Side 1 - Sorin, Konstantin, Nina, Yakov

Start

SORIN Still—I'm rather keen on literary men. There was a time when there were two things I passionately wanted—to get married and to be a literary man. Never managed either one. Even to be an unknown literary man must be very nice, that's what.

KONSTANTIN I can hear her coming. (*He embraces his uncle.*) I can't live without her!—even the sound of her footsteps is enchanting—I could go mad, I'm so happy—

Konstantin quickly hurries to meet NINA *as she enters.*

My angel!—my dream—

NINA (*agitatedly*) I'm not late—tell me I'm not late.

KONSTANTIN (*kissing her hand*) No . . . no . . . no . . .

NINA I've been worried sick all day—oh, I was so terrified my father would stop me coming. But they've gone out—he and my stepmother. The sky was red, the moon was rising, and I was urging on the horse—come on—come on—come on! (*She laughs.*) I feel happy now, though. (*She shakes Sorin firmly by the hand.*)

SORIN Oooh, do I see tears? That won't do!

NINA It's nothing—it's just how out of breath I am. I've got to go in half an hour, we have to hurry, I can't be late. I simply can't—don't make me late, for God's sake—my father doesn't know I'm here.

KONSTANTIN It's time to start anyway—we must call everyone.

SORIN I'll go, I'll go—all done, that's what and there you have it. (*He goes and sings.*)

Two grenadiers were riding to France,
Home from their prison in Russia . . .

He looks round.

I once started to sing like that, and one of the assistant prosecutors said to me, 'You have a powerful voice, Your Excellency,' then he thought for a moment and added, 'powerful, but perfectly horrible.' (*He laughs and goes out.*)

NINA My father and his wife don't let me come here—they say you're all bohemians. They're terrified I'll go on the stage. But I'm drawn here like a seagull drawn to the lake. Oh, my heart's so full of you.

KONSTANTIN [It's all right,] we're alone here.

NINA I think there's someone . . .

KONSTANTIN There isn't anyone.

They kiss.

NINA What kind of tree is that?

KONSTANTIN Elm.

NINA Why does it look so dark?

KONSTANTIN The light's going now—everything starts looking dark. Don't leave too soon, please don't!

NINA I can't stay on.

KONSTANTIN What if I came back with you, Nina? I'll stand the whole night in your garden looking up at your window.

NINA You'd better not!—The watchman would see you!—Tresor isn't used to you, he'll bark.

KONSTANTIN I love you.

NINA Shh . . .

KONSTANTIN Who's that?—is that you, Yakov?

YAKOV Yes, sir, it's me.

KONSTANTIN Everyone [get] ready, we'll be starting. Is the moon up?

YAKOV Yes, sir.

KONSTANTIN Have you got the methylated spirits?—and the sulphur? We must have the smell of sulphur as soon as the red eyes appear. (*to Nina*) Go on then—everything's ready for you—Are you nervous?

NINA Very. I don't mind your mother, I'm not nervous about her, but to have Trigorin here, I've got stagefright just thinking about acting in front of him, I feel so unworthy—such a famous writer! Is he young?

KONSTANTIN He is, yes.

NINA All those wonderful stories he writes!

KONSTANTIN I wouldn't know, I haven't read them.

NINA Your play's difficult to do. Being as there aren't any real people in it.

KONSTANTIN Real people! The idea is to show life the way we experience it in dreams—not the way it is or [the way] you think it ought to be.

NINA Yes, but there isn't much *action* in your play, it's all—you know—*lines*. I think there ought definitely to be love in a play . . .

They both go behind the stage. End

POLINA, DORN *enter.*

POLINA It's g damp. Do go back an on your galoshes.

DORN I'm too h

POLINA You don't l fter yours plain mulishness. You're a doctor, you know perfe ell d ss in the air is bad for you, [but] you just do it to ups ght you deliberately sat the whole evening out on the . . .

DORN (*hums*) 'Say not yo was ruined.'

POLINA You were so c aw ing to madam you never noticed the cold. You l r—adm do.

DORN I'm fifty-f

POLINA Oh, ta dle—that's not old man. You've worn well and you'r ttractive to women.

DORN What is t you want me to do about it

POLINA You men would kiss the ground for an actress—not one of you wouldn't.

DORN (' 'Again I stand before you . . .'

If it so at artists in our society are treated differe say, trade only natural, that's called idealism.

POLINA Y s had women throwing themse — that's their id is it?

DORN Well, in What women liked m e was that I was a damn g r. If you rememb teen years ago, I was the only d trician in the vince. And besides—I was always s h them.

POLINA Oh, my dear—

DORN Hush—they're com

Enter ARKADINA *on Sorin's* IGORIN, SHAMRAEV, *Medvedenko a*

SHAMRAEV In 1873 at the s amazing—gave a superb performance, quit ppen to know what became of the com din? I incomparable Raspliuyev—better th y, you hav ma'am. What is he doing now?

ARKADINA You g me about people the Flood! How sh v?

SHAMRAEV nadin. They don't make them more. The t what it was. There used to be m — now we' ing but stumps.

DORN ren't as many outstanding actors nowadays, t true, but verage level is much higher.

SHAMRAEV There I have to disagree. But it's all a matter of taste. *De gustibus aut bene aut nihil.*

Konstantin comes out from behind the stage.