

Chapter 1

Famine

Southern Ukraine, February 1932.

The crowd was assembled outside Mayor Petrovsky's house near the Headquarters for the People's Ukrainian Comintern. The village had been without food for six weeks, and the people were now getting desperate. Mrs. Petrovsky was boiling down leather belts, hats, coats and shoes, and then selling the "broth" to villagers for two rubles a bowl. A trapper from the Ural Mountains had, one month earlier, carried in a freshly killed deer on his horse, and he was almost immediately assassinated for "the common good of the town."

During the raging blizzards of the Ukraine's worst winter ever, the villagers had eaten all of the livestock, pets and other farm animals, and they were now devouring whatever rats and other vermin they could catch inside their cottages. In addition, any "strangers" from outside their community were being assassinated as political enemies, and then they were secretly being cooked and distributed in neatly wrapped, warm bundles by Mrs. Petrovsky for the survival of the starving community.

The four village leaders who were assembled inside Mayor Petrovsky's house knew they had to come up with some fast solutions. The villagers were again angry and shouting for food outside the mayor's house, and the four male members of Stalin's Communist Ukrainian Cell knew that they had to come up with a way to feed the masses, or else they themselves would become victims of this raging community of cannibals standing outside in the snow, drunk on vodka and as hungry as ravenous wolves.

Vladimir Vladiev, 42, was the officer in charge of the national prison compound on the edge of town. Anatoly Lagrosky, 36, was the local postmaster. David Staskov, 28, was the head of the Communist Youth League. Mayor Fedor Petrovsky, 53, a veteran of World War I, was the government appointed spokesman for the Marxist/Leninist Council in Moscow.

The men stood around a large, potbellied stove in the middle of the room, rubbing their hands together and stomping their boots to stay warm. Staskov spoke first. He was the youngest and the most frightened. His blonde hair was neatly parted in the middle, and he wore a mink overcoat and cap. David had the largest vocabulary of the group, as he also taught in the secondary school's gymnasium.

"I say we select someone who has already been deemed an Enemy of the People. It is not our prerogative to say who is an enemy and who is not."

Petrovsky wrapped his freckled arm around the youth's shoulders and gave him a hug. "Nicely phrased, comrade! I couldn't have put it better myself! But who do we know that is an enemy?"

Vladiev cleared his throat. His long beaver coat had the governmental look of regimental tailors. He was the shortest man of the four, and the lowest in status, and he spoke with a stammer. "There's a family named Chikatilo who l . . . lives near the p . . . p . . . prison."

Lagrosky, a postal inspector and the Stalin government's official censor, was a huge man, almost seven feet tall, and he spoke with

authority. "Yes, indeed! Chikatilo was a traitor in the trenches during the war with the Japanese monkeys. He was caught selling maps of our military positions while he was in the Jap prison near Manchuria. I concur with Vladiev. This family is a blight on the people. The oldest son has been caught selling pornographic photos of his sister and younger brother. The whole family refuses to attend local cell meetings."

"Then it's settled," said Petrovsky, tossing more sticks into the flaming belly of the stove.

"Let's drink on it," said Vladiev, and he walked over to a small table near the door. He picked up the leather wrapped bottle and took a deep swig, and then he wiped off the spout on his fur coat and passed it to Lagrosky. The postal inspector raised the bottle into the air and shouted, "*Nastrovia!*"

One by one, each man drank from the bottle and swore his allegiance to the evil code of starvation justice brought about by the famine and the world economic depression.

Chapter 2 Manhood

Moscow, May 1, 1958.

Andrei Romanovich Chikatilo was sitting in the Bachelor Officers' Lounge when Drednev, Popov and Irkansky brought the prostitutes in.

They were all singing "Lenin's March across Russia," and Andrei barely looked up from his reading Communist Party Rules but when they walked over to stand in front of him, swaying and giggling like obscene fools, he finally paid them heed, staring up at them with his ice blue eyes, twisting his mouth into a sarcastic grimace.

They were Russian Army Officers, in charge of the guard at Lenin's Tomb, where each day, promptly on the hour, one of the four men would march the contingent of six enlisted men over to the tomb and go through the goose stepping ritual of the guard changing ceremony. But today was a holiday the Anniversary of World Communism and the officers were all off duty.

Nicholas Irkansky, 24, a tall and thin lieutenant from Vladivostok, and the senior officer of the group, stood behind one of the three women, his skinny arms wrapped around her waist, his angular chin nuzzled against her soft cheek. "Hey, Chikatilo! See what you've missed by studying that party crap? You're too much business, my man. You need to break loose and have a good time. Eh, fellows?"

The other three men laughed and pointed drunkenly down at Andrei, grappling lewdly with their three women like uniformed satyrs. It was disgusting how these men acted, Andrei thought. Didn't they realize there was a Cold War going on? These were the actions of American pigs not noble Communist officers.

But the men had been making fun of his sexual chastity his refusal to undress in front of them, or to shower with them his choice to stay back at the BOQ rather than to go with them on leave into Moscow. Andrei just kept smiling down at his book, pretending not to hear them.

Boris Popov laughed and pushed his woman, a short and pretty Asian, toward Andrei. "Chikatilo, my friend, this is Nadia Cherminski. She wants to go into the back room with you to see what you're made of. She has heard the legendary stories about your masculine prowess, but does not believe us. Please show her what a really fantastic stud you are!"

Andrei sat still for a moment and then he stood up. He was six feet four and he stood a good two inches above any of the other men, but now his shoulders were slouched as he walked toward the door. Popov and Drednev, however, blocked his way. "Come on, Andrei. Where are you going?" asked Drednev. "This woman has taken time from her busy schedule to be with you. It is only considerate that you be a man and oblige her, don't you think? Or perhaps you don't like women. Is that it? Do you prefer boys, Chikatilo? Is that your problem?"

Andrei exhaled deeply and shook his head. "I should have expected as much from you baboons. If I take her now, will you stay off my back?"

"Certainly!" they shouted, in unison.

Andrei Chikatilo took the young Oriental into his sleeping quarters. But he did not have sexual intercourse with her. Instead, he sat on his chair and asked her to undress for him.

When she was completely naked and lounging like a cat across his bunk, he spoke to her in a low and quivering voice. "I am not one of these animals. I am a patriot and a partisan. My father was sent away to prison as an enemy of the people. All because he cooperated with the people and let them eat my older brother in the Famine of 1932. When he came back from prison, he was a shell of a man. Whereas Dostoevsky was strengthened by imprisonment, my father was destroyed. He lost his party membership, and he sat in front of our house each day, chewing on raw pork rinds and cursing at passing citizens. He beat on us often in blind rages. He weighed three hundred pounds when he died."

But as Andrei thought about what he could do to overcome the ignominy of his father's heritage, the hairy black triangle beneath the woman's belly suddenly began to speak to him. The lips of the labia majora and minora formed perfectly as the vagina spoke, mouthing the syllables like some bearded prophet. "You are no good, Andrei," it said, spitting the words back at him in a vehement cadence, "you are a coward and a liar, and you will always live a nothing life just like your father did!"

When the four officers broke into Andrei's room, they found him screaming hysterically through clenched jaws, his teeth biting down viciously into his own forearm. The blood oozed out between his teeth and dripped down onto the shiny wood floor. The short Oriental woman was yelling, her brown nipples pointing hard and accusingly at them, "You bastards! Why did you leave me with this crazy man?"