

TELEGIN: It seems, Marina Timofeyevna, that they're not predestined to be living here. (Pause.) False predestination.

MARINA: . . . so much the better.

TELEGIN: . . . a scene worthy of an artist's pen.

MARINA: My old eyes cannot stand it. (Pauses, then sighs.) Well, we'll live again. As we used to. I know we will. In the old ways. With tea at seven and dinner twelve and evening we sit down to supper. As we always did. As Christians. (Pause.) I haven't tasted simple human noodles in a long, long time, black with sin as I am . . .

TELEGIN: Yes. Quite a while since we've had noodles. That's true. (Pause.) Quite a long while. This morning, Marina Timofeyevna, this morning, I'm walking through the village, a *shopkeeper* shouts after me, "Hey, Freeloader! Hey, Deadbeat . . ." (Pause.) And how did I feel then?

MARINA: Don't pay no mind to them, my darling, for we're all freeloaders in the sight of God. Living on nothing. Sonya, Ivan Petrovich . . . you, all of us. No one sits about doing not one blessed thing, the while the whole world toils. Where's Sonya?

TELEGIN: Sonya is in the garden with the doctor. Still looking for Ivan Petrovich.

MARINA: . . . are they . . . ?

TELEGIN: Afraid that he might lay hands on himself.

MARINA: And where's his pistol?

TELEGIN: Hid it in the root cellar.

MARINA: *Mercy* . . .

(IVAN PETROVICH and ASTROV enter from the yard.)

IVAN PETROVICH: Leave me alone. (To MARINA and TELEGIN:) Will you leave me, please? Will you leave me . . . ? If only for an hour? Oh. Please! Will you spare me this Bodyguard . . . ?

TELEGIN: Of course, Vanya.

MARINA: The Gander, "Ga Ga Ga . . . !"

IVAN PETROVICH: Leave me.

ASTROV: For my part, with the greatest joy. Ought to have left a decent time ago. As I said, though, I *will* not do so, till you return what you took from me.

IVAN PETROVICH: I took nothing from you.

ASTROV: I'm speaking to you in all frankness; do not detain me. I should have left *long* ago.

IVAN PETROVICH: I took nothing from you. What are you saying . . . ?

ASTROV: Eh? Alright. Eh? If you wish, I'll sit here for awhile and, then, if you *oblige* me, *subdue* you and *bind* you and *search* you. My word on it.

IVAN PETROVICH: As you wish. And the *worst* of it, the Fool of the World, is to've shot *twice* and *twice missed* him. Which I cannot forgive myself. *Never*.

ASTROV: If the mood for shooting struck you, why not shoot *yourself* . . . ?

IVAN PETROVICH: Myself. Mm. Hmm. *I'll* tell you an oddity: A man, myself, attempts murder, and do they

arrest him? No. Why? *Obviously*, as I am regarded as insane. Ha. I am thought mad. But, a man who cloaks his heartlessness, his cruelty, and his, his *swinishness*, if you will, a man, hides behind a veil of false *achievement*, this wizard, this *genius*, this *exploiter*, *he* is not mad . . . A young woman who *marries* this old man, and then, in the sight of the world, betrays him. *I* saw what you did . . .

ASTROV: That's right. I did, and you can go to hell.

IVAN PETROVICH: . . . and you. *You* are not mad. It is the *earth* which is made to support you.

ASTROV: Quite poetic.

IVAN PETROVICH: Yes, well, I'm a madman, and I'm not responsible.

ASTROV: Mm.

IVAN PETROVICH: I can say what I wish.

ASTROV: *That's* a lovely trick.

IVAN PETROVICH: *Is* it . . . ?

ASTROV: You're not *mad*, you know . . .

IVAN PETROVICH: What am I?

ASTROV: You're a fool. Time I thought, I used to think the foolish, the deranged, the irresponsible, are sick. They are not sick. They're normal. You are quite well.

IVAN PETROVICH: Oh, God, I am so ashamed. *(Pause.)* You cannot know the shame I feel. God. How can I stand it? How can I live with it? Tell me. What am I to do?

ASTROV: Nothing.

IVAN PETROVICH: Give me something to take. Oh *God*. I am *forty-seven years of age*. If I live till *sixty* I will have to live *thirteen more years!* How can I live through that? What can I do? I've nothing to do with those years. You see? You see? If I could start *anew*. If I could live the rest of my life out in some different *way*, if that were possible. As people do, to *wake*, to waken each day and say, "this is a new day." If I could *lose* the past . . . how could I do that? Tell me. How could a man start anew? And begin a new life?

ASTROV: Oh, will you *shut up?* Will you go away! What are you *plaguing* me with? To start anew!?! We can not "start anew." You or I. This or that, that we're living, you know, is our *life*.

*(Pause.)*

IVAN PETROVICH: It is?

ASTROV: Quite.

*(Pause.)*

IVAN PETROVICH: Give me something. *(Points to his heart.)* I have a pain. Here.

ASTROV: Oh *stop* it! *(Pause.)* Listen to me. People who live after us. In one hundred or in two hundred years, you know? Do you know what they'll feel? They will despise us for our stupid and insipid lives. And perhaps they will know how to be happy. We, however, but for you and I, there is but one hope. And that hope is this. That when we are dead, lying in our graves, visions may visit us, and that they are of peace. Oh, yes. My

friend, we've said, in this district we find but two decent cultivated men. And we spoke of ourselves. But the last decade has undone us. Life has sucked us in—this foul, Philistine life—and has corrupted us. What a shocking surprise; we've turned out like the rest! But we have changed the subject. Give me what you took.

IVAN PETROVICH: I took nothing.

ASTROV: You took a large bottle of morphia from my medicine case. If you are set on killing yourself, take your gun and go off in the woods. But give me back the drug, or people will say I gave it to you. It's enough I'll have to pronounce you dead and cut you open. Can you think I'll enjoy that . . . ?

IVAN PETROVICH: Leave me alone.

(Enter SOFYA.)

ASTROV: Sofya Alexandrovna, your uncle has filched a vial of morphia from me and he won't give it back.

SOFYA: Is this true?

ASTROV: It *is* true. Please tell him it's rather *dorody* of him, if nothing else, and that I must leave and must have it returned.

SOFYA: Give it back, Uncle. Why must you frighten us? Give it back. (Pause.) Uncle Vanya, am I more happy than you? (Pause.) Am I? Do I go about despairing? I bear my life, and *shall* till my life comes to its natural end. And so must you. Please. Give it back. Give it up to me. Sweet Uncle. Give it back. Please. Sweet one. Please. Be kind. You, who are so kind. Take pity on me. Give the bottle back. (Pause.) Uncle . . .

IVAN PETROVICH: Oh, take the thing. Here. (Hands the bottle to her.) I need work. I must work, do you understand me . . . ?

SOFYA: Yes.

IVAN PETROVICH: I must turn my hand to something. Now. And I can't . . .

SOFYA: Yes. I understand. As soon as they've gone . . . We'll . . .

IVAN PETROVICH: Yes . . .

SOFYA: We'll sit down and . . .

IVAN PETROVICH: Yes. Yes . . .

SOFYA: We'll. We'll . . .

ASTROV: Thank you. Thank you all, and, now, I'm on my way.

YELENA ANDREYEVNA (entering): Ivan Petrovich. Are you here? Please go to Alexandr. He has something he wishes to say.

SOFYA: Go, Uncle Vanya. Come, we'll go in together. You and Papa *have* to make it up. You know that.

(SOFYA and IVAN PETROVICH exit.)

YELENA ANDREYEVNA: I'm leaving. (Pause.) Goodbye.

ASTROV: Leaving. Already?

YELENA ANDREYEVNA: The horses are here.

ASTROV: Goodbye.

YELENA ANDREYEVNA: Today you promised me you'd move away from here.

ASTROV: Yes. I remember. I will. Presently. (*Pause.*) You're frightened.

YELENA ANDREYEVNA: Yes.

ASTROV: Then stay. (*Pause.*) Stay. Stay. And tomorrow at the orchard . . .

YELENA ANDREYEVNA: No, we're going. Which is the reason I can look at you. One thing, I should like you, when you think of me, to think well of me. If you can. (*Pause.*) I should like you to respect me.

ASTROV: I beg you to stay. I beg you to stay. Admit it, there's not one thing in the world for you to go to. Sooner or later you shall have to face the fact. In Kharkov, in Kursk, *somewhere*. Why not here? Right now. And just throw it up and begin again. Eh? *Right now*. Eh? In *such* a lovely autumn. We have *orchards* . . . we have run-down country *bomes*, right out of Turgenev . . .

YELENA ANDREYEVNA: Oh, you're funny. You're a funny man.

ASTROV: Am I . . . ?

YELENA ANDREYEVNA: And I'm angry with you.

ASTROV: . . . I'm sorry.

YELENA ANDREYEVNA: But I'll think of you with pleasure.

ASTROV: Why is that?

YELENA ANDREYEVNA: You're an Original. We'll never see each other again. I'll tell you—why hide it?—I was

tempted by you. (*Pause.*) I was taken with you. (*Pause.*) So, good. Shake hands and part friends. Please. Don't think ill of me.

(*They shake hands.*)

ASTROV: Yes. Goodbye, then. Mmmm . . . You know, I'll tell you something. This is strange. You see, I'm sure you *are* a good, warmhearted person. But, yet, what is there in your nature? Something. Here you come, you and your husband, and industrious people drop their work, neglect their duties, and waste whole *months* ministering to you, *talking* of you, buzzing around you, worrying for your husband's *gout* . . . your *wishes* for this and the other thing . . . And all become entangled in your idleness. How *is* that . . . ? I was infected. One whole month, I haven't done a thing. People are falling ill, the peasants graze their cattle in my newly planted trees, all that I cared about's decaying. Your husband and you. Where you *light (pause)* you seem to spread decay. I overstated myself. (*Pause.*) Yet . . . And, and, and, yet had you *stayed*, I feel something . . . something quite *terrible* . . . for me, for you, too, would have come to pass. *You* know it, *yes* you do. *You* know it, too. Ha! So. *Finita la commedia!* Go. And goodbye.

(YELENA ANDREYEVNA takes a pencil from Astrov's pocket.)

YELENA ANDREYEVNA: I take this pencil as a memento.

ASTROV: Isn't that something? You come, we *meet*, suddenly you're gone and that's the way the world is, it

seems. Do this, though, no one here, before Vanya comes back, with some Bouquet for you. A kiss. One kiss. Yes? For goodbye. Yes? (*Kisses her.*) Alright then, *that's* done. That's done, and all's well.

YELENA ANDREYEVNA: I wish you all the best.

ASTROV: As I wish you.

YELENA ANDREYEVNA: Whatever . . . whatever . . . (*Pause.*) Whatever . . . ah! For *once* in my life . . . (*Embraces him.*) I must go.

ASTROV: Well, go quickly. Your horses are ready. You had better go.

YELENA ANDREYEVNA (*bears noises offstage*): They're coming. I think . . . yes.

ASTROV: So be it.

(*They listen. Enter SEREBRYAKOV, IVAN PETROVICH, MARIYA VASILYEVNA, TELEGIN, and SOFYA.*)

SEREBRYAKOV: Let bygones be bygones. I have lived through so much in these last four hours. I have *thought* so much. I feel I could compose a *treatise* for *posterity* on how one ought to live. I most *gladly* accept your apology, and I ask of you to accept mine as well. Farewell.

IVAN PETROVICH: You shall receive the same amount that you received before. Sent without fail and regularly. *Everything* shall be just as it was before.

(YELENA ANDREYEVNA *embraces* SONYA.)

SEREBRYAKOV: Maman . . .

MARIYA VASILYEVNA: Alexandr, please sit for another photograph and have it sent to me.

SEREBRYAKOV: I will.

MARIYA VASILYEVNA: How *precious* you are to me . . .

TELEGIN: Goodbye, your Ex'lency. Farewell. Don't forget us.

SEREBRYAKOV: Farewell. Farewell all . . . (*Shakes hands with ASTROV.*) I thank you. For the pleasure of your company. I possess nothing but the greatest respect for *you*, for your way of *thinking*, for your *impulses* and your enthusiasm. But I pray you, let an old man reason his farewell with one small observation. It's not enough to *think*; one must *work*. Do you understand me . . . ? Above all, the greatest joy is to do some real *work* in the work world. Ladies and Gentlemen: All the best . . . I wish you all the *best* . . . and goodbye.

(SEREBRYAKOV *exits, followed by* MARIYA VASILYEVNA *and* SONYA.)

IVAN PETROVICH: Farewell. (*To* YELENA ANDREYEVNA:) Forgive me . . . (*Kisses her hand.*) We'll never meet again.

YELENA ANDREYEVNA: Farewell, my dear, farewell. (*Kisses him on the head and exits.*)

ASTROV: Waffles.

TELEGIN: Yes!

ASTROV: While they're at it, tell them, bring my horses, too.

TELEGIN: My friend, I will. (*Exits.*)