

Tanya-Tanya

by Olga Mukhina

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CHARACTERS

TÁNYA

IVÁNOV

THE BOY

THE GIRL

VASÍLY (Vásya) OKHLOBYSTIN

ZÍNA — a woman whose youth was ruined by geometry

A WORKER

Part One

Women Always Laugh and Dance

Okhlobystin has a large home in Biberevo. There is a large garden around it with large apple trees and old benches that have sunk their roots deep into the ground. The weather is marvelous every day in the garden. Birds are always singing and in the pond there are many large perch. The house is filled with guests and women. The women are always laughing and dancing. Okhlobystin loves them with all his heart.

SCENE ONE

Ivanov Okhlobystin's house. Gay, loud music plays. Zina and Okhlobystin dance and laugh. Ivanov and the Girl sit at a large table. They are silent.

Zina, what do you love?

OKHLOBYSTIN

To dance until I drop!

ZINA

Is that all?

OKHLOBYSTIN

Nothing else interests me!

ZINA

You have a great body!

OKHLOBYSTIN

You're a smart-aleck!

ZINA

I'm going to bite you!

OKHLOBYSTIN

ZINA

Ha-ha!

OKHLOBYSTIN

You don't believe me?

ZINA

(Sits at the table) My God, what is this? He's going to eat me! You'd be better off eating some chicken!

OKHLOBYSTIN. Wrong! Chicken is not better.

ZINA

You just think so.

OKHLOBYSTIN

What hands!

ZINA

(Wipes her hands on a napkin) What a maniac! Now what are you embracing me for?

OKHLOBYSTIN

No particular reason. For the beauty of the feeling.

ZINA

We don't need that kind of beauty.

OKHLOBYSTIN

You don't think so?

ZINA

Comrade Okhlobystin! I don't understand you.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Where do you live, Zina?

ZINA

Let's say - Lenin Street.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Maybe we could say something else?

ZINA

Maybe. Such as?

OKHLOBYSTIN

Let's say I'm going to kiss you.

ZINA

Let's say you won't get away with it.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Why should we say that?

ZINA

Because I'm not such an easy nut to crack.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Zina, Zina. I've had such a hard life. I've suffered so much, and now I've simply gotten old. But you...

ZINA

Everything will be all right.

OKHLOBYSTIN

May I kiss you?

ZINA

No. You aren't old at all. You're a wonderful person. You just drink too much.

OKHLOBYSTIN

May I kiss you, then?

ZINA

No. You have your whole life ahead of you. You will be happy.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Maybe you are my happiness?

ZINA

Don't make jokes like that.

OKHLOBYSTIN

I'm not joking. I'm going to kiss you.

ZINA

No.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Leave me some hope at least.

ZINA

Let's have a drink.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Let's drink to you.

ZINA

Everything is going to be okay.

They drink.

OKHLOBYSTIN

You know what, Zina...

ZINA

What?

OKHLOBYSTIN

I'm still going to bite you.

ZINA

Comrade Okhlobystin!

*AND THE GIRL LAUGHS, SHE LAUGHS
LIKE A YOUNG GIRL*

*Ivanov looks at the Girl and
smiles.*

GIRL

Careful, I'll spill my wine.

Are you talking to me?

IVANOV

Yes.

GIRL

We are divided by an expanse of people and salads.

IVANOV

Apples roll across the tablecloth as apples do!

GIRL

INDEED, APPLES ROLL AS APPLES DO

Do you dance?

IVANOV

Of course.

GIRL

Do you smoke?

IVANOV

I don't know.

GIRL

Do you want an orange?

IVANOV

Yes.

GIRL

Do you want some candy?

IVANOV

Yes.

GIRL

*ORANGES FALL FROM THE TABLE AS
ORANGES WILL, AND ROLL ACROSS THE
FLOOR*

Take these apples, grapes, pears and ice cream and be happy

IVANOV

Thank you

GIRL

That's not the half of it
IVANOV

How frightening
GIRL

What's your name
IVANOV

What's yours
GIRL

Where have you
IVANOV

What about you
GIRL

That can't be
IVANOV

That's funny
GIRL

*THE GIRL LAUGHS, EATS PEACHES AND
THROWS THE PITS OUT AN OPEN WINDOW*

*THE BRANCHES OF BLOOMING PEACH
TREES PEER IN THE WINDOWS
THEY LAUGH AT EVERYTHING*

If today it wasn't
IVANOV

Nobody would find out
GIRL

Is that sad?
IVANOV

It isn't if you don't know about it.
GIRL

Color?
IVANOV

Hazel. Sound?

GIRL

Violin.

IVANOV

Is that winter?

GIRL

Fall. Is that laughter?

IVANOV

Yes, and it's red, blue and very childlike

GIRL

It's also what you know nothing about

IVANOV

Or is it the wind, evening and rain?

GIRL

*OUTSIDE THE WINDOW THE RAIN POURS,
THE RAIN POURS*

Four-eight-nine-eight-three

IVANOV

*NOTHING IS VISIBLE THE WIND HOWLS
THE EVENING GOES DARK*

DARKNESS COVERS EVERYTHING

SHADING EVERYTHING IN A DARK COLOR

(Laughs) I don't know what I'm saying anymore

GIRL

AND THE GIRL LAUGHS AND LAUGHS

and I don't know myself what's so funny what I found so funny I just feel good and happy – the young girl laughs and laughs like young girls laugh without stopping she can't stop at all this young girl is so happy

ZINA

(Loudly) What a sad song. Do you hear that? What's it about?

OKHLOBYSTIN

All songs are about the same thing, Zina.

ZINA

What?

OKHLOBYSTIN

Once upon a time there lived two lonely people. A Man and a Woman.

ZINA

(Hums) "Two lonely souls happened to meet..."

OKHLOBYSTIN

They met one day and each thought about the other. They spent a few days together...

ZINA

Comrade Okhlobystin!

IVANOV

A few silent nights.

ZINA

Were they afraid of each other?

IVANOV

Each was afraid of losing.

OKHLOBYSTIN

They sat in the bathtub facing each other.

IVANOV

Gazing into each other's eyes.

GIRL

Thinking about each other.

IVANOV

Not about someone else?

GIRL

As friends will do?

They laugh.

OKHLOBYSTIN

And then they never met again.

IVANOV

They never even said anything.

GIRL

That wasn't that Man and Woman, was it?

IVANOV

She didn't come from my rib.

GIRL

It wasn't me?

ZINA

It wasn't me?

Okhlobystin invites the Girl to dance. Ivanov shouts after them.

IVANOV

I love Tanya! Tanya is beautiful! She sleeps on a velvet pillow, her skin is white, the velvet is black with night, a dark, cold night!

ZINA

(Powers her face) White skin.

IVANOV

Tanya is everywhere. Now and even when she is not here. Her eyes peer out from behind books in a room. Her eyes are beautiful, astonishing!

ZINA

(Looking in the mirror) Beautiful eyes.

IVANOV

She is in every aroma and she is in every one of my cells. Every centimeter of me has been kissed by Tanya, every centimeter has been kissed by Tanya.

ZINA

Every centimeter...

IVANOV

Tanya's warmth spans every distance. I sense it as a dog would a scent. Every step I take towards her breathes, every stride breaks into a run, my every breath hurries me on. I love Tanya!

ZINA

Every breath...

OKHLOBYSTIN

(Shouts) But she's so young!

IVANOV

(Quietly) There's something in this silliness, in this laughter of hers, in this nonsense.

ZINA

She's a serious girl. She talks about poetry.

IVANOV

She asks what I think about love. (Laughs)

ZINA

She asks something else, too.

IVANOV

I don't think so. But there's something in this, in her young body, in those slender arms. Maybe it's my happiness?

ZINA

Her name is Tanya, too.

IVANOV

What a coincidence.

ZINA

Give this girl some asters.

IVANOV

What if she doesn't like asters?

GIRL

What if I have some tea with him first? And then some cake, and then something to drink, maybe wine, and then, maybe, show a picture album, afterwards maybe?

IVANOV

Here are some asters.

GIRL

Thank you.

You like them? IVANOV

Yes. I love asters. GIRL

They are silent.

I don't like them. ZINA

*A VASE FALLS FROM THE TABLE AND
BREAKS WITH AN EVENING PEAL SADLY
SQUEALING BEFORE FALLING FROM THE
TABLE WITH A PEAL AND THE EVENING
VASE — VIOLET AND PORCELAIN —
BREAKS WITH A SAD PEAL*

How terrible GIRL

Tanya IVANOV

What GIRL

My wife is also Tanya IVANOV

I know GIRL

How IVANOV

I know everything about you, sir GIRL

Why so formal IVANOV

So there GIRL

Lock me away then IVANOV

GIRL
 What for

IVANOV
 I'm a miscreant. I'll pervert you.

They are silent.

GIRL
 Pervert me.

Zina and Okhlobystin collect the sad evening shards. Okhlobystin pinches Zina.

ZINA
 (Tempestuously) Comrade Okhlobystin! I don't understand you!

Tanya

SCENE TWO

The Girl

Zina and Okhlobystin dance. Tanya and the Girl sit at the table. The Girl holds a bouquet of asters in her hand.

TANYA
 It's so fun drinking champagne
 A third eye seems green
 A third hand seems useless
 When you remember you remember nothing
 And think you think nothing
 You walk down the street and shout. Happily. You're kissing
 someone.

OKHLOBYSTIN
 Zina! I'll cover you with kisses!

ZINA
 Comrade Okhlobystin!

GIRL
 I was walking down the street eating an orange, throwing peels in all the puddles, littering up the town. Nobody saw me and I was not ashamed. I was happy. It tasted good and life was grand.

I smiled and thought, "What a life!" Afterwards my hands smelled of oranges, and afterwards I had the feeling I needed nothing else...

TANYA

A white road lies on the black earth and the house burns like a red sun. It's spring! Riding around Moscow in a black car and drinking champagne, now that's what I call fun!

OKHLOBYSTIN

In his time my best friend Guidon said to his future wife Klava, "Klava, you're an elephant. I love elephants. I always want to go up to them and crawl all over them."

ZINA

After that she married him?

OKHLOBYSTIN

Without batting an eyelash.

ZINA

Strange woman. He's no better.

OKHLOBYSTIN

What about me?

ZINA

You're a swine, Okhlobystin.

OKHLOBYSTIN

And you're an elephant, Zina. I love elephants. How can I not want to crawl all over you?!

ZINA

What a swine!

GIRL

(Singing) Sha-la-la-la.

TANYA

Dropping pebbles into a cup and playing happy tunes on a flute

GIRL

Look out the window at the trolley wires – the neighbors' windows say, "Look out the window"

TANYA

Who did you choose? Whose flirtatiousness? Whose eyes?

GIRL
You are very pretty.

TANYA
You are very pretty.

GIRL
I like you very much.

TANYA
I like you very much.

OKHLOBYSTIN
There was no prettier woman on earth than Klava until you appeared, Zina. I am at your feet!

ZINA
Oh, knock it off.

OKHLOBYSTIN
Klava's legs don't have a chance against yours.

ZINA
Legs like any other legs. Perfectly normal legs. What's got into you?

OKHLOBYSTIN
Believe me.

ZINA
(Squealing) Take your hands off me, Okhlobystin!

OKHLOBYSTIN
Zina.

ZINA
I'm warning you for the last time!

Zina leaves angrily, hiding her legs under the hoops of her skirt. Okhlobystin disappears after her.

GIRL
This morning I was riding the subway. He looked past me. He was taller and looked straight over my head. Squinting his eyes. He didn't notice me. I also looked off into the distance so that I wouldn't see he wasn't looking at me. I smiled a little and felt

like an idiot. I felt so sad that he didn't care, that he didn't know anything, that in two seconds he'd be gone, that I'd get off the train before him, that basically – I didn't love him. I hated him.

How did you meet?
TANYA

At somebody's house.
GIRL

Here?
TANYA

Yes. Just like you. He gazed into my eyes all evening long.
GIRL

What about you?
TANYA

Me? I smiled.
GIRL

All evening long?
TANYA

Yes.
GIRL

They laugh.

He's different with me. Not like he is with other women.

Why's that?
TANYA

Because I'm special. I'm not like them.
GIRL

Do you love him?
TANYA

I can't live without him.
GIRL

Sometimes I think he's silly. He sits there in his chair, hunched over and muttering something. I look at him and think,
TANYA

that can't be him. That's not my man anymore. Or maybe its not any man at all. Your name is Tanya, too.

GIRL

Tanya.

TANYA

What a coincidence. I love my husband very much, too. We met on the beach. Great big dragonflies like that were flying all around.

GIRL

At the seashore?

TANYA

A bell rang but everybody was dancing and nobody heard it. I opened the door and he was standing there. We danced all night long.

GIRL

At somebody's house?

TANYA

He came running at me and nearly knocked me off my feet.

GIRL

Outdoors?

TANYA

He grabbed me, spun me around, set me down on the table and shouted, "Let's have a song for the most beautiful woman in the world!" The band played something very lively.

GIRL

A restaurant?

TANYA

I had to give him something in connection with my job, so I called him and we met by the movie theater. Then we went to see a movie.

GIRL

You mean it was at work, then.

TANYA

The subway. We saw each other and that's how we met.

GIRL

That's so cool!

They are silent.

She poured tea (slowly) and spoke so gently

TANYA

Her blue eyes show the way (they are still trusting). I don't hear anything. I KNOW, THAT'S HOW HE LOOKS AT HER

GIRL

If only I could embrace her, tell her everything, be her smell, her color, her laughter

TANYA

I KNOW IT ONLY TOO WELL

GIRL

Erase all the years ahead so I could be her right now

TANYA. WHAT DO I DO NOW?

GIRL

The room smelled of her perfume

TANYA

Maybe I should poison her with something?

GIRL

Tanya

TANYA

Tanya

GIRL

You are very beautiful

TANYA

You are very beautiful

I like you very much

GIRL

I like you very much

TANYA

They take each other by the hand.

My face

GIRL

my

TANYA

My hand

GIRL

my

TANYA

My body

GIRL

my

TANYA

How do you

GIRL

you

TANYA

How do I

GIRL

i

TANYA

SCENE THREE

The Boy

Okhlobystin, Zina, the Girl, the Boy.

I love you, Okhlobystin.

ZINA

OKHLOBYSTIN

I'm not the one you need, Zina.

ZINA

I love you, Okhlobystin.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Zina, I'd be the end of you.

ZINA

No.

OKHLOBYSTIN

What do you need in a husband? You need a rich husband. I'm broke and empty-handed. And my name is Okhlobystin.

ZINA

It's a fine name for a kitten.

OKHLOBYSTIN

You've got such great legs you'd never be able to live with me. With legs like that, you should be walking on carpets of money.

ZINA

Have pity on me, Okhlobystin. I want to marry you.

OKHLOBYSTIN

It's not the time for it, Zina. I'm a destitute, impoverished man. Open your eyes, look a little closer.

ZINA

I always see everything even with my eyes closed.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Zina, Zina, Zina. I don't like talks like this.

ZINA

Sometimes they're necessary.

OKHLOBYSTIN

The kids are getting bored. Let's have a drink!

They drink, then are silent.

ZINA

Why don't people fly?

OKHLOBYSTIN

What are you going to ask next, Zina?

ZINA

If I were a bird, I would fly away from you.

BOY

You can't fly from love, you can't hide from it.

ZINA

Is that a song?

OKHLOBYSTIN

Zina, my sweet bird, you and I will sing yet. And we'll dance, too.

They turn on music and dance.

BOY

What do you see in the window?

GIRL

The window? Black smoke and a black smokestack. A single bright star burns in the black sky.

BOY

Like you?

GIRL

Like me?

BOY

Like the star?

AND THE GIRL LAUGHS, LAUGHS WITH RINGING LAUGHTER

ZINA

Why don't you have any money?

OKHLOBYSTIN

Money is like a bird.

ZINA

I would be happy as a bird.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Money disappears like a bird on the wing! It doesn't remember me, it sends no news.

ZINA

I would fly away somewhere.

OKHLOBYSTIN

And come back to me in spring.

ZINA

Do all women come back to Biberevo in spring?

OKHLOBYSTIN

In spring all the birds return.

ZINA

I'm not your bird!

OKHLOBYSTIN

In spring even money turns up sometimes.

*A TRAIN PASSING NEARBY DROWNS OUT
THE VOICES OF THE SPEAKERS
CARRYING THEM IN THE AIR AS IF
THEY WERE A LIGHT RATTLING OF
WINDOW PANES — SOMEWHERE FAR OFF
WHEELS RATTLE BUT THE CURTAINS
ONLY SASHAY A LITTLE AND THE WIND
BLOWS IN THE WINDOW CARRYING WITH
IT THE VOICES OF THE SPEAKERS IN
AN UNKNOWN DIRECTION*

GIRL

Did you wave bye-bye to trains when you were a boy?

BOY

No. Never.

GIRL

Why not?

BOY

I threw rocks at them.

GIRL

How horrible.

BOY

I was a bad boy.

GIRL

I always waved bye-bye to them. And you know what? They would whistle back. Just for me.

BOY

That's nice. I'll bet you were a good girl. You want some more wine?

GIRL

Yes.

ZINA

Oh! Something just ran by there!

OKHLOBYSTIN

One of our little friends.

ZINA

Mice!

OKHLOBYSTIN

That's right, Zina. I have nothing against them. I feel sorry for them. They're so little.

ZINA

I'm afraid of them.

OKHLOBYSTIN

There's no need to be afraid with me.

ZINA

Oh, Vasya.

They embrace and leave.

BOY

Then they drank tea (she spilled her cup on the table and the tea spread out slow and hot, soaking into the newspapers, the matches and the books. We sat and didn't even lift our hands. We were silent.)

GIRL

The boy has a secret, the secret's in a box, the box is in a tree. Shoot it with an arrow and break it all to pieces. It's all so simple, no secret now.

BOY

She has blue eyes. Silent lips. I know how not to ask questions. That's the only thing she likes. She says, "It's nice that you're with me. It's nice that it's so simple."

GIRL

"Simple isn't good," he says.

BOY

I wipe the table with a towel. She peels an orange and holds it out to me. She says she cried yesterday – her tears were like these candies here. And then, she said, she thought, No.

GIRL

My tears were like these oranges.

BOY

Juice squirted in her eyes and her tears flowed.

GIRL

I said, Now they're just like these candies.

BOY

Now they're like huge oranges.

GIRL

Then it was morning. The room was dark, the way it is early. Yesterday's evening light crept down the wall. The Boy slept and dreamed – I caress his face and say, "I'm going. Sleep."

BOY

She caresses my face and says, "I'm going..."

GIRL

I kiss him.

BOY

She runs her tongue down my body

GIRL

He scrunches up in his blanket

BOY

In the morning she smokes in the darkness (it's early morning, the windows are hung with curtains). I sleep, she kisses me and leaves.

GIRL

Then it's only him – he doesn't remember anything.

BOY

Then it's only her – she doesn't go anywhere.

GIRL

Then it's only us – we fall asleep together.

BOY

Only then, then, then.

The Boy and Girl run around the house, looking out all the windows, laughing and shouting.

Spring is insane! You are insane! Here – here are some flowers for you! There's no stopping me now! Keep your eyes peeled!

GIRL

Spring!

BOY

The sun today is already shining brighter than yesterday. The snow is melting. The wind blows warmer. Green leaves will soon appear on the trees. Birds will fly to our country. In the capital of our Motherland it will be Woman's Day, March 8. I will give you a tulip or a mimosa.

GIRL

Tulip

BOY

Or mimosa

GIRL

Tulip

BOY

Or mimosa

GIRL

Tulip

BOY

A bushy, yellow mimosa. It will stand forever somewhere on your dresser like a Christmas tree.

GIRL

What marvelous weather!

BOY

I'll give my sweetheart a Christmas tree!

GIRL

Spring!

BOY

I'll earn a ton of money! I'll go rake leaves!

GIRL

Leaves fall in autumn. Autumn is a long way off.

BOY

You'll dump me a hundred times by autumn.

GIRL

In the summer the poplars give off little fluff balls.

BOY

I'm a gardener. I won't let you lift a finger.

GIRL

Tell me another tall tale!

BOY

I'll kiss you.

GIRL

You'll get up at five in the morning and sweep and sweep and sweep.

BOY

No, at five in the morning I'll kiss you and kiss you and kiss you.

GIRL

I want that now.

BOY

(Laughs) You see, it's love.

GIRL

It's spring again.

SCENE FOUR

Night. Okhlobystin's house. The Girl sits in the room on a chair. Ivanov sleeps.

GIRL

I was thinking about your words

IVANOV

I'm tired

GIRL

I was thinking about how you talked about tenderness

IVANOV

It was a crazy day

GIRL

I was thinking about my tenderness

IVANOV

A madhouse

GIRL

I agree that that's the main thing

IVANOV

Sleep

GIRL

I want you to answer

IVANOV

Come here

GIRL

I want you to answer me

IVANOV

What do you want me to answer

GIRL

I don't know anything about you

IVANOV

You don't know anything about me

GIRL
I don't need anything from you

IVANOV
You don't need anything from me

GIRL
I just want you to talk to me

IVANOV
I did

GIRL
I hurt

IVANOV
I'm tired

GIRL
I'm going to cry

IVANOV
Don't

GIRL
So you'll pity me

IVANOV
Lie down, you'll freeze

GIRL
I thought about tenderness all day long today

IVANOV
All day long today I ran around town

GIRL
I thought about you

IVANOV
Tenderly?

GIRL
I was happy all day long today

IVANOV
All day long today I ran around town

GIRL

Today is the most horrible night of my life

IVANOV

I've got to get up early tomorrow

GIRL

I want to die

IVANOV

This little boy shouted obscenities at me in the subway – I was amazed

GIRL

(Dressing) That's funny

IVANOV

Lie down and sleep

GIRL

I can't

IVANOV

Where are you going

GIRL

I'm going to die

IVANOV

Calm down

GIRL

I hurt

The Girl leaves. Ivanov dresses and leaves after her.

SCENE FIVE

MONDAY

Okhlobystin runs around the house setting the table. He stands in front of the mirror a long time. He changes his shirt. He pours himself a shot glass of vodka and prepares to drink it. Enter Tanya.

Okhlobystin offers the glass to her.

OKHLOBYSTIN

I'm leaving for the North. We won't see each other for a long time. Maybe never. What are you laughing at? At me?

TANYA

Of course not.

OKHLOBYSTIN

It's true. I'm leaving. (Laughs)

TANYA

I just came by the café and I recognized him instantly – he was sitting with the Girl, Tanya, there on the street at a white little summer table. It was cold, the wind was blowing and he took off his coat and threw it around her shoulders.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Sit here in this easy chair – that comfortable?

TANYA

He was in just his blue jersey with the 62 on it – that silly one.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Want some wine?

TANYA

With that stupid knit cap with the fuzz ball on top. I can't understand why he wears that thing.

OKHLOBYSTIN

It's very good wine.

TANYA. I sat down at the next table and they didn't notice me. They didn't even look in my direction, didn't see a thing. He pulled his headphones

out from under his hat

and leans one ear up to hers

they laugh

he kisses her cheek

they smoke

he runs and buys her ice-cream

they listen to music

they laugh

he kisses her

they smoke

they talk

he buys her another ice-cream and then brings her some hot tea

they sit and warm their hands

they kiss

they laugh

and laugh

and laugh

OKHLOBYSTIN

Are you talking about the Boy?

TANYA

Yes. And she's very pretty, isn't she? She has beautiful eyes.

OKHLOBYSTIN

And he's a very nice Boy.

TANYA

White number 62 – on the front and the back...

OKHLOBYSTIN

Such kids.

TANYA

Both of them. So when are you leaving?

OKHLOBYSTIN

I wanted to today, but I'll probably go tomorrow. I'm going by plane.

TANYA

The cold wind twirls stray white papers around them, blowing them off the table. And they just sit there, with no reason to hurry anywhere...

They are silent.

It used to be I didn't pay any attention to young people. And now I go along the street and I see they're so young. They walk holding hands. My youth slipped away somewhere. In the subway I look at old ladies and fear I'll see their wrinkles on me. Old age is creeping up on me...

OKHLOBYSTIN

Tanya. I want to say one thing. Only don't laugh.

TANYA

Okay.

OKHLOBYSTIN

You're not going to laugh?

TANYA

(Smiles) No.

OKHLOBYSTIN

I love you. Is that so funny?

TANYA

No. (Laughs)

OKHLOBYSTIN

You happy now?

TANYA

Turn on some music. You've always got music on here. Today it's so quiet.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Have something to eat. Go on.

TANYA

Did you fix that yourself?

OKHLOBYSTIN

Yes.

TANYA

We can't eat all that, just the two of us.

OKHLOBYSTIN

We'll have to invite somebody over. Is that okay for music?

TANYA

Yes. You've got a nice place, here. So you're leaving tomorrow?

OKHLOBYSTIN

Looks like it.

TANYA

Would you rent me a room? If Zina wouldn't mind. I'd like to live here awhile.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Take any room you want.

TANYA

Thanks.

They are silent. Tanya looks out the window.

Is today Monday?

OKHLOBYSTIN

Today is Monday. Wine. Headache. Tanya is sitting in my room and I still can't believe she came to see me.

They are silent.

TANYA

I've known it all for a long time. About you and about Ivanov.

SCENE SIX

Ivanov runs down the street towards Bibirevo. The Girl runs after him.

IVANOV

This is where I got in an accident

How? GIRL

I only saw her eyes IVANOV

Whose? GIRL

We were dancing in the middle of the road IVANOV

(Laughs) You? Dancing?! GIRL

We were drinking champagne and dancing IVANOV

Who? GIRL

I love to dance IVANOV

I don't understand GIRL

We were looking at the stars. It was a warm night and we were dancing. Indescribably beautiful. IVANOV

Who? GIRL

The night. Tanya. And then all I heard was her cry IVANOV

Whose? GIRL

SHE LEFT ME IVANOV

Who? GIRL

Tanya IVANOV

GIRL
 What?

They come to Okhlobystin's house.

I don't get it.

IVANOV
 You will now. (Picks up a big rock and heaves it at the window)

Zina runs out of the house.

ZINA
 Oh, my God!

IVANOV
 Where is Okhlobystin – I'll kill him.

ZINA
 Somebody broke our window!

Ivanov throws another rock at another window.

Comrade Ivanov, is that you breaking our windows? Are you crazy?

IVANOV
 Where is Okhlobystin?

ZINA
 He left.

IVANOV
 Where to?

ZINA
 The North.

IVANOV
 Where's Tanya?

ZINA
 Right here. What are you breaking our windows for?! I don't understand you!

GIRL
 Hello, Tanya!

IVANOV
You know each other?

GIRL
Yes. That's Tanya.

IVANOV
I know.

Okhlobystin comes out of the house.

ZINA
Vasya! Comrade Ivanov has broken two of our windows! Careful you don't cut yourself. There are pieces of glass everywhere – what are you still doing here?

OKHLOBYSTIN
Inclement weather.

ZINA
We've got to call someone. To put in new panes...

OKHLOBYSTIN
You're probably right.

ZINA
Comrade Ivanov, you'll have to pay for this!

IVANOV
Naturally, Zina.

ZINA
(Looking through a phone book) Vasya, what's that worker's last name? You know, the one we call Uncle Vanya.

OKHLOBYSTIN
I don't know. Workers don't have last names.

ZINA
(On the telephone) Uncle Vanya? Hello, it's Zina. Yes. Ivanov here has broken out all our windows. A trouble-maker? No. A friend. Well, he's jealous! Passion! No, not me, another woman. Yes. Will you come? (Hangs up the phone) He'll be right here.

OKHLOBYSTIN
What are we standing outdoors for? Come on in the house.

They leave. The Boy appears from the garden, looks at the broken windows in amazement and goes into the house.

SCENE SEVEN

Evening.

TANYA

The sunset tonight bodes rain – red as blood.

IVANOV

Does that mean rain?

TANYA

Well, whatever. It's a red sunset tonight. Marvelous.

ZINA

Red means wind.

GIRL

The dog rose has bloomed.

BOY

That means the perch are biting.

ZINA

I was chopping onions – my hands smell of onion. All day long. I washed them with strawberry soap but they still smell of onion.

TANYA

The sky is so clear; not a cloud in the sky. It's so stuffy.

OKHLOBYSTIN

It's a hot summer.

ZINA

Smell that. Smells of onion. And I washed them with strawberry soap.

IVANOV

It would be good if it would rain.

ZINA

Really fine soap, quite aromatic. How do they do that?

OKHLOBYSTIN

Maybe you'd like some more wine?

TANYA

I like drinking wine.

ZINA

And now apples smell like apple soap, and strawberries smell like strawberry soap.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Have a drink, Zina.

GIRL

I like white wine.

BOY

How about if I put on a record?

ZINA

But my hands still smell like onion.

BOY

I bought a new record. Listen to this.

IVANOV

Music like that also bodes rain – it's stuffy.

BOY

You just don't understand anything.

GIRL

That's pretty music.

TANYA

You want me to cry, don't you? Don't you?

BOY

No, not at all.

TANYA

I don't want anything sad.

ZINA

I can't believe how they smell of onion. Can I try using your perfume?

OKHLOBYSTIN

It won't help, my sweet, sad-eyed girl...

ZINA

What nice perfume. Such a sweet, sweet smell. How charming! What bliss it would be if the air was like that!

GIRL

I like that too.

TANYA

Just look at that sunset. Why is it you never see anything?

IVANOV

It's a very pretty sunset.

OKHLOBYSTIN

A very red one.

IVANOV

There's a deep blue strip running along the horizon.

OKHLOBYSTIN

It's a clear sky; no clouds at all.

IVANOV

It's stuffy.

GIRL

The dog rose has bloomed.

BOY

That means the perch are biting.

GIRL

If sparrows are flying low to the ground, that definitely means there'll be rain tomorrow.

IVANOV

(Looking out the window) I can't see a thing.

ZINA

It's probably too late. The sparrows are all asleep.

IVANOV

Who wants wine?

ZINA

I do, I do.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Zina, Zina.

ZINA

Zina what?

OKHLOBYSTIN

It's an old Russian custom – you don't drink wine when the swallows are sleeping.

ZINA

I didn't know that.

OKHLOBYSTIN

But you're arguing with me.

BOY

Go ahead and drink, Zina. The swallows aren't sleeping.

ZINA

Why not? It's late.

OKHLOBYSTIN

(Goes out onto the balcony) Well, look at that! Ha-ha! Go ahead and drink, Zina! There'll be rain tomorrow! (Shouts) My Lord – there are swallows, God fucking damn it!

Part Two

A Nasty Deception It Gets Light

SCENE ONE

TANYA

It's getting light.

IVANOV

Some bird has been singing all night long.

OKHLOBYSTIN

It's not a nightengale is it?

TANYA

No. It's too squeaky sounding.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Maybe it's a goatsucker?

ZINA

I hope it's not a goatsucker.

IVANOV

Is that a bad sign?

ZINA

It's just not good.

IVANOV

Why?

GIRL

Maybe it bodes rain?

ZINA

It bodes no good.

OKHLOBYSTIN

What's it going to do – quit singing now?

IVANOV

Would anyone like champagne?

TANYA

It's so fun drinking champagne!

GIRL

What beautiful music!

ZINA

Did you buy a new record?

IVANOV

Music like that definitely bodes no good – worse than a goatsucker. Isn't it, Zina?

BOY

You just don't understand anything.

TANYA

You want me to cry don't you? Don't you?

BOY

No. Not at all.

TANYA

I don't want anything sad.

ZINA

Goatsuckers might even bode death, I think.

IVANOV

Let's settle for rain.

TANYA

What wonderful perfume you have, Zina. It smells so sweet. How charming.

GIRL

The dog rose has bloomed.

BOY

That means the perch are biting.

ZINA

What a sunset today! Do you see how beautiful that is? And the air – what bliss!

IVANOV

The fog is rolling in. It's going to be a hot day.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Now the goatsucker fell asleep.

ZINA

There it is – the morning of a new day.

IVANOV

Would anyone like more champagne?

ZINA

Let's dance! Come, let's dance!

Zina leads Ivanov out to dance with him; the Boy dances with the Girl.

TANYA

When are you leaving?

OKHLOBYSTIN

Never.

TANYA

Why?

OKHLOBYSTIN

I lied.

TANYA

How humorous. And I believed you.

OKHLOBYSTIN

That's what I was counting on.

They are silent.

Every day I think about the fact that you are still here.

TANYA

Every day I walk by his house so he will look at me in the window.

ZINA

Comrade Ivanov reminds me of someone.

TANYA

The radio is playing in his room and he's smoking. I hurry by on my way to work.

IVANOV

(To Zina) She boards the trolley and I see her reflection. A piece of her overcoat, her face, a hand – she sails away, sails away.

TANYA

The whole day seems senseless and empty.

IVANOV

The whole day seems senseless and empty.

ZINA

Comrade Ivanov, you remind me of someone. Your appearance does.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Zina! Some man was calling you all day long today.

TANYA

I walk by his house in the morning and hope he will look at me in the window.

IVANOV

She runs past in the morning and doesn't even lift her gaze.

ZINA

What man is that, Vasya? He really called so early?

OKHLOBYSTIN

Maybe it was yesterday. Who is it? Come on, out with it!

ZINA

Lord, what a jealous beast!

TANYA

When I run past store windows I look at myself and think about him.

GIRL

What beautiful music!

BOY

The air is ringing!

TANYA

And the tram goes, "ring, ring, ring!"

IVANOV

She doesn't want to see me.

TANYA

As if we were playing cards.

ZINA

Maybe it's that sailor?

OKHLOBYSTIN

Last time you said it was a doctor.

IVANOV

It's slippery – she's afraid of falling.

ZINA

Vasya, he's a doctor in the navy! Was he from the North Pole?

OKHLOBYSTIN

He didn't say who he was.

TANYA

I'm always the fool.

IVANOV

(Shouts) Zina, I'm unlucky in love!

ZINA

(Laughs) I know, Vasya, it's my father!

OKHLOBYSTIN

Tell me another one.

TANYA

Okhlobystin, I'm unlucky in love.

OKHLOBYSTIN

What can you do? Me too.

BOY

Not me!

*THE GIRL'S LAUGHTER SAILS ABOUT
BIBIREVO SO LOUDLY THAT THE BIRDS
TURN TOWARDS OKHLOBYSTIN'S HOME IN
AMAZEMENT*

TANYA

We're not talking about you or me.

IVANOV

This is silly, we're talking nonsense.

TANYA

About how mandarine oranges grow on trees.

IVANOV

Big huge trees grow right there on the street with big huge mandarin oranges on them.

TANYA

You can just go up and pick them.

IVANOV
There's no electricity in the subway.

TANYA
They sell flowers in the dark.

IVANOV
You're always looking at your watch.

TANYA
Every day I think you...

IVANOV
You board the tram and leave...

TANYA
I'm going to take a different route.

IVANOV
You're always looking at your watch.

ZINA
Comrade Ivanov, you know you really remind me of someone.

IVANOV
Shall we go home?

TANYA
Now?

IVANOV
Yes.

TANYA
(Laughs) I don't want to.

IVANOV
What do you want?

TANYA
You to leave.

OKHLOBYSTIN
Anyone for wine?

IVANOV
No.

ZINA
Strange.

IVANOV
I don't want anything.

ZINA
Nothing, really?

IVANOV
I'm probably just old. (Goes out onto the balcony) Oh, the birds
are singing – CAW, CAW...
(Shouts) WELL, HELLO, MORNING!

ZINA
What air... What air! What air...

SCENE TWO

When it Grows Dark

The Boy and Girl.

BOY
When it grows dark, when the grass along the road turns to
silver dust

GIRL
When only this house is distant, when only when

BOY
At home a window is open and music and conversations are heard

GIRL
When men tell funny stories and women laugh and laugh

BOY
And then they dance, and the sound of conversations with
senseless words are so mysterious that you want to listen from
beneath the windows and peek in from behind the curtains

GIRL
It's so fine – just like in the movies!

BOY
So fine!

GIRL

So simple!

Maybe someone's kissing

Maybe it seems they're doing something else

Maybe everything may be just the opposite maybe

Italian music pours out of open windows

Maybe they aren't even saying anything to each other

If we were in a movie, I would sneak up on you on tiptoes

BOY

Your dress would flash by like red silk

GIRL

I would whisper to you quietly – I would hide behind you with my nose buried in your hair

BOY

You would almost be like smoke – you would fly away like one of Chagall's women

GIRL

I would hold a rose to my breast – I would sing down to you from above like a flute

BOY

I would think about my madness

GIRL

Would look around

BOY

Amazed

GIRL

Turning your head

*The sounds of music, noise, shouts
and the crash of breaking dishes
are heard from inside the house.*

BOY

Just a second. (Runs into the house)

GIRL

In the movies I would love you...

VOICE OF ZINA

Oh, careful, careful you don't break that vase

VOICE OF IVANOV

Okhlobystin, you knew all along. You knew.

VOICE OF ZINA

Comrade Ivanov!

VOICE OF TANYA

He's got nothing to do with it

VOICE OF ZINA

He didn't know a thing, don't mix Vasya up in this!

VOICE OF IVANOV

I'll kill him

VOICE OF ZINA

Comrade Ivanov!

VOICE OF TANYA

Knock it off, now, knock it off

VOICE OF OKHLOBYSTIN

No, let's get to the bottom of this

VOICE OF TANYA

Zina

VOICE OF IVANOV

Tell him, go on – go ahead and tell him

VOICE OF ZINA

You get out of here

VOICE OF IVANOV

Then her and then you

VOICE OF ZINA

Everything is smashed – Everything

VOICE OF OKHLOBYSTIN

Get out of here, Zina

And you too
VOICE OF IVANOV

Knock it off
VOICE OF TANYA

Oh, oh! Comrade Ivanov – you're going to have to pay for
everything again
VOICE OF ZINA

Calm down, Zina
VOICE OF IVANOV

Somebody get him out of here
VOICE OF TANYA

Oh, Vasya, the tablecloth – Vasya
VOICE OF ZINA

This is impossible
VOICE OF TANYA

That is a very expensive piece, comrade Ivanov!
VOICE OF ZINA

Come on, man! Come on, come on, come on!
VOICE OF OKHLOBYSTIN

That's not true
VOICE OF TANYA

Don't hurt him! Careful!
VOICE OF ZINA

*ECHOING THE CRIES OF THOSE MOVING
AROUND IN SPACE, MORE DISHES
QUIETLY SMASH AND A PASSING TRAIN
DROWNS OUT THE VOICES OF THOSE
SHOUTING AND CARRIES THEM OFF IN
THE DIRECTION OF SOME OTHER TOWN
WHICH FOR NOW IS STILL WASHED IN
CALM*

*Ivanov runs out of the house and
runs into the Girl.*

GIRL
 What happened in there? I...

IVANOV
 I'm bad.

GIRL
 (Laughs) I know.

IVANOV
 I'm very bad.

GIRL
 Yes. But what happened?

IVANOV
 I'm a big swine.

GIRL
 Okay.

IVANOV
 What's okay about it?

They are silent. Shouts are heard from the house. We hear the Boy's voice.

I don't want anything.

GIRL
 So what?

IVANOV
 I don't even want you.

GIRL
 (Turns away) I don't care.

IVANOV
 (Stands on his head and then falls in the grass) See? I don't even want to stand on my head.

GIRL
 I understand. I understand everything.

IVANOV
 You don't understand anything!

I love you.

GIRL

(Laughs) Thank you.

IVANOV

My momma says...

GIRL

Who says? Your momma? (Guffaws)

IVANOV

What's the matter?

GIRL

Momma! Your son is splendidly ill! Momma! His heart is on fire!
Tell my sisters Lyuda and Olga!

IVANOV

Tell who?

GIRL

He has no place else to go.

IVANOV

I don't get you.

GIRL

My dear little girl, don't be offended. Go away, get lost
somewhere. I don't want to see you anymore, I don't want to!

IVANOV

You mean that?

GIRL

Yes!

IVANOV

The Girl runs away. Ivanov laughs.

Give me any pretty young thing – I'll rape her and I won't bat
an eyelash – may every piece of official paper burn in hell...
ha-ha...

READ THIS AND WEEP: I AM A CITIZEN OF THE SOVIET UNION AND TANYA
DOESN'T LOVE ME ANYMORE

Let it all burn in hell...

Your son has a fire in his heart...

Your son is congenitally thick-headed, dear momma

Your son hasn't understood what's important in life

The most important woman in the world doesn't love your son!

NO!

Bursts into the house. Zina squeals.

IT ISN'T TRUE!

NO!

WHAT ABOUT YOU? WHY, BABY, WHY?

ZINA

Comrade Ivanov!

IVANOV

It's true — I was out and around handing out bouquets. It's not like I was stealing silver spoons from your drawers!

ZINA

What silver spoons?

IVANOV

I didn't steal any silver forks, I didn't steal any silver cups, plates, pens, knives... WHY, BABY, WHY?

TANYA

Knock it off.

ZINA

What forks? What are you talking about? Comrade Ivanov!

IVANOV

(To Okhlobystin) Alexander Sergeevich! Allow me to introduce myself: Mayakovsky.

ZINA

What Mayakovsky? What is wrong with him?

OKHLOBYSTIN

Thanks for the poetry.

IVANOV

I'll tell you a secret: She doesn't love me or you, anyway. Imagine that. It's one thing she doesn't love me – but she doesn't love you either.

TANYA

I love Pushkin.

IVANOV

Who is this woman?

ZINA

You have had too much to drink today, comrade Ivanov.

IVANOV

I know, Zina. Will you drink to me? What about you, Alexander Sergeevich? I mean, I love you... (Kisses Okhlobystin) You and Tanya. Imagine that. And nobody else.

Enter the Girl.

TANYA

What about her?

They are silent.

ZINA

The sun has shone brightly all day long today.

OKHLOBYSTIN

It's a hot summer.

ZINA

There's a beautiful moon today.

OKHLOBYSTIN

A white moon. A black sky.

ZINA

Ooo, something just flashed up over the roofs. Did you see that? It just flashed and disappeared.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Maybe it was thunder somewhere far off.

ZINA

What if it was a UFO?

TANYA

We need some rain.

ZINA

You see that luminescence? It must be some sort of electrical discharges in the atmosphere.

TANYA

It's growing light.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Some bird has been singing all night. Is that a goatsucker, Zina?

ZINA

How would I know? It's some squeaky kind of bird.

IVANOV

Anyone for more wine?

ZINA

Oh! Did you see that? Did you see that?

OKHLOBYSTIN

It's a clear sky; no clouds at all.

ZINA

How beautiful! You know, I am so happy!

GIRL

The dog rose has bloomed.

TANYA

Where is the Boy?

ZINA

Are we going to dance today? Somebody put on a record!

GIRL

It smells terribly of onion in here...

They put on a record. The Girl goes outside and cries. Drinks water out of a faucet.

So what if I get a bacterial infection and die – no – so what if I have to go to the hospital and then he has to pity me. Let him cry his eyes out

Okhlobystin comes out of the house.

You'll save me, won't you?

OKHLOBYSTIN

(Embraces the Girl) It's all right. It's all right.

GIRL

I love him.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Everything will be okay tomorrow. Tomorrow everything will be all right.

GIRL

What if it isn't?

OKHLOBYSTIN

If it isn't, at least it won't be as painful.

GIRL

Lord, make me not love him anymore!

OKHLOBYSTIN

There's no escaping him for you. You are so young... And Tanya is not for him. Now, now. Calm down. Don't cry. You know I love you, don't you?

Enter the Boy, laughing.

BOY

You too, huh?

Zina comes out of the house.

ZINA

What's going on here?

BOY

Nothing!

ZINA

What are you shouting about if nothing's going on? I don't understand you.

GIRL

You're so mean.

BOY

Yes, sweetheart! Mean!

GIRL

And stupid.

BOY

Leaves) Yes, my love! And stupid!

The Girl runs out in the opposite direction.

ZINA

Everybody is shouting today. What is going on? What is there to shout about, Vasya? Would you explain it to me?

OKHLOBYSTIN

It's feelings. Passions.

ZINA

Oh, my Lord! Would you look at that rain cloud! We'd better put rubber plugs in all the electrical outlets.

OKHLOBYSTIN

If we've got to, then let's do it.

They leave.

SCENE THREE

The Boy Invites Zina to Dance

Tanya's room in Okhlobystin's home. Ivanov is silent. Tanya reads a newspaper.

TANYA

(Laughs) I will be visited by love in June.

A knock at the door.

It's her. IVANOV

It's Okhlobystin. TANYA

He's come for you. IVANOV

It's only May yet. TANYA

July has been dragging on for two months. IVANOV

I'm not opening. TANYA

You'll be sorry. IVANOV

None of your business. TANYA

I want you. IVANOV

You always do what you want. TANYA

Because I always want you. IVANOV

Real men in love always do whatever the woman wants. TANYA

For example, stand outside the door. IVANOV

Real men in love always stand on tiptoe just a little. TANYA

I don't look like a man in love? IVANOV

All the men who loved me stood on tiptoes. TANYA

IVANOV

That's why you love me, not them.

TANYA

No.

IVANOV

All the men in love with you will soon go out of their minds.

TANYA

If he's still standing outside the door – I... (Goes to open the door)

IVANOV

You what? Well, what? What?

Tanya opens the door. Okhlobystin stands there with a bouquet of flowers.

Hello, Vasily!

OKHLOBYSTIN

Fancy meeting you here!

TANYA

What flowers!

IVANOV

What a love! (Leaves)

OKHLOBYSTIN

(Sits in a chair and long remains silent) It's quiet...

Tanya fusses with the flowers.

It's as if I didn't come by at all, didn't see a thing – didn't hear anything or say anything. Just as if I just went on by

TANYA

And flashed in the window?

OKHLOBYSTIN

Without thinking about you for even a second (or even less?). Or maybe I came in – but it wasn't me?

TANYA

This morning I was walking along the street and I turned around and saw I was walking along the street. Then I looked around again and saw my own turned head looking back at someone.

OKHLOBYSTIN

It was just a dream.

TANYA

In my dream I was lying on the sand sunbathing. Then I came up to myself and began looking over my body which was lying on the sand. I ran my finger along my leg and saw that I opened my eyes and thought, "Who am I, then?"

OKHLOBYSTIN

Your soul.

Tanya laughs.

I dreamed the smell of milk, warm milk as if it were a recollection of something long ago. I smiled in my sleep. Then I opened my eyes. There was a child standing at the edge of my bed looking at me and he smiled too. When I smiled at him, he ran away.

TANYA

That was probably me in childhood. Momma always said that I smelled like warm milk.

OKHLOBYSTIN

And now?

TANYA

Now?

OKHLOBYSTIN

Now...

TANYA

Now

OKHLOBYSTIN

Now

*FALLING FLOWERS ARE AMAZED AT
THEIR OWN FALLING THE WAY FLOWERS
ARE AMAZED WHEN THEY FALL ON THE
FLOOR UNEXPECTEDLY AS IF FALLING*

*FROM SOMEONE'S LIMP HAND WHO
DIDN'T GET AS FAR AS PUTTING THE
FLOWERS IN A VASE GLUED TOGETHER
FROM BROKEN SHARDS — THEY ARE SO
AMAZED AT THEIR OWN FALLING*

What a life we could have together — I forbid myself to think about it. I get suffocated just thinking about how inexpressibly wonderful it would be. And I forbid you to look at me like that, and I forbid you not to be with me. If you want to, let's get out of here — right now. I mean, time is passing, it's evaporating, it's vanishing, while you sit there getting around to realizing that you belong to me alone.

TANYA

What about Zina?

OKHLOBYSTIN

You are the exception to everything. You are the exception to all loves. You are love. It's our destiny that just you and I — we are everything, EVERYTHING.

TANYA

I love Ivanov...

OKHLOBYSTIN

(Laughs) That's an empty sound, a myth, dust, your illness, jealousy, delirium — You ought to be whipped across the cheeks so you would quit fearing to name words with words, would quit fearing to ask simple questions when you already know what the answer will be

TANYA

I love Ivanov.

OKHLOBYSTIN

That doesn't mean a thing — absolutely nothing!

TANYA

Did you bring her here on purpose? Did you introduce them on purpose?

OKHLOBYSTIN

So what if I did?

TANYA

If it wasn't for her, everything would be all right.

OKHLOBYSTIN

No

TANYA

Yes

OKHLOBYSTIN

No

TANYA

Yes

OKHLOBYSTIN

No

TANYA

Yes

OKHLOBYSTIN

Tanya, sweetheart. I love you. Only you. I'll never love anyone again in this world as I love you...

They are silent.

I was walking down the street. It was snowing. There you were.

TANYA

I was walking down the street. It was snowing as I walked.

OKHLOBYSTIN

You were covering your face with your hands.

TANYA

You shouted, "I love Moscow and this wet snow...."

OKHLOBYSTIN

I wanted to spend my whole life walking up and down Sretenka Street, so that my whole life would become one funny little Sretenka Street, so that it would be – LIKE IT WAS THEN – you, snow, cognac, movies, the bookstore, dark sidestreets

TANYA

You really think it can be like that again?

OKHLOBYSTIN

I'll shout it at the top of my lungs

TANYA

I'm going home.

OKHLOBYSTIN

No, no, no!

TANYA

I'm going.

OKHLOBYSTIN

I won't let you. I'll hide your things. I'm going to lock you in this room. I... – I won't let you go – never, never...

Tanya leaves.

Tanya – Tanya – Tanya

Zina sits by the window. She heard everything.

ZINA

Betrayal! (Leaving, runs into the Boy)

BOY

Zina! Marry me!

ZINA

You all of you are so mean... (Cries)

BOY

Are you crying?

ZINA

You shouldn't make jokes like that.

BOY

Zina, I didn't mean to. I meant it seriously... Did I offend you?

ZINA

No, no. Everything's all right.

BOY

I'm not joking. Want to go to a restaurant? I've got money. Come on, let's go.

ZINA

To a restaurant?

BOY

We can go dancing.

ZINA

It's been so long since anybody invited me to go anywhere...

They leave.

*TANYA AND THE GIRL PACE THE GARDEN
LIKE TWO LARGE BIRDS, THEIR
SHADOWS NEVER MEETING AND WITHOUT
SEEING ANYTHING THEY FLY OFF AWAY
FROM BIBIREVO IN SEPARATE
DIRECTIONS FLAPPING THEIR LONG
SKIRTS AS IF THEY WERE WINGS — THE
WIND CARRIES ONLY OKHLOBYSTIN'S
PITIFUL HOWL ABOUT THE GARDEN*

SCENE FOUR

Okhlobystin Matures

Morning. Okhlobystin is alone.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Women follow me, peering out from behind branches and blades of grass. They gallop like does, squinting with their brown eyes, and then there is only a rustling, a whistle. There's no one there, only (what?); only me, only their former glances and a violin string humming and humming in the air until I close my ears and shout something at them. Until I fall in the grass and weep from exhaustion and nerves. Until I am suffocated by that endless confusion of love and strangled by my feverish sensations.

LEAVE ME, LEAVE ME ALONE YOU INTRACTABLE BEAUTIES, YOU NEFARIOUS WITCHES — MY LIFE HAS PASSED, MY YOUTH HAS ENDED, MY HEART HAS BEEN TORN IN PIECES BY LOVE FOR YOU, IT HAS FALLEN FROM MY CHEST AND GROWN UP AS A FLOWER. Now I will live quietly, diapering children, going for walks in the park, slowly smoking my pipe. FROM NOW ON ALLWOMEN PASSING BY WILL ONLY BE GETTING YOUNGER AND YOUNGER WITH EVERY YEAR THAT PASSES ME BY.

(Shouts) Zina! Zina! Zina! God damn it — where are you, bitter pill of my life? Zina! I have matured morally!

ZINA

(Appearing) What are you shouting about?

OKHLOBYSTIN

Zina, sweetheart...

ZINA

Lord, what happened?

OKHLOBYSTIN

Will you still be my wife, Zina?

ZINA

Vasya, what happened? Tell me right now.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Don't try wriggling out of it, you fool. I've just proposed to you.

ZINA

It's all so sudden, Vasya.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Zina, I'll quit drinking and everything else.

ZINA

Vasya, how can I put it...

OKHLOBYSTIN

I think everything will work out great for us.

ZINA

(Wiping a tear) Vasya, I...

OKHLOBYSTIN

You'll give me a little daughter. I really want a daughter.

ZINA

The fact is, we uh... I...

OKHLOBYSTIN

Don't cry, monkey.

ZINA. Vasya, I can't.

OKHLOBYSTIN

You can't what, you silly fool? Don't be afraid, I'm not lying. My mind is made up. I've been thinking about us all the time. About you and me. God's truth.

ZINA

The Boy and I...

OKHLOBYSTIN

What.

ZINA

The Boy and I just now, I didn't tell you...

OKHLOBYSTIN

What did the Boy and you just now?

ZINA

We just got married.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Oh, what an idiot... Oh, what an idiot I am...

ZINA

Vasya, are you crying or laughing? He really needed it badly – you know, to show everybody, to show them all. It was no big deal for me. He just needed a piece of paper, a document, some proof. I mean, you didn't want to.

OKHLOBYSTIN

I'll kill him.

ZINA

Vasya!

OKHLOBYSTIN

Don't touch me. (Leaves)

ZINA

(Sits in a chair. Folds her hands on her knees) Today I dreamed I took him by the hand. My feet rose up off of the floor. The light air carried us up to the ceiling as if we were helium balloons. He looked at me in amazement. I do love to amaze him. I said, "I have this power," but he still doesn't believe me. He doesn't believe me, doesn't believe me at all. Like a clown, like a young smart-aleck, he's satisfied with himself as he jokes... He holds me gaily by the hand and spins in circles all

night long to his smart-aleck music which never existed before he did. He laughs. He makes me clumsy and he smiles just like a little boy! His gaze tells me, "Do you realize how sneaky I am?"

I AM INSANELY SNEAKY

I AM TERRIBLY SNEAKY

I AM THE SNEAKIEST OF THEM ALL

(She is silent) That's all there is to it. It all happened pretty sadly. (Gathers her things and puts on her raincoat. Pulls a photograph of Okhlobystin out from behind the mirror, puts it in her pocket. Leaves without looking back.)

The Boy races through the rooms, crying out in a long, drawn-out voice, "Zina, Zina, Zina." Then Okhlobystin comes in. He is sad and distressed and walks aimlessly about the house.

OKHLOBYSTIN

MY LIFE HAS ENDED — I'VE LOST MY SILLY, SILLY ZINA — SHE DANCES UNTIL SHE DROPS, NOTHING ELSE INTERESTS HER — SHE'S GONE GONE (Sees the Boy. Stares at him a long time)

BOY

(Shrugs his shoulders) That's right. Drunk.

OKHLOBYSTIN

So?

BOY

I'd even have to say, very drunk.

OKHLOBYSTIN

All right, Boy. Let's see your i.d. We're going to get to the bottom of this.

BOY

Why do you want to do that, comrade Okhlobystin?

OKHLOBYSTIN

Show me your i.d. It's for your own good.

BOY

I don't have an i.d. Yet.

OKHLOBYSTIN

What do you mean, yet?

BOY

On account of my youthful age, comrade Okhlobystin.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Are you kidding?

BOY

No sir. How come?

OKHLOBYSTIN

You little pipsqueak, what are you so drunk about?

BOY

I'm drowning my sorrows.

Okhlobystin laughs.

OKHLOBYSTIN

SHE DECEIVED ME! SHE DECEIVED ME!

*Cranks the music way up loud.
Shouts.*

Dance until you drop! Everybody dance!

BOY

(Dancing with Okhlobystin) COMRADE OKHLOBYSTIN, I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU!

OKHLOBYSTIN

NOTHING ELSE INTERESTS ME!

The Boy and Okhlobystin dance, punching each other, laughing and running about the room. The Worker walks about the house replacing the windows. He walks into the room and looks at the Boy and Okhlobystin with suspicion.

WORKER

One woman went out to empty the trash. Sees some guy on the trash heap looking for something. One thing leads to another and they start talking. He says, "I just got out of the slammer. Did

my time, see, and now I can't find any work, any place to eat or anything to eat." So he's picking up old bottles and turning them in for the coin – at least it's something. She took a liking to him right from the start and he liked her, too. She was all alone just like him. And now they're together – does your heart good to see 'em. Ain't that a story?

OKHLOBYSTIN

Now there's feelings for you! That's real love! Everybody dance!

BOY

Uncle Vanya, have you been fishing for perch? Huh? Have you been fishing for perch?

OKHLOBYSTIN

They're really biting now! And she says, "He needed a piece of paper, a document, to show 'em all..."

They laugh.

WORKER

This woman was going home from a party. Everybody'd been drinking, naturally, and she was in a real good mood. She was walking along and she sees this young man lying in a puddle. Totally gassed. And it's really late already, and dark. But that didn't scare her and she took pity on the guy, helped him up and took him home. Next morning she finds out he's a really nice, shy kid! It was like, the first time he ever got drunk and he just fell there. You know, it could happen to anybody. And now they're together – does your heart good to see 'em. Like two peas in a pod. Amazing, ain't it?

OKHLOBYSTIN

You been fishing for perch yet, Uncle Vanya? Done any perch fishing yet?

BOY

Hey! Comrade Ivanov!

Ivanov stands in the doorway. He's holding a loaf of bread and a bottle of vodka.

OKHLOBYSTIN

What are you looking at? What are you looking at me like that for? What do you got aloaf of bread, man? Put that bread down. Going around walking around with a loaf of bread. Where'd you get that thing? You need bread, huh? You need bread?

The Boy seats Okhlobystin on a chair.

IVANOV

I am so tired.

OKHLOBYSTIN

(Sighs) Well, pour me some, number sixty-two!

They drink.

IVANOV

I saw a lot of mice today.

BOY

You never saw any before?

IVANOV

There was a lot of 'em.

BOY

What about 'em?

IVANOV

They weren't real mice.

OKHLOBYSTIN

What are you looking at? What are you looking at me like that for? What are you always squeezing that loaf of bread for? You wanna eat? Then eat, man. And quit pawing that whole loaf of bread!

The Boy seats Okhlobystin on a chair.

(Sighs) Have some mushrooms. Zina pickled 'em. They're probably salad mushrooms. Have some.

IVANOV

There was just too many of them things. Too many.

BOY

Dreams are a bunch of nonsense — like the one where I buy a cat. She walks down the street and turns around.

And I walk down the street and turn around

And the Girl turns and laughs

The cat laughs and leaves

She leaves and never comes back

She never comes back and everyone forgets her

Everybody forgets her and they start talking about something new

OKHLOBYSTIN

What about mushrooming, Uncle Vanya? You been mushrooming in the woods?

BOY

(Grabs the Worker by the lapels of his coat) WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO ALL OF US?! WHY DID YOU POISON THE MILK?!

OKHLOBYSTIN

So what about mushrooming, Uncle Vanya? Have you been mushrooming in the woods? Huh? I SAY, HAVE YOU BEEN MUSHROOM HUNTING? YOU BEEN MUSHROOM HUNTING IN THE WOODS?

IVANOV

So how come he poisoned the milk?

OKHLOBYSTIN

Who?

IVANOV

Uncle Vanya.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Yeah. That's Uncle Vanya. I know him real good.

BOY

INSANE VIOLINS FALL DOWN ON ME FROM THE HEIGHT OF THE FIR TREES IN THE PARK

OKHLOBYSTIN

Uncle Vanya, how come you put poison in our milk?

WORKER

I didn't put anything in your milk.

IVANOV

So then how do you know there's poison in the milk? Who told you?

OKHLOBYSTIN

She says – the Boy and I just got married... (Laughs)

IVANOV

You're the one that did it, man! Snuck in the house like a mouse and poisoned the milk!

OKHLOBYSTIN

Man, how she cried...

IVANOV

What you do it for, man?!

BOY

The water's boiling in the kitchen.

IVANOV

And you weren't the only one here, man. I saw you all! There was a lot of you guys here!

WORKER

I didn't put anything in your milk.

BOY

Hey guys, I feel pretty lousy...

IVANOV

I thought you were mice! And it turns out, he's some Uncle Vanya!

BOY

(Grabs the Worker) WHAT DID YOU DO TO US?!

OKHLOBYSTIN

Come on, this is Uncle Vanya, guys. I know him. Hey, Uncle Vanya, you been out looking for mushrooms with the wife? Salad mushrooms, huh? I'm asking you – have you been mushroom hunting in the woods? Did ya get a good crop?

IVANOV

Oh, Uncle Vanya – and there I thought at first, I thought it's mice – that's what I thought...

OKHLOBYSTIN

What do you keep pawing that loaf of bread for?

IVANOV

Come on, admit it. Admit the whole thing.

WORKER

I did not put any poison in your milk.

IVANOV

Okay. So you didn't poison the milk. Right? What did you poison?

OKHLOBYSTIN

We ought to tie him up.

They tie up the Worker.

IVANOV

What did you poison?

OKHLOBYSTIN

So you don't go waving your arms.

IVANOV

What did you poison?

OKHLOBYSTIN

Ai, yai, yai... Walks by here every day grinning and then he goes and poisons us...

IVANOV

Let's at least make him tell us what he did it for.

OKHLOBYSTIN

And I even liked you, man.

IVANOV

What a scum.

BOY

Vasily, how is it that forty-year-old women got into our house?

IVANOV

You figure that? Guy sneaks in here like a little mouse.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Down with all women!

BOY

They're ducking in and out from behind the plates on the table.

IVANOV

I'll put him in the other room.

OKHLOBYSTIN

So you don't go waving your arms.

WORKER

I didn't go poisonin' nothin'.

OKHLOBYSTIN

What made you put it in the milk? How come not someplace else?

Ivanov carries the Worker into the next room. The Boy shakes the women from the table.

(Laughs) When's this all going to end? Do I want it to end? And what am I going to do when it all ends?

WILL I FEEL ANY BETTER FOR THAT?

BOY

(Sits on the floor) Daddy... Daddy... I feel really sick...
(Cries)

IVANOV

(To Okhlobystin) I love Tanya.

BOY

i love Tanya

OKHLOBYSTIN

TANYA IS BEAUTIFUL

BOY

Tanya is beautiful

IVANOV

I want you to know that.

OKHLOBYSTIN

I KNOW THAT.

BOY

i know absolutely everything

IVANOV

And so that's the end of that.

BOY

and so – that's the end of that

OKHLOBYSTIN

THE END (Raises his hands)

IVANOV

I don't want to hear anything more. You got that? You got that?

BOY

i don't want nothing no more, nothing

*Ivanov lifts the Boy off the
floor.*

I imagined her voice... – you don't believe me?

in the nighttime sounds, hums and squeaks

i rode it like a wave

i sailed and listened to her laughter

it fell and rolled down away from me, ran away and hid behind
the door

i missed catching it by only a second

i arrived just a second too late

i kept coming up late and i heard only her shadow

OKHLOBYSTIN

To your health!

BOY

Only her laughter – IT LAUGHED AT ME

IVANOV

Right now we are going to go to her and she will forgive us...
She will see us and forgive us...She will forgive me – it's not
your fault... We're going to go to her right now.

BOY

I imagined her voice

IVANOV

We're going to go to her right now.

They leave.

OKHLOBYSTIN

(Shouts after them) SHE LEFT AND SHE'LL NEVER COME BACK!

IVANOV

(Turning around) Who?

BOY

Who?

They are silent.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Zina.

The Boy and Ivanov leave.

My head is full of nonsense.

Sometimes nonsense seems real wise.

Oh well. I know how to wait.

And there's time enough ahead to go nuts forty times over...

(Walks from room to room, gathering his things into a suitcase.
Gets dressed and goes out. Locks the house)

Well, time? Forward!

SCENE FIVE

Morning.

The Worker wanders throughout the house sadly looking out all the windows. But everything is closed. Everything is locked. A chewed-up rope hangs from the Worker's hands. The Worker breaks out a window, curses, climbs out and leaves.

WORKER

(Stops and howls) I'll poison every one of the sons of bitches!

SCENE SIX

People Love Having Fun On The Chermlyanka River

Okhlobystin's house. Gay music is heard. Today might be a holiday. Zina flashes by, busy with something and humming. Okhlobystin sits in an easy chair reading a newspaper and smoking. The Boy prances from room to room, whistling. Everything is white and sunny – Zina's dress, the Boy's suit. The table in the large room is covered with a snow-white tablecloth and there are flowers all around. Tanya and Ivanov appear from the garden. Everyone smiles at each other and laughs.

TANYA

How nice it is here! So nice!

OKHLOBYSTIN

I have waited my whole life for some physicist to discover interim bosons – and now look at this, someone has!

ZINA

Is that in the paper?

OKHLOBYSTIN

Want some champagne?

TANYA

Hurray! I love drinking champagne!

ZINA

Everything's ready!

All sit at the table.

I had a terrible dream last night. It was like I was at some reception. I'm standing next to the table and I'm holding a big

purse. Everyone is dancing and I'm shoveling food into the purse.

Then somebody says, "Check out what she's got in her purse!"

And everybody looks at me. It was terrible. That's when I see the actor Georgy Zhzhonov standing there.³ I say, "Comrade Zhzhonov, tell them there's nothing in the purse!"

And Zhzhonov takes me by the hand and gives me a ride home in his car.

I say to him, "Thank you so much, comrade Zhzhonov – You saved my life!"

BOY

What did he say?

ZINA

Well, that part's not important, but can you imagine such a nightmare? You think it means anything?

IVANOV

I haven't dreamed anything for ages. I just drop off instantly into some black darkness – and that's the last I know of it.

BOY

Has anyone been perch fishing this year?

ZINA

Is perch the one with the red fins?

OKHLOBYSTIN

They're really biting right now.

ZINA

Vasily and I are going to the Crimea in August. He's going to write a scholarly report there.

TANYA

It's all so interesting!

ZINA

Yes. The correlating dependence of the form and structure of the ambulacral fields of walrus upon their lifestyle.

TANYA

I've never seen a walrus!

ZINA

I've never been to the sea.

BOY

Me either.

ZINA

Poor Boy...

BOY

(Whispers) Zina, you've got great legs!

ZINA

At your age the only thing that interested me was physics and geometry.

However, on the other hand, look how much time I wasted. I gave my whole youth to geometry.

And what for?

I love putting on a record, listening to music and dancing. The most important thing is to have a record and a record player.

That's all I need. We are going to dance today, aren't we?

The Boy and Zina dance.

BOY

Zina, there aren't any walruses in the Black Sea.

ZINA

Yes there are.

BOY

No there aren't.

ZINA

Yes there are.

BOY

No there aren't.

ZINA

My Boy, that's just your jealousy speaking!

BOY

Ha-ha!

TANYA

Your perfume is delightful, Zina.

ZINA

Isn't it? It's like flowers.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Anyone for wine? Champagne?

ZINA

How I do love champagne! How I do love dancing! And how I do love music!

BOY

Anything else?

ZINA

I like everyone to be happy, to live in peace, and for no one to argue.

BOY

It doesn't happen like that.

ZINA

Basically, I just love people. And I love animals.

TANYA

It's probably wonderful in the Crimea right now.

IVANOV

It's always wonderful in the Crimea.

ZINA

I just can't wait to go there... I can't even imagine what the sea must be like...

IVANOV

I'm leaving for America.

ZINA

Oh, my Lord! So far away?!

TANYA

How I do love summer. Summer is always so pleasant and warm. I don't like snow. Summer in Bibirevo is so nice!

BOY

It's always nice in Bibirevo.

ZINA

They say it's nice in the Crimea, too.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Life is grand!

IVANOV

Yes, grand it is.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Aren't we getting on well?

IVANOV

Everything is just so fine.

OKHLOBYSTIN

We live well.

TANYA

I love it when all is well.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Oh, it's so good!

TANYA

It's nice drinking wine.

BOY

Yes, it is nice.

ZINA

But I hear things are bad in America.

OKHLOBYSTIN

Things are fine in America, too.

TANYA

How fine summer is in Bibirevo!

ZINA

They say things are nice in the Crimea...

Everyone looks off into the distance.

SCENE SEVEN

The Girl stands in the doorway.

*Tanya turns around and spills wine
on the Boy's suit.*

BOY

Ahhh!

ZINA

Just like blood.

END OF PLAY