only die once.

PUTIN

On that we agree. But, what about afterwards?

OFFICER

He will be buried according to the rites and customs of the military command and his country.

PUTIN

A traitor should not receive the dignity of a good burial. My dogs are hungry.

OFFICER

General Kutozov served his country for his whole life and he died according to military tradition. He took his own life with his own revolver.

PUTIN

He is a traitor. And you are too. You have a family?

OFFICER

I do, Lord Putin. I have a wife, two young children and a third is due soon.

PUTIN

On your death, how will your family receive the news?

OFFICER

If I should die in battle, my wife and children will be sad. I will be honoured in death and buried as a soldier should be.

PUTIN

No doubt. And will they ask if your wounds are on the front?

OFFICER

A military myth, my Lord, from the Middle Ages when we only had daggers and spears to fight with? We have guns now and bombs. No need to face the enemy. They even kill you in your sleep from hundreds of kilometres away.

PUTIN

If I ask you to commit suicide, will you do it?

OFFICER

That's a difficult question to answer, Lord Putin.

PUTIN

Do you have a passport, General?

OFFICER

A Russian one of course, full of visas from the countries I have visited.

PUTIN

General Pulov. Life is also a visa, not a passport. Yours has expired.

Putin takes out a revolver and shoots General Pulov through the head. As the body lies on the floor Putin shoots him several more times in anger. The two Choruses are shocked.

PUTIN  
Get rid of this.

CHORUS MALE  
You mean, bury him?

PUTIN  
No traitor in this country will get an honourable burial. Throw his body into the street so it will be seen by the people and eaten by dogs. Do it. Or you will be next.

CHORUS FEMALE  
We obey, Lord Putin.

PUTIN  
Be quick.

The Male and Female Chorus drag the body away, Putin moves towards them with his gun.

PUTIN  
Wait.

The Chorus stop. Putin contemplates the body and fires the remaining bullets into it.

PUTIN  
Get rid of him quickly. If he is still here when I get back, beware. There are many traitors.

He kicks the body, spits on it and exits. The Chorus look at each other.

CHORUS FEMALE  
You know what we must do? We cannot leave the body to the dogs.

CHORUS MALE  
Yes. We will bury him. It is dangerous. But we must do it.

CHORUS FEMALE  
Lord Putin is insulting the ancestors.

CHORUS MALE  
I remember General Pulov when he was a boy. He helped the poor and the old.

CHORUS FEMALE  
We'll take him to my house. I have a large garden. My neighbour is a priest. He'll help with the burial.

CHORUS MALE

We risk our lives and our families. This is a fearsome time.

CHORUS FEMALE

Quick. Let us go.

CHORUS MALE

I cannot sleep at night. I wish for silence and peace.

CHORUS FEMALE

When we are dead we will be at peace like General Pulov.

As they drag out the body a military messenger enters

MESSENGER

General Pulov. What happened to him?

CHORUS FEMALE

Lord Putin shot him.

MESSENGER

I will help you.

They take away the body. Putin re-enters the stage with his revolver in his hand. He stands there and sees someone approaching. It is Alina. She looks distraught and tired.

PUTIN

It is good to see you, Alina. I am surrounded by traitorous generals.

ALINA

It's our baby.

PUTIN

Russia is yours and will be his too.

ALINA

It is not needed. Our baby is dead.

PUTIN

Dead. That cannot be. You have the best doctors.

ALINA

They tried. But failed.

PUTIN

Failed. It is their job. I pay them.

ALINA

Vladimir. Our child is dead.

PUTIN  
The baby. Our son.

ALINA  
Dead.

PUTIN  
Dead. I don't understand. You were well yesterday, this morning too. I saw you. We talked.

ALINA  
Our baby is gone.

PUTIN  
How can that be? Who was in charge? I'll have him shot immediately. Damn incompetent butchers. Who was it? I want a name? Who?

ALINA  
Vladimir, Vladimir. There was nothing the doctors could do. The baby died inside of me. I knew. I was afraid to tell you. It was nature at work.

PUTIN  
Nature?

ALINA  
My mother lost her first child too. I never told you. I was afraid it might happen to me.

PUTIN  
You cannot lose my child. Life is so precious.

ALINA  
When the doctors opened me up I saw him.

PUTIN  
A boy. I had dreams to make a special school for him. For him alone. Tutors would be brought in from all over the world. He would be trained as a leader. One day he would become the leader of the greatest country in the world.

ALINA  
Oh, Vladimir. I would have been happy just to have him here, to play with him, to love him. To be a good mother.

Putin is silent.

PUTIN  
The destruction of my son.

Alina turns and starts to walk offstage.

PUTIN

Don't leave. You can't just walk away.  
Alina!!!!

ALINA

I want to be alone.

Alina starts to exit the stage.  
Putin watches her for a moment and  
abruptly turns away as he sees a soldier  
approaching. The Female Chorus beckons  
to Alina and they approach each other.

CHORUS FEMALE

I was listening to you. I am sorry you have  
lost the child that grew in you.

ALINA

It is fate.

CHORUS FEMALE

What will you do?

ALINA

I have no idea. Nor do I care much. But, I  
will not go back to Lord Putin.

CHORUS FEMALE

He wants a heritage.

ALINA

He wants a son. But not to love as a father.

CHORUS FEMALE

You are right.

ALINA

For a while I was his goddess. Did you see  
how he turned away when I left him. A lover  
would have called me back. I am a doormat in  
his eyes. I will never go back.

ALINA begins to sob

CHORUS MALE

I watched Lord Putin. He wants heroes who  
are invincible. It is our fault too.

CHORUS FEMALE

When we are young we look up to those strong  
men. They look down. We are foolish and we  
pay for it.

ALINA

I shared his bed. Now there is a war on he  
wants to feed it with youth until he wins.



## CHORUS FEMALE

Lord Putin will never understand women. You remember Stalin. He had his daughter. He turned her into a doll, a toy. She grew up and left him forever. He hoped that on his deathbed she would return. Fool.

## CHORUS MALE

Alina. Your life could be in danger.

## ALINA

No. He would never do that.

## CHORUS MALE

He will if you ever show interest in another man.

## ALINA

I have no fear.

## CHORUS MALE

He is ruthless. Self is all.

## CHORUS FEMALE

You must leave Moscow.

## ALINA

And go where. He knows every part of this country. There is no safe place.

## CHORUS MALE

We will help you leave the country.

## ALINA

Russia is my home and I will not leave.

## CHORUS FEMALE

Come to my house. Rest there for a while.

The two Choruses and Alina exit the stage. A young Russian officer, enters and stands nearby. He salutes.

## PUTIN

You are from the battle field?

## MESSENGER

Yes, Lord Putin. I am an official war messenger.

He hands the message to Putin.

## MESSENGER

It's from the Senior Commander of the army.

## PUTIN

General Kutozov. But, he's already dead. Why's this message so late?

## MESSENGER

Our messengers were attacked by the enemy and killed. The messages were later retrieved from their bodies. They were read by the officer in charge. I was ordered to deliver it to you.

## PUTIN

So you know the content?

## MESSENGER

Yes, Lord Putin. The officer who retrieved it from the dead body read it to the other officers. I accidentally heard it.

## PUTIN (reading)

Then you will know General Kutozov said there were many deserters and defectors from our army to the other side. The enemy commanders put all our defectors into the front line of the battle so they would face our own soldiers. Kutozov knew this action demoralised his army. Rumour spread that our brothers who had been killed were rising from the dead to attack us. This caused another mass desertion of troops.

## MESSENGER

I have to return to the front. I was delayed getting here and the journey back is long.

## PUTIN

Go.

The MESSENGER exits. Putin realises he wants to send a message. He sees the Male Chorus nearby.

## PUTIN

Call the messenger back.

The Male Chorus hurriedly leaves the stage. As he does there is a loud howl and crying from off-stage and shouting. The Male Chorus re-enters looking agitated.

## PUTIN

So you found him.

## CHORUS MALE

My Lord.

The Male Chorus kneels down before Putin.

## PUTIN

What's that howling? Another traitor has committed suicide. Hopefully. It will save me a bullet.

CHORUS MALE

I have news, my Lord, of Prince Haemon.

PUTIN

What has he done now?

CHORUS MALE

He is dead.

PUTIN

Dead. Dead. Haemon. Dead.

The Chorus is silent.

PUTIN

Who killed him?

Putin grabs him by the throat.

CHORUS MALE

No one killed him, my Lord.

PUTIN

He is dead?

CHORUS MALE

He killed himself.

PUTIN

Haemon would not commit suicide. He is strong.

CHORUS MALE

He went to look for Antigone. The guards locked her in the truck as you ordered. Haemon demanded the guards open it. They refused so he killed them both. He tried to open the truck calling out ... Antigone's name. There was no answer. He forced the door open. Antigone had hung herself on a meathook. Haemon took her body off the hook while all the time calling her name ... Antigone, Antigone. He hung himself on the same hook and died.

There is a loud cry from off-stage. It is the sound of a woman wailing. The Female Chorus enters. She is crying.

PUTIN

What was that sound?

CHORUS FEMALE

Lady Eurydice. Lady Eurydice, your wife, is dead, Lord.

PUTIN

How did she die?

## CHORUS FEMALE

A messenger brought her the news about Prince Haemon and Antigone. Lady Eurydice became distracted and started to walk around the room. She seemed strange and cried aloud ...

\* I would have spread flowers on their bed\*.

She asked me to wait outside. I did and returned to her room after a few minutes. She was already dead, she had hung herself.

He is distressed and slowly walks off-stage.

## CHORUS FEMALE

He has nothing now.

## CHORUS MALE

There is more news from the battlefield. Generals demanding the soldiers fight are being shot by other officers and soldiers. This war will soon be over.

## CHORUS MALE

Lord Putin?

## CHORUS FEMALE

If we stay here he will kill us. We must go away.

## CHORUS MALE

Two of my sons are back from the front... they deserted. I must protect them now.

## CHORUS FEMALE

I have a son at the war. I don't know where he is. He may be dead. So many died.

## CHORUS MALE

Lord Putin is mad. I wish I were mad too, perhaps I would understand him.

## CHORUS FEMALE

What must we do?

## CHORUS MALE

Prepare for a different future. This place is cursed. Lord Putin is cursed. His army is cursed. He must be killed. I will get you a gun.

## CHORUS FEMALE

I am not a killer. There has been too much death, I want no more. We will leave this accursed city

## CHORUS MALE

Where do we go? Where can we be safe?

## CHORUS FEMALE

I don't know. I will look for my son.

## CHORUS MALE

Collect as many people as you can. We will go to the countryside and live in the villages.

## CHORUS FEMALE

To start a new life.

## CHORUS MALE

Before we go let us punish Lord Putin. Burn his crops, kill his horses, poison his water and set his palace on fire.

## CHORUS FEMALE

No. No more. I will not be part of any new evil. Lord Putin has his palace and his loneliness. He is cursed. He can never redeem himself. Forget him. I want to forget his face. Our hope is our children. Our babies will grow up and never see him. He will be a another sad story of our country.

As they start to leave the stage they see something in the distance and stop.

## CHORUS MALE

Look. A soldier.

## CHORUS FEMALE

He doesn't look like a soldier from here. More like a beggar. He's walking slowly with a limp.

A man comes onstage wearing a dirty torn military uniform and using a rifle as a crutch. He seems to be unable to see where he is going. He stumbles and falls.

## CHORUS MALE

Where are you from soldier?

## TIRESIAS

Is this the battlefield?

## CHORUS MALE

No. You are well away from it. We are civilians. You are on the edge of the city.

## TIRESIAS

Are the soldiers near?

CHORUS MALE

No.

TIRESIAS

I am afraid at what I have seen. My friends attacked us. The dead attacked us. We were killed by dead people.

CHORUS MALE

How can that be?

TIRESIAS

Our officers said many of our friends had been killed. We were ordered go to the front of the battlefield to fight for our country. We asked where our friends were, so we could bury them.

CHORUS FEMALE

And was it allowed?

TIRESIAS

The officers did not answer. We did not understand what was happening. We were ordered to fight. We went out to fight. One of my friends went mad. An officer shot him when as he would not stop screaming.

CHORUS MALE

Did you hear what your friend said?

TIRESIAS

He said he would not kill his own family. He said he had seen his brother on the battlefield facing him with a rifle. It can't be. But I was frightened.

CHORUS FEMALE

You are among friends now.

TIRESIAS

I tell you. It was Baba Yar.

CHORUS FEMALE

You are tired my friend. Come. rest.

TIRESIAS

I tell you, it was Baba Yar, the Russian Witch. I know her. My father told me of the Nazi massacres of our people. He said Baba Yar sleeps and then comes back for blood. I heard her moan in the sky before she began to kill us.

CHORUS MALE

My friend. Rest. Baba Yar is a myth.

(MORE)

## CHORUS MALE (CONT'D)

An old wife's tale of a wicked Russian witch.

## TIRESIAS

No, No. It is true. I saw the white flash as she arrived. It filled the sky. Then came the blood. Baba Yar took my friends blood. It roared out of their veins. The there was blackness. It is still here. I cannot see you. I am in darkness.

## CHORUS MALE

You are safe.

## TIRESIAS

I saw my friends with Baba Yar. Our officers said were dead. But they were in the battle with the enemy. They fired at us.

## CHORUS FEMALE

How did you know they were dead?

## TIRESIAS

I wanted to speak with them. I saw my best friend, he was dead. He was going to shoot me. His face was full of fear too. All of a sudden there was a blinding flash, a frightening noise and I could not see. When I awoke there was no sound. My voice had gone. I called out, but there was only silence. Baba Yar had taken them away.

## CHORUS MALE

How did you get back here?

## TIRESIAS

I don't know. I found I could stand and walk. I was among dead bodies. I know. I fell over them. I felt their faces. All were dead, My friends. Others. Officers. I could not see them. My eyes have gone. I began walking. I had no idea where I was going.

## CHORUS MALE

The battlefield is a long way away.

## TIRESIAS

I walked. When I eventually heard voices I called out for help. Children took my hands and walked with me. I stayed overnight at a village.

## CHORUS FEMALE

What is your name?

TIRESIAS

My mother named me, Tiresias.

CHORUS FEMALE

I thought it was you. I recognised the voice. I knew your mother. She was my friend.

TIRESIAS

Oh. Oh. She must not see me like this. Where is she now?

CHORUS MALE

She is well. She is well.

TIRESIAS

People say the dead are well. She is dead then.

CHORUS FEMALE

She is at rest.

TIRESIAS

Aiii..... How did she die?

CHORUS MALE

The war took her like it took so many of our people. She is buried in the village.

TIRESIAS

I am pleased my mother will never see my destroyed face and body.

He starts moaning

TIRESIAS

I saw the dead rise and attack us.

CHORUS MALE

Come, my friend. We will take care of you.

TIRESIAS

But, I must find Lord Putin. I must tell him what I have seen. Our dead colleagues were killing us. I must tell Lord Putin.

CHORUS MALE

Don't worry about Lord Putin. Come. Hold my arm. Careful.

CHORUS FEMALE

Our home is warm. We have food and water and I will clean your wounds. Then you will sleep and recover.

TIRESIAS

They attacked us.



## CHORUS FEMALE

Come. I will be your eyes.

The two Choruses hold his hands and they leave the stage. As they do we hear a strong wind, accompanied by thunder and lightning. After it quietens down, Putin enters the stage looking dishevelled and tired. He walks around the stage and calls out in a loud voice.

## PUTIN

Guards. Guards. Where are those damned guards?

There is no answer. He walks around the empty stage.

## PUTIN

Servants. Guards. Messengers. Guards. Servants. Guards.

There is still no answer. Putin keeps walking around the stage and his footsteps gets slower and slower until he stops and remains frozen in the front of the stage.

*As he does we see the RUSSIAN VICTORY MARCH appear on the screen without sound.*

He is frozen in a position on stage. We hear a gunshot. Putin staggers but does not fall down. There is another gunshot. Putin collapses. The stage lights fade out with a spotlight on his inert body.

THE END  
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THE END

Note: The video was the \*Victory Parade in Moscow May 9 2022. It may not be available anymore. Use any Russian victory march.

