

Marina Carr

**16 POSSIBLE
GLIMPSES**



Gallery Books

Characters

ANTON PAVLOVICH CHEKHOV, writer, doctor
MASHA, his sister, a teacher
YEVGENIA MOROZA, his mother
PAVEL, his father
KOLYA, his brother, a painter
ALEXANDER, called Sasha, his brother, a writer and journalist
SUVORIN, friend, newspaper magnate and writer
LIKA, young woman, an opera singer
OLGA, his wife, an actress
TOLSTOY, writer
KOLYA, young Russian in Badenweiler
BLACK MONK, supernatural figure
DR SCHWORER
OLD MAN
WAITER 1
WAITER 2
SERVANT

Set

The set must encompass a hotel room, a train station, two restaurants, several gardens and interiors.

I suggest a bare space with a table and chairs. A backdrop that spans the length and width of the stage. On this backdrop Russian paintings of the period, magnified. A different painting for each scene. These paintings along with lighting will be paramount in creating the many different atmospheres in the play. (Levitan's paintings are stunning. Also a close friend of Chekhov's. Also look at Chagall and designs for Diaghilev's ballets.)

Music

Also hugely important. From Russian church music to folk to gypsy to piano. All to create mood and tone.

16 Possible Glimpses was first performed in the Peacock by the Abbey Theatre as part of the Dublin Theatre Festival, on Wednesday, 5 October 2011, with the following cast:

ANTON PAVLOVICH CHEKHOV	Patrick O'Kane
MASHA	Catriona Ní Mhurchú
YEVGENIA MOROZA	Bríd Ní Neachtain
PAVEL	Mark Lambert
KOLYA	Gavin Fullam
ALEXANDER	Malcolm Adams
SUVORIN	Michael James Ford
LIKA	Deirdre Mullins
OLGA	Cathy Belton
TOLSTOY	Gary Lilburn
KOLYA	Aaron Monaghan
BLACK MONK } DR SCHWORER }	Will Irvine

<i>Director</i>	Wayne Jordan
<i>Set/Costume Designer</i>	Naomi Wilkinson
<i>Lighting Designer</i>	Sinéad McKenna
<i>Audio Visual</i>	Hugh O'Connor
<i>Sound Design/Composer</i>	Sam Jackson
<i>Movement</i>	Sue Mythen
<i>Audio Visual Technician</i>	Patrick Kickham
<i>Design Assistant</i>	Cáit Corkery
<i>Audio Visual Operator</i>	Muireann O'Neill
<i>Set Construction</i>	The Natural Construction Company
<i>Scenic Artist</i>	Vincent Bell
<i>Wigs and Make-up</i>	Val Sherlock

ACT ONE

Scene One

Badenweiler. The balcony of a room in the Hotel Sommer. Darkness. We hear the laboured breathing of ANTON PAVLOVICH CHEKHOV. Let us listen to this fight for breath a while.

Lights up. We see ANTON standing in the stifling heat. Quartet music from below. A fan whirrs.

Suddenly the BLACK MONK is there. A tall gaunt figure in black robes and cowl. We never see his face. He stands there till ANTON registers him.

ANTON So you tracked me down?

BLACK MONK What is distance to me, or time for that matter?

ANTON You take unfair advantage. Don't have the energy to stave you off anymore.

BLACK MONK It's not a war, Anton Pavlovich.

ANTON Believe me, from this vantage point it is. I'm only forty-four.

BLACK MONK You think eternity cares whether you're nine or ninety?

ANTON Go away. You don't exist. I must've finally lost it.

BLACK MONK Oh, but I do exist. Don't be afraid. I've watched you since you were a boy, came out of a thousand year sleep to watch you live. There isn't a thing about you I don't know, so don't be afraid. Eternity has always had its claim on you. Why should that surprise you?

ANTON Doesn't surprise me. It shames me.

BLACK MONK Why does it shame you?

ANTON I'd have liked more of eternity here.

BLACK MONK And so you're not prepared?

ANTON Give me five more years.

A knock on the door. The BLACK MONK disappears.

Come in, it's open.

Enter KOLYA, a student.

KOLYA Was wondering if you needed anything.

ANTON Could you pass me that glass of water, please?

KOLYA does. ANTON can barely hold the glass. His hand trembles as he drinks.

KOLYA You don't want to lie down?

ANTON Better to keep moving.

KOLYA Yes . . . but . . . it's hot, isn't it?

ANTON Unbearable. Isn't there a cooler room?

KOLYA The whole place is a furnace, maybe at the back. I'll ask them again.

ANTON Thank you.

KOLYA Those reporters from home are still in the lobby. They keep asking about you.

ANTON Don't let them near me.

KOLYA Certainly not.

ANTON And don't give them any information about me.

KOLYA God, no.

ANTON You're Moscow, aren't you?

KOLYA Yeah, and you're from the south.

ANTON A lazy southerner. And what brings you to Badenweiler, you don't look sick.

KOLYA No, the brother. My mother sent me to keep him company, only he doesn't want my company. Are you hungry?

ANTON No.

KOLYA Just your wife said to take care of your lunch order.

ANTON You're very kind. Kolya, isn't it?

KOLYA Yeah.

ANTON I had a brother Kolya. He was a painter. A very gifted painter. Could have been better than Levitan.

KOLYA 'Had'?

ANTON Drink . . . women . . . the dreaded bacilli.

KOLYA Oh, I'm sorry.

ANTON Yeah, the same as me . . . For years I wouldn't name my disease, thought to confuse it, thought if I didn't acknowledge it, it would go away . . . I nursed Kolya at the end, carried him from room to room like a child, the wild eyes of him. Then I couldn't watch anymore. I'm waiting for a train and a telegram comes. Three words. KOLYA IS DEAD.

KOLYA Keats nursed his brother too.

ANTON That's right. Tom, wasn't it? The brother?

KOLYA And Keats was a doctor too.

ANTON And Keats was one of God's own.

KOLYA What do you mean?

ANTON He came with it all, just had to transcribe it.

KOLYA Many would say the same about you.

ANTON They're wrong. As usual. Every word, every line has been a struggle for me. Do you have a few minutes to spare?

KOLYA I've all the minutes, nothing to do here.

ANTON Yeah, the women are hogs, have you seen the state of them in the dining room, lashing into the grub, sweat pouring off them — Will you write a letter for me? There's paper there. What date is it?

KOLYA June 30th.

ANTON Okay? Mariya Chekova, Autka, Yalta, Rus. Got that?

KOLYA Yeah.

ANTON Masha, why haven't you written? Where are you? We're still at the Hotel Sommer and will be a while yet as I've had a bit of a setback. I'm high as fifty kites, thanks to the morphine. The food is gorgeous but my ruined stomach can't take it, so I watch Olga eat. The people here have the fattest arses I've ever come across and so satisfied with themselves that I'm glad I don't have to wander the streets looking at them. I miss my garden. How is my new cedar? And how is Mamasha? Is

she sparing the ink too? Olga got her teeth fixed and bought me a new suit you could wrap four times round me. The poor fool thinks she's married to a giant. Be well, be happy, be good to the poor, look after my old mother, and don't be alarmed this is not my handwriting. I'll be fine in a few days. Let me sign it.

KOLYA If I run down now I'll catch the post. Need anything from the shops?

ANTON No.

KOLYA I'll be able to tell my grandchildren that I wrote a letter for Chekhov.

Exit KOLYA.

ANTON Long, long ago, once upon a time, the end.

Lights.