

THRIE SISTERS

ACT 1

A drawing-room in the Prozorov's house; it is separated from a large ballroom at the back by a row of columns. It is midday; there is cheerful sunshine outside. In the ballroom the table is being laid for lunch. Olga, wearing the regulation dark-blue dress of a secondary schoolmistress, is correcting her pupil's work, standing or walking about as she does so. MASHA, in a black dress is sitting reading a book, her hat on her lap. IRENA, in white, stands lost in thought.

OLGA: It is juist a year the-day that Faither dee'd, is it no? This verra day, the fift o Mey, -- yeir Saint's day, Irena. Ah mynd it wes gey cauld an the snaw wes cummin down. Ah felt than Ah wad never git ower his daith; an you haed faintit an war lyin still, lyke ye war deid. An nou --- a year's gaen by, an we can speak about it easy lyke. An ye'r weirin whyte an lookin fair bonnie sae ye ir!

(A clock strikes twelve)

The clock struck twal than anaw. *(A pause)*
Ah mynd whan Faither wes be-in taen til the ceimeterie, the war a military band, an a salute wi rifles be-in fyred. But the warnie monie fowk on the glaur at the lair syde. Mynd ye, it wes fair rainin down, rainin an snawin.

IRENA: Dae we need ti bring up aw thir loured maimories?

(Baron TOOZENBACH, CHEBUTYKIN and SOLIONY appear behind the columns by the table in the ballroom)

OLGA: It's that warm the-day, we can keep the wundae wyde open, an yit the'r nae leafs ti be seen on the birks ootby. Faither wes made a brigadier eleivin year syne, an than he left Moscow an taen us wi him. Ah mynd weill hou awthing in Moscow wes in blossom bi this tyme; awthing wes droukit in sunlicht an it wes warm lyke. Eleivin year haes gaen by, yit Ah mynd aw about it, lyke we haed left onlie yestrein. Whan Ah waukent up this mornin, an saw the sunlicht cum fluidin in, aw this spring sunshyne, Ah felt that blyth! Ah haed sic a weiriein ti git back ti Moscow!

CHEBUTYKIN (to TOOZENBACH): The Deil ye hae---!

TOOZENBACH: It's haivers, Ah wad agree.

(MASHA, absorbed in her book, whistles a tune under her breath)

OLGA: Masha, you stap that whustle, whustlin! Hou can ye daur? *(A pause)*
Ah suppose Ah'm gittin this sair heid, kis Ah hae ti gang ti the skuil
everie day an cairrie on teachin even on, inti the forenicht. Honestly,
Ah feel as if aw ma strenth an youtheid war drainin oot me, drap bi
drap, day eftir day. Day eftir day, eftir day, aw thae fower year Ah've
been dargin at the skuil. The'r juist ae thing Ah lang for, an it seems ti
growe strangir an strangir.....

IRENA: Gin we coud juist gae back ti Moscow! Sell the houss, feinish wi oor
lyfe here, an gae back ti Moscow.

OLGA: Ay, Moscow---! As suin as we possibly can.

(CHEBUTYKIN and TOOZENBACH laugh)

IRENA: Ah daursay Andrew wul suin land a professorship. He's no lyke ti
byde on leevin here. The onlie problem is oor puir Masha.

OLGA: Howt, Masha can cum an stey the haill simmer wi us everie year we ir
in Moscow!

(MASHA whistles a tune under her breath)

IRENA: Awthing wul wurk oot, wi God's help.

(Looking through the window) Whit grand weather it is the-day.
Ah juist dinna ken hou Ah feel sae blyth in ma hert the-day. Ah
myndit this mornin that it wes ma ain Saint's day an aw at aince, Ah
felt sae happy, an Ah thocht o the tyme we war bairns, an oor mither
wes ay leevin. An syne, sic wunnerfu thochts cam inti ma heid --- sic
braw lyfie thochts.

OLGA: Ye'r sae luivlie the-day, Irena. Ye div look verra fetchin. Masha looks
bonnie, tae. Andrey micht be weill-faured, but he's growne that stoot
this whyle back. It disna suit him at aw. As for me, Ah've juist aged
an growne thinner. Ah suppose it's throu be-in fasht wi the lassies at
the skuil. But the-day, Ah'm at hame, an ma sair heid's awa, an Ah
feel a sicht yungir nor Ah did yestrein. Eftir aw – Ah'm onlie twantie-
echt.... Ah daursay awthing God wulls maun be richt an guid, but Ah
canna help thinkin whyles, that gin Ah'd gotten mairrit an bidden at
hame, it wad hae been a better thing for me in the lang rin. *(A pause)*
Ah wad hae been awfu fond o ma man, sae Ah wad..

TOOZENBACH: *(To SOLIONY)* Ye speak sic a lot o blethers, Ah'm tired listenin
til ye. *(He comes into the drawing room)*

Ah forgot ti tell ye: Vershinin, oor new battery commander, is
cummin ti see ye the-day. *(Sits down by the piano)*

OLGA: Ah'm verra gled ti hear it.

IRENA: Is he auld lyke?

TOOZENBACH: Na, no verra---! Forty, forty-five at the maist. (*Plays quietly*)
He seems a nice lyke fallae. He's nae fuil, for shuir.
His ae faut is he speaks ower mukkil. He speaks juist the aince an
that's aw the tyme.

IRENA: Is he interestin?

TOOZENBACH: He's awricht, onlie he haes a wyfe, a guidmither an twa wee
lassies. Whit's mair, she's his saicont wyfe. He gauns aboot veisitin
awbodie an tells thaim he hae a wyfe an twa wee lassies. He'l tell
YOU aboot it tae, Ah'm shuir o that. His guidwyfe seems ti be a bit
saft i the heid. She weirs a lang plet lyke a quyne. She is aye
philosophisin an speakin in a ferr-back lyke wey wi bouls in his mou,
an forby she aften tries ti commit suicide, seeminlie ti worrie hir man.
Ah richt heid case---
Ah wad hae run awa frae a wyfe lyke that years syne, but he juist pits
up wi it, an girns on aboot it.

(SOLIONY enters the drawing room with CHEBUTYKIN)

SOLIONY: Nou Ah can lift nae mair nor the saxtie pund wi the ae haund, but wi
twa, Ah can lift twa hunder pund, or even twa hunder an fortie. Sae
Ah wad say that twa men ir no juist twyce as strang as yin, but thrie
tymes as strang; if no mair.

CHEBUTYKIN: (*reading the paper as he comes in*) Here a recipe for fawin-oot
hair..... twa unce o naphthalene, a hauf bottle o methylated
speirit....dissolve an apply yince a day.....(*Writes it down in notebook*)
Ah maun mak a note o it.
(*to SOLIONY*) Weill, as Ah wes tryin ti explain ti ye, ye cork the
bottle an shove a gless tube throu the cork.
Syne ye tak a tait o ordnarie pouthert alum, an

IRENA: Ivan Romanych, ma dear Romanych---!

CHEBUTYKIN: Whit is't, ma bairn, whit is't!

IRENA: Tell me, hou is it Ah'm sae happy the-day? It's lyke Ah war sailin
alang in a boat wi gret whyte sails, an abuin me, the wyde blue lift, an
in the lift, gret mukkil burds kelterin aboot.

CHEBUTYKIN: (*kissing both her hands tenderly*) Ma wee whyte burdikin--!

IRENA: Ye ken, whan Ah waukent up this mornin, an eftir Ah haed gotten up an washt masell, aw at aince Ah felt as gin awthing in the warld becam clear ti me, an Ah kent the wey Ah soud leeve.

Ah ken it aw nou, ma dear Ivan Romanych. Man maun wurk bi the sweit o his brou, whitever cless he belongs, an that is his haill purpose in lyfe --- that is whaur his happiness an content can be fund. Ai, it maun be graund ti be a wurkman, rysin wi the sun an brekkin stanes bi the roadsyde – or a hird –or a skuilmaister lairnin the bairns – or an ingine dryver on the railway. Heivins, it’s better ti be a bullik or horse, an wurk, nor the kynd o yung wumman that waukens at twal, an drinks hir coffee in bed an syne taks twa oors dinkin hirsellTerrible----!

Dae ye ken hou ye grein whyles for a lang cauld drink in the het wather? Weill that is the wey Ah lang for wark ti dae. An gin Ah dinna git up aerlie frae this day on an really wurk, ye can refuse ti be freins wi me onie mair, Ivan Romanych.

CHEBUTYKIN: (*tenderly*) Sae Ah wul---

TOOZENBACH: Aw this greinin for wark---! Crivvens! Hou weill Ah can unnerstaun it! Ah’ve never duin a straik o wark aw ma leevin days. Ah wes born in St Petersburg, an unfreinlie, idleset ceitie---born until a faimlie whaur wark an worrie war never kent. Ah mynd a sairvant pouin aff ma buits for me whan Ah cam hame frae the cadet skuil..... Ah girmed at the wey he did it, an ma mither lookit on in admiration.

Ah wes weill gairdit frae wark, Ah can tell ye. But the tyme haes cum. The’r a mukkil thunner clood blawin ower us. A mukkil blatter is on its road for ti freshen us up. Ay, it’s cummin for shuir. It’s gey near us areddies, an an it’s gaun ti blaw awa aw this idleset an dowfness, an prejudice agin wark. Ah’m gaun ti wurk, an in twantie-five year’s tyme, everie man an wumman wul be wurkin. Ilkane o us---!

CHEBUTYKIN: Ah’m no gaun ti wurk!

TOOZENBACH: You dinna coont.

SOLIONY: In twenty-five year’s tyme ye winna be alive, thenk guidness. In a year or twa, ye’l dee frae a straik---or Ah’l loss ma temper at ye an pit a bullet in yeir heid, ma guid fallae.

(*Takes a scent bottle and sprinkles the scent over his chest and hands*)

CHEBUTYKIN: (*Laughs*) It’s true aneuch Ah hae never duin onie wark. No a haund’s turn sen a left the university--- Ah haena even read a book--- juist the papers.

(*Takes another newspaper out of his pocket*)

CHEBUTYKIN: For instance, Ah ken frae the paper, the war a bodie cawed Dobrolibov, but whit he wrate about Ah haena the faintest notion.....Guid alane kens...

(Someone knocks on the floor from downstairs)

Thare---! They'r cryin me ti cum doun; the'r sumbodie cum ti see me. Ah'l be back in a meinit.....

(Goes out hurriedly, stroking his beard)

IRENA: He's up ti yin o his little games.

TOOZENBACH: Ay, he lookit gey sleikit as he gae oot. He's shuirly gaun ti gie ye a wee present! That wul be it!

IRENA: Ai, Ah div hate that kynd o thing....

OLGA: Ay, is it no awfu? He's aye daein sumthing silly.

MASHA: *(Gets up as she sings under her breath)* 'A green oak grows by a curving shore, and round that oak hangs a golden chain....'

OLGA: Ye'r dowie, the-day, Masha.

(Masha puts on her hat, singing)

Whaur ye gaun til?

MASHA: Hame--! Ah'm gaun hame!

IRENA: Whit a daftlyke thing ti dae!

TOOZENBACH: Whit--! Gaun awa frae yeir sister's pairtie?

MASHA: Whit dis it maitter? Ah'l be back again this forenicht.
Fareweill ma darlin! *(Kisses IRENA)*
An aince mair, Ah wush you aw the happiness in the warld.
In the auld days, whan oor faither wes alive, we uised ti hae thertie or fortie officers at oor pairties. Whit cheerie pairties we haed!
An the-day---whit hae we got the-day? A man an a hauf, an the hous is quaet as a grave. Ah'm awa hame. Ah'm fair depressed the-day, sae Ah im! Ah'm dowie, sae never YOU heed me!
(Laughs through her tears)
We'l hae a crack later, but fareweill for nou, ma dear.
Ah'l gang sumwhaur or ither, oot the road.

IRENA: *(displeased)* Ye ir the leimit!

OLGA: *(tearfully)* Ah unnerstaun ye Masha. Ah unnerstaun.

SOLIONY: Gin a man sterts philosophisin, ye caw that philosophy, or mebbe juist
sophistry, but if a wumman sterts philosophisin, ye cry that....whit
wad ye cry it nou? Ask me anither!

MASHA: Whit ir ye on about? **You** ir a richt haiveril.

SOLIONY: Naething---!
 ‘‘He had no time, ‘Oh, oh’
 Before that bear had struck him low’’

MASHA: *(To OLGA, crossly)* An **you** stap that sneivellin!

(Enter ANFISA and FERAPONT, the latter carrying a large cake)

ANFISA: Cum alang ma dearie, this road. Cum awa in, yeir buits is clean
aneuch.
(to IRENA) A braw cake frae Protopopov, at the Coouncil Office.

IRENA: Thank ye! You tell him Ah’m mukkil behauden til him!

(Takes the cake)

FERAPONT: Eh---? Whit’s that?

IRENA: *(louder)* TELL HIM AH SEND MA THENKS!

OLGA: Nanny, wul ye gie him a bit cake?
Alang ye gae, Ferapont, they’l gie ye a bit cake!

FERAPONT: Whit’s that?

ANFISA: Juist you cum alang wi me, Ferapont Spiridonych ma dearie!
Cum alang!

(Goes out with FERAPONT)

MASHA: Ah dinna lyke that Protopopov chiel, Mihail Potopych, or Ivanych, or
whatever it is. It is best no ti invyte him here, Ah’m thinkin.

IRENA: Ah haena invytit him.

MASHA: Thank guidness for that.

*(Enter CHEBUTYKIN, followed by a soldier carrying a silver
samovar. Murmers of astonishment and displeasure)*

OLGA: *(Covering her face with her hands)* A SAMOVAR---!
But this is awfu!

(Goes through to the ballroom and stands by the table)

IRENA: Ma dear Ivan Romanych, whit ir ye thinkin about?

TOOZENBACH: *(Laughs)* Did Ah no tell ye?

MASHA: Ivan Romanych, ye really soud be ashamed o yeirsell!

CHEBUTYKIN: Ma dear sweet lassie, Ah hae naebodie in the warld but you.
Ye'r dearer ti me nor oniething in aw the warld. Ah'm verra near
saxtie year auld. Ah'm an auld man – gey ferr doun the brae nou – a
lanesum auld man o nae importance at aw. The ae thing that's warth
oniething ti me is ma feelins for ye, an it warna for you, Ah'm shuir
Ah wad hae been deid an in ma lair, langsyne.

(to IRENA) Ma dear, ma sweet wee lass, hae Ah no kent ye sen the
verra day ye war born? Did Ah no cairrie ye about an daunil ye in ma
airms?an yeir mither an me no aye guid freins?

IRENA: But whit did ye git sic expensive presents for?

CHEBUTYKIN: *(tearfully and crossly)* Expensive presents---?
Howt, awa wi ye---!
(to the orderly) Pit you the samovar doun ower thare!
(Mimics IRENA) Expensive presents----!

(The orderly takes the samovar to the ballroom)

ANFISA: *(Crosses the drawing room)* Ma dears, the'r a strange Colonel juist
arrived. He's taen aff his tapcoat an he's cummin up nou.
Irenuska, you be nice an polite til him, wul ye no?
(in the doorway) An it's tyme we haed oor denner, tae.
Ai Mercie me!

TOOZENBACH: It wul be Vershinin, Ah daursay.

(Enter Vershinin)

Lieutenant-Colonel Vershinin!

VERSHININ: *(to MASHA and IRENA)* Allou me ti introduce masell—
Lieutenant-Colonel Vershinin. Ah'm that gled, that verra gled for ti be
here at lest. Hou ye hae aw chynged!
Ai Michtie, hou ye hae chynged!

IRENA: Please, sit yeirsell doun, Sir! We'r unco pleased ti see ye, Ah'm shuir.

VERSHININ: (*cheerfully*) Ah'm that gled ti see ye, that gled! But the war the thrie o ye, war the no? Thrie sisters--- Ah mynd the war thrie little lassies. Oh ay, Ah saw thaim masell. Ah mynd thaim weill. Hou tyme flees! Ai, mercie, hou it flees!

TOOZENBACH: Alexandr Ignatyevicvh cums frae Moscow.

IRENA: Frae Moscow, is it? Ye cum frae Moscow?

VERSHININ: Ay, frae Moscow it is. Yeir faither wes a battery commander thare, an Ah wes an officer in the same brigade.

(*to MASHA*) Ah seem ti ken **your** face a wee bit.

MASHA: Ah dinna mynd **you** at aw.

IRENA: Olia, Olia! (*Calls towards the ballroom*) Olia, cum ben the houss!

(*OLGA enters from the ballroom*)

It seems that Lieutenant-Colonel Vershinin cums frae Moscow.

VERSHININ: **You** maun be Olga Serghyeevna, the auldest yin.....
An **you** wul be Maria....an ye ir IRENA, the yungest yin.

OLGA: Ye cum frae Moscow?

VERSHININ: Ay, Ah studied in Moscow an listit thare. Ah bade thare for a guid lang whyle, but syne Ah wes pitten in chairge o a battery here---sae Ah flittit oot here, ye see. Ah dinna richt mynd ye, ye ken. Ah juist mynd the war thrie sisters. Ah div mynd yeir faither tho, Ah **wul** say. Ah mynd him verra weill. Aw Ah need ti dae is shut ma een an Ah can see him staunin thare as gin he wes aye leevin.
Here, Ah uised ti veisit ye in Moscow.

OLGA: Ah thocht Ah myndit awbodie an yit.....

VERSHININ: Ma Christian names ir Alexandr Ignatyevich.

IRENA: Alexandr Ignatyevich, an ye cum frae Moscow!
Weill, whitna surprise!

OLGA: We'r gaun ti leeve thare, ye ken.

IRENA: We howp ti be thare bi the Back End. It's oor hame toun, we war born thare.....in Staraya Basmannya Street.

(*Both laugh happily*)

MASHA: Fancy meeting in wi sumbodie frae the same toun sae unexpekkit lyke!
(eagerly) Ah mynd nou. Div ye mynd, Olga, the war sumbodie they uised ti caw, 'the luivseik Major'? Ye wad be a Lieutenant then, war ye no, an ye war in luiv wi sumbodie or ither, an awbodie uised ti bather ye aboot it! They cawed ye Major for sum reason or ither, tho ye warn a richt Major at aw.

VERSHININ: *(Laughs)* That's it, that's it....
 'The luivseik Major', that's whit they cawed me.

MASHA: In thae days, ye onlie haed a mustache.... Michtie me, ye look a sicht aulder nou! *(tearfully)* That mukkil aulder---!

VERSHININ: Ay, Ah wes still a yung man in the days whan they cryit me, 'the luivseik Major'. Ah wes in luiv then, richt aneuch. It's different nou,

OLGA: But ye haena a singil gray hair on yeir heid.
 Ye've aged lyke, but ye'r shuirlie no an auld man.

VERSHININ: For aw, Ah'm turnt fortie-twa. Is it lang sen ye left Moscow?

IRENA: Eleivin year. Nou whit ir ye greitin for, Masha, ye daft kipper?
(tearfully) Ye'l gar me greit anaw.

MASHA: Ah'm no greitin. Whit wes the street ye bade in?

VERSHININ: In the Staraya Basmannaya.

OLGA: We did---we bade thare tae!

VERSHININ: At ae tyme, Ah leaved in the Niemietzjkaya Street. Ah uised ti walk frae thare til the Krasny Berricks, an Ah mynd a dreich brig A haed aye ti cross. Ah uised ti hear the soond o the wattir rushin ablo it. Ah mynd hou lanesum an dowie Ah felt thare. *(a pause)*
 But whit a braw braid river ye hae here! It's a marvellous river.

OLGA: Ay, but this is a cauldriif place. It's cauld here, an the'r an awfu mosquitoes here.

VERSHININ: Is that sae? Ah wad hae thocht ye haed a guid climate here, a rael Russian climate: forest, river..... bonnie birks anaw
 The dear shy birks---Ah loue thaim mair nor onie ither tree.
 It's fyne leevin here. But the'r ae unco thing; the station is fullie fifteen myle frae the toun. An naebodie kens whit for.

SOLIONY: Ah ken hou that is. *(Everybody looks at him)*
 Kis gin the station wes nearer it wadna be sae ferr awa, an as it is sae ferr awa, it canna be nearer.

(an awkward silence)

TOOZENBACH: Ye fairlie lyke yeir little joke, Vassily Vassilich.

OLGA: Ah'm shuir Ah ken ye nou. Ah ken Ah dae.

VERSHININ: Ah kent yeir mither.

CHEBUTYKIN: She wes a guid weill-daein wumman, God bliss hir maimorie!

IRENA: Mammie wes beirit in Moscow.

OLGA: At the convent o Novo-Dievichye.

MASHA: Ye ken, Ah'm even stertin ti forget whit she lookit lyke.
Ah daursay fowk wul forget aw about us in the same wey, yae day.
Ah dout we'l be forgotten awthegither.

VERSHININ: Ay, we'l aw be forgotten foraye. That is oor weird, an the'r naething we can dae about it. An aw the things that seems serious, important an ful o meanin til us nou, wul be forgotten yae day --- or oniewey, they winna seem important onie mair.

(a pause)

VERSHININ: It's queer ti think that we canna tell whit wul be seen as gret an important in future an whit wul be regairdit as fouterie an haivers. Did the gret discoveries o Copernicus—or a Columbus, gin ye lyke, no kyth as uissless ti begin wi? Whyles a whein blethers wruten bi sum dottilt auld fuil wes seen as a revelation or a gret truth!" It nicht even cum ti pass that in tyme ti cum, the lyfe we leeve the-day wul seem orra an stuipit, an no even clean aither, an mebbe even wicked.

TOOZENBACH: Wha can tell? It's juist as lyklike that generations ti cum wul think that we leaved oor lyves on a hie plane an mynd us wi respek. Eftir awe, we dinna hae tortures an public executions an invasions an siclyke, tho the'r aye a fek o puirtith an sufferin.

SOLIONY: *(In a high-pitched voice as if calling chickens)* Chouk, chouk. Couk!
The'r naething oor guid Baron lykes as mukkil as a nice bit o hamespun philosophisin.

TOOZENBACH: Vassily Vassilich, wul **you** kyndlie leave iz alane?
(Moves to another chair)
This is becummin richt wearisum.

SOLIONY: *(as before)* Chouk, chouk, chouk!

TOOZENBACH: *(to VERSHININ)* The sufferin we see aroond us – an the’r mukkil o it – proves in itsell that the society we belang haes at least wun til a level o moralitie that is heicher....

VERSHININ: Ay, ay, richt aneuch.

CHEBUTYKIN: Ye said the-nou that oor age wul be cawed gret, but fowk ir wee an shargert aw the same..... *(he gets up)*
Juist look hou smaw an shilpit Ah im!

(A violin is played off stage)

MASHA: That’s Andrey on his fiddle; he’s oor brither ye ken.

IRENA: We hae quite a clivver brither – we’r fair expekkin him ti be a professor. Faither wes a military man, but Andrey hae chuisen an academic career.

OLGA: We’ve been funnin wi him the-day. We think he haes fawn in luiv, a wee bit.

IRENA: Wi a lass that bydes doun hereabouts. She’l be lookin in the-day, maist lykeli.

MASHA: Mynd ye, the wey she dresses hirsell is no cannie. It’s no juist that hir claes ir ugsum an auld-farrant, they’r simply pathetic. She’l pit on sum weird-lookin bricht yallae skirt wi a coorse kynd o freinge falderal, an syne a reid bloose wi gang wi it. She’s a bit o an affront wi hir auld duds.

Hir chowks looks lyke as tho they’d been skoured, they’r that glossy. Andrae canna be in luiv wi **hir**. Ah canna credit it: eftir aw, he haes sum taste. Ah think he’s juist playin the daft laddie, juist ti fash us. Ah heard yestrein she’s ettlin ti git mairrit on Protopopov, the convener o the local cooncil. Ah thocht masell that wes a grand idea.

(Calls through the side door) ‘Andrey, you cum ben here, wul ye? Juist for a meinit, ma dear!’

(Enter Andrae)

OLGA: This is ma brither, Andrey Serghyeevich.

VERSHININ: Vershinin!

ANDREY: Prozorov! *(Wipes the perspiration from his face)*

Ah hear tell ye’ve been appyntit battery commander here?

OLGA: Whit dae ye think, dear? Alexandr Ignatyevich cums frae Moscow.

ANDREY: Dae ye nou? Man, Congratulations---! Ye'l git nae peace frae ma sisters, nou.

VERSHININ: Ah dout yeir sisters maun be gittin bored wi me areddies.

IRENA: Juist look, Andrey gied me this little picter frame the-day.
(Shows him the frame) He made it hissell.

VERSHININ: *(Looks at the frame, not knowing what to say)*
Oh ay, it's verra braw, Ah'm shuir....

IRENA: Dae ye see yon wee frame ower the pianae? He made that yin anaw.
(Andrae waves his hand impatiently and walks off)

OLGA: He's richt knackie wi his haunds; he plays the fiddle an he maks aw kynds o things, anaw. Andrae, please dinna rin awa! He's got sic a bad habit --- aye walkin awa that wey. Cum here **you!**
(Masha and IRENA take him by the arms and lead him back laughing)

MASHA: Nou juist you cum here!

ANDREY: Juist leave me alane, please!

MASHA: Ye **ir** a sumf! They uised ti caw Alexandr Ignatyevich, 'the luivseik Major', an it didna bather *him* at aw.

VERSHININ: No in the laest---!

MASHA: Ah feel Ah soud caw ye, 'the luivseik fiddler'.

IRENA: Or a 'luivseik professor'.

OLGA: He's fawn in luiv! Oor Andriusha's in luiv!

IRENA: *(Clapping her hands)* Thrie cheers for Andriusha!
Andriusha's in luiv.

CHEBUTYKIN: *(Comes up behind ANDREY and puts his arms round his waist)*
'Nature created us for love alone'

(Laughs loudly, still holding his paper in his hand)

ANDREY: That's aneuch Less o that.....! (*Wipes his face*)

Ah coudna git ti sleep aw nicht, an Ah'm no feelin ower grund the-
nou.

Ah read or fower o'clock, an syne gaed ti bed, but naething happent--

-

Ah coudna faw ower. Ah kept on thinkin aboot yae thing an
anither....

An it gits licht sae aerie; the sun juist poors inti ma chaumer. Ah'd
lyke ti owerset a book frae the English, whyle Ah'm here throu the
simmer.

VERSHININ: Ye read the English then?

ANDREY: Oh ay, ma faither – God bliss his maimorie – uised ti fair weir us oot
wi lairnin. He wes ay at us. It soonds daft, Ah ken, but Ah maun
confess that sen he dee'd, Ah've begun ti growe stoot, wi be-in
relieved o the strain o lairnin. In juist a year, Ah'm fair stoot growne.
Ay, thanks ti ma faither, ma sisters an Ah kens French an German an
English, an Irena here, kens the Italian anaw. But whitna tryauve it aw
cost us.

MASHA: Kennin thrie ootlin leids in a toun lyke this is no mukkil guid til
oniebodye. It is juist a uissless burden – raither lyke haein a saxt
fingir on yeir haund. We ken a hantil stuff that's uissless awthegither.

VERSHININ: Dae ye think sae? (*Laughs*)

Ye ken a hantil stuff that's uissless! It seems ti me that the'r nae
place in aw the yird, houever dreich an dowf it micht be, whaur
intelligence an a guid education can be uissless. Lat us suppose that
among the thrie hunder thousan sowls in this toun, the haill
clanjamfrie, nae dout, ignorant an backward, the'r juist thrie bricht
fowk lyke yeirsells. Atweill, ye canna howp ti mak a big impression
on the mass o ignorance roond aboot ye; as yeir lyfe gaes in, ye'l git
smoored among the thrang. Lyfe wul gollop ye up but ye winna sant
awa awthegither, ye'l mak sum impression. Eftir ye'r awa, mebbe
sax mair fowk lyke yeirsells wul pit in an appearance, syne the'l be
twal, or in the end, maist fowk wul be lyke you. Sae in twa or thrie
hunder year, lyfe on this auld warld o oors wul becum lousum an
wunnerfu.

Man greins for sic a warld, an gin it's no here yit, he wul imagine it,
dream aboot it, an mak ready for it. He haes ti ken an see mair nor
his faither an grund faither did afore him.

(*Laughs*) An here ye'r complainin kis ye ken a lot o stuff that's
uissless.

MASHA: (*Takes off her hat*) Ah'l be bydin for ma denner.

IRENA: *(with a sigh)* Mercie, sumbodie soud hae wrutten aw that doun afore
Ah forget it.

(ANDREY has left the room unnoticed)

TOOZENBACH: Ye say that in tyme, lyfe wul be lousum an wunnerfu. Aweill,
that's lykeli true. But ti enjoy it the-nou, at a distance, sae ti speak,
we maun mak ready an wurk for it.

VERSHININ: *(Gets up)* Oh ay....ay shuirlye.
Whitna hantil flouers ye hae here!
(Looks around) An whit a braw houss ! Ah fair envy ye!
Aw ma lyfe A've leeved lyke a pig in pokey wee flats, wi twa chairs
an a sofae, an a stove that aye reiks.
It's the flouers Ah've missed aw ma lyfe, flouers lyke this!.....
(Rubs his hands) Aweill, never heed!

TOOZENBACH: Ay, we maun wurk. Ah daursay ye'l be thinkin Ah'm a
sentimental German. But Ah can tell ye Ah'm no---Ah'm Russian.
Ah dinna speak a wurd o German. Ma faither wes brocht up in the
Greek Orthodox Kirk. *(a pause)*

VERSHININ: *(Walks up and down)* Ye ken, Ah aften wunner whit it wad be lyke ti
stert yeir lyfe ower again---Ah mean..... Suppose ye coud pit asyde
the waesum lyfe ye've leeve areddies, lyke it wes juist a kynd o first
draft, an syne stert anither yin as a fair copy.

An that happent, Ah think the thing ye'd want maist wad be no ti
repeat yeirsell. Ye'd try shuirlye, ti bigg a new warld for yeirsell: a
flat lyke this yin, for instance, wi a whein flouers an plenty licht
Ah hae a wyfe, ye ken, an twa wee lassies, an ma wyfe is no weill, an
aw that.....Weill, gin Ah haed ti stert ma lyfe ower again, Ah wadna
mairrie, for a stert..... Na, na, Deil a fears.

(Enter KOOLYGHIN in the uniform of a teacher)

KOOLYGHIN: *(Approaches IRENA)* Congratulations ma dear sister--- frae the
bottom o ma hert, congratulations on yeir Saint's day.
Guid health ti ye an awthing a quyne o your age soud hae.
An allou me for ti present ye wi this little book.

(Hands her a book)

It's the historie o oor skuil ower the haill fiftie year o its existence.
Ah wrate it aw masell. Juist a bit o a divert, ye ken --
Ah wrate it in ma spare tyme whan Ah haed naething better ti dae,
lyke-
But Ah howp ye wul read it for aw!

(to VERSHININ) Allou me ti introduce masell!

Koolyghin's the name. Ah'm a dominie at the secondary skuil here.
An a toun cooncillor anaw.

(to IRENA) Ye'l finnd a leit in the book o the names o aw the bairns that haes feinisht thair studies at oor skuil ower the lest fiftie year.
Feci quod potui, faciant melior a potentes.

IRENA: But ye gied me this book lest Aester.

KOOLYGHIN: (*Laughs*) Did Ah really? In that case, gie me it back---or no, better gie it til the Colonel. Please tak it, Colonel. Mebbe ye'l read it sum tyme whan ye hae naething better ti dae.

VERSHININ: Monie thanks ti ye! (*Prepares to leave*)

Ah'm rael gled for ti make yeir acquaintance....

OLGA: Ye'r no gaun, ir ye? Ye maunna gang.

IRENA: Ye'l shuirlye byde an hae a pikkil denner wi us, please!

OLGA: Please byde!

VERSHININ: (*Bows*) Ah see Ah've intruded on yeir Saint's day pairtie. Ah didna ken. Ye maun forgie me for no offerin ma congratulations.

(*Goes into the ballroom with OLGA*)

KOOLYGHIN: The-day is the Sabbath, ma freins, a day o rest. Lat us rest an enjoy it, ilkane accordin til his age an poseition in lyfe! We wul hae ti rowe up the carpets an pit thaim awa till the wunter....we wul hae ti mynd no ti forget ti pit sum moth baws on thaim, or Persian pouter.

The auld Romans aye enjoyed guid health kis they kent hou ti wurk an hou ti rest. They haed, *mens sana in corpore sana* for ti keep thaim richt. Thair lyfe haed a definite maik, a paitern..... a form... The Rector o this skuil aye says the maist important thing in lyfe is form.....a thing that losses its maik is feinisht---an that's true o everyday lyfe.

(*Takes MASHA by the waist and laughs*)

Ma Masha loues me. Ma guidwyfe loues me. Ay, an the curtains wul hae ti be taen down an pitten awa wi the carpets, tae.....
Losh, Ah'm fair cheerie the-day, sae Ah im. Ah'm in braw speirits....
Masha, we'r invytit ti the Rector's at fower o'clock this eftirnuin. A bit dander in the kintrie haes been arranged for the teachers an thair failmies.

MASHA: AH'M NO GAUN!

KOOLYGHEN: (*distressed*) Masha, darlin, whitfor no?

MASHA: Ah'l tell ye eftir.....(*crossly*) Awricht, Ah'l cum.
Juist leave iz alane the-nou--- (*Walks off*)

KOOLYGHIN: An eftir the walk we wul aw spend the forenicht at the Rector's
houss. For aw his puir health, that man spare nae pains ti be sociable.
The'r aye a kynd wurd frae him. A first-rate ceivilised bodie----!
Yin o naitur's gentlemen--- Eftir the conference yestrein, he says ti
me, says he 'Ah'm wabbit, Fiador Ilyich. Ah'm fair forfochen.'
(*Looks at the clock, then at his watch*)
Yeir tyme piece is seivin meinits fest. Ay, Ah'm fair worn oot
awthegither,' he said.

(*The sound of the violin is heard offstage*)

OLGA: Wul ye aw cum an sit yeirsells doun, please! The denner is richt
ready.
The'r a pie!

KOOLYGHIN: Ai, Olga, ma dear lass--! Lest nicht, Ah wrocht up till eleivin
o'clock, an Ah felt tyred lyke, but the-day, Ah'm fair blyth, sae Ah
im.
(*Goes to the table in the ballroom*)
A pie, is it---? Graund! Ma dear Olga!

MASHA: Aw the same, dinna you daur drink oniething!

(*Crossly, but making sure her husband doesn't hear*) Sae nou Ah hae
ti spend anither o thir deid borin forenichts at the Rector's.

TOOZENBACH: Ah wadna gang if Ah war you, an that's that.

CHEBUTYKIN: Dinna you gae, ma dear!

MASHA: Dinna gang! Ai, whitna damnable lyfe! Ah canna thole it.
(*Goes into the ballroom*)

CHEBUTYKIN: (*Follows her*) Weill, weill....

SOLIONY: (*as he passes TOOZENBACH on the way to the ballroom*)
Chouk, chouk, chouk!

KOOLYGHIN: (*brightly*) Yeir health, Colonel! Ah'm a skuilmaister.....
An Ah'm fair yin o the faimlie here, mair or less.
Ah'm Masha's guidman. She haes sic a sweet naitur, haes Masha, sic
a verra sweet naitur!

VERSHININ: Ah think Ah'l hae a drap this derk vodka. Slainte---!
(*to OLGA*) Ah feel that joco wi you fowk!

(Only IRENA and TOOZENBACH remain in the drawing-room)

IRENA: Masha's in a bit o a bad tid the-day. Ye ken she got mairrit whan she wes echten, an at that tyme, hir man seemed til hir the clivverest man in aw the warld. It's different nou. He is the kyndest o men, but she kens he is no the clivverest.

OLGA: *(impatiently)* ANDREY WUL YOU PLEASE CUM!

ANDREY: *(offstage)* Juist cummin---! *(Enters and goes to table)*

TOOZENBACH: Whit is on yeir mynd?

IRENA: Oh, naething special. Ah dinna lyke this man, Soliony. Ah'm fair feart for him. Whanever he opens his mou he says sumthing silly.

TOOZENBACH: He is a queer burd. Ah'm vext for him in a wey, even tho he fashes me. In fact, Ah feel mair vext for him nor fasht. Ah think he is blate in a wey. Whan he is on his lane wi me, he can be wycelyke an freinlie, but in company, he is a bullie an turns nestie. Dinna you gae ower thare juist yit; lat thaim git richt dounsutten an settilt. Ah'l byde wi you for a bit. Tell me whit ye ir thinkin about!

(a pause)

You'r twantie an Ah'm no thertie yit, masell. Whit years an years we still hae afore us: a haill lang train o years, aw fou o ma luiv for you!

IRENA: Dinna speak ti me about luiv, Nicolai Lvovich!

TOOZENBACH: *(not listening)* Ai, a lang tyme for a ful lyfe. Ah lang ti wurk an warsil an this langin is sumhou melled wi ma luiv for you, Irena. An juist kis ye happen ti be lousum, lyfe seems lousum ti me! Whit ir ye thinkin about nou?

IRENA: Ye say that lyfe is lousum. Mebbe it is---but whit if it onlie seems lousum? Oor lyfes, Ah mean the lyfes o us thrie sisters, haena been lousum up ti nou. Ti tell ye the truth, we hae been smooored, lyke sae monie weeds in a gairden. Mercie, Ah'm greitin.....the'r nae need!

(Quickly dries her eyes and smiles)

We maun wurk, wurk, wurk! Ah think we feel depressed an tak sic a dreich view o lyfe, kis we hae never kent hou ti mak a real effort. Fowk that haes ti tyauve disna hae tyme ti wunner whuther they'r depressed or no.

We'r the bairns o parents that despises wark

(Enter NATALIA IVANOVA. She is wearing a pink dress with a green belt)

NATASHA: They've gaen in for the denner areddies.... Ah'm late....
(*Glances at herself in a mirror, adjusts her dress*)
Ma hair seems awricht.....Ah think it wul dae.
(*Catches sight o IRENA*)
Ma dear IRENA Serghyeevna, ma congratulations!
(*Gives her a vigorous and prolonged kiss*)
Ye hae sae monie veisitors.....Ah feel fair shy, sae Ah div....
Hou ir ye, Baron?

OLGA: (*Enters the drawing-room*) Oh, thare ye ir, Natalia Ivanovna!
Hou ir ye ma dear?

(*They kiss each other*)

NATASHA: Ma best wushes! Ye ir that thrang here, Ah feel awfu shy...

OLGA: It's awricht, they'r aw auld freins.

(*Alarmed, dropping her voice*) Ye'r weirin a green belt!
That's shuirly a mistak.

NATASHA: Hou a mistak? Is it an ill taiken or whit?

OLGA: Na, Na, but it juist disna gang wi yeir dress... It looks wrang!

NATASHA: (*Tearfully*) Dae ye think sae?
But it's no richt green. It's a kynd o dull color.....

(*Follows Olga to the ballroom. All are now seated at the table; the drawing room is empty*)

KOOLYGHIN: Irena, ye ken, Ah div wush ye'd finnd yeirsell a guid man.
Ah'm thinkin it's mair nor tyme ye got yeirsell mairrit.

CHEBUTYKIN: You soud finnd yeirsll a nice wee man, tae, Natalia Ivanovna.

KOOLYGHIN: Natalia Ivanovna haes a man in mynd areddies, haes she no?

MASHA: (*Strikes her plate with her fork*) A gless o wyne for me, please!
Thrie cheers for oor gret auld lyfe! We fairlie keep oor end up,
Dae we no?

KOOLYGHIN: Masha, Ah wadna gie ye mair as five oot o ten for guid conduct.

VERSHININ: Say, this liqueur gaes down weill. Whit is it made frae?

SOLIONY: Blek beetles.

IRENA: It's no! Ugh! Ugh! That's skunnersum!

OLGA: We'r haein roast turkey for the supper the-nicht, syne aipil tairt.
Ah'm gled Ah'm here aw day the-day.....this forenicht anaw.
Ye maun aw cum the-nicht.

VERSHININ: Can Ah cum then, tae?

IRENA: Ay, please cum!

NATASHA: They dinna staun on ceremonie here.

CHEBUTYKIN: 'Nature created us for love alane!'(*Laughs*)

ANDREY: (*crossly*) Wul YOU stap it please? Less o that!
Ir ye no tyred oot yit?

(*FEDOTIK and RODÉ come in with a large basket of flowers*)

FEDOTIK: Juist look here, they'r aw at thair meat areddies!

RODÉ: (*in a loud voice*) HAEIN THAIR DENNER? Sae they ir, they'r haein thair luncheon areddies!

FEDOTI: Haud on a meinit! (*Takes a snapshot*) Yin---!
Juist anither meinit!.....(*Takes another snapshot*)
Twa...! That's it!

(*They pick up the basket and go into the ballroom where they are greeted uproariously*)

RODÉ: (*loudly*) Congratulations, Irena Serghyeevna! Ah wush ye aw the best, awthing ye'd wush for yeirsell! Graund weather the-day, gret---!
Ah've been oot stravaigin the haill mornin wi the laddies. Ye ken Ah teach gym at the academy, div ye no?

FEDOTIK: Ye can move nou, Irena Serghyeevna, that is gin ye want ti.
(*Takes a snapshot*) Ye look unco bonnie the-day.
(*He takes a top out of his pocket*)
See this peerie---it's got a graund hum til it!

IRENA: Whit a dinkie wee thing---!

MASHA: 'A green oak grows by a curving shore, and round that oak hangs a golden chain'a green chain around that oak'
(*Peevishly*) Whit dae Ah keep on sayin that for? Thae lynes haes been worryin me aw day lang!

KOOLYGHIN: Dae ye ken, we'r therteen, dounsutten at the yae table.

RODÉ: *(Loudly)* Ye shuirle dinna believe in thir auld supersteitions, dae ye?

(Laughter)

KOOLYGHIN: Whan therteen fowk sits doun at the yae table, it means sum o thaim ir in luiv. Is't yeirsell, bi onie chaunce, Ivan Romaych?

CHEBUTYKIN: Howt, Ah'm juist an auld skoundrel..... But whit Ah canna mak oot is hou Natalia Ivanovna looks sae embarrassed.

(Loud laughter. NATASHA runs out into the drawing room. Andrey follows her)

ANDREY: Please, Natasha, never you heed thaim! Haud on....
Wait a meinit..... Please!

NATASHA: Ah feel that affrontit..... Ah dinna ken whit ails me, an they'r aw lauchin at me. Ah soudna left the table lyke yon, but whan Ah seen sae monie fowk, Ah coudna help it, naither Ah coud Ah juist coudna.....

(Covers her face with her hands)

ANDREY: Ma dear lassie, please, please, dinna git upset. Honestly, they mean nae herm; they'r juist batherin ye. They ir guid naitured fowk – they aw ir – an they ir fond o us baith. Cum ower ti the wundae!
They canna see us thare..... *(Looks round)*

NATASHA: Ye see, Ah'm no weill uised wi be-in wi sae monie gentrie.

ANDREY: Hou yung ye ir, Natasha, hou wunnerfu yung! Ma dear sweet lass, dinna fash yeirsell! Believe me --- Ah'm sae happy, that ful o luiv an joy.... Na, Na, they canna see us! Hou did Ah cum ti faw in luiv wi ye, whan wes it?...

Ah dinna unnerstaun oniething onie mair. Ma precious, ma darlin, please --- Ah want ye ti mairrie me! Ah luiv ye as Ah've never luived oniebodie.....*(Kisses her)*

(Enter two officers and, seeing NATASHA and ANDREY kissing, stand and stare in amazement)

CURTAIN

