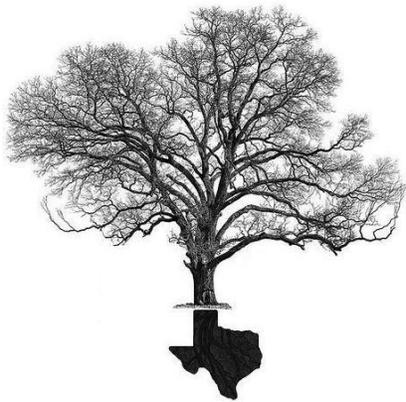


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DERSU, THE HUNTER

ALAN NAFZGER



Pecan Street Press
LUBBOCK • AUSTIN • FORT WORTH

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Amazon edition

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ISBN: 9781071235041

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DERSU THE HUNTER

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FADE IN:

EXT FOREST - FAR EASTERN SIBERIA WINTER

It is 2014 and DERSU is trying to stay alive. He is an Eastern Russian and a professional hunter. He may be mixed race Nanai and Russian. His features aren't entirely Russian. However he is a very old man, an older man with inner-strength. He is thin and gaunt with deep wrinkles and his stamina is almost gone. DERSU has gnarled hands and is swimming in the tide water of his sixth or seventh decade.

The snow and the subfreezing whiteout conditions are making DERSU's day miserable. There is a little snow falling, but the ground is completely covered with thick snow, diffused lighting from overcast clouds has caused almost all surface definition to disappear.

DERSU is being followed by an Amur tiger.

POV of the tiger. As DERSU walks through the woods he frequently stops, listens and smells, he slowly turns. He feels the tiger's presence. When DERSU stops, the tiger stops.

POV of DERSU. His vision is seriously diminished. He is very hungry. He does manage to see a sika deer.

POV of the tiger. Despite the tiger, DERSU manages to fire a shot but it only frightens the deer. Firing the weapon seems to startle the tiger; the camera careens back one foot and stops. DERSU may be starving to death.

DERSU walks very fast through the snow, muttering a very old Russian song.

DERSU

In the islands, the hunter
Roams all day long.
But no luck for him
And he curses himself
What's he going to do
How is he to serve
He cannot be cheerful
So what he's try to aim better
So the hunter goes to warmer waters
Where the fish are frolicking

in the beautiful weather
There on the shore

DERSU smells smoke and then scans the horizon for it. He senses the direction and panics. He runs through the thick snow. The tiger's chase instincts are triggered. It is a race.

DERSU drops and abandons the furs that he has collected.

As the chase develops, DERSU stops and fires his rifle at the cat. However, the cat ducks into cover of the forest. As DERSU begins to run again, the tiger emerges and follows.

DERSU now sees a conservationist's winter cabin. It is maintained by BORIS ZARUBIN of the Wildlife and Hunting Department. Smoke is drifting out of the chimney. DERSU fumbles through his pocket and looks to take something out. DERSU runs harder but he is almost exhausted. The tiger is only yards away and it is ready to make the kill.

A hunting knife in his hand, DERSU falls exhausted into the snow. He rolls, knife in hand; he is ready to fight the tiger. Suddenly the conservationists steps out of the cabin and fires a shot into the air. The tiger stops dead in his tracks and then retreats.

Five minutes later..

INT. CONSERVATIONIST'S WINTER CABIN

DERSU is at the table rapidly eating bread and hot soup. There is a fire. There is a business card on the table. It is a very old and worn card of a politburo member, Viktor DEMICHEV. The words, "Please extend every courtesy to my very good friend, Dersu."

ZARUBIN

How did you know a politburo member?

DERSU doesn't understand the question. ZARUBIN holds up the card.

DERSU

Viktor was here many years ago.

DERSU does not stop eating. He is famished.

ZARUBIN

What happened?

DERSU
I saved his life.

ZARUBIN
It was a tiger?

DERSU
No, it was wolves.

ZARUBIN
You know there isn't a politburo any more. Right?

DERSU
Thank you for not killing the tiger.

ZARUBIN
We try not to shot tigers but I must admit I almost had to. He was almost on you.

DERSU
Thank you.

ZARUBIN looks into a dark corner of the room. There is a man. He is a reporter, ANTON DOROKHOV. The reporter leans forward; his face is now lit by the laptop computer that he is working with. He is a Moscow reporter writing about the conservation efforts and tigers.

DOROKHOV
What's the name on the card?

ZARUBIN
Demichev.

The reporter's eyes become enlarged.

ZARUBIN
(to Dersu)
This is Anton Dorokhov he is a reporter here doing a story on the tigers and the conservation efforts.

DOROKHOV
He is still alive. The last of the Brezhnev gang. It is impossible to

Speak with him. I've tried. What a story! It is rumoured that he knows where the bodies are buried, so to speak. Perhaps literally. He will not answer the door.

ZARUBIN

Did you phone?

DOROKHOV

Well, yes. There was a signal, two rings hang up and then call back. And he answered. Well, I told him who I was and he hung up. They changed the code.

ZARUBIN

He never leaves?

DOROKHOV

He used to play chess at tables outside his apartment and go for walks. But no one has seen him in 10 years. Daughter brings him food. She won't let me talk to him.

The conservationist nods to DERSU, who is feverously still eating.

ZARUBIN

Take him with you.

DERSU

Thank you. I will go.

The men think DERSU means Moscow. But he takes up his gun and is about to leave the cabin. But the men stop him.

DOROKHOV

Why don't you go with me to see Demichev?

DERSU

I don't know who that is?

DOROKHOV

Viktor.

DERSU

I can't see. My eyes will not work in the city.

DOROKHOV

What?

DERSU

I will be run over by a wagon.

ZARUBIN

We won't let anything happen to you.

DERSU

I am a hunter.

DOROKHOV

Come on. You are not happy here in the winter. Come and visit with Viktor and in the spring you can come back here.

DERSU

What kind of food is there in the city? I will take my gun.

ZARUBIN

How about if I keep it here for you?

Several days later...

INT. TRAIN CAR

DERSU sits hours (days) at the window looking out and watching Russia pass by. There are furs stacked up near DERSU.

EXT. MOSCOW TRAIN STATION

DERSU and the reporter exit a first class train car. DERSU takes in Moscow. He is awed by the hustle and the bustle of the crowds and the noise. As they walk to the taxi cabs out front, DERSU studies it all.

EXT. HOUSE ON THE EMBANKMENT

A taxi arrives with DERSU and DOROKHOV.

INT. HALLWAY OF THE HOUSE ON THE EMBANKMENT

DERSU and DOROKHOV reach the door of the apartment. DOROKHOV knocks and we hear a rustling about but there isn't an answer.

DOROKHOV
Hand me your card again.

DERSU
Why?

DOROKHOV
So he will open the door.

DERSU feels this is silly.

DERSU
Open the door Viktor, it is your friend DERSU. It is cold out and I would like to have some soup.

The door opens slightly; DEMICHEV is afraid it is a trick by reporters, or even worse, historians. But then the door is opened all the way.

Viktor DEMICHEV is a man much older than DERSU. Fringe of grey-white hair around balding, mottled scalp. Wizen face. Back slightly hunched. Thick, groomed moustache, wide forehead with numerous lines. Resigned. Contorted arthritic hands.

When he sees his old friend DERSU, we learn that he is surprisingly agile. He is elated to see his friend and gives him a big hug. The reporter is ignored.

DERSU hands him the card.

DEMICHEV
Oh I've not seen one of these for years.

DEMICHEV examines the other side and smiles. He remembers it all very well.

DEMICHEV flashes back the wolves who almost killed him.

DEMICHEV gives DERSU the card back to keep. DERSU and DEMICHEV walk into the apartment and shut the door.

The reporter must knock on the door. DEMICHEV reluctantly lets him in, but he was hoping the man would go away.

INT. DEMICHEV APARTMENT

The interior is about as far from minimalist as possible. There is a great deal of things in the apartment. Many taxidermists exhibits and guns. There are rugs from the Middle East. African and Asian art. Books but no television. There are flags and portraits of Lenin and Brezhnev. There are photographs of DEMICHEV and Brezhnev together.

DEMICHEV nods to the stuffed boar's head hanging on the wall and the men warm to that memory. They smile but say nothing.

DEMICHEV

Oh, friend. You said you are hungry.
Come with me.

They go into the kitchen. DEMICHEV happily opens the refrigerator and puts a lot of food on the table. He microwaves some soup. DERSU is happy with this.

DEMICHEV returns to the front room. The reporter tries to hide his phone. He has been photographing the room. DEMICHEV is stern.

DEMICHEV

Who are you?

DOROKHOV

Well, I'm a journalist.

DEMICHEV

I know that; you are taking
photographs of my living room. Who
else would be so rude?

DOROKHOV

I'm sorry. It is just that you are
the last living member of the
Brezhnev politburo and I would like
to talk to you.

DEMICHEV

I don't give interviews. I'm an old man. I've forgotten so much it seems pointless.

DOROKHOV

You haven't forgotten so much.

The reporter nods to the bear mounted on the wall.

DEMICHEV

And you traveled here with Dersu from the Ussuri basin?

DEMICHEV thinks... he looks in on DERSU, who is eating.

DEMICHEV

We are going to walk. I will be back in a short time.

DERSU smiles and waves that he understands.

DEMICHEV

(sternly to the reporter)
You have 30 mins. Outside.

The reporter and DEMICHEV leave the apartment.

Twenty-five minutes later...

INT. DEMICHEV KITCHEN

DERSU has eaten most of the food laid out. He walks to the window of the apartment and looks down. It is a cold but sunny winter day. DERSU sees DEMICHEV and DOROKHOV on the sidewalk returning to the apartment building.

DERSU sits in the front room of the apartment. There is all this stuff to look at but DERSU isn't interested. He simply waits.

DEMICHEV enters the apartment with a tear in his eye. It might be from the bitter cold... or from explaining his history.

Evidently he has been overwrought with shame or guilt and hasn't been outside for 10 years but perhaps now he has come to grips with it and given the interview.

INT. DEMICHEV APARTMENT - MORNING

DERSU rises slightly before the sun. DEMICHEV sleeps most of the morning. Dersu simply sits and waits for DEMICHEV to wake.

INT. DEMICHEV APARTMENT - NOON

DEMICHEV takes DERSU into his bedroom and they try on shirts, pants and suit jackets. DERSU tries on the shoes given to him. It seems that with a bit of alteration the two men are the same size clothes. The shoes seem to fit perfectly.

EXT. MOSCOW STREET - DAY

DERSU and DEMICHEV are walking in the winter. DERSU seems fascinated by the women. Skittering up, over and around the ice sheets and the snow slicks on every sidewalk in central Moscow, their spike-heeled boots somehow finding a grip on the sharp, crusty surface. Some of them are texting while they do it.

DERSU

They're like mountain goats, these
Moscow women.

DEMICHEV laughs and agrees.

INT. MOSCOW BANK

POV the sidewalk looking onto the bank. DEMICHEV looks very nice in an expensive suit. Dersu looks like a very poor hunter and is dressed in his furs. He has furs in a pack on his back.

DEMICHEV has a gold coin and he gets cash for it. DERSU understands the gold coin, but the cash is something less interesting. He says nothing but seems a bit worried DEMICHEV is trading gold for worthless paper. The money is put on the counter. DERSU shakes his head in disagreement. DEMICHEV hesitates for a moment, calculating the math, and then takes the money.

INT. MOSCOW FUR COAT FACTORY

DERSU and DEMICHEV sell the furs that DERSU brought.

INT. MOSCOW TAILOR

POV the sidewalk looking onto the shop. The sons seem to be running the shop but DEMICHEV asks for the father. A very old man

comes from the back. The old man is delighted to see DEMICHEV. DEMICHEV has a tailor alter a suit for DERSU.

INT. MOSCOW MEN'S CLOTHES STORE

POV the sidewalk looking onto the shop. It is the heart of the winter but DERSU picks out three Hawaiian and Caribbean shirts. DEMICHEV buys one shirt with a warm weather design.

EXT. MOSCOW MONTAGE

DERSU and DEMICHEV are making their way slowly up Tverskaya. It is a grand boulevard and main shopping drag. The traffic-choked street is so wide it cannot be crossed above ground, so every 100 yards or so there are subterranean passages, chockablock with stalls selling everything from lingonberry cakes to lingerie. A passage brings the men from one side of the boulevard to the other. DERSU has been in the East and stops at almost all the shops, if only to look. DERSU has money from the sale of his furs but buys nothing.

Everywhere, it seems, the OLD PAIR are moving too slowly. Young people in leather coats and wool caps zip around them, as do the hundreds of improbably elegant women in their gravity-defying boots scurrying without pause over small glaciers that force the OLDER MEN to stop, carefully consider and plot their path.

DEMICHEV hasn't ventured out of his apartment in ten years, but now he will brave a famously difficult city in general – especially for pedestrians. There are pushy crowds, confusing signage and surly ticket sellers.

DEMICHEV takes DERSU to an outfitter and sporting goods shop. There are hunting and fishing supplies. Tents and sleeping bags. DERSU notices the store has a display of fishing flies.

Of course, it is bitterly cold. No matter. Snow piles atop snow piles. Life marches on. Restaurants are full. Sidewalks are crowded. DEMICHEV and DERSU find the theaters and opera houses are packed. They visit the Red Square and the city's monuments. Parks are crisscrossed by people on ice skates along with those who are simply taking a leisurely winter stroll as though at the height of spring.

DERSU finds some cloth fragments in the trash behind a clothing factory. He opens the door and it is a sweatshop. There are

hundreds of immigrant workers making clothes. He isn't welcome. DERSU has a bad feeling and is puzzled.

INT. DEMICHEV APARTMENT - MORNING

DERSU takes his pieces of cloth and makes fishing flies. He works slowly, precisely, obviously engrossed in his work. When DEMICHEV wakes up there are many flies all colors and many variations in size and design. They rush off like two teenage boys with something new to trade.

INT. SPORTING GOODS STORE - DAY

POV the sidewalk. They trade the flies for a fishing pole, reel and line. DEMICHEV seems to be doing the negotiations and driving a hard bargain. Both men are happy. DERSU is happy to have some fishing supplies and DEMICHEV is walking proudly because of his still useful negotiating skills. When they return home, both men are pulled back to reality by the still frozen river. And the silly exuberance is gone. There will be no fishing today.

INT. DEMICHEV APARTMENT - DAY

It is still winter. In the morning, DERSU sits in the apartment. He goes to the window and looks at the frozen river and then he goes back to stare at his fishing rod and equipment.

DEMICHEV calls someone on the phone.

Very early the next morning...

EXT. BRIDGE NEAREST DEMICHEV'S APARTMENT

The sun is just now appearing. An army truck pulling light artillery pulls up. It is a small cannon, but the soldiers manoeuvre it quickly and accurately. They fire a single shot. It creates a nice large hole in the ice. The soldiers are off the bridge before most people look out the window.

INT. DEMICHEV APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

DERSU sits in the apartment. He hears a loud explosion. DEMICHEV is still sleeping soundly. DERSU goes to the window. He immediately sees the hole in the ice. He grabs his fishing supplies and leaves the apartment.

INT. DEMICHEV APARTMENT - LATE MORNING

DERSU does manage to catch some big healthy fish. However he has difficulty finding the correct apartment afterwards. He knocks on ten or more doors before he gets the right apartment. Five people are negative about opening the door to dead fish and a smiling DERSU.

DEMICHEV however, opens the door very surprised and is positive about things. They have a very good time frying the fish. It seems like old times to them. However in this scene we notice that DEMICHEV's health may be deteriorating.

They cook the fish but DEMICHEV returns to bed.

INT. DEMICHEV APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

DERSU awakes in the apartment. He goes to the window. The river has frozen over again. He goes down stairs.

EXT. MOSCOW RIVER - LOOP REPEAT FOR SEVERAL WINTER WEEKS

DERSU looks up at the sky. He hopes something loud will break the ice again. Nothing happens. He sits and waits for spring or for something to fall from the sky.

But he hears a buzzing. A drilling. He sees a man on the ice. He has a small engine and an auger. Someone far down the river is drilling a hole in the ice. DERSU runs to the spot.

DERSU is amazed. The man pulls out the auger and begins to fish.

Time passes. Each day Dersu watches the man drill the hole and fish. Each day and man catches very small fish. When the man is done he leaves and Dersu takes over the hole. Each day DERSU leaves with large meaty fish.

Walking home, he passes homeless men who look at his healthy fish. Dersu has four fish always, but only needs two. He gives two to people on the street who are very happy to receive them.

EXT. MOSCOW RIVER - FIRST SPRING DAY

The spring arrives finally. DERSU is waiting for his turn at the hole in the ice. DERSU seems to hear the ice crack. DERSU has never even spoken to the man with the drill. We aren't even sure that the man is aware of DERSU. But today DERSU is yelling at him to get off the ice. The man doesn't understand and waves a

friendly wave back at DERSU. DERSU points to the sun. The fisherman waves that he understands what a pretty day it is.

Now we hear the ice cracking. The fisherman stands up quickly and it causes more cracking in the ice. This might become a dangerous situation.

Suddenly the fisherman and the auger fall through the ice. The auger is lost. The fisherman surfaces.

DERSU is near the man now but still on the bank.

DERSU

I tell you to keep calm. I know what to do and I will come get you if necessary.

FISHERMAN

It is necessary.

DERSU

Truthfully, as long as you stay afloat, with your head above water you will have plenty of time.

DERSU looks around. There is a construction truck with a ladder on top. DERSU gets the ladder and extends it out to the man. But it doesn't reach. DERSU must get on the ice. DERSU lays down and takes out his hunting knife. He stabs the ice and then pulls himself and the ladder nearer to the fisherman.

The fisherman is able to pull himself out of the water and to the side of the embankment. An ambulance arrives.

DERSU replaces the ladder on the construction truck and walks home.

INT. DEMICHEV APARTMENT

SASCHA, an elderly lady and the daughter of DEMICHEV, enters with a bag of food and clean laundry.

SASCHA

(sets dinner before DERSU)
Evening, Dersu.

DERSU
Good evening, Sascha.

Louise sets DERSU's clean clothes on the small table, picks up his laundry bag.

SASCHA
My father is getting weaker.

DERSU
(begins to eat)
Yes.

SASCHA
I'm afraid he's slippin' a bit with every day that goes by...

DERSU concentrates on eating.

A doctor comes and gives DEMICHEV an exam and an injection.

One week later...

INT. DEMICHEV APARTMENT - NIGHT

DERSU is asleep in the floor of the front room, in his sleeping bag, lying on his back. His eyes slowly open, and, with no change of expression, he sits up and turns. DEMICHEV is there with an expensive leather briefcase. DEMICHEV says nothing but he opens the case and gives it to DERSU. He shows him papers and many gold coins and two small gold bars. And then he returns to bed.

The next morning...

INT. DEMICHEV BEDROOM

DEMICHEV is dead. Without emotion DERSU returns to the front room and waits.

INT. DEMICHEV APARTMENT

SASCHA arrives with food and laundry but she immediately senses that it is over.

SASCHA
Is he...

SASCHA

He now walks with the bear.

DERSU is emotionless and SASCHA takes this as a "yes". SASCHA is distraught.

SASCHA is on the phone with authorities. DERSU goes to the bedroom, crosses to the closet. He puts on his suit and DERSU gathers his things and is about to leave. SASCHA signals him not to leave.

DERSU returns to the kitchen.

SASCHA

Can you at least stay a few days?

DERSU

Yes. I can stay.

Two days later...

INT. DEMICHEV APARTMENT

SASCHA and DERSU return to the apartment after the burial. They change clothes. DERSU is again in his hunting clothes. SASCHA is in an outfit to clean house. DERSU goes fishing and says nothing. SASCHA begins to pack up her fathers things. When DERSU returns SASCHA has everything boxed up and she is scrubbing the floor. And they sadly cook the fish. Nothing is said. SASCHA hands DERSU her father's Soviet medals. Many are gold.. some silver. DERSU puts them in the briefcase.

The next morning...

INT. DEMICHEV APARTMENT

SASCHA arrives. She notices the fishing pole is gone. She looks out the window. There isn't anyone fishing on the river. She looks for his sleeping bag. She looks for his suit. DERSU has gone.

EXT. MOSCOW STREET - MORNING

DERSU walks along in his nice new suit and briefcase. He has a fishing pole and a sleeping bag. He is an odd man on the street, looking half wealthy and half homeless. Or, he looks like a man, in a suit, on a hiking trip.

EXT. MOSCOW PARK - MORNING

DERSU is in a park collecting pinenuts from the trees.

An Italian Greyhound who has lost his person is the most desperate thing you can witness in a city. DERSU spots a lost Italian Greyhound. She is panicked and starving. The dog is hyper, alert and runs to examine each person in the park hoping desperately that it is her person. An Italian Greyhound in the middle of Moscow needs a person more than any other animal on earth. And they are not ashamed for that to show.

DERSU cracks the nuts and eats. The dog is drawn to DERSU. DERSU gives him a nut. The dog, very frightened, however does eat the nut.

DERSU

Oh, my pretty friend. You've not eaten. You are worried? What a nice fast dog you are? But there is nothing here to hunt. Are you lost? I'm lost too. It is a very good thing that it is not the winter.

DERSU smells a hamburger. He sees a man is throwing a half eaten hamburger in the trash. DERSU collects the hamburger for the dog. The dog immediately adopts DERSU. This is odd; generally it will take weeks to accept a new master, especially if there isn't a calm quiet home. Many times lost Italian Greyhounds will starve rather than change owners. DERSU is magic; only the most crafty director will be able to reveal this quality.

DERSU

You are worried a little less now?

DERSU and the Italian Greyhound sit very proudly on a park bench. DERSU now has a friend and the dog will not starve. On the bench, they are joined by an attractive professionally dressed lady who has her breakfast.

LADY

Oh, what a beautiful dog.

She shares some of her food with the dog.

DERSU

Thank you.

They sit and watch the park.

DERSU
Who are you?

LADY
Oh, I'm sorry. I'm Olga and I'm a
secretary in that building.

She points to a building.

DERSU
(thinking)
Secretary.

DERSU
What is a secretary?

There is an odd moment.

DERSU
I'm sorry I've been in the East. I
don't know what that is?

LADY
Oh, okay... sure. I see. I take care of
Mr. Skvortsov on the third floor. I
answer the phone. Answer emails. I
put things in the post. I make tea. I
cook. I bring food back to the
office. I'm a loyal friend..
(pause)
Which he needs very badly.

DERSU looks at her and then at his dog. The lady smiles at DERSU
and the dog. She returns to her work. He looks at her as she
leaves the park and then at his dog.

DERSU
(naming his new loyal friend)
Secretary. I will call you Secretary.

DERSU and SECRETARY watch activity in the park.

EXT. MOSCOW RIVER - MORNING

SECRETARY is deaf so there isn't any sound when the POV is from SECRETARY.

Alternate POV SECRETARY (silent) and POV DERSU. DERSU fishes and catches a fish... Some homeless people visit DERSU and stare longingly at the fish. They appear very hungry. They are dumbfounded, because SECRETARY seems to enjoy a higher standard of living than they do. The Italian Greyhound is given some parts; the men are given the majority of the fish. They excitedly walk away to go cook it. DERSU does without but he is happy none the less.

INT. ELECTRONICS STORE - MORNING

Alternate POV SECRETARY (silent) and POV DERSU. DERSU watches TV news coverage of the PRESIDENT of Russia greeting foreign dignitaries at the Kremlin. CLOSE SHOTS on television reveal that the PRESIDENT shakes hands when meeting people. SECRETARY follows watching DERSU's every move.

EXT. MOSCOW STREET - LATE MORNING

Alternate POV SECRETARY (silent) and POV DERSU. A group of eight to ten hard-core Russian street criminals are hanging out on a corner. Other passersbys give them a wide berth; they are unapproachable. The Italian Greyhound hides behind a trash can and peaks around. DERSU nears the group. They quickly break his fishing rod and with a knife carve up his sleeping bag. They are about to take his briefcase but he swings it about wildly and knocks two of them out. DERSU doesn't know what to do (fight or flight), he reaches for his knife but he and the dog decide run. Only the appearance of a policeman prevents the thugs from chasing.

SECRETARY and DERSU cross under the street to the other sidewalk. They look over and the police are questioning the street gang. It looks like some arrests will be made.

INT. SPORTING GOODS STORE

POV of SECRETARY on the sidewalk looking onto the store. Dersu has some more fishing flies in his briefcase but the storeowner doesn't want anymore. The shopkeeper hasn't sold the first flies that he bought yet. Dersu can't make an exchange and leaves dejected.

EXT. CHINATOWN - MOSCOW - AFTERNOON

Alternate POV SECRETARY (silent) and POV DERSU. There is a bulletin board affixed to a storefront in Chinatown. DERSU gazes at the notes pinned to it, written in Chinese. Smiling, he turns from it, walks on through the area. He speaks to everyone and is greeted with respect. DERSU has some cash in the briefcase and could buy some lunch. He isn't accustomed to buying food and it doesn't occur to him. He makes friends with everyone, speaks Chinese it appears. He simply stands at the counter, making small talk, until the worker offers him or the dog a sample. He then goes to the next shop, making friends, asking questions and eating samples.

EXT. MOSCOW SIDEWALK - AFTERNOON

Alternate POV SECRETARY (silent) and POV DERSU. DERSU is handed a communist newspaper by a political activist on the street.

DERSU
Oh, Thank you.

DERSU walks to an ally behind some trash cans and lays the newspaper out on the ground. SECRETARY knows exactly the purpose.

DERSU wads the papers up and deposits them in the trash can.

EXT. ADULT ENTERTAINMENT AREA - MOSCOW - AFTERNOON

Alternate POV SECRETARY (silent) and POV DERSU. The pair walk a street lined with adult book stores, X-rated movies and strip joints. He is shocked by both homosexual and heterosexuals. Things are pretty slow in the middle of the day but DERSU has never witnessed such things. The Italian Greyhound is even nervous.

EXT. MOSCOW LENINSKY PROSPEK STREET - AFTERNOON

DERSU and the dog walk down the center meridian of a divided street. He seems unconscious of the cars and trucks passing on either side. Sberbank of Russia and Globeks Bank are in the background.

EXT. RED SQUARE AND KREMLIN - AFTERNOON

Alternate POV SECRETARY (silent) and POV DERSU. DERSU and the dog stand for a long period looking at Saint Basils Cathedral. DERSU looks until he is run over by a group of tourists. He joins them. The group is large and the tour is "official" and no one sees or

mentions the dog. They blend into the Kremlin on a tour. DERSU is stealth.

EXT. THE KREMLIN - AFTERNOON

Alternate POV SECRETARY (silent) and POV DERSU. Tourists are gathered around a tour guide at the Kremlin. DERSU is turned the other way, spotting the locations of the hidden security people. The Italian Greyhound seems to be watching the lecture however. It seems DERSU is making clear that he knows their hiding places. But he can't contemplate what the soldiers would shot at inside the walls. DERSU moves to some trees where a heavily armed FSO guard is concealed. We can't see the man. DERSU is talking to a Spruce tree.

DERSU

Excuse me...

(points to the weapon
we can't see)

What do you hunt?

The GUARD looks at the gun, then at DERSU through the leaves, figures a man dressed that well with such a nice briefcase, and allowed to have a dog on the grounds, must be important.

GUARD

Terrorists, sir.

We aren't sure DERSU knows what a terrorist is.

DERSU

Yes. Pesky critters. That would be a good thing to hunt. Good luck.

GUARD

Good day. Sir.

The GUARD thinks about it as DERSU walks away. He steps out of the tree. Something is not quite right. He takes out his walkie-talkie and makes a report. Nothing happens to DERSU; he is invisible as the tour moves on.

EXT. MOSKVA RIVER AT THE VODOOTVODNY CANAL - LATE AFTERNOON

Alternate POV SECRETARY (silent) and POV DERSU. DERSU and his dog seem stumped on which way to travel. They look down river and then up river. DERSU has no idea where they lead. He turns, looks

behind him and sees the Peter the Great statue, it is a giant sailor standing on a tiny sailing ship looking over the bow and pointing with a rolled up bronze map. Peter is pointing, but it is all so puzzling. DERSU is thinking and he and the dog strain their eyes in the direction that Peter points.

EXT. TVERSKAYA BUSINESS DISTRICT - EVENING

Alternate POV SECRETARY (silent) and POV DERSU. A fashionable area. Expensive shops, well-kept streets and sidewalks. On a street corner, a group of street musicians have caught DERSU's ear. He watches the band. He sees people put money in the guitar case and does the same. He stands there a very long time, listens to the music. The band playing various popular Russian songs.

The vision of an Italian Greyhound is superior. SECRETARY from a distance sees a woman walking two Italian Greyhounds on the opposite sidewalk. Perhaps this is his person, or he wants to join their pack.

The music ends and the musicians pack up to go home. As they do this, DERSU sees his new dog in the street. The dog has been in the street found it unpleasant and is trying to return to the sidewalk. SECRETARY has only a few yards more but she has stopped. Terrified. DERSU makes it to the dog and as he picks up the dog and tucks it under one arm; the car to his left, a large black limousine, hits DERSU. The dog under DERSU's arm escapes injury. The impact isn't devastating for DERSU but I'm sure it smarts. DERSU does not cry out in pain, but his briefcase goes flying. Thirty year old top secret government papers, Soviet medals, fishing flies, money, gold coins and two gold bars spill out on the street.

The chauffeur, DENIS, and the body guard, YEFIM, immediately jump from the car, run to DERSU.

DENIS

I'm very sorry, sir... I...

DENIS and YEFIM reach out to help, but DERSU's leg is clearly injured.

DERSU

(in pain)

I can't move... My leg...

SECRETARY licks DERSU's face.

DENIS
(rushes back to limo)
My Lord...

The chauffeured car is owned by YURI SOLOMIN, an elderly business mogul. Arguably SOLOMIN is the most powerful man in Russia. In the back seat of the car sits SOLOMIN's wife SVETLANA.

DENIS comes back. During this, the rear door of the limo opens and SVETLANA SOLOMIN steps out. SVETLANA is in her late thirties, has the look of a elegant Russian lady. She watches as DENIS tends to DERSU.

DENIS
Perhaps I should call an ambulance.

A BYSTANDER interrupts.

BYSTANDER
Somebody ought to call the police!

DERSU
(looks over, smiles)
There's no need for police. It is my leg that is hurt. Nothing is stolen or dead.

SVETLANA and YEFIM notice the government papers, medals, and the gold coins scattered about. YEFIM begins to pick up the papers (quickly trying to read parts), medals and coins and place them back in the briefcase.

DENIS
This is terrible, sir. I hope you're not badly injured.

DERSU
No. I'm not badly injured. But my leg is very sore.

DENIS
Can you walk? It's not broken, is it?

DERSU grasps SECRETARY tightly and leans against the front of the limo. The dog's eyes are very wide and observes everything. She is very worried.

DERSU
It's just sore.

People are gathering on the sidewalk. YEFIM motions that he wants a private word with SVETLANA. They walk a few paces and YEFIM speaks to her with his hand over his mouth to mute the sound and avoid any lip readers. We can't hear YEFIM speaking to SVETLANA.

YEFIM
(to Denis)
I don't think we should call anyone just yet, it may not even be all that serious. Give him a minute.

DERSU
(obviously hurting)
I agree.

SVETLANA moves closer to DERSU.

SVETLANA
(to DERSU)
Won't you let us do something for you? Your leg should be examined, we could take you to a hospital.

DERSU
(smiles at SVETLANA)
There's no need for a hospital.

SVETLANA
Why, there certainly is. You must see a doctor, I insist on it. Please, let us take you. Come on. Let's go.

SVETLANA turns to get back into the limo. DENIS goes with her to hold the door.

DENIS
I'm terribly sorry, Mrs. Solomin, I never saw the man. All I saw was the dog.

SVETLANA

Oh, I don't think it was anyone's fault.

DENIS

Thank you, ma'am.

DERSU is hesitant about getting in the car. YEFIM offers a helping hand.

YEFIM

Please, sir.

DERSU

I've never...

YEFIM

(a beat)

I assure you, sir, Denis is a very careful driver.

DERSU

(holding his leg)

Yes, I know.

YEFIM

Please, won't you let us take you?

DERSU

(looks at the car, then decides)

Yes. You can take me.

YEFIM

Very good.

YEFIM assists DERSU into the rear seat of the limo.

DERSU

(as he gets in)

My briefcase.

YEFIM

Yes sir.

YEFIM hands DERSU the briefcase. YEFIM has one fishing fly in his hand and he hands it to Dersu. YEFIM closes the door. `

DERSU is holding SECRETARY, his briefcase and a fishing fly.

INT. LIMOUSINE - EVENING

DERSU, the dog and SVETLANA settle in the back seat. As they talk, DENIS starts up the limo, YEFIM joins him in front and the limo pulls out into traffic. There is a television in the limo showing the news but it is silent. There is the PRESIDENT of Russia again on TV. The PRESIDENT is pinning medals on soldiers.

SVETLANA

I hope you're comfortable. Is your dog okay?

DERSU

Yes. We are okay.

SVETLANA

These can be such trying situations everyone seems to make such a big deal over a simple little accident. Of course, they can be very frightening, and I must apologize for Denis, he's never had an accident before.

DERSU

(feeling his leg again)
Yes. He's a very careful driver.

SVETLANA

Why, yes, he is... Is your leg feeling any better?

DERSU

It's feeling better, but it's still very sore.

SVETLANA

I see.

SVETLANA is a smart lady. She doesn't want a lawsuit about the accident but most importantly she doesn't want to make enemies for her husband. Her husband has always flown under the radar and has avoided any media coverage. DERSU is dressed well, has nice shoes, silk tie. He has top secret papers in his briefcase and rather a lot of walking around cash and gold. SVETLANA treats him well.

SVETLANA

Say, would you mind seeing our family doctor?

DERSU

(doesn't understand)

Your family doctor?

SVETLANA

Yes. My husband has been very ill. He is at home. His doctor and nurses are there. The hospitals can be so unfriendly. Why, it could be hours before you are treated.

DERSU

I agree.

SVETLANA

Fine, it will save a lot of unnecessary fuss and it will be so much more pleasant for you...

(leans forward)

Denis, we'll just go on home.

(looks right)

Yefim, would you call and let them know?

YEFIM

Yes ma'am.

There is an odd moment of silence. SVETLANA, still a bit on edge from the accident and feeling a bit uncomfortable with a stranger in the car she looks to make a drink. She opens the limo's bar, a row of decanters and glasses.

SVETLANA

Would you care for a drink?

DERSU

Yes. Thank you.

As SVETLANA pours cognac into a monogrammed crystal glass. Dersu looks at it and it appears to him to be dirty water.

DERSU
I would like clean water, please.

SVETLANA
(a bit surprised)
Oh? Certainly...

She hands DERSU bottled water. He immediately downs it. It looks as if he has been walking around Moscow all day and hasn't had a drink.

SVETLANA
Oh, by the way - I'm Svetlana
Solomin.

DERSU hands the bottle back to SVETLANA. He would like more.

DERSU
Hello, Svetlana. May I have another
water please?

DERSU drinks the second bottle. There is another moment of silence. It appears that DERSU is still thirsty.

SVETLANA
May I ask your name?

DERSU has drunk the water too fast and is a bit chocked.

DERSU
(with a slight cough)
My name is Dersu.

SVETLANA
Pardon me, was that Mr. Dersu?

DERSU
(still indistinct)
Dersu. I'm a hunter

She thinks his last name is Охотник.

SVETLANA
Oh... Mr. Hunter... Dersu Hunter. I
like that name.

SVETLANA looks at the brief case.

SVETLANA

You were with the government in the East?

DERSU

Yes, Svetlana.

(pause)

I was chased by a tiger.

SVETLANA

Oh. Well, that must have been a terrible ordeal. We visited their habitat years ago but never saw one.

DERSU

It is okay; he saw you.

SVETLANA never thought of it that way. The tiger is a bit unsettling. But SVETLANA has always been attracted to men who are both practical and philosophical.

DERSU is beginning to tire holding the fishing fly, so he motions for SVETLANA to lean forward. He carefully hooks the fly on her scarf.

She thinks it is odd, but still it is a nice gesture and actually as she looks at it in the mirror; seeing it she is charmed. It does strangely look fashionable.

SVETLANA

I see you are fisherman.

DERSU

(smiling)

I like to fish.

SVETLANA

I'll feel so relieved after Dr. Ardankin examines your leg. After that, DENIS can run you on home, or to your office or wherever you'd prefer.

(DERSU still drinking water)

So you are retired?

DERSU
Yes, I'm very tired.

DERSU watches the news. SVETLANA sips on her cognac as DENIS drives the limo out of the city.

EXT. SUBURBAN MOSCOW - WOODED AREA - NIGHT

The limo approaches, then turns into the entrance-way of the SOLOMIN ESTATE. Two armed guards stand on either side of the open gate, wave as the car passes through.

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

DERSU is glued to the TV watching the news, mostly of the PRESIDENT. SVETLANA takes his focus on politics and current event as a sign of intelligence.

SVETLANA
My husband is that way. I can see that it must be very important for you to stay informed of all the latest events.

DERSU
Yes.

SVETLANA
I admire that in a person. As for myself, I find there is so much to absorb that it can become quite confusing at times...

DERSU
I am confused too, yes.

SVETLANA looks at him perplexed, then takes it as a statement that he is opposed to the current PRESIDENT's ad hoc and incoherent policies. She smiles.

SVETLANA
My husband doesn't like him either.

Dersu motions to the Russian President who is still dominating the news. DERSU looks out the window and sees pollution, poverty and prostitution. While Russia suffers, the Russian President is

smiling and kissing babies and waving to the cameras like he is a Western celebrity.

DERSU

There is something wrong with that man. It isn't natural.

EXT. SOLOMIN DRIVE - NIGHT

The road runs alongside a stream, then turns and crosses a large meadow. The limousine passes, still no sign of the house. It is a very, very long driveway. The full moon lights up the property. DERSU stops watching TV and looks out the window.

EXT. SOLOMIN MANSION - NIGHT

Two valets, YAKUNIN and RAYT, await the limousines by the front door of the SOLOMIN mansion. YAKUNIN stands behind a wheelchair. As the limo parks, RAYT and YEFIM assist DERSU into the chair. YAKUNIN turns to SVETLANA as she gets out of the limo.

YAKUNIN

Good evening, Mrs. Solomin.

SVETLANA

Good evening, Yakunin.

YAKUNIN

I shall take the gentleman to the third floor guest suite, ma'am. Dr. Ardankin is standing by.

SVETLANA

Thank you, Yakunin. That will be fine.

RAYT and YEFIM carry DERSU in the chair up the steps and roll him into the house. SVETLANA and YAKUNIN follow.

INT. SOLOMIN MANSION - FRONT HALLWAY

Once inside the house, YAKUNIN takes over wheeling DERSU. A lady, GIZLA, is waiting to take SVETLANA's coat.

SVETLANA

Thank you, Gizla.
(to YAKUNIN)

I'll be with Mr. Solomin, if I'm needed.

YAKUNIN

Yes, ma'am.

SVETLANA

(to DERSU)

I'll see you after the doctor has a look at your leg, Mr. Hunter.

DERSU

(looking around mansion)

Yes, I think he should examine my leg.

SVETLANA watches as YAKUNIN wheels DERSU past a huge saltwater aquarium and then around a corner. DERSU is very interested in the exotic fish. DERSU has caught many fish in his life but has never seen angels, clownfish, gobies, tangs, wrasse or the others.

INT. ELEVATOR

The doors open, YAKUNIN pushes DERSU into the elevator. As YAKUNIN pushes a button and the doors close on them, a strange look comes over DERSU's face.

DERSU

(looks to YAKUNIN)

I've never been in one of these.

YAKUNIN thinks that DERSU is talking about the wheelchair.

YAKUNIN

It's one of Mr. Solomin's. Since he's been ill.

DERSU looks around the elevator.

DERSU

How long do we stay here?

YAKUNIN

How long? I don't know, see what the doctor says.

The elevator stops on the third floor.

INT. SOLOMIN MANSION - HALLWAY - NIGHT

A hallway adjoining a large, glass-enclosed room. SVETLANA passes through the hall, enters the room.

INT. YURI SOLOMIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM

SVETLANA enters into a hermetically sealed area, set up with all the latest hospital emergency gear; oxygen, EKG machine, X ray machine, transfusion equipment, sterilizers, etc.

YURI SOLOMIN, wearing a silk bathrobe, lies in a king-sized bed in the center of the room. A nurse, CHEMISLAVA, is attending to her duties in the room, looks up as SVETLANA comes in.

CHEMISLAVA

Good evening, Mrs. Solomin.

SVETLANA

Good evening, Chemislava.

YURI SOLOMIN perks up as he sees SVETLANA crossing to him. He is in his late seventies or early eighties, maintains a certain confidence and dignity despite the effects of his illness.

SOLOMIN

(with weakness)

Svetlana

SVETLANA kisses him, holds his hand.

SVETLANA

Oh, Yuri - I miss you so when I'm out... How are you feeling?

SOLOMIN

Tired... And I'm getting tired of being so tired. Other than that, I'm doing very well.

SVETLANA

No headaches?

SOLOMIN

No, it's been a good day - better than yours, from what I've been told.

SVETLANA

(holds his hand against her cheek)
You heard?

SOLOMIN

I may be a shut-in, but I do not lack for news. I'm sorry you had to go through all that.

SVETLANA

Oh, it wasn't all that bad, darling. We were fortunate that Mr. Hunter turned out to be so reasonable. He is a very nice gentleman. It seems he was a politician in the East.

SOLOMIN

A gentleman? Good, and I'd like to meet a reasonable politician. Why don't you ask this Hunter to join us for dinner?

SVETLANA

(sits on the side of the bed)
Do you feel well enough for that?

SOLOMIN

(smiles)
Hah!... Tell me the truth, Svetlana; if I wait until I feel better, will I ever meet the man?

There is silence from SVETLANA. Solomin squeezes her hand, turns to Chemislava.

SOLOMIN

Chemislava! I want new blood tonight, I'm getting up for dinner.

CHEMISLAVA

But, Mr. Solomin...

SOLOMIN

Don't argue, tell the doctor I want new blood!

(turns to SVETLANA)

Ask him to dinner.

SOLOMIN pulls SVETLANA's hand close, kisses it.

INT. EAST WING GUEST SUITE - NIGHT

An enormous bedroom, filled with 18th century French antique furniture. DR. ARDANKIN dabs DERSU's ass with a piece of cotton soaked in alcohol, prior to an injection. DERSU stands with his pants on the floor, looks out the window. SECRETARY is looking out into the huge bedroom from the safety of the bathroom.

ARDANKIN

The injection will ease the pain and swelling, Mr. Hunter.

DERSU

I understand. I've seen it done before. How long do I have to live?

ARDANKIN

Years and years.

DERSU'S friend VICTOR died six days after his injection.

DERSU

(puzzled)

Years?

ARDANKIN

Now, you'll barely feel this. It won't hurt at all.

ARDANKIN administers the injection, DERSU reacts from the pain.

DERSU

You were wrong, it did hurt.

ARDANKIN

(a chuckle)

But not for long...

As ARDANKIN puts the needle in a container and then in the trash, DERSU walks to the window.

ARDANKIN

It's good that there was no apparent damage to the bone.

DERSU

Yes. I think so, too.

ARDANKIN

However, with injuries such as this, I have run into minor hemorrhaging, which really isn't too serious at the time, but can cause secondary problems if not looked after.

DERSU

I see.

DERSU is looking at deer on the estate.

ARDANKIN

(a look to the window)

You can pull your trousers up, now.

DERSU

Oh, fine.

ARDANKIN

(as DERSU pulls up pants)

Just to take the proper precautions, Mr. Hunter, I'd recommend we take you downstairs and X-ray your leg.

There is no reaction from DERSU. In the moonlight, DERSU now sees several deer out on the lawn. ARDANKIN takes a long look at him.

ARDANKIN

By the way, Mr. Hunter, I would like to ask you something straight out.

DERSU

(doesn't understand)

Straight out?

ARDANKIN

Yes. Are you planning on making any sort of claim against the Solomin's?

DERSU

(after a beat)

Claim...? Oh, I don't even know what that is.

ARDANKIN

(gives DERSU a look)

Oh, I see...

(a warm chuckle)

Well, then... You're a very funny man, Mr. Hunter. You caught me off guard, I must admit.

DERSU

Thank you.

ARDANKIN

Good, keep your weight off that leg, Mr. Hunter. In fact, it would be best if you could stay here for a day or two, if that would be possible. Since Yuri became ill we have our own hospital downstairs. I can promise you the finest in care, unless, of course, you would prefer to go elsewhere.

DERSU

(looking at the deer)

Yes, I could stay here. Thank you.

ARDANKIN

Fine. Would you like me to speak to your personal physician?

DERSU

No.

ARDANKIN waits for DERSU to say more, he does not. DERSU is looking out the window. Finally, ARDANKIN picks up his bag, heads for the door.

ARDANKIN

(stops by door)

I'll send YAKUNIN up to take you for X-rays, Mr. Hunter. Feel free to use

the telephone, and please let me know if you have any discomfort.

DERSU
(looking out the window)
Yes, I will.

ARDANKIN gives him a look, then leaves. DERSU watches the silent full moon through the window.

EXT. MANSION - PATIO - NIGHT

SVETLANA sits next to a roaring patio fireplace with a steaming cup of tea. ARDANKIN comes outside, joins her.

ARDANKIN
Good God, Svetlana - you'll freeze out here.

SVETLANA
I wanted some fresh air. How is Mr. Hunter?

ARDANKIN
A rather large contusion, but I don't feel there is any serious damage. I'd like to keep an eye on him, though. I suggested that he stay here for a couple of days.

SVETLANA
Stay here? Is that necessary?

ARDANKIN
Not necessary, but preferable. I don't think he'll be a bother, he seems like a most refreshing sort of man.

SVETLANA
Yes, he is different... Not the kind of person one usually meets in Moscow.

ARDANKIN
How true. Mr. Hunter may be a welcome change of pace.

SVETLANA

He's very intense, and internal,
don't you think?

ARDANKIN

At times, yes. But that's not an
uncommon reaction to such an
accident. Dennis said the car stuck
him pretty hard. Actually, I found
him to have quite a sense of humor.

SVETLANA

Good. It might be pleasant for a
couple of days.

(SVETLANA puts down her tea)

Is there any improvement...?

ARDANKIN

No, Svetlana... I'm sorry.

SVETLANA is silent for a moment, looks out at the moon.

SVETLANA

Sometimes when I see Yuri I could
swear that he's getting stronger.
Something that he might say, the way
he moves, or a look in his eyes,
makes me feel that this is all a
nightmare and that he'll be better
soon. It's just so hard to believe
what's really happening.

ARDANKIN reaches out, holds SVETLANA's hand.

INT. SOLOMIN MANSION - FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

The elevator door opens, YAKUNIN guides DERSU in the wheelchair
into the hallway.

DERSU

(looks back to elevator)

That is a very small room.

YAKUNIN

(laughs)

Yes sir, I guess that's true smallest room in the house.

DERSU
(glancing around)
Yes. It seems to be.

YAKUNIN takes this as a joke, laughs quietly as he wheels DERSU toward Solomin's hospital room.

INT. SOLOMIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

CHEMISLAVA stands by as SOLOMIN is being given a transfusion. SOLOMIN lifts his head as YAKUNIN wheels DERSU into the room.

SOLOMIN
Welcome to Solomin Memorial Hospital,
Mr. Hunter.

DERSU
(looks around room)
I see.

YAKUNIN pushes DERSU to the X-Ray machine, where the technician, PECHENIKOV waits. As YAKUNIN helps DERSU onto the X-Ray table, DERSU's face lights up.

DERSU
I feel very good in here.

SOLOMIN
Sure you do. This ward is air tight,
I have extra oxygen pumped in, keeps
my spirits up.

DERSU
Yes. I like that very much.

PECHENIKOV
(lining up DERSU's leg)
This won't take long, Mr. Hunter.
Please hold still when I ask.

PECHENIKOV readies to take the X-Ray.

PECHENIKOV
Mr. Hunter. Now, hold still.

Solomin looks over as PECHENIKOV takes the X-Ray.

SOLOMIN
Leukemia, Mr. Hunter.

DERSU smiles to Solomin.

SOLOMIN
Failure of the bone marrow to produce red blood cells. Not a damn thing they can do about it. The treatment therapy is also causing a decrease in my blood cell counts. I'm told, unfortunately, cancer treatments cannot tell the difference between cancer cells and healthy cells. So, while the therapy is killing the leukemia cells in the marrow, it is also killing blood producing stem cells as well. I'm in a fix. Oh, they can make me comfortable, prolong my life... But what makes my blood boil, what little I have left, that is, Mr. Hunter - is that it's generally a young person's disease. Here I am, getting on in years and about to die of a young person's disease.

DERSU
(still smiles at Solomin)
Yes. You look very sick.

PECHENIKOV
Hold still, please, Mr. Hunter.

SOLOMIN
(a laugh)
I am very sick, and, as you can see by all this paraphernalia, I am very wealthy. I think I would rather be wealthy and sick than poor and sick.

DERSU
(looks around the room)
I understand. I've never seen anything like this in the East.

PECHENIKOV

Please, hold still, Mr. Hunter.

CHEMISLAVA

You too, Mr. Solomin, you must stay quiet.

SOLOMIN lays his head back.

SOLOMIN

We're prisoners, Mr. Hunter - we're prisoners of tubes and technology. Nurses run the show!

DERSU

I agree.

SOLOMIN

(flat on his back)

You will join us for dinner, won't you, Mr. Hunter?

DERSU

(also flat on his back)

Yes. I only had a few bites all day. I am very hungry.

SOLOMIN

So am I, my boy - so am I.

An hour later...

INT. SOLOMIN DINING ROOM - NIGHT

NOVIKOV, a waiter, and ILKUN, a waitress, enter into the SOLOMIN dining room carrying trays of food. The dining room is immense, a 70-foot ceiling, huge fireplace. ARDANKIN, SVETLANA, SOLOMIN, and DERSU (both in wheelchairs) sit around the table. SOLOMIN speaks slowly, with obvious weakness.

SOLOMIN

I know exactly what you mean. Today the Russian businessman is at the mercy of the government bureaucrats and from the Kremlin itself. All they want to do is regulate Russia's

natural growth! And they all have their hand out for a part of something they have had nothing to do with. Russia could be a rich country but half the people work for the government and everything is against the law! If you make a pie, and want to sell it, it is against the law.

ARDANKIN

To everyone, I'm afraid. The Government controls are so restricting that the Medical profession, as we know it, is being decreed out of existence.

SOLOMIN

Of course! By Kremlin-lawyers!

SVETLANA turns to DERSU.

SVETLANA

Won't your injury prevent you from attending to business, Mr. Hunter?

DERSU

No. It won't do that.

SVETLANA

Would you like us to notify anyone for you?

DERSU

No. My only friend Viktor has died.

There is a moment of silence.

SVETLANA

Oh. I'm very sorry.

SOLOMIN

Do you need a secretary?

DERSU

No, thank you. I have one.

SVETLANA
(To SOLOMIN)
He is retired.

DERSU
I've lost my vision. I can't see
things clearly and I'm a burden to
everyone.

SVETLANA
He's not happy with the government.

SOLOMIN
Oh. When you say 'your retired', you
mean to say that you were harassed by
the government and forced out of
business?

SVETLANA leaves the table to speak the cook.

DERSU
Yes. Hunted by a real tiger and
almost killed. He tried to kill me.
I was saved by a man in a uniform,
Boris Zarubin. And a man named Anton
Dorokhov brought me Moscow.

SOLOMIN
This criminal was big?

DERSU
Big teeth. Very high on the food
chain.

SOLOMIN
What'd I tell you? The Kremlin. Damn
them!

SVETLANA
I hope that staying here won't be an
inconvenience for you.

DERSU
No. I like it here.

SOLOMIN

That's good, Mr. Hunter. Or may I call you Dersu?

DERSU

(agreeable to being called Dersu)
Yes. Dersu is fine.

SOLOMIN

And I'm Yuri.

ARDANKIN

(smiles to DERSU)
And please call me Vasily.

DERSU

Yes, Vasily. I will.

SOLOMIN

So tell me, Dersu, what are your plans now?

DERSU looks around the room. He thinks.

DERSU

I think I will return to the East and hunt? The winter is over.

SOLOMIN

Good idea. Relax and plot your next move.

DERSU

Do you ever hunt and fish?

ARDANKIN gives DERSU a "don't encourage him" look. SOLOMIN gives SVETLANA a "romantic" look.

SOLOMIN

Do we hunt and fish? Hah! When we get up, Dersu, you will see our trophy room.

DERSU

I see. I would like to see that.

SOLOMIN

I say our room because Svetlana has become quite a little huntress. I have to say when we married I would have never guessed. She is a natural shot and loves it.

DERSU

I'm very glad to know this.

SOLOMIN

Not bad for the best looking woman in Moscow to be a great hunter.

DERSU

Yes it is a rare woman who is happy hunting. You are a luck man.

SOLOMIN

Yes, I am.

SVETLANA

(laughs)

I never fired a gun until we were married. But we've taken several trips and it is such a pleasant way to forget about Moscow.

DERSU

I am a very good hunter.

SOLOMIN

A hunter! You should be a politician.

SVETLANA

He was a politician.

Odd silence.

SVETLANA

In the old regime.

Odd silence.

SOLOMIN

Well, that doesn't disqualify you. You have been a businessman. A person

that makes things productive with ingenuity and with the sweat. You have created value for Russia and your family.

DERSU

Thank you, Yuri. The East was such a place. The fur and food which grew there was a gift from God. It was the greatest experience. I hunted and fished and there was abundance.

SOLOMIN

(weakly)

Bravo!

DERSU

But I don't have that any more...
(points to ceiling)
All that's left for me now is the room upstairs.

SOLOMIN

Now, wait a minute, Dersu you are wise, you are healthy, for God's sake don't give up on yourself! You have to fight! You can't let those bastards in the Kremlin keep you down! I don't want to hear any more from you about the 'Room Upstairs'. That's where I'm going soon.

There is a long pause. DERSU looks up, then smiles at SOLOMIN.

DERSU

It's a very pleasant room, Yuri.

SOLOMIN

(laughs)

Yes, I'm sure it is. That's what they say, anyway.

Another period of silence. The servants buzz around the room as ARDANKIN studies DERSU.

INT. SOLOMIN'S TROPHY ROOM - NIGHT

ARDANKIN opens the door. SOLOMIN enters in his electric wheelchair followed by DERSU being pushed by YAKUNIN.

SOLOMIN

I don't know what you've heard about me, Dersu, but I'm sure you know everything there is to know. Cigar?

SOLOMIN holds out humidor to DERSU.

DERSU

Yes, thank you.

(takes cigar)

No Yuri. I know hardly anything about everything.

SOLOMIN smiles as he takes a cigar for himself.

SOLOMIN

No, of course you don't. Excuse me for being so presumptuous. No man knows everything. However, very few are honest enough to admit it.

ARDANKIN

That is so true. You're different, Dersu. Quite different than most men.

DERSU

Thank you, Vasily.

SOLOMIN

He tells the truth.

ARDANKIN

What would say has influenced this honesty you have?

There is a pause as DERSU thinks.

DERSU

I only came to Moscow a short while ago?

SOLOMIN and ARDANKIN nod approvingly.

SOLOMIN lights his own cigar, then hands an ornate lighter to DERSU.

SOLOMIN

You know, Dersu, there are thousands of Russian businessmen, large and small, that share your plight. I've been concerned with the situation for some time now.

DERSU, imitates SOLOMIN, lights the cigar.

SOLOMIN

So I've been thinking about beginning a legal assistance program, Dersu, to help out businessmen that have been harassed by corrupt government officials, false criminal prosecutions, victims of excessive taxation, parasitic unions and other criminals.

ARDANKIN watches DERSU trying to light the cigar as SOLOMIN speaks on, looking at his trophies as he talks.

SOLOMIN

I'd like to offer the decent hard working men and women of the business community a helping hand. After all, they are our strongest defense against the communists who so threaten our basic freedoms and the well-being of our economy. Tell me, would you have any thoughts on such a program?

DERSU puts the cigar in the ashtray, smiles at ARDANKIN, then answers SOLOMIN.

DERSU

No, Yuri.

SOLOMIN

(a smile)

Reluctant to speak, eh, Dersu? Well, I can understand that. When a man is driven from his home, almost killed,

anger or fear has a tendency to block
out reason for a time.

SOLOMIN nods to YEFIM who shows DERSU the pistol under his coat.
SOLOMIN wheels about the room opening and closing secret
compartments built into the walls, all holding weapons.

SOLOMIN

There are 84 weapons in this house.
Three armed guards at all times. Most
of the servants have weapons. No one
is going to harm you here.

DERSU has no reaction.

SOLOMIN

Just give it some thought, work with
the idea, I'm sure you'll have plenty
to say in a few days.

DERSU

I could give it some thought, Yuri,
but my leg is very sore.

SOLOMIN

Oh?
(looks to ARDANKIN)
Vasily, take a look, would you?

ARDANKIN

Some pain is to be expected...
(bends to DERSU, looks at leg)
And I think what would be best for
the two of you is a good night's
rest.
(checks watch)
It's late, I'm afraid it's time for
my patients to prepare for bed.

SOLOMIN

We have common foes, Dersu - the
Kremlin and our physician!

DERSU

I agree.

ARDANKIN laughs as he takes SOLOMIN's cigar from him, snuffs it in the ashtray.

INT. MANSION - ELEVATOR - NIGHT

YAKUNIN stands behind DERSU in the wheelchair. DERSU glances slowly and inquisitively around the elevator. When his eyes meet YAKUNIN's, the valet breaks out in laughter. The elevator stops, the door opens.

INT. MANSION - THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

YAKUNIN wheels DERSU out of the elevator.

YAKUNIN stops laughing, becomes the stone-faced servant once again as he notices SVETLANA coming out of her bedroom. YAKUNIN stops wheeling DERSU, stands stiffly at attention as SVETLANA and DERSU talk.

SVETLANA

Dersu, I wanted to tell you how dreadful I feel about the accident today, but that I'm delighted that you are staying with us.

DERSU

Thank you, Svetlana - I like this family very much.

SVETLANA

And Yuri is just mad about you; you've lifted his spirits so. It's just... Well, it's just a real pleasure having you with us.

DERSU

Yuri is very ill, Svetlana - I've seen that before.

SVETLANA

Yes... I know, Dersu.

DERSU

I like Yuri very much... He reminds me of my friend Viktor.

SVETLANA

He does...?

DERSU

Yes. Are you going to pack everything
and leave when he dies?

SVETLANA is not prepared for such a question.

SVETLANA

Why... No, I don't think so.

DERSU

That's good.

DERSU smiles at SVETLANA and there is a moment of silence before SVETLANA steps back into her bedroom.

SVETLANA

Good night, Dersu.

DERSU

Good night, SVETLANA.

SVETLANA closes the door. YAKUNIN wheels DERSU down the hallway toward the guest room.

INT. SOLOMIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

SOLOMIN is in his hospital bed, lying on his back. There is a male nurse in a chair sleeping. SOLOMIN's eyes are open, and, with no change of expression, he sits up and turns. DERSU is there with his briefcase.

SOLOMIN

You can't sleep either?

DERSU says nothing but he opens the case and gives it to SOLOMIN. He shows him papers and some gold coins and two small gold bars.

SOLOMIN

Oh, I'm sorry I should have asked if
you had anything for the safe.

SOLOMIN gets up from bed and they go to a different room.

INT. YURI'S FORMAL OFFICE SOLOMIN MANSION - NIGHT

SOLOMIN goes to huge safe hidden in the wall. SOLOMIN opens the safe and places the briefcase inside. Closes the safe.

SOLOMIN
Good night.

And then SOLOMIN returns to bed.

The next morning...

INT. SEAMSTRESS ROOM SOLOMIN MANSION - MORNING

DERSU looks in the room but doesn't disturb the work. The seamstress throws small pieces of multi-colored cloth into the trash and then a man comes to collect the trash. DERSU at a distance, follows the man collecting the trash.

EXT. FRONT OF SOLOMIN MANSION - MORNING

SVETLANA comes out of the house, YEFIM holds the door for her as she gets into a limo. YEFIM gets in and the limo pulls away.

EXT. REAR OF SOLOMIN MANSION - MORNING

DERSU comes out of the back door, walking with a limp. His first view of the SOLOMIN ESTATE in the daylight, he is taken by the extent of the greenery. There are deer on the lawn. He seems happy.

As DERSU looks at the surroundings, ARDANKIN and YAKUNIN, with DERSU's wheelchair, come out of the house.

DERSU sees where the trash is deposited and is about to open the bags.

ARDANKIN
(frowns as he sees DERSU walking)
Dersu, there you are. What are you doing on that leg?

DERSU
It's fine today, Vasily.

ARDANKIN
Shame on you, Dersu - you should let me be the judge of that.

(motions to YAKUNIN)
Please, sit in the chair.

DERSU opens the trash bag and gathers some of the brightly colored cloth.

YAKUNIN pushes the wheelchair to DERSU, he sits.

ARDANKIN
(checks leg)
I swear, Dersu, between you and Yuri,
I've got my hands full...
(looks at calf)
Say, that is coming along, the
swelling has gone down
considerably...
(pokes a spot)
Any pain here?

DERSU
Yes, Vasily.

ARDANKIN
(continues examining)
Yuri has been hounding me to allow
him to address the annual meeting of
his Financial Institute today, but
obviously, the strain would be
impossible... How about here, Dersu,
any soreness?

DERSU
Yes, Vasily.

ARDANKIN
Would you help me dissuade Yuri from
going to the meeting?

DERSU
No, Vasily.

ARDANKIN
(a beat)
Oh.
(checks leg)
My God, I only wish that Yuri had
your recuperative powers... Anyway,

the President offered to sit in for Yuri at the meeting, quite a nice gesture, I felt. But Yuri insists on attending. The President's due here soon, I believe.

DERSU

Yes, Vasily. I know about the President.

ARDANKIN

(mildly surprised)

Oh? You've heard?

DERSU

Yes. Yuri called me. He wants me to meet the President.

ARDANKIN

(stands)

He does, does he?

DERSU

Yes, Yuri told me to be in his room at ten o'clock.

ARDANKIN

Why, that's terrific, Dersu.

DERSU

How do I know when it's ten o'clock?

A long look from ARDANKIN, then he looks at his watch.

ARDANKIN

It's twenty of, you'd best get on in there.

DERSU

Thank you, Vasily.

YAKUNIN begins to push DERSU.

DERSU

I would like to walk today.

ARDANKIN
Hell yes, walk. You're meeting the
President, aren't you?

DERSU
(gets out of chair)
Svetlana has left; she doesn't like
the President does she?

ARDANKIN, a bit puzzled, watches as DERSU goes into the house.

INT. SOLOMIN MANSION - HALLWAY - MORNING

DERSU limps aimlessly through a hallway. He stops, admires a large tapestry on the wall, dogs are chasing a stag. There is a man with a rifle in the tapestry. DERSU begins to walk again. A servant notices DERSU appears confused, approaches him.

SERVANT
May I help you, Mr. Hunter?

DERSU
(with a smile)
Yes. I would like to go to Solomin
Memorial Hospital.

SERVANT
(a pause)
Sir?

DERSU
Yes.

There is another long pause.

SERVANT
Did you wish to see someone, sir?

DERSU
Yes, I would like to see Yuri.

SERVANT
Oh, Mr. Solomin, of course. Right
this way, sir.

DERSU follows the SERVANT down the hall.

INT. SOLOMIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Solomin is in an easy chair, dressed for his meeting with the President. The two nurses are working cleaning and disinfecting everything. Solomin smiles as DERSU is shown into the room.

SOLOMIN

Dersu, up and around this morning,
are you?

DERSU

Yes, Yuri. My leg is not very sore.

SOLOMIN

Well, that's good news, my boy.

DERSU

You're looking much better today,
Yuri.

SOLOMIN

Hah! It's all make-up, Dersu... I
asked the nurse to fix me up, I
didn't want the President to think I
was going to die during our talk.

DERSU

I understand. He will not like a
dying man.

SOLOMIN

It is because he doesn't know what
death is.

There is a long pause.

SOLOMIN

But we know the terror of it, the two
of us.

There is a long pause.

SOLOMIN

How long after you were almost killed
did you recover?

DERSU

Three days.

SOLOMIN

But you're an exception; most people never recover. Dersu - that's what I admire in you, your marvellous balance. You don't stagger back and forth between fear and hope - you're a truly peaceful man.

DERSU

Thank you, Yuri.

(looks at Solomin closely)

The nurse did a very good job, Yuri.

The nurses turn, smile at DERSU.

EXT. FRONT SOLOMIN MANSION - MORNING

YAKUNIN is at the head of eight servants lined up on the front steps. Two black cars pull up and park. Eight FSO MEN in grey business suits get out. One of them, SHCHITT, goes directly to YAKUNIN.

SHCHITT

Good morning, Mr. Yakunin.

YAKUNIN

Good morning, Mr. Shchitt, nice to see you again.

SHCHITT

Thank you. How have you been?

YAKUNIN

Fine, thank you.

(hands Shchitt paper)

We have an additional guest with us today, Mr. Dersu Hunter.

SHCHITT

(reads list)

I see...

(turns to other men)

Okay, let's go to work.

The eight servants pair up with the eight men in suits and go into the house.

INT. SOLOMIN MANSION - THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - MORNING

ARDANKIN gets off the elevator, stands and thinks for a moment, then heads off down the hallway in the direction of DERSU's room.

INT. SOLOMIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

DERSU watches the television news as SOLOMIN speaks.

SOLOMIN

Yes, when I was younger I had thoughts about rising in the Communist Party all the way to the top. But I found, Dersu, that I wasn't allowed to contribute. Of course, my intelligence provided me with considerable influence, but I've tried, believe me, to change the system.

DERSU

I understand, Yuri.

SOLOMIN

And another thing. It's extremely important, Dersu, when one is in a position of power, that he does not allow himself to become blinded to the needs of the country. The temptations are strong, and I've been labeled a 'kingmaker' by many, but I have tried to stay open to voices of the people. I have tried to remain honest to myself.

DERSU

Yes, Yuri.

SOLOMIN

Maybe one day you shall find yourself in a similar position, Dersu... Maybe one day...

DERSU
Yuri, Svetlana isn't here.

SOLOMIN
She knows the President is a son of a
bitch. You know. I know.

EXT. FRONT SOLOMIN MANSION - MORNING

Two black limousines followed by a three SUVs pull up in front of the mansion. As men from the first limousine and the SUV jump out and take positions around the driveway. The servant hurries to his post, picks up his phone.

INT. SOLOMIN MANSION - MRS. CHUPOV'S OFFICE - MORNING

The nerve center of the Solomin Enterprises since Yuri has become ill. Four or five desks, all the latest electronic office equipment, three TV's with video taping facilities, countless telephones. MRS. CHUPOV, Solomin's senior secretary, is at her desk, answers her phone.

MRS. CHUPOV
(into phone)
Yes... Oh, very good, thank you.

Mrs. CHUPOV hangs up, picks up another phone, pushes a button.

INT. SOLOMIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

SOLOMIN smiles at DERSU as the phone rings.

SOLOMIN
(to DERSU)
He's here.
(into phone)
Yes, Mrs. Chupov?
(listens)
Fine. Show the President to the
library, we'll be along in a few
minutes.

SOLOMIN hangs up the phone, turns to DERSU with a twinkle in his eyes.

SOLOMIN
It's an old habit that goes along
with power -- keep them waiting.

INT. SOLOMIN'S LIQUOR CABINET AND BAR AREA - MORNING

A protection agent watches a servant pour a drink and place it on a silver tray.

INT. SOLOMIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

The nurse brings SOLOMIN's wheelchair to SOLOMIN.

SOLOMIN
(stands, very weak)
Not now. I'm seeing the President on
my own two feet.

NURSE
But, Mr. Solomin...

SOLOMIN
(puts an arm around DERSU for support)
Shall we go, Dersu?

DERSU
Yes, Yuri. That's a good idea. Let's
walk. He is the President.

Solomin walks slowly, clings to the limping DERSU tightly as they leave the room.

EXT. HALLWAY - MORNING

Federal Protective Service men are seen down the hallway in the background as SOLOMIN stops outside Mrs. Chupov's office, leans in.

SOLOMIN
Mrs. Chupov, have you received the
papers on the pipeline agreement?

MRS. CHUPOV
Yes, sir. They're ready for you to
sign.

SOLOMIN
Excellent.
(turns to DERSU)
A good woman, Mrs. Chupov.

DERSU
(seeing her for first time)
I know that, Yuri.

They shuffle off down the hallway. DERSU smiles at the stoned face security men that they pass.

INT. SOLOMIN MANSION - HALLWAY BY LIBRARY - MORNING

A servant arrives with a drink on a tray for the PRESIDENT. Evidently there is a rush about getting the PRESIDENT the drink. SHCHITT has a small metal detector but waves the servant and the drink past. He doesn't go over the servant... which might mean this is already the President's second drink. And it is morning.

SHCHITT waits by the library door. SHCHITT hold his metal detector ready as SOLOMIN and DERSU slowly approach.

SHCHITT
Good morning, Mr. Solomin.

SOLOMIN
Mr. Shchitt, how have you been?

SHCHITT
(passes detector over SOLOMIN)
Just fine, thank you, sir.
(turns to Dersu)
And you must be Mr. Hunter.

DERSU
Yes.

SHCHITT
(passes detector over DERSU)
Just a formality, Mr. Hunter.

DERSU
(as he finishes)
Thank you very much.

SHCHITT knocks lightly, then opens the library door, SOLOMIN and DERSU enter.

INT. RAND LIBRARY - MORNING

PRESIDENT is finishing his drink. SOLOMIN and DERSU come into the library and the PRESIDENT goes to SOLOMIN with both hands outstretched.

PRESIDENT
Yuri!

SOLOMIN
(very weak)
Mr. President, how good to see you.

PRESIDENT
It's so good to see you too, Ben. You look terrific!

SOLOMIN
(barely able to stand)
I'm not convinced of that, Mr. President, but your visit has raised my spirits...

PRESIDENT
Well, I'm delighted to be here, my friend. I've missed you.
(guides SOLOMIN to chair)
Here, sit down, get off your feet.

As SOLOMIN sinks into the chair, DERSU approaches the President with his hand outstretched.

DERSU
Good morning, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT
(smiling)
Hello.

DERSU and the President exchange a handshake. SOLOMIN, still weak from standing, catches his breath and introduces DERSU.

SOLOMIN

Mr. President, I'd like you to meet
my dear friend, Mr. Dersu Hunter.

PRESIDENT

Mr. Hunter, my pleasure.

DERSU

You look much taller on television,
Mr. President.

PRESIDENT

(a beat)

Oh, really.

SOLOMIN

(smiling)

You will find that my house guest
does not bandy words, Mr. President.

The President gives DERSU a look, then laughs.

PRESIDENT

Well, Mr. Hunter, that's just fine
with me - I'm a man that appreciates
a frank discussion... Be seated,
please, Mr. Hunter.

DERSU

(sitting)

Yes, I will.

PRESIDENT

(also sits)

Now, Yuri, did you happen to get a
chance to go over my speech?

SOLOMIN

Yes, I did.

PRESIDENT

Well?

SOLOMIN

Overall - pretty good. But, Mr.
President, I think we can move faster
in your reforms. It's very dangerous

not to appear to be moving forward in weeding out corruption. If you don't act to end the corruption with forceful language then they will think you aren't serious. The people will think you are involved.

PRESIDENT

Well, Yuri... I...

SOLOMIN

I sympathize with your position, Mr. President. I know how difficult it is to be straightforward, but the point of your speech could be missed. Be strong. Your words should cause chaos in this corrupt bureaucracy. They should hear your big foot steps coming to get them. Scare the hell out of the corrupt officials.

PRESIDENT

That's too big a risk, I can't take the chance.

FLASHBACK TO DERSU walking slowly, quietly, stalking prey.

DERSU

No.

The President gives DERSU a puzzled look.

PRESIDENT

You disagree?

DERSU

They should not hear your foot steps, but should feel your arrow.

The president hesitates. He is thinking.

SOLOMIN

Oh, good point. Mr. President maybe you should just act. Mass arrests and surprise them. The newspapers should be full of arrest reports of corrupt government bureaucrats.

INT. SOLOMIN MANSION - THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - MORNING

The FSO men are checking out the third floor. One knocks on each door, looks inside, then moves on.

INT. DERSU'S ROOM - MORNING

SECRETARY is there thrashing a copy of Komsomolskaya Pravda into bits. Alternate POV SECRETARY (silent) and POV ARDANKIN. ARDANKIN enters the room. There are at least 500 pieces of paper strewn about. This was for play perhaps or to build a soft bed. Perhaps she doesn't like the newspaper's political bias. SECRETARY stops when ARDANKIN arrives; she runs and hides in the bathroom.

ARDANKIN walks into the bathroom and there is an undisturbed copy of the Rossiyskaya Gazeta on the floor. ARDANKIN notices and contemplates the fervor of the Italian Greyhound thrashing the copy of Pravda.

ARDANKIN begins searching through DERSU's clothes looking for some sort of identification. The only thing that DR. ARDANKIN finds interesting are tens of expertly crafted fishing flies. They are laid out on a small table at the base of the window.

There is a knock at the door, ARDANKIN pulls back from the table as the FSO man opens the door, looks inside.

ARDANKIN
Oh... Hello.

FSO
(entering)
Good morning. I'm FSO.

ARDANKIN
Yes. Of course. I'm Dr. Ardankin.

The FSO man passes the metal detector over ARDANKIN's clothing.

INT. LIBRARY - MORNING

SOLOMIN
So we are agreed? Mr. President give the pansy ass speech but then act. Make arrests and strike at the corruption.

The PRESIDENT is worried about what SOLOMIN is telling him; you might have guessed already that the President is at the top of the corruption. He paces, another drink arrives; he smokes a cigarette. DERSU is watching intensely and judging the man.

PRESIDENT

Yes, I need to appear strong.

SOLOMIN

Mr. President the people who work for you are dragging down the country. We are on the brink of another economic crash from which recovery might not be possible.

PRESIDENT

It's that serious, huh?

SOLOMIN

I'm afraid so. Honest government is required for prosperity. It's not enough to have an honest man at the top.. he has to reflect honesty throughout government.

The PRESIDENT now looks nearly as pale as SOLOMIN. He sits, turns to DERSU.

PRESIDENT

Do you agree with Yuri, Mr. Hunter?

DERSU

(a beat)

This beast must be killed. We will help you.

PRESIDENT

(a pause)

Killed?

DERSU

That is correct. If you don't kill the wolf, he will comeback night after night and soon you will have no more flock.

PRESIDENT
(staring at DERSU)
Wolf and sheep...
(confused)
Yes, I see... Government and the
Russian people.
(smiles at DERSU)
Yes, indeed...
(a beat)
Could you go through that one more
time, please, Mr. Hunter?

SOLOMIN
I think what my most insightful
friend is saying, Mr. President, is
that if you want to be re-elected you
must hunt a few wolves. The more, the
better. And save our economy. And
save yourself.

PRESIDENT looks to DERSU.

DERSU
Yes. There are many wolves.

PRESIDENT
(pleased)
Well, Mr. Hunter, I must admit, that
is some of the best rhetoric I've
heard in a long time. I pay
speechwriters and consultants huge
amounts of money and they can't give
me anything useful.

The President puts out his cigarette, rises.

PRESIDENT
Many of us forget that nature and
Russia are one! Yes, though we have
tried to cut ourselves off from
nature, we are still a part of it!

The President smiles at DERSU, who is absorbed in looking around
the room at the books.

PRESIDENT

I envy your good, solid sense, Mr. Hunter - that is precisely what we lack in the my communications department.

(glances at watch)

I must be going.

(holds out hand to DERSU)

Mr. Hunter, this visit has been enlightening.

DERSU rises and shakes the President's hand.

DERSU

Yes. It has.

PRESIDENT

You will honor me and my family with a visit, won't you?

DERSU

Yes. I will.

PRESIDENT

Wonderful, we'll all look forward to seeing you.

(turns to Solomin)

Is Svetlana around? I'd like to say hello.

SOLOMIN

No, she flew up to SP for another charity event. She'll be sorry to have missed you.

PRESIDENT

I'm sorry, too. Well, my wife wanted me to send along her best to the two of you - and, Yuri, I want to thank you for your time and thoughts.

SOLOMIN

Nonsense, Mr. President - I thank you for coming to spend time with an old man.

PRESIDENT

Now, Yuri, I won't have any of that.
Why don't you help me win this re-
election next year and we will put
Russia back on its feet.

The President clasps Solomin's hand.

SOLOMIN

You're right, Mr. President. Let's
win.

PRESIDENT

Take care of yourself, Yuri.

SOLOMIN

You take care too.

DERSU is distracted by the books and halfway pulls a book from the
shelf. The book is a hiding place for a small pistol. Dersu
quickly replaces the book before anyone notices.

PRESIDENT

(as he turns to go, a smile to DERSU)
Mr. Hunter...

DERSU

Good luck, Mr. President.

The PRESIDENT leaves the library and DERSU sits back down.

SOLOMIN

(as the door closes)
We were in the business together.
He's a decent fellow, the President,
isn't he?

DERSU

No, Yuri - he is not. He will make a
nice speech this afternoon but no
wolves will be killed.

SOLOMIN

Of course.

There is an odd pause. SOLOMIN hasn't wanted to admit or face the
truth that his choice for President has been a failure.

SOLOMIN

But he was quite impressed with your words, Dersu. He hears my sort of analysis from everyone, but yours, unfortunately - seldom if ever at all.

DERSU

I'm glad he came, Yuri. It was nice talking to the President.

EXT. SOLOMIN MANSION - MORNING

An aide, TSELNER, waits by the front door of the SOLOMIN mansion. As the PRESIDENT comes out, he speaks quietly to TSELNER.

PRESIDENT

Tzelner, I'm going to need information on Mr. Dersu Hunter's background.

TSELNER

(makes note of name)
Hunter, yes, sir.

PRESIDENT

And put it through on a Code Red - I want it as soon as possible.

TSELNER

No problem, Chief.

They head toward the waiting limousines.

INT. SOLOMIN MANSION - HALLWAY - MORNING

SOLOMIN has an arm around DERSU, hangs on for dear life as the two of them walk through the hall. Behind them, YAKUNIN and RAYT push empty wheelchairs.

SOLOMIN

(very weak)
You know, Dersu, there's something about you. You're direct, you grasp things quickly and you state them plainly. You don't play games with

words to protect yourself. I feel I can speak to you frankly. You know what I was talking to you about last night?

DERSU
(blankly)
No, Yuri.

SOLOMIN
Oh, sure you do, the legal assistance program. I think you might be just the man to take charge of such an undertaking. I'd like you to meet with the members of the Board, we'll be able to discuss the matter at greater length at that time.

DERSU
I understand.

SOLOMIN
(stops outside his door)
And, please, Dersu - don't rush your decision. I know you're not a man to act on the spur of the moment.

DERSU
Thank you, Yuri.

SOLOMIN
And now, Dersu, I'm afraid you must excuse me - I'm very tired all of a sudden.

YAKUNIN and RAYT leave the wheelchairs, assist SOLOMIN into his hospital bed.

DERSU
(as they go in)
I'm sorry that you are so sick, Yuri.

The door closes, DERSU limps off down the hall.

EXT. SOLOMIN MANSION - GARDEN - DAY

DERSU, with a limp, walks down a pathway in the garden, admires the greenery. In the background, coming from the house, we see SVETLANA.

SVETLANA
(approaches DERSU, calls)
Dersu!

DERSU
(stops, turns)
Hello, Svetlana.

SVETLANA
Your leg must be getting better.

DERSU
Yes. It's feeling much better now.

SVETLANA
Good. I'm glad to hear that.
(they walk together)
How did you like meeting the
President?

DERSU
Fine. But he's not a hunter.

SVETLANA
No, true. He isn't. He is all talk.

They walk along in silence for a moment. DERSU sees a huge herd of deer not far from them, heads toward it. SVETLANA turns to him, hesitates, then questions.

SVETLANA
Dersu... Last night you mentioned a
friend of yours that died.

DERSU
Yes.

SVETLANA
Was he a relative? Or an intimate
friend?

SVETLANA is trying to determine if DERSU is heterosexual.

DERSU

(looking at the deer)
He was a very powerful man, I saved
his life when he was in the East.

SVETLANA

Oh, I see. He was like a mentor?
(relieved)
You came to visit him in Moscow?

DERSU

I couldn't stay in the East and
survive. I had to come here.

DERSU is thinking about his encounter with the tiger. SVETLANA
takes his uncertainty as a reluctance to discuss VIKTOR.
Sensitivity.

SVETLANA

Forgive me, Dersu - I didn't mean to
pry. You must have been very close to
him.

DERSU

Yes. I was.

SVETLANA

I'm sorry...
(getting more to the point)
And what about your family in the
East? YOU mentioned that you had to
leave.

DERSU

Yes. I had a family once. They were
killed by Chinese bandits in 1959. I
loved them very much.

SVETLANA

(relieved)
Oh, my!... Stupid me, I thought
perhaps you had left someone that you
may have been romantically involved
with, or a wife. Oh that was
terrible; they were killed.

DERSU

It was not good but I killed the Chinese.

SVETLANA

(sad)

Of course.

SVETLANA edges slightly closer to DERSU. DERSU edges slightly closer to the deer.

DERSU

They don't run?

SVETLANA

Our deer. There is corn in the gardeners shed.

DERSU

(pleased)

I like them.

SVETLANA

Yes, so do we.

DERSU picks out a big buck and pretends to aim a rifle at one.

INT. SOLOMIN'S BEDROOM - DAY

SOLOMIN is in bed. SVETLANA, DERSU and ARDANKIN are seated around him, the two nurses standing to one side. They all watch the President's address to the Financial Institute on TV. DERSU inhales deeply, enjoys the oxygen in the room. SOLOMIN is looking weaker. Every so often, ARDANKIN casts a concerned glance his way.

PRESIDENT'S VOICE

And there are so many of you that have proclaimed that we are on the brink of the worst economy crisis in this nation's history. And there are so many of you demanding that we put into effect drastic measures to alter its course. Well, let me tell you, gentlemen, I have been conducting multiple-level consultations with members of my staff and the Duma. I have conducted meetings with

prominent business leaders throughout the country. And this very morning I had an in-depth discussion with your founder and Chairman of the Board, Mr. Yuri Solomin and his close friend and advisor Mr. Dersu Hunter.

The audience applauds.

SOLIMON perks up a bit at this mention. ARDANKIN manages a smile, once again looks at SOLIMON, checking his condition. SVETLANA looks proudly at DERSU, who continues to enjoy the oxygen. DERSU is not impressed by the PRESIDENT mentioning his name.

PRESIDENT'S VOICE

Well, gentlemen, I have been informed of shocking revelations pointing to low-level government corruption as the chief reason for our economic stagnation. I've learned with great dismay about a growing culture of bribery and extortion. I found this morning's meeting to be a most enlightening conference. To quote Mr. Hunter, a most intuitive man, "If you don't kill the wolf, he will come back night after night and soon you will have no more flock."

SOLOMIN starts coughing, breathing heavily. ARDANKIN and the nurses rush to his bedside. ARDANKIN shoots a quick look to SVETLANA and DERSU.

ARDANKIN

(motioning toward door)

Excuse us, please.

SVETLANA and DERSU leave the room as ARDANKIN administers oxygen and drugs to SOLOMIN.

PRESIDENT'S VOICE

Gentlemen, let us not fear the inevitable clash with nature, instead, let us deal with it in a quick and forceful way. Today I'm ordering FSB personnel to begin operation 'Nagyka' to target and

prosecute corrupt low-level
bureaucrats. We will tame the local
governments and we will restore the
economy.

Crowd applauds.

INT. MANSION HALL - DAY

The PRESIDENT leaves the meeting is handed a drink, downs it in one mouthful, and walks down a secure hallway on the way to the limo. He is surrounded by aides and security.

AIDE

Sir when do you want us to begin
operation 'Nagyka'?

PRESIDENT

Three years from now. I will let you
know when.

The President will NOT do anything about corruption. But he wants to win re-election with this rhetoric.

EXT. SOLOMIN MANSION - PATIO - DAY

SVETLANA and DERSU sit in silence on the patio. SVETLANA's eyes are swollen, red, she has been crying. She turns to DERSU, reaches out, touches his hand.

SVETLANA

(hesitates)

I'm...

(pause)

I'm very grateful that you're here,
Dersu...

(pause)

With us ...

DERSU

So am I, Svetlana.

ARDANKIN comes out the door, his mood is serious, professional. SVETLANA turns quickly, awaits his news.

ARDANKIN

(sits alongside SVETLANA)

Svetlana, this has been an exhausting day for Yuri...

SVETLANA
(anxious)
But he's...?

ARDANKIN
He's resting comfortably now. There's no cause for alarm, yet...

MRS. CHUPOV comes out of the house.

MRS. CHUPOV
Mr. Hunter, I have a telephone call for you. Spartak Fenenko, the editor of the Rossiyskaya Gazeta.

DERSU
(not moving)
Thank you.

MRS. CHUPOV
Would you care to take it, sir?

DERSU
Yes.

DERSU still does not move. He doesn't know where or how to use a telephone. SVETLANA mistakes DERSU's not moving for concern for herself. She puts a hand on his shoulder.

SVETLANA
Dersu you go ahead with Mrs. Chupov. I'll be all right.

DERSU
(rising)
Yes, Svetlana. You'll be all right.

DERSU follows Mrs. Chupov into the house. SVETLANA watches him go, then turns to ARDANKIN.

SVETLANA
He's such a sensitive man, so thoughtful.

INT. SOLOMIN MANSION - MRS. CHUPOV'S OFFICE - DAY

Mrs. Chupov leads DERSU to a phone at one of the desks. The window is near and the deer again attract DERSU's attention.

DERSU
(picks up phone, looks out the window)
Hello.

INT. ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA - FENENKO'S OFFICE

SPARTAK FENENKO, a man in his fifties, wears a rumpled wool jacket, smokes a pipe.

FENENKO
Hello, Mr. Hunter. This is Spartak
Fenenko, Rossiyskaya Gazeta.

INTERCUT - MRS. CHUPOV'S OFFICE / FENENKO'S OFFICE

DERSU
Hello, Spartak.

FENENKO
I'm sorry to disturb you, Mr. Hunter,
I know you must be very busy.

DERSU
(looking out the window at the deer)
No. I'm not busy.

FENENKO
Then, I'll be brief. I covered the
President's speech at the Financial
Institute today, and since the Gazeta
would like to be as exact as
possible, we would appreciate your
comments on the meeting that took
place between Mr. Solomin, the
President and yourself.

DERSU
The President is a charming person. I
enjoyed it very much.

FENENKO

Good, sir. And so, it seems, did the President - but we would like to have some facts; such as, uh... What exactly is the relationship between yourself and that of the First Russian Economic Corporation?

DERSU

I think you should ask Mr. Solomin that.

FENENKO

Of course. But since he is ill I'm taking the liberty of asking you.

DERSU

Yes, that is correct. Mr. Solomin is ill.

Fenenko doesn't understand but continues his questioning.

FENENKO

I see. Then one more quick question, Mr. Hunter; since we at the Gazeta would like to, uh - update our profile on you - what exactly is your interest in cleaning up corruption?

DERSU

I am a Russian. And this is Russia.

DERSU hangs up the phone, watches the deer.

FENENKO listens to the dial tone, then puts the receiver down.

FENENKO

(to himself)

Typical capitalist tycoon - no wonder he's so close to Solomin.

INT. SOLOMIN MANSION - HALLWAY - DAY

DERSU comes out of Mrs. Chupov's office, notices the service elevator.

DERSU
Hmmm. Elevator.

He gets in the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

DERSU looks at the row of buttons, presses one. He smiles as he feels the elevator move. He rides to the third floor and then the first floor. Back to the second floor and then into the basement.

INT. SOLOMIN MANSION - BASEMENT

One of Mrs. Chupov's secretaries, YANA, waits with an arm load of paperwork for the elevator. The door opens, DERSU smiles at her as he steps out.

YANA
(surprised to see him)
Why, hello, Mr. Hunter - are you
looking for someone?

DERSU
No.

YANA gets in the elevator, the doors closes. DERSU looks around the basement, puzzled. It appears to be a bomb shelter. There is a copying room. But rooms and rooms full of canned foods, rice, salt, noodles and other staple foods. Propane tanks. Weapons.

INT. SOLOMIN MANSION BASEMENT - THE CHRISTMAS ROOM

DERSU stands in a room with thousands of Christmas and New Year decorations. He is totally confused. There is a huge plastic Christmas tree on a hydraulic lift. DERSU pushes a button and the tree rises through the ceiling. A mechanical door in the ceiling opens. CUT TO the tree now on display on the first floor. The lights on the tree come on.

INT. SOLOMIN MANSION SECOND FLOOR - DAY

YANA gets off the elevator and looks down over the balcony into the formal parlor. Oddly, it is spring but the Christmas tree is up.

INT. MRS. CHUPOV'S OFFICE - DAY

Mrs. Chupov is at her desk, buzzing her inter-house phone. As YANA enters, Mrs. Chupov hangs up in frustration.

MRS. CHUPOV
I can't find Mr. Hunter anywhere.

YANA
He's in the basement.

MRS. CHUPOV
What's he doing in the basement?

YANA
I don't know, Mrs. Chupov. But the Christmas tree is up.

MRS. CHUPOV grabs a notepad, leaves the office.

INT. SOLOMIN MANSION - BASEMENT

MRS. CHUPOV comes out of the service elevator, hurries through the basement. She checks: The boiler room. The electrical room. The ice rink (SVETLANA is skating). The gym (ARDANKIN is working out).

MRS. CHUPOV enters the Christmas room and she pushes the button again. The tree returns to its original position in the basement. The opening in the ceiling closes.

INT. SOLOMIN MANSION BASEMENT - GUN STORAGE ROOM

DERSU is sitting down at a table with oil and rags and has disassembled a gun. He is cleaning the weapons.

MRS. CHUPOV enters, DERSU smiles at her.

MRS. CHUPOV
Oh, Mr. Hunter, I've been looking all over.

There is a long pause. It seems odd to her.

MRS. CHUPOV
Oh, I guess you are right. I've never seen anyone cleaning them. They do need cleaning.

DERSU

Oh, yes.

MRS. CHUPOV

Andrey Galerkin, the producer of 'Let them Speak' just called.

(pause)

TV.

DERSU

Television?

MRS. CHUPOV

Yes. They would like you to appear on the show tonight. The Prime Minister was scheduled, but he had to cancel, and they asked if you would be interested.

DERSU

Yes. I would like to be on that show.

MRS. CHUPOV

Fine. They felt that since you had such close ties with the President, you would be a splendid choice.

(DERSU nods, there is a pause)

Can I help you get ready? Do you need something to wear or something cleaned?

DERSU

No. I like this gun very much.

MRS. CHUPOV gives him a look, leaves.

EXT. SKY - DUSK

President of Russia's Ilyushin Il-96 passes through the clouds.

INT. ILYUSHIN IL-96 - DUSK

The President sits on a couch in one of the compartments on the jet, drinking a cocktail. Before him, stand six of his STAFF, TSELNER included.

PRESIDENT

Gentlemen, I quoted this man on national television today he is obviously a financial sophisticate of some renown.

TSELNER

Yes, sir - we are aware of all that, but still, we haven't been able to...

PRESIDENT

(interrupts)

He's an advisor and close personal friend of Yuri Solomin's! For Christ sakes, we have volumes of data on Yuri!

TSELNER

Yes, Mr. President, we attempted to contact Mr. Solomin, but he was too ill to...

PRESIDENT

(again interrupts)

I do not want Yuri Solomin disturbed! You have other ways of gathering information than to trouble a dying man. Use whatever agencies are necessary to put together a detailed history of Dersu Hunter, if you run into problems, alert Perezhogin.

(he stands)

I'll be in the office at seven in the morning and I would like to have it at that time.

(he starts for door)

I've got to take a leak.

TSELNER

Right, Chief.

It could be turbulence, but the President stumbles to the men's room; he could be drunk. Two of the aides reach for telephones.

INT. DERSU'S ROOM - EVENING

DERSU wears a velvet bathrobe, looks out the window. RAYT lays out a suit, shirt, tie, etc. on the bed.

RAYT
I believe these garments will be quite appropriate, Mr. Hunter.

DERSU
(eyes on deer)
Yes. They are fine.

There is a knock at the door.

RAYT
Excuse me, sir.

RAYT answers the door, it is SVETLANA.

SVETLANA
(entering)
Dersu...

DERSU
(rises)
Hello, Svetlana.

SVETLANA
Dersu, I just wanted to wish you well. I know you'll be smashing.

DERSU
Thank you, Svetlana.

SVETLANA
And Yuri sends along his best wishes.

DERSU
How is Yuri feeling?

SVETLANA
He's tired, Dersu - but he's going to watch you tonight. We'll both be watching.

DERSU
That's good. I see the deer again.

SVETLANA

I know you do - you and your deer...

(a pause)

Good luck, Dersu.

SVETLANA impulsively steps forward, kisses DERSU on the cheek. DERSU smiles at her, and SVETLANA, slightly embarrassed, turns and leaves the room. DERSU goes back to the window, watches the deer as RAYT attends to his clothes with a whisk broom.

INT. ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA - STAFF ROOM - NIGHT

FENENKO heads a meeting of his four staffers. One man, BARANOVSKY, a research assistant, sits behind a stack of paperwork, has a downcast expression as he listens to FENENKO.

FENENKO

Hunter is laconic, matter-of fact. The scuttlebutt is that he's a strong candidate for one of the vacant seats on the board of Gazprom. But before we can do any sort of a piece on the man, we're going to need facts on his background...

(turns to Baranovsky)

Baranovsky, what did you come up with?

BARANOVSKY

(after a pause)

Nothing.

FENENKO

(sighs, taps pencil on table)

Skip the levity, Baranovsky - what have you got?

BARANOVSKY

(another pause)

... I realize this sounds lazy but there is no information of any sort on Hunter. We have no material on him - zilch...

The room is quiet except for the tapping of FENENKO's pencil.

EXT. TELEVISION STATION - NIGHT

The SOLOMIN limousine parks in front of the station. As YEFIM opens the door for DERSU, ANDREY GALERKIN steps to the limo.

GALERKIN

Mr. Hunter, I'm Andrey Galerkin, the producer of 'Let them Speak.'

DERSU

(as they shake hands)
Hello, Andrey.

GALERKIN takes DERSU into the station.

INT. SOLOMIN MANSION - DERSU'S ROOM - NIGHT

The Italian Greyhound is sleeping on Dersu's pillow. Chemislava, Solomin's nurse, enters DERSU's room, goes to the closet. The Italian Greyhound runs to hide.

INT. TV STATION - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

DERSU is intrigued by the surroundings as GALERKIN guides him through the corridor.

GALERKIN

Of course, Mr. Hunter, the fact that you occupy such a position in the world of politics makes you ideally suited to provide our millions of viewers with an explanation of this nation's political crisis.

DERSU

I see. I must explain things?

GALERKIN

Do you realize, Mr. Hunter, that more people will be watching you tonight than all those who have been to the Bolshoi in its entire history?

DERSU

Why?

GALERKIN

I don't know.

DERSU

You don't want to know why.

GALERKIN is puzzled.

DERSU

It's a very good show.

GALERKIN

I'm glad you like it, Mr. Hunter.

GALERKIN takes DERSU into the MAKE-UP room.

INT. SOLOMIN MANSION - DERSU'S ROOM - NIGHT

Chemislava is in the closet, searching through DERSU's pockets, finding nothing. She takes out a miniature spy camera, snaps a shot of a label from one of the jackets. Quickly, she examines one of DERSU's shoes, photographs the name of the shoemaker. Chemislava hurries to the dresser, continues her search.

INT. TV STATION - CORRIDOR AND MAKEUP ROOM - NIGHT

VITVININ, the makeup man, comes through the corridor carrying a glass of water. He turns into the makeup room, goes to DERSU who sits in front of the lights. GALERKIN sits next to DERSU, briefs him on the show. DERSU has his eyes on a TV monitor, watches the guest preceding him.

VITVININ

(gives DERSU the water)

Here you go, Mr. Hunter.

DERSU

Thank you. I'm very thirsty.

VITVININ

Yes, sir - it's hot under those lights.

VITVININ applies finishing touches to DERSU.

GALERKIN

Now, if the host wants to ask you a question, he'll raise his left forefinger to his left eyebrow.

(DERSU watches TV)
Then you'll stop, and he'll say
something, and then you'll answer.

On the TV, ANDREY MALAKHOV, the host, wraps up his talk with his
guest.

VITVININ
(a last-minute dab)
Okay, Mr. Hunter, you're all set.

GALERKIN leads DERSU out of the makeup room. Colson closes the
door, then carefully picks up DERSU's water glass, wraps it in an
evidence bag, puts it in his overcoat pocket to be fingerprinted.

INT. TV STATION - "LET THEM SPEAK" STUDIO - NIGHT

ANDREY MALAKHOV introduces DERSU.

MALAKHOV
Ladies and gentlemen, our very
distinguished guest, Mr. Dersu
Hunter!

An audience of about three hundred applauds DERSU as he appears.
Two TV cameras move with him as he walks, with a smile and a limp,
to center stage. MALAKHOV shakes DERSU's hand.

MALAKHOV
Mr. Hunter, how very nice to have you
with us this evening.

DERSU
Yes. Thank you.

MALAKHOV
(showing DERSU to his chair)
I'd like to thank you for filling in
on such short notice for the Prime
Minister.

DERSU
(sits)
You're welcome.

MALAKHOV
(also sitting)

I always find it surprising, Mr. Hunter, to find men like yourself, who are working so intimately with the President, yet manage to remain relatively unknown.

DERSU

Yes. That is surprising.

MALAKHOV

(a beat)

Well, your anonymity will be a thing of the past from now on.

DERSU

(doesn't understand)

This is what worries me.

Audience laughs.

MALAKHOV

Yes... Of course, you know, Mr. Hunter, that I always prefer an open and frank conversation with my guests, I hope you don't object to that.

DERSU

No. I don't object. The President said this when we spoke. Open and frank conversations.

MALAKHOV

Fine, then let's get started. The President is a mountain in Russian politics. How do you see him?

FLASHBACK TO distant mountains.

DERSU

Sometimes mountains and forests look cheerful and inviting. At other times they seem brooding and distant.

MALAKHOV

So you have mixed view.

DERSU

Yes. The mountain can be good or bad, depending on his mood.

MALAKHOV

The current state of our country is of vital interest to us all, and I would like to know if you agree with the President's action against the corruption in government?

DERSU

What actions?

Applause and laughter from the audience. The Russian population seems to know that politicians will never end the corruption. MALAKHOV accustomed to parrying with his guests, asks again.

MALAKHOV

Come now, Mr. Hunter, before his speech at the Financial Institute the President consulted with you and Yuri Solomin, did he not?

DERSU

Yes. We were there with Yuri.

MALAKHOV

I know that, Mr. Hunter.

DERSU

Yes.

MALAKHOV

(a beat)

Well, let me rephrase the question; the President compared the corrupt government officials to a pack of wolves, and stated that they were the reason for the faltering economy. Do you go along with this belief?

FLASHBACK TO wolves.

DERSU

Yes, I know the wolves very well. I have worked fighting them all my

life. It is a good country and a healthy one. The people need a hunter to keep the wolves at bay. I do agree with the President; people can be made safe, if the wolves are dealt with. And there is plenty of work to do, trust me.

The audience applauds DERSU's apparent metaphor. MALAKHOV waits for it all to subside, then asks another question.

INT. SOLOMIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

SOLOMIN is in bed. SVETLANA sits in a chair next to the bed, squeezes SOLOMIN 's hand in excitement as they both watch DERSU on television. A nurse watches in the background.

MALAKHOV

(over TV)

Well, Mr. Hunter, that was very well put indeed. Many Russian's have thought this for years and it is refreshing to actually hear someone say it.

INT. KERMLIN - PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The PRESIDENT and wife are in bed together watching the show. The PRESIDENT has a drink in his hands.

PRESIDENT

Many Russian's have thought? That insolent son of a bitch! I'll fire him.

FIRST LADY

Honey you can't; he doesn't work for you.

MALAKHOV

(over TV)

Let's make it clear, Mr. Hunter, it's your view that the collapse of the stock market, the dramatic increase in unemployment, you feel that this is attributable to government corruption?

The PRESIDENT looks defeated. The First Lady cuddles close the President, ruffles his hair, tries to cheer him up. However he is angry.

INT. TV STUDIO - "LET THEM SPEAK" - NIGHT

FLASHBACK TO wolves. DERSU reluctantly answers.

DERSU
The wolf is a ravenous creature.

INT. FSB ROOM - NIGHT

A small, dark room. A videotape machine is running. Also, a machine is turning that records the harmonics of DERSU's voice. TWO FSB MEN run the equipment, watch as a needle charts DERSU's voice onto paper.

FLASHBACK TO wolves.

DERSU
(over TV)
The wolves, they grow bigger and stronger and taller than they were in the past. Some wolves die, but fresh pups replace them. Russia needs a lot of hunters.

The audience is shocked as they see DERSU saying that the Russian government corruption is worse than the corruption under the Soviet government. First shock and then enthusiastic applause.

INT. ANTON DOROKHOV'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

ANTON DOROKHOV, the reporter that delivered DERSU to Moscow, comes out of the bathroom brushing his teeth. His wife is in bed absorbed in TV. DOROKHOV sits on the end of the bed, watches the show.

DERSU
(over TV)
And you can't show a wolf any mercy.
And if we work very hard, we can win.
If we find the leader of the pack and then keep the numbers down, Russia will be safe.

More applause from the TV. DOROKHOV leans closer to the set.

DOROKHOV

(puzzled)

It's that hunter!

WIFE

Yes, Dersu Hunter.

DOROKHOV

No! He's a real hunter!

WIFE

(laughs)

He does talk like one, but I think he's brilliant.

MALAKHOV

(over TV)

I think your metaphors are quite interesting, Mr. Hunter, but, is all this possible. We have always had leaders that promised to stomp out corruption and nothing ever happens.

INT. PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The President and First Lady continue to watch. The PRESIDENT pours another drink.

MALAKHOV

(over TV)

Doesn't a country need to have someone in charge that can see it through such crises and as you say hunt the wolves?

PRESIDENT

That bastard...

The First Lady moves closer to him.

INT. DERSU'S ROOM - NIGHT

The TV, its volume low, plays in the background as CHEMISLAVA, with a pair of tweezers, plucks a hair from DERSU's pillow, puts

it into a small vial. It appears she may be inadvertently collecting a hair from the dog.

MALAKHOV

(over TV)

Don't we need a leader capable of guiding us to the corrupt bureaucrats?

FLASHBACK TO wolves stalking prey.

DERSU

(over TV)

Yes. We need a very good leader.

INT. TV STUDIO - NIGHT

MALAKHOV continues his questions.

MALAKHOV

Do you feel that we have a 'very good leader' in office at this time?

At the end of the question, MALAKHOV glances over DERSU's shoulder to look at the monitor. FLASHBACK TO wolves.

DERSU

(a beat)

I'm afraid...

DERSU turns to see what MALAKHOV is looking at, sees the back of his own head on the TV screen. It appears on TV that DERSU is looking around behind him, fearing some treachery.

MALAKHOV

I realize that might be a difficult question for you, Mr. Hunter - but there are a lot of us around the country that would like to hear your thoughts on the matter.

DERSU is still turned to the monitor. On TV it looks like he is still looking behind him. FLASHBACK TO wolves fighting with each other.

DERSU

I'm afraid for the President's safety. I have seen a pack turn on its leader and this isn't a pretty site.

INT. SOLOMIN MANSION - ARDANKIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

ARDANKIN watches DERSU on television. The camera that covered MALAKHOV in close-up has now pulled back, includes MALAKHOV and DERSU, both looking into camera. ARDANKIN is concerned, he is unsure of DERSU.

MALAKHOV

Mr. Hunter are you saying the President risks a coup' if he actually does crack down on corruption in the government?

FLASHBACK TO wolves growling and showing their teeth.

DERSU

(over TV)

The fangs on a wolf are very long.

INT. MOSCOW TELEVISION STUDIO

There is a commercial playing. We can't hear but MALAKHOV is apparently told not to pursue the topic of a coup.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

The television commercial ends. A group of ELDERLY PEOPLE sit in the lobby, watch "Let Them Speak" on an shared older and smaller TV.

MALAKHOV

Welcome back. How do you feel about Moscow's western style urbanization?

DERSU

I don't understand. I'm from the East.

MALAKHOV

How do you feel about the environment?

DERSU

I think if a wealthy man wants to cut down a tree then he should take an axe and cut it down himself and not hire a machine to do it for him.

MALAKHOV

How do you feel about the national defenses?

DERSU

I like holding a good reliable gun. Earlier today I held an AN94 and it felt good. Russia makes some very nice guns. This weapon can make Russia safe.

MALAKHOV

What did you do with the gun?

DERSU

I cleaned it and then put it back on the shelf.

MALAKHOV

What are the current President's short fallings?

DERSU is reluctant.

DERSU

(over TV)

It is the hunter's responsibility to make the country safe and prosperous. It isn't an easy job but necessary.

MALAKHOV

So you are saying he should be replaced?

DERSU

My friend Yuri is a good hunter and would be an excellent President.

MALAKHOV

At Yuri's age can he, as you say,
still hunt?

DERSU

He has many nice trophies in his
room.

MALAKHOV

What about you Mr. Hunter are you up
for the job? Will you challenge the
President in next year's election?

The audience likes the idea.

INT. TV STUDIO - NIGHT

DERSU is silent. MALAKHOV continues.

MALAKHOV

You are a relatively unknown. Come on
be honest. What do you bring to the
table?

Dersu looks at the table, thinks. Dersu literally takes from his
pocket -- a bear tooth, a lynx claw and a fern leaf - and puts
them on the table as the TV cameras zoom in on the objects.

DERSU

The mother bear is very protective of
her cubs, the lynx is very quick and
silent, and if you gather many fern
leaves it makes for a soft place to
lay your head.

The audience understands something. Dersu is speaking of his
experience in the forests of Russia but the people see it is an
analogy that he, as the next Russian president, would take better
care of them - protection, stealth and a make Russia a softer
place. They think and then they applaud.

MALAKHOV

So you could run. Couldn't just about
any Russian do a better job than the
current President?

DERSU

This is not about me; it can't be.
Russia is a huge nation. If you ever
rode a train from West to East, then
you know Russia is never be about one
man. It can't be.

The Russian people seem tired of the "me" and "I" politics. They
are tired of the selfish politicians. They applaud.

DERSU

It is the responsibility of every
Russian to be on guard and to protect
their property and their neighbours.
If the average Russian does his job
of vigilance, everything will be
fine.

The words "every Russian" rings home with them and they applaud.

INT. SOLOMIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Audience applause is heard over TV. SOLOMIN claps weakly along
with the TV sound. SVETLANA and the nurses also clap.

SOLOMIN

(smiling)

Splendid. Just splendid...

SOLOMIN looks up as CHEMISLAVA comes into the room.

SOLOMIN

Damn, Chemislava, get in here! You
shouldn't miss any of this!

CHEMISLAVA hurries to the other nurses side. SOLOMIN turns to
SVETLANA.

SOLOMIN

I'm becoming quite attached to Dersu
- quite attached.

(SVETLANA smiles)

And so are you, aren't you, Svetlana.

SVETLANA

(a beat)

Yes, I am, Yuri.

SOLOMIN
(reaches out, takes her hand)
That's good. That's good.

MALAKHOV
(over TV)
Well, Mr. Hunter, from the sound of
our audience, I'd say that your words
are a most welcome respite from what
we've been hearing from others.

DERSU
(over TV)
Thank you.

INT. TV STUDIO - NIGHT

MALAKHOV asks another question.

MALAKHOV
I'm sorry to say that our time is
running short, but before we close,
I'd like to ask one final question.
What sort of hunter, sir, would you
be?

DERSU
(with confidence)
I am a very sober hunter.

INT. KREMLIN - THE PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

More applause and laughter over the TV. The PRESIDENT pales and
throws his glass against the wall.

PRESIDENT
Oh, no...

He rolls over in bed defeated. The First Lady reaches out, puts a
comforting hand on his shoulder.

INT. DOROKHOV'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

DOROKHOV holds a phone to his ear with one hand, shuts off the TV
with the other.

DOROKHOV

Okay, I'll see you in twenty minutes.

DOROKHOV hangs up the phone, scurries around getting dressed. His wife sits grimly in bed.

WIFE

(coldly)

Business, bullshit! Going out in the middle of the night to meet that bitch in a bar...

DOROKHOV

She's a damn fine reporter! I've got to talk to her about this Hunter.

WIFE

(turns over in bed)

Good night.

DOROKHOV

Look, honey...

WIFE

(cuts him off)

I said good night!

DOROKHOV gives up, hurries from the room.

INT. TV STATION - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

VITVININ, carefully carrying his overcoat, walks with DERSU through the corridor. A delighted producer walks behind them.

VITVININ

Marvelous! Just marvelous, Mr. Hunter! What spirit you have, what confidence! Exactly what this country needs!

DERSU smiles at well-wishers as they continue on through the corridor.

INT. PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The First Lady is snuggled up close to the President, caresses his body. She almost causes him to spill his drink. But after a moment, it becomes clear to her that he is not up to the occasion.

FIRST LADY

Darling... What's wrong?

PRESIDENT

I can't... I just can't right now...
I'm sorry, dearest... I just can't...

The First Lady looks at him for a beat, then turns, lies on her back and stares at the ceiling.

INT. COCKTAIL LOUNGE - NIGHT

An 'in' meeting place for the upper-middle Moscow crowd. DOROKHOV and ANYA ONEGIN sit at a table, drinks in front of them.

DOROKHOV

It didn't make any sense to me at all. I didn't know what the hell he was talking about...

ONEGIN

He wasn't making a speech to us - he was talking to the masses. He was very clever, keeping it at an elementary school level - that's what they understand.

DOROKHOV

Yeah? Well, I don't understand why he was out East. I saw him almost eaten by a tiger. And why?

ONEGIN

Who knows? Maybe the government had something to do with it. You did write a sympathetic story for them.

DOROKHOV

You know, Anya - I really feel like I've been had, you know the newspaper paid to bring him back here to Moscow.

The CAMERA begins to slowly move away from the table toward the bar. DOROKHOV's voice fades into the background hubbub. The voice of BARANOVSKY, the research assistant from the newspaper is heard as the camera settles on the part of the bar occupied by FENENKO and his BARANOVSKY.

BARANOVSKY

Be reasonable - I've been everywhere,
there's no place left to check!

FENENKO

Try again.

BARANOVSKY

Sure, try again - where? There's
nothing, it's like he never existed!

FENENKO

Try again.

BARANOVSKY

It's useless!

FENENKO

I said - try again.

BARANOVSKY stands, shoves his sparse paperwork across the table.

BARANOVSKY

Up yours You try again, I quit!

BARANOVSKY takes his drink with him as he leaves the lounge.

EXT. SOLOMIN MANSION - NIGHT

The household staff is lined up on the front steps, applauding DERSU as he steps from the limousine. DERSU accepts the applause, though does not understand the reason. As he nears the steps, RAYT and YAKUNIN step forward.

YAKUNIN

An outstanding speech, sir.

RAYT

May I take your coat, Mr. Hunter?

DERSU

Yes. Thank you, Rayt.

RAYT nods, takes DERSU's overcoat, allows everyone to enter the house ahead of him. Alone on the steps, RAYT quickly searches through the pockets of the coat, finds nothing.

INT. SOLOMIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

SOLOMIN is in bed. SVETLANA sits on the edge, looks warmly to DERSU who stands nearby. ARDANKIN prepares an injection for SOLOMIN, and occasionally glances curiously at DERSU. DERSU breathes deeply, enjoys the oxygen.

SOLOMIN

(with some effort)

You possess a great gift, Dersu, of being natural. And that, my boy, is a rare talent, the true mark of a leader. You were strong and brave, yet did not moralize. I hope the entire country was watching you tonight, the entire country.

ARDANKIN crosses to SOLOMIN, needle in hand.

ARDANKIN

And you, Yuri, must be strong and brave for me. Turn over, please.

SOLOMIN

(holds up hand)

In a minute, Vasily - in a minute. Dersu, I would like to ask a favor of you.

DERSU

Certainly, Yuri.

SOLOMIN

The Americans are hosting an evening reception tomorrow evening honoring Ambassador Jackson of the United States. I think it's rather obvious that Vasily won't allow me to attend, so - would you go in my place, and escort Svetlana?

DERSU

Yes. I would like to escort Svetlana.

SOLOMIN

Good. Together, the two of you should create quite a stir - I can already hear the gossip.

SVETLANA

(with a blush)

Yuri, really...

SOLOMIN holds out a tired hand to DERSU - DERSU holds it.

SOLOMIN

Thank you, Dersu... Thank you very much.

(takes back hand)

I'm happy to help you, Vasily.

SVETLANA and DERSU quietly leave the room. ARDANKIN watches DERSU go, then gives SOLOMIN the injection.

INT. SOLOMIN MANSION - THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

The elevator door opens, SVETLANA and DERSU come into the hallway. DERSU looks back at the elevator for a beat, then the two walk quietly down the hall.

SVETLANA

(stopping by bedroom door)

You don't happen to have a tuxedo in your suitcase, do you?

DERSU

No.

SVETLANA

Oh. Well, we can fix up one of Yuri's for you tomorrow night. They insist on a black tie.

DERSU

I see.

SVETLANA
(a pause, softly)
I have very few friends, Dersu... And
Yuri's friends are all quite a bit
older...

SVETLANA gives DERSU a long look, then kisses him on the lips. She
steps back, smiles.

SVETLANA
Good night, Dersu.

DERSU
Good night, Svetlana.

SVETLANA goes into her bedroom, closes the door. DERSU heads for
his room as though nothing had happened.

INT. KREMLIN HALLWAY - MORNING

TSELNER and the five other AIDES nervously await the PRESIDENT's
arrival. The door opens, the PRESIDENT briskly enters the room.

PRESIDENT
Good morning, gentlemen.

AIDES
(as a group together)
Good morning, sir.

The President leads the way into the office.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - MORNING

As the PRESIDENT goes to his desk, an assistant hands him a drink.

TSELNER hands him a folder. The President sits, reads it quickly,
it is very brief.

PRESIDENT
(to TSELNER)
This is not what I requested.

TSELNER
No, sir.

PRESIDENT

This information goes back three days. I want the standard file, you know that.

TSELNER

Right, Chief.

PRESIDENT

So...? Where the hell is it?

TSELNER

We... uh, have been unable to come up with any information before the man appeared at Mr. Solomin's home ... and, uh...

PRESIDENT

What the hell are you talking about, Tselner?

TSELNER

Well, we do have data from FSB's sources, Chief - but it isn't pertinent.

PRESIDENT

I'd like to hear that data, Tselner.

TSELNER

Yes, sir.

TSELNER takes a clipboard from the man at his right.

TSELNER

(reading)

Suits hand-made by a tailor in Moscow in 1978. However the suit was recently altered. The original tailor went out of business in 1982, when he was sent to a work camp.

(a pause)

His shoes were hand-made in 1978. The shoemaker has long since been dead. Underwear, all of the finest cloth, factory destroyed by fire in 1988. The man carries no identification; no

wallet, no driver's license, no credit cards.

(a pause)

He carries one item along with him, a fine Swiss hunting knife crafted around 1980; so far they have been unable to ascertain where or when purchase was made.

(a pause)

The knife is engraved, "Thank you, Viktor"

(a pause)

He has never dyed his hair.

(a pause)

Computers have analyzed Hunter's vocal characteristics; it is impossible to determine his ethnic background, they feel his accent may be eastern Russia, but they will not commit to that.

(a pause)

Fingerprint check proved negative, no identification possible.

(a pause)

Oh, one curious item he has a business card. It is a very old and worn card of a former politburo member, Viktor Demichev, Politburo, 1978 to 1991. The words, "Please extend every courtesy to my very good friend, Dersu." The handwriting is authentic. Viktor Demichev died last week. We gained access to the apartment but it had been wiped for prints and cleaned meticulously.

(a pause)

They only found some fish DNA in the sink. It was consistent with fish in the Moscow River.

(a pause)

That's it, Mr. President.

The President stares at TSELNER for a beat, then speaks into his intercom.

PRESIDENT
(into intercom)

Miss Davis - I'd like my sausages
with my eggs this morning, please.

The PRESIDENT leans back in his swivel chair, looks at TSELNER.

PRESIDENT
So what does all that add up to?

TSELNER
Well, sir - it occurred to us that he
might be an agent of a foreign power.

PRESIDENT
So Solomin has introduced an agent
into his home. That is good. We can
use that against him.

The PRESIDENT thinks. He is a bit paranoid.

PRESIDENT
I don't think Solomin is ill. I think
it is a ruse and he will be running
against me in the election.

TSELNER
But, we ruled that out, as foreign
agents invariably are provided with
too much documentation, too much
Russian identity... Typically an
American spy would have too many
documents and never have none.

PRESIDENT
He is Chinese then?

The PRESIDENT sits and calculates. He drinks vodka before
breakfast.

TSELNER
We, uh... think he might be exactly
who he says he is. A Russian. From
the East.

PRESIDENT
That could be dangerous.

TSELNER

I don't quite know what to make of it yet, sir... But we'll keep on top of it, Mr. President - we'll come up with the answer.

PRESIDENT

(with sarcasm)

I would appreciate that.

The AIDES quickly leave the office.

INT. DERSU'S ROOM - MORNING

Alternate POV SECRETARY (silent) and POV DERSU. DERSU has left his bed. He is standing at the window; he has his bed tray in one hand, eating breakfast with the other. A pile of the morning's newspapers lies at the foot of the bed, untouched. The deer are out on the huge lawn, DERSU watches as he eats. There is a knock at the door.

DERSU

(without turning from the deer)

Come in!

SVETLANA enters, wearing a robe over her nightgown.

SVETLANA

Dersu! Have you seen the papers?

DERSU

No, Svetlana. I didn't read the papers.

SVETLANA

(moving to bed)

Well, it seems you've been described as one of the architects of the President's speech. And your own comments from the 'Let Them Speak' show are quoted in opposition to the President's.

DERSU

I don't like the President.

SVETLANA
(sits on bed)
I know...
(a moment)
So you really charmed Russia last
night, Dersu ...
(another moment, DERSU watches the
deer)
Do you mind my being here, like this?

DERSU
(a bite of toast)
No, Svetlana. I like you to be here.

SVETLANA smiles, moves a little closer to DERSU.

SVETLANA
You know, Dersu... I want us to be...
(with difficulty)
I want us... You and I to become
close... I want us to become very
close, you know...?

DERSU
Yes, Svetlana. I know that.

SVETLANA suddenly begins to cry, sobbing quietly at first, then losing control, the tears flowing freely. To comfort her, DERSU puts his arm around her shoulder, nearly tipping his breakfast tray. SVETLANA responds to his touch, draws closer, holds DERSU tightly. DERSU does his best to avoid spilling his breakfast, keep an eye on the deer, and to comfort SVETLANA. She gives in to her desires, begins to caress DERSU, running her hand over his body. She kisses him, his eyes, his neck, his lips, his ears. CUT TO the deer. CUT TO SECRETARY. We hear the breakfast tray crash to the floor. The Italian Greyhound is frightened and runs under the bed. She peers out from under the bed watching.

Later...

A knock at the door startles SVETLANA. She rises off the floor, straightens her robe and moves toward the door.

SVETLANA
(stopping by door)
I do love you, Dersu.

She turns, opens it to YANA, the seamstress. YANA carries one of SOLOMIN's tuxedos.

SVETLANA
Oh, come in, Yana.

YANA
(entering)
Yes, ma'am.

SVETLANA
Dersu, Yana will alter Yuri's tuxedo
for you.

DERSU is sitting on the floor leaning against he wall under the window. Exhausted. He can't speak... but he raises one hand to acknowledge that he heard.

SVETLANA smiles to DERSU confidently and leaves. YANA stands by patiently as DERSU watches SECRETARY eats his scrambled eggs off the floor.

INT. SOLOMIN MANSION - ARDANKIN'S ROOM - DAY

ARDANKIN is at his desk, searching yandex.ru for "Anton Dorokhov". He finds a number, dials.

ARDANKIN
(into phone)
Mr. Anton Dorokhov., please.
(a wait)
Is Anton Dorokhov in?
(a beat)
Yes, this is Dr. Vasily Ardankin,
would you please tell Mr. Dorokhov
that I would like to talk to him? It
concerns Dersu Hunter.

INT. SOLOMIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DUSK

Nurses work in a corner of the room. Solomin is in bed, very still, deep in thought.

EXT. AMERICAN EMBASSY - EVENING

The SOLOMIN limousine pulls up to Embassy. YEFIM opens the door for SVETLANA and DERSU. He wears YURI's tuxedo, SVETLANA is in a

formal gown. The PRESS is waiting, a couple of reporters, 5 photographers and a mini-cam crew from a TV station gather around SVETLANA and DERSU.

GAZETA REPORTER

Mr. Hunter, what did you think of the Gazeta's editorial on the President's speech?

DERSU

(smiling for photos)

I didn't read it. My Secretary however found it useful.

GAZETA REPORTER

(surprised)

But, you must have at least glanced at it.

DERSU

No. I did not glance at it.

PRAVDA REPORTER

Mr. Hunter, the Komsomolskaya Pravda spoke of your 'Peculiar brand of viciousness,' what was your reaction to that?

DERSU

(continues to be photographed)

I did not read that either.

PRAVDA REPORTER

Well, how do you feel about that phrase, 'Peculiar brand of viciousness?'

DERSU

I do not know what that means. My Secretary tore it to bits before I could look at it.

TV REPORTER

I'm from television. Do you find television more informative?

DERSU

Why? The idiot box serves no purpose.
I find newspapers very useful and
convenient.

INT. DERSU'S ROOM AT THE MANSION - DUSK

SECRETARY goes to the bathroom on the newspapers laid out on the
bathroom tile.

EXT. AMERICAN EMBASSY - EVENING

There is a moment of silence as the reporters digest this. The
NEWSPAPER REPORTER smiles, questions DERSU.

GAZETA REPORTER

What newspapers do you use to gather
information?

DERSU

(hand gestures wide)

I prefer the Rossiyskaya Gazeta. It
seems to have a broader coverage. And
it is easy to pickup.

PRAVDA REPORTER

Mr. Hunter. Do you use Komsomolskaya
Pravda?

DERSU

I've found it is weak, not wide
enough coverage, and the newspaper
falls apart and I can't pick it up
easily.

GAZETA REPORTER

Thank you.

DERSU

You're welcome.

SVETLANA and DERSU walk toward the front door, leaving the newsmen
to talk among themselves.

SVETLANA

Your dog is named Secretary?

DERSU

Yes.

She smiles at the joke DERSU has played on the press.

SVETLANA

I've never seen anyone handle the media as well as you, Dersu. You're so cool and detached - almost as if you were born to it.

DERSU

Thank you, Svetlana.

The front door is opened for them by the Embassy staff.

INT. AMERICAN EMBASSY - EVENING

The reception is in progress. The room is crowded possibly a hundred guests, mostly foreign ambassadors and other such dignitaries. SVETLANA and DERSU enter, are greeted by DENNIS WATSON, a State Department official.

WATSON

Mrs. Solomin, how good to see you.

SVETLANA

Mr. Watson.

WATSON

(looks to DERSU)

And you must be Mr. Hunter, correct?

DERSU

Yes.

SVETLANA

Dersu, this is Mr. Dennis Watson of the United States State Department.

DERSU

(they shake)

Hello, Dennis.

WATSON

A pleasure to meet you, sir.

DERSU

Yes. It is.

SOPHIE, an older Russian-American woman adorned with jewelry, approaches, embraces SVETLANA. SOPHIE spends winters in Port Saint Lucie Florida and summers in Moscow.

SOPHIE

Svetlana, child! How nice of you to come.

SVETLANA

Hello, Sophie.

Sophie steps back, looks at DERSU.

SOPHIE

And look who you brought with you!

SVETLANA

Sophie, this is Dersu Hunter...

SOPHIE

(hugs DERSU)

Oh, I've been just dying to meet you, Mr. Hunter!

SVETLANA

Dersu, this is Mrs. Sophia Yemelin.

DERSU

(being hugged)

Hello, Sophia.

SOPHIE

(steps back, admires DERSU)

Sophie, please - call me Sophie!

Sophie pulls them all into the thick of the party.

SOPHIE

(as they go, to DERSU)

You just have to let me introduce you to some of the exciting people here... Why, Nikita Mikhalkov and his daughter may drop by later!

They disappear into the crowd.

INT. KREMLIN RESIDENCE - NIGHT

The PRESIDENT is bent over his desk, drinking but also wrapped up in constructing a model airplane from the Korean War. The First Lady sits nearby, plays solitaire on an undersized table. The PRESIDENT glances to her, then back to his work.

PRESIDENT

(drinking and gluing the wing)
How are the kids getting along?

FIRST LADY

Oh. Well, I just talked to Vika this morning. She loves London, but to quote her, she says, 'The Protection Service is getting to be a drag.' I guess she wants her privacy...

PRESIDENT

Huh... I'm glad they're along with her, if you know what I mean... How about Fidel?

FIRST LADY

Well, I think Fidel needs some time alone with you, darling... He's getting to that age, you know... He really misses you...

PRESIDENT

Yeah... I'll have a talk with him as soon as...

A KNOCK at the door interrupts the PRESIDENT.

PRESIDENT

(calls out)
Yes, come in!

TSELNER enters.

TSELNER

Sorry to disturb you, chief but we have new developments.

PRESIDENT

Oh? What?

TSELNER

We have word that the Americans have put out a top priority alert for information on Hunter's background. So far, they haven't come up with a thing - what's more, as a result of their eagerness, one of their ablest agents blew his cover, we have him in custody at this time.

PRESIDENT

Good. Anything else?

TSELNER

Yes, chief - eight other foreign powers have put Hunter under surveillance. We're around-the-clock now, sir. I'll keep you posted.

The PRESIDENT nods, TSELNER leaves. The PRESIDENT puts some more glue on the wing. He pours another drink. It is a really crappy looking model.

INT. AMERICAN EMBASY - NIGHT

SOPHIE pulls SVETLANA, WATSON and DERSU to AMBASSADOR JACKSON, who is black, and his WIFE, also black. JACKSON smiles as he sees SVETLANA. JACKSON speaks a broken peasant quality Russian, the sort they teach at Prarie View A&M college.

JACKSON

Mrs. Solomin. How delightful.

JACKSON kisses SVETLANA's hand.

SVETLANA

It seems like ages, Mr. Ambassador.
(a nod to his wife)
Mrs. Jackson.

MRS. JACKSON returns the nod as SOPHIE introduces DERSU.

SOPHIE

Mr. Hunter, let me introduce you to our guest of honor, His Excellency Andrew Jackson, Ambassador of the United States.

DERSU warmly shakes Jackson's hand.

DERSU

Hello.

SOPHIE

Ambassador Jackson, this is Mr. Dersu Hunter.

JACKSON

Delighted. Delighted.

SOPHIE

And this is Mrs. Jackson.

DERSU smiles at MRS. JACKSON as the Ambassador puts an arm around him. This affection is suspiciously too much.

JACKSON

You must sit with us, my friend, we have much to discuss.

DERSU

I agree.

JACKSON

(to SVETLANA)

How is my dear friend Yuri feeling?

SVETLANA

He's doing as well as could be expected, Mr. Ambassador. He still speaks of the stimulating discussions he's had with you.

JACKSON

Ah, Yes. Please give him my regards.

SVETLANA

Of course.

SOPHIE

(tugs at SVETLANA)

Come on, Svetlana. Let's let the men talk, there are so many people that have been asking about you.

SVETLANA

(to DERSU and JACKSON)

Would you two excuse me for a moment?

JACKSON

Regretfully, Mrs. Solomin - I shall yield the pleasure of your company to others.

DERSU

Yes, Svetlana. I shall yield too.

SVETLANA

(smiling)

I'll be back soon...

SVETLANA and SOPHIE leave. JACKSON leads his wife and DERSU to their table.

JACKSON

(as they walk)

I'm sorry we haven't met sooner, Mr. Hunter. I had the pleasure of seeing you on television last night and I listened with great interest to your down-to-earth philosophy. I'm not surprised that it was so quickly endorsed by the President.

(quietly)

Tell me, Mr. Hunter, just how serious is Yuri's illness? I did not want to upset Mrs. Solomin by discussing it in detail.

DERSU

Yuri is very ill.

JACKSON

Yes, so I've heard, a shame... As you know, we in the States have the keenest interest in developments of

the First Russian Economic Corporation... We are pleased to hear that you may fill Yuri's place should he fail to recover.

(arrive at table)

Be seated, please, Mr. Hunter.

DERSU sits between Jackson and Mrs. Jackson.

JACKSON

(moves chair close to DERSU)

Mr. Hunter, I wish to be quite candid - considering the gravity of your economic situation, shouldn't we, the diplomats, and you, the businessman - get together more often?

DERSU

Yes, I agree, I think so too.

JACKSON

To exchange our thoughts - what does an American know about business these days? On the other hand, what does a Russian know about diplomacy?

DERSU

Yes, I understand.

INT. EMPTY EMBASSY HALLWAY

The Chargé d'Affaires and CIA agent speaks into a gold Rolex watch.

AGENT

Testing 1, 2, 3.

INT. EMBASSY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

The communications technician reads the recording equipment.

TECHNICIAN

The device is active.

INT. AMERICAN EMBASY - NIGHT

JACKSON

And I have noticed in you a certain reticence regarding political issues - so why not a coming together? An interchange of opinion? We may find, my friend, that we are not so far from each other, not so far!

DERSU

(an engaging smile)

We are not far...

(motions at nearness of their chairs)

You are an angry black man.

DERSU is mocking the American.

JACKSON

(laughs hard)

Bravo! Bravo! We are two angry men! And we want our supporters to remain angry also, correct? You know if we lay our cards right, the entire world can be ruled by angry men. Everyone must be a hateful victim. But once people get the idea that they can do without us then we must agree to stomp this idea out. No?

DERSU

No.

The Chargé d'Affaires brings the ambassador the watch.

JACKSON

Mr. Hunter since we are going to be friends and our nation's are going to peacefully coexists, I would like to present you with this watch.

DERSU has no idea what it is... and looks at it strange. But JACKSON thinks he is impressed. And speechless. JACKSON also thinks that he is open for bribery when DERSU finally nods.

JACKSON takes the watch from the box and puts the watch on DERSU's wrist. MRS. JACKSON smiles deviously, thinking - that was easy enough.

JACKSON

Yes. Tell me, Mr. Hunter - do you by any chance enjoy Langston Hughes poetry? I ask this because there is something... there is something ghetto about you.

DERSU

Do you think so?

JACKSON

So you know Hughes!

Jackson pauses, then leans close to DERSU, speaks softly in English.

JACKSON

(in English)

Negroes - Sweet and docile, Meek, humble, and kind: Beware the day - They change their mind.

DERSU, having never heard this language, laughs. It sounds funny to him. DERSU raises his eyebrows and laughs again. Mrs. Jackson remains impassive.

DERSU

I understand.

JACKSON

(amazed)

So you know Langston Hughes in English, do you? Mr. Hunter, I must confess I had suspected as much all along - I know an educated man when I meet one!

DERSU

Oh, good.

JACKSON

Yes, it is very good!

DERSU

Yes, it is.
(beat)

Would you tell me your name again,
please?

JACKSON

(slaps DERSU on the back)

Ho! Ho! A dash of Russian humour!
Andrew Jackson!

DERSU

Yes. I like that name very much.

JACKSON

And yours, sir - Dersu Hunter! How
poetic! Dersu, a name of uncertain
meaning! And Hunter, a bit of the
French, a suggestion of a stroll
through the forest! A beautiful name,
my friend!

As he speaks in Russian, SVETLANA comes to the table, taps Jackson
on the shoulder.

JACKSON

(immediately rises)

Mrs. Solomin! You have returned to
us!

SVETLANA

Only to steal Mr. Hunter away, if I
might.

(to DERSU)

Everyone wants to meet you.

DERSU

Yes, SVETLANA. That would be good.

JACKSON

(shakes DERSU's hand)

We must speak again, Mr. Hunter, many
times!

DERSU

Thank you.

As SVETLANA and DERSU leave, Jackson turns and nods to a MAN
standing a short distance away. The man, SMITH, hurries to the
table. They speak in English.

JACKSON
Yes? What have you found?

SMITH
(in English)
We have nothing on him, Ambassador Jackson.

JACKSON
(holds up hand, looks around)
Quietly, please. Mr. Hunter, for one, understands our language.

SMITH
(in English, softly)
Sorry, Mr. Ambassador.

JACKSON
What do you mean there is nothing?
That's impossible.

SMITH
There is no information available on the man before he moved into Yuri Solomin's. It has proven to be such a difficult task that it has resulted in the loss of one of our agents to the Russian government.

MRS. JACKSON strains to overhear the conversation.

JACKSON
But... Where was this man Hunter before last week?

SMITH
Apparently the Kremlin shares our curiosity - they have also launched an investigation, and, according to our sources, neither the FSO nor the FSB has met with success.

JACKSON
I see. Clearly, such interest on their part is of great political significance.

SMITH
Clearly, yes comrade.

JACKSON
Hmmm... Take this down.
(SMITH takes out notepad)
I want this quote included in the New York Times coverage; 'Dersu Hunter, in an intimate discussion with Ambassador Jackson, noted that "Angry black men make the best leaders because the victims can count on them for rapid social and political changes."'

SMITH
Very good, Sir.

SMITH leaves the table.

INT. MOSCOW COCKTAIL LOUNGE - NIGHT

The same lounge as before. FENENKO sits at the same table as earlier, only this time with the editor of the Rossiyskaya Gazeta, MAXIM BEBCHUK. FENENKO puffs on his pipe as he speaks.

FENENKO
It's strictly rumor at this stage,
Maxim - just something in the wind...

BEBCHUK
Something rather big in the wind, I'd say. So whose files were destroyed? The FSB's or the FSO's?

FENENKO
I don't know. Like I said, it's just rumours so far, but we should start nosing around, see if we can talk to some people...

The CAMERA begins to slowly MOVE AWAY from their table.

BEBCHUK
But why? The question is why? Why would they destroy Hunter's files?

What is it about his past they are trying to cover up?

(his voice fades)

A criminal record? A membership in a subversive organization? Homosexual, perhaps?

The sound of Stuart's voice dissolves into ANTON DOROKHOV's as the camera turns to DR. ARDANKIN and DOROKHOV sitting at a table nearby.

DOROKHOV

And he told us that he had been living in the forest since he was a child, working as a hunter. Wife and child killed. He had a gun and trapping equipment, a tiger had chased him and he was exhausted when I first met him and I... Well, I didn't really believe him, of course - but why the act?

ARDANKIN

I have no idea.

DOROKHOV

Another thing that baffles me, Doctor - what was his connection with DEMICHEV? Major financial dealings, obviously - but our newspaper has no record of any such transactions.

They men sit and think. Finally DOROKHOV volunteers some information he has been holding back.

DOROKHOV

We think his friend Viktor Demichev left the politburo with literally tons of Kremlin gold. And his living in obscurity all these years was a ruse.

ARDANKIN

Hmmm. You say he showed up at a conservationists cabin. You saw his equipment?

DOROKHOV

Well, he said it was his, he walked us through it. There was tiger. I saw it. The conservationist saw it. He had furs that he had dropped and we went to retrieve.

ARDANKIN

I see.

(leans close to DOROKHOV)

Mr. Dorokhov, I must ask you to keep this incident with Mr. Hunter to yourselves. There's no telling what he was involved in, and the matter may be extremely confidential. So please, not a word.

DOROKHOV

I'm a reporter.

ARDANKIN

Of course, I understand.

ARDANKIN

Fine. Thank you, Mr. Dorokhov.

DOROKHOV

Wait hang on. If I don't report this can I have full access to what is coming?

ARDANKIN

Yuri Solomin can get you into any room in Russia with a phone call.

ARDANKIN rises, leaves the bar.

INT. EMBASSY DINNER PARTY - NIGHT

SVETLANA and SOPHIE are talking to a small group. DERSU moves away to get an hors d'oeuvre and is approached by RONALD ZHILIN, a publisher.

ZHILIN

Mr. Hunter, I'm Ronald Zhilin, of Moscow Books.

DERSU

Hello, Ronald.

ZHILIN

Mr. Hunter, my editors and I have been wondering if you'd consider writing a book for us? Something on your political philosophy. What do you say?

DERSU

I can't write.

ZHILIN

(smiles)

Of course, who can nowadays? I have trouble writing a post card to my children! Look, we could give you a large advance, provide you with the very best ghostwriter, research assistants, proof readers...

DERSU

I can't read.

ZHILIN

Of course not! No one has the time to read! We are going bankrupt. I should have gone into television or radio.

INT. SOLOMIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

SOLOMIN is in bed. Sitting nearby are two attorneys, IZHUTIN and LUKYANOV. MRS. CHUPOV stands to one side and CHEMISLAVA and DINA prepare an IV for SOLOMIN.

SOLOMIN

(speaks slowly, with effort)

Everything. I said everything and that's exactly what I mean.

IZHUTIN

But, Mr. Solomin, the holdings are so extensive, I would like to be more precise in...

SOLOMIN
(interrupts)
What could be more precise than
everything...?

ARDANKIN enters the room, stands by the door, unnoticed.

IZHUTIN
(turns to LUKYANOV)
Everything to Mrs. Solomin.

LUKYANOV
(drafting a will)
Right - everything.

SOLOMIN
You two don't have to lecture me on
the complexities of the situation; no
one knows that better than myself...
But you must understand that I have
an endless faith in Mrs. Solomin's
abilities - I know that she will
select the right person for guidance
when she has the need... She has
shared my life, gentlemen, she has
given me far more pleasure than any
of my so called assets. Life has
suddenly become very simple for me
now - I may be older than my years,
and you might think me to be somewhat
feeble... But I am still in love,
gentlemen, thank God for that.

ARDANKIN steps up. He has the look of bad news on his face.

ARDANKIN
Yuri. I would like to talk to you
about Dersu.

SOLOMIN
You know there is something about him
that I trust. He makes me feel good.
He makes Svetlana feel good. Since he
has been around the thought of dying
has been much easier for me.

ARDANKIN can't bring himself to bother SOLOMIN. ARDANKIN silently leaves the room.

INT. KREMLIN - PRESIDENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It is pitch black. The President and the First Lady are in bed. They each lie on their backs, a distance apart and are silent.

FIRST LADY
(after some time)
Maybe you should talk to somebody,
darling.

PRESIDENT
No, that won't do any good.

FIRST LADY
(another pause)
Is it me? Is there something I've
done?

PRESIDENT
Oh, no, sweetheart - it's not you...

FIRST LADY
(another pause)
It's your damn job. It never happened
when you were the Prime Minister.

PRESIDENT
It's not that, I just...

The phone rings, the President reaches for the lamp and the phone.

PRESIDENT
(into phone)
Yeah, TSELNER - what is it?

TSELNER'S VOICE
(over phone)
Chief, we have a break in the case.
Our man at the Rossiyskaya Gazeta
says they are working on a story that
either the FSB or the FSO destroyed
Hunter's files before anyone could
get to them.

PRESIDENT

What? Why?

TSELNER'S VOICE

(over phone)

I can't say at this time - neither agency will admit to a thing.

PRESIDENT

(getting out of bed)

Okay, get both Directors over here.
I'll be right down.

The President hangs up the phone as the First Lady stares at the ceiling.

EXT. AMERICAN EMBASSY - NIGHT

A long, black limousine with an American and US State Department flag in the front pulls away from the embassy.

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

TIM EDWARDS, a high-ranking CIA black man, and two of his underlings are in the limousine, along with JACKSON, his wife. EDWARDS and his men wear new clothing, fresh from Washington D.C. They all drink whisky.

(Dialogue in English, Russian subtitles)

EDWARDS

The rank-and-file in the FSO feel he is FSB, but others feel he is a FSO man who knows how to destroy FSB files.

JACKSON

That could be possible...

EDWARDS

But we are quite certain, brother, that this man Hunter is a leading member of an Russian elitist faction planning a coup d'etat.

JACKSON

A coup d'etat! Of course, that was foreseen by Lenin himself!

EDWARDS

That is correct, Ambassador Jackson. We have ascertained that Hunter heads a big-business power group that will soon be taking over the Russian government.

JACKSON

Big business? America is socialist now, we can't work with that faction. The new Russian government would be capitalist. Our economy is stagnate we can't let the Russians surpass us.

EDWARDS

You have proven insightful again, Ambassador Jackson, you are to be congratulated for recognizing the importance of defeating capitalist nations.

JACKSON

Thank you. I will contact the White House and determine our level of participation. But I think we can expect a presidential finding to eliminate Mr. Hunter very quickly.

EDWARDS

(raising his glass)

Let us toast the end of Hunter.

They all raise their glasses.

GROUP TOAST

Cheers!

The MEN and MRS. JACKSON drink their whiskeys.

INT. AMERICAN EMBASSY - NIGHT

The reception is breaking up. SVETLANA, wearing her coat, searches for DERSU in the crowd. She sees him, taps him on the shoulder from behind.

SVETLANA

Dersu, where have you been? I was afraid you got bored and left, or that you were with some mysterious woman.

DERSU

No. I was with no one important.

INT. KREMLIN OFFICE - VERY LATE AT NIGHT

The PRESIDENT sits behind his desk in a bathrobe, his hair mussed. He takes a long drink to wake up. Standing before him are OLEG PEREZHOGIN, the Director of the Federal Security Service (FSB), and GRIGORII RYZHIKOV, the Federal Protective Service (FSO) chief. TSELNER stands to one side. All are red-eyed, tired, and frustrated.

PEREZHOGIN

I never gave such a directive, Mr. President.

RYZHIKOV

Nor I, sir. It would be out of the question.

PRESIDENT

Gentlemen, I didn't call you here at such an hour to make accusations, I just want to explore the possibilities. Now, I have three questions; Is the man a foreign agent? Or, have we suddenly found that our methods of gathering data are grossly inefficient? Or, thirdly, have the man's files been destroyed? Now, I'd like some answers.

RYZHIKOV

Hunter is not a foreign agent, there are too many countries investigating the man. We can rule that out.

PRESIDENT

Who isn't investigating the man? That is the answer. He is from there.

It is quite. They are struggling for an answer.

PEREZHOGIN

I think everyone is investigating him.

RYZHIKOV

New Zealand. They aren't, that we know of.

PRESIDENT

Very well... Can we rule out inefficiency...?

There is silence in the room. A couple of looks, but silence.

PRESIDENT

I see. What about question three? Is it possible to erase all traces of a man?

PEREZHOGIN

Highly unlikely, sir... In fact, the boys around the FSB feel that the only person capable of pulling it off would be an ex-FSO man.

RYZHIKOV

(a look to PEREZHOGIN)

I don't think that's entirely true, Oleg.

PRESIDENT

(to RYZHIKOV)

And what do the FSO boys think?

RYZHIKOV

Well, Mr. President... They don't quite know what to think.

PRESIDENT

(rising)

Gentlemen, needless to say, there is going to be a full investigation of your respective operations.

(goes to door)

Good night.

The President leaves the Oval Office.

INT. SOLOMIN MANSION'S SALT WATER AQUARIUM - LATE

DERSU AND SVETLANA return home from the party. They stop at the aquarium to watch. DERSU takes the watch off. It seems to irritate his wrist.

SVETLANA

Oh. You got a watch, Dersu.

DERSU

Andrew Jackson gave it to me.

SVETLANA seems concerned that it is a bribe of some sort or that it might create an obligation. Or she is worried that it might contain a listening device. Anything from the Americans is suspect. She is curious what he will do.

DERSU drops the watch into the aquarium. It sinks to the bottom and makes a rather ornate decoration. SVETLANA approves.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

The CIA detail is parked outside the ESTATE on the street. They have been following DERSU in the van with headphones on and machines recording.

TECHNICIAN

Sir we've not lost the signal but everything seems muddled and there is a pumping sound in the background.

The technician hits a button and the sound is sent to speakers. It sounds like the microphone has been dropped into an aquarium. The Chargé d'Affaires can't believe what he is hearing.

CHARGE D'AFFAIRES

That watch cost the taxpayers \$200,000.

INT. SOLOMIN MANSION - THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

SVETLANA and DERSU walk down the hallway.

SVETLANA
(holding his hand)
I feel so close to you, so safe with
you, Dersu...
(stops at her bedroom door)
And Yuri understands that, dearest.
He understands and accepts my
feelings for you.

DERSU
Yes, Svetlana. Yuri is very wise.

DERSU walks SVETLANA to her bedroom door.

Minutes later...

INT. SVETLANA'S BEDROOM SOLOMIN MANSION - NIGHT

SVETLANA is standing at her window a lot since she noticed DERSU doing this. She sees DERSU leave the house and walk out on the lawn. She runs down stairs to join him.

EXT. SOLOMIN ESTATE FOREST - NIGHT

DERSU is slowly walking through the forest. SVETLANA slowly reaches him, nervously paces behind him as DERSU peers into the forest. She makes a decision, moves to DERSU, kisses him.

EVE
(getting aroused)
Oh, DERSU...

She steps back, slips off her dress. CUT TO the deer panic and race to the other side of the estate.

INT. SOLOMIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - EARLY MORNING

ARDANKIN, CHEMISLAVA and DINA are readying a transfusion for Solomin. There is a feeling of urgency as they work.

Solomin, very weak, strains to speak to ARDANKIN.

SOLOMIN
No more, Vasily... No more needles...

ARDANKIN
(sits on the side of the bed)
It's not good, Yuri. I'm sure you can
feel it.

SOLOMIN
I know, Vasily. But, strangely
enough, I don't feel too bad about
now. I feel all right. I guess it's
easier knowing Dersu is here to fight
the Kremlin.

DINA is about to swab Solomin's arm with alcohol but he pulls
away.

SOLOMIN
No, I don't want any of that. Please.
Please, just get me Mr. Hunter, Dina
- please. He'll head it up.

DINA looks to ARDANKIN, he nods to her. Dina puts the cotton down,
leaves the room.

EXT. DERSU'S ROOM SOLOMIN MANSION - EARLY MORNING

DERSU is creating fishing flies. Dina appears in the doorway.

DINA
Mr. Hunter. Mr. Solomin would like to
see you.

DERSU
Yes. I would like to see Yuri.

DERSU then follows DINA into the house.

INT. SOLOMIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

ARDANKIN, with nothing more he can do to prolong Solomin's life,
sits on the bed close to him, grips his hand tightly. DINA shows
DERSU into the room and ARDANKIN motions to the nurses to leave.
As they do, DERSU, once again breathing the oxygen with a smile,
goes to Solomin's bedside.

SOLOMIN
(slowly)
Dersu... Dersu...

DERSU
Yes, Yuri. Are you going to die now?

ARDANKIN winces.

SOLOMIN
(a weak smile)
I'm about to kick this oxygen habit
and play a few duets with
Tchaikovsky.

DERSU
I'm sad about that.

SOLOMIN
(reaches out to him)
Let me feel the strength in your
hand, Dersu. Let me feel your
strength.
(holds DERSU's hand)
Yes, that's good... I hope, Dersu - I
hope that you'll stay with Svetlana.
Take care of her, watch over her,
she's an excellent guide, Dersu.

DERSU
(smiling)
A guide. Good.

SOLOMIN
She cares for you and she needs your
help, Dersu... there's much to be
looked after...

DERSU
Yes. I would like to do that.

SOLOMIN
I've worked very hard and enjoyed my
life. I've known success and I've
felt love. My associates, Dersu -
I've talked with them about you.
They're eager to meet you, very eager

to meet you. I'm very fond of you,
Dersu. And I understand Svetlana...
Tell her that, tell her I'm madly in
love with her.

SOLOMIN sees something..

SOLOMIN
Oh Wow. Oh Wow. Oh Wow.

SOLOMIN slumps down, dead. ARDANKIN checks his pulse, turns to
DERSU.

ARDANKIN
He's gone, Dersu.

DERSU
It happened to my friend Viktor too.
Yes, Vasily. I saw it happen too many
times before.

ARDANKIN
(covers Solomin's face)
Yes, I agree.

DERSU reaches out, uncovers SOLOMIN's face, gently touches the
man's forehead, feels the coldness. ARDANKIN eyes him as DERSU
stays with SOLOMIN for a moment, then replaces the sheet.

DERSU
(turns to ARDANKIN)
Will you be leaving now, Vasily?

ARDANKIN
In a day or two, yes.

DERSU
I wish you would not.

ARDANKIN
Why?

DERSU
Yuri gave me a job, to take care of
Svetlana. I don't think I'm able.

ARDANKIN
(a moment, a look)
You've become quite a close friend of
Svetlana's haven't you Mr...
(a beat)
Hunter...?

DERSU
Yes. I love Svetlana very much.

ARDANKIN
I see...
(another beat)
And you are really a hunter, aren't
you?

DERSU
(brightens)
Yes, Vasily - I am.
(a smile at ARDANKIN)
I'll go tell Svetlana about Yuri now,
Vasily.

DERSU leaves the bedroom. ARDANKIN watches him go, then sits back
in a chair, his head spinning.

A few days later...

EXT. MONASTERY CEMETERY - SOLOMIN MAUSOLEUM - MIDMORNING

Alternate POV SECRETARY (silent) and POV DERSU. The services are
being held on a hill overlooking the monastery. A clear, warm day
the grass is green. The sun is bright. The SOLOMIN servants are
lined up in back row of the seating. DOROKHOV the reporter, having
been promised full access, is there.

Sixty mourners are gathered around the SOLOMIN family. DERSU
stands with SVETLANA and ARDANKIN. The Italian Greyhound sits
reverently beside DERSU. DERSU has his briefcase again and it
looks like he may be ready to leave again.

SVETLANA looks at the briefcase and SECRETARY; SVETLANA is a bit
worried.

Carrying the casket are six important businessmen, speaking in
hushed tones. They are the oligarchs who run Russia.

PALLBEARER #1

Yuri said he is our candidate. But what do we know of the man? Nothing! We have no inkling of his past!

PALLBEARER #2

Correct, and that is an asset. A man's past can cripple him, his background turns into a quagmire and invites enquiry.

PALLBEARER #3

To this time, he hasn't said anything that could be used against him.

PALLBEARER #4

Well, I'm certainly open to the thought - it would be sheer insanity to support the President for another term. Everyone knows he is a vampire sucking the life blood out of Russia.

PALLBEARER #5

No one will go along with the man we have in the Kermlin now. Look at the facts, gentlemen, the response from his appearance on 'Let Them Speak' was awe-inspiring; he has thrilled and awakened the people of this Russia at a time of despair.

PALLBEARER #6

He's amiable, subtle, yet seemingly honest. He's riding a crest of popularity that builds with every statement. As far as his thinking goes, he appears to be one of us. I firmly believe, gentlemen, that he is our only hope - Mr. Dersu Hunter!

The PALLBEARERS have taken their place behind SVETLANA, DERSU and ARDANKIN.

The PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA stands before a microphone. He takes what looks like bottled water from under the rostrum. He takes a drink but, from his expression, it appears not to be water. It is probably vodka.

PRESIDENT

Millions of people across Russia have heard of the passing of Yuri Solomin; but, unfortunately, only relatively few will feel the pain and sadness at such a loss. To most, Yuri Solomin was a legend; to those of us gathered here today, Yuri was a beloved friend. My personal association with Yuri dates back many years, and my memories of our friendship will stay with me forever.

DERSU is looking around and is distracted by the deer.

PRESIDENT

Yuri worked at what he loved. He worked very hard. Every day. That's incredibly simple, but true. He was the opposite of absent-minded. He was never embarrassed about working hard, even if the results were failures. If someone as smart as Yuri wasn't ashamed to admit trying, maybe I didn't have to be ashamed.

(a beat)

When the Soviet system was dismantled, things were painful. He told me about a dinner at which 500 new Russian leaders met the new president. Yuri hadn't been invited. He was hurt but he still went to work. Every single day.

(a beat)

Yuri Solomin was an industrial giant, known to be powerful and uncompromising, and yet, on a personal level, we have all felt his warmth and humor.

(a beat)

I would like to share with you some of the things I noticed witnessing his life, illness and death.

(holds up paper, reads)

He didn't favor trends or gimmicks.

He liked people his own age.

His philosophy of business reminds me of a quote of his that went something like this: "A business trend is what seems to work now but fails later; progress can be ugly at first but it becomes workable later." Yuri always aspired to make progress.

Yuri was like a girl in the amount of time he spent talking about love. Love was his supreme virtue. He tracked and worried about the romantic lives of the people working with him.

I remember when he phoned the day he met Svetlana. "There's this beautiful woman and she's really smart and she has this dog and I'm going to marry her."

Even as a millionaire, Yuri always picked me up at the airport. He'd be standing there with his driver.

When a friend called him at work, his secretary answered, "Yuri's in a meeting. Would you like me to interrupt him?"

At first when Yuri had contracted his disease his doctor forbid any food that tasted good. We were in a very fine cafe. Yuri, who generally disliked cutting in line or dropping his own name, confessed that this once, he'd like to be treated a little specially. Dr. Ardankin told him: Yuri, this is special treatment. Yuri leaned over to me, and said: "I want it to be a little more special."

What I learned from my friend's death was that character is essential: What he was, was how he died.

As the President speaks DERSU get up and walks away. Leaving in the middle of the President's speech is a signal that he will run against the president. The PALLBEARERS on the second row nod their head in approval. Svetlana thinks he is simply emotional, which doesn't bother her. A few reporters in the back scramble to take notes... some of the TV cameras leave the Russian president and follow DERSU.

Leaving early is also a signal that he is not one to be controlled. Dersu will not be forced to obey the world's laws until he realizes he is defying them. He only recently learned about some of the rules of society, he has always known the rules of nature. He may be having an internal debate between the two systems.

The journalists, SVETLANA and ARDANKIN turn and watch as DERSU walks onto the lawn.

EXT. MONASTERY LAWN - MIDMORNING

DERSU, followed by his Italian Greyhound, walks over the lawn. He is followed by DOROKHOV and a TV reporter with a small portable camera.

Oblivious to all the politics and the two reporters, DERSU wanders through the estate. Evidently he has filled his brief case with corn for the deer. He empties the corn onto the lawn. A gold coin accidentally falls out with the corn. He doesn't pick it up.

Alternate POV SECRETARY (silent) and POV DERSU. The deer come and eat only feet away from DERSU and the dog.

EXT. MONASTERY CEMETERY - MIDDAY

The services are over. SVETLANA, ARDANKIN talk with the President and the First Lady.

SVETLANA

It was very moving, Bobby. Thank you so much...

PRESIDENT

We're all going to miss him, Svetlana...

(glances around)

Where's Mr. Hunter?

ARDANKIN
He walked off...

SVETLANA
Dersu is so sensitive... He was
overcome with grief...

PRESIDENT
I can certainly understand that...

FIRST LADY
Of course. I'm so sorry for you,
Svetlana.

SVETLANA
Thank you.

FIRST LADY
I'll call you soon.

The PRESIDENT and FIRST LADY head toward their limousine.

SVETLANA waits for them to turn and then she runs to follow DERSU.

In this film, DERSU evolves from a hunter to a potential presidential candidate; SVETLANA becomes a young Russian woman again; because of his confidence in DERSU, YURI SOLOMIN has become comfortable with the reality of his death.

EXT. MONASTERY WOODS - MIDDAY

DERSU walks deeper into the woods, absorbed in the greenery and the defused sunlight. He stops by a tree, thinks and then moves on. Alternate POV SECRETARY (silent) and POV DERSU. Reporters are following at a distance.

EXT. MONASTERY CEMETERY - MIDDAY

The majority of mourners have left. The entire staff goes to look for DERSU.

SVETLANA and ARDANKIN walk slowly toward the SOLOMIN limousine, look around for DERSU.

SVETLANA
Do you think we should look for him?

ARDANKIN

I don't think so, he should be along soon.

SVETLANA

I wish he were here...

SVETLANA keeps looking as they walk to the monastery lawn.

EXT. MONASTERY WOODS - MIDDAY

DERSU happens on a baby bird on the ground under a tree. The bird is uninjured but will not survive on the ground. DERSU and SECRETARY stop; they inspect the bird and the tree. He pulls a folder from his briefcase and scoops up the bird. He climbs the tree and replaces the baby in the nest. He begins to descend the tree.

Alternate POV SECRETARY (silent) and POV DERSU. DERSU falls the last ten feet with a thud on the ground. But DERSU stands, puts the file back into the briefcase and continues his walk, disappearing into a remote section of the woods.

EXT. MONASTERY CEMETERY - MIDDAY

SVETLANA has walked out into the lawn but returns to the monastery. There are servants looking beyond the lawn in the woods.

YEFIM stands holding the limo door for SVETLANA and ARDANKIN, all the other cars have gone. SVETLANA is worried, gets into the limo.

EXT. SIDEWALK - MIDDAY

Alternate POV SECRETARY (silent) and POV DERSU. Dersu leaves the property through a gate. DERSU, not aware of the media following him out onto the sidewalk, does several charitable things. The media is recording everything for the evening news.

LONG SHOT. DERSU takes some money from the briefcase and hands it to a homeless person. The homeless person is about to then enter a liquor store but DERSU reasons with the man and persuasively redirects him to the grocery store.

INT. LIMOUSINE - MIDDAY

SVETLANA is deeply concerned for DERSU.

SVETLANA

We have to find him, Vasily - he could be lost, something may have happened, we can't leave him!

ARDANKIN

You really care for him, don't you, Svetlana?

SVETLANA

I do - we do - both of us, Yuri and I feel so much for Dersu.

ARDANKIN

I think we'd better go look for him.
(he taps on the glass partition)
Denis!

DENIS starts up the limousine.

EXT. MOSCOW SUBURBAN STREET - MIDDAY

Alternate POV SECRETARY (silent) and POV DERSU. DERSU picks up some discarded trash and deposits it in a trashcan. Reporters maintain their distance but are taping it all.

INT. LIMOUSINE - MIDDAY

ARDANKIN and SVETLANA search for DERSU as DENIS drives along a suburban Moscow road.

EXT. MOSCOW SUBURBAN STREET - MIDDAY

Alternate POV SECRETARY (silent) and POV DERSU. DERSU carries the groceries of an old grandmother. Reporters maintain their distance but are taping it all.

INT. LIMOUSINE - AFTERNOON

ARDANKIN and SVETLANA search for DERSU as DENIS drives along a suburban Moscow road.

EXT. MOSCOW SUBURBAN ORPHANAGE - AFTERNOON

The orphanage is in disrepair. It needs to be painted. The boys are not clothed well and perhaps not feed very well.

Alternate POV SECRETARY (silent) and POV DERSU. DERSU watches a wild group of orphan boys play football out of control. They are dirty; they have no direction and they injure each other. The ball isn't properly inflated. DERSU gives the two gold bars from the briefcase to a lady overseeing an under-funded home for orphans and street children.

Orphanage managers stops the game and lines up the boys for DERSU. DERSU didn't ask for this but he seems to think it has some significance. He opens the brief case and pens one of DEMICHEV's medals on each boy. The boys have no idea what a soviet medal is or was, they think it is for their excellent athletic ability and stand proudly.

The last boy in line doesn't receive a medal. He is the smallest of the boys. DEMICHEV didn't receive enough medals in his career. DERSU doesn't know what to do. He glances at the orphanage manager. He reaches into his belt and pulls out a hunting knife. It is the knife Viktor DEMICHEV gave him. DERSU looks at the boy who is expecting the same reward as the other boys. DERSU looks to the manager and she nods. DERSU awards the boy with the knife.

Reporters maintain their distance but are taping it all.

INT. LIMOUSINE - VERY LATE AFTERNOON

ARDANKIN and SVETLANA search for DERSU as DENIS drives along a suburban Moscow road.

EXT. MOSCOW SUBURBAN STREET - VERY LATE AFTERNOON

Dersu approaches a church. Reporters maintain their distance.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DUSK

ARDANKIN and SVETLANA search for DERSU as DENIS drives along a narrow road through the woods. YEFIM, sitting in front, suddenly calls out.

YEFIM

Look!

About 100 yards ahead of them, DERSU and SECRETARY crosses the road. They continue on into the church.

INT. MOSCOW CHURCH - DUSK

DERSU attends the Panichida of someone with almost no friends or family.

SECRETARY parks herself in a corner and goes unnoticed.

There is only a very old widow in attendance. This appears it is a day of special commemoration, the yearly anniversary. The widow has a dish of boiled, soft-shell wheat and barley. It was prepared for the relatives and friends of the deceased. It has been sweetened with sugar, honey, raisins and some other dry fruits. However, there aren't any relatives or friends.

SVETLANA has caught up to DERSU and they are side-by-side in the church. VERY LONG SHOT through the church doors. Reporters maintain their distance but are recording it all from the church steps.

The kolivo is offered to DERSU and SVETLANA in remembrance of John 12:24.

THE PRIEST

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

As the service ends, the widow places a bit of kutia in cup, and DERSU and SVETLANA partake of it.

DERSU gives a handful of coins to the widow, who obviously looks poor. He gives a hand full of coins to the priest.

The church empties. SVETLANA and DERSU remain in the church. There is a slight (barely noticeable) halo over DERSU head.

THE END