

The Bedbug

By Vladimir Mayakovsky

Adapted by Snoo Wilson

Characters

Ivan Varlet	Or, Ivor Violet. Former Party member, former worker, now the fiance of
Elzevir Bornagin.	Manicurist and cashier of a beauty parlour.
Rosalie Bornagin,	her mother.
David Bornagin	her father
Zoya Byrioszka	A working girl.
Oleg Bard	An eccentric house-owner
V.Mayakovsky,	Poet
Police	
Professor	
Zoo director	
Fire Chief	
Usher	
Reporter	
Workers Chairman of City Soviet	
Orator	
High school students	
Master of Ceremonies	
Members of Presidium of city Soviet,	
Hunters	
Children	
Old People.	

(Enter Mayakovsky, in an explosive fashion. The author, wielding a pair of pistols, bursts through a screen which is showing a collage of Russian images from the twentieth century: everything from the storming of the winter palace to babushkas selling wooden Gorbachev dolls in Red Square and queues outside the Moscow MacDonalds. Everything that Mayakovsky does is performed outside. The accompanying music is briefly on the scale of the relief of Moscow in Tchaikovsky's 1812 overture, before it subdues to a reverie behind the words of the wild eyed, cloth-capped poet who harangues the audience confidently, revolver in hand.)

Mayakovsky A prologue, professionally pronounced
 By the shade of the former author!
 How classical! How charming!
 Or perhaps it will prove modern, and therefore- *alarming?*
 Sweet robotics, I would rather shock than bore you.
 This necriligious tale that I now host, was my undoing;
 Rest assured, no Social-Realist poodle stands before
 you.
 No dog this century pissed further up the post
 Than I. I saw the future and it worked; too well.
 My play *The Bedbug*, is a politico- futurological blast
 Which invents a satiric future out of that false dawn,
 The comically deluded time, just after the Revolution,
 In Russia, and just before Stalin's terror.

Coming from *Realms of Night*, this artist might not put you
 At your ease at first, but shock is only so far, from delight.
 And who knows, if tonight won't be a perfect night?
 Now, for those who have still not read their programmes-
 My first proclaimed poem was "*Mayakovsky, a Tragedy*",
 And in my end is my beginning, for look!
 I am Vladimir Mayakovsky, the poet, come to you,
 Released no longer than this speech lasts in my mouth
 From the nether world. Is that not- tragic? My diabolic
 Instructions are, to have these shallow actor-marionettes
 Make you all cry. We want sobs and moans, out there.
 Keening bosoms, and tearsoaked handkerchiefs, please!
 Withers wrung and weasands strung, taut as violins.
 Audience! Do your best. If not moved, pretend. To be alive
 Is not always so sincere; I know- I was alive once, too.
 To assist you to deploy the full range of emotion
 My visiting unquiet spirit has been equipped with
 (Shouts) *Stainless steel Lungs!!!* (Beat) You are all terrible.
 (Points) You sir, madam, you are not enough afraid!

Stalin's terror!

How did one man create so much fear? Like this-
 (Mayakovsky imitates Stalin, twirling his moustache)
 If our comrade leader, the general secretary liked it not,
 It was the author, and sometimes the actors who got shot.
 In life I beat Stalin, man of rusting steel, to the draw.
 In life, my last act woke the world up, with a Colt .44.
 Myself, at forty years of age, started feeling weary,
 With a vague, impersonal fear
 Lapping around my ankles like a cold fever
 I calculated I could save the new socialist state
 A one way ticket to Siberia, and shot myself. I foresaw
 The revolution would turn to ashes, and burnt straw.
 The note I left just said "The loveboat has crashed".
 Hell's devils tell me it loses everything, in translation.
 -But they would, wouldn't they?-
 The poetic heart is subject to perturbation.
 At any time, the creed of the Futurist permits him to Break
 from this earthly caper. 'Nothing is here for tears',
 Your English revolutionary poet John Milton wrote that.
 Imprisoned, blind, he still wrote. Under Stalin I foresaw
 The condemned would call in vain for pen and paper.
 So this poet's vision encouraged him to pinch out
 His own deathless flame; -and-
 Darkness! No more taper.

You might think Doctor Chekhov said it all, already,
 Before coughing his life into a bloodspattered bowl. *Nyet!*
 Move over Anton, for a glowing electron storm comes!
 Its purpose; to illuminate the tundra of the Russian soul.
 (Effects begin)

Unfold now, the lethal prophecy.
 My Futuristic pen, you will observe skewers many hearts.
 It is a sharpened stake to drive through the left ventricle Of
 later, Socialist-Realistic, fear-beshitted 'art'!

I, Mayakovsky the Great, say-
 Let the first scene now appear, to begin my play!

(Fires pistols, and exits through broken screen)

Scene One

(A backdrop of a colourless and glum Russian state department store. All the action takes place outside on the street. The cries of the street vendors all overlay, in a scene-setting panorama. The sellers begin a market number, each pitching their wares, building the song to a choral crescendo-)

SELLERS' SONG

Button seller DUTCH PRESS STUDS,
DUTCH PRESS STUDS,
BETTER THAN BUTTONS ARE DUTCH PRESS STUDS,
DUTCH PRESS STUDS, DUTCH PRESS STUDS, TWENTY
FOUR HOUR CONTROL- (REPEATS)

Doll seller DANCING DOLLS, DANCING DOLLS,
LIGHT AS A FEATHER ARE DANCING DOLLS,
READY AND WILLING ARE DANCING DOLLS
DANCING DOLLS, DANCING DOLLS,
LIGHT AS A FEATHER ARE DANCING DOLLS,
READY AND WILLING ARE DANCING DOLLS (REPEATS)

Fruit seller NO KIWIS, NO MELONS,
WE GOT SOCIALIST BANANAS.
NOT TWENTY ,NOT EIGHTEEN,
FIFTEEN'S ALL I'M ASKING
BARGAIN BANANAS
ARE YOURS FOR THE GOBBLING
PUT THE BEST RUSSIAN MANHOOD TO SHAME,
(REPEATS)

Herring seller HERRINGS! NON-TSARIST HERRINGS
REPUBLICAN HERRINGS
HERRINGS, NON-TSARIST HERRINGS
REPUBLICAN HERRINGS
(REPEATS)

Lampshade seller LAMPSHADES, LAMPSHADES (REPEATS)

(Balloon seller is making up animals with long thin balloons)

Balloon seller What am I doing? I'll tell you. With these all-socialist balloons at five kopecks, you can make animals- see - like a sweet little post-monarchist sausage dog- you try.

(He gives an untied balloon to a small boy. Boy lets go and balloon deflates.)

Balloon seller You got to hold on tight to its arse. Have another try now. Thing is even with socialist balloons it all whooshes out- That's right- whoops- (Balloon flies out of boys hand again)

Herring seller Herrings! Non-Tsarist herrings! Republican Herrings!

Bra-seller -LOVELY BRASSIERES TRIMMED WITH MINK,
LADIES YOU NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT.
NOT JUST THERMAL, DECORATIVE, TOO.
BE SURPRISED WHAT YOUR HUSBAND WILL DO-
(REPEATS)

Bookseller -Books, books. 'Ho to' books on all subjects. This one- special offer- How to commit adultery - a spicy ribtickler by ex- count Leo Tolstoy, full of practical hints -

ALL- A MODERN SOUK, A NEW BAZAAR
THOUGH NOT THE FIRST, THE BEST BY FAR
YOU'LL BE SURPRISED, YOU'LL BE AMAZED
AMAZEMENT IS OUR STOCK IN TRADE

YOU MIGHT PRESUME THE STATE PROVIDES
BUT YOU DON'T NEED TO SHOP INSIDE
UNLESS YOU TAKE THAT FOOLISH STEP
THE CHOICE IS YOURS, SELECTION WIDE.

YOU WANT SOME CHEESE, YOU WANT A HAT,
A BIT OF THAT, A BIT OF THIS
A DREAM COME TRUE, WE PROMISE YOU
THE MARKET PLACE IS WHERE IT'S AT

IT'S EVERY RUSSIAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE
STATE OR PRIVATE ENTERPRISE
WE CAN OBTAIN IN ANY SIZE
IF YOU SUPPLY A CRATE OF BOOZE.

MARXISTS ALL, IN MARX WE TRUST
HE WILL PREVAIL WHEN WE ARE DUST
BUT EVEN LENIN WILL ADMIT
IT'S ONLY FAIR TO EARN A CRUST

(Enter Varlet and his mother in law, Rosalie Pavlovna, and

Oleg.)

Varlet I say, look at these aristocratic nightcaps! Is it real fur?

(Varlet puts a bra from a stall on his head.)

Bra seller Real? Is this lovely fur real? Was Cleopatra a snake fancier? Feel that silkiness. It's from the inside legs of the animals. But there wasn't no suffering involved. These little minks were sleeping on silk, crammed with cream, before they finally sacrificed themselves for the people.

Rosalie Comrade Violet, I wouldn't advise trying to put your head in one of those. There are two, see?

Varlet Away with you, foolish creature. I always have two of everything that catches my fancy.

Rosalie But they're not for your sort. They're for supporting parts of outstanding female party members.

Varlet What nonsense. After I marry your daughter Elzevir, these trinkets will dress what comes to pass.

Rosalie Get away! You're not one of them cross dressers are you? And I thought he was an honest prole not a decadent capitalist!

Varlet I'm talking exactly nine months after. I know they will make superior hats for your future grandchildren. They can put them on when they go out together in the park.

Rosalie Siamese twins, they'll have to be.

Varlet We'll have twins, naturally- because I am going to have two of everything I want in the future. It is written!

Oleg I think what Ivor Violet here , his working classness, is doing is bringing an innocent proletarian eye to bear on everyday creations, and transforming their use-value with his incisive intelligence, don't you?

Rosalie I didn't realise that union with the proletariat meant that my grandchildren will have to go round forever with their heads crammed into one furtrimmed brassiere.

Oleg Rosalie, don't provoke his workingclassness - don't forget, with your kind of background, you need to get that union

card in your front room.

- Doll seller (Background) -Dancing dolls, dancing dolls, light as a feather, ready and willing in all kinds of weather-
- Oleg If he wants two of everything, it's his by right! He's the man of the hour!
- Varlet (To doll seller) Hither, fellow. (Examines dolls) 'The fruit of the proletarian loom must be able to step out of its cradling, into culture and elegance.'
- Rosalie You'd better have two of them, too.
- Varlet No. I don't just want two, I want a regiment of those.
- Rosalie But Comrade Violet!
- Varlet Don't comrade me till your family's officially united with the one true class, the proles. That won't be till after the marriage. For now, you are still bourgeoisie, so watch what you say.
- Rosalie I take your point, future comrade Violet, but for the money we're spending, we could smarten up any number of your compatriots- shave and shampoo a dozen of the grottiest proles- if the wedding's going to go off with a bang, we're going to need to budget for some booze?
- Varlet Do you imagine I can have forgotten drink? Of course not.
- Oleg That's right! The wedding is the union of the classes in peace and harmony. Beer will rain down as if the bottom had fallen out of Valhalla. You'll be swimming in it, with vodka chasers to keep your strength up.
- Oleg Don't upset him now Rosalie ! His is the class of the future. The bourgeois class, it is written, are mere mushrooms which spring up in the night and then wither and are heard of no more. Think of it this way. The trousers of future comrade Violet, however repellent, contain within them the socialist horn-of-plenty!
- Herring man Finest post-Tzarist herrings! Essential accompaniment to all kinds of vodka!
- Rosalie (Brightening) You hear that? Salted herrings are the very

thing for a wedding! Out of my way, young prole-gentleman. (looking) Oh dear, how disappointing.

Oleg Let me carry them- I won't charge a penny-

Rosalie How much do you want to get rid of these horrid little stunted sardines?

Herring man I can't let these salmon go at under two roubles sixty. They weigh a full kilo each.

Rosalie Two sixty for a piddling minnow like that?

Herring man That's no minnow, that's an apprentice sturgeon! Look at the fat on those gills!

Rosalie Sturgeon? More like a twiglet fish. Well I'm not standing here arguing, we've had a revolution in case you haven't heard. I'm going to get some decent fish from the Soviet State Co-op!

Oleg Oh this is all so unnecessary. Future comrade Violet, why let your dear future mother in law get involved in tasteless street polemics, when for fifteen roubles and a bottle of vodka I can personally guarantee the best wedding that you'll ever have in your life !

Varlet Others are going to be handling the petty-bourgeois details. I don't care to be involved.

Oleg Alright, then have you thought of having your nuptials conducted along the lines of the ancient Rites of Eleusis? Eleusis of the ancient world, the fountain of our culture, where sacred drama and religion both drank from the same stream? We can reconstruct the rites for your ceremony. When the wedding procession advances, holding sheaves of corn in front of the bride, I will sing in praise of Hymen.

Varlet Hymen? Hymen who?

Oleg Hymen's the ancient goddess of marriage and fertility.

Varlet No no. I want an honest to goodness Red wedding, with no decadent foreign trimmings, like- people without patronymics.

Oleg Of course, I see now that the wedding has to obey our Russian dramatic unities - I refer to the coming unities, of

class....let's see..... a Red.... we envision the red-dressed Red wife-to-be stepping out of her carriage as she arrives on the arm of the red accountant, the universal proxy father-in-law, representing the state, she's looking pretty steamed up, but he's ooh, red as a beetroot. And then the Red red groom is ushered in by the Red ushers, and the red table cloth is covered with bowls of steaming borscht and juicy red hams. How does that envision for a start?

Violet Oh, just the ticket!

(Enter Zoya, circles them suspiciously)

Oleg Then the blushing guests tear the red red tops off the vodka bottles with sweaty fingers and pour the proper vodka down their red throats, and when they look down at you again to draw breath, they shout, "Kiss, kiss!" and your brand-new encarminated red-hot spouse with her tongue weaving like a red cobra inside her mouth comes towards you closer and closer till her panting embouchure closes succulently on your own rosy face sphincter, sploosh! - recipe for mutual rapture.

Zoya Just a minute. Ivan! What's this old cow going on about? What wedding? Who's getting married?

Varlet Nothing's happened yet, Zoya. But I do not, I cannot know you any more.

Zoya Why not? What are you two talking about?

Oleg The future rubicund nuptials, I am assisting in arranging, between Elzevir Davidovna Bornagin, and this eminent prole-gentleman here. Ivor Violet.

Zoya His name is Ivan Varlet, and he was engaged to me! What's going on Ivan?

VARLET'S SONG

Varlet (Sings) I'M SORRY THIS HAS COME TO PASS, OH MY ZOYA
IT'S NOT A MATTER OF HER TITS AND ARSE, THOUGH HERS ARE HIGHER.
I'M MARRYING A DIFFERENT CLASS, THEY'RE CALLED EMPLOYERS.

Zoya What about me, Ivan?

- Varlet Ivan? Who he? Ivan exists only in memory. Enter Ivor, the new man!
- Varlet IVAN VARLET IS GONE- I'VE DISINVENTED HIM
THE PAST IS THE PAST. THERE'S A NEW WAY
HE USED TO DRESS AND EAT LIKE A PIG
A WOMAN IN EACH SMOKEY BAR
A CHICKEN IN EVERY PORT
IS NOW A RECIDIVIST THOUGHT
I'M GOING TO CHANGE GEAR AND CHANGE CLASS
OLD IVAN'S BEEN RUMBLER AT LAST
- All sing- IT NEVER WON A WOMAN'S HEART
THE DRUNKEN WAY HE USED TO FART
BALALAIKA ON HIS KNEE
IVAN VARLET, R.I.P.
- Ivan YOU CAN TAKE MY GUITAR AND UNSTRING IT
FOR I HAVE BECOME DESTINY, MANIFEST
OF MY CLASS AND SO THE MIRACLE WILL NOW
OCCUR
WITH BARELY A WINK AT THE CRYSTALIS STAGE
CATERPILLAR TO BUTTERFLY WITH A SINGLE
BOUND
IT'S CAUSE FOR SOME CELEBRATION
THE VODKA BOTTLE SAW LOTS OF ACTION
NOW HAS BECOME MEREST DISTRACTION
- All (Sing) IVAN VARLET REST IN PEACE
FAREWELL TO A BOOZY SLOB
WHO USED A KNIFE TO PICK HIS TEETH
AND THEN FORGOT TO SHUT HIS GOB
- Zoya You're not that different!
- Varlet I am too! Ivan drank like a fish. He had a drunken way with him, and his guitar, his life was understandably short. He's gone, I have disinvented him.
- Zoya Ivor Varlet! You said you and me belonged together like pork and beans!
- Varlet You might have belonged to Ivan, true. A woman in every smokey bar, a chicken in every port. But you are well rid of him. Do not weep, I have become the manifest destiny of

my class.

Zoya Ivan- you once said our hearts beat as one. And that we would work for the good of our class together forever..Don't tell me it's over, Ivan.

Varlet It's over. The iron tongue of determinism has chimed midnight, and I declare our love liquidated, citizen. I shall summon the people's trusty law enforcers if you try to obstruct my heart's new direction with your plebeian fisticuffs. All that is behind me.

(Re-enter Rosalie)

Rosalie And the fish I saw in there are even smaller.....(Sees Zoya) Just a minute, what's going on. Who's this little slut?

(Rosalie starts to knock Zoya around. A crowd gathers, cheering as they whack at each other with their handbags.)

Zoya Piss off! Who are you?

Rosalie Has she got her hooks into you, future comrade Ivor? Piss off yerself, you little tart, he's going to be my son-in-law!

Zoya His fate is tied to mine. Irreversibly.

Rosalie Aha! You mean you're pregnant and you want money. Alright fair's fair, I'll pay you off here and now.

Zoya You lot can only think of money!

Rosalie Not true! When I've paid you off I'm going to split your nostril in the bargain, you little slut. Come here !

POLICEMEN'S SONG

Police CITIZENS! PLEASE STOP THIS UGLY SCENE
ADMIT THE LAW MUST THROW ITSELF BETWEEN
WE ARREST EVERY ACTION UNDERHAND
AND IF YOU'RE DRUNK WE'LL PUT YOU IN THE CAN-
CITIZENS! PLEASE STOP THIS UGLY SCENE
(Etc and fade over scene change)

NOW WE KNOW THERE IS NO GOD
POSTREVOLUTIONARY MODE
WE SEEK THE HIGHER THINGS IN LIFE
COME WITH US UP THE RED RED ROAD

Scene 2

(Grotty Hostel for young workers with dirty bunks. Inventor, cleaner, barefoot youth, girl in spectacles. Barefoot youth screams and runs around.)

Barefoot
Youth

Oi! Me grass shoots!

Girl

Yer wot?

Barefoot

Some capitalist swine's nicked me daisy roots again! The last time, I tried to leave 'em in hand luggage at the railway station, last thing, but they won't take anything smelling that ripe. What am I supposed to do, sleep with the effing cheesers on?

Cleaner

I meant to tell you. Ivan Varlet's borrowed them to see that bourgeois cow he's going to get hitched with. He was effing and blinding trying to get them on.

Barefoot

I bet he split 'em the poxy class traitor!

Cleaner

I bet his language will improve faster than yours though. He did say he was never going to have to use the effski word again, now he's moving up the social ladder!

Barefoot

All this crap he's leaving round- it's not like it used to be. Before it was old sardine tins and empty beer bottles, now it's bottles of aftershave which came in this amazingly poncy wrapping paper. Changed his name, too, I hear. Effing ponce.

Cleaner

Now now stop that or the warden'll -

Barefoot

Ponce, ponce, that's what all class traitors are.

Girl

Class traitor, arse traitor. Just because he's got a flash new tie an gear you're going on like he was an poncing enemy of the people.

Youth

He is a poncy bloody enemy of the people. I'm the people, aren't I? I told him not to take my boots and look what he done. But you know, he's not going to fool anyone into thinking he's not still a prole. He's so thick, when he tightens his tie, it stops any blood getting to his brain at all.

Inventor As a matter of fact, he's not so stupid after all- seems to have reinvented himself. Seen this box of calling cards? (Shows them round)

All Ivor Violet! Wooooo!

(Displays of extravagant and contemptuous mirth. Inventor takes bottle of aftershave)

Youth 'Ere you what are you nicking?

Inventor With his new name, does 'Ivor Violet' even need aftershave? He smells good enough already!

Youth Leave it mate, it's got class contamination written all over it!

Girl You can mock, but he's changed. He's started a one man cultural revolution in the domestic sphere, from right here in the hostel!

Youth And then he had this way of smarming this horrible smelling stuff, all over his sideboards. No wonder they call 'em buggers' grips.

Inventor (Surprised) Was that why they was invented?

Youth They hang off the side of his face like something nasty off a dog's behind.

Girl Oh shut up. Lotsa movie stars have sideburns now.

Barefoot But he's not a movie star. He's a mechanic!

(Enter greasy mechanic.)

Mechanic Not any more. That's all in the past. Comrade Ivan Varlet came in and chucked his job in today. Said factory work was incompatible with his new wife.

Girl Who is this lucky girl then?

Youth Not you, obviously.

Girl Piss off!

Mechanic A hairdresser's daughter is what he's landed. Yep. The poodle-fancying class threw him a lure, and they is reeling

him in now. I expect she'll sort his side whiskers out for free and then buff his pinky afterwards till the welkin rings.

Girl Lucky for him. Ivan Varlet's improved himself and you're all jealous! If little miss Pinky buffer waved one of her tits at you, you'd be there like rat up a drainpipe.

Mechanic I'm not marrying no posh hairdresser . I'm a socialist. We're building a new state, houses for everyone. It's tough. It's war, mate, but that doesn't mean I'm surrendering my principles.

Barefoot The war's over. It stopped being 1917 a while back. The revolution's finished, dad! Go and get your hair permed!

(Enter Oleg, Ivan with shiny shoes, throws the boots to Barefoot Youth.)

Oleg -One last lesson and you will be perfect. Head up now- Meinheer Ivor, refinement for your new class consists of occasionally ignoring the obvious. Now, follow my instructions. Music ho!

(A foxtrot sounds out of a crackling gramophone playing a 78. The hostel boos and blows raspberries.)

Oleg Bard At the nuptial climax of our modern wedding, the seductive rhythm of the foxtrot will insinuate itself into the guests consciousness. And we will all.....step out onto the dance floor!

Varlet Can I take my shoes off ? They're playing old harry with my corns.

Oleg Bard Step up, sir, imagine your bride standing here and one two three and off! (Varlet dances)

Barefoot Class traitor!

Oleg Bard Very nicely sir! Now, Monsignor Violet, the moon is riding high, filling your soul with longing and passion- the nightscented stock fills the air with heavy perfume, and what are you doing? You are weaving dreamily back from a well stocked taverna. The Rites of Eleusis were always concluded with a dance. Don't wiggle your rear end, and you're supposed to be leading your lovely partner, not carrying a sack of spuds. Too high! Watch that hand!

Varlet It won't stay up!

Oleg Bard Alright, well, just locate the lovely lady's brassiere, and and hook your thumb in it it- it's makes it easy for you and it's very pleasant for the lady too. Now you can experiment with the other arm. What on earth are you doing with your shoulders?

(Ivan's dance gets wilder and wilder)

Oleg That's not a foxtrot . It's something greater! You have a talent and no mistake. You're too big for this country! You should break into Europe and astonish them all! Beyond socialism! The song of the body beautiful! The Moulin Rouge will never be the same after you conquer Paris! More, more! Encore! Bravo!! Magnificent!

(Music ends, stopped by Mechanic)

Oleg Oh, I'm exhausted already, but I must go and finish on the preparations- if I don't keep the ushers off the booze we'll never get there. Tuck your shirt inside your trousers but not inside the underpants. That is, provided you have underpants....

(Oleg leaves)

Youth Oy, dog's dinner! What's going on then?

Varlet Etiquette would say, none of your business, respected Comrade. But I will tell you. I have fought for the good life, and I have won. Furthermore, I'm doing my class, the proletariat, a favour by raising the average standard of living. What do you say to that?

(Gunshot, off. Enter Youth)

Youth 'Ere! Ivan Varlet's rejected fiancee's shot herself! You know, Zoya Wasserpatronymic! I don't know how she's going to explain herself at the next party meeting!

Voices Help! First aid! Help! First Aid!

(Zoya is carried in by excited pedestrians.)

Man Missed the heart thank god- but shot herself right through the tits ! Got to phone for assistance!

Mechanic There's no phone here!

Crowd (Enthusiastic) Emergency! Emergency! Emergency!
Emergency!

(Crowd exits leaving Zoya on floor)

Varlet My past is behind me. Destiny calls. The time has come at
last to change classes.

(Varlet steps over Zoya and comes downstage to hail cab)

Varlet Cabbie! Seventeen Lunacharsky street, otherwise known
as Hairdresser Hall. Don't forget my baggage!

Varlet FAREWELL TO POVERTY LICE AND CHEAP
PROPAGANDA (Exiting)
HELLO TO RELAXED SUMMER EVENINGS WITH TRIVIAL
CHATTER UPON THE VERANDAH-

(Exits, leaving mechanic alone with body of Zoya. Mechanic
kneels, weeping, to hold her hand. The crowd comes back and
surrounds them. Music.)

Mechanic Don't die my love!

Zoya (Faintly) To think I tried to kill myself over a greasy worthless
jerk like Ivan. There's nothing stupider than misplaced love.

Mechanic I know what you mean.

(Cloth cap off, hand on heart)

MECHANIC'S SONG

Mechanic THE ROAD TOWARDS UTOPIA IS PAVED WITH BLOOD
AND STONE
THERE'S MANY WITH ME COMRADES,
I KNOW I'M NOT ALONE
THE GODLESS PARTY PROMISES
A HEAVEN FOR OUR EYES-
BUT WHO WILL PAY FOR THIS?
WE'RE PAYING WITH OUR LIVES-

WE'VE BUILDING A ROAD TO A BETTER WORLD
FOR NIGHT ON SEVEN YEARS,
BUT NOW THE MISTS HAVE MOVED AWAY,
TO SHOW THE PATH WE STEERED

THE ROAD TO UTOPIA LEADS STRAIGHT TO A WALL
AND OUR WORK WAS IN VAIN,
'COS THE WALL DON'T WANT US,
THE WALL DON'T US
THE WALL DON'T WANT US AT ALL.

All SEE HOW SLEEK OUR MASTERS GET-
WHILE WE SIT IN OUR DIRT AND SWEAT-
STILL IT ISN'T FINISHED YET,
OUR UTOPIA- OUR UTOPIA-

HARK TO WHAT OUR MASTER SAID,
'SWING YOUR HAMMER, SWING WITH DREAD
HIT THAT RIVET ON THE HEAD-"
BUT THE DREAM WILL FALL
BUT THE DREAM WILL FALL

AND THE WALL DON'T WANT US, THE WALL DON'T
WANT US, THE WALL DON'T WANT US AT ALL.

Scene Three.

(Beauty parlour is the site for the Red Wedding. Bottles of vodka as Oleg has promised, and some disgusting looking food. Varlet, Elzevir Bornagin, Best Man, Accountant, and Matron of Honour, Accountant's wife. Oleg is Master of Ceremonies. On stage an 'ethnic' wedding band, eg Georgian, covered in bandoliers, with huge handlebar moustaches and balalaikas, to taste.)

Elzevir I think we could start, Ivor darling, don't you?

Varlet Not so fast!

Elzevir What's the matter? Don't you want to get married after all?

Varlet You bourgeois have a thing or two to learn about protocol in this new world ! On these important occasions of inter-class mingling, protocol has to be strictly observed. In addition to the Best man, the accountant, and Matron of Honour, his regularly fulfilled wife, the secretary of the committee of our glorious steering wheel factory has graciously accepted our invitation. And look where he comes!

(Guest runs in)

Elzevir Oh, is Mr Steering Wheel the guest of honour? Some sort of super-prole? I see. Alright, very nice.

Varlet Deigning graciously to illuminate our nuptials with his working-class brilliance, and repartee- the witty and resourceful representative of socialised motor vehicles, Comrade Lassalchenko! (Pause)

Guest Party greetings and apologies for absence-from Comrade Lassalchenko. His message reads (Reads) "Tomorrow I can go anywhere- even as far as church. Today, however is a party day, and like it or lump it, I have to report to my party committee in full." Message ends. (Exits)

Varlet So that's that. Apologies having been tendered, we should move on to the next item on the agenda.

(Opens champagne bottle and sprays it over Elzevir.)

Elzevir Just a minute- what sort of celebration is this- you're ruining my dress!

Varlet I hereby declare this wedding- open!

(Cheers and the guests rush for the food)

Rosalie Comrades, proles, nuptial sponsors of the hour from all sexes- please help yourselves from the generous buffet. I've been saving the ham for a rainy day ever since the end of the war. It's impossible to find porkers tasting like they do nowadays. They just don't feed piggies the right food .

(A musical interlude where everyone eats furiously)

Best man Next item- drink!

(All stopping eating. Rush to drinks, take and raise bottles)

Best man And now, the smooch that proclaims the twin fleshes one inseparable for evermore till divorce do 'em part!

All Kiss! Kiss! (Elzevir and Varlet kiss) Kiss! Kiss!

(Elzevir kisses Varlet with passion. He returns kisses stolidly)

Best man We witness here the historic embrace of the broad masses, by the bourgeois! C'mon let's hot it up! We Russians know how to celebrate- We celebrate Shakespeare's birthday- an' Beethoven - in fact we celebrate 'em both, all day, every day- so let's get a piano in here - and really make this an outstanding occasion!

(Piano is pushed on. Oleg plays a vamp introduction under the following)

Oleg Now about this union we are celebrating. I predict it will be a reconciliation of the two classes and all their inherent contradictions, for ever and a day. (Applause)

All Kiss- kisser!

Oleg And there's something about this union that we should not forget when we see a twinkle in both the bride and groom's eye. I predict we will soon hear the patter of tiny feet around the beauty salon! Tiny socialist hands raised to be manicured!! What is happening here is the rebirth of family life which over the years has been so damaged by economic savagery of the marketplace.

All Shut up you old windbag. Get them to kiss! Kiss! Kiss!

Oleg Not Marx, not Engels could have dreamed in a thousand years that what we are witnessing could ever take place - Labour and Capital together. What a winning combination ! Neither lived to see the heroic class, then obscure, if promising, rise up and seize the reins of history. They never dreamt that in a dramatic development, the conquering hero, Labour would take such a shine to Capital- now dethroned but clearly, enduringly alluring. I feel a song coming on!

HAIRDRESSER'S SONG

(Oleg plays on piano)

OLEG COME ALL YOU WEDDING GUESTS AND BEAT YOUR BREASTS ABOUT ME NOW TO DISPEL THE WICKED RUMOUR THAT THE BRIDE'S A CUNNING COW AND TO CAMOUFLAGE THE FACT THAT SHE IS BOURGEOIS TO HER RUMP SHE'S HOOKED UP WITH A PROLE SO THEY CAN HANG ON TO THIS DUMP.

ALL WHILE HIS BROTHERS IN THE LITTER ARE ALL BUTCHERED IN THE YARD THIS PORKER BY ANOTHER NAME HOLDS UP HIS UNION CARD OUR PROLETARIAN HUBBY'S PULLED IT OFF, THE LITTLE RUNT FIRST SHE BUFFS HIS PINKIE - NEXT SHE'S STICKING OUT IN FRONT

Usher Who's that trying to make off with a case of vodka, over there! Come back!

Guest I was just putting it somewhere safe, honest.

Oleg Well spotted, comrade usher. But no need to bust a blood vessel, just get everyone to relax - (Calls out) Attention please, everyone!

(Guests finally fall silent as Usher holds the vodka- thief by the lapels.)

Usher You're one of those bleeding bourgeois, aren't you?

(The two sides- hairdressers and mechanics- divide and square up for a fight.)

Oleg People, listen to me! We shouldn't be getting snooty about occupations! "She's a hairdressers and he's mechanic, so they can't get on!" One look at the bride and groom would dispel that nonsense. (To bride and groom) I think that if the hairdressers could all find a mechanic to demonstrate their art on, then both classes will discover exactly why the bride and groom are going to live happily ever after.

(A pairing off of hairdressers and mechanics, mutually suspicious. Tension.)

Oleg THERE'S A CLASS OF PERSONS PRESENT MALIGNED,
MISUNDERSTOOD
WHO IN THIS DAWNING NEW AGE CAN STILL DO
SIMPLE GOOD
I SING IN PRAISE OF HAIRDRESSERS, ALL AROUND THE
WORLD
IT'S AN INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT, LET'S HEAR IT FOR
THEM, GIRLS-

(A squad of hairdressers set upon the rest of the guests and do their hair, against their wishes. A choreographed fight.)

HAIRDRESSERS WE LIKE TO CHAT A LITTLE BIT IT HELPS US
PASS THE HOURS
YOU WON'T BELIEVE THE STORIES THAT WE HEAR
UNDER THE DRIERS
OH DON'T YOU THINK WE RAISE THE TONE
AND -WE SHOULD HAVE A UNION OF OUR OWN!

OLEG NOW HAIRDRESSERS CAN CHANGE A WOMAN'S
THOUGHTS ABOUT HERSELF
THE HAIR DONE RIGHT, SHE'LL NEVER STAY FOREVER
UPON THE SHELF
WHY SHOULD MOTHER NATURE RULE AND MAKE US
ALL UNCHANGED
AND NOW THE REVOLUTION'S COME- MEN! DON'T BE
ASHAMED

(The men fight off the hairdressers. Brawls break out. A stove is knocked over and smoke starts to fill the stage. Smoke increases. The hairdressers are winning, pinning mechanics down in the melee to perm their hair with monstrous combs and spraycans of lacquer, as the stage darkness and pandemonium breaks out.)

HAIRDRESSERS ADMITTEDLY BESIDE THE GOSSIP OTHER
PASSION PALES
WE FOLLOW FASHION FEARLESSLY AND DO EACH
OTHERS NAILS
ATTENDING WEDDINGS IS OUR BLISS-
WE'LL GIVE THE BRIDE A LOVING KISS
AND WE DESERVE A UNION OF OUR OWN.

All (Various) Kiss! kiss! /Where's the bride and groom- /can't see
them- /we're on fire! /Who said fire??? / Fire Brigade- It's
out of control!/ Heeelp!)

(Blackout)

Scene Four.

(Firemen are checking out rows of charred corpses. Enter Fire Chief, with further group of firemen, officials)

Chief What a bloody barbeque eh? You lot should have rescued at least some of these hapless folk, innocently celebrating what was to have been a happy day.

Fireman 1 It's their own fault. Did anyone bother to call us when the fire started? You drunken bastards! (Kicks the body bags)

Fireman 2 There was nothing we could do, chief. Like, when we arrived, the whole bleeding place was like an oil refinery. Vodka musta been feeding the flames.

Chief But a hundred percent casualties! It's not going to look good in the records. Dear oh dear. Alright, least said, soonest mended. What have we got here, anyway?

(They review the corpses, pulling back the shrouds and dropping them in place again.)

Fireman One bod, bonce all spoiled, probably falling beam- ...

Fireman3 One charred bod, sex NK, hairdressing tongs in hand, ...

Fireman4 One female bod, with wire thingummyjig fried tight on her upper bonce.

Chief Spare us the details, sonny. I've just had me tea.

(Fireman 2 giving charred notes to firechief)

Fireman 2 One back of the site, criminal and prerevolutionary build, was found with a cash register in his hands.

Chief (Pockets notes) Something for the fireman's ball at last. Check the cellar too.

Fireman 2 Can't get down there. It filled up with our water straight off, and froze solid. We did manage to rescue this.

(Firechief examines a blackened box, then opens it. It is a case of vodka. Bottles of Vodka from the case are handed out to

firemen and they line up for their drinking song)

Firechief Your average standards of safety in this town make Sodom and Gomorrah look like a safe bet.
You got to somehow get out there, and educate the people-

FIREMAN'S SONG

(Sings) TRADITIONAL!- THE MARRIAGE FEAST WHICH ENDS IN ARMAGEDDON
IT'S QUITE SURPRISING ANYONE SURVIVES A RUSSIAN WEDDIN'
AND YOU FIREMEN ARE SO LEGLESS THAT YOU CANNOT POINT A HOSE
PROOF ALCOHOL'S A KILLER, AVOID THE DREADED DOSE

Firemen HEAR OUR DREADFUL WARNING, PEOPLE, HEAR IT LOUD AND CLEAR,
WITH EACH AND EVERY CORK THAT POPS REHEARSE IT IN YOUR EAR
IF YOU LIKE A DRINK YOU WELL MAY THINK THAT IT WON'T END IN TEARS,
BUT YOU'RE RISKING FULL COMBUSTION WHEN YOUR LIVER CHANGES GEAR

OY! OY! THE REDNOSED FIREMEN STRIVE IN VAIN TO DOUSE THE FLAMES
WE CANNOT GET THE LADDER UP WE CALL EACH OTHER NAMES
IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO CELEBRATE- AS THE FLAMES GO HIGHER
WHAT WAS ONCE A BRIDE AND GROOM BECOMES FUNERAL PYRE.

HEAR OUR DREADFUL WARNING, PEOPLE, HEAR IT LOUD AND CLEAR,
WITH EACH AND EVERY CORK THAT POPS REHEARSE IT IN YOUR EAR (Firemen exiting)
OM TIDDLY OM TIDDLY OM, OY! OY!

Scene Five

(Futuristic conference hall with crazy Futurist electronic voting system. An old worker and his apprentice are polishing bits of machinery feebly.)

Old man It's a vital vote, this one today, young shaver. Oil the Agricultural Zones voting apparatus. We don't want no little mistakes again.

Youth The Central zones were a bit off as well, and the Smolensk apparatus was coughing a bit.

Old man Are we forgetting, sonny that this is a socialist paradise? Everything works, more or less. Just needs a drop of oil. Urals factories are go, Kursk metalworks sections is spanking new with sealed bearings. Runs with "all the smoothness of a military operation."

Youth I thought you must remember military operations, Vlad, cos you're so bloody Jurassic and wrinkly.

Old man Nah . I was a little kid when they had the revolution. I'm not that old. I do remember in the old days, just after the revolution, people voting by hand, My mother had to hold me in her arms. And the whole hall was filled with a thousand and one people, and there was all this argy-bargy, and they was split down the middle, exactly on the vote. My mother couldn't vote of course, she was carrying me in her arms and this stopped her.

Youth That could never happen now.

Old man Exactly. In the old days, some people stood at the back and pretended they had twelve hands- that can't happen nowadays. (Enter orator) Here comes the president of the Institute for Resurrection. I say! This means an important announcement.

Orator Citizen functionary mechanic and apprentice -Plug in the interactive response registers for all the federation zones! We have an urgent consensus to hold.

(Old man and Youth hurry to their places)

Old Man Yes suh! Green register go!

Young Man Green Register on!

Old man Red register on!

Young man Red register go. All systems go!

Orator Testing testing. One, one, one.

Old Man Test transmission verified, President, transmission commencing forthwith!

Orator (Coughs. Announcement) Now hear this! At the corner of 62nd Street and 17th Prospect in the town of Tambov, a building brigade working at a depth of seven metres has unearthed an ice-filled cellar of a previous building. Visible in the midst of the ice is a freefloating, frozen human figure. In the opinion of the institute for human resurrection, this individual, who froze to death very rapidly approximately fifty years ago could be reactivated. This motion has been circulated by telegram and discussed and we will now proceed to register the different opinions on this proposal. Remember, The Institute for Resurrection considers that the life of every worker must be used until to the last possible instant. What we have found is definitely a worker- the hands are calloused, and this is the distinguishing mark of workers around the decade of his entombment. I would remind you that after the wars that swept over the world, and led to the creation of our world federation, human life was declared inviolable by decree. But we should note the objections to resuscitation, from members of the Institute of Prevention of Disease, who fear a renaissance of many of the bacillus and bacteria known once to have infested the inhabitants of what was formerly Russia. But remember comrades, I cannot emphasise this too strongly, we are voting for a human life here!

(Lights, bells, buzzers.)

Orator In order to further the anthropo-cum- archeological comparative studies into the age in question, the Institute votes for resurrection!

(Triumphant music begins. Orator reads message)

Orator A warning from the sanitary inspection stations in the Don Basin. The hazard to humankind of reviving these archaic bacteria is great, so the sample must remain in a deep frozen state for ever! (Hubbub)

Orator The Siberian agricultural zones request that the defrosting indeed take place, but only after harvest in the autumn so that the Tractorate who have naturally all heard of the monster on their cab radios while harvesting can be witnesses. I can take no more amendments, before voting.

All in favour of immediate action raise hands!

(A forest of steel hands raise up)

Orator Voting on the Siberian amendment? (Two hands only) The assembly of the Federation hereby accepts the motion for full and immediate resuscitation.

All Resurrection! Resurrection! Resurrection NOW!

(Music swells. Stage floods with reporters who pull old fashioned microphones out of their pockets.)

Reporter -Eskimo Isvestia? Clear the front page. It's resurrection!-

2nd Reporter -Vladivostok Pravda- newsdesk. Conference have voted for resuscitation- pictures by wire to follow-

3rd Reporter -Berlin and Warsaw Komsol Pravda- Resurrection confirmed as predicted-

4th reporter -Chicago Soviet Isvestia- it's go for resurrection-

5th reporter -Red Gazette of Rome- resurrection gets green light-

6th reporter -Shanghai Weekly Pigeonfancier- it's go for resurrection-

7th reporter Los Angeles Weekly Embalmer- shock horror decision on near-corpse. Ex-guitarist to swear and smoke again.

REPORTER'S SONG

1st Reporter DESPITE THE RISKS IT'S BEEN DECREED
EARLY MAN IS TO BE FREED
WILL HE BE VERMIN FREE?
TUNE IN TOMORROW TO KNOW

2ND Reporter THIS JUST IN - THIS JUST IN-
WE'RE WITNESS TO HISTORY- THIS JUST IN

3RD Reporter THE STATE HAS DECIDED ALTHOUGH HE'S
RETARDED
HOMO VULGARIS WITH ARCHAIC VIRUS
SUSPENDED IN BLOCK ICE , THIS CRO-
MAGNON MAN

MAY PUT OUR BEST RUSSIAN BRIDEGROOMS
TO SHAME

4th Reporter DANGER- IGNORING THE DANGER-
DANGER- FROM YESTERDAY'S STRANGER

5th Reporter BEDBUG BOVVER-BOYS BOOZE AND VICE
WE'LL BE BRINGING YOU AN EXCLUSIVE-
READ IT FIRST IN IZVEST-IA
HE MAY JUST BE YOUR CAVIAR

(Newsboys come on with papers)

Newsboys Resurrection! Resurrection! Resurrection!
Resurrection!

All OUR BRAVE NEW WORLD WILL SET HIM FREE
THE WHITE HEAT OF TECHNOLOGY
WHEN HE AWAKES THIS WILL ALL SEEM
THE PERFECT FUTURISTIC DREAM

SCIENCE SHOWS US HOW TO FEEL
HOW TO VOTE AND HOW TO HEAL
SCIENCE PLAYS THE STARRING ROLE
REANIMATES THE HUMBLE PROLE

(As they sing, Zoya, much older, comes on and buys a
paper, reads the news, and screams. Blackout, end song.)

Scene Six

(Zoya runs in waving newspaper at Professor, who is working in
cryogenic unit, with frozen iceblock containing Varlet)

Zoya (Panting) Comrade! Comrade Professor! Don't go through
this! Don't pull the lever or the bleeding shenanigans will
start all over again.

Professor Shenanigans....? Comrade Byrionzka, you appear to slipped
back into the past where I regret to say they spoke an
language unknown to today's scientists.

(Takes up dictionary)

Zoya Oh you know what I mean!

Professor I'm afraid to say I don't. Modern life has a very different
language, and we have no use for the old words. I don't
want to harp on your little mistake though.

Slobberchops..... Shibboleth..... Here we are.
Shenanigans. 'Useless occupation or activity that prevents anything being done.'

Zoya Exactly! Fifty years ago, this 'shenanigans' which you are about to unfreeze caused me to attempt suicide!

(Zoya mimes shooting herself, graphically)

Professor Suicide? You've got me guessing again. (Dictionary) Suppositious...Swabber....Suppository. Suspender....(Pause) Suicide. (Reads) Oh dear. I suppose they were turbulent times, in those days and there were injustices. Did you try to shoot yourself after receiving a court order from a misguided tribunal, perhaps?

Zoya No. I acted entirely alone.

Professor Then it must have been an accident. It is irrational to end life before it stops being of use to the party.

Zoya I acted out of disappointed love.

Professor Oh, that is impossible. It is well known that love for the party means we have children and railway bridges and tractors, and so forth.

Zoya I can't stay if you continue with the reverse cryogenic programme.

Professor But I can't let you go, if you knew it! There is specialised information which we in the party may need from you to ensure his survival. To survive the trauma of awakening after all these years.

Zoya I think I am going to try and kill myself again.

Professor I beg you to submerge your personal feelings for the good of the party.

Zoya He's going to be hard to bring back. The vodka in his stomach and liver could ignite when you run the defrosting current through him.

(Professor goes to phone)

Professor People's firebrigade? Prepare to saturate resuscitation room 451 area with carbon dioxide.

Zoya What's so wonderful that's he's got that needs to be brought back?

Professor The past, comrade Byrioska, that obscure country that we carry within ourselves, but so seldom till recently have understood.

(Ice block revealed with doctors operating on it as the firebrigade, completely modernised with extinguishers, all arrive at the back, at the double, very brisk and efficient, humming a reprise of the fire-song)

Professor Switch on the current when I say.

Doctor Alternating current standing by.

Professor Now!

Professor Bring up the temperature to 98.6 with fifteen second bursts.

Doctor Fifteen seconds and counting!

Professor Have the oxygen ready.

Doctor Surgical oxygen cylinder and mask ready to go!

Professor Replace the ice with air pressure as you draw off the melt-water, and I want a full description for the Institute of every physical change he goes through-

(Exciting music. Choreographed stenographers taking down the narrative)

6th doctor Natural colour returning.....Subject appears almost icefree..... Chest movement now perceptible! But some very unusual manual spasms now apparent!

Professor That's a trapped sensory- reflex from the time he was frozen. Musical, probably: unimportant. They had things which they used to strum with one hand like that, forget what they were called.

Zoya Oh no, he's coming back with his guitar!

First doctor Temperature 98.6

2nd doctor Pulse is sixty eight per minute.

6th Doctor Breathing regular.

Professor Stand back, gentlemen! Observe the triumph of science!

(Varlet comes to life, dishevelled. He rises up, clutching his guitar, bending over it, retuning it, croaking along in a broken cracked voice)

Varlet (Sings) THE PARTY WENT OVER THE TOP, THEN
SOMEONE MUSTA SHOUTED STOP..... (Twang)
I THINK WE'RE IN A POLICE STATION, ME OLD GUITAR! I
MUSTA HAVE SLEPT IT OFF
I'M STARTING TO FEEL ROUGH
I'D PREFER BY FAR TO BE IN A BAR (Twang)

(The firemen surround him and put an end to the song with a burst of dry ice)

Professor Comrade neanderthal, This is not a police station.

(Varlet faces Professor)

Varlet What?

Professor Drunk tanks are no longer necessary. This is Reverse Cryogenic Room 451 in the Institute for Resurrection where specimens can be thawed out under scientific conditions.

Varlet Specimens?? I'm a person- I've got documents to prove it! Come off it! You're pissed! You're all pissed! I know doctors- they're never far from the surgical spirit and -it's glug, glug glug all the time with them.... what's the date?

Professor The tenth day of the revolutionary month Blossomy.

Varlet Not Blossomy, already? I musta been asleep forWhat year is it then?

Professor Revolutionary year fifty nine!

Varlet You're kidding. Don't tell me it's fifty nine years....

Professor That's exactly what we are telling you.

Varlet Oh no! I'd better get the wife a bunch of flowers. She's going to be really pissed off.

Professor You do not have a wife, specimen.

Varlet I don't have a wife!!!??? Look, here's my marriage certificate. (Searches) Oh no! Where the bloody hell is it? I can't find it-

Doctor What's it doing now?

(Varlet's hands go in and out of pockets faster and faster, trying to find the documents.)

Professor Dictionary please. We may be able to get a clue from its speechpatterns. (Consults dictionary.) What you are witnessing, comrades, is a slice of biological history. Deprived of its partner, the male creature is resorting shamelessly to decadent pre-revolutionary self-pleasuring. Extremely unhygienic. Stop it immediately.

(Two doctors move forward with a straitjacket and try to put it on Varlet.)

Varlet Oy! Lemme alone you wankers!

Professor Dictionary again please!

(Varlet frees himself from the jacket and throws it down.)

Varlet There's a woman out there, waiting for me - She's been waiting there for fifty years!

Professor The creature is still trapped in fantasy. Comrade Zoya, see if you can obtain the animal's trust, alone.

(Zoya steps forward to be recognised by Varlet. He stares at her . The rest of the doctors and the professor step back .)

Varlet Who's this?Just a minute, don't I know you-

(Lighting change. Music. Zoya and Varlet approach each other.)

Varlet Blow me down, it's got to be the ex- girlfriend's mother. If not you're the spitting image- You're not Zoya are you-

Zoya Yes, I was Zoya. What a fool I was to care about you.

Varlet What they say about it being the future- is true?

Zoya Find out for yourself. You'll never survive in the modern world.

(Zoya throws open a huge door, and traffic noise and fumes pour in and fill the stage. Varlet, dazzled by the light peers out into the new world.)

Varlet There's not a horse in sight. Cars cars cars! It's inhuman! Where am I? What's going on? Is this Moscow, Paris or New York?

(The door closes, and the noise and fumes die away abruptly.)

Zoya They should never have unfrozen you.

Varlet That's a cruel thing to say, Zoya. But then you always had a cruel, sarcastic side to you.

Zoya I was the one who was jilted at the altar by you! Remember?

Varlet I don't know what I remember any more. This is all so confusing. Just a moment, here's a little animal friend I recognise! A bedbug! Perhaps you can you take me to 17 Lunacharsky street, little bedbug? Take me back in time again, to where there is singing and dancing, and people there, admittedly drunk, stupid, laughing- but alive.

Zoya You are contemptible!

KLOP SONG

Varlet (Sings to bedbug, with guitar) LITTLE BED, LITTLE BUG,
WHERE YOU GO, MY HEART GOES WITH YOU,
LITTLE BED LITTLE BUG
SO FAMILIAR TO ME.

(The cast come on to take up the refrain en masse, as the scene changes.)

Cast LITTLE BED, LITTLE BUG, WHERE YOU GO, MY HEART
GOES WITH YOU,
LITTLE BED LITTLE BUG
SO FAMILIAR TO ME.

Varlet YOU DON'T COMPLAIN, YOU MAKE YOUR HOME
WHEREVER YOUR LITTLE LEGS ROAM; HOT OR COLD,
YOU'LL SURVIVE,

YOUR BITES REMIND ME I'M ALIVE.
VERY SHORT AND VERY SMALL,
IN FACT HARDLY VISIBLE
LITTLE FANGS SUCKING BLOOD,
NOURISHMENT THAT DOES YOU GOOD.

I ONCE HAD DOZENS, NOW THERE'S ONE,
WILL YOU BE MY ONLY ONE?
LITTLE KLOP, IN THE SEAMS
OF MY TROUSERS AND MY DREAMS
YOU DON'T CHANGE,
YOU'RE STILL THE SAME,
LITTLE KLOP MY FRIEND.

Scene seven

(A futuristic city street is revealed with strange trees and futuristic pedestrians. A crowd enters following a reporter.)

Reporter Let us refresh ourselves and I will tell you about these grim and terrible events, as we sit under the canopies of the civic omni-arborials.

(All take melons and eat them messily)

Man The juice on this here story.

All Spill the beans, watermelon man!!

Reporter You will know that as First Reporter I always have access to the finest class of information-so here it comes!

(Points to MEN hurrying across stage, each with a black bag with a dog's head wearing a stethoscope sticking out of the bag.)

Reporter There are three epidemics now raging in the town. See that? Those men are vets- The epidemic started when the resurrected early mammal made contact with some of our advanced domestic animals- and now the dogs don't bark any more, they don't play, they only go around on their hind legs, smirking, winking and generally ingratiating themselves to diners in restaurants, and then- they bite. The doctors say that anyone who is bitten by one of these animals will develop all the symptoms of infection before going on to bite someone else.

All Disgusting! Outrageous!

Reporter Now look at this! Disease number two!

(A fireman rolls by, drunk)

FIREMAN'S SECOND SONG

Fireman WALK BACKWARDS WITH ME TO THE GOOD OLD DAYS
YOU COULD GET LEGLESS IN SO MANY WAYS
WITH A CHUM ON EACH ARM AND A BOTTLE IN HAND
BOYS, KEEP DOWN THE NOOOO-ISE, YOU KNOW IT'S
BIN BANNED

NO READING OR WRITING, JUST FIGHTING, FART-
LIGHTING
LIVER ON FIRE, HEART'S DESIRE
CAST NOT THE FIRST STONE: WE'RE MERRY,
AND THE EFFECTS ARE REVOLUTIONARY
OH I'M TIDDLY, I'M OH- OH., ETC AND FADE.

Reporter See that ? He's done for as well! There are already one hundred and seventy five workers infected just like him.

(Several firemen take up the tune and hum softly as they weave backwards and forwards, all over the stage)

Reporter They say this one may be even more contagious.

Man This is dreadful! How on earth did it start?

Reporter To revive the unfrozen early mammal, a fermented mixture you may have heard of was used, called 'beer'. During the preparation great care was taken but some has been ingested. Five hundred and twenty workers have been hospitalized and the numbers are growing every day!

Man As an historian, I know about this "beer." I predict the mysterious illness can only be conquered if enough volunteers come forward - and for the good of the people, I will put myself forward immediately as a test case to be inoculated!

(Applause from the crowd. Bows & exits. Music, guitar. Enter girl, dancing by herself)

Reporter The third aspect of the plague. Any women who live within earshot of the crazed infected mammal, hears him at night, when the town is silent, hear the plunk of his horny plectrum on his depraved instrument through the thin walls- finally this noise becomes too much for our girls- they go out of their minds-

Man This I do not believe! How can this be?

Reporter Infection rates of "Lurve" as it is known , are running at over seventyfive percent of all withing earshot!

All "Lurve" microbes are poisoning every cubic centimetre of our air!

(The single girl is joined by several others, inhaling imaginary

roses and swooning about the stage., they swoop around, to music, humming in a trance)

Reporter At a certain stage, “Lurve” victims respond to a further set of stimuli. They come together on a hidden signal, and somehow the parasitic infection synchronizes all infected legs, in a low parody of decadent bourgeois art!

(Suddenly the girls come together to do high kicks, in an intense, professional looking, insect-like conga)

Man (Amazed) How on earth is that done??

Reporter We don't know yet, but the epidemic is reaching crisis proportions! It's as if some sort of depraved primitive consciousness is taking over the world!

(Enter Director, with a magnifying glass. The girls keep dancing in conga round him.)

Director Attention please! A search party has reported that the precious final example of the unique bloodsucking creature, the klop, or bedbug, has been sighted here a quarter of an hour ago, heading for the fourth floor, average speed one and a half miles per hour- comrades -search the premises, immediately!

(Everyone searches while the girls dance through them.)

Reporter You'll never find it this way. The only way to capture a bedbug is to lay out some bait-

Voice Put a naked man on a mattress in every window!

Voices Don't shout, you'll frighten it away!

Director Anyone who finds it is warned not to try to secrete it about their person. This bedbug is state property and a severe fine will be levied if it is found on any person!

Voice Here it is! Here it is!

(Spotlight on one spot on stage. The girls stop dancing.)

Director Yes that's it. Firemen, over here!

(Charade with drunken firemen, trying to trap it in helmet, and ladders)

Director It's over here now! Bastard got away! Never fear, quick-

Fireman Got it!

Director Don't let it fall- it'll kill itself! Do not crush the insect's legs!
Careful!!

Voices Got it, hurrah!

Director Careful, now- the capture, using the highest technology in a previously undreamed of combination, has been resoundingly successful. Now you be quiet folks please. It has crossed its legs and wishes to rest! Thank you comrades for your struggles which will I'm sure our scientific knowledge. This is an unique specimen of Bugus Normalis, extremely popular at the beginning of the revolutionary era and believed extinct subsequently. Now our city zoological gardens will be the first to exhibit it, and if we're not on the tourist map after this, I'll eat my tricycle. I invite all present, including gentlemen of the press to a formal inauguration of Bugus Normalis' new life in captivity.

(Exit all, to important dead march music, carrying the bedbug ceremonially off on a velvet cushion.)

Scene Eight

(Cryogenic ward. Varlet strums on his guitar, melancholy.)

Varlet Professor, c'mere- gimme some hair of the dog, will you you.

(Doctor gives beer, a small amount)

Varlet This amount hasn't got a snowball in hell's chance of curing a hangover. What about a litre and a half of vodka, then?

Professor I could not be responsible for giving you a lethal dose.

Varlet Did I ask to be resurrected? Freeze me back! (Slurred)
What 'smatter? Scared?

Professor We are not empowered to act separately from the collective, and the life of each worker is sacred.

Varlet But your charter doesn't include me. I mean, I'm not working, here, am I? So what is sacred about me now? Gimme a proper drink.

(Enter Zoya with books)

Zoya I've got the books for you. I don't know whether they are what you want. Nowhere carries books in praise of "Lurve". Or roses, or daydreams, the closest I could get was a textbook on horticulture.

THE LOVEBOAT HAS CRASHED

Varlet THIS IS WHY I WOULD RATHER DIE
WHAT DID WE FIGHT FOR IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS
MEMORY'S IN SHORT SUPPLY
CENSORED AND SANITISED
ALL THE CHIPS WERE STACKED ON RED
WE TOOK OUR CHANCES WITH THE GUN
WE DANCED AND SANG, WE THOUGHT WE'D WON
WHAT HAPPENED/

WHY DID YOU LET IT GO
SWEET PROLETARIAT
A BEAUTIFUL PLAN, THE PERFECTION OF MAN-
I WOULD HAVE DIED FOR THAT

Zoya HOW CAN YOU BLAME ME NOW?
YOU NEVER WORKED FOR THIS
DIDN'T YOU FEEL OUR NOBLE IDEAL
WAS MORE THAN HYPOTHESIS?

V+Z I WOULD HAVE DIED FOR THAT
NOW WE'RE ALL OUT OF TIME
WE WERE AFLOAT ON DREAMS
BUT THE LOVEBOAT HAS CRASHED

WE'RE OUT OF STEP WITH LOVE
TIME HASN'T BEEN OUR FRIEND
THE WORLD'S LOST ITS PASSION
NOW FEELINGS ARE RATIONED
SAD WE CAN'T START AGAIN

I WOULD HAVE DIED FOR THAT
NOW WE'RE ALL OUT OF TIME
WE WERE AFLOAT ON DREAMS
BUT THE LOVEBOAT HAS CRASHED.

THE PAST IS ASHES NOW
WE ARE BOTH OUT OF TIME
FEELINGS ARE RATIONED HERE
NOW THE LOVEBOAT HAS CRASHED
THE LOVEBOAT HAS CRASHED
THE LOVEBOAT HAS CRASHED

Doctor We have dancing in our modern state. Tomorrow, twenty thousand male and female workers will celebrate the collective harvest with a dance around a thousand-tractor rally in the people's arena.

(Takes paper sandwiched between books.)

Varlet Aw, I can't wait. Look you don't want me here. Even I can see that. Give me what I want or pop me back in the permafrost. (Pause)

Professor (To Zoya) There is a sort of sub-human logic to what he is saying. We just don't have the resources to provide what he wants.

Zoya I'd deepfreeze him again without a second's regret, if it was my decision.

(Varlet has found a flyer in the books that Zoya brought in.)

Varlet Zoya- explain- please- what's this bumf about?

Zoya It's just a jobsheet. They give them out free on the streets.

Varlet It says "Human being wanted"? Human being! That's me. None of you are qualified..

Zoya The city is committed to full employment, and I must have picked one up...

Varlet "Ordinary human being wanted! Job at civic zoo" See- Someone wants me!

Professor Are you sure?

(Professor goes to phone)

Varlet I could do this! I could do this job!

Professor (Phone) Zoo Director? This is the Institute for Resurrection. We think we may have a candidate who would fit your advertisement. Of course, we shall be sad to see him go...

Scene Nine.

(The stage fills with animals. Zoo with elephants, giraffes, and musicians and stewards directing people to grandstands. A cage draped with cloth, centre. The band plays.)

Steward This way, foreign comrade- journalists! Next to the platform, leave room for the Brazilians- the their airship is landing at this moment in the central airport. Sun blessed comrades, kindly mix in with the climatically challenged British visitors, that way we can get a memorable and striking effect . Oh, it looks a picture. You high-school students, over to the left, listen up. Four veterans from the Union of Centenarians have elected to supplement the professor's lecture with thrilling eyewitness examples of the old time, fresh- culled from their memory banks.

(Happy old people come forward in a dense clanking phalanx Zimmer frames.)

Old Man Oh now!-I remember it like it was now.

Old Woman No it's me who remembers it like it was now!

2nd Old man You remember like it was now, but I can remember what it was like before now.

Old Woman Oh, I can remember before that, before before now. I can remember a very long time ago.

Old man Oh I remember that time, but also what it was like before that! All of which I remember like it was yesterday! What day is it today?

Steward Thank you veterans! Right now we've got the distilled experience of beardless Youth to hear- by the right, quick march!

(Children enter marching. INSTRUMENTAL INTRO)

Steward Take these, now, children.

Girl Cor what are these?

Boy And what's this disgusting smelling slop?

Steward Now children, can you guess which animal likes the things you're holding?

Girl An ostrobogulous! (Titters, shushed)

Steward These are animal nutrition units, products specifically created by the Central Medical Institute for one special creature. And follow my instructions to the letter, or it may be the worse for you!

(Steward handing out drinks and cigarettes)

Steward Your school been chosen to feed the latest acquisition.

Steward And now- please greet the chairman and committee of the City Soviet!

(Enter Chairman. committee sing)

Committee WE SEND FRATERNAL GREETINGS TO THE WORKERS
OF THE ZOO
WE SOVIET CITY WORKERS ALL APPLAUD WHAT YOU
DO,
HEROES OF LABOUR WITH RHINOS FOR
NEIGHBOURS!
HURRAH! THE SPINY PORCUPINE WILL,
WITH ITS LITTLE MOTTLED QUILL-
DO AND DO AND DO
WE SEND FRATERNAL GREETINGS TO THE WORKERS
OF THE ZOO

Chairman Comrades, children, other species. Since external mishaps have been minimised in our modern society, there is time now for us to develop interest in spectacle, that however extravagant it may be in appearances, contains significant scientific and historic truths. We can spend hours staring at the multicoloured and inflamed posterior of baboons, and we can link the sight with a deeper understanding of the past struggles of the world proletariat.

I'd say the latest arrival was easily as entertaining as any of the droll creatures we have here already. Mr Zoo Director, we applaud you, and I hand over the chair.

(Applause, music fanfare. Director goes up to podium.)

Director If it had not been for the kind offer of my colleague the

professor at the Institute of Resurrection, these -two- specimens of a bygone era would not be available for our edification tonight. Initially, we were only aware of one. We first caught Bedbugus normalis, it was on its own, but we knew we would need a homo sapiens feedsource to keep the specimen alive. But how? We have evolved far beyond them. I put out an advertisement, and to my astonishment a mammalian specimen was made available. When the specimen arrived at the Zoo, we discovered that it was Bourgeoisius Vulgaris, not noble Homo Sapiens. However Bedbugus Normalis is not too choosy, thankfully, and both have settled into their little routine quite happily. Bourgeoisius Vulgaris, in the era this specimen is, from affected horrid passions for what was called 'culture'. It was not possible to avoid bourgeoisius's cultural droppings filling the insteps of your shoes, wherever you stepped.

(Keepers sweep round Varlet's draped cage, carefully.)

Director In the past, it was disgusting and contagious but today we have a system which continuously removes any culture that the animal deposits so you are all quite safe. Comrades and comradeses, Bedbugus Vulgaris and Bourgeoisius normalius in an exact replica of their natural habitat. Behold!

(Curtains fall away to show Varlet on a bed with a bottle, and guitar. Crowd approach. Varlet plucks guitar listlessly. Director steps into the cage, puts on rubber gloves, draws gun, and turns a listless Varlet round for the Zoo visitors.)

Director Come closer, comrades, don't be frightened. It's quite tame. Look, this is something you won't have seen before. It's going to have a 'smoke'.

Voice Is that what those tubes are for? Disgusting!

Director And it's going to have some 'booze'.

Voice This is cruel- watching animals take poison! We shouldn't be tormenting it!

Director Would you like to come for a little walkies, Bourgeoisius? Come on! See it knows its name. Come on, leave your little chum under the bed and come for walkies. He just dropped a whole lot of culture before you arrived- he generally only does that once a day. So it's completely safe....

(Director opens the cage door and retreats. Slowly Varlet comes

out and peers around.)

Director Say hello to the nice people!

(Director slowly backs away from Varlet, who looks at the crowd disinterested, then turns back to the theatre audience, and starts to peer at them excited for the first time. Recognition. The speech starts with a whisper and ends up shouting. Instrumental intro for the MECHANIC's song, underneath)

Varlet Hey- just a minute- citizens! Hundreds of them. Brothers! My own, my very own people! People like me! How did you get in here? So many of you? When were you all unfrozen? Oh, this is marvellous- but why am I kept all alone in the cage when there are so many of you? We could have a party. Come and join me please immediately! All of you! (Yells) I'm so lonely- It hurts to be alone. So alone!

Director Get the children out of here- they shouldn't be hearing this!

(Varlet sinks to his knees. Children scream. crowd panic)

Varlet I'm sad, so sad, sad, sad. Life has cheated me...Join me...Why am I suffering like this?

(Children scream again)

Varlet Touch me. Come closer! (Sobs)

(Two attendants grab Varlet.)

Director Apologies for what you heard, comrades. The bright lights must have caused it to hallucinate. Please remain calm. There's no one out there.

BEHOLD THE NOBLE PROLE

VARLET THE ROAD TOWARDS UTOPIA WAS PAVED WITH BLOOD
AND STONE
WE WERE SO GREAT IN NUMBER
HOW COULD WE HAVE KNOWN?

I AM THE MYTH INCARNATE
YOUR LIVER AND YOUR SOUL
AND I'VE COME BACK TO HAUNT YOU
BEHOLD THE NOBLE PROLE

WE WERE BUILDING A ROAD TO A BETTER WORLD
FREE OF WANT AND FEAR,
BUT NOW THE MISTS HAVE MOVED AWAY,
TO SHOW THE PATH WE STEERED
THE ROAD TO UTOPIA LEADS STRAIGHT TO A WALL
AND OUR WORK WAS IN VAIN,
'COS THE WALL DON'T WANT US,
THE WALL DON'T US
THE WALL DON'T WANT US AT ALL.

All SEE HOW SLEEK OUR MASTERS GET-
WHILE WE SIT IN OUR DIRT AND SWEAT-
STILL IT ISN'T FINISHED YET,
OUR UTOPIA- OUR UTOPIA-

-HARK TO WHAT OUR MASTER SAID,
"SWING YOUR HAMMER, SWING WITH DREAD
HIT THAT RIVET ON THE HEAD-"
BUT THE DREAM WILL FALL
BUT THE DREAM WILL FALL

AND THE WALL DON'T WANT US, THE WALL DON'T
WANT US, THE WALL DON'T WANT US AT ALL.

MARXISTS ALL, IN MARX WE TRUST
HE WILL PREVAIL WHEN WE ARE DUST
A DREAM COME TRUE WE PROMISE YOU
BUT THE DREAM WILL FALL-

(END)

