

**ABOUT ZOYA**

Written by

**Pravda**

**Historical-OilLamp-GroceryStore-Translator**

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EXT. PETRISHCHEVO VILLAGE - GROCERY STORE - NIGHT  
RUSSIA, JULY 1941

A small store. VLAD (17), tall and handsome, stacks condensed milk cans and soup into his bag. He looks outside at--

ZOYA (17), frail with a poetic gaze, watches him, nods and moves away from sight.

Vlad approaches the cashier, pays.

INT. PETRISHCHEVO VILLAGE - ZOYA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Decrepit place, no furniture. The walls are black with soot.

Seated on the floor, Zoya counts the milk cans. Her eyes shine with appreciation as she looks up at standing Vlad.

ZOYA

The gratitude from me to you,  
I will express in stronger terms,  
When reckless Nazis wiped out, From  
land that fights through this curse.

Vlad sits on the floor next to her. She cozies up to him.

VLAD

There will be the river and forest  
and stars, Around the house that  
we'll built for us.

She shakes her head, buries her head in his chest. He wraps his arms around her shoulders.

ZOYA

I lack for words when I think about  
this war, Vlad.

He holds her closer.

VLAD

That doesn't rhyme at all, does it?

ZOYA

The wondrous destiny is ended, The  
mighty light is quenched and dead.

VLAD

And that's Pushkin.

Teared up, Zoya rises, stacks the milk and soup into her bag.

ZOYA

I must get going.

He wants to take the bag from her, but she doesn't let him.

ZOYA

We can't be seen together.

She walks toward the door, peers out. It's clear outside. Through a window, Vlad watches her move toward the woods.

EXT. WOODS - VLAD'S TENT - NIGHT

Zoya pushes through a group of kids(18) who respectfully make way for her. She stops. The group leader, BORIS (18), steely blue eyes and pronounced chin, takes bags from her.

BORIS

You can be caught in the village.

ZOYA

I was hiding the entire time. Vlad entered the store for me.

They enter the tent.

INT. VLAD'S TENT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Boris sits on a box, counts the cans, writes down the number.

BORIS

What an irony, Vlad is a traitor, who houses the fascists yet we're bound to take his help.

ZOYA

His mother took them in, not Vlad.

BORIS

Oh, yeah? What would you do if it was your mother, Zoya? Let me answer that for you. You would become the partisan all the same and fight.

She lacks for words.

BORIS

He works as a translator for them by the way. Ask him if you will.

She glares at him. The tension can be cut with a knife.

ZOYA

Is Vasilyev going to approve our petition for action or not?

Boris shrugs his shoulders.

INT. ZOYA'S TENT - NIGHT

A pile of clothes fashioned into a bed. Zoya lays on top, covered with a thick coat. She tosses and turns.

She finally rises, grabs an oil lamp seated on the ground in a corner, lights it up. She mounts it on one of the boxes, writes something on a piece of paper.

BORIS (O.S.)  
We should save the light.

Zoya extinguishes the lamp. She continues writing in the dark.

EXT. RUSSIAN VILLAGE - VLAD'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lurking underneath a window Zoya observes the life inside. A few men in Nazi uniform hold drinks and cheer. A woman plays a piano. Vlad is amongst them, mingling.

The front door opens. The piano sounds and laughter waft out. Vlad appears with A FASCIST and A BLONDE WOMAN. Zoya slinks forward to hear their conversation.

FASCIST  
Finde ein anderes Haus mit einem  
Klavier. Russische Pianistinnen  
machen einen Soldaten glücklich.

Vlad turns to the Blonde Woman to translate his words.

VLAD  
Find another house with a piano for  
my soldiers. Russian female  
pianists sure make us happy.

Zoya bites her lip. She hears the woman laugh.

BLONDE WOMAN  
Tell this cutie I'll arrange that.

Zoya blocks her ears in disgust, runs away, making a noise.

The Fascist reacts. He steps down from the porch, looks around the house to check but sees nothing.

VLAD  
Es ist wahrscheinlich ein Tier, ich  
überprüfe es besser. Entschuldige mich.

Vlad walks to the back of the house as if to check.

EXT. BACK OF THE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Vlad and Zoya stand hidden by a thick bush. They speak in a whisper.

VLAD

You need to be more careful.

Zoya takes out a paper from her pocket. Vlad snatches the paper away from her, laughs at the handwriting.

VLAD

My cat would write cleaner than that.

(reading from the paper)

I will believe my stupid heart,  
That whispers he can be your fate,  
When dead from his unshaken hand,  
They burn in hell on tainted land.

She grabs the paper, crumples it.

ZOYA

Do you work for them, Vlad?

VLAD

I've got to do something for money.

ZOYA

Please tell me you do it to kill them  
in their sleep some day. Please.

She hides her face in his chest. Vlad remains silent. She looks up again, anger washes over her face.

ZOYA

Watch yourself at nights then.

She breaks away from him, rushes to disappear into the night.

INT. ZOYA'S TENT - NIGHT

Boris walks in, sees Zoya. She idles about, seated on a box.

BORIS

Were you with your boyfriend again?

Zoya bolts up, grabs Boris by the collar. A hand-made knife appears in her other hand. She presses it against his throat.

ZOYA

Next time I won't think twice  
before I slit your throat.

It's a stare off. Boris utters through his teeth:

BORIS

Let's save our hatred for the enemy.

She lets go of him, sits down, sees his hands curled in fists.

ZOYA

I won't wait for Vasilyev's approval anymore. Are you with me?

BORIS

We'll need more people for that.

ZOYA

No, just you and me. Three houses total. Tomorrow after dark.

Boris gulps. Then nods, ready to leave but turns back to say:

BORIS

I thought you were all about poetry, romance and fluff. Glad to see you're not.

EXT. PETRISHCHEVO VILLAGE - NIGHT

The village immersed into sleep. Further away from houses, Zoya and Boris crawl with gasoline canisters in hands. They sprinkle the surrounding area.

They stop, take a breath. Then, they count to three, rise and spread out running toward the houses. They light them up. Fire catches at once. They hurry away to light the sprinkled perimeter around the houses. Then, they dash for the woods.

EXT. WOODS AROUND PETRISHCHEVO VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

They hide in the bushes to watch the fire engulf the houses. A couple of Nazis break out only to face another wall of flames.

Zoya sees Vlad on the roof of his house. He sprints down, falls into the bed of spreading flames. Zoya darts up but Boris holds her down. They grapple, he holds her body tight with one hand, pressing against her mouth with the other.

BORIS

He's a friend of fascists. A Nazi all the same. You should hate him.

She breaks into tears.

Afar, other Nazi's rush towards the flames shouting something to each other in German. Zoya and Boris crawl away.

FADE OUT.