



Ukrainian Drama TRANSLATIONS

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Play	CAN I BUM A CIG?
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CAN I BUM A CIG?

Cast of Characters

KSALA:

15-year-old girl, hangs out with the "wrong crowd."

NALA: 15-year-old girl, Ksala's close friend.

KOT: 17-year-old boy, a charismatic guy with long hair and a guitar.

CHIKA: 15-year-old girl, Ksala's neighbor and friend.

ANNOYING PASSER-BY: 40 to 50-year-old man, without a definable appearance, who always has something to say.

ANDERSEN: A drug addict at 17, then priest at 37.

KSALA'S MOTHER: 36-year-old woman.

FINN: Ksala's father - 36-year-old journalist.

POLICEMAN 1, POLICEMAN 2, CONDUCTOR, GRANNY, WORRIED PASSER-BY, and others

Scene

Various locations in Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Russia.

Time

1991, just before the fall of Soviet Russia. EPILOGUE is set in 2011.

ACT IScene 1

SETTING: KSALA and CHIKA are travelling in a tram (trolley bus). Ksala is wearing a black, overstretched sweater with a pin of Viktor Tsoi, ripped jeans with rock song lyrics boldly written on them with pen: "My blood type on my sleeve." Chika is wearing a wide brimmed hat and a light, red jacket.

CHIKA

Let's get outta here!

KSALA

Umm no, we're riding.

CHIKA

The conductor is already in the next car!

KSALA

We'll make it.

CHIKA

And what if we don't? They'll take us to the station like last time.

(makes a mocking facial expression and tone)

"Where are your tickets?!"

KSALA

I just don't wanna walk.

CHIKA

Well, shit!

KSALA

Yes, shit!

(ANNOYING PASSER-BY enters, walks past Chika and Ksala, stopping to look at Ksala's jeans.)

ANNOYING PASSER-BY

(reading with interest)

"Hey! And who will sing, / If everyone will sleep? / Death
is worth living for, /And love... And love...

(to KSALA)

Um, can you lift your sweater? - I can't read the poem on
your jeans.

KSALA

"And love is worth the wait."

ANNOYING PASSER-BY

(sarcastically)

How poetic!

(ANNOYING PASSER-BY examines
KSALA's jeans.)

ANNOYING PASSER-BY

And why is the other quote not on your sleeve?

KSALA

What are you on about?

ANNOYING PASSER-BY

(with feigned affection)

Dear child, what do you mean? I am talking about the quote
on your shredded jeans. It's written there - "My blood type
on my sleeve." But it's on your pants, not your sleeve..
That's dumb.

KSALA

Dude, give me a cigarette, and I'll tell you.

ANNOYING PASSER-BY

Do you know what I call ladies who smoke?

KSALA

Nuh-uh

ANNOYING PASSER-BY

Ash-hoes!

CHIKA

Sir, we aren't even 18 yet! We're minors. We'll get the police out here and tell them, that you're teaching us a bunch of nasty things!

ANNOYING PASSER-BY

Is that a threat?!

CHIKA

It's an invitation to fuck off.

ANNOYING PASSER-BY

Brats! Who do you think you are?! I'll teach you some respect!

KSALA

What do you want from us? We weren't even bugging you!

ANNOYING PASSER-BY

Aren't bugging me?! You're "bugging" me with your ugly, entitled faces! Sitting there - like some queens! All fattened up at the government's expense! You think you can wear ripped jeans, and that's normal?! You want a cigarette? Maybe a dick in your mouth too?! Why the hell are your nails blue? Who is this chink on your pin?

KSALA

(covering the pin of Viktor Tsoi
with her hand)

Shut up!

ANNOYING PASSER-BY

Clothed, well-fed! Never seen war. Never smelled the gunpowder! It's alright, you'll find out what it's like - when you give it your ALL - and receive nada! You'll see... Eh, smartasses! It's ok! It's ok! Life will teach you! Society will show you. Your homeland will shove your face into the truth...

CHIKA

(quietly)

What the hell! Get outta here!

KSALA

Yeah! Fuck off! Or else!

ANNOYING PASSER-BY

Or else, what?! Come on, stand up when you're speaking to an adult!

KSALA and CHIKA

(yelling)

This man is harassing us! Help!

ANNOYING PASSER-BY

Have you lost your minds?!

KSALA and CHIKA

(louder)

People, help us! There's a psycho over here!

(The tram stops)

ANNOYING PASSER-BY

Little bitches!

(ANNOYING PASSER-BY quickly gets off at the stop and goes into a different cart.)

KSALA

Asshole! Why do they always bother us?

CHIKA

Because they're all dicks! Now the conductors will definitely clip us!

KSALA

We'll just say we ate our tickets - like we got lucky numbers or something.

(KSALA looks through the window into the next cart.)

KSALA

Shit! That freak is in the other cart and I bet he's ratting us out to the conductor

CHIKA

Quiet. Look back at me and be cool - like, everything's chill.

(carefully looks around)

Basically, act like we're just chatting.

KSALA

About what?

CHIKA

Well, whatever we were talking about before.

(KSALA hands her friend a folded note.)

KSALA

Here. You'll give this to her exactly at 9pm. No earlier. If you go earlier, I'm screwed! They'll take me off the train.

CHIKA

Hm, I don't know. Feels kinda weird to me.

KSALA

Chika, I've never let you down!

CHIKA

So, I just have to ring and give this to your mom?
(shows the note that Ksala has just given her.)

KSALA

Uh-uh

CHIKA

And what if she starts crying?

KSALA

In front of you, she won't...

CHIKA

So, I'll have to ring the doorbell, say: "this is a letter for you" - and leave?

KSALA

Do you not understand from the first time? Don't be scared. I'll bring back some coal from "Kamchatka" for you. Imagine, he could have touched it.

CHIKA

Yeah, with his shovel probably.

KSALA

What if he picked it up with his hands and his fingerprints are still there?

CHIKA

I wanna go to Kamchatka too!

KSALA

And who will pass the note? Plus, your love is here... You have something to lose.

(Pause.)

CHIKA

You're manipulating me. I feel bad for your mom!

KSALA

I never ask you for anything.

CHIKA

That's cap!

(Pause.)

KSALA

Did you forget how we went on that walk... with Prokop?

CHIKA

What does that have to do with anything?!

KSALA

It has to do with the fact that because of you, I had to gawk at the TV like a complete idiot. While you were in the other room with him doing—

CHIKA

(looking around)

Don't shout! That was the best day of my life.

KSALA

That was the most stupid day of my life... Did you forget how I told your mom that you were with me, when you were really hanging with him?!

CHIKA

Wow, thank you so much! What a sacrifice! I'm eternally grateful!!

(CHIKA starts crying)

KSALA

Hey! What's up with you?

CHIKA

Nothing! He has a wife.

KSALA

But you knew that!

CHIKA

But back then I just had a crush on him!

KSALA

And now?

CHIKA

And now I want to go away to the seaside with him, just us.
Forever.

KSALA

You could go.

CHIKA

How?!

KSALA

On a train.

CHIKA

With his wife?!

KSALA

Well, just tell her you're his bastardette.

CHIKA

A what?!

KSALA

His whore daughter!

(Both laugh.)

KSALA

He has a nose like a turkey.

CHIKA

You don't know shit about noses! He has a beautiful, big
Roman nose.

KSALA

Okayyyy, I agree! Lucky you! So will you pass on the note?

(The tram stops, the doors open.
CHIKA looks out the window.)

CHIKA

Look! That prick is leading the conductor right to us!

(CHIKA and KSALA run to the exit,
but the doors close right in front
of their noses. The girls start
beating on the doors and
screaming.)

CHIKA and KSALA

Let us out, it's our stop!! Open the doors!

(The doors open, the girls jump out
and giggle as they run on the
street. The sound of trains on the
track can be heard from far away.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT 1Scene 2

SETTING: Detective's office. A basic office with furniture from the 80's, the desk is messy and stacked with papers. FINN is interviewing the DETECTIVE. A cassette recorder is on the desk. Throughout the interview FINN writes in his notebook.

DETECTIVE

It's virtually impossible to detect a psychopath from the regular population. He's usually a male of a regular build and without any special characteristics. Their intelligence is, of course, also regular. Married or divorced. Drinks in moderation. Doesn't have close friends. Clearly leads a traditional way of life. Well-respected at his place of work. This is the characterization of a supposed sexual predator - a serial killer.

FINN

Understood! But let's return to the psycho from the train. What can you say about him?

DETECTIVE

We can only report quite limited information at the moment. He travels exclusively by train. He gains the trust of a woman or young lady and rapes her. Then he steals her underwear. During the act he strangles his victim, and never leaves a trace.

FINN

How do you mean?

DETECTIVE

Erm... Doesn't finish.

FINN

Well, this is quite a widespread issue nowadays. There's chaos everywhere, in the streets and in people's minds. Everyone is stressed. My kid's all grown up.

DETECTIVE

And you're still living in a studio.

FINN

The bathroom is communal too.

DETECTIVE

The wife got fat as a whale - the drive just isn't the same is it was!

FINN

And even if it was, there's still no chance for a heart-to-heart. The monotony of married life has completely sucked out the passion.

DETECTIVE

Don't even get me started.

FINN

What?

DETECTIVE

Ah, nothing. Just a memory.

FINN

I get it... So how many victims are on this psycho's record?

DETECTIVE

More than 10. And that's only the ones we know about so far.

FINN

Why are the police refusing to open up a criminal case?

DETECTIVE

Because they're degenerates! Everything's going to shit. They got a raise, you see! I used to think that this was systemic deformation! Now I know, they're just born shitty. Don't give a fuck about anything.

FINN

Could you explain this "not giving a fuck" thing?

DETECTIVE

Yes, of course. We practice full transparency here. So, it turns out that the operatives are not only refusing to open criminal cases, but are also hiding victims and evidence. We had a situation recently. An example of a complete and inexcusable mess. A photographer was doing wedding shoot in Lugansk. The newlyweds chose a river as their backdrop. Beautiful view over there. And, this photographer is

DETECTIVE (Cont.)

looking through his camera - there's a wife, husband - everyone's happy. Smiling from ear to ear. Suddenly, he sees an arm floating in the river! And it was as if it's pointing up. To the sky. Just like Lenin's statue, you know, his outstretched arm and a finger sticking out.

FINN

Or like the Khmelnitsky mace!

DETECTIVE

Exactly right! This photographer, although quite young, turned out to be a stand-up citizen. Immediately, despite protests from the newlyweds, he stood his ground and captured this moment with the arm. Later he took a closer look - the arm belonged to a dead girl. The locals started calling her Ophelia after that. It turns out, she was an 8th grader: Dasha Miroshenko. She was raped and then murdered. They hit her in the head with a pipe and tossed her in the sewage. The killers were found - beginner psychopaths. Not studying or working anywhere. Laughed like hyenas in court - not even a hint of guilt.

FINN

No one feels guilt anymore. - It's the tragedy of our time. Decades later these bandits and drug dealers will take over the government. And in the biography of some future politician there will be a chapter about how he served time, robbed, dealt drugs... But, we're getting off topic. So, what about the photographer?

DETECTIVE

Like a respectable person he ran to the police. On his way he met detective Kukushkina. He tells her: "Comrade detective! There's a dead body in the river." And she says: "I'm on my lunch break."

FINN

What a nightmare!

DETECTIVE

I know. These are dark times. But in the end, the witnesses - husband and wife - did have morals. They got the body out and it didn't even ruin their wedding, the celebration went according to plan - festive, with a spark!

FINN

Good people!.. But, comrade detective, what should a regular person do in such a difficult situation? When there's psychopaths everywhere? How do you protect yourself and your family?

DETECTIVE

How do you think?! Run and scream. Even better - do not travel in trains.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT 1Scene 3

SETTING:

Sound of trains on the tracks. KSALA and CHIKA move to opposite side of the stage. One side is the staircase of an apartment building, the other - in a train. The action happens in two locations at the same time.

(CHIKA runs up the stairs.)

(KSALA enters, sprinting to the train. NALA enters, running in from the other side - she has long black hair, and is wearing a black sweater. Upon first glance, the two girls look like twins, but actually aren't alike at all. Both jump on to the train car at the same time.)

(CHIKA rings the doorbell.)

(The train starts to move. KSALA and NALA enter the walkway of the train.)

(KSALA'S MOM opens the door for CHIKA. CHIKA hands her a note and runs away. KSALA'S MOM reads the note in Ksala's voice.)

KSALA'S MOM

"Mom, dad, I took a can of condensed milk without permission. Sorry. I'm going to Petersburg. Need to see Tsoi's grave."

(KSALA'S MOM dejectedly sinks to the floor. The lighting for this side of the stage is dimmed.)

(NALA and KSALA light one cigarette for the two of them. They take

turns smoking it, their puffs sync
with their lines: one puff, one
line.)

NALA

Let's stand here for a bit.
(puffs cigarette)
Haven't smoked all day...

KSALA

Isn't it cool to smoke? What will we say when the conductor
comes?

NALA

Yeah, smoking's cool. We'll just say that we're someone's
kids.

KSALA

Uh-huh. Smoking and listening to music. We'll tell them
we're someone's kids.

(NALA starts to cough. KSALA starts
to cough.)

KSALA

(puffs cigarette)
When I grow up, I'll quit smoking.

NALA

(puffs cigarette)
We'll quit together. When can I get my Doors album back?

KSALA

Later. When will you give me my copy of *One Hundred Years of
Loneliness* back?

NALA

Later. By the way, you're wearing my sweater.

KSALA

Uh-huh. And you're wearing my jeans!

NALA

Uh-huh.

KSALA

Did you cut them?

NALA

Uh-huh.

KSALA

(looking intently at NALA's pants)

I like it. But I'd rub them on the sidewalk too, so they look more grungy.

NALA

No-o-o, that's a dumb idea - they'll just look dirty. And then all the normies will judge us. They'll think we're homeless, or leeches who don't pay for their tickets or something.

KSALA

Haha. But we really are leeches.

NALA

Yeah... Look - ... are there some kind of school kids over there? We'll act like we're with them - no one will notice.

KSALA

I brought a can of condensed milk. Maybe we can bribe them with it, so they don't rat us out?

NALA

Nah, that's overkill. We'll find a place to crash for that can, like with Fred.

KSALA

Fuck that, Fred's gonna try something.

NALA

But his wife's home.

KSALA

And what if she's on vacation? Did you forget what happened last summer? I memorized *The Master and Margarita* for the rest of my life!

(Both laugh.)

NALA

And I *Slaughterhouse Five*. Remember how he looked at us? We were just sitting there, staring into our books as if we

don't understand shit, or why he's in our room stripped to his underwear?!

KSALA

Uh-huh. And his dumbass anarchist friend with a beard decided we were completely mental. Being 15 is a great excuse.

NALA

We were 14.

KSALA

Even better.

NALA

You're so naïve. We were so fucking lucky nothing happened to us that day.

KSALA

Then we won't crash at his place anymore. He's gross and sticky... Makes me want to take a shower.

NALA

Yeah, for real. Ugh, but the bitch lives right in the city. He's got a sick pad. Theoretically - if his wife's there - then he won't try anything.

KSALA

And what if she's not?

NALA

Then we'll get his hopes up and disappear in the morning.

KSALA

You know, sometimes you're a smart cookie - and then other times such a dumb hoe!

NALA

I'm thinking of a plan for us! (getting angry) And you're panicking! You have a shitty attitude - you always think of the worst.

KSALA

That's my way of keeping bad shit from happening! I think of the most fucked scenarios that could happen and bam, everything is fine. Then you're like, -Woo! - I'm good!

(pause)

Like, imagine your teacher wants to give you a C for physics, and you tell yourself - fuck, I'm gonna get a C! And then you actually get a B. You're like, phewww - there is a God!

(The train doors suddenly open, and KOT enters - a young guy with long, fair hair, wearing a leather jacket and combat boots. A spotlight shines on him, he looks like a rockstar.)

(NALA and KSALA freeze from surprise.)

KOT

Greetings, girls!

NALA and KSALA

Hi.

KOT

Leeches?

NALA

Are you a snitch?

KOT

Don't shit a brick! You can call me Kot. I don't have a ticket either, but a whole pack of Kosmos in my pocket. Wanna smoke?

KSALA

Alright.

(They light their cigarettes.)

KOT

(inhales deeply)

This is the life. What's your plan?

NALA

You talking about staying on the train or in general?

KOT

About the train, and in general.

NALA

We'll stand here for a bit, then go blend in with the schoolkids over there. No one will notice.

KOT

But they're sophomores! And you're tiny!

NALA

We're 8th graders!

KOT

Still, you're little. So basically, when you become obsessed with me - don't count on anything sexual.

KSALA

Ew! As if.

KOT

Thank you, that makes me feel better. I just have this problem - every woman that I meet, no matter the age, instantly falls head over heels in love with me. First, she looks at my lips, then she gets that glassy look in her eyes... and that's it! - She's trapped.

NALA

Then what?

KOT

Whatever happens, happens. If I like her - I'll write a song especially for her, sing it, and then we'll go to her place. If I don't like her - I won't sing her a song, but I'll still go to her place, and then take something valuable while she's sleeping, for my valiant efforts, and disappear.

KSALA

So you're a thief?

KOT

(sighing deeply)

That was harsh. But that's how it is. The jail cell awaits me... I'm kidding. You're as gullible as kittens. How haven't you been busted yet? I'll bet my right hand that you don't even know what a BJ is!

(Pause)

KSALA

Have you read *The Teachings of Don Juan*?

KOT

There was something like that.

NALA

You haven't! Well I have...

(KOT opens the doors into the train
car.)

KOT

Girls, lets save the measuring for when our dicks are out!
Let's go in. Act like I'm your teacher. I'll talk to the
conductor, and you just agree with everything I say.

NALA

I won't be your bitch, I don't even know you.

KOT

Then just be quiet.

(KOT walks into the train car with
confidence. NALA and KSALA walk
behind him.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT 1Scene 4

SETTING: FINN'S apartment. Kitchen. MOM is boiling an egg. FINN smokes nervously.

MOM

Don't call the police yet.

FINN

The hell are you going on about again?

MOM

Watch how you speak to me!

FINN

This is all because of your parenting! Or, lack thereof.

MOM

And yours! Or, lack thereof.

FINN

I'm always at work.

MOM

Awesome excuse. And I'm always on vacation. Leave some for me!

FINN

What do we do? Don't we have to do something? Here.

(FINN hands MOM the cigarette).

(MOM puffs on the cigarette and hands it back to FINN.)

MOM

I was just on the phone with Nala's mom. She left too. But she got permission to go for the break, not like ours. Wrote a note and...

FINN

We should have spanked her more often! That'd be more useful.

MOM
That's not a method.

FINN
And your hysterics are a method?

MOM
You only preach! Then don't do shit!

FINN
I do interviews.

MOM
And what's the use?

FINN
I help people!

MOM
Let the people help you!

FINN
I told you, let's call the police! Have them take her off the train!

MOM
And then they'll write a letter to her school? Can you even imagine, what problems she'll have?

FINN
Margot, are you hearing yourself? She already has problems! Let's pray she doesn't get on the same train as that killer!

(Pause.)

MOM
What killer?!

FINN
Your egg is about to burn - as usual!

MOM
I'm boiling it.

FINN
When you boil it, somehow it still gets burnt.

MOM

I warned you 16 years ago that I can't cook!

FINN

Exactly, that was 16 years ago! You could've learned after all this time.

MOM

(quietly)

So you were saying, there's a killer?

FINN

I didn't say anything.

MOM

I'm not deaf!

FINN

Let me eat.

MOM

I don't understand, how can you eat right now?!

FINN

I also amaze myself every day, for 16 years already. How can I eat *this*?

MOM

I told you!

FINN

And I told *you*!

MAMA

You said "killer." What did you mean?

(FINN walks up to MOM and embraces her.)

FINN

A psychopath is traveling the trains.

(In this moment, the burnt pot shoots out an egg up to the ceiling.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT 1

Scene 5

SETTING: On the train. KOT speaks with the CONDUCTOR. NALA and KSALA quietly stand beside them.

CONDUCTOR

So I don't understand, do you have tickets or not?

KOT

No. They're with our teacher.

CONDUCTOR

It's a shame you're still in school.

KOT

School doesn't affect anything.

CONDUCTOR

I don't know what you're talking about. Ladies, why are you standing there, dilly dallying? Take me to your teacher.

KOT

She's sleeping, out like a light, as they say. Super tired.

(Suddenly KOT blows in the
CONDUCTOR'S face.)

CONDUCTOR

Are you insane?

KOT

You had an eyelash on your cheek.
(looks closely at her face)

Bam!

CONDUCTOR

What?!

KOT

You've got amazing shoulders. I'll bet, you used to be in the circus. Such buff shoulders.

CONDUCTOR

How did you know? I'm an acrobat. They retired me, those fucks, because of a rib injury.

KOT

Ah, what a tragedy! I noticed right away that you're not a typical train conductor. You have great posture, and muscles.

CONDUCTOR

Stop it, you'll make me blush.

KOT

I'll sing for you!

CONDUCTOR

"The Soviet mailman stood by the pavilion..."

KOT

I have a different repertoire. But you can teach me.

CONDUCTOR

Okay let's go. But quickly. And them?
(nodding towards the girls)

KOT

They're my daughters. Spiritually. Gotta carry this burden with me.

CONDUCTOR

Well, let them go to sleep already. Children need to sleep. Girls, if you don't find any seats, then climb up to the luggage shelf.

(KOT winks at the girls and follows the CONDUCTOR to the other train car.)

(KSALA and NALA walk through the train car, looking for seats to sleep in.)

KSALA

That Kot guy is weird!

NALA

Why?

KSALA

Seems kinda whack.

NALA

And where have you seen anyone normal in this stupid world? If it wasn't for Kot, that witch would have kicked us out at the first stop! Look, there's an empty shelf over there - seems like there's no bags.

(The girls look up to the 3rd shelf
- GRANNY pokes her head out.)

GRANNY

Git outta here!

(KSALA sways backwards.)

KSALA

Me?! We'll get the conductor over here real quick!

GRANNY

Yelling at a senior like that! Respect the elderly, you heathens!

KSALA

Being a leech at your age is just embarrassing!

(Suddenly GRANNY starts
cackling/laughing.)

GRANNY

Quite a mouth you've got! I'm not a leech, I'm a vampire!

NALA

(to KSALA)

Whatever.

(They walk through the train car,
peeping up to the 3rd shelves.
Faces pop up one by one.)

KSALA

Jesus, look how many leeches are in here! Maybe, we can break into the conductor's room?

NALA

(hesitantly)

She's busy in there with Kot.

KSALA

Doing what?

NALA

Do you not get it?

KSALA

Ohhh. Duh. They're taking a trip to pound town.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT 1

Scene 6

SETTING: Morning. Train station. The train has arrived in St. Petersburg. KSALA and NALA are sleeping on the luggage shelf. POLICEMAN 1 and 2 walk through the train car.

POLICEMAN 1
(to POLICEMAN 2)
Five cars left. Look around this one.

POLICEMAN 2
Me again?!

POLICEMAN 1
Who else?

POLICEMAN 2
I have one free weekend and again - a body. As soon as I plan a vacation - there's a body. And that's every Sunday.

POLICEMAN 1
We have to check all the passengers.

POLICEMAN 2
If we're checking, then we should check the men. The conductor was definitely offed by a man.

POLICEMAN 1
You think a woman isn't capable of this?

POLICEMAN 2
Well I'm assuming that the conductor was fucked with the help of a dick! And her underwear was stolen.

POLICEMAN 1
These days, you can get smoked for a pack of "Day of the Week" underwear without any sex!

POLICEMAN 2
Then why did the murderer leave the other six pairs?

POLICEMAN 1

Because she hid them well. This one guy in my neighborhood was put in a coma for a pair of Adidas sneakers.

POLICEMAN 2

So, according to your theory - underwear with "Wednesday" written on them are the cause of the murder?

POLICEMAN 1

How do you know they had "Wednesday" written on them?

POLICEMAN 2

Because those are the ones that are missing from the pack. My wife has the same set. She wears them strictly day by day. If it's Monday, then she puts on the Monday pair, if it's Tuesday - then the Tuesday ones.

POLICEMAN 1

Anyway, there's six left - let's divide them in half.

POLICEMAN 2

And what about the others?

POLICEMAN 1

They don't have wives.

POLICEMAN 2

"Day of the Week" underwear, my dear friend, don't just lay around like that. We have to share, or they'll eat us alive.

POLICEMAN 1

Solid point. There's also a decent bra on the corpse.

POLICEMAN 2

Get it for yours.

POLICEMAN 1

Do I look like a dumbfuck? - It's torn. And when they start looking for evidence, then they'll find out I have it. Are you trying to frame me, buddy?

POLICEMAN 2

You're being paranoid. I just thought, the size would fit your lady. The victim was about the same size as yours, and there's a French tag on it. For a French bra, any chick

would give you a night you'd remember for the rest of your life.

POLICEMAN 1

And beyond! ... The lace is torn though...

POLICEMAN 2

That's nothing, just sew it carefully, wash it. Spray it with perfume and that's it! Valentine's day is solved. She's yours for eternity.

POLICEMAN 1

Yours for eternity? Wait, how do you know what size my wife wears?

(Pause.)

POLICEMAN 2

What do you mean, how? I don't know... My wife told me. They go to the same bathhouse. She said that yours is --

(gesturing at chest)

-- flat as a board.

(POLICEMAN 1 grabs POLICEMAN 2 by the collar and slams him against the wall of the train.)

POLICEMAN 1

And I'm over here thinking, why has she been smelling off lately?!

(KSALA sneezes loudly from the luggage shelf. The POLICEMEN jerk back from surprise. POLICEMAN 2 grabs KSALA from the shelf.)

KSALA

Let go! Let go of me!

POLICEMAN 2

Oh! There's another little bitch hiding up there!

(POLICEMAN 2 grabs KSALA by the hair.)

POLICEMAN 1

You working on the trains?

KSALA

We're in school! 6th graders.

POLICEMAN 1

IDs and tickets?

NALA

Sir, what IDs? We're minors. We were going on a field trip to Kyiv with our class, and, well, we overslept!

POLICEMAN 1

And why were you sleeping on the luggage shelf?

NALA

We were experimenting. We read this one story about pioneer-heroes and their struggles. So, we decided to bet each other whether we could sleep on the shelves - like, to train our willpower.

POLICEMAN 2

And how long ago did you wake up?

KSALA

We didn't hear anything about underwear.

(NALA looks viciously at KSALA.)

NALA

We didn't see anything. Our teacher is waiting! Let us go, please. Our parents are waiting for us. My dad works in the KGB. His name is Ivan Marcus, maybe you've heard of him?

POLICEMAN 1

Marcus? Shmarcus. Got any grub?

KSALA

I have condensed milk!

POLICEMAN 1

Leave it on the shelf!

(KSALA puts down the can of condensed milk.)

POLICEMAN 2

Now get the hell outta here!

(The girls quickly run out of the train and jump out on the platform.)

NALA

We were almost completely screwed!

KSALA

Did you hear about the murder?

NALA

You think it was Kot who strangled her?

KSALA

Who else? He's sus. I woke up at night, and he's just standing there and staring. I was like: "What?" and he was like, super quietly: "This is the life." And left.

NALA

Total nonsense! He was staring at me too! That means he killed her and then wanted to strangle us too?

KSALA

(with a knowledgeable tone)

If he's a psycho - then one murder should calm him down for a bit. Psychopaths are like crackheads - they relax once they get their dose.

(KOT walks up to them from behind, he looks disheveled and tired, a piece of white cloth pokes out from his pocket.)

KOT

Good morning, little ones!

(KSALA and NALA scream from surprise.)

KOT

Not a single woman has greeted me with such screams before. What's up with you?

NALA

We got excited. How was your night?

KOT

I feel squeezed out like a lemon! Middle aged women are freaks!

KSALA

We're very happy for you. We're gonna go.

KOT

Let's go together! I'm from here. I'll show you everything.

NALA

Thank you, Kot, but we don't wanna burden you.

KOT

What a verb - "burden"! But I'd be glad to. We'll have fun. If you want, you can crash at my place. I live with my mom, in the center.

NALA

That's cool.

KSALA

Uh-huh, cool. But our family is waiting for us. We came to visit them.

KOT

Without tickets?

KSALA

We lost them.

KOT

Lost them?

NALA

Yeah... Back home we went to a getty and there were hella people there. The tickets fell out.

KOT

Where did they fall out of?

KSALA

My pocket.

KOT

Why would you keep tickets in your pocket? Do you have matches?

KSALA

No.

KOT

Did they also fall out?

KSALA

We ran out.

KOT

Oh well! Wait for me. I'm gonna go light this. Then we'll run away together.

NALA

And why do you need to run?

KOT

It's a long story.

(KOT walks away.)

KSALA

Let's get the fuck out of here! Did you see what was in his pocket?

NALA

You think those are the conductor's panties?

KSALA

(nodding)

I'm convinced that it had "Wednesday" written on it.

(NALA and KSALA girls speed walk on the platform, but KOT calls after them.)

KOT

Girls! If you wanna bum some cigs, I've got that pack of Kosmos.

(Hands them a pack of Kosmos).

(KSALA and NALA pick up a cigarette each.)

KOT

Don't think anything weird. I just feel like you're my people, I don't need to explain anything to you. You don't

want anything from me. That kind of coincidence is rare. I'm telling you this at my ripe old age of seventeen.

(KSALA and NALA make eye contact.)

KOT

I wrote my phone number on the pack for you guys.
 (Hands them an almost full pack of Kosmos. KSALA quickly glances at the contents and hides the pack in her pocket.)

KOT

Call me, if anything.

KSALA

Did you hear what happened on the train?

KOT

No. What happened?

(At this moment CONDUCTOR runs up to KOT and embraces him.)

CONDUCTOR

You didn't even say goodbye!

(KSALA and NALA stare at her in shock. CONDUCTOR starts crying.)

KOT

I am very honored to have made such a strong impression on you, but don't cry.

CONDUCTOR

My friend from the third train car was strangled! While you and I were dancing the tango!

KOT

(obviously disturbed)

Shit! I'm sorry for your friend.

CONDUCTOR

She was such a woman! Please don't leave. You're so! Ugh! Leave me something to remember you by.

(KOT smiles and takes out a white hanky from his pocket, the one that the girls thought was the dead conductor's underwear. Gives the hanky to the CONDUCTOR.)

KOT

It's clean. You'll wipe your tears, remember me, and everything will be top-notch!

(The bus arrives at the stop, KOT runs to it while yelling towards KSALA and NALA.)

KOT

Bye girls!

(The CONDUCTOR sobs. KSALA and NALA look at each other.)

KSALA

(to NALA, quietly)

We are such idiots!

(They walk along the platform.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT 1Scene 7

SETTING: KSALA and NALA wander the city streets at night.

KSALA

We fucked up big time with the crash pad.

NALA

We'll figure it out.

KSALA

Maybe we should call Kot again?

NALA

We called already. There's some woman who picks up the phone and hangs up. We'll go sleep in an entryway of an apartment building.

KSALA

Maybe it will be better in the subway? We can sleep on the stairs.

NALA

It's sus there.

KSALA

And it's not sus in an entryway?

NALA

Not as bad as the subway.

(KSALA rummages through her pocket and takes out a crumpled pack of Kosmos.)

KSALA

Give me the matches.

(NALA searches through her pockets, takes out a box of matches. There's only one left.)

KSALA

Fuck! There's only one left.

NALA

I'll do it carefully.

(NALA lights the match and protects the flame with her hand. KSALA gets ready to light her cigarette.)

WORRIED PASSERBY

(offstage)

Boo!

(NALA drops her match from fright.)

KSALA

Fuck!

(WORRIED PASSER-BY enters from behind the girls. He is a middle aged man wearing a wind breaker. He has bald spots on his head. He takes out a lighter. He lets KSALA light her cigarette.)

KSALA

Thank you.

(to NALA)

Let's go, grandma's been waiting.

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Girls, would you like me to walk you home?

KSALA

No, thank you, we can do it ourselves.

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Sure. It's late though, and dangerous. I live here. It's not a calm neighborhood.

NALA

Who do you live with?

WORRIED PASSER-BY

I live in a communal. A big one. In that building.
(points to an old looking building).

NALA

That's cool. We need to go to a different neighborhood. We were late to the last bus.

WORRIED PASSER-BY

(clicks tongue)

Why were you being so inattentive?

NALA

Do you have a phone at home?

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Of course!

NALA

Could we call our grandma from there?

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Of course.

NALA

What's the address?

WORRIED PASSER-BY

World Prospect 20.

(KSALA pulls on NALA's sweater.
NALA pinches KSALA in response.)

NALA

Me and my sister will come in for a second just to call.

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Of course, girls. Otherwise, what are you gonna do out here? I have tea.

KSALA

Excuse us, but we have to discuss something.

(KSALA drags NALA to the side.)

KSALA

Are you sure?!

NALA

Better with him, than in some entryway.

KSALA

And what if he's a psycho?

NALA

There's two of us.

KSALA

Solid argument. Well, I would actually like to *not* get raped or killed tonight.

NALA

Why are you panicking again? He lives in a communal. There's other people there!

KSALA

(loudly to WORRIED PASSER-BY)

And who are your neighbors?

WORRIED PASSER-BY

A family.

NALA

Do they have kids?

WORRIED PASSER-BY

A boy, he goes to kindergarten.

NALA

(to KSALA)

Come on, let's go.

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Tomorrow morning we'll take a walk. It's beautiful over here, in the morning.

(NALA walks next to the WORRIED PASSER-BY. KSALA walks behind them.)

NALA

We'll come in and call our grandma right away. She's old.

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Well, if she's old, then she's probably sleeping. Snoring, even.

KSALA

Our dad is the one who snores. When he comes back from the cop station all tired, he snores. Then he's out like a light, as they say.

WORRIED PASSER-BY

So, your dad works the night shift?

KSALA

Well the night shift pays better!

(They walk up to the old building.)

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Understo-o-o-d. Come on in.

(WORRIED PASSER-BY holds the front door open. NALA walks in. KSALA is unsure.)

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Well?

(KSALA walks in. The man comes in after her. The doors close with a squeal. It's dark in the entryway.)

NALA

I can't see anything!

(WORRIED PASSER-BY takes her by the hand, she yelps.)

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Don't be scared, it's me. Hold on to my arm.

(WORRIED PASSER-BY lights his lighter.)

WORRIED PASSER-BY

The bandits unscrewed the light bulb again. Girls, why are you so quiet?! I'm on the third.

NALA

(looking at the stairs with
difficulty)

Let go of me already. It's narrow here.

WORRIED PASSER-BY

I thought you couldn't see where you were going.

KSALA

We're young, minors. We have 20/20 vision.

WORRIED PASSER-BY

My right eye is -2. And my left is +3.

(The WORRIED PASSER-BY walks in front with the lit lighter. KSALA and NALA hold hands and walk behind him.)

(KSALA and NALA walk up the stairs in darkness.)

(WORRIED PASSER-BY stops in front of an old, wooden door. He searches his pockets for the key. He opens the door.)

(WORRIED PASSER-BY lets in the girls to the entryway and turns on the light. The entryway is full of trinkets and furniture. There's also a tricycle.)

WORRIED PASSER-BY

(quietly)

Walk down the hallway, the first door on the left is mine.

(The girls walk into the room. He locks the front door and puts the keys in his pocket. The neighbor's door cracks open and someone looks out (at first glance he looks like a child) and then hides.)

(KSALA and NALA look around the spacious room with high ceilings. There are many books in the room, and a portrait of a young woman

hangs on the wall. There are women's shoes by the door.)

NALA

Well, and you were scared. He has books. We'll get some sleep and..

(The door opens, the WORRIED PASSER-BY walks in holding a pot of pasta.)

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Let's have dinner. Are you hungry?

KSALA

Yeah, we are.

(The WORRIED PASSER-BY serves the pasta on plates which he gets out from a shelf in the same room. KSALA and NALA sit on the sofa.)
(The WORRIED PASSER-BY pours wine into glasses. Puts down a pack of cigarettes and a lighter on the table.)

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Well, let's toast to our meeting, shall we?

KSALA

We don't drink. Only smoke.

WORRIED PASSER-BY

(drinking)

Eat, smoke. And I'll drink to you wonderful girls. You're still girls, right?

NALA

Definitely not boys.

WORRIED PASSER-BY

(to NALA)

You're a smart cookie.

(WORRIED PASSER-BY starts to eat.
KSALA and NALA, since they're
hungry, start eating as well.)

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Is it good?

KSALA

Mhm.

NALA

Whose portrait is that on the wall?

WORRIED PASSER-BY
(without looking)

My wife's.

KSALA

Where is she?

WORRIED PASSER-BY

She left me.

NALA

How long ago?

WORRIED PASSER-BY
(picks up second glass of wine)

Couple days now.

NALA

I'm sorry.

KSALA

You're sad, aren't you?

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Yeah, it's hard. She was a good woman.

KSALA

Why did she leave her sandals here?

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Who the hell knows! Tell me about yourselves instead, girls.
Such pretty girls and wandering the streets alone at night?

NALA

We're not wandering. We were at a concert and didn't make it on the bus. Do you have kids?

WORRIED PASSER-BY

A daughter. She's 17. Which school do you go to?

KSALA

Oh, did she leave with your wife?

WORRIED PASSER-BY

She left a long time ago. She's beautiful - long legs, and with them she walked out of my life. And she really betrayed her father. So, which school do you go to?

KSALA

The 59th.

WORRIED PASSER-BY

No way! My old school. So do you guys travel all the way here from your neighborhood?

KSALA

Well, yeah. It's supposed to be a good school. What did your daughter do that was so bad?

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Ah, she told her mother that I spanked her with a belt when she was little. Not hard. Is that psycho Shabaltas still teaching physics there?

NALA

Where?

WORRIED PASSER-BY

The 59th school.

NALA

Yeah, he still teaches. Strict asshole. And how did your wife not know that you spanked your daughter?

WORRIED PASSER-BY

She pretended that she didn't. Shabaltas doesn't change. He constantly gave me Cs. Dropped my grade because of the right-hand rule section. Do you know about the right-hand rule, girls?

NALA

Not really.

WORRIED PASSER-BY

(hovers above NALA)

How? What grade are you in? 8th?

NALA

Yeah. We're not even 16 yet!

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Well, then you must have learned about the right-hand rule. It's Shabaltas's favorite section!

NALA

Physics isn't our thing.

KSALA

Where is your phone?

WORRIED PASSER-BY

In the hallway

KSALA

(to NALA)

Nala! let's go call grandma. What is your apartment number?

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Number eight. Why do both of you need to go? Go by yourself. You two will be too loud out there. You'll wake up the neighbors!

(hovers over NALA)

I'll explain the right-hand rule to your sister while you're gone, she's in 8th grade already and doesn't know anything about the right hand rule. Such a pretty girl.

NALA

I'm stupid. I don't get anything in physics.

WORRIED PASSER-BY

It's easy. Give me your hand. I explained physics to my daughter this same way.

(WORRIED PASSER-BY starts to "walk" with his fingers up NALA'S wrist. KSALA moves away from NALA. NALA

turns around and looks at KSALA with the look on her face: "don't you dare leave me here." KSALA carefully steals the lighter and pack of cigarettes from the table, so the WORRIED PASSER-BY wouldn't notice.)

WORRIED PASSER-BY

The electric current travels through the wire according to the right-hand rule... creating a magnetic field around the wire...

(WORRIED PASSER-BY pets NALA's hand and breathes heavily.)

NALA

Hey! That tickles!

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Be patient, darling!

(walks up NALA'S shoulder with his fingers)

In the direction of the rotation the right-hand rule - so, the screw heads...

(KSALA pulls on NALA'S other arm, both jump up from the couch.)

KSALA

We're gonna go call! Grandma needs to hear our voices. Both of ours!

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Girls, why are you acting like animals? Relax!

NALA

Oh, we are super relaxed actually. We'll call our grandma and relax completely.

WORRIED PASSER-BY

(switches to a softer tone)

Yes, of course. The phone is right by the front door.

(NALA and KSALA walk out to the hallway.
WORRIED PASSER-BY, remaining alone, undresses

to his underwear. KSALA and NALA walk down the hallway. KSALA lights the way with the lighter.)

KSALA

(whispering)

He will definitely try something.

NALA

He's already doing it! Maybe, he'll get drunk off the wine and pass out?

KSALA

(sarcastically)

Yeah, right!

NALA

We'll tell him that we told grandma his address. He's got books in there. The wife, judging by the portrait, seems normal. I'm tired.

KSALA

Alright. Let's, like, talk loudly on the phone.

(They walk up to the phone. KSALA picks up the receiver.)

KSALA

(loudly)

Grandma, everything is fine. We're at a friend's, write down the address.

(In this moment, LITTLE PERSON enters and bites KSALA'S leg. She screams from fright. NALA also screams.)

KSALA

A dog just bit me!

(The WORRIED PASSER-BY and the NEIGHBOR run out into the hallway; NEIGHBOR turns on the light.)

(LITTLE PERSON stands next to the girls.)

LITTLE PERSON
(smiling and looking at KSALA)
Are you scared?!

(KSALA and NALA scream even louder.)

(NEIGHBOR enters, walks in with outstretched arms, squinting blindly.)

NEIGHBOR
Who's there?

(LITTLE PERSON waves his fist at the girls.)

LITTLE PERSON
(in a child's voice)
Mommy, they hurt me!

NEIGHBOR
Who, my honey?

LITTLE PERSON
Two huge women!

NEIGHBOR
(waving arms around/feeling the air)
Did he bring them?!

WORRIED PASSER-BY
(whining)
Don't pry into my private life!

NEIGHBOR
I've heard all about your "private life"!

NALA
I'll call the cops!

NEIGHBOR
I'll call them myself!

LITTLE PERSON

Mommy! They'll take me to the orphanage again!

KSALA

(to WORRIED PASSER-BY)

Open the door right now!

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Crude bitches!

NEIGHBOR

I'll report you to the housing office!

NALA

I'm going to start screaming!

KSALA

Me too!

(WORRIED PASSER-BY runs to the door
and unlocks it.)

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Give me my lighter back!

NALA

You'll get by without it, Mr. right-hand rule!

(The girls run out of the
apartment, and the WORRIED PASSER-
BY follows them.)

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Why are you stomping like elephants?! You'll wake the
neighbors! I just wanted to help!

KSALA

Go fuck yourself!

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Hooligans!

KSALA

Perv!

(KSALA and NALA sprint down the
stairs as the WORRIED PASSER-BY
yells a string of insults at them.)

WORRIED PASSER-BY

Liars! Criminals! Rotten brats! There's no such physics teacher - Shabaltas! It's me! I'm Shabaltas!

(The door of the entryway shuts loudly.)

NEIGHBOR

(heard from the apartment)

Turn off the light in the hallway! I don't need the light, and I'm the only one who pays for it! Let's go, dear son, let's go. Those God-awful women hurt my little baby.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT 1Scene 8

SETTING:

An abandoned church undergoing reconstruction. In the middle stand a large wooden cross. Icons hang on the walls, their eyes are poked out.

NALA

We'll take turns sleeping! There might be rats here.

KSALA

Ugh! Don't say that!