

THE THEATRE SEASON / Uncle Vanya (memorized excerpts – English version)

MAY

VOINITSKI: Soon the rain will be over, and all nature will sigh and awake refreshed. Only I am not refreshed by the storm. Day and night the thought haunts me like a fiend, that my life is lost for ever.

JUNE

ASTROV: When I plant a little birch tree and then see it budding into young green and swaying in the wind, my heart swells with pride and I-- however--[He drinks] I must be off. Probably it is all nonsense, anyway.

JULY

HELENA: No one is disputing your rights. [The window slams in the wind] The wind is rising, I must shut the window. We shall have rain in a moment. Your rights have never been questioned by anybody.

AUGUST

ASTROV: The weather is fine to-day, my dear Ivan; the morning was overcast and looked like rain, but now the sun is shining again. Honestly, we have had a very fine autumn, and the wheat is looking fairly well. [Puts his map back into the portfolio] But the days are growing short.

SEPTEMBER

ASTROV: the present has so terribly miscarried! What shall I do with my life and my love? What is to become of them? This wonderful feeling of mine will be wasted and lost as a ray of sunlight is lost that falls into a dark chasm, and my life will go with it.

OCTOBER

SONIA: It is still raining; wait till morning. **ASTROV:** The storm is blowing over. This is only the edge of it. I must go.

NOVEMBER

ASTROV: We still see spots of green, but not much. The elk, the swans, the black-cock have disappeared. It is, on the whole, the picture of a regular and slow decline which it will evidently only take about ten or fifteen more years to complete. You may perhaps object that it is the march of progress, that the old order must give place to the new, and you might be right if roads had been run through these ruined woods, or if factories and schools had taken their place. The people then would have become better educated and healthier and richer, but as it is, we have nothing of the sort. We have the same swamps and mosquitoes; the same disease and want; the typhoid, the diphtheria, the burning villages. We are confronted by the degradation of our country, brought on by the fierce struggle for existence of the human race. It is the consequence of the ignorance and unconsciousness of starving, shivering, sick humanity that, to save its children, instinctively snatches at everything that can warm it and still its hunger. So it destroys everything it can lay its hands on, without a thought for the morrow. And almost everything has gone, and nothing has been created to take its place.

DECEMBER

HELENA: There he lives, cut off from the world by cold and snowstorm and endless roads of bottomless mud, surrounded by a rough people who are crushed by poverty and disease, his life one continuous struggle, with never a day's respite; how can a man live like that for forty years and keep himself sober and unspotted?

JANUARY

VOINITSKI: As a peace offering I am going to fetch some flowers which I picked for you this morning: some autumn roses, beautiful, sorrowful roses. [He goes out.] **SONIA.** Autumn roses, beautiful, sorrowful roses!

FEBRUARY

TELEGIN: The weather is enchanting, the birds are singing, we are all living in peace and contentment—what more could the soul desire?

MARCH

HELENA. What a fine day! Not too hot. [A pause.] **VOINITSKI.** A fine day to hang oneself.

APRIL

ASTROV: The thunderstorm woke me. It was a heavy shower. What time is it? **VOITSKI:** The devil only knows.