
If Not Me, Then Whom?

Kostiantynivka, 2005



You are an excellent nurse.
I think you would also make a great doctor.



Me? A doctor?
What are you talking about?



And why would I take on
so much responsibility?



The real doctors are surgeons and casualty doctors.
A woman can't become either of these.

Kostiantynivka, 2015



*January 2015

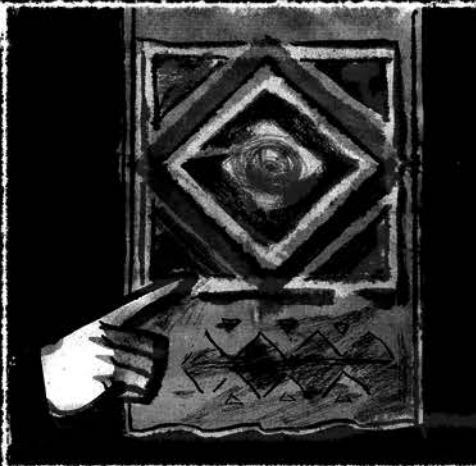
Mum, you need to sit there.



My dear son, please calm down. I'll do everything you want, just, calm down.



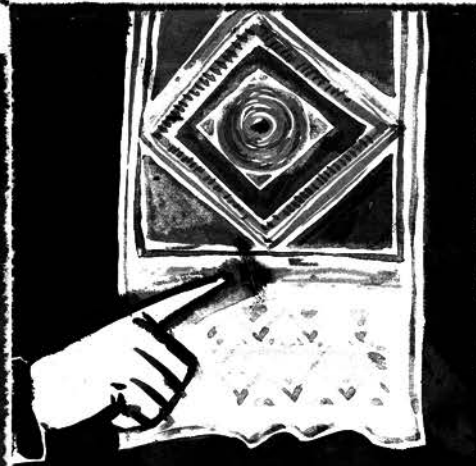
This is your chair.



I need to sit here so I can see the carpet.



Honey...

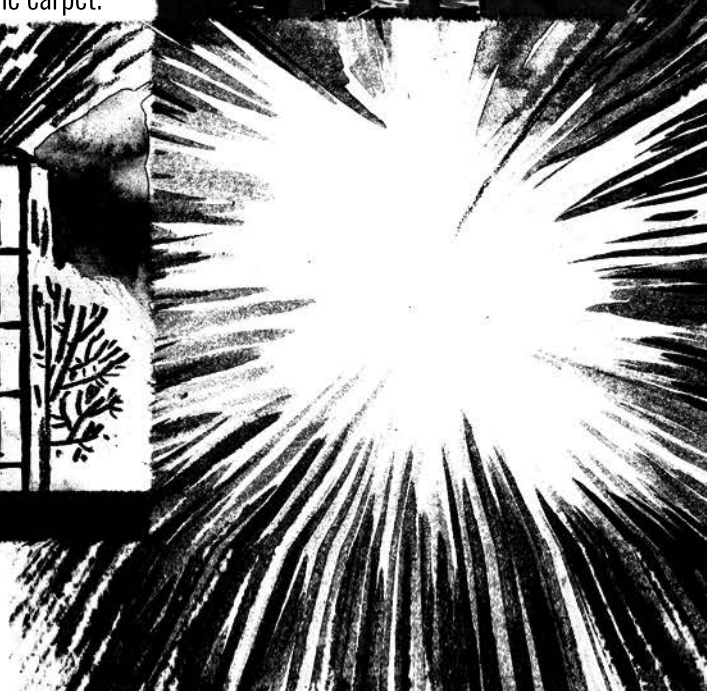


Because I need to see the carpet.

Mummy, please sit on this chair so that everything will be okay.



We need to sit exactly as we did during the last air-raid.





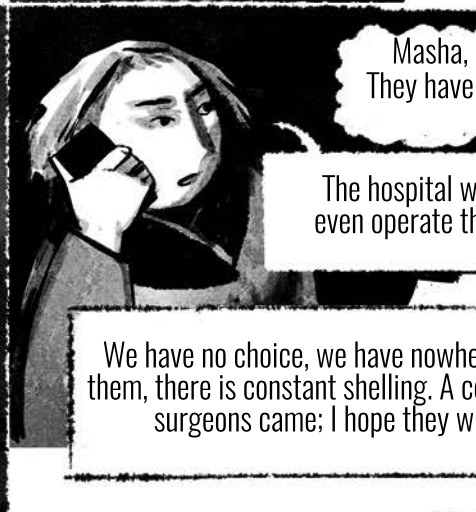
I guess we really need to leave.



No!!!



The most important is that you stay on this chair, so nothing will happen to us.



Masha, please come quickly to the old hospital. They have set up an improvised surgery room there, to take care of the injured.

The hospital was closed two years ago, how can they even operate there? There's no medicine or anything...

We have no choice, we have nowhere else to take them, there is constant shelling. A couple of military surgeons came; I hope they will help us.



Oh my God!!! This is Katya, my son's classmate!

Masha, it doesn't make sense
to constantly watch her.
She has nearly no chance of surviving.



We have no medicine to treat her
and as long as we are being shelled,
no ambulance will come here.

I have an idea!



There is this soldier, they call him
Crazy Jack. Only he would risk
to drive to the hospital under fire.



And he did.



Some weeks later on Facebook...



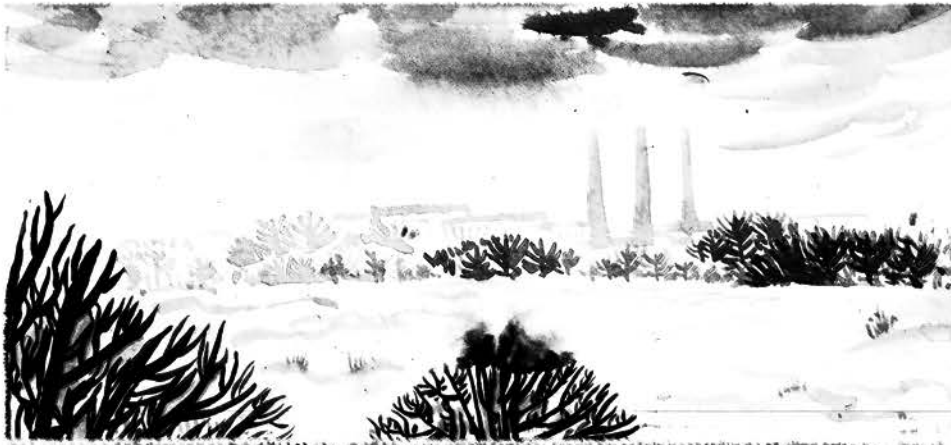
* I got a dog! Yeah!



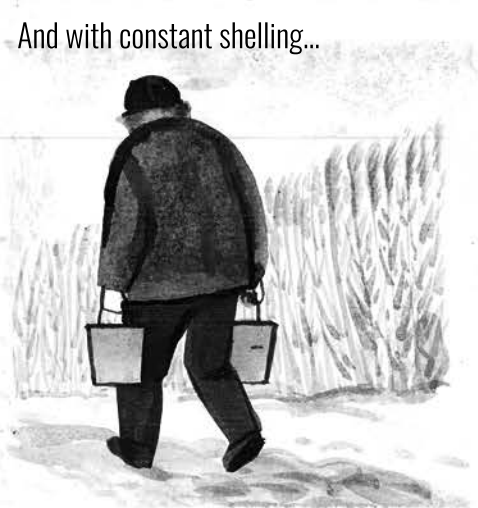
*Kids on board

How can we survive this winter without water, electricity, gas or heating?

And it's only February...



And with constant shelling...



You're charging us for plain water, my son?

We won't force you to buy it. If you prefer, go to the ice hole yourself.



Theres almost nothing left of my pension.
But I have no choice.





Masha, Elena Timofeevna is in a bad state. Her blood pressure is jumping up and down. We have no medicine. Could you have a look at her? I understand if you refuse. At our place, they are shooting constantly.



I can try to bring her some medicine. Volunteers brought something, but the instruction leaflet is in English. However, they noted on the package what it's for.



You're a man, you shouldn't be afraid. Look at me, do I look afraid? And I am a woman.



I need to buy some food quickly.



Maybe I could walk next to you, then it would be less scary.





Oh, looks as if I am too late.



Oh God, she's had a stroke.



She must have been sitting here for a while.



What terrible bedsores you have!



I used to feel ashamed when I felt sorry for someone.



Mummy, did you realize that I have stopped doing the things that make other people think I am crazy? I don't need that anymore.



I don't get it. Did the war do what all these doctors couldn't? Or is my son better so I can help others?



Mummy, are you treating everyone now because there are people with guns everywhere?



I treat them because they need it. If someone is in pain, and might even die, it doesn't matter who he is or which side he's on. He deserves help.



And if not me, then who?



Masha, we have been working together for more than a month now. But you're still a little distanced towards us military doctors, aren't you?



I don't fully understand it myself. Of course I can see that you are good people.



Can you imagine? He froze to death in the tank. During the training. What a weird death. Poor daughter.



But the Russian TV says Ukrainian soldiers are occupants. And I have my own personal experience with the military. When I was young my father went to do military training...



And I am really wondering why you came here. Is it because of the money?

That's what you think? I'm a successful emergency surgeon in my hometown. Why would I volunteer to go to war? For me, it's very simple. Who will do it if not me?



If not me, then who? That's it!



I just need to accept my place and my role.



Look, there is Masha. She's like a real doctor now.