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Play

Tonia, Asya and a plane

Original name /
translated

Тоня, Ася і літак

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a Kharkiv metro station

Tonia, 18 y.o.

Asya, 22 y.o.

TONIA: We all will die. We'll be dumbly trapped in rubble.

ASYA: Even kids don't cry, but you do.

TONIA: You saw it! You saw it! You saw it! You saw it!

ASYA: We have to wait until it's over.

TONIA: The plane. The shadow. The sound. The explosion.

ASYA: It was far away.

TONIA: But then it turned around.

ASYA: And that's why we hid.

TONIA: But it's still there!

ASYA: And we are here.

TONIA: It was heading right toward us...

ASYA takes out a "Snickers" candy bar and gives it to TONIA.

ASYA: Take it. It must help. And now listen: the metro is a fortress. The fortress of our own. We've been lucky enough to get here. We're still alive. We're in a secure shelter. Here we could survive a nuclear winter. Here we are safe. In here nobody would get to us. We'll stay here until it's over.

TONIA: Do you promise?

ASYA: I promise. (*Pause*) Now I'm gonna call Alick.

TONIA: And Mom.

ASYA: And Mom.

TONIA (*or her voice only*):

The silence. So weird. When you go outside, you hear everything. An engine roar. A gasp of wind. People scream. Hurry up here. An air-raid siren. Where is auntie Liuda? She's already downstairs. Doors slam. Artillery shells whistle. Bombs explode. Debris cracks. TV news reports that once again the city is under shelling. But it's all quiet here. Only people keep landing. Their gurgling is barely audible, so the words are soundless. People shuffle their feet and nestle, trying to keep warm. Time is measured in steps of a station attendant.

What is going on outside? Are there any people left? Do the wounded moan? Do tanks rumble? Does a plane fly? Like a massive owl chasing after its prey. And we are like mice. Hiding in burrows, afraid of making the slightest noise. Just not to expose ourselves...

ASYA: Mom's crying, she wants to come.

TONIA: I found a place for us...

ASYA: I told her to stay in Italy...

TONIA: ...here we'll have cookies and the food...

ASYA: ...roads are dangerous, and we'll get by on our own.

TONIA: ...and here we'll sleep...

ASYA: Alick joined the Territorial Defense.

TONIA: ...by turns or top to tail?...

ASYA: Alick says we should get out.

TONIA: ...like in our childhood...
ASYA: 'Cause it'll only get worse.
TONIA: ...come on, get inside...
ASYA: Tomorrow we will think about it.
TONIA: ...damn, 'cause it's cold.
ASYA: Let me hug you. Is it warmer now?
TONIA: Yep, a bit.
ASYA: I've told you, a proper winter coat must cloak one's ass.
TONIA: I never thought that I'd be forced to live underground.

ASYA: Tonia, let's go. We have to brush our teeth.
TONIA: I didn't take a...
ASYA: People have brought everything.
TONIA: What people?
ASYA: Zombie apocalypse's been canceled. There are still people outside.
TONIA: And they brought us toothbrushes?
ASYA: Apparently.
TONIA: I think I caught a cold. My whole body aches. I had a dream, that I... forgot a flashlight. Grad rockets are striking on our block, we're rushing to the shelter, and I'm thinking: if electricity is cut off, I'll need a flashlight, but I don't have one; there was a flashlight at "Epicentr" shopping mall, a black and yellow flashlight on batteries, 230 hryvnias and 20 hryvnias - for the batteries, you'd be yelling at me if I didn't buy it. So I'm rushing to the "Epicentr", and I see people carrying full trays, the "Epicentr" is being grabbed out, I must make it, but I'm running so slow... And I notice a dot, a black dot in the sky, my feet are like cotton wool, and the dot is growing, it's a plane, it's roaring, it's flying too low, 10 meters above the city, and I fall down and I'm walloped. I press my ear to the ground. And I hear voices, there, underneath. They're laughing and listening to music. And I'm outside, and I can't reach them. And I hear the bomb drop off the suspension. Then I wake up. May I not brush my teeth?

ASYA: Truth or dare?
TONIA: Truth.
ASYA: So did you buy a flashlight when I asked you to?
TONIA: E-e-eh.
ASYA: What the hell, Tonia?
TONIA: I went to buy it. I went to "Epicentr" and I was looking for a flashlight. And for an adhesive tape. And wires. But what I found was a coffee table. So bloody stylish. Red, made of metal. And I thought... I thought...
ASYA: Did you buy a table?
TONIA: Delivery's tomorrow.

...

TONIA: Truth or dare?

ASYA: Truth.

TONIA: Have you got it on with Alick?

ASYA: Well... once.

TONIA: In our apartment!

ASYA: We couldn't help it.

TONIA: On our couch! I will never sit on it again.

ASYA: We were in the kitchen.

TONIA: You're such a slut!

...

ASYA: Truth or dare?

TONIA: Truth.

ASYA: Are you jealous?

TONIA: You're nuts!

ASYA: Did you like him?

TONIA: Come on.

ASYA: Have you got it on with anybody at all?

TONIA: I'm not jealous. That is my answer.

ASYA: Have you got it on with anybody at all?

TONIA: My turn.

ASYA: Tell me the truth, are you a virgin?

...

TONIA: Truth or dare?

ASYA: Truth.

TONIA: When will all this end?

ASYA: Dare.

TONIA: Do you think it will last a long time?

ASYA: Dare.

TONIA: Will Mom come?

ASYA: I told you, dare.

TONIA: Do you think our apartment is undamaged?

ASYA: I think: dare.

TONIA: But is there still shelling?

ASYA: How would I know?

TONIA: What shall we do?

ASYA: Tonia, dare.

ASYA takes out a "Snickers" and gives it to TONIA.

TONIA: Where've you been?

ASYA: Sorry, you were sleeping.

TONIA: Where've you been?

ASYA: I went out to the city.

TONIA: We agreed to stick together.

ASYA: We do.

TONIA: Did you go to your lover?

ASYA: You're breaking my balls.

TONIA: Did you?

ASYA: That plane has been shot down.

TONIA: What?

ASYA: The plane. Which we saw on the first day. It has been shot down. It burned down. It's gone. Everybody saw it.

TONIA: Is there still anybody?

ASYA: The other planes will also be shot down. One after another. I gave Alick some stuff and blankets. He says the guys feel forceful. They slay like war gods. And there we are - today's plane. Such a fiesta.

TONIA: You have your lipstick on.

ASYA: So what?

TONIA: I thought you wouldn't come back. I thought you were dead. I imagined how I would collect your body parts. You know, the sight of blood makes me feel sick. I won't collect your body parts. Your guts will be scattered around the city until stray dogs eat them. Altogether with the lipstick. I've warned you.

ASYA: Thank you kindly.

TONIA: I thought you were dead.

ASYA: I just can't sit like this doing nothing.

TONIA: You just can't stand without your Alick.

ASYA: When was the last time you looked in the mirror?

TONIA: Why should I look in the mirror?

ASYA: Latte!

TONIA: Latte?

ASYA: Weigh up, coffee shops have been opened.

TONIA: Did you bring a "Snickers"?

ASYA: It's sunny outside. The snow melted away. There is a guy playing the guitar on the square.

TONIA: Did you bring me a "Snickers"?

ASYA takes out a "Snickers" and gives it TONIA.

ASYA: Did you hear? The guitar! Monuments are being covered with sandbags.

TONIA: Have you come over to our home?

ASYA: Take it.

ASYA takes out clothes.

TONIA: At last (*changes her clothes*).

ASYA: Everyone's staring at you.

TONIA: I couldn't care less.

ASYA covers her up.

ASYA: Alick says that we should get out...

TONIA: If Alick says so.

ASYA: We cannot live in the metro.

TONIA: People are living.

ASYA: People are leaving the city. The railway station is open. If you're afraid of living in Ukraine - let's go to Italy...

TONIA: ...Outside there are bombs...

ASYA: ...So many people have already left...

TONIA: ...And shattered window glass...

ASYA: ...People will help us...

TONIA: ...People die under debris...

ASYA: ...We'll go to Mom...

TONIA: ...People queuing for bread are shot to death...

ASYA: ...Evacuation trains continue to run...

TONIA: ...Without any warning, they shoot from the sky.

ASYA: That plane was shot down!

TONIA: There will be another one.

ASYA: I can't go on like this. I can't go down here any more. It's a half-life. And for what. It's sunny outside. It's spring. We can still go away. Without Alick. Just the two of us.

TONIA: We can live here as well.

ASYA: No, we can't.

TONIA: You said that we would stay in here until it's all over.

ASYA: And what if it won't be over?

TONIA: What do you mean, it won't be over?

TONIA (*or her voice only*):

Time has stopped. And it won't move on. Aerial bombs killed time. Time was raped. Collectively and on purpose. Time is lying in a well and waiting until spring waters usher its body to the surface. But spring waters don't flow. Because time ceased to exist. There is no more spring. And no more water to flow. No more sun to rise and go down. There is an endless February. And we're all in it. Children are no longer able to walk. They're forgetting words. They cling to their mothers as if they want to return to the womb. But there is no way back. No way forward. It is endless now. And the damn plane is circling, and circling, and circling endlessly, though it was shot down a long time ago. But it is still there, in the sky above us. The new sun of the new world.

ASYA: I'm working in the kitchen.

TONIA: You and the kitchen?

ASYA: What's so funny?

TONIA: I hope you feed the enemies?

ASYA: Very witty. I'm slicing vegetables. Such therapeutic stuff. Cooking's done by others.

TONIA: And during an air raid?

ASYA: Well, an air raid it is. Guys still need to eat.

TONIA: So guys.

ASYA: And girls too. Everybody needs to eat.

TONIA: Girls cook, boys fight. Then they all fuck.

ASYA: By the way, you have somebody to bring you food, you too. Though you've got both your hands unharmed.

TONIA: I'm glad that you and Alick have found each other.

ASYA: I haven't seen him for a week.

TONIA: But you're eager to see him. You'll cook some borsch and set off. An outstanding volunteer from the kitchen front. This is all because of him, isn't it?

ASYA: You do know how to screw things up.