

Anastasia Romanova

**A semi-historic play in 2 acts
about the last Russian Imperials**

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Scene 1 Full set

A brutal murder uncovered

Late September, early October 1918. A clearing in the forests of Yekaterinburg.

Workmen and two white soldiers are excavating. The newspaper boys of scene 12, are here, dressed in the same clothes but with beards to show they are older versions of themselves. Yakovlev and Avdiev look exactly the same as in scene 18 since it has only been 2 months since then.

Commissary Yakovlev	Is that really all you could find?
	Are you sure there is nothing more?
Sergei Vladimirovich Sidorov	This is all, commissary.
Commissary Avdiev	What have we got so far? The buckle of the Tsar's belt, a fragment of his cap, the little portable frame containing the portrait of the Tsarina ...
Anton Mikhailovich Belevich	And the mortal remains!
Yakovlev	Yes that is the most important thing. How many bodies can we be sure of?
Piotr Maximovich Vedenin	It seems we can complete 6 skeletons, I mean we have remainders of 6 skulls.
Avdiev	We are one short then?
Yakovlev	Two actually. We know that Dr Botkin stayed with the family till the last.
Sergei,	Who are we missing then?
Avdiev	That is a good question, Sergei.
Yakovlev	We should catalogue all our material finds, and then see what we can match with the biological remains.
Avdiev	I think we can be quite sure the Tsars remains are here, as we have his belt buckle, and that picture frame of Alexandra he always wore on his person.
Piotr	These seem to me as earrings of the Tsarina or one of the Grand Duchesses ...
Avdiev	Let me see, I may remember who's they were ...
Piotr	Here, look, one is broken, though ...
Avdiev	Those were Alexandra's, I am sure of it.
Sergei	A set of false teeth, fragments of eyeglasses?
Yakovlev	Dr Botkin wore glasses. And I do not remember the Tsar or Tsarina having false teeth ... I would conclude the teeth are also Dr Botkins'.
Anton	These all seems various fragments of necklaces, shoes, buttons and hooks ...
Avdiev	Hmm, difficult to put a precise ownership on those things.
Yakovlev	What did Yurovsky admit to during his interrogations?
Avdiev	He said that they chopped up the corpses, partly destroyed them with sulphuric acid and then burned the remains.
Yakovlev	They didn't do such a good job at it. If their purpose was to hide their crime, well, we found evidence of it far too easily.
Sergei	Yes, but it will start snowing soon, and by next spring much more will have been hidden by the earth. Maybe they were just counting on not being found out before spring?
Anton,	I think they were only counting on staying in power, and not been ousted by the White Army.
Yakovlev	We should have never left. We could have saved the imperial family. Maybe Russia is better off without them, but they could have been exiled or something, they didn't need to die.
Sergei,	Didn't Germany ask for the princesses and the Tsarina to be exiled to them?
Yakovlev	Yes, they did, Alexandra was of German blood after all.

Avdiev Maybe that request signed their death warrant in the first place.
All was done in such haste! I hardly believe the act was well thought through.

Anton Do you think the Reds acted out of fear of the Germans?

Avdiev Maybe. But probably even more out of fear for the Russian populace.
Our peasants would always be prone to believe in the benefit of a Tsar over a dictator. The communist revolution isn't over my friends.

Sergei But the democratic White Army are back in power !?

Yakovlev Not since long and maybe not for long either !!! Fighting is still going on not far from here. This war isn't over yet my friends !!!

Piotr It all starts to be far too confusing for me. A world war, a civil war in our own country ... Reds, White Army ...

Avdiev Guys, back to the matter of the day, please. Let's just leave politics for after our task is done here.

Yakovlev Indeed, so, we have the Tsar and Dr Botkin, that is 2.

Anton, These things here seem to me like corset busks, aren't they?

Sergei Show me, my mother is a seamstress, I've seen corsets in different states or readiness, I should be able to detect something ...

Anton Here, what do you make of it?

Sergei Hm, it is really fragmented, *inspects the remains*, but I should say about 4 corsets.

Yakovlev Four?

Sergei Yes, 4, maybe only 3 but definitely not 5!

Yakovlev Four corsets, four women ...

Avdiev We need to have a look at the skulls, try and see if we can figure it out.

Anton Ok, but we did say Alexandra is here, as we found her earrings, no?

Avdiev True. But we still need to identify her skull, as not to mix hers up with one of her daughters.

Piotr How are we going to determine which skull is who's?

Yakovlev The report of Yurovsky, about how they died. We need to try and match the evidence found on the bones with that. Like shot wounds or bayonet wounds, that kind of thing.

Sergei I don't want to be impertinent, but my cousin works at the Sissert Workshops.

Anton Yes, so what?

Sergei The workers, live in dormitories.

Piotr Yes? *Doesn't see where this is going*

Sergei My cousin claims Grand Duchess Anastasia was one of the workers there.

Anton That is ridiculous, and has nothing to do with our work here, has it?

Sergei Maybe it has. What if the Grand Duchess escaped before the massacre?

Then the Reds could not have killed her, could they?

Anton We could go ask that princess at the workshop, no?

Sergei No, that's just it. She arrived only a few days before the massacre and a few days after, the Grand Duchess went missing from the dormitories; they are still looking for her.

Yakovlev If that was the Grand Duchess, she would try to get away, wouldn't she?

Avdiev And trying to do so, now, while the Reds are not in power.

Anton Wait, wait, what are we saying?

Yakovlev We are saying that if one of the Grand Duchesses escaped the massacre, the Reds would not want us to know, so they'd lie about it.

Avdiev They lied anyway, they tried to cover up the murder of the women and the boy at first. Stating they only killed the Tsar and brought the Tsarina and children away to another safe place.

Yakovlev One they never divulged the exact location off, because the place simply doesn't exist. They did kill all the Romanovs.

Avdiev Except for one of the Grand Duchesses, and maybe the Tsarevich. ?
His remains aren't here either, are they?

Yakovlev Indeed, they are not. So, say Anastasia and Alexei may well be still alive ?

Piotr Such news would be like a fairytale come true to my poor mother.

Sergei Indeed, it would, and not for your mother alone, I bet half of the world would embrace the possibility ...

Scene 2 Apron

Franziska Shankowska

1913 Franziska Shankowska gets hired to be a scullery maid in the palace.

Natalya Filipovna Kargina (*a strict middle aged household maid*)
Your name?

Franziska Franziska Shankowska, ma'am.

Natalya References?

Franziska I have them here, ma'am.

Natalya Where are you from, your Russian has a strange accent in it?

Franziska I was born on December 16, 1896, in Pomerania, ma'am.

Natalya Ha, Polish are you?

Franziska Prussian actually ma'am, but my family moved to St-Petersburg when I was 5.
I've lived in Russia most of my life.

Natalya A very young life ... you are what? 13 ?

Franziska Indeed ma'am, 13.

Natalya And why would you want to work here, girl?
It is not an exalted job that we can offer you. And the pay is but moderate.
Their Majesties live a quite modest life considering their noble rank,
And they expect nothing less from those who work for them.

Franziska I would like the opportunity to learn more here, to climb up a bit on the ladder, and maybe someday I could be more than just a humble scullery maid.

Natalya Ambition is good, but not too much of it ...

Franziska I only dream of serving to the best of my abilities, ma'am.

Natalya Hmm that remains to be seen ...
You are aware of our working conditions?

Franziska Ma'am?

Natalya All the imperial servants have to live at the palace. No luxury accommodation, though. You'll share dormitories with the other kitchen girls. You'll sleep on army bunks, just like the Tsarevich and the Grand Duchesses do ...

Franziska *astonished* Their Highnesses sleep on army beds?

Natalya Yes they do, not that it is of any of your concern. I told you, the Imperial Highnesses live a modest life, not at all what the people in the streets think they do.
And we, who are to serve them should be prepared to live as moderate as they do, according to our rank even more so. Also, since the imperial children are not subject to the same etiquette here, at Alexander's palace as they are when they are in St-Petersburg, you may encounter one of their Highnesses while you go about your duties. If ever such an encounter does happen; your job is to be invisible and only respond when talked to. Is that clear?

Franziska Very clear, ma'am.

Natalya You always address them with 'Your Imperial Highness' and keep your eyes down.

Franziska Yes ma'am.

Natalya You get 1 day off a month in which occasion you may leave the palace to visit your family. Do you understand?

Franziska I do ma'am.

Natalya You'll take your meals always in the kitchen together with the other girls. You will hardly have any privacy in the palace, any privacy at all.

Franziska I am not accustomed to privacy anyway. We were too many siblings in a poor family to enjoy such luxury.

Natalya Are you religious?

Franziska I was baptised Catholic, ma'am, but since we live in St-Petersburg, we always celebrated Eucharist in an Orthodox church.

Natalya Good, especially the Tsarina, is very pious. She has swapped her Lutheran faith for the Orthodox religion before marrying Nicholas Alexandrovich, then Tsarevich. Her nature is more mystical, just like the Russian people tend to be.

Franziska Her Majesty is German, is she not?

Natalya Her Majesty is Russian now! But yes, she was born a German princess, although she spent most of her youth at the British court. I assure you, she is very Russian now, Even speaks an impeccable Russian whenever she chooses to address those of us who do not speak another language.

Franziska I do speak Polish and German.

Natalya Don't expect the Tsarina to address you in German though, she hates the language as she hates everything German. If you do not talk French or English, stick to Russian.

Franziska I'll remember that, ma'am.

Natalya I'll tell you what ... you seem an honest girl.
And we are in desperate need of more help, so I'll let you start on probation, right now. And while you prove your worth, I'll check your references.
If I find everything in order, I'll discuss your permanent appointment with the head of the imperial household.

Franziska That is okay, ma'am, I am confident you will find everything in order.

Natalya In that case, get yourself to the maid's wardrobe and ask to be given a uniform. Then you can get your possessions to the dormitory. I expect you ready for work tomorrow morning at 6 am, report to the kitchen to be given your tasks for the day. You will mainly be washing dishes and stuff, although sometimes you may be asked to perform other duties.

Franziska Yes, ma'am.

Scene 3 Full set

Carefree

Anastasia and her sisters are playing hide and seek in the gardens of Alexander's Palace.

It is winter 1913 in Tsarskoe Selo. The girls have built a snowman for Alexei (the children should be between the ages of 18, 16, 14, 12 & 9)

Marie *finishing off the snowman* Isn't he beautiful, Alexei? What shall we call him?

Olga Marie, are you quite sure it's a he, maybe it's a she.

Marie No Olga, snowmen are always male, everybody knows that!

Olga Anastasia, run inside and ask one of the maids to bring a scarf and a hat for him.

Alexei I think we should call him Dmitri, what about that, Tatiana?

Tatiana If you would like to call him Dmitri then that shall be his name, little brother.

Meanwhile, Anastasia runs into Franziska

Anastasia, Who are you?
 Franziska My name is Franziska, I'm the new scullery maid.
 Anastasia Wait for a second ... Let me look at you? *Inspects the face and the height of Franziska*
 Did anybody ever mention to you that you look a lot like me?
 Franziska Grand Duchess?
 Anastasia Yes, you look like me! I bet we could swap clothes and nobody would notice you are me and I am you.
 Franziska Your Highness?
 Anastasia Don't call me that! Here, take my coat and my hat. Let's see if this trick could work !? Loosen your hair, like so ... good. Oh, and before you join them in the garden, go get clothes for the snowman!
 Franziska ... but ...
 Anastasia No buts, you won't get into trouble ... I promise.
Franziska runs away to get the stuff, while Anastasia looks for good hiding spot from where she can see if her newest mischief works.
 Alexei I have decided on Dmitri, what do you think about that Tatiana?
 Tatiana I like that name!
Picking up a snowball But while we wait for Anastasia to bring us Dmitri's clothes, let's have a bit of a fight, and she flings the snowball to one of her sisters
All children immediately follow her example, picking up snowballs and throwing them at each other.
 Alexandra Girls, girls, be careful with that, don't throw them at Alexei,
 You know your brother should not be hurt in any way!
 Olga We are aware of that Mama, do not worry, we will be careful.
Suddenly a snowball comes flying out of nowhere.
 Marie *Looking where the ball came from.* Look, it's father !!!
 All the children greet their father with love, hugs, etc. Alexandra makes a mini-bow to the Tsar, he kisses her gently on the cheek.
 Nicholas It is such a beautiful day outside. What where you kids busy with?
 Olga We made a snowman, look over there, father.
 Alexei Meet Dmitri, daddy.
 Nicholas Dmitri?
 Tatiana Yes, Alexei decided to name him Dmitri.
 Alexei He is a guard for our protection.
 Nicholas In that case I hope temperatures will remain cold for long still, so that Dmitri has a long life before him, and that he can serve us faithfully ?! *Laughs*
 Alexandra I am sure he will, dearest. The winter promises again to be a long one!
 We're only December now ...
 Olga Will you join us in our snowball fight, father?
 Nicholas I have a few minutes before my work needs my attention again, ... ok
He picks up a ball and throws it softly to Alexei, who can grab it rather than be hit by it.
 Alexandra Nicholas Alexandrovich!
 Nicholas Alexandra Feodorovna, I am gentle with the boy, don't you worry,
 But he does have the right to as much a normal life as possible.
 Alexandra Please, just be careful.
 Tatiana Mammy, we are all always careful with the Tsarevich, we love him too much to see any harm done to him.
 Alexandra Still, I feel guilty because it is my fault.
 Alexei Mama, please.

They all continue playing for a little while. Franziska returns, with Anastasia's hat and coat on. She tries to remain silent, but the Tsarina notices her..

Alexandra Oh, Anastasia, what did you find for Dmitri?

Franziska A scarf, and fur hat *she says it without realising it*, your Highness.

Nicholas *thinking it is a joke from Anastasia* Your Highness. Indeed, you are funny Anastasia!

Alexei Is it a military hat? Dmitri is a sentry of the guard!

Olga *Taking possession of the hat Franziska brought.* This hat will do Alexei.

Look, Dmitri already looks like a real soldier.

Marie and Olga dress the snowman, who does not look like a soldier at all, but their imagination helps.

Marie We should build an igloo! Then we could camp as Eskimo's outside and have our tea here in the park.

Tatiana An igloo is not easy to build, Marie, maybe we should rather give Dmitri a companion to stand guard here together with him?

Olga Yes, we could do that tomorrow, maybe ?!

Nicholas Come, girls, one last rally before I have to go back to work.

All pick up another snowball and throw it. When the Tsar throws one to gently hit his wife, she also gives in, picks up a snowball and throws it to the Tsar.

Then Nicholas hugs them all again and walks back to the palace.

Marie Olga, Dmitri's hat is going to glide off his head!

Olga Don't worry Marie, I will fix it with a bit of snow underneath, and by tomorrow it will be frozen stuck to him.

Alexei If Dmitri is a sentry of the guard to protect us then he should have a weapon.

Let's find something that we can give him, like a branch or a stick or something ...

Marie I will look to find something on this side.

Tatiana Alexei, Anastasia go look that side with Marie, Olga and I will look on the other side.

Alexandra stands and looks at her children. After a short while, we hear some kind of gong or bell from inside the palace. Franziska joins but half a step behind the real Romanovs ...

Alexandra Children, come; it's time for tea. We can look further for a stick for Dmitri tomorrow, Let's go inside now. Come 'on now.

Olga Come Alexei, sisters, mother calls us.

But the younger siblings are trying for a moment to ignore the call

Tatiana Marie, Anastasia, Alexei ... come 'on, let's go!

When Tatiana calls the trio finally stop their search for a stick and join the older siblings and their mother and go.

Alexandra Go to your rooms and take those wet clothes off, and then come back in a hurry. Tea will be served in the mauve room!

Anastasia *When they walk back inside Anastasia stops Franziska and pulls her into a corner.* That didn't go too badly, did it?

Franziska I was scared to my wits, Your Highness.

Anastasia If we are going to be friends you have to stop calling me Your Highness!

Come to my room after we had our tea, I will teach you how to better be me, and we can both have more fun with this game.

Franziska Your Highness ?!?

Anastasia After tea! Don't be late !!

Now, give me back my coat and hat!

Scene 4

Apron

Fraulein Unbekannt

1920: Clara Peuthert is sitting on the balcony of a psychiatric hospital.

Nurses Inge rolls a wheelchair with Franziska in it next to Clara.

Inge Ladies, we trust you will be okay together. Ring if you need us. Otherwise, we'll come for you in an hour or so. Enjoy the sunshine, they have predicted rain again for tomorrow, and then you will not be able to enjoy the fresh air.

The nurse leaves them

Clara You are Fraulein Unbekannt, aren't you? Room 217? I am in room 215, right next to yours.

Franziska looks at her, but she says nothing.

Clara Why don't you talk, Fraulein? I know you can talk, I have heard you talk before; in your sleep.

Franziska looks at her, but she says nothing.

Clara, They say you are quite mad you know, the nurses.
They talk behind your back, they say you are a real nutcase.

Franziska looks at her, but she says nothing.

Clara, You talk weird in your sleep, it's not German, it sounds more like ... *and she thinks before she talks* ... like Slavic. Czech maybe, or Polish ...?

Franziska looks at her, but she says nothing.

Clara Hey, I get it, maybe you don't even understand German?
Everybody here just keeps rambling on to you in German, and you don't understand a word they say. You seem to read these German magazines all the time, but maybe you really don't, maybe just look at pictures, like an illiterate child?

Franziska looks at her, but she says nothing.

Clara You're boring ... what magazines do you read anyway *and she snatches the magazine Franziska is holding in her lap out of her hands.*
Browses through the magazine. See, I said it was Slavic; your language.
This magazine is full of Russian stuff. Why do you read this stuff?
This magazine is kinda old too; October 1920!
What can be so interesting in those old articles anyway? *Her eyes fall on the article about the Tsar.* What? Are you a fan of royalty? Look here, a picture of the Romanovs. It's an old picture and a bit and faded. Let me see, what does it say?
"The family of Nicholas II", hmmm ... *she studies the face on the picture* Hey, you actually look a lot like this one. Shame she's dead ... They are all dead, aren't they?
The stupid Tsar and his crazy wife.

Franziska seems to have more of a reaction at this but still remains silent.

And all the kids, even that invalid of a son of his, all dead. *Clara works herself up in more and more of a state of anger* Good thing too, bloody aristocrats, bloodsuckers of a nation living from the work of the poor people. Oh, how I would have loved it if the communists would have made revolution here as well! Ach, stupid mute!
She is mocking Franziska now A young woman jumps into the Landwehrkanal. They should have let you drown! Fraulein Unbekannt ... given all the attention. Stupid mute, why don't you talk, hey ... Say something, idiot !!!

Franziska is very uneasy at this stage. She takes the bell and rings for the nurse

Clara Oh yes, run to mommy, call for the nurse, call for the doctor.
She is trying to mock Franziska more and more now
I am Fraulein Unbekannt, and as long as I don't tell them my name I am a guest of the state, and they won't chuck me out on the streets.
But they will chuck you out, you see? One day, they will just decide that you are healthy enough and that not knowing your name is not sufficient grounds to keep you here. And then you will be all alone, left to your own devices. Hahaha, maybe you can try to jump into the canal again?! And I hope you actually drown then.

At this 2 nurses come in, and they force an injection into the arm of Clara. Clara does try resisting this, but it is in vain, and the calming injection has a near immediate effect as Clara collapses in her chair seemingly asleep.

Thea Inge, go fetch a wheelchair for Fraulein Peuthert so we can bring her back to her room. And ask Hans to come help, we'll never be able to get Fraulein Peuthert in a wheelchair just by ourselves.

Inge leaves

Thea Forgive this incident Fraulein, we really thought Clara would have been stable enough by now, and would not bother anybody. I am so sorry.

Franziska motions to the magazine that Clara had snatched from her and that is now on the floor.

Thea sees this and picks it up, giving it to Franziska.

Inge comes back with an empty wheelchair and Hans. Hans helps the nurses pick Clara up and put her in the chair, after which he and Inge wheel her back to her room, leaving Franziska alone with Thea. Thea watches how Franziska browses again through the magazine, Franziska stops at the picture of the Romanov Grand Duchesses, she looks at Tatiana and shakes her head. She then takes a closer look at Anastasia, and a vague smile comes over her.

Thea looks on interested when Franziska suddenly says hesitantly;

Franziska She took me for my sister Maria. So wrong. Maria was much taller than I am, and more elegant, just like mama. Olga and Tatiana were also beautiful. I was always chubby and a bit of a brat.

Thea *totally perplex about the sudden talking from Franziska calls out.*

Doctor, doctor, Fraulein Unbekannt talked!

Please come as soon as possible. Fraulein Unbekannt remembers her identity !!

Scene 5 Full set

Livadia

Full dance scene depicting summer in the Crimea. The Grand Duchesses, dressed in white, are selling white flowers to passersby, as an annual fundraiser for a local sanatorium. The bunches of flowers are tied to arches which the girls hold above their heads. For ease of performing, some flowers may be easier to reach in small containers at the ends of the arches.

Male dancers with balalaikas, female dancers with Russian tiaras and handkerchiefs.

Music:

Svetit mesiats – 4' - (Balalaika ensemble).

Sasha, play for the dance - 3'39" – (Balalaika Ensemble).

They stop a potential client with words such as

Good day to you, sir. Would you like to buy a few flowers from us?

We are raising money for the sanatorium. They are in desperate need of funds.

You can pay us anything you like, sir, it is all for a good cause.

And when a generous buyer has paid his dues

Thank you very much, sir. May God bless you and your family.

Scene 6 Apron

Haemophilia

We hear a child crying and moaning behind the scenes. We are in the hall in front of his room.

Anna Vyburowa is the best friend of Alexandra, she only wants to help.

Alexandra My God, my God *and she crosses herself several times in an orthodox way*
Why oh why, have You punished my dear boy with this infliction.
My God, you know I would do everything, I would rather die a thousand deaths
myself than see my only son suffer like this. Oh God, please, God, please ?!?
At this point, she falls to her knees and starts actually praying.
Our Father, who art in Heaven, So Holy is Your Name. I know that The Kingdom is
Yours, and I will obey Your will always. Let me be but Your humble servant here on
earth. My Most Holy Father, I know that You do provide in all my needs and that You
lovingly forgive me each time I offend You and repent it. Please, Most Holy and
Heavenly Father, send Your healing to the Tsarevich. Cure him of this horrible
disease. I know it is my fault, I know that the illness runs in my blood. Please, I
cannot, but beg of You My God and Saviour to put on me this burden of illness, I
offer you my own life, my whole life, my being ... Please God, oh please Almighty and
most Merciful God, save my son and save him from this ordeal.

Anna Vyubowa comes walking in and stumbles on the kneeling Tsarina.

Anna Your Highness, is there nothing I can do to help you. In this hour of worry?
Alexandra Oh, Anna Alexandrovna, I did not hear you coming. The Tsarevich is very poorly.
The doctors are with him, he is in so much pain. Would you pray with me?
Anna Of course your Majesty, I would. But tell me, what happened this time?
Alexandra This time and every previous time, it is always the same thing that makes Alexei
suffer so much.
Anna Do you mean he is chronically ill?
Alexandra *looking as to make sure they are not overheard* Yes, he is. His periods of suffering get
triggered by accidents; little accidents of all kinds can spark it.

Anna doesn't seem to understand

Alexandra Alexei bumped his left thigh on the side yesterday, the blow has caused profuse
internal haemorrhage, and a sanguineous tumour is forming in his groin. I am quite
beside myself with worry.
Anna Poor Tsarevich.
Alexandra I blame myself entirely for my son's illness, I so wish I could take it from him.
Anna Why do you blame yourself?
Alexandra Alexei was born with haemophilia.
Anna What is that?
Alexandra Haemophilia is a hereditary disease in my bloodline. It comes down from my
grandmother: Queen Victoria.
Anna The Grand Duchesses have it as well?
Alexandra No, I don't have it either. It passes through the female bloodline, but only males can
really have the disease.
Anna So only the Tsarevich is affected?
Alexandra I should have been glad being a mother to 4 Grand Duchesses. I think God was trying
to protect me, by giving me only daughters. But a woman can never be heir to the
Russian throne. Oh, what misery. That poor Alexei has to suffer the same fate as so
many men in my family.
Anna Do all men automatically get it?
Alexandra I do not know, but it seems it is at least very likely that boys will be affected.
I lost my brother and 2 cousins to the disease.
Anna *realising the danger* Will the Tsarevich die?
Alexandra I hope not. Oh please pray with me?
May God grant him life, he will be better if only he can reach adulthood.

Anna Will all Russian Tsars from Alexei on be ill?

Alexandra No, he shouldn't pass the disease to his children, but the Grand Duchesses may pass it on to theirs, and their sons may be affected just like Alexei.

Anna Is there no cure?

Alexandra No, there is nothing the doctors can do, but try and keep the Tsarevich comfortable. I wish some doctor could help, but so far all I can do is pray for a miracle.

Anna Did you ever hear of a man called Grigori Rasputin?

Alexandra No, is he a doctor?

Anna No, he is a monk, a tsarets.

I have met him several times in St-Petersburg. He is only a moujik; a poor country man from Siberia. But he miraculously cured madame Lochtina. The doctors had said they could do nothing more for her, and that she would have to resign to her fate. I swear to you Your Highness Grigori Rasputin can do miracles.

Alexandra Miracles?

Anna Yes, I have seen him perform amazing stuff. He has these strange eyes, like magic.

Alexandra You say that he is a monk?

Anna Yes, a tsarets, he wanders from town to town. He has the blessing of Theophanes, the archimandrite.

Alexandra *crosses herself* If this tsarets has the blessing of such a highly respected man of the Orthodox church, then maybe you should approach him on my behalf?

Anna I can surely arrange for him to meet you if Your Majesty so desires. Maybe you could meet the tsarets at my house?

Dr Botkin *appears*

Alexandra Please, Doctor Botkin. Tell me good news ?!

Dr Botkin Alas, your Majesty, the Tsarevich is suffering much. However, he is asleep now ... I am taking advantage of that to go and inform his Majesty the Tsar of the heir's condition. You can go in if you would like, your Highness. Dr Derevenko is also still with him.

Alexandra I will go to my son, indeed. If you would excuse me, Anna Alexandrovna?

Anna Of course your Highness. And I will pray for the Tsarevich.

Scene 7 Full set

Perfecting the swap-game

Anastasia had Franziska come to her room.

Anastasia Did anyone see you coming here?

Franziska No, hum ... miss Anastasia.

Anastasia Good, professor Gilliard said he was going to teach us about French History today. I hate History !! Napoleon, my ... whatever. I don't want to go. You go!

Franziska Miss Anastasia ?!

Anastasia No complaining! What are you supposed to do today?

Franziska I am a scullery maid, I obey the kitchen staff. Mostly they make me do dishes and stuff.

Anastasia Playing with soap and water? That seems like fun to me!

Franziska It is not all that great, Miss Anastasia.

Anastasia No matter. We'll swap today, until tea time. Without hat and so close-up, my mother may suspect something is wrong ... but no one else is allowed to actually look us in the eye, are they, so I'm sure professor Gilliard will not notice a thing!

Franziska is hesitant

Come'on, don't just stand there! Get undressed!
Both girls undress till the pantaloons and chemise.
 Ok, stop ... you can keep your own underwear, I don't really want to wear that old stuff on me, it would scratch my skin.
Franziska is still just obeying
 Now, put on my clothes, I'll put on yours.
 Franziska This fabric feels nice. Miss Anastasia.
 Anastasia It's silk. Possibly the softest material around. Your dress feels a bit stiff ...
 Franziska Wool and cotton, and a lot of starch in the apron, that makes it so stiff.
 Anastasia Ha, ok! Now let me do your hair, it has to look like mine.
 Go sit girl!
 Franziska Where? *Looking for a 'non-noble' seat to sit on*
 Anastasia Right here, of course, at my dresser! *Planks Franziska down*
 Look in the mirror, see how we look alike?
 Franziska We do, actually, don't we? *Starting to see the fun in it all*
 Anastasia *does Franziska's hair.* Now you do mine! Is that bun, like a prescribed hairstyle or so?
 Franziska It has to be tucked away, like in a bun or so braids pinned to your head ...
 Anastasia Make me a bun like yours then!
 Franziska *obeys*
 Anastasia Ok, now we swapped our clothes and our hairstyles, but we must also swap behaviour ! Do you understand?
 Franziska I do. Being me will not be that difficult, miss. I mostly just have to keep my mouth shut and do what they tell me to do. Do you know how to heat water?
 Anastasia Why?
 Franziska Doing dishes in cold water is hard work, it really goes better with warm water. And warm water feels nicer on your hands as well.
 Anastasia Do I really have to heat water? I have no clue how ...
 Franziska You can try cold water, or try to get Anna to do it for you.
 Anastasia Anna?
 Franziska Anna is the other scullery maid, she's Swedish; Anna Anderson.
 Anna is a sweet girl. At lunch, I sit next to her at the table.
 Anastasia Oh, yes, lunch. What do you eat at lunch ?
 Franziska A bowl of kipyatok and then mostly some kind of stew, miss.
 Anastasia Kipyatok, yikes ... that's not even really a soup, is it ...?
 Anyway, so I'll be fine if I stick to Anna Anderson?
 Franziska You should be.
 Anastasia Ok, now you, ... he ... me I mean. You know where our classroom is?
 Franziska Yes.
 Anastasia Ok, I sit between Marie and Alexei. Remember that!
 Franziska I will remember, miss ...
 Anastasia You call professor Gilliard 'monsieur', he's French, or Swiss actually but a French-Swiss. Now say it; monsieur ...
 Franziska Monseejeeur? *She gets the pronunciation all wrong*
 Anastasia No, Monsieur. Like this: Mur-s-j-ur-ur.
 Franziska Mursjur
 Anastasia Close. Just try to avoid speaking too much, mostly I daydream and then Monsieur Gilliard doesn't have the courage to call me out of it.
 Franziska *tries to 'get' it all in*
 Anastasia You are in luck; our lunch consists of sandwiches brought to us, during the class break time. You can't really do wrong with that. Olga and Tatiana always eat them properly, with knife and fork, but mostly Marie, Alexei and I just use our hands. And

we have tea. The samovar is always there, Monsieur Gilliard often has a cup while he's teaching us. I guess his mouth gets dry from all the talking and explaining.

laughs

Franziska I always ask for mine with extra honey, I love it very sweet !!! Remember that!
I love sweet tea as well, but we don't often get honey, we mostly just have to drink our tea as it is.

Anastasia Honey will be a treat, then ?! *smiles*
After lunch break, we continue our lessons. All very annoying ... until tea time.
But before tea time we meet back here, and we swap again! Understood ?

Franziska As you wish, Miss Anastasia.

Anastasia Ok, I'll go first, and try not to be seen until I'm downstairs. You wait 5 seconds and then head to the classroom.

Anastasia grabs a good handful of sweets from the jar on her dressing table, throws one to Franziska, who grabs it and put it in her mouth immediately. Anastasia puts the rest of the sweets in her hand in her apron pocket and exits, 5 seconds later Franziska exits

A change of lights depicts the changing of time.

Franziska is the first to be back ... she uses her time alone in the bedroom of Anastasia to look at everything, to study it all. She looks in the mirror and compares her reflection to a photograph of the Grand Duchess standing there; she indeed does see how easy it is to look like Anastasia.

Anastasia *coming in in a hurry* Oh, you're already here. Good, we have to rush, or I'll be late for tea. How was it? *And she initiates the swap, they talk while they change clothes and hairstyles.*

Franziska Surprisingly easy, miss. Not even your siblings noticed there was something wrong.

Anastasia Good, I think Anna may suspect stuff, I was horribly clumsy in the kitchen.
Maybe you'd better make up an excuse for 'your' clumsiness when you get back there?

Franziska I hope you didn't break stuff?

Anastasia One plate, actually ... why ?

Franziska *disappointed.* If we break stuff, it comes out of our salary.

Anastasia Oh, smash, I didn't realise that! I'll pay it back to you from my allowance.
How much is a plate?

Franziska That depends on what type plate it was, miss. An everyday staff-plate or one from the imperial household? Those are worth several salaries for one ?! *in horror that Anastasia may have broken one of those*

Anastasia Plain plate, a soup one.

Franziska *sigh of relief* ... I won't know before payday. Misses Kargina will have bought a new one by then and will have taken the price for it from my salary.

Anastasia Let me know how much it was, I will pay you back.

Now tell me. Did no-one, like in really no-one suspect anything?

Franziska No, I did as you told me, miss. I daydreamed or tried to anyway.

They all thought I was you! Oh, I never had salmon sandwiches. That was so yummy!

Anastasia I'm glad you liked it. Your stew was okay, rabbit I think. But I didn't even touch the kipyatok, bah!

Franziska I don't really like it either, not that much ...

Anastasia So we are fine actresses, the both of us!

Hey, wait ... I got a splendid idea?

Franziska What, miss?

Anastasia What do you do on your day off ?
 Franziska I go visit my family, ... but ...
 Often they are at work when I am off, and then I just wander around in town.
 My curfew here is before they are back from work, so I don't see them often.
 Anastasia I would like to know what real life is like. I would want to see St-Petersburg, without
 sentry guards, and without a golden carriage. We should perfect our little game,
 And next time you have a day off, we'll swap again!
 Franziska St-Petersburg is not a safe place, miss.
 Anastasia Nonsense, if you can survive on the streets, so can I!
 When is your next day off?
 Franziska I just had my day off, so it's only next month, miss.
 Anastasia Splendid that gives us ample time to prepare. This is going to be so much fun !!!

Scene 8 Apron

The kitchen staff preparing for the ball

Anna Anderson Franziska, why are you so slow? *With suspicion* You ARE Franziska, right?
 Franziska Yes, it's me. The Grand Duchess would never make me swap with her on a day such
 as this. She loves the excitement. Preparing for a ball must be a lot more exiting from
 her perspective than from ours.
 Anna Point taken. She's not too bad, the Grand Duchess, she's kind to me.
 Franziska And nobody in the kitchens ever notices it's not me?
 Anna No, well, I guess they don't suspect anything like that to happen, so they are not
 really looking for it, are they? Poor Grand Duchess, Mrs Kargina scolded her quite a
 lot when she broke that soup plate!
 Franziska Didn't you notice there was something wrong that day?
 Anna Not really, I mean I thought you were getting ill. You, I mean she was so clumsy ...
 I thought you had a fever or something. And when she asked me to heat the water
 for her ... I just thought you were dizzy. Which, mind you, after eating so little, didn't
 surprise me. But now I realise the Grand Duchess must not have liked the food on
 her plate, I can imagine the imperial children have a more refined pallet.
 Franziska She said she liked the rabbit, but not the kipyatok.
 Anna Who, on earth, would ever 'like' kipyatok ?!
 Franziska That is also true. *laughs*
 By the way. Does she know, you know?
 Anna What?
 Franziska Does Miss Anastasia know it that you know she takes my place from time to time?
 Anna I don't know. I mostly only notice after a while, and I just call her Franziska all the
 same. Like *and she pauses, suddenly not so sure anymore* for all I know I am standing
 here talking to the Grand Duchess *just checking again if it's Franziska or Anastasia*
 Your Highness *and she tries to make a curtsy*
 Franziska Get up, you fool! It's me, Franziska, really. It's me !!!
 Anna I was just making sure to be sure!
 Franziska Can I tell you something? Will you keep it a secret ???
 Anna And you still think I can't keep secrets?
 Franziska Tonight. I get to wear a ballgown as well.
 Anna What? You're not saying the Grand Duchess doesn't want to go to the ball,
 Doesn't she?
 Franziska No, she will be there. But she managed somehow to get me exact same dress as she
 is going to wear. I have to be there, in hiding.

Anna Why ?

Franziska Only the Grand-duchesses Olga and Tatiana are allowed to stay at the ball till late. The Tsarina sends Marie, Anastasía and Alexei to bed earlier.

Anna I still don't get it ...

Franziska Miss Anastasía fancies the Prince Igor Konstantinovich, but the Tsarina thinks she is too young for courtship, so her Highness Alexandra will never allow Miss Anastasía to be alone with Prince Igor.

Anna Seeing the age of Grand Duchess, I do have to agree with the Tsarina.

Franziska I know, and Prince Igor is family, so I'm sure it's all entirely innocent. But anyway ... I am to take Anastasia's place when her mother sends them to bed. The governess will never see something is amiss, and Anastasía can have a few private moments with Prince Igor. That's all.

Anna so what, you go sleep in her bed?

Franziska Yes, that's it pretty much.

Anna *mockingly* Oh, the tenderness of puppy love!

Franziska Shut up, I don't even know if it's mutual ... I only know what Miss Anastasía tells me.

Mrs Kargina Hey, lazy girls. Don't stand there chatting. We haven't got all day to get this table linen upstairs! It is the Grand Duchess Tatiana's 16th birthday. It is a grand occasion! And we have zillion things to do before the ball tonight! Now move those lazy feet!