*Geographical region: Europe, Ukraine*

NEDA NEZHDANA play “PUSSYCAT FOR MEMORIES ABOUT DARKNESS”

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*Farewell monologue of Donbass*

Summary

This play is about the women in the actual hybrid war on Donbass region that Russian Federation began against Ukraine after the victory of the Ukrainian Revolution of the Dignity (Maidan) and the occupation of the Crimea. It was written based on different real stories, events, facts. However, this is not a documentary theater, but an art version of the author, the feelings of this war. The main heroine - a refugee from Donbass, who was a volunteer, survived the captivity and the escape, lost her home, work, town, friends - all her "small world". All that she has that left of this world - three orphaned kittens, which she is selling during the play - white, gray and black. These are three steps of immersion in the "theme", in the horror of the war with its cruelty and meekness, despondency and dirt. The idea of ​​the title originated from the phrase of real person Irina Dovgan, who survived the captivity and the torture of the soldier from Russia, about him: "In his eyes I saw the eyes of the darkness..." This play is also about the "darkness" raised in the people by the war, but at the same time "in the dark times the bright people are clearly visible". This is the story of an ordinary woman – she has a family, two children, a job, a house, animals... This woman is left in the occupied territory because her cat... gave birth to kittens. And gradually, step by step, we pass the circles of the hell with her. She just tries to remain a human. How to accept that your child can be crippled, raped, killed? How not to help a friend's son? How to rob people who lost their children in a catastrophe? How can you betray your land? How to leave your animals? Lying after the torture in the basement, she is almost ready for a suicide and bites the "incompetence" of God who created such a world. And suddenly she begins to understand him, to regret to this hopelessness to love people capable of such horrible things. The play also has predictions - the heroine says that there is already a world war, only otherwise, hybrid one, and this was written before the terrorist attacks - in Brussels, Paris, Istanbul, London... In the end of the play the heroine leaves herself the last Black kitten - nobody needs "misfortune" - and she left the black glasses that have closed her eyes to the public, because with them it is "easier to get used to the darkness". She has a hope for a new home and the resistance, and at the same time reminder to all those who looks at the war from the screens only.

The play is directed to the adult audience.

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*Farewell monologue of Donbass*

 “**I wish I was born a Cat**”

An abbreviated version

SHE: Take the kitty?... I’m selling. If they were not purebred, I would gift them. Just for nothing – no. They will resell them, will torment in bazaars… and I want to know to which hands I give them. They are very purebred… Documents?... I have not restored yet my documents… If you want the documents – go away. The beast is chosen by the heart. Bout – and fell in love… They are not fluffy? But they are not Persians, they are Scots, they have skin like a plush, so soft… And else they can stand on hind legs. Such a breed. No, I will not show now, they are sleeping. And actually, they don’t want to stand by order – they are same Scots… Why didn’t Scots vote for secession from England?... I’m about kittens. Color? One is white, another is grey, and one more is blackish. White is a pussycat, I called her Maria Stewart… No, you can call her as you want… She’s like a real queen, very noble, like mom. Do you want me to show you mom?… There is a photo, but I cannot show her… Cannot, and that's it. And what's suspicious in it? That I'm wearing glasses when there is no sun? Should I remove the glasses? What does it have to do with glasses? Or you buy it, or don’t. I see that your little girl liked her. She trusts her… I’m about pussy. And you do not trust me? Because of glasses? Are you buying a cat or my glasses? You'll think, and then I'll think too… Let the girl put the kitty into place – don’t hurt psyche… I’m about kitty. She had already endured… In a war that doesn’t exist… You think that Donbas registration spoils the breed? Well, and think, you want, elsewhere… Well, will you buy a cat if I remove the glasses?

Haven't you changed your mind? I'm not a boozer; I have never wallowed under the fence, have not got to the police, and have not cheated on my husband. What an amazing thing – why the bruises, for example on the ass - it's decently, and under the eye - is not? Why does appear contempt for a woman with such… makeup?... No, husband does not beat me, God forbid. I also taught my son – a girl can’t be beaten. You can do it with boys, but don’t start first. But with a girl – you can’t. Understand, I say, a girl is weaker, and it is unworthily to beat the weaker, and then the girl has such... complicated thin computer that makes a program for making a baby. Programmer. And what will happen, if to hammer the system block with a sledgehammer? Program will hang. You’ll strike today, and in about 20 years the baby will die as a result of it. Therefore, for me, the man who beats a woman – a piece of shit, and one who beats his wife… Then my son promised – never beat girls... This?… It's not bunch, it's mountain, slagheap of shit…

And I was just the same white and fluffy as this pussy… Husband, two children, cat, dog, bank account, vacation at sea… I had a hairdressing salon; husband had a firm – eurowindows, doors… Son – clever wit – studied in Kyiv on a budgetary for a computer programmer… When I saw these shots with the bloody Xristmas tree… His cell phone was “outside the coverage area“, and I was outside of horror area… Husband said – what do you want? Like mother, like son…

I was there a long time ago, during the first revolution, “on granite”… I studied in Kiev, and I was considered the first nationalist on the class, even though I’m from Donbas. I learned Ukrainian by dictionary. Granny spoke Ukrainian, mother spoke Russian, father spoke Inucountrainian, grandfather spoke Russian… Two-headed mutant… We were so funny… children… how can you buy children who refuse from food? How to seduce children committing, in front of millions, slow suicide for the sake of their truth? I remember a briar-tea – the only food, rough lips because of hunger and wind, restless sleep under clock’s bong bong bong, clothes that smelled by smoke… And yet some strange lightness – like you are semi-astronaut, who is about to fly into weightlessness. It was fun and for some reason not scary… By the dispels and tanks we were made afraid even then. In tents – songs, jokes. Stardust. Later, when I was lying on the grass near Rada, ours were fainting one by one, and ambulance couldn’t come, we were surrounded, I looked up… Hefty uncle-deputies were looking at us from the windows, like fishes from aquarium – afraid go out to us, and became so… There was no hate – scorn.

Then was euphoria of victory… And after a while–invitation to the KGB. “Someone inform on you – think who is this?... Style – pit close ones! Since that I have an allergy to politics!… But when with your child – clever, talented, and honest – they can do anything – beat, torture, maim, arrest, kill – just for so, for nothing, I couldn’t wait and jerked to Maidan. I walked… walked… walked… Strange feeling… Déjà vu… Then started to call these people “fascists” … How can black be called white? I suddenly understood my son – it isn’t scary here, it is scary behind the screen. Once upon a time a dog bit him, and he began to fear all dogs. Then we had bought him a puffy – Ralf – and fear passed.

So, are you going to take the kitty? Take it, because it so suffered… Documents? I don’t have… yet or already… And now looks like I do not exist… It’s illegally… Of course, to sell illegal kitties in illegal place – is illegally. But will it be legally for driblet? By the way, I want to file an application. Will you accept it?… I got robbed. What was stolen from me?... everything… House, land, car, work, friends, city, faith… Everything, except these kitties… Can you give all that back? This is the most serious crime… this is not your area of experti… ……

Grayish? “Smoky” – I loved the smell of smoke before now, now – I am afraid, perhaps, someone was burned… Saw I those who were taken out of the tank… stand before my eyes till now, I am afraid to close and yet afraid of dreams – nightmares… You are waking up - and seems that you have not woken up… It is better to say the colour of a stormy sky… When all that started, the sky became dark-gray – like this kitty. It presses on you, and you can’t do nothing…

It has been awakened… Gently… It’s not herpes, a cigarette was extinguished on it… Terrorists, militiamen, separatists… Why did they burn a kitty? Banderian… And the tatar jew-banderites aren’t absurd?…

It eats everything, vegetables, bread… And mom was the same… They are Scots… Probably, the Englishmen led once those poor Scots to the point when people became eat mice, and the cats were eating spruce…

Brothers… Brothers – are those, who share, but not rob. And who robs – is robber. One who stole our Crimea, will never be brother… And Crimea isn’t Russian, and isn’t Turkish. Crimea – is Tatarian, they call themselves this way “kyrymly”, because they don’t have another land…

Listen to a fairy-tail: a little girl lived with mom, brothers and sisters. So, a neighbour knocked to her once and says: “Your mom is so poor and unhappy… But look at me – I’m reach, famous, if you want I’ll be your stepmother? And you will be like me”. – “And what I need to do for that?” – “Kill your mom, what for do you need her like this? And I’ll give you a weapon”. So, little girl conceived to kill her mom, and brothers and sisters cried out: “No! We’ll not let you to kill mom!” Little girl started to shoot at the brothers and sisters… Stepmother looked at all that and says: “Well done, and now it's your turn”. “But you said that I’ll be like you…” – “Well, you are so naive! Do you know why I’m reach? Since I’m killing and robbing all my life. I will say that I came to protect you, but didn’t make it in time…”

And neighbour Raya responds – “Fairy-tails! You made up the absurd… That are the people, but that is a land, it’s non-living… “Non-living or living? If it’s living than, how to bury it? The Land, to which many memories connected, how?... Once in childhood, our relatives from Moscow visited us – and I began speaking their accent…

We have residence on the tongue. In Donbass, for example, it is said, "watermevons" - watermelons, such small, juicy - the "Spark" variety – watermevons… I remember once hail beat watermelons, and they were given for us for free - we were smashing and eating them - sweet juice was running down on our hands and faces, and we were laughing, and continued smashing… Sweet red splatters... For me it is Donbass – the taste of the watermelons and apricots, they are growing here like weeds along the roads... and Muscovites, when saw all of these, said - oh, so you have communism here.

Silly stamp: Donbass -mines. For me Donbass - watermevons, apricots, white chalk mountains, ponds and salt lakes, where it was so easy to learn how to swim, and it seemed impossible to go down…

I will never be able to swim there... “Run away!” “run away!” “run away!” “run away!” “run away!” but how, Lord?... here there are notches as children grow up, drew on the wallpapers here and we sticked up magnets from different trips... The smell… we have here everywhere that apricots – the smell of flowers at spring, the smell of squashed on the road at summer, and dried up apricots at fall…

And now another smell appeared… The smell of bitter blood, burned skin, the smell of death... The stench… …

When our tanks appeared, they started to cry – Do not let them go, let them go back to Kyiv... How? It's our tanks, they came to defend our land?.. And women cribbbed: we do not need tanks… And then our old friend called – from the Uni, she is a judge now. Her son is in the army. Maksym. Asked – Look how he is there... Well, I went…

That's what the men without women? They want and hot home made food, and just to talk. So, I started bringing - the food, the warm clothes ... And yet other women joined - and we got accustomed to… Once I am pulling the biddles to the car – Raya towards me ... "Where are you going?" - "Ah, so... I am in a hurry, forgive me, no time ..." "Do you know that your honey-boy now is a tycoon in the militia?…"

"Vovchyk, our neighbor, he ran into you and you gave him the brush-off... "… Ahaaaaa... I was 10-11 years old. And he ran into us - by bike. We were playing and he was running into us... Everybody is screaming and running away - and he has fun, he is a king. I was fed up. He is riding and I am staying without any move... Step to the right – I am pushing… He never more ran into me and my friends…

I was walking with the daughter, and I saw him. This glance. So... Greedy… First, at me, then at her. And I stopped dead... I had remembered... I remember, people said, he was in jailed for robbery – something like that. "Run away"… Lord, my girl, Inga, my beloved sun, my princess, light, kind, gentle... I resisted in order not to run, but I saw – that he was… he was watching…

I came home and told my husband: "Myhas, let’s collect our bags and run away."He persisted at the beginning, but I prayed, and shouted, and cried - and he retreated, for daughter he was ready to go through water and fire. I began to gather, threw some things, took them out, put others in, suitcases could not be closed, tears flowed... And then our pussy started to give birth. The whole night we were giving birth to three kittens, one was gray, the second was white and one more was black pretty small. Wallydrag as my mother said. In the morning I fell asleep. I wake up at seven, kittens were squealing under my side - she entrusted them to me. And I had understood - I'm not going anywhere. "Myhas, go alone, save daughter." I persuaded him…

Then I had a dream - a big plane... - floats... overshadows half of the sky... terribly... Whirring sound of the plane, exploding shells, flashes... I did not get to the bomb shelters - I had a basement. And we were hiding there - with Ralph, Esmeralda and kittens.

...And then that plane was shot down, with civilians… Once we were praying for peace, now - for victory!..

… Finally the new camouflage came - oaks. I am pulling all of that to the car…

Raya - "Are you taking it for the chasteners?" - "I'm sorry, I am in a hurry, a friend asked to transfer". - "And I am not a friend for you anymore? Maybe, you’ll help for old friendship's sake?" She is getting out the card, a bank card, but some kind of not our. - "Your son is a computer geek, maybe he will help to figure out with the code, since it is lost somewhere, I can not…" - "find?… I do not think he can do it, he's not a hacker, he is a programmer, a student... "

I came running to ours with those biddles. Expected the joy – there is no. "Where is Maksym?" Showed - what remained from him… "Can you tell his mother?"... I went home, tried to call... At the threshold - a neighbor... Screaming! Choking with rage... a shell fell down on her house, knocked the windows…

Came home and fell down into bed… Cats were squeaking, the phone was ringing off the hook… She... in the morning someone called back from another phone. Investigator. She died – poisoned herself. My telephone - it was the last that she dialed - 28 times. So when they came in the morning, I could not deny. There was no point in denying. "Coater!"

...Take this kitty, even for half price... The boy. Black color - to misfortune? Do you know what is misfortune? Kitty is a joy, at least some consolation.

Who needs us with our misfortune, pussyk?... I will tell you, since there is nobody else. Children?… Husband?

...They brought me in some basement, and began to beat there... "I am Ukrainian from grandfather - great-grandfather and my surname is Ukrainian, and passport, so which land I have to protect? And which soldiers? I am not Kyivan and not western, I am local. That church was built by my great… great… at…"

.....In the night I was lying on the concrete, and was thinking about God and death. And so, as the women, I tried to imagine myself in the place of God… So I gave birth to a child, gave him a freedom - and suddenly I find out that he rapes and kills children, and the most important, he feels joy because of that. And I love… him…

Hopelessness of God?... Next morning they took me into the city... wrapped in the flag and left standing with a sign… Beat... Spat... mostly women... No one stood up. Took pictures on my background…

Heard English. Flashes. Journalists... arguing with someone… Vovchyk… commanded something for somebody, and they took me back to the basement. In the house I was given to take a shower, at night they brought something to eat. For the first time in four days. And then showed up he - Vovka. He said I could go, but if I sign a document that I do not have any claims to them, including property claims…

I came to my house... they cleaned there... Everything. Jewelry, appliances, utensils, husband’s tools... how he collected them - every detail, little angels, Inga collected... Stash - of course, they found it. They even cut roses... Lord, what for they need roses?.. Once great-grandmother planted the whole courtyard with roses, grandmother cut down roses - planted kitchen-garden. So here they fought - potatoes and roses…

Esmeralda… Her frozen little body laid near the door... She was waiting for me to her last. My faithful friend. Ralph jumped around and tried to raise her harden little body by muzzle… They were very good friends, she was for him before, like mother... No one will ever feel me as she did... Kittens?!.. Are crawling out from under the cupboard. One is white, the second is gray, and one more is black. I grabbed them into the feedbag. Little body of Esmeralda, wrapped in baby blankets, I covered... Raya, tearful, a kind of black. "Whom do you bury?" - Esmeralda... - "My son tripped a mine …" - "Alive?" – The hand was torn off…" - "Forgive me…" - "You can live here…"

I would like to say – to those, who sowed all these... All these your worthless passions - desire for power and business interests... in comparison with the monstrous black hole that you opened, towards which our land flies at breakneck speed... I wish I was born a cat... Take the kitty... Take... Ta... So, you will not take this black kitten? No? I understand you are afraid of a misfortune... You look at us as on the hated ones. So, we supposedly are guilty of attacking us... Or because we escaped... But what is better? That we were killed? Maybe it's better ... But I'm not afraid of it ... I don`t believe that there... it will be worse than it is here... What will happen to this black disaster? (She takes a kitten). He does not even have a name... And you know, I'll call him Ukrop. And I`ll leave it to me. True, I don`t have a home... And cats get used to the place... Or maybe on the contrary – then I will be a cat, I will have a house? Somehow it will be, because it never was that it was not. (She removes glasses). I'll leave my glasses for you. With them it's easier to get used to the darkness... (She is going out).