



**Alexander Pushkin**

*Boris  
Godunov*

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# **Boris Godunov**



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## **DRAMATIS PERSONAE**

- **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.
- **ATHANASIUS 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.
- **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.

Boyars, 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.

- The list of Dramatis Personae which does not appear in the

original has been added for the convenience of the reader--A.H. [Translator]

## **PALACE OF THE KREMLIN**

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(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.