

viliam klimáček

## chekhov – boxer

### deception of the czarist television

*to the pharaohs*

*grave looter*

#### cast

anton pavlovich <b>chekhov</b> <sup>1</sup>	writer and physician
<b>lika</b> stakhiyevna mizinova <sup>2</sup>	love of his life
<b>maria</b> pavlovna chekhova <sup>3</sup>	his sister
mikhail lvovich <b>astrov</b> <sup>4</sup>	his friend and physician
evgeny konstantinovich <b>lvov</b> <sup>5</sup>	his admirer and municipal doctor
ivan romanovich <b>chebutykin</b> <sup>6</sup>	military doctor
<b>bear woman</b>	chechen artist
<b>ellen</b> homerovna dorn <sup>7</sup>	czarist television reporter

#### and the sitcom characters *three sisters*

olga	played by maria pavlovna
masha	played by lika stakhiyevna
irina	played by ellen homerovna
tuzenbach	played by mikhail lvovich

*the story takes place in the chekhovs' homestead in melichovo<sup>8</sup> in october of 1896, several days after the total fiasco of the seagull in the alexandrinsky theater*

*the third act takes place a year later in the same place*

**cocaine**  
first act

*drawing room in melichovo*

**chebutykin** did you watch tv yesterday<sup>9</sup> – evgeny konstantinovich

**lvov** i read books

**chebutykin** there was something on the Lake Baikal<sup>10</sup> – I served there – in the artillery regiment *lowers his voice* they say anton pavlovich is sick – have you heard

**lvov** i hate gossip – and the gossipers

**chebutykin** i have been coming here for three days – he didn't come down a single one time – other times he chitchats – winds the clock – and nothing now – boring even scary

**lvov** *with reproach* the clock is working

**chebutykin** that was maria pavlovna – our little light

**lvov** *stands up with excitement* you and i are both bound by the aesculapian oath – have you forgotten doctor chebutykin

**chebutykin** well well – just how hotheaded he is – brings up aesculapos right away – i can't spill the beans but have to help – what if anton pavlovich needs a doctor

**lvov** i will not allow that chekhov be treated by some military quack

**chebutykin** have you ever seen a war wound – can you imagine what a cavalry sword can do

**lvov** *reconciled* do tell

**chebutykin** he came back from st. petersburg a week ago – from his play – the raven

**lvov** *disgusted* the seagull<sup>11</sup>

**chebutykin** some kind of bird, anyway – the tv said so too – that the theater whistled like a hundred samovars – utter humiliation – anton pavlovich escaped by the first train to melichovo<sup>12</sup> – and he's been in bed since

**lvov** theater<sup>13</sup> – such a low art form

**chebutykin** that's not all – listen – when anton pavlovich woke up one morning – he found out he turned – into a boxer

**lvov** *surprised* a boxer

**chebutykin** god only knows how it is *gets up* i'll be on my way – i already drank a barrel of tea

**maria** *comes in* the horses are ready – ivan romanovich

**chebutykin** *kisses maria's hands* maria pavlovna – our little light – you are chasing me away

**maria** the regiment called – cholera

**chebutykin** they were drinking from the springs again – fools – the cannoneers are not only deaf – but also stupid

**lvov** *to maria pavlovna* i respect your brother – i travel with all of his books

**maria** *to chebutykin* they already called twice – the carriage is waiting

**chebutykin** a cannon would cry before you would – maria – you are so cruel – let the horses wait – i'll pay for the oats – say lie down and i will lie down on the threshold – say help and i will give away my last shirt – just don't ignore me

**lvov** *to chebutykin* even cholera doesn't move you

**chebutykin** *to maria pavlovna* confide in your friends

**maria** antosha has changed – he is looking for any pretext to argue – the muzhiks are hiding in front of him – he doesn't want to treat anyone any more<sup>14</sup> – only the bear

**lvov** *stunned* the bear

**maria** he let the bear woman take shelter in the shed – the peasants cut her animal with an axe – poor chechen woman – she’s a wanderer – she plays the tambourine and the animal dances

**lvov** *with enthusiasm* chekhov is treating a bear

**chebutykin** so what – even a teddy bear is one of god’s creatures

**lvov** he is a great man – i’m telling you – great

**maria** he plays with the bear like he would pamper a child<sup>15</sup> – he feeds him with a bottle – he gave him three jars of honey – i cried through all those nights

**chebutykin** how can he make you suffer like that

**lvov** he is sick he needs help – cool your head - cannoneer

**chebutykin** i’ll slap you

**maria** gentlemen – for god’s sake

**chekhov** *comes in his night gown – boxer gloves on his hands* maria – take some oatmeal to the bear – oh we have guests – it doesn’t matter that we don’t have money for gas and the phone<sup>16</sup> – as long as we have guests<sup>17</sup>

**maria** antosha – please

**lvov** my deepest respects – anton pavlovich

**chekhov** i was joking – i will swallow my tongue if i’m not telling the truth – i really love visitors – that’s when i realize all the things i have yet to do<sup>18</sup> – and that’s how i escape them

**maria** you’re a master of that

**chekhov** i need many people around me to be alone

**lvov** *frightened* if we are overstaying

**chekhov** when you’re doing well – you have guests every day – when you flop – you dine alone all month long *with suspicion* you are not bringing me any manuscript – right

**lvov** just wishing you well

**chekhov** some young hopefuls are coming to me<sup>19</sup> – but none of their hopes come true – they want to hear my opinion – they suspect one day my bust will be in every high school<sup>20</sup> *looks around* what’s that smell

**maria** anfisa is boiling cabbage

**chekhov** *with doubts* salt-cured herring

**maria** antosha – put on your jacket – you’ll catch a cold

**chekhov** *sniffs around* herrings for sure *to chebutykin* aren’t these your boots – dear chebutykin

**chebutykin** *clicks his heels in a military manner* the army greets the artist

**chekhov** have you ever heard the name doroganskaya – gentlemen

**chebutykin** the abortionist – who many years ago was beaten up by scythes in ryazan

**chekhov** no – this doroganskaya – gentlemen – murders with her pen – she sits at every premiere in st. petersburg and she ravages every play she ever sees – she thoroughly despises theater – her skirts swish around the balconies – always in her black wig like a wet greyhound – the scene on stage is pure poetry – you are on the verge of bursting into tears – when a sound disturbs you – doroganskaya’s teeth grinding – in a hundred years people will remember her only because she deterred people from good plays – i have tried my hand in literature in everything except poetry and informant reports *maria is crying* but if you read her column – no tact no regards – she gets excited only by state funerals – those cast iron gallows – that petty hollow shell full of curdled kvass *suddenly kindly* won’t you have some tea

**chebutykin** my dear – you are soaking in sweat

**maria** for christ's sake – put on your jacket – anton  
**chekhov** *putting the jacket on* i had a poisonous frog on my tongue – it's gone  
**lvov** *takes out a book* anton pavlovich – would you sign  
**maria** *to chekhov* at least drink the broth – would you like some oatmeal  
**chekhov** will you put some lard in the onions  
**maria** i will – just eat something  
**bear woman** *enters with lots of bracelets and chains* your highness – quickly – the little one is in pain  
**chekhov** *to the doctors* gentlemen – we need to consult *he raises his hands in boxer gloves* my fingers don't work  
**lvov** we will do it for you – anton pavlovich  
**maria** *to chekhov* eat first *to the bear woman* he's not going anywhere  
**chekhov** when the sick call – the doctor must go  
**bear woman** my little star  
**chebutykin** when the general's horse had a limp – first they called me – only then the horse doctor – i'm good with animals  
**bear woman** little star – hurts  
**chekhov** *kisses his sister* maria – angel of mine – prepare a hot dressing – boil some wine with mustard seed – and bring it to the shed – please *doctors leave after the patient – bear woman goes with them*  
**maria** god why am i so ugly – bring – do – boil – fetch – everybody keeps ordering me around and i obey – and ugly girl has to be kind – like a cripple – left up to the mercy of others – must not show bad mood – always smiling – comes up with suggestions first – brings things by herself – does – boils – fetches – you don't have to tell her – an ugly girl is always willing – to help first – just to get noticed<sup>21</sup>  
**astrov** *comes in cheerfully* hello – anybody here  
**maria** good heavens – mikhail lvovich  
**astrov** doctor astrov – at your service  
**maria** nice of you to show up  
**astrov** you look ever so beautiful  
**maria** *jokingly hits him with her fists* you liar you – you merciful samaritan – little vodka *calls out* anfisa  
**astrov** don't call – i want it from your hands – my dear – tell me – what have you been up to all summer  
**maria** *pouring the doctor vodka* just ordinary things *spills*  
**astrov** you are in love – you little rascal  
**maria** since when – i keep making cherry preserves – i can never get enough of them – in taganrog<sup>22</sup> we never had any cherries  
**astrov** pick the cherries – maria pavlovna – and don't be sad – or maybe be sad – the sunset in your eyes is very becoming  
**maria** will you stay for lunch – misha shot a woodcock  
**astrov** i'm a vegetarian  
**maria** we also have cabbage – with potatoes  
**astrov** how is antosha doing  
**maria** *leaving with the guest* i'll tell you in the dining room  
**lvov** *comes in with chekhov and chebutykin* your shed is nicer than the houses in the village – master  
**chebutykin** each muzhik – that a swine – they don't ever wash  
**lvov** what about our saunas – even the real beggars treat themselves to a sauna once a year

**chekhov** you know why russians love the sauna – because of the birch twigs – it is not the love of hygiene – it is the national altar of flagellantism – whip yourself and suffer – and then nothing will surprise you *to the guests* where did you study – doctor lvov

**lvov** like you – moscow university – they will let you sit at your desk for a single kopeck

**chekhov** *surprised* for a kopeck – oh how shabby was our university<sup>23</sup> – everything around the student should be beautiful – well-lit classrooms and crystal chandeliers – paintings by the best artists on the hallway walls – but our universities with piles of dirty snow – that is the source of russian pessimism – just look at our intelligentsia<sup>24</sup> – whoever does not escape abroad – will drink or shoot himself to death

**lvov** *to chekhov* but you used to be different – your were our idol

**chebutykin** *with admiration to chekhov* your shed is a showpiece – so is your well

**chekhov** the biggest source of russian pessimism is russia herself – but what troubles me the most – gentlemen – is how russia shines – like a black sun – who knows if europe has enough antibodies

**chebutykin** admiral avelan<sup>25</sup> was in france – the french fleet was here

**chekhov** the french are too far – they can admire us – but the closest neighbors are dying – those little countries next door

**astrov enters** *pretending cheerfulness* you're politicizing again – writers

**chekhov** *hugs his friend cordially* mikhail – my dear

**astrov** antosha – you boxer

**chekhov** they avoid me like an armoire full of china

**chebutykin** cholera calls *leaves*

**lvov** i'm sure you have things to talk about *leaves*

**astrov after lvov** bright young man – but not himself – taut as a string

**chekhov** just imagine – they let people sit at my desk for a kopeck

**astrov** *hugs his friend's hands in boxer gloves* let's fight

**chekhov** you brought in snow

**astrov** if you take off your gloves

**chekhov** they grew onto my fingers – maria has to feed me – you brought

**astrov** *checking* the door is closed

**chekhov** show me the snow *astrov hands him a package*

**astrov** *pours the cocaine on the table – holds the straw – chekhov snorts – then astrov into the sled they collapse into the armchairs*

**chekhov** they booed my play – you know – i was sitting behind the set and i could feel it flop – when i fail – i gain strength – when they applaud – i would have crawled under the table

**astrov** so you're feeling good

**chekhov** i can't write – i'm hurting everyone – i offend women

**astrov** i'd like to experience that feeling at least once – to create

**chekhov** *mockingly* creativity – the dwarfs yell that i write too much<sup>26</sup> – and they themselves are unable to put together a complex sentence – blame me for the content – not the extent<sup>27</sup>

**astrov** everything gets sucked into a hellish ass – not your stories

**chekhov** there are a couple of good characters and the rest is filler – i envy you – i'd like to experience at least half of your loves

**astrov** pish posh – in st. petersburg they are dying to see chekhov – you are like a vineyard – with grapes of female admirers

**chekhov** neither enrapturing joy – nor even striking grief – i can't enjoy anything – like a high school kid i'm waiting for a big love – and yet i'm afraid of it – i'm afraid it will come one day – and that it won't be it – that there will be nothing left to hope for – so here I go smoldering – like charcoal – like a swamp gas *the cocaine trip is climaxing* we used to do the best theater at our place<sup>28</sup> in the orchard – remember – lika played lead roles – you used to play colonels – I played landlord farmers – chebutykin was pulling the curtain – everything went to hell

**astrov** where is lika now

**chekhov** she escaped to st. petersburg – i was an idiot and recommended her to the suvorin theater<sup>29</sup> – something like acting school – our orchard is too small for her now

**astrov** i had an actress once – she stuffed her breasts

**chekhov** they all escape to big theaters – they want to have chandeliers above their heads and be surrounded by velvet – till they go to school<sup>30</sup> they are natural girls – you can talk to them – but there they spoil their inner clocks<sup>31</sup> – they start running too fast – then they start skipping<sup>32</sup> – in the acting school they all pretend to be one family – that from now on they will stick together forever – but a year later they will fight for every honorarium like dogs for a pork bone – and they will envy each others' roles – yet they will unanimously exclude everyone who does not hold their diploma – you know – if you didn't graduate from their school – you have no right to pinch venus in her highlands – you are not creating – just acting – important things come out of only people with diplomas - this cocaine will kill me one day

**astrov** i'll go first

**chekhov** i wanted to ask you – let this not be known – let them rather say – he died of consumption – consumption mikhail – can you do that for me

**astrov** that is nonsense *returns his revolver*

**chekhov** we have hundreds of friends – all famous doctors – and when they spread it around

**astrov** i love chekhov the boxer – the cokehead *yells* into the sled

**chekhov** consumption please – do that for me – my mother and my sister – they won't understand – do it for your friend

**astrov** i swear – you have tuberculosis

**chekhov** *jokingly fights with astrov* thanks - mikhail

**maria enters with lvov** you are like little boys *treats astrov's cheek wound* i'll put some iodine on it *sternly to his brother antosha* – you stay here

**astrov to maria** from your hands it won't sting – angel of mine *they leave with maria*

**lvov** are you alright – master

**chekhov** *shaking* i'm drenched in ice cold sweat – my nose is running – and you say – master

**lvov** great people go through stages like that

**chekhov** larva – i'm a larva you know

**lvov** tomorrow we'll laugh about that – we'll drink some vodka

**chekhov** you are so polite – doctor lvov – to an ordinary larva

**lvov** tomorrow you'll turn into a butterfly

**chekhov** my nasopharynx quit

**lvov** *wipes his nose* i have excellent drops

**chekhov** *with conspiracy* guess where maria hides the cognac

**lvov** i don't really drink

**chekhov** but i do *they leave*

**maria enters** when i'm with astrov – i lose my head – i have to look into the furnace whether the fire is on three times – i can't speak naturally – what were you making – marmalade i say – cherry he asks – gooseberry i respond – we have three barrels full – you could grease the hinges with it – i laugh yet i would love to lick the marmalade from his mouth – knives keep falling out of my hands and he picks them up – he doesn't see anything – oh mikhail – i envy the bread in the palm of your hand – i love the way you move – you hold the slice like a violin – as if you were about to play with your teeth

**chebutykin enters and covers maria's eyes – she cheers up** enteritis – no cholera

**maria disappointed** chebutykin

**chebutykin** some tartar told the cannoneers to drink koumiss<sup>33</sup> – that they will be better men

**maria** i despise your stories

**chebutykin** as a young man i drank five bottles of koumiss – a bet

**maria** stop it

**chebutykin** i vomited – it splished and splashed

**maria** phooey

**chebutykin** *offended* i just joke around and you don't like it

**maria** *angry* you – koumiss

**chebutykin** maria pavlovna – marry me – i'm well established – five uniforms – and two pairs of boots a year

**maria** *smells the air* salted herring

**chebutykin** *shows off his pocket watch* from the general

**maria** they say you are treating his horse

**chebutykin** for bravery – in chechnya<sup>34</sup>

**maria** i won't be the mother of the regiment

**chebutykin** i will ask for a discharge – i found myself a mill on the volga river – i'll be a miller

**maria** you're a good man – ivan romanovich – but sometimes you're intimidating

**chebutykin** and you're not – i'm not afraid of you – you're not malicious like other women – i'd confide in you with everything – you are capable of being friends with a man

**maria** all friends *she starts crying* but none of them love me – i never experienced a passionate love – and nobody ever lost their head because of me

**chebutykin** a mill like that can make you some twenty thousand rubles in a year

**maria** nobody ever jumped into a pond because of me *runs out crying*

**chebutykin** *yells after her* but i love you

**chekhov enters** did you have a fight

**chebutykin** i asked her to marry me

**lvov runs in** maria pavlovna jumped into the pond<sup>35</sup>

**chekhov** untie the boat – quickly *runs out*

**chebutykin** she loves me – she loves me after all *runs after the others*

end of first act

**lika**  
second act

*garden gazebo in melichovo*

**chebutykin** did you watch tv yesterday – evgeny konstantinovich – they were showing statistics on russian suicides

**Ivov** *looks around startled* for god’s sake – chebutykin

**chebutykin** men prefer to shoot themselves – women drown themselves more – they say it is all the result of the introduction of faulty gas lines in russia

**Ivov** be respectful to maria pavlovna

**chebutykin** lighting gas – quiet and dignified

**Ivov** you should be ashamed

**chebutykin** the pond is only about waste deep – she just caught a cold

**Ivov** you don’t know how to lose

**chebutykin** losses are my daily bread – i lose in cards – i lose with women – maria pavlovna was my one hundred and thirty eighth fiasco

**Ivov** you disgust me

**chebutykin** there are incredible leeches in the pond

**Ivov** you’ll die alone – chebutykin – in a shelter for cynics

**chebutykin** *surprised* you don’t use leeches for treatment

**Ivov** i scorn you - sir

**chebutykin** only a leech can cure inflammation of veins

**Ivov** quack *astrov enters with chekhov – astrov is carrying a tray with a plate* how’s maria pavlovna

**astrov** she just fell asleep

**chekhov** go to her door – please – when she wakes up – call me

**Ivov** we won’t leave her sight *leaves together with chebutykin*

**astrov** you should eat something

**chekhov** *smells the plate* who knows if it smells nice – my nose is raw – slowly i’m losing my sense of taste too – it doesn’t matter if i’m eating meat or a rag – let’s have some snow

**astrov** *looking into the orchard* you have visitors – a light carriage

**chekhov** i don’t want to see anybody – in this shape

**astrov** your medicine is coming

**chekhov** i didn’t order anything

**astrov** you yourself have to estimate your dose – but take it in drops

**chekhov** what is it *astrov leaves* where are you going – mikhaïl

**lika** *enters and hugs chekhov* anton – darling

**chekhov** *kisses lika* lika – lika mizinova *hiding his hands behind his back* how did you get here<sup>36</sup>

**lika** i got your telegram

**chekhov** *surprised* telegram – to astrov – did you conspire – what

**lika** i ran to the first train – i won’t let you die

**chekhov** i’m not dying – just living wretchedly *lika kisses his boxer gloves* i feel like i’m naked in front of you

**lika** don’t say anything *feeds chekhov with a spoon and he eats obediently*

**chekhov** how are you doing – they don’t write about you

**lika** i’m going to study singing

**chekhov** you’re leaving theater

**lika** they kicked me out really

**chekhov** in my orchard you were a great actress



**lika** but the cherry trees don't applaud – my dear – now i take singing lessons – i found a teacher – he's polish

**chekhov** young

**lika** eat – silly *keeps feeding him*

**chekhov** you also wanted to be a translator

**lika** there's so little time – you know – i paint i sing – i gave it to a german woman

**chekhov** *angry* and i vouched for you in the editorial office – i'm an idiot – and what else – you paint – bravo – when will you start building cathedrals

**lika** levitan is giving me free lessons<sup>37</sup>

**chekhov** levitan doesn't do anything for free – when it comes to beautiful women<sup>38</sup>

**lika** i'm here – i am – i always come back – forgive me – i only found myself now – i really love singing<sup>39</sup> – i want to go to paris – a certain count is paying for everything *laughing* don't be jealous – he's very old

**chekhov** you sing him lullabies

**lika** we set each other free<sup>40</sup>

**chekhov** your freedom means everyone – my freedom means just you

**lika** i was reading a short story and crying – fleeting – that's me – you know that levitan got horribly offended<sup>41</sup>

**chekhov** he doesn't come here any more

**lika** the whole of moscow is whispering about that<sup>42</sup>

**chekhov** moscow does not whisper – moscow screams out loud – and you keep advertising yourself – drop hints in parlors that you are living with me<sup>43</sup> – if this is life – then my shirt is an oak coffin

**lika** nobody gave me what you did – and didn't want anything for it

**chekhov** *kisses her ring* my ring with the blue stone<sup>44</sup>

**lika** every time i wear it - i know i love you

**chekhov** it slides off easily – doesn't it

**lika** don't start

**chekhov** that i didn't want anything – i always wanted everything – only i couldn't tell you that – when nothing is at stake – i joke around – but when i care about someone – i start stuttering – you were probably startled that i was so polite – so vague – you didn't know how to deal with it – if a man does not tear off your dress on a first date it doesn't count – you forgot refinement lika – i'm not weird – i'm just shy – i have my own internal clock – we keep missing each other – i'm late – you're fast

**lika** *hugs him* antosha – let's go somewhere

**chekhov** you're going to paris

**lika** let's go together – even to caucasus – i'll book the train tickets

**chekhov** have you heard about the premiere

**lika** whomever i meet they know – that the seagull is about me<sup>45</sup> – I'll buy the tickets for each one of us in a different compartment – we'll go in secret<sup>46</sup>

**chekhov** you'll take the room next to me – or next city

**lika** make me a baby

**chekhov** *mockingly* really – you haven't tried a baby

**lika** you're bad

**chekhov** a child lasts – you can't cancel a child – like singing or acting

**lika** i have changed – you'll see – the hell with paris – tomorrow we'll go to caucasus

**chekhov** same compartment

**lika** same compartment

**chekhov** i'll lock you up in chains

**lika** *whispers* in caucasus you'll make me a baby<sup>47</sup> *kisses him* – and i still have a surprise –  
you'll never guess – i submitted your plays to television

**chekhov** good god – where

**lika** i know the head censor – they are looking for new things

**chekhov** they wouldn't put on my good night fairy tale

**lika** things are moving – they want to push russian artists

**chekhov** push where – off a cliff – just the theater edited my seagull a hundred times –  
they played ivanov twice a month – both times in the morning

**lika** it's loosening – yesterday they showed a critical report from the putil factory – the  
head accountant hung himself afterwards

**chekhov** first successes of television

**lika** now listen – tolstoy is getting his own show

**chekhov** *surprised* lev nikolayevich

**lika** he can invite guests – russia today that's what they call it – you know who the first  
guest will be – you know who *whispering* maxim gorky

**chekhov** i don't believe that

**lika** it will be on at three in the morning – but it will be on – screens will flicker in all of  
russia – culture will reach as far as sachalin<sup>48</sup> – you wanted that all your life

**chekhov** it is so beautiful that it's intimidating – new forms – the art will rid itself of  
decadents<sup>49</sup> – television is like an eye – you can't cheat there – russian  
television will start cleaning the eyesight bigtime for the benefit of truth and  
realism – lika dear slap me – am i dreaming

**lika** *kisses him* two tickets – to caucasus

**chekhov** i'll buy

**lika** no – i'll buy

**chekhov** we will always be together from now on<sup>50</sup> – be quiet – I know you won't last in  
caucasus – i'll come to paris with you – i'll guard you – there are more russians  
in paris than in noontime moscow

**lika** i love you – my boxer – antosha – you must be on the screen – you are the best one of  
them *lika hands him the contracts and chekhov signs*

**chekhov** will i ever see my plays

**lika** like you see me now *lvov enters – chebutykin – maria*

**maria** antosha

**lvov** *excited* anton pavlovich

**maria** the television people came

**chebutykin** *with admiration* three carriages and six horses - splendid

**lvov** to see you – master

**maria** *moved* you made it – my dear antoshka

**lika** *kisses chekhov provocatively* i'm so tired

**ellen** *enters* good day – ellen homerovna dorn – czarist television reporter *to doctor lvov* we  
met in the madam kuvshinnikova's parlor<sup>51</sup> – remember – master

**lvov** i am not chekhov

**chebutykin** *clicks his heels in a military manner* ivan romanovich chebutykin – military  
doctor *laughing at his own quick wittedness*

**ellen** *calls out into the orchard* wait with those lights *tries out chekhov* master

**chekhov** you guessed right

**ellen** ellen homerovna dorn – i'd like to *calls out into the orchard* the camera boys – let's  
do it in the orchard – under the cherry trees *to chekhov* i'd like to ask you a  
couple of questions

**chekhov** *quietly to lika* i'm doing this only for you

**ellen** *calls out into the orchard* let's do master's makeup okay – he's glistening *to chekhov*  
let's go under the trees – that will be a beautiful shot

**lika** *to chekhov* i won't leave you – don't worry

**chekhov** *to the reporter* could those people not step on the roses

**ellen** *calls out to the orchard* misha – careful with that tripod *to chekhov* this is very nice  
here – is it all made of wood

**chekhov** the base is made of concrete

**ellen** adorable house – aren't you bored here

**chekhov** in Moscow i'd be a suicidal drunk<sup>52</sup>

**ellen** *laughs with affectation* that's cute – can you say that into the camera too *they leave with chekhov and lika for the orchard*

**maria** *crosses herself* god let him be successful

**lvov** maria pavlovna – i don't know any more successful russian

**maria** you don't know anything yet – young man

**chebutykin** *to maria* you owe me something

**maria** don't torture me – ivan romanovich

**lvov** i envy you – being the sister of a great man – sit with him at the same table – serve him tea

**maria** *to lvov* he doesn't drink much *to chebutykin* isn't that enough – what happened

**chebutykin** why did you jump – maria pavlovna

**lvov** sharing a great man's time – makes you live twice as long as the others

**maria** *to chebutykin* had the pond been deeper – i wouldn't have to answer *to lvov* we share diseases too – he gets a head cold so often – poor thing

**chebutykin** true – i'm no stud – but that is my virtue – i am no danger to other women – no woman will ever seduce me – i don't evoke temptation – that is why i'm ideal marriage material – i'll be faithfully yours – maria pavlovna

**lvov** *to maria* how does anton pavlovich sleep – soft mattress or hard mattress

**maria** he curls up like a puppy – he covers his head with a pillow *to chebutykin* so you have nothing else left but faithfulness – don't you think it's humiliating – for the wife

**chebutykin** *irritated* so what do you want – fleeting race

**lvov** *moved* head under the pillow

**chebutykin** when they are anchored – they long for a shipwreck – when they are drowning – they are calling the harbor

**maria** *to lvov* when anton gets angry – you don't want to be near – last time he shot through the samovar

**lvov** i don't know how to beg you – maria pavlovna

**chebutykin** *to maria* you're giving me the runaround – and i love you so much

**lvov** *to maria* could you – could you show me his bed

**chebutykin** *to maria* a cannoneer keeps firing until the bunker falls

**lvov** *to maria* chekhov's pillow – beautiful russian dreams ripen here

**maria** bunker – pillow – there are so few real men *ellen peeks in*

**ellen** don't stumble into my shot ladies and gents *company leaves* so one more time master – take it from how you lost monte carlo in roulette<sup>53</sup> – camera *goes back to the orchard* – lika and astrov enter

**astrov** madhouse – how can you work here

**lika** i love the lights<sup>54</sup>

**astrov** they love to look at you – don't they

**lika** what did i do to you – mikhail lvovich – you walk around all frowns – now i know why you're successful with women

**astrov** every birch is seeking its axe  
**lika** smile – frowner *gives astrov a jolly poke* you frowner – frowner  
**astrov** if you leave anton again  
**lika** you divide women into bad and even worse – i came to him – voluntarily – tell me about yourself – doctor astrov  
**astrov** what do you want to hear – how amazing it is to save lives – how amazing it is to sleep in the carriage and operate on the locksmith’s workbench – how it is to treat only with morphine and iodine when entire villages are dying of typhoid – what else is strong enough to move you  
**lika** why are you so bad to me  
**astrov** your reputation precedes you – like a pyroclastic wave – first it knocks you out then flames follow  
**lika** artists get old very quickly – they can talk only about themselves – you are different  
**astrov** velvet hook  
**lika** what kind of a hook  
**astrov** that’s what they call you – hunter of the artists  
**lika** i’m not like that  
**astrov** *mockingly* the price of the village doctor is going up  
**lika** why do you always have to attack a beautiful woman – can’t we talk normally – can we really only seduce each other  
**astrov** god almighty in his endless mercy decided to grant us drives – drives – and the soul bursts like a fish bladder  
**lika** you are hunting – the paws on your legs are sticking out already  
**astrov** my boots are tight *surprised* how do you know  
**lika** god almighty in his endless mercy decided to grant us the sixth sense  
**astrov** so start  
**lika** you start  
**astrov** speaking normally – start – please  
**lika** no sense doing that  
**astrov** what else can i do – you belong to my friend  
**lika** belong is a strong word – want is even stronger  
**astrov** alright – let’s make small talk about our province – typhoid lice poverty – and antosha is founding a library here  
**lika** he was telling me something about maps  
**astrov** so that i wouldn’t go completely crazy – i draw maps<sup>55</sup> – and now you ask me – whether you can take a look at them  
**lika** can i take a look at them – and you respond – are you really interested  
**astrov** are you really interested – and little lanterns will light up in your eyes  
**lika** *nods* and you  
**astrov** and i – will show them to you *their faces are getting closer – there is a spark – there is a kiss – then astrov draws back* they are in the house *leaves to get the maps – the reporter peeks in*  
**ellen** misha *calls out into the orchard* let’s put number two here – or maybe not - misha – don’t bring the camera – it is muddy here – and you – little anton – sweetie – row quieter *leaves – lvov runs in with a pillow*  
**lvov** *moved* his pillow  
**chebutykin** *tries to take the pillow from him* don’t be crazy lvov – return it immediately  
**lvov** *kissing the pillow* this is where he rests his head  
**chebutykin** give me that pillow – man *they run out fighting – astrov enters with maps*

**astrov** it's a disaster there – anton pavlovich is sitting in a boat – he keeps rowing around the pond and talking – a guy with a microphone is in water up to his waistline following him – and the camera is swirling around the little tracks like a train – the entire melichovo village is behind the fence – even the pope and police chief showed up

**lika** you have to pay a price for fame

**astrov** they trampled all over the roses

**lika** does anyone ever praise your work

**astrov** those who stay alive *unfolds colorful maps* look – here is the map of our province – from here to here

**lika** *points to the map* what is this green thing

**astrov** green is people – i've been making maps like this for twenty years – lydia stakhiyevna – i draw all decent people in the province – look – this is the oldest one – there's a lot of green – I was still a young optimist

**lika** how dare you say who is decent

**astrov** a doctor gets everywhere – he can't help but see how people live – they tell him things they would not tell at the confession *unfolds another map* this is how the province looked ten years ago – fewer green areas – white spots spread out everywhere – stuffy characters *unfolds the third map* this is the province today – solitary specks of green drowned in the sea of nothingness – characters die quietly – in a white way somehow

**lika** what are those red circles *comparing all the maps* each year there are more of them

**astrov** red is islands of women – from flames of passion to stolen looks

**lika** *points at the map* the crosses – next to islands of women

**astrov** the tide rushed me from thigh to thigh – only a cross is left

**lika** *mockingly* male cemetery

**astrov** gravestones of former loves – if you like

**lika** *hugs astrov* why don't you do it – you've been wanting it for a long time

**astrov** *hugs lika* ever since i saw you for the first time

**lika** what's stopping you – if you want to

**astrov** the eleventh – thou shall not seduce a friend's fiancée *lika gives him a long kiss – chekhov and maria pavlovna enter – they see everything*

**maria** god

**chekhov** god damn *calls out into the orchard* get out with those cameras – or else i'll release the hounds

**lika** i'll explain - dear

**chekhov** i chased out the famous czarist television staff – they should chase them out with stones from melichovo – swindlers – they reeked of brilliantine half a league away – even from the last horse blanket carrier – we are just material for them – they were not interested in my books – my friendship with tolstoy – you know what that homerovna wanted to know – whether besides writing i treat artists too – whether i'm not a personal physician of that – arkadinova<sup>56</sup> – that old turtle who day after day slathers herself with at least five puds<sup>57</sup> of powder and downs six shots of cognac so that she could even come on stage – they were disappointed that i don't treat the elite – for sure they expected me to perform abortions on ballet dancers from st. petersburg's theaters – disgusting – disgusting from earth to heaven

**astrov** anton forgive me – if you can

**lika** *to chekhov* i want to explain it to you

**chekhov** *to lika* go with them – they still have room *leaves laughing caucasus – caucasus*

**astrov** *to chekhov* we can't finish like this – lay one on me – you hear me *follows his friend*

**maria** *to lika* how do you do it – everyone loves you – leave families for you – friends – perhaps the perfume – no no – don't listen – i'm being ridiculous – i don't know what I'm saying – what kind of scent do you use – do tell me

**lika** i love them sincerely – believe me – i love them fully – entirely – astrov for an hour and chekhov for an hour – whoever is close by – it is not on purpose – it's not my fault – i'm like a pendulum – here once – there once

**chebutykin** *enters* so those television folks – thank god – are leaving *maria starts crying – she and lika leave* what did i say – don't give up ivan – charge – fall to your knees in front of her – ask her to marry you – but not alone – in front of everyone – the whole melichovo will hear it *calls out* maria pavlovna – maria pavlovna cannons – fire *leaves – chekhov enters – tears a pack of cocaine with his teeth – clumsily takes the straw between the two boxer gloves and snorts – he is covered with cocaine dust all over*

**chekhov** caucasus – to caucasus *lvov enters – holding a pillow in his hands*

**lvov** let me – allow me master

**chekhov** *laughing* one compartment

**lvov** can i call you – anton

**chekhov** *laughing* one compartment – caucasus

**lvov** i know everything – forgive me – i don't snoop around but i know – i'm sorry about how miss lika behaved

**chekhov** *laughing* two tickets – caucasus

**lvov** that was mean – however typical for women – you don't deserve that – you need next to you – like this – you are a beautiful apple tree – anton pavlovich – but even the thickest tree needs a pole – part of your soul – and i have been looking for it for years in your books – its part is like a fragile twig – allow me to tie myself – i'm short of words – to support your branches so that they wouldn't break – in any wind – whether it's called lika mizinova or whatever – simply – anton pavlovich – i'll do anything for you – i'll be your secretary – i'll fill your inkwells just to be able to be near you – share – yes share with you both good and bad – be like this pillow – so that you can rest your head – and not think about it – well think but not be afraid – be able to trust someone – i – i love you anton pavlovich – love – the way you move – your voice – your violinist's fingers – let me kiss them – no no – for god's sake don't be afraid – just hair – hair – kiss like a brother

**chekhov** you are way out of line – lvov

**lvov** don't take it the wrong way – anton – listen

**chekhov** get out

**lvov** *covering his eyes with the pillow* yes i deserve your anger – please be quiet – it can't be – i know – at least kill me quietly

**chekhov** i don't want your drool on my neck *grabs the pillow from him* i am not the lamb that liberates from all the worldly sins *throws the pillow at him* you can keep this *lvov runs out into the orchard*

**maria** *enters – looks after lvov* his eyes were terrible

**chekhov** i offended a man – sister – grab my ears *maria is holding his ears with both hands* pull that evil out of me – like dirt *maria is consoling her brother – chekhov is shaking – lika enters – bringing crying lvov*

**lika** there there – you're no worse than them

**lvov** everything is over  
**lika** *looking at lvov* such a sweet boy  
**lvov** i'll shoot myself  
**lika** but my dear boy – it doesn't matter that you don't love women – what you feel is not a sin – it would be a sin if you didn't love – but you do love  
**lvov** i hate this house  
**lika** we are useless here – we'll leave together – *mon cheri kisses lvov*  
**astrov** *enters with a doctor's bag* god be with you  
**lika** *to astrov* we're going too  
**astrov** i'm going in a different direction  
**maria** *to astrov* stay - misha  
**astrov** we'd both regret it  
**chebutykin** *enters bringing an old television set* ladies and gentlemen – be merry – hello hey – end of boring evenings – put out the candles – life in melichovo is beginning  
**chekhov** *points at the television set* new forms  
**astrov** horses are ready – goodbye *leaves*  
**lika** *kindly to lvov* you'll like it – you'll see *they leave*  
**maria** *to chebutykin* ivan romanovich  
**chebutykin** *with the television set* where shall we put it  
**maria** *quietly to chebutykin* i'll marry you  
**chekhov** new forms *takes the television set from chebutykin and dances with it around the gazebo – yelling* new forms – new forms

end of second act

**the duel**  
third act

*one year later – chekhov is in his study – he has scars all over his face – he is sitting in boxer gloves in front of a television set that is on – which is part of the stage separated with a transparent fabric – behind it in the blue light a television broadcast goes on*

**chekhov** monoscope – all night long just the monoscope *a double-headed czarist eagle is on the “screen” – the czarist russian anthem plays* how much of the volga has to flow into the turbines so that they can broadcast the monoscope – i've had the television for a year now – but not a single program that i could identify with without blushing – only the monoscope – on top of that my sister is getting married today – chebutykin will be a miller now – i should be happy – sit among the guests  
**voice of the reporter** *from the television set* czarist television presents a thirteen part miniseries of situational comedies – three sisters – screenplay anton pavlovich chekhov – the pilot episode – to moscow  
**chekhov** for christ's sake – this was supposed to be drama *the fetish of every sitcom – a giant sofa – is sitting in the middle of the screen – olga enters – then masha – irina*  
**masha** i've been married for a year now – but i cannot help it but ask – they say new officers are coming today  
**olga** let's just hope they behave with dignity *recorded sitcom laughter*

**irina** *tapping on the wooden table with her ring in the morse code rhythm* why do barracks have to be so far away from our house

**olga** because if they were nearby – they wouldn't be far away – and if they are far away – they can't be nearby *thunder of laughter*

**masha** we could accommodate the officers in our house too – especially the younger ones – *applause with laughter simultaneously*

**tuzenbach** *enters with the samovar* bonjour ladies *whistling with welcoming applause* i have never worked in my life *mocking laughter with whistling* i am a baron after all *to irina – peeking from behind the samovar* tapping – tapping

**irina** *tapping in the morse code rhythm* tapping – tapping

**tuzenbach** well – tap then – tap *after a while he calls to the door* enter *thunder of laughter* someone knocked – didn't they

**masha** they did – they did

**tuzenbach** *to irina* we had a beautiful chat today – mademoiselle irina

**chekhov** for god's sake what did they do to it – they made tuzenbach an idiot – why does irina keep tapping – she's just supposed to work at the post office at the telegraph

**tuzenbach** yesterday i had a dream – that i turned into a samovar *laughter*

**irina** full or empty

**tuzenbach** full – i woke up right away and had to go take a leak *thunder of laughter with applause – here you may insert a commercial* the moment i got out of bed – i ran out to buy a samovar

**masha** phooey – bringing your nightmares here

**tuzenbach** mademoiselle irina – may i ask you – what is it that you are tapping

**irina** i'm tapping in morse code – you – samovar *laughter*

**tuzenbach** but i also know the morse code

**olga** this is getting to be unbearable – let's leave immediately *starts tapping the morse code as well* we will work – start a new life – let's leave

**masha** *taps on the samovar* let's leave

**irina** *taps on the samovar* let's leave

**tuzenbach** i understand what you're tapping *spells it out* t-o-m-o-s-c-o-w

**olga** *taps* to moscow

**masha** *taps* to moscow

**irina** *taps* to moscow

**three sisters** *they all shout together* to moscow *chekhov throws a chair into the screen – sound of broken glass – blue light fades*

**chekhov** why do they scorn the writers so much – they spoiled what they could – they made my drama into a farce – on the phone they promised actors from the best theaters – konstantin sergeyevich was supposed to lend his protective hand – but this was directed by a vsevolod no-name – for christ's sake – but what if these are just growing pains – this must get better – such an amazing new form – it can revive from the inside – i'd like to be alive in a hundred years – i envy the future generations their television – it will be in the hands of wise men – it will be the fire that will enlighten and inspire – the greatest thinkers of the times will be speaking from the screen – the composers will present their symphonies in front of millions of people at a time – even the most backwater wasteland will light up with the blue light – the eskimos will enjoy turgenev's stories pushkin's kindness tolstoy's wisdom<sup>58</sup> – under the influence of television each generation of humankind will be happier – there will be



millions of educated people because whoever is once struck by the beauty of the screen<sup>59</sup> – he cannot lead a wicked life

**maria** *enters* – party noises and music can be heard antosha – come here among us

**chekhov** *pointing at the broken screen* they killed chekhov

**maria** guests are asking about you

**chekhov** i'm not used to noise any more

**maria** they almost danced me to death – that jewish orchestra you always loved is playing<sup>60</sup>

**chekhov** i would only spoil your fun

**maria** *bitterly* fun – yes – my fun – remember – when we were little

**chekhov** in taganrog

**maria** we could buy a goose only once a year

**chekhov** *moved* taganrog geese

**maria** when I was carrying it home – I kept pinching it on purpose so that it would honk as loud as possible – so that everyone would hear – that chekhovs are no beggars – that they are having meat tonight

**chekhov** *listening to the music* give everyone a gold coin – the whole band

**maria** and my wedding is so noisy – so that everyone would know – an ugly girl is getting married

**chebutykin** *cheerfully enters in a white suit* where is our writer

**chekhov** dear chebutykin *looking at his white suit* you were born a second time

**chebutykin** i just close my eyes – and I can hear the mill wheel sing – can you hear it

**maria** that's astrov – he got really wasted

**chebutykin** *closes his eyes* i can really see our mill

**maria** *to chebutykin* yours – not mine

**chekhov** *to maria with doubts* you a miller

**maria** no way – volga would drag me away

**chebutykin** the guests would like to box with you – master

**maria** *with reproach* but ivan romanovich

**chebutykin** anton pavlovich is a name – he challenged many in the province

**maria** you fight every barely grown boy – why do you do that – antosha – they are letting you win – because they love you

**chekhov** i challenge artists too – they don't want to punch chekhov

**chebutykin** come here among us – dear – it's boring here at the table

**maria** *to chekhov* you don't dare challenge gorky – do you

**chekhov** gorky is my friend<sup>61</sup>

**maria** antosha – you don't have any friends any more

**chebutykin** *to maria* i ordered flour sacks for the mill – they have our monograms embroidered

**maria** i'll have them heat up borscht *leaves with her brother*

**chebutykin** tough nut – but that's why i love her *he walks towards the wedding guests – for a second the music gets louder – lvov enters dragging suitcases and hat boxes*

**lvov** that is ridiculous – to be that late

**lika** *enters* if you had ordered a real carriage – we could have been here for the ceremony

**lvov** we should not have come

**lika** you are a guest of maria pavlovna – it is her wedding

**lvov** but his house

**lika** wipe my boots *lvov wipes lika's boots and starts kissing them* not now

**lvov** you must be thirsty – i'll bring some water

**lika** i already had a bath – bring champagne

**bear woman** *runs in* disaster – save the poor thing – such disaster *maria and chebutykin run in*

**maria** what’s going on – for christ’s sake *notices guests* welcome

**lika** *kisses the bride* maria – angel – all the best to you

**bear woman** the bear escaped – the music startled her

**maria** little star – oh my god

**lvov** *congratulates* many sunny days and no storms in your marital heavens

**chebutykin** poor bear *to lvov* but we can use the water

**maria** *to lvov* he won’t quit about the mill

**lika** mill – how beautiful

**maria** *to chebutykin* we have to send the servants – to look for the bear

**lvov** i’ll help too

**bear woman** my little star *runs away*

**chebutykin** she has been growling all night – probably disturbed by the smells – we’d been baking for a week now

**lika** and where is antosha

**astrov** *enters drunk* he went to look for the bear *reserved to lika and to lvov* ma’am – sir

**chebutykin** i’m going to look too – clear my head at least

**lvov** *to lika* aren’t you coming – darling

**lika** leave me alone *everybody leaves except lika and astrov* mikhaïl – i missed you

**astrov** i miss only cigarettes and vodka – ma’am

**lika** alright – let’s put on animal skins

**astrov** you won’t get everybody ma’am – no

**lika** i know you keep thinking about me

**astrov** like about a toothache

**voices** *from afar* little star – little star *astrov pulls out a crumpled map*

**lika** it hurt your pride – that you don’t have a cross next to me

**astrov** *unfolds the map* – *there is a burnt hole in the middle* here is a map of decent people of this province *points at the burnt hole* and here you are – lika mizinova – this is where all the faith I ever had in mankind flows out – somewhere up to the stars – the universe is sucking it out like a giant vacuum

**lika** so it wasn’t just another meaningless flirt

**astrov** i lost a friend because of you – but he lost more – what for you was just a stop between a man and a man – could have been a beginning for him – he quit writing – he boxes – he challenges heavier weights all the time – he wants to get killed ma’am – for sure not because of you – but you were the only one who could have stopped him

**voices** *from afar* lit – tle – staaaar

**lika** what should i do

**astrov** who knows if they will find the bear – the fog fell

**lika** tell me what

**astrov** nothing now

**lika** *hitting him* you utterly unbearable man

**astrov** pack your bags – and your servant too

**lika** *yells upset* eugene – we’re leaving *enters chekhov*

**astrov** if you were looking for me – i’m committing suicide *leaving yells* by vodka

**chekhov** *looking at lika* it becomes you

**lika** you have scars

**chekhov** i look like a prussian soldier

**lika** moscow is not talking about anything else except your sitcom – russians have discovered that they can laugh

**chekhov** russians will never discover that

**lika** you have millions of viewers antosha – the show is amazingly popular – just imagine – they started to manufacture the three sisters samovar – with three spouts

**chekhov** we should have gone to caucasus – i should have pushed you off the cliff<sup>62</sup>

**lika** i keep thinking about you all the time

**chekhov** you slept with every man who ever stood in front of a camera – when this thing came to melichovo – what will be the st. petersburg truth – but it is your life – i have no claims at you – just don't say how you think about me any more

**lika** *shows him the ring on her finger* i wear your ring – every time i wear it – i know – that i love you

**chekhov** congratulations on your role

**lika** *surprised* on what

**chekhov** i saw your commercial

**lika** *laughing* role – you silly – i'm just making a living

**chekhov** you wore a ring in it

**lika** that was a message – for you

**chekhov** i saw all of them

**lika** *moved* because of me

**chekhov** they showed you thirty-seven times – i'm like an owl you know – i sit in front of the television all night – i know that commercial by heart *kisses her finger with the ring and suddenly grabs both her arms – twists them behind her back*

**lika** that hurts

**chekhov** do it for me

**lika** *with tears in her eyes* let go – it hurts

**chekhov** i keep hearing your voice from the commercial

**lika** you'll break my arm

**chekhov** *loosens the grip a bit* i can't write any more – topics don't wake me up any more – just melichovo dogs – no music in my head – just white noise – please – do it for me *strokes lika with the boxer glove on her face – the other one crawls under her skirt*

**lika** *yields and recites the commercial* now something for you dear ladies – did you ever want to go to a costume ball so badly and you couldn't go like me – the sky above my boudoir clouded up – you know – i have my days – but the sorrow is over forever – because now we have doctor zacharov's hygiene pads *kisses chekhov* you are brilliant – antosha *back to the commercial* now i can dance the night away – seductive fresh self-confident – zacharov's hygiene pads – with the protective seal of the Russian quack's chamber *sighs* dear – you are so deep – oh god

**chekhov** i'm holding your heart

**lika** why didn't you do it to me years ago – i love you

**chekhov** now i will take your heart *pulls his hand out – lika screams and falls to the ground – the orchestra is playing very loudly* get out

**Ivov** *enters and helps lika get up – yells at the orchestra* shut up *others enter – music stops – yells at chekhov* sir – you've offended my fiancée – you arrogant writer swine – i demand a duel

**astrov drunk** what kind of a wedding would it be without a duel - oops

**chebutykin** sweethearts – just listen to me – let's have a bite of halva – a drink of cognac – the anger will dissipate like mist

**Ivov** first i shoot chekhov  
**maria enters** here we go some borscht *notices lika* poor thing – those men will do you in one day *takes lika away* ivan romanovich – entertain the guests  
**chebutykin** *to maria* i'm entertaining - mommy  
**maria** *to her husband* don't ever call me that again *they leave together with lika*  
**chebutykin** honor is honor – i understand gentlemen – but do understand me too – it's my wedding – i'm not a young man – first time in my life – what will they say – his guests were shooting each other – bad oh – bad – but if instead of a duel you would care to shoot a game – i have a brand new pool table yellow in the middle – duplet into the corner – why shoot  
**Ivov** *challenges chekhov* sir  
**chebutykin** fog is thick like curdled milk – why all that – sweethearts – you won't be able to see each other  
**chekhov** i haven't had champagne for a while<sup>63</sup> *the duel rivals leave with astrov* – *maria enters with the bear woman*  
**maria** *to the bear woman* have something to eat – god's creature – so that you also feel like you are at a wedding  
**chebutykin** it doesn't matter  
**maria** where did the boys go  
**chebutykin** eh  
**maria** i made miss lika's bed in our room  
**chebutykin** *surprised* our room  
**maria** she's sick – poor thing – so young – her heart is skipping beats – yup yup  
**chebutykin** but it's our wedding night bed  
**maria** yup yup  
**bear woman** *sad* little star – my teddy bear  
**chebutykin** don't cry – she'll come back to you  
**astrov enters** horrible fog – i lost them  
**chebutykin** thank god  
**maria** where is anton  
**chebutykin** he wandered off in search – he missed the teddy bear  
**maria** an animal is more important to him than his sister  
**chebutykin** *to the bear woman* i was also in chechnya – with my regiment – we didn't want to shoot – my dear – we had to *hands her his pocket watch* here – i got it from the general  
**maria** *shot sounds in a distance* what was that  
**astrov** something must have broken in my portable first aid kit *goes out and comes back right away* like i said – the ether vial broke  
**maria** i got so horribly scared  
**astrov** *to chebutykin* take maria pavlovna away  
**chebutykin** *looking into the fog* someone's coming  
**astrov** *looking into the fog* chekhov – or Ivov  
**chebutykin** can't see a thing – horrible fog *everybody is looking out the window*  
**bear woman** little star – little star came back *runs out* – *everybody is staring into the fog* – *the roaring of the bear outside is getting stronger*

**curtain**

**References:**

- 1 *chekhov – boxer* is intended as an respectable tribute to Anton Pavlovich, no matter what anyone thinks.
- 2 Lydia Stakhiyevna Mizinova – rookie teacher of Russian language, colleague of Chekhov’s sister Maria from the Rzhev high school. She was ten years younger than Anton Pavlovich. Eyewitnesses remember her “indescribable beauty with no hint of pretension and almost harsh simplicity.” Chekhov fell in love with “Beautiful Lika” probably around 1890.
- 3 A. P. Chekhov’s younger sister.
- 4 Character from a play “Uncle Vanya” – in its extent the biggest “medical” role from Chekhov’s plays.
- 5 Character from a play “Ivanov”.
- 6 Character from a play “Three Sisters” – there, a 60-year old, here, a 40-year old.
- 7 For the sake of completeness I included at least the name in the play – Doctor Dorn from “The Seagull” is the last of the quartet of great Chekhov’s doctors.
- 8 Chekhov moved here in March of 1892.
- 9 In the amazing Encyclopedia of Russian Firsts from 1950 we learn that the light bulb was not invented by Edison, but a Russian engineer Lodygin, that the wicked engineer Siemens stole the drawings of the telegraph directly from the workbench of the Russian inventor Yakobi, that the Russian scientist Golubicky designed a telephone receiver much better than Bell, but above all, that the Italian Marconi stole the invention of the radio from a Russian A. S. Popov; and that the Russian engineer B. L. Rosing invented the very first cathode television as early as 1909. The writer of this play is convinced that the Russian scientist developed television even earlier that the Encyclopedia states, and that the published year is not only a misprint but also testimony to the legendary modesty of Soviet encyclopedia makers.
- 10 “Siberian Poetry starts with Lake Baikal and up to Baikal it was prose.”  
*(from a letter from A.P.C.)*
- 11 “The Seagull” fiasco happened on October 17, 1896, in St. Petersburg, and it returned triumphantly in December of 1898 on the stage of MCHAT.
- 12 “The theater was breathing with evil, the air was heavy with hatred, and I – based on the laws of physics – flew out of St. Petersburg like a bomb.”  
*(unless stated otherwise, all quotes by A.P.C.)*
- 13 “The salvation of the theater is in writers.”
- 14 Towards the end of the 1880s in Moscow Chekhov did not have a medical practice, he treated only his friends. Yet he continued to treat muzhiks and insolvent farm workers for free.

- 15 As a child he raised pigeons, caught songbirds and tarantulas.
- 16 During the times when he still contributed to the humor magazine *Alarm Clock*, the publisher paid him in office furniture once, which he used for living.
- 17 “The place is not enough any more, neither are the bed sheets, nor the mood for me to talk to them and give an impression of a pleasant host.”
- 18 “Oh, if you only knew what kind plot for a novel I am carrying in my head! What beautiful women! What funerals, what weddings!”
- 19 “It is all artificial, wise, noble and below average.”
- 20 “Taganrog high school was in reality some kind of company of convicts... instead of canes and whips they used Greek and Latin variations... Not a shrine to science but police headquarters with a sour smell.”
- 21 Artist Levitan, the famous Russian landscape painter and Peredvizhnik, courted Chekhov’s sister, among other women. Her brother warned her that Levitan desired only women of Balzac’s age. “I was embarrassed to admit to Anton that I did not know what a woman in Balzac’s age was,” remembers Maria Pavlovna.
- 22 “Just like in Asia! I am surrounded by such Asia that I cannot believe my own eyes. 60,000 citizens spend their time exclusively by eating, drinking and procreating, and they do not have any other interests... There are no patriots, no opportunists, no poets, not even decent bakers.”  
*(Impressions from a visit to native Taganrog after many years.)*
- 23 In the spring of 1884 he successfully passed the final exams and in September of 1884 he was awarded the position of a municipal doctor.
- 24 “There is no such Russian University graduate who would not brag about his past. The present is always worse than the past. Why? Because Russian enthusiasm has one specific feature: it is quickly replaced by fatigue.”
- 25 “Avelan’s Squadron” – table company of young people and especially ladies, gathered around Chekhov. Lika Mizinova also participated in these stormy “voyages”.
- 26 Pen names from his early period: The Doctor Without Patients, Hot Headed Man, My Brother’s Brother, A Man Without a Spleen, and most frequently, Antosha Chekhonte.
- 27 In 1882 the young writer’s pay of 8 kopecks per line was a lot. It required a lot of writing.
- 28 In the domestic theater in a Vaudeville play “The Carters or Mischief of A Hussar Soldier” Chekhov plays the role of an old mayor’s wife to great acclaim.

- 29 “She is intelligent and dresses nicely, sometimes she is even reasonable... If it were not for a certain ostentatiousness and affectation (meaning comedic manner), she would be a real actress. In any case, she is an interesting type. Do take a note of her.”  
(on actress Yavorska, member of the Avelan Squadron)
- 30 Lika attended the A. F. Fedotov School of Theater in Moscow.
- 31 “Actors never observe ordinary people. They do not know any farmers, merchants, popes, or bureaucrats. But they can portray excellent bookies, lovers, drunk conmen, meaning all the individuals that they unwittingly observe when they putter around pubs with companies of bachelors.”
- 32 “With pleasure I would scald you with boiling water.”  
(from his letter to Mizinova)
- 33 In 1901 Chekhov was getting treatment in a tuberculosis sanatorium in the Ufim Province by drinking koumiss. He drank four bottles a day, koumiss kept him slightly sedated and he slept a lot. He gained 11 and a half pounds.
- 34 Since about 1810, the Russian Army regularly fought against the Caucasian nations lead by a Chechen leader Shamil, who in 1834 became an imam. Shamil declared the holy war against Russia, to which Russia answered with a half-million army. After the initial victories the last remnants of resistance of the rebels was suppressed in 1864.
- 35 “I planted 60 cherry trees and 80 apple trees. We dug a new pond and we will fill it with a fathom of deep water in the spring.”
- 36 “Dear Lydia Stakhiyevna! I love you passionately like a tiger and I am offering you my hand. Your leader of the watch-dogs, Golovin-Rtishchev.”  
(from his letter to Mizinova)
- 37 “I am writing to you from this enchanted corner of the country, where everything, starting with the air and ending, lord, forgive me, with the very last tiny beetle in the ground, is impregnated with her – divine Lika! She loves not you, the fair man, but me – the volcanic brunette, and she goes only where I go. It will not be easy for you to read, but for the love of truth I could not keep it a secret.”  
(from Levitan’s letter to Chekhov)
- 38 Levitan really needed women of Balzac’s age and after a while he returned back to his lover Madame Kuvshinnikova, 13 years his senior.
- 39 In 1894 in Paris Mizinova studied singing, massage (!) and English (!).
- 40 “Let Baron Shtakelberg, my cousin, and the dragoon officers know that I will not stand in their way. We Chekhovs do not prevent young maidens from living. That is our cannon. Therefore you are free.”  
(from his letter to Mizinova)

- 41 Many of Chekhov's friends were offended to death after he published the short story "The Betrothed". Levitan challenged Chekhov to a duel and cut off contact for several years.
- 42 Also actor Lensky recognized himself in the role of a fat actor and his family stopped socializing with Chekhov.
- 43 Not only Lika, but also the above mentioned actress Yavorska was advertised in the society as having an alleged love affair with Chekhov. The eyewitnesses say about Chekhov's relationship with Yavorska: "Sometimes he liked her, sometimes he did not, and he was unconditionally interested in her as a woman."
- 44 Just like the character of Nina Zaryechna is inspired by Lika Mizinova, so was the famous episode with a pendant given to writer Trigorin a message to Chekhov from his long platonic love, writer Lydia Avilova. Everything came out only many years after Chekhov's death. Avilova – by then a married woman and a mother – anonymously mailed a pendant to Chekhov with the engraved text: "Novels and Short Stories, p. 267, Lines 6 and 7." These were the famous lines: "If you ever need my life, come and take it." In the year when "The Seagull" was staged, Chekhov met disguised Avilova again at a costume ball, sipped champagne and chatted all night while pretending not to recognize her. At "The Seagull" premiere Avilova almost fainted when she saw the pendant scene on stage. Only the page and line numbers were different from what she had engraved. When she compared them to Chekhov's books they did not make any sense. The key was hidden only in her own book of short stories. The secret message was: "Young girls do not belong in costume balls."
- 45 Trigorin from "The Seagull" was in reality named Potapenko, he was a writer and he never showed interest in the daughter that resulted from a brief relationship with Lika.
- 46 They were supposed to travel the route Moscow – Sevastopol – Batumi – Tbilisi – Vladikavkaz – Mineralnye Vody – Moscow. Lika was telling her relatives she would be traveling with "a lady". However, she booked the tickets for different places on a train. The trip was canceled due to an approaching cholera epidemic that required Chekhov to face it as a physician. Apparently Lika was very irritated because of the trip that did not happen.
- 47 Chekhov was expecting his only child with his wife, actress Olga Knipperova. "I would really like it if you gave birth now to a tiny half-German who would distract you and fulfill your life," he writes to Olga. Unfortunately, the child was never born. Olga writes bitterly to her husband: "I cannot help myself and have to mention Moscow's quick wit in connection to what happened: 'Our first actress made a fool of herself – with such a man – and she was unable to keep it...'"
- 48 Before his trip to Sakhalin where he went to study the social conditions of prisoners, Chekhov writes: "I bought a fur half-coat, big boots and a giant knife for cutting sausages and hunting tigers. I am armed head to toe."
- 49 "They only pretend to be sick and crazy. In reality they are healthy peasants. Frauds, not decadents! They are selling rotten goods... Religion, mysticism and who knows what kind of mischief!"



- 50 “I promise to be an excellent husband but give me a wife that will not be appearing in my heavens every day like the moon...”
- 51 The owner of a well-known social parlor, Levitan’s “Balzac” lover, not only did not fear competing with young girls but also liked to surround herself with them.
- 52 “They feed me lunches, they sing trivial songs of praise, yet they are willing to devour me. Why? Devil knows. If I shot myself, nine tenths of my friends and admirers would be very pleased. They are not people but some kind of mold.”
- 53 One evening in 1891 Chekhov lost 500 francs on in a Monte Carlo roulette wheel and in the end he was happy he bought his return ticket to Nice ahead of time. After his return he continued to play a small wheel at home, however, betting only kopeck amounts.
- 54 “All of you, artistic actors, are not satisfied with regular, average success any more. You need noise, shooting, dynamite. You are completely spoiled, numbed by constant discussions of success, full or empty banks. That thorn apple poisoned you almost completely and in two to three years you will be worthless.”  
*(from his letter to O. Knipperova)*
- 55 The original Astrov may have been the first environmentalist – in “Uncle Vanya” he was drawing maps of dying forests.
- 56 Irina Nikolayevna, Treplevova after her husband, a character from “The Seagull”.
- 57 Pud is an old Russian measure of weight. Pud equals to 40 pounds, which is 16.38 kilograms. According to Chekhov, “The Seagull” is a play that contains “five puds of love”.
- 58 “Old men are always inclined to see the end of the world and to say that the morals have stooped to non plus ultra low, the art is shallow and worn out, the people are weak, etc. Lev Nikolayevich wants to convince us that art has currently entered its final phase, a dead end street from which there is no exit.”  
*(Chekhov on Tolstoy)*
- 59 “Here, in the world of beauty and freedom, a Russian man, poor and humiliated, can easily lose his mind. One would like to stay here forever, and when he stands in the church and listens to the organ, he feels like becoming a Catholic.”  
*(letter from Venice)*
- 60 This orchestra also comes to play for Ranevska in the third act of “Cherry Orchard”.
- 61 At the MCHAT New Year’s Eve party a year before his death Chekhov made Gorky laugh so much that he coughed. Terminally ill Chekhov coughed too. “They can say about the two of us: the writers spent the evening well, they shared an interesting cough.” Immediately afterwards Stanislavsky, dressed in a tuxedo, took them backstage. The sources do not state whether Konstantin Sergeyevich coughed too.

**62** “A big crocodile is sitting in you, Lika, and in essence it is a good thing that I am obeying my common sense and not my heart that you bit.”  
*(from his letter to Mizinova)*

**63** According to Olga Knipperova, those were Chekhov’s last words. He died in a hotel room in the Badenweiler Spa in 1904. Chekhov’s coffin was brought back to St. Petersburg on a train car that said “Oyster Car”.