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SF PERUSALS

Samuel French Acting Edition

Barbarians

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SAMUEL FRENCH
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The action takes place in a small provincial Russian town in the early 1900's.

Act One

Ivakin's stall and garden on the outskirts of town.

Act Two

SCENE 1—The garden of Tatyana Nikolayevna's house.
SCENE 2—The same. Two months later.

Act Three

The sitting room in Tatyana Nikolayevna's house. Two months later.

BARBARIANS

Presented by the BAM Theater Company in the Helen Owen Carey Playhouse, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, New York, on April 10, 1980, with the following cast:

IVAKIN, *gardener and beekeeper*.....*Jerome Dempsey*
YEFIM, *employed by Ivakin*.....*Peter Phillips*
MATVEY GOGIN, *a young peasant*.....*Stephen Lang*
DUNYA'S HUSBAND, *a person of indefinite profession*.....*Frank Maraden*
PAVLIN.....*John Heffernan*
MARIA IVANOVNA Vesyolkina, *postmaster's daughter*.....*Sherry Steiner*
DROBYAZGIN, Porphiry, *a Treasury clerk*.....*Michael Hammond*
PRITYKIN, Arkhip Fomich, *timber merchant*.....*Gary Bayer*
DR. MAKAROV.....*Bill Moor*
MONAKHOV, Mavriky Osipovich, *the local Tax Inspector*.....*Brian Murry*
LYDIA Pavlovna Bogayevskaya, *Tatyana's niece*.....*Roxanne Hart*
NADEZHDA Polikarpovna Monakhova, *wife of Monakhov*.....*Sheila Allen*
PELAGEYA Ivanovna Pritykina, *wife of Pritykin*.....*Joan Pape*
TATYANA NIKOLAYEVNA Bogayevskaya, *gentlewoman of property and Lydia's aunt*.....*Avril Gentles*
REDOZUBOV, VASSILY IVANOVICH, *the Mayor*.....*Patrick Hines*
STEPAN DANILOVICH LUKIN, *a student, Ivakin's nephew*.....*Boyd Gaines*

TSYGANOV, Sergi Nikolayich, *engineer* . . . . . *John Seitz*
ANNA Fyodorovna Cherkoon, *wife of Cherkoon* . . . . . *Marti Maraden*
STYOPA, *the Cherkoons's maid* . . . . *Anna Kluger Levine*
CHERKOON, Yegor Petrovich, *engineer* . . . . . *Jon Polito*
GRISHA, *Redozubov's son* . . . . . *MichaelJohn McGann*
KATYA, *Redozubov's daughter* . . . . *Christine Estabrook*
CHIEF OF POLICE . . . . . *Richard Jamieson*

DIRECTOR ..... *David Jones*

SET DESIGNER ..... *Andrew Jackness*

COSTUME DESIGNER ..... *Dunya Ramicova*

LIGHTING DESIGNER ..... *William Mintzer*

COMPOSER ..... *Bill Vanaver*

PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER ..... *Stephen McCorkle*

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGERS ..... *Ron Durbian*
Peter Glazer

CHARACTERS

IVAKIN—gardener and beekeeper, age 50

YEFIM—worker employed by Ivakin, age 40

MATVEY Gogin—a young peasant, age 23

DUNYA'S HUSBAND—a person of indefinite profession, age 40

PAVLIN Savelyevich Golovastikov—age 60

VESYOLKINA, Maria Ivanovna—daughter of local postmaster, age 22

DROBYAZGIN, Porphiry—a Treasury clerk, age 25

PRITYKIN, Arkhip Fomich—timber merchant, age about 35

DR. MAKAROV—age 40

MONAKHOV, Mavriky Osipovich—the local Tax Inspector, age 40

LYDIA Pavlovna Bogayevskaya—age 28

NADIEZHDA Polikarpovna Monakhova—wife of Monakhov, age 28

PELAGEYA Ivanovna Pritykina—wife of Pritykin, age 45

BOGAYEVSKAYA, Tatyana Nikolayevna—a gentlewoman of property and Lydia's aunt, age 55

REDOZUBOV, Vassily Ivanovich—the Mayor, age 60

STEPAN Danilovich Lukin—student Ivakin's nephew, age 25

TSYGANOV, Sergei Nikolayich—a engineer, age 45

ANNA, Fyodorovna Cherkoon—wife of Cherkoon, age 23

STYOPA—the Cherkoons' maid, age 20

CHERKOON, Yegor Petrovich—engineer, age 23

GRISHA—Redozubov's son, age 20

KATYA—Redozubov's daughter, age 20

CHIEF OF POLICE—age 45

Barbarians

ACT ONE

A meadow on the bank of a river. On a rise across the river a small country town ringed with carefully tended gardens. Nearer the audience an orchard with a variety of trees, apple, cherry, lime, mountain ash, a few bee-hives and a round table dug into the ground, with benches. Around the orchard a dilapidated wattle fence with a pair of felt boots, and old jacket and a red shirt hung on its stakes. Skirting the fence is the road from the ferry landing to a mail-coach station. Inside the orchard to the R. *the corner of a small house is visible. Attached to it is a lean-to which shelters a stall that sells bread, ring-shaped rolls, sunflower seeds, and home-brewed beer.* L. *of center just this side of the orchard fence stands a small thatched building. The garden continues to the* L. *beyond it.*

A hot summer afternoon.

A corncrake can be heard in the distance occasionally, mingled with the doleful notes of a reedpipe. In the orchard, on the earth below his window sits IVAKIN, *a clean shaven man, bald, with a kindly, comical face. He plays his guitar with great concentration. Beside him sits* PAVLIN, *a fastidious little old man in a light, tight-fitting coat and peaked winter cap. On the window sill is a jug of beer and some mugs.* MATVEY, *a young man from the village is sitting on*

the ground by the fence, slowly chewing bread. From the direction of the station comes the lazy voice of an ill WOMAN.

WOMAN. (*Off.*) Yefim. (*Silence.* DUNYA'S HUSBAND *appears to the* L., *a man of indefinite age, tattered and timid. Again, the woman's cry. Off.*) . . . Yefim! Yefim!

IVAKIN. Hey, Yefim, she's calling you. (YEFIM *enters along the garden side of the fence.*)

YEFIM. I heard. (*To* MATVEY.) What are you doing here?

MATVEY. Nothing. Just . . . sitting.

WOMAN. (*Off, irritated.*) Yo. Yefim!!!!!

IVAKIN. What's the matter, Yefim, you deaf?

YEFIM. (*Calls.*) I'm coming, damnit. (*To* MATVEY.) You got no business here. Go away. (YEFIM *takes his red shirt off the fence.* DUNYA'S HUSBAND *coughs and bows to him.*) Ah, so you're here, too. What do you want?

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. Just back from the monastery, Yefim Mitrich.

YEFIM. So they didn't want you, either. Monks and beggars, birds of a feather. To hell with all of you.

WOMAN. (*Off.*) Yefim!!!

IVAKIN. Better move it, my friend. (YEFIM *starts out.*) (*To* PAVLIN.) Likes to boss people around.

PAVLIN. Everybody likes to do that.

IVAKIN. Except the people that get it. Who wants to be yelled at for nothing.

PAVLIN. A little discipline never hurt. It doesn't seem to matter what you do, no one's ever satisfied.

IVAKIN. Now this little waltz, you can play it in a whole different style . . . listen.

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. Dear Lord, the man curses

everybody, saints and sinners, doesn't matter to him. And what for? I didn't do anything.

MATVEY. Christ it's hot.

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. I'm hot, too, but I suffer in silence. He thinks he can yell at everyone just because he has food in his stomach. He has no right. That looks like excellent bread.

MATVEY. It's all right.

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. Country-baked, I bet. Looks like it. They know how to make bread out in the villages, that's the truth.

MATVEY. When they can get flour they know how to make it. But I bought this from Ivakin.

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. Did you? Well, it smells like the real thing. I wouldn't mind sampling a piece myself.

MATVEY. There's not enough for me. (DUNYA'S HUSBAND *sighs, moves his lips.*)

IVAKIN. There, you see. And you can play it even slower.

PAVLIN. Did you say it's called the Waltz of the Mad Priest?

IVAKIN. That's the title.

PAVLIN. That's not good. It suggests a definite yielding to temptation and a disrespect for the calling of the church.

IVAKIN. There you go, criticising again. Why do you always look at the bad side of things, Pavlin?

PAVLIN. That's not fair. You know very well that my heart is humble. It's just I have a restless mind.

IVAKIN. What you have is an unpleasant personality. That's why people don't like you.

PAVLIN. I know what they say. I won't let it stop me from speaking out. I cry not when the mob persecutes me, I serve only one master; the truth, the whole truth

and nothing but the truth.

IVAKIN. You can afford to. Nice little house, nice chunk of land, nice pile of money stashed away. (*Voices heard off,* L. IVAKIN *looks in that direction.*) Here comes that girl, the postmaster's daughter.

PAVLIN. She's a most shameless creature. A bitter fate awaits her. (DROBYAZGIN *and* VESYOLKINA *enter.*)

VESYOLKINA. I'm telling you, she was married to an engineer . . . she *was.*

DROBYAZGIN. Maria Ivanovna, I can't believe the things you say sometimes. Why don't you look at the facts.

VESYOLKINA. I see what I see and I know what I know.

DROBYAZGIN. Well, the facts are, a. Lydia Pavlovna's husband was not an engineer, he was the foreman of a licorice factory and b. she didn't throw him out at all, he died, he choked to death on a fish-bone.

VESYOLKINA. And I say she threw him out.

DROBYAZGIN. You're so incredibly cynical. You shouldn't be, you know. You don't look like a cynical person.

VESYOLKINA. She threw him out.

DROBYAZGIN. She did no such thing. I know the facts. I work in the Department of Finance. We hear everything about everything there. . . .

VESYOLKINA. Well, I work in the Post Office and we hear everything about everything and more, so there. And you can buy me a glass a beer. That's what you get for arguing. (IVAKIN, *taking this as an order, gets up and goes round the corner of the house.* PAVLIN *picks up* IVAKIN'S *guitar, looks inside it, touches the strings.*)

DROBYAZGIN. Of course I'll buy you a beer. But Lydia Pavlovna's a widow and you know it.

VESYOLKINA. Oh do I? You'll see. (*They exit towards the* R.)

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. (*Softly.*) Please . . . for the love of Christ, give me a piece, I'm starving.

MATVEY. You're weird! "I wouldn't mind sampling a piece", like you're a chef or something. Why didn't you come right out and ask?

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. Ask . . . just? . . . no, no, couldn't do that. (IVAKIN *returns with a jug of beer and two glasses which he puts on the table. He then stands looking at the town in the distance.*)

IVAKIN. Pavlin, look at the town. Beautiful, eh? Like a big pan full of fried eggs, eh?

PAVLIN. Just wait till they build the railway. That'll be the end of everything.

IVAKIN. There you go again, moan, moan, moan. What's wrong with the railroad?

PAVLIN. Strangers running all over town. Barbarians. You'll see. (*Re-enter* VESYOLKINA *and* DROBYAZGIN. *They sit at the table, drink beer and converse in low voices.* IVAKIN *and* PAVLIN *move off behind the corner of the house.*)

MATVEY. Who are you, anyway?

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. I'm from the town.

MATVEY. I thought all the townspeople were rich. What happened to you?

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. Ruined. Ruined. Dunya. My wife. Did me in. Took everything, my strength, even. Oh, she was all right at first. She's a pretty girl, very lively, you know. Then one day, out of the clear blue, 'I'm bored'. That's what she says. So she started to drink. I played along.

MATVEY. You drank?

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. What can you do? Went from

bad to worse. She took up with other men. Shameful. I beat her of course, went on beating her. She ran away. I had a daughter, fourteen years old. She ran away, too. Vanished. (*He is silent, in thought.*)

DROBYAZGIN. (*Loudly.*) Maria Ivanovna, you must stop saying these things. The doctor and Nadiezhda . . . it's impossible . . .

VESYOLKINA. Shh, not so loud.

MATVEY. Does she go for the men, too?

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. Who?

MATVEY. Your daughter?

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. How should I know? I don't even know where she is. Someone beat me up when I was drunk, this was later on, kicked me right in the heart. Never recovered. Still in pain. Can't work. Couldn't if I wanted to. I don't know how to do anything.

MATVEY. You're a mess, aren't you. How do you manage?

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. Day to day, that's all. Day to day. (DROBYAZGIN *jumps up.*)

DROBYAZGIN. No, no, I'm not going to listen any more. Isn't there anything in the world, that you hold sacred?

VESYOLKINA. Don't shout. You're acting like a lunatic.

DROBYAZGIN. But . . . I mean, Lydia Pavlovna and the Chief of Police. . . . !!!

VESYOLKINA. Shut up, sit down and drink your beer.

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. Today's the day the engineers arrive.

MATVEY. The railroad people?

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. That's it. Everywhere, everywhere they build their railroads, and still there's no place for a man to go.

MATVEY. At least there'll be some jobs. I wouldn't mind working for a change. (PAVLIN *appears in the orchard, approaches the table.* VESYOLKINA *sees him coming.*)

VESYOLKINA. (*Quietly.*) Here comes old grouchface.

DROBYAZGIN. Well, if it isn't the venerable sage himself. What's new in the world?

PAVLIN. Good health to you both.

DROBYAZGIN. Same to you.

PAVLIN. The Mayor just crossed the river. He's coming this way.

VESYOLKINA. He wants to meet the engineers, I bet. Imagine . . . going out of his way like that . . . and he's such a proud old man. (IVAKIN *enters, panting.*)

DROBYAZGIN. That he is. Ah, Ivakin. Hot, isn't it?

IVAKIN. Yes, it's very hot.

PAVLIN. You know what makes a person hot? Impatience. Now I'm not waiting for anyone so I'm not impatient, and since I'm not impatient I'm not hot.

IVAKIN. Look, the doctor's coming. And the tax collector's with him.

VESYOLKINA. We're not waiting for anyone. Are we waiting for anyone?

PAVLIN. I'm talking about Ivakin. He's waiting for his nephew. He's arriving with the engineers.

VESYOLKINA. The student?

IVAKIN. That's right. Look, Pritikin the timber merchant's coming, too. The whole town's on the move.

VESYOLKINA. A student. This is getting interesting. He's the first student we'll have ever had in the town.

DROBYAZGIN. Now you know that's not true, Maria Ivanovna. What about the statistician who shot himself.

VESYOLKINA. That doesn't count. He never got his degree.

PAVLIN. He was expelled for his political behavior,

and a good thing, too.

IVAKIN. (*Brusquely.*) And he shot himself because you informed on him. Anyone who'd do that to another person is a snake. (IVAKIN *moves away. The* DOCTOR, MONAKHOV *and* PRITIKIN *come along the road from the* L. MATVEY *stands and bows.* DUNYA'S HUSBAND *slips away quietly.*)

PRITYKIN. Well, each to his own and one man's meat, but I must say in all honesty, I don't see it, doctor, I just don't understand what pleasure you can possibly find in catching fish.

DR. MAKAROV. (*Morosely.*) For one thing, fish don't talk.

MONAKHOV. Pritikin, your problem is you don't understand anything about anything. Swimming in the summer, a steaming bath in the winter, that's the extent of your spiritual understanding. (PAVLIN *goes to the bank and sits by the fence.*)

PRITYKIN. Cleanliness is next to godliness, you know.

DROBYAZGIN. (*Shouts.*) We got here ahead of you. (*The* DOCTOR *stops by the fence.*)

DR. MAKAROV. Order some beer, Drobyazgin.

DROBYAZGIN. (*Shouts.*) Ivakin, beer over here . . . lots of it . . . and make sure it's good and cold.

PRITYKIN. One pleasure I understand is winning at cards.

MONAKHOV. I won't argue with that.

PRITYKIN. And music, there's another thing. Ah, when those trumpets start to play I feel like an entire army marching into battle. (*The* DOCTOR *smiles grimly at* MONAKHOV.)

DR. MAKAROV. Here comes the flattery. (DROBYAZGIN *goes to the fence and listens attentively, wanting to join in the conversation but too slow to find an open-*

ing. VESYOLKINA *moves farther back, gazes at the town and hums a tune to herself.*)

PRITYKIN. I don't have to flatter him. He knows it's true. His name will go down in the annals of this town . . . "Mavriky Osipovich, the man who taught our firemen to play music."

MONAKHOV. Well, I don't know about that, but it wasn't easy, I can tell you. I'd've had an easier time teaching walruses to sing opera.

PRITYKIN. Nowadays, when I see a samovar, Mavriky Osipovich, I think of you.

DR. MAKAROV. (*Unsmiling.*) Did you know you looked like a samovar? (DROBYAZGIN *laughs.*)

PRITYKIN. No, no. I mean the brass. A samovar is brass, like trumpets. That's what reminds me of you, brass of any kind.

DR. MAKAROV. He's going to strangle you to death with all this flattery.

PRITYKIN. I'm talking about music . . . your work with music.

MONAKHOV. What's all this twittering for, anyway. What are you after?

PRITYKIN. I'm after nothing. If I'm twittering I'm doing so in the spirit of the lark, just for my own pleasure. The doctor here just likes to sneer because he's bad tempered and doesn't like anything in the world. Except fish. (MONAKHOV *looks off to one side.*)

MONAKHOV. The ladies seem a little tired. They're moving like snails, look.

DROBYAZGIN. It's hard on Tatyana Nikolayevna. She's old and she has to carry all that weight with her.

IVAKIN. You have some beer here.

DR. MAKAROV. Am I going to walk around? No, I am not. (*The* DOCTOR *steps over the fence.*)

MONAKHOV. Tatyana's neice doesn't seem to care for our company, very much.

DROBYAZGIN. She's a society lady. She thinks she's better than us.

PRITYKIN. She rides a horse very nicely.

MONAKHOV. Yes, that she can do, all right.

PRITYKIN. You know what we forgot? I mean before, we were talking about the pleasures of life and we left out the fair sex. Isn't that the pleasantest thing of all? I'm not talking about my wife, of course.

MONAKHOV. (*Laughs.*) Pritikin, Pritikin . . . let's go, the beer's getting warm. (MONAKHOV *and* PRITIKIN *walk around the fence.*)

PRITYKIN. It's getting late, isn't it? The mail coach should be here any minute now. We'll see what these engineers are like at last.

MONAKHOV. Yes, that should be interesting. One thing you can bet on, they'll go for a game of cards.

PRITYKIN. And a drink or two, eh? (*They pick up their glasses and drift away. Enter* DUNYA'S HUSBAND.)

MATVEY. Have they all come here just to meet the engineers?

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. They were in the next village, at the fair. But engineers are engineers. Everybody wants to be the first to know them. Important people. That's how they do things. (LYDIA IVANOVNA *enters from the* R. *She is dressed in riding clothes, with a whip.*)

LYDIA. Would one of you be kind enough to look after my horse. I'll pay you.

MATVEY. I'll do it.

LYDIA. Thank you so much. (*She goes off to the* R.)

MATVEY. Look at that!

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. (*Irritable and envious.*) If you hadn't been here. It could be me looking after that horse

right now.

MATVEY. You had your chance.

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. Listen, if she gives you a good tip, let me have five copeks, would you, would you do that?

MATVEY. What if I only get five? (*They both exit to* R. *The* DOCTOR *and* VESYOLKINA *are talking in the orchard.*)

DR. MAKAROV. (*Sullenly.*) When people are young, that's when they do things.

PAVLIN. (*Stands.*) You're forgetting about the holy fathers of the church. If I may make the observation, many of them were productive well into their later years.

DR. MAKAROV. So what?

PAVLIN. Well. Nothing. Just, they were. (*Enter* PELAGEYA PRITIKINA *and* NADIEZHDA POLIKARPOVNA, *the latter a very beautiful woman, tall with enormous, staring eyes.* TATYANA BOGAYEVSKAYA *is behind her.*)

NADIEZHDA. And then he says to her, "Alissa, my love for you moves inside of me like the ocean, and I am yours forever."

PELAGEYA. It's beautiful. You know all those wonderful love stories and they're all so beautiful, just like you dream about when you're a girl. Why don't our men know how to talk like that?

NADIEZHDA. (*Sitting on a log.*) Frenchmen are the most passionate and noble lovers, even if they are unfaithful. The Spaniards are the most fierce, even ferocious, and Italians, when they're in love they stand under your window all night and play the guitar.

BOGAYEVSKAYA. Nadiezhda, I'm beginning to think it was a big mistake that you ever learned to read.

NADIEZHDA. Maybe you've just reached an age where

none of this interests you any more, but I . . .

BOGAYEVSKAYA. But you . . . you talk and talk and talk.

PELAGEYA. Where's my husband?

BOGAYEVSKAYA. Isn't that Lydia's horse over there?

NADIEZHDA. Oh, would you introduce me to her?

BOGAYEVSKAYA. To the horse?

NADIEZHDA. No, to Lydia Pavlovna.

BOGAYEVSKAYA. You see, my dear, you've read a thousand novels and you can't even ask a simple question correctly.

NADIEZHDA. It doesn't matter. Nobody's perfect. (BOGAYEVSKAYA *goes off to the* R., *calling.*)

BOGAYEVSKAYA. Lydia . . . !

PELAGEYA. (*Softly.*) Dear oh dear, she's so rude to you.

NADIEZHDA. (*Calm.*) The gentry always talk that way to us ordinary folk. Look, here she comes. Isn't she beautiful! (BOGEVSKAYA *enters, followed by* LYDIA.)

BOGAYEVSKAYA. Lydia, dear, Nadiezhda Polikarpovna would like to meet you. (NADIEZHDA *curtsies.*) You see, she's even learned how to curtsy.

NADIEZHDA. I've seen you so often. You ride by our house every day on your horse and I admire the way you look. Like a countess or a marquise. It's very beautiful.

LYDIA. Yes, I've often seen your face in the window, and I return your admiration.

NADIEZHDA. Thank you. It's always nice to have another woman praise your beauty.

BOGAYEVSKAYA. She's not what you'd call shy.

DR. MAKAROV. (*Gloomily.*) Isn't it nicer to hear praise from a man than a woman.

NADIEZHDA. Well, of course it takes a man to fully appreciate a woman's beauty.

LYDIA. You seem so sure of yourself.

PRITYKIN. (*Shouts, off.*) Listen, can you hear the bells . . . they're coming! (*They listen. Sound of bells.*)

NADIEZHDA. (*To* LYDIA.) Aren't you longing to see what they're like?

LYDIA. Who? Shouldn't we be going home, Auntie?

NADIEZHDA. The engineers.

PRITYKIN. (*Rushes on.*) They're coming up the road.

LYDIA. (*To* NAD.) Why should I be dying to meet them?

BOGAYEVSKAYA. Let's wait a moment, my dear. I'm utterly exhausted.

NADIEZHDA. I've been awaiting their arrival as if it were my birthday.

PELAGEYA. What if they turn out to be old men?

LYDIA. (*Softly but urgently.*) Can we please go, Auntie. We look like some ridiculous reception committee. I feel absurd.

BOGAYEVSKAYA. Let's go into the orchard. I'd like a drink of something. Come along. (*All start out after her.*)

PRITYKIN. So they're here at last. It's quite interesting, isn't it, doctor.

DR. MAKAROV. Why? If they came all the way on foot, that might be interesting.

NADIEZHDA. Nonsense.

BOGAYEVSKAYA. Nadiezhda wants to see them galloping in on horseback, wearing armor and swords and long capes billowing out behind them. Come along. (*They all exit* R., *their slow conversation drowned in the sound of bells. From the* R. *appears* REDOZUBOV, *the Mayor, walking slowly, hands clasped behind his back. He is a gray-haired, severe old man with black, bushy eyebrows. He stops, listens to the noise from the mail station. Enter* PAVLIN, *taking his cap off deferentially long before they meet.*)

REDOZUBOV. Afternoon. You well?

PAVLIN. Thank you, very much so. And you, I trust the day finds you in the very best of health?

REDOZUBOV. Ask the doctor. They here yet?

PAVLIN. Indeed they are, the much awaited engineers. One's older than the other, has a moustache, seems he's had a sip or two on the way. The other one's younger and has remarkably red hair. There's a young lady, too, very beautiful and she has a maid with her, very dressed up. They came in two carriages. Three to be exact, but the last one's just luggage, except for that student, Ivakin's nephew.

REDOZUBOV. What's he doing with them?

PAVLIN. A victim of reduced circumstances. A traveller on the charity of others. (PRITIKIN *enters.*)

PRITYKIN. Good afternoon, Vassily Ivanich.

REDOZUBOV. (*Not shaking hands.*) Afternoon.

PRITYKIN. Have you come to welcome our illustrious guests?

REDOZUBOV. They're no use to me.

PRITYKIN. No, but in a general way, they'll be beneficial to the town, don't you think?

REDOZUBOV. Then let the town welcome them. (REDOZUBOV *walks off towards the station.*)

PRITYKIN. (*Softly.*) He doesn't mean that, does he?

PAVLIN. Of course not. He wants to get the contract for the railway ties.

PRITYKIN. He's a sly old fox. Now Pavlin, what you have to do is get to know the maid and see if you can find out what's what with them, just in general. Do you follow me?

PAVLIN. Of course. (*They exit towards the station. Enter* IVAKIN, *looking happy, with* STEPAN LUKIN, *the student.*)

STEPAN. So, how are things with you?

IVAKIN. I'm well, that's all I ask. But you look a little undercooked. How'd you manage to get yourself put in prison?

STEPAN. Couldn't avoid it. It's becoming a standard government requirement nowadays, like the draft. Don't worry, it doesn't mean anything. But, just to be on the safe side, I wouldn't mention it to anybody, all right, brother?

IVAKIN. Brother? Where'd you learn that? I'm not your brother, I'm your uncle.

STEPAN. You're not my uncle. You're just an old friend from childhood days. Look, I have the beginnings of a beard and your face is smooth as a baby's bottom.

IVAKIN. That's enough. Drink your beer and show a little respect for your elders. (PRITIKIN *rushes on.*) What's the trouble, Arkhip Fomich?

PRITYKIN. Nothing, they're just . . . (*Calls off.*) Hey, boy, over here. (MATVEY *enters.*) You know who I am, don't you. Run over to my house in town, tell them to send two carriages and a wagon for the luggage. Tell them to wait for me at the ferry landing. Can you remember that? Now get moving. (MATVEY *runs off, calling as he goes . . .*)

MATVEY. Hey, keep an eye on the horse for me, would you. Thanks. (PRITIKIN *runs off towards the station.*)

IVAKIN. Things are humming in the town of Verkhopolye.

STEPAN. What's with the ferry? What happened to the bridge?

IVAKIN. Had a storm a few months ago, whoosh, washed it right away.

STEPAN. Why doesn't the mayor do something about it?

IVAKIN. He's in no hurry. He owns the ferry. Say, are you in pretty tight with these engineer people?

STEPAN. I'm going to be working for them. So, what about yourself? How are the bees doing? And the guitar? And your fishing tackle?

IVAKIN. Fine, fine, everything's fine. (*Enter* DOCTOR, MONAKHOV, DROBYAZGIN, VESYOLKINA *in conversation.* IVAKIN *and* STEPAN *go off.* PAVLIN *appears, looks around and withdraws.*)

MONAKHOV. Did you see how that Pritikin moved in on them? Didn't waste any time introducing himself, what a weasel.

VESYOLKINA. Did you notice the younger one, Doctor? His hair's so red, it looks like a flaming torch.

DROBYAZGIN. And that woman has the most incredible eyes, did you notice that, Mavriky Osipovich?

VESYOLKINA. She does not. She has very ordinary eyes.

DROBYAZGIN. Well, I disagree. I think they're extraordinarily poetic.

MONAKHOV. It's not very tactful to praise one woman's beauty around another. You should know that by now.

DR. MAKAROV. It's disgusting. The way everyone's swarming around them like a bunch of mosquitos round a bonfire.

PRITYKIN. (*Off.*) Doctor, would you come here for a moment, please.

DR. MAKAROV. I'm busy.

PRITYKIN. (*Off.*) We need your professional assistance.

DR. MAKAROV. Damnit all. (DOCTOR *starts off.*)

MONAKHOV. Now you'll get to meet them too, lucky so and so. (VESYOLKINA *goes out after the* DOCTOR.

TSYGANOV *meets her as she exits. He is an elegantly dressed gentleman, slightly tipsy.* VESYOLKINA *is embarrassed and turns abruptly away from him.* TSYGANOV *raises an eyebrow in surprise.* DROBYAZGIN *bows to* TSYGANOV.)

TSYGANOV. (*Touching hat in return.*) Greetings. And to whom have I the honor?

DROBYAZGIN. (*Embarrassed.*) Porphiry . . . I mean, clerk, Department of Taxation, Porphiry Drobyazgin.

TSYGANOV. Ah, delighted. Tell me, does this charming town happen to have a hotel?

DROBYAZGIN. A very fine one . . . it even has a billiards room. And we have a high school for girls.

TSYGANOV. Really? A high school for girls. I'll probably have no immediate use for that. Do you have any such thing as a cab?

DROBYAZGIN. Three. We have three of them. They always wait in front of the church.

TSYGANOV. (*Blancing towards the town.*) I don't suppose they'd hear me if I called.

DROBYAZGIN. I shouldn't think so. After all, the town's two miles away.

TSYGANOV. Pity. (*Enter* DUNYA'S HUSBAND *from* L. PAVLIN *drifts on.*)

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. A little help, your excellency, alms for a poor, sick man. . . . (TSYGANOV *finds a coin.*)

TSYGANOV. Here you are. (DUNYA'S HUSBAND *shudders with delight.*)

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. God grant . . . bless you, sir, god bless you and yours. (DUNYA'S HUSBAND *exits.*)

TSYGANOV. Is he a drunk?

DROBYAZGIN. No, he really is poor and always sick, and his wife ran off and now he's . . . (MONAKHOV *comes over.*)

MONAKHOV. Excuse me, sir, if I may make so bold . . .

TSYGANOV. Feel free.

MONAKHOV. Mavriky Osipovich Monakhov. I'm the tax inspector for the district.

TSYGANOV. An honor. Sergei Nikolayich Tsyganov.

MONAKHOV. I feel it is my duty to inform you that the hotel here is filthy and overrun with bugs.

DROBYAZGIN. It's the shame of the town, a pesthole.

MONAKHOV. There is only one place in Verkhopolye for a gentleman to stay, and that's Madame Bogayevskaya's house. I'm sure I can arrange for her to rent it out. I'll take care of everyting. (MONAKHOV *leaves quickly.* ANNA FYODOROVNA *and* STYOPA *are entering.*)

TSYGANOV. (*After* MONAKHOV.) Just a moment, I don't really . . . that's very kind of you, but . . .

MONAKHOV. I'll be right back, leave everything to me. . . . (MONAKHOV *exits.*)

DROBYAZGIN. I'll get him back.

TSYGANOV. No, no, please. This is absurd. He's run off now.

ANNA. What's the matter?

TSYGANOV. The natives, they're smothering us with kindness. And, by the way, congratulations, there's no hotel in town.

ANNA. There seems to be difficulty even getting to the town. Some problem with the ferryboat. (TSYGANOV *beckons off.*)

TSYGANOV. Come here a moment, would you? (DUNYA'S HUSBAND *enters.*) Tell me, good sir, does this town have any local wonders that mustn't be missed while one is here?

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. Crayfish, sir. We have giant, enormous sized jumbo crayfish. (STYOPA *looks intently at* DUNYA'S HUSBAND.)

TSYGANOV. Do you? That's fascinating. But I should think they live more in the river than in the town itself, no?

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. Oh, yes, yes, always in the river. They're an animal that lives in the water.

STYOPA. (*Softly.*) Anna Fyodorovna . . . that man . . . it's him.

ANNA. Who?

STYOPA. My father. What'll I do now?

TSYGANOV. And in the town proper? Does anything interesting live there?

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. The firemen. They all play trumpets. Brass trumpets. The tax collector taught them how.

ANNA. Don't say anything, stand behind me.

TSYGANOV. Do they play very loudly . . . ?

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. They give it everything they've got. . . .

STYOPA. I'll go back to the mail coach. He hasn't seen me yet.

TSYGANOV. Well, so much for the pleasures of Verkhopolye. Thank you for your time. Here, take this.

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. Your excellency . . . (DUNYA'S HUSBAND *tries to kiss* TSYGANOV'S *hand.*)

TSYGANOV. (*With revulsion.*) Please, that's not necessary. You can go now. (DUNYA'S HUSBAND *exits.* STYOPA *gazes after him.*)

STYOPA. A beggar . . . My father's a beggar. I told you he was bound to be here. I told you I shouldn't come, I told you not to bring me. I told you!

ANNA. Stop worrying, Styopa, he won't bother you while you're with us.

STYOPA. I'm afraid of him. He drove my mother mad.

TSYGANOV. And what's all this about, may I ask?

ANNA. That was her father.

TSYGANOV. Aha . . . now that's interesting.

ANNA. Is that all you can say? Go ahead, Styopa, go back to the coach.

TSYGANOV. We'll look after you, don't worry. (CHERKOON *shouts from offstage.*)

CHERKOON. Anna, Anna, come here. (TSYGANOV *looks in the direction of the shout.* ANNA *calls back to* CHERKOON.)

ANNA. What is it? I'm coming.

TSYGANOV. My God, I don't believe this. (TSYGANOV, *delighted, stretches out his arms towards* LYDIA PAVLOVNA, *who is approaching.*) Lydia Pavlovna, is it really you. This is incredible.

LYDIA. (*Entering.*) Dear old Sergei . . .

TSYGANOV. You, here in Terra del Fuego among the savages. How in the world? (VESYOLKINA *has returned to the garden. She walks alone, fanning her face with some flowers.* DROBYAZGIN *appears and they walk side by side, eavesdropping.*)

LYDIA. I've come to stay with my aunt. It's wonderful to see you again. Still fond of the ladies, I see.

TSYGANOV. Yes, but no luck yet. The first creature I met in this Siberia was a man, and he turns out to be the tax collector. (*Indicates* ANNA, *who is offstage.*)

LYDIA. And is that your wife?

TSYGANOV. Wife? I've never encumbered myself with such an extravagant possession, and I never shall. And your esteemed husband, where is he?

LYDIA. I haven't the faintest idea.

TSYGANOV. Well, bravo, a free woman at last. Are you?

VESYOLKINA. (*Overhearing this, to* DROBYAZGIN.) You see, what did I tell you?

LYDIA. You don't have to shout it to the whole world.

TSYGANOV. Have you met my partner yet? Georges, come here. (CHERKOON *approaches. To* LYDIA.) His manner is very bold and his hair is very red. (*To* CHERKOON.) Guess who I've run into here, Georges. You remember I told you about a certain young lady?

CHERKOON. Yes, I remember. In fact, he talked about you a great deal.

LYDIA. How nice. . . .

CHERKOON. But of course I never expected to meet you, expecially not in a dreary hole like this.

LYDIA. I take it you don't like the town?

CHERKOON. I don't like the countryside, period.

TSYGANOV. Scandal and excitement, that's what he likes. (NADIEZHDA *enters, stares at* CHERKOON. *She is motionless, face frozen like stone.*)

CHERKOON. Oh, yes, it's a pretty little scene. Charming little houses nestled among charming little trees. Somehow it makes you want to put your fists through it.

TSYGANOV. Why don't you introduce Lydia Pavlovna to your wife, Georges.

CHERKOON. Oh, certainly. May I?

LYDIA. I'd be delighted. But I think you're a bit hard on this poor little town.

TSYGANOV. You see, it takes a brute like this to make you appreciate the tender and sensitive soul of yours truly.

CHERKOON. When I see something I either like it or hate it.

TSYGANOV. See? A man without a single redeeming quality.

LYDIA. A man with no good qualities. Well, at least that's something definite. (TSYGANOV *notices* NADIEZHDA.)

CHERKOON. (*Calls.*) Anna. She'll probably love the view. She has a weakness for serene and peaceful landscapes.

LYDIA. I think a lot of people would find this spot quite poetic.

CHERKOON. Yes, everyone bloodless, idle and tired of living.

TSYGANOV. Who is that stately ship sailing towards us with your wife? (*Enter* ANNA *and* BOGAYEVSKAYA.)

LYDIA. That's my aunt.

CHERKOON. Anna, this is Lydia Pavlovna Bogayevskaya.

ANNA. How lovely to meet you.

BOGAYEVSKAYA. Well, everyone seems to have met. They've just rented the first floor of my house, Lydia.

ANNA. I'm glad it's all been taken care of so quickly . . . and conveniently.

TSYGANOV. Long live the architect of these wonderful arrangements, the one and only collector of taxes himself.

LYDIA. That's his wife in the orchard.

TSYGANOV. His wife? Her? Hmmmmm . . . (TSYGANOV *stares at* NEDIEZHDA.)

ANNA. I hope we're there soon. I'm exhausted.

BOGAYEVSKAYA. The ferry's on its way. (NADIEZHDA *walks off slowly.*)

CHERKOON. And look, horses waiting across the river already. What's that timber merchant's name. He's the one who arranged it.

BOGAYEVSKAYA. Pritikin. I'll go over in the skiff, Lydia. I want to make sure the house is ready for them.

ANNA. Please, don't worry about us.

CHERKOON. We're not completely helpless.

LYDIA. (*To* BOG.) Wait a moment. (*To* ANNA.) Do you ride?

ANNA. Heavens, no.

LYDIA. That's a pity. I was going to offer you my horse. There's a shallow place up the river where you can cross.

ANNA. That's very kind, but I'm afraid of horses. I saw one throw a little boy once. He was killed. Since then I've always had this feeling horses want to kill the person riding them. They're just waiting.

LYDIA. But you travel in a carriage. You're not afraid of that?

ANNA. It's different. There's a coachman between me and the horse.

CHERKOON. If that's supposed to be clever, Anna, I'm afraid it's rather feeble.

ANNA. I'm not trying to be clever.

TSYGANOV. (*To* LYDIA.) So, we meet again.

CHERKOON. I wish you would try sometimes, just for a change.

TSYGANOV. It's a miracle sent from above. . . .

LYDIA. Just an ordinary coincidence that proves the world's too small.

BOGAYEVSKAYA. (*To* ANNA.) Come over here, I want to show you our town. It's really quite charming. (*She takes* ANNA *to the fence.*)

TSYGANOV. You know you're more beautiful than ever. And your eyes, there's something different in your eyes.

LYDIA. Boredom, probably.

CHERKOON. Are you bored?

LYDIA. Life doesn't seem particularly interesting at the moment. (*Enter* REDOZUBOV *from the direction of the station. He approaches, coughs. He raises his hand to his hat to salute, then drops it quickly as if someone may have noticed this subservient gesture.*)

CHERKOON. I didn't expect that from you.

LYDIA. Why not?

CHERKOON. I don't know. I suppose I just didn't think you were the kind of person who'd see life that way.

LYDIA. Life is just people. I've seen plenty of them. After a while they seem more and more alike.

REDOZUBOV. I'm Vassily Ivanov Redozubov. I'm the mayor of this town. The mayor.

CHERKOON. Well?

REDOZUBOV. I want to speak to the head engineer. Which one of you's in charge?

TSYGANOV. We work together. We're equals, as in 'equality', if you can grasp the general concept.

REDOZUBOV. Will you be needing timber for the railway? I can supply you . . .

CHERKOON. (*Dryly.*) We'll be ready to discuss business next week, not before.

REDOZUBOV. (*Pause.*) I don't think you heard what I said.

CHERKOON. What did you say?

REDOZUBOV. I'm the mayor. I'm the head of the town.

CHERKOON. What's that got to do with us? We don't live here.

REDOZUBOV. (*Controlled.*) I am sixty-three years of age. I am the churchwarden. The entire town is under my control.

CHERKOON. Congratulations . . .

TSYGANOV. Your honor, please, our deepest respects to you and your town, and I assure you, as soon as we've had a chance to make ourselves comfortable here we'll look forward to availing ourselves of your many rare qualities. . . .

CHERKOON. But for now you can leave us alone. When we need you we'll send for you, thank you. (REDOZUBOV *measures* CHERKOON *with a murderous look, then walks away in silence.*)

ANNA. Why did you have to be so rude, Yegor? He's an old man, after all.

CHERKOON. He's an old bully is what he is. Head of the town. More like the other end of it. I know his kind. Arrogant, greedy, stubborn old horse's ass.

TSYGANOV. (*To* LYDIA.) So, how do you like my fiery friend here?

LYDIA. Not very much, I'm afraid.

BOGAYEVSKAYA. Come, Lydia, we should be starting back.

ANNA. It's just his manner. Underneath he's really . . .

CHERKOON. Gentle and sensitive and kind, is that what you were going to say? Because it's not true. I'm exactly what I seem to be.

LYDIA. Good-bye. Oh, dear, that man's handling the horse all wrong. (LYDIA *goes off quickly* R., *followed by* BOGAYEVSKAYA.)

BOGAYEVSKAYA. We'll be expecting you shortly.

TSYGANOV. Thank you very much indeed. We won't be long. Georges, you're looking at the town like Attila at the gates of Rome. Are you planning a conquest?

CHERKOON. God, what a dismal place. That woman . . . has she had lovers?

ANNA. Yegor, that's awful.

TSYGANOV. Georges, what a delicate way you have with words.

CHERKOON. (*To* ANNA.) What? You're shocked? Lots of women have lovers, didn't you know that?

ANNA. But people don't talk about it like that.

CHERKOON. *People* don't. *I* do. You think it's immoral?

ANNA. It's just not polite. It's vulgar.

CHERKOON. Really? I thought I might have offended your morals, but it's just a question of manners is it? Well, Sergei, has she?

TSYGANOV. Lovers? I don't like to think about it, frankly. And if anyone whispered something in my ear, I wouldn't believe them. (*Enter* PRITIKIN *and* DUNYA'S HUSBAND.)

PRITYKIN. Everything's ready if you'll just follow me. I've already had your luggage loaded on the ferry.

TSYGANOV. Well, you have been busy, haven't you.

PRITYKIN. Allow me . . .

TSYGANOV. Our deepest gratitude . . .

PRITYKIN. It's nothing, nothing at all. The very least we could do. Hospitality. A country welcome. . . .

TSYGANOV. You know you must be one of the five or six most wonderfully friendly men I've ever met. (*They exit together.*)

CHERKOON. Let's go. (ANNA *takes* CHERKOON'S *arm.*)

ANNA. Why so gloomy all of a sudden?

CHERKOON. I'm tired.

ANNA. That's not true. You're never tired.

CHERKOON. All right, then, I'm in love, is that better?

ANNA. (*Softly.*) Yegor, why do you always have to be so unpleasant? Why?

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. Your excellency . . .

CHERKOON. Get away from here . . . (ANNA *gives him a coin.*)

ANNA. Here, take this. (ANNA *and* CHERKOON *exit.* MATVEY *jumps up.*)

MATVEY. What did she give you?

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. Twenty copeks. That makes one rouble, twenty and the day is young.

MATVEY. Damn. Ten copeks, that's all I got.

PRITYKIN. (*Off, yelling.*) Hey, you there . . .

MATVEY. Coming. (MATVEY *goes.* PAVLIN *steps over the fence.*)

PAVLIN. Did you say one rouble twenty?

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. (*Timid.*) One-twenty, yes.

PAVLIN. Let me see. Hmmm, you're right. And you haven't lifted a finger for it. Mangey old gutter rat. Get out of here. Wait a moment. I'll tell you a little something. Do you want to hear this?

DUNYA'S HUSBAND. I haven't done anything Pavlin Savelich . . . (*Enter* REDOZUBOV.)

PAVLIN. What are you doing here? I told you to stop bothering everyone. Get moving. Go! (DUNYA'S HUSBAND *exits.*)

REDOZUBOV. They gone?

PAVLIN. Yes.

REDOZUBOV. You talked to their maid. What did you find out?

PAVLIN. All sorts of things. General conversation. She's not a highly talkative individual. I gave her a rouble at one point to see if that might loosen her tongue a little. . . .

REDOZUBOV. Damn fool. Now she can say you tried to bribe her.

PAVLIN. Ah, well, no, you see, Vassily Ivanich, what I mean precisely is that the rouble was never actually given to her, the actual giving of the rouble, the event itself happened in my mind, if you see what I mean. I found myself thinking, 'Perhaps if I gave her a rouble' and then I thought to myself, 'No, Pavlin, this girl is too spoiled, nothing will help. . . .' (REDOZUBOV *stares at the town, not listening.*) She's a runaway. Did you know that, Vassily Ivanich? Dunya's husband is her rightful father. I got it out of her. . . .

REDOZUBOV. (*Abruptly, severely.*) And did you know, Pavlin Savelich, the governor himself shakes hands with me. The governor.

PAVLIN. Of course he does. Everyone is very well

aware of that fact. (*Pause.* STEPAN's *voice heard inside through the window.*)

REDOZUBOV. Whose voice is that?

PAVLIN. Ivakin's nephew, the student.

REDOZUBOV. Shhhh, quiet. (*They listen. A dog is howling somewhere in the distance. A crowcall.*)

STEPAN. (*Off.*) Just wait'll we finish pushing through with the railway. That'll burn all the old rot out of this town, you'll see. (STEPAN *laughs.*)

REDOZUBOV. (*Softly.*) You hear that?

PAVLIN. (*With conviction.*) It's nonsense.

REDOZUBOV. Remember his words. Remember them. (*Beat. He exits, followed by* PAVLIN.)

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

The garden of TATIANA BOGAYEVSKAYA'S *house. A canvas awning is stretched out between the trees over a very large, simple, unpainted wooden table. To the* L. *is a house with a wide path leading up to it. At the end of the garden a fence.*

CHERKOON *is seated at the table with a pile of papers, maps and plans in front of him. Under the trees to the* L. *in a wicker chair sits* ANNA *with a book in her lap. She stretches.*

ANNA. Aren't you hot?

CHERKOON. Of course.

ANNA. Still no sign of Sergei. You always end up doing all the work, but you always want to be on the same jobs with him. Why?

CHERKOON. (*Without looking up.*) He knows far more than I do. He has experience.

ANNA. But he's so . . . degenerate.

CHERKOON. His morals don't interest me. His knowledge does.

ANNA. (*Pause.*) I wish everyone here wasn't so nosey. Always spying on us, eavesdropping. They're so naive.

CHERKOON. They're idiots, that's all.

ANNA. Look, there's someone in the next garden staring at us through the fence. I can see two eyes, gleaming at us.

CHERKOON. Who cares. Let them gleam. (*Enter* STEPAN.)

STEPAN. Well, I've hired that boy, Matvey Gogin. I have his papers here.

ANNA. I'll take them.

CHERKOON. Don't give them to her, she'll shove them away in a corner somewhere and forget where she put them. It's not funny, she always does that.

STEPAN. My god, the people here . . . They belong in a museum. It's enough to make you a pessimist for life.

CHERKOON. For a working man, pessimism is about as useful as white gloves. What's he like, this Matvey?

STEPAN. Not too stupid. See for yourself, here he comes. Do you need me here? (*Enter* MATVEY, *dressed more tidily than in the first act.*)

CHERKOON. No. (STEPAN *exits. To* MATVEY.) Well, what do you have to say for yourself?

MATVEY. I wanted to thank you for giving me this job, your excellency.

CHERKOON. I'm not an excellency. My name is Yegor Petrov and I'm a peasant by birth, just like yourself. You're going to work for me, I'm going to pay you for your labor. If you're lazy I'll fire you and if you cheat I'll have you run in. Do we understand each other?

MATVEY. Yes, you excel . . . Yegor Petrov, sir. I'll do my best. You won't be sorry.

CHERKOON. We'll see about that. You can go now. (MATVEY *hesitates, thinking.*)

MATVEY. Thank you, sir, thank you.

CHERKOON. (*Glancing up.*) What?

MATVEY. Sir?

CHERKOON. Nothing . . . go, go. (MATVEY *exits.*)

ANNA. Yegor, you're so hard on everyone.

CHERKOON. That's how they were with me. (*Pause.*)

ANNA. It was very kind of Tatiana Nikolayevna to rent us her house, don't you think? Do you like her?

CHERKOON. She's all right. I like her niece better.

ANNA. Why do you always have to tease me.

CHERKOON. Why do you let me get away with it. Make a scene. (GRISHA REDOZUBOV's *head appears over the fence.*)

ANNA. (*Alarmed.*) Look, Yegor, look.

CHERKOON. (*Surprised.*) What do you want?

GRISHA. Nothing. I was just . . . just looking, that's all.

CHERKOON. Who are you?

GRISHA. Grisha Redozubov. The mayor's my father. We're neighbors.

ANNA. I love the way he smiles. Invite him over, Yegor.

CHERKOON. Well, come on over. Let's get acquainted.

GRISHA. I can't climb over. I'm too fat.

ANNA. (*Laughing.*) Why don't you just come through the gate.

GRISHA. You mean out into the street and . . . and back in again?

ANNA. Yes.

GRISHA. O.K. (GRISHA *vanishes. Enter* TSYGANOV.)

ANNA. He's hilarious.

CHERKOON. So, now you'll have some entertainment.

TSYGANOV. I tried to have a nap but I couldn't sleep, damnit. The flies here, they're incredible . . . buzz buzz, smashing into the windows, bang, splat, landing on your nose, crawling into you ear . . .

CHERKOON. Not to mention the hangover after last night's festivities.

TSYGANOV. Ah, yes, they certainly do welcome you with a vengeance in these parts. What the hell was that drink they served?

CHERKOON. Pritikin called it Elephant Poison.

TSYGANOV. Well named. You know, George, I think it might have eaten away some of my brain cells. All day long I've found myself thinking about that little brunette, what was her name, chorus girl at the operetta . . . drowned herself in the Moika. Did you ever meet her?

CHERKOON. No.

TSYGANOV. (*Thoughtfully.*) Petite, lovely eyes . . . just now when I was executing this particularly persistant fly, de-winging it with my cigarette tip, I was suddenly reminded of her. What *was* her name. (ANNA *looks towards the house, starts.*)

ANNA. What on earth is that? Oh god no, look . . .

TSYGANOV. I must be hallucinating. (GRISHA *enters wearing a heavy fur coat.*)

GRISHA. Made it. Whew, it's hot.

CHERKOON. You damn fool, what's that for?

GRISHA. What? Oh, the coat. I'm called for the army this fall. I wear this coat, it'll steam all the fat off me and I'll be so thin and weak they won't want me. It's my father's idea.

TSYGANOV. Brilliant.

CHERKOON. And you let him make a complete fool out of you.

GRISHA. What can I do? He has a temper, you should see it, just like that . . . (*Snaps fingers.*) He'd bust my head open. Anyway, maybe I will get real thin and the army really won't take me.

CHERKOON. For god sake take off the coat, you look hideous. Aren't you ashamed of yourself? Every girl in town must be laughing at you. You tell your father from now on you're not going to wear a fur coat in this heat wave.

GRISHA. Tell him?! Me?! You tell him. I'd like to see that.

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