

A CHERRY BLOSSOM IN WINTER: SEASON 1

by John Halas

A half-hour romantic historical fiction television drama  
treatment

Based on the novel, A Cherry Blossom in Winter

by

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Logline: At the beginning of the 20th century, a web of deceit and corruption fills the hearts of Russian nobles as they struggle to retain power, control, and love in a collapsing monarchy while Alexei, the faux son of a count, tries to find his place and claim his sweetheart in Japan.

Characters: This series is a web of intrigue and corruption. There are many perspectives that it takes. The characters that are most important to the overall narrative are:

Alexei: The son of the Count's wife who was brought in to the family with her before birth. His struggling relationship with his current father and desire to find the identity of his biological father are one of the many motivations towards his character during the story. It is also due to this relationship that he and the Count do not get along with Alexei hating the Count for his treatment of his mother, Olga, and the Count viewing Alexei as a stain on his family.

In contrast to the majority of the cast, Alexei is a very upstanding individual who cares deeply for his mother and friends while showing dignity and compassion. He is even willing to kill the Count and face the consequences to save his mother from the abuse.

Alexei is a saber fencer who wins a match against Boris, a vengeful senior cadet at the naval academy. Boris, who becomes Alexei's main antagonist, challenges him to a duel but Alexei's friend, Sergei intervenes. Alexei's other defining traits spawn from his love for Kimi. After their

meeting in Japan, the two of them find that they are unable to stop thinking about each other over the course of the long years they remain apart.

Admiral Kochenkov: The Admiral is the head of the academy that Alexei joins during the series and a primary benefactor of his family. He is also the adoptive father of Svetlana, Boris's girlfriend. The Admiral takes an interest in Alexei early in the story and hopes to recruit him early in the series. The reason he doesn't initially is to encourage sending him to Japan to avoid the fights with Boris. He is one of the more admirable characters in the series, taking great focus in honor and worth. He has great pride in his nation and desires to see it grow into the new world. However, he can also be manipulative and regularly uses various tricks to persuade people to view things his way and to make the Count dance his tune such as when he convinced him to take Alexei to Japan or forced Alexei to marry Svetlana before she died.

The audience later learns that the Admiral is Alexei's true father and Olga's lover. This shines some light on the Admiral's protective nature for Alexei as well as some of his actions. With this revelation, their relationship changes until the two of them are pretty much father and son by the end of the series.

The Count Brusilov: The faux father of Alexei and Olga's husband. The Count is one of the slimiest, and most deprave

characters in the story. His actions rarely lead to Alexei's happiness and the things he does eventually destroy his family. He is abusive to his wife and child and thinks of everyone besides the Russian elite as inferior or subhuman. Much like how the Admiral has a relationship with his wife, he has a relationship with the Admiral's, visiting her for sex regularly.

During his time in Japan, he seduces Kimi's friend into sex and gets her pregnant. When he forces her to a clinic to get an abortion, she dies. He then runs away from Japan back to Russia with the unsuspecting Alexei where he is forced to pay Japan and the family for the damage, leading him to be indebted to the Admiral.

Boris: The foil to Alexei and his rival. In contrast to Alexei, Boris is petty, arrogant, and violent. He despises Jews and is unfiltered compared to the rest of military academy students. He is also very protective of what he views as his such as Svetlana who is his girlfriend up until her arranged marriage with Alexei.

The relationship between Boris and Alexei starts off rocky at the beginning when Alexei beats Boris at saber sparring, and Boris resolves himself to humiliate and destroy Alexei's life. It later comes to a head when Svetlana dies at her wedding to Alexei and Boris blames him for it, devoting the rest of his life to killing his nemesis.

Kimi: Alexei's love interest from Japan who was promised to a different man. Kimi is a dignified and kind woman whose actions carry an air of grace and beauty. Like Alexei, she falls in love with him at first sight and despite their brief time together, spends considerable time thinking about him until they are reunited years later. After her father and abusive husband die at war, her chains are removed, and she marries Alexei at the end of the series.

While Kimi is easily the main character who receives the least amount of screen time, her presence can be felt throughout the story as both a driving force for Alexei and through her connections to the Japanese military. It is because of her relationship to these people that Alexei isn't gunned down like the rest of his ship's crew in the final episode of the series.

Episode Summaries: This series will be broken down into eight, episodes with an approximate 45-minute running time. What occurs in these episodes is as follows:

Episode 1: The show opens with a brief description of the current events and setting leading to the saber match between Alexei and his friend Sergei. The Admiral talks with his daughter Svetlana briefly before watching Alexei beat his friend. Then he is challenged by Boris. Boris loses quickly and decides to make Alexei disappear for the disgrace. Alexei meets up with Sergei and is seen at a worker's riot that was put down by the armed police. Sergei supports them

discreetly, and there is the possibility that it will fall back onto Alexei.

Alexei's unstable family life is introduced. His father, the Count is upset that he is being forced to go to Japan and refuses to take his son in fear of embarrassment and starts to abuse his mother, Olga. Alexei desires to protect Olga by killing the Count for the abuse but is stopped by Olga after which we learn that the Count is not his birth father.

Boris challenges Alexei to a duel, which he accepts. Sergei stops the duel, and the admiral convinces the Count to take Alexei to Japan to defend him from Boris. Alexei accepts after Olga urges him and declares that he will become as Japanese as possible to ruin his father.

Episode 2: The episode begins with Boris and Svetlana having an intimate moment where we find out that Boris killed his parents for abuse. We also learn that Svetlana is not the real daughter of the admiral and is currently seeking her biological father. We also see that the Admiral and Olga are spending time together and that they have intimate feelings for each other.

In Japan, Alexei makes friends with a military Lieutenant named Itomo over fencing. Later on, during a rainy day, Alexei collides into a young woman at an ikebana shop while reading a Japanese dictionary, knocking her into the street. After he apologizes, she hurries into a building. Later he traces back there with an apology gift and asks for her name

from the young woman's flower teacher. It is Kimi. Kimi receives the gift and seems to think highly of Alexei, even if the old woman, the sensei, does not.

Months later, Itomo takes Alexei to a Japanese tea ceremony where he meets Kimi who turns out to be Itomo's brother. They clearly like each other because Kimi cannot focus on the ceremony. Both Kimi's father and her arranged husband do not appreciate this. After the ceremony is over, Itomo warns Alexei not to pursue Kimi as the husband is a dangerous individual.

Episode 3: This episode deals with Svetlana's situation in greater depth and the true identity of her parents. Her father is the priest she has been courting, and the mother is a nun who died. Meanwhile, Alexei is forced to leave Japan due to the Count's rape and forced abortion of Kimi's friend. This episode ends with the Count selling what he owns to the Admiral and agreeing to an unknown secondary promise to raise money to pay an indemnity to the Japanese family for the death of the girl and the Priest who has been seeing Svetlana murdered in the church.

Episode 4: This episode reveals the unknown promise to be a requirement for Alexei to marry Svetlana, despite the fact that Alexei and Kimi have started exchanging letters. The Admiral and Olga arrange it so they are forced into it, and the Admiral essentially blackmails Boris to keep out of the affair. Alexei complains about it to Sergei who is being

sentenced to prison in Siberia for assisting insurgent groups. The audience learns that Admiral is Alexei's true father. The episode ends with Svetlana running from the wedding and getting run over by a carriage.

Episode 5: This episode starts shortly after the end of the previous with Svetlana's death. Boris sees the damage and blames Alexei. He attempts to kill Alexei before going into hiding, and his uncle recruits him in the Okhrana. During this time, war is on the horizon with Japan, and the nation is filled with false bravado. While the military around Alexei declares their victory and cheers for God, Alexei, knowing Japan's naval capabilities, prays that war will not come.

Episode 6: The episode begins by revealing that the bravado in St. Petersburg, Russia, is becoming increasingly false. With the death of Queen Victoria, Alexei is sent to England as an aide to the Tsar's emissary. There he has a rendezvous with Kimi who has been sent to the U.K. for courses in nursing. Though she reveals that the Japanese government wants her to extract military secrets from Alexei, they nevertheless spend a passionate night together only to be forcibly separated by Japanese agents in the morning. Upon returning to Russia, Alexei is condemned as a traitor and sent to a Siberian prison where he meets Sergei, the revolutionary, and they talk about the coming war with Japan.

Sergei favors it, seeing that the defeat of Russia will lead to revolution.

Episode 7: In 1904 the war starts with Japan's attack on Port Arthur. Alexei and Sergei are mobilized on the same Russian cruiser where Sergei, to Alexei's horror, still plots revolution and sabotage. It is soon apparent that the Russian navy is incompetent and is threatened with disaster by the British navy when, mistaking fishing vessels for Japanese warships, fires upon them in the English Channel. We also learn that Kimi's father and husband died in the war and she has had Alexei's child. Boris, now working for the Okhrana, is also on Alexei's ship and, after an attempt to take Alexei's life and reveal his Jewish faith, is ostracized by the captain. The episode ends with Sergei's attempt to destroy the ship, and after one final discussion with Alexei, is executed for treason.

Episode 8: Repairs are completed and the ship continues its eighteen- thousand- mile sail. Under orders from St. Petersburg the entire fleet must remain on the African coast awaiting the arrival of more obsolete ships while the dissolute crew sinks into an orgy of women, drunkenness, and in-discipline. Alexei's heart aches for Kimi and as the fleet edges closer to battle, he fears that he will never see her again. Joined by the "self-sinkers" the fleet once again sets sail to relieve Port Arthur. The morose and despairing learn of anti-war riots and starvation in Russia.

Meanwhile, the superior Japanese fleet with its destroyers led by Kimi's brother, Itomo, prepares to way-lay the Russian fleet in the Tsushima Straits off Korea.

Just prior to the battle, Alexei speaks with Admiral Kochenkov and learns that the Admiral is his birth father and that Svetlana was his adopted daughter. We also learn that Kochenkov's wife, Ekaterina, was the real murderer of the priest, Svetlana's father, who, (without knowing that Svetlana was his daughter) intended to seduce the girl just as he had so many others.

The Russian fleet, completely out-matched, hopes to evade the Japanese but as the night fog clears, the Japanese close the trap. Although they fight bravely, virtually every Russian ship is ravaged and sinks. Alexei is blown into the water and swims to a lifeboat commanded by Boris who tries to drown Alexei. Itomo's destroyer, in a final attack on Alexei's dying cruiser, fires on the nearby lifeboat killing Boris. Recognizing Alexei struggling in the turbulent water, Itomo circles his ship and rescues him from certain death. Waking up in a Japanese hospital, Alexei is reunited with Kimi who he marries and begins a family. The story ends with him briefly returning to Russia for one last visit with his father, the Admiral.