



Ukrainian Drama  
**TRANSLATIONS**

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Characters:

Man with No Name  
Middle-aged Finn  
Representative of Generation Y  
Middle-aged Finnish Woman  
Old Man, Witness of the Winter War, Hard Worker  
Religious Believer  
Ukrainian, Master of Reiki Therapy  
Psychologist  
Performer of the *Kalevala*  
Andrii  
Middle-aged Finnish Woman  
Kyiv Actress  
Old man, Witness of the Winter War, Meticulous  
King of Finland  
Finnish Day Laborer  
Sly Finn, bureaucrat

## Act One

**Man with No Name.** Let me introduce myself. I am a Ukrainian, the son of an ethnographer.

I am interested in the customs of different peoples. At least, that's what I used to think.

But professionals "frustrate" me. Usually, I love anything that's well-made. I love good stories, and I envy the guy sitting with a professional face on the jury of some British talent show. I adore professionals. But I laugh silently when someone explains to me how to prepare plays or cook up a good film. I haven't eaten my fill in a long, long time. It might be so fucking good that you are glum the whole way home because you will never, ever be able to do anything like that. Because you'd have to be a total idiot to spend so much energy on such gorgeous bullshit. Knowledge like that won't let you enjoy the film. Or it might be such crap that you can't imagine why anyone would ever waste their fucking time on it. Whatever the case, the people making these films are looking to someone else, not me.

Something similar is happening right here. I'm reaching out to a fictional audience. You're not who I think you are. But at least I remember that.

In 1990, I came home from the army, quickly realized all my childhood dreams, and went to work in a bank slowly but surely to earn all the money in the world. In those days, banks were created by former functionaries of the Communist Youth League. As such, banks lived short but cheerful lives. In the narrow circle of corporate parties, the chairman of the board could afford to raise a glass: "to those whom we deceive!"

I didn't want to be dishonest. So I worked where the deception was official – in the advertising department.

I managed my projects well, got along with my superiors, and even went to Finland, where I met a wonderful business coach from the city of Oulu. Hey, Paavo! Remember that jerk who broke your golf club on the first swing?

Our advertising became more and more audacious, and less and less about banking. Our billboards confused Ukrainian motorists more thoroughly than any single advertising campaign that has followed us. We commissioned videos from the best advertising agencies in Moscow: life was beautiful.

People trusted me. I didn't meddle in other people's affairs, and I provided the chief with an alibi each time he entered mating season. The time was fast approaching when I fully expected the knowledge about how the world truly works to be revealed to me.

**Middle-aged Finn.** The traditional Finnish breakfast includes coffee, and oatmeal porridge.

**Middle-aged Finnish Woman.** Oatmeal, bread, coffee.

**Middle-aged Finn.** Very simple. Bacon and perch with onions. Bacon, perch and onions, roll it in rye flour and put it in the oven for several hours. Even a Russian wouldn't refuse it. (*Laughs*)

**Old Man, Witness to the Winter War, Hard Worker.** Milk would be delivered to the station at Ruttul. From there – always at a certain stroke of the clock – from a northerly direction came the so-called Milk Train. It was uncoupled and transferred to other tracks. There was a station worker, Junnila, whom everyone feared, even I when I was a boy. He would thread a hook into the handle of a cannister and lift it off the train car. He always did it so easily, he never... But here's what I want to tell you. There was a tower on the roof of the Vaara furniture factory from which aerial surveillance was conducted. When air-raid alarms sounded, when danger was approaching, it gave off short beeps. Later, when the danger passed, it gave off one long beep. It was foggy, and we had managed to walk along so-called Sausage Hill for about a kilometer before I heard the hum of an engine. A Russian plane appeared, flying so low that I could see the pilot. He was tracking, looking down. He was alone, without any comrades, and he began firing his machine gun. I hunkered down. Then we ran into the forest toward a big pine tree and hid there, while my horse stood nearby. Splinters were flying everywhere. That was my first experience.

**Man with No Name.** So, in 1993, I was ready to know how the world works. And I was ready to amass large batches of banknotes. But something went wrong: I became interested in literature for the theatre.

**Middle-aged Finnish Woman.** It used to be rye bread and oatmeal porridge, but now it's oatmeal grain, oatmeal porridge, coffee and fresh juice. When we went to perform in Estonia, our friends were Estonian, none were Russian. I was drinking on one of those trips, and when everyone went into town for a fun night out, I stayed in the room alone with the Russians, and we ate salmon sandwiches and talked about their salaries. One of them was a dentist, we called him Amalgam. All I remember is that a conflict arose when the Finns and Estonians returned to our nightly quarters, and I was with those Russians. I have no Russian friends in Finland. Nor any other foreign friends, for that matter. That applies not only to Russians. (*Laughs.*) Yes, I like healthy food and junk food both. I eat too much of everything. No more Depression-era food cards to limit me. I never lack for food. I know what my mom did when they had these cards. By which I mean to say that anytime she would be stressed in her adulthood, she would overeat because she once had experienced hunger. That's also why she never left anything on the plate, and she wouldn't let you play with your food. Some wartime trauma is obvious. Estonians are more European, they are a little more educated. At least to some extent. Unlike Russians they don't travel to Finland to consume tons of booze and food. I remember in the 'seventies how they showed me children, hungry children from Biafra, and forced me to finish everything on my plate. But back then I had no real fear of war. I'm probably more afraid of it now. Just as I was about ready to swear off alcohol, I immediately began dreaming of beer. Fortunately, you don't have to think about specifics. Ice cream and cotton candy for

everyone! And a balloon so big it will carry the little ones up into the air. (*Laughs.*)

**Representative of Generation Y.** My grandfather was born in 1931, my grandmother in 1935. They lived in poverty, and you can still see that in them. Take, for example, their attitudes to cream, oil and meat – they had none of that back then. In short, everything extends outward from that, as well as this: our grandfather slowly ceased to be at peace with his mind. He was visited by all sorts of thoughts. For example, a cake so big that even the three of you can't eat it. I mean, this is what that shows. A person wants something. As for our grandmother... if she were going to bake bread on the grill, she would... she had this notion that the bread should be dipped in milk, and only then do you bake it. In short, there was complete confusion in the kitchen: there was bread, and there was milk, inside of which there was this bread mix – quite disgusting actually, and grandmother would look at that milk and say, this must be drunk. And I would drink this milk porridge. I mean it just goes to show – you want a big cake, but the feeling of poverty follows immediately after. I don't know if anyone can be neutral about consumption.

**Man with No Name.** There most likely is no such thing as a typical Ukrainian breakfast. But when I live with my mom, my breakfasts look like this –

**Middle-aged Finn.** As a Finn, I would say that there is nothing better than Finland.

**Man with No Name.** I wrote my first play in 1992. It was very bad, I remember it only as a curiosity: it was about the war in Crimea. At that time, we lived with the understanding that there would be a war with Russia. The collapse of the USSR was not peaceful, despite what people say. The Baltic states spilled blood gaining independence, then war came to Georgia, Tajikistan, and Moldova, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Then there was Chechnya. The Ukrainians understood they could be next. Many were aware of how this particular Empire operated, and how reluctant it was ever to release prey from its claws. But a miracle happened, and war did not come. Soon, in 1994, Ukraine gave up all its atomic weapons in exchange for security guarantees. In exchange for... the Budapest Memorandum. The United States, Russia and the United Kingdom confirmed their obligations to Ukraine:

1. respect the independence, sovereignty and existing borders of Ukraine in accordance with the principles of the final act of the OSCE;
2. refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine and never use any weapons against Ukraine other than for self-defense or in any other way in accordance with the UN Charter;
3. refrain from economic pressure aimed at subordinating to its own interests the exercise of Ukraine's sovereign rights, and thus ensure any advantages for oneself;

These are just three points. Of course, Russia claims it violated nothing. As if the agreement meant something entirely different. As if the memorandum did not correspond to reality, and you carefully had to read the fine print. But there was no small print. Ukraine reduced the number of countries that possess atomic weapons. One less country with an

atomic button. In return, everyone promised to respect Ukraine's sovereignty and existing borders! Sovereignty and existing borders! Sovereignty and existing borders! I can go on repeating that for a long time.

Okay, let's move on.

There were also "real" agreements. Including the so-called "Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between Ukraine and the Russian Federation." A lot of beautiful, phony words. This also turned out to be nothing more than a piece of paper. But in 1994, people like me felt like... we had gotten away with something. There would be no need to die, no need to kill, no need to prepare for war. You can wrap up the past and finally go on about your business. Forget about hundreds of years of colonization policy: a series of constant deceptions, wars and the Holodomor, bans on the Ukrainian language and the direct destruction of the cultural elite. Forward! Forget it! Let's move on!

**Old Man, Witness of the Winter War, Meticulous.** I didn't talk to Russians enough to know anything about them. I went there on vacation once. What kind of country was it? Everything was so primitive... chickens running around in front of the hotel. Chickens never fed in front of Finnish hotels.

**Religious Believer.** Now there was a wonderful person in Russia - Alexander II. He was a wonderful ruler. He favored Finland, he respected Finland. It was better then, in the time of Alexander II, than in the time of Swedish rule. (*Laughs.*) Sweden almost sucked Finland dry, sending troops out for the Thirty Years ' War. For thirty years the Finns were at war while raping women became a common tool of conflict.

**Man with No Name.** The so-called Ems decree was issued to please the beautiful man Alexander II.

It was Forbidden:

1. to import books written in Ukrainian into the territory of the Russian Empire from abroad without special permission;
2. to publish original works in Ukrainian or make translations from foreign languages;
3. to stage Ukrainian theatrical performances, or print sheet music with Ukrainian texts;
4. to print any books in Ukrainian;
5. to organize concerts with Ukrainian songs;
6. to teach in the Ukrainian language in primary schools.

But let's be objective, Alexander II was not Russia's worst ruler. Even if you measure it by Ukrainian standards. Others were significantly worse.

To be honest, I hate feeling like a victim. Victimization is not for me. Just step up and do it! No one is stopping you from writing the play you want to write! No one prevents Ukrainians from being the first people on Mars! Zhytomyr is a true aerospace hub. It makes the best

rockets, and boasts the best engineering culture! Why not? I was surrounded by talented people. Why not! My first play will be staged on Mars. Why not! Maybe I'll do it myself. They don't take people with tattoos into space. As such, I never did tattoos, although I came up with some funny ideas.

A person can change everything, it all depends on the person. It all depends on me. I can do whatever I want to do. If that doesn't work out, it's my fault alone. I'm always to blame. It's all my fault. It's my fault that this happened. It's my fault. It's all my fault, it's my fault. It's my fault.

**Master of Reiki Therapy.** I felt helpless. Yeah. Of course. Of course, yes. There are many such moments. As early as Maidan, because it was closer. This was in Kyiv – in the city center. In Kyiv, people were shot in the center. The center of town. This is bullshit. This is total bullshit. I don't think people realize how bullshit this is. This is flat-out nonsense: in Kyiv, on Khreshchatyk, people were shot. I mean... Nonsense, I mean... I mean... Nonsense. Helplessness... right... And then this war on top of that. Yes, helplessness. What do I do with all the old people? What should I do with them? How can I get this crowd of people out of here? Because I don't feel supported by anyone in my life. In my work, my personal life. I load it all on my own shoulders. Because I fear I can't cope.

**Psychologist.** "You are used to scolding and criticizing yourself more than others, comparing yourself to those who, in your opinion, are better than you. You need outside support and approval to counter the attacks of internal criticism. However, it's unlikely that anyone can give it to you as you wish. In your relationships with others you have trouble "taking," so you tend to "give" more, which leads to a violation of the take-give balance, and then to a feeling of "I am being used," and a sense of injustice.

**Man with No Name.** Is this treason? They talked so much about friendship.

**Master of Reiki Therapy.** No. This is not treason. For those who make decisions, this is not a betrayal. This is a natural course of events for them. This is the norm. I have a friend, she had a house on Tereshchenkivskaia Street. Her grandmother watched from the balcony as the Reds entered entered town. Treason will earn you money. "Loans, that's the ultimate: I'll go kill the followers of Bandera." To think like this is treason.

**Psychologist.** The trick is that guilt creates inadequately negative self-esteem, and reduces faith in things that might change. It is difficult for a person to see good in himself; he focuses on the "bad." If I'm bad, what kind of happiness and success can we talk about?"

**Man with No Name.** So I forbade myself to feel guilty. Forbade myself to be someone who would tell his grandchildren what a wonderful life he would have lived in the theatre if.

**Performer of the *Kalevala*.** Why did you come here?  
To eat weeping willow bread?

Strange, as if in a dream,  
Are your habits and songs...  
What did that courteous foreigner slip in your mug?  
Is he harmless, or does he conceal a gun?  
Is this brother to the Finnish people,  
The Karelian brother, cooking something up...

**Man with No Name.** This Is Jussi. He's a performer of the *Kalevala*. Ukraine had its own singers like this. Performers of folk ballads and tales, who, named after the the musical instrument kobza, were called Kobzars. In the '30s, they disappeared. Suspiciously fast. This may be due to the fact that they began to be arrested and killed. Perhaps. That's just one of the versions. Maybe they were taken by aliens. Or a giant cybernetic crab dissolved them with acid. There are so many mysteries in this world!

**Performer of the *Kalevala*.** Jussi's mother saw a dwarf:

A tiny, old man  
Warms his flanks on the oven...  
I know he's a sorcerer...  
Hear now what I say:  
Help me, and I'll help you!  
The little man ran and stacked the wood,  
A second later – a fire did burn in the stove!

**Man with No Name.** The dwarf responsible for my inner energy said: Your plays are good, your third one may have something, and the fourth will be better than your third. But you need a lot of people to need your plays. If you want to become someone in the profession, you must go to Moscow. The point is professionalism. We will return to that more than once.

I didn't really want to quit a promising job, I didn't want to leave Kyiv, Ukraine, a country where the kingdom of Dreamers was about to begin! But I wanted to be fully prepared for the pending work of inspiration.

As such, I entered the Moscow Literary Institute. An important argument was that this terrible hostel was immortalized by the poet Andrukhovych. I loved Andrukhovych and I wanted to try on real student life: with howls, drunkenness and suicidal poets.

Everything went according to plan: there were howls, there were fights (although less than in classical times), there were beautiful classmates, and a lot of real and fake vodka.

I became a theater professional and an alcoholic almost simultaneously. In Moscow, theater has always been an enormous force. But in the mid-90s, it was not customary to stage live authors. We just read each other's plays and dreamed of a future in which words would be important again.

Words are important again, words are once again imprisoned. In Moscow, they'll put you in

jail for your words. All over Russia, people are jailed for their words. Words are important again. But, still, I have this feeling we were dreaming of a different future.

And then, near Moscow, in Lyubimovka, the estate of the famous theater reformer Konstantin Stanislavsky. 1996. A fireside chat:

**Andrii.** I'm going back. To Kyiv.

**Man with No Name.** I never left.

**Andrii.** That's what you think.

**Man with No Name.** Wherever I am, I am still in Kyiv.

**Andrii.** That's what I thought before, too. Location matters.

**Man with No Name.** Remember the story of the Cossacks who were forced to move to Turkey? They put native soil in their shoes and always swore allegiance only to "the land on which they stand."

**Andrii.** What the hell are you talking about?

**Man with No Name.** You're not a romantic.

**Commentary.** Andrii studied under the best theater director in Moscow at that time. He was already successful and well-known, as was the whole course.

**Andrii.** I can't. I'm going back. I can't go on.

**Man with No Name.** Theatre is fucked in Kyiv.

**Andrii.** I know. But I can't. I can't. I can't. I can't take it anymore.

**Commentary.** When Andrii said his "I can't," there was still freedom of speech in Russia, television channels developed amidst fierce competition, the hosts of analytical programs seemed to be deities of Free Thought, courage and, DAMN IT, professional honor. Needless to say, almost all of them later became Putin's toadies. Not all of them. But almost all. But back then... Back then there almost was freedom.

**Man with No Name.** I don't understand.

**Andrii.** Chechnya. Chechnya at the very least. You understand. What's happening there now?

**Man with No Name.** All normal people are against the war, that's understandable. But in actual fact... who can make sense of anything there? It's their business.

**Commentary.** Andrii looked at me with pity.

**Andrii.** Don't you realize we're next?

**Man with No Name.** No. It's too late now. They wouldn't dare.

**Andrii.** And you say that, a historian.

**Commentary.** Andrii went to Kyiv. Where he lives the hard and honest life of a Ukrainian director.

**Tricky Finn.** What's so difficult about it? Is he talented?

**Commentary.** He's talented. But Ukraine is just learning to appreciate its talented people, and letting them work.

**Man with No Name.** Ukraine really could have been next. After Chechnya. But then, in the '90s, the country was taken over by corrupt crooks with Soviet habits. And this situation was advantageous to Moscow.

To a certain extent, it was to me, too.

For me it is important for people not to die. Ukraine already has enough dead people. The time to die has past. God, now, is clearly on our side, we need only wait a bit longer.

**Religious Believer.** Back then, when I was young, I didn't realize that, after all, it was just an ordinary life in the middle of it all. And God, of course. God and religion influenced faith, and I left the question to God, counting on Him and knowing that God is Almighty and able to stop wars, and that is how it turned out. Both the president's wife and Kyösti Kallio himself – they also relied on Almighty God.

**Man with No Name.** Now, I thought, God is clearly on our side, we need only wait a bit longer. All we must do is wait for them all to disappear – the people with communist mugs on their faces, the communist smiles and guts, with their "you-scratch-my-back-and-I'll-scratch-yours," their invisible connections, their ancient habits, their friendly hugs, their forked, unswearing tongues, their tireless piggishness, their drunkenness, their worried-parents' eyes, and conversations about "brotherly nations" and "eternal friendship," lying, crafty, and talentless in languages, stupid in all but survival.

They were never going to leave, of course. They just milked Ukraine, pulled on its udder, and looked for ways to make money, thanks to Moscow, which is always happy with thieving communist brothers.

So be it. Most important of all is that Ukrainian mothers were not having to attend funerals.

**Old Man, Witness of the Winter War, Meticulous.** The planes did not show themselves right away. (*Pause.*) We heard a bomb fall on the potato field behind our house. No one talked about the Soviet Union with us children. (*Pause*) But it's all ingrained up here in my head. It was such an ordeal, even for a child, that now, though I am eighty-nine years old, I remember everything as if it were yesterday. I will remember this to the end. (*Tears well up.*)

**Man with No Name.** The USSR did not wage wars of conquest. All the peoples of Russia join the union voluntarily. Wars in the Caucasus arise because the "Englishwoman shits." We help the people of Afghanistan build roads, nurseries, and schools. Where two million Afghans went is unknown. They must have killed themselves. We have no one in Algeria. We have no one in Ethiopia. An accident occurred at the Chernobyl power plant, but its scale should not be exaggerated. The American Indians were exterminated, but the Siberian peoples died out voluntarily. Just individual kinks of history. Special cases. Abuse, excesses on the ground. The Party is cleared! The Finns attacked the USSR. The governments of the USSR and Germany, following the collapse of the former Polish state, considered it their exclusive duty to restore peace and order in this territory, and provide the peoples living there with a peaceful existence that corresponds to their national characteristics. The Baltic nations entered the USSR peacefully and voluntarily. If we hadn't sent tanks to Prague, there would have been NATO tanks there the next day. On November 30 of this year, at 2 a.m. in the village of Kovoina, on the northern shore of Lake Ladoga, a group of Finnish soldiers from the village of Manesila, violating the Soviet border, attacked the front line of the Red Army. Our troops drove the Finns back to Finnish territory with losses. That same night, machine-gun fire was opened on the Karelian Isthmus at 3:15 a.m., from the village of Raasuli, after which a significant group of Finnish infantry attacked the village of Korkiamaki. Our border units counterattacked, driving the Finns back to their territory, as we captured ten of their soldiers and one non-commissioned officer.

At 4 a.m., two companies of Finnish infantry attempted to attack our outpost in the village of Ermolovo on the Karelian Isthmus, but were repulsed by rifle and machine gun fire. By order of the main command of the Red Army, taking into account new armed provocations by the Finnish military, the troops of the Leningrad Military District crossed the Finnish border on the Karelian Isthmus and in a number of other areas at 8 a.m. on November 30. In the area of Rebola and Porosozero, Red Army units advanced 10 to 15 kilometers west of the national border.

In the Petro Zavodsky direction, Red Army units went to Lake Suoyarvi. On the Karelian Isthmus, Red Army units occupied the village of Metsyapirti, Kuokkola station, and approached the city of Teriyokiya. Several dozen prisoners were captured during the operation. Despite unfavorable weather, our aircraft conducted reconnaissance flights and dropped bombs on the airfields of Viipuri (Vyborg) and Helsinki (Helsingfors). "Greetings to the valiant Red Warriors"; "Wipe out the Finnish Bandits"; "The Enemy will be destroyed"; "Our patience has run out"; etc. We ask the government and the Red Army to punish the Finnish military, bring liberation to the oppressed Finnish people, and permanently protect the Soviet Union and the city of Leningrad from hostile threats of the White Finn bandits.

The Soviet Union is not at war with Finland, and does not threaten the Finnish people with war. As such, the reference to Article 11, paragraph 1, of the Covenant of the League of Nations is incorrect.

**Old Man, Witness to the Winter War, Hard Worker.** There was a chapel, and I went to see what was inside. Inside I discovered a magnificent iron gate blown out, the chapel doors were all thrown open, there was crap everywhere inside, the tombstones had been turned over. Basically, that's the picture of what came of this.

**Middle-aged Finn.** As a Finn, I will say that there is nothing better than Finland.

**Old Man, Witness to the Winter War, Meticulous.** What I remember clearly is that my sister and I watched the sky very carefully every night. If the sky was clear, we feared there would be a night bombardment, or at least an air-raid alert. In cloudy weather, Russian planes could not reach us, so there were usually no night alarms. We were not allowed to go into the city, but of course we saw the last bombing of Tampere, and how terrible that was. We came out of the bomb shelter, and there was a fire in the direction of Tampere. There was a district called Kuttyal there, made almost entirely of wooden houses, and Messukul - and I could see the glow from there.

**Middle-aged Finnish Woman.** Dad had a war injury of some kind, he had to learn to throw himself on the ground to save his life. He worked at a machine-building plant and walked along the railway tracks to work. When a train would come, he would fall to the ground. I remember asking him later about a jar of pills, and I was told it was my dad's medicine. Then I put two-and-two together... he was visiting a doctor. Later he had to... During the war – not long – he worked awhile as the head of a prisoner-of-war camp, and so he had to participate in court hearings. He had to explain what he was doing in the camp, because there were people there who beat and killed others. Dad wasn't one of them. He never killed anyone nor mocked anyone, he did not frequent bars and did not talk to others. People don't want to talk about how soldiers were traumatized during the war, how they were denied help, how... It was considered unpatriotic to seek help. You didn't feel like a hero. Yeah. They still don't talk about it – dad mentioned that they were given "brakes" – you know what kind of medicine that was? It stopped your penis from getting erect. (*Laughs.*) There's a lot of talk about amphetamines, but that is somehow unofficial. You could easily shit your pants out of fear. It's not surprising that many were injured, and then they'd take to drink. The bars is where they lived out their military experience. It's right-wing populism that feeds on the idea that we were heroes. And we were allies, too, but this was a time when I was told as a child that they had come to help. But no one ever told me we were allies of Nazi Germany. They don't want to admit that we had a close relationship with the Nazis. My mother didn't talk about it, but she had something to go through, too. Dad was at a meeting somewhere, and they had to leave at a specific time. Mom went on a bicycle to meet Dad, and suddenly a Russian plane is flying over her. My mother ran to lie down under a fir tree, and the plane tried to hit her several times. But then this plane was shot down in a field, and my mother told me it was a terrible feeling when she saw these dead people being transported on a cart. Quite a

meeting. They were being carted away from there, away from the front.

**Man with No Name.** You have to love the life you choose. What's the point, otherwise? I honestly chose to love and I loved. Theatre in Moscow is a great thing. To be honest, I was almost happy. I've seen contemporary texts redeem the right to be spoken on stage. They infiltrated the most conservative buildings, where the shadows of actors who have outlived their fame still lurk.

Yes, the main tool of a decent person is love. There are no problems loving Russian women. It's easy. You can even love the names of Moscow alleys if you give it a chance. Tryokhprudny – Three Ponds – sounds good. We converted an old basement on Three Ponds Lane into a small theater in order to speak in our own words, not in the words of Chekhov's heroes. You can love the Moscow Metro: a strange underground palace decorated with the marble of destroyed cathedrals. On my way to an important meeting, I always rubbed the nose of a bronze dog at Revolution Square station.

I was lucky. I loved the courage of my theatre friends, their talents, their texts, their dedication to studying literature, their willingness to stand up for unjustly convicted people, and their ability to do without the government. I loved their ability to live without hoping for salvation. I am far from them. I know I can always go back. I have my Heavenly Jerusalem. Mirgorod. I have Kyiv. I'm not hanging out in Moscow because I feel bad at home. But because I see the point of being where new art is growing! Boom! A new dawn! Premieres! Everyone needs you! Soon all the money in the world will follow. In Moscow, I am not a migrant worker, but a respected bearer of Ukrainian theatrical wisdom!

**Middle-aged Finn.** I know at least one Ukrainian... Wait, uh.... Mila Jovovich. (*Laughs*). She's Ukrainian.

**Middle-aged Finnish Woman** (*laughs*). If I could just remember the name of the Ukrainian President. Yes! Stalin was from Ukraine, wasn't he? Oh, no, he's Georgian. Wrong answer! Natalia (*laughs*).

**Middle-aged Finn.** The Slavs are the most hospitable people in the world, as are the Finns. We are tribal brothers.

**Man with No Name.** It's bullshit, of course. But here's the phrase that most accurately conveyed my attitude –

**Middle-aged Finnish Woman** (*laughs a long time*). My faith in people has been undermined, but we'll give even the Russians a chance.

**Man with No Name.** The world is beautiful. We're able to do our job. Theatre comes to life not only in Moscow. It also comes to life in Kyiv. New Ukrainian authors. New hopes... Yes, Putin is fucking crazy. He stifles the press, free opinion, removes rivals, kills dissenters. Yes, he cuts Georgia apart and spoils the international atmosphere. But we can

keep doing our job. Putin's henchman win the election in Kyiv. So what? The Empire will still lose. Historically it is doomed, Ukraine will survive. Russia will be free, a new generation is coming along.

**Old Man, Witness to the Winter War, Hard Worker.** Yes, it was an absolute surprise. Of course, there were fears that war would break out, since our negotiators did not achieve anything of value during their trip to the Soviet Union. Still, the war came as a surprise. And nevertheless, we had to live with it. Somehow I thought I was still at an age where I would not be sent to the front. But life... it just kept going on. We went ice skating. We skated where the stadium is now. This is a strange thing, of course, because, for example, before the war I had the opinion that Russians were also people. That we should not always criticize them: they have their customs and living conditions, and we have ours. I considered them absolutely equal. But then, when the war started, when they attacked, that thought changed: they were completely different after all. What right do they have to attack a small state?

 **Man with No Name.** I once was asked to take part in a project about the Soviet-Finnish War. One Ukrainian, two playwrights from Moscow, three Finns.

I really liked the process and the result! The Moscow plays were witty, brilliant, and sarcastic. The Finnish plays were also good, I don't want to say anything bad about them. But they lacked air and what the word "flight" meant at our literary institute. Yes, the Finns lacked "flight." As if their playwrights could not get an angle from above or from the side to look at the circumstances of a war that had ended long ago. They couldn't mix old war stories with light-hearted fantasy or devilry. For some reason, one playwright cried when he read his text aloud. The Finns are amazing people. They didn't study at a literary institute, they don't understand how important it is to abstract yourself from your own feelings in order to write convincingly and vividly. I've been thinking about this guy for a long time. When Russia's "little green men" seized Crimea, when Russia's "volunteer internationalists" brought death to the land of Ukraine, I often remembered this guy. I am ashamed that I used to laugh at him. I am sorry, Ari Pekka.

**Middle-aged Finnish Woman.** Crimea is far away. (*Laughs.*) I am not particularly worried, as is everyone in Finland who is not in a position of power. Of course, it's unpleasant, but what can I do about it?

**Man with No Name.** In November of 2013, Putin bribed Yanukovich with a billion-dollar bribe to abandon Ukraine's course of European integration. It wasn't just a bribe. Putin threatened war. Yanukovich is an experienced thief. But this time he was confused: no one had any desire to go to war with the Russian Federation. And he decided that betraying his people was a better strategy. The people did not understand Yanukovich. They took to a city square. That day I said, "Shit, this is ill-timed. I have a homeland again."

It really was a bad time for it. The day before Kyiv's Maidan protest began, my wife and I received a loan to buy a modest but cozy Moscow apartment two minutes from the metro.

While Maidan was underway, I renovated and decorated my apartment. When the first person died in Kyiv, I realized that the Kyiv I knew no longer existed, and that my own former self was no more. In December, I had dreamed of a big housewarming party to which I would invite all my Moscow actor friends, director friends, and playwright friends. In February, when the foreman gave us the keys, I no longer had space in my heart for joy. I had nothing left to celebrate.

**Kyiv Actress.** Speaking of friends... I would advise you to do a better job of choosing your friends. At this moment... They didn't reveal themselves at all. That is, they clearly understood what was happening. My friends specifically. All my friends on social media were from a group of people that I communicated with all the time, but for various reasons. They were so... they watched the Russian news, they told me ours was a fascist government. Even earlier they would say we steal gas from them. (*Laughs.*) These people actively wrote to me. I tried to discuss it once. No-no-no... It felt like I was being spoken to as a child who doesn't understand the situation. I mean, you explain it. But they hear it not as you explain it, they simply perceive it as your innocence and your...

I started avoiding discussions. I saved my breath and that was that. The only important person who was there for me, and who condemned what was going down – the protesters, let's just say, whom I supported – was my dad, who lived in the Krasnoyarsk region. He wrote to me (*quotes*) "No matter what, you're still my daughter, and I love you as always." (*Laughs.*) You know what, in mid-February when the assault started on the 18th and-and-and you'd go out and you didn't know if you would return home alive or not. My neighbor and I exchanged keys and agreed to call each other every day: She has cats, I have a cat. If someone were to disappear - we'd feed the cats. And you know what... we did that in an absolutely detached, emotionless way. And then he writes to me to say I am, no matter what... I'm still his daughter... (*Laughs.*) Like I attacked someone, you know? "My heart hurts, I can't sleep. You upset me there - you support the fascists." I turned the conversation to another topic. At one point, I went to see him. This was a year ago, and he said, "I wrote something in social media, I don't know what will happen to me." "What did you write?" "I wrote that Putin is a very bad person. That's what I think." (*Laughs.*)

**Waiter.** My father no longer goes to church nor will he cross himself. Because Putin walks the earth doing what he does.

Greetings from the chef.

**Man with No Name.** Then came the annexation of Crimea. And much of me died. Including much that was good. What would you expect?

**Performer of the *Kalevala*.**

These songs that I know,  
I remember them and I sing.  
My tongue is a frosty day,  
A stake so strong and very sharp.  
My father sings the very same way,

As if hacking with an axe.  
Here's what my mother taught me:  
She held me gently at her breast,  
Milk flowed into my lips,  
And with that milk flowed love.

## ACT TWO

**Man with No Name.** Crimea. Crimea. Crimea. How could you do that? The Russians called us brothers for so many years. They... there is no name for this. Crimea. This is what Judas did. Cain did this. I'm fucking shocked.

**Old Man, Witness to the Winter War, Meticulous.** It seems... Is that fair? It's unpleasant, of course, but that's what great powers do. That's how they rule, they don't ask citizens for permission. Of course, they should have asked the people first. Ask the Crimeans. But you're not going to get any honest answers in Russian territory. They have been caught lying so often that one now has less faith or trust in them. They don't always tell the truth these days, either. I don't know why they've been so unreliable from time immemorial.

**Man with No Name.** I saw the Russians rejoice.

**Middle-aged Finn.** The whole thing is fucked. I like both. Slavs are the most hospitable people in the world, just like the Finns. We are tribal brothers. Just listen to Vysotsky's songs. (*Sings*) "What else can I do to befuddle the world atmosphere."

**Middle-aged Finnish Woman.** What is not happening right here, nearby, unfortunately, does not particularly affect us, even if it's suffering from war. Of course, it's rather offensive, but it's mostly true that I don't care. This is all somewhere far away, you even have to look it up on the map. So many things have happened, and are happening all the time, but you can't hang onto them any longer. I can no longer maintain interest in all the events in the world, politics or history even though I should. Now, if you were taking part in a quiz game, and you needed to know what happened and when... I used to read that *What? Where? When?* magazine. So I'd at least have a general understanding of things. Otherwise no, it no longer stays with me.

**Middle-aged Finn.** Something should have been done when everything was just beginning. Listen to what I have to say, yes. (*Laughs.*) NATO troops should have been sent when everything was just beginning in Crimea. I think you can avoid war by simply putting a deterrent on the border. Look how it was during the Cold War. Putin knows the rules.

**Man with No Name.** How is this possible? In 2017? Muscovites, whom Facebook until recently called my "friends," publish their photos from annexed Crimea. They smile in these photos. Finns in the 1940s didn't know what Facebook was. I envy the Finns.

**Representative of Generation Y.** I'm interested, but probably not very. I don't hold any one opinion, and the media no longer discusses this topic. We aren't talking about Crimea at all anymore. Still, a war is going on there, I'm sure it's no party for the Ukrainians. Everything starts with the media. I think this is because Russia is perceived as a powerful, unshakable force, and when it says it has decided to do something, people lose interest in whatever that is because nothing can be done about it.

**Man with No Name.** To be fair: I met almost everyone who was truly important to me at the Moscow rallies against the war and annexation. It's true. And Teatr.doc was impeccable – it spoke out honestly and boldly, it opened its stage to Ukrainians. Until it was closed. Until it was attacked by police officers accompanied by lackeys from the Ministry of Culture and a bomb squad. Until a pogrom hit it and the doors were sealed shut. When Varya Faer suggested I should think about the Finnish war again, I agreed without hesitation. It seemed to me that I would find answers to my questions from the Finns. I was hoping to correct previous mistakes. One more thing... I tried to shout. Not be heard. I'm not naive. But at least to shout.

*Shouts.*

**Middle-aged Finnish Woman.** I often want to shout, and I do. I don't know why I want to shout, because I know people who never shout. I don't understand how anyone manages to restrain themselves. When I want to shout, I shout.

No. That's how it is now. Back then, when I had cancer, I considered jumping off a bridge and committing suicide. But the bridge was so low (*laughs*) that I wouldn't have died. Anyway, after that I decided I would stick with this battle to the end, it would be either me or the cancer.

**Man with No Name.** I was hoping to regain some peace, put my head back in place. Explain it, explain it to me.

**Sly Finn.** Explain what?

**Man with No Name.** How could they dare... How could he dare?

**Sly Finn.** Who? Putin?

**Man with No Name.** Well, yes, Putin! In a broad sense. Doesn't he realize how many people he's offended? Doesn't he understand how many people he has destroyed and how many more he will destroy? Is it true that people are nothing but dust to people like him? How many people has he corrupted with his propaganda and lies, how many people have you tarnished by turning them into accomplices?

**Sly Finn.** I'm not Putin's doctor. Ask me something simpler.

**Man with No Name.** I know...

**Sly Finn.** No, don't be offended. Seriously. All this Ukraine, these problems, this Crimea, the Donbas. It's somewhere very far away. Honestly. No offense. What I can say? We are Finland. We're doing fine. We have a lot of problems, of course. But aside from that, everything is fine. Don't be offended. It's your typical post-Soviet infighting. They say you persecute the Russian language.

**Man with No Name.** Go fuck yourself!

**Sly Finn.** No offense intended.

**Man with No Name.** Okay. Let's talk about something closer to you. Describe the course of the Winter War in one sentence.

**Sly Finn.** That's another matter, brother. Please...

**Religious Believer.** That's scary. (*Laughs.*)

**Middle-aged Finn.** Stepping on the same damn skis. (*Laughs hoarsely.*)

**Old Man, Witness to the Winter War, Meticulous.** Many people cried then. My mother cried all the time. And then those terrible conditions for peace... She prayed all the time.

**Finnish Day Laborer.** Finland's elite wanted to please Germany, so they went to war against the Soviet Union.

**Middle-aged Finnish Woman.** We fought for a hundred and five days, on skis, in the dark, in winter, in the bitter cold.

**Middle-aged Finn.** Put briefly... as they say... first drink for eternal slumber, second for eternal health. (*Laughs*) We more or less ended it. At first it was hard, then it got better, and then we won and survived.

**Middle-aged Finnish Woman.** First there was confusion, then resurgence, then we apparently achieved what we wanted.

**Man with No Name.** I like you. I try not to admit it when I like someone. But you - I'll say it, I like you.

Is there anything you can't talk about?

**Middle-aged Finnish Woman.** What's taboo? I talk about my mother's death, but it's not customary to talk with your mother about her death. I'd like to talk to her about her impending death, but she wouldn't be too happy about that. I recently found these lines of poetry: "I've been waiting for this grief for a long time." That's a nice phrase. I've been preparing for my mother's death for the last 30 years, or even more, because I was 18 when she got cancer, and I've been afraid of it ever since. My mother at least hid the fact that my father did not recognize me as a daughter. That is, he did for the sake of social services, but he didn't for the sake of official documents. I was given my father's documents when he died, and there were no children listed in there. My mother's had three plus one. One extra one.

**Middle-aged Finn.** What? Homosexual relationships? No, not anymore. (*Laughs*). Wait, do you mean sleeping together or just being friends?

**Middle-aged Finnish Woman.** Real politics has silenced us more than once, at least for a certain period. So we learned that if something can't be said, it's best to keep silent about it.

**Middle-aged Finn.** About the wife's sex life.

**Finnish Day Laborer.** I don't remember the fiends we fought against. In our country, how do you put it, you couldn't say "Russkies" out loud. I remember once this football team from Kuopio played against a Russian team. One of the older guys said that under no circumstances should you shout "Russkies," that they have KGB officers on the perimeter of the field, who would instantly take you by the arm. They'd grab you if you started shouting "Russkies." Or something like that. They say you have to be careful. By the way, this guy lived in the same village as us, he was several years older. They believed things like that. But it meant that we never got into fights with the Russians, as long as everything went well. How do you explain it. It's like the spirit of the forest, or the bear in Finnish folk beliefs. You don't call someone by their first name.

**Man with No Name.** Yes, it is profitable to remain silent. The gentle calf can suck on two mothers.

**Sly Finn.** That's right.

**Man with No Name.** "And the silent ones became superiors. Because silence is golden." That's what the poet Galich said.

**Sly Finn.** Not Vysotsky?

**Man with No Name.** Not Vysotsky, it's even more wicked than him.

**Sly Finn.** What are you silent about?

**Man with No Name.** Am I silent?

**Sly Finn.** Yeah. You're not silent about Putin. But what are you silent about?

**Man with No Name.** I am silent... You know, you're right. I say nothing about lots of things. About how nice it is not to go to war if you have a legitimate reason not to go, and how much you hate yourself for that. About how convenient it is to be an alcoholic at the moment when an opportunity like Crimea arises. I am silent about the fact it is easier to be a bad husband if your wife is totally brainwashed, and does not understand that Ukraine has earned the right to live by its own wits.

**Sly Finn.** At least you started off right.

**[L] [SEP] Man with No Name.** Yes, I'll be fair. She was moved, I saw her tears when people were shot on Institute Street. She went with me to a banned protest on Manezh Square in the middle of Moscow. She even moved a guard rail a little to get past the closed perimeter. But then... it broke down after the Boeing.

**Sly Finn.** The Boeing that was shot down?

**Man with No Name.** Yeah. She's probably not a bad person. But then her brain refused to process the information and she went into denial. She just couldn't believe that her beloved Russian people, the sympathetic Russian people, eternally and unfairly humiliated Russian people, descendants of great miraculous knights – the gendarmes of Europe – suppressors of popular uprisings, descendants of secret policemen, stool pigeons, opportunists who hunkered down and survived, prison guards, honest workers, pilots who bombed Helsinki, victors over fascism, ...