

Ilpo Koskela: The Devil's Whisper

Finnish edition "Paholaisen kuiskaus", ISBN 978-952-99947-0-0, released in April 2009. Published by Valiosarjat Oy/ Arktinen Banaani, Finland.

Swedish edition "Djävulens viskning", ISBN 978-91-85951-25-3, released in May 2011. Published by Optimal Press, Sweden.

Algerian edition: "Astewtew n ccitan", ISBN 978-9931-9310-0-3. released in October 2016. Published by Oxygen Publishing House, Algeria.

The book includes prefaces with several photographs about Cuban cigars and Caribbean political situation during spring 1961.

April 1961. The first man has just been sent into space; Adolf Eichmann is on trial in Jerusalem. In the third year of its revolution, Cuba is seething. Soviet troops stream into the country, black aeroplanes dirty the sky, the landing of the counter-revolutionaries is imminent.

Ricardo Carcia, a cigar maker whose brand "Tres Dagas" – "Three Daggers" has been left in the shadow of the renowned Montecristo cigars, has sent Aleks Revel and Charles Calthrop on a mission to find Jose Manuel Menendez, the world's best cigar maker, and bring him back from Cuba. Menendez was left behind in Cuba when the Montecristo factory and its owners fled the revolution to the Spanish Canary Islands the year before. Ricardo Carcia believes that his chance has come to develop a new cigar called "El Susurro del Diablo" – "The Devil's Whisper", and turn it into the best cigar make in the world.

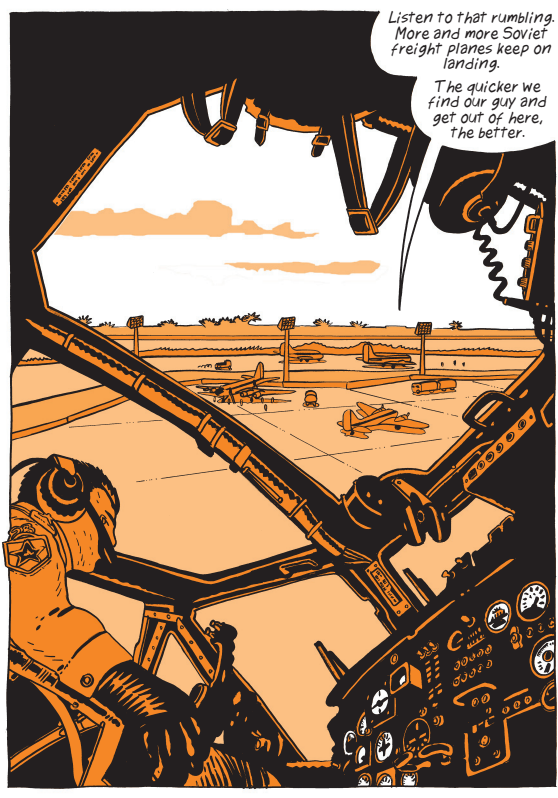
Aleks and Charles venture their way to Havana Airport, where they launch their search for Menendez, which eventually takes them to the western parts of Cuba, to Pinar del Rio. But things do not go as smoothly as they had planned. Four days later, the searchers along with Jose Menendez, his daughter and a doctor who has joined the fugitives escape from a Cuban prison camp and make a break for Havana with Che Guevara's guardsmen on their tail. The next morning, they find themselves in the middle of the attack of the CIA-backed "black bombers". Calthrop manages to fly his badly bullet-torn DC-3 to the south, to Princeton on the Cayman Islands, where the story ends.

The Devil's Whisper takes Aleks Revel all the way to captivating Cuba, to the midst of its desperate attempt to break free from communist power. The story also recounts the history of cigars and discusses cigar etiquette. Other influences include early 1960s Cuban music, Caribbean cuisine, rum, politics, patriotism and relationships.

The main character, Aleks Revel, has previously featured in the comic books *The Irelander* (1991), *The Comic Cook Book* (1992) and *Aleks Revel* (1997).

International rights: prefaces, script and comics by Ilpo Koskela

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Listen to that rumbling. More and more Soviet freight planes keep on landing. The quicker we find our guy and get out of here, the better.



God!

Great! That's got to be Benny More!

DE LA RUMBA AL CHA-CHA-CHA!

Let's ask the bar manager.

Merendez? No señor, not for a few months now.



To west?

Yep. We should find a town called Pinar del Rio in there.

ROBERTA 2007

... y éste fue el discurso de clausura del Comandante Che Guevara en la exposición de los logros económicos chinos en el Hotel Habana Libre. Ésta es la Radio Libertad ... det är den 11 april 1961 ...



A very fine cigar.

See how smooth the rolling leaf is. The humidity in Cuba's air improves the taste even further.



A Cuban night is made for smoking a good cigar. They don't taste like this in Europe or in Asia. This is my humble opinion.

This whiskey?



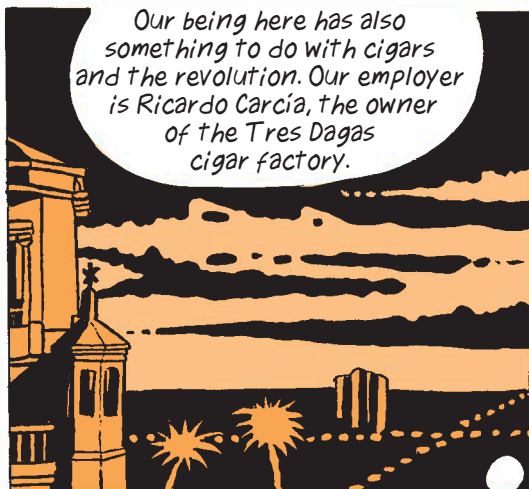
Middleton, a brand kept in high regard from Cork, my father's homestead. It's as good a companion to a Havana as dark rum.

The Cuban made a great deal!



Speaking of night, when are we going to leave the airport?

Speaking of leaving, when are you going to tell me why we came here? We'll find someone and then what?



Our being here has also something to do with cigars and the revolution. Our employer is Ricardo Carcía, the owner of the Tres Dagas cigar factory.

Our job is to find a man named José Manuel Menendez. He's a torcedor, a cigar maker. We'll give him a letter from Ricardo Carcia.



Carcia pays us both 10 000 dollars to deliver a letter. That's just mad; it'd be way cheaper to just mail it.



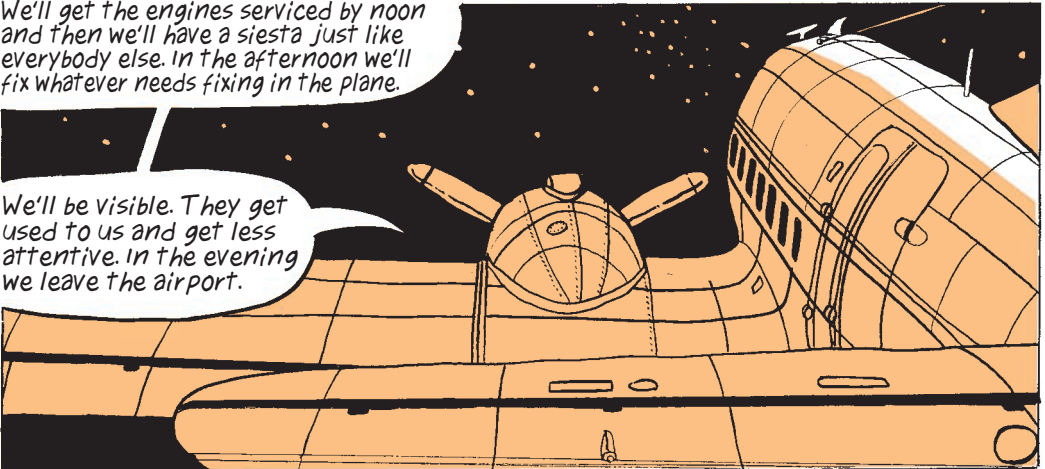
Carcia must have his reasons not to trust Fidel's and Che's mail services.

I suppose those are pretty tired of guarding us by tomorrow. When we wake up we'll go to the airport office and send a telegram to Douglas aircraft manufacturer in California.



We'll get the engines serviced by noon and then we'll have a siesta just like everybody else. In the afternoon we'll fix whatever needs fixing in the plane.

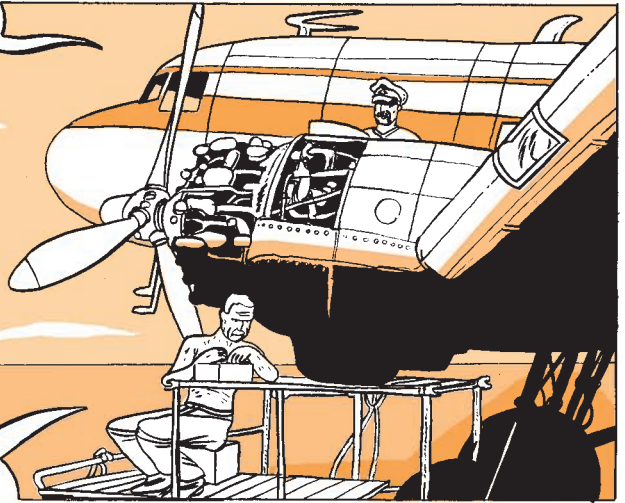
We'll be visible. They get used to us and get less attentive. In the evening we leave the airport.



Who would've known that you know your way around airplane engines?

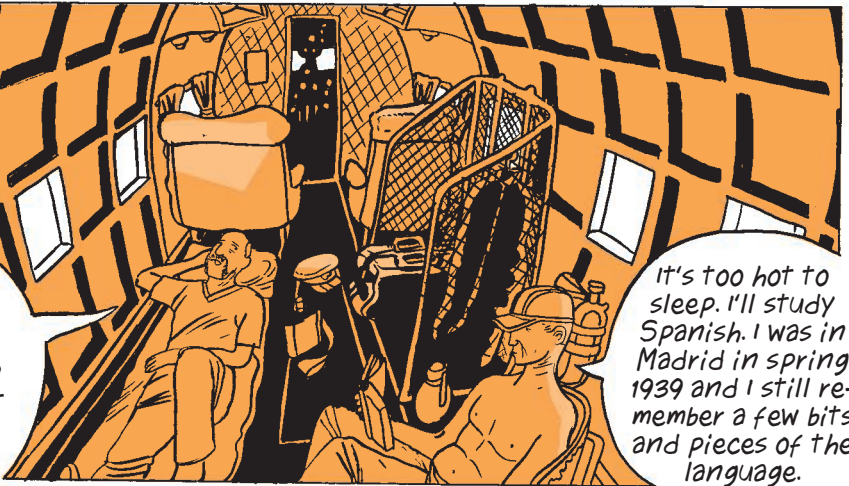
On Christmas, 1941, I arrived in Cyprus and as a Balt I was interned. At the time, my home country was a part of the Greater Germany. At the camp we fixed bombers that were damaged by German fire. Even a few Pratt-Whitneys came by...

I think it's siesta time...



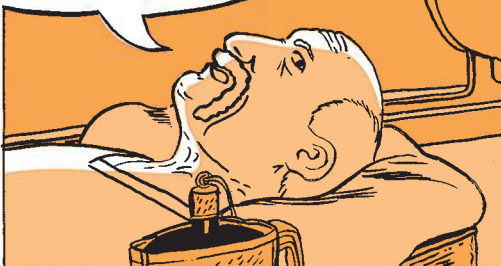
Sleep, Aleks mate. We'll be leaving in the evening and I don't know when we'll get the next chance to get some sleep.

It's too hot to sleep. I'll study Spanish. I was in Madrid in spring 1939 and I still remember a few bits and pieces of the language.



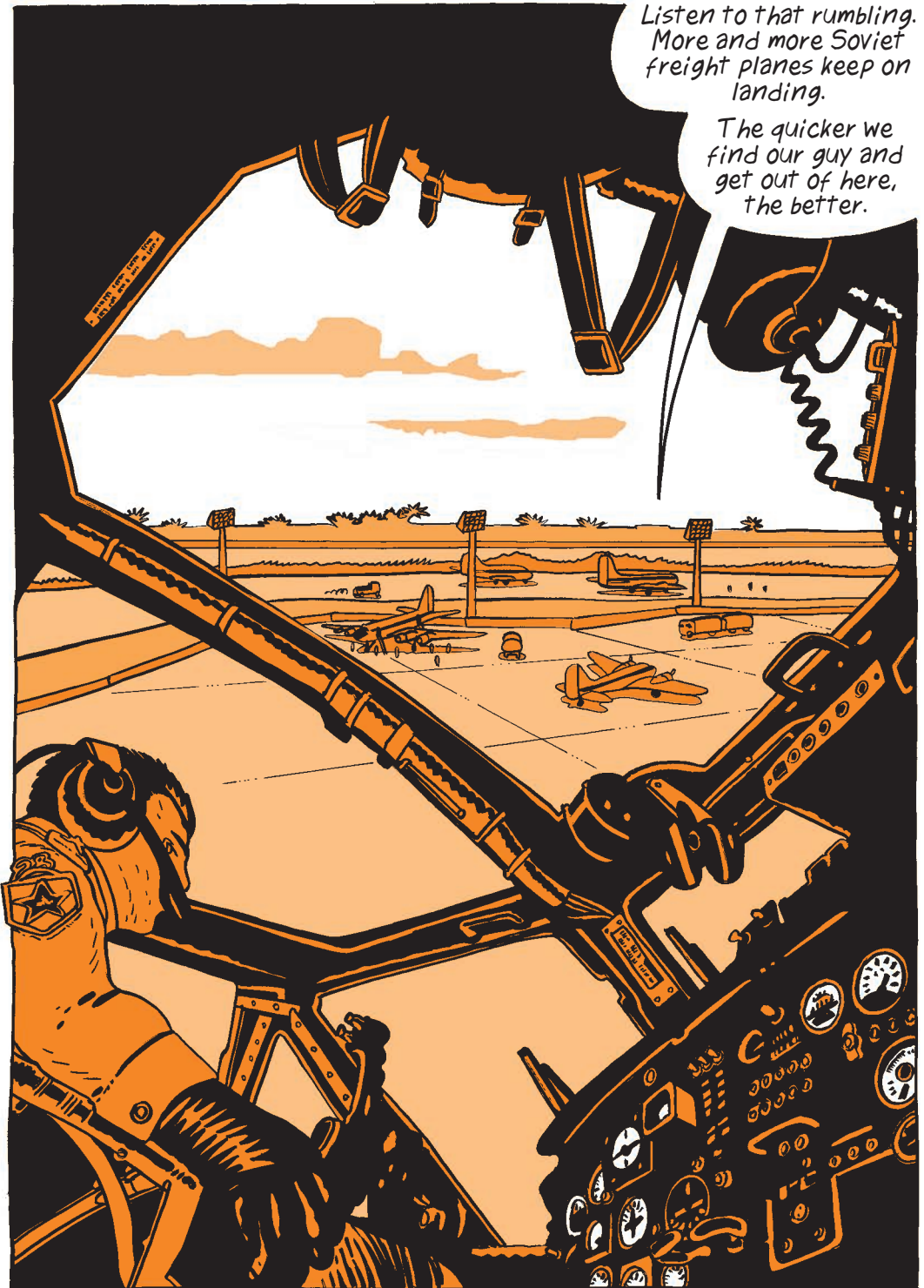
We'll be leaving unarmed in the evening. In a way, Cuba is still at war and an "americano" with a handgun will end up in prison or in front of a firing squad.

That's ok for me.



Listen to that rumbling.
More and more Soviet
freight planes keep on
landing.

The quicker we
find our guy and
get out of here,
the better.







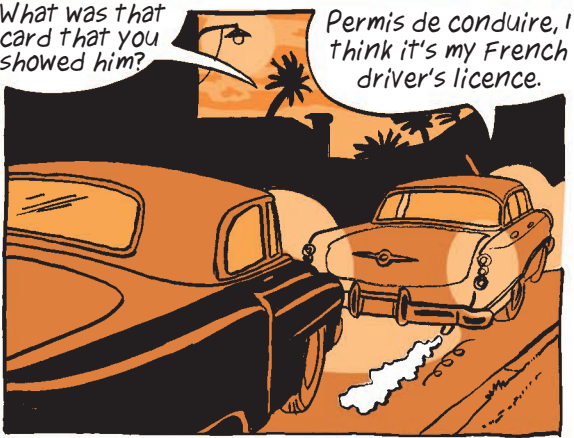
Club Estrellas de Habana, por favor.

Americanos?



No señor, periodistas de Francia.

What was that card that you showed him?

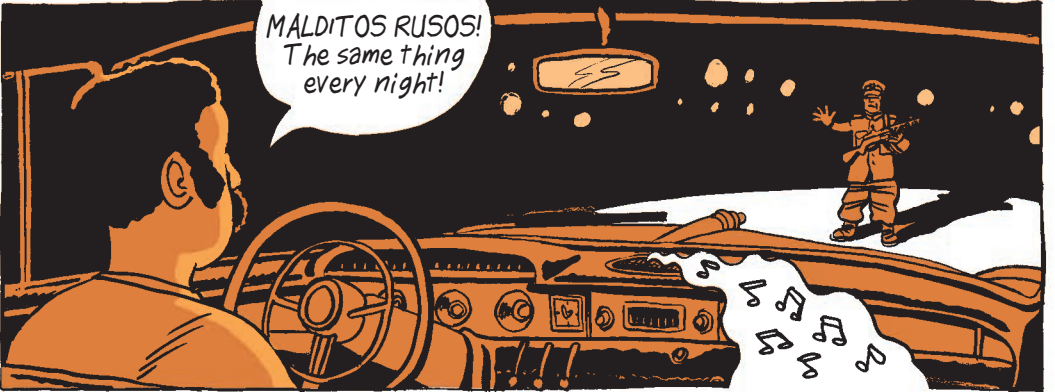


Permis de conduire, I think it's my French driver's licence.

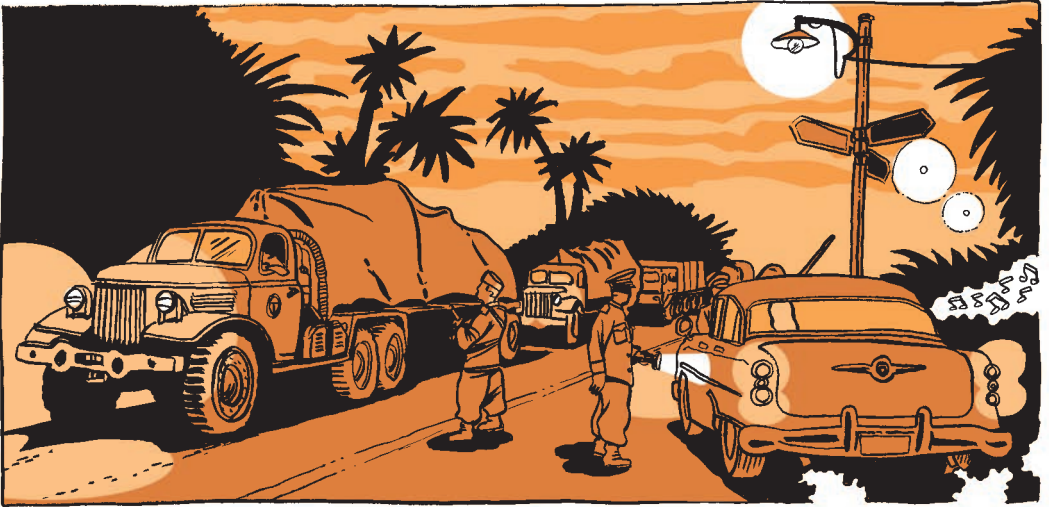


This music, Perez Prado?

Si señor, very good.



MALDITOS RUSOS!
The same thing every night!



Bueno!

Russian military equipment and Russian soldiers. That's obvious to anyone.

So the rumours are true.

Esas cosas las hacen sólo por la noche, nunca por la tarde...



According to Carcia's letter, they know about Menendez in here. Let's go and ask them.



Which is no wonder.
Under the new regime
people do disappear.
And at times, some
come back.



Would anyone
else here
know?



I wouldn't ask
too many questions.
Many here support
the new regime.

And what
about you?



I'm a bar
manager, not
a politician.

Ordinary people keep their
opinions to themselves.
People party like they did
before.



00-000-00
RUMBA!
00-000-00 RUMBA!



Everything in Cuba happens
under the watchful eye of
the Revolutionary Guard.



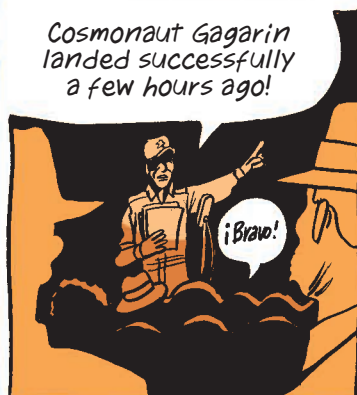
There are
no rules. Anybody
can be arrested.



AL
CHA-CHA-CHA!



Ladies and gentlemen, our great friend, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has managed to send the first man into space!



In technical achievements, the Soviet Union beats the US imperialists. Compañeros, we are on the right track! A toast to Fidel and our comrades in the East.



Is socialist vodka
not good enough for
you foreigners...
what...



... for you spies of
the capitalists?



Out of
my way!



COMRADES,
HELP!



They're
gone!

Qué
rapidos, son
profesionales.

Don't worry,
spies always
get caught.

