

# FOREIGN GIFTS

a play in one act

by

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CHARACTERS:

Sonia (11 years old)  
Raya (7 years old)

The characters can be played by children or by female actors in their early twenties, preferably short and slightly built.

SETTING: An apartment in Moscow. A minimal set. A dinner table and two chairs. On the table are two plates: one plate is clean, the remains of a recent meal are on the other. In the beginning of the play, both Sonia and Raya are in the same ("Soviet") part of the room. Raya is sitting at the table in front of the plate with an unfinished meal. Sonia is standing next to her.

SONIA

Finish what's on your plate.

RAYA

Don't want to.

SONIA

You must.

RAYA

Who said.

SONIA

Mama said.

RAYA

What will she do?

SONIA

What will she do if what?

RAYA

If I don't.

What will she do if I don't finish.

SONIA

She'll slap you.

RAYA

No she won't.

(Pause)

No she won't.

She won't slap me.

(Pause)

She never slaps me.  
You're the one she slaps.

SONIA

No she doesn't.  
I'm the oldest.  
When Mama isn't here, I get to be Mama.  
(Pause)  
Finish what's on your plate.

RAYA

What if I don't?

SONIA

You've got to eat. If you don't eat, you won't get big.

RAYA

That's not how she says it.

SONIA

Yes it is.  
Yes it is how she says it.

RAYA

Is not!

SONIA

Is too.

RAYA

Is not!

SONIA

Is.

RAYA

I don't want to play this game.  
It's a stupid game and I don't want to play it.

SONIA

It's not a game.

It's for real.

She wants you to eat your food 'cause you've got to be big for real. If you don't get big, nobody will see you. You may be right there with all the rest of them, but they won't see you. They won't even think you're a person. They'll just think you're--

RAYA

I don't want to be a person.

I like being ME.

What's so great about being a person?

SONIA

I'll be a person 'cause I eat what they give me.

RAYA

I don't want to be that kind of person!

I want to be the kind of person that eats what she wants.

SONIA

You won't get to be that kind of person. 'Cause you won't grow.

RAYA

Is the world made up of people who eat what they don't want to?

SONIA

Spit out that gum.

RAYA

It's not done yet.

SONIA

It doesn't matter.

RAYA

There's still some sweet in it.

SONIA

It doesn't matter.

RAYA

I want to chew till the sweet is gone.

SONIA

If you don't spit it out, you'll get blown up.

RAYA

Who said?

SONIA

I said.

RAYA

What do you know?  
You don't even have some gum.  
You're just jealous, that's all.

SONIA

I'm not jealous.  
I'm a teacher.

RAYA

No you're not.  
You're a girl.  
You're a girl like me.  
You're my sister.

SONIA

When the teacher isn't here, I get to be her.

RAYA

No you're not.  
(pause)  
You're not her.  
You're you.

SONIA

Spit out your gum or you'll be blown to pieces.

RAYA

How come I didn't get blown up yet?

SONIA

It takes time. It may be a slow bomb. In some candy they put a slow bomb.

RAYA

Who?

SONIA

Foreigners.

RAYA

Why do they put a bomb in candy?

SONIA

I told you lots of times.

RAYA

Tell me again.

SONIA

Tell you what?

RAYA (louder)

Why do they put a bomb in candy?

SONIA

'Cause they're foreigners.

RAYA

What's that mean?

SONIA

They're not like us.

RAYA

So what?

SONIA

Cause they hate us.

RAYA

But why do they hate us?

SONIA

'Cause they're not like us. They want to be like us but they can't.

RAYA

Why?

SONIA

You'll know when you go to school.

RAYA

Why do they hate us?

SONIA

'Cause we're not foreigners. We're us.

RAYA

I'm not us. I'm me.

SONIA

When you go to school they'll tell you. They'll tell you that you are us.

RAYA

But why do foreigners hate us?



SONIA

Cause they're capitalists.

RAYA

What's that mean?

SONIA

They're capitalists. They only think about themselves.

RAYA

They're thinking about us. They're thinking about us when they put  
bombs in the candy. Ha-ha. Got you!

SONIA

Not funny.

RAYA

Is too.

SONIA

Is not.

RAYA

Is too.

SONIA

Is not.

RAYA

Anyway, this isn't candy. This is gum.

SONIA

So what.

RAYA

They can't put a bomb in gum. You'd chew right through it.

SONIA

They have special bombs. They feel like gum. But then three days later--

RAYA

It's not true.

SONIA

Is too.

RAYA

I don't want to play this game.

SONIA

I know someone who got blown up.

RAYA

Do not!

SONIA

Do too.

RAYA

I said I don't want to play that.

SONIA

I know someone who chewed American gum.

RAYA

Who?

SONIA

A girl.

RAYA

What girl.

SONIA

A girl from my class. She chewed American gum and got blown to pieces.

RAYA

How many pieces?

SONIA

Doesn't matter.

RAYA

Does.

SONIA

Does not.

RAYA

I said I don't want to play that game. I said!

SONIA

You started it.

(Pause. RAYA is thinking.)

RAYA

What's her name?

SONIA

She doesn't have a name. She's dead.

RAYA

What was her name then?

SONIA

It's gone. Your name goes away when you die.

RAYA

Not my name.

SONIA

Yours too.

RAYA

I'll always be me. Even when I die.

SONIA

No you won't. Not when you die you won't.

RAYA

How do you know? You're not me.

SONIA

I know 'cause I go to school.

RAYA

So what.

SONIA

They tell us things.

RAYA

How do they know? They're not you.

SONIA

That's stupid.

RAYA

But how do they know about you? They're not you.

SONIA

'Cause they're teachers. They know.

RAYA

They know about them. They don't know about you.

SONIA

When you're a grown up, you don't know about you. You know about other people.

RAYA

I don't want to be that kind of grownup. I want to know about me.

SONIA

You're a capitalist.

RAYA

Am not.

SONIA

Are too.

RAYA

Don't want to play this game I said.

SONIA

You're a capitalist 'cause capitalists only think about themselves. They don't care about others.

RAYA

So what.

SONIA

If you don't think about others, you'll get sent to America.

RAYA

So what.

SONIA

You'll never get to see Mama again.

RAYA

Mama won't send me away.

SONIA

Yes she will.

RAYA

No she won't. I know.

SONIA

She won't want to but she'll have to.

RAYA

How do you know?

SONIA

