

The Great Bolshevik Bank Heist

by

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1 INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT

The dank, dusty walls of a prison cell. Stones covered in fingernail scratches. A voice babbles incoherently in the darkness. The year is 1907.

The voice belongs to KAMO, late 20s, a hulking man who looks like a complete nutjob--tattered hair, filthy rags.

He sits in a corner, rocking back and forth.

The lock turns. The door opens, bathing him in light. Two GUARDS and a BALD DOCTOR tower over Kamo.

Each guard grabs an arm, and haul Kamo up.

2 INT. PRISON MEDICAL CENTER - NIGHT

Kamo sits on an examination table under torch light. He is still babbling to himself.

The guards stand at attention by the door. The Bald Doctor is now joined by a YOUNG DOCTOR and an OLD DOCTOR.

YOUNG DOCTOR

This is an obvious ploy. Insane? He's wily. A fox seeking to exploit us.

OLD DOCTOR

I haven't heard a real word come out of his mouth in months. He not only sleeps in his own filth, he eats it too. You think a sane man could keep this up?

YOUNG DOCTOR

Anyone who is facing the kind of punishment he is could keep it up.

OLD DOCTOR

The man who entered this place, the man infamous throughout Russia--he was sane. But Kamo is gone. This creature, this animal, has taken his place.

YOUNG DOCTOR

He is laughing in our faces! How can you fall for his act?

BALD DOCTOR

Enough. Enough!

He is clearly the chief--his words have authority.

He turns his head towards the guards.

BALD DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Test him.

OLD DOCTOR

How many times must we do this?

The guards open a door and a third GUARD walks in, carrying a RED-HOT POKER.

The Guard waves the poker around in Kamo's face. No reaction.

The Guard glances towards the Bald Doctor for direction. He points at Kamo's lower back. Dutifully, the Guard SEARS his back with the poker.

Kamo just drools a bit. The Guard may well have scratched an itch. Kamo looks up blankly at the Bald Doctor.

OLD DOCTOR (CONT'D)

You see? Always the same.

BALD DOCTOR

(to the Guard)

That is enough for now.

The Guard leaves with the poker. The doctors huddle up.

OLD DOCTOR

This seems conclusive to me.

YOUNG DOCTOR

This will not please the Tsar.

They pause, waiting for the chief to speak.

BALD DOCTOR

I have seen enough. I do believe he is genuine. This lunatic does not seem capable of appearing before a court or serving a sentence.

The Young Doctor grimaces, disappointed.

BALD DOCTOR (CONT'D)

I will make my recommendation. Likely he will go to court regardless. Russia cries out for his blood.

With a CRASH Kamo falls off the table. He squirms on the ground like a worm.

3 INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT

The guards toss Kamo into his cell like a sack of potatoes.

Kamo is listening--until he hears the door slam shut and footsteps die away.

He sits up. Takes a deep breath. Checks the burn on his lower back. His whole expression changes: his eyes are sharp and focused now.

Kamo digs through a corner of the cell. He removes a loose brick from the wall and empties it out. Inside the hollow brick is a pen and some paper.

He spreads the paper out on the floor and lies down. He starts to scribble.

In loose handwriting we see him write: "Dearest Josef".

4 EXT. TIFLIS SEMINARY - DAY

A white neoclassical seminary, topped with a spire and cross, nestled among green mountains. A beautiful sunny day in Tiflis, the capital of Georgia.

SUPER: "GEORGIA, RUSSIAN EMPIRE 1895"

A line of seminary students filters into the front door.

5 INT. TIFLIS SEMINARY CLASSROOM - DAY

The classroom is crowded with teenage students.

Sitting at the front is JOSEF DJUGASHVILI, 16, known to history as JOSEF STALIN. Handsome and arrogant, there's not a trace of warmth in him. Even at a young age he holds imperious power over others.

Next to him sits a young Kamo, 14, already a large bully.

There is a third boy, JOSEF DAVRICHEVY, 15, good-natured and sarcastic, with a striking resemblance to the other Josef (they are rumored to be half-brothers).

The head priest FATHER DIMITRI, 65, clad in black robes and a long gray beard, steps in front of the assembly. The students instantly fall silent.