

Ivan and the Dogs

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Cast

IVAN: (*Ivan can be cast as any age and any gender*)

NB ALL dialogue in the soundscape is pre-recorded in RUSSIAN.

IVAN

So. All the money went and there was nothing to buy food with. *(stop)*

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 apartments for these things.
(stop)

The dogs went first. *(stop)*

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. *(stop)*

So Mothers and Fathers looked for
other things, other things that ate,
and drank and needed to be kept
warm.

And some Children
(stop) were taken to
other side of the city
and left. *(stop)*

Then I was 4.

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.

And this is now. *(stop)*

*

*

*

*Soundscape. Door slamming shut. Stumbling. Man muttering in
RUSSIAN. Rummaging in kitchen – sound of bottles.*

- *Where is it. Where is it.*
- *Kolya?*
- *You've had all the vodka you fucking bitch.*
- *No.*
- *You have, look at you. (to Ivan) what you looking at.*
- *Leave him alone.*

This is my Mother and my Stepfather.

Soundscape. RUSSIAN.

- *Did you drink it?*
- *Ivan - No.*
- *Don't hit him.*
- *shut up bitch. (scream) why is 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.

Every night is like this.

Soundscape. RUSSIAN.

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

– *No Kolya. No Kolya.*

– *Out of my way.*

– *No*

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

– *No*

Violent banging escalating, Mother terrified screams.

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 will say it is because he has not
been paid for months and months, that
it is 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 will
promise again on his Mother's life
that he will never hit her again.

But he is lying.

His Mother should have died many times.

Soundscape *RUSSIAN*.

- *No Kolya. No.*
- *What's the fucking point of him. It's either me or that little shit. All he does
it eat and drink. Get fucking rid of him. Get rid of him now. You hear me
bitch it's either him or me.*
- *No Kolya. Don't hit him. No. NO.*

Child screaming.

And he says all I do is eat and drink.

He says she has to get rid of me. He
says I have to go and then he hits her
again for keeping me.

And his breath smells like there's a
dragon inside him and he builds red
mountains across my skin and the
mountains are like holes inside me, he
digs into me saying forever and
forever and forever, this will be
forever and forever and forever. It will
always be like this.

And he throws my mother against the
walls. and she is bleeding and can't
cry anymore.

And I can't scream anymore.

I can't even say stop.

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

And outside there are the other children.

So.

I put in my pockets two packet of crisps, and some
pickles.

I put on my thick coat and my thick gloves.

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

And when I come back into the
kitchen They are curled around each
other on the floor,

They are holding hands.

They sleep.

I slip but they do not wake.

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 thick door and wait.

Soundscape. Laughter. 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.

Soundscape *Man and Woman.*

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

Giggling. They move off.

I'm out. It is night time.

Into the wild, wild world.

Soundscape *MUSIC. With dogs barking and children playing – like a playground.*