



Ukrainian Drama
TRANSLATIONS

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Play Original name / translated	DREAMING OF AN ALL-INCLUSIVE GLOBE МРІЯ ПРО ВСЕОСЯЖНИЙ ГЛОБУС
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(A dialogue set in the time of the Russo-Finnish War, 1939-40)

Raisa and I are out for a walk in the park at Vladimir Hill. I'm in sandals, although it's November. My cardboard soles are wet, they slip across the bricks in the pathways. I turn that to my advantage, though, waving my arms comically every time I lose my balance. Raisa laughs. She has fine shoes, fit for a model, flagrant stockings marked with arrows, and that's not all: Raisa is quite unevolved. I tell her that straight out.

“You amaze me, kid.”

I've taken to calling all women older than me “kid.” It brings us closer together. Raisa is twenty-two, she had a husband.

“You don't read anything.”

“I'm reading *Karenina*.”

Raisa rips at a leaf on a tree with her fingernail. As yet there is little that is comradely in her, but she possesses much inner beauty, the kind for which poets fought and died.

“*Karenina* is coal dust. Good for clay stoves. But the brain is a locomotive, it requires genuine Donbas anthracite. Have you read about the Panasevich case?”

I'm not entirely sure what a clay stove is. I think they are usually stoked with straw. But I'm from Kyiv, and for the people of Kyiv the sound of a word is more important than its meaning. Raisa is also almost from Kyiv, she lives in Bucha. She travels to the city to study at a school for working youth. Although, to be honest, there is nothing "working youth" about Raisa, she is a true dressmaker.

"Have you read about the Panasevich case?"

Raisa looks at me with respect.

"I wonder what will become of you?"

"Don't play with me, kid: admit it, you haven't read about the case of "S."

"No, I don't read things like that."

"Read it. It will open your eyes to many things: how they infiltrated the institutions, how they disguised themselves..."

"Who are they?"

How primitive she is! And how beautiful that lipstick is on her. We kiss for the first time.

"Enemies, Raisa."

"Who? Enemies?"

"Enemies. Do you even know what today is?"

We kiss again.

"No. What is it?"

"Today aggression has taken place against the USSR."

"Against the USSR?"

I tell Raisa about the traitorous shelling, about our dead and maimed soldiers, about the terrible forces threatening Leningrad. She listens carefully, her palm grows warmer, my excitement has been conveyed to her.

"Maybe they didn't mean to?"

"No, it was on purpose. It's a big war. Did you read the German Chancellor's last speech?"

"Hitler? But he's a fascist."

"I feel sorry for you, you don't follow events at all. Hitler now largely opposes fascism. And by the way, Pravda does not publish fascists. His speech is very profound. He speaks quite precisely about the arsonists, and about the unsightly role of England. You must understand: we have almost no friends, all the so-called Western democracies are just waiting to organize a crusade against the USSR. The Chancellor speaks boldly about this. For all our ideological differences, he extended a brotherly hand to us. That's why they tried to blow him up. Right at the rally. Many workers and veterans died..."

“Fascists?”

“There you go again. Don't be so dense.”

“You're probably right. I really can't make sense of all of it. I'm more attracted to music.”

It is important not to let her talk about music. None of my friends have a gramophone. I run straight through the puddles to the gazebo, hanging onto the curved rods and wiggling my legs in the air. It seems like Raisa laughs only with her eyes and lips, I don't understand the rest of her face. It has no wrinkles and is too beautiful. Or, I don't notice anything but her mouth and eyes. Or maybe it's just myopia. My hands are tired, I jump down to the ground. I'll have to build up my muscles, the brain should not be so detached from the body.

“What a shame! Don't you think so? Raisa, don't you feel that?”

“What is a shame?”

“They set off too early, the timing was off.”

“Is that really so bad?”

“Very bad. They won't learn their lesson again.”

Raisa waits for me to continue. But it's better in love to say too little than to say too much. I learned that half a year ago. We long hold our silence, looking out over the Dniepr River and the Podol neighborhood. Then Raisa says:

“Will you see me home?”

We catch the last tramcar. Raisa sleeps on my shoulder, and I dream about the occupation. They will enter the city and... No, that's not it.

Heavy bombers with black markings on their wings will come first. Bombs will fall on old crooked streets, and on churches, the demolition of which is causing such a ruckus these days. More bombs will fall on barracks, military schools, and the city committee of the Komsomol... Many civilians will die, and my father will finally stop saying I went too far playing the role of the “rootless proletarian.” He will sign up for the workers' militia, and all his buddies will sign up too, all those Gorbaniuks and Gladsteins love raising a ruckus. But all this fuss and bother will be swept aside, will blow away like chaff. We will see them off from our apartment on Vorovsky Street. The enemy will come from the north, Vorovsky Street is closer to the north. Naturally, I will not violate my principles and will eat nothing cooked by my mother. But I will drink wine as an equal, for no one knows what is fated to us: war is war, and it is not fitting of a Bolshevik to underestimate the strength of the enemy. When father and his colleagues leave, I will help mom with the dishes and will put a squad together. I'll recruit only those who know their way through yards, know the holes in fences, and where the attics are. We will definitely register as an independent battle brigade, and we will have Raisa sew us a banner with a star and crossed swords. Come on, enemies, come from the north, come from everywhere! We are ready. Khreshchatyk Street will meet you with the fire of camouflaged cannons, mines, and well-aimed sniper shots. You will rest nowhere, enemies. You will be killed via basements, window vents, and drains. We will plant Socialist-Revolutionaries with optical rifles in the tops of Kyiv's chestnut trees. They don't accept our methods of social construction, but they are excellent

marksmen. Come, enemies. You still know nothing of the sharp knives the street thugs are sharpening in the Shuliavka neighborhood and Jewish Bazaar. Craving Kyiv cream? Come, harvest lead fruit from Kurenev crossbows, Bessarabian revolvers, and Pechersk hunting rifles. You will bring dogs trained on human smells and human flesh! But our dogs will gnaw your dogs to death, your horses will lose their shoes on Kyiv's cobblestones, there will be sugar in your tractors' gasoline, and you'll have to reassemble the engines, although there will be sugar in the gasoline again tomorrow. Not a single Kyiv girl will go for walks with the northern barbarians, the sky over Kyiv will shower your bony-cheeked faces with rain. One by one your blond-haired warriors will disappear. They'll go out for a smoke, and won't come back. My friend Sakhno will wipe his knife on caps bearing the fascist symbol. Enemies, you will fear us! There are more of you, but we are stronger, and our love for our city, its secrets, and hills is greater. You should not have come to us. Nothing but death awaits you in these courtyards with whitewashed fountains. Your strength here shall melt! Here, on Vorovsky Street, you shall lay to rest your nation's brightest men in short fur coats unsuitable for our climate. Then father will return after being a prisoner-of-war. And we will reconcile forever, because a union of workers and communists helped him survive those terrible prisons. This is the occupation of which I dream! Raisa wakes up. What a pity I will never, ever see Khreshchatyk blown to smithereens, for the northern aggressor will never reach Kyiv by circling around through the USSR. The military brass set out too early, they could not wait for the proper moment, and bared their bloody fangs too soon. I'm afraid they