

PART 1/6

1 NARRATIN R7pW&

SC 1.1. INT. CAR – DAY

1 SHURA Remember the drill. We make it quick, we keep it calm. In and out.

2 JOE What if they don't hand over the key?

3 PAVEL They will, when they see the guns.

4 SHURA: Good luck everybody. Masks on.

FX: They put masks on.

5 JOE Let's do this!

SC 1.2

PEKING NOIR by Paul French & Sarah Wooley

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1 **Perhaps hiding out in the Western Hills, just outside Peking, in one of the plethora of old temples and inns that spotted the largely deserted and unpoliced area? And maybe the newspapers were right and the gang had fled to the International Settlement of Shanghai, most probably to its louche and corrupt French Concession. Wherever - the authorities seemed to be having trouble identifying their main culprit.**

SC 1.6. INT. SHANGHAI POLICE STATION, 1938

FX: Busy office. Telephones ringing etc.

2 POLICE OFFICER: ATTENTION TOUS LES POLICIERS.

3 **NARRATION: The Peking Police sent the French police in Shanghai a description of the criminal mastermind they sought:**

4 POLICE OFFICER: FEATURES: ASIATIC OR WESTERN; USUAL DRESS: WESTERN OR ASIAN; SHOES: WESTERN OR ASIAN; LANGUAGES USUALLY SPOKEN: RUSSIAN, PEKINGNESE, ENGLISH, FRENCH; APPROXIMATE AGE: 30S, 40S; HAIR WORN CROPPED; MARITAL STATUS: UNKNOWN; SURNAME: MAYBE GIRALDI, PERHAPS SOSNITSKY, UNKNOWN FOR SURE.

5 **NARRATION: It was perhaps one of the most confusing bulletins ever issued. I pity the poor policeman looking for this chameleon-like mastermind in the crowded lanes and rookeries of Shanghai's French** **I**

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1

Shura moved Zelig-like across the seedy landscape of interwar Peking, all things to all men – and women. As I delved deeper into my research, I could almost sense Shura, just off-stage, mocking my efforts, wanting to tell me I

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- 1 SHURA Audition?
- 2 TATIANA For the Shura Giraldi dancers? This is the group, no?
- 3 SHURA Are you the ballet dancer from Shanghai?
- 4 TATIANA Yes. My name is Tatiana. I have an appointment.
- 5 **NARRATION:** **When Tatiana first met Shura she recalled he was a slight man with famously petite feet and a perfect set of small white teeth. He was always immaculately groomed and dressed, tweed suits in winter, linens in summer, well-polished brogues, and wore his hair slicked down. He supervised the troupe, but left the rehearsals and choreography to another White Russian man, who before the revolution had run several well-known cabarets in Moscow.**

SC 1.14. NEUTRAL BG

- 6 **Tatiana:** *Shura always treated the girls with respect. Shura let émigré boys with weak lungs spend the summer in a villa in the hills, gardening and recuperating away from the overcrowded*
- afford to keep, bad men they needed to get away*
- o Shanghai or Harbin to*
- start a new life away from our Peking Badlands; sometimes*
- they just needed a place to stay, a few dollars.*

1 **NARRATION:** **This was the first time Tatiana had witnessed Shura’s effortless transformation. The other girls in the troupe, better versed in the ways of the Badlands, teased her for her naivety – Shura was a he/she, whose company was much sought after by rich foreign businessmen, connected Chinese officials, and the powerful warlords of Northern China. After that visit to Paomachang, Tatiana became used to seeing Shura in flowing colourful silk dressing gowns, gossiping with the troupe members and sipping syrupy liqueurs that stung their teeth they were so sweet.**

2 **It was like someone switched the light on! This was what had confused my research so much. Edward Werner, Vova Nelsky, Tatiana, Sylvia, and others – as well as me - had all encountered our own, and often very different, Shuras. And the Shura I was searching for sometimes presented as male and sometimes as female. When passing as a man Shura bound his breasts tightly and wore a sharp tailored suit; when she was a woman she wore startlingly coloured robes, both Chinese-style cheongsam and Western dresses, letting her raven hair flow loose, said witnesses. Shura had added an incredibly massive layer of confusion and obfuscation to anyone looking by changing gender. Switching for anonymity, for commercial gain or criminal advantage, for love, for a whim. No wonder that French police description in Shanghai had been so hopeless!!**

3 **So, you’re probably thinking - Is this a true story? Are these details correct, can we trust these old documents, are these witnesses reliable after so many years?**

PART 2/6

1 **NARRATION:** **Shura grew up in the Siberian city of Tomsk, in a home dominated by Shura's father Mikhail Ivanovich Sosnitsky, a loyal and god-**

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The Russian

- 1 IVAN I am Ivan Sosnitsky. Who do you think you are barging into my home at this time of the morning and frightening my servants -
- 2 GUARD You are under arrest Ivan Sosnitsky -
- 3 IVAN

1 ANNA Shura. She is not in her room. Perhaps, she has gone to the dance hall again.

(THE GUARD LAUGHS)

2 GUARD Looks like your precious daughter is a slut, Sosnitsky.

(IVAN SPITS AT THE GUARD)

FX: **The Guard slaps Ivan, he reacts as does Anna.**

3 GUARD You're going to regret that.

FX: **The Guard drags Ivan away.**

4 IVAN Find Shura Anna. Find her!

5 **NARRATION:** **When the Bolsheviks arrived the communist commissars began to exact brutal revolutionary justice to anyone thought to be sympathetic to, or working for, the restoration of the Tsar.**

SC 2.3. EXT THE PUBLIC SQUARE AT TOMSK - DAY

FX: It is busy, chaotic. A military van drives through the crowds.

1 GUARD 2 Make way. Make way for the prisoners.

FX: The crowd react.

2 GUARD 2 Make way I said.

FX: Shura runs on to find Anna. The Guard gets the prisoners out and starts to line them up against the wall.

3 SHURA Anna? Anna?!

4 ANNA

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1 NASTYA Helping the White Armies. They took his shop. From now on we need to stick together. A girl of your age shouldn't be on her own.

2 SHURA You're not much older than me Nastja.

3 NASTYA But life has made me a little more streetwise, no? Have you got money?

4 SHURA A little and I have my jewellery. Just a few things. A necklace, a family icon.

5 NASTYA Well hold on tight to that. You're going to need it.

6 **NARRATION:** **The exact number of Russian émigrés who fled the Bolsheviks is unknown. Best guess is somewhere between 800,000 and two million. Many went north and left Russia through the**

SC 2.6. EXT DOCKS AT VLADIVOSTOK - DAY

FX: **There are crowds of people pushing trying to get on to the boat. People could die in the crush. We hear the sound of the boats' horns, lapping of the dock water, chug on the boat engine.**

- 1 SHURA Stay close Nastya. Don't get separated.
- 2 NASTYA I can't breathe. I'm being crushed.
- 3 **NARRATION:** **At Vladivostok they crowded onto rusting and leaky tramp steamers headed down to Korea. Momentarily safe perhaps, but now stateless, in exile, unemployed, often desperate, and headed to a strange country.**
- 4 OLD MAN Please Miss. Miss? Take my Granddaughter with you. I am ill, I can't fight for my place. Please, take her on the boat with you.
- 5 NASTYA Don't be ridiculous old man. Get away.
- 6 OLD MAN Please, she is no trouble and we have travelled far, waited four days at the dock -
- 7 NASTYA We can't help you - No.
- 8 OLD MAN She is a good girl. Please. Her name is Marie. Her parents were nice people. Music teachers. The Bolsheviks killed them. Left them hanging outside their home -
- 9 NASTYA No. I said no!
- 10 SHURA Look, take my arm. We won't take your granddaughter but if you stay with me I'll make sure you both get on the boat.
- 11 OLD MAN You are an angel. God's angel.
- 12 SHURA Hold tight
- 13 NASTYA You're going to regret that Shura.

FX: **Another surge of people.**

- 1 NASTYA Oh who's this now?
2 SHURA It's Marie.
3 NASTYA That kid? Oh For God's sake!

FX: **Shura opens the door.**

- 4 SHURA Marie, are you alright?
5 MARIE It's my Dedushka, he can't stop coughing.

FX: **SHURA goes to help.**

- 6 **NARRATION:** **The overcrowded ships made it to ports along the Korean coast such as Seishin, now Chongjin in today's North Korea. From there they desperately tried to board trains that would take them into northern China – to Manchuria and cities where exiled Russians were making their new homes.**

SC 2.8.

INT TRAIN TO HARBIN - DAY

SC 2.9. INT TRAIN TO HARBIN - NEXT MORNING

FX: **The train gets into the station at Harbin. We can hear the Guard shouting:**

- 1 GUARD Harbin station. Harbin. You must disembark. Harbin station.
- 2 NASTYA Shura, wake up.
- 3 SHURA What is it?
- 4 NASTYA We're here. Look. Harbin.
- 5 SHURA We're safe.
- 6 NASTYA We made it.
- 7 **NARRATION:** **Harbin was the most common destination for those Russians leaving via Vladivostok and heading for northern China. It was a Chinese city, but one with a large and established Russian community of 34,000, a terminus of the Russian-built and operated China Eastern Railway. Harbin had Russian schools, Russian Orthodox churches, Russian language newspapers, literary journals, a symphony orchestra of Russian**

1 SHURA What?

2 NASTYA He's dead.

(BEAT)

3 GUARD (O.S.) Harbin station. Everybody out. Harbin station. This is the end of the line.

4 ~~SHURA~~ Go and find the child. Quick.

FX: *Nastya goes. Shura goes to the old man. She says a*

SC 2.10. INT TRAIN TO HARBIN - DAY

FX: Shura and Marie walk down the carriage, heading back to their seats.

1 MARIE There are so many people, I got lost.

2 SHURA Well you are lucky I came to find you. Anything could have happened. Let's go find Nastja. We need to go.

FX: She gets to her seat and realizes that Nastya is gone. Only the old man is there.

3 SHURA Nastya? Where is she?

FX: The Guard appears.

4 GUARD Time to go. This train terminates here. C'mon.

5 SHURA

SC 2.11. EXT HARBIN TRAIN STATION.

FX: Busy crowds of people swarming.

1 SHURA Please. It's just for tonight. Tomorrow I'll find lodgings.
Tonight, I need a job. She can watch.

(HE HESITATES)

2 DOORMAN You better come in.

3 **NARRATION:** **And so Shura enters the world of taxi-dancing. Men bought tickets from the ballroom, gave the tickets to their dance partners who traded them in with the nightclub for cash later.**

4 **It was not, as is popularly portrayed, prostitution. Though it could easily become so. A league of nations report on Shanghai in the 1920s found nearly a quarter of Russian émigré women in the city engaged in either full-time or casual prostitution to support themselves and their families.**

SC 2.13. INT. HARBIN NIGHTCLUB – NIGHT

5 CUSTOMER What's your name?

6 SHURA Shura.

7 CUSTOMER Come and dance with me, Shura.

FX: She gets up to dance.

8 CUSTOMER Not like that. You need to come closer. Like this.

FX: He pulls her in, Shura winces as the music builds.

9 **NARRATION:** **These were desperate times for Shura - a new country, forced to earn a living, a young child dependent on them - a tiny microcosm of the great Russian emigration. Shura was safe from the Bolsheviks, but taxi-dancing in the many rough dancehalls of Russian Harbin demanded a whole new level of survival skills...**

OUTRO:

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We often think of the Russian émigrés as Counts and Countesses but they were a far more varied exile community – ballerinas, opera singers, novelists and pamphleteers alongside horse traders, butchers, ladies maids and, among them, a fair share of Russia’s criminal milieu.

FX: _____ A door slams muffling the music inside the club.

SC 3.3. INT A BAR/CAFE - NIGHT

FX: Shura tucks into a plate of dumplings. Leopard drinks and smokes.

- 1 LEOPARD You're enjoying that.
- 2 SHURA I've had worse.
- 3 LEOPARD How long is it since you've eaten?
- 4 SHURA Long enough for this to taste like decent food.
(HE LAUGHS)
- 5 LEOPARD But these are the best jiaozi dumplings in the city. How have you managed all this time on your own?
- 6 SHURA I'm not on my own. I have a kid I look after. A girl.
- 7 LEOPARD Not yours?
- 8 SHURA No. But it's a long story...
- 9 LEOPARD So tell me about it.
- 10 SHURA Why?
- 11 LEOPARD I'm interested.
(BEAT)
- 12 SHURA We left Russia by train, then boat, then another train. First we lived in Harbin now we live here in Peking, in Yang-I hutong.
- 13 LEOPARD A slum? But I thought Russians were rich aristocrats.
- 14 SHURA A friend - she betrayed me. Stole all I had; my rings, my mother's necklace, a gold icon with my family crest. I wouldn't be living in the Badlands or eating food like this if I had my jewellery.
- 15 LEOPARD Well from now on, you trust me.

1 SHURA I don't even know who you are.

FX: **She finishes the meal. Pushes the plate away.**

2 LEOPARD Have you heard of Leopard? Great Provider of Tongzhou?

3 SHURA That's you? Then why have you brought me to a place like this?

(HE LAUGHS)

4 LEOPARD I like you Shura but no offence, you look like you could do with a protector.

5 SHURA And a new job. Now that you've probably killed my employer.

6 LEOPARD How would you like to work in the best clubs in Peking?

7 SHURA You could arrange that for me?

8 LEOPARD I'd want something in return.

FX: **She gets up.**

9 LEOPARD Where are you going?

10 SHURA Home. I've finished my dinner.

11 LEOPARD Let me come with you.

12 SHURA Don't be ridiculous -

13 LEOPARD Then when can I see you again?

FX: **She's off.**

14 SHURA If you're such a 'Great Provider' Find me a new job, somewhere good, then we can talk.

(HE SHOUTS AFTER HER)

15 LEOPARD How about - I set you up in your own place? My gift.

FX: **Shura stops.**

SC 3.4. INT A NEW CLUB, THE KAVKAZ- NIGHT

FX: MUSIC PLAYS AS WE HEAR MONTAGE SCENES OF SHURA AT HER NEW CLUB.

1 MC Gentlemen, gentlemen. May I introduce you to our new owner of the Kavkaz.

SC 3.7. EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - NIGHT

FX: The Gang are wrecking the tracks.

1 LEOPARD Are you ready?

2 HENG Ready.

3 GANG MEMBER 2 That train won't go any further than here.

4 LEOPARD When it stops, you take the driver. Then we go through first class. Remember, we want everything.

FX: The sound of the train approaching in the distance.

5 **NARRATION: Between 1916 and 1928 alone, Peking was ruled by more than seven different warlords, all of whom were eventually chased out, hunted down or killed in one way or another. It wasn't a career with high longevity expectations.**

SC 3.8. INT. ON THE TRAIN

FX:

SC 3.10. INT ANOTHER TRAIN ANOTHER TRAIN

FX: Leopard and the gang going down a carriage collecting valuables.

1 LEOPARD Call it a contribution to the fighting fund of the Leopard, the Great Provider of Tongzhou. You will be defeating Bolshevism, Kuomintang tyranny & foreign domination.

2 PASSENGER I'm not giving you anything. I don't support your 'cause'. This is just daylight robbery.

3 LEOPARD Heng?

4 HENG Yep.

5 LEOPARD Get rid of him.

FX: The gang member drags the passenger roughly away as he protests, screaming.

6 LEOPARD Anyone else not feeling charitable today?

7 **NARRATION: The warlords of Northern China made the American Wild West look tame. They robbed trains, took hostages, demanded fantastic ransoms. One Northern Warlord,**

SC 3.11. INT A TRAIN - NIGHT

FX: The gang are going through the stolen goods.

- | | | |
|----|-------------|---|
| 1 | HENG | Broaches 50 |
| 2 | G/ MEMBER 2 | Watches 20 |
| 3 | HENG | Money. 1,000 Dollars |
| 4 | G/ MEMBER 2 | Necklaces 4 |
| 5 | HENG | Diamond rings? |
| 6 | G/ MEMBER | 2 |
| 7 | HENG | And some kind of gold icon with a family crest |
| 8 | LEOPARD | Let me see that. Where did you get this? |
| 9 | HENG | There's a Russian in the last carriage. She was dripping in gold. |
| 10 | LEOPARD | Bring her to me. |

SC 3.12. INT. DOWNSTAIRS IN THE KAVKAZ CLUB - NIGHT

- | | | |
|----|---------|---|
| 11 | SHURA | How did you find it? |
| 12 | LEOPARD | It is yours, isn't it? |
| 13 | SHURA | The one that was stolen. See, it has the family name. |
| 14 | LEOPARD | And I have another surprise for you. Heng! |

FX: Heng enters with...

- | | | |
|----|---------|-------------------------------------|
| 15 | LEOPARD | Meet the Countess of Sosnitsky |
| 16 | SHURA | Nastya? |
| 17 | NASTYA | Shura! Oh Shura. You must help me - |

1 LEOPARD Can you believe it? The little thief was pretending to be you! Sitting in first class and wearing your jewels round her neck like she's the Empress Dowager herself.

2 NASTYA Oh Shura. Can you forgive me? I'm sorry I ran, but I had no choice. Please don't let them hurt me.

3 LEOPARD What do you want me to do with her?

4 SHURA What do you mean?

5 LEOPARD She stole from you. She should be punished.

6 NASTYA Please, Shura, Shura. I have suffered. You know what it's like to be a stranger in this terrible country -

7 LEOPARD Well?

(BEAT)

8 SHURA Take her away. Do what you want. I don't care.

FX: **Heng takes Nastya away.**

9 NASTYA No, no! Shura no. Please. They will kill me!

FX: **She is gone.**

10 SHURA Thank you, for finding this. All of it.

11 LEOPARD It will fetch a good sum if you decide to sell. With your jewellery back and the Kavkaz, you probably no longer need my help.

FX: **He goes to leave.**

12 SHURA Why don't you - help me to put it on? Start with my necklace.

FX: **She hands him the necklace. A moment.**

13 LEOPARD Turn around.

FX: **He puts a necklace on her.**

1 SHURA My father gave me this. It was a present to my mother. To hold it again in my hands, to have it round my neck, it reminds me of the past....

2 LEOPARD You have a beautiful neck.

3 SHURA And you have strong hands.

(BEAT)

4 LEOPARD You pretend not to like me, Shura. But really, I don't think that's the case.

(BEAT)

5 SHURA Kiss me.

(HE DOES)

6 **NARRATION:** **Despite the precarious lifestyle of a warlord, it seems** **NARRATION:** **Despite the precarious lifestyle of a warlord, it seems**

SC 3.13. INT. SHURA'S HOUSE IN THE BADLANDS - NIGHT

(MARIE IS NO

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What we do know is that that night Leopard fled Peking never to return. While Shura, alone, grieved the end of the relationship for months - confused, ashamed, unsure of what was happening to her body.

FX:

PART 4/6

SC 4.2. INT FOH AT THE MANHATTAN CLUB - NIGHT

FX: Tatiana arrives in the club. It is rowdy.

1 MC Gentlemen, Gentlemen welcome to the Manhattan Cabaret!
Isn't it glamorous, isn't it sexy, isn't it expensive?

1 TATIANA

- 1 DANCER But we dance in pairs, Shura.
(MARIE MOANS)
- 2 SHURA New girl, Tatiana. You go on.
- 3 TATIANA What? But -
- 4 SHURA Just follow the other girls. It can be your audition.
- 5 TATIANA But I'm not in costume.
- 6 SHURA That dress you're wearing is fine.
- 7 MC (O.S) Gentlemen, please put your hands together for The Shura Giraldi dancers!
- 8 SHURA Just go! Go, go go! (*They do. To Marie:*) Oh Marie. Marie. What am I going to do with you?

FX: Music. The audience whoops and applauds as the girls rush on stage and go into their number.

- 9 **NARRATION:** Shura exploited Peking's nightlife explosion – the demand for jazz music and high kicking chorus lines by forming the Shura Giraldi Dance Troupe.
- 10 (I have to admit here that i don't know why Shura dropped the Sosnitsky family name and became Shura Giraldi. I think Shura just liked the sound of it – more cosmopolitan; more modern?)
- 11 In any case, Shura's troupe made the Badlands swing. Shura had kept the Kavkaz bar as a base of operations. John Blofeld, the English aesthete whose memoir provides an invaluable record of this period, recalled that Shura now presented publicly as a man.
- 12 Shura now seemed once again outwardly happy and prosperous but, according to Blofeld, after the sudden estrangement from the warlord Leopard:

SC 4.3. _____ NEUTRAL BG

1 BLOFELD *Shura became increasingly alarmed by the continuing appearance of inexplicable physical changes in herself. Unhappily, these*

- 1 TATIANA Thank you for letting me join the company.
- 2 SHURA You went on for Marie without a moment's notice. That's the sign of a true professional.
- 3 **NARRATION:** **By the mid-30s, the warlords had been defeated, but China was still weak. There was fuel and food shortages, refugees from the countryside flocking into the city. Paper money was increasingly worthless – inflation became stagflation. Shura's cash register take tonight is almost worthless the next day.**
- 4 **John Blofeld recalled that, when faced with big decisions in life, it was to a Russian Orthodox priest that Shura turned.**
- 5 **Father Vassily - known by the Chinese as the "Ruski Lama" - had fled Siberia to Mongolia where, it seems, he'd picked up a knowledge of shamanism that he blended with his own rather exuberant style of Christianity, mixing mythology, Buddhism and spiritualism all together. He lived in Peking's ancient lama temple – the Yonghegong.**

SC 4.6. INT THE KAVKAZ - NIGHT

- 1 ZAICHEK Smuggling? Are you kidding me? Shura this is madness!
- 2 SHURA The girls will conceal the jewels about their person. They catch the train, as usual, then when they get to Shanghai, after their performance, they meet with Father Vassily's contact. The contact will exchange the jewels for cash. It's simple.
- 3 ZAICHEK And if they get caught?
- 4 SHURA I need the money, Zaichek. And this is a quick way of getting it. I need to get us out of the Badlands. Fast.
- 5 ZAICHEK You talked to Marie?
- 6 SHURA Did you know what she was taking?
- 7 ZAICHEK I had my suspicions.
- 8 SHURA So then you know how serious this is. I need to get her away from Saxsen before he gets his claws in deeper.
- 9 ZAICHEK Which girls would do the smuggling?
- 10 SHURA The new one, Tatiana. I mean I won't tell her she's smuggling. I'll just say, 'can she take the jewels to a friend'. The Chinese guards won't search a young white woman. Marie can go with her. I'll tell her what's going on. She can be the one who does the handover.
- 11 ZAICHEK And you think Marie is up to this? You can trust her?
- 12 SHURA I'll have to. She's the only one who is streetwise.
- 13 ZAICHEK Well I hope you know what you're doing.
- 14 SHURA God is on our side.

SC 4.7. EXT. SHANGHAI TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

FX: Marie and Tatiana at the station.

(TATIANA IS OBLIVIOUS, MARIE NERVOUS.)

- 1 POLICE Welcome to the Shanghai International Settlement. Papers please ladies?
- 2 MARIE Here.
- 3 POLICE And the purpose of your visit?
- 4 MARIE We're dancers. The Shura Giraldi Troupe?
- 5 POLICE Oh yes, we've had a few of you travelling through today?
- 6 TATIANA We're always on the road.
- 7 MARIE Here's a free ticket. Why don't you come and see us? We're at the Paramount?
- 8 POLICE Well, thank you very much.
- 9 MARIE Can we go then?
- (BEAT)
- 10 POLICE Of course. But watch out for smugglers.
- 11 TATIANA Sorry?
- 12 POLICE There's some nasty characters travelling these trains, be sure to look after yourselves.
- 13 MARIE We will, don't you worry.

FX: Marie and Tatiana walk quickly on.

- 14 TATIANA Are you feeling okay?
- 15 MARIE I am now. Come on, we don't want to miss the train.

FX: They hurry on.

SC 4.10. **INT. STAGE**

1 MC ‘Ladies and Gentleman, Gentleman and Ladies, Welcome, Dobro Pozhalovat, HuanyingHuanying...are you ready to witness a reinvention? May I introduce to you Shura - the drugs’ baron.

FX: **Music plays under:**

2 **NARRATION:** **So that was how the deal worked out – gems for heroin. With cash barely worth the paper it’s printed on, drugs are a reliable currency. And the nighttime denizens of the Badlands are demanding the newly fashionable heroin.**

SC 4.11. **INT THE KAVKAZ**

FX: **Zaichek is cutting up the drugs.**

3 SHURA How much in each?

4 ZAICHEK I don’t know? This much?

5 SHURA Too much.

6 ZAICHEK You think?

7 SHURA We need to ask someone who knows. Marie!

8 **NARRATION:** **The junkies of the Badlands had to pay in British pounds, American dollars, French francs, Dutch guilders, Italian lira, Mexican silver dollars...anything but worthless local Chinese money.**

SC 4.12. EXT A STREET CORNER

- 1 MARIE We are much cheaper than Saxsen. And this is good stuff. So you tell your friends, you tell your customers, that from now on you come to us, alright?
- 2 R/SHAW GUY So Shura is going into business. So many fingers, so many pies.
- 3 MARIE We Russians are resourceful. We have to survive.
- 4 R/SHAW GUY Survive? Shura *thrive* in Peking!

SC 4.13. INT THE KAVKAZ

FX: They count out money.

- 5 ZAICHEK Two hundred, Three hundred. There's one fifty missing.
- 6 SHURA Marie?
- 7 ZAICHEK She's been helping herself to the profits.
- 8 SHURA What the hell am I going to do with that girl! I think now might be the time to move while luck is still on our side. Time to buy that house in the country. Can we afford it, yet?
- 9 ZAICHEK With money left over to throw a housewarming.
- 10 SHURA Then let's make it a big one. Really big.
- 11 **NARRATION:** **Even if it wasn't quite how Shura and Father Vassily had planned it, Shura was becoming wealthy. Shura could leave the crowded alleys of Yang-i hutong and the Badlands. Move outside the city's ancient tartar walls. Out to Paomachang racecourse where stout Mongolian ponies, invariably ridden by Russian émigré jockeys,**

SC 4.14. INT THE VILLA - NIGHT

FX: A housewarming party in full swing.

- 1 TATIANA Zaichek! Zaichek!
- 2 ZAICHEK Tatiana! Shura will be so glad that you came.
- 3 TATIANA Where is he?
- 4 ZAICHEK Getting ready to perform with the band.
- 5 TATIANA Perform?
- 6 ZAICHEK A special number to celebrate.
- 7 TATIANA What a beautiful house this is. I can't believe it. Zaichek, can I introduce you to Roy, he's my boyfriend.
- 8 ZAICHEK Well hello Roy. You're Chinese?
- 9 ROY My Father is. My mother is English. I was born in Oxford.
- 10 TATIANA Roy is the manager of one of the clubs we perform at. This is Zaichek, Roy. He's Shura's -
- 11 ZAICHEK Friend.
- 12 TATIANA Is Marie here, Zaichek?
- 13 ZAICHEK Not yet. But I'm sure she will be here soon.

FX: Anton, a Russian jockey enters.

- 14 ANTON Roy? Roy Tchoo,! Hey Roy!
- 15 ROY Anton!
- 16 ANTON Hey!
- 17 ROY Anton! What are you doing here?

FX: They embrace.

- 18 ANTON I'm riding a horse in the 2.15 tomorrow.

PEKING NOIR by Paul French & Sarah Wooley

SC 4.15. EXT. BADLANDS - NIGHT

FX: Marie is out of it, trying to get to the villa.

- 1 JAPANESE SOLDIER Halt! Stop what you are doing? Girl, where are you going?
- 2 MARIE Home.
- 3 SOLDIER Where?
- 4 MARIE Paomachang.
- 5 SOLDIER At this hour? What are you doing in the Badlands?
- 6 MARIE I used to live here. I was - visiting... a friend. What's the problem? Are you the police?
- (HE LAUGHS)
- 7 SOLDIER You're a Russian?
- 8 MARIE Yes.
- 9 SOLDIER Then you better go quick. Tell your friends, the Japanese are here.

FX:

OUTRO:

- 1 **NARRATION:** In the next episode of **Peking Noir Shura**, Marie and the entire Russian émigré community of Peking now live in an occupied city, subject to the vicissitudes and cruelties of the Imperial Japanese Army. Yet, as ever, they must work out a way to survive...

PART 5/6

1 NARRATION:

- 1 **NARRATION:** **The Russian émigrés remain – no passports, stateless, nowhere to run to. Now in the certain knowledge that the Japanese are the new masters of the ancient city...**
- 2 YAKUZA 2 Move! Move! MOVE!
- 3 **NARRATION:** **Imported “loyal” Yakuza gangsters have arrived from Tokyo to take over the city’s Badlands; to run it at a profit for the Japanese army and subsidise their occupation of china.**
- 4 SHURA Stop! Who the hell are you? This is my club and my rehearsal. I give the orders round here.
- 5 YAKUZA 1 Not anymore, Giraldi. Get against that wall.
- 6 ZAICHEK Who ordered this?
- 7 YAKUZA 1 The new law makers. Now, get up against that wall!
- 8 ZAICHEK We don't take orders from thug Yakuza.
- 9 YAKUZA 1 Listen, you Chinese dog. Your little game is up here. We know what you lot are into.
- 10 SHURA We run a dance troupe and a nightclub.
- 11 YAKUZA 1 Our sources tell us this place is a front for drug smuggling.
- 12 SHURA That's a lie!
- 13 YAKUZA 2 Listen. We are being very kind by allowing you to continue.
- 14 ZAICHEK What do you mean?
- 15 YAKUZA 1 Stop shouting and crying we'll explain. From now on you'll be selling for us.
- 16 ZAICHEK So you can fund your war against China?
- 17 YAKUZA 1 Only Japanese can make money now so you sell our stuff to your degenerate Russian junkies and these girls here, can entertain the officers.

1 YAKUZA 2 And we don't just mean by dancing.

FX: **The girls object.**

2 SHURA Now you listen to me. These girls are highly-trained dancers they are not -

3 YAKUZA 1 So you won't cooperate, fine. Yoshiaki? Go and get the Russian pimp. Tell him he can run this place. Hand it over to him.

4 SHURA Russian pimp?

5 YAKUZA 2 Saxsen. This place can be his.

6 SHURA That bastard's never setting foot in here. This is my club. I have spent years building it up!

FX: **The Yakuza grabs Shura. Shura reacts.**

7 YAKUZA 1 I hear you're a girl under that shirt Giraldi - why don't you let me see.

8 ZAICHEK Why you filthy bastard/ Get off him!

FX: **He goes for him.**

9 SHURA Zaichek don't!

FX: **The Yakuza shoot Zaichek dead. Three shots. Everyone screams. Shura rushes to him.**

10 SHURA No! Zaichek no!

FX: **The girls scream and cry.**

11 SHURA

SC 5.2. EXT A STREET IN PEKING - DAY

FX: Anton, Shura, Tatiana and Roy are at a restaurant.

1 SHURA It was cold-blooded murder! That's what it was. And I am lost without him. I know you wouldn't think it to look at him, he was so unassuming, but he did deals with people, smoothed

- 1 **NARRATION:** By the end of 1937 things were getting increasingly desperate in Peking as Japan's grip on the city tightened. The rail lines to Shanghai were disrupted; resistance in the countryside led the Japanese army to instigate the 'three alls' policy: kill all, burn all, loot all.
- 2 Terrified peasants flooded into Peking, found shelter where they could, or slept on the streets. Food supplies ran low as crops burned; tuberculosis raged through Yang-i hutong taking a terrible toll; Badlands heroin was cut to maximise profits, with baking soda, starch, bleach. The death toll was horrific – overdoses occurred daily. The addicts, their immune systems weakened, became especially susceptible to cholera and TB. Their corpses were left on the streets in the early mornings to be collected by the carts of the Chinese Buddhist benevolent society.
- 3 Money was worthless – merchants wanted only gold, jewels, or rice as payment. The city's police force - those that weren't imprisoned as politically unreliable or had deserted - were hated as collaborators and kept a low profile. A crime wave took hold...

SC 5.3.

INT HOME SHUW5005C>----2 Tf1 0 1 72.024 296.9296.9292F3 12 Tf1

- 1 SHURA When I first came to Peking I had a protector. He was handsome and rich. He told me he loved me and as I got to know him I loved him too. But I was not the person he wanted me to be. Then, I met Zaicheck, and although he wasn't handsome or rich, he looked after me, and more than that, he desired me for who I was, not what I wasn't. I thought, we'd grow old together, that we'd live happily at the Villa, find peace there for Marie. Instead, I am alone again and Marie never got her chance to get well so I have no choice but to be my own protector, and hers. Zaicheck would understand that.
- 2 ANTON Are you scared?
- 3 SHURA Terrified.
- 4 ANTON Promise me, you'll come back alive.
- 5 SHURA Would you miss me if I didn't?
- 6 ANTON Why do you think I came here this evening to see you? Why do you think I hang around Tatiana and Roy so much? It's only so I can see you. Of course I'd miss you!
- 7 SHURA Then come closer?

FX: He does, maybe they kiss. Music.

1 SHURA We don't want to hurt you, alright? We are here for the money. Think of your families, don't risk your life. Give him the key.

2 TELLER Here.

FX: **She hands over the keys.**

3 SHURA Go, Let's go! Quick. Quick!

FX: **They rest of the gang run to get the money from the safe.**

4 SHURA Ladies and Gentlemen, I apologise for the inconvenience but I'm afraid that times are hard and needs must. The bank is insured and we will only take their money, not yours. Now, please cooperate, although you should also know that we are desperate and will not hesitate to shoot.... This won't take long.

FX: **Suddenly a member of the public pulls a gun, click.**

5 HERO MAN Hold it right there.

6 SHURA Please Sir, whoever you are - don't be a hero. Put the gun down.

7 HERO MAN I am not about to let you rob this bank and terrify these poor people -

8 SHURA It's not your money, it's the bank's. There is no need for heroics. Now put the gun down.

9 HERO MAN No!

FX: **Pavel and co run back in with the money.**

10 PAVEL We've got it we've got it. Let's go -

FX: **He stops.**

11 JOE Shit. What the hell? He's got a gun!

1 HERO MAN And I will shoot you all!

2 PAVEL I don't think so.

FX: PAVEL shoots the man, everybody screams.

3 SHURA What the hell did you do that for?

4 PAVEL Let's get out of here. Go! Run! Run!

FX: They all leg it.

5 **NARRATION:** This was the biggest bank heist in Chinese history – biggest then and still the biggest haul to date nearly a century later. But I have to remind you what I said at the start: for everyone who said Shura was the “King of the Badlands”, someone else said Shura was nothing of the sort. Well, the rumour was Shura robbed the Bank of Peking – but nobody ever proved it.

6 However, inflation, stagflation, Japanese bribes and arbitrary taxes, safe houses, hush money ate the takings up quick...and, as every villain knows, steal too much, grab too many headlines, and they never stop looking for you...

SC 5.7. EXT THE VILLA - LATE AFTERNOON

FX: Shura drinks, Anton smokes while reading the paper.

1 SHURA They've found Herbolt. The safe cracker. It's in the paper.
They've arrested him.

2 ANTON Let me see.

FX: He takes the paper, worried.

3 ANTON It says here they're looking for a Russian. It won't take long
before the police are here. 'All Peking know Shura'!

4 SHURA So what can I do? Go on the run? I robbed that bank so we
could afford to stay here, so we could live! I can't just I

SC 5.8. EXT. VILLA IN THE WESTERN HILLS – NIGHT

FX: Chinese cops can be heard surrounding the villa.

1 CHINESE COP Pavel Oborska, we know you're in there. We have you surrounded. Come out. With your hands up!

FX: Shots can be heard from inside the villa.

2 CHINESE COP 2 Gun fire, gun fire get down. Get down!

FX: The shots stop, a moment.

3 CHINESE COP He's reloading. I'm going in. Cover me!

4 CHINESE COP 2 Are you sure?

5 CHINESE COP Let's go!

FX: They rush into the villa, shooting.

6 **NARRATION:** Pavel Oborska was killed. Herbolt, the German safecracker was sent to prison but never revealed the identity of the "Russian Mastermind" behind the heist. The cops turned the safe house upside down. They recovered some pearls and gems, but no cash.

SC 5.9. INT. A HOUSE IN THE HILLS – NIGHT

FX: A cop bangs on the door.

7 US MILITARY Open up! Open up!

FX: Joe, blurry eyed, goes to the door.

8 JOE Who are you? What do you want?

9 US MILITARY Military police. We're here to arrest you.

10 JOE What the hell for?

FX: He gets dragged away.

11 JOE Please. You can't do this. I haven't done anything wrong.

- 1 **NARRATION:** **United States Military Police arrested a Marine thought to be one of the gang. But the Marine Corps dealt with its own problems and quickly shipped the guy back Stateside to avoid embarrassment. Shura's name was never mentioned officially, but it was whispered all around town. A warrant was issued in Peking and**

SC 5.11. INT THE VILLA - LATE AFTERNOON

FX: Shura is packing. Maire enters, she's just woken up and is out of it.

1 MARIE Hey. What are you doing?

2 ANTON Oh, finally, Marie. Where have you been all day?

3 MARIE What's going on?

4 SHURA We're moving

5 MARIE What? Why?

6 SHURA Haven't you noticed? It's not safe here anymore. I see that terrible cheap Yakuza crap has addled your brain.

7 MARIE If I could go back to dancing I could earn enough to buy better stuff. But I can't go back to dancing since they took your club away.

8 SHURA So the tragedy that is your life that is all my fault, is it? You were suppl 1 245.09 479.59 0 G[o]-3(u)-3(r l)3(ife)1AC800550048>4008871

1 SHURA This is our other lady. Guard, if you want to check our tickets?

2 GUARD Thank you.

FX: The Guard goes down the carriage calling out 'all aboard' Train leaving etc. Marie is cat crazy, fuming.

3 ANTON What the hell?!

4 MARIE Shura, I'm going to kill you!

5 SHURA Hush. You think I'd leave without you Marie? After all these years.

6 MARIE You had me kidnapped and – dragged here by a rickshaw puller. Oh the indignity.

7 SHURA (LAUGHING) You asked me for proof of my love? Well, here we are. It's time to start your rehabilitation. And mine.

PART 6/6

FX:

SC 6.5. INT THE KAVKAZ - NIGHT

FX: Sound of a rowdy GI audience.

1 MC Ladies and Gentlemen. Especially you, American gentlemen. The war is over! And it's New Year's Eve - It's time to celebrate! Welcome, to the biggest, the rowdiest, the best nightclub in all Peking. The all new Kavkaz! Hit it boys.

FX: Band go into a number. Tatiana sings something joyful, glamorous and razzmatazz.

2 MC Welcome 1946! The year of the Dog.

FX: Cheers ring out, happy new year etc.

3 **NARRATION:** The Americans are back in town and US dollars are flowing. But world war has become civil war – Chinese Nationalist vs Chinese Communist. And civil war looks like becoming revolution – Communist revolution.

4 MC 1947, the year of the Pig.

5 **NARRATION:** The civil war grinds on. It becomes clear that Chiang Kai-shek's armies are losing – Chairman Mao Zedong's communist troops take city after city. There is fighting close to Peking. The Nationalists begin a long retreat, the Communist winter offensive in northeast China is a crushing defeat for Chiang. Peking is once again vulnerable, and starting to panic.

6 MC 1948, the year of the Rat.

7 **NARRATION:** The Red Army's advance is remorseless. The Nationalists retreat now a rout. Chiang prepares to take himself, and all China's gold he can grab, to Taiwan. Anyone – Chinese or foreign – not sympathetic to the Communists makes plans to leave. For Shura it's like Tomsk all over again.

- 1 ROY There are barely any foreigners left here now. Even if you could stay you won't be able to make a living. You are what they're calling a "Displaced Person". Because my Father was English I have a British passport, Tatiana and Sylvia too. That means we can leave. But as a Russian... you can do one of two things; you can go back to Russia -
- 2 SHURA What? No! The Soviets will kill me -
- 3 ROY Or, you can apply to the United Nations. See if they will allocate you a new place to settle.
- 4 SHURA But - where might that be?
- 5 ROY Australia? England?
- 6 TATIANA America would be great for you Shura. You could open the Kavkaz in San Francisco, or on Hollywood Boulevard?
- 7 SHURA When are you two thinking of leaving?
- 8 ROY As soon as possible. There's no time to lose.
- 9 **NARRATION:** **In 1949 the Nationalist government finally collapsed. Those remaining loyal followed Chiang Kai-shek's lead and fled to Taiwan. On October 1st 1949 the victorious People's Liberation Army paraded through Peking. A new national anthem, *the march of the volunteers*, was blasted from speaker trucks, a new Chinese flag, red with five yellow stars, was unfurled. Chairman Mao took to the rostrum:**

- 1 ANTON Are you feeling alright?
- 2 SHURA Just a little – light-headed. They made us queue for hours.
And what do we get for it? Nothing!
- 3 MARIE We'll just have to make the best of things here.
- 4 SHURA And die like my father, or your parents. No thank you! What
about you, Anton? What did they say to you?
- (BEAT)
- 5 ANTON I didn't go in.
- 6 MARIE Why not?
- 7 SHURA For God's sake Anton this was important!
- 8 ANTON I have something to tell you.
- 9 MARIE What?
- (BEAT)
- 10 ANTON I've already got my passport.
- 11 SHURA I don't understand -
- 12 ANTON I applied last year.
- 13 MARIE Last year!
- 14 ANTON It was in June, when the communists took Shanghai. I got
scared. I asked around and - someone told me that's what I
had to do.
- 15 SHURA You applied and didn't tell us - why?
- 16 ANTON Because I knew, they'd turn you down, Shura.
- 17 MARIE You already know how you're getting out, don't you?
- (BEAT)

- 1 SHURA Please don't go.
- 2 ANTON But what will happen to me if I don't?
- 3 SHURA We'll find a way. There's always a way. I promise.

FX: **The announcement again.**

- 4 ANTON Goodbye Shura. I'm sorry.

FX: **He kisses Shura, leaves for the plane.**

SC 6.11. **EXT. STREET - DAY**

FX: **Marie and Shura walk arm-in-arm.**

- 5 MARIE Now that everyone is gone. I've been thinking... what if we were to go into business together?
- 6 SHURA As what?
- 7 MARIE We could open a new bordello?
- 8 SHURA The communists will never allow a cathouse
- 9 MARIE The communists don't need to know.
- 10 SHURA But who would be the girls?

FX: **Marie stops.**

- 11 MARIE

1 SHURA Anton?

2 MARIE Anton!

FX: **He catches them up.**

3 ANTON We Russians, we need to stick together, no? I couldn't just -
leave my family.

4 SHURA Oh Anton. What have you done?

FX: **Hugs.**

5 **NARRATION:** **The UN was gone, foreign embassies shuttered. It took a while for the new regime to get around to dealing with the remaining émigrés. Stalin and Mao were close – big brother and little brother, so they said in those days. Naturally, the White Russians were suspect. They had to be dealt with.**

SC 6.12. **INT/EXT THE KAVKAZ - NIGHT**

6 COM GUARD Kuaile-Kuaile. Hurry up. Hurry up now.

7 MARIE But where are you taking us?

8 COM GUARD All Russians. You are being moved out of Peking. You are all going to Tientsin. To a hotel.

9 SHURA Tientsin? What hotel? Why?

10 COM GUARD Don't ask questions. C'mon move.

11 ANTON But you can't make us leave. This is our home!
Our/(business)

12 COM GUARD Not anymore. All anti-Soviet Russians must leave. I said -
Move!

FX: **Marie, Shura and Anton are shoved onto a truck, it drives away.**

SC 6.14. INT. SHURA'S ROOM TIENTSIN HOTEL - DAY

FX: Early morning, pandemonium at the hotel. Someone banging on the door.

1 MARIE Shura, Anton. Open up! Shura!

FX: Anton opens the door.

2 ANTON What it is it Marie? 5

3 MARIE The

1 SHURA

PEKING NOIR by Paul French & Sarah Wooley

FX: **The sound of more guards appearing (Russian voices now mingled with Chinese).**

- 1 CAPTAIN Are these prisoners for us?
- 2 GUARD Yes sir.
- 3 CAPTAIN Good. Take the women back to the truck. Drive them into the town to be processed. Line the men up in a row. Shoot them.

FX: **There's a reaction from the prisoners. Weeping, crying out etc.**

- 4 CAPTAIN SHUT UP! Right. Stand by. Positions, soldiers. Take Aim.
FIRE!

FX: **The sound of guns.**

- 5 NARRATION: This was the swift and final end for so many of the forcibly repatriated émigrés. The men particularly were treated with distrust by the Soviet state, considered parasites, traitors, spies. Those not executed often found themselves in the gulags.
- 6 The truth is we don't know what happened to Shura after he reached the border...a bullet? A gulag for years and death by overwork, starvation or disease? But you should know, there were, as always with Shura, other rumours...

SC 6.17. EXT BACK OF MOVING TRUCK AT BORDER - DAY

1 SHURA Whatever happens next. I want you to know that I love you Anton.

2 ANTON And I love you. You know, all this time you've feared coming back here, to Russia when maybe, it might all be fine. Maybe, it won't be so bad being back home.

FX: Truck stops. Guards get out.

3 GUARD Right. Everybody out. Everybody out! Come on. Move!

FX: They get up.

4 GUARD Men on one side. Women on the other.

SC 6. 18. EXT BACK OF TRUCK - DAY

SHURA The women are moved off the truck.

- 1 GUARD Line up. Line up.
- 2 **NARRATION:** **And so our story ends pretty much as it started – with uncertainty and rumour.**
- 3 GUARD: Right. I need names. Let's start with you then you'll be told where you are going to next. What's your name, woman?
- 4 SHURA Alexandra Mikhailovna Sosnitsky, they call me Shura.
- 5 GUARD Welcome home, Comrade Shura. To the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics.
- 6 **NARRATION:**