

## DUBINUSHKA

Rallying Song in One Act

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### Cast

**MOTHER, woman about 70**

**FATHER, man about 70**

The scene is a worn out playground in the state of perpetual reconstruction. Its rectangular area is divided lengthways into two parts, one of them remains a sort of playground, on the other concrete garages have been put up. The garages are unpainted; there is only some basic and rude graffiti on the rough greyness of the concrete. The total legacy of the old playground consists of a seesaw with a missing seat, a swing with the chains torn off and three benches from which only one is usable. It is on this that the Mother and Father are sitting facing the row of garages.

MOTHER The weather is splendid today!

*A new Peugeot 406 arrives, it stops with creaking tyres. A young man gets out of the car, opens the lock of the garage door, then the doors themselves, they creak too, he props them open with some nearby stones, gets in the car, steps on the accelerator, there is a loud sound from the brakes, the blinkers indicate that the car has stopped. The young man comes out of the garage, he does not notice the two old people, he kicks away the stones, with effort pushes the garage doors back, puts the lock on them and leaves.*

FATHER coughs, Mother hands him a paper tissue, the coughing doesn't

*stop, Father doesn't take the tissue, he is fumbling in his pockets till he pulls out a big handkerchief made for men, he continues to cough into it.*

MOTHER What its now? Did you start again?

FATHER *tries nervously to say something, but the coughing swallows his words.*

MOTHER I always said to you, it's all the same whether you smoke or you don't, but no, you always play the hero, the strong one, who is beyond giving up to the urge of lighting up a cigarette, and what's more, you always preach about how unhealthy my smoking is, and look at you now, who is coughing, who is choking? *She takes out a cigarette from her pocket and she lights it.*

FATHER *in the momentary break of the coughing fit me.*

MOTHER Although you sucked a lot in your turn!

FATHER *the coughing fit is slowly easing up, but still his answer cannot be heard clearly* For sucking, I sucked a lot.

MOTHER Huge amounts of Mărășești and Carpați with no filter! They were sold almost for free, do you remember? The Mărășești were for 1 lei and 50 bani, the Carpați for 3 leis.

FATHER the Carpați were for 3.25.

MOTHER Isn't it the same? 3.25 is practically also for free.

FATHER For free, yes, and those big stems or whatever in them, also for free. They punched out the paper of the cigarettes. They also had some name, "captain" or something like this, what was it exactly, it doesn't come to my mind, you know, that they stuff in the cigarettes, some kind of rasping or chips, as if they would be pieces of wood, eh?

MOTHER It's unfair for you to say that we only smoked such cigarettes.

I've got whole packages of BT from the grateful invalids. If they would not... *her voice is fading, some music is getting louder and louder: a Cabrio VW, old but with stylish tuning, is pulling up only a few feet from the two*

*old people, parallel with the row of garages. The bass of its music can be heard long after it passed away.*

MOTHER *hesitates a while about what to do with the stub, finally she drops it on the ground among the others* Do you remember when we went to the mountains with the bus of the Organisation, what good music we had during the trip?

FATHER Beautiful, melodic music... *he is crooning* Una paloma blanca, Itoostoomoringasky....

MOTHER We sang folk-songs too, do you remember? The chief comrades were jaw dropped about how many songs we know, but they did not say a single word.

FATHER Not, then. But you never knew what they were writing in their reports.

MOTHER What would they write? That the members of the working class are singing folk-songs? For this we even would have got red points!

FATHER Yes, if they would be worker's-songs.

MOTHER Worker's-songs? What the hell they are?

FATHER You don't know, what a worker's-song is? It's unbelievable! We had to sing them at every demonstration, and also on the excursions with the Organisation! You really cannot recall it?

MOTHER *is thinking about it* Nothing. I think that I didn't come into contact with them.

FATHER Its totally impossible. I remember clearly how you sang in full voice *he sings furiously* Ekh, dubinushka, ukhnem!

MOTHER *takes softly the song over, she likes the melody of it* Ekh, zelyonaya sama paidyot!

FATHER and MOTHER *furiously respectively with empathy sing together* Padyo-o-rnim! Padyo-o-rnim! Da ukhnem!

*A good-looking and well-dressed young woman arrives, clatters her keys,*

*speaks on her mobile, she gazes for a moment at the two singing old people, makes a face, steps away on her highheels into the garages. She absentmindedly opens the lock while she says into her phone: "Eh, nothing, two loony old-folks are crooning on the bench." She laughs bubbling as if she would be tickled, "yes, exactly in that way", she says – the old people shyly shut up, look at the young woman sitting in her new Volvo. She accelerates, stops, closes the lock on the garage door, sits back in her Volvo and drives off.*

MOTHER Papa, you were wrong: it isn't a worker's-song, it is a *slowly, articulating each sound* ra-lly-ing song.

FATHER No matter, you were singing it all the same!

MOTHER Why wouldn't I? It's so melodic!

FATHER *mimics Mother, lisping* Its so melodic! And of course it doesn't come to your mind what the lyrics are about.

MOTHER Eh, about what, are you a philosopher?

FATHER It is about, mama, how nice it is that cudgels grow everywhere, to have a tool to fuck your precious aristocrat family with.

MOTHER So, thanks for the information, even our dog had more wit than you. In my turn, I am bored with any form of the class struggle. That song was beautiful and melodic anyway, and, you deny in vain, you were annoyed by it only because all the guys were looking at me when I started to sing.

FATHER Because you were ridiculous.

MOTHER Ridiculous? You were. With your eternal jealousy.

FATHER You were ridiculous then and still now... *his voice is suppressed by the sound of a car and its music, the VW cabrio streaks again off in front off them, after a while we can slowly begin to hear again the voice of Father, who didn't stop his speech...*

done with your family. Of course, this doesn't concern you, your fortune

has to be nice, for you, nothing else matters.

MOTHER It's your fortune that the Cabrio swallowed up your speech, otherwise you would string me up again. You forget that if the communists wouldn't have come, you wouldn't have become the president of the Organisation.

FATHER Well, if I would not have been the president of the Organization, you would have been thrown out from the faculty on your ear. Like your precious sister... maybe at least about this you will succeed to remember.

MOTHER Oh, yes, as if I could not get ten little party-activists like you on each finger who could have arranged everything what I wished for me.

FATHER You are ridiculous... *the coughing fit once again comes upon him, he strains himself again, he cannot continue the sentence*

MOTHER *looks at Father's coughing fit contently, she brings out a cigarette from her pocket, looks for her lighter, does not find it, asks for a light from a member of the audience, thanks them, sucks the smoke deeply into her stomach, lets it out slowly, making smoke-rings.*

FATHER *with a weak voice* You could ask for many things in those days... what to say?!

MOTHER Yes, I could have got a lot of things! Even the stars from the sky, if I would have asked for them!

FATHER The stars from the sky? And who would bring them down to you, if I may ask? Belka and Strelka?

MOTHER Belka? Strelka? *with regret in her voice* I didn't know them.

FATHER Oh, they were pretty famous in their time.

MOTHER *gets excited* Where did you come to know them? When were you at Snagov?

FATHER *with satisfaction in his voice, finally he has got the advantage* In an even more brilliant place!

MOTHER And I was not there?

FATHER I don't know, there were so many exciting chicks there, I cannot recollect at the moment whether you were there or not. Wait a minute, when did it happen... around the middle of the sixties... maybe you were breast-feeding and you stayed at home with the child.

MOTHER *looks up theatrically to the sky* Why is it, that whenever he says something seemingly exciting, in no time it turns out that all it is hot air? Nothing else! If he could sustain the tension for only five minutes! But no, he tries to pounce on the spot, but he has no wit to find a really painful point. *To Father* I can't believe that you are not capable of recalling, that, for many reasons, I didn't breast-feed the child at all.

FATHER *tries to continue in superior mode, but in vain, he acknowledges to himself that he has lost this round* If you know so many things, you would have known also, that Belka and Strelka were two Soviet dogs who were launched into the space and didn't come back.

MOTHER Oh, my heart is bleeding!

*Another car arrives to the garages, a pretty new Skoda Octavia. A man and a woman get out of it, than the woman opens the back door and takes out an approximately 6 month old child from the child-seat, she holds him or her in her arms, they wait for the man who puts the car into the garage. They leave together.*

FATHER Do you remember our Skoda?

MOTHER How couldn't I? It was a red beauty.

FATHER I got pretty frightened when I saw the rows of yellow S100s in the yard of the factory. Do you remember? They used to paint the Skodas in a sort of a pale yellow.

MOTHER Ours was a red beauty.

FATHER I called up comrade Száraz, he'd also made a few calls in his turn and so I could enter a secret courtyard where three red and four blue

Skodas were shining.

MOTHER Ours was a red beauty.

FATHER I would've chosen a blue one, but I thought that you would be glad with the red one.

MOTHER Ours was a red beauty.

FATHER And we went with it to Berlin! To East-Berlin, of course.

MOTHER Ours was a red beauty.

FATHER *puts gently his hand on Mother's knees* Do you remember, I suggested to flee to West Germany. It was the eighties already, the system had become totally hopeless, only one sort of uneatable canned fish and some sanitary alcohol were on the shelves of the shops, nothing else.

MOTHER Ours was a red beauty.

FATHER We even had to stand in line for bread. And they gave everything in portions: half litre of oil, fifty grams of butter, half a kilo of sugar, ten litres of petrol... as was the monthly ration per person.

MOTHER Ours was a red beauty.

FATHER *strokes Mother soothingly* Remember? We had to borrow the petrol-portion off a few friends of ours to go on that trip.

*The VW Cabrio with its noisy music is again streaking about in front of them, Mother quivers, from her gestures it becomes suddenly clear that she has been thrown off balance, Father is easing her as somebody who has been doing it for years.*

FATHER Do you remember, what a good time we spent at Balaton? There we met the Wagners, and they offered us their help in case we decided to go away. You, as a doctor, would immediately have got a job. And still you didn't want to go.

MOTHER Ours was a red beauty.

FATHER I cannot understand even now, what was holding you back: you only got blows from the system. I know, I know, I used to say quite the

opposite, because the truth is that in the first twenty-thirty years we put right a lot of injustices, and we constructed factories and flats for working people... I don't know, we messed up somewhere...

MOTHER Ours was a red beauty.

FATHER But from you, we took away everything, indeed... I thought it was only a question of time, and you would realise that it was better for everybody... But step by step we realised that it wasn't better... And we had to roar louder and louder the opposite of what we were thinking... And we retaliated if somebody dared to say something else... And still you wanted to come back.

MOTHER Ours was a red beauty.

FATHER We went into a huge shopping centre in Bratislava, do you remember? And we spent all our remaining money on a lot of useless things, the whole luggage-rack and the back seats were full with them. We were afraid, how we would be let in at the border.

MOTHER Ours was a red beauty.

FATHER We stopped a few kilometres before the border and we took out the things from their wrapping papers, boxes, whatever. With great effort we succeeded to put all of our treasures into the luggage-rack.

MOTHER Ours was a red beauty.

FATHER And when we looked back, there was a whole little hill from our papers and boxes near the road. Do you remember? We laughed for years about that little hill.

*The noise of cars and the drum and bass adaptation of the Dubinushka can be heard in the distance, Dubinushka gets dominant, the noise of the cars serves as its background, slowly the cars begin to be louder and louder till they suppress the melody. Silence comes suddenly.*

**Curtain**



