LEVANI'S REVENGE

BY. THAIS GONZALEZ

SCENE 1

INT. LEVANI'S HOME - MORNING

It is March 1953 in Soviet Russia. LAMARA, 36, and her son LEVANI, 8, dark black hair and dark eyes, had just been relocated to Moscow from Tbilisi, Georgia for work.

Levani listens to the news on the radio.

NEWS ANCHOR
In other news, sirens will signal a moment of silence for our beloved, brave and most handsome leader, Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin at fifteen hundred hours this afternoon. Fear not comrades, for the Motherland will see brighter days with our new well educated secretary Mikhail Zasranets.

Lamara enters with curlers in her hair and in her nightgown.

LAMARA
Levani I need you to go to the market and buy some things.

Levani messes with the radio. Not listening to his mother.

LAMARA (CONT'D)
Levani! I have to leave for work in 20 minutes. Go buy some eggs, milk and butter.

Levani gets up, sighs and goes to his mother to retrieve cash. Before leaving, Lamara does the sign of the cross three times to Levani. He rolls his eyes.

LAMARA (CONT'D)
Don't be long. Eggs, milk and butter!

Lamara kisses his forehead.

Levani leaves their apartment and crosses the street to the market. When entering, he repeats the grocery list to himself in Georgian, his native language.

LEVANI
(whispers)
Eggs, milk, butter. Eggs, milk, butter.

Levani grabs the carton of eggs.

LEVANI (CONT'D)
Milk. Butter. milk. Butter.

Levani grabs the glass bottle of milk.

LEVANI (CONT'D)
Butter. Butter.

SVETLANA, mid 20's, blonde and bright blue eyes wearing a brown fur coat takes notice of Levani's usage of a different language and his darker hair.

SVETLANA
Do you know where you are?

Levani's eyes follow up her slender figure as she looms over him.

SVETLANA (CONT'D)
I said, do you know where you are? This is the motherland, not your uncle's farm. You speak the mother tongue! You and your kind are disgusting parasites, they'd kill you and leave you on the streets like dogs.

Levani's eyes water. He drops the eggs and milk and runs out of the market. He enters his apartment bawling and runs to his mother.

LAMARA
What's wrong?! What happened?!

Levani stares at his mother in distress. She knows someone at the market caused his pain.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE APARTMENT BUILDING

Lamara drags Levani by the hand and crosses the street to the market, with her nightgown and curlers in her hair.

They both enter the market frantically and walk around.

LAMARA
Point her out.

Levani looks around and sheepishly points Svetlana out.

LEVANI
Her.

Lamara's eyes lock on Svetlana.

LAMARA
Wait here.

Lamara crosses through the aisle and grabs a glass bottle of milk from the shelf. She walks up to Svetlana and breaks the bottle over her head. Svetlana falls to the ground. A pool of milk mixed with blood forms at her head. Lamara steps over her and grabs her with one hand by the coat.

LAMARA (CONT'D)
I shit on your country.

She lets go of the coat aggressively.

Levani, startled, stares at his mother walking toward him. Lamara grabs his hand as they exit the market.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - AFTERNOON

2 DAYS LATER

Lamara dials the home number. The phone rings three times. Levani picks up.

LEVANI
Hello?

LAMARA
Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you, happy birthday my sweet boy. Happy birthday to you.

LEVANI
(enthusiastically)
Mom is it you?! Shouldn't you be at work?

LAMARA
I asked for the rest of the day off to be with you. I picked up your favorite.

LEVANI
Honey cake and --

LAMARA
An Alenka bar! Put the kettle on. I'll be home soon.

Lamara hangs up the phone. She steps out of the phone booth and is approached by a man in a militia uniform from behind.

MILITIA MAN
Orders of Mikhail Zasranets.

He shoots Lamara in the back of the head. She falls on top of Levani's cake. He will never see her again.

SCENE 2

EXT. BOOT CAMP - DAWN

It is now summer of 1965 in Irkutsk, Russia. Far from Moscow. Out in the field are men in camo uniforms and a LIEUTENANT, late 40's, walking through the rows of recruits as he instructs them.

LIEUTENANT
They say this place is hell on Earth, so if you want to make it out of here alive, you will do what I say when I say it. You will be dressed, armed and ready to go at 0400 hours every morning. If not, we have many men here who can help give you a wake-up call. You will be responsible for your equipment, your guns, and for each other. If you cannot meet these bare minimum requirements, I will throw your ass in solitary for as long as it takes. You can forget about who you were before you got here. From this point forward, you are a number, and your only objective is defending the interests of the USSR.

He walks up to Levani, who is now 20 years old, has bleached blonde hair and eyebrows and is now known as Alexei.

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)
Is that clear?

TRAINING MONTAGE

A. All recruits are woken up by a siren at 3:57 AM, giving them only 3 minutes to prepare for the day. They all rush to put their uniforms on and assemble their guns.

B. The recruits run through the forest in full gear as the sun rises.

C. The recruits practice shooting at their targets. Levani hits the bullseye with every shot. The Lieutenant takes notice as others envy him.

D. The recruits compete in pairs to complete an obstacle course. Levani comfortably beats his opponent.

E. In the cafeteria, one of the men bumps into Levani leading him to drop his food. A fight ensues which lands Levani in solitary confinement.

F. Levani does push ups, alone in a cell.

G. He shivers at night while the guards flicker the fluorescent lights on and off to keep him awake.

H. Levani back at the boot camp, outrunning everyone in the forest and shooting every target.

I. Levani and an opponent participating in hand to hand combat. Levani takes some hits but then picks up his opponent and slams him to the ground.

J. Levani graduating with the highest ranking among the recruits.

Everyone applauds.

END MONTAGE.

SCENE 3

INT. MILITARY PLANE - NIGHT

2 YEARS LATER - 1967

Levani’s unique skill set and strengths have been noticed by the upper command of the army and he has been hand picked to serve on the Secretary’s security detail, just as he wanted. He is en route to the Kremlin located in Moscow.

INT. KREMLIN INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Levani patiently waits for OFFICER BORISOV, early 50’s, tall and muscular, the chief officer of the Secretary’s security detail.

Officer Borisov enters. Levani stands and salutes.

OFFICER BORISOV
At ease.

Levani lowers his arm and sits down.

OFFICER BORISOV (CONT'D)
Alexei is it? I was taking a look at your records, unfortunate how your paper work got caught in that fire in the orphanage. Looks like I have to get my information straight from the source-- so tell me the story of Alexei.

LEVANI
It's quite simple. I was born and raised here in Moscow. My mother died when I was about 7 or 8. After that-- the orphanage.

OFFICER BORISOV
How'd she die?

LEVANI
Car accident. Drunk driver hit her.

OFFICER BORISOV
No father in the picture?

LEVANI
Never knew him. He left before I was born.

OFFICER BORISOV
Answer me this-- how does a little orphan boy who grew up without a father learn how to shoot the way you do?

LEVANI
Confidence. Bravery. One's love for the motherland.

Officer Borisov smirks in approval.

OFFICER BORISOV
Well-- I know they told you in Irkutsk that who you were before does not exist. Look, this country will still be strong long after we are both dead but, while we are here, we have to protect her from enemies outside and within. What's the American expression?
(MORE)

OFFICER BORISOV (CONT'D)
Keep your friends close and your enemies closer.

Officer Borisov leans in.

OFFICER BORISOV (CONT'D)
Don't fuck this up.

CUT TO:

INT. KREMLIN HALLWAYS

Officer Borisov and Levani walk through the halls.

OFFICER BORISOV
Now, he's going to be very busy but it's important that you meet him tonight.

LEVANI
I'm sorry, who?

OFFICER BORISOV
Secretary Mikhail Zasranets. Starting tomorrow morning, you are to serve and protect him. Wherever he is, you will be. You will accompany him at meetings, trips, speeches and personal agendas. You are to be at constant alertness when it comes to the Secretary. If you happen to be sick or have personal issues, suck it up. This is your life now for 24 hours--365 days.

Officer Borisov and Levani approach the doors to the conference room where a meeting is being held by Mikhail Zasranets.

OFFICER BORISOV (CONT'D)
Now, we're going to go in. Keep your mouth shut. Once the meeting is over, I will introduce you.

Officer Borisov and Levani enter the conference room. It is dark and the only light is coming from a projected image of Eastern Europe on the wall. Smoke from the many men's cigars is visible in the light beaming out of the projector. A loud voice can be heard. It is Mikhail Zasranets.

Levani stares at Mikhail aggressively. In his head, he encounters a voice of himself screaming for his mother.

Officer Borisov slaps Levani on the shoulder and directs him to stand in the back of the room and listen to the meeting.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS
Regarding the situation with Romania, I think it's very simple. A special military operation with the goal of demilitarizing the anti-Soviets, I think anyone with common sense would think the same. And most importantly, the Americans would never see it coming, they're too busy worrying about the Cubans. Speaking of, that's another thing we have to take care of. Chavez wants to organize a state visit, it's very important that we maintain a united communist front. History is being written for Mother Russia, and we are holding the pen.

An aide brings in a small mug of tea for Mikhail. Before taking a sip, Mikhail makes the aide sip it first. The aide sips from the mug and appears to be fine. Mikhail takes the mug and excuses the aide.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS (CONT'D)
(whispers)
I live to see another day.
Now, moving on.

Mikhail looks at his documents.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS (CONT'D)
Let's discuss Georgia.
(Slams desk)
Protests. Everyday. Effective immediately-- I am enacting martial law. I've already instructed General Volkov to send troops to Tbilisi and eliminate the protesters by any means necessary.

Levani grips his hands tight and shifts.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS (CONT'D)
Georgia will remain a Soviet republic whether they like it or not. End of story.

LEVANI
What about Azerbaijan?

The sound of everyone turning around fills the room. The silence is loud. Mikhail looks at Levani.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS
Excuse me?

LEVANI
I'm sorry sir. I was just suggesting an idea.

Mikhail stands and slowly walks up to Levani.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS
What's your name, Comrade?

OFFICER BORISOV
Sir you have to forgive--

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS
Was I talking to you, Comrade Borisov?
What's your name and where'd you come from?

LEVANI
It's Alexei sir. Alexei Geroyev. I was stationed at Irkutsk.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS
Did they not teach you the chain of command in Irkutsk?

Levani is speechless. Mikhail turns to Officer Borisov.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS (CONT'D)
Put this one on a leash.

Officer Borisov nods. Mikhail turns around to continue the meeting.

LEVANI
But sir. It makes no sense to send troops to Georgia. What about Azerbaijan?

OFFICER BORISOV
(whispers)
Are you mad?! Shut the fuck up.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS
Let him speak.

Levani takes a step up.

LEVANI
Azerbaijan also has anti-Soviets, but not just that. They also have oil reserves. That's where we have to station our troops so that the oil doesn't end up in the wrong hands. If we send them to Georgia instead, it will be a costly mistake.

Silence fills the room.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS
What, do you have an uncle in Georgia or something?

Levani shudders. Silence again. Mikhail breaks the ice and starts slowly laughing, progressively getting louder and louder. This gives the room the OK to laugh.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS (CONT'D)
We got a real Churchill over here.

Laughter gets louder. Levani nervously chuckles. Mikhail looks at him.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS (CONT'D)
You're alright, Comrade Geroyev. That's just the finest idea. I will redirect Volkov's men to Azerbaijan instead. Don't make me regret this, Comrade. I want my oil.

Levani nods and lets out a sigh of relief.

CUT TO:

EXT. AZERBAIJAN - DAWN

Tanks are rolling in with the barren desert in the background. Local Government offices are seized and troops begin rounding up opposition leaders to take them to the gulags. Families crying and screaming can be heard. General Volkov arrives at an oil distillery and instructs his men to go inside.

SCENE 4

INT. OUTSIDE KREMLIN CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Secretary Zasranets can be heard behind his office door speaking with his advisors while Levani stands guard outside. The meeting ends and the advisors leave the room.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS
Alexei! Come in here for a moment.

Levani enters and stands by the Secretary's desk.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS (CONT'D)
Sit.

Levani pulls out a chair and sits. Mikhail pulls out a bottle of Vodka.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS (CONT'D)
This was a gift to me from St. Petersburg. 65% alcohol.

Mikhail pours the Vodka into a glass.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS (CONT'D)
Volkov rang me. The Azerbaijan operation was a success. So-- we're celebrating your excellent idea.

Mikhail hands the glass to Levani. He pours himself a glass of wine and sets the bottle down.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS (CONT'D)
To the Motherland. May her glory never fade.

LEVANI
To the Motherland.

Levani takes a sip of the Vodka while Mikhail sips his wine.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS
You can lose your friends, you can lose your wealth but you can never lose your honor. That's what my father always told me, may he rest in peace. If he can only see me now. Young man-- never take your parents for granted.

Mikhail pours more Vodka into Levani's glass

LEVANI
Actually sir, my mother passed away years ago and father wasn't around. I grew up an orphan.

Levani drinks his Vodka.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS
That's a shame. Family is everything to me. If you ask me, family is the glue that holds this whole country together. If we didn't have family, who would teach the children right from wrong? Good from evil?

LEVANI
I agree sir. I was fortunate enough to learn those lessons in the orphanage. Then, in Irku--

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS
A dynamic with blood relation is far more precious compared to sharing a bed with a bastard child.

Mikhail sips his wine and looks at a photo in a frame on his desk.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS (CONT'D)
My niece-- she was so beautiful before the scars. She was nearly put in a coma. Some whore of a lady bashed her head simply for the sake of loving her country. But she fought through it and continues to fight everyday. That's honor.

Mikhail sips his wine and grabs the photo for a closer look.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS (CONT'D)
Between you and me, I took care of that woman that did this to her. It's my job to protect my people from such parasites. Hell I wish I could've shot her myself.

Levani begins to feel tense. Mikhail takes one last sip of his wine.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS (CONT'D)
Ahhh--Damn good stuff. The best wine comes from Georgia-- but you knew that already didn't you?

Mikhail flips the photo and slams it on the desk for Levani to see. It is a photo of Svetlana. The woman Levani's mother assaulted. Levani looks at the photo then slowly looks at Mikhail.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS (CONT'D)
How stupid do you think I am? I can practically see your roots coming in. What exactly was your plan? Did mama's boy want to get revenge?

Levani's vision starts to blur.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS (CONT'D)
That shit you're drinking-- It will start by paralyzing your extremities before it reaches your organs. They'll put down "heart failure" as the official cause of death. And then your ass will lie in the morgue with no one to weep for you.

Levani's fists tighten.

MIKHAIL ZASRANETS (CONT'D)
Then you'll be with your whore of a mother again.

Levani musters up all the strength he has in his body and grabs the wine bottle. He smashes it over Mikhail's head leading him to fall over.

LEVANI
My name is Levani Darashvili-- and I shit on your country.

Levani repeatedly stabs Mikhail with the remnants of the wine bottle. Blood and wine stain the floor and walls.

Levani stands up, breathing heavily and takes one last sip of Mikhail's glass of wine. He loses his balance then collapses.

We see a birds eye view shot of both Mikhail and Levani lying on the floor dead.

FADE TO BLACK.