

NINA

How strange to see a famous actress weeping, and for pretty much nothing! Is it not strange, too, that a famous author should sit and fish all day? He's an idol, the papers are full of him, his photograph is for sale everywhere, his books are translated in foreign languages, and yet he is overjoyed if he catches a couple of minnows. I always thought famous people were distant and proud; I thought they despised the common people that worship them. But here I see them weeping and playing cards and flying into passions like everybody else.

*(KONSTANTIN enters, carrying a gun and a dead seagull.)*

KONSTANTIN

Are you alone?

NINA

Yes.

*(KONSTANTIN lays the sea gull at her feet.)*

What's that supposed to mean?

KONSTANTIN

I was base enough today to kill this seagull. I lay it at your feet.

NINA

What...?

*(NINA picks up the bird.)*

KONSTANTIN

I'm going to shoot myself one of these days, just like this.

NINA

Konstantin, I don't recognize you.

KONSTANTIN

And I don't recognize you either.

NINA

All you do is sulk and talk, so dark and symbolically. So I'm sorry if I can't always follow you. I'm too simple to understand sometimes.

*(NINA sets down the bird.)*

KONSTANTIN

It started when my play failed. Women don't forgive failures. I burned it. Every page. I'm... Your estrangement is terrible to me. It's like I woke up and the lake had dried up and sunk into the earth. You're too simple to understand me?

*(A beat.)*

What's there to understand? You didn't like my play. You think I am stupid, my ideas are stupid, that I am mediocre, my ideas are mediocre. You all do. I understand that and I understand you.

It feels like somebody is pounding a nail into my brain. Damn it!

*(TRIGORIN enters, reading.)*

There's the real genius, reading like Hamlet. "Words words words."

*(NINA smiles.)*

KONSTANTIN (continued)

I'll get out of your way.