

Basa Janikashvili

THE NEIGHBOURS

A comedy in one act and two scenes

Translated in English by Manana Dadiani

CHARACTERS:

Nana

Aleko

Stranger

The main character performs song "Misses" of "The Green Room" band
and Irakli Charkviani's "Organ 78"

Scene one

Poorly illuminated doorway. Aleko enters. Carefully moving towards the lift, he lights through a cigarette lighter.

Aleko - Anybody there?

Nana - *(After a pause. She is not seen yet)* it's me...

Aleko - *(He can't see Nana)* Hello...*(After a pause)* don't be scared, I live here .It seems that I have frightened you...

Nana - Yeah...a little bit...

Aleko - Don't be afraid. I live here. Is there electricity?

Nana - a bulb has fused off...

Aleko - is a lift operating?

Nana - I guess...

Aleko - Excellent *(After a pause)* Where are you? I can't see anything. Are you still frightened?

Nana - Yeah...

Aleko - Why? Haven't I told you I live here...

Nana - why should I believe?

Aleko - *(Gets a lighter close up to his face)* don't you recognize me?

Nana - don't move. Put it out or I'll scream...

Aleko - Ok, ok! Why are so nervous? Stop it, or I'll get scared too. *(After a pause)* Are you still here? I am going to light it up once again and everything will be ok.

Nana - Don't light or I'll scream!

Aleko - But I just want to have a smoke...

Nana - You won't smoke!

Aleko -I beg you pardon?!

Nana - let me pass!

Aleko -Which direction shall I move to?

Nana - you're standing in the middle and I want to pass...

Aleko - It seems you can see very well in a pitch dark...

Nana - let me pass...

Aleko - As you please...

Nana - Move aside. Don't stand in the way...

Aleko - I won't move off, if you want to pass just do it!

Nana - I will scream...

Aleko - Scream as much as you want, come on, cry and shout till the morning and do whatever you want! I am just standing about and if you want to pass there is quite enough space to do it! Come on!

Nana - Why have you chased after me?

Aleko - Me? Chasing you?

Nana - Yeah, throughout my way here. First you pursued me into the shop, then into a drug store, just everywhere! What do you want of me? Say it or I'll cry indeed!

Aleko - Are you nuts?!

Nana - Just answer why are pursuing me? What do you want? Well, I know, though...
You are a maniac! A pervert! Move aside! Give me a way!

Aleko - First cry and then I'll move off...

Nana - That's the thing that you want me to do! I hate you!

Aleko - Come on, cry and scream! Just incite my feelings making me lose my human appearance and then I'll show you!

Nana - Calm down...

Aleko - (*Moves towards Nana, although he is not seen*) Me?! Calm down? Me?!

Nana - don't move! Don't move or I'll shoot you! I have a gas pistol! Just another step and I'll shoot you down!

Aleko - don't shoot!

Nana - Move off! Let me pass!

Aleko - All right, all right (*Moves back with raising hands*) where shall I move? Right side or left side?

Nana - Stop kidding or I'll shoot you!

Aleko - You are crazier than me...

Nana - Just you dare to say anything! (*Aiming a pistol to Aleko, she gradually appears from darkness. Now Aleko obediently executes Nana's orders*) Step aside!
Make one move inside like this! Put your hands up! Now down to your knees!
Stand up and make three jumps! Get over your heels! Make a circle hopping!
Right now I am getting closer, holding 830 GMI Brauning...8 bullets in

charger... eight crazy teary eyes and eight times saved femininity and honesty,
eight lives and eight thoughts! One bullet is quite enough for you...now sing!

Aleko - What shall I sing?

Nana - Whatever...

Aleko - (*Chants "Misses" of the "Green Room" band*)

Nana - Well done!

Aleko - What do you want in the street? Haven't you been getting to your place?

Nana - Lift is not running...

Aleko - Go up on foot then...

Nana - Up to the last floor! You go if you wish!

Aleko - Right, I will, if you let me alone!

Nana - No, don't move! You will wait for me there, won't you? Now I got your
intention...don't move! You are staying here!

Aleko - What have I done wrong?

Nana - Whatever you deserve! Queers like you shall be imprisoned!

Aleko - You have no right telling me what I am supposed to do!

Nana - Stop that dissembling! I recognize fellows like you...right the same...

Aleko - Will you leave me alone? May I get home? What on earth do you want of
me? Who are you?

Nana - Who are YOU? YOU shall leave me alone! YOU were the first to start it!

Aleko - Was I? You were the first! Why did you leave me behind? I might have been
frightened first! In that case anything could have gone other way! Why did
you were the first to get scared?! Why you and not me? Why?

(*Both at the same time*)

Nana - Everybody wants to get first...let me pass! (*Carefully goes up to exit*) I am not
the one to get trifled with...one more step and we will part forever and never,
ever see each other again ...and I will be absolutely happy never to meet you,
although if some day in future, quite accidentally I notice you, I swear, I'll
shoot you down! Stop it! No more teasing! Shut up !!!

Aleko - This way please...I won't move, I won't say anything. Shall I sing for you
once again? (*chants*)"Time will fly and take pain away, words will flux snow,

I will be back with flowers and forget about the lost fighting, I will come to you maybe today, I will come to you maybe today and bring you some roses..." or maybe you want me to get over my heels? What else am I supposed to do? Expecting me to dance? (*Dances*) Assa! Assa! Assa!

Shot rings out. Aleko falls down. Lift's door opens.

Scene Two.

A few minutes later. The same place - a doorway. Aleko lies unconscious.

Nana - Hey you, wake up!

Aleko - What's going on? Where am I?

Nana - Don't worry...you are alive...

Aleko - Are you a phantom? Why is it so dark? Have I gone blind? Or died?

Nana - You are alive. Calm down, please. It is just a bulb that had fused in the doorway. Why are you lying here?

Aleko - I don't remember...

Nana - Funny that you haven't been robbed through...Thousands of maniacs are hanging about...

Aleko - Well, at least my wallet is here...oh dear! My head! What a pain!

Nana - You'll soon feel better... It is a usual sort of thing...

Aleko - But...but... who are you?

Nana - Well... I have just passed by and saw you ...first I got scared but later when I understood that you weren't pretending, I just pitied you...

Aleko - Ah, I remember now...

Nana - What was that?

Aleko - I was walking home when some crazy maniac started pursuing me, first to the store, when somewhere else and finally up to this doorway. She told me she was scared and shot me!

Nana - He or she?

Aleko - I guess it was a woman, but, you know, she looked exactly like a man...

Nana - Well, she might have thought you were a woman (*After a pause*) some kind of the "present-day" man can even make women to envy them...

Aleko - (*Rises*) And how about women? They have no femininity; they act like men, real males! If you are not the first, they will outstrip and trample you down, if she exceeds, she might even shoot you down! That is the "present-day" sort of a woman!

Nana - If anybody had intended to murder you, she would have done it I bet!

Aleko - Is a lift running?

Nana - It is just coming. I've just pressed it...

(Embarrassing silence. Both wait for the lift to run down)

Aleko - What did she want of me? Why has she got scared? It was me who should have been frightened to death and not her. This woman...woman...do ya know what'd she look like? She resembled a rat, a frightened mouse.... No, a mouse is far more attractive, though...she looked exactly like a rat - the one with a pistol...so feeble, so arrogant, so common... what else should I call her? Ugh! I don't even want to remember her face...you are not saying anything because you haven't seen her... she was so offensive, so...so unpleasant and nasty... I didn't even know that such kind of women ever exist... why are you staring at me like this? One crazy maniac trapped me in the doorway, robbed me out and yet kept proving that she was frightened to death...could you believe that?

Nana - But you haven't been robbed...

Aleko - Why are defending her? What for?

Nana - Because...well, I don't know...

Aleko - Oh dear! What a weakness! What a virtue! What a simple soul! I hate all women in the world because they are milksops!

Nana - Why are you shouting at me? Whom are you taking me for?

Aleko - I hate you!

Nana - We don't love you either!

Aleko - Ugh!

Nana - Hmm!

(Door of the lift opens. First enters Aleko, then Nana)

Aleko - Men have made enough way for women...

Nana - Who asked you though...

Aleko - Which floor?

Nana - You go first...

(Aleko presses a button. Doors get closed. Lift runs up)

Aleko - Why haven't you left before? Didn't you shoot me?

Nana - But I didn't!

Aleko - Well, now you are a liar!

Nana - I never tell lies!

Aleko - Oh, really! You held a pistol and shot me, and now you have the cheek to deny that?

Nana - Look here, I hold a pistol, I admit, but I didn't fire...I swear...

Aleko - Stop it for God's sake. Maybe you say that it weren't you?

Nana - Well, it was I, but I didn't shoot!

Aleko - Why are you living like that? You must be always frightened... Is fear a way of your life? I bet it is!

Nana - How did you come up to that?

Aleko - Where were you hiding? What are you concealing?

Nana - What is your horoscope sign?

Aleko - For any case, be sure that we shall never meet again...

Nana - Please stop. Don't say anything...

Aleko - What's your name?

Nana - Nana...

(Electricity goes away and lift stops)

Aleko - I knew that...

Nana - What are you talking about? About my name or electricity?

Aleko – What if we are stuck here until morning?

Nana – I have asked you a question!

Aleko – *(lights a lighter, Nana starts yelling)* Hey, what's the matter? Stop it!

Nana – I'm sorry...

Aleko – *(He is trying to open the lift door)* it seems we are in trouble.

Nana – What do you see?

Aleko – We have stopped right between stories.

Nana – Is there any way out?

Aleko – Well, if you can go through the walls.

(Silence. Nana secretly looks at Aleko. Aleko is examining the walls the way as if any exit can be found).

Nana – *(chuckles)* Hmm... You know, in childhood me and my friend used to drive a lift, I mean for fun, like driving a car, and both of us had been scared at the same time – what if the lift would have broken through the roof and flown into sky. We lived in another building then.

Aleko – *(ironically)* Could not find anything better?

Nana – Hmm...

Aleko – What do you mean by that "Hmm"?! What was that?!

Nana – Hmm...

Aleko – Stop it. No "Hmm" anymore!

Nana – I do what I want..

Aleko – Damn, she really makes me mad! Help! *(Punches the lift door)*. Does anybody hear me? We are stuck in the lift ...! Help us out of here...!

Nana – Why are you shouting? What are you afraid of?

(Aleko looks at Nana the way as if he had just noticed her)

– Looking for something? Don't look at me. Why are you gazing at me?

Aleko – *(after pause)* You are pure Nana!

Nana – What was that?

Aleko – Every Nana I know is coward and single.

Nana – How do you know?

Aleko – Every Nana is the same. What did they call you in childhood?

Nana – It is not your business.

Aleko – You want me to name you?

Nana – Baby, blandly.

Aleko – You are brunet, of medium height, stooping and lean girl. Each day you drink at least five – six cups of coffee and then gossip. Gossip and gossip. You go to office occasionally, just from time to time. Your mother and father wait for you at home, maybe sister too. You have no brother; otherwise you have not been such a coward. Your sister is married for businessman who is quite rich. Isn't it so?

Nana – And now you'll say that I am bursting with envy at my sister. What is your name again?

Aleko – This won't work..

Nana – Come on, tell me or you want me to name you?

Aleko – I'm scared to death!

Nana – Tell me!

Aleko – Put your hands off, don't touch me!

Nana – Nobody's touching you, I think you have hallucinations already.

Aleko – It could be much worse, I am with you here...!

Nana – Poor man!

Aleko – Help! (*Punches the lift door*) Open the door I am in the lift. Does anybody hear me? Let me out!

Nana – And a little about you: you are slim, thin, bald man. Probably you have wife and two daughters otherwise you would not have been such an expert of women's nature What do you want..? Why are you touching my legs...?

Aleko – Maybe you'll say that I am trying to tempt you? Damn, I am in hell..

Nana – You were touching my legs right now.

Aleko – What the hell I would touch your legs for? What good from them? You really think that ...? Oh, I see to all that you are intriguer too. Do you know what are you doing?

Nana – What am I doing or what YOU are doing? You want me to beat your head off with my bag?! I don't know what shall I do if you touch me one more time..

Aleko – What you were talking with respect to my intellectually - homeopathic origin?

Nana – I shall not let you change the point. You were touching my legs..

Aleko – Maybe but it was not what you mean, never! If you are kidding I can say that you have very strange sense of humour. But if you say anything about it once again it shall mean only that you want me to make you and that will never happen!

(Almost simultaneously. Aleko speaks with one sentence delay. Conversation must be performed the way that Aleko says his last sentence alone after which Nana hits Aleko's head with her bag)

Nana – I'm not kidding. I am stuck in the lift with most disgusting man in the world and you think that I have time for kidding? Indeed you are the most rude creature in the world who wears pants and thinks that this gives him right to talk about being a gentleman. The whole army of women must be waiting for you at home otherwise you won't be so experienced in woman's character. Maybe you are working so much that you have lost any honour and decency. You are kind of a guy that is always discontent with today and who does not like any season of the year. It seems that nobody respects you, everybody despises and ignores you. You are just like abandoned thing – completely useless. That is what you are!

Aleko – Yes, indeed, you are not kidding! But how do you think what conclusion I can make about you? You think that you differ from women who spoil one's life every single minute? You have no womankind left that's why you even are not wearing skirt but pants. Womanhood, where have you gone? If I am working too much you from having nothing to do and wagging your tongue have exhausted your jaws to death. And you are so splendid and attracting that any man becomes a maniac and his eyes fills with blood when he sees you and only thing he tries to do is to get you into his bed to enjoy the rest of your fascination that I hope you have not lost yet.

(Aleko becomes silent for a while after Nana hits him with her bag. Pause continues)

Anyway – I can't say it is pleasant when somebody has wrong opinion about yourself...

Nana – What's your name

Aleko – Aleko...

Nana – Pleased to meet you...

Aleko – It is my pleasure...

(Pause. They avoid looking at each other. Sound of farting. They look at each other. For a moment they pretend that nothing has happened)

Aleko – This is too much...

Nana – You are pure Aleko, Aleko that is stuck in the lift. Aren't you ashamed?

Aleko – Is it me who has to be ashamed? You are talking about me? How could you... in such a place...? Jesus, what a stink!

Nana – You are talking about me?! You are dangerous one...

Aleko – What did you eat last time? What a stink...

Nana – And you call yourself a man? I've never met man like you. Men usually don't do it in presence of a lady.

Aleko – Man don't and I didn't either.

Nana – It is very convenient to lay the blame on somebody else isn't it? Maybe that you are so contemptible is also somebody else's fault?

Aleko – what a stink! I wish the lights turned and doors opened and I swear God I will never go by lift with stranger.

Nana – You'd better be ashamed of lying and I'm not talking about mentioning the Lord's name at the same time!

Aleko – Stuff like this happens and is natural, but I could not imagine such a stink is possible ... and that there is a woman who can contain stink like this in her body ... I'm afraid to think what will happen when you are alone and what you will do. What a flower will bloom in your house when you are spreading your "aroma" ... You have to be put in the Guinness world records... And you can sell stink of your flatus to Gas Pistol Company; I shall be your manager (*chuckles*) provided that I know English and I am skilled in computer. I will

send a letter saying that there is a woman who sells flatulence at a very low cost with stink that can make even Bin Laden leave his cave fortress ... (*chuckles*). You have to work in the Ministry of Defense. Yeah, really... but will you be able to do it in front of committee? Let's have a try (*chuckles but stops when sees Nana's menacing face*)

Nana – It wasn't me. You have to be ashamed blaming me. But the best way of defense is attack isn't it? You think that if you started talking about this means that it was me who did it? But I do know that it wasn't me. I do know. And one more thing to all that now I know that you are a scoundrel...

Aleko – Well, well! I am a scoundrel and stuck in the lift Aleko.

(*Pause. The two are standing back to back*)

Aleko – If it wasn't you then who?

Nana – You!

(*Pause*)

- And by the way why...?

Aleko – What why?

Nana – Now it is the way that I did it and all this because of that you blamed me first.

Aleko – I did it the same way as when you called me a maniac.

(*Pause. Aleko is in elated mood he stands of his own accord and smiles*)

Nana – I would not wish anybody meeting you. You are not far from becoming a maniac...

Aleko – Neither are you...

Nana – I am different, not like this, it is because of you that I am like this now...

Aleko – You are fragile and gentle girl aren't you? Hey!

Nana – Yes! I am a different person with my friends, relatives in the office. I am not like you have described.

Aleko – What do you do for living?

Nana – I work for newspaper. I am a journalist.

Aleko – And how old are you, Nana?

Nana – Nobody asks lady such questions.

Aleko – You are telling this after what you have done, you consider yourself a lady?

Nana – (*starts weeping*) You really make me sick...

Aleko – Oh really? What did you say? I'm too boring? Disgusting? And you are purity itself.

Nana – Don't laugh at me.

Aleko – I don't believe you. Neither I believe your weeping. You shoot first and then weep? Are you a crocodile? Journalist Nana stuck in the lift pluralistically is a crocodile.

(*Electricity turns on. lift starts moving*)

- Thanks to God.

Nana – (*stops weeping*) I beg you pardon, I'm sorry ... I do am aware of what I have done. I really was scared. I was afraid when you followed me and when I saw you in the entrance I thought ... I'd rather say ... You know what happened after, but I didn't shoot I swear I didn't. Do you want me to read poetry? No? I know you want because you sang didn't you...? (*Expressively reads the poem*)

My heart is hard drive Quantum U 160

It has ten thousand rounds per minute.

My brain has memory of 128 mega bytes and it's 80% is utilized by love

My eyes are LG monitor whose blue screen is embellished with your smile

My hand is mouse Pentium made and bought for 7 dollars along with a mouse pad;

And mouse pad is the way of life we pass thousand times forward and back.

My body is high tower in which all this is chilled by two coolers and I feel so fresh...

If anything happens I shall upgrade you from Internet,

Where I shall by love for one week with my visa credit card – just for six dollars and ninety-nine cents.

Then I'll install our dating for us to be tête-à-tête,

I shall press start button and we shall start sex from the most advanced level.

Insert Sony blank CD-R,

Press with finger record button
And turn our meetings into AVI file.
And we shall be introduced to the world through Internet
By uploaded MPG file
And we'll be on the site meandu.ge
But the most important is that we'll be free...

Aleko – Why did you say that I had touched your legs?

Nana – You know you really put your hand on my leg, I don't know what you call this but I retain the right to call it attempt to do something when somebody gets his hands under my skirt.

Aleko – Jesus how should I believe something that as I do know have never happened? How can I convince myself that you didn't shoot when you had had pistol in your hand aimed at me and you had shoot? How can I believe when I even didn't touch your skirt, and I didn't think about what is between your legs?

Nana – You starting it over again. Your manners are far from acceptable!

Aleko – Maybe there were no so sudden and pitiable defeat of yours? Maybe you spoiling the air were only a dream? Or maybe it was me? Oh really it was me who shoot me in the head. You have nothing to do with it.

Nana – You are very antagonistic.

Aleko – I am not antagonistic anymore I almost become a maniac. Almost, and I ask the God to get home as soon as possible until I kill somebody. That is what I am.

Nana – Why I have to tolerate your impudence? Why?! Who are you? Who gave you right for this? Why do you blame me in everything? I didn't shoot you! And I haven't done anything shameful and don't need to make excuses to you...

(The lift stops and the doors open)

- You are not a maniac. You are even worse. You are dangerous for anyone – adult and kids. You... you...

(Aleko goes out of the lift. Nana after him)

Aleko – Why are you following me?

Nana – And you?

Aleko – You live here?

Nana – And you?

Aleko – Leave me alone.

Nana – No, you leave me alone.

Aleko – one more step and I'll shoot you. (*Takes out gas pistol from his pocket*).

Walter IUG. Sixteen rounds. Sixteen with justice and sixteen with dignity!
Sixteen thoughtless words and sixteen pieces of vengeance. Don't force me to
make you sixteen times weep.

Nana – What I was talking about? You see, it was you who shoot himself!

Aleko – I swear I'll shoot you if you do not leave me alone right now and then blame
yourself.

Nana – You... you ... what do you want from ... (*doesn't know what to say*) let me
pass.

Aleko – No it is you who has to let me pass.

Nana – Let me pass!

Aleko – No, you do!

Nana – Let me pass!

Aleko – I won't move. Let me pass!

Nana – Let me pass!

Aleko – No, you do!

Nana – Let me pass!

Aleko – I won't move. You do!

Nana – I won't move either. Give me the way and let me pass!

Aleko – No, you make way for me. It is only half an hour that I do not give a way to
ladies.

Nana – As for me I never gave the way to anybody!

Aleko – I shall shoot you and you will leave behind.

Nana – (*takes her gas pistol*) If you shoot then I'll do...

Aleko – Then I shall shoot you again, but first give me the way, otherwise it will be
me who shoot first...

Nana – I'll shoot you as soon as you do, but first let me pass, or...!
Aleko – no, you first.
Nana – Let me pass!
Aleko – No, You do!
Nana – Let me pass!
Aleko – I won't move. Give me the way!
Nana – Let me pass!
Aleko – No, You do!
Nana – Let me pass!
Aleko – I won't move. Give me the way!
Nana – I won't move either. Give me the way and let me pass!
Aleko – No, you make way for me. It is only half an hour that I do not give a way to ladies.
Nana – As for me I never gave the way to anybody!
Aleko – I shall shoot you and you will leave behind.
Nana – *(takes her gas pistol)* If you shoot then I'll do.
Aleko – I'm giving you the last warning...
Nana – I shall do it before you...

(Aleko aims his pistol at Nana and cocks it. Nana copies all his movements. They stand for a few minutes in tension and look at each other. Aleko steps to the right. Nada does too. Aleko bends and then straightens his leg and Nana too. Aleko jumps and then Nana after him. Aleko barks once like a dog. At first Nana is taken aback but then she barks once too. Aleko makes one step towards Nana. Nana makes one step back. Sound of shooting and then another one. After a short pause Nana falls down and then Aleko. Scene darkens. Only light is highlighted where we can see maniacal face of a smiling stranger)

The End