

Scene Two

The convent. YURI and MOTHER SUPERIOR meditate.
YURI opens her eyes to look at the door. Nothing happens.

She shuts them, but can only wait a short while before
opening them again in anticipation. Still, nothing.

She waits even less the next time—but MOTHER
SUPERIOR puts a hand on her knee.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Calm down, my child.

YURI

I'm sorry, I'm just too excited.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Your nerves will not alter the rhythms of time, try as they might, so just...be peaceful.

YURI

Okay, good point.
Concentrating...
Focusing...
Meditating...

MOTHER SUPERIOR

It is best if this is a *silent* process.

YURI

(Whispers.)
Sorry.

Suddenly, there a pounding at the door.

MARYA

YOO-HOO!

YURI

(Jumps up and races to the door.)
They're here!!!

YURI opens the door. MARYA and IVANA step in.

YURI

(Embracing MARYA.)

Mama!

MARYA

My child!

MOTHER SUPERIOR

(Rises to bow.)

Greetings.

YURI steps aside so that MARYA can greet MOTHER SUPERIOR. In response to the nun's bow, MARYA bows exaggeratedly too much times. IVANA scoffs.

MARYA

How does thou fare, oh wisest elder?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

(Smiles good-naturedly.)

I am well, Madame Karamazova. And yourself?

MARYA

Oh, I am most well, most well indeed, thank you!

MOTHER SUPERIOR

You must be Ivana.

IVANA

Hello.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

It's quite the pleasure to finally be acquainted with you. Your younger sister speaks highly of you. She tells me that you are one of Russia's brightest minds.

IVANA

Well, my sister is horribly underqualified to judge our nation's bright minds. But she is not mistaken. I am very smart.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Duly noted.

YURI

Oh, how I've missed you both!

MARYA

We've missed you too, my sweet fairy. But, I must ask, what on Earth have you done to your head?

YURI

It's part of my spiritual transformation, Mama. Do you like it?

MARYA

...sure.

YURI

You're so kind. Oh, my sister, welcome!

IVANA

Hello.

YURI

(Wraps an unwilling IVANA in a hug.)

Thank you for blessing me with your presence. What a wonderful way to reunite!

IVANA

Just so you know, I'm not here of my own volition.

MARYA

Don't be difficult. She's thrilled to be here.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

All of you may sit if you wish.

MARYA

Gladly. I'd like to rest before Natasha rips through here.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Yuri tells me that you are estranged from your eldest.

MARYA

I am, but through no fault of my own. Natasha's an insufferable bitch. Oh, how much easier my life would be had I only two daughters!

MOTHER SUPERIOR

From the way I understand the situation, Natasha has just simply never found her footing in this world.

MARYA

Wow! Even *your* mind's been infected by her poison! How does she do it?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Perhaps Natasha acts out in search of sympathy, rather than mayhem. Maybe, she requires a loving figure in order to reform herself.

MARYA

If only. I've tried to be the type of mother who can "support" her children even when they're idiots, but let me tell you, it's impossible to love her.

YURI

Mama!

MARYA

What? I'm only telling the truth. She's absolutely despicable as is. Oh, Mother Superior, but if only you could fix her!

MOTHER SUPERIOR

It is not my intention to *fix* anyone, but, truthfully, I do not believe that Natasha is the only one deserving of reform.

MARYA

(Melodramatically.)

No, you're absolutely right. I'm also a bitter scoundrel, and I know it! I need you to fix me and her and all of us!

IVANA

Jesus.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

You're no scoundrel. You are good in your core. Your soul is simply out of practice of showing it.

MARYA

Do you truly mean that?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Most definitely.

MARYA

(Gripping MOTHER SUPERIOR's arms and shaking them.)

Oh, bless your heart! Tell me, please, what must I do to be redeemed?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Begin by looking inward and healing the domains of your heart that have been overtaken by carelessness and vice.

MARYA

Of course that's the solution! How didn't I see it before?
But...what does that entail, exactly...?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Well, there are several ways to repair one's soul. At the convent, we engage in study of the Holy Book as well as translation, prayer, vows of silence—

MARYA

That's it! I'll take a vow of silence!

YURI

What a marvelous idea!

IVANA

/ What a terrible idea.

MARYA

How long should I go for?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

As long as you believe appropriate.

MARYA

Hm, okay, I guess I'll just ride it out, decide what's appropriate later. Does that work?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Yes.

MARYA

Okay, I'll be silent, startinggg...now!

MARYA mimes locking her mouth and throwing away the key. She sits in a corner for the next bit of conversation, but at various points, may get up or move around wildly, wanting to butt in but knowing she can't. IVANA ignores her mother, while MOTHER SUPERIOR sees MARYA's reactions out of the corner of her eye and smiles.

IVANA

(Turning to MOTHER SUPERIOR.)

Now that my *enthusiastic* mother cannot interrupt, I had an intellectual inquiry.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Yes?

IVANA

Do you disdain me for my atheism?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

I disdain no one.

IVANA

But, if given the chance to convert me, would you?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

I wish to save every soul I can.

IVANA

So yes.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

I suppose—

IVANA

Is it not correct to say that you consider my belief system damning and my person redeemable to the extent that you can convert me?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

That is one interpretation of my practice, although it is not altogether accurate.

IVANA

No? So, then what do you *really* think of those who refuse your advances? I bet you resent them.

YURI

Never! She doesn't have a bitter bone in her body!

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Yuri, no person is without resentment. Mine is just overcome by my love.

IVANA

What if I said that your religion is nothing more the collective ramblings of generations of village idiots, your occupation a useless trap crafted to take our poorest's few remaining rubles, your intelligence only stupidity masked in antiquated verses? Would you hate me then?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Of course not. I would never hate you.

No, I pity you.

IVANA

And I pity you. The idiocy in this world stretches far and wide, and it's a shame you've dedicated your life to it.

YURI

Ivana!

IVANA

I'm merely being honest. Isn't that virtuous?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

My child, I hope that, one day, you will accept the love you crave so dearly.

IVANA

You don't know me.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Don't I?

Pause.

IVANA

No, you don't.

NATASHA bursts into the room. She has got a bottle of vodka tucked in between her boobs and acts like she is on day six of a bender, which she might be.

NATASHA

Hello, hello!

YURI

Tasha!

NATASHA

(Picks YURI up and swings her around.)

My cherub!

IVANA

Natasha.

NATASHA

Oh, Ivana, sister, hello! I see you look as mercilessly drab as always!

IVANA

And you're still a pig.

NATASHA

You know me! There's nothing I love more than wetting my parts in the dirt.

(Turns to MARYA; barely acknowledges her.)

...Mother.

MARYA nods unenthusiastically.

NATASHA

What's the matter with her? The parasites finally take her tongue?

YURI

Mama was so inspired by Mother Superior that she's taken a vow of silence!

NATASHA

Well, hallelujah to that!

(Turns to MOTHER SUPERIOR.)

Speaking of, you must be my savior.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

I am very pleased to meet you, Natasha.

NATASHA

As am I. I gotta admit, I've never met a witch before.

YURI

She's not a—

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Yuri tells me that you are lost.

NATASHA

Oh, did I—?

(Chases a nonexistent tail, spinning in circles like a dog.)

Well, unless I left a leg somewhere in the hall, I'm not lost—if anything, I'd say I'm extremely found!

MOTHER SUPERIOR

I meant in a more...spiritual sense.

NATASHA

(Pulls out and shakes her vodka bottle.)

Believe me, my spirit's *well* accounted for!

MOTHER SUPERIOR

I fear that that may be the problem. Your sister has hinted that, well, your affinity for drink and sodomy has turned you against your mother.

NATASHA

No, see, that's where you're wrong. *This*—

(Indicating the vodka.)

—and puss haven't gotten between my mother and me, not at all. My problem with her is that she can't keep her clit in her pants.

MARYA stands up, ready to say something.

NATASHA

Giving up already?

MARYA shakes her head and then sits down slowly.
NATASHA continues, glaring at MARYA all the while.

NATASHA

I assure you, Mother Superior, whatever you've heard of my personage is all smear. Sure, I might drink a little excessively once in a while, but who placed the bottle in the mouth? I fuck indiscriminately, but who taught me to only relate to others through means of the flesh?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

I understand the tendency, dear child, but blame is a fruitless pursuit.

NATASHA

Sure, but that doesn't change the fact that my plight would've been several thousands of times easier had I not been cursed with *her* blood in my veins! Oh, how much I've *longed* for death to rid myself of her corruption!

YURI

Tasha! Don't say these things!

NATASHA

My sweet Yuri, I've lived many more years by her side than you, so I can promise you: search all of the taverns, cemeteries, pits, mines, jails, courts, and camps, in Russia! The blackest soul is sitting right there!

MARYA

YOU WICKED LIAR!

IVANA

/ Not even five minutes.

MARYA

(To MOTHER SUPERIOR.)

My revolting daughter is slandering me out of spite! She's Lucifer incarnated!

NATASHA

If only Anna cared for you half as much as she cares for me, you wouldn't have to compensate with such pathetic verbal theatrics.

MARYA

Mother Superior, are you hearing this? My blasphemous offspring, related to me only by name, is stealing my lover when she's engaged to another—arrest her!

MOTHER SUPERIOR

/ I lack the power to arrest your daughter, nor would I if I could—

IVANA

(To NATASHA.)

You're engaged?

NATASHA

Oh, yeah.

IVANA

To whom?

NATASHA

Uh...that prissy bitch...what's her name? Yuri, do you remember?

YURI

Katerina Ivanovna.

IVANA

(Looking pale and faint.)

No.

NATASHA

Right, I forgot you know her.

IVANA

How—why did that happen?

NATASHA

Eh, I don't really remember. Anyways, I'm not all that into it. Anna's all I think about.

IVANA sits down to steady herself. She doesn't pay attention to the rest of the conversation; she's sick to her stomach.

MARYA

Well, covet her as much as you want, but soon she'll be mine alone!

NATASHA

Yeah, right.

YURI

Natasha, Mama, *please*—

MARYA

Don't believe me?

NATASHA

Why would I?

MARYA

Well, I happen to know that you couldn't afford Anna's services last week. It seems as though you're running out of money, and when that happens, Anna will leave you in the dust.

NATASHA

I'd have money if you just coughed up what I'm owed!

MARYA

I owe you nothing.

NATASHA

You're my fucking mother.

MARYA

I know, which is why I gave you your fair share of rubles, but you wasted it, and now you're nothing more than a destitute adult, leaving Anna's flesh all mine to crave and stroke and lick. I'll give her so much of the cash that you'll never have, just to spite you because you'll inherit nothing, because you *are* nothing—

NATASHA

I'LL FUCKING KILL YOU!

NATASHA lunges at MARYA. They jostle for a good while before YURI and IVANA ultimately succeed in separating them. With NATASHA and MARYA pulled apart and heaving, everyone pauses for a moment. IVANA is unaffected by the show of violence, but YURI cries.

MOTHER SUPERIOR stands up, walks across the room, and leaves.

YURI

Look what you've done!

NATASHA

(Brushing herself off, laughing.)
Can't we believe we scared off a witch.

YURI

She's. Not. A. WITCH!

NATASHA

Oh, I know, cherub. I'm just joking. No need to throw a tantrum—

YURI

I wasn't throwing a—

MARYA

Well, if we're done here, I've got some orgasms of the purchased variety penciled into my afternoon. I'd invite the old virgin, but she seems like a buzzkill.

IVANA

Bye.

MARYA

You're not coming with me, Ivana?

IVANA

I think that it would be best for me to stay.

MARYA

Suit yourself. Farewell, daughters.

MARYA kisses YURI on the head, squeezes IVANA's hand, and jeers at NATASHA, before exiting, leaving behind an uncomfortable silence.