Side 6 - Arkadina, Konstantin

SORIN (*laughs*) Quite [illegible] And at[illegible]ght on your back. Thank you, I don't need help to walk.

MEDVEDENKO Just for f[illegible]m s[illegible]ke, then—

They go out.

Start **ARKADINA** He gave me such a fright.

KONSTANTIN Living in the country isn't good for him, it doesn't suit him. It gets him down. Now, if you had a fit of generosity and lent him a couple of thousand, he'd be able to live in town all year round.

ARKADINA I have no money, I'm an actress, not a banker.

KONSTANTIN Mama, can you change my bandage?—no one does it like you do.

Arkadina takes a box of dressings from the medicine cupboard.

ARKADINA The doctor's late.

KONSTANTIN Yes, it's midday—he said he'd be here at ten.

ARKADINA Sit down. (*She takes the bandage off his head.*) You look like somebody in a turban. There was someone asking in the kitchen last night what country you were from. There . . . it's practically healed over, just a tiny bit left. Now promise me there'll be no more (*pulling an imaginary trigger*) chk-chk! when I'm gone.

KONSTANTIN [I] promise. I just went mad for a moment, I was in such despair I lost control . . . it won't happen again. (*He kisses Arkadina's hands.*) Your hands are the hands of a ministering angel. I remember—ages ago—when you were still working at the Imperial—when I was a little boy—there was a fight in the courtyard where we were living, and a washerwoman in our building got badly hurt—do you remember this?—she was out cold when they picked her up . . . You were always going in to see her, you brought her medicine, you used to wash her children in her washtub. Can't you remember that?

Arkadina puts on a fresh bandage.

ARKADINA No.

KONSTANTIN There were two dancers living in our building at the time . . . they used to come in and have coffee.

ARKADINA That I remember.

KONSTANTIN They had religion. (*Pause.*) These last few days, I've loved you as tenderly and trustfully as I did when I was little. I have nobody but you now. Only—why do you let that man have such a hold over you?

ARKADINA You don't know him, Konstantin. He has the noblest nature in the world.

KONSTANTIN Oh, has he? Well, when he heard I wanted to fight him his noble nature didn't get in the way of his prudence. He's running away like a coward.

ARKADINA What nonsense. He's leaving because I said we're leaving.

KONSTANTIN Noble nature! Here we are, practically falling out over him, and he's next door or in the garden somewhere laughing up his sleeve and improving Nina's mind in a last-minute attempt to convince her he's a genius.

ARKADINA You seem to take pleasure in being horrible to me. I have the greatest respect for that man and I'll thank you not to speak of him like that in my presence.

KONSTANTIN Well, I haven't the slightest respect for him. You'd like me to think he's a genius, too, but—I'm sorry—I can't lie, his books make me sick.

ARKADINA That's envy. Talentless people with ideas about themselves can't do anything but run down anybody who's got any real talent—it's their consolation.

KONSTANTIN Real talent! If it comes to that, I've got more talent than the lot of you put together! (*He tears off the bandage.*) You hacks and mediocrities have grabbed all the best places for yourselves and you think the kind of art you do is the only kind that counts—anything else, you stifle or stamp out. Well, I'm not taken in by any of you—not by him and not by you either!

ARKADINA My son the Decadent!

KONSTANTIN Go off to your cosy little theatre and act in your pathetic stupid little plays.

ARKADINA I have never in my life appeared in a play of that description! Get away from me! You can't even write a wretched little comic sketch! Go back to Kiev and open a shop! Parasite!

KONSTANTIN Skinflint!

ARKADINA Rat's nest!

Konstantin sits down and cries quietly.

Little nobody! Crybaby. Stop crying. Don't cry. There's nothing to cry about. Please don't cry . . . Please, there's no need to . . . Oh, darling, I'm sorry—forgive me—forgive your awful mother—your poor miserable mother . . .

Konstantin embraces her.

KONSTANTIN If you only knew!—I've lost everything. She doesn't love me—I can't write any more—I've lost all hope.

ARKADINA Don't say that—it'll all turn out all right. Now he's going away she'll love you again. It'll be all right. (*She wipes away his tears.*) There . . . we're friends again, aren't we?

KONSTANTIN (*kisses her hands*) Yes, Mama.

ARKADINA (*tenderly*) Make it up with him, too. There's no reason to fight him—there really isn't, is there?

KONSTANTIN Yes, all right—only don't make me see him—I couldn't face it—I'm not up to it . . .

End

Trigorin enters carrying his book.

[It's] all ri I'm going. (*He quickly puts things away in the dicine cupbo doctor can do my bandage later.

TRIGOR *self, with the book in his hand*) 'If y ve need of r e and take it.'

Konstanti he bandage from the floor and

ARKADINA T bringing the horses ro

TRIGORIN (*to hi* you ever have n life, come and take it.'

ARKADINA All pack

TRIGORIN Yes, yes . . . ([C hy do I hear such a note of sadness in this cry eart?—and why is it my heart that feels broken? need of my life, come and take it.' (*to Arkadina*) Let' re day! Why can't we?

ARKADINA Because, my lov y you want to. But you mustn't let it make you forg e a little intoxicated, that's all. You have to com

TRIGORIN No—you me yes, to be sensible—and wise—I beg you, a true f u're capable of the sacrifice—be genero go.

ARKADINA Are otted with her?

TRIGORIN It' being called to her— is is the one thing that's al missing in my life.

ARKADINA e love of a little miss nobody [how little] you ut yourself.

TRIGO ple sometimes walk and talk and they asleep— that, I'm talking to you but it's as if I'm r eep and she's my dream—I'm possessed by such sweet visions . . . Oh, please, I beg you, let me go!