

# Waif T's Private War

Uršul'a Kovalyk

Translated by Lucia Faltin

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## A list of characters

**TANYA** 55-year-old, unemployed “waif”, single, mentally underdeveloped – her development ended when she was young (the “aged” punk). She listens to punk, dead metal, industrial metal, hard core. She wears quirky punk outfits, too tight for her. She lives with Mummy, whom she takes care of as her mother is confined to a wheelchair.<sup>1</sup>

**MUMMY** 75-year-old, widow, Tanya’s mother. Disabled after an injury and an operation that was poorly handled by the doctors (she is unable to bend her knees, hence, when seated in a wheelchair, her legs virtually stick out in a horizontal position). She is fully dependent on Tanya’s round-the-clock care.<sup>2</sup>

**DUSHAN** neighbour, bachelor, about 54-years-old, a neglected effeminate character in flannels, an existence lost. He grew up with Tanya in the block of flats.<sup>3</sup>

**NEIGHBOUR FEHER** 75-year-old man, an old resident in the block of flats where he served as a custodian during Communism.

**NEIGHBOUR 1** about 38-year-old, fine-looking woman who has only recently moved into the block.

**NEIGHBOUR 2** (we later learn his name: Chobrda), middle-aged man, managerial type, who always has a ready answer – as if suffering from the “master of the Universe” syndrome. He, too, moved into an block only recently.

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<sup>1</sup> Transl. note: The character mostly speaks in a highly colloquial language, using a lot of strong vulgarisms and, at times, retro-vocabulary particularly in reference to the Communist era and what was then either en vogue or the official language. In English translation, for the sake of clarity, some highly colloquially pronounced words are written in the original spelling, e.g. *coming* instead of *comin'*. When staging the play internationally, the production team will be best placed to decide what type of colloquial language and pronunciation is most appropriate for their audiences. The same applies to the colloquial language used by the character Mummy.

<sup>2</sup> Transl. note: The character tends to speak properly, though she quite often uses a colloquial language; when addressing her daughter, she tends to speak in the colloquial language that comes across as somewhat harsh, at times being peppered with vulgarisms.

<sup>3</sup> Transl. note: The character tends to speak properly, though his language edges on colloquial. Unlike the characters of Tanya and Mummy, his vocabulary is hardly vulgar. Dushan uses a family-like style when addressing Mummy: In Slovak cultural context, it is customary for a younger person, not a member of kin but in a close relationship with an older person, to address an older woman Aunt / Aunty. This is not common in Anglophone linguistic and cultural context, where the address to thus use is ordinarily the first name. Since the character Mummy has no first name, no address is used in the translation.

*The story is situated a tiny flat in a block of flats in a large city; a park full of greenery has always been next to the building.*

*Performing space components:*

*Stage (flat, corridor in the block of flats, park bench, construction site), video screening (large screen behind the stage where different images are always screened showing the audience spaces or images associated with an action on stage).*

*Apartment: kitchen and living room in one, plain furnishings, bed, dining table, chairs, shabby fitted kitchen, old appliances, fridge, tape player; wardrobe, armchair, cupboard, old chest of drawers; ancient computer and a television set. The entire room looks very tattered, crowded and worn. Just a few home accessories suggest that, once, the residents used to be far better off. Narrow toilet with a bathroom is located within the living room-kitchen area. The space is utterly unsuitable for a person confined to a wheelchair (it is not wheelchair-accessible).*

## Scene 1

*Space: living room-kitchen. Mummy is in bed, her wheelchair is parked by the table. We hear the clock ticking. Tanya passes through the living room-kitchen. She wears a frayed oversized T-shirt and slippers. She enters the toilet, slams the door. Sound of toilet flushing. She returns to the living room-kitchen. She turns on the coffee machine. She is sleepy. She sits on the chair by the table. Her movement is slow, as she is just waking up, yawning.*

**MUMMY** Good thing you got up. I've been rolling in my bed since four. I need a loo.

**TANYA** I'll just grab some coffee and I'll deal with you.

*Tanya gets up, walks over to the kitchen counter and pours coffee from the coffee-maker into a mug, adds sugar, takes a long sip.*

**MUMMY** On an empty stomach? It's no good. Tanya, have some water. Plain water.

**TANYA** Stop it. I need a kick-start. Your water is just good enough to wash windows. *(sits at the table, yawns)* Disgusting coffee, no power to it. I must get some power bomb that will get me on my feet.

**MUMMY** Then let me have some as well! I might finally get on my feet and walk to the loo.

**TANYA** Coming, coming.

*She gets up from the table, grabs the wheelchair and pushes it towards the bed. Slowly, she raises Mummy's arms and sits her on the side of the bed. She adjusts her pyjamas, puts socks on. Mummy puts on her spectacles. Tanya takes her under the armpits and, with great effort, sits her in the wheelchair.*

**TANYA** Whoopsie! Here's a chimpanzee. You're kind of heavy. Like you gained weight overnight. Did you dream of stuffing yourself with scones?

**MUMMY** I haven't dreamed in years. This drug I'm on, totally erodes my brain.

*Tanya pushes Mummy on the wheelchair to the toilet. Yet the wheelchair does not fit in the narrow door frame. Tanya lifts Mummy out of the wheelchair and puts her on the toilet seat. Mummy is on the toilet with legs stretched out, so the door can't be closed.*

**MUMMY** Do you know what I'll do when I win a million? I'll make an extension to the loo. Do you realise that I have had to sit on this throne with an open door for years? This really drives me nuts.

**TANYA** (*smirks*) When you win a million, I'll treat myself to a perm!

*Tanya walks into the kitchen, sits at the table again, and drinks coffee in silence.*

**MUMMY** Tanya! Do something. Whatever. In the kitchen ... put away the washed dishes. Just so there is no silence. I can't take a leak. Tanya, hello! Are you deaf?

*Tanya gets up and turns on the tape player. Wild punk song sounds.*

**MUMMY** (*trying to shout over the music*) Noooooo! Do you want to kill me?! Turn it off! Or I won't be able to take a leak till Christmas! Turn it off, now!

*Tanya turns off the tape player. She is placing the washed dishes in the kitchen cupboard, banging with everything in exaggeration.*

**TANYA** Do you know what's really going to drive me nuts? That, in this fucking flat, I can never listen to my music out loud. And why can't I listen to my music out loud? Because my beloved mother, who hates punk, is parked here round the clock!

**MUMMY** (*hurt*) Suddenly I am in the way of my own daughter! Am I to blame for being on those bloody crossroads back then? Was it my fault the drunken moron hit me? I've taken care of you all my life and worked hard to keep you. And, suddenly, I'm in your way!

**TANYA** Stop it!

**MUMMY** (*still sitting on the toilet*) Know what? Take me to an old people's home, the cheapest! Let me die in peace! I lived to get this from my only daughter. Parked, she says! This is what my very own daughter tells me because of some silly music!

**TANYA** Fuck, Mummy, stop pissing me off!

*Tanya stops putting away the dishes, comes to her mother who is still on the toilet, kneels by her, massages her feet.*

**TANYA** All right, all right! That's enough. Stop whaling. I just had to wake up. I won't play it anymore. Alright? I won't play it. I'm telling you!

**MUMMY** (*through tears, her nose is full*) We're out of toilet paper, babe.

*Tanya brings a roll of toilet paper and hands a few sheets to Mummy. Mummy blows her nose. Tanya strokes the back of her head, with slight unease, as if she were embarrassed to show her feelings.*

**TANYA** Hey, no need to put on a show right away.

**MUMMY** I'm done.

*Tanya wipes her mother, pulls up her pyjamas bottoms, puts her in the wheelchair in front of the toilet, flushes, closes the door.*

**TANYA** Come-on, let's get dressed.

*Musical interlude.*

*Commercial music plays on the radio. Mummy is in her wheelchair, only in her bra and panties. Tanya is standing in front of an open wardrobe, picking her mother's clothes. She pulls out sweatpants and a sweatshirt.*

**MUMMY** No way. I can't even think of the sweatpants anymore! How about that lovely polka-dot dress. You know ... the knitwear.

**TANYA** It's October, in case you haven't noticed.

**MUMMY** So, let's go for something else. Besides, you are to ask me first. Didn't they teach you that on the course? It's just my legs that don't work. Mentally I am fit. I'm still legally responsible for myself!

**TANYA** Listen, you ... mentally fit, your bladder will get cold, you'll keep commuting to the loo every five minutes and I'll get sore arms again. Am I a bodybuilder or what? Today you will be wearing trousers. End of story.

**MUMMY** So then pass me the blue ones. I've only worn them three times in my life. At most. And the V-neck jumper. Do you know which one?

*Tanya sighs, places the sweatpants and a sweatshirt back in the wardrobe. She rummages through the clothes on hangers for a while. Mummy is briefly inspecting her bare feet.*

**MUMMY** I've got claws like a cat.

**TANYA** Who's supposed to tell me everything? Hey! I was also taught that on the course. I can't keep ya nails on my mind!

*From somewhere, Tanya retrieves the nail kit and is ready to cut her mother's nails. Suddenly, she stands up.*

**TANYA** With this shit on, all I can do is to cut off your thumb. No one can really listen to that!

*She turns off the radio and carries on cutting her mother's nails.*

**MUMMY** I don't get it.

**TANYA** What don't you get?

**MUMMY** Nice song is crap to you, while those satanic screams make you high. Who on earth do you take after?

**TANYA** (*teasing her*) Didn't you happen to have me with a metalhead?

**MUMMY** Nonsense! Your father was, may he rest in peace, an ordinary man. He listened to brass bands. There should still be a few LPs somewhere there.

**TANYA** Brass bands, fucking hell! I wouldn't listen to it even with a gun pressed to my head. Obviously, he didn't make me.

**MUMMY** Tanya! Do you think I'm kind of ... I never cheated on him. (*pause*) You hurt me. My pinkie toe.

**TANYA** No way!

**MUMMY** I can't feel my legs, but my eyes are fine. Can't you see? Blood. It will mess up my socks.

*Tanya stands up and takes out a piece of cotton wool and bandage from a drawer in the kitchen counter. She treats the toe with revulsion.*

**TANYA** You won't haemorrhage, no worries!

*From the wardrobe, Tanya takes the clothes her mother wanted and puts them on her. When she wants to put on her socks, Mummy protests.*

**MUMMY** For God's sake! White socks with blue trousers? What's wrong with you? I'll look like that guy ... Fred Aster.<sup>4</sup> Get a dark pair.

*Tanya sighs and exchanges the socks without a word. Slowly, Mummy manually wheels herself to the dining table. Tanya closes the wardrobe, opens the other wardrobe and changes into some quirky punk outfit.*

**MUMMY** Where did you get that from!

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<sup>4</sup> Tranl. note: The character pronounces Astair as Aster – with a heavy Slovak accent.



*Tanya ignores her, pulls out her clothes, slams the wardrobe door, ruffles her hair and walks to the kitchen counter.*

**MUMMY** You used to wear it back at the vocational school.

*Tanya doesn't respond; she takes food from the fridge, pours some tea, lays out the breakfast on the table. She sits by her mother and serves her bread, butter, jam. They eat.*

**MUMMY** You look like a haggis.

**TANYA** Not your problem. Eat. The last thing I need, is you passing out here.

*Tanya pours Mummy some tea. She momentarily watches her chew the bread.*

**TANYA** And the tea! You don't drink, you get hypotension, and I am the one who gets a fuck-up from the doc. Shit, the jam's mouldy.

**MUMMY** Because you keep inserting a butter knife in the jar. You put mess in there. Would it be a problem to get a clean spoon?

*Tanya bites her bread and butter, speaking with mouth full.*

**TANYA** It's not a problem to get a clean spoon, the problem is to wash that pile of dishes. Easy for you to boss around while I am the one to do the chores. Screw it, I'll throw it out. End of story.

*Tanya gets up from the table, still holding the rest of the bread, and bins the jar.*

**MUMMY** Can we go shopping at last? We've lunched lentil soup all week long. I can't even think of it anymore!

**TANYA** Mummy, I already told you: the money is due tomorrow. I just have enough for bread and fags.

**MUMMY** Fags, fags! You always have enough to get those. Yet it doesn't occur to you to buy something to put in the pot. *(She pushes away her plate to indicate that she finished eating.)*

*Tanya takes the breakfast leftovers from the table, and throws dirty dishes in the sink.*

**TANYA** What's ya attitude about lentils? They're healthy, and besides ... you've gotta eat diet food, else one day I won't be able to pick you up from that wheelchair.

*Tanya helps Mummy into a sweater, moves her in the wheelchair to the door, she puts on a leather jacket.*

**MUMMY** Come-on, how can I get fat eating the crap you serve? I eat like a bird, I don't like it at all. For instance, I'd love some ... ham.

*Tanya pours tap water into a plastic bottle and places it into her rucksack along with her mother's parka. Then she looks for a cigarette lighter, then a cell phone, her wallet, keys ... she hangs about the kitchen, forever looking for something.*

**TANYA** When there's money, there's ham. For now, let's get moving, I'm dying for a fag.

**MUMMY** What's our destination today?

**TANYA** Guess! The other living room!

*Lights off, music interlude.*

## Scene 2

*Space: park. It is a sunny but cold Autumn day. The trees and shrubs in the park are created by video projection behind the stage. It is an ordinary working day in a large*

*city, we hear the sounds of cars, ambulances howling, etc.. Tall modern buildings peek out from behind the treetops.*

*Tanya is pushing her Mummy in the wheelchair.*

**MUMMY** Oh well, half past eleven! The doctor told me that I had to stick to a regular routine. Do you understand? Breakfast is in the morning and lunch shouldn't be at four. It's supposed to help my digestion. Plus the drinking régime.

**TANYA** Which, of course, you don't give a damn about. Where shall we head to? Towards the climbing frames or the hills?

**MUMMY** The hills. We might run into someone.

*Tanya pushes the wheelchair, starts accelerating, gets into trot.*

**MUMMY** What got in you today?

**TANYA** One's got to keep moving. When was the last time you ran?

**MUMMY** It's been a good fifteen years, I guess I ran for the tram then. Slow down or you knock me over!

*Tanya keeps accelerating, then running. The wheelchair is bouncing on an uneven surface of the paved road in the park.*

**TANYA** Breathe! Deep! Let your lungs inflate.

*Mummy's breathing deeply. Tanya (panting and pushing the wheelchair) also breathes deeply. They breathe together, inflating their lungs. Tanya suddenly slows down, stops, starts coughing.*

**MUMMY** Those cigarettes of yours.

**TANYA** (*short of breath*) Good point. Let's have one!

*Tanya pushes the wheelchair to a bench. She sits down, retrieves a half-empty pack of cigarettes from her pocket.*

**MUMMY** Do you know what I noticed recently? You keep commenting everything while using the plural form. We wash, we dress, we put on. As if I were a kid.

**TANYA** (*lights a cigarette*) We light it and we'll take a good long drag. (*She offers her mother a cigarette.*) Here ... my ancient kiddo.

**MUMMY** (*makes a negative gesture*) No way to talk to you normally. You're fifty-five and act like an adolescent. Stop blowing the smoke in my face.

**TANYA** (*laughs*) Is it my fault that my lid got blown off at the concert?

**MUMMY** Lid! Lid! Your expressions are bound to kill me one day. (*She looks somewhere in the distance.*) Isn't it Dushan over there?

*Tanya looks in the direction where Mummy is looking and whistles, then calls out.*

**TANYA** Dushkeee. How about a smoke?!

*Dushan approaches. He looks neglected and tired. He is wearing a baseball cap turned front-to-back and carries a plastic bag.*

**DUSHAN** Hiya, ladies. What are you doing here?

**MUMMY** We? We're here every day, but I haven't seen you for ages. Are you walking through the sewers?

*Tanya offers him with a cigarette, Dushan turns it down.*

**DUSHAN** This saves me about fifty quid a month. That comes to a decent amount in a year. I'd rather buy grass. They changed my shifts at work. I do day and night shifts as they please.

**MUMMY** At least you've got a job.

**DUSHAN** It sucks. The manager keeps an eye on time, I can't even take a piss. And the pay, pittance!

*Dushan sits on the bench next to Tanya, who is still smoking. Momentarily, everyone is just looking at the trees in silence.*

**MUMMY** Look, what a skyscraper. It wasn't here the last time I looked.

**DUSHAN** They knocked down the brewery.

**MUMMY** No kidding ... What's wrong with them? They used to make the best beer.

**TANYA** Yeah, but when? When you were young and pretty. And that's been ages.

**DUSHAN** When you go to the other end of the park, you'll also see new glass buildings of the Digital City.<sup>5</sup> I read that birds keep crashing into those huge windows. Many die. They break their neck.

**TANYA** Who cares about birds nowadays, man? The old soap factory also got demolished. Massive digging is supposed to be under way there. God knows what they're about to build there.

**MUMMY** Something big ... made of reinforced concrete. I bet I'd get lost. Since they changed it all so quickly. Dushky, is the greengrocer still on the High Street?

**DUSHAN** Nah! Now it's a gambling den. With slot machines.

**MUMMY** Dreadful. Where do the cooks shop now?

**TANYA** What cooks?

**MUMMY** Well, from the kindergarten. It used to be right next to the greengrocer. The cooks used to get their fruit there. They thus had it always fresh. I know, because Val worked in that kindergarten for ages.

**DUSHAN** It's a bank now. It's been there for about seven years. Didn't Val tell you?

**TANYA** (*in a low voice*) I think Val's been long farting into the soil.

**MUMMY** It would never occur to me that they'd close the kindergarten. Are children of no interest to anyone either? Awful.

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<sup>5</sup> Transl. note: In the Slovak original, the author requests that the expression Digital City is pronounced in a Slovak way which sounds as in dighital tsiti; when staging the play internationally, the production team may wish to use whatever local mis-pronunciation is familiar to the local audiences.

**DUSHAN** Nightmare what they're doing to this city ... And all those neo-Nazis. Last time they kicked my friend so badly he nearly died. And the cops? Nowhere in sight! Driving their arses around? Oh yeah! But to walk the streets? They haven't got the balls!

**MUMMY** The constables are missing! Constable Frankovich always walked in the park. I tell you ... he was good at sorting things out!

**DUSHAN** I still remember that KGB undercover bastard!

**TANYA** (*mockingly*) Mommy doesn't mind bastards, as long as there is order.

**MUMMY** Stop nagging!

**DUSHAN** Well ... I still have some groceries to buy. Have a good time here!

*Dushan gets up and leaves.*

**MUMMY** Such a good boy, Dushan. Doesn't even smoke. I don't understand why you two never got together. You are of age by now ...

**TANYA** Gee! The last thing I need. Do you know what he listens to? Folk! That would kill me.

**MUMMY** Can I have some water?

*Tanya takes a bottle of water from her rucksack and hands it to her mother. Mummy drinks with delight.*

**MUMMY** Goodness! So he's into folk. What's wrong with it? A woman's got to sacrifice something for love, right?

*Tanya takes the bottle from her mother and puts it in back in the rucksack.*

**TANYA** No love is worth my being tortured by folk music. You bet! Besides, Dushky turns me on as much as that candelabra.

**MUMMY** Pleasure! You clearly have no clue what marriage is about ...

**TANYA** Don't be smart arse! Me and Dushky ... we're like water and fire. He's boring and always high on grass. He's fucking effeminate, nothing more!

**MUMMY** Though he likes children. I once saw him playing with this boy. He's family-oriented, totally unlike those crazy-haired lunatics of yours. *(She makes a gesture over her head with her palm indicating punk-spikes.)*

*They are silent briefly. Tanya lights another cigarette.*

**MUMMY** What would I give for a baby. Just one grandchild.

**TANYA** Well then, "mother", what you would give to have it. Keen to know. Well? Come-on! I am all ears.

**MUMMY** *(startled)* Well, everything. Everything I've got.

**TANYA** Really? And what've you got? Nothing. No health, no money, no more friends. You only have me and the wheelchair.

**MUMMY** *(triumphantly)* I've got a flat! It's still mine!

**TANYA** You'd sacrifice a flat for a grandchild?

*Mummy is silent for a moment. She hesitates.*

**MUMMY** You can't take it like that.

**TANYA** You see. You adults always exaggerate! *(She parodies her mother.)*

Grandchild, grandchild! What would I give to have one! It would get on your nerves within a week. Besides, if I had a kid, I would have no time to keep wiping your arse. You'd be long rotting in an old-peoples' home. So, keep the talk about your grandchildren and Dushky to yourself. All right?

*Brief, awkward silence.*

**MUMMY** *(conciliatory)* And who have we got here!

*Tanya and Mummy look in the same direction somewhere in the park. Video projection behind the stage: a raven lands on the waste bin in the park. It is picking through the litter. Tanya slowly pulls out her phone.*

**TANYA** Ah, our birdie. It didn't show up for a ages. I wonder how fast it can make it today.

**MUMMY** Let's bet. If you lose, you won't smoke for a week.

**TANYA** All right. But if you lose, I'll be listening to Dead Kennedys for a week. Full blast!

**MUMMY** Modification. If you lose, you won't smoke for one day. I guess it will open it in two minutes.

**TANYA** As you wish ... if you lose, I'll be listening to Dead Kennedys out loud for a day only. The whole day, though. It'll take one minute and fifty seconds.

**MUMMY** Deal. I don't want to disillusion you, but it won't make it in under two minutes. It's not that smart.

*Tanya and Mummy are watching the raven. Tanya keeps checking the time on her phone.*

**TANYA** What did I say! One-fifty-two!

**MUMMY** Well, did you check the time properly? It doesn't seem right.

**TANYA** (*shows her the phone*) Mummy, dear, that's it. You lost. Like it or not. End of story! The wind is picking up, let's go. We'll put on your parka and we'll take another walk.

*Tanya pulls out the parka from the rucksack and puts it on Mummy. She grabs the wheelchair, they are off.*

**MUMMY** By the way ... you're talking to me again like to a kid.

*Music, lights off.*



### Scene 3

*Space: living room-kitchen. There is a blanket on the ground on which Mummy lies. Tanya is doing special exercises with her, to stretch her leg muscles. The Dead Kennedys music (the first single California Über Alles) sounds from the tape player.*

**MUMMY** It hurts! Auch, auch!

**TANYA** We'll make it a little longer. Yes. The physiotherapist said we should exercise daily. Or your muscles shrink.

**MUMMY** But ...

**TANYA** (*interrupts her*) Do you want them to shrink? You'll turn into a dwarf!

**MUMMY** (*irately*) Stop interrupting me! I got a headache! That awful music triggered it. Sorry, I don't mean to offend the music. That insane rumble!

**TANYA** Pumps blood into your body. Let's speed up. Hop! You see? Your face turned red. Come-on! Imagine you're at a concert and bouncing.

**MUMMY** Aaaauch!

**TANYA** Cut the crap and workout. Now, I'll turn you around.

*Tanya exercises with her mother to the beat of the music for a while. The sound of a chainsaw is suddenly mixed into the music.*

**TANYA** (*stops exercising with her mother and grows alert*) Fuck, what's that sound. Are the speakers breaking down? Nooooo!

*Tanya gets up, checks the tape player and tries to figure out where the sound is coming from. She turns off the music. There is only the unpleasant sound of a chainsaw. She briefly walks around the apartment, then approaches the window.*

**TANYA** They can't be serious!

*Tanya lifts Mummy off the ground and puts her in the wheelchair. She runs to the window again, Mummy moves to the window as close as possible, but can't see because she can't reach the windowsill. She tries to lift herself, stretching her neck, but sees nothing.*

**MUMMY** What's going on?

**TANYA** Carnage. They're cutting down the trees in the park.

**MUMMY** Perhaps just the branches, or the walnut tree that dried up last Winter. So it doesn't git someone over the head.

**TANYA** Forget the branches. They're also putting down perfectly sound trees. No! Guys, are you fucking mad? They're just cutting down the magnolia.

**MUMMY** The giant one? The one beneath which I used to push you in the pram?

**TANYA** The one. Not this! *(She opens the window wide and calls out; the sound of the chainsaw grows louder.)* Hey, stop it! Now! You hear?! You have no right to do that. Hey, stop it!

**MUMMY** Run down, honey, and find out what's going on there. After all, they can't just keep logging in the park. Out of the blue. Nobody told us anything. They wouldn't dare.

*Tanya turns around and leaves hastily. Mummy remains by the open window. She holds the window sill and tries to get up to see what is going on. She is not managing – she is too heavy. The sound of chainsaws sounds across the flat.*

**MUMMY** I better not fall out. At least she could've closed the window, it's cold.

*She tries to slam the window, but each time it opens; the harder she slams it, the harder it comes back.*

**MUMMY** I'm totally useless.

*She moves to an armchair where her sweater is laid and puts it on, clumsily.*

**MUMMY** I hope she doesn't get into a fistfight out there, silly girl.

*She moves to the tape player that is turned off and removes the tape.*

**MUMMY** Let's get rid of this nightmare.

*She moves around for a while, looking for a suitable hiding place, finally her gaze turns to the window. She triumphantly throws the tape out of the window.*

**MUMMY** Peace at last. Let's put on something less perverse.

*She rummages through the box, retrieves a tape, inserts it in the player and returns to the window.*

*Tanya is back, furious. Heatedly she throws the keys on the table. The chainsaw sound still comes in through the window.*

**TANYA** We're done with, babe. The park's a fucking goner. Definitely! The mogul dicks! (*cursing*)

**MUMMY** What happened? Tanya. Come-on.

**TANYA** (*closes the window angrily and violently*) The labourers just told me there's a construction about to begin. They've already stuck in a signpost ... it says Green Park!

**MUMMY** Green Park? What's that?

**TANYA** A residence of some kind. A disgusting concrete mausoleum for the soaped-up well-off families to rot.

**MUMMY** What!?! But they wouldn't dare! The park is also ours after all!

*Tanya pushes Mummy to the table and, stripped of her senses, automatically takes off her sweater. Mummy protests, trying to grab her hand.*

**MUMMY** I just ...

*Tanya is angry, altogether ignoring her mother, she is taking off her sweater. She interrupts her.*

**TANYA** No more. They'll butcher it just for the sake of some pricey flats. Totally! Do you realise what this is about? We're fucked!

**MUMMY** Awful! We'll complain. That's against decency!

**TANYA** You can just go and complain to the Moon. This is impossible to listen to. Like they're drilling into my head.

*Tanya turns on the tape player, reggae sounds, though unable to drown out the sound of chainsaws coming from outside.*

**TANYA** (*angrily*) Mummy! Where did you put it?

*Mummy is silent and moves to the kitchen counter. She reaches the fridge, opens it and peeks inside. It is almost empty, there is only a pot and some mustard. Tanya grabs the wheelchair, pushes it away, and – with her mother in – she begins to spin it angrily. She spins faster and faster.*

**MUMMY** What are you doing, stop it! I'll puke.

**TANYA** Tell me where you put it!

**MUMMY** Stop it! I'm about to pass out. This is an abuse of physically challenged!

**TANYA** Abuse? Yeah? Abuse? And what you do to me is what? Where did you put that tape?!

*She stops spinning the wheelchair and angrily kicks the wheel. Mummy starts sobbing, clutching the wheelchair handle.*

**MUMMY** I never thought you'd be like that. *(sobs)* So ... *(shouts)* Cruel!

*Tanya stops kicking the wheelchair and slams hard the open fridge door.*

**TANYA** Where did you put it!

*Mummy keeps sniffing, looks at the window meaningfully and slowly. The room is full of the slow reggae, into which the chainsaw hums in a regular rhythm.*

**TANYA** Those drugs drive you really nuts. Do you know what you threw away? Family treasure. It was their first single and, especially ... I got it from Nail. Do you remember him? You don't! Because you were always out somewhere!

*Tanya opens the window, leans out and looks down, hoping to see the tape. The sound of chainsaws amplifies and overpowers the reggae.*

**TANYA** You fucked up my youth throwing it out of the window. Isn't this abuse? Isn't it?

**MUMMY** Your youth is long gone.

**TANYA** What are you talking about? I can't hear a thing because of those fucking saws!

*Tanya shuts the window, goes to the tape player and turns off the music.*

*We only hear the sound of chainsaws. Tanya opens the fridge, removes the pot and puts it on the stove. She is no longer angry but offended. She sets the table: plates, cutlery, glasses with water, slices of bread.*

*Mummy moves to the kitchen sink. She wants to wash her hands, but can't reach the taps.*

**MUMMY** Would you run the water for me?

*Tanya ignores her. She keeps stirring the meal on the stove, tastes it to check whether it's warm enough. She adds some salt. Awkward silence. Mummy is submissively waiting by the sink.*

**MUMMY** Would you be so kind and turn on the stupid tap?

*Tanya opens the tap without a word and continues to stir the meal. Mummy washes her hands with difficulty. She then wipes them in a kitchen towel hanging on the stove. Tanya closes the tap and ignores her. Mummy gets to the table. Tanya takes the pot, walks to the table, and scoops the meal into the plate placed in front of her mother. Mummy starts eating, slowly. Tanya dispenses her pills, sits down, and serves herself the soup. They eat.*

**MUMMY** (*conciliatory*) What's the menu special today?

*Tanya is offended, silent, eating.*

**MUMMY** Soup again?

**TANYA** (*snaps*) Again.

**MUMMY** (*conciliatory*) Do you think it's still okay? Tastes quite sour.

**TANYA** (*still offended*) It's gotta be sour. Vinegar goes in it.

**MUMMY** (*trying to joke*) Well, as long as it doesn't make us poop.

**TANYA** (*angrily*) You're always going on about something! Always! I'm telling you, it's fine. Eat!

**MUMMY** Come-on, don't be angry. (*pause*) I do happen to remember Nail. He had the giant safety pin in his ear. Can I have some bread?

**TANYA** (*hands her bread*) Klatka used to wear safety pins. Nail had a nail in his ears. It's logic dictating, right? That's why we called him Nail.

**MUMMY** Aha, I know which one ... tallish, right? Did you two go out or what?

**TANYA** (*hands her mother the pills, a glass of water, Mummy takes them*) What is it with you ... (*sarcastically*) We were just fucking and sniffing.

**MUMMY** Slow down, alright? This talk is quite a cuppa for me. *(She takes her pills, drinks some water.)*

**TANYA** *(teasingly)* Don't you want to find out at last what your daughter was up to when you sat all those nights at the Communist Unions meetings?

**MUMMY** *(angrily)* And what was I to do? What? Those were the times, dear. Had I not attended them, they would've kicked me out of the design department and sent me straight to the ironworks. What do you always blame me for? I worked my arse off to feed us, which you, of course, absolutely can't understand, because you've done nothing in life. Except for hanging out with your punks!

**TANYA** At least I didn't support the fucking régime!

**MUMMY** The endless quarrels! I'm fed up, Tanya. I really am. I don't like it anymore.

*Mummy continues to eat, doesn't enjoy the taste the least; she is pushing her spoon about in the plate and accidentally spots her top. Tanya watches her for a moment silently, then gets up sharply, takes a kitchen towel and wipes the spot.*

**TANYA** You lost the bet. You won't get away with that.

*Tanya pulls out chunky headphones from the drawer.*

**MUMMY** *(protests)* You know they're too tight and give me a migraine.

*Tanya uncompromisingly places the headphones over Mummy's head and replaces the tape in the tape player. It's punk rock. The music is at the highest volume. Tanya sits at the table, picks up a spoon and bread, and smiles triumphantly at Mummy. The mother makes a fucker sign, except she uses a wrong finger. They eat in silence. Music, lights off.*

#### Scene 4

*Space: sidewalk in front of the block of flats, where Tanya and Mummy live. Video projection behind the stage: image of a construction site where the park used to be, excavators are digging a hole, trucks are removing the soil and felled trees.*

*Tanya and Mummy are returning home, having been shopping. Tanya has a rucksack on her back and is pushing Mummy in the wheelchair with plastic bags in her hands. They move clumsily along the pavement.*

**MUMMY** (*grousing*) I feel like a Tesco shopping trolley. The cream tub burst, because you put the potatoes on top. It's running between my legs. If you weren't such a wimp, you'd have gotten a driving license ages ago and everything would be easier.

**TANYA** Car gives me bloody fright. Besides ... I'd never put up with driving school. Not with some prick shouting at me whenever I go wrong changing gear. Forget it. In fact, be happy things turned the way they did, else you'd be stiff by now. Me too.

**MUMMY** That's an excuse: you wouldn't be able to have booze whenever you please.

**TANYA** Don't mess with me, Mummy. I buy my bloody vodka once a month. I hate it when you exaggerate.

*They arrive to a section on the pavement that is blocked by a lorry. Tanya tries to push the wheelchair through the narrow space between the lorry and the construction site fence, but the wheelchair is too wide. She manoeuvres it for momentarily, then turns it around, but fails to push it through the narrow space.*

**TANYA** I'll be fucked! Arseholes! They don't give a fuck about people walking in this fuckin city.

**MUMMY** So he parks on the pavement, wanker!?! Where on earth do we live? Watch my legs!

**TANYA** (*shouting towards the construction site*) Hey, is there a driver anywhere? Move that fucking lorry, right now. Or I call the cops! Hello, do you hear?! I can't get through with the disabled!



*No response, just the hum of excavators. The women watch the construction work for a while. Video projection behind the stage: excavators are digging out the soil and tree roots, they create a pit, trucks are hauling the soil.*

**MUMMY** Like some alien monsters. From an action movie.

**TANYA** Brutal! They didn't even leave the precious fir. Bastards!

**MUMMY** (*coughs*) I'm gonna choke. I'm all dust-covered.

*As she attempts to wipe the dust from her face, the shopping bags nearly drop to the ground. Tanya catches them.*

**MUMMY** Who allowed all this?

**TANYA** Well, who ... some bastard let another bastard to buy the park. I'd say. He must've pocketed quite a fortune. The new owner sold it on and then again. No names, just senseless company names. We'll never find out. That's how it's done. In silence.

**MUMMY** Call the cops, else we'll spend the night here.

*Tanya pulls out her cell phone from leather jacket. She is looking at the display for a while and presses the buttons. She resigns and puts the phone back in her pocket. Swearing, she turns the wheelchair, tidies up the bags placed on her mother's lap. They leave in the opposite direction.*

**TANYA** We'll take it through the parking lot.

**MUMMY** (*moaning*) But there're high curbs. I'm always afraid you knock me over! Your phone battery is flat again. If you ever thought of anything other than nonsense, we wouldn't have to stumble across the stupid parking lot.

**TANYA** The cops wouldn't come anyway, the developer bought them long ago. Hold that bag properly!

*They pass through the parking lot, Tanya clumsily pushes the wheelchair between the cars, pulling it effortlessly over the curb.*

**MUMMY** (*tearfully*) I'm tired. My hands are aching, I need a loo ... and the cream, well, that's already ... (*She screams as Tanya makes an abrupt move with the wheelchair.*) Watch out! Careful. Do you hear?!

**TANYA** Stop bossing me about, or I go crazy. I'll end up in a madhouse, and what will happen to you?

**MUMMY** We'll go there together; we might get a shared room.

**TANYA** A room, she says! We'll get a shared straight jacket.

*Musical interlude.*

*Mummy and Tanya enter the flat. Tanya takes the bags from her mother's lap, places them on the table. She quickly takes off her jacket and shoes. Mummy is still dressed, with a bag on her knees.*

**MUMMY** The cream's now down my knickers! The wheelchair's a mess. Last time when we spilled milk, it stank for three weeks. Like rotting fish. Is it impossible to wash?

*Tanya is hurriedly putting the groceries in the fridge and freezer.*

**TANYA** I'll scrub it. But let's get you scrubbed first.

*Tanya helps Mummy to take off her parka, then gradually undresses her to bra and panties. She throws the clothes on a pile on the floor.*

**TANYA** Bloody hell, you're a mess. Off we go in the shower!

*Tanya parks the wheelchair in front of the bathroom, picks up Mummy and climbs in the shower with her through the narrow door frame. She closes the door behind. We hear them talking.*

**MUMMY** I can't believe I didn't have an accessible shower fitted in while I still had a job! I would've been eligible for a loan.

*Sound of shower.*

**MUMMY** Who could've known then that I'd end up like this. I had totally different idea about my old age.

**TANYA** Me too!

*Music interlude.*

*Space: kitchen-living room. Mummy is sitting in the armchair in front of the TV, dressed in a bathrobe, wet hair (as from the shower), holding a TV guide, switching channels with a remote control. Tanya is sitting by an old computer, immersed in surfing the web.*

**MUMMY** It should start shortly. New show ... *(reads aloud)* Real stories of people whose lives have slipped out of their hands.

**TANYA** It's about us, isn't it?

**MUMMY** *(laughs)* Yeah, spot on! We would make it to a feature film. Just not sure whether it'd be a comedy or tragedy. No matter, we'd be famous anyway.

**TANYA** I can't get to the website for dear life... or a phone number to an official in charge of parks. One wants to complain and doesn't know where.

**MUMMY** *(laughs)* Ring the Moon, dear, they'll advise you.

**TANYA** I bet you had some of the vodka, didn't you?

**MUMMY** I needed something to warm up. It was just a drop. Honest!

*Tanya gets up from the computer, walks over to the kitchen counter, opens the lower cabinet, and retrieves a bottle of vodka.*

**TANYA** Fuck! Mummy! You know you're not to have any! You're on medication, you're gonna get high. A drop, she says. Half a glass at least.

**MUMMY** (*merrily*) Come-on ... no one's yet got killed by a little spirit. Besides ... I'm reaching the end. Am I to die today or tomorrow? Who cares.

**TANYA** I do! You pass out and not even the bloody ambulance can get here. Because of that fucking building. Well, sweetheart, we're changing the vodka station. (*She places the bottle in the cabinet above.*)

**MUMMY** Scrooge, denies to her own mother. (*laughs*) Yeah! (*She retrieves her pills from the pocket of her bathrobe, holding them.*) I missed taking them this morning. Do you think I'm nuts? I know everything, don't I?

**TANYA** Giv'em to me! You really are like a child! (*She takes the pills from her mother and puts them away.*)

**MUMMY** It's about to begin.

*There is a loud, annoying sound from an excavator on the construction site, drowning out the sound of the TV. The women listen for a moment in surprise, Tanya runs to the window, looks out.*

**TANYA** They can't be serious.

*The sound grows louder, with the added sound of a jackhammer, beep and rumble. The room is filled with the construction sounds.*

**MUMMY** I can't hear the tele!

**TANYA** I'll turn up the volume.

**MUMMY** What're you saying?

*Tanya waves her hand, takes the headphones, puts them on Mummy's head, and plugs the cable into the TV. Mummy smiles contentedly, looking at the screen. Noise from the building fills the room. Tanya glances at Mummy, then rummages through a box full of tapes placed on top of a cabinet and inserts one into the player. The music by the Ministry (or other industrial style) sounds. Tanya puts it on full blast and starts cutting something on the kitchen counter. The industrial music mixes with the noise from the construction site. Mummy is smiling and watching TV. Tanya is nodding her head, moving to the rhythm of the music, chopping the vegetables, here and there jumping like a punk. After a few minutes, the power goes out. TV, tape player and kitchen light go out. The space sinks into twilight. The sound of the jackhammer from the construction site amplifies.*

**MUMMY** *(screams with headphones on her ears and turns to Tanya)* Whyyyyy!

**TANYA** Fucking fuses!

*Tanya runs off stage, returns momentarily, holding a notice.*

**TANYA** They switched off the power.

**MUMMY** *(with the headphones still on)* What?

*Tanya takes off her headphones.*

**TANYA** *(shouting)* They turned off the power. We didn't pay the bill!

**MUMMY** How come? They keep deducting it from my account automatically!

**TANYA** You must have money in that account, dear. Hold on ... Obviously. I got it! The pharmacy. We used your card to pay for the medication. Remember? Your pension was late this month. For a mysterious reason.

**MUMMY** Everything happens here for a mysterious reason! Why didn't they alert us? I won't get to see the show. There will be no hot water and ... *(recoils)*

**TANYA** *(throws the notice on the table)* Fuck the show, but the freezer will thaw, the stove doesn't work, and you're about to pee in the dark! What a day!

*From the construction comes an insane sound of an iron sawing machine.*

**MUMMY** I'll go crazy here!

*Tanya takes the headphones again, places them on her mother's head, picks her up from the armchair and puts her in the wheelchair. Mummy moves to the table.*

*Tanya looks at her for a moment without a word. Then, as if something occurred to her, she grabs a parka and a wallet, gets dressed, returns from the door to take the notice from the table, and is off.*

**MUMMY** (*shouting*) No meal today?

*Music, lights off.*

## **Scene 5**

*It is evening. Mummy and Tanya are sitting at a table in the kitchen-living room by a single candle. They have dinner. The building is silent, it's quiet, they are eating without words. Tanya puts a spread and salami slices on her mother's bread, and places it on her plate.*

**MUMMY** Can't it be arranged? You did pay.

**TANYA** (*tired*) Mummy, stop it. Some guy is coming tomorrow; he'll turn it on.

**MUMMY** Perhaps if you said I'm disabled ...

**TANYA** Who cares about your being disabled? We have to endure.

*They eat for a while, without words.*

**MUMMY** I could do with some tea. There was supposed to be this good film on tonight.

**TANYA** Look! Water! You always keep offering it to me, so have it yourself now.

*Tanya pulls out play cards from somewhere, places them on the table in front of Mummy.*

**TANYA** You haven't played solitaire for a while.

*Mummy pushes the plate away and starts laying out the cards. Tanya throws the plates into the sink, puts the food away.*

**TANYA** That park pisses me off. Fucking hell! I spent my childhood there. Remember those hide-and-seeks we used to play there?

**MUMMY** How could I not ... and those neighbourhood parties! When the late Mikeshka got married, she went to the park at midnight with the musicians. Saying they wanted to dance but their flat was too small. Within half-an-hour, the entire bloc was dancing along. Ladi Voytkovich got sooo pissed. Otherwise he was a tee-total, poor man. He was lying in a puddle, shouting he was on vacation in Yugoslavia! What a bash! Till morning!

**TANYA** I vaguely remember; we ate such bizarre cakes.

**MUMMY** Moravian wedding buns! Mikeshka was from Moravia. She married a Hungarian. Quite a couple. He also had a such strange name ... Poppy? Or Appy; something like that. He would always potter about his car. And she'd call at him from the window, "Howy, lunch!"<sup>6</sup>

**TANYA** Sure! We used to shout at him: Howy're you! And he'd swear like a sailor.

**MUMMY** Why don't you bring two more candles, I can't see properly.

**TANYA** If only we had any. I don't get it, such a park and nobody protests. I had my first fag there. By that pine tree, you know, it had such a weird bark, like a snake. Our gang had a great spot there. I better spare you the stuff we did.

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<sup>6</sup> Transl note: In the original, the word *lunch* is in Czech to highlight that the character, Mikeshka – being from Moravia – was a Czech speaker. The same is suggested by her possibly mispronouncing her husband's first name which, however, is not specified. The English translation offers alternative words for names to achieve the pun that is picked up in the next line.

**MUMMY** No worries, there's always been a good soul to report to me on what you were up to. For instance, the custodian ... Feher. I guess he's still alive. He was awful. I came from work and didn't even get a chance to put down the groceries, he'd already turn up in the kitchen. He was reporting on you, everything, down to the smallest detail. I was so embarrassed.

**TANYA** What can I say ... you slaved, and I was killing time. Though it was cool that you could let me out, just like that. There were almost no cars zooming by. After school, I'd toss my bag on the floor, put the key on the string around my neck, grabbed bread spread with lard and off I was! To fool about, keep coming up with this-n-that.

*Tanya gets up, pulls a bottle of vodka and a glass from the cupboard, places them on the table. She pours herself a shot.*

**MUMMY** How about me?

*Tanya drinks bottom up.*

**TANYA** Want some?

**MOTHERS** (*rubbing her hands*) The sick are being asked! Just a drop. As Mikeshka used to say, I'm just going to wet my beak.<sup>7</sup>

**TANYA** (*pours a shot of vodka*) Have some of mine ... you beak!

*Mummy has some vodka, smiles and sighs.*

**MUMMY** Actually, they also ruined my memories of those years in the sun. God is my witness that I didn't have too many.

**TANYA** How about me? They just totally destroyed my childhood. And my teens, actually; the old age, too: I don't know where I'd get out when I walk around with a stick. Developers! The plague of humanity.

**MUMMY** I'll wet my ...

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<sup>7</sup> Transl. note: The Mikeshka line is in colloquial Czech.



**TANYA** Forget it, you just had your pills.

**MUMMY** A couple of shots won't kill me. What are you so strict about! She's supposed to be a punk. The hausfrau you've become!

*Tanya pours a drop of vodka into a glass and hands it to her.*

**TANYA** Last one. I don't want to get the blame for you. (*She pauses, watching Mummy lick the glass.*) Who of the old bunch is still here? Try to remember.

**MUMMY** I, you, Dushky, perhaps the Richards, Feher. Dunno. All either died or moved away ages ago. Up, on the fifth floor, Emi's kids sold the lovely four-bedroom flat. Now it's always someone else living there.

**TANYA** Yeah, I know. These rentals, the ... erbeebee, or whatever it's called. That's what it is now.

**MUMMY** The tenants change every week? Who cleans after them? This is not proper!

*Tanya pours a shot of vodka. Looks at it for a moment, drinks it.*

**TANYA** Everyone pretends like nothing's happening. Sheep. No one gives a fuck about the trees. They'd rather breathe lead, as long as they don't have to worry about anything. Zero point! Apathy! Then they moan about their tumours growing. But to speak up when someone is taking down the only trees around the block ... no way, José!

**MUMMY** And where are they to speak up? You can't reach anyone here. And if you happen to, you don't get anything sorted. Waste of time.

*Tanya picks up a candle and starts looking for something in the kitchen. She is rummaging through the drawers, slams the cupboard doors.*

**MUMMY** It's money that rules today, dear. You always know it all! (*Parodies Tanya.*) Zero points! Apathy! You always keep blaming others. And you? Just cursing! Because

you know very well that there are the more powerful above us, and none of our bullshit can change their plans.

*Tanya looks at Mummy for a moment, then pulls a sheet of blank paper and a pen out of the drawer. She places a candle on the kitchen counter, puts on her slippers and leaves. When she slams the door, the draft extinguishes the candle. Mummy is left in the dark.*

**MUMMY** (*calling out*) Tanya! Tanya! Where are you going! Come back! I can't see a thing!

*Music, lights off.*

## Scene 6

*Third-floor landing in the block of flats, elevator door is in the middle, four doors to the flats are on the sides. Each has a different coat, no name labels. Tanya is standing there in slippers, holding a sheet of paper and pen. She rings at the door No 1, waits for a while. When no one opens, she rings at door No 2. The door opens, a middle-aged man appears, wearing a smart shirt and waistcoat, and fine trousers. During the conversation, the light in the corridor keeps going off in regular intervals. One of those present always switches it back on.*

**TANYA** Good evening, sorry to disturb, but perhaps you noticed that our park is being removed, so I wondered if ...

**NEIGHBOUR 2** (*interrupts her*) Of course I noticed. What is this about? Who are you?

**TANYA** Toth. Your neighbour. I wondered whether we should write a petition to keep the park, that is, what's left of it ...

**NEIGHBOUR 2** Petition? Do you believe that a petition has any weight in this country? Come-on, people keep signing petitions and what's the difference? Nothing!

*Door No 1, where Tanya previously rang, opens. A woman dressed in a bathrobe with a towel on her head appears.*

**NEIGHBOUR 1** What's going on? I'm sorry, I didn't hear the bell.

*The light goes off. Tanya switches it on.*

**TANYA** Sorry to disturb, but I ...

**NEIGHBOUR 2** (*interrupts her*) She is drafting a petition!

**NEIGHBOUR 1** Do you live here?

**TANYA** Tanya Toth. (*She stretches her hand to the neighbour, but the lady ignores it.*)

We live on the third floor with my mother, who ...

**NEIGHBOUR 1** On the wheelchair! Now I know.

**NEIGHBOUR 2** (*to Tanya*) Do you know you dented the lift with your wheelchair? I wonder who's going to pay for it.

**TANYA** We didn't dent anything, I wanted to ask if you ...

*The light goes off. Neighbour 2 switches it on.*

**NEIGHBOUR 2** No one else goes to the lift with a wheelchair, and it is dented precisely where the wheels touch the wall.

**NEIGHBOUR 1** Well, what is this all about?

**TANYA** They destroyed our park, and I think that's dirty! Where are we to go now?

Kids won't have a place to play, and the old trees are still important ...

**NEIGHBOUR 1** You know, Mrs Toth, I'm not saying no, but people have to live somewhere. You won't stop urban development and I firmly believe they will put in there some greenery anyway. Besides, today's children hardly ever go to parks. They sit at home at their computers.

**TANYA** Don't you mind the noise? We can't hear our own words at home, and those heavy lorries totally destroyed the pavement we used.

**NEIGHBOUR 2** The noise is annoying. Certainly. But you should deal with it differently. Through the local municipality. Though it is a question whether it falls within their remit. But a petition? It has no weight. The builder bought the land, it is now his property, so it is utterly futile. In any case, you should at least paint the lift since you damaged it.

*The light goes off.*

**TANYA** (*into the dark, resolutely*) We didn't damage a thing!

*Someone switches the light back on.*

*Door No 3, an older man appears.*

**TANYA** Good evening, Mr Feher.

**NEIGHBOUR FEHER** Why are you shouting here?!

**NEIGHBOUR 2** She doesn't want to admit that they dented the lift!

**NEIGHBOUR FEHER** You never change, do you? Trouble as always. Because you didn't have a father. There was no one to raise you properly!

**TANYA** That's not the point, Mr Feher, really. It's about the park. Would you sign the petition?

**NEIGHBOUR FEHER** Stuff your petition!

**NEIGHBOUR 2** I am exactly of the same opinion, it is futile. Besides, our signatures might be misused easily!

**NEIGHBOUR 1** I don't want to patronise you, Mrs Toth, or is it Miss? I don't know. A petition must have a certain form, you won't get anywhere with this scrap of paper.

**NEIGHBOUR FEHER** I don't give a damn about the park! Good thing they got rid of it, it was just a hangout for the homeless! And the mess there, litter, dog shit. There will be order at last!

**TANYA** You really went crazy! The last piece of nature and you don't care ...

**NEIGHBOUR 2** (*interrupts her*) Don't exaggerate, okay? There was no nature. Man-made park is no forest. The trees were damaged and a risk to pedestrians. Public safety comes first.

**NEIGHBOUR FEHER** Now you won't have a place to smoke, right? And to keep getting pissed with those hooligans of yours. I saw what you were doing there! I've been watching you for years. Abominable! You should be ashamed of yourself!

**TANYA** How dare you!

**NEIGHBOUR 1** Do you know her?

*The light goes off.*

**NEIGHBOUR FEHER** (*hits the light switch angrily, the light comes on*) Dear lady, I've been living here for fifty-five years. This is a familiar company. (*he points finger at Tanya*) I've known her since she was in nappies.

**NEIGHBOUR 2** I won't give my signature to any dubious person. And I insist that you restore the lift to its original condition.

**TANYA** I already told you that the lift is not our shit! I don't understand what you're going on about! They're ruining your park. Hello, folks! In a moment you'll have nothing to breathe, and you keep going on about all this nonsense. Mr Feher, you don't mean to tell me that you didn't spend a single beautiful Saturday in that park.

**NEIGHBOUR 1** Nonsense? Let me you ask a few questions, so we find out who you really are? Or how did you picture this? That you ring at my door and I sign any bullshit?

**NEIGHBOUR FEHER** (*furiously*) I built this country with these hands while you hung about with some junkies sucking blood of us, decent people! As I say, under Communism, such a parasite would have been rotting in jail! I won't sign a thing for you! (*He returns to his flat and slams the door.*)

**NEIGHBOUR 1** I believe any communication with you is counterproductive. (*She shuts her door.*)

**NEIGHBOUR 2** Well then, you wanted to use us and get a fraudulent signature! You should be ashamed, ma'am!

**TANYA** You're totally out of it! How about using your brain and taking a little care about your surrounds! Not just about your polished BMW!

**NEIGHBOUR 2** (*calls mockingly*) Some waif won't tell me what to do or not to do!  
(*slams his door*)

*The light goes off. Tanya is left alone in the hallway. It's dark. Door No 4 opens silently. A beam of light illuminates Tanya. Dushan cautiously steps out to the hallway, turns on the light.*

**DUSHAN** (*in a whisper*) The demons vanished?

*Tanya glances at him insanely, then sighs and slides down the wall to the ground, where she remains seated.*

**TANYA** Did I want to (*pause*) save the park, or get willingly fucked up? I just don't know.

**DUSHAN** (*smiles*) I heard. An old junkie who annoys decent people with his credit for building Communism. What is it you are after?

*He sits on the ground next to her.*

**TANYA** Do I really look like a waif?

**DUSHAN** Not at all. He's out and the lift is nonsense, too. Angelwax is being paranoid.<sup>8</sup>

**TANYA** The bloke is called like that cough syrup.

**DUSHAN** (*laughs*) I'm the one to call him that, because he uses expensive cosmetics on that flashy car of his.

**TANYA** Would you sign? Don't be a pussy! You spent year smoking there. Or will you chicken out?

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<sup>8</sup> Transl. note: the word Angelwax is, again, pronounced in Slovak – anghelwax

**DUSHAN** Come-on, even if (*signing the sheet*) I doubt anyone else signs it for you in this block. Maybe The Kishes. Most of the old settlers have died, the children either sold the flats or are renting them out. They don't give a damn about anything. They have to earn pots of money! To afford expensive rags and holidays.

*Tanya takes the sheet and pats Dushan on the shoulder.*

**TANYA** Too bad for them that they pissed me off. It doesn't pay to piss off an old punk! If you want to be in this with me ...

**DUSHAN** I'm done here, Tanya! When I manage to sell the flat, I'll get a small house outside the city. And I'm out of here!

*The light goes off. Tanya switches it on.*

**TANYA** Nonsense!

**DUSHAN** Look ... I've been painning myself with the Commies ... you know I was in jail for three years. Do I now have to pain myself with the former secret police arseholes? I'm fed up with all this.

**TANYA** You're not going to sell the large flat to some nouveau riche. What's wrong with you? Your folks will be spinning in the grave. Bloody hell!

**DUSHAN** Everything is so overpriced in this fucking city; one can hardly afford a pint in a pub. And we just keep paying! For everything! People treat each other like underdogs. No one helps you, even if drop dying on the street. Zillions of cars, filth, hideous buildings. Cult pubs long gone. I was at the bus station recently. Actually, I got lost! The stuff they built there?! Manhattan is nothing compared to it! I hate it here!

**TANYA** You know. Though, at least, the park might be rescued.

*Dushan shrugs not to knowing, he waves his hand goodbye and enters the flat.*

*The light goes off. In the darkness, Tanya puts her foot in the door that Dushan is closing slowly.*

**TANYA** Listen ... do have an extra candle?

*Music, lights off.*

### **Scene 7**

*Living room-kitchen, the space is in disarray, drawers and cabinets are open, a pile of small redundant items that people hide in drawers is on the table, along with a bottle of vodka. Unwashed dishes, a pile of clothes on the chair. Mummy in pyjamas is sitting on her bed. Industrial sound of the heavy construction mechanisms comes from the window.*

**MUMMY** Don't drink! Tanya! Do you hear me?! No more drinking!

*Tanya is rummaging through the pile of small, unnecessary items, as if looking for something.*

**TANYA** Like a rat! Exactly ... a rat driven into the corner.

**MUMMY** I've been in my pyjamas all day, I don't like it anymore. I want to get in the wheelchair, I need to brush my teeth. Tanya! Do you hear me!

*Tanya ignores her, leaves the table and rummages through the drawers in the kitchen cupboard and in the shabby closet.*

**TANYA** It's everywhere! Everywhere. In bed linen, shampoo, breadcrumbs. My brain is about to explode!

*She runs to the window, opens it wide and screams.*



**TANYA** Turn it off! Fuckers! One can't live here! Siiiiiiiileeeence!

**MUMMY** She's gone mad. It's the vodka. Because she drinks on an empty stomach!

Close the window, I'm cold!

*Tanya slams the window and runs to Mummy. She is pulling her out of bed abruptly and insensitively, and puts her in the wheelchair.*

**MUMMY** What are you doing twisting my arm. Slowly! Leave me alone, huh? I can do it by myself.

**TANYA** We have to take care of our ancient child, don't we! (*She parodies a mother speaking to a child.*) Let's pee, wash, eat!

**MUMMY** Give me a break, I'm telling you!

*Tanya lets Mummy sit in the wheelchair, comes to the table and drinks from the bottle.*

**TANYA** Well, well ... Aren't we asking today where we're going?

*Mummy slowly moves to the kitchen counter, takes a cup and tries to fill it with water from the tap. She doesn't manage – the tap is too high.*

**MUMMY** (*mumbling to herself*) Sure thing, going out with you, especially in that state.

*Tanya pushes her abruptly from the kitchen counter and takes her cup.*

**TANYA** Nothing today?

**MUMMY** My pills, Tanya. We forgot the pills.

*Tanya pours her a glass of water, takes the pills and then it to her so carelessly that she spills the water and the pills scatter on the ground. She bends to pick them up and hands them back to Mummy.*

**TANYA** You really piss me off! Don't you miss the daily routine all of a sudden?

**MUMMY** (*sighs resignedly, swallows the pills and drinks the water*) All right, all right. So where are we off to today? Happy?

*Tanya points her finger at the window and keeps shouting.*

**TANYA** We're off to hell! Into one big cut-down, dusty, dug-out hell! It's over, Mummy. You won't get to sit there anymore, stroll or even breathe the fresh air. You'll be staring at the concrete crap for the rest of your fucking life!

*Mummy moves to the fridge, she wants to pick up something. Tanya won't let her, shuts the fridge and pushes her hard to the table.*

**TANYA** Actually ... actually you can breathe. That shit! And deep down! To be done and over with ASAP!

**MUMMY** You frighten me! You are unbearable when you drink. Just like your father!

*Tanya doesn't notice her. She pushes aside the pile of redundant items on the table and keeps throwing things from the fridge in front of Mummy. She grabs everything she sees.*

**TANYA** They pissed me off. But really!

**MUMMY** It's a bit over the top. I don't eat that much after all.

*Tanya stops and puts back the vinegar she just wanted to place on the table. She sits next to Mummy. She watches her briefly as she puts a spread on her bread, then gets up, picks up the headphones from out of nowhere.*

**MUMMY** (*mumbling*) You better give them to me. I can't listen to you anymore.

*Tanya puts the headphones on Mummy's head. Then she plays loud some Mongolian metal (the HU). The music drowns the noise from the construction site; it fills the space.*

*Tanya jumps, dances for a while, then opens the wardrobe and pulls out the most extravagant punk outfit she has, which she can still fit in. She dresses and undresses, looks in the wardrobe mirror, dancing here and there. When she is happy with her appearance, she wets her hair, puts in fixing gel, lots of it, and takes a hair dryer. By the mirror, she begins combing her hair to create punk-spikes. She looks like getting ready for a punk concert. The music is on full blast. With the headphones on, Mummy is eating dinner at the table and watches Tanya in silence. Behind the stage, video projection slowly lights up: an image of the Green Park residence construction appears. We see the ruined park, an excavated pit, a crane and construction machinery. The stage darkens, only Tanya's head with her spiked hair casts a large dark shadow on the screen (the construction site).*

*Music, lights off.*

## **Scene 8**

*Space: living room-kitchen. Mummy is sitting in a wheelchair and sewing something. Tanya sits on the ground in front of a giant tin box, taking out different tools. There is complete silence in the flat. Mummy watches Tanya briefly, then is sewing for a while.*

**MUMMY** No work today?

**TANYA** (*with a smile*) Did you notice? Silence at last. Fuckers. They're in mourning.

**MUMMY** Someone must've complained. It was insane, they kept roaring on Sundays as well.

**TANYA** Tell me who'd complain. The petty bourgeoisie from our block? Where do you live? They can't even sign themselves ... even if you put the sheet right under their noses.

**MUMMY** After all, there are standards or something. Such a major construction cannot just break the law.

**TANYA** (*slams the box with a screwdriver so much so that Mummy jumps*) The developer doesn't give a shit about law, Mummy. Don't you see what this is all about?

**MUMMY** Stop shouting. I'll prick my fingers with the needle.

**TANYA** Your naiveté drives me crazy. (*She parodies her.*) He can't just break the law ... He sure can! Because he's loaded beyond imagination! He bribes everyone, no prob ... and he still has enough for holiday. Though he won't do much today with pierced pipes in his excavators. (*laughs*)

**MUMMY** What pipes? What are you telling me? (*menacingly*) Tanya! Don't tell me you again got yourself in some ...

*Tanya stops paying attention to her and rummages through the box, picks up a metal holder for a silicone foam tube, and tests it.*

**TANYA** (*to herself*) Hey, you might come handy.

*Mummy puts the sewing in her lap, she pushes herself in the wheelchair very close to Tanya.*

**MUMMY** (*menacingly*) If it's your fault, I'm telling you to stop. I'm not telling you. I'm ordering you! As your mother! Are you gone mad? They will lock you up. What are we going to do then?

**TANYA** (*making fun of her, lisping childishly*) What will we do then, what will we do then? (*in a regular voice*) We'll go to jail.

**MUMMY** Yeah, keep making fun. Your entire life is one big joke, isn't it? You never think of the consequences. (*She moves the wheelchair to the chest of drawers and puts*

*the sewing kit in a drawer.) It's punk to blame! It ruined you completely, your packs or whatever you call those ragged drunks.*

*Tanya stands up, proudly, puts her foot on the box, combs her hand through the spiked hair, raises her hand high and makes a victory sign.*

**TANYA** My life – a never-ending party. Oh yeah!

*Then she jumps over the box, runs to the tape player and turns on the music. The band Visaci Zamek sounds – their song Kanarek. Tanya puts the music at the highest volume, opens the cabinet, takes out vodka and drinks from the bottle.*

**MUMMY** Turn it off!

*Tanya makes a dance step to the tape player and turns down the music.*

**TANYA** You know what? So that you don't say I'm a total rat, I'll put on the headphones today.

*Tanya puts on her headphones and plugs the cord in the tape player. The music stops. She stands by the kitchen counter and peels potatoes.*

**MUMMY** How about going out at last? To another park or just hang out in the street.

*Tanya can't hear her, she's preparing dinner with headphones on to hear the music. Mummy pushed herself to Tanya.*

**MUMMY** At least turn on the TV for me. (*shouting*) Set up my channel, it doesn't work again!

*Tanya doesn't hear her, she is nodding her head to the rhythm of the tune in the headphones.*

*Mummy moves to the TV set, picks up the remote control and moves back to Tanya. She pokes her in the rear and waves the remote control. Tanya takes off the headphones, turns on the TV and sets the channel.*

**TANYA** How do you always manage to mess it up? Look, you press red and wait a minute! Then press 1 and wait again for a while for it to start. Such an scrap!

*Mummy parks her wheelchair in front of the TV. Tanya puts her headphones back on and continues preparing dinner. A moment of silence, we hear the voice of a speaker commenting on a documentary from the TV screen.*

**MUMMY** I'd like some chocolate.

*Tanya doesn't hear her and ignores her altogether.*

*Mummy wheels over to the food cabinet, opens it, keeps looking in for a while, then reaches in. She picks up a chocolate bar, puts it in her lap, and notices a small flask of rum. She is pleased, but realises that Tanya is near, her back turned.*

**MUMMY** (*shouts*) Tanya, can you hear me?

*As Tanya is not responding, she opens the flask and has a quick sip. She puts it back. Tanya incidentally looks at her mother. Mummy smiles at her and waves the chocolate bar. She closes the cabinet and returns to the TV set. She opens the chocolate and keeps chipping off tiny pieces to munch.*

**MUMMY** (*mumbling*) Why is she hiding rum? For doughnuts? If she can make doughnuts, I'm Brigitte Bardot. But I wouldn't mind some. I haven't had doughnuts for

ages. Hmm. Nonsense. After all, she can't even cook simple meals. Just dog's breakfast. She definitely wants to drink it in secret.

*There is brief peace in the room. Mummy is nibbling on her chocolate, watching TV – we hear conversation from the TV show. Tanya, with headphones on, is listening to her music and is cooking. Front door opens and Dushan quietly enters the room. He is holding a large paper box full of eggs. No one notices him enter. He briefly stands behind Tanya's back, then gently touches her shoulder. Tanya is so startled that she jumps and almost knocks out the eggs from Dushan's hands.*

**TANYA** (*screams*) You're fucking mad?! Do you want me to get a heart attack?

*Mummy turns her gaze away from the TV. Tanya takes off her headphones.*

**MUMMY** Dushky! What brings you?

**DUSHAN** (*to Tanya*) I brought you some eggs. They're off. (*to Mummy*) Good evening.

**TANYA** Should I use them to make you eggnog or what?

**MUMMY** Sweet of you to care. They will be for doughnuts.

**TANYA** Mummy, stop the nonsense, they're off.

**MUMMY** Do sit down. Let's have a round of joker.

*Dushan is still holding the eggs and is looking at Tanya indecisively. He seems hesitant, as if unsure what to do.*

**DUSHAN** (*in a low voice*) I saw you. At night. Yesterday and the day before. From the balcony. It occurred to me that they might come handy. (*glances at the eggs.*) For something.

**TANYA** Come-on! After all ... let's chat, alright?

She takes the eggs from Dushan and puts them on the kitchen counter. Dushan sits down at the table, Mummy turns off the TV and joins them. Tanya picks a bottle of vodka and two glasses, and places them on the table.

**MUMMY** How about me?

**TANYA** You already had some. Plus you've got to take your pills in an hour.

*Mummy and Tanya glance at each other. Mummy takes a deep breath intending to say something, Tanya cuts her short.*

**TANYA** Do you think I'm stupid or what? You stink like an old drunk.

*Mummy waves her hand and turns to Dushan.*

**MUMMY** Well, shall we play? Five cents to bet. One can't play with Tanya, she quarrels right away.

*Dushan nods in agreement, Mummy sets off with to the cupboard to get the cards. Tanya pours the vodka and hands Dushan a glass. They drink.*

**TANYA** Careful, the old lady is a cheat. It can cost you fortune.

*Mummy comes back to the table. She secures the wheelchair with the handbrake, shuffles the cards. Tanya goes to the stove and puts on the soup.*

**TANYA** I'll play some music. Okay, Mummy?

**MUMMY** You may, exceptionally. Dushky, what would you like? Else she puts on some madness.

**DUSHAN** Do you have Cechomor?

**TANYA** Take a good look at me! Do I look like I'd listen to Cechomor?



*Dushan smiles and shakes his head.*

**MUMMY** (*hands out the cards*) Put on The Beatles! I used to like them, or ... wait, what was the name ... Piramish or what the scarry-hairies were called.

**TANYA** Go to Dushan's place to listen to that crap.

*Tanya rummages through the box with the tapes for a moment and pulls out one.*

**TANYA** So, dear lot, the ultimate lightie I got here is garage.

**DUSHAN** (*taking the cards in his hand*) Cooooool!

*Tanya inserts the tape into the player and plays the music, not very loudly. She sits at the table. Mummy and Dushan start playing joker, Tanya watches them.*

**DUSHAN** (*to Tanya*) I thought that if you spread them on the windshields, by the morning they'd harden like concrete.

**TANYA** Dried eggs are shit to wash off. Plus the stench!

**MUMMY** What are you doing?! Watch out ... ace of hearts.

**DUSHAN** I see. But you shut down the machines for the weekend. We'll get to sleep in!

**TANYA** Do you know what I could do with? Assembly foam.

**DUSHAN** Oh so! I guess I might find some at my place.

*Dushan deals with the cards for a while, scratches his head, looks desperately at Mummy. She grins at him, then gives Tanya side looks.*

**MUMMY** Do you know what I would do with, sweetheart? Tranquilisers. You're coming up with nonsense again. That's enough, okay? And you, Dushky, stop encouraing her; you should be taming her.

**TANYA** I'm telling you, you don't stand a chance with her.

**MUMMY** Forget about the dirty line. You miss the square.

**DUSHAN** You're looking at my cards. Obviously.

*Tanya goes to the stove, stirs the soup, tastes it.*

**TANYA** She has X-rays in her eyes. This needs seasoning.

*Mummy keeps grinning at Dushan, who's in trouble with his cards. Dushan sighs, and eventually draws another card. Mummy laughs triumphantly and starts laying her cards on the table.*

**MUMMY** You're done, Dushky. Five cents. Put this on the table! Come-on, let's go!

*Tanya turns off the soup, pours vodka for Dushan and herself. She offers him a drink.*

**TANYA** She beat you like a little boy.

*Dushan drowns the shot, it gives him shivers. He retrieves a five-cent coin from his pocket and places it in front of Mummy.*

**MUMMY** (*shuffles the cards*) Anther round?

*The tape is over. It's quiet. Tanya ladles the soup into a plate and places it in front of Mummy.*

**TANYA** Enjoy! When I'm back, the plate will be empty, okay? (*She starts packing her rucksack, puts in wire-pliers, tests the torch.*)

**MUMMY** Don't go anywhere!

*Tanya keeps ignoring her, she is placing the eggs in a plastic bucket without a word. Mummy moves to Tanya and grabs her sleeve.*

**MUMMY** Tanya! I'm ordering you! As your mother! Stay home!

*Dushan is obviously uncomfortable. He is standing by the table, holding an empty glass. Then, as if he remembers something.*

**DUSHAN** Shall we have another one?

*Tanya replies without stopping whatever she is doing.*

**TANYA** Feel free to get pissed with the old lady. I've got stuff to do.

*She then stops placing the eggs in the bucket and looks at Dushan.*

**TANYA** The foam ... you were just fucking about, weren't you?

*Dushan doesn't want to look her in the face, he is anxious, looks very indecisive. Mummy is stirring her soup, spoons some and blows at it to cool.*

**MUMMY** At least you should be wise, if she isn't anymore.

*Tanya looks Dushan in his eyes, pours him the spirit and hands him the glass. He looks away.*

**TANYA** Down there, at our spot under that twisted spruce – by the way, it's still standing – you once told me: When the sheep feel defiant, they stop crying. I remember. That's the point. It's pushing its way from within so much that I can't sleep. It presses against my nerves! I've got to do something. Else it will tear me apart! Something crazy, so they remember. Forever.

*Dushan places his unfinished glass on the table, scratches his head, tucks his palms under his armpits as if hiding something. Tanya takes a cigarette and sticks it behind her ear. She puts on a leather jacket.*

**MUMMY** You're a sensible boy, Dushky. I always knew so.

*Tanya gets up to leave, puts her rucksack on her back, grabs the bucket. When she is at the door, Dushan can't stand it anymore and calls after her.*

**DUSHAN** Wait, for God's sake! What's the rush? Where to!? This is quite some job. You just think of something and let's go, you go like a lawn mower. Give me time!

**TANYA** Time's up, Dushky. See ya!

*Tanya slams the door. Dushan and Mami are alone. Dushan is still standing at the table. Then he notices that Tanya forgot the torch on the kitchen counter. He takes it and walks to the door, turning to Mummy still tasting her soup.*

**DUSHAN** You know what I just don't get? She's so bold.

*Mummy takes salt shaker and wants to season her soup, but the shaker is clogged; she shakes it in the air.*

**MUMMY** Punk girls are bold.

*Dushan takes the salt shaker from her, hits it hard against the table top and hands it back. He grabs the torch, throws it up in the air and cleverly catches it.*

**DUSHAN** Neither are the Indians! (*leaving*)

*Mummy is left alone. She wants to season the soup, but the salt shaker spills into her plate. She sighs. She picks up the remote control from the table and turns up the volume*

*on the TV. Karol Duchon's song V dolinach is heard.<sup>9</sup> Mummy takes Dushky's unfinished glass of vodka, makes the cheers gesture towards the screen and drinks it bottom-up.*

*Music, lights off.*

## Scene 9

*3rd-floor landing in the block of flats: lift door is in the middle, doors to the four flats are on the sides. The doors have each a different coloured coat of paint and are without labels. Female neighbour steps out of the lift with a shopping bag. She puts it on the floor in front of the door to her flat and is looking for the keys in her purse. Door from the flat where Neighbour 2 lives, opens.*

**NEIGHBOUR 2** Good evening.

**NEIGHBOUR 1** *(still looking for her keys)* Hello.

**NEIGHBOUR 2** Have you noticed that they again stopped working on the site?

**NEIGHBOUR 1** Really? I don't watch it much, I'm at work all day. Perhaps an outage again ... you know how it goes, the supplier is late, doesn't deliver the material and a problem arises.

**NEIGHBOUR 2** I thought the same, but when I was last coming back from my business trip, I saw her.

**NEIGHBOUR 1** Who? *(Finally, she retrieves a bundle of keys from her purse.)*

**NEIGHBOUR 2** Well, the waif. Toth or whatever she's called.

*Neighbour 1 tries to insert the right key into the door. The light goes out. Neighbour 2 switches it on.*

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<sup>9</sup> Transl. note: This is a song by a Slovak singer from the Communist era which is currently raising in popularity on retro wave. The title in English is *In the Valleys*, the lyrics are an apotheosis of the of Slovak countryside.

**NEIGHBOUR 2** Do you know where I saw her?

**NEIGHBOUR 1** No. Where?

**NEIGHBOUR 2** She was pottering about the construction site. Then she climbed up an excavator and did something there. I didn't see what. It was dark, but I do suspect she is the one behind the outages.

**NEIGHBOUR 1** (*stops inserting the keys into the lock*) No way! That would be sabotage. There are quite some laws against that. Though, a sole woman cannot just cut off heavy construction mechanisms.

**NEIGHBOUR 2** She can't ... but I saw her there. She was all dressed in black with a rucksack on her back. Perhaps she had some tools in it.

**NEIGHBOUR 1** Honestly, I find it a bit of a stretch. Why would she do that?

**NEIGHBOUR 2** Why, why ... she's frustrated? Bored perhaps? Why look for reasons. Don't you find her odd? She dresses like a bum, and the language! Sheer louse!

**NEIGHBOUR 1** (*At last she manages to insert the key in the lock and unlocks.*) Well ... I don't know, I think it unlikely.

*Feher suddenly appears in his door.*

**NEIGHBOUR FEHER** Frustrated? That woman is the embodiment of evil!

**NEIGHBOUR 1** Have you been eavesdropping?

*The light goes out. Feher switches it on by hitting it with a palm.*

**NEIGHBOUR FEHER** Sometimes it's good to know what's going on in the block. Last time, I kicked out some suspicious people. Burglaries are on the agenda in the city.

**NEIGHBOUR 2** Indeed. We've got to be vigilant!

**NEIGHBOUR FEHER** Why didn't you call the police?

**NEIGHBOUR 1** Perhaps you exaggerate. She might have had an altogether different motif to be there.

**NEIGHBOUR 2** (*sarcastically*) An evening stroll, right?

**NEIGHBOUR FEHER** Dear lady, you have no idea who you have the honour with. That woman is capable of everything. If I were you, I wouldn't be so cool. Do you know she lives directly above you?

**NEIGHBOUR 1** I know, sometimes I hear music ... her taste is somewhat bizarre, but to blame her for something ... Well, I don't know. I'm sorry I have to go; my ice cream will melt. *(She takes the shopping bag and enters her flat, closing the door behind.)*

**NEIGHBOUR FEHER** We are dealing with a serious situation and she is concerned about her ice cream! Phew, as long as she doesn't get surprised when the junkie floods her!

**NEIGHBOUR 2** Or plain burglars her! Do you think we should ...

*The light goes out. Neighbour 2 switches it on.*

**NEIGHBOUR FEHER** We should!

**NEIGHBOUR 2** But we must cover ourselves. Without evidence, it might be deemed as false accusation. I don't want any problems.

**NEIGHBOUR FEHER** No way ... I didn't mean that. In the end ... what's the point of them having a watchman? To slumber? He's being paid. We'll draw their attention to her and ... that will do the trick. Trust me, I have the experience.

**NEIGHBOUR 2** The devil gave us that woman. She should move out. With that wheelchaired creature. They're ruining everything here. Moreover ... this neighbourhood is now considered an exclusive place to live. There's no place here for such inadaptable lot.

**NEIGHBOUR FEHER** Everything will be cleared in time, trust me.

**NEIGHBOUR 2** They should sell the flat and get something, say, more fitting outside the city centre.

**NEIGHBOUR FEHER** As I say, we have to start somehow, gradually, slowly, until it clears up here. *(whispering)* If caught, she'll be paying off the damages on the equipment for the rest of her life. Then, there are other means ... You know ... how it goes.

**NEIGHBOUR 2** Clearly. I just don't want any problems ...

**NEIGHBOUR FEHER** No, no, not at all! Just to point her!

**NEIGHBOUR 2** You think we should write ...

**NEIGHBOUR FEHER** For instance! As I say, just point her out and they'll do their job. No autograph – no problems!

*The light goes out, but no one switches it on. The landing is only illuminated by the light from the flats behind the open doors.*

**NEIGHBOUR 2** Can I count on your discretion, Mr Feher?

**NEIGHBOUR FEHER** You know, Mr ...

**NEIGHBOUR 2** Chobrda. Mr Chobrda.

**NEIGHBOUR FEHER** I'm unswerving, Mr Chobrda!

*Music, lights off.*

## **Scene 10**

*Space: living room-kitchen. Tanya is sitting on Mummy's bed, picking panties from a pile of washed laundry, folding them on top of each other. Mummy is pacing the room in her wheelchair.*

**MUMMY** How I hate it here! Like in a cage. I haven't been out for two weeks. I'm going crazy!

**TANYA** Mummy, stop it.

*Mummy is furiously banging the wheels with her hand.*



**MUMMY** Do you have any idea what it's like? Fifteen years in this fucking pram!  
Dependent on how you feel! On your moods. You have no idea! You can't even  
imagine! I want to get away!

**TANYA** And where to?

**MUMMY** Somewhere! Out of this room else I suffocate!

**TANYA** I'll take you to the city tomorrow. Promise. It's late, traffic jams and buses  
everywhere. You know we can't squeeze in.

*Tanya stands up. She takes the folded underwear into the wardrobe.*

**TANYA** Come-on, let's exercise a little, then I'll put on the TV for. How about that?

*Mummy tries to hit her with the wheelchair. Tanya dodges, further and further, until she  
climbs on a chair and finally onto the table.*

**TANYA** Are you fucking mad or what?

*Mummy pushes her wheelchair into the table, chairs, bed and furniture, as if intending  
to demolish the flat.*

**TANYA** (*menacingly*) OK, I'm calling the doctor! You'll see! Tomorrow and I'll give  
you Lexaurin!

*Mummy stops and throws herself from the wheelchair to the ground, almost hurting  
herself, crying. Tanya jumps off the table and lifts Mummy off the ground.*

**MUMMY** You keep leaving me alone, all evenings and nights you leave me alone. I'm  
sad. I need someone to talk to and quarrel with, can you understand? Tanya, I have no  
one but you.

*Tanya tries to lift Mummy into the wheelchair, but Mummy refuses to cooperate.*

**MUMMY** Don't you feel at least some responsibility for your frail mother? I want to be with you.

**TANYA** But you are ... with me.

**MUMMY** Yet I want to be with you all the time! Take me ...

**TANYA** (*interrupts her*) Mommy, don't you fuck with me!

*Tanya leaves her lying on the floor and walks to the window. She looks out the window, then leans against the windowsill.*

**TANYA** Don't you interfere. It's my war! Last mission. Tonight. I swear! For the last time!

*Mummy crawls around the room, holding on to the floor and dragging her limp legs behind. She crawls to the kitchen counter, opens the lower cabinet and throws out kitchen pots.*

**MUMMY** Don't interfere, don't interfere. Is that possible? After all, we are intertwined like hallah. I won't be here alone for a minute. Do you hear? Take me along!

*Dushan enters. He is dressed in dark outfit, with a rucksack on his back.*

**DUSHAN** Hey, ladies! I found a can of paint, how about we ...

*He stops, looking for a moment at the pots scattered around and Mummy on the floor.*

**DUSHAN** Housekeeping?

**MUMMY** Dushky, help me. You're so empathic, don't leave me alone, else I die here.

*Dushan looks at Tanya inquisitively.*

**TANYA** Madhouse! Totally! She wants to go to the construction site with us.

*Dushan bends over to Mummy, takes her hand.*

**DUSHAN** Listen, today it's the last time. I promise. You have my word. We're going there for the last time! And that's it, okay?

*Mummy takes a frying pan from the floor and starts banging it against the fridge.*

**MUMMY** (*screaming*) I want to go with you! And you'll take me along. Or I destroy the flat with this pan! I'll destroy the block, I'll wake up the neighbours, everyone!

**DUSHAN** All right, all right, all right, let me have it! You end up hurting yourself and what good is that for? Hm? Let's calm down, shall we?

*Dushan takes the pan from Mummy, puts it back in the cupboard. Tanya watches them, still leaning against the window sill.*

**TANYA** I wonder who I take after.

**DUSHAN** I see that the women of your tribe are wild.

**MUMMY** You gave me a promise.

**DUSHAN** Sure. For now, stay put in the wheelchair and calm down. Deal?

*Tanya walks over to Mummy. They lift her off the floor with Dushan and put her in the wheelchair.*

**TANYA** Well, be prepared for the difficult terrain. You'll be shaken like Detva.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Transl. note: DETVA was a popular brand of cheap cigarettes during Communism.

*Mummy nods, blows her nose. Dushan pushes her to the table. Tanya picks up the dishes from the floor and puts them back in the cupboard.*

**TANYA** Hey! You beat up our finest pan. Now the schnitzels will keep burning.

*Dushan takes off his rucksack and the jacket.*

**MUMMY** Tea? Coffee? Tanya, make him some coffee.

**TANYA** I still don't like the idea. It will be difficult, and when we mess up the wheels ...

**MUMMY** (*threateningly*) Dushan gave me his word! Don't you twist it, else ...

**DUSHAN** Don't start again. We'll make it there somehow.

*Tanya turns on the coffee machine. She sits at the table next to Dushan. She hands him a sugar jar and looks thoughtfully in front, as if thinking of something.*

**MUMMY** How about me?

*Tanya doesn't even look at her, she just answers, like a machine.*

**TANYA** We ran out of caffeine-free.

*Mummy moves closer to Dushan.*

**MUMMY** See what she's like? She won't even give me coffee. And I breastfed her for almost three years.

*Tanya gets up and pours coffee into the mug. She places it abruptly on the table.*

**TANYA** You know what, darling? Here! May it give you a stroke. I can't take it anymore, really.

**DUSHAN** I'm thinking ... If we enter from the opposite end, you know? You can somehow park your wheelchair there.

*Tanya gets up, walks to the window, opens it wide and looks at the construction site.*

**TANYA** It's quite far from the watchman.

**DUSHAN** If we wait till midnight, he'll be pissed, dozing off in the barrack.

*Tanya closes the window and looks at Mummy.*

**TANYA** Can you last till midnight?

*Mummy sips the coffee and smiles.*

**MUMMY** Kids, dear, I don't sleep all nights long, I only go to bed to stretch my bones.

*Tanya opens the wardrobe and looks in briefly.*

**MUMMY** I'll take the white mohair jumper. I haven't worn it on for ages. Pass me the insulated trousers, so I won't need a blanket. I can't remember where my gloves are ... Any idea?

**TANYA** In the white you'll shine like a dove of peace, damn it! I'll get you something.

**MUMMY** Such a hoodie would do, like the one Dushky has. *(She feels his sleeve.)*

Don't you have one extra?

**TANYA** Stop nagging, take mine. *(Takes the clothes from the wardrobe.)*

*Tanya is helping Mummy to get dressed. Dushan tries to help her, unsure what to do first; he wants to give her thick socks, but he's clumsy, he doesn't manage. Mummy watches him in amusement.*

**TANYA** Leave it, Dushky. I'll do it.

**MUMMY** Practice makes perfect, see? It's not just like that to dress the disabled. Years of labour!

*When Mummy is ready, Dushan looks at his watch, finishes his coffee, pulls on his hoodie. Tanya puts on a black punk leather jacket and tidies up her spiked hair. She takes the rucksack, puts on her gloves. Mummy puts on a knitted hat and starts pushing the wheelchair forward. Everyone is heading to the door. Then Mummy announces.*

**MUMMY** Oy. I need a loo. Tanya, sorry.

*Tanya throws her rucksack on the floor and leans against the door in a helpless forward bend, hands on her thighs. She looks at Dushan, who shrugs.*

**TANYA** One day she'll drive me mad.

## Scene 11

*Space: It's night; a building, enormous pit, surrounded by the silhouette of the city, high-rises. Single tree is left on the construction site. Construction mechanisms are parked, scattered around are all kinds of tools, chains, a crane, waste.*

*Mummy, Dushan and Tanya move slowly on the uneven surface, Dushan pushes the wheelchair, straining himself. Tanya sometimes helps him and pulls him to overcome a rock or a deeper hole. Mummy uses a torch to illuminate the path.*

**DUSHAN** *(in a low voice)* I'm totally sweaty ... aren't you heavy!

**MUMMY** *(out loud)* At least you get to do some bodybuilding. No worries, muscle ache is no disease!

**TANYA** *(muffled)* Lower your voice! Let's park here, on the flat patch, so that the old lady doesn't slip into the pit.

*They take the wheelchair and carry it to the last tree standing. It actually comprises two intertwined hazelnut trees. Dushan and Tanya sit on the ground. They are shattered having been manoeuvring the wheelchair. Tanya lights a cigarette. Mummy touches the trees for a moment, she feels them and pats them like a horse, rubbing her palm against the bark, smelling it.*

**MUMMY** (*out loud*) Just like the two of us. Siamese twins!

**TANYA** Tell her something, or ...

**DUSHAN** You can't keep shouting, dear. See that little barrack over there? That's where the watchman sleeps. We better be quiet not to wake him.

**MUMMY** (*whispering*) Sure, I just wanted ... since the two of us are together all the time ...

**DUSHAN** (*covers her mouth with his palm*) Hush!

**MUMMY** And what are we going to do?

**DUSHAN** You'll see.

*Tanya smokes, silently looking somewhere in front.*

**MUMMY** They demolished it, I tell you! Like a moon land. Exactly! And those machines ... Goodness ... like lunar vehicles!

*Dushan takes out a can of paint, brushes and gloves from the rucksack. Tanya is still smoking. She approaches a giant vehicle; chunky metal chain is hanging there, creating a makeshift swing. Tanya extinguishes the cigarette, sits on the chain, makes sure it holds. She starts to sway gently.*

**MUMMY** When you were little, you used to climb trees like a monkey. With the kids from the neighbourhood, you were building a bunker there. You even brought in some boards ... Though nothing came of it. I no longer remember why.

**TANYA** Why? The custodian stopped us, as one of the boards dropped on his head. He chased us around the park for nearly an hour. Like a madman! Holding a belt. He caught Alex first and beat him like a dog. But you can't know that, because you were, as always, at a meeting.

**MUMMY** Indeed ... yours was a romantic childhood. And these poor hazelnut trees are the only ones left to remember all that.

**DUSHAN** They won't. They'll cut them down, too. They'll put something classy in a planter.

**MUMMY** I don't get it. They cut abundant, healthy trees to plant some feeble sticks that need watering. The stupid lot we are.

**DUSHAN** The more dead trees, the more money in the account.

*Mummy watches the swaying Tanya.*

**MUMMY** I also want to. At least a little. I haven't done it for ages, last time with Tanya on the carousel.

**DUSHAN** You must be nuts. How are we to put you up here?

*Mummy looks at Dushan, smiling.*

**MUMMY** Dushky ... would you hold me for a moment? Just for a blink. This might be my last swing before I die. Where can an old wheelchair-bound woman roam. Tell me!

*Dushan stops removing items from his rucksack, hesitating briefly, as if contemplating what to do.*

**TANYA** I saw this coming! The nonsense! She keeps coming up with all that bullshit. Mummy, you don't realise ...

**DUSHAN** I'll get her up there somehow. I'll be careful so she doesn't fall. Can't be that difficult. We'll make her happy.



*Dushan climbs out of the pit to the wheelchair, Tanya stops swinging, gets off the chain and comes to the wheelchair. They slowly carry the wheelchair with Mummy into the pit. They work hard, at one point Mummy nearly falls off. When they finally reach the chain, Tanya lifts Mummy from the wheelchair and carefully sits her on the swing. Dushan supports her from behind.*

**DUSHAN** Now you have to find the centre of gravity ... else you fall. Grab this with your hands, but hold on tight. Don't lean forward. I'll secure you from behind!

*Mummy tries to sit on the chain as per Dushan's instructions. At one point she flips forward and nearly falls. Tanya catches her.*

**MUMMY** *(screams with laughter)* Gee!

**TANYA** Shhhhhush! I bet you'll knock out your teeth. What're you doing ... not forward, lean back!

**DUSHAN** Stop screaming, for God's sake. Alright, now you sit fine. Shall we? Tanya, watch out.

*Carefully and slowly they swing the chain with Mummy. She looks excited.*

**MUMMY** Feel free to get me higher. I'm fine, I'm sitting firmly like on a huge chain carousel!

**TANYA** Dushky, careful.

**DUSHAN** Easy-peasy!

**MUMMY** *(shrieks)* Faster! More! That's it! Blimey ... I'm on a giant chain.

**TANYA** Stop shouting!

*They keep swinging Mummy, she whispers in delight.*

**MUMMY** I'm flying! I need this at least once a week. I am as light as a feather and I breathe. Tanya, look, I'm finally taking a deep breath. More! Faster!

**TANYA** Mine! You turned into a little kid. Check this out, Dushky, she rejuvenated.  
Shall we buy you a swing, darling?

*Tanya and Dushan quicken the pace; at some point Mummy loses her balance and falls forward on Tanya. They drop to the ground. Mummy shrieks laughing.*

*Video projection behind the stage: somewhere in the distance, on the other side of the construction site, light comes on the in the watchman's barrack.*

**DUSHAN** Shhh! Get down and don't move. *(He also drops to the ground.)*

*For a while, everyone lies on the ground without the slightest movement, waiting to see what happens. The light in the barrack goes out again. It is quiet and dark.*

**DUSHAN** *(sits down, whispering)* Well, that was close.

*Tanya pushes Mummy away and pulls herself off the ground.*

**TANYA** *(upset, whispering)* Closing time! That's enough! One can explain to you a thousand times what you must not do, and you do it anyway. Plus you keep screaming! We nearly got caught.

*Mummy is still lying on the ground, rolling over, laughing softly.*

**MUMMY** Stop exaggerating. The watchman just went for a drink and you chickened out. Now lift me up, the gravel is a pain in the arse.

*Tanya and Dushan lift Mummy off the ground, dust her off and sit her in the wheelchair.*

**TANYA** *(whispers)* The party's over! We're not on holidays. And it's time you listen! Mad old woman!

*Tanya takes a plastic bag from her rucksack and places a can of paint in it. She puts the brush in a pocket of her leather jacket.*

**TANYA** (*whispering, turns to Dushan*) Can you make it? It will be faster.

**DUSHAN** Just so she doesn't start inventing some ...

**TANYA** Mummy, seriously ... No screaming! Whatever happens, just sit and wait.

Understood? We'll be fine.

**MUMMY** (*nods*) Where are we going?

**DUSHAN** (*points up*) Up!

*Holding the plastic bag, Tanya starts to slowly climb the ladder on the crane. Dushan strokes Mummy's hair – she is sitting in the wheelchair; silently. He presses his finger against his lips gesturing to be quiet. Holding the brush, he climbs the ladder after Tanya. We briefly watch them on the ladder, then they disappear from the stage. Mummy is left alone. Without a word, she is watching what is going on above her. She moves a little and tilts her head to get a better view.*

**MUMMY** Oh mine, she drives me ... Punks are off to heaven.<sup>11</sup> Ha!

*Mummy watches what is going on above her, at the height of the crane. The audience doesn't see it, Mummy merely comments the action, talking to herself.*

**MUMMY** I'm keen to know what she's about to do to that crane. I hope she doesn't intend to start it. Nonsense. She can't even turn on the washing machine, she still has to check the instructions manual. Perhaps she breaks the windows ... Rubbish. She would cut herself and she hates blood.

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<sup>11</sup> Transl. note: This expression is a pun on a Slovak title *Gypsies Are Going to Heaven* of the Soviet – Moldovan film from 1975. The film title in English has two versions: *Gypsies Are Found Near Heaven* and *Queen of the Gypsies*.

*She pauses, pulling her hoodie tighter around her neck.*

**MUMMY** Ha! Dushky's slowing down. The boy is afraid of heights. I empathise, I would feel the same. But Tanya, she goes like a motorbike. I'm really curious what the two are up ... hmm. When my colleagues wanted to piss off our driver, they poured sugar into his gas tank. He was fuming like a chimney. Hmm, I doubt it ... she never opened the tank. Perhaps Dushky has a plan.

*She yawns and checks her watch.*

**MUMMY** Lovely! It's nearly two in the morning.

*She retrieves a candy from her hoodie and rolls it in mouth. She looks up again.*

**MUMMY** (*hits her wheelchair wheel with her palm*) Witty fox, my girl! Only she can come up with something like that. Ha! They're up for surprise in the morning! Like in that joke ... how did it go? Hm ... a cowboy comes to the pub and calls: 'Who painted my horse red?!' A muscular fella gets up from the table and says: 'I did!' And the cowboy goes ... (*pause*) The cowboy goes ... (*pause*) The cowboy goes ... how did it go? ... Oh well, I forgot.

*She takes another candy and sucks it. Then she looks up to see what is going on, and busies herself with the candies, mumbling to herself.*

**MUMMY** I've got to admit, red is pretty. I always wanted to have a small cottage in the woods, white, with a lovely red roof. We would go there on weekends, I'd pick my currants in the garden. I do love picking currants. Since childhood. Tedious job, but I really enjoy it! Hmmm. (*looks up*) That, too, is quite a tedious job. Had I had fit legs, I'd already be up there.

*Video projection behind the stage: somewhere in the distance on the other side of the construction site, light in the barrack comes on, door opens. Mummy gets frightened, moves a little closer to the ladder and calls out.*

**MUMMY** Get out of there!

*As she tries to move the wheelchair to escape, red paint spills on her from above. The can of paint falls with a thud right next to her.*

**MUMMY** (*screams, more helpless than terrified*) Oops! Tanya! You ... you coloured me like that horse! Dushky! Tanya!

*Shouts, dog barking, police siren, voices on portable radio; Mummy is in the wheelchair under the crane, covered in paint.*

*She slowly raises her hands above her head, as if someone were pointing a gun at her; with a red, dirty face she is squinting into the headlights of a police car. Sound of music (industrial music, e.g. Ministries).*

**The End**