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Ballad of a Soldier

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Script by V. Yezhov and G. Chukhrai Directed by G. Chukhrai Photography by V. Nikolaev and E. Savelyeva Starring: Alyosha - Vladimir Ivashov Shura - Zhanna Prokhorenko (C) 1959 MOSFILM This is the road to town. Those who leave our village, and those who later return to their birthplace, walk along this road. She's not waiting for anyone. The one she used to wait for, her son Alyosha, did not return from the war. He's buried far from his birthplace, near a town with a foreign name. Strangers bring flowers to his grave. They call him a Russian soldier, a hero, a liberator. But to her he was simply a son, about whom she knew everything from the day he was born to the day he left along this road for the front. He was our friend. We will tell his story, a story not everyone knows-- not even her--his mother.

BALLAD OF A SOLDIER - That's it! Let's go! - But what about reporting? You want to report from the next world? Scram! Eagle! Eagle! I see tanks! Eagle! Eagle! Do you read me? Eagle! This is Finch. This is Finch! Eagle! This is Finch! Answer me! Yes, this is Finch! I see tanks! Four of them! They're heading straight towards me. There's no infantry. I can pull back. You don't like that, eh? - Skvortsov, report to the general. - Skvortsov, report to the general. Here he is, Comrade General. Private Skvortsov, reporting as ordered. Well, hero, come here. Tell us everything that happened. Were you at the observation point? - Yes. Well, what happened? Comrade General, to be honest, I was afraid! They were so close... I was scared. You were so scared that you knocked out two tanks? Out of fright? Everybody hear? I wish everybody were so scared. Wait a minute. Is it possible that somebody else did it? No, it was me. Excellent. I'm putting you up for a decoration. Include Skvortsov on the list. - Yes, Comrade General. Please make note of this. Comrade General, instead of my decoration, could I go home to see my mother? - How old are you? - Nineteen. When I was leaving, I didn't have time to say good-bye to my mother. And I just got a letter from her. The roof is leaking. Please let me go, Comrade General. We'd all like to go home, Skvortsov, but we can't leave the front. This is war and we're all soldiers. I wouldn't have asked you if we weren't all taking a rest now. I just need one day, Comrade General. I'll fix the roof and come right back. Well, should we let Skvortsov go home? Let him fix the roof? Just make sure you're back on time! Well, I... Comrade General... I'll do whatever it takes! Sit down. You're pretty lucky, Skvortsov. Where are you going? To Georgievsk, the village of Sosnovka. I could be there by tomorrow. - No, my friend. The way things are going nowadays, a day won't be enough. I'll give you two days to get there and two to get back. And two to fix the roof. Satisfied? Comrade General. Can I go now? - Go! Just make sure you're back on time. - Yes, Comrade General! Fellows, give us a hand! - Take care! - Thanks, guys! - Have a good trip! - Thank you! Hey, friend! Wait a minute! Are you going on leave? - Yes. - To Georgievsk? - Yes. I'm from Uzlovaya. We're neighbors! Stop by at this address. - I won't have enough time. I can't. You have to

change trains at Uzlovaya anyway. Chekhov Street. Not far from the station. Stop by, friend! - Okay. What should I say? Say that you saw me! Tell Liza that her Sergei is all right, that you saw him yourself. Tell his Liza that he dreams about her day and night. Sergei, you ought to give her some sort of present. What can he give? Everything he has is army-issue. Quit talking! Sergeant, give Sergei a cake of soap! It's for his wife! - His ration is only for one washing. - Give him a whole cake. I have only two cakes for the entire platoon. - Well, give him one. - That's against regulations. - Come on, Comrade Sergeant! - Don't be stingy! It's for his wife. Open it. She's going to be happy. - Soap is now a delicacy. - A deficit, you moron. She'll be happy regardless. - Let him have the second one, too! - He's right, Sergeant! Come on, Sergeant. - Comrade Sergeant... - Here. Take it! Close it. - 7 Chekhov Street. - I'll find it. Let me help you. Where are you going? - To Gorisov. Me, too. That's where I'm changing trains. Going home? - Yes, I've finished fighting. I'm going home, too. On leave. I got lucky. We'll be traveling to Gorisov together. Thanks, friend. - I'll help you in Gorisov, too. - Someone will meet me there. Your wife? My wife. Keep an eye on my suitcase. I have to send a telegram. What on earth are you doing? The train's here. It's about to leave. - What's with you? - What do you mean? We have to go! I have your suitcase. - So go by yourself. - What's wrong? - What do you want? Beat it! Beat it? I have your suitcase. Fine, I'm going. - Wait a minute. Don't be angry, friend. Things are hard for me. I wrote to my wife and told her I wouldn't be coming. - Why? - I have to. Even before the war, things weren't working out. I was jealous of her. And now-- Be quiet! I don't want to, you understand? She's young and pretty. She'll find her happiness, right? I don't know. She will. - What about you? - What? Where will you go now? Russia is a big country. That's despicable! It's despicable to think that way! She's waiting for you. And what do you do? You lie! It's despicable! Wanna smoke? Got a piece of paper for me? - Here. - Hey, friend, can you spare one? Pass one over here. How thin! Kill the enemy. Read it and pass it on to your comrade. And how's the tobacco supply on the front? On the front? It's available. It's available, hero! That reminds me of the soldier who asked a collective farmer for a glass of water and said, "Lady, give me something to drink. I'm so hungry that I don't have a place to sleep." Exactly! The story of your life. A good woman. I can't forget her. Then why forget about her? After the war, go and marry her. You fool! She's already got a husband. - Pockmarked like you? - No, smooth. Why would she trade a guy with smooth skin for someone pockmarked like you? How should I know? Maybe he has some other defect! - Are you accompanying your friend? - No, I'm by myself. - Are you on a mission? - No. - Being transferred? - No again. - Then what? - Home. On leave. Who do you think you're kidding? Come on! I'm telling the truth. I knocked out two tanks! You see, even a signalman-- A signalman. Well, that's about average for a signalman, of course. What did you knock

them out with? A telephone receiver. It was double-barreled! You know how it is with these signalmen? They walk around, they see a tank. First one, then another, and then into his bag. I'm serious! When the general called me to the bunker-- - Soldier, enough already. - Enough about you talking to the general! Gimme this. I'll prove it to you What are you doing? - Look! - Looks like him! Direct hit! Why on earth did you ruin it? I have a lot more just like it. Don't think about it, son. Everything will work out. I can't. I have a daughter who just got married and she's already a widow. - You should go. Thanks. - Yes, in a minute. Let's go. Vasya! Oh, Vasya. You're back. You're alive. Well, here I am. Now we're together. I was in such a hurry. The buses aren't running. It's just a shaving. I work at the factory now. The steel coming out these days is very hard. So, citizen, are you going to take this car or not? Yes, coming. Vasya, this is the driver. Where are your things? - There it is. - I'll get it. - Where's the boy? - What boy? The boy. The soldier. He accompanied me. A hero! He knocked out two tanks! - Let's hurry. I'm running late. How unfortunate. He left. - Hi, friend. - Hi. - Are we taking off now? To Georgievsk? - Yep. - Listen, friend-- - He won't allow it. Who won't allow it? - The lieutenant. - Do you understand what's going on? I understand perfectly. It's not allowed. It's strategic cargo. - Hay is strategic cargo? - Depends on who it's for. - For horses. Who else? - Depends on what kind of horses. Fine, your hay is strategic! But you've got to understand. I've come from the front. I'm on leave. I've already used up half a day and I only have two. I understand perfectly, but the lieutenant won't. - What kind of man is he? - Him? A beast! Got it? Listen, let's forget about the lieutenant. I'll climb into the car and he won't know anything about it. As if I feel like getting court-martialed for you. Why court-martialed? You set the wagon on fire, and I get court-martialed. - Why on earth would I set it on fire? - How would I know? What do you have in that bag? Maybe something flammable? It's just canned beef. Look. Canned beef? So, you're trying to bribe a guard? - What? Give me that! - What's with you? I was just kidding. What, you can't take a joke? Well, you convinced me. Climb in. Not a sound. Got it? Got it. Where are you going? Let me go! Mama! Let me go, you scoundrel! Let me go! What are you doing? You're crazy! You fool! Leave me alone! What have I ever done to you? Don't come near me! - Are you insane? - If you come near me, you'll find out. - Don't even think about it. Get away from the door. Get away, I tell you! - I won't. What's with you? - What's with you? - Why do you keep screaming? - Don't come near me. - Then get away from the door. I won't. I was right. You're insane. Well, to hell with you. Go ahead and jump! Break your neck! Why should I? We're stopping soon. Open the door. I'm getting off. Keep away from the military transport. Anyone caught will be court-martialed. Hey, citizen, I'm talking to you! Anyone caught will be shot! - There's no point in that. - It's all your fault. I threw my things out because of you. You would have killed yourself. It's none of your

business. Quit pestering me. Pestering you? You jumped into the car yourself, and I'm pestering you? Then why were you hiding in the straw? - You think I was hiding from you? - Who else? From the lieutenant! What lieutenant? The one in charge of the transport. He's a beast. I snuck on the train, too. If they catch me, they'll make me get off. I'll have to wait for a passenger train, or even fly. I'm scared of bigger things than you. I thought you were the lieutenant. I had a terrible fright and got slapped in the face, and it's all my fault. I had everything in my bag: my things, some bread, a skirt. Everything. It's nothing. When you go back, you can find your bag. - You think so? - Of course. Where could it go? It's probably waiting for you on a bridge somewhere right now. This train just keeps going and going. We're pulling in. When you get off, go quickly so nobody sees you. What if I can't find my bag? You know what? Don't get out. I have some food and the car is comfortable. No, I'd better get out. Any chance you'll stay? No. Someone's out there. Yes. Want a bite to eat? Eat? No, thanks. I'm full. If you want any, you're welcome to it. Don't be shy. Look at this salo. - Salo? - Yes. Try some. Well, maybe just a little piece. Like it? Dry rations. I love the wafers too. Remember, before the war? - I lived in a village before the war. - I lived in a city. - Are you mad at me? - For what? Because I hit you. It happens. It made us friends. - Stepanov, do you have the tarpaulin? - No, Gavrilkin has it. Call Gavrilkin. Gavrilkin, do you have the tarpaulin? Please forgive me. I was so foolish. Me, too. I frightened you. You know what? Let's introduce ourselves. Let's. My name is Alexei. And mine is Shura. - Pleased to meet you. - Pleased to meet you. - Where are you going? - Home, on leave. You? Hurry up, Gavrilkin! I'm coming, Comrade Lieutenant. Something's jammed. Hide! Hurry! Here it is, Comrade Lieutenant. - What on earth are you doing? - I'm coming, Comrade Lieutenant. He didn't notice us. Were you scared, Shura? - No. - You're a scaredy-cat. - No. Shura, who are you going to see? I'm on my way to Kupinsk. To see my fianc. He's a pilot. He's in the hospital. He's very badly wounded. Honest! I'm getting off now. Why? Did I offend you? Then why? - Just because. - You think I won't take you to your fianc? - I don't think anything. I'm going out for water. - Heard any news? - Those rotting swine! The battle for Novorossiisk is getting fierce. We'll turn you over to the war tribunal for sneaking on board. Follow me. Follow me, I tell you. - I won't. Hey, stop that. Ah, here's her lovey-dove now. What's going on here? We had an agreement, and you're sneaking civilians aboard? What difference does it make if it's two people instead of one? A big difference. Come on, citizen. She's not going anywhere, got it? Get out of here. What? Who are you to give orders? You've got it made: hay, a girl-- What? Shut up. You think I didn't see? I saw everything. - What did you see? - The two of you, tumbling in the hay. Fine. Attacking a guard while on duty. You know what will happen? - You miserable shit! - From your point of view. A miserable shit from your point of view. From mine, I'm

priceless. Get the hell off this train, both of you. If you don't, I have every right to shoot. So, shoot. We're not scared. You still haven't seen the lieutenant. That's why you're so brave. Enough. We're both a little hot under the collar. Let's talk it out. - I have nothing to say to you. Get out of here, and take your-- I'll give two warning shots and then-- You've really made yourself at home here. What if I give you another can of meat? How about two? It will take much more than that to make up for the insult. You want me to apologize to you? Fine. Give me the canned meat. What's going on here? Comrade Lieutenant, they snuck into the car. I'm taking appropriate measures. Who are they? Private Skvortsov. On leave. Where are you headed? To Georgievsk, Comrade Lieutenant. Here are my papers. I have only two days, and I'm already late. You're a hero. And the girl? Is she with you? - Yes. - No. She lost all of her things... money, bread... so I had to... - All right, all right. - No, really! We-- - Just be careful with fire. - Okay. What's that? Well, Comrade Lieutenant, it's sort of canned meat. Who did you take it from? From them? Give it back immediately. But they gave it to me voluntarily. Voluntarily? Two days under arrest! - For what? - Five days? - But I-- - Repeat the order! - Five days... - How disgraceful. I told you: He's a beast. Now we don't have to be afraid of any beast. Beast! Alyosha, it's so pleasant when you think badly of someone, only to discover that he's good. Yes, that lieutenant is a good man. Very. Do you believe in friendship? Of course I do. On the front, you'd be lost without it. No, I know that. I mean between a boy and a girl. Some girls are even better than boys. I think so, too. But there are some who believe that they can only be in love. Nonsense. I used to be friends with a girl. We were friends and didn't think at all about love. - Maybe you were in love and didn't notice. - With her? No. - Maybe she was in love with you. - She was just a little girl. Our neighbor Zoika. No, love is something different. Alyosha, would you like to have a friend? A true friend, to have your whole life? Me, too! Why do you think I'm traveling? Do you think-- You're doing the right thing, going to him. You're a good girl. - That's not the only reason. - You're a good girl. You're not some sort of floozy. No, Alyosha, you don't know anything. You know what, Alyosha? - What? I'm so thirsty. Aren't you? Yes. - A quick stop? - A quick stop. The evening news, July 27th. Throughout the day, our troops have been fighting in the Voronezh region, and also in the Tsimlyanskaya region. After persistent battles, our troops left the towns of Hovocherkask and Rostov. In other parts of the front, there are no significant changes. Over the past week, from the 19th to the 25th of July, during aerial battles, on airfields... Stop! Stop! Can you take me to Uzlovaya? I missed my train. - Have you heard the news? - Yes. Damn it! I haven't slept for two days. What can you do! Here, crank it. What a truck. We're the same age. My son's on the front. Field Post Office 139. Have you heard of it? No. Don't fret, little fellow. We'll get there in time. - Stay back, soldier! - This is my

train! You're mistaken. Where are you going? - To Georgievsk. - That train left an hour and a half ago. Alyosha! Shura! - Shura, you're still here. - Yes. Here, you forgot this. - Shura, you're brilliant! - It was my fault you didn't get back. - Silly girl! I thought I'd never see you again. Well, I waited. I'm so thirsty. - You still haven't had anything to drink? - No, I was afraid I'd miss you. My little Shura. Well, let's go. - Soon you'll be home. - You, too. Don't worry, Shura. He'll get better. Alyosha, I've never met a fellow quite like you before. Alyosha, who is that handkerchief for? It's a gift for my mother. - Really? The soap, too? - What soap? The soap in your bag. - Let's go. - Where? - I have to give it to someone. - The soap? Yes, I promised. Good thing you reminded me. It's not far--Chekhov Street. Is this Pavlov a friend of yours? No, I don't know him at all. We met by chance. He was on his way to the front. Chekhov Street. - So close. Grandma, where's building 7? Right here. Who are you looking for? - The Pavlovs. They're alive! Are you looking for Lizaveta Petrovna or the old man? - Lizaveta Petrovna. - She now lives on Semyonovskaya Street. And the old man is at the institute, where the people who were bombed out live. - Which is closer? - Semyonovskaya Street. Mitya will take you there. - Grandma, look what I found! - Good. Mitya, take these people to see Lizaveta Petrovna. Mitya, this man is from the front. - He's going to miss his train. Come on. Let's go. - Don't touch my bubbles! - Kid, do the Pavlovs live here? - Lizaveta Petrovna. - Over there. You have to knock. The bell doesn't work. We're looking for Lizaveta Petrovna. Please come in. That's me. You must be-- I'm from the front. I brought you a package. Pavlov must have sent you. Yes. Please come in. Excuse me for just a minute. I'll be right back. Someone's here from the front with a package from Pavlov. What should I do? - Tell the truth. I can't. What's the problem? At least he'll know the truth. - I beg you! - Well, fine. Please excuse me. It's just so unexpected. So, you're from the front? From the front. Your husband sent me. He asked me to give you this. - What is it? - Soap. Oh, soap. Thank you. Maybe you'd like some tea? - No, we have to go. - Why? - I don't have enough time. Tell me. How is he? - Pavlov? He's fine. He's worried about you. Thank you. Don't tell him about what you've seen here. Although maybe... the truth is better. Don't look at me like that. You're still young. Who are you here to see? - We're looking for Pavlov. - Vasilii Yegorovich! It's for me. Sergei sent him! How is he? - Don't worry, everything's fine. Your son sent me. Here, he sent you a little package. - Soap! - He's alive? Of course he's alive! Alive. This means he's alive. Thank you. So this is a present from him. Grandpa, lie down. You're not supposed to-- - Is he wounded? - Not at all. He's perfectly healthy. What's the matter with me? Please sit down. Someone get them a little stool. Here, sit down. Tell me about him. How's he doing there? Well, he's a good fighter. You could even say excellent. Everyone respects him for his courage. He's a brave man. The commander always says we should follow

Pavlov's example. He's a steadfast soldier and a true friend. Everyone in the regiment loves him. Yes, yes. Even as a boy, everyone loved my Sergei. Well, we have to go. Would you like some tea? Thanks very much. We don't have the time. We have to go. - Please excuse us, but he really has to go. I understand. It's war. Tell Sergei that I'm proud of him. Everything's fine. But don't tell him about this. It's all temporary. Better he not worry. And tell him... that Liza, his wife, is working. She sends her regards and is waiting for him. I'll tell him. Let's go, let's go, let's go. Where are you going? This is a war car. - She's with me. - Your wife? - Yes. - No. Work it out first, then drag her on. Citizen, you're not allowed. It's a war car. Was it really so hard for you to say yes? Alyosha, my dear, go on without me. You've already lost half a day because of me. I'll be fine by myself. It's not far from here. Go, Alyosha, go. - Put this on. - Why? Put it on, I said! Hold it. Keep moving! Keep moving! Let's go, let's go! - What's wrong? - Someone stepped on my coat. Well, this is it, Alyosha. Yes. Don't forget me, Shura. Alyosha, don't be angry with me, but I've deceived you. How? I don't have a fianc. I don't have anyone. I'm going to my aunt's. Please don't be angry. I'm so silly, aren't I? What did you do that for? I was scared of you. Are you scared now? The train! Hurry, Alyosha, hurry! Shura, wait! My address! Write to me! To the village of Sosnovka. The village of Sosnovka! Shura! I can't hear you! When I told you I didn't have anyone else, I was admitting that I love you. Why didn't you say anything? You don't love me. Wait, Shura. I have something to tell you. Let me through. Let me off this train. Are you traveling far, comrade? To Sosnovka, just over the bridge. It's about another 10 kilometers. We're from the Ukraine. We fly like birds in autumn, not knowing where we're going. Empty words. We're going to the Urals. Our factory is there. Our sons are there. Is that thunder? - Going home? - Yes. For long? There was more time, but now it's just for a night. My leave ends at dawn. How awful. A whole night at home-- you're very lucky! Do you have a girlfriend? Yes. Only she's not in Sosnovka. I lost her. Save the children! The children! Step aside, soldier. - Get out of the way. - Good-for-nothing. Comrades, I already told you: We're only taking wounded women and children. Everyone else will have to stay behind and wait. A train will be here in exactly two hours. Yes, Grandma, in two hours. Two hours! Have you lost your head? Are you tired of living? Friend! Take me to Sosnovka! - I can't. - It's only 10 kilometers. I told you, I can't. I've come from the front to see my mother. I'll hug her and go right back. And I should go to the slammer because of you? Get off! To hell with you! You pig! Girls, that was Katerina's boy, Alyosha! - Katerina's in the fields. - Go get her--quickly! You're back, Alexei Nikolaevich. Zoika. I didn't recognize you. Do you know where my mother is? - In the fields. Have a seat and rest. Have a bit of tea until Aunt Katya gets here. I can't. I have to go now. A car is waiting for me. - Now? - Now. Right this minute. But what about Aunt Katya? - She's not here.

Let's go to the fields. - They'll send me to jail! - It's on the way. - It's right nearby. They're gonna get me for this anyway. Let's go! Alyosha! You've come back, my son. You've made your mother happy. I've been waiting, thinking about everything-- - How are you, Mama? - Like everyone else. I'm going through the war. Work is hard. There are no men--all women. My dear, you've come back. Alyosha, have you seen Ivan? - When is the war going to end? - Leave him alone. He just got back. Let's go, Alyosha. You can have a bite to eat and rest. - Wait, Mama. I'm in a rush. - Where are you rushing to? I have to travel on. I'm just stopping by for a minute. What do you mean, son? - I don't understand. - I have to go. Right now. Let's just talk for a moment. I wanted to fix the roof. You've grown. You're so thin. It's just from the trip. You're not sick, are you, Mama? I don't have time to be sick. Are you shaving already? Do you smoke? I have to go. I won't let you! - Forgive me, Mama. - For what, Alyosha? Forgive me, Mama. What's wrong, Alyosha? I'll survive. I'll get by. I'll wait for you to come home. I didn't wait for your father, but I'll wait for you. Alyosha! Have you seen Ivan on the front? When is the war going to end? I'll be back, Mama! That's all we have to tell you about our friend Alyosha Skvortsov. He could have become a remarkable man. He could have become a builder or beautified the land with gardens. He was, and in our memory will forever remain, a soldier... a Russian soldier.