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I

Whoo-oo-oo-oo-hooh-hoo-oo! Oh, look at me, I am perishing in this gateway. The blizzard roars a prayer for the dying, and I howl with it. I am finished, finished. That bastard in the dirty cap—the cook of the Normal Diet Cafeteria for employees of the People's Central Economic Soviet—threw boiling water at me and scalded my left side. The scum, and he calls himself a proletarian! Lord, oh lord, how it hurts! My side is cooked to the bone. And now I howl and howl, but what's the good of howling?

What harm did I do him? Would the People's Economic Soviet get any poorer if I rooted in the garbage heap? The greedy brute! Take a look at that mug of his sometimes—it's wider than it's long. A crook with a brass jowl. Ah, people, people! It was at noontime that Dirty Cap gave me a taste of boiling water, and now it's getting dark, it must be about four in the afternoon, judging from the smell of onions from the Prechisténka firehouse. The firemen get kasha for supper, as you know. But kasha is the last thing I'd eat, like mushrooms. However, some mutts of my acquaintance, from the Prechistenka, have told me that at the Bar-Restaurant on Neglinny people gobble a fancy dish—mushrooms en sauté piquant—at three rubles and

seventy-five kopeks a portion. To each his own—to me it is like licking galoshes! Ooh-oo-oo-oo . . .

My side hurts dreadfully, and I can see my future quite clearly: tomorrow I'll have sores, and, I ask you, what am I going to cure them with? In summertime, you can run down to Sokolniki Park. There is a special kind of grass there, excellent grass. Besides, you can gorge yourself on free sausage ends. And there's the greasy paper left all over by the citizens—lick it to your heart's content! And if it weren't for that nuisance who sings "Celeste Aida" in the field under the moon so that your heart sinks, it would be altogether perfect. But where can you go now? Were you kicked with a boot? You were. Were you hit with a brick in the ribs? Time and again. I've tasted everything, but I've made peace with my fate, and if I'm whining now, it's only because of the pain and the cold—because my spirit hasn't yet gone out of my body. . . . A dog is hard to kill, his spirit clings to life.

But my body is broken and battered, it's taken its share of punishment from people. And the worst of it is that the boiling water he slopped over me ate right through the fur, and now my left side is without protection of any kind. I can very easily contract pneumonia, and once I do, my dear citizens, I'll die of hunger. With pneumonia, you're supposed to lie under the stairs in a front hallway. But who will run around for me; a sick bachelor dog, and look for sustenance in garbage heaps? Once my lung is affected, I'll be crawling on my belly, feeble as a pup, and anyone can knock the daylight out of me with a stick. And then the janitors with their badges will grab me by the feet and throw me on the garbage collector's cart.

Of all the proletarians, janitors are the worst trash. Human dregs—the lowest category. Cooks can be of all sorts. For example, the late Vlas from Prechistenka.

How many lives he saved! Because the main thing is to get a bite to eat when you're sick. All the old dogs still talk of how Vlas would throw them a bone, and with a solid chunk of meat on it. May he be blessed for it in the Heavenly Kingdom—a real personality he was, the gentry's cook for the Counts Tolstoy, not one of those nobodies from the Soviet of Normal Diet. The things they do in that Normal Diet, it's more than a dog's brain can comprehend. Those scoundrels make soup of stinking corned beef, and the poor wretches don't know what they're eating. They come running, gobbling it down, lapping it up.

Take that little typist, ninth grade, getting four and a half chervontsy. True enough, her lover will give her a pair of Persian cotton stockings once in a while. But what won't she have to put up with for that Persian cotton? You may be sure he will not take her in some ordinary way, no, he'll insist on French love. They're scum, those Frenchmen, between you and me. Although they know how to eat, and everything with red wine. Yes . . . So she'll come running, this little typist. On four and a half chervontsy, after all, you can't afford to eat at the Bar-Restaurant. She doesn't even have enough for a movie, and a movie is the only solace in a woman's life. She shudders and makes faces, but she puts away the stinking soup. . . . Just to think of it: a two-course meal for forty kopeks; and both courses together aren't worth fifteen kopeks, because the manager has pocketed the other twenty-five. And is that the kind of nourishment she needs? The tip of her right lung isn't quite right, and she has female trouble from that French love of his, and they've deducted from her wages at work, and fed her putrid meat at the cafeteria. But there she is, there she is . . . running toward the gateway in her lover's stockings. Her feet are cold, her stomach's cold because her fur's

like mine now, and her panties give no warmth, a bit of lacy fluff. For her lover's sake. Let her just try and put on flannel panties, and he'll yell: but how inelegant you are! I'm fed up with my Matrena, I've had enough of flannel pants, it's my turn to have some fun in life. I'm chairman now, and whatever I filch, all of it goes for female flesh, for lobster tails, for Abrau-D'urso wine. Because I've been starved long enough in my youth, I've had it, and there's no life after death.

I am sorry for her, so sorry! But I'm even sorrier for myself. I'm not saying this out of selfishness, but because our conditions really don't compare. At least, she is warm at home, and I, I . . . Where can I go? Oo-oo-oo-oo!

"Tsk, tsk, tsk! Sharik, hey, Sharik . . . Why are you whimpering, poor beast? Who hurt you? Ah-h!"

The wind, that raging witch, rattled the gate and boxed the young lady on the ear with its broom. It blew up her skirt above her knees, baring the cream-colored stockings and a narrow strip of the poorly laundered lace panties. It drowned out her words and swept across the dog.

"Good God . . . What weather . . . Oh . . . And my stomach hurts. It's that corned beef, that corned beef! When will it all end?"

Ducking her head, the young lady threw herself into attack, broke through the gates, and out into the street; the blizzard began to spin and spin her around, push her this way and that, till she became a column of swirling snow and disappeared.

And the dog remained in the gateway. Suffering from his mutilated side, he pressed himself to the cold wall, gasped for air, and firmly decided that he would not go anywhere from there, he'd die right there in the

gateway. Despair overwhelmed him. He felt so bitter and sore at heart, so lonely and terrified, that tiny dog's tears like little bubbles exuded from his eyes and dried at once. Frozen tufts of fur hung from his mangled side, and among them the bare scalded spots showed ominously red. How senseless, stupid, and cruel cooks are. "Sharik" she called him. . . . "Little Ball" . . . What kind of a "Sharik" is he, anyway? Sharik is somebody round, plump, silly, a son of aristocratic parents who gobbles oatmeal, and he is shaggy, lanky, tattered, skinny as a rail, a homeless mutt. But thanks for a kind word, anyway.

The door of the brightly lit store across the street swung open and a citizen came out of it. Yes, precisely, a citizen, not a comrade. Or even, to be more exact, a gentleman. The closer he came, the clearer it was.

A gentleman. Do you think I judge by the coat? Nonsense. Many proletarians are also wearing coats nowadays. True, their collars aren't quite like this one, naturally. But from a distance it is easy to confuse them. No, it is the eyes I'm talking about. When you look at the eyes, you can't mistake a man, from near or far. Oh, the eyes are an important thing. Like a barometer. You can see everything in them—the man whose soul is dry as dust, the man who'll never kick you in the ribs with the tip of his boot, and the man who is afraid of everything himself. It's the last kind, the lickspittle, whom it is sometimes a pleasure to grab by the ankle. Afraid? Get it, then. If you're afraid, you must deserve it. . . . Rr-r-r . . . Rr-r-r! . . .

The gentleman confidently crossed the street wrapped in a column of swirling snow and stepped into the gateway. *Oh, yes, you can tell everything about him. This one won't gobble moldy corned beef, and if anybody*

serves it to him, he'll raise hell, he'll write to the newspapers: "I, Philip Philippovich, was fed such and such."

He is coming closer and closer. This one eats well and does not steal. He won't kick you, but he isn't afraid of anything himself. And he is not afraid because he is never hungry. He is a gentleman engaged in mental work, with a sculptured, pointed goatee and a gray, fluffy, dashing mustache, like those worn by the old French knights. But the smell he spreads through the snow is rotten, a hospital smell. And cigars.

What devil, do you think, could have brought him to the Central Economic Administration cooperative? There he is, right by me . . . What is he waiting for? Oo-oo-oo-oo . . . What could he have bought in that shabby little store, isn't Okhotny Ryad enough for him? What's that? Sausage! Sir, if you could see what this sausage is made of, you'd never come near that store. Better give it to me.

The dog gathered his last remnant of strength and crawled in a frenzy from under the gateway to the sidewalk. The blizzard clattered over his head like gunshots, and swept up the huge letters on a canvas placard, IS REJUVENATION POSSIBLE?

Naturally, it's possible. The smell rejuvenated me, lifted me from my belly, contracted my stomach, empty for the last two days, with fiery spasms. The smell that conquered the hospital smells, the heavenly smell of chopped horsemeat with garlic and pepper. I sense, I know—the sausage is in the right-hand pocket of his overcoat. He stands over me. Oh, my lord and master! Glance at me. I am dying. We have the souls of slaves, and a wretched fate!

The dog crawled on his belly like a snake, weeping

bitter tears. Observe the cook's work. But you'll never give me anything. Oh, I know the rich very well! But actually, what do you need it for? What do you want with putrid horsemeat? You'll never get such poison as they sell you at the Moscow Agricultural Industries stores anywhere else. And you have had your lunch today, you, a personage of world importance, thanks to male sex glands. Oo-oo-oo-oo . . . What's happening in this world? But it seems too early to die, and despair is truly a sin. I must lick his hands, there's nothing else left.

The mysterious gentleman bent over the dog, the gold rims of his glasses flashed, and he took a long, white package from his right pocket. Without removing his brown gloves, he unwrapped the paper, which was immediately snatched up by the blizzard, and broke off a piece of what is known as "special Cracow sausage." And he held it out to the dog. Oh, generous soul! Oo-oo-oo!

"Whuit-whuit," the gentleman whistled and added in the sternest tone: "Take it! Sharik, Sharik!"

Sharik again. They'd christened me. But call me what you will. For such an exceptional deed!

The dog instantly pulled off the skin, sank his teeth with a sob into the Cracow sausage, and gobbled it up in a wink. And almost choked to tears on the sausage and the snow, because in his greed he had almost swallowed the cord. I'll lick your hand now, again, again. I kiss your trousers, my benefactor!

"Enough for now . . ." The gentleman spoke curtly, as though issuing commands. He bent down to Sharik, peered into his eyes, and suddenly passed his gloved hand intimately and caressingly over Sharik's belly.

"Ah," he said significantly. "No collar. That's fine, you're just what I need. Come on, follow me." He snapped his fingers, "Whuit, whuit!"

Follow you? Why, to the end of the world. You may kick me with your fine suede shoes, I wouldn't say a word.

The street lights gleamed all along the Prechistenka. His side ached intolerably, but Sharik forgot the pain from time to time, possessed by a single thought: he must not lose the wonderful vision in the overcoat in the crowd, he must do something to express his love and devotion. And he expressed it seven times along the stretch of Prechistenka up to Obukhov Lane. At Dead Man's Alley he kissed the man's overshoe. He cleared the way for him. Once he frightened a lady so badly with his wild howl that she plopped down on a fire pump. Twice he whimpered, to keep alive the man's sympathy for him.

A mangy stray tom, pretending to be Siberian, dived out from behind a drainpipe; he had caught a whiff of the sausage despite the storm. Sharik went blind with rage at the thought that the rich eccentric who picked up wounded mutts in gateways might take it into his head to bring along that thief as well, and then he'd be obliged to share the product of the Moscow Agricultural Industries with him. He snapped his teeth at the tom so furiously that the tom shot up the drainpipe to the second story, hissing like a torn hose. Gr-r-r-r . . . Wow! Feed every ragged tramp hanging around the Prechistenka!

The gentleman appreciated his devotion: as they reached the firehouse, he stopped by the window from which the pleasant rumbling of a French horn could be heard and rewarded him with a second piece, a bit smaller, just a couple of ounces.

Ah, the silly man. He's trying to tempt me on. Don't worry, I won't run off. I'll follow you anywhere you say.

"Whuit-whuit-whuit! Here!"

Obukhov Lane? Certainly. I know the lane very well.

"Whuit-whuit!"

Here? With plea . . . Oh, no, if you don't mind. No. There's a doorman here. And there's nothing worse in the world. Much more dangerous than janitors. A thoroughly hateful breed. Even viler than toms. Murderers in gold braid.

"Don't be afraid, come."

"How do you do, Philip Philippovich?"

"Hello, Fyodor."

That's a man for you! Heavens, to whom has my dog's fate brought me? What sort of personage is this who can bring dogs from the street past doormen into the house? Look at that scoundrel—not a sound, not a move! True, his eyes are chilly, but on the whole he is indifferent under that gold-braided cap. As if everything's just as it should be. He respects the gentleman, and how he respects him! Well, and I am with him, and walk in after him. Didn't dare to touch me, did you? Put that in your craw. Wouldn't I love to sink my teeth into your calloused proletarian foot! For all we've suffered from your kind. How many times did you bloody my nose with a broom, eh?

"Come on, come on."

I understand, I understand, don't worry. Wherever you go, I'll follow. Just show the way, I won't fall back, despite my miserable side.

From the staircase, calling down: "Were there no letters for me, Fyodor?"

From below, up the stairs, deferentially: "No, Sir, Philip Philippovich." Then confidentially, intimately, in a lowered voice, "They've moved in some more tenants, settled them in Number Three."

The lordly benefactor of dogs turned sharply on the step, bent over the rail and asked in a horrified voice:

"Real-ly?"

His eyes became round and his mustache bristled.

The doorman turned up his face, put his cupped hand to his lips, and confirmed it:

"Yes, sir, four of them."

"Good God! I can imagine what bedlam they'll have in the apartment now. And what do they say?"

"Why, nothing."

"And Fyodor Pavlovich?"

"He went to get some screens and brick. They'll build partitions."

"Damned outrage!"

"They'll be moving additional tenants into all the apartments, Philip Philippovich, except yours. There's just been a meeting, they elected a new committee and kicked the old one out."

"The things that are going on. Ai-ai-ai . . . Whuit, whuit."

I'm coming, I'm keeping up. My side is bothering me, you know. Allow me to lick your boot.

The doorman's braid disappeared below. The radiators on the marble landing exuded warmth. Another turn, and we're on the second floor.

II

There is absolutely no necessity to learn how to read; meat smells a mile off, anyway. Nevertheless, if you live in Moscow and have a brain in your head, you'll pick up reading willy-nilly, and without attending any courses. Out of the forty thousand or so Moscow dogs, only a total idiot won't know how to read the word "sausage."

Sharik first began to learn by color. When he was only four months old, blue-green signs with the letters MSPO—indicating a meat store—appeared all over Moscow. I repeat, there was no need for any of them—you can smell meat anyway. But one day Sharik made a mistake. Tempted by an acid-blue sign, Sharik, whose sense of smell had been knocked out by the exhaust of a passing car, dashed into an electric supplies store instead of a butcher shop. The store was on Myasnitsky Street and was owned by the Polubizner Bros. The brothers gave the dog a taste of insulated wire, and that is even neater than a cabby's whip. That famous moment may be regarded as the starting point of Sharik's education. Back on the sidewalk, he began to realize that blue didn't always mean "meat." Howling with the fiery pain, his tail pressed down between his legs, he recalled that over all the butcher shops there

was a red or golden wiggle—the first one on the left—that looked like a sled.

After that, his learning proceeded by leaps and bounds. He learned the letter “t” from “Fish Trust” on the corner of Mokhovaya, and then the letter “s” (it was handier for him to approach the store from the tail end of the word, because of the militiaman who stood near the beginning of the “Fish”).

Tile squares set into corner houses in Moscow always and inevitably meant “cheese.” A black samovar faucet over the word indicated the former owner of Chichkin’s, piles of red Holland cheese, beastly salesmen who hated dogs, sawdust on the floor, and that most disgusting, evil-smelling Beckstein.

If somebody was playing an accordion, which was not much better than “Celeste Aida,” and there was a smell of frankfurters, the first letters on the white signs very conveniently added up to the words “no inde . . .,” which meant “no indecent language and no tips.” In such places there were occasional messy brawls and people got hit in the face with fists, and sometimes with napkins or boots.

If there were stale hams hanging in a window and tangerines on the sill, it meant . . . Grr . . . grr . . . groceries. And if there were dark bottles with a vile liquid, it meant . . . Wwhi-w-i-wines . . . The former Yeliseyev Brothers.

The unknown gentleman who had brought the dog to the doors of his luxurious apartment on the second floor rang, and the dog immediately raised his eyes to the large black card with gold letters next to the wide door with panes of wavy pink glass. He put together the first three letters right away: Pe-ar-o, “Pro.” After that came a queer little hooked stick, nasty looking, unfamiliar. No telling what it meant. Could it be “proletarian”? Sharik wondered with astonishment

. . . No, impossible. He raised his nose, sniffed the coat again, and said to himself with certainty: Oh, no, there’s nothing proletarian in this smell. Some fancy, learned word, who knows what it means.

A sudden, joyous light flared up behind the pink glass, setting off the black card still more clearly. The door swung open silently, and a pretty young woman in a white apron and a lace cap appeared before the dog and his master. The former felt a gust of divine warmth, and the fragrance of lilies of the valley came at him from the woman’s skirt.

That’s something, that’s really something, thought the dog.

“Come in, please, Mr. Sharik,” the gentleman invited him ironically, and Sharik stepped in reverently, wagging his tail.

A multitude of objects crowded the rich foyer. He was most impressed with the mirror from floor to ceiling, which immediately reflected a second bedraggled, lacerated Sharik, the terrifying stag’s horns up above, the numerous overcoats and boots, and the opalescent tulip with an electric light under the ceiling.

“Where did you dig him up, Philip Philippovich?” the woman asked, smiling and helping the gentleman to remove his heavy overcoat lined with silver fox, shimmering with bluish glints. “Heavens! What a mangy cur!”

“Nonsense. Where is he mangy?” the gentleman rapped out sternly.

Having removed the coat, he was now seen wearing a black suit of English cloth, with a gold chain gleaming discreetly and pleasantly across his stomach.

“Wait, stop wriggling, whuit . . . stop wriggling, you silly. Hm! . . . This isn’t mange . . . wait a minute, you devil . . . Hm! A-ah. It’s a burn. What scoundrel did it to you? Eh? Be still a moment, will you! . . .”

A cook, a bastard of a cook! The dog said with his piteous eyes and whimpered a little.

"Zina," commanded the gentleman, "take him to the examination room at once, and get me a smock."

The woman whistled, snapped her fingers, and the dog, after a moment's hesitation, followed her. They came into a narrow, dimly lit hallway, passed one laquered door, walked to the end, turned left, and found themselves in a dark little room which the dog immediately disliked for its ominous smell. The darkness clicked and turned into blinding daylight, and he was dazzled by the glitter, shine, and whiteness all around.

Oh, no, the dog howled mentally. Excuse me, but I won't, I won't let you! Now I understand it, to hell with them and their sausage. They've tricked me into a dog hospital. Now they'll make me lap castor oil, and cut up my whole side with knives, and I cannot bear to have it touched as it is.

"Hey, stop, where are you going?" cried the woman called Zina.

The dog spun around, coiled himself like a spring, and suddenly threw himself at the door with his sound side so that the crash was heard all through the apartment. Then he sprang back and whirled on the spot like a top, turning over a white pail and sending the tufts of cotton it contained flying in all directions. As he spun, the walls lined with cases full of glittering instruments danced around him; the white apron and the screaming, distorted female face bobbed up and down.

"Where do you think you're going, you shaggy devil?" Zina cried desperately. "Damned cur!"

Where is their back staircase? wondered the dog. He dashed himself at random at a glass door, hoping it was a second exit. A shower of splinters scattered, ringing and clattering, then a potbellied jar flew out,

and the reddish muck in it instantly spread over the floor, raising a stench. The real door flew open.

"Wait, you brute," shouted the gentleman, jumping around, with one arm in the sleeve of the smock, trying to catch the dog by the leg. "Zina, grab him by the scruff, the bastard!"

"My . . . oh, my, what a dog!"

The door opened still wider and another male individual in a smock burst in. Crushing the broken glass, he rushed, not to the dog, but to an instrument case, opened it, and the whole room filled with a sweetish, nauseating smell. Then the individual threw himself upon the dog, pressing him down with his belly; in the course of the struggle the dog managed to snap enthusiastically at his leg just above the shoe. The individual gasped, but did not lose control. The nauseous liquid stopped the dog's breath and his head began to reel. Then his legs dropped off, and he slid off somewhere sideways. Thank you, it's all over, he thought dreamily, dropping right on the sharp splinters. Good-bye Moscow! Never again will I see Chichkin's and proletarians and Cracow sausage. I'm off to paradise for my long patience in this dog's life. Brothers, murderers, why are you doing it to me?

And he rolled over on his side and gave up the ghost.

When he revived, his head was turning vaguely and he had a queasy feeling at the pit of his stomach. As for his side, it did not exist, his side was blissfully silent. The dog opened his languorous right eye and saw out of the corner of it that he was tightly bandaged across the sides and stomach. So they've had their will of me, the sons of bitches, after all, he thought mistily. It was a neat job, though, in all justice.

"From Seville and to Granada . . . on a quiet, dusky night," a voice sang over him absently, off key.

The dog, surprised, opened both his eyes wide and

beheld a man's leg on a white stool two steps away from him. The trousers and underpants were turned up, and the bare yellow calf was smeared with dried blood and iodine.

Saints in heaven! thought the dog. I must have bitten him. It's my work. I'm in for a whipping now!

"There are sounds of serenading, and a clashing of bared swords! Why did you bite the doctor, you tramp? Eh? Why did you break the glass? Eh?"

Oo-oo-oo . . . the dog whimpered pathetically.

"All right, all right. You've come to? Just lie there quietly, dumbbell."

"How did you manage to get such a nervous dog to follow you?" asked a pleasant masculine voice, and the trouser leg was rolled down. There was a smell of tobacco, and the glass jars tinkled in one of the cases.

"By kindness. The only method possible in dealing with living creatures. By terror you cannot get anywhere with an animal, no matter what its stage of development. I've always asserted this, I assert it today, and I shall go on asserting it. They are wrong thinking that terror will help them. No—no, it won't, whatever its color: white, red, or even brown! Terror completely paralyzes the nervous system. Zina! I bought this scoundrel some Cracow sausage, a ruble and forty kopeks' worth. Be good enough to feed him as soon as he stops feeling nauseous."

The glass splinters crackled as they were swept out and a woman's voice remarked coquettishly:

"Cracow sausage! Heavens, twenty kopeks' worth of scraps from the butcher shop would have been good enough for him. I'd rather eat the Cracow sausage myself."

"Just try! I'll show you how to eat it! It's poison for the human stomach. A grown-up girl, and she's ready to stuff herself with every kind of garbage, like a baby.

Don't you dare! I warn you: neither I, nor Dr. Bormenthal will bother with you when you come down with stomach cramps. . . . And if anyone says you can be easily replaced . . ."

A soft, delicate tinkling scattered through the apartment, and voices were heard from the distant foyer. The telephone rang. Zina disappeared.

Philip Philippovich threw his cigarette butt into the pail, buttoned his smock, smoothed down the fluffy mustache before the small mirror on the wall, and called the dog:

"Whuit, whuit. All right, all right. Come on, we'll see our patients."

The dog rose unsteadily, swayed and trembled, but quickly recovered and followed the flying coattails of Philip Philippovich. Once more the dog crossed the narrow hallway, but now it was lit by a bright rosette on the ceiling. And when the laquered door opened, he entered the office with Philip Philippovich and was dazzled by its interior. To begin with, it blazed with lights: lights burning under the molded ceiling, on the table, on the walls, lights flashing from the glass doors of the cabinets. The lights illuminated a multitude of objects, the most intriguing of which was the huge owl perched on a twig projecting from the wall.

"Lie down," ordered Philip Philippovich.

The carved door across the room opened, and the man Sharik had nipped on the leg came in. In the bright light he turned out to be young and extremely handsome, with a small, pointed beard. He handed Philip Philippovich a sheet of paper and said:

"The same one . . ."

He disappeared, and Philip Philippovich spread the tails of his smock, sat down at a huge desk, and immediately became extraordinarily dignified and important.

No, this is not a clinic, it's something else, the dog

thought in confusion, stretching himself on the patterned rug near the heavy leather sofa. As for that owl, we'll have to find out about it. . . .

The door opened softly, and the man who entered was so disconcerting to the dog, that he gave a short, timid bark.

"Quiet! Well, well, but you're unrecognizable, my friend."

The visitor bowed with great respect and some embarrassment.

"He-he! You are a wizard, a miracle worker, Professor," he mumbled with confusion.

"Take off your trousers, my friend," commanded Philip Philippovich, getting up.

Jesus Christ, thought the dog, what a queer bird!

The hair on the visitor's head was completely green, and at the nape it had a rusty, tobacco-brown tinge. His face was covered with wrinkles, but its color was baby-pink. His left knee did not bend, and he had to drag his leg over the carpet, but his right foot jumped like a jumping jack's. In the lapel of his magnificent coat a precious stone gleamed like an eye.

The dog was so excited and curious that he forgot his nausea.

Tiaw, tiaw! . . . he yipped tentatively.

"Quiet! How do you sleep, my dear?"

"He-he. Are we alone, Professor? It's indescribable," the visitor spoke with embarrassment. "Parole d'honneur, I remember nothing like it for twenty-five years," the queer individual pulled at his trouser button. "Will you believe me, Professor, every night it's flocks of naked girls. I am positively enchanted. You are a magician."

"Hm," Philip Philippovich grunted thoughtfully, peering into the guest's pupils.

The latter had finally mastered his buttons and

removed the striped trousers. Under them the dog beheld a pair of the most unique underpants. They were cream colored, embroidered with black cats, and they smelled of perfume.

The cats proved too much, and the dog gave such a bark that the individual jumped.

"Ai!"

"I'll thrash you! Don't be afraid, he doesn't bite."

I don't bite? the dog thought with astonishment.

A little envelope dropped out of the visitor's trouser pocket, with a picture of a beauty with loose, flowing hair. He jumped up, bent down, picked it up and flushed darkly.

"Look out, though," Philip Philippovich warned gloomily, shaking a finger at him. "After all, don't overdo it!"

"I don't over . . ." the visitor mumbled in confusion, continuing to undress. "It was only as a sort of experiment, my dear Professor."

"And? How did it go?" Philip Philippovich asked sternly.

The odd visitor only raised his hands in ecstasy.

"I swear, nothing like it for twenty-five years, Professor. The last time was in 1899 in Paris, on Rue de la Paix."

"And what made you turn green?"

The visitor's face clouded over.

"That damned liquid! You can't imagine, Professor, what those good-for-nothings stuck me with instead of dye. Just look at it," he muttered, searching for a mirror with his eyes. "They ought to get their teeth bashed in!" he added, suddenly furious. "What am I to do now, Professor?" he asked tearfully.

"Hm, shave it off."

"Professor," the visitor exclaimed piteously, "but it'll grow back gray again. Besides, I won't be able to

show my face at the office. I haven't gone in for three days as it is. Ah, Professor, if you would only discover a method of rejuvenating the hair as well!"

"Not all at once, my friend, not all at once," mumbled Philip Philippovich.

He bent down and examined the patient's naked stomach with glittering eyes.

"Well—charming, everything is in perfect order. To tell the truth, I really didn't expect such results. New blood, new songs. Get dressed, my friend!"

"My love is the most beautiful of all! . . ." the patient sang out in a voice that quavered like a frying pan struck with a fork, and began to dress, his face beaming. Then, bobbing up and down and spreading the odor of perfume, he counted out a bundle of large bills, handed them to Philip Philippovich, and tenderly pressed both his hands.

"You need not report for two weeks," said Philip Philippovich, "but I must repeat, be careful."

"Professor!" the man's voice exclaimed ecstatically from behind the door, "you may be quite, quite sure," and he vanished with a sugary giggle.

The tinkling of the bell spread throughout the apartment, the laquered door opened, the bitten one entered and gave Philip Philippovich another sheet of paper, saying:

"The age is entered incorrectly. Must be fifty or fifty-five. The heart tone is somewhat flat."

He disappeared, to be replaced by a rustling lady in a hat set at a jaunty angle and with a gleaming necklace on her flabby, wrinkled neck. She had peculiar dark bags under her eyes, and her cheeks were as red as a doll's. She was very nervous.

"My dear lady! How old are you?" Philip Philippovich asked very sternly.

The lady became frightened and even turned pale under the coat of rouge.

"I . . . Professor, I swear, if you only knew my tragedy! . . ."

"How old are you, madam?" Philip Philippovich repeated still more sternly.

"Honestly. . . Well, forty-five. . ."

"Madam," roared Philip Philippovich, "people are waiting to see me. Don't waste my time, please. You're not the only one!"

The lady's breast heaved stormily.

"I'll tell it to you alone, as a luminary of science. But I swear, it is so dreadful."

"How old are you?" Philip Philippovich squealed in fury and his eyeglasses glinted.

"Fifty-one," the lady answered, shrinking with fear.

"Take off your pants, madam," Philip Philippovich said with relief and pointed to a high white platform in the corner.

"I swear, Professor," the lady mumbled, undoing some snaps on her belt with trembling fingers. "That Maurice . . . I tell this to you as at confessional . . ."

"From Seville and to Granada," Philip Philippovich sang absently and pressed the pedal of the marble washstand. The water rushed out.

"I swear by God," the lady said, and spots of genuine red stood out under the artificial ones on her cheeks. "I know—this is my last passion. But he is such a scoundrel! Oh, Professor! He is a cardsharp, all of Moscow knows it. He's ready to take up with every nasty little seamstress. He is so fiendishly

young!" The lady muttered, kicking off a crumpled bit of lace from under her rustling skirts.

The dog was utterly bewildered, and everything turned upside down in his head.

The devil with you, he thought dimly, putting his head down on his paws and dozing off with shame. I wouldn't even try to figure it out—I couldn't make head or tail of it anyway.

He was awakened by a clinking sound and saw that Philip Philippovich had thrown some shiny tubes into a basin.

The spotty lady, her hands pressed to her chest, was looking at Philip Philippovich with anxious hope. The latter frowned importantly, then sat down at his desk and wrote something.

"We'll do a transplant. A monkey's ovaries," he declared, looking at her sternly.

"Ah, Professor, a monkey's?"

"Yes," he replied implacably.

"And when is the operation?" she asked in a faint voice, turning pale.

"From Seville and to Granada. . . Uhm . . . on Monday. You'll come to the hospital in the morning. My assistant will prepare you."

"Ah, Professor, I'd rather not go to the hospital. Can't it be done here, Professor?"

"Well, you see, I operate here only in special cases. And it will be very expensive—fifty chervontsy."

"I am willing, Professor!"

The water clattered again, the hat with the feathers swayed, a head appeared, bare as a platter, and embraced Philip Philippovich. The dog dozed, his nausea gone. His side no longer troubled him, he luxuriated in the warmth, and even caught a quick nap and saw a fragment of a pleasant dream, in which he managed to pull a whole tuft of feathers out of the owl's tail. . . .

And then an agitated voice barked over his head:

"I am too well known in Moscow, Professor. What am I to do?"

"Gentlemen," Philip Philippovich cried indignantly, "this is impossible. A man must control himself. How old is she?"

"Fourteen, Professor . . . You understand, the publicity will ruin me. I am slated to receive an assignment abroad in a day or two."

"But I am not a lawyer, my friend . . . Well, wait two years and marry her."

"I am married, Professor."

"Ah, gentlemen, gentlemen!"

The doors opened and closed, faces succeeded one another, the instruments in the cases clattered, and Philip Philippovich worked without a moment's respite.

What an obscene place, the dog thought, but how pleasant! And what the devil did he need me for? Will he really let me stay here? Such an eccentric! Why, he need only blink an eye and he could have the finest dog in town! But maybe I am handsome? I guess I'm lucky! But that owl is trash . . . Insolent trash.

The dog came to completely only late in the evening, when the bell ceased ringing, and precisely at the moment when the door opened and let in a special group of visitors. There were four of them at once. All of them young men, and all very modestly dressed.

What do they want? the dog thought with astonishment. Philip Philippovich met his guests with even less cordiality. He stood near his desk and stared at them as a general would at the enemy. The nostrils of his hawklike nose flared out. The visitors shifted their feet on the rug.

"We've come to you, Professor," began the one with

a shock of thick curly hair standing up at least six inches above his face, "to talk about . . ."

"You should not go about without galoshes in such weather, gentlemen," Philip Philippovich interrupted him didactically. "To begin with, you will catch colds. Secondly, you've tracked up my rugs, and all my rugs are Persian."

The fellow with the shock of hair fell silent, and all four stared at Philip Philippovich with astonishment. The silence lasted several seconds, broken only by the tapping of Philip Philippovich's fingers on the painted wooden platter on his desk.

"To begin with," the youngest of the four, with a peachlike face, brought out finally, "we are not gentlemen."

"And secondly," Philip Philippovich interrupted him, "are you a man or a woman?"

The four lapsed into silence again, gaping with open mouths. This time the fellow with the hair recovered first.

"What is the difference, comrade?" he asked proudly.

"I am a woman," confessed the peach-faced youth in the leather jacket, blushing violently. And for some unknown reason, another visitor—with blond hair and a cossack hat—also turned a vivid red.

"In that case, you may keep your cap on. As for you, dear sir, I must ask you to remove your headgear," Philip Philippovich said weightily.

"I'm no dear sir to you," the blond man answered sharply, removing his hat.

"We have come to you," the dark one with the shock of hair began once more.

"First of all, who is 'we'?"

"We are the new house management committee," the dark one said with controlled rage. "I am Shvonder,

she is Vyazemskaya, he is Comrade Pestrukhin, and this is Sharovkian. And so, we . . ."

"Are you the people they've moved into Fyodor Pavlovich Sablin's apartment?"

"We are," confirmed Shvonder.

"Good God, the Kalabukhov house is finished!" Philip Philippovich exclaimed in despair, clapping his hands together.

"Are you joking, Professor?"

"Joking? I am in total despair," Philip Philippovich cried. "What's going to happen to the steam heat now?"

"You're mocking us, Professor Preobrazhensky?"

"What business brought you to me? Make it short, I am just going to dinner."

"We are the house management," Shvonder spoke with hatred. "We've come to you after a general meeting of the tenants of this house which went into the question of consolidating the tenancy of the apartments. . . ."

"Who went into whom?" Philip Philippovich shouted. "Be kind enough to express yourself more clearly."

"The question of consolidation."

"That will do! I understand! Are you aware of the resolution of August 12 which exempted my apartment from any of your consolidations or tenant transfers?"

"We are," answered Shvonder. "But the general meeting reviewed your case and came to the conclusion that, generally and on the whole, you occupy excessive space. Altogether excessive. You live alone in seven rooms."

"I live and work in seven rooms," replied Philip Philippovich, "and I would like to have an eighth one. I need it most urgently for a library."

The four were stunned.

"An eighth one! O-ho," said the blond man who had

been ordered to remove his headgear. "Really, that's a good one!"

"It's indescribable!" cried the youth who had turned out to be a woman.

"I have a waiting room which, please note, is also a library; a dining room; and my office. That makes three. The examination room makes four, the operating room, five. My bedroom, six, and my servant's room, seven. And I haven't enough space. . . . However, all this is beside the point. My apartment is exempt, and that's the end of it. May I go to dinner now?"

"Excuse me," said the fourth visitor, who looked like a firm, strong beetle.

"Excuse me," Shvonder interrupted him, "this is precisely what we have come to talk to you about—the dining room and the examination room. The general meeting asks you voluntarily and by way of labor discipline to give up your dining room. Nobody has a dining room in Moscow."

"Not even Isadora Duncan," the woman cried in a ringing voice.

Something happened to Philip Philippovich, as a result of which his delicate face turned purple, and he did not utter a sound, waiting to see what happened next.

"And the examination room too," continued Shvonder. "The examination room can perfectly well be combined with the office."

"Uhum," said Philip Philippovich in a strange voice. "And where am I to take my meals?"

"In the bedroom," the four answered in chorus.

The purple of Philip Philippovich's face assumed a grayish tinge.

"Eat in the bedroom," he said in a slightly choked voice, "read in the examination room, dress in the waiting room, operate in the maid's room, and examine

patients in the dining room. It is very possible that Isadora Duncan does just this. Perhaps she dines in her office and dissects rabbits in the bathroom. Perhaps. But I am not Isadora Duncan! . . ." he barked out suddenly, and the purple of his face turned yellow. "I shall dine in the dining room, and operate in the surgery! You may report this to the general meeting, and now I beg you to return to your respective business and allow me to take my meal where all normal people take theirs, that is, in the dining room, and not in the foyer or the nursery."

"In that case, Professor, in view of your obstinate opposition," said the excited Shvonder, "we shall lodge a complaint against you with the higher authorities."

"Ah," said Philip Philippovich, "so?" and his voice assumed a suspiciously polite tone. "I will ask you to wait just a moment."

That's a man for you, the dog thought with admiration. Just like me. Oh, but he'll nip them in a second, oh, but he'll nip them. I don't know yet how he'll do it, but he'll do a job of it. . . . Get 'em! That leggy one, he ought to be grabbed just above the boot, right at that tendon behind the knee . . . ur-r-r . . .

Philip Philippovich banged the receiver as he lifted it from the telephone and said into it:

"Please . . . yes . . . thank you. Ask Pyotr Alexandrovich to the telephone, please. Professor Preobrazhensky. Pyotr Alexandrovich? I am glad I found you in. Thank you, quite well. Pyotr Alexandrovich, your operation is canceled. And all the other operations as well. This is why: I am discontinuing my work in Moscow, and in Russia generally. . . . Four individuals have just come in, one of them a woman dressed as a man, and two armed with revolvers, and they're trying to intimidate me in my home in order to take it from me."

"But, Professor," Shvonder began, changing in the face.

"Sorry . . . I cannot repeat everything they said. I am not a fancier of nonsense. Suffice it to say that they suggested that I give up my examination room. In other words, they make it necessary for me to operate on you in the place where I usually dissect rabbits. I not only cannot, but have no right to work under such conditions. Therefore I am discontinuing my activities, closing my apartment, and leaving for Sochi. I can turn the keys over to Shvonder. Let him operate."

The four stood petrified. The snow was melting on their boots.

"What can I do? . . . I find it very unpleasant myself. . . . What? Oh, no, Pyotr Alexandrovich! Oh, no. I refuse to go on any more. I'm at the end of my patience. This is the second time since August. . . . What? Hm . . . If you wish. Very well. But on one condition: I don't care who, when, or what, but it must be an order that will make sure that neither Shvonder, nor anyone else will be allowed even to approach the door of my apartment. A final and definitive order. An absolute one! A real one! Ironclad. So that my name is never mentioned again. Finished. I'm dead to them. Yes, yes. Please. Who will? Ah . . . That's something else. Aha . . . Good. I'll give him the receiver now. Be so kind," Philip Philippovich spoke in a serpentine voice to Shvonder, "he'll speak to you now."

"But please, Professor," said Shvonder, flushing and turning pale, "you have misrepresented our words."

"I'll thank you not to use such expressions."

Shvonder, completely abashed, took the receiver and said:

"I'm listening. Yes . . . Chairman of the house committee . . . But we acted according to rules . . . The Professor lives under totally extraordinary conditions

as it is We know about his work We wanted to leave him five whole rooms. . . . Oh, very well . . . If that's the case . . . Very well . . ."

Beet-red, he hung up the receiver and turned around.

That fixed him! What a fellow! the dog thought enthusiastically. He must know some magic word. Now you can thrash me all you want, I'll not leave anyway.

The other three gaped with open mouths at the humiliated Shvonder.

"It's disgraceful!" he mumbled tentatively.

"If we had a discussion now," the woman began, flushing excitedly, "I would prove to Pyotr Alexandrovich . . ."

"Excuse me, you don't intend to open this discussion right now?" Philip Philippovich inquired civilly.

The woman's eyes flared.

"I understand your irony, Professor, we shall leave at once. . . . However, as director of the cultural department of the house, I . . ."

"Di-rect-ress," Philip Philippovich corrected her.

"I want to ask you," and she pulled several magazines, vividly colored and wet from the snow, from the bosom of her coat, "to buy several magazines for the benefit of German children. Fifty kopeks apiece."

"I will not," Philip Philippovich answered briefly, glancing at the magazines out of the corner of his eye.

The four faces expressed utter astonishment, and the woman's face turned a cranberry tinge.

"But why do you refuse?"

"I don't want to."

"Don't you sympathize with the German children?"

"I do."

"You stint the money?"

"No."

"Then why?"

"I don't want to."

They were silent.

"You know, Professor," the girl began, with a deep sigh, "if you were not a world celebrity, and if you weren't protected in the most outrageous manner (the fair-haired man tugged at the edge of her jacket, but she brushed him off) by persons whose authority, I am sure, we shall yet look into, you ought to be arrested."

"And what for?" Philip Philippovich inquired with curiosity.

"You are a hater of the proletariat!" the woman declared proudly.

"You are right, I do not like the proletariat," Philip Philippovich agreed sadly and pressed a button. A bell rang somewhere within, and the door into the corridor swung open.

"Zina," called out Philip Philippovich. "You may serve dinner. Will you allow me, gentlemen?"

The four walked out of the study silently. Silently they crossed the office, silently walked the length of the hallway, and the door could be heard closing behind them with a heavy thud.

The dog rose to his hind legs and performed a kind of salaam before Philip Philippovich.

III

Thin slices of salmon and pickled eel were piled on plates adorned with paradisiac flowers and wide black borders. A piece of fine, moist Swiss cheese lay on a heavy board, and near it stood a silver bucket with caviar, set in a bowl of snow. Among the plates stood several slender liqueur glasses and three crystal carafes with liqueurs of different colors. All these objects were arranged on a small marble table, cosily set against a huge sideboard of carved oak filled with glass and silver, which threw off sheaves of light. In the center of the room a table, heavy as a sepulchre, was covered with a white cloth, and on it were two settings, with napkins rolled like papal tiaras, and three dark bottles.

Zina brought in a covered dish with something sizzling in it. The smell from the dish immediately made the dog's mouth fill with thin saliva. The gardens of Semiramide! he thought, and his tail began to hammer on the parquet like a stick.

"Bring them here," Philip Philippovich commanded fiercely. "Doctor Bormenthal, I implore you, forget the caviar. And if you'll listen to good advice, you'll pour us some ordinary Russian vodka instead of English whisky."

The stunningly handsome bitten one—he was no longer wearing a smock, but an elegant black suit—

shrugged his wide shoulders, and poured the transparent liquid with a courteous smile.

"Newly blessed?" he inquired.

"Heaven forbid, my friend," responded the host. "Spirits. Darya Petrovna makes an excellent vodka."

"But why, Philip Philippovich, everybody says it's quite good, eighty-proof."

"And vodka should be ninety-proof, not eighty. That's one," Philip Philippovich interrupted didactically. "And two, heaven knows what they slop into it. Wouldn't you say—whatever comes into their heads?"

"Anything you can name," the bitten one confirmed in a positive tone.

"I am of the same opinion," said Philip Philippovich, throwing the contents down his throat in a single gulp. "Ww . . . Mm . . . Doctor Bormenthal, I beg you: taste this, at once, and if you say—what's this?—I'll be your deadly enemy for the rest of my life. From Seville and to Granada . . ."

With these words, he picked up with his broad-tined silver fork something resembling a tiny dark loaf of bread. The bitten one followed his example. Philip Philippovich's eyes lit up.

"Now, is that bad?" he asked, chewing. "Answer me, my dear Doctor, is it bad?"

"Incomparable," the nipped one responded wholeheartedly.

"Indeed, it is . . . Mark you, Ivan Arnoldovich, it's only the few remaining landowners whom the Bolsheviks hadn't got around to slaughtering who dine on cold cuts and soup. No self-respecting man will operate with anything but hot dishes. And among Moscow's hot specialties, this is the best. The Slavyansky Market was famous for it once upon a time. Here, catch."

"Feeding the dog in the dining room," a female voice

protested. "You'll never drag him out of here with a rope after that."

"That's all right. The poor fellow is starved," said Philip Philippovich offering the dog a tidbit at the end of his fork. The latter snatched it off with the dexterity of a juggler, and the fork was flung, clattering, into the washbasin.

After that, the smell of lobster rose from the steaming plates. The dog sat in the shade of the tablecloth with the air of a sentry near a powder depot, and Philip Philippovich, the tail of a crisp napkin stuffed into his collar, preached:

"Eating, Ivan Arnoldovich, is a cunning art. You have to know how to eat, and, imagine, most people haven't the slightest notion of it. It's not only a matter of knowing what to eat, but also when, and how. (Philip Philippovich wagged his spoon significantly.) And also what to talk about while you are at it. Yes . . . If you care about your digestion, my good advice is—do not talk about Bolshevism or medicine at dinner. And—heaven preserve!—don't read any Soviet newspapers before dinner."

"Hm . . . But there are no others."

"That's just it, don't read any. You know, I carried out thirty tests at my hospital. And what do you think? Patients who read no newspapers feel excellent. But those whom I deliberately compelled to read *Pravda* lost weight."

"Hm . . ." the nipped one responded with interest, turning pink from the soup and the wine.

"But that isn't all. They had lowered knee-tap reflex, rotten appetite, a depressed state of mind."

"The devil, you don't say . . ."

"Oh, yes. But what am I doing? I've started on medicine myself."

Philip Philippovich leaned back and rang, and Zina appeared from behind the cherry-red hanging. The dog was given a pale, thick slice of sturgeon, which he did not like, and directly after that, a slice of bloody roast beef. Gulping it down, the dog suddenly felt that he must sleep and that he could not bear the sight of any more food. What a strange sensation, he thought, closing his heavy eyelids, I couldn't look at food now. And smoking after dinner is just stupid.

The dining room was filled with unpleasant blue smoke. The dog dozed with his head on his front paws.

"St. Julien is a decent wine," he heard through his sleep, "but where can you get it nowadays?"

The sound of choral singing came from somewhere above, muffled, muted by ceilings and rugs.

Philip Philippovich rang and Zina came in.

"Zinusha, what does this mean?"

"They're having another general meeting, Philip Philippovich," answered Zina.

"Again!" Philip Philippovich exclaimed hopelessly. "Well, it's begun, it's the end of the Kalabukhov house. I'll have to go, but where, I ask you? From now on, the course is clear. First there will be singing every evening, then the pipes in the toilets will freeze, then the boiler will crack—no more steam heat, and so on. Kalabukhov is finished."

"Philip Philippovich is fretting," Zina observed, smiling, as she carried out a pile of dishes.

"But how can you help it?" wailed Philip Philippovich. "What a house this was, if you only knew, what a house!"

"You take too dark a view of things, Philip Philippovich," said the handsome bitten one. "They have changed quite a lot lately."

"My dear friend, you know me, don't you? I am a man of facts, a man of observation. I am an enemy of

unfounded hypotheses. And this is well known not only in Russia, but also in Europe. If I say something, you may be sure it is based on certain facts, from which I have drawn conclusions. And here are the facts for you: the coat rack and the stand for galoshes in our house."

"That's interesting . . ."

Such rot—galoshes. Galoshes aren't the main thing, thought the dog. But he's an outstanding personage, no question of that.

"There you are—the stand for galoshes. I have lived in this house since 1903. And throughout all these years, until March, 1917, there was not a single instance—and I underline this with a red pencil, *not a single instance*—of even one pair of galoshes missing from our front hall, with the door always unlocked. And remember, there are twelve apartments here, and I have patients. Well, one fine day in March of 1917, all the galoshes disappeared, including two pair of mine. Also three canes, a coat, and the porter's samovar. And from that day on the stand for galoshes ceased to exist. My dear friend! I won't even mention the steam heat. I won't. Let's forget it: when there's a social revolution, there's no need for steam heat. But I ask you why, when this whole business started, did everyone begin to go up the marble staircase in muddy galoshes and felt boots? Why is it necessary to this day to lock up the galoshes? And even to post a soldier to make sure no one steals them? Why was the rug removed from the front stairway? Does Karl Marx forbid rugs on the stairs? Does he say anywhere in his writings that the second entrance of the Kalabukhov house on Prechistenka must be boarded up, and people must go around the house and enter through the backyard? Who needs this? Why can't the proletarian leave his galoshes downstairs instead of tracking up the marble?"

"But, Philip Philippovich, he doesn't even own any galoshes," the nipped one ventured.

"Nothing of the kind!" Philip Philippovich thundered, pouring himself a glass of wine. "Hm . . . I am against liqueurs after dinner—they make you feel heavy and affect your liver . . . No such thing! He wears galoshes now, and these galoshes are . . . mine! They are precisely the galoshes which disappeared in the spring of 1917. And I will ask you—who filched them? I? Impossible. The bourgeois Sablin? (Philip Philippovich pointed his finger at the ceiling.) Ridiculous. The sugar manufacturer Polozov? (Philip Philippovich pointed sideways.) Never! Yes, sir! But at least if they would take them off downstairs! (Philip Philippovich began to turn purple.) Why the devil did they remove the plants from the landings? Why is it that the electricity which, if my memory serves me, had gone out twice in twenty years now regularly goes out once a month? Dr. Bormenthal, statistics are a dreadful thing. You, who are familiar with my latest work, know this better than anyone else."

"It's the general rack and ruin, Philip Philippovich. Economic collapse."

"No," Philip Philippovich argued with utmost assurance. "No. You ought to be the first, Ivan Arnoldovich, to refrain from using these terms. They are a mirage, a puff of smoke, a fiction." Philip Philippovich spread out his short fingers, and two shadows like turtles stirred on the tablecloth. "What is this general ruin of yours? An old crone with a crutch? A witch who has knocked out all the windows and extinguished all the lights? Why, there's no such thing! It doesn't exist. What do you mean by these words?" Philip Philippovich addressed himself furiously to the hapless cardboard duck which hung upside down next to the sideboard, and answered for it himself. "It's this: if I

begin to sing in chorus in my apartment every evening instead of operating, it will lead to ruin. If, coming into the bathroom, I will—forgive the expression—begin to urinate past the toilet bowl, and if Zina and Darya Petrovna do the same, I'll have ruin in my bathroom. Hence, the rack and ruin are not in the bathrooms, but in the heads. And consequently, when these clowns begin to shout, 'Fight economic ruin!' I must laugh. (Philip Philippovich's face was so twisted with rage that the bitten one's mouth dropped open.) I swear to you, it's funny! It means that everyone of them should whip himself on the head! And when he knocks all the hallucinations out of it and begins to clean up the barns—which is his job in the first place—the general ruin will disappear of itself. It is impossible to serve two gods! It is impossible at one and the same time to sweep the streetcar tracks and settle the fate of Spanish beggars! No one can succeed in this, Doctor, and least of all people who, being generally behind Europeans by some two hundred years, still aren't too sure of how to button their own pants!"

Philip Philippovich was in a frenzy of excitement. His hawklike nostrils flared. Reinforced by the hearty dinner, he thundered like an ancient prophet, and his head glittered with silver.

His words fell upon the sleepy dog like a dull subterranean hum. The owl with stupid yellow eyes leaped out at him in his dream; then the vile physiognomy of the cook in the dirty white cap; then Philip Philippovich's dashing mustache; then a sleepy sled creaked and vanished, while the ravaged piece of roast beef, swimming in juice, was being digested in the canine stomach.

He could earn lots of money at meetings, the dog dreamed mistily. A first-rate business mind. But he evidently has plenty as it is. "Police!" shouted Philip

Philippovich. "Police!" Oohoo-hoo-hoo! bubbles seemed to burst in the dog's brain

"Police! That and only that. And it is entirely immaterial whether they have badges or red caps. Post a policeman next to every man and order him to subdue the vocal impulses of our citizens. General collapse, you say? I will tell you, Doctor, that nothing will change for the better in our house, or in any other house, until these singers are quieted down! As soon as they stop their concerts, the situation will take a turn for the better by itself."

"You're saying counterrevolutionary things, Philip Philippovich," the nipped one remarked jocularly. "Heaven forbid if anyone should hear you."

"Nothing dangerous at all," Philip Philippovich countered heatedly. "Nothing counterrevolutionary. And, incidentally, that's another word I can't endure. It's absolutely impossible to tell what it covers! The devil take it! And so, I say: there isn't any of this counterrevolution in my words. There is only common sense and good advice based on practical experience."

Philip Philippovich removed the tail of the shiny, crumpled napkin from behind his collar and, crushing it, put it down next to his unfinished glass of wine. The bitten one immediately rose and thanked him. "Merci."

"One moment, Doctor!" Philip Philippovich stopped him, taking a wallet from his trouser pocket. He squinted, counted off some white notes, and held them out to the bitten one with the words: "Today, Ivan Arnoldovich, you get forty rubles. Please."

The dog's victim thanked him civilly and, blushing, stuffed the money into the pocket of his jacket.

"Will you need me this evening, Philip Philippovich?" he asked.

"No, thank you, my dear. We shall not do anything today. In the first place, the rabbit died. And, in the

second, there's *Aida* at the Bolshoi tonight. And I haven't heard it for a long time. I love it Remember? The duet . . . Tari-rarim."

"How do you manage it all, Philip Philippovich?" the doctor asked with respect.

"He who does not hurry manages to get everywhere," the host explained sententiously. "Of course, if I began to skip around from meeting to meeting and sing all day like a nightingale instead of doing my own work, I would never manage to get anywhere." The repeater watch sang out in heavenly tones under Philip Philippovich's fingers in his pocket. "It's just past eight . . . I'll get there for the second act I am an advocate of the division of labor. Let them sing at the Bolshoi, and I will operate. Then everything will be fine. And there will be no ruin And also, Ivan Arnoldovich, do keep your eyes open: as soon as there is a suitable death, straight from the table into a nutrient medium, and rush it here!"

"Don't worry, Philip Philippovich, the pathologists promised me."

"Excellent, and in the meantime we shall observe this stray neurotic and get him into shape. Let his side heal"

He's concerned about me, thought the dog. A very good man. I know who he is. He is a wizard, a magician, and sorcerer out of a dog's fairy tale . . . I couldn't be dreaming all of this. But what if it is a dream? (The dog started in his sleep.) What if I wake up . . . and there is nothing? No lamp with a silk shade, no warmth, no full stomach. Again the gateway, the fierce cold, the icy pavement, hunger, vicious people . . . the cafeteria, snow . . . God, how bitter it will be! . . .

But nothing of the kind happened. It was the gateway that melted away like an evil dream, never to return.

Evidently, the rack and ruin were not so terrible after all. Despite them, the gray accordions under the windows filled with heat twice daily, and the warmth spread in waves throughout the apartment.

It was quite clear: the dog had pulled out the best dog-ticket. His eyes filled with tears of gratitude to the Prechistenka sage at least twice daily. Besides, all the mirrors in the waiting room and in the office between the cabinets reflected the lucky dog—a real beauty.

I'm a handsome devil. Am I perhaps an unknown canine prince—incognito, the dog wondered, gazing at the shaggy coffee-colored dog with a well-pleased muzzle wandering about in the depths of the mirrors. It is very possible that my grandmother had sinned with a Newfoundland. Look at that white spot on my chin. Where does it come from, I ask you? Philip Philippovich is a man of excellent taste—he wouldn't pick up just any stray mutt.

In the course of a week, the dog gobbled down as much food as he had eaten during the last hungry month and a half in the street. But, of course, measured by weight only. The quality of his present diet was beyond comparison. Even aside from the pile of scraps bought daily by Darya Petrovna at the Smolensk Market for eighteen kopeks, it would be enough to mention the 7 o'clock dinners in the dining room, at which the dog was present despite the protests of the exquisite Zina. During those dinners, Philip Philippovich irrevocably earned the status of divinity. The dog stood up on his hind legs and chewed his jacket. The dog learned to recognize his master's ring—two loud, short blasts—and flew out barking to welcome him in the hallway. The master would tumble in, wrapped in his silver fox glittering with a million snow-sparks, smelling of tan-

gerines, cigars, perfume, lemons, benzine, eau de Cologne, and woolen cloth, and his voice, like a megaphone, resounded through all the rooms.

"You swine, why did you tear the owl to shreds? Was it in your way? Was it, I ask you? Why did you smash Professor Mechnikov?"

"He should be whipped at least once, Philip Philippovich," Zina cried indignantly. "He'll get completely out of hand. Look what he did to your galoshes."

"Nobody should be whipped," Philip Philippovich cried heatedly. "Remember that, once and for all. Neither man nor animal can be influenced by anything but suggestion. Was he given his meat today?"

"Heavens, he's eating us out of house and home. Why do you ask such things, Philip Philippovich. I only wonder why he doesn't burst."

"Well, let him eat all he wants . . . What did you have against the owl, eh, rascal?"

Ooo-oo! whimpered the fawning dog and crawled on his belly, with his paws splayed out.

Then he was dragged noisily by the scruff of the neck across the waiting room to the office. The dog whimpered, snapped, clutched at the rug with his nails, rode on his backside, like a circus dog. In the middle of the office, on the rug, lay the glassy-eyed owl with a slit belly, from which protruded some red rags smelling of naphthalene. On the table lay the portrait bust, shattered to pieces.

"I deliberately did not tidy up, just so you could admire it," Zina reported excitedly. "He jumped on the table, the scoundrel! and snapped at the tail! Before I knew it, he gutted it. Poke his snout into the owl, Philip Philippovich, let him know how to spoil things."

And a wild howling broke out. The dog, who clung to

the rug, was dragged to have his nose poked at the owl, and he wept bitter tears, praying, beat me, but don't kick me out of here.

"Send the owl to the taxidermist at once. And here is eight rubles and sixteen kopeks for carfare. Go to Muir's and buy him a good collar and chain."

On the following day they put a wide, shiny collar around the dog's neck. At the first moment, as he looked into the mirror, he was dreadfully upset and slunk off to the bathroom with his tail between his legs, wondering how to scrape it off against a trunk or box. But very soon it dawned on him that he was simply being stupid. Zina took him walking on the chain along Obukhov Lane. In the beginning, he walked like a convict, burning up with shame. However, by the time they had reached the Church of Christ on the Prechistenka, he began to realize how much a collar meant in life. There was fierce envy in the eyes of all the dogs he met. And near Dead Man's Alley some rangy mutt with a chopped-off tail barked insults at him, calling him "gentleman's scum" and "six-legs." As they were crossing the streetcar tracks, the militiaman looked at his collar with admiration and respect, and when they returned, the most unheard of thing occurred: Fyodor the doorman opened the front door with his own hands and let Sharik in. And he remarked to Zina, "Look at that shaggy beast Philip Philippovich has gotten himself. And how fat!"

"I'll say! He eats enough for six," said Zina, flushed and pretty from the cold.

A collar is just like a briefcase, the dog quipped mentally and, wagging his behind, proceeded with a lordly air up to the second floor.

Having assessed the full value of a collar, the dog made his first visit to the chief department of paradise, from which he had been categorically banned until

then, namely, the realm of the cook, Darya Petrovna. The whole apartment wasn't worth two spans of Darya's kingdom. Every day the stove, black on top and faced with tile, roared and stormed with flames. The oven crackled. In the shafts of scarlet light, Darya Petrovna's face burned with eternal fiery torment and unquenched passion. Her glossy face dripped fat. In her fair hair, fashionably drawn over the ears and formed into a basket in the back, shone twenty-two fake diamonds. Golden saucepans gleamed on hooks along the walls. The entire kitchen clattered with odors, gurgled and hissed with covered pots . . .

"Out!" shrieked Darya Petrovna. "Out, you homeless sneak thief! All I need is to have you here! I'll bash you with a poker! . . ."

Oh, don't! Why are you scolding? The dog squinted at her with melting eyes. What sort of a sneak thief am I? Don't you see the collar? And he sidled to the door, prying it open with his muzzle.

Sharik possessed some secret power over human hearts. Two days later he was already lying next to the coalbin and watching Darya Petrovna work. With a sharp, narrow knife she chopped off the heads and claws of helpless grouse, then, like a furious executioner, she pulled the soft flesh off the bones, tore the entrails out of chickens, busily turned the meat grinder. And throughout all this, Sharik was torturing a grouse head. Darya Petrovna extracted pieces of roll soaked in milk from a bowl, mixed them with the meat pulp on a board, poured cream over the mixture, salted it, and molded it into patties. The stove hummed like a house on fire, and in the frying pan something gurgled, bubbled and leaped. The door of the oven sprang back with a clatter, revealing a terrifying hell in which flames roared and flashed.

In the evening the fiery maw went dark, and in the

kitchen window, over the white curtain covering the lower panes, stood the dense and dignified Prechistenka night, lit by a solitary star. The kitchen floor was damp, the pans glinted dimly and mysteriously, and a fireman's cap rested on the table. Sharik lay on the warm stove like a lion on a gate and, cocking an ear with curiosity, watched a black-mustachioed, excited man in a wide leather belt embrace Darya Petrovna in the room she shared with Zina. The woman's face burned with torment and passion—all of it, except the dead-white, powdered nose. A crack of light fell on the black-mustachioed man's photograph, with an Easter rose hung over it.

"Pesters me like a demon," muttered Darya Petrovna in the dusk. "Let go! Zina will be here in a minute. What's the matter with you, as though you'd been rejuvenated too?"

"We have no need of it," the mustachioed one spoke huskily, scarcely able to control himself. "How fiery you are!"

Later on in the evening, the Prechistenka star disappeared behind the heavy drawn curtains, and if the Bolshoi did not present *Aida* and there was no meeting of the Russian Surgical Society, the godhead sat in a deep chair in his office. There were no ceiling lights, only the green-shaded lamp on the table. Sharik lay in the shadow on the rug and looked, unblinking, at terrible doings. In a disgusting, caustic, muddy liquid in glass containers lay human brains. The godhead's hands, bared to the elbow, were dressed in reddish rubber gloves, and the slippery, blunt fingers fumbled in the convolutions. From time to time, the godhead armed himself with a small gleaming knife and carefully cut into the firm yellow brains.

"To the sacred banks of the Nile," the godhead sang quietly, then bit his lips, recalling the golden interior of

the Bolshoi Theatre.

At this hour the heat in the radiators reached its highest point. It rose to the ceiling and thence spread through the room. In the dog's fur, the last flea, not yet combed out by Philip Philippovich himself, but already doomed, awakened. The front door clanked distantly.

Zina went to the movies, the dog thought. And when she returns, we shall have supper. I guess we'll have veal cutlets today!