

# THE SEAGULL

MEDVEDENKO

Why do you always wear black?

MASHA

I'm in mourning for my life. I'm unhappy.

MEDVEDENKO

Why are you? I don't see why. You've got your health and your father may not be rich but he doesn't go short here. Look at me with my twenty-three roubles a month- I don't go about in morning. And that's before they take off the pension.

MASHA

Money isn't everything. A pauper can be happy.

MEDVEDENKO

A happy pauper? Yes...Yes, in theory, but in practice what you've got is me and my mother, my two sisters and my little brother, and my salary of twenty-three roubles a month. It isn't as if we don't have to eat and drink-is it? or don't need tea-and sugar-tobacco...it's everywhere you turn.

MASHA

It's nearly time for the performance, anyway.

MEDVEDENKO

Oh, yes: The performance. Nina Zarechnaya: appearing in a play by Konstantin Gavrilovich. They're in love and today their two souls will merge into one in an effort to create a single work of art. Your soul and mine, by way of contrast, don't meet at all. I love you and can't stay at home for longing for you, every day I walk four miles here and back again, and you don't care. Well, why should you? I have no money, large family to support...Who wants to marry a man who can't even feed himself?

MASHA TAKES SNUFF.

MASHA

That's all rot. I'm touched that you love me but I can't return your feelings and that's all there is to it, so have a pinch of snuff.

MEDVEDENKO

I don't want a pinch of snuff...Thank you all the same.

MASHA

It's stifling. There'll be a storm tonight, I shouldn't wonder. You're always either philosophizing or talking about money. You think there's nothing worse than being poor. I'd a thousand times rather go about in rags and beg than- well, I wouldn't expect you to understand...