

Petrograd Falling

by

Katalina Bernane

INT. NATASHA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Zoya sits on the bed, listening to Natasha's heartbeats through the stethoscope. It takes her a few attempts to find the right spot on the woman's chest, her hands tremble.

She writes down numbers in a little notebook.

ZOYA

Roll up your sleeve, please.

Natasha turns back from staring out the window, pulls up the sleeve of her white nightgown.

Zoya wraps the cloth part of the blood-pressure pump around her upper arm, it keeps slipping off. Natasha's confused as she watches Zoya struggle. Finally, Natasha tightens it herself, Zoya tries to hide her embarrassment.

NATASHA KUZNETSOV

My father would turn around in his grave if he knew I ruined the premier of Prokofiev's new piece.

ZOYA

Passing out is hardly your fault.

NATASHA KUZNETSOV

He would have been livid. He loved Prokofiev.

ZOYA

I heard he's not too bad.

NATASHA KUZNETSOV

My father?

ZOYA

Prokofiev.

NATASHA KUZNETSOV

Him and his chromatic displacements. I'd like to see him try and survive all those key changes in a corset.

ZOYA

(focused on the blood pressure pump)
Hold your breathe.

NATASHA KUZNETSOV
 (after finally breathing out)
 Boris adores Prokofiev. Father loved
 that about him almost as much as all
 the gold.

ZOYA
 (lets her sarcasm slip)
 Life dealt you a bad hand?

NATASHA KUZNETSOV
 (amused)
 A wealthy man in power? Oh, doctor,
 they don't get much worse than that.

Zoya packs up her equipment.

NATASHA KUZNETSOV
 Do you enjoy operas?

ZOYA
 I'm thankful for the double glazed
 windows at the University.

NATASHA KUZNETSOV
 You know why opera houses are always
 so big and made of granite?

ZOYA
 So that all the screaming would seem
 worth it?

NATASHA KUZNETSOV
 So that people sat inside drinking
 champagne can't hear the hungry
 children on the other side Petrograd.

Zoya watches Natasha for a moment, then packs up her bags and
 stands up.

NATASHA KUZNETSOV (CONT'D)
 Any instructions?

ZOYA
 (hesitates)
 Your blood pressure is low. You must
 eat more salt and drink tea.

NATASHA KUZNETSOV
 Drinking tea will save me from dying?

ZOYA
You are not dying.

NATASHA KUZNETSOV
That's the good news, doctor. We all
are.

Zoya heads to the door. The sudden softness of Natasha's
voice throws her off, she stops walking.

NATASHA KUZNETSOV (CONT'D)
Are you going to come tomorrow?

ZOYA
You might just stay alive and see.