

Stavl Zosimov

Voluntarios De Donbass



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«АВТОР»

2025

Zosimov S.

Voluntarios De Donbass / S. Zosimov — «Автор», 2025

Los voluntarios de Mariupol Ekaterina y Sergey de Sakhalin transportan cargas humanitarias a asentamientos peligrosos bajo fuego. Y Catalina recibe una herida en el pecho, y Sergei es vendido como prisionero, de donde regresa a los suyos en un Hymers secuestrado.

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CHAPTER ONE

Salad-colored volunteer jackets stand out with bright spots against the gray ruins of Mariupol. Today, there are four of them, volunteer searchers: SERGEY (20), YEKATERINA (19), ALINA, and YAN. Like for the past eight months, their task is to search for missing people and restore lost connections between loved ones. The quartet in bright jackets and with food kits in bags enters the entrance. Explosions are constantly heard from the side of the sea and in parts of the city. The young people stop at the landing of the second floor. Yekaterina knocks on the door.

EKATERINA

We are looking for Lyubov Ivanovna Pugachyova.

LYUBOV IVANOVNA

(confused)

That's me.

EKATERINA

Oleg and Elena are looking for you, there has been no contact with you for a long time.

LYUBOV IVANOVNA

Those are my tenants!

EKATERINA

We will record you in a short video and give you this food kit.

LYUBOV IVANOVNA

Please, come in. And why are you avoiding me so much?

SERGEY

Many.

ALINA

We try to process about ten requests for finding people in just one day.

LYUBOV IVANOVNA

On March 2nd, the communication was cut off in Mariupol, and we were left without information about each other. Everyone sees a terrible picture on television, for those who still have power, and no one knows what happened to their family. They try to call you on the phone, but it's turned off. The first thought is that you've died.

YAN

We found a colossal number of people who simply had no opportunity to inform their relatives that they were alive.

LYUBOV IVANOVNA

How did you become volunteers? Are you locals?

SERGEY

Not all.

ALINA

Katya is local.

EKATERINA

I am 29 years old. I have lived all my life in Mariupol, in the Kalmyk district. I worked as a teacher in a kindergarten. On February 24th, not a single child was brought to my group. That's when my life took a different turn. During the storming of Mariupol, like other residents, I hid from shelling in the basement, had little food, and, of course, was without communication.

LYUBOV IVANOVNA

And I stayed at home at my own risk. My legs are almost not working. I sat hungry for three days. Thank you, my neighbor sometimes brought food and water.

Lyubov Ivanovna starts crying and covers her face with her hand.

LYUBOV IVANOVNA

And then I looked out the window and saw her sniper shot by the column. – She sighs deeply. How did you become a volunteer?

A month earlier

The parents come to the common changing room to pick up their children. The children get dressed.

ARTEM

Goodbye, Aunt Katya.

EKATERINA

(Smiling)

Goodbye, Artem.

ARTEM'S MOTHER

What was his behavior like today?

EKATERINA

Like all the boys.

LENOCKA

Goodbye, Aunt Katya.

EKATERINA

(Smiling)

See you tomorrow, Lenocka.

BOY
Goodbye.

GIRL
Goodbye.

Ekaterina remains alone in the changing room. She takes off her white robe and puts on her outerwear. She turns off the light and exits into the corridor. She activates the alarm system with a remote control and steps outside. She locks the entrance door and heads towards the residential buildings.

Ekaterina enters the territory of her courtyard. In the center of the yard stands military armored vehicles with the symbols of the Ukrainian army. Local civilians are gathered around it, expressing their outrage.

WOMAN
Why did you bring this here? There are children here. Ordinary civilians.

GRANDMOTHER
Go away, go beyond the city limits. Fight there. You've brought hell here.

TANK OFFICER
(from the tank turret)
We've been ordered to be stationed here. And you'd better get out of the city.

MAN
Get out? My family and I wanted to leave yesterday, but we were turned back at the exit.

WOMAN
Exactly. We're a living shield for them.

TANK OFFICER
(from the tank turret)
This equipment is expensive, so we'll deploy it on the ground floors. We won't ask for your opinion. We have orders. It's better if you disperse to your homes. Before you're arrested for violating the curfew. And stop shouting.

UKRAINIAN SOLDIER
The Russians are already approaching the city. And your district is on the front line for us.

TANK OFFICER
And, by the way, if I were in your place, I would prepare for urban defense.

EKATERINA is going to her entrance. People, starting to get agitated, begin to disperse.

CHAPTER TWO

In the morning, EKATERINA is sitting in the kindergarten's locker room. A teacher from the neighboring group enters and approaches her.

EKATERINA
Nobody?

EDUCATOR
As you can see.

EKATERINA
And I don't have anybody either.

EDUCATOR
The news mentioned that Russia has come close to the city's borders.

In the distance, the explosion of a projectile can be heard. Then another one. The sound of automatic gunfire. The KINDERGARTEN DIRECTOR approaches the girls.

KINDERGARTEN DIRECTOR
Girls, nobody will be brought in today. I received a call from the administration instructing us to disperse and stay indoors until the next notification from the authorities through local news. Things are getting serious. It's frightening to think about. And on your way, stock up on supplies.

The girls exchange glances.

A long, monotonous doorbell rings at Ekaterina's apartment. This is followed by strong knocks on the door.

EKATERINA
I'm coming, I'm coming.

Ekaterina quickly approaches the door.

EKATERINA(CONT.)
What's with all the impatience?

Ekaterina opens the door. In front of her stand three soldiers with rifles slung over their shoulders.

ARMED FORCES OF UKRAINE OFFICER
Is there anyone else in the apartment?

An officer from the Armed Forces of Ukraine boldly barges into the apartment. The others follow him.

EKATERINA
No, I'm alone. My family has all gone to the village to visit relatives.

ARMED FORCES OF UKRAINE OFFICER
Get all your essentials and head to the basement.

EKATERINA

(Indignant)
How dare you?

The officer fires a burst into the ceiling.

ARMED FORCES OF UKRAINE OFFICER
(Roughly)
Unclear?

EKATERINA
(Frightened)
Alright. I'm leaving.

Panicking, Ekaterina runs to the living room to gather her things. The soldiers exit the apartment and pound on the door across the hall.

In the basement sit the residents of the building. There are old men, old women, children, and their parents.

WOMAN
And what will happen to us now?

The young woman with a one-year-old child in her arms turns to the man sitting next to her.

YOUNG WOMAN
(Indignantly)
I told you we should leave the city. But no, you were all about business. Prices are rising. When will this panic-buying for groceries end?

OLD MAN
(soothingly)
Young people. We shouldn't argue right now. Who knew this would happen like this?

MIDDLE-AGED MAN
(smilingly)
History repeats itself.

NEIGHBOR
(sternly)
What's so funny about that?

Suddenly, explosions ring out on the street. Then a second, a third. The sound of automatic gunfire is heard. Sometimes stray bullets ricochet into the basement window. By the window, a family sits with children.

EKATERINA
You should move away from there. God forbid anything else happens.

The family quickly gets up and moves deeper into the basement. The GUY takes out a receiver and tunes in to a station. The voice of the announcer is heard.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

Ukrainian nationalists caused a real massacre in Mariupol. After barbaric shelling by the Azov Battalion, which is banned in Russia, not a single building was left standing in the city.

GRANDFATHER

Our people say, 'Russian.

WOMAN

(Interrupting)

Okay, please be quiet..

RADIO ANNOUNCER

Near every house are many corpses of peaceful citizens. The residents of Mariupol have been surviving in inhuman conditions for three weeks already. The humanitarian corridor organized by the DPR and Russia has become their only hope for salvation..

There is a scraping noise in the equipment and the signal stops.

GUY

Done. The battery died.

GRANDFATHER

Now the news will only come if a crow brings it on its tail.

WOMAN

So there is a humanitarian corridor.

MAN

The question is only in which direction?

EKATERINA

Okay, I'll go get some water. Are there any empty jugs? I'll also scan the situation while I'm out.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Wait, daughter. Let it calm down.

EKATERINA

It will never calm down.

ELDERLY WOMAN

On March 8th, Azov fighters arrived at our house by car, entered our entrance, and went upstairs. I asked: 'Aren't you going to leave from here? Maybe go somewhere to the fields, there are people here. Look, there are old men here, a girl just gave birth, the baby is two months old.' They replied: 'For us, this is a shooting range.' And I ran to the neighbors to tell them to hide in the basements.

GUY

So until victory?!

MAN

Their battalion in Mariupol had been preparing fortifications since 2014.

WOMAN

Who told you?

MAN

I worked in the administration of our district, in the communication department.

GUY

Fun.

GUY sets aside the receiver.

MAN

The militants equipped machine gun nests and positions for PTRS calculations in hospitals, schools, kindergartens, and other civilian objects. They placed heavy weaponry close to residential buildings to provoke return fire to these points.

WOMAN

And here I thought they were coming into our yard for exercises or something?

EKATERINA

They also installed machine guns in the attic of our daycare.

CHAPTER THREE

A powerful explosion is heard. Half an hour later, a truck drives up to the house. The Ukrainian Armed Forces soldiers enter the basement.

SENIOR AZOV SOLDIER

Okay. Bring them here.

OLD MAN

And what happened?

SENIOR AZOV SOLDIER

The Russians launched artillery strikes on the local maternity hospital and drama theater.

Soldiers carry two wounded civilians each. The groans are incredible. Ekaterina and a few others help arrange the bodies comfortably. The soldiers run away and you can hear the truck leaving for the neighboring house.

GIRL

You need to go to the hospital.

EKATERINA

Where are you from?

ПАHEHHAЯ GIRL

(gasping for breath)

We live in the area near the Drama Theater.

INJURED MAN

Drink. Drink.

They bring him a mug of water.

ПАHEHHAЯ GIRL

(gasping for breath)

They herded us all like cattle into the building. The Azov soldiers promised us a 'green corridor.' And the gathering was at the theater. They said UN buses would arrive soon.

INJURED MAN

What corridor? I was turned back at the exit of Mariupol. There was a car with a shot-out windshield. Not far away lay the bodies of a woman, a man, and two children. Apparently, this family was trying to escape and didn't make it. Next to the car, a wounded dog whimpered, guarding the bodies of its owners, who were killed by the Ukrainian fighters controlling the perimeter.

ELDERLY WOUNDED WOMAN

They kept us in the Drama Theater for several days. Didn't let us go out... Didn't give us any water, nothing.

WOUNDED WOMAN

As they retreated, they bombed the bomb shelter in the drama theater and that's it. They brought the survivors to you with shrapnel wounds.

In the basement, it's quiet. EKATERINA opens her eyes and twitches her nose. GRANDFATHER sits in the corner and reads a book. The sunlight falls on the book through the window slit.

EKATERINA

What's that smell?

INJURED MAN

My neighbor died. He's already stiff. And his wound started to smell.

EKATERINA

We need to do something about it?

GRANDFATHER

And what will you do, daughter? I'm sure there's just no ambulance left.

EKATERINA

(panicking)

Do they come here at all.

GUY

And last year, I buried my dog right here in the yard at night.

EKATERINA

Then let's bury them there too while it's quiet. Come on, get up.

Ekaterina and her boyfriend are carrying a dead body outside. Then they come back and carry out a second corpse. Some people who are able to stand up also start carrying bodies outside.

Ekaterina wrinkles her face from the sun. She blinks and sees. The buildings in the courtyard are all shattered by shells. There are many craters from impacts in the yard. Burnt private cars stand near the entrances. Occasionally, UKRAINIAN SOLDIER bodies lie around. Ekaterina and her boyfriend go to the basement for the third body.

EKATERINA

The light is so bright it hurts the eyes. The whole courtyard is shattered. There are craters in the yard from shells. Go outside. And help those who can't walk. We need to get some fresh air. The weather outside is so wonderful.

People are slowly coming out into the courtyard. Men are using shards of slate to dig graves for the deceased.

MAN

How deep should we dig?

GRANDFATHER

Just deep enough to cover with soil. It will all end someday, and they will be reburied later.

Some women are making a barbecue out of bricks and starting a fire.

MAN

I'll check out the nearest stores. Maybe I'll find some food. Who's coming with me?

Two guys stand up and the three of them leave the courtyard. The remaining people chop down trees for the fire with whatever they have. A young girl lights the bonfire.

WOMAN

Save matches and lighters to start a fire.

Guys come with full bags.

MAN

It's all in ruins there. Here's what we managed to grab. No meat. But there are a lot of scattered bread rolls and grains. Be careful while eating. There might be stones inside.

The woman stirs the boiling water in the pot by the campfire.

WOMAN

Put it here. Let's eat it hot right now.

MAN

Bodies of the killed lie near every high-rise building. The survivors don't have the strength to bury them.

SECOND MAN

I haven't been able to reach my mother since March 6th. She lives a few houses away. I went to check and counted fifteen bodies. My mother was among them.

EKATERINA

I sympathize with you. And which floor are you on?

SECOND MAN

I'm on the eighth floor.

MAN

I'm on the third floor.

SECOND MAN

When I was evicted, the Azov members were in my apartment with sniper optics.

WOMAN

I counted, we have been living in the basements for twenty days. Without food, without water. We were not needed by anyone: neither the Ukrainian Armed Forces soldiers, nor the Azov members.

MAN

We were abandoned to the mercy of fate. What we went through, I don't wish on anyone, not even on them. It was very difficult. I don't know how we survived. It's indescribable.

WOMAN

I am 57 years old and I lost everything.

Suddenly, a Bander-mobile drives into the courtyard and starts firing from a machine gun. All the residents in the yard jump up and run back to the basement. Some are shot in the back and fall to the ground. EKATERINA lifts an old woman by the shoulders and heads towards the entrance to the basement. A quadcopter flies over dropping grenades into the truck bed. Sequential explosions occur, and the Bander-mobile explodes. The shockwave scatters the bodies of the Nazis sideways, and everything falls silent again.

END OF MEMORY

CHAPTER FOUR

In the apartment, EKATERINA, ALINA, YAN, SERGEY, and LYUBOV IVANOVNA are sitting. EKATERINA sighs deeply with despair.

EKATERINA

When the battles were still ongoing, but our district had already been cleared, a woman in her thirties arrived. And I hear someone calling: 'Katya! I need Katya!' I went out and met Alina.

ALINA

I'm Alina, a volunteer from Moscow. And I say that Katya's cousin brother is looking for her. Also from Moscow. He has something to pass on to her?

YAN

I am the brother. My name is YAN. And this is my classmate Serega. He is from Sakhalin.

EKATERINA

I respond to Alina, 'Tell them that we are alive.' That's how I first encountered the search for people, and soon I was involved in the same thing myself.

ALINA

I left for Moscow. Katya refused to go with me. And I brought Sergey and Katya's brother YAN here.

EKATERINA

Right. Old people, children. Who will take care of them?

YAN

And that's how our volunteer squad from Donbass was formed.

EKATERINA

My acquaintances started asking to check their addresses: what's with the apartment, what's with their grandmother, what's with their sister. We started driving in May, battles were still ongoing on the left bank. When we arrived there, people asked to convey one thing: we are alive. Simply alive.

SERGEY

Later, our squad joined the charitable foundation «Civil Position».

ALINA

Katya is the eldest in our unit or unit.

LYUBOV IVANOVNA

And what organization are you with?

EKATERINA

The organization is focused on searching for people who have lost contact with their relatives. In the time that our foundation president Alexander Daryev recounts, the foundation has managed to find about a thousand people.

ALINA

Search requests are coming in through the Telegram bot. On the very first day of our work, volunteers received around 200 addresses and surnames that needed to be checked.

SERGEY

Dozens of requests continue to come in daily.

YAN

In the foundation, they know in advance that not everyone will be found alive.

ALINA

By the way, LYUBOV IVANOVNA. YAN and I invite you to our wedding.

LYUBOV IVANOVNA

How is this possible at such a time? Will I live to see it? And, have you already submitted the paperwork?

YAN

Yes. To the Mariupol Registry Office.

LYUBOV IVANOVNA

Oh, what a wonderful couple.

ALINA

True, he's still recovering. The Azov soldiers fired directly at him when they were retreating. But we're not rushing it. So, about the wedding?

LYUBOV IVANOVNA

Oh, my dears, you are golden! And why not? I also got married right after the war. We lived our whole lives together. Raised three children. Thank God they all moved to Russia. But my husband was killed last year. On May 9th. He hit a fascist with a stick because he tore off his St. George ribbon. And you too?

Ekaterina and Sergey glance at each other and smile.

EKATERINA

No. We are just friends.

SERGEY

Indeed, a guy and a girl can be friends while loving others?

Catherine's volunteer squad enters the next entrance. Everything inside is burnt. They enter the broken doorway of the apartment and see human remains, bones, and burnt bodies scattered on the floor.

SERGEY

Wow, that's some heavy stuff?

ALINA

I feel like I'm going to be sick.

ALINA covers her mouth with her hand and hurries out of the room.

EKATERINA

(In a panic, sobbing)

We need to call the Emergency Situations Ministry, the police, and the ambulance.

SERGEY takes out a walkie-talkie.

SERGEY

I'll call right now. What is the address?

EKATERINA

Alright. Everyone calmed down. Let's go to the upper floors. We'll find out there.

YAN

If there are any survivors.

YAN goes out into the entrance. He lifts his head up and shouts.

YAN

There are survivors?

WOMAN

Yes, I am alive. On the third floor.

From above appears a WOMAN at the open landing. She looks down.

YAN

We will come up to you right now.

WOMAN

Just be careful. The staircase landing is hanging on reinforcement. It could collapse any moment.

YAN

And what is the house number?

EKATERINA

Pull yourself together, ALINA. We need to keep going.

ALINA wipes her eyes.

ALINA

Yes, yes. Just a moment.

EKATERINA

Breathe deeply. I'm in shock myself.

WOMAN

(shouting)

Young people. There are bones here. Charred remains lay in the hallway of my apartment.

YAN

Don't touch anything.

SERGEY

We are already on our way to you.

YAN

I called the emergency services and they will arrive here shortly to evacuate you.

ALINA

Here's how to tell someone that their loved one is no longer with us?

EKATERINA

(sympathetically)

It's very difficult. I am grateful to God that everyone in my family and circle of friends is alive. Because finding out that your child has passed away is incredibly hard.

The charity fund 'Civic Position' is temporarily housed in the middle school. In the rebuilding classroom after the bombings, volunteer squads are sitting as in a regular class. Katya's squad is sitting in the middle. At the teacher's desk by the blackboard stands the chairman of the fund, Alexander Dariev.

ALEXANDER DARIEV

Volnovakha is a small town situated right in the middle of the road between Donetsk and Mariupol. It is home to a major railway junction. In the spring, there were fierce battles in Volnovakha. Some areas of the city were almost completely destroyed, while others survived slightly better. Currently, the fighting has subsided, and the government of the DPR has decided to send volunteer squads to the city. Your task remains the same: to help the peaceful residents with food, clothing, and shelter. Even after six months, Volnovakha is no longer making headlines, but the help of volunteers is still needed. A squad of volunteers from the All-Russian Student Corps of Rescuers (VSKS) has already arrived there to restore the Orthodox church that was destroyed by shelling. But more hands are needed. Who will go there?

EKATERINA

We will go.

ALEXANDER DARIEV

Okay, let's write it down. Ekaterina Savina's squad is heading to Volnovakha. Now, who will go to Melitopol?

In the morning, EKATERINA exits the tent and steps out onto the street. ALINA follows her. Around them are collapsed houses. In the distance, the sounds of shell explosions can be heard.

ALINA

It's terrifying. Seeing the devastation, the destroyed houses, hearing the shelling.

EKATERINA

My head is constantly spinning, thinking about what might come flying at us. And you walk around constantly on edge.

The Church Mother approaches them.

CHURCH MOTHER

Have you ever worked on a construction site?

EKATERINA

No. Never.

YAN and SERGEY step out onto the street.

SERGEY

All set. We are ready for labor and defense.

CHURCH MOTHER looks at SERGEY and YAN. They exchange glances.

CHURCH MOTHER

Have you ever worked on construction sites?

YAN

I worked in a construction team during vacations.

SERGEY

And I can weld metal.

CHURCH MOTHER

So the guys go to work on the construction site of the temple, while you ladies go to help with household chores.

YAN and SERGEY are approached by a GUY in overalls, and they walk towards the ruins of the temple. EKATERINA and ALINA follow their mother.

CHURCH MOTHER

Heat up the water, clean up, help CHURCH MOTHER. Prepare tea for the workers, monks, and kids on the front line. We're in the rear with them. Where are you from, and what are your names.

EKATERINA

I am EKATERINA from Mariupol.

CHURCH MOTHER

From Mariupol? Oh, I've heard about what was happening there. Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on all the martyrs of Mariupol. What is happening to the world. And what are your names?

ALINA

I'm ALINA. I'm from Moscow. More like from Murmansk. I study in the Capital. I practically went to Donbass on my own – my mother still doesn't know that instead of studying at MGIMO, I chose Donbass. However, coming here was of paramount importance to me.

CHURCH MOTHER

And is it scary?

ALINA

I wasn't scared. I always dreamed of helping people. My dad was a Chernobyl liquidator. And somehow, I have this idea in my head that he helped to mitigate the disaster. And I constantly think: help people, help people. It's easy for me to approach and say, "Guys, do you need help?".

In the opposite direction, GUY in overalls is walking with YAN and Sergey.

IVAN

What are your names?

YAN

I'm YAN, and my friend is SERGEY.

IVAN

In the world, my name was IVAN Dreylikh. I used to be a volunteer and practiced medicine. And then I took the vow of obedience.

SERGEY

You are not a monk then?

IVAN

No, but they are already preparing for the tonsure ceremony.

YAN

How does the consecration to the monkhood usually take place?

IVAN

The candidate pronounces vows. Prayers are read. Then the abbot throws the scissors three times and demands that the candidate humbly pick them up. Each time, the candidate humbly hands them over and kisses the abbot's hand. Do you want to become a monk too? It's very difficult, especially at a young age.

YAN

I don't know. But our help and that of all other volunteers here is definitely needed.

IVAN

All the territories that have been liberated and joined together need help because there are problems everywhere, and the problems are serious. Some places lack water, while others face severe destruction due to shelling. Volunteers will always be needed here, and their assistance will always be in demand.

YAN

Indeed, the local residents mostly treat us well, but not everyone initially believes that we came here to work for free. Not for money, but simply out of a desire to help.

SERGEY

It surprises people. We have to explain to them that we are volunteers precisely to help for free.

IVAN

Since the start of the special operation, more and more people are joining volunteer movements to help residents of the border territories who have lost their homes and families. This is the will of God.

The girls with the mother walk into the tent where food is being prepared. There are many staff members working in it. Each is diligently carrying out their duties..

CHURCH MOTHER

Here is where you will be helping out. Let me introduce you to our senior in charge of the dining tent, SISTER VALERIYA. She is the sister of EKATERINA and ALINA.

CHURCH MOTHER quickly exits the tent.

SISTER VALERIYA

Hello. How did you make the decision to participate in the volunteer program??

ALINA

Volunteering is not new to me. I have been helping homeless animals since childhood, and in general, I try not to stand aside when someone needs my help. Of course, I couldn't stand aside from such a great tragedy as the one faced by the residents of Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republic.

SISTER VALERIYA

Silence.

In the distance, a swiftly approaching sound of a whistle can be heard.

SISTER VALERIYA

(shouting at the top of my lungs)

Everyone, get down on the ground!

SISTER VALERIYA falls to the ground. The others immediately lie down as well. ALINA and EKATERINA stand in fear and look at each other. SISTER VALERIYA grabs their legs and pulls them down. There is a strong explosion. The shockwave bends the tent towards the ground. Some poles do not hold up and break. Shrapnel of various sizes pierces through the tent roof.

SISTER MARIA

It's an explosion at the construction site. My husband is there.

SISTER MARIA jumps up and runs towards the exit. A couple of other sisters follow her as explosions continue.

SISTER VALERIYA

Wait, the cassettes are about to explode now.

Immediately, the cassettes explode with automatic fire. The girls running are thrown back by the shockwave and fall lifeless. One falls near Alina and Katya. Her lifeless face with open eyes gazes unblinkingly at Ekaterina. Katya looks at her. After a while, SISTER VALERIYA stands up.

SISTER VALERIYA

Alright. Whoever can, let's all head to the construction site.

ALINA
(in a trembling voice)
And these?

SISTER VALERIYA
It's too late to help them here. But there might be wounded there.

At the construction site, everything is destroyed. Those who are able are carrying the wounded out from under the rubble of beams and walls. Novice IVAN and Sergey are carrying construction stretchers and there lies the bloodied YAN.

SERGEY
Hang in there, buddy. Just don't fall asleep.

YAN
(In a trembling voice)
Seryoga. I'm scared. ALINA.

SERGEY
Everything will be okay, brother.

IVAN
Let's carry him to that tent. It looks like a medical tent and seems to be mostly intact.

YAN
(groaning and writhing)
Aaahhh.

Sergey and Novice Ivan stop and place the stretchers on the ground. Novice Ivan kneels down and checks the pulse.

He then closes YAN's eyes, and Ivan begins to recite a prayer.

IVAN
Look with Your mercy, O Compassionate Lord, upon their wounds, sufferings, groans, and sorrows, and count all these as a good and pleasing sacrifice to You. Accept them with Your grace, for they have endured fierce sorrows and hardships here, in need, distress, toil, and vigilance, hunger and thirst, exhaustion and weariness.

Nearby, EKATERINA and ALINA stop.

ALINA
YAN?!

ALINA breaks down in hysterics and rushes towards the stretchers. She falls to her knees and starts wailing hysterically.

ALINA
(SOBING)
Damn you, Herods.
Zelensky, bitch. Yes so that
you were damned forever.

EKATERINA
(crying)
Calm down, ALINA. We must keep ourselves composed.

ALINA struggles to catch her breath.

ALINA
Forgive me.

Alina starts crying again and holds onto YAN's bloodied stomach. SISTER VALERIYA, with tears in her eyes, gently lifts Alina up. EKATERINA helps her, and they lead her away from the deceased.

Novice IVAN finishes praying. SERGEY crouches down next to the stretchers.

SERGEY
What was that?

IVAN
Heimers with a cassette charge.

Novice IVAN stands up from his knees. In the distance, emergency vehicles of the Emercom and Ambulance Service appear.

IVAN (CONT.)
SERGEY is coming. They will handle it without us now.

SERGEY
What is Heimers?

IVAN
M142 HIMARS is a highly mobile artillery rocket system. It is an American rocket artillery system mounted on a wheeled chassis. It has recently been introduced into service in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. It has a weight of 16,000 kilograms, a speed of 85 km/h, and a range of 480 km. Its primary armament consists of 6 MLRS-type rockets or 1 ATACMS-type tactical missile. It can fire cassette rounds, which are prohibited by the Geneva Convention..

SERGEY
cassette rounds?

IVAN
That is, such ammunition that scatters many explosive submunitions, each weighing no more than 20 kg. Such things, brother SERGEY.

IVAN and SERGEY approach the ravine and sit on the edge of its shore.

SERGEY

I will enlist as a volunteer and will kill those fascist creatures. I will retrieve Zelensky from hell.

IVAN

It's simple.

SERGEY

What?

IVAN

The hardest thing is to find strength within yourself and suppress the desire for revenge. You have chosen your path as a volunteer and must carry this burden for the rest of your life.

SERGEY

What are you talking about, IVAN?

IVAN

To fight fascism, one must not only kill, but also save. If everyone seeks revenge, then how are we any better than them? Evil cannot be defeated with evil. Only with goodness. And YAN is now watching us from the gates of Heaven and wants us to continue our mission, keeping the promise we made to God. Otherwise, we should have gone as volunteers to death and killing immediately.

SERGEY

I wanted to, but it was a bit scary. YAN came here because of Alinka. He is Katya's brother and he tried to dissuade her, but Alina insisted on it. They were actually planning to get married. She told him it was a pre-wedding vacation.

IVAN

Apparently, it was God's will. And you?

SERGEY

I'm in for the company.

IVAN

I thought you went for Katya.

SERGEY

Katya is beautiful and very kind. But my heart feels indifferent towards her. We are just friends.

Ekaterina approaches Sergey and Ivan with a girl and sits down next to them.

SERGEY

How about you?

EKATERINA

I'm holding up for now.

SERGEY

And Alina?

EKATERINA

She's sleeping. She cried her heart out. Let me introduce you to Vika. She will be in our squad instead of Yan. She's a dental plasterer.

SERGEY

Nice to meet you, Sergey. And this is Ivan's brother.

IVAN

Are you a volunteer? Tell us about yourself?

VIKA

I applied to medical school. I failed the exam. Then I decided to help others. I just didn't know who to turn to for a long time. I talked about my desire with some acquaintances, and one of my old friends told me that her colleague, who is a doctor, got involved in a volunteer mission. She shared a website where I could read about different programs, and I chose one that felt closer to me and applied. It was a program providing humanitarian assistance to residents of Donbass. After some time, they contacted me.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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