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Daniel Starer

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**Research for Writers**

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December 15, 1986

Dear Ken:

I've talked to three experts about the best expletive for your screenplay. Xue-moi is definitely not a good choice. It means "my prick" or "my dick". The only way in which someone might use the translation from Maledicta is: "when you say xue-moi we say fuck-a-duck". In other words, the use of the terms are vaguely equivalent but certainly not a translation.

The experts all suggest two other expressions, which are the most common expletives in Russian. The best choice appears to be Yop Tvayu Mat, with an accent on the "u" of "tvayu" and the "t" in "mat" used as a soft "t" (pronounced "mach" as in the Yiddish "chutspah"). Literally the term means "I fucked your mother" or "I have fucked your mother". But it can also mean "fuck your mother" or "mother fucker". This is definitely the most common expression a Russian would use when surprised or startled.

One expert suggested a way to work the expletive into your story might be to use the shortened version "Mat Tvayu" which means "your mother" but every Russian would understand the "fuck" was implied and intentionally left out. In the flashback to Paris, Jane might have asked what "Mat Tvayu" meant and find the expression amusing or memorable because of the embarrassment of the speaker as he explains the full meaning. The expression might also be memorable because it is the most common Russian obscenity. In Maledicta III, p. 202, the author states "In Polish and Ukrainian it is referred to as 'the Russian curse,' while in Yiddish, with characteristic irony, it is known as 'a Russian blessing.'"

The second most common expression used by a startled Russian would be "Chort Paveri" or "Chort Vazmee", both of which mean "May the Devil take it." Commonly, the word "Chort" (Devil) is used alone.

All three experts were pleased to help. If you need further words or clarification I'll get them within a day or two.

Best regards,

*Stan*