

THE FLOWER OF THE PARTISAN

Written by

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An original work

M. 072 767 1115

A blank screen. The quote, "Rebellion against tyrants is obedience to God."

1 THE ISLAND OF CRETE 1

CAPTAIN MICHALIS, a solitary figure emerges out of the forest on the island of Crete.

2 EXT. ENTRANCE TO THE LABYRINTH - DAY 2

He runs to the entrance to a vast labyrinth. He pauses and then leaps forward but something pulls him back. It's his goddaughter, muse, warrior ELENITSA. She's concerned.

CAPTAIN MICHALIS

To take a man's life is a terrible thing. But I have searched and searched and if there was another way, I would take it, Eleni-mou.

Elenitsa paces, then turns to him

ELENITSA

But it's madness. There is no way out. You will never come free.

CAPTAIN MICHALIS

This is the only way for our people to be free. And I am the only one who can do it.

Elenitsa is frightened to hear this.

ELENITSA

You are my people. You are my only one. *Please.*

He steels himself, and smiles.

CAPTAIN MICHALIS

Who knows maybe I will find a way out.

ELENITSA

Then take me with you.

She puts her hand into the labyrinth and it becomes a puppet hand. Captain Michalis pulls it out and shakes his head, pushes her back.

CAPTAIN MICHALIS
 My duty, this duty. Is the
 privilege of my life. Yours lies
 ahead, but this is my fight.

A flower drops from a tropical tree, and she gives it to him.

CAPTAIN MICHALIS (CONT'D)
 Death to tyrants!

He enters.

ELENITSA
 Is obedience to God

She watches.

3 INT. PASSAGE IN THE LABYRINTH - DAY

3

Captain Michalis runs through the labyrinth. On his
 breastplate "Pasop! nantsi Ndod'emnyama".

As he runs, the walls change from tunnels to the passages of
 Parliament. His body changes too, it gets flabby, the stomach
 gets paunchy.

When Captain Michalis arrives at the heart of the labyrinth,
 he has changed completely. He is DIMITRI TSAFENDAS, a middle
 aged, overweight Greek man with a sensitive face, that looks
 more used to laughter. He is dressed like a parliamentary
 messenger. The walls are lined with the sneering, bobbing
 faces of politicians. In silhouette, Tsafendas runs up the
 neck of VERWOERD, a half human half tapeworm rubbing his
 chin. He raises his sword and hacks his head off. Silence.
 Then gasps, some angry, some delighted in the wall of faces.

TAPEWORM HOUNDS
 Bow wow!

From down the passages of the labyrinth come the tapeworm
 hounds of war and hell fire.

The hounds appear at every passage entrance but one.
 Tsafendas takes flight.

4 THE PASSAGE CONNECTING THE ENTRANCE TO THE LABYRINTH

4

Elenitsa paces. Then Captain Michalis, his messenger uniform
 in rags under his armour, comes running toward Elenitsa.

CAPTAIN MICHALIS
 I'm behind you! Run!

Elenitsa turns and runs.

The hounds overtake Captain Michalis, and drag him into their feasting circle.

5 EXT. THE ISLAND OF CRETE - DAY 5

The earth shakes, a volcano puffs. Elenitsa runs through a primordial forest.

6 EXT. A BEACH ON CRETE - DAY 6

Elenista bursts through the brush onto a beach and sits down scared. She stands ready for attack, afraid but bold. Nothing comes, then:

Captain Michalis struts out unscathed. Elenitsa runs to Michalis.

CAPTAIN MICHALIS
Victory! The tyrant is dead
....dead!

Captain Michalis and Elenitsa dance together joyfully.

CAPTAIN MICHALIS (CONT'D)
His regime will fall. You'll see.

TOGETHER
Oh Bella ciao! Bella ciao! Bella
ciao ciao ciao!

Elenitsa looks out to the cosmic beach.

ELENITSA
The sea looks so beautiful today
Captain. Let's go for a swim.

She drops her armour, and in her bathing costume, runs to the ocean. Captain Michalis takes his armour off. He follows to the waves.

As he runs one bruise and then another appears on his back. As he gets to the sea, he stumbles forward and collapses into the small waves.

Elenitsa goes to touch him on the bruise.

7 INT. A CELL IN PRETORIA CENTRAL PRISON - DAY 7

DIMITRI TSAFENDAS, middle-aged, fat, naked and in a strait jacket. Police beat his naked parts with their fists and batons. He howls in pain.

8 EXT. BEACH IN CRETE - DAY 8

Flickering between the previous scene. Elenitsa is horrified as she struggles to come free of what she is seeing. The vision leaves her when she lets go of him. She finds a branch and gives it to him.

ELENITSA

Grab!

He takes it and she drags him onto the sand. He lies on the beach in exhaustion and pain. Their eyes meet.

CAPTAIN MICHALIS

The regime will fall.

She half smiles, terrified. Keeping distant.

CAPTAIN MICHALIS (CONT'D)

Because I, Dimitri Tsafendas. I killed him.

The volcano spits flame, the skies darken. A new two headed monster emerges from the volcano.

WYRM

Roar!

ELENITSA

Captain look.

The half human/half tapeworm two-headed tyrant climbs out of the volcano.

CAPTAIN MICHALIS

No. It can't be...

ELENITSA

And it is worse. What did we do?

He comforts her with a confident smile.

CAPTAIN MICHALIS

We will defeat them. It may take an army but ...I will make a way for you to stay safe.

Michalis gets up and finds driftwood and sticks. He makes a pair of wings and turns to her.

CAPTAIN MICHALIS (CONT'D)
Put this on.

He is bleeding from his eyes as he holds out the wings.

CAPTAIN MICHALIS (CONT'D)
Use this to get away.

She looks at his face and then his hands. She doesn't want to touch him.

CAPTAIN MICHALIS (CONT'D)
You are free!

She is moved.

ELENITSA
All by myself? What freedom is that.

She reaches out passed the wings and touches his arm.

9 INT. TSAFENDAS' CELL IN PRETORIA CENTRAL PRISON - DAY 9

The moment Dimitri touches her, Elenitsa is in the prison cell. He is on the floor. Feet in chains march passed the cell. He sees her.

DIMITRI TSAFENDAS
Eleni. I didn't want you to see your Captain like this.

She looks at the cell, its dirty blanket, hears the keening and wailing of prisoners. She goes to his side.

ELENITSA
Ah! You should see how the tyrant looks.

She shows a finger across her neck. He laughs through his pain.

Feet march passed the cell. She goes to observe.

10 INT. STAIRCASE TO GALLOWS - DAY 10

Elenitsa curiously follows the feet as they walk up stairs. The door at the top opens and she sees a row of nooses.

The men are led to the nooses.

ELENITSA

Aargh

Elenitsa is in horror. She turns tail and runs away. The sound of a trapdoor falling open.

11 INT. GALLOWS - DAY 11

The view of the gallows shows Tsafendas' cell is immediately below. Dimitri Tsafendas realises what is happening. He gets up and paces as above in the gallows the feet of hanging men drop and then twitch as the men hang to death.

12 INT. TSAFENDAS' CELL IN PRETORIA CENTRAL PRISON - DAY 12

Dimitri Tsafendas in agony to hear the executions. He bangs the door and the ceiling of his cell. Sound of nails hammering into coffins.

DIMITRI TSAFENDAS

Murderers!

Fade to black.

13 INT. TSAFENDAS' CELL IN PRETORIA CENTRAL PRISON - DAY 13

Tsafendas is curled on his blanket. Elenitsa enters.

She reaches to touch him and turns grey. Something knocks her down. Cut to black.

14 INT. INSIDE THE HOOD OVER TSAFENDAS HEAD - DAY 14

In the darkness Tsafendas' eyes dart around.

He is knocked against the walls as he is dragged along the ground.

15 INT. PASSAGE IN THE PRISON - DAY 15

Greyscale Elenitsa runs through the prison looking for Tsafendas.

16 INT. A ROOM IN PRETORIA CENTRAL PRISON - DAY 16

Four WARDERS with Tsafendas in the room. He has a hood on. There is a chair and a noose hanging from a hook.

They make Tsafendas climb on a chair and hoist the noose around his neck.

The body drops and hangs. The warders laugh hysterically.

17 INT. PASSAGE IN THE PRISON - DAY 17

Elenitsa comes to a stop and listens for a sound. She is losing her shading. Then crash!

WARDER ONE

(voice over)

This is for killing our beloved leader.

18 INT. A ROOM IN PRETORIA CENTRAL PRISON - DAY 18

Tsafendas hits the ground and lies gasping for breath. A warder stands on a chair and the rope swings in the air.

WARDER ONE

Your time is coming.

WARDER TWO

Maybe tomorrow, maybe the day after, who knows?

WARDER ONE

Be sure you are not getting out alive.

19 INT. PASSAGE IN THE PRISON - DAY 19

The warders drag Tsafendas. Elenitsa follows. She is a wooden featureless puppet, just a few sticks.

ELENITSA

Stand up Captain! One Two, One Two!

20 INT. TSAFENDAS' CELL IN PRETORIA CENTRAL PRISON - DAY 20

Tsafendas is thrown into his cell. Elenitsa holds onto the bars of the prison cell.

ELENITSA
Remember the beach...

He looks at her.

DIMITRI TSAFENDAS
I thought what can they take from
me? I have nothing to lose. Let me
be the one to kill the tyrant.

She moves into the shadowy corner of the room.

DIMITRI TSAFENDAS (CONT'D)
but they came for the ghosts in my
heart.

He turns away from her.

But she smiles slowly. Tilts her head like a curious puppy.
She takes her stick limbs apart and stretches them into
measuring tapes for the length and breadth of the cell.

ELENITSA
Captain, what do you think the
volume of this cell is?
(Echoes of foot steps)

Two mickey mouse hands trying to measure the length and the
breadth.

ELENITSA (CONT'D)
One, two, one and a half

Then she measures the height.

ELENITSA (CONT'D)
Now how does it work again?

Slowly light seeps in from a small sliver of a skylight. The
gleam of the warrior helmet on Tsafendas' head reflects in
the dim light. It looks pitiable on Tsafendas tubby middle
aged body.

DIMITRI TSAFENDAS
Multiply the length and breadth and
then times it by the height.

ELENITSA
So it's two by one and a half.
That's

DIMITRI TSAFENDAS
Three

ELENITSA
By two and a half, that's

DIMITRI TSAFENDAS
Seven point five square metres.

ELENITSA
Ah!

Back to herself, she sits quietly pondering. She turns the sticks of her limbs into music notes and then blow them to Tsafendas. When they touch his ears they explode into sound.

ELENITSA (CONT'D)
(singing)
*Never say that you have reached the
very end
When leaden skies a bitter future
may portend*

Tsafendas listens with a tiny smile, and then joins in under his breath.

DIMITRI TSAFENDAS
*For sure the hour for which we
yearn will yet arrive,
And our marching step will thunder:
we survive!*

A warder approaches and hits the prison bars.

WARDER
No singing!

Tsafendas feet are silently pulled into darkness.

The sound of a beating taking place. In the dark, the light reflects the Greek helmet lying in the cell. Elenitsa's shadow puts it on.

ELENITSA
They can't silence what they can't
hear. Sing ...in here.
(gestures to heart)
*And wherever our blood was shed in
pain,
Our fighting spirits now will
resurrect again.*

The sound of a beating still. The room changes as she sings. Light fills the room to reveal algebra equations on the wall.

Lining the room from end to end are shelves and shelves of books.

DIMITRI TSAFENDAS & ELENITSA
 (in weak singing voices that grow
 stronger)
*Not lead, but blood inscribed this
 bitter song we sing,
 It's not a caroling of birds upon
 the wing,*

Tsafendas is thrown back in the cell.

ELENITSA
 Ah, where were we?

DIMITRI TSAFENDAS & ELENITSA
*But 'twas a people midst the
 crashing fires of hell
 That sang this song and fought
 courageous till it fell.*

We see her stick figure turn into words that enter his ear,
 as the voice still sings.

Then feet pulled into darkness, followed by the sound of a
 beating.

ELENITSA
*But 'twas a people midst the
 crashing fires of hell*

A "door" opens and the beach is seen beyond it. A flower
 falls through the door. She steps onto the beach.

ELENITSA (CONT'D)
*That sang this song and fought
 courageous till it fell*

She turns around. Tsafendas is standing on the beach, weak,
 wounded but eyes bright. The Greek warrior helmet is on his
 head, but in every other way he is the real Tsafendas. Still
 sticks, she turns into a movie camera.

ELENITSA (CONT'D)
 Tell the story about the army
 that's coming.

Barely perceptible, the sound of marching...they turn to see
 the feet of an army marching through the breaking waves. The
 camera rolls.

Credits:

"Tsafendas spent 23 of his 28 years in prison in torture and
 solitary confinement."

"In memory of the determined hope,
the moral courage
and the joyful spirit
of Dimitri Tsafendas."