

Lidia, Nikolai, and the Crisis in Krasnodon

by

Rosa Lovo

Rosa Lovo

540-230-1622

rosamlobo.14@gmail.com

Playwright's Notes

This show is based on a true story. The Germans took control of Eastern Ukraine in July 1942. By the end of September, the smaller rebel groups in the city of Krasnodon united to form the Young Guard. The Young Guard sought to sabotage any German activity in the city and surrounding villages while also covertly sharing accurate news about the war. All actions portrayed here were described in the diary of Lidia Makarovna Androsova.

This is about life in a war zone where violence and fear are so commonplace that you hardly notice it anymore. The spies in this story don't wear black and roll across the stage. Their heroism is not announced with fanfare. These characters are a sepia photograph brought to life.

Characters:

Lidia Makárovna Andrósova: Also Lida or Lidóchka. Seventeen year old clandestine agent. Employed at mine No. 5. Intermittent diarist and willful, yet pessimistic secretary to *the Young Guard*.

Nikolai Stepánovich Sumský: Also Kolya. Eighteen year old clandestine agent. Employed at mine No. 5. Manages a 12 person division of the Young Guard. In love with Lidia Makarovna. Serious leader.

Vladímir Alexándrovich Zhdánov: Also Volodya. Eighteen year old clandestine agent serving under Nikolai Stapnovich's Young Guard division. Employed at mine No. 5. Best friend to Nikolai Stepanovich. Headstrong and a bit smug.

Nina Georgievna Kezikóva: Also Ninochka. Seventeen year old clandestine agent serving under Nikolai Stapnovich's Young Guard division. Employed at mine No. 5. Best friend to Lidia Makarovna. Cheerful and good.

Yuri Fedótovich Polyánsky: Also Yurochka. Eighteen year old clandestine agent serving under Nikolai Stapnovich's Young Guard division. Employed at mine No. 5. Plays the mandolin. Honest and loyal.

Makar Timofeyevich Andrósov: Married to Daria, and Lidia's

father. A rebel leader and head of mine No. 18. Tired survivor of POW camp.

Daria Kuzminíchna Andrósova: Also Dasha. Makar's wife and Lidia's mother. She runs the household with an iron fist, hiding her fear for the future behind the crease in her brow.

An ensemble of at least 4, or any higher even number, will play the Neighbor, Friends, and Germans. These are speaking roles in their respective scenes, but more could mingle in the background during scenes that take place in the street or at the parties.

On names:

Eastern Slavic naming customs dictate that most individuals will have three legal names. The first name is personal to the individual like Lidia or Vladimir, and comes with a variety of common derivatives. Lidia is shortened to Lida and Vladimir becomes Volodya. Next is a patronymic, the working middle name formed by attaching a gender specific suffix to one's father's first name. Girls take evna/ovna while boys take evich/ovich. The family name is also gender specific, with women adding an 'a' to the end of their father or husband's surname.

When addressing someone of higher rank, one refers to that person by their first name and patronymic. People of the same status like students or miners, call each other by their first or last name only. Diminutives, such as Kolya or Ninochka, are used between friends and family.

For simplicity's sake, the play uses their first name and patronymic in the name tags only when a new character is introduced while more traditional distinctions are reserved for the dialog.

Scene 1

Soviet Hospital in the Eastern Ukraine, 1942. Lidia Makarovna

Androsova sits in bed, writing in a small journal. Nikolai

Stepanovich enters first.

Lidia Makarovna:

Kolya? You ought to be home!

Nikolai Stepanovich:

You ought to be asleep!

Lidia:

What if the police stop you?

Nikolai:

I wanted to see you again. Besides, I have good news. Polyansky
and Zhdanov are back in the city.

Lidia:

Good! Nina will be happy to see them, I am sure.

(Nina Georgievna and Vladimir Zhdanov enter)

Nina Georgievna:

And you!

Lidia:

Ninotchka! Volodya!

Vladimir Zhdanov:

How nice to see you!

Nina:

The secretary held us up downstairs; she was dying to know where
I got my hair cut.

Vladimir:

I have no idea why.

Nina:

What is this?

Lidia: *(She jerks the journal from the foot of the bed as Nina
reaches for it, hugging it to her chest.)*

Kolya brought me my journal from Mama's apartment.

Nina:

You're writing again?

Lidia:

As much as I can.

Vladimir:

Good! You can write down Yuri's new song!

Nina: *(to Nikolai)*

Our Yurochka? Is he really here?

Nikolai (nods):

And he can stay if he works at the mines.

Vladimir: *(To Nikolai and Lidia)*

When will you both be back in commission?

Lidia:

Sunday.

Nikolai:

Sergei Nikolayevic gave her exemption until the 29th for a whole flu, and me until the 30th for only a cough!

Lidia:

That doctor will not let me go to work; he doesn't understand that they'll beat me when I do return.

Nina: (To Vladimir)

It's true! On the farms, they at least fed us. Now you have to bleed and split six kopeks with a whole mining crew.

Vladimir:

Six? I heard five!

Lidia:

Well, I would not work at all if I had had the choice, even if it saved me from those damned officers. They did not take me to Germany, although there had been plans to, or to Stalingrad. But they will probably take us all away soon.

Nina:

No! Don't think this way. These times are difficult enough without more melancholy.

Lidia:

And without friends. We have that if nothing else.

Vladimir : *(He checks to make sure no one is listening.)*

Is there still *other work* waiting for the Germans?

Nikolai and Lidia, together:

Plenty.

Nikolai:

I will request an assignment for you soon. Perhaps, when I visit

Tosya.

Lidia:

We should have a party, now that we're reunited. We can play music together. Papa and Mama are coming to take me home tomorrow, I am sure that they will be happy to have such *ruckus* shaking their walls again.

Nina:

Yes! Let's do it there!

Nikolai:

I think the hospital is overdue for another pie delivery too.

Nina:

I'll put my sister to work the minute I get home.

Lidia: *(Puts her journal under her pillow)*

Good. Now get back home.

(Nina and Vladimir protest).

Go, and try not to get stopped. I won't get better until you do!

(All exit but Nikolai).

Nikolai:

I will come visit you at home soon. I promise.

Vladimir: (From offstage)

Kolya, are you coming?

Lidia:

Oh, what slow German time! There is no way to sleep, not that I want to. Maybe if I close my eyes and think on everything...and

I think of when I will stop thinking.

Scene 2

In the Androsov family's apartment, early morning before the sun rises.

Daria Kuzminichna:

Up! Up!

Lidia (From bed):

I am up, Mama.

Daria:

Do you think your husband will let you sleep in?

Lidia (Rising):

If he loves me he will.

Daria:

When is the Sums koy boy taking your lazy ass off my hands, then?

Lidia:

Kolya and I are not engaged, Mama.

Daria:

Why not?

Lidia:

I'm busy! I mean, are we not all a bit preoccupied, right now?

Trying to stay off the streets and out of jail...

Makar Timofeyevich:

A little jail from time to time is good for you.

Lidia:

Good morning, Papa.

Makar:

It builds character. You would be surprised how much character you can build in just a month, and you need a whole lot of character before you get married.

Daria (To Makar):

And you need to go pick up the paper before they sell out.

Makar:

Me! Out on the street before tea?

Daria:

Before I even heat the samovar!

Makar:

Bitter crone!

Lidia:

Papa can stay in a while longer.

Makar:

No! You heard my orders!

Lidia:

Kolya will visit this morning; I'm sure he will bring a copy with him.

Makar:

Ah-ha! Now, Dasha, you won't give your son cold water to drink will you? Put on the samovar! How nice of him to stop in...just to bring me the paper and warm up...and not for any other reason.

Lidia:

I need it to go read to the injured in our hospital.

Makar:

Very likely.

Lidia:

I am seventeen years old, Papa. Kolya and I both have so much more party work to do.

Nikolai:

Good morning, Makar Timofeyevich. Good morning, Daria Kuzminichna. Good morning, Lidochka. Look what I picked up in the bazaar. Stanislav Illich made this map by hand with an atlas from the school and some newspapers.

Lidia:

The newspapers don't print frontline reports anymore, not with the Germans breathing down their necks.

Nikolai:

The map aligns with this summer's news. From this line over is us and the other occupied territories.

Lidia:

How much further -

Daria:

Do you want toast with your tea also, Kolya?

Nikolai:

No, thank you. I have to hurry out.

Daria:

Oh?

Nikolai:

I am visiting Antonia -

Lidia (*Jealous*):

Who?

Nikolai:

Eliseenko.

Lidia:

You have a meeting with Tosya! Why didn't you say so? How much further inland do you think they've gone?

Nikolai:

Do you work tonight, Makar Timofeyevich?

Makar:

Indeed. Third shift. I am going back to bed after breakfast.

Daria:

Are you? Am I chopping the firewood, then?

Nikolai:

If you can wait until 6 or there about, Zhdanov and I will bring firewood when we come over for dinner.

Daria:

I never said -

Lidia:

I invited them over, Mama. It is only a few friends from Komsomol who just returned from the collective farms! I'll cook and everything!

Daria:

I will cook! I am taking a meal upstairs to that new mother.

Lidia:

Even better!

Nikolai:

Then, I will see you tonight, Lidia.

Neighbor:

Androssov! Androssov!

Makar:

What, man? What news?

Neighbor:

Truckloads of soldiers parked outside the city!

Daria:

Our soldiers?

Makar:

Nonsense!

Neighbor:

Truckloads of German soldiers. Outside the city coming from
Voroshilovgrad.

Nikolai:

They're retreating.

Makar:

Which way did they come?

Neighbor:

They are driving in along the access road.

Lidia (*As she begins to understand*):

They're moving.

Neighbor:

Retreating, you mean.

Lidia:

No. They are driving west to move into their warm, winter
apartments.

Audio plays of an airplane flying by.

Nikolai:

I should leave.

Neighbor:

Let me go with you, son. No one should be on the streets alone
today.

Makar exits with his drink.

Lidia:

Damned Germans!

Daria:

Five months, now, we have lived like guests in our own home.

Lidia:

Will you come with me to get my hair cut, Mama?

Daria:

Of course, Lidochka. Although, the bazaar is hardly ever open.

Lidia:

Half empty when it is.

Daria:

Eggs, Lida?

Lidia:

Yes, please. Here, let me fix your tea. **(Pause)** Do you think
they will remember to salt the Earth when it's all over?

Daria:

I doubt it. Too expensive!

Scene 3

Later that day, in the apartment.

Nina:

Whoo! I missed this chair!

Lidia:

Just the chair?

Nina:

I can't miss you if you are always in my thoughts.

Lidia:

You're so full of it! Go answer the door.

Yuri Fedotovich:

Nina Georgievna! How are you? Hello...

Nina:

Hello, Yuri.

Yuri:

Hello, Nina. Here! Take my mandolin! I dropped some of my sheet music in the hall.

(Yuri exits. Vladimir enters, carrying firewood).

Vladimir:

Lida, we passed your Papa on the street! Where is Daria Kuzminichna?

Lidia:

Visiting the soldier's wife upstairs.

Vladimir:

Sumskoy has the big box. Only he's in the hall helping little Yurochka.

Nina:

He's going to play for us!

Lidia:

Tea?

Vladimir:

Not yet. Water and electronics don't pair well together.

Nina:

You need something! Even if you just let it get cold on the floor.

Vladimir:

I will make myself a cup. Do you have jam, Lida?

Nikolai and Yuri come back. Kolya has a package under his arm with the radio in it. Vladimir sits, begins to take tools out of his pocket, and laying them out.

Nikolai:

Hello, Nina. Lida, do you have space in your album for Yuri's new music?

Lidia:

Probably, let me check.

Yuri (To Nina):

I learned a few folk songs from the grandpas on the collective farm. And there is one original composition that I have recently perfected.

Nina:

Oh? What are you calling it?

Yuri:

I think I'm going to go with "Brown Eyed Girl."

Yuri plays and sings for a starstruck Nina while Lidia serves the tea. As the song goes on, we see the boys off center working on the radio and slowly begin to hear crackling static. Lidia sits down and Nikolai brings her a page of notes that she places in the album. She hands him a blank sheet of paper. The power suddenly goes out and there is a loud whine from the radio.

Nina:

Lidochka, did you not pay the bill?

Rough German is heard over the radio. When it stops, Yuri begins to play again

Scene 4

On the streets.

Nina:

He shook my hand when he left last night. Not a hug, just a handshake and I can't even say if he walked me to my door or if he was just heading towards the stairs!

Lidia:

Both are equally likely in my opinion.

Nikolai:

How does your chest feel, Nina?

Nina:

Sore.

Lidia:

He did sing to you all night.

Nina:

He sings at every meeting.

Lidia:

I thought you liked it.

Nina:

I do! But not when the songs are all for Antonia!

Nikolai:

Go easy on him, Nina. I heard that things between them had

gotten very serious over the summer.

Lidia (To Nikolai):

You. Are. Not. Helping!

Nikolai:

Really?

Lidia:

Nina, he just needs time. I would feel worse if he rushed into things. Here take my hand; I won't let you fall and break your head before we even get to the doctor.

Nina:

I am too afraid to broach the subject with him! I know he will tell me exactly how he feels and I just couldn't stand it.

Nikolai:

Would you be happier if he lied?

Lidia:

Nonsense!

Nina:

No. I only want to know where I stand. I feel so directionless...

I am long overdue for a romantic assignment!

Yuri:

Hello!

Nikolai:

Good morning, Polyansky.

Yuri:

Good morning, Nikolai, Lidia, Nina.

Nina:

Are you well?

Yuri:

Yes, I only came for my physical. And you?

Nina:

I can feel my heart boiling over in my chest.

Yuri:

Probably nerves, then. You have an appointment with Sergei

Nikolayevic?

Nina:

Indeed. Lidia has been taking care of me while Mama and Claudia

work.

Yuri:

Your sister is in good health?

Nina:

Yes.

Yuri:

Is your mother meeting you here?

Nina:

No.

Lidia:

We will stay and wait to walk her home.

Yuri:

I can stay. If that is what you want, Nina. Then, our friends
can get back to their party work.

Nina:

Yes! They are so good, but so terribly busy. Yes, please, thank
you, Yuri.

Yuri:

Here take my arm so you don't lose your balance on the ice.

Nikolai:

Was I ever like that?

Lidia:

No. Me?

Nikolai:

Never, though I would not have minded if you were.

Lidia:

Of course, men always have the most to benefit from girls'
insecurities.

Nikolai:

Well, I like you as you are.

Lidia:

Curt and gangly?

Nikolai:

Here.

(Pause)

What do you want for your birthday?

Lidia:

My birthday? I had almost forgotten about it!

Nikolai:

That's not an answer.

Lidia:

It's the truth! Besides, for everything that this year has brought, I am most happy that it brought me you.

Nikolai:

Damn, that set the bar pretty high.

Lidia:

Shut up!

(They kiss)

Nikolai:

Jewelry maybe?

*(Police sirens sound and they push each other away running
offstage in opposite directions)*

Scene 5

In the apartment.

Lidia:

I stayed up reading until midnight.

Nina:

That new book Kolya brought you? What was it called...*The Great Steppe?*

Lidia:

Yes.

Nina:

Did you read to him?

Lidia:

No, he did not come visit last night.

Nina:

We will check the sign in sheet this morning.

Lidia:

If his name is missing, he must be in jail. If his name is there
and he stood me up -

Nina:

The liar will only *want* to be in jail!

(They laugh).

What was weigh in yesterday?

Lidia:

Low enough to annoy the foreman, high enough for the check
weighman to mark it down.

Nina:

Good.

Lidia:

We shouldn't work too hard for the Germans. Lest they think
we've changed sides.

Nina:

Even if their food deliveries are more reliable? I'm kidding!
Anyway, I will need to go to the bazaar for lamp oil after we
get paid.

Lidia:

Do you need me to go with you?

Nina:

No thank you, I can manage.

Lidia:

Just as well. I'm a better seamstress than you anyway!

Nina:

Have we taken everything necessary to the labor exchange?

Vladimir:

Hey, girls! Looking forward to the holiday weekend?

Lidia:

What is there to celebrate! The Germans don't abide by our
constitution!

Nina:

No, but your mama and papa are taking a trip to Orlovka, so the
apartment will be free for us to use.

Yuri:

All alone this weekend, Lidia Androsova? Hello, Ninochka. How
about a party?

Lidia:

Maybe later, Yuri, we're too busy now!

Nina:

He might be onto something! How often do your parents stop
arguing long enough to make a decision?

Vladimir:

Nina Georgievna!

Nina:

I'm only saying that we should honor their little holiday!

Nikolai:

We will all spend the holiday in the hospital or jail if we're
late to work!

Scene 6

In the apartment.

Makar:

I hate to see it like this.

Daria:

We will build another, one day.

Makar:

Of course, it's only that...I used to walk Lidochka to school everyday. When she grew too old, I could still come look out the window and remember her as she was. Big ears, chicken legs.

Lidia:

Papa, please!

Daria:

Better that it burns and they lose our records than they send the children away. Look at that smoke! How long do you think it will burn?

Makar:

Longer than it will take for them to pull down the flags.

Daria:

They will burn those too!

Makar:

Our rebels, it seems they are not afraid of heights. They made

it to the fifth floor of the school and hung them over the
machinery at the mines.

Lidia:

It wasn't a school anymore, Papa. The Germans use it now.

Daria:

Used it.

Makar:

I wonder where they found all the flags.

Daria:

Don't be thick, Makar! Honestly, I can see the stitches on the
scythe from here!

Makar:

Wonder where they found all that red cloth.

Daria:

With the labor exchange gone, there will be twice as many
soldiers patrolling the streets.

Makar:

Right! With one less building to guard.

Daria:

I don't know how much of this I would write down, Lida.

Lidia:

It's only an electrical fire, Mama; they happen all the time.

Daria:

Did those corroded wires hand out pamphlets too?

(Reading the flyer from over Lidia's shoulder)

"Honor Stalin this Constitution Day! Our Red Army is over the
hill! Liberate yourself!" Lidia!

Lidia:

Hey! Give it back, Mama!

Daria:

Where did you get this?

Lidia:

What does it matter?

Daria:

Where!

Makar:

Dasha, please! What are you doing!

(Daria moves to light the pamphlets on fire)

Daria:

If she is caught with these, we're all as good as gone!

Lidia:

I picked it up off the street! There were hundreds on the
street!

Daria:

I will make it up to you, Lidia. Whatever you want for your
birthday!

Lidia:

My birth - will you stop the war? Will you bring Nika back?
Which first?

Makar:

Do *not* bring your brother into this foolishness!

Lidia:

Thousands are already dead, Mama! How many more lay dying? What
do you really want me to do? I will not sit with my hands in my
lap while those *bastards* tear apart our home!

Daria:

You could be killed!

Makar: *(taking the lit papers from Daria's hand and stomping
them out.)*

All this over a piece of paper?

Lidia:

I will not die, Mama! And if I do I would rather have been a
patriot than a child!

Daria:

Our daughter is a zealot; that doesn't worry you?

Makar:

They are children! How else would they react?

(Makar exits)

Lidia: *(To Daria)*

Right now our life is lies and loss. Life behind enemy lines is hardly worth having. Let me have what I can. Let me take it!

(Daria exits).

Scene 7

In the apartment with jazz playing in the background. Full cast
save Daria and Makar present..

Yuri:

Really? You just get to sit around all day on the job and get
paid?

Nina:

Not all the time, silly! Just until they finish building the
overpass.

Lidia:

They took all our tools and my team took all of her's.

Yuri:

Yes, latrine duty is priority work, isn't it!

Lidia:

Shut up! Even their shit is our problem.

Nina:

But everything they build is shit.

Yuri:

That's why it burns so well!

Lidia:

The defense at Morozovsk¹ is burning while we speak.

¹ More-oh-zohv-sk

Yuri:

Truly?

Lidia:

More or less. I know that they are falling back.

Nina:

My sister heard from the jam man at the bazaar that it's the
Italians.

Lidia:

What about them?

Nina:

They don't want to fight anymore.

Yuri:

Get in line!

Nina:

They aren't used to the cold and the German's supply line has
been cut off. No new coats.

Yuri:

I want one of those coats. Take off the belt and it's basically
a kaftan.

Nina:

I'm happy with my valenki. Besides, if you keep your head and
feet warm, you hardly even feel the rest!

Lidia:

Which supply line?

Nina:

North.

Lidia:

Then won't the trucks come through here when they're called.

Yuri:

If they're called!

Lidia:

What do you mean?

Vladimir:

Great party, Lidia, but I have to run home. Mama thought I was only coming for dinner, you know how she'll pull my ear if I stay gone too late.

Nina:

I'm surprised you have any ears left!

Nikolai:

I will walk with him.

Lidia:

You said you could spend the night.

Nikolai:

You know how errands like this pop up.

Lidia:

Is it an errand or are you taking him home?

Yuri:

Ugh, somebody, change the record!

Nikolai:

Have fun tonight, Lida.

Lidia:

Why can't you stay?

Nikolai:

Well, if I go out now I may as well go home.

Vladimir:

There are not as many soldiers on the streets tonight,

Nikolai:

No.

Vladimir:

Just the Romanian brutes.

Nikolai:

And none at all on these backroads.

Lidia:

They don't need a reason to arrest you, Nikolai.

Vladimir:

Who said we were going to give them one?

Nikolai:

Come on, Zhdanov.

Lidia:

Will you come back?

Nikolai:

I'm not sure if I can, Lida.

Vladimir:

We need to leave now.

Lidia:

Promise me you will come back.

Vladimir:

Lidia!

Nikolai:

Later...

(Nikolai and Vladimir exit).

Nina:

Come away from the door, Lidia.

Lidia:

Did they say anything to you?

Nina:

About Volodya having to leave early?

Lidia:

They didn't leave; they went somewhere. Look! They're waling out
of town now!

Nina:

Into the alley isn't 'out of town.'

Lidia:

It's away from the apartments!

Nina:

Maybe they went the long way to keep out of trouble. Then again,
they are trouble.

Yuri:

Ninotchka, you'll be the only one in trouble if you don't dance
with me. You will dance with me, won't you? Please, Nina?

Lidia:

Yuri, did Volodya tell you where he was going tonight?

Yuri:

Tosya had a favor to ask of him, so probably that.

Lidia:

What was the favor?

Yuri:

No clue. I'm doing my part (*gestures to the wild party behind
them*). That's all I know to do tonight.

Nina:

The boys will be fine.

Lidia: (Walks away from the party, intending to go offstage while Nina and Yuri join the ensemble. Those who sat chatting now cheer and rise to dance as a new song comes on. One steps out and approaches Lidia).

Ensemble Member:

Looking for a partner, comrade?

The ensemble member pulls her into a twirl and she spins changing partners multiple times. When she stops she is on the other side of the stage, alone. The spotlight shines on her while the others dance in the dark and the music gradually gets louder. Just as it becomes uncomfortable, she sits, the music stops, and the lights cut off. All exit but Lidia.

Scene 8

There is a knock at the door, Lidia lets Nikolai inside.

Nikolai:

It's cold out tonight. Do you have any firewood? *(Pause)*. I came back. Just like you asked.

Lidia:

I knew you would. Zhdanov's house is not very far away.

Nikolai:

I had to go, Lidia.

Lidia:

Go where?

Nikolai:

You know that Eliseenko's work is need-to-know only.

Lidia:

I need to know.

Nikolai:

You want to know.

Lidia:

Of course, I do! If not what, then that something is happening!

Nikolai:

Something happened! Is that enough?

Lidia:

What are you hiding?

Nikolai:

Nothing, Lidia!

Lidia:

Then why did you lie to me?

Nikolai:

Don't you know something is always happening during a party?

Lidia:

But why did I have to hear it from Yuri?

Nikolai:

What did Polyansky tell you?

Lidia:

This isn't his fault.

Nikolai:

Why are you protecting him?

Lidia:

Don't change the subject!

Nikolai:

So you admit it?

Lidia:

Admit what?

Nikolai:

That you trust him more than you trust me?

Lidia:

If he's under my nose instead of wandering around the city all night, then yes!

Nikolai:

Why don't you go write down what he told you in that little diary of yours!

Lidia:

What?

Nikolai:

Dammit! You act you're the only one who wants to know everything!

Lidia:

How stupid do you think I am? My own father doesn't know what I am and what I do! Do you think I'm going to sign, seal, and hand deliver our execution notes to the Germans? I don't write anything down! I've always been careful! They don't even follow me home anymore! Or Nina! So, I think that your friends, at least, have a right to know when and where you plan on laying down to die for the city!

Nikolai:

Lidia, I - nothing happened tonight, Lidia. I didn't even see a German. Nothing serious happened, I swear.

Lidia:

Everything you do is serious.

Nikolai:

Everything we do. But I didn't even meet a soldier tonight. That's why it was easy to go cut their communication lines out by the access roads. I don't know why I didn't tell you right away. It didn't seem so bad when every other day is bombs and beatings. A late night stroll and pair of wire cutters didn't seem worth bothering you about.

Lidia:

You will tell me the next time. I'm not asking, Kolya.

Nikolai:

I won't make a promise that I can't keep. You will know if I am arrested. If I live or die. You will know that I love you. I will always love you, Lidochka. I have never loved anyone so much and I probably never will again.

(They kiss)

Lidia:

What am I going to do with you?

Nikolai:

You can promise me something. Promise that you'll leave me if something goes wrong. If something bad happens, you will take our friends and go away.

Lidia:

I won't make a promise that I can't keep.

Scene 9

In the apartment.

Daria:

Happy Birthday, my Lidochka.

Lidia:

Happy Election Day, Mama.

Daria:

To hell with that fat Russian! Today is the most important day
in all Ukranian history!

Makar:

But can you still say it in Ukranian, eh, Dasha? My how much you
have grown: I can't even recognize my little girl.

Lidia:

You see me everyday, Papa!

Makar:

Hush! I am the big foreman now, so you have to listen to me!

Lidia:

I can't imagine what they need you for, unless they want to be
here for another winter.

Daria:

Lidia, I think I hear your friends coming up!

Nikolai, Vladimir, Nina, and Yuri (All together, overlapping):

Surprise! Happy Birthday, Lida! Such a pretty day to be
eighteen. Congratulations!

Nina:

Mine first!

(To Nikolai) Out of the way, *sweet heart!* I've known her longer.

Makar:

Good morning, children!

Nikolai, Vladimir, Nina, and Yuri: *(All together, overlapping)*

Good morning, Makar Andreevich! Hello, Daria Kuzminichna! Good
morning, comrades!

Daria:

Are you all staying for tea? The dishes I'll have...

Nina: *(She gives Lidia a card and a small brown parcel)*

Here, Lida, please!

Lidia:

"To: Lidochka, my best and only true friend. Without your help I
could never - "

Nina:

Don't read it all here! Treasure it! Quietly! Here, open this!

Lidia *(Taking the parcel):*

I'll put it up in my room tonight; I promise. Look, Mama, it's a
photo of Nina and her sister!

Daria:

How precious! I wish you were more photogenic.

Nina:

Be happy the Romanians didn't snatch it up too!

Makar:

Those cowards ran through your apartment too?

Nina:

They came in, stole all our canned food, and Claudia's pishki²,
hot out of the oil!

Yuri:

I understand; I could be a thief for Clava's pishki.

Daria:

But would you be a Romanian or a German or a Russian?

Yuri:

I may as well be Soviet if it keeps me out of Siberia.

Daria:

Well, I have breakfast for party members and a gift for my
Ukranian daughter. Here, Lidia.

Lidia: *(Take the wrapped fabric from Daria)*

Where did you find this?

Makar:

² A dish mentioned directly in the diary that was the Soviet response to doughnuts.

How did she pay for it?

Daria:

I have some friends in the bazaar, but don't worry about that. I thought we could make you an Easter dress with it.

Lidia:

Thank you, Mama.

Nikolai:

I didn't wrap mine. *(He hands her a small, but ornate hair comb)*. I remember you saying that you had broken your old one.

Lidia:

Kolya, thank you -

(Gunshots interrupt the party and they all duck down to the floor).

Makar:

Quiet! *(pause, then Makar rises)*.

Daria:

Careful.

Makar:

It was in the streets. I don't hear anyone coming up the stairs.

Yuri:

Maybe they were fighting with each other

Nikolai:

Or perhaps there was a scuffle during the retreat.

Vladimir:

Not even. They're probably just making noise to feel big again.

Fucking cowards.

(Vladimir rises first, Nikolai behind him to keep him from running out the door.)

Makar:

Sit back down, boy! All of you sit down! The sun's not even up,

yet.

Lidia:

I'll lay these in my room and put on the samovar.

Nina:

I'll pick out a record to play!

Lidia:

Thank you.

Scene 10

On the streets as Yuri, Nikolai, and Vladimir walk to work. Nina runs onto stage. He catches her in his arms as she is about to pass him. She is in a frenzy on the verge of tears.

Yuri:

Nina!

Nikolai:

Slow down!

Vladimir:

What is the matter with you?

Nina:

I have to leave! They saw me!

Yuri:

Who did?

Vladimir:

Breathe, Nina.

Yuri:

I can't help, if I don't understand.

Nina:

The Germans, they were in the bazaar when I went for a haircut -

Vladimir:

Afraid of some kraut buying a razor?

Nina:

Don't laugh! I saw them arrest Yevgeny, Ivan, and Victor.

Yuri:

Did they chase after you?

Nina:

No. I don't think so...They were already putting them into their cars, Yuri, there was nothing I could do!

Yuri:

It's alright, Nina. Alright...do you need me to walk you home?

Nikolai:

No. We shouldn't miss work.

Yuri (To Nikolai):

What are you talking about?

Nikolai (To Yuri):

We don't want to raise suspicion. Look, Nina, you can make it back to the apartments. I'm certain. Look how far you've come.

Yuri (To Nikolai):

Look how much further we have left to go.

Nina:

He's right, Yuri. I can make it. I'm certain.

Nikolai:

Just a moment before you go (*He opens his coat to remove a*

pencil and notepad. He writes something down). Give this to
Lidia for me, please.

(Both parties exit the stage in opposite directions).

Meanwhile, in the apartment.

Daria:

This is one time I will excuse you and your delinquent friends'
behaviour.

Lidia:

A sale?

Daria:

Don't tell me how they did it! You know I can't lie, but if the
bazaar has hooks and eyes for your dress then I don't care where
they came from!

Lidia:

Understood. I was thinking of buying a chain today. Then I could
wear my brooch as a locket and not have to take it off for work.

Daria:

What brooch?

Lidia:

Kolya gave it to me after the party, see there is a picture of
the two of us inside. It felt too intimate to wave around in

front of everyone.

Daria:

You look so small.

Lidia:

It is a miniature.

Daria:

No! This picture is from a year ago, even then you looked so much...younger. Now you're always covered in dust from the coal mines and your cheeks have hollowed out.

(There is a pause and Daria hugs Lidia. Nina enters.)

Lidia:

Nina, what's the matter?

Nina:

The Germans are in the bazaar tearing everything apart!

Daria:

Are you alright? Where is your mother?

Nina:

Home, I think. I haven't gone upstairs, yet. Listen, they took the boys selling everything from that supply truck we raided last weekend. Oh, and here. I saw the boys - our boys - on their way to the mines. Sumskey told me to give you this.

Daria:

You poor child, sit down. You look so out of breath.

Lidia: (*Reads the note*).

No, Nina, you should go home. Check and make sure Claudia is
back home safe.

Nina:

Excuse me, Daria Kuzminichna. I really should go and check on my
mother. Goodbye.

(Nina exits)

Daria:

I am going to put on the samovar.

Lidia:

You don't think we should start packing.

Daria:

Well, they aren't after me. And they already took your father
once, so he knows what to do and when to hide. But you, I can't
make you do anything.

Lidia:

Mama.

Daria:

I helped your brother pack when he joined the army. It was
snowing then too.

Lidia:

Mama.

Daria:

What does the note say?

Lidia:

"Keep working hard."

Daria:

How romantic our lives are.

Lights go down.

Scene 11

There is a knock at the door.

German 1:

Open up!

Daria:

Who is it?

(Two Germans forcefully open the door).

German 1:

Don't you have a light?

Daria:

Over there.

German 2:

Ihren haus

German 1:

We are here to search your home for contraband and fugitives.

Daria:

What fugitives?

German 1:

Whoever we find.

The Germans into another room.

Lidia:

What is it, Mother?

Daria:

The police are here.

Lidia:

What do they want?

Daria:

I don't know. Here give me your brooch.

Lidia:

What?

Daria:

If Sumskoy is gone already, then they will recognize him. They will beat you even more.

(Germans reenter).

German 1:

Where is your husband?

German 2:

Er soll hier sein

German 1:

We were told that they would be here.

Daria:

He works night shifts at the mines.

German 1:

The mines are closed this weekend.

Daria:

Then he is probably spending the night at the camps there. It's
a long way to walk this late and in the cold.

German 1 (to Lidia):

You will come with us then.

German 3 (entering with Nina):

I have another one from the list!

Lidia:

Nina.

Daria:

Lidia, go get your coat.

German 3 (To Lidia):

Go ahead, girl.

(To Daria).

You. Why don't you go back to bed?

Daria:

If I came into your house and took your child with a gun, would
you turn away?

Lidia (to Daria):

Give Papa a kiss for me.

The Germans handcuff Nina and Lidia, then exit.

Daria:

My son is a soldier. My daughter is a rebel. I cannot call them
brave when all we have ever done is live. We lived with the
tzars. We lived with the Bolsheviks. We lived starving through
Holodomor. All of this we did together, and in one night they
take us all apart.

Scene 12

Nikolai, Vladimir, and Yuri all sit on the floor of the prison,
beaten up.

Vladimir:

Nina? Yuri, I see Nina!

Yuri:

Nina!

The Germans throw her onto the floor and exit.

Nikolai:

Nina, where is Lidia? Did she get away?

Nina:

She started mouthing off the guards and they took her out into
the snow.

Yuri:

Your family? Where are they?

Nina:

I don't know. It all happened so fast. They hit me with the butt
of the gun. I can't remember, Yuri.

Yuri:

It's alright. We're together now.

Vladimir (*rising*):

It won't be the last time we get hurt tonight.

Yuri:

Shut up!

Nikolai:

Sit down, Vladimir. You will need your strength.

The Germans enter with Lidia throwing her onto the stage, also.

Lidia:

Useless Germans.

Nikolai:

Easy, Lidia.

Lidia:

The fat one can't be any older than my brother.

Nikolai:

You're bleeding.

Lidia:

How stupid they are. Heretical Nazis!

Nikolai:

Sit down, please.

Lidia:

We will kill them, Nikolai. We will kill all the fascist
bastards in our land.

Nina:

Quiet, Lidia! They will hear you!

Lidia:

Let them hear me, Ninochka! My voice- no, my laugh - will be the last thing they hear. Cheap son of a bitch!

Vladimir:

She's lost her good sense.

Lidia:

I have never seen clearer. Won't you fight with me, brother?

Where is my brother Nika?

Nikolai:

The radio stopped working, Lidia. We haven't had any reports from the front lines in weeks.

Nina:

I don't want to hear about the front lines.

Yuri:

I saw Tosya on the way in.

Vladimir:

I saw Shishchenko.

Lidia:

It's good our numbers are so high. Better to help our liberators.

Nina:

Lidia, no one is coming.

Nikolai:

It may not be so. And we might still go home. This may only be
an investigation.

Nina:

I love you all.

Nikolai:

Don't.

Nina:

I love you too, stupid.

Lidia:

You are my best friends. When we are free we will push the
Germans and the Romanians out of the city together. And we will
go back to school, together. And one day our children will play
together in the same streets we did.

Vladimir:

I wish it were so beautiful.

Yuri:

Why don't I sing for us?

German 1:

Get up! All of you stand! Sumskey first.

*The Germans one by one walk their friends off stage. We hear a
gunshot each time. Meanwhile, Lidia has her last words.*

Lidia:

Do not be afraid, friends! Our Red Army is over the hill. Our soldiers are coming to liberate us. My brother is coming to save us. He will avenge us. The nation will remember us. The Party will avenge us, my friends, please! Blood for blood! Death for death! We are dying for our Motherland!

Lidia laughs as she is led off the stage before the final gunshot.