

ACT THREE

A bedroom now shared by OLGA and IRENA. There are two beds, one on the right, the other on the left, each screened off from the centre of the room. It is past two o'clock in the morning. Off stage the alarm is being sounded on account of a fire which has been raging for some time. The inmates of the house have not yet been to bed. MASHA is lying on a couch, dressed as usual, in black. OLGA and ANFISA come in.

ANFISA: Nou they'r sittin doun thare ablo the stair..... Ah keep on tellin thaim ti cum up here---that they soudna sit doun thare---but they juist cry, 'We dinna ken whaur oor Papa is!' They say, 'Mebbe he's gotten burnt in the fire.' Whitten an idea---! An the'r fowk doun in the yaird, tae....hauf-dressed, lyke.

OLGA: *(Takes a dress out of a wardrobe)* You tak this gray frock, Nannie..... An this yin....This blouse, anaw....An this skirt....Ai, Heivins! Whit's gaun on! Seeminlie the haill o Kisanovsky Street's been burnt doun....Tak this....an this, tae!
(Throws the clothes into ANFISA's arms)
The puir Vershinins haed a richt gliff. Thair haill houss nearly burnt doun awthegither. They'l hae ti spend the nicht here....We maunna lat thaim gae hame the-nicht. Puir Fedotik's tint awthing....he's got naething left at aw....

ANFISA: Ah'd better cry Ferapont, Oliusha. Ah canna cairrie aw this masell.

OLGA: *(Rings)* Naebodie peys onie heed whan Ah ring.
(Calls through the door) Ir the oniebodie thare?
Wul sumbodie please cum up?

(A window, red with the glow of the fire, can be seen through the open door. The sound of a passing fire engine is heard.)

This is terrible! Ah'm fair seik o it, sae Ah im!

(Enter FERAPONT)

Wul ye tak this doun the stair.....The Kolotilin quynes ir sittin ablo the stair.....Gie it til thaim.....an this anaw.....

FERAPONT: Verra guid, Mistress. Moscow wes burnt doun in echteen-twal the verra same wey. Mercie on us!....Ay, the French war fair dumfounert at the sicht.

OLGA: Alang ye gae, nou! Tak this doun!

FERAPONT: Ay, verra guid--- *(Goes out)*

OLGA: Gie it aw awa, Nannie ma dear! Ah'm that wabbit, Ah can haurlie byde on ma twa feet. We maunna lat the Vershinins gae hame. The wee lassies can sleep in the drawin-room, an Alexandr Ignatyevich can gang in wi the Baron. Fedotik can gang in wi the Baron anaw, or mebbe **he** wad better sleep in the ballroom. The doctor's gaen an gotten drunk---ye'd think he did it on purpose. He's fair fliein, sae we durstna lat oniebodie gae intil his chaumer. Ah dout Vershinin's guidwyfe wul hae ti gang inti the drawin-room, tae!

ANFISA: (*wearily*) Dinna send iz awa, Oluiska, darlin! Dinna send iz awa!

OLGA: Whit haivers is this, Nannie? Naebodie is sendin ye awa.

ANFISA: (*Leans her head against OLGA'S breast*) Ma dear lassie, Ah div wurk, ye ken. Ah tyauve awa as hard as Ah can.....Ah daursay, nou Ah'm gittin waeker, Ah'l be telt ti gang. But whaur can Ah gae? Whaur? Ah'm echtie year auld, ye ken. Ah'm mair as echtie-yin!

OLGA: Juist you sit dou, for a whyle, Nannie.... Ye'r tired, ye puir thing.... (*makes her sit down*) Juist rest yeirsell a bittie! Tak yeir meinits! Ye've turnt fair whyte aboot the gills.

(*Enter NATASHA*)

NATASHA: They'r sayin we soud stert a fund ti help the victims o the fire. Ye ken---form a societie, lyke, aince eirant for ti help thaim. Weill, whitfor no? It's a graund idea! It's up ti us ti help the puir fowk the best we can. Bobik an Sofochka ir soond sleepin lyke naething haed happened. We haed sic a thrang o fowk in the houss; the place is ful o fowk everie wey ye turn. Ah hear tell the'r flu in the toun an it's gey smittil.....Ah'm that feart the bairns nicht catch it.

OLGA: (*without listening to her*) Ye canna see the fire at aw frae this chaumer, it's quaet in here.

NATASHA: Ay..... Ah daursay ma hair is aw ower the place. (*Stands in front of the mirror*) They say Ah've growne stooter, but it's no true! Ah'm no a bit stooter..... Masha haes went ti sleep.....She's wabbit, puir lass..... (*to ANFISA, coldly*) Hou daur ye sit down in ma presence? Git up! Git yeirsell oot o here!

(*ANFISA goes out. A pause*)

Ah canna unnerstaun whit ye keep that auld kimmer in the houss for.

OLGA: (*Taken aback*) Forgie me for sayin it, but Ah dinna unnerstaun whit it haes ti dae---

NATASHA: She's uissless awthegither....She's juist a kintrie wumman.
Hir richt place is in the kintrie plowterin aboot amang the dubs in hir wellington buits.
Ye'r spylin hir. Ah div lyke ti keep an orderly houss.
Ah canna be daein wi uissless auld bodies hingin aboot the place.
(Strokes OLGA'S cheek) Ye'r tired ma dear.
Oor heidmistress is fair worn oot. Ye ken whan Sofochna growes up an gaes til the skuil, Ah'l be a bit feart for you.

OLGA: Ah'm no gaun ti be the heidmistress.

NATASHA: Ye'l be askit til, Olechka; it's aw settilt.

OLGA: Weill Ah'l refuse. Ah coudna dae it.... Ah wadna be strang aneuch.
(Drinks water) Ye spak gey hairshlyke ti Nannie the-nou.....
Ye maun forgie me for sayin sae, but Ah juist canna thole that wey o speakin.... It garred me feel faint.

NATASHA: *(Agitated)* Forgie me, Olia, forgie me! Ah didna mean ti mismak ye.
(MASHA gets up, picks up a pillow and goes out in a huff)

OLGA: Please try ti unnerstaun me....It micht be that we've been brocht up in a funnylyke wey, but oniewey, Ah canna beir it. Whan fowk ir treated lyke that, it gits me doun. Ah feel fair seik....It pits ma nerves on edge.

NATASHA: Forgie me, dear, forgie me.....
(Kisses her)

OLGA: Onie cruel or tactless remerk, oniething coorselyke, aye fair upsets me.

NATASHA: Ye'r richt. Ah ken Ah aften say things that wad be better no said at aw--
But ye maun grie wi me, dear, that the lykes o hir wad be better on sum glaurie ferm steidin, amang the dubs.

OLGA: She's been wi us for thertie year.

NATASHA: But she's no able nou, is she? Aither Ah dinna unnerstaun ye, or ye dinna want ti unnerstaun me. She canna wurk. Ah seen hir sleepin whan she wes supposed ti be reddin up eftir the denner yestrein.
She juist sleeps an sits aboot daein naething.

OLGA: Aweill, lat hir sit aboot!

NATASHA: *(in surprise)* WHIT DAE YE MEAN, LAT HIR SIT ABOUT?
(tearfully) Na, Ah dinna unnerstaun ye, Olia!
Ah hae a nurse for the bairns, an a wet nurse, an we share a maid an a cook. Whit ever dae we want this auld kerlin for? Whit for?
(The alarm is sounded again)

OLGA: Ah think Ah've aged ten year the-nicht.

NATASHA: We maun sort things oot, Olia, you an me. You ir wurkin at yeir skuil an Ah'm wurkin at hame. You'r teachin an AH'M RINNIN THE HOUSS. An whan Ah say onieething about the sairvants AH KEN whit Ah'm speakin about. That auld wyfe, that auld wutch maun git oot this houss the-morn!
(Stamps her foot) Hou daur ye vex me lyke this? Hou daur ye?
(Recovering her self-control) Really, gin you dinna shift down the stair, we'l aye be rowin lyke this. This is juist awfu, sae it is.

(Enter KOOLYGHIN)

KOOLYGHIN: Whaur Masha? It's tyme we war awa hame. Ah hear tell the fire is gittin less bowsterous. *(Stretches)* Juist the yae block got burnt down, but ti begin wi, it lookit lyke the haill toun wes gaun ti be set ahaud bi yon wund.
(Sits down) Ah tell ye whit it is, Ah'm that wabbit, Olechka, ma dear. Ye ken, Ah hae aften thocht ti masell, that if Ah haedna mairrit Masha, Ah'd hae mairrit you, Olechka. Ye'r that kynd.
But Ah'm fair worn oot, sae Ah im! *(Listens)*

OLGA: Whit is't?

KOOLYGHIN: The doctor's gotten fou, juist lyke he haed duin it on purpose. He is fair stottin! He's gotten a richt skinfu this tyme.
(Gets up) Here, Ah think he is cummin up here.....
Can ye hear him? Ay, he's cummin up here awricht. *(Laughs)*
Whit a lyke fallae, Ah ask ye! Whit a caird.... Ah'l awa an hide masell.
(Goes to the wardrobe and stands between it and the wall)
Ai, whit an auld skoondrel!

OLGA: Mercie, he's been aff the drink for twa year, an nou, aw at aince, he gangs an gits anither skinfu.

(Walks with NATASHA towards the back of the room)

(CHEBUTYKIN enters, walking firmly and soberly, he crosses the room, stops, looks round, then goes to the wash-stand and begins to wash his hands)

CHEBUTYKIN: (*Glumly*) The Deil tak thaim aw..... The haill clamjamfrie!
They think Ah can treat oniething that ails thaim juist kis Ah'm a
doctor,
But Ah ken naething ava. Ah've forgotten everie singil thing Ah uised
ti ken. Ah mynd naething, naething at aw....

(*OLGA and NATASHA leave the room without him noticing*)

CHEBUTYKIN: The DEIL tak thaim! Lest Wodinsday, Ah attended a wumman at
Zasyp. She dee'd an it's aw ma blame that she did dee. Ay,.....
Ah uised ti ken a trick or twa, but nou Ah dinna mynd a thing. No a
singil thing! Mebbe, Ah'm no a man at aw, but juist fancy Ah hae
haunds an feet an a heid. Mebbe Ah dinna exist at aw. (*Weeps*)
Ai, if Ah coud onlie stap existin!

(*Stops crying, glumly*) Guid kens....The ither day they war speakin
about Shakespeare an Voltaire at the club.... Ah haedna read aither o
thaim, never read a singil lyne o aither, but Ah tryit ti mak oot bi ma
expression that Ah haed. The ithers did the same. Hou pathetic it aw
is!

Hou despicable---! An syne, aw at aince, Ah thocht o the wumman Ah
killed on Wodinsday. It aw cam fluidin back ti me, an Ah felt sic a
swyne, sae seik o masell Ah gaed an got fou....

(*Enter IRENA, VERSHININ and TOOZENBACH. TOOZENBACH is
wearing a fashionable new civilian suit*)

IRENA: Lat's sit doun here for a bit. Naebodie wul cum in here.

VERSHININ: The haill toun wad hae been burnt doun, an it haedna been for the
sojers. They'r a grand lot o fallaes! (*Rubs his hands with pleasure*)
Excellent fallaes. Ay, they'r a brow lot.

KOOLYGHIN: (*Approaches them*) Whit tyme is't?

TOOZENBACH: It's fullie thrie. It's stertin ti cum licht.

IRENA: They'r aw sittin throu in the ballroom an naebodie thinks to leave.
That man, Soliony is thare, tae....
(*to CHEBUTYKIN*) **You** soud gae til yeir bed, Doctor!

CHEBUTYKIN: Ah'm aw richt.... Thenks.... (*Combs his beard*)

KOOLYGHIN: (*Laughs*) Hauf seas ower, Ivan Romanych!
(*Slaps him on the shoulder*) Ay, ye'r a brow yin!
In vino veritas, as they uisd ti say in auld Rome.

TOOZENBACH: Awbodie keeps speirin at me ti arrange a concert for ti help the
victims o the fire.

IRENA: Weill, wha wad ye git ti perform in it?

TOOZENBACH: Ah daursay it coud be duin if we wantit. Maria Serghyeevna is graund at playin the pianae, in ma opeinion.

KOOLYGHIN: Ay, she's first cless!

IRENA: Mercie, she's forgotten hou ti play. She haesna played for thrie year..... or mebbe it's fower?

TOOZENBACH: Naebodie unnerstauns muisic in this toun, no a singtil sowl.
But Ah ken, an Ah can tell ye for shuir, that Maria Serghyeevna plays brawlie. She haes a fair genius for the ivories.

KOOLYGHIN: Ye'r richt thare, Baron. Ah'm verra fond o Masha.
Sic a nice lyke lass. She certainly sees me awricht.

TOOZENBACH: Fancy be-in able ti play as weill as hir an haein naebodie, naebodie at aw ti appreciate it.

KOOLYGHIN: *(Sighs)* Ay! But wad it be quite the richt thing for hir to play in a public concert. *(a pause)*
Ah ken naething anent sic maitters ma freins. Mebbe it wul be awricht.
But ye ken, tho oor director is a guid man in his wey, a verra guid man, an clivver, tae, Ah ken that he haes gey definite notions aboot whit is wycelyke..... Mynd ye, this is really nane o his business, but aw the same, Ah'l hae a wurd in his lug aboot it, an ye lyke.

(CHEBUTYKIN picks up a china clock and examines it)

VERSHININ: Ma claes ir in sic a state helpin for ti pit oot the fire, Ah maun look lyke naething on earth.
(a pause) Ah believe they war sayin yestrein that oor brigade wes lyke ti be posted sumwhaur a lang wey awa. Sum said ti Poland an ithers awa ti Cheeta, in Siberia.

TOOZENBACH: Ah heard that, anaw. Aweill, the toun wul be fair desertit athoot thaim!

IRENA: We'l gang awa, anaw!

CHEBUTYKIN: *(Drops the clock and breaks it)* Smashed ti smithereens!
Ah dout it wul never be the same.

(A pause. Everybody looks upset and embarrassed.)

KOOLYGHIN: Fancy brekkin sic a valuable thing! Ai, Ivan Romanych, man, man, ye'l git a blek merk for that!

IRENA: It wes ma mither's clock.

CHEBUTYKIN: Aweill, supposin it wes. Gin it wes yeir mither's, it wes yeir mither's. Mebbe Ah didna smash it. Mebbe it onlie appears Ah did. Mebbe it onlie appears til us that we exist, tho, in reality, we dinna at aw. Ah ken naething---naebodie kens oniething.

CHEBUTYKIN: (*Stops at the door*) Whit ir ye aw glowerin at me for? Natasha's haein a nice wee affair wi Protopopov, an ye dinna see it. Ye sit here on yeir erses seein naething, an aw the tyme, Natasha's haein a nice wee affair wi Protopopov.

(*Goes out*)

VERSHININ: Aweill... (*Laughs*) Things ir funny, richt aneuch. (*a pause*)

Whan the fire stertit, Ah stoued hame as fest as Ah coud. Whan Ah got near, Ah coud see that oor houss wes awricht an oot o herm's wey, but the twa wee lassies war staunin thare in thair nicht gouns. Thair mither wes naewhaur ti be seen. Fowk war rinnin about aw airts, horses, dugs...an in the bairns' faces, Ah saw a feart wanrestfu look, Ah dinna ken whit! Ma hert sank whan Ah saw thair wee faces. Dod, Ah thocht, whit wul thir bairns hae ti gae throu in thair puir lives? They micht leeve for a lang tyme, tae! Ah picked thaim up in ma airms, an ran back here wi thaim, an aw the tyme Ah wes rinnin, the same thing wes in ma heid: whit wul they hae ti gae throu in this lyfe?
(*The alarm is sounded*)

An whan Ah wan here, ma wyfe wes here areddies.....roosed, skraichin!

(*Enter MASHA, carrying a pillow. She sits down.*)

VERSHININ: (*Continues*) An whan ma wee lassies war staunin thare in the door wi naething but thair nicht gouns, an the street wes reid wi the lowe o the fire an ful o terrifyin dirdum, it struck me that this kynd o thing uised ti happen lang syne, whan airmies made sudden raids on touns, an herried thaim an set thaim ableize.....

Oniewey, ir the onie gret difference atwein the wey the warld wes then an the wey it is nou? An afore verra lang, say in anither twa or thrie hunder year, fowk micht see oor present lyfe, juist as we see the past nou, wi skunner an scorn. Oor ain tymes micht seem coorse ti thaim, borin an comfortless an ootlin.....Ai, whitna grund lyfe it wul be then, whit a lyfe!

(*Laughs*) Ye maun forgie me, Ah'm philosophisin ma heid aff.

Ah dae that, whyles.....but can cairrie on, please? Ah'm in guid fettil for it.

(*a pause*)

Ye look lyke ye'r aw gaun ti sleep. As Ah wes sayin, whit a gret lyfe it wul be in the future! Juist try ti imagine it!.....The nou the'r juist thrie fowk o intelligence in aw this toun, but in future generations, the wul be mair an mair smert fowk lyke yeirsell, or the day wul cum whan awbodie wul be lyke you. Fowk wul leeve thair lyfes in your wey, an syne, even you wul faw ahint an be auld-farrant, an a new bricht generation wul pit in an appearance, that wul be better nor you ir....

(Laughs) Ah'm in grund fettil the-day. Fou o the ettil ti leeve! *(Sings)*

*'To Love, all ages are in fee,
The passion's good for you and me'*

(Laughs)

MASHA: *(Sings)* tara-tara-tara

VERSHININ: Tum-tum....

MASHA: Tara-tara

VERSHININ: Tara-tara, tum-tum-tum.... *(Laughs)*

(Enter FEDOTIK)

FEDOTIK: *(Dancing about)* Burnt, burnt! Awthing aw burnt ti shunders!

(All laugh)

IRENA: It's nae lauchin maitter. Haes awthing really been burnt?

FEDOTIK: *(Laughs)* Awthing, awthegither! Ah hae naething left. Ma guitar's burnt, ma photigraphs is burnt---aw ma letters. Even the wee note-book Ah wes gaun ti gie ye, haes been burnt.

(Enter SOLIONY)

IRENA: Na, na! Awa ye gang, Vassily Vassilich! Ye canna cum in here.

SOLIONY: Can Ah no? Hou can the Baron cum in here an Ah canna?

VERSHININ: It's tyme we war aw awa, the haill lot o us. Hou is the fire daein?

SOLIONY: The wund haes lowdent an it's dwynin doun, they say. Weill, Ah hae ti say, it's a queerlyke thing the Baron can cum in here, an **Ah** canna.

(Takes scent bottle from his pocket and sprinkles himself with scent)

VERSHININ: Tara-tara.

MASHA: Tum-tum, tum-tum

VERSHININ: (*Laughs, to SOLIONY*) Lat's gang til the ballroom!

SOLIONY: Verra weill, we'l mak a note o this.

*'I hardly need to make my moral yet more clear:
That might be teasing geese, I fear!'*

(Looks at TOOZENBACH) Cluck, cluck, cluck!
(Goes out with VERSHININ and FEDOTIK)

IRENA: That Soliony haes fair smeikit the room oot....
(Puzzled) The Baron haes dozed aff. Baron! Baron!

TOOZENBACH: *(Waking out of his doze)* Ai, Ah maun be fair forfochen. Ah maun hae dovert aff. The brick-warks Na, na, Ah'm no speakin in ma sleep. Ah ettil ti gae back til the brick-warks an stert wurkin thare fairlie suin. Ah've haed a bit wurd wi the manager.

(To IRENA, tenderly) Ye ir sae pale, sae lousum....
Yeir fauch face seems ti licht up the mirk aboot ye, sumhou....
But ye'r dowie: ye'r no content wi the lyfe ye hae ti leeve here.
Cum awa wi me, lat's gae awa an wurk thegither!

MASHA: Nikolai Lovovich, Ah wush ye **wad** gae awa.

TOOZENBACH: (*Laughs*) Ach, you'r here, ir ye? Ah didna see ye.

(Kisses IRENA'S hand) Ah'm gaun, ye ken, an as Ah look at ye nou, Ah keep thinkin o the day---it wes a lang whyle syne, yeir Saunt's day—whan ye spak til us about the pleisir o wark....ye war sae blyth an bonnie then---an whit a happy lyfe Ah saw aheid o me then! Whaur is it aw nou?

(Kisses her hand) The'r tears in yeir een. Ye soud awa til yeir bed. Mercie, it's stertin ti git licht---it's amaist mornin. Ai, if onlie Ah coud gie ma lyfe for you!

MASHA: Nikolai Lvovich, wul **you** please gang awa/ This wul no dae!

TOOZENBACH: Ah'm gaun. (*Goes out*)

MASHA: (*Lies down*) Ir ye sleepin, Fiador?

KOOLYGHIN: Eh? Whit?

MASHA: Whitfor dae ye no gang hame?

KOOLYGHIN: Ma darlin Masha, ma sweet precious Masha....

IRENA: She's tired. Lat hir rest a wee whyle, Fyedia!

KOOLYGHIN: Ah'l gang in a meinit. Ma wyfe, ma dear wyfe....
Hou Ah luiv ye, onlie you.

MASHA: (Crossly) *Amo, amas, amat, amamus, amatis, amant!*

KOOLYGHIN: (*Laughs*) Whit an amazin wumman!
Ah've been mairrit on ye for seivin year, but Ah feel lyke we war
onlie mairrit yestrein. Ye really ir byordnar! Ai, Ah'm that happy,
happy, happy.

MASHA: An Ah'm that bored, bored, bored!

(*Sits up*) Ah canna git it oot ma heid.
It's juist skunnersum. It's lyke haein a mukkil nail cawed inti ma heid.
It's about Andrey.... Dae ye ken he haes actually mortgaged this houss
til a bank? An that wyfe o his haes gotten hir haunds on aw the siller
---an yit the houss disna belang ti him. It belongs the fower o us!
Shuirlye he maun ken that, if he haes onie honesty at aw.

KOOLYGHIN: Whit ir ye bringin this up for, Masha? Whit ir we batherin about it
for nou? Andriusha is awin siller aw roun the toun.... Leave him
alane!

MASHA: Whitever, it's a richt skunner. (*Lies down*)

KOOLYGHIN: Weill we'r no puir, Masha. Ah hae ma wark: Ah teach at a kintrie
skuil, Ah gie private lessons in ma ain tyme....Ah'm a dominie, a
plain honest man.....*Omnia, mea mecum porto*, as they say.

MASHA: Ah ask for naething for masell, but injustice skunners me aye.

Whitfor dae ye no gae hame, Fiador?

KOOLYGHIN: (*Kisses her*) Ye'r wabbit, lass. Juist you rest here for a whyle....

Ah'l awa hame an wait for ye..... Gang an hae a guid sleep!
(*Goes to the door*) Ah'm that happy, happy, happy!

IRENA: Ti tell the truith, Andrey is gittin ti be shallae-myndit. He's aulder
lookin, an sen he's been leevin wi that wumman, he's lost aw the
smeddum he uised ti hae. No that lang syne he wes wurkin for a
professor's chair, an yit yestrein, he wes blawin an booncin he haed
been elekkit a member o the Coonty Cooncil, wi Protopopov as
chairman! They say the haill toun is lauchin at him. He is the onlie
yin that disna ken oniething.

An nou ye see, wi awbodie oot at the fire, he's juist sittin in his
chaumer, ignorin awthing.

(*Agitated*) It's juist terrible, terrible. Ah canna beir it onie langir ti see
ma brither lyke this. Ah canna.

(Enter OLGA. She starts arranging things on her bedside table.)

IRENA: *(Sobs loudly)* Ye'l hae ti turn me oot o here!
Turn me oot! Ah canna thole it onie mair!

OLGA: *(Alarmed)* Whit is't? Whit is it, darlin?

IRENA: *(Sobbing)* Whaur..... Whaur haes it aw gaen til?
Whaur is it aw nou? God, Ah've forgotten.....Ah've forgotten
awthing.
The'r naething but confuision an heiligoleirie in ma heid.....
Ah canna mynd the Italian for 'wundae' or for 'ceilin'. Ilkie day,
Ah'm forgettin mair an mair, an ma haill lyfe is slippin awa, an it wul
never, never cum back....We'l never gang ti Moscow.....Ah can see
that that nou.... We wul never gang back.

OLGA: Dinna ma dear, dinna you fash yeirsell!

IRENA: *(Trying to control herself)* Ai, Mercie, Ah'm that meiserabil! Ah
canna wurk, Ah winna wurk. Ah've haen mair nor aneuch o it, Ah tell
ye, aneuch! First Ah wrocht on the telegraph, nou Ah'm in the Coonty
Cooncil offices an Ah hate an despise awthing they gie me ti dae
thare.....
Ah'm twantie-thrie year auld, Ah've been dargin aw the tyme an Ah
feel lyke ma brain haes dried up awthegither. Ah ken Ah've gotten
skinnier an mair ugsum an aulder, an Ah finnd nae satisfaction in
oniething Ah dae, no a bit o it..

An the tyme is aye passin....an Ah feel lyke Ah'm slippin awa frae
onie howp o a rael guid lyfe, doun intil a derk pit o despair. Ah dinna
ken whit Ah'm aye alive for....hou Ah haena killed masell.

OLGA: Dinna greit, ma puir lass, dinna greit, it gies me a sair hert!

IRENA: Ah'm no greitin onie mair. See, Ah hae stappit! That's aneuch o it.
Look, Ah'm no greitin nou. That's aneuch o it.

OLGA: Darlin, lat me tell ye sumthing! Ah juist want ti speak as yeir sister, as
yeir friend. Dae ye ken whit Ah think?

Ah think ye soud mairrie the Baron.

(IRENA weeps quietly)

OLGA: Eftir aw, ye respect him an think weill o him..... It's true he's nae eyl paintin, but a richt, innerlie, wycelookin fallae. Ye'd gang ferr an finnd waur. Whan aw is said an duin, whit haes luiv got ti dae wi it. Naething ava! We aw hae oor duty ti dae. Mercie, gin it war me, Ah'd mairrie oniebodie that speired me, as lang as he wes wycelyke. Ah'd even mairrie an auld dottilt whyte-heidit man!

IRENA: Here A've been hingin aboot aw this tyme, thinkin we'd be flittin ti Moscow, an that Ah'd meet in wi the fallae Ah'm meant for thare. Ah've dreamed aboot him an Ah've luived him in ma dream..... But it haes aw turnt oot ti be sae monie haivers....juist a lot o styte!

OLGA: (*Embracing her*) Ma darlin, Ah ken awthing ye'r sayin, perfitlie. Whan the Baron resigned his commeission an cam ti see us in his civvie claes, Ah thocht he lookit sae plain an dowf, Ah stertit ti greit at the sicht o him....He speired whit wes Ah greitin for..... Hou coud Ah tell him, Ah ask ye? But for aw, gin it war God's wull he soud mairrie ye, Ah'd feel quite gled aboot it.

IRENA: Ai, wad ye, Olga?

OLGA: Crivvens, that wad be a different thing awthegither.

(*NATASHA, carrying a candle, comes out of the door on the right, crosses the stage and goes out through the door on the left without saying anything*)

MASHA: (*Sits up*) She gangs aboot lookin lyke she'd stertit the fire.

OLGA: You'r silly, Masha. Ye'r the stuipitest bodie in oor faimilie. Ye'l forgie me for sayin sae, but ye **ir** a bit o a gowk.

(*a pause*)

MASHA: Ma dear sisters, The'r sumthing Ah hae ti tell ye. Ah hae ti git it aff ma kist. It's in ma hert. Ah'l juist tell it til the twa o ye, syne til naebodie else. Ah'l tell ye in a meinit.

(*In a low voice*) It's a secret, but ye'l hae ti ken awthing aboot it. Ah canna haud it in onie langir.

(*a pause*) Ah'm in luiv.....Ah luiv that man.....

Ye saw him thare the-nou. Weill whit's the guid?

Ah luiv Vershinin.....

OLGA: (*Goes behind her screen*) Dinna say it! Ah dinna want ti hear it. Mercie, he's auld aneuch ti be yeir faither!

MASHA: Weill, whit's ti be duin?

(Holding her head) Ah thocht he wes a bit o a heid case at first, syne Ah stertit ti be vext for him.....syne Ah stertit ti luiv him.....luiv awthing about him---his voice, his crack, his mishanters, his twa wee lassie bairns.

OLGA: Hou about his wyfe? Dae ye luiv hir, tae?
But Ah dinna want ti hear this. Ye can blether awa as lang as ye lyke.
Ah'l no be heedin ye.

MASHA: Ach, ye'r stuipit, Olia! If A luiv him, weill---that's ma weird.
That's ma destiny.....He luivs me anaw. It's kynd o scary,
Is't no? It's no a guid thing this, is it?

(Takes IRENA by the hand and draws her to her)

Ai, ma dear! Hou ir we gaun ti leeve throu the rest o oor lyfes?
Whit's ti becum o us? Whan ye read a story-book, awthing in it seems sae auld an obvious, but whan ye faw in luiv yeirsell, ye finnd oot aw at aince that ye dinna richt ken oniething for shuir, an hae ti mak yeir ain mynd up.... Ma dear sisters..... Ah've telt ye awthing, an nou Ah'l keep quaet....Ah'l be lyke yon madman in the story bi Godol----silence.....silence.

(Enter ANDREY followed by FERAPONT)

ANDREY: *(Crossly, to FERAPONT)* Whit dae ye want?
Ah canna unnerstaun whit ye'r on about.

FERAPONT: *(Stopping in the doorway, impatiently)* Ah've askit ye nou, ceivil aneuch, about ten tymes, Andrey Serghyeevich.

ANDREY: In the first place, ye'r no ti cry me, Andrey Seerghyeevich---
You caw me, 'Yeir Honor.'

FERAPONT: The firemen ir speirin at Yeir Honor, if they micht dryve throu yeir gairden for ti win til the river for the wattir. They've been gaun the lang road roond aw this tyme, an the fire aye bleezin.
It's an awfu business.

ANDREY: Awricht, Ah didna ken. Tell thaim it's awricht!

(FERAPONT goes out)

They keep on plaguin me. Whaur's Olga?

(OLGA comes from behind the screen)

Ah wantit ti see ye. Ye wadna be sae guid as ti gie me the key til the lobby press? Ah dout Ah've tint mynes. Ye ken the key Ah mean.?
The wee tottie yin ye've got.

(OLGA silently hands him the key. IRENA goes behind the screen on the side of the room)

ANDREY: Whit a terrific bleize! It's deein doun nou tho. Thon Ferapont fasht me, the Deil tak him! Silly thing he gart me say....Tellin him ti cry me, 'Yeir Honor'Wha dae Ah think **A im**?
(a pause)

ANDREY: Whitfor ir ye no sayin oniething, Olia?
It's aboot tyme ye stappt this daft cairrie-on....dortin lyke this for nae reason at aw.....You here Masha? An Irena's here tae. That's fyne!
We can cum oot wi it then, aince an for aw! Tell me strecht, whit hae ye got agin me. Whit is't?

OLGA: Juist drap it the-nou, Andrey. We'l speak aboot it the-morn.
(Agitated) Ai, whitna lyke nicht this haes been.

ANDREY: *(In great embarrassment)* Dinna mismak yeirsell! Ah'm askin ye, ceivil lyke, whit hae ye got agin me? Juist tell me strecht!

VERSHININ: *(Voice offstage)* Tum-tum-tum!

MASHA: *(In a loud voice, getting up)* TARA-TARA-TARA!
(to OLGA) Guidby, Olia, God bliss ye!
(Goes behind the screen an kisses IRENA) Sleep weill!
Guidby, Andrey! Ah soud leav thaim the-nou, they'r aw fair duin.
We'l speak it ower the-morn.
Goes out)

OLGA: Richt aneuch, Andrey, lat's leave it or the morn's mornin!

(Goes behind the screen on her side of the room)

It's tyme ti gang til oor sleepin beds.

ANDREY: The'r juist the yae thing Ah want ti say, then Ah'l gae. In a meinit.....
First o aw, ye hae sumthing agin ma guidwyfe---agin Natasha.
Ah've kent it ever sen the verra day we war mairrit. Natasha is a fyne wumman, she's honest an strecht an she haes hir principles.....
That's ma opeinion. Ah respek ma wyfe, an Ah expek ithers ti respek hir anaw. Ah'l repeat: she's an honest,weill-daein wumman an yeir ill-wull agin hir---gin ye dinna mynd me sayin sae---is juist yeir imagination, an naething mair.....It dis ye nae credit.*(a pause)*
Saicontlie, Ah seem ti be in yeir blek books for no makkin masell a professor, an no daein onie academic wark. But Ah'm wurkin in the Cooncil Office. Ah im a member o the Coonty Cooncil, an whit is mair, Ah feel ma wark thare is juist as wycelyke an uissfu as onie academic wark Ah nicht dae. Ah'm a member o the Coonty Cooncil, an if ye want ti ken, Ah'm prood o it! *(a pause)*

Thirdly, the'r anither thing Ah hae ti tell ye....Ah ken Ah mortgaged the houss athout askin yeir leave....That wes wrang an Ah admeit it, an Ah ask ye ti forgie me.....Ah wes driven til it bi aw ma debts....Ah wes at ma wuts' end. Dae ye ken, Ah'm in debt ti the tuin o thertie-five thousan roubles. Ah dinna play at the cairds onie mair. Ah gied it up langsyne.....The onlie thing Ah can say ti excuise masell is that, i the feinish, you girls wul cum in for an annuity, whyle Ah wul git naething at aw---naething in the wey o income, Ah mean..... *(a pause)*

KOLYGHIN: *(Calling through the door)* Is Masha in thare at aw? Is she no thare? Whaur can she be, then. It's gey queerlyke.....
(Goes away)

ANDREY: Sae ye winna heed me! Natasha is a guid honest wumman, Ah tell ye!
(Walks up and down the stage, then stops)

Whan Ah mairrit hir, Ah thocht we war gaun ti be happy thegither....
But ma God....
(Weeps) Ma dear sisters, ye maunna believe whit Ah hae been sayin.
Dinna believe it!
(Goes out)

KOOLYGHIN: *(Through the door again, agitated)* Whaur's Masha? Is Masha no here! Ah canna credit it! *(Goes away)*

(The alarm is heard again. The stage is empty)

IRENA: *(Speaking from behind the screen)* Olia, wha's that chappin on the fluir?

OLGA: It's the doctor, Ivan Romanych. He's fou again.

IRENA: This haill nicht, it's juist been yae thing eftir anither.
(a pause) Olia! *(Peeps out from behind the screen)*
Hae ye heard? The troops ir be-in moved awa frae this neiborheid.
They'r ti be gaun sumwhaur a lang wey awa.

OLGA: That's juist a rumor!

IRENA: We'l be left aw oor lane then.....Olia!

OLGA: Weill, whit is it?

IRENA: Olia, darlin, Ah div lyke the Baron....
Ah think about him an awfu lot. He's a richt guid man....
Ah'l mairrie him, Olia. Ah'l grie ti mairrie him if onlie we can gang ti Moscow! Please lat's gang thare, Olia! Please lat's gang!

CURTAIN

