

# ***Error-Free Zone***

*by*

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Cast of Characters

MASHA :

20's

DIMITRI :

58

Place

Moving handcar

Time

Day

Setting: The play takes place on a railroad handcar.

At Rise: The play opens up with Dmitri working the handcar and Masha sitting beside him.

DIMITRI gives a final few pumps to the handcar.

He then sits beside MASHA.

DIMITRI (out of breath): ...Downhill...for a mile or so.

DIMITRI digs into a brown paper bag and breaks off a piece of bread offering a piece to MASHA.

MASHA takes it.

MASHA: Thank you.

DIMITRI: It's good. One has to imagine chewing something delicious. What is your favorite food?

MASHA: Stew.

DIMITRI: Stew. (he smiles) I like stew. You make good stew?

MASHA: Yes.

DIMITRI: What do you put in your stew?

MASHA: Besides the meat...potatoes of course, carrots, dried plums, balsamic vinegar, cinnamon, nutmeg, marsala wine---

DIMITRI: Ah yes, marsala wine--

MASHA: Dried red pepper, onion and cornstarch.

DIMITRI (holding up his bread): Let us eat our stew together.

MASHA: ...How much further until we arrive?

DIMITRI (Dmitri licks his thumb and holds it to the sun): Two more nights.

MASHA (admiring the countryside): I almost forgot how beautiful the world can be?

DIMITRI: What is that saying..."Looks can be deceiving". Everything frozen in time on the outside but dangerous on the inside.

MASHA: I miss the world I knew.

DIMITRI: As do I.

MASHA: I hope one day everything will go back to normal.

DIMITRI: They say it will take a century to recover.

DIMITRI: Eh, what is normal? There is no normal. Normal as you know it, maybe, but now we have is what they call, a new normal.

MASHA: ...

DIMITRI: ...

DIMITRI digs into his brown paper bag and pulls out another piece of bread for MASHA.

Have more stew.

MASHA takes a bite into the bread offered.

MASHA: Can you tell me more about the error-free zone?

DIMITRI: ...When I was just a tiny baby in my mother's arms, I can recall her feeding me milk. There was jazz music playing softly on a record player, a warm yet cool comforting breeze escaping through the nearby window which somehow magically brushed my mother's hair and illuminated her in evening glow. I can never forget. Many things I remember from my life as if they happened yesterday...

When you enter the error-free zone, your memories take on new resonance and meaning. Everything your eyes had ever seen since birth, will recollect in your mind. You will see life in a profound way. It is all there, untapped. Everything you heard, smelled, touched, tasted. Some people lose their minds because they are overwhelmed. They cannot handle the information. Other people become free. I believe those that become free are the forward evolution of humanity. Everything we are capable of being, our fullest and truest potential, awaits us, it just needs to be unlocked but if we do not have the key to unlock such knowledge, we are left walking around aimlessly. That is what the error-free zone provides...a chance at a deeper life.

MASHA: Reality becomes heightened?

DIMITRI: Precisely, but it is much more than that. The only way to know is to undergo the transition.

MASHA: What else do you see differently?

DIMITRI: It will be different yet the same for each one of us. You will have to wait and see for yourself.

MASHA: What happens to the people who cannot manage what they are given?

DIMITRI: They die.

MASHA: ...How do they die?

DIMITRI grows uncomfortable.

DIMITRI: That isn't really any of your concern.

MASHA: Please...

DIMITRI: We have tried to bring them back to their former selves, but once a human being is unlocked, they cannot go back. The only thing left is to be polite about it.

MASHA: Polite?

DIMITRI (sadly): At first, things were done violently, much too violently. There was a panic, you understand...we did not know how to handle the first reaction and so...but now, now we are better prepared for the negative reaction...if someone goes outside of themselves, we put them down gently, efficiently...I wish it wasn't this way, but there is no other choice. Great beauty comes with great pain.

MASHA: There is no other way for me, Dimitri. I must go, it is time that I know.

DIMITRI: I understand this.

MASHA: Why do you do what you do?

DIMITRI: I wish to give others a chance to be something more.

MASHA: When you first told me about the zone I didn't believe you.

DIMITRI: Of course...

MASHA: Part of me still doesn't believe you.

DIMITRI: Then why did you choose to come with me?

MASHA: Did I really have a choice?

DIMITRI: Yes.

MASHA: I did not feel as though I had a choice.

DIMITRI: I did not force you.

MASHA: What were my alternatives?

DIMITRI: You can go back to your life if you still wish. I do not hold you here against your will.

MASHA: Why not?

DIMITRI: Because I believe in free choice.

MASHA: You call this free choice?

DIMITRI: What would you call it, Masha?

MASHA: I would call it *no choice*. Everything that has happened to our world...that was when we had a choice. How many decades went by before any of us got the message...and now, it is all too late, isn't it? Everything I have ever known, gone forever. All my dreams...

DIMITRI: You can still dream.

MASHA: Not anymore!

DIMITRI: Maybe not in the way you once did, but there is still hope.

MASHA: There is no hope anymore. It has died with everything else.

DIMITRI: Have I been nothing more than kind to you?

MASHA: You have been kind.

DIMITRI: That is why we have hope.

MASHA: Why?

DIMITRI: Why what?

MASHA: Why have you been kind to me?

DIMITRI: There is no reason to be otherwise. Life is too short, no?

MASHA: What if everything you told me is true? Finding out has become my mission and hope because if what you say is real, it will change my life forever.

DIMITRI: For better or worse.

MASHA: I am not afraid.

DIMITRI: That's a start.

MASHA: Start?

DIMITRI: It helps to have no fear. Research has revealed to me that fear is a strong negative component to a bad reaction. When we arrive, there will be training. We have improved this training over time and it has lowered the negative rate, but we still have much work to do.

MASHA: I am ready. Train me now.

DIMITRI: I cannot train you now.

MASHA: Why not?

DIMITRI: Because we do not have the tools here, you must wait until we arrive.

MASHA: There must be something you can teach me.

DIMITRI: ...Alright...I will show you something...but you must keep an open mind. Close your eyes.

MASHA closes her eyes.

DIMITRI'S hand lights up and glows. He touches MASHA'S forehead, resting the palm of his hand there for five seconds.

DIMITRI removes his hand and says...

Open your eyes.

MASHA: My father...I saw my father. I was five years old, I was on a trail road, riding a pink bike and a dog came running at me and my father, my father saved me! I think he was bit, yes he was bit and he screamed out in pain, it was his thigh, he was bit in the thigh but he held me high in his arms to protect me...he never told me this story, I didn't remember until now...I saw everything...

DIMITRI: Ah, yes, you see.

MASHA: I was there.

DIMITRI: (laughs)

MASHA: I mean, I know I was there but it was like I relived the memory with vividness. I can't explain it.

DIMITRI: No need to explain it, I already know. There will be much greater experiences, experiences with the other side that will go beyond memory recall...you will be capable of even deeper connections, you will find a purpose, if you allow yourself one and our world will get much greater...in time.

**END OF PLAY**