

ALEXANDER PUSHKIN

BORIS
GODUNOV

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin
Boris Godunov

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Boris Godunov: a drama in verse:

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Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin
Boris Godunov:
a drama in verse

Rendered into English verse by Alfred Hayes

DRAMATIS PERSONAE¹

BORIS GODUNOV, afterwards Tsar.

PRINCE SHUISKY, Russian noble.

PRINCE VOROTINSKY, Russian noble.

SHCHELKALOV, Russian Minister of State.

FATHER PIMEN, an old monk and chronicler.

GREGORY OTREPIEV, a young monk, afterwards the Pretender to the throne of Russia.

THE PATRIARCH, Abbot of the Chudov Monastery.

MISSAIL, wandering friar.

VARLAAM, wandering friar.

ATHANASIOS MIKAILOVICH PUSHKIN, friend of Prince Shuisky.

FEODOR, young son of Boris Godunov.

SEMYON NIKITICH GODUNOV, secret agent of Boris Godunov.

GABRIEL PUSHKIN, nephew of A. M. Pushkin.

PRINCE KURBSKY, disgraced Russian noble.

KHRUSHCHOV, disgraced Russian noble.

KARELA, a Cossack.

PRINCE VISHNEVETSKY.

MNISHEK, Governor of Sambor.

¹ The list of Dramatis Personae which does not appear in the original has been added for the convenience of the reader—A.H.

BASMANOV, a Russian officer.

MARZHERET, officer of the Pretender.

ROZEN, officer of the Pretender.

DIMITRY, the Pretender, formerly Gregory Otrepiev.

MOSALSKY, a Boyar.

KSENIA, daughter of Boris Godunov.

NURSE of Ksenia.

MARINA, daughter of Mnishek.

ROUZYA, tire-woman of Ksenia.

HOSTESS of tavern.

Boys, The People, Inspectors, Officers, Attendants, Guests,
a Boy in attendance on Prince Shuisky, a Catholic Priest, a Polish
Noble, a Poet, an Idiot, a Beggar, Gentlemen, Peasants, Guards,
Russian, Polish, and German Soldiers, a Russian Prisoner of
War, Boys, an old Woman, Ladies, Serving-women.

PALACE OF THE KREMLIN

(FEBRUARY 20th, A.D. 1598)

PRINCE SHUISKY and VOROTINSKY

VOROTINSKY. To keep the city's peace, that is the task
Entrusted to us twain, but you forsooth
Have little need to watch; Moscow is empty;
The people to the Monastery have flocked
After the patriarch. What thinkest thou?
How will this trouble end?

SHUISKY. How will it end?
That is not hard to tell. A little more
The multitude will groan and wail, Boris
Pucker awhile his forehead, like a toper
Eyeing a glass of wine, and in the end
Will humbly of his graciousness consent
To take the crown; and then—and then will rule us
Just as before.

VOROTINSKY. A month has flown already
Since, cloistered with his sister, he forsook
The world's affairs. None hitherto hath shaken
His purpose, not the patriarch, not the boyars
His counselors; their tears, their prayers he heeds not;
Deaf is he to the wail of Moscow, deaf

To the Great Council's voice; vainly they urged
The sorrowful nun-queen to consecrate
Boris to sovereignty; firm was his sister,
Inexorable as he; methinks Boris
Inspired her with this spirit. What if our ruler
Be sick in very deed of cares of state
And hath no strength to mount the throne? What
Say'st thou?

SHUISKY. I say that in that case the blood in vain
Flowed of the young tsarevich, that Dimitry
Might just as well be living.

VOROTINSKY. Fearful crime!
Is it beyond all doubt Boris contrived
The young boy's murder?

SHUISKY. Who besides? Who else
Bribed Chepchugov in vain? Who sent in secret
The brothers Bityagovsky with Kachalov?
Myself was sent to Uglich, there to probe
This matter on the spot; fresh traces there
I found; the whole town bore witness to the crime;
With one accord the burghers all affirmed it;
And with a single word, when I returned,
I could have proved the secret villain's guilt.

VOROTINSKY. Why didst thou then not crush him?

SHUISKY. At the time,
I do confess, his unexpected calmness,
His shamelessness, dismayed me. Honestly
He looked me in the eyes; he questioned me
Closely, and I repeated to his face
The foolish tale himself had whispered to me.

VOROTINSKY. An ugly business, prince.

SHUISKY. What could I do?
Declare all to Feodor? But the tsar
Saw all things with the eyes of Godunov.
Heard all things with the ears of Godunov;
Grant even that I might have fully proved it,
Boris would have denied it there and then,
And I should have been haled away to prison,
And in good time—like mine own uncle—strangled
Within the silence of some deaf-walled dungeon.
I boast not when I say that, given occasion,
No penalty affrights me. I am no coward,
But also am no fool, and do not choose
Of my free will to walk into a halter.

VOROTINSKY. Monstrous misdeed! Listen; I warrant you
Remorse already gnaws the murderer;
Be sure the blood of that same innocent child
Will hinder him from mounting to the throne.

SHUISKY. That will not baulk him; Boris is not so timid!

What honour for ourselves, ay, for all Russia!
A slave of yesterday, a Tartar, son
By marriage of Maliuta, of a hangman,
Himself in soul a hangman, he to wear
The crown and robe of Monomakh!—

VOROTINSKY. You are right;
He is of lowly birth; we twain can boast
A nobler lineage.

SHUISKY. Indeed we may!

VOROTINSKY. Let us remember, Shuisky, Vorotinsky
Are, let me say, born princes.

SHUISKY. Yea, born princes,
And of the blood of Rurik.

VOROTINSKY. Listen, prince;
Then we, 'twould seem, should have the right to mount
Feodor's throne.

SHUISKY. Rather than Godunov.

VOROTINSKY. In very truth 'twould seem so.

SHUISKY. And what then?
If still Boris pursue his crafty ways,
Let us contrive by skilful means to rouse

The people. Let them turn from Godunov;
Princes they have in plenty of their own;
Let them from out their number choose a tsar.

VOROTINSKY. Of us, Varyags in blood, there are full
many,

But 'tis no easy thing for us to vie
With Godunov; the people are not wont
To recognise in us an ancient branch
Of their old warlike masters; long already
Have we our appanages forfeited,
Long served but as lieutenants of the tsars,
And he hath known, by fear, and love, and glory,
How to bewitch the people.

SHUISKY. (Looking through a window.) He has dared,
That's all—while we—Enough of this. Thou seest
Dispersedly the people are returning.
We'll go forthwith and learn what is resolved.

THE RED SQUARE

THE PEOPLE

1ST PERSON. He is inexorable! He thrust from him
Prelates, boyars, and Patriarch; in vain
Prostrate they fall; the splendour of the throne
Affrights him.

2ND PERSON. O, my God, who is to rule us?
O, woe to us!

3RD PERSON. See! The Chief Minister
Is coming out to tell us what the Council
Has now resolved.

THE PEOPLE. Silence! Silence! He speaks,
The Minister of State. Hush, hush! Give ear!

SHCHELKALOV. (From the Red Balcony.)
The Council have resolved for the last time
To put to proof the power of supplication
Upon our ruler's mournful soul. At dawn,
After a solemn service in the Kremlin,
The blessed Patriarch will go, preceded

By sacred banners, with the holy ikons
Of Donsky and Vladimir; with him go
The Council, courtiers, delegates, boyars,
And all the orthodox folk of Moscow; all
Will go to pray once more the queen to pity
Fatherless Moscow, and to consecrate
Boris unto the crown. Now to your homes
Go ye in peace: pray; and to Heaven shall rise
The heart's petition of the orthodox.

(The PEOPLE disperse.)

That's right, that's right!

1ST PERSON. As everyone is crying,
We also, brother, will begin to cry.

2ND PERSON. Brother, I try my best, but can't.

1ST PERSON. Nor I.
Have you not got an onion?

2ND PERSON. No; I'll wet
My eyes with spittle. What's up there now?

1ST PERSON. Who knows
What's going on?

THE PEOPLE. The crown for him! He is tsar!
He has yielded!—Boris!—Our tsar!—Long live Boris!

THE PALACE OF THE KREMLIN

BORIS, PATRIARCH, Boyars

BORIS. Thou, father Patriarch, all ye boyars!
My soul lies bare before you; ye have seen
With what humility and fear I took
This mighty power upon me. Ah! How heavy
My weight of obligation! I succeed
The great Ivans; succeed the angel tsar!—
O Righteous Father, King Of kings, look down
From Heaven upon the tears of Thy true servants,
And send on him whom Thou hast loved, whom Thou
Exalted hast on earth so wondrously,
Thy holy blessing. May I rule my people
In glory, and like Thee be good and righteous!
To you, boyars, I look for help. Serve me
As ye served him, what time I shared your labours,
Ere I was chosen by the people's will.

BOYARS. We will not from our plighted oath depart.

BORIS. Now let us go to kneel before the tombs
Of Russia's great departed rulers. Then
Bid summon all our people to a feast,
All, from the noble to the poor blind beggar.
To all free entrance, all most welcome guests.

(Exit, the Boyars following.)

PRINCE VOROTINSKY. (Stopping Shuisky.)
You rightly guessed.

SHUISKY. Gessed what?

VOROTINSKY. Why, you remember—
The other day, here on this very spot.

SHUISKY. No, I remember nothing.

VOROTINSKY. When the people
Flocked to the Virgin's Field, thou said'st—

SHUISKY. 'Tis not
The time for recollection. There are times
When I should counsel you not to remember,
But even to forget. And for the rest,
I sought but by feigned calumny to prove thee,
The truelier to discern thy secret thoughts.
But see! The people hail the tsar—my absence
May be remarked. I'll join them.

VOROTINSKY. Wily courtier!

NIGHT

Cell in the Monastery of Chudov (A.D. 1603)

FATHER PIMEN, GREGORY (sleeping)

PIMEN (Writing in front of a sacred lamp.)

One more, the final record, and my annals
Are ended, and fulfilled the duty laid
By God on me a sinner. Not in vain
Hath God appointed me for many years
A witness, teaching me the art of letters;
A day will come when some laborious monk
Will bring to light my zealous, nameless toil,
Kindle, as I, his lamp, and from the parchment
Shaking the dust of ages will transcribe
My true narrations, that posterity
The bygone fortunes of the orthodox
Of their own land may learn, will mention make
Of their great tsars, their labours, glory, goodness—
And humbly for their sins, their evil deeds,
Implore the Saviour's mercy.—In old age
I live anew; the past unrolls before me.—
Did it in years long vanished sweep along,
Full of events, and troubled like the deep?

Now it is hushed and tranquil. Few the faces
Which memory hath saved for me, and few
The words which have come down to me;—the rest
Have perished, never to return.—But day
Draws near, the lamp burns low, one record more,
The last. (He writes.)

GREGORY. (Waking.) Ever the selfsame dream! Is 't possible?

For the third time! Accursed dream! And ever
Before the lamp sits the old man and writes—
And not all night, 'twould seem, from drowsiness,
Hath closed his eyes. I love the peaceful sight,
When, with his soul deep in the past immersed,
He keeps his chronicle. Oft have I longed
To guess what 'tis he writes of. Is 't perchance
The dark dominion of the Tartars? Is it
Ivan's grim punishments, the stormy Council
of Novgorod? Is it about the glory
Of our dear fatherland?—I ask in vain!
Not on his lofty brow, nor in his looks
May one peruse his secret thoughts; always
The same aspect; lowly at once, and lofty—
Like some state Minister grown grey in office,
Calmly alike he contemplates the just
And guilty, with indifference he hears
Evil and good, and knows not wrath nor pity.

PIMEN. Wakest thou, brother?

GREGORY. Honoured father, give me
Thy blessing.

PIMEN. May God bless thee on this day,
Tomorrow, and for ever.

GREGORY. All night long
Thou hast been writing and abstained from sleep,
While demon visions have disturbed my peace,
The fiend molested me. I dreamed I scaled
By winding stairs a turret, from whose height
Moscow appeared an anthill, where the people
Seethed in the squares below and pointed at me
With laughter. Shame and terror came upon me—
And falling headlong, I awoke. Three times
I dreamed the selfsame dream. Is it not strange?

PIMEN. 'Tis the young blood at play; humble thyself
By prayer and fasting, and thy slumber's visions
Will all be filled with lightness. Hitherto
If I, unwillingly by drowsiness
Weakened, make not at night long orisons,
My old-man's sleep is neither calm nor sinless;
Now riotous feasts appear, now camps of war,
Scuffles of battle, fatuous diversions
Of youthful years.

GREGORY. How joyfully didst thou

Live out thy youth! The fortress of Kazan
Thou fought'st beneath, with Shuisky didst repulse
The army of Litva. Thou hast seen the court,
And splendour of Ivan. Ah! Happy thou!
Whilst I, from boyhood up, a wretched monk,
Wander from cell to cell! Why unto me
Was it not given to play the game of war,
To revel at the table of a tsar?
Then, like to thee, would I in my old age
Have gladly from the noisy world withdrawn,
To vow myself a dedicated monk,
And in the quiet cloister end my days.

PIMEN. Complain not, brother, that the sinful world
Thou early didst forsake, that few temptations
The All-Highest sent to thee. Believe my words;
The glory of the world, its luxury,
Woman's seductive love, seen from afar,
Enslave our souls. Long have I lived, have taken
Delight in many things, but never knew
True bliss until that season when the Lord
Guided me to the cloister. Think, my son,
On the great tsars; who loftier than they?
God only. Who dares thwart them? None. What then?
Often the golden crown became to them
A burden; for a cowl they bartered it.
The tsar Ivan sought in monastic toil
Tranquility; his palace, filled erewhile
With haughty minions, grew to all appearance

A monastery; the very rakehells seemed
Obedient monks, the terrible tsar appeared
A pious abbot. Here, in this very cell
(At that time Cyril, the much suffering,
A righteous man, dwelt in it; even me
God then made comprehend the nothingness
Of worldly vanities), here I beheld,
Weary of angry thoughts and executions,
The tsar; among us, meditative, quiet
Here sat the Terrible; we motionless
Stood in his presence, while he talked with us
In tranquil tones. Thus spake he to the abbot
And all the brothers: "My fathers, soon will come
The longed-for day; here shall I stand before you,
Hungering for salvation; Nicodemus,
Thou Sergius, Cyril thou, will all accept
My spiritual vow; to you I soon shall come
Accurst in sin, here the clean habit take,
Prostrate, most holy father, at thy feet."
So spake the sovereign lord, and from his lips
Sweetly the accents flowed. He wept; and we
With tears prayed God to send His love and peace
Upon his suffering and stormy soul.—
What of his son Feodor? On the throne
He sighed to lead the life of calm devotion.
The royal chambers to a cell of prayer
He turned, wherein the heavy cares of state
Vexed not his holy soul. God grew to love
The tsar's humility; in his good days

Russia was blest with glory undisturbed,
And in the hour of his decease was wrought
A miracle unheard of; at his bedside,
Seen by the tsar alone, appeared a being
Exceeding bright, with whom Feodor 'gan
To commune, calling him great Patriarch;—
And all around him were possessed with fear,
Musing upon the vision sent from Heaven,
Since at that time the Patriarch was not present
In church before the tsar. And when he died
The palace was with holy fragrance filled.
And like the sun his countenance outshone.
Never again shall we see such a tsar.—
O, horrible, appalling woe! We have sinned,
We have angered God; we have chosen for our ruler
A tsar's assassin.

GREGORY. Honoured father, long
Have I desired to ask thee of the death
Of young Dimitry, the tsarevich; thou,
'Tis said, wast then at Uglich.

PIMEN. Ay, my son,
I well remember. God it was who led me
To witness that ill deed, that bloody sin.
I at that time was sent to distant Uglich
Upon some mission. I arrived at night.
Next morning, at the hour of holy mass,
I heard upon a sudden a bell toll;

'Twas the alarm bell. Then a cry, an uproar;
Men rushing to the court of the tsaritsa.
Thither I haste, and there had flocked already
All Uglich. There I see the young tsarevich
Lie slaughtered: the queen mother in a swoon
Bowed over him, his nurse in her despair
Wailing; and then the maddened people drag
The godless, treacherous nurse away. Appears
Suddenly in their midst, wild, pale with rage,
Judas Bityagovsky. "There, there's the villain!"
Shout on all sides the crowd, and in a trice
He was no more. Straightway the people rushed
On the three fleeing murderers; they seized
The hiding miscreants and led them up
To the child's corpse yet warm; when lo! A marvel—
The dead child all at once began to tremble!
"Confess!" the people thundered; and in terror
Beneath the axe the villains did confess—
And named Boris.

GREGORY. How many summers lived
The murdered boy?

PIMEN. Seven summers; he would now
(Since then have passed ten years—nay, more—twelve
years)
He would have been of equal age to thee,
And would have reigned; but God deemed otherwise.
This is the lamentable tale wherewith

My chronicle doth end; since then I little
Have dipped in worldly business. Brother Gregory,
Thou hast illumed thy mind by earnest study;
To thee I hand my task. In hours exempt
From the soul's exercise, do thou record,
Not subtly reasoning, all things whereto
Thou shalt in life be witness; war and peace,
The sway of kings, the holy miracles
Of saints, all prophecies and heavenly signs;—
For me 'tis time to rest and quench my lamp.—
But hark! The matin bell. Bless, Lord, Thy servants!
Give me my crutch.

(Exit.)

GREGORY. Boris, Boris, before thee
All tremble; none dares even to remind thee
Of what befell the hapless child; meanwhile
Here in dark cell a hermit doth indite
Thy stern denunciation. Thou wilt not
Escape the judgment even of this world,
As thou wilt not escape the doom of God.

FENCE OF THE MONASTERY²

GREGORY and a Wicked Monk

GREGORY. O, what a weariness is our poor life,
What misery! Day comes, day goes, and ever
Is seen, is heard one thing alone; one sees
Only black cassocks, only hears the bell.
Yawning by day you wander, wander, nothing
To do; you doze; the whole night long till daylight
The poor monk lies awake; and when in sleep
You lose yourself, black dreams disturb the soul;
Glad that they sound the bell, that with a crutch
They rouse you. No, I will not suffer it!
I cannot! Through this fence I'll flee! The world
Is great; my path is on the highways never
Thou'lt hear of me again.

MONK. Truly your life
Is but a sorry one, ye dissolute,
Wicked young monks!

GREGORY. Would that the Khan again
Would come upon us, or Lithuania rise
Once more in insurrection. Good! I would then

² This scene was omitted by Pushkin from the published version of the play.

MONK.

Well, what say'st thou?

GREGORY.

'Tis resolved.

I am Dimitry, I tsarevich!

MONK.

Give me

Thy hand, my bold young friend. Thou shalt be tsar!

PALACE OF THE PATRIARCH

PATRIARCH, ABBOT of the Chudov Monastery

PATRIARCH. And he has run away, Father Abbot?

ABBOT. He has run away, holy sovereign, now three days ago.

PATRIARCH. Accursed rascal! What is his origin?

ABBOT. Of the family of the Otrepievs, of the lower nobility

of Galicia; in his youth he took the tonsure, no one knows where, lived at Suzdal, in the Ephimievsky monastery, departed from there, wandered to various convents, finally arrived at my Chudov fraternity; but I, seeing that he was still young and inexperienced, entrusted him at the outset to Father Pimen, an old man, kind and humble. And he was very learned, read our chronicle, composed canons for the holy brethren; but, to be sure, instruction was not given to him from the Lord God—

PATRIARCH. Ah, those learned fellows! What a thing to

say, "I shall be tsar in Moscow." Ah, he is a vessel of the devil! However, it is no use even to report to the tsar about this; why disquiet our father sovereign? It will be enough to give information about his flight to the Secretary Smirnov or the Secretary Ephimiev. What a heresy: "I shall be tsar in Moscow!"... Catch, catch the fawning villain, and send him to Solovetsky to perpetual penance. But this—is it not heresy, Father Abbot?

ABBOT. Heresy, holy Patriarch; downright heresy.

PALACE OF THE TSAR

Two Attendants

1ST ATTENDANT. Where is the sovereign?

2ND ATTENDANT. In his bed-chamber,
Where he is closeted with some magician.

1ST ATTENDANT. Ay; that's the kind of intercourse he
loves;

Sorcerers, fortune-tellers, necromancers.
Ever he seeks to dip into the future,
Just like some pretty girl. Fain would I know
What 'tis he would foretell.

2ND ATTENDANT. Well, here he comes.
Will it please you question him?

1ST ATTENDANT. How grim he looks!

(Exeunt.)

TSAR. (Enters.) I have attained the highest power. Six years

Already have I reigned in peace; but joy

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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