

THE TSAR'S CHOICE

Redemption Trilogy Written by Jacklyn A. Lo

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THE TSAR'S CHOICE — TV SERIES

THREE EXCERPTS

Season 4 of the Redemption Series (192 pages)

Written by Jacklyn A. Lo

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Setting: St. Petersburg, Russia 1914; Russia 2021; Heaven's Realm

EXCERPT ONE

Pages 17-21 — When Heaven's Agent Enters Imperial Russia

Setting: St. Petersburg, Russia 1914; Heaven's Realm; Satan's HQ

INT. GOROKHOVAYA STREET 64 - ENTRANCE - DAY

Wearing the same gray coat Nadezhda enters the wide bright lobby.

She passes the stuffed the moth-eaten wolf and a bear and a decadent window with a bush of withered roses.

INT./EXT. ELEVATOR - 3D FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Opening for her the elevator's door, a DOORMAN pointed to one of the high yellow doors with the number 20.

DOORMAN  
You to Rasputin!

Nadezhda steps out.

EXT./INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Nadezhda turns to the elevator's door.

NADEZHDA  
How do you know?

But the doorman closing the elevator's door didn't answer and the elevator immediately begins to descend.

EXT./INT. APARTMENT 20 - CONTINUOUS

Nadezhda RINGS the bell.

AKULINA (early 40s), a short, plump woman in a white kerchief opens the door.

AKULINA  
Are you invited?

She speaks with a pleasant singing accent.

NADEZHDA  
Yes!

AKULINA  
Well, come in.

INT. APARTMENT 20 - CONTINUOUS

Nadezhda wants to take off her coat.

AKULINA  
No, don't! Follow me.

She waves her hand.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nadezhda comes into the large room with a few chairs spread far apart against the walls.

A huge awkward sideboard stands near a ridiculously painted stove.

AKULINA  
Grigory Efimovich has not yet  
returned from the mass. Wait in  
here, please.

She shows on one of the chairs.

MOMENT LATER

Sitting at the chair Nadezhda looks around.

There are three visitors in the hall: KHVOSTOV, 42, a plump dark-haired man; an indefinite SUBJECT in a very bad suit, in a gold pince-nez and with a disheveled beard; and the pale GIRL in an old sheepskin-trimmed blouse and a round hat.

MOMENTS LATER

The door opens, and Rasputin hurries into the room, shuffling his checkered shoes.

He is in a yellow silk shirt with a raspberry belt and English striped trousers. Grigory looks at Nadezhda and smiles but walks over to SUBJECT.

GRIGORY  
Well, you need something, tell me.

He asks in a low voice, tilting his head a little to one side, as priests do during confession.

SUBJECT  
Grigory Efimovich, I'm a village  
teacher from Ryazan province...  
slandered by enemies... it would  
have done everything with a note to  
the comrade minister of public  
education.

He speaks quickly and in a whisper.

GRIGORY

Enemies?

He looks shrewdly at the petitioner.

The teacher nods.

GRIGORY (CONT'D)

Well, wait. Okay, wait.

He nods to the petitioner.

Rasputin comes to Khvostov.

KHVOSTOV

Grigori Efimovich, may I speak in private?

He jumps from his chair.

GRIGORY

What's your name?

He squints slyly at the fat man.

KHVOSTOV

Khvostov, sir. Alexei Nikolaevich. Don't you remember? I'm the governor of Nizhny Novgorod.

GRIGORY

Aha, I remember. And what do you want to say?

KHVOSTOV

Grigori Efimovich, I need to talk in private!

GRIGORY

I don't have any secrets from anyone.

He gestures to the visitors.

KHVOSTOV

Grigory Efimovich, have mercy, it took me so long to get here...

He grabs Grigory's hand for a kiss, but Rasputin takes it and turns to Nadezhda.

GRIGORY

(in a softer tone)

Have you come, deary?

He smiles to her.

NADEZHDA  
Yes, Grigory Efimovich.

She gets up from the chair.

KHVOSTOV (O.S.)  
Grigory Efimovich, have mercy!

Khvostov does not stop buzzing.

GRIGORY  
(to Nadezhda)  
Has come. Good.

He nods to her, turns to the door and opens it.

GRIGORY (CONT'D)  
(loudly)  
Akulina!

MOMENT LATER

Akulina enters.

GRIGORY (CONT'D)  
Take Nadezhda to my room.

## EXCERPT TWO

Pages 112-116 — When Heaven's Agent Confronts the Church Establishment

Setting: St. Petersburg, Russia 1914; Men's Monastery, Vasilyevsky Island; Hermogenes's Room



ACT NINE

INT. HERMOGENES'S ROOM - MONASTERY - LATER

Grigory thoughtfully enters a small, modestly furnished room.

Two pairs of eyes stare at him - HERMOGENES, 56, in bishop's liturgical vestment, holding a crucifix, and MITYA KOLYABA, 49, a partly disabled holy fool.

GRIGORY

Surprise, surprise! I didn't know  
you are so many.

There is metal in his voice. He turns to Iliodor, who hides his eyes.

HERMOGENES

(in a commanding voice)  
Sit down, Grigory!

GRIGORY

(calmly)  
I'll stand better, father. I've had  
to sit enough in the loco.

Hermogenes steps closer to Rasputin and lifts his crucifix above.

HERMOGENES

(in a louder voice)  
You are a deceiver and a hypocrite!

Shaking the cross, the bishop begins his speech.

HERMOGENES (CONT'D)

You pretend to be a holy man, but  
your life is wicked and filthy!

He looks at Grigory menacingly.

HERMOGENES (CONT'D)

You bypassed me, but now I see who  
you really are, and I see that I  
have committed a sin - I brought  
you into the tsar's family!

He declares.

GRIGORY

(with metal)

If you have sinned, atone for your sin, and I will atone for mine if I had. Why put it on the performance?

HERMOGENES

(with irritation)

Silence, yokel! I didn't give you a word!

GRIGORY

(heavy metal)

And I didn't ask any!

MITYA

(with a wild cry)

Ah! You have offended many mummies!  
You have offended many nannies! You  
live with the tsarina! Scoundrel!

He splashes saliva in all directions, trampling on a lame leg and desperately gesturing with the stump of his hand.

Ignoring the holy fool, Rasputin continues his speech to the bishop.

GRIGORY

Are you mad that I crossed the path  
for you all?

There are metallic notes in his calm voice.

GRIGORY (CONT'D)

With these "saints" it's clear.

He nods disdainfully towards Iliodor and Mitya.

GRIGORY (CONT'D)

But why you are mad?

He gazes into the eyes of the bishop.

GRIGORY (CONT'D)

Are you taking revenge for exposing  
your money fraud? For what I told  
tsar about your scams, and did not  
remain silent?

He continues in his calm tone.

GRIGORY (CONT'D)  
But a huge shortage came out to the  
tsarist budget. Why aren't you  
talking about this sin?

HERMOGENES  
You... You!

He gasps with anger and shakes his crucifix.

MOMENT LATER

Iliodor jumps between Hermogenes and Grigory.

ILIODOR  
(to Hermogenes)  
Can I, Father Hermogenes?

The bishop nods gravely.

ILIODOR (CONT'D)  
He is an impostor and a notorious  
lecher!

He theatrically points on Grigory, who grins.

ILIODOR (CONT'D)  
Using his power over women, he  
seduced countless numbers of them!

He sparkles with his eyes.

ILIODOR (CONT'D)  
One of his unfortunate victims came  
to me for help and told me that he  
had hypnotized her and that she was  
unable to resist him.

Iliodor points by his finger at Grigory. Hermogenes listens  
to him with pleasure.

ILIODOR (CONT'D)  
And then this poor creature tried  
to seduce me! Of course, I sent her  
to an asylum for the mentally ill,  
but I'm afraid that her mind has  
left her forever.

Mitya SQUEALS.

MOMENT LATER

Hermogenes looks smugly at Grigory.

HERMOGENES

(shouting)

Speak, son of demons! Did Father Iliodor tell the truth about you?

GRIGORY

I'm not going to make excuses - there is nothing. There was no sin with Galina. Additionally, I'm not a monk, but I try to follow the Divine laws. However, if you wish, I'll tell what Iliodor kept silent about, and I will give evidence of his guilt.

ILIODOR

Muzhik is lying!

He shouts in an unpleasant voice and Mitya HOWLS after.

HERMOGENES

(to Grigory)

I conjure you in the name of God to disappear and not to disturb the Tsar's Court with your presence anymore!

He raises his crucifix.

Mitya BLEATS.

GRIGORY

Who are you to conjure me?  
Moreover, in the name of God!?

There is heavy metal in his voice.

GRIGORY (CONT'D)

You are a squander, a henchman in the Iliodor gang!

HERMOGENES

How dare you?

He loses his temper.

HERMOGENES (CONT'D)

So, you, vile libertine, do not want to obey the orders of the bishop and threaten me!? So know that I, as a bishop, curse you!

His face contorts with anger.

GRIGORY  
(calmly)  
Who needs you with your curses?  
Shut your ass with them!

Ivan Rodionov, catching Iliodor's gaze, grabs his saber and decisively rushes to Rasputin.

Without waiting for him to approach, Rasputin grabs a chair with his strong peasant hands and menacingly raises it above his head.

Rodionov retreats.

MOMENT LATER

Grigory with the chair in his hand calmly walks to the exit. Nobody is following him and even the holy fool is silent.

EXT. HERMOGENES'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Grigory locks the door into the chair.

ILIODOR (O.S.)  
You bastard!

Behind the door are the SOUNDS of Iliodor's heavy boots and the ROAR and SQUEAL of the holy fool Mitya.

EXCERPT THREE: Pages 161-166

When Heaven's Agent Witnesses the Tsar's Spiritual Choice

Setting: St. Petersburg, Russia 1914; Heaven's Realm

ACT THIRTEEN

INT. WORKSTATION - HEAVEN

Michael and Ann are looking at a large computer screen hanging in the air.

ON SCREEN:

INT. RASPUTINS' HOUSE - DINNING ROOM - NIGHT

The doctor, bending over Nadezhda, sews up the torn intestines by the light of a kerosene lamp and candles.

SCREEN IS OFF

INT. WORKSTATION - HEAVEN

Michael lightly strokes Ann's shoulder.

MICHAEL

You did everything that was needed.

ANN

Am I?

Michael nods and caresses her cheek gently.

ANN (CONT'D)

Michael...

She glances at the Archangel.

ANN (CONT'D)

Why did that woman want to kill  
Rasputin?

MICHAEL

She was an admirer of Iliodor, who  
used her in his revenge on  
Rasputin.

ANN

Where did this revenge come from?

MICHAEL

Well, the basis of any revenge is  
pride in oneself and envy of other  
people's successes.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

But particularly because Grigory refused to support Iliodor's newspaper "Thunder and Lightning" due to Iliodor's hatred of Jews and intellectuals.

Ann nods.

ANN

So? My mission is over?

MICHAEL

This is a good chance to exit, but we have to double-check it. Our ultimate goal has not yet been achieved.

ANN

Sure.

Michael makes a slight movement with his hand - the screen comes to life.

ON SCREEN:

INT. ALEXANDER PALACE - DAY

Grigory, all in black, with the icon of the Kazan Mother of God in his hands, kneels before Tsar Nikolai II, the Emperor of Russia, King of Congress Poland, and Grand Duke of Finland.

GRIGORY

Father of the Russian land! A storm is coming over Your country, a terrible storm. Grief... endless suffering... a sea of tears... And how much blood!

There is a deep sorrow on his face.

Alexandra stands behind Grigory, a deep wrinkle forming on her forehead.

GRIGORY (CONT'D)

I know that everyone requires you to fight, even the most loyal ones. They do not understand that they are rushing into the abyss!

Alexandra, too, kneels down and looks pleadingly at her husband.



NICHOLAI

Well...

He turns to the window and TAPS his fingers on the windowpane.

NIKOLAI

We were presented with a great opportunity to save the empire and the good name of the Romanovs...

GRIGORY

By this war, you won't save but destroy the empire... Don't let the fools triumph, don't let them push themselves and all of us into the abyss! Don't let them do it! Do not join this war, not invented by you!

He speaks in a pleading tone.

NIKOLAI

Stand up, Grigory! You have served us faithfully, we know that.

He speaks in a calm tone. Grigory doesn't move.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

(to Alexandra)

Let's me help you, Alex.

He holds out his hand to Alexandra, who looks at him with pleading eyes, but doesn't move.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

Empire...

He again TAPS on the windowpane.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

But what I will tell to my generals?

He speaks without turning.

GRIGORY

Tell them you won't go to this war.

NIKOLAI

This is much easier said than done.

GRIGORY

Make it in written format as a directive.

ALEXANDRA  
(to Nikolai)  
It's a good idea, Niki.

She speaks meekly.

NIKOLAI  
How about William? He's so eager to fight.

GRIGORY  
He has nothing personal to you, does he? It's just his ambition and vanity. Send the best diplomats to him. Any price of peace will be better than war.

NIKOLAI  
I have to think things through.

GRIGORY  
Thank you, papa! Thank you! God bless you, your family, and the Russian land!

He gets up from his knees.

OFF SCREEN

INT. WORKSTATION - HEAVEN

Ann watches at Michael.

ANN  
It's thrilling!

MICHAEL  
Yes, it is! This is a critical moment of the monarch's spiritual choice. The fate of the Russian Empire and the whole world will be decided within a few hours.

ANN  
And it's up to one person?

MICHAEL  
It's up to choice, the tsar's choice.

ANN  
So, how many options does Nikolai have?

MICHAEL

Only two - the war, which is the choice towards Darkness, and the peace - the choice towards Light.

ANN

So the war will bring the empire to the same result as on my former home planet, and peace?

MICHAEL

Well, peace will open the destiny with the dominant values of Light - love, freedom, justice... The values of our Spiritual Father, which means His support and protection.

He smiles and gently touches her hair.

ANN

Yes, but what does that mean for the country practically? By choosing the values of Light I ended up in Heaven... and Russia?

MICHAEL

We shall check it out.

He winks at her with a smile.

EXT. ST. PETERSBURG - DAY

SUBTITLES IN: ST PETERSBURG - RUSSIA - THE YEAR 2021

Wu holding the hand of Meketaten, Ann, Michael and Mira stand on top of the hill.

Behind them is a huge statue of JESUS CHRIST illuminated from within.

All five stare at the big city spread in front of them. A beautiful violet-turquoise glow rises above the city.

MIRA

Wow!

She exclaims rapturously.

WU

(to Michael)

Is this the same city with a gray sky?

MICHAEL  
Yes, that one.

WU  
But now it looks different.

MICHAEL  
Yes.

He nods in confirmation.

ANN  
(to Michael)  
What is it?

She points to the glow.

MICHAEL  
(to Ann)  
Aura. Enlightened aura.  
(to all)  
Let's go!

He spreads his huge wings over them.