Side 3 - Trigorin

TRIGORIN Am I? (*shrugging his shoulders*) Hm . . . here you are talking about fame and [illegible]une and s[illegible]e interesting, brilliant life I'm supposed to be having, [illegible]t I'[illegible]raid these sweet thoughts mean no more to me than sweet ca[illegible] which I never eat. You're young and you mean well.

NINA But you have su[illegible] a marvello[illegible]life.

Start **TRIGORIN** I don't see what's so specially good about it. (*He looks at his watch.*) I have to go and do some writing now—excuse me—I haven't the time—(*He laughs.*)—You've trodden on my pet corn, you see!—and I start getting upset and irritable—All right, let's talk about my wonderful, brilliant life . . . Well, where should we begin? (*after a little thought*) Well—there are people who develop an obsession with something—say, a man who can think about nothing but the moon, day and night. Well—I have my own moon. Day and night I'm driven by one constant thought: I must be writing—I must be writing—I've scarcely finished one story before—God knows why—I have to write another—then a third, and after the third a fourth—I keep on without a break like the mailcoach changing horses—on and on, and I can't do anything else. What's so wonderful and brilliant about that? It's a ridiculous life. Here I am with you, I've got myself all worked up—and the whole time, I'm thinking [that] there's a story waiting to be finished on my desk. I look up and see there's a cloud shaped like a grand piano. I think—I must get that into a story some time, [that] a cloud floated past like a grand piano. I can smell heliotropes—I make a quick mental note, sickly sweet scent, colour of widows' weeds, mention when describing summer evening. I snap up every word and phrase we utter and hurry off to shut them away in my bottom drawer. When I finish something, I escape to the theatre or go fishing. There you'd think I'd be allowed to relax, lose myself—but no: something is already moving in my brain like a heavy iron ball, a new idea, a new story, and it's dragging me back to my desk. I have to rush back and write—and write—and that's how it is, all the time. I'm never left in peace, and it's as if I'm devouring my own life—to make the honey (or the readers out there, 'I'm gathering up the pollen from my best flowers, breaking

off the flowers themselves, trampling on their roots. I could be a madman. Are my friends and acquaintances actually treating me as if I'm sane? 'What are you working on?' 'When are you going to give us your next?'—over and over, it never stops—and I sometimes think, all this fascination—this admiration and congratulation—it's all an act, they're humouring me like an invalid and getting ready to creep up behind me and pounce on me and carry me off to the madhouse like in Gogol. Back in the days when I was starting out—the years of one's youth, the best years—it was continuous torture. A young writer, especially if he isn't having much luck—feels awkward and not *for* anything—he's on edge, his nerves are a wreck—he can't stop himself hanging around the literary crowd, unknown and ignored, afraid to look people in the eye, like a compulsive gambler with nothing to bet with. I never met my readers, but for some reason I always imagined them to be sceptical, hostile. I was afraid of the public—the thought of them terrified me. When I came to have a play put on I'd look at the audience and decide that everyone with dark hair had made up their minds to hate it, and everyone with fair hair wasn't interested enough to care either way. Oh—it was a nightmare! Sheer torture! End

NINA I'm[illegible]rry, but—surely when you're in mid-inspi[illegible]on—actually i[illegible] act of creation—doesn't that give[illegible]t for that mom[illegible]ling of being lifted up—of[illegible]dent happiness?

TRIGORIN (*casually*) [illegible] I love wr[illegible]ting is very enjoyable. Correcting pro[illegible] . . . But then it's got to be published. The moment th[illegible] the press I can't stand it. It's already no good—a mist[illegible]ever to have been written in the first place—and I f[illegible]y a[illegible]less. And people read it and say, 'Oh yes, a v[illegible]y talent, q[illegible]ing, but not a patch on Tolstoy'—[illegible]t bad at all, but *Fa*[illegible] *Sons* is better.' And it will go[illegible]his till I die. I'll never be[illegible] more than charm[illegible]talented. And when I'm dead it [illegible] my gravestone, [illegible]e lies Trigorin. He was good—but not a[illegible]d as Turgenev.'