

The earthenware vase

Drama Short

by

Gerlinde Kenkel

First Draft English/based on her German Script

© Gerlinde Kenkel

Kenkel20002000@freenet.de

Publication and duplication, also in part, is only permitted with the written permission of the author. Other publications and reproductions are prosecuted under criminal and civil law.

FADE IN:

1 EXT. FLEA MARKET - MORNING 1

A well-attended antiques and flea market. People stand, haggle, and buy things that are precious to them.

SUPER: 2020, Somewhere in Germany

MARGOT (78), an old but well-dressed woman in an expensive fur coat, walks searching through the rows of the market, without paying attention to the antique clocks, the gold jewelry or the porcelain.

She reaches into her expensive branded handbag, takes out two shards of an earthenware vase. Her eyes fill with tears.

She remembers a dream.

2 INT. DARK ROOM - NIGHT - DREAM SEQUENCE 2

A dark room, in the middle, brightly lit, a vase made of earthenware, gray with floral pattern. At the top, two pieces are missing.

Margot wants to reach for it, but the vase disappears.

3 EXT. FLEA MARKET - MOMENTS LATER - PRESENT TIME 3

A BOY (8) bumps into her, which she does not notice immediately.

MARGOT

(loud)

Can't you be careful, brazen boy?

BOY

Watch out for yourself, old witch!

MARGOT

(indignant, loud)

When I was as old as you, I should not have allowed myself this impudence! My mother would have...

A young WOMAN (30) stands next to the boy.

WOMAN

(to Margot)

Don't attack my boy, you stupid cow!

(MORE)

WOMAN (CONT'D)
 (to the boy)
 Did the old woman do something
 to you?

MARGOT
 Now I don't wonder where her boy
 got that from!

She leaves.

A little further away she sees some antique and flea
 shops. She is approaching it.

4 EXT. IN FRONT OF A ANTIQUE SHOP - MOMENTS LATER 4

A typical shop window of an antique shop, with all the
 things that people think they did no needed.

Knickknacks next to antique clocks, old broken porcelain
 dolls next to old cameras.

With a fleeting glance, Margot's eyes roam the shop
 window. She is disappointed, wants to leave again.

Suddenly, in the middle of her moving, she pauses, turns
 around again. She smiles.

POV MARGOT:

Behind a porcelain plate is a grey vase with a floral
 pattern made of earthenware. They were glued together.
 Only two parts on upper edge is missing.

She enters the store.

5 INT. ANTIQUE SHOP - MOMENTS LATER 5

The antique shop is in the semi-darkness when Margot
 enters it. The DOORBELL RINGS quietly.

Margot looks around, turns up her nose as she picks up a
 fur coat and smells it. She puts the coat back in disgust.

MARGOT
 (loud)
 Hello, is there anyone?

You can hear the rattling of dishes.

OWNER (O.S.)
 (East German accent)
 I'll be coming soon.

The Owner (48), a medium-sized thin man with thin hair,
 appears. In the hand a tea towel, the hands a little wet.
 He throws the tea towel over his shoulder.

MARGOT

I want to buy the vase in the shop window. The broken one made of earthenware.

The Owner samples the woman. He wonders why this rich-looking woman has an interest in an old, broken vase?

OWNER

The vase is not for sale.

Margot reaches into her purse and pulls out two thousand euros.

MARGOT

I must have the vase! I pay what you want!

She stretches out the money to him. The Owner shakes his head.

OWNER

Not everything can be bought with money, madam!

MARGOT

(mocking)
So, what not?

OWNER

If you don't know, why would I tell you?

He hints at her to leave the store.

Furious, she turns around and leaves. The Owner smiles.

6 EXT. FRONT OF A ANTIQUE SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

6

Margot stands in front of the shop, looking at the vase in the shop window. The Owner takes the vase out of the shop window. Margot looks at him angrily.

MARGOT

You can buy everything for money! I will prove it to you, you, Schmock!

She turns around, goes away.

7 EXT. IN FRONT OF A BANK - AFTERNOON

7

Margot gets out of the taxi and walks towards the bank.

Through the shop window we see how she goes to the cashier and withdraws money.

8 INT. ANTIQUE SHOP - LATER

8

Margot stands with the Owner in front of a large table. She spreads the bundles of money on the table.

MARGOT
 (determining)
 I want the vase!
 (complacent)
 It's all yours. It's thirty
 thousand euros if you sell me
 the vase!

The Owner does not appreciate the money at all, instead he looks at Margot penetratingly.

OWNER
 As I told you, madam, the vase
 is not for sale!
 (thoughts)
 Unless...
 (Grabs Margot's arm)
 Come along!

Margot goes with the Owner. Both disappear behind a door.

9 INT. ANTIQUE SHOP/KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

9

A small room with kitchen, couch and lots of things, messy and a bit dirty. In the middle of the room is a table with three chairs that are old and in need of repair.

Margot and the owner sit opposite each other at the table. Margot looks lurking, but also curious at the owner, who is pouring coffee to both of them.

MARGOT
 You just said that there is a
 way to get the vase after all?

OWNER
 (pours milk into his
 cup)
 Yes. And, it wouldn't cost you
 anything.

MARGOT
 What do you mean by that?

OWNER
 Tell me why this vase is so
 important to you?

MARGOT
 (Stands up)
 I can't do that!

OWNER

A story for a vase. You want the vase, I want to know why?

Margot starts crying.

MARGOT

I can't do that!
(quiet)
I'm so ashamed!

OWNER

Sometimes talking helps to heal open wounds.

Margot hesitates, her hands tremble, hold her handbag tightly clawed over.

MARGOT

Maybe you're right?
(clears herself)
It all began shortly before the end of the war. I was 5 years old at the time. My father and I lived on the edge of a small Brandenburg village.

DISSOLVE TO:

10

EXT. IN FRONT OF A FARM - AFTERNOON - FLASHBACK

10

A typical turn-of-the-century farmhouse; neglected and with a broken window.

The FATHER (30) sits on a bench and carves around a piece of wood. Next to you a pot of steaming soup.

He looks at his daughter MARGOT (5), who picks flowers from the balcony.

SUPERIMPOSE: MARCH 1945

MARGOT (V.O)

We were Jews. My father and I were able to survive because two German communists hid us on this farm and provided us with food.

Margot comes to her father with the picked flowers and holds the flowers out to him.

FATHER

For me? But they're beautiful, Margot!

He gets up, goes into the house, and comes out with a gray vase of earthenware. She is whole, has a floral pattern.

FATHER (CONT'D)

Put the flowers in there and
give them plenty of water.

(smiles)

Flowers are thirsty, you know?

Margot puts the flowers in the vase and takes the vase.
She goes into the house. You CAN HEAR the SOUND of running
water.

The father sits down on the bench again, looks at the pot,
which is steaming less, and stirs the soup with a spoon.
He tries a spoon and nods contentedly.

The father begins to eat.

Margot comes out with the vase she places next to her
father. She watches him eat.

A SHOT sounds. Surprised, Margot and her father look in
the direction of the shot.

Two German SOLDIERS can be seen on a hill. When they see
the house and Margot with her father, they get closer.

FATHER (CONT'D)

(anxious, to Margot)

Quickly, into the house with
you. Go to the attic, and don't
give a damn!

Margot takes the vase and runs into the house. The
soldiers are getting closer.

SOLDIER 1 (33), a tall beefy man with a scar on his left
cheek. SOLDIER 2 (25), young and slender, with the
appearance of a scholar, put her rifles on her father.

SOLDIER 1

Is there something to eat in the
house? And, do you have clothes
that suit us?

SOLDIER 2

(quietly, to soldier 1)
I think there was someone else.
A little girl.

Soldier 1 looks doubtfully at his colleague. He nods.
Soldier 1 tells him silently to search the house. Soldier
2 goes inside.

SOLDIER 1

Is there anyone else in the
house besides you?

FATHER
 (anxious)
 Nobody, soldier.

Soldier 1 sees the pot. Greedily, he pounces on it and loops the soup into himself.

SOLDIER 1
 Do you have clothes and food for us?
 (quiet)
 The war is lost anyway.
 (presses rifle barrel)
 (against father)
 So, what about now?

The father nods and points to the house. By moving with the rifle, the soldier indicates to him that he should go ahead.

11 INT. FARM/ATTIC - MOMENTS LATER - FLASHBACK

11

Margot crouches on the floor. Through several cracks in the ground, she looks down, sees how her father is led by soldier 1 into the large living room.

Anxiously trembling, the vase filled with water and flowers next to her, she looks down spellbound.

POV MARGOT:

The father stops in front of the stove.

SOLDIER 2 (O.S.)
 So, there's nothing here.

SOLDIER 1
 Then just have a look at other rooms! If there really should be a girl here...
 (grins)
 ... we will definitely have our fun.

Margot HEARS BOOT STEPS slowly coming up the stairs.

She gets up and knocks over the vase. Some water flows out and through the ceiling into the lower room.

Full of fear, Margot grabs the vase with the rest of the water and flowers and goes deeper into the attic, where she hides between two old farmer's cupboards.

12

INT. FARM/LIVING ROOM - TWILIGHT - FLASHBACK

12

The father stands anxiously at the stove, soldier 1 searches the wardrobe, holds the gun pointed at the father, and looks at him from time to time.

He throws two pants and two shirts on the couch, which has seen better days.

SOLDIER 1

(loud)

I found something to wear for us.

(curious)

Already found something?

SOLDIER 2 (O.S.)

Not yet. I'm in the bedroom right now.

SOLDIER 1

Then go up to the attic. If so, then your imaginary girl is up there.

SOLDIER 2 (O.S.)

All right. Just quickly search the other two rooms.

Soldier 1 continues to search the closet. He finds an expensive-looking coat, which he takes out, examining the back. He puts it on his body.

The father freezes.

POV FATHER:

On the front of the coat, a yellow sewn-on Star of David can be seen on the left side.

Soldier 1 puts his rifle on the couch, wants to put on the coat. Then he sees the Star of David.

He takes off his coat, carelessly throws it to the ground, grabs his rifle.

SOLDIER 1

(full of hate)

Are you a Jew?

(pull the trigger)

I hate Jews!

The father falls to the ground. Blood seeps from the chest.

SOLDIER 2 (O.S.)

Why did you shoot?

SOLDIER 1
 (full of hate)
 One dirty Jew less.

13 INT. FARM/ATTIC - MOMENTS LATER - FLASHBACK

13

Soldier 2 searches the attic. He is afraid as he walks through the attic with the unsecured weapon.

He sees Margot when a black cat crosses his path, and he is frightened. ONE SHOT comes loose, it stumbles.

Margot drops the vase, which breaks. The water flows through the cracks.

SOLDIER 1 (O.S.)
 (screams)
 Have you caught anyone?

SOLDIER 2
 (loud)
 No, the shot just went off accidentally.

SOLDIER 1 (O.S.)
 Take better care! Do fast, we have to go fast from here. The Ivan is not far from here.

SOLDIER 2
 (screams)
 Come soon!

Margot trembles all over her body, the shards of the vase in front of her.

The soldier approaches her, pointing her with his finger on her mouth to be quiet. She understands. He puts the rifle on the ground.

SOLDIER 2 (CONT'D)
 (whispers)
 Stay up here until we're gone.

He begins to collect the shards and put them in his backpack.

SOLDIER 2 (CONT'D)
 I'll try to fix the vase and bring it back to you.

Margot cries softly. The soldier puts his arm around her.

SOLDIER 2 (CONT'D)
 And never give up hope! Do you hear? Never give up hope! The haunting will soon be over!

He gets up, takes the rifle, and goes to the stairs, where he turns around and waves to her shyly. Margot waves back.

14 INT. FARM/LIVING ROOM - MORNING - FLASHBACK 14

The first rays of the morning fall through the open window. Two German uniforms are scattered on the floor. Next to it lies the cold corpse of the father.

Margot is standing in the room. She cries.

MARGOT (V.O)

That was the first time I encountered death. A short time later, Russian soldiers found me and took me to an orphanage.

DISSOLVE TO:

15 INT. ANTIQUE SHOP/KITCHEN - SHORTLY LATER - PRESENT 15

Margot cries, stealthily wipes the tears from her eyes.

The owner also cries, but shows his feelings openly.

OWNER

That was a beautiful story!

MARGOT

And it is true!

OWNER

Have you ever seen the soldier again?

MARGOT

No.

The owner stands up.

OWNER

You have fulfilled your part of the agreement, now I am fulfilling my part. Come along.

Margot gets up and follows him.

16 INT. ANTIQUE SHOP - MOMENTS LATER 16

The owner takes the vase out of the shop window, hands it over to Margot, who places it on an old table.

She opens her handbag and gets the two missing pieces from it, which she puts on the empty spaces. They fit exactly.

OWNER

Should I pack it for you?

Margot nods, puts the two pieces back in her purse. The owner carefully wraps the vase in newsprint and puts the vase in a shopping bag.

Margot leaves the store, the owner looks after her, as if he was expecting something else.

17 EXT. FRONT OF ANTIQUE SHOP - SHORTLY LATER 17

Margot comes out of the store with a happy smile. She walks a few steps, looks into the shopping bag, and stops.

Slowly she becomes aware of something. She goes back to the store.

18 INT. ANTIQUE SHOP - EVENING 18

When Margot steps through the door, the owner looks up in amazement but delighted.

OWNER

Have you forgotten something, madam?

Margot takes out the wrapped vase from her pocket and places it on a table.

MARGOT

I don't need the vase anymore!

OWNER

Why?

MARGOT

All these many years I felt guilty about the death of my father, so I was looking for the vase. Hoping that he will forgive me, that I forgive myself.

OWNER

(nods)

The feeling of guilt of the survivors. I understand!

MARGOT

But, after telling you the story of the vase, I understood that I didn't need to feel guilty. I was a kid back then. A small, frightened girl of five years. I

(MORE)

MARGOT (CONT'D)
 would have the death of my Never
 be able to prevent father!

The owner comes up to her, hugs her. She lets it happen.

OWNER
 It is, I believe, time for you
 to experience the rest of the
 story as well!
 (caring)
 I still have some coffee and
 biscuits left. Come with us to
 the back. You will be
 interested!

Both leave the room, the vase remains there.

19 INT. ANTIQUE SHOP/KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

19

On the table is a coffee pot, two cups of saucers, and a
 small bowl of cookies.

Margot and the owner sit opposite each other. The owner
 drinks a sip of coffee.

OWNER
 I received the vase as you see
 it now on my father's deathbed,
 with the request never to sell
 it, but to return it to its true
 owner.

MARGOT
 (thoughts)
 Wait a minute! Are you saying
 that...

OWNER
 ... The soldier who saved your
 life is my father? Yes!

MARGOT
 But, why didn't he come back?

OWNER
 Shortly after he left you, he
 visited his wife, and gave her
 the shards, with the request to
 glue them because he had to
 leave again briefly.
 He was caught by a Soviet patrol
 and taken to Siberia, where he
 worked in a uranium mine.

MARGOT
 (compassionate)
 Poor man!

OWNER

Why poor? Despite the work and the starvation, it had been the best time of his life for him, because he had realized what a great guilt the German people had carried on him! Throughout his life he was for peace and international understanding. And he passed this inheritance on to his children.

Margot opens her handbag and takes out the two missing pieces.

MARGOT

Please, complete the vase, and give the vase to someone from your family.

OWNER

(surprised)
Why?

MARGOT

Because it is more than a simple vase! It is a symbol of the good in human people!

FADE OUT:

THE END