

Lines in brackets are to be performed in sign language and without voice unless specified otherwise.

SCENE 6

(SERGEI enters the house, followed by PETER. PETER sits to clean the hunting rifle while SERGEI begins to prepare the game from the hunt.)

SERGEI

Peter, can you get Roland? Roland, come help with this.

(ROLAND approaches.)

KATRINA

Successful, I see.

SERGEI

Very successful, Peter's got an okay eye on him.

KATRINA

And his hands?

SERGEI

We'll get them steadied. Yep, we'll get him steady soon. Steady and ready, right Peter? The fighting was louder, though.

PETER

Even the birds knew what was happening, I think.

KATRINA

Are you alright, Peter? It's scary, I know.

PETER

I'm okay.

KATRINA
(privately)

And his shot?

(A beat.)

SERGEI

He'll get there.

KATRINA

Time won't stop for him, his birthday is drawing nearer like a fire through dry tinder.

SERGEI

He'll get there, Kat.

KATRINA

And if he does? You know who was a great shot.

SERGEI

Not now.

KATRINA

Imagine that on a battlefield, hm?

SERGEI

I understand, Kat, I do. I really, truly do, and I would never push what happened to Ilja on anyone else, but what are we going to do else? They'll pay very well for young men like him, and we need money. It's just a fact of this life, Kat, it's unavoidable.

KATRINA

I'm no child, I get it. But we cannot ship our own child off to fight in something he probably doesn't understand and can't possibly be prepared to handle.

SERGEI

He will be prepared. He may not be an expert but I am trying my best to prepare him; he will be ready, Katrina.

ROLAND

[Let us hope he succeeds where you failed once.]

SERGEI

What is he saying?

KATRINA

He says he hopes Peter will be ready.

SERGEI

I work out there, you do your sewing when he isn't doing it for you and he's also out there -- thank the lord he's capable of something. Peter will be off soon, and we will be set. Then, we can get that Fiodor fucker out of here, too. And Estelle. That's the piece I can't nail down.

KATRINA

What do you mean?

SERGEI

What is she going to do for the family? She can't sew, her hands could never handle that. She can't do my work, no question. She can barely even hold herself with other people in the same room as her unless she's on that damn piano. Hell, she can still barely read, Kat!

KATRINA

I know, I know! So we just keep on helping her, just as we have. There is nothing wrong with needing help sometimes.

SERGEI

All the time? So she's just going to remain dependent on us her whole life? Not contributing anything?

ROLAND

[If that is what she needs, then we will do it for her. She is a person, she is our family.]

SERGEI

Katrina, translate. Please.

(KATRINA voices ROLAND's lines.)

KATRINA

He says she is our family, a person.

SERGEI

Well, I'm not arguing that.

ROLAND

[And you need to understand that she is not a prop! She has thoughts, she has a full life, whether she can plough a field or not, unlike you.]

SERGEI

Careful.

ROLAND

[And what will you be when you're old and frail and we have to take care of you? Should we ship you off to die on some island? Or just leave you here to wither while we all head off to the city?]

SERGEI

You are not going to the city, there's nothing for you there anyhow. There's no room for a brute who can't speak to anyone in such a place. You're just alike, you and Estelle. You'll always need us. No distance can escape that truth.

ROLAND

[I don't care! I will find people! I'm going!]

KATRINA

You're going?

SERGEI

Where are you going to go?

ROLAND

I'm leaving for university!

SERGEI

University? Ha! For what?

KATRINA

What?

ROLAND

[Fiodor has been getting messages through to the city, and I submitted an application and my work, my writings. I was accepted.]

SERGEI

You are not going.

KATRINA

Sergei!

ROLAND

[They liked my work, expenses are nil.]

SERGEI

Fucking hell.

KATRINA

[That's -- that is great, but where will you live?]

ROLAND

[I can live with Nadia, I will work at the University.]

KATRINA

[Let's hope Nadia will take you.]

SERGEI

No no, we're *talking*, I am still a part of this. You're staying here.

ROLAND

[I am not.]

KATRINA

When will you need to go? Uh, [When?]

SERGEI

He's not going.

PETER

Why not?

KATRINA

He's an adult.

PETER

I'm finished, by the way.

SERGEI

Because he lives here, he works here.

KATRINA

Thanks, Peter, just put it on the table for now.

ROLAND

(not voiced by KATRINA)

[Just admit that you need me here.]

SERGEI

Katrina, focus, what's he saying?

KATRINA

Uh, make sure it's unloaded, too.

PETER

I know.

SERGEI

What's he saying?

PETER

I'll put it away actually, I don't want to scare Nadia when she gets here.

(PETER exits.)

KATRINA

[What did you say?]

ROLAND

You need me here and you know it!

(ROLAND exits in a hurry. A small beat.)

KATRINA

Lord above, Sergei!

SERGEI

You know I'm right.

KATRINA

He's right, we need him here, it's clear as day. He's no idiot.

SERGEI

Clearly not, now he's gotten in with the intellectuals.

KATRINA

That's not a bad thing! That's a wonderful thing.

SERGEI

And Fiodor, too? He's pulling us all into his game, scaring Peter, putting Estelle against us, sending Roland away, hell, putting you against me!

KATRINA

I'm not out to get you, Sergei, no one is out to get you.

SERGEI

Bullshit. Fiodor chose to be here, he forced himself into our house and now he's breaking us down. It's a goddamned war of attrition and he's winning. He's winning. He's winning.

KATRINA

It's alright, Sergei, you're alright. He isn't winning anything.

SERGEI

He won with you once, now he's out to win you for good.

(KATRINA hits SERGEI.)

KATRINA

Don't you say that to me. Don't ever say that.

SERGEI

I'm sorry, I didn't mean it. You know I didn't mean it.

KATRINA

Go to bed, Sergei.

SERGEI

Kat.

KATRINA

No, you're going to get some rest before you speak to me again. Talk to me in the morning.

SERGEI

The lights are so bright out there. Closer than ever. Goodnight, Kat. Oh, it's nearly Peter's birthday, isn't it? Time has gotten away. I hope you know I'd part mountains for you. Raze the earth to nothing to keep you safe. Fuck.

(KATRINA is silent and stoic. SERGEI exits.)

(FIODOR enters.)