

PERUSAL SCRIPT

A Long Waltz Too Short

(One of Four Short Plays from “The Witching Hour”)

by Kira Shaffer



Newport, Maine

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(One of Four Short Plays from "The Witching Hour")

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CAST:

A Long Waltz Too Short (2f, 2m)

DMITRI PETROV: an official in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, 20s to 30s

ELENA PETROVNA: Dmitri's new wife, 21 a pretty but indecorous

SVETLANA KARATAEVA: single woman, 20s to 30s

GIBEL SMERTOV: a mysterious man, 20s to 50s

Settings should remain simple so they can easily be changed.

Props should be minimal.

Costumes should help delineate the period as well as the character

A LONG WALTZ TOO SHORT: One of Four Short Plays for Halloween (or any time) by *Kīra Shaffer*. 2f, 2m. About 14 minutes. Period costumes. Simple Setting and props. A newlywed young woman meets a stranger with grim purpose at a ball. The festival of Samhain, or as we more commonly know it, Hallowe'en, is a favorite time of year for many people. This play from *The Witching Hour*, a collection of short plays of the haunting and the macabre is a perfect fit for the celebration of that season, or for any time of the year. Content Advisory: Thematic elements. Suitable for most teens and adults. **ORDER # 3336**

Kīra Shaffer graduated from Brigham Young University–Idaho in 2014 with a BA in English, creative writing emphasis. Her love for Halloween and supernatural stories inspired these plays. She met her collaborator and co-writer Cory Larsen in 2015. They developed a friendship after she joined the volunteer choir he directed in 2017. She sang under him for five seasons before the choir disbanded with the COVID-19 shutdown of 2020. Kīra lives in Utah with her husband and children.

The World Premiere production of *A Long Waltz Too Short* was produced at The Hive Collaborative in Provo, Utah, in 2021, as a part of the collection of plays entitled: *The Witching Hour*. Directed by Cory Larsen. The cast was as follows:

A Long Waltz Too Short

DMITRI PETROV: **Mitchell Larsen**

ELENA PETROVNA: **Alanna Koltermann**

SVETLANA KARATAEVA: **Julianne Davis**

GIBEL SMERTOV: **Benjamin Hyde**

GUEST: **Ashley Pitts**

A Long Waltz Too Short

A short play
by Kīra Shaffer

Cast of Characters:

DMITRI PETROV: an official in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, 20s to 30s

ELENA PETROVNA: Dmitri's new wife, 21 a pretty but indecorous

SVETLANA KARATAEVA: single woman, 20s to 30s

GIBEL SMERTOV: a mysterious man, 20s to 50s

PLACE: a ballroom

TIME: Evening, 1960s

Scene

At rise: A cushioned chair upstage right. DMITRI enters escorting Elena.

DMITRI: You are as graceful as ever: the star of the ball. My comrades wonder how I ever managed to catch you.

ELENA: It's no great mystery. You are more dashing than all of them.

DMITRI: Will you dance the next one with me?

ELENA: You're incorrigible. We just danced together twice in a row. If you are this eager, perhaps we should take a second honeymoon, hm? A trip to the Black Sea?

DMITRI: You know I can't get away from work again so soon. Indulge me now, please?

ELENA: Stop. Look there. Svetlana Karataeva needs a partner.

(THEY look to SVETLANA, who is trying to attract a partner.)

DMITRI: Oh no.

ELENA: Oh yes. Tis a happy duty. This is a ballroom, not a bedroom: you cannot have me all to yourself.

DMITRI: If you say so, tishka.

ELENA: *(shooing him away)* Kysh kysh!

DMITRI: Woman, I go!

(DMITRI goes to Svetlana and offers his hand. SVETLANA accepts it and they exit. A waltz begins to play. ELENA feels a sudden, sharp pain in her head. She gasps.)

ELENA: Sch-toe! Not now!

(SMERTOV enters and crosses to Elena. ELENA sits.)

SMERTOV: No lady should be left sitting when a perfectly good waltz is playing. Come, you must dance. He proffers his hand to Elena.

ELENA: I'm sorry, sir, but I'm indisposed at the moment. You may save a dance with me for later, if I feel better.

SMERTOV: No matter. Take my hand.

ELENA: I tell you I shan't.

SMERTOV: Elena Petrovna, stand up with me.

(ELENA must obey. She takes his hand and rises. At his touch, her headache disappears.)

ELENA: My headache—it's gone!

SMERTOV: How fortunate.

ELENA: So it seems...

(ELENA pulls her hand from Smertov's.)

Do you know me, sir? I don't know you. You didn't introduce yourself. Where are your manners?

SMERTOV: Do you ever apologize for your bluntness?

ELENA: Never. Though perhaps I would if I were not so pretty.

SMERTOV You do look ravishing tonight.

ELENA: Then my time in front of the mirror was well spent. But you should know I am married.

SMERTOV: Until death do you part.

ELENA: Are you always this morbid?

SMERTOV: You have no idea.

ELENA: Tell me your name.

SMERTOV: Gibel Smertov.

ELENA: You're teasing me.

SMERTOV: I would not be so cavalier.

ELENA: You must be teasing.

SMERTOV: Why?

ELENA: Because that's not a real name.

SMERTOV: It is mine.

ELENA: It can't be. No one is called—no one has the name of Death.

SMERTOV: Except Death himself?

ELENA: I don't believe you.

SMERTOV: Typical. Nevertheless, I am he. Believe what you will.

ELENA: I believe we're through here.

(She walks past him and he grabs her hand.)

SMERTOV: The dance is not over, Elena.

ELENA: It's halfway done.

SMERTOV: Ah, but this is your last, so I shall make it last, as a parting gift.

ELENA: You're mad.

(ELENA tries to pull away again but SMERTOV holds her fast.)

Very well, Smertov, I'll play along.

(THEY begin to waltz.)

What brings Death to a State Ball in Soviet Russia?

SMERTOV: You, my dear.

ELENA: Oh really?

SMERTOV: You are coming home with me tonight.

ELENA: My husband would be unhappy to hear you say that.

SMERTOV: All the same.

ELENA: And to what do I owe your attention?

SMERTOV: Think no further than your consuming headaches.

(ELENA breaks away and SMERTOV lets her go.)

You have not always been thus afflicted. Did you never dread they portended something dire?

ELENA: Plenty of people live out their lives with bad headaches.

SMERTOV: The doctor you saw said as much, said your pain was just migraines. You should have asked for a second opinion, I am sorry to say. I might not be here if you had.

ELENA: Why? What did the doctor miss?

SMERTOV: A large aneurysm of the brain, my dear.

ELENA: But I'm only twenty-one.

SMERTOV: That just makes it unlikely.

ELENA: How do you know all this? My headaches, the doctor...

SMERTOV: Well, I am either Death or an informant for the State. And there are plenty of the latter here in your part of the world.

ELENA: If you are Death, can I do something, anything, to change your errand?

SMERTOV: No.

ELENA: But you've been swayed in stories before. I could weave a tale to intrigue you utterly, and refuse to tell the ending till tomorrow. You'd let me live one more day just to hear it.

FOUR MORE PAGES TO THE END