

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE. [*Ty, Nick, Tara, Sasha, Lilya and choir hold mesh cloth "River" and sing.*]

MUSIC (all 5 students sing): ВАГАНТЫ: НА ФРАНЦУЗСКОЙ СТОРОНЕ

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1w3iF6j0EpY> Д.Тухманов - ваганты (р/м Л.Гинзбург)

ПЕСЕНКА СТУДЕНТА

Во французской сторонé,
На чужой планéте
Предстоит учёться мне
В университéте.
До чего тоскую я –
Не сказа́ть слова́ми,
Пла́чьте ж, мило́е друзья́,
Го́рькими слеза́ми,
На проща́ние пожмём
Мы друг дру́гу ру́ки,
И покинет о́тчий дом
Му́ченик нау́ки.

Вот стою́, держу́ весло́,
Че́рез ми́г отча́лю,
Сёрдце бе́дное свело́
Ско́рбью и печа́лью.

Тихо плéщется вода́ –
Голуба́я лéнта,
Вспомина́йте иногда́
Ва́шего студéнта.

Мно́го зим и мно́го лет
Про́жили мы вме́сте,
Сохранíв свято́й о́бет
Ве́рности и че́сти,
Ну так бу́дьте же всегда́
Жи́вы и здоро́вы,
Ве́рю день придёт, когда́
Сви́димся мы сно́ва,
Всех вас вме́сте соберу́,
Если на чужби́не
Я случа́йно не помру́
От своéй латы́ни.

LIGHTS change.

SCENE TWO.

SCREEN: Search for an apartment for four in Eugene, UO proximity.

Nick's Voice. This one's too far from campus. *Tara's Voice.* This one isn't, see? Oh, but it's expensive. *Ty's Voice.* This one's in a basement. Look at this one. I like the pictures. *SCREEN UP.*

SCENE THREE. [*Realtor, Tara, Nick, Sasha, Lilya, Lady Rain, Ty, Blue Muppet, Green Muppet, Pink Muppet*]

Three (two or one are also OK) doors on stage.

Realtor. It's really cute, you'll see. Within walking distance to campus, but still very quiet.

Tara. Will we walk to school all year round? I've heard it rains a lot here, especially in winter.

Realtor. Well, you don't melt from it. (Enters Lady Rain).

MUSIC Lady Rain crosses the stage with umbrellas and hand them out to everyone on stage.

ALL and Choir sing.

Если не сведёт с ума
Римляне и греки,
Сочинившие тома
Для библиотеки,
Если те профессорá,
Что студéнтов учат,
Горемыку–школярá
Нáсмерть не замúчат,
Если нáсмерть не упьюсь
На хмельной пирúшке,
Обязáтельно вернúсь
К вам, друзья–подружки.
Вот стою, держú весло,
Черéз миг отчáлю,
Сéрдце бédное свелó
Скóрбью и печáлью.
Тíхо плéщется водá –
Голубáя лéнта,
Вспоминáйте иногда
Вáшего студéнта.

Realtor. I understand your other two friends aren't here yet, but we can we start anyway? I have another appointment in half an hour.

Ty. Russians are always late. Your idea of having a language immersion apartment may not work that well after all.

Tara. I'm not even in the Russian program. You'll have to translate for me or teach me.

Sasha and Lilya run onto stage, panting.

Sasha. Извините! Sorry we're late.

Realtor. I need to take a call, just come down when you've seen the apartment and we'll talk then.

Realtor leaves. Students open one door.

Tara. I like the living room.

Students open another door.

Sasha. I like it a lot!

Ty. If we don't rent it, it'll be gone in a day.

Nick. Hey, look at these! Muppets in the closet!

Tara. Cool! I wonder who lived here before... they must have left those.

Muppet (waking up and getting up). Oh, yes, one was a puppeteer. He moved out and left us to his roommate. The roommate graduated, got a job on Wall street and left us here.

Ty (astounded). All right... And you?

Blue Muppet. Well, first we thought we should join the Occupy Sesame Street movement, but given that we aren't that well made, and the weather isn't that great, what's the point in rotting?.

Green Muppet (getting up). Yeah, we aren't that well made, and we aren't very popular characters, either. Our master sold the coolest ones, Ernie, Bert and Kermit to a real theater.

Sasha. Hey, you are guys dressed up as muppets, right? There was a muppet TV show in Russia in the nineties, Ulitsa Sezam. It was a good show and a good era. Russians are not nearly as free and hopeful now.

Blue Muppet (hums). Lalalala, lalalala, Putin's world. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETkVYejtq8>

Lilya. Russian economy was a mess, people sold all they had for food. It's much more stable now.

Sasha. But life is not about comfort or even survival. There is much more to life... The taste of freedom. Big goals.

Ty. And here... The cold war was over and the war on terror wasn't around yet. But people didn't enjoy it that much, they had their petty troubles.

Pink Muppet. Cool, I love debates! To be poor in a democratic country versus well off under a dictator. Incidentally, we ARE REAL muppets!

Nick. Right. So you live here?

Tara. Apparently they don't pay rent since they're dressed up as muppets and sleep in the closet. Hey, folks, we like this place and we'll be renting it, the five of us.

Blue Muppet. But we have absolutely nowhere to go.

Tara. You have your beautiful costumes, go do puppet shows for living.

Nick. Get out of your costumes, we won't tell anyone. I'm Nick. And you?

Pink Muppet. I'm Miss Piggy. He's the Blue Guy, he's the Green Guy.

Nick. I'm serious.

Pink Muppet. Sorry. We ARE muppets. You could do a puppet show with us. We aren't the coolest ones, but in theater, it's better to have a reliable cast than a bunch of unruly stars.

Sasha. Wait, maybe they ARE real muppets? In our apartment in Perm, we had a Domovoi, house spirit, he always finished our food and rearranged furniture.

Ty. Russians...

SCREEN: Д Домово́й (Domovoi) House spirit

Tara. Let's check them out. Let's pinch them and pull their skin.

Tara, Sasha, Lilya, Ty and Nick surround the Pink Muppet, pinch her and pull the fabric she is made of. The Pink Muppet giggles and finally crawls out of the mess.

Pink Muppet. See? What did I tell you? (Walks away a few steps, speaks as someone wrongly suspected and now acquitted). Since we all live here, let's collaborate on a puppet theater project. Play at kids' birthday parties. Small business, little trouble. *Ty.* You know, my brother did puppet shows at kids' birthdays when he was in college and he was better off than most of his friends. We'll all have a few extra bucks...

Sasha. We need a play... something very short and simple, but fun.

Tara. Right, something hands on and easy like an alphabet song or counting. Something kids could memorize!

Sasha. We can do it in English and in Russian, it will be less boring and parents will like it.

Nick. Let's teach kids some Russian letters and words, too.

Realtor. So, would you like some more time to think about it?

Ty. We actually like it. Could we pay you now?

LIGHTS OFF. Students and Muppets leave.

SCENE FOUR [*Nick, Lilya, Pink Muppet*]

MUSIC. Nick practices the Alphabet song.

Lilya. I can't do it. I can't be natural. I am too nervous.

Nick. Try to think of something good or funny, Lilya.

Lilya. I can't.

Nick. Did you have fun when your dad bought you ice cream?

Lilya. My parents... well, my dad did not buy me any ice cream.

Nick. I'm sorry. You know why a blonde was staring at a carton of orange juice for half an hour?

Lilya. No. Why?

Nick. Because it had the word "concentrate" on it.

Nick takes ping pong balls cut in halves on a string and talks with his hands like puppets.

Right Ping Pong Puppet. Рэйс нóмер сто двáдцать три Сан-Диéго-Гонолу́лу отпра́вля́ется неме́дленно. Прóсьба пассажи́рам заня́ть мeста́ в самолéте.

Left Ping Pong Puppet. This is a final call for flight number 123 for Honolulu. Honolulu. Honolulu. Honolulu.

Lilya. I can paint something. Help advertise. But I just can't act.

Enters Pink Muppet. Pink Muppet. Have you finished practicing? We're already packing our stuff. Come on, Lilya, you look so nervous. You'll be just fine when we start.

LIGHT CHANGE.

SCENE FIVE [*Birthday cake with candles on a small table, kids in birthday hats.*]

MUSIC.

Birthday boy, three more kids, Mother, Father, Sasha, Lilya, Ty, Tara, Nick, Muppets sing the Alphabet song. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9111111111>

Буквы все, от А до Я – наши добрые друзья,
По порядку их spoём, повторять не устаём,
А всего их 33, ну-ка, с нами повторй:
АБВГДЕЕЖЗИЙКЛМНОПРСТУФХЦЧШЩЪЪЭЮЯ
АБВГДЕЕЖЗИЙКЛМНОПРСТУФХЦЧШЩЪЪЭЮЯ

Sasha (takes a block with БI): I hate letter БI, it's the ugliest one, but what can be done? Not much can be done.

Nick (takes blocks with ШI and ШI). I can never say Шa and Щa right. And it's not like I don't try or anything.

Students, Puppets and guests stand around the cake.

All.

С днём рожденья тебя,
С днём рожденья тебя,
С днём рожденья Кирюша,
С днём рожденья тебя!

Kirill. How do you say "Thank you" in Russian?

Ty. Spasibo! (To the audience) Should we all try it? SPASIBO!

SCREEN: "C" (s) СПАСИБО (SPASIBO) THANK YOU

Pink Muppet. OK guys, we're done. Have a great party!

Filipp. How do you say "bye" in Russian?

Sasha. Poka. (To the Audience) Let's all say it! POKA!

SCREEN: "П" (p) ПОКА (POKA) BYE

Filipp. Poka!

Everyone at the party. Poka! Spasibo!

Ty. Sasha, would you like to go out to dinner with me?

Sasha. Sure. When?

Ty. Tomorrow at the Thai place on campus?

Sasha. OK.

SCENE SIX [*Sasha, Lilya, Green Muppet, Blue Muppet*]

Sasha. Я жутко волнуюсь. Что если у них тут всё шиворот-навыворот? Пока я одеваюсь, можешь ещё раз прочесть эту главу про мужчин и женщин?

Lilya. Ладно. Вот: In the US, the distance between two people when they speak is considerably longer than in Russia. Americans speak about this in term of a "bubble" that surrounds a person. Russians have no such bubble.

Demonstration: Lilya approaches Green Muppet and Sasha approaches Blue Muppet. The muppets jerk back. They repeat this action.

Sasha. Дальше, дальше!

Lilya. Russians like to argue about politics and religion whereas Americans think it is not polite to do so.

Sasha. Значит никакой политики, о чём же тогда говорить?

Lilya. Не перебивай пожалуйста, я же читаю! "The way of dating in the US tends to follow well-defined rules. For instance, there are widely followed rules about sleeping on the third date. Men know they shouldn't expect to see a woman again if she insists to split the bill at the end of their first date. In Russia and Europe, the way of doing things is more informal and spontaneous, and can vary from one region to another and even on a person to person basis.

Sasha. Раз, два, три, секс, раз, два, три, секс...

Lilya. Russians are much more careless with money. They do many things in excess including spending big sums of money. They are proud of it and call this feature "broadness."

Sasha. Если по–просто́му, ру́сские ще́дрые, а на За́паде жмо́ты.

Lilya. Са́ша, посмотре́й на часы́! Три! Ты уже́ должна́ быть там. Беги́!

SCENE SEVEN [Sasha, Ty, Waitress]

Sasha. Sorry, I am late.

Ty. Russians are always late.

Sasha. I read this book on cultural identity, it says that we just have a different style of time management.

Ty. That table in the corner.

Sasha. I burned a CD for you with my favorite Russian music.

Ty. Thank you! Ка́к это по–ру́ски: спаси́бо за му́зыку?

Sasha. Right. I like to listen to these pieces and I make up all kinds of stories when I am listening.

Ty. What kind of stories? (takes earphones and listens)

Sasha (dreamily). Like that I am a princess, and my beloved knight has to overcome obstacles to get me back after some evil guy steals me.

Ty. I love this first piece. But all I can think of when I hear it is the sea. A lot of moving water. Sasha, I have a crush on you.

Sasha. There is that famous poem by Pushkin about the sea, its moving water.

Ty. Russians quote Pushkin all the time. I would like to learn a poem by him. How do you say in Russian "I love you?"

Sasha. Я тебя́ люблю. Two Я and two Ю.

SCREEN. Я тебя́ люблю. Ya tebya lyublyu. I love you.

Ty. Do you mean it?

Sasha. What?

Ty. Do you love me?

Ty and Sasha take one earphone each and listen to a Russian song about love. MUSIC: Russian love song. <http://www.youtube.com>

MUSIC:

Бо́гу ра́вным ка́жется мне по сча́стью
Челове́к, кото́рый так бли́зко–бли́зко
Пред тобо́й стои́т, твой звуча́щий не́жно
Слу́шает го́лос
И преле́стный сме́х
У меня́ при э́том
Переста́ло срáзу бы се́рдце би́ться:
Лишь тебя́ уви́жу – уж я́ не в си́лах
Вы́молвить сло́ва.
Вы́молвить сло́ва.

Waitress. Hi! What are you gonna have today? (Shouts) Shall I start some drinks for you?

MUSIC PLAYS.

SCENE EIGHT [Lilya, Sasha]

Lilya. Ну как?

Sasha (spins). "I have a crush on you, Sasha."

Lilya. Здо́рово! И запла́тил?

Sasha (spins). "It's on me, Sasha."

MUSIC. Lilya and Sasha spin slowly to:

Но неме́ет тотча́с язы́к,
 под ко́жей
Бы́стро лёгкий жар пробегáет,
 смóтрят,
Ни́чего не ви́дя, глаза́,

в ушах же –

Звон непрерывный.

Потом жарким

я обливаюсь,

дрожью

Члены все охвачены,

зеленее

Становлюсь травы,

и вот-вот как будто

С жизнью прощусь я.

Sasha exits spinning around. Lilya lingers near the stage wing.

SCENE NINE [*Green Muppet, Lilya, Stage hand with a letter cube*]

Green Muppet. Lilya? Are you sad?

Lilya. No, I am not.

Green Muppet. I know how to say "you" in Russian.

Lilya. Say it.

Green Muppet. ТЫ.

Lilya. Right.

Green Muppet. I know how to say "sad" in Russian.

Lilya. Say it.

Green Muppet. ГРЮЧНЫ.

Lilya. Almost.

SCREEN: Т (t) Г (g) ТЫ ГРУСТНЫЙ (ty grustnyj) YOU ARE SAD

Stage hand runs across the stage with the letter Г on a cube, gives it to Green Muppet, takes it back, then disappears.

Green Muppet. Sasha is in love, and you... Will you love me?

Lilya. YOU?

Green Muppet. If you mean I'm a Muppet, I know many mixed couples. We Muppets don't self-identify as puppets, we're independent living beings.

Lilya. I am just done with a very unpleasant love story. I need a break.

Green Muppet. What was it?

Lilya. I had a high-school sweetheart who was handsome and cool, from a very rich family. They were Muslim Tartars.

Green Muppet. Muslim?

Lilya. So what, Muslim? I know many mixed couples. 15% of Russian population are Muslims. We are EURASIA.

Green Muppet. And what with the Muslim guy?

Lilya. He proposed, but said that I would have to accept the fact that he may eventually have two or three wives.

Green Muppet whistles.

Green Muppet. So you said "no?"

Lilya. What would YOU say?

Green Muppet. I'm really sorry. I'm not Muslim, you know.

Enter Blue and Pink Muppet.

Lilya. Here, your friends are back. I better go.

Lilya leaves.

Blue Muppet. Did you talk to her?

Green Muppet. I don't like her anymore. I think if she marries me it would be for the green card. She's that type...

Pink Muppet. It's good you figured it out... Hey, guys, I just saw in the news that Muppets are cool again. Isn't it great?

Blue Muppet puts his hand on Pink Muppet's shoulder.

Blue Muppet (to Green Muppet). Let's practice acting. The guys think we are pros, I didn't have the heart to tell them we were only in one school play.

SCENE TEN [*Pink Muppet, Green Muppet, Blue Muppet, Enter Ty, Nick, Sasha, Tara*]

Tara. Look! We're in the newspaper! "Hilarious Children's Theater." "College students... great energy and talent." That boy's dad was a journalist. We'll have hundreds of calls now.

Pink Muppet. He liked our alphabet song.

Sasha. We can't do alphabet song all the time. Let's do a story. A short fairy tale for kids.

Blue Muppet. This is a liberal college town, they love multiculturalism. Let's do a story from China or India...

Pink Muppet (playing with a burka). Or maybe something from Arab folklore?

Sasha. How about a Russian love story?

Blue Muppet. A love story. (Hugs Pink Muppet)

Ty. A Russian love story would probably end in tragedy.

Nick. Why, it's a children's show!

Ty. Are the best Russian fairy tales also by Pushkin? He is the most venerated Russian author. He enjoys some God-like status there... 19th century, right?

Sasha. Right. I love "Ruslan and Lyudmila." It's short and it has Russian folk creatures, knights, princesses, everything kids love. (Dreamily) Think about it: a handsome knight marries a princess, she is kidnapped by a magician, he sets off to rescue her, there are rivals and friends.

Tara. Sounds like our fantasy books.

Ty. We have to be realistic. There's only five of us...

Pink Muppet puffs angrily.

...Plus three Muppets. Eight actors just aren't enough.

Blue Muppet. What with the guys and girls who were occupying the city? They have to clear out of downtown by tomorrow. Let's go ask them to join our show. Some might want to.

SCENE ELEVEN [*Nick, First Occupy Girl, Second Occupy Girl and four more strangely dressed people with outrageous hairdo, tattoos, beer bottles and cigarettes*]

Nick. Oh well. Are you on the cast?

First Occupy Girl. We are! What're we supposed to do?

Sasha. We are doing a fairy tale, and in the introduction, there is a tree of life and around it, a Learned Cat who tells tales, a forest spirit Leshij, a Mermaid Rusalka, a witch Baba Yaga, a Hut on Chicken Legs, a Covetous Tsar, a knight, a Sorcerer and a Princess. Second Occupy Girl. I love folk stuff. (hums, the First Girl joins her) "We shall overcome..."

Nick. It's not exactly that. Come we'll tell you what to do.

SCENE TWELVE [*Pushkin, Quill, Oak Tree, Cat, Leshij, First Mermaid, Hut on Chicken Legs, Chernomor, Ruslan, Baba Yaga*]

DANCE: Pushkin is chasing his Quill across the stage, then turns her upside down. The Quill hugs Pushkin from behind and looks at his paper. The Quill runs downstage and sits still.

Pushkin (with paper and a small quill, writes, recites). У лукоморья дуб зелёный...

Oak Tree enters

Tree speaks). У лукоморья дуб зелёный.

Pushkin (with paper and quill: writes and recites). Златая цепь на дубе том.

All and the Tree speaks). Златая цепь на дубе том.

Pushkin (with paper and quill: writes and recites).

И днём и ночью кот учёный

Всё ходит по цепи кругом.

Cat (to someone behind the stage). A Learned Cat walks day and night, on a chain! My turn, finally!

(Comes out proudly, walks chained around the tree).

Pushkin (with paper and quill: writes and recites).

Идёт направо — песнь заводит,
Налево — сказку говорит.

The Cat walks to the left and murmurs a song then walks to the right.

Cat. Oops! The other way around. To the right he walks, and sings a song; To the left he walks, and tells a tale...
(walks up to Pushkin, looks from behind his shoulder and recites with air of importance). Там чудеса: там леший бродит, Русалка на ветвях сидит. (Whispers loudly and angrily). Leshij and Mermaid, you're talking backstage and missing your cue again.

Enter the First Mermaid and Leshij. Each leans on the wall on the two opposite sides of the stages or on two opposite branches of the oak. The Mermaid is playing with her tail, looking around arrogantly and Leshij is wiggling his fingers and shakes his head, acting as if he is a forest in the wind.

Leshij. Там на неведомых дорожках Следы невиданных зверей.

Izbushka on Chicken Legs (enters, opens the door, recites).

Избушка там на курьих ножках
Стоит без окон, без дверей.

First Mermaid.

Там лес и дол видений полны;
Там о заре прихлынут волны
На брег песчаный и пустой,
И тридцать витязей прекрасных
Чредой из вод выходят ясных,
И с ними дядька их морской.

Cat (spinning/twirling paws around each other).

Там корольвич мимоходом
Пленяет грозного царя.

Enters Chernomor, then enters Rouslan. Rouslan is holding onto Chernomor's beard. Both look at the public as if blinded by light and stunned.

Chernomor.

Там в облаках перед народом
Через леса, через моря
Колдун несёт богатыря.

Baba Yaga (enters in a mortar and recites, becomes agitated and excited when she speaks about Baba Yaga).

В темнице там царевна тужит,
А бурый волк ей верно служит;
Там ступа с Бабою Ягой
Идёт, бредёт сама собой;
Там царь Кащей над златом чахнет;

All together.

Там русской дух... там Русью пахнет!

Pushkin (with paper and quill: writes and recites).

И там я был, и мёд я пил;
У моря видел дуб зелёный;
Под ним сидел, и кот учёный
Свой мне сказки говорил.
Одну я помню: сказку эту
Поведаю теперь я свету...

Grabs the Quill, the Quill runs away from him. Chase dance movements. Pushkin turns the quill upside down.

Pushkin. I'll get a laptop and you'll be out of job! Stop running away from me!

Quill. Just try and get one! But remember, I am your INSPIRATION! Your Muse! Your girlfriend! Can you laptop be all of that?

The Quill runs away.

SCENE THIRTEEN [*Pushkin and Cat sit on two sides of the Oak Tree. The rest of the group sit downstage.*]

Pushkin. Why on earth did I write all that crap. I'd rather be picking berries or something. They wrote all that literary criticism about my work, a waste of paper if you ask me.

Cat. Look, you are just depressed. Think about it, every Russian schoolchild knows tons of your poems by heart, especially this one, "U Lukomoria." You immortalized me, the Learned Cat. (Jumps up). I, I, I am the cat that goes to the right and sings a song and goes to the left and tells a tale. Isn't it cool?

Pushkin. OK. Well. Fine. Let's have a drink. What do the kids have here? Some ghastly beer... (Pours some beer to the Cat and himself). All my stories are dated.

Cat. Dated? In Russia? Russia has all the problems you wrote about now as it did at your time. The autocracy, the fools, the bad roads. Take "The Prisoner of Caucasus," what is dated about that poem of yours? All those wars with the wild mountaineers — just recently they have had several wars with their own Chechnya. They even shot a movie, "The Prisoner of Caucasus," about it.

SCREEN: Episode from Chechnya war. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ayTqy1AqqHU&feature=related>

Mermaid. What about your magnum opus, your novel in verse, "Eugene Onegin?" Doesn't every girl everywhere in the world fancy a fop before she marries a decent guy? Doesn't love always walk in circles? I'd love to act it out!

Leshij (acting out and agitated; he is always talking in a red neck style). And Onegin shooting his best friend in a duel: Bang! Bang! (pretends to shoot). And the Bronze Horseman chasing some poor guy all over the city: Boom! Boom! Love it!

Izbushka on Chicken Legs. And all your fairy tales for leetle children, soooo sweet! I would love to take them to stage!

Rouslan. And all of your... hm, r-rated little poems, I reread them when I feel low.

Chernomor utters an angry sound.

Pushkin. Well, this may be. But that erotic poem you're all in, "Rouslan and Lyudmila..." Except for the introduction we all recited, it has a feel of a college prank. I can't even reread it, I'll be too disgusted.

Cat. I can't believe you are saying this.

Pushkin. When I was writing it, I was twenty. This explains a lot. Good luck anyway. I am out of here.

Cat. You'll be sorry. It's going to be fun!

Pushkin jumps over the Cat, pulls Chernomor's beard, kisses the Mermaid and runs away.

Chernomor (angrily tidies up his beard). Typical Pushkin. His whole biography is just a list of pranks.

Baba Yaga. You guys got carried away. Aren't you all supposed to act out Prince Vladimir's beloved daughter Lyudmila's wedding with all the Ambassadors, dancing skomorokhs and toasting?

Everyone jumps on their feet.

First Mermaid. It's a Russian wedding, so they sing lamentations because the bride loses her freedom when she gets married. Russians have that predisposition to tragedy.

Cat (puts on huge glasses and browses a huge book). No, not lamentations, in this scene, Pushkin was focusing on Rouslan's desire to consummate his marriage and his wife's fears...

Rouslan. You aren't in it, right? So get lost!

Cat. It's easy to hurt a Cat's feelings. Who cares?

SCENE FOURTEEN [*Vladimir, Anna, First Skomorokh, Western Ambassador, Moslem Ambassador, Armenian Ambassador, Rouslan, Lyudmila, Rugdie, Rutmir, Farlaf, Lyudmila's Maid, Lada*]

SCREEN: П (p) ПИР (pir): FEAST (or Puppets cross stage with three cubes with letters)

MUSIC. Rouslan, Lyudmila, Prince Vladimir, the Eastern Ambassador, the Western Ambassador, Farlaf, Rutmir and Rugdie enter with a feast table, skomorokhs somersault to the room, dance and sing, use shakers and horns. The Maid is making Lyudmila's braids.

Vladimir (toasts).

Меньшую дочь я выдаю
За князя храброго Руслана
И мёд из тяжкого стакана
За них с весёлым сердцем пью.

Everybody drinks.

First Skomorokh. Замо́рский посол хо́чет вы́ступить, Гиперборейский. Позво́лить?

Vladimir (nods). Позво́лить!

Western Ambassador (bows to Prince Vladimir). Мило́рд, благодарю вас! Это больша́я честь — прису́тствовать на сва́дбе Ва́шей до́чери.

Western Ambassador drinks.

Second Skomorokh. Ка́к там это... Ара́бский посол хо́чет вы́ступить, позво́лить?

Vladimir (nods). Позво́лить!

Moslem Ambassador (bows to Prince Vladimir). Вели́кий князь, я польще́н Ва́шим приглаше́нием и жела́ю молоды́м сча́стью!

Moslem Ambassador drinks.

First Skomorokh. Тут ещё́ это, Арме́нский зна́чит посол име́ется. Позво́лить вы́ступить?

Vladimir (nods). Позво́лить!

Armenian Ambassador. Вели́кий Христиа́нский Князь Влади́мир! Брат наш во Христе́! За сча́стье твои́х дете́й!

Armenian Ambassador drinks.

Everyone. Го́рько!

Rouslan and Lyudmila kiss.

LIGHTS OFF, OMINOUS MUSIC Lada, the Love Goddess, enters angrily.

Lada (SINGS LADA'S SONG). <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FaujPBT0vu0>

Бы́ло вре́мя: процвета́ли
Бо́ги дре́вние славя́н!
Нам свята́ни посвяща́ли,
Возвратя́сь из да́льных стран.
Молоды́х венча́ла Ла́да
Из цвето́в лия́ некта́р,
И любóвные усла́ды
Посыла́ла им как дар.
Но свята́ни опустели́,
К ним пала́тник не идёт.
Во Днепре́, в большо́й купели́
Окрести́ли весь наро́д.
Вы Христу́ воздви́гли хра́мы,
И кади́те вы ему́.
И уходи́м наве́гда́ мы
Погружа́емся во тьму́.
Прокляну́ поля́ и ве́си,
И престо́льный Ки́ев град.
Ты Влади́мир пьёшь и вёсел —
Скóро бу́дешь ты не рад,
Что прогна́л бого́в роди́мых,
Полюбив чужо́й зако́н.
Никакие́ херуви́мы
Не спасу́т твой жа́лкий трон!
LIGHTS OFF, OMINOUS MUSIC

Moslem Ambassador (to Western Ambassador). This was their pagan Goddess of love, Lada! She cursed Vladimir and the young couple. She can't forgive Vladimir for accepting Christianity. What disaster will befall Kiev?

Western Ambassador. Whatever makes them weak will make us stronger.

Armenian Ambassador. Look at the evil Prince Rugdie (Rugdie brandishes his fist), Prince Farlaf the drunkard (Farlaf bows), and at the charming khan Rutmir (Rutmir takes out and puts back his sword). They all had proposed and were denied. They are so jealous and angry they don't even drink. This is where the disaster can strike from!

Western Ambassador. Our king's nephew also proposed...

Moslem Ambassador. And our sultan's son did, too. They say Vladimir chose Rouslan because he fought a dragon and a Pecheneg army all alone, but I don't believe such rumors. Rouslan is a Christian, that's what matters at the Kievan court these days.

Grand Princess Anna (sends chasbnik with goblets to the three rivals).

Тебѣ, Рогдѣй, воитель смѣлый,
Мечом раздвинувший предѣлы
Богатых киевских полѣй
Сей кубок: радуйся и пей. (Rugdie stand up and bows).
Другой тебѣ, Фарлаф надменный,
В пирѣх никѣм не побежденный. (Farlaf stands up and bows).
А третій шлю тебѣ, Ратмир,
Пусть веселит тебя мой пир! (Rutmir stand up and bows).
Eastern Ambassador dances lezginka-like dance with two skomorokhs.

Rugdie.

Как думы страшные таят
Любви и ненависти яд.
На свете мне ничто не мило:
Не мне достанется Людмила!

Farlaf.

Что толку за ковшом пустым
Сидеть насупясь. Повторим!
В винѣ и пивѣ сколько силы...
Не мне достанется Людмила!

Rutmir. Невѣста очи опустила,
Как будто сердцем приуныла,
Нет, пир веселый мне не в пир,
Не мне достанется Людмила!

Moslem Ambassador. Ratmir is the most charming of all four, but he is not Christian.

Western Ambassador. Vladimir was not that sure what religion to prefer before he baptized Rus'. He sent his emissaries to the lands of Islam, Judaism, to Greeks in Constantinople and to the Pope in Rome. The cunning Greeks won the Russians over.

Moslem Ambassador. I heard the emissaries liked our Moslem faith most of all, but the Prophet Mohummad forbade drinking. Vladimir said "Drinking is the joy of Russians." Look!

Farlaf makes a couple of dance movements and falls onto the floor with a huge empty goblet in his hands.

SCREEN: DRUNK PRESIDENT YELTSIN IN 1995 (HE SAYS, "DRINKING IS THE JOY OF RUSSIA:" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aA-1a12MUKw> episode from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1A9nHuSPS>

SCREEN: Yeltsin was a drunk, but he was fun. We miss him!

Vladimir stamps with his staff. Skomorokhs run away.

MUSIC CHANGES.

SCREEN: H (n) НОЧЬ (noch): NIGHT

Rouslan walks away with Lyudmila. Vladimir and Anna walk away.

LIGHTS CHANGE. MUSIC: Lullaby

SCENE FIFTEEN [*Western Ambassador, Moslem Ambassador, Armenian Ambassador, Lyudmila's Maid, drunk Farlaf, Volchok*]

Enters the little grey wolf Volchok. He sings the lullaby (with the choir repeating the song), and the skomorokhs and guests fall asleep. Ambassadors are leaving on tiptoes.

Volchok.

Баю-баюшки-баю,
Не ложися на краю.

Придѣт сэренъкий волчѡк
И ухвѣтит за бочѡк.
Он ухвѣтит за бочѡк
И потѣщит во лесѡк,
И потѣщит во лесѡк,
Под ракѣтовый кустѡк.

Western Ambassador: What a fierce people these Russians are, no wonder they say that their ancestors are the bloodthirsty Scythians. Did you hear the lullaby?

Armenian Ambassador: What?

Western Ambassador: It goes, if you sleep on the edge of the bed the little grey wolf will grab you and drag you to the forest.

Moslem Ambassador: Why, I think it's cute.

LIGHTS OFF, all exit

SCENE SIXTEEN [Rouslan, Lyudmila, Draped Person]

Lyudmila.

Огнѣ погѣсли... и ночнѣю
Лампѣду зажигаѣет Лель.
Rouslan. Свершѣлись мѣлые надѣжды,
Гѡтѡва брѣчная постѣль.

MUSIC: *Дитя сестра моя*. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Es62_gevmYc

Rouslan.

Дитя, сестра моя,
Уѣдем в те края,
Где мы с тобой не разлучѣться смѡжем.
Где для любви – века,
Где дѣже смерть легка,
В краю желѣнном, на тебя похѡжем.

Lyudmila.

И сѡлнца влѣжный луч
Средѣ ненастных туч
Усталѡго ума легко коснѣтся.
Твоѣх неверных глаз
Тайнственный приказ.
В солѣной пеленѣ два чѣрных сѡлнца

Rouslan and Lyudmila.

И мы войдем вдвоем в высокий древний дом,
Где временем уют отполирован,
Где аромат цветов – изысканным вином.
Где смутной амброй воздух околдован.

Choir.

Дитя, сестра моя,
Уѣдем в те края,
Где мы с тобой не разлучѣться смѡжем.
Где для любви – века,
Где даже смерть легка,
В краю желѣнном, на тебя похѡжем.

Rouslan takes off parts of Lyudmila's costume.

SCREEN: Russian female national costume has four parts: kokoshnik, a fancy hair dress; sarafan, a type of a sundress; a long shirt underneath the sarafan; and a belt.

They hug and then a hand/draped person pulls Lyudmila's braids and Lyudmila shrieks and disappears.

Rouslan (catching air and following her).

Людмила! Что это, Люмила,
Похищена безвѣстной силой!
Как! после долгих, долгих лет
Обнять влюбленную подругу,
Желаний, слѣз, тоски предмет,
И вдруг минутную супругу
Навѣк утратить... о друзья,
Зачѣм, зачѣм не умер я!

Rouslan covers his face with his hands and runs off stage.

SCENE SEVENTEEN [*Rouslan, Vladimir, Anna, Ambassadors, Skomorokhs, Rutmir, Rugdie, Farlaf*]

Vladimir, Anna, Ambassadors and skomorokhs enter, yawn, stretch, then clash with frantic Rouslan.

Rouslan. Людмила, милая Людмила! Похищена безвѣстной силой!

Everyone exclaims something.

Western Ambassador. Someone kidnapped the young bride. I can't see how this could happen. Wasn't her husband in there?

Vladimir.

Теперь терзайся, плачь, злодей!
Не мог сберечь жены своей!
Скажите, кто из вас согласен
Скакать за дочерью моей?
Ваш подвиг будет не напрасен,
Тому я дам ее в супруги
С полцарством прадедов моих.
Кто вызовется, дети, дружки?

Rouslan. Я...

Farlaf. Я...

Rutmir. Я...

Rugdie. Я...

Farlaf.

Отец наш! Князь наш! Мы с Рогдаем
И с нами юный хан Ратмир
Сейчас коней своих седлаем;
Мы рады весь изъездить мир!

SCREEN: Я (ya), Я (means "I")

Vladimir and his men exit.

Western Ambassador. Prince Vladimir annulled his daughter's marriage. Whoever finds Lyudmila and brings her back gets to marry her. I should go write to my King.

Armenian Ambassador. So we'll have one more wedding feast soon. Let's bet on the contenders. I would say Rutmir.

Moslem Ambassador. Rugdie is heavier, I'd bet on him.

Ambassadors leave.

Farlaf.

Ну наконец! Насилу я
На волю вырвался, друзья!
Уж то-то крови будет течь,
Повеселись, мой верный меч!

All three contenders leave, then Farlaf leaves.

SCENE EIGHTEEN [*Rouslan, The Learned Cat.*]

Rouslan.

Уехали все трое вместе;

А я уныньем как убит;
Мысль о потерянной невесте
Меня терзает и мертвит.

Cat.

Не распалй себя тоской
И отправляйся за княжнй.
Что толку в шпорах и коне?
Садись, и поезжай на мне.

Rouslan. Кто ты?

Cat.

Кто я? Я Кот Учёный!
Садись, доверься мне во всём!
Мы скоро в Киев золочёный
Твою невесту привезём!
Напрасно гнёт тебя кручина,
И плача бредишь наяву.
Пойдём разыщем мага Финна:
Руслан... доверься волшебству.

I am a Learned Cat. I can speak Russian fluently. I can speak English fluently. I am therefore a bilingual Cat. If you act bravely but remain careful, if you do all the right things knights do when they are on a quest I will get your Lyudmila back.

Rouslan. Может хвтит хвастаться, а?

Rouslan leaves.

SCENE NINETEEN [Cat, Pushkin, Quill]

Pushkin enters, followed by hi Quill, catches the Cat's tail.

Pushkin. Разве он на Котё ехал?

Quill. Нет, не на котё.

Pushkin. I'd like everyone to know that this cat is an impostor. In my poem, Rouslan was riding a horse.

Cat. I protest. Rouslan prefers me over a horse because I am smarter. A plain horse is a plain horse, and a Learned Cat is a Learned Cat. Дьявольская разница!

Pushkin tries to pull the cat out but the Quill calms him down and takes him away.

SCENE TWENTY [Cat, Finn, Rouslan, Naina]

Cat. Hey, Finn! How are you? Business going well?

Finn. So-so, the economy isn't that good. But I don't only do magic now, I'm a shrink, too.

Cat. Oh, great. I brought you a client. On his wedding night, he lost his bride Lyudmila, the Grand Prince's daughter, to an unknown evil force! He could use some therapy and a lot of magic.

Finn. I can do therapy. As far as magic goes, I am a great wizard, but so's my enemy, Naina. As soon as she finds out I'm helping your guy she'll do all she can to do him in.

Cat. Who is Naina?

Finn. Naina is a witch. She rejected me when I was a young shepherd. I became a warrior and took my countrymen all over the world. But she rejected me, even with all my power and riches. Then I became a wizard, and spent years enchanting her so that she would fall in love with me. Alas! I succeeded, and a seventy year old witch came to my cave to tell me she was burning with love for me! This is my story about Naina, for anyone who forgets that time flies way too fast.

SCREEN: В (v) ВРЕМЯ (vremya): TIME

Rouslan enters.

Finn.

Руслан, лишилс ты Людмилы;
Твой твёрдый дух теряет силы;
Но злá промчйтс быстрый миг:

На время рок тебя постиг.
Узнай, Руслан: твой оскорбитель
Волшебник страшный Черномор,
Красавиц давний похититель,
Полнощных обладатель гор.
Его найдешь ты, и злодей
Погибнет от руки твоей.

Rouslan.

Откройся: кто ты, благодатный,
Судьбы наперсник непонятный?

Finn.

Отвечу я, любезный сын,
Уж я забыл отчизны дальней
Угрюмый край. Я родом финн.
Вот нить судьбы моей печальной:
Давно близ нашего селенья,
Как милый цвет уединенья,
Жила Найна. Меж подруг
Она гремела красотой.
И я любовь узнал душой.
Словам любви она внимала,
Лишь прелести своей любя,
И равнодушно отвечала:

Naina. Пастух, я не люблю тебя!

Finn.

Что мне сказать? задумал я
Оставить финские поля;
Морей неверные пучины
С дружиной братской переплыть
И бранной славою заслужить
Вниманье гордое Найны.
К ногам красавицы надменной
Принес я меч окровавленный,
Кораллы, злато и жемчуг;
Пред нею, страстью упоенный,
Безмолвным роем окруженный
Её завистливых подруг,
Стоял я пленником послушным;
Но дева скрылась от меня,
Примолвя с видом равнодушным:

Naina. Герой, я не люблю тебя!

Finn.

И я, любви искатель жадный,
Решился в грусти безотрадной
Найну чарами привлечь
И в гордом сердце девы холодной
Любовь волшебствами зажечь.
Спешил в объятия свободы,
В уединенный мрак лесов;
И там, в ученье колдунов,
Провел невидимые годы.
Узнал я силу заклинаньям.
Венец любви, венец желаньям!
Волшебный вихорь поднял вой,

Земля вздрогнула под ногой...
И вдруг сидит передо мной
Старушка дряхлая, седая,
Глазами впалыми сверкая,
С горбом, с трясушей головой,
Печальной ветхости картина.
Ах, витязь, то была Найна!..

Naina.

Так, сердце я теперь узнала;
Я вижу, верный друг, оно
Для нежной страсти рождено;
Проснулись чувства, я сгораю,
Томлюсь желаньями любви...
Приди в объятия мой...
О милый, милый! умираю...

Finn runs away, she tries to follow him then brandishes her fists.

Добился ты любви Найны,
И презираешь — вот мужчины!
Изменник, изверг! о позор!
Но трепещи, девичий вор!

Finn.

Так мы расстались. С этих пор
Живу в моем уединенье
С разочарованной душой;
И в мире старцу утешенье
Природа, мудрость и покой.
Душой черной зло любя,
Колдунья старая, конечно,
Возненавидит и тебя;
Но горе на земле не вечно.

Rouslan. Отец, благослови меня.

Finn blesses Rouslan.

Cat. И меня.

Finn waves at the Cat.

Cat. No blessing for me! Discrimination against cats, as always, even though very often animals are much more human than people.

Rouslan leaves riding the Cat.

SCENE TWENTY ONE *[Rugdie, Farlaf]*

MUSIC, Farlaf is singing a hedonistic song (Serdyuchka?), then begins to eat and drink sumptuously. Farlaf hears steps, wraps his food in he tablecloth and with this sack runs. Rugdie chases him.

Rugdie (sees Farlaf).

Руслан!
Презренный, дай себя догнать!
Дай голову с тебя сорвать!

Farlaf falls, Rugdie bends over him.

Rugdie. Погибни, трус! Умри, Руслан!

Then Rugdie recognizes Farlaf and pushes him with his foot, laughing.

Rugdie.

Как я Фарлафа не узнал,
Я чуть ли меч не запятнал.

Farlaf crawls away and lies quietly.

SCENE TWENTY TWO [Naina, Rugdie, Farlaf, Nenila]

Naina comes to Rugdie.

Naina.

Руслán вон тáм! Бегí тудá!
Егó убьёшь ты без трудá.

Rugdie runs in that direction Naina. Naina finds Farlaf lying on the ground.

Naina.

Людмíлу мудренó сыскáть;
Она́ далёко забежáла;
Не нам с тобóй её достáть.
Опáсно разъезжáть по свéту;
Ты, прáво, б́удешь сáм не рад.
Послédуй моемú совéту,
Ступáй тихóхонько назáд.
Под Кíевом, в уединéнье,
В своём наследственном селéнье
Остáнься л́учше без забóт:
От нас Людмíла не уйдёт.

Naina gives Farlaf a goblet of wine. Enters Nenila. Naina whispers something to Nenila.

Nenila.

Голúбчик, мíленький, Фарлáф!
Тебя́ я дóма дожидáлась.
От слéз давнó промóк рука́в,
И сёрдце чуть не разорвáлось.
Зачём искáть чужíх невéст,
Когдá своя́ невéста дóма?
Зачём бежáть от блíзких мест
К местáм далёким, незнакóмым?
Твоя́ Нeníла чем тебе́
Не подошла́, не угоди́ла?
Иди́ ко мнé, к своéй судьбé!
Зачём, Фарлáф, тебе́ Людмíла?

Farlaf cries and hugs Nenila. Nenila and Farlaf hug and leave.

SCENE TWENTY THREE [Rouslan, Rugdie, Cat]

Rugdie encounters Rouslan.

Rugdie.

Стой!

Rouslan. А, ты, кровáвых битв искáтель,

Рогдáй, наде́жда киевля́н,
Людмíлы мрáчный обожáтель.

Rugdie.

Кто потеря́л её, Руслáн?
Трусли́вый муж жену́ теря́ет.
Вся Русь смеётся над тобóй!

Rugdie thrashes his sword into Rouslan. Rouslan resists the blow and in turn thrashes his sword into Rugdie. Rugdie falls onto the ground.

Rouslan. Умри́, завíстник злóбный мой!

Rouslan throws Rugdie into the river and walks away.

Cat. I told you you have to be careful, the guy nearly did you in, if you didn't kill him he would definitely kill you and...

Rouslan. Мóжет хвáтит болтáть, á?

SCENE TWENTY FOUR [*First Mermaid, Rugdie*]

First Mermaid swims up and tickles Rugdie.

Rugdie. А, ты, русáлка молодáя?

First Mermaid.

Заполучú себе Рогдáя,
Нас ждёт отéц мой, царь морскóй
Тепéрь ты, вíтязь, бúдешь мой!
На дне морскóм, в подвóдной бéздне,
Ты бúдешь мúжем мне любéзным!

First Mermaid and Rugdie wrap themselves in the river and leave. From the ceiling are hanging fish on ropes (the fish kiss Rugdie)

MUSIC Enchanting music (Russian?) and OPERA SONG by GHOST SINGER. MUSIC.

SCREEN: P (r) РУСАЛКА (rusalka) РОГДАЙ (Rugdie): MERMAID, RUGDIE

SCENE TWENTY FIVE [*Muppets, Cat, Pushkin, Quill*]

Cat (turning the pages of a book). Невáжно, невáжно, невáжно. The next several pages are irrelevant.

Blue Muppet. What's there?

Cat. Well... mmm... Pushkin is discussing some aspects of married life.

Enters Pushkin.

Pushkin (jumps on Blue Muppet's lap). Увú! На рáзные забáвы Я мнóго жízни погубíл! I was twenty, low morals, liberal French influence, etcetera, etcetera.

Enters Quill. Quill dances towards Pushkin and slips away when he tries to catch it.

Quill.

Любвú, надéжды, тúхой слáвы
Недóлго нéжил нас обмáн,
Исчéзли юные забáвы,
Как сон, как úтренний тумáн...

Quill dances. Pushkin chases it.

Pushkin. Don't write my poems! You just mess them all up!

Quill.

Товáрищ, верь: взойдёт она́,
Звездá пленíтельного счáстья!

Pushkin catches the Quill, turns it upside down and then sits down with the Quill in his lap.

Pink Muppet. (dumbfounded). OK, how about our scenes in the wizard's castle?

Cat. They are OK! OK! OK!

Pushkin (jumps off). Yes, they are fine. I'll go see how you do them.

The Quill dances away and falls, sits on the stage. Pushkin leaves, dragging away the Quill with him.

Cat. Pushkin! Very childlike and unruly. He used to jump into generals' laps as soon as he entered theater. Well, what do you want, he is a genius. Гéний какóй-то.

The Cat leaves. Muppets put on burkas.