Side 4 - Masha, Trigorin, Nina

ACT THREE

The dining-room in Sorin's house. A sideboard and a cupboard with medicines. In the middle of the room, a table. A trunk and hat boxes; preparations for a journey are to be seen. Trigorin is having lunch. Masha stands by the table.

Start

MASHA I'm telling you this because you're a writer. You can use it. I'm telling you in all honesty, if he'd seriously wounded himself I wouldn't have gone on living another minute. [It's] not for lack of courage, mind you. I've decided—I'm going to tear this love out of my heart, just tear it out by the roots.

TRIGORIN How are you going to do that?

MASHA I'm getting married. To Medvedenko.

TRIGORIN The schoolteacher?

MASHA [Yes.]

TRIGORIN I think that's rather overdoing it.

MASHA Loving without hope—waiting years on end for something, you don't know what . . . Better off married and forget about love, I'll have new troubles to blot out the old ones—and anyway, anything for a change. Shall we have another [drink]?

TRIGORIN Wouldn't that be rather [overdoing it]?

Masha pours out a glass each.

MASHA Oh, come on. You don't have to look [at me] like that. Lots of women drink—more than you think. Not so many openly like me—mostly in secret. Vodka or brandy for preference. (*clinking glasses*) Here's to you! You're all right [I approve of you]. I'm sorry you're leaving.

TRIGORIN I'm sorry too.

MASHA Ask her to stop on.

TRIGORIN No, she won't stay now. Her son is being awfully difficult. Not content with trying to shoot himself, he now wants to challenge me to a duel, apparently. I've no idea why. He sulks and stamps his foot and preaches his doctrine of new forms. But there's plenty of room for all, there's no need to push and shove.

MASHA Yes, but he's jealous. Not that it's any of my affair.

Yakov crosses the stage with a trunk. Nina enters and stands by the window.

My schoolteacher's not very clever but he's kind, and he's got nothing. He's devoted to me. I'm sorry for him. I'm even sorry for his old mother. Well—time to wish you all the best. Spare me a thought now and then. (*She shakes Trigorin warmly by the hand.*) Thank you very much for being nice to me. Send me your books and don't forget to write in them—only, not the usual 'To so-and-so, best wishes'—put 'To Masha, God knows whence and God knows why.' Goodbye!

Masha leaves.

Nina stretches out her hand towards Trigorin, her fist clenched.

NINA Odd or even?

TRIGORIN Even.

NINA Wrong. That means 'No'. I'm trying to decide whether or not to go on the stage. If only somebody would tell me what to do.

TRIGORIN It's not the sort of thing anybody can decide for you.

NINA We're parting today and I don't suppose we'll ever meet again. Would you take this little medallion?—to remember me by? I've had your initials engraved on it—and on the other side, the title of one of your books, *Days and Nights.*

TRIGORIN But how sweet of you. (*kissing the medallion*) It's a lovely present.

NINA Will you think of me sometimes?

TRIGORIN I'll think of you as you were on that sunny day a week ago—do you remember?, wearing your light-coloured dress . . . We talked . . . and there was a seagull lying on the seat.

NINA Yes . . . the seagull.

TRIGORIN (*reading the medallion*) 'Days and Nights, page 121, lines 11 and 12.'

NINA We can't talk now, they're coming—please—I beg you—give me two minutes before you go—

End

She leaves. At the same time, Arkadina enters, with Sorin in a tail coat with a star, and then Yakov, who is preoccupied with the packing.

ARKADINA What wilt thou do, old man, driving around raving calls wi… r rheumatism? Why don't you stay at hom… *Trigorin*… s that who just went out? Nina?

TRIGORIN

ARKADINA *M*… for interrupting … everything's packed. I'm exhaust…

Yakov is clearing the tab…

YAKOV Are the fishing rods…

TRIGORIN Yes—I'll be wa… books can be given away.

YAKOV Yes, sir.

TRIGORIN (*to A*… Have you got any o… ks here in the house?

ARKADI… y brother's study—in the corner bo…

Trigo… *s out.*

I mean it, Petroosha, you'll be better staying at home.