

ANYA: synopsis with uploaded songs

Prologue

The Russian front, January 1945

As Russian soldiers move through a frozen field of corpses, the Russian people lament the huge cost in lives of the war – 27 million lost. Fires of lamentation, the ‘roses’ of Leningrad, burn in the street, and old women mourn their lost sons.

1. YOUNG MEN ARE DYING

In Moscow, famous Russian actress Anna (ANYA) Davidova pleads with head of the NKVD Lavrenty BERIA for the release of her father. Her father LEV is returned but completely broken, with fingers lopped by frost-bite. ANYA sings a lullaby as he dies in her arms.

2. THE SLEEP OF WINTER

ACT ONE

Moscow, April 1945

Four American naval officers in Moscow as part of the team to co-ordinate the final assault on Japan settle into their spartan Moscow hotel room: GEORGE, EUGENE, RON and LOUIS, in his late 30s, unmarried and with the feeling that life has passed him by. They take the mickey out of the lack of luxuries – and the old cleaner NINA, clearly there to spy on them.

3. LIGHTEN UP, MR STALIN

The Americans head down to the Spiridonovskaya Dom for a welcoming party. The atmosphere takes time to warm up. LOUIS is captivated by the singing of ANYA and believes one song must be for him

4. THE CLOSED DOOR

The party livens up as the Americans recognize the band’s version of Glenn Miller’s Don’t Sit Under the Apple Tree very popular in Moscow at the time

5. DON’T SIT UNDER THE APPLE TREE (1940s GLENN MILLER, not original)

BERIA invites ANYA for a private dinner, but she shuns his advances. LOUIS and ANYA talk briefly, under the suspicious eyes of BERIA’s henchmen NADARIA and SARKISOV, and ANYA secretly passes him her phone number.

Walking on clouds, LOUIS wonders back to the hotel in Moscow dream:

6. MOSCOW NIGHTS (Popular Russian song from 1945, not original)

Back in the small apartment she shares with her sister ALEXANDRA and her baby, and the Gavrillov family (KATERINA and GEORGIY and their young son PIOTR), ANYA tells of her encounter with LOUIS.

ALEXANDRA is worried about the dangers of such a liaison. LOUIS ring to make a date.

ANYA playfully imagines turning her meagre Soviet wardrobe into an American fashion cornucopia in which she is spoiled for choice in how to dress for the date:

7. WHAT SHALL I WEAR

ALEXANDRA warns of the dangers, but she is determined to go.

After a beautiful evening, ANYA is sad, thinking that LOUIS must soon go. LOUIS is deliriously in love for the first time in his life

8. WHEN I WAS YOUNG

and believes all obstacles can be overcome, but he is distraught when EUGENE brings him the news of Roosevelt’s sudden death.

BERIA, still bitter about his rejection by Anya, is worried by the death of Roosevelt, creating uncertainty, and laments the lack of firm leadership in Russia.

9. RULE LIKE IRON

ANYA and LOUIS wake up after their first night together to the sound of the bells ringing out over Moscow to announce the final victory of the Russians over Germany in Europe, VE day.

10. LISTEN, CAN’T YOU HEAR?

ANYA and LOUIS go out to join the jubilant crowds celebrating in Manesch Square. They recognize her and call for a song. She gives them an innuendo laden song about soldiers returning to their women

11. TAKE OFF THAT UNIFORM, SOLDIER

NADARIA and SARKISOV snap photos of ANYA and LOUIS together.

Greenhats (Russian agents) come to expel LOUIS immediately from Russia. He manages to pass a message secretly to NINA for ANYA. After LOUIS has been escorted out, the Greenhats find the message and shoot NINA.

Moscow, 1946

ANYA is now holding the baby KATYA that they conceived on VE day. The apartment has long been watched. Now the Greenhats burst in and take ANYA away, and her baby is thrust into her sister ALEXANDRA'S arms:

12 & 13. THIS BABY SLEEPS

LOUIS manages to get back into Russia and returns to the apartment to find it completely empty and is led to believe ANYA has moved on romantically. He looks around him wistfully:

14. A BRIEF AFFAIR

ANYA is interrogated and tortured by the NKVD, and learns that the GAVRILOVS have been taken to the Gulags too while ALEXANDRA has fled to the country with the children. ANYA finally finds she is accused of plotting to assassinate Stalin with American spy and philanderer LOUIS.

Florida, 1953

Meanwhile LOUIS is trying to make a go of being a film-noir script writer in America, but his interest in Russia brings him a warning from GEORGE who is involved in the McCarthyite anti-communist witch-hunt. LOUIS feels trapped, and feels bound to join in:

15. SHOOTING PINKOES

Russia, 1953

Seven years pass. In Vladimir prison camp, ANYA imagines writing to her little daughter KATYA who knows her only as a distant aunt she never sees:

16. SEVEN YEARS OLDER

Stalin dies and BERIA becomes leader of Russia. BERIA decides to free hundreds of thousands of prisoners from the Gulags, including ANYA. KHRUSCHEV stages a coup and BERIA is executed.

ANYA and KATERINA return to ALEXANDRA and the children in the Moscow apartment. PIOTR is now 20, the two girls KATYA and ALEXANDRA'S daughter TANYA are eight and nine. KATYA does not know what to make of her strange aunty ANYA. Upset, ANYA reveals that she is in fact her mother. KATYA runs out distraught.

ACT TWO

Moscow, 1960

The sound of the VE day celebrations burst noisily into the apartment.

17. FIELD, O MY FIELD (Russian traditional song, not original)

KATYA (now 15) flirts with PIOTR while TANYA looks on enviously. KATYA finally prises the secret of her father from ANYA, and to her excitement discovers that he was American.

Thrown by the discovery, KATYA runs out into the street to be alone, wondering where LOUIS is now:

18. WHERE ARE YOU?

Khrushchev and Nixon meet to exchange ideologies. They arrange an American Exhibition in Moscow.

PIOTR arranges for KATYA to meet an American journalist.

Florida, 1960

LOUIS is now married to JANE but is still struggling as a writer. He feels betrayed when Nixon loses the election to John F Kennedy.

KATYA meets the American journalist, JAMES MILLER, and tells him her story and asks for his help in tracing him. Sensing a great story, he agrees to help.

America and Russia, 1961

MILLER, after tracing LOUIS, phones him and tells him he was a teenage daughter in Russia, and that ANYA has been in the Gulags. LOUIS is utterly shaken, but agrees to learn more.

KATYA breaks the news to ANYA that MILLER has been in touch with LOUIS. ANYA is overcome with shock and terrified of the dangerous position this puts them in.

MILLER gets LOUIS to invite KATYA and her mother to the USA to visit him. He wants to make it a big story to minimize the chances of reprisals. LOUIS, harangued by JANE who thinks the visit is a very bad idea, wants to keep it private.

KATYA receives a new sweater, the first gift from her father, on her 16th birthday. But the birthday celebrations are interrupted by NADARIA and SARKISOV and two greenhats who demand the sweater for inspection. After the shock of this visit, ANYA, who has been against the American visit, finally decides she needs to get KATYA out of Russia.

LOUIS and JANE argue. JANE suggests he is a fool trying to revive an old dream, and is very suspicious of KATYA and ANYA's motives.

ANYA is grilled as she tries to arrange an exit visa for her and KATYA. The application is refused.

It becomes clear that the trip can only be arranged through clandestine means. MILLER tells LOUIS that he has arranged bogus short-term visas for mother and daughter to Brussels – from where they will be able to fly on to New York.

MILLER meets ANYA and KATYA at Moscow Airport. They are being watched closely. MILLER gets through security and after some scares KATYA gets through too. They turn to find that ANYA is refusing to come with them. KATYA is distressed but ANYA is adamant. She feels KATYA will be safer this way (if they do not look like runaways) – and she believes she has no place in America; Russia is her home.

MILLER shepherds KATYA on to the plane.

ANYA returns to the flat. KATYA emerges from the throng of press in New York to meet LOUIS, and is welcomed by JANE. KATYA makes a phone call to her mother in Moscow and a party begins in the Moscow flat.