

# *Ivan and the Dogs*

*A play for radio by Hattie Naylor*

*Cast*

IVAN

FATHER – *Russian speakers doubles at MAN*

MOTHER - *Russian speakers doubles as WOMAN could double as Erina's neighbour/mum.*

MAN – *Russian speaker*

WOMAN – *Russian speaker.*

BOY (teenage) - *Russian speaker.*

ERINA

## Scene 1

IVAN

So. All the money went and there was nothing to buy food with. Mothers and Fathers couldn't feed their children or their animals. Mothers and Fathers tried all sorts of things to find money, to buy food, but there wasn't any because all the money was gone. So Mothers and Fathers tried to find things they could get rid of, things that ate, things that drank or things that needed to be kept warm. They looked about their flats for these things.

The dogs went first.

They took them in their cars and drove them to the other side of the city and left them there.

But still there was no money,  
So Mothers and Fathers looked for other things,  
other things that ate, and drank and needed to be kept warm

And Children were taken to other  
side of the city and left there.

You have promised me a dog, Erina, if I tell you  
my story.

I have been with you for three years now.

Now I'm 11, then I was 4

So, I can't remember everything because I was very  
little but I will tell you as much as I can.

I will tell you as if it's now.

Dogs live like it's now.

And this is now.

*Background – Int. Flat. A large man falling on the floor and getting up.*  
**IN RUSSIAN.**

- *But I.*
- *Get off. Where have you put it, you bitch? Where have you put the drink.*

*MAN stumbles back up.*

- *get off me I don't need your help.*

And this is my Mother and my Stepfather.

*Background – Int. Flat. A large man falling on the floor and getting up.*  
**IN RUSSIAN.**

- *Did you drink it?*

*Ivan - No.*

- *Don't hit him.*

- why he here. All he does is eat and drink

- No Kolya. No Kolya.

- Out of my way.

*Thud. Screaming. Mother and father fight. Ivan screams.*

- No

He has fists like forever, like hammers,

and he builds red mountains across my skin.

*Screaming continues – a far back of mix to fade.*

- No Kolya. No Kolya.

- Out of my way.

*Thud. Screaming. Mother and father fight. Ivan screams.*

- No

Later they curl up together on the floor.

Every night is like this.

*Thud. Screaming. Mother and father fight. Ivan screams.*

- No

In the morning he will beg her to forgive him and

promise on his Mother's life that he will never

hit her again. And she will say it is because we

have nothing.

She'll say it's because he has not been paid for

months, that it's because the bosses steal – and then

she will blame the boss of everybody, who is called

President Yeltsin.

And then she will cry and he will cry,

and she will tell him that he has a soft heart

and then she will kiss his red face all over.

And he'll promise again on his Mother's life  
that he'll never hit her again.

But he's lying.

His Mother should have died many times.

But now is tonight, they are curled up on the  
kitchen floor – holding hands with nothing.

It is May and the ice on the river has just broken.

So I go.

I put in my pockets a can of beans, some dry

bread and some pickles,

then I put my most special thing in my pocket.

It is a picture from a magazine of Svetlana – she is  
Miss Russia.

And she is as beautiful as the last star in the

morning sky. I fold her picture

carefully so there are no lines across her face  
and put it in my pockets.

I stand on a chair to open the door and I go.

*FX opening of door.*

The lift is broken, broken for  
months and months. People say they will come to  
mend it but they never do.

So I go down the stairs.

The door at the bottom is really thick –  
and I can't open it.

It's so no one can get in.

When people get in that don't live here, there's  
always screaming, two people died in the  
apartment next door. There were guns and then  
silence.

It's when God is counting.

‘One, two.

Two of you go to heaven now.

Shh.

Go to heaven now, shhh, go to heaven now.”

Sshh.

I hide behind the door and wait.

*FX door opens. FX big metal door opening.*

*FX Laughter. In Russian, Sound of pressing lift. Man and woman.*

- *The lift doesn't work.*
- *Which floor do you live on*
- *Sixteenth. Sorry.*
- *Come on – up the stairs.*

*Giggling.*

*It is Nina, she lives above us, and a man I don't*

*know.*

*I run past them.*

**Russian. MAN and WOMAN**

- *Ow. Ivan is that you. Ivan. (shouting after him) Ivan!*
- *Let him go.*
- *Ivan! Ivan!*
- *He's gone now come on. We've got things to do.*

*Giggling. They move off.*

*FX MUSIC. With dogs barking and children playing – like a playground – ending on this being brought up very high in the mix – like a nightmare ending with a thud.*

## Scene 2

IVAN                    And I am woken by someone kicking me.

BOY

In Russian

- *You can't stay here.*

I am in a door way in front of a shop.

BOY

In Russian

- *You can't stay here!*

He tells me that I can't stay here.

*Boy shouting.*

In Russian.

- *Pay! Pay!*

You have to pay to stay here, he says.

*Boy shouting.*

In Russian.

- *Pay! Pay!*

And I run away.

*FX. Laughter.*

Boy in Russian.

- *Stupid kid. Just left home have you. You're not going to get far like that.*

Someone has emptied the bins in the night and  
rubbish blows across the street:  
bottles, tin cans and  
crisp papers and everything smells.

I stand on a corner between two streets, so I can  
watch each street.

I take out my pickles and bread and eat them.

A dog is watching me.

It is a way away from me.

But it watches every time I put something in my  
mouth.

She is white with big hungry eyes.

When she sees I have finished and there is nothing  
for her she turns and runs away.

I don't like how I feel when the white dog goes.

There are no more pickles left to give her, and a  
tiny bit of bread which I must keep for myself.

*FX running and giggling.*

I watch a boy and girl running towards me, I hide.

They are carrying something.

They run onto land where this is only rubbish and

then they disappear down a hole.

More children follow, some running some walking.

Ten, fifteen children, disappear into the ground.

*FX children. Running and shouting.*

Maybe something lives in the waste land

Something that steals children.

Then two of them come back.

They look strange.

*FX children laughing.*

Russian

One rolls over onto the other and they laugh

And pinch one another. They look happy.

More children appear.

They all look happy

And then they lie in the

melting snow, very still.

I don't think they can feel the cold.

Maybe somewhere in the earth there's a kind place  
that makes you happy. Or a Mother that makes you  
happy.

I wait till no one is watching and then I go into the  
hole.

It stinks here, but it's warm and there are there  
are candles.

There are dark paths, and pipes.

The pipes are warm.

And children, lie amongst them.

All the children are very still.

They are blowing plastic bags up in their mouths,  
like balloons.

A boy stands in front of me.

Boy  
RUSSIAN  
- *Glue. You want some glue?*

Glue he says. You want some glue?

I don't know what he means.

Boy  
RUSSIAN  
- *Glue. You want some glue?*

‘Glue’, he says again, ‘do you want some glue.’

Boy  
RUSSIAN  
- *Glue. Glue.*

I say, ‘Yes’

Boy  
RUSSIAN  
- *What can you give me?*

He wants me to give him something.

But I say I haven’t got anything.

He pushes me to the floor and laughs.

Boy  
RUSSIAN  
- *You can’t have any glue unless you pay me, you idiot.*

He says: ‘I can’t have any glue if I can’t pay.’

But his eyes aren’t good.

All the children’s eyes aren’t good.

Nothing is wrong with the world, one says.

Then he shouts it.

Boy  
RUSSIAN  
- *Nothing is wrong with the world!*

And all the children laugh.

Then he says, “you’ve never had glue before have you. You don’t even know what it is.”

RUSSIAN.

*- I've never seen him before anyway, he must have sneaked in'*

And another says, a bigger boy.

“I've never seen him before anyway, he must have sneaked in”

And he has eyes are like mine.

I know I have to make friends with him but am not good at this.

Boy.

Russian.

*- What you got for me?*

He asks me if I have anything for him.

I take out my tin of beans.

He pushes me onto the floor and kicks me.

He searches my pockets, he takes my bread and eats it and then he takes my picture of Svetlana.

He screws up the picture of Svetlana and throws it in my face and kicks me again.

‘Get out’ he shouts. ‘You have to pay to live here,  
get out. ‘

BOY  
Russian

- *Get out!! You have to pay to live here.*

It’s so warm next to the pipes.

BOY  
Russian  
- *Get out!!*

‘Get out’ he screams. I pick up my screwed up  
picture and run, climbing back up  
to the ground.

And back into the cold.

Then I run again until I think I’m in a safe place.

I take Svetlana’s picture from my pocket and  
smooth it out against the ground.

There are now lines all over her face  
from where the bully-boy screwed it up.

I cannot see any stars tonight and  
I am so hungry.

### Scene 3

*FX Music.*

*Into humming Bombzi.*

*Ext. FX bonfire.*

IVAN

It is evening now – no food, for two days.

I got water from the melting snow. But you have to  
have lots and lots of it, to stop feeling thirsty.

I smell potatoes. Round a fire *Bombzi* – drunk old  
men on the streets.

Then two walk over to a lump in the snow.

It's where the snow is melting.

One bends down and dusts the snow off the lump.

It is a body.

It is a body in the melting snow.

*MAN and WOMAN.*

*Russian like howls.*

- Vlad
- Vlad! Vlad!

Then they start to cry.

*MAN and WOMAN.*

*Russian like howls.*

- Vlad

- Vlad! Vlad!

They see me but they are too sad to care.

They howl a name over and over again.

*MAN and WOMAN.*

Russian.

- *Vlad, our friend.*

- *He was a good, good man.*

The winter killed him.

The winter kills lots of Bombzi.

You see the bodies when May comes and

everything melts.

They are crying over their dead friend who is the

body in the snow.

Now they all see me, and I turn to run but

one of the crying one's offers me a potato from the fire.

I take it.

*FX singing or humming, mumbling between.*

MAN

RUSSIAN.

- *dear boy, dear boy.*

He sings and moves closer to me.

I move away.

*FX singing or humming, mumbling between.*

MAN

RUSSIAN.

- *dear boy, dear boy.*

He sings and moves closer to me.

I move away.

*FX singing or humming, mumbling between.*

MAN

RUSSIAN.

- *dear boy, dear sweet boy.*

He puts his large dirty hand on my shoulder.

I move away.

*FX singing or humming, mumbling between.*

MAN

RUSSIAN.

- *dear boy, dear boy.*

The same white dog is watching me.

The same dog as before.

She is not near.

But she is watching.

*FX singing or humming, mumbling between.*

MAN

RUSSIAN.

- *My dear boy, my dear boy.*

The man moves again and I see there is no good in

him even with tears in his eyes.

He wants something bad from me.

The white dog barks. She sees it too.

And I push him and run with my potato.

*FX man stumbles to the ground.*

MAN

RUSSIAN.

- *Come back! Come back you little git. Come back!! Come back!!*

The white dog runs. I am running and she

is running too.

We are running together.

She looks at me and she smiles.

I know she is smiling.

We stop, a long way away from the Bombzi.

We both breath very hard.

We are by a big factory.

I sit.

She sits.

I break off a bit of my potato and put it in my hand.

I lay my hand open for her to take it.

She looks.

I wait.

We wait together.

She won't take it

But she doesn't shout or kick me.

She just looks down on the ground with big hungry  
sad eyes.

So I put the potato on the ground and move away.

Now she comes near to the potato, very near

And then snaps it up. And moves away.

Now she eats it all up,

She stands as far away as I was from the Bombzi.

So I cannot hurt her.

I would never hurt her.

I eat the rest of my potato – giving her two more  
bits.

She waits for me.

I sigh. She sighs.

I close my eyes.

Then I sleep. I sleep knowing she is watching me –  
the white dog, knowing the white dog  
watches me.

*Music.*

## Scene 4

IVAN

In the morning the white dog has gone.

I wake just in time to see the last star and I take  
the screwed up picture of Svetlana from out of my  
pocket again and try to get the lines out  
but they won't go.

Svetlana will be my Mother one day.

One day she will be my beautiful, kind Mother.

She will see me and take me in and I will go and  
live with her because she is so kind and beautiful.

I will have food everyday and everything I want.

I am at the back of the factory and the men now  
come to work.

So I hide.

I find a place where I can see out but no one can see  
me.

Then I see her again. The White dog.

She knows I'm there. Though the men don't.

She is careful not to get near them and then  
I see her disappear underneath the building.

This is her den.

I'm so hungry.

All morning this hungry feeling grows.

But I think now that the day is not very safe if  
you are small.

The dogs know this too.

They stay in their den, so I stay in my hiding place.

The men come out for lunch.

They throw what they don't want away  
and they go back in.

The white dog moves towards the bin when they  
have gone back but she can't get inside.

But I can.

When she sees me she moves away. Her head low  
like before with her sad eyes.

I climb into the bin.

I pull out the end of a fizzy drink and a sandwich.

I drink the drink and eat half the sandwich and then put the rest on the ground for the white dog.

She takes it and eats it.

She is so beautiful.

*FX music.*

It is night now.

The men have all gone home.

*FX fire. Adult voices, sounding drunk.*

**RUSSIAN.**

Men and women.

- *The potatoes are ready.*
- *No They're not.*
- *Yes they are.*

I am standing near two Bombzi,

They are roasting potatoes in their fire.

I'm not sure how to get near them without

being seen.

Then a gang of children come near one of them.

They get in a circle all around him.

*FX children jeer at Bombzi.*

Children.

**RUSSIAN.**

- *Bombzi drunks. Bombzi drunks.*
- *Grab his trousers.*
- *Go on grab them.*
- *Bombzi – What are you doing. Get off me. Don’t. Don’t.*

They push him onto the floor. The other Bombzi

Can’t do anything as there are too many children.

They push him to the floor and then take his

trousers off.

- *Bombzi – What are you doing. Get off me. Don’t. Don’t.*
- *Children – Get his belt.*
- *Children – I’ve got it.*

They take all his clothes so he is

naked in the cold.

His old grey body shivers.

*FX children laughing.*

- *Look at his little legs.*
- *Bombzi – Leave me alone.*
- *Look at his wrinkly.*
- *Bombzi – Leave me alone.*

*FX children laughing.*

I run at the fire while they are doing this, grab

two potatoes and run. No one sees me accept the

white dog.

When I look back the children have pushed the fire

over and taken the other potatoes and one of the

Bombzi has fallen into the fire.

No one helps her.

*FX WOMAN falling into fire. Screaming.*

*WOMAN – help me! Help me!*

*Children laughing.*

Bully-boy is there and he is laughing very much.

The white dog runs with me. I run with her.

We run all the way back to the factory.

I put half of one of the potatoes on the ground,

A little nearer to me this time.

And she comes, snaps it up, and moves away

to eat it.

Then I put the next piece in my hand.

I make my hand flat for her to take the potato.

It is hard for her.

She is very, very afraid.

Her eyes look down on the ground.

I talk to her.

I tell her I will never hurt her.

I remember my Stepfather and his lying.

And I tell her that I am not lying, that I will not

Hurt her, that she is safe with me.

And then I sing to her.

*Song.*

*Russian into English?*

She listens, her ears to one side.

And then she takes the potato from my hand.

I am so happy.

I am so happy.

And I give her a name.

I call her Belka.

Belka, Belka.

Belka who took food from my hand.

*FX Music.*

## Scene 5

IVAN

There are new restaurants opening all over  
Moscow.

The women in them have blonde hair, always and  
the men

wear suits and gold rings. These men  
kill people.

They killed the people in my block.

One, two, Silence.

One, two, and God counts.

In the bins outside is all the food they  
can't eat because they are already fat.

Well the women aren't fat, but all the men are.

The dogs can't climb into this bins but I can.

Just before the last star is left in the morning sky I  
go to the restaurants and climb into the bins.

Belka comes with me.

I give her all the thrown out raw meat.

She takes food from my hands now, always  
But she won't let me touch her.

I think maybe someone hurt her.

And then we go back to the den.

I am not allowed in the den.

I am never allowed in the den.

I have my own place, on the other side, at the back  
of the factory.

They can see my place and I can see their den

But the men in the factory can't see any of us.

The food I give her she takes back to her den.

In the den there are other dogs.

Belka's dogs – they are all part of her den.

I give them names: they are Vano,

Strelka, Ruslan and Kugya.

We start hunting together.

In the morning I go to the restaurants bins.

These are the most dangerous places.

No one likes children or dogs.

So early morning is best.

But now is later on in the morning when

people are on their way to work,

I go down to the corner of Tverskaya Street.

and beg.

## Scene 6

*FX. Ext. Street. People rushing by.*

IVAN                   I put out my hand flat.

People are in a hurry.

A man stops and talks to me.

He gives me 12 roubles. Which is a lot.

But he doesn't go away and talks more and more.

He asks who I am.

MAN.

RUSSIAN.

*- What is my name?*

What is my name.

I pretend not to understand him.

Then he says he knows somewhere really nice we  
can go, that has ice cream.

MAN.

RUSSIAN.

*- Would you like some ice cream. What's your favourite ice cream?*

Which is your favourite he says.

I bet it's chocolate, or maybe it's strawberry.

MAN.

RUSSIAN.

- *I bet it's chocolate, or is it strawberry, is it strawberry?*

Come with me now. He says. We can go now.

Come on. They'll have all your favourites.

Don't you trust me?

*To back of mix:*

RUSSIAN:

- *Come on. Don't you trust me?*

But all men lie.

*To back of mix:*

Russian:

- *Come on, don't be silly little boy, come on ! I've paid you.*

He starts shouting at me, then he grabs me.

I don't know what to do. I know he is going to hurt me bad. I tell him to let go.

*To back of mix:*

Russian:

- *I tried to be nice but you wouldn't come.*

But he won't let go of me.

He starts dragging me away.

So I bark.

*IVAN barks, with difficulty at first and then with a loud convincing sound -*

*It is the most extraordinary sound. Heightened acoustically in anyway we can. He repeats this bark – becoming ‘like a dog’. Mixed into real sound of dogs and growling as BELKA and the other dogs enter.*

And, suddenly they are all there – all of them.

Belka, Vano, Strelka, Ruslan and Kugya.

*FX Growling and barking of dogs.*

They curl up their snouts and show their teeth and  
growl at the man.

*FX Growling and snapping.*

They are very angry with him for frightening me.

Belka snaps at him.

He lets me go, I kick him in the leg and we run.

We run laughing, Belka, Vano, Strelka and Kugya.

We run all the way back to the den.

All the dogs are grinning now.

I lie down on the ground outside, getting my breath.

And Belka bends over me and licks my face and I  
put my hand out and she lets me touch her.

I touch her.

I touch Belka.

She lets me feel her soft white fur.

This is the first of the best days.

*FX Music.*

It is so hot now, that we never do anything in  
the middle of the day.

I sleep in my hiding place opposite their den  
and they sleep in their den.

Belka still won't let me into their den.

She barks 'NO'. whenever I try.

I wake up for when the men go back in from their  
lunch so I can get what they have left in the bins.

There's a nice man, who is always clearing up.

He works in a restaurant near Tverskaya Street  
and he gives me special bits that the fat  
men and their thin wives don't want.

He is not always there in the morning so I  
wait and watch to see if he is working and when  
he comes out for a smoke, I stand a little away,  
with my head bent low, with sad, hungry eyes.

Then he goes back in and finds something for me, and something for my dogs. Once it was a bar of chocolate, I still shared it. I share everything with my dogs.

**We know every moment**

**What we need to see**

**And where danger is**

**And when to go**

**We know now.**

Kugya is a very silly dog and he always wants to play. Ruslan is a big soft thing; he likes to roll over in anything that smells. He licks me until I scratch his belly. Strelka runs like the wind and she is always guarding, like me, we are both on look out always.

Belka tells us what to do.

Suddenly they stand still and we all have to stand still too and they listen to the wind, the cars, the factory and people. No one likes us so we have to be very careful. Then Belka nudges me and barks and we all know that danger is near and we run back to the den and the men pass and don't even know we're there. Belka always knows best and we do whatever she tell us.

I learn to growl. I learn to howl.

You howl when you can't find each other and they howl back to say they are nearby. And then when we are together we all growl at each other but no one ever gets hurt, it's so we know if we've been good or not. Sometimes I fall asleep when I should be watching out and then Belka wakes me up by jumping on me and growling. And every morning I unfold Svetlana's picture And tell her how happy I am and that I hope

She likes dogs, I know she does.

Because my dogs will come and live with her too.

### Scene 7

IVAN

And now I am standing near the hole in the ground  
that the children go down.

I am begging further down the street.

Today has been no good and no one has given  
me any money to buy biscuits or drink with.

I think people have less again.

I think things are bad.

It is dangerous to beg here as I know it belongs to  
the other children. But I'm not worried.

And then there is shouting.

Boy

RUSSIAN

- *Hey you, what are you doing here?*

But I'm not scared. Not anymore.

It's the bully-boy, that made the children  
have nothing in their eyes.

Boy

RUSSIAN

- *what are you doing here? This is my territory.*

I stand still.

Very still.

I say nothing.

Boy  
RUSSIAN

- *Hey you deaf or something?*

I hope he will come very close.

Boy  
RUSSIAN

- *I'm talking to you.*

Come close I think. Come very close.

Boy  
RUSSIAN

- *This is my territory. You listening.*

I smile at him and he runs towards me to push to the  
ground and I then bark.

All my dogs are there.

They circle him.

*FX dogs growling and snapping.*

They curl up their noses and snap at him.

He tries to escape but they are very angry with him  
for trying to hurt me.

He tries again but they open their mouths very wide  
and he sees their big sharp teeth.

He tries again but still they snap

And growl and he can't escape.

And then he starts to cry.

He is crying and crying.

He curls up in a ball on the ground and cries.

He looks very little.

I signal to Belka and they stop.

We move away.

And turn to go home.

The bully-boy doesn't move – he stays on the  
ground in a small ball.

I think he is still crying.

*FX music.*

## Scene 8

IVAN

It's a full moon. The summer is going.

We go to the hills at the top of Moscow and look  
over the city, my dogs and me.

And we howl.

*FX Ivan and Dogs howl.*

We howl across the city.

From here it glitters

From here it doesn't smell.

There are no bins to spill rubbish and

no bully boys or drunk stinking Bombzi.

From here you can imagine a city of good.

From here there is a kind Mother.

From here God never has to count.

And somewhere in the city Svetlana is sleeping

or dancing or out in a restaurant with somebody

nice.

And I feel her curled up picture in my pocket.

*FX Music.*

## Scene 9

IVAN

And now I go to see my Mother.

Belka comes with me.

It is difficult to find my way back.

It is right across the city.

But I find it.

I wait outside until someone else goes in

And then slip in with them.

I climb up all the stairs and

I knock.

*FX knocking.*

A strange women answers.

I say I've made a mistake.

I don't know what to do.

I sit on the stairs.

Then Nina comes home.

WOMAN

Russian.

*Int. Stairwell.*

- *where have you been. Ivan you look dreadful. They were so worried about you. Oh Ivan you don't know do you. You don't know.*

And Nina says: "Where have you been. Ivan you  
look dreadful. They were so worried about you.  
Oh Ivan you don't know do you. You don't know.

And Nina goes very silent.

And I ask: 'What is it?'

But still she is silent.

And then she starts to cry and I ask her again  
and then she tells me.

She tells me that my Mother is dead.

And everything is silent.

'One.' Silent. 'One.' Silent.

Then she tries to get me to come in but I won't.

She died three months ago she says.

WOMAN

Russian.

- *Ivan I'm so sorry. So sorry. Come and have some hot milk. Come in with me.*

Nina tries again to get me to come with her.

But I say no.

I go and wait outside. I wait until it is dark.

*FX ext. Stumbling man approaching. Mumbling to self. MAN.  
RUSSIAN.*

- *Git. I'd have paid him tomorrow. Would have paid him.*

And now he is coming home.

My stepfather.

So drunk like always.

I am bigger now and it is easy to trip him up.

*FX repeated thuds and groaning.*

He tries to get up but I bark and Belka curls  
up her face and growls at him.

*FX growling ad snapping dog.*

Man.

RUSSIAN.

- *get her off me. Get off me.*

*The groaning through out kicking – his is out of his head and can barely speak.*

He is stuck on the ground.

She snaps at him.

And I kick him and kick him and kick him.

But he looks like an old man and

there is nothing in his eyes.

The vodka has eaten him up. It is so easy to kick  
and kick and kick him.

But I don't want to do it anymore.

Belka barks – it's enough.

We leave him. Lying on the ground.

He doesn't even recognize me.

## Scene 10

IVAN

The first snow comes.

The first snow is never beautiful.

It turns turn to slush and mud and it means the beginning of the very, very cold days.

Everyday there is no sun and no stars.

I am waiting at the back of the restaurant  
the nice man has just gone in to get me and my  
dogs something.

Then I turn and there is a militia man.

He grabs me.

MAN. *Ext. City.*

Russian.

- *Got you.*

He is silly to do this.

I bark.

*FX Dogs bark back and arrive.*

*Growling.*

You must let me go, I say.

Ivan. RUSSIAN.

- *you must let me go, or they will bite you hard.*

or they will bite you hard.

Man.

RUSSIAN.

- *I'm not letting go.*

He won't let go.

I shout.

Belka bites into his leg.

Then he lets go,

*FX Man shouting in pain.*

We run and run.

He has no chance of catching us.

We run all the way back.

And lie down on the ground all panting  
together.

We rub noses – to check we are all alright.

We are very alright.

If the militia capture you they put you in  
prison's filled with other children  
who no one cares about.

Belka still won't let me into the den.

Than Vano disappears.

One day he goes out and does not come back.

We wait for him.

When it is night and he should be home,

Belka and the others howl for him but he still  
doesn't come back.

They howl all night.

But still he doesn't come.

I go out looking for him.

The dogs won't come with me.

So I look on my own.

It is hard to be without them.

There is no kindness without them.

I see the bully-boy walking towards me.

I turn to run.

Then I see he is not walking properly.

He looks much older.

He wobbles.

A Bombzi goes to him.

It is very cold.

So the Bombzi rubs vodka in his face,

to make his face warm

And then he helps him stuff newspapers in his

shoes, to stop the cold from getting in.

They drink from a bottle.

He is a Bombzi too I think now.

I think that that is the only thing you can grow

up to be.

I go back to the den and sit outside.

Vano still hasn't come back.

We are all quiet.

I try to go into the den but Belka barks

'No' at me. And I don't go in.

Maybe Vano is lost somewhere.

Maybe he has been taken.

Maybe he is dead.

And maybe it was silent after he died.

When God is counting:

One, one, one.

One more for heaven.

And then silence.

I curl up into a little ball and cry.

I didn't cry for my mother.

But I cry for Vano.

I cry all night.

*FX music.*

## Scene 11

IVAN

Now I am at the back of the restaurant.

This time I am very careful here.

I still wait for the man but I always  
have all the dogs with me very close.

They are tucked behind big bins  
but they are there.

And I always safe because they are here,  
so no one can touch me.

The man goes inside to get me something.

I watch him, all the way. Ready to bark.

He has told me he likes children  
and dogs.

*MEN.*

*RUSSIAN.*

- *There he is.*
- *Grab him.*
- *I've got him.*

And then there is five militia.

They have big sticks.

But the dogs see.

*MEN.*

*RUSSIAN.*

- *Hold him fast.*
- *The dogs.*
- *Hit them.*

I don't need to do anything.

They are at their feet.

*Russian Militia shouting as dogs attack. Yelping dog.*

*MEN.*

*RUSSIAN.*

- *Keep hold of him.*
- *Let go of my leg.*
- *Hit them.*

They grab their legs.

They yelp when they are hit by the sticks

But they are brave dogs.

They bite them.

*More shouting from MEN.*

They let me go.

*MEN.*

*RUSSIAN.*

- *I couldn't hold on anymore.*
- *We'll get you next time dog boy and your dogs.*
- *They've cut into my skin.*

This time I run like so fast.

We don't look back.

We run and run and run.

The snow is thick and I slip but then I am back  
on my feet again.

They don't know all the ways.

We know all the ways.

All the secret animal ways.

In and out of everywhere.

They can't follow us.

But this time was very close.

I was almost taken.

Belka knows I am very frightened.

There is a red mark on my neck where the militia  
hit me.

The night is very, very cold.

I don't know what to do.

If I stay out I think I might die in the cold.

I lie outside the dogs den and bark.

*FX Ivan barking.*

Belka barks back.

*FX Belka barks.*

It is a good bark.

I think she might let me in now.

I bark again.

She barks back another good bark.

I crawl inside.

It is dark and warm.

I lie curled up with their warm bodies

All around me.

I put my head in their soft fur.

I am buried in their warm fur, in our den

and the cold can't creep in and hurt me.

Belka licks me and sighs.

I know she loves me and I love her.

Now I am dog.

*FX music.*

## Scene 12

IVAN

We don't go back to the restaurant.

But now it is very, very cold.

And people don't give anything.

I think there is even less money for people now.

The dogs and me are hungry all the time.

The men don't come out to eat their lunch

because it's too cold, so nothing is in the bins

outside.

But every night I am let into the dogs den, our den.

and I curl up with Belka and the others.

And then nothing is bad with the world.

Now I am standing on the corner of Strastnoy

Boulevard.

I have my hand out flat – though it is very, very

cold.

And everyone rushes by and then there she is.

Svetlana she is on all the T.Vs in the street.

She is smiling.

She is everywhere.

Maybe it is a sign  
that she will be my mother.  
I go and stand in front of a shop with TV's to see  
her face. It is so beautiful.  
A woman looks too.

*WOMAN*  
Russian.  
Ext. street.  
- *Such a shame. Such a shame, she's dead. They killed her. Gangsters killed her. Such a shame.*

And the woman walks away.

They killed Svetlana.

Gangsters killed her.

They murdered her.

They killed the most beautiful woman in the  
world.

How could they kill the most beautiful woman  
in the world.

All humans are bad. All of them.

They only make bad things happen.

## Scene 13

IVAN

So now.

Because we are so hungry.

I have to go back to the restaurant.

I wait for the man.

He comes out for a smoke.

He sees me and then goes back in.

He is a long time.

I think I shouldn't have come.

We are all so hungry, I have to wait and I am very

worried but we are so hungry.

And anyway they can never get me because

my dogs will always be here.

But then I know it's all wrong, I turn to go and then

he shouts out.

*Man*

*RUSSIAN*

- *Hey come back. Here some chocolate and some warm milk.*

He holds up three chocolate bars

and a Pepsi drink and tells me there's nothing to be  
afraid of.

Man.

RUSSIAN

*- There is nothing to be afraid of.*

But I know something is wrong.

Though my dogs are near and there  
is nothing to worry about.

Then militia come.

Man.

RUSSIAN

*- There he is*

There are eight of them.

I bark.

No one comes.

Man.

RUSSIAN

*- Got him.*

I bark again.

Still no one comes.

Man.

RUSSIAN

*- You can bark all you like dog boy – no one's coming for you.*

Where are they?

Belka, Strelka, Ruslan and Kugya.

*FX IVAN shouting.*

- *Belka! Vano! Ruslan! Kugya!*

They don't come.

Man.

RUSSIAN

- *No one's coming for you.*
- *We've seen to them*

Men laugh.

*FX IVAN shouting.*

- *Belka! Belka! Belka!!*

My dogs don't come.

I bark and bark.

But still they don't come.

*FX van.*

RUSSIAN.

- *Well done.*
- *Easy. As easy as picking up a 5 year old eh boys.*

The men grab me and put me in a van.

I howl.

*FX howling.*

Men.

RUSSIAN.

- *Get him to be quiet.*
- *Shut it. Shut it!*

I howl and howl.

They would have trapped them with food,

Because they were so hungry.

Belka.

One, two, three, four.

One, two, three, four.

Silence.

*FX music.*

## Scene 14

IVAN

I won't write about the orphanage.

Those were the worst days.

Worse than before.

I was there for a long time.

There were bully-boys and younger boys who wet  
their beds and cried all night long.

Then you Erina, started to come  
I tell you go away.

I tell you, your not dog so what's the point of  
You.

I you I don't want to be human again.

I tell you that all humans lie.

**I tell you dogs don't lie.**

And I tell her, always, always I am with my dogs.

I am not here with you.

I tell you that everything is made up by  
humans, so they can make themselves up, so  
they are one big lie.

Dogs just are, they don't make things up.

Humans do only bad things,

so go away!

And I you that that the only reason you want me

is because of my time with the dogs.

Newspaper men come and take photos of me,

I won't talk to them.

I want my dogs back! I want my dogs!

But you, Erina, you come back again and again.

And one day I hear you shouting at a newspaper

Man, about me and telling them to leave me alone.

So one night I let you take me home.

There are no bully boys here and no one cries all

night.

## Scene 15

IVAN

On that first night – you give me warm milk,

And puts it in a cup in front of me. Then

You go over to a shelf and take down a

Small white wooden box.

It has red curling patterns painted

on it.

You say: “It’s for you Ivan.” And then you leave

me in your kitchen with my milk and the

box.

I am very cross that you are not a dog

and I won’t drink my milk.

I look at the box and the red curling patterns on

its side. I trace the patterns with my figure. I don’t

want it. I don’t want anything from

you, Erina. But then I lift its lid, just a tiny bit and

music plays. I shut the box down quickly and the

music stops and then I open it slowly

and this time I let the music play. It’s sweet.

I drink my milk and listen.

Then when it finishes you come back in and  
winds up the music box and it plays again. Only  
this time you sing a song to it.

*Russian Lullaby.*

“Bai, bai, bai, bai,  
Báyu, Detusku mayú!  
Bai, bai, bai, bai,  
Báyu, Detusku mayú!  
Shta na górkí, na goryé,  
O visyénnei, o poryé,  
Ptíchki Bozhiye payút,  
F tyómnam lyési gnyózda vyut.”

Then, you close the lid and look at me. My eyes  
are shut. I am sleeping. I think I might be safe  
here, safe with you.

## Scene 16

IVAN

And I am told I have a soul.

It is the thing that has to be counted out

when you die. ‘One, two.’ ‘One two’.

It is a shiney thing that sits inside me and is a bit of

God but when I look at it and feel it, it has a tale,

and a black wet nose – and it can hear the

sound of a man’s whisper from 300 meters, the fall

of snow and the ice breaking on the Moskva River,

it can hear jackdaws, and sparrows and

other wild things – the wild things that are around

us always – deep in the middle of the city.

The middle of me is a dog.

And will always be dog.

But this is now.

And Erina, because I have told you this story that  
I wouldn't tell, you have given me a dog.

I am holding a small puppy in my  
arms, a small white puppy.

I am allowed to call her Belka. I know it is Belka  
come back.

I know that she is my soul dog.

I know, its her, her sad eyes and her black nose,  
tell me this.

And the puppy sleeps in my bed.

And you do what you always do at night.

You wind up the music box, like you did that first  
time and sings.

*FX brief refrain of lullaby to the back – into Ext of city and nocturnal animals  
and birds, mounting with music – into forest at night with forest animals.*

And I fall into a deep sleep.

I see my dogs, all of my dogs, they are singing to  
me:

Vano, Strelka, Ruslan, Kugya and Belka.

We're down in the dark, dark city and it's very  
cold. Belka goes still and we all stand and wait.

Suddenly she barks and we run, and run into the  
wild, wild forest,  
into forever.

Into now.

Running and running with my dogs in the white  
falling snow.

**The end**