Alexander
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You were, you are, you will always be

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Love for one's mother: is it a mental illness? Is there a cure? Is this for life?

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Александр Ермак
You were, you are, you will always be

He: a young man in white pajamas with a red dotted line on the shaven head.

She: a middle aged woman wearing a white doctor's smock.

The room is empty except for a bed, a chair, a table, and a door.

He (sitting on the edge of the bed, sings):

"Fifteen men on the dead man's chest-

Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!

Drink and the devil had done for the rest-

Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!"

(Pensively): Rum!.. I want some rum. Mom, I want my rum! Mommy…

She comes in, with a vase of tulips in her hands and a bag over the shoulder. Places the vase on the floor near the door, then puts the bag on the table and sits down in the chair next to the man.

She: Oh, boy… Why are you crying? (Embraces him and strokes his head.) I'm here, right next to you.

He: Mommy, I want my rum.

She: The very idea!

He: But I want…

She: Alcohol doesn't agree with you! Especially today.

He: But I feel like taking a shot of rum, Mom.

She (shaking her head, pulls a small paper bag out of her pocket): And how do you feel about taking your medicines?

He (echoes): Medicines?

She (pointing at her watch): Yes, it's time to take your pills.

He: Those nasty bitter pills!

She: No. They are sweet this time.

He: Really? Were they made at the candy factory?

She: Yes.

He: Specially for me?

She: Yes. And they were delivered for you just a moment ago. Here you are.

He stretches out his hand. She pours out the pills into his palm.

He: So they were! They are still warm. Yellow, pink and green. (He arranges the pills in his palm.) The big one is the commander. The plump one is his kitchen maid. And these are his faithful soldiers. Brave boys are they. Always ready to fight. Ready for a flight.

He raises his hand preparing to give the pills a flick.

She (softly gripping his hand): Swallow them.

He (sighs): All right. (Saluting the pills with his free hand.) Farewell, brave front line heroes (throws the pills one by one down his throat), and you, the chubby and glorious home front worker…

She pours some water into the glass on the table and gives it to him.

He (taking the glass): Tea with raspberry jam?

She: No.

He: With milk?

She: No.

He: With honey?

She: No. You will have tea the next time, but today it's just water. Drink up.

He (drinking the water): Sweet… From the candy factory.

She: And now it's time you went to bed. You need your strength.

He: I've already been there.

She: Never mind. The more you sleep the better you get.

He: What for?

She: For what?

He: What should I get better for?

She: What are you carrying around in your mouth?

He: Nothing.

She (gives him the glass once again): Come on, swallow the pills, now.

He submissively drinks the water.

She puts him to bed and covers him with the white sheet.

She: Good boy! Get some sleep now. You really need your strength, we have some work to do later today.

He: Will you tell me a bedtime story about the little dragon?

She: Next time.

He: About Goldie and the three brothers?

She: After the dragon.

He: But… but.

She (sighing): No buts. Fall asleep now.

She out of the room, leaving the door ajar, and stays there spying on him.

He (looks around, bends over the edge of the bed and spits out the remaining parts of the pills onto the floor): No, no… I'll never get well again. I'll lie down here… till the end of the year. The next year. No, I'll lie flat here for ten tens years, and Mommy will bring me tea with raspberry jam, and milk, and honey. And oranges, and tangerines too. And she'll buy me a gun. And a saber. And she'll hug me and call me "my lovely"… And she'll tell me stories. About the dragon. And the three brothers. And Ali Baba. And she'll sing me songs. (Sings.) "Hush, little baby, don't say a word…" (Still bending over the edge of the bed he starts swinging. Then slowly slips down and crawls under the bed. Lying there he aims an imaginary gun at the audience.) Combat crew! Action stations! Clear for action! Hey, you there! I've got you in the sights of my gun! Surrender! I'm aiming at you. All rise! Hands up! You, yes, you, on the right, go first! Now…

She (enters): Again?

He lies still.

She pulls him out from under the bed and sits him down onto it.

She: All right. You don't want to take your medicines, you don't want to go to sleep. How about having some play time?

He (echoes): Play time?

She: Yes, let's try again. Once again. Let's play school.

He: I don't wanna go to school.

She: I just said play school. We'll have a school of our own. And I'll be your teacher. Deal?

He: Deal?

She: Lets start then. We'll start… We'll start… Where shall we start?

He: Where shall we start?

She: We'll start at the beginning. The beginning… We'll have an English lesson. Noun declension… verb conjugation…

He: Conjugation?

She: If you like it, I love it… Let's conjugate verbs.

He: Verbs?

She: Yes, we'll conjugate verbs. Let's conjugate the verb "to be" in all tenses. Listen to me. So, I… was, I… am, I… will… be. Past, present, future tense. Was, am, will be. It's your turn now.

He keeps silent.

She: Of course, it’s not so easy, but anyway you can try. You… were…
He: You were.
She: You… are.
He: You are.
She: You will be.
He: You will be.
She: Right. Now let’s try to do the same but about me this time. I… was…
He: I was.
She: No, you should say "You were".
He: You were.
She: I am.
He: I am.
She: No, you should say "You are". All right, looks like this isn't your best day for conjugating. So what is the perfect mental game for your? Maybe math?
He: Math.
She: Five times five makes twenty five.
He: Twenty five.
She: Six times six makes thirty six.
He: Thirty six.
She: Eight times eight makes…
He: Eight times eight.
She: One might say you're right. No, math isn't your thing. How about literature?
He (echoes): Literature?
She: Yes, literature. I have a wonderful book here… (She opens up her bag and takes out a book.) I believe you are steeped in literature. (Giving him the book:) Have a look at it.
He takes the book and starts to turn over the pages systematically one by one, not stopping at any of them.
She (shakes her head): I see some books just swallow you up…
He: Swallow you up…
She: In the figurative sense, of course. (She makes a gesture as if she is pushing something in her throat.) It's just a metaphor, you know. Kind of picture… picture… (She takes a sheet of paper from her bag, draws a horned animal on it and writes "goat" on it, then shows the drawing to him.) Look here, read this.

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