

Ipatiev's house was the last stage in the history of the Romanov family. During this memorable night, when all the members of the Romanov family were being led to the basement to have their alleged photo taken, the children were still feeling this lingering hope that everything would be all right. That everything would work out somehow. That they would be moved to another place and they would survive the revolution. And then, they would come home and everything would be the way it had been before.

Tsar Nikolai was carrying Alexei – the hemophilic heir to the throne. Empress Alexandra was being followed by her four maturing daughters, who were ready to protect her if necessary. Tsarina had been suffering from sciatica for a long time. The tsar family was being accompanied by their entourage, little Anastasia was being accompanied by her baby spaniel.

They were taken to a tiny basement with a barred window. They were lined in two rows and eleven armed men appeared there instead of a photographer. Yurovski read out quickly their death sentence, after which he took out of his pocket a small gun and shot the Tsar. Following his example, his troop started shooting.

The Tsarina didn't manage to raise her hand to make the sign of cross.

However, the bullets seemed to bounce back from Alexei and the younger girls and to fly back to the shooting soldiers.

*- Dear God, if Your wish is that I should stay here till the very end – I will....*

*I will be waiting till you take me.....silently, calmly and in a dignified way.....*

The soldiers went into a frenzy. Later it turned out that the children were protected by corselets with six kilos of diamonds sewn inside.

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Rain was mixing with snow not letting people enjoy their festive Easter walks. The weather was the right excuse for the town dwellers to stay in front of their TVs. Easter Monday was truly wet. And cold. A car stopped on one of the streets. The door was burst open and an unknown figure shoved out a black and white bundle. Then the door was slammed and the car drove off. The bundle was lying and soaking with rain. After some time the puddle into which the unwanted burden had been thrown started to change the colour into red. One of the passers-by approached the bundle, touched it and, as he got interested by this situation, he called the woman who was working in the Animal Care Society.

A nine-year old female borzoi was lying in the bloody-rainy puddle. She was exhausted after the delivery. She was dirty and powerless, so quiet.

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The area near the town was surrounded by beautiful forests with lots of game. The area was also inhabited by poachers who kept dogs in basements, garages and hideouts. The law doesn't allow to hunt with sighthounds, but one has to do something to make one's living. The puppies were probably born dead so such a dog was useless for a poacher. It has to be fed, it can't hunt any more or give birth to puppies.

The woman from the Animal Care Society took the bitch to her home. She fed her, gave first aid and started to look for a new home for Beriozka.

They decided to meet in Kielce. When the owner-to-be approached the dog, tears started to flow from her eyes, the tears were just streaming down. Bieriozka, with her stout smiling, started to lick the woman's ear. Simply a borzoi, wounded as hell, but still proud. She was standing and licking her ear, enjoying this action as God

knows what. After a short exchange of opinions, the woman marched towards the car together with the dog. She helped the dog to get into the car, as Beriozka, apart from being weak after the delivery, also had a broken paw. The paw had healed over, but because of being bent, it forced the dog to walk in a completely different way.

The woman was afraid how this female adult dweller would be accepted by her pack of dogs. She was the most apprehensive about Alma's reaction, because she is the alpha female. Alma came close to Beriozka and smelt her, then she lowered her head and moved backwards. From this moment Bieriozka belonged to them.

She will never forget the first night spent with Bieriozka. The bitch was sleeping next to her bed. Every single time the woman woke up to check if everything was all right, Bieriozka was standing just above her, gazing at her face with a simile.

A borzoi.

Borzoi burst into her life impetuously, but the woman doesn't have the slightest intention to oppose them. Quite contrary. The dogs gave her so much and she derives a lot from them each day. It is probably also thanks to them that she survived the most difficult moments in her life. So she has to give back in return, if there is such a need. Additionally, she strongly believes that she is found by those dogs that need to find her and that are to find her.

Petersburg nights are truly white. It is two o'clock a.m. and although it is unnecessary in a tiny window of the hotel hidden among houses, there is a flickering light.

On principle. And a white computer screen, on which, with every passing minute, new letters appear. The woman, wearing a silk dressing gown, is sitting at a round table. The borzoi are sleeping at her feet. On the table there is a bottle of chilled Russian champagne, which was brought by her husband before he went to sleep. The woman approaches her suitcase and from a cardboard box she takes out a crystal wine glass. This wine glass was hand-carved by her

husband's grandfather and many years ago this glass had been made especially for them, as their wedding gift. A few days ago the woman didn't exactly know why she was packing it for this journey. Now she knows.

Yes, now she is able to try this beverage, the beverage so matching the atmosphere, the city, Russia, caviar and of course the dogs.

And this beautiful silence. So enchanting.

In her ears, she could still hear the sounds by Czaikovski, which on that day, during the grand opening of the 10th Borzoi Congress in St.Petersburg were floating towards the sky together with a paper borzoi and balloons.

*I wrote these few words in order to thank everybody who contributed to the organization of the congress in this beautiful city. They are for the lecturers and the breeders for whom the breed is far from being indifferent , and the meeting of whom was the source of my inexpressible joy...*

*thank you*