

A Map of the Region

a play
by Tim Luscombe

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Scene 2.

1988

Piret's apartment. Winter.

Most of the action of the play happens here.

It's a small, cramped, one-bedroom Soviet apartment.

The bulk of the sparse pieces of furniture are well-maintained items from the 1960s and 70s. Only a very few things evoke the 80s.

We see two rooms: the bedroom and the kitchen.

In the bedroom: two beds.

In the kitchen: a frail old woman sleeps in a high-backed, uncomfortable-looking armchair.

In the bedroom, Piret (a beautiful woman in her 30s) and Misha (a handsome, beefy but damaged man) are asleep in one bed. Tonü (a 12 year old boy) is asleep in the other.

Piret wakes. She at once tenses and reaches out for her watch. She peers at it and, relieved, drops it. Out of a partly opened eye she spies a bottle. Alarmed, she sits up, and examines it (vodka, empty). Last night, or part of it, returns to her.

Piret: Oh no. Oh God, oh God.

Misha grunts, and turns over, still sleeping.

Piret stands up, realises the extent of her headache, and throws some clothes on. She drops to her knees and races silently through her morning prayer.

She returns to the bed.

(Hissing) Wake up. You have to go.

Misha: Eh?

Piret: Shhh.

She signals the other bed, where Tonü's asleep.

Misha: Morning, beautiful.

Piret: What?

Misha: What?

Piret: What?

They look blankly at each other, and then the full truth dawns.

Misha: *(Pleased)* Oh yeah / I remember.

Piret: *(Horried)* Oh my God.

Misha: *(Pulling her back to bed)* Come / on.

Piret: Get off.

Misha: Oh. Ok.

He returns to sleep.

Piret: No, don't – You've got to –

Tonü wakes up.

Piret smartly covers Misha with a sheet.

(Breezily to Tonü) Morning.

Tonü makes a wordless greeting and leaves the room. He heads for the bathroom (through the kitchen).

As soon as Tonü's gone:

Quick!

Misha: Come here!

Misha pulls Piret into bed with him.

Piret: Get / off me.

Misha: What's the matter? You were a lot / friendlier last night.

Piret: (*Struggling*) Stop it, for / Christ's sake.

Misha: Come on, I love it hungover.

She pushes him out of bed.

(*Landing naked on the floor*) What the fuck?

Misha has two or three large, sinister, blue-black patches on his torso and legs. Not exactly burns and not exactly bruises.

Piret: What the hell have I done? Ruined everything.

Misha struggles to his feet, still naked, and starts to sing:

Misha: (*Intimately*) ...Dark eyes, passionate eyes
Burning and splendid eyes /
How I love you, how I fear you...

Piret: Oh God, I remember that. Jesus, Piret, you don't think. Think before you ask for things.

He drags Piret to him and, still naked, dances with her. For a second, she's too weak to fight. Then she grabs Misha's clothes from the floor.

Quickly.

She shoves the clothes at Misha.

Here.

But they fall to the ground.

For Christ's sake put them on. (*Miming*) You have to go. You understand? You. Go. Now.

Tonü returns.

Tonü, go and make breakfast.

Tonü: Make breakfast? You mean actually go in the cupboard and –?

Piret: Tonü, please!

Tonü: Mum, who is this?

Misha: *(On his hands and knees)* Where's the pot?

Tonü: Why's he here? Is this about Dad?

Misha: Pot?

Piret: Go to the kitchen. Make sure Grandma's ok. I'm sorting this out.

Tonü: What's wrong with him? What are those blue marks on his –?

Misha stands up triumphantly with the pot in his hand.

Misha: Aha! D'you know what? I'd love some coffee.

He pisses in the pot.

Tonü: Mum!

Piret: Oh my God.

Tonü: Make him go to the bathroom!

Misha: *(Pissing)* Coffee?

Tonü: Mum? What's going on?

Piret: I've made a really bad mistake.

Tonü: You asked him to come?

Piret: I must have done.

Tonü: You asked him to come and sleep in your bed without any clothes on and piss in the pot?

Piret: Don't say piss.

Tonü: What would Dad / say?

Piret: Please, Tonü, don't you think I –? God.

Tonü: At least make him put some clothes on.

Piret: I'm so sorry.

Misha: Here. (*Proffers the pot to Tonü*).

Tonü: Mum!

Piret: Put it down.

Misha: I don't / understand you, woman.

Piret: Put. It. Down.

Misha: 'Poot eet darn'.

Piret takes the full pot from Misha and puts it down.

(*Going back to bed*) Coffee? Any chance of a CO-FFEE?

The front door buzzes –

Which wakes Ema in the other room.

Piret: Oh no. Oh no. (*Grabs her watch*).

Ema: Piret! It's the door. Don't answer it!

Piret: This bloody watch.

Ema: It isn't me they want.

Piret: Stay here. Don't let him out.

Tonü: Don't leave me with him!

Misha: Coffee?

Piret goes into the kitchen, heading for the front door, but Ema bars her way.

Ema: Don't open the door, Piret! Don't!

Piret: I have to, Mama.

Buzzer.

Ema: (*Panicked*) No, because, then you'd open it and it would be a friend –

Piret: Listen to me –

Ema: Or a neighbour bringing a bunch of sweet peas on my name day –

Piret: It's ok, Mama, you're safe –

Ema: Now you don't answer –

Piret: Yes, I have to –

Ema: You do nothing. You stay in the forest. You don't go into town –

Buzzer.

You'll only get into trouble –

Piret: This is important –!

Ema: You trust no one, you hear me? You don't know whether they're a real criminal or just an ordinary person –

Piret: Mama, please. Let me –

Ema: Some of them are murderers. They shout in the night. You all roll over, all at once, or they hit you...

In the bedroom Misha has begun to cough. It's a terrible cough.

(Re the coughing) Piret?

Ema's moving to the bedroom.

Piret: Mama, no! Stop! Don't go in there!

Ema: Who is that...?

Piret: Mama. Don't.

Ema: There's someone in the –

Ema goes into the bedroom and confronts the naked stranger.

Misha: *(To Ema)* Ah, some service at last. I'd like some coffee please.

Ema screams.

She hobbles back to the kitchen. Misha follows her, and Tonü follows him.

Tonü: Do you know what I'm gonna be?

Misha: If I told you I was dying, would it make any difference? / Think of it as a last request.

Ema: Piret! Piret! It's a naked Russian!

Tonü: I'm going to be a diver – a deep-sea diver.

The doorbell buzzes again.

To read the entire play, please contact Tim directly on
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